East meets West – why do some South Asian young people feel they need to lead a double identity and how does cultural and religious issues affect them


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Acknowledgements

We would like to say a special thank you to all the young people who were involved in this research project, the ‘Originals’ group.

They are:

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Thank you to everyone who took part.

The conclusions reached in this research report are held by The Original Research Group and are not necessarily the view of The National Youth Agency.
Executive Summary

The purpose of this research is to help local services in Kirklees support South Asian young people as well as inform practice regionally and nationally. The research aim is to capture the experience of living with a ‘double identity’ so that specific needs of South Asian young people can be better understood and therefore met by professionals.

The young people felt it was important to undertake this research to raise the awareness in schools, organisations and with professionals working with South Asian young people and why they feel they have to lead a double identity. This would then increase the knowledge and understanding of why many South Asian young people have to lead and behave in certain ways within and out of the family home.

The key questions that the research questions are:

1. How do South Asian young people negotiate double identities?
2. What are the family, cultural and social factors that influence and/or shape how South Asian young people behave in different environments?
3. What do local professionals and organisations understand about the cultural identity needs and practices of South Asian young people?

Focus groups, one to one interviews and questionnaires were undertaken with young people, parents and professionals. The data was then analysed to produce the key findings under three key themes of negotiating identity, family, social and cultural factors and professional understanding of double identity. The majority of the data was qualitative.

In total 54 participants were involved in the research project. The majority of participants identified themselves as being ‘Asian’. The participants were as follow:

35 young people completed the questionnaire
6 young people (focus group)
8 young people interviewed
5 parents
3 professionals

Overall, the findings support the idea that there is a strong existence of double identity in South Asian young people. South Asian young people led a double identity outside of their family home such as their peers. The way in which they achieved this was by hiding their mobile phone from family members. Participants accepted that family pressure and peer pressure were key factors for the existence and negotiation of a double identity. Other key factors which contributed to double identity existing amongst South Asian young people were dress codes, appearances, and personalities.
From the professionals perspective it can be concluded the professionals who were interviewed for the research project had an understanding of cultural and religious issues that impact young people and meeting their specific needs.

Professionals highlighted that South Asian young people have very “complicated and complex needs which need to be addressed”. This includes stigma, barriers and acceptance in relation to their appearance, culture, religion and behavior.

What we would, therefore, like to recommend are some thoughts for reflective practice that can form the basis of training and professional development, as well as empower professionals to engage with the complexity of family life of South Asian young people. In doing so, professionals by recognising similarities and differences across communities, will be better able to address the needs of South Asian families and plan support according to context.

Within this context, our recommendations are:

• There is a need to educate professionals on cultural and religious issues and needs
• Services need to meet the health and emotional well-being needs of South Asian young people through specialist services being developed
• Appropriate service development for young people from Asian communities, requires their involvement in planning and implementation from the outset, rather than attempting to slot them into services that are not tailored to meet their needs
• Professionals from schools, education, health and social services need to understand how ideas of parenting, childhood and ‘youth’ differ not only between ethnic groups but also within each sub ethnic group
• Undertaking further evaluation and research with this group of young people with a focus on young South Asian males
• Local authorities need to identify the cultural and social needs of this group in strategic documentation and identify clear needs.
1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a research project involving South Asian young people in Kirklees. The research project was undertaken by a group of young people, The Originals Peer Research Group with the Support of The National Youth Agency. The aim of the project, which took place between June – October 2008, was to explore why some South Asian young people feel they need to have a double identity and the impact of cultural and religious issues upon them.

Barnardo’s Kirklees Khandaani Dhek Bhal Service provides “a comprehensive multicultural Kirklees wide family support service which promotes the positive development of children, young people, adults and families to enable them to play a full and active role in society” (KKDB Annual Report 2007–2008). Participation of young people is at the heart of KKDB and working with South Asian young people has developed over the last five years.

The Originals Research Group consist of eight South Asian young people who have previously been service users accessing youth activities at Barnardo’s. A number of the young people are also members of the ‘Kidz Council’ which is a constituted young people’s group. It develops and contributes to the running of activities for children and young people in Kirklees by applying for funding as group. Members are involved in taking part in independent evaluation work for Barnardo’s and providing feedback on what they have learnt from this. Members also provide feedback on work undertaken by other agencies in Kirklees if asked to do so.

The Originals Peer Research Group discussed areas of interest to them and highlighted issues that were important to them. Through these discussions the young people identified how they as young South Asian individuals were coping in today’s society, in particular two cultures and the expectations that were placed upon them by their peers, their family and friends. The group identified that if they as young people were experiencing this anxiety and pressure, being able to explore the views of other young South Asian young people in relation to cultural identity and living in a Western society and bound by cultural expectations would be their topic of research. The group agreed it was important to understand the reasons why some South Asian young people lead a double life – what were the influences and gain knowledge of their experiences within their family home, within the community, in schools and with their peers.

The Originals Research Group had grasped the notion of two cultures and was then able to explore additional issues which needed to be included in the research project:

- Accessing mainstream services can be difficult as it does not meet their needs as a young British person in the UK. The group focused upon gaining the views of South Asian young people
in Kirklees, their experiences of life as a South Asian young person representing his/her family and having to balance this with living in a Western culture.

- The group agreed that South Asian young people face many challenges and the research would look at and identify these. The research would also identify ways in which issues that impact young people’s identities could be addressed.

- **Raising awareness** of professionals as well as schools and organisations working with South Asian young people as this would allow them to understand why this group of young people has to lead a double life, behave in certain ways within and outside of the family home. This would allow key stakeholders to gain an understanding on cultural and religious needs and practices of young people when providing services and resources.

2. **Literature Review**

This section is a summary of the literature review in relation to work with South Asian/BME children and young people. Most research regarding South Asian young people relates generalised data for all children and young people and clear gaps have been identified in this area.

**Setting the Scene – Population in the UK and Kirklees**

The 2001 Census collected information about ethnicity and religious identity and the population is more culturally diverse than ever before, 36 million people (nearly 7 out of 10) described their ethnicity as White. Among other faiths the largest groups were Pakistani Muslims (658 thousand) and Indian Hindus (467 thousand) followed by Indian Sikhs (301 thousand), Bangladeshi Muslims (260 thousand) and White Jews (252 thousand).

The Indian group was religiously diverse. 45 per cent of Indians were Hindu, 29 per cent Sikh and a further 13 per cent Muslim. By contrast the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups were more homogenous, Muslims accounting for 92 per cent of each ethnic group. Some faith communities were concentrated in particular ethnic groups. For example, 91 per cent of Sikhs were Indian and 97 per cent of Jews described their ethnicity as White. Others faiths were more widely dispersed; significant proportions of Buddhists were found in the White, Chinese, Other Asian and Other Ethnic groups.

(Source: Census, April 2001, Office for National Statistics.)

