SOMALIS

IN LEICESTER

Somalis in European Cities

Somalis in Leicester

At Home in Europe

OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS

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Open Society Foundations Mission Statement

The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant societies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. Working with local communities in more than 100 countries, the Open Society Foundations support justice and human rights, freedom of expression, and access to public health and education.

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At Home in Europe 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 is that all people in an open society count equally and should enjoy equal opportunities. The Open Society Foundations work day-to-day with civil society organizations across Europe to respond to discrimination, prejudice and injustice; to understand the emergence of new and sometimes worrying political phenomena; to inform better practices in policing and security; to connect those seeking justice and equality with policymakers and institutions; to promote inclusion for Europe's minorities; to support a critical and informed discourse among nongovernmental actors; and to empower grassroots organizations to seek change for themselves, unique to their own local context.

At Home in Europe, part of the Open Society Initiative for Europe, Open Society Foundations, is a research and advocacy initiative which works to advance equality and social justice for groups excluded from the mainstream of civil, political, economic, and cultural life in Western Europe. It places a high priority on local community and city level practices that mitigate discrimination and seek to ensure access to equal opportunities for all. At Home in Europe engages with policymakers, civil society organisations, and communities at the local, national and international level to improve the social inclusion of Europe's diverse minority and marginalised communities in different ways.

Minority communities – whether Muslim, migrant or Roma – continue to come under intense scrutiny in Europe today. This complex situation presents Europe with one of its greatest challenges: how to ensure equal rights in an environment of rapidly expanding diversity. The Somali community is one such emerging minority group on whom a lack of precise data hampers the possibility of achieving meaningful integration.

People of Somali origin have lived in parts of Europe for many generations but in the past 15 years their numbers have increased. There are no accurate figures for the number of Somalis in Europe but on the whole, whilst small in absolute numbers, they are among one of the continent's largest refugee groups and a growing minority population. Europe's Somalis can be divided into three broad categories: people of Somali origin born in Europe, Somali refugees and asylum seekers (who came directly from Somalia or neighbouring countries largely as a result of conflict) and Somalis who migrated to a country in Europe from elsewhere in Europe, such as from Sweden to the UK for example. They are a diverse and vibrant community who suffer from negative and biased media representation and stereotyping. There is a limited understanding on the specific needs of this community and they are in the category of groups that experience significant inequalities in accessing education, employment, health, and housing with resulting poor outcomes. Somali community groups are very present in certain countries in Europe but their engagement with policymakers and in local and national bodies can be relatively limited.

The comparative research series 'Somalis in European Cities' examines city and municipal policies that have actively sought to understand Somali origin communities and their specific needs. The research aims to capture the everyday, lived experiences as well as the type and degree of engagement policymakers have initiated with their Somali and minority constituents. An underlying theme is how Somali communities have themselves actively participated in tackling discrimination and whether the needs of specific groups warrant individual policy approaches in overcoming barriers to equal opportunities.

The 'Somalis in European Cities' series contains seven individual city reports and an overview. The cities selected take into account the population size, diversity, and the local political context. They are: Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Leicester, London, Malmö, and Oslo. All seven city reports were prepared by teams of local experts on the basis of the same methodology to allow for comparative analysis. Each report includes detailed recommendations for improving the opportunities for full participation and inclusion of Somalis in wider society in the selected city. These recommendations will form the basis for At Home in Europe of the Open Society Initiative for Europe's advocacy activities.

Somalis in Leicester

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACMD	Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs
BEM	British Empire Medal
BME	black and minority ethnic
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FGM	female genital mutilation
IMR	infant mortality rate
LSOA	Lower Super Output Area
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OA	Output Area
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PCSO	police community support officer
SCSC	St Matthew's Community Solutions Centre
SDS	Somali Development Services
SOA	Super Output Area
SOCOPA	Somali Community Parents Association
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is part of a set of qualitative comparative policy studies exploring the views and experiences of Somali communities and governments' policy responses and initiatives supporting their integration. The research was undertaken concurrently in Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Leicester, London, Malmö and Oslo. In Leicester data were collected through 12 focus groups attended by 127 participants. Semi-structured interviews were held with 26 stakeholders in order to explore subjects in greater depth.

The presence of Somalis in the UK dates back to the late 19th century, when sailors and traders arrived (and some settled) in the UK. After the second world war, there was further migration of Somalis seeking trade and education; family members also joined, forming more settled communities from the 1960s onwards. The Somali community of Leicester is one of the largest in the UK and Leicester's Somalis can be divided into three broad categories: British-born Somalis, Somali refugees and asylum seekers (who came directly from Somalia as a result of the conflicts) and Somalis who migrated to the UK from various EU countries such as the Netherlands.

On the whole, Leicester's Somali community could be regarded as fitting into the city's overall success story. Despite the challenges that are raised in this report, the early signs of settlement seem to indicate a community that has a strong sense of entrepreneurship and is quickly learning from the experience of previous communities that have settled in Leicester. One that clearly stands out is the energy and activism among Somali women, who occupy a very public role in the life of the community.

Population and demographics: Accurate data for the number of Somalis in the city are not available as the question on ethnic identity in the census does not contain a "Somali" category, so figures are extrapolated from language, country of origin or birth and ethnic data. Estimates often put Leicester's Somali population at 10,000–15,000 people. In the sample accessed in Leicester for this search, the largest cohort (nearly 50 percent) was from the Netherlands and most of the sample arrived in Leicester between 2000 and 2005. A majority of Somalis (68 percent) live in four wards of the city: Spinney Hills, Stoneygate, Beaumont Leys and Charnwood.

Policy context: With a population of 329,000 in 2011, Leicester is the most populous city in the East Midlands. The city has one of the largest ethnic-minority populations in the UK in percentage terms (thought to have passed the 50 percent threshold), and is one of the most ethnically diverse cities outside the capital, with a strong reputation for its multicultural heritage. Nearly half of the councillors (21 out of 54) are of ethnic-minority background, though there are currently no Somali councillors. The council is dominated by the Labour Party, with only two councillors from other parties.

The downturn in the economy has hit the city hard. The city council has already planned to cut £75 million (about €87 million) from its annual budget and plans to cut a further £50 million (€59 million) per year by 2016. Such funding cuts have

significantly affected community organisations that previously had access to grants and other public services and the organisations that remain in existence need to think hard about sustainability.

Identity and belonging: As one respondent in the research process described: "Somali residents in the UK are balancing a number of factors in their identities—Somali heritage and origin, Western culture, Muslim faith and black colour." There was a range of views expressed about identity, with generational difference, some identifying predominantly as Somalis, others as European and others as British. A majority of respondents spoke positively about the city and felt a strong sense of belonging to it, though concerns were also raised about the negative portrayal of Somalis. Positive aspects of living in the city were identified as multiculturalism, tolerance and diversity, religious freedom and a strong Somali community. Negative areas included housing problems, crime and safety, and lack of employment.

Education: In 2013 there were 2,076 Somali pupils (4.27 percent of the total) in Leicester city schools, forming the third largest ethnic-minority group. Despite initially facing challenges in achievement, significant effort has been put in by various agencies to raise the standards and the results have shown marked improvement over the last five years. In 2008, 60.6 percent of Somali pupils were at Key Stage (KS) 2 national thresholds in English and mathematics; in 2012 this had risen to 76.8 percent. In 2008 26.6 percent of Somali pupils attained 5 A*–C in their GCSEs; in 2012 this had risen to 45.3 percent, close to the city average of 51.8 percent. Taylor Road primary school, where 46 percent of pupils are of Somali background (and 60 percent of the school are black and minority ethnic, BME) has been recognised by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) and the Home Office for its positive performance. The chief strengths of the school have been the engagement of Somali parents as governors in the school and the role of the community more broadly. However, difficulties do remain concerning deprivation, pupil mobility, language difficulties, a lack of support mechanisms, expulsions and cuts to services. Access to pre-school support by Somalis is also considered to be more limited and this can have a knock-on effect on language difficulties in early years.

Employment: Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicate that unemployment rates in Leicester are higher than the national average (14.4 percent compared with the national average of 8 percent). Much less is known about Somali unemployment, though it is expected to be much higher. In our focus groups, the respondents articulated that barriers to employment include lack of recognition of qualifications, language barriers and discrimination. The translation of existing qualifications to ones that are recognised by UK employers was seen as a major problem and carrying recent educational success over into the workplace remains a challenge. Rates of self-employment appear to be high in the Somali community due to a combination of entrepreneurial spirit and the ease of establishing businesses in UK.

Housing: Housing stands out as an area where Leicester's Somali community expressed the most vocal need for improvement. There is generally a concern about poor housing

conditions, the time taken to undertake repairs, high levels of social housing (council housing, indicating poverty) and housing stock that is small in size, leading to overcrowding. Moreover, Somalis strongly felt that they were being exploited by private landlords but did not know where to seek effective redress. Tenants need to be made more aware of their rights and the regulations that govern private tenancy, for example asking for energy efficiency certificates or understanding better the rules on eviction notices. The local housing department has brought in some changes such as employing Somali-speaking staff and translating information into Somali. However, comments from the focus groups pointed to persistent problems in this area. Forms of redress do exist but do not seem to be adequately accessed and utilised by Somali tenants, perhaps due to lack of awareness or language barriers. The city council is currently undertaking a wholesale review of the housing repair service.

Health and social protection: The health of Leicester's residents generally falls below the average for UK. To compound this, the city's Somalis live in some of the most disadvantaged wards: research shows a link between socio-economic disadvantage and poor health. Focus group discussions revealed that there appear to be some barriers to the use of health-care resources. Participants complained about many things: lack of referrals to specialists, misdiagnosis, perceived unfair treatment, lack of language support, etc. The most negative experiences seem to lie with GP services, where there were complaints about unwelcoming receptionists, the time taken to get appointments, and lack of time with doctors. Some focus group participants felt they had better experiences in other EU countries. Concerns were also raised about social services, mainly that social workers do not give adequate importance to the families' culture and traditions. However, a great deal of work seems to have been done to improve the engagement of Somali citizens with health-care and social services, and often some of that has been led by the community itself. But despite the progress that has been made, the sentiments expressed by focus group participants would indicate that more could be done.

Policing and security: The police are often under scrutiny in the press for the way they deal with ethnic-minority communities. Stop and search has been controversial as the police force in the UK has been accused of using these powers too much and Leicester was one of the places highlighted for this a few years ago. Participants in focus groups had mixed feelings about the police, on the one hand concerned about stop-and-search measures and the securitisation of the community, and on the other hand feeling that the presence of the police is reassuring for public safety. Concerns about extremism and links to overseas threats also featured in discussions in Somali communities. Recruitment and retention of BME officers have also been discussed by Somalis, who advocate the police force being representative of the people in the locality. Despite targeted recruitment campaigns there are currently no Somali police officers or police community support officers (PCSOs), but there are a few volunteers. The presence of Somalis is seen to have contributed positively to the safety and image of the city; St Matthew's estate is an example, where communities and the police have worked

together to tackle prostitution, drugs and antisocial behaviour, thus bringing down crime in the area.

Participation and citizenship: While there is a sense of vibrant activism in civil society there seems to be a poor uptake of Somali citizens in the formal political process thus far. There are councillors from very diverse backgrounds in Leicester and in 2012 Councillor Abdul Usman became Leicester's first Muslim lord mayor. Focus group participants felt Somalis are still disengaged from the political process and, furthermore, felt that the blame for this lay often with their own community. In the 2011 local council election, the voter turnout among Somalis was higher than the previous election, following efforts made in the community to increase the numbers of voters. However, many of the Somalis who are entitled to vote had not registered on the electoral roll; this appears to be an issue of inadequate awareness rather than a conscious choice.

In addition to a large number of community organisations there are six Somali mosques in Leicester, four in St Matthew's and two in Highfields. There are also madrassas, independent schools and many religious activities for young and old. It is clear that the Somali community has started to make a significant impact on the city and its role in civil society is growing and becoming more organised. There is genuine successful social entrepreneurship in the Somali community that needs to be supported and encouraged, and harnessed into a stronger sense of political and civic engagement.

Role of the media: Discussions about the media in the focus groups largely concentrated on the national media's portrayal of the Somali community in the UK. There was a general perception that British mainstream media portrayed minority groups, including Somalis, in a negative light. This was considered to be a central cause of their negative image in the wider society. The only positive story was that of Mo Farah. One of the key points that came out of the focus groups was that many of the participants did not engage with UK-based media outlets due to the language barrier. In particular, many of the older members of the community were unable to understand English and therefore relied heavily on Somali media for information and entertainment. Despite the fact that some interviewees had appeared in mainstream local media, day-to-day engagement tends to be limited due to a lack of connection.

Conclusion: At first glance, given the recent arrival of Somalis from a difficult context of conflict and disruption to families, one might expect this to be a somewhat fragmented and beleaguered community, but the surprising reality is far from that, as can be seen in this report. As a result of the community's own desire to get on, coupled with the city's forward-looking policies encouraging settlement and inclusion, progress has been good. However, the perception of discrimination, not just from the wider society, but also from fellow Muslims of South Asian heritage, stands out as a stark sentiment from focus group participants. Nevertheless, throughout this research, despite participants' feelings of exclusion and of being judged, a language of optimism and aspiration could still be heard. Somalis do not want to be seen as a problem or as marked out for special treatment, they want to settle and contribute, they want to work

hard and earn their place. Participants wanted to be valued, recognised and supported in making a good life in the place they have made home.

But such optimism cannot sustain itself if grievances and frustrations are not revealed and overcome. The impact of deprivation on health, education and housing has important consequences, so more needs to be done, as identified in this report. Influential Somalis have decided that their community must succeed, but they know that it cannot succeed by being passive recipients of help. It wants to carve out a place for itself in the footsteps of earlier communities and of earlier successes, and in so doing it also recognises that it can and must do more for itself.

Recommendations

- Consult Somali communities more effectively and represent better in service delivery.

- Ensure targeted recruitment of Somali staff into priority service areas such as housing, education and health.

- Embed the monitoring of key integration indicators into the Council's Equality Schemes and identify interventions to address inequalities experienced by Somali residents.

- Support a Somali Cultural Day in order to recognise the music, poetry, literature and other cultural features of Leicester's dynamic Somali community.

- Deliver classes on life in the UK, including English instruction and activities for introducing Somalis to the public services and institutions of Leicester.

- Create a schools forum for teachers and schools to share information, monitor progress and exchange good practice.

- Collect better data in the pre-school sector (nurseries) in order to inform people and prepare children for school.

- Encourage parents to play more of a role in the schools, especially as governors (through training).

- Explore the establishment of a small loans and grants system to facilitate small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the city.

- Put on a careers fair or conference for young Somalis to advertise careers and ways to get into different professions.

- Establish a diversity kitemark for employers based on models such as "Diversity Works for London".

- Implement a much higher quality threshold for private landlords so as to improve the quality of rented accommodation in Leicester.

- Set up a housing taskforce to review the accessibility and effectiveness of housing provisions for Somalis.

- Improve access to translators / interpreters and leaflets in Somali language in order to promote health awareness and engagement with local GPs.

- Improve Somali participation in engagement structures between the police and the community.

- Raise awareness of voter registration and active engagement in civic and political life and enhance the general political education of Leicester's Somali citizens.

- Develop training and support to develop the effectiveness of community groups to access a range of media skills (including social media) and communication strategies.

- Put on media events to exhibit the achievements of the Somali community and encourage media professionals to expand their contacts in the Somali community.

METHODOLOGY

This study is part of a wider survey of seven cities in Europe that have significant Somali communities. The report is based on fieldwork conducted in Leicester between January and March 2013. The fieldwork consisted of focus groups with Somali residents of Leicester and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (practitioners, policymakers and members of civil society). The focus groups were split both thematically, looking at identity, participation, education, employment, health, housing, media and policing, and by age and gender, so as to add more detail to the information. There were 127 participants attending 12 focus groups. Of the sample, 66 were female and 61 male. Figure 1 shows that nearly a half of the participants in the focus groups had previously lived in the Netherlands (56 people), where some were born, and where others had lived for over 10 years having arrived as refugees. The second largest cohort had come from other parts of the UK, the most significant part of which (eight people) came from London, and the rest from a variety of different countries. A few (13 people) had arrived directly from Somalia. More than half of the sample were born in Somalia and had come to Europe as refugees; some were born in countries such as Ethiopia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates and came to Europe as children or young adults. The largest cohort in the sample came to Leicester between 2000 and 2005. The age distribution of the participants was quite evenly spread: 29 people were aged 18–35, 35 were aged 35–44 and 36 were aged 45 and over; there were 27 who did not state their age.

Semi-structured interviews were held with 26 key stakeholders, in which subjects were explored in greater depth. As with any such study, there are limitations that should be borne in mind. As the research method consisted of interviews and focus groups the information gathered represents mainly qualitative data. Such a small number of participants obviously cannot claim to be representative of the whole Somali community of Leicester, but the heterogeneous backgrounds shown in Figure 1 reflect the diversity of Leicester's Somali community.

Figure 1. Residence prior to Leicester, 2013
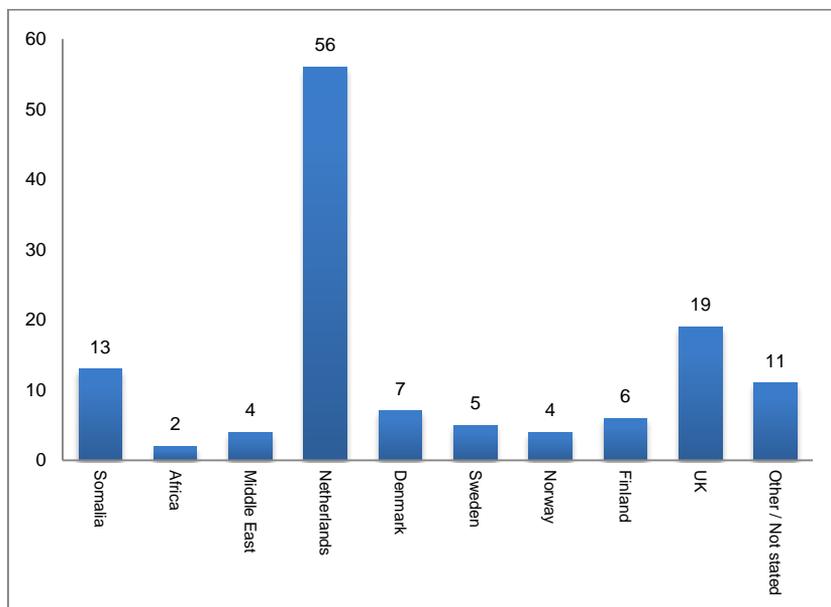
Source: Open Society Foundations research

The report begins with a look at the Somali population of the city, their migration history and demographics, and goes on to examine the policy context of the city before exploring participants' experiences with identity, education, employment, housing, health, policing and security, citizenship and the media. Recommendations are made at the end.

1. INTRODUCTION

Somalia lies at the easternmost point of Africa and is positioned very close to the Arabian heartland, separated by a strip of sea, the Gulf of Aden. It is linguistically and religiously connected to the Arab world. Somalis are generally Sunni Muslims and the majority follows the Shafi'i school of *fiqh* (Islamic law). Close-knit clans are a strong cultural feature among Somalis and clan networks are usually geographical. Although clans unite large groups of Somalis, clan affiliations can also be divisive. There are majority and minority clans and this creates a stratified social hierarchy. Even in the UK clan structures remain important (especially among more recent migrants from Somalia), and cannot be entirely ignored in any analysis of the community.

Figure 2. Map of present-day Somalia

Source: United Nations, 2011, at
http://www.un.org/depts/Cartographic/map/profile/somalia.pdf.

Britons with Somali roots such as Mo Farah and Rageh Omaar have become household names in the UK, which now has the largest Somali community in Europe. Although the British Somali presence is often seen as a recent migration, the presence of Somalis in the UK dates back to the 19th century, when sailors and traders arrived.

According to an act of 1894 Somalis could only take jobs in the seafaring industry.[1] Despite facing discrimination and public backlash, some Somalis settled in the UK and members of the community served in the merchant navy, even engaging in the first and second world wars. After the second world war, there was further migration of Somalis seeking trade and education; family members also joined, forming more settled communities from the 1960s onwards. The conflicts in Somalia in the 1980s also meant that refugee and asylum seekers came to the UK in at least three other waves, mainly in the 1980s and early 1990s and then towards the end of the 1990s as well as a further arrival after 2001 of those previously resident in other European countries (in addition to African and Middle Eastern countries).

The peak year for Somalis arriving in the UK seeking asylum was 1999, with 7,495 applications, dropping to 2,585 in 2004, 1,760 in 2006[2] and 590 in 2010.[3] A significant number of Somalis in cities like Leicester are twice migrant, having arrived in other EU states in the 1990s as refugees and after gaining citizenship of those countries, moving to the UK as EU migrants. This migration from within the EU may be the result of a combination of factors, such as the larger size of the community in the UK, the ease of establishing a business, the educational opportunities available and the discrimination faced in other countries (and consequently the feeling that the UK would be a more tolerant place to live in).[4] This may be creating a brain gain for the UK, as the most entrepreneurial and mobile members of the community leave other EU countries and settle here.

The settlement of Somalis in the UK has created many debates and discussion in the community, including about the identity of Somalis born in the UK. According to a Somali radio presenter, "We always have that debate; 'Are Somalians black?' ... 'The indigenous population says we're black. And then the black kids will say 'You're not

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[1] See http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConNarrative.109/chapterId/2320/The-Somali-Community-in-the-Port-of-London.html (accessed October 2013).

[2] Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR) Briefing, *The Somali Refugee Community in the UK*, ICAR, London, 2007 (hereafter, ICAR Briefing, *The Somali Refugee Community in the UK*).

[3] Estimate by the Red Cross: see http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Refugee-support/Refugee-facts-and-figures (accessed April 2014).

[4] Ilse Van Liempt, "Young Dutch Somalis in the UK: Citizenship, Identities and Belonging in a Transnational Triangle", *Mobilities* 6 (4) (November 2011), pp. 569–583; Mohamed Hassan, Martijn van Muiswinkel and Ismail Awil (eds), "The Somali community in focus", paper presented at the European Conference on Integration and Migration, 1 October 2004, Momatrade Consultancy, Rotterdam, at https://www.academia.edu/225695/European_Conference_on_Integration_and_Migration_The_Somali_community_in_focus (accessed July 2014); Jawaahir Daahir, "The Push to Cross the Border (The Migration Journey of Dutch-Somalis to Leicester UK)", unpublished MA thesis, Markfield Institute of Higher Education and Loughborough University, September 2006.

black—you're Mali.'"[5] Other concerns with immigration, associations with piracy and connections to a wartorn country with movements such as al-Shabab[6] often dominate the public debate on Somalia.

Traditionally the Somali community is very close-knit. Young people are brought up with strong family bonds with both the immediate and the extended family. However, the struggles of migration have led to many challenges for families: separation, marital breakdown, lack of male role models, conflicting cultural identities, which have all affected not just young people, but the whole community. Furthermore, language, intergenerational conflict and the changing roles of Somali women in the UK—due to the background of migration and conflict there is a high proportion of female-led households—are all factors that have required negotiation and adaptation.

The Somali community of Leicester is one of the largest in the UK and is a vibrant, diverse minority group with a rich set of cultures and traditions. Leicester's Somalis can be divided into three broad categories: British-born Somalis, Somali refugees and asylum seekers (who came directly from Somalia as a result of the conflicts) and Somalis who migrated to the UK from various EU countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway.[7] Jawaahir Daahir, a prominent member of the Leicester community, has discussed some of the opportunities and difficulties facing Leicester's Somalis. Her book *Somalia to Europe: Stories of Somali Diaspora*[8] charts many accounts of the experiences of Somalis who have settled in the city.

