

Listening to British Muslims: policing, extremism and Prevent

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About Crest Advisory

We are crime and justice specialists - equal parts research, strategy and communication. From police forces to public inquiries, from tech companies to devolved authorities, we believe all these organisations (and more) have their own part to play in building a safer, more secure society. As the UK's only consultancy with this focus, we are as much of a blend as the crime and justice sector itself.

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Foreword

Akeela Ahmed MBE

Over the last decade or so, issues around extremism and terrorism have dominated public discourse around British Muslim communities. But there is obviously so much more to British Muslim communities than that. Both within those communities and across wider society, extremism and how to counter it and has also been an increasingly polarising subject. There has been a sense that you are either wholly for counter-extremism initiatives such as the Prevent programme, or you are wholly against them.



This report attempts to start to resolve both of those problems. It looks at British Muslim attitudes to issues of crime, policing and extremism in the round and not just at counter-terrorism. And, by asking British Muslims what they actually think, it picks a way through that polarised debate in a way that is much more reflective of the reality on the ground in which people are, for some surprisingly, supportive of programmes such as Prevent, while caveated with reasonable concerns.

The report takes an evidence-based approach based by developing an independent and birds-eye understanding of how British Muslims feel about these areas. The authors have taken great care to ensure that under-represented voices in what can often be a loud and divisive debate are heard. They also went to great lengths to ensure that the research was carried out in a way that avoids bias or weighting in particular directions, and avoiding over extrapolation – sloppy practices which the report rightly identifies as having occurred across several other widely-cited studies in the past. Due to the rigour and integrity of this approach, I believe that the findings of this report are significant and provide a sound evidence base by which to bring fact and balance to a debate that has been raging for a number of years.

There are many fascinating elements in the report, but there are a few which stand out to me in particular. Firstly, I was pleased that the report gives a strong and equal voice to British Muslim women. The British Muslim women I work with experience the same everyday concerns of any average woman in the UK, around money, work, schooling, wellbeing, the safety of their children, and being treated as equal citizens. However for some of them, anxieties about Islamophobia are also a major worry. These women are often under-represented in research like that undertaken in this report. More people should try talking to British Muslim women and not just presume that we are 'hard to reach'.

Secondly, the reality is that British Muslims are very worried about the threat of Islamist extremism. Speaking to communities around the UK, I know that many are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of their own and all families and communities due to the activities of extremists. While Islamist extremists will never represent mainstream Islam in all its diversity, any more than the far

right represent white British communities, there is no denial that extremism across society is a problem that we all have to help solve. In fact this report finds that British Muslims feel an extra responsibility to do so. They are doubly impacted by being potential victims of Islamist-inspired attacks and far right ideologies. And when terrorist incidents do occur, British Muslims also fear the prospect of subsequent retaliatory hate crimes and attacks such as that at Finsbury Park Mosque in 2017.

Thirdly, as an activist and equalities campaigner, I was personally unsurprised by the finding that most British Muslims have not even heard of the Prevent programme. Yet, while this was not news to me, it is likely to be surprising to many who have come to assume the contrary.

This finding also provides important learning points for policymakers and practitioners working within Prevent, indicating that far more needs to be done to communicate about it with grassroots communities. It also underscores the urgent need to improve consultation with communities most affected by counter-terrorism and counter-extremism policies in general.

When it is communicated to them, British Muslims support in principle the rationale for a safeguarding programme, even when it is mostly targeted towards their own communities. They do so however with caveats, and are correct to do so. They are concerned that any approach which involves targeting is at risk of becoming racialised and therefore antagonising and invariably flawed. They also want to know more about how the Prevent process works and what would happen if they did make a referral. And they want a clear distinction held between legitimate religious beliefs and what is classed as extremism.

So conditional support should not be taken as an unequivocal endorsement. Therefore, policy-makers and practitioners need to ensure more is done to address these concerns. Yet on the other hand, this finding provides a challenge to those critics of Prevent demanding its complete dismantlement who do not reflect the wider views of British Muslims. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that those organisations that seek to represent British Muslim communities take considered steps to engage with all views.

Finally, it is heartening that the report finds that British Muslims think that Britain is a good place to be Muslim. Yet it is dispiriting that the impacts of the negative narratives that exist in the media which are highlighted in this report are having an impact on the everyday experiences of British Muslims in the form of hate crimes, prejudice, and discrimination.

We British Muslims believe that life in Britain is good for us – but we also believe it can be better. We must not allow it to get worse, and politicians in particular should do more to recognise the positive contributions that British Muslims make to Britain. Countering and preventing Islamist extremism goes hand in hand with treating British Muslims as equal citizens. This report is an important step forward in listening. Now we need delivery.

February 2020

1. Executive summary

Homegrown terrorism inspired by Islamist and far right extremism continues to pose a severe threat to Britain and its population. There is widespread agreement that stopping people becoming radicalised or engaged in extremism is critical to reducing this threat and that building support for this activity among sections of the population most at risk is essential. With Islamist terrorism posing the largest overall threat,¹ support for counter-extremism from British Muslims is particularly important. Despite this, surprisingly little publicly available research is available on British Muslim attitudes to policing and to counter-extremism efforts. Instead, there are superficial characterisations of British Muslim opinion, which divide people into binary groups. Where research does exist, it has been media-commissioned and/or has methodological limitations, while larger scale, more robust academic studies have tended to focus on broader research topics, without looking at attitudes towards extremism specifically.

There has been evidence that trust in the police is relatively high among British Muslims and considerably higher than among, for example, Britain's Black Caribbean population.² However, it has not been known how deep or broad this trust is and, in particular, whether it extends to police involvement in counter-extremism. Previous research conducted by Crest identified a potentially broader range of views than the dominant media narratives suggest, with most British Muslims neither wholly hostile nor wholly supportive of counter-terrorism or counter-extremism programmes, but holding a range of questions and legitimate concerns about this work and its impact.

This research project aimed to build a richer picture of British Muslim attitudes towards life in the UK and its institutions generally and towards the police and counter-extremism work in particular, using methodologically strong qualitative and quantitative research. Following an initial review of existing research we conducted structured focus groups with British Muslims in eight towns and cities across Britain and subsequently commissioned a robust opinion poll of a representative sample of Britain's Muslim population and a comparison group of the general population. We set out our key findings from this research below.

Though this report does not make detailed recommendations, we do reach a number of conclusions which have implications in particular for politicians, for the police and for the media. Specifically, we find that there is a significant gap between what people assume or believe British Muslims think and what many British Muslims do actually think about extremism, policing and the Prevent programme. The results of our research are very difficult to reconcile with the dominant, polarising narratives, which argue that the Prevent programme is a "toxic brand" mistrusted by British Muslims and, alternatively, that British Muslims are "in denial" about Islamist extremism and "need to do more" about it. We found that the views of British Muslims frequently mirror those of

¹ See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49753325>

² Overall, British Muslim attitudes to the police appear quite close to non-Muslim Asian attitudes and white British attitudes: 68% of white British people have trust in the police compared to 68% of Bangladeshi, 70% of Pakistani, and 42% of Black Caribbean populations (despite lower generalised trust). Source: Ethnic Minority British Election Study (EMBES, 2010).

the general population and even where they differ they rarely do so dramatically. We also conclude that British Muslims have a broader range of views than is commonly acknowledged by politicians, the media and other participants in the debate on extremism and how best to counter it. We have sought to not use the phrase “the Muslim community” in this report since our findings suggest it has limited or no utility. Finally, our research should give the media in its broadest sense cause for concern, with British Muslims appearing to be more concerned by media representation than by job discrimination or even the far right.

This is independent research. It has been funded by a charitable trust and carried out by a non-partisan consultancy. We recognise that our findings may be a surprise to many and be challenging for some to accept. However, we hope all those with an interest in the experience of Muslims who live in Britain, and in their views on policing and counter-extremism work will consider them carefully.

Summary of findings

Life in Britain as a Muslim

- **British Muslims think Britain is a good place to be a Muslim:** More than three quarters (76 per cent) of British Muslims polled for this report considered Britain to be a good place to be a Muslim. When asked what makes Britain a good place to be a Muslim, “freedom of religion” was the most commonly selected option amongst British Muslims and GB adults. It is notable that British Muslims’ own view on this was significantly more positive than amongst the GB adults group (of which 52 per cent thought Britain is a good place to be a Muslim).
- **Most British Muslims tend to believe their local area is better to live in as a Muslim than other parts of Britain:** Fifty-nine per cent of British Muslims polled believed their local area was better to live in as a Muslim than other parts of Britain; 26 per cent considered their local area the same; and 10 per cent considered it worse. This view also came out strongly within the focus groups.

The media and other institutions

- **British Muslims’ trust in institutions as ‘fair’ is generally very strong, apart from the media:** British Muslims consistently gave net favourable ratings to British institutions in terms of how fairly they treat Muslim citizens, with the exception of the media. The NHS received the highest net rating of fair treatment – eighty-four per cent of British Muslims thought the NHS treats Muslims fairly.
- **The media emerged as a distinct outlier in terms of negative perceptions among British Muslims, with misrepresentation emerging prominently in the focus groups:** The media received the lowest ratings of fair treatment, with only 36 per cent of British Muslims rating its treatment as fair. This view of unfair treatment by the media was corroborated by 39 per cent of British Muslims choosing the media as a reason for “what makes Britain a poor place to be a Muslim” (second only to Islamophobia), and by the

media's representation of British Muslims emerging strongly as a theme across the focus groups.

Islamophobia and the far right

- **British Muslims are worried about the far right, but Islamophobia and media representation were bigger concerns:** More than a quarter (28 per cent) of British Muslims selected the far right as a reason Britain is a poor place to be a Muslim, the fourth highest choice on the list behind Islamophobia (64 per cent), media representation (39 per cent) and job discrimination (30 per cent). However, there was significant variation within these figures by gender, with Islamophobia cited by 80 per cent of British Muslim women compared to 48 per cent of British Muslim men and media representation cited by 46 per cent of British Muslim women compared to 31 per cent of British Muslim men. Overall, 89 per cent of British Muslims considered Islamophobia to be a problem in Britain, compared to 82 per cent of GB adults. British Muslim adults were almost twice as likely to consider Islamophobia to be 'a large problem' than GB adults (30 per cent vs 16 per cent).

An in-depth look at trust in the police

- **Both British Muslims and GB adults show relatively high levels of trust in the police and this extends to views about the police's role in counter-extremism, as well as more routine police tasks:** Nearly two thirds (64 per cent) of British Muslims said they trust the police compared to 71 per cent of GB adults. On "helping the vulnerable" and "responding to emergencies", British Muslims' levels of trust were broadly in line with the wider public (at 65 per cent and 67 per cent, and 77 per cent and 80 per cent respectively). A higher proportion of British Muslims trust the police more on "countering extremism / terrorism" than do on "investigating routine crimes e.g. burglary" (64 per cent and 59 per cent). The proportion of British Muslims who trust the police on routine crimes is significantly higher than that of GB adults (59 per cent vs to 47 per cent), though proportionally less trust the police on "countering extremism / terrorism" compared to GB adults (64 per cent vs 78 per cent).
- **British Muslims and GB adults have very similar views on police engagement:** More than half of British Muslims (53 per cent) agreed that the police engage well with their community, compared to 51 per cent of GB adults. However, our focus groups revealed a strong sense that engagement had declined, particularly since cuts to police budgets from 2010 onwards. This was viewed very negatively, particularly in relation to the visible presence of police officers on the streets (which made it much harder to have informal engagement).
- **British Muslims are not in denial about the threat of extreme Islamism:** Similar levels of British Muslims (63 per cent) as the wider public (67 per cent) reported that they were 'very worried' or 'fairly worried' about the threat of Islamist extremism. Our focus groups backed this up, with a common consensus being that while extremists make up a small proportion of the British Muslim population, there is little doubt that they do exist.

- **British Muslims have mostly not heard of the Prevent programme:** A majority of British Muslims (56 per cent) are not aware of the Prevent programme, although salience at 44 per cent is higher than the 32 per cent level among the wider population. Low levels of salience were also found across our focus groups.
- **British Muslims tend to support the Prevent programme once it has been explained:** When offered a neutral explanation of the Prevent programme four fifths (80 per cent) of British Muslims offered either unqualified (47 per cent) or qualified support (33 per cent) for it. This was only slightly lower than the 85 per cent of the wider public who did so.
- **British Muslims believe the police should have a prominent role in preventing extremism and terrorism:** The “police and security services” was the second most popular choice of British Muslims on the question of who “should be involved in preventing extremism and terrorism before it happens”, behind only “religious groups” and ahead of schools, councils, charities and community groups for example. However at 34 per cent, the “police and security services” lags behind a long way behind the wider public’s score (at 50 per cent), pointing to a gap which needs to be closed. Likewise “national government”, while still the third most popular choice for British Muslims on this measure at 32 per cent, lags similarly far behind the 46 per cent of the wider public who chose it.
- **British Muslims understand the need to target the Prevent programme at communities and areas of the country where the risk of terrorists being drawn from is highest:** A combined 74 per cent of British Muslims either supported (36 per cent) or supported ‘but with some concerns’ (38 per cent) Prevent’s targeting approach when it was candidly explained that it involved explicitly focusing on Muslims due to the nature and weight of the current terror threat being predominantly from extreme Islamism. Only 13 per cent said they would not support such an approach.
- **British Muslims would be more likely to refer someone to Prevent if they suspected they were being radicalised than the general population:** Two thirds (66 per cent) of British Muslims said that they would refer concerns about someone they knew being radicalised to the Prevent programme. This was higher than the 63 per cent of the wider public who said the same.
- **Despite widespread support for the principles of the Prevent programme, there are concerns that need to be addressed:** While support for risk-based targeting is high amongst British Muslims, it is important to acknowledge that slightly more than half of that support comes with the caveat that ‘I have some concerns’. Of those who had concerns, the most common to be expressed was “people associate Islam with terrorism” (59 per cent). “It means all Muslims are treated as suspects” featured in the top three choices of British Muslim adults and GB adults. However, all three top choices (the third being “it is unfair on innocent Muslims”) were significantly more likely to be concerns for British Muslims compared to GB adults.

2. Introduction

The policy context

Since the 2005 London bombings, successive United Kingdom governments have prioritised attempts to stop people being drawn into terrorism. These efforts to tackle radicalisation, the process by which individuals or groups adopt increasingly extreme and potentially violent political, social or religious views and ambitions, have historically focused largely on British Muslims. This is based on the police and the security services' assessment that Islamist extremism poses the greatest terrorism threat, though concern about far right extremism has increased significantly in recent years.³ With a total of 22 terrorist plots foiled between March 2017 and September 2019,⁴ the need to divert people from terrorism is as urgent as ever.

Much of this work has been delivered by police and local authorities through the Home Office-funded Prevent programme, as part of the government's counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST. Prevent's stated aim is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism through challenging extremist ideology, supporting vulnerable people and working with key sectors e.g. policing, education and local authorities. It is delivered through communities (via civil society groups, Prevent co-ordinators and statutory partners); tackling radicalisation online; and interventions (through implementation of the Prevent duty and the Channel scheme). Through the Channel scheme, vulnerable individuals receive multi-agency support such as educational or mental health provision or religious and ideological mentoring. Since 2015, schools, NHS trusts, prisons, universities and local authorities have had a statutory duty to refer people they believe may be at risk of radicalisation to Prevent. Referrals to Prevent increased by more than a third between 2016/17 and 2017/18 with 394 individuals receiving Channel support up 19 per cent on the previous year.⁵

In recent years, there has been an additional focus on non-violent extremism, driven by concerns that prejudice, discrimination and supremacist or hateful beliefs create a climate in which radicalisation and other harms may thrive. Police recorded hate crime has doubled since 2015⁶ and there is evidence that Islamophobia is driving support for far right extremism.⁷ In response, the government has set up an independent Commission for Countering Extremism to advise it on policies and powers it may require. In October 2019, the Commission called for a new Counter Extremism Strategy⁸ and taskforce to be chaired by the Home Secretary. Separately, the government has established a cross departmental Anti Muslim Hatred Working Group has been set up to consider and take forward proposals to tackle Islamophobia.⁹

³ See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49753325>

⁴ See: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/sep/09/foiled-terrorist-attacks-on-uk-soil-have-risen-to-22-says-top-officer>

⁵ See: <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2019/11/05/factsheet-prevent-and-channel/>

⁶ See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-50054915>

⁷ See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47280082>

⁸ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/independent-advisor-calls-for-overhaul-of-extremism-strategy>

⁹ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/anti-muslim-hatred-working-group>

Critics of the Prevent programme

These policies have been intensively scrutinised. In particular, the Prevent programme has become subject to a number of criticisms ranging from how it has been implemented in practice to attacks on its legitimacy in principle.

Complaints from mainstream charities and Muslim advocacy groups have coalesced around Prevent being “a toxic brand”¹⁰ which harms counter-terrorism efforts. Civil rights groups Liberty has argued Prevent has “left a trail of discrimination and distrust in its wake... by alienating whole communities, spreading fear and suspicion, shutting down debate”. The Muslim Council of Britain has described Prevent as a “strategy that has left Muslims feeling demonised, targeted and spied upon”.¹¹

Many leading politicians have raised concerns too. Former Foreign Office Minister Baroness Sayeeda Warsi has said the programme has “...huge problems, I think it’s broken... the brand is toxic” and called for a new strategy which would be “deeply trusted by the communities it is trying to engage”.¹² Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott has said of Prevent that “there is a concern Prevent is a tainted brand and not fit for purpose”¹³ and more recently described it as “an abject failure”.¹⁴ Others argue that while Prevent is doing good work, it has a perception problem. For example, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, has called for more information to be shared about Prevent because “any counter-terrorism strategy needs to be localised, have community buy-in and be seen to be fair to all communities rather than appearing to target one”.¹⁵

At the more extreme end of the spectrum, a number of smaller campaign groups have questioned the entire basis of Prevent claiming that it has had a “chilling effect on open debate and free speech”¹⁶ and is underpinned by a “discriminatory framework” which “fundamentally skews the relationship between government and citizens”.¹⁷

Supporters of Prevent

This narrative is challenged by the government and by the police who argue Prevent is an essential safeguarding programme. Some supporters of the strategy have questioned the basis for the “toxic brand” narrative arguing that the efforts of Prevent workers “are undermined at every turn by a vocal minority of campaigners who claim to represent the communities most at risk and are

¹⁰ See: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/mar/09/anti-radicalisation-prevent-strategy-a-toxic-brand>

¹¹ See: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/dec/19/lord-carille-prevent-review-legal-challenge>

¹² See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-39399011/baroness-warsi-prevent-scheme-should-be-paused>

¹³ See: <https://labour.org.uk/press/diane-abbott-speech-to-labour-party-conference/>

¹⁴ See: <https://labour.org.uk/press/prevent-review-far-independent-diane-abbott/>

¹⁵ See: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1169/a-shared-future-mayor-and-deputy-mayor-response.pdf>

¹⁶ See: <https://www.preventwatch.org/about/>

¹⁷ See:

<https://www.cage.ngo/cage-offers-a-new-way-forward-from-prevent-impasse-as-2011-reviewer-is-re-appointed-to-rubber-stamp-the-strategy-he-helped-introduce>

emboldened by politicians who should know better”.¹⁸ While saying that at times the implementation of Prevent has been “badly handled”,¹⁹ Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu, Head of UK Counter Terrorism Policing, has described some of the programme’s critics as “malign detractors” and argued that “no one who has challenged Prevent to date has had a better idea”.²⁰

In January 2019, the Home Office announced an independent review of Prevent with the then Security Minister Ben Wallace insisting that “Communities across the country have got behind the policy and are contributing to it because they want, as we do, their own young people to be protected from grooming and exploitation by terrorists”.²¹ Accusing Prevent critics of “spin and distortion”, he challenged them to produce “solid evidence of their allegations”.²² Lord Carlile QC was asked to lead the review but stepped down in December 2019 after Rights Watch UK, which objected to his previous support for Prevent, brought a judicial review of his appointment.²³ The Home Office is currently reconsidering the terms of reference of the review.

The absence of evidence

Despite the intensity of this debate, evidence of what British Muslims think about policing, extremism and counter-extremism policy is limited. It has been unclear how aware or unaware British Muslims are about these issues, how strongly or otherwise they feel about them and what their views are on the role of the police and the legitimacy of efforts to prevent radicalisation. Crime survey data indicates that British Muslims show higher levels of trust and confidence in the police compared to the general public, despite reporting crime as having a more negative impact.^{24,25} However, it has been unclear if this favourable view of the police extends into counter-terrorism, counter-extremism policing and, in particular, the Prevent programme.

Crest’s locus in this research

Our interest in this field originated in work conducted in 2018/19 on police delivery of Prevent. Counter Terrorism Policing HQ, along with private sector partners and a charitable research trust not involved in this piece of research, commissioned Crest to review and make recommendations on police delivery of the Prevent programme, with particular reference to its communications and engagement with partners and local communities. Our findings²⁶ suggested that while the debate on Prevent was highly polarised (see above) between opponents, who questioned the legitimacy of the programme, and advocates, who questioned the motivations of its critics, the majority of the public had a more balanced position i.e. they were broadly supportive of its principles and aims but had concerns about its practical implications. This research indicated that the majority of British

¹⁸ See: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/our-efforts-to-stop-extremism-are-undermined-at-every-turn-cwrm3d3t>

¹⁹ See: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/aug/06/counter-terrorism-chief-calls-for-greater-social-inclusion>

²⁰ See: <https://news.npc.police.uk/releases/acso-neil-basu-the-independent-review-of-prevent-must-ignore-the-malign-detractors>

²¹ See: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/ian/22/prevent-strategy-on-radicalisation-faces-independent-review>

²² Home Office blog (January 2019). Government announces an independent review of Prevent. Available at:

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2019/01/22/government-announces-independent-review-of-prevent/>

²³ See: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/dec/19/lord-carlile-prevent-review-legal-challenge>

²⁴ Innes, M., Roberts, C., & Innes, H. (2011). Assessing the effects of Prevent policing: a report to the Association of Chief Police Officers. Available at: <https://www.npc.police.uk/documents/TAM/2011/PREVENT%20Innes%200311%20Final%20send%202.pdf>

²⁵ ONS: Crime in England and Wales: Annual supplementary tables

²⁶ Yet to be published by CT Policing

Muslims were likely to share this “middle ground”. Furthermore, it indicated that most British Muslims were not aware of Prevent and consequently had no formed opinions on it.

Our intent

This project set out to explore the potential gap between an often polarised debate conducted by a small number of highly engaged organisations and individuals operating at a national level on policing, extremism and the Prevent programme and the views of the general public and in particular British Muslims, as the demographic most likely to be impacted. Our intention was to better understand how British Muslims view life in their country in relation to the police, extremism and efforts to counter extremism including the Prevent programme. We also hoped to see how British Muslims’ views on these matters compared to the general population and what the implications could be for the government, policymakers, the police, the media, civil society and other interested parties. To deliver this, Crest secured funding from a charitable trust which had not been involved in the previous research commissioned by CT Policing. Throughout the project we sought and received advice from an advisory group drawn from academia and civil society with relevant knowledge of integration, identity and Muslim community relations. We are very grateful for their advice.

Structure of the report

The report below sets out our methodology, the findings from 12 focus groups held in eight towns and cities across England, Wales and Scotland, the results of a Savanta ComRes poll of a 1,000+ sample of British Muslims weighted to be representative and a 1,000+ control group of the general population and our conclusions. The materials we used in our research, including a focus group screening questionnaire, focus group discussion guide and polling questionnaire, are set out in the appendices. The full survey from Savanta ComRes is available [here](#). We recognise that some of our findings call in to question well-established narratives about extremism and Prevent and may challenge strongly held beliefs. However, we encourage all people and organisations with an interest in countering extremism and preventing terrorism to consider them carefully. Though we do not make recommendations for them, our findings have implications for the government, the police, for civil society and for the media.

3. Project initiation / methodology

Literature review

The first stage of the project was to conduct a literature review. The literature review had two main aims:

1. To review existing research looking into British Muslims' attitudes to the police, extremism and counter-extremism, including a thorough evaluation of the methodology of existing quantitative polls
2. To thematise common narratives stemming from existing research, and the validity of these narratives based on the reliability of the underlying data

See Appendix A for a full list of existing attitudinal research reviewed as part of this report, including details of their methodology.

Existing polls and their findings

The majority of polls involving British Muslims have been commissioned by the media, particularly before 2010, during which time most media-commissioned polls were framed around the July 7, 2005 ('7/7') bombings, and mainly polled British Muslim populations only (without comparing to a control group). Due to these limitations, the findings of these polls (see Table 1 in Appendix A for a full list) were not considered sufficiently reliable to inform Crest's research first aim of exploring the attitudes of British Muslims towards policing, extremism and counter-extremism.

Since 2010, as well as further media-commissioned polls, a number of more robust polls have been conducted, including academic studies (see Table 2 in Appendix A). However, the more robust polls have tended to focus on broad topic areas, with some questions that tangentially relate to British Muslim attitudes towards extremism and counter-extremism being included. These polls did not explicitly focus on extremism and counter-extremism as a topic area.

A number of more recent (i.e. post-2010) media-commissioned polls have received methodological criticism (see Table 3 in Appendix A). For example, ICM conducted a widely publicised poll for Channel 4 which reported that nearly a quarter of British Muslims supported the introduction of Sharia law (23 per cent), that four per cent sympathise with terrorism and that more than half (52 per cent) disagreed that homosexuality should be legal in Britain.²⁷ The poll had a large sample size of 1,081 British Muslims, and used a comparison general population group. However, the poll took its test sample from areas where at least a fifth of the population was Muslim.²⁸ This skewed the sample towards (on average) more conservative and deprived Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities, excluding around 50 per cent of the British Muslim population which did not live in these areas. The poll also used a quota design, meaning that the interviewers only had to ensure

²⁷ ICM Muslims survey for Channel 4 (2016). <https://www.icmunlimited.com/historical-polling/icm-muslims-survey-for-channel-4/>

²⁸ Sampling methodology available here: https://www.icmunlimited.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Survey-of-Muslims_Sampling-approach.pdf

that they interviewed eight people per area, as long as they fitted pre-selected demographic characteristics. This method meant the interviewees ended up being those who were most convenient to interview and who were, as a consequence, not representative. Small sample sizes of particular sub-groups also increased the risk of sampling errors within the ICM poll, such as large variability, bias or undercoverage – for example, the poll only sampled 11 Arabs, meaning the views of 11 people who made up one per cent of the survey sample were weighted to reflect the views of six per cent of British Muslims.

One of the more robust and methodologically sound polls was the Ethnic Minority British Electoral Survey (EMBES).²⁹ The EMBES was a standalone ethnic minority survey, as opposed to a 'boost' to an existing general population survey, and covered a range of areas with different levels of ethnic composition, achieving 90 per cent coverage. The substantial sample size (n=2,500) allowed comparisons between different minority groups (as well as a white comparison group), and a breakdown of attitudes within sub-groups e.g. across generations. The use of incentives (£20) ensured good levels of response from difficult-to-reach populations.

The results of the EMBES indicated that overall, British Muslim attitudes towards the police appear relatively close to non-Muslim Asian attitudes and white British attitudes, suggesting there is no general difficulty of policing by consent with British Muslims overall – 31 per cent of British Muslims rated their trust in the police at '9' or '10' (where 0 means 'no trust' and 10 means 'a great deal of trust'). British Black Caribbean respondents showed the lowest levels of trust in the police, with only 42 per cent trusting the police compared to 68 per cent of white British respondents.

The EMBES results echoed those of the Citizenship Survey,³⁰ another large-scale poll, which found that despite lower generalised trust amongst British Muslims, the majority of British Muslims trusted the police, with nearly a third (31 per cent) saying they trusted the police 'a lot', and just less than half (49 per cent) trusting them 'a fair amount'.

Ipsos MORI conducted a summary of research into British Muslim attitudes,³¹ by comparing the relevant parts of existing polls which included British Muslims. It included both small-scale, media-commissioned polls such as ICM's poll for Channel 4, as well as large-scale academic studies, such as the EMBES British Election Study and the Citizenship Survey. Across the surveys included in the review, the results demonstrated that 90-95 per cent of respondents supported opposition to extremist terrorism and violence, with three quarters (75 per cent) of all respondents completely condemning terrorist violence and threats, and a further 15 per cent condemning to some extent. Taken together, the results of the surveys included in Ipsos MORI's review showed that British Muslim attitudes towards the police are largely supportive.

