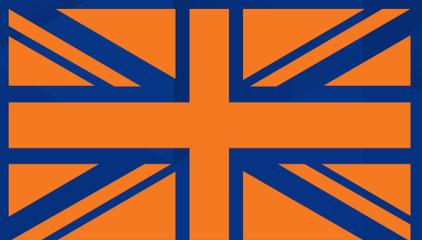


BRITISH SIKH REPORT 2016



AN INSIGHT INTO
THE BRITISH SIKH COMMUNITY



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Welcome to the British Sikh Report 2016, the fourth in our series of strategic documents created by Sikhs about Sikhs.

Over the last four years, we have developed unrivalled statistical information about Sikhs living in the UK. The highly influential annual document has been quoted in Parliamentary debates, referred to in several white papers and research documents about faith and society, and used by a diverse range of public bodies and private companies in identifying the needs of British Sikhs.

Our experienced team works with many Sikh organisations throughout the UK in creating the questionnaire and collecting the data. This year, the team has included research analysts, lawyers, academics, senior consultants and managers amongst many others who have volunteered their time and expertise to help put this together. As always, we are deeply indebted to them for their help.

The findings from this year's report include the following:

- Sikhs in the UK identify as being 'Sikh' (78 per cent) and 'British' (64 per cent), and none of the respondents self-described as Asian.
- The Sikh community donates about £125 million to charity per annum and spends over 65 million hours each year on voluntary activities.
- 42 per cent of British Sikhs want to remain in the EU as long as there are reforms to the relationship, with a further 15 per cent willing to remain regardless of any EU reforms.
- Over two thirds of respondents want to restrict British welfare benefits to EU migrants.
- Almost 60 per cent of Sikhs in the UK feel that immigrants make a positive impact on British society.
- 57 per cent of Sikh men and 36 per cent of Sikh women want to keep Trident as our nuclear deterrent.
- 53 per cent of respondents believe that military action in Syria is unjustified.
- The vast majority of Sikhs go into further education, with only 1 per cent stating an apprenticeship as being their highest level of education.
- One in ten British Sikhs keep all of the Panj Kakkar or Five Articles of Faith, denoting them as Initiated or Khalsa Sikhs.
- 80 per cent of Sikhs in the UK consider caste to be unimportant.



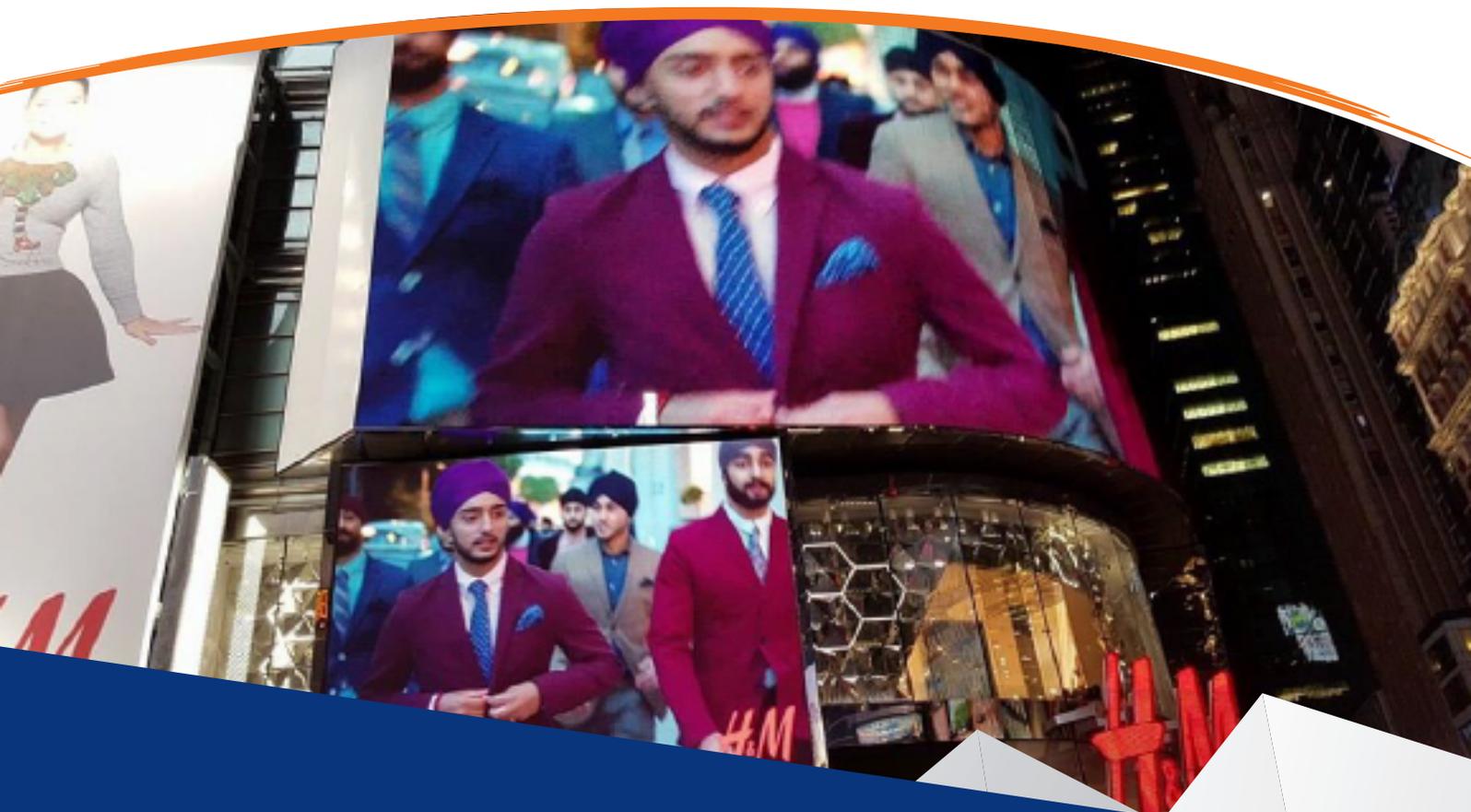
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

British Sikhs are a proud community with a distinct identity, as can be seen across these pages. Some of their concerns are uniquely Sikh, whilst others quite clearly reflect national sentiments and sensibilities. As such, this document provides a snapshot of what it means to be Sikh in contemporary Britain.

We hope that you find the British Sikh Report 2016 fascinating, thought-provoking, and most of all, insightful.

Jasvir Singh

Chair of the British Sikh Report





Article by Gurbachan Singh Jandu, Birkbeck College, University of London

➤ SIKHS AS BRITISH CITIZENS

Sikhs and Britain have a long and storied history. Decades before the last Sikh King, Duleep Singh, stepped onto British soil in the middle of the 19th century, there had been Anglo-Sikh contact as far back as the 1800s in the Punjab with his father Maharaja Ranjit Singh.¹

Since then, even though this relationship has changed in nature many times, both communities have left a permanent mark on each other. For instance, in such varied parts of British society as food, language, political systems, soldiering and of course cricket, the British-Sikh relationship has given rise to many new facets of modern British and Indian society. Further proof of this relationship is seen in the historical prominence of Sikhs in Britain's armed forces.² Sikhs have since the Victorian era had a strong identification with the nation's armed forces and, although this has declined since then, the community still bears an uncommon service record. For example, the first Sikhs to serve in the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace were Signaler Simranjit Singh and Lance Cpl. Sarvit Singh in 2009. In not wearing the Bearskin caps that this regiment is famous for, these two Sikhs have become symbols of Sikh Britishness that are celebrated by both communities.³ Today in 2016, the British Sikh Report (BSR) shows that this unique relationship between the two communities is deepening.

However, the relationship has had many challenges, and like other long political associations, some progress has come through hard work and negotiation. This is certainly the case with Sikhs and Britain. One such step forward was that of legal challenges by Sikhs to British law, specifically that relating to British identity and Sikh ethnicity.⁴ The 1983 House of Lords case of *Mandla v Dowell-Lee* is considered a milestone to the acceptance of diversity in British society. In this way, Sikhs have been instrumental in changing perceptions about who is a Briton. And as a result, contemporary British society has at its legal core changes brought about by new citizens such as Sikhs. In this manner, progress through perseverance has created improvements in both communities for the benefit of British society.





BRITAIN'S SIKHS IN 2016: A COMMUNITY WITH SOCIETY IN MIND



In the late 1990s, a new phase of the relationship between Sikhs and Britain appears to have started. Its causes may have been the Europeanisation effects of the Maastricht Treaty, and the relaxing of border controls post-1992. Following the mass influx of new migrants, Sikhs began to be perceived as the 'old migrants' amongst the successive waves of new European migrants. The Sikh community was modelled as 'British' due to their high level of integration, but especially due to the widespread use of the English language. This new phase marked a pivotal shift in the public perception of post-war migrant communities, and as such, it helped to draw Sikhs closer to mainstream society. In this way, Europeanisation can be reflected upon as a phenomenon that helped confirm the Sikhs' Britishness. They were now seen as citizens, not settlers. This can be considered a major achievement for the world's fifth largest religious group, whose majority still reside in India.

This change in public perceptions is one whose effects are still being felt today. One example is the many marketing campaigns that, wishing to represent the diversity of British society, use the image of a Sikh male, complete with a turban and beard, to celebrate British citizenry. These images include the iconic London Underground posters or the TV commercials for the Scotland 'NO' campaign, and more recently the advertisements for Ford and Samsung. These public visuals confirm that Sikhs are conspicuous British citizens. Whilst these may be stereotyped images, it is worth bearing in mind that Sikhs make up just 0.8 per cent of the population of England and Wales.⁵ So despite being a minority, Sikhs continue to challenge public perceptions about migrant communities and Britishness. In addition to this, and using the BSR survey, it can be suggested that the Sikh community in Britain stands out for other reasons too. The report indicates that Sikhs are actively engaged in national issues that will affect them and all future British generations. Some examples of these issues are covered in this article under occupation, identity, Europe and demography. These will show that, by thinking of society, Sikhs stand out socially and politically. As a result, they continue to challenge narrow notions of identity.



