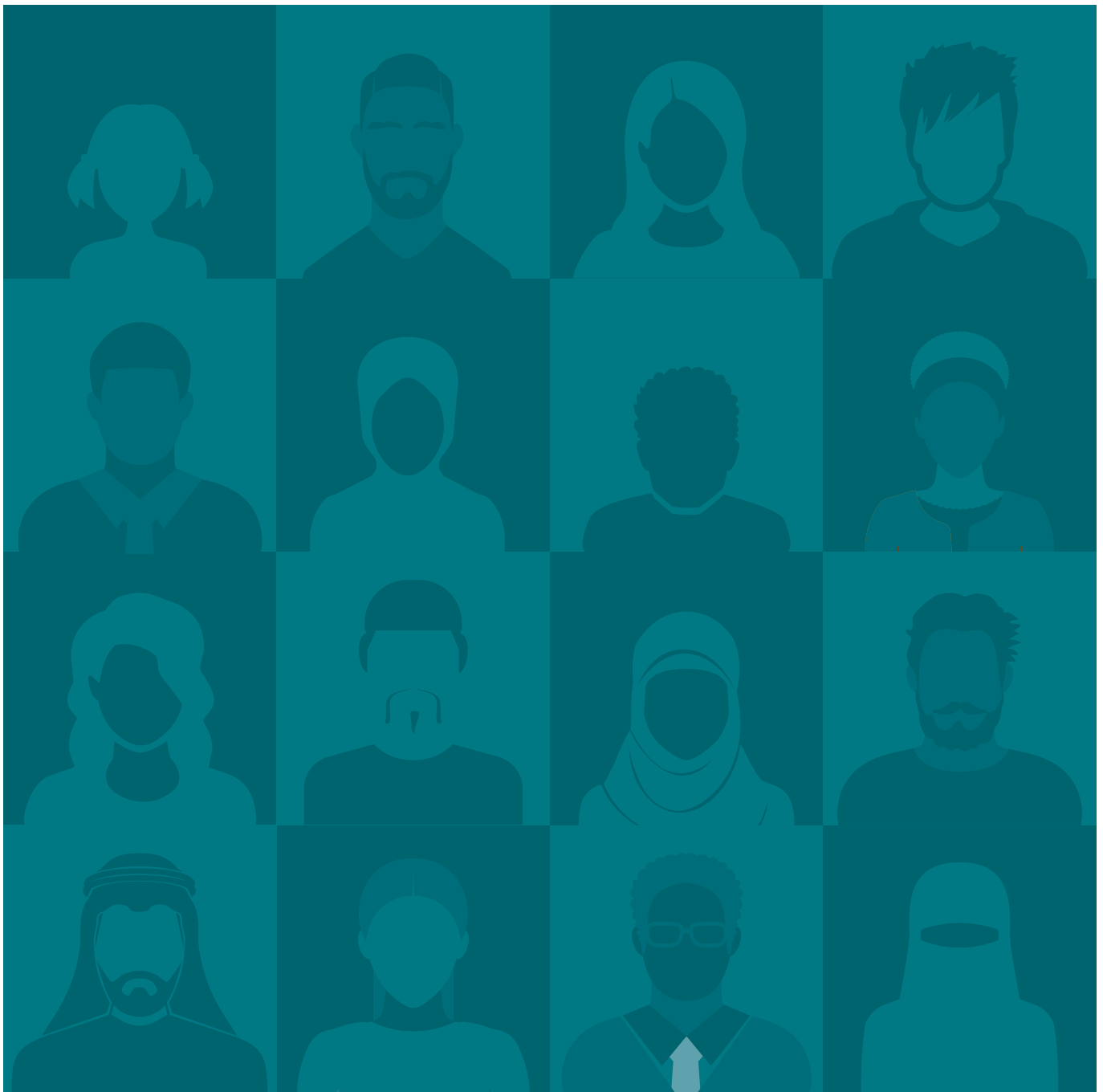




Ipsos MORI
Social Research Institute

A review of survey research on Muslims in Britain

Research report for the Aziz Foundation, Barrow Cadbury Trust,
the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Unbound Philanthropy.



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1 Introduction

Background

Muslims in Britain make up just under 5% of the population.¹ They are the second largest religious group. Over recent years there has been an increased focus on British Muslims; for example, the extent to which British Muslims face racial and religious discrimination, Muslim identity, civic and political participation, relations between Muslim and non-Muslim communities, as well as concerns over vulnerability to radicalisation.² In response to this, there have been a number of research studies carried out over this time to understand some of these issues. Much of the research has been conducted on an ad-hoc basis, and quite often for media consumption, in response to a specific event whereas other studies have looked to understand the views of British Muslims in more depth. Other surveys used in the research include larger academic studies which use a large enough sample of Muslim respondents to allow for examination of their views as an independent group. While these studies do not necessarily ask questions specifically aimed at Muslims they do ask a number of questions that make it possible to explore how Muslim attitudes compare to non-Muslims in various aspects of life.

In order to get a more comprehensive picture of research on Muslims and public opinion on Muslims, the Aziz Foundation, Barrow Cadbury Trust, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Unbound Philanthropy commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct a review of existing research, bringing together information on the views of British Muslims as well as public opinion of Muslims. This is an important step in consolidating existing knowledge and a useful starting point in highlighting any knowledge gaps that may be covered in potential future research.

Approach to the research review

The review was undertaken in two stages. Stage 1 involved consulting a number of experts in the field who we asked to signpost us to relevant studies and sources of data. During the consultation (which was done via a telephone conversation) we also asked people about topic areas that they may find useful to explore in our review and analysis. Following the consultation, the second stage involved searching for and collating relevant data sources and assembling the evidence from them into an analytical report.

Part of this second stage involved simply the collection and thematic arrangement of previously published analysis. In recent years a number of bodies, both public and private, have researched and reported upon various aspects of the lives of Muslims in Britain or the opinions of the wider public towards Muslims, and a number of academics have also published learned papers on these subjects. Drawing together the conclusions of these investigations produces in itself a rich body of knowledge. However, in addition to this we have where appropriate also conducted some new analysis of existing datasets. Several of the major publicly-funded social surveys, although not necessarily intended specifically for studying Muslims in Britain, include many relevant questions and put these to sufficiently large representative samples of Muslims to be useful to us. We therefore re-analysed each of these surveys, isolating the responses of Muslims, comparing these where relevant with the responses of non-Muslims to the same questions, and often breaking down the Muslim group further, for example to distinguish between the responses of men and women, of different age groups, or of those living in different parts of the country. This produced a substantial body of information which has been included in this report and which has not previously been published; it includes information both about demographic or lifestyle characteristics of British Muslims and about their opinions on many issues.

¹ 2011 UK Census data

² Important policy studies covering aspects of the issue in recent years include a report by the Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life, *Missing Muslims: Unlocking British Muslim Potential for the Benefit of All* (2017, http://www.citizensuk.org/missing_muslims) and *Employment opportunities for Muslims in the UK (Second Report of the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, Session 2016-17, HC 89, <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/women-and-equalities-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry/>)*, to which the government responded (Cm 9371) in December 2016.

Furthermore, official and media interest in issues concerning Muslims and Islam in recent years have resulted in a number of commercial opinion polls being conducted whose findings are relevant to our purpose, both polls *of* Muslims and polls of the general public *about* Muslims. While quite detailed findings from these polls are published in the sense of being made available on the polling companies' websites, media reporting of these polls tends to concentrate on highlighting a small number of key conclusions and the rest of the wealth of this data remains unexploited. It is necessary to bear in mind the need for greater caution in using these polls: because of cost and time limitations, they must rely on less robust sampling methods than the major government surveys; and they are frequently commissioned in reaction to news events or popular concerns, so that the context in which they were conducted may need to be understood in interpreting their findings. Nevertheless, if used with suitable care they are a rich source of information not available in any other way. We have examined all the published cross-tabulations of the data from these polls, and drawn upon them to add substantially to the picture that this report portrays.

Data sources for the review

The data sources we have used for this report have used different modes of data collection or different methodologies and therefore, any comparisons made between different sources should be interpreted with caution.

Much of the data in this report was generated from the raw datasets and where possible, sub-group analysis has been conducted. However, it should be borne in mind that some sub-group analysis has been limited due to the small sample sizes. Data sources and information used for this study can be seen in tables 1.1 and 1.2.

Table 1.1: Academic/large dataset sources used in study

Survey	Year	Mode	Gen public or Muslim population?	Geography	Age group	Full sample size	Religion identifier?	Muslim sample size
British Election Study EMBES	2010	Face-to-face	General public (BMEs)	GB	18+	2,787	Yes	1,140
Citizenship Survey	2010-2011	Face-to-face	General public	England/Wales	16+	16,937	Yes	2,875 (practicing Muslims)
Longitudinal Study of Young People in England	2004	Face-to-face	General public	England	13+	15,500	Yes	1,347
Understanding Society (Ethnic Minority Boost)	2015-2016	Face-to-face	General public	GB	16+	5,000	Yes	over 1,000
Pew Global Attitudes towards Muslims	2016	Telephone	General public	UK + France Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden	18+	1,460	No	N/A

Table 1.2: Commercial/Media Surveys used in study

Survey	Year	Mode	Gen public or Muslim population?	Geography	Age group	Full sample size	Religion identifier?	Muslim sample size
ComRes survey for BBC Today Programme	Feb 2015	Online	Muslim	Great Britain	18+	1,000	NA	Full sample
YouGov survey for Islamic Relief	Jun 2015	Online	General public	Great Britain	18+	6,641	NA	NA
YouGov survey for Eurotrack	May 2015	Online	General public	Great Britain	18+	1,667	NA	NA
YouGov-Cambridge	Mar 2015	Online	General public	Great Britain	18+	1,641	NA	NA
ICM survey for Channel 4	Apr 2015	Face-to-face	Muslim	Great Britain	18+	1,081	NA	Full sample
Survation survey for the Sun	Nov 2015	Telephone	Muslim	Great Britain	18+	1,003	NA	Full sample
Populus survey for Hope not Hate	Feb 2016	Online	General public	Great Britain	18+	4,015	NA	NA
ICM Survey for Policy Exchange	March 2016	Face-to-face	Muslim	Great Britain	18+	3,084	NA	Full sample
Ipsos Perils of Perception survey	Dec 2016	Online	General public	40 countries worldwide including Great Britain	16+	c500-c1,000 per country; 1,000 in GB	NA	NA

2 Executive summary

This report reviews existing survey research on Muslims in Britain. Much of its content is based upon new analysis of previously-published datasets, but no fresh survey research was undertaken. Its coverage has therefore been mainly determined by the topics and issues already covered in the available existing research. It takes an important step in consolidating existing knowledge, and provides a useful starting point in highlighting any knowledge gaps that may be covered in potential future research.

It is clear that there is a lack of robust up-to-date data on Muslim public opinion. Most of what does exist was collected either as part of wider research projects in which the study of Muslims was not the primary aim, or in opinion polls commissioned on an ad hoc basis which were reactive to the news agenda and are inevitably reflective of the context in which they were conducted. Consequently, the available data does not add up to a complete and comprehensive picture. But what exists is, nevertheless, revealing and valuable.

Overview

As with any other population group, there are few if any issues on which all British Muslims agree. There are individuals whose circumstances, views or behaviours are different from those of the majority, and it is easy but usually misleading to talk of “Muslims” or “Britons” when we mean “most Muslims” or “most Britons”. But Muslims in many ways are distinctive, in the sense that most Muslims differ from most other Britons, or that particular attitudes or characteristics are much more prevalent in one group than the other.

Nevertheless, there are many respects in which the views of British Muslims are little different from those of the rest of the general public; and some other attitudes of British Muslims are similar to those of other members of ethnic minority groups although different from those of the white, non-Muslim majority.

Young Muslims hold distinct views to older Muslims on many issues; and there are often significant differences between men and women, between those living in London and elsewhere, or by educational attainment.

Religion is a far more important part of their life for most Muslims than it is for other people in Britain, and is central to their sense of identity. But Muslims do not feel that this is in conflict with their “Britishness”, and they are in fact more likely than members of other groups to feel that their national identity is also important to their sense of who they are. Most Muslims have a strong sense of belonging to Britain, and believe that their religion is fully compatible with the British way of life.

The British public hugely overestimates the number of Muslims in the country: on average, the public think that around one in six Britons are Muslim, rather than the correct figure of fewer than one in twenty.

The public’s views on Muslims are mixed, and understanding of Islam is limited – but younger people tend to be better informed and more positive in their attitudes, and knowing someone who is Muslim also makes a positive difference.

The Muslim population

Islam is the second most widespread religion in Britain, after Christianity. In the 2011 Census, two-and-three-quarter million of the UK’s population identified themselves as Muslims, 4.4% of the total. The number has been steadily increasing for many years. Most of these are British citizens, although only a minority were born in the UK.

British Muslims are becoming more ethnically diverse. In 2001, only around a quarter (26.3%) of British Muslims were not Asian; by 2011, this had risen to almost a third (32.4%).

A third of Muslims are below the age of 15, and half are under 25 years old.

Muslim young people are significantly more likely to live with both natural parents than their non-Muslim peers.

Most Muslims say they are regularly religiously active, either in private prayer or in collective acts of worship, and that their religion is important to them: only around one in twenty does not say their religion is ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’ to them, and an even smaller number that they do not undertake any regular religious activity in private. Graduates with a UK degree are especially likely to feel their religion is extremely important to them.

Education is important to Muslims, and they are much more likely to feel that their level of education is part of their self-identity than are most Britons: 55% of Muslims say their education is important to their sense of who they are, compared to 35% of Christians. They also have higher educational aspirations for their children than other parents— slightly higher for Muslim girls than for Muslim boys, but in both cases much higher than the national average. (70% of parents with a Muslim daughter said it was ‘very likely’ that she would go to university, and 64% said the same about their Muslim sons, compared to 43% for non-Muslim girls and 34% for non-Muslim boys).

Most Muslims in Britain live in ethnically-mixed areas; this is especially true of younger Muslims and graduates. Younger Muslims and graduates are also more likely to have diverse friendship groups than older Muslims and non-graduates. More than two in five of those aged up to 34 say at least half their friends are from a different ethnic group, but this falls to 37% among 35-54 years old and 31% among Muslims older than this. Three-fifths of Muslim UK graduates say that half or more of their friends are from a different ethnic group, compared to only a little more than a third of Muslim non-graduates.

Two-fifths of Muslim UK graduates (42%) feel they have a great deal in common with other Britons, while only three in ten non-graduates (30%) and one in five of those with overseas degrees (19%) say the same.

Muslims’ outlook on life

Most Muslims in England and Wales, like most of the rest of the population, are reasonably satisfied with life in general, although they do not feel that things are necessarily improving: 88% are at least “fairly satisfied”, with their “life as a whole nowadays”, but in a 2010 survey, only 17% thought things had gotten better for Muslims in Britain over the previous few years while 44% (and even higher proportions of young and graduate Muslims) felt that they had got worse. Around half also feel there is “often a big gap between what people like me expect from life and what we actually get” — but this view is not unique to Muslims.

The majority of Muslims feel positive about the community spirit in their area, as do the rest of the public, and nearly all feel there is respect for different ethnic groups in their local area. Nevertheless, almost two-thirds of Muslims (63%) say they think different ethnic and religious groups should mix together more in their local area than they do at the moment.

Muslims have lower levels of “generalised trust” than most people in Britain – by two-to-one, 55% to 28%, they feel that “you can’t be too careful” rather than that “generally speaking... most people can be trusted” – and they are more worried than average about becoming a victim of crime.

Sense of belonging and identity

Muslims have a strong sense of belonging to Britain and of feeling part of British society. In a 2016 survey, 93% said they felt they belonged to Britain, with more than half saying they felt this “very strongly”, and in another survey in 2015, 95% said they feel loyal to Britain.

Most Muslims in Britain consider themselves to be “British”, rather than “English”, “Scottish”, “Welsh” or “Northern Irish”, and most feel that this is their only national identity, although a substantial minority identify with some foreign nationality. Those who were educated abroad are much less likely to think of themselves as British than those educated in Britain.

Religion plays an important part in the lives and identity of most Muslims in Britain, particularly those who are UK

graduates. However, a strong sense of religious identity sits alongside a strong sense of British identity - Muslims are more likely than the British public as a whole to say that their national identity is important to their sense of who they are (55% of Muslims say this, compared to 44% of all adults). They – like other minority groups such as Hindus – often have multiple and overlapping identities, but these aspects are seen as equally important and do not diminish their sense of Britishness.

While most Muslims feel they have much in common with other Muslims, many also feel they have much in common with other British people and with other people of their ethnic group. In fact, those who feel they have most in common with other Muslims tend also to feel they have most in common with other Britons.

Political engagement

The majority (64%) of Muslims say that they are satisfied with the way that democracy works in this country, making them happier with the democratic process than the British public as a whole, and more likely to express trust in democratic institutions.

Muslims are more likely than the rest of the public to believe that being active in politics can bring benefits, although many feel they have little influence over the decisions that affect them. Young Muslims are the most likely to have participated in some form of political activism.

Like other Britons, most Muslims express negative and often cynical attitudes towards political parties; but they are more likely than average to have positive feelings towards at least one political party (55% of Muslims, but only 44% of the whole public, say they like at least one of three main political parties).

Community engagement and charitable giving

Charitable giving is regarded as highly important in Islam, and most British Muslims donate to charity. Three-quarters (72%) say they have given in the last year, with older Muslims, graduates and those living outside London donating more than younger Muslims, non-graduates and Londoners.

One in five (18%) Muslims have volunteered in the last 12 months; those aged 16-24 and graduates are more likely to have volunteered than older groups and non-graduates.

Muslims were substantially more likely than others to report involvement in some form of community group or club.

Muslims' views on religion in Britain

The vast majority (94%) of Muslims feel able to practice their religion freely in Britain, and most believe that Islam is compatible with the British way of life.

Five in six Muslims (83%) agree that “it is possible to fully belong to Britain and maintain a separate cultural or religious identity”; and two-thirds (66%) of Britons regardless of religion agree with them.

Around half (49%) of Muslims say they would like full integration with non-Muslims in all aspects of life: younger Muslims and those born in the UK are more likely than older Muslims and those born abroad to support this.

Experiences of prejudice and discrimination

While some Muslims in Britain feel that there is prejudice and mistrust against them, the majority take the opposite view; and seven in ten (70%) Muslims feel they are treated fairly by the government. Nevertheless, prejudice against Muslims is felt to be increasing, particularly by Muslim graduates and young Muslims, and a significant minority believes Muslims do not get the same life opportunities as others.

Three in five (63%) Muslims from minority ethnic groups think there is more prejudice against Muslims than against other religious groups, a perception that is especially widespread among young Muslims and graduates. One in four (27%) Muslims say they have experienced discrimination; this rises to one in three (34%) for graduates and Muslims aged 18-24.

Less than one in five (14%) Muslims say harassment is a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem, and one in four (26%) worry about being physically attacked.

Social attitudes

Muslims tend to have more conservative attitudes towards gender roles and homosexuality than the rest of the public, although many of these views were more widely shared by the British public as a whole not long ago. A majority (52%) of Muslims disagree that homosexuality should be legal in Britain, although attitudes among young Muslims are somewhat more liberal (18% of all Muslims but 28% of those aged 18-24 think that it should). Close to half of Muslim men and a third of Muslim women agree that "Wives should always obey their husbands".

Most Muslims participate in traditional British cultural practices, even those with explicitly Christian origins. At Christmas, three-quarters (73%) send cards and three in five give presents, and many also send Mother's Day or Father's Day cards, and wear a poppy on Remembrance Day. But most do not put up a Christmas tree.

Attitudes towards terrorism and extremism

Across numerous surveys, only a tiny percentage of Muslims have expressed support or sympathy for terrorism. A recent 2016 survey found that on any act relating to violence, there were notably higher levels of condemnation among Muslim communities than for the population as a whole. Indeed, if anything, sympathy for terrorist violence in the general population (4%) was higher than among Muslims (2%).

Around a half (51%) of Muslims believe it is the responsibility of Muslims to condemn terrorist acts carried out in the name of Islam, although a sizeable minority (38%) believe it is not.

While the vast majority (94%) of Muslims say they would report activities supporting violent extremism to the police, only a minority (16%) say they have come across such activities and these were mainly on internet sites.

What we know about public attitudes towards Muslims

There is a mixed picture on how the public as a whole views Muslims - some measures find a broadly positive or neutral view, others a more negative impression - but younger people are consistently more positive.

Most (57%) of the British public do not feel that they have much knowledge or understanding of Islam, and surveys confirm that misconceptions are often widespread. The public hugely overestimates the number of Muslims in the country: on average, the public think that around 15% of Britons are Muslim, rather than the correct figure of 4.8%

3 Overview of the Muslim population

After Christianity, Islam is the second largest religion in the UK. Muslims make up 4.4% of the UK population and 2011 Census data put the UK Muslim population at 2,786,635. The vast majority of Muslims in the United Kingdom live in England: 2,660,116 (5.02% of the population). 76,737 Muslims live in Scotland (1.45%), 45,950 in Wales (1.50%), and 3,832 in Northern Ireland (0.21%).

Table 3.1: Religion in the U.K., 2011

	England		Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland		UK Total	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Christian	31,479,876	59.4	1,763,299	57.6	2,850,199	53.8	1,490,588	82.3	37,583,962	59.5
Muslim	2,660,116	5.0	45,950	1.5	76,737	1.4	3,832	0.2	2,786,635	4.4
Hindu	806,199	1.5	10,434	0.3	16,379	0.3	2,382	0.1	835,394	1.3
Sikh	420,196	0.8	2,962	0.1	9,055	0.2	216	0.0	432,429	0.7
Jewish	261,282	0.5	2,064	0.1	5,887	0.1	335	0.0	269,568	0.4
Buddhist	238,626	0.5	9,117	0.3	12,795	0.2	1,046	0.1	261,584	0.4
Other religion	227,825	0.4	12,705	0.4	15,196	0.3	7,048	0.4	262,774	0.4
No religion	13,114,232	24.7	982,997	32.1	1,941,116	36.7	183,164	10.1	16,221,509	25.7
Not stated	3,804,104	7.2	233,928	7.6	368,039	7.0	122,152	6.7	4,528,223	7.2

Source: Census 2011 (tables KS209EW, DC2107SC, S218NI)

The majority of Muslims (76%) live in the urban areas of Greater London, the West Midlands, the North West and Yorkshire and Humberside. More than a million Muslims live in London, where they make up 12.4% of the population. Other cities with large Muslim populations include Birmingham (234,000, 21.8% of the total), Bradford (129,000, 24.7%), and Manchester (79,000, 15.8%), and Muslims also make up a high proportion of the population in some smaller local authorities such as Blackburn with Darwen (27.0%), Luton (24.6%) and Slough (23.3%).³

According to data from the Understanding Society survey, 37% of Muslims were born in the UK and 78% are UK citizens (this assumes that all Muslims born in the UK are also citizens). More than half of 16-24 year olds were born in the UK, but this figure falls to only around a quarter of 35-64 year olds, then rises again, to 49%, for those aged 65+.⁴

³Figures from the 2011 Census (table KS209EW). Further analysis of data concerning Muslims in the 2011 Census can be found in a Muslim Council of Britain report, *British Muslims in Numbers* (2015), https://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf.

⁴The sample size is lower for older age groups so caution is advised when interpreting these results.

Table 3.2: Muslims born in UK vs. UK citizenship

	All UK Muslims	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
UK born	37%	55%	38%	28%	21%	24%	49%
Born Outside UK	63%	45%	62%	72%	79%	76%	51%
UK Citizens	78%	76%	70%	79%	82%	83%	94%
Non-UK Citizens	22%	24%	30%	21%	18%	17%	6%

Source: *Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 3,671 adult Muslims*

Ethnic diversity

The Muslim population in the UK is ethnically diverse.

The majority (67.6%) are considered to be “Asian”. The next biggest group is from “other” ethnicities (including Arabs and other ethnic groups), who contribute 10.7% of the Muslim population, followed by 10.1% of Black Muslims and 7.8% of White⁵ Muslims. This diversity is increasing, the proportion of Muslims from groups other than “Asian” having risen from 26.3% at the 2001 Census to 32.4% in 2011.

The Muslim Asian population can be further subdivided: 38.0% of British Muslims are Pakistanis, 14.9% are Bangladeshi and 7.3% are Indians. The biggest group of Black Muslims describe themselves as Black African (7.7% of the total); a substantial proportion of these are Somalis, but this was not included as a separate category in the Census so no definitive number is available.⁶

Muslims make up about a third of the entire UK BME population, and 43.4% of the Asian/Asian British population.

Age profile

One in three Muslims are aged 15 or under

The Muslim population has a younger age profile to the rest of the population. Across the UK, 19% of the population are aged 15 or under – among the Muslim population, this rises to a third (33%). Almost half (48%) are aged under 24. Similarly, those aged 65 or over contribute to 16% of the UK’s population, whereas amongst the Muslim population, this is only 4%.

In light of this, the median age amongst the UK population is 40 – whereas across the Muslim population, it is 25.

Health and disability

While overall, Muslims report similar rates of health and disability to the general population, older Muslims are more likely to report poor health than older people in the general population

Judging by the Census⁷, health amongst the Muslim population overall appears relatively similar to that of the general UK population, but there are some big differences when looking at health and disability among Muslims aged 65 or over; older Muslims are more than twice as likely to report poor health as the general population and have higher rates of disability.

⁵‘White’ includes White British, White Irish and White other as per 2011 Census definition categories.

⁶See *British Muslims in Numbers* (Muslim Council of Britain, 2015), https://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf.

⁷Because the Census necessarily relies on self-reported assessment of people’s state of health, conclusions should be drawn with some caution.

81.2% of the UK population state themselves as being in “very good or good health”. Amongst the Muslim population, this is 84%.

13.2% of the UK population state themselves as being in “fair health”; this is 10.5% for Muslims.

And similarly, 5.6% of the UK population consider themselves as being in “bad or very bad health”; amongst the Muslim population, this is 5.5%.

Among those aged over 65 years almost two in five (38.2%) Muslim women describe themselves as being in “bad or very bad health”. This is just 16.1% for women across the UK as a whole. Similarly, 26.7% of Muslim men over 65 describe themselves as being in “bad or very bad health”, compared to just 14.8% of men across the UK.

For disability, the picture is fairly similar: 24.7% of men in the UK aged 65 or over have a health problem or disability that limits them “a lot”; this increases to 35.1% for Muslim men of this age group. For women aged 65 or over in the UK, 29.4% have a disability that limits them a lot. This increases to 47.6% for Muslim women of this age group.

