



Birmingham Pakistani Report

June 2023



The Birmingham Pakistani Report (BPR) is a grassroots community initiative which aims to form the basis for engagement with political, city and community leaders, providing existing service providers with an understanding of how they can engage, deliver services and reach the community. As well as inspire others to create initiatives to cater for the Pakistani community in Birmingham.

Did you know? In the 2021 census, Pakistanis made up 17% of Birmingham's population, meaning approximately 195,000 Pakistanis live in Birmingham.

Atif Ali BEM BCAC, founded BPR. He has over 5 years experience working in local government, and previously worked at Birmingham City Council. Atif has a Master of Laws (LLM) from the University of Birmingham and is a Fellow of The Lunar Society Birmingham. For the BPR, he acted as the project director.

Dr. Muhammad Umar Boodoo, is an Assistant Professor at Warwick Business School in the University of Warwick. He is also the Director of Empirix Management Consulting Ltd, and a Research Fellow at the Institute for the Future of Work. For the BPR, he acted as the lead researcher.

Mohammed Khawar Amir, is currently a postgraduate student at the University of Birmingham, studying Philosophy. Previously, he completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Leeds, in addition to studying traditional Islamic scholarship under teachers in Bradford. For the BPR, he supported the lead researcher.

Muhammed Asad Kayani, has spent the last twenty years working in education in Birmingham. He is an Alumni of King Edwards School, and is the founder of BEY, a community educational project focusing on leadership for all. For the BPR, he supported the community research elements, actively engaging the community and empowering the young people's voices.



We would like to thank our funders, The National Lottery Community Fund for their generous grant, which has allowed us to undertake this project.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted or reproduced in any form or by any means, now known or hereinafter invented, including photocopying and recording or in any information, storage or retrieval system, without the permission in writing of the publisher.

Designer: Alima Ali
(www.alimali.com)

Birmingham Pakistani Report Team | www.pakistanireport.org.uk | info@pakistanireport.org.uk

Contents

Hear Birmingham, Here poem	Page 4
Foreword	Page 6
Executive Summary	Page 10
Data I: Survey	Page 14
Data II: Focus Groups	Page 15
Data III: Interviews	Page 15
Demographics	Page 17
Life Satisfaction, Optimism, and Pride	Page 19
Identity and Ethnicity	Page 24
Physical Activity	Page 26
Health and Well-being	Page 29
Arts, Culture, & Heritage	Page 32
Religion	Page 35
Politics and Civic Engagement	Page 45
Disability Care	Page 46
Crime and Racism	Page 48
Education, Employment, and Mentorship	Page 53
Wrap Up	Page 61
Recommendations	Page 63
Acknowledgements and Credits	Page 69



*To the people
of Birmingham.
This poem is for you.*

Hear Birmingham, Here

By Zarah Alam

Hear Birmingham in the thrum of a dhol drum, burst
Out the speaker of the tenth taxi stuck on Stratford Road,
Hear the well-travelled seas still sing of a journey which spans time and lives,
Lives in the echo of lapping waves under the croaked smoke-stained lungs
Of proud daadas and naanas on a Small Heath Park bench.

And there, a few yards down, sits an old woman whispering her refrain
Back home, back home, back home
But, wouldn't you know, we've got two homes growing in our souls
And it shows in the trainers paired with shalwar kameez,
A draped dupatta paired with our favourite jeans.

Hear Birmingham in the *tap, tap, whack, ruuuunnnn*
Of the young Hall Green cricket players and the roars of the Hodge Hill goal-scorers,
Raucous howls of laughter to complement the rough and tumble.
Their parents' prayers weigh heavy in their palms at night,
Begging God that their children don't end up on the other side of right.

Hear Birmingham in the soft sigh of a single word hovering
In the air of a block of flats in Ladywood – *when...*
When the cooking and chores are done for the day,
And the children have exhausted themselves from their play,
She lingers on a thought
When will I treat myself for a change?



Stratford Road Image Source: Simon Felton

Her gaze lands on the silent stuttering flashes of her mobile phone,
All the community groups and clubs she could join, perhaps soon,
Very soon, she'll finally press 'unmute'.

Again, Birmingham, *do you hear us?*
We're proof that where you're from, where you're *really* from,
Are the countries and places that sing from your tongue, so *Burminum*, hear
That chart-topping cultural mixtape, the melodious azaan,
The cheers of celebration from yet another distant cousin's wedding
Ring out across our city.

We, the 17%, have been called to speak and we have sung,
But know that long before this ink dries,
We were here in this city, bursting with pride,
British Pakistanis waving both flags, holding them high,
And still we continue the work and hustle and grind
That our parents' parents started long before our time
For the future to be that bit easier, more hopeful, bright.

And there,
do you hear that?
Warm as a whisper,
do you hear that?
In the maroon dark within the dark, beneath a moon and a star,
That spark of a little lion's heartbeat
Blinking to life.

Foreword

The report in front of you is a vast community effort, and after a year of working on it, I'm proud of what we have achieved. The report provides a long-overdue insight into the Pakistani community of Birmingham. It says we are here, as a community, so hear us. And as someone who was born and raised in Birmingham, this is also an area close to me.

On 10 March 2022, I met with Doug Wright MBE DL, Chief Executive Officer of his own franchised restaurant company which operates 23 McDonald's.

We sat together in his Sutton Coldfield office; I was looking for some advice on how I could do something for my community, little did I know that this encounter would result in this report.

During our conversation, it became clear to Doug that I wanted to do something for my community, but I didn't know where to start. So, he gave me some homework: to write down what my community needs were. I wasn't sure I could answer this, so he advised to start off by asking myself 'what are my parent's needs?' And so, I got thinking, and planning, and writing.



By summer 2022, I received funding from Awards for All, who wrote 'Congratulations, we're going to fund your idea.'

I am grateful to them for their support and to Jon Matthews, for supporting me with the application.

Fast forward to today, this idea has become a reality that has involved hundreds of Pakistanis right across our city (and beyond) who have provided guidance, completed questionnaires, attended focus groups, and agreed to be interviewed. I'm grateful to each one of them.

My hope is that this report will be a catalyst for change by providing the foundations for understanding the needs and aspiration of the Pakistani community in our great city.

Atif Ali BEM BCAC
Project Director, Birmingham
Pakistani Report

Foreword

I am delighted that this report has been published.

As the largest minority group living in the UK's second biggest city, Pakistanis represent an important group not only within Birmingham but also within the overall fabric of Britain.

This first of its kind report provides an in-depth understanding of the views of Birmingham's Pakistani community on socio-economic aspects and importantly highlighting the contribution that we have made and continue to make across all areas of society.

I am proud to have been born and brought up on Somerville Road in Small Heath and like many, I have been able to use the blend of my rich cultural background and proud city roots to contribute more broadly to society.

I was discovered by a school teacher in the playground at Oldknow at the age of 12 and 7 years later in 1990, I became the first British born Pakistani to be awarded a professional playing contract when I signed for Warwickshire County Cricket Club. I also had the honor of representing England at U19's level that same year.

I set up and ran a national cricketing charitable campaign called Chance to Shine that raised £55 million in 9 years, reaching 2.5 million children, of which 1 million were girls, across 9,000 state schools in the country.



I was blessed to have received an MBE for my charitable work. My autobiography 'Brim Full of Passion' was Wisden Book of the Year in 2006.

The proudest part of my book was charting my journey growing up in Small Heath and the lessons that it taught me about life.

I became the first BAME CEO across any professional sporting club in the UK when I took over at Leicestershire County Cricket Club in 2015 and then later became the first overseas Pakistani to serve the Pakistan Cricket Board as its CEO in 2019, linking my British Pakistani roots to my proud family heritage.

I currently work for the International Cricket Council in Dubai overseeing all international men and women's cricket.

I am proud of the opportunities that I have been blessed with and I am pleased that this report will highlight not only the views and concerns of the Pakistani community but will also do a great deal to highlight our contribution to both daily life in Birmingham and the UK.

Wasim Khan MBE

Former Professional Cricketer, CEO of the Pakistan Cricket Board, and current General Manager at International Cricket Council

Foreword

This report aims to provide an overview of the views of ethnic Pakistanis residing in Birmingham, United Kingdom. The report incorporates demographic data and captures a diverse range of opinions and perspectives.

It was testament of the efforts of the team that data for this report was collected through a survey distributed to a representative sample of the ethnic Pakistani community in Birmingham.

Over 500 respondents participated in the survey, ensuring a robust representation of views within the community. It is refreshing that young people have played a key role in the production of this report and contributed vastly. 33% of the Birmingham Pakistani Report questionnaire respondents were aged 13-29. In addition to this, the team held a specific focus group for young people.

As an international climate activist and UN goodwill ambassador, I believe young people have a critical role to play in improving society. Policymakers and organizations aiming to promote climate action for example should consider using the report as a foundation to develop and gather perspectives to foster meaningful engagement and participation among ethnic Pakistanis in Birmingham.



I am grateful to have been a part of many 'firsts'; The first Pakistani woman to have received the UK House of Lords "honour" seat to voice the concerns of citizens on health and climate.

The first person to host an international intersectional climate symposium at just 19 years of age. The first Pakistani young adult at Cannes Film Festival for green filmmaking. The first Pakistani youth member to have chaired a United Nations Development Program meeting. But I know that I only accomplished these 'firsts' because of the experiences that you get when you belong to the Pakistani community.

Our community is rooted in hard work, diversity, and solidarity for one another, and I'm grateful to have been invited to pen down this foreword, alongside other British Pakistani trailblazers.

It is my wish that in the years to come, we see every British Pakistani child face less and less barriers, realising their full potential and that more of us reach success, whatever that may then mean to each person.

Aliza Ayaz
United Nations Goodwill Ambassador
Executive Director Climate Action Society

Foreword

We are honoured to welcome the Birmingham Pakistani Report, the ground-breaking initiative encapsulating the collective experiences, challenges, and triumphs of a vibrant community that has played a pivotal role in shaping the cultural, social, and economic fabric of this dynamic city.

The story of Birmingham's Pakistanis is one of resilience, determination, and unwavering commitment to building a better future for themselves and their fellow citizens.

This report delves into the various aspects of the Pakistani community's journey, examining their history, their struggles, and their aspirations that shape the Pakistani experience in Birmingham.

It sheds light on the challenges they have faced and the barriers they have overcome, underscoring their remarkable ability to adapt, flourish, and contribute to the wider society.

The brainchild of community activist Atif Ali, Birmingham Pakistani Report rejoices the history and culture of the Pakistani community in Birmingham that has shaped a generation and Birmingham as we know it.

We commend the authors, researchers, and contributors who have worked tirelessly to bring this report to fruition. Their dedication and commitment to capturing the essence of the Pakistani community's journey is evident in the meticulous research, the compelling narratives, and the insightful analysis presented within these pages.

We would like everyone to take a moment to reflect on the significance of this report and appreciate the collaborative efforts of community partners, health organizations, and local leaders, reflecting the shared commitment to improving the lives of Pakistani Brummies.

We express our sincere hope that the findings of the Birmingham Pakistani Report will serve as a catalyst for positive change; igniting conversations and inspiring action; fostering a brighter future for the Pakistani community.

Pakistan Consulate, Birmingham



Executive Summary

The Birmingham Pakistani (BPR) report is the first of its kind, devised to analyse the needs, perceptions, wants, and aspirations of ethnic Pakistanis living in Birmingham. With its multi-data sources, the BPR endeavours to portray both a wide and focused description of life as an ethnic Pakistani in Birmingham.

In the 2021 census, **17% of Birmingham's population identified as Pakistani, which is approximately 195,000 people. People from Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups are over three times as likely as white British people to live in the most income-deprived 10% of neighbourhoods.**¹ The Pakistani Community health profile 2022 by Birmingham City Council Public Health Team ² highlighted:

- The Pakistani ethnic group **has a young age profile**, with those aged 65 and over only accounting for 4.4% of its population,
- The Pakistani community accounts for **12.5% of the working age group in Birmingham,**
- **91% of British Pakistanis** identify as Muslim,
- Children in Pakistani households were **2.8x as likely to live in low-income households,**
- **47% of children** living in Pakistani households were living in low-income households, **30 percentage points higher** than children living in White households and 27 percentage points higher than the national average,

- The Pakistani ethnic group consistently had the **highest rate of infant mortality** of all the Asian subcategories,
- Men from the Pakistani ethnic group are almost **three times as likely** as the general population to have **type 2 diabetes,**
- Women of Pakistani ethnicity are **over five times** more likely than women in the general population to be diagnosed with diabetes,
- In Birmingham, 74% of Pakistani males are **economically active compared to only 34% of females.**

With topics such as identity, health and well being, arts and culture, religion, politics and civic engagement, crime and racism, and education, employment and mentoring, the BPR adds to these findings and seeks to address the various topics that its researchers deemed necessary in this time.

While the BPR is not exhaustive in its list of topics and concerns, it nonetheless, has used its analysis of these topics to tailor recommendations to all levels of government and to local community institutions.

¹ Levelling Up the United Kingdom

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1052708/Levelling_up_the_UK_white_paper.pdf

² Pakistani community health profile

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50265/supporting_healthier_communities/2463/community_health_profiles/9#:~:text=The%20Pakistani%20Community%20Health%20Profile,health%20that%20affect%20Pakistani%20Communities.



We invite all readers to engage with the BPR via social media, including the BPR website (<https://pakistanireport.org.uk>), spread the word and encourage further and better iterations of this report in the future.

Pakistanis must have a voice in Birmingham, and a collective voice backed by data and robust analyses is our way of contributing to this endeavour and to the objective of helping Pakistanis in Birmingham achieve “a good life”.



Interview participants

- Surwat Sohail, CEO - Roshni Birmingham
- Sajid Gulzar OBE, CEO - Prince Albert Community Trust
- Abid Khan, Chair, Institute of Directors - British Asian Business Community
- Theiba Khan - Lead Clinical Educator/ Team Manager at Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Shaukat Ali Khan - Community Leader and former Councillor at Birmingham City Council
- Shreen Mahmood, Founder - Muslims Connect
- Salma Bi BEM BCAe - Grassroots Cricket Champion
- Dr Mohammed Hanif, Secretary - Birmingham Central Mosque

This report is the first of its kind, collecting the views of ethnic Pakistanis living in Birmingham in 2023.

As the **largest minority group** living in the **UK's second biggest city**, Pakistanis represent an important group within Birmingham and Britain, thus making this report **long overdue**.

The data that makes up the report is divided into three parts:

First, an online questionnaire/survey was disseminated to the public via several channels, including social media, engagement events, visits to community centres/mosques, and word-of-mouth. The survey remained open from December 2022 until February 2023.

Second, we conducted two focus groups, one with women in late February 2023, and another one with young people (aged 16-24) in early March 2023.

Third, we interviewed a few prominent ethnic Pakistanis in Birmingham who hold positions of leadership in the social sphere.

Our prime reason for having multiple data types is to take advantage of each and thus draw insights and tailor recommendations to the respective bodies. To that end, we have made recommendations to the central government, regional and local authorities, and local community leaders.

Data I: Survey

As the survey was online, responses were monitored and particular groups were targeted as shortfalls were observed. The groups we focused on were:



Areas/regions within Birmingham



Gender



Age groups

To mitigate shortfalls in certain regions for example, we handed out leaflets outside mosques/community centres.

Women-led organisations made extra efforts to ask women across age groups to complete the survey.

The online survey initially yielded **609 responses**, but some people put in postcodes outside the West Midlands altogether.

Thus, after deleting those responses, the total number of respondents used for **this survey is 584**, unless otherwise stated.

We have kept postcodes in Solihull and West Bromwich because of their proximity to Birmingham. Excluding them does not significantly alter the data, and certainly does not change our interpretation and recommendations.

The sample was also assessed against information on ethnic Pakistanis in Birmingham available from the 2021 Census as well as the City Observatory.

We are confident, as we will show later, that the survey has broad representation. Future iterations of the BPR should nonetheless seek to attract more respondents.

The BPR aims to collect the views of ethnic Pakistanis in Birmingham on various aspects of life. Topics around identity, economic situation and aspirations, social life, services provided by the city, services provided by local community organisations, crime and racism were the most potent ones.

This first iteration of the BPR aimed to collect demographic data such as location, age, gender, size of household, household income, and marital and work/study status.

Data II: Focus Groups

Focus groups are a great way of discussing some topics that may be of interest to a group of people in particular.

Starting with broad questions regarding aspirations of a good life in a good city, the women's focus group heavily tilted toward (mental) health, services provided by the city, and social life (or lack thereof).

Similarly, the focus group involving the city's young people with Pakistani ethnicity heavily tilted toward safety and environment, services around physical and mental health, and the need for and love of diversity in Birmingham.

Data III: Interviews

Interviews with ethnic Pakistanis in leadership positions within various sectors of the city add to the depth of the data.

Interviewees gave their own takes on the city's progress, and on the facilities that are available to the public based on their own area(s) of expertise.



Topics of Study

In this report, we will populate the data across various topics. Note that these topics are not inductively arrived at by the researcher(s); rather, they were topics or subjects that were selected prior to the survey being disseminated.

The topics we identify in this report are

- i) Demographics,
- ii) Life Satisfaction, Optimism, and Pride,
- iii) Identity and Ethnicity,
- iv) Physical Activity,
- v) Health and Well-being,
- vi) Arts, Culture, & Heritage,
- vii) Religion,
- viii) Politics and Civic Engagement,
- ix) Disability Care,
- x) Crime and Racism,
- xi) Education, Employment, and Mentorship.

Finally, we wrap up this entire section by running a regression using items from each of the themes to identify the determinants of life satisfaction, whose improvement we deem to be the main research objective of the Birmingham Pakistani Report.

Demographics

Geography

Around 17% of Birmingham is made up of people who identify as Asian or Asian-Pakistani according to the 2021 Census. Pakistanis live in various areas of the city, and our sample of 584 individuals covers various areas as well. Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses.

