

1 Why choose Leeds?

Leeds exemplifies those more substantial Jewish communities in the United Kingdom outside Greater London. There have been Jews living in Leeds since at least the middle of the eighteenth century, and by 1825 the community had its own *shochet* (ritual animal slaughterer), an indication that it had achieved a size threshold sufficient to support this service. The first Jewish cemetery in Leeds opened in 1840 and the first Jewish marriage in the city was recorded in 1842.³

Like Jewish communities throughout the United Kingdom, the Jewish population of Leeds increased throughout the nineteenth century as Jews fled Eastern Europe. Though many emigrants hoped to reach the United States, regarding British cities like Leeds, Manchester or Liverpool as mere staging posts, many remained, lacking funds to proceed further. In 1881 the Jewish population of Leeds had grown to comprise 561 families. Twenty years later, there were 2,496 families comprising 13,858 people.⁴ By the time the community had probably attained its maximum size, in the 1950s, it was estimated to be between 18,000 and 20,000 strong.⁵

The Leeds Jewish community, then, is predominantly of Eastern European provenance. Its prosperity was based on the textile and clothing industries. Though many of the Jewish immigrants to Leeds were either self-employed or employers, others embodied a substantial supply of cheap labour, both for the multiple tailoring enterprises and the sweatshops. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, conditions in the sweatshops led to a series of general strikes by Jewish clothing workers in Leeds, and it is these events that entered the collective memory and have coloured social attitudes among Leeds Jews up to the present.⁶

Throughout the twentieth century there was a steady rise in the overall economic status of the

Leeds community. Many children of the immigrants and later generations entered the professions, and there was a continual move from inner-city areas, such as Leylands and Chapeltown, further out to Roundhay and later to the suburbs of Moortown, Alwoodley and Shadwell, which are among the wealthier parts of the city. According to the 2001 Census just under three-quarters of all the Jews in Leeds lived in the North, Moortown and Roundhay wards; slightly over 10 per cent are in Headingley, University and Chapel Allerton wards (see Figure 1). In selecting the sample prior to the publication of the Census results, it had been estimated that four-fifths of Leeds Jews lived within the LS17 postal district (see Table 1 and Appendix).

Since the decade immediately following the Second World War, the Leeds Jewish community—in common with other communities outside London and Manchester—has declined sharply in numbers. Moreover, the ageing process has accompanied this overall numerical decline, as younger people have left Leeds for London and other places that have been perceived as offering better opportunities. Consequently, with this dual pattern of ageing and out-migration, the burden of providing services is heavier than it once was and, moreover, falls on a relatively smaller number of individuals in their productive years. Even though there has been some in-migration to Leeds from other centres, as the population has aged and people have continued to leave the city, there is nothing to suggest that others are filling their place.⁷

Despite the long-term and persistent drop in numbers, the Leeds Jewish community is still robust and active. Community facilities include eight synagogues (seven Orthodox and one Reform), a voluntary-aided primary school and nursery, a range of youth, educational, sporting, cultural and Zionist groups, and a representative council. It also has a residential and nursing

3 Ernest Krausz, *Leeds Jewry: Its History and Social Structure* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons 1964).

