

INCLUSIVE IT: ETHNICITY

A definitive series of evidence reports from BCS exploring equality and diversity within the IT workforce

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Established in 1957, the British Computer Society (BCS) is the leading body for those working in IT. With a worldwide membership now of more than 68,000 members in over 100 countries, BCS is the qualifying body for Chartered IT Professionals (CITP).

BCS was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1984. Its objectives are to promote the study and practice of computing and to advance knowledge of, and education in, IT for the benefit of the public. BCS is also a registered charity.

CONTENTS

1	Summary of key findings	4
2	Background	5
3	Ethnicity in context, labour market overview.....	6
4	Ethnicity and IT employment.....	7
4.1	Overview.....	7
4.2	Ethnicity in IT explored	8
4.3	Representation across the UK	9
5	Nature of employment.....	10
5.1	Occupation	10
5.2	Permanency of employment.....	11
5.3	Ethnicity and unemployment	11
6	Employment characteristics	12
6.1	Self-employment	12
6.2	Employees and size of workplace	12
6.3	Industry of employment	13
7	Working hours and benefits	15
7.1	Full-time and part-time working	15
7.2	Remuneration	15
7.3	Responsibility	16
8	Skills.....	17
8.1	Qualifications held	17
8.2	Skills development	18
8.3	Skills sourcing.....	19
	Data Notes	21

1 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Individuals from BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) groups accounted for 14% of the working age population in 2018 but only 12% of those in work and 20% of the unemployed.
- At 19%, BAME representation was higher amongst IT specialists than within the workforce as a whole (12%) in 2018 and in total there were 266,000 BAME IT specialists in the UK at that time.
- BAME representation amongst IT specialists varies significantly across the UK - from just 6% in the South West of England to 35% in London over the 2014-18 period.
- BAME representation amongst IT specialists varied in 2018 from just 11% in the case of IT Directors – to 29% of 'other' IT professionals.
- There were approximately 7,000 unemployed IT specialists from BAME ethnic groups in the UK during 2018 – 26% of all unemployed IT specialists in the UK at that time.
- BAME IT specialists were more likely to self-employed than others during 2018 (14% compared with 10% of those from white ethnic groups).
- Half (50%) of BAME IT specialists were working in IT businesses in 2018 compared with two fifths (42%) of IT specialists as a whole.
- In 2018, BAME IT specialists (full-time employees) were earning 11% more than IT specialists as a whole with median hourly rates of £22 and £20 per hour respectively.
- BAME IT specialists are less likely to be in 'positions of responsibility' than others in IT roles with 36% and 43% respectively stating that they were a manger/foreman or team leader in 2018.
- Almost none in ten BAME IT specialists have an HE level qualification (86%) and 17% are IT graduates (with related under/post-graduate awards).
- BAME IT specialists less likely than others to find employment from contacts in post (10% compared with 16% of white IT specialists over the 2014-18 period).

2 BACKGROUND

Over the past three years, the British Computer Society, as part of its aim to make IT good for society, has been tracking and reporting upon levels of female representation within the IT labour market, highlighting areas of particular concern for the industry and supporting infrastructure and providing supporting evidence for those seeking to improve the gender balance within our industry.

In 2017, we expanded the reach of our analysis to cover other 'minority groups' – namely, the disabled, ethnic minorities and older workers, and following positive feedback/comment from the IT community, this year have elected to continue with this broader analysis of diversity in IT.

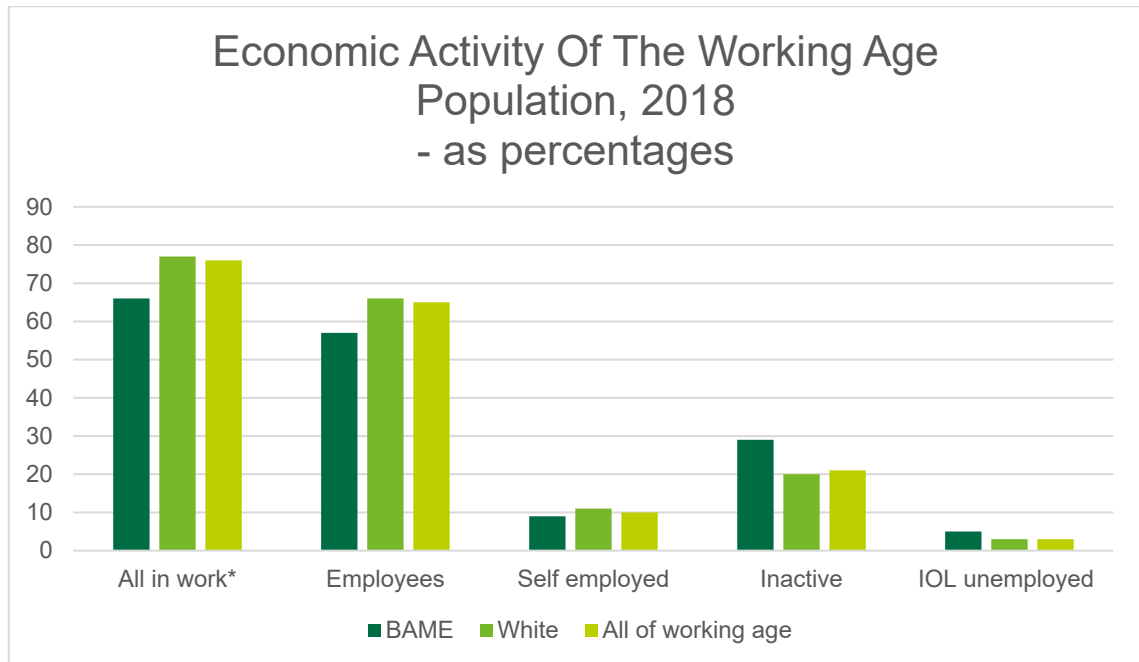
This input allows us for the first time to not only identify the key issues in question, but also potential/preferred resolution mechanisms as suggested by our membership base. In summary then, these reports aim to:

1. Provide a definitive source of information concerning the levels of 'minority' representation amongst the IT professions.
2. Identify and explore the extent to which the market is failing those from minority groups, as demonstrated by below-average levels of representation and compensation amongst these groups.