Many times Somali Development Services (SDS) has hosted European delegations, including Dutch, Danish and Swedish, who want to learn from the good practice that enabled the Somali community to settle in Leicester.[9]

Migration to and settlement in Leicester was handled through a "New Arrivals Strategy" initiated by Leicester City Council,[10] which sought to integrate and deal with

[5] Hugh Muir, "Somali Community in Britain Begins to Find its Voice", *The Guardian*, 21 February 2012, at http://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/feb/21/somali-community-britain-finds-voice (accessed October 2013).

[6] Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahidin (Movement of Young Mujahidin) is a militant/jihadist group operating in Somalia and the region. It is thought to be closely affiliated with al-Qaeda and was proscribed by the UK government in March 2010.

[7] Jawaahir Daahir and Hashim Duale, *Somali Community Development Report*, SRB Team, Leicester City Council, Leicester, 2002, p. 13 (hereafter, Daahir and Duale, *Somali Community Development Report*).

[8] Jawaahir Daahir et al., *Somalia to Europe: Stories of Somali Diaspora*, Leicester Quaker Press, Leicester, 2011 (hereafter, Daahir et al., *Somalia to Europe*).

[9] Jawaahir Daahir, "The Arrival of Somalis in Leicester", 19 September 2013, at http://www.publicspirit.org.uk/the-arrival-of-somalis-in-leicester (accessed October 2013).

[10] Leicester Partnership, *Leicester New Arrivals Strategy,* Leicester, 2008 at http://www.cabinet.lei cester.gov.uk/%28S%284qabzrbatpcasl33xdvy4v2a%29%29/documents/s13851/Revised%20Ne w%20Arrivals%20Strategy.pdf (hereafter, Leicester Partnership, *Leicester New Arrivals Strategy*) (accessed July 2014).

the major concerns of not only the Somali community but also other new arrivals in the city such as Poles and Slovaks. This report looks at the experiences of the Somali community of Leicester and examines the views of residents of the city.

It is important to recognise that the Somali community can sometimes be thought of as a minority within a minority. Leicester has one of the most diverse populations of ethnic minorities in the UK outside London, and the Muslim communities in Leicester are also heterogeneous, composed of both ethnically and culturally mixed groups stemming from Indian (mainly Gujarati), Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Turkish backgrounds, among others. Many of the communities settled in Leicester in the 1970s after large numbers of Ugandan Indians expelled by Idi Amin arrived in the UK. By contrast, the Somali and Kurdish communities are newer in Leicester. This has led to some tensions between ethnic groups in Leicester that is described in this report.

On the whole, Leicester's Somali community fits into the city's success story. Despite the challenges that are raised in this report, the early signs of settlement seem to indicate a community that has a strong sense of entrepreneurship and is quickly learning from the experience of previous communities that have made the city their home over the last 40 years. There is also much the Somali community can teach other groups, for instance the energy and activism among Somali women, who occupy a very public role in the life of the community.

2.   POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

This chapter looks at the demographics of the Somali community in Leicester and provides a brief history of the Somalis' arrival in the UK. It notes some of the challenges in dealing with statistical information on the Somali population in the UK. It is important to recognise that, with the exception of Italy, Somali migration to the UK has a much longer history than to many other European countries, a history that is shared with Italy through colonial links. The British colonisation of Somaliland (northwest Somalia) in 1897 yielded an almost continuous pattern of migration similar to that of the larger and more familiar populations of the Yemen, the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean islands. Somali seafarers often settled in the port areas of east London, Cardiff and Liverpool,[11] home to some of the earliest resident minority communities from other countries such as Yemen and pre-partition India. In that respect, Somali migration is an integral part of the UK's multinational early 20th century and postwar immigration history, particularly before the 1962 Immigration Act.

It is difficult to establish reliable numbers for this historical presence, but one estimate suggests 600 Somalis lived in the UK in 1953.[12] During the 1960s, many former sailors travelled in search of work to the industrial cities of Sheffield, Birmingham and Manchester, as well as London.[13] Also not dissimilar to the larger migratory pattern from Asia, Somali women began to join Somali men during the 1960s, and students also began to settle as citizens.

2.1   Census Data on Somalis

There are notable problems acquiring reliable data on the Somali population in the UK because of the way that census data are collected, and this can have a direct effect locally in services delivery and community activity. If Somalis are hidden in statistics and yet are visible in people's social experiences, this will naturally affect social inclusion or exclusion.

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[11]   Sophie Gilliat-Ray, *Muslims in Britain: An Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010 (hereafter Gilliat-Ray, *Muslims in Britain*); Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel within: The History of Muslims in Britain, 1800 to the Present*, C. Hurst, London, 2004 (hereafter, Ansari, *The Infidel Within*); Glenn Jordan, *Somali Elders: Portraits from Wales,* Butetown History and Arts Centre, Butetown, 2004.

[12]   D. Sporton et al., *Post-Conflict Identities: Practices and Affiliations of Somali Refugee Children: Full Research Report*, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) End of Award Report, RES-148-25-0028, ESRC, Swindon, 2007 (hereafter, Sporton et al., *Post-Conflict Identities*).

[13]   Gilliat-Ray, Muslims in Britain; Ansari, *The Infidel Within.*

The UK census is a crucial instrument for social policy that is carried out once every 10 years.[14] It is the primary basis for government and planning data, affecting all public services, down to small local areas or wards. The most recent census was in 2011.

The data from the 2011 census showed that 101,370 persons in England and Wales were born in Somalia, a significant increase over the 43,000 recorded in the 2001 census.[15] The population count is estimated with "95 percent confidence" by the ONS.[16] Public confidence in its reliability is important, which affects Somalis, since some Somali community organisations, such as the Somali Development Service, believe that the figures significantly undercount the number of Somalis.

The census has recorded data on some ethnic groups since 1991. The 2011 form required the person completing it to identify which of 19 options best described their ethnic identity (see Figure 3), and notably Somalis were not one of the predetermined ethnic categories on the form. Thus the census does not provide a clear measure of the number of Somalis.

Thus, in the absence of clear primary data, a Somali population count becomes a sensible estimate based on the relevant primary census data, such as language, country of birth or ethnic self-identity. Being an estimate and not a count, there is greater scope for under- or over-estimating. In this way an accurate assessment of policy needs is difficult.

A population count by country of birth makes estimates hard, as, for instance, significant numbers of young Somalis in the UK may not have been born either in Somalia or in the UK, but in other European countries. Measurement and analysis by language also present difficulties as the natural language of many teenagers and youngsters is that of their European place of birth or early childhood, although the main language (the question asked by the census) of the household may still be Somali.[17]

Ethnicity is a primary base used to measure the ethno-cultural makeup of the UK. Question 16 of the 2011 census (see Figure 3) asks "What is your ethnic group?" and is

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[14] In fact, there is more than one census. Separate ones are carried out at the same time across England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

[15] Looking at the information currently available for Scotland (not all the data and analysis have been released from the 2011 Census), the figures are on a much smaller scale. The total number of Muslims, for example, in 2011 was only 77,000. The ethnic groups do not reveal details that show Somalis. The top 15 countries of birth outside Scotland show that Somalia is not listed as one of them. Ethnic data from Northern Ireland are even less specific: for instance, there is no reliable count of the Muslim figures.

[16] See http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_290558.pdf (accessed February 2013).

[17] For instance, the presence of a small Chwimini minority was identified by the Change Institute's report, *The Somali Muslim Community in England: Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities*, Communities and Local Government, London, 2009 (hereafter, Change Institute, *The Somali Muslim Community in England*). However, the census did not expressly measure Chwimini, so any self-identification of this language fell within a more general "other" count in the census.

designed to elicit one answer per person. There is an option for an answer to be written in, which may be carried out by the head of the household.

An answer is designed to fit within one of five broader sections for ease of categorisation. In practice, however, respondents such as those of Somali background are much more likely to answer across these categories because they feel the options provided do not respond to their details. This presents additional difficulties in the census.

Figure 3. Sample census questionnaire

Source: ONS, 2011 Census

The ONS ran consultations in 2006 and 2007 to explore which ethnic groups ought to be expressly provided as categories in the 2011 census,[18] including specific consultation

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[18] The consultation and the resultant report can be seen at http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/consultations--users-and-local-partners/closed-consultations/ethnic-group--national-identity--religion--and-language/index.html (accessed July 2014).

exercises with reference to Somalis, which incorporated response testing to see which categories created uniform responses. The consultation report noted some confusion concerning Somali Arab identity. Testing held in Wales showed Somali responses to be inconsistent and shared across "African", "Arab" and written-in ("Somali") self-descriptions. The result of the tests was that a Somali ethnic group[19] was not included in the 2011 census.

2.2   Counting Leicester's Somalis

The 2011 census showed Leicester to have an overall population of 329,900, a growth of 16.7 percent from 2001, which represents the eighth-highest growth for all local authorities in England and Wales. Measured by broad ethnic groups, half of the city is now non-white and Asians represent over a third of the city's population. The city is also religiously diverse; its 61,440 Muslims make up 18.6 percent of the city, representing the city's second-largest faith group.

Figure 4. Leicester census, 2011
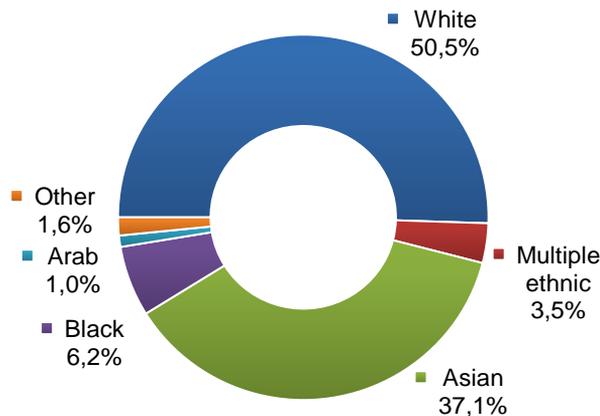
Estimates based on the community have put the total number of Somalis in Leicester to be between 10,000 and 15,000.[20] However, the 2011 census reported that 3,209 residents of Leicester were born in Somalia[21] (to get a true count of the number of

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[19]   An "Arab" category was introduced in 2011 as a result of the consultations. There were community requests to also introduce a "Kashmiri" category that were not taken up.

[20]   Foreign Policy Centre (FPC), Improving FCO Engagement with the UK-Somali Community, FPC, London, 2006.

[21]   ONS, 2011 Census, Table QS203EW.

Somalis in Leicester, those born in the UK and other EU countries would need to be added). Nevertheless, this represents an increase of 268 percent from the 872 Leicester residents born in Somalia recorded by the 2001 census. This rise in those born in Somalia and living in Leicester is also significantly greater than the 136 percent average rise across England and Wales in the same census. The rise in Leicester on a like-for-like score is therefore slightly short of double the national rise for Somali-born people in England and Wales. In terms of language, the 2011 census stated that in Leicester, there were 3,331 people (aged three and over) whose main language was Somali. It is possible that there is an under-reporting of figures for Somalis, as some members of the community might not have completed the census forms for 2011 and 2001. As many of the current residents were arriving just before or after 2001, it is possible that the 2001 census missed many of the Somali residents, but it is difficult to ascertain how significant this factor was in 2011.

Table 1 shows the most relevant ethnic groups in Leicester where the count is likely to include Somalis, and incorporates the write-ins where respondents recoded their self-declared ethnic group.

Table 1. Ethnicity in Leicester Unitary Authority, adjusted to include write-in self descriptions, 2011 census

"Somali"	2,065
"Somalilander"	85
"Black British"	783
"Black European"	6
"African"	13,120
"White and Black African"	1,161
"Other Black"	3,315
"Arab"	3,425
"African/Arab"	32

Source: ONS, 2011Census, Table KS201EW

Variations always exist in how respondents answer questions. For example, a Somali respondent may tick the "Black African" box and wish to write in "Somali" as well. As noted earlier, variation in response is likely to be greater with Somalis and so the write-in responses cannot simply be added to the ticked boxes count. The write-in responses showed that 2,150 respondents expressly stated themselves to be "Somali" or "Somalilander". A much smaller number of 38 wrote in "African/Arab" or "Black European". The "Somali" write-in is the most significant here, but it also shows that many or most Somalis in Leicester would be counted within the pre-identified ethnic

categories (that is, through the straightforward tick-box). The largest count of Somalis may therefore be found in the "Black African" figure.

Table 2 shows the makeup of Leicester's Somalis by ward (ranked in descending order of language) as counted by the 2011 census, both by main language and by the slightly lower (but more widely used) count of country of birth. It shows an expectedly uneven spread, in common with ethnic minorities.

Table 2. Somalis by ward, Leicester Unitary Authority, 2011 Census

Ward	Somali as main language	Main language, % of Leicester Somalis*	Somalia as country of birth	Country of birth, % of Leicester Somalis
Spinney Hills	1,220	36.6	1,053	32.8
Stoneygate	435	13.1	414	12.9
Charnwood	315	9.5	279	8.7
Beaumont Leys	308	9.2	344	10.7
Coleman	198	5.9	165	5.1
Castle	124	3.7	164	5.1
Abbey	118	3.5	130	4.1
Humberstone and Hamilton	110	3.3	99	3.1
Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields	65	2.0	87	2.7
Freemen	65	2.0	49	1.5
Belgrave	62	1.9	47	1.5
New Parks	56	1.7	69	2.2
Rushey Mead	48	1.4	50	1.6
Latimer	45	1.4	57	1.8
Eyres Monsell	40	1.2	40	1.2
Evington	34	1.0	49	1.5
Fosse	25	0.8	25	0.8
Western Park	25	0.8	30	0.9
Westcotes	20	0.6	35	1.1
Thurncourt	10	0.3	12	0.4
Knighton	6	0.2	10	0.3
Aylestone	2	0.1	1	0.0
TOTAL	3,331		3,209	

Note: * Those under three years old excluded
Source: ONS Neighbourhood Statistics, 2011 Census

When counted by main language, 68 percent of Leicester's Somalis (or 65 percent counted by Somali birth) reside in the four wards of Spinney Hills, Stoneygate, Beaumont Leys and Charnwood (in descending order), and eight wards record a count of over 100 people. Of these, over a third live in the ward of Spinney Hills, which is the only ward that has a Somali population in excess of 1,000 based on measurable Somali data, and is twice the number of the second-most populated ward.

The absence of more verifiable data raises concerns about how omissions and underestimations (or even overestimation) in policymaking may affect Somalis at an administrative level. Verifying the accuracy of population estimates depends on estimating the proportion of Somalis who are not born in Somalia compared with those counted in the 2011 census as born in Somalia. An estimate based on main language yields a lower count than an estimate built on European/British births. Thus, such assumptions about language may affect outreach efforts by the local authority, particularly for those people for whom neither English nor Somali is the main language. With no clear ethnic marker in statistical reports, it is important to be mindful of gaps in measurement tools for counting the size of Leicester's Somali community.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Historical Background

This chapter summarises important historical and policy background features, especially in connection with the Somali community. Leicester is one of the oldest cities in the UK. Records go back to the early Roman invasion of England and a Roman presence in Leicester can be traced to AD 43.[22] Prior to this, the area was the ruled by Celtic tribes. The name "Leicester" may derive from an old name for the River Soar, Ligore, and the term Ligoraceaster (the town of the Ligor people) is probably the precursor of the current name.

The city is also one of the oldest market towns in the UK (with one of the largest remaining outdoor covered market areas in the country) and was granted city status in 670. After the industrial revolution, the city grew considerably, and in the 19th and early 20th centuries Leicester became a major economic base with its manufacturing, textiles, shoemaking and hosiery industries. In the early 20th century, it was thought to be one of the richest cities in Europe due to its diverse and stable economic base.[23]

Today, the city is the most populous in the East Midlands with a population of 329,000 according to the 2011 census (a significant growth from 2001, when the city had a population of 279,000), but the closure of significant parts of the industrial base that gave it its previous success has meant a dramatic change in the economy. (One of the enduring local businesses is Walkers, the international potato crisp manufacturer.) Perhaps due to the location of the city, it has a high rate of immigration, with a reported 150 languages or dialects spoken in the city's schools, according to an analysis of the schools census for 2011.[24] The city also has one of the largest ethnic-minority populations in the UK in percentage terms (now around 50 percent)[25] and is also one of the most ethnically diverse cities outside the capital.

Despite a number of important challenges,[26] Leicester continues to celebrate its pride in diversity and embraces a multicultural vision for its citizens. Some of these

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[22] See https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/jewry-wall/history-and-research/roman-leicester-and-its-baths (accessed July 2014).

[23] Siobhan Begley, *The Story of Leicester*, Phillimore, 2013.

[24] Trish Roberts-Thomson, *Languages in Leicester's Schools: Analysis from the Schools Census Data Spring 2011*, unpublished work by Research and Intelligence Team, Leicester City Council, 2011.

[25] According to the 2011 census, 50.6 percent of Leicester residents said they were "White" and 45 percent said they were "White British".

[26] There have been some inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions that have emerged over the years but on the whole these have been managed well. As in some other cities, there have been concerted campaigns by groups such as the English Defence League: see for example http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/news/article/2558/thurnby-lodge-forgotten-estates (accessed October 2013).

challenges partly relate to changes in the demography of the city, but also they are in part due to the downturn in the economy that has hit council services significantly and has also had an impact on intercommunity relations. Due to the national budget deficit, the city council has already planned to cut £75 million (about €87 million) from its annual budget and plans to cut a further £50 million (€59 million) per year by 2016.[27] The economic reality has thus shifted radically over the years. Funding cuts have affected community organisations that previously had access to grants and the organisations that do remain have to consider their sustainability.

The city has a vibrant cultural base, hosting the largest comedy festival in England, rated as one of the top five comedy festivals in the world.[28] It also hosts the biggest Diwali[29] celebrations outside India, as well as "Pride" and "Carnival" events every year. The city has developed a considerable reputation for diversity, especially the multicultural heritage of its citizens. It has won "Beacon Status" (which identifies excellence in a policy area) for its work on community cohesion. However, it was not always thus. In a move that was heavily criticised by the current city leadership, including the elected mayor,[30] the Labour leadership of the city issued an advertisement in the *Ugandan Argus* in 1972 urging Asians fleeing from Uganda not to come to Leicester as it was "full". The turnaround in the following 40 years saw the city deal with the rise and decline of far-right groups[31] such as the National Front, the British National Party and more recently the English Defence League. The ability to manage diversity and the reputation of areas such as the "Golden Mile", a focus of Asian food, jewellery and music shops, bring visitors to the city from across the country. The Leicester Council of Faiths,[32] the Faith Leaders Forum and the Leicester Multicultural Advisory Group (LMAG),[33] established in 2001 by the then editor of the *Leicester Mercury* newspaper, remain important bodies that encourage Somalis to engage with wider faith and cultural groups.

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[27] Leicester City Council, "City Mayor's Delivery Plan, 2013–2014" (accessed March 2013).

[28] See the Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival, at http://www.comedy-festival.co.uk/ (accessed October 2013).

[29] Diwali, or Deepavali as it is also called, is the festival of lights and is an important religious celebration among Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and some Buddhists.

[30] BBC News Leicestershire, "Ugandan Asians advert 'foolish', says Leicester councillor", 8 August 2012, at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-19165216 (accessed October 2013).

[31] Richard Bonney, "Understanding and Celebrating Religious Diversity in Britain: A Case Study of Leicester since 1970 Making Comparison with Flushing, Queens County, New York City", *Encounters* 9 (2) (2003), p. 128.

[32] See http://www.leicestercounciloffaiths.org.uk (accessed October 2013).

[33] See http://www.media4diversity.eu/en/content/leicester-multicultural-advisory-group (accessed October 2013).

3.2   A City of Diversity

Somali citizens have settled in the footsteps of earlier Jewish, Gujarati, Punjabi, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Polish and other migrants that have made the city their home. The presence of this very multifaceted community of communities—Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews and people of other faiths and no faith—in fairly large numbers creates an environment not found in many other cities and towns in the UK. The presence of more than one significant minority-faith community has at times created tensions and competition for recognition and resources, but has also worked to harmonise community relations.[34] Furthermore, the entrepreneurial example set by successive waves of immigrants into the city also provides an important economic contribution to the city.

However, the economy of the city is often worrying. Although an improvement from 2007, when the city was ranked as the 20th-most deprived local authority area (out of 326 areas), in 2010 it was still at number 25. This is also reflected in the unemployment figure for the city, which in 2013 was 14.4 percent compared with the national average of 8 percent.[35] In 2010 the city contained 47 Lower Super Output Areas[36] (LSOAs) (out of a total of 187 LSOAs in the city, i.e. 25 percent) ranked within the top 10 percent of the most deprived areas in England (compared with the national average of 5.5 percent of LSOAs in the top 10 percent deprived areas).[37]

3.3   National Equality Framework

As a result of the Equality Act 2010, UK legislation, which has a long history of anti-racism policies, is now considerably developed in religious discrimination. The law in the UK now comprehensively covers individuals against direct and indirect forms of discrimination in both the private and the public sectors, and allows for prayer and other core aspects of religious life to be fulfilled in the workplace. There is a duty upon

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[34] The presence of significant multipolar Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities, with some historical tensions, does cause occasional sensitivities, spill-over debates from sectarian and religious conflict abroad, and competition for funds and access to grant schemes domestically, but it also helps to dissipate potential tensions from an otherwise bipolar setting: see Open Society Institute, *Muslims in Leicester*, Open Society Institute, Budapest, 2010 (hereafter, OSI, *Muslims in Leicester*).

[35] Leicester City Council, "Unemployment Bulletin August 2013", based on UK figures for April 2012–March 2013 at http://www.lsr-online.org/reports/unemployment_bulletin_august_2013 1/download/1/Unemployment%20Bulletin%20August%202013.pdf (accessed July 2014) (data from ONS).

[36] These are names of administrative units of geography for looking at neighbourhood level data. Output Areas (OAs) are the smallest and have populations of at least 100 people. Super Output Areas (SOA) are groups of OAs and are further divided into Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA), with populations of at least 1,000 people, and Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOA), with populations of at least 5,000 people.

[37] Changes were brought to the boundaries of Output Areas in the 2011 census.

public-sector agencies to be vigilant in promoting equality and good relations. Changes in legislation over the last 10 years mean that the different strands of equality (age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation) have been brought together into one single legal instrument. A single body, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, has "a statutory remit to promote and monitor human rights; and to protect, enforce and promote equality".[38]

With this strong and clear legislative framework and agencies to champion the cause of citizens' rights, if (as was the case in the focus groups for this research) members of the Somali community feel that discriminatory practices are holding them back, there are avenues for pursuing action. Members of the community need to be made aware of their actual rights and how they can seek recourse when their rights are violated.

The city council has published a range of leaflets (downloadable from their website) in the Somali language that offer information and advice on issues ranging from "Housing" (the main focus) to "Harassment".[39] Somalis have set up a number of community organisations, like the St Matthew's Community Solutions Centre (SCSC), Somali Community Parents Association (SOCOPA),[40] Aqoon School Home Support Services and SDS.[41]

3.4   Administrative Structure and Local Policy

Leicester City Council is managed by 54 Councillors[42] who are responsible for 22 wards. Each ward elects two or three councillors, who sit in various committees and meet in the full council meetings. Ward meetings are held to listen to residents' views, to communicate decisions and consult on issues, but decision-making power rests centrally at the city level. As of 2011 the city has an elected mayor, who leads the council, with a deputy mayor and a team of six others forming the executive team.

