



Technical Report  
**Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities**





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# 1 Introduction

Communities and Local Government recognises that there is a need to enhance its understanding and knowledge of the diverse Muslim ethnic populations in England, particularly relating to some of the specific smaller communities of African, Middle Eastern and other Asian countries of origin. As such, Communities and Local Government commissioned The Change Institute (CI) to deliver the research project 'Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities' (UMEC). The 13 ethnic Muslim communities that the Cohesion Directorate was seeking more information about were those originating from:

- Afghanistan
- Algeria
- Bangladesh
- Egypt
- India
- Iran
- Iraq
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- Turkey.

The aim of the research project is to identify the key characteristics of above named 13 priority Muslim communities in England. The research is needed in order to guide Communities and Local Government's delivery of projects within England and also to inform its international engagement programme.

This technical report is split into five sections as follows:

- Objectives of the research **page 5**
- Methodology **page 6**
- Research Considerations **page 14**
- Contact details **page 22**
- Appendix **page 23**

## 2 Objectives of the research

There were four distinct objectives for the research:

- *Mapping*: population maps for each ethnic community, outlining the spread of the population and identification of high density clusters
- *Identification of denominations and pathways*: information on the representative grassroots institutions/individuals serving ethnic communities and the breakdown of these ethnic communities by denomination/sect/clan
- *Identifying strength of links and capacity of ethnic communities*: information on the strength of links between each ethnic community and country of origin (including influential institutions/individuals/media channels/religious influences). Information on the relative strengths and weaknesses of civil society infrastructure for each ethnic community, highlighting where capacities need to be developed.
- *Identifying how government can best engage with ethnic communities*: recommendations on the ways in which the Department for Communities and Local Government can best engage with ethnic communities in England on the Prevent agenda, including recommendations on avenues of communications and delivery to the communities.

These objectives translated into six key questions that the study needed to address:

1. Where are the key ethnic groups of the Muslim population located?
2. What are the latest estimated sizes and demographic make-up of the key ethnic communities?
3. Which denominations and/or other internal groupings do these ethnic groups belong to?
4. How can Communities and Local Government best engage with them?
5. What are the strength of links between the ethnic communities and country of origin?
6. How developed is the level of social infrastructure for each group?

During the course of the desktop research and fieldwork, we obtained data on other facets of the community such as socio economic position and intra-community dynamics. In order to provide additional context to users of the report we have included this information where it was felt this would be valuable to the reader. However, it should be noted a comprehensive socio economic description or analysis of the community was outside the scope of this study. We also took the view that the migration and history of each community's country of origin was important and often offer potential explanations for the location, intra-community dynamics (including political, social and cultural characteristics) and development of the diaspora communities in the UK.

## 3 Methodology

The research questions represented a broad area of inquiry and analysis. While quantitative data about the size, location and other demographic features of the priority communities was a key research need, the study primarily focused on enabling the Communities and Local Government to ‘know’ these communities in depth. It was recognised at the outset of the project that the time and budget would not enable a comprehensive mapping or analysis of these communities, but would provide a ‘snapshot’ which is a solid starting point for policy makers, community practitioners, local authorities and academics with an interest in engaging, developing, supporting and working with England’s diverse Muslim ethnic communities.

To fulfil these research requirements, the methodology developed needed to combine documentary research with processes of consultation and dialogue. Data collection consisted of two phases which were consistent across each community.

PHASE	ACTIVITY	METHOD
1	Population mapping	Review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing literature</li> <li>National data sources</li> <li>Local data sources and consultations with Local Authority, other public bodies and community representatives. These were conducted to cover all 13 communities in this study.</li> </ul>
2	Qualitative data collection	Community interviews (205 total). Interviews with local government and voluntary services stakeholders (15 total). Focus groups (30 total, two with each community and four with youth from ethnic groups covered in the study).

### 3.1 Phase 1: Population mapping

The first phase consisted of collecting mainly secondary quantitative data but also some primary qualitative data about locations of Muslim ethnic populations and known civil society organisations. The main method for data collection on population characteristics was through a comprehensive review of a broad range of secondary data sources, including the Census, Annual Population Survey, output of migration and population think tanks and academic research centres. This initial literature review assisted in developing a detailed picture of data currently available in the public domain, and in identifying key gaps in the existing knowledge base. It also helped in identifying key locations for each diaspora to be targeted in the community research which followed, as well as identifying key stakeholders and community respondents.

