Muslims in
London

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At Home in Europe Project

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Open Society Foundations Mission Statement

The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. Working with local communities in more than 70 countries, the Open Society Foundations support justice and human rights, freedom of expression, and access to public health and education.

Acknowledgements

This city report was prepared as part of a series of monitoring reports titled "Muslims in EU cities". The series focuses on eleven cities in the European Union (EU) with significant Muslim populations. Each report focuses on the following neighbourhoods within each city: Slotervaart, Amsterdam; Borgerhout, Antwerp; Kreuzberg, Berlin; Nørrebro, Copenhagen; Hamburg-Mitte, Hamburg; Evington, Spinney Hills, Stoneygate, Leicester; 3rd Arrondissement, Marseille; 18th Arrondissement, Paris; Feijenoord, Rotterdam; Järvafältet, Stockholm; the London Borough of Waltham Forest, London.

The At Home in Europe Project has final responsibility for the content of the report including any errors or misrepresentations.

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Preface

A central belief of the Open Society Foundations (Foundations) is that all people in an open society count equally and should enjoy equal opportunities. The Foundations works to mitigate discrimination, in particular harm done to minorities through discriminatory treatment, and to ensure that access to equal opportunities for all is an integral part of social inclusion policies of governments.

The At Home in Europe project of the Open Society Foundations focuses on monitoring and advocacy activities that examine the position of minorities in a changing Europe. Through its research and engagement with policymakers and communities, the project explores issues involving the political, social, and economic participation of Muslims and other marginalized groups at the local, national, and European levels.

Whether citizens or migrants, native born or newly arrived, Muslims are a growing and varied population that presents Europe with one of its greatest challenges: how to ensure equal rights in an environment of rapidly expanding diversity. Europe is no longer – if it ever was – a mono-cultural and mono-faith continent; its emerging minority groups and their identities as Europeans are an essential part of the political agenda and discourse.

Through its reports on Muslims in EU cities, the At Home in Europe project examines city and municipal policies that have actively sought to understand Muslim communities and their specific needs. Furthermore, the project aims to capture the type and degree of engagement policymakers have initiated with their Muslim and minority constituents by highlighting best practices in select western European cities. An underlying theme is how Muslim communities have themselves actively participated in tackling discrimination and whether the needs of specific groups warrant individual policy approaches in order to overcome barriers to equal opportunities.

The city reports build upon Foundations' earlier work on minority protection, in particular the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program reports on the situation of Muslims in France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. All of these studies make it clear that further research is needed. The limited data currently available on Europe's Muslim populations are extrapolated from ethnic and country of origin background. This lack of precise data limits the possibilities for creating nuanced, specific polices on the most relevant issues for Muslims, and developing sensitive and integrated social inclusion policies.

The At Home in Europe report series includes an overview and individual reports on 11 cities in seven European countries. The project selected the cities on the basis of literature reviews conducted in 2006, taking into account population size, diversity,

and the local political context. All 11 city reports were prepared by teams of local experts on the basis of the same methodology to allow for comparative analysis.

Each city report includes detailed recommendations for improving the opportunities for full participation and inclusion of Muslims in wider society while enabling them to preserve cultural, linguistic, religious, and other community characteristics important to their identities. These recommendations, directed primarily at specific local actors, will form the basis for the Foundations advocacy activities.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic

ClaSS – Community Learning and Skills Service

CSB – Community Safety Board

CTCs – City Technology Colleges

CWF – Community Ward Forum

DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government

ECM – Every Child Matters

EPPE 3-11 – Effective Pre-school and Primary Education 3-11 Project

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

GLA – Greater London Authority

GP – General Practitioner (of medicine)

HMO – House of Multiple Occupation

IAW – Islam Awareness Week

JSA – Job Seeker's Allowance

JSNA – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

LB – London Borough

LDA – London Development Agency

LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

LGTU – London Gypsy and Traveller Unit

LSC – Learning and Skills Council

LSP – Local Strategic Partnership

MINI – Mental Illness Index

MOPC – Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

MPA – Metropolitan Police Authority

MPS – Metropolitan Police Service

NELFT – North East London Foundation Trust

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NHS – National Health Service

NLDC – Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities

NLMHA – North London Muslim Housing Association

NRF – Neighbourhood Renewal Funding

PCT – Primary Care Trust

PLASC – Pupil Level Annual School Census

PSHE – Personal Social and Health Education

RE – Religious Education

SACRE – Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

SAfH – Social Action for Health

SCS – Sustainable Community Strategy

SHA – Strategic Health Authority

SRE – Sex and Relationship Education

UKBA – United Kingdom Border Agency

YA – Young Advisor

YIAG – Youth Independent Advisory Group

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Discrimination: The term "discrimination" is used throughout this report; it includes harassment and direct and indirect discrimination. Articles 1 and 2 of the EU Race Directive expressly prohibit both "direct" and "indirect" discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs "where one person has been treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin". According to the Directive, indirect discrimination occurs "where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage when compared with other persons unless that provision, criterion, or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary".

Ethnicity: Membership of a group which may share language, cultural practices, religion or common identity based on a shared history.

Harassment is conduct which creates "an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment".

Integration: The definition used in this report is "a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the European Union" as stated in the Common Basic Principles (CBPs). In the Explanation to the EU Common Basic Principles on Integration, 2004, "Integration is a dynamic long-term and continuous two-way process of mutual accommodation, not a static outcome. It demands the participation not only of immigrants and their descendants but of every resident. The integration process involves adaptation by immigrants, both men and women, who all have rights and responsibilities in relation to their new country of residence. It also involves the receiving society, which should create opportunities for the immigrants' full economic, social, cultural and political participation. Accordingly, Member States are encouraged to consider and involve both immigrants and national citizens in integration policy, and to communicate clearly their mutual rights and responsibilities."

Islamophobia: Irrational hostility, fear and hatred of Islam, Muslims and Islamic culture, and active discrimination towards this group as individuals or collectively.

Marginalised: Marginalised groups can be part of an ethnic or racial minority and a subcategory of minority groups. They can also be characterised and distinguished from other groups by suffering socio-economic disadvantage and a powerless position in society or in a group. This report defines marginalised groups as those who experience social exclusion, be they part of a minority or majority group in society.

Migrant: The United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) definition refers to a "person who has moved temporarily or permanently to a country where he or she was not born and has acquired significant social ties to this country". This includes students, children and family dependants. A distinction is

made in which this term does not include asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons. However, in some countries "migrant" also refers to those who are born in the country to which their parents migrated.

Minority: Under international law, there is no agreed definition of this term. Some countries define a minority as that which is recognised as such by national laws. In this report, the term refers to ethnic and religious groups that are not the dominant group in society.

Muslim: This group is diverse and although there are common belief systems and possibly experiences as Muslims, this report relies on its Muslim respondents' identification of themselves as Muslims. Furthermore, this term includes Muslims who view themselves in a cultural rather than a religious context.

Nationality: Country of citizenship.

Non-Muslim: For the purpose of this report, a non-Muslim is anyone who does not define himself or herself as belonging to the Islamic faith.

Race: The term "race" is used in the context of discrimination on the grounds of race, which occurs when people face discrimination because of their presumed membership in groups identified by physical features such as skin colour, hair or physical appearance. References to race in this report should not be taken to suggest that there are distinct human races.

Racism: Where used in this report, "racism" will be defined as "racial discrimination" which according to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination "shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social or cultural or any other field of public life". Racial discrimination can also be based on markers of visible difference due to membership of a cultural group.

Social inclusion: The provision and promotion of equal rights and access in the fields of education, employment and decision-making. Overcoming discrimination is implicit throughout policies and practices whose aim is to make inclusion a reality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

London is among the most diverse cities in Europe and, with a long history of receiving migrants and post-colonial settlers, has had policies supporting integration and multiculturalism in place for many years. The UK in general has also been among the first countries to take ethnicity and religion into account in governmental data collection. As a consequence, the city has a developed range of official programmes tackling racial and ethnic diversity issues; at the same time, expectations are higher among these groups that their needs will be recognised and met. Public unrest and rioting triggered by race-related policing issues have flared up at various points in recent decades, most notably in 2011 in London.

Muslims are the second-largest faith group in London after Christians. Almost 40 per cent of Muslims in England and Wales live in the capital. The focus of this report is on the borough of Waltham Forest, located at London's north-east border. Parts of the borough have long been a destination for migrants both from abroad and from elsewhere in London. It ranks as one of the city's poorer boroughs, and also one of the more diverse. Some 15 per cent of the population is Muslim, and the borough hosts mosques representing many different traditions. Data on languages spoken at home point to the wide range of backgrounds of Waltham Forest's Muslim population, with Urdu, Turkish, Somali, Punjabi, Bengali and Arabic being some of the most common.

Allocation of responsibility differs across policy areas between the central government, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the local authority (London Borough [LB] of Waltham Forest). Since 2000, the GLA has been responsible for London-wide services such as transport and policing. The LB of Waltham Forest determines the overall budget and policy framework at the borough level. In some areas like health and education, the central government sets the overall policy framework, while delivery is organised at the local level through bodies called Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), which bring together the relevant local actors.

The past few years have seen a period of intense work by the local council in promoting cohesion through the implementation of their community cohesion strategy. The local authority won a National Beacon Award from the central government for this work.

Research conducted by the Open Society Foundations since 2008 found both positive indications of high levels of social cohesion as well as signs that further efforts to develop and support cohesion may be needed. A majority of respondents liked living in their neighbourhood, felt that people from different backgrounds got on well together and had a strong sense of belonging to the area. While a majority of respondents felt that people would help each other, a majority did not feel that people would work together to improve the neighbourhood.

Nearly three-quarters of Muslim respondents to the Open Society Foundations' questionnaire indicated that they see themselves as British, although far fewer, just 41

per cent, believed that other people see them as British. Moreover, 45 per cent of Muslims also reported experiencing religious discrimination at least some of the time. The local authority's efforts to enhance cohesion do appear to be paying off; many Muslim respondents felt that an increasing number of services sensitive to the needs of Muslim have become available.

The local authority has undertaken a number of outreach initiatives for Muslim groups, including support for Islam Awareness Week (IAW) and for a Muslim Young Leaders Project. While recognising that a focus on one group may sometimes be needed, officials have also developed initiatives that work across different faith groups. For example, the Muslim Young Leaders project has been replaced by a Young Waltham Forest Leaders Programme, which is open to young people of all backgrounds. Alongside IAW, there is local authority support for an Inter-faith Week and for building the capacity of faith institutions in the local area. Challenges remain in engaging with women and newer Muslim communities. Furthermore, the future of many initiatives remains precarious in the current economic climate.

In keeping with the high level of diversity in Waltham Forest, schools in the borough provide instruction to children with a wide range of religious and ethnic affiliations. Respondents to the Open Society Foundations' questionnaire reported their satisfaction with the local schools, and in particular praised efforts to attend to issues of inter-religious understanding, community cohesion and respect within the educational system. While some parents, including Muslims, have raised concerns over lessons addressing sexual health and orientation, the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education was recognised for working with mosques in Waltham Forest to ensure families were informed about and comfortable with the "Faith and Values Framework" offered in schools. Most of the participants in the Foundations research welcomed the various ways in which schools accommodated religious diversity, including the provision of *halal* meat, prayer spaces, and the recognition and celebration of different religious holidays. Schools have been active in monitoring and challenging bullying, including anti-Muslim and racist bullying. Efforts to involve Muslim families in their children's education have had some success, particularly those run by the Community Learning and Skills Service that focuses on helping parents to support their children in school. More work is, however, needed in encouraging and supporting parents' involvement in school governance.

While there have long been indications that ethnic minorities face a disadvantage on the labour market, new data suggest that religious discrimination may also affect employment. Unemployment in Waltham Forest is higher than the London average, which is itself above the average for the UK. The Pakistani/Bangladeshi ethnic group has the highest unemployment rate in the borough; ethnic-minority women also have a higher rate of unemployment than the average for the UK. Low skills in the borough population contribute to difficulties in finding a job, and improving the availability of training and adult education has been a priority at the national level. A particularly successful local initiative, WorkNet, includes an outreach component working with

faith community organisations such as mosques. Over a fifth of respondents to the Open Society Foundations' survey reported actually experiencing discrimination themselves on a variety of different grounds. Muslim respondents reported positive experiences of accommodation of their needs in the workplace in terms of prayer and holidays. The public sector race equality duty was identified as a key driver for change that has ensured that the local authority as an employer has met its targets for an inclusive workforce. This duty now extends to religion and belief. However, more work needs to be done to encourage the collation of data on the religious diversity of the local authority's workforce, in order to support the impact of this duty.

Access to housing, particularly social housing, can be a source of tension in areas with shortages, particularly where this is accompanied by perceptions of unfairness from the (mistaken) belief that migrants and asylum seekers are jumping the queue for social housing. People living in Waltham Forest felt that the ethnic and cultural diversity of the area and access to goods and services that meet cultural and religious needs were positive features. Against the backdrop of rising rents and housing prices across London, Waltham Forest has a long waiting list for social housing. With a lower than average rate of owner occupation compared with other London boroughs, Waltham Forest also has a high proportion of private rentals, an increasing number of which are classified as multiple occupancy housing. This has raised concerns about the exploitation of vulnerable groups such as immigrants who may not be aware of their rights, and in response the council has developed a scheme to accredit landlords. Overcrowding was also a concern among survey respondents living in social housing. Overall, Muslims were more likely to be satisfied with social housing than non-Muslims. Problems with repairs and insufficient attention to street cleaning were also noted by respondents.

The main instrument for addressing health needs in Waltham Forest is the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which was developed by the local authority together with the local National Health Service Trust. It recognises variations in health outcomes across ethnic groups for different conditions. Overall, rates of cancer and coronary heart disease are higher than the national average in Waltham Forest, as is tuberculosis. Mental health issues are also a worry. Participants in the Open Society Foundations' survey expressed a range of concerns with the health services, and 30 per cent of Muslim respondents said that they were "very" or "fairly" unsatisfied. Specific areas of concern were a lack of female providers available to provide care to women and insufficient access to translation for older patients unable to communicate in English. A number of initiatives in the borough use faith-based local outreach workers to better relay information and develop activities related to health issues. Local organisations have worked with mosques in targeting Muslims in stop smoking campaigns during Ramadan, a month when Muslims who are fasting refrain from smoking.

Policing and security are significant concerns in Waltham Forest, especially following the arrests in 2006 of local residents in Operation Overt, a counter-terrorism initiative. While these events brought international attention to the borough, within the borough

there was praise for the council's handling of the situation. Relations with the police were more difficult following the arrests. The appointment of a faith communities liaison officer has helped to build trust and confidence between the police and Muslim communities. The Foundations' survey found that nearly half the Muslim respondents and just over half the non-Muslim respondents had "a fair amount" of confidence in the police, but in focus groups with younger participants, concerns about discrimination came to light. Stop-and-search procedures were perceived as targeting people due to their religion or ethnicity, and outreach initiatives were regarded with suspicion because combating extremism was seen as the underlying motive. A more nuanced approach to community participation and consultation is needed, with programmes such as the Safer Neighbourhood Panels. The local authority has developed initiatives in tackling hate crime, including the establishment of non-policing sites such as mosques and community centres for reporting hate crime. The Foundations research suggests that there remains much under-reporting by Muslim women of instances of hate crime.

Muslim respondents had greater levels of trust in political institutions compared with the non-Muslim respondents. Almost half of Muslim respondents (49 per cent) reported trust in the national Parliament, compared with just over one-third (35 per cent) of non-Muslim respondents. Political participation among survey respondents was modest; only just over half of both the Muslim and non-Muslim groups indicated that they had voted in the most recent council elections. A majority of Muslim respondents felt that they could influence political decisions at the city level; this was significantly higher than the proportion of non-Muslim respondents. At the national level, there were lower levels of confidence in the government and in respondents' own belief that they could influence decision-making. Waltham Forest has developed initiatives to encourage all residents including Muslims to more actively participate in borough activities, including mainstream initiatives such as the Community Ward Forum and specific mechanisms for engagement with young people, the Youth Independent Advisory Group and Youth Advisors. Some respondents expressed concerns about consultation with a limited range of community leaders that did not represent the diversity of the community and most emphasised the need for engagement with the wide and diverse range of the people from within local Muslim communities.

Survey respondents were critical of media representations of Muslims, but also found that Muslims themselves must more actively engage with the media and present a more balanced perspective of their communities. Focus group responses suggested that both the stereotypical portrayal of Muslims as religious extremists and those focusing exclusively on the positive aspects of Islam create an unrealistic view of British Muslims as a single, undifferentiated category. The local community radio station, Streetlife FM, has been singled out as both an important outlet for young people to express their opinions and a successful example of a grassroots initiative from young people.

Waltham Forest faces singular challenges as a highly diverse borough that forms part of an increasingly multicultural city. The borough has taken important steps to find ways to engage with Muslim communities; these are clearly works in progress, and not all have been well received. Particularly noteworthy are efforts to acknowledge that religion is itself a factor in community relations, and that the interrelation of many aspects of culture, faith and ethnicity must all be addressed for policies to be effective. The Open Society Foundations' survey revealed that Waltham Forest is part of a city with a long history, seeking ways to constantly come to terms with itself.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report sets out to analyse the everyday experiences of Muslims living in the London borough of Waltham Forest, with a particular focus on public policies aimed at improving integration and social inclusion. Integration in this report is understood as a two-way process that requires both engagement by individuals and opportunities for participation.

A report that places its focus on Muslims as a group faces the challenge that Muslims are not a fixed group with defined boundaries, but rather a diverse set of individuals with different religious practices, ethnic attachments, and linguistic and cultural backgrounds, who are currently defined and marked as such mainly from the outside. It can include those who adhere to the religion of Islam as well as those who, because of their cultural or ethnic background, are perceived as Muslims by others in society, even if they are, in fact, adherents of other religions. In the context of this report the identification of a person as Muslim has been left to the self-perception of the interviewee and has not been associated with any prefixed religious or cultural definition.

The identification of a person – whether by self- or external ascription – as Muslim is not a neutral matter, as it can entail identification with a group that is at times stigmatised in public discourse. In social and public policy Muslims are increasingly viewed as a potential security threat or a group that is unwilling or unable to integrate.

A focus on action and social realities at the local level allows for a closer examination of the interaction between residents and policymakers in boroughs such as Waltham Forest in London. In contrast to other recently published studies[1] on Muslims, this study focuses on policy implications and looks in-depth into a wide range of aspects of daily life for ordinary Muslims in Waltham Forest, a district which has undergone fundamental change and is home to large Muslim communities in London. It looks into Muslim identities and their feelings of belonging, of interactions between groups in Waltham Forest, their situation in relation to education, employment, housing, health and social protection, policing and security concerns, their levels of participation as citizens and how they do so, and the role the media play in shaping perceptions and opinions.

By monitoring at the local level, this report also examines whether these demographic circumstances at the district and neighbourhood levels have encouraged the development of practical solutions to social policies which respond to the needs and views of local Muslim populations.

While the research at the district level is meant to be comparable with other boroughs in British cities and in other countries, the specific context of Waltham Forest and

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[1] Institute for Community Cohesion, *Breaking Down the Walls of Silence,* Coventry: 2008.

London has nevertheless to be kept in mind. Care is therefore needed before findings can be transferred to different contexts.

1.1   Methodology

This report provides an analysis of findings based on fieldwork and existing literature on research and policy in the London borough of Waltham Forest undertaken from 2008 to 2010, with additional follow-up conducted in 2011.

The fieldwork consisted of 200 in-depth, face-to-face interviews with local residents (100 Muslims and 100 non-Muslims) in the three areas. Each group was evenly split between male and female respondents from differing social and religious backgrounds. The questionnaires were then expanded in six focus groups with approximately 50 Muslim residents in 2008–2009, and three additional focus groups convened in 2010. There was a further range of in-depth interviews conducted with local politicians, members of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), practitioners such as teachers and health workers, community representatives and anti-discrimination and integration experts, including 20 with staff working in the borough in the areas of health, education, employment, policy and media, and those working in the local voluntary sector. This final version of the report incorporates feedback on an earlier draft, presented at a roundtable meeting in London in March 2010. Participants at the roundtable included a diverse range of stakeholders, again representing civil society, local administration, faith-based groups and other institutions.

The 200 interview respondents were a non-random cross-section of individuals chosen from specified subgroups of the population in Waltham Forest (see Table 1). The characteristics (age, ethnicity and gender) of the selected respondents were extrapolated from the available national population figures for the city.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents (by age)

Age		Muslim male %	Muslim female %	Non-Muslim male %	Non-Muslim female %	Total %
<20		23.9	22.6	13.3	18.2	19.6
20–29		26.1	37.7	31.1	25.5	30.2
30–39		17.4	9.4	6.7	21.8	14.1
40–49		8.7	15.1	17.8	16.4	14.6
50–59		13.0	13.2	22.2	12.7	15.1
60>		10.9	1.9	8.9	5.5	6.5
Total	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.0
	Number	46	53	45	55	199

Source: Open Society Foundations

The ethnic origin of respondents was obtained through interview questions on nationality, place of birth and self identification of ethnic and/or cultural background. The nationalities of the Muslim interviewees are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Nationalities of Muslim respondents

Nationality		Male %	Female %	Total %
Bangladeshi		2.1	1.9	2.0
British		76.6	86.8	82.0
Congolese		2.1	0	1.0
German		0	1.9	1.0
Indian		2.1	0	1.0
Pakistani		6.4	1.9	4.0
Somali		4.2	5.7	5.0
Turkish		6.4	1.9	4.0
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	47	53	100

Source: Open Society Foundations

The nationalities of non-Muslim interviewees are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Nationalities of non-Muslim respondents

Nationality		Male %	Female %	Total %
Bangladeshi		2.2	–	1.0
British		77.8	81.8	80.0
Dutch		–	3.6	2.0
French		–	3.6	2.0
German		–	1.8	1.0
Irish		6.7	1.8	4.0
Japanese		–	1.8	1.0
Kurdish		4.4	–	2.0
Lithuanian		–	1.8	1.0
Nigerian		2.2	1.8	2.0
Romanian		–	1.8	1.0
South African		4.4	–	2.0
Ugandan		2.2	–	1.0
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	45	55	100

Source: Open Society Foundations

The birthplaces of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Birthplace of Muslim respondents

Country of birth		Male %	Female %	Total %
Did not answer		–	1.9	1.0
Bangladesh		6.4	7.5	7.0
Democratic Republic of Congo		2.1	–	1.0
India		4.3	3.8	4.0
Pakistan		23.4	22.6	23.0
Somalia		6.4	13.2	10.0
Turkey		6.4	1.9	4.0
United Arab Emirates		–	1.9	1.0
United Kingdom		51.1	47.2	49.0
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	47	53	100

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 5. Birthplace of non-Muslim respondents

Country of birth	Male %	Female %	Total %
Bangladesh	2.2	–	1.0
France	2.2	3.6	3.0
Germany	–	1.8	1.0
Gibraltar	–	1.8	1.0
Guyana	–	1.8	1.0
India	–	3.6	2.0
Ireland	4.4	–	2.0
Japan	–	1.8	1.0
Lithuania	–	1.8	1.0
Netherlands	–	1.8	1.0
Nigeria	4.4	3.6	4.0
Romania		1.8	1.0
South Africa	4.4	–	2.0
Sri Lanka	2.2	–	1.0
Suriname	–	1.8	1.0
Turkey	4.4		2.0
Uganda	2.2	3.6	3.0
United Kingdom	71.1	70.9	71.0
Caribbean islands	2.2	–	1.0
Total — %	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total — Number	45	55	100

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 6 shows the diverse identities of Muslim respondents in the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

Table 6. Ethnic and cultural identification by Muslim respondents

Ethnic and cultural identity	Muslims %
Asian	6
Asian Bangladeshi	2
Asian Indian	1
Asian Muslim	2
Asian Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	5
Black African	2
Black African/ Somali	1
British	1
British Asian	4
British Bangladeshi	2
British Indian	2
British Muslim	5
British Pakistani	8
British Pakistani Muslim	1
British Indian Muslim	1
Indian	2
Indian Pakistani	1
Mauritian	1
Muslim	1
Pakistani	31
Pakistani Muslim	1
Somali	6
Turkish	3
Did not answer	4
Total %	100.0
Number	100

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 7 shows the occupations of respondents, though it should be noted that a perhaps surprisingly high percentage did not answer this question in the questionnaire.

Table 7. Occupation of respondents

Occupation	Muslims %	Non-Muslims %	Total %
Did not answer	31.0	14.0	22.5
Modern professional	10.0	24.0	17.0
Clerical/intermediate[2]	11.0	15.0	13.0
Senior manager or administrator	4.0	3.0	3.5
Technical and crafts	6.0	5.0	5.5
Semi-routine manual and services	17.0	18.0	17.5
Routine manual and services	11.0	10.0	10.5
Middle or junior manager	6.0	8.0	7.0
Traditional professional	4.0	3.0	3.5
Total — %	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total — Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

In order to facilitate access to the variety of ethnic and faith communities in the area of research, a number of male and female interviewers were recruited, including people with origins or links in South Asia, Africa, Europe and Australia. Some had Islamic backgrounds while some were from other faith groups.

The focus groups were convened with Muslim residents from wards in the London borough of Waltham Forest according to age and gender. Six groups consisted of male and female participants between the ages of 18 and 45. Each of the focus groups discussed one of the following areas in depth: education and employment, health and social services, and policing and political participation. One of the groups consisted of participants under the age of 25. The other three groups were composed of: women under 35 years of age; women of more than 40 years of age; and men older than 40 years of age Eight of the focus groups were conducted and facilitated in English; the group with women older than 40 was held in Urdu. The most significant findings of the questionnaires as well as issues of concern from the focus groups are outlined and summarised in the thematic chapters of this report.[3]

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[2] Intermediate refers to occupations below professional and management position and above the unskilled and partly skilled jobs. Examples include supervisory and technical positions.

[3] The full data of the questionnaires as well as the full-length transcriptions of the focus groups are on file with the authors and originators of the research.

2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

2.1 Profile of Muslims in London

The 2001 Census remains a key source of demographic data. It was the first census in England and Wales to ask respondents a voluntary question about their religion.[4] A population census was also carried out in 2011, but the results will not be available until mid-2012. This report therefore relies in large part on the 2001 census data, but makes reference to more recent data sets or projections where these are available.

In 2001, there were 1.6 million Muslims in the UK. More recent estimates suggest that the Muslim population had increased to over 2.5 million by 2010 and project the Muslim population to reach over 5.5 million by 2030.[5]

According to the 2001 Census, almost 40 per cent of Muslims in England and Wales live in London, where Muslims are the second largest faith group after Christians: 8.5 per cent of London's population, or 607,000 people, identified themselves as Muslim. The Muslim population in London is more ethnically diverse than in the rest of the UK. In the UK generally, 69 per cent of Muslims have a South Asian ethnic heritage and 31 per cent come from other ethnic groups. In London, 58 per cent of Muslims are South Asian and 42 per cent are from other ethnic groups. Twenty per cent of Muslims in London identify themselves as "white", although it should be noted that this category may include those who are Turkish or from south-eastern Europe as well as "white" British Muslims. A little over 13 per cent are black, and just under 5 per cent are in both the "mixed" category and the "Chinese or other" group. The largest proportion of London's Muslims, 39 per cent, were born in the UK, compared with 46 per cent in England and Wales.[6] There are estimated to be up to 100,000 converts to Islam in the UK from a variety of different ethnic groups, including from the white British population.[7]

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[4] There was a religious census in 1851 that focused on worship; see, for example, http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Some_Notes_on_the_1851_Religiou s_Census_with_a_Summary_of_the_Roman_Catholic_Returns (accessed November 2011).

[5] Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population*, Pew Research Center, Washington, DC, 2009. Estimates by Pew for the Muslim population in the UK for 2010 and 2030 are given in the online interactive map, available at http://features.pewforum.org/muslim-population (accessed April 2012).

[6] M.A.K. Brice, *A Minority Within a Minority: A Report on Converts to Islam in the United Kingdom,* Faith Matters, London, 2010.

[7] Office of the Mayor of London, *Muslims in London*, Greater London Authority, London, 2006, available at http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0C BsQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Flegacy.london.gov.uk%2Fgla%2Fpublications%2Fequalities% 2Fmuslims-in-london.rtf&ei=t93FTrjEH6KniQLM-536BQ&usg=AFQjCNEtEGdDFtBEScOw yk0TTaGYCl0X2w (accessed November 2011) (hereafter GLA, *Muslims in London*).

The diversity of London's Muslim population is also reflected in the range of languages spoken across Muslim communities. Data from the 2008 Annual School Census identified over 300 languages spoken by school pupils in London. The top 10 non-English languages spoken by pupils included Bengali (46,681), Urdu (29,354), Somali (27,126), Arabic (19,378) and Turkish (16,778).[8]

In some boroughs Muslims account for a greater proportion of the population than the average figure of 8.5 per cent mentioned above: 71,000 Muslims (36.4 per cent of the borough's population) live in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, making it the area with the highest proportion of Muslim residents in the UK. Newham has the second-largest Muslim population with more than 59,000 people (24.3 per cent of the borough's population). Brent, Camden, Ealing, Hackney, Haringey, Redbridge, Waltham Forest and Westminster are all boroughs in which Muslims constitute over 10 per cent of the local population. At the other end of the scale, Havering, Bexley and Bromley have less than 2 per cent Muslims (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Distribution of the Muslim population in London, 2001
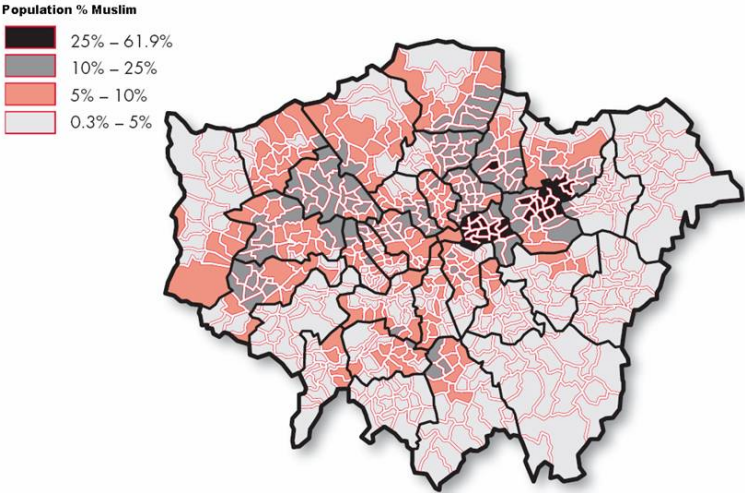
Source: www.muslimsinbritain.org (accessed April 2012)

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[8] Michelle von Ahn, Ruth Lupton, Charley Greenwood and Dick Wiggins, *Languages, Ethnicity, and Education in London,* Department of Quantitative Social Science Working Paper 1012, Institute for Education, London, 2010, available at www.ioe.ac.uk/Dick_Wiggins_-_Languages_ethnicity_and_education_in_London.pdf (accessed November 2011).

In the UK, Muslims are one of the few faith groups containing higher numbers of men than women. In London, Muslims and Hindus have larger numbers of men than women. There were 310,477 Muslim men and 296,606 Muslim women in London in 2006.[9] This gender profile may be attributed to migration history and patterns where often men with families migrate alone and their families follow at a later date.

Muslims have the youngest age profile of all the religious groups in London, and in the UK as a whole. Almost one-third of Muslims are below 15 years old and 17 per cent are 16–24 years old. London's Muslim population is older than that of Muslims in the rest of England and Wales, but still younger than the general population. Only one-fifth of London's Muslims are aged between 40 and 64.[10] This reflects patterns of migration and possible changes in family structures.

2.2   Waltham Forest

The focus of this report is on the London borough of Waltham Forest. It lies on the outer edge of north-east London and has in fact only been part of London since 1965 when the three boroughs which were then in the county of Essex (Chingford, Walthamstow and Leyton) were merged into Waltham Forest and joined to Greater London.[11] Its name is a reference to the Royal Forest of Essex which covered much of the borough until the 19th century. Epping Forest now borders the north of the borough. Famous residents of the borough include the designer William Morris, the film director Alfred Hitchcock and the footballer David Beckham.[12] It is one of the five boroughs hosting the 2012 London Olympics, with the main Olympic park in the area adjoining the south of the borough. Its neighbouring London boroughs are Hackney and Newham in the south and Haringey and Enfield in the west. To the east is the Essex county borough of Redbridge.

Waltham Forest has for a long time been a place where immigrants into the UK have settled and made their homes. In the late 19th century and early part of the 20th century, many migrants who settled there were Jews who had come to the UK to escape persecution in central and eastern Europe. The majority lived in the East End of London for a short period of time, and then made their way to the more affluent northern outskirts of the city. The largest influx into the area from overseas took place, as elsewhere in the UK, in the postwar years, with the arrival of immigrants first from the Caribbean and then South Asia, particularly Pakistan. Other immigrants who have settled (mostly since the Second World War) in the borough include Africans,

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[9]   GLA, *Muslims in London.*

[10]   GLA, *Muslims in London.*

[11]   Greater London is the administrative division covering London in England. It has 32 London boroughs and was created in 1965.

[12]   See the website of the London Borough of Waltham Forest, at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/environment/land/local-heritage-and-history.htm   (accessed November 2011).

Mauritians, Chinese, Greeks, Turks and Irish; the most recent newcomers from abroad have been refugees from Somalia.

Since 2003, the borough, like other parts of London, has experienced an increase in the population from eastern Europe. Until the 2011 Census data are published the size of this population will be difficult to estimate. However, government data for national insurance registrations for adult overseas nationals entering the UK between 2002 and 2010 show that the largest number of registrations were from Poland (10,960), Pakistan (8,270), Lithuania (6,140), South Africa (5,830) and Romania (5,180).[13] However, caution is needed in interpreting these data which are only for residence at the point of registration and do not account for individuals who may leave to settle elsewhere.

In 2001, Waltham Forest had a population of 218,277. More recent estimates suggest that by 2009 the population had increased to between 227,000 and 243,280.[14] The Greater London Authority (GLA) predicts that by 2016 the population will increase to a total of between 231,000 and 243,000.

The age profile of residents is younger than that of London as a whole. For instance, 7.2 per cent of the population in Waltham Forest are aged younger than five years, compared with 6.7 per cent of the population as an average across Greater London.[15] Waltham Forest is ranked seventh-highest among London boroughs for the percentage of residents aged 15 years or younger: 20.3 per cent of Waltham Forest residents are in this age group while the London average is just 19 per cent.[16] The Census data also revealed that Waltham Forest has above average numbers of 20- and 39-year-olds, compared with the rest of the UK. As with the rest of London, the young age profile of Muslims is also reflected among the Muslim population of Waltham Forest, with 33.8 per cent in the under 24-year-old age range.

In 2001, the white British ethnic group constituted 64.5 per cent of the population, down from 74.4 per cent in 1991. Ethnic-minority groups therefore constitute 35.5 per cent of the population. The largest ethnic-minority group was black Caribbean (8.2 per cent) followed by Pakistani (7.9 per cent) and black African (5.7 per cent). These data do not take into account the significant migration since 2001 that has led to changes in the ethnic diversity of the local population. The GLA's estimates for the

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[13] See http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/top_10_countries_of_new_arrivals_to_wf_from_2002_to _december_2010.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[14] The figure of 227,000 is given by the GLA 2003 Round Ward Projections v2: Greater London Authority, 2004, and the higher figure is given by Les Mayhew and Gillian Harper, *Counting with confidence: The population of Waltham Forest,* Mayhew Harper Associates, London, 2010, available at http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/mayhew-report.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[15] 2001 Census data.

[16] 2001 Census data.