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[38] See http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us (accessed October 2013).

[39] See Leicester City Council at http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/housing/downloa dable-forms-and-information/information-in-other-languages/somali (accessed October 2013).

[40] Somali Community Parents Association (SOCOPA), established in 2005, is a charity that provides community-based services for children, young people and their parents. It provides educational support with English and maths, counselling, crime prevention, youth sports, recreation programmes and other services.

[41] Aqoon School Home Support Services is a local educational charity, set up to support (not exclusively Somali) children and families; it also provides some services to families for disabled children. It is a community initiative, which supports young people who are disadvantaged and may be at risk of school exclusion. The Somali Development Service (SDS) provides information, advice and guidance to the Somali community and other ethnic groups on education, housing, employment, benefits, family problems and rights.

[42] 52 Councillors are currently from the Labour Party, one from the Conservative Party and one from the Liberal Democrat Party.

In terms of community representation, nearly a half of the councillors (21 out of 54) are of ethnic-minority background. The council is overwhelmingly Labour-controlled, with only two non-Labour councillors (one Conservative and one Liberal Democrat) at the time of writing. In administrative terms much has changed in the last few years with the replacement of the chief executive, the introduction of an elected mayor and the deepening impact of the recession.

One of the city's major policy areas that had an early impact on the Somali community was the "New Arrivals Strategy", which dealt with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants from the EU.[43] This had four broad priorities:

- to ensure a favourable policy context for the integration of new arrivals in Leicester

- to ensure the effective coordination of services between national, regional and local levels

- to provide local services responsive to the needs of new arrivals

- to create a city where the public have a positive image of new arrivals and their community.

The city council manages school education, although there are some academies and free schools (which have a more autonomous status) a number of private schools. The recent start-ups of free schools under the Coalition government (and the previous academy schools programme under the Labour government) aim to give schools greater autonomy and independence from local authorities.

Social housing policy in the UK has for some time been based on a mixed, partnership approach between local authorities that run council housing and housing associations that are non-profit-making private entities that provide housing services. The demand for housing in the UK, which has a strong tradition of home ownership, is increasing and the public debate often focuses on affordability and the need to build new housing stock.

Since March 2013 primary responsibility for health care has rested with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) made up of local doctors, nurses and other health professionals. The CCGs commission services for the health-care needs of their local area. The city of Leicester is served by three CCGs: Leicester City CCG, East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG, and West Leicestershire CCG. The National Health Service, the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, the CCGs, local authorities, public health bodies as well as private and commercial health-care providers work in partnership to deliver health care.

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[43] Leicester Partnership, *New Arrivals: Strategy for Leicester.*

Policing in the city of Leicester is amalgamated with the wider county area, Leicestershire, which surrounds the city and is a separate administrative area. The Leicestershire Constabulary serves just under 1 million people and is split into 15 local units, six of which are in the city of Leicester. Since 2012, each police force in England and Wales (with the exception of London) has had a directly elected police and crime commissioner. Sir Clive Loader is commissioner in Leicestershire. Concerns about policing, for example the practice of stop and search, are vocally aired all over the UK as well as in Leicester. But the focus groups for this research also showed confidence in the police presence as well. Security worries were also revealed in focus group discussions. Although the tensions resulting from the government's "Prevent" strategy now seem to be becoming a little less prominent, the Somali community remains under the spotlight due to the ongoing conflict in the Horn of Africa and the strong connections of the recently settled community with its homeland, with UK residents travelling to Somalia.

The focus groups and interviews showed that Somali residents of Leicester have many views about the policies and organisations that have been established (some with the support of the local council) to help their community. Access to services, familiarity with the provisions in the city, language barriers and low levels of social capital continue to provide problems to Somali residents, even though they are adapting to deal with them.

4. IDENTITY AND BELONGING

This chapter explores the sense of identity and belonging that local Somalis have through living in Leicester and its neighbourhoods. It explores, primarily through the focus group discussions, whether the sense of belonging is emerging and taking root, and what the barriers may be.

There are many factors influencing an individual's sense of identity. Identities are not given, but are the products of ongoing processes such as social interaction.[44] Migration history has a huge impact on how communities define belonging and their level of integration. The refugee experience of the Somali communities in the West has contributed to their self-definition and redefinition as an ethnic group and a people of faith, who have lived through war, displacement, and the loss of property and loved ones.[45] As one respondent in this research described: "Somalis residents in the UK are balancing a number of factors in their identities—Somali heritage and origin, Western culture, Muslim faith and black colour."

4.1 Migration History and Identity

Most of the respondents (78) in the focus groups had previously lived in other European countries, of which a significant cohort had lived in the Netherlands (56), nearly half of the 127 participants. This aligns with previous research which showed that the Somali community in Leicester has predominately migrated from other European countries. It was also shown that the second-largest migration to Leicester among respondents was from other areas of England (8 from London and 11 from elsewhere in the UK). Respondents varied widely in the amount of time they had spent in Leicester. Some had moved to Leicester in the late 1990s and some had only settled in the city within a year of the beginning of the research project.

There was a mixture of opinions over the sense of belonging and migration. A female participant said:

> We are grateful to Leicester for accommodating us but I personally still feel close to Holland. I regard it as my motherland. But when it comes to our culture, identity, religion and education we have it much better here. There is no glass ceiling here, the sky is the limit for whatever you want to achieve.

The affinity to the Netherlands is naturally more pronounced among people who were born in the Netherlands or had spent a substantial portion of their childhood there,

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[44] Dilwar Hussain (ed.), *British Muslims Between Assimilation and Segregation*, Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 2004, p. 89.

[45] Rima Berns McGown, *Muslims in the Diaspora, the Somalia Communities of London and Toronto*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1999, p. 14 (hereafter, McGown, *Muslims in the Diaspora*).

and so may feel linguistically and culturally closer to Dutch life. By contrast, an older male participant said:

> My heart is not here. It is in Somalia. We are here to raise our children but I belong to Somalia and I am concerned about the country's wellbeing so my future is there and being part of its rebuilding. My heart, mind and soul are invested in Somalia.

A female participant gave yet another view of the experience of living in Leicester:

> Leicester has been my favourite city to live in. I have had a very positive experience, especially with the diverse cultures and communities all co-existing with each other peacefully. There is a lot of religious tolerance.

The Change Institute in their research on the Somali community in 2009 found differing and contrasting attitudes to social integration, with some believing that Somali society, particularly its young people, had already assimilated too much into the mainstream.[46] Others believe that the community has been too rigid about retaining its distinctive identity and suggest that Somalis need to take a more active lead in integrating themselves into British society.

In the focus groups, the majority of the responses from participants indicated a clear sense of strong Somali identity, reflective of and identifying in the culture, traditions and religion of Somalia. Most respondents in the focus groups mentioned their religion or the impact of their religious lifestyle as focal points in their identity and sense of settlement. One of the (older) female focus group participants reflected:

> One of the things I am very proud of is how Somalis maintain their religious identity and still integrate. Our children are achieving in their education and we are making good contribution to the local economy.

4.2   Generational Differences in Identity and Belonging

Younger Somali participants in the focus groups often identified more strongly with the city, ward or area where they lived. During the discussions on identity, individuals often expressed affinity to a local neighbourhood. Mostly this was Leicester, but in some cases it also related to the city they had migrated from, often in the Netherlands.

Young Somalis were seen by the older generation as integrating well and making a contribution to Leicester, which was regarded as positive. A minority echoed sentiments from previous research showing that there were some concerns about moving away from Somali culture, as young people adopt what is perceived as a British way of life: "Somali youth are creating new British identities developed from a fusion

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[46] Change Institute, *The Somali Muslim Community in England.*

of an attachment to Somalia, clan group identities and Britishness".[47] A female focus group participant said:

> Younger people have not been to Somalia, majority come from other European countries. However identity would first be Somali in the general public as we are identified in this country as first Somali and then black. Among Somalis it would be Swedish/our European country and then with people outside Leicester it would be what part of Leicester we identify ourselves with. There is a great pride among young people about being identified with Leicester, compared with other areas in the UK.[48]

Earlier research on Somali identity showed that most of the children interviewed confirmed their strong roots in Somalia. However, these young people often find themselves positioned in narratives about what it means to be Somali that are not of their own making and are predicated on sometimes differing and contradictory accounts of a place of which they have limited direct knowledge. Whereas media reporting of Somalia has tended to focus on the civil war, terrorism and piracy, parents may offer a more positive representation, even a nostalgic one, of a beautiful country and family life.[49]

The older generation clearly identify with Somalia as a homeland, and are less identified with the UK. Nevertheless, in the discussions there was a clear appreciation and recognition of the positive impact Leicester has had on their families and their personal development, as well as their own contribution to the city. In discussion an interviewee responded:

> When an older person approaches you, they will ask "Who you are from?" i.e. what tribe and some young people who have been raised culturally might ask the same but it's mainly the elders. If you ask the older Somali about their identity it will be Somalia, Somalia and Somalia.[50]

Participants in the research acknowledged the disturbances and instability in Somalia and the impact they have on their identities. Sometimes clan issues cause conflicts here, particularly among older people as they are identified with their clans, although only a few respondents referred to this. People felt that internal problems were creating barriers to the development of the community. A female focus group participant talked about the need for greater unity:

> It would be good if we can achieve that but we have a long way to go. We still struggle with clan issues, arguing within sub-clans let alone establishing Somali unity.

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[47] Change Institute, *The Somali Muslim Community in England*, p. 7.

[48] Somali youth facilitator, events organiser and Somali women's workshop, February 2013.

[49] Sporton et al., *Post-Conflict Identities*, p. 22.

[50] Somali youth facilitator, events organiser and Somali women's workshop, February 2013.

Albeit a minority experience, clan rivalry also came up in another focus group where a male participant remarked:

> In Finland, my neighbours and I used to meet every month to discuss common issues but in my current neighbourhood there isn't much interaction. I live mostly among Somalis and I sometimes get discriminated against because of my clan.

Older participants expressed concerns that negative portrayals of Somalia would create difficulties for the identity and self-esteem of young people. A younger Somali noted:

> It knocks our confidence especially if there are extreme situations back home. Positive issues unite us within our Somali identity and negative cause conflict and lack of confidence in how we identify ourselves.

An elderly focus group participant reflected on how Somalis are identified generally by other communities, and in turn how this affects one's own sense of identity:

> I think we are respected less because of the conflict we have created in our homeland, which is still ongoing. We will get full respect and acceptance when we sort out our own issues.

The focus group discussions identified a number of big problems affecting identity and belonging, for instance the negative media portrayal of Somalis and discrimination in employment and from the police. A young man responded as part of the focus group:

> There is a stigma of being a black and a Muslim man, so I have been stopped and searched on numerous occasions.

4.3   Feelings of Belonging at the City and Neighbourhood Levels

Most respondents spoke about the positive aspects of Leicester and the multiculturalism, tolerance and diversity of the city (see Figure 2), which had contributed to their positive responses on belonging to the city and neighbourhoods. The religious tolerance and freedom to practise their faith was noted by a majority as a reason for staying in Leicester and feeling a strong sense of belonging. This also connected them to the older Muslim communities, creating a greater sense of belonging. Focus group participants relayed:

> I feel a sense of belonging in Leicester. I fit in.

> I like the multicultural aspect in Leicester. I don't feel like an outsider.

> I think Leicester is very welcoming and embraces everyone. I love living here.

Younger people spoke of school, work and university communities that they also belong to. Parents spoke of links to other families and parent groups; family played a huge part in the discussion: parenthood and raising children in a neighbourhood. Focus group participants relayed:

When my children were young, they used to play in the local park. I don't have any negative points to raise about my neighbourhood and I feel part of it. I am friends with many neighbours and we help each other. One of them is an elderly gentleman who grows his own vegetables in his garden and he always shares them with me. I have a lot of respect for him. He is always ready to help me. I also share food with him, especially during Ramadan. He sometimes plants tomatoes in my garden and helps me to maintain my garden.

Figure 5. Positive aspects of living in Leicester, 2013
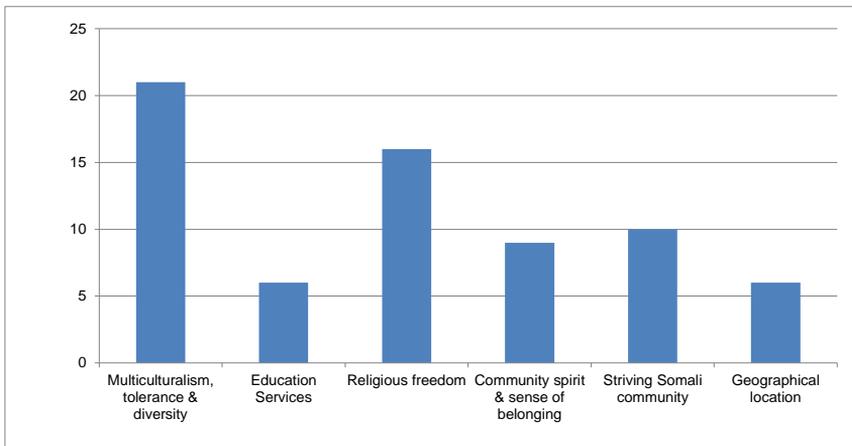
Source: Open Society Foundations research

A majority spoke of good relations with their neighbours, although a small number spoke of negative experiences they had in their neighbourhoods, relating to safety, crime and racism. One of the focus group participants said:

There are some neighbourhoods where if a Somali person moves in, their houses are set ablaze, looted and vandalised. I was walking in my neighbourhood one day and a guy asked me if I was lost. I asked why he would think that and he replied he hadn't seen my kind in the area before. I have been asked numerous times what I was doing in this country.

A young male respondent who had lived in the area of Braunstone Park, where the Somalis account for 2–3 percent of the population, remarked that:

Our family has had some housing issues. We lived in Braunstone where we endured four years of racial abuses and damages to our properties. There have been break-ins too but it has been resolved and we have moved on.

Many of the respondents wanted to stay in areas where the Somali population is more concentrated, for safety as well as cultural and religious support. However, those who

lived in more diverse neighbourhoods generally had good relations with neighbours and felt comfortable. One respondent emphasised the values of tolerance and multiculturalism found in Leicester as an important asset enabling Somalis to contribute to the local community:

> I believe we are part of the society and we make a valuable contribution. The neighbourhoods we have moved to such as St Matthew's are a lot safer today than they have ever been. We have opened many stores and shops that contribute to the local economy and Leicester as a city appreciates us, generally speaking. Its multiculturalism and tolerance for diversity is what attracted most of us to move here and those are the values we identify with.

Figure 6. Negative aspects of living in Leicester, 2013
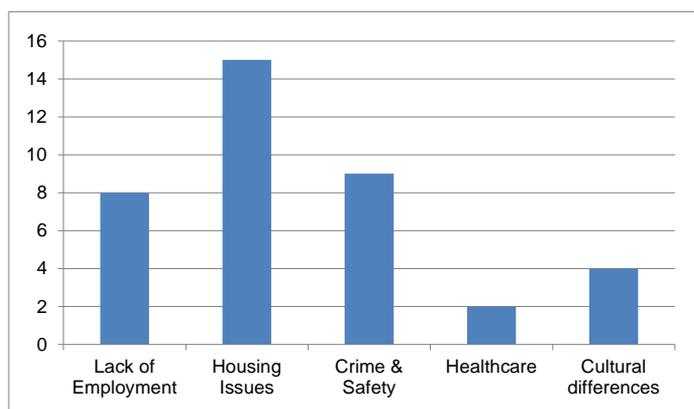
Source: Open Society Foundations research

The most significant of the negative experiences was in housing. People felt inadequately supported in their accommodation and living arrangements (see Chapter 7).

Somalis in the focus group felt that they made a positive contribution to life in their neighbourhoods through the many small interactions they make. In particular, they thought that Somali entrepreneurs and businesses had contributed to the regeneration of local areas:

> I think things have improved in terms of relations between Somalis and other communities in comparison with the 1990s, for example. Society at large is more familiar with Somalis now and Somalis themselves have established themselves and have been able to take advantage of the opportunities available.

> Somalis have made positive contributions to Leicester, especially in the unsafe areas like St Matthew's which was previously crime-ridden but the Somalis that moved there in large numbers made it a safe neighbourhood again.

Despite acknowledgement of the progress made the focus groups also identified concerns about conflict and tension with other ethnic-minority communities such as the established South Asian community and settled African and African-Caribbean communities. A common theme to emerge in the discussions was a feeling of being treated unfairly by professionals who were from more established ethnic communities in Leicester, particularly the South Asian community. A respondent in one focus group stated:

> The Asian community has been an obstacle to us with regards to settling in and finding our feet. Leicester is like small India and Pakistan.

The respondent noted the tensions between young Somali and Jamaican youngsters:

> The Jamaican and Somali community also used to fight at the local schools later on when lots of Somalis moved to Leicester … Even the adults had trouble getting along.

Quite a high proportion of the South Asian migrants to Leicester were from East Africa. For some this connection to Africa created a positive link for the two communities:

> I think the Asians, especially those that have moved from Africa, have welcomed us and they are more familiar with our culture than many of the other communities in Leicester.

There were concerns among focus group participants that life in certain parts of Leicester is segregated, with people not wanting to mingle or interact outside their own communities. This was reflected in their response to belonging and integration. A focus group participant observed:

> People are segregated here, which hinders cross-cultural integration and for values to be passed on. Most Somalis don't interact with their neighbours. People are scared to have eye-to-eye contact. We need street festivals perhaps once a year where people can get to know their neighbours and interact and this will help establish cross-community interaction and communal harmony.

4.4   Support for Integration

The arrival of many Somalis in Leicester as EU migrants after being refugees in other EU states has created an unusual citizenship and integration situation. Many had received citizenship classes or had taken integration courses in other European countries but not in the UK. Several respondents referred to their experience of

citizenship classes in the Netherlands,[51] which they felt had helped their integration into Dutch cities. Some wanted to see similar support for integration in Leicester:

> Somalis need education in citizenship and how to live as part of Leicester's society. We had similar courses in Holland and its impact was visible as Somalis were integrated into the Dutch society.

As part of the naturalisation process of becoming a British citizen, legislation has been enacted that applicants must be able to communicate in English (or Welsh or Scottish Gaelic); pass a citizenship test; and complete an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course and citizenship classes.[52] Some focus group participants felt that more information is needed on how to use services, how services operate, how to get support and how to raise complaints. There was some concern that the Somali community had not integrated well due to this lack of knowledge and skills. A focus group participant said:

> We have a language barrier and we don't know how the British system works. This hampers our integration into the larger society.

However, comments generally indicated a dynamic young community that is progressively integrating, possibly more quickly than the earlier generations of migrants to the city. Most people spoke of good neighbours and their support. Some also mentioned the Somali community support services and how these have helped the community. The response from a focus group participant summed up the overriding sentiments:

> I feel we are part of the city, recognised by the mayor and the local authorities. We are known as safe people. There is not much employment but our children have good reputation for their educational achievements. We are hospitable people and we mingle with other community members.

Overall the responses echoed sentiments from previous research such as the local Somali community development report[53] conducted in 2002, reflecting upon the local Leicester community. But in comparison with previous research there seems to be an emerging confidence and sense of settlement demonstrated by the emergence of a strong local identity. The City of Leicester is very good at recognising and celebrating its wide cultural diversity, including Diwali, Vaisakhi, Eid, Hanuka and Christmas, "Pride" and "Carnival" celebrations. However, an acknowledgement of the Somali

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[51] Laws introduced in the Netherlands in 1998 require immigrants to complete 600 hours of language and social orientation classes, followed by assistance in starting an education or finding employment. The programme was meant to help immigrants find their way in Dutch society and become self-supporting.

[52] ESOL classes have to be paid for by both EU and non-EU migrants (higher rate). Depending on the social security benefits received, the cost may be exempted. There is also a fee for the citizenship test (£135/€165 at the time of writing).

[53] Daahir and Duale, *Somali Community Development Report.*

community's culture and contribution to Leicester is lacking. More could be done to recognise the poetry, music and literature of Somalis and formally locate it in this culturally vibrant city.

5.   EDUCATION

Education is understandably a prime concern for Somali parents. Many participants valued the ease of access, equality of opportunity and simplicity of the English educational system, especially compared with their experience in other European countries. Yet there remain problems, particularly at pre-school and secondary levels, and difficulties negotiating cultural change and the adaptations required to progress through school. So while many experiences are positive and achievement levels are rising, a lack of support, and communication difficulties were also reported. This chapter looks at educational achievement and problems in Leicester schools and also highlights support initiatives that are having a real impact on Somalis' education.

The Somali community (perhaps due to many of their previous European experiences) have themselves been proactive in pushing the local authority to address the educational needs of their children, and the authority was very receptive to this, especially early on in the migration of large numbers of Somalis. They welcomed ideas and acted where they could to help the situation.

Leicester has a whole host of educational issues, with increasingly diverse communities (more than half of Leicester's population now has an ethnic-minority background) and a large underperforming white community—white British boys are the lowest performing in Leicester schools. However, Jasbir Mann, head of Service, Learning, Transformation and Development at the city council, argued that Leicester's experience of meeting the needs of existing communities ensured that it was in a good place to meet the needs of newer citizens: "The advantages we have as a city are that we're used to different communities settling here."[54] Dealing with diversity over the years has, she argued, resulted in an increased recognition of the need to talk to different communities and thus understand ways of moving forward together. The Somali community have been especially active in making the most of this approach. The city council has helped set up initiatives to deal with the needs of different communities in Leicester. Although many of these are generalised initiatives and often not exclusive to Somali pupils and families, they have helped with their settlement and education.

The leadership in UK schools, particularly the head teachers and their management teams, have a lot of autonomy and although the local authority can offer advice and give guidance, it is ultimately up to the schools to use their funding as they see fit. This means that although there are avenues of funding provided by the city council to offset costs and close the gap, it is up to the school and not the council to decide whether to use this budget on particular community groups or other school priorities. This can mean a wide variation in performances of ethnic-minority pupils in different schools, depending on the leadership of the school, their priorities, how they choose to apply

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[54]   Interview with Jasbir Mann, head of Service, Learning, Transformation and Development (0–19), City Council, April 2013.

for funding, what the funding is used for and the direction they choose to take the school in. It is also important to point out that diminishing resources due to funding cuts are likely to have a negative impact on some of the progress that has been made among the Somali pupils (as well as other groups) in recent years. For example, there has been a recent reduction in Somali teaching and support staff, which had been invested in only a few years earlier. This may well affect the achievements and progress of Somali children in Leicester schools.

In the roundtable discussion a number of initiatives in the field of education, not yet seen in Leicester, were suggested. This included the creation of networks of alumni and successful students that could serve as role models to upcoming pupils and thus link between the education and employment sectors and the promotion of apprenticeships among young Somalis who are not engaged in higher education. Courses providing practical work experience could encourage students to begin gaining work experience from secondary school onwards.

5.1 Data Collection

In the UK as a whole, the situation of pupils of Somali background is not very visible in the educational system "because of the failure to recognise Somalis as a distinct ethnic group in data collection".[55] Thus, their specific needs and challenges may have been ignored for some time, despite the fact that Somali presence in Britain dates back to the 19th century.

