



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

Equality Impact Analysis

Title of policy, function or service	Communications and Conversations Strategy 2023-26 and Delivery Plan
Lead officer	Kathryn Robson
Person completing the EIA	Kathryn Robson
Type of policy, function or service:	Existing (reviewed) <input type="checkbox"/> New/Proposed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Version & Date	Version 0.1

1. Background

As a town and as a council we are ambitious to achieve more and do things better for our people, which is clearly expressed in our Council Plan and Delivery Plan. What these plans also highlight is that the people of Watford – the community and businesses we serve – are always at the heart of everything we do. These principles are woven throughout the council’s new Communications and Conversations Strategy 2023-26.

The council has chosen to focus on conversations to reflect the importance of talking, listening and having a discussion or just a chat – whether online or in person.

The strategy is supported by a delivery plan, which will bring the commitments in the strategy to life, keeping local people and the town up to date on what the council is doing and providing an opportunity to share their views. Both the strategy and delivery plan recognise the diversity and vibrancy of Watford and how this should inform and influence our communications and conversations.

In terms of approach, the strategy has been developed around key themes and has drawn on good practice, including [LG Comms](#) , and taken into account the legislation that informs local government communications.

2. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis

As this is a strategy an Equality Impact Analysis has been undertaken. This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative of the council’s Communications and Conversations on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010.

These are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex (gender)
8. Sexual Orientation
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership.

3. Engagement and consultation

The recent Big Watford conversation explored people's views of the council's communications and how people want to engage with us.

The survey is still open (as of August 2023) but early analysis shows:

- Over 75% of people think the council keeps them well informed
- There is significant interest in engaging with the council across a range of channels and opportunities, including surveys, social media, drop ins and contact with the Elected Mayor and councillors

In total, around 700 responses have been received to the consultation. All respondents were asked to complete a number of equality related questions so it will be possible to understand the responses across the protected characteristics.

The emerging strategy has been shared internally across services, including with the officer leading on developing the council's EDI policy to allow for any issues to be raised and also to make sure synergies and links have been captured.

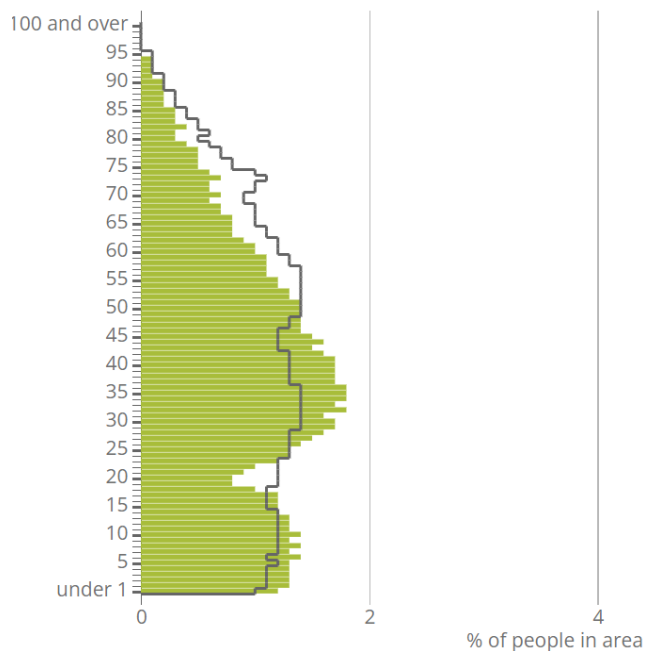
4. What we know about the Watford population

Population (including age)

Watford is a town with a growing population. The census data 2021 indicates that Watford has a population of 102,300, an increase of 13.3% since the previous census in 2011. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%), where the population grew by nearly 3.5 million to 56,489,800.

Watford's population is currently projected to increase to 110,300 by 2035, a rise from 2016 of 14.2%. This growth will be a challenge for Watford, given our tight borough boundaries and is recognised within the Council Plan, shaping a number of our commitments and areas for action in the Delivery Plan.

The chart below shows Watford's age ranges between 0 – 100 and over in percentage of the population (green) compared with the England / Wales percentages (black line).