The literature review involved using key search terms for each community to locate both academic and non-academic material. The output of public policy research organisations with an interest in communities, for example Joseph Rowntrees Foundation and the Institute for Race Relations, were also included in the search. Additional sources and material were supplied by respondents and in communication with academics who were specialists in the area. Some 'grey literature' (leaflets, brochures etc) was used to inform organisation profiles.

Robust and up-to-date population data is difficult to obtain outside of the 2001 Census but we were able to obtain some anecdotal information from Local Authorities and community groups about migration since 2001. However, the 2001 Census data still informs the baseline of the population figures quoted in this study. This data has been supplemented where possible by a limited amount of additional Local Authority information or other sources where reliable estimates have been made. Further details on the main sources of quantitative data are provided in Section 4.

## 3.2 Phase 2: Qualitative data collection – March 2008 to July 2008

Qualitative data collection has been undertaken primarily through 220 one-to-one interviews with community representatives and stakeholders and a series of 30 focus groups with representatives of different communities and with Muslim youth. The ethnic background of researchers was deemed to be important for focus groups and community consultations and research for all but two of the communities was predominantly carried out by someone from that ethnic community. The researchers who were not of the same ethnicity as the research community had either previous extensive research experience with that community or the internal dynamics of the community necessitated a neutral observer.

The research teams observed a strict data protection protocol which was also supplied to all participants to outline the process of data collection and analysis. The anonymity of all respondents was guaranteed, and assurances to this effect given to all who responded to or participated in the study. All those involved in the delivery of this programme of work, including members of the research and project teams, were bound by non-disclosure agreements to ensure the confidentiality and ethical handling of the research and to ensure that the findings from the consultations are not used to inform other studies or research outside of the UMEC study.

### 3.2.1 In-depth interviews

The interviews assisted in developing an overview of national and local contexts: the make-up of diaspora communities, key issues concerning violent extremism including perceptions, experiences and activities, current initiatives in place to counter this and existing civil society structures and development needs. The majority of interviews were conducted face-to-face and some by telephone where necessary.

*Stakeholders:* Fifteen interviews were held with relevant Local Authority key workers in education, youth work, social services, housing, community cohesion/social inclusion units, equality and diversity units, and voluntary sector support agencies. The stakeholders provided further detail on local ethnic Muslim populations and the dynamics of interaction with Muslim civil society organisations. The list of stakeholder organisations included in this study is appended.

*Community interviews:* A total of 205 in-depth interviews were undertaken with a sample of individuals from each priority community ensuring that individuals active in each of the 13 communities were included. Interviews were undertaken with individuals and organisations, ensuring an appropriate balance between men and women of different ages, and of different denominations in different regions broadly in line with the distribution of the population as a whole.

These interviews included religious, political and community leaders, as well as representatives from community organisations, voluntary agencies, key social spaces, women's networks, student societies and education professionals. Considerations of language, gender, ethnic/national background of researchers were important and accommodated appropriately.

Respondents were chosen on the basis that they offered a range of different types of knowledge and perspectives on community issues and dynamics. Selection involved drawing up a 'long list' of key contacts in each community in consultation with community interviewers, expert advisers and contacts made during the first phase of research. Additional names were added on the basis of subsequent recommendations made.

For the five largest communities (Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Somali and Turkish), 21 interviews were conducted. For the eight smallest communities 12 interviews were conducted except for the Saudi Arabian Muslim community where, due to difficulties accessing participants, only six interviews were conducted.

It should be noted that the purpose of these interviews was qualitative in nature. Due to the focus on active individuals and organisations, we did not intend to infer characteristics of the wider population from the sample.

These interviews covered a range of topics including:

- Key data sources
- Denominations and pathways
- Key influencers and institutions
- Key issues and needs for the specific diaspora
- Links with countries of origin
- Civil society structures and capacity needs
- Current levels of contact and key barriers to engagement with public authorities
- Appropriate communication channels for engagement and involvement.

In addition to the formal interviews researchers made contact with a large number of additional contacts in each community who provided information on a wide range of issues but who were in most cases not prepared to participate in a formal interview either because of fears that the information they provided would not be used for the stated purposes or because of time constraints. Many of these contacts provided invaluable information that assisted with identifying useful community contacts, literature and highlighting key considerations and community issues. Some of this information was used to triangulate data and give support to the inclusion of key themes, but no direct quotes are included in the report from these individuals.

