

---

## THE FUTURE AGEING OF THE ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES

---

By 2051 it is estimated that there will be 7.4 million Black and minority ethnic older people, over the age of fifty, living in England and Wales, with 3.8 million over the age of 65.

*The Future Ageing of the Ethnic Minority Population of England and Wales* is a joint publication by the Centre for Policy on Ageing and Runnymede Trust projecting the future ethnic minority population of England and Wales with particular emphasis on ethnic minority populations over the age of fifty.

The ethnic minority population of England and Wales is, in general, younger than the majority White British population, exceptions being the White Irish, Indian, 'Other White', and Black Caribbean ethnic groups.

This should not be allowed to obscure the fact that, in the future there will be a substantial increase in the number of older people from ethnic minorities.

The number of people from ethnic minority groups aged 50 and over is projected to increase from 1.3 million in 2001 and 1.7 million in 2007 to 2.4 million by 2016, 3.8 million by 2026 and 7.4 million by 2051.

Typical of the rising numbers for an ethnic group with an ageing population structure is the number of over 50s in the Indian ethnic minority group which is projected to rise from 200,000 in 2001 and 282,000 in 2007, to 408,000 by 2016, 625,000 by 2026 and 1,150,000 by 2051.

There will be fewer people from ethnic minority groups aged 65 and over but the number is projected to increase from half a million in 2001 and 675,000 in 2007, to 0.81 million by 2016, 1.3 million by 2026 and 3.8 million by 2051.

The 'Other White' group is projected to show the greatest increase in numbers aged 65 and over rising from 140,000 in 2001 to 204,000 in 2016, 319,000 in 2026 and one million by 2051.

Individual ethnic groups show very different patterns of ageing. The mixed ethnic groups tend to have a very young population structure with very few older people. Even by 2051 the number of older people from the mixed ethnic groups will be low. The White Irish population has, on the other hand, a very much older population structure with already, in 2007, 57% of the population aged 50 or over.

The Indian ethnic minority group is one of those with an older age structure and, by 2051, there will be an estimated 440,000 Indian residents of England and Wales aged 70 and over and 70,000 aged 85 and over.

The future ageing of the ethnic minority population of England and Wales is very much

bound up with future patterns of fertility, mortality and migration. Ethnicity is self defined so, for the ethnic minority populations, there is the additional complication that the child of a mother from any ethnic group will not necessarily be of the same ethnic group as the mother. The child may be ascribed, or give themselves a different ethnicity to that of the parent. This is particularly so for mothers from the White Irish and 'White Other' ethnic groups but is also common when the mother and father are from different ethnic groups.

Future patterns of immigration and emigration are difficult to predict as these may change with changes in government policy and changes in patterns of re-migration. Re-migration is the return or onward migration of migrants to England and Wales and, since 1975, around one half of all immigrants to England and Wales have re-migrated. Of particular interest in future years will be patterns of onward or return migration for ethnic minorities reaching retirement age.

The report's projections take into account likely future improvements in health and life expectancy for all ethnic groups. Individual ethnic groups do not have the same levels of health and life expectancy but it might be expected that, over time, the health and life expectancy of migrant groups would converge with those of the majority population. Social factors, such as the high smoking rate among Bangladeshi men may, however, mitigate against the closing of the gap.

The pattern of births in individual ethnic groups is very much dictated by the age structure of that ethnic group as well as other social factors. The overall birth rate in England and Wales reached a low in 2001 but has since been increasing. It is difficult to assess for how long this upward trend will continue and that is one of the assumptions that have to be made that affect the overall projections in the report.

The report cautions that its projections are just that, projections based on reasonable assumptions about fertility, mortality and migration. The projections are likely to be less reliable the further they are taken into the future and they are not predictions. Future outcomes will change with any future variation from the assumptions made.

