



BRIEFING PAPER

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Ethnic Minorities in Politics and Public Life

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3. The Government and Cabinet
4. Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly
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Summary and key statistics:

Currently more than 6% MPs in the House of Commons and Members of the House of Lords are from an ethnic minority background¹.

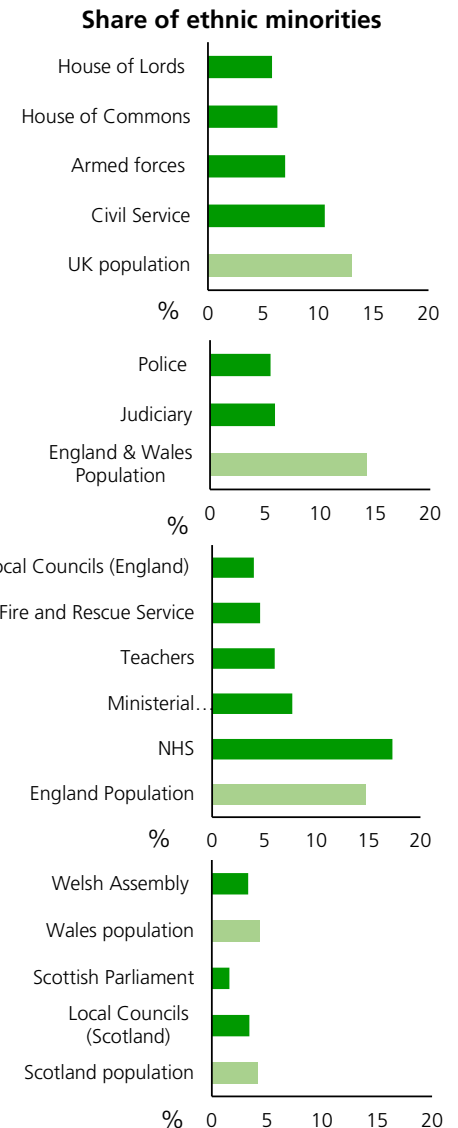
The latest available estimate from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Population Survey 2015 indicates that 13% of the UK population are from ethnic minority background.

The number of ethnic minority female MPs in the House of Commons nearly doubled after 2015, from 1.5% (11 of 650) in 2010, to 3.0% (20 of 650) in 2015.

Among Government agencies the non-white population is the most proportionally represented in the Civil Service. In 2015, 11% of Civil Servants were from minority ethnic groups.² This compares with 7% in the UK Armed Forces.³

Among other public sector organizations the NHS has the largest share of ethnic minorities. 18% of all NHS staff and around 41% of Doctors in England are from an ethnic minority background⁴. This compares with 5% of National Fire and Rescue service staff⁵.

Analysis of ethnic minority representation is difficult, because ethnicity is both sensitive, and difficult to define. Work such as this generally relies on self-definition. The UK Census includes an 'Ethnicity' section, as do most staff surveys within major public services. However, it is not a mandatory requirement to disclose such information. Data on the ethnicity of Members is not systematically gathered and is an estimate based upon multiple sources.



Notes:

- Figures for ethnic minorities in the House of Commons, House of Lords, Armed Forces and Civil services are UK wide.
- Figures for ethnic minorities in Police forces and judiciary cover England and Wales
- Estimates for Fire and Rescue Service, teachers, ministerial appointments and NHS staff are for England only.

Sources:

- See footnotes 1-5.

¹ House of Commons Library, (2016) [Briefing Paper – CBP-7483](#), January 2016; Operation Black Vote (2016) [‘BME peers’](#), as at June 2016

² ONS (2015) [‘Civil Service statistics 2015’](#), October 2015

³ Ministry of Defence, (2015) [UK armed forces quarterly personnel report: 2015](#), May 2015

⁴ HSCIC, (2016) [‘NHS Workforce Statistics, September 2015, England, Experimental’](#), March 30, 2016

⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government (2015) [‘Fire and rescue authorities: operational statistics bulletin for England 2014 to 2015’](#) September 2015

1. The population of the United Kingdom

The latest available estimate from the ONS *Annual Population Survey 2015* indicates 13% of the UK resident population in non-white groups and 87% white ethnic group.⁶ (See table 1)

Table 1: Ethnic makeup of the United Kingdom (%), Q4 2015

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
White	85.2%	95.5%	95.9%	98.5%	87.0
All non-white groups	14.8%	4.5%	4.1%	1.5%	13.0

Source: ONS, *Annual Population Survey Q4 2015*.