In Kirklees the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2008) counted **400,600** people living in Kirklees in 2007 from this, 10.1% are Muslims, which is a total of 39,311 people. (Source: Kirklees Metropolitan Council; Corporate Development Unit; Analysis of 2001 Census Key Statistics, February 2003). The Health Advisory Service identifies a number of population groups at increased risk of poor emotional health and wellbeing, including children from BME communities (Every Child Matters; Kirklees Emotional Health and Wellbeing Commissioning Strategy; 2008)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulnerable group</th>
<th>No. in Kirklees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looked after children</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children on child protection register</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young offenders</td>
<td>2,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with disabilities on registers</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with statements</td>
<td>2,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless young people</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people with substance misuse problems (in treatment)</td>
<td>1255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children from BME communities</td>
<td>29,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children whose parents misuse substances</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bereaved young people</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who live with domestic violence</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum seekers and refugees</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The identified needs for children and young people derives from the Every Child Matters agenda and this has been focused upon in the Kirklees Children and Young People Plan 2006-2009 identifies that:

“The Kirklees’ children and young people matter. They are the future of Kirklees. Investment today means a better future for all. Everything we do impacts on the lives of our children and young people. Therefore, we must ensure that we create an environment that enables and encourages Kirklees’ children and young people to achieve their potential.”

It has been identified in the Children and Young People Plan that every Kirklees child and young person should have the best possible start in life and be physically and emotionally healthy. The importance of being consulted, listened to and heard is essential for young people and people and organisations contribute to the development and delivery of this vision: families, carers, public and voluntary sector organisations, the private sector, as well as children and young people themselves.

Upon reviewing the Kirklees Children and Young People’s Plan key outcomes based on the Every Child Matters Agenda was clearly identified as well as how the Plan links to key strategies and plans developed throughout services in Kirklees. However there was a gap in identifying the issues and needs of vulnerable groups such as South Asian children and young people as well as how these needs would be met. The Plan focuses upon all children and young people and is a useful tool to refer to for setting the scene for what is happening in Kirklees.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in Kirklees aimed to describe the future health and well being needs of local population and to inform the strategic direction of services to meet those needs. Reviewing the JSNA, the ‘health’ of children and young people focused upon physical health rather than emotional and mental health and well being.

Kirklees have drafted their ‘Emotional health and Well being Commissioning Strategy’ which has highlighted that the aim is to improve the emotional health and psychological well being of all children and young people in Kirklees The issues identified from the survey of all 14 year olds (Year 9) in
Kirklees particularly identified low self esteem - a quarter of young people report feeling not happy with themselves as a person, especially girls (over one third); as well as poor relationships which included factors such as:

- having no-one to talk to about their problems (22%);
- feeling lonely (1 in 8 at least weekly);
- not getting on with family members (19% and twice as many girls as boys);
- not getting on with their peers (1 in 7);
- not getting on with staff at school (over a third);
- not feeling happy at school (35%).

One of the main health challenges facing children and young people as identified in the JSNA (2008) is personal unhappiness and social isolation. The core of this is valuing oneself as a person i.e. self esteem, which is fundamental to being able to cope with life.

Self esteem is also closely linked to having confiding and trusting relationships. The consequences of low self esteem are huge, especially in teenagers where pressure to conform by peer or media is high. The direct consequences are smoking, use of alcohol, drugs, and sexual activity.

**Analysis of Research Area**

Cultural identity shapes who we are and how we see ourselves as individuals. By knowing our cultural history we can understand our families, the society we live in and expectations that people have of us. This gives us confidence and increased self esteem, we feel that we belong and understand the values that are important to us. Our cultural identity leads us to act, conform and behave in a manner that is an important part of our lives. Every Child Matters policy highlights that children and young people should be able to explore their personal, local, national and global identities.

As stated in the Kirklees JSNA (2008) “relationships, self image, self esteem and level of worry all impact on young people’s emotional and psychosocial well-being and ability to cope. Such well-being is important for us all in living a full and creative life, and being able to cope with its ups and downs. With the right support most young people learn to cope with life and develop effective problem solving skills. Without that support, emotional and psychosocial difficulties that develop in childhood can have lasting effects, including affecting educational attainment. Young people who have poor relationships with parents, peers and others are more likely to have low self esteem, particularly where those relationships have significant conflict. This results in them adopting poor coping skills that can harm health, such as being unable to resist peer pressure, smoking, doing poorly at school and having more physical ill health.”

It is important that this statement from the Kirklees JSNA (2008) is considered however there is little reference to South Asian children and young people and provides a general perspective for all children and young people residing in Kirklees. The research to be undertaken will highlight the perspective of South Asian young people with reference to cultural and religious issues and the impact that this has upon them. This can complement existing data such as the Children and Young People’s Plan and other key strategies in Kirklees as it provides a specific view from a specific group of young people.
This is also supported by a major study by Professor Ghuman featured in “Double Loyalties, South Asian Adolescents in the West” (2003) which identifies issues facing second and third generation of South Asian young people growing up in Western countries. By using qualitative and quantitative data, a detailed view is provided of cultural conflicts and identity formation. The study highlights that to understand the real issues facing South Asian young people, there needs to be an improvement in their education, lifestyles as well as understanding the impact of family, culture and religion.

In the study “Young People of Pakistani Origin and their Families: implications for providing support to young people and their families” (2004) Sangeeta Chattoo, Karl Atkin and Di McNeish highlighted that their findings did not support that young people of Pakistani origin in general are often seen as a ‘problem’ and are estranged from traditional family and parental values. They found that family values and practices, religion, culture and ethnicity are central to how young people define themselves and are defined by others within the community. They identify that South Asian young people can make sense of their values and practices within the context of their own lives. This is also supported by The Runnymede Trust that it is essential BME young people gain an understanding of their culture and traditions so that they can develop a positive cultural identity (Weekes-Bernard, D.; 2007).

It is clear that there are gaps in literature available to support an understanding of the needs of South Asian young people and the impact leading a double identity has upon them. Also the understanding that these young people have about services available to them and the roles professionals have in providing a culturally sensitive service needed to be explored due to the lack of data available. Our research project further explored the impact of religion and culture on this group of young people as well as the perspective of professionals who provide services.

3. Research Aims

South Asian young people have identified that accessing mainstream services can be difficult as it does not meet their needs as a young British person in the UK. The Originals Peer Research Group decided to look at this area in more detail to gain the views of young people in Kirklees, their experiences of life as a young person representing their family and having to balance this with life and living in a Western culture and society. There are many challenges for this group of young people and the research aimed to look and identify these, as well as how they might impact young people’s identities.

It was identified by the Originals Peer Research Group that it was important to undertake this research to raise the awareness in schools, organisations and with professionals working with South Asian young people on why they feel they have to lead a double identity. This would allow key stakeholders to gain an understanding on cultural and religious needs and practices of young people when providing services and resources. They would gain the knowledge and understanding of why many South Asian young people have to lead and behave in certain ways within and out of the family home.

Therefore it was identified that the main aim of the research was to understand the reasons why some South Asian young people negotiate a double life – what are the influences and gain knowledge of their experiences within their family home, within the community, in schools and with their peers.
The research was undertaken during the summer holidays (six weeks duration) and a final presentation/event is planned to disseminate the findings. A final report presenting the findings will be made available to key stakeholders and commissioners of young people’s services in Kirklees.

The research focused on three pertinent questions:

- **Does leading a double identity within South Asian young people exist? If so why and how does it exist?**
- **Why do some South Asian young people feel they have to behave in certain ways within and out of the family home/community/organisations/school etc?**
- **Do professionals and organisations understand the cultural and religious aspects of young people and do they meet their needs?**

4. Methods Section

Due to the sensitive nature of the research, a clear plan was developed to ensure there were no concerns identified by parents, professionals and members of the community. This in particular had been considered in the research design and when considering ethical issues.