Overall, this comparison shows that Watford is a relatively young town. This is particularly the case in the 0 to 19 age range. Similarly the 30 to 49 cohort accounts for a significantly higher proportion of the Watford population than nationally.

The median age in Watford is 36 compared with 40 for England. This means that we are a town which is popular with families and, whilst we are a town for all, we recognise that our plans need to reflect our large number of young people and families. In terms of voluntary and community sector organisations, this means there are likely to be demands for help across all age profiles but those supporting families and younger children may face higher than average demand.

Population density

The population density for Watford is circa 4,770 people per square kilometre. This makes it the most densely populated district area in Hertfordshire and in the country (434 per square kilometre). This is a reflection that we are an urban district, with many characteristics of a metropolitan borough. In comparison with many metropolitan boroughs, particularly those in and around the outskirts of London, our density is relatively low.

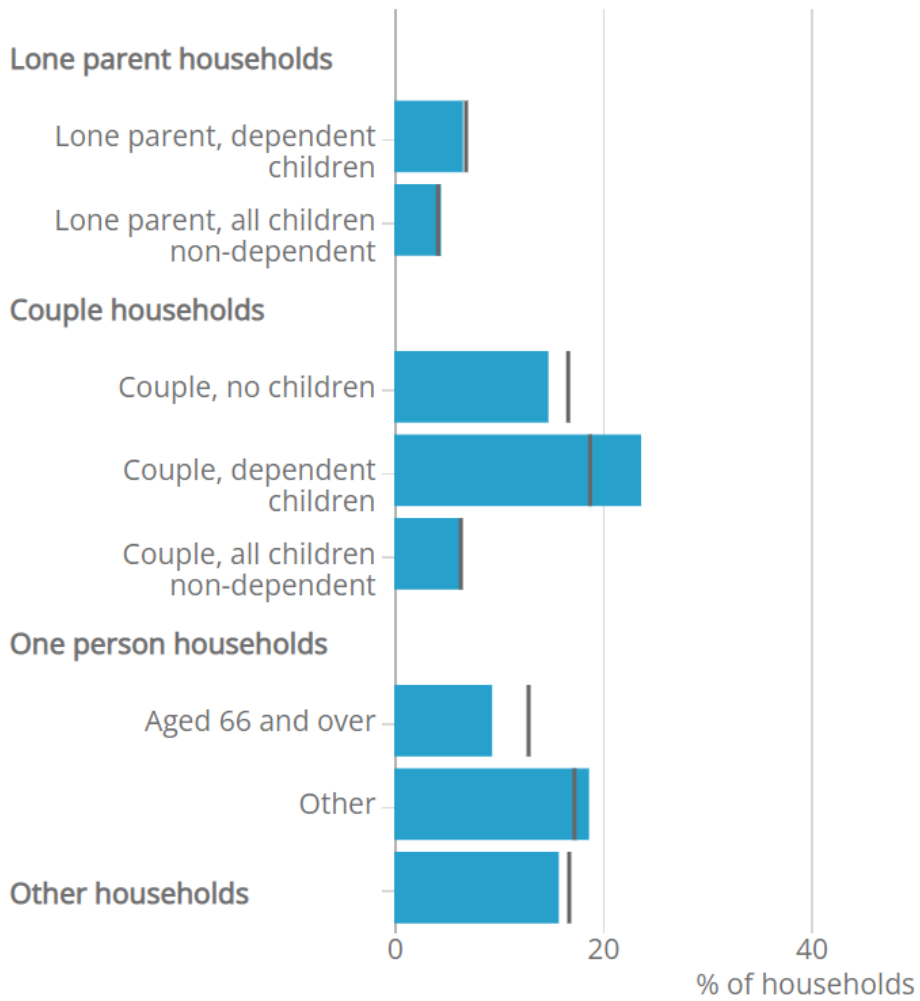
Households

Number of households

The ONS data, based on the census, says that there were 39,628 households in Watford at the time of the Census. The average household size in Watford is currently 2.57. This is slightly higher than the national average of 2.45 and is in line with the Census 2021 household composition data below.