²⁹ British Election Study Ethnic Minority Survey (2010). <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6970-1>

³⁰ Citizenship Survey (2010-11).

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919165040/http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/citizenshipsurveyg4201011>

³¹ Ipsos MORI (2018). A review of survey research on Muslims in Britain. Available at:

https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/publication/documents/2018-03/a-review-of-survey-research-on-muslims-in-great-britain-ipsos-mori_0.pdf

Crest's review of the literature highlighted a lack of research looking into the attitudes of British Muslims towards the police, extremism and counter-terrorism in its own right (i.e. not as a 'boost' to a general population poll, or as a small part of a survey looking at general attitudes). The review also highlighted a lack of methodologically robust research that is independent/neutral. Our aim was therefore to address this key gap in the evidence base, whilst avoiding a number of methodological pitfalls through:

- Ensuring a large sample size to avoid sampling errors, and to enable within-group comparisons, where possible
- Including a comparison/control general population group, for comparative purposes, and to contextualise the results
- Selecting participants from a range of areas with different ethnic compositions and varying proportions of Muslims vs non-Muslims
 - The base sample should mirror the actual demographics of British Muslims as closely as possible, to avoid sampling errors when weighting the results
- The wording of questions should be carefully considered, to avoid unintentional bias or leading questions

Common narratives

Despite polls overall demonstrating British Muslims have a high level of affinity to the UK, and a high level of condemnation of extremist and terrorist activities, the narratives that have developed in the face of such research often paint a different picture. We believe this is partly driven by polls with methodological issues skewing the narrative, as well as selective reporting of results.

Crest reviewed a number of studies that have looked at the representation of British Muslims in the media (see Appendix B for a full list), and categorised the common narratives that emerged as follows:

- **Terror and toxicity**
 - British Muslims are particularly susceptible to, supportive of, or inherently linked with terrorism and extremist ideology – this is often tied into conceptions about a lack of integration
 - British Muslims are hostile to Prevent, which is often described as toxic, divisive or alienating
- **The enemy within – a community apart**
 - British Muslims have divided loyalties e.g. between the UK and another country such as Pakistan/Bangladesh
 - British Muslims are isolated or self-segregated – this is presented as a conscious choice of Muslim communities, with this isolation making them more susceptible to radicalisation

- **Monolithic**
 - British Muslims are a single bloc, static and unresponsive to new realities, with largely uniform opinions
- **Evolving narratives**
 - Moderates growing in confidence: Work by moderate groups or individuals is often highlighted, but in a frequently paternalistic tone which implies British Muslims have a collective responsibility for dealing with extremism
 - Change of focus over time: Since 2008, narratives about British Muslims have shifted away from a primary focus on extremism towards social and cultural differences with wider society

Focus groups

Both quantitative and qualitative research have weaknesses. Quantitative research is limited for understanding the context or setting in which data is collected. Qualitative research may include biases and does not lend itself to generalisation. As a result, Crest employed a mixed methods design for this research project, to offset these respective weaknesses and to obtain both depth and breadth from the research. A mixed methods design also helped to validate the results of each part of the research within the overall project.

We held focus groups both for methodological reasons, and to address a gap in current research. Often, narratives about the opinions of British Muslims are based on the opinions of a select few representatives.^{32,33} We aimed to hear from a cross-section of typical British Muslims, who had an everyday interest in the police, extremism and counter-extremism, as opposed to those who may consider themselves or be seen by others as “community leaders”. In doing so, we were particularly keen to gather the insights of under-represented voices, such as young and/or female British Muslims, who face particular and specific barriers in publicly contributing their opinions.^{34,35}

As a result of these research methodology considerations, and the lack of qualitative research involving British Muslims, we decided to hold a number of focus groups across Britain, and use the findings to inform the quantitative polling.

Aims and structure

We conducted twelve focus groups across eight different towns and cities in England, Wales and Scotland as part of this project overall, to explore the scale of support, permission and scepticism around the police and counter-extremism programmes amongst British Muslims. These towns and

³² Morris, D., Wylie, R., & Wilson, S. (2018). *The Ties that Bind: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in the 21st Century*. London: House of Lords.

³³ Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life (2017). *The Missing Muslims: Unlocking British Muslim Potential for the Benefit for All*. London: Citizens UK.

³⁴ Morris, D., Wylie, R., & Wilson, S. (2018). *The Ties that Bind: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in the 21st Century*. London: House of Lords.

³⁵ Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life (2017). *The Missing Muslims: Unlocking British Muslim Potential for the Benefit for All*. London: Citizens UK.

cities were selected to ensure that our qualitative findings were based on a representative cross-section of British Muslims, reflecting different generations and ethnicities.

A significant amount of planning and preparation was undertaken before conducting the first focus group. This was partly due to focus group recruiters advising Crest that engagement with British Muslim participants may be difficult, and potentially very difficult, if non-Muslim facilitators were used, particularly with regards to groups of British Muslim women. We were keen to assess whether Crest could successfully facilitate the groups ourselves, as this would be beneficial for our understanding of the data and the analysis phase. We therefore conducted three initial focus groups as a pilot to assess whether Crest was able to effectively facilitate focus groups with the target audience, and to refine the discussion guide and methodology. No engagement issues arose in these three pilot focus groups, comprising two all male groups and one all female group. The pilots were followed by the further nine focus groups. The method of the 12 focus groups is detailed in the following sections.

Participants

Individuals were eligible to participate if they were aged 18 or above and identified as Muslim. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the overall study sample aligned as closely as possible with the demographic breakdown (according to gender, ethnicity and generation) of British Muslims.³⁶ Eight to ten participants were recruited for each focus group – the numbers in attendance at each focus group can be found in Table 1.

Eight-six participants participated in the focus groups in total: 48 males (56 per cent) and 38 females (44 per cent). The participants had a median and mean age of 34 years, with a range of 18-51 years. Thirty-three (38 per cent) of the participants were first generation immigrants, and 53 (62 per cent) were second generation. The largest ethnic group was Pakistani (47.7 per cent), followed by Bangladeshi (29.1 per cent), Indian (3.5 per cent), Somalian (9.3 per cent), Black African (2.3 per cent), Sri Lankan (1.2 per cent), British Bengali (3.5 per cent), Arab (2.3 per cent) and Afghan (1.2 per cent).

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants who took part in the twelve focus groups

Group	N	Location / Place of residence	Gender	Ethnicity	Age range	Generation	
Pilot groups	1	8	Tower Hamlets	Female	Bangladeshi	36-47	Mixed (1st & 2nd)
	2	8	Newham	Male	Pakistani	34-51	Mixed (1st & 2nd)
	3	9	Newham	Male	Mixed	18-30	2nd generation
Remaining focus groups	4	2	Watford	Female	Pakistani	27-42	Mixed (1st & 2nd)
	5	8	Slough	Mixed	Pakistani/Afghan	30-48	Mixed (1st & 2nd)

³⁶ This was based on 2011 Census data

6	6	Tower Hamlets	Male	Somali	34-44	1st generation
7	4	Birmingham	Female	Bangladeshi	32-44	2nd generation
8	8	Oldham	Mixed	Bangladeshi	19-35	Mixed (1st & 2nd)
9	9	Braford	Mixed	Pakistani	18-50	Mixed (1st & 2nd)
10	7	Birmingham	Male	Pakistani/Somali	19-45	Mixed (1st & 2nd)
11	10	Cardiff	Mixed	Mixed	20-39	Mixed (1st & 2nd)
12	8	Glasgow	Mixed	Pakistani	23-48	Mixed (1st & 2nd)

The participants were recruited by three specialist recruitment companies.³⁷ Please refer to Appendix C for the screening questionnaire used by the recruiters, which also includes further inclusion and exclusion criteria.

No potentially identifying information was included in any part of the study's results, and the participants were identified only by participant number rather than by name in the transcription and analysis stages.

The discussion guide

The focus groups involved discussions around:

- Being a Muslim in Britain
- Policing and the community
- Extremism and counter-extremism

The focus groups mainly included open-ended questions, discussed verbally, as well as three multiple choice questions using live voting polling technology (results were presented anonymously during the discussion). The questions were designed around the selected topic with the aim of exploring the research questions, whilst prioritising the views and perspectives of the participants themselves. Existing literature was also used to design and refine the questions.

The discussion guide was reviewed by Sunder Katwala,³⁸ who provided consultancy to Crest during this project and co-facilitated two of the three pilot focus groups. Following the pilot focus groups, Crest made a number of changes to the discussion guide which included altering the order

³⁷ Participants for focus groups 1-9 were recruited by Agroni, specialists in BAME research who have conducted surveys for the NHS and central government (<http://www.agroni.co.uk>). Focus groups 10 & 11 were recruited by Made in Studios (<https://www.madeinstudios.com/birmingham>). Focus group 12 (Glasgow) was recruited for by Taylor Mackenzie (<https://www.taylormckenzie.co.uk/>)

³⁸ Sunder Katwala is the director of British Future. He has previously worked as a journalist. He was general secretary of the Fabian Society thinktank from 2003 to 2011, and was previously a leader writer and internet editor at the Observer, a research director of the Foreign Policy Centre and commissioning editor for politics and economics at the publisher Macmillan.

of some questions to ease understanding and the flow of the discussion, and removing one of the live polling questions regarding the Prevent programme, and replacing it with a live polling question about policing. The live polling question was amended because the original polling question had assumed a higher level of prior knowledge of the Prevent programme than was the case, which resulted in confusion within the three pilot groups.³⁹ On reflection, we consider this to be evidence of a discrepancy between common narratives of British Muslim attitudes towards the Prevent programme and the reality.

Additional minor changes were based on Crest's evaluation of the pilot focus groups, and consultation with an advisory group, namely Sunder Katwala, Akeela Ahmed, MBE,⁴⁰ Qari Asim, MBE⁴¹ and Dilwar Hussain.⁴² The advisory group continued to provide feedback throughout the project, for which Crest was grateful.

Please refer to Appendix D for the full discussion guide, which includes the live polling questions.

Procedure

Individuals who met the inclusion criteria (see Appendix C) were identified and then invited to take part in the focus group by the recruiters commissioned by Crest. Each potential participant was given a verbal summary of the study.

The focus groups took part in local community centres or hired meeting rooms. The focus groups were facilitated by two members of the Crest team (Sunder Katwala co-facilitated two of the three pilot focus groups). The single-sex focus groups were facilitated by two facilitators of the same sex. Each focus group lasted 90 minutes and was audio recorded.

Participants in the pilot groups were reimbursed £60 for their time. This was reduced to £40 for subsequent groups for budgetary reasons. Each participant signed a consent form confirming they had received their incentive and gave their permission for quotes from the focus groups to be presented anonymously in a final report, as per the research project's purpose which was explained to them by the recruiters, and repeated at the beginning of the focus groups (please refer to Appendix E for the confirmation of payment and consent form).

³⁹ In the pilot focus groups, the following question was asked using live polling technology:

The Prevent programme aims to target all forms of extremism e.g. Islamist extremism and far right extremism. To what extent does this align with your thoughts on Prevent? 1/A: This is true of Prevent; 2/B: This is partly true of Prevent; 3/C: This is not true of Prevent; 4/D: I do not know enough about Prevent to answer

Given the majority of participants had not heard of the Prevent programme, this question caused some confusion as it was being answered hypothetically in most cases. As a result, this question was replaced with Q5 in the final discussion guide (see Appendix D).

⁴⁰ Akeela Ahmed is an equalities campaigner specialising in youth and gender issues and Chair of the Independent Members of the Cross Government Working Group on Anti Muslim Hatred In 2017 she helped organise the *Women's March On London*. She received an MBE for services to Muslim women in 2018.

⁴¹ Qari Asim, MBE is senior Imam at Makkah Mosque in Leeds, which has won the award of being the UK's model mosque. He is a Legal Director at a global law firm, DLA Piper. He is Deputy Chair of Government's Anti-Muslim Hatred/ Islamophobia Working Group and he is Chair of Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, and senior editor of ImamsOnline.

⁴² Dilwar Hussain is a Fellow at Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), and an independent consultant working on social policy, Muslim identity and Islamic reform in the modern world. He is founding Chair of New Horizons in British Islam, a charity that works on Muslim identity, integration and reform.

Method of analysis

The focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim following each session.

The responses were analysed using inductive thematic analysis i.e. a data-driven approach that does not depend on any pre-existing assumptions of the themes, based on the procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).⁴³ Thematic analysis provides a methodology which is less dependent on pre-existing theory, thus providing an appropriate methodology for the present study given the lack of existing research literature on British Muslims' views towards extremism and counter-extremism.

The results of the focus groups are detailed in the following chapter.

Polling

Polling requirements & commissioning

The focus groups informed the development of the quantitative polling, which aimed to see how scalable the findings of the focus groups were. There were a number of methodological considerations (detailed above) which were imperative when commissioning the poll, including having a minimum sample size of 1,000, and including a general population sample as a control group. Nine polling companies were initially contacted, and it was specified that the polling sample would need to be reflective of the British Muslim population in the following regards:

- ethnicity (i.e. around one third non-Asian);
- age range (reflecting the younger demography of British Muslims – though the sample would be 18+); and
- geographical spread (i.e. from areas that have a high and a low proportion of Muslim residents)

based on 2011 census data, to reduce the likelihood of sampling biases when weighting the data.

Of all the polling companies contacted, only one, Savanta ComRes, who have a Faith Research Centre,⁴⁴ was able to closely adhere to the specified quotas.

⁴³ Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.

⁴⁴ <https://www.comresglobal.com/what-we-do/faith/>

Polling questions

The polling questions were developed based on existing literature, and the focus group findings. The advisory group provided feedback on the polling questions in terms of their suitability and usefulness, and Savanta ComRes reviewed the questions in terms of their validity and reliability.

The polling questionnaire included the following sections:

- **Screener questions:** participants who worked in journalism, public relations, market research, media/broadcasting, policy, or refused to provide their field of work were excluded from the poll, in order to ensure a representative sample of British Muslims that would not have a disproportionate knowledge of the issues asked about in the poll
- **Demographic questions:** gender, region (broad region as well as first part of postcode to measure density of Muslim population in the participants' place of residence), main sources of news, newspaper readership,⁴⁵ worship frequency, education level, employment status
- **Voting intention:** note this poll was completed before the December 2019 election
- **Awareness/knowledge of the Prevent programme:** this question was included early in the poll as not to inadvertently lead the respondents towards the correct answer by including it after the section on extremism and counter-extremism
- **Is Britain a good place to be a Muslim?** what makes Britain a good or poor place to be a Muslim; the perceived fairness of treatment of Muslims by different institutions; whether the participants considered their area to be better or worse than other areas to live in as a Muslim; the extent to which Islamophobia is considered a problem; the extent to which Islamophobia has changed (if at all) over the last five years
- **Trust in police:** how much the participants trusted the police; how much they trusted the police to undertake particular tasks; views on police engagement
- **Views on extremism and counter-extremism:** which groups should be involved in preventing extremism and terrorism; levels of worry about Islamist extremism and far right extremism; support for the principles and approach of the Prevent programme, including its targeting of particular communities based on risk; concerns about the Prevent programme's approach; the likelihood of referring to the Prevent programme; what would increase trust in the Prevent programme/the likelihood of referring

See Appendix G for the full polling questionnaire.

⁴⁵ See Appendix F for breakdowns of main sources of news and newspaper readership among the Muslim adults and GB adults groups

Procedure & respondents

Savanta ComRes interviewed 2,000 respondents online, consisting of a sample of 1,000 GB Muslims and 1,000 GB adults. Fieldwork was conducted from the 25th October – 8th November 2019. The GB Muslims sample was weighted to be demographically representative of all GB Muslims by age, sex, region and ethnicity (see Table 2 for the demographic breakdown of the unweighted and weighted survey sample). The GB adults sample was weighted to be representative of all GB adults by age, sex and region. Savanta ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

Table 2. Demographic breakdown of the n=1,000 participants who took part in the twelve focus groups

	Survey total (unweighted)	Weighted total
Ethnic group	53.7% Asian 17.6% White 9.7% Mixed 9.4% Other 6.6% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British <i>(3% of participants responded 'prefer not to say')</i>	66.0% Asian 7.8% White 3.9% Mixed 9.7% Other 9.7% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British <i>(3% unknown)</i>
Geographical distribution	35.6% London 13.7% West Midlands 12.0% North West 9.8% Yorkshire and the Humber 7.7% South East 7.2% East Midlands 4.6% Scotland 3.0 South West 2.3% East of England 2.2% Wales 1.9% North East	36.0% London 14.0% West Midlands 13.0% North West 11.0% Yorkshire and the Humber 7.0% South East 5.0% East Midlands 3.0% Scotland 2.0 South West 5.0% East of England 2.0% Wales 2.0% North East
Age profile	70.9% 18-34 years 26.2% 35-54 years 2.9% 55+ years	51.0% 18-34 years 36.0% 35-64 years 13.0% 55+ years

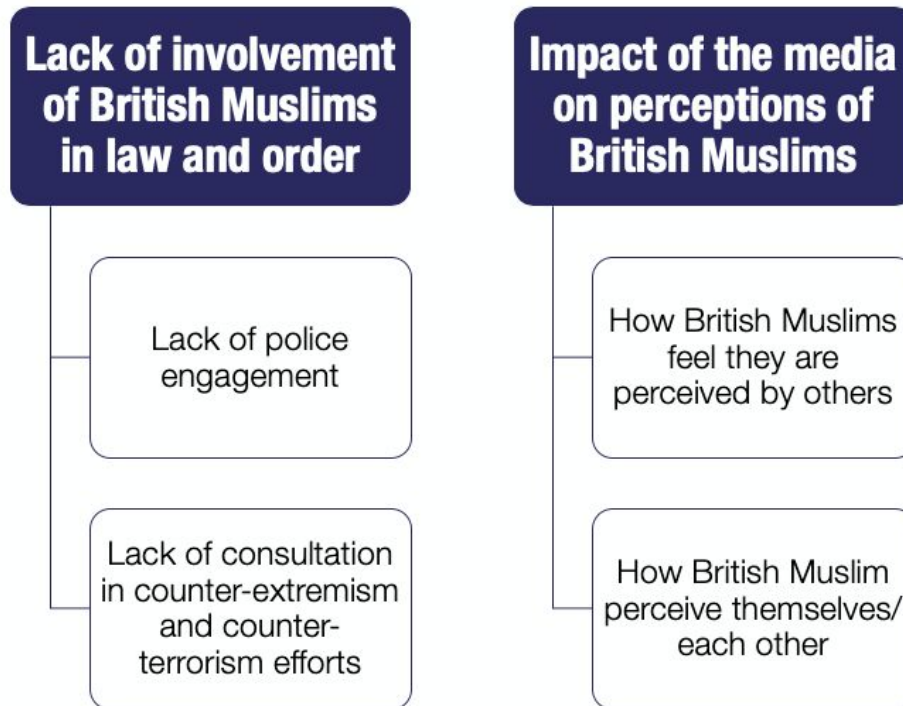
The full polling results can be found [here](#). The results are presented in the following chapter.

4. Findings

Focus group findings

Thematic analysis of the transcripts yielded two main themes which included two sub-themes each, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Thematic map showing two main themes and two sub-themes



The content of each main theme and sub-theme is detailed below, with relevant quotes. All quotes are presented verbatim, apart from when identifying information such as individuals' names has been removed to protect confidentiality, and when contextual information is added in square brackets to aid understanding. Participants are identified by number (participant = P; facilitator = F) and the focus group (FG) number (as detailed in Table 1).

1. Lack of involvement of British Muslims in law and order

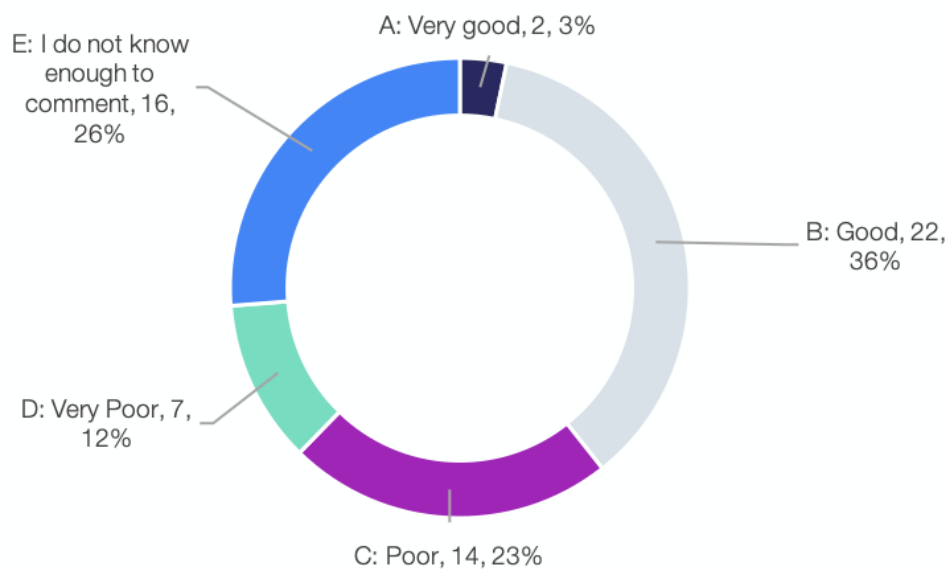
The lack of involvement of British Muslims in law and order activities (namely policing, counter-extremism and counter-terrorism), and frustrations arising from this lack of involvement, featured prominently across the twelve focus groups. Discussions around inadequate police engagement were more general in nature compared to discussions around a lack of consultation in counter-extremism and counter-terrorism efforts – that is, police engagement (and lack of) was much more often discussed in terms of the community as a whole, as opposed to the police's engagement with British Muslims specifically. Discussions around the design and implementation of counter-extremism and counter-terrorism efforts on the other hand centred around a direct and

specific impact on British Muslims, and as such the frustrations around not feeling consulted (despite widespread agreement for the need and purpose of such activities) were felt more personally.

Lack of police engagement

The first live polling question showed that fewer than two fifths (39 per cent) of participants believed that the police are good at engaging with their community, whilst over a quarter (26 per cent) did not know enough to comment (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Responses to the live polling question:
'How good or bad are the police at engaging with your community, in your experience?'**⁴⁶



Generally, responses to questions of what contributes to good or poor police community engagement were generalist i.e. not specific to British Muslims. These included cuts to police budgets, which were frequently mentioned:

P4: “First of all, our community, the wider community, we need more police officers. Before we saw two police officers all the time, morning time or evening time, school time. Nowadays [...] we need more police officers. Because the government cut down the police. So we are suffering.”

– FG1

⁴⁶ This polling question was not introduced until after the pilot focus groups

When police cuts were mentioned, they were described as having had a wholly negative effect on police engagement with the local community. The negative effects put forward included the decreased visibility of police officers (contributing to increased feelings of disconnect and decreased trust between the police and the community over the past decade or so), and the perceived de-prioritisation of less serious crimes such as theft and drug dealing:

P4: "In our early years, we used to have people to help us. Come in ... we'd have a fire engine and the real firefighters, we'd have the police, we'd have an ambulance ... they don't have enough people now. So unless somebody calls 999 a child will never see a police officer's car unless it's going on the road. They'll never get a chance to see the ambulance service."

P1: "See, that is what we need. That is really important. You know, the young that are growing up now, the barrier that exists ... if they don't ever see the police in the community, they don't know who to go to if they need help. So I think it is important for them to go into schools and have those conversations early on ... to say this is what we do and try and recruit as well, you know. Because it's a potential career for many."

– FG7

P1: "In the past, you used to have your local bobby and everyone knew him, but because of austerity and cut-backs that personal touch is gone. They don't have the staff."

P4: "I think in the news as well recently, this isn't just to do with Muslims, but there was a thing where the police can't respond to the things they could respond to before. Like they would just take the report and like not come ..."

P1: "Like burglary ..."

P4: "Yeah stuff like that. And police engagement, and because of that, it's poor but that's because of austerity and cuts and shit."

– FG10

P8: "When you look at policing there is various elements. So one of them is obviously the cuts and the other thing is, is the attitude of the police generally, and it's been related to the cuts, yeah? Just generally to a lot of crime which you'd refer to as petty crime. House robberies, we've seen a huge increase recently in car theft, in this kind of criminal activity, which I don't think the police have the resources to tackle."

– FG2

P1: "[Eight years ago] there used to be a lot of visits, community support officers? They used to walk around, a lot of them. I used to see two daily that I almost knew, I'd say 'hello' and 'hi' all the time and ask them to pop over for a cup of tea. I don't see any of them anywhere at all in Oldham anymore. I don't know where they've gone. I mean I know obviously there have been police cuts, but it's just so sad because a lot of crimes are taking place in Oldham, particularly like burglary and theft. And it's so on the rise, and sometimes I question, 'what is going on? why is this not getting addressed?'. But again it goes back to central government then local government, cuts have been made. I'm quite open minded in the sense that you can't directly blame the police because it all depends what comes down from central government to local government. And because of the cutbacks we are in this problem that we are having. So I know the police are out there to help us if there is a requirement but I don't feel things are being done as much as they can, but again is it because of a lack of funding. And that's the bottom line really, lack of funding is everywhere."

– FG8

Consequently, the participants who expressed concern due to police cuts were of the view that the decrease in police officer numbers should be reversed:

P5: "I would like to see a bit more bobbies on the beat, a bit more visual police on the road."

– FG9

P3: "General impressions of the police: I think they are doing their job. And I know there are less police officers and stuff. It is difficult for them. [...] But we do need more police around, obviously. Because there are less police now, so we do need more police."

– FG1

A small number of participants specified that police engagement with minority communities specifically had worsened over time. Such comments were also attributed to cuts in funding and police numbers, but featured less prominently than the more generalised comments about decreased police engagement with the community as a whole:

P7: “In 2003/2004, [...] we had senior police officers come to our organisation. It’s a mosque and a community centre. They came and they ran a workshop about life in the police and at that time there was a drive to make the police look like British society. So recruit. From that one workshop, I still know four people that attended the workshop, and remember there were only twenty of us, four people are currently serving in the police force because of that.”

F1: “So that outreach works, yeah?”

P7: “That outreach works. And that basically hasn’t happened.”

F1: “So there has been less of that? They used to do more?”

P7: “They used to come to our meetings but that’s all stopped. Because despite there being a Muslim Superintendent in town, he is one man, he can be black, brown, Asian. If he hasn't got the resources to send the police officers out to recruit, like they were, then obviously, you’re going to see less of this.”

– FG2

P1: “I sometimes feel like because I’m a Muslim they might treat me differently. Nowadays that’s how I feel.”

P4: “It’s not like before, they were friendly. Now there are so many gaps between the police and public. I don’t know why. Is it the government? Psychologically I don’t understand.”

– FG1

Nevertheless, in five focus groups, participants mentioned specific efforts by the police to engage and work with their Muslim community, particularly in response to anti-Muslim attacks or demonstrations:

P2: "I also feel that the police are quite good in terms of getting together with different religions. For example, we have a religious march, for the Muslim community, and we have so many different people helping us like the Bradford Council, the police themselves, coming and patrolling it so there is no trouble in Bradford or no groups like EDL coming and causing problems and frictions. It is a very comfortable walk because we have got the police in, we have the patrols there and we have the support we need."

– FG9

P6: "I think last year when there was the attacks on the mosques and the police came to the local mosque and I felt it was reassuring that they were very proactive and very supportive at the time. That made it more positive for me."

– FG10

Similarly to discussions of Islamophobia, instances of negative police interactions described by participants (as opposed to the absence of police engagement, which featured more prominently), were more often non-direct than direct e.g. incidents heard via word of mouth or incidents seen on social media. Given the majority of participants were coming from the perspective of not having had much interaction with the police at all, social media had a significant influence on overall perceptions of how well the police engage with their communities:

P1: "I only see the police in a positive way."

F1: "You only see the police in a positive way?"

P1: "I always see the police in a positive way. I have seen instances where I feel the stop and search before a British Asian Muslim is higher than someone from a different ethnic background. I don't particularly know why that is. From that experience, from what I have seen and heard, I feel as though they are persecuting more people from different ethnic backgrounds."

F1: "You do think they are persecuting people from ethnic backgrounds?"

P1: "Yeah, every experience I have had with the police has been absolutely fine, personally."

F1: "Right so your personal experiences have been ok, that's why you said something positive at the start."

P1: "Yeah I have seen instances, have heard of instances where different individuals, British Muslims, have had very very poor experiences. Partly you could blame them as well."