Mental health has been an issue rightfully coming to the forefront of the British health debate in recent years. When comparing rates of depression between British Muslims and non-Muslims there is no significant overall difference. When asked “Have you recently been feeling unhappy or depressed?”, 5% of Muslims said ‘much more than usual’ while a further 15% said ‘rather more than usual’. This compares to 3% of non-Muslims saying ‘much more than usual’ and 14% saying ‘rather more than usual’. However, when looking deeper there is some difference between age groups particularly older people. Nearly a quarter (23%) of Muslims aged 55 and above say they have felt unhappy or depressed ‘rather more than usual’ (3% ‘much more than usual’) compared to 12% of non-Muslims aged 55 and above (3% ‘much more than usual’).⁸

When respondents were asked if they have recently been losing confidence there are no statistically significant differences between the Muslim and non-Muslim overall populations. When again looking at different age groups however young Muslims were more likely than young non-Muslims to say they have not been suffering from a loss of confidence. Three in five (58%) 16-24-year-old Muslims said they have ‘not at all’ felt they have lost confidence in themselves compared to less than half (47%) of 16-24-year-old non-Muslims. Older Muslims (those aged 55+) were just as likely to say ‘not at all’ (43%) when compared to older non-Muslims (45%). Two-thirds (65%) of Muslims aged 55+ however say they have not been able to overcome their difficulties to some extent. This compares to 54% of non-Muslims of the same age group.⁹

Economic activity

Compared to the rest of the UK, Muslims have lower employment rates: a third (34.9%) of the UK population are in full time employment. This decreases to a fifth (19.8%) amongst the Muslim population.

This is partly a reflection of the slightly higher percentages of Muslims that are in education (13.3%, compared to 5.3% of the UK as a whole). However, 7.2% of Muslims are unemployed, compared to just 4.0% of the UK population as a whole.

A number of academic and other investigations in recent years have explored the impact of being Muslim on inequalities in the Labour market, The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee considered employment opportunities for Muslims in a 2016 report, making a number of recommendations¹⁰. A report by

⁸Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 2,930 adult Muslims, 34,812 adult non-Muslims.

⁹Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 2,930 adult Muslims, 34,812 adult non-Muslims.

¹⁰Employment opportunities for Muslims in the UK (Second Report of the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, Session 2016-17, HC 89, <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/women-and-equalities-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry/>).

the Social Mobility Commission, also in 2016, highlighted evidence of the disadvantage faced by different Muslim groups¹¹. Some studies have concluded that it is possible to distinguish a 'Muslim penalty' from disadvantage related to ethnic group: Heath and Martin, using data from 2005-6, found "a consistent pattern for Muslim men and women to experience greater labour market penalties than their co-ethnics who belong to other (or no) religions" and that "These Muslim penalties are largest in the case of women's economic activity and smallest in the case of men's unemployment, but even for male unemployment they are large and significant."¹² Khattab and Hussein, using 2002-13 data and concentrating on Muslim women, conclude that "On the one hand, Muslim women are disadvantaged within the labour market but, on the other hand, the extent of their disadvantage varies by their ethnicity, migration status (first or second generation) and other social markers."¹³ Khattab, Johnston and Manley look at the same period and explore some hypotheses that might partly explain the differences: they conclude, among other things, that "Patterns of family formation, and the gender division of labour strongly associated with it, were among the most important factors explaining different labour market participation of Muslim women from the Christian White-British majority".¹⁴

Education / qualifications

One in four Muslims have degrees or equivalent qualifications

Education levels among Muslims are slightly lower than UK population as a whole, although the gap is narrowing. At the time of the 2001 Census, 29.1% of all people aged 16 and over in England and Wales had no qualifications, 38.6% of Muslims had none; by 2011, the figures had fallen to 22.7% for the public as a whole, and to 25.6% for Muslims. On the other hand, where the proportion of graduates among Muslims was slightly ahead of the average in 2001 (20.6% compared to 19.8%), by 2011, it had fallen slightly behind (27.2% of the whole age group but 24.0% of Muslims now having degrees or equivalent qualifications).¹⁵ The figure for Muslims is only slightly behind that for Christians (25.1%), but substantially lower than for those giving their religion as Hindu (44.6%), Sikh (30.1%), Buddhist (39.7%) or Jewish (42.1%), and for those saying they had no religion (30.9%).¹⁶

Estimates from the Citizenship Survey reveal Muslim men are more likely than women to have obtained a degree or higher - one in three (33%) men compared to one in five (21%) of women.¹⁷ However, research by Nabil Khattab and Tariq Modood finds that among 21-24 year old Muslims, slightly more women than men (25% to 22%) have degrees, suggesting that this gap may begin to close.¹⁸ By way of comparison, 26% of men and 25% of women amongst the non-Muslim population are graduates.¹⁹

¹¹Ethnicity, Gender and Social Mobility (Social Mobility Commission, 28 December 2016), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethnicity-gender-and-social-mobility>.

¹²Anthony Heath & Jean Martin, 'Can religious affiliation explain 'ethnic' inequalities in the labour market?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, 1005-27 (2013), doi:10.1080/01419870.2012.657660.

¹³Nabil Khattab and Shereen Hussein, 'Can Religious Affiliation Explain the Disadvantage of Muslim Women in the British Labour Market?', *Work, Employment and Society* (21 July 2017): doi:10.1177/0950017017711099.

¹⁴Nabil Khattab, Ron Johnston, and David Manley, 'Human Capital, Family Structure and Religiosity Shaping British Muslim Women's Labour Market Participation', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (6 June 2017), doi:10.1080/1369183X.2017.1334541.

¹⁵British Muslims in Numbers (Muslim Council of Britain, 2015), https://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf, table 28 (p. 60), citing Census table DC5204EW..

¹⁶ONS Census 2011, table DC5204EW.

¹⁷Department for Communities and Local Government, Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

¹⁸University of Bristol, "'Cultural Transformation' as Muslim Girls out-Perform Boys Academically, Research Says", 4 April 2016. <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2016/april/muslim-women-degrees.html>. The analysis uses data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, with interviews carried out 2002-13.

¹⁹Department for Communities and Local Government, Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

Level of education appears to be very important towards one's sense of who they are for Muslims. More than half (55%) say education is very important compared to 35% of Christians. This is also comparable to English/Welsh Hindus where 57% say education is very important. Despite differences in education levels between Muslim men and women, education is equally important towards their self-identity. More than half of both (54% of men and 56% of women) say education is "very important".²⁰

Aspirations for education

Muslim parents have higher educational aspirations for their children than other parents in England, with aspirations for Muslim girls being higher than for Muslim boys.

Muslim parents' aspirations for their child's educational achievement are higher than other parents in England. Two-thirds (66%) of parents with Muslim children thought it "very likely" that their child would go on to university to do a degree at some time in the future, only 38% of the non-Muslim group said the same. There was also a difference by gender – with aspirations for Muslims girls being higher than for Muslim boys. The "very likely" figure is 64% for Muslim boys and 70% for Muslim girls (compared to 34% for non-Muslim boys and 43% for non-Muslim girls). The children themselves, questioned separately, also showed a difference in expectations, but a little less than that of their parents. 38% of the non-Muslim children thought it "very likely" that they would go to university, the same proportion as the prediction by the parents, but 56% of Muslim children thought it "very likely" that they would do so, much higher than the proportion for non-Muslims but considerably lower than the ambitious 66% that their parents had suggested. For Muslims and non-Muslims alike, more girls than boys thought they were "very likely" to go to university (for the Muslims, 52% of the boys and 60% of the girls said so).²¹ These findings suggest that Muslim girls themselves and parents of Muslim girls have higher educational aspirations than Muslim boys and parents of Muslim boys, which may counter gender stereotypes that people hold about Muslim girls.²²

In the Longitudinal Survey of Young People of England - a cohort study following young people and their parents - when the "main parent" of 13-14 year olds across England was asked how involved they personally felt in his or her school life, 41% of parents of Muslim children felt "very involved", while for non-Muslims the figure was only 26%. A further 43% of Muslim parents and 48% for the rest felt "fairly involved". In both groups, parents in London were significantly more likely to feel very involved than those elsewhere (50% against 36% for Muslims, 38% against 24% for the others).²³

Household make up

Young Muslims are more likely to live in households with both a mother and a father than non-Muslims.

A cohort study of 13-14 year olds in England in 2013 found that 97% of Muslims in this age group, and 95% of non-Muslims, live with their natural mother. However, Muslim young people are significantly more likely to live with their natural father as well: 77% of Muslim 13-14 year olds, but only 63% of non-Muslims, have their natural father in the household. Due to small sample sizes, analysis by ethnicity is limited but does show that the father was part of the household for 83% of Pakistani Muslim children, 85% of Bangladeshis and 49% for Africans. In London the picture is slightly different: Muslims in London were less likely to be living with their father (73%) than those in the rest of the country; this was much larger than the difference between the capital and the rest of England for non-Muslims (61% against 63%).²⁴

²⁰Department for Communities and Local Government, Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

²¹Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013)

²²The relationship between expectations and attainment in the LSYPE data is explored in detail by Nabil Khattab and Tariq Modood, 'Accounting for British Muslim's Educational Attainment: Gender Differences and the Impact of Expectations', *British Journal of Sociology of Education* (11 April 2017), doi:10.1080/01425692.2017.1304203.

²³Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013)

²⁴Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013)

Parents of Muslim children report slightly less frequent arguments between parent and child over lifestyle issues than do parents of non-Muslim children. A 2013 survey that talked to the main parent of 13-14 year olds asked about “arguments with their parents about things like the young person’s friends, their clothes or hairstyle, things they do when they go out or what time they come back”, and found that while 9% in the case of Muslims and 11% in the case of non-Muslims said they had such arguments “most days”, not a substantial difference, a further 13% of Muslims had these arguments “more than once a week”, but the figure was 21% for non-Muslims. (It should be borne in mind, however, that the question asked the parent “How often would you say you argue with {name}?”, and it is possible that some or all of the difference is in whether it is the “main parent” that has such arguments with the child rather than with the total number of arguments that occur.)²⁵

English language proficiency

2011 Census data does not provide formal measures for English language proficiency by religious affiliation. However, if we look at the English language proficiency amongst the Muslim population’s two largest ethnic groups, i.e. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, we can see that 67.3% of those born in Pakistan say that English is not their main language; nevertheless, two-thirds of this group say they can speak English “very well” or “well”. A third (32.7%) say that English is their main language, and only 4.2% say they cannot speak English at all.

British residents born in Bangladesh show a similar picture: 76.7% do not have English as their main language, but almost two-thirds of these can speak it at least “well”, whilst 23.3% do have English as their first language and 5.5% cannot speak English at all.

Almost half of Muslim children in England are growing up in multi-lingual households whose first language is not English.

The cohort study of 13-14 year olds showed that 45% were living in households where the first language²⁶ was something other than English; in 32% of households, English was the main or first language but other languages were also spoken, 11% were in bilingual households and 12% in households where only English was spoken. The incidence of a non-English first language was slightly higher in London (50% versus 42% outside London), and of English being the first language but other languages also being spoken was correspondingly lower (26% in London, 35% elsewhere). By way of comparison, only 4% of non-Muslim children in the same age group were in a primarily-non-English-speaking household, although this was much higher in London (15%) than the rest of England (3%).²⁷

Wealth and income

The National Equality Panel, reporting in 2010 on Labour Force Survey data from 2006–8, found that median hourly wages for Muslims, both men and women, were substantially lower than for any other major religious group or for those with no religion.²⁸ Since Muslims also had the lowest rates of employment, this implies an even greater disparity in overall average incomes, although the report did not analyse incomes by religion. It found even greater differences in total household wealth at the same period: the median household wealth (net financial and property wealth including houses net of mortgages and private pension rights) in the UK was £205,000; for Muslim households, the median was only £42,000. This is much lower than for either Sikhs (£229,000) or Hindus (£206,000), and seems to be closely related to differences in wealth between different ethnic groups (the median

²⁵Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013). This question was asked only to parents who were able to complete the interview without an interpreter.

²⁶Respondents were asked: Is English the first or main language of this household? If ‘Yes’ –Q. ‘Is English the only language spoken or are any other languages spoken?’ with other follow-up questions. Interviewer then codes responses as one of: English only; English first/main and speaks other languages; No - another language is households first/main language; Household is bilingual

²⁷Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013)

²⁸An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel (January 2010), <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28344/1/CASEREport60.pdf>, p. 132, 149.

²⁸*An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel* (January 2010), <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28344/1/CASEREport60.pdf>, p. 132, 149.

for Bangladeshis is £15,000 and for Black Africans £21,000, while for Pakistanis it is £97,000 and for Indians £204,000, not far short of the £221,000 median wealth of white British households.)²⁹ It should be borne in mind, of course, that while this overall pattern of disadvantage is very unlikely to have changed, the figures today may be very different since this data refers to the period before the global financial crisis.

Muslim young people are much more likely to be in families relying on benefits than non-Muslims.

The 2013 cohort study of 13-14 year olds in England found that 10% of the Muslim children were in households receiving Income Support (compared to 5% for non-Muslims), 9% receiving Jobseekers' Allowance (3%), 6% Employment and Support Allowance (3%), 26% Housing Benefit (16%), and 61% received Tax Credits (41%). On the other hand, the numbers receiving Carer's Allowance (6% of Muslim children's families, 5% for non-Muslims), Disability Living Allowance (8% and 9%) and – perhaps unsurprisingly – Child Benefit (87% and 83%) were little different for Muslims from anybody else.³⁰

Differences between London and the rest of the country were larger for Muslims than for others, and had a substantial impact on the overall figures since the proportion of Muslim children in the capital is much higher: 38% of the Muslim households included in the survey, but only 12% of the non-Muslim households, were in London. Muslim families in London were much more likely to be receiving Income Support (14%) than those outside London (8%), whereas for non-Muslims there was no significant difference between London (6%) and elsewhere (5%). Housing benefit was being paid to 41% of Muslim children's families in London but to only 16% elsewhere; for non-Muslims the figures were 25% and 15%, so the difference between London and the rest of the country was less stark, and indeed outside London, Muslim families were no more likely to be on housing benefit than anyone else. London Muslim families were also more likely to be receiving Council tax benefit (28%) than those not in London (16%); again, there was no significant difference between Muslims and non-Muslims outside London, but non-Muslims in London were less likely (19%) than Muslims to be receiving this benefit.³¹

Religious practice

Religion plays a very important part in the lives of most Muslims in Britain – particularly for Muslims with a UK degree.

In the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Study (EMBES), almost all adult Muslims from the main ethnic minority groups said their religion was important to them (51% extremely important and 43% very important); not a single Muslim respondent said it was not important at all. The claimed importance differed little by gender or age, but UK graduates were most likely to say that it was extremely important (62%) than non-graduates (50%) and those with a degree from overseas (44%) somewhat less so.³² The EMBES study does not comprise a large enough sample size for comparisons with other religions apart from Christianity. Among ethnic minority Christians, 37% said religion was extremely important to them (31% among UK graduates compared with 49% with an overseas degree and 35% of non-graduates).

The importance of religion is even more strongly expressed by Muslim children: 79% of Muslim 13-14 year olds say religion is "very important" to the way they live their life.³³ Moreover, according to the comparisons over time with the Citizenship Survey, the proportion of Muslim people in Britain who practised their religion increased (from 73% in 2005 to 79% in 2009-10), and this rise was particularly evident in the younger (16-29) age group (from 68% to 80%).³⁴

²⁹*An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel* (January 2010), <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28344/1/CASereport60.pdf>, p. 208.

³⁰Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013)

³¹Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013)

³²Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

³³Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013)

³⁴Department for Communities and Local Government, *Citizenship Survey, Race, Religion and Equalities: A report on the 2009–10 Citizenship Survey*

And most Muslims claim to be regularly religiously active, either in private prayer or in collective acts of worship...

Women are most likely to say that they pray regularly on their own while men are most likely to say they regularly attend religious services or otherwise participate together with other people.

More than half of British adult Muslims 53% say that they do religious activities on their own or in any other location at least five times a day. (The question stated that “This may include prayer, meditation and other forms of worship taking place at home”, and presumably regular prayer is the activity in question in most cases.) Women are much more likely than men to state this (64% of women and 43% of men are religiously active five times a day), and older Muslims somewhat more likely than their younger counterparts to do so (44% of 18-24 year olds and 50% of 25-34 year olds but 59% of 35-54 year olds and 60% of those aged 55+years). Those with a UK degree (42%) or A-levels (44%) are less likely than other Muslims to do so, but those with an overseas degree (63%) or overseas school exam qualifications (66%) are more likely to do so – this may be partly a function of age, however.³⁵ These findings are notable given that those with a UK degree are most likely to say their religion is important to them but their participation in regular religious practice seems to be lower; this may of course be because their situation makes it more difficult to carry out religious observances rather than because they have less inclination to do so.

Very few Muslims say they do not undertake any regular religious activity in private. Just four per cent said that they did not do any religious activities on their own at all, and three per cent only on festivals. These are twice as likely to be men as women.³⁶

Around a quarter of Muslims (24%), also say that at least once a day they attend religious services or participate in religious activities with other people, and more than half (55%) say they do so at least once a week. Men are considerably more likely than women to take part in such group activities regularly: 29% of men say they do so daily, and 74% at least weekly, while for women the figures are 19% daily and 36% at least weekly. Age differences in participation are relatively small (51% of 18-24 year olds and 53% of those aged 55+ say they participate at least weekly, although the older group are more likely to do so daily, 27% compared to 19%).³⁷

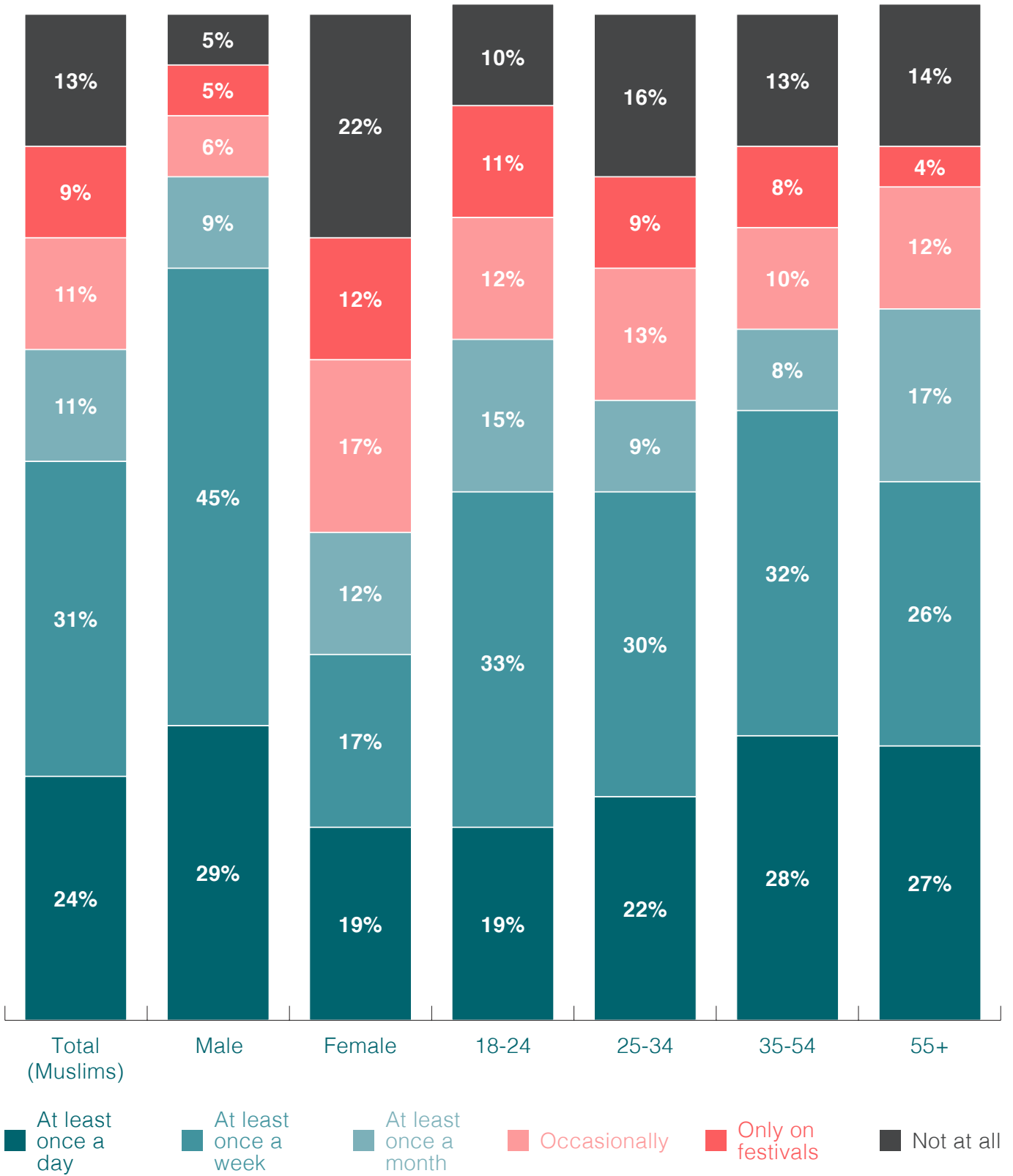
³⁵Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

³⁶Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

³⁷Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Figure 3.1: Participation frequency in religious activities or services

In the past 12 months, how often did you participate in religious activities or attend religious services or meetings with other people, other than for events such as weddings and funerals?



Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+

Around one in five say that they either participate in religious activities or attend religious services or meetings with other people only “occasionally (but less than once a month)” (12%) or only on festivals (8%). These make up a much higher proportion of women (29%) than men (12%). A further one in eight (13%) do not participate at all, again most of whom are women (22%) rather than men (5%).³⁸ In total, therefore, around half of Muslim women but one Muslim man in six are at best occasional participants in these collective religious activities. It is worth noting that one possible explanation for this gender difference is that access to mosques and weekly collective worship (Friday prayer) is an obligation on Muslim males, and not females.

Social networks and contacts – number and characteristics

There is little difference between the number of close friends young Muslims and non-Muslims have. Overall, young women have fewer close friends than young men, and young Muslim women have fewer close friends than young non-Muslim women

In a 2010 cohort study of young people in England born in 1989-90 (i.e. aged 19-21 at the time of interview), 14% of the Muslim participants and 18% of the non-Muslims put their number of close friends (“that is friends you could talk to if you were in some sort of trouble”) at ten or more, but there was a very substantial difference between young men and young women which was more marked among Muslims than non-Muslims. For young men, the difference between the 23% of Muslims and 25% of non-Muslims who said that they had ten or more close friends was not statistically significant; however, only six per cent of young Muslim women said that they had this many close friends, while 11% of the female non-Muslims said so.³⁹

Around three in five young Muslims in this age group (60%) have at least four close friends, somewhat lower than the 68% of non-Muslims of which the same is true.⁴⁰ Again, young women are more likely than young men to have less than this number of friends, both among Muslims and non-Muslims, but the proportion of young Muslim women with so small a group of close friends is larger; half of young Muslim women (53%) and 63% of other young women have at least four close friends, as do 66% of young Muslim men and 73% of young non-Muslim men.⁴¹

Only a small number of this age group have no close friends or only one, but this is also higher among Muslims than non-Muslims. Three per cent of young Muslim men and five per cent of young Muslim women said they have no close friends, while five per cent of young Muslim men and six per cent of young Muslim women have only one. (For non-Muslims, the numbers are 2%, 1%, 3% and 4% respectively.)⁴²

Younger Muslims have more ethnically diverse friendship groups than older Muslims

More than half of Muslims in the Election Study say that all (10%) or most (47%) of their friends have the same ethnic background as themselves. By way of comparison, among ethnic minority Christians, 6% say all and 39% say most of their friends have the same ethnic background.⁴³

⁴⁰Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 7 (interviews May-October 2010): 1,156 Muslim and 7,210 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

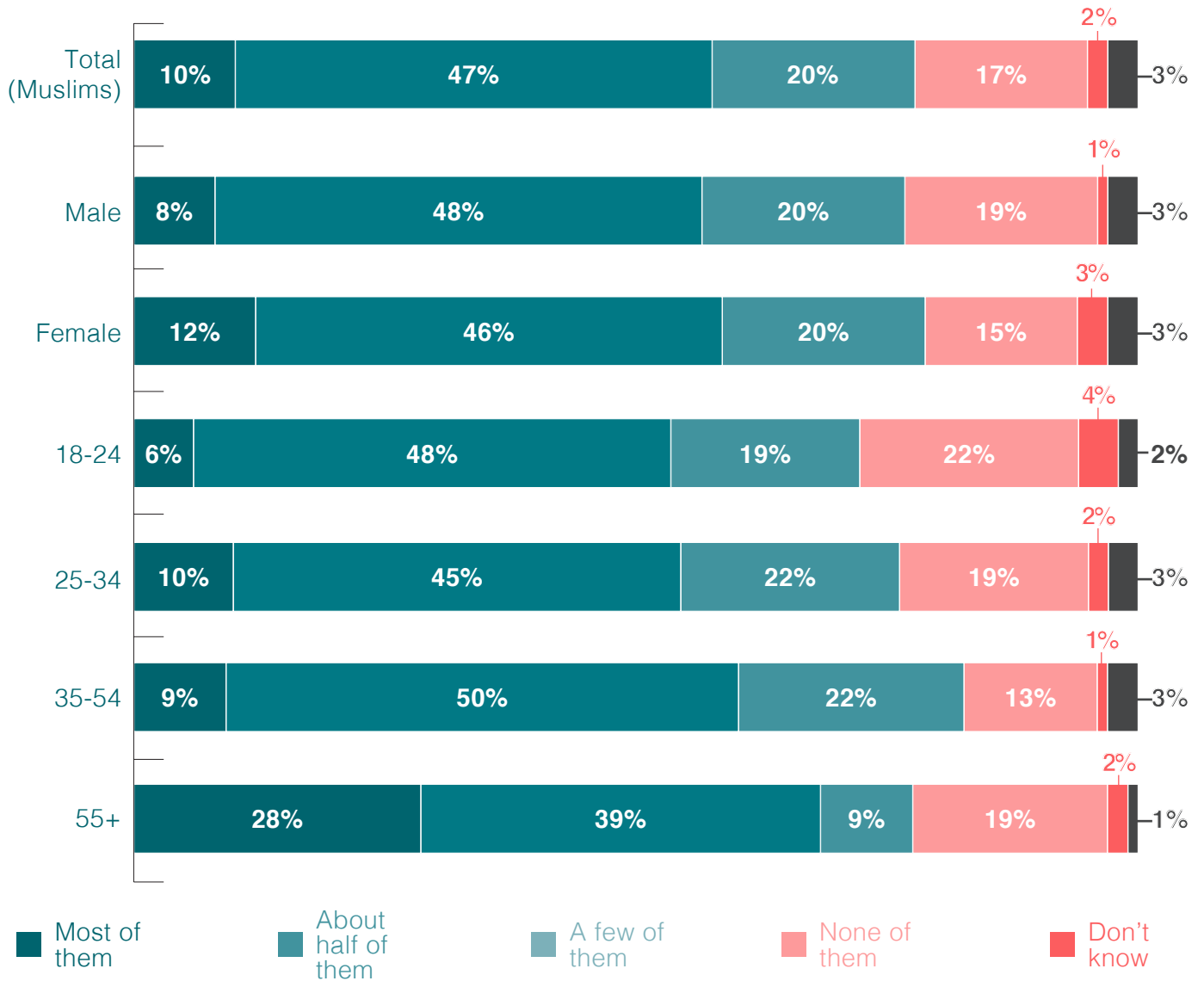
⁴¹Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 7 (interviews May-October 2010): 1,156 Muslim and 7,210 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

⁴²Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 7 (interviews May-October 2010): 1,156 Muslim and 7,210 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

⁴³Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Figure 3.2: Proportion of British Muslims who have friends of the same ethnic background

As far as you know, how many of your friends have the same ethnic background as you?



Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+

There are differences within these figures by both age and by geography; younger Muslims are more likely to have diverse friendship groups than older Muslims, and Muslims in London are considerably more likely to have friends from outside their own ethnic group than those in the rest of the country. Overall, more than two in five of 18-24-year-old (45%) and 25-34-year-old (43%) Muslims say at least half of their friends are from a different ethnic group, falling to 37% among 35-54 year olds and 31% among Muslims older than this. Approaching half, 48%, of London Muslims have half or more of their friends from outside their own ethnic group, but only 35% say the same in the rest of the country. This puts London Muslims closely in line with other members of minority ethnic groups in the capital: 49% of non-Muslims in the EMBES survey said that half or more of their friends were from a different ethnic group; but the non-Muslims outside London had, if anything, more diverse friendship groups, with 54% judging that at least half of their friends were not of their own ethnicity, half-as-high-again as the 35% figure for the Muslims.⁴⁴

Three in five (59%) Muslim UK graduates say that around a half or more of their friends are from a different ethnic group, compared to 45% of those with an overseas degree and 36% of non-graduates. These figures for both UK and overseas graduates are very similar to the figures for non-Muslim members of ethnic minorities with the same qualifications; however, ethnic minority non-Muslims without a degree are much more likely to say at least half their friends are from a different group (51%) than are the corresponding group of Muslims (36%). Only a handful of those with a UK degree -just one per cent- say that all their friends are of the same ethnicity, and it is also less frequent than average among those with a degree obtained abroad (6%), but one in eight (12%) of non-graduates say this.⁴⁵

Muslim women are more likely than Muslim men (12% against 8%) to say that *all* their friends are from the same ethnic group, and this is also much more frequent for those aged 55+ years (28%) than for younger age groups (6% for 18-24 year olds, 10% for 25-34 year olds and 9% for those aged 34-54), and somewhat less frequent in London (8%) than elsewhere (12%).^v

Most Muslims in Britain tend to live in ethnically-mixed areas. Overall, only three per cent of Muslims say that *all* the people living in their neighbourhood share the same ethnic background, and 29% that most of them do. Younger Muslims and graduates are more likely than older Muslims and non-graduates to say they live in ethnically mixed areas. Older Muslims (from an ethnic minority background) are much more likely to live (or believe that they live) in areas where the majority share their ethnic background: 48% of those aged 55+ years say that all or most of the people living in their neighbourhood have the same ethnic background as they do, compared to 35% of 18-24 year olds and 28% of 25-54 year olds. Graduates are much less likely (18% for those with a UK degree, 20% with a degree from overseas) as those without a degree (35%) to say all or most of their neighbours share their ethnic group. This is also much rarer in London (21%) than elsewhere (37%).⁴⁷

Unsurprisingly, fewer say that all or most of the people they work with are of their own ethnicity (27% of those in work), although this is significantly higher for those aged over rather than under 35. Only seven per cent of Muslims with a UK degree and 15% of those with an overseas degree work mostly with people from their own ethnic group.⁴⁸

⁴⁴Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

⁴⁵Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

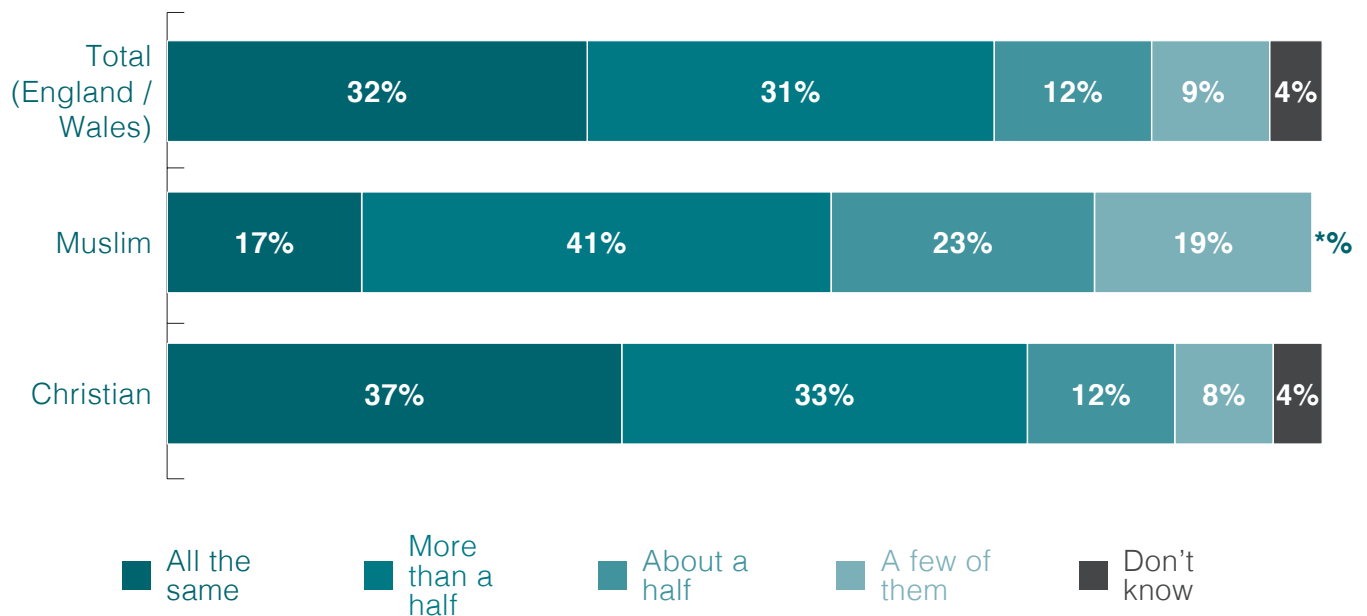
⁴⁶Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

⁴⁷Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

⁴⁸Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Figure 3.3: Proportion of Muslims in England & Wales who have friends of the same religion

And what about religion? What proportion of your friends are of the same religious group as you? Would you say...?



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government, (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011* (base size: 16,937; 2,875 Muslims)

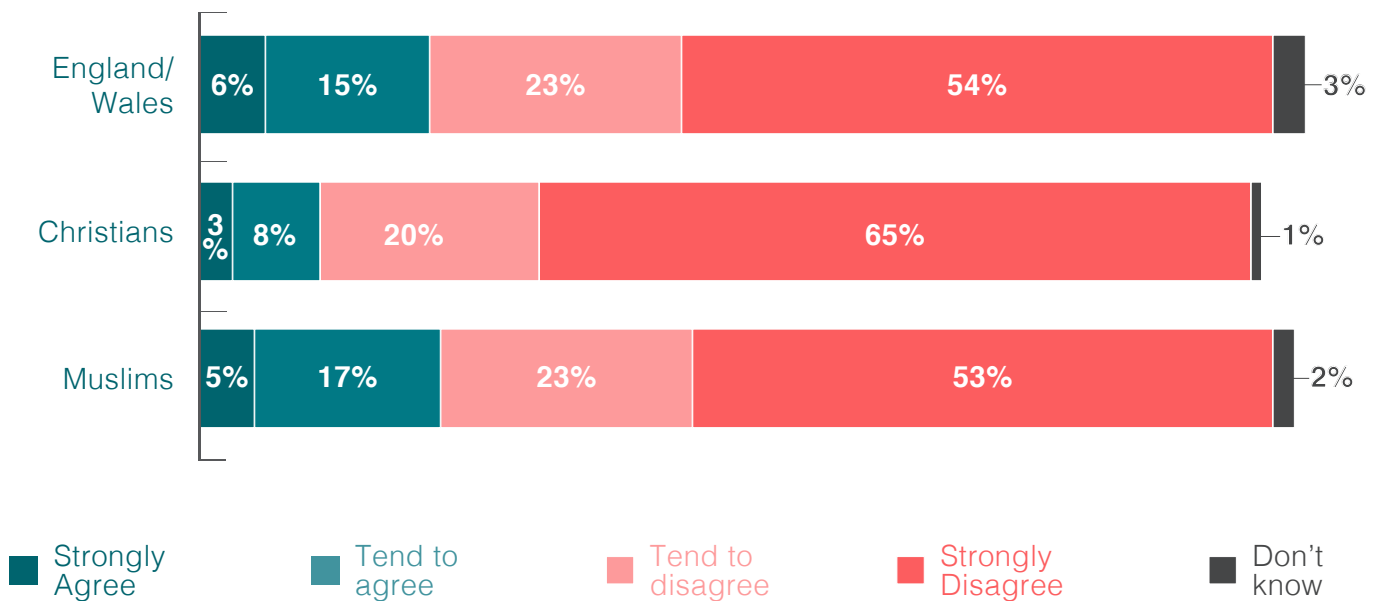
The Citizenship Survey asks about the religion of people’s friends. One in six Muslims in England and Wales (17%) say that all their friends are also Muslim, and a further 41% that more than half are. By way of comparison, in the same survey more than a third of Christians (37%) said all their friends were of the same religious group as they were, and another third (33%) that more than half were. Amongst Muslims there was relatively little difference between age groups. One in five (18%) aged 16-34 say all their friends are Muslim compared to the same proportion (18%) of those aged 35-54 and 20% of those aged 55+. Fifteen percent of those aged 16-34 say less than half their friends are Muslim compared to 17% 35-54 year olds and 16% aged 55+. There is more variation between age groups amongst the non-Muslim population where a quarter (25%) of those aged 16-34 say all their friends are from the same faith while 44% those aged 55 and above say the same.⁴⁹ Despite this, 76% of Muslims and 85% of Christians say that their religion does not affect who their friends are – indeed, 53% of Muslims (and 65% of Christians) “strongly disagree” with that suggestion.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Department for Communities and Local Government, (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

⁵⁰Department for Communities and Local Government, (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

Figure 3.4: Proportion of Muslims and Christians in England & Wales say their religion affects who their friends are

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your religion affects who your friends are?



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 5 (interviews June-October 2008): 1,404 Muslim and 8,676 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

Social networks in a religious setting

Muslim graduates and Muslims in London are more likely than non-graduates and those outside London to attend an ethnically-diverse place of worship

Around two-thirds say that all (29%) or most (36%) of the people at their place of worship share their ethnic background. Perhaps surprisingly, women (who are more likely to say they practice their religion at home) are considerably more likely than men (34% compared to 24%) to think that all are from their own ethnic group and those without a UK degree are about twice as likely (31%) as UK graduates (16%) to say this is the case. Those living in London (11%) are much less likely than those elsewhere (38%) to think this is true.⁵¹

Table 3.3: As far as you know, how many of the people at your church or place of worship have the same ethnic background as you?

	All GB			London			Outside London		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
All of them	29%	24%	34%	11%	9%	14%	38%	32%	44%
Most of them	36%	40%	32%	33%	35%	31%	38%	43%	32%
About half of them	14%	15%	12%	22%	25%	20%	9%	10%	8%
A few of them	14%	15%	13%	25%	26%	23%	8%	8%	7%
None of them?	2%	1%	2%	1%	0%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Don't Know	6%	5%	7%	7%	6%	9%	5%	4%	6%
All or most	65%	64%	66%	44%	44%	45%	76%	75%	76%
Half or less	29%	31%	27%	49%	51%	46%	19%	20%	18%

Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010

⁵¹Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas. Percentages given exclude those who say that they do not attend a place of worship (2% of men and 12% of women).

More Muslims than Christians in England and Wales say they socialise with individuals from different racial or religious backgrounds. Overall, 96% of those Muslims surveyed in 2010-11 said they had socialised with people from different backgrounds at least once in the past month. This compares to 77% of those who identified as Christian and 78% of those in England and Wales overall.⁵²

Young people's lifestyle

Muslim youngsters are significantly less likely to have tried alcohol than their non-Muslim counterparts.

Only three per cent of Muslim 13-14 year olds in England (4% of boys and 2% of girls) say they have ever had "a proper alcoholic drink - a whole drink, not just a sip". A third (33%) of non-Muslims in the same age group have done so.⁵³

Young Muslim women are less likely to acquire a driver's licence than young Muslim men

Young Muslim women are much less likely than other people of the same age to acquire a driving licence within the first couple of years after it becomes legally possible. A 2010 survey of 19-21 year olds in England found that a very similar proportion of Muslim (62%) and non-Muslim (60%) men in that age group have licences; for non-Muslim women the number is slightly lower (55%), but substantially so for Muslim young women (40%).⁵⁴

Social media usage

The use of social media among young Muslims is widespread although not as high as young non-Muslims

A 2013 cohort study found that the majority (74%) of Muslim 13-14 year olds used social networking sites or instant messaging services, but usage was not as high as it is among non-Muslim youngsters. The most widely used social network site was Facebook, but only 53% of young Muslims used it while 82% of other young people did so; and Muslim young men (61%) were much more likely to use it as Muslim young women (43%), whereas there was no real difference between the sexes for non-Muslims (males 81%, females 83%).

However, Muslim young women were more likely than young men to use Twitter (29% to 20%) and other social networking sites (20% to 10%), although these were also favoured more by non-Muslim young women than by non-Muslim young men. A quarter of young Muslims (24%) used instant messaging services such as Blackberry Messenger, with no significant difference between young men and young women; this was in distinct contrast to non-Muslims, among whom young women were much more likely than young men to use such services (40% compared to 28%). A quarter of young Muslims used none of these services, compared to only one in ten non-

⁵²Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

⁵³Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013)

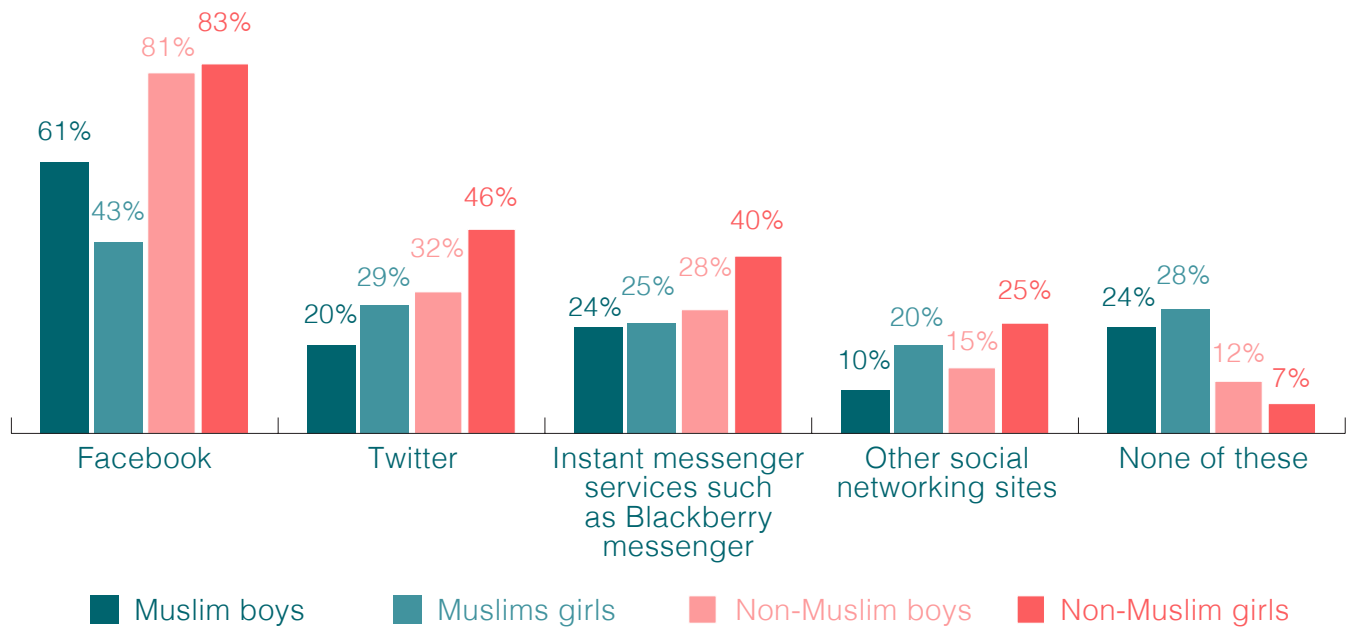
⁵³Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 7 (interviews May-October 2010): 1,156 Muslim and 7,210 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

⁵⁴Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013)

Muslims in the same cohort.⁵⁵ Of course, this is an area where habits are changing quickly as new social media channels emerge and become popular while others fall away, and the detail of the 2013 figures is almost certainly already well out of date; however, it may well be that the same patterns will be reflected in the adoption of new forms of online social interaction.

Figure 3.5: Social media use amongst young men and women

Which, if any, of the social networking sites and instant messenger services on the card do you use?



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14), interviewed 2013

⁵⁵Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, second cohort wave 1 (1,347 Muslim and 11,721 other subjects aged 13-14, interviews with young people and their parents, 2013)

4 Muslims' outlook on life

General satisfaction with life

Most Muslims in England and Wales, like most of the rest of the population, are reasonably satisfied with life in general but do not feel that things are necessarily improving

When interviewed for the Citizenship Survey in 2010-11, a third (34%) of Muslims were “very satisfied”, and 88% at least “fairly satisfied”, with their “life as a whole nowadays”. Only four per cent said they were dissatisfied, the same proportion as for Christians and for the public as a whole. Nevertheless, non-Muslims were slightly more likely to feel very satisfied, although the difference is barely significant (37% of all English and Welsh adults, and 38% of Christians, gave that answer).⁵⁶

Nevertheless, there is a negative view of the direction of change. When they were asked in 2010, Muslims were split on whether things generally had got better or worse for ethnic minority groups in Britain over the past few years. Three in ten (30%) felt they had got better, 29% felt they had got worse, and 36% that they had stayed the same. Similarly, 26% felt things had got better for their own ethnic group, 25% that they had got worse, and 43% that they had stayed the same.

But their views of the situation of Muslims were much more negative: only 17% thought things had got better for Muslims in Britain and 44% that they had got worse⁵⁷. Young people and graduates were most likely to think things had got worse, and three in ten 18-24 year olds thought things have got “a lot worse”.⁵⁸ This finding is borne out in our recent analysis of the millennial generation (those born between 1980-1995), where when we look at income, they feel poorer for longer and are less optimistic about the economic conditions of the country.⁵⁹

Life expectations

Despite high levels of satisfaction, there is a gap in terms of what people expect from life- but this view is not unique to Muslims

The majority of Muslims agree that “There is often a big gap between what people like me expect out of life and what we actually get”: nine per cent strongly agree and a further 43% agree, while two per cent strongly disagree and another 16% disagree. The figures are very similar for non-Muslim members of ethnic minorities: 11% strongly agree, a further 44% agree while 3% strongly disagree and another 18% disagree. The same question was asked on the main British Election Study, and figures for all GB adults are 10% strongly agree and another 42% agree, 2% strongly disagree and another 18% disagree, which indicates that there is nothing distinctive in the views of Muslims here.⁶⁰

This pessimism is shared by Muslim men and Muslim women, and differs little by age or education level. Only some think that a political solution will improve things for them, since 48% of all Muslims, and 54% of those seeing a big gap between expectations and reality, agree that “It doesn't really matter which party is in power, in the end opportunities for Black and Asian people will stay much the same”.⁶¹

⁵⁶Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

⁵⁷This is a common finding in research where people tend to be less negative about their personal experiences compared with those of others/more general perceptions, for example in health services.

⁵⁸Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

⁵⁹<https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2017-05/ipsos-mori-millennial-myths-realities-full-report.pdf>

⁶⁰British Election Study 2010 post-election cross-section survey. 3,075 GB resident adults aged 18+.

⁶¹Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Half (50%) of 19-21 year old Muslim young men agree that “If someone is not a success in life, it is usually their own fault”, while 44% disagree; but young Muslim women of the same age disagree by 59% to 35%, suggesting that women feel other external factors are at play when it comes to success in life. The views of non-Muslims, and the difference between young men and young women, are very similar however.⁶²

Perceptions of the local area

The vast majority of Muslims are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, but their views are less emphatic than their non-Muslim counterparts.

When it comes to satisfaction with their local area as a place to live, four in five (82%) Muslims say they are “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied”, not far below the 86% figure for all adults in England and Wales. However, when focussing only on those who are “very satisfied” the difference is more notable, with 29% of Muslims saying this compared to a 40% national average. But only a few in either group say they are dissatisfied (7% of Muslims, 6% of all adults). While there is no difference between gender amongst Muslims there was some difference by age. A quarter (25%) of those aged 16-34 said they were “very satisfied” with their local area while 56% said they were “fairly satisfied”. This compares to 37% of those aged 55+ who are “very satisfied” and 50% who are “fairly satisfied”. This trend is not unique when compared to non-Muslims where 32% of those aged 16-34 say they are “very satisfied” with their local area (51% are “fairly satisfied”) while 49% of those aged 55+ say they are “very dissatisfied” (40% are “fairly dissatisfied”). (It should be noted, however, this lower satisfaction amongst Muslims about where they live is much more emphatic than the slight difference between Muslims and non-Muslims in general satisfaction with life, suggesting that it has a relatively small impact on their overall outlook). Table 4.1 below shows there is little difference between Muslims and non-Muslims when it comes to satisfaction with their local area and how it influences satisfaction with life.

Table 4.1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

	Very satisfied		Fairly satisfied		Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		Fairly dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied	
	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Muslims	Non-Muslims
How satisfied are you with life as a whole?										
Very satisfied	51	52	30	30	17	22	18	23	29	21
Fairly satisfied	41	42	60	58	60	54	52	51	49	42
Neither	5	4	7	7	18	16	20	13	1	10
Fairly dissatisfied	3	2	2	4	4	6	8	9	18	14
Very dissatisfied	1	0	0	1	1	2	3	4	3	13
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: 2010/11 Citizenship survey (England & Wales); Base non-Muslims 13,475; Muslims 3,491

On balance Muslims are more positive than the public as a whole that their local area has improved over the past few years

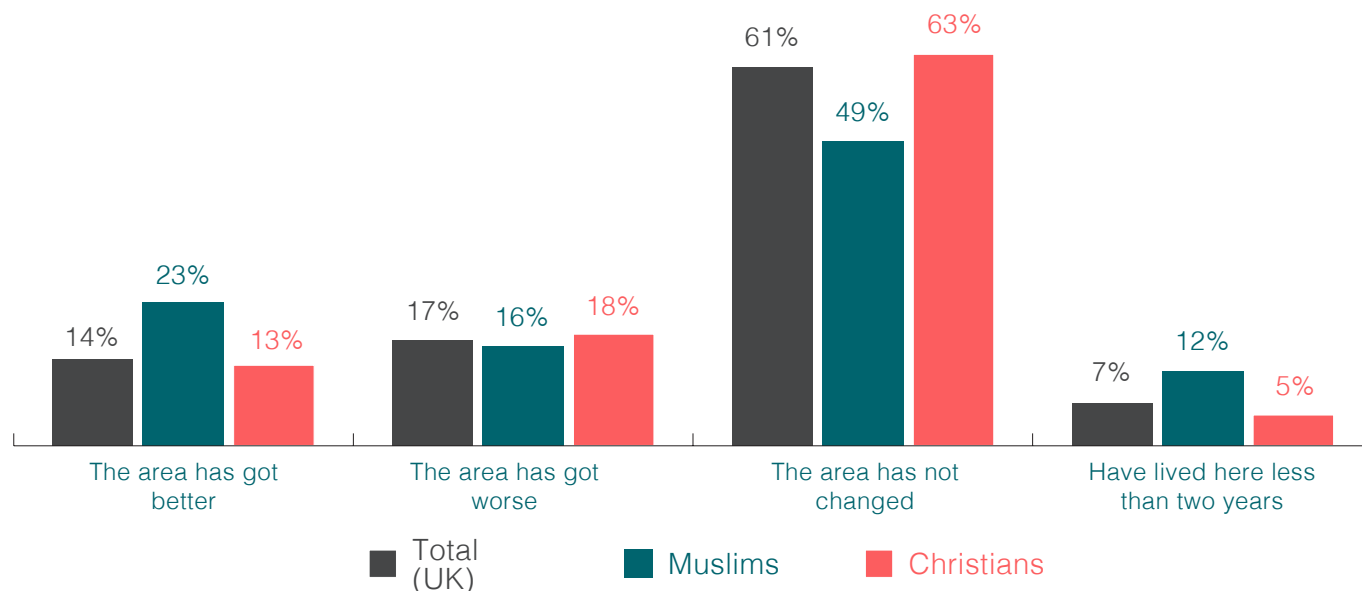
Muslims in 2010-11 were more likely to think that over the past two years their local area had got better to live in than that it had got worse (23% felt it has got better compared with 16% who felt it had got worse). This is a more positive assessment than that made by the public as a whole (17% who thought it had got worse compared with 14% who said it had got better), and Muslims were more likely to think that there had been some change (only 49%

⁶²Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 7 (interviews May-October 2010): 1,156 Muslim and 7,210 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

of Muslims said the area had not changed, against a national average of 61%), but that may of course reflect real differences in the areas where they live rather than differences of perceptions.⁶⁴ It should also be borne in mind that according to 2011 Census data for England, approaching half the Muslim population (46%) lives in the most deprived areas.⁶⁵

Figure 4.1: Attitudes towards changes in local area

On the whole, do you think that over the past two years this area has got better or worse to live in or would you say things haven't changed much?



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government, (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*. 1,696 English/Welsh adults aged 16+

One other finding of note is that Muslims report being more mobile than their non-Muslim counterparts; one in eight (12%) Muslim adults said they had lived in their local area for less than two years; the figure for all adults in England and Wales was seven per cent.⁶⁶

The majority of Muslims feel positive about the community spirit in their area, as do the rest of the public

Most Muslims feel that “people in this neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood” (61% agree, 27% disagree, very little different from the 62% to 30% verdict of all adults in England and Wales). Moreover, five in six (87%) agree that their local area is “a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together”, and 27% “definitely agree” with this – this is a considerably higher level of agreement than for English and Welsh adults as a whole (74% agree, 20% “definitely agree”), although most of the difference comes from non-Muslims saying that there are too few people in their local area to judge, or that they are all from the same background, rather than actively disagreeing. Around one in ten Muslims (9%) and non-Muslims (11%) disagree that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.⁶⁷

Further analysis shows there is a relationship between a strong sense of community and neighbourhood satisfaction and there is some difference between Muslims and non-Muslims here. Half of Muslims (52%) who strongly agree that people come together to improve their neighbourhood are also very satisfied with the neighbourhood they live in. This number rises to two in three (67%) for non-Muslims who strongly agree people in their neighbourhood come together to improve it and are very satisfied with the community they live in.