A quality control process was used by CI to ensure consistency and quality across each community. This involved:

- *Piloting*: Each community researcher was required to carry out two/three pilot interviews in each community to refine approaches and questions where necessary. This included a detailed discussion with each researcher following the pilot interviews, with expert adviser involvement where necessary, as well as a review of the interview field notes to ensure that relevant data was being picked up by researchers.
- Each community researcher was assigned to a member of the core research team who reviewed field notes on an ongoing basis, and regular internal team meetings were held to share findings and ensure consistency across the project.

### **3.2.2 Discussion groups**

In addition to the individual interviews, we conducted 30 focus groups that allowed for collective insights to be generated on community needs and issues, including challenges and practical ways forward. These explored partnership issues, civil society infrastructure and capacity development needs, media and communications. While these focus groups were limited in number, they provided a rich and often diverse set of views that complemented the data gathered in the one-to-one interviews.

Focus groups were designed to include a mix of participants from different community networks and different occupational backgrounds who might be expected to hold a

wide range of views. Recruitment for focus groups was led by the lead CI researchers and facilitated by local consultants and community organisations. Participants were identified through contacts made through the community consultations as well as on-the-ground sourcing of individuals who were not affiliated with community organisations.

One male and one female focus group was conducted with each community due to sensitivities around gender mixing and to ensure the views of women were adequately represented. Participants in these focus groups were aged 35+. In addition, we conducted four mixed ethnicity/gender focus groups with Muslims aged 14 - 35 years.

Focus groups took into account denominational and gender issues and we sought an appropriate geographical spread based on phase 1 mapping and in discussions with the client team. The largest proportion (23) were held in the Greater London area, two in Birmingham, three in Yorkshire, one in Leicester, and one in Manchester. All focus groups were held in community centres and neutral settings except for one youth focus group held at a Muslim cultural centre and mosque.

In the majority of focus groups there was one group organiser and one facilitator. Data from focus groups was recorded through detailed hand-written notes by the organiser or facilitator where applicable. A written copy was then sent to the other member to be verified and added to where applicable. Translators were required for four of the focus groups and there was ad hoc translation in a small number of other groups for participants who had difficulty expressing themselves in English.

### 3.3 Phase 3: Data synthesis and analysis

Data analysis involved generating understandable patterns by comparing what different respondents/focus groups said about specific themes or questions. The central question was whether the data and information and the range of views expressed led to the same conclusions. Findings were validated by triangulation of all data and information collected in both project phases so far as possible, and by critical internal reflection and review within the CI team.

The analytical process involved reviewing field notes to develop emerging themes in line with the analytical framework, which was done in collaboration with the field researchers; regular internal meetings to discuss findings from all communities; dedicated internal workshops on the communities to finalise analysis; reviews from expert advisers; feedback from 'community reviewers' and a formal peer review process.

The qualitative analysis focused primarily on key characteristics of individual populations, key influencers, overall civil society development needs, communication channels and pathways, overview of various partnership activities and approaches suggested, and recommendations for ways forward. Table 1 sets out the overall research process and Table 2 outlines the analytical and reporting framework for the study which was then used as a basis for the final report structure.

<b>Table 1: Overall research process</b>	
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Phase I:</b> Literature review	Literature was identified, reviewed and cross-checked against other literature and with stakeholders. Literature reviews were peer reviewed by expert advisers.
<b>Phase I:</b> Quantitative data analysis	Data sources were identified by core team as well as those assisting with Phase I data collection. Data analysis and assessment of sources was conducted internally and reviewed by one of research expert adviser.
Interim analysis	The literature review and data sources were circulated to the core project team to inform an interim analysis of the data, which also incorporated some emerging findings from consultations. Expert advisers provided additional comments as well as comments from specialists at Communities and Local Government.
<b>Phase II:</b> Consultations and Focus groups	<p>Transcripts were sent to assigned CI member and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Community researchers prepared an initial analytical report of their research which was reviewed by the relevant CI member plus one peer reviewer from the CI team.</p> <p>An internal analytical workshop provided a forum for discussing and mapping key themes both within and across communities as well as discussing and incorporating findings from the focus groups.</p> <p>A draft analysis was produced incorporating and informed by the Phase I analysis and then peer reviewed internally and by external advisers.</p>
Final analysis and peer review	<p>Final reports were peer reviewed by relevant staff at Communities and Local Government and sent to select staff at the FCO and Home Office for comments.</p> <p>Each report was also reviewed by an external reviewer from the community in focus. These individuals were either academics or individuals with significant experience and knowledge of the community.</p>