This is because Sikhs continue to consider themselves British. The report's survey result highlights this clearly. It shows that a significant proportion today, 64 per cent, include 'British' in their identity. A key sub-development is that a small proportion of these respondents self-identify territorially, for instance as 'English' (2.8 per cent) or Scottish (1.4 per cent). Although this does not reflect the national statistical picture, where English is a majority identity and Scottish is a fast-growing identification, this could be an early sign of Sikhs beginning to consider the effects of national identity changes on their own Sikh identity. As evidence for this phenomenon, it is worth noting that amongst the Sikhs living in Scotland, 40 per cent of these respondents self-described as 'Scottish Sikh' in this BSR. This result may suggest that Sikhs are in step with the political issues of both national society and locality. It strongly shows that they are not just concerned with issues that affect them as an 'imagined' community.⁶ This is because being British is important to Sikhs, it allows them to express their uniqueness using values that double up as both Sikh and British – such as fairness and tolerance.

➤ SIKHS AND OCCUPATIONS

One reason for Sikhs drawing closer to the larger issues of Britain is that they have begun to occupy a wider professional spectrum of society. This is especially the case amongst the younger professionals. From having their migrant employment roots in industrialised cities and in jobs such as manufacturing, the community can today count professionals in Business, Law, Politics, Academia and Medicine amongst its members. Likewise, another development that has been observed from field research is the increase in Sikhs within the creative and arts sectors of the economy. Sikhs have furthermore become better represented in the sports and music industries. All these employment patterns reflect changes in the British economy, which is gaining more growth and revenue from newer sectors such as media, technology and telecommunication services over manufacturing. These are all trends that are supported by the BSR's results. For example, the report shows that respondents aged less than 50 are more likely to be in the 'Design and Art' category than those aged 50 or over. As a summary on occupations, it can be said that Sikhs are a key part of the national productivity changes and as such, that they exhibit signs of an integrated community and are coordinated with society.

➤ SIKHS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Despite their successes, one challenge for Sikhs, like many other citizens, is British identity. The vast majority of Sikhs balance a religious identity alongside a secularising one. Given that in Britain, society is increasingly portrayed as non-religious, this can cause some concerns for many Sikhs. This is especially the case amongst Sikh youth, a group who are the future of British Sikh identity. It has been observed that their identity is changing. For example, religious knowledge is now reflected-upon as it is passed on from one generation to another.⁷ Additionally, instead of utilising traditional channels of Sikh and Punjabi identity or culture transfer such as family, *gurdwaras* (Sikh places of worship) and community socialisation,



BRITAIN'S SIKHS IN 2016: A COMMUNITY WITH SOCIETY IN MIND

many Sikh youths are turning to newer forms of information. These include consulting websites, other non-Sikh youth, mainstream schools and non-communitarian circles of socialisation. Additionally, these youths are evidence of new research on Sikh identity. This suggests that examining the Sikh religion using its own Indian roots, i.e. as *sikhi* rather than Sikhism is more useful in understanding its meaning to contemporary lives.⁸ This, and other research, forecasts that future British Sikh identity is dependent on approaching Sikhism through its own spiritual traditions, and also engaging with mainstream cultural politics. This will be a challenge for Sikh youth as they find it hard to disentangle culture and religion in their formation of British Sikh identity.

The fact that Sikhs are increasingly using mainstream forms of knowledge dissemination also means that they are becoming more aware of mainstream politics. Furthermore, and perhaps due to this, they are getting closer to elements that make up British, rather than just Sikh, identity. This may explain why Sikhs are comfortable with self-labelling as British across the generations. Although the BSR offers quantified support for this assertion, this is still a surprise as it is Sikh youth that are more often thought of as being better integrated. Nevertheless, as evidence of this community's integration, the BSR shows that of the 1400 plus respondents, a significant 13 per cent self-identified as "British". The examination of the results for the identity category in the age groups of below 50, and of 50 and over, reveals that there is no significant difference in those that self-label as 'British' between the age brackets. As a headline then, it is a key finding in this BSR that in both age categories, a near similar 13 per cent have chosen to name themselves solely using the country they reside in. This may show that their identification process is increasingly taking into account society, as well as community.



Nearly half (48 per cent) of Sikhs in Britain identify themselves as "British Sikh", another 13 per cent identify as "British".

However, a larger proportion of Sikhs still appear to be more comfortable in self-identifying as "British Sikh" – a return of nearly 48 per cent of all those surveyed for this report suggests as such. Nevertheless, it is of significance that this category appears to be undergoing change as within it, the same two age groups returned very different percentages. There was approximately 37 per cent of those aged 50 and over, and approximately 50 per cent of those under 50 that chose this hybrid category. Therefore, it can be proposed that Britishness is stronger in the younger Sikhs' identity process. Associated field research likewise supports this finding. This suggests that younger Sikhs are well positioned within national discussions on the changing British identity, or indeed, identities.



➤ SIKHS AND EUROPE

The Sikhs in mainland Europe are a fast-growing voice amongst the global community, especially on issues such as freedom of movement, integration and labour opportunities. This could be due to the history of Sikhs being a well-travelled migrant group. Related to this, the BSR reports that 57 per cent of its respondents are in favour of Britain remaining in the EU – both with and without reform. This is significant because, given the deep divisions in national party politics over this emotive debate, this figure places Sikhs at the heart of national issues concerning Britain's future. This is further reinforced by research on Sikhs in Europe by Jacobsen and Myrvold (e.g. 2015). Their literature shows that Sikhs are both very aware, and are active members, of the European societies they live in. One noteworthy community of mainland Sikhs is that of the Sikhs in Italy.

The Sikhs in Italy are a good example of how Sikhs globally have integrated and adapted within 'host' societies, and help influence common futures. In the case of these Sikhs, this has been done via a 'good neighbour' strategy in national identity politics, and with food. In Italy, food is not just an important national symbol, it is moreover a crucial lifestyle aspect for both communities. Having recognized this, both communities have worked closely together to save an iconic national foodstuff. As a result, Sikhs make up a large number of workers in many of the Mozzarella and Parmesan dairies in Northern and Central Italy. It is remarkable to think that a significant portion of these and other world famous Italian cheeses are now produced by Sikhs. The influx of diligent Sikh migrant workers has rescued the trade as many younger Italians have sought vocations away from these traditional industries. This is a testament of 'good neighbourliness' for all Sikhs and Italians globally. In this way, the Italian Sikh identity bears similarities to the integrationist nature of the British Sikh identity. This is also the case with many other Sikhs globally. In disparate places such as Kenya or Hong Kong, the community has long championed neighbourliness in national identity development.

➤ SIKHS AND BRITAIN'S CHANGING SOCIETY

British society is changing. Within this, Sikhs in Britain can be expected to further consolidate their position as a key community of society. Furthermore, as their professional and social networks grow rapidly, they may even help shape what it will mean to be a Briton in the future. This assertion is assisted by the finding that most Sikhs live in major population hubs, and due to inherent neighbourhood diversity in these areas, they are less likely to hold and practice extreme political views. This means that they are open to the various social changes that British society is undergoing. This moreover means that they could help society maintain a liberal outlook in changing times.



BRITAIN'S SIKHS IN 2016: A COMMUNITY WITH SOCIETY IN MIND



The society that Sikhs are members of is undergoing very rapid social and political changes. This is the result of the relatively unnoticed population changes that have taken place in Britain over the last two decades. These, in turn, are due to the long term effects of several demographic and social changes. The first of these is the major influx of migrants from the EU, migrants who have the freedom of movement and access to labour employment rights in Britain. These new migrants now form a significant proportion of workers in the service industries that Sikhs have traditionally been part of. These include the construction industry, skilled manual labour, customer services and retail work. The second factor is the higher than average birth rates prevalent amongst minority ethnic communities, including Sikhs. Closely tied to this is the lower than average age within ethnic minority communities, meaning that they are generally younger. Finally, as a result of increasing personal relationships between various communities, there is the sharp increase in the mixed-ethnicity population of Britain. All these factors when combined, mean that the ethnic make-up of Britain is changing and with it, British identity could change too. However, this is a very unpredictable situation as it has taken place relatively recently, and has few contemporary precedents.

All the same, it can be confidently suggested that these demographic changes will challenge many ideas of what British identity is, perhaps even who a Briton is. In this development, Sikhs could play an active part as they occupy a vantage position in society. As part of an older wave of migrants, yet not part of the ethnic majority, they are able to provide commentary on many different sides of the British identity debate. Additionally, this community appears well placed to actively shape the 21st century Briton for a reason earlier introduced. This reason is their choice of residence. Sikhs reside in major population hubs such as cities and towns (as the BSR has shown). It is in these very locales that rapid demographic changes have particularly taken effect on neighbourhood and ward diversity. As such, they can influence the very roots of social and demographic change. At present, the effects of these changes to everyday life are still unfolding at these locations, however it is generally a harmonious picture.



Nevertheless, and more seriously, the impact on national politics and the policy environment has yet to be felt. As context, some commentators suggest that these changes ought to be less of a surprise or concern. This is because Britain has for centuries hosted migrants and along with it, changed its own identity as adaptation took place. For instance, the iconic British Meal, Fish and Chips, has its origins in Ashkenazi migrants and Belgium.

In addition to these national changes, territorial identities are on the rise and it will be interesting to see how this affects the national Sikh community. This is because the community has traditionally self-labelled 'British' over regional identities, such as English or Welsh. As this BSR shows, Scotland is one region where Sikhs could easily become part of a 'national versus community' identity debate due to the rise in multicultural 'Scottish ethnicity'. Due to this, Sikhs in Scotland are more likely to align themselves closer with national identity over state identity. The role of Sikh identity in this interplay remains a rich area for further research.