⁶⁴Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

⁶⁵2011 UK Census, ONS

⁶⁶Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

⁶⁷Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

Diversity in the local area

The vast majority of Muslims feel there is respect for different ethnic groups in their local area

Muslims are much more likely than other Britons to believe – presumably correctly in most cases - that their ethnic group is a minority in their local area. Only two per cent say that all the people in their area are of the same ethnic group as they are, and a further 27% say that more than half are. For adults in England and Wales as a whole, 27% think that all the local population is of their ethnic group, and another 48% that more than half are. Half of Muslims (52%) say that less than half are of their ethnic group but this applies to only 15% of all the public.

The vast majority of Muslims believe that residents in their local area respect ethnic differences between people (28% “definitely agree” and 58% “tend to agree”), although 9% disagree. With so many non-Muslims saying they live in areas that are ethnically uniform, it is doubtful how far their answers to the same question are really comparable, but seven per cent of all adults in England and Wales disagree that ethnic differences are respected and a further seven per cent feel they don’t know.⁶⁸

Attitudes towards mixing

There is widespread support among Muslims to mix with people from different backgrounds

Almost two-thirds of Muslims (63%) say they think different ethnic and religious groups should mix together more in their local area; 29% say they mix enough already, only one per cent that they should mix less. (Many non-Muslims agree: 48% of all adults in England and Wales, and 47% of Christians, also think there should be more mixing in their local area).

When it comes to mixing with diverse groups, Muslims are more likely to say they mix socially than non-Muslims. Nearly all (96%) said that they have socially mixed with people of different religious or ethnic groups in the past 12 months compared to 80% of non-Muslims. There is no significant difference between age groups amongst Muslims when it comes to socially mixing with 96% of 16-34 year olds and 93% of those aged 55+ saying they have done so. This differs from findings of non-Muslims where 90% of those aged 16-34 say they have socially mixed while 68% of those aged 55+ say the same.⁶⁹ More generally, almost all Muslims say they support ethnic/racial mixing and integration; 47% strongly agree and a further 45% agree that it is important that members of their own ethnic group should integrate and mix with other groups of people in the UK.⁷⁰ In a separate survey, three in five Muslims (61%) said that British Muslims are doing enough to integrate into British society, 22% that they are not, but only three per cent said that it is not important for British Muslims to integrate.⁷¹ In an earlier poll carried out in 2015⁷² which asked the same question, the views of the general public were compared with the views of Muslims. In this survey 71% of Muslims said that British Muslims were doing enough to integrate into society and 23% that they are not. This contrasts with the views of the public where the figures are reversed: 23% think that Muslims are doing enough to integrate into British society compared with 70% who do not think they are doing enough.

But it is important to note that support for more mixing is not the same as support for cultural assimilation; 83% of Black and Asian Muslims agree, including 37% who strongly agree, that it is important that people of their ethnic group should maintain their own values, beliefs and traditions. (Muslim women, 41%, are even more likely than Muslim men, 34%, to strongly agree.) The overall figure is the same for non-Muslim ethnic minorities (83%) although they are fractionally less emphatic with 33% who strongly agree.⁷³

⁶⁸Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

⁶⁹Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

⁷⁰Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas

⁷¹Survation poll for The Sun: interviews with 1,003 GB resident Muslims aged 18+, interviewed by telephone on 18-20 November 2015. Sampling was based on a demographically-modelled probability of residents identifying as Muslim.

⁷²Survation poll for Sky News: interviews with 1,001 GB resident Muslims aged 18+, interviewed by telephone and interviews with 1,001 GB adults aged 18+ interviewed online between 10-20 April 2015.

⁷³Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Similarly, three-quarters agree that “It is good for society if different ethnic groups keep their own customs and traditions” (21% “strongly agree”, and a further 53% merely “agree”). For non-Muslim ethnic minorities, 15% strongly agree and 56% agree.⁷⁴ These findings resonate with those we detail later on in this report (see chapter 5) where there is strong belief that being a Muslim and being a part of British society are not considered mutually exclusive activities – by both Muslims and the public more widely.

Trust in others

Muslims have lower levels of “generalised trust” than most people in Britain

While two in five members of the general public (43%) say that “generally speaking... most people can be trusted”, with 48% taking the contrary view that “you can’t be too careful”; nine per cent reject this simple dichotomy, and volunteer that “it depends”. Muslims, however, are rather more likely (55%) to feel that “you can’t be too careful”, and much less likely (28%) to feel “most people can be trusted”, with twice as many, 17%, saying unprompted that it depends.⁷⁵ Comparatively 36% of Hindus think that people can be trusted while 44% say “you can’t be too careful”. One in five (20%) however said it depends. The Ethnic Minority British Election Study, which found broadly similar overall results for Muslims, suggests that graduates (especially overseas graduates) and Londoners are significantly less distrustful than other Muslims, that men are more trusting than women, and that trust also increases with age.⁷⁶

Trust in the police

Lower levels of generalised trust do not necessarily crossover into lower levels of trust in the police

In the light of their low levels of general trust, it is perhaps surprising to find that the vast majority of Muslims express a reasonable amount of trust in the Police: 31% say they trust the Police “a lot”, and 49% “a fair amount”; only 14% trust them “not very much” and five per cent “not at all”. This is only very slightly lower than the average trust level for all adults in England and Wales (34% “a lot”, 49% “a fair amount”).⁷⁷ These findings are in line with 2011 analysis of the British Crime Survey which showed that Muslims express higher levels of trust and confidence in the police than the general population despite them reporting that crime and disorder impacts on them more negatively than the general population.⁷⁸

Measured differently, on a 0 to 10 scale “where 0 means no trust and 10 means a great deal of trust”, 31% rate their trust in the Police at ‘9’ or ‘10’: this is slightly higher among women (34%) than men (28%), and the youngest (18-24) group are less than half as likely to express this degree of trust as those aged 55+ years (20% compared to 45%). It should also be noted that trust in the Police in the 2010 survey was substantially lower in London (26%) than elsewhere (34%).⁷⁹

⁷⁴Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

⁷⁵Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

⁷⁶Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

⁷⁷Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011.

⁷⁸See Innes et al, Universities’ Police Science Institute, Cardiff University, *Assessing the Effects of Prevent Policing: A report to the Association of Chief Police Officers*, March 2011.

⁷⁹Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Fear of crime

Muslims are much more worried about being a victim of crime than average

In 2010-11, Muslims were twice as likely as adults in England and Wales as a whole to be very worried about becoming a victim of crime: 15% were very worried, and 33% fairly worried; for all adults the figures were 8% and 27% respectively.⁸⁰ This could be a result of a growing feeling of religious prejudice amongst many Muslims which we discuss further in the report (Page 57). Two in five Muslims (41%) think that reducing crime is more important than protecting the rights of people accused of committing crimes while 19% think the rights of the accused are more important and 22% think both are equally important (placing their views at 5 on a 0-to-10 scale).⁸¹

⁸⁰Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

⁸¹Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

5 Sense of belonging and identity

Sense of belonging

Nine in ten Muslims say they feel a part of British society

Three-quarters of Muslims say they feel strongly that they belong in their immediate neighbourhood (37% very strongly, 42% fairly strongly), and in their local area, within a 15-20 minute walk of their home (31% very strongly, 48% fairly strongly). On their neighbourhood, these answers are not significantly different from those of Britons as a whole, but they feel slightly less strongly than others that they belong to their local area (for all adults in England and Wales, 36% felt they belong very strongly, 43% fairly strongly).⁸²

There is little difference between Muslims and non-Muslims when it comes to having friends of the same ethnicity or religion and a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. Two in five Muslims (41%) who say that all their friends are of their ethnic origin say they feel very strongly connected to their neighbourhood compared to 46% of Christians who say all their friends are of their ethnicity and religion. On the other hand, around a third of Muslims (35%) who say less than half of their friends are of their background also say they feel strongly connected to their neighbourhood compared with 31% of Christians who say less than half their friends are from their same background.⁸³

Muslims' feeling of belonging to Britain is stronger than it is for the local area, as is that of other Britons. Seven in eight Muslims (88%) feel "very" or "fairly strongly" belong to Britain, and only one per cent that they belong "not at all strongly". Their sense of belonging is slightly less intense than that of other Britons: 43% of Muslims belong "very strongly" compared to 50% of all adults and 52% of Christians, 39% of Hindus and 43% of those from other faiths.⁸⁴

These findings are slightly in contrast, however, to those of a separate, more recent (2015) survey of Muslims for Channel 4⁸⁵ which found similar figures for a feeling of belonging to Britain (86% very or fairly strongly, although 49% very strongly) but even higher belonging to the local area, again defined as within 15-20 minutes' walking distance of the home (91% very or fairly strongly, and indeed 59% very strongly.) The difference may be a genuine change in direction or a result of different survey methodologies⁸⁶ so results should be interpreted with caution.

Those born abroad – who did not feel a significantly weaker level of belonging to Britain than those born in Britain – were also asked about their sense of belonging to their country of birth: 48% felt they belonged very strongly, 31% fairly strongly, very marginally weaker than their attachment to Britain. Those whose parents were born abroad but who were themselves born in Britain felt a weaker attachment than this to the country of their parents' birth (24% very strong, 37% fairly strong), although three in five still said their sense of belonging was at least fairly strong.⁸⁷

⁸²Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

⁸³Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

⁸⁴Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

⁸⁵ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

⁸⁶The survey methodology used in the 2015 study was criticised by some in the academic community. For example, see <http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/ethnicity/2016/04/misleading-irresponsible-and-dangerous-why-phillips-and-co-should-apologise-for-what-british-muslims-really-think/>. However, it is important to bear in mind that there are always likely to be constraints when conducting surveys of rare populations in terms of coverage of the population.

⁸⁷ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

Table 5.1: Please tell me how strongly you feel you belong to ...

	All GB Muslims	GB Muslims born abroad		Muslims born in Britain, parents born abroad	
	...to Britain	...to Britain	...to country of birth	...to Britain	to country of parents' birth
Very strongly	49	48	48	n/a	24
Fairly strongly	36	36	31		37
Not very strongly	10	11	10		18
Not at all strongly	1	1	5		12
Don't know	3	3	6		9

Source: ICM/Channel 4; Base 1,081

There is some link between the sense of belonging to Britain and general perceptions of the nature of British society. Over a third (36%) of those who say they feel they belong to Britain “not very strongly” or “not at all” agree that “Britain is a country of bad moral behaviour”, compared to 27% of those who feel they do belong.⁸⁸

The 2015 ICM study was repeated in 2016⁸⁹ using the same methodology although with a bigger sample size of Muslims. The 2016 study shows that strength of belonging to Britain has moved in a more positive direction – overall 93% said they belonged to Britain with 55% saying they “very strongly” belonged to Britain (up 6 points from 2015) and those saying they “fairly strongly” belonged to Britain remaining at a similar level (at 38% from 36% in 2015).

Exploring the same issue with a slightly different question, 48% of Muslims strongly agree and 45% tend to agree that they “personally feel a part of British society”. This compares to 45% of Hindus who strongly agree and 49% who tend to agree. Interestingly it is older Muslims who are more likely to strongly feel part of British society. Two in five (39%) Muslims aged 16-34 say they strongly agree they feel part of British society (although 50% tend to agree) while 57% of those aged 55 and above say they strongly agree (39% tend to agree).⁹⁰

For young people, however, age may be a more significant common factor than either religion or ethnicity. In 2008, 64% of Muslim 17-19 year olds in England said they had most in common with people of the same age, whatever their ethnic group or religion, rather than with people with a similar religious or ethnic background, regardless of their age; 23% said the opposite. But an even higher number, almost three-quarters, strongly agreed (15%) or agreed (56%) that “Being British is important to me”. (This is in fact a little higher than the figures for non-Muslims of the same age, of whom 17% strongly agreed and 50% agreed.)⁹¹

Dimensions of identity

And there is a strong sense of attachment to the British identity among Muslims

A common aspect that is often explored in surveys of minority groups is their sense of identity and the different dimensions of that identity. In the 2011 Census, UK residents were simply asked “How would you describe your national identity?”, given the options “English”, “Welsh”, “Scottish”, “Northern Irish”, “British” or “Other, write in” (with

⁸⁸ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

⁸⁹ICM Survey of Muslims for Policy Exchange: interviews with 3,040 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain between 19 May -23 July 2016.

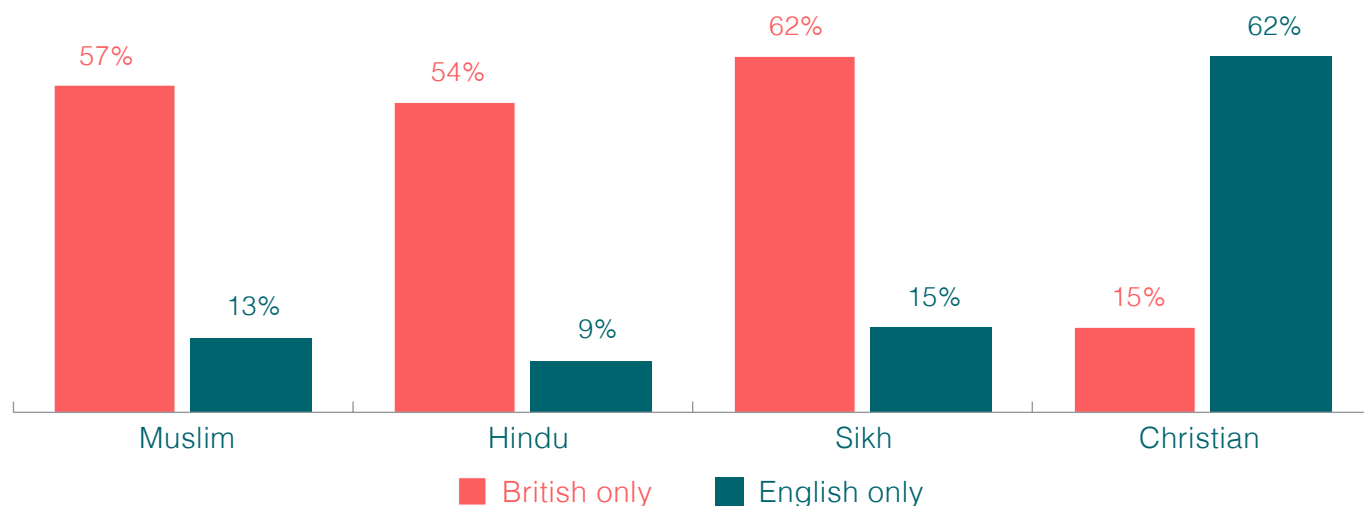
⁹⁰Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

⁹¹Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 5 (interviews June-October 2008): 1,404 Muslim and 8,676 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

an adjoining box), and told “Tick ALL that apply”; the vast majority of those replying ticked only a single choice. In England and Wales, 57.2% of Muslims described themselves as “British” only, 12.8% as “English only” and 2.8% as “English” and “British” (but no other identity). A little under a quarter, 23.6%, answered that they had some “Other” (i.e. foreign) national identity only; the remaining 3.6% chose either one of the other British national identities or a combination of two or more identities. This substantial outnumbering of those feeling “English” by those feeling “British” is also true of Hindus (54.0% British only, 9.1% English only) and Sikhs (62.3% British only, 15.2% English only), but among Christians (15.2% British only, 62.0% English only) and those with no religion (17.0% British only, 61.5% English only) the reverse is true.⁹²

Figure 5.1: British vs English identity of British religious groups

How would you describe your national identity? Tick all that apply



Source: ONS Census 2011

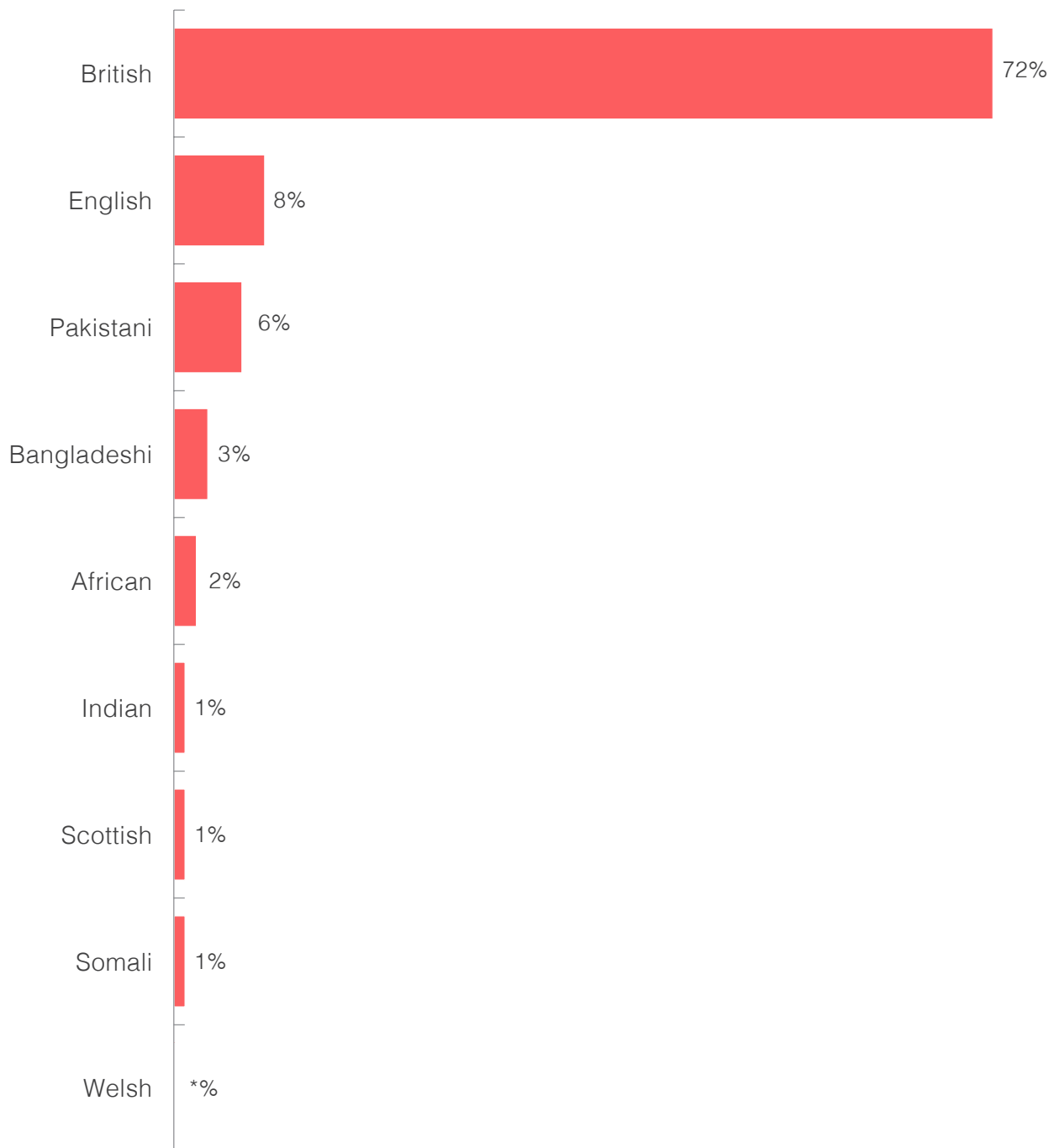
Apart from the Census, the recent survey which explored Muslims’ sense of national identity in most detail was the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Study (which includes only respondents from the main minority groups, excluding white and mixed-ethnicity Muslims). Its results were significantly different from those of the Census, finding barely half as many who said they felt a foreign rather than some form of British identity. This difference may reflect slight differences in the way the question was asked, although it is not obvious why these should have created so substantial a discrepancy. The survey asked people to choose “which one best describes the way you think of yourself” and if they felt they had more than one national identity. Seven in ten (72%) considered themselves “British”, only nine per cent “English”, “Scottish” or “Welsh”; six per cent identified as Pakistani and three per cent as Bangladeshi. Three per cent said they had more than one national identity and were not prepared to choose a single answer as best describing it.⁹³

⁹²Census 2011 table DC2204EW. Unfortunately, the analysis of national identity by religion offers no breakdown of the various national identities within “Other”.

⁹³Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Figure 5.2: National identity of British Muslims

What do you consider your national identity to be? Please choose your answer from this card. And if you had to choose, which one best described the way you think of yourself?



Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+

Those who were educated abroad are much less likely to identify as British than those educated in Britain: 50% of those with a degree obtained abroad and 59% of those whose highest qualification is an overseas school-exam qualification identify as British, compared to 74% of those with a UK degree and 70% of those with A-levels or another British equivalent.⁹⁴

A poll in 2015 found that almost all Muslims (95%) said that they feel a loyalty to Britain.⁹⁵ This suggests that even those Muslims in Britain who do not think of themselves primarily as British have loyalty towards the country.

Importance of different aspects of identity

Religion is far more important to Muslims' sense of identity than it is for others

Family is more important to more Muslims' sense of who they are than any other factor, which is the same for non-Muslims. However, religion is in second place, which is more important to Muslims than either their ethnic/racial background or their national identity. What is notable is that religion is important to the self-identity of the vast majority of Muslims (74%), but only to a minority of Christians.

Nine in ten (90%) Muslims say their family is "very important" to their sense of who they are; three-quarters (74%) said their religion is very important, 55% their ethnic or racial background, and 55% their national identity. On the whole, socio-economic identifications matter a little less: 55% say their level of education is very important, 49% their occupation and only 23% their social class.⁹⁶ Comparatively Hindus are not significantly different from Muslims on most of these indicators while each comes at a lower level of importance for Christians.

Table 5.2: How important is ... to your sense of who you are? (Percent saying "very important")

	All adults	Muslims	Hindus	Christians
...your family...	88	90	89	89
...your religion...	22	74	48	23
...your ethnic or racial background...	33	55	47	34
...your national identity...	44	55	55	46
...your level of education...	37	55	58	35
...your occupation...	47	49	52	47
...your social class	17	23	26	17

Source: *Citizenship survey 2010-2011*

Levels of education and national identity are also important to a substantially higher proportion of Muslims and Hindus than to other Britons, and this is also true of ethnic/racial background (although in this case it must of course be borne in mind that the nature of its significance may be different to a member of a racial/ethnic minority than to a member of the national majority group, and that a much higher proportion of Muslims than of other Britons belong to minority groups).⁹⁷

In a separate (2008) study, 17-19 year olds in England were asked how important were age, religion and ethnic background to defining how they saw themselves. 58% of the Muslims said their religion was very important, 32% their ethnic background and 23% their age; there was no significant difference between the views of young men and young women. (For non-Muslims in the same cohort, age was very important to only 12%, religion to six per cent and ethnic background to six per cent, but these numbers were higher for members of other minority religious

⁹⁴Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

⁹⁵ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015

⁹⁶Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

⁹⁷Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

groups who were sufficiently represented in the sample to be studied: religion was very important to 37% of Sikhs and 25% of Hindus; ethnic background was very important to 26% of Sikhs and 25% of Hindus; age was very important to 19% of Sikhs and 20% of Hindus.)⁹⁸

A different measure of the same question is not to ask respondents how important they think each element of their identity is, but to choose directly between them. When asked to choose between ethnic identity and national identity, the biggest group of ethnic minority Muslims (49%) see themselves as equally Black or Asian and British. A quarter (25%) feel more Black or Asian than British or only Black or Asian and one in five (21%) say they feel more British than Black or Asian or only British. (The other ethnic minority respondents in the EMBES were substantially more likely than Muslims to put their ethnicity ahead of their Britishness: 35% feel more Black/Asian than British or only Black/Asian, only 14% more British than Black/Asian or only Black/Asian not British. But these differences may be related more to ethnic group or national origin than to religion: the percentages saying they felt more or only Black/Asian were Pakistani 21%, Bangladeshi 29%, Indian - mostly non-Muslim - 29%, Black Caribbean 36%, Black African 46%.)

But religion proves a more powerful identifying factor for Muslims than either nationality or ethnicity: half (51%) feel more Muslim than Black or Asian (33% feel both equally and six per cent more exclusively Black or Asian); while 43% feel more Muslim than British and 6% Muslim not British (39% feel equally British and Muslim, and 6% more British than Muslim).⁹⁹

These findings contrast, however, to those of a separate, more recent (2015) survey of Muslims for the Sun, which put the choice in terms of what was “more important” to the respondent, found that 82% of Muslims said that their British identity was equally or more important than their religious identity. Only 17% said that “My Muslim identity is more important to me than my British identity”.¹⁰⁰

As we can see from these findings here, survey questions on identity are often asked in different ways, some asking people to choose the most important whereas others ask people to choose between different aspects. What the data illustrates is that while religion is seen as important to Muslims, they – like other minority groups such as Hindus – have multiple and overlapping identities; many of these aspects are seen as equally important and do not diminish their sense of Britishness.

Factors that influence common ground with others

The more British Muslims feel they have in common with other Muslims the more they also feel they have in common with other Britons and other ethnic groups

A different although related factor is how much an individual feels he or she has in common with other members of the various groups to which he or she belongs. Measured in this way, religion once again has the strongest pull, and British national identity is weaker than either religious or ethnic identity, but all three are of relevance to a substantial part of the group. Half of ethnic minority Muslims (49%) feel they have “a great deal” in common with other members of their religion, two in five (41%) with other members of their ethnic group and three in ten (31%) with “other British people in general”; only a tiny minority (7%) feels they have not very much or nothing at all in common with other Muslims, 16% with others who share their ethnicity and 14% with other Britons.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 5 (interviews June-October 2008): 1,404 Muslim and 8,676 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

⁹⁹Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹⁰⁰Survation poll for The Sun: interviews with 1,003 GB resident Muslims aged 18+, interviewed by telephone on 18-20 November 2015. Sampling was based on a demographically-modelled probability of residents identifying as Muslim.

¹⁰¹Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

A sense of commonality with other Britons is strongest amongst young Muslims and graduates from the UK

There are no meaningful differences between men and women in answering any of these three questions, but the feeling of community with other members of the same ethnic group is strongest for older people, rising from 33% of 18-24 year olds to 56% of those aged 55+ years feeling they have a great deal in common, while 22% of the youngsters think they have very little or nothing at all in common, whereas less than one in ten (9%) of those aged 55+ years think the same. However, those from different age groups have very similar feelings about how much they have in common with other Muslims and with other British people. There are no significant differences between graduates and non-graduates in how much they feel they share with their ethnic group, but those with an overseas degree are least likely (39%) to feel they have a great deal in common with other Muslims, and non-graduates (51%) are most likely to do so; those with a UK degree are in an intermediate position (46%). The differences are more marked on national identity: two in five (42%) Muslims with a UK degree feel they have a great deal in common with other Britons, while only three in ten (30%) non-graduates and one in five (19%) with overseas degrees say the same.¹⁰²

There is a good deal of overlap between answers to these three questions, with a significant positive correlation between responses to all three – in other words, far from them being competing influences, the more British Muslims feel they have in common with other Muslims the more they also feel they have in common with other Britons, and with others of their ethnic group. Possibly, therefore, these questions are more measuring a psychological disposition to recognise community than any real differences in community. A quarter of ethnic minority British Muslims (25%) feel they both have a great deal in common with other Muslims and with other Britons; and four in five, 79%, feel they have at least a fair amount in common with both.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹⁰³Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

6 Political engagement

Democracy and politics

The majority of Muslims say that they are satisfied with the way that democracy works in this country...

