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OF AN ENTRY
Deaths Registration Act

**Vital statistics of the
UK Jewish population:
births and deaths**

Dr Donatella Casale Mashiah

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The **Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)** is a London-based research organisation, consultancy and think-tank. It aims to advance the prospects of Jewish communities in the United Kingdom and across Europe by conducting research and informing policy development in dialogue with those best placed to positively influence Jewish life.

The **Board of Deputies of British Jews** is the voice of British Jewry – the only organisation based on cross-communal, democratic, grassroots representation. It is the first port of call for Government, media and others seeking to understand the Jewish community's interests and concerns.

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This study was produced by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research on behalf of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

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Executive summary

Jewish births

- Demographically, the Jewish community has turned an important corner in recent years. Following several decades of demographic decline, during which Jewish deaths consistently exceeded Jewish births, in every year since 2006 births have exceeded deaths, which implies, other things being equal, Jewish demographic growth in the UK.
- In 2015, an estimated 3,821 Jewish babies were born in the UK. This is an increase of 25% since 2005.
- Strictly Orthodox births were estimated to comprise 51% of all Jewish births in 2015.
- Between 1979 and 2015 there has been an average of 3,267 Jewish births each year. The most recent peak occurred in 2011 (3,869 births).
- In the eight years between 2007 and 2015, Strictly Orthodox births are estimated to have increased by 35%, climbing from 1,431 to 1,932. Over the same period, 'mainstream' Jewish births are also estimated to have increased by 2%, rising from 1,844 to 1,889.
- Circumcisions of male Jewish babies have long been used to derive UK Jewish birth statistics. There were 1,961 such circumcisions in 2015, an increase of 26% over the last decade. The number of such circumcisions taking place in the UK increased by 7.2% between 1979 and 2015, rising from 1,830 in 1979 to 1,961 in 2015.

Jewish deaths

- 2,411 Jewish deaths were recorded in the UK in 2016, the lowest number on record. This marks a decrease of 20% since 2006, although the number of deaths has remained almost constant for the last five years, decreasing just slightly, by 6%, between 2012 and 2016.
- On average, there were 3,738 Jewish deaths per annum between 1979 and 2016. The peak occurred in 1984 at 4,937.
- Between 1979 and 2016, recorded Jewish burials and cremations fell by almost half (48% or 2,245 deaths), mainly due to an overall drop in the size of the Jewish population.
- Between 2013 and 2016, cremations accounted for between 5.5% and 6.8% of all Jewish funerals, with no discernible trend. All of these cremations were carried out under the auspices of the Reform and Liberal movements, accounting on average for 22% of Reform/Liberal funerals carried out during that period.

- Denominationally, the majority of deaths (68%) in 2016 were ‘Central Orthodox’ – i.e. funerals conducted under the auspices of the United Synagogue, the Federation of Synagogues, or independent modern Orthodox synagogues. These were followed, in turn, by Reform at 18%, Liberal at 6%, Sephardi at 4%, Strictly Orthodox at 2% and Masorti at 1%. These proportions are reflective of the relative size of each group in the Jewish population at the oldest age bands.
- In proportionate terms, Central Orthodox burials accounted for 74% of all Jewish burials in 1992, and 68% in 2016. Reform burials climbed from 12% of the total in 1992 to 18% in 2016. Liberal funerals accounted for about 6% of the total throughout the period, while Strictly Orthodox burials decreased from 4% to 3%. Sephardi and Masorti both increased, from 2% to 4% in the former case, and from 0.3% to 1% in the latter.

Introduction

This report is the latest in a series of community statistics studies conducted in the United Kingdom since the 1960s. Throughout much of this period, this work was conducted by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, whose researchers developed the main methods employed. The last report in this series was published in 2013 and included data on births, deaths, marriages and divorces up to 2011/2012. This new report has been carried out by JPR under an agreement with the Board that provides funding for JPR to collect, analyse and disseminate key community statistics under the guidance of a joint JPR/Board of Deputies Management Team. The members of this team – which is comprised of Dr Sheila Gewolb and Phil Rosenberg from the Board of Deputies, Professor Stephen H. Miller OBE and Dr Jonathan Boyd from JPR, Professor Steven Haberman in the capacity of external independent academic, and Dr Donatella Casale Mashiah, the researcher with prime responsibility for the research programme – along with Dr Daniel Staetsky and Dr David Graham, both Senior Research Fellows at JPR, have all contributed their expertise and ideas in the course of preparing this report. We are grateful to all of them for their input and advice, as well as to Richard Goldstein and Judith Russell from the wider JPR team, both of whom have helped to manage and support the project as a whole. The full research programme which the Management Team oversees includes data on births and deaths, marriage and divorce, Jewish school enrolment and synagogue membership.

The focus of this report is on birth and death statistics in the Jewish community, including data up to and including 2016. These types of vital statistics are used to gauge the demographic health of a population. Births and deaths reflect natural life events and are critical to our understanding of population changes over time, particularly future population size and structure. The number of births in a population is an expression of the fertility of that population and its structure, in particular the number of women of fertile age. In a similar way, the number of deaths is an expression of the mortality of that population and its age structure. By monitoring the balance of births over deaths or vice versa (i.e. natural increase or decrease) it is possible to predict future trends, including the stability, growth or decline of the population.¹

No official vital statistics on Jewish births or deaths are available, since the religion of an individual is not recorded by UK authorities on the relevant documentation. Therefore, the collection of these data must be undertaken by the Jewish community itself. This communal tradition of collecting data on Jewish births and deaths significantly predates the collection of religion data in the national census, which has only happened twice in England, Scotland and Wales, in 2001 and 2011.² Alternative methods to replace the traditional national census are being evaluated by the UK Statistics Authority and the Office for National Statistics, and whilst a religion question will be included in the 2021 Census, there are no guarantees that this

1 Migration is also a component of population growth; however, it is not investigated in this report. For more on this, see Staetsky, L. D. (2017). *Are Jews Leaving Europe?* London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

2 Northern Ireland censuses have included a religion question since 1861.

will continue beyond then. Notwithstanding the extraordinary value of census data, censuses can only be carried out periodically, so vital statistics of the type included in this report serve as the principal instrument for making intercensal estimates of population, among other assessments, and help us to understand both what the long-term implications of any changes may be and why those changes are occurring. Further, it is not only the overarching story of the Jewish population that these data reveal that matters; it is also the numbers themselves. They are of significant value to local authorities, politicians, community leaders and charitable organisations, among others, since they can be applied to assess a variety of communal needs, such as childcare facilities, school places, elderly care facilities, religious services and burial grounds.

For all these reasons, the JPR team, and particularly the author of this report, Dr Donatella Casale Mashiah, wish to convey their deep gratitude to Maurice Levenson at the Initiation Society and to Dr Howard Cohen and the other mohelim at the Association for Reform and Liberal Mohelim, for their support, as well as the various Jewish communal umbrella organisations for their collaboration in the phases of the data collection. Thanks, too, to Martin Stern MBE for generously providing Manchester *Shalom Zachar* data, to the large number of volunteers and employees at the various synagogues and burial societies who dedicated their time to complete the survey and whose data constitute the core of this report, and to Daniel Vulkan and Marlena Schmool, whose dedicated work in the past forms the foundations of this study.

That work, and those data, along with the data collected for other components of the joint Board of Deputies/Institute for Jewish Policy Research project, are fundamental to our shared understanding of the UK Jewish population, and should serve as a key reference point for organisations working to support Jewish life in the country, both now and in the future. Certainly, that is the underlying intention of this study, and both JPR and the Board of Deputies are committed to ensuring this work continues for the foreseeable future.

Dr Jonathan Boyd
Executive Director

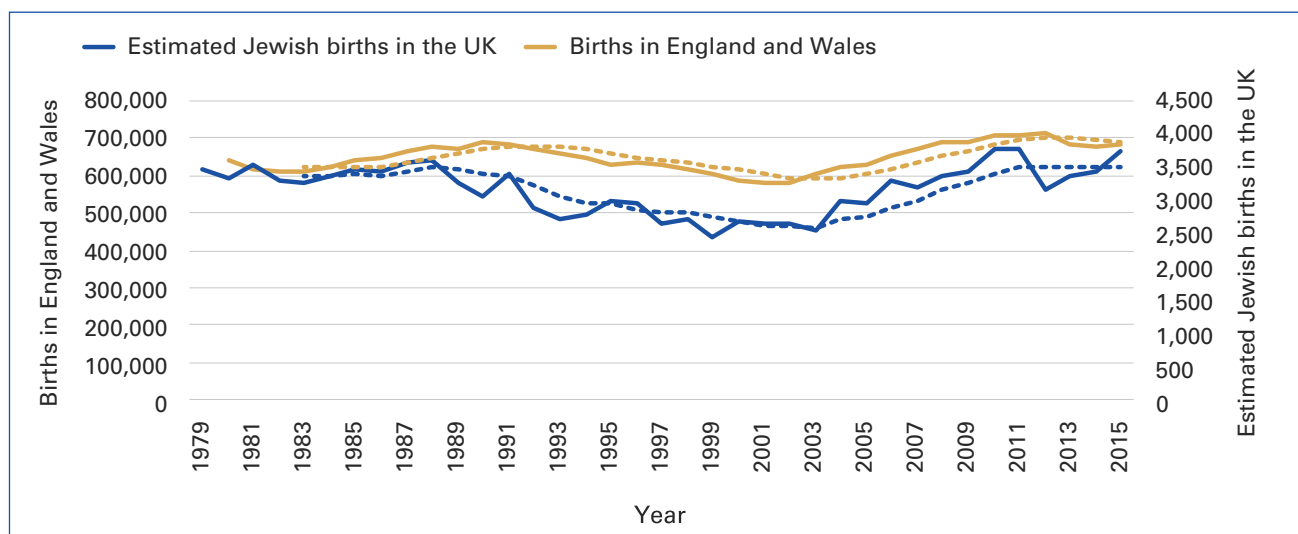
1 Birth data

Circumcision is one of the most fundamental tenets of Judaism and is widely practised by Jews across the world. In the absence of a direct measure for calculating the number of Jewish births, JPR and the Board of Deputies of British Jews use data on ritual circumcision (*brit milah*, literally ‘covenant of circumcision’) as a proxy.³

The data in Table 1 show that the number of such circumcisions in the UK has been growing over the past few decades. Indeed, between 1979 and 2015, which are, respectively, the first year for which the Board of Deputies’ Community Statistics Unit gathered comprehensive data and the most recent year for which JPR collected complete data, the number of ritual circumcisions increased by 7.2%, rising from 1,830 in 1979 to 1,961 in 2015. However, over the course of the last decade for which data are available (2005–2015), the number of such circumcisions per annum is estimated to have increased much more sharply, by 25.8%.

Between 1979 and 2015, Jewish births constituted, on average, 0.5% of all births in England and Wales. Over that period, the number of total births in England and Wales increased by 9.4% (or 59,824 births) whereas the number of Jewish births increased by the slightly lower rate of 7.4% (or 265 births). However, over the most recent ten-year period available for analysis, 2005 to 2015, total births in England and Wales increased by 8.1% (or 52,017 births), whereas Jewish births increased by 25.4% (or 775 births). Considering the average number of births per annum over periods of five years (see dotted line in Figure 1), counts first increased from 3,471 in 1983 to 3,586 in 1988 (+3.3%), before falling by 12% by 1993, reaching 3,156 estimated births at that time. They continued to fall in 1998 and 2003, by 8% and 7.4% respectively, when the estimated average number of births per annum was 2,903 and 2,687. However, by 2008 and 2013, the estimated number of births had recovered, increasing by 21% (3,252 average estimated Jewish births) and 10.5% (3,592 estimated Jewish births) respectively.

