

LUTON: THE IRISH DIMENSION

An exploration of 2001 Census Data

A report prepared for the



Federation of Irish Societies

This report, one of a suite of twenty four, is an outcome of a research project on the Irish data in the 2001 Census. The research project was funded by the Díon Committee.

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The Federation of Irish Societies is a national umbrella body representing and providing services to its affiliated organisations throughout Britain. These organisations include welfare advice agencies, day centres, community care services, clubs, social and cultural organisations and housing providers; as well as projects to meet specific needs of particular sections of the community, such as

Luton:
the Irish dimension

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FIS foreword

We are very pleased to be able to publish the suite of reports which FIS has commissioned from Word-Works and which focus on the Irish data in the 2001 Census. This data and commentaries are presented in a comparative context at national, regional and selected local levels, and on the basis of the full sixteen categories from the 2001 Census Ethnic Group Question.

These reports indicate the diversity in the performance of ethnic minority groups in Britain. They show that the statistical profile of the identified white Irish places them closer to white British and Indian in many respects than, for example, more radically marginalised groups like Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, refugees and asylum seekers.

Nevertheless, Irish deficits exist, most visibly in the area of health. They extend to related areas like levels of economic activity, where limiting long-term injury and disability contribute. The specific age profile of the white Irish population, with its bias towards older people, has implications in terms of care needs, as have the high proportions of white Irish single- and two-pensioner households. At the same time, the proportions of those white Irish without qualifications and working in the building industry point to the need for training/retraining towards integration/retention in the labour market. Indeed, government initiatives around health aspects of local regeneration, extension of working life, and reengagement of those with disabilities in the labour market, increase the importance of Irish community inclusion in order to achieve targets.

It is important that the duality of the performance of the Irish in Britain – that combination of high achievement and disadvantage/social exclusion, which is by no means unique to the Irish community among British ethnic minority communities – should not distract attention from issues that need to be addressed.

That there are sections of the Irish population who have multiple needs, are marginalised, and have information, support and service needs which need to be addressed was clearly indicated by the data provided by the FIS/AGIY Standardised Information System, collected from our front line agencies and published between 1994 and 2003. This and other documentation with a strong local thrust (for example, the valuable L Simpson et al., *Ethnic minority populations and the Labour Market: an analysis of the 1991 and 2001 Censuses* (DWP 2006)), emphasise the need for good local intelligence and greater and easier access to small-area statistics.

We have been disappointed by the structuring of much of the analysis of ethnicity data from the 2001 Census published to date, particularly the use of various “combined ethnic group categories” and the failure to disaggregate the White “combined group” data. These procedures ignore one of the most significant findings of T Madood et al. *Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage* (PSI 1997) with relevance to policy formation, as well as such examples of good practice as *Collecting ethnic category data: Guidance and training material for implementation of the new ethnic categories* (DH 2001). Increasingly, micro-decisions about delivery of services take place at a local level. Those with local responsibility under the Race Relations Acts for addressing inequalities must have the best possible local data on all significant communities (including minority ethnic communities) at their disposal, and must use it in an inclusive way to inform their policies.

We thank Word-Works for providing us with this suite of reports, which we commend to our affiliates, our partners in the British voluntary sector, and to those with a responsibility for policy formation and the delivery of services. We hope they will prove useful in raising the profile of the needs of ethnic minority populations, including our own.



*Dr Mary Tilki, Chair
Federation of Irish Societies
May 2007*

Author's Introduction

The Census has long been the most extensive, if not the most comprehensive, source of information about the population of England and Wales.

This has not been the case for the Irish population however. Although previously asked whether they were members of other minority ethnic groups, it was not until the 2001 Census that they were asked whether they were Irish. In the 1991 Census, the Irish population was identified from a combination of country of birth data and those instances where people had taken the initiative to write in their Irish identity.

The Census is based largely on a series of tick box type questions which are quick to fill in and easy to understand. This approach means that highly complex topics have to be condensed into just a few words.

Ethnic origin is one area which can suffer greatly from this treatment as it is so very complex. Potential problems arising in relation to Irish identity are discussed in the reports, most comprehensively in Section 1 of *England: the Irish dimension*.

It is important to examine the information derived from the Census to learn about the Irish population, in order to identify any specific provisions appropriate to meeting their needs. It is to assist this process that the Federation is publishing this series of commissioned reports on the Irish dimension of Census 2001.

The Census has provided us with an enormous quantity of data. These reports examine key elements of that data and make comparison, where appropriate, with data relating to the white British population and other minority ethnic populations.

Summary findings of the analysis of the Irish dimension of the 2001 Census are set out below and in the series of key data to be found at the beginning of each report.

1. The age of the white Irish population

The white Irish population of England and Wales, indicated by the 2001 Census data, is a comparatively older population. In England, the proportion of children identified – those aged under 16 – is very low: 6% in comparison with 20% when looking at the population of England as a whole. In London and the South East, the proportion of white Irish children is slightly higher (7% and 6% respectively), whereas it is slightly smaller in the South West and the North West (both slightly under 5%).

The issue of the proportion of children recorded is complicated by the fact that children born to Irish parents may not be classified in the Census as white Irish. If they have one Irish parent and one British parent, for example, they may be classified as white British or white other.

At the other end of the age scale, the white Irish population has a large proportion of people who are of pensionable age. Between 20% (London) and 32% (the West Midlands) are aged 65 or older.

With between a fifth and a third of the population of this age, there are consequences for the population in terms of economic activity, health and welfare. For example, when looking at the white Irish population as a whole, the level of economic activity is low – this is due at least in part to the proportion of people who are retired.

The white Irish population also exhibits the highest level of people who describe themselves as being in 'not good health' of all the ethnic groups listed. When data is broken down by age, it can be seen that this is largely (although not solely) because the population has such a high proportion of older people, who are far more likely to describe themselves as being in 'not good health'.

One of the consequences of an older population is a higher proportion of women – simply due to the greater longevity of women. In London for example, 58% of the white Irish population is female. In the South East 62% of the white Irish 65 and older population is female. In England as a whole, 53% of the white Irish population (of all ages) is female.

Another related consequence of an older population is the proportion of people who are living alone – typically women who have outlived their male spouses. A fifth of white Irish households comprise a pensioner living alone.

Given the older age profile of the white Irish population identified in the Census, as well as the proportion of white Irish households which are single or two pensioner households, provision of statutory and unpaid/informal care is a significant issue. The Census indicated that, in England, 4% of pensionable age white Irish men were themselves providing 50 or more hours a week of unpaid care, that 1.7% of working age white Irish men were providing the same amount of weekly care, and that 8.6% of working age white Irish women were providing 1 to 19 hours a week of unpaid care.

In addition to the informal and formal care being provided in the community, 0.44% of the white Irish population are being cared for in psychiatric hospitals and homes, nursing homes and residential homes, as opposed to 0.28% of the whole population.

2. Education and qualifications

The findings of the 2001 Census in this area present a mixed picture. At one level, the white Irish population performs very well, in terms of the proportion attaining the highest qualifications (levels 4/5 – degrees, PhDs, professional qualifications).

Among white Irish aged 25 to 34, the proportion so qualified reached 46% - with regional variations ranging from 36% (West Midlands) to 54% (North East England), proportions, in each case, more than double that found in the equivalent white British population. Even 22% of 16 to 24 year old white Irish people in England have qualifications at this level, although some of the qualifications would be outside their age range.

This pattern of relatively high attainment continues up to the age group 35 to 49. After this age, the attainment levels reduce to the levels of the white British population.

One of the main reasons for the comparatively low levels of economic activity amongst white Irish 16 to 24 year olds, is the large proportion of white Irish individuals who are in full-time education. The proportion here is much greater than in the equivalent white British population, rising to 69% in the North East of England. Levels of economic activity in this group range between 4% and 10% below the level of economic activity in the white British population.

The Census data suggests that, while a proportion of white Irish people in England have high level qualifications, there is also a significant proportion who have no qualifications at all. 12% of white Irish 16 to 24 year olds have no qualifications (from 9% in the North East to 17% in the West Midlands). This proportion rises with age. Amongst white Irish 65 to 74 year olds, 70% in England have no qualifications. This ranges from 60% in the South East to 77% in the West Midlands.

In each group over the age of 49, there is a greater proportion of white Irish people with no qualifications at all than in the population as a whole. For example 62% of white Irish people in England aged between 60 and 64 have no qualifications, in comparison with 54% of the general population.

3. Work

The 1991 and 2001 Censuses provide evidence that Irish men are commonly to be found working 'on the buildings'. The 2001 Census found that this was true for around a fifth of white Irish men of working age. Between 13% in North East England and 22% in the West Midlands are working in construction – 20% in England as a whole. These are far higher proportions than those found in any other ethnic population. Working in construction has possible implications for other areas of life. It can have a seasonal or temporary element leaving numbers of men out of work for periods of time. It can also be dangerous and exhausting work. It is an industry which reflects the peaks and troughs of the economy. With so many white Irish people working 'on the buildings', there is inevitably a glut of people needing to retrain at times when there is an economic downturn or when individuals need to move on for other reasons such as age and illness.

Between a quarter and a third of white Irish women are working in health and social services. This is a far greater proportion than in the white British population and on a par with the Black African and Black Caribbean populations. Much care work and nursing work, while not seasonal or temporary, can be low-paid or may involve anti-social hours.

A significant proportion of white Irish men work in professional occupations. 15% of white Irish men in England are in professional occupations (compared to 12% of white British men). In some English regions, the picture is much more exaggerated. For example, in the North East, 27% of white Irish men are in professional occupations in comparison with 10% of white British men. Women show a similar, although less pronounced, pattern. 13% of white Irish women in England are in professional occupations in comparison with 11% of white British women.

So again, in this area, the 2001 Census presents a mixed picture. Further, the Census data relates to a period of time in which there was relative economic prosperity for the country and its regions. Certain indicators, such as levels of long-term unemployment were thus very low. It is important to recognise that during a less prosperous time, such indicators will be higher and there may be greater disparities between some of the ethnic groups.

4. Health

The Census provides data about limiting long-term illness and disability. In every region in England the proportion of white Irish men aged between 25 and 74 who are not working because of permanent illness or disability is higher than the proportion of white British men not working for the same reason. In England, 11% of white Irish men are not working because of illness or disability. There is one age group of white Irish men for whom findings in this area are exceptionally strong and consistent, men aged between 50 and 64. In this age group, between 25% (the South East) and 41% (the North West) of men have limiting long-term illness. In England as a whole, 29% of white Irish men of this age have limiting long-term illness, 4% more than amongst white British men of the same age.

The Census also asked about people's view of whether they were in good health or not. 22% of men in England aged between 50 and 64 described their health as 'not good'. In fact, for each age group, for both men and women, the trend is for more white Irish people than white British people to indicate 'not good health'.

5. Housing and amenities

Census data relating to housing and amenities provides a complex picture in terms of the white Irish population. For example, a relatively high proportion of the population owns their own home outright (26%) but, similarly, a relatively high proportion of the white Irish population lives in social housing (21%). These proportions are relatively

high in comparison with both other minority ethnic populations listed in the Census and in comparison with the majority of the white British population.

Significantly, in England, the white Irish population has the highest proportion (1.2%) of people in medical and care communal establishments (including psychiatric units, prison, and those we might associate with an older population, residential and nursing homes). The population also has the highest proportion of people in households comprising a lone pensioner (18%). This is true of England as a whole and each of the country's regions.

In terms of amenities, the white Irish population of England shows two interesting characteristics in comparison with the other ethnic populations listed in the Census. The first is in terms of central heating – 8% of the white Irish population has no central heating – and secondly, 40% of the white Irish population does not have a car. Both of these proportions are higher than those found in the white British population.

The report

The Census data is wholly descriptive and, as such, does not seek to explain particular phenomena, merely to tell us what it is. Thus, we cannot find out from Census data why a specific proportion of people live in social housing, for example. The following report attempts to describe the findings of the 2001 Census and, where appropriate, to suggest possible causes and effects.

*Gudrun Limbrick
WordWorks
May 2007*

Using the data

All the data in this report is derived from the results of the 2001 Census which attempted to include all people living in England and Wales. As such, the report and its findings are entirely dependent on the coverage achieved by the Census, the terminology used and the questions asked.

The delineations used are those provided by the Census. For example, the age bands quoted are those designed by the Census.

The data is represented as graphs in this report to provide an immediate visual to represent the bare figures. However, greater detail can be found in the accompanying tables of data.

This report has a number of companion volumes which may provide useful comparative analysis to aid understanding.

