



CENSUS 2021

FIRST LOOK

November 2022

The MCB was an active member of the interfaith alliance that lobbied successfully for the religion question in the Census, first appearing in 2001.

THE 2021 CENSUS'S FINDINGS: BRITISH MUSLIMS IN NUMBERS

Key points

- The population of England & Wales stands at 59.60 million; the Muslim population is 3.87 million, or 6.5% of the total.
- The population of England & Wales increased by 3.52 million in the decade 2011-2021. In the same period, the Muslim population increased by 1.16 million accounting for approximately 33% of the total increase.
- MCB's analysis linking Census data with the Index of Multiple Deprivation indicates that 40% of the Muslim population of England reside in the most deprived fifth of local authority districts; whilst just under 6% Muslims live in the most affluent fifth of local authority districts.
- The top 5 locales with the largest Muslim populations are Birmingham 341,811; Bradford 166,846; London Borough of Tower Hamlets 123,912; Manchester 122,962; London Borough of Newham 122,146. However, in comparison with some other minority faith groups, Muslims are more dispersed across the local authority districts in England and Wales.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published further findings from the 2021 Census, including responses to the religion and ethnicity questions on the 29th November 2022. The response rate was 94%.



Muslim Population

The Muslim population in England and Wales on Census Day was 3.87 million. In 2011, it stood at 2.71 million. The increase coincides with the growth in the total population from 56.08 million in 2011, to 59.60 million. In 2011, Muslims formed 4.8% or just under 1 in 20 of the population in 2011. Now it stands at 6.5 %.

The Muslim population has increased by 1,162,067 between 2011 and 2021, when the overall population rise was 3.52 million. The Muslim numbers account for 33% of the population rise. In addition to this census data from the ONS for England and Wales, the Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency reports a Muslim population of 10,870. In 2011 it was 3,832. Output from the Scottish census, conducted in 2022, will be available next year. In 2011 the number reported was 76,737.

Explanatory factors for this growth include age demographics and impact of migration. From its analysis of 2011 Census data, the MCB estimates that approximately 36% of all Muslim women entered the 20-39 year age band in the last 10 years, compared to 25% of the overall population. This is the age band in which women predominantly bear children. While British society has an increasingly ageing population, the contribution to the work force of a younger Muslim population remains a strategic national asset in the medium term. In the longer term, the fertility and age profile of the Muslim population will be no different from the rest of the nation.

Some of this increase is also a

consequence of climate change and conflict. For example, the Census informs us the number of Iraq and Afghanistan-born respondents in England and Wales on Census Day 21st March 2021 was 89,394 and 85,693 respectively. The population of North African-born persons was 57, 236. These are parts of the world with predominantly Muslim populations.

Overall, the UK continues to be a more diverse nation, with the minority ethnic population standing at 18% of the overall population, compared to 14% in 2011. This needs to be reflected in our public life and in our key institutions.

Commenting on the Census, MCB Secretary General Zara Mohammed observed, *"It is rightly said that our nation today is a community of communities. We are now 2nd and 3rd generation Muslims, confident of our faith and place in society. There is a certain vitality in the air. Diversity is a catalyst for creativity."*

Deprivation Analysis

MCB's analysis linking Census data with the Index of Multiple Deprivation indicates that 40% of the Muslim population of England reside in the most deprived fifth of local authority districts; almost 482,000 more Muslims now live in the most deprived locales than in 2011. Just under 6% of Muslims live in the most affluent fifth of local authority districts.

Muslim communities have had to bear the consequences of inner-city settlement with 99% of the Muslim population living in urban areas in 2011 as compared to 82% of the overall population. The Government's 'Levelling Up the United Kingdom' programme has identified the need for resource allocation in rural local authority districts, but if this policy is to deliver a truly equitable allocation of resources, then the needs of deprivation in our urban centres also need to be addressed. The onus is on policy makers to engage with representative community bodies who are aware of ground realities and the lived experience of deprived pockets in society.

