



BRIEFING PAPER

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Ethnic diversity in politics and public life

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1. Ethnicity in the United Kingdom
2. Parliament
3. The Government and Cabinet
4. Other elected bodies in the UK
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Summary

This report focuses on the proportion of people from ethnic minority backgrounds in a range of public positions across the UK.

By “ethnic minority” we mean all people from non-White ethnic categories in Great Britain, and all those apart from the “White” and “Irish Traveller” categories in Northern Ireland. In 2018 about **13.8% of the UK population** was from an ethnic minority background, ranging from 2.4% in Northern Ireland to 15.6% in England, as set out in the table below.

ETHNIC MAKE-UP OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, 2018 (%)					
	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
White ^a	84.4%	96.2%	95.0%	97.6%	86.2%
All non-White groups	15.6%	3.8%	5.0%	2.4%	13.8%

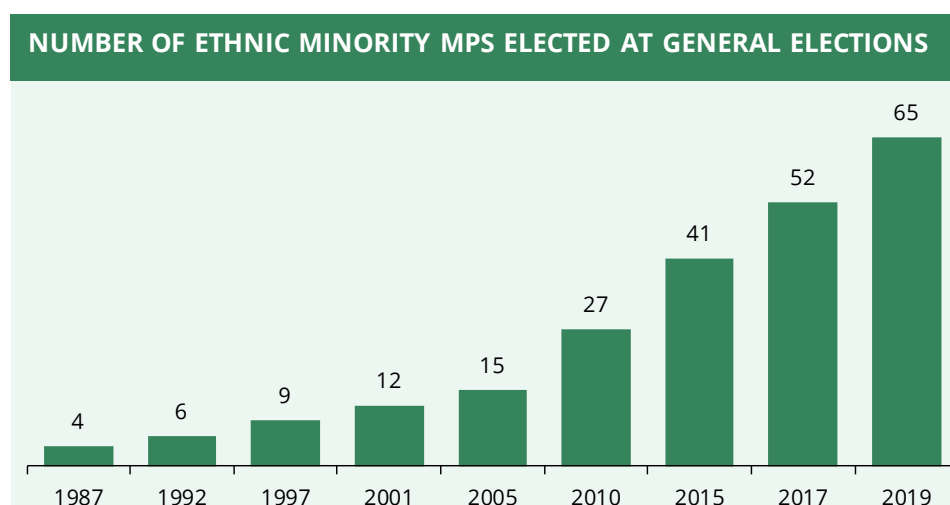
Note: (a) Includes the Irish Traveller category in Northern Ireland.

Source: Office for National Statistics (2019) [Annual Population Survey](#)

The proportion of people from an ethnic minority background has risen in recent years, and so has the proportion of ethnic minorities in political and public positions. However, in most cases, the proportion of people from non-White backgrounds in such positions is lower than in the population as a whole – and often markedly so. The most notable exception is the NHS, where the proportion of non-White staff is higher than that of the ethnic minority population in every country of the UK.

UK Parliament and Government

Following the 2019 General Election, 65 or **10% of Members of the House of Commons** were from non-White ethnic backgrounds. Four non-White MPs were elected in 1987, the first since 1929. Their number has increased at each general election since then – most notably from 2010 onwards – as the chart below shows. But if the ethnic make-up of the House of Commons reflected that of the UK population, there would be about 90 non-White Members.



Source: [British Future](#) (2019), House of Commons Library Briefing Paper [CBP7529, UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018](#)

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41 (63%) of the 65 ethnic minority Members are Labour and 22 are Conservatives. There are two Liberal Democrat MPs with an ethnic minority background. More than half (37) of the 65 are women.

In March 2020, **48 or 6.1% of Members of the House of Lords** were from ethnic minority groups, according to research by Operation Black Vote.

It is difficult to compare figures internationally, but the ethnic make-up of the 116th (current) US Congress is very close to that of the wider population, at 24.2% and 23.5% non-White respectively.

Three members of the Cabinet are from an ethnic minority background: Rishi Sunak (Chancellor) and Priti Patel (Home Secretary) and Alok Sharma (Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy).

Other elected bodies in the UK

Two (1.6%) of the Scottish Parliament's 129 members and **two (3.3%) of the 60 Members of the National Assembly for Wales** were from ethnic minority backgrounds. **None of the 90 Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly** were recorded as being from an ethnic minority group.

As well as the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, **seven (28%) of the 25 Members of the London Assembly** were from ethnic minority backgrounds in May 2019, compared with about 40% of London's population.

Ethnic minority representation in local government is lower than the corresponding population in all countries of the United Kingdom. An audit by Operation Black Vote found that while councils in some local authorities, especially in London, closely reflected the local ethnic make-up, many others had no non-White councillors at all.

Public sector staff

Ethnic diversity in staffing levels varies noticeably across services and countries of the UK, although figures are often hard to compare.

The **NHS stands out** as having high levels of non-White staff, especially in England where **20.7% of staff** reported their ethnicity as non-White. This compares with 14.3% of the economically active population (that is, people aged 18-64 who are employed or available for work). **40.3% of doctors and 39.3% of hospital consultants in NHS England** are non-White.

The ethnic profile of the UK Civil Service and non-officer ranks in the Army was similar to that of the wider economically active population.

In most other services, ethnic minority representation was significantly lower, although many reported gradual improvements. Fire and Rescue services typically reported the lowest figures – as low as 0.2% in Northern Ireland, compared with 2.0% of the economically active population.