– FG9

P3: "After all of these viral videos, there is a gap between the community and the police. Because I don't think the community has any trust in them anymore."

– FG1

P4: "I think on the one hand you can say that none of us had negative experience, you always hear of other people who have."

P3: "Yeah videos, just like some videos on the media and stuff like that, but I feel like with the police, they're there, if you need help, they will help, they'll help anyone and stuff so... I just see the police as the police, that's it."

– FG10

F2: "What is your impression of police?"

P3: "I think they're fine, so far. I mean I haven't had any..."

P4: "Experience."

P3: "I know people that have had encounters and stuff."

– FG5

Overall, despite the consensus that police engagement had worsened as a result of police cuts, and the negative impact of social media on how British Muslims believe they are treated by the police, the participants generally agreed that the police are doing a good job in difficult circumstances, and that only a small minority of police were causing issues in terms of community engagement:

P9: "I feel that you have the good cops and the bad cops in my opinion. There are some good police out there, actually out there trying to help people. But I think some of them... where the issues is guys, where they..."

P4: "Abuse their power."

P9: "Yeah exactly. That was what I was gonna say. Abuse their power."

F1: "Is it half and half, the police? Is it a mix?"

P9: "I think 80 per cent are probably good, even 90 per cent of police officers are pretty good. You get the odd 10 per cent who abuse their power."

– FG3

P6: "I think the police, yeah, there is absolutely no issue with the police at the moment. My only issue at the moment, is the police cuts, there aren't enough of them at the moment."

– FG2

However, these opinions did differ across participants, with a small minority expressing negative overall views of the police and how they engage with their community – though again, these were largely non-specific grievances in the main, as opposed to being due to direct negative experiences with the police:

P8: "Yeah I have a pretty negative view of the police which shouldn't be the case but it is the case."

Two main suggestions emerged for how the police could improve their engagement with communities as a whole, as well as British Muslim communities – firstly, to simply have more police officers (as mentioned above), and secondly, targeted recruitment. However, recruiting police officers from a British Muslim or ethnic minority background was not considered sufficient in and of itself, as being from the same ethnicity was not thought to guarantee representativeness, and was also said to potentially come across as a 'box ticking exercise':

P4: "I think the police's relationship with a lot of minority groups could be improved. Obviously we're talking about Muslims here today. At the same time the Muslim community isn't just like one big monolith, there is many different types of people, like sub-cultures even, within that. I think some Muslims may have more issues with the police, maybe depending what area you're in, so I wouldn't say the police have a specific issue against Muslims. But the police probably have to improve their relationship with non-white groups like much more basically. And Muslims obviously come underneath that banner."

F1: "And how can they do that?"

P4: "Representation is obviously important but what a lot of people would get annoyed at is representation for representation's sake. So just taking people just because they're from an ethnic minority background. But what I think they should do is recruit from these areas where there are a lot of Muslims because there is obviously going to be people qualified, who have talent and who will probably a good police officer. When there's representation it isn't that you feel safer, it just feels more comfortable."

– FG10

P1: “I do agree with what has been said, particularly about cuts and stuff. But then the problem is that in order to recruit police officers, who are they recruiting? Sometimes I think it is getting out of hand, there are police officers doing their job, but they seem to be recruiting anyone.”

– FG1

P5: “If that were to happen, honestly, the question would be how they would be doing that. [...] There are lots of Asian people, there are lots of black people who are policemen, they will say basically what happened is they fulfilled a particular tick box exercise and they really don’t represent me. People like [senior Muslim police officer] and [Muslim police officer], you don’t want them knocking on your door, they belong to a different social class, his upbringing is different, the opportunities he’s had are different.”

– FG2

Instead, it was considered more important to have a comprehensive knowledge of the local area they were policing and the people who live in that area, and to take the time for targeted and effective communication with the community they are policing:

P1: “They should do more, I would say they should consider the background, what kind of person they are. You’re recruiting them from the community, because they are working within the community. It is difficult but they need to come out, they need to start talking to people, they need to start going to community centres. And if they do attend someone’s house, they need to sit down and actually get to know that person and listen to them. And I do think right now they don’t listen, they don’t give you a chance to say anything.”

– FG1

P2: “I think there should be some form of national strategy. Not only for the Muslim community, I think all sorts of minority communities. I think there needs to be workshops in place in and around different areas with members of the public like how we’re sat here, but also in conjunction with police officers. For example, the Muslim community and the Muslim police officers informing and educating non-Muslim and non-Asian police officers. That is the best way of moving forward in terms of improving the police force and how they treat us.”

– FG8

Lack of consultation in counter-extremism and counter-terrorism efforts

Discussions regarding the state's counter-extremism and counter-terrorism efforts elicited feelings of frustration within the focus group participants as a result of not being consulted during the design or implementation of government programmes. The main issues to do with the Prevent programme that were outlined during the focus groups related to the way the programme is communicated to British Muslims, as opposed to there being a fundamental lack of support for the programme's aims and principles. These issues included:

- Not being aware of the Prevent programme in the first place
- Feeling targeted as a result of the communication of the Prevent programme's mode of working (specifically the pairing of 'Islamist' and 'extremism', which was felt to be damaging due to the implicit associations it can contribute to)
- A lack of transparency in the how decisions are made regarding where the highest risk of terrorism is drawn from
- British Muslims not being consulted during the initial design of the Prevent programme

In order to provide context for the participants' views on counter-extremism and counter-terrorism, the focus group questions aimed to gauge the relative salience of extremism and counter-extremism as issues considered by the participants. This was assessed by asking participants how worried they were about all forms of extremism, and of their awareness of the Prevent programme.

Overall, there were varying levels of worry about extremism within the focus groups. No participant denied the fact that extremism exists in Britain. Most participants who responded stated that they agreed it was an issue that required attention, but they were not overly worried day-to-day:

P1: "I suppose because it doesn't impact my day to day life, I think if it was more a case of impacting me on a day to day basis, then I'd be worried."

– FG7

The participants who showed higher than average levels of worry about extremism spoke about their worry being driven by recent, local extremism-related events:

P4: "People was so scared. What happened in the schools [Bethnal Green Academy] with Syria, for example. [...] How much concern the head teacher had [...] Any holidays she is scared that someone is missing, when school is open or something like that. [...] At that time everyone was so scared."

– FG1

P2: "Well I am [worried about extremism], because something's happened a few years ago, extremism in a couple of the mosques in Cardiff. So since then you know I'm a bit more wary. You know, I've got kids, before they used to go to the mosque, and now even though I'd like them to learn more, but I do feel like you just don't know what is going to happen and it's like there is fear from both sides. Because there could be extremism, Muslim extremists, teaching them wrong things and at the same time, they could be, you know, the whole Islamophobic attacks because of clashes back from, retaliation back from, you know, things happening in other countries and everywhere else. It does have an impact."

– FG11

Participants who took part in focus groups outside of London were more likely to state that they were not worried about extremism within their own area, but that there was more reason to be worried in the south of England, or London specifically:

P2: "To be honest with you I've never come across someone extremist personally myself but I've heard in the media over the last year, was it? That guy who went to Westminster Bridge and he tried to run someone over. And they shot him dead or something."

– FG10

P6: "Not really Scotland, I feel like nobody wants to cause any trouble in Scotland. We're all happy up here. But down South you've got all sorts of havoc going on, so that's where all the terrorism goes on."

– FG12

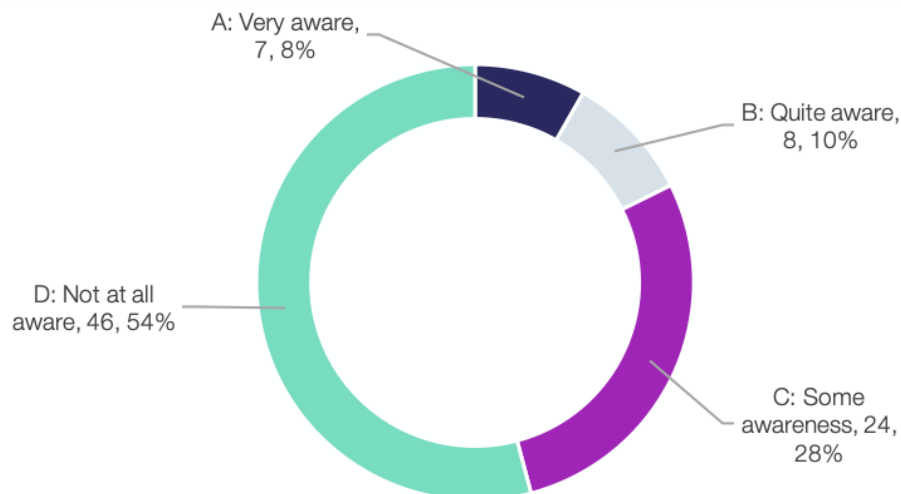
Knife crime was brought up as a concern in over half of the focus groups, without being prompted by the facilitators, indicating that broader concerns about crime (particularly knife crime and drug-related offending amongst young people) might be more salient as a day-to-day worry for the participants compared to extremism, e.g:

P1: "For me, that's higher up – terrorism and extremism are second-party concern. Because that's not really every time happening around. It is not like in daily life you see. And the drugs, the fighting, this is daily life, taking place every day."

– FG4

The second live polling question demonstrated that there was a very low awareness of the Prevent programme across the focus group participants: over half (54 per cent) were 'not at all aware', whilst more than a quarter (28 per cent) had 'some awareness'. Only eight per cent said they were 'very aware' (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Responses to the live polling question:
'How aware were you of the Prevent programme before agreeing to take part in this focus group?'**



Those who had heard of the Prevent programme, or thought they might have heard of it, had mainly heard of it through their work – awareness was particularly high amongst the participants who worked in or with schools. There was some confusion amongst the participants who had some awareness of the Prevent programme. For example, some participants mistook the Prevent programme for other government programmes, e.g. British Transport Police's 'see it, say it, sorted' campaign, or MI5 activities:

P2: "Prevention of Islamophobia or something."

F1: "Okay."

P3: "Campaign where you see something, you support it."

P5: "See it say it sort it."

– FG3

P3: "I didn't know, I didn't know there was a special like programme on it. I thought ..."

P6: "... like the community leaders working with different communities. Get to know the communities, that's what I thought."

P2: "I think it's quite possible that they can actually send people into like you know mosques and stuff and that."

P4: "They do do that."

P2: "You know, what was it, the undercover?"

P1: "MI5."

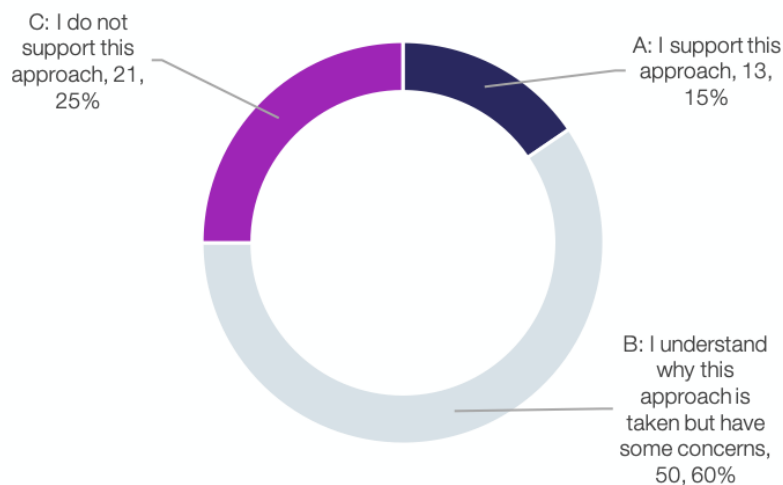
P4: "There were a few mosques actually that had it."

P1: "MI5."

Despite the low level of awareness and confusion regarding the Prevent programme, there was nevertheless a high level of agreement across the focus groups that there was a need for programmes that aim to counter-extremism and prevent terrorism before it happens. The third live polling question also demonstrated that three-quarters of focus group participants (75 per cent) understood the need for a targeted approach to preventing terrorism (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Responses to the live polling question:

'Prevent is targeted at communities and areas of the country where the risk of terrorists being drawn from is highest. While it also seeks to prevent other types of terror like that from far right extremism, this means it is currently mostly aimed at Muslim communities at risk of being drawn into extreme Islamist terrorism, because the police and security services assess that that is currently the single biggest terror threat we face. Which of the following statements best reflects your view?'



Whilst the polling question indicated clear overall agreement with the principles of the Prevent programme, subsequent focus group discussions provided a more nuanced view, including detail on the concerns that 60 per cent of the participants reported having about the programme's method of risk-based targeting. Discussions of the description of the Prevent programme that was presented to participants (see Appendix B) resulted in a strong initial reaction to the wording 'Islamist extremism' in particular, with this use of language causing participants to feel as if they were being unfairly targeted by the government as a result of their religion:

P2: "One thing that came to my attention just now, in the second paragraph where it says 'to prevent extreme right-wing radicalisation as well as extreme Islamism'. That bugs me there and then. There is no such thing as Islamism. You are Muslim, and you follow Islam."

– FG3

This dissonance between participants' underlying support for the programme's aims/approach and of feeling unfairly targeted (despite not denying the existence of extremism), was ascribed to the perception that their religion was being automatically associated with extremism and terrorism as a result of the programme's targeted approach. Many participants strongly expressed that all forms of extremism were entirely anti-Islam, and that any associations between religion and extremism were thus unfair:

P1: "I think that at the moment what is unclear is the background that talks about this. It is more putting Muslims in one corner and all other, like choices about that. They need to clarify as well to the general public as all Islam is a moral Islam. We as Muslims, we try our best to tell people about Islam, Alhamdulillah, and about extremism, which is not Muslims as well, but this kind of programmes they are trying to keep the Muslims as their top priorities, the concerns are obviously Muslims don't like it."

– FG2

P2: "This is totally against Islam, Islam is a peaceful religion. We are totally against these people, these terrorists, we disown these people who are doing what they're doing. Islam is not about that."

– FG9

P5: "For me, extremism means a pseudo version of Islam, the incorrect version of Islam, that's a simple interpretation."

– FG10

Participants also felt there was a risk of the government looking 'too hard' for evidence of extremism, due to an implicit, pre-conceived association between Islam/Muslims and extremism/terrorism, further fuelled by the wording of the Prevent programme's purpose, leading to innocent people potentially being drawn in unfairly:

P5: "My concerns would be is that they've already got a preconceived idea, that they've already got a generalisation. And that they feel that because of history and things that have happened by a small group of people, that this is it, then they start targeting everybody."

– FG12

P1: "I think you read this and literally just think Muslims, that's it, and [...] you kind of have this programme in schools I think, and so when they're kind of looking for people who could kind of fall under this, they will kind of just be looking at the Muslims – they won't be looking at, what I think anyway, I don't think they'll be looking at the other kind of ... white kind of people. It would kind of be Muslims would be targeted and you'd get like innocent people as well."

– FG11

In roughly half of the focus groups, participants expressed scepticism around the statistics or evidence underpinning Islamist extremism being the largest extremist threat currently faced (used as the basis for the Prevent programme's targeting). Some participants were concerned that this would lead to a disproportionate emphasis on one type of extremism, and other threats being underplayed. The participants who expressed scepticism stated that without understanding how the risk level was ascertained by the government, that they could not confidently support the programme's targeting of British Muslim communities:

F1: "So part of your problem is, you don't necessarily trust the assessment, understand the assessment?"

P1: "Yes, yes I would. I would go against that question because I mean, as my own view I wouldn't directly say without proof, without evidence."

– FG4

P6: “The statement here, I want to know what stats they used for the security service to assess that the current single biggest terror threat they face is Islamic extremism. What stats do they use for this statement for example? Is Islamic extremism really the biggest threat at the moment? I mean that's up for discussion right surely. [...] I feel like I think is quite misleading personally. I just feel there's bigger threats out there. I think the more common problems are like football hooliganism at the moment is really a problem in the country at the moment, racism, there's lots of other issues. And I think you know to word it this way I feel like is targeting Muslim extremism is the biggest problem in this issue. And I don't agree with it. I don't agree with the whole statement. Because you make stats however you want them, you can mess around with stats and make them fit your agenda. So if that's the agenda they want, they can make stats look like that, make it a problem, like we've already spoken about. And then they can have things like the Prevent programme for something that is a really small percentage, because of the stats and how they portray it. They make it look like a massive problem and then they've got to fix the problem. They come up with things like this and then it's a problem that was never a problem, or not as big a problem as it seems.”

– FG11

P4: “When you look back at what the original plan was for the [Prevent] programme, makes me question the authenticity of those figures, and the authenticity of the programme. Was it an objective of whoever it was leading that programme, to say ‘can we balance the numbers out a little bit’? [...] But because of the initial reason for creating the programme, it just removes all credibility. And I wouldn't be trusting, I have a trust issue.”

– FG8

P1: “I don't support this approach. I said this because I don't think it is just Islamist terrorism, there is right wing as well, which is a concern. You know so I honestly don't think that the Muslim one is more ... I don't know the word.”

P2: “Dominant...”

P1: “Dominant than the other. And depending on the area, if you go to a lower working class area I think you have got the issue of right wing extremism and it is no less than if you go into an inner city Muslim area where there is the risk of Islamist radicalisation. So I don't think it is right that the police focus their areas just on the one. I think there has got to be a balance because the other one is just as important and it's on the rise.”

– FG7

The scepticism around how the level of risk is determined frequently obscured discussions of whether or not participants would support risk-based targeting in principle, if the risk was determined in a way that was transparent – the level of scepticism varied across the different focus groups, but was present across all twelve. When asked how resources should be targeted by the Prevent programme, despite strong negative feelings often being invoked on the basis of the written description, participants' discussions often ultimately resulted in agreement of needing to target the areas deemed to be highest risk in terms of extremist and terrorist activities (assuming the risk was calculated in a fair and understandable way):

P1: "I think you need to prioritise, like what you said, it does shift. It is not one thing all the time. It's assessing the situation. And then focusing the resources where it needs to. For example, right now it is right-wing extremism. But you don't hear about that you know, in the news. You only hear about it if it's to do with Muslims. You don't hear how the shift has changed because the concern is more right-wing extremism, you know, whereas if it was the other way around, you'd hear about that in the news. So it's just focusing the resources on the right things. And that can change as you said, you know, but at the end of the day we need to do that. We shouldn't be singling anybody out. And we shouldn't be targeted areas because of racism or anything else, it should be for the right reasons. And that is what they should be doing."

– FG7

However, a similar number of participants advocated an equal spread of resources across all types of extremism (e.g. 50 per cent targeted towards preventing Islamist extremism and 50 percent for preventing far right extremism) – but it is unclear how much of this opinion was driven by a lack of faith in the way risk is currently assessed by the government, and subsequently communicated to British Muslims:

P9: "I think that people from outside of the Muslim community ... people in the Muslim community, people outside the Muslim community ... none of them are able to better prevent terrorist activity taking place. If you targeted 80 per cent – say you've got 100 per cent funding – say you targeted 80 per cent of that funding at Muslim community, it is not gonna be as effective, any different, as spreading it 50/50 or equally across every community."

– FG3

P3: "They need to not just target Muslims, there is extremism in Christianity and in the Jewish community. [...] I think it needs to be equal."

– FG5

P1: “If they are just focusing, aiming on Muslims, obviously, there will be, obviously, I mean, they will be thinking they are just focusing on us and targeting on us only and not other cultures. Everybody is living here. Anyone can do something wrong. It’s not just... for which way are they aiming at Muslims?”

– FG4

Consequently, the main issue outlined by the focus group participants was to do with how the Prevent programme was communicated – both in terms of general awareness raising, and the language used when describing the programme to the public. A high number of participants stated that if descriptions of the Prevent programme were clear and unambiguous in informing the public that it aimed to tackle *all* forms of extremism, and avoided highlighting Islamist extremism where possible, then they would be more likely to support the programme:

P2: “When they’re talking about it, Prevent, they should talk about both [Islamist and far right extremism], or any other terrorism. Like when I went to the school meeting, they only talked about Islamic radicalisation. And some parents, they go with good intention and interest, but then the next meeting they are not coming because it is the same thing. And targeting only one community. We are suffering. They are not mentioning it or addressing it. So there is nothing new. We already know about it.”

– FG1

P1: “It goes back to some of the wording used, ‘it is run by local police forces and councils, and works to prevent extreme right wing radicalisation as well as extreme Islamic radicalisation’. So those two points, I feel like it could have just stopped there at ‘radicalisation’. Because then it just straight away has that notion of it's just referring to Islamic extremism.”

– FG8

P6. “It’s the way you come about it, it’s the way you speak about it, you need to speak about it in a way that doesn’t only affiliate with Muslims, doesn’t affiliate with religion, doesn’t affiliate a group. You need to keep broad, you know, you need to mention every single person, you can’t speak to people directly, that’s what I’m trying to say.”

- FG3

Poor communication about the Prevent programme also fed into a broader frustration expressed in two focus groups, as a result of a lack of consultation with British Muslims when designing and implementing the programme, and the resultant negative impact of this on the likelihood of British Muslims referring to the programme:

P6:⁴⁷ “So it's the way Prevent actually launched, there were a few fundamental mistakes. Number one, there was very little engagement with ... because let's face it, this happened after the rise of Islamic extremism, Prevent was formulated from that. So naturally Muslims are going to feel like a target. Number one. Number two, if they were going to, Prevent, the government, launch such a programme there was absolutely zero engagement with the leaders of the Muslim community, and if there was it was miniscule. So that is the second big issue.”

– FG2

P2: “[It's] for the non-Muslims to feel like, 'oh, they're doing something'. Then maybe that makes you feel like, 'oh, that's why we don't know about it?' You know, because it's not for us. I mean if we had an issue, is this where we would go? Because we don't know about this, the people who need to know about it, kind of the non-Muslims who are scared, who kind of need the reassurance we're doing something, that's why they know about it, and we don't know about it. So it again shows who it's kind of for and what the kind of actual reason behind it really is.”

P9: “Yeah, I agree, I don't think non-Muslims would be able to identify what extremism is like we would. So I think we should be the ones who know about the programme because we would identify extremism if it's like a family member or someone in the community.”

– FG11

P9: “You said Prevent has been operating for years, and most people do not even know about it. So who does know about Prevent or how to activate the process of Prevent? I don't understand who it's aimed at. Who are the people who are aware of it who can do something about it? I do think that's a definite problem.”

– FG11

⁴⁷ Note this quote is from one of the few participants who had a good knowledge of the Prevent programme

Summary of main theme one

Discussions around policing and counter-extremism highlighted feelings of disengagement across the twelve focus groups. Whereas opinions of how well the police engage with the community were considered to be largely applicable to the local community as a whole (e.g. the negative impact of police cuts on community engagement), discussions of the Prevent programme, whilst demonstrating widespread support for the principles of the programme, prompted strong reactions of feeling unfairly targeted as British Muslims, and of being omitted from the design and implementation of a programme that directly impacted them.

Fewer than two fifths (39 per cent) of participants believed the police are good at engaging with their community, whilst over a quarter (26 per cent) did not know enough to comment. It was more common for participants to report having experienced little to no engagement with the police as opposed to having had negative experiences. As a result of this lack of direct interaction, participants' responses suggested that social media has a strong influence on general perceptions of the police.

F2: "How good are they [the police] at policing Muslim/ minority communities in particular?"

P1: "So I actually don't know enough to comment on that one, I would just be making it up."

[agreement from another participant]

P2: "So I would just say again I don't know but social media plays a part in it where ... there was that incident where I think a father, for whatever reason refused the police, and he ... don't know if you've seen it, on the corner of the street there was a good few police there, the wife was obviously shouting and screaming. That social media again, we don't know the full story so, we don't know why he was detained and stuff, or why he was put down, I think he had a heart attack as well. So there was some issues there as well but it is just the way social media ... so that would give me a bad opinion in that sense. Even though I have never had it happen, obviously I've seen it happen on social media but it kinda gives me the perspective, that view. I've never seen it myself, it's never happened to me. But like that does have an impact, because you think, 'what if this is happening somewhere else?'. You know, that kind of thing, it does have a negative ..."

P1: "View, yeah. It would be different if it was balanced with the positive news on social media but you don't see that, you see the negatives."

– FG7

There was a broad consensus that more police officers would improve police engagement with the participants' communities, however, increasing Muslim representation within the police was considered comparably less important than recruiting individuals who knew their local area well.

Whilst no participants denied the presence of extremism in the UK, awareness of the Prevent programme was notably low: over half of the participants were 'not at all aware' of the programme (54 per cent), and only eight per cent reported being 'very aware'. No participants expressed objection to having a programme in place that aims to prevent terrorism before it happens, however 60 per cent of participants expressed some concern with the programme targeting Muslim communities based on where the highest risk of terrorism is highest (a further 15 per cent expressed full support).

Discussions about how the Prevent programme could be improved showed that ultimately, the prevailing issue was not a lack of support for the programme, but rather:

- a lack of awareness of the Prevent programme's existence;
- the way in which the programme is communicated (particularly with regards to making it clear that the programme aims to prevent all kinds of extremism, and that descriptions of the programme do not inadvertently associate Islam and extremism); and
- a lack of consultation with the communities the Prevent programme targets, who are instrumental in contributing to the prevention of extremism and terrorism.

P5: "Prevent is better than the cure, so you know. Try nip it in the bud. You know. Get support, prevent it before."

P2: "Yeah... before it escalates. Once it sets off something..."

P5: "People will get used to it. They'll see how things work with Prevent you know."

P4: "There are a lot of people affected."

F1: "In your own community?"

P4: "In our own community as well. So best thing is the Prevent programme. The more awareness.. it is all about awareness. The more people know about it the better it is."

– FG9

F1: "Given what you now know a little bit about the Prevent programme, do people feel that they would refer someone to it if they were concerned about someone they knew?"

P5: "Absolutely."

P1: "Yeah."

P6: "One hundred per cent yeah, I think instead of working with public sector workers, if you're looking for Islamic extremism, as I said earlier, it would be good to have a good relationship with the Islamic community, because if there is extremism going on in our groups then we should be the people that report it."

F1: "And you would be able to talk to the police?"

P6: "Yeah, 100 per cent. Or if I knew something was going on in my mosque that was a bit dodgy I would one hundred per cent go to them."

P5: "But there is eight Muslims sat in this room. And only really one person knew exactly what this programme actually was."

F1: "And that in itself is a problem is it?"

P5: "Yeah, absolutely."

– FG12

2. Impact of the media on perceptions of British Muslims

The ways in which the media represents British Muslims and the impact of this on how British Muslims feel they are perceived by others, were discussed at length during the focus groups, and to a lesser extent, the impact of media representation on their own self-perception. The media was not included as a specific topic in the discussion guide, but was nevertheless brought up frequently in all twelve focus groups, often very early on in the discussions. Overall, the media was discussed in overwhelmingly negative terms.

How British Muslims feel they are perceived by others

Overall, the media was considered to contribute to a negative overall perception of British Muslims on the part of the general public. The participants' main issue with the media's representation of British Muslims, based on the frequency it was discussed across the twelve focus groups, was a consistent conflation of Islam and terrorism. It was repeatedly mentioned that merely pairing the words 'Islam'/'Muslim' and 'terrorism'/'terrorist' in the media (something which was said to happen

continually) created implicit associations in those digesting the media, particularly in the absence of neutral media representation elsewhere:

P5: "I think the media have a big part to play, you know, feeding into the vernacular that terrorism and Muslims are somehow linked, arm in arm."

– FG7

P6: "I think ... it's not the way they show it, it's the way they say it. Like, they're not necessarily saying anything bad, but it's when they affiliate the two names 'terrorist' and 'Islam' together, it just puts an image. If I was to say 'Christian' and then 'terrorist' right after, what would you think? Christian terrorist. I'm not saying the Christian is a terrorist, I've just used the same word, these two words in the same sentence, and your brain is automatically going to think that. You've haven't got any bad intentions. I'm not saying anyone has bad intentions. But as humans we will always make an assumption. Everyone will have an opinion."

F1: "Does everyone agree with this about the media? Is it always the media ...?"

P4: "I think it is like the TV as a whole. There is a lack of representation, you don't see Muslims on TV, you don't see Muslims in drama shows, or movies, anything from Hollywood, any films or anything like that."

– FG3

P6: "I think they [non-Muslims] think of Muslims basically as terrorists because of what they hear in the media day in and day out. Newspapers, media, internet – whatever they see, they see the same thing: Muslim plus terrorist."

