

27 October 2003

ISLAM & EUROPE- ROLE FOR THE FCO

X 1. I attended a conference in Brussels, in late September, organised by the Forum of European Muslim Youth & Student Organisations (FEMYSO) and the issue of Muslims in Europe. The event took place in the European Parliament and was attended by over 150 delegates (mostly under the age of 30) from across Europe, including Britain. The event was addressed by several MEPs, the President of the Parliament and a British Muslim academic who regularly advises the MoD. Other attendees included representatives from the US Embassy, as well the leading Muslim leader/speaker in Europe- Dr Tariq Ramadhan.

2. The conference was well received and discussed issues impacting European Muslims, including foreign policy.

3. A large number of leaders of the organisations said that HMG was well regarded because of the dialogue and engagement it has developed with British Muslims. They added that in many cases, this could not be said of their own governments. Many of the people, who held that view, included leaders and executive members of influential European Muslim organisations. This view was emphasised to the British Muslim attendees.

4. An interesting phenomena which seems to be emerging is that an increasing number of second/third generation British Muslims (as well as those in countries such as Germany, Belgium, France and Italy), are going further than just defining themselves by their nationality or their Muslim identity generally. Instead they seem to be defining themselves as 'European Muslims', in the same way as there are 'African Muslims' or 'Asian Muslims'. This seems to be directly linked to the common denominator that Muslims in European countries share, i.e. they are all minorities in their respective countries. As a result, 'Islamic' jurisprudence is developing in order to cater for this developing identity. As would be expected, this 'European Muslimness' is more pronounced in other European countries than in the

UK, but it is increasing rapidly here, e.g. the Vice-president of FEMYSO is a British Muslim.

Action:

5. As discussed, we should inform the embassies of countries such as Germany, France, Italy, etc, and our embassies in those countries, of our strategy of building bridges with mainstream Islam, as the assumption is that there will be a great deal of interest.

6. In that context it would be worthwhile for us to support and host a wider seminar on Islam & Europe, organised principally by British and European Muslim organisations. It seems that we are seen as having the best model of dialogue with Muslims, and an event of this kind, especially with upcoming young leaders would help to endorse that. Further, if 'European Muslimness' is one of the emerging identities amongst Muslims in the West, including amongst British Muslims, it would make sense to understand it better. I would expect interest from DSI, research analysts, the British Council and the Home Office, especially if we can involve figures such as Dr Tariq Ramadhan and Imam Hamza Yusuf. I have seen the E-mail you have forwarded me, from Rosemary Waugh with regards to a possible UK/French Muslim event next year. With some planning, this could all fit together.

Home Office Activity

- The HO held consultations with Imam and Mosque officials in Birmingham, Bradford, Blackburn and East London. Young Imams (17 -25 year olds) also attended these seminars.
- The HO already has a network of contacts with young people from various organisations such as FAIR, Muslim Youth Helpline, FOSIS and recently the new UMS. However plans are to reach out to the more disaffected young people as well as young Muslim professionals through community and personal contacts via a series of seminars/consultations. The next round of consultations planned are focusing on young people and women. These will target colleges, F.E. institutions as well as H.E. institutions.
- Ministerial meetings with young Muslim people and young Muslim organisations.
- HO acted as facilitators in preparing and briefing for the FOSIS meeting with Charles Clarke, about DfES policies.
- HO has also developed research specifications about British young Muslims and British Muslim women. The purpose is to obtain a quality, comparative study that gives us more information about both groups, in comparison to other faiths, so that we can understand the issues and develop a strategy based upon research.
- HO produced guidance on entering religious premises for the police.
- Support for the Muslim Safety Forum in developing a constitution.

- Development of a package to ensure that Imams from abroad in the UK are better equipped to meet the needs of British Muslim congregations in a modern, democratic and cohesive society.
- X • Investigating right-to-buy Islamic mortgages with ODPM and the Housing Corporation.
- X • Piloted intervention model between Police and young Muslims at International Test Match.