3 ETHNICITY IN CONTEXT, LABOUR MARKET OVERVIEW

There were 5.8m people of working age in the UK that were from BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) groups in 2018 - i.e. 14% of the total working age population at that time. Of these, 66% were in work, 29% were classed as 'inactive' and 5% were unemployed (compared with figures of 77%, 20% and 3% respectively for those of white ethnicity).

“THERE WERE 5.8M PEOPLE OF WORKING AGE IN THE UK IN 2018 FROM BAME GROUPS”



Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

* includes a small number of individuals in work but not as employees/self-employed (i.e. <1% of the total)

Given that they accounted for 14% of the working age population, the proportion of individuals in work accounted for by BAME groups was slightly lower than expected (12%) as was the case amongst employees (12%), self-employed workers (13%), and those in other working arrangements (11%).

The level of representation for BAME groups was unfortunately, much higher however when considering individuals that were either unemployed (i.e. 20% of the total) or economically inactive (19%).

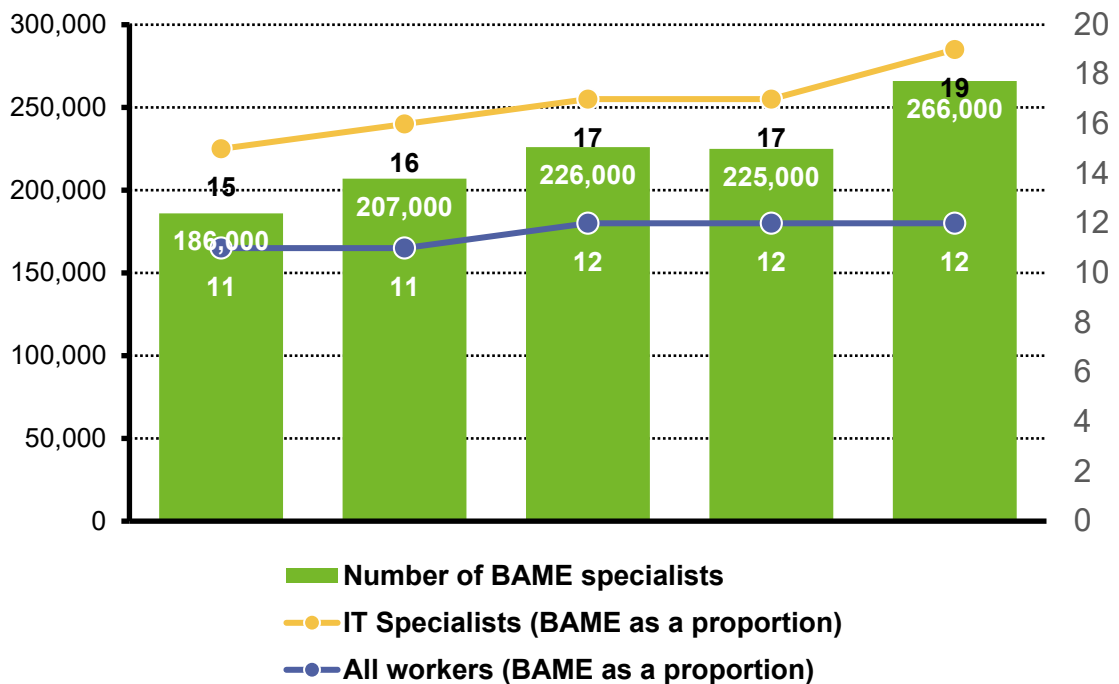
4 ETHNICITY AND IT EMPLOYMENT

4.1 Overview

There were 5.8m people of working age in the UK that were from BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) groups in 2018 - i.e. 14% of the total working age population at that time.

“THERE WERE 5.8M PEOPLE OF WORKING AGE IN THE UK IN 2018 FROM BAME GROUPS”

Of these, 66% were in work, 29% were classed as ‘inactive’ and 5% were unemployed (compared with figures of 77%, 20% and 3% respectively for those of white ethnicity).



Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

4.2 Ethnicity in IT explored

Amongst IT specialists from BAME ethnic groups, representation is highest for those whose ethnicity is Indian (9%) – this group three times more prominent amongst IT specialists than in the workforce as a whole (3%) in 2018.

The next most prevalent ethnic groups in both cases are Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British (3% of IT specialists and 3% of all workers) followed by Pakistani/Bangladeshi (2% in each case).

	IT specialists	Other occupations	All workers
White	81%	88%	88%
BAME:	19%	12%	12%
...Indian	9%	3%	3%
...Pakistani/Bangladeshi	2%	2%	2%
...Chinese	1%	1%	1%
...Other Asian	1%	1%	1%
...Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	3%	3%	3%
...Other ethnic group	2%	2%	2%