Geographic Spread

In 2011, the University of Manchester/ Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported that Muslims were more dispersed across the local authority districts in England and Wales in comparison with the Jewish and Sikh faith groups. The MCB's own analysis of Muslim population using the same methodology confirms this finding for 2021. Though there has been this spreading out, certain conurbations have large Muslim populations, notably: Birmingham 341,811; Bradford

166,846; London Borough of Tower Hamlets 123,912; Manchester 122,962; and London Borough of Newham 122,146. The urban settlement has not been entirely one of choice. Post-World War II Britain's need for labour led to migrants from the Punjab and Kashmir working in the manufacturing industries in the Midlands and the mills and foundries of Northwest England. The seamen recruited for service on the British merchant navy led to the first Bengali settlements near the docks in the East End of London.

Trends

The population identifying as Christian has dropped from 59 % in 2011 to 46% this time. Islam continues to be the largest non-Christian faith group. However, Zara Mohamed offered a further reflection on the Census output: "taking a broader look at the data, the increase in the number of respondents stating, 'No religion' – from 25% in 2011 to 37% in 2021 - is cause for introspection for faith leaders: how are people fulfilling the natural quest for spirituality?"

The MCB was a leading member of the interfaith alliance that lobbied parliamentarians in the late 1990s for the inclusion of the religion question in the census. The data has enriched British social statistics and provided the basis for a better alignment in the allocation of public-sector resources with needs. An example is the NHS's appointment of Muslim chaplains in hospitals and its spiritual chaplaincy project based on Census statistics provided by the MCB. With data from the last three census now at hand, the MCB's further work

includes assessing policy interventions for their efficacy in addressing socio-economic inequalities faced by Muslim communities. The ONS is to be commended for its thorough work in planning and conducting the Census and the online facilities it is making available to access the data within privacy and disclosure safeguards.

The MCB acknowledges the ONS as the data source in the preparation of this 'First Look' of 2021 Census data.

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The Muslim Council of Britain will be producing an in-depth report once the complete data set from 2021 Census is published.

Media pack

A. Maps (chloropleths) indicating Muslim population distribution (percentage of total population) across local authority districts in England and Wales for the 2001, 2011 and 2021 census, similarly for Greater London.

B1. Muslim Population – Top 50 Local Authority Districts

B2. Muslim Population – Top 50 Local Authority Districts as % of Total Population

C. Analysis of Muslim population in local authority districts classified by bands of Index of Multiple Deprivation – Histogram & Data Table

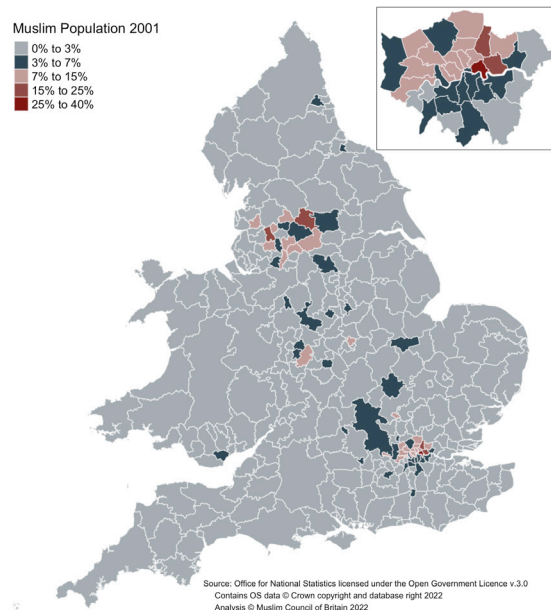
D. Analysis of geographical spread index of dispersal of Muslim population

E. Top 30 LADs according to increase in Muslim Population between census dates in 2011 and 2021

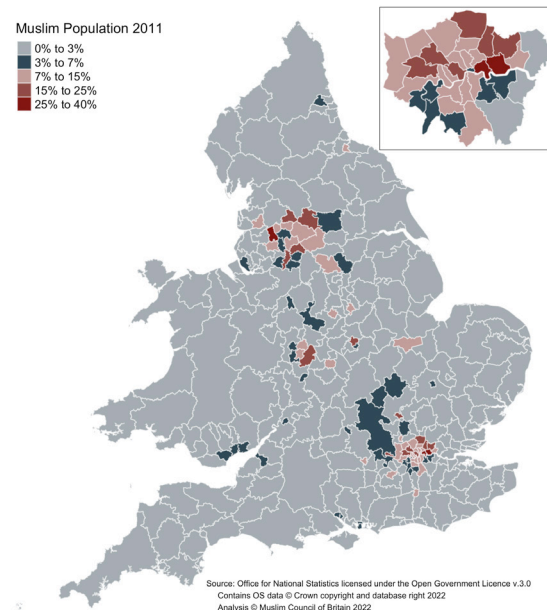
MUSLIM POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