The situation in Leicester differs from the national picture in a number of important respects. Since 2008 educational data collected by the local authority have identified Somalis as a distinct group,[56] rather than placing them in a broader category of black African or Caribbean. These data has allowed the council to develop a more detailed picture of the experience of Somali pupils and to compare their achievement with those of other pupils. Many local authorities in the UK still do not gather data in this way. However, there are currently no data for Leicester Somalis in the pre-school/nursery sector; if such data were collected, they would help prepare children better for entry into the school system.

According to the city council, the January 2010 school census report found that there were 2,076 Somali pupils (4.27 percent of the total) in Leicester city schools, forming

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[55] Feyisa Demie, Kirstin Lewis and Christabel McLean, *Raising the Achievement of Somali Pupils: Challenges and School Responses*, Lambeth Council, London, 2007, p. 5 (hereafter, Demie et al., *Raising the Achievement of Somali Pupils*).

[56] Leicester City Children's Trust, *Leicester Children and Young People's Needs Assessment*, Leicester, 2010 (hereafter, *Leicester City Children's Trust, Leicester Children and Young People's Needs Assessment*).

the third-largest ethnic group in Leicester's schools.[57] Although Somalis live in various parts of the city, there are wards in Leicester, such as Spinney Hills, that have a much higher concentration of Somalis (see Chapter 3). This has meant that in at least one school (Taylor Road Primary School) the classes have a majority of Somali pupils. Other schools have significant, but lower, percentages of Somali pupils. There are also a number of Somali supplementary classes and institutions, such as homework clubs and Qur'an classes (in madrassahs), which have been set up by the community for young people's education.

5.2   Educational Achievement

Since the 1970s the underachievement of ethnic-minority students in British schools has been very noticeable.[58] Leicester City Council's website states:

> Although the rate of increase is above average, educational attainment rates in the city are still low ... across the country there is an issue of educational underachievement among black male students. There are higher than average levels of underachievement within this group in Leicester.[59]

Ms Mann challenged claims of underachievement among Somali pupils: "Somali children in Leicester schools are not underachieving, although boys are not doing as well as girls."[60]

There has been a notable improvement in achievement of Somali pupils in Leicester: in 2008 in Leicester schools, 60.6 percent of Somali pupils were achieving Key Stage[61] (KS) 2 national thresholds in English and mathematics but the level has since risen to 76.8 percent at this level. Somali girls are doing particularly well, with 89.5 percent of them achieving national thresholds in English and mathematics (in 2008 only 55.4

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[57]   Leicester City Children's Trust, *Leicester Children and Young People's Needs Assessment*, p. 33. According to 2009 figures, the largest ethnic groups were White British (35.4 percent), Indian (29 percent) and Black Somali (4.1 percent).

[58]   Swann Report, *Education for All. Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1985. The Swann Report was a groundbreaking investigation into the educational needs of ethnic minorities in the UK. See also Tariq Modood and Stephen May, "Multiculturalism and education in Britain: an internally contested debate", *International Journal of Education Research* 35 (2001), pp. 305–317.

[59]   See   http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/jobs-and-careers/equality-and-diversity/diversity-in-leicester/ (accessed April 2013).

[60]   Interview with Jasbir Mann, head of Service, Learning, Transformation and Development (0–19), City Council, April 2013.

[61]   Key Stages describe a range of school years in both primary and secondary schools. They enable progressive standardised tests that can be used to measure a child's progress compared with other pupils of the same age across the country. In primary school there are three stages: Foundation Stage (ages 3–5, Nursery and Reception), Key Stage 1 (ages 5–7, school years 1 and 2), Key Stage 2 (ages 7–11, school years 3–6). Key Stage 3 (ages 11–14), Key Stage 4 (ages 14–16) and Key Stages 5 (ages 16–18) are in secondary school.

percent reached this level). Ms Mann said: "Somali girls are the third best achievers from the ethnic minority community in Leicester." Somali boys, however, are achieving only 3 percentage points higher in KS 2 attainment than four years earlier, with 67.9 percent in 2012 and 64.8 percent in 2008, according to local education authority data.[62] Ms Mann and her colleagues felt that poor achievement was an issue not exclusive to Somali boys; generally boys from age five from all backgrounds were not performing as well as girls. Similarly there have been dramatic improvements in achievement by Somali pupils at GCSE level in KS 4. In 2008, only 26.6 percent of all Somali pupils got five A*–C GCSEs (including English and mathematics), whereas in 2012 the figure improved to 45.3 percent. There are differences in the figures for girls and boys, but both showed a definite change for the better: 48.6 percent of girls got A*–C GCSEs in 2012, compared with 23.8 percent in 2008; for boys the figure was 42.5 percent in 2012, compared with 29.7 percent in 2008.

The progress made by Somali children generally in Leicester is very good. Based on the data cited above, 77.4 percent of Somali pupils progressed from KS 2 to KS 4 in 2012, which was higher than the overall average in Leicester schools (71.3 percent), and more than 10 percent better than white British pupils, where only 65.5 percent made the same progress in 2012.

Interviewees working in education in the Somali community have identified certain factors that contribute to this success. This includes improved teaching methods, the availability of better statistics in Leicester schools, the push from parents for children to do well at school and the engagement of the community in schools, as well as increased use of mentors and teaching assistants from ethnic-minority backgrounds. Interviewees identified pupils' and parents' own high aspirations to do well educationally as a key driver. It was clear from the focus group participants' contributions that many of the parents taking part in the discussions were highly aspirational, not only wanting their children to achieve well in schools, but also enrolling themselves in English courses and other adult education courses and training, including first and second degrees to enable them to gain employment too. One parent said:

> Education is the only way to escape this way of living … the way has been paved for us, by the Asian community, they passed through hardships to establish the madrassahs, homework clubs and mosques, it would have taken us longer if we had to do that first—we are grateful for that … Some of the younger generation have gone to Oxford, Cambridge, etc … If parents persevere, their children will eventually get used to studying in the UK. My eldest daughter who started college here has now finished university graduating with a degree in accounting and finance.

The local authority staff who were interviewed agreed that Somali parents have high aspirations, but also recognised that many lacked experience of formal schooling and

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[62] Figures obtained from Leicester City Council Statistics department in January 2013.

education, which limited their ability to support their children's education. Focus group participants also identified that aside from aspiration and personal experience, access to education also plays an important role in educational achievement, as one participant who was in adult education mentioned:

> It seemed everything in Holland was designed for people like me to never realise their educational ambitions. When I came to Leicester, I had four children and began learning the language straight away. Less than a year into my language course, my teachers told me I was capable of going on to university and that is when it dawned on me that it is the education system of each country that either enables its people or disables them.

Despite the great improvement made by Somali pupils over the years, overall achievement levels still lag behind in comparison with some other ethnic groups. At KS 1, the pupil average point score for Somali children is still one of the lowest in the city at only 14.4 in all core subjects, compared with 15.1 in Leicester City schools overall, 15.0 for those of White British descent and 15.9 in the highest-performing pupils of Indian descent.[63] Although Somali pupils appear to do better than some other (more established) ethnic-minority groups at GCSE level in Leicester (e.g. only 33.8 percent of pupils of Bangladeshi background achieved five A*–C GCSEs in 2012), their results (45.3 percent) were still lower than the city average at 51.8 percent; 60.9 percent of Indian pupils achieved these results and the national average was 59.4 percent[64] in 2012.

5.3   The Educational Challenges

A number of studies[65] have consistently identified factors such as interrupted previous education, language, poverty, overcrowding and lack of parental help as barriers to academic achievement among Somali youngsters. The Open Society Foundations' research in Leicester also found a number of similar problem areas, but also interesting and innovative means that both the Local Authority and the Somali community have adopted to overcome some of these difficulties.

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[63]   Figures obtained from Leicester City Council Statistics department in January 2013.

[64]   BBC News, Education and Family, "GCSE Results 2012", at
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-21171285 (accessed October 2013).

[65]   Demie et al., *Raising the Achievement of Somali Pupils;* Feyisa Demie, *Raising the Achievement of Somali Pupils: Good Practice in London Schools,* Lambeth Council, London, 2008 (hereafter, Demie, *Good Practice in London Schools*). Previous studies attribute the roots of Somali pupil underachievement to a number of factors, including lack of understanding of the British educational system, difficulties speaking English, single-parent families, overcrowding and racism. Other factors reported included poor school attendance, poverty, the stress of living in large households, interrupted or non-existent prior education, negative teacher perceptions, poor liaison between school and home, lack of exposure to written language and lack of role models for achievement.

In 2004 the city council commissioned some research into mapping Somali children's educational needs.[66] This resulted in a list of recommendations, which led to an action plan to address some of the causes of poor achievement and progress, with results monitored over time.

5.3.1   Language and Communication

> English schools have been educating immigrant children for decades. Recently, however, new arrivals have brought challenges to schools as the majority are relatively new to English and increasing numbers are from asylum families.[67]

For some young Somali children, limited knowledge of the English language is the chief obstacle when they begin school. They are under-represented in pre-school learning facilities that other more established communities will have grown familiar with, but there are no data to substantiate this. There are practical difficulties for some Somali parents in accessing pre-school services. For single-mother households, with multiple children at a young age, engagement with early years education is more difficult. Somali parents are, however, conscious of the importance of sending children to early years facilities. Interviews with stakeholders and focus group participants suggested that in Leicester many Somali pupils' experience of British education begins with struggling to understand the language. They may have an understanding of the subject from previous education, but their inability to comprehend the teacher's instructions or communicate in English themselves in order to move forward is a problem. A participant in one of the focus groups described:

> When I moved from Finland I came with five children and the eldest was attending secondary school. My children came with good grades but when they were put with students whose first language was English, they quickly fell behind due to the language barrier.

Abdishakur Tarah, from Aqoon Schools Home Support Services, explained how Somali parents were quick to develop a dialogue with the local authority, to express their concerns about these educational problems early on in their settlement:

> Because of parental engagement from the outset, the local authority provided support by employing a large number of bilingual teachers about 10 years ago. Children are therefore doing much better than they were 10 years ago … so the trend of achievement has been there for quite a while.

Two of the key recommendations from the 2004 report mentioned above were to first assess young people in the language they could speak (Somali, Danish, etc.) rather than

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[66]   Jawaahir Daahir, Mehdi Barghchi and Abdishakur Tarah, *Mapping Somali Children's Educational Needs in Leicester*, Leicester City Council and Leicester Partnership, 2004 (hereafter, Daahir et al. *Mapping Somali Children's Educational Needs in Leicester*).

[67]   Demie, *Good Practice in London Schools*.

in English, as until their language skills improved, assessments in English were proving inadequate and failing to reflect actual ability, knowledge or understanding of a subject. The report recommended second that the council should train Somali assistant teachers, who could then facilitate communication between teachers and pupils, as well as between staff and parents.[68] As a result, children's assessments are now conducted in a language that the children understand, and more assistant teachers and mentors have been recruited by schools with higher concentrations of Somali children.

Taylor Road Primary School, where 46 percent of the pupils are of Somali background and has been recognised by the Home Office for the impact of its work with new immigrant families,[69] has invested in Somali teachers, assistants and parents as role models. The school is situated in the inner city of Leicester, with nearly 60 percent of pupils from BME backgrounds, particularly African. The head teacher is well known for fostering a consistently high level of teaching, with impressive results:

> With such a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, the key to the school's success lies in its promotion of pupils' language and literacy skills. Pupils understand, both from the school and their own families, that mastering English and communication skills is vital to their success across the range of other subjects.[70]

5.3.2   Understanding the UK Educational System

One aspect of migrant parents' communication difficulties is dealing with children's schools and not understanding the school system. In some of the European countries that the children came from, they were not moved annually according to their age, but according to their academic ability. A number of parents in the focus groups expressed confusion and doubts.

> I came here with young children and they struggled to get used to the primary school system of education, which was very different to the system in Holland.

Some focus group participants felt that parents' awareness of school procedures needed to be improved, while others felt that there was discrimination, that teachers had low expectations of their children and that not enough was being done to include parents.

> There is a lack of communication between Somali parents and school staff and this creates a barrier between them.

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[68]   Daahir et al. *Mapping Somali Children's Educational Needs in Leicester.*

[69]   Ofsted, "Report for Taylor Road Primary School", 2012, at http://www.successforall.org.uk/downloads/taylor%20road%20ofsted%20report%202012.pdf (accessed October 2013) (hereafter, Ofsted Report for Taylor Road Primary School).

[70]   Ofsted Report for Taylor Road Primary School.

Some parents felt that schools in other European countries provided more support for those struggling academically than provided for in British schools:

> [In the Netherlands] children with special needs and language barriers received lots of support. Here the number of students in each class is too large for the teaching staff to even begin to provide extra support.

5.3.3   Poverty

Most studies indicate a clear albeit complex link between poverty and educational achievement.[71] Eligibility for free school meals is a nationally recognised method of identifying children from low-income families. However, its application to newer migrant groups as a predictor of achievement may not be as effective as in established groups, because need of migrant families that may qualify for free school meals may fluctuate: they may climb the economic ladder quickly, or are highly motivated to have children succeed through school, all leading to potentially rapid progression. According to Ms Mann, "There is a high level of deprivation for some of these communities, therefore they have a lower baseline; however, they progress at a greater rate."[72] Nevertheless, due to its general use in the educational system, eligibility for free school meals remains a measure for assessing levels of poverty, at least in a single point in time.

At Taylor Road Primary School the 80.3 percent of pupils were eligible for free school meals, well above the national average of 19.2 percent in January 2013,[73] indicating a high proportion of children in low-income households. The majority of such pupils make the school eligible for the "pupil premium", which provides additional funding from the state according to the number of pupils who receive free school meals or are in local-authority care. Schools such as Taylor Road Primary often use this funding to invest in areas of work to help students. Ofsted in 2012 reported:

> Data show that those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make much better than expected progress during their time at the school. The standards they attain are higher than similar groups nationally. Their attainment by Years 2 and 6 is now broadly similar to that reached by all pupils nationally.[74]

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[71]   Carlo Raffo et al., *Education and poverty: A critical review of theory, policy and practice,* Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York, 2007.

[72]   Interview with Jasbir Mann, head of Service, Learning, Transformation and Development (0–19), City Council, April 2013.

[73]   Department for Education, *Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics, January 2013*, DFE and ONS, June 2013 at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2013 (accessed July 2014).

[74]   Ofsted Report for Taylor Road Primary School.

Ofsted also found that "the spending of funding through the Pupil Premium and for minority ethnic groups is monitored particularly well" at Taylor Road Primary.[75] This funding has then been used for a variety of initiatives which have helped strengthen the pupils' social and academic success. These include one-to-one tutoring, Saturday morning school support, the breakfast club, after-school activities and the school's "role model" initiatives.[76]

5.3.4   Pupil Mobility

Somali pupils' mobility in Leicester is also a prominent problem. For example, Taylor Road Primary has had to think of new ways of keeping all children on track with achievement, despite the high rates of departure and arrival at times outside of normal start and end times to the academic year. In 2006 they implemented programmes such as the "Success for All"[77] scheme, an international programme designed to accelerate achievement levels, which greatly improved achievement. Schemes such as this may give a boost to pupils' confidence and help them when they move from one school to another. The head teacher of Taylor Road Primary, Chris Hassell, has also adopted a number of other strategies for working with the Somali community.

5.3.5   Parental and Community Support

The problem of language is compounded by the fact that many Somali parents themselves are initially unable to speak English, so they have a limited if not non-existent ability to communicate with teaching staff. If there is a lack of education among the parents, this will affect how much support they can give their children at home and complicate things further. Participants in focus groups remarked:

> There is a big problem with the fact that Somali parents have little or no education themselves and therefore struggle to help their children with their education. Parents need training to develop skills to help them help their children.

The support that Somali parents can provide is also affected by the high number of single-parent families (headed by mothers).[78] According to Demie et al. and Rutter, high rates of "Somali households are being headed by women. This may be as a result

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[75]   Ofsted Report for Taylor Road Primary School.

[76]   Ofsted Report for Taylor Road Primary School.

[77]   "Success For All" was established in 1997 as an international charity aiming to raise achievement in literacy in schools. About 200 schools in the UK have used the system that helps children to learn in a group environment throughout primary schooling.

[78]   Demie et al., *Raising the Achievement of Somali Pupils.*

of men being killed [in the civil war] in Somalia, families being split up as a result of working in the Gulf States and also divorce."[79]

The SDS and other Somali organisations have recognised the difficulties women face having to raise children on their own and have developed a learning programme for women at their community centre, providing ESOL classes, computer skills, and methods to gain fresh insights into the needs of their children.

5.3.6   Exclusion from School

Precise data on exclusion from schools in Leicester have been difficult to come by, as even the city council was not able to provide accurate figures. However, figures for exclusion in other places seem high. A spokesperson for a Sheffield Somali education charity (Somali Education Breakthrough) said that "according to recent Sheffield statistics, Somali pupils are excluded from schools almost 2.5 times more than [other] British children."[80] Abdishakur Tarah from Aqoon Schools Home Support Services explained how educational concerns over the exclusions of Somali children in Leicester came to a head in 2011:

> We had a Somali consultation day, not to specifically talk about exclusions, but the overall performance of our children. When we asked parents how many of them had children excluded from schools, unfortunately 20 out of 50 parents raised their hands.

Aqoon then began to focus on how to prevent these exclusions, and found many issues that needed addressing. They now provide some mentoring and pastoral support for excluded Somali children and work closely with primary and secondary schools, mainly on early intervention and prevention to ensure that the needs of those who are at risk of school exclusions are dealt with early on.

5.4   Local Authority Initiatives

5.4.1   Complementary Schools

Alongside existing supplementary classes set up by the community themselves, as a result of the 2004 report recommendations Connexions Leicester City, a careers service for young people, funded a three-year study support programme for underachieving Somali pupils. It also provided funding to Aqoon School Home Support Services to support primary-school children with their studies, as well as support for parents in how to create a more positive environment for a child to study in.

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[79] Jill Rutter, *Refugee Communities in the UK: Somali Children's Educational Progress and Life Experiences,* London Metropolitan University, London, 2004.

[80] "Somali Education Breakthrough Receive Grant to Promote Members' Education in Sheffield", Somalia diaspora news blog, at http://www.qurbejoog.com/2013/08/07/somali-education-breakthrough-receive-grant-to-promote-members-education-in-sheffield (accessed October 2013).

Mr Tarah indicated that "Somali children require support with basic things such as help with understanding school work and homework." Aqoon provides this type of support and also assists with complementary school programmes. Complementary schools (sometimes also known as supplementary schools) are non-state, voluntary initiatives (operating in the evening or weekend) often established by faith, ethnic or cultural groups in order to bolster teaching that may be missing from the national curriculum or to support and enhance certain areas. The complementary education provided by Aqoon has made a real difference by supporting Somali pupils. These programmes were originally funded via the local authority, but now a state school can receive funding directly from central government to link with a complementary school, in a move to encourage mainstream and complementary schools to work together and develop partnerships to ensure student needs are being met. Complementary schools are available for KS 2, 3 and 4 pupils and work alongside several schools such as Coleman, Highfields, Uplands and Taylor Road schools, which all have high numbers of Somali pupils. Although these complementary schools are not exclusively for Somali children, significant numbers of students are Somali. Support services also include interpreters for parents and assistance with cases of pupil exclusion.

5.4.2 Somali Staff

Most secondary schools have Somali staff who can act as role models and make interventions and understand how they can get the best out of students. This was another of the key recommendations of the 2004 report: to recruit more Somali-speaking assistants and mentors in schools with large numbers of Somali children.

5.4.3 Work with Parents

To facilitate better relationships with families, schools are reaching out to parents directly, providing staff like the school receptionists to communicate with them in a language they understand better and collaborating with bodies like Aqoon. The Taylor Road school example also shows that the active engagement of parents, both as a general part of the school community as well as governors of the school, could make an important difference. There is therefore a need to train and support more parents to engage in such roles in other parts of the city.

5.4.4 Other Initiatives

- School Improvement Partner (SIP) advisers (senior educational policy consultants or head teachers) are attached to some schools that are underperforming. They evaluate the quality of support in schools, and provide advice on how to improve outcomes.

- Education Action Zones[81] have recruited Somali teaching assistants to support eight local primary schools, helping assess children in the language they understand, thereby helping to identify where they need help and how they can improve.

- A secondary school consultant has been employed by the city council to support individuals and help train teachers in schools to deal with situations they may not be familiar with.

- Education conferences and events have been organised, to understand more about the grassroots issues, how they affect children's education and how they can be addressed, for instance the "Bilingual Somali" event, which received funds from "Everybody's Reading Festival".[82]

- Partnership models have been introduced, pairing up a school that performs well with one that needs some assistance, so they can learn from good practice.

- "Whatever it Takes" (WiT),[83] set up in November 2009, is a children's reading programme. Moat Community College (which has a significant number of Somali pupils) has used WiT, with a budget that comes from the council, and believe it has started to make a real difference.[84]

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[81] Ofsted, *Excellence in Cities and Education Action Zones: Management and Impact*, 2003, p. 5. Education Action Zones are partnerships usually formed between the schools, their local educational authority and other local organisations, especially from the business community, and other agencies, such as higher-education institutions. They were set up to tackle problems of underachievement and social exclusion in disadvantaged areas by devising innovative methods and strategies that would involve disaffected pupils more fully in education and improve their academic performance.

[82] This is a collaborative project, spearheaded by the "Whatever it Takes" initiative (which seeks to ensure that every child in Leicester reaches their age-related reading standard by the end of primary school), with a creative partnership of Leicester Libraries, the Schools Development Support Agency, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, BBC Radio Leicester and other partners.

[83] The "Whatever it Takes" initiative is made up of a diverse set of projects which run alongside one another. These range from grants to support reading based activities within schools, to festivals which encourage reading.

[84] See http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/schools-ratings/story-12964147-detail/story.html (accessed July 2014).

6. EMPLOYMENT

Low income and unemployment are the two most important drivers of social exclusion.[85] It is also clear that low income and unemployment are strongly linked. This chapter looks at developments in these crucial areas of the lives of the Somali community in Leicester.

The Somali community has yet to break out of the circular problems that stem from unfulfilled employment potential. The Somali sailors of the early 20th century went to the industrial towns in search of factory work, as noted earlier. In reality, many became unemployed and this naturally affected the social progression of the early Somali community. Later refugees from the 1980s onwards met similar difficulties in the job market, despite evidence of qualifications and white-collar work experience back home. This has had a direct impact on the outlook and social integration of Somali households and may have created a lack of confidence and self-esteem. These realities are compounded by the limited information available on these issues affecting Somali households.[86]

6.1 Background and Statistics

Data from the ONS indicate that unemployment rates in Leicester are higher than the national average, at 14.4 percent compared with the national average of 8 percent.[87] Much less is known about Somali unemployment. The city council website gives some indication of employment among Somalis in Leicester: "People with an ethnic minority background are more likely to be unemployed than white people", and "Within the ethnic minority population Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi are more likely to be unemployed."[88] A report commissioned by the city council in 2008, called *The Diversity of Leicester: A Demographic Profile*, states: "Unemployment rates for the Somali community in the city are significant and figures quoted have been in excess of 75 percent unemployment for both men and women."[89]

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[85] Social Exclusion Unit, *The Drivers of Social Exclusion,* Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London, 2004.

[86] Hermione Harris, *The Somali community in the UK: What we know and how we know it,* ICAR, London, 2004 (hereafter, Harris, The Somali community in the UK).

[87] Leicester City Council, "Unemployment Bulletin August 2013", based on UK figures for April 2012–March 2013.