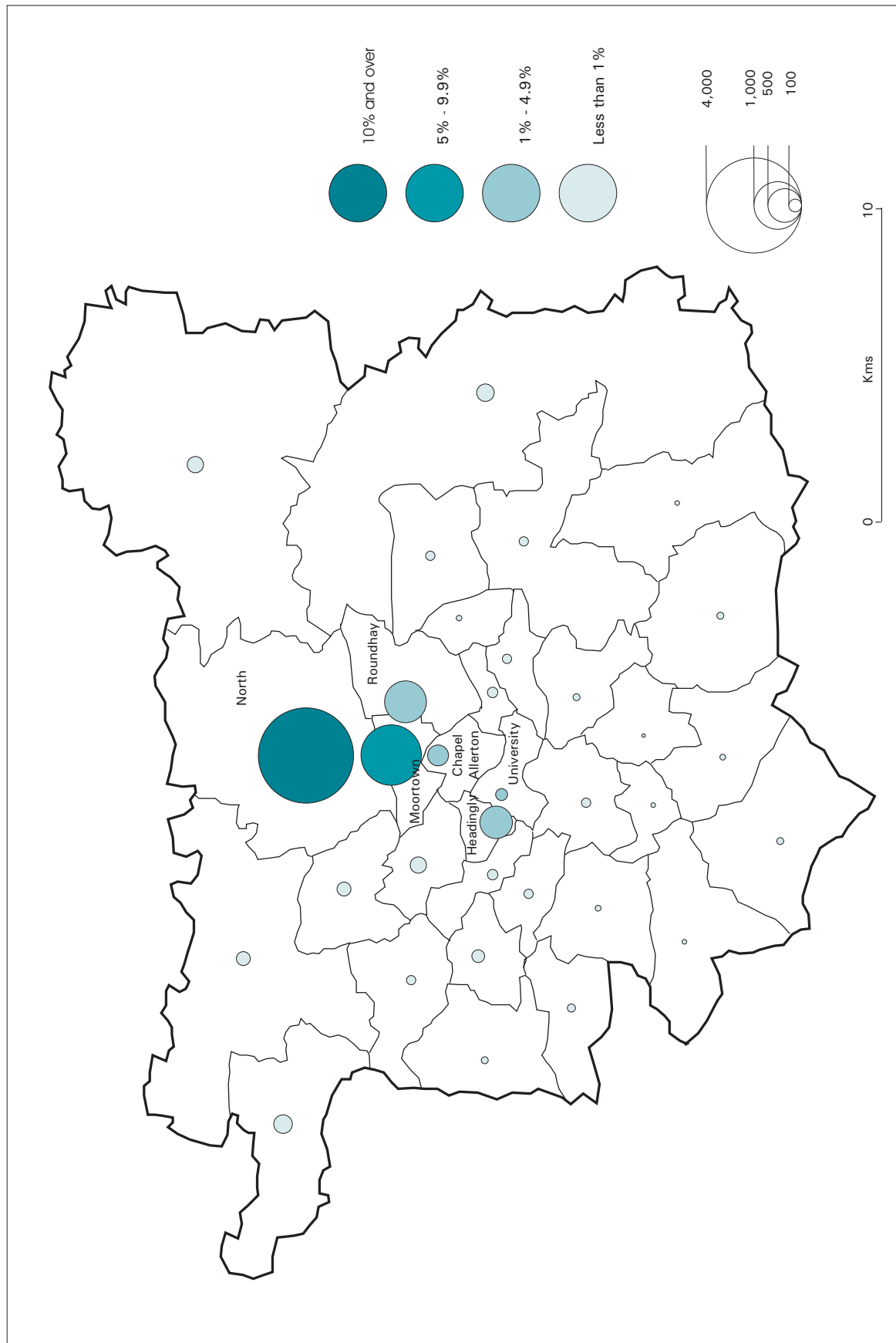
4 Murray Freedman, *Leeds Jews in the 1901 Census: A Demographic Portrait of an Immigrant Community* (Leeds 2002).

5 Murray Freedman, *Leeds Jewry: A Demographic and Sociological Profile* (Leeds 1988).

6 See Anne Kershen, *Uniting the Tailors* (London: Frank Cass 1995).

7 There is a considerable Jewish student population in Leeds that numbers several hundred. Most of these students come from outside Leeds and few stay in the city after graduation. Nevertheless, and despite the constant turnover of individual students, the 'student body' remains an important and vibrant feature of the Leeds Jewish scene.