Figure 1. Estimated number of Jewish births compared to the total number of births in the general population of England and Wales, 1979–2015⁴



Note: The dashed lines denote the five-year rolling averages over the period shown.

3 Details of how this calculation is made can be found in the Appendix.

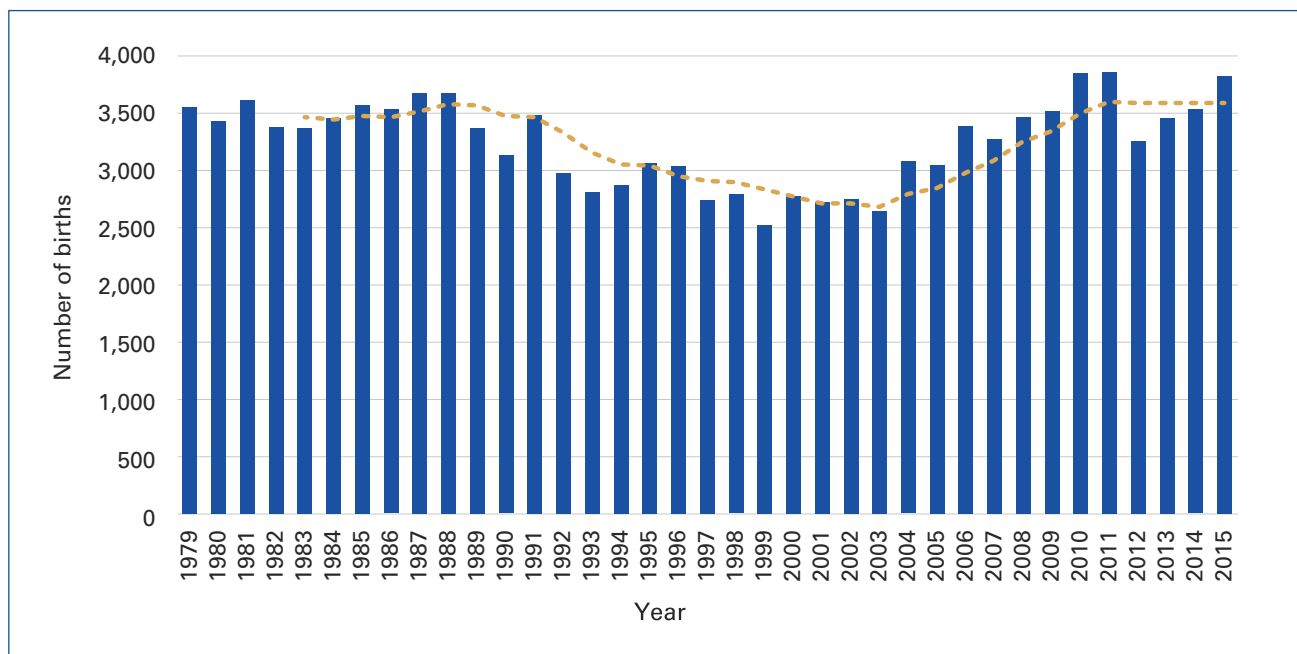
4 Data for the general population from ONS Death registrations summary tables – England and Wales: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/death-registrations-summary-tables-england-and-wales-referencetables.

Table 1. Ritual circumcisions and estimated Jewish births in the UK, 1979–2015⁵

Year	Total reported	Not reported (estimate)	Estimate of total	Multiplier	Estimated total Jewish births
1979	1,830	0	1,830	1.94	3,556
1980	1,757	0	1,757	1.95	3,432
1981	1,859	0	1,859	1.95	3,621
1982	1,736	0	1,736	1.95	3,381
1983	1,729	0	1,729	1.95	3,366
1984	1,771	0	1,771	1.95	3,459
1985	1,833	0	1,833	1.95	3,572
1986	1,812	0	1,812	1.95	3,535
1987	1,888	0	1,888	1.95	3,680
1988	1,884	0	1,884	1.95	3,681
1989	1,727	0	1,727	1.95	3,371
1990	1,605	0	1,605	1.95	3,136
1991	1,783	0	1,783	1.95	3,478
1992	1,529	0	1,529	1.95	2,981
1993	1,446	0	1,446	1.95	2,816
1994	1,475	0	1,475	1.95	2,873
1995	1,574	0	1,574	1.95	3,071
1996	1,559	0	1,559	1.95	3,036
1997	1,405	0	1,405	1.95	2,742
1998	1,432	0	1,432	1.95	2,794
1999	1,296	0	1,296	1.95	2,524
2000	1,427	0	1,427	1.95	2,786
2001	1,398	0	1,398	1.95	2,729
2002	1,411	0	1,411	1.95	2,748
2003	1,357	0	1,357	1.95	2,649
2004	1,579	0	1,579	1.95	3,076
2005	1,709	0	1,559	1.95	3,046
2006	1,705	27	1,732	1.96	3,387
2007	1,439	243	1,682	1.95	3,275
2008	1,479	300	1,779	1.95	3,474
2009	1,222	586	1,808	1.95	3,526
2010	1,544	433	1,977	1.95	3,853
2011	1,635	348	1,983	1.95	3,869
2012	1,595	75	1,670	1.95	3,255
2013	1,724	51	1,775	1.95	3,460
2014	1,796	20	1,816	1.95	3,539
2015	1,933	28	1,961	1.95	3,821

5 The figures shown in this report for years prior to 2012 may differ slightly from previously published figures due to subsequent adjustments. Previous reports include: Graham, D., and Vulkan, D. (2007a). *Community Statistics 2005*. London: Board of Deputies of British Jews Community Statistics Unit; Graham, D., and Vulkan, D. (2007b). *Britain's Jewish Community Statistics 2006*. London: Board of Deputies of British Jews Community Statistics Unit; Graham, D., and Vulkan, D. (2008a). *Britain's Jewish Community Statistics 2007*. London: Board of Deputies of British Jews Community Statistics Unit; Vulkan, D. (2012). *Britain's Jewish Community Statistics 2010*. London: Board of Deputies of British Jews Community Statistics Unit; Vulkan, D. (2013). *Britain's Jewish Community Statistics in 2012*. London: Board of Deputies of British Jews Community Statistics Unit.

Figure 2. Estimated total Jewish births, 1979–2015



Note: The dashed line denotes the five-year rolling average over the period shown. It begins in 1983, as that is the first year for which a five-year average is available.

Figure 2 shows the annual number of estimated total Jewish births between 1979 and 2015. The data include both male and female births. On average, there were 3,267 estimated births each year over this period. The number of births shows a shallow U-shaped trend over time, mainly declining between 1979 and 2003 and increasing between 2003 and 2015.⁶

6 The biggest drops in the number of Jewish births occurred in 1992 (-14%) and 2012 (-16%), although the lowest number of Jewish births (estimated) was recorded in 1999 (2,524). Among the general population in England and Wales the biggest drop happened in 2013 (-4%) and the lowest number of births was recorded in 1977 (569,259). Considering recorded circumcisions, the biggest drops happened in 2009 (-17%) and 2007 (-16%) and the lowest number of reported circumcisions was recorded in 2009 (1,222). Fluctuations in these numbers can be attributed to several reasons, notably, in the case of births, the number of women of fertile age, and, in the case of circumcisions, the number of male Jewish births. It is worth noticing that between 2007 and 2011, the Board of Deputies had to depend heavily on estimates of the numbers of circumcisions carried out by some mohelim. This is a major concern and significantly reduces the credibility of those figures. Therefore, the drop observed between 2011 (when estimated unreported figures amounted to 348) and 2012 (when they amounted to 75) may be due to the fact that previous figures could have been somehow inflated by the higher portion of estimated circumcisions.

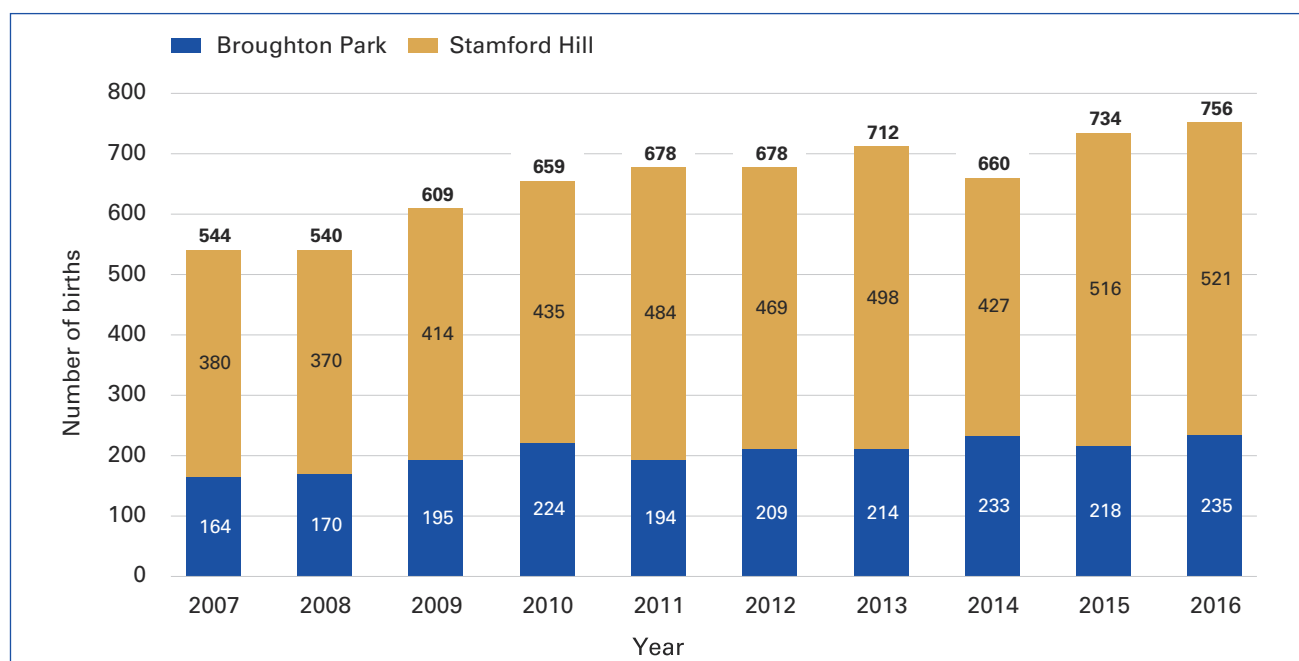
The decline in Jewish births observed between 1979 and 2003 could be due to the decrease in the number of Jewish women of reproductive age over that time, or to the lower fertility of these women, or both. Similarly, the increase in births observed since 2003 could be due to the increase in the number of Jewish women of reproductive age, the increase in their fertility, or both.

