



***The Merton Story  
Refreshing of the Community Cohesion Strategy and Developing an  
Action Plan for Engagement.***

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## 1. Introduction and Brief

Merton is very aware of the challenges it faces and seeks to review its present community cohesion work to ensure that it sustains good relations at a community level and maintains an excellent reputation within the Borough as a welcoming place to invest, work and live. iCoCo was commissioned to capture the Merton story and look at existing good practice, compare its approach with that of other leading authorities and 'reality test' programmes against current expectations in the local community and amongst local partners.

### The Brief

1.1. Building on Merton's achievements in promoting community cohesion, the key elements of the brief included:

- Identify and evidence issues and grievances that divide alienate and isolate different communities.
- Highlight challenges and key priorities to be tackled in promoting greater cohesion between the different areas and the diverse communities and the indigenous population
- Identify best practice in Merton and from elsewhere, and propose how these could be mainstreamed where appropriate.
- Focus on building resilience across the voluntary, faith and public sectors to anticipate and deal with tensions and conflict between communities.

### Methodology

1.2. In fulfilling the brief, iCoCo carried out research in two phases. Phase 1 concentrated on identifying key issues and challenges and what is already being done. This involved:

- A desk top documentary review of policies in Merton relevant to promoting community cohesion and the Prevent agenda, building on the work undertaken previously to produce the current Community Cohesion Strategy
- Constructing a statistical profile of the current state of community cohesion in Merton using key and widely accepted indicators, in addition to local data and recent surveys. This included looking at the differential impact of disadvantage and deprivation across different communities.
- One-to-One interviews with key personnel in the public, voluntary and faith sectors to identify what they see as key issues and how well current initiatives are working. Public sector personnel included Merton Council, the Police, Children and Young People Service, Merton Partnership – exploring the thematic strands in particular Education, community safety and Employment and Economic Development.
- Identifying best practice in other areas.

- 1.3. Upon completing the first Phase an Interim Report was produced setting out our initial findings.
- 1.4. Phase 2 involved mapping the Borough's main BAME and new and emerging communities in terms of heritage, cultures and faith, but also seeking to identify what local residents see as the key issues to be tackled. This was done mainly through 25 Focus Groups with Merton's diverse communities with the aim of gauging and identifying:
  - Factors that influence relations, tensions and barriers between different communities.
  - Perceptions of capacity within different communities to influence decisions affecting their local areas and communities.
  - Views on how current arrangements to identify and tackle tensions as well as promote community cohesion can be improved.
  - The influence of far right political and radical religious groups.

### **About iCoCo**

- 1.5. The Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo)<sup>1</sup> was established in 2005 to provide a new approach to race and diversity and, in particular, to focus on the development of harmonious community relations.
- 1.6. iCoCo is a unique partnership of academic, statutory and non-governmental bodies, which combines the experience and expertise of four Universities – namely, Coventry, Warwick, De Montfort and Leicester. Other key partners include Local Government and Improvement Development (formerly the IDeA).
- 1.7. iCoCo is committed to 'improvement from within' by working with local authorities to build on their current strengths. We therefore operate as a 'critical friend', constantly questioning and challenging, but also trying to find ways of supporting Councils in improving community cohesion and integration by bringing good practice and expertise to the recommendations we make.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/home>

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Merton is a very diverse London Borough with a rich mix of ethnicity, culture, faith and languages. In 2001 25% of the population were from BAME backgrounds compared with 9% nationally and a further 10.9% described themselves as White but not British. Since then the non White British population has continued to grow reaching an estimated 37.5% in 2009.
- 2.2. The diversity of the borough is likely to continue to change as the relatively large and much more diverse school population moves through to adulthood -55.8% of secondary and 60.1 % of primary pupils are BAME.
- 2.3. Merton's population is also changing as a consequence of international migration. DWP figures for NINo (New National Insurance Numbers to foreign nationals) registrations in Merton rose sharply in 2005 at the time the A8 countries joined the European Union although numbers have declined since 2008. The countries of origin for foreign nationals registering for National Insurance numbers in Merton are unusually diverse with significant numbers from Africa, Australasia, East & West Europe and South Asia as well as Eastern Europe.
- 2.4. This reflects the general diversity of the BAME population with significant numbers of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Black Caribbean, Black African, Korean, Thai, Gypsy Roma Traveller and mixed heritage. It is also notable that 110 languages are spoken in Merton schools.
- 2.5. Merton is also one of the most religiously diverse boroughs in London, and the base for several faith centres of both architectural significance and hierarchical importance, including; the Holy See (Vatican) Embassy; the Royal Thai Government supported Wat Buddhapadipa [Temple], and the international Ahmadiyya Muslim Association headquarters.
- 2.6. While there is a concentration of BAME population in some wards – Graveney is 52.8% non White whereas Raynes Park is 14.6% for example, spatial segregation in Merton by ethnicity is fairly low and a feature principally of the Black or Black British population. Schools are also generally mixed with none being over 80% White or 70% or more BAME with one group 50% or more, though 28.8% of primary schools do have over 70% BAME pupils with no one BAME group dominant and this percentage is growing.
- 2.7. Although in general Merton's residents are better qualified than Londoners as a whole, as elsewhere, the overall picture on skills and unemployment conceals some large differences geographically and across different ethnic groups. Some BAME groups are over represented in claimants for Job Seekers Allowance, have lower levels of qualifications than the rest of the population and are underrepresented in senior positions.

- 2.8. The Economic Development Strategy contains an extensive analysis of the local economy, a clear vision and objectives and a lengthy action plan focused on a range of key interventions. The economic vision is both spatial and thematic in nature, addressing the issue of development in the borough's main centres as well as determining which sectors to actively facilitate for further growth. However, while also recognising that skill levels are an important issue, and a principal determinant of the east/west divide, action to address skill levels is not a strong focus of the Economic Development Strategy. Nor does there appear to be much understanding of the structure and trading relations of ethnic minority businesses.
- 2.9. Merton Council and the LSP have a long track record of working to promote inclusion, fairness and cohesion. The Council has supported the development of the BAME Strategy led by a consortium of voluntary and community groups. At 77.1% the percentage of people 'who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together' is slightly above both the London and national figures of 76.3% and 76.4% respectively.
- 2.10. Our interviews and focus groups found generally positive views about Merton as a place to live: people both recognised the diversity of the borough and were broadly comfortable with it. There is widespread support across all elected positions and political parties for cohesion and integration – with a particular emphasis on bridging economic disparities across the borough.
- 2.11. However, there were inevitably some issues of concern and potential conflict. The economic divide between the East and West of the borough was widely mentioned and this clearly has, in part, an ethnic dimension, though there were those who argued that such differences were just a reflection of London generally. Some concerns were expressed about changing neighbourhoods, the erosion of traditions and the arrival of new migrants. Some argued that harmonious relations might only be skin deep and pointed to tensions within and between different communities including the growing Ahmadiyya community and Sunni Muslims and the treatment of Gypsy and Roma children.
- 2.12. Views about the threat from the Far Right were mixed. While overall the Far Right had not had a major impact, on the ground or electorally, it was seen as an ever present threat ready to take advantage of any incidents which might threaten cohesion.
- 2.13. There was recognition that the Council had invested a great deal in improving and promoting equality of opportunities but it was felt that still more needed to be done particularly around representation and engagement and under achievement in schools for Black pupils.

- 2.14. Intergenerational issues also featured prominently amongst concerns raised in focus groups across all communities. Whilst anxieties about anti-social behaviour constituted one part of these concerns, at a deeper level the issues appeared to be about the ways in which local communities were changing, different lifestyles between generations and weakening family and social bonds.
- 2.15. Though the presence and influence of street gangs was not seen as a big problem in comparison with other parts of London, it was nevertheless identified as a growing concern particularly involving young males of African Caribbean and Tamil heritages. Quite often these 'street gangs' were in fact little more than groups of young people hanging around and socialising. But some are territorial and seen as associated with illegal and violent activities.
- 2.16. Overall, we found young people in Merton at ease with diversity and some exceptional examples of a desire to engage and understand cultural and faith diversities.
- 2.17. There was, perhaps inevitably, widespread concern about the impact of cuts in public spending.
- 2.18. As elsewhere, Prevent had proved a controversial programme but we heard very positive reports of a Prevent funded project to engage young Asian women.
- 2.19. The Council and its partners have worked hard to engage sensitively with a range of communities. However, given the range, diversity and changing nature of the different communities inevitably some groups are harder to identify, understand and engage than others. The final section of the report provides a detailed narrative, description and profile of Merton's changing population in order that key organisations in the local public, voluntary and faith sectors may be better informed of the communities they serve.

### 3. AN OVERVIEW OF COHESION AND INTEGRATION

#### Introduction

- 3.1. Merton is a South West London borough formed in 1965 when Mitcham, Morden, Merton and Wimbledon merged. The 2011 estimated population is 208,200 and is expected to grow to 242,300 by 2031. Merton is an ethnically diverse borough. In 2001, its BAME population was 25% with an additional 9% describing themselves as White Other. Adding to the diversity are new economic migrants from Eastern Europe and other countries. The borough is the 211<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority area nationally. The impact of multiple deprivation is greater in the east of the borough with the west being relatively (much) more affluent. Political control of Merton council is held by the labour Party. The borough has two Parliamentary constituencies and currently has one Labour and one Conservative Member of Parliament.
- 3.2. Merton Council and the LSP have a long track record of working to promote inclusion, fairness and cohesion in the borough. The 2004-2006 Ethnic Minority Housing Strategy was seen as a model and the BAME strategies of 2006-2009 and 2010-2013 were, uniquely, prepared by the BAME Forum facilitated by Merton Unity Network (MUN) with support from the Council.
- 3.3. The report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) in 2007 stressed that the level of cohesion in a locality will depend upon a series of interacting factors about the area and its people.<sup>2</sup> In short, 'one size does not fit all' and it will be for local authorities and their Partners to determine which aspects of the definition best reflect local circumstances and current challenges.
- 3.4. This theme was also reflected in guidance issued by the Local Government Association (LGA), which stressed that it will be for each local authority – informed by a baseline assessment of its circumstances – to determine what strategies and plans are necessary to promote community cohesion in their area<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.5. As to what local factors might affect the level of cohesion in a particular area, in the view of the Commission, differences of ethnicity, culture and faith are aspects, which will differ in importance depending on local circumstances. The same may be said of the level of recent international migration – whether economic migrants, asylum seekers or refugees.
- 3.6. But other factors are also important. To begin with more cohesive communities are likely to have a strong sense of belonging to and

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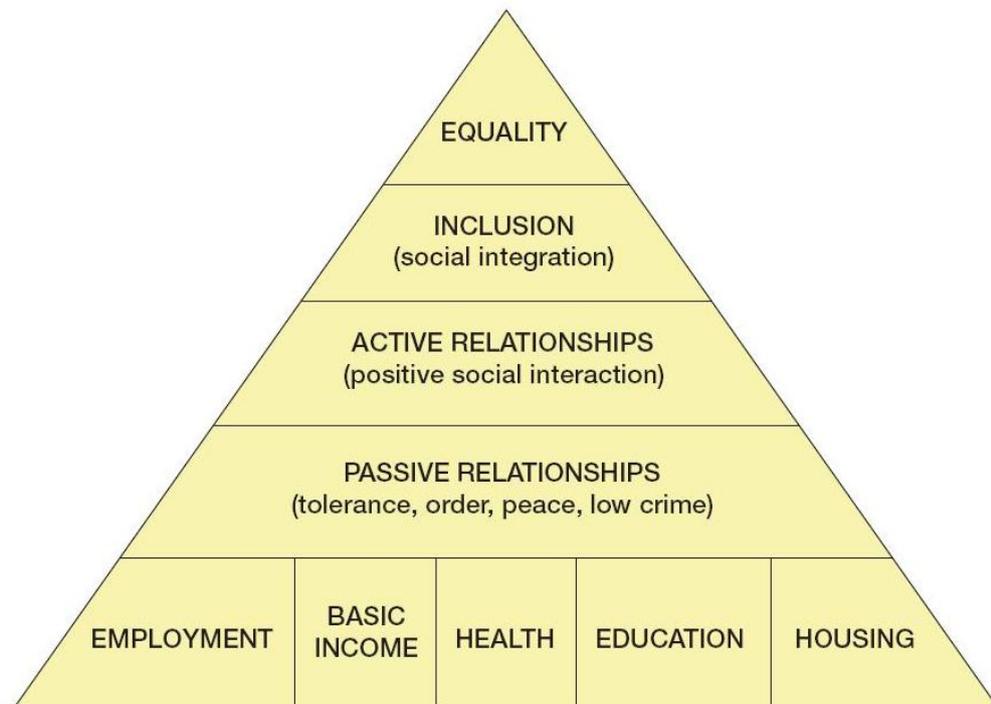
<sup>2</sup> 'Our Shared Future': The Commission on Integration and Cohesion. Final Report - June 2007.

<sup>3</sup> LGA Guidelines on Community Cohesion - 2002

satisfaction with place. People are likely to trust and help neighbours, believe they can influence local decisions and are active participants in locally organised voluntary activities and elections. At the same time cohesion can be also influenced by the level of geographical segregation between different communities, divisions and inequality between communities in housing, educational and employment, different levels of deprivation, inter-generational tensions, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime, the activities of far right and extremist groups and the pace of change.

- 3.7. The 'State of English Cities' published by the government in 2006 used a pyramid model as a way of illustrating how these different factors relate to each other. At the base of the pyramid are 'material conditions' considered essential to social cohesion – employment, income, health, education and housing. The second level addresses issues 'passive relationships' relating to social order, and the third 'active relationships' or positive social interaction. Level four is concerned with 'social inclusion', which includes integration into mainstream institutions, sense of belonging, shared experiences, identities and values. The opposites of these are segregation, social exclusion, disaffection and isolation. Finally, at the apex of the pyramid is social equality - the level of fairness or disparity in access to opportunities<sup>4</sup>.

**Figure 1: State of English Cities Pyramid Model of Cohesion**



<sup>4</sup> State of English Cities – a research study. Independent report to the Department for Communities and Local Government 2006.

3.8. A 2008 report prepared for the Department of Communities and Local Government also provides some useful insights into predicting and measuring community cohesion.<sup>5</sup> The report found that:

- Once other factors are accounted for, ethnic diversity is – in most cases – positively associated with community cohesion. However, this relationship is thought to depend on an area having a broad mix of residents from different ethnic groups, as is the case in Merton.
- An increasing percentage of in-migration of people born outside the UK could have a negative influence on cohesion.
- Having friends from ethnic groups other than one's own was a strong predictor of cohesion.
- Disadvantage and deprivation consistently undermined cohesion, though not all deprived areas have low cohesion.
- Increasing levels of crime and fear of crime are both strong negative predictors of cohesion.
- Feeling able to influence local decisions is a strong positive predictor of cohesion. However, an individual feeling that they are unfairly treated because of their race is thought to have a strong negative impact on cohesion.
- Volunteering is a positive predictor of cohesion.

3.9. Starting with a profile of the borough's changing population, the analytical framework provided by these studies will form the basis for our assessment of the current state of community cohesion in Merton.

### **Merton's Changing Population**

3.10. The population of Merton at the time of the 2001 Census was 187,908. This was an increase of 17,000 (or 9.0%) since the 1991 Census and made Merton the 40<sup>th</sup> fastest growing local authority in terms of population size out of 376 in England & Wales. Merton ranked 5<sup>th</sup> out of 33 local authorities in London in terms of population growth over this period.

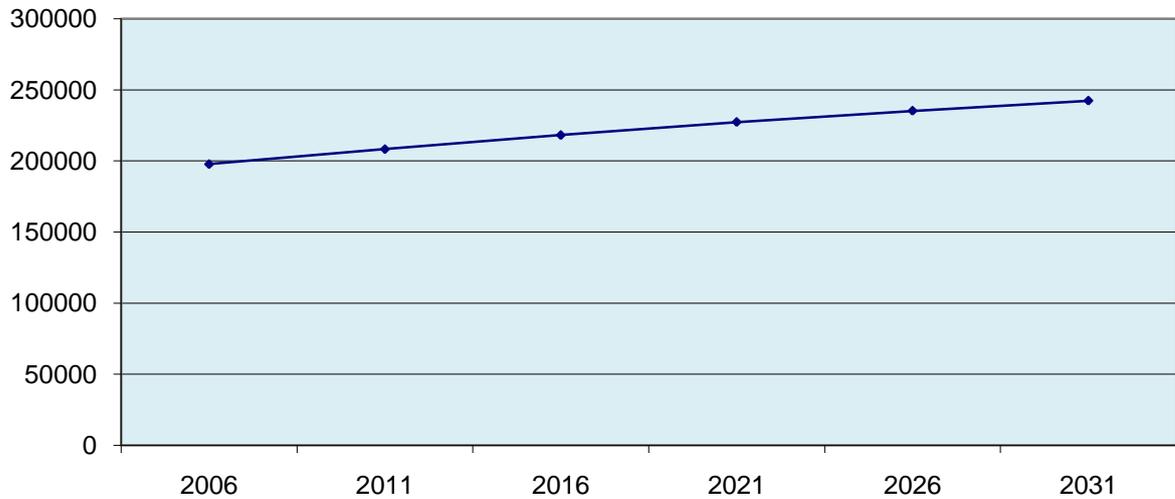
3.11. This population growth is expected to continue and ONS long-term population estimates put the population size at 197,700 in 2006 and an expected 242,300 in 2031. The figure for 2011 is estimated to be 208,200.

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<sup>5</sup> Predictors of Community Cohesion: Multi-Level modeling of the 2005 Citizenship Survey. DCLG February 2008.

**Figure 2: Long Term Population Growth<sup>6</sup>**

Merton Population, 2006-2031



3.12. The table below shows the components of population change that the ONS has used to calculate recent MYEs. There will be some expectation in the long-term population estimate methodology that these trends will continue.

3.13. Merton has a high rate of natural growth which is the main driver of population growth over the period covered. Net migration over the period is actually negative and given that other data sources such as NINo and Flag 4 show that there are people moving into the borough, this must mean that there are also larger numbers of people leaving the borough at the same time.

**Table 1: ONS Components of Population Change, 2002-2009<sup>7</sup>**

MYE	Natural Change (births vs deaths)	Net Migration & Other Change	Total
2002	1200	-600	600
2003	1200	-1500	-300
2004	1300	-500	900
2005	1600	1400	3000
2006	1700	700	2400
2007	2000	-400	1500
2008	2100	0	2100
2009	2200	1500	3700

Note: Numbers may not tally due to rounding at source.

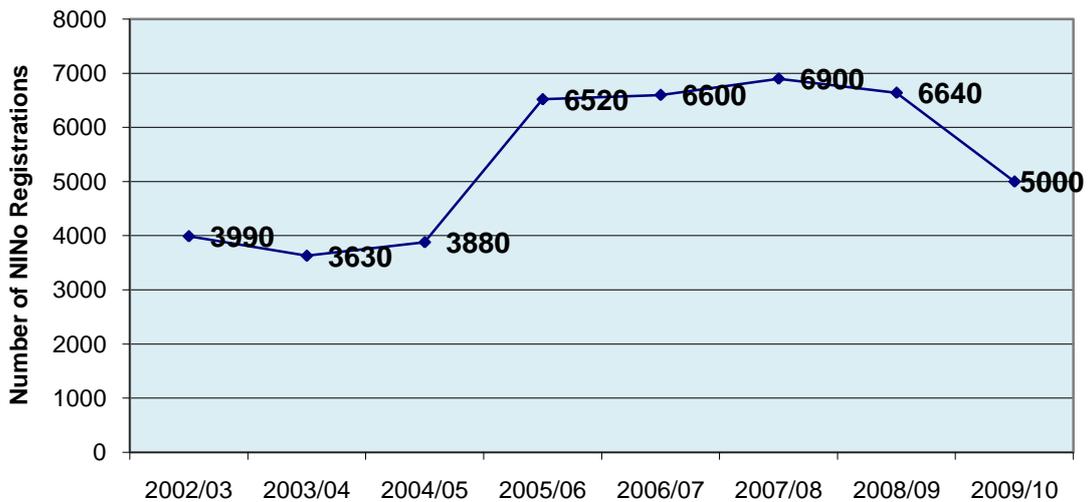
<sup>6</sup> Office of National Statistics- Long Term Population Estimates, 2006-2031

<sup>7</sup> Office of National Statistics- Mid Year Population Estimates Components of Change 2001 to 2009

3.14. Merton’s population is also changing as a consequence of international migration. DWP figures for NINo (New National Insurance Numbers to foreign nationals) registrations in Merton between the years 2002/03 to 2009/10 and can be seen below in Figure 3.

3.15. The numbers of NINo registrations rising sharply in 2005 at the time of the A8 countries joining the European Union is a national trend, as is the drop off of numbers from 2008 onwards.

**Figure 3: Merton NINo Registrations 2002-2010<sup>8</sup>**



3.16. Table 2 below shows the main countries of origin of NINo registrations in Merton in both 2005 and 2009.

3.17. The countries of origin for foreign nationals registering for National Insurance numbers in Merton are unusually diverse with significant numbers from Africa, Australasia, East & West Europe and South Asia.

3.18. The numbers from South Africa dropped off hugely between 2005 and 2009 but are still among the highest in England.

3.19. That the White Other population of Merton has grown so rapidly could be expected if one looks at new National Insurance Numbers (NINo) issued for foreign nationals in Merton. In 2009 there were 5,680 NINo applicants in Merton and 1,040 of these were from Polish nationals and 520 were from South African nationals- the 2 biggest countries of origin in 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Work & Pensions- New National Insurance Registrations to Foreign Nationals 2002/03 to 2009/10

**Table 2: Merton NINo Applicants Country of Origins, 2005 & 2009<sup>9</sup>**

2005		2009	
Country of Origin	Number	Country of Origin	Number
South Africa	1140	Poland	1040
Poland	1060	South Africa	520
Australia	370	India	360
Pakistan	300	Sri Lanka	360
Sri Lanka	270	Australia	270
India	210	Pakistan	240
Germany	180	Germany	170
Lithuania	180	Italy	160
New Zealand	160	France	150
Slovak Rep	140	Lithuania	120

3.20. Table 3 and Figure 4 both show the numbers of Flag 4 GP registrations per 1,000 of the resident population for the years 2000-01 through to 2008-09. Merton, as is typical of a London borough, has a much higher rate than England as a whole.

3.21. What stands out and can be seen graphically in Figure 4 is that the rate for Merton was slightly below that of London as a whole in 2000-01 but had overtaken it 2 years later and as of 2008-09, was much higher. This suggests that Merton will have seen a faster rate of growth in international migration than London itself has.

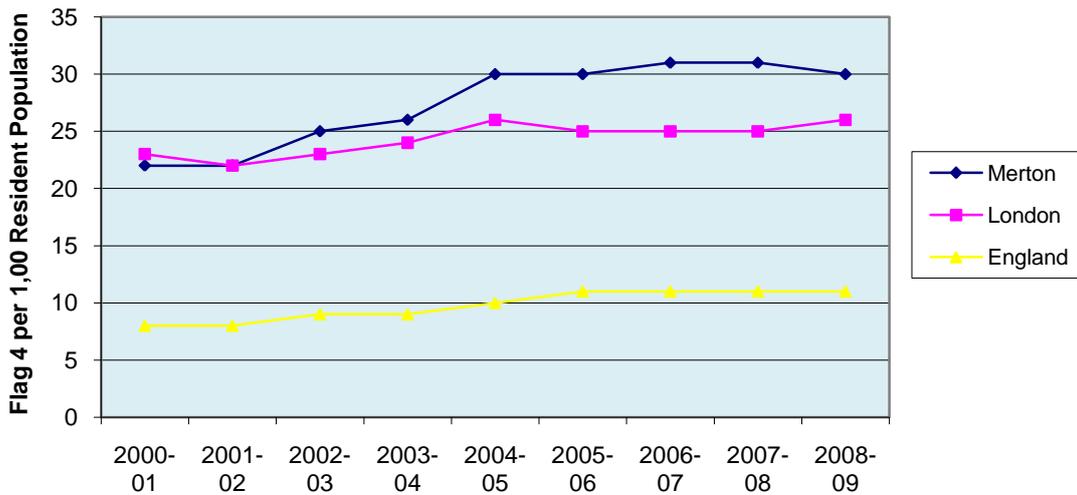
**Table 3: Flag 4 GP Registrations, 2000-2009<sup>10</sup>**

	Number of new Flag 4 GP Registrations in Merton	Rate per 1,000 resident population in Merton	Rate per 1,000 resident population in London	Rate per 1,000 resident population in England
2000-01	4177	22	23	8
2001-02	4237	22	22	8
2002-03	4710	25	23	9
2003-04	5004	26	24	9
2004-05	5839	30	26	10
2005-06	5869	30	25	11
2006-07	6181	31	25	11
2007-08	6306	31	25	11
2008-09	6139	30	26	11

<sup>9</sup> Department of Work & Pensions- New National Insurance Registrations to Foreign Nationals 2005 and 2009

<sup>10</sup> Flag 4 GP Registrations 2000-01 to 2008-09

**Figure 4: Flag 4 GP Registrations, 2000-2009<sup>11</sup>**



3.22. The borough's population is also becoming more diverse in terms of ethnicity and faith. Table 4 shows the population of Merton by ethnicity at the time of the 2001 Census and also the ONS mid-year population estimates by ethnicity for 2009. These are the most up to date estimates of this kind available.

3.23. Merton is an ethnically diverse area in relation to England as a whole. In 2001 25.0% of the population were from BAME backgrounds as opposed to just 9.0% nationally. However Merton also has unusually large White Irish and White Other populations compared to the national picture. In 2001 just 64.1% of Merton's population were White British as opposed to 87.0% of people nationally. As of 2009 the White British population of Merton was 62.5%.

3.24. All BAME groups in Merton at the time of the 2001 Census were proportionally larger than those seen nationally. The largest non-White British ethnic group was White Other at 8.0% of the population. This has since grown to 8.4%.

3.25. This was followed by Asian or Asian British Indian, Black or Black British Caribbean and Black or Black British African however, as has been said, all ethnic groups are proportionally larger than is seen nationally and there is no dominant group in terms of size.

