

Profile of Black and Minority ethnic groups in the UK

David Owen, University of Warwick

Ethnic composition of the population in 2001

The 2001 Census of Population provides the most up-to-date and comprehensive picture of the ethnic composition of the UK population, though the Labour Force Survey, the Annual Population Survey and other regular government surveys can provide more up-to-date *estimates* of the population by ethnic group. For the first time, people living in Northern Ireland were asked to record their ethnic group. The classification used by the 2001 Census was a revised version of that used in 1991, designed to better represent people of mixed parentage, Irish people and people from Black ethnic groups.

The breakdown of the UK population by ethnic group is presented in Table 2 and illustrated graphically in Figure 5. The total minority population in 2001 was 4.6 million (or 7.9 per cent). The largest category was South Asian people, accounting for 2 million people or 3.5 per cent of the population, half of whom were Indian. There were 1.15 million Black people, with more than half a million Black-Caribbean people. The Black African population has grown very rapidly to be almost as large as the Black Caribbean population, which is much longer established. Many of the children of Black-Caribbean parents are allocated to the Mixed parentage ethnic groups, which contain 677 thousand people, almost as many as the number of people from Chinese and Other ethnic groups.

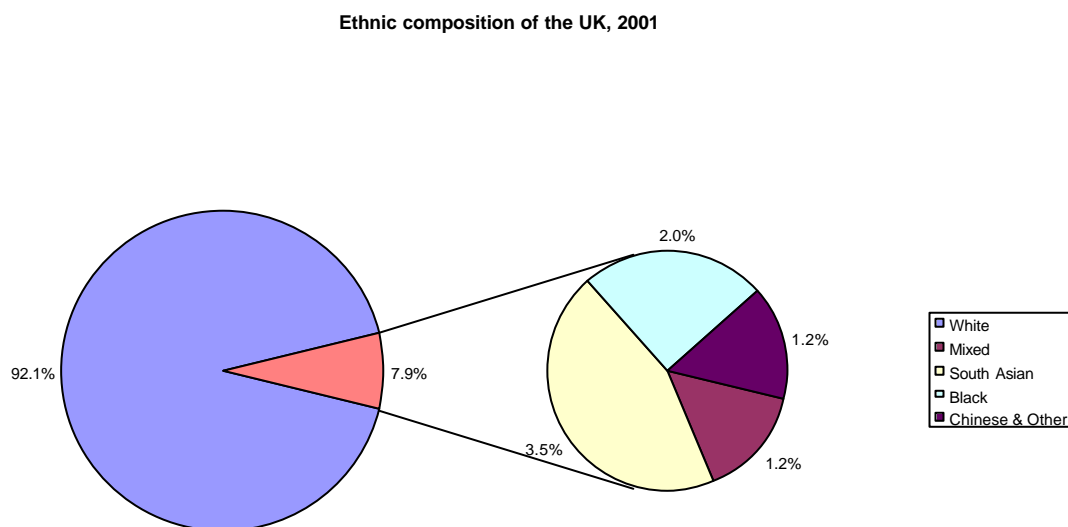


Figure 1: Broad ethnic breakdown of the UK population, 2001

Overall, females outnumber males, accounting for a larger share of the white population than of the population of people from minority ethnic groups. The female share of the population is greatest for Black people, especially Black-Caribbean people, and smallest in the “Other Asian” (mainly people from south-east Asia), Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups.

Table 1: Ethnic composition of the UK, 2001

| Ethnic group | Number | Percent | Males per 1000 females | Mean age in years | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | | | | Males | Females |
| White | 54153898 | 92.1 | 944 | 38.2 | 40.9 |
| Minority ethnic groups | 4635296 | 7.9 | 968 | 28.2 | 28.8 |
| <i>Mixed parentage</i> | 677117 | 1.2 | 968 | 20.1 | 21.3 |
| <i>Asian and Asian British</i> | 2083759 | 3.5 | 1008 | 28.7 | 28.7 |
| Indian | 1053411 | 1.8 | 990 | 32.0 | 32.4 |
| Pakistani | 747285 | 1.3 | 1028 | 25.8 | 25.5 |
| Bangladeshi | 283063 | 0.5 | 1021 | 24.3 | 23.2 |
| <i>Black and Black British</i> | 1148738 | 2.0 | 896 | 30.6 | 31.3 |
| Black Caribbean | 565876 | 1.0 | 864 | 35.4 | 35.8 |
| Black African | 485277 | 0.8 | 932 | 26.6 | 27.1 |
| Black Other | 97585 | 0.2 | 907 | 23.8 | 25.3 |
| <i>Chinese & Other</i> | 725682 | 1.2 | 974 | 30.7 | 31.8 |
| Chinese | 247403 | 0.4 | 929 | 30.7 | 32.2 |
| Other Asian | 247664 | 0.4 | 1212 | 31.5 | 31.1 |
| Other ethnic groups | 230615 | 0.4 | 808 | 29.7 | 32.1 |
| All ethnic groups | 58789194 | 100.0 | 946 | 37.4 | 39.9 |

On average, women are 1.5 years older than men, with white women being just over 40 on average. In contrast, the mean age of people from minority ethnic groups is about ten years less, with little difference between men and women. Among minority ethnic groups, Black-Caribbean people are oldest on average, followed by Indian, Other Asian and Chinese people. At the other extreme, the mean age for people of mixed parentage is just over 20, with Pakistani and Bangladeshi people around 24 or 25 on average. The more youthful age structure of minority ethnic groups relative to white people is apparent from a comparison of Figures 6 and 7. The number of people in each 5-year age group is largest for 30-55 year olds, declining for each younger age group. This reflects the “baby booms” of the late 1940s and 1960s, and the decline in fertility thereafter. In contrast, the shape of the minority pyramid is more triangular, with children outnumbering older people, indicating that population growth will remain rapid well into the 21st century. However, the number of people of retirement age from both white and minority ethnic groups will increase substantially in the next few decades.