– FG6

This representation was felt to be particularly and specifically unfair towards Muslims by the focus group participants: it was felt that while terrorist acts committed by Muslims are always attributed to Islam by the media, participants stated that terrorist acts committed by non-Muslim individuals were generally not associated with any religion, and are often associated with mental health issues:

P8: "Nothing good – it's [media representation] always bad. For example, if a white person committed a crime, they look at it as if it must be 'do you know of his mental illness?'. If it was a brown person, it can only relate to the wrong thing. If he's a Muslim, he is a terrorist."

– FG11

P8: "The terminology they [the media] use, the language, like, if a Muslim commits an offence, or something serious, they always label them as a terrorist or something like that, whereas if someone from a different background, you wouldn't see the word terrorist used a lot. But, you know, they can be from any background, a terrorist can be from any background, any religion, race of background. A Muslim is always labelled that."

- FG9

P5: "If there is a white person, they don't turn around and say ... they just say 'white male', they don't turn around and say, Christian or Jewish or anything. It's 'white male'. But when it comes into Muslim, it's like 'Muslim man attacks such and such'. You know, and it's always Muslim."

F1: "You feel that as well?"

P7: "Yeah. I always feel we talk about Islam with extremism. But extremism doesn't belong, terrorism doesn't belong to any religion or race. It can happen anywhere, like it depends on individual personalities, what they want to do, but religion doesn't teach anyone, anybody, to go towards terrorism, or extremism. So I feel whenever I see this line Islamic terrorism or extremism, I feel like extremism or terrorism doesn't belong to any religion."

– FG12

It was also mentioned that the media-driven conflation of Islam and terrorism was further bolstered both by a lack of media coverage of positive contributions of British Muslims to British society, and the media providing disproportionate airtime to individuals who were felt to be wholly unrepresentative of British Muslims. For example, Anjem Choudary was mentioned in two focus groups as an unrepresentative British Muslim frequently called upon by the media:

P6: “You know, he [Anjem Choudary] has caused so many problems for Muslims, you know, a lot of us think he is an agent...”

P1: “Misrepresenting us.”

P6: “...working against the Muslim community. People like that, why did they used to get so much, you know, airtime. Newsnight, and everywhere. They used to be interviewed. Why don't we get some intellectuals like, one of the most famous and influential intellectuals in Britain, Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad, tutor from Cambridge University who has just built a £23 million mosque in Cambridge. [...] But I never see him being interviewed, you know, when there is a terrorist attack.”

– FG2

P1: "At one time, every time there was an incident in the Muslim community, all you saw on the news was Anjem Choudary. And he doesn't represent Muslims. And why would the press or the news go to an extremist to show the country the rest of the people that he represents?"

– FG7

Whilst positive stories about British Muslims were felt to either be ignored entirely by the media, or not attributed to British Muslims, any negative stories (e.g. regarding crime) were felt to be automatically associated with Islam in some way (which was not viewed as being the case for any other religions), contributing to stereotyped or Islamophobic views of British Muslims. Examples of these views included British Muslim women being oppressed, or Islam being associated with particular crimes:

P2: “Again it's media portrayal. Women in Islam have much more rights than men in Islam – we were voting way before women in the western world were voting, we are the rulers of our homes but if you look at how we are portrayed in the media, it is one of oppression.”

– FG5

P1: "They [the media] play a part on grooming too, which is very anti-Muslim. Muslims get highlighted more often, that Muslims have been involved in grooming than if you were a different ethnicity."

P4: "Yeah, like Muslim will be next to the headline basically."

P5: "Yeah I mean if for example a white person rapes somebody, you know, their religion of Christianity or the colour of their skin doesn't get taken into account. But if there is a Muslim grooming gang, it emphasises the word Muslim and grooming gang ... and I think those two now become synonymous as well. It's not just the terrorism now, I think the issue of grooming gangs has also become synonymous with my religion, and that's affecting. I think that does affect the way you think."

– FG7

Islamophobia was generally perceived to have increased over the past 10-20 years, with the media specified as one of the main drivers, while racism was believed by most participants to have decreased over the same period:

P1: "Before, back in the days, it was a great place to live as a Muslim. No one used to worry about if you were a Muslim or if you were not."

F1: "When you say 'back in the days', what do you mean?"

P1: "Early 90s. In the early 90s nobody used to question that. But nowadays the first thing they ask is if you're a Muslim or not. It's like everything changed. They ask you questions, are you a Muslim, your religion. Early 90s, before 2000, nobody used to care. All they used to care about was whether you were black or white. Now, if you're black and Muslim, it's even worse."

F1: "So there might have been racism, black and white issues, but it wasn't to do with your religion?"

P1: "Not at all."

– FG6

P4: “Before it was racism... I think now, with all that is happening in the world, it is Islamophobia. [People are scared of] something that is so new and they don't really understand it, they don't research for it. Knowledge is just what they see on TV and what's on the media, and they think that is how Islam is. That's the issue at the moment.”

– FG3

Terrorist incidents such as 9/11 and the 7/7 bombings, as well as the Afghanistan war were put forward as potential ‘turning points’ in the increase of Islamophobia, driven by the media's reporting of these incidents:

P2: “You had your whole war on terror, Afghanistan, everything kicked in, and then media start teaching everybody, ‘Muslims are bad, Muslims are this, they're negative, they're violent, bloodthirsty’, however they want to word it.”

– FG1

P1: “I think the terrorist attacks in the UK since 9/11, the change started gradually from then. I think when the mainstream press moved into it, started sensationalising everything, it became more acceptable as time went by.”

– FG10

P5: “The whole media and things doesn't help in this situation. You know, especially after the 9/11 attacks and things like that, Muslim is put in front of everything.”

– FG12

However, integration was put forward in six of the twelve focus groups as a mediating factor – that is, it was said in these groups that the negative impact of the media on general perceptions of Muslims was less in areas where there was a higher level of integration or contact between Muslims and non-Muslims. Those who did not interact with or see Muslims on a day-to-day basis on the other hand were felt to be more susceptible to the negative representation put forward by the media:

P5: “London is much, much more diverse than all the other cities in the country. [...] I think that is the number one reason why they cancel out all the racism and Islamophobia watching the movies and what we see in the series and TV shows and stuff like that.”

– FG3

P6: "I think the media have a massive factor to play in this, I mean if you look down history, there has always been 'the other'. You know, whether Russians from before, or you know, black people, but now the Muslims are the other right now. And the media really – like certain tabloids, the Sun, the Daily Mirror, you know, some of those tabloids, some of the other ones as well, you know, headlines are always kind of – they have a play on it, and then you know, places like Pontypridd, like the sister mentioned, where there's not many Muslims interactions, they're only going to believe what these tabloids are telling them anyway. So all of a sudden in their mind, they're thinking we're like these, you know ... zombies, or we're the enemy."

– FG10

P6: "I might be negative, but I think they think of Muslims basically as terrorists because of what they hear in the media day in and day out. Newspapers, media, internet – whatever they see, they see the same thing: Muslim equals terrorist."

F1: "Is that the only story, the only impression, or are there good examples that people might see of the work that Muslims do?"

P6: "Yes of course. Unless you be with Muslims and interact with them, then you might have different views. But if you're not with them and you don't interact with them, the first views you will hear is the media or what you see in the papers."

– FG6

F2: "What did he expect you to be like as a Muslim?"

P5: "BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!"

[Laughter]

P5: "He expected a beard, all of that... Because he has got no Muslims around him."

– FG3

How British Muslims perceive themselves/each other

Whilst discussions of media representation largely focused on its impact on the general public's view of British Muslims, the impact on British Muslims' perceptions of themselves and each other also featured prominently. The different ways the media impacted British Muslims' own perceptions of their own community included:

- British Muslims themselves associating terrorist acts with Islam;
- feeling misrepresented by British media; and
- influencing the perceived prevalence of Islamophobia in different parts of the UK.

A number of participants stated that they, as British Muslims, automatically associated any terrorist incident with Islam, as a direct result of the media's coverage of such events:

P1: "So the way that media have portrayed it, is extremism equals Islam, terrorism, Muslims. But actually extremism is much more than that. But that is how it has been portrayed so the feeling is as soon as you hear the word extremism you think it's got to be related, you know, to Islam."

– FG7

P1: "'Allah Akbar' is just 'God is great'. We say it 50,000 times a day [laughter], literally. And actually, one of my friends pointed it out, he lived in Bahrain, he's English, and he said, 'you know like, we used to hear it so much', and he goes 'here, you hear it and it's like, oh my God, is there a bomb?'. So even words, because they've scrutinised it so much, and he goes, 'it's only because I lived there it doesn't bother me', but here those words make you fearful because that's what the media's portrayed."

F2: "What would help to improve that situation?"

P1: "Well you can't control the media, can you?"

– FG5

P7: "It's really sad because as soon as I hear 'extremism' I think 'Muslim', and that's not what should be the case but I think because the media again have played such a big role in just linking those two words, like they're going to be like inseparable now in everyone's minds which is not the best."

– FG11

P1: "I think of Muslims. What I see on the TV, what I hear, it is extremism plus Muslim. Muslim: extremism. So automatically, subconsciously, that's what you pick up. As soon as you hear that word, you think what if your family members has done something."

F1: "Right. Anyone else, agree with that, disagree with that?"

P2: "Just say the word, and we already believe it's Islam, straight away. That's why, that's how it's presented to us."

P3: "Not us though. To everyone."

– FG3

The constant highlighting of Islam in the media's reporting of crimes or other negative incidents, combined with the media giving airtime to those felt as unrepresentative of British Muslims, both contributed to negative feelings within the participants. Participants spoke of feeling constantly misrepresented and underrepresented by the press and wider media as British Muslims, further exacerbated by not having positive role models presented to them:

P5: "It's all to do with the role models. I mean even though we have got, and as I said Mo Salah is a classic example of a role model, but at the same time the media doesn't give these people the foundation to get to the mainstream. I mean if you look at someone like Anjem Choudary for example, anything that he says, is literally written in the media. As I said, that is where the responsibility of the media comes into play. If you've got positive role models like Mo Salah who are only going to make the back page for the reasons that they're there which is football, and you know, nothing about their religion is going to be included, then people like Anjem Choudary who are going to be included for the wrong reasons, sort of feeds into that. "

– FG10

P4: "You don't see a lot of the good, you see the bad, you always tend to see the bad in these kind of things [...] There is never really like good stories, all the good things Muslims are doing. Very rare. But there was a recent incident about some girl in a hijab and was quite abusive on the bus, but that was like repeated over and over again. It's there, it's been there for the past week and I keep seeing it but you won't see other things like that. The headlines they do, it's always 'Muslim girl in hijab...', it kind of makes you feel bad. Not everybody is the same, what she did or whatever her reasons, that's her. But it's representing the rest of us."

P1: "I think, you know, whether she is Muslim or not is irrelevant. Why is it always that the media says Muslim man/Muslim woman, you know, but you never read Christian or Hindu or anybody else? But what has the religion got to do with it? Religion doesn't represent ... somebody's actions don't represent all of us. Why say Muslim woman/hijabi woman did this or did that? What has that got to do with anything? The media play a significant part and they don't portray us in a very positive way. They've got that power and influence really and they use it to show us as oppressed."

P2: "Things are forced upon us."

P1: "And honestly sometimes I just think come and speak to us, to real people. And we will tell you we are not oppressed. You know, it's our choice, we are independent, strong women. We have careers, we have a life, everything, we have desires, we have everything like everybody else. Just because I wear a hijab doesn't mean I'm different from anybody else."

– FG7

As detailed in the previous sub-theme, there was a prevalent opinion amongst the focus group participants that the media's representation of British Muslims directly fed into Islamophobia amongst the British public. Whilst a small minority of participants mentioned personal experiences of verbal Islamophobic attacks, most participants were of the view that despite not having experienced Islamophobia themselves, its prevalence was significantly higher outside of their area of residence. Therefore, their overall view of whether Britain as a whole is a positive or negative place to be a Muslim was shaped more by the perceived link between the media's representation of British Muslims and resultant Islamophobia than by an extrapolation of their own, largely positive experiences within their own area:

P2: “Well in the community that we live in we are all equal. We have English friends, we have Indian friends. Everybody has their own religion, [...] and I have not seen anyone going against it or saying bad words about it. When you hear in the media, there is a lot going around. So we don't know what is right and what is wrong. We are living in a small town, and you do hear news every day what is happening around the world and cities as well. As part of the city I am living, my town is a beautiful town, I mean, especially the square I am living. There are Chinese people, English people, black people, Muslims, everyone. We are so happy with each other, never looking in an aggressive way, or a bad way – never.”

F1: “So you just mentioned the media – is that something you picked up on?”

P2: “I haven't seen anything in real, like anything saying anything to us about religion. Whenever we see Indians, or British, they are saying very nicely, ‘hello/hi’. Never heard to my face, but obviously as she said, we've heard some things in the media, not in real, in the face.”

– FG4

P1: “I genuinely feel like Britain has given me a lot as a Muslim and has been very accepting. But at the same time, I am aware of all the hate crimes taking place, everything that's been on the media, and that has kind of reserved myself, in the sense of getting out and about not as much as I could before.”

– FG8

P3: “Yeah, I think it's pockets of Glasgow, I've been born and bred in the West End my whole life, and I probably haven't experienced anything directly but I've probably been into other parts of Glasgow but I've kind of maybe felt slightly uneasy. [...] It's probably manifested a lot more in the South where certain parts of England you can't go ... you know, if you're Indian you can't go to a Pakistani area, if you're Christian you can't go into certain areas. And you hear about that in the media all the time.”

– FG12

Social media also appeared to contribute to the extent to which Islamophobia was perceived to be a problem for British Muslims, seemingly to a greater extent than personal experience:

P4: "I just think about social media as well, how that has a big effect on it as well. Because you'll see little things being exaggerated and that causes a lot of issues, and then it gets people worked up, I think that is what it is as well. You'll get an incident, one individual incident that's happened for whatever reason, you don't know the full story but it's showing you one side, and you're following and you're believing it, or ... and it does affect you I think."

P1: "That is a really good point actually because social media doesn't help. One story and that's it. It gathers people doesn't it. Especially young Muslims, it's us and them. It's not like that. When there was no social media, you know, everything was fine. Whereas now with social media, one little thing is taken out of proportion, isn't it?"

– FG7

P1: "There are much more incidences of violence I feel. Targeted towards Muslims."

F1: "Because you are Muslims and not just violence in itself?"

P1: "Not necessarily, mainly because, I mean, because there are instances on social media where women in headscarf are targeted specifically, whether that be acid attacks or attacks online. It has become more widespread recently."

P2: "Yeah. I'd agree with that."

– FG9

This prominent theme of life being better in the participants' own area than elsewhere emerged despite the fact that the majority of participants considered Britain (as a whole) to be a good place to be a Muslim, most notably due to freedom of religion – again demonstrating the media's influence in affecting perceptions of life in Britain as a Muslim over and above personal experience:

P1: "Having been born here and brought up, I think it's a good place to be a Muslim. Because you're free to practice your religion and you don't get no problems whatsoever."

– FG10

P1: "It is a fantastic place to work, for a Muslim especially. Because you can practice your religion as you want, you have your work places like and you can live pretty much the life you want."

F1: "So you're very positive ... do what you want. Anyone else positive, less positive, more mixed?"

P7: "Definitely positive yeah, you can be ... you've got religious freedom in this country, that's the main thing. You can practice your religion. Yeah, it's definitely a positive."

P6: "I would say ... agree with that as well. I think if you look at other countries, you know, a lot of our parents came here for economic reasons. So they've had that opportunity to build their lives. You know, we build our mosques. Thousands of them. And you know all religions ... we are okay with them, they're alright with us generally speaking."

– FG2

Summary of main theme two

Taken together, the focus group participants' perceptions of the media comprised: were:

- a conflation of Islam and terrorism;
- an omission of positive coverage relating to British Muslims; and
- disproportionate airtime being given to individuals who were not considered representative of British Muslims

These were believed to contribute to a misrepresentation of Islam, to Islamophobic beliefs amongst the general public in Britain, and to negative feelings amongst British Muslims.

As a result, terrorist incidents were felt by the majority of participants to contribute to a vicious cycle, whereby terrorist incidents fuel negative media reporting relating to British Muslims, which in turn contributes to a negative overall perception of British Muslims/Islamophobia amongst the general public, and feelings of insecurity and misrepresentation on the part of British Muslims:

P4: "Generally being a Muslim's okay, it's just when, you know, some attacks happen say in America or something, and then it's like you have to apologise for being a Muslim on social media."

– FG5

P3: "I think it's only the media in my point of view who portray the bad image of Muslim people: the media is playing a major role in changing people's opinion towards other people. I lived here for more than 20 years, before 9/11, 7/7, people were more tolerant and integration was between communities. The community was safe and used to live together."

F1: "So more integration before 9/11 and 7/7?"

P3: "Yes, before, before. Now, in this area it used to be many white people used to live here, in [area], but after that, they all put their houses on sale and left. This is mainly because the media has portrayed Muslims as dangerous people and you can't live with them, that is what it is. Otherwise, in my opinion, Britain is the most tolerant country if you think about it."

– FG9

P7: "I think there is always an increase, I've never experienced like physical attacks, but like verbal attacks there's always an increase after an event. So I think you just get that because people are reminded of the issue and then they get angry again, and they just take it out on the first visibly Muslim person they see which is usually a woman."

– FG11

P4: "We didn't have any of this Islamophobia before. Why should we constantly justify ourselves for being a Muslim?"

F1: "When you say before, what sort of time frame are you thinking about?"

P4: "This has just got deeper and deeper and deeper maybe in the past four or five years I would say. We didn't have to justify ourselves this much. Every terror attack is linked to Muslims. We have nothing to do with it. We paid into the system, educated into the system, in fact we don't really know where our roots are from back home. We live the western way. We contribute towards everything. We pay into the system. I am not sure why we are getting penalised the way we are if there is an attack somewhere else. 'Oh, it's the British Muslims'."

– FG8

P4: "You know what happened in Borough Market, two/three years ago. When I went to the mosque, I was scared of my shadow as well, looking like someone was behind me, for around a month it was like that. Every time anything happened, even abroad, like France or Germany, we are scared here."

– FG1

Participants in every focus group felt there was a need for a better level of education and awareness of Islam. In eight focus groups, it was specifically stated that the media had a responsibility in improving the general public's knowledge of Islam by improving their representation of British Muslims:

P4: "In the modern environment, social media and media in general play a big part in getting information spread around the world. [...] When you say are Muslims represented well in the UK, the answer is absolutely not. For example, when the Grenfell Tower fire happened, it was during Ramadan, and the first help was from a little local mosque next to it – that was never highlighted on the BBC or Sky News. There's a difference between Islam and Muslims. Muslims are human beings, they can make mistakes and do something wrong. When a person does anything wrong, to label him as Islamist, that's when things start going wrong. A lot of Muslims get angry about this."

F1: "What would improve the representation of Muslims? What does the media here need to do differently?"

P2: "I think they need a better understanding of what the Muslim religion is, what Muslim leaders are saying, the difference between the religions – they need to be understood – then they can see that Muslims are not different from other people. The media needs to change what it's saying about Muslims. When a group of two or three people do something wrong, just highlighting Islam, that's where people think."

– FG6

P9: "I think I'd rather have no representation than bad representation. [...] It would appease things even if they mentioned, even if they talked about Muslim rights, or a bright Muslim woman, or a bright Muslim man."

– FG11

P5: “For me, some education is probably the key to defining what Islam as a religion actually is. I think that’s something that has to be ... I think the media has a responsibility as well.”

– FG10

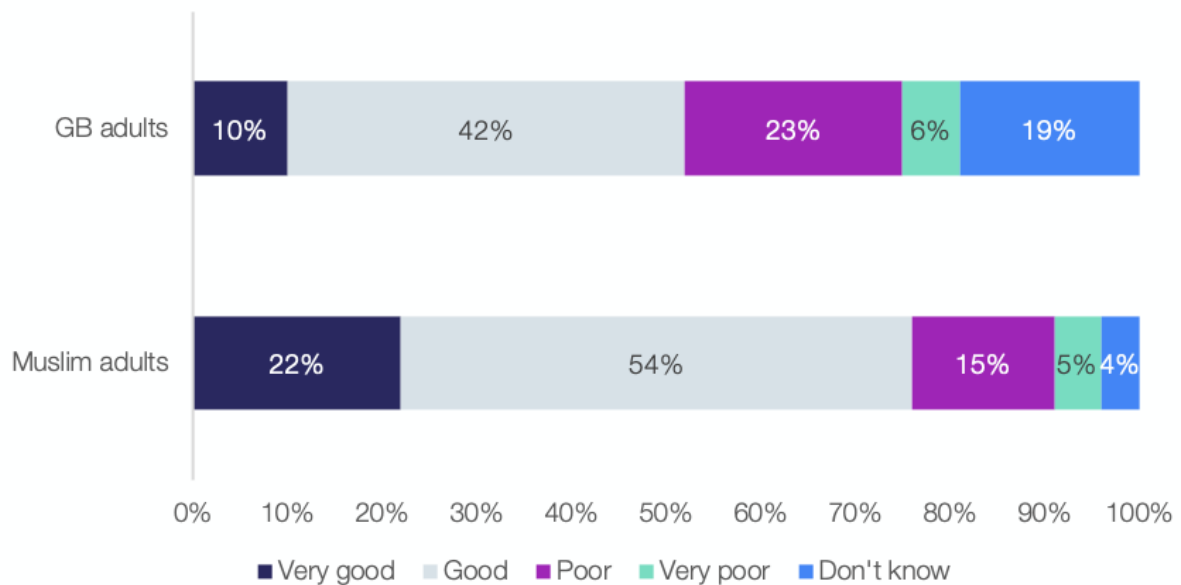
Polling findings

Is Britain a good place to be a Muslim?

More than three quarters (76 per cent) of British Muslim adults considered Britain a good place to be a Muslim, compared to slightly more than half (52 per cent) of GB adults. Nearly a fifth (19 per cent) of GB adults answered 'don't know', compared to four per cent of British Muslim adults – see Figure 5.

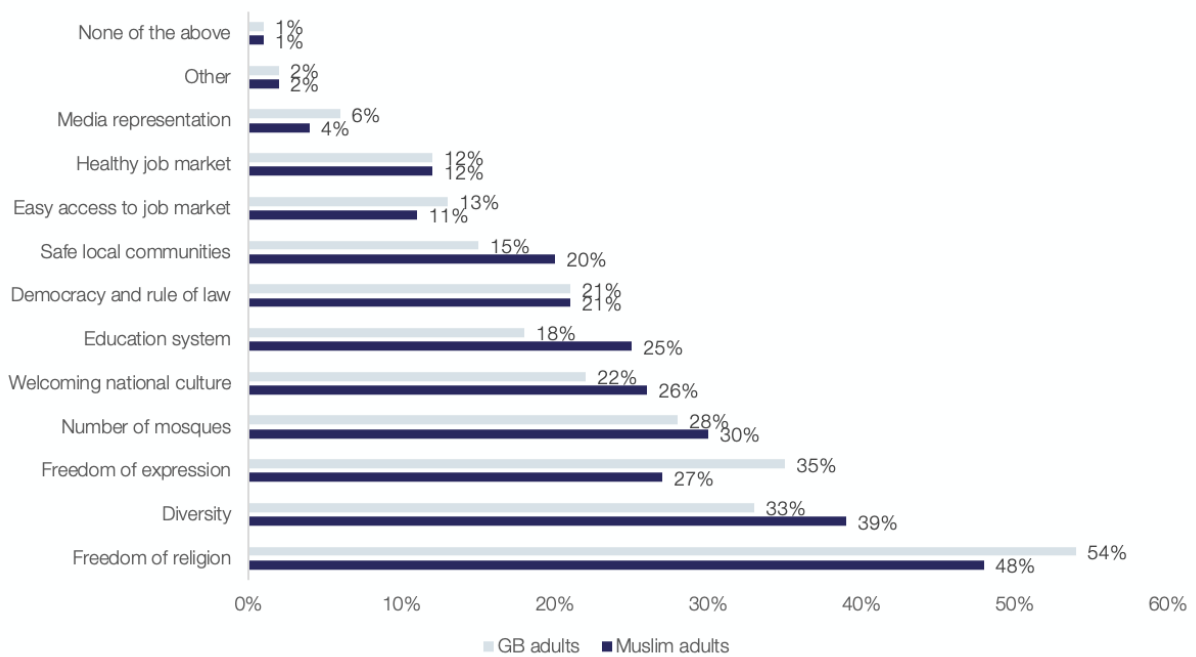
The more frequently British Muslim adults worshipped, the more likely they were to say Britain was a good place to be a Muslim. Those with higher levels of education were also more likely to say Britain was a good place to be a Muslim. In both the GB adults and British Muslim adults groups, those who intended to vote Brexit Party were most likely to consider Britain a good place to be a Muslim, followed by Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, then Labour.

Figure 5. To what extent do you think Britain is a good place to be a Muslim?



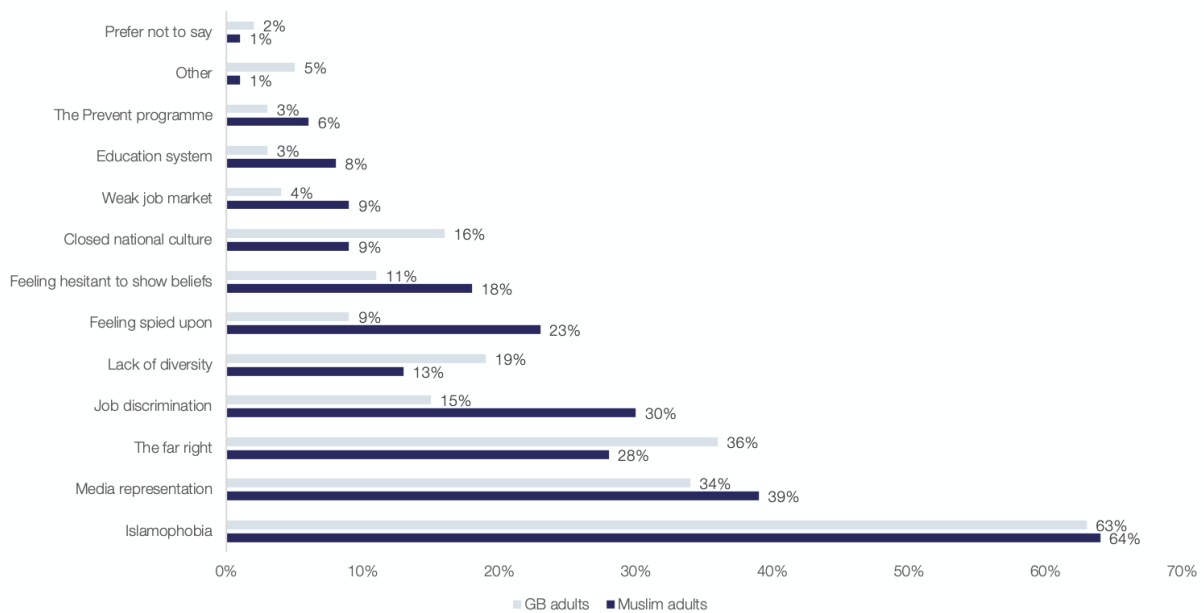
The top three answers for both GB adults and British Muslim adults in response to what makes Britain a good place to be a Muslim were freedom of religion (the most popular choice in both cases), followed by diversity. Overall, a similar hierarchy emerged from the responses of GB adults and GB adult Muslims in their choices of what makes Britain a good place to be a Muslim. British Muslim adults were more likely to mention diversity (39 per cent); the education system (25 per cent); and safe local communities (20 per cent) as reasons why Britain is a good place to be a Muslim than British adults in general (33 per cent, 18 per cent, 15 per cent respectively). British adults were more likely to list freedom of expression (35 per cent) than British Muslims (27 per cent) – see Figure 6.

Figure 6. What makes Britain a good place to be a Muslim? Please choose up to three of the following.