The Research Design and Participants

A wide range of qualitative research methods were used to collect data which included questionnaires, one to one interviews and a focus group. Due to the data being collated, respondents were given ‘space’ to complete the questionnaires and return these to the researchers. Researchers ensured that respondents were kept anonymous and their safety was ensured due to the taboo nature of research topic.

Once all the data would have been collated, data would be analysed as follows:

- **Quantify data in relation to gender, age and ethnicity**
- **Identifying questions under three key themes of:**
  - Negotiating a double identity
  - Family, cultural and social factors
  - Professional understanding
- **Highlighting key links in the data and being able to identify gaps in the data**
- **Common themes be identified in the responses received from respondents**

1. Qualitative Research undertaken with South Asian young people to explore attitudes and views

**Methodology**

Qualitative questionnaire - this included researchers providing questionnaires to respondents in schools they attended. The questionnaire was also emailed to respondents as well as providing to a local school in Kirklees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core objective</th>
<th>To identify, explore and understand the behaviours, attitudes and services available to South Asian young people in relation to what a ‘double identity’ means to them and the impact of this upon them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>52 - received 35 completed questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork period</td>
<td>July – August 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample definition</td>
<td>South Asian young people aged 11 – 21 who either attended school, at university, volunteering and involved in services provided to this group. The sample included respondents who defined themselves as being South Asian and were of a mixed gender</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once questionnaires had been received the data was analysed and the researchers identified gaps in the data.

### 2. Qualitative research with South Asian Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Focus Group - this included researchers leading the focus group and respondents based on the additional questions devised.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core objective</td>
<td>To further discuss, explore, identify, and understand the behaviours, attitudes perceived by South Asian parents and the impact a ‘double identity’ has on South Asian young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork period</td>
<td>August 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample definition</td>
<td>South Asian mothers aged 34 - 45 whose children either attended school, college or are at university. The sample included respondents who defined themselves as being South Asian.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Further research undertaken to meet the gaps in the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Qualitative interviews - this included researchers interviewing respondents on a one to one basis with additional questions being devised.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core objective</td>
<td>To further explore identify, and understand the behaviours, attitudes and services available to South Asian young people in relation to what a ‘double identity’ means to them and the impact of this upon them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork period</td>
<td>September 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample definition
South Asian young people aged 13 – 21 who either attended school, at university, volunteering and involved in services provided to this group. The sample included respondents who defined themselves as being South Asian and were of a mixed gender

4. Qualitative research with South Asian young people

Methodology
Focus Group - this included researchers leading the focus group and respondents based on the additional questions devised.

Core objective
To further discuss, explore, identify, and understand the behaviours, attitudes and services available to South Asian young people in relation to what a 'double identity' means to them and the impact of this upon them

Sample size
6

Fieldwork period
September 2008

Sample definition
South Asian young people aged 13 – 21 who either attended school, at university, volunteering and involved in services provided to this group. The sample included respondents who defined themselves as being South Asian and were of a mixed gender

By undertaking further research once gaps had been identified, key issues were highlighted by the respondents and by using a variety of research methods, respondents were asked about their views in more detail.

5. Qualitative Research undertaken with professionals to explore attitudes and views

Methodology
Qualitative questionnaire - this included researchers providing questionnaires to professionals working with children and young people. The questionnaire was also emailed to respondents.

Core objective
To identify, explore and understand the perceptions and views of professionals of the cultural and religious needs of South Asian young people and service provision

Sample size
5 questionnaires emailed – 3 questionnaires received

Fieldwork period
September 2008

Sample definition
Professionals working with children and young people in Kirklees. The sample included respondents of a mixed gender. The professionals were from a health, commissioning and youth and community background/professional
Research Ethics
This statement sets out the ethical guidelines that informed the conduct of all research undertaken. We acknowledge that ethical practice is necessarily rooted in ongoing reflection and discussion. The team did think about possible ethical implications when they began to look at the actual design and methodology of their research.

The majority of research conducted by Barnardo's involves children and young people. The responsibilities detailed above apply equally to children and young people. However, there are specific issues arising from children and young people's legal status, their knowledge and experience of the world and their relative lack of independence/autonomy that require specific attention in order to ensure appropriate and ethical research practice.

Research conducted by, and on behalf of, Barnardo's is committed to addressing these issues in the context of an organisational commitment to maximising the participation of children and young people at all levels of planning, evaluation and influencing.

The research involved young people as respondents considered the potential costs and hoped-for benefits of such participation:

- In order to ensure that such issues are central to the research design, young people were involved and led in the planning and piloting of research.

- Safeguarded to minimise any inconvenience, intrusion, embarrassment, coercion, anxiety or distress.

- Attention should be paid to ensuring that participation in research is a positive and rewarding experience.

Feedback on research findings was routinely provided to children and young people as part of acknowledging their contribution and seeking their views about outputs and dissemination.

When undertaking research we have:

- Been open about the methods used and data gathered.
- Been honest about interpretation and presentation of findings.
- Acknowledged the boundaries of our professional competence.
- Safeguarded the interests of those involved in, or affected by, our work.

We ensured the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants was not adversely affected by their involvement in the research. Due to the sensitivity of the area of work, questionnaires were provided and participants were given opportunity and time to complete these.

The processes of selection, inclusion and exclusion were explicit so that colleagues, participants and funders clearly understand who will be involved in the research, how they will be selected, how access will be negotiated, and how participants will be engaged to gain consent. South
Asian young people and parents were involved in the research due to the research topic and professionals involved had some knowledge and understanding of working with this service user group. Inclusive practice was promoted to ensure involvement of all eligible participants, including those frequently excluded from research (such as participants, some parents for whom English was not their first language).

Research was based on the freely given, informed consent of those participating. This involved providing a full explanation of the research project, including information about: the purpose of the research, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken, what is expected of participants in terms of time and activities, how information will be gathered and recorded, what will happen to the information provided, and how the findings will be disseminated. It was vital to ensure that participants were aware of the researcher’s identity and purpose. The researchers disclosed and disseminated as broadly as possible through general announcements in schools and community settings, the researcher’s purpose, research topic, and data gathering method. Participants were made aware that any of their interactions with the researcher may constitute some form of data gathering.

Such explanations were provided in terms and language which are accessible and meaningful to participants. Permission was sought from group leaders and professionals within schools where it was appropriate, especially with those that could help to broadcast the researcher’s purpose and method. Throughout the data gathering, the researcher obtained oral informed consent from each individual participant with whom the researcher was interacting with. This was after the participant had the opportunity to carefully consider the risks and benefits to ask any pertinent questions.

Permission was gained for recording and storing data which would be anonymous at all stages. Researchers explained how information would be gathered and recorded, as well as who will have access to the data at Barnardo’s. Appropriate measures were taken to store data in a secure manner and researchers were informed and had regard to their obligations under the Data Protection Act. Anonymised data was saved in a confidential area of the Barnardo’s electronic system until the research has been completed.

All those involved in the research should receive recognition of their time and effort, including both participants and those providing access. In addition to some form of thanks, for participants - other than professionals - who have provided significant contributions to the research this may include: payment of expenses; vouchers for use in local shops; provision of refreshments or a meal; contributions towards a shared activity such as a cinema visit or leisure activity; presentation of certificates (see Barnardo’s Rewards and Payments Policy).

