

2022

British Sikh Report

An Insight
Into The British Sikh Community



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I. Executive summary

Welcome to the British Sikh Report 2022. This is the ninth in our series of strategic documents created by Sikhs about Sikhs, and for everyone with an interest in the lives of Sikhs in Britain.

The last 12 months have seen immense change throughout the United Kingdom. Having emerged from the pandemic, we are now in the midst of a costs-of-living crisis which is impacting everyone within society, and we have looked at both of these areas within this report. A new head of state in King Charles III and our third Prime Minister in 3 years has added to this feeling of great flux, and the potential impact of this on collective identity is something that we hope to explore in our next report.

BSR is a very well established source of robust and unrivalled statistical information about Sikhs living in Britain. This highly influential annual document has been quoted by MPs and Peers, referred to in research and white papers regarding faith in modern society, and used by public authorities and private companies in identifying the needs of British Sikhs.

Our experienced team has worked with a large and diverse group of Sikh organisations throughout the country to create the questionnaire and collect the data. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has helped us along the way and volunteered their valuable time during such a challenging period of time.

The findings from this year's report include:

- *Costs of Living Crisis*
 - *38% of Sikh women and 25% of Sikh men are finding it difficult to pay their bills*
 - *88% of British Sikhs have had their costs of living increase over the last month*
 - *36% of Sikhs are cutting back on non-essential car journeys*
 - *35% of Sikhs are shopping around more to save money*
- *Covid-19 pandemic*
 - *59% of British Sikhs have had Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic*
 - *21% of British Sikhs who had Covid believe they have long Covid*
 - *29% of Sikhs knew at least 5 people or more who died of Covid during the pandemic*
 - *29% of Sikhs volunteered during the pandemic*

British Sikhs are a strongly proud community with a distinct identity, and whilst some of their concerns are clearly unique to Sikhs, others reflect national trends as can be seen across these pages. As such, this document provides an unparalleled snapshot of what it means to be a Sikh in Britain today.

We hope that you find the British Sikh Report 2022 enlightening, interesting, and most of all, insightful.

Jasvir Singh DBE

2. Impact of cost-of-living ‘tsunami’ on the Sikh community – Jagbir Jhutti-Johal OBE, Professor of Sikh Studies

Background

COVID-19 impacted the UK economy as a whole¹ and highlighted the socio-economic inequalities within society. Throughout the pandemic it was reported that minority ethnic groups have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19² with reference to health outcomes, access to working from home, access to education because of issues regarding access to technology and the internet, and access to outdoor green spaces.

In 2022 the inequalities exposed by COVID-19 are being further exacerbated by the impact of the UK leaving the European Union (Brexit), the climate crisis across the globe, the continuing stop-start strict lockdowns in China, and the war in Ukraine, all of which has resulted in increasing food, petrol and energy prices resulting in a cost-of-living crisis.



*Packing bags for lorry drivers
on Christmas Eve 2020*

Energy Price Caps

In August 2022 it was reported that inflation, as measured by ‘the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), rose by 10.1% in the 12 months to July 2022, up from 9.4% in June’³. In September 2022, the British Government intervened under the new Prime Minister, Liz Truss, to introduce an Energy Price Guarantee to limit the price that suppliers can charge for each unit of energy for households until autumn 2024, with similar support for businesses until April 2023. A variety of grants and rebates also appear as part of the plan to reduce the impact of the energy price increases.

However, for a typical household, it still means that an annual bill will be about £2,500 from 1st October 2022, which is more than twice the amount it was in 2021:

The amount you actually pay depends on the amount of energy you use

How might your bill work out?



Examples are illustrative with prices based on energy price guarantee rates and customers with 2019 median usage, paying for dual fuel by direct debit.

Source: UK Government

BBC

‘What the new Liz Truss energy plan means for you.’
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-62833623>⁴

Rising costs are already having severe impacts on poorer communities and those on benefits. ‘Surging inflation means benefits for working families and the unemployed are at their lowest level in more than a decade.’⁵

Impact on wider society

Despite the current level of state intervention, great concerns remain about how vulnerable people, those with illnesses and disabilities⁶ and larger families will be hardest hit by the costs of living crisis.

*'A miserable winter is still on the cards for millions of households with inflation at a 40-year-high of 9.9 per cent, sending the price of consumer goods and fuel rocketing while wages stagnate'*⁷

A 2022 report by Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁸ highlighted:

- Low-income families have fallen behind on payments by an average of £1,600
- About 7 million households - equivalent to every family in the north of England - have missed out on essentials like heating, toiletries or showers because they couldn't afford it this year, or didn't have enough money for food last month
- 1.3m low-income households (11%) have used credit to cover essentials this year

The ONS⁹ highlighted that

- Around three in four adults (77%) reported feeling very or somewhat worried about the rising costs of living.
- Those most likely to report feeling very or somewhat worried about the rising costs of living included women (81%, compared with 73% of men); those aged 30 to 49 years (82%) and 50 to 69 years (77%), compared with 70% of those aged 70 years and above; disabled people (82%, compared with 75% of non-disabled people); and those living with a dependent child aged 0 to 4 years (90%, compared with 76% of non-parents or parents not living with a dependent child).

The impact of soaring energy and food prices are already being felt by many families on low incomes who are already being forced to make tough choices, but as prices continue to rise throughout the year many are turning to food banks and other charities for support. Food banks have reported an increase or significant increase in the need for their services since the start of 2022. The Trussell Trust in their mid-year statistics report reported that

*"Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, food banks in the Trussell Trust's UK wide network distributed over 2.1 million emergency food parcels to people in crisis. This is an increase of 14% compared to the same period in 2019/20. 832,000 of these parcels went to children."*¹⁰

Alongside this, a national charity Women's Aid reported that the cost of living is preventing women from fleeing domestic abuse.

"The current cost-of-living crisis has been devastating to survivors of domestic abuse."

"We know that domestic abuse and economic abuse go hand in hand, with abusers often controlling every aspect of a woman's life."

*"The soaring energy and food costs will leave many women more vulnerable to abuse."*¹¹

A *Guardian* report highlighted how 'City workers have received double-digit wage rises while people on the lowest incomes were paid annual increases of just 1% in the last year, and how that means that better-paid workers will be able to protect themselves from the cost-of-living crisis.' The report also highlighted how Professional, scientific and IT sector workers also saw wage growth peak in February at 12.7%.¹²

The cost-of-living crisis will "deepen racial inequality" as soaring prices disproportionately impact people from ethnic minority groups. The *London Poverty Profile* revealed 27 per cent of households in the capital are living in poverty. For Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, the proportion of people living in poverty is far higher at 39 per cent - almost four in 10.¹³

Impact on British Sikh Community

What is clear is that we are again in a crisis which is having an impact on all communities and this is true for the Sikh community.