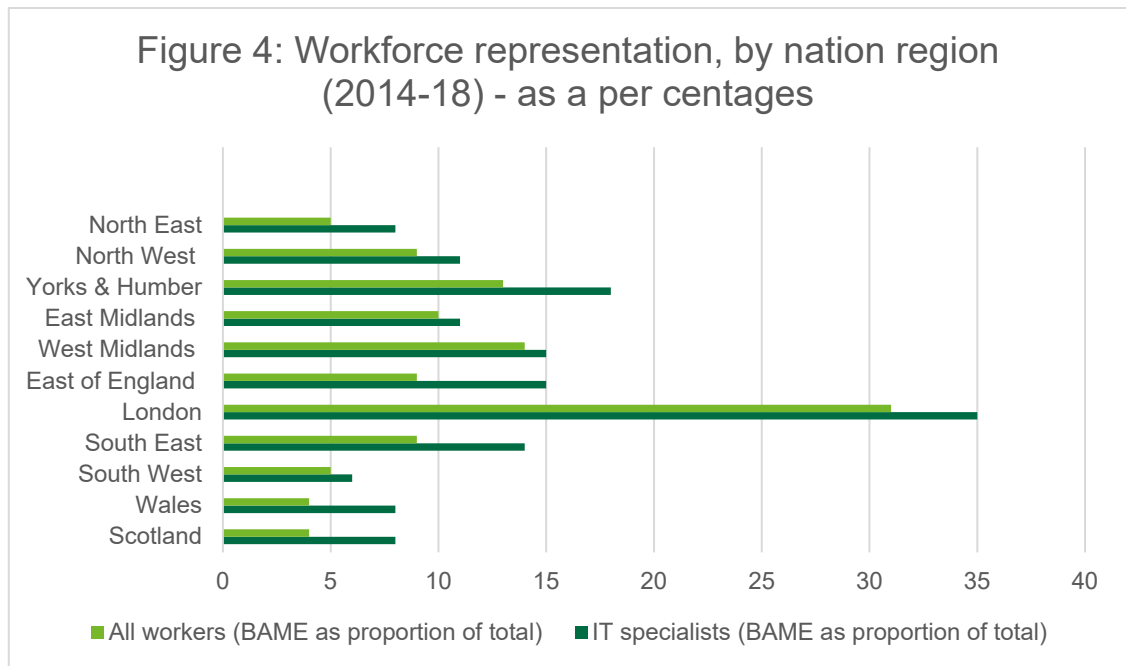
Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

4.3 Representation across the UK

Representation of individuals from BAME ethnic groups amongst the IT professions varies significantly across the UK - from just 6% in the South West of England to 35% in London.

“OVER ONE THIRD OF IT SPECIALISTS IN LONDON ARE FROM BAME ETHNIC GROUPS”

In all nations/regions however, the proportion of IT specialists from BAME groups is higher than that recorded within the workforce as a whole – the difference up to 6 percentage points in the case of Wales, the East of England and Yorkshire and Humberside (2014-18 data).



Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

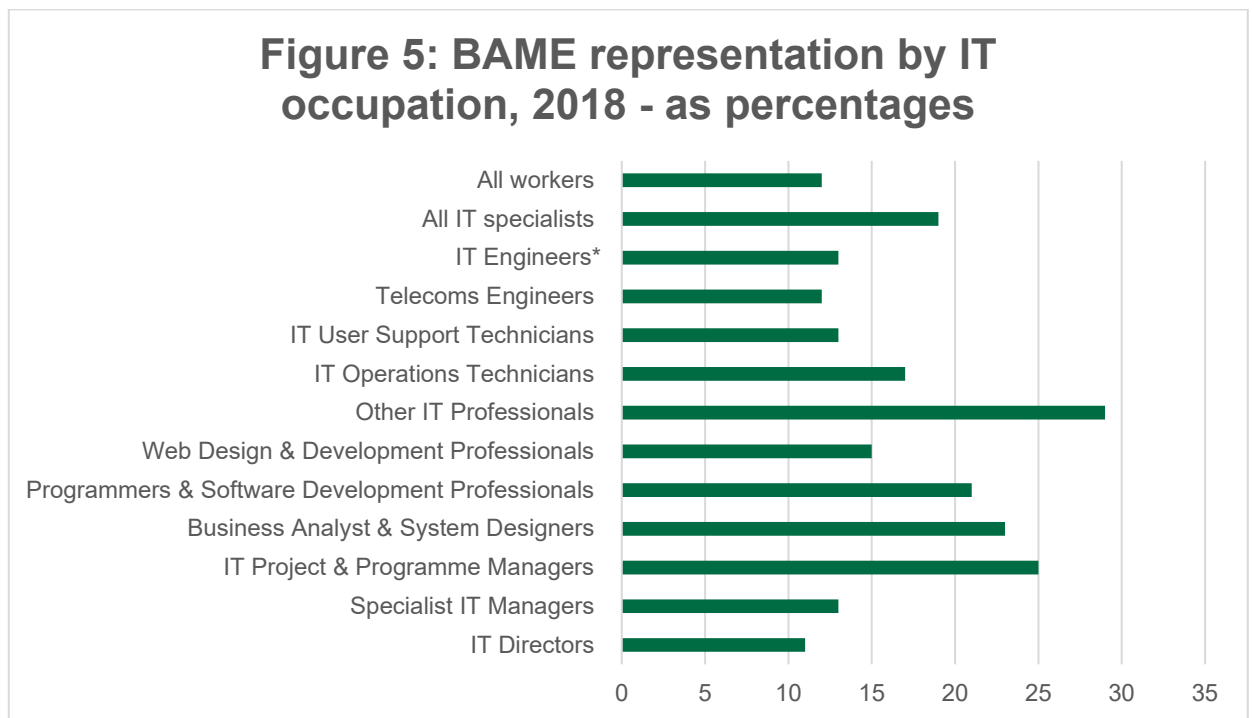
5 NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT

5.1 Occupation

BAME representation amongst IT specialists varied in 2018 from just 11% in the case of IT Directors – to 29% of ‘other’ IT professionals.

“ONLY 11% OF IT DIRECTORS ARE FROM A BAME BACKGROUND”

As illustrated in the chart below, the level of representation tended to be lower not only amongst Director/Managerial positions but also in IT support and amongst IT/Telecoms engineers in particular.



Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

* Three year average figure (2014-18 inclusive)

5.2 Permanency of employment

Overall, just 3% of IT specialists in the UK were working on a non-permanent basis in 2018, whilst for IT specialists from BAME ethnic groups the figure was marginally higher at 4%. By comparison, the proportion of BAME workers as a whole in non-permanent employment during the year at 8% was twice this level.

“THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR BAME IT SPECIALISTS IN 2018 WAS HIGHER THAN FOR OTHERS NORMALLY IN IT ROLES”

Though a detailed analysis of the reasons why IT specialists (white/BAME) were in non-permanent employment during 2018 is not possible due to limitations of the data source, it can be said that BAME IT specialists are more likely to be in temporary positions as they cannot find a full-time job (29% of BAME IT specialists versus 22% of others in such roles stating this to be the case during the 2014-18 period). This was also the case for workers as a whole (comparison figures of 37% and 32% respectively).

5.3 Ethnicity and unemployment

There were approximately 7,000 unemployed IT specialists from BAME ethnic groups in the UK during 2018 – 26% of all unemployed IT specialists in the UK at that time.

“THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR BAME IT SPECIALISTS IN 2018 WAS HIGHER THAN FOR OTHERS NORMALLY IN IT ROLES”

At 2.5% the associated unemployment rateⁱ for IT specialists from BAME groups was notably higher than that of their white counterparts (1.7%) though well below the overall unemployment rate in the UK (4.2%).

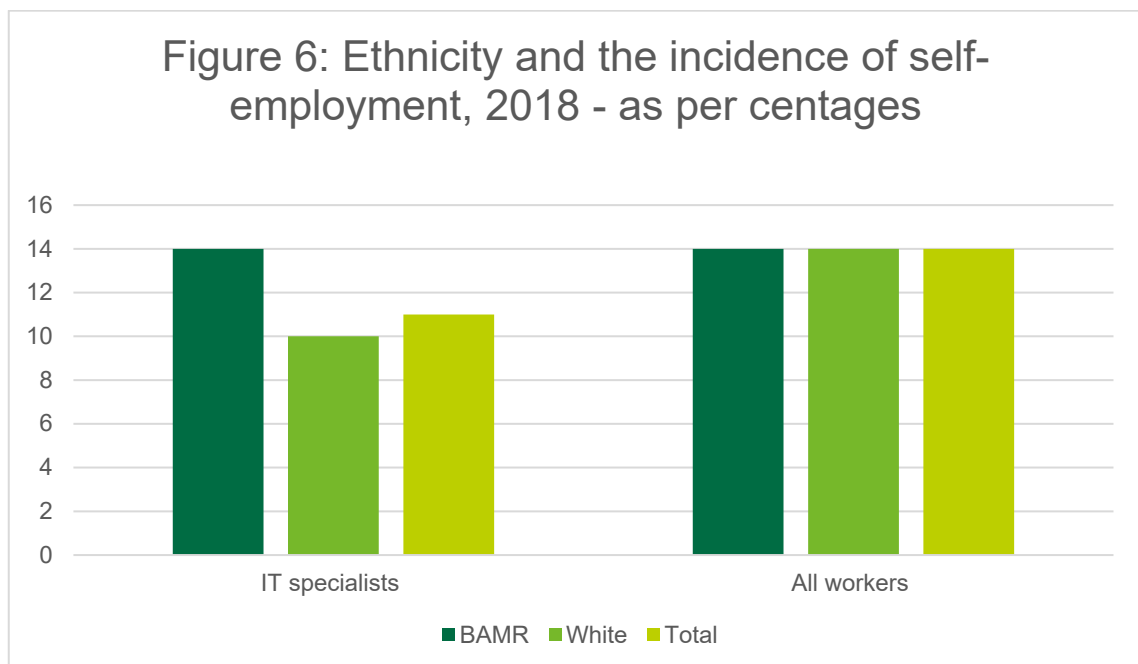
6 EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

6.1 Self-employment

The incidence of self-employment has risen dramatically over the past 5 years for both IT specialists and workers more generally and in 2018 it is estimated that 14% of all UK workers and 11% of IT specialists (155,000) were working on a self-employed basis.

“BAME IT SPECIALISTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE SELF-EMPLOYED THAN OTHERS”

For both groups of workers, the incidence of self-employment was found to be higher amongst individuals that were from BAME ethnic groups and amongst IT specialists in particular, a differential of +4 percentage points was observed (14% of BAME IT specialists working in a self-employed capacity as opposed to 10% of IT specialists of white ethnic origin).