During the focus group the researchers were aware of the sensitivity required to understand when a participant did not want to continue, respond or be observed as well as:

- Research participants were made aware of their right to refuse to take part, for whatever reason they wish, without adverse consequences, throughout the research process.
- Research participants were made aware of their right to withdraw, in particular during one to one interviews/focus groups - either temporarily (e.g. choosing not to answer certain questions or discuss certain topics) or completely - at any point, without adverse consequences.
• Research participants were informed that there would anonymity and confidentiality throughout all stages of the research due to the sensitive nature of the topic. The researchers and members of the staff team were sensitive to how the information from the participants was protected from unauthorized observation. This meant locking away the information, anonymising the questionnaires and respecting the culturally sensitivity of the research. The anonymity and privacy of those who participated in research was respected. Researchers avoided undue intrusion into the personal lives of participants and ensured that they did not feel pressured to discuss anything they do not want to. Personal information concerning research participants was kept confidential and it was decided it is inappropriate to record certain kinds of sensitive information such as names and addresses. The limits to confidentiality were explicitly communicated:

“Whatever you have to say in this interview/focus group/questionnaire is confidential unless you tell me that you or someone else is in immediate danger of serious harm, or I see or am told about something that is likely to cause serious harm. If that happens, I would need to report it to someone who might be able to help. I would talk to you about what I will need to do, what might happen, and how you would prefer to deal with the situation.”

• Researchers made every effort to ensure that participants feel comfortable and secure during the completion of questionnaires and the interviews and focus group. This included using venues which are familiar to research participants and where they feel confident; ensuring that refreshments are available; ensuring that support is available for those requiring it (e.g. participants whose first language is not English).

When planning methods, researchers offered choice to suit participant’s needs and preferences – while some preferred talking about sensitive issues in a group with others who have shared similar experiences and can offer support, others found group discussion intimidating or impersonal. Use of participatory methods such as one to one interviews and focus groups prompted exploration of relevant issues without requiring individuals to relate personal experiences or events. If researchers observed behaviour or practice which did not raise child protection concerns but was considered unacceptable/inappropriate, they reported these concerns to their supervisor/members of the staff team who would then feed this back to the relevant managers.

When dealing with sensitive issues, research participants often shared personal information and developed a significant relationship with the researcher. Participants who felt relatively isolated or ignored often appreciated the interest and company provided by the researcher. Consequently, researchers considered their strategy for concluding relationships with research participants. This entailed clarifying, at the start, the nature of the research and its duration.

It also required attention to ‘closing down’ activities or ‘de-briefing’ meetings, where participants discussed final questions or issues with the researcher and the researcher provided details about local sources of information/advice/support as well as Barnardo’s contact details. In order to ensure our research did no harm to any of the participants, we held de-briefing sessions which meant participants had the opportunity to discuss any concerns/queries/anxieties with members of staff. This was an important part of the process as there was a need to create a situation where participants felt their feelings were acknowledged.
To ensure the research was helpful and useful to other people, professionals within Kirklees were made aware, as well as other young people accessing the service aware of the work and gained their comments. Overall, researchers received praise and recognition as this was a unique piece of research that had not been researched in our local authority before.

Barnardo’s is committed to providing **feedback** about research progress and findings to participants. Regular updates about progress could be made in person or written form in addition to making copies of full reports readily available, summaries, presentations and reports for participants should be produced as appropriate. Where these are available on the internet, the website link will be provided.

**Dissemination** is a key element of any research and this will would be negotiated. Researchers plan to disseminate the findings and implications of their work using formats appropriate for different audiences, including: participants, practitioners, managers, policy makers, other researchers, academics, funders, and media.

**Analysis & Findings**

The data obtained from the research was both qualitative and quantitative. Once data collection had taken place, it was quantified in accordance to gender, age and ethnicity. Some of the questions produced ‘yes’ or ‘no’ results therefore this information has been presented as pie charts and bar charts to demonstrate the analysis and findings. The analysis of the data took place under three key themes and the findings have been presented under these so that key links in the data could be identified and common themes established in the responses received.

In total, 18 questions were asked within the young people’s questionnaires and 17 questions for the focus groups.

**Ethnicity of participants**

In total 54 participants were involved in the research project. The majority of participants identified themselves as being ‘Asian’.

**Gender**

In total 54 participants were involved in the research project. The majority of participants identified themselves as being ‘Asian’.

![Graph showing Ethnicity of participants](image-url)

![Graph showing the gender of participants](image-url)
**Theme 1:**  **Negotiating a double identity**

All participants answered the question and demonstrated that they had a good understanding of what constitutes a 'double identity', for example common strands of thought included:

“**When girls or boys act different with their family and different with their friends and at school**”

“**Someone who has two sides of their personality... a double identity is when a person behaves differently at two places due to a reason. A double identity is two or more ways to describe your background and where you come from.**”

“I think it’s where they’re two people in one person.”

“It could be a range of things. A person who behaves in a certain way when they are around family members and behave in a complete different way when they are away from their home environment”

“When an individual feels they are trapped between their culture/ethnicity and western society, they act differently in familial situations and differently in peer groups”

“A person who is different from outside and different from inside”

The majority of participants understood that being different at home and at school was what constituted a 'double identity' and behaviours changed according to the setting the young person would find themselves in. Participants understood identity changes according to different situations
and environments. 30% of the subject group felt they were trapped between their culture/ethnicity and the modern western society they live in.

Furthermore, 34% agreed they do behave different at home, compared to another environment and setting, whereas 26% shared they felt more confident at school than at home and only 10% shared they felt less confident at school than at home:

“Yes I behave differently, because there is a different atmosphere at home than there is at school.”
“Yes, because you know your family and friends are strangers. You try to impress them. I am more confident at school.”
“No, I behave the same because I have always been brought up like this.”
“Yes because I am more happy at school”
“Yes sometimes because you can tell your friends secrets which can't be said at home”
“I do because my mum and dad are Pakistani they are nice but when I am with my friends we have a laugh”

Data highlighted that friends and school influences, play an important role in identity development for South Asian young people. Family can restrict how one behaves and is perceived and young people acknowledged that external influences allow them to behave in ways they want to.

Two thirds of the participants accepted in the focus groups that South Asian young people did lead a double identity but could not speak to family about this due to:

“Feel being judged”
“Fear of parents”
“Family might tell parents”
“Might have the fear of getting hit by parents”
“Feel they don't connect”
“Generation gap”
“Blackmailing by family, brothers and sisters”
“Culture and religion – you have to have two different personalities to be able to cope with life today”

The majority of participants identified that it would not feel natural to lead a double identity. The common strand of thought highlighted that many South Asian young people do not feel comfortable in leading a double identity. They feel leading a double identity would be a difficult process.

“No, because you are not yourself if you have a double identity”
“It would be hard for me to lead a double identity.”
“If your school friends and family were with you at the same time you would not know how to act.
“I would not like to lead a double identity, I would feel sad.”
“Leading a double identity would be difficult because the person would be confused, scared and you would feel weird, be lying and not natural.”
“It would feel different because my friends would tell me to do something else and my family would tell me to do something else”
“I do lead double identity, and I think Pakistani girls all do it and some Indian girls”
It can be seen that many South Asian young people in actual fact are unaware that they are leading a double identity and perceive themselves as being a focused young person. Participants acknowledged the negative impact of having a double identity however many also felt that it would be difficult to maintain.