The above data from the ONS and Joseph Rowntree Foundation is also echoed by the British Sikh Report data collected in early 2022, before the latest increases in fuel prices were announced. Even then, the data highlights that Sikhs were experiencing the same issues as other members of the British population, and are likely to be doing so even more now.

32% of British Sikhs said that they were finding it difficult or very difficult to pay bills (40% of women

and 25% of men). 75% reported that their gas and electricity bills had increased, and 20% said that their rent or mortgages had increased. Over 70% reported being hit by increasing food and fuel prices, with 35% shopping around more than before to find the cheapest prices. 50% of women and 40% of men reported spending less on non-essentials. Over a third are using less gas and electricity, and also cutting back on non-essential car journeys. 41% reported finding it somewhat difficult to afford energy bills, and another 14% found it very difficult.

36% of women and 30% of men said that they would not be able to save any money in the coming year. 26% reported having had to borrow more this year than last year, and a similar percentage said that they would not be able to pay an unexpected bill of over £850. 11% reported a reduction in their income, and 23% are now using their savings to cope with living costs. 13% now have more credit in the form of loans, overdrafts and credit card debts, and 5% are also borrowing money from friends and family. 9% reported working longer hours to help cope with increasing costs.

The Sikh community is a successful community and the vast majority of members have not normally relied on food banks or charity. Instead, they have provided food and support to others in need due to the theological concept of *seva* and *vand chakana* (selfless service) which enable spiritual growth and facilitate moral and ethical living. They emphasize an individual's social responsibility to ensure the well-being of society.¹⁴

*In the midst of this world, do seva,
and you shall be given a place of honour in the
Court of the Lord. (Guru Granth Sahib: Ang 26)*¹⁵

However, in the current situation some Sikh families (1%) have said that they are starting to use foodbanks and are using them more.

Like in all communities conversations are being had by middle-aged Sikhs in well to do jobs on how they will support children and ageing parents through this cost of living crisis.

The Sikh community has also engaged in social action in the United Kingdom. The theological teaching of *seva* (selfless service) has always encouraged the notion of "Big Society" and social engagement. As a result, all Sikh *Gurdwaras* have used this ethical requirement as a means of bolstering local communities through civic engagement, whether it be "inward civic engagement" aimed at improving

the wellbeing of the Sikh community or "outreach or outward civic engagement" service for the good of the wider community. It was noted in the 2016 British Sikh Report that "Sikhs in the UK are estimated to donate about £125 million to charity per annum and spend over 65 million hours each year on voluntary activities."¹⁶

A distinctive Sikh activity of social action is *langar*. *Gurdwaras* in the Diaspora serve *langar* to non-Sikhs, performing a function analogous to food banks and soup kitchens who support homeless people and those working in low-paid jobs.¹⁷ In the United Kingdom, however, in recent decades we have seen a new role for *langar* in response to welfare cuts: *langar* is now being taken out of the *Gurdwara* by young Sikhs to feed the homeless. One organisation that has done this is Midlands Langar Sewa, which feeds the homeless in Birmingham. Their activity has branched out into other areas, such as Coventry and Leicester. In London, there is the Nishkam Sikh Welfare and Awareness Team (SWAT) which provides food to the homeless every day at various locations across the South East. Another example is Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara in Gravesend, which decided to take *Langar* to those who needed it when the country went into lockdown in March 2020, and *Gurdwaras* had to close their doors. They delivered *Langar* daily to vulnerable persons of all communities, as well as to NHS staff working long shifts, local care homes and a hospice. When lorry drivers became stuck at Dover at Christmas 2020, they also supplied thousands of meals to their lorries stuck on the M20 motorway. In total, over 160,000 meals were delivered during the lockdowns.

These organisations cater overwhelmingly to individuals who are not Sikh. Such groups work with humility and the absence of ego, hence a lack of self-promotion or engagement in politics, because to do so would be to take away from the religious element of the activity, which is selfless service.

Vand Chakana: "Eat after sharing with others"

This principle encompasses acts of *seva* (selfless service) and compassion. People are encouraged to work hard and honestly for a living and to share the fruits of their labor.¹⁸ As we saw earlier, the highest objective of human life is the remembrance of God's name, so there is a great emphasis on *seva* and the concept of selflessness (*nishkamta*). Although the concept of selflessness is present in Hinduism and

other religions of India, the Sikh Gurus make selfless service the central tenet of the Sikh Dharam and link it to the ideal of God-realization. *Seva* mandates a complete dedication to giving without expecting any material or spiritual reward in return. Such service cultivates qualities such as altruism, commitment, and sincerity. It is those individuals who serve without any desire for reward who achieve liberation because they destroy their ego by cultivating humility and the ultimate union with God. Furthermore, there are many references in the Sikh Sacred Scripture that illustrate the importance of service to one's Guru - service which can be interpreted as service to the eternal Guru by following the teachings presented in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. It is emphasized that through this service, one can become closer to God and gain peace.

Sikhs are also taught that they must then share their earnings (*Vand Chakana*) with others.

O Nanak, in the world hereafter, one only receives what one gives to the needy in this world from their earnings and labour. (Guru Granth Sahib: Ang 472)

A minimum of a tenth is stipulated (*Dasvandh*), but it is also reminded that in essence, one's body, mind and wealth all belong to God, and therefore there is no limit to what can be shared with others.

However, this is not always possible due to personal circumstances and external factors. Harmeet Singh, the General Secretary of Sri Guru Singh Sabha Southall with reference to COVID-19 noted in 2020 how 'For Sikhs, donating 10 per cent of income is a core tenet of the faith, but as people lose jobs and struggle financially this becomes difficult.'¹⁹

This is true in 2022. As inflation erodes real disposable income people are giving less to charity because of the rising cost of living. Like all communities, members of the Sikh community have also been affected by rising inflation, higher food and fuel prices which is impacting their donations to *Gurdwaras* and Charities. Although as during the pandemic, faith communities are once again supporting members of their own and other faith communities, this time they themselves are also not immune to the rising costs of food and utility bills. The cost of producing *langar* to serve at the *Gurdwara* or distribute to the homeless is proving difficult due to rising energy and fuel costs and rising food prices alongside an increase in footfall.²⁰

In terms of volunteering to cook and distribute food, the cost-of-living crisis is having a negative impact

because less people are volunteering because they are working more to make ends meet.