## Briefing on British Muslims: socio-economic data and attitudes (updated)

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### Executive summary

Socio-economic data from the census and the 2000 Index of Multiple deprivation reveals significant levels of disadvantage experienced by the Muslim community. Reliable survey data covering Muslims from the Home Office Citizenship Survey 2001 contains some positive messages: strong faith identity and satisfaction with government action to protect people belonging to religions. But it also shows low levels of participation and volunteering. Less reliable (*indicative*) data from opinion polls conducted amongst Muslims contains mixed messages: strong opposition to terrorism and loyalty to Britain but strong disapproval of foreign policy and significant concern about discrimination.

Two important caveats need to be borne in mind throughout. Firstly, whilst the data does reveal disadvantage and issues of concern amongst Muslims, it **does not prove any association between disadvantage and 'disaffection' or 'extremism'**. If participation is used as a proxy for engagement then the finding that Muslims have low levels of participation is unremarkable, since this is common to other minority faith groups.

Secondly, with the exception of faith identity, the data **does not show** that faith is itself strongly associated with socio-economic outcomes or attitudes. In other words, whilst the data shows Muslims experience high deprivation, it does **not** show that this is because of their faith. Other factors might be more relevant (e.g. education, class and ethnicity).

## Key messages from three main sections

### 1. Socio-economic statistics

**Economic activity:** Muslims occupy the most disadvantaged position in the labour market compared with other groups. Compared with the population as a whole, the unemployment rate for Muslims is around three times higher. Economic inactivity rates are higher and economic activity rates are lower. (*Census 2001*)

**Qualifications:** Muslims are over-represented at the bottom of the qualifications rankings. Over two fifths have no qualifications. (*Census 2001*)

**Deprivation:** Muslims are over-represented in local authority areas that are deprived. The most deprived areas have a disproportionately higher concentration of Muslims. The association between deprivation and Muslim residency is strong. (*IMD and Census 2001*)

### 2. Home Office Citizenship Survey 2001: Religion Report

**Identity:** For Muslims the role of faith for self-identity ranked second only to family. This was also the case for other minority faiths. The importance of faith to self-identity is particularly strong amongst younger people. Nearly three quarters of young Muslims viewed religion as important to their identity, along with almost two thirds of Sikhs and Hindus.

**Religious discrimination:** The majority of all faith groups were satisfied with government and employer action to protect rights of people belonging to religions. But a significant minority of Muslims, and especially young Muslims were not satisfied.

**Active citizenship:** Participation of Muslims is around three quarters the rate of all faith communities as a whole. Young Muslims are least likely to participate, compared with all faith groups. Muslims are least likely of all faith groups to engage in volunteering.

### 3. Opinion polls of Muslims

**Attitudes:** High rate of condemnation of September 11 attacks; strong disapproval of war in Afghanistan and concern for Muslim countries; strong support for ban on religious discrimination; widely loyal to Britain; mixed views on citizenship issues.

## 1. Socio-economic data

### Data From the Census 2001

#### 1.1 Economic activity

*Note: this data does not imply a causal link between faith and disadvantage*

Muslims occupy the most disadvantaged position in the labour market compared with other groups. Compared with the population as a whole, the unemployment rate for Muslims is around three times higher. Economic inactivity rates are higher and economic activity rates are lower.

- The unemployment rate<sup>1</sup> of Muslims is more than three times that of the population as a whole and is the highest of all faith groups. 14.6% of economically active Muslims were unemployed compared with 5% for the population as a whole.
- Muslims have the lowest rate of economic activity<sup>2</sup> of all faith groups – around half of Muslims (48%) are economically active compared with around two-thirds the population as a whole (66.5%).
- Around half of Muslims are economically inactive (52%). This is higher than that for any other group and is over one and a half times the rate for the population as a whole (33.5%).
- 16% of Muslims have never worked or are long-term unemployed – more than five times the rate for the population as a whole

*Note: this data concerns men and women. The situation for Muslim women will be significantly different.*

	Unemployed	Economically active	Economically inactive
ALL PEOPLE (aged 16-74)	5.0	66.5	33.5
Muslim	14.6	48.3	51.7
Any other religion	8.4	67.8	32.2
Buddhist	7.9	63.0	37.0
Sikh	6.9	66.2	33.8
Religion not stated	6.4	65.0	35.0
No religion	6.1	75.2	24.8
Hindu	5.4	66.9	33.1
Christian	4.3	65.5	34.5
Jewish	3.8	66.1	33.9

<sup>1</sup> Those unemployed as a proportion of the economically active population

<sup>2</sup> Defined as aged 16-74, based on census data availability

## 1.2 Qualifications

*Note: this data does not imply a causal link between faith and disadvantage*

**Muslims are over-represented at the bottom of the qualifications rankings. Over two fifths have no qualifications.**

- ✕ • 43% of Muslims don't have a (recognised) educational qualification. This is the highest rate of all faith groups and compares with 36% of all people.
- After Christians (17.5%) Muslims were least likely to have higher qualifications (20.6%).