A. Choropleths indicating Muslim population distribution (percentage of total population) across local authority districts in England and Wales for the 2001, 2011 and 2021 census, similarly for Greater London.

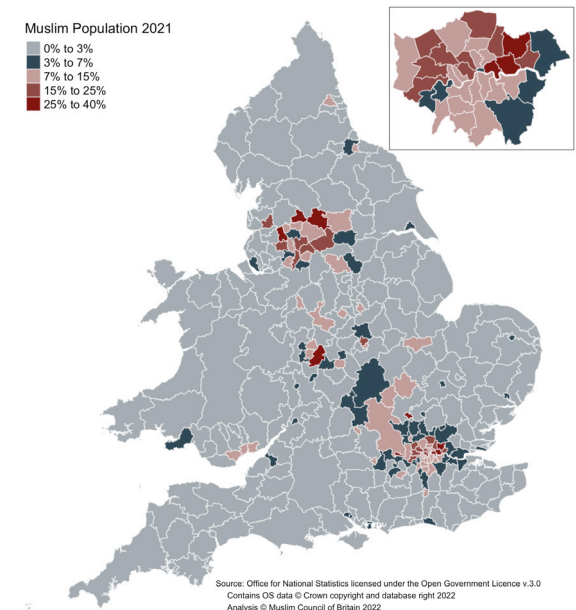
Muslim Population 2001



Muslim Population 2011



Muslim Population 2021



B1. Muslim Population by Local Authority Districts 2021

Top 50 Local Authority Districts in England and Wales with the highest number of Muslims in descending order

Local Authority District	Region	Rank	Muslim Population Numbers		
			2001	2011	2021
Birmingham	West Midlands	1	140,033	234,411	341,811
Bradford	Yorkshire and The Humber	2	75,188	129,041	166,846
Tower Hamlets	London	3	71,389	87,696	123,912
Manchester	North West	4	35,806	79,496	122,962
Newham	London	5	59,293	98,456	122,146
Redbridge	London	6	28,487	64,999	97,068
Leicester	East Midlands	7	30,885	61,440	86,443
Kirklees	Yorkshire and The Humber	8	39,312	61,280	80,046
Luton	East of England	9	26,963	49,991	74,191
Brent	London	10	32,290	58,036	72,574
Ealing	London	11	31,033	53,198	68,907
Leeds	Yorkshire and The Humber	12	21,394	40,772	63,054
Enfield	London	13	26,306	52,141	61,477
Waltham Forest	London	14	32,902	56,541	60,157
Oldham	North West	15	24,039	39,879	59,031
Bolton	North West	16	18,444	32,385	58,997
Sheffield	Yorkshire and The Humber	17	23,819	42,801	57,044
Blackburn with Darwen	North West	18	26,674	39,817	54,146
Barking and Dagenham	London	19	7,148	25,520	53,389
Hounslow	London	20	19,378	35,666	48,028
Barnet	London	21	19,373	36,744	47,688
Slough	South East	22	15,897	32,655	46,661
Sandwell	West Midlands	23	13,051	25,251	45,763
Hillingdon	London	24	11,258	29,065	44,077
Rochdale	North West	25	19,248	29,426	42,121
Harrow	London	26	14,915	29,881	41,503
Westminster	London	27	21,346	40,073	40,873
Croydon	London	28	17,642	29,513	40,717
Nottingham	East Midlands	29	12,353	26,919	39,540
Buckinghamshire	South East	30	17,333	25,781	38,740

B1. Muslim Population by Local Authority Districts 2021 (cont.)

