

who gets the Muslim **vote?**

*a selection of statistics and articles compiled by Justpeace to complement the panel discussion
'Decicion Time' on 23rd April 2004, 6.30pm at the LSE*

MUSLIM POPULATION

Source -Office for National Statistics

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

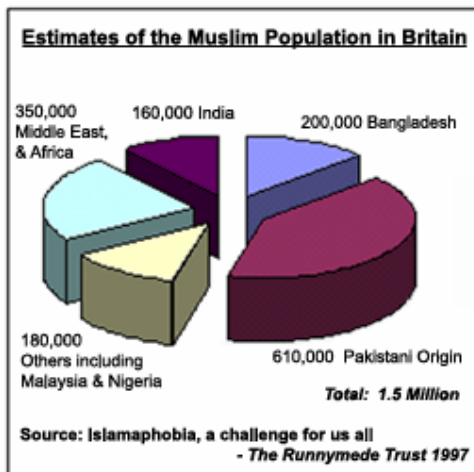
General Register Office, Scotland

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk>

- The Muslim population of England & Wales is 1.54 million. The Muslim
- population of Scotland is about 40,000.

Total Muslim population 1.6 million. (just under 3% of total British population)

- The Local Authority Districts with the highest Muslim populations are:
- Tower Hamlets - 71,000 (36% of population))
- Newham - 59,000 (24%)
- Blackburn - 27,000 (19%)
- Bradford - 75,000 (16%)
- Waltham Forest - 33,000 (15%)
- Luton - 27,000 (15%)
- Birmingham - 140,000 (14%)
- Hackney - 28,000 (14%)
- Slough - 16,000 (13%)
- Redbridge - 29,000 (12%)
- Westminster - 21,000 (12%)



POLITICS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- Source - The Guardian, June 17, 2002, British Muslims series

There are two Muslim MPs: Khalid Mahmood (Labour, Birmingham Perry Barr) and Mohammed Sarwar (Labour, Glasgow Govan) / One Muslim MEP: Bashir Khanbhai (Conservative, Eastern Region)

- Source- The Muslim Council of Britain, reported in The Muslim News, March 30, 2001, General Election Supplement

Top 10 constituencies with largest Muslim voter estimate: B'ham, Sparkbrook & Small Heath; Bradford West; Bethnal Green & Bow; Birmingham, Ladywood; East Ham; Blackburn; Poplar & Canning Town; Bradford North; Ilford South; West Ham

Thirteen marginal parliamentary constituencies with significant Muslim voting potential: Bradford West, Rochdale, Glasgow Govan, Brent North, Enfield Southgate, Hendon, Harrow West, Watford, Colne Valley, Oldham East & Saddleworth, Wimbledon, Finchley & Golders Green, Hammersmith & Fulham

- Source - The Muslim News, May 25 2001, 'Over 200 Muslim Councillors', By Hamed Chapman and Ahmed Versi www.muslimnews.co.uk

217 Muslim councillors elected in the May 2000 local government elections (of a total of 25,000 councillors UK-wide).

- Source- The Guardian, June 19, 2002, British Muslims series, 'Wake-up call for party that took votes for granted'

84% of the Bangladeshi vote and 86% of the Pakistani vote went to the Labour Party five years ago. In Bradford West, a majority of the local Pakistani population, some 61%, put a cross next to the name of a Tory candidate rather than Labour as Muslims voted for a fellow Muslim rather than for a political organization.

General Election Results 2001	
Party	Seats Won
Labour	412
Conservative	166
Liberal Democrats	52
Ulster Unionists	6
Scottish National Party	5
Ulster Democratic Unionist Party	5
Plaid Cymru	4
Sinn Fein	4
Social Democratic Labour Party	3
Independent	1
The Speaker	1
Total	659
Government Majority	166

Should Labour fear the Muslim vote?