National reports:

England
Wales

Local reports:

Birmingham
Bristol
Coventry
Leeds
Leicester
Liverpool
Luton
Manchester
Northampton
Nottingham
Portsmouth
Sheffield
Swindon

Regional reports:

East England
East Midlands
London
North East England
North West England
South East England
South West England
The West Midlands
Yorkshire and the Humber

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Luton:

Key data

The nature of the population

- 71% of the white Irish population was born in the Republic of Ireland
- 21% of the white Irish population is aged 65 or older

Economic activity and inactivity

- 62% of white Irish people aged 25 to 74 are economically active
- 10% of white Irish men are not working because of permanent sickness or disability
- 45% of white Irish 16 to 24 year olds are in full-time education

Types of work

- 36% of white Irish men are working in construction
- 11% of white Irish men are managers or senior officials
- 18% of white Irish men are in elementary-type occupations
- 25% of white Irish women are working in health and social work

Qualifications

- 11% of white Irish 16 to 24 year olds have no qualifications
- 15% of white Irish 16 to 24 year olds have qualifications at the highest levels

Home tenure and accommodation type

- 75% of white Irish people own their own home
- 14% of white Irish people are in social housing
- 10% of white Irish people are in privately rented accommodation
- 20% of white Irish households are pensioners living alone

Amenities

- 51% of white Irish people do not own a car
- 4% of the white Irish population does not have central heating
- 13% of the white Irish population are living in households regarded as overcrowded

Health

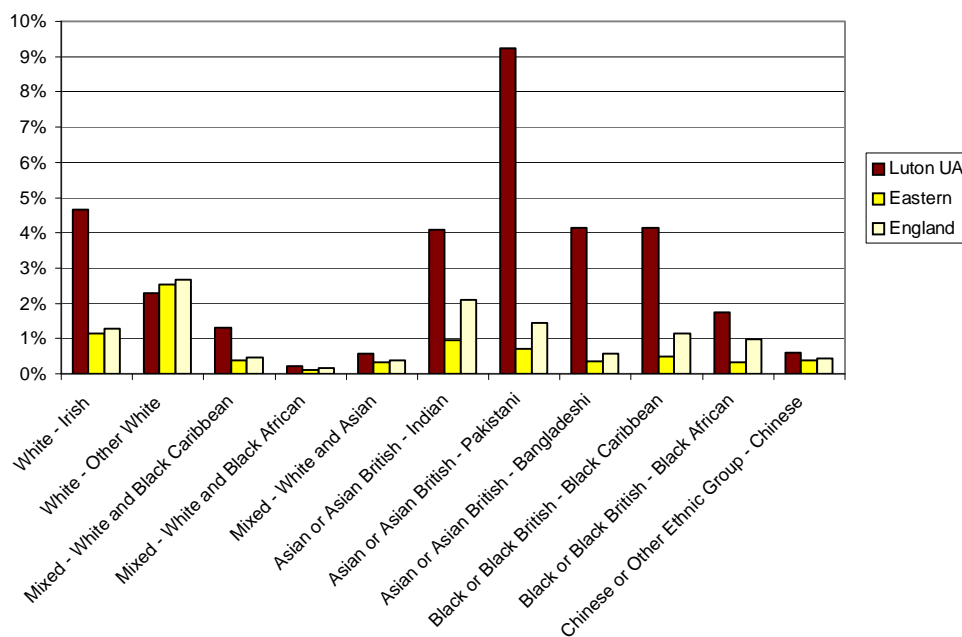
- 39% of white Irish men aged 16 to 49 have long-term limiting illness
- 24% of white Irish men aged 16 to 64 are in not good health
- 21% of white Irish women aged 16 to 64 are in not good health

Section 1. The nature of the population of Luton

This section looks at the number of Irish people in Luton. The place of birth of Irish people is examined, differentiating between those Irish people born in Ireland and those born elsewhere. It also examines basic demographic information such as ethnic origin, gender and age. It is this data which is of fundamental importance when understanding other data in this report such as economic activity and health.

In Luton, 65.0% of the population classified themselves as white British¹ in the 2001 Census. In comparison, 87.0% of the population of England as a whole classified themselves as white British. Luton is also very different from the region in which it lies. The Eastern region as a whole was found to have a population in which 91.5% were white British.

Figure 1. The distribution of minority ethnic groups



With the exception of the 'other white' population each minority ethnic group illustrated accounts for a higher proportion of the population of Luton than of the Eastern region or England as a whole. The white Irish population is no exception – 4.7% of the population of Luton is reported to be white Irish in comparison with 1.1% of the largely rural Eastern region and the country as a whole (1.3%). This series of explorations of the Census data looked at 13 different urban areas (listed in the 'Using this data' section). Of each of these, Luton had by far the highest proportion of white Irish people – the second highest being Manchester with 3.8%.

At 4.7%, the white Irish population is the second largest minority ethnic group in Luton. The largest is the Pakistani population at 9.2%.

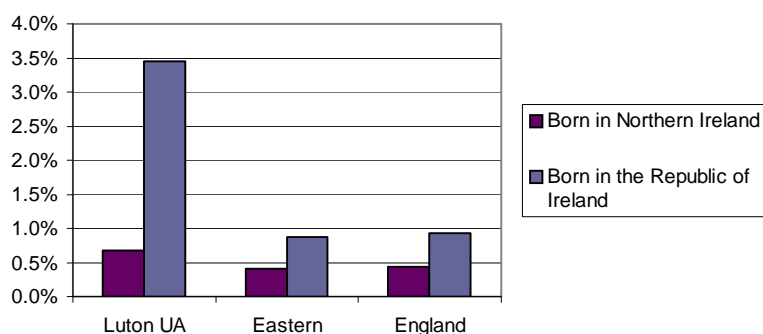
It is probable that the proportion of Irish people recorded in the Census is an under-representation of the actual Irish population. This complex issue is discussed more fully in *England: the Irish dimension – an exploration of 2001 Census data*.

¹ In the Census questionnaire, respondents were given five options: white, mixed, Asian, Black or Chinese. Within the 'white' option, respondents were asked to select either British, Irish or other white. For the purposes of this report, these options have been abbreviated to 'white British', 'white Irish' and 'white other'.

Estimates² suggest that the actual Irish population of the Eastern region could be between 10.3% (19,010 individuals) and 12.4% (22,812 individuals) which is significantly higher than the estimated proportional size of the Irish population of England (4.1%) or the Eastern region (3.8%). These corrected figures for Luton would make the Irish population the largest minority ethnic population in the city, overtaking the Pakistani population.

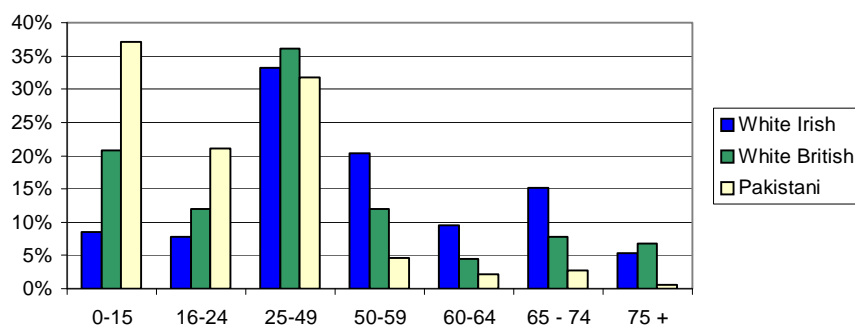
Because the Pakistani population is the minority ethnic population found to be numerically larger than any other in Luton in the Census, it is this population which is looked at in more detail in the figures and discussion in the following pages, along with the white Irish population and the majority population – people defining as white British.

Figure 2. Proportion of population born on the island of Ireland³



3.5% of the population of Luton was born in the Republic of Ireland – more than three times the proportion in Eastern England (0.4%). Of those people in Luton who described themselves in the Census as white Irish, 70.9% were born in the Republic of Ireland. 5.6% were born in Northern Ireland. In total, 28.4% of those who described themselves as white Irish were born in the United Kingdom.

Figure 3. The age distribution of the white Irish population in Luton



The above chart clearly demonstrates the disparity in age distribution between the white Irish population, the white British population and the largest minority ethnic population – the Pakistani population.

With 8.6% of the white Irish population aged under 16, in comparison with 20.8% of white British people and 37.1% of the Pakistani population, this is a comparatively aging population⁴. Of all the minority ethnic groups listed in the Census, the white

² Using the suggested 2.5 and 3 correctional factors of the born-in-Ireland population suggested by Hickman MJ and Walter B *Discrimination and the Irish Community in Britain* CRE 1997

³ The term 'island of Ireland' used here includes Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

⁴ In future years, in the absence of an increasing white Irish birth rate, the immigration of younger Irish people, or a change in how people define their ethnicity (e.g. through more first,

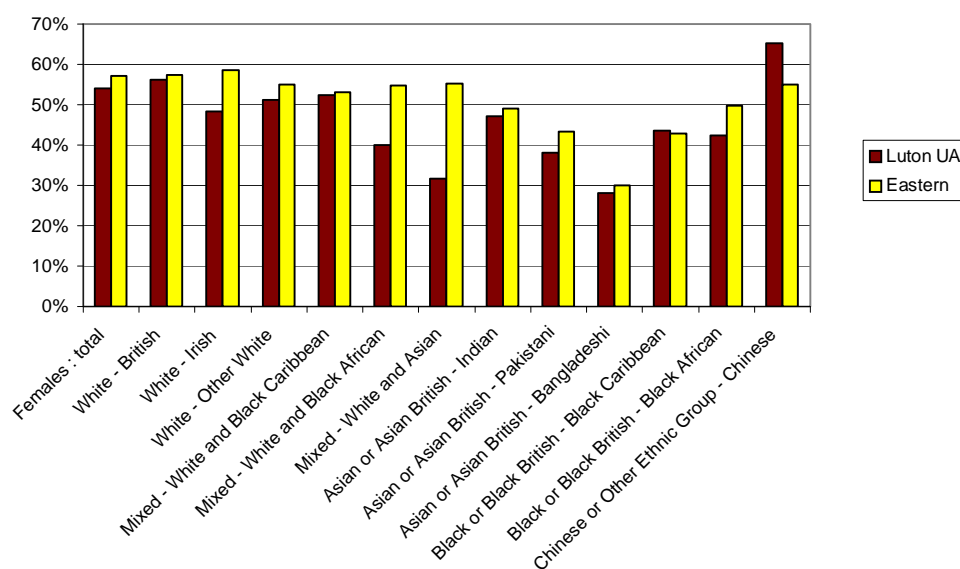
Irish population has the smallest proportion of people aged under 16 in Luton – the next lowest being the ‘other white’ population in which 13.2% are children.

This disparity continues through the 16 to 24 age bracket and the 25 to 49 age bracket but, after this age, the picture switches and a much larger proportion of white Irish people are in each age bracket than in the white British population. A lower proportion again of the Pakistani population is in each of the older age brackets.

The disparity is greatest in the 50 to 59 age group – 20.3% of the white Irish population are aged between 50 and 59, the highest proportion of all the minority ethnic groups listed in the Census. The next highest is the Indian population in which 10.9% are aged 50 to 59.

In all, 50.4% of the white Irish population of Luton is aged 50 or older – in comparison with just 11.7% of the Pakistani population and 31.1% of the white British population. 20.5% of the white Irish population is aged older than 64.

Figure 4. Proportion of the population aged 65 and older who are female



49.4% of the white Irish population in Luton is female – along with 50.0% of the population of Luton as a whole. As women tend to live longer than men, one would expect the proportion of women to increase as the population ages. When looking at the population aged 65 and older, illustrated in the chart above, 48.4% of the white Irish population is female – in comparison with 56.2% of the white British population.

Overall, the white Irish population aged 65 and older has the fourth highest proportion of women – after the Chinese population (56.8%), the white British population (56.2%), the white and Black Caribbean population (52.5%) and the other white population (51.1%). The older population with the smallest proportion of women is the Bangladeshi population in which 28.1% are female.

In summary

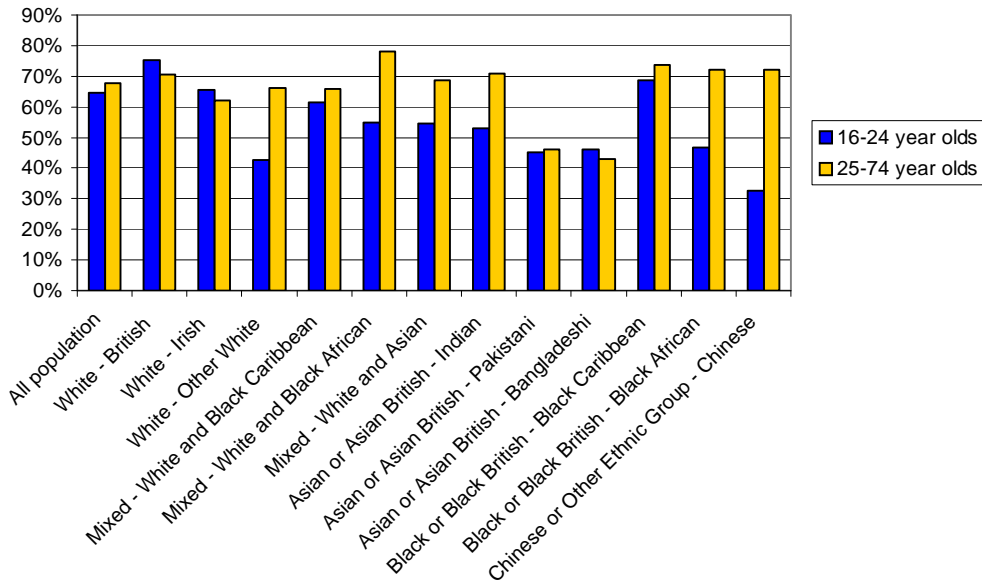
4.6% of Luton’s population reported as white Irish is likely to be an under-representation of those who could potentially be described as Irish. Self-declared ethnicity is a complicated issue – the Irish population could be as high as 12.4% of the population. The reported white Irish population in Luton has a relatively small proportion of people who are aged under 25 and a relatively large proportion of people who are aged 50 and older.

second and third generation people defining themselves and their children as white Irish), upward movement to replenish the older white Irish age cohorts will reduce.