Nevertheless, as inflation continues to rise and donations diminish Sikhs will continue to serve those in need because they will be reminded:

O Nanak, how shall I tell them this? Without the karma of good deeds, they are only destroying themselves (Guru Granth Sahib: Ang 147).

and failing to do so:

With great effort and exertion, the miser works to gather in the riches of Maya.

He does not give anything in charity or generosity, and he does not serve the Saints; his wealth does not do him any good at all. (Guru Granth Sahib: Ang 712)

It is highly likely that those Sikhs who have greater financial security will increase the level of their support for others due to the conscious attitude towards service and charity, and whilst the *sangat* (congregation) themselves may feel the pinch of financial stress and *Gurdwaras* are facing increasing overhead costs, Sikhs who can afford it will continue to do their duty and serve those who have been negatively impacted by this cost of living crisis.

In conclusion, the reality is that currently rapidly increasing living costs may be a greater financial challenge for some Sikhs than the Covid pandemic, and it is also clear that like the rest of the UK population many Sikhs, especially pensioners and those on Universal Credit will feel the increased living costs. Middle income Sikhs are not immune to the cost-of-living crisis and will also struggle to afford the 80% energy price cap hike. In an interview in late August, the then Chancellor, Mr Nadhim Zahawi highlighted that:

*"If you are a senior nurse or a senior teacher on £45,000 a year, you're having your energy bills go up by 80% and will probably rise even higher in the new year – it's really hard."*²¹

In her first speech as Prime Minister, Liz Truss has made it clear that tackling energy prices will be one of her priorities, and action is being taken to ensure that the impact isn't felt as strongly as it could be. However, it will take some time before we know whether the steps taken have been enough to help people cope with the other aspects of the costs of living crisis.

According to the British Sikh Report 2022 survey 60% of respondents have a graduate level qualification or above and 62% are in full time employment, with a further 9% in part time employment and 10% are self-employed.

1. British Sikhs have: an 81% employment rate, compared to about 75% for the country (based on the ONS' Labour Force Survey).
2. The top sectors in employment for British Sikhs in 2022 are Public Service, Charity and Social Work (7%); Healthcare (14%); Teaching and Education (9%); Accountancy and Financial Management (6%); and IT and Technology (8%).²²

Whatever someone's status is it is clear that greater support will be required, and whilst the 'make-do and help others' Sikh attitude is helpful as part of the 'Big Society' approach, some Sikhs will undoubtedly fall through the gaps because of the general assumption that all Sikhs are financially well off. It is imperative that we look beyond stereotypes and assumptions about Sikhs, and this is where the changing data about British Sikhs is fundamental to a better understanding of a diverse, dynamic and complex community such as the British Sikh community.



Langar being prepared and delivered at Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara (Gravesend) and delivered to vulnerable persons, NHS staff and lorry drivers stuck at Dover during the lockdowns.



Notes

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- ² Butcher, Benjamin & Massey, Joel. 19 June 2020. 'Why are more people from BAME backgrounds dying from coronavirus?' BBC <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52219070>. Also See 'Covid-19 and how it affects Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and communities'. *Race Equality Foundation* <https://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/health-care/lockdown-2-briefing/> [Accessed 21 July 2022]
- ³ King, Andy. 17 August 2022. 'Consumer price inflation, UK: July 2022.' *Office for National Statistics* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/july2022> [Accessed 30 August 2022]
- ⁴ Peachey, Kevin. 12 September 2022. 'What the new Liz Truss energy plan means for you' *BBC News* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-62833623> [Accessed 21 September 2022]
- ⁵ 'Charities underpin the UK's social safety net as cost of living crisis bites.' *Financial Times* <https://www.ft.com/content/4a1c4833-30e5-47e3-acd0-4588c83b53c0> [Accessed 8 August 2022]
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- ¹⁰ The Trussell Trust End of Year Stats 2022. <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/end-year-stats/> [Accessed 1 August 2022]
- ¹¹ Lggulden, Caroline. 1 August 2022. 'I visited this refuge centre in Leeds twice a week – they helped rebuild my life, reveals Mel B.' *The Sun*. https://www.thesun.co.uk/tvandshowbiz/19390252/women-refuge-centre-leeds-domestic-violence-melb/?utm_medium=Social&utm_campaign=sunmaintwitter&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1659421865-1 [Accessed 1 August 2022] Also see Davidge, Sarah. 'The cost of living is preventing women from fleeing domestic abuse.' <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-cost-of-living/> [Accessed 8th August 2022]
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- ¹⁸ "One who works for what he eats, and gives some of what he has - O Nanak, he knows the Path." *Ibid.*, Guru Granth Sahib: Ang 1245
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- ²⁰ Monday 4 April 2022. 'Food, fuel and faith: The impact of the cost of living crisis in Cardiff's Sikh community.' <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-04-04/how-the-cost-of-living-crisis-is-affecting-cardiffs-sikh-community> Also see 3 June 2022 'Gurdwara offers free meals amid cost of living crisis.' <https://www.asianimage.co.uk/news/north-of-england/20185524.ramgarhia-gurdwara-bradford-offering-langar-amid-cost-living-crisis/> [Accessed 1 August 2022]. See also Religion and Media Centre Podcast with Harmeet Singh Gill <https://t.co/oDVprXEpDK>
- ²¹ ITV News. 27 August 2022 Chancellor Nadhim Zahawi warns middle-income earners will struggle with rising energy bills too <https://www.itv.com/news/2022-08-26/chancellor-suggests-those-on-45000-could-struggle-with-sky-high-bills> [Accessed 1st September 2022]
- ²² British Sikh Report survey data 2022 and ONS LFC [Accessed 5th September 2022]

3. British Sikh report 2022: survey introduction

This is the ninth British Sikh Report (BSR), which has now become an established annual snapshot describing the lives of Sikhs in Britain, collecting their views on topical issues. This year's survey received over 2,000 responses spread across the United Kingdom, providing a reliable and unbiased sample of British Sikhs. The survey was primarily conducted online, as in previous years, but there was a concerted effort to supplement that sample with paper questionnaires to reach those without internet access. Responses were monitored and particular areas of shortfall were targeted to ensure that the overall sample is representative of Sikhs in Britain in terms of age group, gender, marital status and region. All responses were scrutinised and validated by applying a range of checks, and several were rejected because they were assessed to be false. The resultant sample of 2,000 is considered to be a very robust and reliable representation of all British Sikhs. The sample has also been assessed against the information on British Sikhs available from the 2011 Census. After allowing for expected changes between 2011 and 2022, the sample distributions by age and region are very close to what we would expect.