Table 2: Analytical framework	
Characteristics	Analysis
<b>Demographic</b>	
Size	Population maps: Map of England, sub-divided by county, highlighting key points of ethnic population concentration  (Also recommend other tabular/graphic data presentation formats)
Location	Location of high density clusters
<b>Social and civic society infrastructure</b>	
Denominations and pathways	Breakdown of the ethnic communities by denomination/sect/clan and other internal groupings
Socio/political/ economic status	Education Employment and economic activity Housing Welfare Immigration and asylum issues Political affiliations and participation
Key Individuals	Local, national and international influencers  Keys workers in public and voluntary sector support agencies
Key local groups and organisations	Representative grassroots institutions/individuals serving ethnic communities
Key national organisations and affiliations	All organisations and individuals that have a significant constituency with any ethnic grouping, and hence provide pathways into a number of ethnic communities will be included, even if they are not ethnically based eg the Sufi Muslim Council
Infrastructure development needs	Current civil society infrastructure and capacity building needs identified through the consultation. Analysis of this will include the relative strengths and weaknesses of existing civil society infrastructures for each diaspora community, highlighting where pathways into these communities should be created or developed

Intercultural understanding of responses and non-responses was also essential in considerations of the data generated. A set of commonly held assumptions and understandings in any cultural group may mean that some things are simply left unsaid – because they are commonly understood in the group and do not require articulation. In addition literal translation or interpretation may simply misrepresent or miss the significance of what is being articulated. In this context in particular there will often be a distinction between what is said, and might be noted or recorded, and what is meant. In looking for meaning, silences and body language were often as important as what was said. A good example of potential misinterpretation that came up many times was body language indicating discomfort and unwillingness to pursue a particular line of enquiry.

Finally, and most importantly, we were *reflexive* in our approach, critically reflecting on the role and influence that our own research intervention may be having on key respondents and focus groups, using critical judgment and being conscious of the need to interpret with integrity in relation to what we were seeing and hearing.

## 4 Research Considerations

This section provides detail on the limitations of the research as well as issues that presented themselves during the course of the research.

### 4.1 Limitations of the research

Data analysis represents both general and particular challenges in the current social and political context, as well as specific challenges in relation to some of these communities. These include:

- The sample sizes for each community were relatively small and respondents were not intended to be a representative sample of the relevant communities
- Because the interviews were not based on a random sample, the study does not claim to provide an analysis of the population as a whole, nor was this the intention of the study. We have analysed views and comments in the context of existing data, knowledge of the current political and social context for these communities, and the comments of other respondents
- Many aspects of the topic guide were designed to identify the key needs and challenges facing the community.<sup>1</sup> Hence the research tended to generate data on problem areas and challenges, particularly in focus group discussions when respondents felt they had limited time to ensure that their voices got heard. This may not reflect many of the positive and optimistic views of respondents. However, respondents were often aware that the discussions may come across as negative in tone, and were quick to try and balance this by highlighting perceived positive aspects of both their communities and their lives in the UK. We endeavoured to set out the 'best' story (in terms of explanatory power) in the context of what is already known about why some of our respondents might express negative feelings
- In the current context, the politicisation of the research field meant that all respondents were conscious of being part of a community under public and government scrutiny. Respondents were made aware of the purposes of the research through a 'showcard' that explained the research as well as possible uses of the research.<sup>2</sup> They were informed that this research would potentially be used to inform a publication that would enter the public domain and would cover aspects such as religion, intra-community dynamics and links with country of origin. A climate of some scepticism within Muslim communities, discrimination, both real and perceived, and awareness of government interest in 'what is happening' on the ground, meant that respondents were often sceptical about the use of the information that they were providing. Many will have had agendas (for positive as well as negative reasons) when asked about issues for their communities, which may have influenced their responses (eg representing their community as having few or no problems, or conversely, as having many or major needs and/or issues with public authorities)

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the full topic guide can be found in Appendix 6.1.

<sup>2</sup> A copy of the showcard can be found in Appendix 6.3.

- This also created a number of practical difficulties in research terms, including difficulties in getting interviews with particular types of respondents, hesitancy and caution in some responses, and a closing off of some lines of questioning in relation to religion, identity and differences
- The researchers' analytical response to these difficulties was to be critically attuned to who was speaking, their location in the community, the interests that they may have, and to judge their comments in the light of this context. Researchers were aware that there are dynamic and charged debates and movement taking place within these communities on a whole range of issues ranging from religion, its expression and orientation in the context of being Muslim minorities living in a non-Muslim society, to negotiations about roles, responsibilities, duties, gender relations, and relationships with country of origin. This awareness underpinned the analysis of the data and the conclusions drawn from responses received.