Section 2. Economic activity and inactivity

Any population has a bearing on the economy of the place in which it lives. This section examines the levels of economic activity of the white Irish population of Luton in comparison with the rest of Luton's population. Economic activity, as an indicator, is a count of the number of individuals who are either working or are available to work. To aid our understanding, this section also looks at what the Census has to say about economic inactivity.

Figure 5. Proportion of population that is economically active⁵



The chart above illustrates the proportion of the population of Luton which is economically active (i.e. working or available for work) in two age groups – 16 to 24 year olds and 25 to 74 year olds.

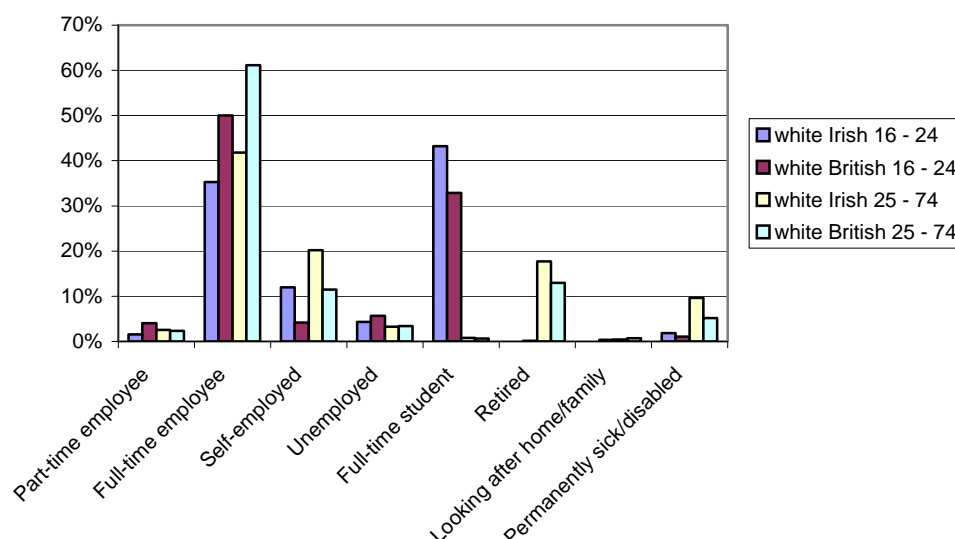
In the younger age group, 65.6% of the white Irish population is economically active. This is the third highest level of the ethnic groups listed in the Census behind white British (75.3%) and Black Caribbean (68.7%) young people.

In the older age group, economic activity in the white Irish population is at 62.0%. While this is only 3.5% below the activity level amongst 16 to 24 year olds, it leaves white Irish people in a much lower position relative to the other ethnic groups listed in this older age bracket. With the exception of the Bangladeshi population (43.0%) and Pakistani population (46.2%), the white Irish population has the lowest level of economic activity of all the ethnic groups listed in the 25 to 74 age group.

It is important to remember the relative age of the white Irish population – 15.1% of the white Irish population are aged 65 to 74 and may thus be retired and no longer economically active. This compares with 7.8% of the white British population and 2.7% of the Pakistani population (this is illustrated in figure 3).

⁵ Economically active is defined as the state of being available for work or working. Thus, someone who is unemployed is still defined as economically active. Someone who is retired, for example, is not defined as economically active.

Figure 6. Economic activity and inactivity amongst white Irish and white British men

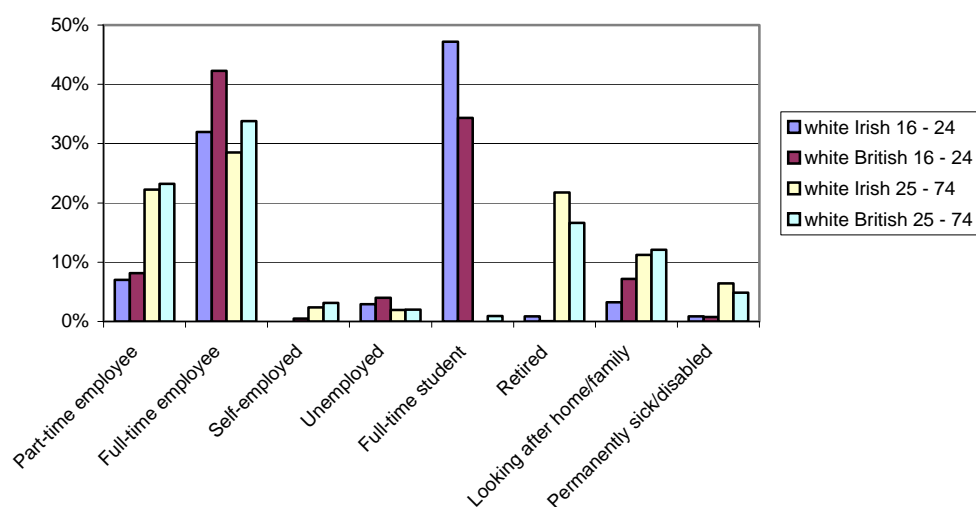


In the 16 to 24 age group, full-time employment is 15% lower amongst white Irish men than amongst white British men (35.3% in comparison with 50.0%). Instead, white Irish men have higher levels of self-employment (12.0% in comparison with 4.2%) and higher levels of full-time education – 43.3% in comparison with 32.9%.

15.1% of Luton’s population is aged between 65 and 74 as is 7.8% of the white British population. It is thus of no surprise that a larger proportion of Luton’s white Irish 25 to 74 year old men are retired (17.7%) than white British men (13.0%).

Levels of full-time employment are 19% lower amongst older white Irish men than amongst older white British men (41.8% in comparison with 61.2%). This is in part accounted for by the difference in the retired population but also by sickness levels and self-employment levels. 9.6% of white Irish men do not work because of permanent sickness or disability in comparison with 5.1% of white British men. 20.2% of older white Irish men in Luton are self-employed in comparison with 11.5% of white British men.

Figure 7. Economic activity and inactivity amongst white Irish and white British women



Amongst younger white Irish women, lower levels of full-time employment are countered by a larger proportion of women in full-time education. 32.0% of white Irish younger women are in full-time employment in comparison with 42.3% of white

British women. 47.2% of younger white Irish women are full-time students in comparison with 34.3% of white British women.

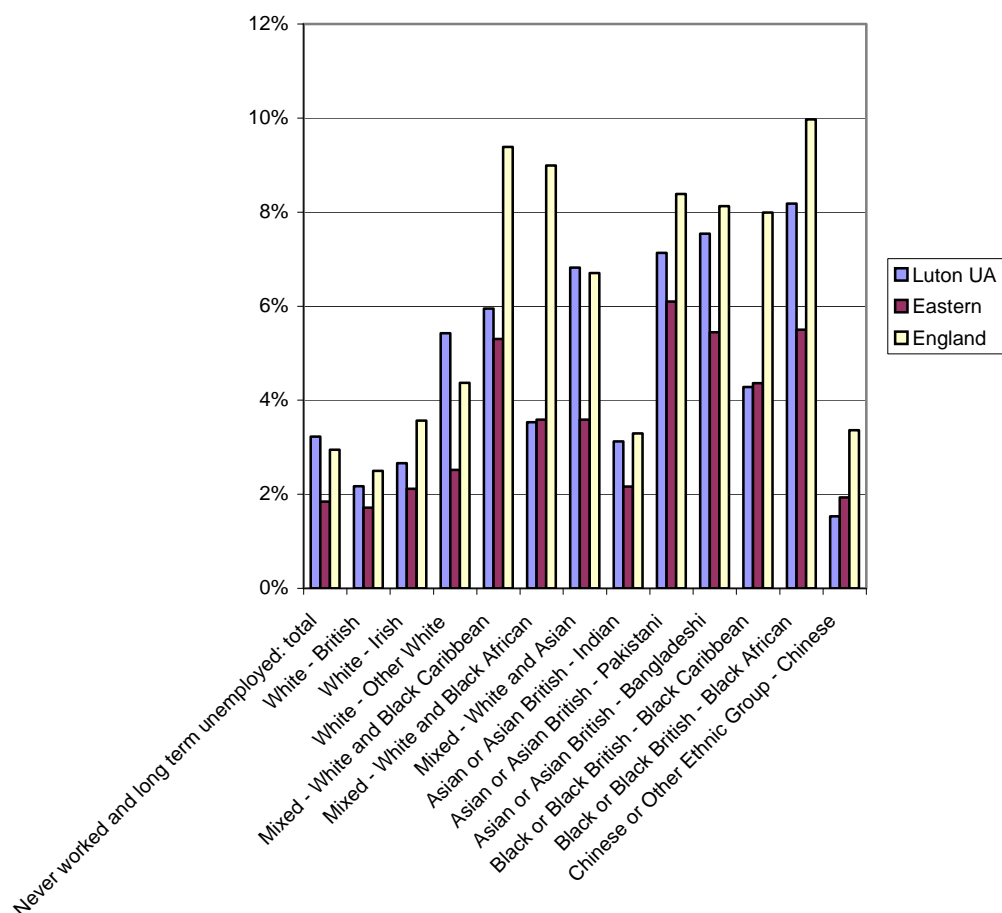
Amongst women aged between 25 and 74 it is, as amongst men, retirement which presents the most marked difference between the white Irish and white British populations. 21.8% of white Irish women are retired in comparison with 16.7% of white British women.

Additionally, there is again a higher proportion of people permanently sick or disabled amongst white Irish women (6.5%) than amongst the white British women (4.9%).

In the 25 to 74 age group, 11.2% of white Irish women are not working because of looking after home and/or family. In comparison, 12.1% of white British women are in this category.

Levels of full-time employment are higher in white British women than in white Irish women in both age groups given. 33.8% of white British women aged 25 to 74 are in full-time employment in comparison with 28.5% of white Irish women.

Figure 8. Proportion of men who are long-term unemployed or who have never worked

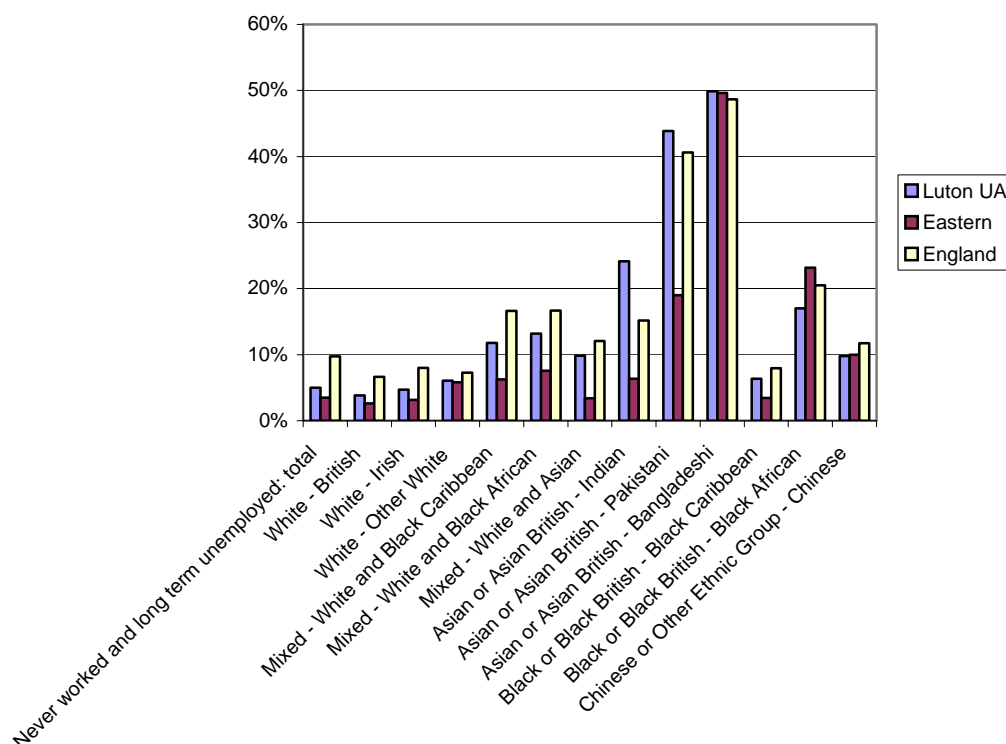


With the exceptions of the white and Black African population, the Black Caribbean population and the Chinese population, long-term unemployment (including those who have never worked) amongst men is higher in Luton than it is in the region as a whole. White Irish men are no exception with 2.7% of white Irish men in Luton being long-term unemployed (including those who have never worked) in comparison with 2.1% of the region's white Irish men.

