



# SOMALI

# COMMUNITY HEALTH PROFILE

# 2022



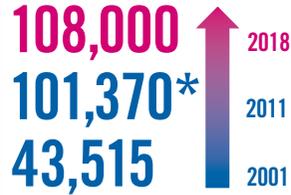
A BOLDER HEALTHIER BIRMINGHAM

**INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND BIRMINGHAM CONTEXT**

**108,000**

Somalis in the UK. Anecdotal evidence suggests roughly 250k-400k Somalis live in the UK  
**THIS IS THE LARGEST SOMALI POPULATION IN EUROPE**

UK's Somali community has seen a year-on-year increase



**5%** of the Somali population living abroad currently live in the UK which accounts for almost **40%** OF THE SOMALI POPULATION IN EUROPE

**LOCAL SOMALI POPULATION**

Based on data from the 2011 Census

**9,870**

SOMALI-BORN PEOPLE ACROSS THE WEST MIDLANDS

**7,765**

SOMALI-BORN PEOPLE ACROSS BIRMINGHAM



**16 MILLION**  
CURRENT POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR SOMALIA

**INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT**

Conflict and violence as well as sudden-onset of disasters and food insecurity have often displacement at a mass scale in Somalia. The UNHCR estimates there to be around 3 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in the country

**MIGRATION, LANGUAGES AND FAITH**

**MIGRATION**

The most prominent wave of migration from Somalia to the UK has been from 1991 to the 2000s. Since 2000, the UK has attracted Somalis from across Europe. Between 1985 and 2006, Somalia was consistently one of the top ten asylum applicant producing countries in the UK



**8,139**



People in Birmingham who speak Somali, making it one of the most common main languages in Birmingham. In England Somali is the main language of 84,387 people

**RELIGION**

Almost all Somalis are Muslims, with most being part of the Sunni sect. Mosques are the primary centres for religious and social gatherings

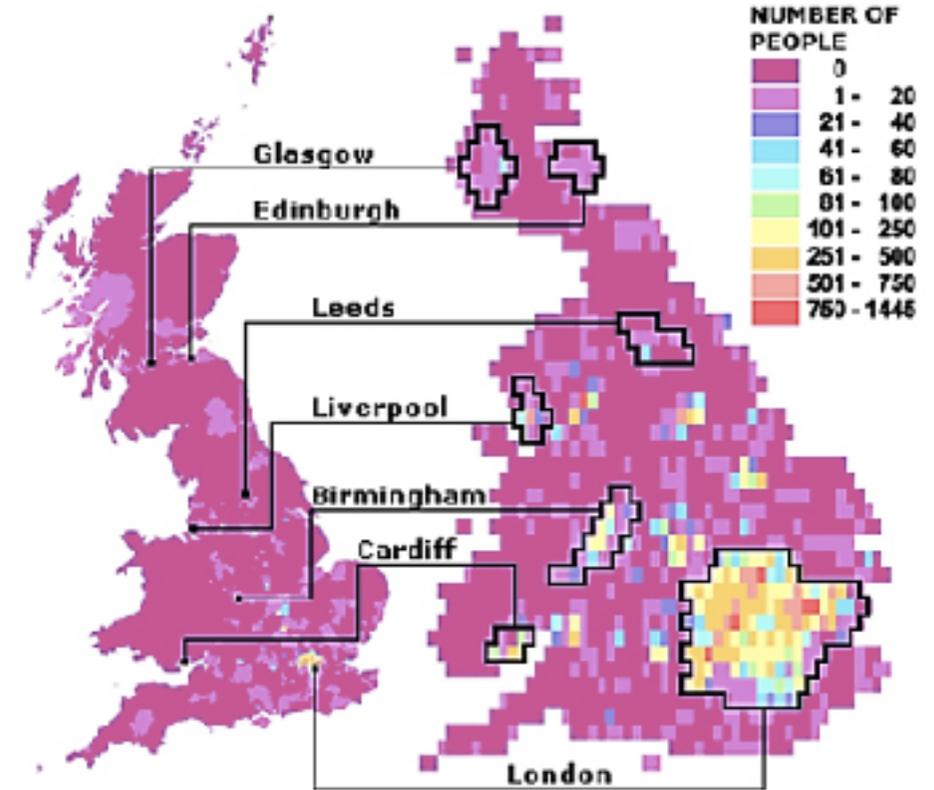
**THERE ARE TWO EID FESTIVALS IN A YEAR**



Ramadan ends with three days of festivities called Eid al-Fitr; Eid-ul-Adha comes at the end of the annual pilgrimage of the Hajj

**DISTRIBUTION OF THE SOMALI COMMUNITY**

Data from the the 2001 Census illustrates the distribution of the Somali population living in the UK. When looking at Birmingham data only, the highest distribution of the Somali population is in the following wards: Nechells (1,559), Aston (895) and Bordesley Green (918).