Table 2: Religious breakdown of Great Britain, 2001

| | Persons | Percent | Percent answered | Percent with religion |
|-----------------------|----------|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| ALL PEOPLE | 57103927 | 100.0 | | |
| Christian | 41014811 | 71.8 | 77.9 | 93.1 |
| Buddhist | 149157 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Hindu | 558342 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1.3 |
| Jewish | 267373 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 |
| Muslim | 1588890 | 2.8 | 3.0 | 3.6 |
| Sikh | 336179 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.8 |
| All other religions | 159167 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| With religious belief | 44073919 | 77.2 | 83.7 | 100.0 |
| No religion | 8596488 | 15.1 | 16.3 | |
| Answered question | 52670407 | 92.2 | 100.0 | |
| Religion not stated | 4433520 | 7.8 | | |

Data on religion was collected by the Census in Great Britain for the first time in 2001 (Table 2). This was a voluntary question and 7.8 per cent of respondents to the Census did not complete it. Among people who answered the religion question, more than three-quarters declared themselves to be Christian, while 16.3 per cent professed not to have a religion. The largest minority religion was Islam, with more than 1.5 million Muslims enumerated. There were over half a million Hindus, and 329 thousand Sikhs. Overall, 6.6 per cent of those with a religious faith had a religion drawn from one of the minority religions identified in the question.

Geographical distribution of the minority population, 2001

Migrants from the New Commonwealth who came to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s in search of work tended to settle in London, Birmingham and other industrial cities and towns of the midlands and northern England, where jobs in manufacturing industry and public sector services were readily available. Minority ethnic groups are highly concentrated geographically within the UK. The main areas of concentration are Greater London, the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and the Leicester/Nottingham corridor in the East Midlands (Table 3). More than a quarter of the population of Greater London is from minority ethnic groups, while a fifth of the population of the West Midlands (former) metropolitan county is from a minority ethnic group. Elsewhere, the minority share of the population only exceeds the UK average in Greater Manchester. At the other extreme, only just over 2 per cent of the populations of the Northern region of England, Wales and Scotland (and less than 1 per cent of the Northern Ireland population) are from minority ethnic groups.

Table 3: Minority population change by region, 1971-2001

| Region, country or metropolitan county | Total population 2001 | % change 1971-2001 | Minority ethnic group population | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| | | | 1971 Percent | 1981 Percent | 1991 Percent | 2001 Percent | |
| | | | | | | | Minority population (000s) |
| South East | 18386.9 | 12.7 | 4.3 | 7.4 | 9.9 | 13.4 | 2460.5 |
| Greater London | 7172.1 | -0.6 | 7.9 | 14.3 | 20.2 | 28.8 | 2068.9 |
| East Anglia | 2174.0 | 35.2 | 0.7 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 3.2 | 69.0 |
| South West | 4928.4 | 26.4 | 0.8 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 5.2 | 585.8 |
| West Midlands | 5267.3 | 5.3 | 4.1 | 6.4 | 8.2 | 11.3 | 593.0 |
| West Midlands MC | 2555.6 | -7.0 | 6.8 | 10.9 | 14.6 | 20.0 | 512.4 |
| East Midlands | 4172.2 | 17.6 | 2 | 3.7 | 4.8 | 6.5 | 271.8 |
| Yorkshire&Humberside | 4964.8 | 4.1 | 1.9 | 3.2 | 4.5 | 6.5 | 323.6 |
| West Yorkshire | 2079.2 | 2.7 | 3.4 | 5.9 | 8.2 | 11.4 | 236.4 |
| North West | 6242.2 | -3.1 | 1.3 | 2.7 | 3.9 | 5.9 | 370.7 |
| Greater Manchester | 2482.3 | -7.5 | 2.1 | 3.9 | 5.9 | 8.9 | 221.8 |
| North | 3003.0 | -2.2 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 1.3 | 2.1 | 63.6 |
| Tyne & Wear | 1075.9 | -9.6 | 0.4 | 1 | 1.8 | 3.2 | 34.0 |
| Wales | 2903.1 | 9.2 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 61.6 |
| Scotland | 5062.0 | 0.2 | 0.4 | - | 1.2 | 2.0 | 101.7 |
| Great Britain | 57103.9 | 9.0 | 2.4 | 4.2 | 5.5 | 8.1 | 4622.7 |

Note: Data missing for Scotland in 1981

In spite of the general tendency for people to leave the cities and move to smaller towns and rural areas, and the massive loss of jobs in the larger urban areas, people from minority ethnic groups have remained geographically concentrated into the major cities. Table 3 demonstrates that the share of minority ethnic groups in the main areas of settlement steadily increased between 1971 and 2001, at the same time as these regions and metropolitan counties were losing population in relative terms to the areas of more recent employment

growth, notably East Anglia and South West England. Thus, the spatial separation between the white and minority ethnic groups has been maintained over this period. Since the mid-1980s, the population decline of the larger cities has been halted by the growth of the minority ethnic group population, and London's population has been increasing over this period, driven by high rates of net international migration.

