



Planning research

People in Bolton

2011 Census Factfile no. 1

Religion

Communicating research and
sharing knowledge

People in Bolton 2011 Census

Religion Factfile - October 2013

People in Bolton factfiles provide key facts and figures about people who live or work in the borough of Bolton. These current factfiles are based on information from the most recent Census in 2011.

Other related publications, including more detailed information on a range of topics can be accessed at: www.bolton.gov.uk/researchandinformation

The latest census was held on Sunday 27 March 2011, with results released from July 2012 onwards. This briefing note outlines the key issues on religion.

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1. Summary

- The England and Wales census asked the same voluntary religion question in 2011 as was asked in 2001. The question (*'what is your religion?'*) asks about **religious affiliation**, meaning **how people connect or identify with a religion**.
- **Christians** are the largest religious group in Bolton with 173,600 people identifying as Christian, making up 63% of the population. The second largest was **Muslim**, with 32,400 people or 12% of the population. **Hindus** made up 2% of the population and there were relatively small numbers of Buddhists, Jews, Sikhs and 'Other' religions.
- The Census 2011 also for the first time provided details of the write-in answers to the '**other religion**' and '**no religion**' sections. In Bolton the most common of the 'other religions' were Spiritualists and Pagans. 'No religion' included write-in answers such as atheist/agnostic/humanist, as well as other types of answers such as 'heavy metal' or 'Jedi'.
- The most significant change from the 2001-11 Census was in the number of people who stated they had **no religion** which has almost doubled from 9%-17%, an increase of around 25,000 people. Equally the number of people identifying as **Christian** decreased by almost the same amount. Conversely there was an increase in all other major religions.

2. Introduction

The census has collected information about the population every 10 years since 1801 (except in 1941). The latest census in England and Wales took place on **27 March 2011**.

Census statistics describe the characteristics of an area, such as how many men and women there are and their ages. The statistics are used to understand similarities and differences in population characteristics locally, regionally and nationally, and inform policy and planning.

The England and Wales census asked the same voluntary religion question in 2011 as was asked in 2001. The question (*'what is your religion?'*) asks about **religious affiliation**, meaning **how people connect or identify with a religion**. This does not necessarily cover religious beliefs or practice which are different (but interlinked) concepts.

In both 2001 and 2011 religious identity was an optional question for people to answer. In 2011 **6%** of people in Bolton declined to answer (down from 7% in 2001).