Strictly Orthodox births

Stamford Hill (including Seven Sisters) in North London, and Broughton Park in Manchester in the North West of England, host two of the three largest Strictly Orthodox (*haredi*) communities in the UK (and Europe). Together, these two areas account for almost three-quarters of all Strictly Orthodox households.⁷ Besides Stamford Hill and Broughton Park, other areas of high Strictly Orthodox concentration can be found in London (Borough of Barnet), and outside London, in Gateshead in the North East of England. Considering all

7 See Casale Mashiah, D. and Boyd, J. (2017). *Synagogue membership in the United Kingdom in 2016*. London: The Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

Figure 3. Estimated Strictly Orthodox male births in Broughton Park and Stamford Hill, 2007–2016



households enumerated in the directories of the Strictly Orthodox community in the year 2013, these four areas alone accounted for 8,554 Strictly Orthodox Jewish households – about 7.5% of all Jewish households in the UK (114,527), as recorded by the 2011 Census. Of those Strictly Orthodox households, Stamford Hill housed 48.6% of the total (4,156 households),⁸ North Manchester housed 24% (2,055 households), Barnet housed 22% (1,885 households) and Gateshead 5.4% (458 households).

Data on births in Broughton Park and Stamford Hill are drawn from the notices of *Shalom Zachar* (literally ‘welcoming the male’ celebrations) in Broughton Park, and *Kol Mevasser* (literally ‘announcements’) in Stamford Hill, both of which serve the purpose of helping to organise informal celebratory gatherings that take place during the week following the birth of a baby boy.⁹

8 There has been some movement recently of Strictly Orthodox households from Stamford Hill to Canvey Island in the East of England that, to date, is estimated to amount to around 45 households (200 people). In the data presented in this report they remain part of the community in Stamford Hill, not least because their birth announcements are included in those presented for Stamford Hill.

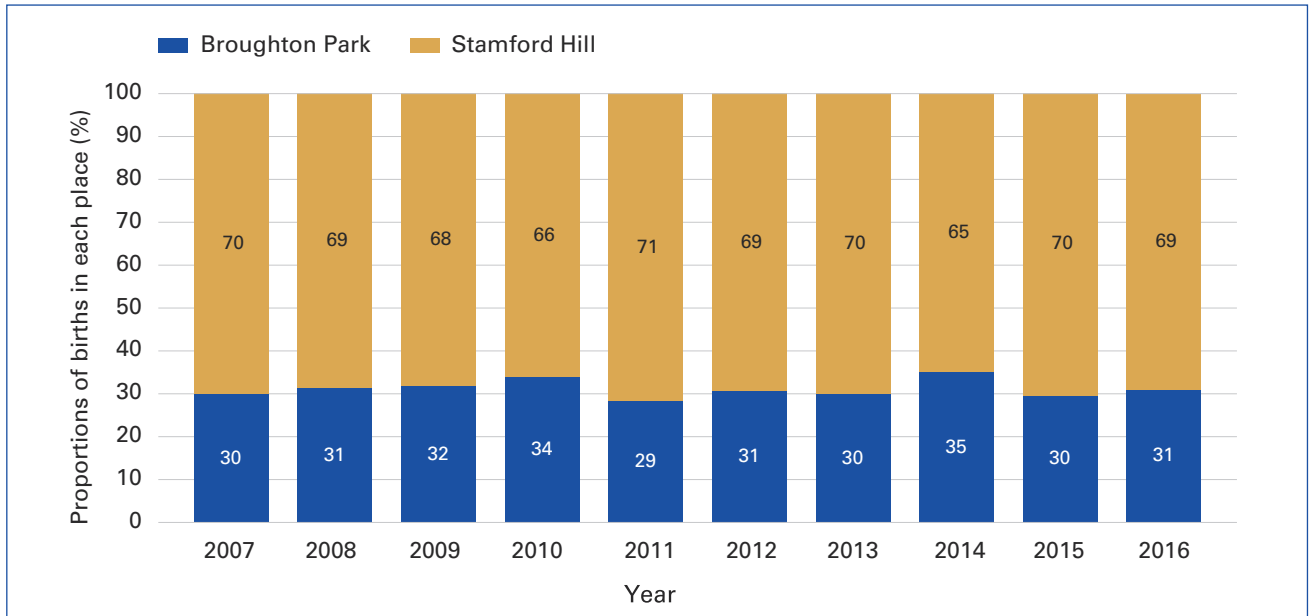
9 Both announcements also include notices about the birth of baby girls in a separate section.

These notices are used to estimate the number of Strictly Orthodox male births in those areas. Equivalent announcements are not available in Barnet and Gateshead.

Figure 3 shows the estimated number of Strictly Orthodox male births based on these administrative sources in Broughton Park and Stamford Hill between 2007 and 2016. The average annual increase in male births over this period was 3.9%, a rate which is broadly consistent with other research documenting the growth of the Strictly Orthodox population.¹⁰ Estimated male births in Broughton Park increased from 164 in 2007 to 235 in 2016, a growth of 43.3%. In Stamford Hill, births increased from 380 to 521 over the same timeframe, representing a slightly smaller growth rate of 37%, or 141 births. Thus, in these two areas alone, the estimated number of boys born to Strictly Orthodox Jewish families was 544 in 2007, rising to 756 (+39%, or 212 births) by 2016.

10 See Graham, D., and Vulkan, D. (2008b). *Population trends among Britain's strictly Orthodox Jews*. London: Board of Deputies of British Jews; Staetsky, L. D., and Boyd, J. (2015). *Strictly Orthodox Rising: What the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

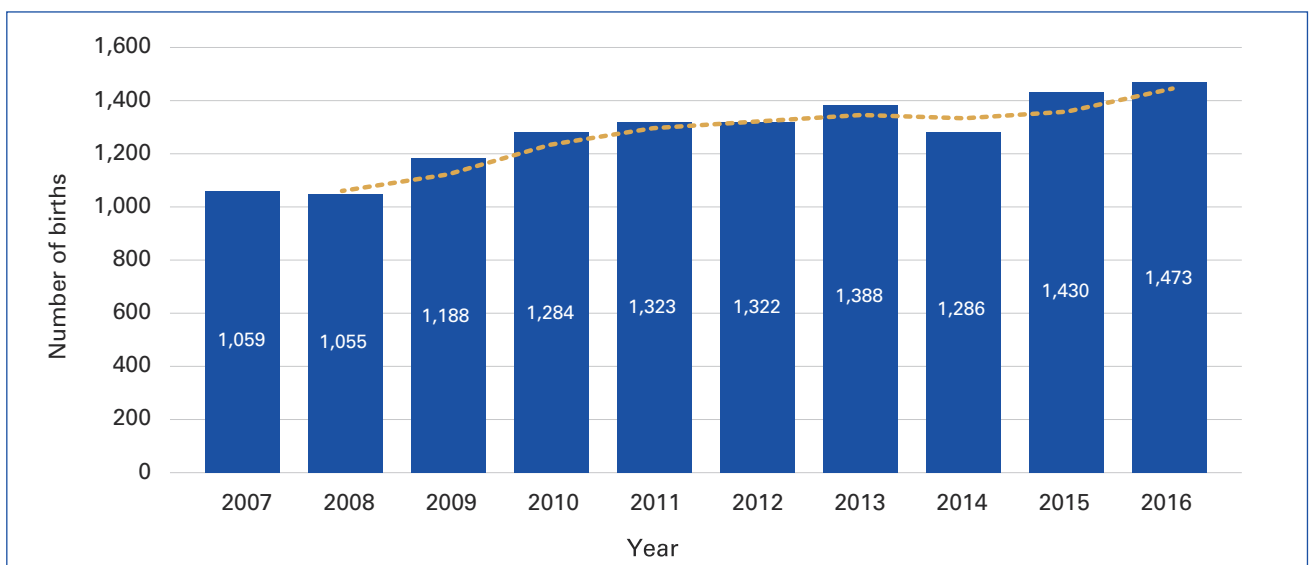
Figure 4. Proportion of total estimated male births in Broughton Park and Stamford Hill, 2007–2016



Based on these data, there does not appear to be any kind of significant shift going on between the Strictly Orthodox Jewish populations based in Stamford Hill and Broughton Park. The proportions of male births in each place has remained largely consistent over the past decade (Figure 4).

Based on data on male births,¹¹ Figure 5 shows estimated total Strictly Orthodox births, including both males and females, between 2007 and 2016 in Stamford Hill and Broughton Park. Strictly Orthodox births increased by 39% over the decade, rising from 1,059 in 2007 to 1,473 in 2016. On average, estimated total Strictly

Figure 5. Estimated total Strictly Orthodox births (including males and females) in Stamford Hill and Broughton Park, 2007–2016



Note: The dashed line denotes the two-year rolling averages over the period shown.

11 For methodological details, please see the methodology section at the end of this report.

Table 2. Pupils in Haredi schools and Strictly Orthodox births in 2015

Geographic area	School population 2014/2015	School population 2014/2015, %	Estimated Strictly Orthodox births, 2015
Stamford Hill and Broughton Park	12,581	74.05	1,430
Barnet	3,358	19.76	386*
Gateshead	1,051	6.19	116*
Total	16,990	100	1,932

*Estimates based on school population data. Percentages have been subjected to rounding.

Orthodox births increased by 3.9% each year over this period, with peaks in 2009 and 2015 when births increased by 12.6% and 11.2% over the previous year respectively. The two-year rolling averages, represented by the dotted line, convey the increasing trend of estimated total Strictly Orthodox births.

These data exclude Strictly Orthodox births in Barnet and Gateshead, where, as said, notices on the births of baby boys and girls are not available. However, these areas alone are estimated to house 27.4% of all Strictly Orthodox households in the UK. Therefore, in order to estimate the number of boys and girls born to haredi families in these two geographic areas, we have used data on the proportion of pupils attending haredi schools, as collected by the 2014/2015 school census.¹² By assuming that the proportions attending haredi Jewish schools in those areas reflect the proportion of children born into haredi households there, we also assume that all Jewish children born into such households will attend haredi Jewish schools. On the basis of these assumptions, it is estimated that, in 2015, Strictly Orthodox births (including males and females) numbered 386 in Barnet and 116 in Gateshead, accounting for 20% and 6% of the total number of estimated Strictly Orthodox births respectively (Table 2).

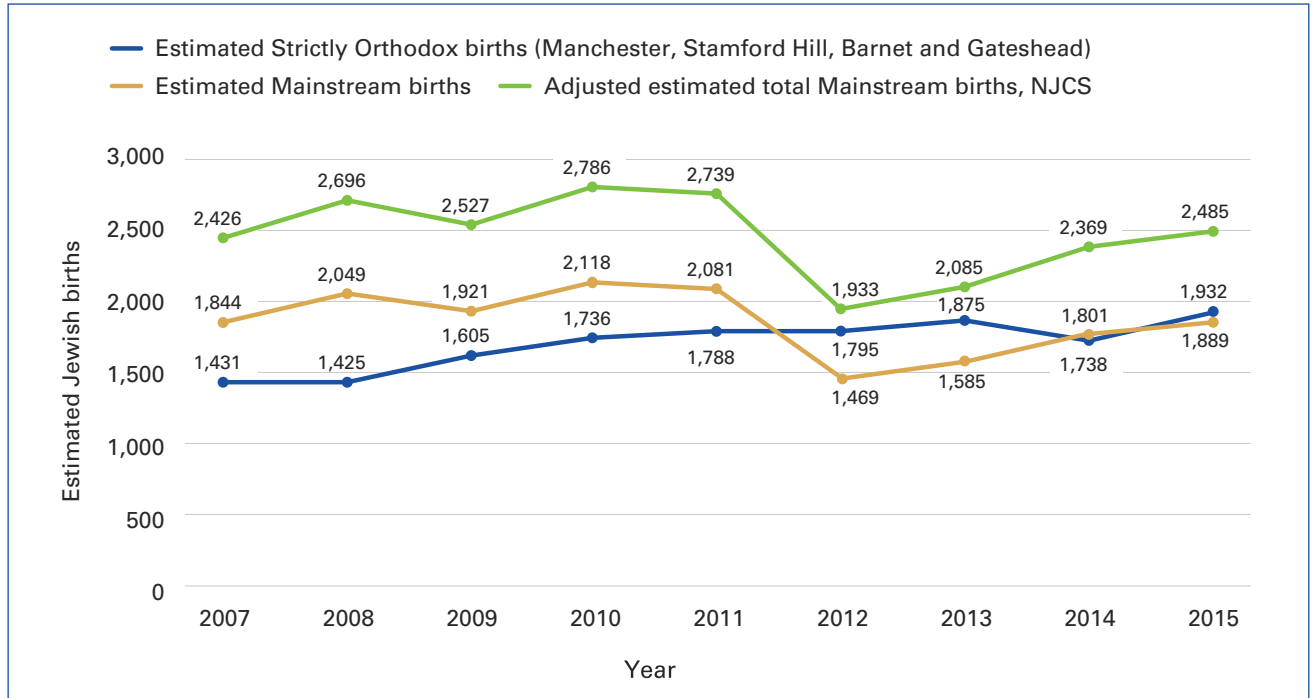
These proportions of births in each geographic area are interestingly similar to the proportions of haredi households living in those areas as enumerated by the haredi telephone and business directories, mentioned earlier. Assuming that these proportions would stay constant, the proportion of haredi births in Barnet and Gateshead between 2007 and 2015 and the residual proportion of births attributed to the mainstream sector of the community can be estimated.