Table 4 emphasises the regional concentration of minority ethnic groups within the UK. Greater London contains only one-eighth of the population of the UK, but nearly half the minority population (and a fifth live in Inner London). A further eighth lives in the West Midlands metropolitan county. More than two-thirds of people from Black ethnic groups live in Greater London, the bulk of the remainder living in the West Midlands metropolitan county and the South East beyond London. More than a third of South Asian people live in Greater London (a larger share of whom live in Outer London), with the second largest concentration being in the West Midlands, followed by the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber and the East Midlands.

Table 4: Regional distribution of ethnic groups

| Government Office Region | All people | All | White | Mixed | South Asian | Black | Chinese & Other | Minority ethnic groups |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-----------------|------------------------|
| ENGLAND | 49138831 | 83.6 | 82.5 | 95.0 | 96.5 | 98.6 | 92.8 | 96.2 |
| NORTH EAST | 2515442 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 1.8 | 1.5 | 0.3 | 1.9 | 1.3 |
| NORTH WEST | 6729764 | 11.4 | 11.7 | 9.2 | 10.3 | 3.6 | 7.6 | 8.1 |
| Greater Manchester (Met County) | 2482328 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.9 | 6.3 | 2.6 | 3.9 | 4.8 |
| YORKSHIRE & HUMBER | 4964833 | 8.4 | 8.6 | 6.6 | 10.1 | 3.0 | 4.7 | 7.0 |
| West Yorkshire (Met County) | 2079211 | 3.5 | 3.4 | 3.7 | 8.3 | 1.8 | 2.4 | 5.1 |
| EAST MIDLANDS | 4172174 | 7.1 | 7.2 | 6.4 | 7.5 | 3.4 | 4.4 | 5.9 |
| West Midlands (Met County) | 2555592 | 4.3 | 3.8 | 8.1 | 15.6 | 8.3 | 5.3 | 11.1 |
| WEST MIDLANDS | 5267308 | 9.0 | 8.6 | 10.8 | 17.5 | 9.1 | 7.0 | 12.8 |
| EAST | 5388140 | 9.2 | 9.5 | 8.6 | 5.2 | 4.2 | 6.7 | 5.7 |
| LONDON | 7172091 | 12.2 | 9.4 | 33.4 | 35.2 | 68.1 | 45.0 | 44.6 |
| Inner London | 2766114 | 4.7 | 3.4 | 15.9 | 12.3 | 39.6 | 17.9 | 20.5 |
| Outer London | 4405977 | 7.5 | 6.1 | 17.5 | 22.9 | 28.6 | 27.0 | 24.1 |
| SOUTH EAST | 8000645 | 13.6 | 14.1 | 12.7 | 7.8 | 5.0 | 11.8 | 8.4 |
| SOUTH WEST | 4928434 | 8.4 | 8.9 | 5.5 | 1.3 | 1.8 | 3.7 | 2.4 |
| WALES | 2903085 | 4.9 | 5.2 | 2.6 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 2.0 | 1.3 |
| SCOTLAND | 5062011 | 8.6 | 9.2 | 1.9 | 2.3 | 0.7 | 4.4 | 2.2 |
| Great Britain | 57103927 | 97.1 | 96.9 | 99.5 | 99.9 | 99.9 | 99.2 | 99.7 |
| NORTHERN IRELAND | 1685267 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.8 | 0.3 |
| United Kingdom | 58789194 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Figure 2 presents the detailed local distribution of the minority population of Great Britain in 2001. This highlights the highly localised geographical distribution of people from minority ethnic groups within regions. The largest concentrations of people from minority ethnic groups occurred in Greater London, the West Midlands, the Pennine towns and the cities of the East Midlands. A general spread of the minority population outwards into the remainder of the South East and into the Midlands and North West is apparent. However, in Wales and Scotland the minority population remains concentrated in the major cities and the minority share of the population remains very small in the areas of England outside the main axis of urbanisation stretching from London to Leeds.

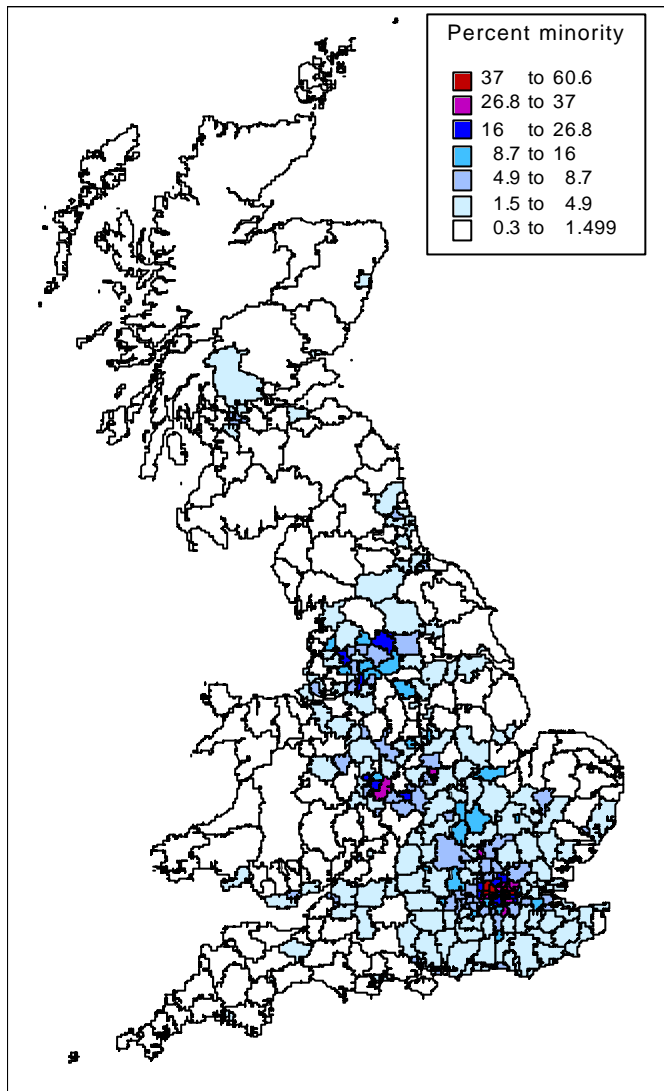


Figure 2: Great Britain - percentage of resident population from minority ethnic groups, 2001