In terms of Parliamentary constituencies, respondents were:

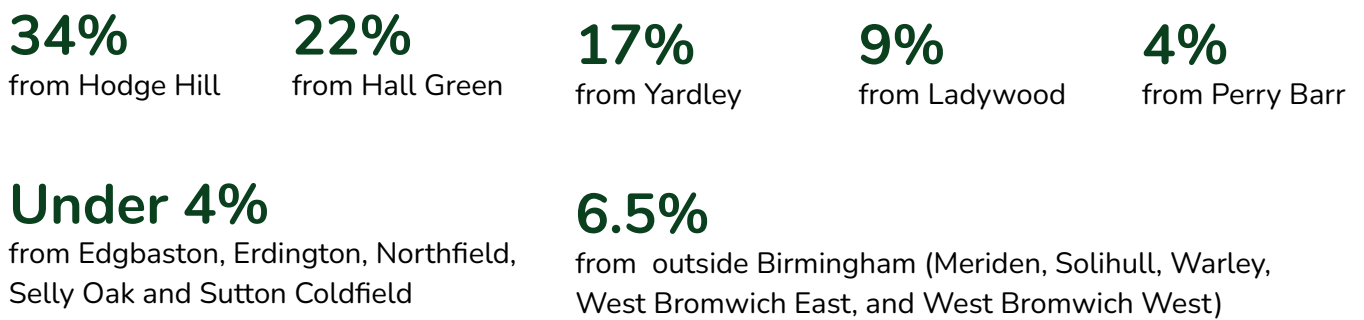
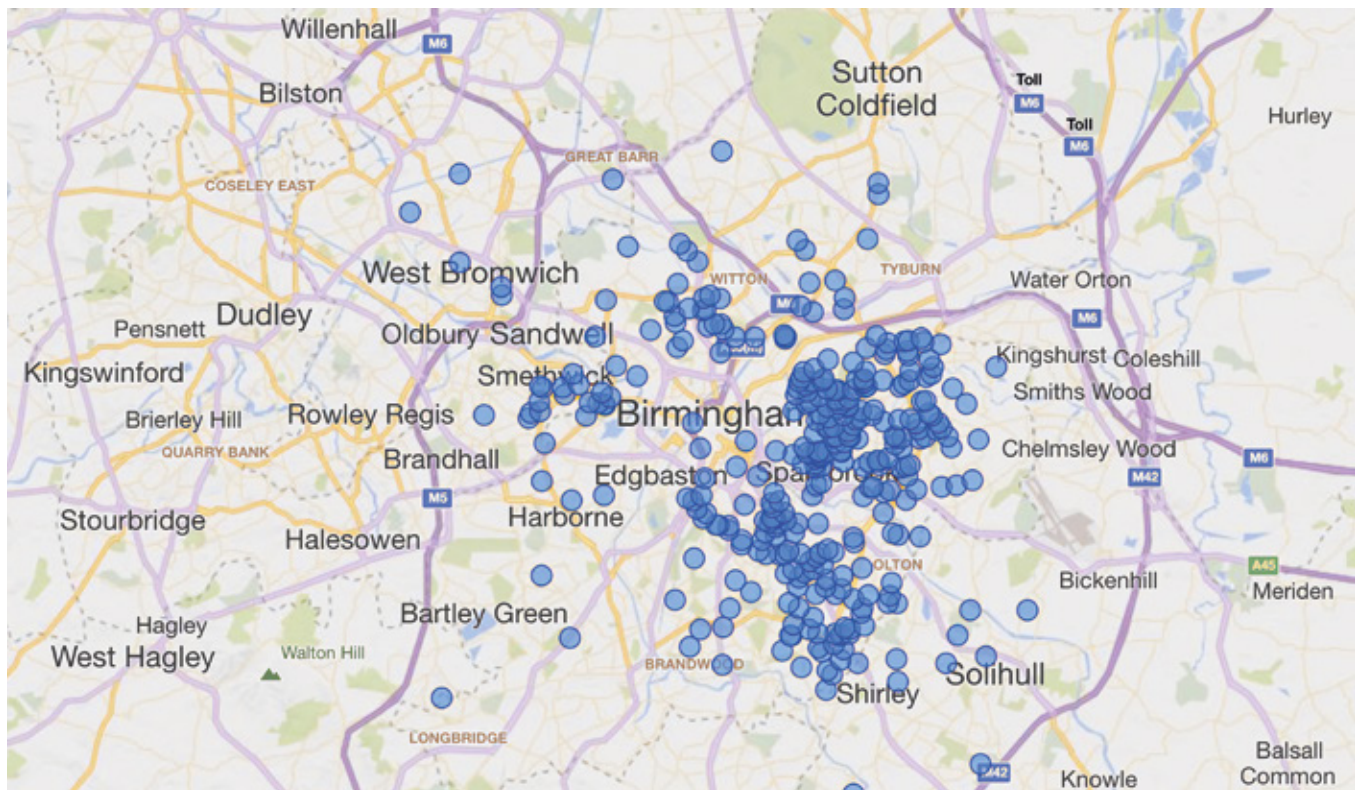


Figure 1



Demographics

Gender, Age, and Marital Status

In total, 55% of the responses were from women, 43% from men, with the remaining 2% split between non-binary/third gender, or unwilling to describe. Age-wise, respondents were:



Thus, while the gender split is adequate, the age distribution shows that the survey did better with the younger people rather than people who are approaching retirement, or have retired. Future iterations of the BPR should make a more concerted effort to elicit responses from those less willing /able to fill online surveys.

While all statistics will be reported for all 584 respondents, we will further use gender and age as two lenses through which we will derive further interpretations.

For parsimony though, these additional analyses will limit gender to male and female, and age will not include the category 60+.

This is because the numbers in other categories of gender and the numbers in the age group 60+ are much smaller (and may inadvertently lead to personal identification). Thus, the two-way distribution between age and gender is shown in Table 1.

As Table 1 shows, there is adequate representation across the chosen age groups for both genders.

All additional analyses based on gender and age are based on 552 out of 584 respondents, i.e., 94.5% of the sample

Table 1: Two-way frequency distribution across age group and gender

Age group	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
13-17	29	22	51
18-19	26	10	36
20-29	74	58	132
30-39	60	44	104
40-49	90	64	154
50-59	35	40	75
Total	314	238	552

Beyond age and gender, about 50% of respondents were married, 37% single and never married, 8% were divorced, 4% lived in partnership, while 1% were widowed.

Life Satisfaction, Optimism, and Pride

Putting general demographics aside, we begin with the ultimate goal: assessing the general life satisfaction of ethnic Pakistanis in Birmingham, and their view of Birmingham as a city.

Respondents were asked to respond to the question “*All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?*” on a 10-point scale.

The average was 6.5 with standard deviation 2.3. The median and mode were both 7, indicating that our respondents are mostly moderately satisfied with their lives. One quarter of respondents chose a scale at or below 5, indicating general dissatisfaction with their lives, while 10% chose 10 on the scale, indicating the highest level of satisfaction.

This begs the question: is there a difference in the distribution of life satisfaction across age and gender. Figure 2 shows various histograms across various age and gender combinations.

Figure 2: Distribution of Life Satisfaction scores across age group and gender combinations

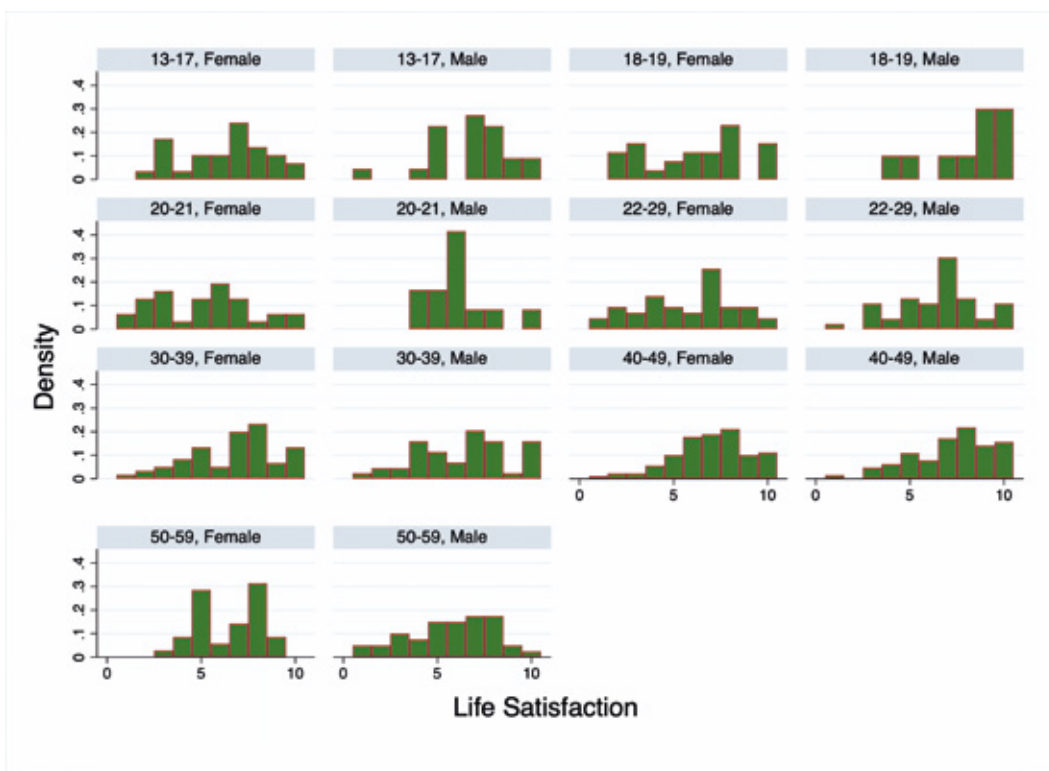


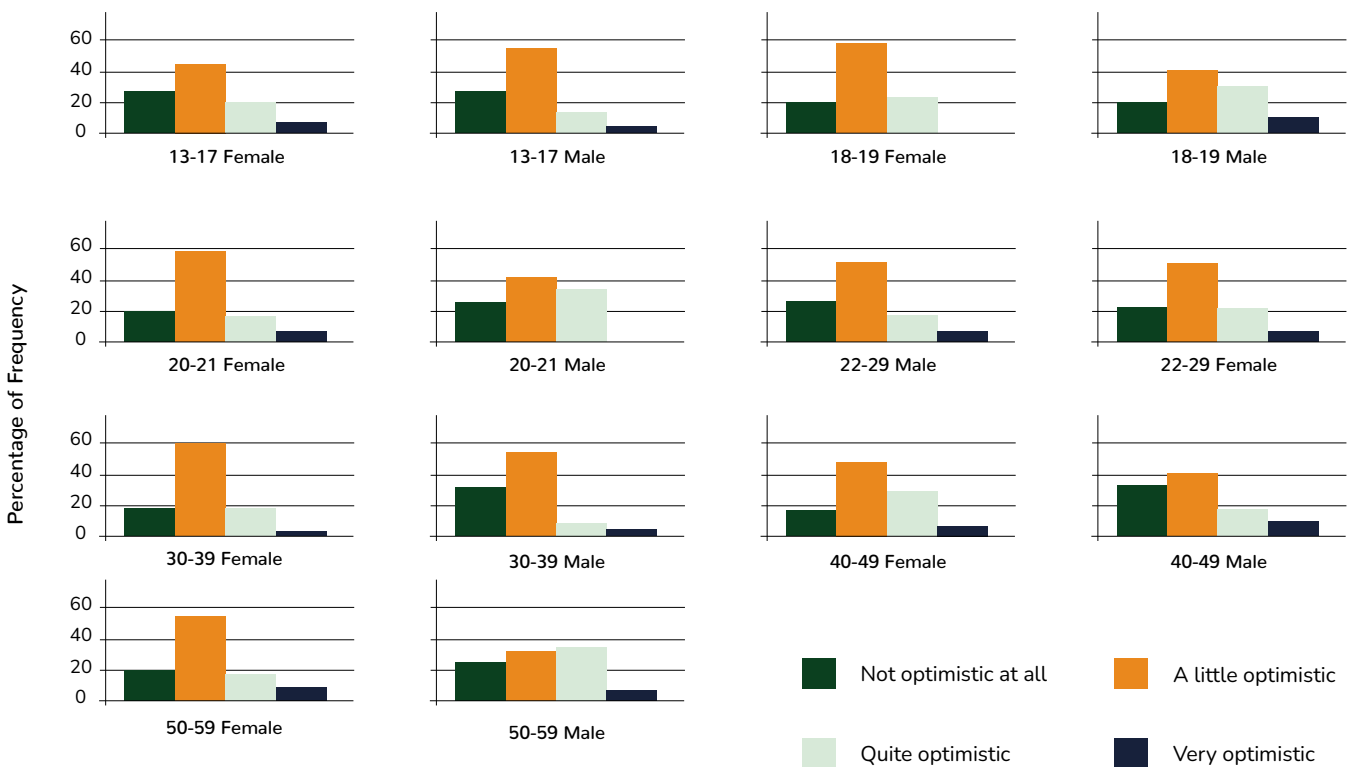
Figure 2 shows that there is a generally smooth distribution across all combinations, though some graphs are more skewed than others. It is noticeable though that in the younger age groups (below 30) there seems to be proportionally more dissatisfied females than males. A t-test statistic (not shown for parsimony) confirms this difference. Younger females have proportionally higher dissatisfaction than their male and older counterparts.

Another question asked respondents: “Generally speaking, how optimistic are you about the future of the city of Birmingham?”. Responses ranged from:

It is perhaps of concern that close to 3 out of every 4 respondents show low optimism about the future of Birmingham. Responses across gender and age combinations show less obvious differences, as depicted in Figure 3.

23% not optimistic at all **49%** a little optimistic
22% quite optimistic **6%** very optimistic

Figure 3: Bar graphs showing levels of optimism about the future of Birmingham across age groups and gender combinations



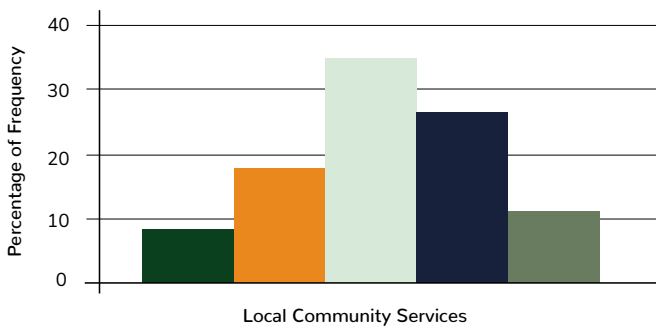
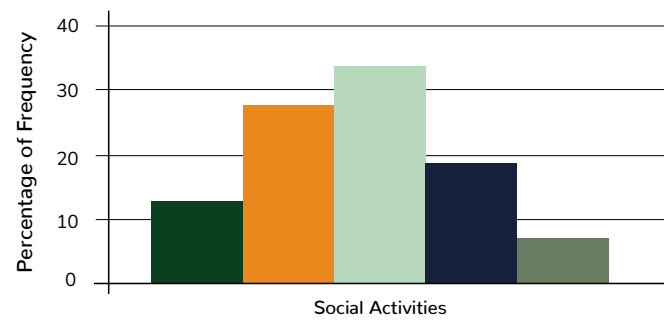
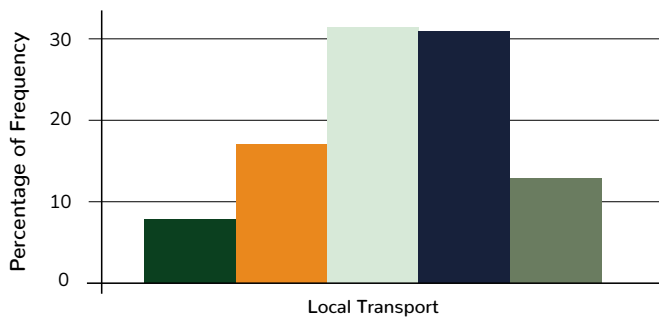
To understand people’s satisfaction with the services provided in Birmingham, the BPR asked respondents to rate their levels of (dis)satisfaction with two activities provided by the city: 1) local transport, and 2) social activities.

With regard to city-provided services, Figure 4 shows that satisfaction with local transport is relatively high (44% combined satisfied and very satisfied) with 32% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Further, the BPR also asked respondents to rate their levels of (dis)satisfaction with local community services not provided by the city council.

However, the satisfaction rate is much lower for city-provided social activities with only about 25% (18% plus 7%) of respondents showing satisfaction.

Figure 4: Bar graphs showing levels of satisfaction with services in Birmingham



Very Dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 Neutral
 Satisfied
 Very Satisfied



Women's Focus Group Insights

"In a nutshell, I would like more outdoor activities because a lot of the time you feel a lot more safer like you said cafes and things like that if there was a lot more availability to women to feel safe to even go out."

In terms of local community services not provided by the city, satisfaction is higher with close to 40% of respondents showing at least some satisfaction, while 35% are neutral.

Focus Groups Insights

Both the women and young people-focus groups started by asking participants to imagine a city where they are leading “a good life”.

Participants were asked to describe the characteristics of that city that allowed them to lead that good life. Figures 5 and 6 show word clouds that capture the characteristics sought by women and young people respectively.

Women participants placed heavy emphasis on their autonomy to make decisions especially regarding their work-family-life balance, while being free from abuse and domestic violence; they also wanted to be able to have access to and freedom to participate in activities which are good for their physical and mental health and that keep themselves active; women wanted to be aware of activities that take place.

In contrast, the young people focused far more heavily on safety, i.e., a city that allows them to partake in several activities while being safe and feeling safe, including good policing and cameras; young people also tended to like a diverse city, i.e., a city where different peoples/ ideas co-exist in peace; transport and good education and sports activities including for non-university students were also a highlight.

Figure 5: Word Cloud generated from the women-focus group describing a city where they lead a good life



Contrasting this imaginative exercise with their own experience in Birmingham does reveal some key insights. In the women’s focus group, participants indicated that the state of buildings such as paint falling off the walls, dirt/mould on the wall, and the general smell of several places such as swimming pools (if/when they are open) puts them off regularly visiting such places.

When probed further about their social life in Birmingham, many participants indicated that they did not do sufficient activities such as hanging out in a café or socialising with others because they did not always feel safe to do so, and the isolation often could lead to mental health issues.

Women also focused on cultural barriers and a lack of offering from cultural/religious organisations in Birmingham. Complaints here relate to a perception of misogyny in the community, to how women do not have open access to mosques, scholars, and other women to learn from and/or socialise with during the daytime.

In a nutshell, women participants want their voices to be heard when planning and evaluating the consequences of national/local/ community planning.

Figure 6: Word Cloud generated from young people-focus group describing a city where they lead a good life



For example, very few women have had their voices be heard about the consequences (short-term and long-term) of HS2.

The experience of the young people depicts a picture wherein the perception of Birmingham is that it is a very diverse city with enormous cultural potential.

However, young people in the city do not always feel or perceive that they have facilities at their disposal. Those that do not go to university feel left out of sports and other enriching activities such as debates.

One of the reasons why they are left out is lack of finances, while the other reason is that they feel unattracted to an unclean, unkempt council-provided facility.

Did you know?

Saheli Hub is a community organisation that seeks to create, among other things, social and friendship circles that lead to physical activity for women. Visit their website at <https://saheli.co.uk/>

Quotes from Young People's Focus Group

"I think young people places could definitely be a first step in doing this [networking spaces and events] but they would have to be maintained well, since young people get detracted from going to such places."

Quotes from Women's Focus Group

"There should be more centres for women to meet and just have somebody to talk to freely. This is very important for mental health, and coping with depression."

Quotes from Young People's Focus Group

"A community lunch where all the students in the area would be able to have lunch, play games and talk would be good. I am unsure if something like this exists in Birmingham but this would be good for multiple reasons."