1. Ethnicity in the United Kingdom

1.1 Categorising ethnicity

The concept of “ethnicity” is open to a wide range of understandings. **Unless otherwise indicated, this briefing uses the term “ethnic minority” to refer to people and groups other than those in the “White” ethnicity categories of the 2011 census.**¹

This reflects the way that many of the figures reported here have been collected across the UK and over time, as well as the historic focus of considering questions of ethnic diversity or race relations.²

It’s important to note the following:

- The “White” categories used vary across the UK; the use of “White” in this briefing reflects Office for National Statistics (ONS) guidance for UK-wide reporting. There are of course ethnic minority groups within the wider White population.
- The wide definitions used here mask differences between and within groups.
- Good practice in data collection about ethnicity is to ask people how they self-identify, as well as to accept that people may not wish to answer the question. Figures are rarely precise or complete.
- Information about ethnicity is not always collected, as for instance in the case of Members of Parliament. This briefing relies on other and multiple sources in these cases, notably relying on individuals’ wider public discussion about their own identity.
- In some cases – notably in smaller bodies in Northern Ireland – the low number of individuals involved means that reporting could clash with confidentiality and so is subject to disclosure control.
- It is also good practice to be explicit about the coverage of specific terms in wider discussion. Doing so helps to avoid misunderstandings and disputes about accuracy.³

These issues mean that the figures presented in this briefing are rarely precise and often not comparable. They do however give reasonable indications of levels and trends.

Annex 1 sets out the ethnic categories used in different parts of the UK, as well as which are covered by “White” and “non-White” or “ethnic minority” in this briefing paper.

1.2 The population of the United Kingdom

As set out in the following table, the ONS has estimated that people from non-White ethnic backgrounds made up **13.8% of the UK**

¹Or the White and Irish Traveller categories in Northern Ireland.

²See Annex 1 and Office of National Statistics [Ethnic group, national identity and religion](#) for more information about different sets of ethnicity categories in use across the UK.

³GOV.UK [Ethnicity in the UK](#)

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population in 2018. This varied from 2.4% in Northern Ireland to 15.6% in England.⁴

ETHNIC MAKE-UP OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, 2018 (%)					
	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
White ^a	84.4%	96.2%	95.0%	97.6%	86.2%
All non-White groups	15.6%	3.8%	5.0%	2.4%	13.8%

Note: (a) Includes the Irish Traveller category in Northern Ireland.

Source: Office for National Statistics (2019) [Annual Population Survey](#)

⁴ Office for National Statistics (2019) [Annual Population Survey](#)

2. Parliament

2.1 The House of Commons

It is difficult to establish the number and proportion of ethnic minority MPs, as MPs are not required to officially state their ethnicity. We therefore rely on external sources who collect this data.

Into the 20th century

Differing understandings of and attitudes towards ethnicity mean that it is difficult to be certain about when the first “ethnic minority” Member entered Parliament.

Opening the House to non-Protestant religious groups, for instance, was a much more central focus in the 19th century, although this struggle eventually facilitated the entry of non-White Members. The first Roman Catholics entered the House of Commons in 1832.⁵ Lionel Rothschild, the first practising Jewish Member, finally took his seat in 1858, when Parliament accepted changes to the oath of allegiance, 11 years after his initial election.⁶

Although it is possible that John Stewart, elected as MP for Lymington in 1832, was from a mixed ethnic background,⁷ the history of non-white Members of Parliament probably begins with David Ochterlony Dyce Sombre. He was of mixed European and Indian descent and was elected as a Radical-Liberal to the seat of Sudbury, Suffolk in 1841. The next year, though, Parliament overturned the result, citing “gross, systematic, and extensive bribery” during the campaign, and he and the other Member for the Sudbury division, Frederick Villiers, lost their seats.⁸

Dadabhai Naoroji, a Parsi born near Mumbai in 1825, was elected Liberal MP for Finsbury Central from 1892 to 1895. While Naoroji was a critic of British rule in India, prominent pro-British Indians decided to put up their own candidate, Mancherjee Bhownaggee. He was elected and represented Bethnal Green North-East from 1895 to 1905 as a Conservative.⁹

A third Parsi, Shapurji Saklatvala, represented Battersea North for Labour from 1922 to 1923 and as a Communist from 1924 to 1929.¹⁰

Since 1987

After 1929, there were no non-White Members of the House of Commons until 1987, when Diane Abbott (Hackney North & Stoke Newington), Paul Boateng (Brent South), Bernie Grant (Tottenham) and Keith Vaz (Leicester East) were elected as Labour MPs. Diane Abbott thus also became the first Black woman MP.

⁵The Victorian Commons, [Catholics in the Commons: part 1](#)

⁶Jewish Virtual Library, [Lionel Nathan de Rothschild](#).

⁷[History of Parliament online, personal communication](#)

⁸Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004

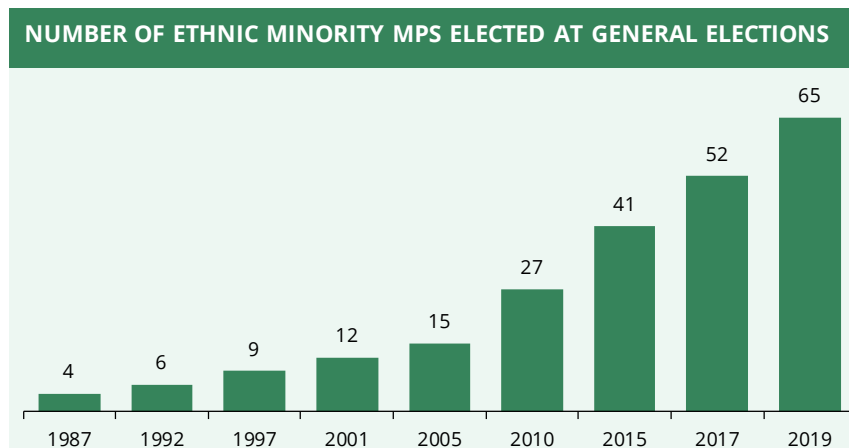
⁹Open University, [Making modern Britain](#).