Figure 1: Leeds Jewish population, by ward (Census)



Postal district/sector	LJWB list (%)	Survey sample (%)	Difference
LS1	0.03	0.43	0.40
LS2	0.06	0.76	0.70
LS3	0.03	0.14	0.11
LS4	0.00	0.12	0.12
LS5	0.00	0.18	0.18
LS6	0.38	2.28	1.90
LS7	1.51	1.83	0.32
LS8	9.06	7.43	-1.63
LS9	0.12	0.43	0.31
LS10	0.00	0.08	0.08
LS11	0.06	0.19	0.14
LS12	0.09	0.27	0.19
LS13	0.12	0.31	0.20
LS14	2.03	1.36	-0.67
LS15	0.12	0.62	0.51
LS16	1.05	1.28	0.24
LS17/1	0.15	1.01	0.87
LS17/2	0.12	0.06	-0.06
LS17/3	0.06	0.02	-0.04
LS17/4	0.00	0.02	0.02
LS17/5	2.50	4.26	1.76
LS17/6	17.72	25.02	7.30
LS17/7	31.75	25.53	-6.23
LS17/8	29.46	22.53	-6.93
LS17/9	2.35	1.85	-0.51
LS17 (unspecified)	0.17	0.14	-0.04
LS18	0.09	0.18	0.09
LS19	0.09	0.27	0.19
LS20	0.00	0.06	0.06
LS21	0.17	0.12	-0.06
LS22	0.35	0.27	-0.08
LS23	0.12	0.10	-0.02
LS25	0.00	0.29	0.29
LS26	0.00	0.12	0.12
LS27	0.09	0.18	0.09
LS28	0.12	0.12	0.00
LS29	0.06	0.18	0.12
Total	100	100	0

Table 1: Postal districts of addresses on the Leeds Jewish Welfare Board (LJWB) list and the survey sample⁸

home, Donisthorpe Hall, and a day centre that caters for 100 people per day and delivers 200 kosher meals-on-wheels each week. The Leeds Jewish Housing Association (LJHA), employing over thirty people, has over 400 residential units and is currently expanding. The Leeds Jewish Welfare Board, employing 120 people and with an income close to £3 million, has on its staff social workers trained to assess people's care needs and care staff to provide domiciliary services. It is the centre of all Jewish social services in the city, and offers a range of facilities, especially for older people, children and those with mental health needs. In addition to these long-established institutions, the Leeds community comprises myriad voluntary associational activities, all of which contribute to the accumulation of social capital within the Jewish community.⁹

The Leeds survey

In order to examine attitudes and perceived needs for a variety of social services in the Leeds Jewish community, a survey of 1,496 households in Leeds was carried out in July and August 2001. The methodologies used in this survey are summarized in the Appendix.

The questionnaire used was designed in a modular format with three sections. Section A was a general section that everyone was asked to complete. In addition to personal questions, this section included questions on household composition, general health, caring, education, attitudes, residence, housing, employment, volunteering, leisure and cultural interests/activities, income and philanthropy. Section B was for older and infirm people: we asked respondents who were seventy-five and over or who had a serious physical infirmity to

8 A note on tables. Percentages have throughout been rounded to the nearest whole number (or, in the case of Table 1, to two decimal places) for ease of comprehension. As a result, percentage totals may in some cases add up to '99' or '101'. Nonetheless, all totals are given as '100'. In the case of the 'Difference' column in Table 1, the 'errors' in subtraction reflect the rounding of percentages.

9 For an appreciation of the concept of social capital in a Jewish context, see Stanley Waterman, 'Introduction', in Ernest Schlesinger, *Creating Community and Accumulating Social Capital: Jews Associating with Other Jews in Manchester* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research 2003), 1–5.

complete this section. Section C was for those respondents with children of school age. In its final

format, there were 117 separate questions in Section A, 26 in Section B and 8 in Section C (see Table 2).

Table 2: Structure of the Leeds questionnaire

Section	Topic	Number of questions
A1	General	3
A2	Personal	9
A3	General health	10
A4	Caring and health	12
A5	Jewish education	6
A6	Attitudes	18
A7	Neighbourhood	7
A8	Accommodation and housing	24
A9	Household composition	1
A10	Employment	6
A11	Voluntary work	6
A12	Leisure and cultural activities	8
A13	Philanthropy	5
A14	Income	2
B	Older and infirm people	26
C	School-age children	8
Total		151