

Agencies and associated data sources

A major section of the COHDMAP report describes the key agencies responsible for data which might be relevant to estimates of population described in terms of cultural diversity, migration and ethnic origin:

- The Office of National Statistics (ONS)** – The main source of published data on characteristics of the national population. These are based on a large number of sources, usually with an element of comparison with the decennial Census, but including surveys conducted by ONS such as the Labour Force Survey, General Household Survey, British Crime Survey, British Household Panel survey or Northern Ireland Survey of Health and Social Wellbeing – all of which routinely incorporate the standard ONS questions on ethnic group. In addition, ONS is responsible for a large number of ad-hoc studies, and publishes data from other sources (such as the DH Health Survey for England, Morbidity Statistics from General Practice, school exclusion data and Civil Service personnel monitoring) in its journals and occasional publications. While most data are analysed by the five and 16 category system of ethnic group identity codes, there is a possibility of examining data where groups have felt sufficiently strongly to ‘write in’ their origin under an ‘Other’ category’, or to impute their characteristics by cross-tabulation with data on birthplace and religion (Gardener & Connolly 2005). However, there remain for the purposes of monitoring community cohesion, considerable problems in reliance on the normal ONS datasets. Primarily, these relate to the long intercensal periods (i.e. ten years between each comprehensive annual national data collection) which lead to major issues of difficulty in estimating the components of change and changes in ‘ethnic’ or other component parts of the population, and while the national census can be analysed at ‘(super) output area’ levels, there are problems in comparing data from national sample surveys and relating them to other projections at differing levels of areal disaggregation (Large & Ghosh 2006). The Office for National Statistics has a comprehensive website offering access to many sources of data, including most of its own analyses, publications and other articles on their interpretation.
- General Register Office (GRO)** - At present the ONS uses the regular and compulsory registration of births and deaths (‘Vital statistics’) through the General Register Office to derive its estimates of the natural change in population numbers for local areas. While the forms collect data on some characteristics of the parents of newborn children, and the cause of death (and birthplace) of the deceased, there is no current attempt to record other information such as ethnic origin. This has been proposed as part of the current review of this procedure (see Aspinall 2003 or www.lho.org.uk) but has not yet been accepted.
- Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA)** - The DCA is responsible for a current consultation relating to plans to modernise and update the national register of voters. It is planned to introduce a national central electronic register of eligible voters (CORE) which would centralise the work of local electoral registration officers and provide a web-accessible and continually updatable database. If current registration levels are maintained, this will still omit about 10% of the total population eligible, but the intention is clearly to improve on that figure. However, this will still only cover the population over the age of 18, and will not hold any other data other than perhaps that relating to eligibility for jury duty (as at present) and some other minor details such as registration for postal or proxy voting. These are unlikely to be of major significance for the study of community cohesion – although the relationship between the ‘predicted’ and registered population would itself be an indicator of commitment, and might indicate the ratio of non-UK/EU or Commonwealth citizens to the total population. At present we understand that the DCA does not hold any other data of relevance to our concerns. Local ‘electoral roll’ data have however been used by researchers to locate or estimate populations of South Asian origin using computer-based programmes (notably *Nam Perchan*, based on work in Coventry and Bradford).

These rely on name recognition and the creation of comprehensive databases of names from distinctive cultures: they are of no use in identifying members of communities such as those of African-Caribbean origin whose names are commonly identical with the majority white population. At present, only certain South Asian cultural communities have been mapped for such use but in theory others could be added, such as Vietnamese, Chinese and Greek names (although Lee is a name which is common in both Chinese and English culture).

