

Multilingual Manchester: A Fact Sheet

Between 150-200 different languages are spoken by long-term residents of Manchester and the Greater Manchester area.

Around 40% of Manchester's youth are known to be multilingual. Close to 50% of Manchester's adult population are assumed to be multilingual.

Close to 20% of Manchester's adult population declared a language other than English to be their "main language" in the 2011 Census.

Community languages with the largest number of speakers in Manchester are Urdu, Arabic, Chinese, Bengali, Polish, Panjabi, and Somali.

There are also large communities of speakers of Gujarati, Potwari/Mirpuri, Kurdish, Persian, Yiddish, Caribbean Creole English, Pashto, Romani, Yoruba and other West African languages, and knowledge of French, Portuguese and Russian is widespread (often as second languages).

The city's languages are widely dispersed, but dense multilingual communities can be found in Burnage, Cheetham, Chinatown, Crumpsall, Gorton, Hulme, Levenshulme, Longsight, Moss Side and Rusholme. Notable language communities in the Greater Manchester area include Gujarati in Bolton, Bengali and Sylheti in Oldham, Panjabi and Potwari/Mirpuri in Rochdale and Oldham, and Yiddish and Polish in Salford.

Manchester libraries hold some 20,000 books and other media items in languages other than English. In 2012-2013, such materials were issued more than 70,000 times, with the most frequent demand being for Urdu, Chinese, Bengali, Polish, Persian, and Arabic.

Some 3,000 pupils at Manchester state schools sat GCSE examinations in foreign languages in 2012. The most common languages were French, German and Spanish. Qualifications in community languages included Urdu, Arabic, Polish, Mandarin, and Hebrew. Around 8,000 pupils attend supplementary schools in Manchester, which offer GCSE qualifications in Arabic, Polish, Cantonese, Mandarin and other languages.

Manchester's commercial sector makes use of community languages to market products and services, and commercial signage in Chinese, Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, Polish and other languages is common in the city's public spaces.



Language skills are often in demand on the Manchester job market, with online adverts in the first part of 2013 offering jobs in Customer Service, Sales/Marketing, Management Roles and Teaching to qualified applicants with knowledge of Arabic, Cantonese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Panjabi, and other languages, at a salary range of £16,000-£35,000.

80% of Manchester residents whose first language is not English report that they speak English well or very well. 17% – most of them elderly – report that they cannot speak English well, while only 3% (some 2,400 people) cannot speak English at all.

Public sector institutions in Manchester engage interpreter and translation services such as M-four, Language Line, and The Big Word. The main service for Manchester City Council, M-4, handled some 12,000 requests for face-to-face interpretation for over 80 different languages between April 2012 and March 2013. The interpreter service for Central Manchester Hospital Trust responded to more than 31,000 requests during 2012. The highest demand was for Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, Polish, Panjabi and Cantonese. Greater Manchester Police and Fire and Rescue Services often rely on multilingual staff as well as on volunteers to communicate with members of minority communities.

Central Manchester Hospitals Interpreter requests 2012		M4 Interpreter requests 04/2012-03/2013		Citywide library stock 2013 > 100		School Pupils' First Language 2013 > 150		Census 2011	
Language	No.	Language	No.	Language	No.	Language	No.	Language	No.
Urdu	6,272	Urdu/Panjabi	2,245	Urdu	10,005	Urdu	6,497	Urdu	13,095
Arabic	3,183	Bengali	910	Chinese	6,168	Arabic	2,448	Arabic	7,037
Cantonese	2,667	Polish	904	Polish	1,023	Somali	2,095	Polish	6,447
Bengali	2,033	Arabic	870	Bengali	916	Panjabi	2,000	All other Chinese	5,878
Polish	1,965	Persian	753	Vietnamese	835	Bengali	1,374	Panjabi	4,719
Panjabi	1,805	Somali	648	Arabic	628	Polish	865	Bengali	3,114
Somali	1,669	Portuguese	429	Persian	593	French	706	Somali	2,958
Mandarin	1,597	Pashto	414	Somali	172	Yoruba	565	Persian	2,660
Romanian	1,272	Kurdish	405	Kurdish	114	Chinese	378	French	2,351
Persian	1,191	Romanian	404			Portuguese	369	Kurdish	1,886
Kurdish	960	Czech	387			Pashto	358	Spanish	1,869
Czech	838	Mandarin	359			Malayalam	313	Cantonese Chinese	1,739
French	452	Lithuanian	357			Kurdish	311	Greek	1,588
Russian	444	Russian	348			Czech	225	Portuguese	1,458
Portuguese	426	Cantonese	262			Spanish	215	Pashto	1,147
Gujarati	316	BSL	235			Persian	204	German	936
Pashto	296	French	218			German	179	Czech	933
Tigrinya	268	Tigrinya	197			Romanian	172	Mandarin Chinese	851
Latvian	242	Amharic	191			Shona	172	Malayalam	849
Vietnamese	209	Gujarati	158					Russian	844

© Multilingual Manchester 2013

For more information see: Multilingual Manchester: A Digest (see our website)

mlm@manchester.ac.uk

http://mlm.humanities.manchester.ac.uk

Multilingual Manchester is based at the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK. Phone (0044) (0)161 275 5999