3. Religion in Bolton

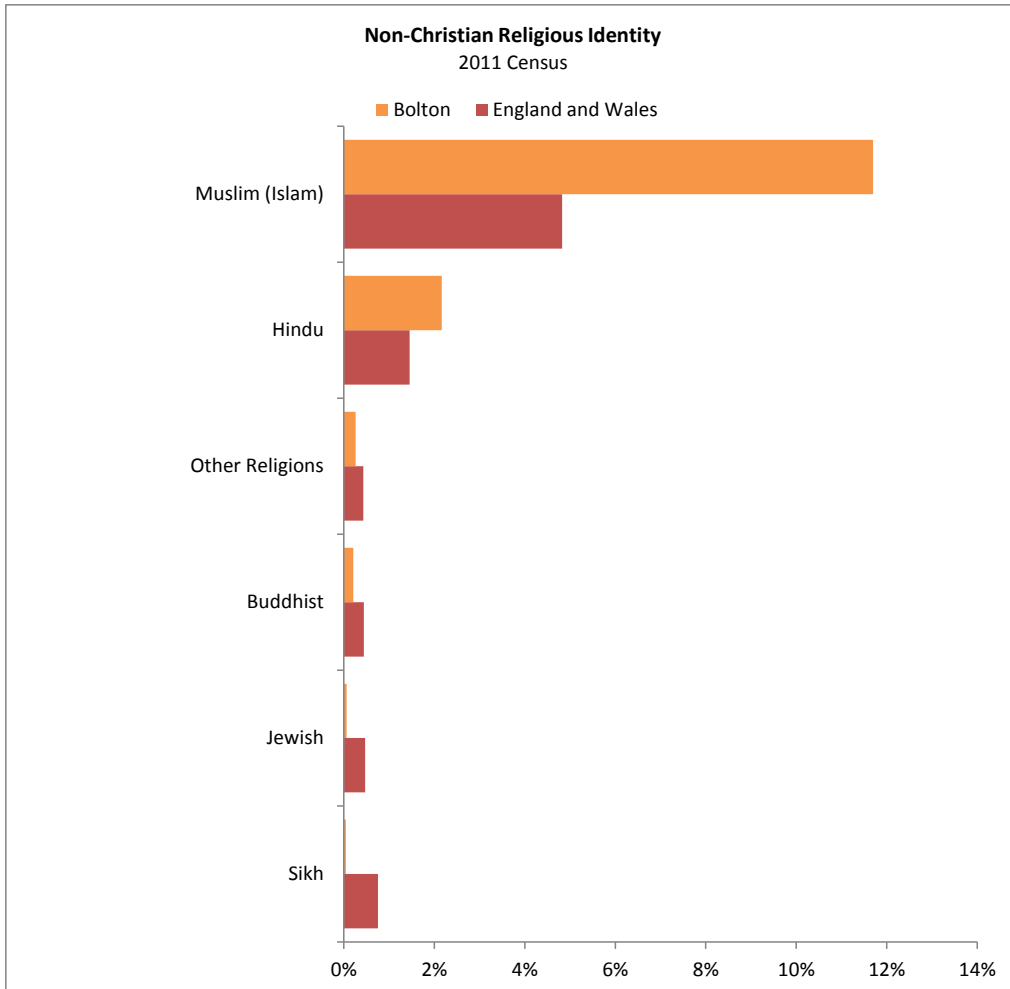
Christians are the largest religious group in Bolton with 173,600 people identifying as Christian, making up 63% of the population. This was slightly larger than the England & Wales average of 59%. (The term 'Christian' in this instance covers all branches of the Christian church, including Catholicism, Church of England, Methodist, Greek Orthodox etc.).

The second largest religious group in Bolton in 2011 was **Muslim**, with 32,400 people or 12% of the population. (This was more than double the national average of 5%). **Hindus** made up 2% of the population (Bolton had the largest Hindu population in Greater Manchester), and there were relatively small numbers of Buddhists, Jews, Sikhs and 'Other' religions.

Bolton overall had significantly more religious affiliation than other areas of England & Wales. Just 17% of people (around 1 in 6 of the population) specifically stated they had **no religious identity**, compared to 25%, or around 1 in 4 of the national population. This was mainly due to the large Muslim population resident in Bolton, as well as slightly more people identifying as Hindus and Christians.

	Bolton (number)	Bolton (%)	England and Wales (%)
Christian	173,608	62.7	59.3
Muslim (Islam)	32,385	11.7	4.8
Hindu	5,988	2.2	1.5
Other Religions	721	0.3	0.4
Buddhist	574	0.2	0.4
Jewish	174	0.1	0.5
Sikh	118	0.0	0.8
No Religion	47,567	17.2	25.1
Religion not stated	15,651	5.7	7.2

Source: 2011 Census, Key Statistics Table KS209EW, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright.



Source: 2011 Census, Key Statistics Table KS209EW, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright.

The Census 2011 also for the first time provided details of the write-in answers to the **‘other religion’** and **‘no religion’** sections, for people identifying with religions that did not fall into the main categories provided. In Bolton the most common of these were Spiritualists and Pagans, however there were also small numbers of Wiccans, Druids, Taoists, Jainists, Rastafarians plus numerous others. 5 people classified themselves as Scientologists, and one person as a Satanist.