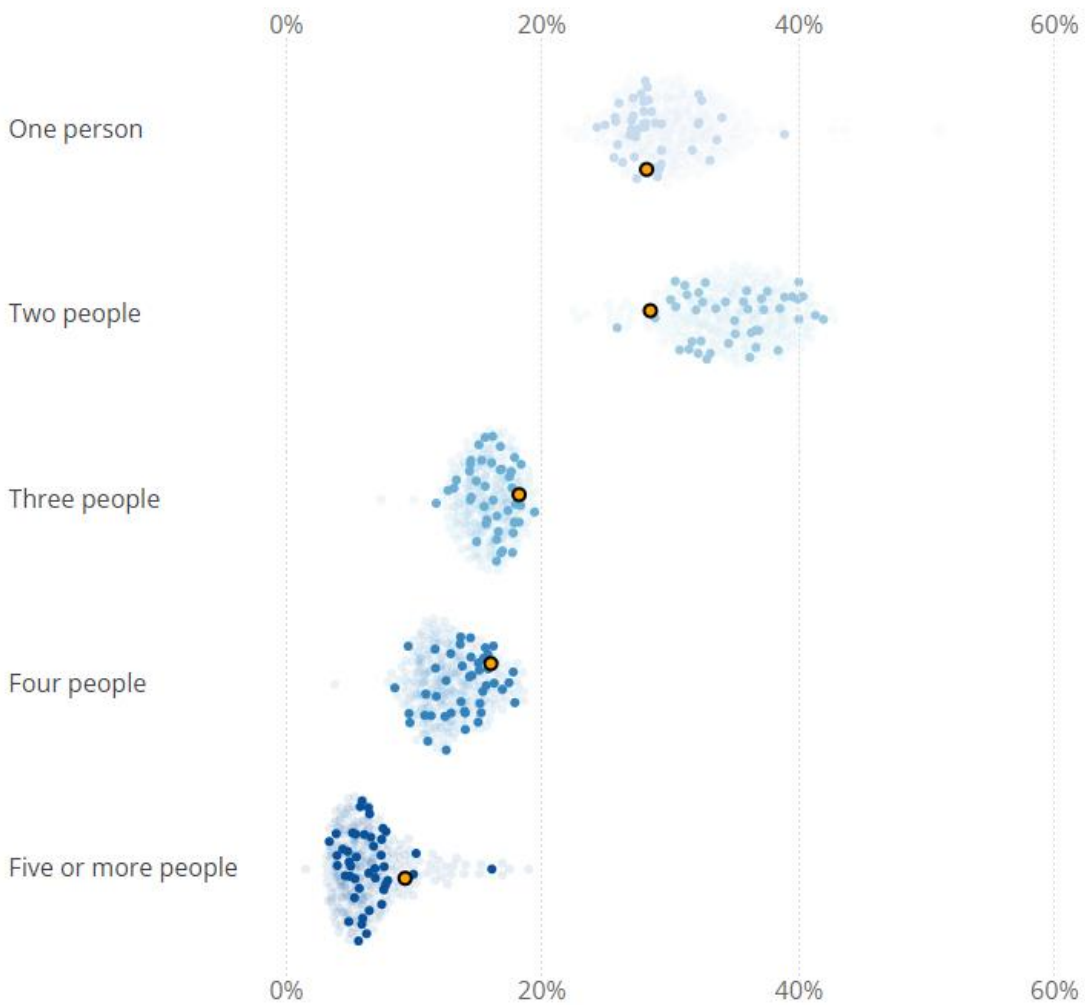
Household Composition

The chart below sets out the composition of Watford households in the Census 2021, with Watford's percentage shown in the blue bars compared to the England and Wales percentages shown by the vertical black bar. Watford has a higher percentage of both households with couples with no children and households with dependent children than England and Wales. As a town with a relatively young population, it has fewer one person households with residents aged 66 and over.



The second chart on household composition shows that Watford has higher than England and Wales average for larger sized households – 3 or more people. Again, this reflects that Watford is a ‘family town’ with different generations living together in one household.

Local authorities within the same region are highlighted



Language spoken at home:

Below is the data collected in Census 2021 with regard to household language. This is another indication that Watford benefits from groups and organisations set up to support those who may have arrived in the town more recently.

