



News Release

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Scots Muslims more likely to have degree or their own business

Muslims in Scotland are more likely to be in higher education or self-employed than the population as a whole, a study shows.

The number of Muslims educated to degree level, or above, has increased from 22 per cent in 2001 to 38 per cent in 2011. This rise exceeds that of the general population at 27 per cent, researchers say.

The findings also indicate that Scottish Muslims are strongly entrepreneurial, as one third of those working full time are self-employed, compared with 12 per cent of the overall population.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh analysed data from the 2001 Census – when a question of religion was introduced – and the subsequent Census of 2011, giving a unique statistical insight into the Scottish Muslim experience.

Other key findings were that a quarter of Muslim women look after home and family, compared with 5.6 per cent of all Scottish women.

Researchers at the University's Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World suggest that a relatively young Muslim population in Scotland may be a factor in this. Statistics show that 30 per cent of Muslims were aged 15 and under in 2011, compared with 17 per cent of the total population.

The study suggests that third sector groups and the Scottish Government use this data to address how to better facilitate women's access to employment opportunities.

Analysis also revealed that a disproportionately high number of elderly Muslim women have self-reported bad or very bad health – 33 per cent compared with 14 per cent overall. The report recommends policy makers and community groups extend health education and awareness campaigns.

The study found that Muslims are widely dispersed across the nation, with the highest concentration in Glasgow at five per cent. It also highlights that less than 4.5 per cent of the Muslim population have weak or no English language skills – compared with an estimated six per cent south of the border.

The report suggests that schools may wish to broaden their foreign language teaching to include Urdu, which the 2011 Census showed to be the fourth most widely spoken language in the home.

Dr Khadijah Elshayyal, who led the study, said: “Our report encompasses numerous aspects of life for Muslims in Scotland. Its findings will form the basis of a wider project that aims to encourage conversations at a national and local level, concerning the present and future needs of Scotland’s growing Muslim population.”

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