The BSR aims to collect British Sikhs' views on various aspects of life. This year's questionnaire has again focused on a range of issues that are particularly

affecting the lives of British Sikhs now, asking questions about topics such as the cost of living, impacts of Covid and attitudes towards vaccinations. This year's survey has also asked questions about blood and organ donation, health services' waiting times, general health and fitness, volunteering and donations, and people's knowledge of using CPR to assist someone having a heart attack.

The survey also sought data on identity, ethnicity, observance of the five Kakaars, wearing of the Dastaar, and about whether respondents are Amritdhari Sikhs. The BSR continues to collect basic demographic information on age, gender, marital status, disability and place of residence, as well as on employment and qualifications. We also collect information on place of birth and first arrival to Britain if not born here every year.

We now have several years' worth of raw data about the Sikh community and we are looking to work with academics and universities in order to take longer term deeper dives into what that data reveals about British Sikhs.

The following sections summarise the results of the information collected through the BSR survey questionnaire.



4. Demographics of the survey

The BSR 2022 survey received over 2,000 valid responses, lower than the 2020 record total of 2,700 responses. However, the sample is a good representation of the distributions of British Sikhs by age, marital status and region of residence.

Just over 50% of the responses were from women, 49% from men, and about 0.7 per cent preferred not to declare their gender.

Around 11% of respondents said that they are Amritdhari, 86% said that they are not, and 3% preferred not to say whether they are Amritdhari or not.

4% of the responses were from those aged 19 or less, 18% from 20 – 34 year olds, 44% from those aged 35 – 49, 25% from those aged 50 – 64, and

8% from those aged 65 and above. We would like to increase the sample of the elderly, but this is not considered to have significant effects on the results of the survey in terms of the topics covered.

Around 27% of Sikhs responding live in London, and 28% in West Midlands. The regions with the next largest Sikh population are the South East, with 15%, and East Midlands with 9%.

About two thirds of respondents are married, and a fifth are single. About 7% said that they are divorced.

93% of respondents said that they were heterosexual, 2% said that they were in a LGBT+ category, and 5% declined to declare their sexual orientation.



5. COVID-19 and its impact

The Covid-19 pandemic led to the first lockdown in March 2020 in the United Kingdom. People with certain medical conditions and the very elderly were identified as being clinically extremely vulnerable or at high risk of being impacted by Covid-19. As the pandemic progressed through the following two years, it became apparent that some ethnic and faith groups were sustaining higher rates of infection and deaths than others.

The BSR 2022 survey asked British Sikhs about their experiences of the impact of Covid-19 on their lives. These varied significantly within the community, particularly between members of different age groups. Overall, 14% said that they had been identified as being at high risk or clinically extremely vulnerable (15% for females and 12% for males). The variation between age groups was much higher, with only 3% of those aged 19 or less in the vulnerable category, rising to 20% for those aged 50 and over. (See Figure 5.1)

When asked whether they had contracted Covid, 60% of females and 58% of males said yes. The lowest rate was among those aged 65 and above, at 44%, while the age groups between 20 and 64 all reported around 60%. 53% of those aged 19 or below reported having had Covid-19.

Of those who had had Covid-19, 25% of females and 21% of males had it twice, and around 4% of both had it 3 or more times. Over 30% of those aged 20-34 had Covid more than once, the age group with the highest incidence of multiple infections during the pandemic. Those aged 65 or more had the lowest percentage with multiple infections, at 14%.

A condition known as “Long Covid” has been identified amongst people who are suffering continuing long term impacts of the illness on their health which can last for months and even years afterwards. According to ONS statistics published in September 2022, 2 million people in the UK said that they had Long Covid as of end of July 2022, namely 3.1% of the entire population. This is around 4.2% of everyone in the country who has had Covid.

Figure 5.1

Have you been identified as High Risk or clinically extremely vulnerable?

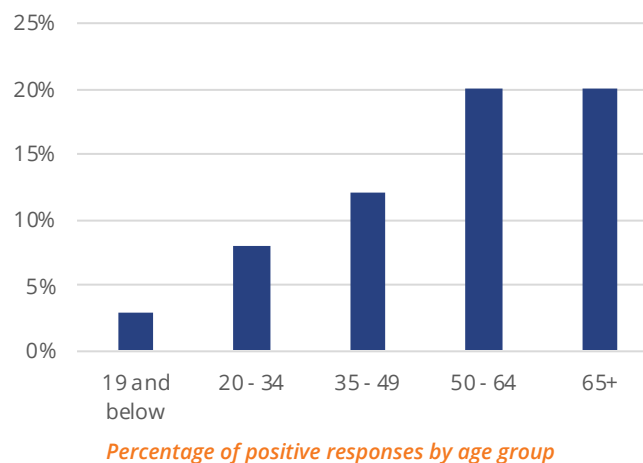
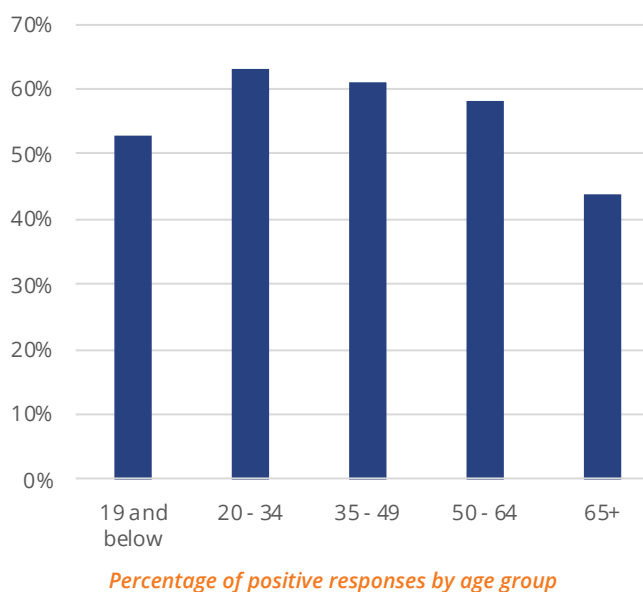


Figure 5.2

Have you had COVID?



However, the BSR has found that, of those British Sikhs who had had Covid, 24% of females and 17% of males said that they thought they are suffering from Long Covid.

Figure 5.3

If you have had Covid, how many times have you had it?

