

50 years of ethnicity data

Richard Laux,
Race Disparity Unit

What is ethnicity?

Data collection

1960s

“Old Commonwealth” vs
“New Commonwealth”

Decreasing value of information
about an individual’s country of
birth

1960s

1970s

Census and names analysis

Police and arrests data

Census field trials for ethnicity
question begin

1970s

PER. NO	RELATIONSHIP TO HOH	OFF USE	SEX		AGE LAST BIRTH DAY	MARITAL STATUS					FAM UNIT				
			H/W	M		F	M	S	W	D		SEPR	C	W	N
1	HOH	0	X	1	2	30-99	1	2	3	4	5	X, Y	14	25	3
2		1-9	X	1	2	44/45	1	2	3	4	5	47	1	2	3
3	53/4	55	X	1	2	57/8	1	2	3	4	5	60	1	2	3
4	66/7	68	X	1	2	70/71	1	2	3	4	5	73	1	2	3
5	27/8	29	X	1	2	31/2	1	2	3	4	5	34	1	2	3
6	2nd		X	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3
7	CRSD - REPRODUCO		X	1	2	UP TO COL 26	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3
8			X	1	2		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3
9	27/8	29	X	1	2	31/2	1	2	3	4	5	34	1	2	3
10	3rd CRSD - REPRODUCO		X	1	2	UP TO COL 26	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3

1971 General Household Survey

C V N

This is an interviewer's assessment which is made entirely from observation.

C - code 1 = All non-white people i.e. those who are black, brown or yellow skinned. eg Negroes, Indians, Pakistanis, Chinese, etc.

W - code 2 = Non-coloured (i.e. not coloured as defined above)

N - code 3 = Not known, as the person was not seen.

One of codes 1, 2 or 3 should have been ringed.

If not coded and there is a note indicating that the interviewer had difficulty in deciding whether the person was coloured or white as defined, examine answer and code as follows.

• If forced to make a choice, the interviewer would
choose coloured

If forced to make a choice, the interviewer would
choose white

Place and ring the code to the left of the printed code 3.

If there is no explanation or indication of choice, place and ring code 1 to the left of the printed codes 2 and 3, unless it is known that the person was not seen. In the latter situation ring code 3 in red.

1980s

Census (no); LFS (yes)

Parliamentary 'regrets'

Field trials continue

1990s

Ethnic group

Please tick the appropriate box.

If the person is descended from more than one ethnic or racial group, please tick the group to which the person considers he/she belongs, or tick the 'Any other ethnic group' box and describe the person's ancestry in the space provided.

- White 0
Black-Caribbean 1
Black-African 2
Black-Other
please describe

- Indian 3
Pakistani 4
Bangladeshi 5
Chines 6
Any other ethnic group
please describe

2000s

8 What is your ethnic group?

◆ Choose **ONE** section from A to E, then ✓ the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background.

A White

British Irish

Any other White background,
please write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B Mixed

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background,
please write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

C Asian or Asian British

Indian Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Any other Asian background,
please write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D Black or Black British

Caribbean African

Any other Black background,
please write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E Chinese or other ethnic group

Chinese

Any other, *please write in*

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2010s

16 What is your ethnic group?

➤ Choose **one** section from A to E, then tick **one** box to best describe your ethnic group or background

A White

- English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B Mixed/multiple ethnic groups

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

C Asian/Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E Other ethnic group

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group, write in

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

BETA Help us improve this website – [answer 4 short questions](#).

Ethnicity facts and figures

In the UK, 87% of people are White, and 13% belong to a Black, Asian, Mixed or Other ethnic group.

Use this service to find information about the different experiences of people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. It gathers data collected by government in one place, making it available to the public, specialists and charities.

View data on ethnicity by topic

[British population](#)

Population statistics and Census data, also analysed by age, location and other factors

[Education, skills and training](#)

Schools, exclusions, further and higher education, apprenticeships and where people go after leaving education

[Work, pay and benefits](#)

Employment, unemployment, pay and income, and benefits

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

Policing, crimes, courts, sentencing, prisons and custody

[Health](#)

Physical and mental health, preventing illness, quality of care, access to treatment, patient experiences and outcomes

[Workforce and business](#)

Ethnic diversity in public services, staff experience and pay, self-employment and business

[Culture and community](#)