Quotes from Women's Focus Group

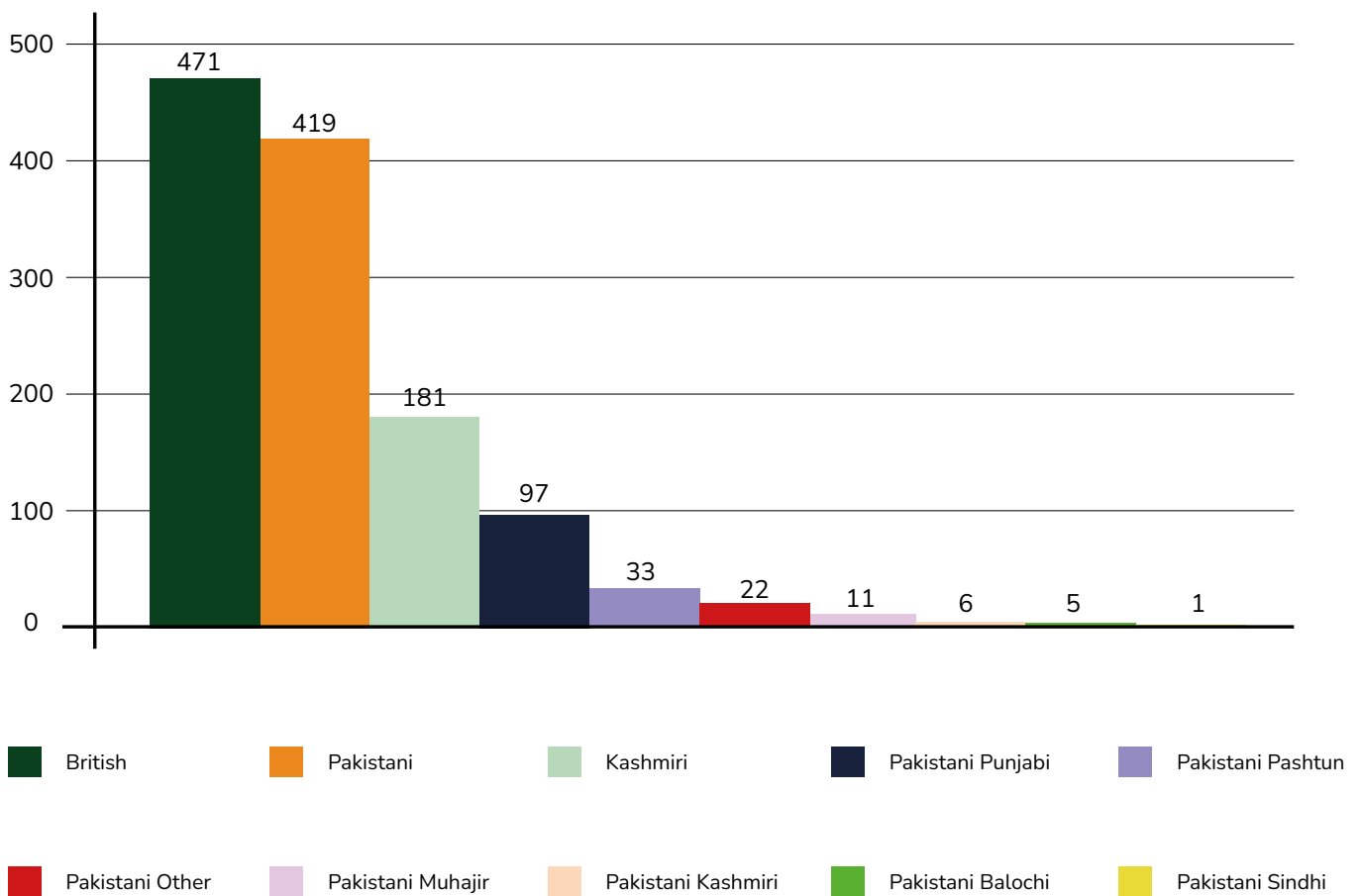
"Many of the women have a lot of aspirations and have lots of skills, unfortunately not able to unleash them because they are restricted by cultural norms that are set and that are expected of them."

Identity and Ethnicity

Pakistanis in Birmingham generally identify themselves as Asian or Asian British-Pakistani. The BPR sought to get more detail about individuals and their sense of identity by giving them multiple options to identify themselves. That is, respondents could choose more than one option. **Out of our respondents, most choose British out of their possible choices (471/584 = 81%);**

81% identify as British **72%** identify as Pakistani **31%** identify as Kashmiris **17%** as Punjabi **6%** as Pashtun

Figure 7: Identity Choice(s) by Survey Respondents



Respondents were also asked if they held both Pakistani and British Nationalities. 63% of all respondents had both citizenships. The BPR also asked respondents to indicate if they, their parents and/or grandparents were born or raised in the UK.

Among the respondents, 79% were born in the UK with 92% raised in the UK. 42% of all respondents had at least one parent born or raised in the UK, while 16% had at least one grandparent born or raised in the UK

Interview Insights

Thus, the identification of most people as British and Pakistani is not surprising. When we interviewed Sajid Gulzar who suggested that many Asian British-Pakistani young people today identify first as “British-Muslim” and second as “Pakistani”.

He also suggested that second-generation British-Pakistanis are perhaps more torn between the Pakistani and British identities than the first-generation migrants who probably saw themselves as more Pakistanis, and third- and fourth-generation migrants who today identify more as British.

A long-time Birmingham councillor and community leader, Shaukat Ali Khan was also not surprised that British-Pakistani ethnic identification among trumps within-Pakistan ethnic identification among the young people given that “most young people today are at least second-generation children of immigrants who have lived here most of their lives and are comfortable in the UK”.

A further question asked respondents about the levels of pride they took in being British citizens and residents of Birmingham (Brummie). Figure 8 shows that there is a high variation in responses.

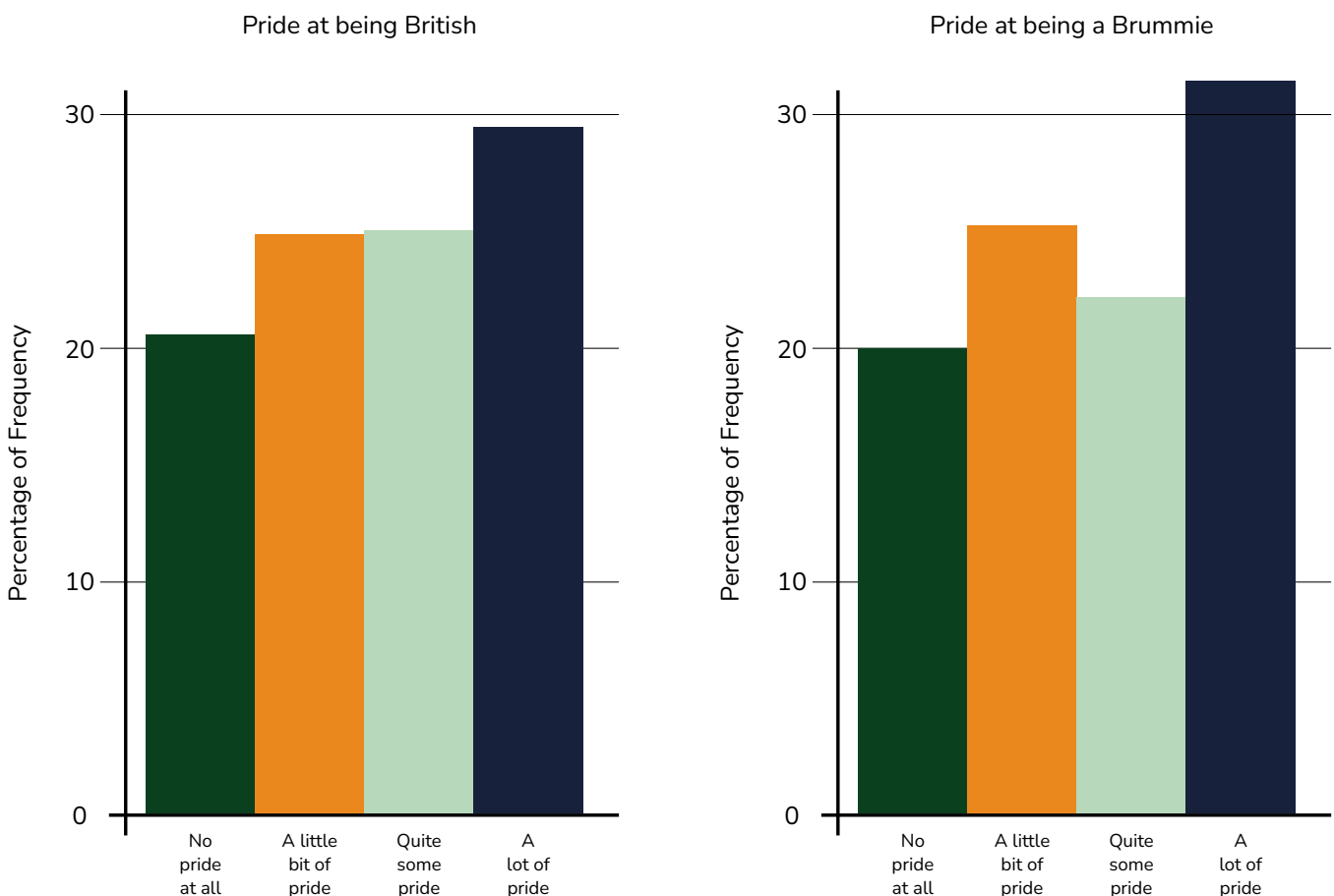


Figure 8: Levels of pride at being British and Brummie

Physical Activity

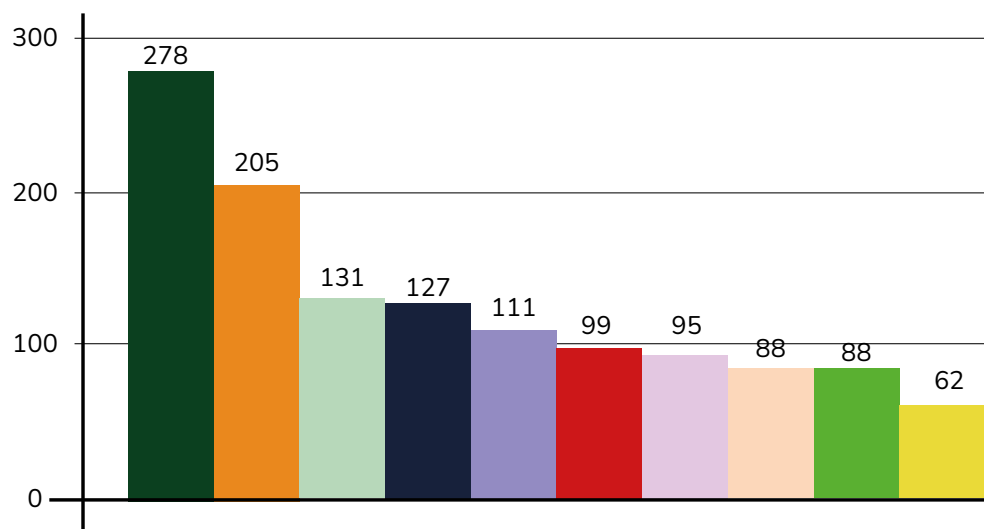
A source of good health and satisfaction with life is arguably physical activity. 84% indicated that they had, while 16% indicated that they had not.

Of the 84% who indicated participation in some physical activity (respondents could pick more than one choice of sports/physical activity in the past 12 months), walking was the most popular choice followed in descending order by:

- Gym/aerobics/yoga
- Swimming
- Football
- Jogging
- Cricket
- Snooker/pool
- Racket sports
- Cycling
- Bowling



Figure 9: Physical Activities practiced by survey respondents in the past 12 months



- Walking
- Gym/Aerobics/yoga
- Swimming
- Football
- Jogging
- Cricket
- Snooker/Pool
- Racket Sports
- Cycling
- Bowling

The following question in this segment asked respondents whether they would like to participate in more sports/physical activities.

82% (478 people) of respondents indicated that they would like to engage more in such activities.

When probed further about the impediments to further sports/physical activities, 196 of the 478, i.e., 41% of those who want to do more sports/physical activities indicated that this was mostly due to cost.

Amongst the impediments to engaging more in physical activities is the fact that they cannot afford gyms/yoga centres, and swimming pools, a finding confirmed in our focus groups, especially from the young people.

The **second** most important reason was a lack of friends or community to engage in such activities.

The third was a lack of infrastructure for pleasant walks (parks, safe sidewalks).

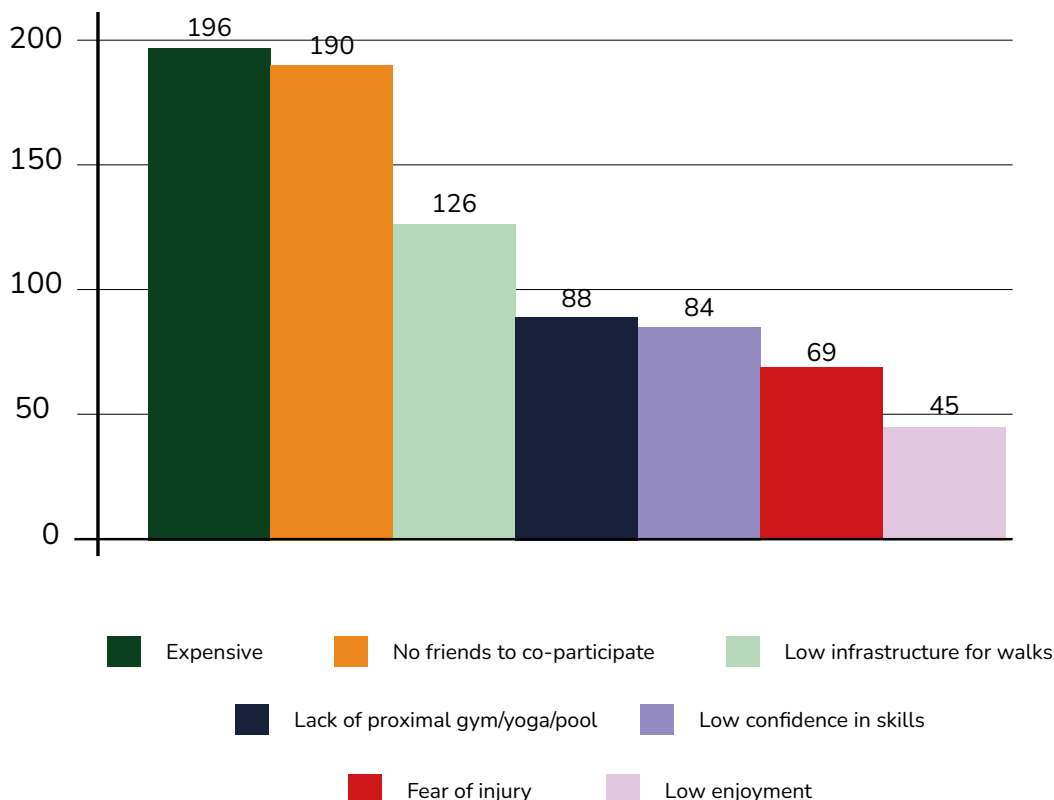
Fourth was a perceived lack of gyms/yoga centres, and swimming pools that were close enough to home.

Fifth reason was a lack of confidence in skills to participate in sports.

Sixth was a fear of injury.

Seventh was a lack of enjoyment in sports /physical activities. Some examples of these issues were also picked up in the women-focus group.

Figure 10: Impediments to engaging in more physical activity



Interview Insights

Our interview with Salma Bi suggested that parental and young people's engagement in sports/physical activity is much more ubiquitous today than it was 20 plus years ago. Nevertheless, there are multiple barriers for young girls and women to engage in sports.

First is a question of geographic proximity
"When I've been contacted, and they've asked me which Cricket Club should I join? Is it far? Oh, I can't drive. How is anyone going to get me there?"

Second is a lack of commitment.

Third is a lack of confidence, especially when the sport demands competitiveness.

Fourth is a lack of encouragement for young girls to get into sports, which probably comes from home.

Fifth is a lack of Asian role models in sports to induce Asian people, especially girls and women, to take part in sports.

According to Salma *"we need to continue reminding people how important sports is becoming. I know how important playing sports is as a lifestyle choice. You don't need to be competitive"*.

In other words, sports is a vehicle towards good physical and mental health. She even suggests that *"people should spend time in their gardens if they have one, go to the park, go on walks"*.

Quotes from Women's Focus Group

"Having choice of facilities [would be good] because for example Small Heath swimming pool has been out of action for at least 6-7 years – too ridiculous - the slots that you get as well for women only with a female lifeguard.

I think we need like centres for women run by women with female instructors, so it's accessible to the working women, to the mothers, all types of women because at the moment there are great organisations, but they are limited in their resources in terms of the capacity of the centres."

Health and Well-being

Expanding the questions about sports and physical activity further, the BPR also included general questions about health and well-being of respondents. The first three questions in this section related to the respondent’s own judgment of their own overall/physical/mental health.

A majority of respondents evaluated their own overall, physical, and mental health as fair or good or very good, as shown in Figure 11. Evaluations of health can be treated as a scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). Exploring some differences across the two lenses that we have chosen for this report, i.e., gender and age, regression results (not shown in this report) show that overall, physical, and mental health self reports are the lowest for ages 20-39, and also for 50+ year olds.

Comparatively, 13-19 year olds and those aged 40-49 report higher overall, physical, and mental health. The second lens, limited to females vs. males for parsimony, confirms what we have been reporting thus far. Females are worse off than males, at least in terms of self-reports. This difference is especially significant with regards to self reports of mental health, as shown in Table 2. On average males evaluate their mental health between “fair” and “good”, whereas females evaluate their mental health closer to “fair”.

Figure 11: Self-evaluations of overall, physical, and mental health by survey respondents

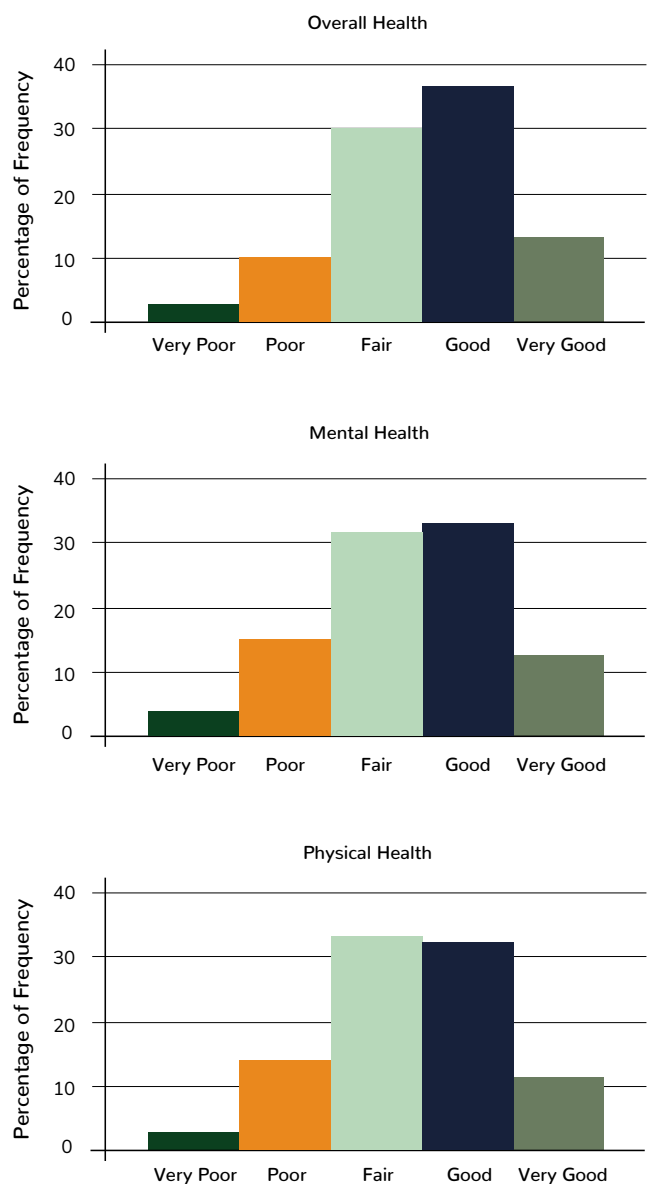


Table 2: T-tests comparing differences in health perceptions between males and females

	N Females	N Males	Mean Females	Mean Males	Diff	Std. Error	t stat.	P value
Overall Health	314	238	3.503	3.538	-.035	.082	-.45	.671
Physical Health	314	238	3.395	3.369	.025	.086	.3	.768
Mental Health	314	238	3.290	3.462	-.173	.088	-1.95	.05

Interview Insights

Our interview with Theiba Khan suggests that there might still be a taboo in the Pakistani community regarding mental health. Even in the context of a career, people may find themselves being advised to stay away from mental health practice and rather go towards other forms of health-related careers.