Islamophobia was the top choice for both GB adults and British Muslim adults in response to what makes Britain a poor place to be a Muslim, with close to two-thirds of all respondents (64 per cent) choosing this option. Job discrimination and feeling spied upon showed the greatest disparity between British Muslim adults and GB adults (see Figure 7), however the higher proportion of British Muslim adults choosing ‘job discrimination’ was largely driven by a significant proportion of those aged 55+⁴⁸ years choosing this option (65 per cent). Media representation was the second most selected option for British Muslim adults, with nearly two in every five respondents (39 per cent) selecting it as an option, and the third most selected for GB adults (34 per cent). British Muslims aged 35-54 years old were most likely to choose media representation, with 46 per cent selecting it as one of their options. British Muslim adults who got their news from national newspapers, local newspapers, or national TV were significantly more likely to select media representation as something that makes Britain a poor place to be a Muslim (40, 45 and 47 per cent respectively) compared to British Muslims who got their news from Urdu news sources or Hindi news sources (37 per cent and 15 per cent respectively).

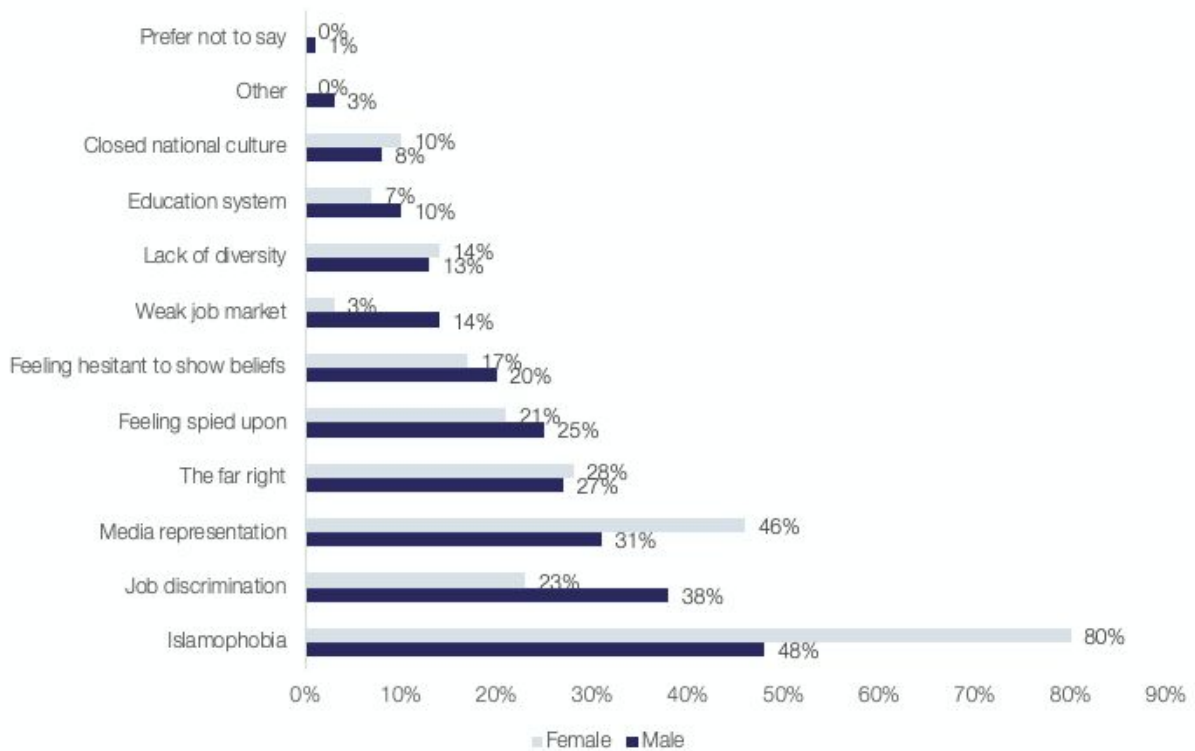
Figure 7. What makes Britain a poor place to be a Muslim? Please choose up to three of the following.



⁴⁸ Due to the very small unweighted sample size of 55+ Muslims (<30), these figures should be considered indicative only.

There were significant differences in the responses of British Muslim men and women to the question of what makes Britain a bad place to be a Muslim (see Figure 8). Islamophobia was the top choice for both, but featured much more prominently in the responses of British Muslim women than those of British Muslim men (80 per cent vs 48 per cent respectively). Job-related issues (job discrimination and weak job market) featured much more prominently in the choices of British Muslim men. Media representation was the second most popular choice for British Muslim women, with nearly half (46 per cent) choosing this as one of their three selections, whereas it was the third most popular choice for British Muslim men, with 31 per cent choosing this option. The remaining responses showed a similar response rate when comparing British Muslim men and women.

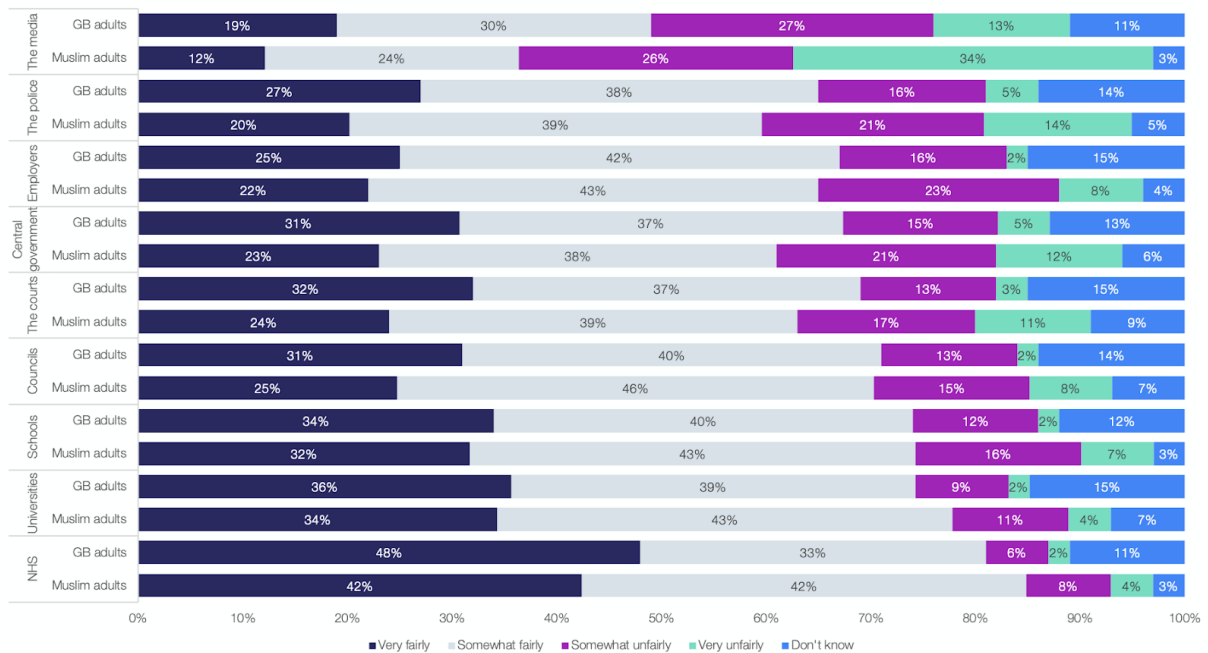
Figure 8. What makes Britain a poor place to be a Muslim? Please choose up to three of the following.
Muslim adult responses, broken down by gender



When asked to what extent the participants thought different institutions treated Muslims fairly or unfairly, overall, the NHS was believed to treat Muslims fairly the most. All institutions received net 'fair' responses of over 60 per cent, apart from the media. GB adults gave higher ratings of fair treatment than British Muslim adults across most institution types (see Figure 9).

British Muslims were more likely to believe the NHS and universities treat Muslims fairly *and* were more likely to say they treated Muslims unfairly than GB adults. However, only the differences in what institutions treated Muslims unfairly were statistically significant. British Muslim women were more likely to say the NHS treated Muslims unfairly (15 per cent) than men (10 per cent – see Figure 9).

Figure 9. To what extent do you think the following institutions treat Muslims fairly or unfairly?



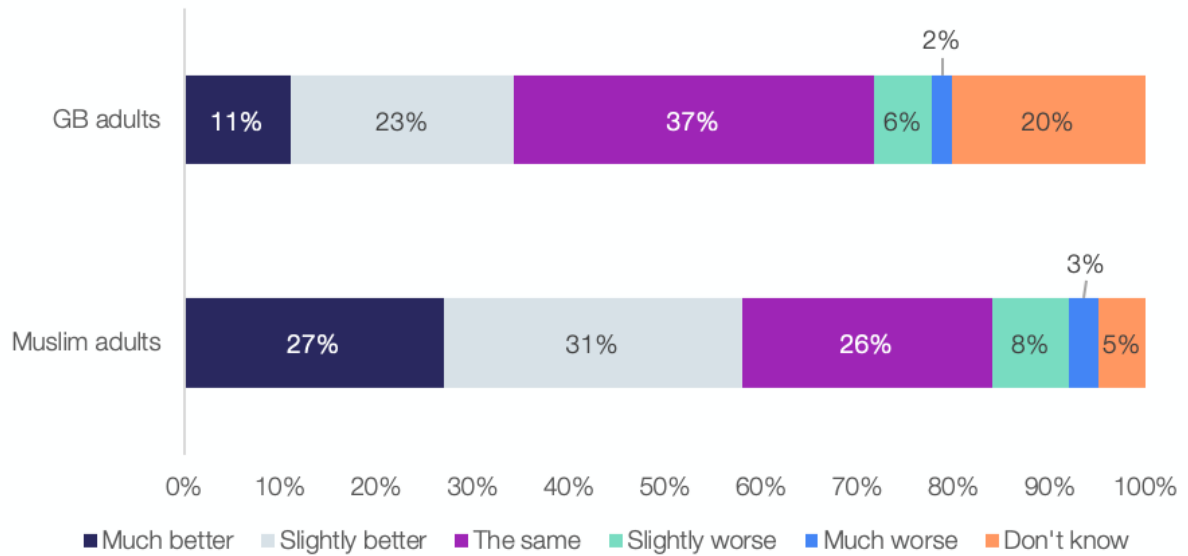
The NHS received the highest ratings of perceived fair treatment of Muslims from both British Muslim adults and GB adults (84 and 81 per cent respectively – see Table 3). All institutions including the police received a net fair rating from the majority (i.e. over half) of respondents, apart from the media, the results of which run in sharp contrast to the other institutions. Over three fifths (61 per cent) of British Muslim adults believed that the media treats Muslims unfairly, compared to two fifths (40 per cent) of GB adults. Only 12 per cent of British Muslim adults and 19 per cent of GB adults believed the media treats Muslims ‘very fairly’.

Table 3. To what extent do you think the following institutions treat Muslimism fairly or unfairly?

	GB Muslim adults		GB adults	
	NET: Fairly	NET: Unfairly	NET: Fairly	NET: Unfairly
NHS	84%	12%	81%	8%
Universities	77%	15%	75%	11%
Schools	75%	23%	74%	14%
Councils	71%	23%	71%	15%
The courts	71%	23%	71%	15%
Central government	61%	33%	68%	20%
Employers	65%	31%	67%	18%
The police	59%	35%	65%	21%
The media	36%	60%	49%	40%

Most British Muslim adults (59 per cent) believed their local area was better to live in as a Muslim than other parts of Britain. Over a quarter (26 per cent) considered their local area the same, and a tenth (10 per cent) considered it worse. A fifth (20 per cent) of GB adults responded 'don't know', compared to five per cent of British Muslim adults – see Figure 10.

Figure 10. To what extent is your local area better, the same, or worse to live in as a Muslim than other parts of Britain?



British Muslim adults living in the South West were most likely to consider their area to be better to live in as a Muslim than other parts of Britain (81 per cent), while those in the West Midlands were most likely to say their area was worse to live in (19 per cent) – see Figure 11.

Figure 11. To what extent is your local area better, the same, or worse to live in as a Muslim than other parts of Britain? Results of British Muslim adults for 'better' or 'worse' responses, broken down by region.

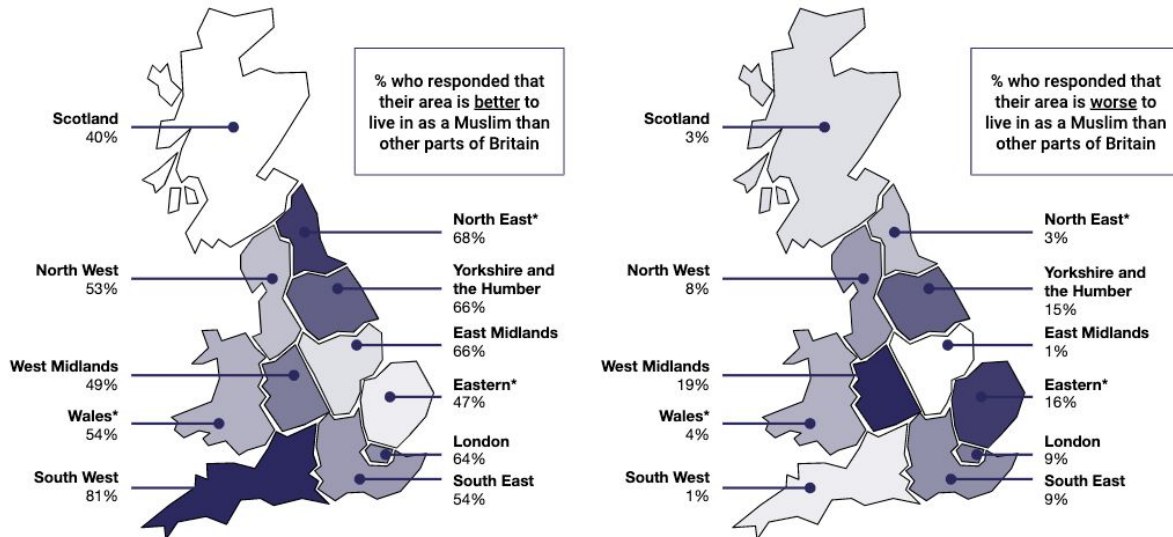


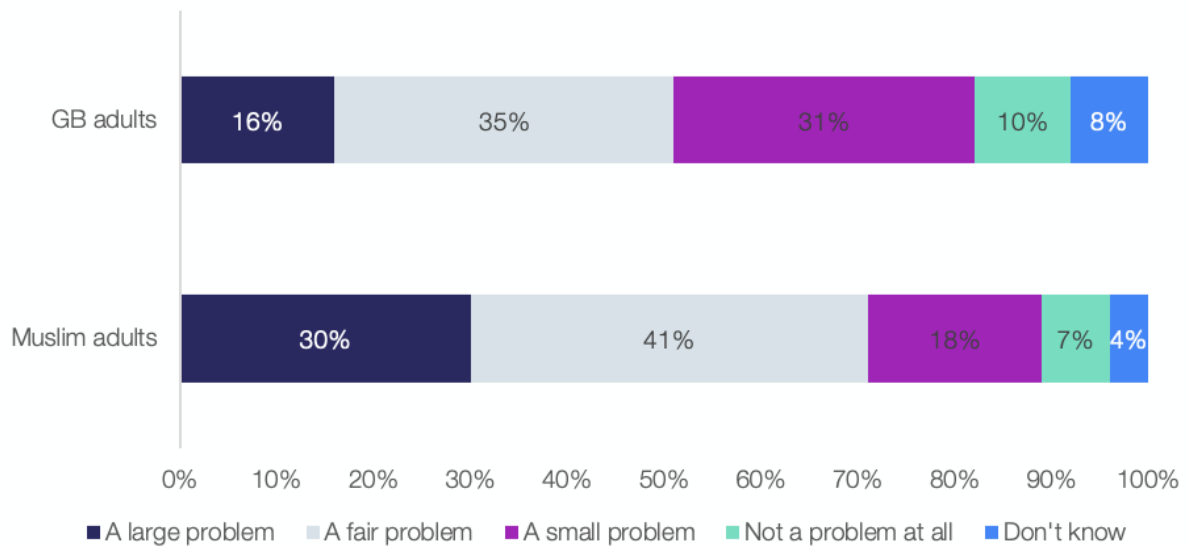
Table 4. To what extent is your local area better, the same, or worse to live in as a Muslim than other parts of Britain? Results for 'better' or 'worse' responses, broken down by region.

	NET: Better	NET: Worse
South West	81%	1%
North East*	68%	3%
Yorkshire & The Humber	66%	15%
East Midlands	66%	1%
London	64%	9%
South East	54%	9%
Wales*	54%	4%
North West	53%	8%
West Midlands	49%	19%
Eastern*	47%	16%
Scotland	40%	3%

*Due to the very small unweighted sample sizes of Muslims living in Eastern England, the North East of England and Wales (<30 each), these figures should be considered indicative only.

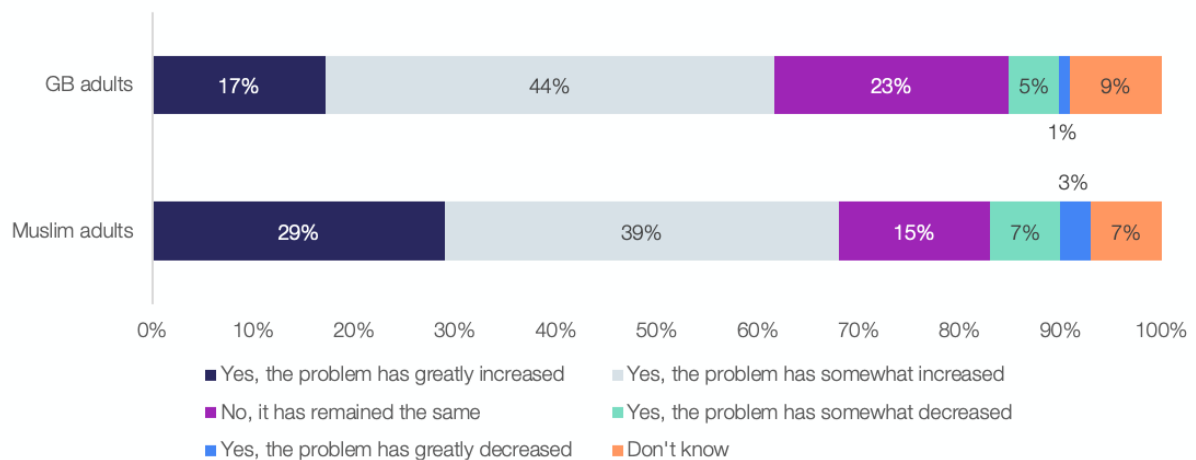
The vast majority of respondents considered Islamophobia to be a problem in Britain: 89 per cent of British Muslim adults, compared to 82 per cent of GB adults. British Muslim adults were almost twice as likely to consider Islamophobia to be ‘a large problem’ than GB adults (30 per cent vs 16 per cent) – see Figure 12.

Figure 12. To what extent do you consider Islamophobia to be a problem in Britain?



A higher proportion of British Muslim adults considered Islamophobia to have increased over the past five years than GB adults (68 per cent vs 61 per cent), as well as decreased (10 per cent vs 7 per cent) – see Figure 13. In both the GB adults and British Muslim adults groups, as education level increased, respondents were more likely to say Islamophobia had increased over the past five years. British Muslims who were in employment were more likely to consider Islamophobia to have increased (72 per cent) than students (60 per cent) or those who were not working (62 per cent).

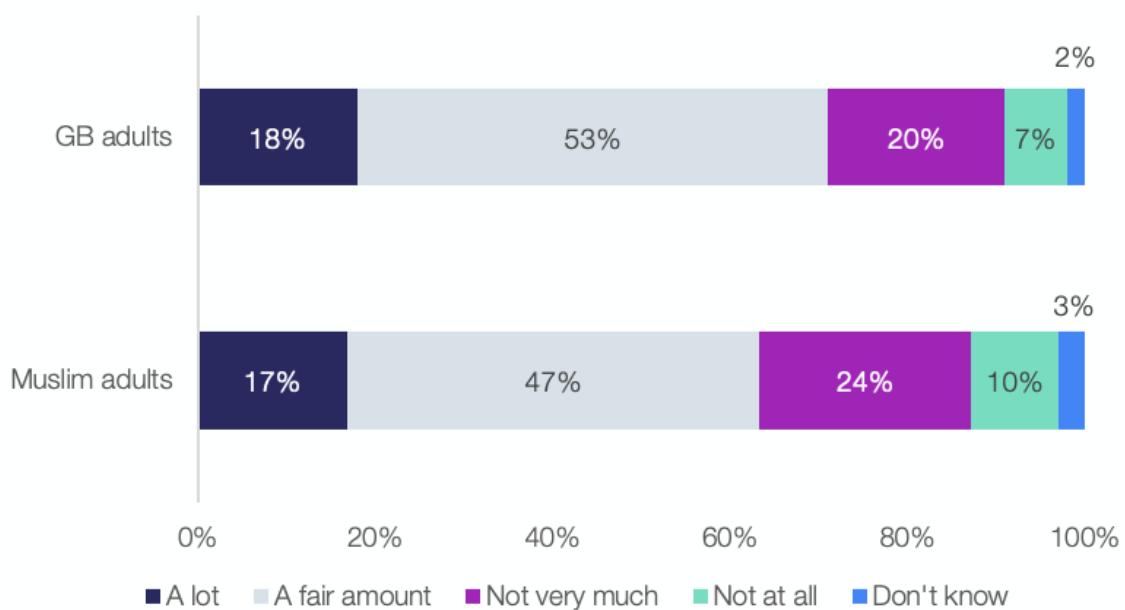
Figure 13. Following on from this, do you think Islamophobia has changed in Britain over the last five years?



Trust in the police

British Muslims were more likely to distrust the police than GB adults (33 per cent vs 27 per cent respectively). Nearly two thirds (64 per cent) of British Muslim adults stated that they trust the police, compared to 71 per cent of GB adults – see Figure 14. BAME GB adults were much less likely to state that they trusted the police (57 per cent) compared with white GB adults (73 per cent), whereas there was very little difference when comparing white Muslim adults (63 per cent) and BAME Muslim adults (65 per cent). Trust in the police increased with age in the GB adults group (18-34: 66 per cent; 35-54: 70 per cent; 55+: 76 per cent), but did not correlate in the British Muslim adults group (18-34: 64 per cent; 35-54: 60 per cent; 55+:⁴⁹ 76 per cent).

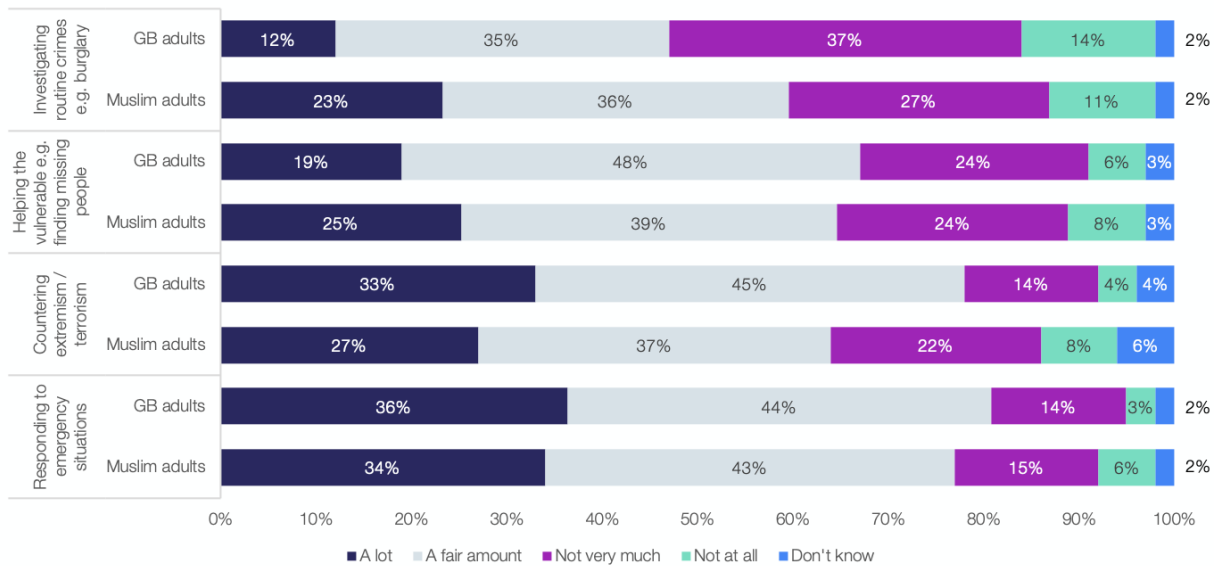
Figure 14. How much would you say you trusted the police?



⁴⁹ Due to the very small unweighted sample size of 55+ Muslims (<30), these figures should be considered indicative only.

GB adults and British Muslim adults trusted the police to respond to emergency situations the most out of the task options, and to investigate routine crimes (e.g. burglary) the least – see Figure 15. British Muslim adults showed a higher level of trust in the police than GB adults for investigating routine crimes (59 per cent vs 47 per cent), despite lower generalised trust in the police. A significantly lower proportion of British Muslim adults trust the police to counter extremism/terrorism (64 per cent) compared to GB adults (78 per cent). British Muslim adults were more likely than GB adults to not trust the police to counter extremism/terrorism (30 per cent vs 18 per cent respectively). However, British Muslim adults were still more likely to trust the police to counter extremism/terrorism than to investigate routine crime e.g. a burglary (64 per cent vs 59 per cent respectively).

Figure 15. How much do you trust the police to undertake the following tasks?



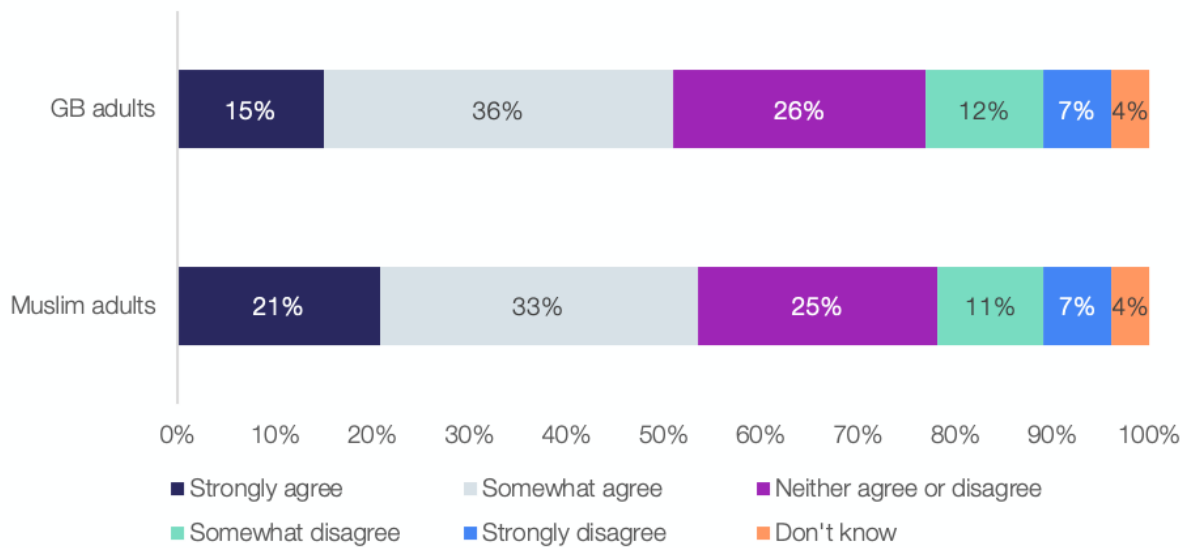
Overall, there were significant gender differences in the British Muslim adults group (but not in the GB adults group) when looking at levels of trust in the police to perform particular tasks – see Table 5. British Muslim men generally showed a higher level of trust in the police to undertake specific tasks compared to British Muslim women, apart from countering extremism/terrorism. Countering extremism/terrorism showed the smallest amount of gender difference within British Muslim adults, but the largest in GB adults. It was also the only task that GB adult males trusted the police to do more than GB adult females.

Table 5. How much do you trust the police to undertake the following tasks? Broken down by gender.

