

Introduction

In 1997 the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) embarked on a major and innovative research project concerning the Jewish voluntary sector (JVS). This project, Long-term Planning for British Jewry (LTP), is now drawing to a close and the present report, on the Leeds Jewish population, is the last publication in a series that has dealt with a wide variety of issues of concern to the Jewish community. These have included studies on how the JVS is financed and governed, on the problems facing an increasingly ageing community, on issues concerning Jewish schooling, and on voluntary associations within the community.

During the years 2001–2, JPR undertook two major household surveys so that the issues facing the JVS could be placed within an empirical framework. Whereas earlier research publications had mainly been based on statistics collected from institutions and on interviews with service providers and their current clients, the household surveys set out to elicit information from the potential clientele of the voluntary sector, namely, adult Jews. They were designed to examine the needs, the perceived needs and the expectations of the Jewish population for a basket of social services. The data for this report on Jews in Leeds were collected in a survey of nearly 1,500 households, conducted in the Leeds metropolitan area during July and August 2001. This survey, and the one that followed in Greater London and the South-east between February and April 2002, thus conclude the active research on aspects of Jewish life in the United Kingdom related to LTP. The Long-term Planning project will culminate in the publication of a document later in 2003 that will bring together the conclusions of the individual research reports and contain recommendations for the better long-term planning of the future of the JVS in the United Kingdom.

From the outset, the survey of a large sample drawn from the Jewish community in the city of Leeds was regarded as part of a larger study of the market for Jewish voluntary services in Britain. Although the 2001 Census showed that around two-thirds of British Jews lived in Greater London and the South-east, the remainder lived in communities throughout the country. These ranged in size from perhaps 25,000 in Greater Manchester, to medium-sized communities numbering 9,000 in Leeds and

several thousand in Glasgow, Brighton, Birmingham and Liverpool, to much smaller communities, many with less than 100 individuals.¹

Research obligations were such that, although the Leeds survey preceded the one conducted in London and the South-east by several months, the report of the work in London preceded the publication of this one on Leeds.² Although the Leeds survey was regarded as part of a national picture, as a precursor to the one undertaken in the London region, there was much that we learned in conducting the work in Leeds that we were able to apply nine months later in Greater London.

The 2001 Census of England and Wales afforded us a unique opportunity to enhance the value of this JPR study. First, we were able to ask our local Jewish respondents whether they had answered the religion question on the Census three or four months previously. Analysis of the responses to this question permitted us to make a more informed estimate of the size of the Jewish population in Leeds.

Second, and of greater interest, was the opportunity to compare Census data (other than a straight count of numbers) with the Leeds survey data, allowing us to construct tables comparing the survey results with the distributions of a range of socio-economic statistics. The innovative use of these previously unavailable statistics permitted us to compare the results from some questions that we asked in our survey with responses to similar questions in the Census, which had been conducted three months previously. Although this is not quite a verification procedure, close approximation between comparative data from the Census and from the Jewish community survey would strongly suggest that the survey results were representative of the Jewish population of Leeds, either as a whole or of specific parts of it. And, as our Leeds survey asked more detailed questions than did the Census, we could then state with greater assurance that our results were accurate, reliable and representative.

- 1 See David Graham, 'So how many Jews *are* there in the UK? The 2001 UK Census and the size of the Jewish population', *JPR News*, spring 2003, 4–6.
- 2 Harriet Becher, Stanley Waterman, Barry Kosmin and Katarina Thomson, *A Portrait of Jews in London and the South-east: A Community Study* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research 2002).