The general lack of understanding of mental health conditions is still present, albeit less than 20 years ago. “Diabetes is fine: acceptable. We accept it because it is a physical condition.” “But when it comes to the mind, [one typical response is] how can you have a mental health condition? It is because you are not close to your Creator.”

Theiba Khan also pointed to vast inequalities in the Muslim scholarly community in recognising, dealing and/or signposting when it comes to mental health issues. While some Imams are well-trained in these issues, those at smaller mosques may not have the adequate resources to do so.

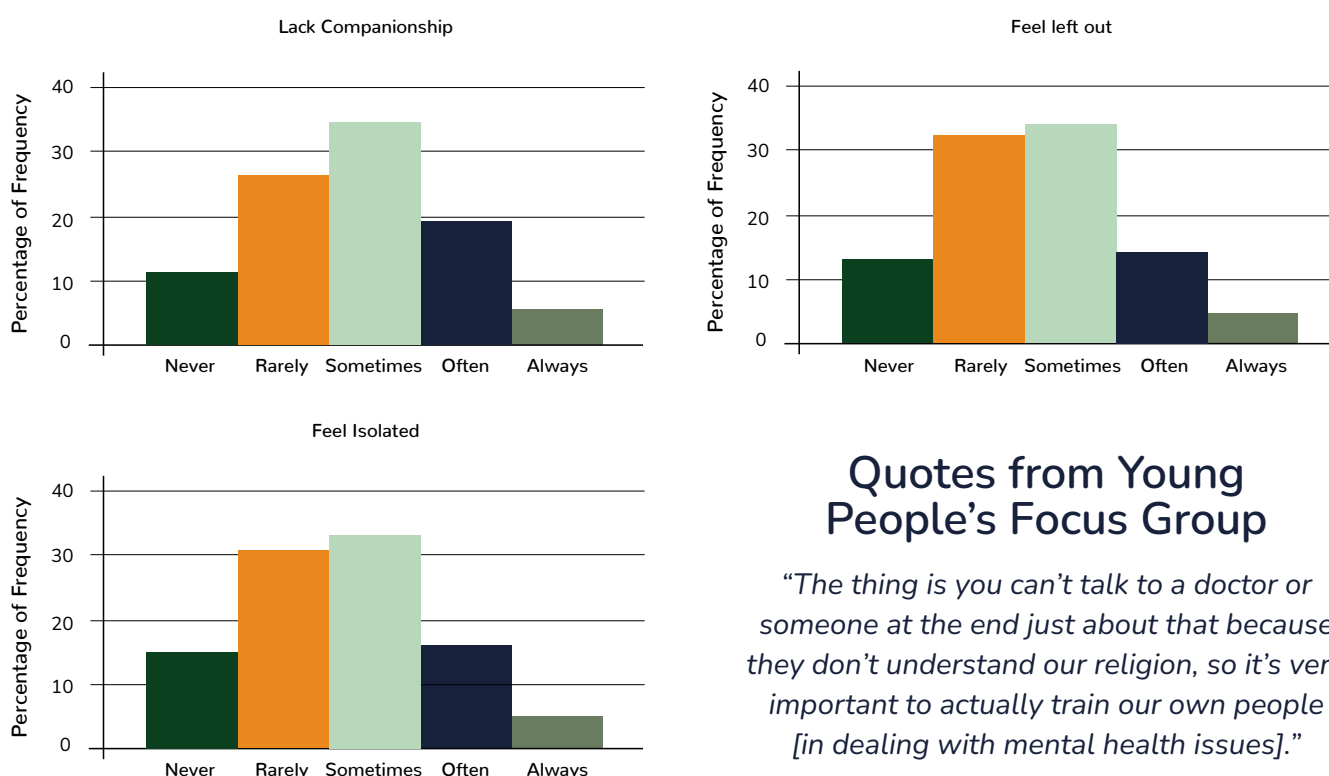
“Spiritual support has always been there, and actually the understanding of mental health issues has got better. Where there are gaps is the local mosques, which are small...those local mosques may not have the resources to deal with mental health issues, but they need mental health awareness, and they can then signpost to the bigger mosques for support”.

Did you know?

Birmingham Central Mosque, Green Lane Mosque and Sultan Bahu are among the largest mosques in Birmingham. They are able to at least signpost people to obtain assistance in mental health-related issues within the city.

To probe issues of (mental) health further, the BPR asked respondents to evaluate how often they: i) lacked companionship, ii) felt left out, iii) felt isolated? Responses could vary from a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always), i.e., higher values denote higher issues of isolation. The distribution of scores is shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Feelings of loneliness expressed by survey respondents



Quotes from Young People’s Focus Group

“The thing is you can’t talk to a doctor or someone at the end just about that because they don’t understand our religion, so it’s very important to actually train our own people [in dealing with mental health issues].”

In general, isolation does not seem to be a wide-ranging phenomenon. However, the percentages that denote people feeling often/always lacking companionship, feeling left out, and feeling isolated still hovers around 20-30%.

This is still a matter of concern. Regression results (not shown in the report) show that age is not significantly correlated with feelings of isolation. Males and females also do not show significant differences in their reporting of isolation.

The impact of COVID on isolation is also mixed: 46% of respondents indicate that they felt more isolated during the lockdown and beyond

compared to the pre-COVID era, while 53% do not report much change in their feelings of isolation. Most of the affected respondents, though, are females compared to males.

Table 3 shows that 51% of all females report feeling more isolated during and post-COVID compared to 39% of males who report the same.

Similarly, Table 4 compares pre- and post-COVID feelings of loneliness across age groups. In relative terms, the most affected ages were from 18-30, most of whom are probably students and single.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of loneliness pre- and post-COVID by gender

During and after the COVID pandemic, have you felt more lonely than previously?	Female	Male	Total
No	153	144	297
Yes	161	94	255
Total	314	238	552



Table 4: Frequency distribution of loneliness pre- and post-COVID by age group

During and after the COVID pandemic, have you felt more lonely than previously?								
Age Group	13-17	18-29	20-21	22-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	Total
No	33	14	14	41	62	96	37	297
Yes	18	22	29	48	42	58	38	255
Total	51	36	43	89	104	154	75	552

Arts, Culture, & Heritage

Another aspect of a good life is availability, attendance, and participation in cultural activities and events. The BPR asked a few questions on these subjects. First, the BPR asked about library usage. Out of 584 respondents, 161 have never used the Birmingham Public Library service.

This represents 28% of respondents.

This lack of usage does not pertain only to older age groups or a particular gender. Rather, when we limit the data to males and females below 60 years of age, we find that lack of usage is transcendent. Table 5 shows the cross tabulation of frequency.

Table 5: Cross-tabulated frequency distribution of not using the library by age group and gender

Age Groups	Gender		
	Female	Male	Total
13-17	8	6	14
18-19	3	2	5
20-21	5	5	10
22-29	10	18	28
30-39	18	13	31
40-49	24	17	41
40-59	10	13	23
Total	78	74	152



For those residents who have previously used the public library services of Birmingham, they tend to be mostly neutral or satisfied with the service. Figure 13 shows the distribution of (dis)satisfaction.

The arts, theatres, museums visited by the other 50% are listed in Figure 14. Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) tends to be the most visited, followed by Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum and the Birmingham Hippodrome.

When asked if they had visited arts theatres or museums from a particular list, about 50% of all respondents responded in the negative.

There is no significant difference in visits to arts theatres and museums across age groups and gender.

Figure 13: Satisfaction with Library Services in Birmingham

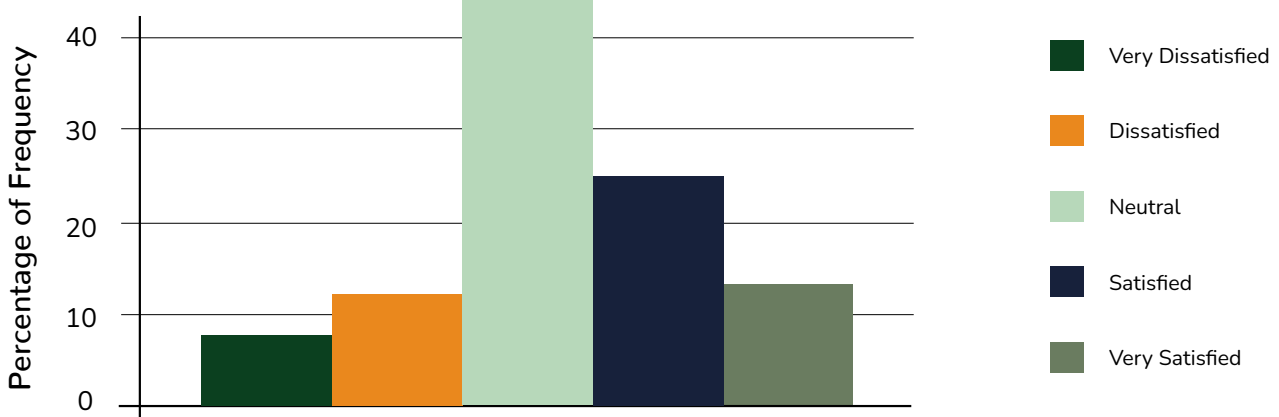
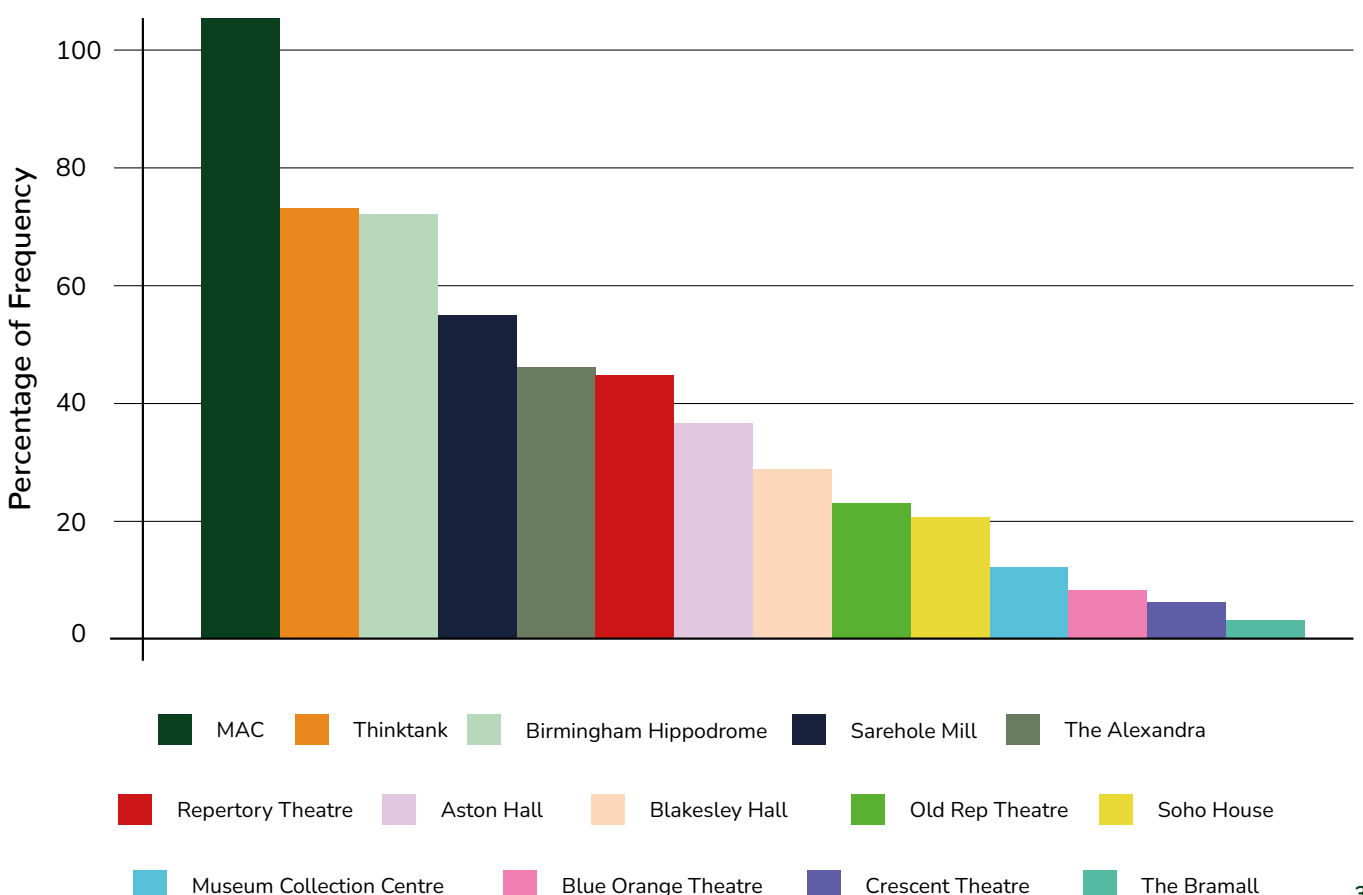


Figure 14: Cultural centres visited by survey respondents in last 12 months



A further question asked respondents whether they attended some arts or cultural events in the last 12 months. 72% of respondents did, while 28% did not. These percentages do not vary significantly with age, but they vary with gender, in that females are more likely to have attended such events than men. These events are shown in Figure 15. Beyond assessing respondents attendance at arts/cultural events, the BPR also sought to assess whether respondents are participating in such events. Out of the 584 respondents, 61% had not participated in any event in the last 12 months. The rest participated in the events listed in Figure 16

Figure 15: Attendance at some arts/cultural events by survey respondents in last 12 months

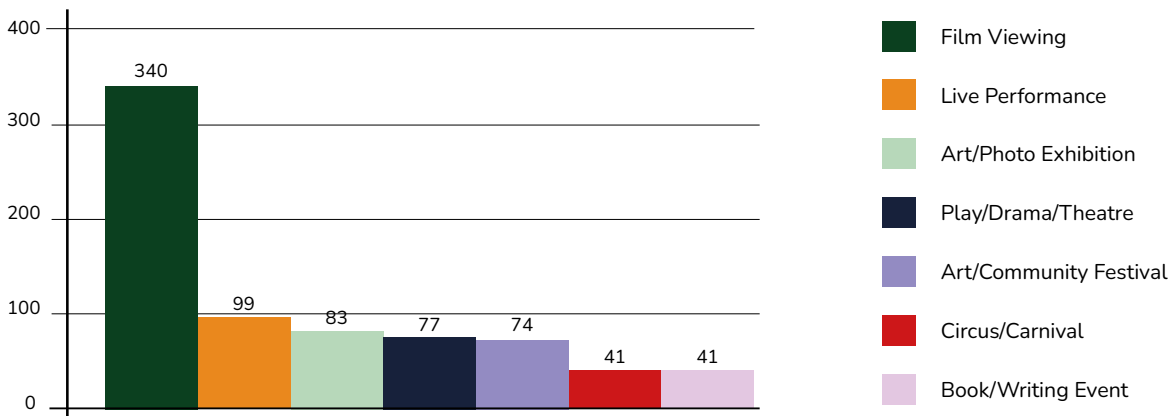
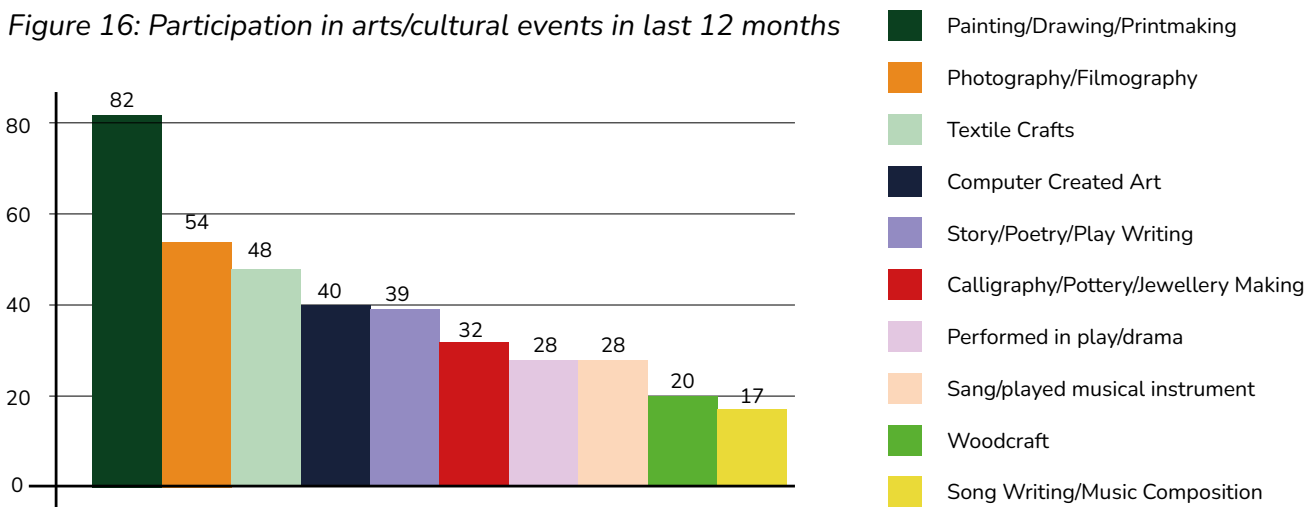


Figure 16: Participation in arts/cultural events in last 12 months



Quotes from Young People's Focus Group

“What does this city have in terms of culture? Food. So what you have is Asian Pakistani cuisine and there’s a lot of shops that are very diverse in showing different types of culture from all over the world”.

Given the relatively low levels of engagement in arts/culture in Birmingham, the focus groups did not provide much further insight into the issues. The closest elements to culture were cafes, food, and shopping. Some women did mention some craftwork at home.

Religion

The BPR also sought to assess the religiosity and satisfaction of Pakistanis in Birmingham with the religious services provided. The first series of questions asked respondents to identify how important religion is for them.