	Number	Percentage
All adults in household have English as a main language	30443	76.8%
At least one but not all adults in household have English as a main language	3486	8.8%
No adults in household, but at least one person aged 3 to 15 years, has English as a main language	1438	3.6%
No people in household have English in England as a main language	4261	10.8%

Main Language

The Census asked people their main language, with over 90 choices. Whilst English was significantly the most chosen language with nearly 80,000 residents citing English as their main language, there are a substantial number of residents with other main languages. The top ten after English are below (see Appendix 1 for the full list of languages).

Language	Number
Other European language (EU): Romanian	3,361
Other European language (EU): Polish	1,659
South Asian language: Urdu	1,486
South Asian language: Tamil	1,193
Portuguese	1,140
South Asian language: Gujarati	954
South Asian language: Malayalam	643
Other European language (EU): Italian	551
Other European language (EU): Hungarian	489
Other European language (EU): Bulgarian	435

Disability/Health

Watford has a lower percentage of residents with a disability (15% than England overall (17.7%). A higher percentage of people in Watford also declared they were in good health (48.2%) compared to England overall (47.5%).

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment

Census 2021 included questions on sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time. 2.7% of those who selected to answer the sexual orientation question identified as LGB+ orientation ("Gay or Lesbian", "Bisexual" or "Other sexual orientation"). 0.31% of those who selected to answer the gender identity question answered 'no' to whether their gender identity is the same as their sex registered at birth.

Ethnicity

Watford has a very diverse population, more so than the rest of Hertfordshire; it is one of the strengths of our town and what makes us such a vibrant and diverse place to be. This diversity is an opportunity for our voluntary and community sector in terms of how they respond to the various needs of the Watford community and how they reach out to engage and include people in what they do.

	WATFORD 2011	WATFORD 2021
		102,245 TOTAL
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	61.9% (55,875)	46.0% (46,820)
White Irish	2.3% (2,063)	2.1% (2,149)
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1% (61)	0.1% (80)
White: Roma	Not a category in 2011	0.3% (343)
White: Other White	7.7% (6,947)	12.6% (12,836)
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	1.1% (990)	1.3% (1,300)
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	0.5% (412)	0.7% (692)
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	1.0% (939)	1.4% (1,408)
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	0.8% (763)	1.4% (1,444)
Asian/Asian British/ Asian Welsh: Indian	5.5% (4,923)	9.7% (9,954)
Asian/Asian British/Asian Welsh: Pakistani	6.7% (6,082)	8.0% (8,197)
Asian/Asian British/Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	0.4% (362)	0.5% (493)
Asian/Asian British/Asian Welsh: Chinese	0.9%	1.0%

	WATFORD 2011	WATFORD 2021
	(822)	(1,024)
Asian/Asian British/Asian Welsh: Other Asian	4.4%	5.3%
	(3,981)	(5,369)
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	3.5%	3.9%
	(3,142)	(3,954)
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	1.7%	1.7%
	(1,558)	(1,733)
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	0.6%	0.8%
	(529)	(801)
Other ethnic group: Arab	0.3%	0.7%
	(294)	(763)
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	0.6%	2.8%
	(558)	(2,885)

Religion or belief

Religious groups in Watford, 2021 census:

- Christian - 45,447 people or 44.6%
- Buddhist - 1,021 people or 0.85%
- Hindu - 8,398 people or 8.2%
- Jewish - 944 people or 0.93%
- Muslim - 13,262 people or 11.0%
- Sikh - 664 people or 0.6%
- Other - 859 people or 0.71%
- No religion – 25,340 people or 24.8%

6,311 people did not answer this question

Gender

The 2021 census did not allow for any option other than female or male.

FEMALE	50.8%
MALE	49.2%

Marriage and Civil Partnership

For census 2021, this has been updated to reflect the revised Civil Partnership Act that came into force in 2019.