Waltham Forest population suggest that by 2011 the ethnic-minority population constituted 42 per cent of the total population.[17]

The Muslim population in Waltham Forest is the third-largest in London and constitutes 15.1 per cent of the borough's population. The borough's Muslim population reflects the diversity of religious traditions and sects across Muslim communities in the UK. According to one study of mosques and young people, there are 14 mosques in the borough; this includes three Dheobhandi mosques, at least four Barelvi mosques, two Salafi mosques, two Tablighi mosques, one Shia mosque and one Qadiani mosque.[18] A further indication of the diversity of the Muslim population in Waltham Forest can also be inferred from the range of languages that are spoken by pupils who attend school in the borough. Data from 2010 indicate that the most common non-English languages that pupils spoke at home included Urdu, Turkish, Somali, Punjabi, Bengali and Arabic.[19]

2.3   Access to Citizenship

For the UK, issues of nationality and immigration were closely tied to its role as a colonial state headed by a monarch. Individuals within the British empire were subjects of the crown. The 1948 British Nationality Act was the first to draw a distinction between two types of British subjects, citizens of the Commonwealth and citizens of the UK. However, all British subjects, whether Commonwealth or UK citizens, were free to enter and settle in the UK. Despite this apparently open policy, the arrival in the UK of the first postwar black Commonwealth citizens led politicians and policymakers to look at ways of limiting such migration, initially through administrative measures, eventually through changing the rules. The first formal measures of control were introduced through the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962. Further restrictions on Commonwealth immigration to the UK were introduced in 1968. Most notoriously, the 1971 Immigration Act deprived UK citizens of the right to enter into the UK free of any immigration control unless they or their parents or grandparents were born, naturalised, adopted or registered as UK citizens in the UK. This condition, called the patriality rule, was "a polite way of allowing whites in and keeping 'coloureds' out".[20] In particular, the measure removed the right of entry to the UK from UK citizens of Asian origin living in East Africa. Primary immigration from the Commonwealth largely ended with the 1971 Immigration Act. Commonwealth citizens who did make it into the UK had the right to vote in local and national

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[17] See www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/community/wf-statistics/bp-population.htm (accessed November 2011).

[18] Fatima Khan, *Waltham Forest: Mosques and Young People*, Action Trust, London, 2010, p. 4.

[19] Data from the 2010 PLASC for Waltham Forest, cited in www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/community/wf-statistics/bp-population.htm (accessed November 2011).

[20] A. Kundnani, *The End of Tolerance: Racism in 21st Century Britain,* Pluto Press, London, 2007, p. 21.

elections. They were also eligible to apply for British citizenship after a period of time settled in the UK.

Since 2001, the traditional liberal approach to citizenship on the basis of time spent in the UK has been replaced by refocusing on using citizenship as a policy tool for developing "a sense of civic identity and shared values".[21] Initial measures introduced to achieve this included civic ceremonies for new citizens, involving an oath of allegiance and tests on language and knowledge of life in the UK. In 2008, the concept of earned citizenship was introduced.[22] Underpinning this was the concern that "British citizenship is a privilege that must be earned" and that new migrants must earn this "by proving their commitment to the community and the country".[23] To support this, a status of probationary citizenship was created as a bridge between temporary immigration status and either full citizenship or permanent residency rights.[24] Crucially, the length of this period could be reduced by two years when a person demonstrated that he or she was contributing to the community through "active citizenship". This may be achieved through "formal volunteering" or "civic activism". The idea of taking this further and developing a points-based system of citizenship was put forward in 2009. This included a possible potential for "deducting points or applying penalties for not integrating into the British way of life, for criminal or anti-social behaviour, or in circumstances where an active disregard for UK values is demonstrated".[25]

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[21] Home Office White Paper, *Secure Borders, Safe Haven*, United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA), London, 2002.

[22] Home Office, *The Pathway to Citizenship: Next Steps to Reforming the Immigration System,* UKBA, London, 2008 (hereafter Home Office, The Pathway to Citizenship).

[23] Home Office, *The Pathway to Citizenship,* p. 12.

[24] Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

[25] Home Office, *Earning the right to stay: a new points test for citizenship*, UKBA, London, 2009. p. 17, available at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090713010115/http://www.ukba .homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/221878/earning-the-right-to-stay/earning-the-right-to-stay/earned-citizenship-consultation?view=Binary (accessed November 2011).

3.   CITY POLICY

3.1   Political Structures

3.1.1   The Greater London Authority (GLA)

London is divided into 32 boroughs.[26] The borough system was established in 1965 and replaced the old metropolitan boroughs set up in the Victorian period. Each borough is a unitary authority responsible for the delivery of local services, including schools, social services and social housing. They also provide local planning, gyms and leisure facilities, refuse and recycling services, parking, and licences for pubs, restaurants and clubs.[27] However, the GLA, which consists of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, is responsible for London-wide services such as transport and policing.[28]

Following the Greater London Act of 1999, a directly elected mayor, the London Assembly and the GLA were established in 2000. The GLA was the first London-wide authority since the abolition of the Greater London Council in 1986. The GLA is responsible for the administration of Greater London, providing a coordinating function between local authorities. The GLA supports both the office of the mayor in developing and delivering policies for London, and members of the London Assembly, in their role of scrutinising the work of the mayor and representing the interests of Londoners.

The London Assembly has 25 members, elected by London residents at the same time as the mayoral election. The Assembly holds the mayor to account and scrutinises the mayor's budget, which it can amend with a two-thirds majority. Its cross-party committees[29] also look at important policy areas, including employment, economic development and housing.[30]

3.1.2   London Borough of Waltham Forest

The London Borough of Waltham Forest (LB of Waltham Forest) consists of 60 elected councillors.[31] The council determines the overall budget and policy framework.

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[26]   In addition to the 32 boroughs there is the City of London, home to the main financial district, which has a separate independent status as a corporation.

[27]   See the GLA website at www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/london-boroughs (accessed November 2011).

[28]   See www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/UKgovernment/Localgovernment/DG_073310 (accessed November 2011).

[29]   See www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1 (accessed November 2011).

[30]   See www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/the-london-assembly/investigations (accessed November 2011).

[31]   More details of the structure of London Borough of Waltham Forest can be found at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/council/about.htm (accessed November 2011).

It elects a leader, who then appoints between two and ten councillors to form a cabinet. Following local elections in 2010, the council has an eight-member cabinet whose responsibilities are organised into the following portfolios: corporate resources, business and employment; children and young people; the environment; health, adults and older people; leisure, arts and culture; community safety and cohesion; housing and development.

The cabinet leads council-wide policy and strategic development on issues that cover all council departments, and is scrutinised by other councillors in a scrutiny management committee and six scrutiny sub-committees. The executive of the council, which consists of the leader and the cabinet, is responsible for most day-to-day decisions, in line with the council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to make a decision outside the agreed policy framework and budget, this must be referred back to the council.

3.1.3   Local Strategic Partnerships

Since 2000, service delivery at the local level has also relied on Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).[32] These are non-statutory bodies that aim to improve public services by bringing together different organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. They are led by the local council, and normally include the local police and the Primary Care Trust (PCT). The LSPs were created to encourage joint working and community involvement. In Waltham Forest the LSP, named Waltham Forest Together, is organised into five thematic partnerships: children and young people; employment and enterprise; housing; safety; sustainability and the environment. A key task of the LSP is to oversee the preparation and delivery of the area's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). Formulated by a LSP, the SCS is a set of goals and actions that reflect the residential, business, statutory and voluntary interests of a local area. The SCS acts as an umbrella for all other strategies devised for the local area. In 2008, Waltham Forest published its SCS, called "Our Place in London".[33]

3.2   Governance of Policy Areas

3.2.1   Cohesion and Integration

Disturbances in northern towns in the summer of 2001 led to a raft of reports exploring the causes of the disorder and the broader economic and social disadvantages which had contributed to them. The Cantle report was "particularly struck by the depth of polarisation in our towns and cities … Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of

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[32]   See www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=1115932 (accessed November 2011).

[33]   See http://oldsite.walthamforest.gov.uk/ourplace.htm (accessed May 2012).

parallel lives."[34] The new agenda that emerged was to foster community cohesion. While equal life chances and respect for diversity were identified as features of a cohesive community, the thrust of the agenda is on promoting trust, belonging and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

It was clear from the beginning that the cohesion agenda was primarily to be driven by local authorities, in part by rethinking existing approaches such as the criteria for funding single ethnicity or faith groups.

There have been many different definitions of community cohesion emanating from the UK government. The "Waltham Forest Community Cohesion Strategy 2008–2011" considered the definition produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government to be particularly clear and useful. It defined community cohesion as based on three foundations:

1. people from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities;

2. people knowing their rights and responsibilities;

3. people trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly.

It noted three ways of living together:

1. a shared vision and sense of belonging;

2. a focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside the recognition of the value of diversity;

3. strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

The "Waltham Forest Community Cohesion Strategy 2008–2011" argued that this definition puts a greater emphasis on the wider meaning of community cohesion beyond ethnicity and faith, including citizenship identity, individual rights and responsibilities, and the integration of individuals in their communities.[35]

The Equality Act of 2010 creates a duty on local authorities, including the London Borough of Waltham Forest Council, to have a due regard for the need to foster good

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[34] The report *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*, was produced after the 2001 disturbances by the independent Community Cohesion Review Team, chaired by Ted Cantle. The report gives an overview of race and community relations across the UK, based on the review team's site visits. See the Institute of Community Cohesion website, www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Resources/AboutCommunityCohesion (accessed November 2011).

[35] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest Community Cohesion Strategy 2008-2011: Working Together, Living Together, Being Together*, p. 6, available at http://www1.waltham forest.gov.uk/ModernGov/Published/C00000287/M00001812/AI00009757/$9AppendixJuly08 CommunityCohesionStrategyv2.docA.ps.pdf (accessed November 2011) (hereafter London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest Community Cohesion Strategy*).

relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic[36] and persons who do not share it. This includes the need to tackle prejudice and to promote understanding between people of different religion or beliefs as well as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex and sexual orientation. The coalition government elected in 2010 reviewed the government approach to policy in this area and is published a new integration strategy in February 2012.

3.2.2   Education

Responsibilities for educational policy and services are spread between the Department of Education, the local authority and schools. The Department of Education has overall responsibility for the framework of educational policy in England, including the nature and type of schools that receive state support, standards for national exams and qualifications and the national curriculum. At the local level, councils have an important role in organising educational services, including funding schools, organising admissions and other support services. In Waltham Forest, the Council had commissioned Babcock 4S, an international company with experience in the engineering and defence industries that had in recent years developed its work in support services for critical infrastructure including education, to deliver some of its educational support services.[37]

As well as local authority maintained schools, academies were established by the former Labour government as a part of an educational strategy to improve the worst-performing schools and schools located in disadvantaged areas. Academies receive funding directly from the Department for Education. Those established before 2007 were able to set entirely their own curriculum, but following this date, they were made to follow the national curriculum in English, maths and science. However, following the Academies Act of 2010 brought in by the Coalition government, academies are able to renegotiate this restriction. Free schools are a new type of school that the Coalition government also legislated for in the Academies Act of 2010. The government opened its first free schools 2011. They were to be set up as academies and funded directly from the Department for Education.

3.2.3   Employment

The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for employment, welfare and pension policy and for addressing child poverty. It is the UK's biggest public service delivery department, serving over 20 million people. At the city level, the London mayor, Boris Johnson, is responsible for strategies for sustainable economic growth and employment in London. The mayor's "London Plan 2008" outlined the framework for

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[36]   Every person has one or more protected characteristics and the Act ensures against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

[37]   See www.babcock.co.uk/markets/education (accessed November 2011).

accommodating London's growing population, improving its infrastructure and retaining its competitive economic position.[38] Particularly relevant to this report, it emphasised the need to secure economic development in the outer boroughs.[39] In April 2009, the mayor began consultations with the London Assembly and the GLA Group to revise the "London Plan".[40]

Alongside the "London Plan", the mayor's "London Economic Development Strategy 2010"[41] provides a strategy for business growth, tackling unemployment, increasing skills and expanding opportunities and prosperity in London. Reflecting the aims of the UK government, the mayor has also embraced the policy of creating a more integrated labour market system in London, initially through a joint investment plan for the London Development Agency (LDA) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LDA commissions both public- and private-sector organisations to deliver projects and programmes through grants and funding agreements. However, in June 2010 the government announced that the regional development agencies, such as the LDA, would be abolished by 31 March 2012. In response to the mayor's proposals on devolution, the government has agreed that the functions of the LDA should be folded into the GLA.

At the local level, employment policy and practice are informed by Waltham Forest's "Strategy for Enterprise, Employment and Skills 2009–14".[42] Enterprise and employment form one of the areas covered by the borough's LSP. It brings together all the main commissioning and decision-taking agencies in the borough, with responsibilities for business and the labour market including Jobcentre Plus, the LSC, the North London Strategic Alliance, the LDA, Voluntary Action Waltham Forest, a representative from the housing associations and Waltham Forest College.

3.2.4   Health and Social Care

A distinction should be made between health and social care. Primary responsibility for health care lies with the national government and the National Health Service (NHS);

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[38]   *The London Plan (consolidated with Alterations since 2004),* 2008, available at www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan/thelondonplan.jsp (accessed November 2011).

[39]   Mayor of London, *A New Plan for London: Proposals for the Mayor's London Plan*, April 2009, available at www.london.gov.uk/archive/mayor/publications/2009/docs/london-plan-initial-proposals.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[40]   The draft replacement London Plan, including minor alterations (December 2009 and Sep 2010), is available at www.london.gov.uk/shaping-london/london-plan/strategy/download.jsp (accessed November 2011).

[41]   Available at www.lda.gov.uk/Documents/Economic_Development_Strategy_(2010)_6543.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[42]   London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest's Strategy for Enterprise, Employment and Skills 2009-14,* December 2009, available at https://democracy.walthamforest.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=10086 (accessed May 2012) (hereafter London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest's Strategy for Enterprise*).

the delivery of adult social care, however, is the responsibility of the local authority. This means that the local authority is responsible for nursing home care for older residents and the delivery of services such as meals on wheels and nursing care unless the treatment is deemed to be related to ill health, in which case it is funded through the NHS.

Health policy is governed by the Department of Health, whose responsibilities include health protection, health improvement and health inequality in England. Care in the national health system is divided into primary, secondary and emergency health care. The NHS is divided into authorities and trusts across the UK: acute trusts, foundation trusts, ambulance trusts, care trusts, PCTs, mental health trusts, special health authorities and Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs).

The Department of Health controls England's 10 SHAs, which oversee all NHS activities in England. In turn, each SHA supervises all the NHS trusts in its area. The trusts are responsible for developing plans for improving health services and for ensuring the high performance and efficiency of local health services as well as inclusion priorities for health into local health service plans.

In Waltham Forest, health care is provided by Whipps Cross University Hospital, the NHS trust, and Waltham Forest PCT, which is responsible for providing community services.

The governance structures for the NHS are being changed by the Coalition government.[43] A key part of the changes will be the abolition of PCTs and SHAs. The reforms aim to give greater power to general practitioners (GPs) than PCTs in controlling local health-care provision in England, as the former are considered to be the most responsive to patients and best placed to know their needs. However, concerns about the impact of the reforms have led the government to begin a process of reconsidering some of these changes and legislation for the amended NHS reforms had yet to be finalised by mid-2012.

In April 2011, NHS Waltham Forest,[44] which was until then responsible for commissioning health care for people living and working in the borough, was merged with the three neighbouring PCTs to become NHS Outer North East London. The Department of Health has accepted NHS Waltham Forest GPs as a pilot pathfinder group for GP commissioning on their GP Development Scheme,[45] which started the

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[43] Department of Health, *Liberating the NHS: Legislative framework and next steps, White Paper,* December 2010, available at www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_122707.pdf (accessed November 2011); and the Executive Summary at www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_123853.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[44] See www.walthamforest.nhs.uk (accessed November 2011).

[45] See www.london.nhs.uk/what-we-do/supporting-changes-to-the-nhs-in-london/londons-gp-development-programme (accessed November 2011).

initial transfer process of giving GPs control of their local NHS budget. It will also oversee the proposed abolition of the PCT in Waltham Forest, which is due to take place in 2013, unless government policy changes.[46]

3.2.5 Housing

Central government provides the overall framework for housing and planning policies. Responsibility for this lies primarily with the Department for Communities and Local Government. The government also sets out the statutory responsibilities of local authorities for the homeless and the system of welfare payments covering housing costs. Local authorities may have responsibility for providing accommodation for those who are homeless and for the allocation of social housing. The maintenance and management of the social housing stock may rest with local authorities or registered social landlords. The local authorities also have a primary responsibility for granting planning permission for new development and changes in land use. In London, the mayor has an overarching development plan for the city, the London Plan, which includes targets for building new housing, including affordable housing.

3.2.6 Policing and security

Responsibility for policing in London lies with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). In addition, the MPS also has a range of specialist units such as those concerned with counter-terrorism and royal and diplomatic protection. The head of the MPS is appointed by the Home Secretary. The work of the MPS is scrutinised by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPC), which replaced the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) in 2011. This makes the mayor of London directly accountable for police performance in London. The work of the MOPC is scrutinised by the Policing and Crime Committee of the London Assembly.

Within the MPS, responsibility for day-to-day policing in each area lies with the Borough Operation Command Unit. At the local level, the MPA supports Community Safety Boards (CSB) as a mechanism for engaging local communities. In Waltham Forest, the CSB is made up of the local councillors, representatives from the local community and business groups, and the police borough commander, who attends with his senior officers.

In addition to the MPS, the municipal council retains a wider responsibility for community safety, including anti-social behaviour and hate crime. "Safe and Sustainable[47]" was a partnership plan for Waltham Forest running from 2008 to 2011. The partnership plan was designed to work with local residents to develop a sustainable

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[46] See Ima Jackson-Obot, "Waltham Forest: PCT Merges Ahead of Reforms", 4 April 2011, available at www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/wfnews/8953254.WALTHAM_FOREST__PCT_merges_ahead_of_reforms (accessed November 2011).

[47] See https://democracy.walthamforest.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=7362.

community strategy for the borough on the basis that the population was likely to grow and diversify over the next 15–20 years. The partnership programme also focused on the engagement of local residents in forming priorities in crime reduction and community safety.

3.3   The Perception of Muslims in the UK

A survey exploring people's prejudices carried out in early 2005 found that around 58 per cent of people thought it was important for society to respond to the needs of Muslims.[48] The majority (66 per cent) of people supported equal employment opportunity measures for Muslims, while 19 per cent thought that such measures had gone too far.[49] The majority expressed positive (38 per cent) or neutral (43 per cent) feelings towards Muslims, although one-fifth expressed negative feelings about Muslims.[50] A quarter of respondents said that they did sometimes feel prejudiced against Muslims but would not let it show, while 9 per cent said they did not mind if they came across as prejudiced against Muslims.[51] When asked whether particular groups were accepted as British, Arabs were the ethnic group and Muslims the religious group that people felt were least likely to be regarded as British.[52] Around one-third of respondents viewed Muslims as posing a cultural and physical threat to the UK.[53]

An opinion poll by the polling company Populus of 1,005 adults in the UK taken in June 2006 found that 60 per cent of people felt that Muslims made a valuable contribution to British society; 60 percent also felt that Muslims were viewed with suspicion by their fellow citizens. A similar percentage felt it was unacceptable for police to view Muslims with greater suspicion because the 7 July bombers were Muslim. In addition, 45 per cent disagreed with the statement that Islam encourages more violence than other religions, compared with 30 per cent who agreed with the statement. A majority, 54 per cent, disagreed with the statement that Islam is a threat to the UK's way of life. Almost three-quarters (74 per cent) felt that Muslims needed to do more to integrate into mainstream British culture. In a Gallup poll of the UK

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[48]   D. Abrams and D. Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, Centre for the Study of Group Processes, University of Kent, 2006, p. 28 (hereafter Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*).

[49]   Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, p. 29.

[50]   Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, p. 34.

[51]   Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, p. 54.

[52]   Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, p. 56.

[53]   Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, p. 67.

population, only 45 per cent of the general public said Muslims living in the UK were loyal to the nation, and 55 per cent said Muslims were respectful of other religions.[54]

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[54] D. Mogahed, *Beyond Multiculturalism vs. Assimilation*, Gallup, Princeton, NJ, 2007.

4. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Identity, Belonging and Interaction

Later chapters of this report examine integration in specific policy areas (education, employment, health, housing and policing) or spheres of activity (civil and political participation), but the focus here is on more general experiences and measures of integration. This chapter, using data from the Foundations' research, begins by examining levels of cohesion in Waltham Forest. It then looks at respondents' sense of personal identity and belonging to the neighbourhood, city and state. These are important elements, as an individual may be integrated into the labour market but may not identify with the area, city or country in which he or she lives.[55] The chapter then turns to perceptions and experiences of discrimination and unfair treatment, as these can undermine a sense of identity and belonging.[56]

4.1   Cohesion

Some research suggests that ethnic diversity undermines social cohesion, although this remains controversial.[57] Several questions from the Foundations' questionnaire explored respondents' perceptions of levels of social cohesion in their neighbourhood. These included questions about the extent to which respondents feel that people in their neighbourhood are willing to help and support each other and the extent to which it is felt that people of different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.[58] Other indicators of cohesion are the perceptions of close bonds, trust and shared values among people in the neighbourhood. The picture to emerge from the Foundations' survey is mixed. There are both positive indications of high levels of social cohesion as well as signs that further efforts to develop and support cohesion may be needed. The responses to the Foundations' survey can also be read in the context of the results of the LB Waltham Forest's "Community Cohesion" survey carried out with a representative sample of 1,000 residents across the borough in 2009 and 2011.

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[55]   F. Heckmann and W. Bosswick, *Integration and Integration Policies*, an INTPOL feasibility study for the IMESCO Network of Excellence, European Forum for Migration Studies, University of Bamberg, 2005. Available at
http://www.efms.uni-bamberg.de/pdf/INTPOL%20Final%20Paper.pdf (accessed 12 April 2012).

[56]   Rahsaan Maxwell (2006) "Muslims, South Asians and the British Mainstream: A National Identity Crisis?" 29(4) *West European Politics* 736

[57]   See R.D. Putnam, "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century. The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture", *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30(2) (2007), pp. 137–174; N. Letki, "Does Diversity Erode Social Cohesion? Social Capital and Race in British Neighbourhoods", *Political Studies* 56(1) (2008), pp. 99–126.

[58]   The two questions measure similar attitudes and views; however, the first focuses on the neighbourhood level (where it may be more realistic to expect to give and receive support and help from others); the second probes the respondent's more general perception of relations between people of different backgrounds in their wider local area.

The local authority survey found a positive view among residents of living in their local area. In 2009, 79 per cent of respondents said they were either "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied" with their local area.[59] This figure increased to 81 per cent in the 2011 survey.[60] The 2011 survey also reveals variations across local areas, with levels of satisfaction highest in Leytonstone (87 per cent) and lowest in Walthamstow and Lea Bridge (68 per cent).[61] The council's survey results are not disaggregated by religion.

This positive perception of the local area is also echoed in the Foundations' survey where almost all respondents said they liked living in their neighbourhood: 40 per cent "definitely liked" living in their neighbourhood, while 56 per cent liked living there "to some extent". Only 3 per cent of respondents said that they "did not like" living in their neighbourhood.

A majority of survey respondents agreed that people from different backgrounds got on well together in their area (Table 8.). The Foundations' survey therefore echoes the findings of the council's 2011 "Community Cohesion" survey, in which over three-quarters of respondents considered their local area to be one in which differences between people were respected.[62]

Table 8. Do people from different backgrounds get on well together here?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Strongly agree	17	8	25
Agree	57	57	114
Disagree	22	19	41
Strongly disagree	1	1	2
Don't know	1	11	12
Too few people in this local area	2	3	5
People in this area are all from the same background	0	1	1
Total	**100**	**100**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

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[59] Ceri Matthias, *Community Cohesion Survey*, BMG Research, London, 2009 (hereafter Matthias, *Community Cohesion Survey*).

[60] Chris Owen, *Community Cohesion Survey 2011*, BMG Research, London, 2012, p. 8 (hereafter Owen, *Community Cohesion Survey*).

[61] Owen, *Community Cohesion Survey,* p. 9.

[62] Owen, *Community Cohesion Survey*, p. 18. Respondents were asked, "Do you think that your local area is a place where differences between people, e.g., age, ethnicity, country of origin or religion, are respected?" Responses to this were: 33 per cent, yes definitely; 46 per cent, yes most of the time; 15 per cent, sometimes; 6 per cent, not at all.

This positive view of living in Waltham Forest was also found in the focus group discussions. One Muslim woman recalled how the area had changed over time:

> I came to this country in 1977 and I was here until 1983. At that time I felt that Muslims don't pass through white areas so much as we see now ... but when I came back in 1988 it was more multicultural everywhere. Whatever you wear, a shalwaar kameez or trousers, [people] don't mind.

A complex picture emerges in which the ethnic and cultural diversity of the area is seen by most as a positive feature of living in their area, while the experiences of change that comes from the migration that generates this diversity is viewed negatively. Recent arrivals, in this case, East Europeans, are identified by some respondents as a source of concern particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour.

Muslims and non-Muslims are similar in their perceptions of whether people in their neighbourhood could be trusted. Over 60 per cent of the Foundations' survey respondents felt that either "many" or "some" people could be trusted; around a third felt that "few" could be trusted. See Table 9.

Table 9. Level of trust in the population

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Many of the people in your neighbourhood can be trusted	13	15	28
Some can be trusted	54	47	101
A few can be trusted	32	31	63
None of the people in your neighbourhood can be trusted	1	4	5
Total	**100**	**97**	**197**

Source: Open Society Foundations

The findings in the Foundations' survey echo those of the 2009 "Community Cohesion" survey, in which two-thirds (67 per cent) of respondents said that many or some people in the local area could be trusted and 30 per cent said that few or nobody in the local area could be trusted.[63] The Foundations' survey found similar perceptions of trust between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents. This differs from the analysis of the council's survey, which suggests a difference between different age and faith groups:

> There is an increased likelihood of the older, white and Christian community considering that many/some people in the local area can be trusted (73), while those under the age of 45 and in particular those of Muslim faith were more

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[63]   Matthias, *Community Cohesion Survey,* p. 30.

likely to consider that few people or nobody could be trusted (43 per cent, cf. 26 per cent of Christians).[64]

Similar results were found in the Home Office's *Citizenship Survey,* which found that Muslims (as well as Hindus and Sikhs) were significantly less likely than the general population to say that people in their neighbourhood could be trusted.[65]

A large majority of both Muslim (80 per cent) and non-Muslim (70 per cent) respondents in the Foundations' survey either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement that people in their neighbourhood were willing to help each other (Table 10). However, the majority of respondents (Muslim and non-Muslim) were more negative about whether people work together to improve the neighbourhood (Table 11.).

Table 10. Are people in this neighbourhood willing to help their own neighbours?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Strongly agree	10	7	17
Agree	70	63	133
Disagree	13	19	32
Strongly disagree	2	6	8
Don't know	5	5	10
Total	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 11. Do people work together to improve the neighbourhood?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Strongly agree	1	4	5
Agree	35	27	62
Disagree	42	45	87
Strongly disagree	11	9	20
Don't know	11	15	26
Total	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

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[64]   Matthias, *Community Cohesion Survey,* pp. 34–35.

[65]   S. Kitchen, J. Michaelson and N. Wood, *2005 Citizenship Survey: Community Cohesion Topic Report*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London, 2006, Table 17.

The response to several questions in the Foundations' survey suggest differences between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents. While all respondents were positive about living in their area, a greater proportion of Muslim respondents (47 per cent) compared with non-Muslim respondents (34 per cent) said they "definitely liked" living in their neighbourhood.

Muslim and non-Muslim respondents also differed in their response to the question of whether people in the neighbourhood shared the same values. Among Muslim respondents there was an almost even split between those who agreed or strongly agreed (44 per cent) with the statement that people in the neighbourhood shared the same values and those who disagreed or strongly disagreed (42 per cent). By contrast, only 30 per cent of non-Muslim respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and 48 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. A significant proportion of both Muslim (14 per cent) and non-Muslim respondents (22 per cent) also said that they did not know.

Muslim and non-Muslim respondents differed in their perception of whether they lived in a close-knit neighbourhood. A majority of Muslim respondents felt that they lived in a close-knit neighbourhood, while a majority of the non-Muslim respondents did not. The Waltham Forest "Community Cohesion" survey noted differences between different ethnic groups in perceptions of whether their neighbourhood was close-knit, with a majority of black and minority ethnic (BME) respondents (57 per cent,) particularly South Asians (62 per cent), saying their neighbourhood was one that was close or tight knit compared with half of white respondents agreeing with this statement.[66]

4.2   Belonging and Identity

The Foundations' survey asked respondents about their sense of belonging to their local area, the city and the country. The results indicate a strong sense of belonging, at all three levels, among both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents. For Muslim respondents a strong sense of belonging was higher for the local area, then the city and finally the country. For non-Muslim respondents, the order appears to be reversed, with a strong sense of belonging greatest for the country, then the city and lowest for the local area. As a consequence, a greater proportion of Muslim respondents (79 per cent) than non-Muslim respondents (66 per cent) reported a "very" or "fairly" strong sense of belonging to the local area. See Table 12.

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[66]   Owen, *Community Cohesion Survey,* p. 18.

Table 12. How strongly does the interviewee feel they belong to the local area?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Very strongly	33	21	54
Fairly strongly	46	45	91
Not very strongly	17	22	39
Not at all strongly	1	9	10
Don't know	3	3	6
Total	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 13. Respondents with strong sense of belonging at local, city and national level, by religion

	Muslims %	Non-Muslims %
Local	79	66
City	74	72
National	69	76

Source: Open Society Foundations

These results appear to dovetail with the 2011 "Community Cohesion" survey, which reported that three-quarters of residents had a strong sense of belonging to their local area; furthermore, the sense of belonging to the local area was strongest among older residents (87 per cent aged 66+ years), BME residents (81 per cent) and especially Asian residents (84 per cent).[67]

In the Foundations' survey there are subtle differences in the responses of Muslims and non-Muslims. While Muslim and non-Muslim respondents gave almost identical responses to questions about belonging at the city level, local-level attachment appeared to be more pronounced among Muslim compared with non-Muslim respondents; one-third of Muslim respondents said they felt "very strongly" that they belonged to their local area compared with one-fifth of non-Muslim respondents. National belonging appeared to be more intense among non-Muslim respondents compared with Muslim respondents: 43 per cent of non-Muslims indicated they had a "very strong" sense of belonging to the UK, while 33 per cent had a "fairly strong" sense of belonging. Among Muslim respondents more respondents reported a "fairly strong" sense of national belonging (41 per cent) than a "very strong" sense of national belonging (28 per cent).

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[67] Owen, *Community Cohesion Survey,* p. 13.

Table 14. How strongly does interviewee feel they belong to the city?

		Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Very strongly		32	31	32
Fairly strongly		42	41	42
Not very strongly		18	18	18
Not at all strongly		4	7	6
Don't know		4	3	4
Total	%	100	100	100
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 15. How strongly does interviewee feel they belong to the country?

		Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Very strongly		28	43	36
Fairly strongly		41	33	37
Not very strongly		15	16	16
Not at all strongly		10	6	8
Don't know		6	2	4
Total	%	100	100	100
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

In addition to a strong sense of national belonging, a majority of both Muslim and non-Muslim Foundations respondents said that they saw themselves as British. In terms of nationality, 82 per cent of Muslim respondents and 78 per cent of non-Muslims were British nationals. Over 70 per cent of both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents saw themselves as British, and, furthermore, wanted to be seen by others as British. The desire to be seen as British renders particularly poignant the striking difference between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents in their perceptions of whether others see them as British. While a majority of non-Muslims felt that they were regarded as British by others, a majority of Muslim respondents did not feel that they were seen in this way. See Tables 16–18.

Table 16. Do you see yourself as British?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Yes	72	77	149
No	28	23	51
Total	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 17. Do most other people in this country see you as British?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Yes	41	67	108
No	57	31	88
Total	98	98	196

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 18. Do you want to be seen by others as British?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Yes	74	75	149
No	25	25	50
Total	99	100	199

Source: Open Society Foundations

Respondents identified not speaking English, as well as being born abroad and being from an ethnic minority, as the main barriers to being British. Few respondents identified not being Christian as a barrier to being seen as British.

This strong sense of being British was also evident in the focus groups. In a group of older Muslim women who had arrived in the UK as immigrants, this strong sense of belonging was often expressed by drawing comparisons between life in the UK and in their country of origin or with other countries that the women had first-hand experience of:

> I think this is an open society, a very good society. I lived in India where I was discriminated against just because I was a Muslim and in India many Muslims are killed because they are Muslims; 2,000–3,000 people were killed in Gujarat and murdered in front of their houses. Here it is much better.

> Here we can buy property, we get nationality, we can study, we have equal rights. You go to any Middle Eastern country, they don't give you equal rights. They hate you and don't give you equal rights.

> There is a lot of safety for us compared with even our own countries.

> We feel British. When we returned from Pakistan my husband said last time, "I'm happy to be in my own country." When I asked him, which is his country, he said, "I'm British because I miss my country." That's a point, when you go to a Muslim country you're happy to be British.

Many of the older participants who had immigrated to the UK as adults would switch back and forth from talking about the UK and their country of origin as their home. Some referred to their country of origin as their country but talked about the positive aspects of life in the UK both for themselves and their children. Others, particularly younger respondents, placed emphasis on their multiple and diverse identities:

> It's like a hybrid mix: we're Muslims; we're also British; we're Asian, we're also British.

> I have grown up here so I believe it is my place. I don't feel that I am an outsider. This is my country. I had my education here and I am very pleased that I am a British Muslim.

4.3 Discrimination

Discrimination can have an impact on cohesion and belonging. For example, analysis of the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey data suggests that for Muslims (and South Asians) experience of discrimination is a better predictor than socio-economic status of whether a person identifies themselves as British or not.[68] The Foundations' survey asked respondents about both perceptions and experiences of discrimination. Respondents were asked about their perceptions of both racial and religious discrimination. These results reflect individual perceptions of levels of racial and religious discrimination. The responses suggest some consensus between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents on levels of racial discrimination in the UK. Just over 70 per cent of both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents believed that there was either "a lot" or a "fair amount" of racial discrimination in the UK and just over 20 per cent of both groups felt there was "very little" or no racial discrimination. This stands in clear contrast to the very different perceptions of levels of religious discrimination, where 86 per cent of Muslims felt that there was "a lot" or a "fair amount" of religious discrimination, compared with 71 per cent of non-Muslim respondents; 21 per cent of non-Muslim respondents and 10 per cent of Muslim respondents believed that there was little or no religious discrimination. Thus, among non-Muslim respondents

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[68] Rahsaan Maxwell, "Muslims, South Asians and the British Mainstream: A National Identity Crisis?" *West European Politics* 29(4) (2006), p. 736.

perceptions of the level of racial discrimination were similar to perceptions of the level of religious discrimination. By contrast, Muslim respondents assessed levels of religious discrimination to be higher than those for racial discrimination. See Tables 19 and 20.

Table 19. Level of racial prejudice in the UK

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
A lot	17	26	43
A fair amount	58	46	104
A little	19	21	40
None	2	2	4
Don't know	4	5	9
Total	**100**	**100**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 20. Level of religious prejudice in the UK

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
A lot	43	27	70
A fair amount	43	44	87
A little	9	17	26
None	1	4	5
Don't know	4	8	12
Total	**100**	**100**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

This difference in perceptions of levels of racial and religious discrimination appears to reflect differences in actual experiences of discrimination. Respondents were asked how often they had experienced various forms of discrimination. The results in Table 21 combine the responses of those who say they experienced a particular form of discrimination almost all the time, a lot of the time or sometimes. The data suggest that the Muslim and non-Muslim respondents had similar experiences of discrimination based on race and colour: just over 30 per cent of Muslims and 27 per cent of non-Muslims said they experienced such discrimination at least some of the time.

Table 21. Discrimination experienced at least some of the time

	Muslims	Non-Muslims
Gender	11	19
Age	13	21
Race	32	27
Religion	45	9
Skin colour	31	27

Source: Open Society Foundations

By contrast, experiences of religious discrimination were very different between the two groups: 45 per cent of Muslim respondents reported experiencing religious discrimination at least some of the time, compared with only 9 per cent of non-Muslims. While these figures provide a stark contrast between the experience of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents, it should be recalled that among Muslim respondents, the majority (54 per cent) never or rarely experienced religious discrimination. This therefore presents a complex picture in which experiences of religious discrimination varied across the Muslim respondents. See Table 22.