‘No religion’ included write-in answers such as atheist/agnostic/humanist, as well as other types of answers such as ‘heavy metal’ or ‘Jedi’. There were over 700 Jedi’s in Bolton according to the 2011 Census, almost more than there were Buddhists, Jews and Sikhs combined.

	Bolton	Bolton (%)	England (%)
Other religion	721	0.26	0.43
Spiritualist	197	0.07	0.07
Pagan	181	0.07	0.10
Other religions	57	0.02	0.02
Mixed Religion	46	0.02	0.04
Wicca	38	0.01	0.02
Spiritual	35	0.01	0.02
Druid	28	0.01	0.01
Taoist	27	0.01	0.01
Jain	18	0.01	0.04
Believe in God	14	0.01	0.01
Rastafarian	14	0.01	0.01
Druze	11	0.00	0.00
Own Belief System	11	0.00	0.00
Heathen	8	0.00	0.00
Baha'i	6	0.00	0.01
Unification Church	6	0.00	0.00
Pantheism	5	0.00	0.00
Scientology	5	0.00	0.00
Zoroastrian	3	0.00	0.01
Brahma Kumari	2	0.00	0.00
Occult	2	0.00	0.00
Animism	1	0.00	0.00
Deist	1	0.00	0.00
Eckankar	1	0.00	0.00
New Age	1	0.00	0.00
Satanism	1	0.00	0.00
Shintoism	1	0.00	0.00
Theism	1	0.00	0.00

Source: 2011 Census, Quick Statistics Table QS210EW, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright.

	Bolton	Bolton (%)	England (%)
No Religion	47,567	17.19	25.14
No religion	46,543	16.82	24.68
Jedi Knight	698	0.25	0.31
Agnostic	93	0.03	0.06
Heavy Metal	92	0.03	0.01
Atheist	81	0.03	0.05
Humanist	49	0.02	0.03
Free Thinker	11	0.00	0.00

Source: 2011 Census, Quick Statistics Table QS210EW, Office for National Statistics, Crown Copyright.