Age structure

The Black and Minority ethnic population of Great Britain is substantially younger on average than white people. This is demonstrated in Figures 3a to 3d, which present age/sex pyramids for white and BME people as a whole, and for individual ethnic groups within the broad groupings of minority groups. In Figure 3(a), the base of the pyramid for BME people is much wider than that of white people, demonstrating the much larger percentage of children and young people in the BME population. The white population is 'stable', with the largest age cohort being people in middle age, reflecting the high fertility of the immediate post-war years and the 1960s. The lower panel of Figure 3(a) presents the population in each age group of white and BME people, emphasising the decreasing BME share of the population as age increases.

Figure 3(a) Contrasting white and minority ethnic group age structures, 2001

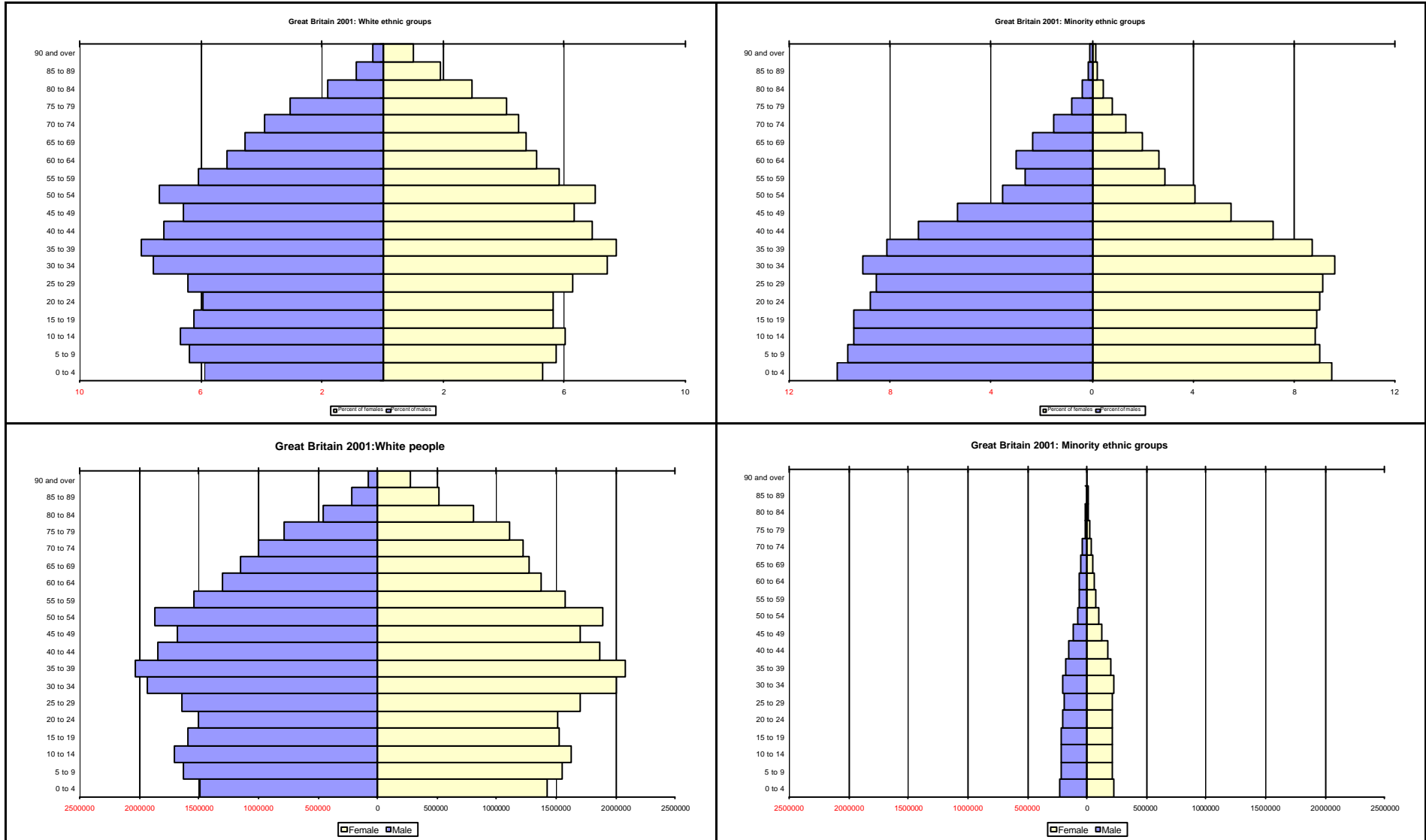


Figure 3(b) Asian and Asian British ethnic groups

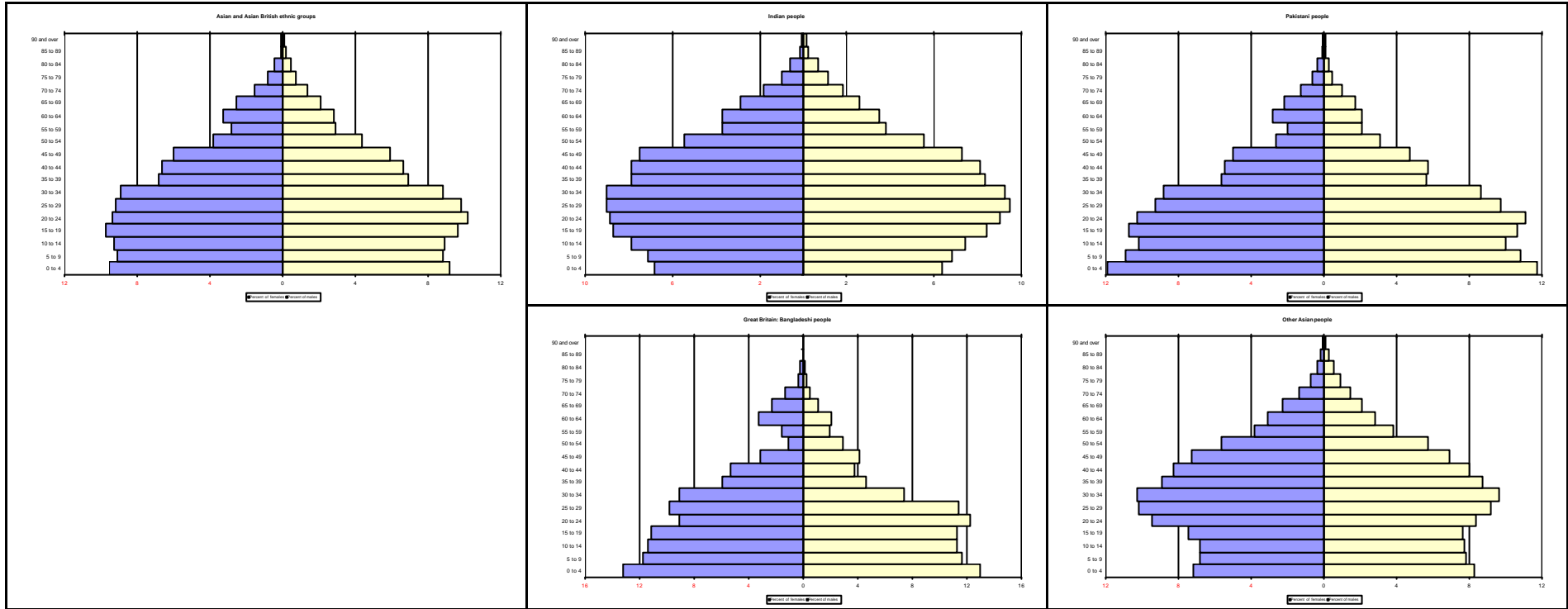


Figure 3(c) Black and Black British ethnic groups