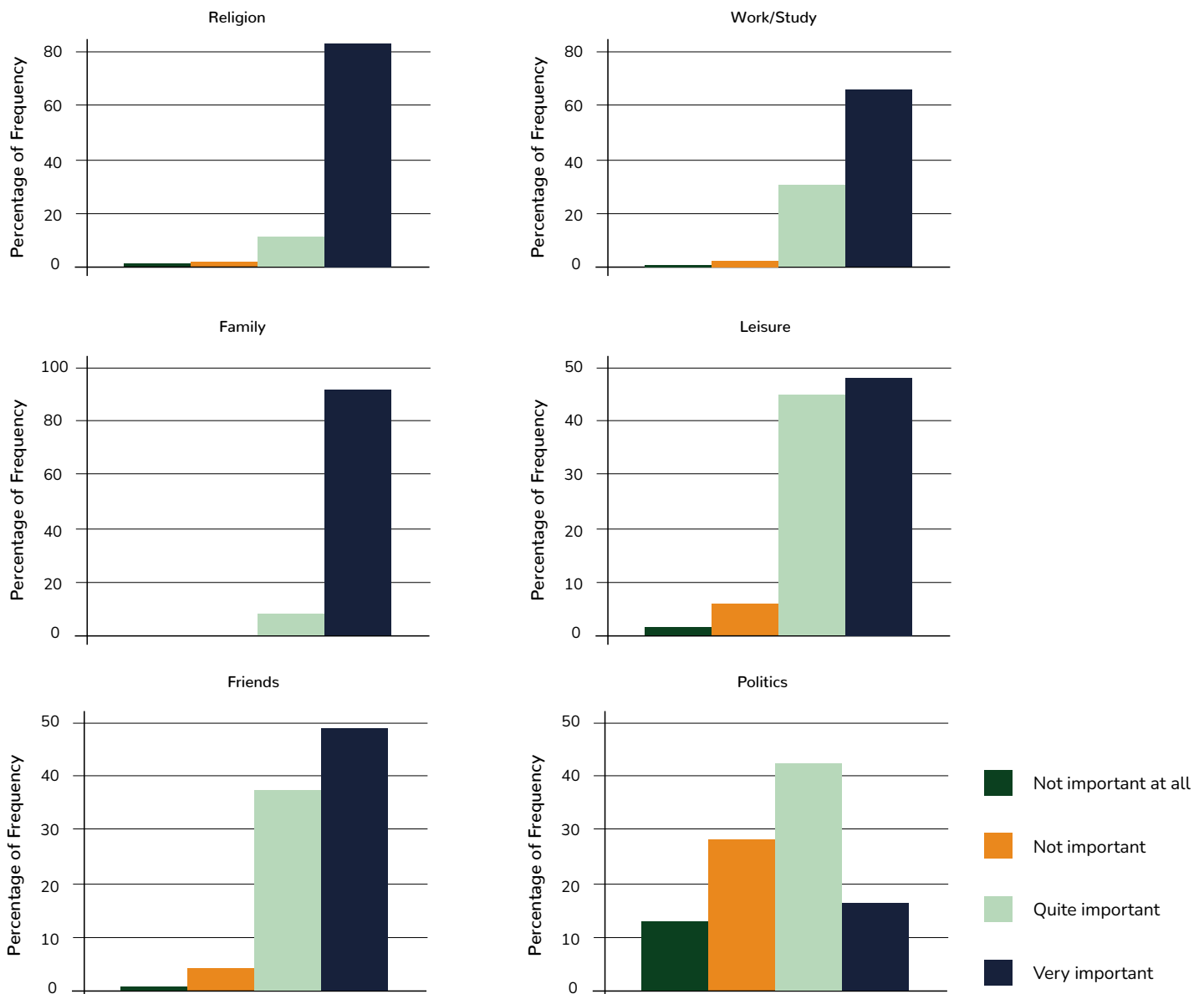
Respondents could answer:

- 1) not important at all,
- 2) not important,
- 3) quite important, or
- 4) very important.

86% of respondents answered very important, while 11% chose quite important. Compared to other aspects of life such as work/study, family, friends, leisure, and politics, Figure 17 shows that the importance of religion is quite high for Pakistanis in Birmingham.

Family, though, seems to be equally or even more important. Politics, on the other hand, is lowest in terms of importance and priority.

Figure 17: Importance of various aspects of life for survey respondents



Other aspects that the BPR sought to address with respect to religion is attendance for prayer as well as other events (lectures, gatherings, etc.).

First question in set was: “*apart from your home, where do you usually pray?*” One option given to respondents was “not applicable: I only pray at home”, with yet another option given to respondents being “not applicable: I do not pray”.

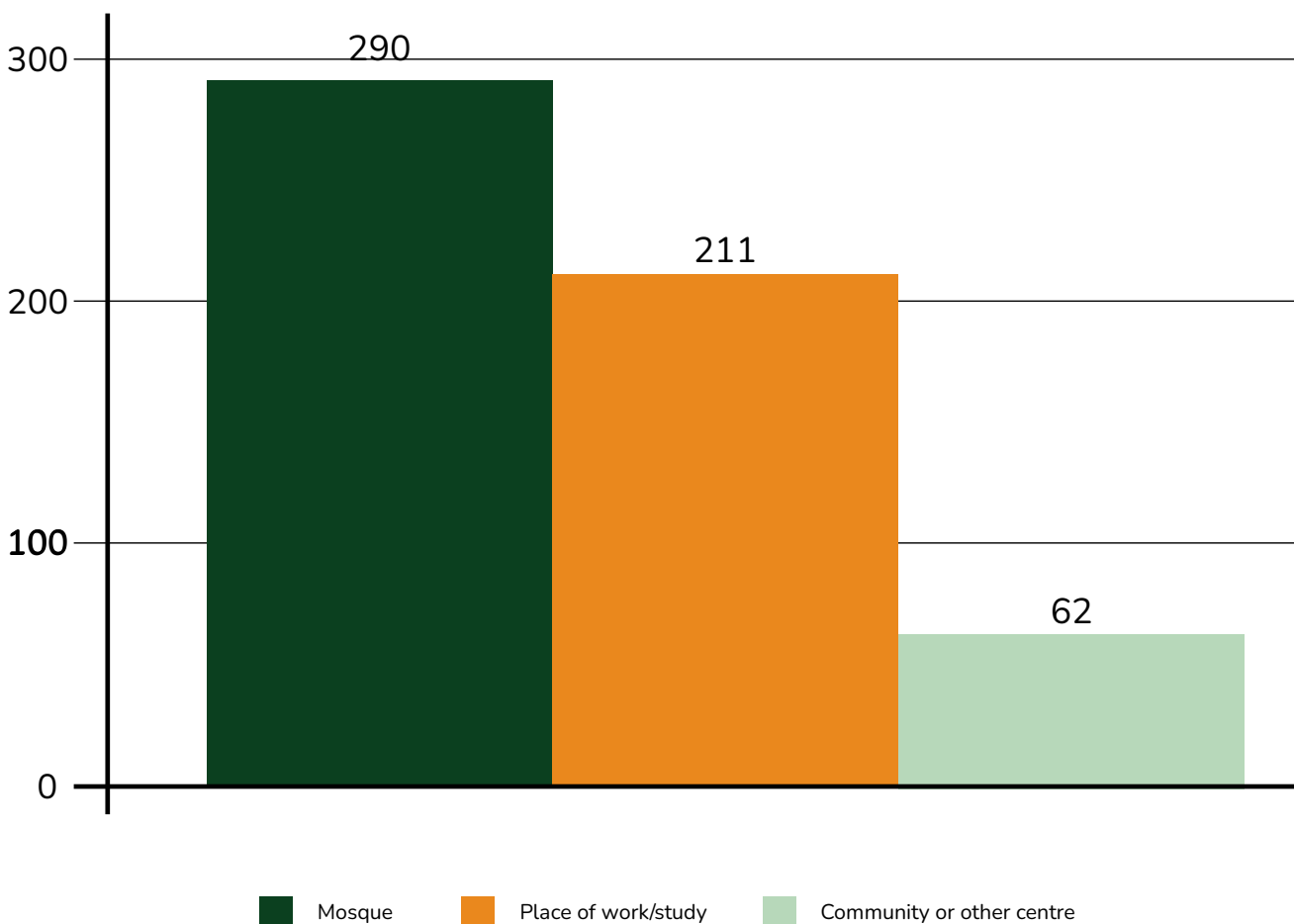
Out of the 584 respondents, 29 said that they do not pray (i.e., close to 5%), while 176 (close to 32%) of all respondents only prayed at home.

The rest, representing 379 respondents, chose among 3 options. These options were: community or other centre, mosque, place of work/study.

Respondents were allowed to choose multiple options, as prayer times occur during work/study hours and hours at home.

The distribution is given in Figure 18, which shows that mosque and place of work/study dominate as one of the usual places of worship for Pakistanis in Birmingham.

Figure 18: Location of main prayer space of survey respondents (except for home)



The BPR also asked respondents to identify how often they attend their usual place of worship. Table 6 shows the frequency distribution of responses. The responses have been scaled/coded from 1 (never or practically never) to 6 (more than once a week).

In Table 6, the response “never or practically never” includes those who do not pray (at all). The bulk of the “never or practically never” is made up of those people who only pray at home.

In fact, 72 out of the 176 who only pray at home answered “never or practically never” to the question. 52 out of the 176 answered that they do visit their place of worship only on specific holy days (usually the Eids).

An additional analysis seeks to analyse whether the distribution of answers to the question of attendance at usual place of worship varies across gender and age groups.

Table 6: Frequency distribution of attendance at usual place of worship

How often do you attend your usual place of worship?	Frequency	Percent
Never or practically never	116	19.86
Once a year	16	2.74
Only on specific holy days	119	20.38
Once a month	56	9.59
Once a week	120	20.55
More than once a week	157	26.88
Total	584	100.00

As expected, males are far more likely to attend their usual place of worship compared to females. The t-test in Table 7 shows the difference is significant, with females averaging around 3, which is equivalent to “only on specific holy days”, while males are closer to 5 (which is once a week – presumably for Friday prayers).

Table 7: T-test comparing difference in attendance at place of worship between males and females

How often to you attend your usual place of worship				
Females Mean	Males mean	Diff.	Std. Err.	p value
3.124	4.916	-1.792	.138	0

A related question asked respondents to identify how often they attend religious lectures, seminars, workshops, or other religious gatherings in Birmingham? The distribution of answers is given in Table 8.

Table 8: Frequency distribution of attendance of religious gatherings

How often do you attend religious lectures, seminars, workshops or other religious gatherings?	Frequency	Percent
Never or practically never	168	28.77
Once a year	46	7.88
Only on specific holy days	134	22.95
Once a month	104	17.81
Once a week	67	11.47
More than once a week	65	11.13
Total	584	100.00



Close to 60% of respondents attend at most a few times a year (never or practically never, once a year, and only on specific holy days). The difference across male and female genders is also similar to the difference previously reported in Table 7 about worship. Table 9 shows the difference with females closer to attending on specific holy days, while males attend more often, between specific holy days and once a month.

Table 9: T-test comparing difference in attendance of religious lectures between males and females

How often do you attend religious lectures?				
Females Mean	Males mean	Diff.	Std. Err.	p value
2.825	3.513	-.688	.143	0

Table 10 shows the regression result when we try to explain variations in frequency in attendance of religious gatherings as a function of gender and age group.

The results show that males compared to females attend at a higher frequency (the coefficient 0.755 is close to 1 which indicates that males are close to one higher category of frequency than females).

Similarly, with regard to age, the base age group is 50-59. Compared to this base age group, we note that the age groups 13-17, 18-19, 20-21, and 40-49 attend religious lectures, gatherings, workshops, and seminars more often.

Put in alternative terms, this implies that people between the ages of 22-39, as well as those aged 50-59 attend such gatherings fewer times than those aged 13-21, and 40-49.

Table 10: Regression estimates of attendance of religious lectures as a function of age group and gender

How often to you attend religious lectures?	Coef.	Std. Err.	t-value	p-value	Sig
Female	0
Male	.755	.143	5.27	0	***
Age Groups					
13-17	.577	.299	1.93	.054	*
18-19	.84	.336	2.50	.013	**
20-21	.781	.317	2.46	.014	**
22-29	.227	.258	0.88	.381	
30-39	.086	.25	0.34	.732	.
40-49	.443	.232	1.91	.057	*
[50-59]	0	.	.	.	
Constant	2.451	.205	11.96	0	***
Mean dependent var		3.121			
R square		0.065			

The BPR also asked respondents to identify the extent to which they felt inspired by religious institutions in Birmingham. Of the 584 respondents;

12%

indicated “not inspired at all

31%

indicated “not inspired”

42%

indicated “quite inspired”

15%

indicated “very inspired”

There is no systematic difference in this level of inspiration across age groups and gender.

In a regression, a positive coefficient (coef.) indicates higher frequency of attendance. To know whether this positive coefficient is statistically significant, the simplest clue is to look at the “Sig” column. No star indicates no statistical significance, and the greater number of stars indicates higher statistical difference.

We also asked respondents to denote their level of satisfaction on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) with i) the facilities offered at their religious institution (e.g., ablution), ii) the ability to meet and socialise with fellow Muslims or Pakistanis at the mosque, and iii) the teaching/sermons given.

Distribution of responses is shown in Figure 19. More or less the satisfaction levels are generally quite high. Differences though exist across the female vs. male divide.

Figure 19: (Dis)Satisfaction of survey respondents with various facilities offered by their religious institution

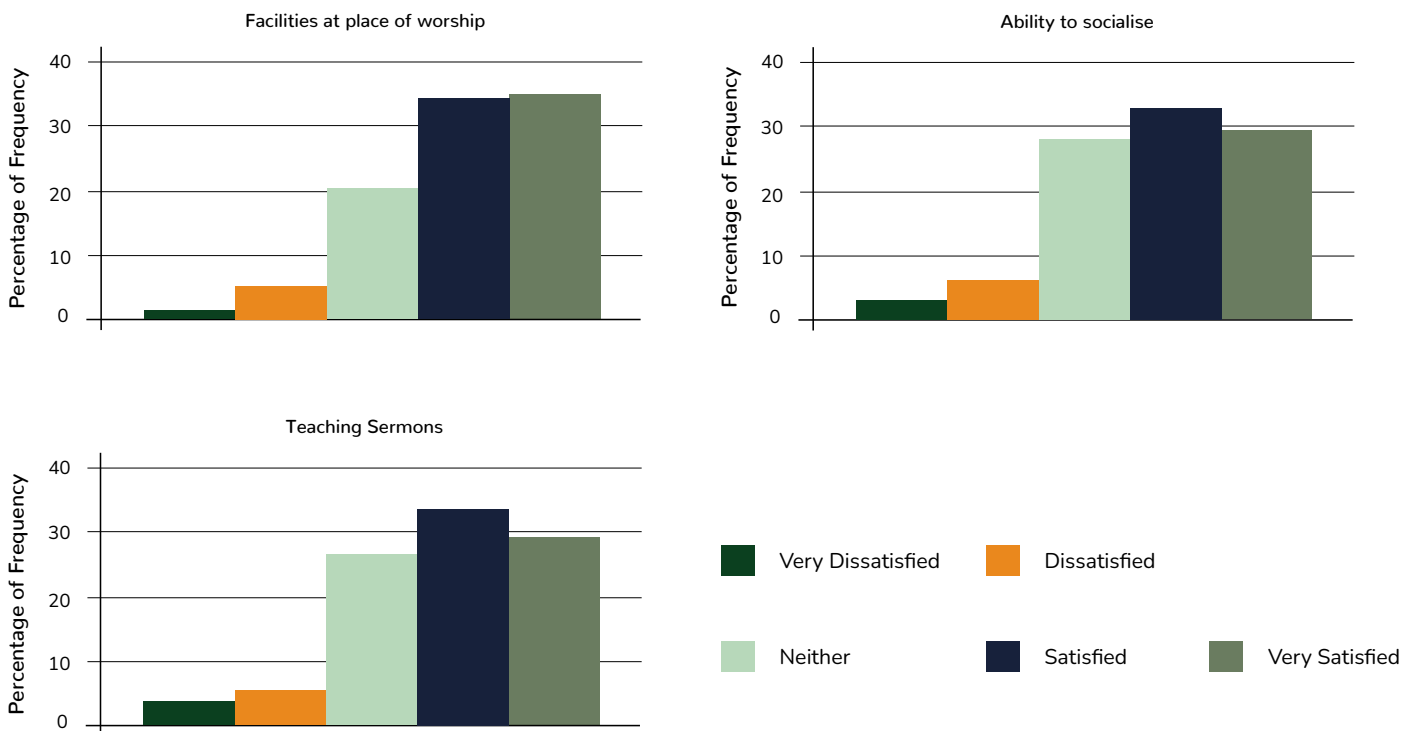


Table 11 shows t-test statistics, which shows that males are more satisfied with the facilities offered to them at religious institutions compared to females. They are also more satisfied with their ability to meet fellow Muslims/Pakistanis and socialise relative to females. With regard to the teaching/sermon, there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of males compared to females.

To assess similar differences across age groups, we run regressions. Results are shown in Table 12. Compared to base group 50-59, people of youngest ages from 13-19 show higher satisfaction with facilities offered, ability to socialise and teaching/sermons. People aged 20-21 show higher satisfaction with facilities and teaching/sermons but not with ability to socialise.



People aged 22-49 are no different in their levels of satisfaction compared to the base group aged 50-59.

Table 11: T-tests comparing differences in satisfaction levels of various services provided at religious institutions between males and females

	Females Mean	Males mean	Diff.	Std. Err.	t value	p value
Facilities at religious institutions	3.895	4.135	-.24	.084	-2.85	.005
Ability to socialize at religious institutions	3.700	3.912	-.211	.089	-2.35	.019
Teaching/Sermons	3.768	3.869	-.102	.089	-1.15	.254

Put differently, from age 22 onwards, the level of satisfaction with facilities offered at religious institutions, ability to socialise, and the teaching/sermons falls compared to the satisfaction of youngsters at or under the age of 21. There is potentially a parallel between the results of Table 10 (frequency of attendance at religious gatherings) and Table 12 (satisfaction with various facilities offered by religious institutions). There is a dip in attendance and satisfaction for people aged 22-39 (and perhaps beyond age 49 as well).

Table 12: Regression estimates of satisfaction of services provided at religious institutions as a function of age group and gender

Age Groups	(1) Facilities at Religious Institutions	(2) Ability to socialise	(3) Teaching/Sermons
13-17	0.442* (2.51)	0.673*** (3.63)	0.663*** (3.58)
18-19	0.714*** (3.64)	0.598** (2.89)	0.717*** (3.46)
20-21	0.466* (2.52)	0.367 (1.88)	0.560** (2.87)
22-29	0.164 (1.08)	0.0953 (0.60)	0.276 (1.72)
30-39	0.0617 (0.42)	-0.0262 (-0.17)	0.274 (1.77)
40-49	0.0828 (0.61)	-0.102 (-0.71)	0.110 (0.76)
Base Group 50-59	0	0	0
Constant	3.813*** (34.13)	3.680*** (31.23)	3.533*** (29.96)
N	552	552	552



Religion, being an important part of Muslim and Pakistani life in Birmingham seems to be experienced quite differently between gender and age groups. The women focus group did give a few hints as to why this is.

First, it is acknowledged that women are taking greater responsibility in raising a family (especially those aged 22 to 39).

Second, there is a lack of satisfaction with the facilities offered by the mosques.