Table 22. How often has interviewee experienced religious discrimination?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Almost all of the time	2	0	2
A lot of the time	12	3	15
Sometimes	31	6	37
Rarely	21	15	36
Never	34	76	110
Total	**100**	**100**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 23. How often has interviewee experienced racial discrimination?

		Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Almost all of the time		2	2	1
A lot of the time		2	4	3
Sometimes		11	15	13
Rarely		12	15	14
Never		75	63	69
Total	%	100	100	100
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Most respondents in the focus groups felt that prejudice towards Muslims had increased significantly since 2001; at the same time, direct personal experiences of discrimination varied across participants.

> You have to prove you are not guilty rather than innocent until proven guilty.

> The majority of Muslims are being perceived as evil because of what is happening in conflict zones.

> I think for our generation it's not that hard. We don't get treated differently. I mean when you see us, you don't see Muslim people, that's why we don't get treated differently.

> After 9/11 and the 7/7 bombing, there is more hatred and racism, not only in Walthamstow; it's all over England. Nowadays, English people, don't see you how they used to see you 10 years back or 15 years back.

> I'm a middle-aged woman with a hijab; I find it a little bit different because people look at me in a slightly different way.

> I go to central London every day on the tube and even when I'm going on the tube with my friends who wear's hijab, it's like we don't get weird looks. Maybe they get looks, but people get looks anyway; if you've got green hair you get looks. You get looks for being different but that doesn't necessarily mean you're being discriminated against.

Among most focus group participants there was a strong perception that discrimination was particularly directed towards individuals who have a visible religious identity, as women who wear a hijab or men with beards.

The focus group discussions also highlighted the ways in which an individual's wider experiences shape their perception of discrimination. Many of the older respondents who had arrived in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s contrasted life today with the challenges they faced when they first arrived in the country. Individuals who made this comparison were very positive about changes, particularly in the access and availability of services that met their religious and cultural needs.

> I tell my children that you can't believe what we had to face with our prayers and other standard things. I think it's a positive change. It's gone quite a long way and I think it will go on for a long time.

4.4   Cohesion Initiatives

Work by the local council on community cohesion has been in place in Waltham Forest for over almost a decade now. A Community Cohesion Task Group was first established in 2003 in response to the Iraq war and its potential impact upon local communities.

Following the arrests of Operation Overt in the summer of 2006, much of the cohesion work in the borough has overlapped and linked with work on the government's "Preventing Violent Extremism" strategy. For some practitioners the link between the two is clear and obvious: "There needs to be a good cohesion base before you can deliver 'Prevent', so people need to be getting along with each other before they will even think of engaging in 'Prevent' initiatives.[69]" The close link between cohesion and the Preventing Violent Extremism policy was also reflected in the administrative structures for policy delivery, with cohesion and "Prevent" initiatives being delivered by the Cohesion and Partnerships team in the local authority. It is also reflected in the fact that in 2009 the council received a Beacon Award for its work in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service in building "cohesive and resilient communities". For policymakers and practitioners working on "Prevent" initiatives, cohesion projects provided a way of engaging with communities in a way that would not have been possible with more policing and a hard-edged "Prevent" programme, as "Prevent" was felt to be viewed negatively among many Muslim civil society groups and organisations.

As a consequence of the close link between the two policy areas, many cohesion projects have focused on Muslim communities. Two examples highlight the benefits and limitations of this focus on Muslims and connection between the two policies. The first is the Young Muslim Leaders project. This was part of the cohesion and "Prevent response to the Operation Overt arrests. The project worked with young people who were identified as being at risk of radicalisation. Those who participated were also vulnerable to gangs and many lacked education, employment or training. The Young Leaders   project   involved   leadership   training   and   developing   skills   around

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[69]   Interview with a member of the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

communication, as well as education and employment training. Practitioners delivering this project felt that for the young people involved, the project "opened a lot of channels". However, the project also involved a clear focus on preventing extremism. There were a number of workshops that focused on the ideologies and narratives used by extremist groups, with a view to deconstructing these narratives. While the focus on young Muslims enabled detailed work on developing skills on countering the narrative of the violent extremist, the young people felt that it limited the development of wider skills in communicating and working with people from a diverse range of religious backgrounds. Among some practitioners and community groups there were also concerns that the focus of the project on Muslim young people created tensions with other communities where young people could not benefit. In 2010, in response to these issues, the project was mainstreamed and opened to all young people and renamed the Young Waltham Forest Leaders Programme. It includes a general session on different forms of extremism as well as looking at cohesion, including threats to cohesion.

The local authority also provides funding and support for the annual Islam Awareness Week (IAW). While IAW provides opportunities for people from different communities to increase their understanding of Islam and Muslims and therefore contributes to cohesion, interviews suggest that IAW makes a valuable contribution towards addressing issues relating to extremism and terrorism. IAW is seen as a way to dispel myths about Islam that arise from violent extremism and to promote the true message of Islam. The organisation of IAW by the local authority is led by the "Prevent" coordinator. The project has a community steering group with representatives from the local Council of Mosques, a women's advisory group and the faith community liaison officer from the police. Events during IAW include open days at mosques across the borough. For those who may not go to a mosque, one innovative response was the "Mosque and the Marquee" event; this was a marquee in the centre of town that had posters about Islam inside as well as a model mosque. This, one interview argued, was aimed at "somebody who is just shopping in Walthamstow. They wouldn't normally have the opportunity to speak to an imam of a mosque, and it really did provide that communication and that dialogue". There were some community organisations that felt that the local authority's key role in supporting and facilitating IAW created a danger of dominating the organisation of events, and wanted to ensure that the local Muslim community had greater ownership of the event.

In 2011, the Coalition government published its revised "Prevent" strategy. The strategy recognised that there was a link between "Prevent" and cohesion, noting that "a stronger sense of 'belonging' and citizenship makes communities more resilient to terrorist ideology and propagandists".[70] The report indicated that around 40 per cent of "Prevent" funding given to local authorities was used for general cohesion and integration projects. The review recognises that "Prevent" requires successful

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[70] HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, London: Stationery Office, http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy, p. 27.

integration, and concludes that as a general rule "Prevent" and cohesion should remain distinct, and that "'Prevent' funding must not be used extensively for community interventions which have much wider social objectives."[71] This change in policy is now reflected in the administrative structures for the policy delivery of "Prevent", which is now based on the community safety team, with cohesion strategies located within community engagement areas. Thus, structurally the two policy areas of "Prevent" and cohesion are now in different parts of the local authority. Among some practitioners in Waltham Forest, there was real concern that the Coalition government's proposed refocusing of "Prevent" strategies at the hard edge of counter-terrorism intervention would make it far more challenging to gain community engagement and support.

There are also several projects that work across different faith communities, including support for capacity-building through intensive governance training. The aim is to develop the governance structure of faith community voluntary-sector organisations so that they can apply for funding. It also addresses issues such as the need for effective child protection policies in faith organisations that provide after-school teaching. The capacity-building programme involved a focus group discussion with the Council of Mosques and interviews with mosque officials. Through these discussions training needs were identified and an action plan was created for all mosques that identified areas for development. Mosques and other faith organisations were also given a toolkit on governance. For instance, support was given to three mosques for planning applications, fundraising and governance structures. There were also two workshops, one on fundraising and the other on IAW. An evaluation of the programme found that it had helped facilitate change in those mosques that were considering developing their capacities but did not know how to start. The report also identified the increased communication and interaction between the different mosques as a further benefit of this programme. Among the key weaknesses identified was the lack of time given to the project.[72]

Alongside IAW, the local authority ensures that events take place in the borough during Interfaith week through its support for the Interfaith Forum. In 2010, this included the screening of the film *The Imam and the Pastor*, which looks at the conflict resolution work of two religious leaders in Nigeria who had previously engaged in armed struggle against each other. Other events during the Interfaith week included a faith exchange involving the congregation of a church and a mosque visiting each other's place of worship and learning about their respective faiths. It was seen as a good way to create opportunities for people to have open discussion and dialogue about each other's faiths. Finally, one interview described the work undertaken by the local authority in respect of Holocaust Memorial Day, in which activities included looking at the role of Muslims in helping Jewish people escape from Germany and German-occupied parts of Europe.

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[71] HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, 2011, p. 30.

[72] *London Borough of Waltham Forest – Capacity Building Programme for Local Mosques 09/10: Evaluation Report,* London: The Local Governance Forum, 2010.

Although there is a range of cohesion projects that the practitioners involved identify as examples of best practice, there is also an acknowledgement of the challenges involved in measuring the success and impact of such projects. The linking of cohesion and "Prevent" work with faith institutions has meant that the engagement is mainly with men. Stakeholder interviews suggested that more needs to be done to engage with women in Muslim communities in relation to both integration and "Prevent".

5. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: EDUCATION

Education, especially in schools, is one of the most important pillars of integration. Schools contribute to integration by providing opportunities for interaction between pupils and parents of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Ethnically and culturally mixed environments from an early age nurture good relations and mutual understanding and help prevent the development of prejudiced views. The educational system provides the necessary qualifications and interpersonal skills for effective participation in the labour market. It plays a formative role in the socialisation of young people in the unspoken rules and values of society. It is therefore crucial that all children receive a valuable, enjoyable and equal learning experience.

This chapter begins with an overview of the profile of schools in Waltham Forest, including a look at the types of schools in the borough and data on the diversity of the student population and educational achievement across different groups. The chapter then explores how issues that arise from the religious and cultural diversity found in schools is addressed in different ways through the curriculum as well as through measures taken to accommodate religious diversity in schools. The chapter then looks at measures taken to improve educational achievement, particularly in encouraging and supporting pre-school learning opportunities. The final sections of this chapter examines the issues of harassment and bullying as well as the extremism and violence that arise in the educational environment.

5.1   Schools and Students in Waltham Forest

According to data from the Department for Education, in 2010 there were 87 schools in Waltham Forest attended by 39,920 pupils. The majority of pupils attended one of the 52 state primary schools or 15 secondary schools.[73] These state-funded primary and secondary schools include some that have a religious character. Of the 52 primary schools, six are Roman Catholic and four are Church of England. There is also one Roman Catholic secondary school. There are no state-funded Muslim schools in Waltham Forest, although there are four state-funded Muslim primary schools in London overall.

There are no data on the number of Muslim pupils in schools in Waltham Forest. However, there are data on the ethnic diversity of pupils in schools in London and

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[73]   The other schools were four nurseries, five special schools, three Pupil Referral Units, seven private schools and one academy. An academy is a school directly founded by the Department for Education and is not controlled by local governments. Academies are mostly secondary schools (aged 11-16) and are usually self-governing. Academies also accept private sponsorship.

Waltham Forest: see Tables 24 and 25. All data was derived from the Department for Education Research and Statistics Gateway.[74]

Table 24. Ethnic diversity of pupils in schools in London and Waltham Forest, by number of pupils

Ethnic group	Primary school		Secondary school	
	London	Waltham Forest	London	Waltham Forest
White British	158,370	3,541	161,690	3,798
Irish	3,770	82	4,130	92
Any other white background	50,640	2,264	38,160	1,825
White and black Caribbean	12,900	575	10,940	502
White and black African	5,570	213	4,200	132
White and Asian	6,670	195	5,150	156
Other mixed background	17,950	814	13,840	545
Indian	25,920	493	27,750	491
Pakistani	20,250	2,678	17,150	2,089
Bangladeshi	26,810	350	20,760	298
Chinese	3,240	70	3,560	70
Other Asian background	20,760	925	18,340	650
Travellers of Irish heritage	670	8	290	6
Gypsy/Roma	790	47	490	41
Any other ethnic group	25,340	610	22,510	360

Source: The Department for Education Research and Statistics Gateway, January 2010[75]

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[74] Department for Education Research and Statistics Gateway, available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000925/sfr09-2010lat.xls (accessed May 2012).

[75] *Ibid.*

	Number of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English	% of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English	Number of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be English	% of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be English	Unclassified	% Unclassified	Total number of pupils
Primary Schools							
England	518,020	16.0	2,707,240	83.8	4,830	0.1	3,230,090
London	218,150	44.6	269,580	55.1	1,460	0.3	489,180
Waltham Forest	8,417	50.7	8,043	48.4	150	0.9	16,610
Secondary Schools							
England	378,220	11.6	2,856,590	87.9	14,150	0.4	3,248,960
London	163,210	36.3	281,510	62.6	5,280	1.2	450,000
Waltham Forest	5,879	40.4	8,580	59.0	92	0.6	14,550

Source: The Department for Education Research and Statistics Gateway, January 2010[77]

In addition to the ethnic diversity of its student population, Waltham Forest also has a large number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The data from 2010 show that over half of the primary-school pupil population in Waltham Forest is believed to speak a first language that is not English, as compared with 44.6 per cent in London and 16 per cent in England. The secondary-school pupil population in Waltham Forest for this category is also higher than for London (36.3 per cent) and for England (11.6 per cent).

The percentage of pupils who receive free school meals is commonly used as an indicator to measure levels of poverty and deprivation. As Table 26 shows, the proportion of primary, secondary and special-school pupils that are eligible and receiving free school meals in Waltham Forest is on a par with London, which is considerably higher than for England. This is because two-thirds of all maintained

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[76] Pupils of compulsory school age and above were classified by first language, this includes City Technology Colleges and Academies. The number of pupils by their first language is expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils of compulsory school age and above. National and regional totals and totals across each local authority have been rounded to the nearest ten. There may be discrepancies between totals and the sum of constituent parts.

[77] Department for Education Research and Statistics Gateway, available at http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000925/sfr09-2010lat.xls (accessed May 2012).

primary and nursery schools in inner London have a higher proportion of their children eligible for free school meals, which is much higher than in any other region.

Table 26. Number and percentage of pupils eligible for and receiving free school meals in state-funded nursery, primary, secondary and special schools[78]

	Number on roll	Number of pupils taking free schools meals	% taking free school meals	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	% of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
Primary Schools					
England	4,134,160	621,320	15.0	717,060	17.3
London	652,230	141,620	21.7	158,200	34.3
Waltham Forest	22,587	4,693	20.8	5,230	23.2
Secondary Schools					
England	3,278,490	364,070	11.1	464,670	14.2
London	453,460	83,880	18.5	104,140	23.0
Waltham Forest	14,818	2,998	20.2	3,791	25.6
Special Schools					
England	91,820	26,560	28.9	30,600	33.3
London	11,920	4,290	36.0	4,970	41.7
Waltham Forest	674	205	30.4	253	37.5

Source: The Department for Education Research and Statistics Gateway, January 2010

5.2 Educational Achievement

In England, school results are reported against a benchmark of the number of pupils that achieve five qualifications graded from A*–C in exams taken at the end of compulsory schooling called GCSEs. For the year 2009–2010, all schools in Waltham Forest achieved above the national floor target of 35 per cent of pupils attaining five or more A*–C GCSE (or equivalent qualification) grades, including English and

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[78] Includes middle schools as indicated as well as full time and part time pupils who are sole or dual registrations, boarders, and students at city technology colleges and academies. The data excludes general hospital schools. National and regional totals have been rounded to the nearest ten. There may be discrepancies between totals and constituent parts. Number of pupils taking a free school meal is based on students present on the day of the census. Those eligible may choose not to take up their offer of a free school meal for various reasons, e.g., through preference or non-attendance on the day.

mathematics. No school achieved less than 37 per cent, with a Waltham Forest average of 50.9 per cent. Although this is below the national average of 53.4 per cent, this marks an increase in the achievement over the past decade and a significant narrowing of the gap with the national average. See Figure 2.

Figure 2. GCSE and equivalent results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 (5+ A*–C grades including English and mathematics GCSEs),[79] 2005/2006–2009/2010

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
England	45.6	46.3	47.6	49.8	53.4
London	45.8	48.0	50.7	54.0	58.0
Waltham Forest	38.6	42.1	44.2	46.0	50.9
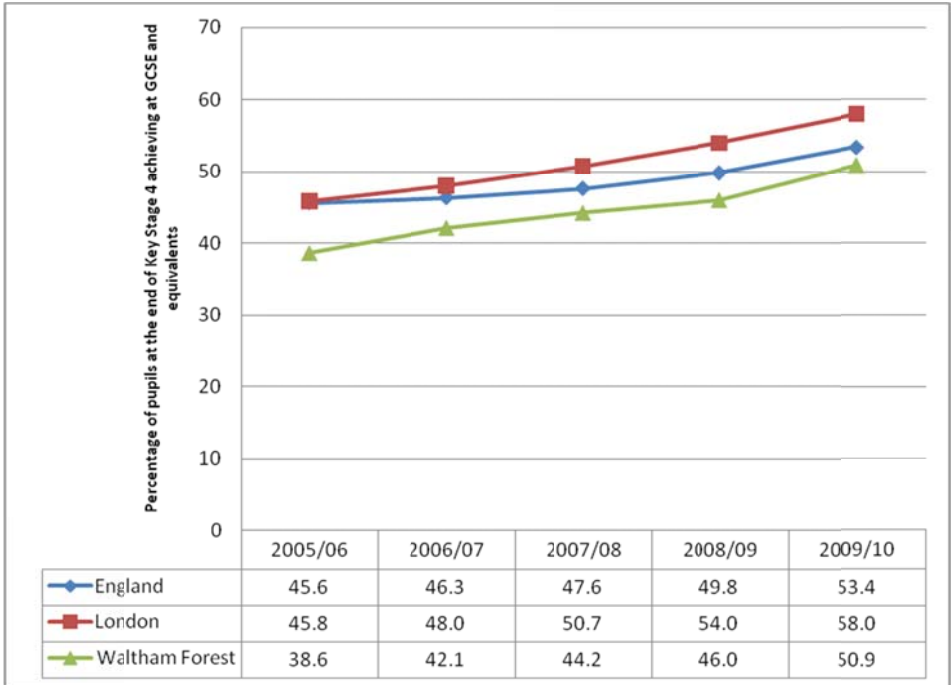
Source: Department for Education, Research and Statistics Gateway, January 2010

Data on educational attainment are not disaggregated by religion; however, there are data showing that the overall attainment data conceals differences across different ethnic groups.

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[79] Department for Education, Research and Statistics Gateway. See table 17 of tables 7–17 at www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000985/sfr01-2011t7-17.xls (accessed November 2011).

Figure 3. Achievements at GCSE and equivalent for pupils[80] at the end of Key Stage 4 by ethnicity (state-funded schools, including academies and City Technology Colleges*(CTCs)), 2005/2006–2009/2010 (provisional)[81]
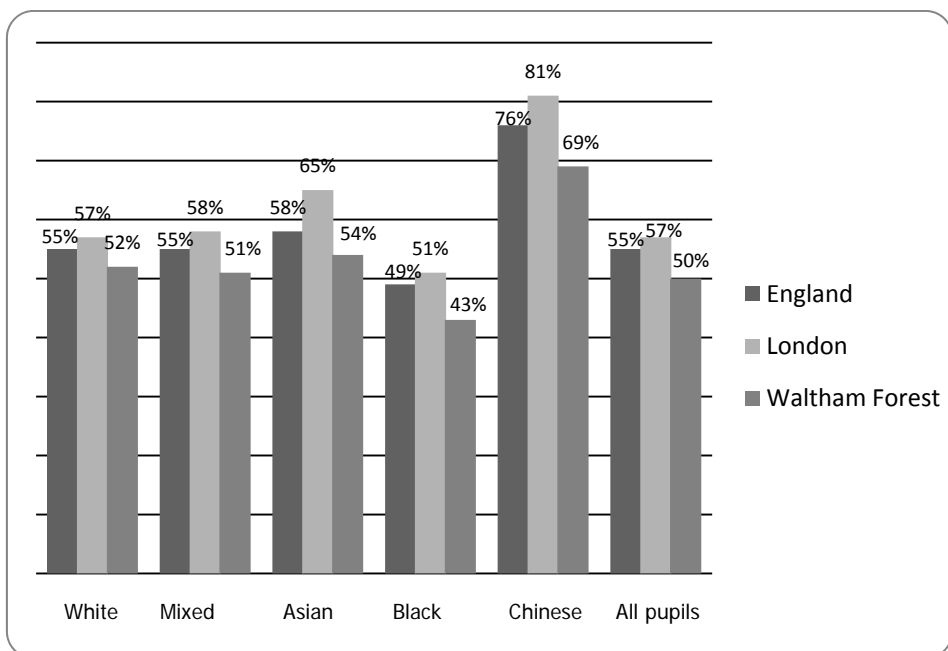
Source: Department for Education, Research and Statistics Gateway, January 2010

As Figure 3 shows, Chinese and Asian groups are performing better than other ethnic categories in England, London and Waltham Forest, and that all ethnic categories are performing less well in Waltham Forest in comparison with England and London. The Council's policy statements outline its plans to increase the educational achievement levels of pupils from ethnic-minority groups.[82] The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted, a non-ministerial government department) annual performance assessment of Waltham Forest's service for children and young

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[80] Pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in each academic year.

[81] Department for Education, Research and Statistics Gateway, available at www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000977/SFR37_2010.xls (accessed November 2011). Figures for 2005–2006 to 2008–2009 are based on final data; 2009–2010 figures are based on provisional data. In 2010, GCSEs, accredited at time of publication, have been counted as GCSE equivalents and also as English & Mathematics iGCSEs (internationally recognised qualifications for pupils aged 14-16). Includes pupils of any other ethnic group, also those pupils for whom ethnicity was not obtained, refused, or could not be determined.

[82] Waltham Forest Council, *Corporate Equality Plan 2007–2010*, 2007, p. 8, available at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/corporate-equality-plan-2007-10.pdf (accessed November 2011).

people singled out for praise for the high numbers of 16–18-year-olds from minority groups integrated into education and training.[83]

Interviews with stakeholders indicate that one of the groups of greatest concern in terms of educational under-achievement are pupils from gypsy and traveller communities. In 2002, a report for the London Borough of Waltham Forest by the Traveller Education Service identified a number of significant problems in the lives of gypsy and traveller communities, of which poor attainment and attendance levels in school and the large number of children dropping out of education in years seven and eight were important.[84] The 2002 report recommended that priority be given to developing the work of agencies involved with gypsy and traveller communities in Waltham Forest and the outreach work of the Traveller Education Service.

5.3   Satisfaction with Schools

The Foundations' questionnaire asked respondents about their satisfaction with local schools and youth service provision. The majority of both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents were "very" or "fairly satisfied" with their local primary and secondary schools but were significantly less satisfied about youth service provision. See Tables 27–29.

Table 27. Satisfaction with primary schools

	Muslims	Non-Muslims
Very satisfied	19	16
Fairly satisfied	44	38
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	13
Fairly dissatisfied	7	2
Very dissatisfied	5	1
Don't know	17	30
Total	**100**	**100**

Source: Open Society Foundations

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[83]   J. Winstanley, *Annual Performance Assessment of Services for Children and Young People in the London Borough of Waltham Forest 2008*, Ofsted, London, 2008, p. 5. Letter to Chris Kieran, London Borough of Waltham Forest. Available at
https://democracy.walthamforest.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=8263.

[84]   London Gypsy and Traveller Unit (LGTU), *An Assessment of the Needs of Children from Traveller and Gypsy Communities in Waltham Forest,* A report by the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit, commissioned by Waltham Forest Children's Fund Partnership Board. Researched and compiled by Debby Kennett, October 2002, available at www.lgtu.org.uk/publications/Microsoft%20W ord%20%20needs%20assessement%20final%20report%202.pdf (accessed November 2011) (hereafter LGTU, *Needs Assessment).*

Table 28. Satisfaction with secondary schools

	Muslims	Non-Muslims
Very satisfied	16	14
Fairly satisfied	46	29
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11	17
Fairly dissatisfied	7	3
Very dissatisfied	5	3
Don't know	15	34
Total	**100**	**100**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 29. Satisfaction with youth services

	Muslims	Non-Muslims
Very satisfied	1	4
Fairly satisfied	27	14
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20	17
Fairly dissatisfied	18	24
Very dissatisfied	18	21
Don't know	16	20
Total	**100**	**100**

Source: Open Society Foundations

5.3.1   Curriculum Content

A senior teacher emphasised that the curriculum "has a huge effect on the ethos around school, the way that our school community bonds and gels". In the UK, local authority maintained schools work within a prescribed national curriculum. Reflecting the national approach to state education in the UK, state-funded schools in Waltham Forest try to teach classes and activities that are inclusive and which treat all pupils as equals. The teacher explained:

> We don't particularly focus on any one group. A lot of our projects and other activities that we run, and opportunities for kids, are not based on one particular ethnic or religious group, but we do run things which will involve a majority of those groups at one point or another as well as those things that are across the board and involve everybody.

Community cohesion and diversity topics form part of the study of Religious Education (RE), History, and Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE). The

national school curriculum is able to include the contributions from different cultures and faiths to maths, science and the arts. Different faiths, ethnicities and cultures are examined in the subject of citizenship. An experienced senior teacher described the aims of the citizenship course:

> It's about awareness of different cultures, different religions, different ethnic groups. It's about awareness of what pupils' families actually go through, what refugees and asylum seekers will go through in terms of coming into the country; it's about the democratic process in our country and how they can have an impact on that; it's about knowing your rights and what to do if you feel that something is not being done properly by the standing government, how to get in touch with your councillor; and yes, it's absolutely huge in terms of what they actually learn about, all really relevant aspects of your place in society.

Those working in schools in Waltham Forest feel that community cohesion, diversity and mutual understanding are issues that are considered "on a regular weekly if not daily basis within school". The majority of Muslim parents in the focus group discussions welcomed teaching about different faiths.

The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Interviewees pointed to the instrumental role of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)[85] and the Faith and Values Framework in supporting schools in the inclusion and study of different faiths and cultures in the delivery of the national curriculum.

The SACRE is responsible in UK law for advising local education authorities on religious education and collective worship. There are over 100 SACREs in England and Wales. Each SACRE is composed of four representative groups (three in Wales): Christian and other religious denominations, the Church of England (except in Wales), teachers' associations and elected councillors. In Waltham Forest, SACRE has representation from all major religious groups, including humanists. Interviewees felt that the SACRE in Waltham Forest was very active and effective:

> Our SACRE has been really good in terms of relations, and relations between the different communities and how they are transferred into the schools, resulting in a really good syllabus around religious education that reflects all of the different groups.

In Waltham Forest, the SACRE developed a Faith and Values Framework, which is considered to demonstrate "excellent work with faith communities", that is, informing understanding between various religions, sex and relationships work as well as

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[85] See www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/education/schools-colleges/sacre.htm (accessed November 2011); www.babcockwf.co.uk/templates/ld_templates/layout_300126.aspx?ObjectId=301665 (accessed November 2011); and www.faithcommunities.org.uk/new/Links.html (accessed November 2011).

contributing to community cohesion.[86] As part of this framework, SACRE produced a statement that was agreed to and signed by its key local representatives from each major faith group in order to guide schools on delivering religious education, and for challenging prejudice in all its forms. The statement gave permission for parents to involve their children in sex education and stated the universal rejection of any form of discrimination against any group in terms of learning in the curriculum:

> So when parents were coming in to say that "We don't know how the mosque deals with this,", teachers are able to respond by saying, "You don't need to feel that you should take your child out of this education programme because the mosque has signed up to this statement of values." It has been really well received by schools as a tool for understanding.

The guiding principles document, accompanied by a DVD, is a support tool for parents, and it is used at parents' evenings at schools. It represents a series of interviews with children speaking about the consequences of not being able to learn about these subjects, and highlighting the outcomes of not having a good grounding in Sex and Relationship Education (SRE).

Overall, it was felt that much parental concern could be remedied by clearly communicating to them what SRE actually involved:

> There was also an issue in that there are so many myths around what was being taught. So I think that there were lots of families who thought that kids were going to see porn in year two, so it was about saying exactly what is taught in sex education and relationship education, putting an emphasis on the relationships element rather than the sex element, because before secondary school, they are not learning about intercourse so much, they are learning about puberty, how to develop as a person, so it was really highlighting that to the groups.

However, there are always conflicting moral outlooks, as these two focus group participant responses illustrate:

> If you ask regarding primary school education, it is not like it used to be. Their focus is on other types of education. Even little children will talk about pregnancy and periods. I mean they are so advanced!

> We were raised in Pakistan and according to our religion, we learn everything too but we learn according to our age, step by step. For example, under-age children discuss such big things in front of adults. There is no more respect. They don't even feel like it's a bad thing; the school should teach them

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86 Ofsted, *Joint Area Review (JAR) Report for Waltham Forest*, 2008, p 8, available at http://www.ofs ted.eu/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/waltham_forest/007_Joint%20Area %20Review%20-%20Main%20report%20as%20pdf.pdf and www.walthamforest.gov.uk/wfsacre2009-annualreport.pdf (accessed November 2011).

according to their age. They show us that they are teaching according to their age but they don't do it how we want it.

In Waltham Forest, two Muslim school governors launched a campaign accusing SRE of sexualising children.[87] Their report called for SRE to shift its emphasis from preventing teenage pregnancy and STDs to disbursing moral guidance which sought to deter early sexual relations in the first place.[88]

An Independent Review launched in consultation with faith groups following a government proposal in 2008 to make PSHE a statutory component of the curriculum detailed the tensions and moral ambivalence here. Although it advocated that it be made mandatory for all students, it also reaffirmed parents' rights to withdraw their children from the SRE programme and suggested that the curriculum should be tailored to suit the ethos and the values of the individual school at the governing body's discretion.[89]

The complexity and challenges of teaching sensitive subjects were emphasised by an incident at one primary school where a number of parents (not exclusively Muslim) withdrew their children from a series of lessons on, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) history. "We prefer to teach the children these issues ourselves and it is too early to learn about these issues," explained one parent, who continued:

> We didn't know how detailed the lessons were going to be and were merely given some information about what the terms of sexual behaviour involved between these groups of people (is called), so that's even more concerning as it's a bit more detailed than we'd thought.[90]

However, a council spokesperson emphasised the efforts made to consult and inform parents:

> Parents were invited to meet with teachers and governors several weeks ago to discuss what work would be taking place throughout the national LGBT History Month, and how this work would be delivered.[91]

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[87] Available at http://sreislamic.wordpress.com (accessed November 2011).

[88] F. Khodabaksh and Y. Patel, *Sex and Relationship Education: a Muslim Community Perspective*, 2009, p. 6, available at http://sreislamic.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/sre_v3_january_new.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[89] London Borough of Waltham Forest, Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, minutes of meeting on Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Waltham Forest Schools, 2009, p. 21. Available at https://democracy.walthamforest.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=9445 (accessed April 2012)

[90] BBC News, "Action on Tolerance Class Absence", 7 March 2009. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/7930063.stm (accessed November 2011).

[91] BBC News, "Action on Tolerance Class Absence", 7 March 2009. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/7930063.stm (accessed November 2011).

The incident illustrates the challenges for any school and particularly for schools in such multicultural and diverse communities as Waltham Forest, in seeking to ensure the equal inclusion of a broad spectrum of identities, views and values. The efforts made to accommodate the values of all communities and groups were recognised in the nomination of Waltham Forest for the Public Service Awards operated by the national newspaper *The Guardian*.[92]

5.4   Accommodating Religious Diversity

Schools in Waltham Forest also respect diversity through customised school uniforms for different cultures and religions as well as marking different religious and cultural holidays and events:

> We have a policy of closures for each of the main religious holidays for the significant communities within the population. So there is closure for Eid, because obviously Eid is not a fixed date, and is determined by the locality of the mosque, and so within that, there is some flexibility for them to work with their mosque leader to determine the actual dates of closure for Eid. So it's further differentiated even within the Muslim communities in this borough.

At the time of the research interviews, new guidance for this through SACRE (see below) had been drafted and agreed, but was not yet publicly available.

> There is also closure for Guru Nanak's birthday and Diwali, and all students get those days off, because yes, they are religious holidays, but they are actually also community celebrations in our view. And many of our schools actually celebrate each and every one of those holidays in a way that the whole school community celebrates it together. The students who are believers then have the opportunity to do their religious observance separately within their family and community, but it is also celebrated within the school community.

Schools and colleges across Waltham Forest demonstrate a number of other examples of good practice in respecting the needs of Muslim students, including the provision of *halal* food and dedicated facilities such as prayer rooms.

The positive impact of these measures accommodating religious diversity was reflected in the results of the Foundations survey, which show that the majority of both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents felt that schools did respect the needs of different religious groups; 68 per cent of Muslim respondents felt that schools sufficiently respect religious customs although 17 per cent felt they do too little. See Table 30.

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[92]   Regarding London Borough of Waltham Forest's strategy on LGBT, see London Borough of Waltham Forest, *LGBT Study: Priority Outcomes and Action Plan,* February 2011 Update, available at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/lgbt_study_response_plan_jan_2011_update.doc (accessed November 2011).

Table 30. Do schools respect different religious customs?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims
Too much	2	7
About right	68	59
Too little	17	7
Don't know	13	27
Total	**100**	**100**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Focus group participants were also positive about efforts made by schools to accommodate the religious needs of Muslim pupils in relation to food, uniform and religious holidays. According to a participant in one of the older Muslim women's focus groups, schools allowed volunteers to provide RE classes during the lunch period for students who were fasting during Ramadan.

> I personally think this area is very flexible because there are prayer rooms everywhere and the staff respect you. I also like the fact that they accommodate religious dress codes into their uniform.

However, another commented:

> I don't agree with schools giving so many holidays for every religion. It gets to be too much.

A similar concern was highlighted by a non-Muslim survey respondent:

> All religious customs should be treated the same. A Muslim boy gets an extra holiday for Eid and also on Christmas. But the Christian students only get Christmas holidays and not for any other special days of different faiths.

This parent's concern was also echoed by other school staff members in the borough, highlighting the lack of guidance or response from the council about the approach to marking religious holidays such as Eid. Other schools, however, did not regard this issue as problematic and exercised discretion in how they marked such events.

The reduction in educational funding that schools are experiencing was inevitably having a knock-on impact on the range of extracurricular activities that schools are able to offer and engage in, including the celebration of the ethnic and cultural diversity of schools:

> Next year, I really have no idea whether the Eid project, the Eid Festival will run because I don't know whether it can be funded. The groups that come in and do the black history month workshops, can we afford to fund them next year? I don't know. But these are the kind of things that we are going to have to start to look at, and that's a real shame.

A main concern in education centred on more general worries about the need for more resources for all pupils.

5.5   Pre-school, Early Learning and the Home Learning Environment

Research demonstrates the importance of the combined impact of good pre-school, early learning and home learning environments.[93] These are particularly essential for children from minority or marginalised groups, especially where English is not their first language or the first language of their parents. Such children can find themselves at a disadvantage from the start of their schooling, with language difficulties affecting their ability to gain as much from education as other pupils. It will also have a detrimental impact on their ability to integrate into the school community. However, in the right educational environment, additional languages skills can be an asset. The Effective Pre-school and Primary Education 3-11 Project (EPPE 3-11) emphasises the need for national and local policies to support parents in providing a rich home learning environment, with sustained opportunities for learning during everyday family activities.

In stakeholder interviews references were made to measures taken in Waltham Forest to ensure that children in marginalised and deprived communities gain these benefits. It was argued that this requires good outreach work combined with initiatives that can encourage the consent and participation of parents. Parents from marginalised and new communities may need to be educated about the importance of pre-school and early learning.

One initiative that has been highlighted in interviews is the Community Learning and Skills Service (CLaSS),[94] which is said to have developed the trust of local communities and played an important role in encouraging the inclusion of parents in the education of their children, as well as encouraging participation in adult learning courses in marginalised communities. Such adult leaning is integral to the ability of parents to help their children with their education and helps parents share in the educational experiences of their children. It can also open the way for better employment opportunities and inclusion in the broader community.

Local nursery and primary schools work closely with CLaSS to run free courses in their schools which help parents help their children with their homework and support their learning. The key to success in the outreach work of CLaSS is considered to be the close support of community centres, teachers and home-school liaison officers. For example, one local school and children's centre, with a high proportion of pupils from

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[93]   The Effective Pre-school and Primary Education 3-11 Project (EPPE 3-11), *A Longitudinal Study Funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (2003–2008),* Principal Investigators Kathy Sylva, Edward Melhuish, Pam Sammons, Iram Siraj-Blatchford and Brenda Taggart, available at http://eppe.ioe.ac.uk/eppe3-11/eppe3-11pubs.htm (accessed November 2011).