Figure 6 shows that between 2007 and 2015, the estimated number of Strictly Orthodox births per annum increased by 35%, rising from 1,431 to 1,932. The estimated number of 'Mainstream' (non-Strictly Orthodox) births per annum also increased over the same period, by 2.4%, going from 1,844 to 1,889. The balance between Mainstream and Strictly Orthodox births shifted in 2012 when it was estimated that Strictly Orthodox births accounted for the majority of Jewish births (54.9%) for the first time. However, this figure may well understate the total number of Mainstream births, since it does not include Jewish babies circumcised by doctors in hospitals without a religious ceremony or those whose parents chose not to circumcise them at all. In order to account for these babies, we have added an adjustment based on data collected in JPR's 2013 National Jewish Community Survey,¹³ which showed that 16% of parents declared not to have circumcised their male child and a further 8% said their child

12 For more on Jewish schools in the United Kingdom see Staetsky, L.D. and Boyd, J. (2016). *The rise and rise of Jewish Schools in the United Kingdom: Numbers, trends and policy issues*. London: The Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

13 The survey data have been weighted to match the population in terms of age, sex and affiliation using the most recent Census data (2011) and the latest synagogue membership report by Casale Mashiah and Boyd (2017) op. cit.

Figure 6. Estimated Mainstream and Strictly Orthodox births including Barnet and Gateshead, 2007–2015



was circumcised by a doctor in a hospital without a religious ceremony.¹⁴ Assuming that all of these parents belong to the Mainstream strand of the community, the estimated number of Mainstream births for 2015 can be adjusted from 1,889 to 2,485. The adjusted estimated figures show that Mainstream births are still predominant, but, indeed, whilst annual fluctuations occur, the

direction of travel of the balance between estimated Mainstream births and Strictly Orthodox births is clear – an ever larger proportion of births is haredi. Previous estimates based on census data indicate that Strictly Orthodox children are expected to constitute about half of all Jewish children aged 0–4 years in Britain by 2031.¹⁵

14 For more detail please see the methodology section.

15 Staetsky, L. D., and Boyd, J. (2015) op. cit.

2 Deaths data

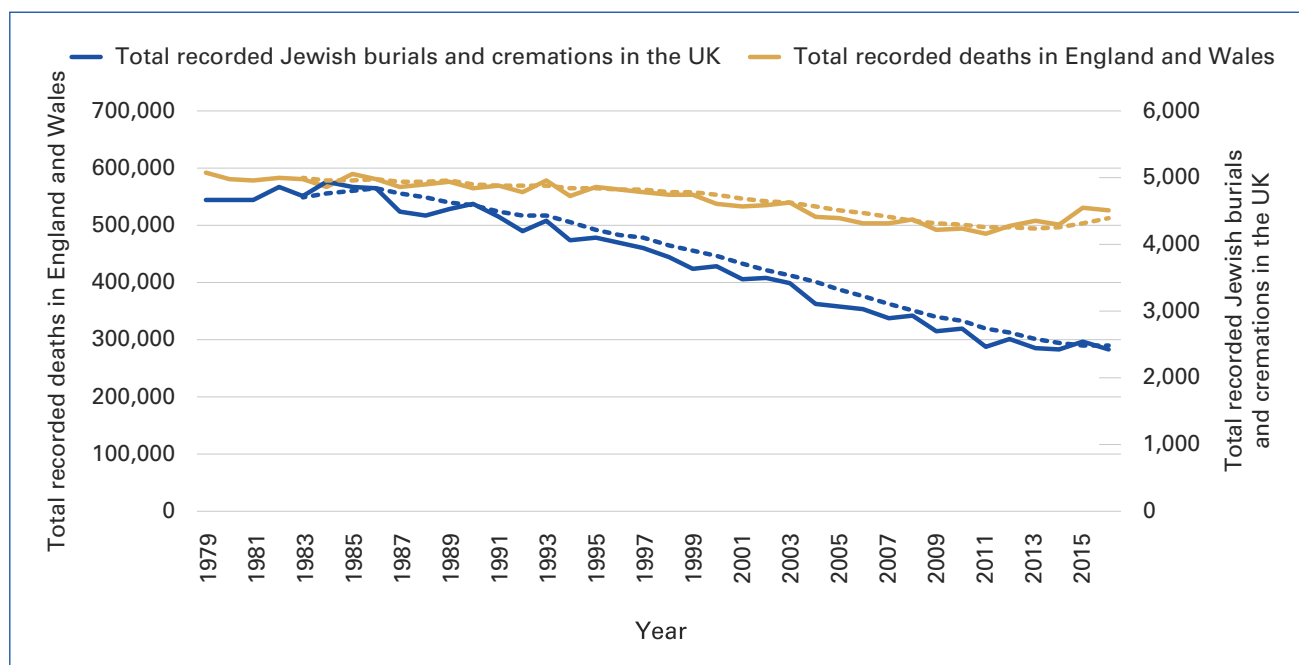
There are no official statistics recording a person's religion at the time of their death, so JPR and the Board of Deputies collect data on Jewish burials and cremations¹⁶ on behalf of the community.

Traditionally, when settling in a location, local Jewish communities established a *chevra kadisha* for the ritual care of the deceased. In Britain, these often developed into burial and friendly societies, which either purchased burial grounds or arranged for separate Jewish sections in municipal cemeteries. In order to estimate Jewish deaths annually, we investigate the total number of persons buried or cremated under the auspices of such burial societies or synagogues,

irrespective of whether the deceased had any involvement in the organised Jewish community during their life.

Between 1979 and 2016, the total number of deaths among the general populations of England and Wales decreased by 11.5%, or the equivalent of 67,971 deaths per annum. Over that period, there was an average of 544,851 deaths per annum, compared to an average of 3,738 Jewish deaths per annum, meaning that, on average, Jewish deaths constituted 0.7% of all deaths in England and Wales (Figure 7).

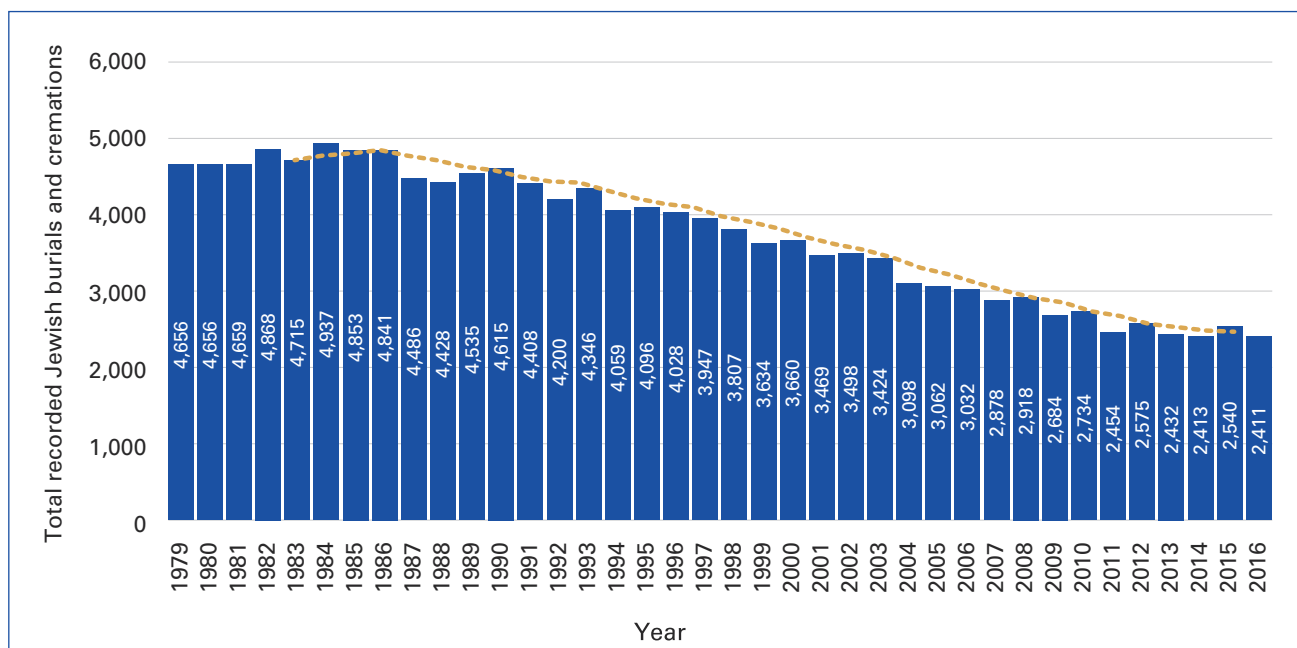
Figure 7. Total recorded Jewish burials and cremations in the UK and total deaths among the general population in England and Wales, 1979–2016¹⁷



Note: The dashed lines denote the five-year rolling averages over the period shown.

16 Cremation is prohibited under Orthodox Jewish law, but some Jews choose, nevertheless, to be cremated. See section on cremation.

17 Data for the general population from ONS Death registrations summary tables – England and Wales: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/deathregistrationsummarytablesenglandandwalesreferencetables.

Figure 8. Total recorded Jewish burials and cremations in the United Kingdom, 1979–2016¹⁸

Note: The dashed line denotes the five-year rolling averages over the period shown.

Figure 8 shows the total number of recorded Jewish burials and cremations between 1979 and 2016. The data show a decreasing trend over time. The total number of recorded Jewish deaths in 1979 was 4,656. This figure had dropped by 48.2% (or 2,245 deaths) by 2016, when recorded Jewish deaths amounted to 2,411, the lowest level found since the Board of Deputies started collating these data.

Similarly to births, the numbers of deaths are a function of population numbers and the rate of mortality. The significant decline in Jewish deaths (48.2%) over the period shown, compared to the rather more modest decline in deaths among the general population (11%) is related to the decrease in the Jewish population over that period. Whereas the Jewish population of the UK was estimated at 410,000 individuals between 1960 and 1965,¹⁹

18 Data 1980–1990 from Haberman, S. and Schmool, M. (1995). ‘Estimates of the British Jewish population 1984–88.’ *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series A (Statistics in Society)*, pp.547–562. Data for 1979 and 1991 have been estimated based on existing data. Data from 1992 to 2012 from Vulkan (2013) op. cit.