For all these reasons, the research should be viewed as a 'snapshot' in time rather than reflective of the full complexity or range of issues, challenges and changes taking place in these communities (eg, intergenerational relationships, gender roles, perceptions of ethnic and religious identity, changing attitudes among the young (both in liberal and more radical directions) and the levels of integration or tensions within and across communities. We were conscious of the dynamism and the rapid changes taking place in some communities, both positive and negative.

## 4.2 Quantitative data collection

### 4.2.1 Demographic data

This project has required the collection of the population statistics for 13 ethnic minority communities in the UK. In addition, we have looked at religious affiliations of these communities as well as relevant statistics on employment, housing, health and education. While this data has been utilised as effectively as possible, it is widely recognised that detailed data to local authority level on ethnicity and religion in England is limited outside of the 2001 census. The main census tables used for the study were S104, CO352, CO644 and C1013. The reports also use secondary analyses of Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS) data.

The commissioned tables were useful in detailing country of birth and religion. Since there are currently few socio economic analyses of Muslims by country of birth, commissioning specific tables on housing, employment and economic activity would be beneficial for follow up research either now or immediately following the 2011 census.

The 2011 census will be invaluable to tracking demographic and socio economic shifts of the Muslim population in England using the 2001 baseline. The addition of the 'Arab' ethnicity category is also a worthy addition and will assist greatly in our understanding of Muslim ethnic communities.

The census and LFS/APS has limitations with respect to the aims of this study including the time elapsed since data collection and its limited ethnic categories – see Table 3.

Table 3: Analytical framework		
Source	Comments	Use in study
Census	<p>The last census was conducted in 2001. Many of the communities in this study have had significant increases due to external events. This is particularly acute for Afghan, Iraqi, Somali and Nigerian communities.</p> <p>The ethnic categories are limited. Country of birth is useful but does not include members of the ethnic group born in the UK.</p> <p>The census could also under-represent some ethnic minority populations due to self-categorisation issues and operational challenges. According to Census research the main 'hard-to-count' groups include those living in multiple occupancy dwellings, BME communities, immigrant populations and the unemployed.</p>	Census data has been used to set a data baseline as well as providing data in the absence of any reliable updated variables.
ONS Estimates	<p>The Office for National Statistics provides estimates for ethnicity at the regional level. While these are useful for Bangladeshi and Pakistani populations, due to the broad ethnicity categories they are less useful for the smaller communities covered in this study. They also do not incorporate data on religion.</p>	Estimate data has been referenced in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani community reports.
Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey	<p>The LFS is conducted every quarter with a sample of approximately 50,000. The APS is an aggregate of four quarters of the LFS. While the LFS is useful for some macro analysis of ethnic minority populations, the sample size is not big enough to produce robust estimates at regional or ward level.</p>	LFS data has been used to provide information on education, employment, gender and age structures where applicable.

### 4.2.2 Migration

The UK does not currently count individuals in and out of its borders.<sup>3</sup> However, the Home Office does provide other useful data. These reports use data on asylum applications, grants of settlement and awards of citizenship by nationality – outlined below:

- **Asylum applications:** This includes all asylum applications made by nationality including those made from the country of origin. It is a statistic that should be treated with caution and is not an accurate measure of inflows. The asylum process is complicated because of appeals, lack of documentation, withdrawn cases and those given 'leave to remain'. There are also no absolute figures for the number of unsuccessful asylum applicants who after coming to the end of the asylum process remain in the country, or who leave the UK voluntarily without participating in a formal government-sponsored return scheme.<sup>4</sup> There are also complications because some asylum seekers may wait up to four years for a decision, so relying on asylum accepts is not necessarily useful. However, the reports use the data because it is a useful indicator of the level of demand from these countries as well as providing an upper limit to how many asylum seekers may have entered the UK from a given country.
- **Grants of settlement:** Refers to the total number of people granted settlement in a given year by nationality. Include asylum acceptances, economic migrants and those granted settlement for family reasons. This statistic is useful to highlight inflows from different countries but the time lag associated with processing asylum applications needs to be taken into account.
- **Citizenship:** This is the most straightforward of the three categories and is a record of the number of people who have applied for and been granted citizenship by nationality.