[94]   See www.walthamforestclass.gov.uk (accessed November 2011).

ethnic-minority backgrounds and of pupils who speak English as an additional language, has worked with CLaSS to "open parents' minds, promote and recruit, and open new areas of learning". The EPPE research suggests that involving parents in the education of their children is particularly important in schools with such a demographic, and will help both parents and their children develop English-language skills. To reach such parents, representatives of CLaSS put up information stands in schools to promote and provide CLaSS taster courses for parents, shared activities for parents and children at the school's fete, diversity day and at culture-related events.

One stakeholder explained that parents' involvement in one class can lead to enrolling in others, thereby developing their learning and inclusion. For instance, a parent may initially be interested in a non-accredited course or activity, such as sewing, but once involved and part of the learning environment, may move on to accredited courses. The activities, workshops and courses facilitate parents meeting each other, and information feedback to neighbours, colleagues and other family members. An example of such progression to further learning was the introduction of ICT level 1 computer classes with qualification for parents, provided free through "Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities" (NLDC) funding for a centre which is also a venue for a broad range of other courses, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Level 1 beauty and nail art, food and safety, money management. strengthening communities, and digital photography. The centre's services include the Every Child Matters (ECM) programme and positive parenting, pre-employment and family workshops, a parents' and carers' forum, a free advice surgery, a community forum group, a knit and chat group, a sewing group, and a cafe where mothers can breast-feed.[95] Classes such as those in free digital photography may not seem directly related to education or employment, but they are seen as useful for encouraging and helping parents to share experiences and learn with their children.

To support outreach and participation, CLaSS works with schools and community organisations. Details of individuals who may be interested in courses are sent to the curriculum adviser for each course. Information about courses is disseminated through education and children's centres websites, and regular advertisements in the free Waltham Forest newsletter that all borough residents receive. Brochures and prospectuses are also placed in community centres, councillors' surgeries and the refugee advice centre. CLaSS representatives also attend key borough events, such as Leyton Day (an event organised by the LB of Waltham Forest), the Car Free Day and the Waltham Forest Mela (festival). Demonstrations by tutors have also been given at the Priory Court Family Day and the Beaumont estate local family fun day, organised by London Quadrant Housing.

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[95] See www.barclaychildrencentre.org/events.htm (accessed November 2011).

5.6   Involvement in School Governance

The importance of parents' involvement in their children's education was also one of the key points raised by many young people in the focus groups. Schoolteachers felt that stronger engagement from parents would have a positive impact on their children's achievement. Both focus group participants and stakeholder interviewees noted the difficulty of achieving diversity on governing boards. Some of the reasons advanced for the low levels of engagement by parents included a lack of confidence, limited English language and a poor understanding of the educational system in general.

> In the borough you will find more than 60–70 per cent of the children are Muslim. But if you look at the governance of the schools maybe 10 per cent of the governing body might be Muslim. I personally have been in the governing body of a school for over 10 years, I have tried so hard to bring in Muslims and do the work on behalf of the school governance to make life easier for the children but they always try to withdraw from that.

While older immigrant Muslims' lack of familiarity with the educational system was a barrier, others noted that the number of British-born Muslims on school governing boards was still very low. The difficulty of achieving diversity was also expressed by another stakeholder:

> We do everything in our power to encourage people to step forward and become governors. Actually it's very hard to get people to step forward and become governors in many cases. I am a head teacher myself, and I am struggling to get representation from a good cross-section of the population on my governing body, and that's simply because there is not perhaps as much collective will as we would like.

Despite this difficulty, it was felt by others that many schools in Waltham Forest managed to achieve a good representation of the local community in their governance structures:

> I would say that in the governing body meetings that I go to, there always appears to be a cross-section of ethnic parents represented. I don't think we collect data on the ethnicity of governors on governing boards; we just try and get good governors. I go to quite a lot of governing body meetings and I can honestly say that they always appear to be quite mixed as far as I can see.

What was uncertain was whether this reluctance to volunteer as a governor was particular to people of Muslim background or just something which one might typically find in more deprived areas. There is some evidence to suggest that "if you are in a more deprived neighbourhood, you are less likely to volunteer for posts that are perceived to be around education". One suggestion was for that the diversity data of school governing bodies should be collected and examined to explore whether people from certain minority or faith backgrounds were not participating.

5.7   Harassment and Bullying

The LB of Waltham Forest has put a great emphasis on clamping down on all forms of harassment at schools, including religious harassment.[96] The council collects data from schools on all reported incidents, which are recorded and categorised according to different types of bullying, including bullying based on ethnicity, faith, special education needs, sexuality and hygiene. After the anti-terrorism arrests in the area in 2006 there was particular concern about the potential for anti-Muslim bullying and many schools paid attention to signs of this occurring. However, very few instances of anti-Muslim bullying were picked up by parents in focus groups:

> I think after we had the arrests in Waltham Forest, there was a perception among young people that there was Islamophobia in the borough, and we did a lot of monitoring around that. It doesn't come up in the same way now. I also feel that in Waltham Forest, we have a really strong mobilised Muslim community; I don't feel in any way that in schools, Muslim kids are marginalised. In fact, in some of the schools, they are a very strong voice.

There was however a recognition that further efforts may be needed in identifying particular forms of bullying.

> Even if it is faith related, it may not manifest itself in that way. So it could be that a young person is being verbally attacked because he is Muslim, but you know, it's packaged in another way. It's really difficult for schools to actually identify what type of bullying is happening.

Interviewees who were involved in bullying and issues of safety in Waltham Forest considered instances of bullying relating to faith to be low. They found other forms of bullying such as those based on homophobia to be more frequent. As one interviewee explained:

> In the last two years, we have done a lot around homophobia because a lot of schools have felt that's a big issue for them. I think so many schools in London would say that their school is not a safe place for kids to come out before the age of 18. Unfortunately, that is still where we are at in society.

In response to this, a number of LGBT projects have been developed. For example, schools in Waltham Forest have performed drama productions which have focused on homophobia. At the suggestion of pupils at one school, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was reworked to feature two male lovers.[97] The production attracted the attention of the English actor, Sir Ian McKellen, who came to the school for the dress rehearsal and became involved by providing a small workshop for the pupils to help them with their performance. This alternative version was performed as part of the Shakespeare Schools Festival. At this event, pupils from four secondary schools in the borough also spoke

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[96]   London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest Community Cohesion Strategy*, p. 5.

[97]   See http://news.pinkpaper.com/NewsStory.aspx?id=242 (accessed May 2012).

about the work that they were doing to promote inclusion and prevent and tackle all forms of bullying. The event and the work of the schools in promoting equality and diversity was acknowledged by the LGBT advocacy group, Stonewall.[98]

Several schools in the borough were also involved in working on a production of the *Laramie Project*, which is a play that uses a series of interviews to depict the reaction of the community in the town of Laramie to the murder of Matthew Shepard, a young, gay student at the University of Wyoming in October 1998. The play follows the events leading up to Matthew's killing and the trial of his killers. It mixes real news reports with actors portraying friends, family, police, perpetrators and other Laramie residents in their own words. The school's production was eventually performed in one of London's West End theatres after a theatre, the Drill Hall,[99] provided their venue free of charge. One of the production's organizers said, "It was great. These kids who were really excited to be performing in a community hall, ended up going to the West End."

One interviewee closely involved in the project considered the significance of the involvement of Muslim pupils in the production:

> I just feel that was quite ahead of its game in so many ways. We have young Muslim kids who have spoken about their involvement, and I felt that was really positive. We sold 300 tickets for that performance. The most amazing thing was that three of the kids were Muslim. That was something that we would have never expected, because it is so easy to say that Islam and sexuality, and especially homosexuality, are not compatible in any way. But there is this new generation of kids who are actually saying it's about human rights and we are going to be involved.

5.8   Extremism and Violence

Violent extremism and terrorism became a significant problem for schools in Waltham Forest after the arrests of a number of young people in the borough in 2006. As one interviewee noted:

> There were so many kids who knew the people who were arrested, the people arrested were so young, they were 18 to 19, early 20s. The schools had their cousins, their sisters, their brothers in their classes. There was a perception that we needed to do something quite sensitively.

Most of those working in schools in the local area felt apprehensive about implementing policies in such a sensitive area. There was concern that the focus on

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[98]   Waltham Forest Magazine (*WFM)*, issue 44, 23 February 2009, p. 7, available at http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/wfm44.pdf (wrong name of school used, apology given in later publication) (accessed November 2011).

[99]   See www.drillhall.co.uk/pl374.html (accessed November 2011).

Muslims as a group would add to tensions and alienation. It was feared that the "Prevent" focus on Muslims could reinforce perceptions that they were a homogenous (and threatening) group, which could be counterproductive for developing community cohesion, and impossible when delivering the national curriculum and seeking to provide education for all. Several interviewees indicated that there was now a recognition that the work on extremism needed to move beyond a focus on Al-Qaeda extremism to include far-right and other forms of political extremism.

> There was so much emphasis put on inclusion of Islamic groups after the arrests, and with all of the "Prevent" funding coming through. A couple of our schools, when they got their Ofsted for cohesion, it was a case of the inspector saying, "Fine, but what are you doing for white, British groups?" Because you have so many initiatives here for inclusion of other groups, but the white working class seems to have been completely neglected, so its swings and roundabouts, isn't it? I have felt a difference this year in terms of focus.

When teachers were consulted about what they thought were the contentious issues that needed to be dealt with in a really safe environment in schools, many felt that this new generation of post-9/11 children were affected by different concerns, such as the far right:

> The real interest from the teachers was on the far right. And I think that the issues at that time were particularly around immigration-based comments, such as "Why are all these people coming to our borough? How can we do something about it, my parents hate that, all of these Polish people are here." Those are the comments they were struggling with rather than anti-Western comments. The whole PVE (Preventing Violent Extremism) ethos seemed to be suggesting that there is a massive anti-Western pro-Islam movement. There are elements of that of course, but I don't think it was infiltrating into the classrooms as much as there was evidence to suggest. It didn't feel that way in our borough. I had kids in year 7 asking "What was 9/11?" It was really interesting because it almost felt like we have a new generation, because it was 10 years ago. So you have got eight– and ten-year-old kids, for whom 9/11 is probably something they have heard of, but they didn't live through it. I may as well have been talking to them about the troubles in Ireland.

More recent work on supporting teachers in addressing issues around extremism appears to be responding to these concerns. For example, the project "Learning Together to be Safe" trained staff to address a range of different forms of extremism, including not only al-Qaeda related extremism but also far-right extremism.

Local concern over violent behaviour is increasingly related to gang culture and knife crime:

> From a borough priority point of view, we are very keen on tackling extremist behaviour, but not necessarily of a religious disposition. Our extreme behaviour

in the borough is gang-related, and that again involves predominantly young men from many faith backgrounds. It's actually defined by postcode as opposed to who you believe is your god. The real issues here are actually much more to do with tribal identifiers, and I say that advisably, around gang culture, and that does involve Muslim boys.

Interviews with practitioners indicate that gang and knife crime have been the focus of youth-led projects that mobilise young people to work on what are considered to be contentious issues or matters of local concern.

One project was with young primary-school pupils identified as being vulnerable to gang culture and knife crime. The eight- and nine-year-old pupils interviewed a youth who had been stabbed, the father of a victim of a stabbing and an A&E doctor who had dealt with knife crime victims. Informed by these interviews, they produced a series of documentaries that highlighted all the consequences that they felt their peers needed to know about. This project has now been introduced into all of the primary schools in Waltham Forest, providing teachers with a booklet for six weeks of material that they can teach.

6. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: EMPLOYMENT

Employment patterns are a compelling gauge of the relative standing of different groups in society, detailing not only their level of economic well-being but also the strength of their integration into the mainstream economy and the predominant labour activities they engage in. Poor employment prospects are perhaps the most clearly discernible symptom of social disadvantage, be it racial, religious, geographic or otherwise.

6.1 Muslims and the Labour Market

The government has long recognised the linkages connecting underperformance in the labour market to ethnic minorities and deprived areas across the country, and tailored its policies accordingly. Religious identity, however, has only recently begun to be factored in as a significant dimension. Part of the problem is that, as in other policy areas, the effect of religious identity on employment opportunities is difficult to distinguish from the challenges confronted by ethnic minorities in general, regardless of their religious outlook. Many of the barriers Muslims face are common to most ethnic minorities: geographic modernisation, limited education and training opportunities, discrimination and constrained choices in the job market.

The national census has been a useful tool for capturing the experiences of different faith groups. For the first time, the 2001[100] Census collected data on religion, therefore enabling comparison of the employment experiences of different faith groups. While for some time now data have recorded the employment disadvantages experienced by Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, analysis of the 2001 Census data on religion suggests that Muslims in other ethnic categories are in a similar position. Compared to other faith groups, Muslims have the highest unemployment and economic inactivity rates and the lowest employment levels. Analysis of this data led Berthoud and Blekesaune to suggest that for some groups "religion rather than ethnicity is the characteristic associated with employment disadvantage".[101] A cross-referencing of ethnicity and religion showed that "when investigating religious groups within different ethnic groups, we find that all Muslim groups are in a disadvantageous employment position irrespective of which ethnic group they belong to".[102] Thus, the employment penalty faced by Indian Muslims was greater than that of Indian Hindus, Sikhs and Christians.

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[100] Office for National Statistics, *Census 2001*, available at http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/census-2001/index.html.

[101] R. Berthoud and M. Blekesaune, *Persistent Employment Disadvantage*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 416, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, 2007, p. 72. (hereafter Berthoud and Blekesaune, *Persistent Employment Disadvantage*).

[102] Berthoud and Blekesaune, *Persistent Employment Disadvantage*, p. 76.

When comparing across minority groups, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims experience a greater employment penalty than Caribbean or black African Christians.

A correlation between British Muslims and greater underperformance in the job market has been posited by some as a "Muslim penalty".[103] Clarke and Drinkwater find "some evidence that, controlling for other factors, Muslims have lower employment rates than individuals with another, or indeed no, religion". However, they argue that the close correlation between religion and ethnicity for some ethnic groups makes it difficult to separate the influences of ethnicity and religion. Furthermore, "it may be tradition, rather than religious belief *per se*, that influences attitudes to female labour force participation and childcare". They argue that it could be "misleading to label behaviour, such as presumably voluntary adherence to a particular religion, as a cause of economic disadvantage".[104]

6.2 Employment in Waltham Forest

Any discussion of the labour market experience of Muslims in Waltham Forest needs to be located in the wider context of the changes that are taking place in employment in the area. Population change has had a significant impact on employment in Waltham Forest. The overall population has not increased at the rate of many neighbouring boroughs, but it has become younger and more ethnically diverse, reflecting changes in modes of employment. There has been much migration, with an older population leaving and a younger population arriving.

This younger generation of workers has also resulted from migration from outside the UK. Most of the international migrants that settled in Waltham Forest have been from South Asia, the Caribbean and more recently, from South and West Africa. Stakeholder interviewees who work on labour market issues suggest that poor skill levels, a low propensity for women to work, combined with discriminatory behaviour by employers, have all resulted in low employment rates among the first generation of arrivals in the 1960s and 1970s. More recently, there has also been a large influx of migrant workers from eastern Europe and from southern hemisphere countries, such as South Africa and Australia.

There is a lack of comprehensive and accurate data to measure the size of such migrant workforces. However, in its "Strategy for Enterprise, Employment and Skills 2009-14", the LB of Waltham Forest Council uses statistics derived from the recorded numbers of

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[103] Open Society Institute, *Muslims in the UK: Policies for Engaged Citizens*, Open Society Institute, Budapest, 2004, pp. 221–223, available at www.soros.org/initiatives/home/articles_publications/publications/muslims_20041122 (accessed November 2011) (hereafter OSI, *Muslims in the UK*).

[104] K. Clarke and S. Drinkwater, *Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market: Dynamics and Diversity*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, 2007, p. 48.

non-UK nationals allocated National Insurance Numbers.[105] Using this data source, which can only provide a partial picture, it is estimated that there were 9,680 registered foreign workers residing in Waltham Forest in the year to May 2007. This figure represents approximately 7 per cent of the borough's adult population, which is higher than the London average (5 per cent), comparable with Haringey (also 7 per cent) and significantly more than the adjoining borough, Enfield (3 per cent only). Of this population, almost a half is from eastern Europe. Other than Haringey, no other borough in London has such a high proportion of its National Insurance registered foreign workers from eastern European countries. Waltham Forest is also the London borough with the third-highest number of registered foreign workers from South Africa.[106]

The population changes and migration patterns found in the borough reflect the restructuring of the local economy over the years. This restructuring has involved the closure of factories and consequent dislocation of semi-skilled blue-collar employment. Many local people who worked in these industries decided to migrate out of Waltham Forest. A new younger population, drawn predominantly from overseas, replaced some of the older generations, creating the highly diverse neighbourhoods that characterise the central and south of the borough today.

The borough's cheap and flexible housing tenures and the availability of family-sized housing have also attracted people to Waltham Forest. Other pull factors have been good standards of schooling, as compared with inner London boroughs, and good transport access to central London. The early 1980s also saw the arrival of many younger, well-qualified people drawn to the borough. In contrast to the inward migration from overseas, this younger and more affluent population was often educated to university degree level and employed in professional and associate professional occupations.[107]

In 2011, the employment rate in Waltham Forest was 69.3 per cent; there were 110,900 employed working-age (aged 16–64) people. This is just above both the London average (68.1 per cent) and just below the national average (70.2 per cent). The economic inactivity rate was 22.2 per cent (34,800 people), which was lower than London (25 per cent) and nationally (23.8 per cent). The unemployment rate in the

[105] Department for Work and Pensions, *National Insurance Number Allocations to Overseas Nationals Entering the UK,* 2007. Statistics are available and updated at http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/niall/index.php?page=nino_allocation (accessed July 2008). 2006 and 2007 publications have been removed from the sites of 21 August 2008.

[106] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest's Strategy for Enterprise*, pp. 55–56.

[107] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest's Strategy for Enterprise*, p. 51.

borough was 10.5 per cent, higher than the unemployment rate in London (9.1 per cent) and the national average (7.7 per cent).[108]

In terms of unemployment, there were 9,950 individuals in the borough who were out of work and claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) in 2011. The majority of JSA claimants were aged 25–49 (59 per cent). About a quarter (26 per cent) were young people aged 16–24 and the rest were aged over 50 (15 per cent). However, proportionally, young people appeared to be facing the biggest difficulties in entering employment. The 12 per cent of young people aged 16–24 were JSA claimants, which is significantly higher than people aged 25–49 (6.1 per cent) and the over-50s (4.7 per cent).[109]

Data from 2010 indicate that non-employment was unevenly distributed across the borough. In some neighbourhoods, less than 10 per cent of working age adults relied on out-of-work benefits, while in other neighbourhoods, the percentage rose to almost 40 per cent. There was a great north–south disparity; in some neighbourhoods in the south nearly a third of the adult population claimed an out-of-work benefit. Claimant count ranged from 4.3 per cent in the Chingford Green ward in the north to 12.2 per cent in the Markhouse ward in the south.[110] The biggest concentrations of economic inactivity were found in Walthamstow, Leyton and Leytonstone. These wards together contained 30,210 people who were economically inactive (around 27 per cent of those of working age).[111] The southern wards also had a significantly larger proportion of ethnic and faith minority residents, as discussed in Chapter 7.

A key concern in terms of employment policy in Waltham Forest is the low skills level in the local population. Almost one-third of the Waltham Forest population (32 per cent) are categorised as "low/no skilled", with only a level 1 qualification or none at all, compared with the London average of 22 per cent. Only 29 per cent hold level 4+ qualifications, compared with 39 per cent in London.[112] This is reflected in the types of work that people in Waltham Forest are engaged in. Far fewer Waltham Forest residents are in the top occupational categories (managers, senior officials, professional and technical occupations) compared with the London average. More Waltham Forest residents are employed in administrative, secretarial and skilled work than in the

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[108] Data from Office of National Statistics, available at
http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038431892/report.aspx#tabempunemp (accessed May 2012).

[109] Data from Office of National Statistics (ONS) at NOMIS, available at
http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038431892/report.aspx#tabempunemp (accessed May 2012).

[110] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest's Strategy for Enterprise*, pp. 55–56.

[111] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Local Economic Assessment*, London: Navigant Consulting (Europe) Limited, November 2010, p. 13. Available at
http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/documents/lbwf-local-economic-asssessment.pdf (hereafter London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Local Economic Assessment*)

[112] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Local Economic Assessment*, pp. 64–65.

London average, and they are particularly over-represented in the lower level and lower waged occupations. In 2010, the median gross pay for full-time workers living in Waltham Forest was £584 per week, which was less than the London average of £607 per week.[113]

There is data disaggregated by ethnic group for employment rates, economic inactivity and unemployment rates. Individuals from ethnic-minority groups account for more than a third of all Waltham Forest residents in employment (36,700 in total).[114] In 2010, the employment rate for ethnic minorities was 56.3 per cent, compared with 69.2 per cent for white groups (12.9 percentage points greater). Among ethnic-minority groups, the employment rate is lowest for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (49.7 per cent), followed by black and black British (54.3 per cent). The employment rate is highest among Indians (70.4 per cent).

Economic inactivity is also higher among ethnic minorities (31.2 per cent) than white groups (23.9 per cent). The groups with the highest inactivity rates are Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (44.3 per cent) and black or black British (29.6 per cent). The unemployment rate is approximately twice as high among ethnic minorities as white groups (18.2 per cent compared with 8.9 per cent). In total, 58 per cent of all those unemployed are from ethnic-minority communities (8,200 people).[115]

The gender gap in employment rates is significantly higher for ethnic minorities than white groups. Across ethnic-minority groups, the employment rate is 13.5 percentage points higher for ethnic-minority males compared with females, while the difference between white males and females is 4.6 percentage points.[116]

Unlike ethnicity where there are relatively recent data, the only indication of the labour market position of different religious and belief groups in Waltham Forest is provided by the council's analysis of the 2001 Census data.[117] However, this report observes that there are significant problems with analysing religious data, highlighted by the Religious Tolerance Group.[118] It therefore emphasises that the religious data presented in the survey should only been used as a rough guide.[119] It also acknowledges that

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[113] Office of National Statistics, *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings* accessed through NOMIS. Available at http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038431892/report.aspx#tabempunemp.

[114] See www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/community/wf-statistics/bp-employment.htm (accessed November 2011).

[115] Annual Population Survey, Oct 2009-Sep 2010, NOMIS. Available at https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/articles/605.aspx (accessed 13 April 2012)

[116] Annual Population Survey, Oct 2009-Sep 2010, NOMIS. Available at https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/articles/605.aspx (accessed 13 April 2012)

[117] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Religion and Faith in Focus*, 2004, p. 3. available at http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/documents/envpl-religion-or-faith-in-focus.pdf (accessed November 2011) (hereafter, London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Religion and Faith in Focus*).

[118] See http://www.religioustolerance.org/uk_rel.htm (accessed May 2012).

[119] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Religion and Faith in Focus*, p. 1.

religion is often linked to ethnicity and that any patterns found in the report could be a result of ethnicity rather than faith, and that "further research would have to be undertaken to establish whether this is the case".[120] The analysis of the 2001 Census data shows that, when disaggregated by faith, Buddhists had the highest unemployment rate (20 per cent), the unemployment rate of Muslims and Hindus was 14 per cent, and Sikhs had the lowest unemployment rate (8.5 per cent).[121]

For those in work, the report shows the differences in the types of employment engaged by those in different groups. In particular, it shows that compared with other groups, Muslims in Waltham Forest are concentrated in unskilled and low-skilled employment. Muslims have a higher representation than other faiths in the process, plant and machine-operative occupations and along with Christians have a high representation in elementary occupations. Muslims have the lowest representation in professional and technical occupations (20.8 per cent), and second-lowest representation in administrative and secretarial occupations (13.8 per cent). A significant proportion of Muslims (19.5 per cent), along with Hindus (21.7 per cent) and Sikhs (21.5 per cent), are employed in personal, customer and sales services.[122]

Using figures from the workplace population,[123] the survey suggests Muslims have the highest rates of "no qualification" attainment and high rates of unemployment, with a large number of women involved in looking after the home and family. Just over a quarter of Muslims (26.1 per cent) in Waltham Forest had no qualifications, the highest proportion for any group.

Rates of labour market participation also differ by gender within different groups. The 2004 economic profile of Waltham Forest found low employment levels for Bangladeshi and Pakistani women. While male employment rates in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities were higher than other ethnic minorities, such as the black and Indian populations, the approximately 20 per cent employment rate among Bangladeshi and Pakistani women was less than a third of this, and far lower than the average of 56.9 per cent among the borough's female population as a whole.[124] This imbalance was largely responsible for the recorded poor employment rate overall among Bangladeshis and Pakistanis in the borough. The analysis of 2001 Census data

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[120]   London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Religion and Faith in Focus*, p. 1.

[121]   London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Religion and Faith in Focus*, p. 3.

[122]   London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Religion and Faith in Focus*, p. 5.

[123]   The workplace population is the total number of jobs provided by the borough, therefore including residents who live and work in the borough, plus those who commute (inflow) from outside the borough to work in Waltham Forest.

[124]   London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Economic Profile Update 2005*, p. 8, using Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey (March 2003–February 2004) as a source. Available at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/envpl-econ-profile-update05.pdf (accessed November 2011).

for Waltham forest found that 39.5 per cent of Muslim women were involved in caring for the home and family.[125]

6.3   Discrimination

Expectations and experiences of discrimination shape the employment choices made by individuals. They may avoid employment in industries where the environment is perceived to be hostile to them. Discrimination also affects an individual's motivation, self-confidence and aspirations and thereby perpetuates exclusion and disadvantage.[126]

Evidence of discrimination in employment is difficult to obtain. The clearest examples of discrimination come from cases of discrimination brought against employers by individuals. In addition to this, situation testing, using CVs with the same qualification but with names that suggest different ethnic or religious backgrounds, can provide evidence of discrimination in recruitment practices. In 2004, for example, the BBC conducted a survey in which fictitious applications were made for jobs using applicants with the same qualifications and work experience, but different names. A quarter of the applications by the candidates with traditionally English-sounding names – Jenny Hughes and John Andrews – were successful in securing an interview, compared with 13 per cent for the applicants with black African names and only 9 per cent of applicants with Muslim names.[127] Levels of labour market discrimination may also be gauged from self-reporting surveys, that is, surveys in which people are asked if they think they have faced discrimination. The accuracy of such surveys is difficult to ascertain as individuals may either under- or over-estimate instances of discrimination. See Table 31.

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[125]   London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Religion and Faith in Focus*, p. 4.

[126]   See J. Wrench and E. Hassan, *Ambition and Marginalisation: A Qualitative Study of Under-achieving Young Men of African-Caribbean Origin*, Research Studies RS31, Department for Education and Employment, London, 1996;and J. Wrench and T. Qureshi, *Higher Horizons: A Qualitative Study of Young Men of Bangladeshi Origin*, Research Studies RS30, Department for Education and Employment, London, 1996.

[127]   See "Shocking Racism in Job Market", BBC News, 12 July 2004, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/3885213.stm (accessed November 2011). See also J. Wilson, "Muslim Says He Was Sacked for Wearing Beard", *The Guardian*, 11 August 2004; V. Dodd, "City Firm Sued for Bin Laden jibes", *The Guardian,* 9 April 2004.

Table 31. Experiences of discrimination when applying for employment

Has interviewee been refused a job in this country in last 5 years?		Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Yes		22	26	24
No		43	48	46
Don't know		1	2	2
Not applicable (who are not working or have not worked)		34	24	29
Total	%	100	100	100
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Respondents in the Foundations' survey were asked if they had experienced discrimination when applying for employment and when seeking promotion. A significant proportion of both Muslim (22.3 per cent) and non-Muslim respondents (26 per cent) reported experiencing discrimination when applying for a job. Muslims and non-Muslims differed in identifying the grounds in which they faced discrimination. For non-Muslims, the most frequently identified ground of discrimination was age, for Muslims it was where they lived and their religion. Twelve per cent of non-Muslims and 6 per cent of Muslims said that they had faced discrimination when seeking promotion. For non-Muslims the identified grounds were ethnicity, age and gender, and for non-Muslims they were ethnicity and religion. Half of Muslims and over a third of non-Muslims believed they had been refused promotion for a reason other than the four grounds of discrimination offered (gender, age, ethnicity and religion).

In the focus groups, there was some discussion of experiences of discrimination, with some examples that stood out. One participant referred to the experience of his son trying to secure an interview for a job where religious discrimination appeared to be a factor:

> My son applied for a job and gave his Muslim name but he didn't get the job so
> he changed his name and he got the job. That is true. He wrote an English or
> Christian name so he got the job. If you have a beard, put down an English
> name. I know that a beard is seen as a negative.

Discrimination may be experienced through a failure to accommodate or adjust for religious needs. Most respondents reported that employers do a fairly good job of respecting religious customs. Almost half of respondents, whether Muslim or not, felt that the employers with which they had contact had it "about right". See Table 32.

Table 32. Do employers respect different religious customs?

		Muslims %	Non-Muslims %	Total %
Too much		3.0	3.0	3.0
About right		42.0	49.0	45.5
Too little		25.0	17.0	21.0
Don't know		30.0	31.0	30.5
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

This is further supported by some of the answers given in the focus group meetings.

> Going back 20–25 or even 30 years when I was working in the civil service, if I explained to them who I am, where I am from and that I need to go to *jum'aa* on Friday, they did not accept it. Nowadays employers do not have any problem or any issues with Muslims.

> I have been going for *jum'aa* ever since I can remember and I have not missed it during my time in London. Initially my bosses didn't know because I didn't announce the fact that I go *for jum'aa* prayer or *zuhur* prayer. Once my boss found out, he made sure I would not have any meetings with him between one and two, not only on Fridays but on other days too. I usually leave for prayer at five or ten past or 10 past. If my boss sees me in the office at that time, he would say, "Why are you still here?" That shows that he respected me as a Muslim.

The comments sections of the written surveys were generally positive about the attitude of employers:

> As a Christian we have been facilitated with a prayer room as well as an Islamic prayer room for Muslims.

> People take a day off when there is a religious festival.

> My employer has provided provisions for all faiths.

> They let people go for prayers when they need to and have separate rooms for these services.

However, not every answer was positive.

> Employers give days off to Muslim or Hindu employees on their special days and they also get holidays for Christmas. Whereas Christian employees get only the holiday allocated to everyone.

My niece works [for an airline]. She has told me that she and others cannot go in the frontline if they are wearing a headscarf. They do not get promoted to management positions – they are held behind and they are not supposed to interact with customers directly. They have to do telephone-based work or other jobs where they cannot see the customers.

I think employers have very little knowledge of other religions and they have very little idea when it comes to respecting other religious customs.

The majority of responses from Waltham Forest participants were overwhelmingly positive that efforts are being made and the overall impression was a positive one.

6.4 Initiatives for Improving Local Employment and Training

Waltham Forest has outlined its objective to increase the proportion of ethnic minorities in employment,[128] but despite research undertaken in the borough on the relationship between faith groups and unemployment,[129] its stated outreach policies on employment do not focus on faith groups directly. Muslims nevertheless benefit from mainstream initiatives aimed at supporting people pursuing employment. The national government plays a key role in setting the overall framework for employment support and skills training. The Coalition government which came to power in 2010 has increased the numbers of adult apprenticeships. At the local level there are also initiatives funded by the council and delivered through voluntary and private-sector organisations.

A key part of the economic strategy of the LB of Waltham Forest is to ensure that residents in the borough benefit from the developments surrounding hosting the 2012 Olympic Games in east London. The LDA has stated that it will aim to ensure that Londoners benefit from the staging of the 2012 Games through jobs, business opportunities, increased tourism, investment and regeneration.[130] The London Development Agency (LDA) is working with the five host boroughs, which include Waltham Forest and partners such as the Skills Funding Agency and Jobcentre Plus to develop initiatives that ensure Londoners have the right skills at the right time to access the employment opportunities brought by the 2012 Olympic Games. The LDA points to a range of successes in meeting its commitment. This includes 10,000 previously workless Londoners in the host boroughs getting jobs through the London Employment and Skills Taskforce for 2012, 5,722 residents of the host boroughs benefiting from construction training linked to the Games, funded by the LDA and its

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[128] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest Better Neighbourhoods Strategy*, 2006, p. 25. Available at https://democracy.walthamforest.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=5240 (accessed 12 April 2012).

[129] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Religion and Faith in Focus*.

[130] See "Getting the Most from the 2012 Games", at www.lda.gov.uk/our-work/2012-games /index.aspx (accessed November 2011) (hereafter "Getting the Most from the 2012 Games").

partners, and 2,300 residents of the host boroughs securing employment through LDA programmes.[131] In 2011, the Waltham Forest Construction Training Centre opened.[132] Despite these developments there is some disappointment about the amount of employment prospects that have surfaced so far. As one stakeholder noted, "There haven't been as many vacancies as we had hoped when we were working with them (the Olympic Delivery Authority)."

A major provider of employment support in Waltham Forest is CLaSS, which provides work-based learning, such as pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, as well as adult learning courses in English language, literacy, ESOL, maths, numeracy, foreign languages and preparation for citizenship. On certain government-approved courses that lead to specified qualifications, CLaSS offers funds to assist learners who can demonstrate financial hardship. It also runs crèches for pre-school children for learners on certain courses, such as ESOL, English language, literacy, numeracy and family learning.

Much of the work of CLaSS focuses on addressing the needs of so-called NEET groups (NEET means "Not in Education, Employment or Training"). Support for NEETs has a particular impact on young Muslims as, according to one stakeholder, Pakistanis and Somalis make up a large proportion of the local NEET groups. The stakeholder argued that the employment problems of this group are linked to family, culture, faith and background. For many minority groups progress is slow and they rely on networks based on their family and faith. For example, many local Pakistanis and Somalis are considered to have "an extended family culture and 'boxed-in' mindset that can obstruct progress through too much focus on family, faith and culture". In this stakeholder's experience, difficulties in integrating and finding work can lead to individuals retreating even more into their family and their faith, and further from employment, education and training, and this can create a spiral of marginalisation in which their initial marginalisation and alienation make them depend increasingly on factors that lead them to become even more detached.

As the stakeholder explained, it is important to consider that many Somalis have fractured backgrounds due to their experiences in the Somali civil war. First-generation Somalis also tend not to have any relevant skills or qualifications, and have little or no understanding of English on arrival. In the local Pakistani community, there is a tradition of marrying cousins, which generally causes men to be brought over to marry women. These men often come from rural backgrounds, so usually do not have any relevant skills and qualifications, and have little or no understanding of English.

Strategies for supporting Muslim women in the labour market also need to take the specific needs of groups into account. In the experience of those working in this area,

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[131] See "Getting the Most from the 2012 Games".

[132] See "Olympic Legacy Construction College Opens", at www.lda.gov.uk/news-and-events/news /2011/olympic-legacy-construction-college-opens.aspx (accessed November 2011).

many Muslim women prefer to work locally. This preference means that there is particular interest among Muslim women in employment in child care, and thus, their interest in child-care courses and the paediatric first-aid courses that are needed for work in this field. Similarly, it was suggested that many Muslim women are interested in make-up and nail art courses because such employment can be local, self-employed and/or part-time, and thus allows them to continue with their family responsibilities.

Waltham Forest's "Strategy for Enterprise, Employment and Skills 2009–14" aims to deliver an integrated employability service targeted to reach the population. The council plans to build on the success of a pilot project called Worknet, which is considered a proven and robust method for integrating into-work and skills services. Everyone who enters the Worknet programme receives an individually tailored package and is assigned an adviser who provides guidance and helps find training. This individual support is supplemented by a discretionary fund to cover the cost of any additional support that is needed. There is also a Worknet Job Club[133] that offers a supportive environment for residents who want assistance from WorkNet, providing an opportunity to talk to experienced advisers who deliver individual support to help find employment. A key aspect of Worknet is delivering outreach through neighbourhood-based access points in neighbourhoods with the lowest employment rates.[134] The Worknet project works with voluntary, community and faith organisations to help meet the needs of harder-to-reach population groups and to offer them work placements and volunteering opportunities. The outreach officers include Muslims who are able to make contact with local community groups and mosques and the outreach work is based on targets. The LDA funds a significant part of the Worknet programme, and provides the LB of Waltham Forest with targets for ethnic minorities, single parents and the long-term unemployed. There are no specific faith group targets, so the council does not record information on that category.