	GB Muslim adults (NET: Trust)			GB adults (NET: Trust)		
	Male	Female	% <i>point diff.</i>	Male	Female	% <i>point diff.</i>
Helping the vulnerable e.g. finding missing people	67%	62%	5%	67%	68%	-1%
Responding to emergency situations	81%	72%	9%	80%	81%	-1%
Investigating routine crimes e.g. burglary	62%	55%	7%	47%	47%	0%
Countering extremism / terrorism	66%	62%	4%	81%	75%	6%

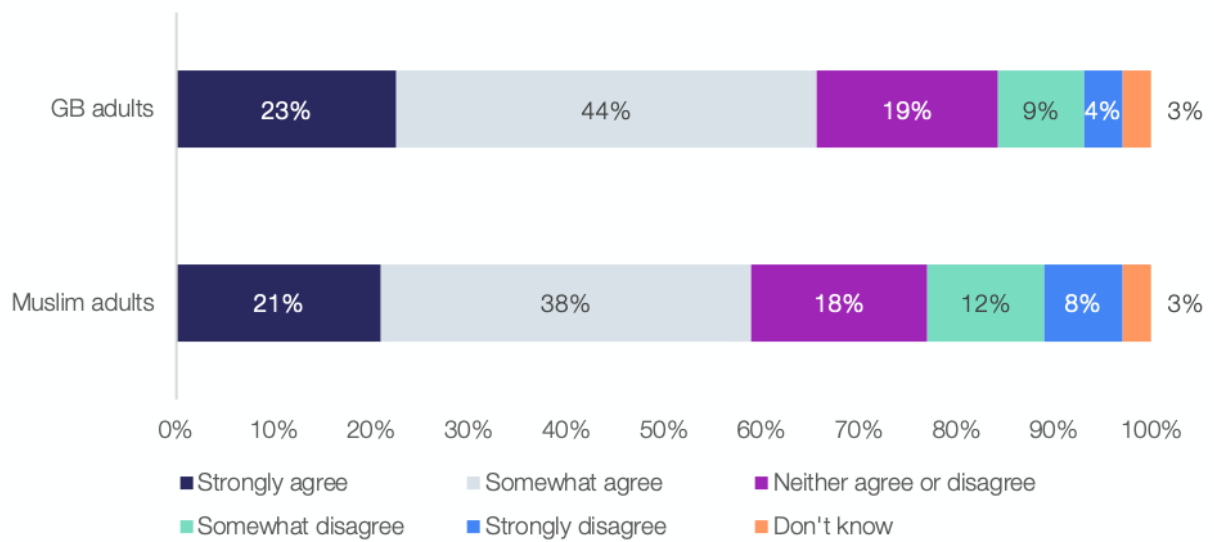
GB adults and British Muslim adults responded in very similar ways when asked how well the police engage with their community – 52 per cent and 53 per cent agreed (respectively) and 19 per cent and 18 per cent disagreed – see Figure 16. Male adults were more likely to agree that the police engaged well with their community than female adults in both the GB adults group (53 per cent vs 50 per cent) and the British Muslim adults group (56 per cent vs 51 per cent).

**Figure 16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
The police engage well with my community.**



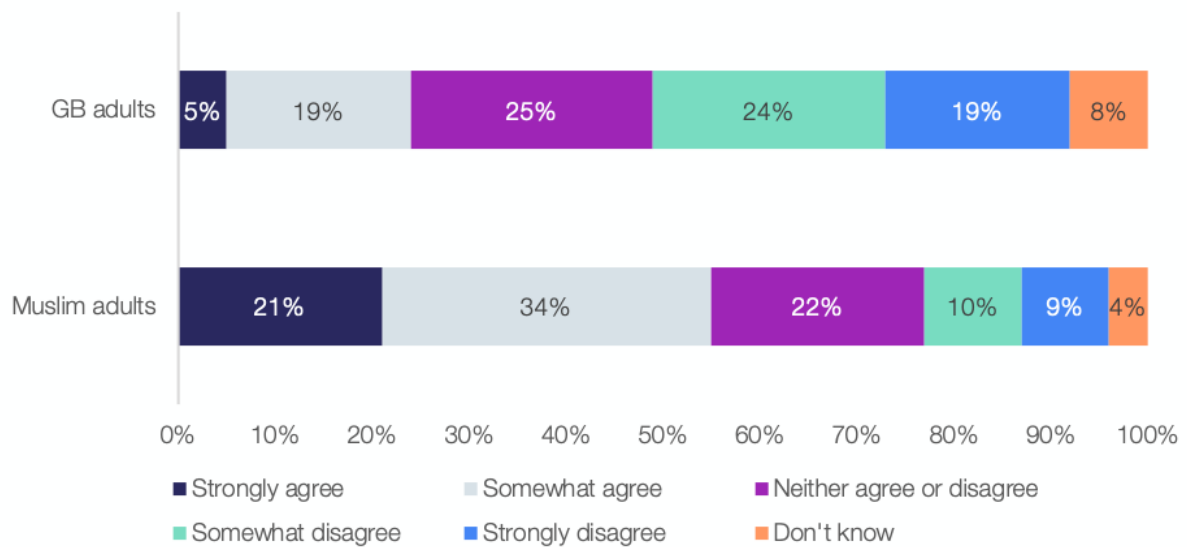
More than two thirds (67 per cent) of GB adults believed most police officers treat people fairly, irrespective of faith or religion, compared to 59 per cent of British Muslim adults (see Figure 17). BAME Muslim adults agreed to a significantly lesser extent (59 per cent) than white Muslim adults (66 per cent). GB adults did not show a similar disparity in opinion as a function of ethnicity – 67 per cent of white GB adults agreed with the statement compared to 65 per cent of BAME GB adults – meaning British Muslim adults overall agreed with the statement less than BAME GB adults (59 per cent vs 65 per cent). Agreement within British Muslim adults varied by voting intention, with those intending on voting Conservative showing the highest level of agreement (68 per cent), followed by the Brexit party (64 per cent), Liberal Democrat (61 per cent), Labour (58 per cent), other (53 per cent) and would not vote (56 per cent).

**Figure 17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Most police officers treat people fairly, irrespective of their race of religion.**



GB adults and British Muslim adults diverged significantly on opinions on whether or not the police unfairly target British Muslims. Over half (55 per cent) of British Muslim adults agreed that Muslims are targeted unfairly, compared to under a quarter (24 per cent) of GB adults – see Figure 18. Fewer than one in five (19 per cent) British Muslims disagreed with the statement that police unfairly target Muslims. BAME GB adults were much more likely to agree with the statement (40 per cent) compared to white GB adults (23 per cent). British Muslim men were more likely to agree with the statement (58 per cent) than British Muslim women (51 per cent). British Muslim adults who get their news from national newspapers were least likely to agree with the statement (58 per cent), whereas those who get their news from Hindi news sources (66 per cent) and Urdu news sources (65 per cent) were most likely to agree.

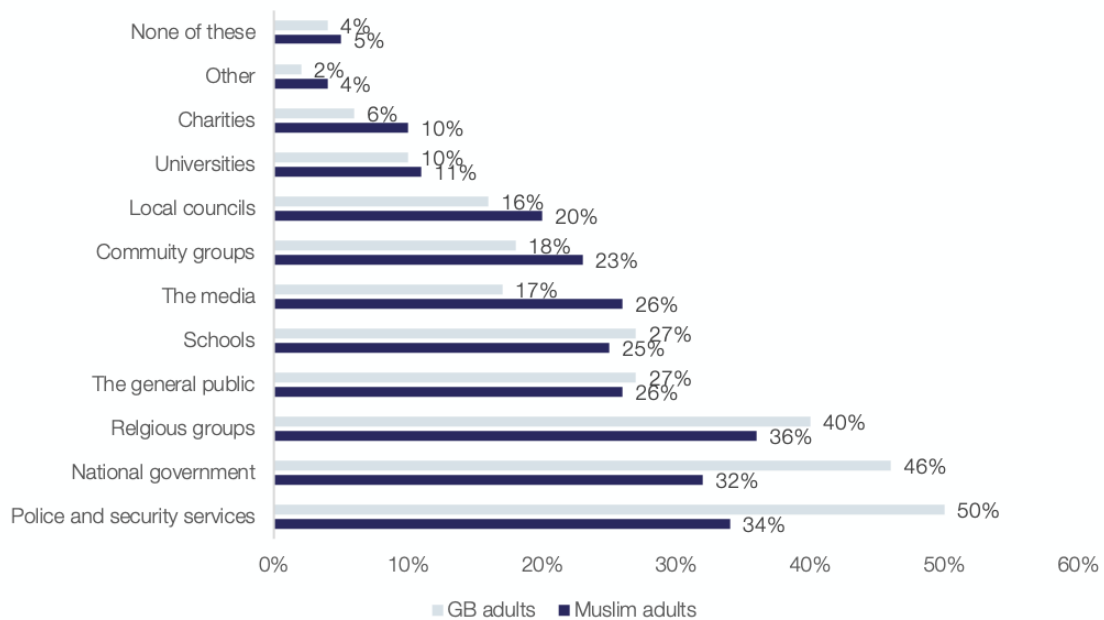
**Figure 18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
The police unfairly target British Muslims as they believe they are a terrorism risk.**



Views on extremism and counter-extremism

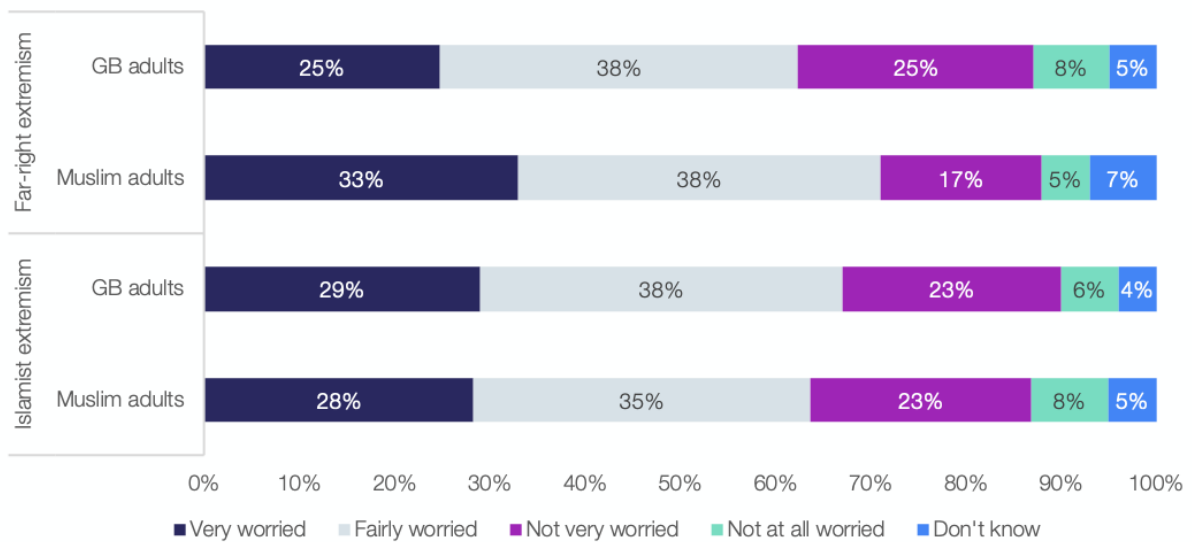
On the question of which groups should be involved in preventing terrorism before it happens, the police and security services, national government, and religious groups were the most commonly selected options selected by GB adults and British Muslim adults. Charities, universities and local councils were the least selected options (see Figure 19). Police and security services showed the biggest divergence between GB adults and British Muslim adults (16 percentage point difference), whilst the general public and universities showed the highest level of agreement (one percentage point difference). Male GB adults were much more likely to select religious groups (45 per cent) compared to female GB adults (34 per cent). British Muslim women were much more likely than British Muslim men to select national government (35 per cent vs 28 per cent respectively).

Figure 19. Which of the following groups, if any, do you believe should be involved in preventing extremism and terrorism before it happens? Please select up to three options.



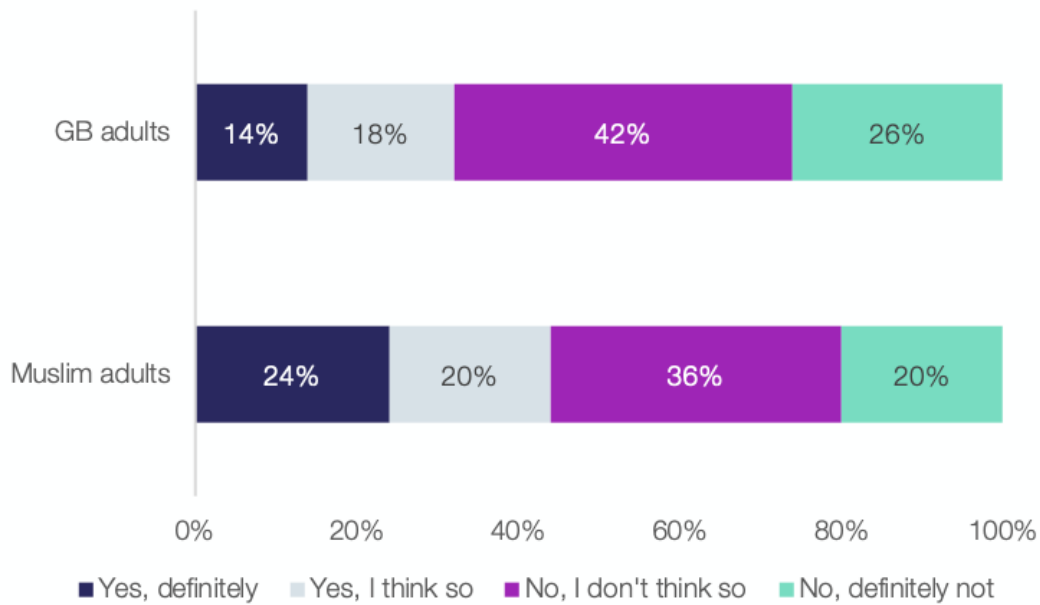
British Muslim adults and GB adults showed similar levels of worry for Islamist extremism (63 per cent vs 67 per cent respectively), however British Muslim adults were comparatively more worried about far right extremism than GB adults (71 per cent vs 62 per cent) – see Figure 20. British Muslim women were more worried about far right extremism (74 per cent) than British Muslim men (69 per cent). British Muslims who intended to vote Labour were significantly less likely to report they were worried about Islamist extremism (58 per cent) compared to all other voting intentions, with Conservative voters showing the highest levels of worry (77 per cent). In the GB adult group, self-reported worry about Islamist extremism increased with age (18-34: 60 per cent; 35-54: 67 per cent; 55+: 71 per cent).

Figure 20. How worried are you about the following in the UK?
Results for Islamist extremism and far right extremism shown on same graph



The majority of respondents were not aware of the Prevent programme at the time of the poll. A higher percentage of British Muslim adults had heard of the Prevent programme (44 per cent) compared to GB adults overall (32 per cent). Just under a quarter (24 per cent) of British Muslim adults said they were 'definitely' aware of the Prevent programme compared to 14 per cent of GB adults. There was a significant amount of regional variation in awareness of the Prevent programme, with 36 per cent of Muslim respondents from the West Midlands being aware of it, compared to 47 per cent in the North West.⁵⁰

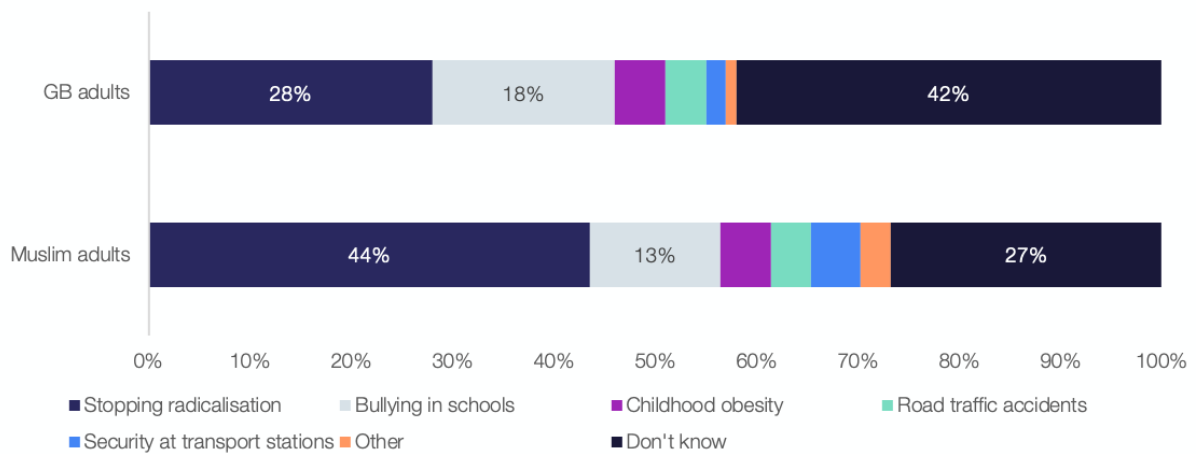
Figure 21. Before today, were you aware of the Prevent programme?



⁵⁰ Awareness was highest in the North East and Wales but due to the small unweighted sample sizes the percentages are not reported here.

Over two fifths (44 per cent) of British Muslim adults correctly chose ‘stopping radicalisation’ as Prevent’s aim, compared to 28 per cent of GB adults (all polling respondents were asked this question regardless of their awareness). The same proportion of GB adults and British Muslim adults (30 per cent) chose incorrect options. More GB adults chose ‘don’t know’ (42 per cent) compared to British Muslim adults (27 per cent). The same proportion of British Muslim adults (44 per cent) said they were aware of the Prevent programme as those who correctly identified its purpose, whereas just under a third (32 per cent) of GB adults stated that they were aware of the Prevent programme, compared to 28 per cent who subsequently correctly identified the programme’s aim. Within the adult British Muslims group, those aged 35-54; who got their news from Hindi news sources; had a higher level of education; were employed; and/or intended on voting Conservative were most aware of Prevent.

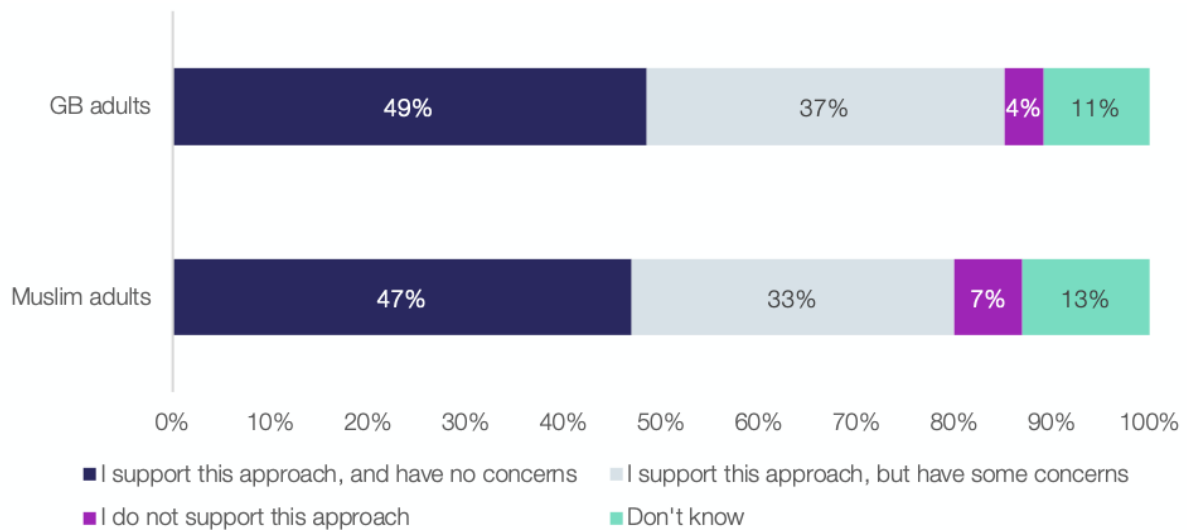
Figure 22. What do you think the Prevent programme addresses?



GB adults showed higher levels of support for the overall purpose and approach of the Prevent programme: 80 per cent of British Muslim adults supported its purpose/approach, compared to 85 per cent of GB adults (see Figure 23). Of the GB adults who supported the purpose/approach overall, 57 per cent were in support with no concerns, with the remaining 43 per cent supporting the approach, but with some concerns. This compared to 59 per cent of British Muslim adult supporters having no concerns, and 41 per cent supporting with concerns. A higher proportion of British Muslim adults did not support the Prevent programme’s purpose/approach (seven per cent) compared to GB adults (4 per cent). Proportionally more British Muslim adults were unsure (13 per cent) compared to GB adults (11 per cent).⁵¹

Higher education level was associated with higher levels of support in both groups. White Muslim adults were significantly more likely than BAME Muslim adults to say they supported Prevent (87 per cent vs 80 per cent respectively). In the British Muslim adults group, Labour voters (79 per cent) and those who would not vote (73 per cent) showed significantly lower levels of support compared to Conservative (91 per cent), Liberal Democrat (92 per cent), Brexit Party (94 per cent) and other (90 per cent) voters.

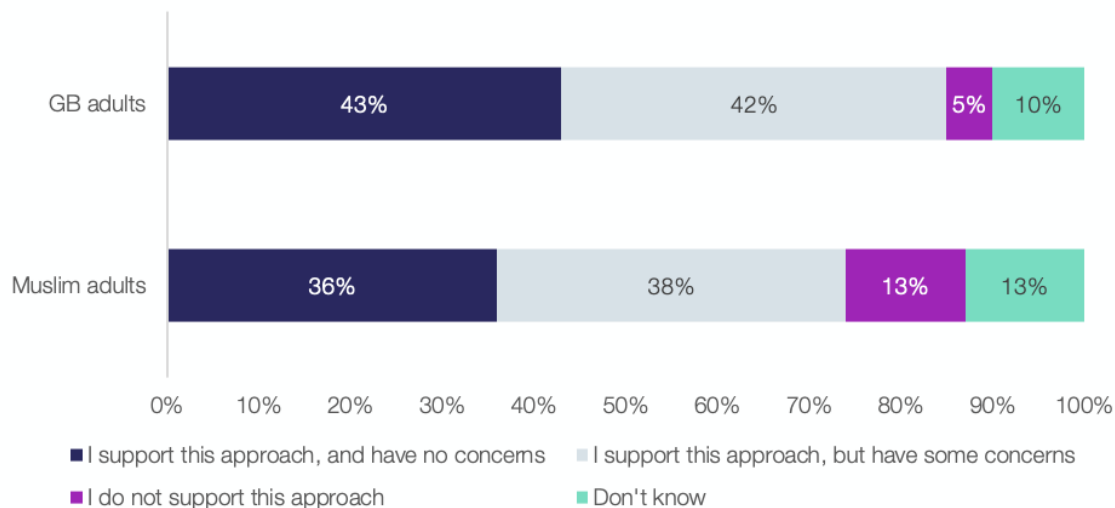
Figure 23. Earlier in this survey, we asked you about your awareness of the Prevent programme. Prevent is a government programme to try and stop people from being drawn into radicalisation and terrorism before it happens. It is run by local police forces and councils and works to prevent extreme right-wing radicalisation as well as extreme Islamist radicalisation. The programme is voluntary and does not involve getting a criminal record. Which of the following statements best reflects your view?



⁵¹ This was not a statistically significant difference.

Significantly more GB adults fully supported the Prevent programme’s approach of targeting particular communities based on risk (43 per cent) compared to British Muslim adults (36 per cent). A further 38 per cent of British Muslim adults supported the approach with some concerns (compared to 42 per cent of GB adults), whilst 13 per cent did not support the approach, and the remaining 13 per cent did not know – see Figure 24. GB adults were less than half as likely to state they did not support the approach (5 per cent) and were also less likely to answer ‘don’t know’ (10 per cent) compared to British Muslim adults. British Muslim women showed lower levels of support (71 per cent) compared to British Muslim men (77 per cent). In both groups, higher education levels correlated with higher levels of support for the Prevent programme’s targeting process.

Figure 24. Prevent is targeted at communities and areas of the country where the risk of terrorists being drawn from is highest. While it also seeks to prevent other types of terror like that from far right extremism, this means it is currently mostly aimed at Muslim communities at risk of being drawn into extreme Islamist terrorism, because the police and security services assess that that is currently the biggest terror threat we face. Which of the following statements best reflects your view?



Of those who had concerns about the Prevent programme’s approach, ‘people associate Islam with terrorism’ was the most commonly chosen concern across both groups (54 per cent overall), whilst ‘it makes Muslims afraid to express their opinions’ was the least likely concern (35 per cent). ‘It means all Muslims are treated as suspects’ featured in the top three choices of British Muslim adults and GB adults, however all three top choices were significantly more likely to be concerns for British Muslims compared to GB adults. GB adults showed a more even spread in their selection of concerns compared to British Muslim adults, who demonstrated a clearer hierarchy in their responses – see Figures 25 and 26 on the following page.

Figure 25. What are your concerns about targeting where risk is highest? Responses of British Muslim adults

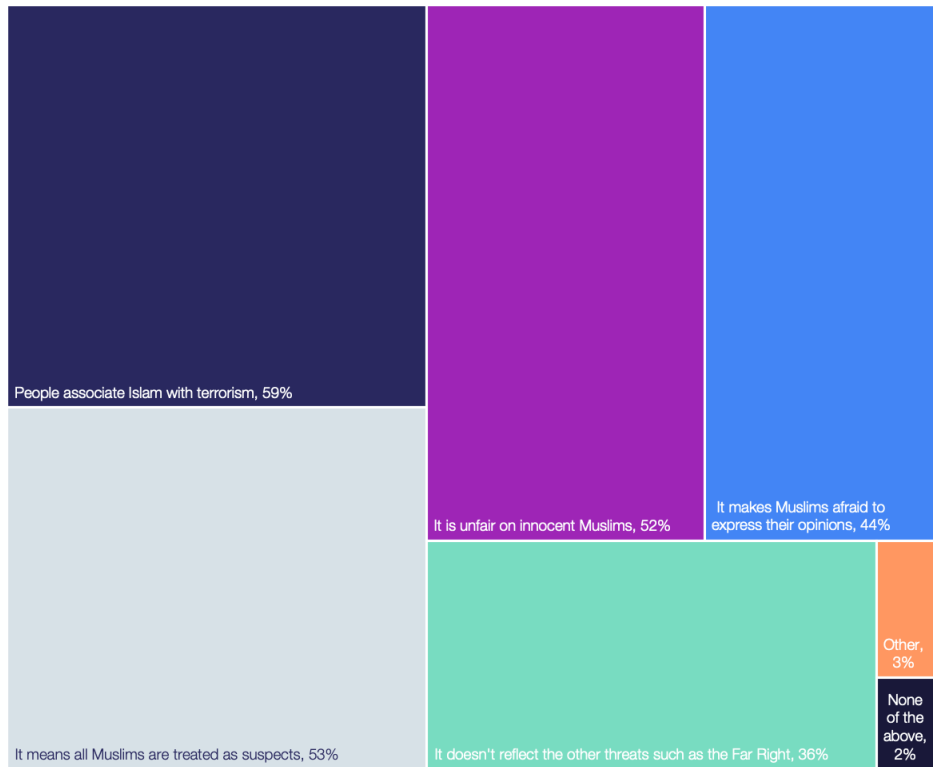
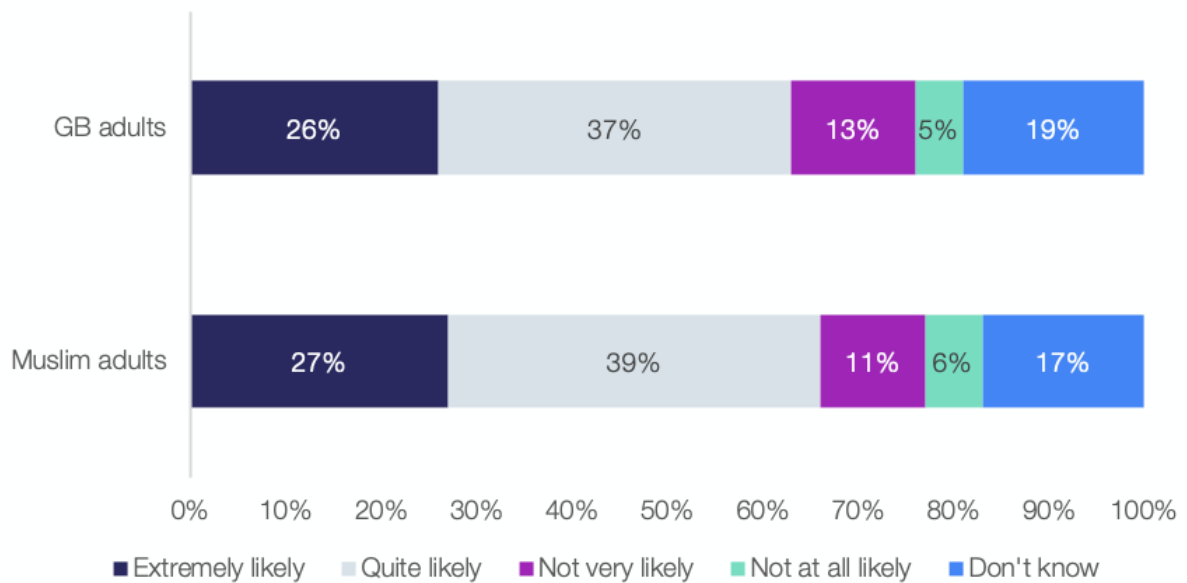


Figure 26. What are your concerns about targeting where risk is highest? Responses of GB adults



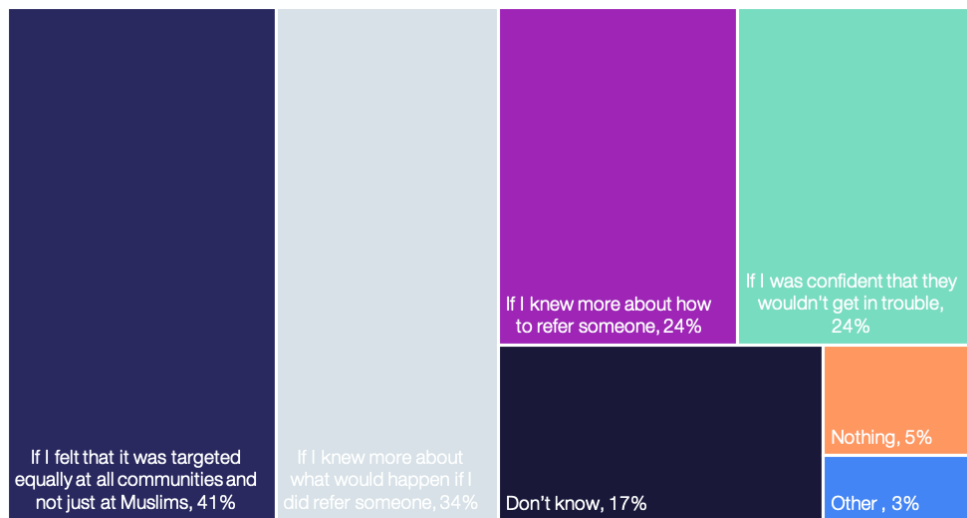
GB adults and British Muslim adults showed almost identical responses in terms of how likely they were to refer somebody to the Prevent programme – see Figure 27. Overall, almost two thirds (65 per cent) felt they were likely to refer, compared to 18 per cent who said they were not likely. Higher education level was associated with a higher likelihood of referring somebody to the Prevent programme within both groups. White Muslim adults were more likely to refer somebody to the Prevent programme (76 per cent) than BAME Muslim adults (67 per cent).