¹⁰[Ibid.](#)

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Since then, the number of ethnic minority MPs has risen at every general election, reaching 63 in 2019, as shown in the chart below. Increases were particularly marked in 2005, when the number almost doubled to 27, and in 2015, when 14 more non-White MPs were elected.¹¹

Following the 2019 General Election, **10% of Members of the House of Commons** are from a non-White ethnic group. If the House reflected the ethnic make-up of the population (13.8% non-White), there would be about 90.



Source: [British Future](#) (2019), House of Commons Library Briefing Paper [CBP7529, UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018](#)

The table below shows the number and percentage of non-White MPs elected by party between 1987 and 2019.

Ethnic minority MPs elected by Party and general election

	LAB	CON	LD	SNP	Total
Number					
1987	4	0	0	0	4
1992	5	1	0	0	6
1997	9	0	0	0	9
2001	12	0	0	0	12
2005	13	2	0	0	15
2010	16	11	0	0	27
2015	23	17	0	1	41
2017	32	19	1	0	52
2019	41	22	2	0	65
Percentage					
1987	2%	-	-	-	1%
1992	2%	-	-	-	1%
1997	2%	-	-	-	1%
2001	3%	-	-	-	2%
2005	4%	1%	-	-	2%
2010	6%	4%	-	-	4%
2015	10%	5%	-	2%	6%
2017	12%	6%	8%	-	8%
2019	20%	6%	18%	-	10%

Source: [British Future](#) (2019), House of Commons Library Briefing Paper [CBP7529, UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018](#)

¹¹ House of Commons Library Briefing Paper [CBP7529, UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections](#); Parliament UK, [MPs](#) (accessed 1 May 2019)

The number of ethnic minority Labour MPs has grown at every election since 1987, reaching a record high of 39 in 2019. The first recent non-White Conservative was Nirj Deva, who was elected in 1992 but lost his seat in 1997; the next ethnic minority Conservatives – Adam Afriyie and Shailesh Vara – were elected in 2005, since when the number has increased at each general election to 22.

Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh was elected for the SNP in 2015 but lost her seat in 2017, while Layla Moran became the first non-White Liberal Democrat MP in 2017.

Following the 2019 General Election, 41 (63% of all non-White MPs) are Labour. This is 20% of all Labour MPs. There are 22 Conservative (34%) MPs from non-White backgrounds; 6% of all Conservative MPs. There are two (3%) Liberal Democrat MPs from non-white backgrounds; 18% of all Liberal Democrat MPs.

The **65 non-White MPs serving following the 2019 General Election** are listed in the table overleaf. This list is a combination of data compiled by [Operation Black Vote](#) and [British Future](#).

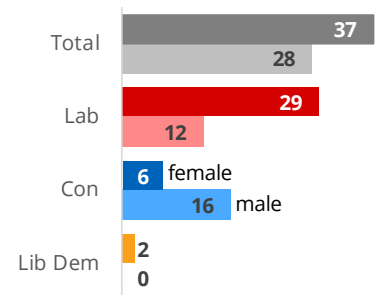
Ethnic minority women in the House of Commons

The chart on the right shows the number of ethnic minority MPs by gender and Party elected at the last General Election.

Before 2010, Diane Abbott and Dawn Butler had been the only non-White women MPs. The first women of Asian origin were elected in 2010.¹²

Following the 2019 General Election, there were **37 non-White women in the House of Commons**: 5.7% of all MPs, 16.8% of the 220 female MPs, and more than half (56.9%) of all ethnic minority MPs. 29 were Labour MPs and 6 Conservative.

ETHNIC MINORITY MPS BY GENDER AND PARTY



¹² House of Commons Library Briefing Paper [CBP7529, UK Election Statistics: 1918-2018: 100 years of Elections.](#)