In a 2014-16 survey, 64% expressed satisfaction with how democracy works compared with 28% who were dissatisfied.¹⁰⁴ This is, however, considerably lower than the 76% satisfied, 20% dissatisfied recorded in a 2010 survey using the same question¹⁰⁵ - it is not clear whether this represents a real fall in satisfaction or sampling and other survey differences, nor whether any change in attitudes reflects short-term circumstantial factors or a more fundamental loss of faith. The fall applies both to the numbers “very satisfied”, down from 19% to 12%, and “fairly satisfied”, from 57% to 52%. Similarly, the 2014-16 figures show higher proportions both “a little dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied”. Men are rather more likely than women (15% against 9%) to say they are “very satisfied”, women more likely (10% compared to 3%) to say they don’t know, but there is no significant difference by gender in levels of dissatisfaction. Those with degrees are a little more satisfied (70%) than those without (61%), but this mainly reflects a higher number of ‘don’t knows’ among the non-graduates and probably arises from different levels of attention to and interest in politics, that we observe more generally.¹⁰⁶

Muslims in general seem happier with the democratic process than the British public as a whole. In the same 2014-16 survey, 45% of non-Muslims were satisfied with how democracy works and 47% dissatisfied. As for Muslims, this was considerably lower than at the time of the 2010 general election¹⁰⁷. However, The Hansard Society’s Audit of Political Engagement poll¹⁰⁸ asks a different but not entirely dissimilar question every year to British adults about “your opinion on the present system of governing Britain”, and finds fluctuation of attitudes rather than a consistent trend: between 2010 and 2014 the proportion saying the system “works well” fell from 31% to 26%, but had recovered to 31% in 2016. It seems likely that these are attitudes that will often reflect short-term political events to some extent, and that no firm conclusions can safely be drawn as to general trends by a comparison of only two data points.

....but interest in politics is lower...

Two in five adult Muslims say they are very (8%) or fairly (31%) interested in politics¹⁰⁹. (The 2010 Election Study used a slightly different question to explore the same topic, and found that 12% said they had “a great deal” of interest and 19% “quite a lot of interest” in “what is going on in British politics”).¹¹⁰ Men are far more likely than women (12% compared to 4%) to be very interested, and overall 47% of men but only 31% of women are at least fairly interested. (A similar gender difference is observed among the general population as a whole where 15% of men and 8% of women say they are very interested and 38% of men and 31% of women say they are fairly interested.) There are also differences by age, although these are slightly smaller (34% of 16-24 year olds and 43% of those aged 55+ are very or fairly interested). Graduates are much more likely to be very interested than non-graduates (16% as against 5%) – so much so that a majority of those who are very interested are graduates, even though graduates make up much less than a third of the total Muslim population.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁴Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,550 adult Muslims.

¹⁰⁵Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹⁰⁶Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,550 adult Muslims.

¹⁰⁷In the 2010 British Election Survey, across Great Britain 61% of adults were satisfied and 35% dissatisfied; in the 2014-16 Understanding Society survey, 46% of GB adults were “very” or “fairly” satisfied and 47% “a little” or “very” dissatisfied.

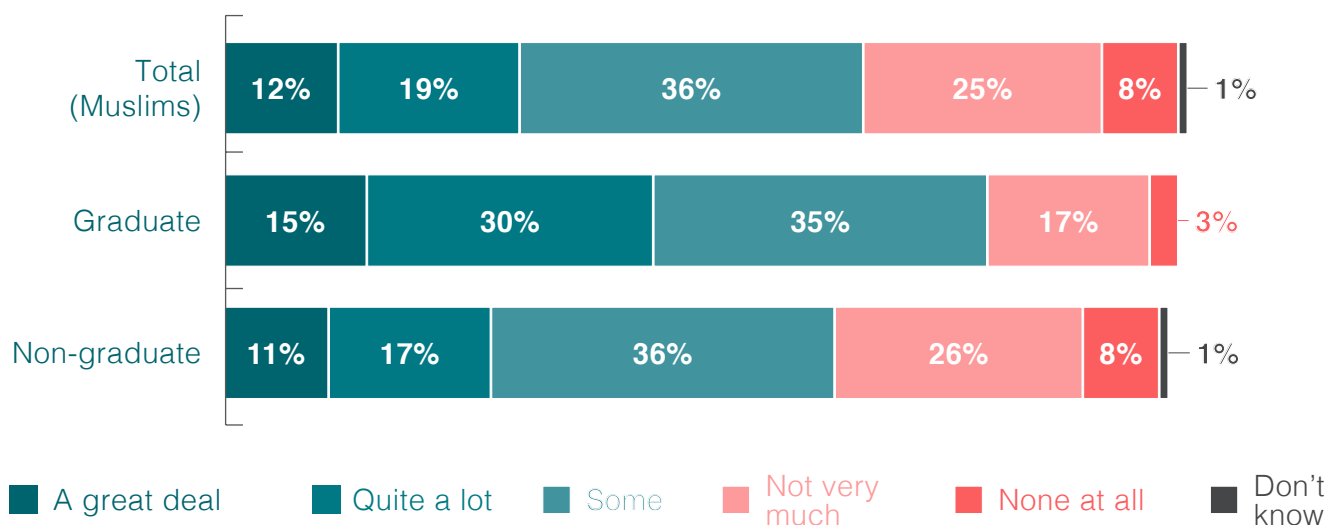
¹⁰⁸<https://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/research/audit-of-political-engagement>

¹⁰⁹Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

¹¹⁰Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Figure 6.1: Interest in politics in general

Let's talk for a few minutes about politics in general. How much interest do you generally have in what is going on in British politics?¹¹¹



Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+

Elections and voting

Although interest increases when thinking specifically about a general election.

A third of Muslims (35%) said they were very interested in the 2010 general election when questioned later that year, and a further third (36%) had been “somewhat interested”. Unlike overall interest in politics, there is little difference between the answers of men and women here. Younger people are less interested than their older counterparts, but the difference is less than in many measurements of engagement, with 30% of 18-24 year olds and 43% of those aged 55+ years being very interested.¹¹² This suggests that a distinction is clearly drawn between the abstract idea of politics and more concrete issues of a specific general election.

Muslims under 35 are more likely to vote in a general election than non-Muslims of the same age group.

More than half of Muslims (54%) said in the 2014-16 wave of the Understanding Society survey that they were very likely (that is, a likelihood of ‘10’ on a scale of 0 to 10) to vote in the next general election. There is no significant difference between men and women, but they are progressively more likely to vote as they get older: 38% for 16-24 year olds, 47% for 25-34 year olds, 59% for 35-54 year olds and 71% for those aged 55+ years. This is a very similar pattern to that familiar from all modern voting studies in Britain. (In the same survey, 58% of all UK adults said they were very likely to vote, slightly higher than for Muslims, but the difference is more than accounted for by the younger age profile of the Muslim population; within each age group, Muslims were as likely or more likely than other adults to vote, but with the less-likely-to-vote young making up so much more of the total among Muslims, the overall figure is lower)¹¹³.

¹¹¹Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

¹¹²Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹¹³Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

Table 6.1: Thinking of a scale that runs from 0 to 10, where 0 means very unlikely and 10 means very likely, how likely is it that you will vote in the {next} general election? (percent say 10 “very likely”)

	All	16-24	25-34	35-54	55+
All adults	58%	32%	43%	57%	72%
Muslims	54%	38%	47%	59%	71%

Source: *Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16 (32,530 UK adults including 1,551 Muslims)*

There is surprisingly little difference between likelihood to vote among graduates and non-graduates despite their different levels of interest in politics: 58% of the graduates rate their voting likelihood at ‘10’ but so do 52% of Muslims without a degree.¹¹⁴ (Not too much attention should be paid to overall levels of likelihood of voting as opposed to comparisons within the survey – experience shows that these responses vary substantially during the political cycle and a survey conducted around election year, as this one was, should always be expected to draw higher claimed certainty of voting than a survey in mid-Parliament.)

Shortly after the 2010 general election, 19-21 year olds in England were asked whether they had voted and, if not, why not. Two-thirds of the young Muslims (67%) said that they had voted, much higher than the 53% of non-Muslims in the same age group who claimed the same.¹¹⁵ Such surveys more often than not find an overclaim on having voted, however, so it is not certain whether the higher figure for Muslims represents a real higher turnout or only a greater inhibition against admitting not having done so – but in either case, it would seem to point towards a strong culture in favour of the value of voting affecting Muslim first-time voters (or non-voters) to a greater extent than other young Britons.

Reasons for not voting

Among young Muslims, the reasons for not voting are no different to non-Muslim young people

Of those young Muslims who admitted that they did not vote, the most frequently cited reasons were that they didn’t have time (13%), that they were not interested or didn’t care (10%) and that they didn’t want to or didn’t believe in politics (10%), but also that they were out of the area or out of the country at the time of the election (11%); 12% said they didn’t know why they had not voted. Young Muslims were a little less likely than their non-Muslim counterparts to say they didn’t care or didn’t believe in politics and a little more likely to blame lack of time, but since the latter is effectively a statement of priorities the underlying reasons for non-voting among 19-21 year old Muslims are probably very little different from those of other Britons of the same age.¹¹⁶ One distinction, however, is that female Muslim non-voters were more likely than the others to say that they did not vote because they were not registered to vote (13% of Muslim young women who did not vote gave this as their reason, whereas the figure was seven per cent for Muslim young men, and for non-Muslims of both sexes). However, strictly speaking the difference between Muslim young men and Muslim young women was not statistically significant, given the small numbers who said they had not voted, and it should also be remembered that individual registration to vote has been introduced in England since the 2010 general election, so any distinctions which then existed may no longer apply in the same way.

¹¹³Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

¹¹⁴Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,527 adult Muslims.

¹¹⁵Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 7 (interviews May-October 2010): 1,156 Muslim and 7,210 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

¹¹⁶Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 7 (interviews May-October 2010): 1,156 Muslim and 7,210 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

The value of political participation

Political participation is seen as an important and worthwhile exercise...

More than half of all British Muslims, 56%, say they feel a sense of satisfaction when they vote. This also is much higher for the old than for the young, but only slightly higher for graduates than for non-graduates, and with no difference between men and women.¹¹⁷

There is wide acceptance that citizens have a duty to vote, even among those who rate their own certainty of doing so at less than '10'. The 2010 Election Study found that 86% of Muslims agreed that "It is every citizen's duty to vote in an election", 45% strongly agreeing and a further 41% agreeing, although this was a post-election survey dealing with political issues which may have led to a somewhat inflated measurement.¹¹⁸ In the parallel British Election Study of all GB adults, 38% strongly agreed and a further 39% agreed suggesting that Muslims have a somewhat stronger belief in a duty to vote than the public as a whole.¹¹⁹ In 2014-16, the Understanding Society survey, which uses a more strongly-worded proposition, that "I would be seriously neglecting my duty as a citizen if I didn't vote", 24% strongly agreed and another 40% agreed, and only 14% disagreed. Once more, there was only a slight difference between men and women, but younger Muslims were more likely to disagree; one in five (25%) 16-24 year olds and 14% of 25-34 year olds disagreed, compared to 10% of 35-54 year olds and only six per cent of those aged 55+ years.¹²⁰ This, too, reflects a familiar pattern which applies also to non-Muslim Britons, and is not peculiar to Muslims. Graduates are a little more likely than non-graduates to agree that not voting would be seriously neglecting their duties as a citizen, 72% compared to 60%.¹²¹

The majority of Muslims believe that voting serves a useful purpose, and this perception extends through to all groups. Over half (57% of Muslim men, 55% of Muslim women) believe that "Voting is a good way to get benefits for groups that people care about, like pensioners and the disabled", and there are no significant differences between graduates and non-graduates. Older age groups are slightly more confident of this, with 64% of those aged 55+ agreeing compared to 50% of 16-24 year olds.¹²²

Moreover, there seems to be a general perception that the community believes in voting. Only one in six agree that "Most of my family and friends think that voting is a waste of time", while almost three-quarters have the opposite impression (27% strongly disagree and a further 45% agree).¹²³ As questions using this "family and friends" formulation are generally regarded as an effective way of tapping hidden attitudes which may be suppressed for social desirability reasons when the respondent is asked about his or her own opinions, this strong rejection of any suggestion that others regard voting as a waste of time suggests that support for its value is probably genuine. Similarly, almost two-thirds (65%) of those surveyed in 2014-16 agreed that "Most people around here usually vote in general elections".¹²⁴ (The figure was even higher, three-quarters, 76%, for Muslims in the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Study¹²⁵ but it is unclear whether the difference arises from differences in the sample or a real change in attitudes.)

¹¹⁷Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,963 adult Muslims.

¹¹⁸Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas

¹¹⁹British Election Study 2010 post-election cross-section survey. 3,075 GB resident adults aged 18+.

¹²⁰Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

¹²¹Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,527 adult Muslims.

¹²²Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

¹²³Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹²⁴Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

¹²⁵Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas

...but the extent to which people feel they can influence decisions is limited

So while voting is seen as a worthwhile exercise, many Muslims doubt the extent of their influence on political decisions. More than two in five (43%) agree that “People like me don’t have any say in what the government does”, a perception that was stronger among older generations (51% of those aged 55+ years agree).¹²⁶ This feeling of powerlessness extends to local decisions as well. A 2010-11 study revealed that half (49%) of Muslims disagreed that they could influence decisions affecting their local area while 39% agreed they could. This is comparable to the overall English/Welsh public where 36% said they agreed they could influence local decisions although they were a bit more pessimistic with 60% disagreeing.¹²⁷ Similarly, in a 2015 media poll, only 43% of Muslims surveyed felt they could influence decisions affecting their local area and 33% that they could influence decisions affecting Britain, these figures were 35% and 21% British public respectively.¹²⁸

This may well create frustration, as most people of all backgrounds say that they want to be able to influence local decisions. Two-thirds of Muslims say it is “very important” (28%) or “quite important” (40%) for them personally to feel that they can influence decisions in their local area; but the figures for all adults in England and Wales are very similar, 28% and 44% respectively, so such frustration would not be limited to any single community. Indeed, further analysis shows that of those Muslims who say it is very important for them to personally feel that they can influence their local area, 43% disagree that they can influence local decisions – and there is little difference among non-Muslims who feel the same (48%).¹²⁹

Attitudes to political activity

Despite feeling their political influence is limited, Muslims are not more negative about the efficacy of political activism

ood way to get benefits for me and my family”, and they believe by a substantial majority, 60% to 12%, that “Being active in politics is a good way to get benefits for groups that people care about, like pensioners or the disabled”.¹³⁰ However, it should be noted that this latter figure is only marginally higher than the number believing that these same group benefits can be obtained by a single, and the least demanding, form of political activity¹³¹ – voting (see page 43) – so it does not necessarily represent a powerful incentive towards other forms of activism.

¹²⁶Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

¹²⁷Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

¹²⁸ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

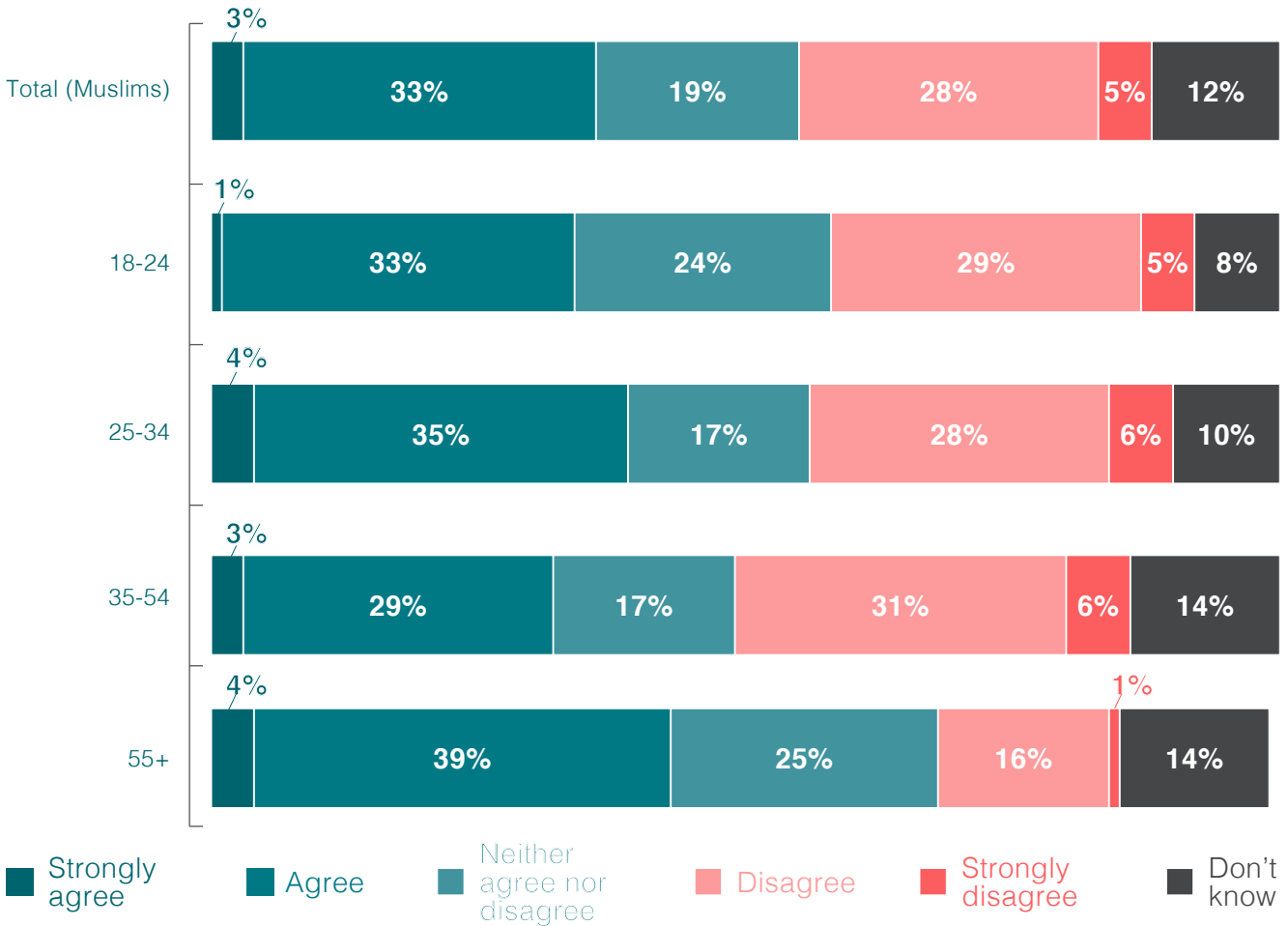
¹²⁹Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

¹³⁰Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹³¹Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

Figure 6.2: Agreement amongst British Muslims that being active in politics brings benefits

Please tell me how far you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: Being active in politics is a good way to get benefits for me and my family.



Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+

Older Muslims are more convinced than anybody else that they and their family could benefit (those aged 55+ agree rather than disagree by 44% to 17%), and men are a little more positive than women (39% of men and 34% of women agree, though 34% of each sex disagree); on benefits for groups people care about, the gap between men and women is bigger (men agree by 66% to 10%, women by 55% to 15%), but the age differences are smaller (with those aged 35-54 years are marginally the most sceptical). UK graduates are much less likely than anybody else to believe they can reap family benefits (30% agree but 45% disagree), while those with an overseas degree take almost exactly the opposite, optimistic view (45% agree, 34% disagree). With regard to group benefits, graduates with an overseas degree are also the most positive (68% agree, 14% disagree) while those whose degree is from the UK (58% agree, 14% disagree) are not very different from non-graduates (60% agree, 15% disagree) but are more likely to strongly agree (14% among UK graduates, 8% for overseas graduates and for non-graduates).¹³²

¹³²Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

And Muslims aged 18-24 are significantly more likely than any other age group to participate in different forms of political activism

One in five adult Muslims also say that they have signed a petition “to show your concern about a public issue or problem” within the previous year, but other forms of political activism are rarer: nine percent have “participated in a protest, like a rally or a demonstration”, 10% participated in a boycott of a particular product or service and six per cent have given money to a “political cause or advocacy organisation (other than a political party)”. Almost three-quarters of Muslims (72%) have done none of these. Men are more likely than women to have taken part in a protest (11% compared to 6%) and to have signed a petition (24% to 15%), but there is no significant difference between the sexes on taking part in a boycott or donating money. The youngest group, 18-24 year olds, are significantly more likely than anybody else to have participated in all of these ways except in giving money, on which no age difference emerges.¹³³ Those with a UK degree (but not an overseas degree) or A levels are the most likely to have taken part in a protest (13% for graduates, 15% with A levels but no degree), to have signed petition (30% and 32%) and to have taken part in a boycott (23% and 14%).

But political activity is viewed negatively and seen as onerous

Even if political activity is seen as potentially effective, it is also considered by many to be laborious. According to the Understanding Society survey (2014-16), two in five Muslims agree (42%) that “It takes too much time and effort to be active in politics and public affairs”, and only half as many (21%) take the contrary view.¹³⁴ The 2010 Election Study found even more negative perceptions, with 56% of Muslims agreeing with the same statement. Both surveys found these negative attitudes most deeply rooted among the older age groups, with those aged under 35 agreeing on balance but by a smaller margin. The doubts about the commitment that political activity involves, though, are not confined to Muslims. There was no significant difference in the proportion agreeing with the statement between Muslim and non-Muslim members of ethnic minorities in the British Election survey,¹³⁶ and while non-Muslims in the Understanding Society survey were somewhat less negative (34% agreed, 30% disagreed), the belief that too much time and effort were involved was still a widely prevalent view.¹³⁷

Politicians and political institutions

Muslims are a great deal more likely than most British citizens to express trust in democratic institutions

Around one in eight Muslims (13%) say they have a lot of trust and 42% a fair amount, compared to 29% who trust it not very much and 11% not at all. This is twice as high as the proportion of the public as a whole where 22%, do not trust Parliament at all and 41% not very much; only four per cent trust it a lot.¹³⁸ Measuring the same question in a different way, 12% would rate their trust in Parliament at ‘9’ or ‘10’ on a 0-to-10 scale, and 46% at least ‘6’; their trust in “British politicians generally” is a little lower, nine per cent at ‘9’ or over and 38% at ‘6’ or over. Those with UK degrees are among the least trusting, with only seven per cent of UK graduates putting their trust in Parliament at ‘9’ or ‘10’ and three per cent their trust in politicians at the same level; yet 21% of those with degrees from abroad, put their trust in Parliament at ‘9’ or above, three times as many, and 11% say they trust British politicians that much. The young (18-24 year olds) are much less likely than anybody else to trust either Parliament or politicians at the ‘9’ level, but many have at least a reasonable degree of trust in Parliament, so that as many of them give it at least a score of ‘6’ as for older Muslims. The picture is different, however, on trust in politicians: in this case, the young are very much less likely to give even a ‘6’ than are older age groups.¹³⁹

¹³⁴Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,550 adult Muslims.

¹³⁵Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹³⁶Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹³⁷Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 30,975 adult non-Muslims.

¹³⁸Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

¹³⁹Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Table 6.2: Now, thinking about British political institutions like Parliament, please use the 0 to 10 scale to indicate how much trust you have for each of the following, where 0 means no trust and 10 means a great deal of trust.

The Parliament at Westminster	All	18-24	25-34	35-54	55+
9 or 10	12%	6%	13%	15%	12%
6 to 8	34%	40%	32%	31%	40%
6 or better	46%	46%	45%	46%	52%
British politicians generally	All	18-24	25-34	35-54	55+
9 or 10	9%	5%	10%	9%	13%
6 to 8	29%	27%	24%	32%	40%
6 or better	38%	31%	34%	41%	53%

Source: *Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010*

...and like the public they are more likely to trust their local council than Parliament

Muslims' level of trust of their local council is higher than their trust in Parliament, which is also true of the British public as a whole; however, Muslims express a somewhat higher level of trust. One in six, 17%, say they have a lot of trust in the local council, which is double the eight per cent figure for all adults in England and Wales as a whole; less than a quarter of Muslims (22%) say they trust the council "not very much" or "not at all", but 36% of all adults say the same. In total, 75% of Muslims trust their council at least a fair amount, compared to the 55% who say the same about Parliament.¹⁴⁰

These higher levels of trust in democratic institutions among Muslims than other people in Britain are all the more striking when taken in conjunction with Muslims' general level of trust in other people, which is much lower than that of other (see page 31) Britons. One hypothesis for this is that Muslims are more likely to be migrants – a group who generally have more optimistic evaluations of British society than the native born population.¹⁴¹

Despite trust in institutions, there is some cynicism towards political parties and public officials

Two in five Muslims believe that "Parties are only interested in the votes of Black and Asian people, not in their opinions" (10% strongly agree and a further 30% agree), views which very closely match those of other members of ethnic minorities (10% of non-Muslims in the Ethnic Minority British Election Study strongly agree, another 33% agree). Muslim men are more likely to sympathise with this cynical view than Muslim women (men agree by 43% to 32%, women are split 37%-36%). The oldest generations (those aged 55+ agree by 44% to 31%) and graduates (48% of both UK graduates and those with degrees from abroad agree) also take a more negative view.¹⁴² A similar proportion of Muslims, 42%, agree that "Public officials don't care much about what people like me think", while only 19% disagree – and while a small proportion of Muslims are prepared to defend parties vigorously (5% strongly disagree with the assertion about parties), only 1% strongly disagree with this criticism of public officials. The most negative view of public officials is taken by those aged 55+ years, who agree by three-to-one (53% to 18%) that public officials don't care, but the proportion of negative to positive views in the youngest group, 16-24 year olds, is even larger (40% to 11%, nearly four to one), although more of them have no opinion either way.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

¹⁴¹Maxwell, Rahsaan (2010), *Trust in Government Among British Muslims: The Importance of Migration Status, Political Behaviour*, Vol 32, No 1, pp 89-109

¹⁴²Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas

¹⁴³Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

Despite cynicism towards mainstream political parties and public officials, Muslims are more positive about organisations that represent them. Half of Muslims (55% of men and 47% of women) “strongly agree” or “tend to agree” that the Muslim Council of Britain represents “your views”,¹⁴⁴ and just over half (53% of men and 57% of women) agree that “The Muslim Council of Britain does a good job at representing the views of Muslims”. This view is shared by Muslims of all ages (54% of 18-34 year olds, 55% of 35-44 year olds and 57% of those aged 45+ agree).¹⁴⁵

Muslims are more favourable towards the Labour party than other political parties compared to the general public who are more negative about all parties.

