

It is Official: 2.7 million Muslims are living in Britain/4.8 % of the population

Religion in decline as census figures reveal there are 4million fewer Christians and one in four is now an atheist

- **Proportion of Christians in England and Wales down to 59.3%**
- **Quarter of people say they do not follow any religion following rise of aggressive atheism**
- **Number of Muslims up to 2.7million, 4.8 per cent of the population**

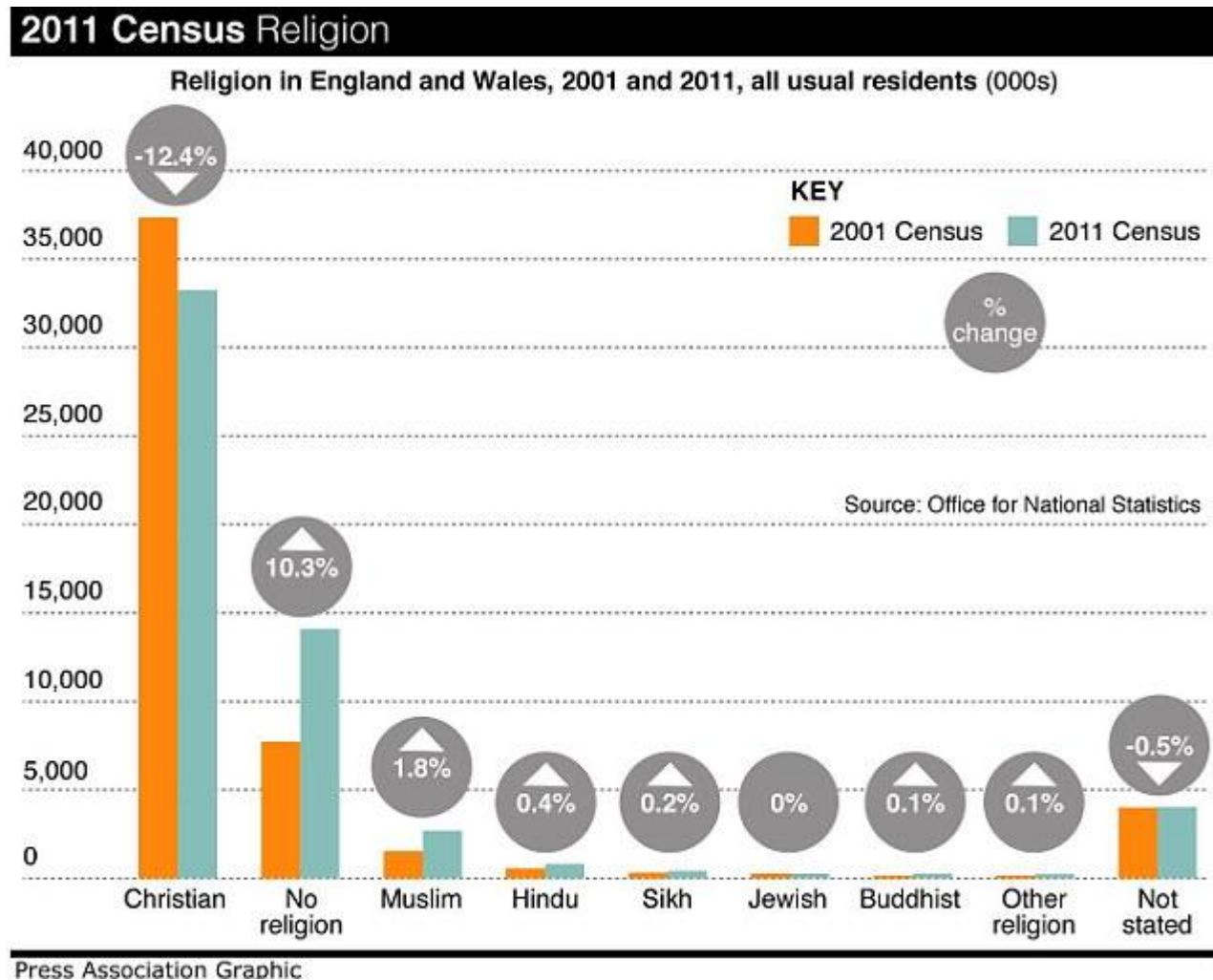
By Daily Mail Reporter

Data from last year's census today revealed the stunning decline of religion in the UK - with the number of Christians dropping by more than 4million.

Just 59.3 per cent of people in England and Wales now describe themselves as followers of Christianity, raising the prospect that Christians could soon be in the minority.

Following a decade of aggressive anti-religious campaigning by high-profile atheists, a quarter of Britons now say they have no faith.

In addition to the huge spike in atheists, the proportion of Muslims has risen from 3.0 per cent to 4.8 per cent since 2001.



Religion: This graph shows how Christianity has been in decline as every other faith grows more popular

Those ticking the box for no religious affiliation rose from 14.8 per cent in 2001 to 25.1 per cent in 2011 with the Christian category - including Church of England, Catholic and all other Christian denominations - falling from 71.7 per cent over the same period to 59.3 per cent of the population.