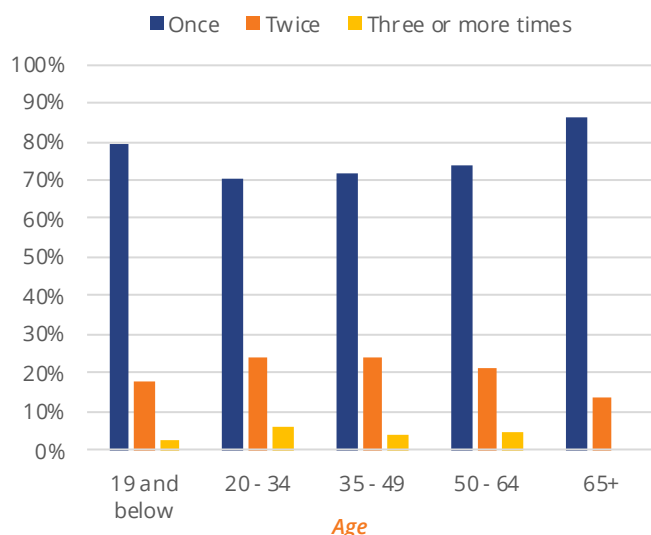
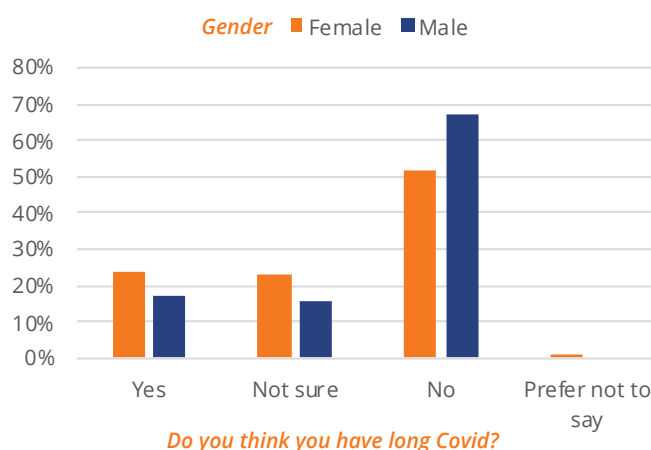


Figure 5.4

If you had Covid, do you believe you may now have long Covid?

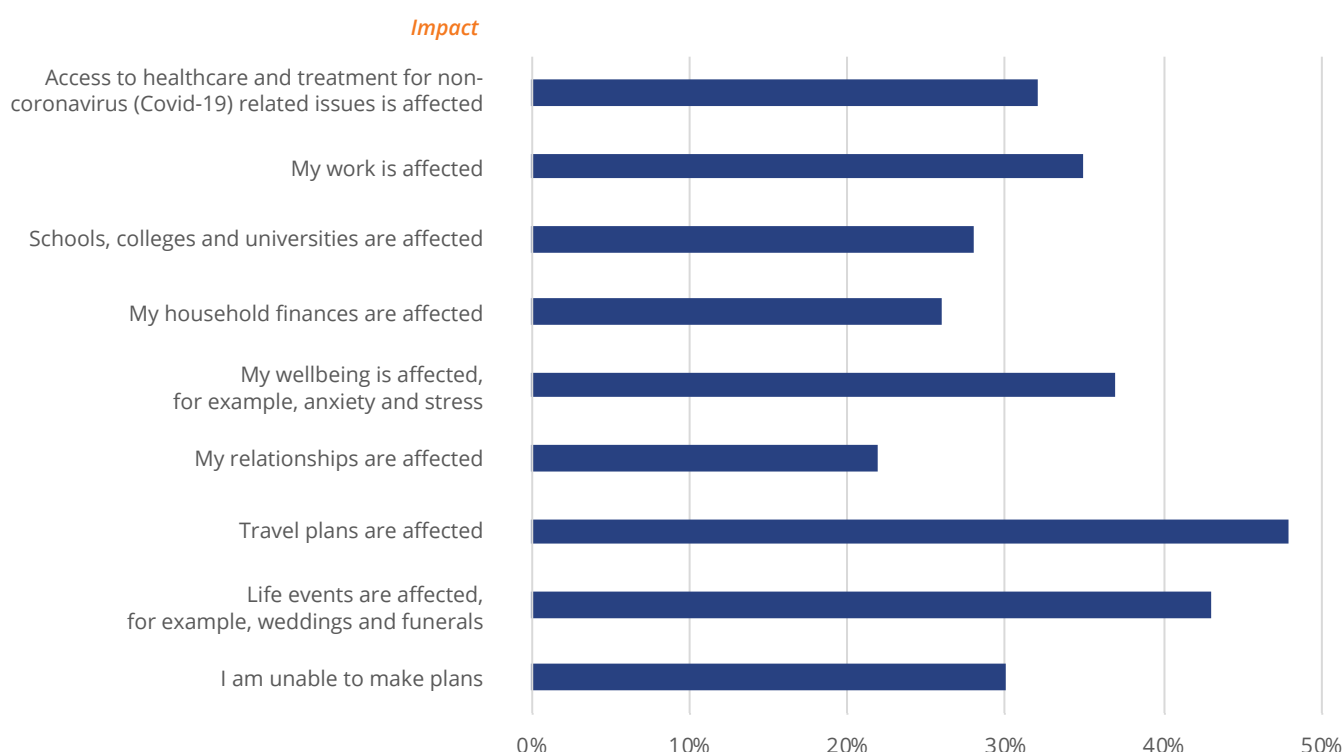


The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic has been devastating, impacting on all our lives in one way or another.

The BSR survey asked British Sikhs about how the pandemic has affected them up to March 2022 and since then, and the responses are shown in Figures 5.5 and 5.6 respectively.