3.26. The 2009 MYEs show that the Black or Black British African has grown in size and is now larger than the Black or Black British Caribbean population. Black or Black British African and Chinese are the ethnic groups that have seen the fastest rates of growth in the past decade.

<sup>11</sup> Flag 4 GP Registrations 2000-01 to 2008-09

3.27. Both the White Irish and Asian or Asian British Other populations have seen proportional population decline in the years 2001 to 2009.

**Table 4: Population by Ethnicity, 2001 & 2009<sup>12</sup>**

	Merton 2001	Merton MYE 2009	National Average 2001
<b>White</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>73.0</b>	<b>91.0</b>
British	64.1	62.5	87.0
Irish	2.9	2.1	1.3
Other	8.0	8.4	2.7
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.3</b>
White and Black Caribbean	0.9	1.0	0.5
White and Black African	0.4	0.5	0.2
White and Asian	1.0	1.1	0.4
Other	0.8	1.0	0.3
<b>Asian</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>
Indian	4.3	4.7	2.1
Pakistani	2.4	2.8	1.4
Bangladeshi	0.9	1.1	0.6
Other	3.5	2.6	0.5
<b>Black or Black British</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Black Caribbean	3.7	3.5	1.1
Black African	3.4	4.2	1.0
Other	0.6	0.7	0.2
<b>Chinese or Other</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Chinese	1.3	2.2	0.4
Other	1.7	1.6	0.4

3.28. As is to be expected of an ethnically diverse area, Merton is also very diverse with regards to faith. The proportional rankings show the size of the faith populations against both the other London boroughs and the other 375 local authorities in England and Wales.

3.29. What these rankings show are that proportionately speaking Merton has one of the smallest Christian populations in the country and that it has proportionately large Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh populations. Given the changing and growing BAME populations in Merton, it is now likely that the non-Christian faith groups are notably larger.

<sup>12</sup> 2001 Census and Office of National Statistics Mid Year Population Estimates by Ethnicity 2009

**Table 5: Population by Religion, 2001<sup>13</sup>**

Religion	Number	%	National
Christian	119002	63.3	71.7
Buddhist	1441	0.8	0.3
Hindu	8738	4.6	1.1
Jewish	881	0.5	0.5
Muslim	10900	5.8	3.1
Sikh	490	0.3	0.7
Other	599	0.3	0.3
None	31096	16.6	14.6
Not Stated	14755	7.9	7.7

**Table 6: Comparator of Religious Population Sizes, 2001<sup>14</sup>**

Religion	London/33	England
Christian	11	339
Buddhist	17	19
Hindu	9	11
Jewish	22	45
Muslim	19	36
Sikh	22	90
Other	25	104
None	15	100
Not Stated	22	131

3.30. Table 7 below shows the ethnic make-up of all major faith groups in Merton at the time of the 2001 Census. This 2001 data is now rather out of date but is still the best and most comprehensive that is available.

3.31. Some faith groups are very mono-ethnic. These include Hindu (96.3% Asian or Asian British), Jewish (94.6% White) and Sikh (92.6% Asian or Asian British). However the Hindu population is also rather evenly split between those of Indian heritage and those of Asian Other heritage whereas 85.9% of the Sikh population is of Indian heritage.

3.32. There are also faith groups which are very diverse such as Buddhist and Muslim. Though 70.7% of Muslims are Asian or Asian British and 64.5% of Buddhists are Chinese or Other Ethnic Background, no single ethnic group has a majority population in either.

3.33. The Christian faith is also fairly diverse compared to the national picture with just 71.2% of the population being White British. White Other, Black or Black British Caribbean and Black or Black British African are the next largest Christian ethnic groups.

<sup>13</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>14</sup> 2001 Census

**Table 7: Religion by Ethnicity %, 2001<sup>15</sup>**

	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other	None	Not stated
<b>White</b>	83.9	15.8	0.8	94.6	12.7	1.4	60.8	86.3	76.8
British	71.2	12.6	0.6	77.6	4.6	1.4	50.2	78.0	65.6
Irish	4.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	1.3	1.1	2.3
Other	8.7	2.7	0.3	17.0	8.0	0.0	9.3	7.2	9.0
<b>Mixed</b>	2.7	3.0	1.6	1.8	5.5	4.2	2.9	3.9	4.0
White and Black Caribbean	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	1.4	1.4
White and Black African	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.4
White and Asian	0.8	1.5	1.0	0.7	2.9	3.0	1.1	1.2	1.2
Other	0.7	1.2	0.5	1.1	1.9	1.2	1.3	1.0	1.0
<b>Asian</b>	2.1	15.2	96.3	1.0	70.7	92.6	26.3	1.1	6.9
Indian	1.0	2.2	53.0	0.3	10.1	85.9	23.7	0.5	2.4
Pakistani	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.3	38.0	0.6	0.5	0.1	1.5
Bangladeshi	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	14.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Other	1.0	12.8	43.2	0.3	7.9	6.0	2.1	0.5	2.5
<b>Black or Black</b>									
<b>British</b>	9.7	1.5	0.7	0.0	6.4	0.0	4.7	3.1	8.8
Black Caribbean	4.5	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	3.4	2.3	5.3
Black African	4.5	0.6	0.1	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.5	0.4	2.5
Other	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.3	1.0
<b>Chinese or Other</b>	1.7	64.5	0.6	2.6	4.6	1.8	5.2	5.5	3.4
Chinese	0.6	22.0	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	3.7	1.6
Other	1.0	42.5	0.6	2.3	4.5	1.8	5.2	1.7	1.8

3.34. Table 8 shows which percentage of each individual ethnic group belongs to which faith group (e.g. 70.8% of White residents in Merton are Christian). Again this table uses 2001 Census data.

3.35. Here we can see that:

- 7 out of 10 White and White British residents are Christian and 2 out of 10 belong to no faith group.
- 5.8% of White Other residents are Muslim.
- Over half of all Indian heritage residents are Hindu whilst 13.6% are Muslim and just 5.3% are Sikh.
- The overwhelming majority of all Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage residents are Muslim.
- Nearly 4 out of 5 Black or Black British residents are Christian. The figure is higher for Black or Black British African residents.
- 9.5% of all Black or Black British residents are all Muslim.
- Nearly half of all Chinese residents belong to no faith group.

<sup>15</sup> 2001 Census

**Table 8: Ethnicity by Religion %, 2001<sup>16</sup>**

	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other	None	Not stated
<b>White</b>	70.8	0.2	0.1	0.6	1.0	0.0	0.3	19.1	8.0
British	70.4	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.3	20.2	8.0
Irish	87.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	6.3	6.1
Other	68.7	0.3	0.1	1.0	5.8	0.0	0.4	14.9	8.8
<b>Mixed</b>	54.7	0.7	2.4	0.3	10.3	0.4	0.3	20.8	10.1
White and Black Caribbean	60.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	26.7	12.4
White and Black African	66.7	0.0	0.4	0.0	9.9	0.0	0.4	14.6	8.0
White and Asian	47.1	1.1	4.7	0.3	16.4	0.8	0.4	19.7	9.4
Other	52.9	1.1	2.8	0.6	13.2	0.4	0.5	19.0	9.6
<b>Asian</b>	11.9	1.0	40.4	0.0	37.0	2.2	0.8	1.7	4.9
Indian	14.8	0.4	57.6	0.0	13.6	5.3	1.8	2.0	4.5
Pakistani	1.9	0.1	0.1	0.1	91.8	0.1	0.1	1.0	5.0
Bangladeshi	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.0	94.9	0.0	0.0	0.7	3.6
Other	18.1	2.8	57.5	0.0	13.1	0.5	0.2	2.1	5.7
<b>Black or Black</b>									
<b>British</b>	78.9	0.1	0.4	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.2	6.6	8.9
Black Caribbean	76.6	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.3	10.5	11.2
Black African	82.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	9.5	0.0	0.0	2.0	5.8
Other	74.1	0.2	0.7	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.4	8.9	12.4
<b>Chinese or Other</b>	34.5	16.0	1.0	0.4	8.8	0.2	0.6	29.7	8.8
Chinese	30.5	12.6	0.0	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.0	46.8	9.3
Other	37.6	18.7	1.7	0.6	15.1	0.3	1.0	16.6	8.3

3.36. The two tables below are estimates of Merton's faith populations as of the time of the 2009 MYE. These have been calculated on the assumption that the ethnic make-up of each faith group will have remained constant though the numbers of people involved will have changed.

3.37. For instance we know from the 2001 Census that 94.9% of Asian or Asian British Bangladeshis living in Merton were Muslim because there were 1,700 Bangladeshi heritage residents in total and 1,614 were Muslim. According to the 2009 MYE there are now 2,300 Bangladeshi heritage residents of Merton and if we infer that 94.9% of these 2,300 will be Muslim then we can estimate that there are now 2,200 Bangladeshi heritage Muslims living in Merton.

3.38. This can be repeated with all faith and ethnic groups to build up a bigger picture estimate which can be seen in the latter of the two tables. By

<sup>16</sup> 2001 Census

these figures the faith groups that will have seen the largest increase in population share in Merton is Muslim. This is even though the Christian population has grown by over 10,000 people in this period.

**Table 9: Estimate of Religion by Ethnicity, 2009 (thousands)<sup>17</sup>**

	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other	None	Not stated
<b>White</b>	106.5	0.2	0.1	0.9	1.6	0.0	0.4	28.9	12.2
British	90.8	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.3	26.0	10.4
Irish	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
Other	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	1.0	0.0	0.1	2.6	1.5
<b>Mixed</b>	4.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.7
White and Black Caribbean	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.2
White and Black African	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
White and Asian	1.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.2
Other	1.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.2
<b>Asian</b>	2.5	0.2	8.6	0.0	9.4	0.5	0.2	0.4	1.1
Indian	1.4	0.0	5.6	0.0	1.3	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.4
Pakistani	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3
Bangladeshi	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Other	1.0	0.1	3.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3
<b>Black or Black</b>									
<b>British</b>	13.8	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.5
Black Caribbean	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8
Black African	7.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.5
Other	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2
<b>Chinese or Other</b>	2.6	1.2	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.7
Chinese	1.4	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.4
Other	1.2	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.3

<sup>17</sup> Author's own figures derived from 2001 Census and Office of National Statistics Mid Year Population Estimate by Ethnicity 2009

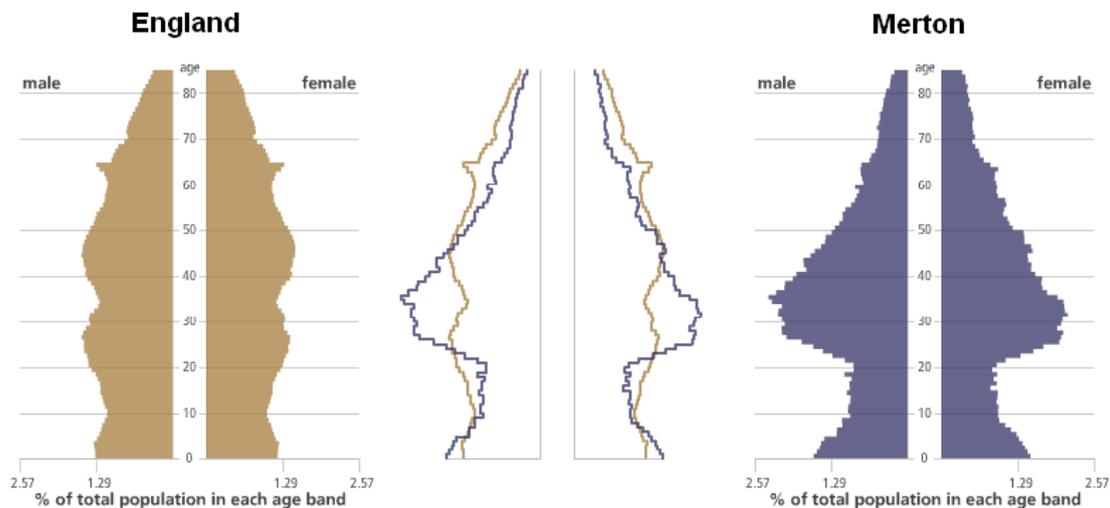
**Table 10: Estimate of Religious Populations, 2009<sup>18</sup>**

Religion	Estimated Number	Estimated % of total population	Estimated Change 2001-2009
Christian	129400	62.7	+10398
Buddhist	1700	0.8	+259
Hindu	9000	4.4	+262
Jewish	1000	0.5	+119
Muslim	13200	6.4	+2300
Sikh	600	0.3	+110
Other	700	0.3	+101
None	34500	16.7	+3404
None Stated	16200	7.9	+1445

3.39. Figure 5 shows the population make up by age of Merton for the year 2011 and for that of England as a whole. The two are overlaid in the middle and this highlights the large bulge in the 25-40 age group that exists in Merton and the smaller teen and 50+ populations in the borough. There is also though a proportionally larger infant age population in Merton compared to England.

3.40. Also in Merton it is notable that the working age male population is larger than the working age female population.

**Figure 5: Population by Age 2011<sup>19</sup>**

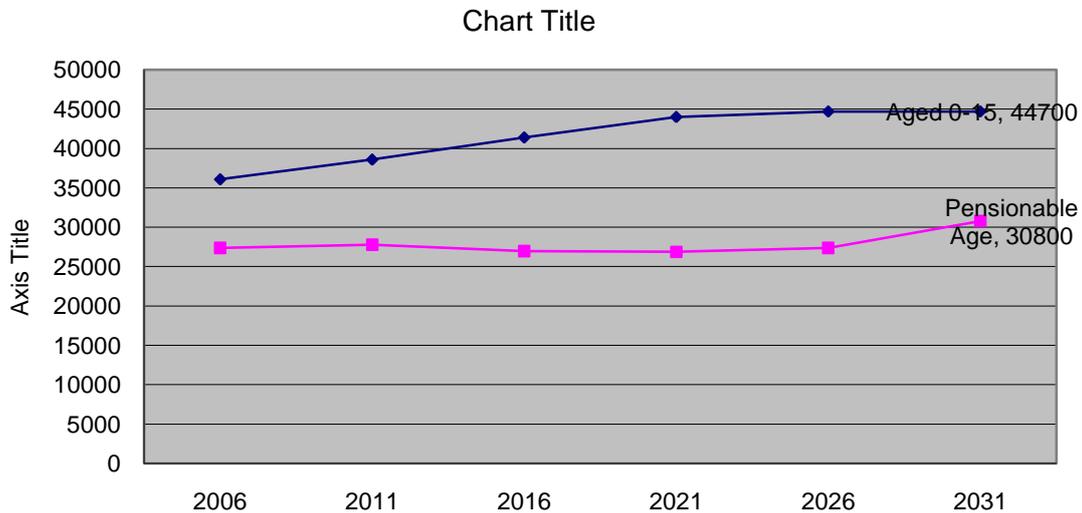


<sup>18</sup> Author's own figures derived from 2001 Census and Office of National Statistics Mid Year Population Estimate by Ethnicity 2009

<sup>19</sup> Office of National Statistics Population Estimates and 2008 Based Projections 1991 to 2033

3.41. Figure 6 shows long-term population trends for the 0-15 and retirement age groups in Merton. Here we see that the population of Merton aged 0-15 is predicted to grow much faster than the population that is of pensionable age.

**Figure 6: Long Term Estimates of Older & Younger Age Groups<sup>20</sup>**



3.42. Table 11 shows the population of Merton by age and ethnicity at the time of the 2009 ONS MYEs. This is the most up to date data available.

3.43. Here it can be seen that the demographics of the population with regards to ethnicity are not the same across all age groups. For instance, as is typical nationally, the Mixed Race population is proportionally much larger in the younger age band than it is in the older - 8.4% of Merton's population that is aged 0 to 15 is of Mixed Race heritage as compared to only 1.1% of the retirement age population.

3.44. What is of particular interest is that the non-White British population is at its proportionally smallest in the working age population band. Just less than 10% of this age band is from White Other backgrounds.

3.45. Black or Black British Other, Black or Black British African, Asian or Asian British Other and Asian or Asian British Pakistani all populations all have young age demographics.

<sup>20</sup> Office of National Statistics Long Term Population Estimates 2006 to 2031

**Table 11: Population by Age & Ethnicity 2009<sup>21</sup>**

	<b>0-15</b>	<b>16-64/59</b>	<b>65/60+</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>83.5</b>
British	61.7	60.5	73.2
Irish	0.8	1.9	4.9
Other	5.8	9.8	5.3
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>
White and Black Caribbean	2.4	0.7	0.4
White and Black African	1.3	0.4	0.0
White and Asian	2.6	0.8	0.4
Other	2.1	0.8	0.4
<b>Asian</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>7.4</b>
Indian	3.4	5.1	3.9
Pakistani	3.2	2.9	1.4
Bangladeshi	1.1	1.3	0.4
Other	3.2	2.6	1.8
<b>Black or Black British</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>6.0</b>
Black Caribbean	3.4	3.4	4.2
Black African	5.0	4.6	1.4
Other	1.3	0.6	0.4
<b>Chinese or Other</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>
Chinese	1.6	2.6	1.1
Other	1.1	1.9	1.1

3.46. Table 12 shows faith populations by age at the time of the 2001 Census. Because population estimates by religion are not available, this is the most up to date dataset.

3.47. The Christian age demographic is slightly older than is seen overall. 18.0% of Christians are aged 0-15 as opposed to 19.5% of the whole population of Merton whilst 16.4% of Christians in Merton are aged 65+ compared to just 12.9% of the whole population.

3.48. The Hindu population of Merton has a younger than average age demographic but one that is skewed heavily towards the working ages. Only 5.3% is of retirement age.

3.49. The Jewish population of Merton has the oldest age demographic of any faith group. This is not untypical. Only 22.3% of the Jewish population is aged 0-24 as compared to 30.3% of the total population. At the other

<sup>21</sup>Office of National Statistics Population Estimates by Ethnicity 2009

end of the age spectrum 23.5% of the Jewish population is aged 65+ as opposed to just 12.9% of the whole population.

- 3.50. Over a quarter of the Muslim population of Merton at the time of the 2001 Census was aged 0-15 and 43.3% was aged 0-24. This compares to 30.3% of the total population. Also only 4.8% of the Muslim population was aged 65+, this is around a third of the figure seen in the general population.
- 3.51. The Sikh population of Merton has a very young age demographic with almost a quarter aged 0-15 and 45% aged 0-24.
- 3.52. Merton's Buddhist population has a younger age profile than average and of all the faith groups has proportionately more aged 25-49. The Buddhist population also has the second largest proportion aged 50-59.

**Table 12: Religion by Age, 2001<sup>22</sup>**

	All People	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other	None	Not stated
<b>Age 0 to 15</b>	19.5	18.0	13.4	21.2	14.3	27.1	23.4	9.1	20.0	24.7
<b>Aged 16 to 24</b>	10.8	9.3	7.3	12.4	7.8	16.2	13.2	10.1	14.2	10.9
<b>Aged 25 to 49</b>	42.6	40.4	57.3	47.4	35.4	39.5	45.7	54.8	52.2	37.5
<b>Aged 50 to 59</b>	10.4	11.5	13.1	10.4	13.6	8.9	8.6	12.6	7.3	9.4
<b>Aged 60 to 64</b>	3.8	4.4	4.1	3.1	5.4	3.4	2.0	3.3	1.9	3.8
<b>Aged 65 to 74</b>	6.6	8.2	3.4	3.7	11.5	3.8	4.6	7.5	2.7	6.1
<b>Aged 75+</b>	6.3	8.2	1.3	1.7	12.0	1.0	2.4	2.6	1.7	7.6

**Segregation and Integration in Merton**

- 3.53. A key finding of the Cantle Inquiry into the riots in northern towns and cities in 2001 was the extent to which different ethnic groups were segregated in terms of geography, housing, education and employment – in essence leading ‘parallel lives’<sup>23</sup>. Merton in many senses is a long way from the towns and cities in the north of England experiencing disturbances ten years ago. But to what extent are different ethnic groups integrated in Merton?
- 3.54. Table 13 shows the population of each of Merton's wards by ethnicity at the time of the 2001 Census. This enables us to see areas of residential concentration of particular ethnic groups.
- 3.55. The ward with the highest BAME concentration in Merton is Graveney. Over half of the population of the ward is of BAME origin and over a quarter of Asian or Asian British heritage.

<sup>22</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>23</sup> Community Cohesion. Report of the Independent Review Team. Chaired by Ted Cantle. Home Office.

3.56. There are also several wards with disproportionately small BAME population shares such as Lower Morden, Raynes Park, Village, Dundonald, Trinity, Hillside, St Helier, Cannon Hill and Wimbledon Park. More than 4 out of every 5 residents of these wards are White.

**Table 13: Ward Population by Ethnicity, 2001<sup>24</sup>**

	White	BAME	Mixed	Asian	Black	Other
<b>Abbey</b>	78.2	21.8	2.9	11.0	4.3	3.6
<b>Cannon Hill</b>	83.2	16.8	2.3	8.8	3.3	2.4
<b>Colliers Wood</b>	67.2	32.8	4.0	14.8	11.0	3.0
<b>Cricket Green</b>	67.8	32.2	4.1	10.5	15.4	2.3
<b>Dundonald</b>	84.3	15.7	3.0	7.3	2.1	3.3
<b>Figge's Marsh</b>	60.6	39.4	3.9	14.5	18.4	2.5
<b>Graveney</b>	47.2	52.8	3.3	27.2	19.3	3.0
<b>Hillside</b>	83.9	16.1	3.0	6.7	1.2	5.2
<b>Lavender Fields</b>	67.1	32.9	4.3	12.0	11.6	4.9
<b>Longthornton</b>	57.2	42.8	4.2	17.2	19.7	1.7
<b>Lower Morden</b>	87.1	12.9	2.6	5.5	3.0	1.7
<b>Merton Park</b>	78.8	21.2	2.4	13.4	2.3	3.1
<b>Pollards Hill</b>	66.3	33.7	4.2	9.2	18.7	1.6
<b>Ravensbury</b>	77.7	22.3	2.7	10.3	6.7	2.5
<b>Raynes Park</b>	85.4	14.6	2.1	7.0	2.1	3.5
<b>St Helier</b>	83.4	16.6	2.6	7.9	3.9	2.1
<b>Trinity</b>	84.1	15.9	2.6	7.8	3.1	2.4
<b>Village</b>	85.2	14.8	2.5	6.6	1.1	4.7
<b>West Barnes</b>	78.8	21.2	2.3	12.1	2.3	4.4
<b>Wimbledon Park</b>	81.5	18.5	2.7	10.5	2.6	2.8

3.57. Table 14 below shows the percentage of each ethnic group's total population that lives in each ward and can be used to highlight areas of spatial segregation.

3.58. In general though spatial segregation by ethnicity in Merton appears to be fairly low. 10.5% of Merton's whole BAME population live in Graveney ward, a ward that is home to just 5.0% of Merton's whole population but the BAME population is fairly evenly dispersed across the borough.

3.59. The Black or Black British population is the most spatially segregated in Merton with 61.4% of the total Black or Black British population living in just 5 wards. The population of these 5 wards make up just 26.2% of Merton's whole population. These wards in descending order are Longthornton, Pollards Hill, Graveney, Figge's Marsh and Cricket Green.

3.60. Only 1.3% of Merton's total Black or Black British population live in Village and Hillside wards. These wards are home to 9.6% of Merton's total population.

<sup>24</sup> 2001 Census

3.61. The Asian or Asian British population shows much less spatial segregation, though there is still a high concentration in Graveney ward.