Figure 27. To what extent is it likely that you would refer somebody to the Prevent programme if you suspected they were being radicalised?

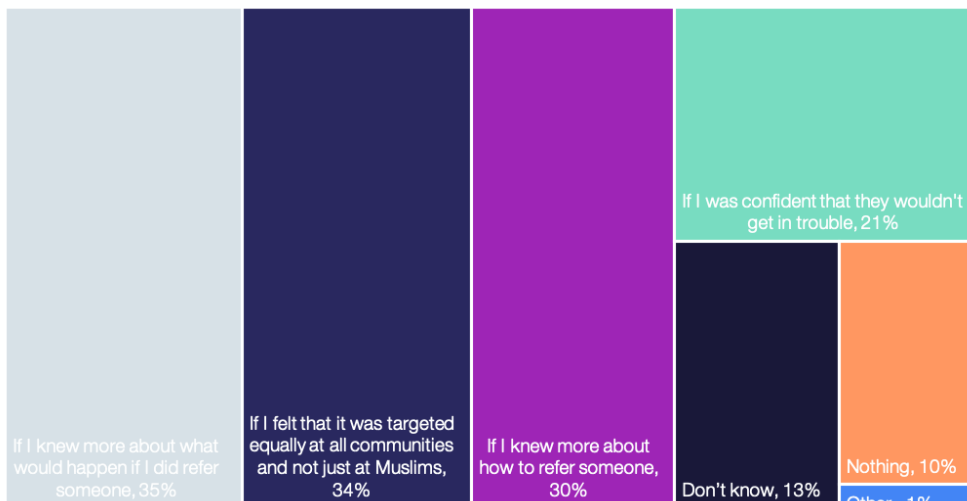


For British Muslim adults, the main way they would be more likely to refer someone to the Prevent programme was if they felt it was targeted equally at all communities (41 per cent), whilst for GB adults, this was equal to if they knew more about how to refer someone (35 per cent) – see Figures 28 and 29 below. ‘If I felt that it was targeted equally at all communities and not just at Muslims’, ‘If I knew more about what would happen if I did refer someone’ and ‘If I knew more about how to refer someone’ were the three most frequently chosen options for British Muslim adults and GB adults.

**Figure 28. What would increase your trust in the programme / increase the likelihood of referring?
Responses of British Muslim adults**



**Figure 29. What would increase your trust in the programme / increase the likelihood of referring?
Responses of GB adults**



Convergence: where did GB adults and British Muslim adults' opinions align most?

- **Freedom of religion:** this was the most positive aspect of life as a Muslim in Britain according to both groups
- **Police community engagement:** both groups gave near identical responses, with over half (52 per cent) agreeing that the police engage well with their community
- **Groups who should be involved in preventing extremism and terrorism:** both groups gave the same top x3 (religious groups; police and security services; and national government) and bottom x3 answers (charities; universities; and local councils)
- **Worry about Islamist extremism:** both groups gave similar responses, with around two thirds reporting being worried about Islamist extremism, and a third not worried
- **Likelihood of referring an individual to Prevent:** 66 per cent of British Muslim adults and 63 per cent of GB adults would refer somebody to the Prevent programme, while 17 per cent and 18 per cent would not

Divergence: which questions resulted in the greatest difference in opinions?

- **Awareness/knowledge of the Prevent programme:** 44 per cent of British Muslims correctly identified Prevent's aim (stopping radicalisation) compared to 28 per cent of GB adults
- **Is Britain a good place to be a Muslim?** more than three-quarters (76 per cent) of British Muslim adults considered Britain a good place to be a Muslim, compared to just over half (52 per cent) of GB adults. More than twice the proportion of British Muslim adults thought Britain was a 'very good' place to be a Muslim (22 per cent) than GB adults (10 per cent)
- **Why Britain is a good place to be a Muslim:** British Muslims were more likely to mention diversity (39 per cent); the education system (25 per cent); and safe local communities (20 per cent) as reasons why Britain is a good place to be a Muslim than GB adults (33 per cent, 18 per cent, 15 per cent respectively). GB adults were more likely to select freedom of expression (35 per cent) than British Muslims (27 per cent)
- **Unfair targeting of British Muslims by the police:** 21 per cent of Muslim adults strongly agreed with the statement 'the police unfairly target British Muslims as they believe they are a terrorism risk', compared to five per cent of GB adults – overall, British Muslims were more than twice as likely to agree with this statement as GB adults (55 per cent vs 24 per cent)
- **Worry about far right extremism:** one third of British Muslim adults (33 per cent) were 'very worried' about far right extremism compared to a quarter (25 per cent) of GB adults

Main areas of within-group differences

- **Is Britain a good place to be a Muslim?** the more frequently British Muslim adults worshipped, the more likely they were to say Britain was a good place to be a Muslim. Those with higher levels of education were also more likely to say Britain was a good place to be a Muslim

- **What makes Britain a poor place to be a Muslim?** British Muslim women were much more likely to choose Islamophobia than British Muslim men (80 per cent vs 48 per cent), and media representation (46 per cent vs 31 per cent), whilst Muslim men were much more likely to choose job discrimination than Muslim women (38 per cent vs 23 per cent) and weak job market (14 per cent vs 3 per cent). Muslim adults who got their news from national TV, local newspapers and national newspapers were most likely to select media representation (47, 45 and 40 per cent respectively), whilst those who get their news from Urdu or Hindi news sources were much less likely (37 per cent vs 15 per cent respectively)
- **Which institutions treat Muslims fairly/unfairly:** British Muslim women were more likely to say the NHS treated Muslims unfairly (15 per cent) than men (10 per cent), whilst Muslims of Black (43 per cent), Asian (36 per cent), or Mixed (42 per cent) ethnicity were more likely to say they are treated unfairly by the police than White Muslims (25 per cent)
- **To what extent is your local area better/the same/worse to live in as a Muslim than other parts of Britain?** Muslim adults living in the South West were most likely to consider their area to be better to live in as a Muslim than other parts of Britain (81 per cent), whilst those in the West Midlands were most likely to say their area was worse to live in (19 per cent)
- **Trust in police:** BAME GB adults were much less likely to state that they trusted the police (57 per cent) compared with White GB adults (73 per cent). Trust in the police increased with age in the GB adults group (18-34: 66 per cent; 35-54: 70 per cent; 55+: 76 per cent), but did not correlate with age in the British Muslim adults group
- **Fair treatment of minority groups by the police:** British Muslim adults overall agreed with the statement 'most police officers treat people fairly, irrespective of their race or religion' less than BAME GB adults (59 per cent vs 65 per cent). Agreement within British Muslim adults varied by voting intention (Conservative: 68 per cent; the Brexit Party: 64 per cent; Liberal Democrat: 61 per cent; Labour: 58 per cent; would not vote: 56 per cent; other: 53 per cent)
- **Unfair targeting of Muslims by the police:** British Muslim men were more likely to agree with the statement 'the police unfairly target British Muslims as they believe they are a terrorism risk' (58 per cent) than British Muslim women (51 per cent). British Muslim adults who get their news from national newspapers were least likely to agree with the statement (58 per cent) compared to other news sources, whereas those who got their news from Hindi news sources (66 per cent) and Urdu news sources (65 per cent) were most likely to agree
- **Islamophobia:** in both the GB adults and British Muslim adults groups, as education level increased, respondents were more likely to say Islamophobia had increased over the past five years
- **Worry about Islamist extremism:** British Muslim adults who intended on voting Labour were significantly less likely to report being worried about Islamist extremism (58 per cent) compared to other voting intentions. In the GB adult group, self-reported worry about Islamist extremism increased with age (18-34: 60 per cent; 35-54: 67 per cent; 55+: 71 per cent)

- **Worry about far right extremism:** British Muslim women were more worried about far right extremism (74 per cent) than British Muslim men (69 per cent)
- **Awareness of the Prevent programme:** within the British Muslim adults group, those who were aged 35-54; got their news from Hindi news sources; had a higher level of education; were employed; and/or intended on voting Conservative had comparatively higher awareness of the Prevent programme
- **Groups who should be involved in countering extremism/terrorism:** British Muslim women were much more likely than British Muslim men to select national government (35 per cent vs 28 per cent), whereas male GB adults were much more likely to select religious groups (45 per cent) compared to female GB adults (34 per cent)
- **Support for the existence of the Prevent programme:** higher education level was associated with higher levels of agreement with the Prevent programme's purpose in both groups. White Muslim adults are significantly more likely than BAME Muslim adults to say they supported Prevent (87 per cent vs 80 per cent). In the British Muslim adults group, Labour voters (79 per cent) and those who would not vote (73 per cent) showed lower agreement compared to Conservative (91 per cent), Liberal Democrat (92 per cent), Brexit Party (94 per cent) and other (90 per cent) voters
- **Support for the Prevent programme targeting Muslim communities:** British Muslim women showed lower levels of support (71 per cent) than British Muslim men (77 per cent). Higher education level was associated with higher levels of agreement with the Prevent programme's targeting method in both groups
- **Likelihood of referring somebody to the Prevent programme:** higher education levels correlated with a higher likelihood of referring somebody to the Prevent programme within both groups. White Muslim adults were more likely to refer somebody to the Prevent programme (76 per cent) than BAME Muslim adults (67 per cent)

Conclusions

This research has been largely investigative and it has not been our intention to produce specific policy recommendations across the whole range of our findings. However, it is apparent that a number of conclusions can be drawn which have implications in particular for politicians, for the police and for the media.

Firstly, there appears to be a significant gap between what people assume or believe British Muslims think and what many do actually think. The popular narrative of Prevent – that it is a ‘toxic brand’ – is difficult to reconcile with our focus groups and polling, which found the majority of Muslims had not heard of the programme, and that there was broad support for its existence. It is equally challenging to accept the opposing (and polarising) narrative that claims British Muslims are “in denial” about Islamist extremism, when near identical proportions of polled British Muslims and the general population say they are worried about the issue. It should be of serious concern to policymakers and to the media that two of the dominant narratives about British Muslims, extremism and Prevent over the last decade appear to be fundamentally flawed.

This debate is too important to be built upon anecdote or assumption and so there is an urgent need for further research to understand in more depth what British Muslims really think about policing and counter-extremism. More broadly, we suggest politicians, institutions and the media need to spend at least as much time talking to British Muslims as they spend talking about them. Engagement with the leaders of Muslim organisations, religious institutions and civil society remains a legitimate, valuable and necessary exercise in order to understand the priorities and concerns of those who they do represent. However, it would appear that talking only to a small number of highly engaged individuals and organisations has been insufficient to gain an accurate picture of what British Muslims think. The independent review of Prevent should reach out beyond practitioners, civil society groups and academics to have direct structured engagement with Muslims and with non-Muslims. Institutionalising such an approach locally and nationally would likely help to depolarise views and address concerns they may have about the programme.

Secondly, our findings demonstrate that there is no single British Muslim voice. We have sought to avoid using the term “the Muslim community” in this report, though it is used on a daily basis by politicians, the media and many other institutions and public figures in Britain. Through our focus groups and polling, we found a rich variety of nuanced views, across age and gender in particular, which call into question the utility of the phrase “the Muslim community”. British Muslim women in particular appear to experience life in some respects very differently and hold different views on the police and extremism compared to British Muslim men and the general population. Others’ views appear to differ by voting intention, frequency of worship at mosque, education levels and media consumption. This should not be surprising, since the same is true – and has long been recognised to be the case – of the population as a whole. However, until more is understood and acknowledged about the diversity of their views, British Muslims are likely to struggle to get the engagement they deserve from many institutions. It should be noted that there are barriers to

developing this understanding. We were initially advised by a number of qualitative research providers that Muslim women in particular may be reluctant or unwilling to share their views in mixed groups or with non-Muslim facilitators. We considered and tested this advice in our pilots and in the event did not encounter either scenario. However, others may be deterred in light of this type of advice or consider some Muslims are “too hard to reach”. In addition, only one of the nine market research and polling companies we approached during the course of this research was able to provide a sample of 1,000+ British Muslims weighted to be representative of the current Muslim population by age, ethnicity and geographical spread. The limited capacity to survey British Muslims in a methodologically robust way represents a notable obstacle to informed debate on their views. Nevertheless, until we better understand and appreciate the diversity of views among British Muslims, conversations about how they relate to policing, extremism and other subjects will remain vulnerable to distortion by the loudest, and in some cases, the most unrepresentative voices.

Thirdly, it is important to recognise that many British Muslims hold similar views to the general population on a range of subjects relating to life in their country. British Muslims love the NHS and have high levels of trust in the police. This flies in the face of the narrative which claims British Muslims have failed to integrate or feel under siege from the state. The argument that Islam is incompatible with life in Britain is not supported by our research either, with polled British Muslims and the polled general population each citing freedom of religion as the principal reason making Britain a good place to be Muslim.

Significantly, British Muslims and the general population also occupy the same broad space on the Prevent programme. The fact that two thirds of polled Muslims said they would be willing to refer someone to Prevent – slightly higher than in the polled general population – will be surprising to many and challenging for some to accept. Those who cite distrust among British Muslims as a reason to scrap the programme may need to find alternative justifications for it. Likewise, those who claim British Muslims must “do more” to tackle extremism may need to include the general population in any future exhortations. On the principle of Prevent targeting where the risk of terrorists being drawn from is highest, even if this means the programme targets Muslims the most, support among the general population is higher than among British Muslims – but not dramatically so. A third of polled British Muslims supported this approach without concerns while a slightly larger proportion supported this approach with some concerns. Together this suggests there is a ‘quiet majority’ of British Muslims willing to support what is routinely described as, and is widely considered to be, a highly controversial counter-extremism policy.

We would, however, warn the Home Office and the police against any complacency about this contingent support. Our polling suggests a third of British Muslims and a third of the general population are either not likely to refer to Prevent someone they suspected was being radicalised or do not know if they would. While our research undermines the argument that Prevent should be scrapped due to lack of trust, it does suggest that there is ample scope to improve confidence in the programme. For example, that appears to be a strong appetite among British Muslims for more engagement by the police on counter-extremism and for more information about how Prevent

works in practice. We hope that the government and the police recognise there is an opportunity to step up and engage British Muslims more directly on the objectives, approach and practicalities of Prevent, confident that there is contingent support for them which could be unlocked.

Fourthly, the media in its broadest sense should carefully consider its impact on the lived experience of British Muslims and their views. A number of civil society groups, including the Muslim Council of Britain, have repeatedly raised concerns about the type and tone of some national newspapers' coverage.⁵² However, it would be a mistake to conclude from our research that Muslims wish to stop certain headlines or restrict coverage in some way in order to have their concerns addressed. Our focus groups suggested that British Muslims felt news coverage of them was disproportionately in connection with terrorism and therefore conflated their religion with terrorism and portrayed Muslims overall in an unduly negative light. They indicated that the remedy was a more balanced representation of Muslims across television and film, including prime time drama and soap operas, and newspapers with their religion referred to in positive and neutral as well as negative narratives or circumstances. In no focus group was it suggested that the news media was wrong to cover terrorism or extremism in the breadth and depth which it does. Complaints about this type of coverage focused on over-emphasis of Islam in the context of terrorism, rather than inaccuracy per se. Overall, it was the absence of coverage of Muslims and their religion in a context unrelated to extremism or terrorism which most troubled them. Only the most indifferent editor or chief executive could fail to be alarmed by polling which suggests British Muslims are more likely to think media representation makes their country a poor place to be a Muslim than job discrimination or the far right. This concern is not theirs alone. Almost as much of the general population also considers media representation to be a negative factor for British Muslims. Since British Muslims are growing in number and economic importance, there is an obvious commercial incentive for the media to improve trust with these audiences.

Ultimately, we conclude that British Muslims enjoy living in Britain. Their views and concerns often mirror those of the general population, from widespread belief in the fairness of most national institutions to concern about the impact of cuts on policing. The majority of British Muslims are supportive of the police in general, recognise the legitimacy of efforts to stop people becoming terrorists and agree with the objectives and approach of the Prevent programme, albeit with some concerns about how it works in practice. We found little or no evidence to support the polarising narratives pushed by the far right and by Islamists about how British Muslims relate to their country. We hope policymakers, the police, the media and other institutions take note of this research and use it to better inform their responses to extremism and the debate about it.

⁵² See: <https://www.ipso.co.uk/news-press-releases/blog/ipso-blog-our-standards-and-monitoring-work-in-2019/>

Appendix A: Existing polls of British Muslims' attitudes to extremism

Table 1: Pre-2010 polls

Survey	Year	Type	Mode	Population	Region	Total sample size	Muslim sample size
Gallup Coexist Index	2008	Academic	Telephone & Face-Face	Muslim, 18+ Non-Muslim, 15+	GB	1,505	504
GfK NOP for C4 News	2007	Media	Telephone	Muslim, 18+	GB	500	Full sample
Populus for Policy Exchange	2007	Academic	Telephone & online	Muslim, 16+	GB	1,003	Full sample
ICM for News of the World	2006	Media	Telephone	Muslim, 16+	GB	502	Full sample
NOP for C4 Dispatches	2006	Media	Telephone	Muslim, 16+	GB	1,000	Full sample
Populus for Times/ITV News	2006	Media	Telephone & online	Muslim, 16+	GB	1,131	Full sample
YouGov for the Sun	2006	Media	Online	General public, 18+	GB	1,942	310
ICM for Guardian	2006	Media	Online	General public, 18+	GB	1,506	501
ICM for Sunday Telegraph	2006	Media	Telephone, re-contacts and snowball	Muslim, 18+	GB	500	Full sample
Populus for Times	2006	Media	Telephone	Muslim, 18+	GB	1,131	Full sample
MORI for BBC	2005	Media	Telephone, re-contacts, RDD	General public, 18+	GB	1,208	204
YouGov for Daily Telegraph	2005	Media	Online	Muslim, 18+	GB	526	Full sample
MORI for the Sun	2005	Media	Face-to-face in street and in home	Muslim, 18+	10 LA areas	282	Full sample

Table 2: Post-2010 polls – Academic/large dataset sources

Survey	Year	Mode	Population	Region	Total sample size	Muslim sample size
British Election Study EMBES	2010	Face-Face	General public (BMEs) 18+	GB	2,787	1,140
Citizenship survey	2010-11	Face-Face	General public 16+	England/ Wales	16,937	2,875
Longitudinal study of young people in England	2004	Face-Face	General public (BMEs) 13+	England	15,500	1,347
Understanding society (ethnic minority boost)	2015-16	Face-Face	General public (BMEs) 16+	GB	5,000	1,000+
Pew Global attitudes towards Muslims	2016	Telephone	General public 18+	UK + France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden	1,460	N/A

Table 3: Post-2010 polls – Commercial/media surveys

Survey	Year	Type	Mode	Population	Region	Total sample size	Muslim sample size
Savanta ComRes survey for BBC Today Programme	2015	Media	Online	Muslim, 18+	GB	1,000	Full sample
YouGov Survey for Islamic Relief	2015	Commercial	Online	General public, 18+	GB	6,641	N/A
YouGov Survey for Eurotrack	2015	Commercial	Online	General public, 18+	GB	1,667	N/A
YouGov-Cambridge	2015	Commercial	Online	General public, 18+	GB	1,641	N/A
ICM survey for Channel 4	2015	Media	Face-Face	Muslim, 18+	GB	1,081	Full sample
Survation survey for the Sun	2015	Media	Telephone	Muslim, 18+	GB	1,003	Full sample
Populus survey for Hope not Hate	2016	Commercial	Online	General public, 18+	GB	4,015	N/A
ICM survey for	2016	Commercial	Face-Face	Muslim, 18+	GB	3,084	Full

Policy Exchange							sample
Ipsos Perils of Perception survey	2016	Commercial	Online	General public, 16+	40 countries inc. GB	500-1,000 per country 1,000 in GB	N/A
YouGov for Crest Advisory (x2)	2019	Commercial	Online	General public, 18+	GB	1,655 1,804	N/A

Appendix B: Reference list of academic studies into the representation of Muslims in the British media

- Poole, E. (2002). *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*. IB Tauris.
- Moore, K., Mason, P., & Lewis, J. M. W. (2008). Images of Islam in the UK: The representation of British Muslims in the national print news media 2000-2008.
- Flood, C., Hutchings, S., Miazhevich, G., & Nickels, H. (2012). *Islam, security and television news*. Springer.
- Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., & McEnery, T. (2013). *Discourse analysis and media attitudes: The representation of Islam in the British press*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ameli, S. R. (2004). *The British media and Muslim representation: The ideology of demonisation* (Vol. 6). Islamic Human Rights Commission.
- Authority, G. L. (2007). The search for common ground: Muslims, non-Muslims and the UK media (a report commissioned by the Mayor of London).
- Petley, J. (2013). *Pointing the finger: Islam and Muslims in the British media*. Oneworld Publications.
- Sian, K., Law, I., & Sayyid, S. (2012). The Media and Muslims in the UK. *Consultado a*, 15, 2013.
- Ahmed, S., & Matthes, J. (2017). Media representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015: A meta-analysis. *International Communication Gazette*, 79(3), 219-244.
- Richards, B., & Brown, L. (2017). Evidence and ideology: moderating the critique of media Islamophobia. *Journalism Education*, 6(1), 12-22.

Appendix C: Screening questionnaire used by the focus group recruiters

Respondent's full name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____

Post code: _____

Contact number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Q1	<u>Are you...?</u>		
	Male	1	Check quota
	Female	2	
	Other	3	
	Prefer not to say	4	

Q2	<u>Your age? (Exact age if possible)</u>		
	18-24	1	Check quota
	24-29	2	
	30-34	3	
	35-49	4	
	40-44	5	
	45-49	6	
	50-54	7	
	55-59	8	
	60-64	9	
	65+	10	

Q3	<u>How would you describe your ethnic origin?</u>		
	British / Welsh / Irish	1	Check quota

	White Western European	2	
	White Eastern European	3	
	Any other White background	4	
	Black or Black British - Caribbean	5	
	Black or Black British - African	6	
	Any other Black background (please specify)	7	
	Asian or Asian British - Indian	8	
	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	9	
	Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	10	
	Any other Asian background (please specify)	11	
	White and Black African / Caribbean	12	
	White and Asian	13	
	Any other mixed background	14	
	Chinese	15	
	Other Eastern / Middle Eastern Asian background (please specify)	16	
	Any other ethnic group (please specify)	17	
	Prefer not to say	18	

Q4	<u>What is your religion?</u>		
	None	1	CLOSE
	Christianity	2	CLOSE
	Islam	3	
	Hinduism	4	CLOSE
	Sikhism	5	CLOSE
	Buddhism	6	CLOSE
	Judaism	7	CLOSE
	Other (please specify)	8	CLOSE
	Prefer not to say	9	CLOSE

Q5	<u>Are you at present?</u>		
	Single	1	Check quota
	Married	2	
	Cohabiting	3	
	Divorced or separated	4	
	Widowed	5	
	Single parent	6	

Q6	<u>How many children do you have?</u>		
	None	1	
	1	2	
	2	3	
	3	4	
	4	5	
	5	6	
	More than 5	7	
	Prefer not to say	8	

Q7	<u>Which of the following best describes your occupation?</u>		
	High managerial, administrative or professional - e.g. doctor, lawyer, company director judge, surgeon, school headmaster etc.	1	Reasonable spread
	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional - e.g. school teacher, office manager, junior doctor, bank manager, police inspector, accountant etc.	2	
	Supervisor, clerical, junior managerial, administrative or professional - e.g. policeman, nurse, secretary, clerk, self-employed (5+ people) etc.	3	
	Skilled manual worker - e.g. mechanic, plumber, electrician, lorry driver, train driver etc.	4	
	Semi-skilled or unskilled manual worker - e.g. baggage handler, waiter, factory worker, receptionist, labourer,	5	

	gardener etc.		
	Work placement / apprenticeship	6	
	Housewife / househusband	7	
	Unemployed	8	
	Student	9	
	Retired / pensioner	10	
	Don't know	11	
	Other (please specify)	12	

<u>Q8</u>	<u>What is the highest level of education you have completed?</u>		
	No formal qualifications	1	
	GCSEs / school up until the age of 16	2	
	A-levels / school up until the age of 18	3	
	University degree	4	
	Other (please specify)	5	

<u>Q9</u>	<u>Have you attended a market research group discussion/depth interview in the last 12 months?</u>		
	Yes	1	CLOSE
	No	2	

<u>Q10</u>	<u>Which statement best describes your status?</u>		
	I have always lived in Britain and was born here and my parent(s) were born overseas	1	Check quota
	I have always lived in Britain and my parent(s) were born in Britain	2	
	I was born overseas but have lived here since my childhood	3	
	I was born and brought up overseas and	4	

	came to Britain as an adult to settle down		
--	--	--	--

If Q10=3 ASK

Q11	<u>Please tell me how long you have been resident in the UK?</u>		
	Less than 1 year	1	Check quota
	1-5 years	2	
	6-10 years	3	
	10+ years	4	

Q12	<u>How good are your English speaking skills?</u>		
	Very good/fluent	1	
	Good/okay – able to at least speak clearly	2	
	Not very good	3	

Q13	<u>We're currently conducting Group discussions regarding attitudes towards policing, extremism and counter-extremism – would you be interested in taking part?</u>		
	Yes	1	
	No	2	CLOSE

Recruiter instructions:

Please confirm appointments venue, time and date according to the schedule provided.

Q14	<u>The personal information you provide will be used solely for this research project. The research session will be audio recorded. This is for purposes of this project only. Can you confirm that you understand and are happy with this?</u>		
	Yes	1	
	No	2	CLOSE

Confidentiality

Any and all information provided to [recruitment company], our client or any other company or persons working on our behalf on this market research project, is strictly confidential and bound to us in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Your details will not be passed on to any third party company and anything you say or do will be strictly confidential and will not be related directly to you in any post-research reporting.

