

2021 Census Data

A referral guide detailing the comparative data relating to Religion from the 2011 and 2021 Census for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

POLICE PAGAN
ASSOCIATION

Document Information

Protective Marking	Official
Title	2021 Census Data
Author	Inspector Andrew Pardy
Creating Body	Police Pagan Association
Purpose	A referral guide detailing the comparative data relating to Religion from the 2011 and 2021 Census for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
Relevant To	Law Enforcement and relevant partner agencies
FOIA	Exempt
Suitable for Publication	No
Version	2
Date Created	24/08/2025
Date to be reviewed	24/08/2030
Date of last review	24/08/2025
Document sign off date	TBC



This document is accessibility compliant.
 If you would like any further guidance on this document, please contact the Police Pagan Association.
 This document is not to be disseminated outside of UK Law Enforcement without reference to the originator.
 This cover sheet must not be detached from the document to which it refers.

**This document is the property of the Police Pagan Association.
 If found, please hand in at your nearest Police Station.
 Police Pagan Association | T: 07590441615
 E: Chair@policepaganassociation.org**

Contents

Section 1

- Summary

Section 2

- Data Parameters

Section 3

- 2021 Census Data

Section 4

- Geographic Data

Section 5

- Summary

Section 6

- UK Map of NPCC Policing Regions

Section 7

- Document Control

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their colour.”

Mattie Stepanek

Section 1

Summary

This document provides comparative data relating to religion from both the 2011 and 2021 Census where applicable.

Sources

2011 Census data pertaining to England and Wales refers to QS210EW Religion (Detailed) 2011.

2021 Census data pertaining to England and Wales refers to TS031 Religion (Detailed), local authorities in England and Wales 2021.

2011 Census data pertaining to Scotland refers to AT_001_2011 - Religion (detailed), Scotland.

2021 Census data pertaining to Scotland refers to KS209SCa Religion, council area (Scotland) 2021.

2011 Census data pertaining to Northern Ireland refers to QS218NI Religion, (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2021 Census data pertaining to Northern Ireland refers to MS-B21 Religion, (Northern Ireland) 2021.

The information contained within this document falls under Section 20 of the Statistics and Registration Act 2007.

All material from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and the National Records of Scotland (NRS) is subject to Crown Copyright protection unless otherwise indicated.

The statistics and information featured in this document are used under the terms of the Open Government Licence:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/>

Section 2

Data Parameters

The data featured in this document will concentrate on collaborated figures collated by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) defined as Religion, local authorities in England and Wales, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) defined as Census Population Statistics - Religion, and the National Records of Scotland (NRS) defined as Write-in Religion Data for Scotland.

The regions, as defined by the various census agencies are the same as those used the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) except for Northwest, which does not include Northern Ireland, and Northeast which, for the purpose of Census data, is divided into Northeast and Yorkshire and Humber. For the purposes of comparative data in this document the statistics will be provided as per NPCC region.

Section 3

2021 Census Data

In 2021 the total population of England and Wales on the day of the Census was given as approximately 68.2 million; in 2011 the total population of England and Wales on the day of the Census was given as approximately 63.2 million by the ONS.

In 2021 data from 59.6 million residents of England and Wales was recorded, compared to 56.1 million in 2011– a rise of 3.5 million.

The census question regarding religion is voluntary; 56 million residents – equating to 94% of the population of England and Wales – responded in 2021, compared to 52.1 million (93%) in 2011.

Of those recorded, 3.6 million people chose not to state their religion (compared to 4 million in 2011), 22.2 million identified as having no religion (compared to 14.1 million in 2011), and 66,000 people recorded their religion as ‘other religion’ compared to just under 14,000 in 2011.

The Police Pagan Association recognises that self-declaration in relation to faith is second only to disability and therefore there may be a significant number of Pagans – or adherents to branches thereof – represented within the 66,000 people who recorded their religion as ‘other religion’ due in part to the continued misinformation and misrepresentation of Paganism in the media and wider society.

The ONS allowed 2021 respondents to record their religion under ‘other’ and, where applicable, define their religious path if not already defined in the Census, for example ‘Other – Shaman’. This data would fall under the collaborated data of ‘Other Religion’ in ONS document TS030-2021 Religion, local authorities in England and Wales, but would be recorded under ‘Other Religion – Shaman’ in ONS document TS031-2021 Religion (Detailed), local authorities in England and Wales.

