



Institute for Jewish Policy Research

2011 CENSUS RESULTS

THINNING AND THICKENING: GEOGRAPHICAL CHANGE IN THE UK'S JEWISH POPULATION, 2001-2011

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Introduction

Between 2001 and 2011 the size of the UK's Jewish population appeared to be static – the total count increased by just 1.1%. However, this stability disguised tremendous volatility just below the surface, especially in terms of geographical change.

Focusing on the ten UK Local Authorities which experienced the largest Jewish population growth between 2001 and 2011, we find that their share of the total Jewish population increased from 36% in 2001 to 44% in 2011. By contrast, the ten UK Local Authorities which experienced the largest decrease in their Jewish populations between 2001 and 2011 saw their share of the total Jewish population decline from 23% in 2001 to 18% in 2011. Though not entirely the result of a direct transfer of the Jewish population from one set of places to another, this shift reveals geographical change at the local level which is of great importance to anyone concerned with planning for the community's future. It is clear that some Jewish areas are 'thinning' while others are 'thickening'. In short, more Jews are living in fewer places.

This is the conclusion of an analysis of new data which includes figures from Scotland's 2011 Census, and allows us to put together the full picture of change in the size and geography of the UK's Jewish population.

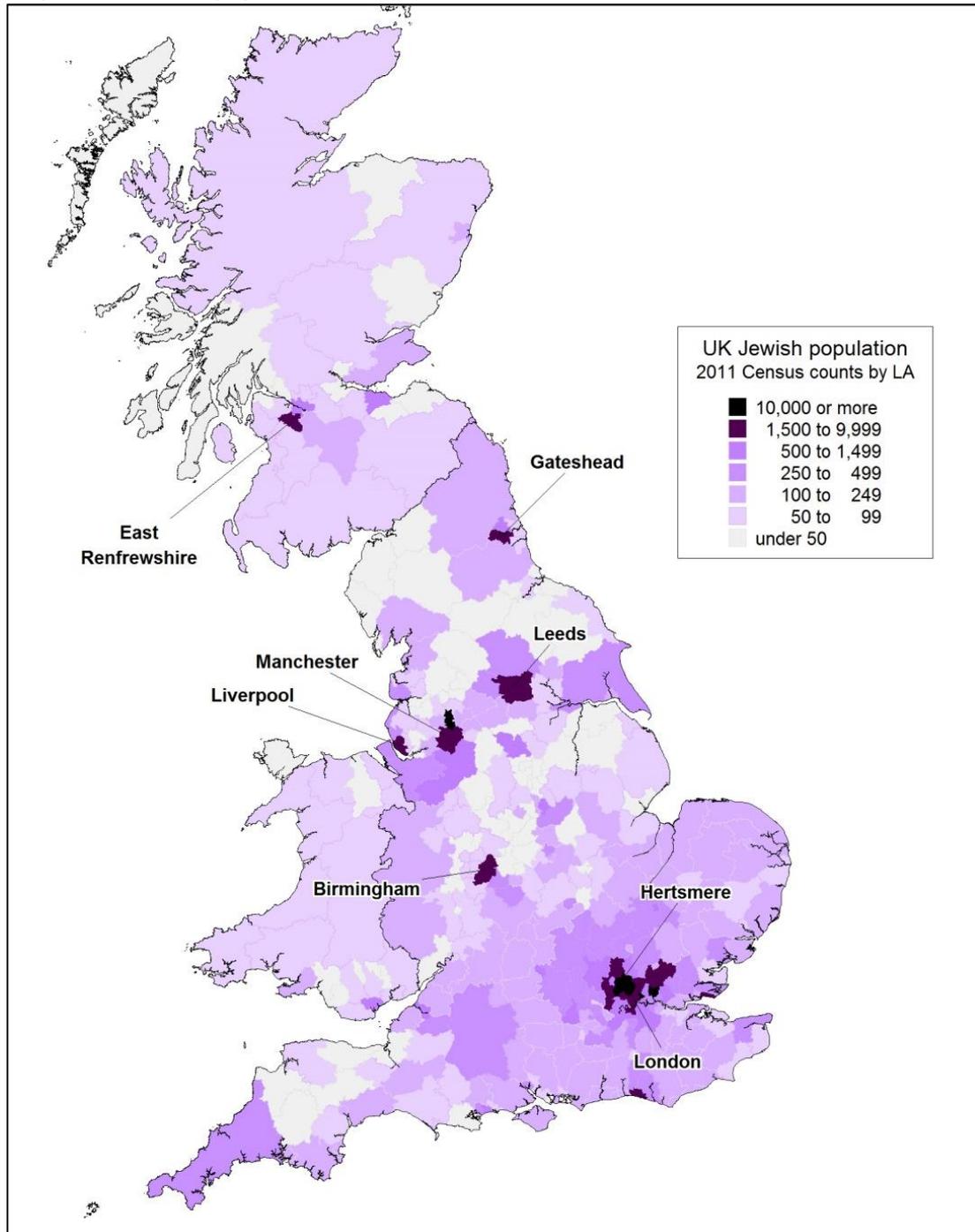
The UK-wide picture

With the recent release of 2011 Census data for Scotland, we can now examine the UK's Jewish population in its entirety. There were 269,568 enumerated Jewish responses in total to the religion question in 2011, and, as was the case in 2001, Jews are spread geographically right across Great Britain (see Map 1).¹ In 2001, the UK's 'Jewish by religion' population numbered 266,740, indicating an increase of 2,828 people, or 1.1%, between 2001 and 2011.

The vast majority of the 269,568 Jews enumerated in Great Britain in 2011 live in England; indeed, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland together make up just 3.1% of the UK's total enumerated Jewish population, slightly less than the 3.4% recorded in 2001 (Table 1).

¹ The term 'enumerated' refers to *actual* census counts (i.e. the number of people who ticked the relevant Jewish box on the census questionnaire).