In summarising this article, it is fitting to recall the work of the Sikh Studies author Gurdip Arora (1967). Arora referred to early Sikh settlers as "frontiersmen" because of the post-war social and economic challenges they faced. Today, this appears to be the case again with Sikhs as they play an active role in challenging the boundaries of British identity politics. This comes through clearly in the British Sikh Report 2016. This itself is a report from a series that has considerably raised the profile and awareness of Britain's Sikh community, and acted as a voice for their concerns and outlook. This year's headline is that, despite the fact that Sikhs make up just 0.8 per cent of the population, they have definitive ideas about the future of the society they belong to. In addressing topical issues such as those examined in this article, as well as migration, governmental diversity, charity, nuclear weaponry and overseas military intervention, Sikhs can help design a society that is fair, liberal and inclusive.



BRITAIN'S SIKHS IN 2016: A COMMUNITY WITH SOCIETY IN MIND

In conclusion, Britain's Sikhs are a community at home within society. In looking forward to their future, it can be suggested that through their unique Britishness, they may assist in answering that puzzling question occupying many British minds these days: Who are we?



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This is the latest in the series of annual British Sikh Reports. This year's survey saw over 1,400 respondents spread across the United Kingdom, making this our largest sample to date. The survey was primarily carried out online, as in previous years, but there was a concerted effort to supplement that sample with a paper questionnaire to reach those without internet access. Responses were monitored and particular areas of shortfall were targeted to ensure that the overall sample is representative of Sikhs in Britain in terms of age group, gender, marital status and region.

The BSR aims to collect British Sikhs' views on various aspects of life. This year's survey has particularly focused on Sikhs' opinions of Britain's place in the world, asking questions about topical issues such as the EU referendum, immigration, treatment of refugees, defence issues and UK military action in Syria. Information has been collected on how much time and money Sikhs contribute to charitable causes and in voluntary activities. In addition, the survey asked for views on identity, ethnicity, and caste. The following sections summarise the results of the survey.





BSR2016

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SURVEY

The survey underpinning the BSR 2016 received 1,416 responses. There was an even split between male (701) and female (703) respondents, with 12 choosing not to disclose their gender.

Figure 1 shows the breakdown by age groups, and the distribution is broadly in line with the 2011 Census, allowing for some change between 2011 and 2016. There is some under-representation in the older age group. However, this is not considered to have any significant impact on the findings of the survey in terms of views on the topics covered.

Figure 1: Age breakdown

Broad Age Group	Number of respondents	Percentage of total
Below 20	83	6 %
20 - 34	537	38 %
35 - 49	559	39 %
50 - 64	181	13 %
65 and over	56	4 %
Grand Total	1,416	100 %

Figure 2 shows the marital status of respondents. About 59 per cent are married, and another 34 per cent are single. About 5 per cent of Sikhs in the UK are divorced. Population estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for 2014 show that about 51 per cent of the population aged over 16 were married, and over 8 per cent were divorced.

Please note that the components of some tables and charts may not add to the total due to rounding of figures.





Figure 2: Marital status

Marital status	Number of respondents	Percentage of total
Civil partnered	6	0.4 %
Divorced	68	4.8 %
Married	835	59.0 %
Separated	8	0.6 %
Single	484	34.2 %
Widowed	15	1.1 %
Grand Total	1,416	100 %

Figure 3 shows the distribution of the BSR sample across the regions and countries of the United Kingdom. About a third of Sikhs responding live in London, a similar figure to that shown by the 2011 Census. The region with the next largest population of Sikhs is West Midlands, at about 24 percent. The Census showed a higher share of the UK population in West Midlands. Wales and Northern Ireland have been combined in the table, because of very small numbers in these parts of the UK. There are only about 200 Sikhs living in Northern Ireland.

Figure 3: Regional breakdown

Region	Number of respondents	Percentage of UK total
East	79	5.6 %
East Midlands	119	8.4 %
London	473	33.4 %
North East	15	1.1 %
North West	40	2.8 %
Scotland	42	3.0 %
South East	186	13.1 %
South West	20	1.4 %
Wales and Northern Ireland	15	1.1 %
West Midlands	336	23.7 %
Yorkshire & the Humber	91	6.4 %
Grand Total	1,416	100 %



➤ Employment Status

Figure 4 shows that 66 per cent of Sikhs in the UK were in either full time or part time employment, and another 14 per cent were self employed. 11 per cent were studying, and only 3 per cent were unemployed.

Figure 4: Employment status

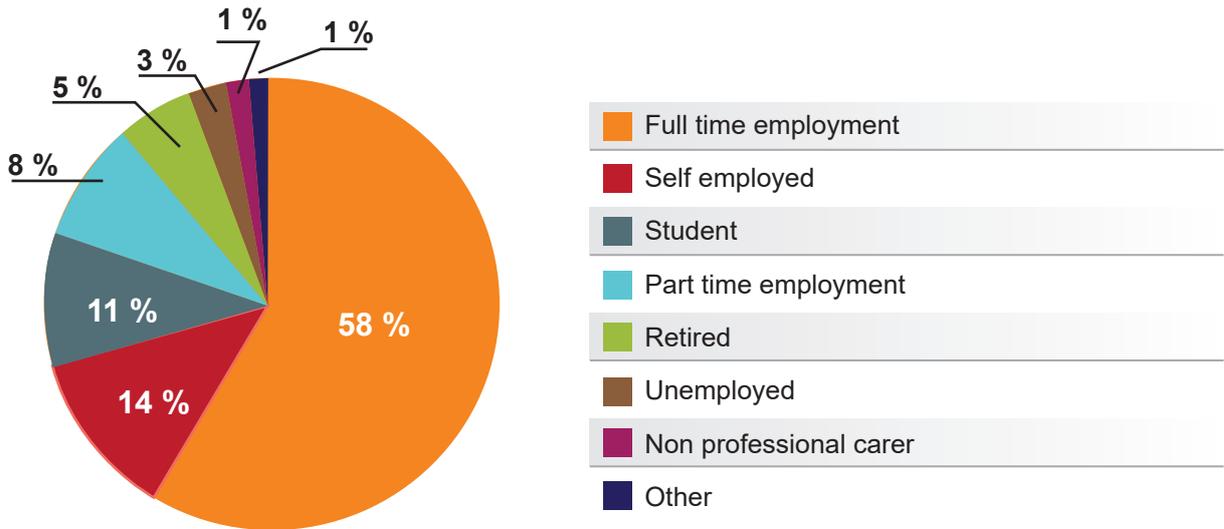
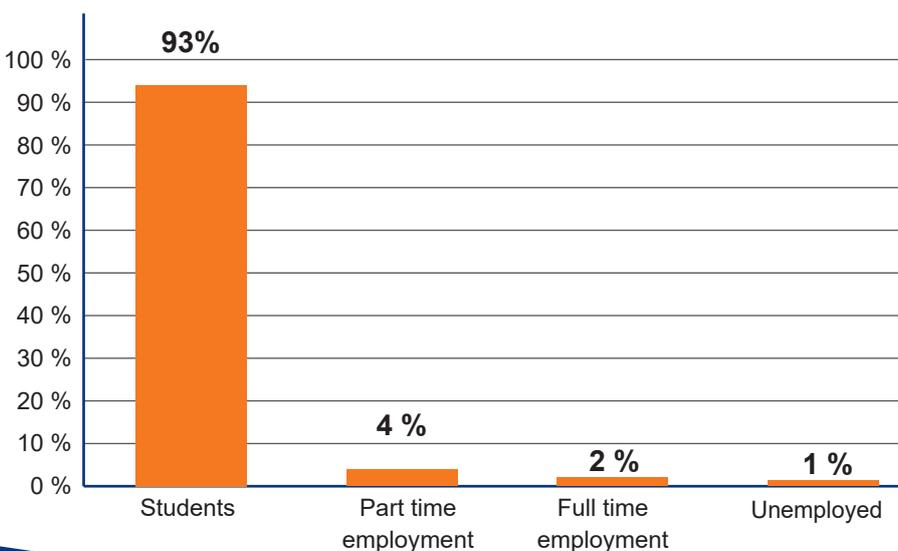


Figure 5 shows employment type for Sikhs aged under 20. 93 per cent of respondents below the age of 20 are in full time education, with only 6 per cent in either part time or full time employment and only 1 per cent unemployed.

Figure 5: Employment Status for respondents aged less than 20 years old



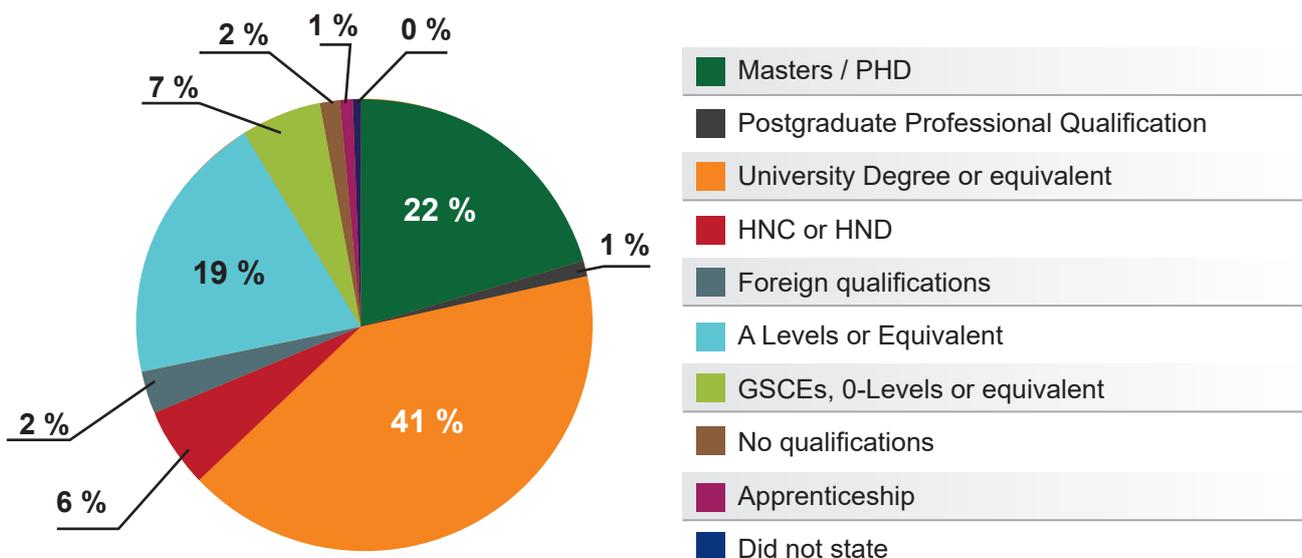
It is noteworthy that fewer females were in full time employment or were self-employed than male respondents. The gender divide was also evident with all non-professional carers in the survey being female.