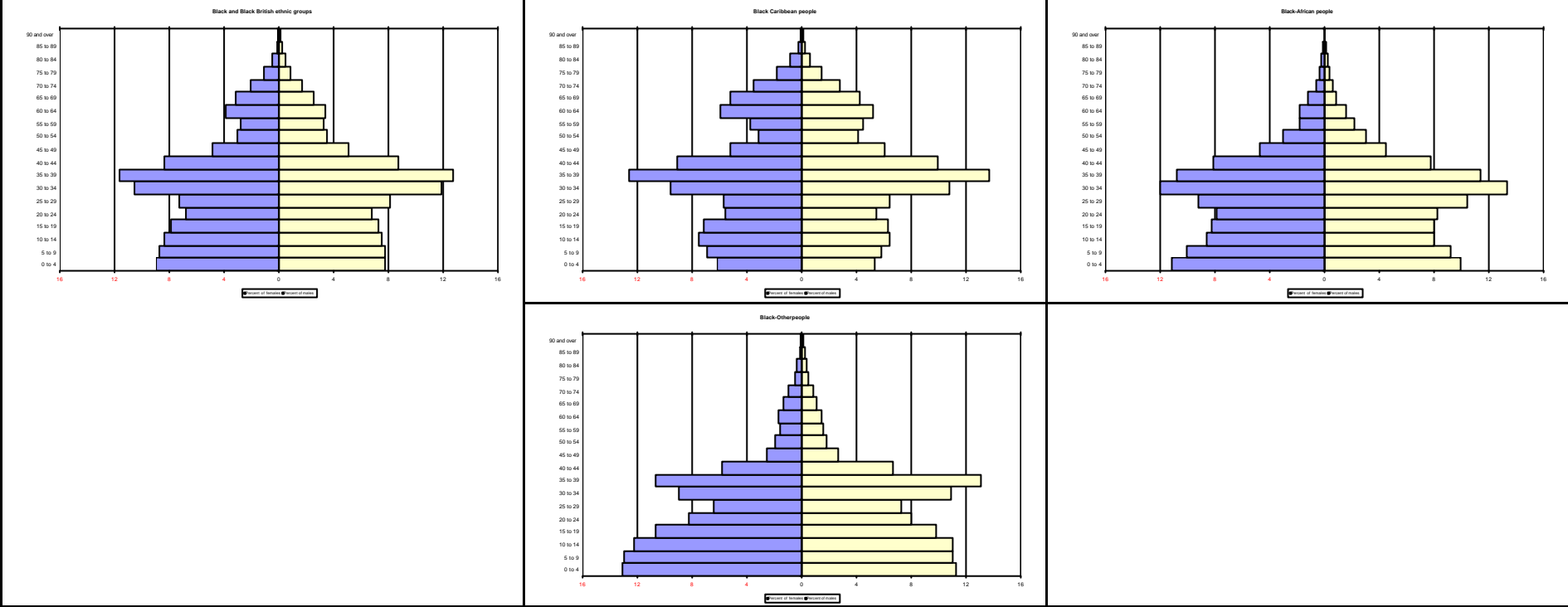
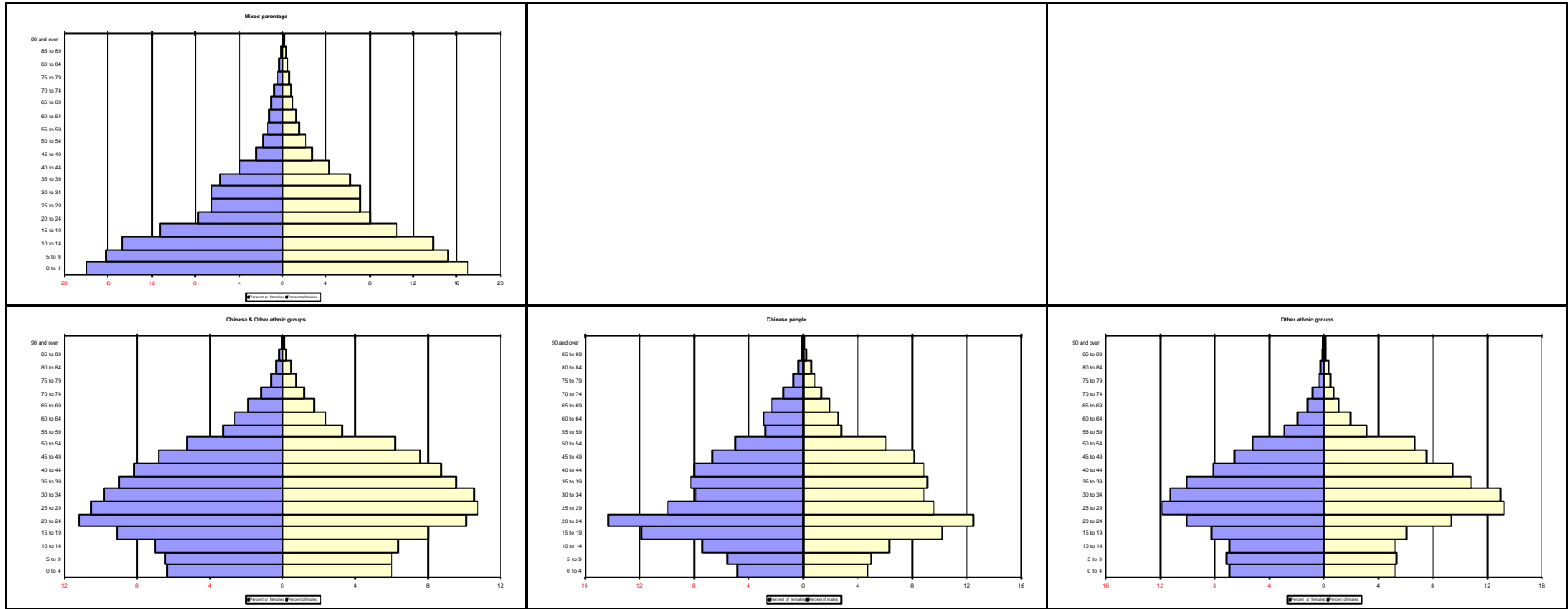


Figure 3(d) Mixed parentage and “Other” ethnic groups



There are substantial differences between the age structures of individual minority ethnic groups. The Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups are very youthful, reflecting high rates of fertility. The Black-Other population is even more youthful, but the most youthful and most rapidly growing population is people of mixed parentage.

The Indian and Black-Caribbean populations display fewer people in the younger age ranges than in the middle age range, reflecting an ageing population, following the period of migration and high fertility. Three ‘generations’ (migrants, their children and their grandchildren) can just be discerned in the age/sex pyramid for the Black-Caribbean ethnic group.

The Chinese, Asian Other and Other populations are heavily biased towards the working age population, reflecting migration of economically active adults. The Black-African population displays similar features, but also a large number of