“I don’t know, if I have a double identity”
“I think that I would feel like I am doing something wrong, plus if both groups came together I would not know how to act.”
“Yes because you might not realise you might have a double identity”

**Theme 2: Family, Cultural and Social Factors**

* Please note participants identified more than one factor when answering this question

As demonstrated in the graph, family, culture and religion were the most popular factors that contributed to individuals leading a double identity.

Participants shared that family provided individuals certain types of norms and values that individuals were expected to behave in accordance to. This would lead them to conform to those rules when they are around family relations. A key strand of thought identified by participants was the generation gap between parents and children which led to different levels of understanding.

“Parents are from different generation, different understanding”
“Because of what people say to you and how they expect you to act like everybody else but it is hard because of how your family is.”
“Family makes you have a double identity as traditions kick in. Culture has an effect as in the home we have one way to live and then outside we live a different culture.”
“Because when I am at home my parents and grandparents let me wear whatever I want to but when I go out it says in Islam that girls should cover their self.”
“My dad at home tells me to cover my arms and legs but other people don’t say anything”
“At home my family are Pakistani so I speak Urdu with them at school the majority are white people so I speak English”

In the focus group participants identified restrictions were in place from the family due to:

“Some families are more strict than others, more freedom to others”
“Because parents want to discipline you because you can learn”
“Due to security and might have seen news they want to keep them safe”
“Sometimes for your own good”
“Culture, society, shame and honour”
“Scared they are doing bad things”
“Other might say things (community/society)”

Restrictions were seen as a positive by at least 20% of the participants so that children and young people can be protected however the majority of participants felt that shame, honour and culture was the most significant reason for parents to do this.

However it was identified that the young person would then behave differently with peers. Peer pressure was a strong factor for participants which contributed to them having a double identity.

“Because when I am out with my friends they make me do things that I don't want to do through pressure and reason to conform.”
“If the person's family is religious, then that person may act religious and her friends are different because they may not be religious.”
“You can be pressured by somebody else to do something bad i.e smoking, which is hidden from family. Extended family makes someone maybe act mature at school and stupid at home”
“My parents are very religious and they don’t let me wear English clothes but my mates all tell me to wear English clothes”

Both the media and extended family can also be contributing factors to a South Asian young person's double identity. Media for example can highlight images and ways of living that may be opposite to the majority of society.

“When you watch TV it makes you think differently”
“Familial expectations and pressure to act in a certain manner, maybe in opposition to what religion says or how friends may act or what the media may portray their lives as being like”

Participants were able to identify that parental, cultural and religious pressures had an impact on their thinking and behaviours. Furthermore many participants felt this was due to not having a choice and obliged to behave in certain ways due to their family's upbringing, their dedication to their religion and culture and expectations they have for their children:

“Yes they would feel pressured because they’d feel obliged to listen to their parents”.
“Yes, because parents can put pressure on you to always go and pray”.
“Yes it can, depending on how religious your parents are.”
“Sometimes a person can feel trapped and does not have a choice but to listen to family due to cultural reasons and therefore have no freedom”
“Yes some young people could be forced, into marriage, not having mobile phones, not allowed to go out etc.”
“My parents tell me to pray everyday five times a day but I don’t want to.”
“Quite possibly with regards to marriage/marriage partners, clothes, education and work opportunities. Parents may want their children to act according to their culture and religion, whilst some South Asian Young people may not feel as much obliged to follow their culture, religion and family compared to their parents and may feel more inclined to the western society.”

Another contributing factor identified by participants was ‘peer pressure’. South Asian young people felt that this could also have a significant impact on their thinking and behaviours. Participants highlighted that young South Asian people can be pressured by friends and peers; they have to behave and act in certain ways, which cannot be refused due to trying to ‘fit in’ as well as it being against their culture and religion.

“Yes, because they are acting pressured by mates and can’t refuse.”
“Yes it can, a person could be pressured by friends, and it can be hard to say no as don’t want to be left out”.
“Yes, because mates might want you to do something that you don’t want to do”.
“Yes because it is difficult to say no to friends because then they start back biting so you follow “because you don’t want that, you want to be like everybody else”
“Yes they could tell you to do something or dare you to do something you don’t want to”
“Yes they could be forced into smoking, boyfriends when you don’t want to,”
“Yes because friends might force you to do something against your religion and culture”
“Yes, because their mates might be telling them to smoke when their parents are saying no”.

When explored further in the focus groups, why peer pressure was a contributing factor to go against religion and culture it was identified by a majority of participants that some South Asian young people had ‘too much freedom’, as well as the impact of parents ‘pushing’ their children was an issue for going against religion and culture.

“People around them influence them, the place they live in a westernised country not a Islamic country also influences them”
“To look good and fit well with the society, don’t want to look like the odd one out”
“To fit in”

However some participants identified that peer pressure was not a contributing factor to their behaviours and thinking. This was highlighted due to having friends from the same culture and religion and therefore did not feel pressured to ‘fit in’.

55% of the participants identified that they felt that they had been judged and needed to lead a double identity to ‘fit in’, in particular reasons identified was ‘skin colour’, appearance, dress code, culture and religion.

On the other hand some participants identified that due to having friends from the same culture and religion, there was a mutual understanding of family pressure and expectations and therefore when leading a double identity they are unaware as they are ‘fitting in’ with the majority of their peers.
“No, my friends have the same cultural/religion as me so understand me”.  
“Yes I wear English clothes when am not allowed and I smoke, my friends know this as they are in a similar situations”  
“I behave the same with my friends as they are of the same religion and do not want to do anything bad”  

Participants also strongly suggested that South Asian young people led a double identity in relation to their personal relationships outside the family home, such as their peers, boyfriends, girlfriends etc. One of the ways they felt they needed to do this was to keep their mobiles phone hidden from parents and families:  

“May have some contacts that parents don’t approve of”  
“They lead their lives with double identities; their parent may be traditional or strict and may disapprove of their friends”  
“Some people may fear what their parents reaction would be if they found out that they have a mobile phone. Mostly I think it depends on how strict their parents are and how much understanding they have on that particular issue”  
“Might have a boyfriend and don’t want family to know, also they might be a txt they do not want them to see”  
“Might be something they want to hide from parents”  
“Might have boys phone numbers, and private pictures”  
“Every Pakistani mother says “that you are talking to a boy” my mum knows about my phone but she still calls me a slut”  
“Because they might have peoples numbers who’s they shouldn’t have, then they hide it because their mostly scared”  
“Because their not allowed to have a phone”  
“Do it to hide what information they have stored in it”  
“Because they have boys to talk to”  
“Because the girls might have boyfriends and the boys might have girlfriends”  
“Because they have no freedom and their parents are back wards”  
“This is because their parents would start suspecting their children if they are talking to a girl or boy”  
“Because their parents think they’re using it for bad stuff young people might not want their parents to know”  

The common strand of thought highlighted was that many South Asian young people felt they needed to hide information or contacts they have with the opposite gender from their families. The reason to this was explored further in the focus group. Participants felt that many South Asian young people hid their phones from parents and/or carers due to fear of them finding out about their personal relationships which included their peers and as mentioned previously having contact with the opposite gender:  