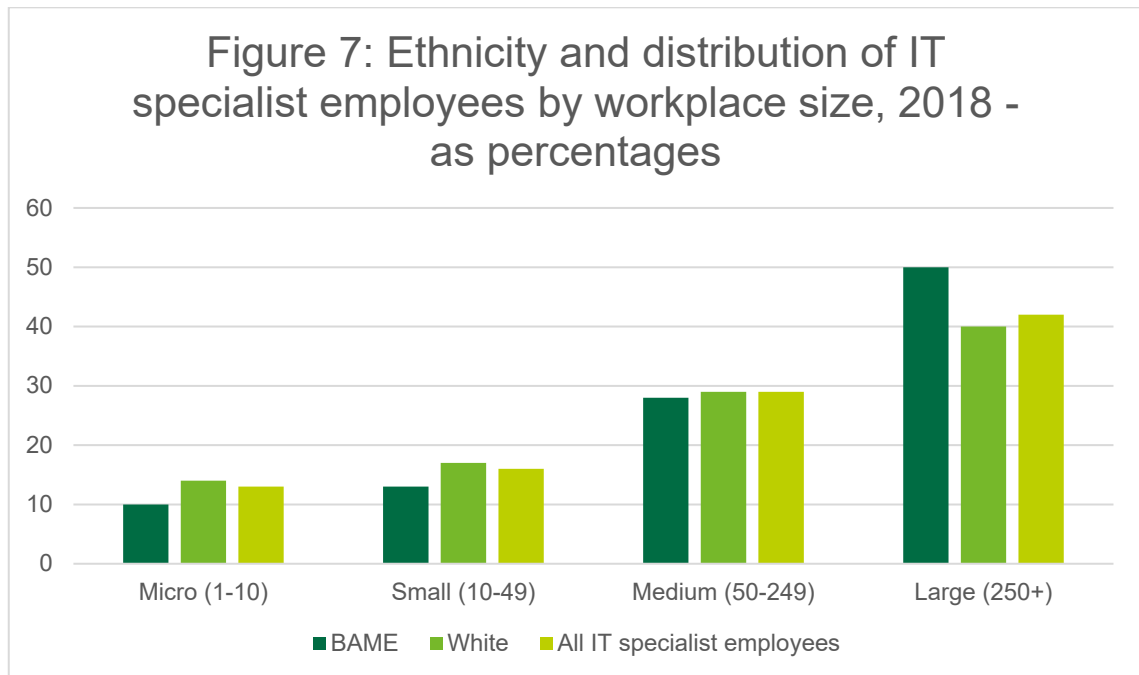


Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

6.2 Employees and size of workplace

IT specialists working as employees are, perhaps understandably, more likely than others to be employed within larger workplacesⁱⁱ (i.e. as micro/small sites are less likely to have an in-house function) and whilst just 28% of UK employees as a whole were working in larger sites during 2018 (those with 250 or more staff), a figure of 42% was recorded for IT specialist employees.

The figure was still higher amongst BAME IT specialists however of which 50% were employed in workplaces with 250 or more staff.



Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

6.3 Industry of employment

Half (50%) of all BAME IT specialists were working in IT businesses in 2018 - a higher proportion than for those of white ethnic origin (43%) and IT specialists as a whole (44% of which were working in IT firms during this period).

After IT, the next largest employer of IT specialists (BAME/white) were Banking/Finance (21% in each case) and the Public sector (9% and 14% respectively).

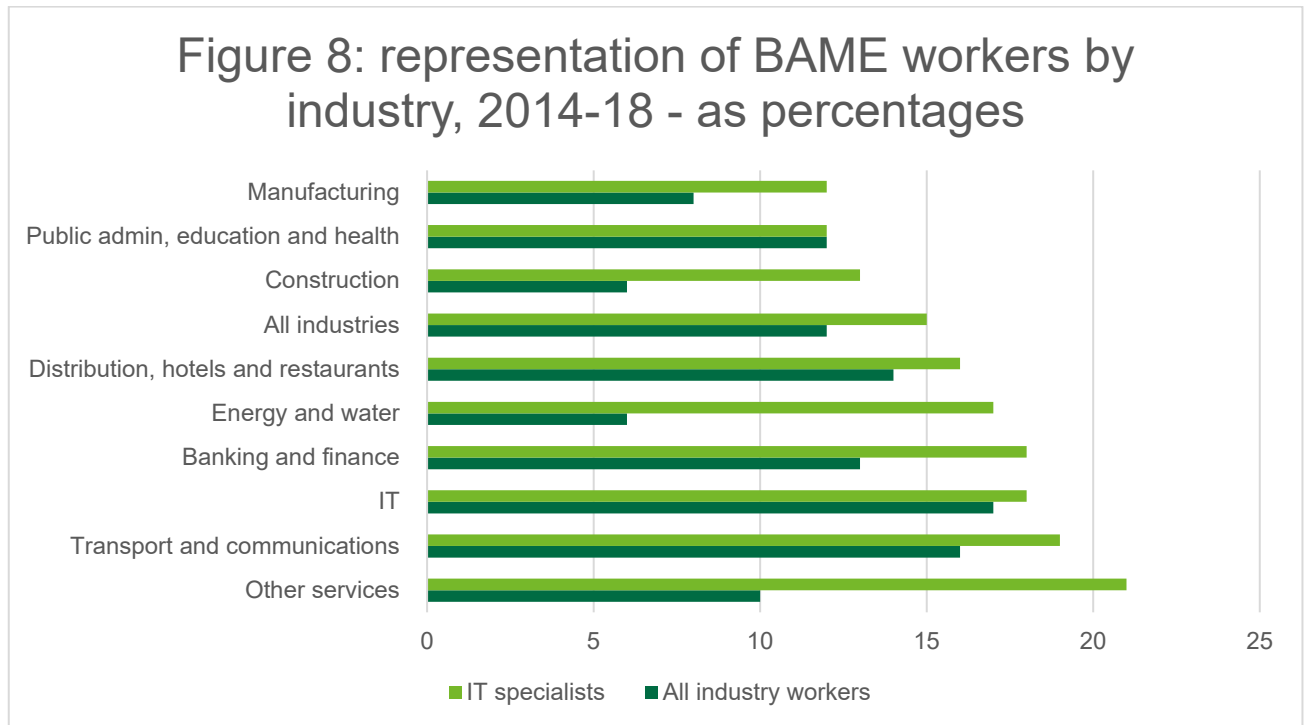
“HALF OF ALL BAME IT SPECIALISTS WORK WITHIN THE IT SECTOR”

To obtain a fuller picture of the levels of BAME representation amongst IT specialists within different industries however it is necessary to undertake an analysis over a longer time period to

ensure reliability of the estimates produced – in this case the five-year period 2014-2018 (inclusive) is used.

Results from this analysis show that though Banking/Finance industry accounts for a relatively large proportion of employment for BAME IT specialists, ‘other services’ is associated with the highest level of representation and over the 2014-18 period, 21% of IT specialists working in this industry sector were from BAME ethnic groups.

Conversely, the level of BAME representation amongst IT staff was lowest within the Manufacturing sector at just 12% over the period.



Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

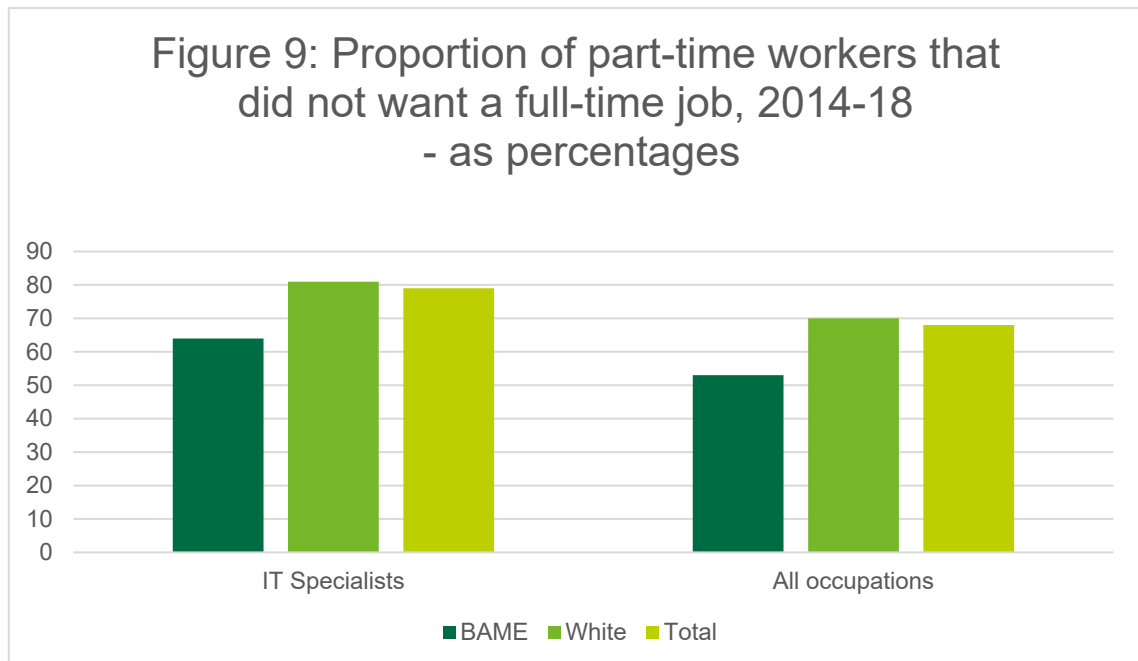
7 WORKING HOURS AND BENEFITS

7.1 Full-time and part-time working

IT specialists in the UK are much less likely to work part-time than other workers, and in 2018, just 5% were working part-time hours compared with 25% of workers as a whole. Moreover, BAME IT specialists appear even less likely to be working in part-time positions (just 3% in 2018).

“ONLY AROUND 3% OF BAME IT SPECIALISTS WORK PART-TIME”

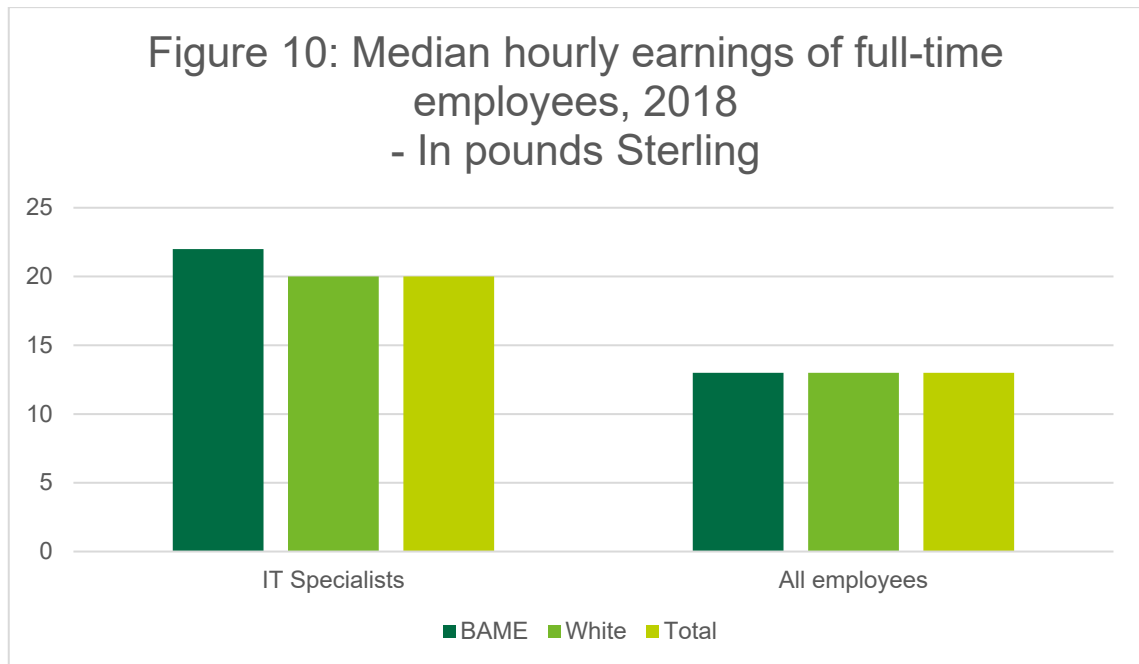
When asked why they were working part-time, the majority of part-timers stated that it was because they did not want a full-time job (68% of all workers and 79% of IT specialists) though the likelihood of this being the case amongst BAME workers was much lower (53% and 64% respectively).



Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

7.2 Remuneration

In 2018, the median hourly earnings recorded for BAME IT specialists working in the UK stood at £22 per hour – an amount 11% higher than that recorded for IT specialists as a whole (£20 per hour) and 71% higher than that for all BAME workers in the UK at that time (£13 per hour)ⁱⁱⁱ.



Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

7.3 Responsibility

Using Managerial/supervisory status as a proxy for the likelihood that individuals are given responsibility within their work, it would appear that during 2018, BAME IT specialists (that were employees) were less likely to be in ‘positions of responsibility’ than others in IT roles with 36% and 43% respectively stating that they were a manger/foreman or team leader.

“BAME IT SPECIALISTS LESS LIKELY TO BE MANAGERS/FOREMEN/TEAM LEADERS”

In both cases the likelihood of individuals holding positions of responsibility was higher than others in the workforce amongst which comparison figures of 30% and 36% respectively were recorded.

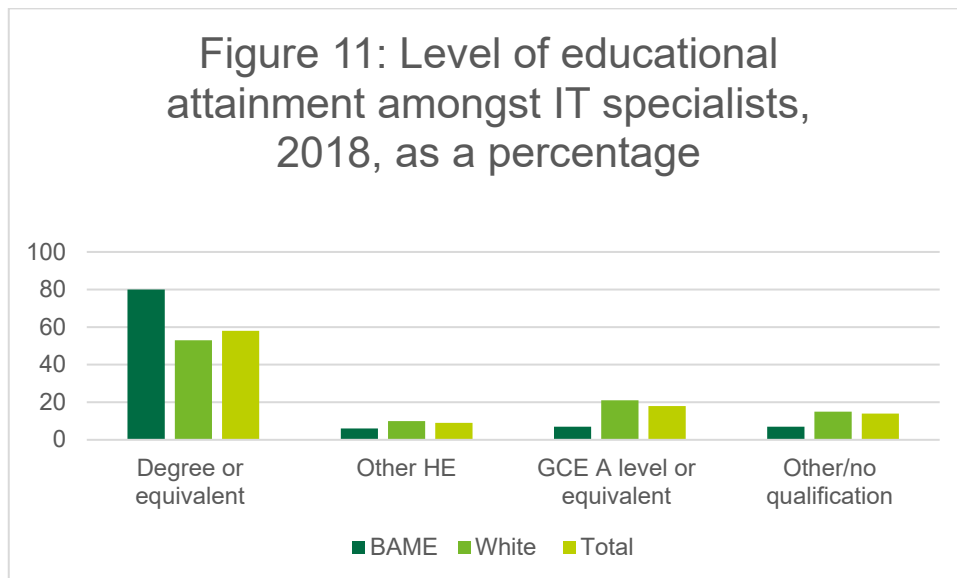
8 SKILLS

8.1 Qualifications held

IT specialists are more highly qualified than other UK workers, and in 2018, more than two thirds (68%) were thought to hold some form of higher-level qualification, compared with just over four in ten workers as a whole (45%).

“BAME IT SPECIALISTS NOTABLY MORE HIGHLY QUALIFIED THAN OTHERS”

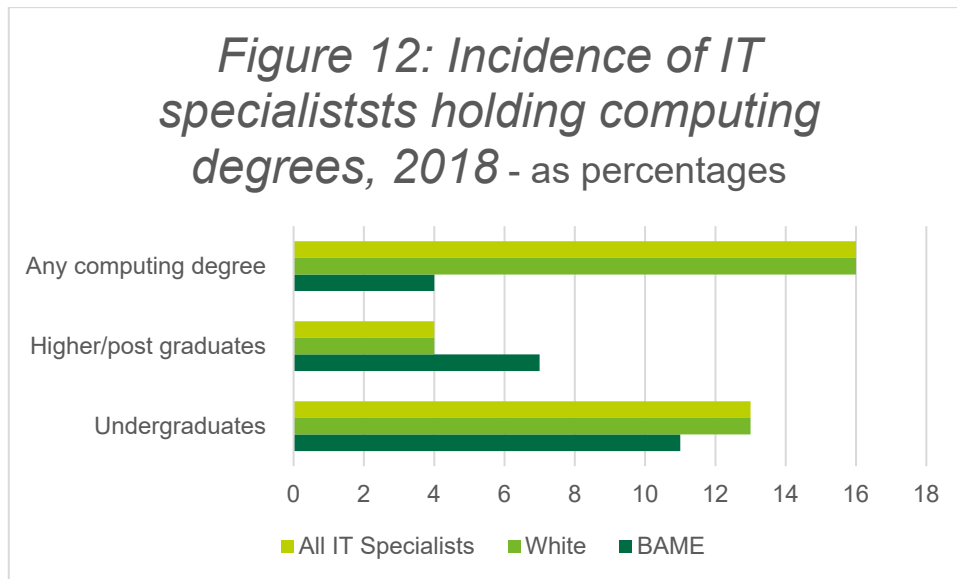
This said, BAME IT specialists were found to be even more highly qualified than others in IT positions with almost nine in ten (86%) holding an HE level qualification.



Source: Analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey by BCS

BAME IT specialists are also marginally more likely to hold a degree in an IT related discipline than others working in such occupations, and in 2018, approximately 17% were thought to have either a higher or undergraduate computing degree compared with 16% of IT specialists from white ethnic groups.