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION



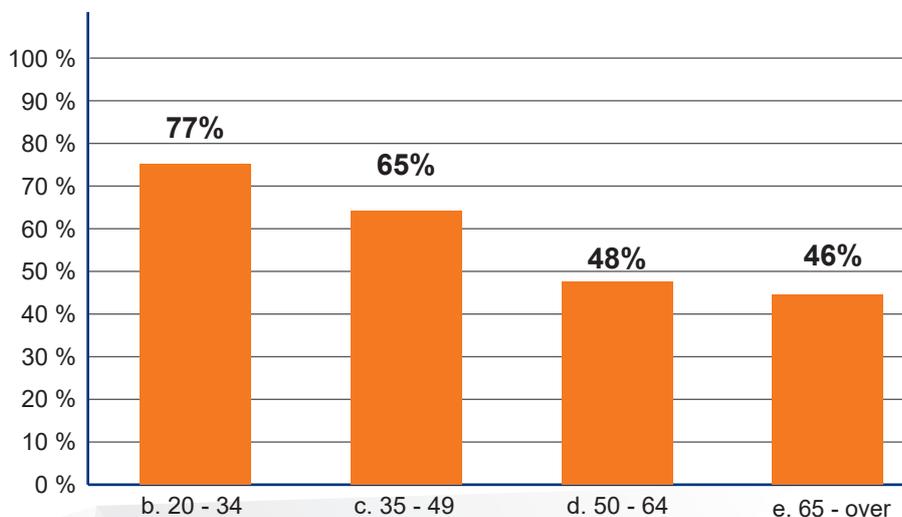
Figure 6 shows that British Sikhs retain traditional career pathways (A Levels, University and then employment) as opposed to taking up apprenticeships. Although the government has made a push to promote apprenticeships for young people, the responses showed that only 1 per cent of Sikhs across all age groups reported apprenticeships as their highest level of education.

Figure 6: Highest Qualification



It is also interesting to note the increasing proportion of each age group that has received a university education as shown in Figure 7, showing the growing attention being paid to education by successive generations of Sikhs in the UK.

Figure 7: University education by age group

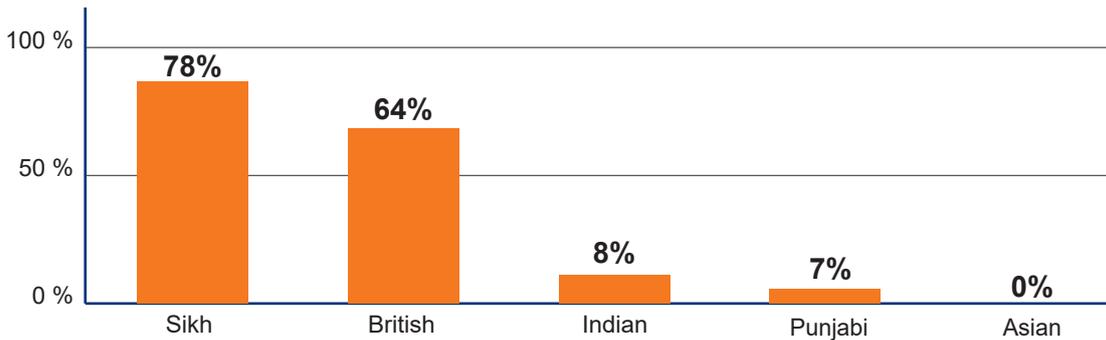




IDENTITY

When asked how they identified themselves, 48 per cent saw themselves as 'British Sikhs'. The most favoured words used in self-identification were 'Sikh' (78 per cent) and 'British' (64 per cent). No respondents used the term 'Asian' which is quite commonly used in the media.

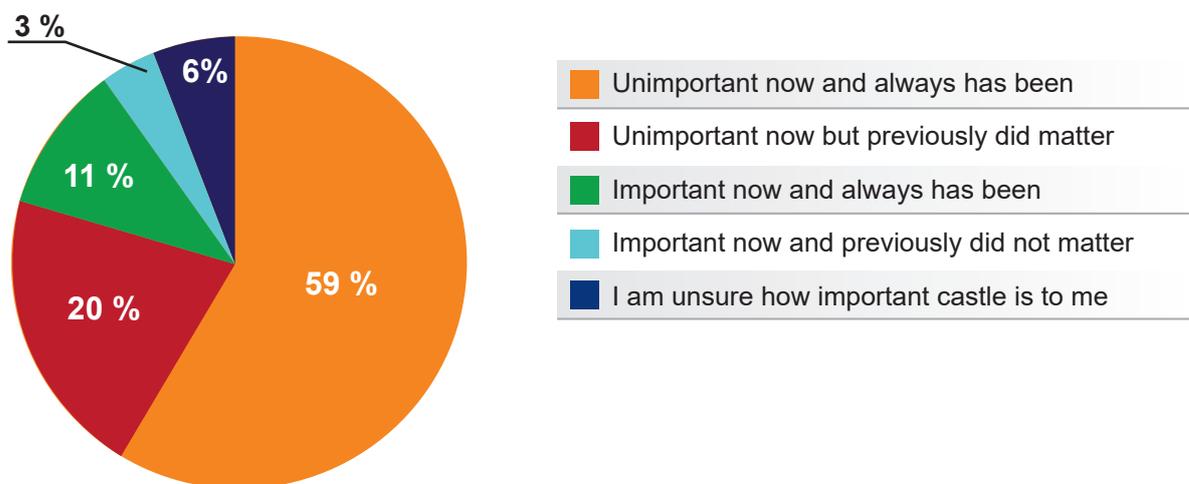
Figure 8: Most common words used in self-identification



➤ RELEVANCE OF CASTE

The teachings of the Sikh Gurus promoted equality for all and were against the observance of caste differences. However, in practice within Sikh communities, caste or Zat distinctions still exist. The survey asked respondents for their views on the importance of caste to them. Nearly 60 per cent of respondents said that caste was not important to them and never has been, and another 20 per cent said that it was now unimportant, although it used to be (Figure 9). Only 14 per cent of the respondents considered caste to be important. Six per cent were unsure, and a large proportion of these were young people who may not have given thought to the issue before.

Figure 9: Responses to 'As a Sikh living in the UK, the relevance of caste to me is':





The survey asked respondents to report on their observance of the Panj Kakkars (sometimes referred to as the Five Ks, the Sikh Articles of Faith worn by Khalsa or initiated Sikhs). Figure 10 shows how many of the Kakkars were kept by individual Sikhs in Britain. Roughly one in ten of the respondents wore all five Kakkars which indicates that they are Khalsa Sikhs, and a similar proportion to those who wore none.

Figure 10: How many Kakkars did the respondent observe

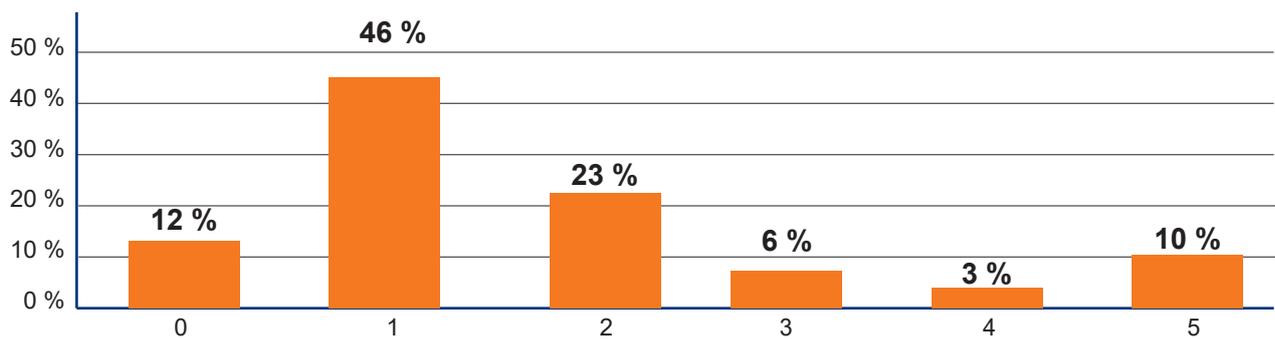


Figure 11 shows that the Kara (steel bracelet) was the Kakkars most likely to be carried by Sikhs followed by the Kesh (uncut hair). In general men were more likely to observe each Kakkars and this was seen most starkly in observance of the uncut hair (53 per cent for men versus 26 per cent for women) and the Kacchera (29 per cent for men and 9 per cent for women)