Dominic Casciani - BBC News Online - 24-Apr-03

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2972279.stm>

Should the Labour Party fear the voice of British Muslims in the aftermath of the war in Iraq? The coming elections in Scotland, Wales and English local councils will be the first test.

On the streets of Glasgow, a handful of Muslim campaigners are out to unseat a Labour MSP.

Labour candidate Gordon Jackson, who is defending the Glasgow Govan seat, is being targeted by campaigners who say he did not do enough to oppose war in Iraq.

The Muslim Association of Britain (Mab), one of the leading organisations against the war, is running the campaign against Mr Jackson.

They say his Holyrood majority of 1,756 over the Scottish National Party can be smashed if the constituency's 5,500 Muslims all vote against him. Mr Jackson's Westminster counterpart is Mohammed

Sarwar, one of the UK's two Muslim MPs.

Mab has launched a website in Scotland to tell supporters how they can best use their vote.

Osama Saeed of the organisation said they wanted Muslims who may never have voted before to understand how they can become kingmakers.

"The next logical step was to help people to use their vote. Looking at the key constituencies, if the turnout is low and Muslims use their vote, we have substantial power."

Rather than endorsing a particular party, campaigners say voters across Scotland should use the proportional representation system to ensure they support the candidates who opposed war in Iraq and show general support for the Palestinians.

So should Labour worry it is alienating communities which have traditionally supported it at the ballot box?

Maybe not, says Shahid Malik, the Burnley-based member of the party's National Executive Committee.

"If you had asked three weeks ago how [Labour-voting Muslims] regard Labour then we may have had a different picture," said Mr Malik.

"It was looking very bleak but it now seems that people are breathing a sigh of relief.

"Groups such as the Muslim Association of Britain are led by well-meaning individuals - but I think their influence is negligible."

Marginal constituencies

The Muslim Council of Britain estimates there are 23 Westminster constituencies where Muslims could have an impact.

One of them. Bethnal Green and Bow, has seen anti-war protests against Labour MP Oona King.

Jack Straw has been in politics longer than you or I and he knows the consequences of his actions

Another is the Blackburn constituency of Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. The question is whether this anti-war opposition will translate into votes on polling days.

The Lancashire Council of Mosques (LCM) met Mr Straw in March to underline their opposition to war.

In 2002, they protested to Mr Straw over his unwillingness to condemn India over sectarian violence in Gujarat, the area where the majority of the town's Muslims have family ties.

Later that year, local activists succeeded in unseating a Labour councillor by encouraging Muslims to back the Liberal Democrat candidate - but the result was tight. There are no council elections in Blackburn this year.

Ibrahim Master, chairman of the LCM, said that close result suggested international affairs ultimately recede at the ballot box.

"You would have expected a landslide against Labour last year but it didn't happen," said Mr Master. "In Blackburn as with anywhere else, we have to be governed by people who take charge of local affairs.

"There might be a protest vote across the country because Iraq is so fresh in the memory. But a lot of people perhaps think it's not the right thing to start bringing international issues into local politics."

So does Jack Straw face a threat at the next general election?

"He has been in politics longer than you or I and he knows the consequences of his actions," said Mr Master.

"He must have known the political damage to Labour of supporting the war. Given what happened here over Gujarat in the local elections, we have to ask whether people will have forgotten about Iraq by the time of the general election."

Community leaders

One of the major political issues for the major parties trying to gauge Muslims opinion is whether "community leaders" really do speak for ordinary people.,

I am really interested to see how Muslims will continue to politically organise - but I think many communities are also politically naive

Humera Khan

Humera Khan, founder of the An Nisa society in London, said the true picture was a lot more complicated than the stereotype of communities acting through the voice of one man.

For instance, while some men may be vocal because of speaking out at mosques on Friday afternoons, a lot of local political influence was being exercised subtly at grassroots levels.

"There is a trend of local groups being set up to bring people together on issues that matter to them," she said. "We're seeing women increasingly involved in these grassroots campaigns.