Map 1. UK* Jewish population distribution, 2011



Source: (Data) ONS/NRS 2011 Census Table KS209; (Map) JPR.

* Northern Ireland not shown

Table 1. Enumerated UK Jewish population by religion, 2001 and 2011, by country

	2001	2011	Percent of 2001 Jewish total	Percent of 2011 Jewish total
England	257,671	261,282	96.6%	96.9%
Scotland	6,448	5,887	2.4%	2.2%
Wales	2,256	2,064	0.8%	0.8%
Northern Ireland*	365	335	0.1%	0.1%
UK	266,740	269,568	100.0%	100.0%

* Current religion = Jewish, as opposed to religion of upbringing = Jewish

This is by no means the final word on the size of the UK’s Jewish population, but it does provide an enumerated *lower limit*. Going forward, there are a number of approaches that can be taken to empirically assess an *upper limit*. For example, since the census religion question is voluntary (see Appendix), it is reasonable to assume that a number of Jewish people chose not to answer it, so an adjustment could be made on this basis. There may also be additional enumerated data from the census itself, such as people who chose not to respond ‘Jewish’ to the religion question but instead wrote ‘Jewish’ in the ethnic group question or the new nationality question.² Data on such responses for 2011 are not currently available.

JPR’s 2013 National Jewish Community Survey (NJCS) will provide survey evidence to help estimate not only the number of Jews who chose not to answer the religion question in the census, but also the number who answered ‘No Religion.’ These results will be published in a future JPR report.

Focus on Scotland

This nationwide picture has been made possible because of the release of data from Scotland’s 2011 Census.³ A total of 5,887 Jews were enumerated in Scotland, but given that there is a likelihood of a certain level of non-response to the census question (as noted above), it is reasonable to make an adjustment to this figure which produces an estimate of 6,262 Jews.⁴ The Glasgow region accounted for 56% of Scotland’s Jews and the Edinburgh region accounted for a further 19%. In the context of the UK, the Jewish population of the Scottish district of East Renfrewshire, home to the largest Jewish population in Scotland, was the 20th largest district out of 382.⁵

Although a different religion question was asked in Scotland in 2011 compared with 2001 (see Appendix), the results indicate that Scotland’s Jewish population overall contracted by more than 8% over the decade.