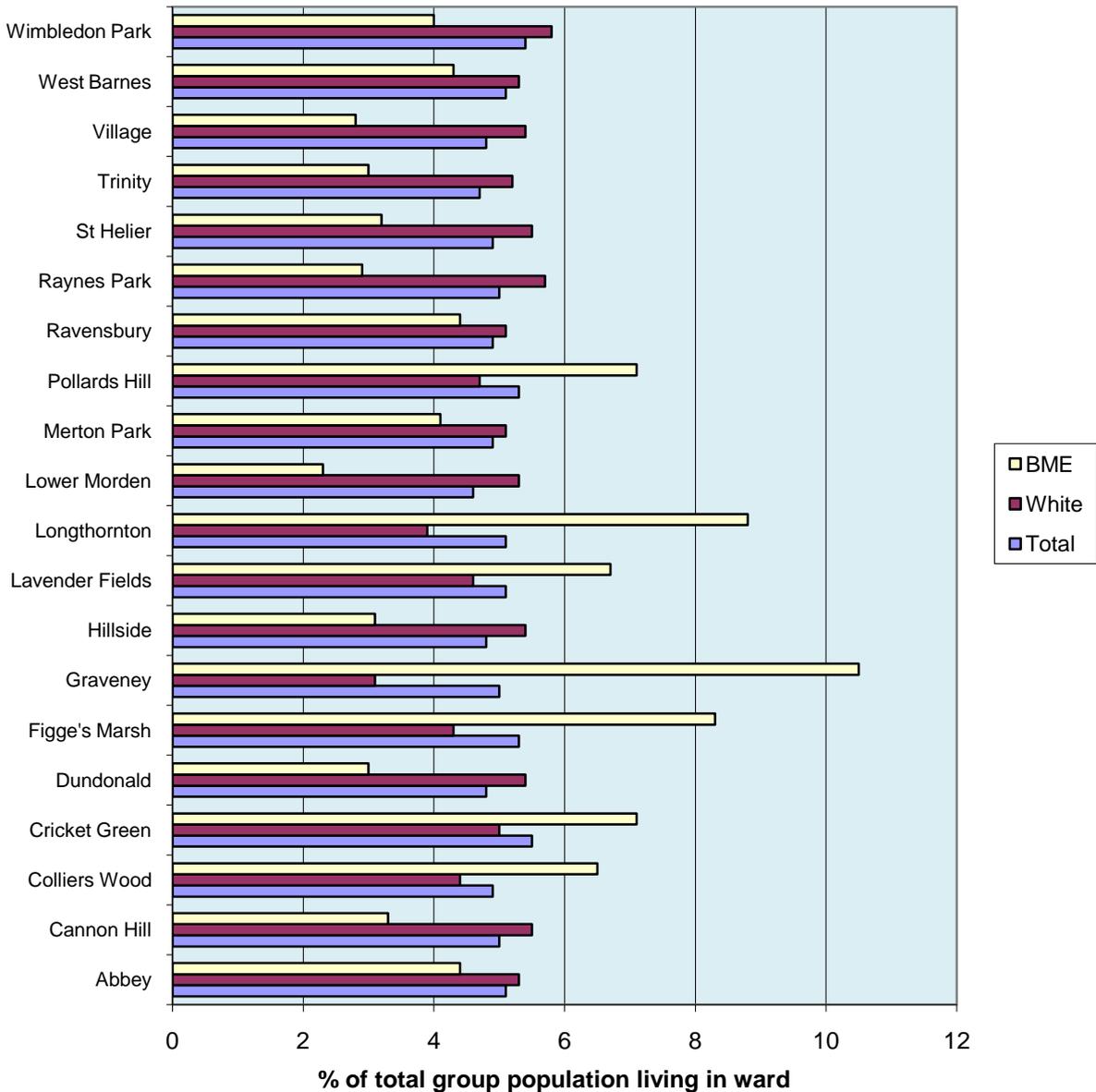
**Table 14: Percentage of each ethnic group's total population living in each ward, 2001<sup>25</sup>**

	Total	White	BAME	Mixed	Asian	Black	Other
Abbey	5.1	5.3	4.4	4.8	5.1	2.8	6.0
Cannon Hill	5.0	5.5	3.3	3.7	4.0	2.1	3.9
Colliers Wood	4.9	4.4	6.5	6.4	6.6	6.9	4.9
Cricket Green	5.5	5.0	7.1	7.3	5.2	10.9	4.2
Dundonald	4.8	5.4	3.0	4.7	3.1	1.3	5.3
Figge's Marsh	5.3	4.3	8.3	6.7	6.9	12.4	4.4
Graveney	5.0	3.1	10.5	5.3	12.2	12.4	5.0
Hillside	4.8	5.4	3.1	4.7	2.9	0.7	8.2
Lavender Fields	5.1	4.6	6.7	7.1	5.5	7.7	8.3
Longthornton	5.1	3.9	8.8	6.9	7.9	13.0	2.9
Lower Morden	4.6	5.3	2.3	3.9	2.3	1.8	2.6
Merton Park	4.9	5.1	4.1	3.7	5.9	1.4	4.9
Pollards Hill	5.3	4.7	7.1	7.0	4.4	12.7	2.8
Ravensbury	4.9	5.1	4.4	4.3	4.6	4.3	4.1
Raynes Park	5.0	5.7	2.9	3.3	3.1	1.3	5.7
St Helier	4.9	5.5	3.2	4.1	3.5	2.5	3.5
Trinity	4.7	5.2	3.0	4.0	3.3	1.9	3.7
Village	4.8	5.4	2.8	3.8	2.8	0.6	7.4
West Barnes	5.1	5.3	4.3	3.8	5.6	1.5	7.4
Wimbledon Park	5.4	5.8	4.0	4.6	5.1	1.8	4.9

3.62. If there were no spatial segregation at all within the population of Merton, then all 3 bars in Figure 7 would line up. That they do not graphically demonstrates that there are some wards with disproportionately large and small BAME populations.

<sup>25</sup> 2001 Census

**Figure 7: Percentage of each ethnic group's total population living in each ward, 2001<sup>26</sup>**



3.63. Table 15 shows the population of each of Merton's wards by religion at the time of the 2001 Census. This enables us to see areas of residential concentration of particular faith groups.

3.64. Here it can be seen that as well as being the most ethnically diverse ward in Merton, Graveney is also the most diverse in terms of religion with particularly large Hindu and Muslim populations and the smallest share of the population that is Christian.

<sup>26</sup> 2001 Census

**Table 15: Ward Population by Religion, 2001<sup>27</sup>**

	<b>Christian</b>	<b>Buddhist</b>	<b>Hindu</b>	<b>Muslim</b>	<b>Sikh</b>
<b>Abbey</b>	58.6	0.8	3.6	6.4	0.2
<b>Cannon Hill</b>	69.7	0.5	4.1	4.5	0.3
<b>Colliers Wood</b>	55.8	0.7	6.3	7.8	0.2
<b>Cricket Green</b>	64.2	0.4	4.8	6.4	0.1
<b>Dundonald</b>	63.4	0.9	2.9	3.6	0.2
<b>Figge's Marsh</b>	62.0	0.6	7.1	7.1	0.4
<b>Graveney</b>	54.7	0.4	13.3	10.7	0.8
<b>Hillside</b>	63.2	1.5	2.0	3.8	0.1
<b>Lavender Fields</b>	56.1	1.3	5.3	6.4	0.3
<b>Longthornton</b>	62.6	0.4	8.1	7.7	0.7
<b>Lower Morden</b>	74.4	0.2	2.2	2.8	0.0
<b>Merton Park</b>	62.1	0.8	5.0	7.4	0.1
<b>Pollards Hill</b>	68.4	0.4	3.6	4.9	0.6
<b>Ravensbury</b>	63.9	0.3	4.6	6.1	0.1
<b>Raynes Park</b>	64.8	1.1	2.5	3.9	0.2
<b>St Helier</b>	67.7	0.6	3.1	4.6	0.1
<b>Trinity</b>	62.3	0.8	3.0	4.1	0.3
<b>Village</b>	64.7	1.9	2.6	3.9	0.2
<b>West Barnes</b>	67.0	0.9	5.5	5.6	0.4
<b>Wimbledon Park</b>	62.0	1.1	2.8	7.4	0.1

3.65. Table 16 below shows the percentage of each ethnic group's total population that lives in each ward and can be used to highlight areas of spatial segregation.

3.66. The Christian population is not spatially segregated. This is to be expected given that Christians make up the bulk of the population.

3.67. 43.9% of the Buddhist population live in just 5 wards. These wards are home to 25.1% of the total population and are Village, Hillside, Lavender Fields, Wimbledon Park and Raynes Park.

3.68. 49.9% of the Hindu population live in 6 wards with 31.3% living in only 3 of these. The 3 wards with the highest concentrations are Graveney, Longthornton and Figge's Marsh and are home to just 15.4% of Merton's total population.

3.69. 48.4% of the Muslim population of Merton live in 7 of the wards. These wards are Graveney, Wimbledon Park, Longthornton, Collier's Wood, Figge's Marsh, Merton Park and Cricket Green.

3.70. Interestingly those wards with the highest proportion of the total BAME population (Graveney, Longthornton and Figge's March) do not have

<sup>27</sup> 2001 Census

overly large Muslim populations. 27.6% of the BAME population of Merton live in these 3 wards but just 9.9% of Muslim's do.

- 3.71. There are also no wards with exceptionally low shares of the Muslim population.
- 3.72. The Sikh population sees relatively high levels of spatial segregation with 41.4% living in just 3 wards. These wards (Graveney, Longthornton and Pollards Hill) are home to just 15.4% of Merton's total population.
- 3.73. Four wards that are home to a combined 19.8% of Merton's population are also home to just 4.5% of the total Sikh population. These wards are Lower Morden, Hillside, Cricket Green and Ravensbury.

**Table 16: Percentage of each faith group's total population living in each ward, 2001<sup>28</sup>**

	Total	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh
Abbey	5.1	4.7	5.3	3.9	5.6	3.3
Cannon Hill	5.0	5.4	3.3	4.3	3.8	5.3
Colliers Wood	4.9	4.4	4.5	6.7	6.7	3.1
Cricket Green	5.5	5.6	3.2	5.7	6.1	1.2
Dundonald	4.8	4.8	5.3	3.0	3.0	3.9
Figge's Marsh	5.3	5.2	3.8	8.1	6.4	7.1
Graveney	5.0	4.3	2.3	14.3	9.2	15.1
Hillside	4.8	4.8	9.4	2.0	3.2	1.2
Lavender Fields	5.1	4.5	8.5	5.9	5.6	5.1
Longthornton	5.1	5.1	2.7	8.9	6.8	13.3
Lower Morden	4.6	5.3	1.1	2.2	2.2	0.6
Merton Park	4.9	4.8	5.1	5.2	6.2	2.4
Pollards Hill	5.3	5.7	2.6	4.1	4.5	13.1
Ravensbury	4.9	5.0	2.2	4.9	5.2	1.4
Raynes Park	5.0	5.1	6.9	2.7	3.4	3.3
St Helier	4.9	5.2	4.0	3.2	3.8	2.4
Trinity	4.7	4.6	4.8	3.0	3.3	4.7
Village	4.8	4.8	11.5	2.6	3.2	2.9
West Barnes	5.1	5.4	5.7	6.0	4.9	7.6
Wimbledon Park	5.4	5.3	7.6	3.2	6.9	3.1

### School Segregation

- 3.74. A further indication of the degree to which different ethnic groups may be separated in spatial terms is segregation in schools – i.e. pupils of different ethnicities concentrated in different schools. The ethnic make-up of the pupil population in any one school will – of course – reflect the make-up of the population in the local catchment area. But it also reflects parental choice, the reputation and performance of the school, and social-economic class.

<sup>28</sup> 2001 Census

3.75. Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) statistics – collected by all local authorities on behalf of the government – identifies pupils by a range of indicators including ethnic origin. Using a methodology widely accepted by demographers and statisticians, we conducted an analysis of the overall distribution of pupils in Merton’s Primary and Secondary Schools. This approach divides schools according to the ethnic composition of the pupil population into five categories or types, under two main headings:

**White British majority population**

Type I: White British predominate (White British 80% or more)

Type II White British majority (White British 50% to 80%)

**Non-White British majority population**

Type III: Substantial White British minority (White British 30% to 50%)

Type IV: Substantial non-White British majority (ethnic minority 70% or more) but no single ethnic group dominant.

Type V: Substantial non-White British majority (ethnic minority 70% or more) with one ethnic group 50% or more of the non-White British total.

3.76. Broadly the greater the ethnic mix in schools, the greater the proportion of pupils in Types II and III schools. Conversely, the greater the level of segregation in schools the greater the proportion of pupils in Type IV and especially in Type I and Type V schools<sup>29</sup>.

3.77. The Table below shows levels of concentration by ethnicity using the typologies outlined above.

**Table 17:**

	<b>Primary 2007</b>	<b>Primary 2010</b>	<b>Secondary 2007</b>	<b>Secondary 2010</b>
<b>Type I</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Type II</b>	41.2	37.0	49.5	47.7
<b>Type III</b>	41.3	34.2	50.5	52.3
<b>Type IV</b>	17.5	28.8	0	0
<b>Type V</b>	0	0	0	0

NOTE: Merton PLASC figures include all pupils who are not White British as being ethnic minority. The figure for ethnic minority therefore includes White Irish and White Other pupils.

3.78. Given the diversity of Merton’s schools, this is the picture that we would expect to see. As 48.5% of Secondary school pupils in 2007 and 55.8% in 2010 came from ethnic minority backgrounds, any Type I, Type IV or

<sup>29</sup> Johnston R J, Burgess S, Wilson D, Harris R, 2006, “School and residential ethnic segregation: An analysis of variation across England’s Local Authorities”, Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol, Working Paper no. 06/145.

Type V segregation would have shown that schools have under or over-representations of ethnic minority (or White British) pupils.

- 3.79. In 2007 53.5% of Primary school pupils in Merton were from ethnic minority backgrounds and in 2010 this figure was 60.1%.
- 3.80. The same is true of the figures for Primary schools. However in Primary schools the percentage of ethnic minority pupils is higher and this coupled with smaller schools sizes and catchment areas means that some Type IV segregation would be expected.
- 3.81. That no Primary schools experience Type V segregation is positive, though it must be noted that several schools in 2010 were very close to being in this category. Those schools that were very close to this have large Asian Other pupil populations.
- 3.82. Merton breaks its schools down into 5 'Cluster Groups' for some statistical purposes. On the table below is shown the percentage of pupils from each cluster group that are of ethnic minority backgrounds and the percentage of pupils in that cluster group who are eligible for free school meals. There is a very strong link between the two with cluster groups with higher percentages of ethnic minority pupils also having higher percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- 3.83. It is possibly worthy of note that some of the cluster groups too have far higher percentages of ethnic minority pupils than others. East Mitcham for instance has 30.7% more pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds than Morden.
- 3.84. This may in part be down to some level of spatial segregation but it is also the case that the 2 cluster groups with the highest percentages of ethnic minority pupils are the only 2 cluster groups that do not contain a Secondary school.

**Table 18:**

	<b>% of ethnic minority pupils</b>	<b>% of pupils eligible for free school meals</b>
<b>Central Wimbledon</b>	54.7	11.2
<b>East Mitcham</b>	79.8	20.8
<b>Mitcham Town</b>	71.8	21.6
<b>Morden</b>	49.1	12.8
<b>West Wimbleton</b>	52.2	10.1

- 3.85. As of 2010 there were 110 languages spoken in Merton Primary schools and 89 spoken in the Secondary schools. The top 11 languages (including English) are listed below for Primary and Secondary schools.

Table 19:

	Primary	Secondary
<b>English</b>	60.8	68.1
<b>Tamil</b>	7.4	2.7
<b>Urdu</b>	5.2	5.1
<b>Polish</b>	3.4	2.2
<b>Akan/Twi-Fante</b>	2.4	1.5
<b>Arabic</b>	1.6	1.2
<b>French</b>	1.6	1.0
<b>Bengali</b>	1.5	1.3
<b>Somali</b>	1.2	1.0
<b>Spanish</b>	1.0	1.5
<b>Portuguese</b>	0.9	1.5
<b>Other</b>	13.0	12.9

3.86. Comparative data is not available for 2007 but in 2008 only 5.8% of Primary school pupils spoke Tamil as their first language. That this figure is 7.4% just 2 years later suggests a rapidly growing Tamil speaking population.

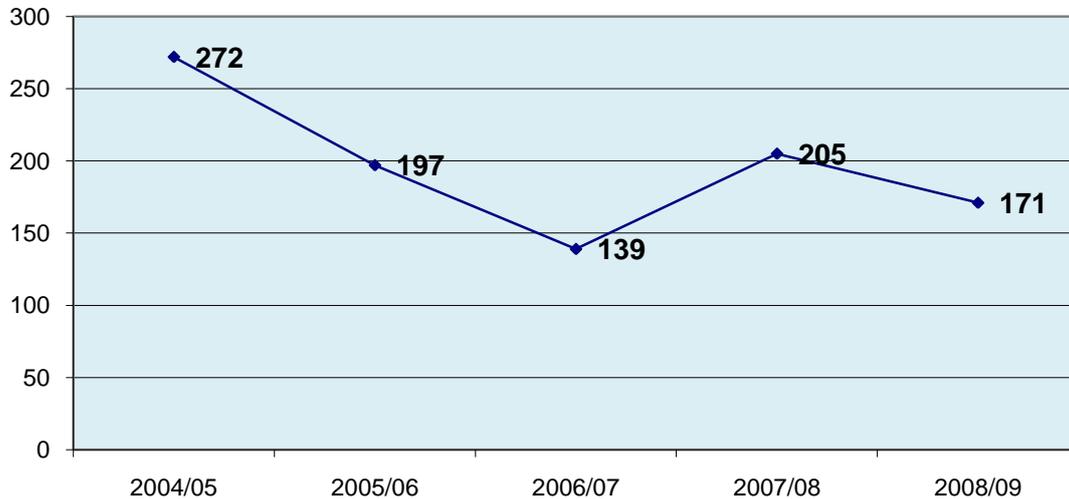
3.87. The Polish speaking populations in both Primary and Secondary schools has also increased significantly over this 2 year period.

#### **Hate Crime and the Far Right**

3.88. The level of hate crime and incidents can be divisive and indicative of underlying tensions between different social, ethnic and other equality groups. Figure 8 below shows the trend of hate crimes in Merton from 2004/05 to 2008/09 as well as the absolute numbers. Over this period the number of hate crimes has dropped relatively steadily with the exception of an increase in 2007/08.

3.89. Between 2004/05 and 2008/09, hate crimes in Merton dropped by 37.1%. Over the same period hate crimes in London as a whole also fell but only by 15.8%.

**Figure 8: Hate Crimes in Merton, 2004/05 to 2008/09<sup>30</sup>**



3.90. All indications are that support for far right political groups in local elections across England as a whole is declining. Typically, those supporting far right political groups are male, over 55, working class with few educational qualifications, and tend to be concentrated in northern areas but with significant support in some localities in the West Midlands and London. Support also tends to be more pronounced in constituencies with large Muslim minorities of Pakistani or African origin.<sup>31</sup>

3.91. As to what drives support for far right political groups, available evidence points to an overwhelming concern with immigration and disaffection with and distrust of mainstream political parties. In particular, Far Right groups have also been able to exploit the seeming inability of mainstream political parties to provide a convincing response to voter anxiety about immigration.<sup>32</sup>

3.92. In Merton, the St Heliers Estate was repeatedly mentioned as an area vulnerable to the appeal of Far Right groups. Two Parliamentary constituencies cover Merton – these are Mitcham & Morden and Wimbledon. In the 2010 General Election a BNP candidate stood in Mitcham & Morden and gained 1,386 votes (3.2% of votes cast). No Far Right candidate stood in Wimbledon. In the 2010 Council Elections there

<sup>30</sup> Home Office – Hate Crimes by Local Authority Area 2004/5 to 2008/09

<sup>31</sup> Dr Matthew J Goodwin – University of Manchester

<sup>32</sup> Ford, R. (2010) 'Who Might Vote for the BNP? Survey Evidence on the Electoral Potential of the Extreme Right in Britain', in R. Eatwell and M. J. Goodwin (eds), *The New Extremism in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain*. London and New York: Routledge

were BNP candidates standing in 5 of the 20 wards. None were successful.

- 3.93. iCoCo's work in areas where support for Far Right Groups is more pronounced indicates an increasing need for a 'counter narrative' tackling myths and misinformation relating to migrants, local jobs, benefits, school places and social housing. There is also a need to promote a sense of belonging that includes all local communities, but also giving due recognition to majority host cultural and other traditions. Voting patterns indicate that only a minority in local communities explicitly support the views of Far Right groups and it is important to reassure the majority that their concerns are seen as genuine and legitimate.

### **Public Perception Measures of Cohesion**

- 3.94. A key measure of state and level of cohesion in Merton is the views and actions of its residents. The table below compares Merton's results with London and England as a whole from the 2008 National Place Public Perception Survey.
- 3.95. A slightly higher than average percentage of residents feel that the area is one in which people from different backgrounds get on well together, there is a low sense of belonging to the area (though this is typical of London boroughs) and that there is low involvement in local decision making despite there being a strong feel that change can be influenced. Levels of volunteering are also low, though again, this is typical of London boroughs.

**Table 20: Place Survey, 2008<sup>33</sup>**

	<b>Merton</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>England</b>
<b>Generally speaking would you like to be more involved in the decisions that affect your local area %</b>	29.1	32.8	26.6
<b>% who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together</b>	77.1	76.3	76.4
<b>% who feel they belong to their immediate neighbourhood</b>	51.7	52.0	58.7
<b>% who have been involved in decisions that affect the local area in the past 12 months</b>	12.6	17.0	14.0
<b>% who agree that they can influence decisions in their local area</b>	38.3	35.0	28.9
<b>% who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live</b>	78.5	74.9	79.7
<b>% who have given unpaid help at least once per month over the last 12 months</b>	19.7	20.8	23.2

<sup>33</sup> 2008 Place survey (Revised)

3.96. In addition, extra questions were added to the Merton Residents Survey 2010/11 with regards to tackling racism, social cohesion and respect. The key results from this were:

- 60% of residents feel that the Council treats them in a fair and non-discriminatory way whilst 31% of residents do not feel this. Both of these figures have seen positive change over the last 3 years.
- 42% of residents in 2010 felt that the Council tackles racism. In 2001 this figure was just 27%. However in 2010 only 32% of Black residents felt that the Council tackles racism. This compares to 43% for White residents and 44% for Asian residents. 25% of Black residents feel that the Council does not tackle racism and this figure is significantly higher than it is for White and Asian residents.
- Overall 90% of residents in 2010 felt that people from different backgrounds get on well together. This is the highest percentage that has been recorded since the question was first asked in 2005. Only 81% agreed in 2005. The results are also remarkably consistent across ethnic groups with White, Black and Asian residents all holding similar views.

### **Inequality and Ethnicity**

3.97. At a national level there is an increasing body of evidence pointing to inequalities in health across different ethnicities. For instance, people born in the Indian Sub-continent are around 50% more likely to die prematurely from Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) than the general population.<sup>34</sup> People of South Asian descent are up to six times more likely to suffer from Type 2 diabetes than the White population.<sup>35</sup> In the 2001 Census, Pakistani and Bangladeshi people were the most likely to report their health as 'not good'. Moreover, some BAME groups are less likely to access NHS services.

3.98. There is also data to support an over-representation of BAME communities within the Mental Health System, but less is known about new communities. Common mental health issues amongst new arrival, refugee and asylum seeker communities range from Depression and Anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to general psychosis – considered to disproportionately affect Tamil heritage residents in the borough.

3.99. Equality is at the apex of the pyramid model of cohesion used in the government publication 'The State of English Cities'. It is at the core of the definition of community cohesion issued by the Department of Community and Local Government in response to the findings of the

<sup>34</sup> Heart Disease and South Asians: Delivering the National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease; DH and BHF December 2004.

<sup>35</sup> S. Bellary, J.P. O'Hare, N.T. Raymond, A. Gumber, S. Mughal, A. Szczepura, S. Kumar, A.H. Barnett on behalf of UKADS Study Group. Enhanced diabetes care to patients of South Asian ethnic origin (the United Kingdom Asian Diabetes Study): a cluster randomised controlled trial. The Lancet. 24 May, 2008.

Commission on Integration and Cohesion. It is essential in assessing issues of integration, social inclusion, fairness and access to opportunities. Moreover, under Clause of the Equality Bill, local authorities have a new legal duty to ensure they consider the impact that their strategic decisions will have on narrowing socio-economic inequalities.

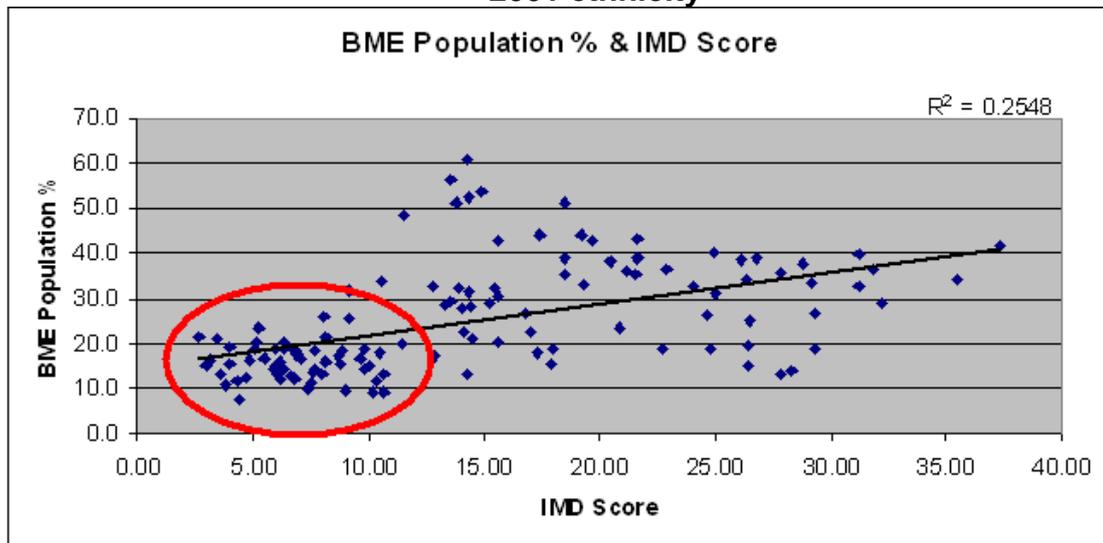
3.100. In the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Merton was ranked as the 211<sup>th</sup> most deprived of all the local authorities in England.

3.101. Merton performed well across all domains but was most deprived in terms of the Income and Employment domains. Merton was ranked the 100<sup>th</sup> most deprived in the Income domain and 120<sup>th</sup> in the Employment domain.

3.102. Merton has no Super Output Areas (SOA) in the 10% most deprived nationally and only 2 in the 20% most deprived. By plotting IMD scores for each SOA in Merton alongside the ethnicity of the SOA's residents, it is possible to see that there is a small link between higher levels of deprivation and higher shares of BAME residents in those wards.

3.103. As is ringed on Figure 9 below, it can be seen that most SOAs with low deprivation scores in 2010 also had small BAME populations in 2001. However it is not the case that a large BAME population correlates to a high deprivation score.

**Figure 9: 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation scores at SOA level and 2001 ethnicity<sup>36</sup>**



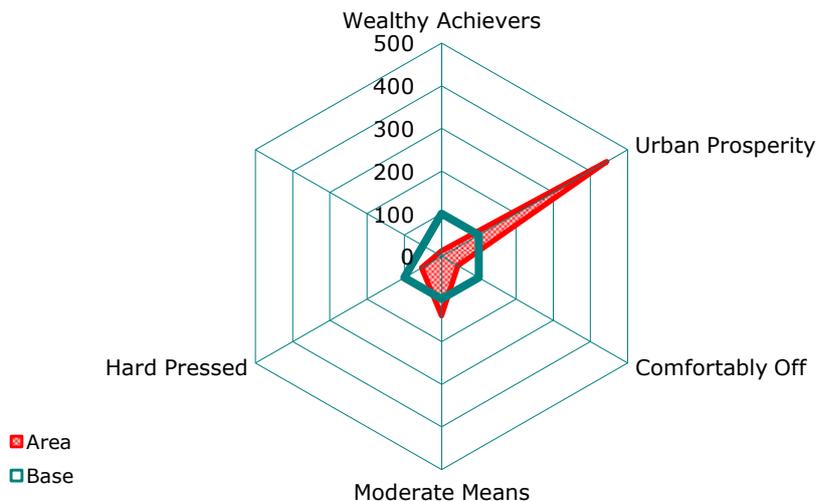
<sup>36</sup> 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation

3.104. The  $R^2$  figure in Figure 9 is 0.2548. This is the correlation coefficient that shows the relationship between the two variables and the higher it is to 1, the stronger the link.