[88] See http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/jobs-and-careers/equality-and-diversity/div ersity-in-leicester (accessed October 2013).

[89] Trish Roberts-Thomson, Rachel Clarke, Kurt Coulter and Ian Robertson, *The Diversity of Leicester: A Demographic Profile,* Leicester, Leicester City Council, 2008, p.17 (hereafter, Roberts-Thomson et al., *The Diversity of Leicester.*) This quoted figure would be extrapolated from broader ethnic categories and may not be very accurate. It is also likely that at this stage many members of the community were undergoing naturalisation and would not have full permission to work, and hence could actually refer to "economic inactivity" as opposed to "unemployment".

Although there are no recent figures on the distribution of Somalis in the labour market, the ONS figures (updated in 2004), indicate that of those employed in Leicester, a large percentage of the general population are involved in manual labour, listed as elementary occupations (15.5 percent) or plant and machine operatives (16.2 percent), compared with only 8.4 percent and 11.8 percent in the same work nationally.[90] This correlates with the city council website:

The occupational structure of those living in the city is heavily biased towards manual labour. There are only two categories where the city has a higher proportion than England and Wales, and this is for plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations.[91]

The non-recognition of qualifications from Somalia can often be a barrier to employment.[92] Thus, despite having an education and possessing qualifications, finding employment is not always easy. The SDS commissioned a feasibility study into unemployment in the community in 2004 and this was one of the findings. The focus groups for this research have also raised unemployment as a major problem. Participants mentioned the cut in programmes that supported people by providing a free evaluation of their qualifications compared with British equivalents. Focus group participants who had previous qualifications found their diplomas were not recognised and so were faced with re-qualifying and/or reassessing the type of employment open to them. There was little sense of career progression in such a situation, as one participant in the focus groups said:

> I looked for employment but was told the diplomas I carry aren't valid in this country. I have to get them re-evaluated to equate them to British qualifications. I also tried to gain employment through work experience but there too I faced another issue: discrimination.

The Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR) found that "the majority of Somalis employed before coming to the UK are not employed in the same or similar occupations in the UK."[93] Furthermore, another component of the problem is a lack of qualifications and training among members of the Somali community. This is partly compounded by the wider challenges in the city itself. The *Diversity of Leicester* report

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[90] ONS, "Occupation Groups – All People", 2001, at http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.u k/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=7&b=6275151&c=leicester&d=13&e=9&g=6383957&i= 1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1361879268015&enc=1&dsFamilyId=33 (accessed February 2013).

[91] Leicester City Council, at http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/council-and-democra cy/city-statistics/employment/ (accessed February 2013).

[92] Harvey and McGeachy, *ICAR Briefing*. p. 8; A. Bloch and G. Atfield, *The professional capacity of nationals, from the Somali regions in Britain,* A report to Refugee Action and the International Organisation of Migration, London, 2002.

[93] Harvey and McGeachy, *ICAR Briefing*.

indicated that 24.7 percent of the working-age population in Leicester has no qualifications, compared with 14.8 percent in England as a whole.[94]

Issak Abdi, from the SCSC,[95] which helps support people into employment, responded to a question about the low percentage of black people employed in the city, that this did not take into account the unique situation of the Somalis in Leicester "The likelihood of a Somali graduate to get a job easily is not always there because of two things: their background and the situation that has forced them into this country." He commented further:

> For Somalis who are here or elsewhere in the main European continent, it is a forced immigration, not an economic one. When you are an economic immigrant you are ready for the new situation, however with Somalis, it was a sudden thing. They are from a wartorn area, (so) there are psychological consequences with these people, they were not ready when they came.

Adapting to a socio-economic environment where the labour market is difficult to penetrate can create many frustrations. This was a recurring theme in focus groups, where language, lack of support, prejudice, feeling lost in the system and even hurdles in performing worship were frequently cited.

6.2   Communication

The language barrier was often cited by stakeholders as one of the main reasons Somalis find it difficult to find employment. Focus group participants agreed:

> People are often hindered by their language, which is why they struggle to find employment. This includes their written skills, which are very poor. People need support to obtain language skills.

However, there are a number of other factors. Communication problems extend to more than just the language barrier. Misunderstanding of how and why people behave in certain ways, making sense of cultural and religious differences, understanding the social and legal aspects of a new society, all play a part in finding and then holding on to a job. A number of the focus group participants felt that many Somalis in the UK had never lived in a situation like this before, therefore they do not understand the UK's labour market, how the system works, how to find a job, what their rights are and how to obtain them.

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[94] Roberts-Thomson et al., *The Diversity of Leicester,* p.18, using data from the Local Area Labour Force Survey, 2004.

[95] The SCSC provides support for new ethnic-minority communities. It helps with CV and job applications, job search facilities, career support, citizenship, advocacy and signposting to other agencies. It also offers an interpreting and translation service to the community.

6.3   Discrimination

Focus group participants felt that low employment levels in the community were due to both the racial and religious prejudice that many Somalis faced. One participant commented, "Although the language is a barrier, but there are jobs that do not require a high level of language skills and we are struggling to get even those."

> We sent them to schools and many of them have graduated from universities, but they are struggling to get jobs even though they are qualified. This leads me to think, our children are being discriminated against. Every time my daughter, who is a university graduate, applies for a job and sends her CV in, she is almost always shortlisted for an interview but whenever employers see her face to face, she never gets the job. She feels all her effort to get the necessary qualifications have been for nothing.

Another said, "I notice that when it comes to redundancies, people of ethnic-minority backgrounds are the first to be let go of."

Mr Abdi felt that conditions were much better than they used to be in the 1990s:

Now we have a Race Equality Council, which is very good, no one will publically humiliate or discriminate, though they may backbite, that by itself is very positive. But politicians (now) need to be very politically correct, and sometimes this is at the expense of what's really happening, and at the risk of not actually helping the new communities. For example, I see Irish deprived communities as having similar difficulties as the Somalis, I don't see them as "white", but when a politician speaks to them, they must speak to them all as the same, rather than address their individual needs.

The Department for Communities and Local Government report also found Somalis felt religious prejudice was a concern in 2008:

> Islamophobia was also perceived as having an impact on the community in relation to employment opportunities. According to respondents, people are easily identified as Muslims due to their physical appearance, and since 9/11 men are finding it more difficult to find work.[96]

In addition to services for language support and for redress, support services need to address people's lack of confidence and of computer literacy particularly for adults who have missed out on general computer literacy skills because of forced migration. Many Somali organisations have received funding from the local authority to provide employment support to the community. The SDS, for example, offers job search support including preparing interviews, CV development, filling job applications, liaising with employers and building confidence.

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[96]   Change Institute, *The Somali Muslim Community in England,* p. 34.

6.4   Self-employment

Interviews with stakeholders for this research showed that people recognise that Somali-owned business have proliferated in the city over the last 10 years in a variety of sectors including restaurants, clothing, internet cafés, furniture stores, remittance units and groceries, but there are no accurate sources of information to gauge the precise number of Somali-owned businesses. A number of the focus group participants commented on how Somalis had set up their own businesses (often as shopkeepers and taxi-drivers), evidently preferring to be self-employed.

> In comparison with other communities, I think we are on par. We have many Somalis who have graduated from universities working as doctors, lawyers, engineers, journalists and the council appreciates our entrepreneurial spirit.

The independent business sector is growing across a range of retail services, but these are currently very low-key. Somalis in Leicester are joining a very developed and vibrant independent trade sector that has been dominated by migrants from the 1960s, mainly those of Indian heritage. Some Somalis view the UK as a place where it is easier to set up a company or a business,[97] and indeed this may be one of the factors that has brought some of the residents to the UK from other parts of Europe.

The focus group discussions revealed one significant development among Somalis that does not seem to have a social equivalent among Leicester's Asian community: a raft of business initiatives by Somali women. These are small-scale services that are mainly addressing intra-community needs, but what can be observed is increasing self-reliance and the seeds of financial independence. Support services should help nurture this socio-economic development that is showing early signs of a shift in confidence and possibly affluence.

Despite all the concerns, there is a great sense of optimism and pride in the Somali community in their achievements in such a short space of time. This brings with it an air of confidence, which indicates that this is just the beginning and there is much more to see yet from the Somalis of Leicester. A variety of responses from the focus groups indicate this optimism:

> Somalis have played a positive role in Leicester. We are also multilingual and we have brought many businesses to the city, which contributes to the local economy. So we are part of the city.

> In Sweden we had a good reputation, we are a proud people. In the areas where we live like Highfields, for example, we are very visible. We have shops where people buy their groceries. We have brought many different languages to the city as well. Many people would struggle to achieve the things we have in this city.

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[97]   *The Economist*, "The road is long", 17 August 2013, at http://www.economist.com/news/britain /21583710-somalis-fare-much-worse-other-immigrants-what-holds-them-back-road-long (accessed October 2013).

If you look at the remittance companies we have set up, they are everywhere, allowing you to send money anywhere in the world in minutes.

With one of the lowest rates of unemployment among Britain's immigrant communities, the Somali diaspora provides several hundred million USD in remittances per annum. There are 11 UK-based money transfer companies serving Somalia. Dahabshiil is the world's largest … (and) has been in operation over twenty years and transfers roughly USD 230 million per annum among Somali communities, with 90 percent of transactions returning cash to Somalia. The company has over 170 agents based in the UK, and it has branch offices and agents throughout Somalia and in other countries with large diaspora communities ... UK-based Somalians see these remittances as vital for the survival of their families, but also as a means to improve the Somalian economy.[98]

Some important challenges do remain in order to realise the true potential of Leicester's Somalis for the economy of the city, and in enabling the required change to take place, but there is also hope that through hard work, educational achievement and growing confidence, progress is being made.

We should not wait only for the support of the Council; we have to resolve our problems by ourselves and support organisations that work for our community. We can set up neighbourhood area based focused solutions as well as professional based forums that support young people through mentorship.

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[98] *Telegraph*, "Somalia: UK-based diaspora and its economic impact in Somalia", 4 February 2011, at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/wikileaks-files/london-wikileaks/8304729/somalia-uk-based-diaspora-and-its-economic-impact-in-somalia.html (accessed October 2013).

7. HOUSING

Overall, housing conditions stood out as the most negative aspect of living in Leicester, as shown in Figure 6. The focus group discussions talked about waiting lists, time taken for repairs, landlords' attitudes, overcrowding and general hygiene. People felt support was inadequate in accommodation and living arrangements, making it difficult to create a sense of belonging and integration.

7.1   Housing Patterns in Leicester

As seen in Chapter 2, nearly 70 percent of Somalis live in the four wards of Spinney Hills, Stoneygate, Charnwood and Beaumont Leys. This section examines the data on housing in these four wards and compares them to the data on Leicester as a whole.

Table 3. Housing stock by ward, Leicester Unitary Authority, 2011 census

	Beaumont Leys	Charnwood	Stoneygate	Spinney Hills	Leicester
Detached	10,2%	2,5%	10,2%	3,8%	19,3%
Semi-detached	37,1%	15,2%	29,8%	24,4%	29,7%
Terraced	35,4%	51,7%	41,4%	55,1%	28,7%
Flat/ Maisonette	16,9%	29,9%	18,0%	16,6%	22,3%
Caravan	0,1%	0,1%	0,1%	0,0%	0,0%
Shared Dwelling	0,3%	0,6%	0,5%	0,1%	0,0%

Source: 2011 Census

Table 3 shows that Charnwood and Spinney Hills wards have housing stock that typically represent low levels of affluence: over half the properties in both area are terraced housing, among the highest in Leicester, while the proportion of detached properties is among the lowest (3.8 percent, 2.5 percent). Housing stock in both Beaumont Leys and Stoneygate is broadly in line with the city's averages and so represents a mid-level catchment by Leicester's standards. Nearly a fifth of the properties in Beaumont Leys are detached, so it may represent a desirable location for relocation from less affluent areas. Both Stoneygate and Beaumont Leys also contain investment properties of a suitable size for letting to families. The focus groups revealed that it is common for older migrants (Asians) to own such properties and let them to Somalis.

Table 4. Tenure type by ward, 2011 census

	Leicester	Spinney Hills	Stoneygate	Charnwood	Beaumont Leys
Owned - Outright	22,8%	24,2%	28,7%	16,9%	15,0%
Owned - Mortgage	26,9%	16,2%	22,1%	21,0%	33,2%
Shared Ownership	0,6%	0,4%	0,4%	0,3%	0,6%
Social Rented - Local Authority	17,1%	27,9%	4,5%	28,8%	25,9%
Social Rented - Other	8,3%	10,1%	11,1%	8,4%	12,8%
Private Rented - Landlord/ Agency	21,3%	17,4%	30,0%	21,6%	10,5%
Private Rented - Other	1,5%	1,4%	1,5%	1,2%	1,1%
Living Rent Free	1,6%	2,3%	1,7%	1,8%	1,0%

Source: ONS, 2011 census, Table KS402EW

Table 5. Persons per household, 2011 census

	Beaumont Leys	Charnwood	Stoneygate	Spinney Hills	Leicester
1Psn	29,4%	27,2%	25,5%	22,0%	30,0%
2Psns	28,6%	22,0%	19,3%	18,2%	27,3%
3Psns	17,8%	15,9%	14,4%	14,3%	15,8%
4Psns	14,2%	16,6%	16,0%	18,0%	14,6%
5Psns	5,7%	8,7%	11,1%	12,3%	6,7%
6Psns	2,8%	5,8%	7,7%	8,5%	3,6%
7Psns	0,8%	2,0%	3,3%	3,5%	1,1%
8+Psns	0,7%	1,8%	2,6%	3,2%	0,9%

Source: ONS, 2011 census, Table QS406EW

Table 6. Overcrowding: people per bedroom, by ward, 2011 census

	Charnwood	Beaumont Leys	Stoneygate	Spinney Hills	Leicester	England
> 0.5 Psn	5,7%	9,1%	6,4%	4,4%	9,2%	14,2%
0.5 - 1.0 Psn	26,8%	43,8%	31,8%	20,2%	39,4%	48,9%
1.0 - 1.5 Psns	22,1%	23,2%	25,0%	22,3%	24,1%	21,5%
1.5+ Psns	45,4%	24,0%	36,9%	53,1%	27,3%	15,3%

Source: ONS, 2011 census, Table 2011QS414EW

Table 7. Religion by ward, 2011 census

	Leicester	Spinney Hills	Stoneygate	Charnwood	Beaumont Leys
Christian	32,4	8,3	14,8	23,2	40,4
Buddhist	0,4	0,1	0,3	0,2	0,3
Hindu	15,2	11,6	12,5	15,9	10,2
Jewish	0,1	0	0,2	0	0,1
Muslim	18,6	69,6	50,2	38,7	11,3
Sikh	4,4	3	6,2	4,3	2,1
Other Religion	0,6	0,4	0,3	0,4	0,6
No Religion	22,8	0,4	10,4	12,5	29,2
Religion Not Stated	5,6	0,4	5,1	4,8	5,8

Source: ONS, 2011 census, Table KS209EW

Nearly three-quarters of Leicester properties have three or fewer persons living in them. Yet in Spinney Hills 15.2 percent of properties have six or more persons in them compared with a city average of 5.6 percent. Similarly, Spinney Hills has much greater overcrowding measured against the standard bedroom space ratio: The proportion of cases with over 1.5 persons per standard bedroom space is 53.1 percent, exceeding half of all ward properties (by comparison, Leicester 27.3 percent, England 15.3 percent). Focus group participants commonly spoke of the present trend towards higher numbers of children, sometimes seven or more, suggesting that many Somali schoolchildren are growing up in very overcrowded conditions.

> I live in council housing consisting of 2 bedrooms and there are six of us. We have been on a waiting list for a very long time with no results and I'm sure many other Somalis face similar issues.

The highest concentrations of Somali residents in Leicester are in St Matthew's and Highfields in Spinney Hills. These are Super Output Areas (SOAs) with Output Areas (OA) within them (see Chapter 3 for further information on SOAs). In St Matthew's the two SOAs with the highest concentration of Somali residents are 18.6 percent and 16.7 percent Somali, based on the census data on main language. Within these SOAs, there are clusters where the Somali percentage rises above 20 percent to almost 30 percent in one OA.

Table 8. Spinney Hills Super Output Areas with the most Somali residents, 2011 census

	Leicester 018E	Leicester 018F	Leicester 018C	Leicester 018D	Leicester Unitary Authority	England and Wales
All residents	2,059	2,216	1,857	2,017	329,839	56,075,912
No. of Somalis by main language	384	369	54	86	3,331	85,918
% Somali by main language	18.6	16.7	2.9	4.3	1.0	0.2
No. of Somalis by country of birth	308	323	84	89	3,209	101,370
% by country of birth	15.0	14.6	4.5	4.4	1.0	0.2
% Muslims*	24.5	22.2	5.9	6.0	5.2	3.7
% African ethnicity*	61.5	62.4	93.3	49.2	25.7	10.2
% households with 6+ persons	10.4	10.4	7.6	12.3	5.6	2.3
% all residents arriving in UK 1991–2011 (20 years)	46.0	47.1	46.2	42.5	21.5	8.9
% households with no adults in employment + children	17.0	21.4	7.2	9.2	6.9	4.2
% households with no adults in employment and no children	34.0	25.7	36.7	34.8	27.3	29.4

Note: *Measured against country of birth
Source: ONS, Neighbourhood Statistics, Census 2011

Table 8 shows the four most populated SOAs of Spinney Hills 018C, D, E and F, which demonstrate how there are many causes of the challenges affecting a minority community group and the resultant sense of otherness or anxiety. In SOA 018E and 018F (near the St Matthew's area), for example, Somalis are living in greater residential concentrations (forming around 15 percent by Somali birth of the local population), in an area where nearly half of all residents arrived in the UK within the last 20 years. Over 10 percent of households in the area contain six or more persons—often eight or more—and around half of all adults have no employment.

Although Spinney Hills has the highest proportion of Somalis in Leicester, there are signs of the gradual spread of Somali residents to other wards. The 2011 Census showed that while the Somali population of Spinney Hills grew by 216 percent from 2001, there were larger growth rates in Charnwood (373 percent) and Beaumont Leys (310 percent). The increase in Beaumont Leys is significant because, unlike the other three wards where (despite the high growth rate) Somalis made up roughly 5 percent of the wards' Muslims in 2011, Somalis made up 18.4 percent of Muslims in Beaumont Leys, representing both a sizeable presence and a significant proportion. Combined with the balanced housing stock in the ward (with almost twice the number of detached properties than the Leicester average), this gives the area more of an affluent, spacious feeling. The effect upon residents in Beaumont Leys can be positive, with a sense of progress and well-being from living in a neighbourhood with a more upmarket and less crowded physical environment, and a sense of being a significantly larger proportion of the surrounding Muslim community.

Tenure patterns in the four wards show high proportions of rented houses. These include social-rented properties (houses owned by the local authority or by a housing association working with the local authority) as well as private landlords (who often receive a payment directly from the local authority for tenants on housing benefit). Over a quarter of properties in three of the wards are social-rented by the local authority. In Stoneygate, which has more detached and semi-detached properties, there is more ownership; consequently a significantly higher ratio of ward properties (30 percent) is privately rented by landlords. The private rental sector is fairly free from regulation.

7.2   Dissatisfaction with Housing

Complaints about housing were directed at private landlords more than at the local authority. Somalis felt that these landlords were in a position to take advantage of their social needs, and overlooked what they felt was a duty to carry out necessary maintenance and repairs. Participants routinely spoke of not being aware of their legal rights or the mechanisms of legal redress when repair obligations were not met, usually by private landlords:

> I believe the biggest issue Somalis face is housing-related, and it is unique to
> them because they do not know the laws of the land and also have a language

barrier. I would recommend to the council to create an independent body employing Somali staff where people can complain and voice their concerns of the council because there is a lot of unfair treatment, in my opinion. My house is less than a year old and it is already leaking water.

It was horrible at first, because in our first house, we had mice and cockroaches crawling around. One mouse even bit my child while he was asleep!

There were a number of comments on how problems were being dealt with and the time it took for repairs, or for the landlord, or even the council, to take complaints seriously.

In terms of the housing office of the local council, the staff are very rude. They would welcome and deal with non-Somali people that had come after me and I have to wait for a long time to be seen, only to be told to come back another time. They would issue the wrong papers and then blame you for taking the wrong papers. They won't acknowledge their own mistakes:

I live in council property and it is difficult to get things repaired and I am always complaining about that. They take their time to respond to a call.

I live in private accommodation and I have been on a waiting list for a council property for the past ten years. In my current house, the floor of the bathroom used to leak and the water would come straight down to our kitchen. The kitchen ceiling has fallen on us three times, one time with me and my children in it. Every time I complain to the council and ask for my application to be speeded up, they come and have a look and speak to the landlord who in turn says he is going to fix it but only puts cardboard boxes on it.

I have a bathroom that leaks and has damp but my landlord wouldn't do anything about it. Housing and people's welfare was always a priority in the countries where we moved from.

Others also felt that with persistence, and when the community understood better how to push for things to get done, issues could be resolved:

I lived in poor accommodation when I first moved to Leicester. We consulted the Environmental Agency and they told the landlord to fix it but he didn't. It was also an old house. We moved to another accommodation which was also private. After some time we got housing association accommodation and we haven't had any problems. I think what needs to happen is for people to follow the procedures in place. Initially, if you live in private accommodation and have complaints, these should be addressed to the council. They will pressure the landlord to resolve the issue and if he doesn't, they will strive to resolve it for you.

Some respondents mentioned safety and crime as a negative aspect of their neighbourhoods. However, it seemed that over time, as the Somali community settled, there was a sense of support and safety:

> Our family has had some housing issues. We lived in Braunstone where we endured four years of racial abuse and damage to our properties. There have been break-ins too but it has been resolved and we have moved on.

> I live in St Matthew's, which is a neighbourhood that has significantly improved its safety. Before Somalis moved in, it was known as a crime-ridden area but now it is one of the safest neighbourhoods in Leicester and I am proud we have been able to be a part of this improvement. It is close to town but there is a lot of pollution. We have a lot of mosques for young and old. There are mice as well and the roads aren't cleaned. The dog owners do not clean up after their dogs and there is spit everywhere. I watch my every step when I am walking outside. But I commend the area's safety.

Overall, a majority of the respondents spoke of good relations with neighbours, particularly in supporting children, sharing their faith traditions with other ethnic groups and generally supportive neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods were characterised as an important focal point. A focus group respondent mentioned:

> Neighbours and neighbourhoods are important within our Somali culture, in Leicester it varies. Some neighbours are friendly and some are not and not much interaction but within our own tradition and faith communities in Leicester it is good.

Housing stands out as an area where Leicester's Somali community expressed a need for much improvement. Several of the recommendations made by the SDS Somali community development report were implemented by the council's housing department, which employed two Somali-speaking staff, translated information into Somali (which is posted on the council's website) and organised awareness-raising sessions for the community with interpreters. However, comments from the focus groups point to persistent problems, even though many were generally happy with life in Leicester. There was a strong feeling that Somalis were being exploited by private landlords (who were often from other Muslim or other minority communities) because housing demands on the local authorities were great and because Somalis did not know where to seek effective redress. If this view persists and encounters with landlords reinforce an impression that Asians are taking advantage of their social position, this could pose a challenge to cohesion in the near future as a younger generation of Somalis becomes more independent, settled and confident; however, no strong feelings of animosity against any specific social group were expressed in the focus group discussions. Tenants need to be made more aware of their rights and the regulations that govern private tenancy, for example asking for energy efficiency certificates or understanding better the rules for eviction.