- **Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)** - The Department for Trade and Industry does compile data on employers, but is not believed to be a major potential source for the study of community cohesion. We were advised that the official registers of employing institutions (on which some other surveys are based) did not, at least in some of our case study locations, include more than 70% of known establishments or employees.
- **Department for Education and Skills (DfES)** - The Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC: England only) potentially allows longitudinal tracking of a pupil over time and space through the Unique Pupil Number. This includes age, sex, ethnicity and achievements. Name and address and postcode information potentially permits linking to siblings and households, and thus it would be possible to calculate pupil and household turnover rates for postcode-based areas. However, this depends on how unique the UPN is, on standardised data recording across LEAs and constant updating of databases in different LEAs to prevent double-counting. Use of these data requires some care since (as we were advised in London) authorities may access either data on residents or by school attended, and pupils attending schools outside their borough or district of residence may present problems of interpretation or inference. Many schools also conduct an annual language survey, but the formal requirement for this was abolished several years ago and there seems to be some inconsistency over practice. There are also slight differences between the way data are collected for private-sector schools and colleges, and LEA schools. Nevertheless, the PLASC and language census data were consistently reported as being among the most useful sources to test for changes in the composition of communities.
- **Regional Observatories** –There are regional observatories for economic development and regeneration in each English region (although the Greater London Authority serves this purpose in London). There is also a network of Public Health Observatories. The observatories hold varying amounts of information about research reports relating to migrant workers and migration in their area. Most appear to rely on ONS Census reports, or provide links to reports from research centres such as the IPPR and Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- **Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)** – One of the most comprehensive national datasets is the DWP Longitudinal Survey (sometimes known as the “Master Index”), which links Inland Revenue and DWP benefits data on individuals. This has the potential to track benefit claimants through their lives, using the national insurance number to trace individuals through spells of employment, unemployment and incapacity. Using the postcode, it is possible to trace geographical mobility of claimants and to generate information on the ‘turnover’ of the claimant population in a small area (e.g. a ward). DWP has recently started to classify claimants by ethnic group, and Jobcentre Plus should record when a person granted refugee status starts to claim benefit. It should also be possible to identify when they register for a NI number. However it was recently realised that staff may issue a number when workers are referred by employers, even if they had doubts about citizenship status or entitlement. Of course, the data base is exceptionally sensitive and confidential. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) publishes a range of statistics based on 100 and 5 per cent samples of benefit claimants. Benefits include Income Support, Jobseekers’ Allowance, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, and Incapacity Benefit. The Inland Revenue (HMRC) also

publish data on Tax Credits. One possible source of under-used information on 'new migrants' are the data collected by DWP on the issuance of new national insurance numbers to migrant workers (largely of EU or accession-state origin) who ask for them in order to legitimise their employment, or to obtain access to health or social benefits. It has been suggested that there are few checks made on the legality of these migrant workers, but that their national (or possibly ethnic) origins may be recorded. This has the potential to locate the beginning of new settlements or concentrations of migrants, although with a low degree of accuracy, and with the possibility of public controversy.

- **Gangmaster Licensing Authority** - The newly formed GLA has the responsibility of registering agencies who recruit and manage (usually unskilled) labour on behalf of a variety of employers, usually recruiting and managing seasonal or temporary workers, including migrants. Full operation only began in spring 2006, and the register has only begun to be effective from October 2006. No statistical data are at present collected, nor envisaged, but the registration form does ask registering agencies (Q8) to designate the 'nationalities' of their workforces. The Agency reports that it has local officers who are collecting 'soft' information to support their own monitoring.
- **Department of Health/NHS** - The largest database in the world is said to be the patient record information held by the National Health Service and derived from the detailed personal records on individual patients held by General Practitioners, linked with prescribing and hospital data. Strictly, these records are the property of the Secretary of State, but in practical terms they are currently managed by GPs and local Primary Care Trusts. Nearly all are now held in electronic form, although paper records are maintained as a backup in most cases. When individuals move their permanent address they may be required to register with a different doctor (and/or PCT) and their records are transferred, through the central NHS Records service in Lancashire (Bootle): such re-registration however depends largely on the initiative of the individual, until they require medical care. In theory also, persons leaving the UK for more than 6 months should suspend or end their GP registration and records should be sent to the central store. Equally, 'temporary' visitors and new migrants seeking medical treatment can register with any GP and thus a record for them will be created, containing at least data on their age, sex and address. Recently, a 'quality points' indicator was introduced providing a small incentive (about £120 annually) to GPs to record ethnic group information on these records, but this is not retrospective and may have little effect on recording rates. There is an extensive literature on 'ethnic monitoring' in the NHS (see Johnson 2001, 1995) and while a national circular placed an obligation on hospitals to collect these data on all 'inpatient' users, this has never been achieved.
- In the future it is planned that as part of the NHS 'Connecting for Health' (formerly NPfIT) programme, all of these records will be combined in a centrally held electronic system which can be securely accessed by NHS staff from any location within the health service, thus reducing redundancy of information gathering and the potential for medical and diagnostic errors due to unrevealed information. The deadline for this programme has been several times extended, partly because of technical problems in creating a national computerised information network for the NHS. As part of the development, the Health Services Information Centre (HSCIC) has a planned programme known as the 'Secondary Uses Service', which will extract anonymised data for epidemiological and research purposes, which could also serve the needs of Community Cohesion monitoring. At present, indeed, the best source for net population flows between local authorities is the data from the NHS on transfers between GPs and PCTs available from the change-of-registration data: this information is crucial to the ONS annual population estimates for local authorities. However, at present only very low level data, on absolute numbers of population flows (and with no descriptive content) is supplied.