19 Prais, S.J. and Schmool, M. (1968). *The Size and Structure of the Anglo-Jewish Population, 1960–1965*. London: Board of Deputies of British Jews.

it had fallen to an estimated 271,295 individuals in 2011,²⁰ a decline of 33.8%. In contrast, the British population increased from 50.3 million in mid-1951²¹ to 63.2 million in 2011²² (+25.6%).²³ So, in the Jewish population, the more substantial drop in the number of deaths is due to the twin effects of an overall drop in Jewish population figures, and a drop in the rate of mortality.

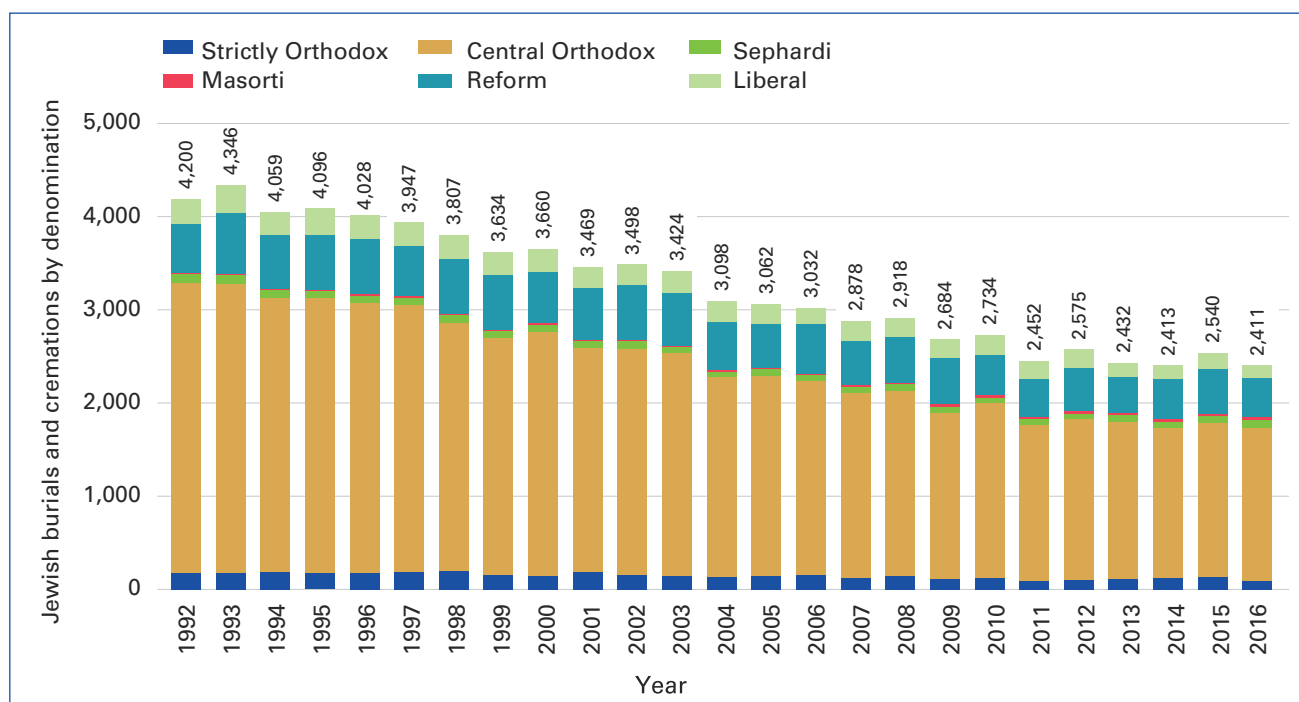
20 ONS, 2011 Census of the population. It is probable that the rate of decline is lower than that shown, as Census data exclude those who opted not to answer the religion question.

21 Jefferies, J. (2005). ‘The UK population: past, present and future.’ In *Focus on people and migration* (pp.1–17). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

22 ONS, 2011 Census of the population.

23 Births in England and Wales declined from 875,972 in 1964 to 695,233 in 2014 (–20.6%). Further information can be found in: ONS (2015). *Trends in births and deaths over the last century*. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/articles/trends-in-births-and-deaths-over-the-last-century/2015-07-15.

Figure 9. Jewish burials and cremations by denomination, 1992–2016



Cremations

Cremations are prohibited by Orthodox and Conservative (Masorti) rabbinic authorities, so the practice only occurs within the Reform and Liberal strands of the community. In general, it remains marginal among Jews, in contrast to the general population of the UK.

Indeed, among the general population in the UK, three-quarters of all funerals (75%)²⁴ now involve cremation, a proportion that has increased significantly over time. Cremation was virtually unknown at the end of the nineteenth century, and remained below 1% of all funerals until the 1930s. Yet its prevalence has grown since then, crossing the 50% barrier in 1968, and reaching 75% for the first time in 2013. Bearing in mind a growing general population and the increasing pressure on land space, this upward trend is not expected to change.

In the period 2013–2016, the percentage of Jewish funerals conducted by cremation fluctuated between 5.5% and 6.8%, with no discernible trend. All of these cremations were carried out

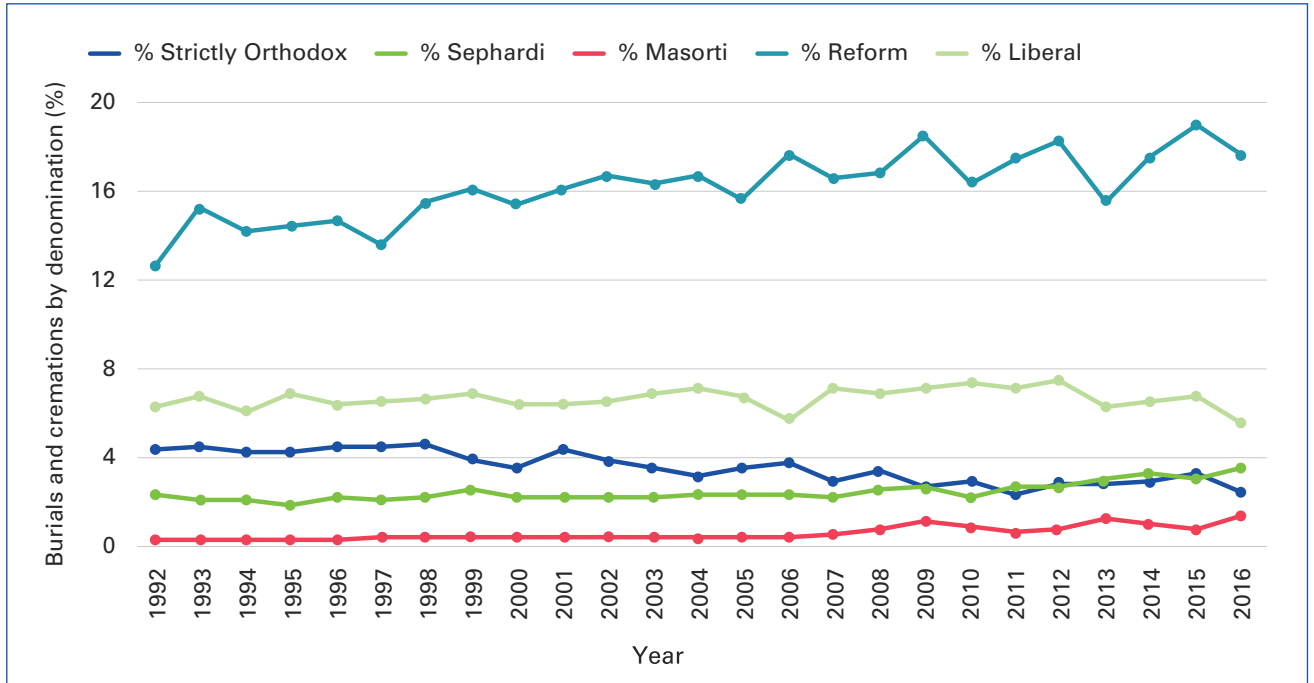
under the auspices of the Reform and Liberal movements. Within those movements, cremations accounted for 21.7% of funerals carried out under their auspices in 2013. The proportion increased slightly to 22.8% in 2014 and 23.7% in 2015, but then decreased to 20.9% in 2016. Again, no discernible trend can be observed.

Deaths by denomination

Changes in the denominational breakdown of Jewish deaths partially reflect a broader change in the make-up of the Jewish community. Long-term data on the total annual number of Jewish deaths show that between 1992 and 2016, Strictly Orthodox burials decreased by an estimated 43.2%, falling from 183 to 104 per annum. Central Orthodox and Liberal burials decreased slightly more: by 48% in the case of the former (from 3,120 to 1,634), and 48.7% (from 261 to 134) in the latter. Sephardi burials also show some signs of decrease over time (-11.5% going from 96 to 85), and Reform ones also decreased, by 19.5% (from 527 to 424). Only Masorti burials buck this trend, although the numbers are very small, increasing by 140.2% from a low base of 13 in 1992 to 31 in 2016 (Figure 9). However,

²⁴ See the Cremation Society of Britain: www.cremation.org.uk/statistics.

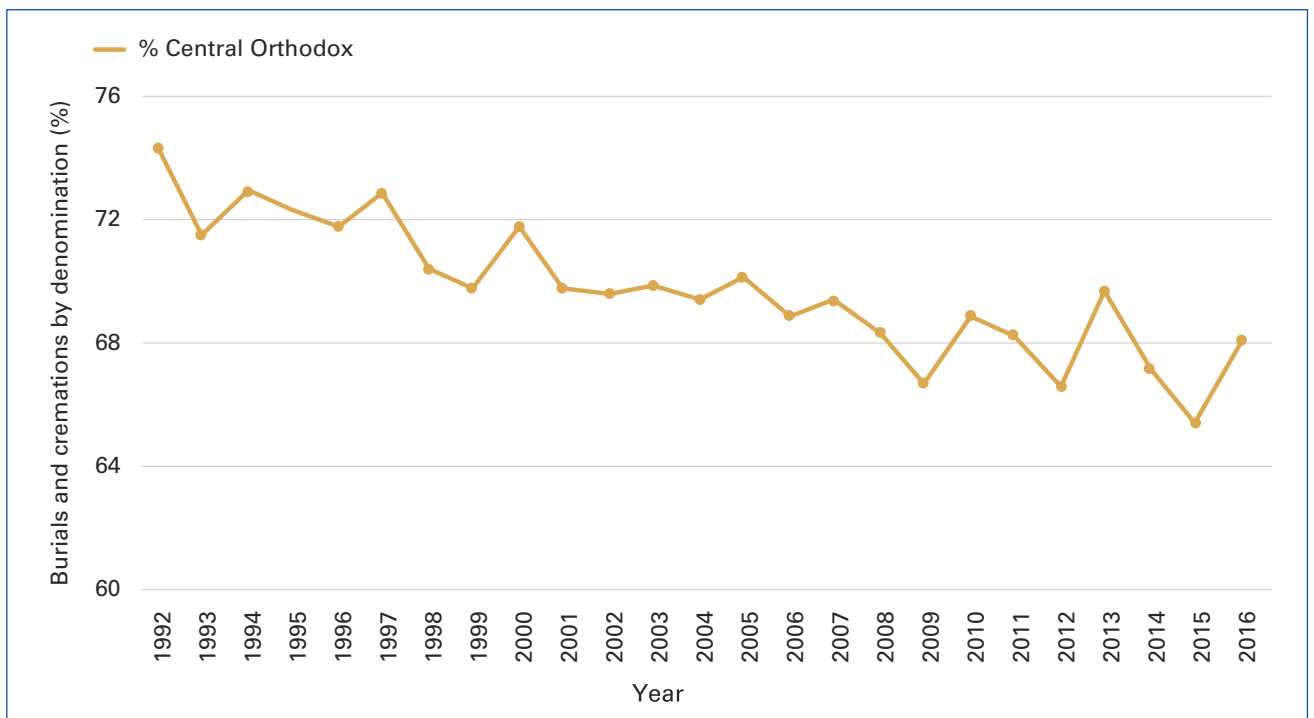
Figure 10A. Proportions of burials and cremations by Jewish denomination out of total annual burials and cremations, 1992–2016



Masorti is the only mainstream denomination that has increased its membership significantly over that period, which explains the increase.