3.105. When the variable for the total BAME population is replaced for that of the Asian or Asian British population, the  $R^2$  figure drops to 0.0301 but when it is replaced with the Black or Black British population, it rises to 0.4282. This demonstrates that the levels of deprivation fall disproportionately on Merton's Black or Black British population and far less so for the Asian or Asian British population.

3.106. The graph below shows the entire population of Merton as classified by ACORN. The base figure for each category is always 100 and represents a national average of sorts. Here we can see that the 2 categories in Merton that are over-represented against their base figures are Urban Prosperity and Moderate Means. The Urban Prosperity category is hugely over-represented and nearly four and a half times the base figure.

**Figure 10: ACORN Category Index**



3.107. Overall 54.0% of Merton residents are categorised by ACORN as living in Urban Prosperity and 10.4% are categorised as being Hard Pressed. This latter figure is just over half of the base figure.

3.108. Table 21 below shows the breakdown for all wards in Merton:

**Table 21:**

	<b>Wealthy Achievers</b>	<b>Urban Prosperity</b>	<b>Comfortably Off</b>	<b>Moderate Means</b>	<b>Hard Pressed</b>
<b>Abbey</b>	0.0	74.9	12.2	0.5	12.4
<b>Cannon Hill</b>	4.2	12.8	27.0	52.2	3.8
<b>Colliers Wood</b>	0.0	87.2	3.8	4.2	4.7
<b>Cricket Green</b>	0.0	28.8	7.8	27.6	35.9
<b>Dundonald</b>	0.0	70.5	29.5	0.0	0.0
<b>Figge's Marsh</b>	0.0	34.1	11.2	24.7	30.0
<b>Graveney</b>	0.0	63.1	30.8	6.1	0.0
<b>Hillside</b>	0.0	98.7	1.3	0.0	0.0
<b>Lavender Fields</b>	0.0	61.4	5.7	12.8	20.1
<b>Longthornton</b>	0.0	29.3	24.7	45.9	0.0
<b>Lower Morden</b>	0.0	10.4	16.7	72.8	0.0
<b>Merton Park</b>	6.0	77.4	10.1	6.6	0.0
<b>Pollards Hill</b>	0.0	30.8	6.1	50.5	12.6
<b>Ravensbury</b>	0.1	31.5	18.6	18.7	31.1
<b>Raynes Park</b>	6.3	81.1	4.5	0.0	8.1
<b>St Helier</b>	0.3	15.1	6.2	45.2	33.1
<b>Trinity</b>	0.0	90.7	2.6	1.6	5.1
<b>Village</b>	41.0	58.5	0.6	0.0	0.0
<b>West Barnes</b>	5.6	31.5	30.2	32.7	0.0
<b>Wimbledon Park</b>	3.0	85.3	8.3	0.0	3.0
<b>MERTON</b>	3.1	54.0	12.6	19.8	10.4

3.109. From this table it is obvious that there are large disparities in affluence and standard of living across the borough. 41.0% of residents of Village ward are classified as being Wealthy Achievers against a borough average of just 3.1% – in fact 12 of the 20 wards do not have Wealthy Achiever populations.

3.110. Similarly there are several wards which have no residents classified as being Hard Pressed yet over a third of residents of Cricket Green live in this category as do around a third of residents of Figge's Marsh, Ravensbury and St Helier.

3.111. Village ward has one of the smallest BAME populations in the borough (only Rayne's Park and Lower Morden have lower percentages of BAME residents) whilst Cricket Green, Ravensbury and Figge's Marsh all have BAME populations that are above the borough average. It is though worthy of note that St Helier, a ward in which 33.1% of residents are Hard Pressed, has one of the smaller BAME populations in the borough.

## 4. Employment and Economic Development

- 4.1. Employment issues are relevant to cohesion in a number of ways. Firstly, different ethnic groups are often concentrated in certain sections of the labour market and at different employment levels. In addition, different ethnic groups may also exhibit varied levels of participation in the labour market and experience different levels of unemployment. These differences can accentuate segmentation and division between communities. At a national level, these factors are also linked to different groups experiencing disadvantage in the labour market and employment. For example, an independent review into the persistent causes of discrimination and inequality<sup>37</sup> found that disabled people and women experienced employment penalties measured at 29% and 23% respectively. An employment penalty is a measure of disadvantage that individuals or groups face in the labour market. However, the biggest employment penalty was experienced by Pakistani and Bangladeshi women (30%).
- 4.2. In general, Merton's residents are better qualified than Londoners as a whole – the percentage of residents with no qualifications in 2007 was less than half that of Londoners – and the unemployment rate was the fourth lowest in London in 2010.
- 4.3. However, this overall positive picture on skills and unemployment conceals some large differences geographically and across different ethnic groups, and the local economy, while relatively diverse compared to its neighbours, is a low pay economy. As elsewhere in outer London, a high percentage of residents commute away from the borough to work.
- 4.4. Table 22 shows the numbers of claimants of Job Seekers Allowance by ethnicity as of December 2010 - the most up to date figures available - compared with the percentage of those of working age for each ethnic group.
- 4.5. It can be seen that BAME groups as a whole are over-represented in these claimant count figures with Black or Black British residents making up just 8.6% of Merton's working age population but accounting for 21.1% of all JSA claimants in the borough.

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<sup>37</sup> *Fairness and Freedom* Final Report of the Equalities Review (2007)

**Table 22: JSA Claimant Count by Ethnic Groupings, Merton, December 2010<sup>38</sup>**

	Number	% of total	%of all 16-64/59 <sup>39</sup>
<b>White</b>	1670	50.3	72.1
<b>BAME</b>	1360	41.0	27.9
<b>Mixed</b>	150	4.5	2.6
<b>Asian or Asian British</b>	390	11.7	11.9
<b>Black or Black British</b>	700	21.1	8.6
<b>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group</b>	120	3.6	4.5
<b>Unknown &amp; Not Stated</b>	320	9.6	-
<b>Total</b>	3320	--	

Note: Numbers may not tally due to rounding at source.

- 4.6. Table 23 breaks the data down into lower level ethnic groups and shows those with the largest figures. Here it can be seen that Asian or Asian British Pakistani and Other residents make up a larger percentage share of the JSA claimant count than Indian heritage residents. This is despite Indian heritage residents making up a far larger share of the working age population in Merton.

**Table 23: JSA Claimant Count by Main Ethnic Groups, Merton, December 2010<sup>40</sup>**

	Number	% of total	%of all 16-64/59 <sup>41</sup>
<b>White British</b>	1420	42.8	60.5
<b>White Other</b>	200	6.0	9.8
<b>Asian or Asian British Pakistani</b>	130	3.9	2.9
<b>Asian or Asian British Other</b>	160	4.8	2.6
<b>Asian or Asian British Indian</b>	70	2.1	5.1
<b>Black or Black British Caribbean</b>	320	9.6	3.4
<b>Black or Black British African</b>	290	8.7	4.6

Note: Numbers may not tally due to rounding at source.

- 4.7. It should be noted that the figures for all ethnic groups are potentially undercounted due to 320 claimants either being of Unknown Ethnicity or refusing to disclose their ethnic background.
- 4.8. A somewhat different picture emerges when unemployment rates rather than JSA claimants is considered. Table 21 shows economic activity and unemployment rates by ethnicity for the major ethnic groups in Merton in 2010 as well as a combined figure for all BAME groups. This data cannot be broken down to a lower level.

<sup>38</sup> Department of Work & Pensions- Job Seekers Allowance Claimant Count December 2010

<sup>39</sup> Office of National Statistics Population Estimates by Ethnicity 2009

<sup>40</sup> Department of Work & Pensions- Job Seekers Allowance Claimant Count December 2010

<sup>41</sup> Office of National Statistics Population Estimates by Ethnicity 2009

- 4.9. BAME residents on the whole have a lower working age employment rate than White residents, a much higher unemployment rate and a marginally higher rate of economic inactivity.
- 4.10. Interestingly though given the JSA claimant data seen in Tables 19 and 20, the Black or Black British population of Merton has a higher working age employment rate than any other group except Mixed Race and also the lowest economic inactivity rate of any ethnic group in the borough. The unemployment rate for the Black or Black British population is also lower than the BAME average, though still high. This suggests that a high proportion of the unemployed from other ethnic groups are not claiming JSA either because they are not actively seeking work, or perhaps, are not aware that they can claim. This probably deserves further investigation.
- 4.11. Economic inactivity rates are high for both the Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi heritage populations. Whilst this is a typical picture for the Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage populations, where economic activity rates for women is generally low, this is not normally the case for those of Indian heritage.

**Table 24: Economic Activity Rates by Ethnicity, September 2010<sup>42</sup>**

	White	BAME	Mixed	Indian	Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	Black	Other
<b>Working Age Employment Rate</b>	75.9	68.2	91.2	68.8	57.8	76.4	64.2
<b>16+ Unemployment Rate</b>	5.4	11.0	*	*	*	8.1	15.6
<b>% of Working Age Economically Inactive</b>	19.6	23.3	*	24.4	35.8	16.8	23.6

\* Suppressed due to small sample size

- 4.12. Table 25 shows the industry of employment by ethnicity for the main ethnic groups in Merton as of September 2010. This data cannot be broken down further and though a large number of figures are suppressed by the ONS because of small samples sizes, we know that these numbers will therefore be small.
- 4.13. Overall Merton has a very small percentage of its residents employed in the manufacturing industries, though residents of BAME origin are more than twice as likely as those of White backgrounds to work in manufacturing. A significant proportion of the Chinese and Other Ethnic

<sup>42</sup> Annual Population Survey- September 2010

Group population working in manufacturing, including it is thought many Koreans, possibly skews these figures for the BAME population as a whole.

4.14. Nationally it is generally the case that a large percentage of the Pakistani/Bangladeshi, Chinese and Other Ethnic Group populations work in Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants. This is not so much the case in Merton, though this sector is the main employer of Indian heritage residents.

4.15. 52.7% of the Black or Black British workforce of Merton work in Public Admin, Education and Health. This compares to just 29.0% of the White population and 30.0% of the combined BAME population.

**Table 25: Industry by Ethnicity, September 2010<sup>43</sup>**

	White	BAME	Mixed	Indian	Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	Black	Other
<b>Agriculture &amp; Fishing</b>	!	!	!	!	!	!	!
<b>Energy &amp; Water</b>	!	!	!	!	!	!	!
<b>Manufacturing</b>	2.9	6.0	!	!	!	!	12.6
<b>Construction</b>	7.8	2.0	!	!	!	!	!
<b>Distribution, Hotels &amp; Restaurants</b>	12.1	27.3	!	40.5	25.0	12.8	36.2
<b>Transport &amp; Communication</b>	7.4	10.4	!	!	32.7	7.1	!
<b>Banking, Finance &amp; Insurance</b>	32.9	20.0	38.1	20.8	!	17.5	20.4
<b>Public Admin, Education &amp; Health</b>	29.0	30.0	39.6	26.0	!	52.7	20.8
<b>Other Services</b>	7.3	3.6	!	!	18.8	!	!

!= Suppressed at data source

4.16. Perhaps more significant is the level of employment. Table 26 shows the occupation (or level of employment) by ethnicity for the main ethnic groups in Merton as of September 2010. Again this data cannot be broken down further and a large number of cells are suppressed because of small numbers.

4.17. It is clear that White residents are far more likely than BAME residents to work as Managers and Senior Officials and are slightly more likely than the BAME population as a whole to work in Professional Occupations. However, over 40% of Indian heritage residents do work in Professional Occupations – a very high figure.

<sup>43</sup> Annual Population Survey- September 2010

4.18. At the other end of the occupation spectrum it is also apparent that BAME residents are far more likely than White residents to work in elementary roles. A relatively large percentage of both the Black or Black British and the Chinese and Other Ethnic Group populations work in these unskilled manual roles.

**Table 26: Occupation by Ethnicity, September 2010<sup>44</sup>**

	White	BAME	Mixed	Indian	Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	Black	Other
<b>Managers and Senior Officials</b>	19.8	12.1	!	13.6	!	!	15.9
<b>Professional Occupations</b>	24.5	23.2	29.8	42.1	17.6	17.4	20.2
<b>Associate Professional and Technical Occupations</b>	12.3	14.2	!	19.3	!	17.4	9.4
<b>Administrative and Secretarial Occupations</b>	11.4	10.4	!	13.2	19.2	10.8	6.1
<b>Skilled Trades Occupations</b>	9.2	4.2	!	!	!	!	!
<b>Personal Service Occupations</b>	7.5	8.4	!	!	!	18.4	5.8
<b>Sales and Customer Service Occupations</b>	5.4	9.9	!	!	20.5	!	14.0
<b>Process, Plant and Machine Operatives</b>	3.1	7.4	!	!	16.0	10.5	6.6
<b>Elementary Occupations</b>	6.9	10.1	!	!	!	13.4	17.7

!= Suppressed at data source

4.19. The differences we have seen in levels of unemployment/JSA claimants and employment level can in part be explained by differences in skill levels across ethnic groups although this does not appear to be the whole explanation.

4.20. Table 27 shows the percentage of each ethnic group, by age band, that has either no qualifications or is educated to degree level at the time of the last Census. The table confirms the general level of qualifications

<sup>44</sup> Annual Population Survey- September 2010

achieved by Merton residents – with high percentages of graduates. Black residents are generally less likely than average to be educated to degree level though no more likely than the average to have no qualifications. Untypically those of Pakistani heritage seem to be better educated than the average with a high percentage with a degree at all age levels and lower proportions with no qualifications in the older age groups. Younger Bangladeshis are far more likely than average to have no qualifications and also far less likely to be educated to degree level or above. The same is true of Mixed Race residents in the same age bands. However, again unusually, a high percentage of older Bangladeshis have degrees, although the numbers are small. Indians generally have a higher percentage with degrees and a lower percentage with no qualifications than the average for Merton.

**Table 27: Qualifications by age and ethnicity in 2001<sup>45</sup>**

		<b>All</b>							
<b>Age</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Mixed</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Pakistani</b>	<b>Bangladeshi</b>	<b>Caribbean</b>	<b>African</b>
<b>16-24</b>	<b>No</b>								
	<b>Quals Degree and above</b>	12.1	12.7	13.6	8.3	8.2	13.4	12.2	11.8
		23.6	25.8	12.7	25.2	27.5	14.4	10.2	16.7
<b>25-49</b>	<b>No</b>								
	<b>Quals Degree and above</b>	11.3	11.4	9.0	10.9	12.0	25.1	10.1	8.2
		45.2	45.8	43.3	50.8	51.3	41.3	25.3	47.8
<b>50-64</b>	<b>No</b>								
	<b>Quals Degree and above</b>	34.8	37.8	21.7	25.3	17.0	26.2	35.3	12.2
		25.4	22.1	28.5	35.7	45.8	50.5	28.1	44.3
<b>65-74</b>	<b>No</b>								
	<b>Quals Degree and above</b>	56.3	59.1	28.8	39.1	21.7	32.7	58.2	31.5
		16.8	14.9	23.3	27.9	48.0	59.2	14.8	30.6

4.21. As well as variations in qualifications and employment across ethnicity there are, of course, major differences geographically across the borough. Table 28 shows various economic indicators at ward level in Merton. Some of the data is from 2001 but is the best that is available at this lower geographic level.

<sup>45</sup> 2001 Census

**Table 28: Economic Indicators by Ward**

	Economically Inactive (not Retired or Student) <sup>46</sup>	Managers & Senior Officials <sup>47</sup>	Elementary Occupations <sup>48</sup>	No Qualifications <sup>49</sup>	JSA Claimants <sup>50</sup>
Abbey	11.0	21.7	4.9	18.4	1.9
Cannon Hill	11.7	14.6	7.6	31.5	1.7
Colliers Wood	13.2	15.2	7.7	23.6	2.6
Cricket Green	19.5	13.6	13.9	39.0	5.4
Dundonald	9.7	22.5	3.0	14.5	0.9
Figge's Marsh	17.7	13.4	11.6	35.0	4.8
Graveney	14.0	14.0	9.6	26.3	3.5
Hillside	11.8	27.2	2.1	9.7	1.1
Lavender Fields	15.1	14.9	10.0	30.2	3.2
Longthornton	13.5	14.2	9.6	30.1	4.0
Lower Morden	10.9	14.1	9.0	35.5	2.2
Merton Park	11.8	20.7	4.8	19.3	1.7
Pollards Hill	16.0	13.2	12.2	37.9	5.6
Ravensbury	17.4	13.7	10.7	38.7	3.8
Raynes Park	13.7	23.2	4.1	17.4	1.3
St Helier	16.7	13.0	11.7	41.9	3.6
Trinity	11.1	23.4	4.1	16.3	1.7
Village	17.7	33.8	2.4	10.2	0.4
West Barnes	10.7	18.4	6.9	23.2	2.0
Wimbledon Park	12.6	23.5	3.9	15.1	1.6
<b>Merton</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>Great Britain</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>3.8</b>

4.22. Only five wards in Merton have economic inactivity rates that are higher than the national average and the rate of economic inactivity across Merton as a whole is notably lower than the national average too but the variation across the borough is considerable. To take the greatest disparity just 9.7% of Dundonald residents are economically inactive as compared to 19.5% of Cricket Green residents.

4.23. Merton also has a much higher percentage of residents who work as Managers or Senior Officials and a much lower rate of residents who work in Elementary Occupations than is seen nationally. But again there are contrasts within the borough - 33.8% of residents of Village work as Managers or Senior Officials as compared to just 13.0% of residents of St Helier. Similarly whereas Wimbledon has only 3.9% employed in Elementary occupations Cricket Green has 13.9%. These differences can better be seen on the graph below:

<sup>46</sup> 2001 Census

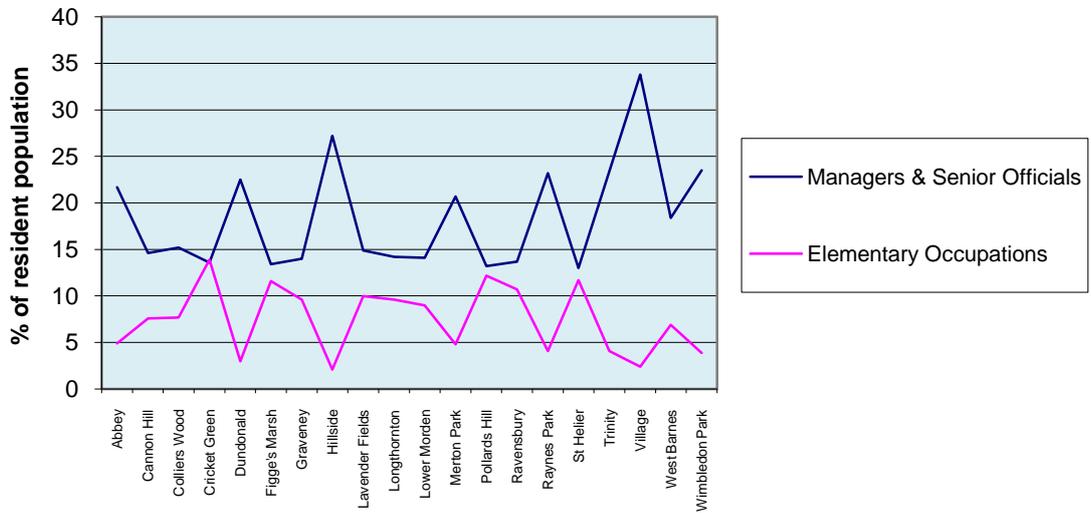
<sup>47</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>48</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>49</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>50</sup> Department of Work & Pensions- Job Seekers Allowance Claimant Count December 2010

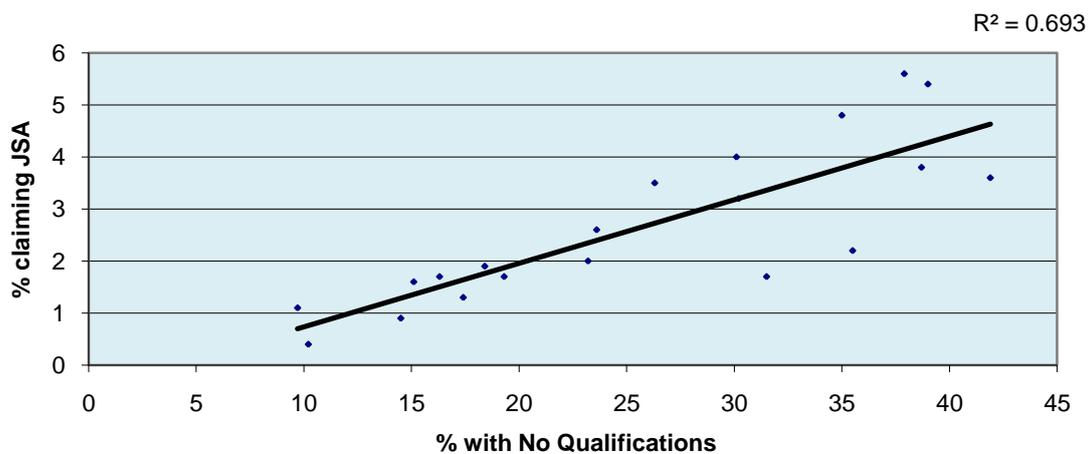
**Figure 11:** Employment Sectors by Residential Area



4.24. However, it is worth noting that neither St Hellier nor Cricket Green are very far outside the national average for the percentage of workers employed as Managers or in Elementary occupations.

4.25. Figure 12 shows the % of residents in each ward who have no qualifications and the % who claim Job Seekers Allowance. This shows not only the range of disparities across the borough but also the fact that there is, perhaps not surprisingly, a clear relationship between the two variables.

**Figure 12: JSA Claimants & Residents with No Qualifications**



4.26. Particular issues arise in relation to migrant workers. Since the enlargement of the EU large numbers of Eastern European, particularly Polish, workers have arrived in Britain. Many of these are single men

working in some form of construction. While some have been recruited by large firms others are often self employed or working 'on the black'. With the downturn in the economy many of these men now find themselves without work and without recourse to public funds. In effect, destitute. The Faith in Action homeless project, which runs a drop in centre with food two days a week at the Salvation Army Hall, has seen a sharp increase in Polish users since the last winter. Around half of the 50-60 clients a week are now Poles.

- 4.27. The presence of substantial groups of men who have to scavenge to survive is not only a problem for the individuals concerned but also one for the wider community too. There is a risk that their inevitable condition and lifestyle will increase antagonism towards new migrants generally. We were informed that the established Polish community had not shown much enthusiasm for supporting these men. The Council's hands are very much tied by the embargo on the use of public funds but there is a clear case for trying to ensure that new arrivals are better informed and appreciate the risks they are taking in working in the UK, particularly unofficially. There are many examples of attempts to welcome and inform migrant workers, up and down the country. For example, Migrant Workers North West provides a website in the form of a one-stop shop which supports migrant workers and their employers. The basic aims are to protect migrant workers by providing them with information on their rights and to help businesses to ensure that they are employing best practice.

#### **How is Merton responding to these challenges?**

- 4.28. The Council has recently agreed an Economic Development Strategy which contains an extensive analysis of the local economy, a clear vision and objectives and a lengthy action plan focused on a range of key interventions. The economic vision is both spatial and thematic in nature, addressing the issue of development in the borough's main centres as well as determining which sectors to actively facilitate for further growth.
- 4.29. There is a large and active Chamber of Commerce which receives external funding, including some from the Council, to provide business advice and support. Mitcham Means Business provides both business and employment support (including volunteering in preparation for work and to enhance skills and experience) in the most deprived part of the borough and there is borough wide support for business start ups.
- 4.30. However, while also recognising that skill levels are an important issue, and a principal determinant of the east/west divide, action to address skill levels is not a strong focus of the Economic Development Strategy. While it is clearly desirable to develop the local economy, London's economy is very porous. The principal determinant of individual economic prosperity in London is not the local availability of jobs but the ability to access jobs more widely. Better paid jobs in Merton will not go to local residents if they lack the skills or aspirations, and conversely

many jobs outside the borough will continue to be filled by Merton residents.

- 4.31. There does not appear to be any analysis in the Economic Development Strategy or indeed the BAME Strategy of the different skill levels of different ethnic groups or of their particular barriers to employment be these to do with language, culture or the attitudes of the wider community.
- 4.32. Nor does there appear to be much understanding of the structure and trading relations of ethnic minority businesses. It was suggested that some communities, such as the Poles and the Tamils were difficult to engage and that their recruitment and trading tended to be confined to their own communities. Clearly there can be strengths to such arrangements but they may also restrict both business and individual opportunity and do little to promote a wider sense of shared purpose and understanding.
- 4.33. Enterprise4All is a not-for-profit company which works with under-represented groups in the North West. It commissioned a detailed report examining the role of entrepreneurship in promoting community cohesion in part of Blackburn<sup>51</sup>. It sought to explore how commercial activity can promote community cohesion by offering local BAME communities the opportunity to engage with the wider community. Promoting greater inter-trading between the different Blackburn communities was an important part of this
- 4.34. A recent Merton initiative perhaps provides a model of how greater inter trading and engagement might be promoted. Korean businesses in Merton, some of which are very significant, have tended to operate within their own community, although this has included trading nationally and internationally. At the request of the Korean Chamber of Commerce the Merton Chamber has organised a number of joint events designed to open up an understanding and dialogue between Korean businesses and other businesses in Merton. A Korean speaking member of staff at the Merton Chamber has been key to facilitating this initiative.
- 4.35. Examples from elsewhere of how business and business support can promote cohesion are growing and include:
- Specific initiatives from a range of major firms such as the Co-op, BT, Asda, Four Seasons Hotels and Eversheds to widen the diversity of their workforce and promote greater understanding of difference within their workforce.
  - Bradgate Bakery in Leicester has developed its own culture that encourages cohesion including :

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<sup>51</sup> "Enterprise as a Catalyst for Community Cohesion - A Research Study into Inter-Community Collaboration through Business", Enterprise4All

- Supporting workers to develop their language skills so no one is excluded or isolated, including providing ESOL training and allocating a trained 'buddy';
  - collectively celebrating all the major religious festivals- Christmas, Diwali and Eid;
  - Having mixed teams on the production lines so the staff cover for each other during festivals.
- In Hoxton The Innovatory delivered a project designed to equip Turkish-Kurdish and African/Caribbean led SMEs to benefit from Olympic opportunities and removing some of the barriers to achieving this by:
    - providing Olympic investment readiness training, along with networking and pitching opportunities. The project will network and link members to mainstream business support services and business partners through partnership events and by referrals.
    - providing 2012 readiness training, and one-to-one advice, as well as mentoring support provided by businesses and participation in networking events.
    - providing training and work experience leading towards qualifications in skills areas relevant to the needs of Olympic-related businesses, including IT, customer service, retail, team leading and management.