	No qualifications or level unknown <sup>3</sup>	Lower level qualifications <sup>4</sup>	Higher level qualifications <sup>5</sup>
ALL PEOPLE (16-74)	36.0	44.2	19.8
Muslim	43.1	36.3	20.6
Christian	38.8	43.7	17.5
Sikh	36.1	41.0	22.9
Religion not stated	35.9	43.0	21.1
Buddhist	26.5	34.1	39.4
Hindu	26.5	39.1	34.4
No religion	23.5	49.4	27.1
Jewish	23.0	41.2	35.8
Any other religion	20.4	46.5	33.1

<sup>3</sup> The term 'no qualifications' describes people without any academic, vocational or professional qualifications.

<sup>4</sup> The term 'lower level' qualifications is used to describe qualifications equivalent to levels 1 – 3 of the National Key Learning targets (i.e. GCSE's, 'O' levels, 'A' levels NVQ levels 1 – 3).

<sup>5</sup> The term 'higher level' refers to qualifications of levels 4 and above (i.e. first degrees, higher degrees, NVQ levels 4 and 5, HND, HNC and certain professional qualifications).



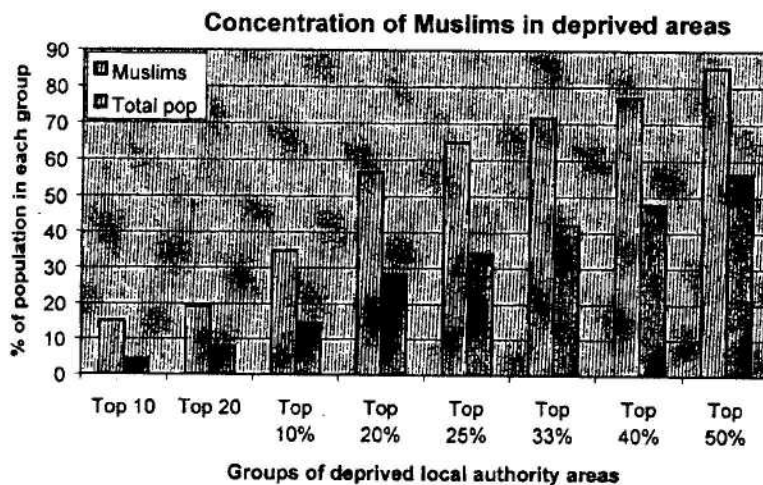
### 1.3 Deprivation

Data from the 2000 Index of Multiple Deprivation.

*Note: this data does not imply a causal link between faith and disadvantage*

**Muslims are over-represented in local authority areas that are deprived. The most deprived areas have a disproportionately higher concentration of Muslims. The link between deprivation and Muslim residency is strong.**

- Around three and a half times as many Muslims live in the 10 most deprived local authority areas compared with the population as a whole (15% of Muslims compared with 4.4% of the population as a whole (see table 2, annex)
- Over a third of Muslims (35%) live in the most deprived 10% of local authority areas (35 districts). This is more than twice the concentration compared with the population as a whole (15%).
- More Muslims live in deprived local authority areas than in non-deprived areas. Over half of Muslims (57%) live in the most deprived 20% of local authority areas. This compares with 28% for the population as a whole.
- Nearly two-thirds of Muslims (65%) live in the most deprived 25% of local authority areas. Amongst the population as a whole the proportion that live in the same local authority areas is around a third (34%).



## 2. Home Office Citizenship Survey data

### 2.1 Identity

For Muslims the role of faith for self-identity ranked second only to family. This was also the case for other minority faiths. The importance of faith to self-identity is particularly strong amongst younger people. Nearly three quarters of young Muslims viewed religion as important to their identity, along with almost two thirds of Sikhs and Hindus.