Figures 10A and 10B show the proportions of burials and cremations by denomination for every year between 1992 and 2016. Central Orthodox deaths have constituted an increasingly smaller

Figure 10B. Proportions of Central Orthodox burials and cremations out of total annual burials and cremations, 1992–2016



proportion of the whole over the period (decreasing from 74.3% to 68.1%). Reform, on the other hand, have constituted an increasingly large proportion, accounting for 12.5% of the total in 1992 and 17.7% in 2016. The proportion of Liberal funerals remained broadly the same (accounting for about 6% of the total throughout the period), while Strictly Orthodox funerals decreased from 4.4% to 2.5%. Finally, Sephardi and Masorti both saw an increase in the number of funerals on the total, rising respectively from 2.3% to 3.5% in the former case, and from 0.3% to 1.3% in the latter.

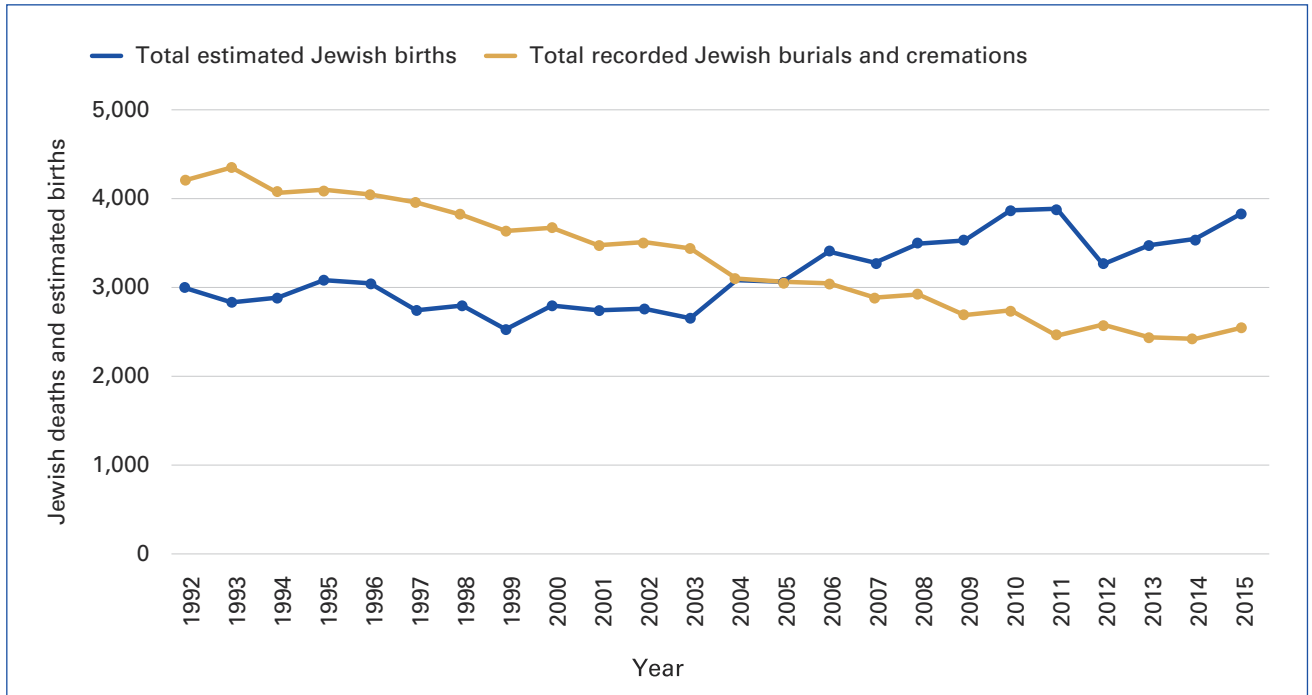
On the one hand, these proportions reflect the denominational makeup of the community, and on the other, they reflect an overall drop in Jewish population figures. In 1990, two-thirds of all synagogue members (66.4%) belonged to a Central Orthodox synagogue, but that proportion had fallen by 13.6 percentage points by 2016, when Central Orthodox Jews accounted for just over a half of all affiliated Jews (52.8%). Sephardi Jews accounted for 3.3% of the total membership in 1990, while in 2016 their share of membership had fallen to 2.9%. In proportionate terms, both the Reform and Liberal denominations have seen their share of synagogue members grow slightly since 1990, rising by 2% (from 17% to 19%) in the case of Reform, and by 0.4% (from 7.8% to 8.2%) in the case of Liberal. Masorti,

too, has increased its share of affiliated members, albeit from a lower base, climbing from just over 1% of the whole in 1990, to over 3% in 2016. Finally, whereas just 4.5% of all synagogue members in 1990 were affiliated with a Strictly Orthodox synagogue, by 2016 that proportion had jumped to 13.5%.²⁵ It is worth noting that between 1990 and 2016, almost all denominational strands have been shrinking, except for Masorti and the Strictly Orthodox. In fact, in absolute terms, Central Orthodox membership figures have declined by over a third (-36.6%) over the past quarter of a century. In the same period, membership of Reform synagogues has declined by 8% and membership of Liberal synagogues has fallen by 16%. In contrast, Masorti has grown by 114%, and Strictly Orthodox membership figures have increased even more dramatically, by 139%. However, the causes of these increases are different. In the case of Masorti, they can be explained largely by denominational switching from other parts of the community, which also accounts for the increasing proportion of Jews wishing to be buried under Masorti auspices over the years. In the case of the *haredi* community, the increase is driven predominantly by demographic forces (particularly high birth rates), so it will be some time before we see any significant evidence of a major upswing in the number of funerals in this sector.

25 See Casale Mashiah and Boyd (2017) op. cit.

3 Jewish natural increase

Figure 11. Jewish deaths and estimated Jewish births, 1992–2015



The difference (i.e. balance) between births and deaths is called the *natural increase* of a population.

As noted in previous JPR reports, the demographic profile of the Jewish community has clearly turned a corner following several decades of decline. In every year since 2006 the number of births has *exceeded* the number of deaths, whereas prior to this the reverse was the case – deaths exceeded births. While the overall size of a population is also shaped by migration, adhesions, secessions (i.e. conversions, assimilation, etc.), this shift in the balance is highly significant: it indicates population growth, other things being equal (Figure 11).²⁶

What caused the reversal from Jewish natural decrease to natural increase? In order to explain the trends observed, it is very important to consider both their causes and consequences, alongside the denominational makeup of the community. Demographic transitions are heralded by gradual,

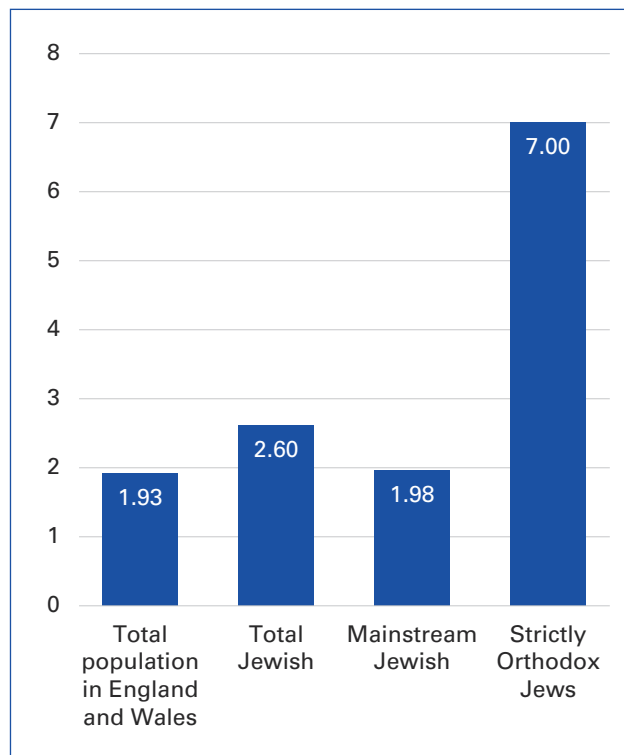
then rapid, declines in mortality, followed by declines in fertility. In today's more-developed countries, life expectancy at birth has nearly doubled in less than a century²⁷ due to economic developments, improving living standards, public health measures, sanitary reforms and advancements in medicine. Indeed, this transition in mortality has been unprecedented in history, both in the UK and worldwide. Although, as a whole, the British Jewish population is quite aged relative to the general population, its mortality is at its lowest point historically.²⁸ The trends we see in the declining number of deaths in the UK, both among the general population and among Jews, are the result of this transition. At the same time, compositional change (i.e. the increase in the share of the Strictly Orthodox in the total Jewish population) and high fertility among the Strictly Orthodox drive up the overall number of births.

26 See DellaPergola S. (2018) 'World Jewish Population, 2017.' In: Dashefsky A., Sheskin I. (eds). *American Jewish Year Book 2017*. Vol. 117. Springer, Cham.

27 Lundquist, J.H., Anderton, D.L. and Yaukey, D. (2007). *Demography: the study of human population*. Waveland Press.

28 See Staetsky, L., (2011). 'Mortality of British Jews at the Turn of the 20th Century in a Comparative Perspective.' *European Journal of Population/Revue européenne de Démographie*, 27(3), p.361.

Figure 12. Estimated total fertility rates in England and Wales in 2011³⁰



The average number of children that would be born to a woman over her lifetime is given by the total fertility rate (TFR), which can be estimated by comparing the relationship between the number of children aged 0–4 years to the number of women of reproductive age in a specific year. An estimation of the TFR for Jews in comparison to the general

population in England and Wales for the year 2011 is shown in Figure 12.²⁹ The fertility of the Jewish population as a whole (2.60) is higher than the fertility of the total population of England and Wales (1.93), and is also significantly higher than the conventional cut-off point for the level of fertility sufficient for population replacement (2.10).

However, these data conflate the high fertility rate of Strictly Orthodox Jews, which is estimated to be in the range of six to seven children per woman, with the much lower rate of non-Strictly Orthodox women. The fertility of the Mainstream Jewish population (1.98) is slightly higher than the fertility of the total population in England and Wales, but it does not reach replacement level. Therefore, the high fertility rates among the haredi sector are the main reason why we observe the positive natural increase of the Jewish population in the UK since 2006. This also explains why Jewish births between 2005 and 2015 increased at three times the rate of the increase in births among the general population in England and Wales over that period. Hypothetically, the fertility of the Strictly Orthodox population may fall in the course of time. However, the size of this population may continue to grow anyway, simply because future cohorts of mothers (and fathers) are much larger in absolute terms than the reproducing cohorts of today.