- The NHS does make a record of every 'patient contact' and hence a variety of data records currently exist, maintained by the different agencies or outlets providing services. It is expected that the majority of these will eventually be co-ordinated and centrally held on a central national patient database (or 'single population record') but there will continue to be paper records and databases of users which are not linked to this. At present, however, only 'inpatient' (hospital-based) services are required to ask users for their (self-identified, census-category based) ethnic origin, and levels of recording vary from near-zero to near-100%. Inpatients are also supposed to be asked their religious origin, and non-UK/EU citizens may be asked to demonstrate entitlement to treatment (unless the medical attendant decides that this is 'immediately necessary' or justified on public health grounds). There are therefore no data on the national or civic status of service users. Data are also normally based on location of service provision (i.e. hospital or primary care trust etc) rather than the residence of the user, although some data may be available for internal accounting purposes to allow transfer of funds between authorities responsible for different areas.
- NHS Direct, the telephone-based service of information and advice to which users are directed outside the normal operating hours of primary care providers, does keep a record of the (preferred) language of its users, and there have been several experimental trials of ethnicity recording. These have been of variable levels of success and only those who explicitly state that they are not confident in English are asked for their preferred language. Few reports have been produced using these data. It should be noted that some health service data, such as dental records, family planning (and possibly sexually transmitted disease clinic) and opticians records, are not incorporated into the general database or exchanged with the hospitals and GPs.
- **Home Office** - The Home Office, as the Ministry with primary responsibility for immigration and nationality, and the functions of the 'ministry of the interior', also covering law and order and the enforcement of the Race Relations Acts, is the prime source for much of the data of relevance. Under the provisions of the 1991 Criminal Justice Act, it produces an annual 'Section 95' review report detailing a breakdown of its functions and outcomes in terms of gender and ethnicity, including particularly the numbers of prisoners, convictions and other crime-related activities, and reports of racist incidents. This function is at present being reviewed. It is also responsible for data on asylum seekers and refugees, including acceptances and the management of the NASS (National Asylum Support Service), although recent media coverage and responses to select committee enquiries have revealed difficulties in tracking the exact numbers and location of individuals, especially following the determination of claims for asylum. There has never been any way in which they or any other agency could track the whereabouts of refugees once a claim was agreed and formal refugee (or indefinite leave to remain) status was awarded: this confers the same rights as citizens to free movement, and it would require the introduction and monitoring of identity cards to permit data gathering.
- Recent public discussion has centred on the admission of senior officers and ministers that it is not possible to provide or maintain accurate registers of the whereabouts of various groups of population such as 'overseas criminals', unregistered or 'illegal' migrants, and those refused leave to remain. This problem is not confined to the Home Office, as discussion with other agencies for this review demonstrates.
- A set of Community Cohesion Performance Indicators were developed by the Home Office Community Cohesion Unit in June 2003 for local authorities and their partners to use as appropriate to their needs. These are used mostly in annual and three-yearly surveys conducted by local authorities, but we were made aware that not all of the questions were asked on all occasions. We have asked for an indication of which questions are regularly used in our survey of LAs. The indicators and technical notes

to assist in their use are available at the IDeA/Audit Commission site <http://www.local-pi-library.gov.uk/communitycohesionindicators.html>