There are acknowledged weaknesses in capturing the in and out flows of international migrations into the country; weaknesses which have been attracted considerable attention from local authorities who believe that these inadequacies have adversely affected their ability to deliver quality public services to increasingly diverse constituencies.<sup>5</sup> In conversations with numerous Local Authorities it was evident that excluding the census, comprehensive data on migrants and ethnic minority populations were often not readily available in any consistent or coherent form.<sup>6</sup>

Estimates of migrant numbers are currently not sufficient to meet the needs of policy makers in 2008. As the ONS has noted:

<sup>3</sup> Naomi Pollard, Maria Latorre and Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah (2008), *Floodgates or turnstiles? Post-EU enlargement migration flows to (and from) the UK*, Institute for Public Policy Research.

<sup>4</sup> *Key statistics about asylum seeker arrivals in the UK*, ICAR, 2005, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> CMT Migration and Population characteristics in Bristol; The Local Government Association Chair, Sir Simon Milton, *The Guardian*, February 4th 2008; *Westminster Ethnic Minority Needs Report: Making People's Voices Heard*, Imperial College, London, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> International migration estimates, which include only people who move to a country other than that of their usual place of residence for a period of at least a year, are currently based on estimates of Total International Migration allocated on the basis of the International Passenger Survey (IPS). International in-migrants are then allocated to local authorities on the basis of the distribution of in-migrants according to the 2001 Census and thus any errors in the census will be compounded in the subsequent population estimates.

*There is now a broad recognition that available estimates of migrant numbers are inadequate to meet all the purposes for which they are now required. They are the weakest component in population... much more difficult to measure accurately than births and deaths, the other major components of population change.<sup>7</sup>*

In response to this urgent need for better information, the Communities and Local Government Secretary Hazel Blears has recently set out a range of actions the Government is taking to manage migration including a £12million cross-government programme of improvements led by the ONS to the way migration data is collected.<sup>8</sup>

A recent study by the ONS states that relevant, accurate, timely migration and population statistics needed to provide the evidence base for managing the economy; allocate resources for service delivery; develop and monitor public policies and reduce the gap between Census and population estimates in 2011.<sup>9</sup> The presentation recommends the collaboration of central and local government, devolved administrations and other partners. Other recommendations for 2008-12 included the provision of more timely, robust key indicators of migrant numbers and bringing together all the statistics collected across government on migration and migrants in a single UK-wide report.

### 4.2.3 Religion

For the first time the 2001 Census provided data on the basis of religion, although, in England and Wales, religious affiliation was an optional question. Muslim organisations and community leaders campaigned for and welcomed the inclusion of a question on religion in the census.<sup>10</sup>

This data has been used in the reports for both the percentage of the country-of-birth or ethnic population which is Muslim as well as the total number and distribution of Muslims from the ethnic group.

### 4.2.4 Language

There is limited data giving a detailed breakdown of how many people in the UK have English as a second language or the ranking of community languages spoken in the UK.<sup>11</sup> The Office for National Statistics held a consultation in summer 2005 to look at the content of the Census in 2011. Languages featured strongly in the consultation; however a final decision is yet to be made due to concerns around respondent burden, operational concerns and public acceptability.<sup>12</sup> The Labour Force Survey does record the ethnic group and first language in the home but is restricted to the list of 2001 census ethnic groups and is a binary measure (ie either English primary language or not primary language).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Karen Dunnell, National Statistician, December 2006.

<sup>8</sup> 'Managing the impacts of migration', *Communities and Local Government*, 10 June 2008. [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

<sup>9</sup> Peter Goldblatt, *Improving international migration statistics*, ONS, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (1997), *Islamophobia – a Challenge for Us All*, London: The Runnymede Trust.

<sup>11</sup> *English language as a barrier to employment, education and training*, DfES, March 2001 and The National Centre for Languages, [www.cilt.org.uk/faqs/langspoken.htm](http://www.cilt.org.uk/faqs/langspoken.htm)

<sup>12</sup> The 2011 Census: Assessment of initial user requirements on content for England and Wales – Ethnicity, identity, language and religion, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> For example see Data Management and Analysis Group (2006), *A profile of Londoners by Language: An analysis of Labour Force Survey data on first language*, Greater London Authority.

### 4.2.5 Research Paucity

The literature review encompassed a wide range of reports, publications and articles. However, as predicted, some communities were better researched than others. For example, the Somali community has been the subject of numerous reports, while Egyptians, Saudi Arabians and Moroccans have limited visibility in research literature.