The importance of religion as a part of people's self-identity varies by faith group. For Muslim, Hindu and Sikh respondents religion was ranked according to frequency of being reported second only after family. Amongst Christians (and for all faith groups) it ranked seventh – almost mid-way in the ranking out of 15 possible factors.

There are other variations within this. For example, of 16 to 24 year olds the largest proportions who reported religion as important to their self-identity were Muslims (74%), Sikhs (63%) and Hindus (62%). This compares with much smaller proportion of Christians of the same age (18%). Similarly amongst 25 to 49 year olds and amongst those aged 50 and over, the largest proportion reporting religion as important to identity were Muslims and Sikhs.

Variations also exist by ethnicity and multivariate analysis indicates the difficulty with untangling whether religion or ethnicity is more strongly associated with this perception. When all personal characteristics are taken into consideration religion was more likely to be important for people from minority ethnic groups than for the majority population.

Top ten things that would say something important about the respondents by faith community						
Rank	Christian	Muslim	Hindu	Sikh	Jewish	Buddhist
1	Family	Family	Family	Family	Religion	Work
2	Work	Religion	Religion	Religion	Family	Family
3	Age/Life-stage	Ethnicity/culture	Ethnicity/culture	Ethnicity/culture	Education	Religion
4	Interests	Education	Work	Work	Work	Interests
5	Education	Country of origin	Education	Education	Interests	Age/life-stage
6	Nationality	Age/lifestage	Nationality	Country of origin	Ethnicity/culture	Nationality
7	Religion	Nationality	Age/life-stage	Age/life-stage	Age/life-stage	Education
8	Gender	Work	Country of origin	Nationality	Income	Gender
9	Income	Interests	Interests	Gender	Gender	Country of origin
10	Social class	Skin colour	Skin colour	Social class	Social class	Culture

## 2.2 Religious discrimination

*Note: this data does not imply a causal link between faith and attitudes*

The majority of all faith groups were satisfied with government and employer action to protect rights of people belonging to religions. But a significant minority of Muslims, and especially young Muslims were not satisfied.

### Government

Around three fifths of Muslim respondents (62%) thought the government was doing about the *right amount* to protect the rights of people belonging to religions. This is the same proportion as Sikhs and but lower than Hindus (70%) and higher than Christians (53%). Of respondents who thought government was doing *too little* the largest proportion were Muslims and Buddhists.

Perceptions varied by age. Three fifths of Muslims (61%) aged 16-24 thought the government was doing the *right amount*. This is the highest of all faith groups. However, respondents in this age group were more likely than people other age groups to think government was doing *too little*, including the majority of Sikhs (56%), and around two fifths of Christians, Hindus (both 39%) and Muslims (37%).

**The amount the government is doing to protect the rights of people belonging to religions broken down by age and faith community**

Age group		No religious affiliation	All faith communities	Christian	Muslim	Hindu	Sikh	All
16 to 24	Too little	36%	40%	39%	37%	39%	56%	38%
	Right amount	50%	55%	55%	61%	57%	44%	53%
	Too much	14%	6%	6%	3%	4%		8%
	<b>Respondents:</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>1,146</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>1,440</b>
25 to 49	Too little	21%	25%	24%	32%	21%	26%	23%
	Right amount	53%	56%	56%	62%	76%	68%	54%
	Too much	26%	19%	20%	5%	3%	6%	21%
	<b>Respondents:</b>	<b>1,035</b>	<b>5,150</b>	<b>3,270</b>	<b>1,168</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>6,185</b>
50 years and older	Too little	19%	27%	33%	32%	25%	23%	26%
	Right amount	56%	51%	33%	65%	66%	69%	52%
	Too much	25%	22%	33%	3%	9%	8%	22%
	<b>Respondents:</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>4,250</b>	<b>3,622</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>4,706</b>

The findings for respondents affiliated to Jewish and Buddhist faith communities were omitted from the table because the number of cases was too small for statistical analysis.

**Employers**

N Respondents were more critical about the extent to which employers were supportive of religious customs and practices. Around a third of Muslims (36%) thought employers were doing *too little*. This is around the same as the overall rate for all faith communities but lower than Hindus (39%) and Sikhs (41%).