“They might be scared because they don’t want their parents to see something they are hiding”  
“Scared because of parents reaction even though they might be doing nothing wrong”  
“Because they might think you are talking to boys or doing things you should not be doing”
Participants identified that their parents also perceived their friends as being a concerning influence upon them if in particular they were not from the Muslim faith or if they were of the opposite gender:

“My parents are not relaxed about my friends, because they don’t approve of them”
“Fine as long as friends are not bad”
“Well because I have a friend she is a Muslim and we have separated in year seven so every Saturday we have sleepovers. But if its another Muslim then no”
“Yes because only Muslim friends because they might not do nasty stuff like non Muslims”
“My friends they have never come to my house”
“They are very relaxed because my mates are like family friends they wouldn’t mind me bringing anyone except if they were boys”
“Only Muslim friends are allowed not non Muslims”

58% of participants agreed there were restrictions on the types of friends they had. Individuals stated that people who smoked and drank alcohol were not approved of by their families and therefore this had a huge impact on their social networks. It can be seen that over 50% of the South Asian young people had to deal with not only issues in relation to their cultural and social identity; they also have to ensure their family approve of their friendships in particular disapproving friendships with non Muslims and opposite gender:

“I’m not really allowed to say I have friends that are boys into my personal life. For example I can talk to them be friends with them but not to a point that I’m in constant contact with them like I do with my girl friends”
“Limitation of male friends because of religious observances”
“I never listen to my parents they don’t know I talk to boys if they did know they would kill me”

It is concerning that parents to an extent perceived religion as a way of distinguishing ‘good’ and ‘bad’ friendships as perceived by respondents. On the other hand 40% of the participants highlighted their parents supported their social networks and encouraged friends to visit the family home. Participants identified that parents had an overall relaxed approach to their friends coming to the family home. They shared this was partly due to the fact that friends were of the same religion and family background.

Another factor that the participants identified during the research project was the importance of appearance and dress and the impact this had upon them. A fifth of the participants identified that they were not judged by their parents or others by what they wear:

“No I don’t because I think that parents should tell us what to do and what to wear”
“I don’t feel judged in what I wear it doesn’t cause restrictions”

Many were of the view that they ‘did not care’ about what they wore whereas the majority of participants identified that:

“Yes I’m judged but I don’t care”
“My mum complains to me whenever I wear English clothes she says “what if my friends saw you what would they say”
“My friends and uncles judge me but my parents don’t"
“My parents don’t really judge me by the clothes I’m wearing but if I’m wearing something immodest that goes against my religion then they would not allow me to wear it … I know that there are other people within my culture oppose to western form of clothing and sometimes that does effect what I wear if I go visiting my family or friends…. But most of the time I don’t pay much attention”

“Yes if you don’t wear designer clothes people think your cheap if you wear traditional clothes people think your weird”

“When people talk to you about not wearing English clothes I don’t listen to them but I still get judged”

“Yes because people in the community may judge you”

Furthermore approximately 22% of the South Asian young people shared that judgmental views hindered them expressing themselves and their personality, whereas a third of respondents identified that there was no such impact.

“Yes, I wear a scarf and take it off; people will ask questions to why I haven’t worn one. ”
“ I don’t care what people think of me ”

“No-one can stop me for what I wear or don’t wear”

“Yes, they call Pakistani girls sluts if she wears short sleeves”

“Sometimes because people comment on your clothes, hair etc. which can put your confidence down”

“Yes because you don’t like people talking about you or judging you ”

“Yes if I spike my hair my parents think I hang around with the wrong crowd”

A key strand of thought presented in the research has been the concept of wearing a headscarf and the impact of this upon South Asian young people. A common theme has been the ‘forcing’ of and the lack of understanding of why a head scarf has to be worn and the impact of this upon the young people. A majority of the young people identified that they wanted to ‘please’ their parents by wearing the scarf as well as 'pleasing' their friends outside of the home environment by removing it in order to be accepted:

“I think that mostly parents haven’t really explained the concept of why Muslim girls should cover their hair and some girls aren’t really given a choice whether they want to wear a headscarf or not. ”

“They feel embarrassed on the streets, they want to look like their friends”

“Because they want to look good in front of their families and want to act all posh and different cultured in front of their friends”

“I do it because our parents are happy when we wear it, but my friends are white and they don’t get why I wear it”

“Because they showing it for the family not for themselves because they may be religious”

“They show it for their family but then she goes out and she takes it off and shows off a lot”

“Parents force them so they do it please them in that environment”

“Someone might keep on teasing that person so they might take off their scarf in front of their friends”

Participants highlighted that the key influence upon them is their parents but when they leave the home, peer pressure and being ‘accepted’ is just as important. Appearance to parents of their children impacts their perception of them and can be seen as either culturally or religiously acceptable or unacceptable.

Furthermore, when considering career choices participants identified that overall the majority of parents supported their career choices and shared their perspective on future career aspirations.
Parents are supportive of their children in their education and career and it was found that they would guide their children to make the ‘right decision’.

To understand the views of parents in relation to the needs of South Asian children and young people, a focus group was undertaken to ascertain their perspective and what services are needed. The key findings were:

1. **Understanding the needs of South Asian children and young people**: Responses suggest a basic understanding of the physical, emotional and mental impact from parents as their children grow up and the difficulties they can face in school, with their friends and how sometimes children can be different at home and when they are out.

2. **Understanding of the many and varied ways in which parents can impact upon children and young people** – emotionally, behaviourally, socially and educationally

3. **The issues for South Asian families experiencing living in today’s (western) society**: a number of common themes emerged:
   a. **Vulnerability of children and young people** (power difference, understanding of the culture and accepted ‘norms’, home based)
   b. **Difficulties accessing help** (language barriers for parents if they have concerns about their children and who to share these with, fear, perceived lack of understanding amongst white professionals, lack of services for them to access support from and have an understanding of the issues parents face with their children and people and this is also the case for children and young people
   c. **Issues of marriage** – perceived need to have children married so that they do not have a negative impact upon from friends and their peers. Discussed issues of forced marriages and there was a lack of acceptance from parents that such marriages took place.
   d. **Expectations from communities and families for girls to get married**. Role can be perceived as in the home, housewife; by fathers and mothers have a tendency to accept the pressure from their husbands.
   e. **Double identity for boys does it exist?** Mothers have the view that it is difficult to see daughters and sons the same way due to cultural expectations and pressures. Sons do get away with more and this impacts on their daughters
   f. **Significance of extended family and community** - blame and shame associations, expectations that the women will keep the family together and therefore suppress her needs, fear of impact on them, pressures associated with joint families.