The 6 self-defined religions featured in the 2021 Census data for England and Wales pertaining to Paganism were the same as those featured in the 2011 census, namely Druid, Heathen, Pagan, Shaman, Wicca, and Witchcraft.

As with the 2011 census date, the Police Pagan Association did not include data pertaining to New Age, Animism, Pantheism, or Occult, however the National Records of Scotland (NRS) includes Pantheism and Reconstructionism as Pagan paths when collating their write-in data.¹

Of the defined Pagan paths in the 2021 Census data the following numbers were recorded:

Pagan Path	Total Pagan Population 2011	Total Pagan Population 2021	Difference +/-
Pagan	56,620	73,733	+17,113
Wicca	11,766	12,813	+1,047
Druid	4,189	2,490	-1,699
Heathen	1,958	4,719	+2,761
Witchcraft	1,276	1,045	-231
Shaman	650	7,890	+7,240
Total	76,459	102,690	+26,231

This represents 0.15% of the total population of England and Wales, and 0.17% of total respondents to the 2021 census.

Druidry was the biggest loss at -1,699 (a 40.5% decrease), whilst Heathenry increased by 2,761 (a 141% increase) and Shamanism increased by 7,240 (an increase of 1114%).

Overall, Paganism in England and Wales has increased by 34% since 2011.

Religion/Faith	Total 2011	Total 2021	Difference +/-	% loss/gain
Christian	33,268,056	27,522,672	-5,745,384	-17.2%
Muslim	2,720,425	3,868,133	+1,147,708	+42.1%
Hindu	817,679	1,032,775	+215,096	+26.3%
Sikh	423,345	524,140	+100,795	+23.8%
Jewish	265,073	271,327	+22,747	+2.3%
Buddhist	248,580	272,508	+23,928	+9.6%
Pagan	76,459	102,690	+26,231	+34.3%

Paganism remains the 7th largest religion in England and Wales, and Paganism has grown faster than Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism since 2021.

¹ <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/documents/scotlands-census-2022-write-in-responses-for-ethnicity-national-identity-language-and-religion-topic/>

Section 4

Geographic Data

The following data is recorded as per NPCC region.

LONDON	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
Metropolitan		Pagan	4,943	4,620
City of London		Wicca	1,023	925
		Druid	361	165
		Heathen	202	306
		Witchcraft	120	111
		Shaman	88	1303

8,799,725

6,737

7,430

+693

+10.3%

EAST	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
Hertfordshire		Pagan	6,284	7,969
Bedfordshire		Wicca	1,322	1,376
Cambridgeshire		Druid	434	237
Essex		Heathen	237	501
Norfolk		Witchcraft	155	108
Suffolk		Shaman	57	538

6,335,071

8,489

10,729

+2,240

+26.4%

SOUTHEAST	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
Kent		Pagan	10,337	12,642
Hampshire		Wicca	2,155	2,143
Surrey		Druid	833	422
Sussex		Heathen	333	750
Thames Valley		Witchcraft	244	172
		Shaman	105	3,971

9,278,066

14,007

20,100

+6,093

+43.5%

SOUTHWEST	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
Avon & Somerset		Pagan	8,953	11,868
Devon & Cornwall		Wicca	1,432	1,637
Dorset		Druid	664	449
Gloucestershire		Heathen	207	629
Wiltshire		Witchcraft	174	158
		Shaman	111	735

5,701,189

11,541

15,476

+3,935

+34.1%

EAST MIDLANDS	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
Derbyshire		Pagan	5,437	7,227
Leicestershire		Wicca	1,087	1,190
Lincolnshire		Druid	387	222
Northamptonshire		Heathen	231	466
Nottinghamshire		Witchcraft	111	84
		Shaman	61	120

4,880,053

7,314

9,309

+1,995

+27.3%

WESTMIDS	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
Staffordshire		Pagan	5,147	6,932
Warwickshire		Wicca	1,144	1,326
West Mercia		Druid	423	233
West Midlands		Heathen	173	479
		Witchcraft	95	90
		Shaman	43	498

5,950,757

7,025

9,558

+2,533

+36.1%

NORTHEAST	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
Cleveland		Pagan	6,721	9,506
Durham		Wicca	1,572	1,838
Humberside		Druid	440	308
North Yorkshire		Heathen	254	803
South Yorkshire		Witchcraft	174	128
West Yorkshire		Shaman	87	363
Northumbria				
		8,127,792		9,248
				+3,698
				+40.0%