Figure 11: Observance of Kakkars overall and by gender

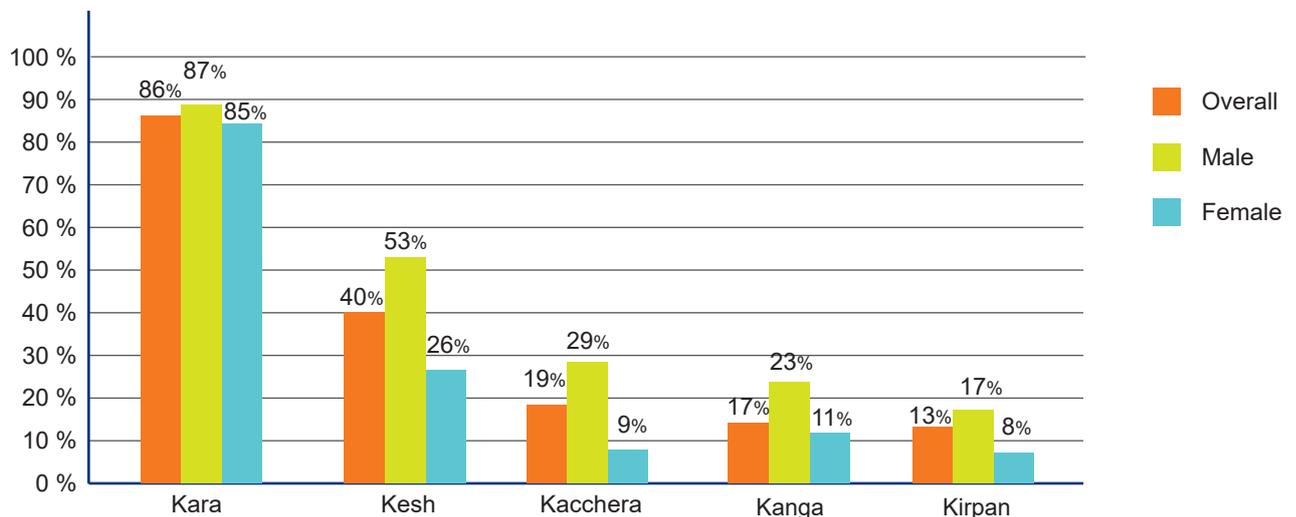
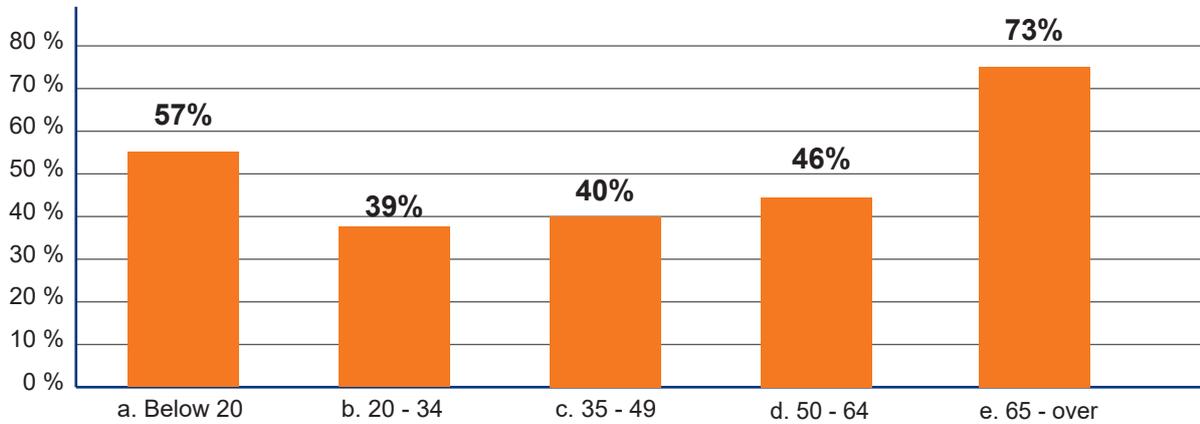


Figure 12 shows the observance of two or more Kakkars by age group. The oldest age group, those aged 65 and over, has the highest rate of observance at 73 per cent. It is interesting that the next highest rate of observance is amongst the youngest age group, those aged below 20. The rate of observance in the other groups showed an increase by age, from those aged 20 to 34 onwards.



CHARITABLE GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING

Figure 12: Observance of Kakkars by age group



CHARITABLE GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING

Sikh Charity and volunteering

Performing Seva (selfless service) is a basic tenet of Sikhi, and Sikhs are also expected to share at least 10 per cent their earnings with those less fortunate and for good causes (Dasvandh).

The survey confirmed this focus with 64 per cent of the community engaging in some volunteering work. 40 per cent give between one and five hours of their time per week on voluntary activities, including Seva at their Gurdwara, whilst more than two per cent spend over 25 hours on such activities. Sikhs spend about 200 hours per year on voluntary activities on average.

93 per cent of those who answered this question said that they donated some money to charity every month, with only seven per cent reporting that they did not donate any. Over half said that they donated between £1 and £20 every month, and seven per cent donated more than £100 per month. From the data collected, it is estimated that Sikhs in Britain donate around £380 per year to charity on average.

Taken as a whole, Sikhs in the UK are estimated to donate about £125 million to charity per annum and spend over 65 million hours each year on voluntary activities.

Figure 13: Sikhs' voluntary and charitable activity

	Percentage Participation	Amounts
Volunteering activities	64 per cent	200 hours per year
Charitable donations	93 per cent	£380 per year



➤ Remain in or leave the European Union?

The EU referendum, which will take place on 23rd June 2016 will be the most significant political event of the year. On the question of the EU referendum, 42 per cent of the sample responded conditionally in favour of the UK remaining in the European Union as long as reforms were to occur. The survey was undertaken before the agreement reached in Brussels in February 2016. Another 15 per cent said that they would vote to remain, regardless of any reforms.

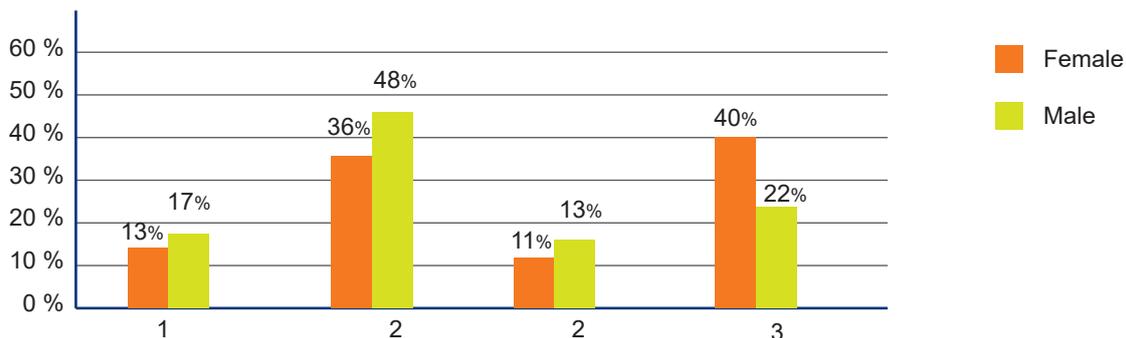
Figure 14: EU referendum voting intention



Only 12 per cent said that they would vote to leave the EU, but 31 per cent were undecided at this stage. The conditional approval and the large percentage of 'Not sure' responses suggest that the overall voting intentions of British Sikhs are far from certain at this stage.

As Figure 15 shows, female Sikh voters are more likely to be a 'not sure' response. How they are influenced by the campaigns may have a large bearing on how they vote.

Figure 15: EU referendum voting intentions by Gender



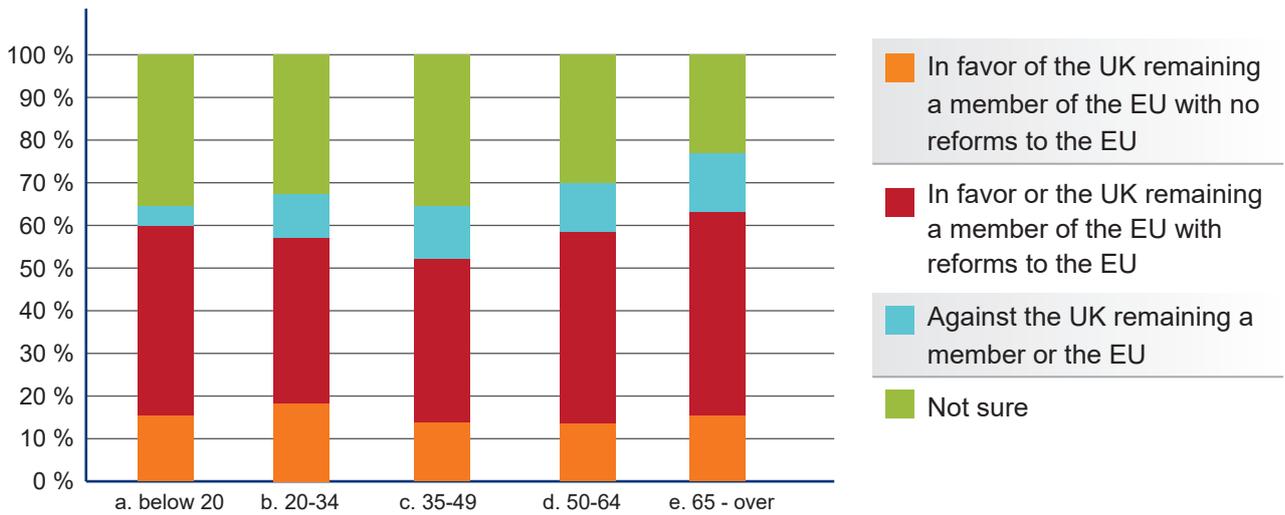
1. In favor of the UK remaining a member of the EU with no reforms to the EU
2. In favor of the UK remaining a member of the EU with reforms to the EU
3. Against the UK remaining a member of the EU
4. Not sure