"But when you talk about big politics, you have to ask yourself who represents Muslims, what does that really mean?"

Ms Khan said there were lots of different people with political influence at different levels.

None of them should be taken as more important as another because of the fractured nature of British Muslim organisations, some of them more closely linked to foreign issues than others.

"I am really interested to see how Muslims will continue to politically organise themselves. But I think many communities are also politically naive in terms of appreciating the groundwork they need to do for big politics."

Lazy thinking?

Shahid Malik of the Labour NEC said ultimately, he believed British Muslims would always vote on what is locally important to them. Predictions of block Muslim-led votes in key marginals was lazy thinking.

"Muslims in north-west towns such as Burnley or Blackburn will be judging the parties on a whole range of issues - just as everyone else does," he said.

"The people with the most influence are those in positions of local leadership, be they councillors or community leaders of one form or another.

"The Muslim communities are not a homogenous slab.

"We have visibly seen Muslims actively taking part in a mainstream issue of concern to all.

"If we see more and more of this on issues such as housing, education and regeneration, then that's the kind of healthy political integration many people are working for."

When Labour is the alternative to New Labour

Hilary Wainwright
June 2003

Robin Cook and Clare Short may have got all the media attention but there have been other expressions of despair of far greater significance for the future of Labour and the left. Consider a letter Manchester councillor Kath Fry sent the prime minister after a loss of seven Labour seats on the city council in May's local elections. The results could not, Fry wrote, be dismissed as 'mid-term blues'. 'We have substantial and irrefutable evidence that people voted Liberal Democrat or Green as a protest against the war in Iraq and your pursuit of Conservative policies.'

Tory, Lib Dem edge towards with potential Muslim breakthroughs -Friday 26 March 2004

By Hamed Chapman – The Muslim News

Both the Conservatives and, to a lesser extent, the Liberal Democrats are tentatively seeking a breakthrough for a handful of Muslim candidates at the next General Election. But neither party have yet selected any for a safe seat. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) described the slow progress as “hugely disappointing” and that the parties were overlooking many excellent Muslim candidates.

With probably just over a year before the election, the Tories have so far selected Ali Miraj in a potentially winnable seat at Watford. Haroon Rashid is also replacing Mohammad Riaz at Bradford West, which the Conservatives tried to take for last two elections. The Lib Dems, which is expected to benefit from the backlash against the Iraq war, have yet to accept a Muslim candidate in any seat throughout the UK with any realistic chance of being elected.

Miraj, a former councillor at the London Borough of Hillingdon, has been rewarded with a target seat after gaining hard experience when coming fourth in the Welsh seat of Aberavon in 2001. He believes that he has a realistic chance of overturning the 5,555 majority at Watford held by Labour’s Claire Ward. “The Tories held the seat for 18 years before Labour’s landslide in 1979 and I’m highly confident but not complacent of winning it back,” Miraj told The Muslim News. He said that he was given the potentially winnable seat 16 months ago and was receiving support from the party, with Michael Howard visiting the constituency twice in recent weeks. If successful, the 29 year-old merchant banker is set to become one of the youngest MPs. Particular crucial in Watford could be the Muslim vote, estimated to be more than 2,600.

In Bradford West, the Muslim vote of over 21,000 is the second highest in the country after Birmingham Sparkbrook and Small Heath, currently held by former International Development Secretary, Clare Short. Rashid, an operations executive at British Airways, is optimistic that the Conservatives will finally be able to secure the seat from Labour’s Marsha Singh. “Unlike Riaz, the Party is now doing well nationally and is feeding on the disillusionment of the Government,” he told The Muslim News. He said he was gaining support on community issues that were not addressed by Singh and was also involved on youth policies. In 2001, Rashid nearly halved Labour’s 21,000 majority in Bolton South East, gaining a 5.7 per cent swing against Brian Iddon. He believed that he could take Bradford West, needing only a 3 per cent swing needed to overtake Labour’s 4,165 majority.