Practitioners suggest that the overall aim of the council's employment service is to be inclusive, treat all residents equally and respond to individual needs. They feel that Worknet reflects this approach:

> It is an inclusive programme for all those that are unemployed, particularly those who have been long-term unemployed. We don't go out and target specific groups, it's for everybody. Everyone gets an individually tailored package. If we were engaging with Muslims, we would be sensitive to their needs and ensure that sessions were not organised when they have their prayers or when they have to go to the mosque. We will take all that into account.

It is felt that any issues of faith will be captured in the personalised support packages.

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[133] See http://parents.info/walthamforest/service?q=search&snac=00BH&kw=%&id=1733 (accessed November 2011).

[134] *Waltham Forest Worknet Business Case & Appraisal,* July 2009, and London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest's Strategy for Enterprise,* p. 27.

Local authority officials recognised the importance that the council, as an employer, can play in the message it sends to other employers and the general public through its approach to ensuring inclusion and equality in its employment practices. One interviewee noted that the local authority, through allowing female Muslim employees to wear headscarves, created encounters that challenged the perceptions and prejudices of others:

> We have got Muslim women who wear a veil in jobs and in contact with members of the public, and that's positive in two ways. One, members of the public come in and they see people like them working here and that gives them confidence. And two, for non-Muslim people that come in, it gives them a brief encounter, if you like, with somebody who is the other. I hope this positively, affects them as well. When they meet a woman through an encounter with us, they may realise that these women work; that this woman has a really strong London accent. They may have to think twice about things. I hope it is having this sort of impact.

Interviewees noted that, where possible, the council allows flexible work arrangements to allow employees space for their religious or other commitments.

Having a workforce that reflects the diversity of the local population can also be an important indicator of inclusion. The council appears to have succeeded in achieving this for ethnic diversity. According to its 2011 "Equality Scorecard",[135] just over half (51.1 per cent) of Waltham Forest's employees are from black and ethnic-minority groups. Furthermore, employees from ethnic-minority backgrounds can be found at all levels of posts. Thus, in 2011, almost a quarter of the top 5 per cent of earners in the local authority came from an ethnic-minority background.[136]

The public-sector race equality duty, a duty on public authorities to promote racial equality that was established by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, was identified by officials as a key driver for change. The Act created a statutory duty on public bodies, including local authorities, to monitor their employment and recruitment practices to identify discriminatory practices, and to have "Race Equality Action Plans".

From 2011, the public-sector race equality duty was replaced by a more general public-sector equality duty which requires public bodies, including local councils, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity on a range of equality grounds.[137] There is also a specific duty for some

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[135] London Borough of Waltham Forest Equality Scorecard March 2010–2011, available at http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/social/equality-employment.htm.

[136] London Borough of Waltham Forest Equality Scorecard March 2010–2011, available at http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/social/equality-employment.htm (accessed 13 April 2012).

[137] Equality Act 2010, section 149. Available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents (accessed 13 April 2012).

public bodies, such as local authorities, to publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the public-sector equality duty, including information on the diversity of their employees.

There is therefore a duty on the council to ensure that in relation to its employment and recruitment practices it eliminates discrimination and advances equality on a range of equality grounds including religion and belief. The effectiveness of this duty is limited by the absence of clear data on religion and belief. Interviewees pointed to the difficulties of collecting data on religion or belief (as well as sexual orientation) in diversity monitoring forms.

> In London we are pretty much habituated to see ethnic monitoring forms and people fill it in, without too much of a fuss. That doesn't apply to all the other groups, and I think monitoring for religion and belief is going to be hugely problematic. People thought that the question about religion and belief, was in some way a test almost of their morality. If you said that you went to church, or you went to mosque or you went to synagogue, or you went to temple, we, as an institution, would infer things from that.

The data from the council's "Equality scorecard" indicate that less than 13 per cent of staff provided data on religion and belief and 8 per cent of staff provided information on sexuality. These low response rates suggest that more efforts are needed to explain the role and significance of equality monitoring in the newly formed areas of religion and belief or sexuality.

7. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: HOUSING

This chapter focuses on housing experiences, and how the nature and condition of the housing that individuals have access to and live in can contribute to social inclusion and integration.

Homelessness, either living in the streets or in temporary accommodation, is a barrier to social inclusion. Beyond this, living in poor housing can exacerbate factors that undermine social inclusion, in particular, it can increase ill health. Overcrowded housing can contribute to disadvantage in other areas; when there is less space for young children to study, complete homework or revise for exams, educational achievements and subsequent employability will be affected. Furthermore, the lack of privacy and space in overcrowded housing increases stress and has an impact on mental health and family relationships.

In local communities, access to housing – particularly social housing – may cause tensions in areas where there are housing shortages, exacerbated by perceptions of unfairness from the (mistaken) belief that migrants and asylum seekers are jumping the queue for social housing. New arrivals often rent rooms in the cheapest private rental sector, which may be houses of multiple occupation (HMOs). Interviews with housing practitioners suggested that there is a strong feeling in the local communities that HMOs are overcrowded and a source of anti-social behaviour. The ethnic and religious diversity of a neighbourhood reflects, of course, the collective impact of individual housing decisions, both positive choices, where people choose to live in areas where they have access to networks of families and friends that support them in finding employment, and negative factors, like staying away from areas from fear of discrimination.

For this report, the topic of housing was explored mainly through focus groups and in interviews with policymakers and civil society organisations working on health issues. There were a few questions in the questionnaire about respondents' housing and the conditions of the neighbourhood they lived in and housing services. The chapter begins by exploring some of the evidence on the relevance and role of faith in housing and sets out some of the most important features of housing in Waltham Forest.

7.1 Religion and Housing

Religion and faith have become a growing feature of England's housing policy discourse,[138] because religious and cultural needs have an influence on individuals' housing choices. For many Muslims, decisions about where to live are affected by

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[138] J. Flint, "Faith and Housing in England: Promoting Community Cohesion or Contributing to Urban Segregation", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36(2) (2010), pp. 257–274 (hereafter Flint, "Faith and Housing in England").

access to facilities and services relating to their faith.[139] Research on Muslims in west London found that for families with young children, after the number of rooms in a property, the main influences on housing choice were access to mosques or supplementary schools for learning Arabic and the Qur'an.[140] Policies that aim to support Muslims and other minority groups in moving into new areas would, it is argued, benefit from support in the development of community institutions, through, for example, the identification of premises and facilities that could be developed. These findings were echoed by Muslim participants in the Foundations' focus groups, who were very positive about living in Waltham Forest and highlighted its ethnic and cultural diversity and the access this provides to goods and services that cater to individuals' cultural and religious needs as a positive feature of living in the area.

Faith-based organisations are also involved in providing social housing. Historically, Christian faith-based organisations played a significant role in the development of social housing in the 19th century. There is also a strong tradition of Jewish social housing organisation in England.[141] Since the 1980s, there have been a growing number of BME organisations that provide housing as registered social landlords. A BME housing association is one where a significant majority of board members are from BME communities. Although BME-led, the organisations provide housing to all members of the community; however, they may specialise in meeting the specific cultural needs of particular BME communities. The BME housing movement encompasses a number of Muslim-led housing associations, including the North London Muslim Housing Association (NLMHA), a registered social landlord that provides housing across north and east London, with a small number of properties in Waltham Forest. Through its work with the wider community, the NLMHA seeks to project a positive image of Islam.[142]

Specific features of the Muslim population also shape its housing experience. For example, as a consequence of the younger demographic profile of the Muslim population, Muslim households are more likely to consist of young families with children. A survey by the Housing Corporation found that among housing association tenants the predominant household size is one person (42 per cent); however, among

[139] H. Jayaweera and T. Choudhury, *Immigration, Faith and Cohesion – Evidence from Local Areas with Significant Muslim Populations,* Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, 2008.

[140] F. Murad and T. Saeed, *Understanding the Housing Needs and Aspirations of Muslim Communities: A Case Study of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea,* North London Muslim Housing Association, London, 2004 (hereafter Murad and Saeed, *Understanding the Housing Needs*).

[141] Flint, "Faith and Housing in England".

[142] Housing Corporation, *Housing Corporation Assessment: North London Muslim Housing Association,* Housing Corporation, London, 2007.

Muslim housing association tenants the dominant household size is four people (20 per cent).[143]

While it is important to recognise that religion may be an important consideration in housing, it is also important to remember that faith communities are not homogenous and that faith identities interact and intersect with other aspects of housing experiences. There is, for example, published research on the housing needs and concerns of Somali communities in London.[144]

7.2   Housing Stock in Waltham Forest

A combination of a growing population, rising rents and increasing house prices ensures that access to housing is a pressing concern for many Londoners. The urban density and economic centrality of London mean that the housing situation in the capital differs in many ways from other parts of the UK. However, within London there are also significant differences across local boroughs and even in the same borough. This section seeks to identify the salient features of housing in Waltham Forest, placing them in the context of housing in London. It also draws upon 2001 Census data on London Muslims published by the mayor of London.

London had a population of 7.9 million people living in 3.3 million households in 2011.[145] There are estimated to be 98,100 residential dwellings in the Borough of Waltham Forest. Four-fifths (78 per cent) of the dwellings are in the private sector and one-fifth (22 per cent) constitute social housing. Social housing in Waltham Forest is split evenly between registered social landlords and housing owned by the local authority.[146]

Flats are a more significant feature of housing stock in London compared with other parts of England. In England, 14 per cent of households live in flats, whereas in London almost half of households are estimated to live in flats.[147] In Waltham Forest,

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[143] Housing Corporation, *Muslim Tenants in Housing Associations Feedback and Engagement,* Housing Corporation, London, 2005, Sector Study 46, available at http://equalityindiversity.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/muslimtenants.pdf (accessed November 2011) (hereafter Housing Corporation, *Muslim Tenants*).

[144] Mohammed Aden Hassan, Hannah Lewis and Sue Lukes, *No Voice, Little Choice The Somali Housing Emergency in North and East London,* Karin Housing Association, London, 2009.

[145] J. Gleeson, *Housing a Growing City: Focus on London,* Greater London Authority, London, 2011, p. 5, available at http://data.london.gov.uk/documents/focus-on-london-2011-housing.pdf (accessed November 2011) (hereafter Gleeson, *Housing a Growing City*).

[146] Opinion Research Services, *Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey: Final Report Prepared for the London Borough of Waltham Forest,* Opinion Research Services, London, 2011, p. 9 (hereafter Opinion Research Services, *Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey*).

[147] Gleeson, *Housing a Growing City,* p. 5.

flats account for one-third of private dwellings.[148] Flats, however, account for around half the public-sector housing stock.

7.2.1 Owner Occupation

In London, just over half of households (53 per cent) are owner occupiers. However, rates of owner occupation vary significantly across London, with owner-occupation rates of over 70 per cent in six outer London boroughs, mainly in the east and south, and 29–45 per cent in the ten inner London boroughs.[149] The proportion of dwellings that are owner-occupied in Waltham Forest (46 per cent) is significantly less than in England (67 per cent).[150] The low owner-occupation levels in London reflect the wider tenure mix as well as the high cost of house purchase. In 2011, the average house price in London was £343,000, compared with £213,000 in England as a whole. Inevitably, this conceals significant variation across London. The median house price in Waltham Forest in 2009 was £200,000. Thus, Waltham Forest ranks 27th out of 33 London boroughs in terms of house prices.[151]

Among respondents to the Foundations' questionnaire, a greater proportion of Muslim respondents than non-Muslim respondents are owner occupiers: 15.2 per cent of Muslim respondents own their house outright and 14 per cent have a mortgage, compared with 11.5 per cent and 9.4 per cent respectively of non-Muslims. Although this figure is slightly higher for Muslims compared with non-Muslims, it is still lower than the London average, where almost 38 per cent of Muslim households own their homes and 11 per cent own outright, and significantly below the national average where 51 per cent of Muslims own their own homes.[152]

A survey of housing association tenants by the Housing Corporation suggests that aspirations to home ownership are higher among Muslim tenants compared with other tenants. While 70 per cent of tenants overall aspired to remain in social housing in ten years' time, this was the ambition of only 52 per cent of Muslim tenants. Furthermore, 29 per cent of Muslims wanted to own their homes, compared with 13 per cent of tenants overall. In fact, "24 per cent of Muslims said they were prepared to spend more than their current rent in order to buy their own home, compared with 17 per cent of all tenants. And whereas 71 per cent of all tenants said they positively would not be willing to pay more to own, only 59 per cent of Muslim tenants took such a strong stand."[153] For some Muslims, religious prohibitions on paying interest may be a barrier

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[148] Opinion Research Services, *Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey,* p. 11.

[149] Gleeson, *Housing a Growing City,* p. 5.

[150] Opinion Research Services, *Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey,* p. 9.

[151] Gleeson, *Housing a Growing City,* p. 10.

[152] Mayor of London, *Muslims in London,* Greater London Authority, London, 2006, p. 65 (hereafter Mayor of London, *Muslims in London*).

[153] Housing Corporation, *Muslim Tenants.*

to buying a house.[154] However, since 2005 changes have been made to financial regulations to facilitate the provision of mortgages that meet the requirements of Islamic laws.

7.2.2   Private Renting

A significant feature of the housing stock of Waltham Forest is the proportion of dwellings that are rented from private landlords. At almost one-third of all dwellings (32 per cent), private rental properties make up a large proportion of the housing stock in Waltham Forest compared with London (22 per cent) and England (15 per cent). In the decade starting in 2011, Waltham Forest saw a rapid increase in the proportion of dwellings for rent in the private sector, from 18 per cent in 2001 to 32 per cent in 2011.[155] The median private weekly rent in the borough is estimated at around £200, placing it 23rd out of 33 London boroughs.

The increase in private rental properties includes an increase in the number of dwellings that constitute HMOs. Estimates suggest that approximately 12 per cent of dwellings in Waltham Forest are either HMOs or flats within an HMO. This is approximately four times the rate found in England overall, but not unusual for some London boroughs.[156]

Table 33 provides some figures on Waltham Forest housing stock.

Table 33. Waltham Forest housing stock

Tenure	No. of dwellings	%	EHS (English Housing Survey) 2009, %
Owner-occupied	45,090	46	67
Privately rented	31,810	32	15
Private-sector stock	76,900	78	82
Housing association (Registered social landlords, RSL)	10,860	11	9
Local authority	10,420	11	9
Social housing	21,280	22	18
All tenures	98,180	100	100

Source: Opinion Research Services, *Private Sector Housing Conditions Survey*, 2011

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[154]   Murad and Saeed, *Understanding the Housing Needs.*

[155]   Opinion Research Services, *Private Sector Housing Conditions Survey.*

[156]   Opinion Research Services, *Private Sector Housing Conditions Survey,* p. 12.

In the Foundations' survey (see Table 34) non-Muslim respondents were more likely than Muslim respondents to be in private rented accommodation or renting in social housing. Only 10.1 per cent of Muslim respondents were in social housing arrangements compared with 21.9 per cent of non-Muslims. This figure is sharply lower compared with the London average of 40 per cent for Muslims and 26.2 per cent for all.[157] However, these figures may not be directly comparable since the Foundations' survey was a survey of individuals rather than households and focused on whether they were paying rent or other costs rather than the nature of their tenure of the dwelling they were living in. It allowed for a number of other options including, for example, living with parents, which could be in owner-occupied property as well as rented in the private or public sector.

Table 34. Do you own or rent your home or have some other arrangement?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Own outright	15	12	27
Own with mortgage/loan	15	11	26
Part rent, part mortgage (shared equity)	1	0	1
Rent from public/social housing	10	21	31
Rent from private landlord	14	23	37
Living with parents/siblings	44	26	70
Living rent-free	1	3	4
Squatting	0	1	1
Other	0	3	3
Total	**100**	**100**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

7.2.3   Social Housing

Social housing forms a smaller proportion of the dwellings in Waltham Forest (22 per cent) compared with London (26 per cent), but this is higher than the proportion in England (18 per cent). Data from the 2001 Census indicate that 40 per cent of Muslims in London rent in social housing compared with 28 per cent of Muslims in the rest of England and Wales. This, it is suggested, can, on the one hand, be seen as a positive indicator of success in accessing social housing and the responsiveness of social housing providers. On the other hand, it can be seen to reflect high poverty rates and housing needs.[158]

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[157]   Source: GLA, *Muslims in London.*

[158]   GLA, *Muslims in London,* p. 67.

As with other London boroughs, the Council of Waltham Forest faces an increasing demand for social housing from those in need, including homeless applicants, and demand clearly outstrips supply. Interviewees explained that the low housing stock in the borough makes it very challenging to meet all the diverse needs of its population and particularly those of large families that request bigger houses. By the end of 2010, there were over 16,000 people on the waiting list for social housing in Waltham Forest, and the council lets around 1,000 properties each year. On this basis it would take more than a decade to reduce the current waiting list. However, in interviews housing practitioners emphasised that the waiting list was not necessarily a useful reflection of housing needs, since anyone living in the borough is able to place themselves on it.

The Foundations' survey also shows that Muslim respondents are on average satisfied with social housing; 33 per cent said that they were either "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied", a much higher rate than non-Muslims (19 per cent). In focus groups, respondents attributed this to important features of the area people were living in rather than just the quality of the social housing. In particular, they appreciated the presence of a large number of Muslims living in the same area and the close proximity of local mosques and amenities. A similar split in opinion was seen with the level of dissatisfaction with social housing, with 22 per cent of Muslim respondents either "fairly dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with social housing compared with 32 per cent of non-Muslim respondents. The reasons for this dissatisfaction varied, but the majority of focus group participants attributed it to the quality of housing as well as overcrowding.

Table 35. Satisfaction with social housing

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Very satisfied	6	1	7
Fairly satisfied	27	18	45
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17	21	38
Fairly dissatisfied	16	19	35
Very dissatisfied	6	13	19
Don't know	28	28	56
Total	**100**	**100**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Prime sources of dissatisfaction over social housing were disrepair and the time taken to address this. Focus group participants, especially those living in social housing, expressed their concerns about the slow response of housing services to repair requests. Several felt that there was a regression in service provision compared with a few years ago. See Table 35.

Before, when you used to get housing benefit, they used to come and repair plumbing problems or any major problem. Nowadays, when there are leaks in the building, they don't repair it.

If something breaks and you report that it is broken, they say they don't have the budget to fix it. If you can do it yourself then get it done. They often say if they get funds, then they'll be in touch.

While many participants were dissatisfied by the quality of housing and the slow response of housing repairs compared with before, very few sought further advice about it.

The opinion of the focus group participants was polarised concerning the treatment they received from housing associations. Some thought that this was a general problem for all the residents in Waltham Forest because of the scarce supply of housing stock: "Generally it's just a lack of housing; it's not a discriminatory issue, full stop. We suffer as a consequence of poor housing in the area". However, others felt that they were subject to discriminatory treatment. Feelings of unfair treatment were high partly due to the perceived lack of accountability from the housing departments, as insufficient explanations were offered to individuals in justifying the criteria used to prioritise some cases over others.

7.2.4   Street Cleaning

Respondents were also asked about their satisfaction with the street cleaning in their area. The views of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents are almost identical. Seven per cent of both groups are "very satisfied", 37 per cent "fairly satisfied" and 18 per cent "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". However, the two groups differed in the intensity of dissatisfaction. A similar proportion of Muslim respondents (38 per cent) and non-Muslim respondents (36 per cent) were either "fairly dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with street cleaning. However, dissatisfaction appears to be more intensely felt by Muslim respondents than the non-Muslim respondents, with 18 per cent of Muslim respondents saying they were "very dissatisfied" compared with 4 per cent of non-Muslims. See Table 36.

Table 36. Satisfaction with street cleaning

	Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Very satisfied	7	7	7
Fairly satisfied	37	37	37
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	18	18	18
Fairly dissatisfied	20	32	26
Very dissatisfied	18	4	11
Don't know	0	2	1
Total	**100**	**100**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

One persistent concern among Muslim focus group participants was rat and mice infestation, which represents a high health hazard, particularly for families with young children.

7.2.5 Overcrowding

The Foundations' survey reveals that a great many of the Muslim respondents (44 per cent) still live with their parents compared with 26 per cent of non-Muslims. One of the factors behind this steep discrepancy could be that Muslim respondents are much younger than non-Muslims. However, a close examination of the survey results shows that there is only a 10 per cent difference, with 56 per cent of Muslims and 46 per cent of non-Muslims less than 29 years of age.

The larger number of Muslim respondents living with parents may also reflect cultural preferences. The pattern of unmarried children living with their parents is very common among Muslim families. Such cultural preferences can impact on other housing problems, such as overcrowding. The 2001 Census used an occupancy rating for measuring,[159] which gives an indication of overcrowding or under-occupancy. In London, 42 per cent or 72,000 Muslim households are overcrowded. Almost 11 per cent of Muslim households in London have more than 1.5 people per room, compared with 2 per cent of the households in the general population.[160]

It is estimated that 14,408 households (16.1 per cent) in Waltham Forest are overcrowded, similar to the London average of 17.3 per cent. Although there are no

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[159] The occupancy rating refers to the number of rooms available to the members of the household, based on the relationship between the residents and their ages. The rating provides a measure of under-occupancy and overcrowding.

[160] GLA, *Muslims in London.*

exact estimates for the rate of overcrowding among the Muslim communities in Waltham Forest, the persistence of this issue has been confirmed in interviews with policy officials.

> There is a problem with space and there's a huge demand for housing. People want to do conversions as well to help with space issues. Also the poor quality of housing has resulted in overcrowding. The housing around the Olympic site is causing a lot of tensions as people are being crowded into housing so work can commence on the Olympic site.

Waltham Forest's housing challenges are multi-faceted. More affordable homes to buy and rent are needed; existing housing across all tenures needs repair and improvement; and homelessness ought to be prevented and reduced. In a wider context, Waltham Forest residents require better support and investment in order to improve their life chances and economic well-being, particularly in the current global financial crisis, which continues to cause major uncertainty for the housing agenda and the residents in the borough.

7.3   Policy Responses to Housing Needs

Since the poor quality of housing affects most of the residents in the borough, new housing initiatives have not been developed with a specifically Muslim focus. The council's housing strategy[161] for 2008–2028 has three main priorities:

1.   Building new homes by: making development and regeneration happen; achieving economically balanced communities with more family homes; delivering the right homes in the right places.

2.   Making the most of the homes by renewing private housing; improving social rented homes; reducing overcrowding and under-occupation.

3.   Creating successful communities: enabling the right housing choices to be made; creating solutions for homeless people and supporting independent living; making good-quality, safe neighbourhoods; creating economic opportunities.

Each objective has a clear set of commitments and actions to be delivered in prearranged time frames. These partnerships have both a local and a wider regard for the sub-regional, London-wide and, indeed, national context within which the borough's housing market operates. For example, targets for new homes are set by the mayor of London's "London Plan". This aims to complete 35,000 new homes a year in London. Under the plan, each authority is allotted a target for the completion of new

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[161]   London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest Housing Strategy 2008–2028*, available at http://www1.walthamforest.gov.uk/moderngov/Published/C00000309/M00001852/AI0001083 6/$HousingStrategyandActionPlanFINALSP221208prepforpublication.docA.ps.pdf (accessed November 2011) (hereafter *Waltham Forest Housing Strategy 2008–2028*).

homes. In 2009/2010 the LB of Waltham Forest was allotted a target of 665 new homes: it delivered 221.

For local policymakers and practitioners, the delivery of goals is complicated by the impact of changes to the welfare and benefits system, including housing benefits, that are being introduced by the Coalition government. The cap on local housing benefits is anticipated by some practitioners who were interviewed as likely to lead to a movement of families from more expensive inner London areas to the less expensive outer London areas such as Waltham Forest. The precise effect of this is not yet clear. Some interviewees saw potential positive and negative outcomes:

> It could be a good thing by increasing the social capital and skills base in the area as people in low-paid jobs move from Westminster and move here. Or, it could lead to more fragmented and dispersed communities.

There is also concern that the cap on the amount the local authorities can spend on meeting their obligation to house homeless individuals in temporary accommodation is leading some inner London authorities to procure temporary accommodation in outer London boroughs like Waltham Forest. This, it was argued, increases competition for such facilities and limits the ability of the borough to procure accommodation in its own area:

> There is an inter-borough agreement that one borough will not go into another borough and pay a higher temporary accommodation rate. In practice, this is not adhered to as strictly as needed given other obligations and pressures on local authorities.

There is also concern that the changes in welfare payments in early 2012, so that those under 25 years-of-age will only receive funding for a room rather than self-contained accommodation, will increase the number of individuals in HMOs. It is feared that this will form an incentive for landlords to convert family homes into HMOs, which will in turn undermine efforts to create sustainability and cohesion:

> Waltham Forest in its sustainable communities strategy does not feel that it is appropriate to break up family housing into HMOs, as that leads to more fragmented societies, more churn, more anti-social behaviour. We want to encourage family units. Because of these changes, there is more risk of the break-up of family units and people moving out.

Practitioners were also concerned about the exploitation of individuals by private landlords. This is a particular worry for those who are new to the UK and not familiar with their legal rights. One initiative that has been taken to address this is a council scheme for the accreditation of private landlords.

8. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Health and Social Services

Poor health affects performance at work and at school, and consequently, employment opportunities and income levels. It also undermines social participation and the involvement in leisure activities that are important for good health and fitness. Most obviously, and perhaps most crucially, good health is also central to a sense of well-being, happiness and positive feelings.

This chapter begins by highlighting the challenges of collecting the data needed for developing health-care policies in areas with diverse and changing populations. It then provides some background context of health and well-being in Waltham Forest, and explores the role of local social determinants and their impact on prevalence rates for the most significant causes of mortality and morbidity, which suggest that higher rates affect the most marginalised groups in the most deprived areas of Waltham Forest. It notes the health inequalities between the north and south of the borough, which reflect differences in income levels, deprivation, child poverty, education, economic activity, safety and crime, housing and the physical environment. Significantly, these also reflect differences of ethnicity and faith. The chapter finishes by examining the initiatives set up to improve access to health services and target health messages at groups in the community.

8.1 Health-care data

There are significant problems in addressing the health-care needs of marginalised and disadvantaged communities in areas such as Waltham Forest which have high levels of population change, diversity and transience. Its population includes many minority groups that have recently migrated from overseas, as well as from other areas of London and the UK.

For boroughs that experience significant population changes, it is a constant task to maintain and update the comprehensive demographic data necessary to deliver health services that meet the needs of all. A prime source of information is the register of patients kept by general practitioners (GPs). GPs ask patients who register with them to provide personal details, including data on ethnicity and faith. These data are shared with PCTs and so shape the delivery of health services to patients.

A PCT routinely collects data on ethnicity but not faith, although data on the former are deemed very relevant for the latter. As a stakeholder explains:

> We don't have targets for Muslims. The equality legislation, even though it mentions religion, from a health perspective, it's more ethnicity that we look at. There are some similarities between ethnicity and religion, for instance, a lot of Asians, such as Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, are more likely to be Muslims, so if

you are targeting those particular groups, you are targeting Muslims. But our main aim is not the religion, it is the ethnicity.

Data on faith are collected by the National Patient Survey,[162] but this only refers to the number of respondents.

There is an acknowledged need for more comprehensive and consistent data. Waltham Forest's "Health Inequalities Strategy 2010–2015"[163] and NHS Waltham Forest and the London Borough of Waltham Forest's "Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011–2012" (JSNA 2011–2012)[164] note the lack of consistent data among the different equality categories concerning access to and experience of health services in the borough. They state that data are patchy for ethnicity as well as for other equality categories, including faith.[165] Without this information, it is difficult to accurately identify which groups have poor access to services, as the information can help to ensure services are targeted more effectively. In response to this lack of data, and in recognition of the fact that GPs often have the most accurate data on ethnicity for their population, a pilot project involving three GP practices was developed to provide more comprehensive ethnicity data. These data were then linked to service use data. The pilot was considered a success and the initiative is now being rolled out across all GP practices.[166]

8.2   Health Inequalities in Waltham Forest

In understanding the context in which health-care policies operate it must be remembered that a key factor affecting health outcomes in the borough, as in the rest of the UK, is the growing and ageing population. By 2031, the population of the borough is estimated to increase from 224,800 to 274,770. This includes a rise in the number of those aged over 65 from 25,000 to 35,000. For a borough like Waltham Forest an important consideration in the coming decades will be the development of social and health-care services for people from minority groups. By 2031, it is predicted that 42 per cent of all Waltham Forest residents aged over 50 will be of ethnic-minority background.

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[162] See http://www.nhssurveys.org.

[163] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *A Healthier, Fairer Waltham Forest: Waltham Forest's Health Inequalities Strategy 2010–2015*, 17 February 2011, available at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/ke39-healthier-communities-strategy-ahealthierfairer-waltham-forest.pdf (accessed November 2011) (hereafter *A Healthier, Fairer Waltham Forest*).

[164] National Health Service and London Borough of Waltham Forest, *NHS Waltham Forest & The London Borough of Waltham Forest Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011–2012*, available at http://www.wherecani.org/images/WF_JSNA-vs3-2011.pdf (hereafter JSNA 2011–2012).

[165] *A Healthier, Fairer Waltham Forest*, p. 40.

[166] *A Healthier, Fairer Waltham Forest*.

Health inequalities in London are well documented, with areas of wealth found side-by-side with areas of deprivation. These differences are largely reflected in the health outcomes of the residents. As examined below, there is a significant health disparity between the north and the south of Waltham Forest, suggesting that local social determinants can have a major impact on health. The social determinants of health and well-being include poverty and deprivation, child poverty, education, economic activity, safety and crime, housing and physical environment. Community cohesion is also viewed to be a good indicator of health, particularly mental health.[167] There are also lifestyle health-risk factors, such as obesity, alcohol, smoking and drugs, which are linked to social determinants.

One measure of health inequality is life expectancy rates. These are worse in Waltham Forest than the average for London and England. Moreover, significant health inequalities exist within the borough between the north and south. Male and female life expectancy in Waltham Forest is the seventh-lowest in London. Healthy life expectancy at age 65 is 11.2 years in Waltham Forest, compared with 12.5 years in both London and England for males and 18.5 years for females, compared with 19.5 years in London and 19.2 years in England. There are also significant differences in life expectancy between north and south within the borough. Residents in the north have significantly longer lives on average than those living in the south. A man in the most deprived ward of the borough dies 5.6 years younger than a man in a more affluent ward. The difference is 5.4 years for women.[168] The three major killers of cardiovascular disease (CVD), cancer and respiratory diseases contribute to the lower life expectancy of those in the most deprived parts of the borough.

8.3   Tackling Health Inequalities

Overcoming local health inequalities requires an approach that includes service providers in health, education, employment, housing, community cohesion and policing. The local authority together with the local NHS has developed the JSNA noted above, using a framework that recognises that health is influenced by a dynamic interaction between people's genetics and their social environment (education, employment, crime, housing), their physical environment, their lifestyle behaviours (adapting to their environments) and the health-care services available to them.

The JSNA recognises that the London Borough of Waltham Forest as a partner delivers many of the services that involve the social and physical environment. Thus, they will work together to understand how these services affect local health and to reinforce the positive influences and mitigate the negative.

The JSNA identifies variations across different ethnic groups in health outcomes in relation to a number of health conditions including CVD, coronary heart disease,

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[167]   *A Healthier, Fairer Waltham Forest,* p. 44.

[168]   JSNA 2011–2012, p. 152.

cancer, diabetes, tuberculosis (TB) and mental ill-health. Among the priorities identified in the JSNA 2011–2012 are CVD, cancer and diabetes mortality, and mental health. As outlined below, ethnicity is seen as a relevant consideration in the approach taken to these conditions.

CVD is the main cause of premature deaths both locally and nationally.[169] It is responsible for almost one-third of all deaths in Waltham Forest and 27 per cent of premature deaths.[170] Asians, black African groups and black Caribbean groups have a higher risk of CVD due to a genetic predisposition towards some of the risk factors, such as diabetes and hypertension.[171] The growing BME population over the age of 50 has significant implications for local health and social care provision for CVD.[172] The needs of different ethnic groups will be relevant if NHS Waltham Forest is to meet the target it has set itself of reducing CVD mortality rates to 68.5 per 100,000 of the population by 2013.[173]

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the single most common cause of premature death in the UK.[174] The main risk factors are smoking and obesity, and rises in occurrence are associated with areas of high deprivation.[175] Cathall, one of the most deprived wards in Waltham Forest, has the highest rates of CHD at 114 per cent above the national average.[176]

Cancer is the second most common cause of death nationally and in Waltham Forest. In 2008, the top four cancers in Waltham Forest contributing to overall cancer mortality were lung (20 per cent), breast (9 per cent), colorectal (12 per cent) and stomach (5 per cent). In a north-east London survey, Waltham Forest respondents were found to have a low awareness of cancer risk factors and screening programmes.[177] The survey identified factors influencing behaviour that may contribute to late

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[169] See http://www.lho.org.uk/LHO_Topics/Health_Topics/Diseases/Cardiovascular.aspx (accessed November 2011); http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Cardiovascular-disease/Pages/Introduction.aspx (accessed November 2011).

[170] Office for National Statistics, mortality data, 2008.

[171] Office for National Statistics, mortality data, 2008.

[172] JSNA 2011–2012, p. 91.

[173] NHS Waltham Forest, *Commissioning Strategic Plan 2009/10 – 2013 /14*, Table 11, p. 10. Available at: http://www.onel.nhs.uk/Downloads/News-and-publications/Strategies-and-plans/WF_CSP2009-10-2013-14.pdf (accessed November 2011)

[174] See British Heart Foundation, *G30 UK CHD Statistics Factsheet 2009-10*, available at www.bhf.org.uk/publications/view-publication.aspx?ps=1001141 (accessed November 2011).

[175] See K.C.R Patel and R.S. Bhopal, *The Epidemic of Coronary Heart Disease in South Asian Populations: Causes and Consequences,* South Asian Health Foundation, Birmingham, 2004, available at http://www.sahf.org.uk/uploads/docs/files/21.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[176] JSNA 2011–2012, p. 95.

[177] For public awareness of cancer in Waltham Forest, see the report for North East Cancer London Network (NECLN), 2010, cited in JSNA 2011–2012, p. 108.

presentation and diagnosis, such as difficulty in arranging appointments and transport, and embarrassment and fear of what the GP may find. The NHS has three cancer screening programmes; breast, cervical and bowel. The Waltham Forest breast screening coverage for 2009/2010 (69.4 per cent) is below the national minimum target of 70 per cent and the England average of 75.9 per cent but above the London average of 63.6 per cent. In 2009/2010 only 6 practices out of 47 (13 per cent) achieved the recommended threshold of 70 per cent, with areas of deprivation failing to do so, including Leyton and Walthamstow. NHS Waltham Forest has set itself a target of reducing the cancer mortality rate to 97 per 100,000.[178] The 2011–2012 JSNA observed that targeted outreach, health promotion and cancer awareness can increase cancer screening uptake by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate cancer awareness notices in targeted venues like grocery shops.[179]

The prevalence of diabetes in Waltham Forest (8 per cent) is higher than the rates for London (7.5 per cent) and England (7.4 per cent). People of South Asian origin are up to six times more likely to develop diabetes compared to white people, while people of black African and Caribbean origin are up to five times more likely to develop diabetes compared to whites. Data suggest that 20 per cent of the Asian community and 17 per cent of the black African and Caribbean community living in the UK have Type 2 diabetes in contrast to 3 per cent of the general population. For people with diabetes, morbidity is also much higher for heart disease (two to three times higher in Asians), renal failure (four times higher in Asians) and stroke (three times higher in black Africans and Caribbeans).[180] Socio-economic deprivation is also associated with an increased risk of diabetes, with the most deprived people at two and a half times greater risk.[181]

Levels of TB are often used as an indicator of inequality because TB is so closely related to overcrowding, poor-quality housing, low living standards, poverty and other social problems. TB is also known to predominantly affect BME communities, with black African, Pakistani and Indian communities having the highest incidences. In Waltham Forest, the rate of new cases of TB is higher than the regional and national averages. In 2008, there were 57.8 new cases per 100,000, compared with 44.3 in London, and

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[178] NHS Waltham Forest, *Commissioning Strategic Plan 2009/10 – 2013 /14*, Table 11, p. 10. Available at http://www.onel.nhs.uk/Downloads/News-and-publications/Strategies-and-plans/WF_CSP2009-10-2013-14.pdf

[179] JSNA 2011–2012 JSNA, p. 111.