NORTHWEST	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
Cheshire		Pagan	5,350	7,865
Cumbria		Wicca	1,291	1,511
Greater Manchester		Druid	404	232
Merseyside		Heathen	230	542
Lancashire		Witchcraft	120	117
Northern Ireland		Shaman	60	97

12,898,185

7,455

10,364

+2,909

+39.0%

WALES	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
Dyfed Powys		Pagan	3,448	5,104
Gwent		Wicca	740	867
North Wales		Druid	243	222
South Wales		Heathen	91	243
		Witchcraft	83	77
		Shaman	38	265

3,107,500

4,643

6,778

+2,135

+46.0%

SCOTLAND	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
North		Pagan	3,467	18,087
East		Wicca	949	482
West		Druid	245	83
		Heathen	150	171
		Witchcraft	81	57
		Shaman	92	67
		Pantheism ²	135	122
		Reconstructionist ³	31	44

5, 439, 843

5,150

19,113

+13,963

+271.1%

² Pantheism is recorded under Other Religion > Pagan > Pantheism in the Scottish Census data

³ Reconstructionist is recorded under Other Religion > Pagan > Reconstructionist in the Scottish Census data

NORTHERN IRELAND	Total Regional Respondents	Pagan Paths	Pagan Population 2011	Pagan Population 2021
PSNI		Pagan	302	840
		Wicca	88	243
		Druid	38	37
		Heathen	-	70
		Shaman	-	15

1,903,188

428

1,205

+777

+181.5%

Section 5

Summary

Taken together, the census data from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland provides clear evidence of both the continued growth and the increasing visibility of Paganism within the United Kingdom. In England and Wales, the 2021 Census recorded approximately 74,000 individuals identifying specifically as Pagan, an increase of almost one-third compared with 2011.

Alongside this, the data show notable rises in those identifying with particular Pagan traditions, such as Heathenry, which more than doubled, and Shamanism, which emerged as a significant category in its own right. Wicca continued to demonstrate steady growth, while Druidry declined slightly, though still remains an established part of the wider Pagan landscape.

In Scotland, the introduction of a Pagan tick box in 2022 marked a significant development in census methodology, allowing for more accurate recording and representation. This change revealed a substantially larger community than had been captured in the 2011 data, with over 19,000 individuals identifying as Pagan, compared with fewer than 5,200 in the previous census.

In Northern Ireland, while the Pagan population remains relatively small in numerical terms, the community has more than doubled since 2011, indicating similar upward trends across all four nations.

When considered together, these results confirm that more than 100,000 people across the UK now openly identify as Pagan, with many thousands more selecting specific traditions such as Wicca, Druidry, Heathenry or Shamanism. The figures demonstrate that Paganism is not only a growing movement but also a religious identity of increasing social confidence, one that is now more readily declared on national surveys.

From a policy perspective, the data highlights the importance of inclusive census design and recognition of minority faiths in equality monitoring. For public bodies, policing, education, healthcare and interfaith initiatives, this information provides an evidence base to ensure appropriate representation, engagement and support.

The upward trajectory of Pagan identification suggests that Pagan communities will play an increasingly visible role in the religious and cultural landscape of the United Kingdom in the coming decades, warranting continued attention in research, policy development and service provision.

In this context, the recognition of Paganism within census data also directly supports compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that Pagan communities are afforded the same consideration, protection and inclusion as other faith groups in the delivery of public services.

Section 6

UK Map of NPCC Policing Regions



Section 7

Document Control

Compliance		Date	Auditor
Diversity		23/08/2025	Insp 1158 Andrew Pardy
Health and Safety		23/08/2025	Insp 1158 Andrew Pardy
Data Protection		23/08/2025	Insp 1158 Andrew Pardy
Human Rights		23/08/2025	Insp 1158 Andrew Pardy
Freedom of Information		23/08/2025	Insp 1158 Andrew Pardy
Information Management		23/08/2025	Insp 1158 Andrew Pardy
Date	Version	Summary of Changes	
20/11/2022	1.1	Original	
		Formatting	
		Extended introduction section	
		Inclusion of Executive Committee section	
		Document reformatting	
		GDPR	
24/08/2025	1.2	Accessibility compliance	
		Formatting	
		Updating data for England & Wales	
		Comparative data for Northern Ireland	
		Comparative data for Scotland	



OFFICIAL
Police Pagan Association 2021