The most recent prospective Parliamentary candidate selected by the Tories is Sayeeda Warsi, the Party’s first Muslim woman nomination. She is standing in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, currently held by Chair of the Intelligence and Security Committee, Ann Taylor, who is stepping down at the next General Election. The 32 year-old solicitor told The Muslim News that she was approved from a short list of three. She said she had long been interested in politics but had only joined the party last year. “I am delighted to be given a potentially winnable seat. It is where I live and includes 12,000 Muslim voters,” Warsi said. Although Taylor’s current majority is 7,449, the seat was bitterly fought over before Labour’s landslide victory in 1997.

The Conservatives have so far selected a total of eight new ethnic minority candidates for next year’s

elections. These include two other non-Muslims in seats currently held by retiring Tory MPs, – Adam Afriyie is defending an 8,889 majority in Windsor and Shailesh Vara is standing in Windsor, the seat currently held by former Minister, Brian Mawhinney. Two other Muslims chosen have virtual little chance, Tariq Ahmad faces a 16,610 Labour majority in Croydon North and Shaagir Bakth Faruk is challenging Labour's Oona King for a second time in Bethnal Green and Bow (east London).

Like the Tories, the Liberal Democrats have yet to select a Muslim candidate for as safe seat and the decision by Fiyah Mughal to also stand in Bethnal Green and Bow may only further divide the 18,000 plus Muslim vote in the third-biggest Muslim constituency. King last time defeated Bakth with a 10,057 majority, while the Lib Dem candidate came a distant third with only 5,946 votes. Similarly, Qasim Afzal is seen having little chance standing in Manchester Gorton, even if veteran Jewish Labour MP, Gerard Kaufman, decides to retire from defending his more than 11,000 majority.

Currently, the best outside chance the Lib Dems have is in the former chair of its ethnic minority wing, Nasser Butt, becoming the Party's first Muslim MP. Butt, an accountant, was the first ethnic person to be selected for a semi-winnable target seat when he was chosen as Perspective Parliamentary Candidate for Mole Valley in Surrey just over a year ago to build up support for the parliamentary elections. The constituency is currently held by Conservative MP Paul Beresford with a 10,153 majority. Butt, a local councillor in nearby Sutton, rates his chances as only "fairly slim." Without any sizeable Muslim population, his hopes are in being able to repeat previous Lib Dem victories in neighbouring Guildford and Kingston, which were also considered to be 'true blue' Conservative constituencies.

MCB Secretary General, Iqbal Sacranie, said that the Muslim community was "hugely disappointed," especially by the Lib Dems, who are supposed to hold values ensuring communities participate fully in local democracy. He said that while there had been "some improvement" by the Tories, it was "time that political parties re-evaluated their whole selection system." Sacranie told The Muslim News that the MCB strongly believed that the best candidates should be chosen but the "parties have once again failed to select brilliant Muslim candidates that were available to stand in winnable seats." He said that those so far selected were "no where near the number to reflect the size of ethnic minority and faith communities." ? Since going to press last month, Labour's National Executive Council intervened to overturn Robert Evan's controversial nomination in London's Brent East and award the candidacy to 40 year old Muslim barrister, Yasmin Qureshi, after reinstating three disputed postal votes in his favour.

Labour heading for more Brent East humiliations – The Muslim News Friday 27 February 2004

British history is littered with struggles for basic democratic rights. These include most notably, the Chartist Movement in the middle of the 19th century and the Suffragette movement a hundred years ago. The Labour Party itself was founded by James Kier Hardy, partly on the premises that Parliament did not represent the vast majority of the population. At the start of the 21st century, we still find a gross democratic deficiency, namely, the lack of representation of ethnic minorities in the House of Commons. Though The Muslim News welcomes the selection of civil rights lawyer, Sadiq Khan, to stand in Labour's safe south London seat of Tooting. Khan will become only Britain's third Muslim MP following

the election of Khalid Mahmood in Birmingham three years ago and Mohammad Sawar in Glasgow in 1997. At this rate, it will take most of the rest of the century to build up to a representative quota of at least 20 more Muslim MPs to reflect the specific interests of the community.