children, indicating that the initial migrant generation (over three-fifths of Black-Africans have come to the UK since 1990) is currently experiencing high fertility rates.

Economic circumstances of ethnic groups

Table 5: Economic activity by ethnic group, United Kingdom 2004

| | employ ment rate | Males 16-64 | | Females 16-59 | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Economi c activity rate | unemplo yment rate | Economi c activity rate | Unempl oyment rate |
| White | 76.3 | 84.3 | 4.7 | 74.9 | 4.0 |
| <i>Black and Minority Ethnic</i> | 59.6 | 75.8 | 10.3 | 57.0 | 10.3 |
| Mixed parentage | 63.0 | 76.7 | 13.6 | 67.6 | 11.0 |
| Indian | 69.8 | 80.8 | 5.0 | 66.0 | 6.3 |
| Pakistani | 45.2 | 72.2 | 10.6 | 32.7 | 21.0 |
| Bangladeshi | 42.5 | 70.2 | 15.1 | 26.8 | - |
| Other Asian | 64.6 | 78.6 | 10.1 | 62.4 | - |
| Black Caribbean | 69.0 | 80.7 | 12.7 | 75.6 | 10.4 |
| Black African | 56.4 | 73.9 | 14.5 | 58.1 | 12.6 |
| Chinese | 55.5 | 64.9 | - | 56.7 | - |
| Other ethnic groups | 57.4 | 73.5 | 10.5 | 54.6 | 10.3 |
| All ethnic groups | 74.8 | 83.6 | 5.1 | 73.3 | 4.4 |