Figure 5.5

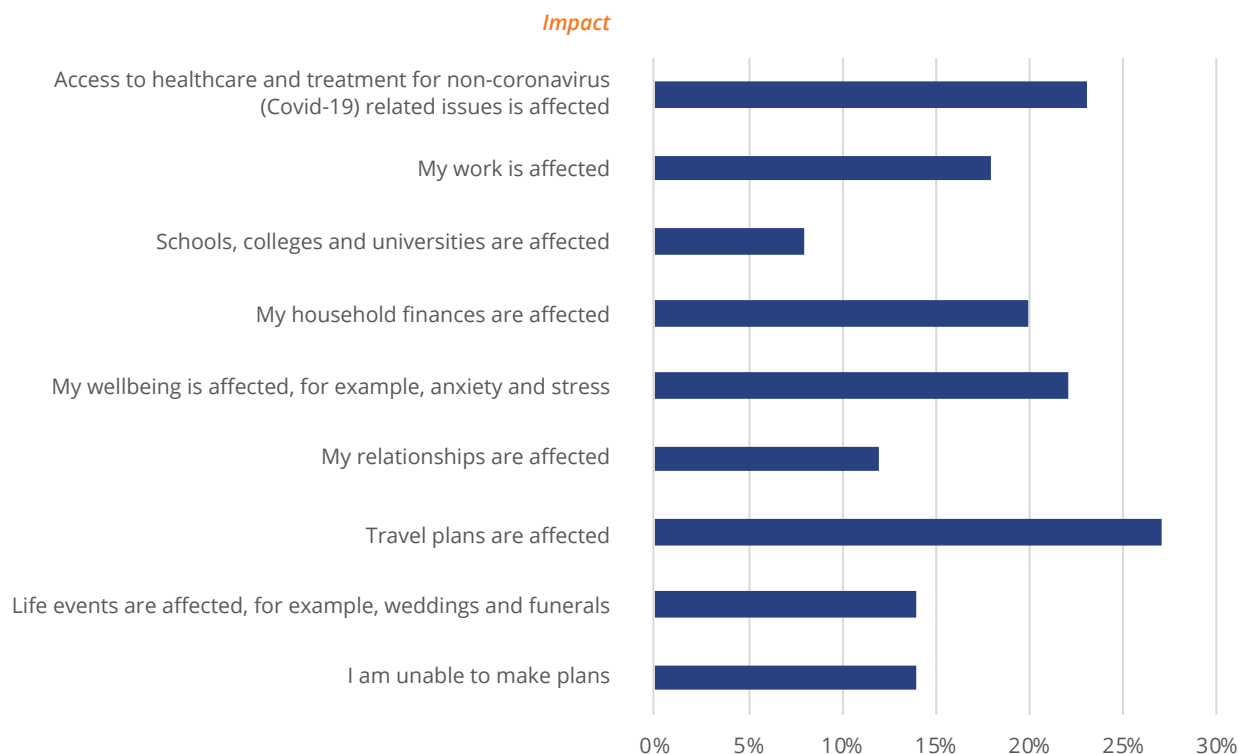
In which ways has the pandemic affected your life up to March 2022?



The greatest impact on British Sikhs up to March 2022 was on travel plans, with nearly 50% being affected, followed by life events such as weddings and funerals. About one third reported impacts on their wellbeing, their work and access to healthcare and treatment.

Figure 5.6

In which ways is the pandemic affecting your life now?



Post pandemic, over a quarter of respondents say that their travel plans remain affected. Nearly a quarter are still feeling the impacts on access to healthcare and treatment, and on their wellbeing. Schools, colleges and universities are least affecting people's lives now.

COVID-related deaths

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to the loss of life worldwide and presented unprecedented challenges to public health, global economies and the world of work. In June 2020 and May 2021, ONS published data and analysis of deaths associated with Covid-19 in England, broken down by religion. The fully adjusted figures showed that Sikhs in England had a significantly lower mortality rate associated to Covid-19 during the first wave of the pandemic (defined as 24th January to 11th September 2020) than Buddhists, Muslims, and Jews for men, while for women the differences were not significant. However, there was a significant increase in mortality of Sikh men and women during the second wave (12th September 2020 onwards), while those of Buddhists and Jews declined significantly.

Respondents were asked whether they knew anyone who had died of Covid (Figure 5.7). Over 60% of all respondents said yes, with over 75% of those aged over 65 saying yes, compared with under 50% for those in the 20-34 year age group.

Figure 5.7 shows that, of those who knew someone who had died of Covid, 29% knew of 5 or more such deaths. This highlights the devastating impact that Covid has had on the British Sikh community over the last three years, particularly among the elderly, with 38% of those aged over 65 reporting that they knew of 5 or more Covid-related deaths.

Figure 5.7

Have people you know died of Covid?

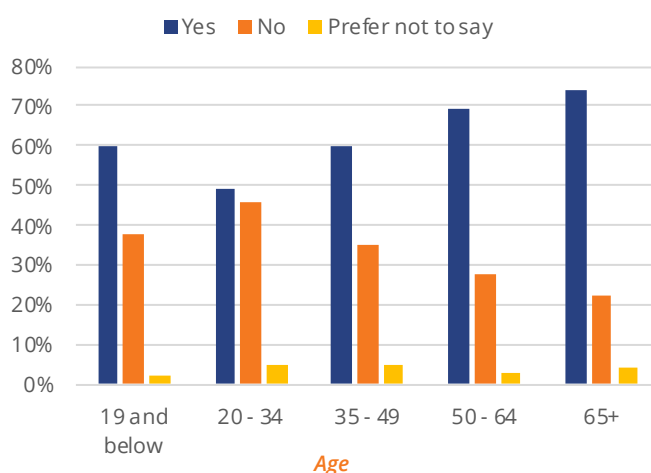
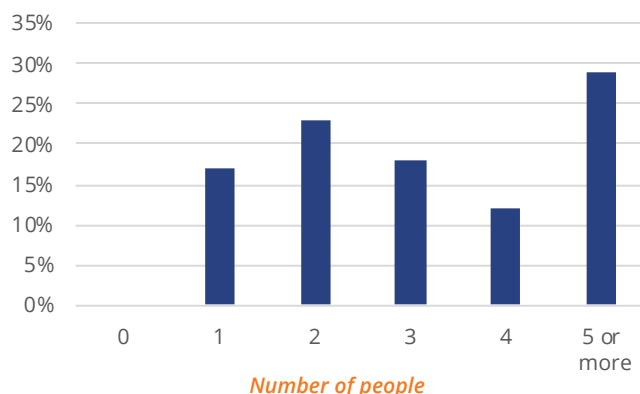


Figure 5.8

How many people do you know who died of Covid?