Ethnic minority Members of Parliament by party

Name	Constituency	Party
Abena Opong-Asare	Erith and Thamesmead	Labour
Adam Afriyie	Windsor	Conservative
Afzal Khan	Manchester, Gorton	Labour
Alan Mak	Havant	Conservative
Alok Sharma	Reading West	Conservative
Apsana Begum	Poplar and Limehouse	Labour
Bambos Charalambous	Enfield, Southgate	Labour
Bell Ribeiro-Addy	Streatham	Labour
Bim Afolami	Hitchin and Harpenden	Conservative
Chi Onwurah	Newcastle upon Tyne Central	Labour
Claire Coutinho	East Surrey	Conservative
Claudia Webbe	Leicester East	Labour
Clive Lewis	Norwich South	Labour
Darren Henry	Broxtowe	Conservative
David Lammy	Tottenham	Labour
Dawn Butler	Brent South	Labour
Diane Abbott	Hackney North and Stoke Newington	Labour
Feryal Clark	Enfield North	Labour
Florence Eshalomi	Vauxhall	Labour
Gagan Mohindra	South West Hertfordshire	Conservative
Helen Grant	Maidstone & The Weald	Conservative
Imran Ahmad-Khan	Wakefield	Conservative
Imran Hussain	Bradford East	Labour
James Cleverly	Braintree	Conservative
Janet Daby	Lewisham East	Labour
Kate Osamor	Edmonton	Labour
Kemi Badenoch	Saffron Walden	Conservative
Khalid Mahmood	Birmingham, Perry Barr	Labour
Kim Johnson	Liverpool Riverside	Labour
Kwasi Kwarteng	Spelthorne	Conservative
Layla Moran	Oxford West and Abingdon	Liberal Democrat
Lisa Nandy	Wigan	Labour
Mark Hendrick	Preston	Labour
Marsha de Cordova	Battersea	Labour
Mohammad Yasin	Bedford	Labour
Munira Wilson	Twickenham	Liberal Democrat
Nadhim Zahawi	Stratford-on-Avon	Conservative
Nadia Whittome	Nottingham East	Labour
Navendu Mishra	Stockport	Labour
Naz Shah	Bradford West	Labour
Nusrat Ghani	Wealden	Conservative
Preet Gill	Birmingham Edgbaston	Labour
Priti Patel	Witham	Conservative
Ranil Jayawardena	North East Hampshire	Conservative
Rehman Chishti	Gillingham and Rainham	Conservative
Rishi Sunak	Richmond (Yorks)	Conservative
Rosena Allin-Khan	Tooting	Labour
Rupa Huq	Ealing Central and Acton	Labour
Rushanara Ali	Bethnal Green and Bow	Labour
Sajid Javid	Bromsgrove	Conservative
Saqib Bhatti	Meriden	Conservative
Sarah Owen	Luton North	Labour
Seema Malhotra	Feltham and Heston	Labour
Shabana Mahmood	Birmingham, Ladywood	Labour
Shailesh Vara	North West Cambridgeshire	Conservative
Suella Fernandes	Fareham	Conservative
Tahir Ali	Birmingham, Hall Green	Labour
Taiwo Owatemi	Coventry North West	Labour
Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi	Slough	Labour
Thangam Debbonaire	Bristol West	Labour
Tulip Siddiq	Hampstead and Kilburn	Labour
Valerie Vaz	Walsall South	Labour
Virendra Sharma	Ealing, Southall	Labour
Yasmin Qureshi	Bolton South East	Labour
Zarah Sultana	Coventry South	Labour

Source: [Operation Black Vote](#), British Future (personal correspondence)

2.2 The House of Lords

It is difficult to collate information about ethnic diversity in the House of Lords, as Peers are not required to provide such information.¹³

The first Peer from a non-European background was probably Sir Satyendra Sinha, created Baron Sinha of Raipur, a hereditary peerage, in 1919.¹⁴ 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 1969.¹⁵

[Research by Operation Black Vote](#) suggests that in March 2020 there were 48 ethnic minority Members of the House of Lords, **6.1% of all 792 Peers**.¹⁶ The following table sets out the numbers of ethnic minority Peers by group and gender.

Ethnic minority Peers by gender and group (May 2019)

Party/group	Ethnic minority Peers				All Peers
	Total	Male	Female	% of group	Total
Bishops	2	2	-	7.7%	26
Conservative	9	7	2	3.7%	245
Crossbench	14	10	4	6.0%	184
Labour	12	6	6	6.1%	179
Liberal Democrat	5	2	3	6.6%	91
Non-affiliated	6	5	1	13.7%	51
Other	-	-	-	-	15
Lord Speaker	-	-	-	-	1
Total	48	32	16	6.1%	792

Sources: [Operation Black Vote. Peers](#); UK Parliament, [Lords membership](#) (accessed 5 March 2020)

The next table gives a complete list of those Peers as at March 2020, based on analysis by Operation Black Vote.

¹³House of Lords Library Note [LLN 2014/017: Membership of the House of Lords: Ethnicity, Religion and Disability](#).

¹⁴Columbia Encyclopaedia, 6th edition, Columbia University Press, 2008

¹⁵100 Great Black Britons, [Lord Leary Constantine](#).

¹⁶[Operation Black Vote. Peers](#); UK Parliament, [Lords membership](#) (accessed 5 March 2020)

Ethnic minority Members of House of Lords (March 2020)

Title	Name	Party/group
Lord	Ajay Kakkar	Crossbench
Lord	Amirali Bhatia	Non-affiliated
Lord	Ara Warkes Darzi	Non-affiliated
Lord	Bhikhu Chhotlal Parekh	Labour
Lord	Bill Morris	Labour
Lord	Diljit Singh Rana	Conservative
Lord	Dolar Popat	Conservative
Baroness	Doreen Lawrence	Labour
Baroness	Floella Benjamin	Liberal Democrat
Baroness	Haleh Ashfar	Crossbench
Lord	Herman George Ouseley	Crossbench
Lord	Indarjit Singh	Crossbench
Lord	Jitesh Gadhia	Conservative
Archbishop	John Sentamu	Bishops
Lord	John Taylor	Non-affiliated
Lord	Kamlesh Kumar Patel	Crossbench
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
Baroness	Meral Hussein-Ece	Liberal Democrat
Lord	Michael John Hastings	Crossbench
Lord	Michael Nazir-Ali	Bishops
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	Rami Ranger	Conservative
Baroness	Rosalind Patricia-Anne Howells	Labour
Lord	Rumi Verjee	Liberal Democrat
Baroness	Sandip Verma	Conservative
Baroness	Sayeeda Hussain Warsi	Conservative
Baroness	Shreela Flather	Crossbench
Lord	Meghnad Desai	Labour
Baroness	Shriti Vadera	Labour
Lord	Simon Andrew Woolley	Crossbench
Lord	Swraj Paul	Non-affiliated
Baroness	Usha Kumari Prashar	Crossbench
Baroness	Valerie Amos	Labour
Lord	Victor Adebowale	Crossbench
Lord	Waheed Alli	Labour
Lord	Zameer Choudrey	Conservative

Sources: [Operation Black Vote](#) (accessed 9 March 2020)

2.3 International comparisons

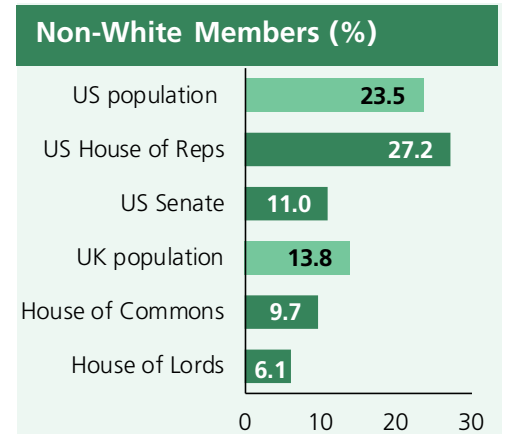
International comparison in this area is complicated by differing classification systems and approaches to ethnic monitoring.