Top 50 Local Authority Districts in England and Wales with the highest number of Muslims in descending order

Local Authority District	Region	Rank	Muslim Population Numbers		
			2001	2011	2021
Coventry	West Midlands	31	11,686	23,665	35,800
Hackney	London	32	27,908	34,727	34,578
Camden	London	33	22,906	26,643	33,830
Cardiff	Wales	34	11,261	23,656	33,650
Haringey	London	35	24,371	36,130	33,295
Wandsworth	London	36	13,529	24,746	32,519
Walsall	West Midlands	37	13,603	22,146	32,107
Bristol, City of	South West	38	7,664	22,016	31,776
Southwark	London	39	16,774	24,551	29,633
Derby	East Midlands	40	9,958	19,006	29,137
Newcastle upon Tyne	North East	41	9,430	17,561	26,896
Peterborough	East of England	42	8,963	17,251	26,239
Lambeth	London	43	14,344	21,500	25,871
Islington	London	44	14,259	19,521	25,840
Liverpool	North West	45	5,945	15,209	25,756
Pendle	North West	46	11,988	15,579	24,900
Greenwich	London	47	9,199	17,349	24,715
Preston	North West	48	10,678	15,769	23,825
Stoke-on-Trent	West Midlands	49	7,658	14,993	23,790
Lewisham	London	50	11,491	17,759	22,264

B2. Muslim population (%) by Local Authority Districts 2021

Top 50 Local Authority Districts in England and Wales with highest proportion of Muslim in descending order

Local Authority District	Region	Rank	Muslim population as a percentage (%) of total population		
			2001	2011	2021
Tower Hamlets	London	1	36.4	34.5	39.9
Blackburn with Darwen	North West	2	19.4	27.0	35.0
Newham	London	3	24.3	32.0	34.8
Luton	East of England	4	14.6	24.6	32.9
Redbridge	London	5	11.9	23.3	31.3
Bradford	Yorkshire and The Humber	6	16.1	24.7	30.5
Birmingham	West Midlands	7	14.3	21.8	29.9
Slough	South East	8	13.4	23.3	29.4
Pendle	North West	9	13.4	17.4	26.0
Barking and Dagenham	London	10	4.4	13.7	24.4
Oldham	North West	11	11.1	17.7	24.4
Leicester	East Midlands	12	11.0	18.6	23.5
Manchester	North West	13	9.1	15.8	22.3
Waltham Forest	London	14	15.1	21.9	21.6
Brent	London	15	12.3	18.6	21.4
Westminster	London	16	11.8	18.3	20.0
Bolton	North West	17	7.1	11.7	19.9
Rochdale	North West	18	9.4	13.9	18.8
Ealing	London	19	10.3	15.7	18.8
Enfield	London	20	9.6	16.7	18.6
Kirklees	Yorkshire and The Humber	21	10.1	14.5	18.5
Hounslow	London	22	9.1	14.0	16.7
Preston	North West	23	8.2	11.2	16.1
Camden	London	24	11.6	12.1	16.1
Harrow	London	25	7.2	12.5	15.9
Hyndburn	North West	26	7.2	10.3	14.7
Hillingdon	London	27	4.6	10.6	14.4
Burnley	North West	28	6.6	9.9	14.0
Sandwell	West Midlands	29	4.6	8.2	13.4
Hackney	London	30	13.8	14.1	13.3