The Understanding Society survey also tested attitudes towards each of the major political parties; these interviews were conducted in 2014-16, which should be borne in mind as giving the political context. Participants were asked to rate their attitudes to each on a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 meant “strongly dislike” and 10 meant “strongly like”. Taking scores below 5 as dislike and above 5 as like, Muslims disliked the Conservative Party by 44% to 15% and the Liberal Democrats by 48% to 11%, but they liked the Labour Party by 47% to 21%. Around one in six (15%) said they strongly disliked the Conservatives (score ‘0’) and 12% strongly disliked the Liberal Democrats; at the other end of the scale, eight per cent strongly liked the Labour Party. Curiously, those aged 55+ years were more likely than anybody else to dislike the Liberal Democrats (57% did so), yet also more likely to dislike Labour (31%) and more likely to like the Conservatives (25%) than other Muslims. The overall picture is more negative than might be assumed from these figures. It is perhaps natural to assume that those people who say that they like the Conservative Party will be different from those that like the Labour Party, and that positive scores of 47%, 15% and 11% for the three main parties will account for a comfortable majority of Muslims. But this turns out not to be the case: there is substantial overlap in the positive responses, so that only 56% of Muslims like any of the main three parties.

Negative as they are, the attitudes of Muslims towards political parties are somewhat less disapproving than those of other Britons. A slightly higher proportion of non-Muslims than of Muslims like the Conservatives, but they are still disliked on balance by more than two-to-one, 47% to 20%; and the Labour Party, which twice as many Muslims like as dislike, scores as badly with the whole public as the Conservatives, liked by 22% but disliked by 48%. The Liberal Democrats fare worse still, disliked by 59% and liked by only nine per cent. Overall, only 44% of the non-Muslim public like any of the three main parties.¹⁴⁷ So, while the options for Muslims of democratic engagement may seem limited in that there is only one of the major parties which many of them view positively, they may be better placed than most of the public who dislike all of the competing parties. Research conducted by Lord Ashcroft¹⁴⁸ in 2011 highlighted a number of reasons why Muslims were less favourable towards the Conservative party than other ethnic minority religious groups – for example, Muslims were less likely to say the Conservatives stood for fairness (27% for Muslims compared with 45% for Hindus and 33% for Sikhs).

¹⁴⁴ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

¹⁴⁵ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015, p1

¹⁴⁶Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,545 adult Muslims.

¹⁴⁷Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 28,641 adult non-Muslims.

¹⁴⁸<http://lordashcroftpolls.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/DEGREES-OF-SEPARATION.pdf>

7 Community engagement and charitable giving

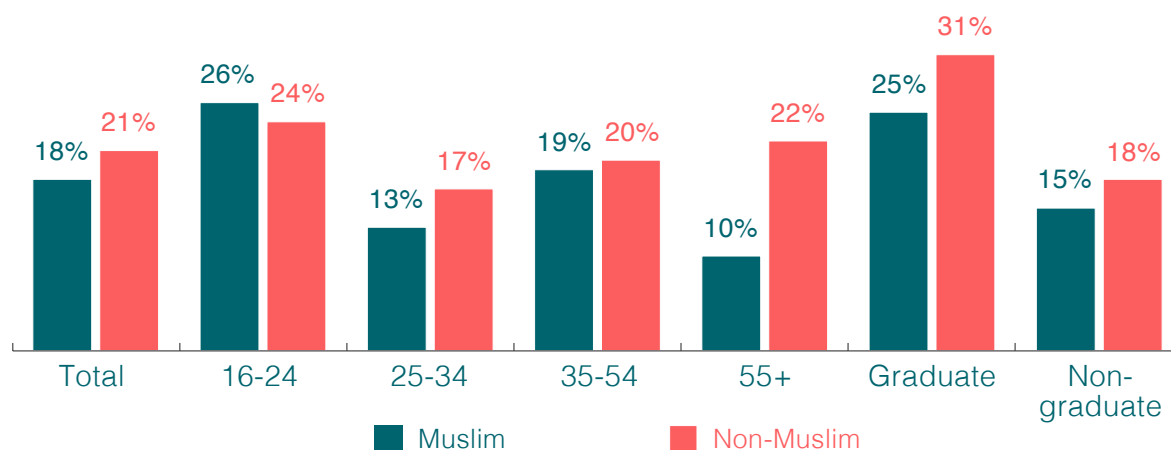
Volunteering

One in five Muslims have volunteered in the last 12 months while Muslims aged 16-24 and graduates are more likely to have volunteered than older groups or non-graduates

In a recent (2014-16) survey, nearly one in five Muslims (18%), said that “in the last 12 months” they had “given unpaid help or worked as a volunteer for any type of local, national or international organisation or charity” – this is comparable to 21% of the non-Muslim population although there is a large difference comparing those aged 55+ years where non-Muslims are much more likely to have volunteered than Muslims (22% vs. 10% respectively). Within the Muslim population there was no difference between men and women and with the oldest group (those aged 55+ years) the least active (26% of 16-24 year olds but only 10% of those aged 55+ said “yes”)¹⁴⁹. Graduates were considerably more likely (25%) than non-graduates (15%) to say they *had* helped in this way. Of those who said they had helped or volunteered, two in five reported that they did so at least once a week. A separate 2010 study of 19-21 year olds found that a third of Muslims in this age group, 35% of both young men and young women, reported that they had “provided unpaid help in the last 12 months (other than donating money)”¹⁵⁰. This was a little higher than the 29% of non-Muslim young men and 33% of non-Muslim young women who said the same.¹⁵¹ (The differences between the findings of the two surveys may reflect the different definition of the sample, the difference in the exact question wording, or both, as well as a change in behaviour since 2010.)

Figure 7.1: British Muslims and Non-Muslims activity in unpaid voluntary help or work

In the last 12 months have you given unpaid help or worked as a volunteer for any type of local, national or international organisation or charity?



Source: Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims

In the 2010 EMBES, one in five (20%) of Muslim men and one in ten (11%) Muslim women said that they had volunteered “to get involved in politics or community affairs” over the last few years.¹⁵² (By way of comparison, 17% of the non-Muslim ethnic minority adults in the EMBES said they had volunteered, but there was no significant difference by gender, and in the parallel British Election Study covering adults of all ethnic groups, 13% of adults

¹⁴⁹Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

¹⁵⁰Due to question wording it is possible some respondents could have considered helping family members as unpaid work

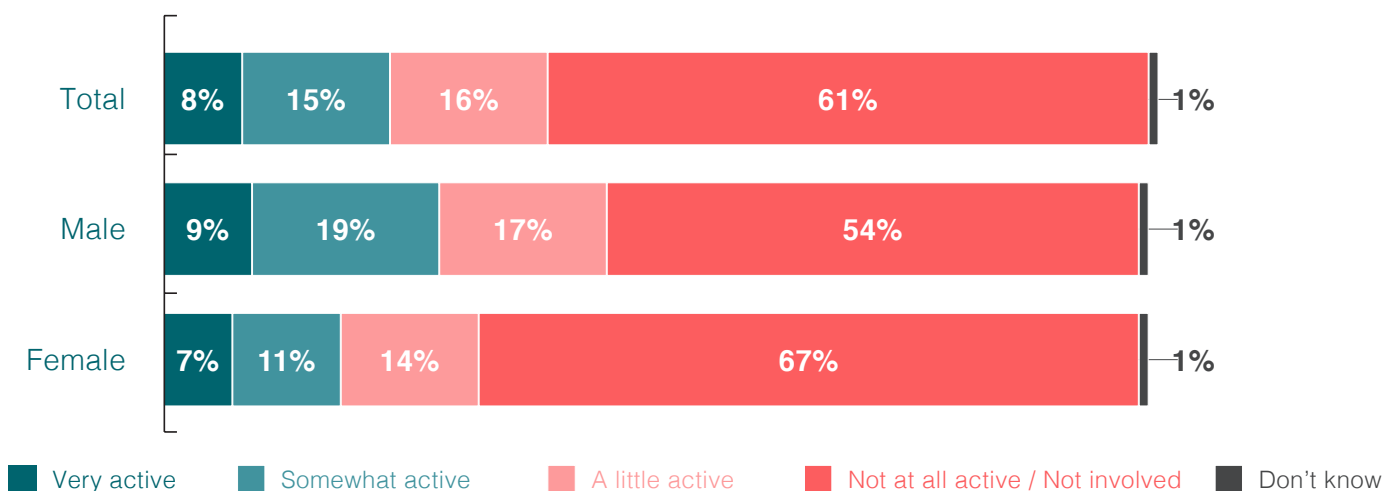
¹⁵¹Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 7 (interviews May-October 2010): 1,156 Muslim and 7,210 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

¹⁵²Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas

said they had volunteered.)¹⁵³ There was not a great deal of difference in the level of volunteering by age but it was slightly lower in the middle age groups (19% of 18-24 year olds, 13% of 25-34 year olds, 14% of 35-54 year olds and 17% of those aged 55+ years said they have volunteered). The level was also slightly lower in London (12%) than elsewhere (17%). A slightly higher proportion, 28% of men and 18% of women, said they had been “very active” or “somewhat active” in “a voluntary organisation, like a local community association, a charity, or a sports club”; again, 25-54 year olds have been somewhat less active than either their younger or older counterparts.¹⁵⁴

Figure 7.2: British Muslims activity in voluntary organisations

Over the past few years, how active have you been in a voluntary organisation, like a community association, a charity or a sports club?



Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+

Giving to charity

Three quarters of Muslims donate to charity, with older Muslims, graduates and those living outside London donating more than younger Muslims, non-graduates and Londoners

Most Muslims say they have given money to charity recently. Almost three-quarters (72%) say they have donated money to “charities or other organisations” within the last 12 months, although the youngest age group claim so less frequently (57% of 16-24 year olds but 76% of other age groups say they have done so). More graduates (84%) do so than non-graduates (66%), and it is less frequent in London (27%) than elsewhere in the country (75%). There is no significant difference between men and women.¹⁵⁵ Of those who say they have given, around half say they give either at least once a week (10%) or less than weekly but at least monthly (38%); here there is a difference between the sexes, with men (12%) half-as-likely-again as women (8%) to say they give at least once a week.¹⁵⁶

Charitable giving is regarded as highly important in Islam. There are two forms of charitable giving Zakat (seen as a religious obligation) and Sadaqah (voluntary). There is an emphasis on charitable giving during the month of Ramadan. Nevertheless, there is no difference between Muslims and non-Muslims in the proportion who report having given in the last year (73% of non-Muslims say they have), nor in the lower figure for the youngest age

¹⁵³British Election Study 2010 post-election cross-section survey. 3,075 GB resident adults aged 18+.

¹⁵⁴Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas

¹⁵⁵Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims.

¹⁵⁶Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,081 adult Muslims who said they had given to charity in the last 12 months.

group (57% for non-Muslim 16-24 year olds); and just over a third of both groups (or half of those who have given at all) say they give at least monthly. There is a distinction, however, in that while Muslim men say they give slightly more frequently than Muslim women, among non-Muslims it is women who say they give a little more frequently. (38% of Muslim men and 31% of Muslim women report giving at least monthly, as do 34% of non-Muslim men and 39% of non-Muslim women.)¹⁵⁷

A separate survey asking how much, and in which ways, people had donated to charity within the previous four weeks found that 37% of Muslims said they had not done so at all; this was higher than the 25% of Christians who said they had not donated, and higher than the 28% reported by all adults in England and Wales. However, those Muslims who said they had donated claimed on average to have given greater amounts than did the non-Muslims, with 17% of Muslim donors (accounting for 11% of all Muslim adults) giving £50 or more in that four-week period.¹⁵⁸ (Please note that seasonal effects could be at play here, although as the Citizenship Survey was carried out quarterly and figures are aggregated for a twelve-month period, any seasonal impact is likely to be minimal). An ICM poll for the website JustGiving in 2012 also reported that Muslims donated more to charity than other Britons, giving on average £371 a year compared to an average for all donors of £165. Protestant Christians gave £202, Roman Catholics £178, Hindus £171 and atheists £116. (However, these findings should be treated with caution as the averaging of estimated spending in surveys can sometimes produce very misleading figures.)¹⁵⁹

And Muslims are most likely than others to give money at a place of worship

Much the most frequent forms of giving by Muslims were in collections at a mosque or other place of worship (35%) and through money in collecting tins (26%). Christians and Hindus were less likely to have given in a church collection (17% and 16% respectively) but Christians were more likely to donate through a collecting tin (36%), and also much more likely to say they had donated by buying raffle tickets (11%), buying from a charity shop (21%) or catalogue and by regular donation such as direct debits or payroll giving (22%), none of which were frequently reported by Muslims.¹⁶⁰ Hindus were generally more similar to the number of Muslims doing each of these things than they were to Christians.

Table 7.1: In the past 4 weeks, have you given any money to charity in any of the ways shown on this card or through any other method? Please exclude donating goods or prizes.

	Christian	Muslim	Hindus	England and Wales
Collection at church, mosque or other place of worship	17	35	16	14
Money to collecting tins (e.g. door-to-door, in the street, in a pub, at work, on a shop counter, etc.)	36	26	23	35
Direct debit, standing order, covenant or debit from salary, payroll giving	22	9	15	20
Fundraising events (e.g. charity dinners, fetes, jumble sales)	13	9	8	12
Giving to people begging on the street	8	9	4	8
Occasional donations by cheque or credit/debit card	10	8	8	9
Sponsorship	18	7	11	17
Buying raffle tickets (NOT national lottery)	26	6	11	23
Buying goods from a charity shop or catalogue	21	6	8	20
Collections using a charity envelope	10	5	6	9
Other method of giving (excluding donating goods or prizes)	2	2	1	2
Did not give to charity	25	37	44	28

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

¹⁵⁷Understanding Society (UK Household Longitudinal Study, wave 6), 2014-16, 1,551 adult Muslims and 30,979 adult non-Muslims.

¹⁵⁸Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

¹⁵⁹<http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/muslim-donors-give-average-religious-groups-uk/fundraising/article/1192969>

¹⁶⁰Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

Participation in community groups and clubs

Muslims were substantially more likely than others to report involvement in some form of community group or club. A minority of Muslims say they have participated in clubs or organisations relating to religion and Muslims are much less likely to take part in sports groups/clubs than the public as a whole

Muslims were substantially more likely to report involvement in some form of group than were other adults: only 40% of Muslims said they had not taken part in supported or helped the activities of any of the 15 activities listed in the Citizenship Survey, 56% of all adults said the same.¹⁶¹ In relation to involvement in religious organisations, one in five Muslims (21%) and Christian (19%) had taken part in, supported or helped the activities of a religious group, club or organisation, although the overall figure for England and Wales is a little lower, reflecting the number with no religious affiliations. However, the Election Survey carried out around the same time found just one per cent of Muslims saying they had been active in a religious group¹⁶², but this may be misleading and probably an artefact of the question wording¹⁶³. Indeed, in the Citizenship Survey, religious groups were picked more frequently by Muslims (from a list of 15 options) than any other single type of group.¹⁶⁴ One in seven Muslims (14%) reported involvement with some sporting group (the same as found in EMBES) and 13% groups connected with children's education or schools (not inconsistent with the 10% EMBES found for "children's school groups"). Adults in England and Wales as a whole were twice as likely as Muslims to be active in sporting groups, and three times as likely to be involved in "Hobbies, Recreation/Arts/Social clubs", although this was less frequent for both groups (20% for all adults, 7% for Muslims).

The high level of Muslim involvement in groups and organisations is also found in the Election Survey in 2010. About half the Muslims said they were aware of some ethnic, cultural or religious association(s) or club(s) in or near the city or town where they live. A quarter (25%) had taken part in the activities of an ethnic or cultural association, and a third (34%) of some other type of association, within the previous 12 months, men being marginally more active than women in each case. For men, much the most frequent involvement was with some sports club or team, with which 24% of men (but only 5% of women) had been active; women were more likely to report involvement with a children's school group (15% of the women, 5% of the men), while charity groups (13% for men, 15% for women) were high on the list for both sexes. But only four per cent of men and two per cent of women said they were active in a political or citizens group.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

¹⁶²Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas

¹⁶³In the EMBES survey, respondents were asked "Do you know of any {respondent's ethnic group} ethnic, cultural or religious associations or clubs in or near the city or town in which you live?", "Have you taken part in the activities of an ethnic or cultural association or club in the past 12 months?" and "Have you taken part in the activities of any other kind of association or club in the past 12 months?". Only those saying that they had were asked the follow-up question, "Which kind of organization(s) have you been active in?". Religious groups were not included in the pre-coded responses on the questionnaire. In the Citizenship Survey, by contrast, "Religion" was one of the possibilities specifically suggested to respondents, as shown in the table.

¹⁶⁴Question asked was "Please pick out the ones which best describe any groups, clubs or organisations you've taken part in, supported or helped over the last 12 months." See Table 6.2 for list.

¹⁶⁵Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas

Table 7.2: Please pick out the ones which best describe any groups, clubs or organisations you've taken part in, supported or helped over the last 12 months.

	Christian	Muslim	England and Wales
Children's education/schools	16	13	15
Youth/children's activities (outside school)	11	9	11
Education for adults	8	6	9
Sport/exercise (taking part, coaching or going to watch)	28	14	28
Religion	19	21	16
Politics	2	3	3
The elderly	7	3	6
Health, Disability and Social welfare	8	4	8
Safety, First Aid	5	5	5
The environment, animals	8	2	8
Justice and Human Rights	2	4	3
Local community or neighbourhood groups	10	5	9
Citizens' Groups	4	1	4
Hobbies, Recreation/Arts/Social clubs	20	7	20
None of these	57	40	56

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government, Ipsos MORI. (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

Participation in community groups has an impact on levels of mixing with people from other ethnic or cultural groups

That participation in community groups is linked to mixing in some ways is not surprising as such activities are likely to provide opportunities to meet other people. Muslims that take part in such activities are mixing with people from other cultures as a result. Of those that say they have given unpaid help to some group, club or organisation in the last 12 months, one in six say they have mixed daily with people from different ethnic or religious groups as part of this, two in five have done so at least weekly and almost three-quarters at least monthly.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). *Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011*

8 Muslims' views on religion in Britain

Religious freedoms and protections

The vast majority of Muslims feel able to practise their religion freely in Britain...

In a 2015 poll, nine in ten Muslims (94%) answered “yes” when asked if they felt they were able to practice their religion freely in Britain¹⁶⁷ and in 2016 the survey question was repeated and the figure rose to 98%¹⁶⁸, which indicates a move in a positive direction. Nevertheless, in another 2015 poll, 46% of Muslims agreed that “Prejudice against Islam makes it very difficult being a Muslim in this country”, although 51% disagreed.¹⁶⁹

Almost three-quarters of Muslim 17-19 year olds in England strongly agree (18%) or agree (55%) that Britain is a free country where everyone’s rights are respected no matter what your background¹⁷⁰. The Citizenship Survey (2010-11) also found high levels of agreement that Britain was a place of religious freedom; nine in ten (89%) said they personally felt able to practise their religion freely in Britain, nine per cent that this was partly true and only three per cent that they were not able to practise freely. (By way of comparison, 95% of Christians answering the Citizenship Survey felt free to practise their religion, three per cent partly free.)¹⁷¹

One Muslim in six (17%) says that “thinking about anything that has happened in [their] local area”, they have personally experienced harassment based on their religion in the last two years, although four in five (82%) have not. This happened to more men (19%) than women (14%), and most frequently to those aged 18-24 (21%). Of those who said they had been harassed, most (78%) categorised this as verbal harassment.

... and two thirds believe that the government is doing enough to protect people of different religions

A third of Muslims (32%) feel that the government is doing too little to protect the rights of people belonging to different religions in Britain, although three in five (60%) think it is doing about the right amount. Significant numbers of Christians share these concerns, although as many think the government is doing too much (22% too little, 24% too much, 47% about the right amount – only two per cent of Muslims think the government is doing too much).¹⁷³ As we see on page 65, this finding may well be related to the fact that Muslims are more likely than the public as a whole to worry about being physically attacked because of their skin colour, ethnicity or religion.

...and views are mixed on whether Muslims are treated with respect

Two in five (43%) Muslims agree that “Muslim women are treated with more respect in Muslim countries than they are in Britain”. However, there are significant differences by gender, while half of all Muslim men agree (49%) and 27% disagree, only 36% of women agree and 33% disagree with this. Those born in Britain are less likely to believe this than those born elsewhere (37% compared to 48%).

¹⁶⁷ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

¹⁶⁸ICM Survey of Muslims for Policy Exchange: interviews with 3,040 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain between 19 May -23 July 2016.

¹⁶⁹ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015, p13.

¹⁷⁰Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 5 (interviews June-October 2008): 1,404 Muslim and 8,676 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

¹⁷¹Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

¹⁷²ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

¹⁷³Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

Three in five Muslim 17-19 year olds in England in a 2008 study strongly agreed (15%) or agreed (45%) that “There is too little respect for religion and religious values in Britain today”. (But it should be noted that half of English non-Muslims in the same age group, including those with no religious identification of their own, also agreed: this may reflect a general perception among the young of modern society rather than a specifically Muslim outlook related to Muslim issues.)¹⁷⁴

The vast majority of Muslims in Britain take offence when they feel their religion is not being properly respected. A 2015 ComRes poll found that 78% agreed that “It is deeply offensive to me personally when images of the Prophet Mohammad are published”, although few believed this justified or could ever justify a violent response. (See page 65)¹⁷⁵

Islam and the British way of life

The vast majority of Muslims believe Islam is compatible with the British way of life and younger Muslims and those born in the UK are more likely than older Muslims and those born abroad to support full integration with non-Muslims in all parts of life

Many of the surveys that have been conducted explore the extent to which Muslims feel their religion is compatible with life in Britain and support for integration. Most Muslims (83%) – and, indeed, most Britons regardless of religion (66%) - agree that “it is possible to fully belong to Britain and maintain a separate cultural or religious identity”; 40% of Muslims strongly agree. And seven in ten Muslims (72%) reject the idea that Western liberal society is incompatible with Islam which contrasts with the perception in the British population that Islam and British values are incompatible (please see section 12 further in this report).¹⁷⁷ This is further supported by the large number of British Muslims who say they have a strong sense of British identity (see page 36).

A 2015 ICM poll gave respondents four options to choose between as “the ideal way for you to lead your life in Britain today”. Half (49%) chose “I would like to fully integrate with non-Muslims in all aspects of life”, 29% that “I would like to integrate on most things, but there should be separation in some areas, such as Islamic schooling and laws”, while 17% said “I would like to integrate on some things, but I would prefer to lead a separate Islamic life as far as possible”, and only 1% that “I would like to live in a fully separate Islamic area in Britain, subject to Sharia law and government”.¹⁷⁸ The ICM 2016 poll¹⁷⁹ shows that those saying they would like to fully integrate with non-Muslims in all aspects in life had increased to 53%. And the second statement “I would like to integrate on most things, but there should be separation in some areas, such as Islamic schooling and laws” was selected by 37%. These figures indicate that a year on, more Muslims are supportive of integration.

The 2016 poll showed that the youngest group, those aged 18-24 years, were significantly more likely (59%) to prefer full integration than all other age groups. And compared with 2015, the oldest age group (those aged over 65) had moved towards wanting full integration (from 31% to 48%). Those born in Britain were more likely to choose full integration than those who were not (56% compared to 51%).¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 5 (interviews June-October 2008): 1,404 Muslim and 8,676 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

¹⁷⁵ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015, p10

¹⁷⁶Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

¹⁷⁷ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015, p1

¹⁷⁸ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

¹⁷⁹ICM Survey of Muslims for Policy Exchange: interviews with 3,040 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face to face across Great Britain between 19 May-23 July 2016.

¹⁸⁰ICM Survey of Muslims for Policy Exchange: interviews with 3,040 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face to face across Great Britain between 19 May-23 July 2016.

Education and religion

Views are divided, however, on the extent to which Muslims want their religious values to be reflected in the schools to which they send their children

One survey found that 31% agree, but 66% disagree, that they would like their children to go to a Muslim state school if they had a choice, with men (34%) slightly more likely than women (28%) to be in favour¹⁸¹. But, on the other hand, another survey found that 45% agree that they would prefer to send their child to a school with strong Muslim values, and this is especially true of those from lower social grades (56% of DEs agree compared to 39% of ABs); again, men are slightly more in favour than women. Such views may reflect a belief that the ethos or social values of mainstream schools would be likely to be out of step with their own religiously-derived beliefs; for example, those who think that homosexuality should be illegal are much more likely to agree (56%) that they would prefer to send their child to a school with strong Muslim values than those who do not (33%).¹⁸²

Similarly, there is division over support for ways in which schools might reflect Muslim beliefs or culture: 33% agree while 46% disagree that girls and boys should be taught separately, 28% agree while 47% disagree that it is acceptable for a homosexual person to be a teacher in a school, and 64% agree while 17% disagree that Muslim girls should have a right to wear a Niqab in school. Only on the separate teaching of boys and girls is there a statistically significant difference between men and women (38% of men and 28% of women support that). Homosexual teachers are much more acceptable to those born in Britain than to immigrants (of those born in the UK, 39% agree this is acceptable and 37% disagree; of those born elsewhere, 19% agree and 55% disagree).¹⁸³

Sharia Law

And a minority of Muslims express support for the introduction of Sharia law in some form in Britain

It is important to note that questions asking people about Sharia law tend to find high proportions of “don’t know” which may indicate that the topic is one to which many Muslims have given little thought or feel that they do not understand, but it may instead be that they find the questions too simplistic to adequately answer or that they feel inhibited from expressing their opinions. Asked in 2010 about Sharia courts being introduced in Britain, one in six (17%) preferred to “Introduce Sharia law, that is traditional Islamic law, in all cases”, 19% to “Introduce Sharia law, but only if penalties do not contravene British law” and 20% chose “Do not introduce Sharia law”, but the biggest group were the 37% who said they didn’t know¹⁸⁴. An ICM poll for Channel 4 in 2015 found that 23% of Muslims would support there being areas of Britain where Sharia law is introduced instead of British law while 43% would oppose it; in this case 10% answered “don’t know” and 24% that they would neither support nor oppose it¹⁸⁵. A 2016 ICM survey of Muslims¹⁸⁶ asked a question about Sharia Law in more detail about areas of law where it could be introduced such as those “related to civil law cases such as financial disputes, divorce or other family matters but which could also cover other aspects”. Asked in this way, support for Sharia law increases to 43% with 22% saying they oppose this and a similar proportion (23%) saying they ‘neither support or oppose’ it and 12% saying ‘don’t know’.

¹⁸¹ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015, p 21.) The sample was of all Muslim adults, not confined to parents of school-age children.)

¹⁸²ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015. (The sample was of all Muslim adults, not confined to parents of school-age children.)

¹⁸³ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

¹⁸⁴Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹⁸⁵ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

¹⁸⁶ICM Survey of Muslims for Policy Exchange: interviews with 3,040 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face to face across Great Britain between 19 May-23 July 2016.