In the 116th US Congress (2019-2021), 119 (27.2%) of 437 members of the House of Representatives and 11 (11%) of 100 members of the Senate were from non-White ethnic groups as at March 2020, giving a total representation of 130 (**24.2%**).¹⁷ According to official estimates, about 23.5% of the US population identified as non-White in July 2019.¹⁸

Following the 2017 elections, 58 (8%) of Members of the German Federal Parliament had a “migration background”, compared with 22.5% of the total population.¹⁹

Public authorities in France are forbidden in law from collecting data on ethnicity or race. Nevertheless an “imperfect” analysis by the broadcaster France 24 reported that of the 551 deputies elected to the National Assembly in 2017 in Metropolitan France²⁰, 35 (or 6.4%) of the total had at least one parent whose background was from a French overseas dominion or territory or from a non-European country. This was up from 1.5% in 2012.²¹

The figures for both Germany and France were record high levels.



¹⁷Congressional Research Service, [Membership of the 116th Congress: a profile](#). The US ethnicity categories used are “White (non-Hispanic)”, “Black”, “Hispanic or Latino”, “Asian or Pacific Islander” and “Native American”.

¹⁸United States Census Bureau, [Quick Facts](#), July 2019.

¹⁹Mediendienst Integration, [58 MPs have a Migration Background](#), October 2017. “Migration background” means that the individual or at least one of their parents was not born a German citizen.

²⁰“Metropolitan France” includes those parts of France in Europe. It excludes French overseas departments and territories (“DOM-TOM”).

²¹France 24, [Diversity gains ground in France’s new-look National Assembly after vote](#), June 2017.

3. The Government and Cabinet

In March 2020 there were **three ethnic minority Cabinet Ministers**: Rishi Sunak (Chancellor), Alok Sharma (Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) and Priti Patel (Home Secretary).²²

The first ethnic minority minister was probably Baron Sinha (see section 2.2), who, after being the first Indian to serve in the Indian government and the first Indian to 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.

The first black woman minister was Baroness Patricia Scotland in 1999; the first black woman Cabinet Minister was Baroness Valerie Amos in 2003. They were both ministers in the House of Lords. The first black woman minister in the House of Commons was Dawn Butler, appointed as a minister in the Cabinet Office in 2009.

²² GOV.UK [Ministers](#) (accessed 19 September 2019)

4. Other elected bodies in the UK

4.1 Devolved legislatures

In March 2020, **two (1.6%)** of the **Scottish Parliament's** 129 members were from an ethnic minority background: Humza Yousaf (SNP) and Anas Sarwar (Labour)²³. This is the same number as in the 2011 Parliament. As noted above, about 5% of the Scottish population is non-white.²⁴

Two (3.3%) of the 60 Members of the **National Assembly for Wales** were from ethnic minority backgrounds in May 2019. Mohammed (Oscar) Asghar was elected as a Plaid Cymru AM in 2007 and then as a Conservative in 2011 and 2016. Vaughan Gething has been a Labour AM since 2011 and is currently Minister for Health and Social Services.²⁵ As noted above, about 4% of the Welsh population is non-white.²⁶

None of the current 90 Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly were recorded as being from an ethnic minority background in March 2020. Anna Lo represented the Alliance Party in the Assembly between 2007 and 2016 and in doing so became the first Chinese-born Member of a legislature in Europe.²⁷ As noted above, about 2% of the Northern Irish population is non-white.²⁸

4.2 Local government and the Greater London Authority

England

The most recent (2018) Local Government Association census found that **4.2% of councillors were non-White**, up slightly from 4% in 2013.²⁹ This compared with a non-White population of about 15.6%.

In April 2019, an audit of local authorities in England by Operation Black Vote reported that while 14% of councillors were from ethnic minority backgrounds, this proportion varied markedly: in Brent, for instance, 66.7% of the councillors and 64.9% of the population were non-White, but in Brighton and Hove, there were no ethnic minority councillors despite a 10.9% non-White population.³⁰

Scotland

A survey of Scotland's councillors after the 2017 elections found that **2%** of respondents were from ethnic minority groups compared with 4% of Scotland's population as a whole.³¹

²³ [Operation Black Vote](#) (accessed 9 March 2020)

²⁴ Office for National Statistics (2019) [Annual Population Survey](#)

²⁵ National Assembly for Wales, [Your Assembly Members](#) (accessed 19 September 2019)

²⁶ Office for National Statistics (2019) [Annual Population Survey](#)

²⁷ BBC, [Alliance party selects Anna Lo](#)

²⁸ Office for National Statistics (2019) [Annual Population Survey](#)

²⁹ Local Government Association (2019) [National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2018](#)

³⁰ Operation Black Vote, [BAME local political representation audit 2019](#). Local population figures are based on the 2001 Census.

³¹ Improvement Service, [Scotland's Councillors 2017-2022](#), 2017. The response rate was 33.3%.