Comments from the focus group also pointed to weaknesses in support initiatives and forms of redress that do exist with the local authority but do not seem to be adequately accessed and utilised by Somali tenants, perhaps due to lack of awareness or language barriers. The bidding system for social housing is online and requires technical skills that new residents in the city may not have. The city council is undertaking a full review of the housing repair service and it would be useful to feed the voices of Somali residents into this process. Beyond this, there may be a need for a wider voluntary-sector engagement in housing. The lack of resources facing local housing units means priority is given to emergencies. Overcrowding can only be addressed when there are more houses built'; the lack of social housing has led to an increase in private accommodation. Such large constraints in housing policies, which are very difficult to resolve, could be communicated better to residents.

8.   HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

This chapter looks at Somali residents' health experiences and needs. Good health is about physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It is a fundamental human right and individuals, families and communities aspire to having good health. Migration, war and social change affect health.

Leicester faces a number of serious health problems, since its residents' health is generally worse than average in UK. People in the city experience many different socio-economic circumstances, which have a direct influence on their health and well-being. The connection between deprivation and health is an important one. In 2007 Deb Watson, now the Strategic Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing, wrote about economic deprivation in the city and how "in Leicester as a whole, both men and women are likely to have a significantly shorter lifespan, by some 2 years, when compared with the national average".[99] The Index of Deprivation (2007)[100] indicated that nearly half of Leicester's population (48 percent) were "highly disadvantaged"; furthermore, specific wards of Leicester were identified as locations of very high levels of deprivation, in fact some of the highest in the country. According to the annual report of the Director of Public Health 2008/2009, "In the most disadvantaged wards of Leicester the average expected survival can be more than 7 years shorter, when compared with the most affluent wards."[101]

This is significant, because Leicester's Somali community can be found in some of these very disadvantaged wards: Spinney Hills and Beaumont Leys contain seven LSOAs that are among the most deprived in the country. Poor-quality housing and diet, pollution levels, a higher proportion of children living in poverty, the lack of feeling in control of their destiny and the psycho-social effects of stress as consequence of this, together with a lack of social mobility, all affect the health of the community. Indeed, "rates of acute diabetes complications are three times as high in the most disadvantaged fifth of the population when compared with the most affluent fifth."[102]

8.1   Health Status of Somalis

Health problems highlighted in the Somali community in Leicester include:

> Concerns such as prostate cancer, not traditionally spoken about within the Somali community, that need to be acknowledged and we need to raise

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[99] Director of Public Health and Health Improvement, "Improving Health in Leicester, 2008/09", Annual Report, p. 2, at http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=25708 (accessed October 2013) (hereafter, "Improving Health in Leicester, 2008/2009").

[100] Office for National Statistics, at http://data.gov.uk/dataset/index_of_multiple_deprivation_imd_2007 (accessed July 2014).

[101] "Improving Health in Leicester, 2008/2009", p. 8.

[102] "Improving Health in Leicester, 2008/2009", p. 9.

awareness. It's a very different lifestyle from back home; the different pace of life brings challenges health-wise. These would include nutrition and diet, whilst also smoking, drugs and alcohol.[103]

Asthma cases are not something we as a community had confronted before, abdominal pains linked to change of diet and nutrition and headaches linked to stress are all new issues linked to our health status within the community.[104]

Such issues are often compounded with coping with cultural differences and identity problems.[105] Other factors have been identified as particular challenges to the health of Somalis in Leicester.

8.1.1 Infant Mortality Rates (IMR)

Infant mortality is the number of deaths under the age of one year per 1,000 live births. Studies often use this indicator to assess the overall health of a population, as it gives a clear indication of the health and well-being of babies, children and pregnant women. In a report published by the Leicester City Children's Trust 2009–10,[106] Leicester ranked sixth-worst out of eight peer primary care trusts in terms of IMR.[107] It is difficult to find statistics which demonstrate how many Somalis are affected, but they are disproportionately subject to the factors that increase its likelihood: poverty, overcrowded housing and high rates of deprivation.

8.1.2 Mental Health

Mental health and stress are important problems. According to research conducted for the London Borough of Camden, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety disorders are the most common mental-health problems presented by Somalis.[108] This was echoed in local studies in Leicester.[109] Incidences of severe mental-health problems in Leicester vary significantly across the deprivation index; the

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[103] Interview with Yasmin Surti, Lead Commissioner, Mental Health/Learning disabilities at Leicester City Council, 30 January 2013.

[104] Interview with Abdi Razak, Ujala Resource Centre for translation and interpretation, 28 March 2013.

[105] Daahir and Duale, *Somali Community Development Report,* p. 35.

[106] Leicester City Children's Trust, *Leicester Children and Young People's Needs Assessment,* p. 135.

[107] The perinatal mortality rate takes account of stillbirths and deaths in the first seven days after birth per 1,000 live births and stillbirths. Leicester City has a higher perinatal mortality rate than the regional and national rates.

[108] E. Alemu and D. Palmer (March 2006) "Imperfect prescription: the mental health perceptions, experiences and challenges faced by the Somali Community in the London Borough of Camden and service responses to them", in ICAR Briefing, *The Somali Refugee Community in the UK,* p. 8.

[109] Daahir and Duale, *Somali Community Development Report,* p. 37.

rate can be up to four times higher in the most deprived areas of Leicester.[110] By contrast, severe mental illness is rare in the South Asian population, but almost twice as common among the black community of Leicester.[111]

In 2008 Dr Jama Warsame conducted a study for the Leicester City Primary Care Trust reviewing the mental-health needs of the Somali community in Leicester. His findings revealed that there are "major mental health needs among the Somali migrant community, with depression, anxiety and post-traumatic being the commonest reported problems".[112] Somalis in Leicester often have to deal with poverty, unemployment and poor housing on a daily basis. In addition, the struggles of migration, due to both violent and traumatic turmoil in Somalia, or for economic purposes, may all play a part in increased stress-related issues. According to one of the interviewees:

> Stress affects a high percentage of Somali people within Leicester. They are shy about mental health problems and need to be encouraged. They are not open on the topic but it's a problem that exists. It's affecting them and they don't talk about it.[113]

Overall, the findings from Dr Warsame's study confirmed the lack of awareness (in the wider public) about the seriousness and frequency of the mental-health problems of Somalis. Warsame's subjects pointed to stigma surrounding mental health as a serious obstacle to seeking help. It also became clear from that research that most Somali families are particularly concerned about the mental health of children and young people, given the vulnerability and exposure of this group to peer pressure, bullying and racism.[114] Other studies by the Change Institute also identified similar issues linked to the displacement experienced by Somali children who have arrived in the UK as asylum seekers or refugees. Many had suffered some form of trauma that had a detrimental impact on their mental health.[115]

Mental health generally is a taboo subject in many communities:

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[110] "Improving Health in Leicester, 2008/2009".

[111] "Improving Health in Leicester, 2008/2009", p. 10.

[112] Jama Warsame, *Mental Health of the Somali Community in Leicester: A review of health needs and suitable approaches*, Leicester City Primary Care Trust, Directorate of Public Health and Health Improvement, 2008, p. 3, at
http://www.leicestercity.nhs.uk/Library/mh16somalimentalhealthreport.pdf (accessed October 2013). (hereafter, Warsame, *Mental Health of the Somali Community in Leicester*).

[113] Interview with Abdi Razak, Ujala Resource Centre for translation and interpretation, 28 March 2013.

[114] Warsame, *Mental Health of the Somali Community in Leicester,* p. 5.

[115] Change Institute, *The Somali Muslim Community in England,* p. 43.

> There is a stigma around issues of mental health and disabilities. It is difficult to get the Somali community to access support and help; however, localised services based within the community seem to work better.[116]

Recommendations made in Dr Warsame's report included: better communication between the Somali community and providers of mental-health care through setting up a mental-health forum, training individuals in the Somali community in the early detection of symptoms of bad mental health and tackling the stigma by raising awareness of it. The report also called for building greater trust between the community and health-care providers.

8.1.3   Khat

Khat is a green-leaved shrub, chewed or drunk as an infusion for its stimulant effects. It is available widely in the Horn of Africa and Yemen and this has meant that people from those regions have brought it to the UK. The substance is primarily used by men and the rate of use (acknowledging that they have ever used the substance) in the UK has been the subject of widely varying estimates, ranging from 39 percent to over 80 percent.[117] The response to the use of khat in Leicester has been varied. The Primary Care Trust highlighted in 2008 that the use of khat was one of the factors linked to mental-health problems within the Somali community.[118] Its impact is felt beyond the user alone, many noting it has effects upon the wider family and community as well: "Although men use khat the impact on women and their families is detrimental."[119] As with wider debates on stimulant substances, there has been a discussion about whether such items should be banned or controlled in other forms. In July 2013, the Home Secretary, Theresa May, went against advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) and took the decision to make khat illegal in the UK, classifying it as a Class C drug.[120]

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[116] Interview with Yasmin Surti, Lead Commissioner, Mental Health/Learning disabilities at Leicester City Council, 30 January 2013.

[117] Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD), "Khat (Qat): Assessment of Risk to the Individual and Communities in the UK", 2005, at http://www.dldocs.stir.ac.uk/documents/khat.pdf (accessed July 2014).

[118] Leicester City Primary Care Trust, *Mental Health Needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland*, Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Focused Implementer Site (FIS), 2008, p. 16 (hereafter, Leicester City Primary Care Trust, *Mental Health Needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities*).

[119] Interview with Yasmin Surti, Lead Commissioner, Mental Health/Learning disabilities at Leicester City Council, 30 January 2013.

[120] BBC News, "Herbal stimulant khat to be banned", 3 July 2013, at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23163017 (accessed October 2013) (hereafter, BBC News, "Herbal stimulant khat to be banned").

Studies have identified links to depression and anxiety disorders caused by using khat, leading to mental and physical illness, sleep disorders and dental problems.[121] The ACMD acknowledged that stopping the use of khat could lead to withdrawal symptoms such as tiredness and depression and therefore recommended that the NHS should set up educational information on withdrawal symptoms and how to cope. However, it could find no link between the use of khat and serious organised crime.[122]

Many Somalis have indicated that khat is a real social problem, resulting in both physical and mental-health problems, as well as family breakdown. Some have linked its use by boys to poor educational achievement and even crime.[123] However, participants in the focus groups in Leicester felt that the use of khat was more of a London problem and was not as acute in Leicester, though some asked about the support that might be available to tackle addiction now that the substance has been banned. The CCG said that some resources are being dedicated to tackling khat addiction.

8.1.4   Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is any procedure designed to alter or injure female genital organs for social rather than medical purposes. It is illegal in the UK and it is also illegal to take a British citizen abroad to perform the procedure. The prevalence of this practice in Leicester among some African (and to a lesser extent some Arab and Asian) cultures, including sections of the Somali community, means that families with young girls may come under scrutiny from children's services when going abroad for holidays or visiting family. Some of this is due to exaggerated reports stigmatising Somali families. However, comments from Leicester and international studies show that this practice is associated with cultural traditions (sometimes thought to be a requirement of Islam: see below).

The Population Reference Bureau in 2010 documented the rates of FGM among women aged 15–49 in Somalia.[124] A UNICEF advocacy paper in 2011 asserted that the practice of FGM is an accepted tradition in Somali society.[125] Much work has been

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[121] C. Havell, "Khat use in Somali, Ethiopian and Yemeni communities in England: issues and solutions, Turning Point: Turning lives around", cited in ICAR Briefing, *The Somali Refugee Community in the UK,* May 2004, p. 8.

[122] BBC News, "Herbal stimulant khat to be banned".

[123] Secunder Kermani, "Khat ban calls ahead of government report", BBC News, 16 January 2013, at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-21052969 (accessed October 2013).

[124] Charlotte Feldman-Jacobs and Donna Clifton "Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Data and Trends, Population Reference Bureau, 2010", p. 5, at http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2010/fgm2010.aspx (accessed July 2014).

[125] UNICEF, "Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation in Somalia", 2011, Advocacy Paper, p. 210, cited in Home Office, "Somalia: Country of Origin Information (COI) Report", COI Service, 2012, at http://www.unicef.org/somalia/SOM_FGM_Advocacy_Paper.pdf (accessed October 2013) (hereafter, "Somalia: Country of Origin Information (COI) Report").

done by international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to raise awareness of the health risks associated with the practice. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)[126] and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)[127] started working with communities in Somalia in 2009 through a project that initiated dialogue and brought Somalia's religious leaders into discussion with international Islamic scholars to reach a consensus that FGM is not religiously sanctioned. According to UNICEF, Somalis still nourish a deep belief that FGM has its roots not only in local culture but also in Islamic doctrine.[128]

FGM has been illegal in the UK since 1985.[129] In Leicester a local community support representative recalled:

> Local Somali organisations have supported the community in the past through advice and information. People are aware of these matters and local Leicester people are very much aware of the consequences, there has been a lot of progress.[130]

Locally services and communities have started working towards better support. A number of changes are occurring, chief among which is increased religious education and observance among Somalis generally, particularly women, which results in their understanding of the practice as a tradition or culture, rather than as part of religious doctrine.[131] According to the SDS, there are two main issues involved: supporting women and girls who have already undergone FGM and dealing with its impact; and taking preventative approaches to decrease the risk of young girls becoming subject to FGM. The media and some NGOs may have exaggerated the problem, but FGM remains a clear concern for many Somali people. The SDS is involved in a national campaign against FGM funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, other national charities and the Home Office. The first phase of the campaign (2010–2012) raised awareness of the harmful consequence of this practice through seminars and workshops and training community leaders, besides educating people about the law against FGM and supporting women who have been victim of this practice by facilitating access to appropriate health services. The second phase (2012–2014) has involved engaging with schools, colleges, youth groups, religious leaders, mosques, health professionals, media

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[126] UNICEF is the world's leading organisation working for children's rights: see http://www.unicef.org.uk (accessed October 2013).

[127] UNFPA aims to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health (including family planning): see http://www.unfpa.org (accessed October 2013).

[128] UNICEF, "Somali religious leaders and high-level officials join hands to put an end to all forms of FGM/C", 3 June 2011, at http://www.unicef.org/somalia/reallives_8552.html (accessed October 2013), cited in "Somalia: Country of Origin Information (COI) Report".

[129] McGown, *Muslims in the Diaspora,* p. 149.

[130] Interview with Abdi Razak, Ujala Resource Centre for translation and interpretation, 28 March 2013.

[131] McGown, *Muslims in the Diaspora,* p. 150.

and safeguarding bodies. The CCG also mentioned that two clinicians with specific duties concerned with FGM and safeguarding.

8.2   Experiences of Somalis in Using Health-service Provisions

The Somalis, especially asylum seekers, would be expected to require a great deal of health care as a result of their experiences of migration. However, there were indications in the focus group discussions that they face barriers to using the NHS. Explanations include distrust of the health-care system, language difficulties, housing problems and anxieties over immigration status.[132] Participants complained of multiple problems: lack of referrals to specialists or for further diagnosis, misdiagnosis, perceived unfair treatment, lack of language support, etc. Some participants compared services received from hospitals with those received from their general practitioner (GP). The worst experiences seem to have been with GPs, where some complained of unwelcoming receptionists, the time taken to get appointments and lack of enough time with doctors. Some focus group participants compared this with their experience in other EU countries they had come from, where they had better experiences. (It is worth noting here that lack of GP access is a problem across the city—and indeed the UK.) The situation is being looked at by the local primary care trust, yet few formal complaints seem to be made by Somali residents, indicating that there may be a need for better feedback mechanisms. Translators are needed and the service is available free of charge, but GPs and nurses often struggle to get translators in quickly enough. Complaints about aggressive receptionists are also being addressed, as this is a citywide problem.

Local research in the community has indicated that there are still members of the Somali community who have little or no knowledge of how the NHS system works, for instance the procedures for waiting lists and referrals. Reports suggest that if the community were better informed, there would be fewer misunderstandings, feelings of anger and frustration.[133] There have been initiatives that have made progress in enhancing understanding of the system targeting the Somali community (see section 8.3), but more should be done and access to bilingual support seems essential:

> People have started to understand the system better; they have integrated but mainly complain about wrong diagnoses, language as a barrier and too much care is not given to their issues.[134]

Views from focus group participants indicated a variety of problems:

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[132]   ICAR Briefing, *The Somali Refugee Community in the UK,* p. 8.

[133]   Daahir and Duale, *Somali Community Development Report,* p. 34.

[134]   Interview with Abdi Razak, Ujala Resource Centre for translation and interpretation, 28 March 2013.

> I came to Leicester as a healthy person. When I had my first visit to the GP, I was told I had diabetes, high cholesterol and an ulcer. I've been given lots of medication, including medication for asthma patients, which two years later they told me I did not have. I began to think I might not be suffering from all the other illnesses they said I had. I started to feel ill regularly and when I try to see the doctor, he tells me the first available appointment is three weeks later, which is too long. I end up going frequently to the emergency services. There is also lack of respect among the GP staff.

> I always have difficulty booking an appointment and they seem careless to receive patients. Sometimes my child gets ill at night and I call the next morning but they often tell me the booking time has ended, call back in the afternoon.

It seemed that other communities had raised similar issues.

A minority of focus group respondents had, in comparison, positive responses:

> Are these issues unique to the Somali community? No, this is not unique to Somalis. I have come across other community members who complain about the same issues.

> I have an illness that requires ongoing medication and my GP is very helpful. Staff there is respectful and I am given particular care as an elder, which I appreciate. I am happy with their treatment and with the medication they give me. Sometimes they even deliver my medication to my home.

> I personally haven't had any problems but I have heard many other Somalis complain about their GPs and how they ignore them or give them wrong medication.

> I work for the NHS and I feel I am respected and treated fairly. I don't feel different to other staff members because I wear a scarf. Staff is really nice and I have been provided a lot of training at the beginning. They provide prayer facilities.

Other respondents raised issues about access to dental care as well as appropriate diagnoses and medication.

There was generally a positive response on hospital care from respondents in the focus groups:

> The doctors at the hospitals are very helpful and treat you kindly. They are patient with me. The GP seems to be bothered that I call them. They try to dismiss me as much as possible and only make a booking for me when I insist.

> The doctors at the hospitals are much better; they do the proper tests and diagnosis and give you feedback based on those tests. They don't make things up

or keep it from you. They give you appropriate medication and explain what those medications are as well as their side-effects. We don't get this from the GP.

Due to language barriers many in the community cannot communicate with their GP and they often have to ask relatives to translate. Sometimes the relatives have difficulties understanding medical terminology or interpreting symptoms accurately, which could lead to a misdiagnosis.[135] A focus group participant responded:

> I think the main reason Somalis are given a hard time is due to their language barrier. Somalis, unlike most of the other communities, do not speak English. Furthermore, other communities have members of their community that work at the GP's but Somalis don't have representatives like that. There aren't any Somali doctors or nurses working at the local GPs' surgeries.

> There are many Somali people, especially the elderly, who have trouble accessing adequate health care. There is a lack of Somali interpreters and translators among all public service centres from the police to health care and educational institutions and I think it is important that all of them have at least one Somali interpreter so that the Somali community can access their services properly.

8.3   Health Initiatives to Improve Access to Social Services and Health Care

Health initiatives have been set up that aim to provide support for the Somali community in Leicester, in order to improve access. What seem to have worked well in improving accessibility are promotions and services that are led or developed in partnership with local Somalis. Two projects in the city were specifically commissioned to provide support: Akwaaba Ayeh, which provides mental-health advocacy to working-age adults from BME communities in Leicester; and Foundation Housing, which provides housing support to people with mental-health needs from African and Caribbean communities. Mental-health community development workers work with BME communities across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.[136]

Groups such as the SDS have a service agreement with the local authority to join with it in providing support on various services including health awareness. After the launch of the *Somali Community Development Report*, the SDS formulated an action plan to tackle its health recommendations in partnership with the Leicester Primary Care Trust, which has now been replaced (as discussed in Chapter 3) by the CCG, with some NHS involvement and private partners. A Somali community development worker was employed, and Somali interpreters were recruited and trained to translate health documents so as to enable the community to more readily access health information. Adequate access to health care for Somalis remains a problem for GP surgeries and hospitals, since as they operate independently, it is up to their discretion

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[135]   Daahir and Duale, *Somali Community Development Report,* p. 34.

[136]   Leicester City Primary Care Trust, *Mental Health Needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities,* p. 12.

to decide whether to involve a professional interpreter or not. They often decide not to, relying instead on relatives or friends to interpret for patients.

A number of other projects have been funded that promote healthy sports projects in the community.[137]

Regular seminars and workshops are offered to raise awareness of health initiatives:

> NHS seminars—recently one took place locally to raise awareness on local services. They provide leaflets, advice and support which the Somali Development Services support is distributing.[138]

A great deal of work has been done to improve the engagement of Somali citizens with health care and social services, some of which has been led by them. Despite the good progress, the sentiments from the focus groups indicate that more can be done in this area. It may be useful to bring together Somalis and other citizens who are experiencing similar problems accessing health care to record their experiences and explain how to navigate the system and use resources, how to complain and feedback procedures.

An important role for community groups may emerge as health-care providers struggle to deliver services in the current economic climate. The CCG advised that focus needs to shift from cure to prevention (care in the community) as the current model is unsustainable. Known as the left-shift model, the new concept aims to move hospital patients to GP services and GP patients to community treatment. Given the complexity, let alone the political debate around the move, this could take several years. However, meanwhile, community groups should be introduced to education on health care. An example of this is the "Putting your health in your hands" scheme,[139] where local community groups are invited to bid for small grants to create a public awareness of lung diseases and help support people who already have lung diseases.

8.4   Social Protection

Social services were raised in the focus group discussions, mainly concerned with social workers' lack of understanding of Somali culture and traditions. Some participants felt that social services were too quick to take children into care and ignored the harm this caused the children they were trying to protect.

> We have a huge issue with the culture of the social services here where it is commonly understood the children will be taken away if they are slightly disciplined by the parents.

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[137]   Interview with Yasmin Surti, Lead Commissioner, Mental Health/Learning disabilities at Leicester City Council, 30 January 2013.

[138]   Interview with Abdi Razak, Ujala Resource Centre for translation and interpretation, 28 March 2013.

[139]   See https://www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/news/ccg-news/putting-your-health-in-your-hands (accessed April 2014).

The discussion about children's services showed an awareness of the safeguarding policies alongside confusion concerning what is allowed or not in disciplining children.

Focus group participants were also concerned about the policies for fostering children. Some participants recalled their experience of trying to become foster carers. One of the respondents said:

> I once tried to contact the foster care services so that I can foster children in need but I wasn't received well. I know many mothers that are available and ready to help but the staff that works for the foster care services do not compose themselves with good conduct and they have a prejudice of not trusting Somalis. They are ignorant of us and it would benefit them to reach out to Somalis since they struggle with so many children they are looking to place.

9. POLICING AND SECURITY

People who have fled from civil war and conflict in Somalia may not have very good experiences of the state, or may have suffered under the systematic corruption in law enforcement agencies, and so they have complex layers of resistance to and uncertainty regarding policing. Being refugees and migrants of necessity, Somalis have been on the receiving end of national authorities as they have entered, lived in and moved across borders. Yet they generally feel settled and relatively secure in the lives they are building for themselves in Leicester. Local policing, both in terms of effectiveness and of the experience and perception of policing, is crucial in a system that polices by consent and where great emphasis is based on community and neighbourhood approaches to policing. The history of postwar migration across the UK has shown, often at a great cost, that relationships between BME groups and the police are critical. This chapter explores the engagement between local police and the Somali citizens they serve.