Note : a dash is used where the weighted count upon which a percentage is based is less than 6000

Table 5 summarises the labour market circumstances of men and women from each ethnic group of economically active age (aged 16-64 for men and 16-59 for women) in the UK, using data from the Labour Force Survey. Overall, white people are more likely to be active in the labour market than people from minority ethnic groups, who are two and a half times as likely as white people to be unemployed. Economic activity rates are higher for men than women, while the overall female unemployment rate is lower than that for men. The UK government Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force is working to reduce the differential between white and BME people in the percentage in employment, but in 2004, this stood at 16.7 per cent. This differential was narrowest for Indian and Black-Caribbean people, but just greatest for Pakistani and Bangladeshi people, for whom only just over two-fifths of adults were in work.

White men display higher economic activity rates and lower unemployment rates than men from all minority ethnic groups. Indian and Black-Caribbean men have the highest economic activity rates and Chinese men the lowest. The unemployment rate is highest for Bangladeshi, Black-African men and men of mixed parentage. The unemployment rate for Pakistani and Black-Caribbean men is well over twice the average for all ethnic groups. Chinese and Indian men experience unemployment rates similar to white men.

Amongst women, a slightly higher percentage of Black-Caribbean than white women are economically active. Indian and Other-Asian women are the next most likely to be engaged in the labour market. For most other ethnic groups, over half of all women aged 16 to 59 are economically active, but Pakistani (32.7 per cent) and Bangladeshi women (26.8 per cent) are distinctive in displaying extremely low economic activity rates. The unemployment rate is extremely high for Pakistani women (and Bangladeshi women, though the LFS sample included too few to report), around twice the corresponding male rate. The unemployment rate for women from Black, mixed parentage and Other ethnic groups is more than twice the average for all women. The Indian female unemployment rate is lowest, but still 50 per cent higher than that for white women.

Health differentials

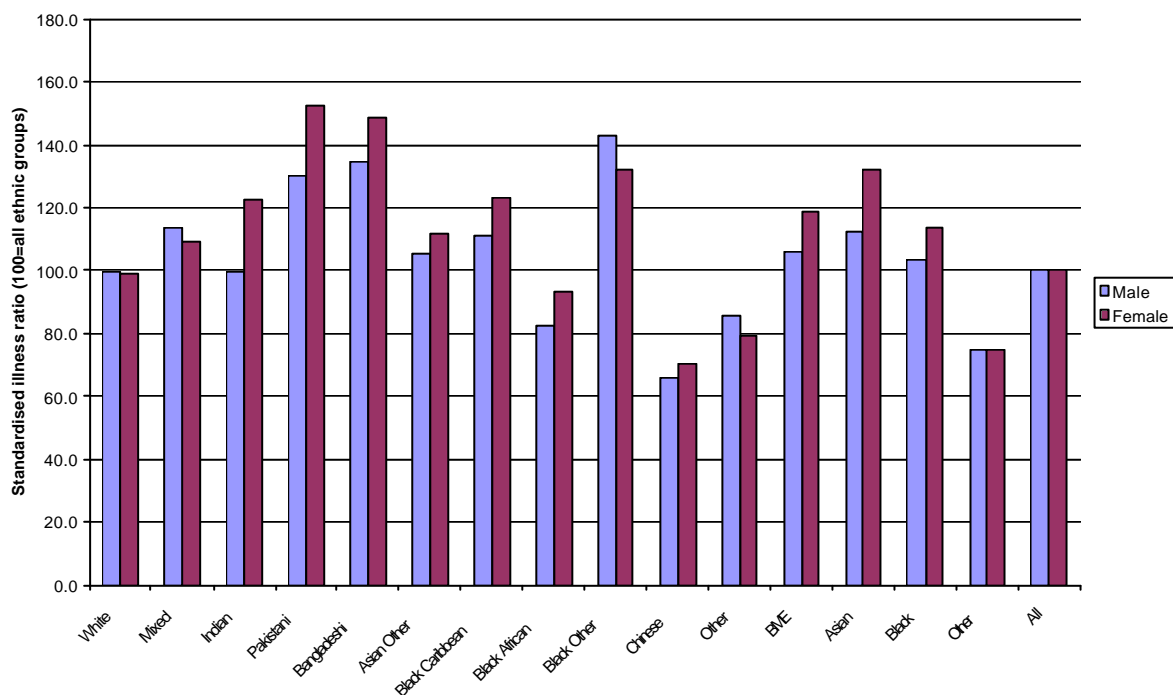


Figure 4: Incidence of limiting long-term illness by ethnic group and gender, UK 2001

Figure 4 presents age-standardized differentials in the incidence of long-term limiting illness by ethnic group and gender for the UK in 2001, calculated using the (Sample of Anonymised Records). In many ethnic groups, women are more likely than men to suffer limiting long-term illness, after the effect of age differentials are controlled for. The female/female differential is relatively small in most ethnic groups. The likelihood of long-term illness was highest for Pakistani and Bangladeshi people, followed by Black-Other, Black-Caribbean and

Indian people. Illness rates were below average for Black-African people and well below average for Chinese people and people from other ethnic groups.