Wales

The most recent survey of councillors and candidates in Wales (2017) reported that **1.8%** of county and borough councillors who responded were from non-white ethnic groups, up from 0.6% in 2012. The corresponding ethnic minority population of Wales was 4.4%.³²

Northern Ireland

In April 2019, there was **one councillor** of recorded ethnic minority origin in Northern Ireland, out of a total of 462.³³

Greater London Authority

As well as the **Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, seven (28%)** of the 25 Members of the **London Assembly** were from ethnic minority groups in May 2019.³⁴ This compares with about 40% of London's population.

³² Welsh Government, [Local Government Candidates Survey](#). The response rate was 26%.

³³ Northern Ireland Assembly, personal communication.

³⁴ Mayor of London / London Assembly, [Assembly Members](#) and further HoC Library analysis.

5. Public sector organisations

This section reports figures about the ethnic make-up of staff and appointments in a range of public services across the UK. It is important to note that coverage, response rates and dates vary, so figures are not necessarily directly comparable.

For ease of reference, the ethnic breakdown of the UK and each country appears again below. This table also sets out the relative proportions of the White and non-White economically active populations across the UK. In brief, this refers to the number of people aged 16 to 64 who are in employment or available for work. These figures may offer better comparisons for considering diversity in the staffing levels presented in this section.

For various reasons – most notably differing age profiles and participation of women in the workforce – the non-White population usually has a slightly lower representation in the economically active population. As the table below shows, this applies in all countries of the UK except for Wales.

ETHNIC MAKE-UP OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, 2018 (%)							
	England	Wales	England & Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Great Britain	United Kingdom
White^a							
<i>Total population</i>	84.4%	96.2%	85.0%	95.0%	97.6%	85.9%	86.2%
<i>Economically active population</i>	85.7%	95.7%	86.2%	96.0%	98.0%	87.0%	87.3%
All non-White groups							
<i>Total population</i>	15.6%	3.8%	15.0%	5.0%	2.4%	14.1%	13.8%
<i>Economically active population</i>	14.3%	4.3%	13.8%	4.0%	2.0%	13.0%	12.7%

Note: (a) Includes the Irish Traveller category in Northern Ireland.

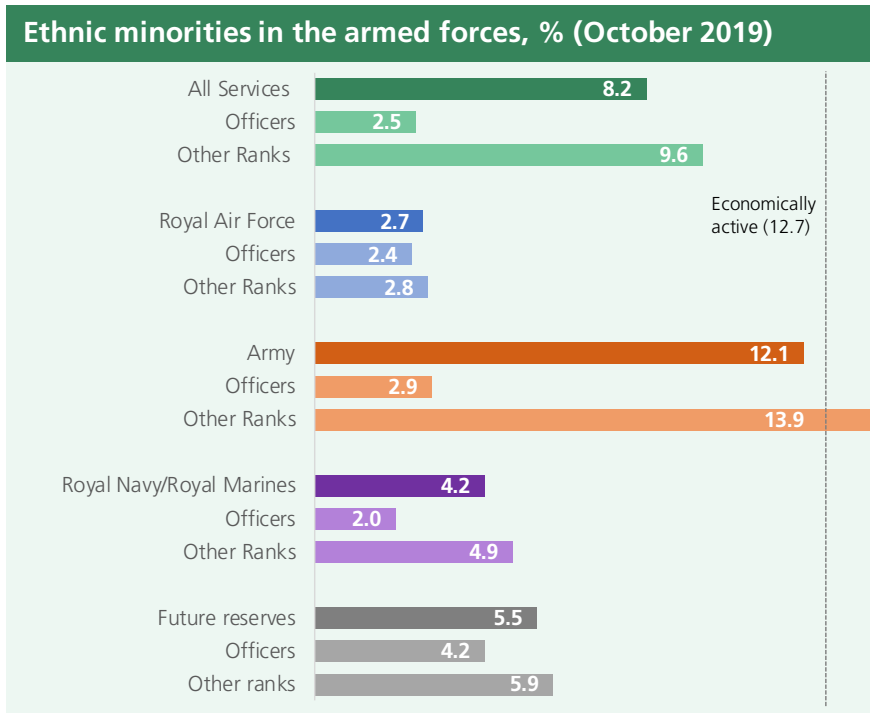
5.1 Armed forces

In October 2019, **8.2% of the personnel in the regular forces** were from ethnic minority backgrounds: However, only **2.5% of the officer ranks** were non-White, compared with **9.6% of other ranks**. By Service, the breakdown was as follows:

- Royal Navy and Royal Marines: 4.2% overall, made up of 2.0% of officers and 4.9% of other ranks.
- Army: 12.1% overall, made up of 2.9% of officers and 13.9% of other ranks.
- Royal Air Force: 2.7% overall, made up of 2.4% of officers and 2.8% of other ranks.

In Future Reserves 2020 (the combined reserve forces of each Service), the overall figure was 5.5%, made up of 4.2% of all officers and 5.9% of other ranks.³⁵

³⁵ GOV.UK [UK armed forces biannual diversity statistics: October 2019](#)

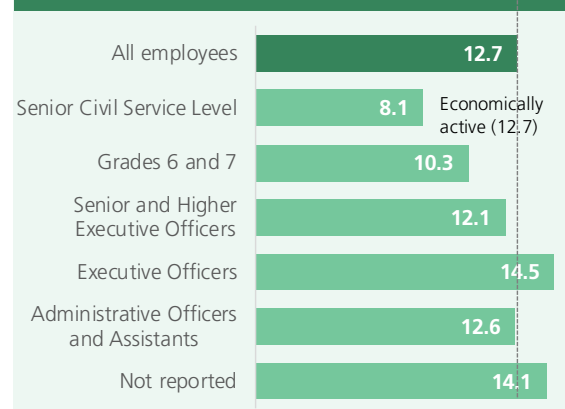


5.2 Civil Service

At the end of March 2019, **12.7%** of UK civil servants were from an ethnic minority background, an increase of 0.7 percentage points from 2018. This is the same proportion as in the economically active population in the UK.