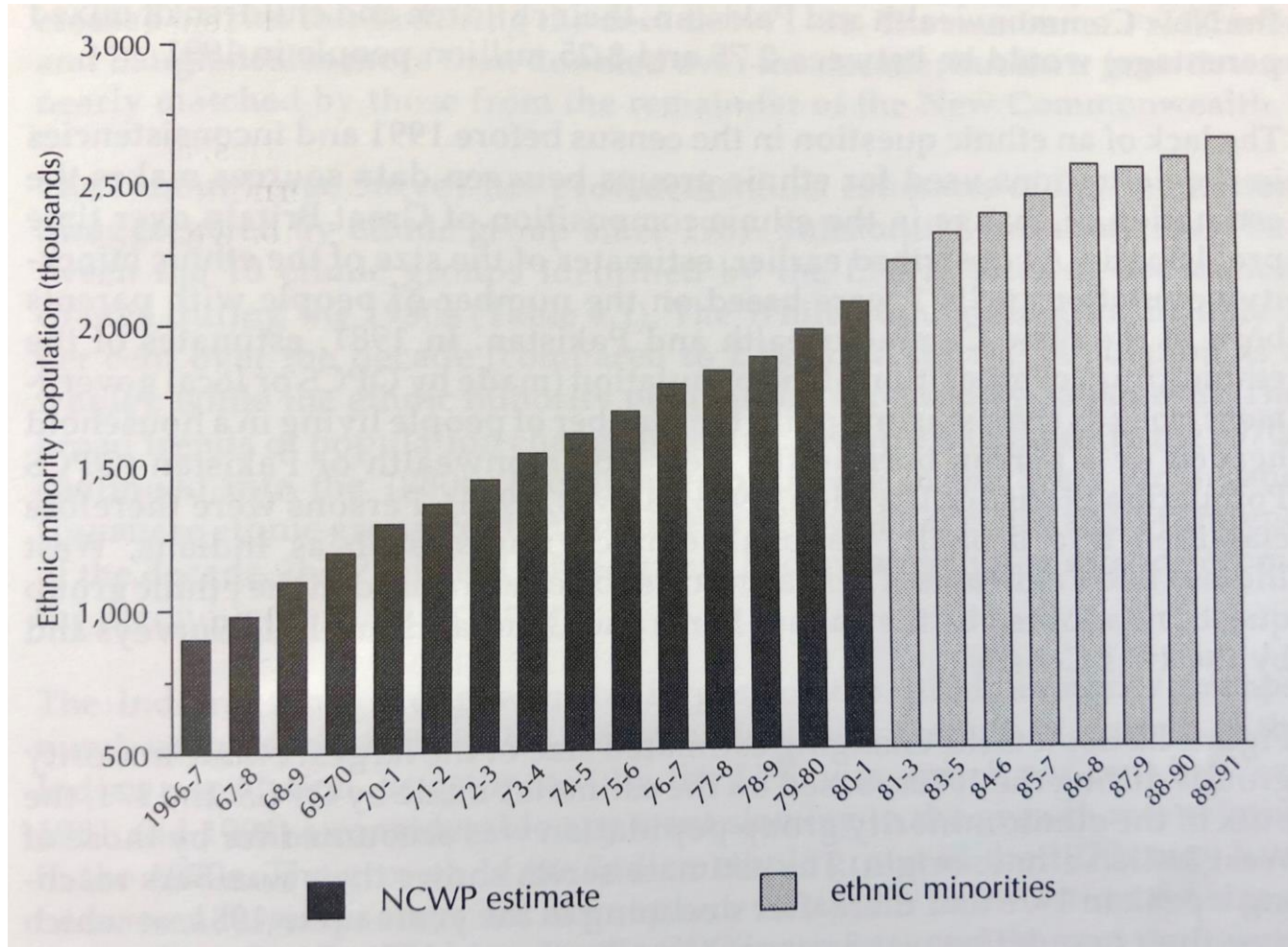
Arts, digital, museums, libraries, volunteering, transport, local area and neighbourhoods

[Housing](#)

