

# Religion or belief

## Evidence of health inequalities affecting people of different religions

### Demographics

As a district all of the world faiths are present in Bradford and in ascending order include, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Jewish along with other smaller groups such as Baha'i.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the 2001 census 60% of the Bradford population described themselves as Christian, whilst 16% described themselves as Muslim, 1% as Sikh and 1% as Hindu. The district has the largest population of Muslim people and Hindu people in the Yorkshire and Humber region.<sup>2</sup>

### National data

- Among groups defined by religion, Muslim people tend to report worse health than average.<sup>3</sup>
- Ghazala Mir and Aziz Sheikh of the Institute of Health Sciences, University of Leeds have recently published research into the factors, including stereotyping, that affect the psychosocial well-being of Pakistani Muslims and on their ability to manage long-term conditions<sup>4</sup>
- Spiritual interpretations of mental illness can play a crucial part in therapeutic success.<sup>5</sup>
- Stressful life events can lead to mental illness and religion can play a large part in the way that person copes.<sup>6</sup>

### Local data

- In 2010 NHS Bradford and Airedale used Pacesetters funding to identify ways of improving local palliative care services to better meet the needs of Muslims. 29 Muslim participants, who had all had a relative who had used palliative care services in Bradford at the end of their life, were interviewed. This showed that proportionate numbers of

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<sup>1</sup> BTHFT Single Equality & Human Rights Scheme 2009 Draft

<sup>2</sup> Bradford Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

<sup>3</sup> Census data

<sup>4</sup> Fasting and Prayer don't concern the doctors...they don't even know what it is': communication, decision making and perceived social relations of Pakistani Muslim patients with long-term illness, by Ghazala Mir and Aziz Sheikh. *Ethnicity and Health* 2010 Vol 15

<sup>5</sup> Religion or belief – a practical guide for the NHS

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

Muslim people are accessing local services but that there is a need to improve patient experience, particularly at Bradford Teaching Hospitals<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Report not yet published