The highest level was at **executive officer grade at 14.5%** (up 0.6 percentage points from 2018), compared with **8.1% for the senior civil service** (up 0.3 percentage points from 2018).³⁶

Ethnic minorities in the Civil Service, % (March 2019)



5.3 National Health Service

Healthcare is a devolved matter, so there are four health services operating in the UK. Statistics on workforce diversity are only published for the NHS England and the NHS Scotland.

England

In March 2019, **20.7% of NHS staff** whose background was recorded were from non-White ethnic groups (0.9 percentage point up from 2018). People identifying as Asian were the biggest group after the White group (10% of NHS staff, compared to 7.2% of the working age population).

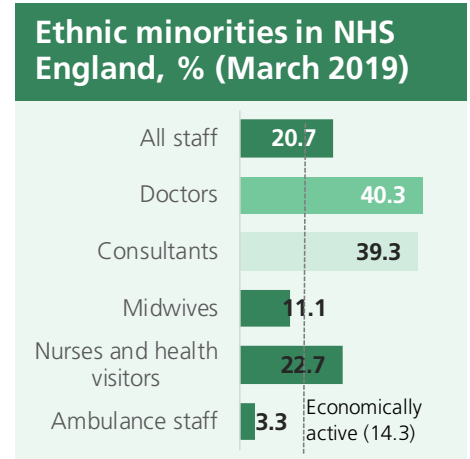
³⁶ ONS, [Civil Service Statistics, UK: 2019](#)

Among **medical staff, 44.4%** identified as non-White, compared with **18.4% of non-medical staff**. 39.3% of consultants were non-White, and 7.1% of very senior managers.³⁷

40.3% of doctors were from non-White groups, 22.7% of nurses and health visitors and 11.1% of midwives. This compared with 3.3% of ambulance staff.³⁸

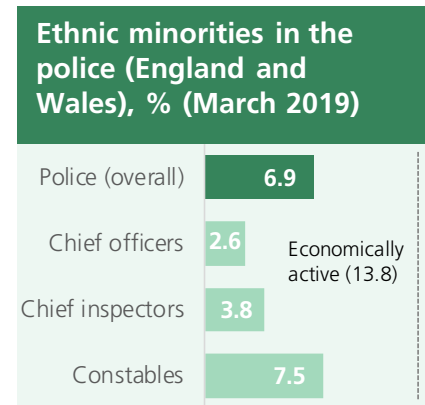
Scotland

In March 2019, 65.3% of Scottish NHS staff reported they were from a White background, while 3.3% identified as being from a non-White group. 12% of staff declined to report their ethnicity, and the ethnicity of 19.4% was unknown.³⁹



5.4 Police

At 31 March 2019, there were 8,329 ethnic minority officers in the 43 **English and Welsh** police forces, an increase of 478 (6%) since the year before. This represents 6.9% of all officers who stated their ethnicity. This proportion has increased every year from the 4.4% recorded in 2009, but is still well below the 14% of the population of England and Wales from ethnic minority groups.



The forces with the highest representation are:

- the Metropolitan Police, with 15% ethnic minority officers (up from 13.4% in 2018, but compared with 40% of the local population);
- the West Midlands Police with 11% (compared with 30%);
- Bedfordshire Police with 10% (compared with 23%).

Despite the increase over time, ethnic minority officers remained less well-represented in the highest ranks: 2.6% of chief officers and 3.8% of chief inspectors were non-White, compared with 7.5% of constables.

Among those who identified as non-White, 'Asian or Asian British' was the largest group.⁴⁰

Police **Scotland** do not publish statistics on the ethnicity of their officers, but reported in response to a Freedom of Information request that in March 2019, 255 (**1.5%**) of its 17,368 police officers were from non-White ethnic groups.⁴¹

The Police Service of **Northern Ireland** reports that in January 2020, **0.53%** of its 6,919 police officers were from an ethnic minority background.⁴²

³⁷ GOV.UK, [Ethnicity facts and figures service – NHS workforce statistics, March 2019](#).

³⁸ NHS Digital, [NHS workforce statistics March 2019](#), (Equality and diversity spreadsheet)

³⁹ Information Services Division, [Workforce statistics: Equality and diversity](#) (spreadsheet)

⁴⁰ GOV.UK, [Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2019 - second edition](#). Local population figures are based on the 2011 census.

⁴¹ WhatDoTheyKnow, [Ethnic backgrounds of employees](#) (accessed 20 March 2019)

⁴² Police Service of Northern Ireland, [Workforce Composition Statistics](#) (accessed 20 March 2019)

5.5 Justice

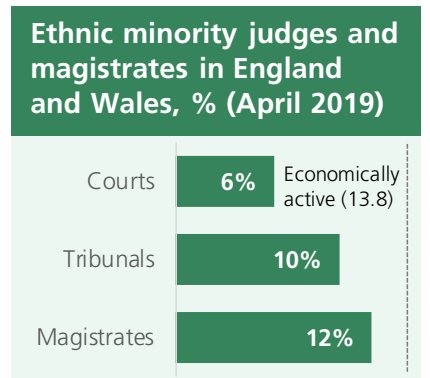
On 1 April 2019, **6% of court judges and 10% of tribunal judges in England and Wales** were from ethnic minority backgrounds. In both cases, this represents a decrease of one percentage point on 2018.