Following the Labour's reported 'dirty tricks' in preventing Shahid Malik's candidacy in Brent East, Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips, warned that all major parties needed to be more pro-active in promoting a more diverse mix of candidates at the next General Election. It was even more puzzling why the local constituency Party insists on selecting London MEP, Robert Evans, to contest the north-west London seat when he humiliatingly lost to the Liberal Democrats in a 29 per cent swing at last September's By-election. "The upshot of this is very straightforward; ethnic minority candidates will feel, and we have some evidence of this already, that whatever they do, there will always be barriers presented at selection," Phillips warned.

Can it be that Labour has become so complacent about being assured of another General Election victory next year that the Party apparatus has little regard for diverse views? Lessons appear not to have been learnt since the last General Election when Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was returned with another landslide victory but with the lowest share of the electorate since women were given the vote in 1928. In 2001, the three main parties selected a total of 25 Muslim candidates but virtually all in unwinnable seats. Tragically, a similar scenario is set to be repeated for next year's election and there is a lesson for Muslims in that they need to be actively involved now. It is no good losing out again in the last few months of horse-trading for seats.

For Labour, the writing is on the wall that there will be more Brent East humiliations, especially since Muslim voters have the incentive of not staying at home as in 2001 but in voting against candidates who supported the Iraq war

Labour discord in selection of Muslim candidates – The Muslim News - Friday 27 February 2004

By Hamed Chapman

Labour constituency parties are in disarray over the selection of Muslim candidates to stand in safe seats at the next General Election, which is expected to be held in the first half of 2005.

The rift opened up a virtually north-south divide in London with the successful nomination of civil liberties lawyer Sadiq Khan in Tooting at the end of last month, while in Brent East, Labour's National Executive Council (NEC) member, Shahid Malik, was snubbed for a second time amid accusation that the local Party's General Committee was Islamophobic.

Khan declared that his selection to replace retiring MP, Tom Cox, sent a message "loud and clear" that Labour remains the only party committed to choosing candidates in winnable seats who represent the diversity of Britain's society. "It is a fantastic honour to be selected as prospective Parliamentary candidate for the area I was born in, grew up in and have lived in all my life," he said after being endorsed by the local Party at a packed hustings meeting in Tooting on January 25. Khan looks set to become Britain's third Muslim MP with Cox holding a comfortable 10,400 majority in the constituency, which has an estimated 22 per cent ethnic minority population.

But in Brent East, Labour's General Committee decided in January against putting 36-year-old Malik even on the final short-list although he won the most nominations in the first stage of the selection process. The refusal comes after he was also snubbed for the nomination prior to Party's humiliating defeat in one of its previously safest seats at last year's By-election.

Energy Minister, Stephen Timms, expressed his deep concern as Chair of Muslims for Labour, at the reported concerted attempt to ensure that no Muslim is selected as the Parliamentary candidate for Brent East. One General Committee member allegedly described the failure to nominate Malik as a "vote rigging exercise." In a letter to the Party's local Secretary, Patricia Harrison, Timms warned that Brent East was "a seat which we need strong Muslim support to regain."

Malik appealed against his exclusion on five procedural points. He said that his rights of being a Labour member for nearly 20 years "have been trampled upon in a blatant and ruthless manner." Malik became the first ethnic minority member of the NEC four years ago but since has failed to secure the Party's candidacy in a winnable seat despite numerous attempts. Last year, he was ruled out of the nomination in his home town of Burnley after the seat was designated as a all-women's short-list following Peter Pike's decision to retire.