## 5. Interviews and Focus Groups Findings.

### The Brief

- 5.1. A key part of the brief for this report is to identify and evidence issues and grievances that divide, alienate and isolate different communities. A great deal of statistical data and information has already been provided in Sections 4 and 5 of this report. In this section we focus on the views and opinions expressed in over 40 interviews with key personnel across the public, voluntary and faith sectors and more than 25 focus groups with residents from across Merton's main communities. A full list of interviews and focus groups is to be found in Appendix I.

### About Merton

- 5.2. Overwhelmingly, participants in interviews and focus groups spoke positively about the borough.

*"People in Merton are all nice"*

African Caribbean Elderly Female

*"Merton is a good place to live and study"*

White Heritage Male College Student

- 5.3. Inevitably, some views were critical, but nevertheless many participants identified with the Borough in which they felt proud to belong and live

### Geography, Economy and community

- 5.4. Reinforcing statistical and economic data in the previous section(s) of this report, some participants in interviews and focus groups made a great deal of reference to economic disparities between the east and west of the borough.

*"People in Wimbledon are much richer and get more of the resources"*

African Heritage Female

*"The economic divide is certainly an issue and needs to be addressed"*

Elected Councillor

- 5.5. Some we spoke to in interviews and focus groups also pointed to change and issues in their neighbourhoods with the arrival of new and emerging communities.

*"...There is resentment bubbling under the surface about people coming in particularly asylum seekers"*

African Caribbean Heritage Female

- 5.6. In addition, participants in focus groups and interviews with the Borough's White majority community also highlighted what was perceived as underlying change in the nature of community and social cohesion in local neighbourhoods and the erosion of traditions.

*"We've lost Wimbledon to other cultures... it's not English anymore"*  
White Heritage Elder Male

- 5.7. Many of those we spoke to in interviews and focus groups were positive about relations between different social, ethnic and faith groups in their immediate neighbourhood. Nonetheless some people noted underlying issues and warned against complacency.

*"St Hellier estate which bridges Sutton and Merton has significant BNP activity"*  
Council Officer

*"Racism is still an issue but has evolved in the way it is done"*  
African Caribbean Heritage Male Professional

*"Everything looks good but when you scratch the surface divisions come out"*  
African Heritage Female

- 5.8. References in focus groups were also made to hostility, name calling and discrimination directed at Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) communities.

*"Bullying in schools is widespread and involves both physical and emotional abuse"*  
GRT Female

- 5.9. In addition, there was mention of hostilities within communities based on faith and other complex backgrounds and associations.

*"The Ahmadiyya community are considered apostates by the majority of Muslims"*  
Senior Council Officer

*"The Mosque (Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK) has caused tensions locally and is always on the radar"*  
White Heritage Male

*"An Afghani youth from a communist background was ostracised by the rest of the group"*  
Support Worker for Asylum Seeker Refugee

*"Tensions exist between Somali communities"*  
Council Officer

*"There is a general Pakistani degradation towards Bangladeshi and an inevitable counter-reaction"*  
Muslim Male

*"Some Muslims don't get on with other Muslims. That is it really"*

White Heritage Male College Student  
*“Muslim girls who where the Hijab are a target... get called terrorist and things”*

Pakistani Heritage Male College Student

### **Crime and Community Safety**

- 5.10. Some concerns were also expressed regarding the perceived fairness and impartiality of the policing and criminal justice system.

*“There is an issue of disproportionate numbers of stop and searches of Black young men”*

Council Officer

### **Perceptions of wider Public Sector Policy on Equality, Cohesion and Engagement**

- 5.11. The majority opinion amongst those we interviewed thought that the Council had invested a great deal in improving and promoting equality of opportunities. However, it was also thought that more still needs to be done and some interviewees and participants in focus groups also made many proposals on how community cohesion could be improved within the Borough. Wider concerns were also raised in interviews regarding representation and engagement.

### **Inter-generational Issues**

- 5.12. Inter-generational issues also featured prominently amongst concerns raised in focus groups across all communities. Issues linked to differences across cultural and faith backgrounds are explored in more detail in Sections 6 and 8. Though allowing for nuances of culture and faith, there seemed to be similar views across all Merton’s communities. Whilst, often repeated, anxieties about anti-social behaviour constituted one part of these concerns, at a deeper level the issues appeared to be about the ways in which local communities were changing, different lifestyles between generations and weakening family and social bonds
- 5.13. As might be expected a great deal of concern was expressed across all communities regarding cuts in services and in particular the impact on facilities in local neighbourhoods for young people.
- 5.14. There were also concerns around under-achievement in schools and ‘Black’ pupils – in particular – falling behind. In part this was thought to be due to a lack of aspiration, motivation and role models.
- 5.15. Though the presence and influence of street gangs was not seen as a big problem in comparison to other parts of London (Croydon, Brixton etc), it was nevertheless identified as a growing concern particularly involving young males of African Caribbean and Tamil heritages. Quite often these ‘street gangs’ were in fact little more than groups of young

people hanging around and socialising. But some are territorial and seen as associated with illegal and violent activities.

### **August 2011 Riots**

- 5.16. Although confined and contained to a small area in Colliers Wood, the August 2011 riots had a borough-wide impact.

*“All the shops closed early”*

White Heritage Male

*“Public transport was cancelled, and tube stations were shut down”*

White Heritage Female

- 5.17. Understandably, viewpoints regarding the causes of the riots were varied with a combination of factors mentioned. Inevitably, some faith leaders conveyed perspectives drawn from their respective religious teachings. For example a monk from the Wimbledon based Wat Buddhapadipa (Temple)<sup>52</sup> (reference paragraph 8.78) referred to Buddhist teachings of restraint and moderation as solutions to what he considered as society's descent into decadence and materialism.

- 5.18. In a wider context, the spread of the riots was believed by many as being down to opportunism. Only a few felt anti-establishment feelings were shared across deprived communities and most agreed that conditions in Merton were not *“bad enough”* for such events to occur. Notably shop owners in Pollards Hill said they had not been in fear of the riots spreading into the area.

*“We have excellent relations with all our customers I could not imagine anything would happen in this area”*

Pakistani heritage Shop owner, Pollards Hill

- 5.19. We also heard measured well thought out informed responses. One respondent spoke with reference to experiences of past riots.

*“Riots back in the 1980s were also talked about as mindless and criminal... used to justify strong police tactics. It took time for the racism thing to be accepted as a cause. The recent riots happened because little has changed in those areas. There's talk of soft policing but in the areas where the riots started there's never been soft policing... that is shown first by the shooting and then the police's disrespectful response to the family... the way forward is to heal wounds and try to re-engage”*

African Caribbean heritage male, 50 years of age

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<sup>52</sup> [www.buddhapadipa.org/temple/](http://www.buddhapadipa.org/temple/)

## **6. Young People: Disconnected? Disempowered? Discriminated?**

- 6.1. The purpose of this section is to provide an understanding of issues related to young people in order to improve engagement and participation.
- 6.2. Reflective of Merton's population compositions, young people living in the borough are represented across increasingly diverse communities. Overall, we found the borough's young people at ease with diversity and also observed some exceptional examples of desires to engage and understand cultural and faith diversities, though understandably experiences, opinions and interests varied.
- 6.3. The vast majority of young people consulted spoke favourably about living in the borough. In defining identities and sense of belonging, their local area was seemingly of most significance.
- 6.4. Some professionals working with young people observed persistent trends and patterns of significant numbers of young people gathering and congregating in like for like ethnic groups. But many complex and unique dimensions were also noted.
- 6.5. In addition to ethnic, cultural and peer group dimensions, a variety of diverse and diffused youth trends, fashions and dialects – all in constant flux – appeared to define social relations, networks and leisure preferences.
- 6.6. For example, some young people spoke of certain styles of attire being associated with certain groupings – defining ever-changing complex and often multiple identities. At one end of the scale, certain colours or items of clothing were associated with gang membership. However, for most, style and fashion was a form of expression. Some represented more distinct features than others, though of most prominent influence – as appeared manifest in varying degrees amongst most groups – were trends associated with Black African and Caribbean youth cultures which in turn drew on African American influences. We were told for example of several forms of Rap and RnB music fusing dialects and languages to convey social commentaries specifically relevant to certain ethnic and even faith groups.
- 6.7. For example Tamil youth fashion combined influences from Tamil films and music fused within a local context drawing on Black and other South Asian youth sub-cultures. The emergence of Tamil Rap was mentioned as using interplay between Tamil and English Black youth slang terms to convey issues relevant to Tamil young people. The subject topics included love relationships as well as issues related to events in Sri Lanka and experiences of having to flee persecution.

- 6.8. However, Tamil culture was said to place importance on saving face which was suggested to be more intense amongst male youth. This was suggested to have shaped attitudes and the reason why minor disagreements could often easily develop into serious disputes and violence.

*“They see to walk away as weakness, and though man might do it, you can bet he’s hurting and is comin back”*

Tamil male, age 17 years

*“Why? Can be no reason, just stupid over nothing... like [that] man [just] said something about how one man bowled in cricket but is his friend so got upset and you see they nearly fighting... over nothing... He walked but is standing over there and look he wants to come back and start”*

Tamil male, age 19 years

- 6.9. Although, a variety of places were mentioned, it was suggested Tamil young people preferred to gather and socialise in and around Tamil owned restaurants and cafes.

#### Gender Issues

- 6.10. Of all the issues raised, the most worrying development was the suggested increase of sexual exploitation and abuse of young women by young men. It was felt that some young males from various backgrounds felt such behaviour was acceptable. Due to the seriousness, sensitivity and attached stigma – accounts were conveyed to us in third party terms and lines of enquiry were not pursued by our team. It was suggested that the attitudes of some young males needed to be challenged and more work was required to engage with vulnerable young girls via groups aware of various cultural sensitivities.

#### Intergenerational

- 6.11. Issues related to intergenerational differences effects all communities however cultural and religious attitudes shaped responses and perceptions.
- 6.12. Young people consulted shared experiences of diverse cultural expectations and approaches to parenting across faith and BAME communities.
- 6.13. African and African Caribbean parents were viewed as imposing strict discipline regimes. Some parents felt child protection laws restricted them in disciplining their children in line with strict cultural norms whereas young respondents found such attempts to be counterproductive and ineffective;

*“they push us too hard and that is why we rebel”*

African Male, 15 years of age

- 6.14. Similar strict cultural disciplinary regimes were also mentioned as common within some Asian cultures yet these were seen as being more successful in maintaining obedience and also at delivering good academic success. However, young people of various Asian heritages noted resentment towards “*pushy parents*” and in particular the imposition of cultural and faith restrictions.
- 6.15. In addition, there are many complex variations within communities including class dimensions and the effects of recent migration and settlement.
- 6.16. The borough’s Asylum and Refugee communities include young people from a range of diverse backgrounds. Workers from the South London Refugee Association & Asylum Welcome<sup>53</sup> demonstrate highly sophisticated levels of understanding of complex dimensions related to divisions and different cultural attitudes towards gender.
- 6.17. Different experiences of fleeing war situations, persecution and severe levels of discrimination linked to origins shaped perceptions and attitudes as well as the nature of vulnerabilities.
- 6.18. Young Muslims from a variety of backgrounds constitute a significant proportion of Asylum Refugee numbers in the borough. Afghani Sunni Muslim male youth were reluctant to express concerns regarding experiences of discrimination, though some had clearly experienced severe levels of prejudice. References were also made to complex dimensions effecting friendship groups and hierarchical peer structures. Their Muslim faith identity made developing friendships with Muslims from other ethnic backgrounds (Pakistani, Arab and Somali) easier. In addition clan heritages and cultures were considered important, and for some, political allegiance was a source of in-group discrimination. Stringent cultural attitudes towards females were also mentioned as an issue resulting in the need to organise separate activities for young girls.
- 6.19. The borough’s Pakistani Ahmadiyya Muslim refugees were said to sometimes experience hostility when participating in activities involving Sunni Muslims. However, the majority of Ahmadiyya refugees were said to prefer accessing support from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK.
- 6.20. The borough’s young refugee populations also include those from Africa, Iraq and Sri Lanka. Some young Tamil male refugees were said to have experienced torture and were particularly vulnerable to suffering from post traumatic stress conditions. Overall, we heard of young refugees from various backgrounds developing close cross-community friendship bonds.
- 6.21. Not all of the borough’s newly settled young migrants are refugees. There has been a sharp increase in recently settled Pakistani heritage

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<sup>53</sup> [www.asylumwelcome.org.uk/get-involved/partnership/](http://www.asylumwelcome.org.uk/get-involved/partnership/)

Ahmadiyya Muslim migrants from EU member states (Germany and Sweden). These represent a relatively affluent group and were described as contributing new dimensions of diffused sub-cultural developments, some younger generations were said to be challenging parental “*contemptuous views towards other Muslims*”.

6.22. Some elder respondents considered younger people as being distant and almost devoid of a sense of responsibility and understanding of diversity.

6.23. On the contrary we found younger people possessing a deep understanding and appreciation of diversity – in many ways in greater detail and wider scope than elder generations. For example pupils at one school had opted for a lesson specifically about religious diversity and understood that religious differences can create problems.

*“It is much better if people from different religions come together and learn about each other”*

Somali Heritage, Year 9 School Pupil

6.24. Whilst most young people consulted spoke of harmonious community relations, for some racism and discrimination was an issue. For example, some African and African Caribbean respondents emphasised police harassment in the form of stop and searches of Black males. In addition, perceptions included feelings of being treated differently by shopkeepers and security guards in shopping centres. This was considered to be much worse in other areas with specific mention of Sutton.

6.25. In addition, GRT children were found to experience a great deal of bullying at school and some had resorted to concealing their origins and heritage to avoid confrontation.

### **August 2011 Riots**

6.26. As expected young people’s views on the recent disturbances were varied though some patterns of agreement were evident. Initial references were made to the shooting of Mark Duggan as the primary cause of the riots. However, as discussions continued opportunism, criminality and general discontent were mentioned.

6.27. Whilst by no means unanimous, it was felt by many that young people were being unfairly blamed. However, there were also indications that some believed the nature of the disturbances were linked to particular styles of bad behavioural norms amongst certain sub-groups of youth. For example a group of South Asian young males noted

*“we don’t move in them dimensions... we don’t express our things the way they was doin”*

South Asian male, 21 years of age

- 6.28. Some young people made references to excessive bankers' bonuses, MPs expenses and anti-capitalist movements – though none were active supporters or sympathisers of such groups.
- 6.29. In response to the question of why the Riots were not widespread across the borough, the general consensus was that conditions were not bad enough for people to be angry.

## 7. The Prevent Strategy

### Background

- 7.1. The Prevent strategy was launched in 2007 and seeks to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It is the preventative strand of the government's counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST. The primary threat was and is believed to be from Al Qaida inspired groups. As with other Local Authority areas with "sizeable Muslim communities" (i.e. 5% or more) Merton was identified as a priority funding area/council.
- 7.2. Nationally the Prevent programme attracted criticisms from a variety of sources. Many of the issues raised were considered in the Coalition Government's review of the Prevent Strategy – published in June 2011<sup>54</sup>. Amongst other changes, the new Prevent Strategy makes clearer separation between cohesion/integration and Prevent initiatives and also identifies 25 priority funding areas, of which Merton is not one

### Merton's Prevent Strategy

- 7.3. In Merton many within and outside Muslim communities questioned the focus of Prevent on Muslims, or what is now referred to as Al Qaeda inspired violent extremism. Some groups also expressed resentment of what was perceived as a national and local focus – in both policy and funding terms – on Muslim issues and concerns only.
- 7.4. In addition, it was argued that Prevent had to some extent skewed engagement with Muslim communities towards a focus on the counter-terrorism agenda to the detriment of wider issues related to cohesion and integration.
- 7.5. Recognising these concerns, Merton Partnership's Prevent strategy focused initiatives within a wider community cohesion context.
- 7.6. From April 2009 to April 2011, £394,596 was allocated on Prevent activities in the Borough. Table 29, provides outline details of Prevent activities in Merton.

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<sup>54</sup> [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/prevent-strategy-review?view=Binary](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/prevent-strategy-review?view=Binary)

**Table 29: Prevent Funded Projects**

<b>No</b>	<b>Name of Group</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Amount Allocated</b>
<b>April 2009 – April 2010</b>			
1.	Asian Youth Alliance	Muslim Heritage Project	£ 29,985
2.	British Muslim Association of Merton	Two events (conference and seminar), plus building into regular programme of events to promote Islamic Awareness	£ 8,525
3.	Ethnic Minority Centre	4 seminars, 4 workshops with VCS groups and 4 workshops with faith groups to promote Islamic Awareness	£ 14,025
4.	Merton Youth Service	Development work with Muslim girls and young women	£ 29,381
5.	Merton Voluntary Service Council	Mapping & directory of faith groups/ activity in Merton	£ 25,000
6.	Ricards Lodge High School	Culture and identity projects throughout school year, plus staff training	£ 31,000
7.	South London Refugee Association	Weekly after school sessions and 4 outings	£ 16,621
8.	South London Tamil Welfare Group	Sports day, 'Generation together' Tamil festival, awareness workshops, self defence classes and feasibility study	£ 29,529
9.	Sutton and Merton Mediation	Roll out mediation programme with communities	£ 33,654
<b>Total</b>			<b>£ 217,720</b>
<b>April 2010 – April 2011</b>			
1.	Asian Youth Alliance	Media and intergenerational project that will produce resource materials for schools and toolkits for other agencies.	£ 27,970
2.	Merton Youth Service	Development work with Muslim girls and young women	£ 41,000
3.	Ricards Lodge High School	Deliver community cohesion workshops within wards and a conference for primary schools staff.	£ 37,950
4.	Institute for Community Cohesion	Community mapping	£ 17,000
5.	South Thames College	The aim of this project is to plan, organise and deliver a programme of enrichment/youth work activities and services for 16-18 year old students of all	£ 30,000

		faiths and none.	
6.	South London Refugee Association	Weekly after school sessions, 4 outings, opportunities to join families, and ESOL classes	£ 22,876
<b>Total</b>			£ <b>176,876</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			£ <b>394,596</b>

- 7.7. Evaluating the success of Prevent activities, is not without its difficulties, as we often hear, it involves “*measuring that which has not yet happened*”. In this context, probably the most defining commendation is that no incidents have occurred in Merton.
- 7.8. As indicated, general overarching theme of criticisms regarding the Prevent agenda relates to its focus on Muslim issues and concerns only. Of the fifteen Prevent funded activities delivered in Merton, only a few had an overt specific Muslim focus. Of these the Youth Service development work to engage Muslim women received most accolades.
- 7.9. Although, intellectually and philosophically critical of the Prevent agenda, representatives from the borough’s Sunni Muslim masjid through the British Muslim Association took the initiative to affect influence on the direction of Prevent activities delivered in the borough. This collective action was deemed vital to avoid misrepresentation and potential demonisation of Muslim communities. Some Muslims in the borough however conveyed a more direct opposition to the Prevent agenda and refused outright to participate in Prevent initiatives.
- 7.10. In contrast, the borough’s Ahmadiyya Muslim community although supportive of the general aims of the Prevent agenda were not involved with any local projects. The extensive range of “Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK”<sup>55</sup> led activities, outreach work and campaigns such as “Love for All Hatred for None”<sup>56</sup> are considered to be more “religiously” appropriate and effective ways to prevent extremism and misunderstanding of Islam.
- 7.11. Most participants in focus groups and the majority of those we interviewed – particularly in the voluntary, community and faith sectors, were not aware of details regarding the Prevent Agenda. Yet those who were aware all raised a number of concerns.
- 7.12. Notably, several respondents representing a diverse cross-section of Merton’s communities also posited intellectually-based critiques.
- 7.13. A prominent Christian faith and community representative presented highly sophisticated arguments questioning the validity of terrorist threat levels and the rationales which suggested a higher vulnerability of

<sup>55</sup> Baitul Futuh Mosque, 181 London Road, SM4 5PT, <http://ahmadiyya.org.uk/>

<sup>56</sup> [www.LoveForAllHatredForNone.org.uk](http://www.LoveForAllHatredForNone.org.uk)

radicalisation amongst Muslims and totally dismissed any risks in Merton.

- 7.14. Similar, intellectualised opposition to the Prevent agenda was conveyed by an African Caribbean heritage respondent, with reference to historical, geopolitical and ideological upheavals.
- 7.15. One Sunni Muslim representative, after initial involvement in the borough's Prevent strategy had withdrawn his support and refused outright to participate in activities.
- 7.16. Other Muslim leaders participated reluctantly only after the term Muslim was dropped from the borough's Prevent strategy. Some felt that only by being involved could they influence the delivery of activities and avert risk of misrepresenting Muslims and further demonisation of the Islamic faith.
- 7.17. At the same time respondents who had come into contact with Prevent funded initiatives aimed at informing and engaging Muslim women were very positive about the impact and results.

*“Probably the most successful Prevent funded project involved improving engagement with young Asian [Muslim] women”*

Council Officer

- 7.18. No references were made to extremism within Merton's Muslim communities, though some concerns were raised about pockets of support for far right groups. In response, Merton council together with the borough of Sutton have focused mediation work in the St. Hellier ward, countering the activities of the far right extremists.
- 7.19. In addition, and fairly unique to Merton was a Prevent funded project focused on the borough's Tamil communities, specifically in response to concerns of potential support for certain groups.
- 7.20. Relative to other places where iCoCo have carried out reviews, the implementation Prevent in Merton has seemingly passed by without adverse effects on community relations in the borough. In fact, activities have generally been aimed at and successfully improved engagement and participation. Although Merton is no longer in receipt of Prevent funding there is scope to harness the new channels of engagement emerging as part of Prevent funded activities. In addition it is important to maintain an emphasis on tackling myths and misinformation from radical and extremist sources, including far right groups.

## 8. Understanding And Appreciating Merton's Communities: Diversity, Leadership and Representation

- 8.1. In recognition of Merton's exceptionally diverse population we provide below an "understanding and appreciative" mapping of the borough's complex communities and faith diversities. Using a multi-dimensional approach the information in this section has been compiled using methods developed from a comprehensive range of studies and reviews of communities' dynamics across the UK though has been collated with primary reference to views gathered from Merton's residents themselves.
- 8.2. It would be neglectful of iCoCo if we did not mention – a frequently heard request in response to questions about concerns related to increasing diversity in the borough. Many people stressed a need to recognise different cultural sensitivities and varied needs in delivery of support services particularly in areas of mental health, elderly care and child protection issues.
- 8.3. A series of focus groups and one to one interviews were held covering a diverse range of Merton's communities. These consultations took place in variety of settings and provided the information necessary to identify common key features across communities' diversities influencing support networks, leadership and the institutions important to their operation. The dimensions identified included;
- **Employment and Economic status.**  
The borough's communities include business professionals, people in high paid jobs, people working in low paid and insecure occupations, people with three or four jobs, and unemployed people. However, it is also important to understand that indicators of social class do not apply to all communities in the same way.
  - **Locality**  
There are noted variations in the nature of communities living in specific areas of the borough. The types of organisations, support networks and facilities available also vary.
  - **Age Groups**  
Older and younger people have different networks. Older people more often tended to use community organisations and religious centres for networking. Younger people are more likely to access networks through their peers in schools, colleges, work, social activities and online media.
  - **Types of organisations**  
These varied in terms of structure, sophistication, capacities and for BAME communities also reflected migration histories and settlement patterns
  - **Migration history and nature of immigration**  
Some BAME communities have been settled in Merton for over fifty years, but there are also many recent and newly settled. The length of time settled in the borough impacts on familiarity with systems and

access to services. Reasons for migration range from planned moves for employment and educational opportunities to those fleeing persecution and war at very short notice.

- **International dimensions**

Given the diversity of Merton's communities it is important to understand that events overseas can impact on communities' relations in the borough. Many we spoke to from across BAME backgrounds noted interest in world events though understandably for some their primary concerns focused on developments in their countries of origin and therefore respective community organisations naturally address and respond to issues.

### **Community Organisations**

- 8.4. The Borough has a wide range of community based organisations reflecting the rich diversity, vibrancy and ability of Merton's communities to organise and represent themselves. In addition to individual contacts provided by council lead officers, we have drawn on information listed on the council's website<sup>57</sup> and the Merton Connected<sup>58</sup> web portal, which combined, list a vast number of groups and organisations. However some details were found to be missing or incorrect and a number of organisations were discovered to be run from homes by volunteers with limited capacity and questionable levels of influence and reach into the communities. It is essential that information about community organisations is kept up to date as is recognising the limitations of engaging people through community organisations. For example, although organisations were open to all, the user profile often depends on the regional group of whoever opened the centre.
- 8.5. Nonetheless, as noted, Merton's communities have been found to enjoy generally cohesive relationships, and an illustration of this can be seen in several collective "Umbrella" bodies established in the borough.
- 8.6. Merton Unity Network (MUN)<sup>59</sup> hosts and facilitates the Merton BAME Forum<sup>60</sup> and led on compiling the recent BAME Strategy. The Ethnic Minority Centre<sup>61</sup>, has been established for over 20 years though is currently facing changes in response to funding cuts. Positive Network<sup>62</sup> is led by a diverse group and focuses on "*Building intergenerational relationships*" and recently successfully negotiated the lease for Taylor Road Elderly Day Care Centre, which was facilitated by utilising community networks<sup>63</sup>.
- 8.7. In addition, there are also a number of unique community led services in Merton.