In recent years progress has been made in increasing the representation of black and minority-ethnic groups in many areas of public life. After the 2015 General Election there were 41 minority ethnic MPs, 14 more than in the previous Parliament. 6 % MPs are from ethnic minority background. This is 7 % less compared to overall share of ethnic minorities in the UK.

2. Parliament

2.1 The House of Commons

Into the 20th Century

Struggles by religious minorities to gain representation in Parliament in the 19th Century have parallels with minority ethnic groups' efforts to increase their representation today. Daniel O'Connell was elected Member for County Clare in Ireland in 1828, but was unable to take his seat, as a Catholic. In 1829, the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed, which allowed Catholics to sit in the House of Commons.

Jews traditionally considered themselves a religious group rather than an ethnic one, and it was religion that stood in the way of them wishing to enter Parliament.⁷ Lionel Rothschild was the first practising Jew to sit in the House of Commons. He was first elected in 1847 but refused to take the traditional Christian oath of allegiance. Rothschild was elected five times but it was not until the House changed its rules and allowed him to swear on the Old Testament, as a Jew, that he finally took his seat.⁸

The history of non-white Members of Parliament probably begins with David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre, who was of mixed European and Indian descent. In 1841 he was elected as a Radical-Liberal to the seat of Sudbury, in Suffolk. In 1842, however, Parliament overturned the result citing 'gross, systematic, and extensive bribery' during the campaign,

⁶ ONS, *Annual Population Survey Q4 2015*.

⁷ This is controversial, however. A [report](#) of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research recommended in 2005 that British Jews should present themselves as an ethnic minority.

⁸ For more information on Jews and Parliament, see [The Greville Janner Jewish Tour of Parliament](#)

and he and the other Member for the Sudbury division, Frederick Villiers, lost their seats.⁹ It is possible that John Stewart, elected as MP for Lymington in 1832, was also from a mixed ethnic background.¹⁰

Dadabhai Naoroji, born near Mumbai in 1825, was a partner in the first Indian firm established in Britain. He was elected Liberal MP for Finsbury Central from 1892 to 1895. Naoroji was a critic of British rule in India and prominent pro-British Indians decided to put up their own candidate, Mancherjee Bhownaggee (later Sir Mancherjee). He was elected and represented Bethnal Green North-East from 1895 to 1905: the second Indian of unmixed parentage and the first minority ethnic Conservative to sit in Parliament. They were followed by Shapurji Saklatvala who was a Parsi born in Bombay and represented Battersea North for Labour from 1922 to 1923 and as a Communist from 1924 to 1929.¹¹

After 1945

The first minority ethnic MPs since 1945 were elected in 1987: Diane Abbott (Hackney North & Stoke Newington), Paul Boateng (Brent South), Bernie Grant (Tottenham) and Keith Vaz (Leicester East). Diane Abbott was the first black woman MP. Since 1987 the number of non-white MPs has slowly risen, and non-white candidates have been elected by most major parties. (See table 2)

Table 2: Ethnicity of MPs elected at General Elections 1987 to 2015

	LAB	CON	LD	SNP	Other	Total
White						
1987	225	376	22	3	20	421
1992	266	335	20	3	21	379
1997	409	165	46	6	24	241
2001	400	166	52	5	24	247
2005	342	196	62	6	25	289
2010	242	295	57	6	23	381
2015	209	313	8	55	24	400
Non-white						
1987	4	0	0	0	0	4
1992	5	1	0	0	0	6
1997	9	0	0	0	0	9
2001	12	0	0	0	0	12
2005	13	2	0	0	0	15
2010	16	11	0	0	0	27
2015	23	17	0	1	0	41
Total						
1987	229	376	22	3	20	421
1992	271	336	20	3	21	380
1997	418	165	46	6	24	241
2001	412	166	52	5	24	247
2005	355	198	62	6	25	291
2010	258	306	57	6	23	650
2015	232	330	8	56	24	418

Source: House of Commons Library Research Papers 08/12, 10/36, CBP7186.