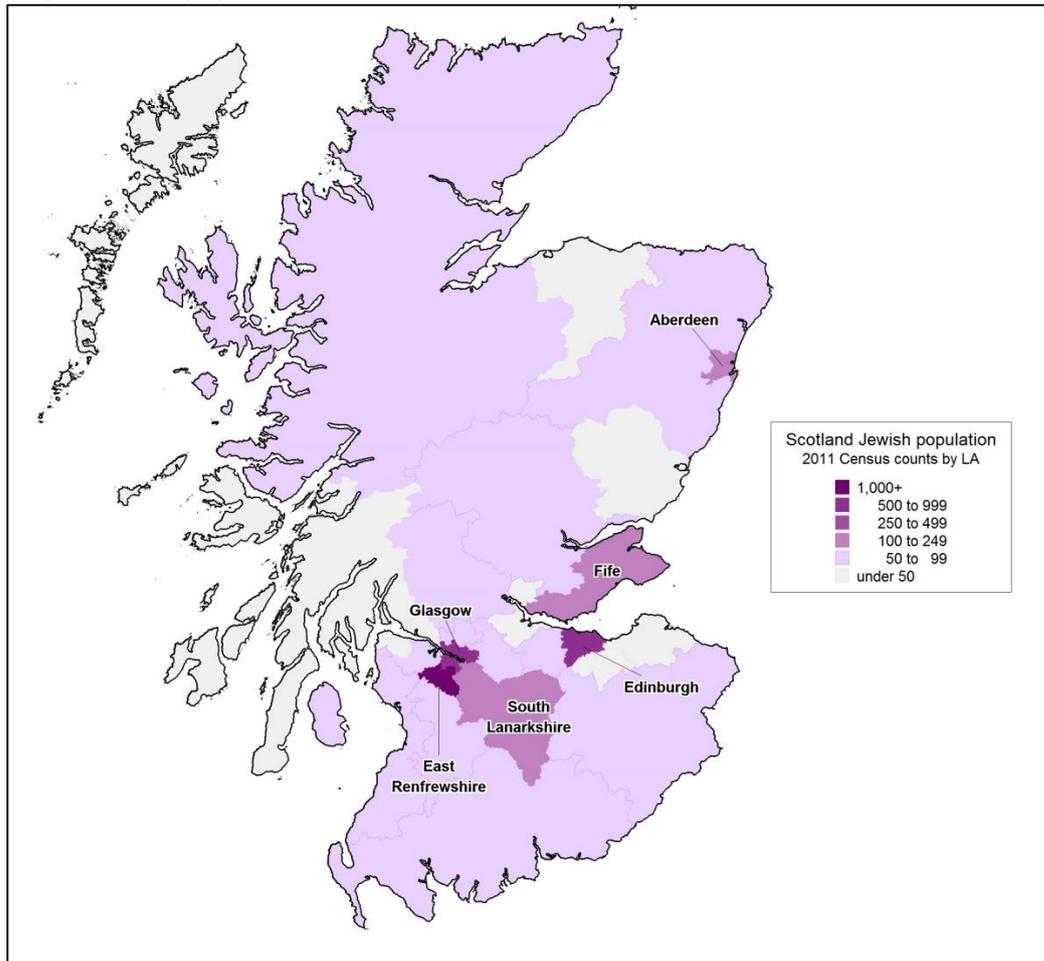
² The 2001 Census of England and Wales enumerated 2,594 people who responded ‘No Religion’ or did not respond to the religion question, but who wrote in ‘Jewish’ in the ethnic group question. There were also 547 people with a non-Jewish religion but Jewish ethnicity.

³ Scotland’s census is run by National Records of Scotland (NRS) <http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk>. This body operates the census independently but alongside the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in England and Wales.

⁴ ‘Estimated’ counts refer to adjustments to the enumerated figure which take into account non-response to the religion question.

⁵ That is, 381 plus Northern Ireland counted as a single area.

Map 2. Jewish population of Scotland, 2011



Source: (Data) ONS/NRS 2011 Census Table KS209; (Map) JPR

Table 2 provides Jewish population details for the largest Scottish Council Areas and details of Jewish population change between 2001 and 2011. A notable decline occurred in the Glasgow area, particularly in Glasgow City and adjacent East Renfrewshire, where the combined Jewish population contracted by 21%. The reasons for this contraction are complex and will become clearer as more census data are examined, but it is likely that much of it is related to natural decrease (an excess of deaths over births) and net migration away from these centres into other cores with high Jewish population density, such as North-West London and South Hertfordshire (see below).⁶

⁶ 2011 Census data on migration are currently unavailable. There will also be an element of assimilation contributing to this decline.