4. **What services are needed**:
   a. **Information**: dominant theme was more information about the support services that are available, provided in places that children and young people go to (ESOL classes for parents,

   b. **Promoting services where children and young people are** – clubs, supermarkets, bus stops, toilets, schools, libraries etc).
c. **Also suggested that there should be more services specifically targeted at Asian children and young people** i.e. gender segregated groups, culturally appropriate services delivered by BME workers.

d. **Services should include:**
- support with resolving difficulties
- anger management for children and young people
- self esteem and confidence building work
- support where there is a bereavement in the family

**Theme 3: Professional Understanding of double identity**

**Participant's perceptions and views**

As highlighted South Asian young people have acknowledged the concerning impact of having a double identity, which many young people may find frustrating, confusing and challenging. Young researchers wanted to ascertain the views of professionals however prior to this they identified the need to further exploration the views of participants and wanted to look at where South Asian young people acquire support about how they feel about themselves:

- “Some might keep quiet and others might talk to people”
- “No they cannot tell their families because then they will get killed”
- “Maybe just a few friends, a brother and sister”
- “I think mostly friends as they likely to have peers who are going through the same thing”
- “No I keep it to myself”

It is clear from the views of the participants; friends and siblings provide support when needed as do teachers at school. However there were concerns expressed about trust and being able to share feelings and understand the young person. Furthermore, 50% of participants perceived schools/organisations as being supportive to an extent depending on the issues and whether the professional/organization had the cultural and religious understanding/appropriate services:

- “Yes they do support you a bit”
- “No because no one would listen”
- “Careers advice and school nurse help you sometimes”
- “No not everyone understands”
- “No schools publicise what they have to offer”
- “Yes in school we have a PHSCE lesson and they explain to us what to do when they are in this situation”
- “No I always felt that schools tend to misunderstand the culture that you come from and often makes you uncomfortable in talking about things like that except if they are from an ethnic minority group themselves, they would hold an ethnocentric point of view on the issues and experiences individuals go through”

Participants’ perception of culturally and religiously sensitive services depended on the work that professionals had already done and how they demonstrated this with them. For example being sensitive to festivals, culture and understanding participants' perspective impacted views:
“They respect our religion so then they can understand”
“No because nothing goes on”
“They do they celebrate festivals there is and don’t make us do what we are not supposed to do”
“No I don’t think they would help as they would think what the problem with staying out late is”
“I think that this is definitely improving but I also believe that parents need to be more aware of the impact that their decisions have upon their children and educating parents is essential”
“I am not sure what is out there for people but do realize that many situations are cultural and not religious as many people believe them to be. A greater distinction needs to be made between the two”

A majority of the participants expressed frustrations about accessing services that were culturally and religiously appropriate to their needs. A key strand was the lack of being listened to by professionals and organisations and not being able to access the ‘right’ service for them as individuals:

“Not always there and don’t always listen and don’t do much”
“They don’t always listen to what you say they listen but sometimes its like they are not really listening to what you are trying to say”
“They don’t understand our religion, they just treat us the same”
“There are some things you cannot tell them as they might screw up your life”
“Sometimes we need to ask teachers more than once”
“They might tell your parents so you can’t trust them in my experience they have done this”

Participants were not accessing services for a number of reasons and two thirds identified that this was due to mixed services for males and females and late sessions taking place, and the lack of understanding of religious and cultural needs from professionals.

“Because it is mixed and its most probably a waste of time”
“We are not allowed to go out when me and my boyfriend ‘Mayah’ (I call him a girl’s name because my mum would get suspicious) real name Haroon meet, I say I am going to school”
“Because it was a mixed of boys and white and late hours”
“Because non-muslims might run it and they might do different stuff”
“Sometimes parents restrictions”
“Its mixed and too late and no one would understand”
“They might tell parents about how you feel which could create problems at home”
“Boys being there, Mum does not let me go out”
“May not feel comfortable with mixed gender”
“Because boys are there and Christians won’t understand you”

In the focus group participants were asked about what professionals needed to do to make them feel they could access services:

“Confidentiality”
“Keeping everything private/confidential give advice, person should be off your culture so can understand clearly”
“More services that more young people can go to”
“Other ethnicity would never understand”
“Different culture, need workers from same culture and background to understand where I am coming from”
“Someone who listens to you”
“Child friendly where there is music, surrounded atmosphere. Where you can talk and stuff, bold colours, bright, so it makes their minds feel good”
“Born and bred here, like me and from same ethnicity”

It is clear from the findings that confidentiality and being able to speak to professionals from similar backgrounds and culture, having the understanding of South Asian young people’s experiences would make services more accessible for this group.

**Professionals’ perceptions and views**

As part of the research area, the Originals Peer Research Group identified the need to look at professionals’ perceptions and views of the needs of South Asian children and young people and the impact of service delivery and provision. The professional participants answered 5 questions focusing on their understanding of culture, the needs of South Asian children and young people and improving service delivery for this ethnic group.

Professionals identified that culture is a means of providing identity to individuals who express similarities in beliefs, norms, traditional values and religion. One professional highlighted that in some communities culture does stem from religion as in others culture may have no relation to religion but are rules and traditions being followed by families.

Professionals highlighted that South Asian young people have very complicated and complex needs, which need to be addressed. This could include stigma, barriers, and acceptance in relation to their appearance, culture, religion and behaviour.

“To be accepted with the way they dress which is especially important to young girls because their religion and culture will tell them how to dress”.
“People to understand the reasons for some young people for not participating in certain activities because of their values and beliefs for example mixed gender activities like swimming or PE”
“People to understand the reasons why some young people can not make their own decisions but will have to consult with their parents even when they reach 16 + ”
“People to understand that family plays a big part in their lives and what they do on a daily basis like eating together, praying together, family visits etc”
“People to understand that honor or ‘izzat’ plays a big part in their lives and sometimes dictates how certain members of the family/community should and shouldn’t behave and because of this, there are certain expectations and clearly defined roles for each gender and each member of the family as well as boundaries which they can’t cross.”

“Culture also plays a big part in what kind of career young people can choose to enter into. For example, females entering into nursing will have certain things they might not be able to do due to their cultural and religious beliefs and values.”
“Parents wanting their children to enter into professional careers like doctors, lawyers instead of other careers like hair dresser, musician, artist etc”
Participants clearly demonstrated an understanding that the above findings are issues that support the development of a double identity in South Asian young people. Culture and acceptance is contributing factors as are family and peer influences.

All 3 professionals shared their services employ a BME worker who is allocated to work with South Asian children and families and therefore have developed culturally sensitive approach throughout their work as well as promote good practice within their organisation. With the development of equality and diversity policies, BME workers are now being supported to develop pioneering work and the involvement in service development and provision of this group.

Cultural identity issues that were highlighted which impact South Asian young people were:

**Emotional Health and Well Being**

2 professionals gave examples of physical effects on the body whereas third professional discussed in detail the impact upon emotional health and well-being which has health implications on the individual. It was identified young people diet secretly and could suffer in silence with eating disorders which parents would not be able to identify the symptoms of or know much about.

Professionals were aware that there are concerns about self harm and the impact on the mental health of young people as a whole. There was little awareness of how South Asian young people are affected and also how parents understand such health issues.

“There will be lots of issues which as a young person growing up will have to face in terms of their identity, their sexuality, their rights etc which will be different from the western view and from their parents view.”

The mixed messages of who South Asian young people are and what they should be vary in the home and if they are outside of this environment.

“As they grow up, the western culture is saying to enjoy being young and that they have certain rights. The Asian culture will be saying to act like an adult and to accept certain responsibilities but at the same time be treated like a child because lots of decisions will still be made by their parents and they won’t have a say in the matter even when they reach adult age.”