⁹ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004

¹⁰ [History of Parliament online, personal communication](#)

¹¹ Biography of Shapurji Saklatvala The Fifth Commandment Sehri Saklatvala, Shapurji's daughter, originally published in the UK in 1991 by Miranda Press – available at <http://www.maze-in.com/saklatvala/index.htm>

After the 2015 General Election 56% (23 of 41) of all ethnic minority MPs are Labour, followed by 41% (17 of 41) Conservative. The first BME SNP MP - Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh was elected in 2015. No BME Liberal Democrat MPs have been elected at a General Election, although Parmjit Singh Gill won a by-election for them in 2004 in Leicester South; he lost the seat at the subsequent General Election.

At present there are 41 non-white MPs elected to the House of Commons¹², 6.3% of all 650 MPs. If the non-white population were represented proportionally in the House of Commons, there would be around 84 minority ethnic MPs.

Table 3 Ethnic Minority Members of Parliament (June 2016)

Name	Constituency	Party
1 Adam Afriyie	Windsor	Conservative
2 Alan Mak	Havant	Conservative
3 Alok Sharma	Reading West	Conservative
4 Chi Onwurah	Newcastle Central	Labour
5 Chuka Ummuna	Streatham	Labour
6 Clive Lewis	Norwich South	Labour
7 David Lammy	Tottenham	Labour
8 Dawn Butler	Brent South	Labour
9 Diane Abbott	Hackney North & Stoke Newington	Labour
10 Helen Grant	Maidstone	Conservative
11 Imran Hussain	Bradford East	Labour
12 James Cleverly	Braintree	Conservative
13 Kate Osamor	Edmonton	Labour
14 Keith Vaz	Leicester East	Labour
15 Khalid Mahmood	Birmingham, Perry Barr	Labour
16 Kwasi Kwarteng	Spelthorne	Conservative
17 Lisa Nandy	Wigan	Labour
18 Mark Hendrick	Preston	Labour
19 Nadhim Zahawi	Stratford upon Avon	Conservative
20 Naz Shah	Bradford West	Labour
21 Nusrat Ghani	Wealden	Conservative
22 Pritti Patel	Witham	Conservative
23 Ranil Jayawardena	North East Hampshire	Conservative
24 Rehman Chishti	Gillingham & Rainham	Conservative
25 Rishi Sunak	Richmond (Yorks)	Conservative
26 Rosena Allin-Khan	Tooting	Labour
27 Rupa Huq	Ealing Central and Acton	Labour
28 Rushanara Ali	Bethnal Green & Bow	Labour
29 Sajid Javid	Bromsgrove	Conservative
30 Sam Gyimah	East Surrey	Conservative
31 Seema Malhotra	Feltham & Heston	Labour
32 Seema Kennedy	South Ribble	Conservative
33 Shabana Mahmood	Birmingham Ladywood	Labour
34 Shailesh Vara	North West Cambridgeshire	Conservative
35 Suella Fernandes	Fareham	Conservative
36 Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh	Ochil and South Perthshire	Scottish National
37 Thangam Debbonaire	Bristol West	Labour
38 Tulip Siddiq	Hampstead and Kilburn	Labour
39 Valerie Vaz	Walsall	Labour
40 Virenda Sharma	Ealing Southall	Labour
41 Yasmin Qureshi	Bolton	Labour

Source: [Operation Black Vote, 2016](#)

¹² Operation Black Vote (2016) [OBV online data](#).

2.2 Ethnic minority women in Parliament

Chart 1 illustrates ethnic minority MPs distribution by gender and Party. Currently there are 3.2% (21 of 650) ethnic minority female MPs. This is more than double compared to 1.5% (11 of 650) in 2010. 65% (15 of 23) of non-white Labour MPs are women, compared to 29% (5 of 17) of Conservative MPs. Prior to 2010, there had only been two black female Members and no Asian woman had been elected. The 2010 General Election saw the first Asian women MPs¹³.

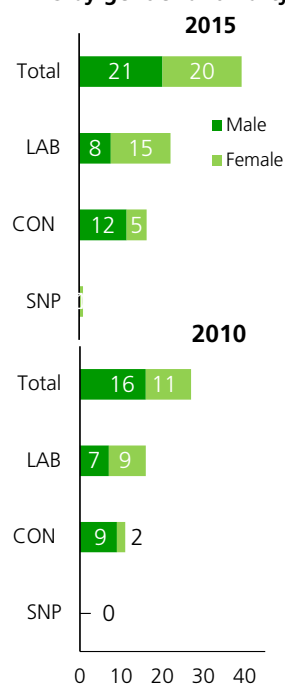
2.3 The House of Lords

Information for the House of Lords is difficult to collate, as no definitive list of ethnic origins exists. In February 2012 following a Freedom of Information request the House of Lords confirmed that information about ethnic origins of the Members is not held¹⁴.