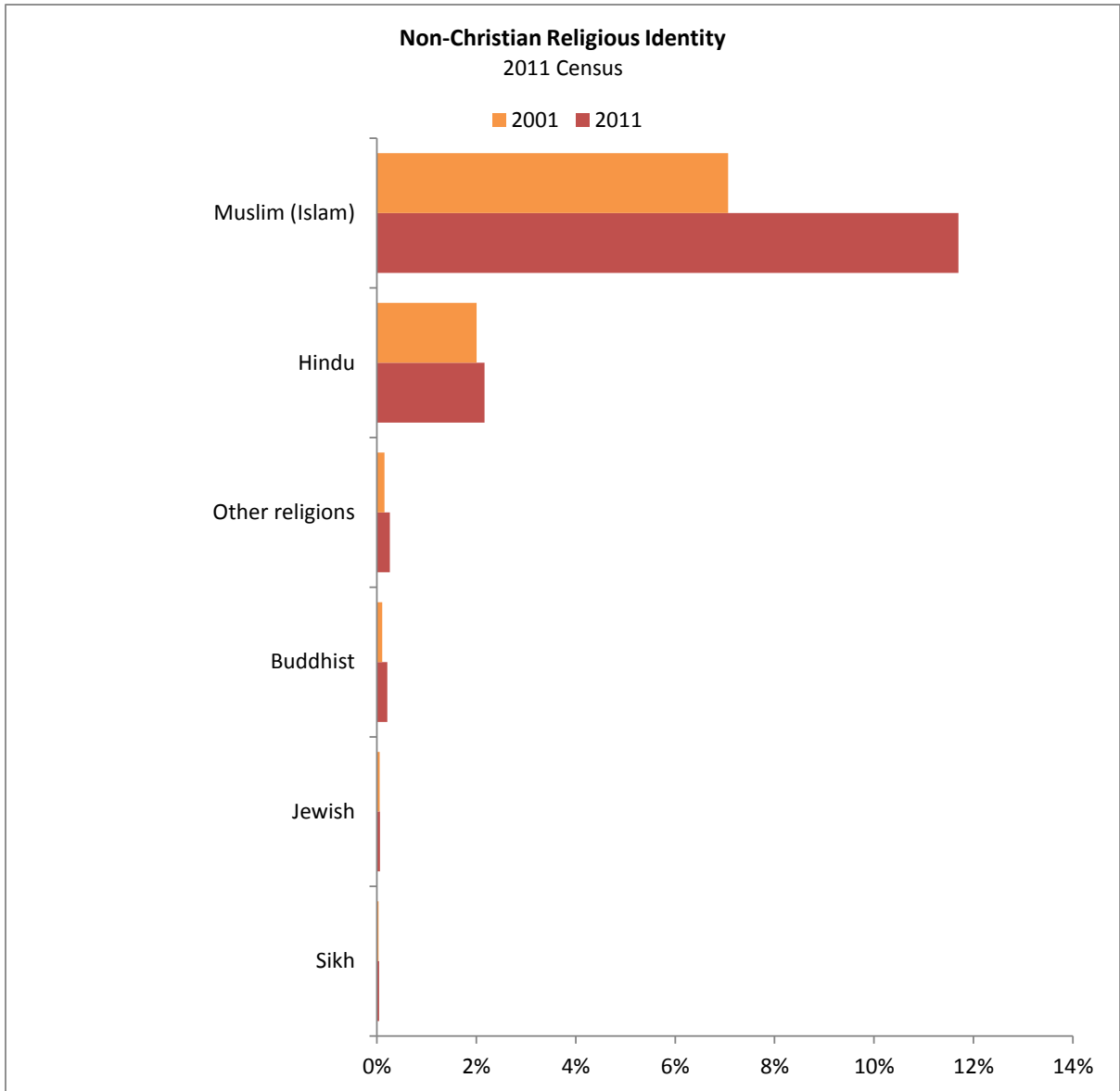
4. Changing Religion

The England and Wales census asked exactly the same voluntary religion question in 2011 as was asked in 2001, meaning that answers from both Censuses can be easily compared.

The most significant change from 2001-11 was in the number of people who stated they had **no religion** which has almost doubled from 9%-17%, an increase of around 25,000 people. Equally the number of people identifying as **Christian** decreased by almost the same amount, and there was a small decrease in the number of people who chose to not answer the question.