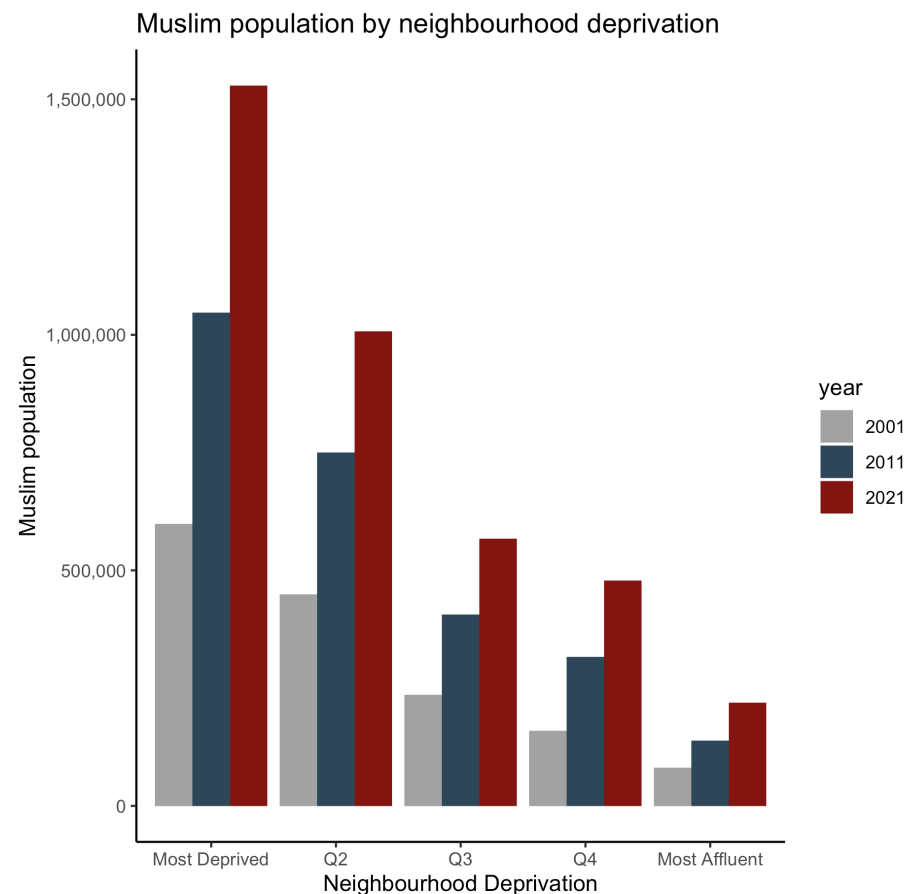
B2. Muslim population (%) by Local Authority Districts 2021 (cont.)

Top 50 Local Authority Districts in England and Wales with highest proportion of Muslim in descending order

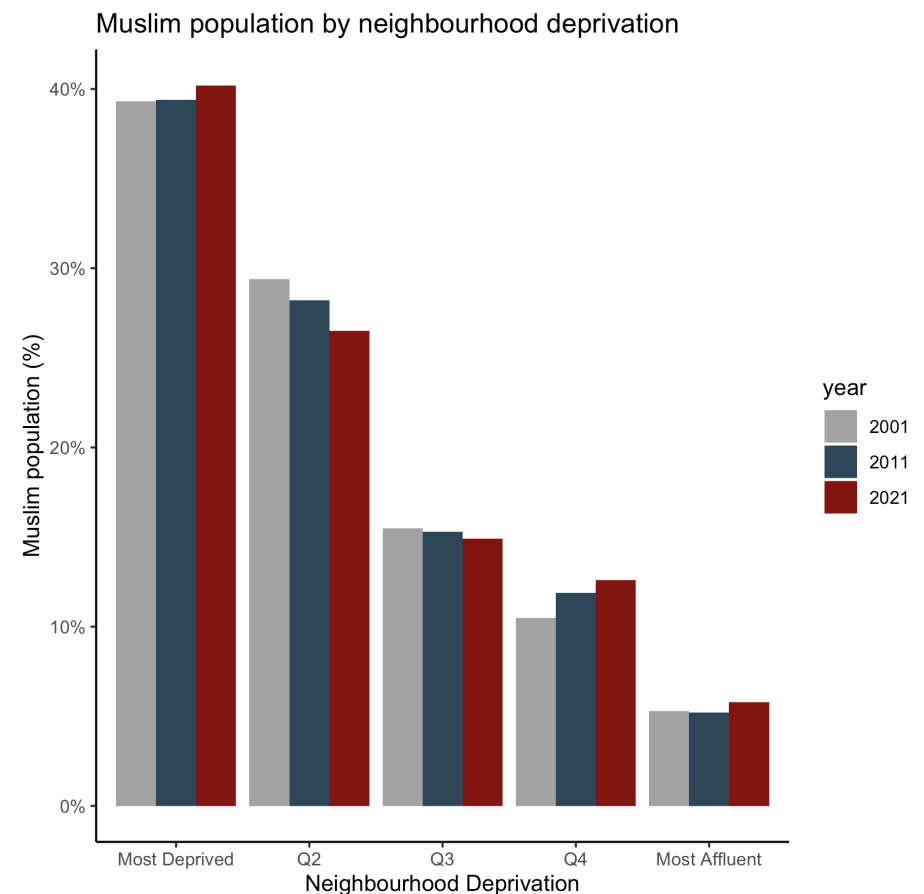
Local Authority District	Region	Rank	Muslim population as a percentage (%) of total population		
			2001	2011	2021
Watford	East of England	31	6.1	9.9	13.0
Haringey	London	32	11.3	14.2	12.6
Barnet	London	33	6.2	10.3	12.2
Nottingham	East Midlands	34	4.6	8.8	12.2
Peterborough	East of England	35	5.7	9.4	12.2
Islington	London	36	8.1	9.5	11.9
Kensington and Chelsea	London	37	8.4	10.0	11.8
Hammersmith and Fulham	London	38	6.8	10.0	11.6
Walsall	West Midlands	39	5.4	8.2	11.3
Oadby and Wigston	East Midlands	40	2.8	5.8	11.2
Derby	East Midlands	41	4.5	7.6	11.1
Croydon	London	42	5.3	8.1	10.4
Coventry	West Midlands	43	3.9	7.5	10.4
Sheffield	Yorkshire and The Humber	44	4.6	7.7	10.3
Middlesbrough	North East	45	4.2	7.0	10.2
Merton	London	46	5.8	8.1	10.1
Wandsworth	London	47	5.2	8.1	9.9
Bury	North West	48	3.7	6.1	9.9
Crawley	South East	49	4.4	7.2	9.7
Southwark	London	50	6.9	8.5	9.6