“BAME IT SPECIALISTS MORE LIKELY TO HAVE AN IT DEGREE”



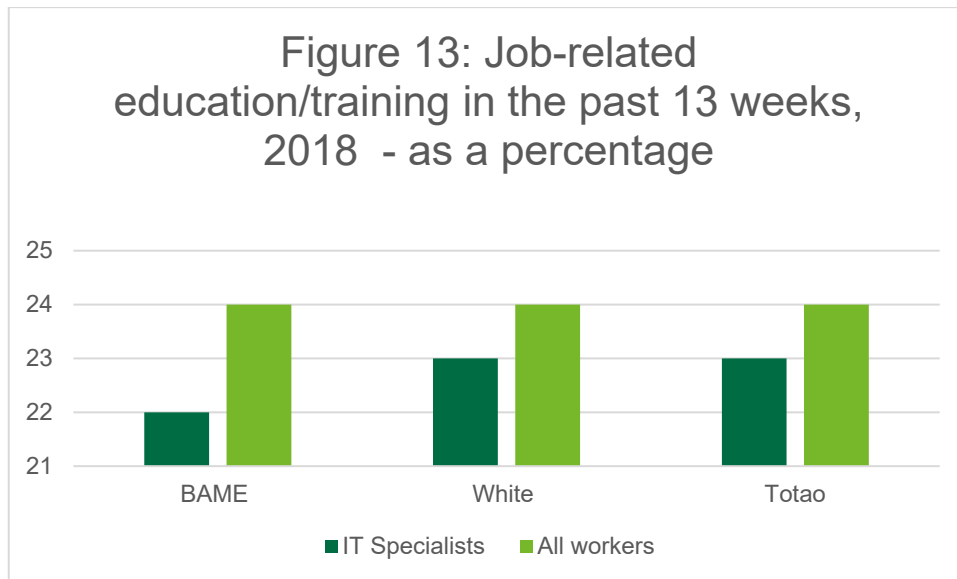
Source: BCS analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey data

8.2 Skills development

Despite the arguably high skill/knowledge requirements associated with their work, IT specialists as a whole in the UK appear marginally less likely than other workers to receive job-related education/training and, throughout 2018, on average 23% of IT specialists stated that they had received some form of job-related education/training in the previous 13 weeks, compared with 24% of workers as a whole.

“BAME IT SPECIALISTS LESS LIKELY TO RECEIVE JOB-RELATED EDUCATION/ TRAINING”

The incidence of job-related education/training was marginally lower amongst BAME IT specialists, - 22% of which stated that they had received education/training during the previous 13 weeks when surveyed in 2018 compared with 23% of ‘white’ IT specialists.



Source: BCS analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey data

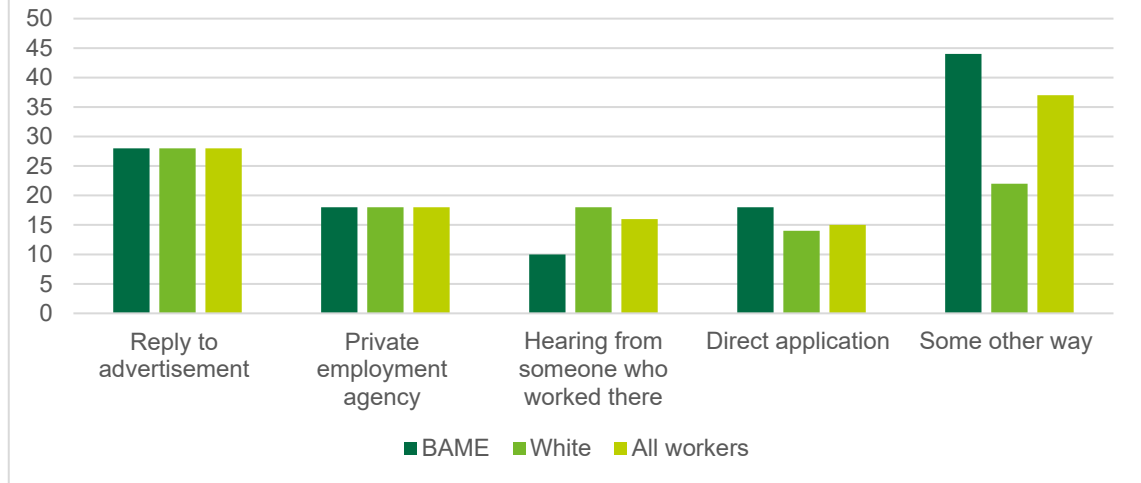
8.3 Skills sourcing

As with other UK employees, the most common identifiable means of IT specialists^{iv} securing a job (where stated) during the 2014-18 period was by 'replying to an advertisement' (28% of those that had been with their employer for less than 1 year stating they had secured work in this manner), and this was true for both BAME/other ethnic groups (28% in each case).

“BAME IT SPECIALISTS NOTABLY LESS LIKELY TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT THROUGH CONTACTS IN COMPANY”

The next most common means of IT specialists securing a job was via a private recruitment agency, followed by contacts already working with the employer, and then direct applications. Interestingly, in this case, whilst the use of agencies was similar for white/BAME IT specialists, the proportion from BAME ethnic groups gaining employment via in-work contacts was notably lower than amongst white/all IT specialists (i.e. with figures of 10%, 18% and 16% respectively).

Figure 14: Means of finding work amongst IT specialists, 2014-2018



DATA NOTES

ⁱ This report contains statistical data from ONS which is Crown Copyright. The use of the ONS statistical data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS in relation to the interpretation or analysis of the statistical data, and research datasets employed may not exactly reproduce National Statistics aggregates.

Annual figures presented are derived from the ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS) and have been produced by averaging results for the four quarters of any given year/years. Further details of the LFS can be obtained direct from the ONS website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforhouseholdsandindividuals/householdandindividualsurveys/labourforcesurveylfs>

ⁱⁱ For this report a generic age filter has been applied (16-64 inclusive) for all analysis presented unless specifically stated otherwise

ⁱⁱⁱ In cases where estimates span multiple years, this amalgamation has been undertaken to overcome issues of small sample sizes which otherwise render estimates unreliable and/or potentially disclosive

^{iv} Numerical estimates are rounded to the nearest 1,000, percentages (normally) to the nearest whole number, and rates of pay to the nearest £1 (hourly), as such totals given may not equal the sum of related subsidiary figures.