In a letter to the Party Chairman, Ian McCartney, Malik said that what was witnessed in Brent East "directly challenges the legitimacy" of what he believed were Labour's ideals, principles, values and philosophy when he joined the Party at 15. But he argued that there was an opportunity in making his appeal "to let the cynics know that our values are as important today as they have ever been" by letting common sense and justice prevail, according to a copy obtained by The Muslim News.

The discrimination against him was underlined after he came top in the first stage of the selection process winning 67 of first preference votes, ahead of Muslim Councillor Ahmed Shazad with 56 first preference votes. But neither were put forward into the short-list. Instead, Labour MEP, Robert Evan, winning 51 first preference votes was chosen even though he had not sought the required express permission of the NEC to stand. But he was supported by Labour's pro-Israel Paole Zion organisation. Raj Jethra with 14 first preference votes was also put on the short-list but was seen having virtually no chance of securing the nomination ahead of Evans.

According to Peter Coghill, Vice-Chairman of Brent East Labour Party, Malik was excluded because of his political record. "We decided not to short-list him based on his voting record on the National Executive Committee and the fact that he voted against a motion on foundation hospitals made by Brent East Labour Party and Unison at the Labour Party Conference last year," he told a local Burnley paper. But supporters of Malik said that his comments only further exposed "dirty tricks," as Coghill is the campaign manager of Evans.

Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips, has also entered the affray over Labour's discrimination of Muslim candidates. In a private letter to McCartney leaked to the Observer (February 15), he warned that all major parties needed to be "more pro-active" in promoting ethnic minorities. The absence of reasons for Malik and Shazad's exclusions "will be seen by many within and outside the Party as a direct example of the Party's inability, or worse, reluctance to select a diverse mix of candidates," Phillips said.

Desire to integrate on the wane as Muslims resent 'war on Islam'

Muslims abandon Labour over Iraq war

Alan Travis, home affairs editor

Monday March 15, 2004

The Guardian

Labour's share of the British Muslim vote has fallen by a half since the last general election because of the UK's role in the Iraq war, according to the results of a special Guardian/ICM poll published today.

The ICM survey of the state of public opinion among Britain's 1.6 million Muslim community was commissioned to mark the start of the Guardian's week-long coverage of the first anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq.

The poll shows that Tony Blair has paid a heavy political price for the war among traditionally Labour-voting British Muslims. It reveals strong hostility to Mr Blair personally and Labour support slumping from 75% of Muslim voters at the last general election to only 38% now. Most disillusioned former Labour Muslim voters have switched to the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives.

The ICM survey also shows that the overwhelming majority of British Muslims - 73% - are strongly opposed to terrorist attacks by al-Qaida and other organisations. But a small minority - 13% of British Muslims - disturbingly say they believe further such attacks on the US would be justified.

The special poll, based on interviews with 500 British Muslims, reveals a community where opposition to the Iraq war is running at more than 80%, scepticism of US motives in Iraq is widespread, and there is a strong feeling that American and British troops should get out of Iraq immediately.

Stressing that most of the people polled were questioned before the Madrid bombings, Iqbal Sacranie, general secretary of the Muslim Council of Britain, said: "The 13% reflects emotions are running high. But the percentage of Muslims that would support attacks when they are taking place would be much, much lower."

He said: "British Muslims are much more frustrated than the general population with US foreign policy. At the end of the day it's a Muslim population around the world on the receiving end of trouble and bias in terms of US policy."

In sharp contrast, the results of the regular monthly Guardian/ICM poll of all voters, also published today, show public opinion among all British voters is fairly evenly split on whether the war was justified, and a large majority think British and US troops should stay in Iraq as long as is necessary to get the job done. The poll also shows Labour maintaining a two-point lead over the Conservatives.

Traditionally more than 70% of the Muslim community voted for Labour in general elections in the 1980s and 1990s. Seventy-five per cent of those surveyed by ICM said they had voted Labour at the last general election, compared with 14% for the Conservatives, 10% for the Liberal Democrats and 1% for other parties. Now only 38% of British Muslims say they intend to vote Labour, with the Lib Dems a close second on 36%. The Tories would pick up 25% of the Muslim vote.