There has been several cases when the ethnicity of the peers was identified on individual basis. The first Indian peer and probably the first non-white peer, was Sir Satyendra Sinha, created Baron Sinha of Raipur, an hereditary peerage, in 1919.¹⁵ The first peer of African descent is widely reported to have been the Trinidadian cricketer and lawyer Learie Constantine, created Baron Constantine of Maraval and Nelson in 1969.

Based on information from various unofficial sources, including [Operation Black Vote](#), there are currently 51 minority ethnic members of the House of Lords, 6.4% of the total membership of 800 peers.¹⁶

Chart 1: Ethnic minority MPs by gender and Party:



Source: See footnotes 13-16

Table 4: BME Members of House of Lords, by gender and group, 2016

Party/group	BME				All Members of House of Lords		
	Total	Male	Female	% of Total by group	Total	Male	Female
Bishops	1	1	0	3.8%	26	24	2
Conservative	8	5	3	3.3%	244	188	56
Crossbench	13	8	5	7.5%	173	134	39
Labour	15	9	6	7.1%	210	144	66
Liberal Democrat	9	4	5	8.3%	108	71	37
Non-affiliated	5	4	1	21.7%	23	20	3
Other	-	-	-	-	16	14	2
Total	51	31	20	6.4%	800	595	205

Sources: House of Lords (2016) '[Lords by party, type of peerage and gender](#)', June 2016
Parliament (2016) 'List of Members of House of Lords', published May 2016
Operation Black Vote (2016) '[BME peers](#)', as at June 2016;

¹³ House of Commons Library, (2016) [Briefing Paper – CBP-7483](#), January 2016

¹⁴ House of Lords (2012) '[Freedom of Information Request 796](#)', February 2012

¹⁵ Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th edition, Columbia University Press, 2008

¹⁶ Operation Black Vote (2016) '[BME peers](#)', as at June 2016;

Table 5 provides a list of Ethnic minority Members of the House of Lords by Party/group.

Table 5: Ethnic minority members of House of Lords (February, 2016):

Title	Name		Party / group
Lord	Adam Hafejee	Patel	Labour
Lord	Ajay	Kakkar	Crossbench
Lord	Amirali	Bhatia	Non-affiliated
Lord	Ara Warkes	Darzi	Labour
Lord	Bernard Francisco	Ribeiro	Conservative
Lord	Bhikhu Chotalal	Parekh	Labour
Lord	Diljit Singh	Rana	Crossbench
Lord	Dolar	Popat	Conservative
Baroness	Doreen	Lawrence	Labour
Baroness	Floella	Benjamin	Liberal Democrat
Lord	George	Ouseley	Crossbench
Baroness	Haleh	Ashfar	Crossbench
Lord	Indarjit	Singh	Crossbench
Lord	John	Taylor	Non-affiliated
Archbishop	John Mugabi Tucker	Sentamu	Bishop
Lord	Kamlesh Kumar	Patel	Labour
Lord	Karan Faridoon	Bilimoria	Crossbench
Lord	Khalid	Hameed	Crossbench
Baroness	Kishwer	Falkner	Liberal Democrat
Lord	Kumar	Bhattacharyya	Labour
Baroness	Lola	Young	Crossbench
Baroness	Manzila Pola	Uddin	Non-affiliated
Lord	Meghnad Jagdishchandra	Desai	Labour
Baroness	Meral	Hussein-Ece	Liberal Democrat
Lord	Michael John	Hastings	Crossbench
Lord	Mohamed	Sheikh	Conservative
Lord	Narendra Babubhai	Patel	Crossbench
Lord	Nathanael	Wei	Conservative
Lord	Navnit	Dholakia	Liberal Democrat
Lord	Nazir	Ahmed	Non-affiliated
Baroness	Oona	King	Labour
Baroness	Patricia Janet	Scotland	Labour
Lord	Paul	Boateng	Labour
Lord	Qurban	Hussain	Liberal Democrat
Lord	Rajinder Paul	Loomba	Liberal Democrat
Baroness	Rosalind Patricia-Anne	Howells	Labour
Baroness	Ruby	McGregor-Smith	Conservative
Lord	Rumi	Verjee	Liberal Democrat
Baroness	Sandip	Verma	Conservative
Baroness	Sayeeda Hussain	Warsi	Conservative
Baroness	Shas	Sheehan	Liberal Democrat
Baroness	Shreela	Flather	Crossbench
Baroness	Shriti	Vadera	Labour
Lord	Swraj	Paul	Non-affiliated
Lord	Tariq	Ahmad	Conservative
Baroness	Usha Kumari	Prashar	Crossbench
Baroness	Valerie	Amos	Labour
Lord	Victor	Adebowale	Crossbench
Lord	Waheed	Alli	Labour
Lord	William Manuel	Morris	Labour
Baroness	Zahida Parveen	Manzoor	Liberal Democrat