The profile of respondents who thought that employers were doing too little by faith community

	No religious affiliation	All faith communities	Christian	Muslim	Hindu	Sikh	All
Male	35%	35%	35%	33%	35%	41%	35%
Female	41%	38%	38%	40%	42%	40%	39%
<b>Male respondents:</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>4,296</b>	<b>2,897</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>5,209</b>
<b>Female respondents:</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>5,198</b>	<b>3,801</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>5,999</b>

### 2.3 Active citizenship

*Note: this data does not imply a causal link between faith and attitudes*

Participation of Muslims is around three quarters the rate of all faith communities as a whole. Young Muslims are least likely to participate, compared with all faith groups. Muslims are least likely of all faith groups to engage in volunteering.

#### Civic participation

Around one in three (30%) of Muslims had engaged in some form of civic activity in the 12 months prior to the survey<sup>6</sup>. This is lower than the overall total for all faith communities (39%) but higher only than Hindus (23%) and Sikhs (28%).

When examined by age Muslims aged 16 to 24 were least likely to have participated (24%) compared with the total for other faiths in this age group (29%). Those aged 25 to 49 were the most active (32%) age group amongst Muslims.

Participated In a civic activity in last 12 months by age and religious affiliation							
		No religion	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh	total
16-24 year olds	Yes	29	30	31	24	32	29
	No	71	70	69	76	68	71
	<b>Respondents 16 to 24</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>1,797</b>
25-49 year olds	Yes	43	41	22	32	30	41
	No	57	59	78	68	70	59
	<b>Respondents 25 to 49</b>	<b>1,378</b>	<b>4,061</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>1,346</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>7,624</b>
50 + years old	Yes	45	38	18	27	25	39
	No	55	62	82	73	75	61
	<b>Respondents 50+</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>4,541</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>5,873</b>

#### Volunteering

Muslims were least likely to volunteer. Over half of Muslims engaged in informal volunteering (54%) but this is the lowest rate of all faith groups (overall total 67%). Similarly around a third (30%) of Muslims volunteered formally compared with two fifths of all faith groups as a whole (39%).

Analysis suggests that religion combined with ethnicity was not strongly associated with participation in volunteering for all groups (with the exception of respondents who were Black or mixed race and Christian). Education, occupational status and age were the engagement in formal volunteering.

<sup>6</sup> Defined as participation in at least one of the following in the 12 months prior to the survey: signing a petition, contacting a local councillor or official from the council, attending public meetings or rallies, signing a petition, contacting an MP, taking part in a public demonstration or protest, contacting a public official from central government.

### 3. Attitudinal data – opinion polls

*Note: this data does not imply a causal link between faith and attitudes*

Between November 2001 and March 2004 it is possible to identify six surveys which have examined the attitudes of British Muslims across various topics emerging from the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Several caveats (in addition to the note above) need to be borne in mind when using this data. Firstly, the surveys vary in quality and reliability, so **results must be interpreted with great caution**. Secondly, due to methods used the data should be treated as *indicative* of British Muslims' opinion, not *representative* of it. Thirdly, there is no comparative context to enable us to compare Muslim responses with those of other groups and understand the findings in this wider context. Finally, since questions asked were different in each survey (even when covering the same topic) strict comparison between the surveys is not possible.

With these important caveats in mind, overall, it is possible to identify broad and tentative messages across five main themes where the surveys asked similar questions.

#### Terrorism

##### Attitudes towards September 11 attacks

Between 7-15% thought the September 11 attacks were justified but a much greater proportion – between 67-85% – thought they were not justified

Poll	Justified %	Not justified %	Others (incl. d/k) %
Eastern Eye MORI Nov 2001	7 <sup>7</sup>	67	13 Not v much, 13 others
BBC ICM Nov 2001	15 <sup>8</sup>	81	4
Telegraph YouGov Dec 2002	8	85	7

##### Attitudes towards further terrorist attacks

Between 7-13% thought further terrorist attacks would be justified but a much greater proportion – between 67-85% – thought though they would not be justified