The impact of this for South Asian young people would be low self esteem, low mood and being unaware of who they could share their concerns with. The additional factor of family expectations increases identity clashes for this group:

“Girls will be told to act and behave in a certain manner and to help their mothers in domestic chores around the house because that’s one of their expectant roles. Girls might not want to do that and could be stressed and feeling it’s not fair that they have to do this when their brothers don’t have to help around”.

Professionals identified key themes in the impact on the social life of South Asian young people due to parents allow a certain degree of freedom to males compared to females in terms of:
• Boys are allowed to go out with their friends and to parties etc
• Girls are restricted to how far they can go from their home and to whose house
• Girls restricted on how long they can go out for and what time they have to be back by
• Certain types of activities and hobbies boys and girls are allowed to participate in
• Girls will feel restricted in fulfilling their potential and learning new things and would feel that their brothers or male members of the family have a head start in life because of the freedom to explore the world outside their home and learn more.
• Often parents will say a woman’s role is inside the home and a man’s role is outside the home
• Education expectations vary for males and females.

It was interesting to see that all 3 professionals who were interviewed agreed there is a need to educate professionals on cultural and religious issues and needs. Specialist services being developed to meet need was also highlighted.

It was reflected in each of the answers given, to establish better working relationships with faith communities and community cohesion so that this can decrease the number of South Asian young people having to pursue a double identity.

The views of the professional group supported the views of the young people in terms of the issues and how this impacts upon their health and well being. The need for services to meet this specific need was also highlighted by both groups.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The findings of this small scale research project was to highlight the views of South Asian young people whether they need to lead a double identity and the impact of religious and cultural issues upon them. Parents and professionals views were also taken into account so a holistic perspective could be ascertained.

The research has focused upon how values, traditions and practices, religion and culture are central to how South Asian young people define themselves and are defined by others within society and the community. In the conclusion there the findings will be presented in accordance to the 3 research questions identified in section 3:

• **Does leading a double identity within South Asian young people exist? If so why and how does it exist?**

The findings support that there is an existence of a double identity in South Asian young people and there was the lack of discussion of this with family members. Participants were able to define what ‘double identity’ meant to them. Being different at home and at school constituted a double identity, thus behaviour and actions changing depending on the setting and environment that they find themselves in. There was acknowledgement that this group was trapped between their culture and traditions and modern Western society. Participants accepted that family pressure and peer pressure were key factors for the existence and negotiation of a double identity.
Leading a double identity would be unnatural and difficult to maintain however a small number of participants were unaware they were leading a double identity until being involved in the research. Friends and school played an important role in identity formulation and external influences allowed South Asian young people to behave in the manner in which they wanted to.

It was identified that changes in behaviour, actions, wanting to be accepted by peers and family as well as in the community were ways in which a double identity existed for South Asian young people. Dress code, appearance and personalities were factors for the existence of a double identity.

South Asian young people led a double identity outside of their family home such as their peers. The way in which they achieved this was by hiding their mobile phones from their family members.

• Why do some South Asian young people feel they have to behave in certain ways within and out of the family home/community/organisations/school etc?

It was found that the family provided specific norms, values and traditions that South Asian young people behave according to. A reason for South Asian young people to behave in certain ways compared to their parents was due to the generation gap and differences in upbringing which would lead to different levels of understanding between them.

Restrictions were accepted in the research and a number of participants felt that this was due to shame, honour and culture within the family. An impact of this was that participants would then also behave differently with their peers and friends to ensure acceptance with them. The media and the extended family have been identified as key factors that impact the behaviour of young people. Family are very supportive of their children in terms of career choices and aspirations which was a very strong finding in the research project.

Peer pressure was a contributory factor for acceptance for the participants and the need to 'fit in' was highlighted. Some participants found that peer pressure was not a contributing factor as their friends were from similar religious and cultural backgrounds, thus not being pressurized to fit in. Furthermore, there was a mutual understanding of family pressure and expectations and therefore when South Asian young people behave in certain ways they are unaware they are leading a double identity.

A key theme was the need for participants to hide information and contacts they had with the opposite gender and peer due to the fear of their family finding out about their personal relationships. A further concern for parents that was identified by participants was the restriction in the friends that they could have in particular if they were not from similar ethnic and religious backgrounds which is a concerning finding. Approval from family was important if social networks were to be maintained.

Participants identified that if they were judged by family this hindered their identity development. The need to be accepted in the home was important and priority for family and for participants however acceptance outside of the family home meant that they would be themselves.

Parents who participated in the research project clearly identified the importance of understanding the needs of South Asian children and young people for them to develop into strong individuals. The issues for South Asian families experiencing living in today's (western) society found key themes including
vulnerability of children and young people, difficulties in accessing culturally sensitive services, issues in relation to marriage for their children and different expectations for boys and girls. Parents identified that services were needed to support children in resolving difficulties, self esteem work and building their confidence.

- **Do professionals and organisations understand the cultural and religious aspects of young people and do they meet their needs?**

It can be concluded the professionals interviewed for this research project had an understanding of the cultural and religious issues that impact children and young people and meeting their needs. However this was a small sample and further research into professionals’ understanding needs to be undertaken. Professionals interviewed identified that culture is a means of providing identity to individuals who express similarities in beliefs, norms, traditional values and religion.

Professionals highlighted that South Asian young people have very complicated and complex needs, which need to be addressed.

This could include stigma, barriers, and acceptance in relation to their appearance, culture, religion and behaviour. Participants clearly demonstrated an understanding that the above findings are issues that support the development of a double identity in South Asian young people. Culture and acceptance is contributing factors as are family and peer influences.

Professionals were aware that there are concerns about emotional health and wellbeing and the impact on the mental health of young people as a whole. There was little awareness of how South Asian young people are affected and also how parents understand such health issues.

It was interesting to see that all 3 professionals who were interviewed agreed there is a need to educate professionals on cultural and religious issues and needs. Specialist services being developed to meet need was also highlighted. It was reflected in each of the answers given, to establish better working relationships with faith communities and community cohesion so that this can decrease the number of South Asian young people having to pursue a double identity.

The views of the professional group supported the views of the young people in terms of the issues and how this impacts upon their health and well being. The need for services to meet this specific need was also highlighted by both groups.

It can therefore be concluded that South Asian young people do lead a double identity and there are concerning factors that impact upon them, such as family, peer pressure, culture and religion. This group of young people has to deal with issues within and outside of the home environment and as identified services need to be developed that address their emotional health and well being. Above all professionals need to develop an understanding of cultural and religious issues if their needs are to be met.

**Our recommendations are as follows:**

- There is a need to educate professionals on cultural and religious issues and needs
• Services need to meet the health and emotional well-being needs of South Asian young people through specialist services being developed
• Appropriate service development for young people from Asian communities, requires their involvement in planning and implementation from the outset, rather than attempting to slot them into services that are not tailored to meet their needs
• Professionals from schools, education, health and social services need to understand how ideas of parenting, childhood and 'youth' differ not only between ethnic groups but also within each sub ethnic group
• Undertaking further evaluation and research with this group of young people with a focus on young South Asian males
• Local authorities need to identify the cultural and social needs of this group in strategic documentation and identify clear needs.

Bibliography


Barnardos – Kirklees Khaandani Dhek Bhal Service, 2007 -2008 Annual Report


Kirklees LA, Children & Young People Plan (2006 -2007)


Appendices

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire for South Asian children and young people

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire for the focus group

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire for Professionals