²⁹ The figure is based on Census data.

³⁰ Staetsky and Boyd (2015) op. cit.

Methodology

This section is designed to explain the methodological approach that guided the production of this report. In the first instance, it is worth considering what the data do and do not explain. As discussed in previous reports on this topic, the main caveats relating to data about births and deaths and calculations of natural increase are that the findings do not take account of migration to or from the UK, nor do they allow for those who choose to convert to Judaism, leave Judaism completely, or indeed return to it after a period of rejection or non-association.

Jewish births data

The practice of *brit milah* in the UK is overseen by two bodies: the Initiation Society (IS) and the Association of Reform and Liberal Mohelim (ARLM). The Initiation Society includes about sixty *mohelim* and works closely with the London Beth Din (Orthodox rabbinical court of law). The Association of Reform and Liberal Mohelim represents Progressive mohelim, and at the time of writing, includes four mohelim working under its auspices. The choice of a mohel from either one of these bodies may not necessarily reflect the denominational affiliation of the parents. It is therefore not possible to produce data split by denomination. However, the Initiation Society is an Orthodox body following halachic tenets and the ARLM is a Progressive body linked to the tenets of Liberal and Reform Judaism. Thus, the IS would not carry out a ritual circumcision on a boy whose father is Jewish but whose mother is not, whereas the ARLM might do so in certain cases (e.g. if the parents are members of a Progressive synagogue and are sponsored by a Progressive rabbi).

The data included in this study are based on the total annual procedures reported to JPR by the IS and the ARLM for the years 2012–2015 inclusive. These data comprise those Jewish male babies whose parents chose to circumcise them. Circumcisions are performed by trained practitioners (*mohelim*), typically on the eighth day after birth. However,

they can be delayed in cases of concerns over the child's health, although they are normally performed up to twelve weeks of age.³¹

The data were collected via an email survey that was conducted between November 2016 and July 2017. The process involved the identification of the relevant data providers, followed by extensive efforts to reach them and explain to them this research project to gain their collaboration. As a result, JPR received data directly from each mohel registered with the ARLM at the time of the survey, and data from the IS in the form of aggregate and anonymised figures. Missing figures have been estimated based on available figures from previous years. As a rule, in most cases the average number of procedures between the previous and subsequent available years has been used. When such data were not available, the missing number of procedures has been estimated using the figure from the nearest available year. However, estimated figures only account for 4% of the total in 2012, 3% in 2013, and 1% in 2014 and 2015, and thus have little bearing on the annual estimates.

In order to derive the number of female births over the period, the total number of circumcisions is factored using the sex ratio of all births in the national population in the same year.³² This assumes that Jewish birth sex ratios are identical to those in the general population. The final figure produced by this method is therefore an estimate of the Jewish birth cohort for the year. However, the sex ratio is a biological constant, and varies relatively little across time and populations.

31 Mohelim associated with the two organisations may also perform circumcisions on adults who are converting to Judaism, on individuals who require the procedure for medical reason or on babies of other monotheistic religions. Such data have not been gathered for the purposes of this analysis.

32 ONS (2013). Statistical bulletin. Births in England and Wales by characteristics of birth 2: 2012; ONS (2014). Statistical bulletin. Births in England and Wales by characteristics of birth 2: 2013; ONS (2015). Statistical bulletin. Birth characteristics in England and Wales: 2014; ONS (2016). Statistical bulletin. Birth characteristics in England and Wales: 2015.

Table 3. Circumcisions performed by the IS and the ARLM, 2012–2015

Year	Reported procedures		Estimate unreported		Total procedures		Change on previous year (%)	
	IS	ARLM	IS	ARLM	IS	ARLM	IS	ARLM
2012	1,396	199	75	0	1,471	199	-6%	35%
2013	1,481	243	51	0	1,532	243	6%	22%
2014	1,543	253	20	0	1,563	253	4%	4%
2015	1,674	259	28	0	1,702	259	8%	2%

Figure 13. Estimated Mainstream circumcisions, adjusted estimates based on NJCS survey data, 2007–2016

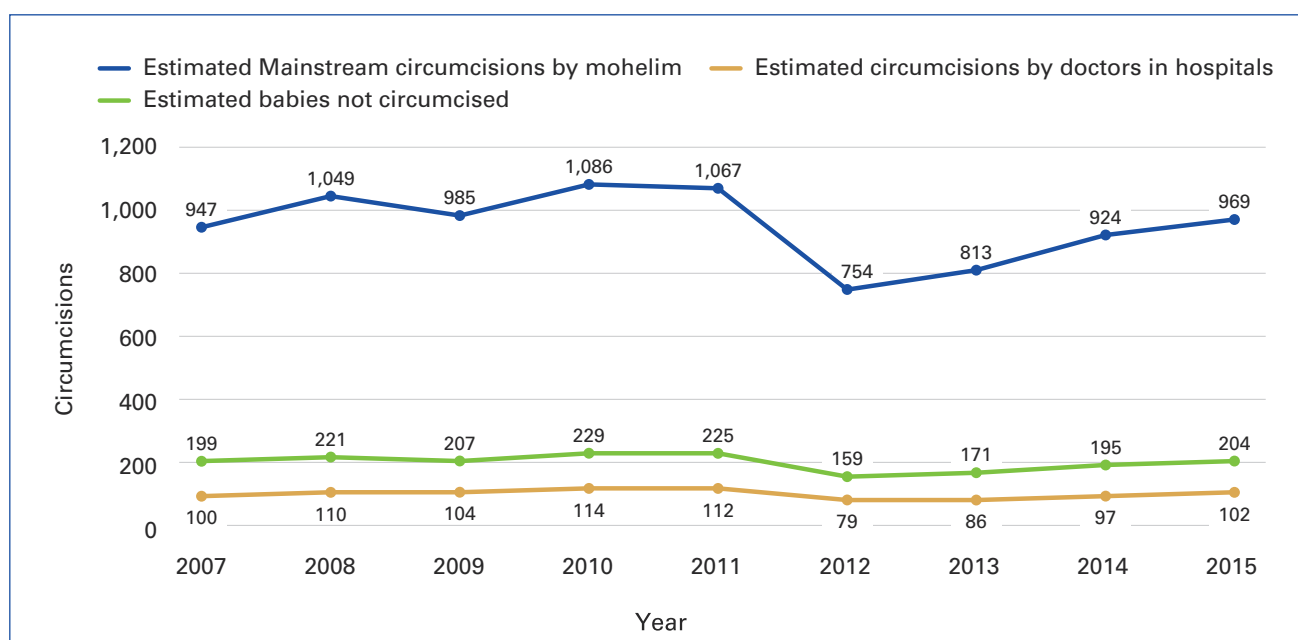


Table 3 shows the breakdown between the number of circumcisions performed by the IS and the ARLM between 2012 and 2015. On average, mohelim each performed 28 Jewish religious circumcisions per year. As can be seen, the number of procedures that have taken place under the auspices of both bodies has been increasing in recent years.

Some procedures might remain unrecorded for a number of different reasons. For example, there might be a few practising mohelim who are not currently registered with either of the professional organisations and of whom JPR is unaware. From our research, it is increasingly clear that the number of such cases is likely to be very small. Alternatively, some babies who would be

considered Jewish by the IS and/or ARLM, might be circumcised by a doctor in a hospital or clinic without a religious ceremony. Unpublished data from JPR's 2013 National Jewish Community Survey³³ reveal the proportions of Jews who choose not to circumcise their children at all, and those who opt to circumcise their children in hospitals without a religious ceremony. According to that source, 76% of surveyed Jews said they used the services of a mohel to circumcise their sons. A further 8% had their sons circumcised

33 Graham, D., Staetsky, D. L., Boyd, J. (2014). *Jews in the United Kingdom in 2013: Preliminary findings from the National Jewish Community Survey*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

Table 4. Circumcisions and Jewish births in the UK, corrected estimates from NJCS data, 2007–2015

Year	Circumcisions by mohelim	Estimated Mainstream circumcisions by mohelim	Estimated circumcisions by doctors in hospitals	Estimated babies not circumcised	Estimated total Mainstream male births	Estimated total Strictly Orthodox male births	Estimated total Jewish male births	Multiplier	Estimated total Jewish births
2007	1,682	947	100	199	1,246	735	1,981	1.95	3,857
2008	1,779	1,049	110	221	1,381	730	2,110	1.95	4,122
2009	1,808	985	104	207	1,296	823	2,119	1.95	4,132
2010	1,977	1,086	114	229	1,430	891	2,320	1.95	4,522
2011	1,983	1,067	112	225	1,404	916	2,320	1.95	4,526
2012	1,670	754	79	159	992	916	1,908	1.95	3,719
2013	1,775	813	86	171	1,070	962	2,032	1.95	3,960
2014	1,816	924	97	195	1,216	892	2,108	1.95	4,107
2015	1,961	969	102	204	1,275	992	2,267	1.95	4,417

by doctors in a hospital and 16% said they did not circumcise their son/s. Hence, the figures in this section of the report are necessarily conservative estimates. Assuming that the above-mentioned proportions remained constant between 2007 and 2015, the corrected estimates show that estimated Jewish births would have climbed from 3,857 in 2007 to 4,417 in 2015. Estimated circumcisions by doctors in hospitals would have been 100 in 2007 and 102 in 2015 and the proportion of children whose parents decided not to circumcise would have amounted to 199 babies in 2007 and 204 in 2015 (Table 4 and Figure 13).

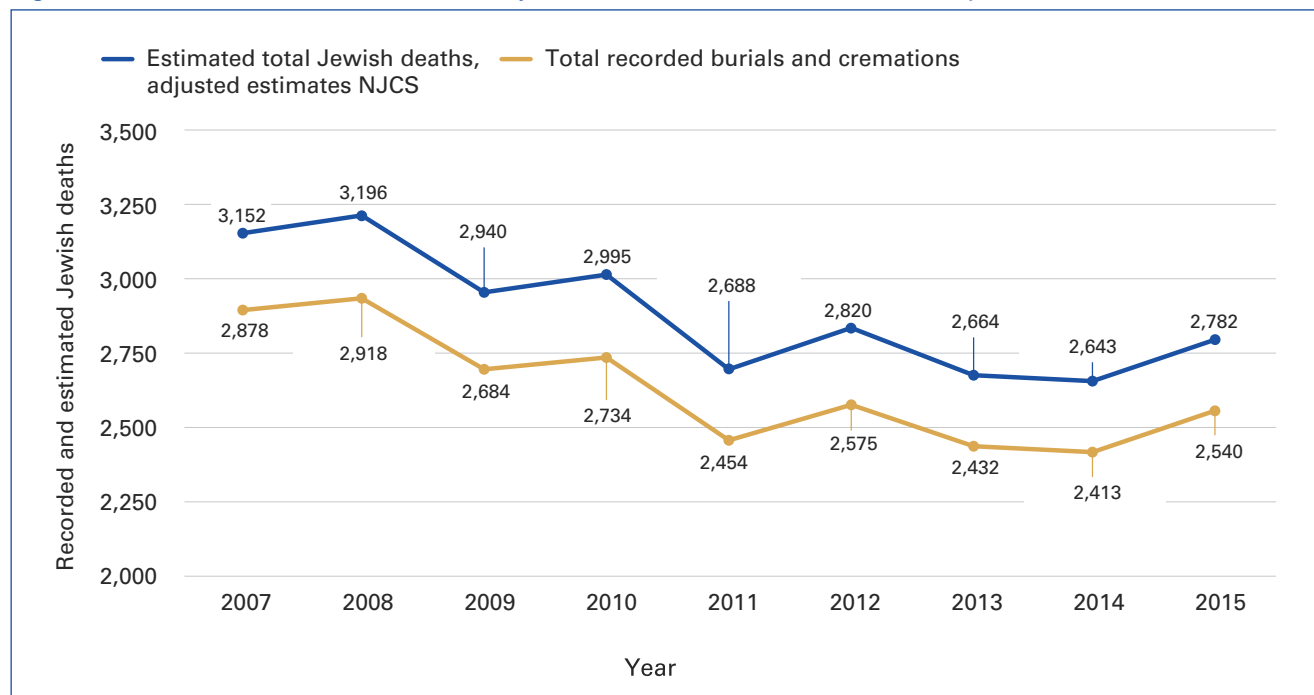
In addition, it is worth noting for methodological reasons that Strictly Orthodox (*haredi*) birth figures collected between 2012 and 2016 are based on figures for the Gregorian calendar (January to December) as opposed to the Hebrew calendar, which is lunisolar and runs from September/October to September/October. One should also note that whilst the placing of birth announcements is an almost universal practice within the Ashkenazi community of Stamford Hill, it is somewhat less common among the Chabad Lubavitch community. As a result, the data may slightly underestimate the number of male births. Moreover, whilst Stamford Hill directories show the numbers of multiple births, Broughton Park notices report the number of women giving birth to boys rather than the number of boys born. Thus at least some multiple births remain