[180] Diabetes UK, *Diabetes and the Disadvantaged: Reducing Health Inequalities in the UK*, World Diabetes Day, 14 November 2006, a report by the All Parliamentary Group for Diabetes and Diabetes UK, London, 2006, available at www.diabetes.org.uk/Documents/Reports/Diabetes_disadvantaged_Nov2006.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[181] Diabetes UK, *Diabetes: Beware the Silent Assassin*, October 2008, London, available at www.diabetes.org.uk/Documents/Reports/Silent_assassin_press_report.pdf (accessed November 2011).

14.9 in England and Wales. The majority of TB cases are concentrated in the southern part of the borough where there is much domestic overcrowding and poverty.

Mental health conditions are the largest single cause of morbidity. Waltham Forest has high risk factors for mental illness. Poor mental health is associated with low socio-economic status, lack of education and opportunities, and other inequalities which fall under the label of social exclusion.[182] In 2008/2009, 3,860 people (26 per 1,000 working age people) with mental health conditions in Waltham Forest received incapacity benefits. Although this rate was slightly below the London and national averages, it was above the national and London averages in nine out of 20 wards. In 2011, the Mental Illness Index[183] (MINI) score for Waltham Forest was 1.33, indicating there would be approximately 33 per cent more mental illness in Waltham Forest than England. The MINI score across the borough ranges from 0.8 to 1.8; of the 20 wards in Waltham Forest, 15 have a score above that of England.

In Waltham Forest, mental health conditions are believed to disproportionately affect Asians and Somalis. For recent migrants, depression can result from the difficulty of adjusting to a new community and lifestyle, and for Somalis, they have also come from an experience of civil war. One interviewee working in health care identifies access to mental health services as a particular issue for minority groups:

> Mental health is probably one of the biggest issues, because there is a clear difference in access. White British are more likely to access health care at a primary care level and are more likely to discuss very low-level mental illness.

This observed gap informed the *Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care 2005–2010*.[184] The North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) is the main provider of mental health services in Waltham Forest. It did not achieve its target of a minimum of 32 per cent of BME patients using psychotherapy and psychology services in the first three quarters of 2009/10, only achieving 25.3 per cent, compared with a minimum of 32 per cent.[185]

The council and the NHS have developed a strategy that aims to reduce the gap in life expectancy between Waltham Forest and England, and among the wards in Waltham

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[182] Martin Knapp, David McDaid, Elias Mossialos and Graham Thornicroft, *Mental Health Policy and Practice Across Europe*, Open University, Maidenhead, 2007, available at www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/96451/E89814.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[183] MINI provides an estimate of mental health issues for England and includes a range of socio-demographic variables such as crime, ethnic minority, population size, long-term illness and hospital admission for mental health conditions.

[184] Department of Health, *Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care: An Action Plan for Reform Inside and Outside Services and The Government's Response to the Independent Inquiry into the Death of David Bennett,* 11 January 2005, available at www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/group s/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4100775.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[185] JSNA 2011–2012, p. 141.

Forest.[186] The strategy includes recognition of the need to create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities. Here, the role of community life and culture is acknowledged, where social cohesion helps protect people and their health. It suggests that high levels of social cohesion may act as a protective factor for communities facing multiple forms of deprivation, while those with low levels of cohesion can often have high levels of stress, isolation and depression. The strategy identifies the risks for particular groups:

> Those with high social isolation are more likely to be older (aged over 75) and belong to white, black Caribbean, or Somali groups. Those who are severely lonely are more likely to be older, single and Pakistani in origin.[187]

It also states: "Tackling isolation will not only improve the quality of life and reduce health inequalities; it will also help to build stronger local communities."[188] Parents participating in the More for You [189] project also agreed that the relationship with the community makes a difference to your health. Benefits include feeling happy, safe, confident, secure, less stressed, having more friends, gaining support, and having someone to talk to and share feelings with.[190]

Waltham Forest's culture strategy, Taking Our Place in London,[191] emphasises the contribution that cultural activity can make to health and well-being. Its vision is to enhance the health and happiness of people who live or spend time in the borough, whether through leisure, work or study. Its aims include the development of "great spaces" to increase creative and physical activity.

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[186] *A Healthier, Fairer Waltham Forest.* London Borough of Waltham Forest adapted the framework proposed in the Marmot Review, *Fair Society, Healthy Lives – A Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010* to address its particular health inequalities. This review provides a "life course" approach that seeks to increase the protective influences on our health and reduce the negative impacts across lifetimes. It also addresses the wider determinants of health, including housing, the physical environment, the food environment, climate change and crime.

[187] *A Healthier, Fairer Waltham Forest,* p. 31.

[188] *A Healthier, Fairer Waltham Forest,* p. 31.

[189] Waltham Forest's child poverty innovation pilot 2009–2011 aimed at reducing child poverty in the borough.

[190] Consultation with families participating in the More for You project, 11 July 2010. Cited in *A Healthier, Fairer Waltham Forest*, p. 37.

[191] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Taking Our Place in London*, Waltham Forest's Culture Strategy, 2010–2030, available at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/culture-strategy-summary.pdf (accessed November 2011).

8.4   Satisfaction with Health-care Services

An important source of data for health services in Waltham Forest comes from the GP patient survey carried out for the NHS.[192] The survey included over 12,000 respondents from Waltham Forest and so allows comparisons between Waltham Forest, London and England. The survey also asked questions on ethnicity and religion: 17 per cent of the Waltham Forest respondents were Muslim. See Table 37.

Table 37. Number of respondents to the patient survey, by faith

	None	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other	I would prefer not to say
England	354,851	11,961	1,317,549	35,495	12,545	79,418	16,948	22,068	51,498
London	59,815	4,759	202,682	21,178	7,758	34,642	6,754	5,615	13,056
NHS Waltham Forest	1,831	116	6,722	336	84	2,053	63	197	408
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
England	19	1	69	2	1	4	1	1	3
London	17	1	57	6	2	10	2	2	4
NHS Waltham Forest	16	1	57	3	1	17	1	2	3

Source: GP Patient Survey[193]

The survey asked a wide range of questions about people's experiences of doctors' surgeries, including one on the overall level of satisfaction with their GPs. The results for Waltham Forest showed that overall there were high levels of satisfaction with GPs, with 82 per cent of respondents either very or fairly satisfied, although these figures were slightly lower than those for London (85 per cent) or England (90 per cent). See Table 38.

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[192] The survey was developed with Ipsos MORI, the University of Cambridge and the Peninsula Medical School to assess patients' experiences when accessing GP services. Approximately 6 million registered patients in England were selected at random and sent a questionnaire on a quarterly basis throughout 2010–2011 (April to June, July to September, October to December 2010 and January to March 2011). See: http://www.gp-patient.co.uk/results (accessed May 2012).

[193] GP Patient Survey. Available at http://www.gp-patient.co.uk/info.

Table 38. Levels of overall satisfaction with GPs in the patient survey

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Satisfied Total
England	1,048,510	703,090	124,880	55,546	20,657	**1,751,600**
London	166,533	150,259	32,861	15,354	6,773	**316,792**
NHS Waltham Forest	5,001	5,107	1,306	603	300	**10,108**
	%	%	%	%	%	%
England	54	36	6	3	1	**90**
London	45	40	9	4	2	**85**
NHS Waltham Forest	41	41	11	5	2	**82**

Source: GP Patient survey

The Foundations' questionnaire also asked respondents about their levels of satisfaction with health services in their area. Data from the Foundations' survey showed that a majority of both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with health services. However, a significant proportion of Muslim (30 per cent) and non-Muslim (25 per cent) respondents were fairly or very dissatisfied with health-care services. See Table 39.

Table 39. Respondents' satisfaction with health services

		Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Very satisfied		7.1	14.0	10.6
Fairly satisfied		42.4	45.0	43.7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		18.2	12.0	15.1
Fairly dissatisfied		20.2	16.0	18.1
Very dissatisfied		10.1	9.0	9.5
Don't know		2.0	4.0	3.0
Total	%	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
	Number	**100**	**100**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Discussions with Muslim participants in a focus group suggested that although perceptions of health care were generally positive, weaknesses in service provision were on the whole seen as general shortfalls not specific to Muslims.

I think I get good health service. It's better than before. Now, at least, I get to see my GP on an emergency basis on the same day and I can make an appointment beforehand if I have to make one. But a lot of our friends don't share my view; they think it's got worse.

It's got worse, especially the doctor. If we want to see a doctor we have to wait. Either today you want to see a doctor, you can't see a doctor at this time they give you an appointment two or three days later. If you have more than one problem it's difficult to explain it in 10 minutes and get a solution. The doctors just say please try to be brief because other people are waiting and can you come again. You waste a lot of time having to see the doctor over and over again.

This was echoed in many of the responses from the questionnaires. The majority seemed to feel that even when services themselves were inadequate discrimination was not generally a problem, and medical personnel made efforts to accommodate the concerns of different communities.

There is equal opportunity. I feel they don't judge you for your ethnic background. They seem to respect all people and religious customs.

Clinics and hospitals provide prayer rooms for people who want to pray. They also provide female doctors to patients who want to see a female doctor.

There are a lot of people working for the NHS who belong to different religions. Through the NHS, the government brings these different people together and they become familiar with each other and patients from different communities while serving the common purpose of providing health care.

However, the Foundations' survey of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents in Waltham Forest gave a more ambiguous picture. When asked whether they felt that hospitals and medical clinics sufficiently respected religious customs, 71 per cent of Muslims sampled answered positively. This measured favourably against the 15 per cent who believed they did not. Interestingly, a large portion (51 per cent) of non-Muslims failed to respond to the question, and this may have skewed the data. As a result, the proportion of Muslim respondents who gave positive responses to the question was much larger (71 per cent, compared with 42 per cent among non-Muslims). But the number of people who answered negatively was also three times higher (15 per cent of Muslims, against 5 per cent of non-Muslims). See Table 40.

Table 40. Do hospitals and medical clinics respect different religious customs?

		Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Too much		2.0	2.0	2.0
About right		71.0	42.0	56.5
Too little		15.0	5.0	10.0
Don't know		12.0	51.0	31.5
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

A large number of responses from Muslims and non-Muslims alike emphasised the efforts clinics made to employ female GPs and a culturally diverse range of staff, as well as the provision of *halal* meals and prayer rooms in hospitals. Nevertheless, some shortfalls were highlighted in the Foundations' survey: interpreters for older residents were not always available, for example, and surgeries with BME staff were reported by some as oversubscribed. There were a number of areas, such as diet and the provision of doctors of the same sex, where some Muslims felt more could be done. Though in general these needs were acknowledged and catered to by the PCT, a few respondents mentioned instances where problems had arisen.

> In our hospitals, we have a lack of female doctors and nurses. Female Muslim patients always demand female doctors, but in most of the cases they can't give an appointment with a female doctor. In this local area there is a high concentration of Muslims, NHS should employ more female doctors at clinics in areas with large Muslim populations.

> There are issues with culturally and religiously insensitive practices regarding the treatment of people who have passed away.

A few respondents reported that they had even felt discrimination from NHS staff.

> In some places, it seems like they make you wait a long time if you are from a particular religion. Once I had to wait for a long time and I felt they kept me waiting because I am a Muslim.

> Sometimes people in the clinic look at me in a way that makes me feel like they don't respect me because of how I am dressed.

> If I am wearing my religious clothes they do not say anything which is out of order, but they intentionally delay my treatment.

Though these instances are exceptional, they suggest that efforts continue to be needed in improving the effectiveness of outreach among Muslims in the borough.

8.5   Overcoming Barriers to Accessing Health-care Services

Stakeholders identified a number of barriers to accessing health services. They noted that language barriers are more pronounced among older people, but it is also older people who have the greatest health needs. Language barriers discourage some residents from visiting health centres and can make communication with health practitioners difficult. Some residents may also be more comfortable about visiting a health centre if they are accompanied by a family member or friend, particularly for certain health conditions. To overcome such barriers, the PCT helps with the provision of chaperones and interpreters for the local community through the Patient Advice and Liaison Service.[194]

Interviewees also identified cultural barriers in reaching out to some women:

> In some communities, women cannot go out on their own, so even if you want see the women, you have to do a family appointment because the man is needed to take his wife. You make it a family appointment so that they can all come. In some instances, men and women don't come together, so you have to have separate appointments for men and women. It's about knowing the individual group. You have to look at the best way of engaging them. Once they are engaged, then you can start working with them.

Although certain women are hardest to reach for religious or cultural reasons, this interviewee argued that men are generally much harder to reach than women: "In almost all of the communities that we work with, men are more difficult to engage with." This means that you need to talk to women to get to the men:

> So for instance, if you are going to start talking about smoking, probably it's the men who smoke, but if you talk to the women, then they can take the message to the men.

The outreach approach also needs to consider the type of health problem:

> If you are discussing something like bowel screening or bowel cancer, it can be very personal. When you do this, you can't have men and women together. You do it separately.

The JSNA recommends more outreach work and effective communication of health messages to marginalised communities. NHS Waltham Forest uses local organisations to improve access to health care services. An interviewee working in health care argued that using local organisations is the best way to engage with different communities because the local NHS "doesn't have the resources or the detailed expertise that come from working with the community."

The PCT selects local voluntary organisations that work closely with the particular communities or groups that have been identified and need to be targeted: "These

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[194]   See http://www.onel.nhs.uk/about-us/Patient-advice-and-liaison-service-and-complaints.htm.

voluntary groups have people within the community, they go and recruit people within the community, and work more closely with them." Such outreach work requires local groups of volunteers that can engage directly with religious organisations. For example, the PCT used local groups working directly with mosques when it targeted Muslims for a "Stop smoking" service:

> Outreach workers from local communities are in a position to talk to people face-to-face. Letters, fliers and leaflets are certainly useful for distributing information to different and relevant places, but outreach workers have the advantage of talking to people in person.

For its local cancer campaign, the PCT used a community organisation to help reach targeted areas and groups, communicate with them to raise their awareness and ask them about any barriers to access. It also organises focus groups to help identify barriers and issues that can inform appropriate action to improve access. A key target group for the cancer campaign was the Pakistani community. The community organisation Social Action for Health (SAfH)[195] was contracted by NHS Waltham Forest to undertake the outreach work for the cancer campaign. It worked at the grassroots level to help local health services reach marginalised communities. They used locally-based workers in the target communities, which ensured that the relevant language skills were available in order to communicate face-to-face and explain issues to individuals effectively. Targeted groups were reached directly through local community centres and other similar venues where individuals from such groups were known to congregate. For example, the cancer project used a couple of community centre workers living locally who could use their specific knowledge to identify the venues.

> There is a little green area where Bengali men sit around talking. Our worker goes out there and chats with them, and he might get a number of men to get involved in one of our 40 different projects.

Certain locations are good for attracting certain groups. For example, a stakeholder suggested that since community centres tend to focus on women, they are a good place to reach out to women. Sometimes a community centre will hold meetings or events such as sewing classes that are known to attract the target group. Venues such as child care centres are good for reaching parents, particularly women. Other good spots for outreach work for parents and women are marketplaces and school entrances.

SAfH also works in mosques, which often have small centres and community rooms that are used by women at certain times and by men at other times. A mosque is a particularly good place to reach Muslim men, especially if it is felt that it would be good to talk to them separately from women because some mosques tend to be more welcoming and oriented toward men.

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[195] See www.safh.org.uk (accessed November 2011).

Outreach workers also go out into the community and recruit and develop what SAfH calls community health champions. These are local people who have some training and can go out and inform the targeted community about the cancer project and about why they may need to go to their GP. They can also propose to some community members that they get trained as SAfH workers in Waltham Forest. SAfH uses these champions to mobilise local people, encourage them to use local health services and communicate health messages to them. They are chosen because they are part of the particular community that has been targeted for a certain project. They are trained for outreach work in their native language and then go out and use these skills with people from the same ethnic community.

The training sessions for community health champions include listening skills, as they also play an important role in communicating back to SAfH about the needs, issues and concerns of these communities. As such, they are an important intermediary for a two-way communication process. For example, SAfH organises community transport so that people can travel together as a group. This service was introduced because some Muslim women residents had informed a health champion that they did not want to go out on their own. Many just needed reassurance and more information to allay any initial concerns, for example, whether there would be women staff available. Hospitals can be viewed as a big alien environment. With the help of health champions SAfH took the women as a group on a preliminary visit. Information about the visit then spread through the community by word of mouth, as participants told other family members and neighbours. Such initiatives help mobilise the community to act on their own:

> We organised local community transport to pick them up from their doctor's surgery to take them to the hospital. They saw it as a day outing; they brought their chapattis as if they were going to the seaside, and they loved it. They thought it was an outing. After that, they didn't even need transport because they started going themselves.

Local health-care practitioners also used interviews to access the depth and detailed knowledge of communities held by local organisations and the health champions. These local sources were aware of the cultural, ethnic and other differences that existed with, for example, the Turkish, Somali and Turkish communities. They also recognise that it is easier to access hard-to-reach groups through activities where health information and advice are available, rather than just meetings or presentations focusing on health issues.

Other outreach initiatives developed by NHS Waltham Forest include engagement with faith leaders to produce a faith and values framework for "Sex and Relationship" education (SRE) in schools, including 16 statements approved by faith leaders and increased engagement with Somali support groups, with health visitors attending group meetings to gain a better understanding of differences between sections of the

community and to encourage service take-up.[196] To ensure that all local residents can contribute to service planning, events are held at shopping centres and community festivals, such as the Asian Mela (festival).

Regarding Muslims specifically, the Muslim Council of Britain has argued for a fine-tuned approach to health-care delivery in London, working at the community level and adapting to cultural sensitivities. It has proposed the establishment of "Healthy Living Centres" in mosques, to harness the vitality of local religious life into improving the well-being of Muslims. From a similar perspective, the Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum partnered with the LSP to implement a system of health preachers.[197] The central concept of the programme was to identify and train local religious representatives from the borough's Muslim, Christian and Sikh communities to draw on their position as faith leaders to communicate important messages on health to their congregations.

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[196] See: *NHS Waltham Forest Annual Health Report 2009–2010*, p. 33.

[197] See: www.faithcommunities.org.uk/7.html (accessed November 2011).

9.   EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: POLICING AND SECURITY

The subject of this chapter is policing and security. Feeling safe and secure is an important prerequisite to flourishing and participating in society. People's experiences of policing are shaped by various factors such as age, gender and socio-economic status. This chapter begins with a discussion of the Foundations' findings on survey respondents' levels of confidence in the police and satisfaction with policing in their local area. It then turns to policing and security specifically. The first concern is the experiences of religious hate crime, that is, violence directed at individuals or their property because of their faith and religious identity. The second is the use of stop-and-search powers by the police. The final section examines the impact of counter-terrorism policing on Muslims, in particular the "Prevent" policy.

9.1   Confidence and Trust in Policing

The Foundations' survey asked several questions about respondents' views and experiences of policing. They were asked whether they had confidence in a number of public institutions, including the police (see Table 41). The majority of both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents said that they had either "a lot" or "a fair amount" of confidence in the police. In fact, the police were rated second after the courts as the public institution in which respondents had the highest level of confidence. Respondents had greater confidence in the police than in the local council, Parliament or the government.

Table 41. Confidence in the police

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
A lot	15	11	26
A fair amount	48	56	104
Not very much	32	27	59
Not at all	4	5	9
Don't know	1	1	2
Total	**100**	**100**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 42 gives the numbers of respondents who had either "a lot" or "a fair amount" of confidence in the institutions named in the first column.

Table 42. Confidence in public institutions

	Muslims	Non-Muslims
Police	63	67
Courts	73	79
Parliament	49	35
Government	45	32
Local council	64	44

Source: Open Society Foundations

The figures in these findings are slightly lower than those for the level of trust in the council's 2011 "Community Cohesion" survey in which 78 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement "I trust the police in Waltham Forest".[198]

Respondents were also asked about their satisfaction with local policing, which was muted compared with the general sense of trust in the police. Furthermore, the views of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents were very similar. Just over 40 per cent of respondents were either "very" or "fairly" satisfied with local policing, while just over 25 per cent were "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied". A higher number of Muslim respondents were either "fairly dissatisfied" (22 per cent) or "very dissatisfied" (7 per cent) compared with non-Muslim respondents, of whom 17 per cent were "fairly dissatisfied" and 4 per cent "very dissatisfied" with local policing. See Table 43.

Table 43. Satisfaction with local policing

		Muslim %	Non-Muslim %	Total %
Very satisfied		9	7	8
Fairly satisfied		34	37	36
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		26	29	28
Fairly dissatisfied		22	17	20
Very dissatisfied		7	4	6
Don't know		2	6	4
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Only a small proportion of respondents said that they had been a victim of crime in the past year (see Table 44) and in the majority of cases the crime had taken place in

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[198] Owen, *Community Cohesion Survey,* p. 51.

their neighbourhood or local area (see Table 45). Sixteen Muslim respondents said that they had been a victim of crime. In 12 cases, the crime had been in the neighbourhood or local area. Only 2 of the 16 Muslims who had been a victim of crime felt that the crime was motivated by discrimination (see Table 46).

Of particular concern to policymakers should be the finding that of those who had been the victim of a crime in the last year, none of the Muslim participants reported the crime to the police, whereas all of the non-Muslim respondents did so. Of course the number of individual respondents is small, and therefore great caution is needed in drawing any wider conclusions. It nevertheless suggests the need for deeper understanding of whether there are particular barriers to Muslims contacting the police when they are victims of crime, as this may be the crux of the perceived gap between the police and the local communities they try to serve.

Table 44. Has the interviewee been a victim of crime?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Yes	16	18	34
No	84	82	166
Total	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 45. Where did the crime take place?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Neighbourhood	8	7	15
Local area	4	3	7
City	2	3	5
Elsewhere	2	5	7
Total	16	18	34

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 46. Was discrimination the motive of the crime?

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Yes	2	3	5
No	14	15	29
Total	**16**	**18**	**34**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 47. Contact with the police in the past 12 months?

	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Total
Yes	22	37	59
No	77	63	140
Total	**99**	**100**	**199**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 48. Satisfaction with the police after contact?

	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Total
Yes	13	22	35
No	9	15	24
Total	**22**	**37**	**59**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Most of the respondents who had had some contact with the police in the previous 12 months were satisfied with the service they received from them. However, a significant minority were not satisfied (Table 48). During the focus group sessions, there was an opportunity to explore the nature and causes of this dissatisfaction. Among older focus group participants the main concerns were poor experiences of responses to reporting crime or perceptions that the police were not effective and able to deal with crime. In particular, the number of comments about the local police apparently just going through the motions and not seeming to make an effort to investigate or pursue offenders was significant.

> We feel that the police just do their basic duty. They come and write the report and that's it. After that they did not console us, nothing; they said nothing. As the burglars were standing on the road before they came in the front door; they should have asked neighbours if they saw anything because my daughter was not home but they [neighbours] were home. The police did not do any investigating.

When my house got broken into the police came and took all the fingerprints, any evidence that they could, but the outcome was…basically, there was no outcome.

Similar comments were also made by Muslim and non-Muslim respondents in the questionnaires:

I feel they should have done more than they actually did.

When I called the police they did not come.

The police did not take the matter seriously.

They acted like they didn't care.

They did not come on time. In fact, they came after an hour.

These comments reflect a general dissatisfaction with policing rather than a concern with unfair treatment. A very different picture emerges from the focus groups of young people, particularly men who were concerned with what they felt amounts to discriminatory use of police stop-and-search powers.

9.2   Safety, Hate Crimes and Violence

Discussion groups and interviews indicated that concerns about anti-social behaviour and gang-related violence have a significant impact on respondents' sense of safety and security:

Around here, the thing that makes people feel unsafe is the threat of violence on the street. This is not helped by young people of all cultures stabbing each other.

Experiences of religious hate crimes, mainly verbal abuse but in some instances physical abuse, were a big feature in the discussion group with young Muslim women. Those who wore headscarves seemed to be particular targets for abuse.

We've been here eight years. I've actually been attacked myself; I've been spat at and attacked. Not just here [local area of London], but in London itself. Since 9/11 and 7/7 it's had a major impact on the Muslim community in terms of veils being ripped off.

My aunt she wears a niqab, she's stopped travelling on the buses or she only gets a cab or goes with family and friends because she's had her niqab pulled off. She's had people spit at her. People throw alcohol at her. She's even had one person push her. Ever since that incident she has really bad knee problems. So she's just stopped going out. She only goes out with family members now. She doesn't get on public transport any more.

Some women had a meeting with the police about reporting hate crime. They were asked about incidents and why they these incidents were not reported. The women

replied that the frequency and regularity of the incidents meant they did not have the time to report them, but had instead normalised this as part of their everyday experience:

> This happens to us every day. What do you want us to do? Report every day? It's part and parcel of our life. We've tried to be resilient; to become immune to it. Every single day we are spat upon.

Most did not report these incidents to the police or local authority. Some felt that there was little that could be done where abuse was from a passing stranger; others believed that these instances would not be taken seriously.

> [Reporting] depends on how severe it is. Everyone gets verbal abuse.

> It's your word against theirs. How seriously is someone going to take verbal abuse?

> There are laws, but no one really goes forward because they see no point in it.

> If we saw more being done about it, we would take it more seriously. But it seems like it's just recorded and nothing ever gets done. It's seen as a waste of time.

The indications emerging from these interviews are particularly worrying as the local authority has invested a significant amount of time and resources in developing initiatives to tackle hate crime. However, interviews with key practitioners in this area suggest that this is not an unusual finding. One interviewee agreed that:

> If you speak to Asian women they will say that [abuse] is a common occurrence. If they reported every single incident they wouldn't be able to leave their homes and get on with their daily routine.

An interviewee who works in this area suggested that women were more likely to experience verbal abuse when they were with their children and that the abuse would be from children and adults from diverse backgrounds. According to the interviewee, reporting differs across gender and generation:

> Young people don't report, they retaliate or move on. Older Asian males tend to report. Anecdotal evidence is that the largest group of victims are Asian women.

Interviews with practitioners indicate that accessibility and confidentiality are critical issues in encouraging crime reporting. People do not report if they fear they will not be believed or will be laughed at. Reporting is easier, it was suggested, if the person you report to reflects your background and gender. It is for these reasons that the local authority has focused on developing a system of third-party reporting sites. These are locations that provide an accessible community-based space for reporting crimes, including hate crimes. One of the council's key initiatives is the development of non-

police reporting sites for hate crimes. This initiative works with a range of organisations including a number of mosques.

9.3   Stop-and-search

The police's use of stop-and-search powers is critical in their relations with minority groups. The police have a range of powers to stop and search people: some require the officers to have a reason for stopping the individual; others allow stops for a period of time in authorised areas without any need for suspicion before a person is stopped. Perceptions of racial and ethnic profiling in the exercise of stop-and-search powers are reinforced by data showing that across the UK that black people are six times more likely than white people to be stopped by police and that Asians are three times more likely to be stopped than whites.[199]

Data from the Metropolitan police for Waltham Forest shows that in the 12 months to July 2011 there were over 40,000 stops in the borough. The Equality and Human Rights Commission review of stop-and-search data found that in Waltham Forest that blacks and Asians, respectively, were 3.9 and 2.5 times more likely to be stopped than a white person.[200] See Table 49.

Table 49. Use of stop-and-search powers by police in Waltham Forest, July 2010–July 2011[201]

PaCE (Police and Criminal Evidents) and other stop-and-search	14,492
Stop and account	20,499
Section 60 searches[202]	5,294
Total	**40,285**

Source: Metropolitan Police Authority Stop and Search report, July 2011

In the focus groups, feelings about stop-and-search ran high, particularly among younger participants:

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[199] Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Stop and Think: A Critical Review of the Use of Stop and Search Powers in England and Wales,* Equality and Human Rights Commission, London, 2010 (hereafter Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Stop and Think*).

[200] Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Stop and Think*, p. 89.

[201] Data taken from Metropolitan Police Authority, *Stops and Searches Monitoring Mechanism*, July 2011, available at www.met.police.uk/foi/pdfs/priorities_and_how_we_are_doing/borough/waltham_forest_stop_and_search_monitoring_report_july_2011.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[202] Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act introduced in 1994 gives police the right to stop and search people in a defined area without reasonable suspicion.

I carry a rucksack on my back while I go to work and I use the Overground to go to Liverpool Street. After the 7/7 attack there have been more police in the Liverpool Street area and I have been stopped and searched several times. I have a massive problem with this especially if I am running late for work or for a meeting, it is very irritating. A friend of mine who comes to this mosque as well has been stopped and searched many times. He has a beard and is three times my size and he finds it very irritating as well. Once he was stopped and searched while walking with his young daughter. My friend is a very high up in our company and it was very embarrassing for him to be stopped and searched in front of his daughter.

However, even among older focus groups participants and stakeholder interviewees, there were experiences of stops of younger members of their family or just the observance of stops of younger people in the street. Some respondents felt that they were stopped because of their religion; this was particularly the case when an individual is stopped under counter-terrorism laws; others thought stops related to their ethnicity. One respondent suggested that the lack of clarity about why you are stopped is the source of dissatisfaction:

Stop-and-search makes everyone feel very uneasy; very unsure of themselves. You are sit there questioning yourself: is it my hijab? Is it Islam? Or, is it just me that they've stopped? It's that uncertainty that doesn't help.

The use of stop-and-search powers was also an important concern highlighted by several stakeholders. The perception that stop-and-search powers are used disproportionately against some groups may explain the response in the council's 2011 "Community Cohesion" survey, in which 70 per cent of respondents agreed with the following statement: "The police view some groups of people (for example, [those connected by] faith, colour or nationality) with more suspicion than others." Further analysis of the responses found that BME respondents were more likely than white respondents to agree with this statement.[203] At the same, 80 per cent of respondents believed that they would be treated fairly by the police. However, further analysis of this data found that among faith groups, Muslims were less likely to agree with this statement than others.[204] This last finding may be a consequence of the focus of counter-terrorism policing on Muslim communities.

9.4   Policing and Counter-terrorism

9.4.1   Operation Overt

For Waltham Forest, the global dimensions of the "war on terror" were brought uncomfortably close to home when, in August 2006, police traced a conspiracy to blow

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[203]   Owen, *Community Cohesion Survey,* p. 50.

[204]   Owen, *Community Cohesion Survey,* p. 50.

up transatlantic airliners to individuals living in Walthamstow. The arrests, undertaken as part of Operation Overt, were a key event in the relationship between police and local Muslim communities. The arrests emphasised the need to address the risks of violent extremism at the local level and also focused on the relationship between local Muslim communities and public bodies such as the police and the local authority.

In the period immediately after the arrest, the police and the local authority were confronted with a number of issues: questions from local residents about the arrests; disruption in access to the streets where the arrests had taken place and where houses were being searched; national and international media attention on these neighbourhoods; and the potential for increased tension between different communities. According to one local official, there was a fear of a backlash against local Muslim communities. Most interviewees agree that actions taken by the council contributed to preventing this from happening: "The council seized the initiative. We avoided the worst of what could have been a really nasty breakdown of community relations."

Interviews with stakeholders in the local authority, police and Muslim communities indicate that a challenge in addressing these issues was the limited nature of the relationship between them. It was suggested that the local authority had strong relationships with particular sections of local Muslim communities, but lacked an understanding of the full diversity and complexity of other parts. One interviewee said that officials in the mosques, which were the centre of attention from the national and international press, felt that they did not have any help from the local authority and only received advice and information after making protests and raising their concerns with the council. It was felt that more could have been done to help them prepare for the reaction to the arrests. The interviewee acknowledges that since then the relationship has changed, "the situation was salvaged", and since then there has been far more engagement and interaction with the different parts of the local Muslim communities.

Several interviewees who worked in local civil society and faith groups were critical of the police's approach to faith communities. They felt some police lacked any sensitivity or understanding of the role of faith communities and organisations and appeared to approach them with suspicion:

> When I first met them [the police], they showed absolute ignorance of anything to do with faith, particularly the Muslim community. [They had] all sorts of preconceptions about mosques having influence over [extremists] and the actions they engage in. There isn't any dialogue between law enforcement and the local mosques.

In the aftermath of Operation Overt and in recognition of the need for greater engagement between the local authority and local Muslim communities, a faith communities liaison officer was appointed. The post is held by a police officer who is seconded to the local authority. The officer is responsible for building relationships

with institutions, organisations and individuals active in local faith communities. In this way the officer is able to monitor tensions and address concerns that arise. The interviews with Muslim community and local authority stakeholders suggest that this has contributed positively to developing trust and confidence.

> I think sometimes when the police try to engage communities there is a clear us and them situation. This project has had a high level of trust. The police confide in them and it works both ways. Through this relationship we've gained a lot of additional intelligence and information we wouldn't normally have received. It has been particularly good for our tension monitoring. There is trust and the channels are open. People are willing to tell the police when something dodgy is going on.

There was, however, criticism by some other faith community groups about the designation of the post as a faith communities liaison officer when it was perceived by some other faith groups that the officer's role was mainly aimed at engagement with the Muslim community.

The interviews generally suggest that the faith communities liaison officer plays a valuable role. However, the officer's effectiveness is curtailed by the difficulties of undertaking any long-term planning. This is a function of the post being based on a one-year renewable contract. Planning for longer-term work would be possible if this position was maintained for at least a period of three years at a time.

9.4.2 "Prevent"

Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE or "Prevent") is a central plank of the government's overall counter-terrorism strategy. "Prevent" aims to stop radicalisation, reduce support for terrorism and discourage people from becoming terrorists.[205] The government Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has the lead responsibility of working with communities and local authorities on "Prevent".[206] In local areas, "Prevent" also involves those working in education, youth services, health, social services and offender management.

Waltham Forest has received funding from the DCLG to support and engage local civil society organisations in working towards the goals of the PVE strategy. In the aftermath of Operation Overt, Waltham Forest received funding through the PVE

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[205] HM Government, *Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism,* Cm 7475, Stationery Office, London, 2009.

[206] Department for Communities and Local Government, *Preventing Violent Extremism: A Strategy for Delivery,* London, May 2008. Available at http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Publica tions/Documents/Document/DownloadDocumentsFile.aspx?recordId=137&file=PDFversion and Department for Communities and Local Government: *Preventing Violent Extremism: Winning Hearts and Minds*. London: April 2007. Available at
http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/preventingviolentextremism.

Pathfinder Fund. Waltham Forest has developed a range of innovative approaches to counter the threat of extremism.[207] In 2009, the council received a Beacon award for its work on cohesion and "Prevent". The award from the central government is given to local authorities that are identified as having undertaken excellent work in a specific area. As part of the award, the local authority is given funding to disseminate its good practice to other local authorities.

Interviews with community groups, the police and local authority officials highlight some of challenges that arise from the implementation of the "Prevent" policy. While there is strong and open support for "Prevent" initiatives from some local Muslim community organisations, particularly those involved in the delivery of "Prevent" projects, most Muslim community groups and organisations view "Prevent" with suspicion and distrust. This lack of community support was acknowledged by stakeholders who worked in this area:

> The problem is there is no community buy-in. Certain community organisations are all for the "Prevent" agenda and deliver it on a day-to-day basis. While there must be mosques that agree with them, the majority of the people in the groups that we work with don't agree with "Prevent".

Communities seem reluctant to engage with "Prevent" due to a belief that it stigmatises the whole Muslim community, and approaches the whole community through the lens of counter-terrorism, treating everyone as potential suspects and focusing initiatives on them. A local official described it in the following terms:

> Muslims are feeling stigmatised by having these projects that just focus on them. They feel they are facing resentment from others as extra resources are directed toward them. There is also a sense of spying, as well as resentment from the local authority that is targeting them for this sort of work.