Table 2. Jewish population in Scotland, 2001 and 2011[§] (for all Council Areas with 50 or more Jews enumerated in 2011)

Council Area	2001 Jewish estimated [‡]	2011 Jewish estimated [‡]	Estimated change 2001-2011	Estimated percentage change 2001-2011	Percent of Scotland's Jews
East Renfrewshire	3,281	2,561	-720	-21.9%	40.9%
Glasgow City	1,174	965	-209	-17.8%	15.4%
Edinburgh (City of)	815	920	+105	+12.9%	14.7%
Fife	139	263	+124	+89.2%	4.2%
South Lanarkshire	190	185	-5	-2.6%	3.0%
Aberdeen City	112	167	+55	+49.1%	2.7%
Highland	85	100	+15	+17.6%	1.6%
Aberdeenshire	68	77	+9	+13.2%	1.2%
East Dunbartonshire	48	71	+23	+45.8%	1.1%
North Lanarkshire	60	70	+10	+16.7%	1.1%
West Lothian	61	70	+9	+14.8%	1.1%
East Ayrshire	56	70	+14	+25.0%	1.1%
Renfrewshire	40	68	+28	+67.5%	1.1%
Dundee City	65	67	+2	+3.1%	1.1%
Stirling	69	68	-1	-1.4%	1.1%
Perth & Kinross	41	61	+20	+48.8%	1.0%
Scottish Borders	36	60	+24	+66.7%	1.0%
North Ayrshire	44	58	+14	+31.8%	0.9%
South Ayrshire	61	56	-5	-8.2%	0.9%
Dumfries & Galloway	57	55	-2	-3.5%	0.9%
Other*	280	249	-31	-11.0%	4.0%
Total	6,781	6,262	-519	-7.6%	100.0%

§ In 2001 the census recorded upbringing and current religion in Scotland. In 2011, only current religion was recorded (See Appendix)

‡ Estimated data have been adjusted to account for likely levels of non-response to the religion question

* Other includes 12 Council Areas

Source: ONS/NRS 2011 Census Table KS209

On the other hand, some areas of Scotland experienced Jewish population increases, especially on either side of the River Forth: in Edinburgh to the south and Fife to the north (Map 2). These two adjacent areas experienced a combined increase of 24% over the decade, albeit from a far lower base than Glasgow. This may be due to the growing attraction of universities such as St Andrews.⁷

The shifting UK Jewish landscape: thinning and thickening

As explained in an earlier JPR report,⁸ there is clear evidence that although the total Jewish population size has essentially remained static over the decade, it disguises considerable geographical change at the local level. The regional decline experienced by Scotland's largest Jewish centre is by no means unique in the UK and can now be put in the national context. It

⁷ Again, later census data releases will help to clarify the main drivers of change.

⁸ [Graham D. \(2013\). '2011 Census Results \(England and Wales\): A Tale of Two Jewish Populations.'](#) London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research

follows a pattern of population ‘thickening’, whereby Jews in the UK are becoming increasingly geographically concentrated.⁹

The ten places which experienced the largest absolute increase in Jewish population over the decade accounted for 36.0% of the UK’s Jewish population in 2001 (see Table 3). However, by 2011, those same ten places accounted for 44.1% (an absolute increase of 23.6%). At the other end of the scale, the places that experienced the largest absolute decrease in Jewish population over the decade accounted for 23.4% in 2001 but only 17.7% by 2011 (an absolute decrease of 23.8%). Together, these twenty places accounted for more than six out of ten (61.8%) Jews in the UK in 2011.

Table 3. Places of growth and decline, 2001 to 2011 (estimated)

	Percentage of total UK Jewish population	
	2001	2011
Top 10 places of growth ^a	36.0	44.1
Top 10 places of decline ^b	23.4	17.7
Total percentage in these 20 places	59.4	61.8

a) Barnet, Hackney, Hertsmere, Salford, Haringey, Gateshead, Bury, St. Albans, Nottingham, Epping Forest

b) Redbridge, Harrow, Brent, Leeds, Enfield, Brighton and Hove, East Renfrewshire, Liverpool, Southend-on-Sea, Manchester (LA)