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<sup>57</sup> [www.merton.gov.uk/atoz.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/atoz.htm)

<sup>58</sup> [www.mertonconnected.com](http://www.mertonconnected.com)

<sup>59</sup> [www.mertonunitynetwork.org.uk/index.html](http://www.mertonunitynetwork.org.uk/index.html)

<sup>60</sup> [www.mertonunitynetwork.org.uk/BAME.html](http://www.mertonunitynetwork.org.uk/BAME.html)

<sup>61</sup> [www.mertonconnected.com/emc/newsletter](http://www.mertonconnected.com/emc/newsletter)

<sup>62</sup> [www.positive-network.com/](http://www.positive-network.com/)

<sup>63</sup> [www.mertonconnected.com/positive-network-taylor-road](http://www.mertonconnected.com/positive-network-taylor-road)

- 8.8. The Fanon Centre<sup>64</sup> provides specialist mental health services founded on an intellectually based ethos and principles of “*encouraging cultural expression*” to support people suffering from mental health problems.

*“Fanon service was established in 1992 as an African and African Caribbean culturally specific approach to mental well being. The service is named after the first renowned Black psychiatrist Franz Fanon<sup>65</sup>, who purported the theory that, due to colonialism, black people living in white societies will adopt the cultural identity of the majority and essentially distort their own mental psyche.”<sup>66</sup>*

- 8.9. Some of the borough’s BAME community organisations service specific community issues often inevitably linked to developments overseas. South London Tamil Welfare Association (TMA)<sup>67</sup> deals with a wide range of issues involving complex diversities and effects of events overseas in Sri Lanka. Passions and concerns run high in the Tamil community as illustrated by protests in London over recent years<sup>68</sup>. It is useful to keep informed about such developments, for example the most recent conviction of a former Sri Lankan army chief for war crimes claim<sup>69</sup> is likely to fuel anger in the community.
- 8.10. The African Educational Cultural Health Organisation (AECHO)<sup>70</sup> runs several projects focused on African communities including a Pilot Business Venture and support for refugees.

### **Faith Communities**

- 8.11. Merton’s faith communities provide an extensive range of support services including several collective faith initiatives, forums and groups.

### **Merton’s Christians**

- 8.12. Christianity is the largest faith group in Merton with over 60 Christian churches/congregations representing a wide range of religious and cultural traditions.

### **Diversity**

- 8.13. In terms of diversity, Merton’s main Christian denominational congregations generally reflect the changing population compositions of the Borough. There is however some patterns of affiliation related to ethno national heritage. Reflecting Merton’s unique diversity, although the majority of Christians are White British, the borough also has four Korean Churches, a Chinese Ministry, White South African Evangelical

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<sup>64</sup> <http://fanonmerton.wordpress.com/>

<sup>65</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frantz\\_Fanon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frantz_Fanon)

<sup>66</sup> <http://fanonmerton.wordpress.com/>

<sup>67</sup> [www.sltwg.org.uk](http://www.sltwg.org.uk)

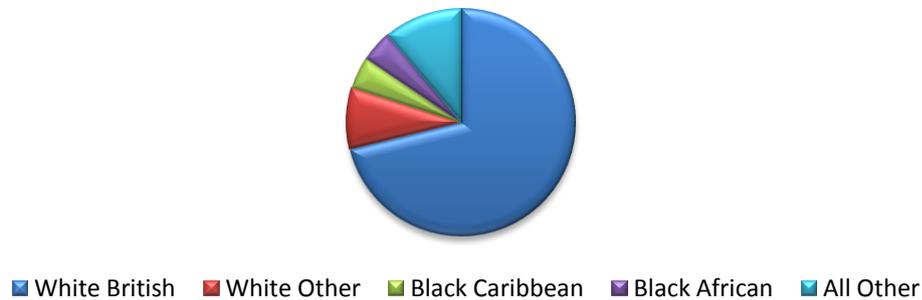
<sup>68</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8007858.stm>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/18/former-sri-lankan-army-chief-jailed>

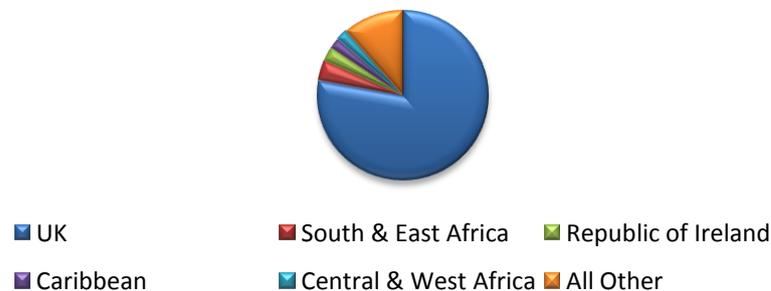
<sup>70</sup> [www.mertonconnected.com/aecho](http://www.mertonconnected.com/aecho)

congregations, as well as a wide range of African Pentecostal, African Caribbean Gospel and Seventh Day Adventist churches/congregations.

**Figure 13: Merton Christian Population by Ethnicity**



**Figure 14: Merton Christian Population by Country of Birth**



### Representation and Leadership

- 8.14. A variety of leadership arrangements are represented across different Christian denominations. It is of significance that the catholic Holy See (Vatican) Embassy<sup>71</sup> is located in the Borough and has close links to local catholic churches and schools. The borough's Catholic congregations were described as exceptionally and increasingly diverse including, African, GRT, Eastern European and South American heritages.
- 8.15. The Church of England has a number of parishes in the Borough and Merton Chamber of Commerce is also the base for London's only remaining Industrial Chaplain – who was widely commended for several roles in addition to church duties and also demonstrated an exceptional appreciation and understanding of diversity across the borough.
- 8.16. In general, Merton's churches and congregations enjoy amicable cross-community relationships. Indeed, all Churches are generally open to all Christians and welcoming to those of other faiths and beliefs. In addition, there are a number of Christian-led focused community initiatives. Street Pastors<sup>72</sup>, consists of a team of 22 drawn from across 12 churches in the borough and provide outreach support to vulnerable people of all

<sup>71</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nunciature\\_to\\_Great\\_Britain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nunciature_to_Great_Britain)

<sup>72</sup> [www.streetpastors.co.uk/ProjectArea/London/Merton/tabid/360/Default.aspx](http://www.streetpastors.co.uk/ProjectArea/London/Merton/tabid/360/Default.aspx)

backgrounds and faiths. Faith in Action<sup>73</sup> focuses on homeless people with a rising client base of Polish men with alcohol related problems. The South London Refugee Association & Asylum Welcome<sup>74</sup> is a predominantly churches-led charity and provides services to people of various faiths including a large proportion of Muslims.

- 8.17. However, certain challenges were noted. 'Churches Together'<sup>75</sup> is a national body that provides local Churches of different denominations a range of support services to "*facilitate collaborative working*"<sup>76</sup>. The borough has Churches Together groups in Malden, Merton Park, Mitcham, Pollards Hill and West Wimbledon. The majority of the Borough's Catholic, Church of England, Anglican, Methodist and United Reform Churches belong to the Churches Together national network though Seventh Day Adventism which is a "*World Church*" – due to some theological differences – is not entitled to join the Network.
- 8.18. In the UK, Adventist church congregations are mainly made-up of African Caribbean and African heritages. There are several Seventh Day Adventist church/congregations established across Merton, in Wimbledon<sup>77</sup>, Mitcham and Pollards Hill, and a well established largely Ghanaian congregation in Tooting<sup>78</sup>.
- 8.19. The diversity of Merton's Christians was viewed by most in a positive light however some barriers to collaborative working were noted. Difficulties included engaging Merton's ethnically and religiously diverse congregations – due to lack of familiarity, language issues and for some a reluctance to participate in collective activities.
- 8.20. Although African Christian congregations have defined leadership structures, these were unfamiliar to some White Christian leaders creating problems in identifying appropriate points of contact.
- 8.21. Merton and specifically Pollards Hill is home to a well established significant Ghanaian, mainly Christian community (Anglican, Roman Catholic and Pentecostal). Traditional religions are also said to be followed alongside Christian religions and influence structural arrangements. The Church is regarded as a very important feature of Ghanaian life.
- 8.22. The town of New Malden straddles the boroughs of Merton and Kingston upon Thames and is home to the largest concentration of Koreans resident in the UK. Protestant (C of E and Methodist) Churches are said to play an important social and cultural role in the Korean community with religious services almost entirely held in the Korean language. This

<sup>73</sup> [www.mertonconnected.com/sites/mertonconnected.com/files/Newsletter\\_April2011.pdf](http://www.mertonconnected.com/sites/mertonconnected.com/files/Newsletter_April2011.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> [www.asylumwelcome.org.uk/get-involved/partnership/](http://www.asylumwelcome.org.uk/get-involved/partnership/)

<sup>75</sup> [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)

<sup>76</sup> [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)

<sup>77</sup> <http://wimbledon.adventistchurch.org.uk>

<sup>78</sup> [www.ghanaadventist.org.uk/](http://www.ghanaadventist.org.uk/)

whilst encouraging Korean language abilities amongst younger generations is also suggested to have made communicating between Korean and other Christian leaders difficult.

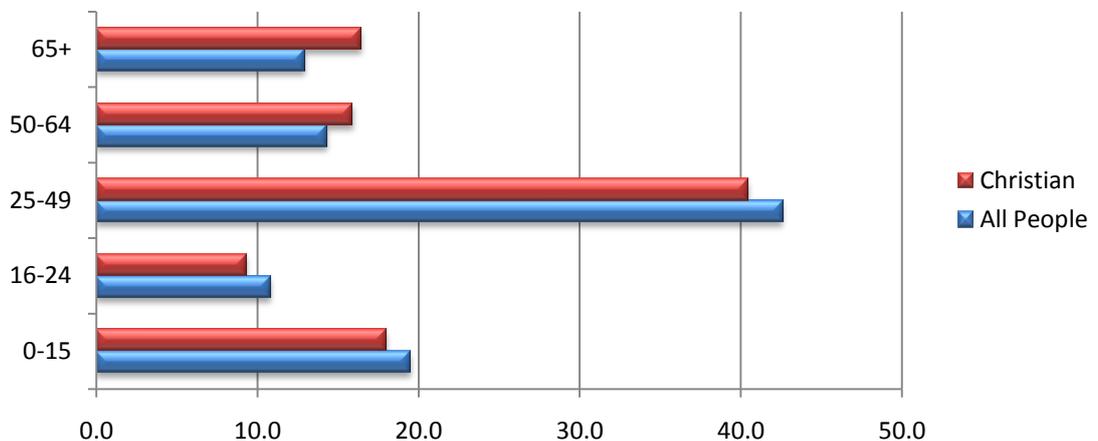
8.23. Challenges were also noted in attempts to engage White South African Evangelical Christian congregations. Which as with some other Christian congregations were said to be averse to participating in collective activities involving other Christian denominations and/or faiths. In addition, we understand that a Christian religious leader based in the borough had in the past reportedly been preaching hate against other faiths, particularly Muslims.

8.24. Whilst most Christian Churches and organisations maintain an apolitical position – the recent “Occupy Protests” have drawn support from Church leaders, particularly from the Methodists. In addition, Black Church leaders were and continue to be instrumental in various guises, advising and helping develop understanding with respect to the August 2011 riots.

### Young People

8.25. The Christian age demographic is slightly older than is seen overall nonetheless most churches in the borough provide activities for younger members of their congregations (specific details can be found on individual church websites).

**Figure 15: Merton Christian Population by Age**



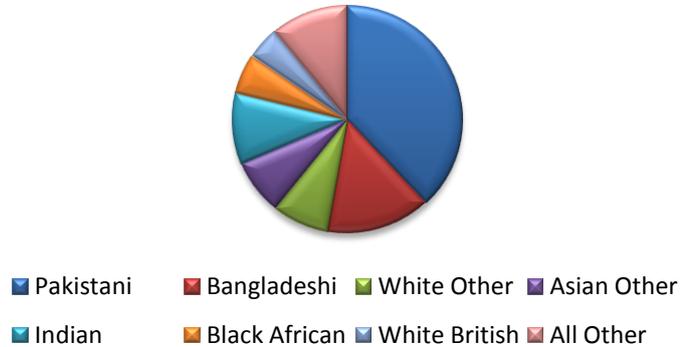
8.26. Some churches are considered to have more of an appeal amongst younger people and several churches in the borough also offer facilities for younger people irrespective of faith and cultural backgrounds. For example, South London Refugee Association & Asylum Welcome<sup>79</sup> (reference paragraph 8.33, bullet xiv) runs regular sessions for young people of diverse backgrounds (though mainly Muslims) from a local Catholic Church Hall.

<sup>79</sup> [www.asylumwelcome.org.uk/get-involved/partnership/](http://www.asylumwelcome.org.uk/get-involved/partnership/)

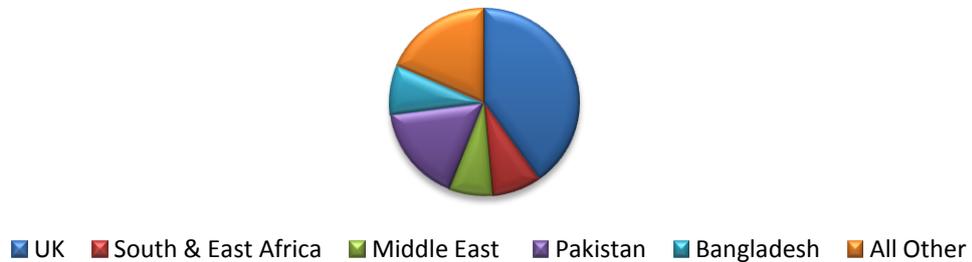
**Muslims**

8.27. Merton’s Muslims are represented across a wide range of diversity including religious, cultural and ethnic.

**Figure 16: Merton Muslim Population by Ethnicity**



**Figure 17: Merton Muslim Population by Country of Birth**



**Sunni Muslim Diversity**

8.28. Sunni Muslim organised religious affiliations – are generally identifiable with Madhahib (Schools of Thought – circa 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> C) often corresponding to global geographical regional origin, and/or Sufi Order or Salafi (8<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> C) variation. The majority of Merton’s Sunni Muslims are of South Asian (Bangladeshi and Pakistani) heritages and also include Afghani, African, Turkish, Tamil and converts from African Caribbean, White and other backgrounds.

8.29. Two, Sunni Muslim Hanafi Madhab (School of Thought) and Sufi Turuq-collective Maslaqain (dual sub-schools) of Barelwi and Deobhandi (circa 19<sup>th</sup> C) constitute the [originating] traditional religious basis for the majority of South Asian heritage Muslims. Arab and African heritage Sunni Muslims more often affiliate to their respective Madhab (School of Thought) with subtle variations relative to cultural and traditional backgrounds.

8.30. There are five Sunni Muslim masjid (mosques)/madrasahs (religious schools) and one Shia Muslim masjid (mosque) located in Merton. All of the borough’s Sunni masjid were originally established by, and continue to be predominantly administered by South Asian heritage Muslim elders (Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian Gujarati) though the congregations include a diverse range of worshippers of various ethno national and Sunni Muslim religious backgrounds.

- i. Wimbledon Mosque<sup>80</sup> (Pakistani Deobhandi management)
- ii. Darul Aman Trust/Islamic centre<sup>81</sup> (Bangladeshi Deobhandi management)
- iii. Al-Madina Mitcham Islamic Centre<sup>82</sup> (Pakistani Barelwi management)
- iv. Mitcham Makkah Masjid<sup>83</sup> (Pakistani Deobhandi management)
- v. Morden Islamic Centre<sup>84</sup> (Bangladeshi Deobhandi & Salafi management - planned relocation to nearby larger (bequeathed) premises)

8.31. Wimbledon Mosque is the Borough's largest Sunni masjid and has links to masjid across Merton and London including neighbouring areas of Tooting and Streatham.

8.32. In addition, two of the masajid listed above (i and ii) are affiliates of the Muslim Council of Britain and three (i, iv and v) are also listed on [www.andalus.org](http://www.andalus.org) website – a community portal primarily for Muslims in South London to be kept informed about prayer times, events and activities taking place in the local mosques and community. Furthermore, as a religious duty all masajid maintain formal links (often nationwide and overseas) to inform of births, marriages and bereavements etc.

8.33. Further to the masajid established in the borough, community centre halls are rented at different locations for Friday prayers (e.g. Pollards Hill) and there are also several organisations established across Merton predominantly administered by, catering for or representative of Muslims.

- vi. British Muslim Association of Merton<sup>85</sup> - representative of all the borough's Sunni and Shia masajid and also an affiliate of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)
- vii. Merton Muslim Interfaith Forum<sup>86</sup>
- viii. Bengali Association of Merton, 42 Quicks Road, SW19 1EY
- ix. Pakistan Cultural Association of Merton and Wandsworth (PCAMW), 29 Norfolk Road, SW19 2HA
- x. Merton Somali Community (MESCO), Vestry Hall, Mitcham
- xi. South London Somali Community Association, 5 Upper Green West, Mitcham, CR4 3AA
- xii. Al Ahliyah<sup>87</sup> School of Arabic
- xiii. Asian Youth Association, The Big T Amateur Boxing Club, St Marks Church of England Academy, Acacia Road, Mitcham, CR4 1SF

<sup>80</sup> 260-270 Durnsford Road, SW19 8DS. Tel , [www.wimbledonmosque.org](http://www.wimbledonmosque.org)

<sup>81</sup> 54 Merton High Street, Colliers Wood, SW19 1DH

<sup>82</sup> 201 Streatham Road, Mitcham, CR4 2AJ

<sup>83</sup> 226 London Road, CR4 3HB

<sup>84</sup> 2a Crown Lane, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5BL. Tel: 02085401185.

[www.mordenislamiccentre.co.nr](http://www.mordenislamiccentre.co.nr)

<sup>85</sup> 75 Daybrook Road, SW19 3DJ

<sup>86</sup> Contact Azim Khan 07956 826223

<sup>87</sup> [www.al-ahliyah.co.uk/](http://www.al-ahliyah.co.uk/)

- xiv. South London Refugee Association & Asylum Welcome<sup>88</sup>  
(provides support and youth services for a large proportion of Muslim youth, mainly Afghani, some Iraqi and a few Tamil (Hindu) and Pakistani Ahmadiyya)

8.34. The borough's Sunni Muslims are said to enjoy generally good relations however we did also hear of some inter-community divisions based primarily on ethno national differences between the two predominant Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage communities. Similarly, certain differences between and within Somali heritage communities are reflected in the two separate organisations established in the borough.

### **Representation and Leadership**

8.35. Overall, masajid were found to be considered the main focal point of influence for Muslims in the borough. Merton's established Sunni Muslim leaders represent religious and community roles within relatively sophisticated interconnected structures having traditionally been headed by educated professional elders. Merton's Sunni Muslim communities' representatives are active participants on the Merton Partnership and are also members of several other boards and bodies including the Interfaith Forum. These arrangements were viewed as both "*a strength but also weakness*".

8.36. The exceptional skills and unwavering commitment demonstrated by Sunni Muslim elder representatives was believed to have made communities somewhat over-reliant and have given rise to serious concerns over identifying new leadership drawn from younger generations.

8.37. Although there had been in the past there are currently no elected Sunni Muslim politicians in Merton. The borough's Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities both have long established high level political links to their respective countries of origin.

### **Merton's Ahmadiyya Muslim Association**

8.38. Ahmadiyya Muslims are a religiously distinct group, in that they are not considered to be part of the Islamic faith by the vast majority of other Muslims (Shia and Sunni). Similarly, it is important to understand that Ahmadiyya Muslims do not consider Sunni or Shia Muslims to be followers of the "*true*" Islamic faith. In addition, Ahmadiyya relations with other faiths can also be strained<sup>89</sup>.

8.39. Originally emerging in 19<sup>th</sup> century India, the Ahmadiyya faith now includes followers from many different nations said to be experiencing rapid growth particularly in parts of Africa, where various Ahmadiyya organisations are engaged in missionary and humanitarian work.

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<sup>88</sup> [www.asylumwelcome.org.uk/get-involved/partnership/](http://www.asylumwelcome.org.uk/get-involved/partnership/)

<sup>89</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmadiyya>

- 8.40. Morden is a very important centre as it is the location for the Ahmadiyya Muslim international headquarters the “Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK”<sup>90</sup> (aka Bait Ul Futuh) which is the largest centre of its kind in Western Europe and also the base for satellite TV Channel MTA. Fairly unique to Merton and specifically Morden, the Ahmadiyya community represents a significant increasingly influential and rapidly expanding population.
- 8.41. In the UK the majority of Ahmadiyya are of Pakistani heritage. In Merton the Ahmadiyya Muslim community was said to number approximately 1000 families mainly of Pakistani heritage with significant proportions of secondary migrants of Indian heritages from East Africa, and more recently from Germany and Sweden. This fairly unique composition is considered to have influenced and shaped diffused cultural developments. In general terms the borough’s Ahmadiyya community was described as a relatively well-educated, professional and affluent community.
- 8.42. Although in many places, a persecuted group, the concentration and increasing population of Ahmadiyya Muslim residents in Merton was suggested to have created a growth in the community’s confidence and assertiveness. On the one hand the borough is considered a place of sanctuary by Ahmadiyya across the world. On the other hand the rapidly increasing population is viewed as threatening by some other Muslims, local residents and faith groups.
- 8.43. There is a widely held perception amongst the borough’s Sunni Muslims that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association exerts disproportionate monetary and political influence over the local authority.
- 8.44. The council, LSP, community and various faith organisations are very much aware of the tensions, however, relationships between Ahmadiyya and Sunni/Shia Muslims are complex and varied. Although there are clear theological contentions – we did not hear of any reports involving serious incidents arising from such tensions.
- “There are philosophical differences and debates around the mosque but I never seen these get out of hand”*
- 8.45. It is generally held that Ahmadiyya relationships are most strained with other Muslims of Pakistani heritage, however it is notable that in Pakistan, some Ahmadiyya are represented in high-level positions across a variety of sectors (Government, politics, military, medicine, business and academia) nonetheless the majority continue to be the subject of persecution including the occasional victims of violent attacks, sometimes severe as demonstrated by recent killings in Pakistan<sup>91</sup> and Indonesia<sup>92</sup>. The aftermath of these events, specifically the absence of

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<sup>90</sup> Baitul Futuh Mosque, 181 London Road, SM4 5PT, <http://ahmadiyya.org.uk/>

<sup>91</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/news/10181380](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10181380)

<sup>92</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12389097](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12389097)

any calls or acts of retaliation illustrates the Ahmadiyya leadership's level of restraint and influence.

- 8.46. Apart from Ahmadiyya and Sunni anxieties over Morden Islamic Centre's plans to move to larger premises closer to the Bait Ul Futuh – overall, the majority of Merton's Sunni and Ahmadiyya Muslims consulted did not raise any serious issues about cross-community relationships. It was noted, for example that a prominent Sunni Muslim Pakistani elder, established in the borough for over four decades had in fact initially supported and helped Ahmadiyya Muslims become established as they first settled in the area.
- 8.47. Similarly the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association is not overly concerned about relationships with Sunni Muslims in the borough though noted the centre retained a constant wariness of “a *minority*” from outside the borough. Particular reference was made to masjid and centres in Forest Gate<sup>93</sup>, Stockwell Green<sup>94</sup> and Tooting<sup>95</sup>.
- 8.48. We did however hear some accounts which were described as low-level incidents involving verbal abuse and gestures of intimidation in the borough. It was alleged that some Sunni Muslims had boycotted Ahmadiyya owned businesses following calls from Sunni Muslim community leaders. Similarly some Sunni Muslims suggested having being subject to occasional subtle forms of intimidation and resented Ahmadiyya missionaries' targeted attempts to convert Sunni Muslim young people in some of the borough's schools.
- 8.49. A fairly unique development was also noted in that Sunni Muslims, especially around the Morden area, would refrain from offering Muslim religious greetings to those they did not recognise in case they happened to be of the Ahmadiyya faith.
- 8.50. We gained the impression that despite all the complexities, an amicable understanding has seemingly been established and no serious issues have arisen.

### **Leadership and Representation**

- 8.51. A further illustration of the importance of Morden as a centre for the Ahmadiyya is that their pre-eminent religious leader, the *Khalifa* (Caliph) – a direct descendent of the founder of the faith – although based at the Fazul Mosque<sup>96</sup> located in Southfields (their oldest and first centre in the UK formally opened in October 1926) also regularly delivers Friday (Jummah) prayer sermons at the Bait Ul Futuh in Morden. This and other events at the Bait Ul Futuh are transmitted worldwide via the MTA satellite television channel.

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<sup>93</sup> [www.khatmenubuwat.org/index.html](http://www.khatmenubuwat.org/index.html)

<sup>94</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-15021073](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-15021073)

<sup>95</sup> 145 Upper Tooting Road London SW17 7TJ, [www.balhammosque.org/Default.aspx](http://www.balhammosque.org/Default.aspx)

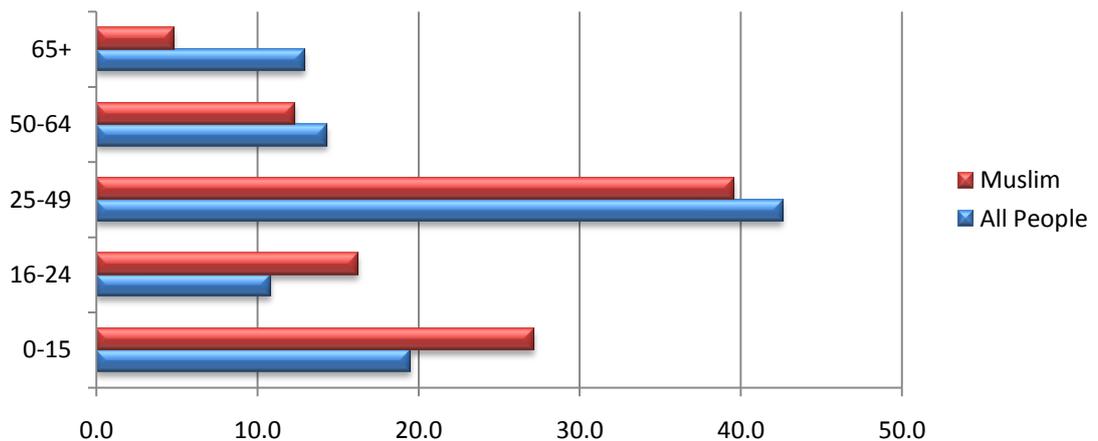
<sup>96</sup> 16 Gressenhall Road, Putney, SW18 5QL

8.52. On a local level, although as with other faith practices Ahmadiyya Muslims are apolitical – there is one local elected Ahmadiyya Muslim councillor, who is also a member of the House of Lords.