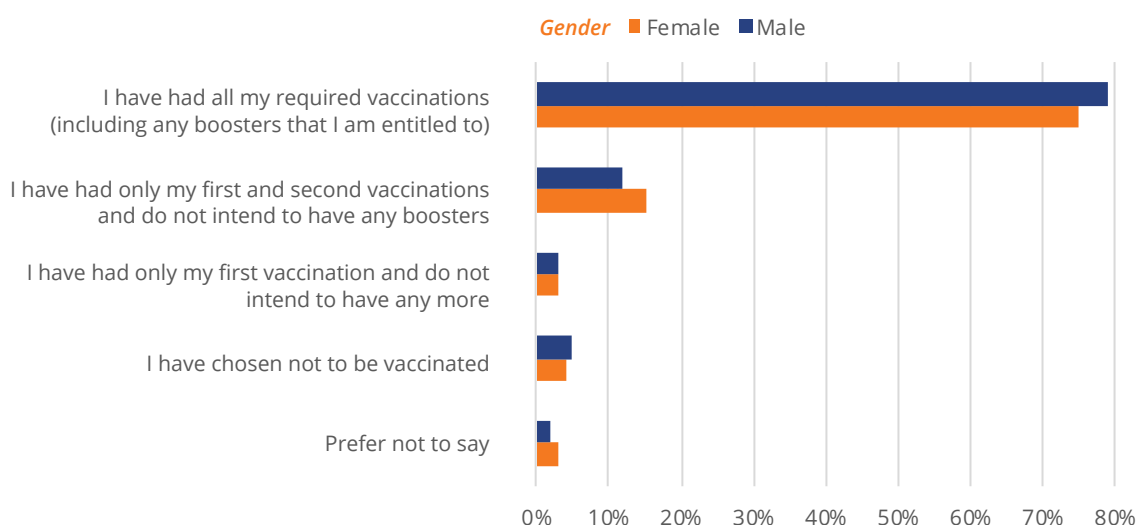
Vaccinations

Vaccinations have been particularly important in the fight against Covid-19, with the government putting in place arrangements for the initial two doses of vaccine, followed by an ongoing programme of boosters. The BSR survey asked respondents about their status in respect of vaccinations.

77% of respondents said that they had received all vaccinations that they were entitled to receive, and 14% said that they had received the first two, but did not intend to have any boosters. 3% said that they only had one vaccination and did not intend having any more, and 5% had chosen not to be vaccinated at all. There was not much difference between females and males in this breakdown.

Figure 5.9

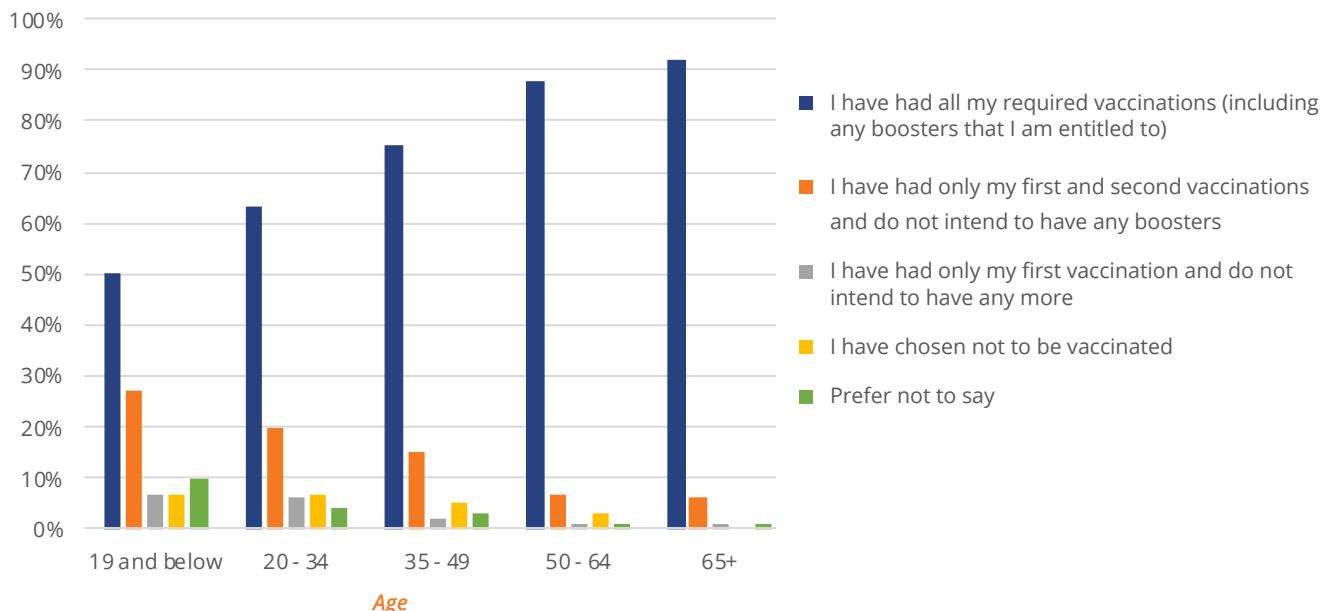
Which of the following statements apply in terms of vaccinations (by gender)



However, there is large variation between age groups on take-up of vaccines. 92% of those aged 65 or more have had all the vaccinations that they have been entitled to, compared with just 50% of those aged 19 or less, with the percentage increasing gradually through the age groups. 7% of those aged 34 or below have chosen not to have any vaccinations, compared with hardly any of those aged 65 or more.

Figure 5.10

Which of the following statements apply in terms of vaccinations (by age group)



Those who had not taken any boosters were asked the reason for not doing so. The most common reason given was that they did not think that the boosters would give any extra protection (40% of males and 27% of females). 23% of both males and females said that they were worried about long term effects on their health. 15% of females and 9% of males said that they had a bad reaction to earlier doses of the vaccine. A further 14% of females and 12% of males said that they were worried about having a bad reaction to the booster jabs.

Figure 5.11

Reason why booster not taken (by gender)