It is important to note that Sharia law is a very broad term grounded in sources from the Qur'an and prophetic traditions, that refer to canonical Islamic laws which prescribe both religious and secular duties. Fiqh is the jurisprudential attempt at understanding what those duties and practices are. The complexity of this understanding is reflected in the survey answers given here, and it would not be too far-fetched to claim that the public's understanding of what Sharia is and entails can differ widely from understanding by Muslim respondents themselves. Recent Pew polling has shown that most Muslims across the world, support the implementation of Sharia only in relation to Personal Status Laws such as marriage, inheritance, and divorce.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷Data available at <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-overview>

9 Experiences of discrimination and prejudice

Religious prejudice

While some Muslims in Britain feel that there is prejudice and mistrust against them, the majority take the opposite view but prejudice against Muslims is felt to be increasing, particularly by Muslim graduates and young Muslims.

Three in five Muslims (63%) disagree that most British people don't trust Muslims, 51% disagree that prejudice against Islam makes it very difficult being a Muslim in this country and 49% disagree that Britain is becoming less tolerant of Muslims.¹⁸⁸

Almost a quarter of ethnic minority Muslims (23%) think there is "a lot" of racial prejudice in Britain nowadays¹⁸⁹ and more say they think it is increasing than reducing - 29% said in 2010-11 there is more racial prejudice "than there was five years ago", 18% that there is less and 36% about the same amount.¹⁹⁰ But a higher number still - two in five Muslims (40%) - thought that religious prejudice had increased over the same five years, while only 10% thought that it had decreased¹⁹¹; and ICM's 2015 survey of Muslims for Channel 4, with a slightly more specific question, found 40% thinking that there is more religious prejudice against Muslims than there was five years ago.¹⁹² Three in five Muslims from ethnic minority groups (61%) think there is more prejudice against Muslim people than against other religious groups, a perception that is especially widespread among graduates with UK degrees (79%) and among 18-24 year olds (71%); just one in twenty (5%) think there is less.¹⁹³ By contrast, 27% think there is more prejudice against their ethnic group than there is against other Black and Asian groups nonetheless there is some concern among Muslims that they will be victims of crime as described earlier (page 32).¹⁹⁴

Personal experience of discrimination

One in four Muslims say they have experienced discrimination and this is higher among Muslim graduates and younger Muslims

In 2010, a quarter of Muslims and a third of younger or graduate members of this group felt they had experienced discrimination in the UK in the past five years; six per cent of men and two per cent of women feel they have been discriminated against "often". Younger Muslims are more likely to feel that they have been treated unfairly in this way (36% of 18-24 year olds compared to 17% of those aged 55+ years say they have experienced discrimination), as are UK graduates (34%, compared to 27% of those with a degree from overseas and 26% without a degree). Men are somewhat more likely than women to say they have been discriminated against, but this difference is much more marked among UK graduates: 39% of Muslim men with British degrees say they have experienced discrimination, compared to 27% of women with a British degree and 27% of both men and women with an overseas degree; among non-graduates, 29% of the men and 23% of the women have had the same experience.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁸ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015

¹⁸⁹Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas

¹⁹⁰Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

¹⁹¹Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

¹⁹²ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

¹⁹³Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas

¹⁹⁴Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹⁹⁵Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Table 9.1: In the past 5 years, do you feel that you have experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in the UK because of your ethnicity, race, skin colour, language, accent, religion, age, gender, sexuality or disability?

	All	Men				Female			
		18-24	25-34	35-54	55+	18-24	25-34	35-54	55+
Yes	27%	34%	37%	26%	17%	37%	24%	18%	16%
No	69%	63%	58%	71%	75%	56%	72%	80%	81%
Don't know/refused	4%	3%	5%	3%	8%	7%	4%	2%	3%

Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010

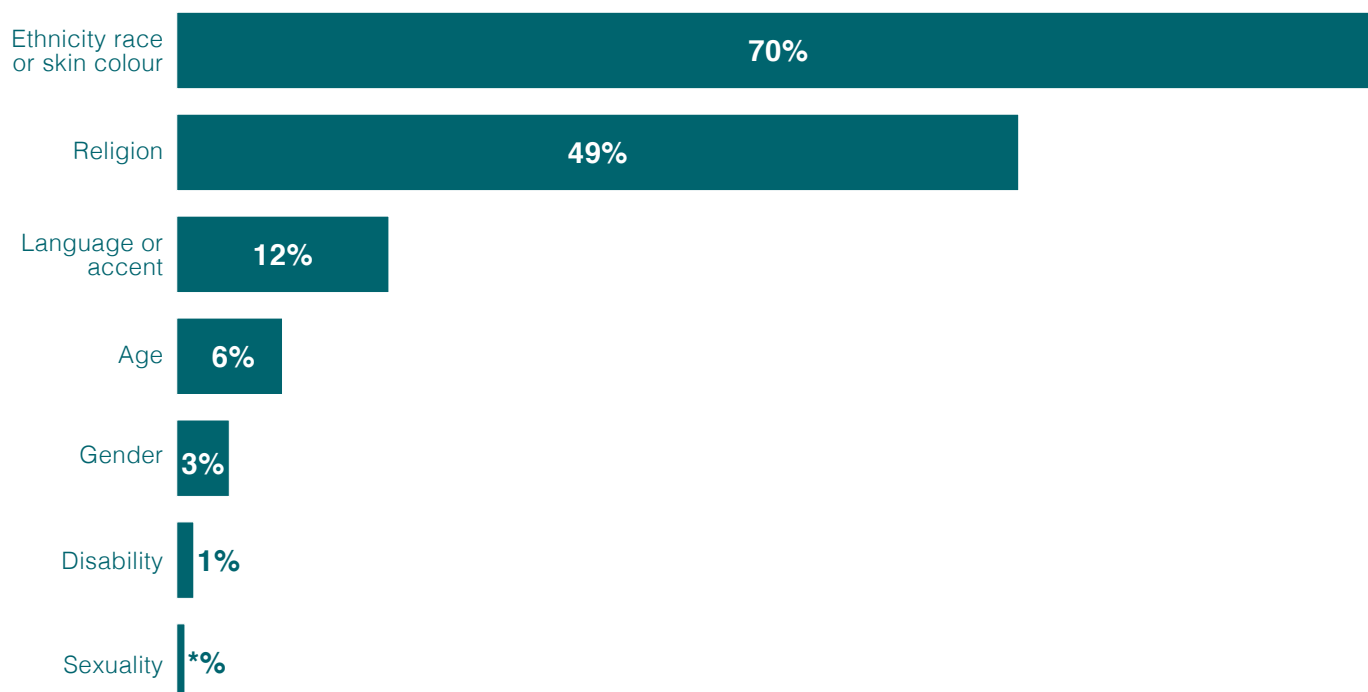
Base: 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups

Muslims are more likely to say they have faced discrimination because of their race and ethnicity than their religion

Those who feel they have been discriminated against are most likely to feel that this was because of their ethnicity, race or skin colour (70% of those reporting discrimination which is 19% of the whole sample). But perceptions of religious discrimination are also frequent (49% of those reporting and 13% of the whole sample respectively). Discrimination for reasons of language or accent (12% and 3%), age (6% and 2%), gender (3% and 1%) and disability (1% and less than half a per cent) are much less widely reported. (In the same survey, non-Muslim members of ethnic minorities were significantly more likely to report having been discriminated against than Muslims (38%) saying this had happened to them in the previous five years); the vast majority of these cases involved racial or ethnic discrimination.)¹⁹⁶

Figure 9.1: Types of discrimination British Muslims say they have encountered

In the past 5 years, do you feel you have been discriminated against for any of these reasons?



Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+

¹⁹⁶Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

More than half these reported cases of discrimination against Muslims occurred on the street, but nine per cent of the total sample feel they have been discriminated against at work or when applying for a job or promotion, four per cent when dealing with the Police or the Courts, four per cent when dealing with immigration or other government offices and three per cent at school, college or university.¹⁹⁷ The Citizenship Survey, conducted at roughly the same time, including Muslims from outside the biggest ethnic minority groups, confirms the nine per cent level of perceived discrimination at work (compared to 6% of all adults in England and Wales who feel they have been discriminated against at work for some reason), and found that most put the discrimination down at least partly to their race (49%) or colour (31%), but in two-fifths of cases (38%) religion was also believed to have been a factor.¹⁹⁸

One in ten young Muslims report religious discrimination by teachers at school

One in ten young Muslims, asked if they have ever been treated unfairly by teachers at school because of their religion, feel that they have, according to a cohort study of 17-19 year olds in England. (10% said yes; only 2% of non-Muslims felt the same.) A similar number, 11%, thought teachers had treated them unfairly because of their race, skin colour or ethnic background.¹⁹⁹

Fair treatment

Seven in ten Muslims feel they are treated fairly by the government but a significant minority believes Muslims do not get the same life opportunities as others

Most Muslims feel that “The Government generally treats people like me fairly” (eight per cent strongly agree and 62% agree), with little difference by sex and age, although more people disagree in London than elsewhere.²⁰⁰ Similarly, 17% of Muslim 17-19 year olds (in a separate survey) felt people like themselves were treated “very fairly” by government, and 50% “quite fairly”. Seven in ten (70%) Muslim adults would expect to be treated the same as people of other races in the Courts (only one in twenty (5%) think they would be treated worse, most of the rest not committing themselves to an opinion)²⁰¹, and three-quarters (76%) said that they would get equal treatment from the Police (although here the number expecting to be treated worse is higher, 11%).²⁰²

Two in five ethnic minority Muslims agree that “Non-White people don’t have the same opportunities and chances in life as White people, as they are held back by prejudice and discrimination”; this perception is much stronger in London (51% agree) than in the rest of Britain (34%)²⁰³. This perhaps contributes to the finding on page 27 which show many Muslims (44%) who disagree that if someone does not succeed it is their own fault.

One in five Muslim school-leavers (19%) think their religious beliefs will affect how likely they are to get a job or training place, with the vast majority of these thinking it will make it more difficult rather than easier. (A similar proportion, 21%, also think their race, colour or ethnic background will disadvantage them in the same way.) Notwithstanding other research which suggests that discrimination may focus in particular on women who have a visible Muslim identity²⁰⁴, there is no significant difference between the views of young men and young women on either question.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁷Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

¹⁹⁸Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

¹⁹⁹Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 5 (interviews June-October 2008): 1,404 Muslim and 8,676 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

²⁰⁰Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

²⁰¹Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

²⁰²Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 5 (interviews June-October 2008): 1,404 Muslim and 8,676 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

²⁰³Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

²⁰⁴See for example C. Allen, A. Isakjee & Ö. Young, “‘Maybe we are hated’: The experience and impact of anti-Muslim hate on British Muslim women”, Institute of Applied Social Studies, University of Birmingham, <https://www.tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/maybewearehated.pdf>, and M. Littler & M. Feldman, ‘Tell MAMA Reporting 2014/2015: Annual Monitoring, Cumulative Extremism, and Policy Implications’, Centre for Fascist, Anti-Fascist and Post-Fascist Studies, Teesside University, 2015, <https://www.tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/Tell%20MAMA%20Reporting%202014-2015.pdf>.

²⁰⁵Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, first cohort (born 1989-90) wave 5 (interviews June-October 2008): 1,404 Muslim and 8,676 other subjects, interviews with young people and their parents

Despite some Muslims feeling they don't have the same opportunities and life chances as others, more ethnic minority Muslims oppose than support positive discrimination in favour of Black people and Asians: 33% agree, but 41% disagree, that "Black and Asian people in Britain who apply for jobs should be given priority, to try to make up for past discrimination against them"; but those in London split narrowly in favour, 39% to 35%.²⁰⁶

Harassment and physical threats

One in five Muslims say harassment is a very big or fairly big problem and one in four worry about being physically attacked

Only a minority of Muslims say there is no problem in their local area with harassment, although few see it as a very big problem. In the Citizenship survey, participants were asked about "racial or religious harassment" in their local area, while ICM's 2015 survey for Channel 4 asked about "religious harassment of Muslims, even if it doesn't affect you personally": the former found that 38% felt it was "not a problem at all", the latter 46%. However, only a tiny proportion (3% in the Citizenship survey and 7% in the ICM survey) felt it to be "a very big problem"; a further 11% and 15% respectively judged it "a fairly big problem".²⁰⁷

A quarter of Muslims say they are very (7%) or fairly worried (19%) about being physically attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion. (By way of comparison, nine per cent of the whole adult public in England and Wales are very or fairly worried, and the figure is similar – eight per cent - for Christians.)²⁰⁸ One in seven Muslims (14%) agree that "I do not feel safe in Britain as a Muslim" (although 84% disagree), and the same proportion (14%) also agree that they would leave Britain and live in a Muslim country if they could (again, 84% disagree). Women are twice as likely as men (19% against 10%) to say they do not feel safe, although both sexes are equally likely to say they would leave Britain if they could.²⁰⁹ These findings are from 2010 and it would be interesting to see the direction of travel, particularly over recent years and since the EU Referendum in 2016 as official Home Office figures show that reported incidents of racist and religious abuse increased significantly in the month after the referendum, for example the number of racially or religiously aggravated offences was 41% higher in July 2016 than it was in July 2015, and over the course of the year (from 2014/15 -2015/16) reported hate crime had increased by 19% overall.²¹⁰ Indeed, these data may not provide the full picture as the figures are subject to the possibility of under-reported crime.

²⁰⁶Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

²⁰⁷Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011; ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

²⁰⁸Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

²⁰⁹ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015, p17

²¹⁰https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/559319/hate-crime-1516-hosb1116.pdf

10 Social attitudes

Views on gender, homosexuality and race

Conservative attitudes towards gender roles and homosexuality are prevalent...

Approaching half (45%) of Muslim men and a third (33%) of Muslim women agree that “Wives should always obey their husbands”. Agreement levels are much lower among the general public as a whole, indicating that a significant number of Muslims have more traditional views on gender roles. Also, 38% of Muslim men and 23% of Muslim women say that it is acceptable for a British Muslim to keep more than one wife. These beliefs are most prevalent among the oldest groups and among Muslims not born in Britain, but are nevertheless also widespread among young and British-born Muslims: 56% of those aged 65-and-over believe wives should always obey their husbands compared to 38% of those aged 18-34 and 38% of those aged 35-64, while 33% of those born in the UK and 44% born elsewhere agree; polygamy is acceptable to 34% of foreign-born and 27% of British-born Muslims, to 45% of those aged 65+, to 26% of those aged 35-64 and to 33% of those aged up to 34.²¹¹

Attitudes among young Muslims are more liberal but most remain conservative

A majority of Muslims disagree that homosexuality should be legal in Britain: 38% strongly disagree and 14% tend to disagree, whereas only 8% strongly agree and 10% tend to agree.²¹² (By way of comparison, 73% of the whole adult public (and 67% of Christians) said that it should be legal in the control group survey with a representative sample from the same poll. But although Muslims’ views are now out of line with the more liberal views of the British public as a whole, it should perhaps be borne in mind that as recently as 1993 the British Social Attitudes survey found 50% of the adult British public believing that “sexual relations between two adults of the same sex” were “always wrong”).²¹³ Young Muslims are significantly more likely to agree that homosexuality should be legal (28% of 18-24 year olds, 23% of 25-34 year olds), but even in these age groups there was a clear plurality against: as many 18-24 year olds strongly disagree as agree, strongly or otherwise, and among 25-34 year olds almost twice as many do so.²¹⁴

Three-quarters of Muslims (77%) do not think that Muslims who convert to other religions should be cut off by their family.²¹⁵

...but views on inter-racial marriage are more relaxed

Three in five Muslims from the main ethnic minority groups say it would bother them “not at all” (42%) or “not very much” (19%) if a close relative were to marry a white person, but one in eight (13%) would be bothered “a great deal”. Also, it would bother 15% of Asian Muslims a great deal if a close relative married a Black person, while 9% of Black Muslims would have the same reaction if a close relative married an Asian – but these figures are almost identical for non-Muslims in the same ethnic groups (16% of Asian non-Muslims would be bothered a great deal if a close relative married a Black person, and 9% of Black non-Muslims if a close relative married an Asian. Asian Muslims have stronger misgivings about the possibility of a relative marrying somebody white (14% would be bothered “a great deal”, 38% “not at all”) than either Black Muslims (7% bothered “a great deal”, 64% “not at all”) or non-Muslim Asians (8% “a great deal”, 45% “not at all”).²¹⁶

²¹¹ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

²¹²ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

²¹³<http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-30/personal-relationships/homosexuality.aspx>

²¹⁴ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

²¹⁵ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015, p 21

²¹⁶Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

Ingrid Storm demonstrates that, at least within the context of attitudes towards inter-ethnic marriage, Muslims are viewed more negatively than other religious minority groups thus it is not simply being a minority group that raises prejudice against them. However, others may view Islam as a religion which involves higher levels of commitment, combined with negative views portrayed in the media, which may influence views of Islam to be seen as a threat to secular liberalism for some.²¹⁷

Cultural practices

Muslims participate in traditional British cultural practices, most send Christmas cards and presents, and wear a poppy for Remembrance Day

The 2010 Election Survey asked people what British cultural practices they observed. Three-quarters of Muslims say they always (39%) or sometimes (34%) send Christmas cards, and three in five that they always (35%) or sometimes (27%) give Christmas presents, although 81% say they never put up a Christmas tree. Older Muslims are substantially more likely than younger ones to say they always send Christmas cards and that they always give presents. Half of British Muslims always (22%) or sometimes (29%) wear a poppy on Remembrance Day. Three in five send Mother's Day or Father's Day cards, a little under half send Valentine's cards.²¹⁸

Immigration

Muslims are less likely than the public as a whole to want immigration reduced and are more likely to want to see the benefits immigration brings to the economy

The 2010-11 Citizenship survey found that half (50%) of adults in England and Wales thought immigration should be reduced "a lot", and a further quarter (23%) that it should be reduced a little. (Only three per cent thought it should be increased.) Muslims were evenly split on whether it should be reduced (21% reduced a lot, 18% reduced a little) or should remain the same (38%), while 10% thought it should be increased.²¹⁹ In line with this, recent research suggests that in the 2016 referendum on membership of the European Union (at which attitudes towards immigration were an important issue in the campaign), Muslim voters split strongly in favour of Remaining in the EU (by 69% to 31%), when the country as a whole voted by 52% to 48% to Leave.²²⁰ That Muslims are less emphatic about wanting to see immigration reduced is perhaps no surprise given that 2011 Census data shows that 53% of Muslims are not born in the UK and those born in the UK are likely to be descendants of migrants. That said, our extensive work on public attitudes towards immigration²²¹ shows that attitudes towards immigration tend to become closer to the nationally representative sample the longer ago someone arrived in the UK. This would suggest that over the longer term the views of Muslims may converge with the public as a whole.

The majority of Muslims (56%, rising to 67% in London) agree that "Immigrants generally are good for Britain's economy", and on balance they disagree (by 42% to 27%) that "Immigrants increase crime rates". Similarly, more disagree than agree, but with a substantial dissenting minority, that "Most asylum seekers who come to Britain should be sent home immediately" (25% agree, 45% disagree). The oldest group, those aged 55+ years are most likely to agree that immigrants increase crime rates (38% agree, compared to 22% of 18-24 year olds) and that asylum seekers should be sent home (22% of 18-24 year olds and 36% of those aged 55+ years think that), but they are also a little more likely to think immigrants benefit the economy (50% of 18-24 year olds compared with 64% of those aged 55+ years).²²³

²¹⁷See <http://www.democraticaudit.com/2015/04/17/muslims-continue-to-be-less-accepted-than-other-minorities-in-britain>

²¹⁸Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

²¹⁹Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

²²⁰B. Clements, 'How religious groups voted in the 2016 referendum on Britain's EU membership', British Religion in Numbers, 11 May 2017, <http://www.brin.ac.uk/2017/how-religious-groups-voted-at-the-2016-referendum-on-britains-eu-membership/>.

²²¹<https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/1634/Perceptions-and-Reality-Public-attitudes-to-immigration.aspx>

²²²Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

²²³Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

11 Attitudes towards terrorism and extremism

Attitudes towards ISIS

Support for Islamic State's objectives is very limited but not negligible

A 2015 survey asked Muslims whether they supported the objective to “establish a ‘Caliphate’, or an Islamic state, led by a group of religious authorities under a supreme leader”, emphasising that this was the aim of ISIS/ISIL, which it described as “an extremist rebel group”. It found just seven per cent expressed support, although 67% were opposed, with 54% strongly opposed. (In the control group survey, asking the same question to a nationally representative sample, 2% said that they supported the objective to create an Islamic state and 80% that they were opposed. Most of those who supported the objective identified themselves as Christian.)²²⁴

Two in five (38%) think that the single biggest root cause of ISIS attacks is Western foreign policy such as the invasion of Iraq; 25% blame ISIS leaders who exploit vulnerable young people, six per cent the poverty of, and discrimination against, Muslims in Western countries and 14% something else; one in six (17%) say they don't know. But most (71%) say they have no sympathy with young Muslims who leave the UK to join fighters in Syria, although one in twenty (5%) say they have “a lot of sympathy”, and 25% of Muslim women say they have at least some sympathy.²²⁵ These figures show a decline in sympathy when compared to a similar Survation poll of British Muslims carried out in March 2015 when 8% said they had a lot of sympathy, 20% some sympathy while 61% said they have no sympathy. However, the meaning of these findings may depend upon how respondents interpreted “sympathy”, which is arguably an ambiguous term in these circumstances and the results should be interpreted with caution. Respondents were asked whether they have sympathy “with young Muslims” rather than with their motives.

Attitudes towards violence and illegality

The vast majority of Muslims believe British laws should be obeyed but there is some sympathy for the use of violence in certain circumstances

Nine in ten Muslims (93%) agree that “Muslims in Britain should always obey British laws”.²²⁶ That said, as many as 44% of Muslims say that they sympathise with people who use violence to protect their family (17% completely sympathise, 27% sympathise to some extent), but there is less hesitation in condemning violence for others: 24% sympathise with violence organised by groups to protect their own religion but 43% “completely condemn it”; 22% sympathise with violence to fight injustice by the Police (completely condemned by 45%), 20% with violence to fight injustice by governments (completely condemned by 48%) and 18% violence against those who mock the Prophet (completely condemned by 53%).²²⁷ Comparatively a poll of non-Muslims carried out by YouGov on behalf of Maria Sobolewska at the University of Manchester shows that many in the public believe terrorism can be justified in various circumstances including occupation of one's country (said by 54%), fighting against an oppressive regime (52%), and fighting for your country's independence (42%).²²⁸ And although a

²²⁴ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

²²⁵Survation poll for The Sun: interviews with 1,003 GB resident Muslims aged 18+, interviewed by telephone on 18-20 November 2015. Sampling was based on a demographically-modelled probability of residents identifying as Muslim., p9

²²⁶ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015

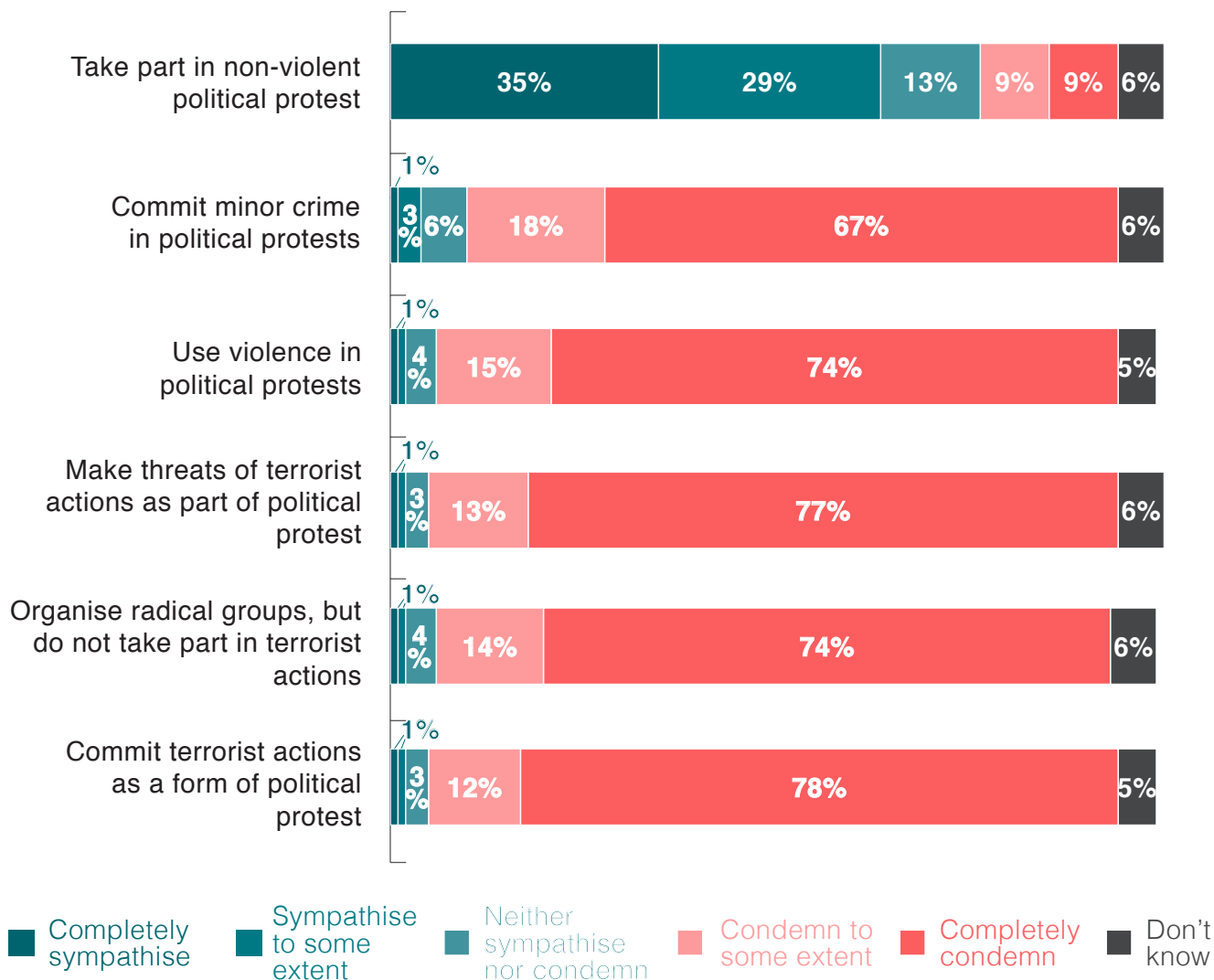
²²⁷ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015: statements p 262

²²⁸Survation poll for Sky News: interviews with 1,001 Muslims aged 18+ by telephone, 10-16 March 2015

separate poll found that four in five (78%) agreed that “It is deeply offensive to me personally when images of the Prophet Mohammad are published”, few of those believed this justified a violent response: only 11% agreed, while 85% disagreed, that organisations which publish such images “deserve to be attacked”, and 68% agreed that “Acts of violence against those who publish images of the Prophet Mohammad can never be justified”.²²⁹

Figure 11.1: Attitudes towards justification of violence

For each, to what extent do you sympathise with or condemn people who?