White Irish men in Luton have the third lowest level of long-term unemployment (including those who have never worked) - behind Chinese men (1.5%) and white

British men (2.2%). The highest level of long-term unemployment (including those who have never worked) is in the white and Black Caribbean population – 6.0%

Figure 9. Proportion of women who are long-term unemployed or who have never worked



As with the picture provided by men who are long-term unemployed (including those who have never worked), in most of the ethnic populations of women listed, regional rates are lower than those for Luton. White Irish women are no exception. 4.7% of Luton’s white Irish women are long-term unemployed (including those who have never worked) – this compares with 3.2% of the Eastern region’s white Irish women.

White Irish women have the second lowest level of long-term unemployment of all the populations listed. White British women have the lowest level (3.8%) and Bangladeshi women have the highest level (49.9%).

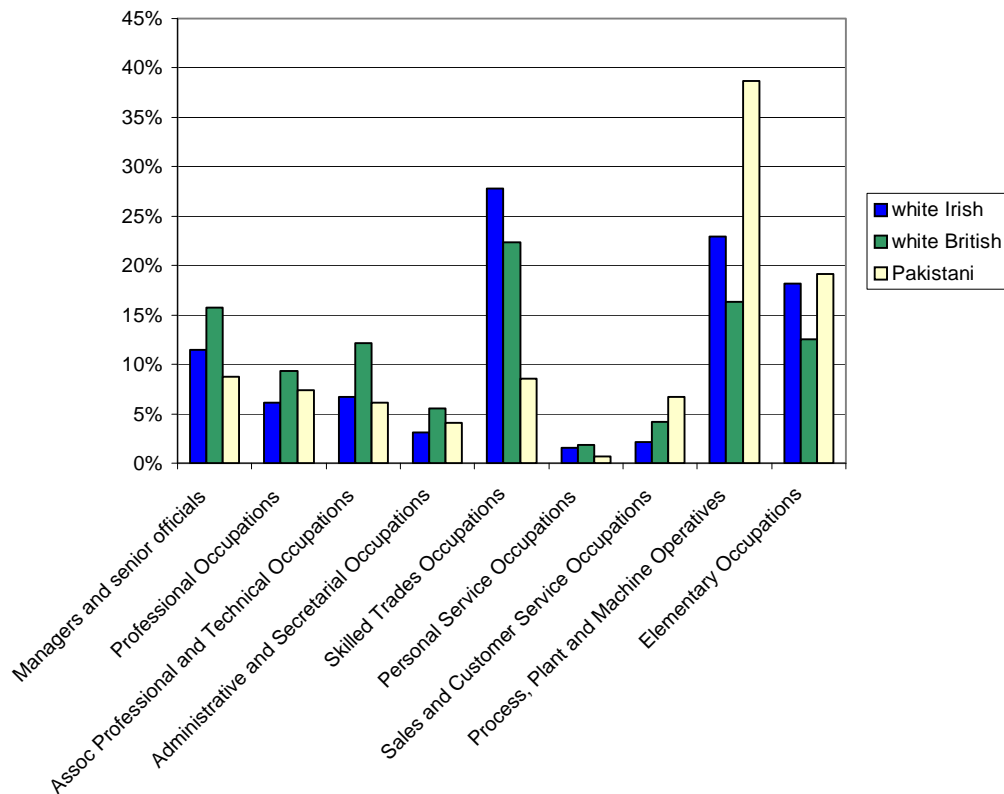
In summary

This section looked at economic activity and found a relatively low level of economic activity amongst the largest age group – 25 to 74 year olds. In the same age group, there were relatively high levels of white Irish people who were retired and people who were not working because of permanent sickness or disability. Both white Irish men and white Irish women have relatively low levels of long-term unemployment (including those who have never worked) in Luton.

Section 3. Types of work

Having examined overall levels of economic activity in the previous section, this section concentrates on what the Census reveals about the nature of work undertaken by the population. Do different ethnic minority groups tend to do different types of work?

Figure 10. Occupations amongst Luton's men aged 16 to 74



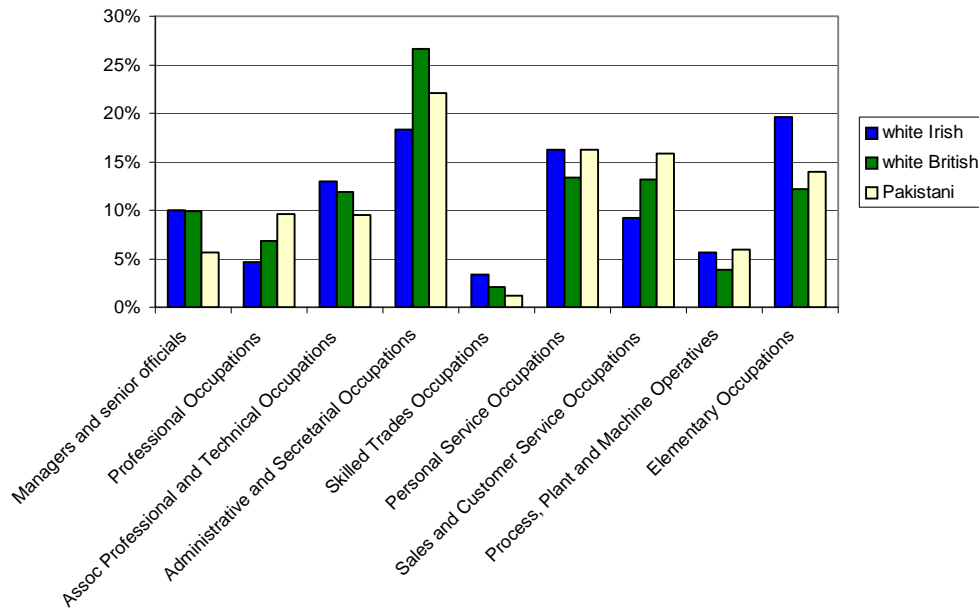
Relative to white British men, both white Irish men and Pakistani men are proportionately under-represented in the managerial, professional and associate professional fields, i.e. the percentage of white Irish and Pakistani men in these fields is smaller than that of white British men. Taking an aggregate of these three types of occupation, we find that 24.3% of white Irish men are working in managerial, professional and associate professional fields. The equivalent percentage of white British men is 37.3% and for Pakistani men it is 22.2%.

Conversely, white Irish men are over-represented in the skilled trades; process, plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations.

The most common occupations for white Irish men are the skilled trades (27.8%); process, plant and machine operatives (22.9%); and the elementary occupations (18.2%). For white British men, they are skilled trades (22.4%); process, plant and machine operatives (16.3%) and managers / senior officials (15.8%).

Amongst the male Pakistani population they are process, plant and machine operatives (38.6%); elementary occupations (19.1%) and managers / senior officials (8.7%).

Figure 11. Occupations amongst Luton's women aged 16 to 74

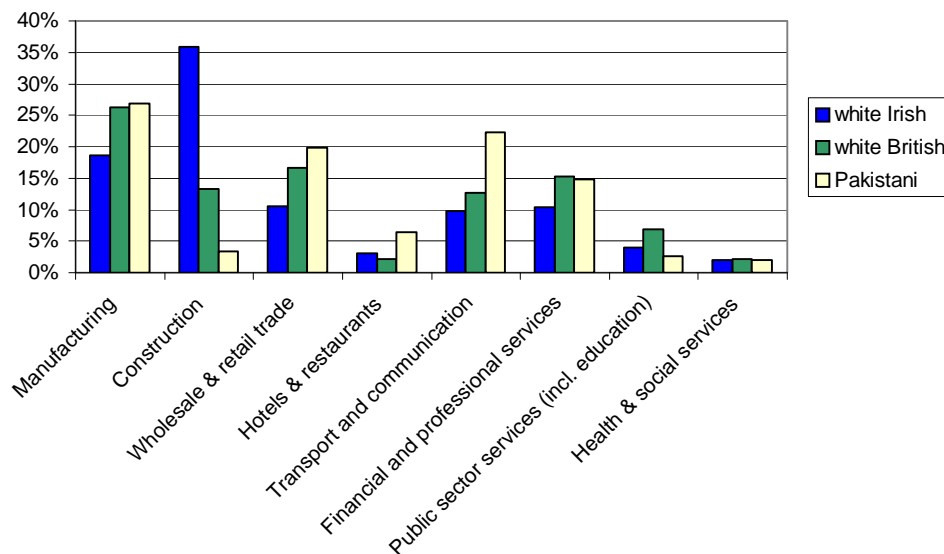


There is the same proportion of managers / senior officials amongst both white Irish women and white British women (10.0%). In terms of professional occupations, there is larger proportion of white Irish women (4.7%) than white British women (6.9%). The proportion of Pakistani women is larger than both (9.7%).

White Irish women (18.3%) are significantly under-represented in administrative and secretarial occupations relative to white British (26.6%) and Pakistani (22.1%) women. Conversely, they are relatively over-represented in the elementary occupations (19.6%, 12.2% and 13.9% respectively).

For white Irish women, the most common occupation types are elementary (19.6%); administrative and secretarial (18.3%) and personal services (16.3%). For white British women, they are administrative and secretarial (26.6%); personal services (13.3%); and sales and customer services (13.2%) – the same three as for Pakistani women (22.1%, 16.2%, 15.9%).

Figure 12. Industry areas employing men in Luton



What is striking from the above figure is that 35.9% of white Irish men in Luton work in construction – more than triple the proportion in any other ethnic group listed in the

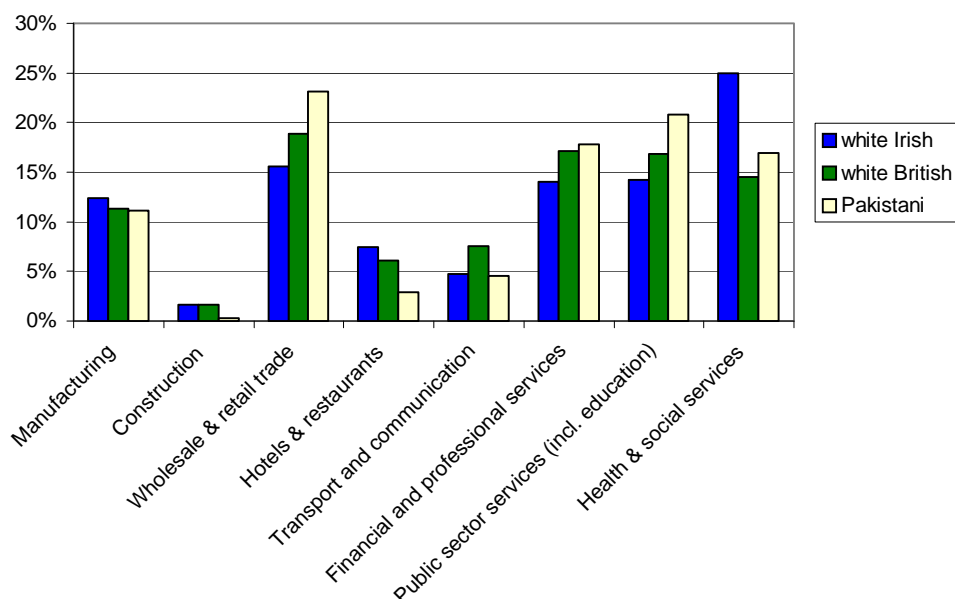
Census. The population with the next highest proportion of men working in construction is the white and Black Caribbean population (9.0%).

A further 18.7% of white Irish men work in manufacturing. The area employing the next highest proportion of white Irish men is the wholesale and retail trades (10.6%).

In the white British male population, 13.3% work in construction and 26.2% work in manufacturing. In the Pakistani male population, just 3.4% work in construction and 26.8% work in manufacturing, a proportion very similar to that in the white British population.

‘Section 8: health’ suggests a possible link between the health of working age men and the focus on construction in terms of employment. There may also be links between this and levels of permanent sickness or disability (figure 6).

Figure 13. Industry areas employing women in Luton



The sector employing the largest proportion of white Irish women in Luton is health and social services – accounting for 25.0%, 1 in 4, of white Irish women. Only the Black Caribbean and Black African populations have a larger proportion of women working in health and social services (26.8% and 35.5% respectively).

Looking at public services and health and social services combined, 39.3% of white Irish women are employed – more than a third of all white Irish women are employed in just these two areas. This compares with 31.3% of white British women and 37.8% of Pakistani women.

A further 15.6% of white Irish women work in the wholesale and retail trade along with 18.8% of white British women and 23.2% of Pakistani women.