Category	Number of Watford households
Does not apply <i>not eligible for a legal partnership</i>	21,282
Never married and never registered a civil partnership	30,974
Married: Opposite sex	38,023
Married: Same sex	192
In a registered civil partnership: Opposite sex	85
In a registered civil partnership: Same sex	60
Separated, but still married	1,744
Separated, but still in a registered civil partnership	7
Divorced	6,074
Formerly in a civil partnership now legally dissolved	18
Widowed	3,782
Surviving partner from civil partnership	5

Mosaic Profile

Mosaic is a classification system which segments our population into 15 groups and 66 types

WHAT IT TELLS US ABOUT WATFORD?

Rental hubs 22% of our community

Educated young people privately renting in urban neighbourhoods
7% nationally

Urban cohesion 19% of our community

Residents of settled urban communities with a strong sense of identity
5% nationally

Domestic success 16% of our community

Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers
7% nationally

5. How will the council ensure equality is promoted through the place brand

Under the Equality Act 2010, three areas need to be considered when analysing the equality impact of the brand strategy:

1. **eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
2. **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
3. **foster** good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not

A. Positive impacts

The Communications and Conversations strategy is underpinned by the council's commitment to delivering its Council Plan 2022-26 and recognises the importance of understanding and responding to the town's diverse community and residents.

The strategy has identified the theme:

Recognising the different ways people from our diverse community choose to hear from us and communicate with us, targeting their needs and preferences

The strategy further identifies how this will be achieved, with the delivery plan outlining the activities and action that will support the council meet its commitment to diverse, accessible communications.

- ensure our communications and conversations reflects the full diversity of Watford

- work with our Elected Mayor, councillors, community leaders and groups to better understand our residents and how they want to hear from, and talk to, us ensure content (videos, online content, website forms, printed materials, advertising)
- meet accessibility standards and use images and photos that truly reflect the people of Watford
- use the data we have about our audiences to shape our communications and target resource towards the most impactful channels
- help to ensure equality of access to our services

This EIA identifies this will have a positive impact on all those with protected characteristics and that the importance of inclusive communications that reflects the town and residents has been considered and addressed.

Through this the council will be actively meeting the public sector equality duty, removing barriers and seeking ways that communications can foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those that don't.

B. Negative impacts

The following negative impacts have been considered during the course of this analysis.

As a diverse town, with residents from a range of ethnic backgrounds, we know language can be a barrier to participation and access to services and facilities. Equally, language and imagery can make people feel excluded where they do not reflect their lives and experiences. We will work with our community to understand how the commitments in the strategy can be effectively delivered and so they feel included not just in terms of communications but across our services and Council Plan.

As outlined above, we will make sure the language and imagery we use is culturally sensitive and reflects our town and residents, including those with protected characteristics, promoting the council and the town across the community and beyond so that there are no barriers to people accessing council services or enjoying all that the town has to offer.

We also recognise that, whilst communications moves more and more to online and digital, there are those for whom these are not easy to access. The strategy emphasises the need for channel mix and this will be considered as we plan and deliver our communications and consultations.

6. Overall conclusion

The new Communications and Conversations Strategy 2023-26 will have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics as it has identified the importance of making sure the council recognises that it needs to understand the different needs of its diverse community to deliver effective and successful communications and to build conversations that matter. Practical measures and actions such as ensuring imagery and language is sensitive to the Watford community, including those with protected characteristics and should actively promote our diversity as a town are ways the council can signal its intent. The strategy recognises this is a minimum and there will need to be ongoing and forward looking thinking that responds to the community and what we learn from feedback and engagement.

This EIA has been approved by: Kathryn Robson

Date: 1 September (version 1)

Summary of potential positive impacts and ways in which they can be ensured

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
<p>Delivery of the Communications and Conversations Strategy 2023-26 particularly in relation to the theme: <i>Recognising the different ways people from our diverse community choose to hear from us and communicate with us, targeting their needs and preferences</i></p>	<p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep our commitment to diverse channels at the forefront of our communications thinking and planning, recognising not all people receive information and messages in the same way or feedback their views • Remain committed to diverse images that represent Watford, recognising the power of images to make people feel included and part of their town • Recognise that our commitment will mean being proactive and asking our community how they want to receive information and hear from us – and how they want to share their views • Stay up to date and informed on any new ways of communicating and engaging • Identify opportunities where the community can be the ‘right voice’ for Watford, recognising these can be the best way to tell our story and share our messages