unreported. However, this number is believed to be negligible, bearing in mind Office for National Statistics data that show that 16.1 out of every 1,000 women giving birth had a multiple birth in 2015. Furthermore, births taking place between midnight on Thursdays/Fridays and the onset of Shabbat on Friday afternoon/evening only appear in a special sub-section the following week, and some may not be reported at all.

Jewish deaths data

The data were collected and analysed between August and November 2017 via an email survey, from a total of 79 data providers, comprised of 16 burial societies and 63 synagogues. The data collection process involved several reminders. In some cases, when certain data providers failed to complete the survey after being sent the survey weblink via email, figures were collected via postal or telephone survey instead. The implemented strategies yielded a response rate of 94%. Unreported figures from burial societies and synagogues known to be carrying out burials or cremations between 2013 and 2016 accounted for 6% of total recorded burials (based on 2012 total recorded burials), and in these cases, counts have been estimated making use of available figures. As a rule, the missing number of burials has been estimated using the figure from the nearest available year.

Figure 14. Estimated total Jewish deaths, adjusted estimates based on NJCS survey data, 2007–2016



The data comprise the total number of deaths in the years 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, as recorded among the Jewishly identifying population that were reported to JPR by the organisations involved in such procedures. These data comprise those who have chosen (or whose families have chosen for them) to be buried or cremated under Jewish auspices. Consequently, a decline or a rise in the figures is as much a reflection of changes in affiliation and Jewish identity as it is in the number of people who have passed away. Therefore, it should be borne in mind that the data do not fully reflect the total number of Jewish deaths over the period, as they fail to capture any self-identifying Jews who were not buried under Jewish auspices and burials which may have taken place overseas.

However, it is possible to gauge the likely scale of unrecorded Jewish deaths by means of other survey data. Unpublished figures from JPR's 2013 National Jewish Community Survey (NJCS),³⁴ weighted to match the population in terms of age, sex and affiliation using the most recent Census

³⁴ Graham, D., Staetsky, D. L., Boyd, J. (2014) op. cit.

The survey asked respondents who had lost at least one parent whether or not the funeral was held under Jewish religious auspices. For those who had lost both parents, the most recent occurrence was recorded.

data and the latest synagogue membership data,³⁵ reveal that the vast majority of Jews who had lost one or both parents declared that their parent/s had a funeral held under Jewish religious auspices (91.3%), whereas the remaining 8.7% did not.³⁶ Therefore, the deaths data collected through Jewish burial societies and synagogues may underestimate the total number of Jewish deaths. Figure 14 shows the adjusted estimates based on this correction. If the proportion of Jews choosing non-Jewish funerals has remained fairly constant, it is estimated that the total number of deaths would have been 2,782 in 2015 rather than 2,540.

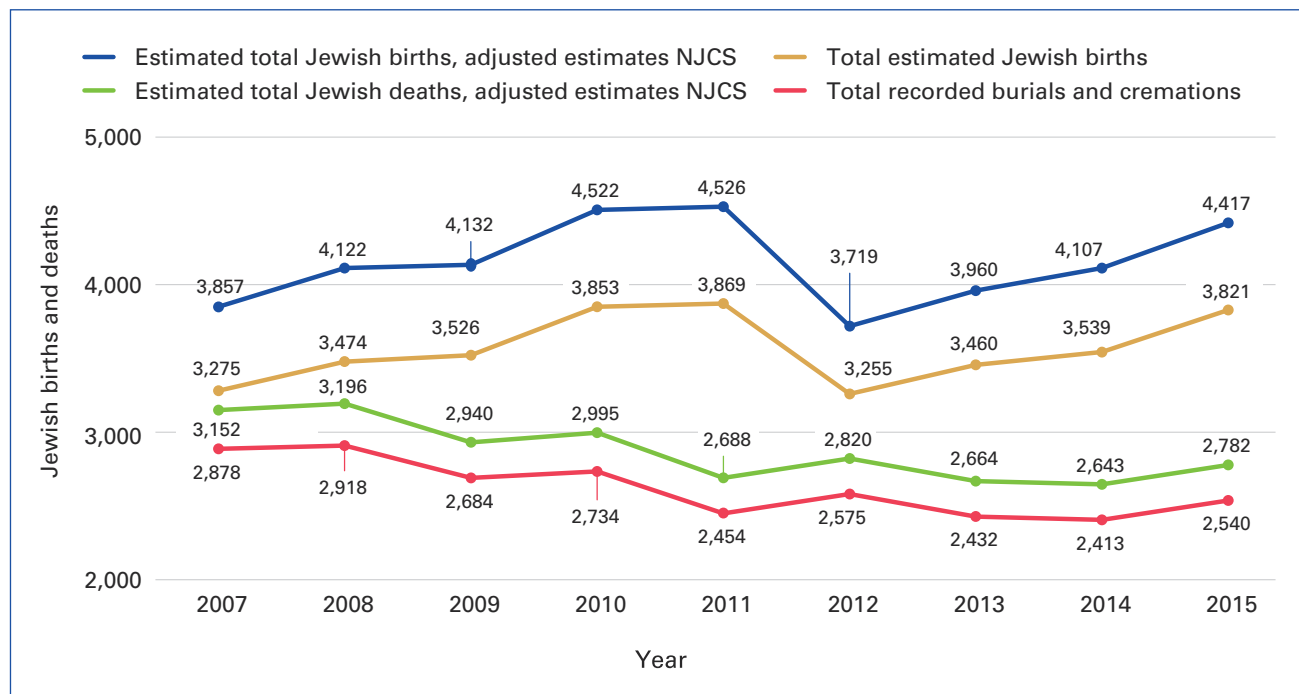
NJCS also asked respondents whether they themselves would want a Jewish funeral. A notably higher proportion of respondents, 18.7%, declared that they would not wish to have a Jewish funeral.

Considering the adjusted estimates of Jewish births and deaths between 2007 and 2016, as derived from NJCS data (Figures 13 and 14), it is possible to derive a corrected representation of the balance between births and deaths (Figure 15).

³⁵ Casale Mashiah and Boyd (2017) op. cit.

³⁶ This analysis is based on respondents who reported that both their parents were Jewish.

Figure 15. Jewish deaths and births, adjusted estimates based on NJCS survey data, 2007–2016



As revealing as these adjustments are, the focus should ultimately be on the original, unadjusted data collected for this survey, not least because they allow for direct comparisons over time and

the tracking of change. However, it is important to empirically delineate the potential size of any undercount to which these data are susceptible, and to bear this in mind when using them.

Appendix: Data providers

The following synagogues and other organisations were approached to provide data for this report.

Circumcisions

1. Association of Reform and Liberal Mohelim (ARLM)
2. Initiation Society (IS)

Burials and cremations

1. United Synagogue
2. Joint Jewish Burial Society
3. Manchester & District Council of Synagogues
4. Federation of Synagogues Burial Society
5. Liberal Judaism
6. Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations Burial Society (Adath Yisroel)
7. West London Synagogue
8. Western Charitable Foundation
9. S&P Sephardi Community Burial Society
10. Glasgow Hebrew Burial Society
11. Leeds United Hebrew Congregation
12. Beth Hamidrash Hagadol (Leeds)
13. Merseyside Jewish Representative Council
14. Liberal Jewish Synagogue
15. Birmingham Hebrew Congregation
16. Etz Chaim Synagogue (Leeds)
17. Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation
18. Brighton & Hove Hebrew Congregation
19. Newcastle United Hebrew Congregation
20. Manchester Reform Synagogue
21. Bournemouth Hebrew Congregation
22. Hendon Reform Synagogue
23. South Manchester Synagogue
24. Maidenhead Synagogue
25. Queens Park Charitable Trust
26. Sheffield Jewish Burial Association
27. Oxford Jewish Congregation
28. Menorah Synagogue (Cheshire Reform Congregation)
29. Cardiff United Synagogue
30. Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue
31. Southport Hebrew Congregation
32. Cardiff Reform Synagogue
33. South London Liberal Synagogue
34. Norwich Hebrew Congregation
35. Edinburgh Jewish Burial Friendly Society
36. Machzikei Hadass Communities (Manchester)
37. St Annes Hebrew Congregation
38. Sha'arei Shalom Synagogue
39. Hull Hebrew Congregation
40. Garnethill Hebrew Congregation
41. Glasgow Reform Synagogue
42. Southend & District Reform Synagogue
43. Leicester Hebrew Congregation
44. Northampton Hebrew Congregation
45. Leicester Progressive Jewish Congregation
46. Portsmouth & Southsea Hebrew Congregation
47. Southport & District Reform Synagogue
48. Hull Reform Synagogue (Ne've Shalom)
49. Margate Synagogue
50. Newcastle Reform Synagogue (Ner Tamid)
51. Sinai Synagogue (Leeds)
52. Eastbourne Hebrew Congregation
53. Bristol Jewish Burial Society
54. Grimsby Hebrew Burial Board
55. Southampton Hebrew Congregation
56. Stoke-on-Trent & North Staffordshire Hebrew Congregation
57. Cheltenham Hebrew Congregation
58. Darlington Hebrew Congregation
59. Plymouth Hebrew Congregation
60. Bradford Reform Synagogue
61. Bognor Regis & District Hebrew Congregation
62. Tayside and Fife Jewish Community
63. Guildford & District Jewish Community
64. Bristol & West Progressive Jewish Congregation
65. Nottingham Liberal Synagogue
66. Gateshead Kollel
67. Aberdeen Hebrew Congregation
68. Blackpool Reform Jewish Congregation
69. Chatham Memorial Synagogue
70. Hastings & District Jewish Society
71. Reading Liberal Jewish Community
72. Sunderland Kollel
73. Colchester & District Jewish Community
74. Shenfield, Brentwood & District Synagogue (Tikvah Chadasha)
75. Shul in the Park (Lubavitch)
76. Birmingham Progressive Synagogue

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