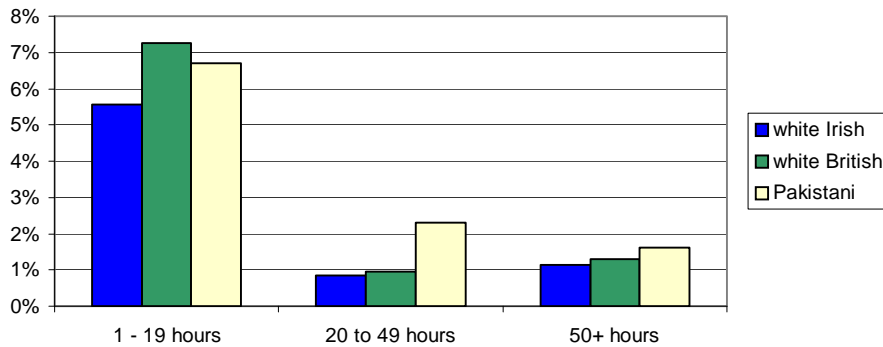
In summary

This section suggests that there is an Irish population which presents two pictures. The first presents a picture of a population which has a relatively high proportion in process, plant and machinery and in elementary occupations. The second presents a related picture of a population in which a very high proportion of men are working in construction and a very high proportion of women are working in health and social care. These types of work can have significant effects on a population’s health, well-being and (current and future) financial well-being.

Section 4. Unpaid carers

Previous sections have examined work as well as retirement and full-time education. However, a significant form of unpaid work has so far been omitted from our discussion – caring for other people. Section 1 outlined the older nature of the white Irish population. Section 8 will look at the relatively high levels of ill health associated with this. This section examines whether these factors impact on the level of unpaid caring carried out by the white Irish population.

Figure 14. Proportion of men aged 16 to 64 providing unpaid care – by number of hours provided per week

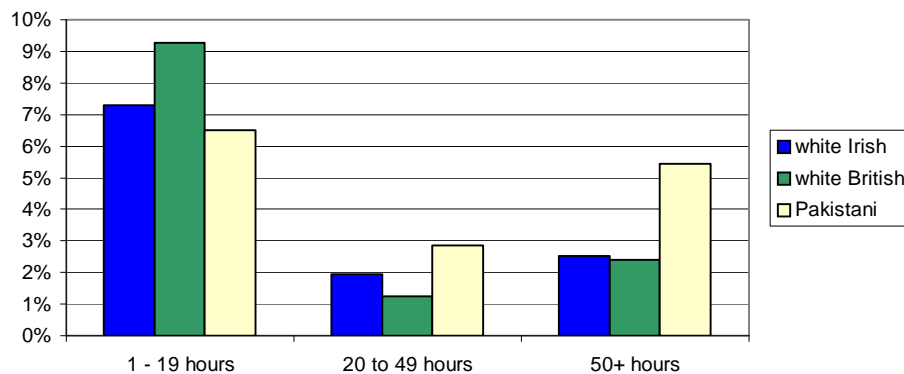


The chart above illustrates the proportion of working age men providing between 1 and 19; between 20 and 49 and more than 50 hours a week of *unpaid care*.

5.6% of white Irish men are providing care at the lower level of time commitment. This is lower than in the Pakistani population (6.7%) and also smaller than the proportion of white British men involved (7.3%).

In the provision of 50+ hours a week of care, the difference between the three ethnic populations has reduced - 1.1% of white Irish men are involved as are 1.3% of white British men and 1.6% of Pakistani men.

Figure 15. Proportion of women aged 16 to 60 providing unpaid care – by number of hours provided per week

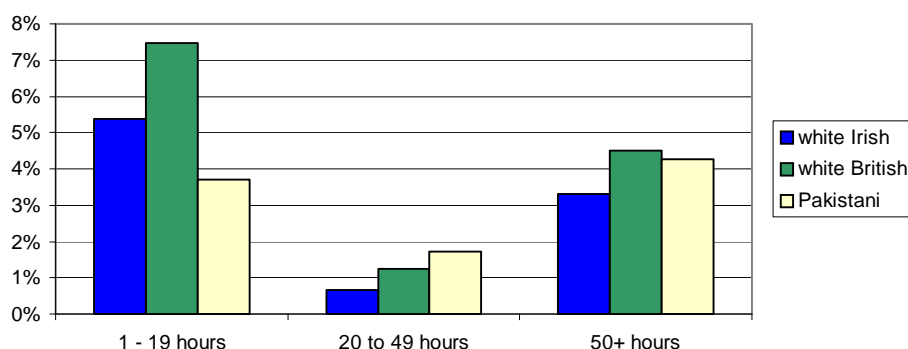


While, overall, there are more women involved in unpaid care provision than men, the relative proportion of white Irish women involved remains the same when compared with white British women.

7.3% of white Irish women are providing care at the lower level of time commitment. This is higher than amongst Pakistani women (6.5%) but lower than the proportion of white British women involved (9.3%).

In the provision of 50+ hours a week of care slightly more white Irish women (2.5%) are involved than white British women (2.4%) but a much greater percentage, 5.4%, of Pakistani women are involved.

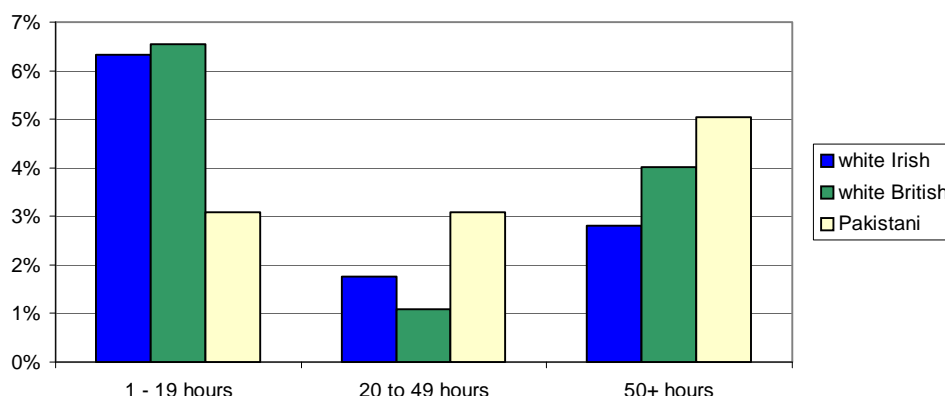
Figure 16. Proportion of men aged 65 or older providing unpaid care – by number of hours provided per week



5.4% of white Irish men are providing between 1 and 19 hours of unpaid care a week. This is 1.1% lower than the proportion of white British men (7.5%) but higher than the proportion of Pakistani men (3.7%).

At 50+ hours a week the difference has lessened slightly. 3.3% of white Irish men are providing care at the highest level – in comparison with 4.5% of white British men and 4.3% of Pakistani men.

Figure 17. Proportion of women aged 60 or older providing unpaid care – by number of hours provided per week



A slightly higher proportion of white Irish women of pensionable age are providing unpaid care than white Irish men of pensionable age – however, the difference is less than 1%. Overall, there is little difference between white Irish women and white British women’s involvement in unpaid care. 6.3% of white Irish women are providing care at the lower level – between 1 and 19 hours a week – in comparison with 6.5% of white British women and 3.1% of Pakistani women. At the 50+ hours level 2.8% of white Irish women are involved – less than the 4.0% of white British women and the 5.0% of Pakistani women involved.

When looking at care provision, there are a number of factors to be considered. There are, firstly, the levels of care needs within specific populations, as well as the ability or willingness of local communities to meet those needs through informal, unpaid care provided by relatives, friends or neighbours. Where care is thus provided there are issues around respite for carers, and due recompense for time given and income foregone - with the consequent impact on future prosperity inherent, for many, in this commitment. In addition, levels of care available are also dependent on the provision of other formal, contracted and publicly-funded or

subsidised sources of care – such as home care provided by the voluntary sector or statutory services, or through care away from home such as in nursing homes, where Irish people are, proportionately, highly represented. There are also issues around the degree to which the use of informal services is a matter of choice or necessity; as well as the appropriateness of formally provided services, and the degree to which members of specific communities are accessing those services.

The data from this section indicates that, largely, there are relatively low levels of unpaid care provision in the white Irish population in comparison with the other populations listed.

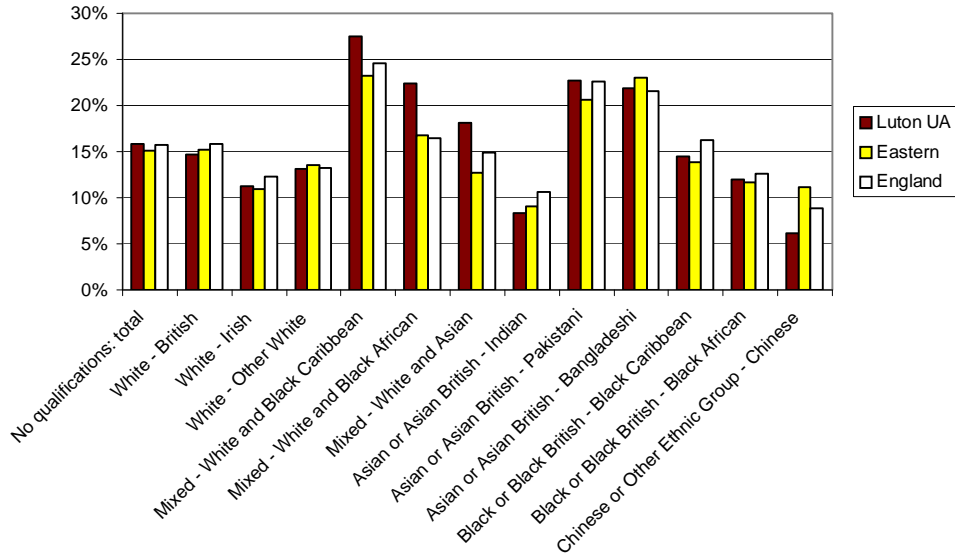
In summary

Providing care for a family member or other person can have a significant impact not only on the person caring but also on the dependents of the carer as the time devoted to caring may mean that taking on employment is not possible. The above analysis demonstrates a complex pattern of care amongst minority ethnic populations in different age bands. What is needed is an assessment of the economic and health impacts of care provision as well as the support needs of those who are caring.

Section 5. Qualifications

This section looks at educational achievement as measured by the attainment of qualifications. While there is a whole range of educational attainment, this section examines the topics by two means – the attainment of no qualifications at all, and the attainment of the highest levels of qualifications.

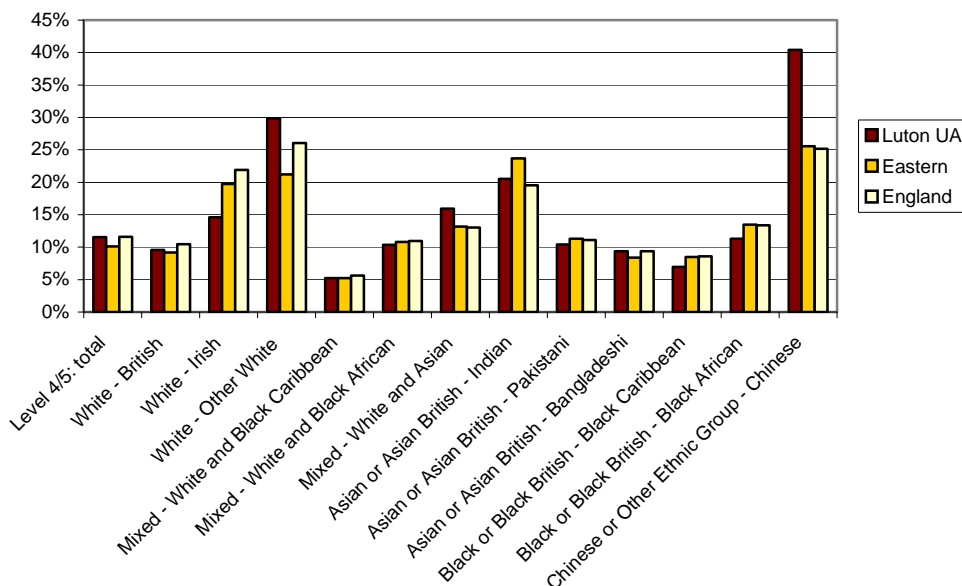
Figure 18. Proportion of 16 to 24 year olds with no qualifications



11.3% of white Irish people aged 16 to 24 in Luton have no qualifications – a very similar proportion to that in the Eastern region as a whole (11.9%). Only two ethnic groups, of those listed, have smaller proportions of their population with no qualifications – Indian (8.3%) and Chinese (6.1%).

The ethnic group with the highest proportion of people of this age with no qualifications is the white and Black Caribbean population (27.5%).