Sources: House of Lords (2016) '[Lords by party, type of peerage and gender](#)', June 2016
Parliament (2016) 'List of Members of House of Lords', published May 2016
Operation Black Vote (2016) '[BME peers](#)', as at June 2016;

2.4 International comparisons

2.5

In the 114th US Congress (2015-2017) of 435 members of the House of Representatives, 85 (20%) are non-white. Only 6 (6%) of the 100 Senate members are minority ethnic.¹⁸ Following the 2010 US Census that 75% of US citizens identified themselves as white and 3% reported more than one race. Charts two and three visualize the non-white distribution in US and UK.¹⁹

In 2013, around 6% of German Federal Parliament members were from migrant background, compared with 19% of total population²⁰. In 2012, 1.5% of ethnic minority in the French National Assembly represented 12.6% of the general population²¹.

3. The Government and Cabinet

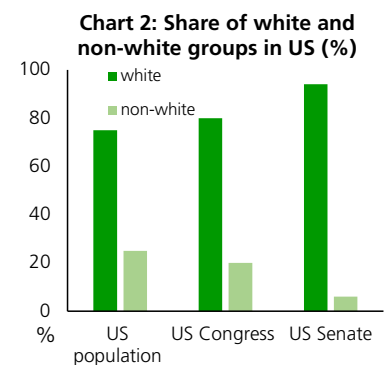
Currently there is one BME Cabinet Minister, Sajid Javid (Secretary of State for Business). Priti Patel (Minister of State for Employment) attends the Cabinet.²²

The first minority ethnic minister was probably Baron Sinha, who, after being the first Indian to serve in the Indian government and the first Indian to take silk and become a QC, was made Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India in the House of Lords in 1919. The first black government minister was Paul Boateng, who went on to be the first black Cabinet Minister when he was appointed Chief Secretary to the Treasury in 2002. In 2010 he was appointed to the House of Lords.

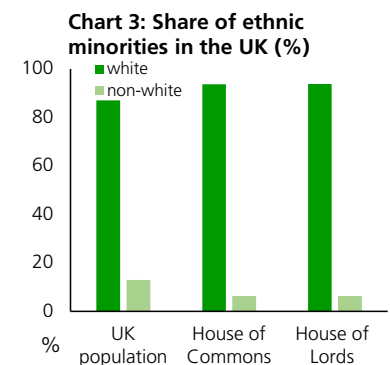
4. Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly

Two of the Scottish Parliament's 129 members (1.6%) elected in 2016 are minority ethnic, Humza Yousaf (SNP) and Hanzala Malik (Labour)²³. This is the same number as in the 2011 Parliament.

Following the 2016 election there are two known ethnic minority National Assembly for Wales Members. Mohammad Asghar was first elected for Plaid Cymru in 2007 and then for the Conservatives in 2011 and in 2016; Vaughan Gething was elected for Labour in 2011 and re-elected in 2016. Together they represent 3.3% of the Assembly's 60 AMs.²⁴

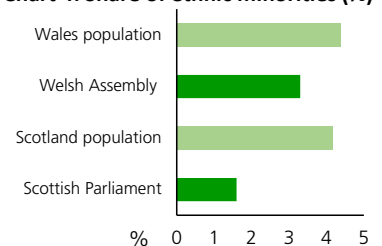


Source: See footnotes 18 & 19



Source: See footnote 22

Chart 4: Share of ethnic minorities (%)