Poll	Justified %	Not justified %	Others (incl. d/k) %
Eastern Eye MORI Nov 2001	7	67	26
BBC ICM Dec 2002 (against USA)	11	79	10
BBC ICM Dec 2002 (against Britain)	8	85	7
Guardian ICM March 2004 (against USA)	13	73	15

Justified on grounds that Muslims are being killed by America BBC ICM Dec 2002	44	46	9
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##### Whether war on terror is not a war against Islam

20-34% agree that the war on terror is not a war against Islam but 57-70% disagree

Poll	Agree %	Disagree %	Others % (incl. d/k)
BBC ICM Nov 2001	34	57	9
BBC ICM Dec 2002	20	70	10

7 Includes Great deal + fair amount. Further 13% replied not very much

8 Includes Completely + somewhat justified

Foreign Policy

**Attitudes towards the Afghan war**

Between 12-20% had favourable views towards the Afghan war. Between 64-80% opposed it. There only poll on the Iraq war shows 10% in favour and 80% opposed.

Poll	Favourable %	Unfavourable %	Others (incl. d/k) %
Eastern Eye MORI Nov 2001	20	64	16
BBC ICM Nov 2001	14	80	6
Guardian ICM June 2002	19	66	15
BBC ICM Dec 2002	12	76	12

Eastern Eye MORI Nov 2001 Whether wrong to try to bring down Taliban regime	33	42	26
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**Attitudes towards Iraq war**

Poll	Favourable %	Unfavourable %	Others (incl. d/k) %
Guardian ICM March 2004	10	80	10

Discrimination and race relations

**Whether relations between Muslims and non-Muslims have got worse because of Sep 11**

Between 3-10% thought relations between Muslims and non-Muslims have got better as a result of September 11; between 27-36% thought there had been no change and 48-66% thought relations had got worse.

Poll	Better %	Same %	Worse %	Others (inc. d/k) %
Eastern Eye MORI Nov 2001	3	34	57	9
Guardian ICM June 2002	6	27	61	5
BBC ICM Dec 2002	10	36	48	6
Telegraph YouGov Dec 2002	4	30	66	
Guardian ICM March 2004 (since Iraq war)	6	34	55	5

**Whether experienced hostility due to religion/result of Sep 11**

Between 30-35% had experienced hostility based on religion as a result of September 11; between 65-70% had not.

Poll	Yes %	No %	Others (incl. d/k) %
BBC ICM Nov 2001	30	70	
Guardian ICM June 2002	35	65	
Guardian ICM March 2004	33	67	

Loyalty

**Whether feel loyal to Britain**

Between 67-87% feel very or fairly loyal/patriotic towards Britain and between 8-26% feel not very or not at all loyal/patriotic.

Poll	Yes %	No %	Others (incl. d/knows) %
Eastern Eye MORI Nov 2001	87 <sup>9</sup>	8 <sup>10</sup>	5
BBC ICM Dec 2002 (how patriotic do you feel)	67 <sup>11</sup>	26 <sup>12</sup>	6
Telegraph YouGov Dec 2002	75 <sup>13</sup>	19 <sup>14</sup>	6

**Whether ok to fight with Taliban**

Between 15-24% thought it was ok for British Muslims to fight with the Taliban; 62% disagreed.

Poll	Yes %	No %	Others (incl. d/knows) %
Eastern Eye MORI Nov 2001	15	62	22
BBC ICM Nov 2001	24	62	13

Citizenship

**Whether Muslims need to integrate more**

Between 33-41% thought Muslims need to do more to integrate; between 28-33% thought they had got it about right and between 17-26% thought Muslims had integrated too much already.

Poll	Yes %	About right	No %	Others (incl. d/knows) %
Guardian ICM June 2002	41	33	17	9
Guardian ICM March 2004	33	28	26	13

Mohibur Rahman  
 Communities Research – Race Relations  
 RDS, Home Office.  
 November 2003  
 Updated March 2004

<sup>9</sup> Includes very loyal + fairly loyal  
<sup>10</sup> Includes not very loyal + not at all loyal  
<sup>11</sup> Includes very patriotic + fairly patriotic  
<sup>12</sup> Includes not very patriotic + not at all patriotic  
<sup>13</sup> Includes very loyal + fairly loyal  
<sup>14</sup> Includes not very loyal + not at all loyal