

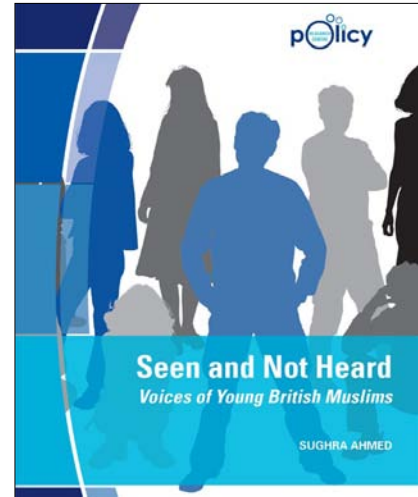
## PRESS RELEASE

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# Young, Muslim and Misunderstood

Much is written about young British Muslims, but what do young Muslims themselves say about the lives they live?

A major new study of Britain's Muslim youth published today argues that young Muslims clearly see themselves as British, but also feel let down in several ways by a society that misreads them - but wastes no time in speaking about them! ***Seen and Not Heard: Voices of Young British Muslims***, by Sughra Ahmed, is the result of 18 months of rigorous research across England, Scotland and Wales listening to and analysing the voices, feelings and aspirations of young people from across the UK.



The report enables female and male voices to express, in their own words, their outlook and how they feel they are perceived, scoping topical issues such as intergenerational challenges, identity, gender, religious teachings, mosques, policing and the media.

Sughra Ahmed, author of the report commented, *“We are used to hearing about young Muslims in the context of radicalisation of Muslim opinion, but their lives are far more complex. They feel a strong sense of patriotism, but also feel let down by voices that do not do justice to their aspirations. Young people are comfortable in negotiating their multiple identities, but some also feel a sense of disconnection from older generations as well as pressure from a society that increasingly stereotypes young people.”*

The findings in this report challenge both British society and the Muslim community to do more to connect with young people and their latent talents. It makes a number of recommendations to policymakers, statutory services and Muslim

communities, including: better and more informed outreach programmes to connect with young people; the need for greater investment in young people to develop their capacity and to create leaders and role models; and the need for initiatives that help bridge inter-generational gaps within the Muslim community.

In the Foreword to the report, the Rt Rev Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester and Chair of the Children's Society writes: *'As this report suggests, "much is written about young Muslims but we rarely seem to actually hear their voices". This report goes a long way to rectifying this issue so that young Muslim voices are heard and valued...'*

*Seen and Not Heard: Voices of Young British Muslims* provides valuable insight into some of the more pertinent questions asked by policy makers, statutory services and community institutions concerning a new generation positioned to make its impact on society.

## **Notes**

1. The author of the report, *Sughra Ahmed*, is a Research Fellow at the Policy Research Centre, she can be reached on: 07800 900 252, or email: [sughra@policyresearch.org.uk](mailto:sughra@policyresearch.org.uk).
2. The average Muslim in Britain is 28 years old (13 years below the national average age); nearly half of all Muslims are below the age of 25; one third are aged 16 or younger.
3. Muslims aged 16 to 25 and from 15 different ethnicities took part in 9 focus groups in England, Scotland and Wales – 45% of those who took part were young women.
4. The Policy Research Centre, based at the Islamic Foundation, specialises in research, policy advice and training on issues related to British Muslims.
5. The report can be downloaded from: [www.policyresearch.org.uk](http://www.policyresearch.org.uk).