Figure 19. Proportion of 16 to 24 years with qualifications at level 4/5

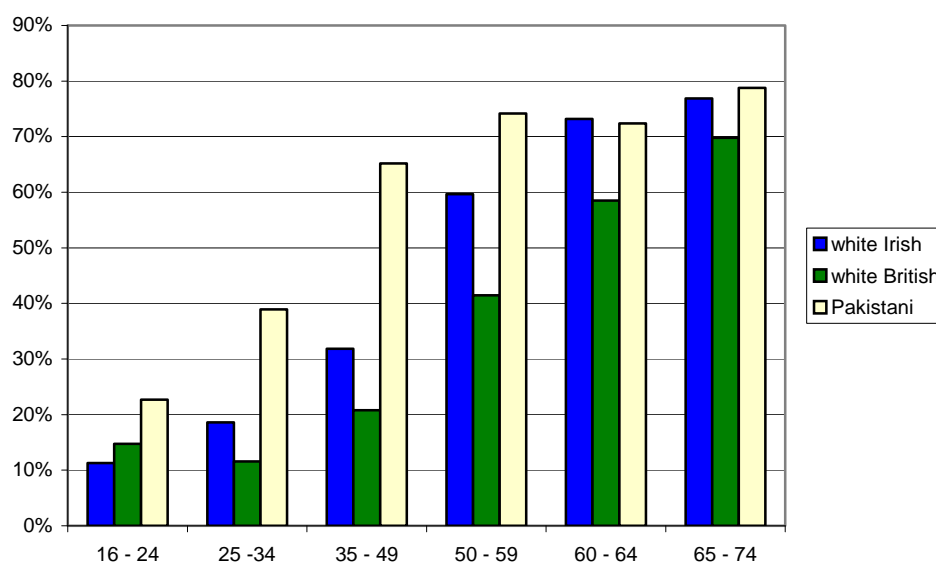


15% of the white Irish population of Luton aged between 16 and 24 have qualifications at levels 4 or 5. Only three of the ethnic groups listed have higher proportions with these, the highest levels of qualifications. This pattern is reflected both in the Eastern region and the country as a whole.

14.6% of the white Irish population of Luton aged between 16 and 24 have qualifications at levels 4 or 5⁶. Only four groups have higher proportions – Chinese (40.4%); other white (29.9%); Indian (20.5%); and white and Asian (15.9%).

This pattern is reflected both in the Eastern region and the country as a whole. In England, the proportion of white Irish people with high level qualifications is 21.9%, still lower than the ‘other white’ and Chinese populations but the gap has lessened (26.0% and 25.2% respectively)

Figure 20. The proportion of the population with no qualifications – by age group

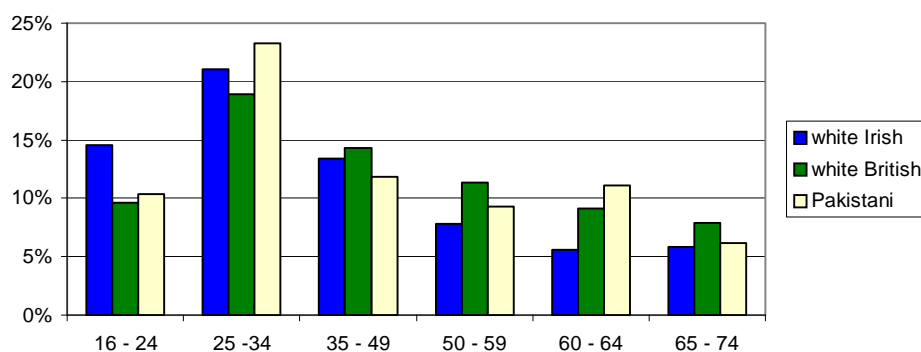


The proportion of white Irish people with no qualifications increases steadily with age. This pattern is repeated in the white British population and the Pakistani population. While the proportion of white Irish people with no qualifications is lower than the proportion of white British people in the 25 –34 age group (11.3% and 14.7% respectively), it is higher in all of the older age groups. For example, 76.9% of white Irish people, aged 65 to 74 years old, have no qualifications as have 69.8% of white British people of the same age.

With the exception of the 60 to 64 age band, the proportion of Pakistani people with no qualifications is higher than both the white British and white Irish populations in each age band. In the 65 to 74 age group 78.8% of Pakistani people have no qualifications.

⁶ Level 4/5 equates to a first degree, higher degree, NVQ levels 4-5, HNC, HND, qualified teacher status, qualified medical doctor, qualified dentist, qualified nurse, midwife, health visitor or equivalents.

Figure 21. The proportion of the population with qualifications at levels 4 or 5



With the exception of the 16-24 age group many members of which may not have had time to reach higher levels of qualifications thus far, the general trend is downward as the older generations have fewer individuals with higher levels of qualifications.

Up to the age of 35, more white Irish people than white British people in each age group have these high level qualifications. For example, in the 25 to 34 age group, 21.1% of white Irish people have qualifications at levels 4/5. In contrast, 18.9% of white British people have such qualifications. The proportion of the Pakistani population at this age with level 4/5 qualifications is higher than both - at 23.2%.

From the age of 35 onwards, white British people have a higher proportion with level 4/5 qualifications than either the white Irish population or the Pakistani population, with the one exception of the 60 to 64 age band. By contrast, the white Irish population have the smallest proportion in each age band. For example, in the 50 to 59 age band, 7.8% of white Irish people have these higher level qualifications in comparison with 11.3% of the white British population and 9.3% of the Pakistani population.

In summary

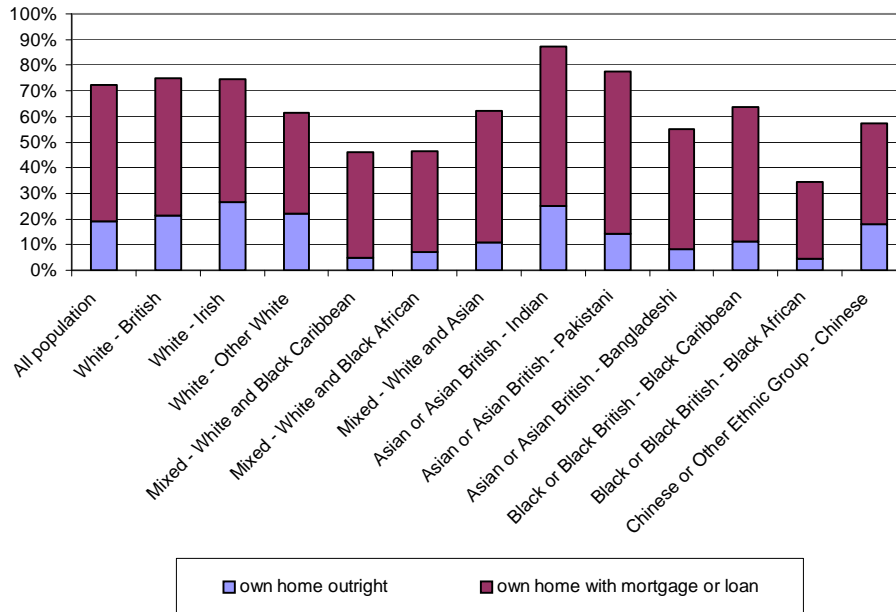
Hickman and Walter (1997⁷) found a dual picture of Irish people in Britain. A high proportion of Irish people with high-level qualifications and a high proportion of people with low level qualifications. In Luton, this picture is largely reversed.

⁷ Hickman MJ and Walter B (1997) Discrimination and the Irish Community in Britain, The Commission for Racial Equality

Section 6. Home tenure and accommodation type

The type of housing in which a community lives can say much about its position in society and about the impact of other community characteristics such as economic activity and income. Type and nature of housing can also impact on a community and affect how it functions in terms of, for example, health and well-being. This section looks at types of housing in broad terms – such as ownership and whether it is shared.

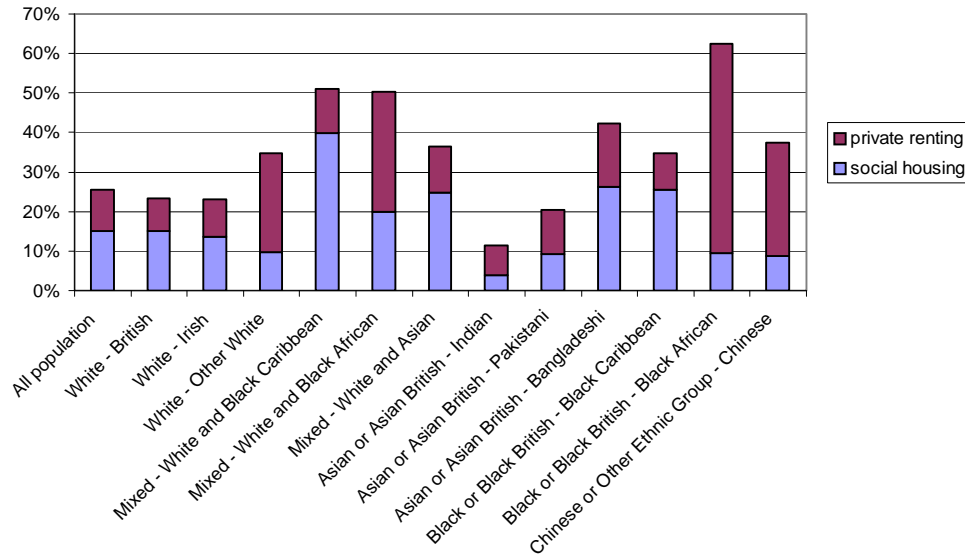
Figure 22. Proportion of people who own their own home



72.4% of the population of Luton own their own home. The group with the highest level of home ownership is the Indian population (87.2%). The group with the least is the Black African population (34.6%). The white Irish population has the fourth highest level of home ownership – 74.7%.

26.4% of the white Irish population own their own home outright – without a mortgage or loan outstanding in it. This is the highest proportion of outright home ownership than any other ethnic group. The population with next highest proportion is the Indian population of which 25.1% own their own home outright. 21.3% of the white British population own their own home outright.

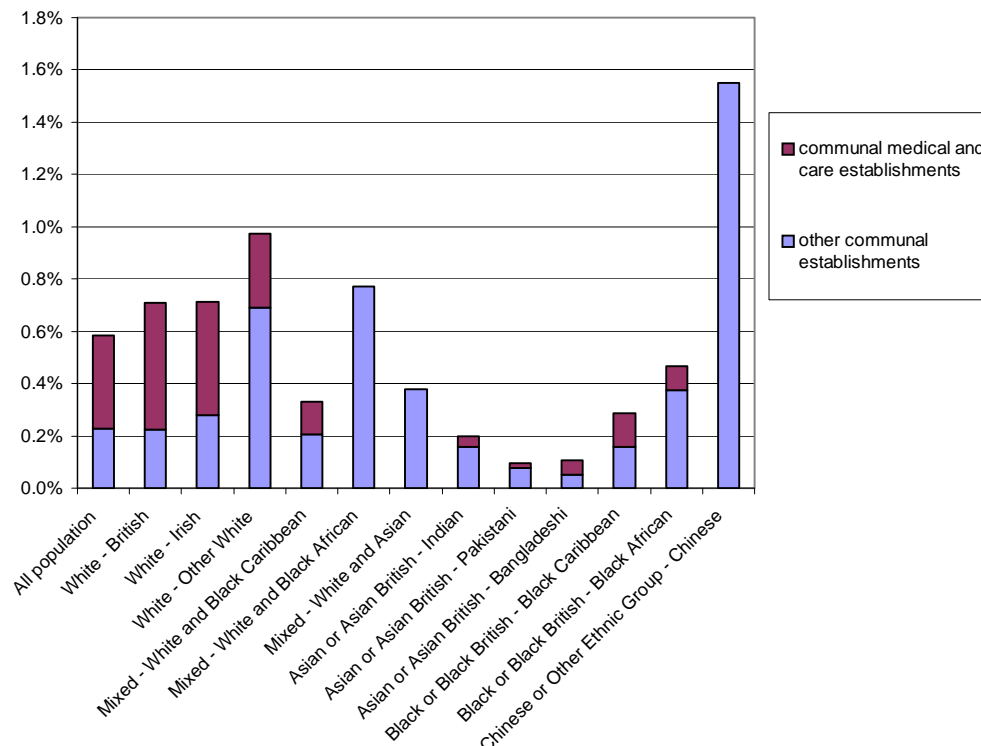
Figure 23. Proportion of the population in social housing and private rented accommodation



13.6% of the white Irish population of Luton are in social housing (including properties rented from the local council) along with 15.1% of the white British population. Highest levels of social housing are in the white and Black African population (40.0%).

The highest levels of private renting are in the Black African (53.0%) population. 9.5% of the white Irish population lives in such accommodation (the fourth smallest proportion) along with 8.3% of the white British population.

Figure 24. Proportion of the population in communal establishments



0.7% of the white Irish population of Luton lives in communal establishments along with an identical proportion of the white British population. This is the fourth highest proportion after the Chinese population (1.6%), the 'other white' population (1.0%), and the white and Black African population (0.8%).

These figures are disaggregated in the above chart into communal medical and care establishments; and other communal establishments.

0.4% of the white Irish population is living in medical and care communal establishments. This is the second highest proportion of all the ethnic populations listed after the white British population (0.5%).

A further 0.3% of the white Irish population is living in other communal establishments as is 0.2% of the white British population. Unlike the proportion of white Irish people living in medical and care establishments, the proportion in other types of communal establishments is relatively low in comparison with the other ethnic populations listed.