Interview insights

Our interview with the General Secretary of the Birmingham Central Mosque suggests that the bigger mosques are striving to engage in more social activities across all genders and age groups, albeit at a slow pace.

There is an acknowledgement that management at various mosques need to show more action in these matters to help people “find a buddy”, “socialise”, and have a place they can call their own.

“They [the young people] are often quite inspired themselves. But I think what they need is for people to open the doors and allow them the space to come in and do things really, because a lot of the young people want to get involved, they want to do things, they want to help the community and what they find is that there are often barriers.”

I think they have to include women: what we found is, mosques that do classes (tafsir, tajwid) for women, they come because it becomes a social thing. So they always have coffee morning. So the class is like an excuse for learning about Deen [Religion] and Quran but really women network so well.”

Did you know?

Birmingham Central Mosque (<https://central-mosque.org.uk>), Green Lane Mosque (<https://greenlanemosque.org>) and Sultan Bahu Trust (<https://bahustrust.org>) have various activities for boys and men, while girls and ladies have their own gatherings as well. Check their websites and the websites of other big mosques for more information



Quotes from Women's Focus Group

"Access to the (tiny/poorly aerated) women's room is locked; doors only opened just 20 or 10 minutes before the next prayer."

Quotes from Women's Focus Group

"Mothers need to have a space to socialize and feel free at the mosque, and this includes a clean and safe place to change their babies' nappies without putting filth in the prayer spaces."

Politics and Civic Engagement

In the segment about politics and civic engagement, the BPR asked two questions. First, *did the respondent vote in the May 2022 elections?*

60% of respondents did, while 40% did not. There is no systematic difference between males and females in terms of answers to this question.

The next question asked respondents why they did not vote in the last elections in May 2022. Respondents could pick multiple reasons, as shown in Figure 20. The top reason is that some respondents feel all political parties are the same.

Second, the BPR has a lot of young people in its sample who are ineligible to vote.

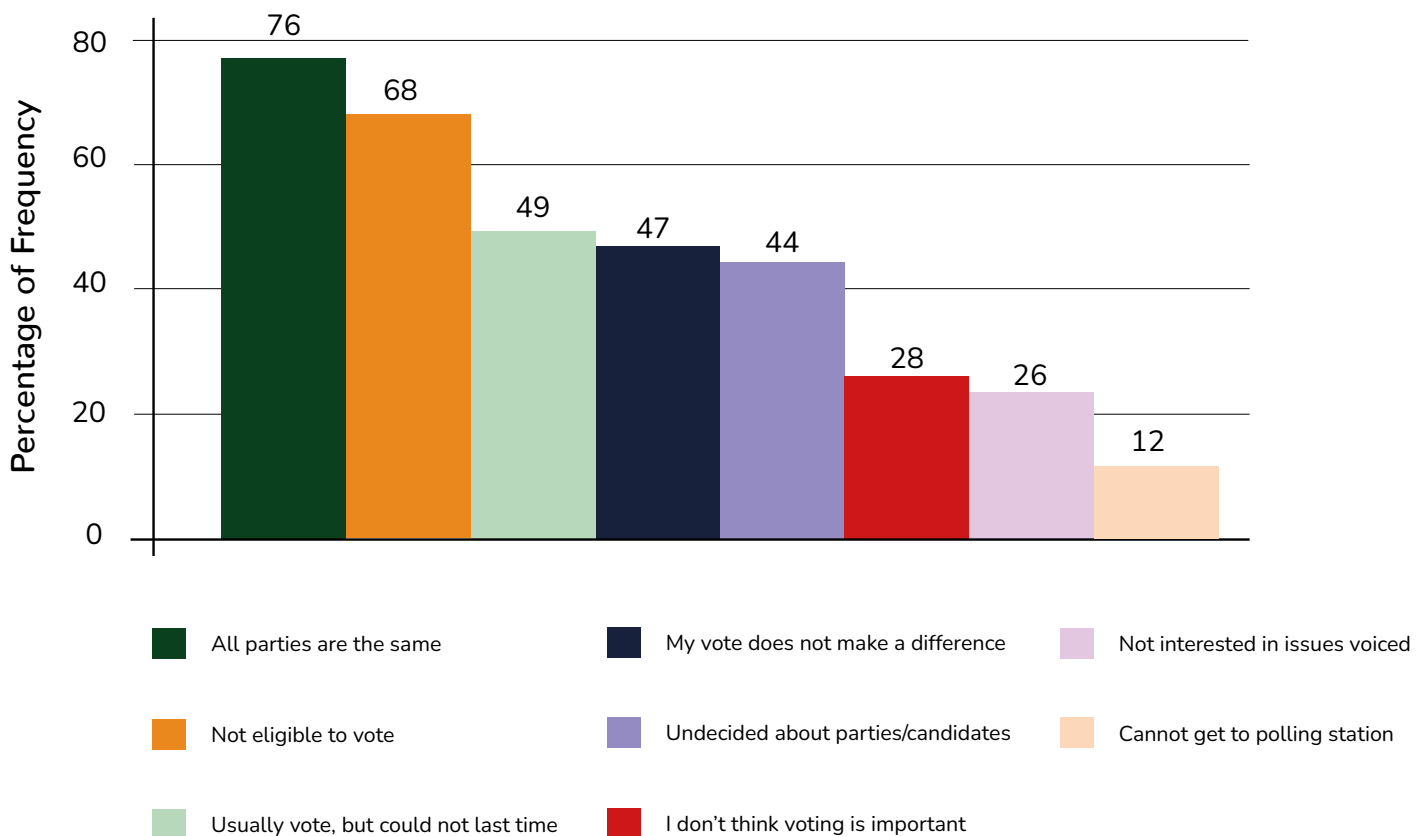
Voter apathy and undecidedness about parties/candidates are also some of the reasons which explain a lack of voting.

Our interview with Shaukat Ali Khan started with the origins of political involvement of Pakistanis in Birmingham back in the 1990s.

In his view, civic engagement then made a difference to the city and also with regard to issues in Kashmir, and civic engagement today would also make a difference to the city.

He strongly encourages people to either engage in (local) politics to help positive change or get to know candidates, hold them accountable by voting for or against them. In his words, *“sitting at home will not change anything.”*

Figure 20: Reasons for not voting in the May 2022 local elections



Disability Care

On disability care, the BPR asked respondents *“Do you look after family members or friends who have a long-term physical or mental illness or disability, or who have problems related to old age?”* 42% of respondents answered in the affirmative.

There is no difference in this percentage across genders. Similarly, there is no difference across age groups.

A further question asked: *“Do you receive support for this care? (Support can be in the form of local authority social care support, or government benefits support)”*.

This question was only open to those who answered in the affirmative to the previous question. 32% responded that they received support.

There is no significant difference to this percentage across genders. However, there are differences with respect to age.

As shown in Table 13, in relative terms, younger people aged 13-21 are more likely to receive support for such care compared to people aged 30 and above.

Table 13: Cross-tabulated frequency distribution of disability care support by age group and gender

Do you receive support for this care? (Support can be in the form of local authority social care support, or government benefits support)			
Age Groups	Female	Male	Total
13-17	10	13	23
18-19	8	12	20
20-21	6	7	13
22-29	22	16	38
30-39	29	5	34
40-49	61	14	75
40-59	24	11	35
Total	160	78	238



This begs the question: is this a question of knowledge/resourcefulness? Thus the BPR asked: “Are you aware of the various support available to carers of people who have health conditions or a disability?” 61% of those who responded yes to the first question of this segment said yes.

Once more, there is no significant difference to the response to this question across genders, but there are differences across age groups.

Table 14 shows that relative to the base age group 50-59, respondents aged 13 to 19 are more aware of support schemes (the positive coefficient and the stars in the “sig” column).

Put differently, compared to the youngest aged (13-19), people aged 20 and above are less aware of disability support schemes. This result holds even if we account for different levels of education.

Table 14: Regression estimates of awareness of disability support by age group and gender

Are you aware of disability support?	Coef.	Std. Err.	t-value	p-value	Sig
13-17	.37	.127	2.92	.004	***
18-19	.357	.132	2.70	.007	***
20-21	.073	.153	0.47	.636	
22-29	.036	.11	0.33	.744	
30-39	-.102	.114	-0.90	.372	
40-49	.03	.097	0.32	.753	0
Base Age Group [50-59]	0	.	.	.	
Constant	1.543	.08	19.35	0	***
Mean dependent var		1.613			
R square		0.090			

Crime and Racism

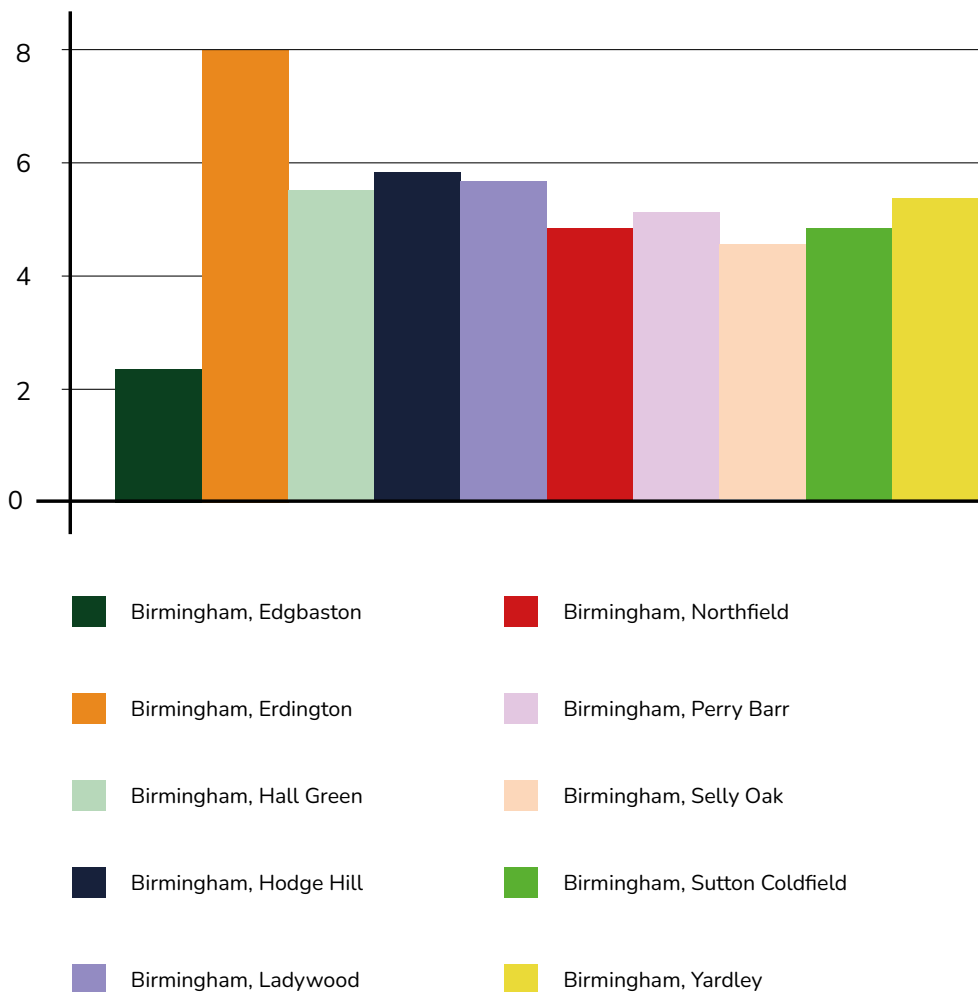
The first question in this section asked respondents: “In the past year, have you either witnessed or experienced a crime in Birmingham?” 55% responded yes.

There is no significant difference to this answer across gender and age. However, as expected, there are differences across geographies, as shown in Figure 21.

We would caution against a strong interpretation of these proportions though, as the number of respondents in some constituencies is quite low.

Nevertheless, in the constituencies that are well represented in our sample (100 or more respondents in Yardley, Hodge Hill, Hall Green and over 50 in Ladywood), the proportion of respondents who have witnessed or experienced a crime is still quite high at over 50%.

Figure 21: Proportion of respondents who witnessed a crime across Birmingham’s Parliamentary constituencies

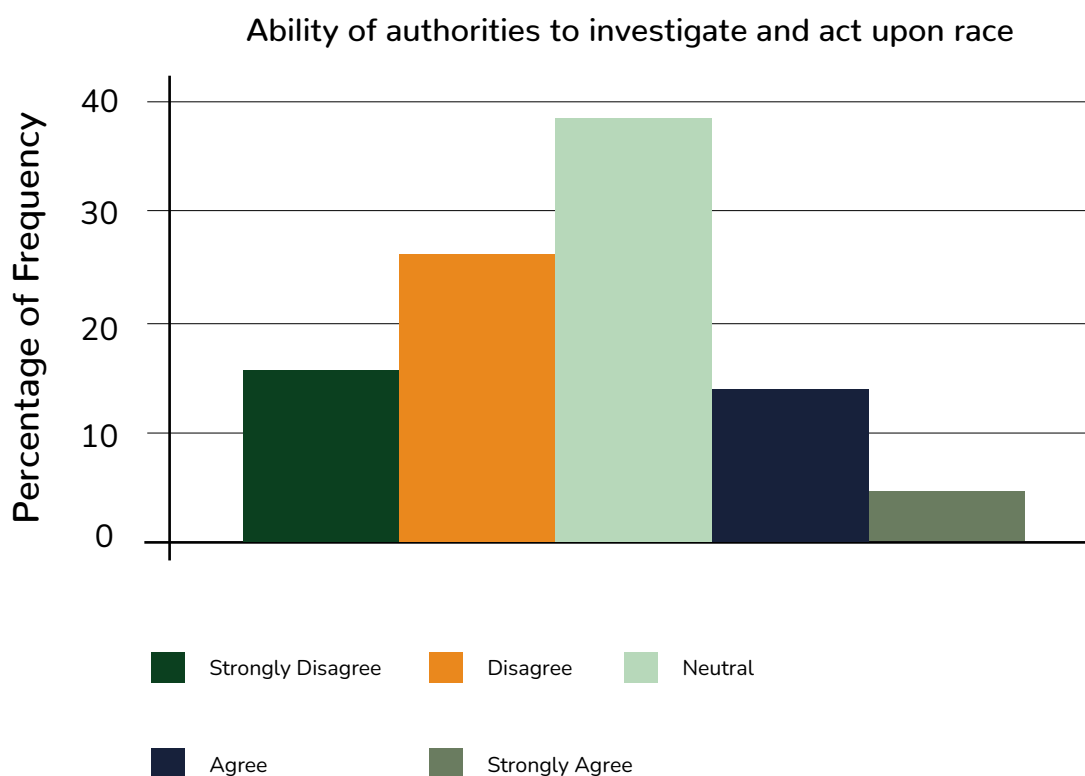




The second question in this section asked respondents if they have “reported any racist incident in the last 12 months? (to the police or hate crime organisation)”. 13% responded yes. This either means that there are few racist incidents and/or respondents are not reporting them to the police or relevant authorities.

When asked their level of (dis)agreement with the statement “The police and other authorities are able to investigate and act upon acts of racism in Birmingham”, responses varied. The distribution is shown in Figure 22, with very few respondents (19%) in agreement or strong agreement.

Figure 22: Dis(agreement) with the ability of authorities to investigate and act upon racist acts



When asked how safe Birmingham is as a city, most respondents answered “fairly” safe, as shown in Figure 23. Regression results (not shown) indicate that there is no significant difference across Parliamentary constituencies of Birmingham.

When respondents were asked: “How much of an impact does a fear of crime have on how you lead your life?”, their responses varied.

8% said “no impact at all”	33% responded with “minor impact”
40% responded with “moderate impact”	19% responded with “major impact”

There is no significant variation in these responses across age groups or gender.

When further probed about how often they had been victims of racism over the last 12 months, most respondents (57%) answered “hardly ever or never”. However, there is still a significant percentage who have been racially abused once (17%) and two to five times (20%) over the last 12 months, as show in Figure 24. There are no significant differences to these responses across genders, age groups, and even parliamentary constituencies.

