

POPULATION AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

There are about 60 million people living in Britain. England, with 50 million inhabitants, has the highest population density, Scotland the lowest. Britain has been home to immigrant groups for many centuries. As a result 3,700,000 people – 6.5% of the British population – belong to ethnic minorities. Since the Industrial Revolution England has attracted large numbers of people from Scotland, Wales and Ireland. In the 19th and 20th centuries there were also significant waves of refugees – Russian, Jews, Vietnamese.

The largest ethnic minorities are those of Caribbean, African and Indian descent who came from ex colonies in the 1950s.

However, about 80% of the UK population is still classified as English, about 10% as Scottish, and about 3 and a half per cent as Welsh and Irish. The diversity of cultures has enriched and influenced many aspects of British society, including food, business, ideas, music and the arts. Many ethnic minority groups are concentrated in particular areas and although white and non-white young people mix in school and college, integration is not always easy.

RELIGION IN BRITAIN

Religious freedom and tolerance are guaranteed in Britain. Everyone has freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Main religions in Britain

Members of the Church of England *35 million*

Catholic *5 million*

Muslim *1,5 million*

Other religions include Sikh, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist.

Read the text on national identity and answer the following questions.

1. What aspects of British society have influenced by other cultures?
2. Why is it difficult to speak of a British identity?
3. How would you describe an Englishman?