Appendix D: Focus group discussion guide & live polling questions



British Muslim attitudes: Focus groups discussion guide

Attitudes to the police, to the state and to counter-extremism

1. Welcome, housekeeping and background (3 mins)

Thank you all very much for coming. Let's start by introducing ourselves. My name is [XXXXX] and I am moderating this focus group. My colleague [XXXXX] is helping me and will be taking notes and assisting with the voting handsets which you each have.

In a moment I will tell you a bit more about our organisation and the work we are doing, but I have some house-keeping to do now before we go further.

- Thank you very much for coming. We are intending this meeting to last about an hour and a half
- There are no right and wrong answers and it is really important that you give your honest opinion. But we have quite a lot to get through this morning/afternoon/evening, and we might have to cut short bits of the discussion. This is not us being rude, it is just that we have got quite a few things we want to ask you about and we want to hear from everyone in the room
- To thank you for your time we are paying you £40. We will provide you with envelopes and will need you to sign a receipt – let's do that at the end
- Please switch your phones to silent – if you do need to take an urgent call that is okay but please leave the room and then return as soon as you can so we don't miss the chance to hear from you
- Please help yourselves to refreshments during the focus group as you wish
- We will be recording this interview, I hope this is OK with you. Only the two of us will have access to this tape and it will be destroyed after we write our report. The research will be

included in a report that will be published later this year, but we are not going to use anyone's names in the report

- We will also be using voting handsets so you can vote on particular questions. The results of each vote will be shown on a screen, but will be anonymous

We work for Crest Advisory, an independent think tank which specialises in researching lots of different aspects of crime and justice. This particular project has a focus on understanding the attitudes of Muslims in Britain today. We're hoping this research will help build understanding of current relationships between the police and communities in Britain, including the Muslim community. We're doing a series of focus groups across the UK.

2. Introductions & technology test (2 minutes)

Could you tell me your names and how you got here today?

[Facilitators to also take part in this introduction]

Technology test / icebreaker

Each of you has a voting handset and we will be using these during the focus group today to get your views on a number of questions. We would like to test the technology so please can you look at the screen and answer the following question [something light hearted and appropriate to the group]

[Explanation of how to use handsets & voting]

Thank you – the handsets are clearly working!

3. Being a Muslim in Britain (10 minutes)

Q1. I want to start by asking you to think about life as a Muslim in Britain. To what extent do you think Britain is a good place to be a Muslim?

Q2. So it seems as if most people in the group think Britain is/is not a good place to be a Muslim. In what ways is Britain a good or bad place to be a Muslim?

- a. Is there anything else?
- b. Does anyone else have any thoughts?
- c. Do you think this has always been the case?
 - i. Do you think this aspect of life as a Muslim in Britain has got worse/improved?
- d. Is this the case everywhere/across Britain?

Q3. What are your opinions on how Muslims are represented in British society?

- In what ways are Muslims represented well / not well?
- What do you think drives this representation?
- In what other ways are Muslims commonly represented?
- What would help to improve the representation of Muslims?

4. Policing and the community (30 minutes)

4a: Policing and the Muslim community

We are going to move the discussion on now to talk about the police more specifically.

Q4. What are your general impressions of the police and policing?

- Are your general impressions of the police positive or negative?
- What led you to this impression?

We are now going to use our voting handsets to answer another question.

Q5 [voting handsets]. How good or bad are the police at engaging with your community, in your experience?

- 1/A: Very good
- 2/B: Good
- 3/C: Poor
- 4/D: Very poor
- 5/E: I do not know enough to comment

[VOTING]

Thank you. So most people think that the police are good / are not good at engaging with your community.

- In what ways are the police good / bad at engaging with your community?
- What led you to your opinion?
- Do you think the police understand Muslim communities?

4b: Policing and minority communities

Q6. How are the police's relationships with minority communities more generally?

- How does the relationship between the police and Muslim communities compare with other groups?
- How do the issues vary across different minority communities?
- Are there different challenges?

- Generally, do you think Muslims are treated more, less or as fairly by the police compared to other groups? In what ways?

Q7. If you could make one suggestion to improve police relationships with minority communities generally, or the Muslim community in particular, what might it be?

- How would this differ to the current situation?
- What would this change look like in practice?

5. Extremism and counter-extremism (40 minutes)

We're going to move the discussion on to the next topic now and talk about radicalisation and extremism and what we can do to stop it.

- How worried are you about extremism in your community and in the UK more widely?
- What does the phrase 'extremism' mean to you? Is it the same thing as terrorism?

I want to talk about a government programme called the Prevent programme. Some of you might know a lot about this, some of you might not, and some of you might never have heard of it at all – any of these are fine! We will say a bit more about what Prevent is, but first we'd like to get a sense of how much you are already aware of it (if at all).

We are going to use our handsets for this question. Just to remind you, the results of the whole group will be shown, and will be fully anonymous. We will then discuss the answers.

Q8 [voting handsets]. How aware were you of the Prevent programme before agreeing to take part in this focus group?

- 1/A: Very aware
- 2/B: Quite aware
- 3/C: Some awareness
- 4/D: Not aware at all

[VOTING]

Thank you. So most people do/do not have an/some/good awareness of the Prevent programme.

Q9. Those of you who *were* aware to some degree before today – could you tell us what you understand or know about the Prevent programme?

- Where/who did you hear this from? / Where did you learn about it?
- How do you think the Prevent programme works?
- Who does the Prevent programme target?

- What kinds of extremism does it target?
- Are all forms of extremism targeted in the same way?
- Of those who hadn't heard of Prevent, have you discussed extremism and what the police, government or others might be doing about it?

We are now going to show you a written explanation of the Prevent programme. This is not an official explanation of the programme but something we have written to try and say what it is in a very straightforward and neutral way. Please read through the description – I will also read it aloud.

The Prevent Programme

Prevent is a government programme to try and stop people from being drawn into radicalisation and terrorism before it happens.

It is run by local police forces and councils and works to prevent extreme right-wing radicalisation as well as extreme Islamist radicalisation.

If Prevent workers feel someone is a serious concern they may be offered one-to-one mentoring from an appropriate adult such as a youth worker or imam who can help educate them and support them in their life to help guide them away from radicalisation. This is entirely voluntary and does not involve getting a criminal record.

Prevent also includes a duty on public sector workers such as teachers and doctors to report signs of radicalisation to the police and council, who then consider whether any further action is needed.

It also includes funding for organisations such as youth groups, faith groups and education programmes to work in communities against radicalisation.

Q10. What do you think about this statement?

- What was your reaction to this statement?
- Do any parts of this statement jump out at you?
- Does it sound like something you would support?
- Would you refer someone you were worried about? Would you know how to?

We are now going to show a further statement about Prevent, which we would like you to respond to using your voting handsets once again.

Q11 [handsets]. Prevent is targeted at communities and areas of the country where the risk of terrorists being drawn from is highest. While it also seeks to prevent other types of terror like that from far right extremism, this means it is currently mostly aimed at Muslim communities at risk of

being drawn into extreme Islamist terrorism, because the police and security services assess that that is currently the single biggest terror threat we face. Which of the following statements best reflects your view?

- 1/A: I support this approach
- 2/B: I understand why this approach is taken, but have some concerns
- 3/C: I do not support this approach

[VOTING]

Thank you. So most of you do / do not support this approach.

Q12. Why do you think this approach is fair, or not fair?

- What are the dangers of carrying out the programme in this way?
- What are the dangers of *not* carrying out the programme in this way?
- Do you have any advice on how to target risk fairly?

We are nearly finished now. Our last question is going to be about efforts to stop extremism.

Q13. If you could give advice to those in positions of influence (for example in the government or the police, or within the Muslim community) about how they could help stop extremism, what would your advice be?

- What would make it easier to tackle extremism?
- What makes it difficult to tackle extremism currently?
- What would an ideal approach look like?
- What else could your community or other communities do to help?

6. Summary and close

Would anyone like to share any views that they haven't had an opportunity to share yet?

Thank you very much for taking the time to share your views with us, we really appreciate it.

If anyone has any questions about the research or how the focus group findings will be used, please feel free to have a chat with me or [XXXX].

Appendix E: Confirmation of payment & consent form



**Crest Advisory focus group:
Attitudes to the police, to the state and to counter-extremism**

Confirmation of payment & consent

Thank you very much for your time today. The insights you shared are much appreciated – we’re hoping this research will help build understanding of current relationships between the police and communities in Britain, including the Muslim community. We’re doing a series of focus groups across the UK.

The focus groups findings will be presented in a publicly available report. Quotes from the focus groups will be included, but these will all be anonymous.

I have understood the above information, and consent to the information from today’s group being used as outlined above. I confirm that I have received £40 from Crest for my participation in today’s group.

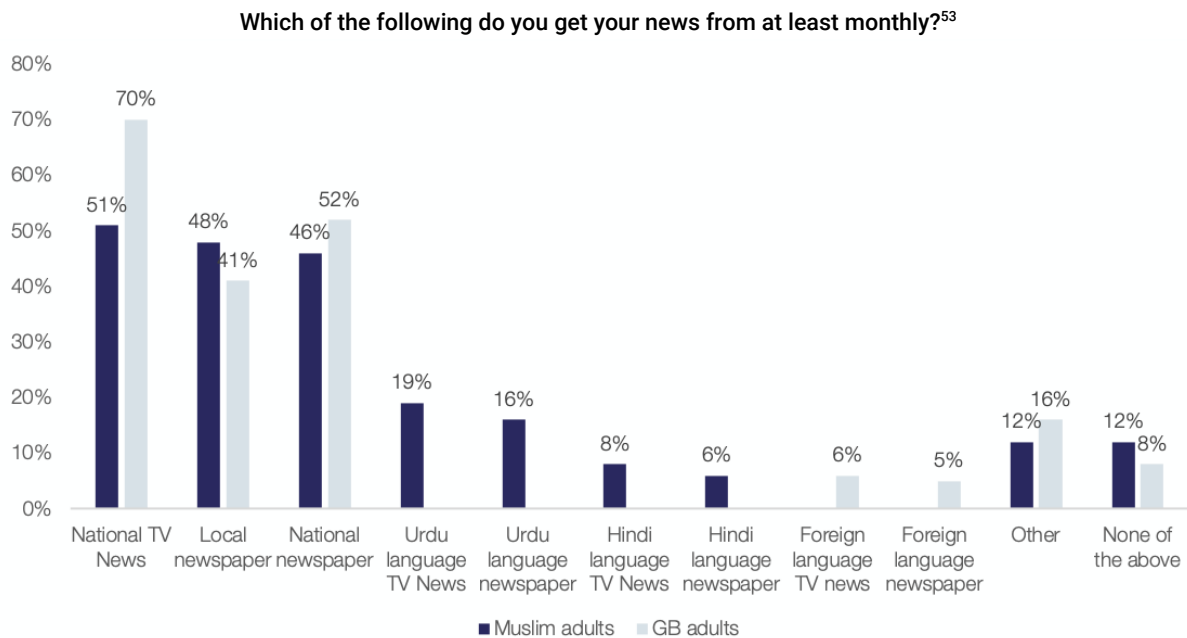
NAME (print): _____ **Countersigned by:** _____
(Crest Advisory)

Signature: _____ **Signature:** _____

Date: _____ **Date:** _____

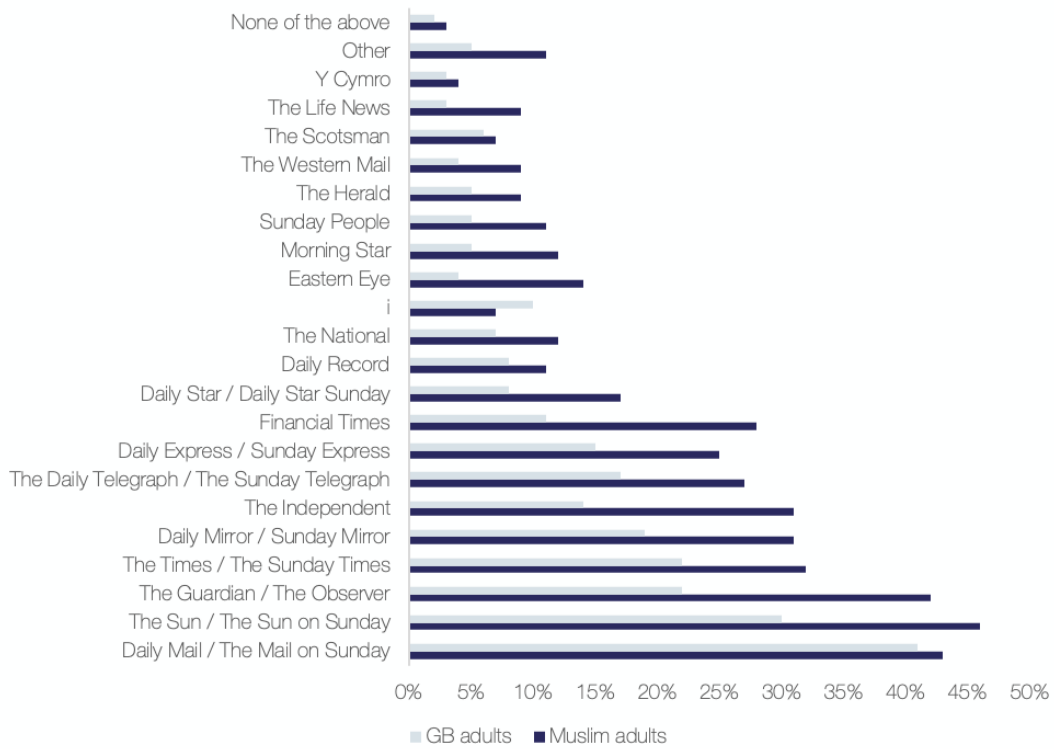
If you have any questions after today about the focus groups, or any other aspect of the project, please don’t hesitate to get in touch at: manon.roberts@crestadvisory.com

Appendix F: Main sources of news and newspaper readership

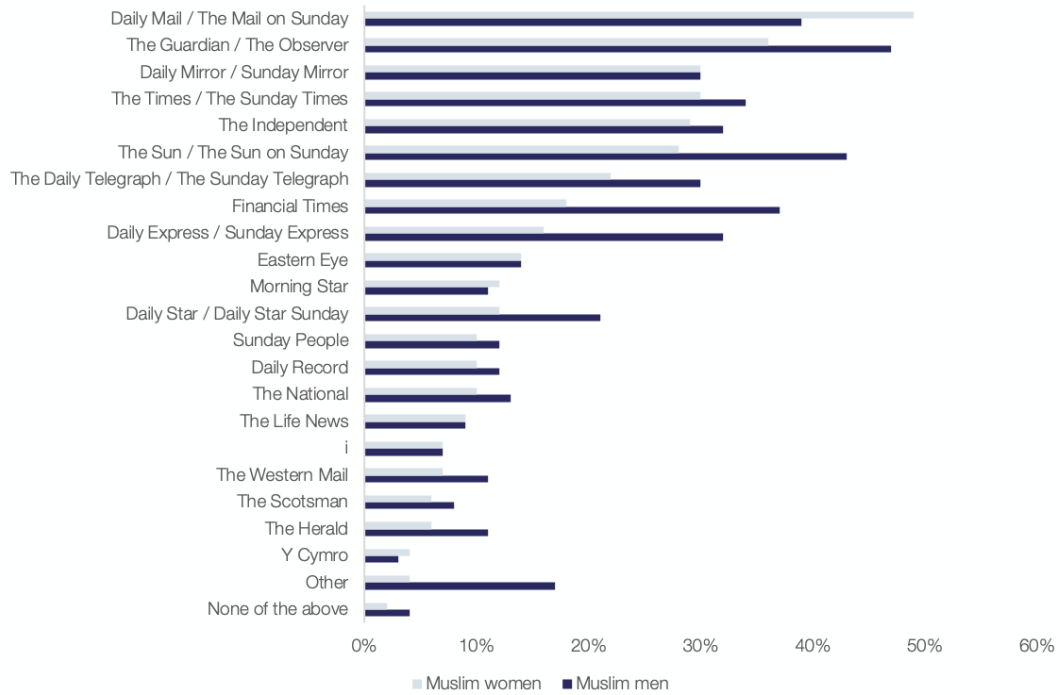


⁵³ The screener polling question differed for the Muslim adult and GB adult groups – GB adults were given the options of ‘foreign language TV news’ and ‘foreign language newspaper’, whilst in the Muslim adult group these questions were replaced by the Urdu and Hindi language options

Which of the following national newspapers do you get your news from at least monthly?



Which of the following national newspapers do you get your news from at least monthly? Broken down by gender



Appendix G: Polling questionnaire

Crest Advisory – Muslim Poll Oct 2019	
SAMPLE DEFINITION and SIZE	1000 GB Muslims [Representative sample by gender, weighted by age, region and ethnicity] 1000 GB Gen Pop [Representative sample by age, region and ethnicity, with a gender split]
METHODOLOGY	Online
QUESTIONNAIRE LENGTH	10 mins

Screener questions

S1. Firstly, do you, or any member of your family or close friends, currently work or have ever worked in, any of the following industries? [ASK ALL, MULTICODE, FIX]

1. Journalism **[TERMINATE]**
2. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
3. Public Relations **[TERMINATE]**
4. Construction
5. Market Research **[TERMINATE]**
6. Finance, Insurance and Real Estate
7. Media/Broadcasting **[TERMINATE]**
8. Public Administration
9. Policy **[TERMINATE]**
10. Refused to answer **[TERMINATE]**
11. None of the above

S2. Which of the following religious groups, if any, do you consider yourself to be a member of? [SINGLE CODE, RANDOMISE 1-6] Please select one only.

1. Buddhist
2. Christian
3. Hindu
4. Jewish
5. Muslim [CODE AS MUSLIM]
6. Sikh
7. Other
8. Prefer not to say
9. None

S3. To which of the following ethnic groups do you consider you belong? [SINGLE CODE]

1. White - British
2. White - Irish
3. White - Gypsy or Irish traveller
4. White - Other
5. Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
6. Mixed - White and Black African
7. Mixed – White and Asian
8. Mixed – Other
9. Asian/Asian British - Indian
10. Asian/Asian British – Pakistani
11. Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi
12. Asian/Asian British – Chinese
13. Asian/Asian British – Other Asian
14. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African
15. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean
16. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Other Black
17. Other ethnic group – Arab
18. Other ethnic group – Any other ethnic group
19. Prefer not to answer

**S4. How old are you? Please enter your age in the box below. [ASK ALL, OPEN TEXT, FIX]
OPEN NUMERICAL BOX / TERMINATE IF UNDER 18**

Demographics

D1. Gender. Are you...? [SINGLE CODE]

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other
4. Prefer not to say

D2. Regions. Where do you live? [SINGLE CODE]

1. Scotland
2. North-West
3. North-East
4. Yorkshire & The Humber
5. Wales
6. West Midlands
7. East Midlands
8. South-West
9. South-East
10. Eastern
11. London
12. Other [TERMINATE]

D3. [MUSLIM SAMPLE] Newspaper readership. Which of the following do you get your news from at least monthly? [MULTI CODE]

1. National newspaper
2. Local newspaper
3. National TV News
4. Urdu language newspaper
5. Hindi language newspaper
6. Urdu language TV News
7. Hindi language TV News
8. Other
9. None of the above

D3. [GEN POP SAMPLE] Newspaper readership. Which of the following do you get your news from at least monthly? [MULTI CODE]

1. National newspaper
2. Local newspaper
3. National TV News
4. Foreign language newspaper
5. Foreign language TV News
6. Other
7. None of the above

D3a. Newspaper readership. Which of the following national newspapers do you get your news from least monthly? [IF CODE 1 AT D3/MULTI CODE/RANDOMISE 1-21]

1. The Daily Telegraph / The Sunday Telegraph
2. The Times / The Sunday Times
3. Financial Times
4. The Guardian / The Observer
5. i
6. The Independent
7. Daily Mail / The Mail on Sunday
8. Daily Express / Sunday Express
9. The Sun / The Sun on Sunday
10. Daily Mirror / Sunday Mirror
11. Sunday People
12. Daily Star / Daily Star Sunday
13. Morning Star
14. The Life News
15. Eastern Eye
16. The Herald
17. The Scotsman
18. The National
19. Daily Record
20. The Western Mail
21. Y Cymro
22. Other
23. None of the above

D4. Worship frequency. How often do you attend your mosque [IF S2=5]/place of worship [IF S2=1-4/6-8]? [ASK IF S2=1-8, SINGLE CODE]

1. More than once daily
2. Daily
3. Weekly
4. Fortnightly
5. Monthly
6. Every 2-6 months
7. Every 7-12 months
8. Less than yearly
9. I never attend
10. I do not have a mosque/place of worship

D5. Which of these qualifications do you have to date? Please select all that apply [ASK ALL, MULTICODE, FIX]

1. No qualifications **[EXCLUSIVE]**
2. 1-4 O-levels/ CSEs/ GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma
3. NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills
4. 5+ O levels (passes) / CSEs (grade 1) / GCSEs (grade A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A-level, 2-3 AS levels/ VCEs, Higher Diploma
5. NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/ General Diploma, RSA Diploma
6. Apprenticeship
7. 2+ A-levels/ VCEs, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/ Advanced Diploma
8. NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma, Undergraduate degree (e.g. BA, BSc)
9. Master's degree (e.g. MA, MSc)
10. Doctorate degree (e.g. PhD)
11. NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level
12. Professional qualifications (e.g. teaching, nursing, accountancy)
13. Other vocational/ work-related qualifications
14. Non-UK qualifications

D6. Which of the following best describes your employment status? [SINGLE, FIX OPTIONS]

1. Full-time employment (more than 29 hours a week)
2. Part-time employment (8-29 hours per week)
3. Retired
4. Student
5. Not working / Sick / Disabled / Working less than 8 hours per week
6. Prefer not to say
7. Other

D7. What is the first half of your postcode? For example. if your postcode is SW1A 0AA please input just SW1A. [OPEN END]

V1. If there were a [*] General Election tomorrow to elect MPs to Westminster, would you vote [ROTATE] Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, The Brexit Party, SNP [FIX, IN SCOTLAND ONLY], Plaid Cymru [FIX, IN WALES ONLY] or for another party?

[DISPLAY PRECODES 1.-7. IN ORDER THEY APPEAR IN QUESTION]

1. Conservative
2. Labour
3. Liberal Democrat
4. The Brexit Party
5. SNP [IN SCOTLAND ONLY]
6. Plaid Cymru [IN WALES ONLY]
7. Another party [SHOW "OTHER" IN TABLES]
8. Would not vote
9. Prefer not to say

The Prevent Programme

1. Before today, were you aware of the Prevent programme?

Yes, definitely / Yes, I think so / No, I don't think so / No, definitely not

2. What do you think the Prevent programme addresses? [RANDOMISE A-E]

- a) Bullying in schools
- b) Security at transport stations
- c) Road traffic accidents
- d) Childhood obesity
- e) Stopping radicalization
- f) Other
- g) Don't know

Is Britain a good place to be a Muslim?

3. To what extent do you think Britain is a good or poor place to be a Muslim?

Very good / Good / Poor / Very poor / Don't know

4. What makes Britain a good place to be a Muslim? Please choose up to three of the following.

[ASK Q3=VERY GOOD OR GOOD / RANDOMISE A-K]

- a) Media representation
- b) Freedom of religion
- c) Healthy job market
- d) Easy access to job market
- e) Education system
- f) Diversity
- g) Welcoming national culture
- h) Safe local communities
- i) Number of mosques
- j) Democracy and rule of law
- k) Freedom of expression

- l) Other
- m) None of the above **[EXCLUSIVE]**

5. What makes Britain a poor place to be a Muslim? Please choose up to three of the following. [ASK Q3=VERY POOR OR POOR / RANDOMISE A-K]

- a. Media representation
- b. Feeling hesitant to show beliefs
- c. Weak job market
- d. Job discrimination
- e. Education system
- f. Lack of diversity
- g. Closed national culture
- h. The far right
- i. The Prevent programme
- j. Islamophobia
- k. Feeling spied upon
- l. Other
- m. Prefer not to say **[EXCLUSIVE]**

6. To what extent do you think the following institutions treat Muslims fairly or unfairly?

Very fairly / Fairly / Somewhat unfairly / Very unfairly / Don't know

- a. Central government
- b. The media
- c. The police
- d. Schools
- e. Councils
- f. Employers
- g. NHS
- h. Universities
- i. The courts

7. To what extent is your local area better, the same, or worse to live in as a Muslim than other parts of Britain?

- a. Much better
- b. Slightly better
- c. The same
- d. Slightly worse
- e. Much worse
- f. Don't know

8. To what extent do you consider Islamophobia to be a problem in Britain? [SINGLE CODE]

- a. A large problem
- b. A fair problem
- c. A small problem
- d. Not a problem at all
- e. Don't know

9. Following on from this, do you think Islamophobia has changed in Britain over the last five years? [SINGLE CODE]

- a. Yes, the problem has greatly increased
- b. Yes, the problem has somewhat increased
- c. No, it has remained the same
- d. Yes, the problem has somewhat decreased
- e. Yes, the problem has greatly decreased
- f. Don't know

Trust in police

1. How much would you say you trusted the police?

A lot / A fair amount / Not very much / Not at all / Don't know

2. How much do you trust the police to undertake the following tasks?

A lot / A fair amount / Not very much / Not at all / Don't know

- a. Helping the vulnerable e.g. finding missing people
- b. Responding to emergency situations
- c. Investigating routine crimes e.g. burglary
- d. Countering extremism / terrorism

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [RANDOMISE A-C]

Strongly agree / Somewhat agree / Neither agree or disagree / Somewhat disagree / Strongly disagree / Don't know

- a. The police engage well with my community.
- b. Most police officers treat people fairly, irrespective of their race or religion.
- c. The police unfairly target British Muslims as they believe they are a terrorism risk.

Views on extremism and counter-extremism

4. Which of the following groups, if any, do you believe should be involved in preventing extremism and terrorism before it happens? Please select up to three options. [RANDOMISE A-J, FIX K-M]

- a. Police and security services
- b. Schools
- c. Local councils
- d. Charities
- e. Community groups
- f. Religious groups
- g. Universities
- h. The general public
- i. National government
- j. The media
- k. Other
- l. None of these [EXCLUSIVE]

5. How worried are you about the following in the UK? [RANDOMISE A-B]

Very worried / Fairly worried / Not very worried / Not at all worried / Don't know

- a. Islamist extremism
- b. far right extremism

6. Earlier in this survey, we asked you about your awareness of the Prevent programme. Prevent is a government programme to try and stop people from being drawn into radicalisation and terrorism before it happens. It is run by local police forces and councils and works to prevent extreme right-wing radicalisation as well as extreme Islamist radicalisation. The programme is voluntary and does not involve getting a criminal record. Which of the following statement best reflects your view?

- a. I support this approach, and have no concerns
- b. I support this approach, but have some concerns
- c. I do not support this approach
- d. Don't know

7. Prevent is targeted at communities and areas of the country where the risk of terrorists being drawn from is highest. While it also seeks to prevent other types of terror like that from far right extremism, this means it is currently mostly aimed at Muslim communities at risk of being drawn into extreme Islamist terrorism, because the police and security services assess that that is currently the biggest terror threat we face. Which of the following statements best reflects your view?

- a. I support this approach, and have no concerns
- b. I support this approach, but have some concerns
- c. I do not support this approach
- d. Don't know

8. What are your concerns about targeting where risk is highest? [ASK Q16=B/C, RANDOMISE A-E, MULTICODE]

- a. It means all Muslims are treated as suspects
- b. People associate Islam with terrorism
- c. It doesn't reflect the other threats such as the Far Right
- d. It makes Muslims afraid to express their opinions
- e. It is unfair on innocent Muslims
- f. Other
- g. None of the above **[EXCLUSIVE]**

9. To what extent is it likely that you would refer somebody to the Prevent programme if you suspected they were being radicalised?

- a. Extremely likely
- b. Quite likely
- c. Not very likely
- d. Not at all likely
- e. Don't know

10. What would increase your trust in the programme / increase the likelihood of referring? [ASK

IF Q18=B-E, RANDOMISE A-D, MULTICODE]

- a. If I knew more about what would happen if I did refer someone
- b. If I knew more about how to refer someone
- c. If I felt that it was targeted equally at all communities and not just at Muslims
- d. If I was confident that they wouldn't get in trouble
- e. Other
- f. Nothing **[EXCLUSIVE]**
- g. Don't know