Even when there is more visible research for some communities this is often specific to a certain feature of the community. For example, in the Somalian research there is often a bias in the type of research that has been conducted on drug abuse and youth violence. According to Harris: *The agenda of much research is determined from the outset – to identify difficulties and suggest solutions.*<sup>14</sup> In these policy-based documents, Somalis are presented in terms of the obstacles they face, as ‘problems’, or victims of circumstance.<sup>15</sup> This is further exacerbated in London by government-led initiatives that focus primarily on Somali youth violence. A council officer in Camden stated: *We are given more money to research Somali youth violence than any other area. That is because it is high on the government’s agenda.*<sup>16</sup>

As a consequence Somali youth violence or Khat abuse amongst Somali men has more exposure than women’s entrepreneurship or Somali children’s achievements in schools.<sup>17</sup> The predominance of problem-oriented research reinforces the image of Somalis as passive supplicants of the welfare state.<sup>18</sup>

## 4.3 Qualitative data collection

During the field research there were some common responses from respondents that were encountered prior to and during interviews:

- **What next?:** While many groups and individuals welcomed being given a voice to government, there were concerns about what tangible outcomes or strategies would emerge from the process.
- **Consultation fatigue:** Particularly among established communities there is scepticism about consultation and research exercises conducted by government. It appears that there is often a lack of follow through either specific to projects or as a result of consultation. This reticence and scepticism contrasts with the enthusiasm of newer communities and communities that do not attract policy attention. However, it is important that these communities are given follow up information both for this study and for future work to ensure that this goodwill is not lost. Participants in this study were sent communication about the progress of the study and will be emailed with a link to the final report following publication.

<sup>14</sup> Harris, H, *The Somali Community in London, What We Know and What We Don’t Know*, FCO, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Harris, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Stakeholder interview.

<sup>17</sup> Many articles are written which are focused on Khat use amongst Somalis in the UK.

<sup>18</sup> Harris, 2004.

- **Building Trust:** For many individuals this process was the beginning of a slow process of bringing marginalised groups into a wider conversation about engagement, religion, identity and community challenges. This was sometimes greeted with enthusiasm but for many there were large degrees of scepticism relating to government agendas and past engagement with local and central government and authorities. This has often required a sensitive approach to communities which understands some of the history, culture and nuances of each community.

There were also some responses and challenges that were specific to communities:

- **Afghan:**
  - Many Afghan respondents approached had a high level of distrust of the government. Some potential interviewees within the community refused to take part in something that was government sponsored.
  - The Afghan community in the UK is particularly complex and close work with gatekeepers has been essential.
  - Language ability among much of the community is limited and translators were required for focus group and one-to-one research.
- **Algerian:**
  - Some interactions between the community and the police appeared to have created levels of animosity within the community towards the government and authorities.
- **Egyptian:**
  - There was some reticence to be involved in government sponsored research.
- **Indian:**
  - The community is aware of its own religious and regional diversity and was keen that this was reflected in the work.
  - There is some degree of ‘consultation/research fatigue’ among members of the Indian Muslim community.
- **Iranian:**
  - The diversity of political, socio economic and religious dynamics within the community requires a good understanding of the community, its history and the modern history of Iran. There is a distinct split between those that emigrated in 1979-80 and more recent migrants – although is said by some to be lessening.

- **Iraqi:**
  - Along with the Afghan community there have been some difficulties in engagement. This partly relates to some animosity over government asylum policy.
  - There is also some reticence to explain community dynamics due to both internal divisions and the fact that the situation in the home country is still unstable. The UK community is still fluid.
- **Morocco:**
  - There has been some hesitancy in agreeing to be interviewed for the project by some potential participants. Many participants were keen to check transcripts before allowing their comments to be included.
- **Saudi Arabian:**
  - The Saudi Arabian community is considerably smaller than the other communities and is largely comprised of students, business visitors and relatively affluent individuals.
  - There is little 'civil society' to speak of so most groups are organised either in business or individual networks, with the embassy playing a dominant role in formal organisation.
  - It is difficult to gain research access to individuals involved in the embassy as this requires the approval of the ambassador which was not granted for this project.
- **Somali:**
  - The Somali community has been accessible but was keen that there was some follow through or tangible outputs.
- **Turkish:**
  - There have not been any specific challenges; however, there is a useful differentiation to be made between the different parts of what most call 'the Turkish speaking community' as many Turkish Kurds, Turkish Cypriots and 'mainland' Turkish communities see themselves as distinct.

## 5 Contact details

This research was commissioned by Communities and Local Government and conducted by the Change Institute.

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## 6 Appendix: Project Protocols

### 6.1 Topic Guide for one-to-one interviews

This is the topic guide which was used by all researchers for one-to-one interviews.