Figure 25a. Proportion of men in key examples of communal establishments in Luton (not including staff members) – by establishment type
(whole numbers are given in parenthesis, neg. suggests <20)

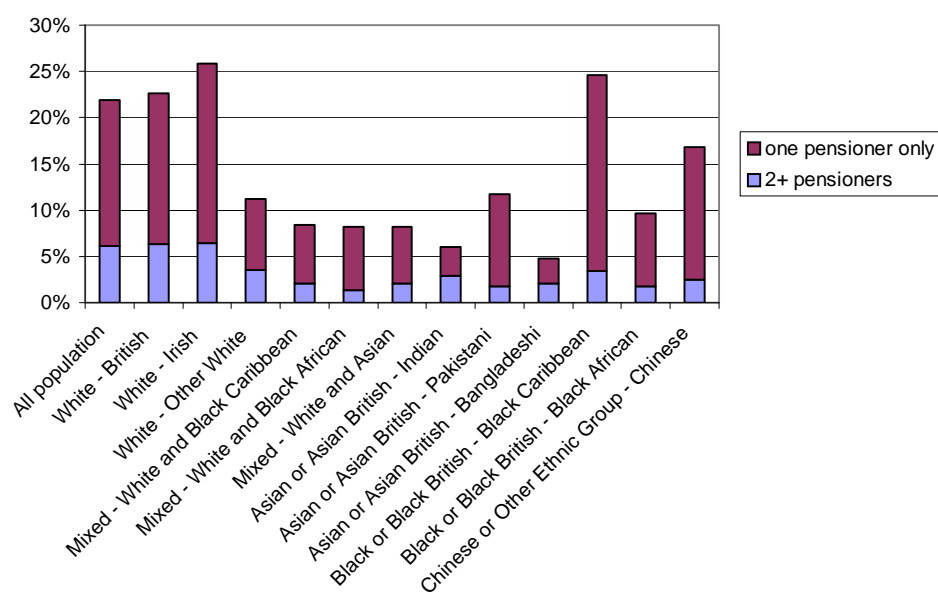
	White Irish population	White British population	Pakistani population
Psychiatric hospitals and homes	0% (neg.)	0.01% (neg.)	0% (neg.)
Nursing homes	0% (neg.)	0.01% (neg.)	0% (neg.)
Residential care homes	0.07% (neg.)	0.08% (117)	0% (neg.)
Prison service establishments	0% (neg.)	0% (neg.)	0% (neg.)
Probation/bail hostels	0% (neg.)	0% (neg.)	0% (neg.)

Figure 25b. Proportion of women in key examples of communal establishments in Luton (not including staff members) – by establishment type
(whole numbers are given in parenthesis, neg. suggests <20)

	White Irish population	White British population	Pakistani population
Psychiatric hospitals and homes	0% (neg.)	0% (neg.)	0% (neg.)
Nursing homes	0.04% (neg.)	0.02% (25)	0% (neg.)
Residential care homes	0.24% (neg.)	0.20% (306)	0% (neg.)
Prison service establishments	0% (neg.)	0% (neg.)	0% (neg.)
Probation/bail hostels	0% (neg.)	0% (neg.)	0% (neg.)

A very small proportion of the three ethnic groups in the chart above are in communal establishments. The small proportion of the white Irish population in residential or nursing homes is noticeable – particularly when looked at in the context of the large proportion of elderly people in the population.

Figure 26. Proportion of households comprising only pensioners



20.5% of the white Irish population in Luton are aged 64 or older. It is thus perhaps not surprising that a high level – 19.5% - of white Irish households comprise a sole pensioner and a further 6.4% are in households with more than one related pensioner (e.g. a married couple, both retired). This compares to 16.2% and 6.4% respectively of white British households. The population with the highest proportion of sole pensioner households is the Black Caribbean population – 21.1%. The white Irish population come a very close second.

The smallest proportions of sole pensioner households are found in the Indian population (3.1%) and the Bangladeshi population (2.7%).

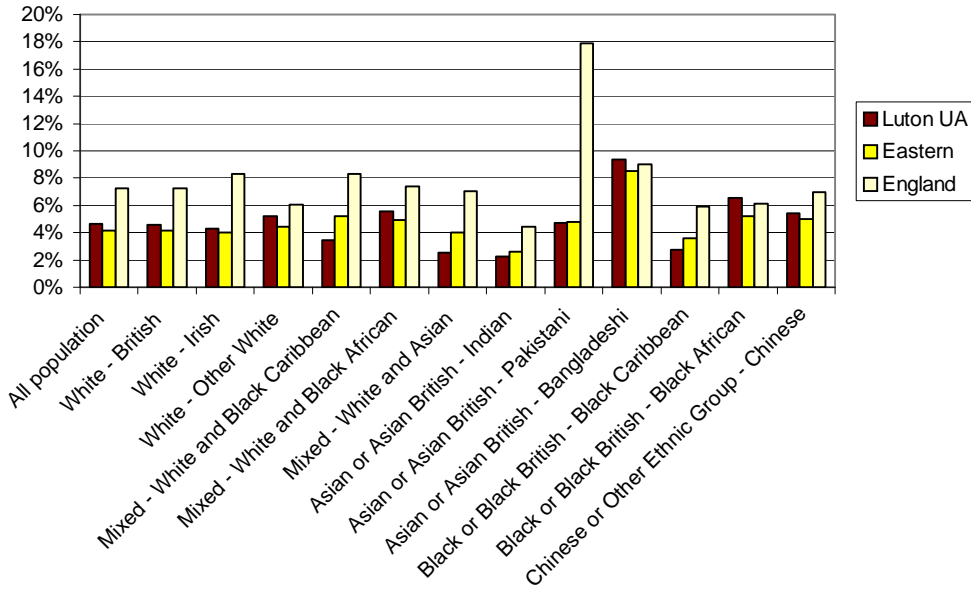
In summary

Housing can be very important in terms of a person’s health and well-being. The analysis of the relevant data in this section suggests that the white Irish population has a relatively high level of home ownership. A relatively high proportion of Irish people live in medical and care establishments. Significantly, more than a quarter of the white Irish population is living in households comprising one or more pensioner – a higher level than any of the other minority ethnic groups listed. This can impact on a range of issues including household income, service provision and levels of informal care.

Section 7. Amenities

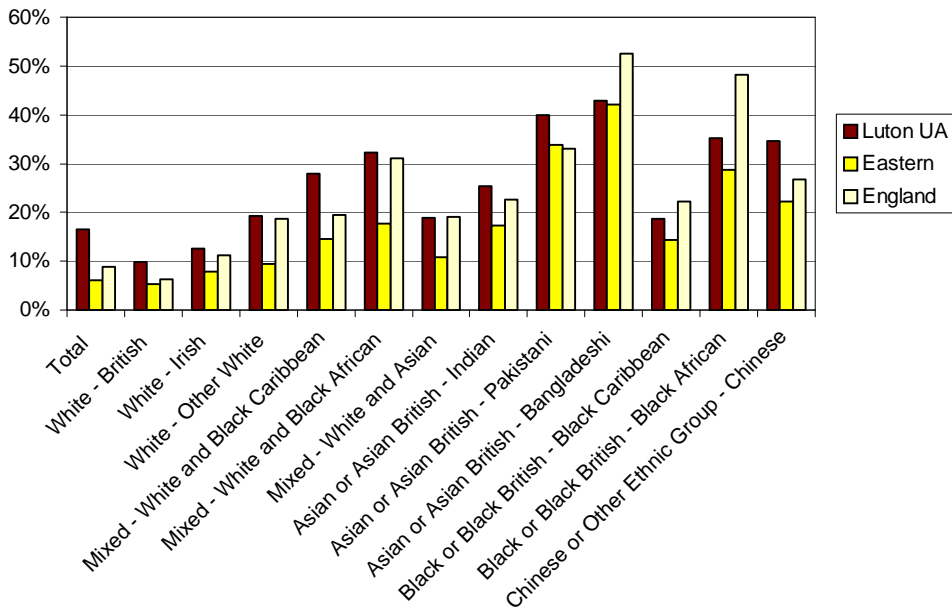
There are certain measures which are used by researchers to assess the quality of life of households. In the Census these include central heating, overcrowding, bathroom sharing and car ownership.

Figure 27. Proportion of the population living without central heating



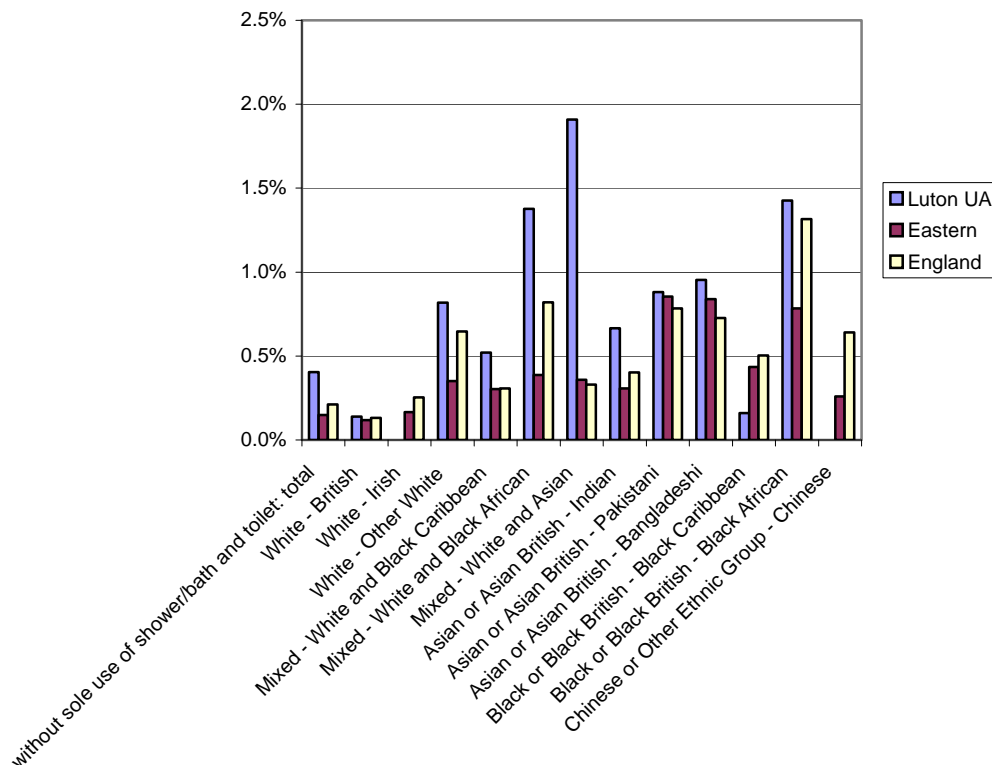
When looking at the national picture, a relatively high proportion of white Irish people live without central heating. In Luton, the percentage is neither so high in absolute terms nor in comparison with the other ethnic populations listed. 4.3% of the white Irish population are living without central heating in comparison with 4.6% of white British people. The ethnic group which has the largest proportion living without is the Bangladeshi population in which 9.4% have no central heating.

Page 28. Proportion of population with an occupancy rating of -1 or less



An occupancy rating of –1 or less suggests overcrowding⁸. In Luton, 16.6% of the population are experiencing overcrowding in their home. This ranges from 9.8% amongst the white British population to 42.8% in the Bangladeshi population. In the white Irish population, the proportion is 12.6%. Only the white British population has a smaller proportion.

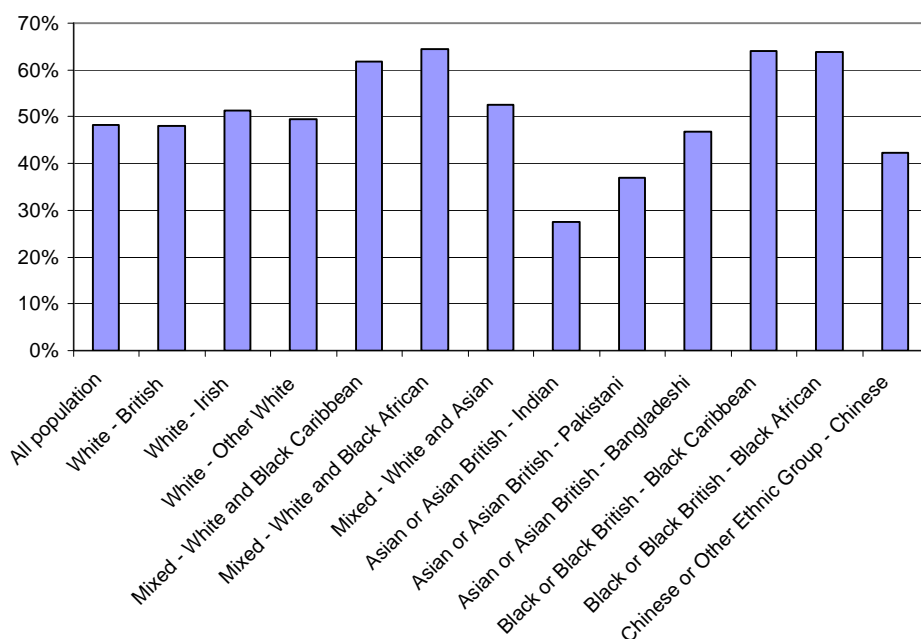
Figure 29. Proportion of the population living in households without sole use of shower/bath and toilet



In Luton, none of the ethnic populations illustrated has more than 2% who are living in households without sole use of a shower or bath and toilet. In the white Irish population, 0.0% is recorded as living without sole use. In the white British population 0.1% are living without. The highest proportion is to be found in the white and Asian population in which 1.9% are living without sole use of basic bathroom facilities.