In the experience of one official, some community groups dissociated themselves from a project on capacity-building for faith community organisations when they learnt that it was part of "Prevent".

For officials who work in this area, the blurred boundaries and overlap between cohesion and "Prevent" projects are seen as providing an important way in which to overcome resistance to "Prevent", by engaging communities in cohesion work:

> The buy-in on the "Prevent" agenda from the community leaders has been really poor. It's seen as targeting a certain community. The language that is used gives a sense that it's all about spying. Communities have refused to engage with it. The only way we can keep our communities involved is by having more of a cohesion angle.

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[207] Waltham Forest Council, *Working Together, Living Together, Being Together – Waltham Forest Community Cohesion Strategy 2008–2011*, 2008, p. 10, available at http://www1.walthamfores t.gov.uk/ModernGov/Published/C00000287/M00001812/AI00009757/$9AppendixJuly08Com munityCohesionStrategyv2.docA.ps.pdf (accessed 6 August 2009).

Others argue that the focus on cohesion work reflects the fact that some community organisations see work on cohesion as the best way to address the issues of violent extremism.

Most interviewees agreed that an attempt to build greater trust through the creation of an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to the "Prevent" board was not effective. There were a number of problems in the process of running the IAG. There were significant delays in getting the group set up and tensions between different members of the group about its role and the impact of "Prevent" initiatives were said by interviewees to have dominated early meetings. Tensions were perhaps inevitable as members of the IAG included organisations that were involved in delivering "Prevent" and groups that remained opposed to or at least suspicious of it. Furthermore, some members of the IAG wanted a more formal representative role on the "Prevent" board. Others felt that their views had not been taken into account in shaping the "Prevent" action plan that was developed by the council. As this was an advisory group set up by the council, the council's response to the challenges of running the group was to allow the group to fall into disuse, to effectively disband it. While this is understandable from the perspective of the council and their feeling that they were not getting much out of the group, according to one interviewee, it nevertheless has had adverse consequences – in particular it "perpetuates the feeling that the IAG was window dressing".

9.5   Neighbourhood Policing Policies

Neighbourhood-based policing is a key feature of the approach to policing in London. It is an approach that seeks to increase contact between the police and local communities and to ensure opportunities for local people to influence the priorities and approach to policing and security issues in their area. In Waltham Forest, a key mechanism for the delivery of neighbourhood policing was the creation of the "Safe and Sustainable" partnership plan which ran from 2008 to 2011. It was designed to work with local residents to develop a sustainable community strategy for the borough on the premise that the population was likely to grow and diversify over the next 15–20 years. The partnership programme also focused on the engagement of local residents in what they considered priorities in crime reduction and community safety.

A partnership action plan created with Safety Net concentrated primarily on the reduction of both violent and acquisitive crime, through early intervention actions such as youth diversion activities and appropriate support for victims of youth crime. The plan also identified Muslim women as gateways to tackling extremism. Other strategies for reducing crime included effective enforcement, reducing re-offending and situational prevention.[208]

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[208]   London Borough of Waltham Forest Council and SafetyNet Partnership, *Safe and Sustainable, The Partnership Plan for Waltham Forest 2008–2011*, available at http://www1.walthamforest.gov.uk/ModernGov/Published/C00000392/M00001893/AI000103 51/$B4Appendix1.doc.pdf (accessed November 2011).

There are also a number of initiatives that aim to engage young people. The police are working alongside the Youth Independent Advisory Group, a group of 15–21-year-olds across the borough, to identify safety issues in the community and to respond to local and national policies. This group also provides innovative role-play training to new police recruits in stop-and-search, offering advice on good practice from a young person's perspective.[209]

There are a number of mechanisms for greater community consultation and participation in shaping policing and security policies. One is the Safer Neighbourhood Panels (SNPs), which are panels matching the Safer Neighbourhood Areas. The SNPs, whose members include local residents, advise on policing and safety. Neighbourhood walks are among the activities that the panel members undertake. These involve a walk around a local area to identify matters that need to be addressed and can be anything from graffiti on walls that needs to be removed, or the lack of street lighting, or anti-social behaviour hotspots that may require more police attention. The interviews indicate that the success of these activities depends on attracting good committed volunteers. One stakeholder interviewee, who is an active member of their local panel, mentioned the importance of faith community organisations as a mechanism for reaching out to different parts of the local communities, particularly minority communities. This referred not only to mosques, but also black evangelical churches. It was suggested that in addition to recruiting individuals from more diverse backgrounds, there was a need for more detailed induction and training for new members. This interviewee, who moved to the area a few years ago and is quite active in the local community, attended two training sessions on participation in the SNPs. Nevertheless, he said that he "had to fight to find out about how I learn what I should do". The interviewee felt that more training was needed, noting for example that "Prevent" was mentioned in the induction but no further details were given.

One stakeholder interviewee argued that while community policing was an excellent idea, there needed to be greater training and support for both police and communities to ensure that the meetings were productive and effective. The interviewee suggested that those attending the meeting or panel might become frustrated as they did not understand the context in which council officers worked or processes by which decisions were made. In addition, the police officers who attended might be quite junior and lack the experience to handle these meetings.

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[209] See http://www.wfyoungadvisors.org.uk/recruitment/yiag.html (accessed April 2012).

10. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Participation and Citizenship

Civic and political participation are a further measure of social inclusion. Citizenship should not solely be measured by the rights afforded to minority groups, but should also assess their level of participation toward political institutions.[210] This chapter focuses on experiences of civic and political participation, beginning by examining the level of political participation through voting in elections and other forms of political activism, such as signing petitions or attending demonstrations. The chapter then examines individuals' perceptions of the influence they have over decisions at the local and national level as well as their level of trust in political institutions. It concludes by outlining some of the ways in which the LB of Waltham Forest has tried to increase the civic participation of local residents, including through initiatives focused on groups, such as Muslims.

10.1 Political Participation

One measure of political participation is voting in elections. There are no data on voting by different faith groups. Attempts have been made to measure voting by different ethnic groups. However, there is no agreed methodological approach for identifying the levels of ethnic-minority voter turnout. Analysis of the level of turnout in elections among ethnic-minority and Muslim groups is therefore contested. Purdam et al. (2002) found low levels of voter turnout among Pakistani Muslims. This, they argue, reflects their younger age profile, greater social and economic deprivation, and settlement in predominantly urban areas where turnout tends to be lower than average.[211] A different sampling methodology found South Asian Muslim voter turnout in 2001 (58.7 per cent) was identical to the non-Asian turnout (58.4 per cent). This study also revealed unexpected gender differences. Turnout among South Asian Muslim women (64.1 per cent) was significantly higher than that of Muslim men (56.7 per cent).[212] Further analysis of the 2001 election also found that voter registration among Muslim residents was higher in areas of high Muslim

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[210] Martiniello makes this point about migrant communities: M. Martiniello, "Practical Participation, Mobilisation and Representation of Immigrants and their Offspring in Europe", in R. Bauboeck (ed.), *Migration and Citizenship: Legal Status, Rights and Political Participation*, IMISCOE Reports, AUP, Amsterdam, 2006 (hereafter Martiniello "Practical Participation, Mobilisation and Representation of Immigrants").

[211] K. Purdam, E. Fieldhouse, A. Russell and V. Karla, *Voter Engagement Among Black and Minority Ethnic Communities*, Electoral Commission, London, 2002.

[212] D. Cutts, E. Fieldhouse, K. Purdam, D. Steel and M. Tranmer, "Voter turnout in British South Asian communities in 2001 general election", *Political Studies Association* 9 (2007), pp. 396–412.

[212] E. Fieldhouse and D. Cutts, "Mobilisation or Marginalisation? Neighbourhood Effects on Muslim Electoral Registration in Britain in 2001" *Political Studies* 56(2) (2008), pp. 333–354 (hereafter Fieldhouse and Cutts, "Mobilisation or Marginalisation?").

concentration, suggesting that social connection and community networks played an important role in mobilisation in these areas.[213]

The Foundations' survey data showed that a similar proportion of Muslim respondents (58.5 per cent) and non-Muslim respondents (57.1 per cent) voted during the last local council elections. A slightly higher proportion of non-Muslims (64.3 per cent) than Muslims (57.3 per cent) voted at the last national election (which, at the time of the fieldwork, was the 2005 general election). These figures can be compared with the overall voter turnout rate for the three parliamentary constituencies in Waltham Forest: Chingford and Woodford Green (63 per cent), Leyton and Wanstead (55 per cent) and Walthamstow (54 per cent). The voter turnout rate among respondents can also be compared with the overall voter turnout rate for the UK in the 2005 general election of 61 per cent.

Compared with the last parts of the 20th century, turnout in general elections in the last 10 years has been low. Reasons for this were discussed by focus group participants. For some it reflects disillusionment with political parties and a belief that party politics constrain individual politicians in what they are able to achieve. Politicians were criticised for being incompetent, career-minded and out of touch with people because they were "not genuine enough to deal with the issues".[214] The scepticism toward mainstream politicians irrespective of whether they were Muslim or not reflected the idea that to enter mainstream politics one has to compromise one's views and beliefs for the party line. See Figures 4 and 5.

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[213] Fieldhouse and Cutts, "Mobilisation or Marginalisation?".

[214] Quote from a participant of Foundations' focus group.

Figure 4. Voting in last national elections, 2005
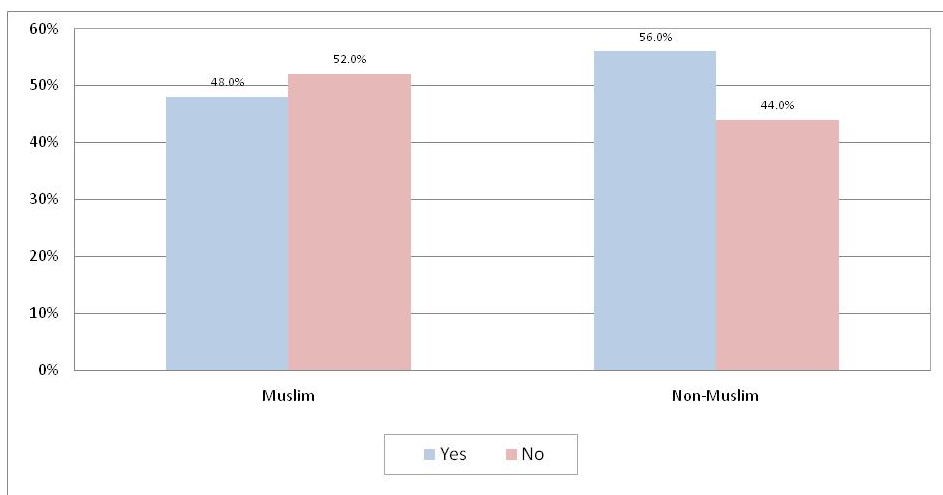
Source: Open Society Foundations

Figure 5. Voting in last local elections, 2005
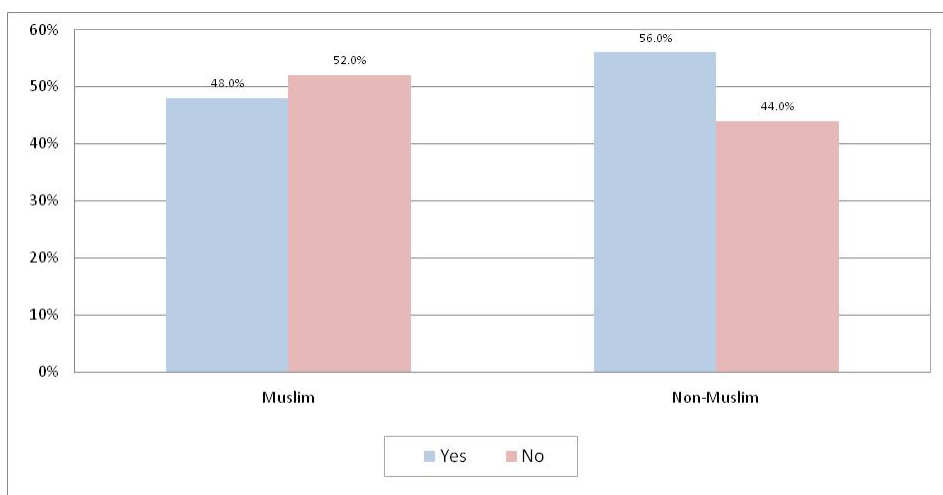
Source: Open Society Foundations

The Foundations' questionnaire asked respondents whether in the last 12 months they had signed a petition, taken part in a demonstration or attended a public meeting or rally. The survey findings show that a similar percentage of Muslim respondents (42 per cent) as non-Muslim respondents (42 per cent) had signed a petition and taken part in a public demonstration (Muslims, 10 per cent; non-Muslims, 11 per cent),

while slightly more non-Muslim (18 per cent) than Muslim respondents (13 per cent) had attended a public meeting or rally. The results therefore show little difference between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents in their level of political participation. See Table 50.

Table 50. Civic participation in the last 12 months

		Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
In past 12 months, has interviewee attended public meeting or rally?	Yes	13.0	18.0	15.5
	No	87.0	82.0	84.5
In past 12 months, has interviewee taken part in a public demonstration?	Yes	10.0	11.0	10.5
	No	90.0	89.0	89.5
In past 12 months, has interviewee signed a petition?	Yes	42.0	42.0	42.0
	No	58.0	58.0	58.0
In the last 12 months has interviewee taken part in a consultation or meeting about local services or problems in local area?	Yes	11.0	19.0	15.0
	No	89.0	81.0	85.0
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

10.2 Perceptions of Influence and Trust

Levels of civic and political participation may be shaped by, as well as have an impact on, individuals' perceptions of whether they can influence decision-making or trust political institutions.

There was significant variation between Muslims and non-Muslims in their beliefs in whether or not it was possible to influence decision-making processes at the local level. Among Muslim respondents, 62 per cent "agreed" or "definitely agreed" with the statement that they could influence decisions affecting the city (Table 51). This was significantly higher than the proportion of non-Muslim respondents (45 per cent) who believed this. These findings in the Foundations' survey should also be read in the context of the Council's 2009 "Community Cohesion" survey, in which 51 per cent of respondents said that they felt that they can influence decisions affecting their local area. More worryingly, by the 2011 survey, the proportion of residents who felt that

they could affect decision-making in their local area had fallen to only 36 per cent.[215] See Table 51.

Table 51. Do you agree that you can influence decisions affecting the city?

		Muslim	Non-Muslim	Total
Definitely agree		6.0	10.0	8.0
Agree		56.0	35.0	45.5
Disagree		26.0	40.0	33.0
Definitely disagree		2.0	10.0	6.0
Don't know		10.0	5.0	7.5
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

The Foundations' questionnaire asked respondents if they felt they could influence decisions at the national level (Table 52). A smaller proportion of both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents felt they could influence decisions affecting the country, compared with the city. Among non-Muslim respondents, 37 per cent felt they could influence decisions affecting the country, compared with 45 per cent who felt that they could influence decisions affecting the city. Among Muslim respondents the difference between perceptions of influencing city and national decisions was more dramatic. While 62 per cent of respondents felt that they could influence decision-making in the city, only 39 per cent felt that they could influence national decisions. This suggests that Muslim and non-Muslim respondents had similar perceptions of their ability to influence national decisions, with a majority of both groups feeling that they could not do so. By contrast, there was a significant difference in the perceptions of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents over decisions affecting the city. A majority of Muslim respondents felt they could influence decisions, while a majority of non-Muslim respondents felt that they could not.

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[215] Owen, *Community Cohesion Survey,* p. 41.

Table 52. Do you agree that you can influence decisions affecting the country?

		Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
Definitely agree		6.0	7.0	6.5
Agree		33.0	30.0	31.5
Disagree		44.0	42.0	43.0
Definitely disagree		8.0	12.0	10.0
Don't know		8.0	9.0	8.5
Did not answer		1.0	0	0.5
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

This issue was also explored in the focus groups. Comments from focus group participants suggested that people thought that it was possible to influence local and national decision-making processes if one had the confidence:

> I think now, being outspoken and being vocal and being challenging works. You have to act this way as well as have enough confidence, understanding and knowledge of what's going on to be effective.

The Foundations' survey also asked respondents whether they trusted civic and political institutions: parliament, the government and the city council. The findings overall suggested that Muslim respondents had greater levels of trust in political institutions compared with the non-Muslim respondents. Almost half of Muslim respondents (49 per cent) reported trust in the national parliament, compared with just over one-third (35 per cent) of non-Muslim respondents. While 12 per cent of Muslims said they had "a lot" of trust in parliament, only 3 per cent of non-Muslim respondents said the same thing. See Table 53.

Table 53. Trust in national parliament

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
A lot	12.0	3.0	7.5
A fair amount	37.0	32.0	34.5
Not very much	33.0	41.0	37.0
Not at all	9.0	13.0	11.0
Don't know	9.0	11.0	10.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

A majority of both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents said that they did not trust the national government. A closer examination of these data shows that Muslims were again more positive than their non-Muslim counterparts. Three times the percentage of Muslims (12 per cent) than non-Muslims (4 per cent) trusted the government "a lot", while only 28 per cent of non-Muslims said they trusted the government "a fair amount"; for Muslim respondents the figure was 33 per cent. An equal proportion of Muslims (16 per cent) and non-Muslims (16 per cent) had no trust in government at all. See Table 54.

Table 54. Trust in national government

	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
A lot	12.0	4.0	8.0
A fair amount	33.0	28.0	30.5
Not very much	35.0	47.0	41.0
Not at all	16.0	16.0	16.0
Don't know	4.0	5.0	4.5
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Among both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents, trust in the local city council was higher than trust in national political institutions. However, again, a greater proportion of Muslim respondents (64 per cent) than non-Muslim respondents (46 per cent) had some trust in the council. Over half of the Muslim respondents (51 per cent) had "a fair amount" of trust in their city council, while only 39 per cent of non-Muslims felt

the same way. On the other side of the trust equation, 40 per cent of non-Muslims compared with 27 per cent of Muslims had very little trust in their city council. See Table 55.

Table 55. Trust in the city council

		Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total
A lot		13.0	7.0	10.0
A fair amount		51.0	39.0	45.0
Not very much		27.0	40.0	33.5
Not at all		4.0	7.0	5.5
Don't know		5.0	7.0	6.0
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	100	100	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Thus, these results, echoing the differences in perceptions of influencing decision-making at local and national level, reveal a greater trust in local political institutions than national ones. Scepticism of the institutions of government at all levels is more pronounced among non-Muslims than Muslims, though some Muslim respondents in the focus groups highlighted the decline in trust in politicians among Muslims and non-Muslims:

> In the past, you used to take things at face value; that's what we were taught, that's how the basic culture of this country is: you expect the politicians to tell the truth, or you expect your government to tell the truth. Recently, the average Englishman has learnt that that's not true anymore.

This view was reinforced by a community activist:

> Why is it that people distrust their governments? Because of the lies and cover-ups. Increasingly people from minority communities are distancing themselves from wanting to work with civic structures, decision making and politics.

10.3 Consultation and Engagement with Service Providers

A small number of both Muslim (11.1 per cent) and non-Muslim respondents (18.8 per cent) in the Foundations' survey had taken part in a consultation or meeting about local services or problems in their local area. This can be read in the context of results of the Council's 2011 "Cohesion" survey, in which 8 per cent of respondents reported attending a safer neighbourhood ward panel meeting.

This lack of participation in local service provision consultation was touched upon in the focus group interviews. The feeling that the Muslim community needed to stop complaining and "to start taking action against whatever problems we have" was expressed by a number of focus group respondents. Reasons for individuals not participating in consultations were also discussed. Some suggested that the lack of interaction by individuals with people from outside their community resulted in individuals lacking the confidence needed to attend meetings or events with a more diverse range of people from outside the comfort zone of their own groups:

> But it might also be intimidation because you're so used to being in a community which is all your people. You can feel sort of intimidated going to a place where it's not just all Muslims, where you have to talk to other people.

Most respondents wanted to see an increase in civic participation and engagement by individuals within their community. They also believed that a wider range of people needed to be consulted within their communities and other groups. They felt that consultation needed to extend beyond what some saw as self-selected or groups endorsed by the local authority.

In contrast to those who felt that Muslims needed to do more to engage with local service providers, others questioned the notion of apathetic Muslim communities, or at least one that was more apathetic than other communities. This was expressed in interviews with community stakeholders as well.

> You know how people always say Muslim communities don't engage. Well I want to ask this: how often does someone from a derelict disadvantaged white working-class area or a white middle-class suburb like Hertfordshire make the effort to engage with their own kind in their own community? Never mind engaging with black and ethnic minorities, how often do they engage with their white colleagues, from a different community?

Nevertheless, others felt that Muslims needed to make more effort in "doing something for their community", as one focus group participant put it. For several focus group participants, the lack of opportunities in their area for interactions with people from a wider range of backgrounds was regarded as a barrier to greater participation. It was believe that the experience of meeting and working with people from diverse backgrounds would engender confidence to take part in society:

> I have forced myself to go and sit on a number of panels. Sometimes I wonder if I should say something or not. You know, be a person with the courageous ability to speak, and sometimes I feel compromised.

Some respondents needed assurance that they did have a legitimate claim to speak and that they would be given a platform to do so. "We need to be able to understand that, yes, we do have a right to speak, and yes, we can do it and just be sure that nothing's going to happen to us," one focus group participant claimed. It was also argued that

more information would be useful in order to get more Muslims more engaged in civic society:

> I think part of it is information as well. If the information is spread to all the people who live there, then people would know and they would think about things. But, as it is, a lot of people just don't know about the issues and meetings.

Another respondent believed that apathy was behind the lack of Muslim participation in consultations, "part of it is because people are not interested in it because even if you do go to a consultation, nothing happens." There were also examples of novel ways in which individuals were trying to make a difference, for example:

> I found my voluntary place because when children fasted in Ramadan, they used to send my girl and boy home during lunch break. I thought children fast and have to come home in lunch break – and don't eat and go back – so it's better that we ask the school to give us time so we can keep the children in school and they agreed. We said we would do this voluntarily so they agreed.

Some focus group participants and community stakeholders also argued that for many Muslims their faith would motivate their sense of social responsibility and spur them towards civic participation. An important dimension of the council's work is its support of the Muslim community's efforts to develop and articulate its British Muslim identity. The council has opened up political spaces for Muslims where the terms and conditions of political participation are not predefined, in the way they might be as a professional employee in the council, for instance. Its Young Muslim Leaders programme exemplifies an approach that balances positive civic participation in the public sphere with retaining a strong emphasis on the values and ethos of Islam.[216] Similarly, the council has assisted organisations in collaboration with Radical Middle Way[217] and worked with local imams[218] to facilitate political participation that is both communal and confessional, engaging with other faith groups in the borough while maintaining a distinctly Muslim perspective.

10.4 Representation and Community Leaders

An important theme which kept on occurring in both focus group discussions and several stakeholder interviews was that of representation, where a clear distinction was made between a community representative and representing the community. People who said they were representing the community were defined as self-appointed

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[216] Sara Cosgrove, "Waltham Forest: Young Muslim Leaders Praised by PM", *The Guardian*, 1 December 2007, available at www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/wfnews/1873660.WAL/ (accessed November 2011).

[217] www.radicalmiddleway.org

[218] London Borough of Waltham Forest Council, *Community Cohesion Strategy Action Plan Year Two 2009/10*, 2009, pp. 20-21.

community leaders whose motives were viewed with suspicion, and community representatives were defined as individuals who had the best interests of the community at heart.

Respondents believed that local authorities and the state were partly to blame for such community leaders because it was they who endorsed their legitimacy by giving them primary status as the voice for the community, when in fact the community was much more diverse:

> We tend to find that two or three people are spokesmen for their communities and they simply tick the boxes and say that they have done their bit. Communities are more complex than this, especially Muslim communities as they have different schools of thought and are spread across different geographical areas. These are the things that make up the Muslim community.

There is a complexity in the dynamics between community representatives, the community and the state. On the one hand, the state needs individuals with whom it can engage, but on the other it also needs to make sure that these individuals have legitimacy in the community or it risks not gauging a sense of the views of the community from inside.

Some of the stakeholders and focus group respondents believed that the needs of the community could not be served by its members:

> If you look at our own, again, look at our own community leaders or so called leaders; what are they doing for us? They're actually self-appointed, egotistical, selfish individuals who have their own agendas. True representation for us is coming from the non-Muslims, unfortunately.

A 2007 study by the Institute for Community Cohesion[219] showed that there were at that time 12 councillors with Muslim backgrounds in Waltham Forest. However, these councillors did not reflect the diversity of the communities in the borough, associated as they all were with one mosque, the Jamia Masjid Ghosia (Lea Bridge Road mosque). There is, of course, no reason why councillors who happen to be from one community should represent all its facets and such a consideration would not apply to any other group. Councillors are after all elected to represent their ward, not a particular community. However, different expectations seem to have been created in respect of these communities. Many of the people who spoke with Foundations researchers said that they do not feel represented on the council. Some felt that community leaders were imposed on communities in place of actually working with the community. It was argued that community–state relations worked when they were nurtured across time.

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[219] Institute of Community Cohesion, *Breaking Down the "Walls of Silence": Supporting Community Engagement and Tackling Extremism in the London Borough of Waltham Forest,* Coventry University, August 2007.

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Such practices of course require time and resources. As one stakeholder, a director of a civil society organisation noted:

> I think the key to working with the groups within the voluntary sector is to actively listen. I don't think that relationships with people can be developed instantaneously in a couple of months. We have worked steadily and in a committed way for over a decade, and I guess if we were not seen to be representing their [community's] views or seen as controlled by them [the council] our partnership wouldn't have survived.

Statements like this highlight the fact that there is no quick fix for community consultation. It also points to the idea that disillusionment with community representatives may be due to a perception that the council uses them as a public relations exercise. While some respondents pointed explicitly to the idea that members from their community could not represent their interests due to egotistical reasons, more implicitly there was an allusion to the fact that real representation was in fact limited by a state agenda. One stakeholder told this story:

> I thought I was going to be that person who would then feed back to the council and have a strategy. But I was told very early on in a conversation with my team leader after I asked for some clarification as to what they wanted me to do; and I was told that we just want you to engage with Muslim women and engage with the Muslim community and set up lots of forums. I asked them what would that achieve. Their rationale was that this was how they were going to understand the community better, but my perception was that they didn't actually want to talk to the community.

This concern was also raised by some focus group participants who argued that the focus on Muslim communities in the context of counter-terrorism and national security under the guise of community cohesion only created more problems. They felt it increased the sense of victimisation on the part of the majority of law-abiding members of the Muslim community.

An important theme in the focus groups was the belief that the issues facing the Muslim community in Waltham Forest needed to be addressed at the grassroots level:

> The local authority should go down to the root level. We live here, we have our culture here. If others, the local community or local authority, don't want to listen to us and prefer supervisors from the top level – that can't work. You have to go to the root level.

Similarly, it was argued that policymakers had to come down and do things rather than just say things need to be done. In general, the tone of the focus group discussions all echoed the need for local authorities to work more with the communities and realise that this takes time. Participants were also well aware of the challenges the local authority faces in achieving this, particularly in light of the cutbacks and the financial

problems facing local government and how they can impact local community organisations. According a project coordinator of a civil society organisation:

> Funding has been reduced. Many voluntary organisations have been forced to close down. Many didn't have their own buildings but had a room and there was no funding and help so they could not afford the resources.

Focus group participants also mentioned some of the concerns they had about how the council's initiatives developed, as sometimes it was felt that these have been driven by pressures to produce proposals to a deadline imposed by committees, rather than by a thorough analysis of the problems on the ground and the identification of appropriate solutions.

10.5 Policies Supporting Civic and Political Participation

Government policy focuses increasingly on the importance of encouraging and supporting active citizenship. Such participation is seen as critical to improving the delivery of local services as well as improving community cohesion. In the introduction to its action plan on community empowerment, the then secretary of state for communities and local government Hazel Blears argued in 2007 that "there isn't a single service or development in the UK which hasn't been improved by actively involving local people".[220] In addition to this, volunteering is part of the Big Society policy agenda introduced by the Coalition government elected in 2010. Research supports claims that volunteering has an important role in developing soft skills – such as self-confidence, self-esteem, communication and time management – that improve employability as well as intergenerational relationships.[221]

The LB of Waltham Forest recognises the importance of community engagement and consultation. It sees the former as critical to the delivery of high-quality services that are responsive to local needs. In order to ensure support for this, there is a community engagement team in the council.

One of the principal mechanisms for engaging local communities in local decision-making is through a structure called the Community Ward Forum (CWF). These forums are open meetings for local residents held three times a year in each local ward. Supported by the council, they are led by the elected councillors for that ward. Each CWF is given £10,000 to spend on local initiatives and projects. Interviews with stakeholders indicated that the forums are regarded by the Council as very helpful in engaging communities. Council officials argue that the forums contribute to cohesion in local areas by providing a space for local people to meet to discuss their concerns and creating opportunities for local residents to work together in developing solutions. It

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[220] H. Blears, Foreword to *An Action Plan for Community Empowerment: Building on Success*, Department for Communities and Local Government, London, 2007.

[221] J. Davis-Smith, A. Ellis and S. Howlett, *UK-Wide Evaluation of the Millennium Volunteers Programme*, Department for Education and Skills, London, 2002.

was noted that the forums have been happy to fund projects to support activities in particular communities, for example, £5,000 for events to celebrate Pakistan Day. In the experience of one stakeholder, there was little problem in attracting people reflecting the diversity of the borough in the centre and south; the greater challenge was in attracting younger people. Although few young people attend the forums, CWF money has been used to fund projects for them.

The council has tried to developed other mechanisms to engage with and consult young people, particularly in shaping the delivery of policies and services that have the greatest impact on them. The council's youth strategy identifies three levels of engagement with young people: level one, children and young people are consulted and asked for their views; level two, they are involved in the planning and delivery of consultation; level three, they are involved in the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of services; and level four, children and young people are encouraged to become decision-makers and leaders. This strategy states that its goal is to set up services with young people that are youth-driven and youth informed. The council employs a youth engagement officer, who is tasked to ensure that the views of young people are taken into account in the decision-making processes of the council and service providers.

The local authority has also instituted a Youth Independent Advisory Group (YIAG), which is made up of young people who provide advice on community safety. Some of these are former clients of the youth offending teams, and are trained to deliver conflict management workshops to young people in youth offending teams and pupil referral units. They also provide advice on interventions with gangs and have been involved in training police officers following young people's experiences of stop-and-search.

Distinct from the YIAG is the council's Young Advisors (YA), a group of 30–35 young people aged 14–21 recruited through an open application process advertised in schools and local papers. There is also more targeted recruitment advertising encouraging applications from young people who may be regarded as harder to reach, such as young people in the care of or in contact with youth offending programmes. The YA are a resource that the council's department and service providers are able to draw on in developing their services and policies. The YA have been asked to help with the design of local services, such as emotional health services, drug advice services, sexual health services and spatial planning. The YA are also commissioned to undertake research with young people. Examples of this have included focus group research on young people's experiences of emotional health and drug services. The membership of the YA group reflects the ethnic and religious diversity of the young people in the borough and therefore includes a number of young Muslims. Interviews suggest that their presence has ensured that officials and service providers are aware of specific cultural and religious sensitivities that may arise for young Muslims in accessing services. For example, the research into young people's views and experiences of services connected with emotional well-being and drugs noted the need for training in emotional health for mosque youth workers.

The most direct form of engagement between local councils and Muslim communities has been through the Council of Mosques. While this has provided an important avenue for dialogue, interviews with community groups and NGOs point to the need to ensure that the dialogue and discussion are broadened to ensure the inclusion of parts of communities that cannot be engaged through this council, for example youth, women's and cultural organisations. Interviews with practitioners indicate that there is a recognition of what needs to be done, with particular challenges in finding effective ways of engaging women.

One local initiative that seeks to bridge the apparent gap between local politicians and young people is the local community radio station, Streetlife FM (see Chapter 11). Its programmes include a community hour featuring interviews with local councillors:[222]

> This is not driven by any political goal or particular local issue. It's about getting councillors in so that young people can see them from a different perspective – that they are human, that they are into music and have done different things. The community hour is more about finding out about who your local councillor is, and what they are into, and what they are like as an individual, taking off their hat as an elected member. The councillors really love that, and it can develop the relationship that they have with young people using Streetlife as a local media entity.

It is also felt that the radio station could be used more by local services:

> In my view, it could be a very strong tool for a lot of the key statutory and primary organisations, like the health service and the police, who are not necessarily getting the results that they are looking for. They can use laws and legislation to get into the community, but Streetlife is a service that the people know, that they understand. It is not here to judge, but offers people something that they can benefit from.

As a community radio station, Streetlife FM aims to give all residents an opportunity to share their views or interest in music, and play an active role in the community through participating:

> We want to include anybody who has an interest in radio or an interest in voicing their opinion about where they live. People who have made a conscious decision to be citizens who make a positive contribution to the community.

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[222] See: http://www.streetlifefm.com/community (accessed October 2011).

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11. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

In both the national and local media in the UK, distorted and negative representations of Muslims and other marginalised communities have been the result of sensationalism, stereotyping, stigmatisation, inappropriate terminology, one-sided media coverage, and the focus on certain problems and events (and the lack of focus on others). This may further alienate minority groups, exacerbate tensions and divide communities. The negative images may be challenged and community cohesion may be encouraged by more diverse representation and the active engagement of minority groups by the media.

11.1 Muslim Representation in the Media

The role of the media in reporting on Muslim communities became particularly problematic in Waltham Forest following the arrests in 2006 of several individuals who lived in the borough in connection with the transatlantic plane bomb plot. In the aftermath of the arrests, media attention focused on one local mosque which some of those arrested had attended. Local mosque officials maintained that the media coverage's implication that the mosque was responsible in some way for the actions of those arrested was completed unfounded. They argued that the individuals arrested attended the local mosque for prayers because it was their nearest local mosque. The then local MP explained that an international news channel that requested an interview appeared to lose interest after he refused to be interviewed outside the mosque. In 2009, *The Times* published an article which claimed that the mosque was under the control of the "ultra-orthodox group Tablighi Jammat and as a consequence its worshippers were easy prey for terrorist recruiters". *The Times* subsequently issued an apology and accepted that the mosque was not controlled by this group.[223]

Participants in focus groups noted a "big difference" between national and local media in their coverage of Muslim communities:

> With the local media we do not have any problems and we have a very good relationship with them. They perform their duties very responsibly and ethically.

Some felt that local media report on Muslim communities in a neighbourhood context and therefore engage with Muslim residents on a news story, whereas national media frequently fail in this respect:

> The national media always are portraying us Muslims as fundamentalists, terrorists and extremists. The local media engages with us in a very good way. They are portraying us as it should be, but the national media are the problem.

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[223] See www.carter-ruck.com/Documents//Apology-Queens_road_mosque-230810.pdf (accessed May 2012).

They also felt that the local media tended to reflect the diversity of local Muslims, rather than approaching them as a homogenous, transnational collective. Focus group participants felt that local newspapers were generally able and willing to engage with local communities.

It was thought that mainstream national media focused largely on the stories connecting Islam and Muslims to terrorism. Stories in the mainstream media were perceived as oversimplified and when representing minority extremist groups not enough was done to investigate or analyse the origins of their outlook, potentially leading to stereotypes of Islam and Muslim communities. The limited number of voices chosen by the media to represent Muslim communities also attracted resentment. Members of focus groups thought that the media afforded disproportionate coverage to extremists:

> The extremist Muslims are the ones who are in the media limelight, and we need to make sure that they're the ones who are moved away, and that the average Muslim is in the limelight.

Focus group participants saw a broad tendency in the national media to concentrate on controversial figures such as Abu Hamza al-Masri, despite the fact that his views were widely discredited among Muslims, as one participant made clear.

For some, the failure of media coverage to sensitively gauge the subtleties of the Muslim community's outlook led to a belief that the mainstream media were committed to a larger narrative that did not permit the subtleties of local reportage. It was felt that positive, low-key stories were generally overlooked or ignored. A major problem arising from this imbalance was a widespread stereotype of Muslim communities as socially destructive. It also ignored the very substantial contributions made by Muslim communities, as one focus group participant remarked:

> Why does the media deliberately ignore Muslims, when Muslims are doing something positive? We contribute to the economy, we contribute to the National Health Service, we contribute to everything here, but the media always portrays small, minor pockets of issues that they blame on the Muslims; why is that? Why can't they show Muslims more positively?