Source: See footnotes 23 & 24

¹⁸ Pew Research Center (2015) '[114th Congress is most diverse ever](#)', January 2015

¹⁹ Fact finder (2010) '[US population](#)', US Census 2010 data, 2010

²⁰ PSA (2013) '[Germany's new parliament: tiny steps towards better immigrant representation](#)', November 2013

²¹ France 24 (2012) '[Record number of women and minorities in new French Parliament](#)', June 2012

²² Institute for Government (2015) '[Whitehall statistics: Getting to know the new government](#)', May 2015

²³ Scottish Parliament (2016), [SB 16-34 Election 2016](#)

²⁴ National Assembly for Wales Research Service (2016) '[Key Issues for the Fifth Assembly](#)', 2016

5. Local Councils and the London Assembly

The most recent census of local councillors in England (2013) showed that 4% came from an ethnic minority background and 96% were white.²⁵ The highest representation for ethnic minorities was in London, with 16% of councillors being non-white. For Scotland the percentage of non-white councillors was similar to that of its population at 3.4%²⁶. The latest available date for Wales was recorded in 2004. Then 99.2% of councillors were white and 0.8% had an ethnic minority background.²⁷

Almost a third of councillors in England are women (31.7%), but minority ethnic women are particularly under-represented. The 2010 census of councillors found around 2% of women councillors were non-white, this is around half the 4% rate for men.

Of the 25 members of the Greater London Assembly, there are seven ethnic minority members (Jennette Arnold, Kemi Badenoch, Shaun Bailey, Unmesh Desai, Florence Eshalomi, Onkar Sahota, Navin Shah)²⁸.

6. Civil Service

In 2015, 10.6% of civil servants in GB were from an ethnic minority²⁹ – an increase of 0.5 percentage points from 2014. This proportion, however, is strongly related to grade – for the senior civil service the proportion is 7.0%.³⁰

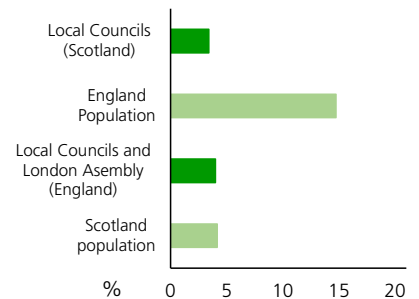
7. Other public sector organisations

7.1 Police

There were 6,979 FTE minority ethnic officers in the 43 English and Welsh police forces as at March 2015, 5.5% of total strength. The forces with the highest representation are the Metropolitan Police, with 11.7% minority ethnic officers, the West Midlands (8.6%), and Leicestershire (7.2%).

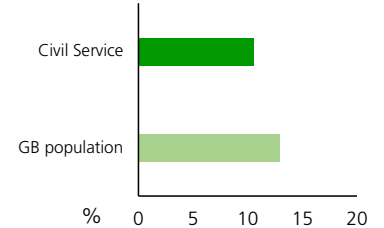
Despite the improvement in their overall representation in the ranks of the police, minority ethnic officers remain less well represented in the highest ranks, with only 3.4% of officers at Chief Inspector or above being from an ethnic minority, compared with 6.0% of Constables, the lowest rank.³¹

Chart 5: Share of ethnic minorities:



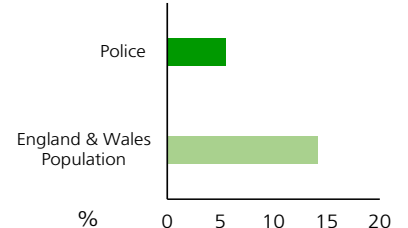
Source: See footnotes 25 & 26

Chart 6: Share of ethnic minorities:



Source: See footnote 30

Chart 7a: Share of ethnic minorities:



Source: See footnote 31

²⁵ Local Government Association (2014) [National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013](#), May 2014 (data does not reflect changes at the May 2016 local elections)

²⁶ Improvement service (2014) [Scotland's Councillors, 2013](#)

²⁷ Welsh Local Government Association, ['National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2004'](#),