### Young People

8.53. Merton’s Muslims have a much younger age profile than the population as a whole with over a quarter of the borough’s Muslims aged under 25 years<sup>97</sup>.

**Figure 18: Merton Muslim Population by Age**



### Sunni Muslim Young People

8.54. Religious adherence for young Sunni Muslims was considered to be on the increase particularly amongst Pakistani heritage youth. We also heard of increasing numbers of Sunni Muslim converts from a variety of backgrounds including significant numbers of African Caribbean and Ahmadiyya.

8.55. There are a wide variety of Sunni Muslim groups and organisations which appeal and cater for young Sunni Muslims. The largest worldwide Sunni Muslim missionary movement is Tablighi Jamat with an estimated male-only membership of over 80 million. Tablighi Jamat originally emerged in the 1920s from the Sunni Muslim Deobhandi maslaq, and whilst the majority of members continue to be of South Asian heritage and drawn from the Deobhandi maslaq there are significant numbers from a range of Sunni Muslim ethnic and religious backgrounds. The majority of the borough’s masajid are affiliated to the Deobhandi maslaq and regularly host members from Tablighi Jamat.

8.56. The Sunni Muslim political group Hizb Ut Tahrir [Britain] (HTB)<sup>98</sup> has a long standing presence in the borough. Although, strictly non-violent, HTB aims to ultimately establish a global caliphate and the coalition

<sup>97</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>98</sup> [www.hizb.org.uk/](http://www.hizb.org.uk/)

government pledge to ban the group is currently under review. There is only a minority of support for HTB in Merton however the group retains a degree of respect across generations. In fact, in the context of future leadership, it was suggested by some that members of HTB – if they toned down their rhetoric would be ideal candidates to take control of the borough’s masajid.

8.57. In general, Sunni Muslim communities in the borough represent a relatively well established, confident, united and cohesive community.

**Ahmadiyya Muslim Young People**

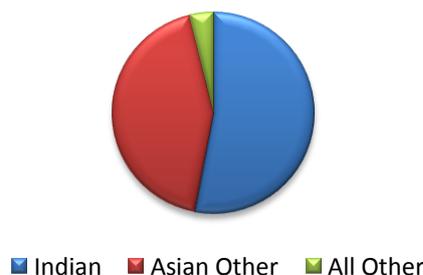
8.58. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Association has well organised structures for engaging people of all ages and genders. Likewise, most Ahmadiyya young people in the borough are well connected to the centre and regularly involved with activities and events.

8.59. However, we understand a minority of young Ahmadiyya, significantly more amongst recent EU migrants, feel disconnected from elders. It was suggested that these young people were struggling to come to terms with settling in the borough where religious and cultural traditions exerted high levels of social control and in particular were challenging elders’ contemptuous views towards Sunni Muslims.

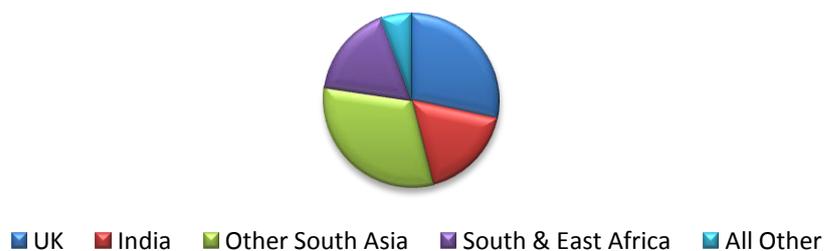
**Merton’s Hindu Communities**

8.60. According to the 2001 Census most of Merton’s Hindus were of Indian heritage, however more recently it has become largely accepted that Tamil communities constitute the majority.

**Figure 19: Merton Hindu Population by Ethnicity**



**Figure 20: Merton Hindu Population by Country of Birth**



**Merton’s Hindu Diversity**

8.61. Religious diversity within the Hindu faith is exceptionally complex with many denominations and varied beliefs. Some Hindus prefer not to claim

to belong to any denomination. However, caste identity is for many integral to the faith, beliefs and traditional social structures. Essentially based on ancestry, caste identity is linked to several aspects including economic, spiritual and social dimensions.

8.62. Merton's Hindu faith populations include diverse ethno national, regional, political and religious differences. As far as we were able to ascertain there are 2 Hindu places of worship (Temples or Mandir) located in Merton, both catering mainly for the Borough's Tamil heritage Hindus.

- Shree Ghanapathy Temple<sup>99</sup>
- Jegatheeswaram Temple<sup>100</sup>

8.63. The Shree Ghanapathy Temple is Merton's longest established Hindu Temple and considered the main centre, whereas details for the Jegatheeswaram Temple were found to be unclear and the telephone number listed was not in use. There is no "Mandir" established in the borough administered by or catering for Indian heritage Hindus, the majority of whom were said to travel outside the borough for purposes of worship.

8.64. There are two other Hindu organisations listed on the Merton Connected website and are located in residential premises.

- Audichya Gadhia Brahma Samaj Society (AGBSS)<sup>101</sup>
- Britannia (Shiva) Hindu Temple Trust<sup>102</sup>

8.65. The AGBSS is an affiliate of the Hindu Council UK and aims to promote the social, cultural and religious needs of the Audichya Gadhia community across London. The Audichya Gadhia community is a Brahmin caste Indian Gujarati heritage based group.

8.66. The Britannia (Shiva) Hindu Temple Trust is based in Highgate, North London, though the chairman lives in Raynes Park, Merton and offers support through advice on Tamil religious and cultural matters including insights into the effects of events in Sri Lanka and the impact on Diaspora communities in the UK.

8.67. Most of Merton's Hindus are of Tamil heritage and Hindu religious practices reflect a culturally diffused variation influenced by aspects of language and Buddhism. For many of the Tamils consulted, faith was viewed as a personal choice though elders were considered to be more religious. Intergenerational differences were also repeatedly raised in terms of loss of religious and cultural identities amongst younger generations.

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<sup>99</sup> 125-133 Effra Road, SW19 8PU. Tel: 0208 542 2267. Mobile: 07956857150  
[Karuneswary21@btinternet.com](mailto:Karuneswary21@btinternet.com), [www.ghanapathytemple.org.uk](http://www.ghanapathytemple.org.uk)

<sup>100</sup> 80a Gorrings Park Avenue, CR4 2DG.

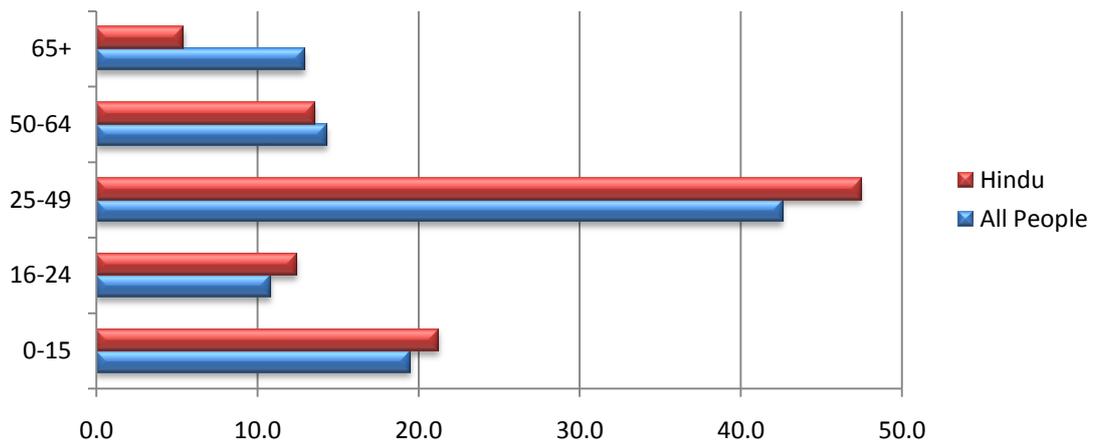
<sup>101</sup> Audichya Gadhia Brahma Samaj Society (AGBSS), 10 Copse Hill, SW20 0NL.

<sup>102</sup> Tel: 02083489835, [www.highgatehillmurugaran.org](http://www.highgatehillmurugaran.org)

**Young People**

8.68. The Hindu population of Merton has a younger than average age demographic but one that is weighted heavily towards the working ages. In contrast to views expressed by elder Hindu Tamils we found amongst young Tamils indications of strong identification with their faith albeit in a different ways from elders. For some, this renewed interest in religious identity was said to have been influenced by increasing religiosity amongst young Muslims.

**Figure 21: Merton Hindu Population by Age**

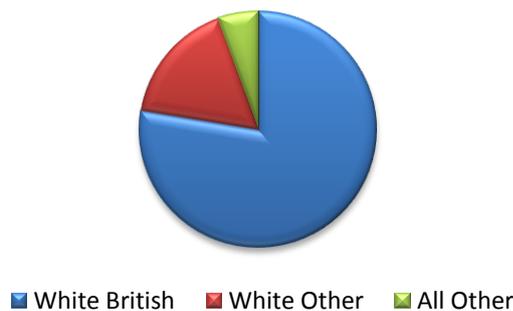


8.69. We also heard of distinct differences between young people of Tamil heritage born in the UK and those from overseas, many of which had initially settled as refugees. Sharp contrasts in terms of study and career aspirations were noted. UK born Tamil heritages were said to be higher achievers, with professional career aspirations whereas specifically amongst males recently settled retail work in petrol stations was seemingly a commonly preferred occupation. In addition there were suggestions from some that a “benefits culture” had developed particularly amongst the more recent arrivals.

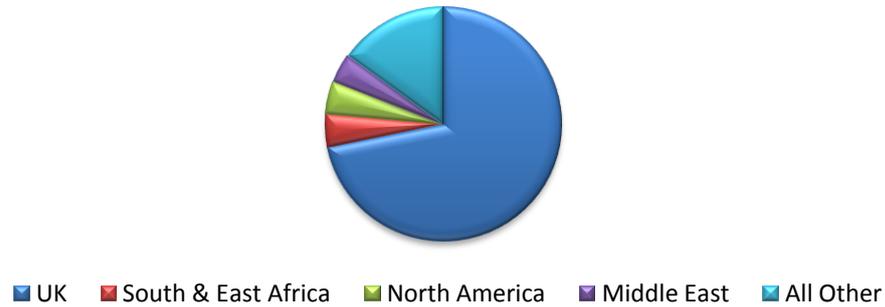
**Jewish Community**

8.70. The Jewish population of Merton is predominantly White (British and Other) though includes a significant proportion with refugee origins having settled during WWII from across Europe.

**Figure 22: Merton Jewish Population by Ethnicity**



**Figure 23: Merton Jewish Population by Country of Birth**



8.71. Merton’s Jewish communities are long, well established, and considered to be relatively affluent. The Borough’s only Synagogue represents a Jewish Reform religious tradition with membership spanning neighbouring boroughs.

- Wimbledon and District Synagogue (WDS), 1 Queensmere Drive, SW19 5QD<sup>103</sup>

8.72. Compared to other faith places of worship established in the borough, a defining feature of the WDS is that the two Rabbis are both female.

8.73. WDS has good established relationships with the majority of other faith groups and centres in the borough including the closely located Holy See (Vatican) Embassy. The WDS is also an active participant of various interfaith groups and initiatives. There had however been some issues. WDS efforts to establish closer links with borough’s Sunni Muslims had been unsuccessful. And attempts to develop relations with the Ahmadiyya had reportedly been more difficult. Misunderstanding about WDS links to events and politics in the Middle East were considered to be the reasons behind these difficulties.

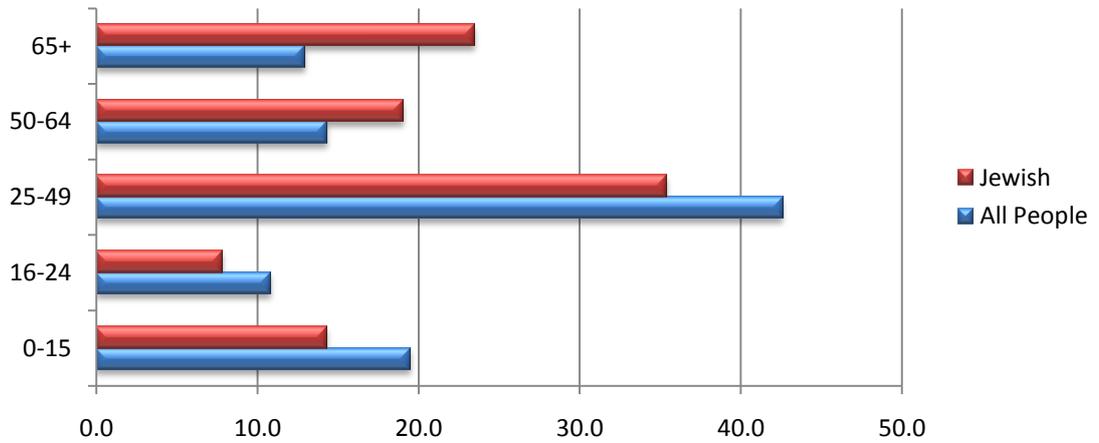
8.74. In addition, WDS maintains a constant wariness and concern over anti-Semitic incidents and growth of support for far right groups, both of which were believed to be on the increase.

**Young People**

8.75. The Jewish population of Merton has the oldest age demographic of any faith group in Merton. The Wimbledon and District Synagogue provides a wide range of activities across ages.

<sup>103</sup> [www.wimshul.org/node/254](http://www.wimshul.org/node/254)

**Figure 24: Merton Jewish Population by Age**

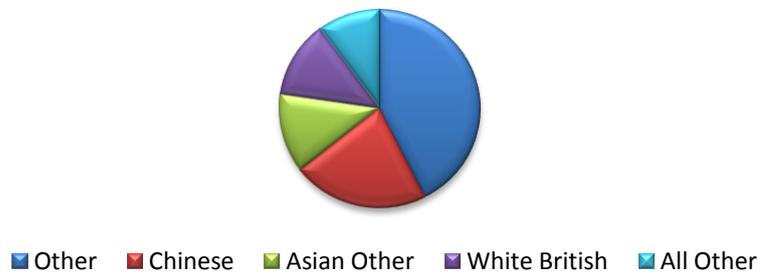


8.76. Merton’s Jewish young people were said to be relatively high academic achievers.

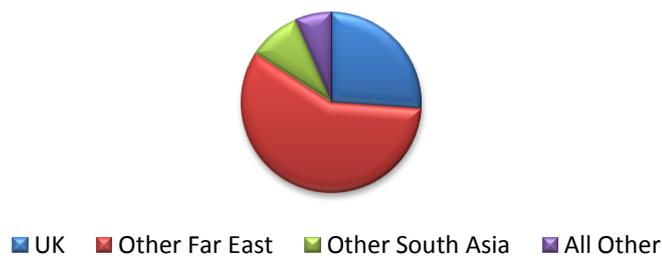
**Profile of Merton’s Buddhist Population in Merton**

8.77. The Buddhist population in Merton is fairly small, though nevertheless diverse and exceptionally unique.

**Figure 25: Merton Buddhist Population by Ethnicity**



**Figure 26: Merton Buddhist Population by Country of Birth**



- 8.78. Buddhism in Merton is represented by two fairly distinct centres.
- Wat Buddhapadipa (Temple)<sup>104</sup>, 14 Calonne Road, Wimbledon, SW19 5HJ
  - Dorjechang Buddhist Centre<sup>105</sup>, 62 Graham Road, SW19 3SS

8.79. The Wat Buddhapadipa (Temple) is the oldest Buddhist Temple in the UK established by the Royal Thai Government and essentially caters for Thai Buddhists from across London. Language barriers were considered a major issue in developing wider community relations, nonetheless the Wat Buddhapadipa is involved with interfaith events and also has good relations with several faith centres.

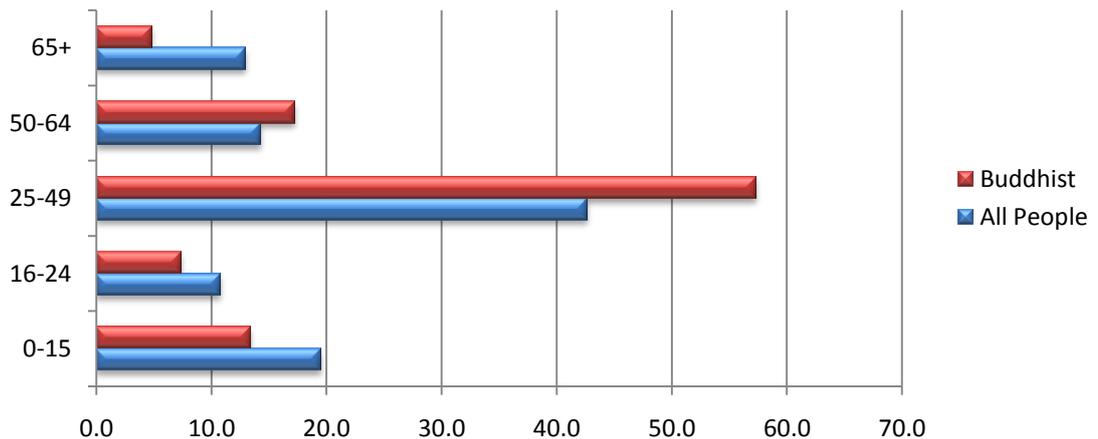
8.80. Apart from odd complaints from residents about parking issues, representative from the Wat Buddhapadipa (Temple) noted having good relations with other communities. The most pressing concerns for Wat Buddhapadipa was recent increases in theft from the Temple. Police had been very good and responsive and advised on the installation of security cameras.

8.81. The Dorjechang Buddhist Centre is the main Kadampa Buddhist Centre in South London. Kadampa<sup>106</sup> Buddhism attracts a relatively more diverse range of followers including a large proportion of white British.

### Young People

8.82. Merton's Buddhist population has a younger age profile than average and of all the faith groups has proportionately more aged 25-49. The Buddhist population also has the second largest proportion aged 50-59.

**Figure 27: Merton Buddhist Population by Age**



<sup>104</sup> [www.buddhapadipa.org/temple/](http://www.buddhapadipa.org/temple/)

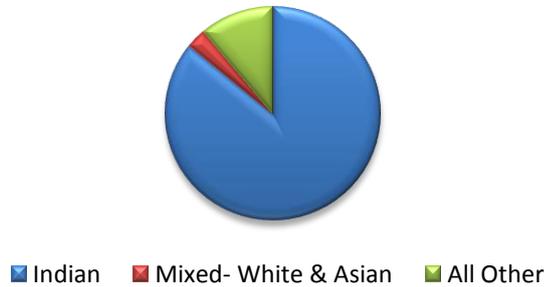
<sup>105</sup> [www.meditateinsouthlondon.org.uk/about-us/](http://www.meditateinsouthlondon.org.uk/about-us/)

<sup>106</sup> <http://kadampa.org/en/buddhism/kadampa-buddhism/>

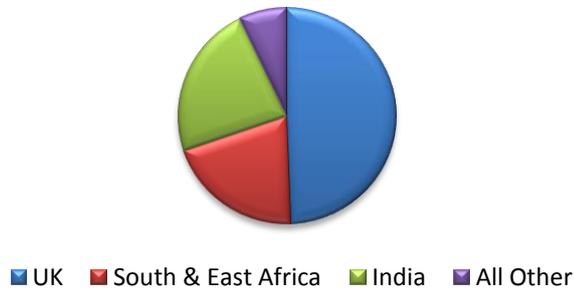
**Sikhs**

8.83. The Sikh population of Merton is mainly of Indian Punjabi heritage and relatively small.

**Figure 28: Merton Sikh Population by Ethnicity**

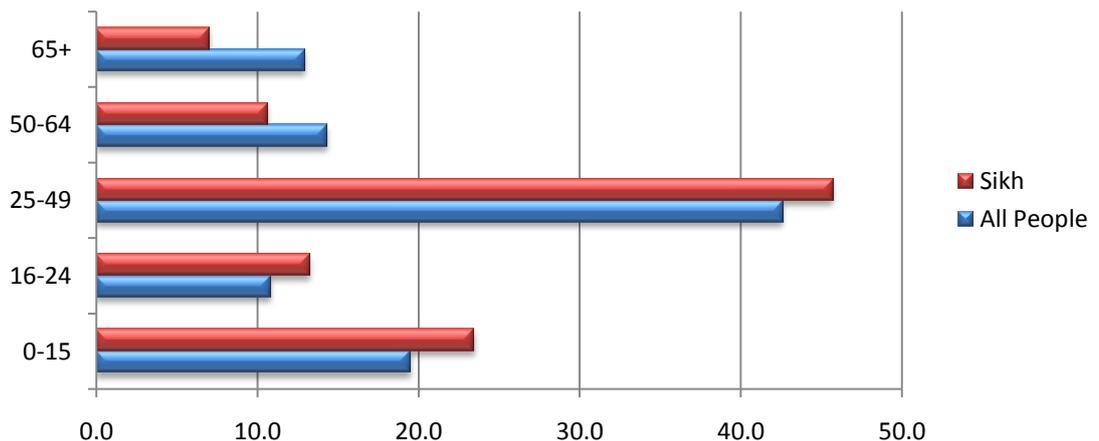


**Figure 29: Merton Sikh Population by Country of Birth**



8.84. The Sikh population of Merton has a very young age demographic with nearly a quarter aged between 0-15 and 45% aged 0-24.

**Figure 30: Merton Sikh Population by Age**



8.85. Although there are no Gurdwaras established in the borough, the Network of Sikh Organisations UK (NSO)<sup>107</sup> – an umbrella organisation representing 90 Gurdwaras – is located in Wimbledon. The nearest

<sup>107</sup> Suite 405, Highland House, 165 The Broadway, SW19 1NE

Gurdwara is the South London Gurdwara, 142 Merton Road, Wandsworth, SW18 5SP.

### **Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) communities**

- 8.86. Merton has a small but significant Gypsy Roma and Traveller (GRT) population, many of whom are long settled and housed on a site managed by Merton Priory Homes. The borough's GRT communities are predominantly English with a small Irish heritage population and more recently settled Eastern European Roma. More precise details of numbers and make-up of the population are likely to become available through the 2011 Census which for the first time includes the category 'Gypsy and Traveller' however is restricted as does not differentiate between Roma and other diversities.
- 8.87. Irish Gypsy Traveller leadership traditions are said to centre on family male-orientated hierarchies organised around key families and exert strong levels of social-control along parochial traditions. Romany Gypsy social organisation is said to resemble Indian caste systems, with leadership hierarchy often defined by ancestral inherited profession.
- 8.88. However, community initiatives are, as is the case in Merton, more often led by female members of the community. Male GRT are said to be reluctant to engage with authorities.

### **GRT Faith**

- 8.89. Irish Gypsy and Traveller communities are considered to be deeply religiously catholic. Roma Gypsy communities, from various countries in mainland Europe, are identified as a distinct group – as having different languages, religious beliefs and certain different cultural traditions.
- 8.90. Merton's relatively longer established English and Irish Traveller groups were said to not share commonalities with the Roma and have little association with them on a regular basis. This poses some difficulties in deciding priorities where community engagement has to take place separately.
- 8.91. Merton's GRT communities were said to face striking inequalities, even when compared with people from other ethnic minorities or from socio-economically deprived white groups. Stereotyping and cultural insensitivity, arising from both ignorance and racist attitudes was also said to feature as prominent in the difficulties of encouraging wider engagement. Some young people were said to have resorted to hiding their ethnic identity so as to avoid bullying in schools.
- 8.92. Merton is in the process of developing a GRT strategy to identify and address the needs of GRT communities, however meanwhile some projects and services have ceased due to funding cuts.

### **Improving Engagement**

- 8.93. Effective engagement with Merton's diverse communities requires a variety of approaches and strategies – and although important – not only in terms of appreciating diverse community and religious affiliations, sensitivities and perspectives but also in identifying the most appropriate channels for engagement specific to the community and target group.
- 8.94. Whilst, in general, umbrella type bodies are an attractive strategy for authorities and indeed can provide effective channels for engagement – however when considering Merton's multiple communities' diversities, may not provide access to all sections of the communities. It will therefore be necessary to approach certain groupings individually.
- 8.95. Furthermore, it will be necessary to go beyond existing practices of engaging with minority communities exclusively through appointed community leaders and seek methods of engaging grassroots minority resident views.
- 8.96. In addition people could be approached in places that they gather. The following are suggested as potential sources:
- markets
  - barbers, hairdressers, beauty salons
  - places of worship
  - informal prayer groups
  - community centres
  - specialist food shops
  - sewing groups
  - English language classes
  - overseas call centres
- 8.97. However, those who do not use community centres or engage in religious or cultural activities need different approaches, including at schools, colleges, and places where young people gather. Isolated and vulnerable members of the community require sensitive and tailored approaches. Some community members will be particularly reluctant to participate due to limited time and financial loss. These people need appropriate incentives and support so that they can participate. Community language speakers need to be involved. Finally, engagement needs to be carried out in different locations across the borough to reflect the different types of people

## 9. Conclusions

- 9.1. Merton is a very diverse London Borough with a rich mix of ethnicity, culture, faith and languages. In 2001 25% of the population were from BAME backgrounds as compared with a figure of 9% nationally and a further 10.9% described themselves as White but not British. Since then the non White British population has continued to grow reaching an estimated 37.5% in 2009.
- 9.2. The BAME population is also diverse with significant populations of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Black Caribbean, Black African, Korean, Chinese, Gypsy Roma Traveller and mixed heritage. It is also notable that 110 languages are spoken in Merton schools.
- 9.3. Merton is also one of the most religiously diverse boroughs in London, and the base for several faith centres of both architectural significance and hierarchical importance, including the; the Holy See (Vatican) Embassy; the Royal Thai Government supported Wat Buddhapadipa [Temple], and the international Ahmadiyya Muslim Association headquarters.
- 9.4. Merton Council and the LSP have a long track record of working to promote inclusion, fairness and cohesion in the borough. At 77.1% the percentage of people 'who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together' is slightly above both the London and national figures of 76.3% and 76.4% respectively.
- 9.5. There is widespread support across all elected positions and political parties for cohesion and integration – with a suggested emphasis on bridging economic disparities across the borough. However, there were suggestions that elected members needed to make more efforts to engage at grassroots levels. Of the councillors consulted all commended the expertise, skills and commitment of council senior management and staff towards promoting cohesion in the borough. Similarly Council senior managers and officers share concerns on matters of cohesion and integration recognising the changing diversity of the borough. However an area for improvement relates to the lack of BAME representation in senior management council positions.
- 9.6. Our very strong impression was that people recognised the diversity of the borough and were broadly comfortable with it. Leaders showed sensitivity around issues of cultural difference.
- 9.7. While there is a concentration of BAME population in some wards – Graveney is 52.8% non White whereas Raynes Park is 14.6% for example, spatial segregation in Merton by ethnicity is fairly low and a feature principally of the Black or Black British population. Schools are also generally mixed with none being over 80% White or 70% or more

BAME with one group 50% or more, though 28.8% of primary schools do have over 70% BAME pupils with no one BAME group dominant and this percentage is growing.