C. Analysis of Muslim population in local authority districts classified by bands of Index of Multiple Deprivation (quintiles).

The Index of Multiple Deprivation is a composite index based on a 'basket' of measures, e.g. Adults and children in Income Support families, Claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance, the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health, Household overcrowding. The analysis is based on the 2019 index provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.



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C. Proportion of Muslim living in the most deprived fifth of English Local Authority District based on 1 April 2022 boundaries

Muslims Population	2001		2011		2021	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
1st Quintile (Most Deprived)	599,151	39.29%	1,047,636	39.38%	1,529,442	40.24%
2nd Quintile	448,733	29.43%	750,765	28.22%	1,007,349	26.50%
3rd Quintile	236,017	15.48%	406,797	15.29%	567,573	14.93%
4th Quintile	160,018	10.49%	316,758	11.91%	478,031	12.58%
5th Quintile (Most Affluent)	80,968	5.31%	138,160	5.19%	218,783	5.76%
Total	1,524,887	100.00%	2,660,116	100.00%	3,801,178	100.00%

D. Analysis of geographical spread index of dispersal of Muslim population, in comparison with other faith groups.

Index of Dissimilarity by religion – a measure of segregation or mixing.

Religion	Index of Dissimilarity		
	2001	2011	2021
Christian	17%	15%	11%
Buddhist	30%	26%	22%
Hindu	57%	52%	49%
Jewish	62%	63%	62%
Muslim	56%	54%	52%
Sikh	63%	61%	60%
Other religion	20%	15%	16%
No religion	12%	12%	14%
Religion not stated	5%	6%	5%

The Index of Dissimilarity is a measure of the 'spreadability' of a population. Across all Local Authority Districts of England and Wales. A 100% index means the population is highly residentially concentrated in one area; the lower the index, the greater its geographical spread. The Muslim population was more evenly spread in 2021 in comparison with 2011.

The methodology is described in the paper 'More Segregation or more Mixing?' ESCR Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity, <https://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/code/briefingsupdated/more-segregation-or-more-mixing.pdf>