London Assembly (2016) ['Assembly Members'](#), June 2016

²⁹ For employees with a known ethnicity

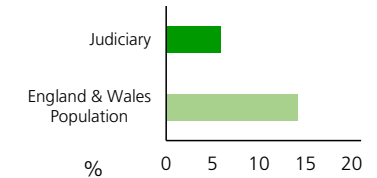
³⁰ ONS (2015) ['Civil Service statistics 2015'](#), October 2015

³¹ Home Office Statistical Bulletin 3/13, [Police Service Strength England and Wales](#), July 2015

7.2 Judges

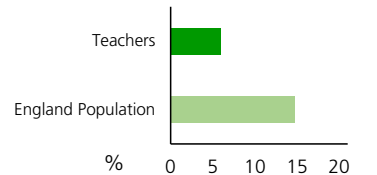
The 2015 figures from the Judiciary of England and Wales show that 6% of the total judicial workforce are of ethnic minority backgrounds; however the figures differ by type of judge. The most ethnic diverse appointment at 10.7% is Deputy District Judges for Magistrate Courts, compared to 6.4% in 2011. The proportion non-white decreases for higher ranked judges³².

Chart 7b: Share of ethnic minorities:



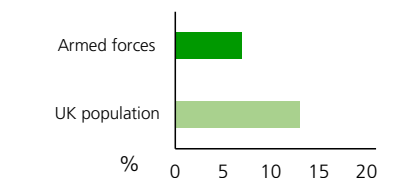
7.3 Teachers

In November 2014, 6.0% of all teachers in publically funded schools in England were from non-white ethnic groups, compared to 6.2% in 2010. The equivalent figure for head-teachers is 2.9%, compared to 2.3% in 2010.³³



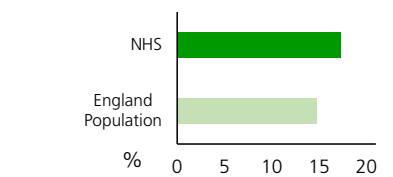
7.4 Armed forces

In April 2015, 7.0% of the total service men and women in the regular forces are from ethnic minority backgrounds. However, only 2.4% of the officer ranks come from ethnic minorities, compared to 7.5% of other ranks.³⁴



7.5 National Health Service

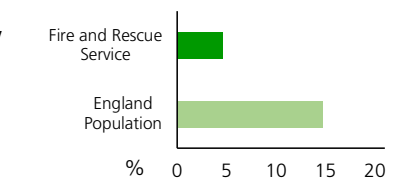
NHS workforce statistics for England indicate that 17.9% of all staff were from ethnic minority background in September 2015. The most diverse group in NHS is doctors, 40.8% from a non-white group, although the proportion falls to 36.5% for the highest staff grade of consultant.



The share of ethnic minorities is lower among other staff. 15.6% of all other staff are non-white. Likewise 6.7% of managers and senior managers are from an ethnic minority background.³⁵

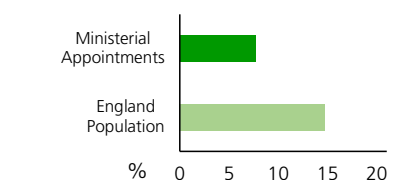
7.6 National Fire and Rescue Service

Operational figures from the fire and rescue authorities in England show that in 2015, the proportion of ethnic minority personnel was 4.6%; up from 4.2% in 2010. The total number of whole-time firefighters from ethnic minority backgrounds in 2015 was 1,149, compared to 1,252 in 2010.³⁶



7.7 Ministerial Appointments

Statistics by the Commissioner for Public Appointments show that in 2014/15 7.9% of appointments were given to those from ethnic minority background, up from 5.5% in 2012/13.³⁷



Source: See footnotes 32-37

³² Courts and Tribunals Judiciary (2015), [Diversity Statistics: England & Wales](#), July 2015
³³ Department for Education (2011) [School Workforce in England Nov 2010](#), April 2011; Department for Education (2015) [School Workforce in England Nov 2014](#), July 2015;
³⁴ Ministry of Defence, (2015) [UK armed forces quarterly personnel report: 2015](#), May 2015
³⁵ HSCIC, (2016) [NHS Workforce Statistics, September 2015, England, Experimental](#), March 30, 2016
³⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government (2015) [Fire and rescue authorities: operational statistics bulletin for England 2014 to 2015](#) September 2015
³⁷ Commissioner for Public Appointments (2015) [Annual survey of ministerial Appointments and Reappointments](#), 2015

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