- **Local Authorities** - Local Authorities all collect and collate vast amounts of data regarding their population. This may vary slightly between rural, urban and unitary authorities, depending on the range of activities and services for which they are responsible. In general, it covers the supply of housing (or housing-related benefits), primary and secondary (and to a lesser extent, tertiary or further) education, amenities (such as sports centres), and voting in local elections, as well as the supply of other relevant locally delivered services. In addition, local authorities have a record of all properties, derived from rating and council tax valuation exercises. They maintain council tax registers (which should also record landlords and owners of unoccupied property) which have Unique Property Numbers and which can be mapped using OS Addresspoint and MasterMap.
- While there is no overall consistency or agreed framework for every item of data collected, many of the data are determined by the requirements of central government in its funding role, and are overseen in particular by the periodic inspections of the Audit Commission and its framework for Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), including 'KLOE' items (Key Local Objectives indicators). Visits to selected key informants and case study authorities revealed that there are often problems in communication or data sharing between departments of local government bodies, although most do have some central data management and statistics group function: much data is collected but not regularly analysed or reported on unless demands are made by elected members or inspecting bodies. Local Authorities do however conduct regular 'satisfaction' surveys of residents and users, which include standard questions on 'community cohesion' issues. These provide a guide to local perceptions, but changes in perceptions may not necessarily reflect actual changes in population.
- One of the most useful and public sources of information on the diversity of the population is the Register of Electors, currently maintained by 390 electoral registration offices based in local authorities but under the oversight of the DCA (see: Department for Constitutional Affairs). All households (or addresses) in the authority area are sent an annual form on which householders are (legally, if not in practice often enforced) required to list the names of eligible voters – that is, those aged over 18 (or whose birthday falls in the next 12 months) who are citizens of the UK, Commonwealth or EU. EU citizens are only eligible to vote in local elections. Certain exceptions exist, and the data are also now recorded on two rolls: one (public) contains more restricted data, and individuals can apply for their details to be further restricted – i.e. withheld from this register, as a means of deterring their use for marketing purposes. There are also serious under-counts among certain populations: at least 10% (i.e. 3.5 million adults) out of the national eligible population is estimated to be unregistered, and recent DCA press releases have suggested that a third of the London Chinese population and 18% of Muslims in London (60,000 of those eligible, based on 2001 census data) were not registered. However, the rolls have been used in the past for name-based analyses (using software originally developed in Coventry and Bradford for this purpose by Ludi Simpson) which can provide estimates of the numbers of people from specific South Asian linguistic/religious communities. (see paper by Gumber available via www.ethnic-health.org.uk). Community groups such as OBV (Organisation Black Vote) have held campaigns to raise awareness and registration among minority communities, although those would not cover migrants from non-Commonwealth or EU states: while Bangladesh was technically outside the Commonwealth, however, many UK Bengali residents maintained their voting status without question.
- There have also been in the past suggestions among researchers and political scientists that the Electoral Registration process might be a suitable mechanism for

collecting more data: a so-called 'enhanced registration' process. These suggestions have not so far been acted on, although there were some pilot exercises in the 1980s.