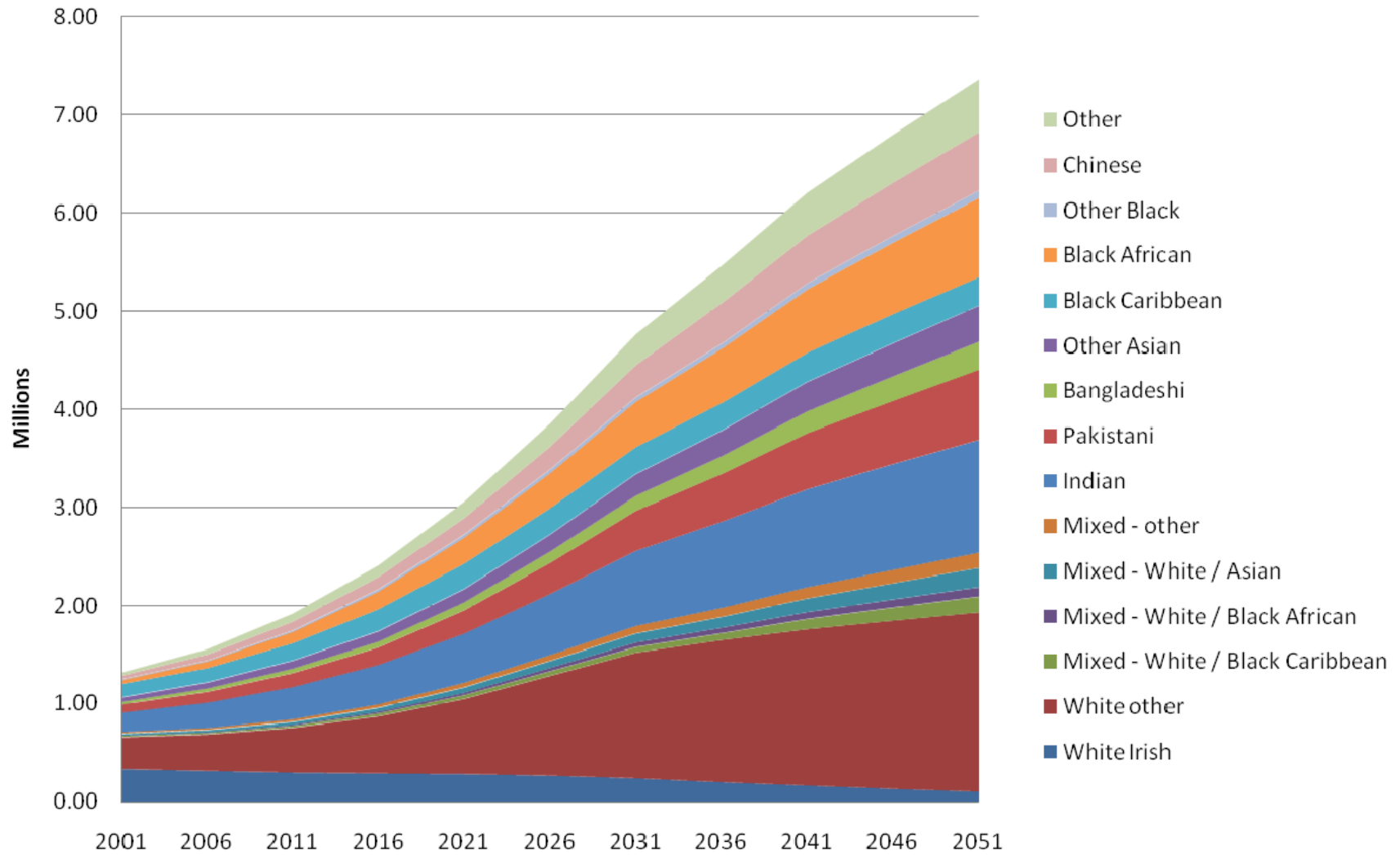
**Report author: Nat Lievesley**

The full report is available at <http://www.cpa.org.uk/reportsandreviews> and also from the Runnymede website <http://www.runnymedetrust.org>

This report was commissioned by the Runnymede Trust as part of a programme on the financial inclusion of older people funded by the Nationwide Foundation. CPA is also carrying out project work on Daily Money Management for vulnerable older people as part of the same programme. Details can be found at <http://www.cpa.org.uk/dmm>

July 2010

The ethnic minority population of England and Wales aged 50 and over.



The ethnic minority population of England and Wales aged 65 and over.