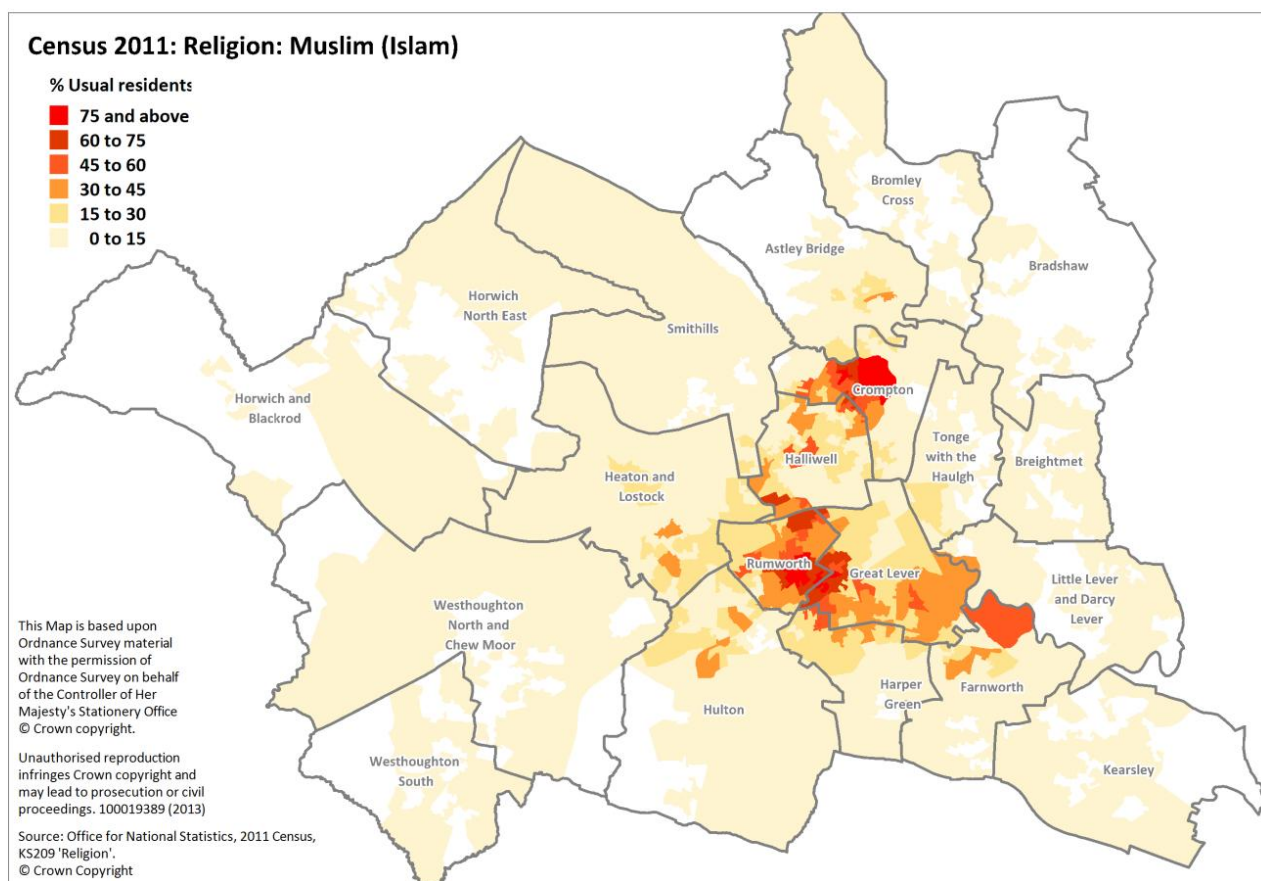
Conversely there was an increase in all other major religions. The number of **Muslims** had the largest increase from 7% to 12% of the population, an increase of almost double. The fastest growing religion however was **Buddhism** which has more than doubled its numbers (from 270-570), however overall this still made up just 0.2% of the total population. Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism also showed moderate increases, and the number of people reporting '**other religions**' increased from 400 to around 720 (however unlike in 2011, we do not have any information on what these other religions specifically were in 2001).

	Bolton 2001 (%)	Bolton 2011 (%)
Christian	74.6	62.7
Muslim (Islam)	7.1	11.7
Hindu	2.0	2.2
Other Religions	0.2	0.3
Buddhist	0.1	0.2
Jewish	0.1	0.1
Sikh	0.0	0.0
No Religion	8.7	17.2
Religion not stated	7.3	5.7



5. Distribution of Religion in Bolton

As stated previously, Islam is by far Bolton's largest non-Christian religious identity. There were over 32,000 Muslims living in Bolton at the time of the Census, the majority of which resided in parts of Crompton and Rumworth, as well as parts of Great Lever, Farnworth and Halliwell. Parts of Crompton and Rumworth for instance had up to 75% of their population stating they were Muslim in 2011. Smaller numbers however were spread across the borough, with every ward in the borough having at least a small number of Muslims residing it.



There were smaller numbers of Hindus in Bolton at the time of the 2011 Census, and out of the 6,000 people who identified as Hindu a great many of them lived in parts of the Rumworth/Halliwell border, Great Lever, Tonge with the Haulgh, Heaton & Lostock and Halliwell. However, much like the Muslim population, most wards had at least a small number of Hindus in them with the exception of Bradshaw and Kearsley.