- Several Local Authorities have indicated that they are in the process of developing local atlases or databases of relevant data: the Norfolk authorities have collaborated in a study (completed in June 2006) on 'Black and Minority Ethnic Community Inclusion' which reviewed all sources of data on mobile and minority populations including those employed in the large local agricultural sector, the majority of whom are of European ('white other') origin. It is expected that this will be used to develop a sustainable profile (held on the Norfolk CC website) to monitor annual changes in the population. This will collate a variety of sources including interpretation of qualitative and anecdotal information, and that obtained from central government agencies under Freedom of Information legislation. Key factors identified in the process have included the future changes in the states covered by EU common-travel (right to work/open borders) legislation, as states covered by present seasonal agricultural worker permits apply for membership; and the complete absence of monitoring of the (known to be substantial) Portuguese population, which is ascribed to a fear of self-identification following urban (and rural) disturbances in recent years. (see also below: Local Observatories)
- The Greater London Authority supports a substantial group of staff working to manage the data emerging from their surveys, administrative procedures and the ONS. The Data Management and Analysis Group (DMAG) published reports and briefings such as the report by Bains (2005) into the use of the Simpson Diversity Index which maps the 'diversity' of the city at various scales, and DMAG Briefing 2005/8 which describes the London Pupil Dataset. Other Local Authorities have set about placing such data onto web-accessible archives such as the Leicestershire 'online atlas' (LSORA).
- While until recently many LAs maintained asylum support teams and could provide reasonable estimates of the numbers of people of refugee origin or believed to be claiming asylum, this appears no longer to be the case (LORECA 2006).
- Local Authorities are of course responsible for many other sources of data which are covered in other parts of the report (e.g. PLASC data has been covered in the section above on DfES).
- **Co-ordination of Local Government data** – The COHDMAP phase 1 work examined the extent to which Local Government data is drawn together, coordinated or analysed at a national or regional level. The report describes several initiatives, particularly by the DCLG and previously by ODPM but concludes that there is wide variation in approaches to data collection and sharing. The report refers to the role of the National Audit Office and Audit Commission in focussing on community cohesion issues in their inspection work with Local authorities and other public bodies. It also refers to the potential of GIS and web based systems to help manage the use of data from a variety of sources.
- **Housing Associations, Housing Corporation, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)** - The main source of housing data of value for the monitoring of community cohesion and population demography is the regular reporting system of 'CORE' data by all registered social landlords ('Housing Associations') falling under the aegis of the Housing Corporation. These do record ethnic group data (using the ONS categories) and for some specialist groups (such as the Vietnamese Housing Association Lin Viet, and some South-Asian oriented organisations such as ASRA, for example) may include more detailed information about ethnicity or language. Quarterly or annual returns can give a reasonably detailed and frequent picture of flows of people in the sector, although moves within an association's stock, and

departures, are not monitored to the same extent. Data may be accessed through the Housing Corporation or the National Federation of RSLs: individual RSLs can access their own data in considerable detail but other users will be restricted in the analyses available because of commercial confidentiality.

- Many (but not all) local authorities have now lost the responsibility for housing provision, or at least the majority of their housing stock, to housing associations or other forms of management. The remainder do collect fairly extensive data on their tenants, similar to that collected by housing associations, and for input into a similar 'CORE' database. For analysis, it would be necessary to collate these data with that from housing association sources. However, as for HAs, the ethnic monitoring information is primarily collected and used as a means of ensuring that lettings are conducted on a fair and equitable basis. Once a letting has been made to an applicant they become a tenant, and at that point, ethnic monitoring records are often seen as no longer relevant and therefore are not maintained or analysed.
- There is no requirement on private landlords to collect any data on their tenants, although there is some obligation for them to ensure that tenants are provided with electoral registration forms, and to comply with health and safety regulations. The registration of housing 'in multiple occupancy' (HMOs) is currently being revised and enforced but this will not collect data on the characteristics of tenants/residents. In some localities, there are meetings of more significant private landlords with local authority officers (Landlord Forums) at which some qualitative information may be exchanged. We are aware that a very significant proportion of migrant workers and refugees offered leave to remain (as well as asylum seekers on NASS support schemes) are living in private sector rented accommodation. They may move at very short notice between addresses, or be moved, and also it appears increasingly that migrant workers are housed for very short periods of time in relatively small units of accommodation (2-3 bed semis or terrace houses) that do not appear as HMOs.
- **Other Local sources** – In addition to the above, the report makes some reference to the roles of the following agencies as sources of information on population change: Police, Crime Reduction Partnerships, Social services, other Social observatories and Think Tanks, private sector data sources (e.g. market research companies, local Estate Agents and credit rating agencies), private employers, Universities and other HE institutions, local businesses (who may be able to provide evidence of changing demand for particular products and services), voluntary agencies working with particular ethnic or faith communities, Race Equality councils, Local Authority Building inspectors (house building statistics) and the Land registry.