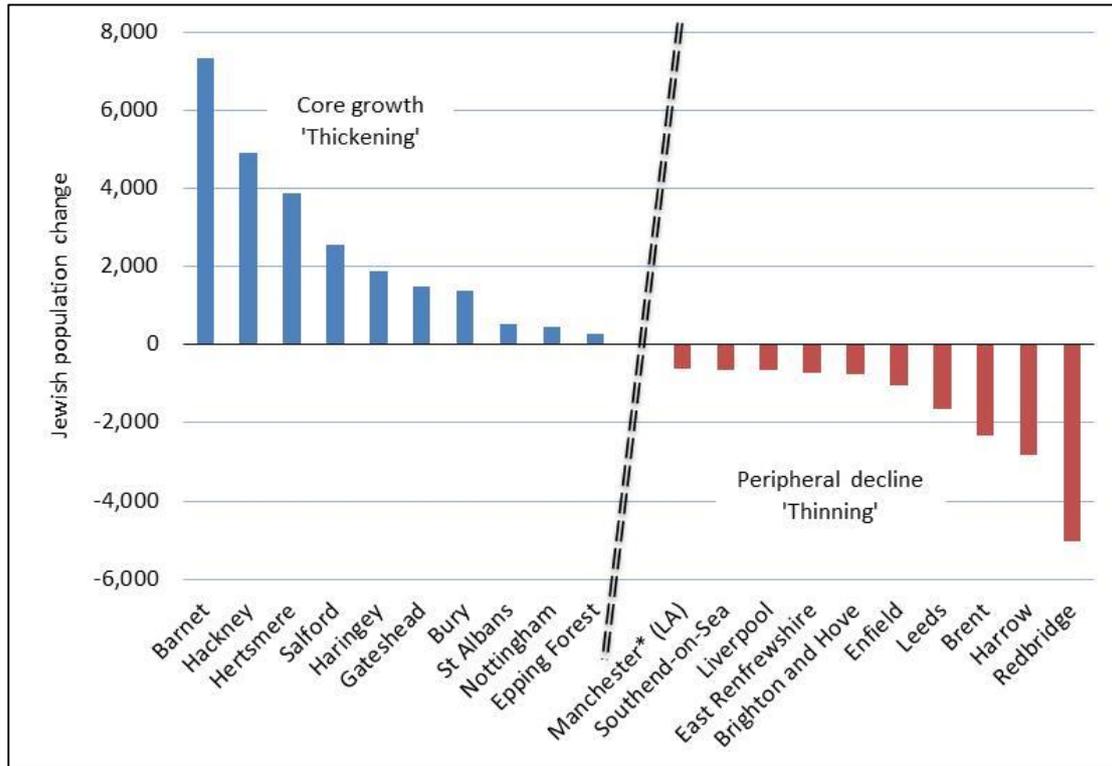
To put this another way, between 2001 and 2011 the Jewish population of the ten biggest losers declined by over 16,000 Jews, or one in four of the 2001 population in those areas. By contrast, the ten biggest winners saw a gain of almost 25,000 Jews, or one in four of the 2001 population in those areas. This highlights significant geographical change in the community. It is clear from recent census evidence that a Jewish population convergence is taking place in the UK: a few core, select places are growing or ‘thickening’, whilst other places are ‘thinning out’.

Figure 1 graphically illustrates these changes. The ten biggest winners include three London boroughs (Barnet, Hackney and Haringey), three ‘satellite’ districts of London (Hertsmere, St. Albans and Epping Forest) and two boroughs of Greater Manchester (Salford and Bury). They also include Nottingham and Gateshead, which have both benefited from the popularity of local educational institutions – the University of Nottingham¹⁰ and the world renowned yeshiva and seminary institutions in Gateshead. The ten biggest losers include four London boroughs (Redbridge, Harrow, Brent and Enfield), one borough of Greater Manchester (Manchester LA) and five regional districts (Leeds, Brighton and Hove, East Renfrewshire, Liverpool and Southend-on-Sea).

⁹ See Graham D, Boyd J, and Vulkan D, (2012). ‘2011 Census Results (England and Wales): Initial insights about the UK Jewish population.’ London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research and Board of Deputies of British Jews.