VIEWS ON BRITAIN'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

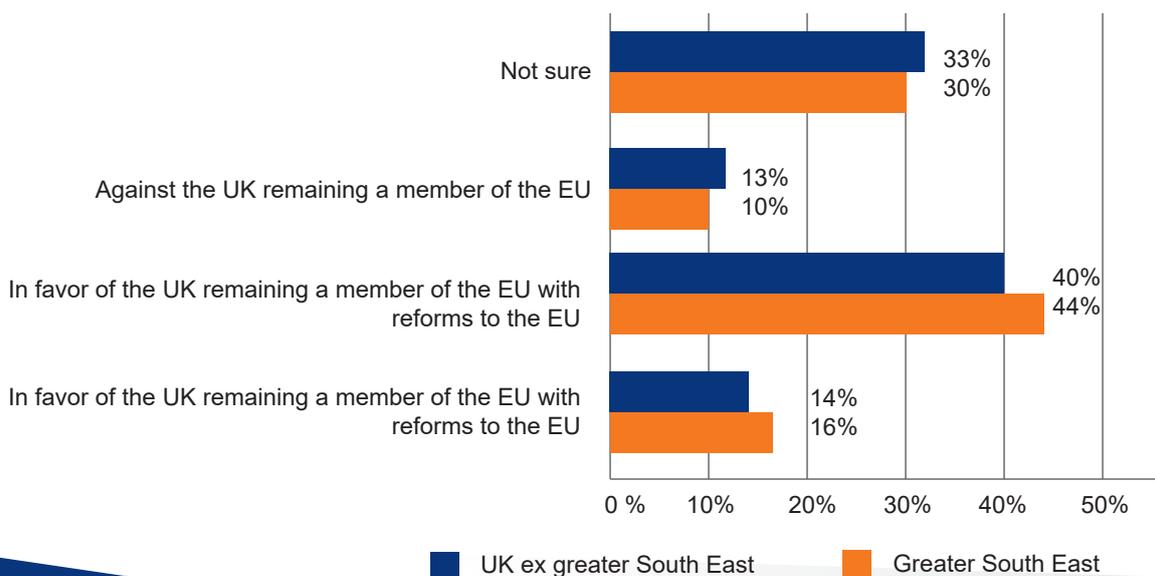
Figure 16 shows that those aged 65 and over are most likely to vote in favour of remaining in the EU, whilst those aged under 20 are most unsure about how they should vote. Only five per cent of this youngest group has decided to vote against remaining in the EU, while other groups vary between 10 and 15 per cent.

Figure 16: EU referendum voting intentions by Age Group



The survey data for some regions have been combined to provide a more reliable picture. London, South East and East regions have been combined to create a "Greater South East". Sikhs living in the Greater South East are more likely to vote for remaining within the EU, while those outside this part of the UK are more likely to vote to leave the EU. However, the differences are not large and those who are not sure could still swing the overall Sikh vote either way.

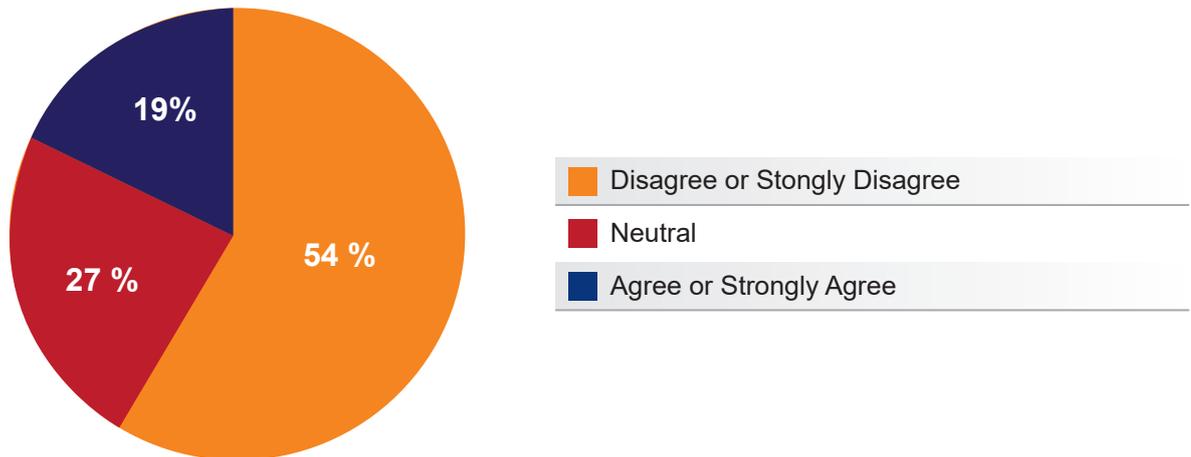
Figure 17: EU referendum voting intentions by Region





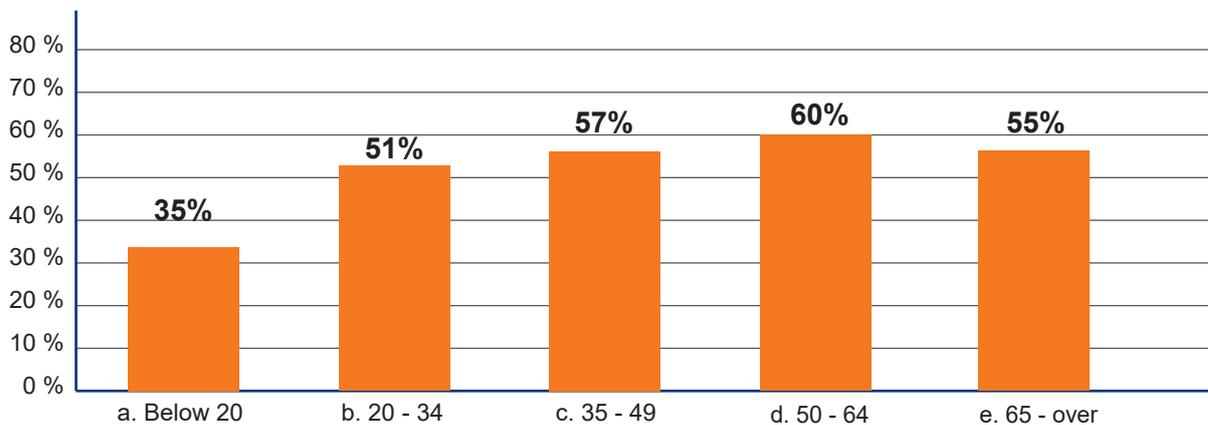
Unlimited EU immigration into the UK was not favoured by the sample with more than 50 per cent of the survey disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement “We should continue to allow an unlimited number of EU migrants to stay, live and work within the UK”.

Figure 18: Continue to allow an unlimited number of EU migrants into UK?



The dissatisfaction with unlimited EU migration was the highest in older age groups.

Figure 19: Disagree/Strongly disagree by age group

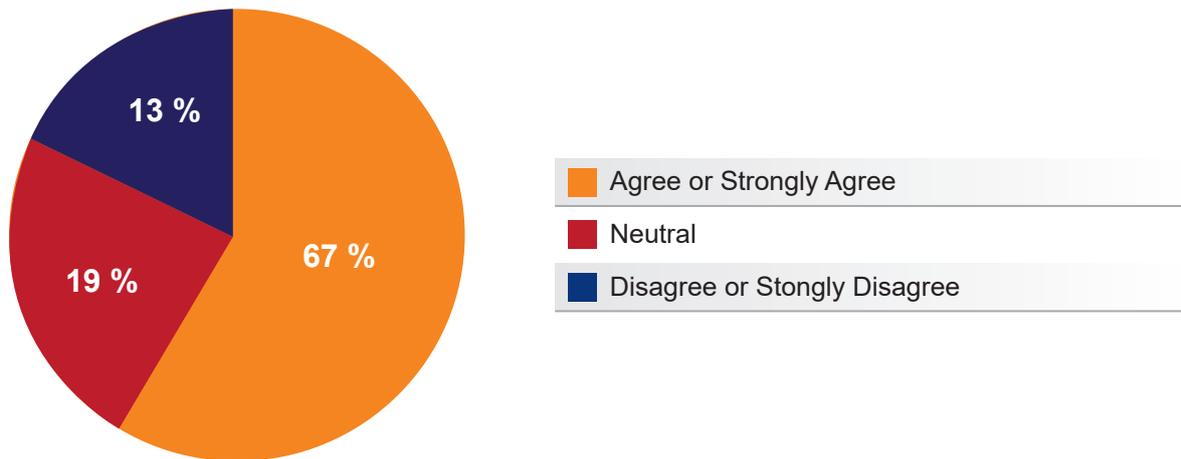




ACCESS TO UK BENEFITS FOR EU CITIZENS

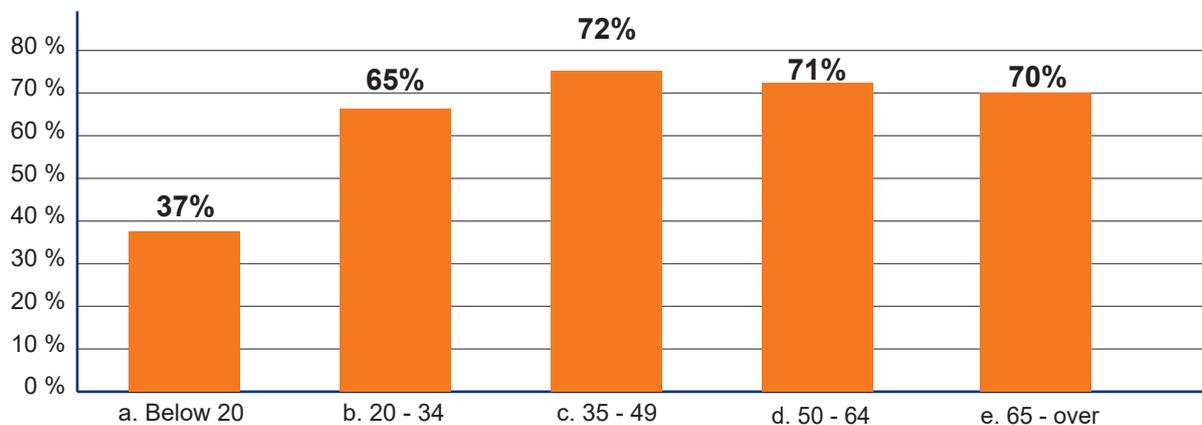
Views on restricting benefits for EU migrants were even stronger than unlimited immigration, with two thirds agreeing with the statement that such benefits should be restricted. Only 13 per cent disagreed.