Figure 23: Perceptions of Birmingham’s safety by respondents

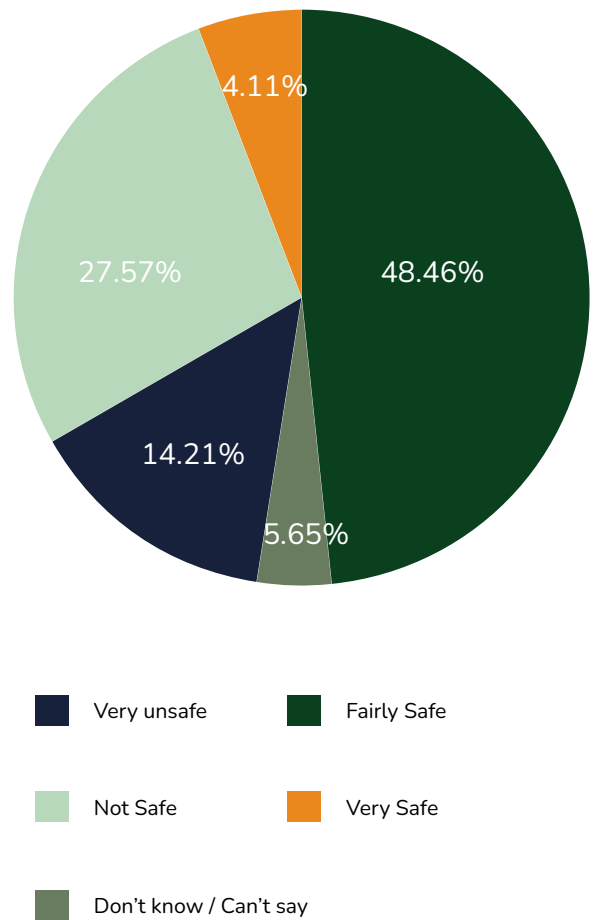
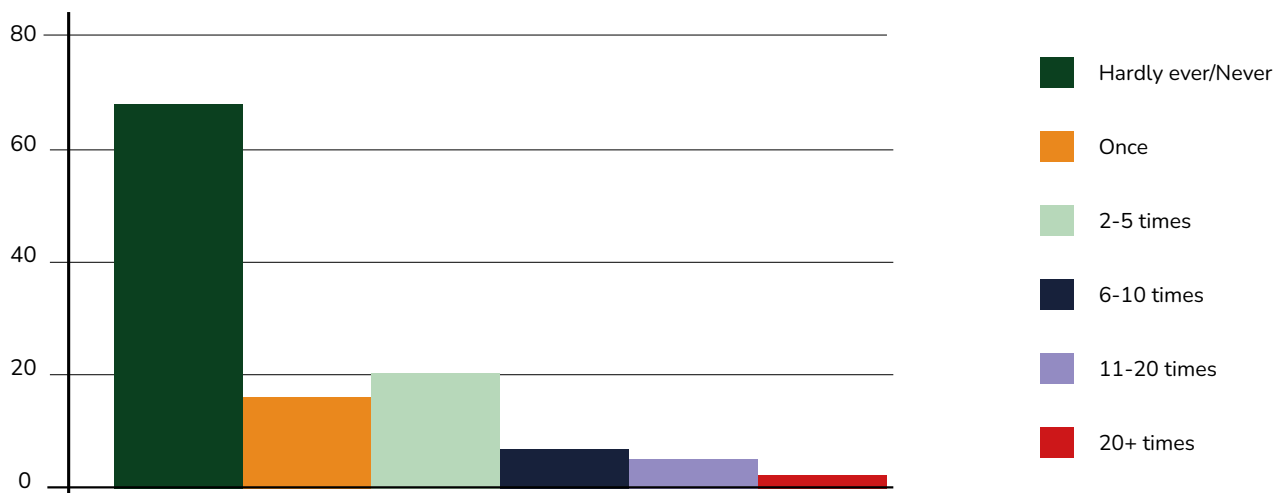
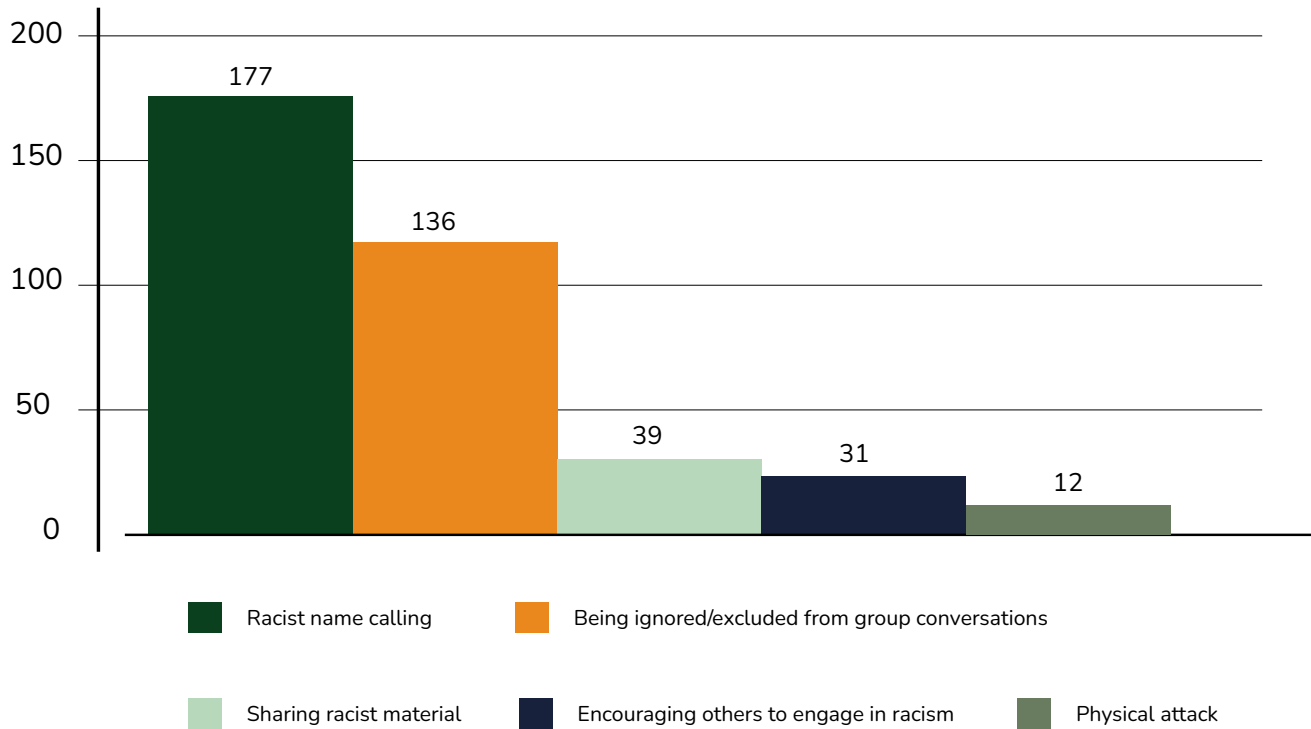


Figure 24: Number of times respondent has been a victim of racism



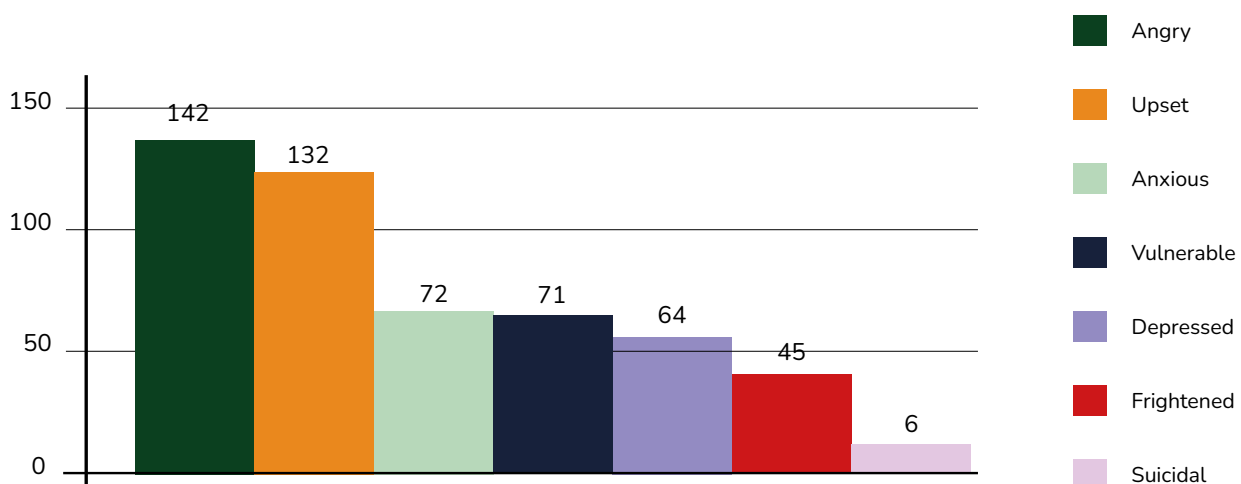
For those who did experience racism in the last 12 months (250 respondents), they were asked to name the various forms of racism that they experienced. The forms and their frequencies are shown in Figure 25. **Racist name calling, including insults, jokes/banter** still remains the top form of racism experienced by ethnic Pakistanis in Birmingham.

Figure 25: Types of racist incidents experienced by respondents



In response to racism, those respondents who faced such events claim to have experienced (multiple) feelings as shown in Figure 26.

Figure 26: Emotive feelings experienced by victim of racism



We have already explained in the section on Life Satisfaction, Optimism and Pride about Birmingham how “safety” was a recurring theme in the young people focus group. On top of that, our interview with Shreen Mahmood highlighted two sides of the same coin.

Interview Insights

First, racism is definitely a concern and there are instances where British Pakistanis have difficulty interacting with institutions such as the NHS, funeral services, and security forces.

The other side of the coin, however, may be that sometimes the community does not put the best people forward to represent itself. Putting the best people forward to represent the Muslim/Pakistani community can be an effective countervailing force against misrepresentation.

“Not many people engage with Muslims, and if they don’t know who Muslims or Pakistanis are, then they have only what they see in the newspapers, and more often than not, it’s [something undesirable] mostly accompanied with a picture of a Pakistani or a niqabi or a Muslim.”

Did you know?

MEND (Muslim Engagement and Development) is an institution that seeks to tackle islamophobia in the UK. Visit them at <https://mend.org.uk>



Education, Employment, and Mentorship

The BPR also asked questions about education, employment, and mentorship. First in this series of question was the highest level of educational attainment. The pie-chart in Figure 27 shows the distribution. The BPR also asked people if they were worried about losing their job or not finding a job. Figure 28 shows the responses.

As can be seen, perhaps given the economic downturn of late 2022-early 2023 and projected recession, over 50% of all respondents are at least a bit worried. That said, about 30% are not worried at all. These numbers do not change much even if we drop the youngest in our sample, those aged 13-19.

Figure 27: Highest level of Education achieved by respondents

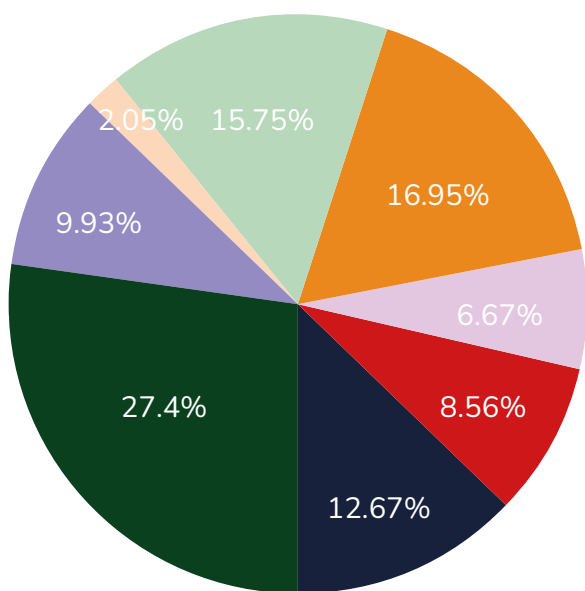
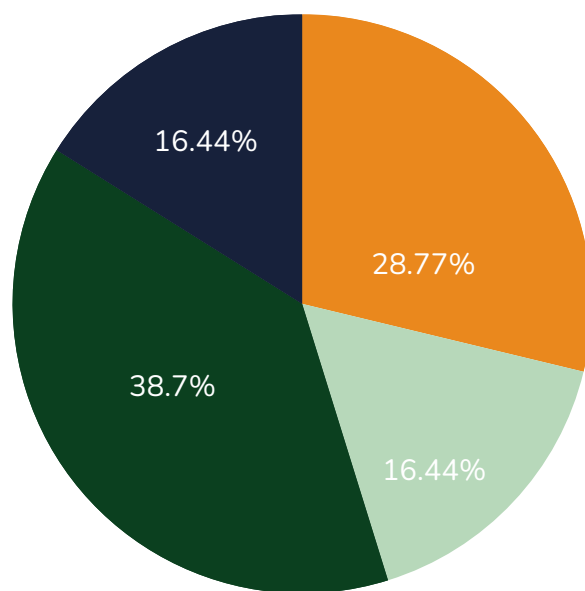


Figure 28: Proportion of respondents and their response to being worried about losing or not finding a job



- University Bachelors Degree
- Graduate or professional Degree
- Completed Secondary School
- Some University but no degree
- Vocational or similar
- Some Secondary
- Prefer not to say
- Completed Primary School

- Not worried at all
- Not so worried
- A bit worried
- Very worried





Household income was also assessed. Table 15 shows the distribution. Similarly, the BPR asked people about their employment status. Table 16 shows the distribution. Most respondents are working as a paid employee, while there is a sizeable amount as self-employed and those studying full-time. It is worth mentioning that out of the 66 who chose “prefer not to answer”, 43 were women. The BPR did not have a category of stay-at-home housewives/mums, but will include in the future.

Table 15: Distribution of household income

	Frequency	Percent
Don't know	141	24.14
Less than £20,000	137	23.46
£20,000 - £29,999	96	16.44
£30,000 - £39,999	76	13.01
£40,000 - £49,999	45	7.71
£50,000 - £59,999	26	4.45
£60,000 - £99,999	34	5.82
More than £100,000	29	4.97
Total	584	100.00

Table 16: Employment Status of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Not working (disabled/health-related)	16	2.74
Not working (looking for work)	41	7.02
Not working (retired)	12	2.05
Not working (study full-time)	72	12.33
Not working (temporary lay-off from a job)	14	2.40
Prefer not to answer	66	11.30
Working (paid employee)	290	49.66
Working (self-employed)	73	12.50
Total	584	100.00

Restricting the sample to those who are working (paid employee or self-employed), the BPR sought to get extra information on their jobs. First, we tried to match the data to the UK Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). Table 17 shows the distribution by UK SOC 2020 Skill Level.

Table 17: UK Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of survey respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Corporate managers and directors (Level 4)	34	9.37
Business, media and public service professionals (Level 4)	16	4.41
Health professionals (Level 4)	37	10.19
Science, research, engineering and technology professionals (Level 4)	10	2.75
Teaching and other educational professionals (Level 4)	38	10.47
Business and public service associate professionals (Level 3)	20	5.51
Culture, media and sports occupations (Level 3)	3	0.83
Health and social care associate professionals (Level 3)	28	7.71
Other managers and proprietors (Level 3)	47	12.95
Protective service occupations (Level 3)	2	0.55
Science, engineering and technology associate professionals (Level 3)	8	2.20
Skilled agricultural and related trades (Level 3)	2	0.55
Skilled construction and building trades (Level 3)	7	1.93
Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades (Level 3)	7	1.93
Textiles, printing and other skilled trades (Level 3)	1	0.28
Administrative occupations (Level 2)	28	7.71
Caring personal service occupations (Level 2)	2	0.55
Community and civil enforcement occupations (Level 2)	6	1.65
Customer service occupations (Level 2)	20	5.51
Leisure, travel and related personal service occupations (Level 2)	9	2.48
Process, plant and machine operatives (Level 2)	4	1.10
Sales occupations (Level 2)	13	3.58
Secretarial and related occupations (Level 2)	3	0.83
Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives (Level 2)	14	3.86
Elementary administration and service occupations (Level 1)	1	0.28
Elementary trades and related occupations (Level 1)	3	0.83
Total	363	100.00

In terms of industry of occupation, Table 18 shows the distribution.

Table 18: Industry of Occupation of Survey Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Accommodation And Food Service Activities	12	3.31
Activities Of Extraterritorial Organisations And Bodies	4	1.10
Activities Of Households As Employers; Undifferentiated Goods And Services-	3	0.83
Producing Activities Of Households For Own Use	-	-
Administrative And Support Service Activities	17	4.68
Agriculture, Forestry And Fishing	1	0.28
Arts, Entertainment And Recreation	5	1.38
Construction	12	3.31
Education	52	14.33
Electricity, Gas, Steam And Air Conditioning Supply	11	3.03
Financial And Insurance Activities	24	6.61
Human Health And Social Work Activities	68	18.73
Information And Communication	19	5.23
Manufacturing	17	4.68
Mining And Quarrying	2	0.55
Other Service Activities	37	10.19
Professional, Scientific And Technical Activities	12	3.31
Public Administration And Defence; Compulsory Social Security	20	5.51
Real Estate Activities	9	2.48
Transportation And Storage	20	5.51
Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management And Remediation Activities	2	0.55
Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles And Motorcycles	16	4.41
Total	363	100.00

The BPR also asked people who work to tick all the types of remuneration that they receive. Figure 29 shows the distribution. Most respondents who work receive a basic fixed wage/salary with few contributing to a pension scheme. The BPR also asked working respondents how much they were paid per week for their jobs. Table 19 shows the distribution.

Figure 29: Types of remuneration earned by survey respondents who work

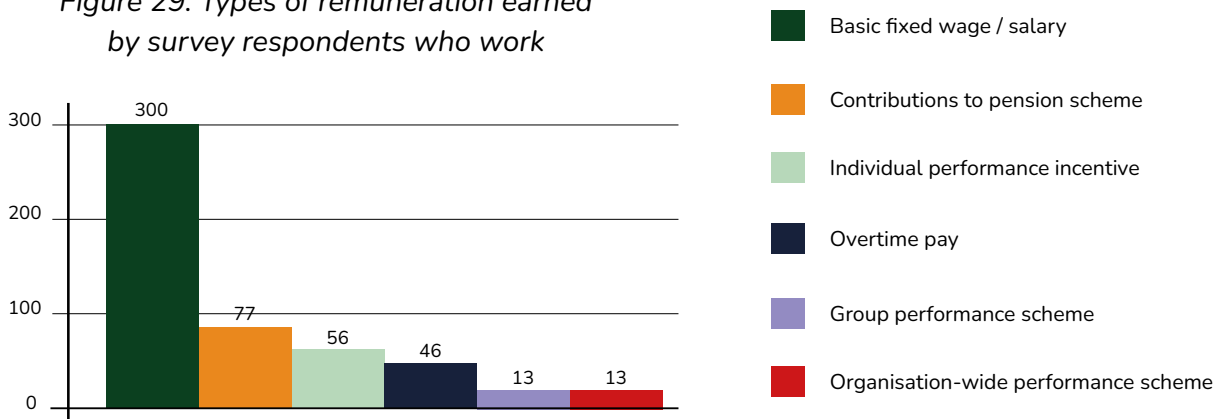


Table 19: Weekly earnings of survey respondents who work

	Frequency	Percent
£60 or less per week (£3,120 or less per year)	16	4.41
£61 - £100 per week (£3,121 - £5,200 per year)	12	3.31
£101 - £130 per week (£5,201 - £6,760 per year)	9	5.23
£131 - £170 per week (£6,761 - £8,840 per year)	12	3.31
£171 - £220 per week (£8,841 - £11,440 per year)	24	6.61
£221 - £260 per week (£11,441 - £13,520 per year)	22	6.06
£261 - £310 per week (£13,521 - £16,120 per year)	14	3.86
£311 - £370 per week (£16,121 - £19,240 per year)	26	7.16
£371 - £430 per week (£19,241 - £22,360 per year)	44	12.12
£431 - £520 per week (£22,361 - £27,040 per year)	36	9.92
£521 - £650 per week (£27,041 - £33,800 per year)	44	12.12
£651 - £820 per week (£33,801 - £42,640 per year)	33	9.09
£821 - £1,050 per week (£42,641 - £54,600 per year)	25	6.89
£1,051 or more per week (£54,601 or more per year)	36	9.92
Total	363	100.00

We ran an additional analysis and found that there is a gender pay gap controlling for same skill level in same industry. Females are generally paid less than males.

The BPR also asked if respondents had ever been mentored in the past. Figure 30 shows that very few individuals have been mentored regarding their career in the past. Figure 31 shows that there is a desire to be mentored though for a future career or for a career change.

Figure 30: Proportion of respondents who were mentored (or not) in their career

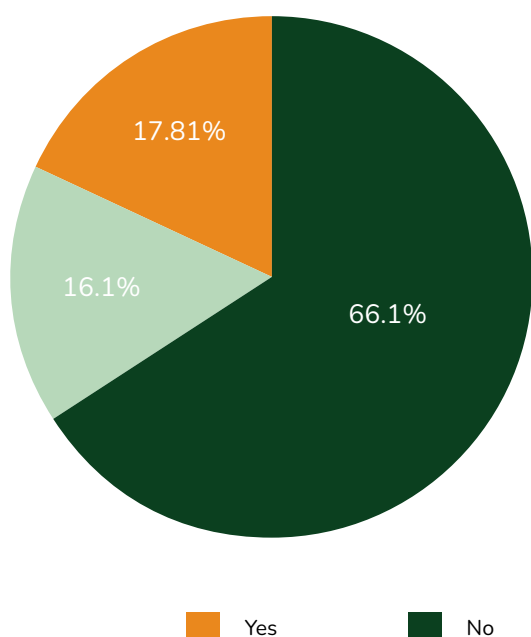
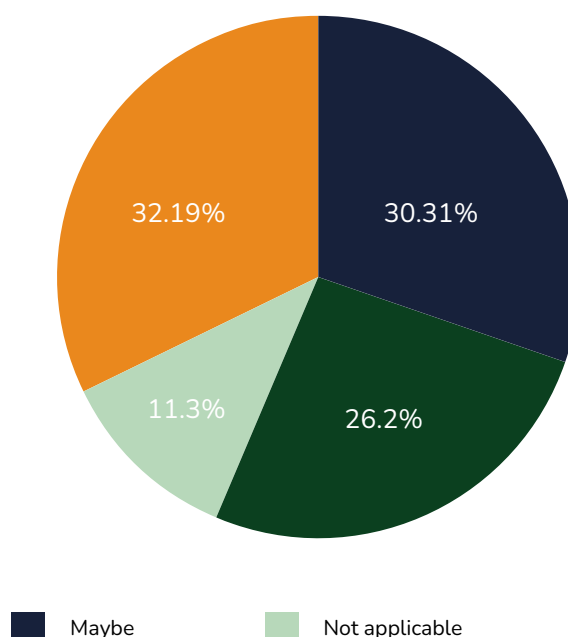


Figure 31: Proportion of survey respondents who would like to be mentored (or not)



Interview insights

Our interviewee, Sajid Gulzar, also pointed to mentoring that could have helped in the earlier stages of his career.