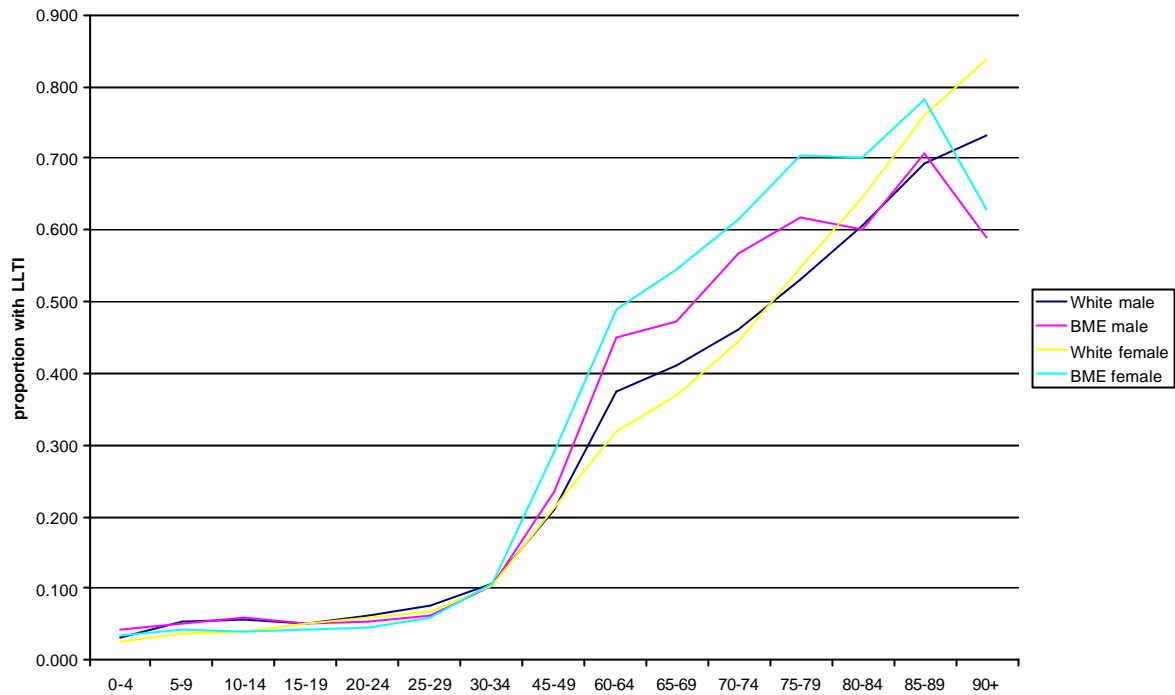


Figure 5: Proportion of white and BME males and females with limiting long-term illness, by age UK 2001

The likelihood of experiencing a long-term limiting illness increased with age for both white and BME people. Under 1 per cent of people experience a long-term illness until the 30-34 age group, after which illness rates increase substantially. A differential between white and BME people emerges with increasing age, with BME people more likely than white people to have long-term illness and BME women experiencing higher rates of illness than BME men. The gender differential is smaller for white people. The ethnic differential in illness rates narrows in the oldest section of the population.

The Labour Force Survey records the incidence of a number of health problems. Table 6 presents the percentage of people of all ages who experienced a range of health problems, comparing white people with people from some of the largest minority ethnic groups.

For white people, the most commonly reported problems were “heart blood pressure circulation”, and “chest breathing problems”, followed by “back or neck” and “legs or feet”. For men from BME groups, these were also the most important illnesses, though the percentage experiencing them was smaller. One notable difference was the much higher percentage of BME than white men experiencing diabetes; the second largest health problem for Black –Caribbean men. BME women also experience a much higher incidence of diabetes than white women. Heart and circulation problems are more common among Black-Caribbean women than white women.

Table 6: Percentage of people experiencing health problems, by ethnic group and gender, UK 2004

| | Male | | | | Female | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|---------------|------------------------|--------|--------|---------------|------------------------|
| | White | Indian | Pakistan i | Black Caribbe an | White | Indian | Pakistan i | Black Caribbe an |
| Arms hands | 1.5 | - | - | - | 2.2 | 1.9 | - | - |
| Legs or feet | 4.0 | 2.3 | - | 2.7 | 4.7 | 3.1 | 2.3 | 3.3 |
| Back or neck | 3.7 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 3.4 | 4.6 | 3.1 | 2.7 | 4.3 |
| Difficulty in seeing | 0.8 | - | - | - | 0.8 | - | - | - |
| Difficulty in hearing | 1.0 | - | - | - | 0.8 | - | - | - |
| Speech impediment | 0.0 | - | - | - | 0.0 | - | - | - |
| Skin conditions allergies | 0.7 | - | - | - | 0.7 | - | - | - |
| Chest breathing problems | 3.9 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 4.5 | 3.8 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 3.8 |
| Heart blood pressure circulation | 6.8 | 5.0 | 3.7 | 5.4 | 5.9 | 2.9 | 3.5 | 6.1 |
| Stomach liver kidney digestion | 1.6 | - | 1.6 | - | 1.7 | - | - | - |
| Diabetes | 1.9 | 4.2 | 2.9 | 5.1 | 1.4 | 2.3 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| Depression bad nerves | 1.0 | - | - | - | 1.5 | - | - | - |
| Epilepsy | 0.4 | - | - | - | 0.3 | - | - | - |
| Learning difficulties | 0.5 | - | - | - | 0.3 | - | - | - |
| Mental illness phobia panics | 0.5 | - | - | - | 0.5 | - | - | - |
| Progressive illness n.e.c. | 1.2 | - | - | - | 1.4 | - | - | - |
| Other problems disabilities | 1.9 | - | - | - | 3.2 | 2.4 | 1.9 | - |

Note : a dash is used where the weighted count upon which a percentage is based is less than 6000