Figure 20: Restrict access to benefits for EU migrants



Again there was a noticeable increase in support for restricting benefits within the higher age categories.

Figure 21: Agree or Strongly agree to restrict benefits for EU migrants by age group



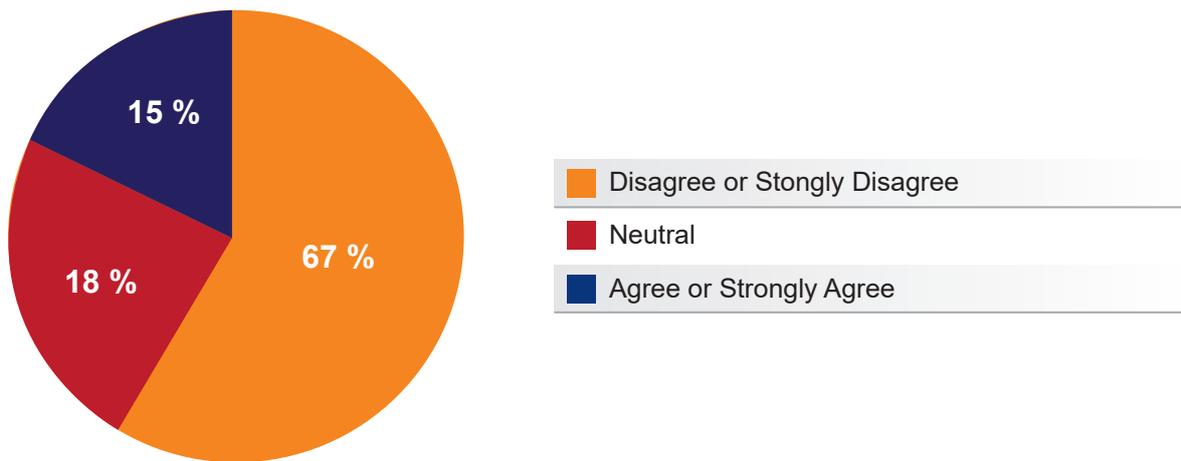
From these responses we would summarise that British Sikhs are in favour of the European Union but not in its current form. The scale of immigration and the availability of benefits are of considerable concern and will be critical issues in the EU debate. Younger Sikhs seem to have fewer concerns about this issue.



➤ Impact of migrants on public services

The respondents in general disagreed with the assertion that “public services in the UK can cope with the current level of net immigration” This continues the theme that emerged from the questions on the European immigration.

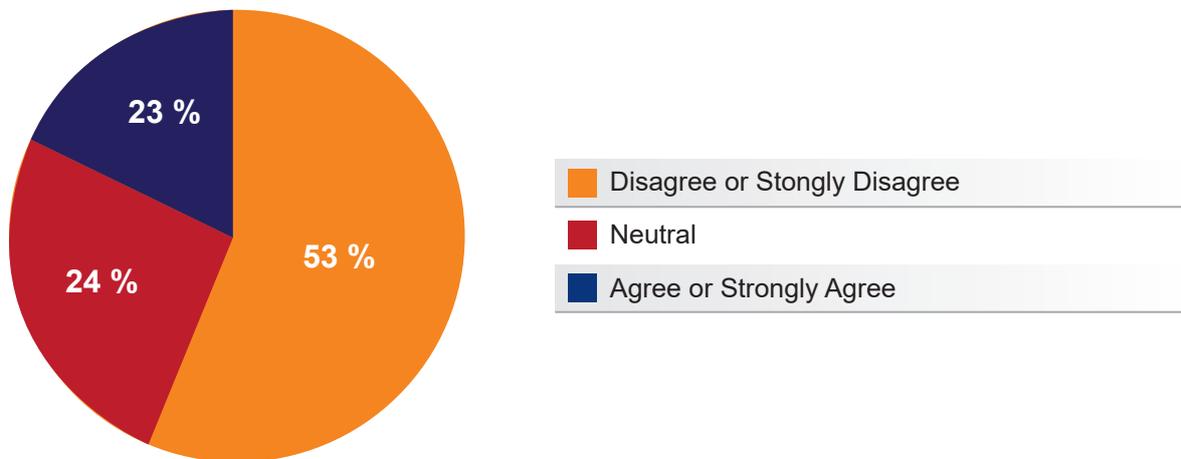
Figure 22: Public services can cope with immigration



➤ Impact of immigration on diversity and cohesion

The respondents in general also seem to have concerns about the impact of migration on diversity and cohesion of society. About half disagreed with the assertion that “The diversity and social cohesion of the UK will not be affected by the current level of net immigration”

Figure 23: Diversity & cohesion not affected by immigration

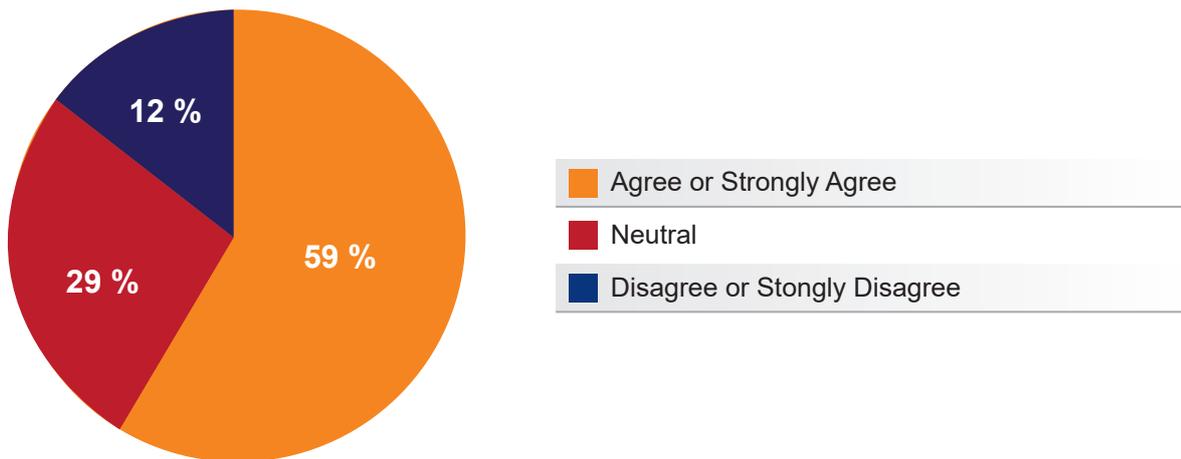




Do migrants make a positive contribution to society?

On the broader question of whether migrants make a positive contribution the response was largely positive. Nearly 60 per cent agreed with this statement, while only 12 per cent thought that migrants do not make a positive contribution.

Figure 24: Migrants make positive contribution



From the responses it can be summarised that British Sikhs are concerned with the scale of potential immigration and the impact that high levels of immigration can have on public services and community cohesion. It does appear however that immigration is considered positively if managed properly.

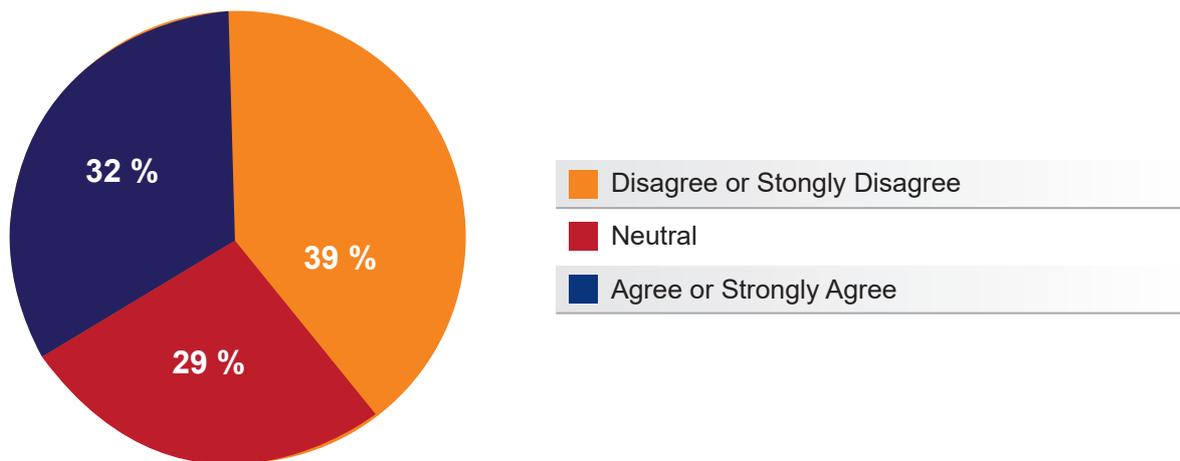




➤ Should the UK accept more refugees?