There are now 14.1million people of no religion in England and Wales, compared to 7.7million a decade ago. But

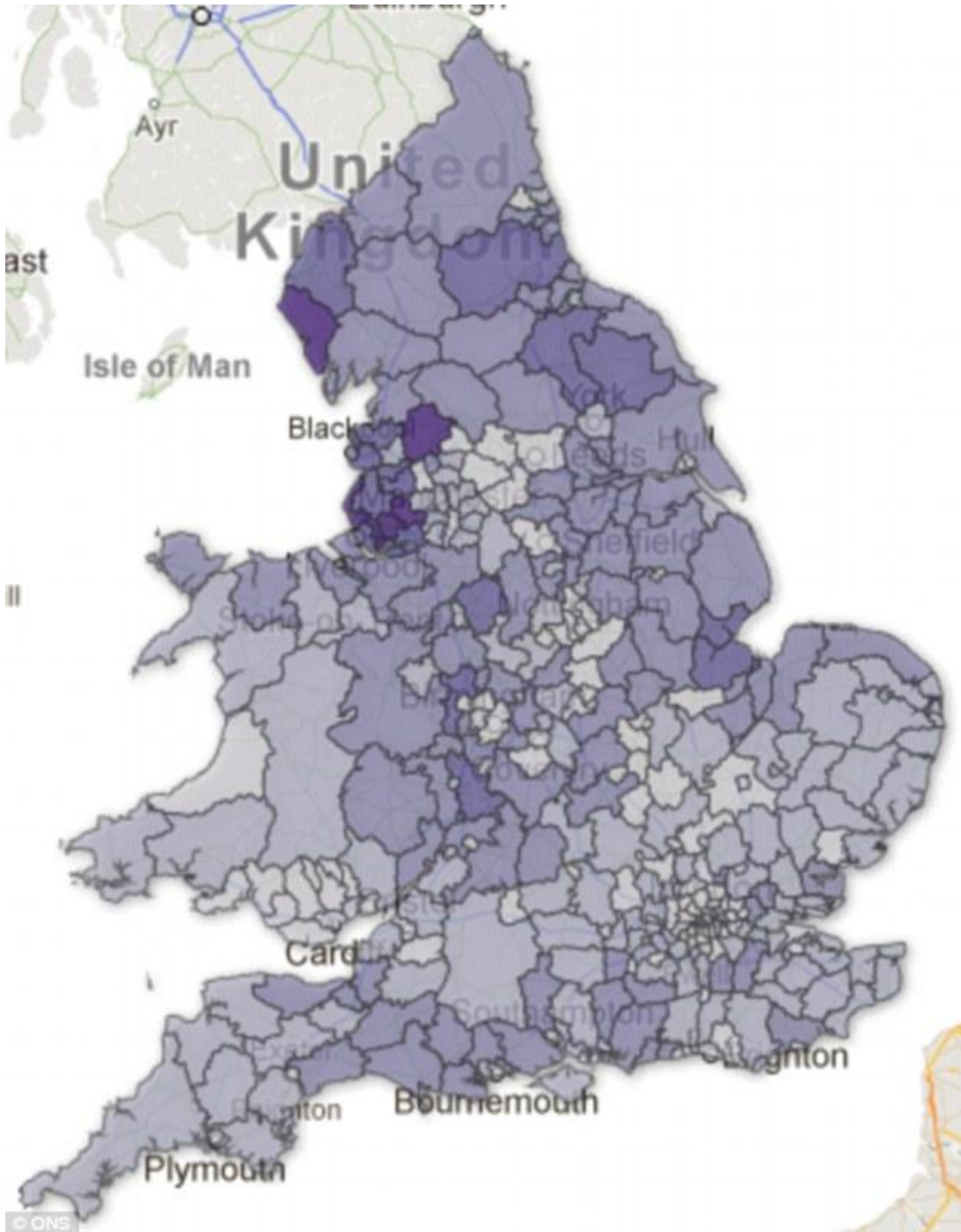
Christianity still remains the largest religion at 33.2million, or nearly six out of 10 people, in spite of registering a fall of just over 4million in the last decade.

More...

- 'British whites' are the minority in London for the first time as census shows number of UK immigrants has jumped by 3million in 10 years

The rise in atheism comes in the wake of high-profile anti-religious screeds by prominent writers such as Richard Dawkins, Philip Pullman and Christopher Hitchens.

The British Humanist Association launched a campaign ahead of the census to boost the number of those ticking the 'no religion' box if they were brought up Christian and have since drifted away from the faith.



Map: The darker areas of this map show the regions of England and Wales with the most Christians

The data showed a rise in the number of Muslims, with 2.7million followers of Islam in the country.

Christians formed the majority religion across most areas of England and Wales. In more than nine out of 10 areas, the proportions of the population who were Christian was more than 45 per cent.

Christianity was the largest religion in all local authorities except Tower Hamlets in east London, where there were more people who identified as Muslim.

The 13 local authorities with the highest proportions of the population reporting to be Christian were in the North West, with the highest in Knowsley, Merseyside, at 80.9 per cent.



Tower Hamlets: The borough in east London is the only area where Muslims outnumber Christians

Tower Hamlets had the lowest proportion of the population reporting a Christian affiliation at 27.1 per cent, with Leicester, Camden, Redbridge, Harrow and Hackney all with proportions under 40 per cent.

The proportion of people identifying with Christianity decreased in all local authorities in England and Wales over the last decade, with Kingston upon Hull registering the largest drop at 16.8 per cent.

The leading local authority for stating no religious affiliation was Norwich, at 42.5 per cent, closely followed by Brighton and Hove, at 42.4 per cent.

Some local authorities in Wales also reported some of the highest levels of people reporting no religion.

The Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Sikh faiths all registered increases over the last decade.

There are now 817,000 Hindus, a rise of 264,000 since 2001.

The Jewish faith also rose by 3,000 over the last decade from 260,000 to 263,000.

Apart from Christianity, the other religion to see a significant decline was Jedi - while 180,000 people jokingly claimed to follow the faith featured in Star Wars, that is down from 400,000 in the last census.

Explore the census statistics on religion with this interactive map from the ONS