¹⁰ Data indicate that the University of Nottingham is the third most popular choice among Jewish students in the UK (see: Graham, D. and Boyd J. (2011). ‘Home and away: Jewish journeys towards independence. Key findings from the 2011 National Jewish Student Survey. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research). The reason why this is the case is unclear, although its initial popularity may be related to *Limmud*, the cross-communal educational organisation, which held its annual conference on the campus every year between 1998 and 2005.

Figure 1. Jewish population change – the UK’s ten biggest winners and the ten biggest losers by local authority, 2001 to 2011 (estimated data)



Source: ONS/NRS 2011 Census Table KS209

The changes we are witnessing are the product of radical demographic shifts. On the one hand, the thickening cores have grown through a literal movement of people from thinning areas (i.e. migration). On the other hand, they have grown because of differing age profiles resulting in high birth rates in the thickening cores and high death rates in the places that are thinning. The net effect is Jewish population convergence on a few chosen places.

Appendix

Different religion questions

Each of the countries asked slightly different religion questions in the 2011 Census. Although the same question wording was used in England and Wales – *What is your religion?* – the answer options were slightly different,¹¹ although both included a ‘Jewish’ tick box. In Scotland, the religion question was worded differently, emphasising belonging, though still allowing for a broader interpretation: *What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?*, and here too ‘Jewish’ was a listed option. Northern Ireland used the same question wording as Scotland, although it presented different response categories which did not

¹¹ In England the Christian option was ‘Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)’, whereas in Wales it was ‘Christian (all denominations)’.

include a Jewish tick box. Northern Ireland also asked a question about religion of upbringing. Finally, in all countries except Northern Ireland,¹² the religion question was voluntary.

To complicate matters further, no country in 2011 repeated the religion question in precisely the same format as in 2001. Perhaps the biggest difference was in Scotland, where a question about religion of upbringing was asked in 2001 but was dropped in 2011. Also, the 2001 option 'None' in England and Wales became 'No Religion' in 2011 (although it remained as 'None' in Scotland and Northern Ireland).

It is very difficult to say exactly what impact these differences might have had on the final outcome of the census, although it is unlikely that they would have had significant effects on the final results. That said, evidence does suggest that even apparently trivial differences in the format of questions can result in rather large differences in the results.¹³

¹² Although it was optional in 2001, this does not appear to have been the case in 2011.

¹³ See for example Voas, D. and Bruce, S. (2004) 'Research note: The 2001 census and Christian identification in Britain', *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 19:1, 23 – 28.

ABOUT JPR

JPR is the only independent institute in Britain that specialises in researching the state of contemporary Jewish communities in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. Our research aims to provide a better understanding of who Jews are and what they feel, think and do, in order to help Jewish organisations plan more efficiently and effectively for the future. Our work is deliberately policy-oriented; we collect and analyse data to ensure that Jewish community organisations have the statistics and information they need. The reports we produce are designed to put relevant facts, figures and analyses into the hands of those best placed to develop and shape community policy at every level.

JPR is also a Jewish think-tank specialising in contemporary Jewish affairs, and regularly convenes groups of policy-makers to help them develop their own thinking about some of the most important and challenging issues facing Jewish communities today. For further details about our work, and access to all our publications go to www.jpr.org.uk.

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Dr David Graham is Senior Research Fellow at JPR. He holds a DPhil in geography from the Oxford University and is an expert in the demography of Jews in Britain, Europe and Australia. A former Senior Research Officer at the Board of Deputies, his publications on UK Census data include: *Initial insights about the UK Jewish population* (JPR/BoD, 2012); *Initial insights into Jewish neighbourhoods* (JPR, 2013); *A Tale of Two Jewish Populations* (JPR, 2013); and *Jews in Britain: A snapshot from the 2001 UK Census* (JPR, 2007).

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OTHER PUBLISHED WORK ON UK CENSUS DATA BY JPR

This report is the fourth in our series on the 2011 Census. The previous three are:

- [*2011 Census Results \(England And Wales\): Initial Insights about the UK Jewish Population*](#) (December 2012)
- [*2011 Census Results \(England And Wales\): Initial Insights into Jewish Neighbourhoods*](#) (February 2013)
- [*2011 Census Results \(England And Wales\): A Tale of Two Jewish Populations*](#) (July 2013)

In addition, our main publication on the 2001 UK Census data can be found here:

- [*Jews in Britain: A snapshot from the 2001 Census*](#) (May 2007)