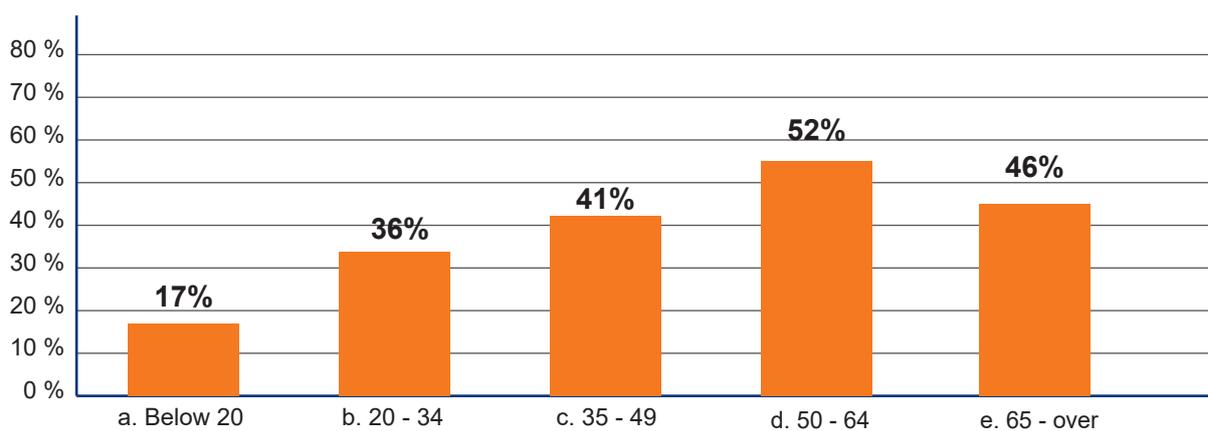
On the statement "Britain should accept more refugees", the responses were mixed although with a tendency towards being against taking a greater number of refugees.

Figure 25: Britain should accept more refugees



This question had a significant variation across age groups with younger respondents being more open to accepting refugees

Figure 26: Disagree with Britain accepting more refugees by age group



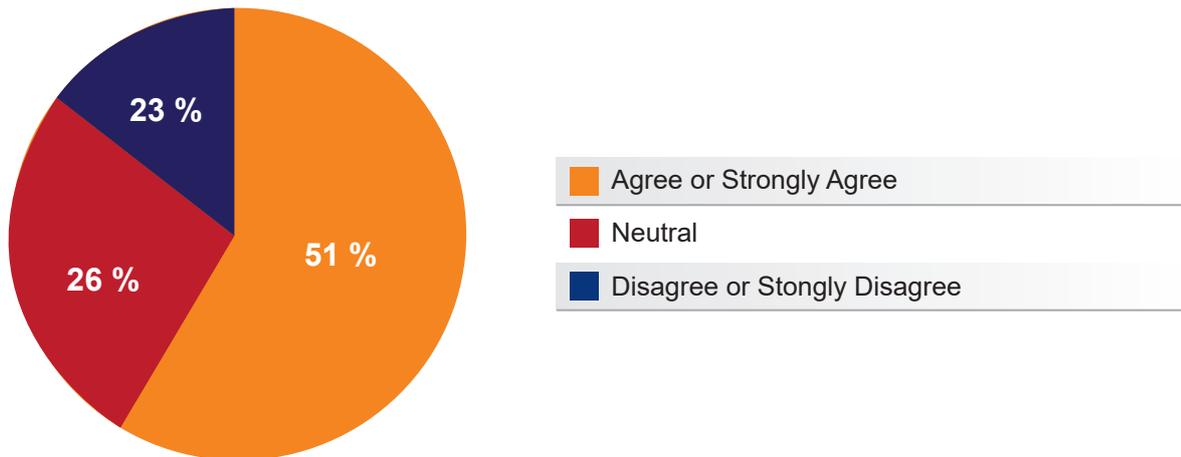


ATTITUDES TOWARDS REFUGEES

➤ Should the UK provide more help to refugees across Europe?

The reluctance for respondents to accept a greater number of refugees in the UK was balanced by support for providing more help to refugees already in Europe. About half favoured helping refugees across Europe, while a quarter were against this proposal.

Figure 27: UK should provide greater help with refugees across Europe



When viewing all responses on refugees and immigrants, the respondents wanted to provide help to refugees in terms of aid where they were. This might be related to the perceived impact on the community cohesion and public services of large-scale immigration.

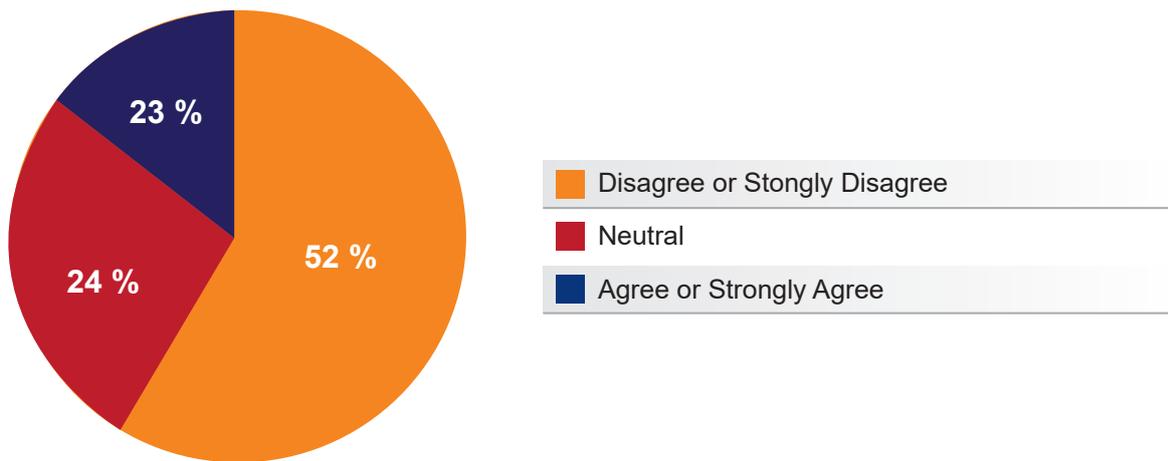




➤ Should the UK take military action in Syria?

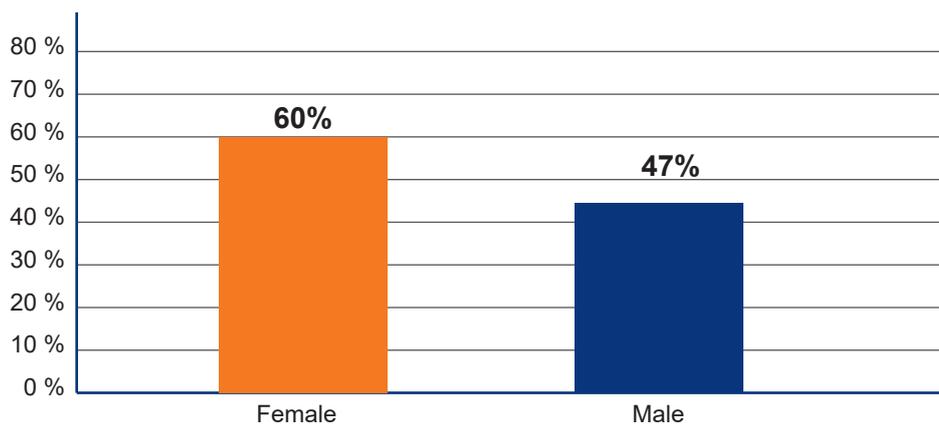
The release of the survey coincided with a parliamentary vote on launching military action in Syria. The responses indicated little comfort with this approach with 53 per cent saying that military action is unjustified, and only 23 per cent in agreement.

Figure 28: Britain would be / is justified in launching military action in Syria



This question had a large difference between male and female respondents with female respondents more likely to disagree with military action than males.

Figure 29: Military action in Syria split by gender - Disagree

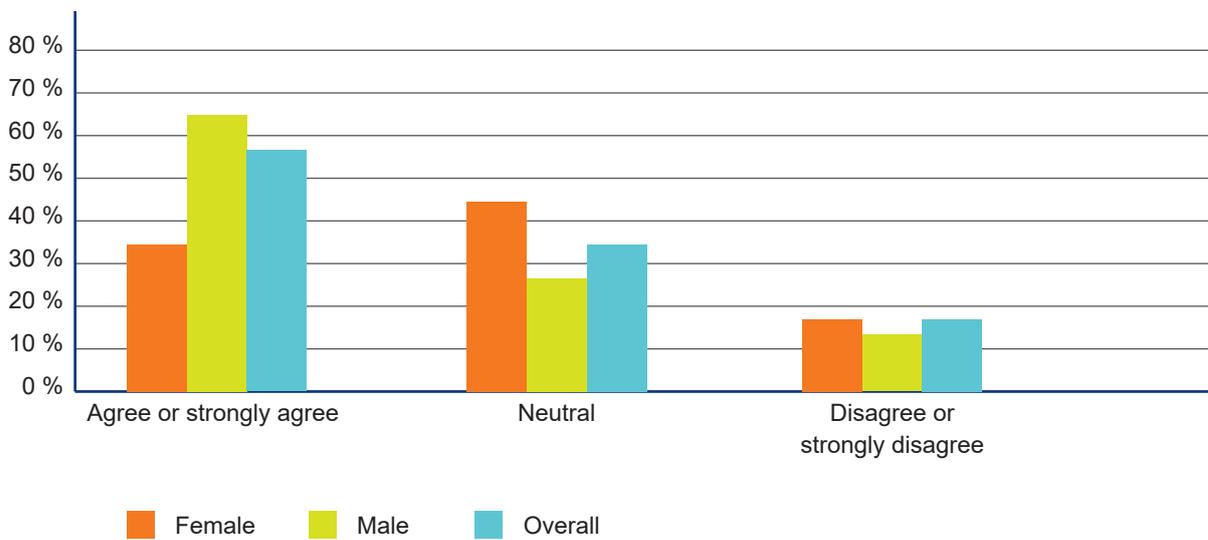




➤ Should the UK retain its nuclear deterrent ?

On the question of nuclear deterrents, men and women responded differently. 57 per cent of men wanted to keep Trident compared with just 36 per cent of women. More women than men were neutral on the issue, although the overall picture was moderately in favour of keeping trident. Less than 20 per cent of both men and women disagreed with keeping Trident.

Figure 30: Nuclear deterrents Overall, and by Gender



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- p.4 – photo of advertising billboard from Singh Street Style
- p.5 – photo of policeman from Vaisakhi at City Hall 2015, organised by EY Sikh Network and Singh Sabha London East
- p.28 – photo of Calais migrant camp from Jasvir Singh

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