The police are often under scrutiny for the way they deal with BME communities. Stop and search has been controversial as the police force in the UK has been accused of using this power too often. There has been debate on the recruitment to the police force of members of the BME communities, which is needed to ensure that the police force reflects the population it serves. The recruitment of Somalis has contributed positively to the safety and image of the city, and St Matthew's estate is an example of this, where communities and police have worked together to tackle prostitution, drugs and antisocial behaviour, bringing down crime in the area.

9.1 Somali Experiences with Criminal Justice and Policing

Leicestershire police have been conducting satisfaction surveys annually and the trends show that there is an increase in confidence in local policing among residents. The 2011 Satisfaction Survey looked at individuals' perceptions of their local area and local public services, finding that 74.4 percent felt the police were doing a good job in Leicester City.[140]

The experiences of Somali citizens with the police and criminal justice system were explored in one of the focus groups for this study. One of the topics debated was focus group participants' confidence in local policing. All had very similar feelings about the police in their area and around Leicester. In general participants felt safe when they saw visible police patrols in their neighbourhood:

> If there weren't any police, there wouldn't be any safety so their work and presence are vital to our existence.

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[140] See http://www.leics.police.uk/media/uploads/library/file/120213-Confidence-and-Satisfaction.p df (accessed February 2013).

> I appreciate the police. They are always patrolling our streets and they make me feel safe.

Barriers identified between the Somali community and the police were mainly based on communication, but a number of other concerns were also raised. One participant commented on why they have reservations in approaching the police: "We have a language barrier and we don't know how the British system works. This hampers our integration into the larger society."

Another participant also noted the anxiety that arose from not being able to communicate effectively in English:

> I fear the police here. When they walk passed me on the streets I am afraid they might be looking for me, ask me questions that I can't answer. This is primarily due to the fact that I don't speak English and wouldn't understand them. But I appreciate their toughness and how they maintain safety in our neighbourhoods. I smile when I see them arrest anyone causing trouble. They're very visible which makes me feel safe.

The key criticism of policing was young people's experience with the police. One participant felt strongly that in family issues such as when a brother and sister were involved in a fight with one another, the police should first liaise with parents to try to diffuse the situation (implying that a criminal record could and should be avoided):

> If the cases are dealing with youth and it is a misdemeanour, police should involve the parents when it comes to resolving it. We have a culture where if for example, one of the younger children talks back to their parents, the older children will discipline them. Also if misdemeanours occur outside, the police should try to engage the parents.

Another participant said:

> Both local authorities and police need to educate themselves on the cultures, traditions and backgrounds of the communities they deal with. They should also seek counsel from the elders of the community and liaise with the community members when it comes to matters that affect them directly. They shouldn't come with prearranged policies.

> Police should deal with issues on a case-by-case basis and strive to come up with a comprehensive solution that is culturally appropriate.

These comments show that although there are high levels of confidence and satisfaction among the Somali community in their local police, caused by the high visibility of police patrols which led to a strong sense of safety in their neighbourhoods, for some aspects of Somali culture and specifically young people, Somalis expressed a wish for a stronger working partnership with the police so that young Somalis could be dealt with through culturally appropriate methods. But there are also tension points across Somali generations between parents and children, particularly youngsters aged

18 and over, who may individually block the involvement of parents (or that of an appropriate adult) or where the police do not deem it necessary to intervene. Typically, however, there is little or no support for young people in these circumstances and the consequences can be serious. Naturally, the choice of involving parents would depend on the nature of the issue, and it should also be noted that for minors the police automatically involve parents as part of their operating protocol. But in cases involving child protection, for example, the safety of the child would have to take priority above other considerations. This legal position may run counter to the cultural expectations of some Somalis, who do not think they should be left out of the decision-making. Some community members worried about the impact of a criminal record and whether that could be avoided by members of the community taking a strong disciplinary approach themselves rather than through the police handling a matter.

9.2   Counter-terrorism

An important concern is counter-terrorism. Since the appearance of Somali actors on the stage of international terrorism and the arrest of a Somali man in Leicester[141] (though he was later found not guilty), worry about links with al-Shabab, especially in the context of a destabilised Somalia, has been significant. In 2010 the then director-general of the British Security Service, Jonathan Evans, warned:

> there are a significant number of UK residents training in Al Shabaab camps to fight in the insurgency there. Al Shabaab, an Islamist militia in Somalia, is closely aligned with Al Qaida and Somalia shows many of the characteristics that made Afghanistan so dangerous as a seedbed for terrorism in the period before the fall of the Taleban. There is no effective government, there is a strong extremist presence and there are training camps attracting would be jihadists from across the world. We need to do whatever we can to stop people from this country becoming involved in terrorism and murder in Somalia, but beyond that I am concerned that it is only a matter of time before we see terrorism on our streets inspired by those who are today fighting alongside Al Shabaab.[142]

Events such as the Nairobi shopping mall attack by al-Shabab terrorists mean that this fear is likely to remain, casting a shadow over the British Somali community, even more intense than the one cast over British Muslims more generally. This subject rarely emerged in the focus group discussions (aside from when some respondents mentioned

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[141]   See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7424289.stm. Musse Said Yusuf, who had come to Leicester from Sweden, was arrested on 28 May 2008 in Rowlatts Hill in Leicester on four counts of possession of terrorist material. He was released on 18 October 2010 after the judge found him not guilty.

[142]   Address at the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals by the director-general of the Security Service, Jonathan Evans, at https://www.mi5.gov.uk/home/about-us/who-we-are/staff-and-management/director-general/speeches-by-the-director-general/the-threat-to-national-security.html (accessed October 2013).

the way in which the Somali community is perceived), but it is a part of the general context of policing and security that cannot be ignored.

9.3   Stop and Search

Participants in the focus group recognised that the police do a good job, but some were also more critical:

> If they see a group of us standing somewhere and a fight happened somewhere else in the same neighbourhood, they'll come directly to us and ask if we know anything about. How should we know? Also they regularly walk into our local centres where some youth might be hanging out, playing games and they'll randomly asks us about stuff that have nothing to do with us, like radicalism.

> The police have been burdensome. I have been stopped and searched more than my fair share.

> I have been stopped and searched on numerous occasions. Police haven't stopped me on my own yet but I have been stopped and searched when I am in a group with other Muslim black men.

A range of stop-and-search powers is available to the police in law, the most commonly used of which is the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (POA). Police interaction with the Somali community was explored in an interview with Chief Superintendent Rob Nixon.[143] He pointed out:

> If you take the example of disorders in Leicester, without the ability to have section 60 [of the POA] what would have happened? I think it is a powerful and essential tool but with that it has to be used in the correct way with the right governance structures and transparency around that.

The disproportionate use of stop and search targeting BME and Muslim citizens more generally has come under considerable scrutiny of late. The Coalition government pledged to reduce the use of stop and search, and agencies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), and civil liberties groups, have also put pressure on the police. Following a national review of the use of stop-and-search powers by the EHRC, it was found that:

> Thames Valley Police and Leicestershire Constabulary had significant and persistent race differences in their use of stop and search. Neither force was able

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[143]   Interview with Rob Dixon, Chief Superintendent responsible for operational policing in the city which includes the service provided to neighbourhoods, March 2013.

to adequately justify and evidence the disproportionate use of their stop and search tactics.[144]

As a result of this finding and the pressure from the EHRC, the police revised and limited their use of stop and search. The latest data from the EHRC suggest that the use of stop and search has declined without having an adverse impact on crime rates.[145]

9.4   Police and Community Engagement

Studies show that community or neighbourhood policing lead to greater public confidence, and also suggest that high visibility and feeling informed of police activities are both associated with greater confidence in policing.[146] Recent evidence also shows that properly handled contacts can have a very positive impact on relations between the police and the community: "Communication between officers and the public—of information, of fairness and respect, and of police presence—appears to be of central importance."[147]

Chief Superintendent Nixon explained the two levels of interaction with the community. "We identify where there are Somali communities and how those communities operate and then we align our policing services to be interactive with it. So some of that is formal and some of that is informal."[148]

Formal interaction takes place at certain times every year when the police go and listen to community leaders and people in groups and discuss the issues that are affecting them and their community. Community groups have organised seminars for local Somali communities, and particularly women, with police officers in attendance to provide information on specific issues as requested. These have included an explanation of the criminal justice system, counter-terrorism policing and airport security checks. Police have also been invited to provide information on specific

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[144] Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), "Commission and police forces sign agreement on stop and search", at http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/news/2011/may/co mmission-and-police-forces-sign-agreement-on-stop-and-search (accessed October 2013).

[145] Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), "Stop and Think Again: *Towards Race Equality in Police PACE Stop and Search"*, London, 2013, at http://www.equalityhumanrights.co m/sites/default/files/documents/raceinbritain/stop_and_think_again.pdf (accessed July 2014) (hereafter, EHRC, "Stop and Think Again: *Towards Race Equality in Police PACE Stop and Search"*).

[146] Mike Hough, Jonathan Jackson, Ben Bradford, Andy Myhill and Paul Quinton, "Procedural justice, trust and institutional legitimacy", *Policing: a journal of policy and practice* 4 (3) (2010), pp. 203–210; Ben Bradford, Jonathan Jackson and Elizabeth Stanko, "Contact and confidence: revisiting the impact of public encounters with the police", *Policing and society*, 19 (1) (2009), pp. 20–46.

[147] EHRC, "Stop and Think Again: *Towards Race Equality in Police PACE Stop and Search"*.

[148] Interview with Rob Dixon, Chief Superintendent responsible for operational policing in the city which includes the service provided to neighbourhoods, March 2013.

incidents that affect the community, thereby allowing for questions to be asked and confidence built in local policing.

The informal level is a more everyday approach. Teams are designated in local areas and they get to know the communities through patrolling that area. The officers appointed in these communities have chosen to work in that area so they are motivated to be there and want to support the community.

> When I go out there patrolling they are fantastically well receiving of the police. So there is something in the way they interact with the police [that] generates a reaction in a positive way back.[149]

As noted above, language is a barrier in communicating between the police and Somalis, particularly Somali women. This may affect the neighbourhood policing teams which have gained the confidence of the Somali community in Leicester and have developed good relations by building the right contacts. Nevertheless, there is still a need to continue building relationships with individuals. Chief Superintendent Nixon explained that the Somali community is involved in the appointment of community liaison officers who are very active in building relationships. There is a partnership initiative currently running between SDS and the Leicestershire Constabulary to engage more with Somali women and mosques. The aim is to organise a series of awareness-raising discussions for Somali women connected to different mosques and others as well as set up an independent advisory group from the Somali community that can advise and support the police on their issues.

9.5   Addressing Anti-Muslim Violence and Hostility

Research since 9/11 has shown that anti-Muslim or Islamophobic feeling[150] is increasing across the UK, largely due to media images of Muslims involved in terrorist or extremist activities or the cultural gap between British Muslims and the wider British society.[151]

Anti-Muslim hate crime is treated the same as any other hate crime by the Leicestershire Constabulary. Chief Superintendent Nixon said that the police have categories of hate crimes and that there are more crimes against Muslim communities than others and this may be due to local far-right activities. He talked about other

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[149]   Interview with Rob Dixon, Chief Superintendent responsible for operational policing in the city which includes the service provided to neighbourhoods, March 2013.

[150]   P. Oborne and J. Jones, *Muslims Under Siege: Alienating Vulnerable Communities,* Democratic Audit, Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, 2008.

[151]   K. Moore, P. Mason and J. 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, 2008. See also C. Allen and J. Nielsen, *Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001,* European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Vienna, 2002, pp. 46–48.

factors separate from the typical image that hate crimes are a black against white issue. He said that there are more incidents occurring between BME communities, and that there is also "a huge under-reporting of hate crime". Current recording of hate crimes does not provide extensive information for resolving the individual instance, but reports do create data on trends. Despite being a priority area, there is currently only one hate crime officer (due to cutbacks), where a hate crime team was previously in place. There are questions about how clearly BME people recognise hate crime and also whether they may be the perpetrators of hate crimes based on the prejudices of different groups towards each other. In Chief Superintendent Nixon's experience, communities recognise hate crime when they are the victims but he was unsure whether they define their own behaviour as a hate crime when they are perpetrators.

Many of the Somalis' experiences of hate crime in Leicester occurred when they first settled there. Many spoke about their early experiences in the focus group discussions. One person said, "My car was set on fire several times and we fought on numerous occasions." Another participant said that they "lived in a racist area", and yet another said, "We were discriminated against, my wife was slapped."

Despite the fact that many of the older Somali participants had been victims of hate crime or knew someone who had been a victim during their early experiences of being in Leicester, they now felt safer due to police visibility. Other focus group participants did, however, express concern about what they saw as the police's lack of interest.

9.6   Advice, Information and Support

The overall picture from the focus groups is that the Somali community do not always know where to turn to for information and advice on policing matters. There was acknowledgement in the focus group that mistakes can be made by the police as normal human error:

> There might be a few mistakes they make but that can be overlooked given the overwhelmingly positive work they do for us most of the time.

Where participants have been keen to seek further advice and information, and in some cases report a complaint about the police, there have not known where to go. Participants gave examples where an incident was handled poorly:

> A short while ago my children were playing in the local park with a group of other children and suddenly they were surrounded by the police. Someone who stole a phone came from outside and hid among them but the police arrested all of the children and then later apologised saying a mistake had happened. The children were just playing football.

> We need somewhere where we can regularly voice our opinions and concerns about all the local public services, especially when it comes to police and employment.

Chief Superintendent Nixon explained how he has worked with Somali leaders in the past on educating the Somali community on how the legal system works. The police has produced literature, engaged with community leaders and also used the medium of Somali Messenger[152] as a communication tool, though feedback from members of the Somali community suggests that this information has not been easily accessible.

9.7 Recruitment and Diversity

9.7.1 Diversity in the police force

The diversity of Leicester is well known and therefore it is important for the Leicestershire Constabulary to reflect a diverse workforce. Since the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the Macpherson report in 1999, there has been a significant drive to increase the number of police officers from ethnic-minority backgrounds across England. During the period 2004–2008 there was an increase in BME recruitment in the Leicestershire Constabulary from 4.9 percent (112 officers) in 2004 to 6.1 percent (137 officers) in 2008. Since that time, the number of BME officers in Leicestershire has dropped slightly due to a hiring freeze and a corresponding drop in the number of police officers employed,[153] which has affected training opportunities for citizens interested in joining the police force. Chief Superintendent Nixon said that the number of BME personnel among support staff in the Leicestershire Constabulary is high, but he would like to see more warrant officers. But it remains unclear whether this translates to specifically Somali staff. Currently there are no Somali police officers, though there are some volunteers.

Statistics show that there were 193 BME police officers in 2008/2009 and 186 BME in 2010/2011. The number of special constables also shows a similar pattern, where 51 BME special constables were employed in 2008/2009 and 49 in 2010/2011. The figures also show that the number of police staff employed overall has dropped during this time.[154]

9.7.2 Recruitment Initiatives

Chief Superintendent Nixon explained that a number of recruitment seminars have taken place for special volunteers and regulars in areas where there is a large Somali

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[152] Somali Messenger was intended to be a web portal for the Somali community in the UK, but seems to have ceased operation and the registered company has been dissolved.

[153] See http://www.leics.police.uk/media/uploads/library/file/EmploymentMonitoringBooklet08-11.pdf (accessed 22 February 2013).

[154] See http://www.leics.police.uk/media/uploads/library/file/EmploymentMonitoringBooklet08-11.pdf (accessed 26 February 2013).

community, for example in St Matthew's. He affirmed that the "recruitment policy is to strive to have a greater representation"[155] and added:

> We have aligned our recruitment focus to those communities but the takings [are] really low. There is an appetite and desire to have a greater representation but I'm not sure how policing is viewed within the Somali community. Whether the elder Somali community would be advocates of their young joining the police service and that would be the challenge.

Recruitment is a two-way process. The police must open their doors and invite citizens to join the force, but at the same time Chief Superintendent Nixon argues that communities need to engage more proactively and take part. In order to provide experience and a sense of what it would be like to work with the police, Chief Superintendent Nixon suggested that work placements could be offered to those who are interested if this would help generate more interest. It is also likely that ongoing interaction and engagement between the police and the community will lead to greater relationships, familiarity and trust, which will in the longer term build the rapport required to help make improvements.

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[155] Interview with Rob Dixon, Chief Superintendent responsible for operational policing in the city which includes the service provided to neighbourhoods, March 2013.

10. PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP

British citizenship is conferred on anyone who was born in the UK before 1 January 1983, or who at the time of birth had at least one parent who was a British citizen, or is legally settled in the UK.[156] For migrants who settled in the UK either to work or to join a spouse, there is a two-step process to apply for citizenship through naturalisation. The first is to apply for indefinite leave to remain (ILR) and once this is granted individuals can then apply for British citizenship, which requires being over 18, of sound mind and good character, and having UK residency for the last five years.[157] EU citizens who reside and work in the UK can also apply for British citizenship. Citizens of a EU country can enter, live or work in the UK without any further documentation. But a registration certificate (normally valid for five years) can often help with gaining access to services such as benefits. A permanent residence card (which will give the right to live in the UK permanently) can also be applied for if the person has lived in the UK (continuously for five years) as a qualified person (i.e. been working, studying or supporting oneself independently).

10.1 Perspectives on Citizenship

The term "citizenship" has different meanings in different contexts. It is commonly understood in terms of a legal and political status that grants certain rights and responsibilities such as the right to vote and the requirement to pay taxes. Participants in the focus groups and interviewees were asked to discuss their ideas of citizenship. Abdishakur Tarah, of Aqoon School Home Support Services, said, "Citizenship is belonging to a certain society and being part of that and you expect to be accepted by that society." A participant from the young women's focus group described what she believes is a good citizen: "Helping an old lady cross the street or exercising your right to vote; making sure candidates that represent your voice are put in charge is what matters. This is what makes you a good citizen who is playing a positive part in the city."

In focus group discussions, all participants saw themselves as citizens:

> I do see myself as a citizen, I pay my taxes.

> I believe we are part of the society and we make valuable contribution.

> Yes I do although I do not engage in a lot of civic activities but I feel a sense of belonging here and my life is based here.

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[156] See Home Office, at http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/othernationality/Britishcitizenship/borninukorqualifyingterritory (accessed March 2013).

[157] See Home Office, at http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/eligibility (accessed March 2013).

> I see myself as a citizen of this country. There are plenty of opportunities to prosper, to work, to volunteer and to be part of the larger society.

10.2 Participation in Elections

Previous research by Open Society Foundations has shown that general representation of minorities at council level in the city is high compared with other locations in the UK.[158] There are councillors from very diverse backgrounds, and in 2012 Councillor Abdul Usman become Leicester's first Muslim lord mayor. However, there have been no Somali councillors to date. Furthermore, there is a perception of disengagement from the political process among the Somali community.

> We are stereotyped as people that do not vote so it has become an expectation. Candidates who run for public office would then not focus on the Somali vote because they assume we won't vote anyway.

Citizenship status is relevant to the right to vote. EU citizens can vote in local and European elections but not national elections in the UK. Most participants in the focus group did not vote in either general or local elections. However, there was an acknowledgement from the Somali community that voting was important and many of the participants across the different focus groups were critical of their own community.

> Somalis need education in citizenship and how to live as part of Leicester's society. We had similar courses in Holland and its impact was visible as Somalis were integrated into the Dutch society.

> They need to make an active effort to become part of this society.

> The issue with Somali people is that they don't see the importance of engaging until they notice a problem that engaging with a particular service can solve.

Mr Tarah shed further light on why there is a low voter turnout for both general and local elections:

> Many Somalis that are refugees are not able to vote in general elections due to restrictions, however there are a large number of Somali families that are British citizens now and are able to vote but have not.

In the 2011 local council election, voter turnout among Somalis had increased compared with the previous election following efforts made in the Somali community itself to increase voting, as well as increased canvassing by political parties knocking on doors creating awareness that members of the community should exercise their vote. However, many of the Somalis who are entitled to vote had not registered on the electoral roll because they did not understand the voter registration process. This is consistent with the findings of a report by the Runnymede Trust in 2012 which shows

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[158] OSI, *Muslims in Leicester.*

that some minorities, especially recent arrivals from Africa, were less likely to register to vote due to lack of fluency in the English language.[159] The low participation in elections thus appears to be an issue of inadequate awareness rather than a conscious choice.

Mr Tarah suggests that many members of the Somali community are neither able to understand the letters they receive about registration, nor do they understand the process of voting. According to him, efforts are already being made by Somali groups to address this issue ahead of the next local elections. He argues that leaders of Somali civil society organisations will work to help Somalis understand the need to register to vote. He added:

> We will organise a local event at the electoral office and explain the importance and benefits of registering and encourage the community to vote/participate in elections.

10.3 Participation in Political Parties

The numbers of Somalis who have joined political parties locally are thought to be very small at present, though there are no accurate records. Mr Tarah has been a member of the Labour Party for the past two years. According to him, many Somalis prefer the Labour Party, as they are considered to have more liberal and migrant-friendly policies.[160] In the 2010 elections in the UK, 68 percent of BME voters supported the Labour Party; black Africans and black Caribbeans were stronger voters of Labour compared with other minorities.[161] There is a sense of Somali community members wanting to join politics but there is very little open discussion or debate about how they can join or get involved.

In the St Matthew's area, where many Somalis have settled, the election of two local councillors of African Caribbean heritage was seen as a positive step by the Somali community. In the focus groups one participant commented:

> We need to exercise our votes. This is where the real power lies and through it we can engage the local authorities to make the changes we need. It is pointless to keep complaining about the Asian community. They have organised themselves, are represented within all sectors and have established organisations and that is how they have achieved what they have achieved. We need to unite and get our act together.

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[159] Anthony Heath and Omar Khan, "Ethnic Minority British Election Study – Key Findings, February 2012", at http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/EMBESbriefingFINALx.pdf (accessed March 2013) (hereafter, Heath and Khan, "Ethnic Minority British Election Study").

[160] Interview with Abdishakur Tarah, Aqoon School Home Support Services, March 2013.

[161] Heath and Khan, "Ethnic Minority British Election Study".

Studies by the Runnymede Trust have raised the concern of whether minority issues are incorporated into the mainstream political agenda or marginalised and whether all citizens have fair access to the political arena, which is key for a well-functioning democracy. Another concern is that minority groups are disenfranchised and may withdraw from the political arena in frustration.

10.4 Participation in Civil Society

A number of Somali organisations have already been mentioned in this report. In addition to civil society organisations, there are six Somali-led mosques in Leicester, four in St Matthew's and two in Highfields. There are also madrassas, independent schools and many religious activities for young and old. Mosques also host wedding and engagement ceremonies and international seminars. It is clear that the Somali community has started to make a significant impact on the city and its role in civil society is growing and becoming more organised. In the 2011 Open Society Foundations report on Muslims in Leicester there was a strong feeling among Muslims that they were able to influence change and decisions locally. This feeling contrasts with perceptions among the Somali participants for this report. They still feel they have little say over local matters in the city despite the development of the organisations and networks mentioned. In the focus group discussions strong feelings were expressed about why they believe they do not have a voice or influence. Many were critical of the Somali community itself, arguing that there needs to be a change from within, together with a strong sense of optimism from the older participants that the younger Somali generation will bring that change.