⁸ The occupancy rating in the Census assumes that every household, including one-person households, requires a minimum of two common rooms (excluding bathrooms). An occupancy rating of –1 implies that there is one room too few and that there is thus overcrowding in the household.

Figure 30. The proportion of the population which does not own a car or van



51.2% of the white Irish population of Luton does not own either a car or a van. This is the sixth highest proportion of all the ethnic populations detailed in the Census. The group with the lowest level of car or van ownership is the white and Black African population (64.5% does not own one). 48.0% of the white British population does not own a car.

There are many reasons why a person may or may not have a car – some will be related to economics and whether a car can be afforded by a household, some will be related to where precisely a person lives in relation to public transport and key amenities and the availability of public transport. Even in an urban area such as Luton these factors differ depending on the locality.

In summary

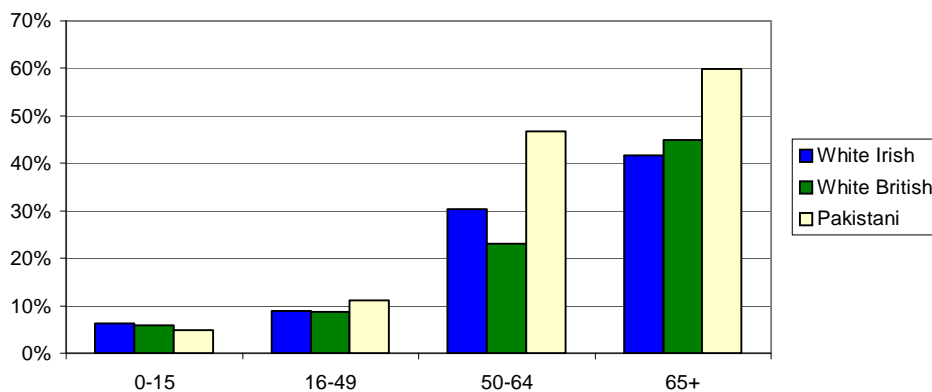
Like housing tenure, the picture provided by the Census data on amenities is a complex one. This section illustrates that some minority ethnic populations have a relatively low proportion of people living without basic amenities. This is not the case in Luton's white Irish population in terms of the amenities listed although the national and regional picture differ. High proportions of an ethnic population without certain basic amenities may point, at least in part, towards relative poverty, although other factors also play a part.

Section 8. Health

This section looks at the health of the population. This is not based on medical records or hospital admissions but on questions in the Census about how people rated their own health. There are two questions – whether people have limiting long-term illness and whether people feel themselves to be in good or poor health.

Respondents were asked, in the Census form, whether they had ‘any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do’. The illnesses or disabilities that people were thinking of when answering this question must inevitably cover a very wide range of health issues including both physical and mental complaints. The key issue that the question presents is that of the long-lasting nature of the health issue or disability. The other question relating to people’s own analysis of their own health, relates only to the previous twelve months. The data from this question is explored in the last two figures in this section.

Figure 31. Proportion of men with limiting long-term illness – by age group

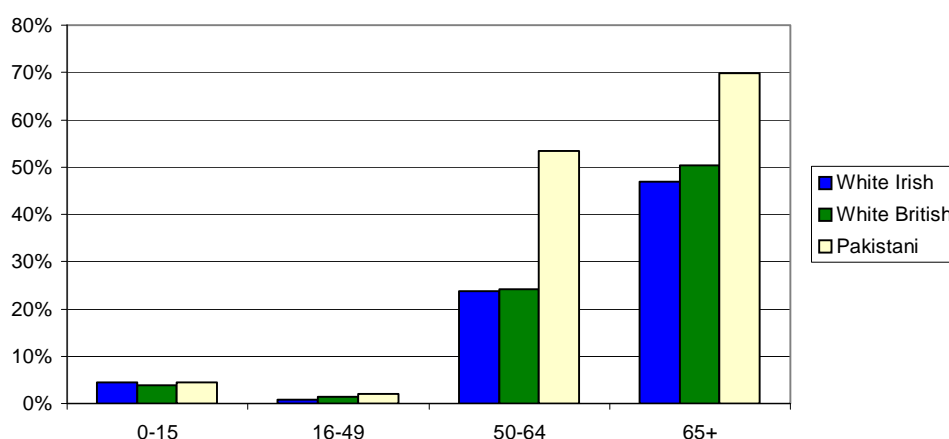


What the chart above makes very clear is that the incidence of limiting long-term illness amongst men increases with age – regardless of ethnic group.

There are similar levels of incidence of limiting long-term illness in the white Irish and white British populations in each age group except the 50 to 64 age bracket. In this age band, white Irish men have a greater incidence than white British men. For white Irish men of this age, 30.4% have limiting long-term illness while for white British men, the proportion is 22.4%. The incidence in the Pakistani male population of this age is greater again – 46.8%.

In the 65 and older age group, the difference between the white Irish and the white British populations have lessened with 46.9% and 50.4% of the populations affected respectively. Again, the Pakistani population have a greater incidence than both – 66.8%.

Figure 32. Proportion of women with limiting long-term illness – by age group

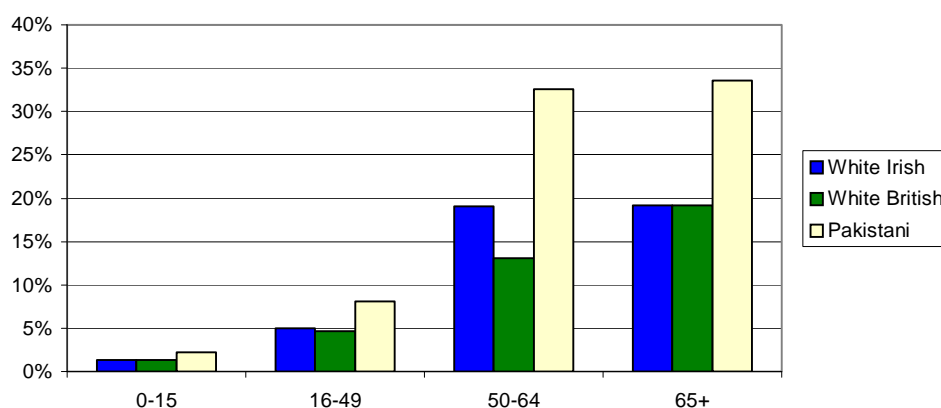


Looking at women, it is noticeable that there is a lower incidence of limiting long-term illness than amongst the men. This is particularly evident in the 16 to 49 age bracket.

In each age group, there are similar proportions of white Irish and white British women affected by limiting long-term illness. In the 50 to 64 age group, for example, 23.7% of white Irish women have a limiting long-term illness in comparison with 24.1% of white British women. The incidence is much greater in the Pakistani population – 53.5%.

In the oldest age group, a lower proportion of white Irish women (46.9%) than both white British women (50.4%) and Pakistani women (69.8%) have limiting long-term illness.

Figure 33. Men not in good health – by age group

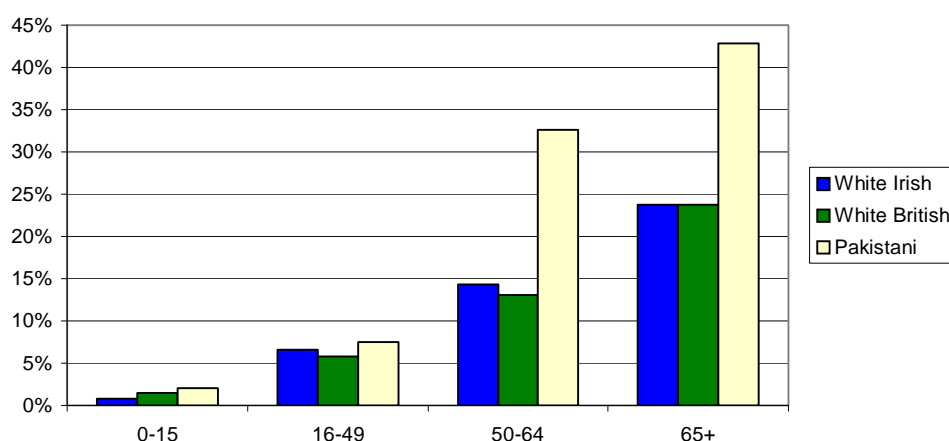


In each age group, there are similar proportions of white Irish and white British men not in good health. The exception to this is in the 50 to 64 age group in which 19.1% of white Irish men have a limiting long-term illness in comparison with 13.1% of white British men. The incidence is much greater amongst Pakistani men in the same age group – 32.5%.

In the oldest age group, a similar proportion of white Irish men and white British men are not in good health – 19.1%. For Pakistani men, however, the proportion is 33.6%.

It is not unreasonable to suggest that the relatively high incidence of limiting long-term illness and 'not good health' amongst men of working age could be related to the type of work being carried out. 35.9% of white Irish men in Luton work in construction (figure 10) or there could be other factors at play such as lifestyle; housing; genetics; isolation and so forth.

Figure 34. Women not in good health – by age group



Amongst women of working age, there are very similar proportions of white Irish and white British people who are not in good health. In both the 16 to 49 age group and the 50 to 64 age bracket, levels amongst white Irish women are less than 1% higher than levels amongst white British women. In the oldest age group, the levels are identical to each other, at 23.7%.

In both the 50 to 64 age bracket and the 65 and older age bracket, the proportion of Pakistani women in not good health far exceeds that of the white Irish and white British populations. For Pakistani women, the proportions are 32.7% and 42.8% respectively.

The health of a population is a complex issue with many inter-linked factors at play. Relatively high rates of long-term illness amongst Irish people are discussed at some length by Hickman and Walter (1997) as well as other commentators. What is clear is that there is no single answer to the matter of why there are relatively high levels of ill-health (and mortality) amongst Irish populations in England. The following are some of those factors which could be at play:

Poverty and housing

As established earlier in this report, the white Irish population has a comparatively low level of economic activity (section 2: Economic activity and inactivity) which implies reliance on other forms of income such as pensions and benefits. Likewise a relatively high proportion of the white Irish population is living in social housing (figure 23). Both of these factors may have an impact on the health of individuals.

Socio-economic status

As well as practical issues related to class, people of lower social classes may also view their own health differently bringing about reporting differences.

Changes brought about by the act of migration

Living in a rural setting in Ireland and moving to an inner-city area of Luton, for example, can represent a significant change in a person's life which may impact on their health.

Negative experiences of host country and racism

Many commentators have documented racism and discrimination experienced by Irish people in England both in the past and currently.

Lifestyle factors

The links between excessive alcohol consumption, smoking and poor diet and poor health are now clearly established and need to be taken into consideration when looking at any population experiencing poor health.

Genetics

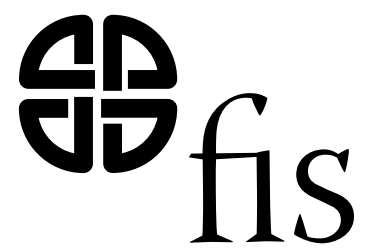
In any discussion of health, genetics may play a factor. Certain illnesses (e.g. cancers) have strong genetic components. In a single community of people this may impact on the incidence of those illnesses.

Occupation

It has been established that a relatively high proportion of white Irish men work in construction (figure 12) and an even higher proportion of white Irish women work in health and social care (figure 13). While the Census data does not indicate the type of work undertaken in these broad fields, we know that construction includes many roles which are dangerous or cause ill-health and that many roles in health and social care involve long, anti-social hours, lifting and stress.

In summary

The data in this section suggests that health is a particular issue for white Irish people in Luton. This relates particularly to white Irish men of working age who are experiencing relatively high levels of limiting long-term illness. It also relates to men of working age who rate their own health as being not good.



*FIS exists to represent and develop our members and
our community*

This report, one of a suite of twenty four, is an outcome of a research project on the Irish data in the 2001 Census. The data and commentaries in the suite of reports are presented in a comparative context at national, regional and selected local levels, and on the basis of the full sixteen categories from the 2001 Census Ethnic Group Question.

... there are sections of the Irish population who have multiple needs, are marginalised, and have information, support and service needs ... to be addressed.

We have been disappointed by the structuring of much of the analysis of ethnicity data from the 2001 Census published to date, particularly the use of various "combined ethnic group categories" and the failure to disaggregate the White "combined group" data. Increasingly, micro-decisions about delivery of services take place at a local level. ... Those with local responsibility under the Race Relations Acts for addressing inequalities must have the best possible local data on all significant communities (including minority ethnic communities) at their disposal, and must use it in an inclusive way to inform their policies.

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