Source: BBC Born Abroad: Somalia (2001 Census). The map shows if areas with roughly equal population were the same size

**GETTING THE BEST START IN LIFE**

**3,732**

CHILDREN REGISTERED AS SOMALI IN BIRMINGHAM

**3.1%**

OF STILLBIRTHS IN BIRMINGHAM ARE FROM MOTHERS FROM SOMALIA



**0-19 YEAR OLDS**

**63%**

OF SOMALI POPULATION IN BIRMINGHAM

**29%**

OF GENERAL POPULATION BIRMINGHAM

**MORE THAN 8 OUT OF 10**

SOMALI PUPILS LIVE IN A POOR HOUSEHOLD



**82%**

of Somali students are eligible for free school meals



**CHILDHOOD OBESITY**

RESEARCH HAS FOUND SOMALI PARENTS CHOOSE A LARGER PORTION OF FOOD FOR A 10-YEAR-OLD CHILD AS HEALTHY

in comparison to parents from other ethnic groups



**VACCINATION UPTAKE**

Somali children were less likely to have received three doses of DTaP/IPV/Hib by six months of age (-11%); compared with White-British children, Somali children were less likely to return for preschool booster, with a drop-out rate at least 7% higher



**MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

**58%**

of Somali respondents to a UK-based survey felt the need for mental health support, but only

**14%** USED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES



**BARRIERS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**



UNAWARE OF SERVICES AVAILABLE



LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNITY



PREFERENCE FOR FRIEND AND FAMILY SUPPORT

**ALCOHOL**

Research has found that the Muslim faith is likely a protective factor against drug and alcohol use within the Somali community



**77%**

of Somali men and women of all ages found to have high levels of regular khat use. Khat use is a major concern within the community

**HIGHER SMOKING RATES THAN THE GENERAL UK POPULATION**

and higher still among men over 40 years old and those that regularly use khat



**HEALTHY AND AFFORDABLE FOOD**

**DIET**



Typical Somali diet is rice, pasta, and red meat, with meat viewed as an important part of the diet

**OBESITY PREVALENCE**

BMI

**24 29**



A US-based study found the mean BMI was 24 in Somali men and 29 in Somali women; 61% of the participants were overweight or obese, and 27% were obese

**BMI > 35**

**WOMEN AGED 40-65**



Research has found most morbidly obese (BMI >35) women were aged 40-65 years

**97%**

Somali respondents consumed less than 2 pieces of fruit per day



**92%** consumed less than 2 portions of vegetables per day

Studies suggest that the Somali community had a limited understanding of healthy eating. Somali people expressed greater freedom to eat as they please in Somalia without the risk or unhealthy weight gain

**ACTIVE AT EVERY AGE & ABILITY**

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

AT LEAST 150 MINS / WEEK

Overall levels of physical activity in the Somali community are low. Somali women felt their physical activities have reduced and that they were



**MORE PHYSICALLY**

**ACTIVE BEFORE IMMIGRATION**

**BARRIERS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**



LIMITED CLOTHING CHOICES



FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS



LIMITED WOMEN ONLY FACILITIES

Research has found a correlation between higher levels of physical activity with years since immigration and education level



**WORKING AND LEARNING WELL**

**ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT**

Attainment of 5+ GCSEs grade A\*-C including English and Maths of Somali community in Birmingham (2013)



City Average **60%**  
 Somali Girls **60%**  
 Somali Boys **55%**



Girls out-performed boys for all ethnic groups

**ECONOMIC INACTIVITY**

ONS data shows high levels of economic inactivity amongst the Somali community

**31%** **84%**



**OVERCROWDING**

Overcrowding is a major issue in the community; average Somali household has four members, though many have six or more people living in them

**1 in 10**  
**IN FULL-TIME WORK**



One of the lowest employment rates in the country

**PROTECT AND DETECT**

**CANCER SCREENING**

The limited data and information on the take up of breast and cervical cancer screening by Somali women shows that screening is infrequent for both types of cancers



**BARRIERS TO SCREENING**



Hesitancy to use male practitioner



Perceived low susceptibility to HPV and cancer



Embarrassment of FGM



Distrust of health care system

**SEXUAL HEALTH**

A Birmingham-based study found limited knowledge within the community of sexual health services; barriers in accessing services included

**SHAME, STIGMA AND TABOO, LANGUAGE BARRIERS AND ABSENCE OF CULTURALLY AWARE AND SENSITIVE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**

One of the highest rates of TB in the UK are found among people of Somali ethnicity. People born in Somalia account for



**3%** OF THE UK'S TB CASES, WITH A MEDIAN TIME OF 10 YEARS FROM ENTRY TO NOTIFICATION SINCE ARRIVAL TO THE UK

**AGEING AND DYING WELL**

**12.1%** HIGHER PREVALENCE OF DIABETES AMONGST SOMALI POPULATION IN THE U.S COMPARED WITH THE GENERAL POPULATION **5.3%**

**CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE**

Research from Finland has found Somali men were less likely to have more than one cardiovascular risk factor compared with men from the general Finnish population. Conversely, Somali women were more likely to have two or more cardiovascular risk factors



**DEMENTIA**



The risk of dementia increases with age, particularly after the age of 65; Birmingham's over 65 Somalis account for only **1.5%** OF THE COMMUNITY'S POPULATION INDICATING PREVALENCE OF DEMENTIA WILL LIKELY BE LOW

**CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD)**

There is an absence of statistics on the prevalence of COPD within the Somali community in the UK

**40%** OF KHAT CHEWERS HAD RESTRICTIVE PATTERNS OF LUNG DISEASES

Research on chronic consumption of khat in Ethiopia reveals its impact on lung function, which may be applicable to the Somali community

**END OF LIFE**

US study found it is likely Somali children prefer to look after their elderly; in Somalia parents raise children and children care for parents in their old age. Studies suggest treatment plans should allow for Somali children to care for the terminally ill and elderly instead of prolonged hospitalisations or placement in a nursing or hospice facility



**CLOSING THE GAPS**

**DEPRIVATION**

Overall the Somali community across the UK experience high levels of poverty, with most living in overcrowded housing, high proportions of economic inactivity, experiencing high levels of unemployment, along with many managing health issues like PTSD