9.8. Despite this generally positive picture Merton is very aware that it faces significant challenges and risks as its community continues to change and becomes increasingly diverse. The risk is perhaps to underestimate these challenges. A charge of complacency would in our view be too strong, although some we spoke to expressed that view, but there is a real risk of becoming too comfortable with the current position and losing focus on cohesion. A number of references were made to good community relations perhaps being only skin deep. The reaction to the knife attacks involving Somali boys on the Phipps Bridge estate was cited as a possible demonstration of this. And the August 2011 disturbances have been a sharp reminder to all that the glue which binds society together is not as strong as we may have felt.

9.9. We believe that good community relations and confidence in the borough have not arisen by chance. They reflect the hard work and continuing attention given to recognising and celebrating difference and behaving openly, sensitively and fairly with all communities. Failure to continue to address these issues, particularly as diversity continues to increase, could be a serious mistake

9.10. The challenges include;

- The scale of the continuing change in the make-up of the borough as the relatively large and much more diverse school population moves through to adulthood. (55.8% of secondary and 60.1 % of primary pupils are BAME) Perhaps not surprisingly the awareness of this was greatest in those areas which dealt with children and young people and less clear elsewhere
- The arrival of new communities – most recently Eastern European, Black African, Asylum Seekers and Refugees (Afghani, Tamil and Ahmadiyya) – about whom less is known than longer established communities
- The growth of the Ahmadiyya community drawn to live close to their international Headquarters and the potential for increased tensions with the borough's Sunni Muslims
- Tensions between and within other communities including 'gangs' of Tamil and African Caribbean boys
- The rate of turnover or 'churn' in the population – despite high levels of in migration net migration is negative

- Intergenerational challenges facing people of all communities, though “seemingly” more pressing for Tamil communities
- The potential growth of extremism, particularly right wing activities
- The impact of wide differences in affluence and deprivation across the borough
- Cuts in services

9.11. The Council and the LSP have supported and endorsed the recent BAME strategy 2010-2013 developed by a voluntary sector consortium. The strategy sets out a very comprehensive range of actions. Realistically it has been recognised that some prioritisation and focus is needed around these and a conference was held in March to do this.

9.12. It is generally accepted that the previous strategy, though a thorough piece of work ‘sat on a shelf’ and was not implemented. This time around a reporting mechanism has been agreed by the LSP and its sub groups. However, a key test will be how far this strategy is now followed through into action, particularly at a time of financial retrenchment. This will be a challenge not only for the Council and LSP but also for the voluntary sector, which will have to rely less on Council funding and support.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Cohesion

- 10.1. We have emphasised that Merton is a very diverse borough in which we found people to be broadly comfortable with diversity. Indeed we heard some very positive views about diversity being expressed by young people. But, as we have stated above, we believe that this positive picture is a result, in part, of the attention given to cohesion and equalities. Without continued attention to these issues as the community continues to change and become increasingly diverse, there is a real risk of cohesion deteriorating.

**Our principal recommendation is therefore that the Council and its partners must avoid the dangers of complacency and continue to focus efforts on promoting inclusion, fairness and cohesion and diminishing potential conflict.**

### The BAME Strategy

- 10.2. The Council and the LSP have supported and endorsed the recent BAME strategy 2010-2013 developed by Merton Unity Network and have worked with the Network to prioritise those actions seen as key to its success. It is generally accepted that the previous strategy 'sat on a shelf' and was not implemented. This time around a reporting mechanism has been agreed by the LSP and its sub groups.

**The LSP now needs to deliver on the agreed priority actions in the BAME Strategy.** This will be a challenge not only for the Council and LSP but also for the voluntary sector, which will have to rely less on Council support.

### Engagement

- 10.3. The Council and its partners have worked hard to engage sensitively with a range of communities. However, given the range, diversity and changing nature of the different communities inevitably some groups are harder to identify, understand and engage than others. A key objective of this report has been to provide a detailed narrative, description and profile of Merton's changing population in order that key organisations in the local public, voluntary and faith sectors may be better informed of the communities they serve.

**The faith and community profiles in this report should be used to help improve engagement with the Borough's new and minority communities. Efforts should also continue to take consultation and engagement with minority groups beyond umbrella groups and traditional community leaders by encouraging grassroots residents – in particular women and young people – to participate in mainstream mechanisms of consultation.** The Prevent funded project to engage young Muslim girls and women has been a noticeable success in this respect. We have also highlighted additional approaches to engage people in places they naturally gather such as markets,

beauty salons and schools. In addition we provide a number of case study examples in Appendix II.

Given the complexity, and the changing nature of Merton's different communities and the varied types of cultural sensitivities, staff need to be both alive to this fact, and as far as possible, trained in the range of cultural sensitivities.

**The council and the LSP need to consider how best to develop and maintain staff awareness of the many different cultures and cultural sensitivities, of Merton's population.**

While recognising the need generally to be fair and open in dealing with all communities, there are some particular sensitivities, and potential conflicts, between some of Merton's communities.

**Staff and Councillors need to be aware of the potential sensitivities between different communities and ensure that they are not only neutral but are seen to be even handed in dealing with them.**

#### **The schools duty to promote cohesion**

- 10.4. Schools are much more diverse than the borough as a whole and have a vital role to play in developing cohesion. We saw some very positive attitudes among schoolchildren. However the removal of the requirement to inspect a school's 'duty to promote cohesion' could result in less attention being given to this area.

**Schools need to be encouraged and supported to continue their work on promoting cohesion notwithstanding the change in inspection emphasis.**

#### **Areas of potential conflict**

- 10.5. Notwithstanding the generally positive sense of cohesion in the borough we have identified a number of areas of actual or potential conflict: the growth of Tamil and African Caribbean gangs; the growing Ahmadiyya community and their relationship with Sunni Muslims; the response to the knife attacks involving Somali youths on the St Phipps estate; the treatment of Roma children, particularly following the showing of 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding'; and the ever present risk of activity by the Far Right. The recent disturbances, though not apparently having any racial basis, have demonstrated that some of the bonds binding society together may be more fragile than was thought.

Tension monitoring has a crucial role to play in identifying grievances, tensions and 'hot spots' before they erupt into conflict. The withdrawal of GLA funding from the CDRP poses some threat to existing monitoring arrangements.

**The Council and its partners must review and revamp their tension monitoring arrangements in light of the loss of GLA funding and**

**the all London training being undertaken by the Metropolitan Police to prepare for the Olympic Games.**

**Employment and Economic development**

- 10.6. Although in general Merton's residents are better qualified than Londoners as a whole, as elsewhere, the overall picture on skills and unemployment conceals some large differences geographically and across different ethnic groups. Some BAME groups are over represented in claimants for Job Seekers Allowance, have lower levels of qualifications than the rest of the population and are under-represented in senior positions. The Economic Development Strategy which contains an extensive analysis of the local economy, a clear vision and objectives and a lengthy action plan focused on a range of key interventions. The economic vision is both spatial and thematic in nature, addressing the issue of development in the borough's main centres as well as determining which sectors to actively facilitate for further growth. However, while also recognising that skill levels are an important issue, and a principal determinant of the east/west divide, action to address skill levels is not a strong focus of the Economic Development Strategy. Nor does there appear to be much understanding of the structure and trading relations of ethnic minority businesses.

**Business support agencies should develop a wider understanding of the structure and trading relations of minority businesses and seek ways of broadening contacts and engagement across the whole business community.**

The initiative from the Korean Chamber of Commerce was a valuable example of this.

**Employers should be encouraged to promote more diverse workforces and manage diversity within their companies**

There are a growing number of examples of this.

**The council should also consider whether there are ways to better inform new arrivals to the borough about the dangers of casual work to avoid the risk of becoming destitute**

**ESOL**

- 10.7. The Borough continues to receive migrants from all parts of the world. Merton will need to respond to the continuing demand for English as a second language in schools, colleges and in the wider community.

**Ways of increasing the availability of ESOL classes could also be explored with the Business Sector, PCT, Police and Fire Service who all have an interest in welcoming and integrating new migrants.**

**The Voluntary and Community Sector**

- 10.8. Merton has a well developed voluntary and community sector but they are having to adjust to both reduced resources and a move from grant funding to commissioning. There are already strong organisations in the Borough providing infrastructure support to the Voluntary Sector

**The Council and LSP should consider ways to assist small and medium sized organisations to meet the challenges of the future in terms of reduced funding and contracting including promoting volunteering within the Public and Private Sector with the aim of providing skills, expertise, advice and support to small and medium sized Voluntary and Community Organisations.**

#### **Faith Communities**

- 10.9. Merton Faith communities are already doing a great deal in providing services to local communities and promoting community cohesion. A number of faiths have major resources, educational and other facilities in the Borough and efforts should be made to further engage and involve them in local forums and activities.

**Faith groups should be further encouraged to develop activities and events that bring different faith groups together to tackle common issues of concern, build bridges, trust and confidence between each other.**

- 10.10. Special focus should be given to involving younger people, utilising existing Faith Communities activities. And ensuring that the Borough's minority faiths and sub-groups are involved as well as majority faith organisations.

#### **Preventing Violent Extremism**

- 10.11. Following the Coalition Government's review of the Prevent Strategy Merton council will no longer be in receipt of Prevent funding. Nonetheless, Prevent activities in Merton were delivered (2009-2011) within a community cohesion context and new channels of engagement and activities have been developed.

**These provide scope and should be maintained and harnessed to include those from other faiths, no faith and other diverse backgrounds. For example the Prevent funded project to engage Asian Muslim women should be supported and encouraged to extend activities to women from other faith and community backgrounds.**

Although we did not hear of any major concerns about extremist groups in the borough, no Local Authority can afford to be complacent about such issues.

**Mediation work to counter the activities of the far right extremists must be continued with added emphasis on tackling myths and misinformation from radical and extremist sources.**

## 11. ACTION PLAN

Theme	Action	By whom
<b>Cohesion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to focus efforts on promoting inclusion, fairness and cohesion and diminishing potential conflict</li> <li>• Ensure that public statements are made underlining this position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council and LSP</li> <li>• Council and LSP</li> </ul>
<b>BAME Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that there is systematic monitoring of the agreed actions at the LSP or its sub groups</li> <li>• Ensure that any changes to the list of agreed actions are transparent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council, LSP</li> <li>• Merton Community Network</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use information on faith and community to develop improved approaches to engagement with the Borough's new and minority communities</li> <li>• Identify ways to consult and engage beyond umbrella groups and traditional community leaders by encouraging grassroots residents – in particular women and young people – to participate in mainstream mechanisms of consultation.</li> <li>• to devise a programme for developing and maintaining staff and Member awareness of the many different cultures and cultural sensitivities, of Merton's population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council and LSP</li> <li>• Council and LSP</li> <li>• Council</li> </ul>
<b>The schools duty to promote cohesion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear message should be given to all schools about the importance of continuing to promote cohesion</li> <li>• Support and encouragement should be offered to schools on how to most effectively promote cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Director of Children's Services</li> </ul>
<b>Dealing with conflict and Tension Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tension monitoring arrangements should be reviewed and revamped taking account of the joint iCoCo and Met Police toolkit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council and Police to lead</li> <li>• Include Wide range of partners (schools and voluntary orgs)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Employment and Economic development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business support agencies should develop a wider understanding of the structure and trading relations of minority businesses and seek ways of broadening contacts and engagement across the whole business community</li> <li>• A programme of engagement and dialogue with major businesses should be developed to encourage them to promote more diverse workforces and manage diversity within their companies</li> <li>• The council should also consider the production of a ‘welcome pack’ for new arrivals which as well as offering advice about services could give information about the dangers of casual work to avoid the risk of becoming destitute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merton Chamber of Commerce and Council</li> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Council</li> </ul>
<p><b>ESOL</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ways of increasing the availability of ESOL classes should be explored between the Council the Business Sector, PCT, Police and Fire Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council, Business Sector, PCT, Police and Fire Service</li> </ul>
<p><b>VCS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council and LSP should consider ways to assist small and medium sized organisations to meet the challenges of the future in terms of reduced funding and contracting including promoting volunteering within the Public and Private Sector with the aim of providing skills, expertise, advice and support to small and medium sized Voluntary and Community Organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council and LSP</li> <li>• VCS</li> </ul>
<p><b>Faith Communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith groups should be supported and encouraged to further develop activities and events that bring different faith groups together to tackle common issues of concern, build bridges, trust and confidence between each other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council</li> <li>• Faith Groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preventing Violent Extremism</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and harness new channels of engagement developed through Prevent funded activities</li> <li>• Continue mediation work to tackle activities of far right extremists with emphasis on tackling myths and misinformation from radical and extremist sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSP</li> <li>• Merton and Sutton LSPs</li> </ul>

## Appendix I: Interviewees and Focus Group

Name	Organisation
1. Abayeh Savage	Ethnic Minority Centre
2. James McGinley	Merton Council
3. Steven Little	Ricards Lodge
4. A Williamson	Rutlish School
5. Kate Lockett	Morden
6. Adele Gregory	Morden
7. David Pinder	Fanon Centre
8. Stephanie McGeavy	South London Refugee Association
9. Nikki Zisman	Faith in Action
10. Andy Fairburn	Faith in Action
11. Patricia Anderson	BAME Forum
12. Grace Salmon	Positive Network
13. Kamila Dyczko	
14. Olivia Douse	St Marks Academy
15. Ged Curran	Merton Council
16. Yvette Stanley	Merton Council
17. Eshaan Akbar	Merton Council
18. Cllr Alambritis	Merton Council
19. Cllr Macauley	Merton Council
20. Kate Martyn	Merton Council
21. Evereth Willis	Merton Council
22. Mark Clark	Merton Council
23. Kris Witherington	Merton Council
24. Mark Lawrence	Police
25. Wasia Shahain	PCT
26. Pauline Ford	Cicle Anglia
27. Andrew Beardall	South Merton College
28. Saleem Shiekh	Wimbledon Mosque and BMA
29. Azim Shiekh	Muslim Interfaith Forum
30. Mustafa Field	MINAB
31. Nazim Bajwa	Ahmadiyya
32. Abid Hussain	Pakistani Lawyers Association
33. Cllr Lohendran	Merton
34. Revd Andrew Wakefield	Wimbledon Interfaith
35. Revd Hannah Neale	AECHO
36. Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild	Wimbledon Synagogue
37. Phramaha Piyobhaso	Buddapedia Temple
38. Dr Arumgarasah	Chairman SLTWG
39. Mr Karim	Bangladeshi Association
40. Omar	Shop Worker
41. Security Guard (Anonymous)	Centre Court Shopping Centre
42. Raja	Business Owner Pollards Hill
43. Umar	Shop Manager, Pollards Hill

<b>Focus Groups</b>	
1.	School Group
2.	Gypsy Traveller Group
3.	Student Group
4.	Help Yourself to Health
5.	Ethnic Minority Centre
6.	Youth Club – Asylum and Refugee
7.	Intergenerational Focus Group
8.	Polish Parents Focus Group
9.	Student Group
10.	Tamil Welfare Group
11.	Sunni Muslim Group
12.	Informal – College Student Group
13.	Christian Group – Street Pastors
14.	Informal Group – 15-16 year old mixed group
15.	Tamil Group – Males 16-19 years
16.	Tamil Group – Males 25-46 years
17.	Tamil Group – Female Business Professionals
18.	Tamil Group – Male Elders
19.	Tamil Group – Female Elders
20.	South African – Informal mixed Group
21.	Mixed Group – Merton College
22.	Bangladeshi – Informal Group
23.	Mixed Group – Pollards Hill
24.	Mixed Group – Males Mitcham residents
25.	Shop Workers – Informal Group
<b>Events Attended &amp; External Consultations</b>	
1.	BAME Network Forum
2.	SLTWG Silver Jubilee Celebration Event

## **Appendix II: Good Practice Case Studies**

### **The U-Nite Project by Rochdale Metropolitan Council**

U-Nite is a multi-agency workshop-and disco-based event led by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council which aims to build understanding between young people (aged 12-19) from different socio-economic groups, ethnic backgrounds and areas.

It puts young people in touch with officers from the borough's voluntary and statutory agencies in a non-confrontational fun environment and voices their concerns by passing on qualitative information to decision makers through the CDRP and other forums.

Young people are recruited to the event by the council's youth service from youth clubs, schools, the youth council and forums, youth offending team and youth inclusion projects.

The key aim of the project is to build a mutual understanding between young people aged 12-19 from different socio-economic groups, ethnic backgrounds and areas of the Borough and to promote contact and discussion between groups that would usually not mix.

U-Nite has been successful in breaking down barriers and building relationships between a range of young people of various backgrounds, as well as with the police. It has also provided informal access for young people to a range of agencies. Furthermore, the event confronted serious factors which impede integration and cohesion such as anti-social behaviour, safety, discrimination and drugs and alcohol, increasing young people's awareness of these issues through facilitation provided by a range of relevant agencies.

The evaluation carried out by Greater Manchester Police Authority following the event found that U-Nite was viewed as an overwhelming success by young people and the participating agencies alike; the participants themselves felt that the event did break down barriers and increase their awareness. Part of this evaluation required participants to provide a vision statement for the young people of the borough and the Army donated a Mountain Bike for the best vision, which was:

"By working together, the young people of Rochdale can bring a rainbow effect to this town by showing off the exquisite diversity of the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic home of ours".

### **The All Belonging Charter by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council**

As part of the "We all belong to Blackburn and Darwen" campaign the council introduced an "All Belonging" charter which uses ordinary - and some extraordinary - citizens to get its message across. A poster and outdoor media campaign under the heading "many lives...many faces...all belonging to Blackburn with Darwen, features local people saying why they are proud to belong to the borough and outlines some of their achievements. The

belonging posters also feature local celebrities and representatives of LSP partners, including Blackburn Rovers players.

The charter was established as a way of fostering both pride and good relations within the area following recent turbulence and inward migration. Citizens have been encouraged to acknowledge that they have a stake in the borough and its future by signing up to a "Charter of Belonging."

The aim is to build bridges of understanding, friendship, neighbourliness and mutual respect between all those who Belong to Blackburn with Darwen. The charter states that citizens and workers will:

- commit all our energies in working towards a peaceful, prosperous and healthy Borough for ourselves, our children, the wider community and future generations because we all have an equal stake in its future
- cherish and uphold our long tradition of welcoming visitors and newcomers to our Borough
- stand together united when those who seek to divide neighbour against neighbour try to damage our economy and destroy our peace
- vigorously oppose hatred, jealousy and racism and the blaming or vilifying of any citizen, visitor, group or community within our Borough
- acknowledge that Belonging to Blackburn with Darwen involves rights and responsibilities, give as well as take

Both citizens and workers will:

- reaffirm what we have in common and what unites us: to wish to live in peace and security together; to have a decent standard of living and a fair share of resources; to have equal chances in life and enjoy good health
- celebrate all that is good about Blackburn with Darwen: its proud history; the richness of its culture and faith traditions; its distinctive neighbourhoods; the energy, character and diversity of its people
- recognise the equal rights of all those who Belong to Blackburn with Darwen, and will show concern and loyalty for all those who visit, live or work here
- reject racism, religious prejudice, intolerance, blame-casting and violence

The Charter has been a measured success in that public perception data shows an increased sense of belonging of residents to the area. There has also been an increase in the numbers of under represented groups in the borough's LSP workforce.

### **Gypsy & Traveller Heritage Project by St Helens Council and Merseyside Police**

The Passing Places project was developed by St Helens Council to explore local and national Gypsy and Traveller heritage through culture, history and art. The project combined objects from a national touring exhibition – 'Passing Places' at Hertford Museum – with workshops and Romany Gypsy storytelling. The aim of the project was to document testimony and stories of local Travellers. This was done through workshops and the production of a booklet. Then an exhibition, devoted to Traveller heritage with artefacts on the lifestyle and crafts of Traveller people on display, was produced.

The aim was to promote community cohesion through an understanding and appreciation of Traveller heritage. This aimed to challenge prejudice, myths and stereotypes of Gypsies and Travellers. These can have a damaging effect on the lives and experiences of the local Travellers.

The exhibition offered the opportunity for the settled community to meet with local Traveller people and have a creative experience together. The storytelling brought Traveller heritage to life and increased the settled communities understanding of Traveller culture.

The event also increased the involvement of local Travellers and Gypsies with the local community and public authorities. This supported social inclusion and community cohesion through the medium of heritage.

- Well over 1,000 people visited the 'Passing Places' exhibition.
- Twenty-eight Gypsy and Traveller craft workshop sessions were delivered to local young people, with approximately 900 children attending the event.
- Local radio station WISH FM reported on the event and interviewed the storyteller.
- 'Travelling Words', a compilation of stories, rhymes, pictures and customs collected from local Gypsy and Traveller families, was published and distributed.

Images from the exhibition and photos and pictures donated by local Traveller families were included in a multi-faith calendar for 2007. This also included information on the 'Passing Places' exhibition and promoted Traveller cultural events like Appleby Fair. These were distributed to local Traveller families, schools and partner organisation.

The success of this project has raised awareness of the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community. It has also established effective partnership working between the council and the police.

### **Intergenerational Project by Bristol City Council**

The City Council's cohesion strategy recognises that a lack of interaction and understanding between young and older people is a risk to cohesion. Projects bringing together different age groups to explore intergenerational issues and exchange experiences are seen as an important aspect of cohesion building work. A video and booklet produced by an African-Caribbean older people's group has been used extensively in schools to allow young people to learn about the history of their elders and relate to their experiences. The video and booklet bring to life the experiences of individuals - from leaving their country of origin to experiences of living and working in Bristol.

This work was supported by other initiatives to bring the generations together. For example, carol services delivered by young people to older residents, young people transforming the garden area in an elderly people's home and joint bingo sessions. This project has already had spin-offs with additional projects developed to bring young and old people together.

### **Intergenerational Project by Bradford Metropolitan Council**

This work was an intergenerational project bringing together Primary School children and elderly residents in four localities, to form relationships and to develop priorities for local Neighbourhood Action Plans. The Project involved a series of workshops comparing experiences of living in each area now and 60 years ago. From this shared understanding, children and older residents identify shared priorities for improving the environment and tackling community safety issues.

The information collected was then shared with the wider community in the form of a 'dramatised' presentation by children to a Neighbourhood Forum, providing an opportunity for feedback from the wider community, Police and Local Authority representatives.

### **Aik Saath Project by voluntary agencies in Slough**

The words 'Aik Saath' mean 'Together As One' in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. They also embody the ethos of our charity. We believe in working together to challenge discrimination, prevent violence and promote equality.

Our mission is to work with people from all communities, faiths and backgrounds to promote and encourage peace, human rights and community cohesion through peer-led education.

Aik Saath was established in response to gang violence between young people from Asian backgrounds in Slough. The founders of our organisation believed that young people needed to lead the efforts to resolve this conflict.

Our training programmes are primarily designed and delivered with the peer training team. This is a group of highly skilled volunteers aged between twelve and twenty five. They lead our trainings in a multitude of settings, including primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, young people's centres and similar institutions.

The projects aim to bring together young people from different schools and colleges across Slough and its surrounding areas to interact meaningfully and to understand each other's cultures, religions and ethnicities.

Every project involves an element of training so that the young participants are equipped to understand each other's differences. These training sessions are then followed by other activities that build bridges across communities including, artistic activities, conferences residential weekends, teambuilding activity days and presentation evenings, involving friends and families. Often the residential component of our work brings together young people from different ethnic or religious backgrounds that would not normally meet. The young people often undertake further community cohesion and conflict resolution training, alongside taking part in teambuilding activities where individuals from different backgrounds support one another in challenging activities such as abseiling and climbing.

Every project concludes with a presentation evening so that the young participants can share the lessons they have learned with family and friends. Furthermore, local dignitaries present the young people with certificates, emphasizing the value of intercultural projects.

### **Economic and Employment Good Practice**

A recent Merton initiative provides a model of how greater inter trading and engagement might be promoted between ethnic businesses and the wider business community. Korean businesses in Merton, some of which are very significant, have tended to operate within their own community, although this has included trading nationally and internationally. At the request of the Korean Chamber of Commerce the Merton Chamber has organised a number of joint events designed to open up an understanding and dialogue between Korean businesses and other businesses in Merton. A Korean speaking member of staff at the Merton Chamber has been key to facilitating this initiative.

Examples from elsewhere of how business and business support can promote cohesion are growing and include:

- Specific initiatives from a range of major firms such as the Co-op, BT, Asda, Four Seasons Hotels and Eversheds to widen the diversity of their workforce and promote greater understanding of difference within their workforce.
- Bradgate Bakery in Leicester has developed its own culture that encourages cohesion including :
  - Supporting workers to develop their language skills so no one is excluded or isolated, including providing ESOL training and allocating a trained 'buddy';
  - collectively celebrating all the major religious festivals- Christmas, Diwali and Eid;
  - Having mixed teams on the production lines so the staff cover for each other during festivals.
- In Hoxton The Innovatory delivered a project designed to equip Turkish-Kurdish and African/Caribbean led SMEs to benefit from Olympic opportunities and removing some of the barriers to achieving this by:
  - providing Olympic investment readiness training, along with networking and pitching opportunities. The project will network and link members to mainstream business support services and business partners through partnership events and by referrals.
  - providing 2012 readiness training, and one-to-one advice, as well as mentoring support provided by businesses and participation in networking events.
  - providing training and work experience leading towards qualifications in skills areas relevant to the needs of Olympic-related businesses, including IT, customer service, retail, team leading and management.