Source: ICM Survey of Muslims for Policy Exchange (May-June 2016): interviews with 3,040 Muslims aged 18+

²²⁹ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015, p10

Support for suicide bombing is much lower. Only one per cent say they completely sympathise and three per cent sympathise to some extent with “Suicide bombing to fight injustice”, while 74% completely condemn it.²³⁰

It is possible that surveys which measure attitudes to violence in general, without specifying that the question is about violence in Britain, may misleadingly inflate the level of tolerance for extremist acts committed in this country. The 2010-11 Citizenship survey asked “How right or wrong do you think it is for people to use violent extremism in Britain to protest against things they think are very unfair or unjust?”, and found 84% of Muslims saying that this was “always wrong” (little different from the 88% of Christians or 86% of all adults in England and Wales who said the same.²³¹ Support for similar violence for religious reasons is even lower, with 92% of Muslims saying that “People in Britain using violent extremism, in the name of religion, to protest or achieve a goal” is always wrong.²³²

Policy Exchange found that 85% of Muslims surveyed condemned minor acts of crime at political protests – this compares to 71% of those surveyed in their control survey. They also found that nearly nine in ten (89%) of Muslims condemned the use of political violence in political protest compared to 81% of those within the control survey. When asked questions about threatening, or committing terrorist actions, nine in ten (90%) Muslims condemned each of these acts compared to 83% and 84% of those in the control survey. The authors also found that 18% of Muslim surveyed condemned ‘non-violent political protest’ – compared to 7% of respondents in the control survey. In sum, they conclude that British Muslims are more supportive of “law and order” and less tolerant of protest than the British population as a whole.²³³

Asked if they would ever support violent demonstrations or protests in various situations, only one in ten (10%) said they might support them “If the British government was about to start a war that you didn’t agree with” and eight per cent if “the British government passed a tax increase which you thought was unfair” and the same proportion (8%) to protest about job cuts. And even of those who said they would support violent demonstrations or protests, the vast majority would support neither destroying property nor attacking police officers in such situations.²³⁴

Seven Muslims in eight (88%) think that “Political campaigners in Britain writing and distributing leaflets that encourage violence towards different ethnic groups” is always wrong.²³⁵

Responsibilities of the Muslim community

Around a half of Muslims believe it is the responsibility of Muslims to condemn Al-Qaeda and ISIS inspired terrorism although a sizeable minority believe it is not

A 2015 poll found that 51% of Muslims said that “It is the responsibility of Muslims to condemn terrorist acts carried out in the name of Islam”, but a large minority (38%) said it was not their responsibility. The poll found a substantial difference between men and women, the men believing it was the responsibility of Muslims to condemn such acts by 60% to 33%, but the women more evenly split 41% to 43%. Younger Muslims (aged 18-34 years) were also split evenly, 44% on each side, while 35-54 year olds accepted responsibility by 55% to 33% and those aged 55-and-over by 64% to 28%.²³⁶

²³⁰ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015: statements p 262

²³¹Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

²³²Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

²³³Frampton, Martyn, Goodhart, David, and Mahmood, Khalid (2016), *Unsettled Belonging: A survey of Britain’s Muslim communities*, London: Policy Exchange, pp 67-68

²³⁴Ethnic Minority British Election Study, 2010, 1,140 GB resident Muslims aged 18+ belonging to defined minority ethnic groups and not living in low-penetration areas.

²³⁵Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

²³⁶Survation poll for The Sun: interviews with 1,003 GB resident Muslims aged 18+, interviewed by telephone on 18-20 November 2015. Sampling was based on a demographically-modelled probability of residents identifying as Muslim.

Three in ten believe that Islamic leaders in the UK have not publicly condemned ISIS sufficiently, but they are outnumbered by those who think the reaction has been about right; just eight per cent say that Islamic leaders in the UK have publicly condemned ISIS too much, 30% not enough and 37% about the right amount with 26% saying they don't know.²³⁷ Around half (47%) say that more should be done by Muslims to tackle the causes of extremism in the Muslim community, but 30% think they have got it about right while 20% don't know. (Only 2% think they should do less.)²³⁸

A quarter of Muslims (26%) say that in the last five years they have disagreed with violent extremist beliefs in conversations with people they know; six per cent have spoken out publicly against people who encourage others to support violent extremism, and a similar proportion (7%) have signed a petition against violent extremism. Two-thirds of Muslims (67%) say they have done nothing to reduce or lower support for violent extremism in the name of religion (although this survey question relies upon showing respondents a list of possible actions and on coming up for themselves with any relevant activities omitted from the list, so it may exaggerate the extent of complete inaction.)²³⁹ More recent data on Muslim public opinion from Policy Exchange show that there is significant support amongst the Muslim community for greater government activity to help prevent violent extremism including funding for special programmes to help Muslim communities combat violent extremism. Furthermore, while 38% of Muslims said that their religious community should take primary responsibility for deterring radicalisation, 29% said it should be the government.²⁴⁰

Reporting extremism

While the vast majority of Muslims say they would report activities supporting violent extremism to the police, only a minority say they have come across such activities and these were mainly on internet sites.

Almost all Muslims (94%) say they "would report it to the police if they knew someone in the local community was planning an act of violence"²⁴¹ (Caution should be applied when interpreting this question as social desirability may be at play.) The vast majority (80%) say they have not personally seen anything which had tried to encourage people to support violent extremism in the name of religion; but 16% said they have, and this rises to 26% of those who say they have no sense of belonging to Britain and 39% of those who say they sympathise with people who commit terrorist actions as a form of political protest. Of people who had seen something to encourage extremism, 70% said this was on internet sites.²⁴² Comparatively ICM polling from Policy Exchange conducted in 2016 showed that a majority (52%) of Muslims say they would report to the police if they knew someone who was getting involved with people who support terrorism in Syria, 26% said that they would talk to the person directly to dissuade them and 20% would seek help from family or friends.²⁴³ Interestingly, Tom Tyler, et al, found in their 2011 publication that perceptions of procedural fairness in treatment by policy and authorities is a significant predictor in cooperation in counter terrorism policing while political and religious ideology is insignificant.²⁴⁴

Knowledge of local groups supporting violent extremism is very low. Only one per cent of Muslims say they know, and four per cent that they suspect, that there are organised groups in their local area who support violent extremism in the name of religion; 28% doubt there are such groups, and 42% state there are definitely no groups, although 25% don't know.²⁴⁵

²³⁷Survation poll for The Sun: interviews with 1,003 GB resident Muslims aged 18+, interviewed by telephone on 18-20 November 2015. Sampling was based on a demographically-modelled probability of residents identifying as Muslim.

²³⁸ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

²³⁹Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

²⁴⁰ICM Survey of Muslims for Policy Exchange: interviews with 3,040 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face to face across Great Britain between 19 May-23 July 2016.

²⁴¹ComRes poll for the BBC Today programme: interviews with 1,000 Muslims aged 18+, by telephone, 26 January-20 February 2015, p22

²⁴²ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

²⁴³ICM Survey of Muslims for Policy Exchange: interviews with 3,040 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face to face across Great Britain between 19 May-23 July 2016.

²⁴⁴Tyler, Tom., et al (2011), Mechanisms for Eliciting Cooperation in Counter Terrorism Policing: Evidence from the United Kingdom, Chicago: University of Chicago Public Law & Legal Theory Working Paper No. 340

²⁴⁵Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Citizenship Survey, 2010-2011

12 What we know about public attitudes towards Muslims

This chapter reports findings from a number of different public opinion surveys about Muslims. One important factor to note when interpreting the findings here is that the timing of the surveys may have had an impact on results – people may be more negative if the survey is conducted following a specific event (e.g. a terrorist attack). Secondly, many surveys ask similar questions but use different wording which can be interpreted differently by people. Therefore, questions that on the surface are asking about similar topics, may result in different answers. Finally, there may also be a mode effect – where people might give different answers depending on whether an interviewer is present. Therefore, findings here should be interpreted with caution.

The public hugely overestimates the number of Muslims in the country

The British public hugely overestimates the proportion of Muslims in the population. The public thinks that 1 in 6 Britons are Muslim, when actually fewer than 1 in 20 are. The findings show that people think 15% of the population is Muslim²⁴⁶, when actually the official figure is 4.8% - less than a third of the guess. In 2014, when the same question was asked, the figure estimated by the public was 21% or that 1 in 5 were Muslim.²⁴⁷ This would indicate that the public is becoming more accurate about the size of the Muslim population. The public is also inaccurate about the rate at which the Muslim population is growing. The public thinks that 22%²⁴⁸ of the British population will be Muslim by 2020, when projections from the Pew Research Center²⁴⁹ suggest Muslims will only make up around 6% of the British population by then. This tendency to overestimate is not unique to the British public. Indeed, the average French estimate was that 31% of the population was Muslim – almost one in three residents. Whereas Pew Research suggest the Muslim population in France in 2010 was around 7.5%, or one in 13 people.

We know from our work on public perceptions that these misperceptions may be fuelled by a number of factors, such as the focus in the media and elsewhere on Muslims – where the majority of people say they get their information - as well as people's tendency to overestimate issues that they are concerned about.

There is a mixed picture on how the public views Muslims but younger people are consistently more positive

A number of surveys have asked about people's overall perceptions of Muslims and these have been asked in many different ways. In a Pew Survey in 2016²⁵⁰ (conducted via telephone) people were asked to rate different groups of people and how favourable or unfavourable they felt towards Muslims. Six in ten (63%) said they were favourable (15% saying very favourable and 48% mostly favourable) and almost three in ten (28%) said they were unfavourable (17% mostly unfavourable and 11% very unfavourably). The survey also asked about Jews and Roma and the corresponding figures for Roma were 54% favourable vs 45% unfavourable and for Jews, 85% favourable vs 7% unfavourable. The Pew Survey trends show that levels of favourability towards Muslims in the UK fell between 2015 and 2016 (from 72% to 63%) but the 2016 level is similar to those recorded in 2014 and 2009 (64% and 61% respectively).

²⁴⁶<https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3817/Perceptions-are-not-reality-what-the-world-gets-wrong.aspx>

²⁴⁷<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/perceptions-are-not-reality-things-world-gets-wrong>

²⁴⁸<https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3817/Perceptions-are-not-reality-what-the-world-gets-wrong.aspx>

²⁴⁹<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projection-table/2010/percent/all/>

²⁵⁰Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes 2016; 1,460 UK adults aged 18+ interviewed by telephone 4 April-1 May 2016

In a 2015 YouGov survey²⁵¹ (conducted online), which interviewed the public across a range of Western and Northern European Countries, more people in Britain had a negative than positive impression of Muslims (40% negative versus 22% positive) and this pattern was fairly consistent among the other countries in the study (Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway). Muslims were also viewed more negatively than the other religious groups that were asked about in the study (Christians and Jews). The only group that was viewed more negatively than Muslims were Roma/Gypsies/Travellers where 58% people had a negative view compared with 10% who had a positive view. These findings may appear to be in contrast to the Pew Survey. As we have already mentioned, one explanation may be a mode effect, where people may be inclined to respond differently when an interviewer is present. It may also be because the question wording is different the first may be interpreted as asking about more personal views whereas the YouGov survey may elicit more general impressions.

Other surveys have asked people to give a score from 0 to 100 on a 'feelings thermometer' where the higher the score, the warmer someone feels towards that group. Asked in this way (via telephone), a 2015 ICM survey²⁵² found that the public gave all groups a score around the midpoint or more positive end of the scale (i.e. above 50) but they did give Muslims a lower mean score than other religious groups; the mean score for Muslims was 55.2 compared with 63.7 for Jewish people, 64.8 for Catholics, 61.52 for Hindus and 64.64 for Buddhists. Younger people (those aged between 18-44) were significantly more positive about Muslims than those aged over 65+ years and women were more positive than men.

Table 12.1: Favourability towards Muslims by general public

Question	Response
Favourable / unfavourable towards various groups (Pew Research Center)	
Muslims	63% / 28%
Jews	85% / 7%
Favourability of religious groups (in a scale of 100) (ICM)	
Muslims	55.2
Jews	63.7
Catholics	64.8
Positive / negative view of various groups (Yougov)	
Muslims	22% / 40%
Jews	41% / 7%
Christians	45% / 11%

Sources: Pew Research Center (2016); ICM (2015); YouGov 2015

²⁵¹YouGov, Eurotrack Study, 1,667 GB adults aged 16+ years, interviewed online 20-25th May 2015

²⁵²ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4: interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, conducted face-to-face across Great Britain on 25 April-31 May 2015, and with a nationally-representative control group of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone on 5-7 June 2015.

In a 2016 study carried out online by Populus²⁵³, the public was asked to indicate which religious groups create problems in the UK on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being 'creates no problems' to 5 being 'creates a lot of problems'. The mean score was higher for Muslims (3.51) compared with 1.89 for Jews, 2.10 for Christians, 1.91 for Hindus and Sikhs respectively. As we have observed previously, young people (aged 18-24 years) were significantly more positive than all other age groups in the study and women were more positive than men. These age and gender differences do not feature when asked about views of Christians.

The same question was asked again in the study but this time about whether different religious groups create problems in the world. Again, the mean score given to Muslims (3.90) was higher than for all other groups (Jews 2.52, Christians 2.51, Hindus 2.20, Sikhs 2.14). Again, on this measure the 18-24 year olds were more positive than all other age groups and women were more positive than men.

What is notable, however, is when we compare the proportion giving Muslims a score of 5 (i.e. create a lot of problems) across the two questions; 27% say that Muslims create a lot of problems in the UK compared with 38% who say they create a lot of problems in the world, suggesting that Muslims in the UK are viewed more positively than Muslims worldwide.

In a study by YouGov²⁵⁴, an open question²⁵⁵ was asked on what words people associate with the term "Muslim". The majority of answers given were to do with the religion itself, such as it being a "religion/belief system/faith" (11%), and other answers including "mosque" (9%) and "Koran" (8%). 4% associated the term with positivity, including "peace/peaceful" and "devout". However, altogether the answers given were fairly negative in connotation, and included "extreme / extremism / extremist" (5%), "fanatic" (4%) and "intolerant" (3%). The most common answer provided by people was "terror/terrorism/terrorist" (12%).

As is the case with perceptions of Muslims, younger people have a more positive view of Islam as do those who know someone who is Muslim

In a ComRes (online) survey in 2016²⁵⁶, seven in ten people (72%) agreed that 'Most people in the UK have a negative view of Islam'. Again we observe an age difference here with those aged over 65+ years much more likely to agree than those aged 18-24 years (81% vs 65%). But this finding does not necessarily suggest people personally have a negative view of Islam. Indeed, when we look at a range of questions on Islam, there is a more nuanced picture. In the same survey, two in five people (43%) agree that Islam is a negative force in the UK but a similar proportion of people (40%) disagree, suggesting a fairly even split in public opinion. Knowing someone who is Muslim (e.g. as a family member, friend or acquaintance) also makes a difference on people's views. Those who know someone who is Muslim are much less likely to agree that Islam is a negative force in the UK compared with those who don't know someone who is Muslim (31% vs 53%).

The public is much less convinced of the links between Islam and violence; half (51%) disagree that Islam promotes acts of violence in the UK (versus 33% who agree) and 57% disagree that Islam is a violent religion compared with 28% who agree. Findings are more positive among the younger population, where those aged 18-24 are more likely to agree that "Islam promotes peace in the UK" (42%, compared to 32% of the national population). Those without Muslim friends are also more likely to disagree (55%) with this statement, than those with Muslim friends (38%).²⁵⁷

²⁵³Populus, Hope Not Hate Survey, 4,015 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed 1-8 February 2016

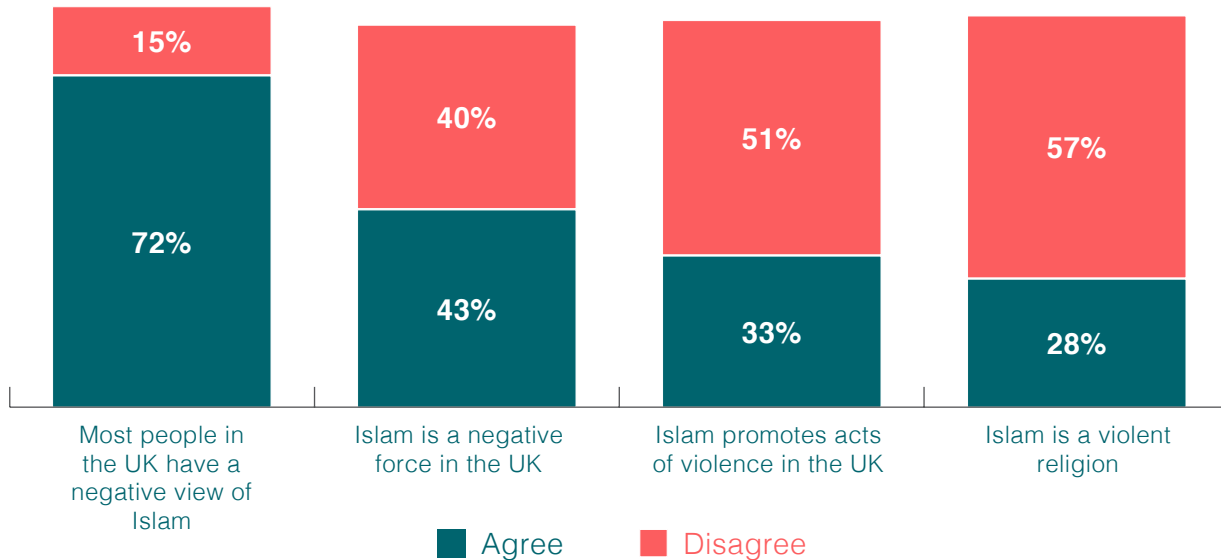
²⁵⁴YouGov, Islam in the UK study, 6,641 UK adults aged 18+ years, interviewed online 5-9 June 2015.

²⁵⁶Open question: where people are prompted to provide a spontaneous answer. These questions have no set answer lists, so are completely spontaneous.

²⁵⁷Ibid.

Figure 12.1: Views of the general British public towards Islam

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



Source: ICM Survey of Muslims for Channel 4 (June 2015): interviews with 1,081 Muslims aged 18+, 1008 British adults aged 18+

But people’s understanding of Islam is very limited

While on some aspects people may tend to view Islam in a more negative than positive light, in actual fact people have very little understanding of it; the majority of people (57%) disagree that they have a good understanding of the traditions and beliefs of Islam compared with three in ten who agree that they do (32%).²⁵⁸ The low level of understanding increases to 72% among those who do not know someone who is Muslim.

In the same study, we see that the public has mixed awareness and knowledge of the Muslim Caliphate. Half of people (49%) said they had heard of it, whereas a fairly similar number (42%) had not. Interestingly, younger age groups were least aware (54% of 18-24 year olds had not heard of the Muslim Caliphate), and women were less likely than men to have heard about it (39%, compared to 60% of men). Other groups that were more likely to have heard of it are those within the higher social grade (60% of AB, compared to 35% of DE) and those working within the public sector (57%, compared to 44% in the private sector).

And a lack of understanding is likely to fuel misperceptions...

This lack of information is likely to give rise to misperceptions - two-thirds of people believe that misconceptions of Islam negatively impact the quality of life of Muslims (67% agree) and all British people (60% agree).²⁵⁹

This may be in part driven by the fact that over half (55%) say they get most of their information about Islam from the media. For example, Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery find that the number of media articles written about Muslims clearly peaks after catastrophic events related to terrorism.²⁶⁰ – The number of those getting their information about Islam from the media rises to 65% among those aged 55-64 years and 67% among those who do not know someone who is Muslim. Groups less likely to get their information about Islam from the media are those of higher social grades (40% of those within ABC1, compared to 34% and 33% of C2 and DE respectively) and those living in London (48%, compared to 37% of the national average).²⁶¹ And a 2016 Populus²⁶² study found

²⁵⁸ComRes, Islamic Caliphate Survey, 2,012 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed online 22-24 April 2016.

²⁵⁹ComRes, Islamic Caliphate Survey, 2,012 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed online 22-24 April 2016.

²⁶⁰Baker, P, Gabrielatos, C, and McEnery, T (2013) Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The representation of Islam in the British press 1998-2009, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge

²⁶¹ComRes, Islamic Caliphate Survey, 2,012 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed online 22-24 April 2016.

²⁶²Populus, Hope Not Hate Survey, 4,015 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed 1-8 February 2016

that two in five (38%) believe the media is too negative towards Muslims compared with 26% who disagree. The belief that the media is too negative towards Muslims rises to seven in ten (69%) among young people.

...but there are mixed views on learning more about Islam – particularly in schools

While there seems to be a widespread lack of understanding of Islam, there are mixed views on whether more should be done to address this in schools.²⁶³ Two in five (38%) agree that more should be taught about Islam in UK schools compared with almost half (47%) who disagree – although younger people are much more supportive of the idea than older people (57% of 18-24 year olds agree vs 35% of those aged over 55 years).

There is lukewarm interest in knowing more about the Caliphate, as half (49%) disagree with the statement “I would like to know more about Islamic traditions, including the caliphate”, whereas a third (36%) agreed.

Compatibility of Islam with British Society

One question that is often asked of the public (and Muslims themselves) is the extent to which people think that Islam can comfortably co-exist alongside British values, although as noted earlier, this question is often asked in different ways. In a 2016 ComRes²⁶⁴ study, over half the public did not think the two could co-exist; 56% disagreed with the statement ‘Islam is compatible with British values’ compared with 28% of people who agreed. Around one in six (17%) say they don’t know. Again there is a big age difference here with 43% of those aged 18-24 agreeing compared with 23% of those aged over 65 years. The difference is very similar among those who know and don’t know someone who is Muslim (41% vs 19%).

A YouGov²⁶⁵ study posed the question in a slightly different format, asking people to choose between two contrasting statements. Asked this way, over half (55%) selected the statement ‘There is a fundamental clash between Islam and the values of British society’ whereas one in five (22%) said that ‘Islam is generally compatible with the values of British society’ and a similar proportion (23%) chose neither statement or said they did not know. Older people were more likely to say there was a clash between Islam and the values of British society than younger people (67% for those aged 60+ years compared with 34% for those aged 18-25 years old). When looking at political lines, two-thirds (68%) of potential Conservative voters say that Islam clashes with British society, compared to half (48%) of Labour supporters and 39% of Liberal Democrat supporters. However, this sentiment is highest amongst UKIP supporters where nine in ten (89%) say the religion clashes with British society.

In a 2016 Populus²⁶⁶ survey, over half of the public (56%) agreed that Islam poses a serious threat to Western civilisation compared with 21% disagreeing. Again, on this measure there is a big difference by age – with young people much less likely to agree than older people (31% for 18-24 year olds compared with 70% for those aged 55-64 years and 63% for those aged over 65 years).

Table 12.2: Questions on compatibility between Islam and British society

Question	Response
“Islam is compatible with British values” (ComRes)	
Agree	28%
Disagree	56%
A choice of two statements (YouGov)	
“There is a fundamental clash between Islam and the values of British society”	55%
“Islam is generally compatible with the values of British society”	22%

²⁶³ComRes, Islamic Caliphate Survey, 2,012 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed online 22-24 April

²⁶⁴ComRes, Islamic Caliphate Survey, 2,012 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed online 22-24 April 2016.

²⁶⁵YouGov, 1,641 GB adults aged 18+ interviewed online 22-23 March 2015

²⁶⁶Populus, Hope Not Hate Survey, 4,015 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed 1-8 February 2016

The majority of the public thinks religious discrimination is a problem for Muslims

Over half the public (57%) thinks that discrimination is a serious problem for Muslims in Britain, according to a 2016 Populus study – among 18-24 year olds this rises to 75%. These findings are supported by a 2015 ICM survey that showed that 61% of public believes there is more religious prejudice against Muslims than there was five years ago. Interestingly on this measure, younger people are actually less likely to think there is more prejudice towards Muslims than previously (41% for 18-24 year olds compared with 65% with those aged 55-64 years).

The public believe that Muslims should not be viewed negatively because of the actions of a few

As we have already observed, the public does not think there is a strong relationship between Islam and violence. The 2016 ComRes²⁶⁷ study found that four in five people (78%) believe that extremist views and actions conducted in the name of Islam by a minority of Muslims has an unfair impact on the perceptions of all Muslims. Similarly, the vast majority of the public (78%)²⁶⁸ agree that 'It is wrong to blame an entire religion for the actions of a few extremists'.

In a 2016 Populus survey, people were asked about their reactions (from a prompted list) on seeing or hearing that Muslims are increasingly associated with violence and terrorism. Over half (57%) said they that their immediate reaction would be to think it was not true compared with 43% who think it is true. Of those who do not think it was true, 8% say it was because it is something fuelled by the media (rising to 15% among 18-24 year olds) and 49% because they did not think it was surprising people say this because of the actions and statements of a few Muslim extremists. Here there are not age differences although women were more likely to think this than men (53% vs 45%) as were those from the higher social classes (for example, 58% for those from social class AB vs 46% for those from social class DE).

A majority agrees that Muslims need to do more to combat Islamic extremism

Three-quarters of the public (75%) agree that Muslim communities need to do more in response to the threat of Islamic extremism compared with only one in twenty (5%) who disagree, according to a 2015 Populus²⁶⁹ survey. Support for this is much higher among older age groups than younger people (92% for those aged 65+ years vs 51% for 18-24 year olds).

There is also support for more positive media coverage of Islam and Muslim communities (47% support this measure compared with 12% who oppose it). There are similar levels of support for a high profile campaign against anti-Muslim hatred (48% support vs 9% oppose).

The same survey asks about a series of measures to promote better integration of Muslim communities into wider British society. All the measures explored in the survey received majority support. Specifically, eight in ten (79%) support measures to ensure that all Muslim immigrants are able to speak English, seven in ten (70%) support the active promotion of British values within Muslim communities and the same proportion (70%) support closer monitoring of faith schools including Muslim faith schools. For this measure support among older people is double that among young people 88% for those aged over 65+ years vs 44% for 18-24 year olds.

²⁶⁷ComRes, Islamic Caliphate Survey, 2,012 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed online 22-24 April 2016

²⁶⁸Populus, Hope Not Hate Survey, 4,015 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed 1-8 February 2016

²⁶⁹Populus, Hope Not Hate Survey, 4,015 GB adults aged 18+ years, interviewed 1-8 February 2016



Ipsos MORI

Social Research Institute

Kully Kaur-Ballagan

Research Director

Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute
Kully.Kaur-Ballagan@ipsos.com

Dr Roger Mortimore

Research Director

Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute
Roger.Mortimore@ipsos.com

Dr Glenn Gottfried

Research Manager

Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute
Glenn.Gottfried@ipsos.com