Summary of potential negative impacts and ways in which they can be removed or mitigated

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
<p>Potential if communications and conversations are not sensitive to those with protected characteristics, which could mean people face barriers or are excluded from accessing council services or other activities and services in the town</p>	<p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to diversity and inclusion within the new strategy and delivery plan is embedded and actioned • Specific areas such as language, imagery and channels are considered and addressed in communications planning and constantly reviewed • Ensure the strategy links to other key council policies, including the emerging EDI policy • Keep in touch with the community throughout the span of the strategy to ensure that it continues to be relevant and meet community need

Appendix 1

Full details of main languages spoken in Watford

Language	Number of residents
English (English or Welsh in Wales)	79,640
Other European language (EU): Romanian	3,361
Other European language (EU): Polish	1,659
South Asian language: Urdu	1,486
South Asian language: Tamil	1,193
Portuguese	1,140
South Asian language: Gujarati	954
South Asian language: Malayalam	643
Other European language (EU): Italian	551
Other European language (EU): Hungarian	489
Other European language (EU): Bulgarian	435
Spanish	432
East Asian language: Tagalog or Filipino	411
Arabic	390
South Asian language: Panjabi	380
South Asian language: Telugu	350
South Asian language: Hindi	343
South Asian language: Nepalese	310
West or Central Asian language: Persian or Farsi	270
South Asian language: Sinhala	268
Other European language (non EU): Albanian	260
French	244
South Asian language: Any other South Asian language	228
African language: Akan	224
Other European language (EU): Greek	223
Russian	199
Turkish	195
East Asian language: All other Chinese	170
South Asian language: Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya)	158
Other European language (EU): Lithuanian	156
East Asian language: Cantonese Chinese	136
Other European language (EU and non-EU): Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, and Montenegrin	116
West or Central Asian language: Pashto	96
Other European language (EU): Czech	89
South Asian language: Marathi	78
Other European language (EU): Slovak	77
African language: Any other African language	58
Other European language (EU): German	54
African language: Any other West African language	54
East Asian language: Japanese	53
East Asian language: Mandarin Chinese	49
African language: Shona	48

South Asian language: Pakistani Pahari (with Mirpuri and Potwari)	46
African language: Somali	46
Sign language: British Sign Language	45
Other European language (non EU): Ukrainian	44
East Asian language: Any other East Asian language	38
Other European language (EU): Latvian	34
Other European language (EU): Dutch	34
East Asian language: Thai	33
East Asian language: Korean	31
East Asian language: Vietnamese	28
African language: Igbo	26
African language: Afrikaans	25
West or Central Asian language: Kurdish	24
Other European language (EU): Swedish	21
Other European language (EU): Any other European language (EU)	21
African language: Swahili or Kiswahili	19
Other UK language: Romany English	17
West or Central Asian language: Any other West or Central Asian language	15
East Asian language: Malay	13
African language: Yoruba	12
African language: Tigrinya	10
Other European language (EU): Danish	9
West or Central Asian language: Hebrew	9
Other European language (EU): Estonian	8
Welsh or Cymraeg (in England only)	7
Caribbean Creole: Any other Caribbean Creole	7
African language: Amharic	7
Sign language: Any sign communication system	7
Other European language (EU): Slovenian	5
Other European language (EU): Finnish	4
African language: Any other Nigerian language	4
Other European language (non EU): Northern European language (non EU)	3
African language: Krio	3
African language: Lingala	3
Sign language: Any other sign language	3
Other UK language: Gaelic (Irish)	2
Other European language (EU): Maltese	2
African language: Luganda	2
Other European language (non EU): Any other Eastern European language (non EU)	1
Oceanic or Australian language	1
Caribbean Creole: English-based Caribbean Creole	1
Other UK language: Gaelic (Scottish)	0
Other UK language: Manx Gaelic	0
Other UK language: Gaelic (Not otherwise specified)	0
Other UK language: Cornish	0

Other UK language: Scots	0
Other UK language: Ulster Scots	0
Other UK language: Irish Traveller Cant	0
Other European language (non-national): Any Romani language	0
Other European language (non-national): Yiddish	0
North or South American language	0
Does not apply	3,892