While the figures range from no non-White heads of division (the highest level) to 9% of deputy high court judges, it is important to note that low numbers and variable response rates mean that levels and trends are not always reliable.

The figure for **magistrates**, however, is **12%**. Higher numbers and response rates overall make this figure more reliable.⁴³

No overall information is available for **Scotland**, although a small number of employment tribunals are included in the figures for tribunals above.

In 2018, **1.5% of lay magistrates and 2.5% of tribunal members in Northern Ireland** were from ethnic minority backgrounds. No court-based judges were. For comparison, 1.9% of the economically active population was from an ethnic minority background.⁴⁴



5.6 Teachers

In November 2018, **8.7%** of all teachers (with recorded ethnic background) in state funded schools in **England** were non-White, compared with 6.2% in 2010. The equivalent figure for head teachers was 3.5%, compared with 2.3% in 2010.⁴⁵

In **Scotland**, **1%** of teachers (FTE) were from an ethnic minority background in September 2019.⁴⁶

In **Wales**, **1.2%** of schoolteachers registered with the Education Welfare Council in March 2019 declared that they were from an ethnic minority background.⁴⁷

In **Northern Ireland**, **0.3%** of teachers whose ethnic background was recorded were from non-White groups in April 2019.⁴⁸

5.7 Fire and Rescue Service

In March 2019, **4.3% of firefighters in England** were from ethnic minority groups (up from 4.1% in 2018), as were **5.0%** of all fire and rescue services staff (up from 4.7 in 2018). This compares with 14.6% of the English population at the time of the 2011 Census.⁴⁹

⁴³ Courts and Tribunals Judiciary, [Judicial Diversity Statistics 2019](#)

⁴⁴ Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, [The Judiciary in Northern Ireland 2018: Equality Monitoring Report](#)

⁴⁵ GOV.UK [School workforce in England: November 2018](#)

⁴⁶ Scottish Government, [Summary statistics for schools in Scotland, 2019](#)

⁴⁷ Education Workforce Council [Annual Statistics Digest 2019](#).

⁴⁸ General Teaching Council of Northern Ireland, by correspondence. Details were held for 71.9% of teachers.

⁴⁹ GOV.UK [Fire and rescue workforce and pensions statistics: England April 2018 to March 2019 second edition](#)

In March 2019, **1.2%** of staff of the **Scottish** Fire and Rescue Service were recorded as belonging to an ethnic minority group.⁵⁰

The latest figures available for **Wales** show that in 2013/14, **just under 1%** of Fire and Rescue staff were from ethnic minority groups.⁵¹

In April 2019, the **Northern Ireland** Fire and Rescue Service reported that of the 52.9% of staff whose origin was recorded, 4 (or **0.2%** of all staff) were from ethnic minority groups.⁵²

5.8 Ministerial and public appointments

In **England and Wales**, **13%** of new appointments were made to people from an ethnic minority background, compared with 10% in 2017/18. This was 10.3% for reappointments, giving a total of 11.9% for all appointments (up from 8.4% the year before).⁵³

In **Scotland**, 2.9% of public board members were from an ethnic minority background (compared with 4.0% of the Scottish population). This figure has remained stable since 2004/05, when it was 2.8%. There were no ethnic minority Chairs.⁵⁴

The latest available figures for **Northern Ireland** show that in 2016/17, 3% of applications were from people from ethnic minority groups. 63 appointments were made overall, and as the number of ethnic minority appointees was fewer than five, figures are not reported in order to protect individual confidentiality.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Scottish Fire and Rescue Service [Fire Safety and Organisational Statistics \(Scotland\) 2018-19](#) (tables and charts)

⁵¹ StatsWales [Personnel by ethnicity and financial year](#)

⁵² Personal correspondence

⁵³ The Commissioner for Public Appointments [Annual Report 2018/19](#)

⁵⁴ Ethical Standards Commissioner [Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19](#)

⁵⁵ The Executive Office [Public Appointments: Annual Report for Northern Ireland, 2016/17](#). The protocol for balancing reporting with individual confidentiality is known as disclosure control.

Annex 1: Standard ethnic classifications used in the UK

This briefing paper uses the terms “White” and “non-White” or ethnic minority in line with guidance from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for reporting across the UK.⁵⁶

Classifications and terminology have varied between country and over time. Those used here are based on the 2011 Census and the ONS’ recommendations for monitoring surveys.

In summary, this briefing separates the “White” categories used in England, Wales and Scotland from all other groups. In Northern Ireland, figures for the “Irish Traveller” group are recorded separately from the “White” group, but they are added to “White” figures for UK-level reporting.

⁵⁶ Office of National Statistics: House style: [Language and spelling Race and ethnicity](#)

RECOMMENDED STANDARD ETHNIC CATEGORIES		
England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
White^a English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British ^a Irish ^a Gypsy or Irish Traveller ^a Any other White background ^a	White^a Scottish ^a Other British ^a Irish ^a Gypsy/Traveller ^a Polish ^a Any other White ethnic group ^a	White^a Irish Traveller^a
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups White and Black Caribbean White and Black African White and Asian Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups Any Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups White and Black Caribbean White and Black African White and Asian Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background
Asian/Asian British Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Chinese Any other Asian background	Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British Any other Asian	Asian/Asian British Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Chinese Any other Asian background
Black/ African/Caribbean/ Black British African Caribbean Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	African African, African Scottish or African British Any other African Caribbean or Black Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British Black, Black Scottish or Black British Any other Caribbean or Black	Black/African/ Caribbean/Black British African Caribbean Any other Black/African/Caribbean background
Other ethnic group Arab Any other ethnic group	Other ethnic group Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British Any other ethnic group	Other ethnic group Arab Any other ethnic group

Note: a) Included in "White" in this briefing paper.

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