Home ownership, renting, social housing, homelessness and housing conditions

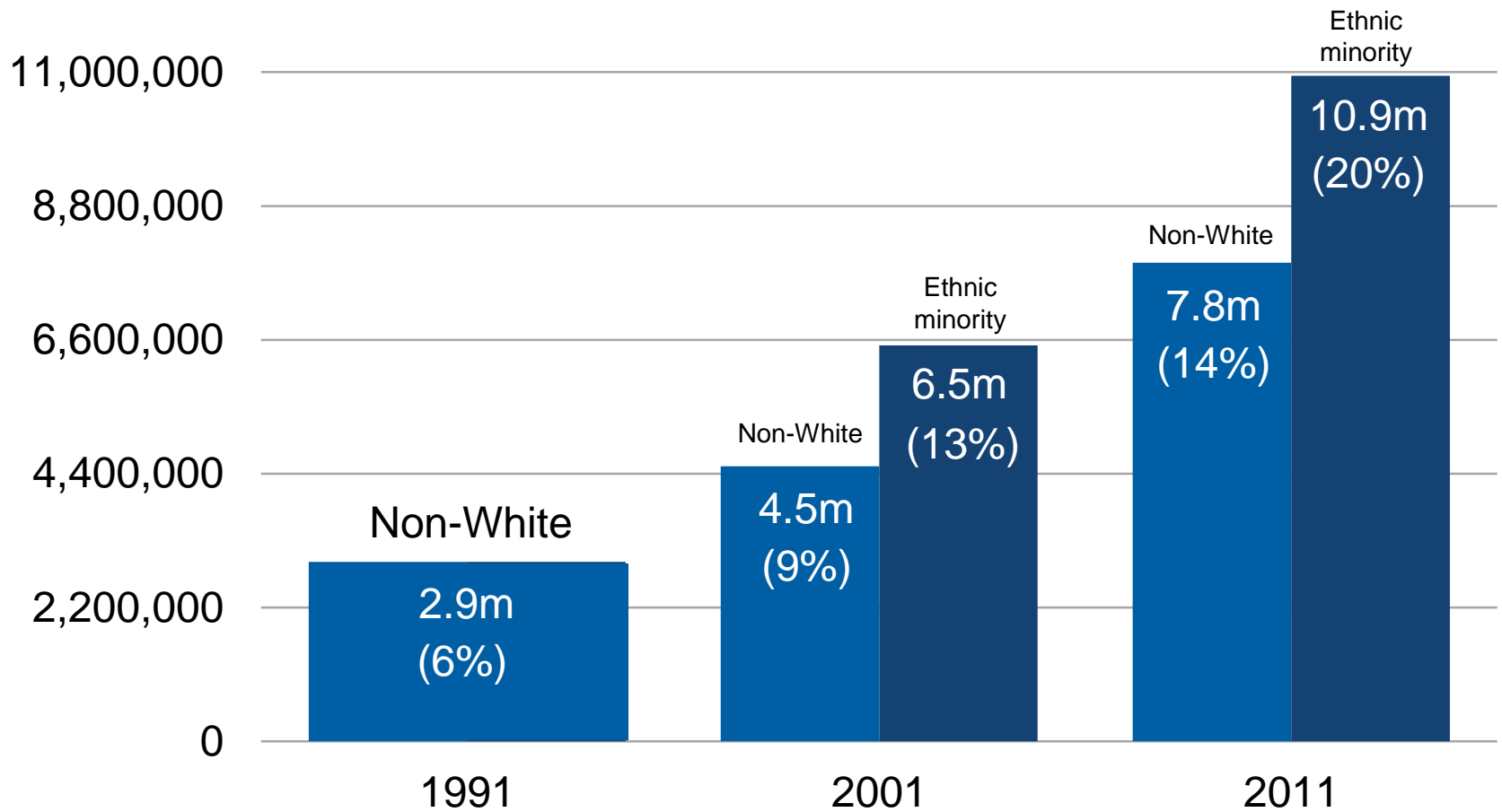
Results

Population estimates



1966 – 1991

Population estimates



1991 – 2011 (England and Wales)

Challenges

Politically and personally sensitive

Loss of consistency over time due to change of questions and perceptions

Different approaches across the
UK

Some ethnic groups are small, so sample surveys can't generate much data for analysis

Administrative sources use a range of classifications and are expensive to change

Policy and operational
interventions often need granular
data for small areas

Harmonisation

Unknown ethnicity

Uses

Inform and monitor immigration
policy

Monitor the extent of racial
discrimination, and inform Race
Relations policy

Measure equality of opportunity,
informing work to reduce ethnic
disparities

Providing the baseline for targets

Inform resource allocation and
prioritisation

(eg addressing the health needs of
a particular ethnic group)

Monitor compliance with the Public
Sector Equality Duty

Inform the marketing of goods and services targeted at particular ethnic groups

What next?

Shift in emphasis from colour and country to language, culture and religion

Greater variation in ancestry of
those of Mixed origin

Possible merging of some
'traditional' ethnic groups

Is there a demand for projections?

GSS themes

Harmonisation / coherence

Increased use of statistics to
improve society and the economy

Professionalisation:

GSS expertise in ethnicity and
data collection

RDU as data/digital/policy

Stimulate informed debate,
including by better dissemination
and cross-cutting products eg
Social Trends,
[www.ethnicity-facts-
figures.service.gov.uk](http://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk)

Thanks