The depth of this disillusionment with Labour is underlined by Mr Blair's personal ratings. Among all voters he has a net rating this month of minus 20 points, with 37% happy with the job he is doing as prime minister and 57% unhappy. Among Muslim voters this falls to a personal rating of minus 58 points, with only 17% satisfied with the job Mr Blair is doing and 75% saying they are dissatisfied with him.

There is a similar gap between the views of Muslim and other voters on the question of whether the war was justified. Eighty per cent of Muslim voters say it was not justified, compared with 42% of all voters. Only 10% of Muslim voters say it was justified, compared with 46% of all voters.

In the light of these results it is perhaps unsurprising to discover that 82% of British Muslims question US motives and do not believe the Americans when they say they want to create an independent democratic sovereign state in Iraq.

More than half of British Muslims - 55% - say that they believe community relations with non-Muslims have got worse since the start of the Iraq war a year ago.

· ICM interviewed a random sample of 500 Muslims between March 3 and 11 2004. The interviews were conducted by telephone throughout the country. ICM also interviewed a random sample of 1,014 adults aged 18 and over by telephone between March 10-11, 2004. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

Poll shows sense of isolation is growing

Alan Travis, home affairs editor

Tuesday March 16, 2004

The Guardian

Britain's 1.6 million Muslims seem to be feeling an increasing sense of isolation, with nearly half the adults now wanting their children to go to separate Muslim schools, according to a Guardian/ICM opinion poll.

Its interviews with 500 Muslims show that the desire to integrate into Britain's multicultural society has weakened in the past 18 months, and a growing minority feels they have given up too much already.

Although the majority still has a desire for integration, the balance of opinion in the community in the past 18 months has begun to swing against measures such as the home secretary's citizenship ceremonies and oaths of allegiance.

The ICM poll shows that many Muslims see the "war against terrorism" as a war against Islam and believe that British anti-terrorist laws are being used unfairly against the Muslim community.

The survey confirms the last Guardian/ICM "snapshot" in June 2002, showing a community in which one person in three reports personally experienced hostility or abuse because of their religion and most believe that community relations have worsened since the Iraq war a year ago.

There is still a clear desire to integrate into mainstream British culture, 33% feeling that more needs to be done, but this feeling seems to have weakened considerably since the previous poll, when 41% said they felt that way.

The proportion of people who feel that the Muslim community has integrated too much already has risen from 17% to 26% of those interviewed. This compares with 44% of all British voters, who say that the Muslim community should do more to integrate.

The growing separatism is most sharply seen in schooling. Nearly half the Muslim respondents say that, given the choice, they would send a child of their own to a Muslim school rather than a state school.

Since only a small fraction of Muslim children are already in such schools, this represents a huge latent demand for separate religious schooling. The demand is stronger among men, younger families and the more affluent.

The poll also shows that the police and the home secretary, David Blunkett, still have a long way to go to persuade the Muslim community that the anti-terrorism laws are not being used in a discriminatory way against them. More than two-thirds feel they are being used unfairly against the Muslim community.

A cross-analysis of the answers to the question about the state of community relations shows that it is Muslim voters who have deserted the Labour party en masse who feel most acutely that things have got worse in the past year.

The poll shows that Labour support in the Muslim community has halved from 75% at the 2001 general election to 38% now. About 60% of those who say they now intend to vote Liberal Democrat or Conservative say that community relations have got worse, compared with 43% of those who have remained Labour voters.

- ICM interviewed a random sample of 500 Muslims between March 3 and 11. ICM also interviewed a random sample of 1,014 adults on March 10 and 11. Interviews were conducted by telephone across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

- More than 57% of Iraqis say that their lives are better one year on from the war, according to a BBC/Oxford Research International poll published today which surveyed 2,500 Iraqis.