"[I could have benefited from] people who are older, wiser, more experienced within the profession, who have been through the same thing, who could help me navigate, who could advise, support, mentor."

"I think mentorship is really important and those mentors within our community just didn't exist or certainly in my sphere of influence didn't exist. They were so few and far between that they weren't really around."

Did you know?

Sajid Gulzar and Abid Khan can act as a volunteer mentors for young people seeking career advice and can be contacted via LinkedIn.

Our other interviewee, Abid Khan, focused more on Pakistanis and young people interacting more with the rest of society to open up opportunities for themselves.

His own experience of being invited to Conservative Party dinners and being chair of the British Asian Business Community and the regional chair for Conservatives and Small Business.

"I'm from the local streets. I'm born in Small Heath. OK, if I can do it, why can't you do it?"

Further, in his opinion, elders and those who have "made it", should be more open to mentoring and counselling the young people.

"Because I tend to find the elders who have made it, and this is not this is disrespect to anybody but the others who have made it tend to keep to themselves: don't want to let out their secrets. And are forever cursing the youngsters. Because that's what they [the young people] got around them. They got dealers, they got gas, they got this, they got that."

"I've had to go and intervene with a few children with their schools because there's been some problems with them, you know, going off the tracks. But they need mentoring, they need guidance. They don't know sometimes what is outside of their own postcode."

Wrap up

We end the analysis with where we began. How can we explain variations in life satisfaction, and thus how can we improve the life satisfaction of ethnic Pakistanis in Birmingham? To this end, we run a regression analysis wherein the dependent variable is life satisfaction (scale of 1-10), and the independent variables are:

- i) Scaled Intervals (Level of Optimism in Birmingham's future, level of inspiration in religious institutions, physical health, mental health, lack of companionship, satisfaction with social activities provided by Birmingham, satisfaction with local community services not provided by the city, the impact of fear of crime in life, level of worry about job)
- ii) Dichotomous (participation in any sport/physical activity, availability of both British and Pakistani citizenships, participation in any arts activity, voting.)

We also control for gender, age group, education level, and parliamentary constituency. The regression results are shown in Table 20. Without getting into too much detail about the interpretation of coefficients, and considering that a regression has limitations and certainly our measures and questions on the survey are not perfect, nonetheless Table 20 does allow for some interpretation.

First, people who are generally more optimistic about the future of Birmingham are also happier in their lives, as one would expect.

Second, health has a major impact on life satisfaction. Better physical and mental health are associated with higher life satisfaction. In the same vein, people who feel a higher lack of companionship in life have lower levels of life satisfaction.

While services and crime do not impact on life satisfaction, economic worries do. People who are more worried about their jobs or future jobs are less satisfied with their lives.

None of the dichotomous variables are statistically significant. In terms of the control variables (not shown for parsimony), there is no statistical difference in life satisfaction across gender, age group and parliamentary constituency.

However, those with higher levels of education tend to be more satisfied with life than those with lower levels. We expect that there is a correlation here with household income (a variable for which we have too many responses as "don't know").

Table 20: Regression estimates of life satisfaction based on all topics in this report

Life Satisfaction	Coef.	Std. Err.	t-value	p-value	Sig
<i>Scaled Intervals</i>					.
Optimism about Birmingham	.325	.105	3.11	.002	***
Inspiration in Religious Institutions	.094	.099	0.95	.344	
Physical Health (perception)	.329	.1	3.29	.001	***
Mental Health (perception)	.512	.099	5.17	0	***
Lack of Companionship	-.512	.087	-5.90	0	***
Satisfaction with social services in Birmingham	-.119	.098	-1.21	.226	
Satisfaction with local community services in Birmingham	.02	.096	0.21	.832	.
Fear of Crime	-.099	.101	-0.98	.33	
Worried about job	
<i>Dichotomous</i>					
Participation in any Sports/Physical Activities	-.083	.236	-0.35	.726	
Both British and Pakistani Citizenship	-.278	.177	-1.57	.117	
Participation in any arts activity	-.295	.184	-1.60	.109	
Voting in last elections	.011	.177	0.06	.948	
Constant	3.858	1.143	3.38	.001	***
Mean dependent var			6.467		
R-squared			0.360		

The regression also controls for gender, age groups, highest education, and location

Recommendations

The analysis in this report has brought to the surface views of the Pakistani community in Birmingham. From topics and issues such as arts and culture to life-threatening ills such as crime and racism, this report has covered a wide breadth of multiple aspects of what constitutes a 'good life' via its three data types.

In this section, we make recommendations to three groups of stakeholders: central government, the regional and local authorities (i.e. West Midlands Combined Authority and Birmingham City Council), and local community organisations and their leaders.

These recommendations are not exhaustive, and we invite all readers to share their own reading and provide recommendations as they deem appropriate¹. The recommendations in this section are based on the analyses of the researchers and we fully want to acknowledge members of the women and young people focus groups as well as our interviewees, without whom this endeavour would have been incomplete.

Central Government

The Birmingham Pakistani Report is confined to the intersection of two broad groups: 1) those who live in Birmingham, and 2) those who have Asian British-Pakistani ethnicity. Therefore, while we do not have sufficient data to make a broader comparative analysis, we can nonetheless draw from Census 2021 data and from our own data to make some observations and thus suggest recommendations.

First, drawing from data provided by Birmingham City Council², it remains clear that Birmingham is on the lower end of weekly earnings compared to residents in other core cities. Further, within Birmingham, the constituencies with the highest proportion of Pakistanis are even more impacted. These findings corroborate with our own findings in Tables 15 and 19.

Recommendation 1

The Government should look to take more concrete steps in enabling, accelerating, and implementing its Levelling Up agenda. One of those concrete steps could be to enable working people (and young people not in education employment or training) in Birmingham to undertake further education and training at some form of subsidised rate.

While the level of education in Birmingham is not the lowest (see Figure 27), a levelling up in this regard, could mean elevating people's Standard Occupational Classification. Too many people are in traditionally lower-paid industries (Table 18), in lower-paid jobs (Table 17 and Figure 29), therefore festering a vicious circle of inter-generational socio-economic immobility.

1. This can be done through our website www.pakistanireport.org.uk

2. Average Earnings 2022 | Birmingham City Council

3. Two of our interviewees, Sajid Gulzar and Abid Khan, already help with mentoring and career assistance.

Recommendations

Recommendation 2

Within this realm, participants in our young people focus group mentioned that they are worried about their economic conditions and worried that lack of university education was preventing them from achieving a good life.

We urge the government to consider expanding and developing further various non-University programs such as apprenticeship schemes to “include” young people from relatively poorer neighbourhoods and backgrounds into the socio-economic fabric of the UK.³

Second, the lack of physical activity (see Figures 9-10) is concerning. The perceived lack of mental health practitioners as well as the perceived lack of mental health support, as evidenced in Table 2, Figure 12 and the womens focus group, point to a lack of awareness of support in many circumstances and a potential lack of resources.

Recommendation 3

We ask that the Government provide more resources to the NHS, statutory bodies and other organisations more widely, by including culturally sensitive training, and assisting mental health practitioners in detecting, diagnosing, and relieving people with mental health issues.

This includes working with local community leaders⁴, Pakistani-led organisations, and others who may have a closer rapport with people in these matters.

Third, our survey findings showed that most of our respondents chose to identify themselves as British (81%), and nearly 80% had pride in being British.

Recommendation 4

A national campaign which looks to highlight the contribution made by British Pakistanis to society over the past 50 years would be encouraged.

The Government should engage with the British Pakistani community and organisations such as the British Pakistani Foundation, to promote success stories.⁵ By doing so there is potential to inspire the next generation of leaders not just in Birmingham but across the country.⁶

Regional and Local Authorities (West Midlands Region and Birmingham)

We would like to open this section by mentioning the statistics on politics with residents (not) performing their civic duty of voting in the last local elections. Figure 20 may hint at a state of apathy in a sizeable proportion of the Pakistani community in Birmingham.

It may also hint at a state of despair and helplessness in that residents do not engage with and are not inspired by local political leaders.

4. One of our interviewees, Theiba Khan, is a leader in these endeavours.

5. See <https://www.britishpakistanfoundation.com/programmes/outstanding-british-pakistanis/>

6. We suggest that this could be facilitated by Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and be part of Bradford 2025 (Bradford is UK City of Culture 2025). Bradford has the third-largest Pakistani community in the United Kingdom. The 2021 Census recorded 139,553 Pakistanis, making up 25.5% of the city's total population.

Recommendations

Recommendation 5

Whilst we acknowledge that it is the duty of residents to reach out to their local politicians, we would also encourage politicians and city leaders to engage with the Pakistani community. They should also work with women-led organisations, to focus on their social life, making Birmingham an anti-racist city⁷ and bridging the economic divide within Birmingham.

Recommendation 6

In terms of health, city leaders should undertake a targeted campaign at getting people to engage more in physical activities in groups (feeling safe while doing so), perhaps intertwined with maintaining a good level of socialising activity.

While the facilities exist in Birmingham, it is quite clear from our focus group participants, that the costs of participation in some leisure activities are too high, not women-friendly enough during normal hours of the day, and generally suffer from poor maintenance and quality (see Figure 10 for example).

Recommendation 7

We ask Birmingham City Council and West Midlands Combined Authority to look to invest more resources in making existing facilities more “attractive”, build new facilities, and encourage people to engage in more activity to maintain both their physical and their mental health.

Sports champions⁸ in the Pakistani community can be sought for advice and to support in this endeavour. Further, we advocate setting up support groups such as scouts/weekend activities so young people and other groups can develop a connected community.

The lack of involvement of the Asian Pakistani community in arts and cultural activities and events is generally quite appalling (see Figures 13-16). It is obvious from the focus groups as well that Birmingham is not perceived to have a strong cultural offering. This may indicate spaces are not inclusive.

Recommendation 8

We encourage local leaders, Birmingham City Council, and arts, culture, and heritage organisations in the city to work with the community to devise more culturally appealing events which cater for the Pakistani community.

7. Birmingham Race Impact Group mission is to make Birmingham an anti-racist city visit <https://www.wearebrig.co.uk/story>

8. Such as Salma Bi BEM, Naseem Akhtar BEM and others



Recommendations

The education and earnings (and crime) gaps within Birmingham are quite high. This state of affairs has multiple repercussions on the course of life of Pakistanis living in Birmingham in particular on their social life, ambition, social mobility, and health.

Birmingham City Council has recently launched 'The Our Future City: Draft Central Birmingham Framework 2040', which sets an ambitious and strategic vision for Central Birmingham by 2040 to create a fair, inclusive, and green place that benefits all of Birmingham's communities.⁹

There is scope for greater engagement with the Pakistani community and we encourage Birmingham City Council to do this. Our data in this report is a mere glimpse of the wider inequalities within the city. We are encouraged by the data provided by Birmingham City Council that sheds further light on the disparities in the city. We urge concrete action in matters such as safety, facilities such as gyms and other leisure and social centres, education, health, as well as arts and culture.

Recommendation 9

A further recommendation is to follow and improve on the Manchester¹⁰ model of 'Making Manchester Fairer', where individuals from the Pakistani community in Manchester have been encouraged to become members of the board to help tackle the injustices that result in some Mancunians suffering worse health than others and even dying earlier than others.

Implementing something similar ('Making Birmingham Fairer') and having greater public participation and representation from the community will hopefully lead to better understanding and better outcomes.

Crime and the ability of authorities to tackle crime in Birmingham are major social problems (see Figures 22-26) that are preventing Pakistanis from leading a good life.

Our focus groups indicated that both women and particularly young people are heavily concerned about crime and the lack of safety in Birmingham. The suggestion of "cameras" by members of the young people focus group is a particularly upsetting observation that they do not feel safe to "go out" and socialise freely.

One of the other reasons why people do not engage in more physical and social activities is because the good and pleasant facilities are deemed to be far, which increases travel time and the fear of racial abuse.

Recommendation 10

Fear discriminates against all, especially the elderly and women. We urge Birmingham City Council to work with the government, the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, West Midlands Police, and the community to co-create an action plan to address crime and fear of racial abuse which is preventing Pakistanis in Birmingham from engaging in more physical and social activities.

9. https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50273/our_future_city_plan_ofcp/2303/our_future_city_-_draft_central_birmingham_2040

10. Apply to be a member of the Making Manchester Fairer Programme Board | Making Manchester Fairer | Manchester City Council

Recommendations

Local Community Institutions/ Organisations

We begin this section by elaborating on two points which have already been mentioned above in the recommendations to the central government and regional and local authorities.

Firstly, local community institutions should act as a vehicle between residents and politicians. Many residents are of the opinion (right or wrong) that Birmingham's constituencies made up of a high proportion of Pakistanis are left behind compared to other constituencies.

The hard data on economic activity and income suggest this also. Our data on politics and civic engagement implies that, and our focus groups provide further light into this matter.

Recommendation 11

We encourage local community institutions, including mosques, to work together to hold city institutions to account, in terms of levelling up Birmingham. Without togetherness and a good voice that is impactful yet coherent and realistic, the possibility of holding city institutions to account is greatly diminished. This could be achieved by setting up a network or group which could voice the views of Pakistanis living in the city.

Secondly, young people have a great desire to be mentored and to have satisfying careers.

Recommendation 12

We encourage prominent individuals from the community to take the lead and set up a working group to work with businesses, the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Combined Authority, Jobcentre Plus, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, and all other educational institutions to develop an action plan to on how to provide satisfying career paths for all young people, irrespective of location within Birmingham and irrespective of family and socio-economic condition. In 2023 it is time to put differences aside and help the young people, who are the future of Birmingham.

We now move on to issues which have hitherto not been discussed as recommendations to the various levels of government. The first one is religion and religious institutions. Figure 17 in our data shows that Pakistanis in general consider themselves to be religious and consider their religion to be an important part of their life.

The issues seem to emerge more in terms of what is on offer from those religious institutions. Figure 19 and the various data points in the focus groups, especially the women-focus group, suggest that the level of inspiration and satisfaction from religious institutions is not very high.

In other words, there is a gap between the religious desire of Pakistanis and what is currently on offer. Our interviewee in this section was the General Secretary of the Birmingham Central Mosque, and he also pointed out the various inequalities that exist between mosques and communities within Birmingham which may exacerbate the lack of satisfaction with regard to a wholesome religious offering.

Recommendations

Recommendation 13

We make a heartfelt appeal to mosques to 1) give women a permanent space during normal hours of the day at the mosque, and 2) to engage more with young people in order to inspire them in a variety of aspects.

One of the suggestions from the womens focus group was to open the mosque for them or at least one room in the mosque before the midday prayer where they can socialise, pray, and develop healthy relationships with one another. We acknowledge that there are at least two issues with our recommendation: first security, and second availability of resources.

Several incidents in Birmingham during Ramadan¹¹ 2023 have highlighted abhorrent crimes towards Muslims. That said, the mosque as a religious institution in 2023 needs to be more than a prayer space: there should be space for socialising for both men and women during normal hours of the day.

Recommendation 14

We ask mosque leaders to work with local authorities to keep mosques open and maintain an adequate level of security (security and fear being a major concern of Pakistanis as we have highlighted in our recommendations to all levels of government).

In terms of the availability of resources, we are aware that the 'local corner mosque' will not be adequately resourced to provide activities for young people and sponsor activities for women. However, these socialising activities are important not least because they are likely to maintain or improve mental health.

Recommendation 15

We encourage mosques to form hub-and-spoke models of networking, where the bigger and more resourced mosques work in conjunction with the lesser-resourced mosques to create communities.

We believe that it is not acceptable for Pakistanis in Birmingham to feel isolated and lonely (see Figure 12). It is also not acceptable for women to not have a safe socialising space in their own mosques.

A workable solution should be devised, and we encourage all mosque leaders to entertain our suggestion and/or devise more creative ways of making the mosque a wholesome space for all Muslims.

11. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community.

Acknowledgements and Credits

This project has been a vast community effort, we are grateful to all our community researchers and everyone who completed our questionnaire and participated in our women and young people focus group. We are grateful to the following people, who have supported this project, many of them from the beginning:

- Aleena Raza
- Numan Ahmed
- Sajad Amjad
- Haji Malik Maqsood Ahmed
- Ikra Nisa
- Sidra Ali Nisa
- Ayra Raza
- Kanwal Raza
- Shezad Raza
- Yasmin Shezad
- Waqaran Nisa
- Shaheen Akhtar
- Saheda Amir
- Bukhtawar Mir
- Sardar Adnan Rashid
- Salma Yaqoob
- Naseem Akhtar BEM
- Rajasab Ali
- Fahim Kayani
- Munir Mughal
- Mohammed Khalid
- Maryam Wahid
- Naib Mughal
- Shazad Mughal
- Mohammed Ghalab
- Maulana Sarfraz Madni
- Wajid Bashir
- Mohammed Shafique
- Ghazanfar Mughal
- Thalal Mahmood
- Rana Shama Nazir
- Abdullah Rehman MBE
- Alima Ali
- Zarah Alam
- Ummaysah Asad
- Yusra Asad
- Sabah Khan
- Lawrence Tallon
- Cllr Baber Baz
- Cllr Waseem Zaffar MBE
- Cllr Saima Suleman
- Marcia Reid
- Cllr Zaker Choudry
- Mohammed Ali
- Asia Hussain
- Rafaqat Ali
- Shafqat Ali
- Masood Ahmed
- Usman Khan
- Alum Zeb Khan
- Simon Felton
- Jane Haynes
- Rachael Thomas
- Dr Justin Varney
- Richard Brooks
- Haider Hussain
- Dr Peter Borg-Bartolo
- Khalid Mahmood MP
- Dr Ajmal Hussain
- Cllr Mariam Khan
- Jehangir Malik OBE
- SM Irfan Tahir
- Syed Abid Kazmi
- Asif Mehmood Bratlvi
- Raja Nasir Mahmood
- Muhammad Basharat
- Saheli Hub
- British Pakistani Foundation
- Pakistani Consulate Birmingham
- Aap Ki Awaaz Radio
- British Pakistani Forum
- Birmingham Race Impact Group



©Marwan Bassiouni. *New British Views #29*, England, 2022. From the series *New British Views (2021-...)*. Our thanks to Marwan for allowing us to use this image.

Notes

Birmingham Pakistani Report (2023)

<https://www.pakistanireport.org.uk/>

info@pakistanireport.org.uk