Demographic	
Size	Estimated size of community.
Location	Location of high density clusters.
Social and civic society infrastructure	
Denominations and pathways	Main ethnic groups and religious denominations/schools of thought practiced in the community. Impact on political, social, civic and religious relationships in the community.
Key Individuals	Key community influencers at a local, regional, national and international level.
Role of women in the community	Significant issues for women within the community. How do they deal with these issues and through what means.
Integration and cohesion	Debates are taking place within community and amongst individuals in the community about identity, cohesion and integration.
Relationship with country of origin	Relationship that the community has with the country of origin (trips back home or to country of origin, political and social links, economic links – remittances).
Media	What media does the community regularly consume/watch/read/listen/interact with? What are the predominant media platforms and titles/publications/programmes/websites? Views on UK media generally.
Key local groups and organisations	Representative grassroots institutions/individuals serving ethnic communities.
Key national organisations and affiliations	All organisations and individuals that have a significant constituency with any ethnic grouping, and hence provide pathways into a number of ethnic communities will be included, even if they are not ethnically based eg the Sufi Muslim Council.

Social and civic society infrastructure (continued)	
Key issues and needs for the community	<p>Specific or unique issues regarding housing, employment, education or public service provision.</p> <p>Nature/character of generational interaction between young and older members of the communities.</p>
Infrastructure development needs	<p>Current civil society infrastructure and capacity building needs identified through the consultation. Analysis of this will include the relative strengths and weaknesses of existing civil society infrastructures for each diaspora community, highlighting where pathways into these communities should be created or developed.</p>
Engagement with public authorities	<p>The current levels of contact and key barriers to engagement with public authorities.</p> <p>How could engagement with the community be improved?</p>

## 6.2 Focus group format

1. Thinking about your community, what would you identify as being its key strengths? (family and community networks, religion/faith, culture, economic activities) **(15 minutes)**
2. What would you say are the main issues and challenges facing your community (youth, intergenerational relations, women, public services, crime, education, employment, political representation, discrimination/racism) **(20 mins)**
3. In what ways does your community deal with such issues/challenges and what more do you think could be done? **(20 mins)**
4. What community/faith organisations are you aware of in your local area and nationally? Do you attend any of these? What do they do? Who are the key people involved in running them? **(20 mins)**
5. Thinking about the area where you live, what other ethnic communities are present in your area and in what ways do you come together (politically, socially, religiously). **(15 mins)**
6. Thinking about your country of origin, in what ways do you and/or members of your community retain links and what are the main reasons for this? **(20 mins)**

## 6.3 Show Card

### **“UNDERSTANDING MUSLIM ETHNIC COMMUNITIES”**

The Change Institute, an independent research consultancy, has been commissioned by Communities and Local Government (CLG), a government department, to help them understand how to improve their engagement with, and inclusion of, all the diverse Muslim communities in England. The research is needed in order to guide Communities and Local Government’s development of programmes and policy in response to the needs of these communities and the challenges they face.

Communities and Local Government recognises that, despite its understanding and knowledge of Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim communities in England, there are crucial gaps in knowledge and understanding of smaller communities such as the Somali, Arab and North African Muslim populations.

The Change Institute will be conducting the research from February to June 2008 and is supported by an expert research team comprising of consultants drawn from Muslim communities and civil society organisations.

As part of the study, the research team plans to conduct a series of interviews with community representatives and leaders as well as focus groups drawn from across a range of Muslim communities in England. We are interested to hear and reflect the genuine views of those who feel that their voices have not been adequately heard on a range of issues so far.

All research will be done in a confidential and discreet manner based on the free consent of all parties, with personal information anonymised at the request of any interviewee. Insights gained from interviews conducted may be included in a research report that will be submitted to Communities and Local Government in June 2008, with interview data being kept in line with Data Protection provisions. If you require any further information or have questions regarding the study please contact The Change Institute on xxxxxxxxxxxx or via email:

Melahat Edib – xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Laurence Hopkins – xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

## 6.4 Stakeholder Consultee List

Organisation
Bedfordshire Council
Birmingham City Council
Bolton Fairness Team
Bradford College
Bradford Local Authority
Camden Borough Council
Community Foundation, Calderdale
Ethnic Minorities Development Association (EMDA), Blackburn
Hammersmith & Fulham Borough Council
Kensington & Chelsea Borough Council
Leicester City Council
Luton Council
Manchester Islamic Education Trust
Muslim Enterprise Development Service, Liverpool
Newham Borough Council
Peterborough City Council
Rochdale Centre of Diversity
Timebank Refugee and Asylum Trust, Peterborough
Wakefield City Council
West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board
Yorkshire Housing

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