E. Top 30 LADs according to increase in Muslim Population between census dates in 2011 and 2021

Local Authority District	Region	Rank	2011			2021			Difference (2021 - 2011)			
			All	Muslim		All	Muslim		All		Muslim	
			No	No	%	No	No	%	No	%	No	%
Birmingham	West Midlands	1	1,073,045	234,411	21.8	1,144,917	341,811	29.9	71,872	6.7	107,400	45.8
Manchester	North West	2	503,127	79,496	15.8	551,938	122,962	22.3	48,811	9.7	43,466	54.7
Bradford	Yorkshire and The Humber	3	522,452	129,041	24.7	546,411	166,846	30.5	23,959	4.6	37,805	29.3
Tower Hamlets	London	4	254,096	87,696	34.5	310,306	123,912	39.9	56,210	22.1	36,216	41.3
Redbridge	London	5	278,970	64,999	23.3	310,260	97,068	31.3	31,290	11.2	32,069	49.3
Barking and Dagenham	London	6	185,911	25,520	13.7	218,867	53,389	24.4	32,956	17.7	27,869	109.2
Bolton	North West	7	276,786	32,385	11.7	295,963	58,997	19.9	19,177	6.9	26,612	82.2
Leicester	East Midlands	8	329,839	61,440	18.6	368,574	86,443	23.5	38,735	11.7	25,003	40.7
Luton	East of England	9	203,201	49,991	24.6	225,260	74,191	32.9	22,059	10.9	24,200	48.4
Newham	London	10	307,984	98,456	32.0	351,036	122,146	34.8	43,052	14.0	23,690	24.1
Leeds	Yorkshire and The Humber	11	751,485	40,772	5.4	811,953	63,054	7.8	60,468	8.0	22,282	54.7
Sandwell	West Midlands	12	308,063	25,251	8.2	341,835	45,763	13.4	33,772	11.0	20,512	81.2
Oldham	North West	13	224,897	39,879	17.7	242,088	59,031	24.4	17,191	7.6	19,152	48.0
Kirklees	Yorkshire and The Humber	14	422,458	61,280	14.5	433,216	80,046	18.5	10,758	2.5	18,766	30.6
Ealing	London	15	338,449	53,198	15.7	367,114	68,907	18.8	28,665	8.5	15,709	29.5
Hillingdon	London	16	273,936	29,065	10.6	305,909	44,077	14.4	31,973	11.7	15,012	51.6
Brent	London	17	311,215	58,036	18.6	339,817	72,574	21.4	28,602	9.2	14,538	25.0
Blackburn with Darwen	North West	18	147,489	39,817	27.0	154,739	54,146	35.0	7,250	4.9	14,329	36.0
Sheffield	Yorkshire and The Humber	19	552,698	42,801	7.7	556,521	57,044	10.3	3,823	0.7	14,243	33.3
Slough	South East	20	140,205	32,655	23.3	158,500	46,661	29.4	18,295	13.0	14,006	42.9

E. Top 30 LADs according to increase in Muslim Population between census dates in 2011 and 2021 (cont.)

Local Authority District	Region	Rank	2011			2021			Difference (2021 – 2011)			
			All	Muslim		All	Muslim		All		Muslim	
			No	No	%	No	No	%	No	%	No	%
Buckinghamshire	South East	21	505,283	25,781	5.1	553,076	38,740	7.0	47,793	9.5	12,959	50.3
Rochdale	North West	22	211,699	29,426	13.9	223,772	42,121	18.8	12,073	5.7	12,695	43.1
Nottingham	East Midlands	23	305,680	26,919	8.8	323,630	39,540	12.2	17,950	5.9	12,621	46.9
Hounslow	London	24	253,957	35,666	14.0	288,182	48,028	16.7	34,225	13.5	12,362	34.7
Coventry	West Midlands	25	316,960	23,665	7.5	345,326	35,800	10.4	28,366	8.9	12,135	51.3
Harrow	London	26	239,056	29,881	12.5	261,203	41,503	15.9	22,147	9.3	11,622	38.9
Havering	London	27	237,232	4,829	2.0	262,052	16,135	6.2	24,820	10.5	11,306	234.1
Croydon	London	28	363,378	29,513	8.1	390,719	40,717	10.4	27,341	7.5	11,204	38.0
Barnet	London	29	356,386	36,744	10.3	389,344	47,688	12.2	32,958	9.2	10,944	29.8
Liverpool	North West	30	466,415	15,209	3.3	486,088	25,756	5.3	19,673	4.2	10,547	69.3



Picture: Muslim scouts' hospitality on
Visit My Mosque Day 2022 at the London Muslim Centre

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