> I don't think the current Somali generation can make much of a difference but my hope lies in our youth who have assimilated into the British society and have educated themselves. As for us, we are more concerned about the issues happening back in Somalia than local issues that might affect us.

> We have made plenty of effort raising our youth and instilling morals and values in them so my hope is in the youth. They will create the better future all Somalis aspire to.

There is a real success in social entrepreneurship in the Somali community and this needs to be supported and encouraged, harnessed into a stronger sense of political and civic engagement, possibly through political education but also perhaps through a more coherent internal dialogue among Somali groups and activists.

11. THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

This chapter explores the relationship between members of the Somali community and the media, the impact of news media reporting on issues pertaining to Somalis and Somali engagement with and use of media outlets. Over recent years, major news media coverage of Somalis has been a mix of positives and negatives. The former was largely as a result of the London 2012 Olympics where much attention was paid to the background story of the British-Somali athlete, Mo Farah, who won gold medals in the Olympics. Other well-known public faces are that of the ex-BBC correspondent Rageh Omaar and, to a lesser extent but bringing a dimension of popular glamour, the former model, campaigner and the wife of singer David Bowie, Iman (Iman Abdulmajid). These faces have a tremendous impact on Somalis.

News stories, on the other hand, and in particular those in print media, have contained coverage of asylum and immigration issues, and more focused Somalia coverage on piracy and terrorism. Somalis do not yet feature among the casts of popular television programmes, nor are they in popular children's programmes. There are no comedy shows or comedians exploring cultural issues as there have been for black Caribbeans and South Asians in this country. It is worth noting that the emergence of soaps, children's programmes and comedy has been a development of the last 20 years, despite a sizeable community presence for half a century.

The BBC World Service launched its Somali service in 1957, and it has since introduced television and online services. The BBC Somali Facebook page has over 138,000 likes at the time of writing. Somalis have pursued initiatives to develop local community media outlets, which provide focus and discussion forums for issues of concern to the Somali diaspora. Direct involvement with the local press in Leicester is considerably less and it remains to be seen if such engagement can be developed in the coming years.

11.1 Reporting on Somalis

The topic of the media came up in various focus groups. Discussions largely focused on national news media and their portrayal of the Somali community in the UK rather than the local media and their reporting, which would be different from the national. There was a general perception that British mainstream media portrayed minority groups, including Somalis, in a negative light. This was seen by focus group participants as central in creating a negative image for the wider British community. One focus group participant remarked, "The only portrayal of Somalis in the media is always of violence, terrorism and piracy. It is always crisis-driven." This sentiment was widely shared. The only positive story was that of Mo Farah.

Some of the focus group participants made the following comments on the impact media stories have on wider societal attitudes:

> The media portrays a negative image of the Somali people and this affects the way we are dealt with at airports and even train stations.

> I've never seen anything positive about the Somali people in the media. It is always crisis-driven. The media generalises issues and blame a whole community. For example, Somalis are labelled to move around and live a temporary existence, which the larger society comes to believe. So when you apply for a job, the employer is going to think this person is probably not going to stay for long because he/she is a Somali.

> Media portrayal of Somalis is very bad. People aren't given complete pictures. I met a random person once who as soon as he identified me as a Somali, asked me if I was pirate.

These comments reflect a common concern about generalisations of a whole community that can be created by stories about a very small number of individuals. Local media were mentioned only three times in all the twelve focus group discussions that were conducted for this research. Two of the participants took a negative stance towards local media, delineating it in the same light as national media.

> Yes, they always give us a bad name, like the story they did on the policewoman who was killed by a Somali guy. Or the group of Somali girls here in Leicester who assaulted a British young female. These are the stories you hear, otherwise it is silence.

> The media does not show much of Somali content and when they do it is never positive. We have brought many positive attributes to the city but this is not reflected in the media.

Another participant took a more neutral stance towards Leicester's local media, saying, "There isn't much representation in the local media of Somalis. Sometimes that could be a good thing because if you're constantly on the news, it would be difficult to fit in."

In the focus group discussion specifically about the media, participants differentiated between mainstream British media and Somali-language media. One of the key points that emerged was that many of the participants did not engage with UK media outlets because of language barriers. In particular, many older members of the Somali community were unable to understand English and therefore relied heavily on Somali media as a source of information and entertainment. Those who did consume mainstream media relied on channels such as BBC and Sky; however, fewer participants tuned to British media compared with Somali media.

> The Somalis struggle to understand or relate to the mainstream media mainly due to language barrier but also because of the different political views.

> I watch Somali media, predominantly the national Somali TV because I live in hope that our country will become peaceful again.

This shows that there is a reliance on Somali media, as consumers have an interest in the content and want to feel a sense of connection to their homeland. But others disagreed:

> I am not bothered about the Somali media because I don't relate to it. You have to integrate into where you live; it is pointless living in hope.

> The Somali media is still struggling with developing a journalistic code of conduct and haven't got any accountability which leads to nobody needing to double check what is being reported.

Views about the media did not differ by gender, although there was a small difference found between older Somali community members, who found the English language a barrier in understanding and engaging with English-language media, and younger members of the Somali community who were able to discuss negative portrayal and its impact in far more depth as they were able to converse in English and therefore had a better sense of how Somalis are often represented in mainstream British media.

11.2 Engagement of Somalis with the Media and Journalists

Many members of Leicester's Somali community enjoy contributing to and listening to community radio and television. However day-to-day engagement with mainstream media tends to be limited due to language barriers and a lack of connection with local media agencies. Despite these challenges, there has been some engagement from key Somali citizens who are fluent in English. Activists and community leaders in Leicester, such as Jawaahir Daahir and Hashim Duale, have often been consulted by the local media and have indeed lent their voices to media reports through BBC Radio Leicester and the *Leicester Mercury*. Journalists often seek these contributions particularly when Somalis feature in the day's news. However, both of these media agencies said that they would like to improve their engagement with members of the Somali community both when they are interested in Somali issues and on a more general basis.

Leicester's Somali community has been actively involved in a community radio initiative called EAVA FM for the past five years. Airtime is shared across a number of minority groups of South-east Asian, Indian and African heritage. Each group makes a financial contribution, so that a studio and equipment can be sourced and budgets for resources such as telephone lines and publicity material are available for all the programmes. Ahmed Bile chairs the EAVA FM committee and is also from the St Matthew's Community Solution Centre; he considers it necessary to cater for the needs of the community through this local community initiative:

> We learn of these needs [of the Somali community] through word of mouth and by being a part of the Somali community ourselves. We have a minimum of 6 hours per day (6p.m.–12a.m.) which we break down into a range of programmes catering for the community by discussing, raising awareness and through interactive engagement on the issues.

Programmes cover both informative and entertaining topics. Typically they include subjects such as health, education, family, social life, local mainstream news items relating to both political life and civil society, general stories of interest in the Somali community and topical issues from Somalia, particularly from Mogadishu. Mr Bile added:

> Our aim is to tackle the challenges and issues faced by our community especially given that they are still settling and therefore keen to learn about services provided by local authorities, educationalists, and useful and helpful programmes that will support them. Women are especially interested in this sort of thing.

> We also provide entertainment during late hours for those working in jobs in the night, in fact we get complaints from taxi drivers if we switch these programmes to earlier times because they are not working at that time.

Women are not only interested in listening to programmes but they also make a considerable contribution to programming by volunteering to help. Often volunteers are unskilled and untrained but their willingness to contribute and learn makes their participation valuable.

11.3 Primary Media Sources

According to discussions in the focus groups, Somalis in Leicester feel they have a strong relationship with Somali cultural media, which provide a focus on the lives of Somalis in Somalia and coverage of events that take place there. In that respect, such media, especially through satellite services (such as Universal, Somali National TV, Royal, Somali Channel, Horn Cable and Somaliland TV) are enjoyed and watched in the same vein as many more settled minority groups from Asia, Europe or Africa. The older Somalis who spent their formative years growing up in Somalia constitute the more avid viewership, but like many ethnic-minority family homes, this keeps the household connected with events and news in the homeland. Somali services by larger established broadcasters, such as the BBC Somali Service and Voice of America, which provide radio and internet services, are used frequently, particularly for main political news.

An interview with Mr Bile highlighted the trust and engagement Somalis in Leicester maintain with community stations such as EAVA FM. Mr Bile explained that their audience ranges from Somalis in Leicester to Somalis in Europe and, further still, Mogadishu. Many Somalis in Leicester rely on the Somali programmes that EAVA FM shares, the vast majority of which tend to be in the Somali language and whose content is community-focused. For example, community problems such as the chewing of khat and employment are explored extensively in evening or late-night programmes, with community leaders and members promoting discussion and positive ideas about things that affect Somalis locally and globally.

In addition, local community issues are addressed through interview and discussion programmes that include local experts and elected leaders from the wider society. Key stakeholders such as the elected lord mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, local councillors, members of the Leicestershire Constabulary and health professionals have been invited to come and talk to the station's audience. They often give their interview in English with interpretation into Somali as the interview is being transmitted. This format creates a closer and more immediate connection between the radio show, its guest and the audience, who then engage by texting and calling in with their comments and questions. Mr Bile explained there is a good level of interaction from the audience with the show and this is reflected through the number of telephone calls they receive, as well as text messages and emails from both local and international audiences.

11.4 Improving the Media Engagement of Somalis

Improving the engagement between local mainstream media services and Leicester's Somali community requires a number of initiatives. Journalists and researchers in the media professions can work to build and nurture working relationships with local Somalis by getting in touch with local groups and individuals who are raising awareness of local issues and enabling Somalis to connect with local services. For example, Somalis working with young people, women and services for the whole of the community can have a wider reach by utilising opportunities to share their experiences and thoughts through local media channels. Both the *Leicester Mercury* and BBC Radio Leicester expressed the need to connect with key Somali individuals and groups in order to improve their reporting both in quality and by including Somali voices on topics relating to Somalis, both on local and national stories. However, they both recognised that they should increase ways in which Somalis can engage with the agencies directly. Currently there are no programmes or initiatives that seek to proactively engage with Somalis either as news providers or as consumers. Part of the onus is of course also on the Somali community itself to get in touch with local media agencies to inform journalists of their opinions and thoughts. Often new communities lack the skills and confidence to do this and journalists find their demanding schedules mean they are unable to take the time to build strong relationships with newer groups.

BBC Radio Leicester felt they could benefit from improved engagement with Somalis in Leicester. Networking and building contacts are valuable practices for journalists. Currently BBC Radio Leicester has very little contact with the community. Jane Hill, editor of BBC Radio Leicester, recognises that this needs to change. She elaborated by saying

> Often we have people from all communities contacting us with press releases, comments, details of events etc, this gives us the opportunity to be inclusive in our reporting as we are able to select from what we are sent. The Somali communities need to do the same but as they are a new community this may take some time, I have hope in the next generation and believe that they will have an interest to engage with the local media.

There are signs for optimism for the future:

> A Somali student from [De Montfort University] DMU's course on Media Studies has been in touch with us [for voluntary work] and I'm sure this will increase in years to come. In the meantime we must make an effort to engage with the community but I'm not sure how best to do this.

Ms Hill recalled two stories they covered in 2012 on Somalis: a homework club project in the Somali community and a Leicester University conference on FGM. However, she expressed concern about stereotyping the community and felt that it was important to get the perspective of the Somali community directly on day-to-day issues such as public health, transport and social matters. Ms Hill explained, "If we had the money we would like to employ a Somali journalist, who would help to generate ideas on what to report on and how, for the Somali community".

It was acknowledged that events could be organised where local journalists and Somali community members can meet and establish contact. Neighbourhood stories are currently being produced by BBC Radio Leicester, which can help to better engage the Somali community. Workshops can also be done with community radio stations, which can help to bring the Somali community and local media closer together. Another suggestion included an input from a Somali journalist through brainstorming meetings that take place every morning at BBC Radio Leicester. Ms Hill talked about how they try to achieve this for other groups through "Asians working with us who contribute 'Asian' stories in our morning discussions and this creates awareness" of what is taking place on the ground. For example on the occasion of Diwali, journalists are able to identify when and where celebrations are taking place so that BBC Radio Leicester is able to provide appropriate coverage and is able to engage directly with the local Hindu communities.

The *Leicester Mercury* expressed similar concerns; the editor, Richard Bettsworth, when discussing its reach into Somali communities, explained restrictions on resources often meant they were unable to take the time to provide expert journalism on or about the local Somali community. This became particularly challenging for them when local incidents concerning Somalis have occurred. The editor felt that they ought to be better connected and should be able to call on key people from the Somali community; this is an ongoing process and is likely to take targeted work in order to build relationships of trust over a number of years.

12. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the long presence of Somalis in the UK, the popular impression is often of recent immigration and asylum seekers fleeing a wartorn country. In that sense, Somalis are not only seen as Muslims, or as an ethnic, black or African other, but also as immigrants and refugees, and fall into the very live debates in British society on immigration and welfare. If this were not enough, the debates about the Somali diaspora are further confounded by association (of a very few) with terrorism and the stigma that creates for the majority, as well as the spotlight it brings in terms of security and policing. On top of all this is another layer of actual under-achievement and disadvantage in economic terms, employment, health and education. Add to this the psychological impact of trauma: memories of conflict and warfare, of families torn apart and homes left behind. All this creates a discourse around a community which can be difficult to manage and creates a media impression of a community with many problems. At first glance, therefore, one may expect this to be a somewhat fragmented and beleaguered community, but the surprising reality is far from that, as can be seen in this report.

The duality of statistical invisibility and public visibility yields an odd mix of there being a problem and yet there being little that can be done in operational terms to address the issues. This creates a real challenge for a local authority such as Leicester, which has a well-earned reputation for dealing with minorities and new arrivals, and generally for celebrating diversity. Through a succession of progressive policies that encouraged community settlement and inclusion, through facilitating alliances across the main religions, helping to foster positive, symbiotic relationships with the local media and police force, and through a spirit of celebration, the city has been spotlighted and acclaimed in national discussions about managing diversity. It is also one of those areas of the UK where diversity now brings a new and more complex dimension and where ethnic minorities comprise more than half of the population of the city.

One of the local authority's current challenges is to ensure its primary civic services reach the great majority of Somalis through an inclusive approach that normalises their presence, rather than one that creates a sense of an undesirable special case, which creates or exacerbates inter-community tensions in such a complex and diverse environment. Throughout this research, through listening to participants' feelings of exclusion and of being judged, a language of optimism and aspiration could still be heard. Somalis did not want to be seen as a problem or as marked out for special treatment; they want to settle and contribute, they want to work hard and earn their place. Participants wanted to be valued, recognised and supported in making a positive life in the place they have made home. There was a genuine sense of gratitude that, after many years on the move, Leicester offered a real chance for a quality of life and opportunity, and a respect for difference that created a space for the Somali community. Most of the focus group participants had in fact travelled from other parts

of Europe (chiefly the Netherlands), some had migrated from London or the north of England, some much further afield, but there was no sense of moving on or going back. Leicester is now home.

Many spoke of good relations with their neighbours, of greater social acceptance (compared with the 1990s, or for others, compared with where they lived previously in the EU), of feeling a connection with Leicester's African Asians, of improvement in education and support by the council, of pride in community radio projects, of entrepreneurial opportunities and growing confidence, of optimism that things were generally moving in the right direction. Women have played a remarkable role in the community and in a short space of time some have overtaken women in other, more settled communities in terms of the leading roles they play in social enterprises and community leadership. The educational achievement of girls is progressing rapidly and measures by schools and the local authority to address the slower progress of boys are also beginning to bear fruit.

Such optimism is a vital ingredient for good growth, which can be cultivated by the efforts of local agencies and community willingness. But such optimism cannot sustain itself if grievances and frustrations are not unpacked, confronted and overcome. The impact of deprivation on health, education and housing is something that has an important consequence. The feeling of being excluded and judged underpinned participants' responses throughout as well. The perception of discrimination, not just from the wider society, but also from fellow Muslims of Asian heritage, stands out as a stark sentiment in the focus groups. Remarks about the attitude of some members of Leicester's established Asian communities towards Somalis surfaced mainly through housing experiences, where landlords were often Asian. Tensions were also reported in relationships with the city's more established black communities, through issues at school among children. It is unclear what impact all this is having among the under-18s, but it does run counter to Leicester's image as a hub of cultural tolerance.

Another challenge was political participation and voter registration, which is one significant area where the Somali community of Leicester has yet to make its mark. The emergence of a self-employed sector and a strong entrepreneurial work ethic, while good in itself, may be masking real difficulty and a lack of confidence to get more attractive and lucrative jobs. Levels of employment remain low and men in particular find their previous career skills are less useful in the UK job market, which is less manually and industrially orientated. The emergence of Somali women stands alongside a scenario of receding roles among some Somali men, who feel undervalued and unemployed. There are real concerns about the psychological impact of war and complex notions of masculinity that seem unfulfilled among some men. In such a context, either because male figures were lost in conflict, are working abroad, or are just absent, boys and young men may struggle to find strong male role models.

Whilst the most positive aspect of life in Leicester was its general tolerance, leading to a strong sense of identification with the city and a sense of belonging, housing problems, crime and safety, and a lack of employment were clearly issues of deep difficulty. They

are also the essentials of a good quality of life. The local authority has been quick to move in order to make Leicester a better home for its new residents and initiatives have either been taken by the council directly, or funded via trusted partners, to address the situation. But more needs to be done, as identified in this report. Influential sections of the Somali community seem to have decided that this community must succeed, but that it cannot succeed by being passive recipients of help, that it wants to carve out a place for itself in the footsteps of earlier communities and of earlier successes; in so doing it also recognises that it can and must do more for itself. All this could mean that some of the best of Leicester's stories have yet to be heard.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

General

- The composition of staffing in statutory services in Leicester does not always reflect the communities they serve and there is a lack of understanding of culture and tradition, which may create unnecessary barriers. Policy officers should be responsible for consulting the Somali communities in a more effective manner. Somali staff should be specifically recruited for priority service areas such as housing, education and health.

- The city council should build on the success of its "New Arrivals Strategy" and the achievements of the Somali community in Leicester by embedding the monitoring of key integration indicators such as employment, educational achievement, competence in English, health, housing, discrimination and civic participation in its Equality Schemes and by working with Somali civil society organisations and other stakeholders to identify effective, evidence-based interventions to address inequalities experienced by Somali residents.

Identity and Belonging

- In line with Leicester's celebration of other communities and groups, there should be a Somali Cultural Day in order to recognise the music, poetry, literature and other cultural features of Leicester's dynamic Somali community.

- Somali civil society organisations should work in partnership with the city council, other faith institutions, mainstream civil society organisations and funders with an interest in inclusion and citizenship to develop and deliver information and classes on life in the UK, including English instruction and activities for introducing Somalis to key public services and institutions in Leicester.

Education

- The City of Leicester's Education Department and partner organisations should build on their success in improving the educational achievement of Somali pupils and the good practice found in some schools (such as Taylor Road Primary) to create a Schools Forum for teachers and schools that will share information, monitor progress and exchange good practice.

- There is a need for better data collection in the pre-school sector (nurseries) in order to better prepare children to go to school.

- Given the important role of parents in school governance, training should be provided to help and support parents to play a more effective role in their engagement with schools, especially as governors.

Employment

- The Leicester Chamber of Commerce, city council and civil society groups should explore the possibility of setting up a small loans or grants system to facilitate the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

- A partnership of civil society and the business sector should organise a careers fair or something similar for young Somali people to showcase career paths and how to get into different professions.

- The city council should establish a diversity kitemark for employers based on models such as "Diversity Works for London" or Oslo's diversity charter.

Housing

- The city council should implement a higher threshold of quality assurance for private landlords in order to improve the quality of private rented accommodation in Leicester.

- A housing taskforce should be established with stakeholders from the Somali community and the council and housing associations to review the accessibility and effectiveness of housing provision for Somali clients and take necessary action to ensure that Somalis have the same access to high-quality housing advice as other residents in the city.

Health and Social Protection

- The CCG should ensure greater access to translators or interpreters and provide leaflets in the Somali language in order to promote health awareness and Somalis' engagement with local GPs.

Policing and Security

- The police should work with Somali civil society organisations to improve Somali participation in engagement between the police and the community, in order to address recruitment, ethnic profiling, and stop and search and provide better information on getting hold of the police.

Participation and Citizenship

- Somali civil society organisations should work with mainstream political parties, the council and the Electoral Commission to raise awareness about registration on the electoral roll, the importance of active engagement in civic and political life and to improve the general political education of Leicester's Somali citizens.

Role of the Media

- Training and support should be provided in order to improve the access of community groups to a range of media skills (including social media) and in order to devise media and communications strategies for community projects.

- Leicester's media organisations should work with Somali civil society groups to organise events that can show the achievements of the Somali community and enable media professionals to expand their contacts in the Somali community.

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ANNEX 2. LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

Abdi, Isaak	St Matthew's Community Solutions Centre (SCSC)
Ahmed, Haseeb	Equality Lead of Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Ashworth, Jon	Leicester South MP
Bettsworth, Richard	Editor, Leicester Mercury
Bile, Ahmed	SCSC and Chair of EAVA Community Media
Brazier, David	Head of Shelter Housing Aid and Research Project (SHARP)
Cannon, Miranda	Director of Delivery, Communications, and Political Governance, Leicester City Council
Carter, Nick	Chair Leicester Multi Cultural Advisory Group (LMAG), Former Editor, Leicester Mercury
Cordell, Mark	School Improvement Officer, Leicester City Council
Fallen, Chris	Secondary School Lead, Leicester City Council
Harrison, Julian	Policy and Partnerships Manager (Community Cohesion/Equalities and Diversity
Hill, Jane, Editor	BBC Radio Leicester
Jenner, Simon	Group Support Manager, Voluntary Action Leicestershire
Manjoola, Sood	Assistant Mayor and Councillor, Lead for Community Engagement and Partnerships
Mann, Jasbir	Primary School Lead, Leicester City Council
Mitchell-Halliday, Sharon	School Consultant, Leicester City Council
Nagdi, Suleman	Chairman of Leicestershire Faith Forum
Nixon, Rob	Chief Superintendent
Olad, Yasmin	YouThink
Palmer, Cllr Rory	Deputy Mayor, Leader of Leicester Employment Programme for Leicester City Council
Parish, Jandurana	Housing Policy, Leicester City Council
Razak, Abdi, Ujala	Resource Centre for translation and interpretation,
Surti, Yasmin	Lead Commissioner, Mental Health/Learning Disabilities at LCC, Chair of Aqoon Aqoon School Home Support Services

Tarah, Abdishakur   Aqoon School Home Support Services

Thamotheram, Priya   Head of Highfields Centre

Thomson, John   Housing Area Manager, Leicester City Council

Varley, Carol   Executive Officer of African Caribbean Citizen Forum

Minority communities – whether Muslim, migrant or Roma – continue to come under intense scrutiny in Europe today. This complex situation presents Europe with one its greatest challenges: how to ensure equal rights in an environment of rapidly expanding diversity.

At Home in Europe, part of the Open Society Initiative for Europe, Open Society Foundations, is a research and advocacy initiative which works to advance equality and social justice for minority and marginalised groups excluded from the mainstream of civil, political, economic, and, cultural life in Western Europe.

Muslims in EU Cities was the project's first comparative research series which examined the position of Muslims in 11 cities in the European Union. Somalis in European cities follows from the findings emerging from the Muslims in EU Cities reports and offers the experiences and challenges faced by Somalis across seven cities in Europe. The research aims to capture the everyday, lived experiences as well as the type and degree of engagement policymakers have initiated with their Somali and minority constituents.

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