The sense of consistent negative portrayals by the media is underlined by research showing that of the most common nouns in news stories relating to British Muslims, the most frequently used words, such as "terrorist" (22 per cent), "extremist" (18 per cent), "cleric" (11 per cent) and "suicide bomber" (7 per cent) were overwhelmingly negative, while more positive nouns such as "scholar" (0.5 per cent) were barely used.[224] The standardisation of Muslims into an undifferentiated category, even when

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[224] Kerry Moore, Paul Mason and Justin Lewis, *Images of Islam in the UK: The Representation of British Muslims in the National Print News Media 2000–2008,* Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff, 2008 (hereafter Moore et al., *Images of Islam*).

the standardisation was comparatively favourable, was a crucial dimension in media representations. Researchers also found that, contrary to the general tendency of newspapers to name subjects in photographs, groups of Muslim men were twice as likely to appear in an unidentified group as in an identified one. "Muslim men are often represented as an anonymous group – the *object* of rather than the *source* of statements … A group of unidentified Muslim men is seen as an image that 'speaks for itself', thus requiring no further specificity".[225]

Other participants argued that if Muslims did not make a stronger effort to interact with the media there was a very real danger that extremists would step in to speak on their behalf:

> We should have our own media and we don't. Blaming somebody else is very easy, but what have we done? When one moves to a new house, do you go round your neighbours, knocking on the doors and telling them you are so and so and inviting them to a barbecue or something like that? The Muslim community doesn't do this, but we need this kind of interaction.

Many participants agreed that a more proactive relationship with the media was required: "We have to cover media, we have to go to the media and ensure that they interview different kinds of people not just those who portray Islam in a bad way; we have to go to the media and get them to portray Islam the correct way." Other participants agreed that to counteract negative perceptions in the press, the problem needed to be approached on a larger scale. Suggestions included more public debate in the media:

> I think the media should take more of a lead, the main media like, BBC1, BBC2 and all the channels they should have a debate on Muslim issues and there should be scholars from all the religions [who] should participate and all kinds of viewers. This did happen a little before but it should be more for a more general audience. The media should play a big part and have discussions that would reveal many opinions not just for Muslims, but also for all different communities.

Another respondent had a similar idea:

> There should be a big seminar somewhere, an open forum where we could talk. We should invite scholars from the Muslim and Jewish communities, from the Somali community. Everyone should get together. They should not be afraid of Muslims.

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[225] Moore et al., *Images of Islam,* p. 23.

11.2 Policies and Initiatives to Address Media Representation of Muslims

There have been a number of initiatives addressing media representation. One was the "iMuslim" 2010 project, which was developed out of concerns being voiced by young Muslims about the representation of Muslims in mainstream television dramas during an IAW workshop on Islamophobia and prejudice. As a result, a project was set up to produce a series of films made by young people exploring the portrayal of Muslims in the media. It involved the production company Fair Knowledge and participants interviewed leading contemporary figures in the media. It provided an opportunity for debate between young Muslims, journalists and scriptwriters from popular television dramas. Participants also learnt skills such as storyboarding, filming, editing and animating, and produced a film to reflect their voices. The films were shown as part of the London International Documentary Film Festival held at the Royal Society of Arts and was posted on YouTube. A DVD of the film was also incorporated into a lesson plan in the PSHE class looking at stereotyping sent to all schools in the borough.

"Press Gang", another initiative, is a project developing the skills of young people aged 12–19 who want to become journalists. Participants receive training in writing for news media and have opportunities to have their work published in local newspapers as well as *The Guardian* and on the BBC. Members also maintain the council's youth website, Forest Flava.

Streetlife FM, a local community radio station, was started with funding from the local Neighbourhood Forum which is supported by the council. It brings local people together through their shared passion for music. It aims to provide an inclusive and empowering platform for the voices of local people and to act as a forum to strengthen community bonds, develop mutual understanding and encourage social cohesion. It also broadcasts via its interactive website.[226]

The idea for the radio station emerged in 2004 during discussion at a Neighbourhood Forum meeting about provision for local young people:

> We were not getting the numbers up and we were not making some of the differences that we were expecting to make. The question was asked, "So how do we know what young people want?" Then I suggested why not a youth radio station, given the rationale that all young people are into music. Whether it's listening to it, playing it, knowing someone that plays it, or just being around where music is, we all have some interest in music. You might have had a favourite song, a favourite DJ, or someone that you look up to. And I think back to my own childhood when I was growing up, there was something about radio that I was always interested in.

Funding was agreed and a partnership approach was adopted, with a management board including members from local service providers, residents and young people. In

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[226] Moore et al., *Images of Islam*, p. 23.

December 2004, Ape Media were commissioned to start work on the station as a Leyton project. It had secured Leyton Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) for a feasibility study and to explore the options informed by it. In 2006, the station gained its first Restricted Service Licence, funded by the Youth Service, Team Leyton and the LB of Waltham Forest.

The station offers a platform for local youth to air their views on issues that concern them. It also provides them with a valuable learning experience that involves music, which is something that they are already enthusiastic about and understand:

> What it was really about was offering young people, a platform to voice their opinion. We are using something that they are already affiliated to, that they can understand and can control, and which they have always had an interest in, but at the same time, offering them some steer. So it's twofold in its approach, and a positive activity where they will learn how to engage with other service providers to tell us exactly what they think about what we are providing them with, gain some new skills, and possibly help them move on to becoming professional presenters or working in radio in different aspects in the media.

In terms of youth participation and development, the success of this initiative is considered to be its provision of a learning experience that is both enjoyable and which allows them to make it their own. It became their station, and so they were responsible for its development and management:

> We have been successful again by simply providing something that was fun and different. I think the key to its element of success is that young people, particularly with the younger group, have been doing everything. They come in, we train them and they have then gone on to train other people. We have young people who sit on the Board of Directors, putting on programmes, doing all the technical stuff, designing the website and contributing photos.

The station has provided local youth with useful skills and helped them build their motivation, confidence, and sense of responsibility and worth.

Its popularity and success is demonstrated in its move from its initial Leyton focus to becoming Waltham Forest's community radio station. Local interest and recognition of its value to the local community are also demonstrated by the number of local bodies that now fund the station, which include the LB of Waltham Forest, the London and Quadrant Housing Association, Waltham Forest College, and Age UK Waltham Forest.

Streetlife FM is working with local community organisations to help involve more local people from under-represented groups, such as the Somali and Asian communities. The station is based in Waltham Forest College and offers accredited courses in "Radio Production and Presenting" and "Music Business". It now has 10 core volunteer staff, but also a database of over 300 local resident volunteers who have either hosted a slot

on air or have been involved in production, information technology support or administration.

Although the council has developed these initiatives, fear of adverse publicity means that officials steer away from releasing stories or press releases directly relating to community cohesion. As one interviewee explained, local authorities feel that it is counterproductive to produce anything more than generic press releases that do not directly mention community cohesion:

> If you talk directly about cohesion projects, then people think you are talking about extremism, and no local authority wants to publish reports about that. No press officer wants to raise their head above the parapet on that, in any local authority. The terrorism issue was a while ago now, so no one wants to unnecessarily bring it up, as this would suggest there is an issue about it again, and that would be counterproductive in many ways.

12. CONCLUSIONS

Waltham Forest has for many decades been a destination for new migrants. However, the increase in the numbers and diversity of the population today makes it one of a growing number of local areas in London where the concept of super-diversity is applicable, and many residents in the borough face high levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

Although this report focuses on the experiences of Muslims, it recognises that in many areas covered by the report the issues and concerns raised and disadvantages found are common to individuals across different ethnic and religious groups. At the same time, there are issues which seem to be particularly relevant to Muslim communities. Muslim communities have faced intense scrutiny and focus from security officials, policymakers and the media following the arrest and conviction of a number of Muslims from the borough for offences relating to terrorism. Furthermore, even when a problem is common across different groups, the research finds that effective solutions can involve recognition of faith identities and working with faith-based groups or organisations in accessing groups that are hard to reach. Such work is complex, as Muslims are not a monolithic group and the borough's super-diversity is also reflected in the diversity of local Muslim communities in terms of ethnicity, religious traditions and experiences of living in the area. Many Muslims in the area have settled and lived in London for over 50 years, with children and grandchildren who have been born and brought up in the city, while others are new arrivals. Supporting cohesion and integration in such contexts remains a challenge for local communities, policymakers and practitioners.

When looked at from the local level and from the everyday concerns of local residents, there are indications of high levels of social cohesion as well as signs that further efforts to strengthen cohesion may be needed. A majority of respondents liked living in their neighbourhood, felt that people from different backgrounds got on well together and had a strong sense of belonging to the area. While a majority of respondents felt that people would help each other, a majority did not feel that people would work together to improve the neighbourhood. Nearly three-quarters of Muslim respondents to the Open Society Foundations' questionnaire indicated that they see themselves as British, although far fewer, just 41 per cent, believed that other people see them as British. Moreover, 45 per cent of Muslims also reported having experienced religious discrimination at least some of the time.

Socio-economic deprivation remains a feature in the lives of many residents in Waltham Forest, including Muslims. While key indicators for levels of education, employment and health remain below the national average and highlight the challenges policymakers face, there are important indications of improvements in all these areas over the past few years. The situation in Waltham Forest suggests a carefully calibrated mixture of different approaches from the local authority and service providers which may have contributed to these improvements by addressing deprivation and integration.

Much of the work that is undertaken by the local authority and other service providers involves a mainstream approach that is not directed at any particular group but aims to address all those who face deprivation and social exclusion. Policy approaches and initiatives focused on minority groups tend to be targeted at groups defined by ethnicity. In practice, this can mean working with faith-based organisations when working with groups that are predominately from one ethnic group, such as Pakistani and Somali communities. There are also some initiatives that have a more explicit focus on faith and religious groups. Faith-based community institutions such as mosques are used by service providers as a way to reach people and make services accessible. The key remaining challenges are to succeed in engaging with Muslim women and accessing newer Muslim communities or minorities within Muslim communities.

Cohesion policies use a mixture of approaches. There are mainstream initiatives such as the Waltham Forest One Community campaign that emphasised the shared community of all those living in the borough, and local authority support for an Inter-faith Week that interacted among faith communities and for building the capacity of faith institutions in the area. The local authority has undertaken a number of outreach initiatives specific to Muslim communities, such as Islam Awareness Week and the Muslim Young Leaders Project. The latter provides an example of a policy initiative that shifted from focusing on one particular group (young Muslims) to a more mainstream approach, when the Muslim Young Leaders project was replaced by a Young Waltham Forest Leaders Programme open to young people of all backgrounds.

In education, where ethnicity rather than religion is used to disaggregate data on achievement, there is recognition that those facing the greatest difficulties are from Roma and traveller communities. There is also work with faith communities, including Muslims, through the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education in developing a faith and values framework in recognition of the need for sensitivity when teaching about sexual health and sexual identity. Fears of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bullying in schools were raised in the aftermath of the 7 July 2005 bombings and the Operation Overt arrests in 2006. The responses to this again illustrate mixed and calibrated responses that were mainstream where possible but recognised the need for targeted measures where necessary. Thus, while there has been clearer monitoring of anti-Muslim incidents, in most schools Islamophobia has been addressed alongside other forms of prejudice and bullying, including, racism, sexism and homophobia.

Most Muslim respondents to the Foundations' questionnaires felt that enough was being done to respect and accommodate the needs of people of different religious backgrounds in education, health care and employment. They noted the provision of *halal* meals and prayer spaces in school and hospitals, as well as the flexibility of many employers on religious holidays and clothing. The response suggested that recognising diversity and ensuring inclusivity are embedded in the practices of many local organisations and institutions. This may be a legacy of earlier policies of multiculturalism as well as more recent developments in equality and anti-discrimination law. The public-sector race equality duty was, for example, seen as

critical to ensuring that the local authority's workforce reflected the diversity of its population. The new public-sector equality duty, which covers religion and belief, has the potential to be a lever for ensuring greater inclusivity and equality. However, more effective data collection on religion would help to achieve this.

The tension between mainstreaming and focusing on particular groups or communities has been particularly acute in policing and counterterrorism policy. Relations with the police were more difficult following the arrests of Operation Overt. Many Muslim community groups and organisations opposed that part of the "Prevent" policy that focused on Muslim communities, as they feared that this unfairly stigmatised them. However, some initiatives with faith groups have been more positive. The appointment of a faith communities liaison officer has helped to build trust and confidence between the police and Muslim communities. The use of mosques as one of the third-party reporting sites for hate crime is also vital in ensuring better reporting.

Like in other local authorities in the UK, a key challenge in the next few years will be sustaining many of the benefits that have been achieved from the initiatives and projects that have been developed in the past decade with limited resources.

13. Recommendations

The range of initiatives and measures that set out to make the most of London's diversity has given the borough of Waltham Forest a head start in meeting the specific needs of its Muslim residents. Many of the ongoing projects in the area set an example for local governments seeking to better understand and serve a multi-ethnic and multi-faith community. However, there remain areas where efforts have been less successful, or have not received the attention they deserve. The following recommendations highlight some of these issues, as identified by the residents and stakeholders who participated in the Open Society Foundations' research. Successful community integration is a continuous process, one that requires constant feedback and refinement to keep up with the ever-changing face of a great city.

13.1 Data and Definitions

1. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) should work with the Greater London Authority in developing guidelines for collecting data that provide a clearer account of the ethnic and religious diversity found in London across different areas such as health and education noting examples of good practice such as the health sector in Waltham Forest, where data on religious communities has been collected and used to improve policies and programmes.

2. The government should support a repeat of the 2005 National Survey on Prejudice to determine how attitudes have evolved.

3. The DCLG should work with the ONS, universities and research institutions to ensure a full analysis of the 2011 Census data, to identify trends and significant changes in the profile of the UK Muslim population since the 2001 Census.

4. The local authority should consider ways of collecting data in schools to ensure an accurate picture of the religious diversity of their student population.

13.2 Education

5. The LB of Waltham Forest should consider whether more detailed guidelines on school holidays would mitigate concerns over inconsistencies among local schools in observing religious holidays for students of different faiths.

6. The LB of Waltham Forest should work with schools to raise awareness and help engage parents from all communities in school governance in order to ensure better diversity and representation at this level. Better collection of data on the diversity of current school boards could help to assess where the needs are greatest.

13.3 Employment

7. The Department for Work and Pensions should support research into whether Muslims experience higher unemployment as a group, and the extent to which ethnicity, tradition, religion and discrimination are factors in economic activity, employment and unemployment rates among Muslims.

8. The LB of Waltham Forest should work to raise awareness about equality monitoring and the significance of newer grounds such as religion and belief in this monitoring process. Such efforts would likely improve the level of responses on equality surveys and score cards.

9. The LB of Waltham Forest, working with the Skills Funding Agency and Jobcentre Plus, should explore ways to identify and challenge the barriers faced by Muslim women jobseekers.

13.4 Health

10. The NHS Waltham Forest should consider how to work with mosques and other community organisations, including minority media, to best reach out to the diverse communities in the area and improve health-care access and adaptation to local needs.

11. The NHS Waltham Forest should work with other London boroughs to develop a better understanding of the mental health-care needs of Somali communities.

13.5 Policing and Security

12. The Metropolitan Police Service should work with Muslim and minority women's organisations in developing initiatives that increase reporting of hate crime

13. The local police should form partnerships with community and religious groups to explore the possible barriers that prevent Muslims from reporting crimes.

14. The police should seek out ways to improve the transparency of the use of stop-and-search powers, and address concerns that these practices continue to be used disproportionately against Muslims.

15. The local authority should contract the Faith Communities Liaison Officer post for three-year terms, rather than for a single year, to ensure that the officer can build relationships and develop longer-term goals in the post.

16. The local council should review the training and induction given to all new and existing members of Safer Neighbourhood Panels to ensure that all panel members have the information and skills needed to be effective participants.

13.6 Participation and Citizenship

17. The LB of Waltham Forest should consider ways of enabling the work of Young Advisors to reach into local neighbourhoods and influence local decision making.

18. The LB of Waltham Forest should explore partnerships with community groups and community media to broaden the range of participants in civic initiatives and increase the contacts between people of different backgrounds.

19. The LB of Waltham Forest should strengthen its efforts to engage with a wide range of local Muslim residents, to ensure that the internal diversity of Muslim communities is made clear and their voices heard.

20. Local NGOs should engage with sectors of the community that have been under-represented in public discussion, particularly women, to encourage and support their participation in community discussions and decision-making.

21. Work on integration should look at ways to create space for dialogue between local residents in Waltham Forest on their values, since in the Foundations' survey perception of whether people in the neighbourhood shared the same values appeared to be one of the weaker cohesive links.

22. Waltham Forest should consider the levels of participation and active citizenship amongst more recently arrived communities and what actions can be taken to ensure that they are active participants in the community and have a voice.

13.7 Media

23. The local authority's press office and local media should consider offering media training workshops and classes for local civil society groups and community organisations.

24. Mainstream media outlets should work with faith groups to identify and report on the positive contributions of Muslim communities.

25. Muslim community organisations should reach out to media sources to offer voices and stories about Muslims that provide a balanced and nuanced perspective.

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Social Cohesion, Participation and Identity

A.   Preliminary Information
[To be completed by the interviewer]

A1   Interview Number: _____

A2   Name of interviewer: _____

A3   Date of interview: _____

A4   Location of interview: _____

1	Amsterdam	6	Leicester
2	Antwerp	7	Marseille
3	Berlin	8	Paris
4	Copenhagen	9	Rotterdam
5	Hamburg	10	Stockholm
11	Waltham Forest		

A5   Name of the local area/neighbourhood: _____

A6   Duration of the interview: _____

A7   Language interview conducted in: _____

1	Arabic	8	German
2	Bengali	9	Kurdish
3	Berber	10	Swedish
4	Danish	11	Somali
5	Dutch	12	Turkish
6	English	13	Urdu
7	French	14	Other

B. Profile of the Interviewee

[This page needs to be completed by the interviewer for every interviewee immediately after the interview.]

B1   Interview Category

        1   Muslim
        2   Non Muslim

B2   Sex

        1   Male
        2   Female

B3   Any visible signs of religious identity?

        1   Yes [*please specify*]
        2   No

B4   Recruitment Source:

C. Neighbourhood Characteristics

This first set of questions is about where you live – your house, neighbourhood, local area, and what you feel about these things.

[Explain that in these questions by '<u>local area</u>' we mean the area within 15-20 minutes walk of where they live and by '<u>neighbourhood</u>' we mean the 3 or 4 street immediately around where they live.]

C1   Do you own or rent your home or have some other arrangement?

    1   Own outright

    2   Own – with mortgage/loan

    3   Part rent, part mortgage (shared equity)

    4   Rent public/social housing

    5   Rent private landlord

    6   Living with parents/siblings

    7   Living rent free [*write in why*]

    8   Squatting

    9   Other [*specify*]

C2   How many years have you lived in this local area?

C3　　What is your main reason for moving to/living in this local area?

1　Did not choose
2　Cost
3　Near work
4　Near school
5　Near family
6　Near shops/other facilities
7　Reputation of the area
8　People from the same ethnic group as you
9　People from the same religious group as you
10　Nice area
11　Social housing was offered to me
12　Liked the house
13　Cheap affordable housing
14　Close to transport
15　Born here/always lived here
16　Lived here before
17　Parent's house/decision
18　Marriage living with partner
19　Close to place of worship
20　Multi-cultural area
21　Other [specify]
22　Don't know

C4　　Are the people who live in this neighbourhood:

1　mainly your relatives
2　mainly people from your ethnic and religious background
3　mainly people who share your religion from other ethnic backgrounds
4　mainly people from the same ethnic background but different religion
5　mainly people from a different ethnic and religious background
6　from a mixture of different backgrounds, ethnicities and religions

C5   Would you say that this is a neighbourhood you enjoy living in?

> 1   Yes, definitely
>
> 2   Yes, to some extent
>
> 3   No [go to C7]

C6   What things do you like about the neighbourhood you live in?

C7   What things do you dislike about the neighbourhood you live in?

C8   What THREE things would you like to see done by the city council to improve your neighbourhood?

> 1:
>
> 2:
>
> 3:

C9   Would you say that ....

> 1   many of the people in your neighbourhood can be trusted,
>
> 2   some can be trusted,
>
> 3   a few can be trusted,
>
> 4   or that none of the people in your neighbourhood can be trusted?

C10   To what extent you agree or disagree with each of these statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
People in this neighbourhood are willing to help their neighbours?					
This is a close-knit neighbourhood?					
People in this neighbourhood share the same values?					
People in this neighbourhood work together to improve the neighbourhood?					

D. Identity and Belonging

We will now ask some questions about your identity, and look at how much you feel a part of and belong to this local area and city.

D1   Suppose you were describing yourself, which of the following would say something important about you? Please identify five options in order of importance, where number one is the most important

1   Your family
2   The kind of work you do
3   Your age and life stage
4   Your interests
5. Your level of education
6   Your nationality
7   Your gender
8   your level of income
9   Your religion
10 Your social class
11 Your ethnic group or cultural background
12 The colour of your skin
13 Any disability you may have

1:
2:
3:
4:
5:

D2   To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?

1   Strongly agree
2   Agree
3   Disagree
4   Strongly disagree
5   Don't know
6   Too few people in this local area
7   People in this area are all from the same background

D3   What sorts of things prevent people from different backgrounds from getting on well together in this local area?

D4   How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?

       1   Very strongly
       2   Fairly strongly
       3   Not very strongly
       4   Not at all strongly
       5   Don't know

D5   How strongly do you feel you belong to this city?

       1   Very strongly
       2   Fairly strongly
       3   Not very strongly
       4   Not at all strongly
       5   Don't know

D6   How strongly do you feel you belong to this country?

       1   Very strongly
       2   Fairly strongly
       3   Not very strongly
       4   Not at all strongly
       5   Don't know

D7   What, if any, are barriers to feeling that you belong to this city?

D8   Which four of the following, if any, would you say are the most important values of living in this country

       1   Respect for the law
       2   Tolerance towards others
       3   Freedom of speech and expression
       4   Respect for all faiths
       5   Justice and fair play
       6   Speaking the national language
       7   Respect of people of different ethnic groups
       8   Equality of opportunity
       9   Pride in this country/patriotism
      10   Voting in elections
      11   Freedom from discrimination

1:
2:
3:
4:

D9   Do you see yourself as [British, French, etc.]? [This question is asking for cultural identification with society rather than legal status]

1   Yes

2   No

D10.   Do most other people in this country see you as [British, French, etc.]? ['Other people' refers to all other ethnic and religious groups to the respondent in the country]

1   Yes

2   No

D11.   Do you want to be seen by others as [British, French, etc.]?

1   Yes [go to D13]

2   No [go to D12]

D12.   If No to D10, please explain

D13   Which do you think is the main barrier to being [British, French, etc.]?

1   Not speaking the national language/s

2   Being born abroad

3   Being from an ethnic minority/not being white

4   Accent/way of speaking

5   Not being Christian

6   There aren't any barriers

7   None of these

8   Don't know

9   Other [specify]

E. Social Interactions

We now want to find out more about the people that you meet and interact with in this local area. We are interested in 'meaningful interactions', ones that involve more than a hello in the streets, that include some exchange of information.

E1   In the last year, how often, if at all, have you met and talked with people from a different ethnic group to yourself, in the following places?

	Daily	At least weekly	At least monthly	At least once a year	Not at all	Don't know
At your home/their home						
At school, work or college						
Bar/club						
Café/restaurant						
Sport leisure activity						
Socially outside work/school						
Child's crèche, school, nursery						
Shops						
Street markets						
Place of worship or other religious centre						
Community centre						
Health clinic, hospital						
On public transport						
Park, out door space						
Neighbourhood group						
Youth group						
Educational evening class						
Other [*specify*]						
Nowhere						

E2   In the last year, how often, if at all have you met and talked with people from a different religion to yourself?

	Daily	At least weekly	At least monthly	At least once a year	Not at all	Don't know
At your home/their home						
At school, work or college						
Bar/club						
Café/restaurant						
Sport leisure activity						
Socially outside work/school						
Child's crèche, school, nursery						
At the shops						

E3   Do you think more needs to be done to encourage people from different backgrounds to mix together?

1   Yes

2   No

E4   If yes to E3, what do you suggest should be done?

E5   Are there any places in your local area or city that you feel uncomfortable to be in?

1   Yes

2   No [go to F1]

E6   If yes to E5, what are these places?

E7   If yes to E5, what are the reasons that you feel uncomfortable in them?

F. Participation and Citizenship

We will now ask about your participation in organisations in this local area and your feeling about being able to influence and change what is happening in society.

F1   Are you eligible to vote in national elections?

          1   Yes
          2   No [go to F3]

F2   Did you vote in the last national election?

          1   Yes
          2   No

F3   Are you eligible to vote in local elections?

          1   Yes
          2   No [go to F5]

F4   Did you vote in the last local council election?

          1   Yes
          2   No

F5   In the last 12 months have you been involved in any of the following activities?

	Y	N	How many times in the last 12 months?
Attended public meeting or rally			
Taken part in a public demonstration			
Signed a petition			

F6   In the last 12 months have you taken part in a consultation or meeting about local services or problems in your local area?

          1   Yes
          2   No [go to F8]

F7   If yes to F6, please give details about the nature and type of consultation.

F8   Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your city?

    1   Definitely agree
    2   Agree
    3   Disagree
    4   Definitely disagree
    5   Don't know

F9   Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your country?

    1   Definitely agree
    2   Agree
    3   Disagree
    4   Definitely disagree
    5   Don't know

F10   In the last 12 months have you played an active role in organising any of the following?

Organisation					
Organisation	Y	N	Based on own ethnicity or religion	Mixed	What did you do?
Children's education/schools (e.g. school governor, running an activity club, play group					
Youth activities (e.g. running a youth club)					
Adult education (e.g. running classes, students' union official)					
Religion (e.g. official in mosque, Sunday school teacher)					
Politics (e.g. local councillor, political party member/activist)					
Social welfare (e.g. adviser/board member in voluntary groups concerned with social welfare					
Office holders in a community organisation (e.g. cultural centre, community association)					
Criminal Justice (e.g. magistrate, special constable)					
Human rights (community or race relations officer, legal advice worker, worker with asylum					
Trade union activist					
Housing/neighbourhood group (e.g. Active member of residents / tenants association,					
Organisation recreation, sports or hobbies					
Arts, music, cultural organisation					
Any other [specify]					

F11   How much do you trust the following?

	A lot	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know
The police					
The courts					
The national Parliament					
The government					
Your city council					

G.   Experience of Local Services

G1   How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with these different types of services?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Local primary schools						
Local High School (incl. gymnasiums, middle schools, lyceum, college and vocational schools from ages 11–16/18)						
Social housing						
Street cleaning						
Policing						
Health services						
Services for young people						
Public transport						

G2   Where interviewees indicate that they were dissatisfied with a service, ask for details of why they were dissatisfied?

G3   What THREE things would you like to see happen to improve any of these services in your local area?

      1.
      2.
      3.

G4   To what extent do you think that schools respect the religious customs of people belonging to different religions?

      1   Too much
      2   About right
      3   Too little
      4   Don't know

G5   Why do you say that?

G6   To what extent do you think that employers respect the religious customs of people belonging to different religions?

      1   Too much
      2   About right
      3   Too little
      4   Don't know

G7   Why do you say that?

G8   To what extent do you think that hospitals and medical clinics respect the religious customs of people belonging to different religions?

      1   Too much
      2   About right
      3   Too little
      4   Don't know

G9   Why do you say that?

G10   Have you been a victim of crime in the last twelve months?

1   Yes
2   No [go to G16]

G11   If Yes to G10, where did this happen?

1   Neighbourhood
2   Local area
3   City
4   Elsewhere

G12   Did you feel that it was motivated by discrimination?

1   Yes
2   No [go to G16]

G13   If yes to G12, what gave you this impression?

G14   Did you report it to the police?

1   Yes
2   No [go to G16]

G15   If yes to G14, were you satisfied with the police response?

1   Yes
2   No

G16   Have you had any contact with the police (about any issue) in the last twelve months?

1   Yes
2   No [go to G20]

G17   If yes, did you initiate the contact or did the police contact you?

1   Interviewee initiated contact
2   Police initiated contact

G18   Were you satisfied with the conduct and outcome of that encounter?

1   Yes
2   No

G19   If no, why were you not satisfied?

G20   In the last twelve months, have you needed advice or information in relation to any of the following issues?

	Yes	No
Education		
Employment		
Housing		
Health		

G21   If yes to G20, can you give some more details? What did you need advice and information about? How did you get it? Who helped and who didn't help?

G22   Where do you get most of your information about what is happening in your local area?

G23   Where do you get most of your information about what is happening in this city?

G24   Where do you get most of your information about what is happening in this country?

H.   Discrimination and Prejudice
We will now ask about your experiences and perceptions of discrimination and prejudice.

H1   How much racial prejudice do you feel there is in this country today?

    1   A lot
    2   A fair amount
    3   A little
    4   None [go to H4]
    5   Don't know [go to H4]

H2   If 1-3 to H1, which groups do you think there is racial prejudice against?

H3   Thinking about racial prejudice in this country today, do you think there is now…

    1   less racial prejudice than there was five years ago?

    2   more than there was five years ago?

    3   about the same amount?

    4   don't know

H4   How much religious prejudice do you feel there is in this country today?

    1   A lot

    2   A fair amount

    3   A little

    4   None [go to H7]

    5   Don't know [go to H7]

H5   If 1-3 to H4, which groups do you think there is religious prejudice against?

H6   Thinking about religious prejudice in this country today, do you think there is now…

    1   less religious prejudice than there was five years ago?

    2   more than there was five years ago?

    3   about the same amount?

    4   don't know

H7   Thinking about your personal experiences over the past 12 months, how often, if at all, has anyone shown prejudice against you or treated you unfairly for each of the following:

	Almost all of the time	A lot of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Gender					
Age					
Ethnicity					
Religion					
Colour					
Where you live					

H8   Thinking about your personal experiences over the past 12 months, have any of the following shown prejudice against you or treated you unfairly because of your religion?

1   A local doctor's surgery

2   A local hospital

3   A local school

4   A local council

5   A landlord or letting agent

6   A local shop

7   Public transport

8   Airline/airport officials

9   The courts (Magistrates Courts and Crown Court)

10   The police

11   The immigration authorities

12   A member of the public

13   None of the above [go to H10]

H9   What form did this discrimination or unfair treatment take?

H10   In the last five years, have you been refused or turned down for a job in this country?

1   Yes [go to H11]

2   No [go to H12]

3   Don't know [go to H12]

4   Not applicable [go to I1]

H11   If yes to H10, do you think you were refused the job for any of the following reasons?

1   Your gender

2   Your age

3   Your ethnicity

4   Your religion

5   Your colour

6   Where you live

7   Other [specify]

8   Don't know

H12   In the last five years, have you been discriminated against at work with regard to promotion or a move to a better position?

    1   Yes [go to H13]

    2   No

    3   Don't know

    4   Not applicable

H13   If yes, do you think you were refused the job for any of the following reasons?

    1   Your gender

    2   Your age

    3   Your ethnicity

    4   Your religion

    5   Your colour

    6   Other [specify]

    7   Don't know

I.   Demographics

Finally, we want to ask you some more information about yourself and your personal circumstances

I1   Age: what was your age last birthday?

I2   In which country were you born?

I3   In which region in that country were you born?

I4   Is that a rural or urban area?

    1   Rural

    2   Urban

I5   What is your nationality at the moment?

I6   What would you say your religion is?

    1   Buddhism

    2   Catholicism

    3   Hinduism

4   Judaism

5   Islam

6   Protestant Christianity

7   Sikhism

8   Other [specify]

9   No religion [go to I9]

I7   Do you consider that you are actively practising your religion?

1   Yes

2   No

I8   What are the ways if any, that you meet religious obligations/participate in your religion?

I9   What is your marital status?

1   Single – never married

2   Married – 1st and only marriage

3   Married – 2nd or subsequent marriage

4   Cohabiting

5   Single but previously married and divorced/separated

6   Single but previously married and widowed

I10   Please tell me which ethnic group/cultural background you feel you belong to.

I11   What is the highest level of education that you completed?

1   no formal education [go to I14]

2   primary [go to I12 and I13]

3   secondary (including gymnasium, lyceum, college, middle schools, or vocational schools from ages 11–16/18) [go to I12 and I13]

4   university [go to I12 and I13]

I12   If 2-4 in I11, Where did you obtain this education?

1   in this country

2   in another EU state [please specify]

3   in a non-EU state [please specify]

I13   If 2-4 in I11, how many years of formal education have you had?

I14   Are you working for pay these days?

    1   yes, full-time employee [go to I16]

    2   yes, part-time employee [go to I16]

    3   yes, self-employed [go to I16]

    4   no, working unpaid in family business [go to I16]

    5   no, retired [go to I15]

    6   no, on government employment or training programme [go to I15]

    7   no, unemployed and looking for work [go to I15]

    8   no, student [go to I15]

    9   no, looking after home or family [go to I15]

    10   no, permanently sick or disabled [go to I15]

    11   other [specify] [go to I15]

I15   If options 5-11 in I14, have you ever previously worked for pay?

    1   Yes, in the last five years

    2   Yes, over five years ago

    3   No [end of interview]

I16   What is your main or primary job, or the last job that you did if you are not working right now?

I17   Can you choose a category that best describes the sort of work you do in your main job? If not working now please tick a box to show last job.

Modern professional occupations such as: teacher – nurse – physiotherapist – social worker – welfare officer – artist – musician – police officer (sergeant or above) – software designer	1
Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary – personal assistant – clerical worker – office clerk – call centre agent – nursing auxiliary – nursery nurse	2
Senior managers or administrators (usually responsible for planning, organising and coordinating work and for finance) such as: finance manager – chief executive	3
Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic – fitter – inspector – plumber – printer – tool maker – electrician – gardener – train driver	4
Semi-routine manual and service occupations such as: postal worker – machine operative – security guard – caretaker – farm worker – catering assistant – receptionist – sales assistant	5
Routine manual and service occupations such as: HGV driver – van driver – cleaner – porter – packer – sewing machinist – messenger – labourer – waiter / waitress – bar staff	6
Middle or junior managers such as: office manager – retail manager – bank manager – restaurant manager – warehouse manager – publican	7
Traditional professional occupations such as: accountant – solicitor – medical practitioner – scientist – civil / mechanical engineer	8

I18   Is the person or group or organisation that you work for (or if currently not working, last worked for):

    1   same religious and ethnic background as you?

    2   same religious but not same ethnic background?

    3   same ethnic but different religious background?

    4   different ethnic and religious background?

    5   other [specify]?

    6   not applicable?

I19   Among the people in your workplace, what proportion do you think are/were from the same religious and ethnic background as you?

    1   more than a half

    2   about a half

    3   less than a half

    4   other [specify number]

    5   not applicable – working by myself

I20   How did you find (get) your current main job (or most recent job for those not working at present)?

Whether citizens or migrants, native born or newly-arrived, Muslims are a growing and varied population that presents Europe with challenges and opportunities. The crucial tests facing Europe's commitment to open society will be how it treats minorities such as Muslims and ensures equal rights for all in a climate of rapidly expanding diversity.

The Open Society Foundations' At Home in Europe project is working to address these issues through monitoring and advocacy activities that examine the position of Muslims and other minorities in Europe. One of the project's key efforts is this series of reports on Muslim communities in the 11 EU cities of Amsterdam, Antwerp, Berlin, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Leicester, London, Marseille, Paris, Rotterdam, and Stockholm. The reports aim to increase understanding of the needs and aspirations of diverse Muslim communities by examining how public policies in selected cities have helped or hindered the political, social, and economic participation of Muslims.

By fostering new dialogue and policy initiatives between Muslim communities, local officials, and international policymakers, the At Home in Europe project seeks to improve the participation and inclusion of Muslims in the wider society while enabling them to preserve the cultural, linguistic, and religious practices that are important to their identities.

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