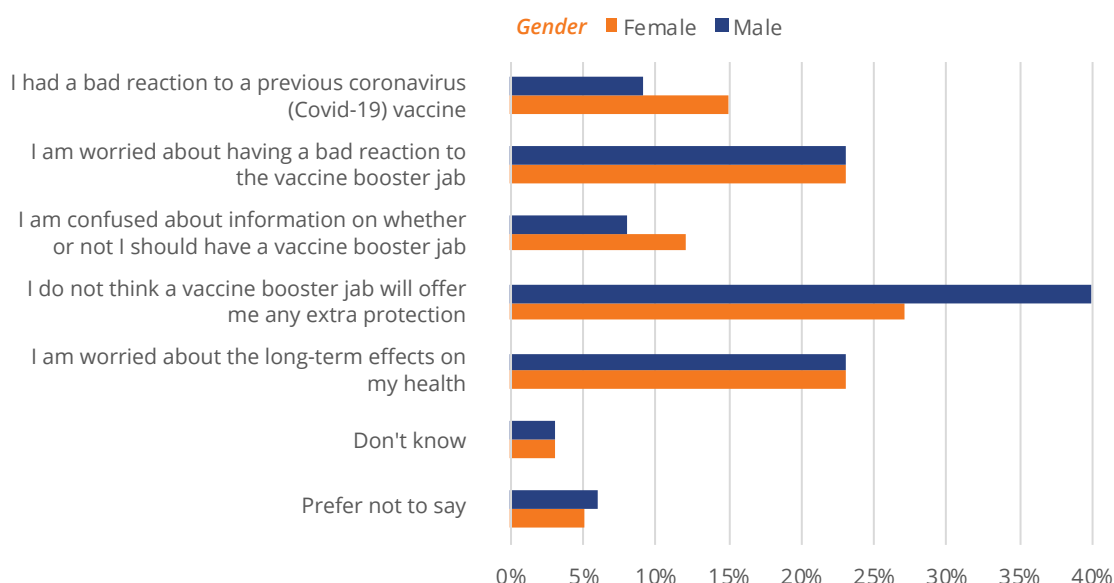
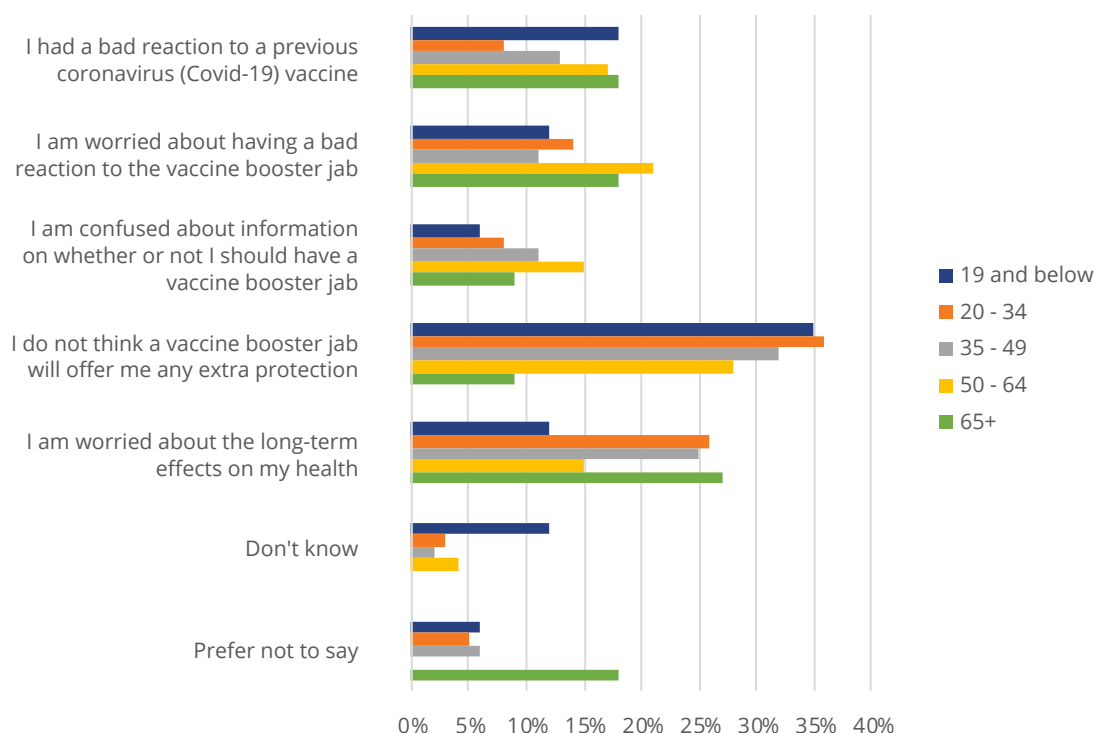


Figure 5.12

Reason why booster not taken (by age group)



Concerns about vaccine

When asked about concerns regarding the vaccines, the following responses were the most common:

- I was worried about side effects (30%)
- I was worried about the long-term effects on my health (21%)
- I was worried that the vaccine may not work (9%)
- I would have preferred to wait to see how well the vaccine works (8%)
- I was worried about the effect on an existing health condition (8%)
- I was worried about the effect on being able to have children in the future (5%)

Access to information about Covid

Access to reliable information during the pandemic was essential in controlling the spread and reducing chances of contracting the disease. BSR survey respondents were asked about their main sources of information about Covid. 41% said that their main source of information was mainstream TV and news, 10% said mainstream newspapers and magazines, and another 10% learnt about developments through word of mouth. Social media (Facebook and Twitter) accounted for 16%, while Sikh TV and Radio channels were relied upon by another 10%.

29% of females and 34% of males said that their gurdwara provided specialist advice and services during the pandemic, with 44% of those aged 65 or more saying likewise. 25% said that their gurdwara did not provide such information, and 42% said that they were not sure or did not know if their gurdwara was providing such a service.

6. Health services waiting times

NHS waiting times and access to social care services have been prominent in public and political debate for many years. During the pandemic the NHS was overwhelmed and stretched further than ever before, and the media would often describe the pressure points on the NHS as pushing it to “breaking point”. One aspect that was particularly impacted during this time was the NHS’s capacity to deal with non-Covid health conditions and ‘routine’ appointments.

The BSR 2022 survey asked “Have you been able to access NHS health and social care services for non-Covid related conditions during the last two years? By that, we mean accessing your GP, consultant appointments, Community Mental Health Team, home carer visits and other such services for health conditions which were not due to Covid”.

About two thirds of respondents said that they were able to access the NHS and social care services for non-Covid related conditions in the past two years during the pandemic, while just under 30% said that they could not. This was also similar across all age groups and for both men and women.

Figure 6.3 shows that waiting times for health services varied across the range of services provided by the NHS. Longer than one month waiting times were reported by 25% of respondents for dental appointments and 21% for early stage/initial assessments with consultants, the two areas with the longest waiting times.

Figure 6.1

Have you been able to access NHS health and social care services for non-Covid related conditions during the last two years? (by age group)

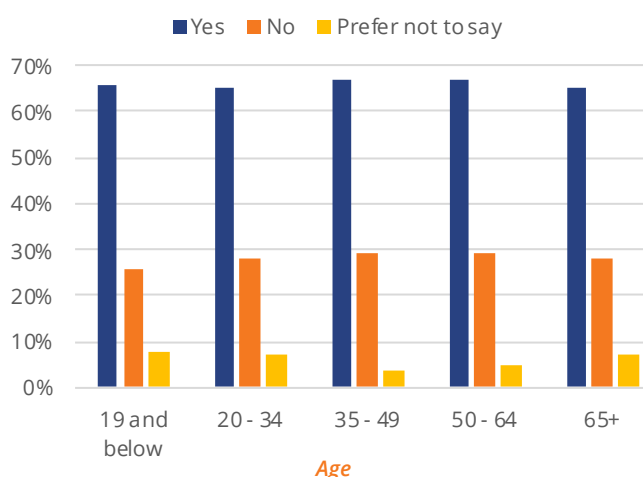


Figure 6.2

Have you been able to access NHS health and social care services for non-COVID related conditions during the last two years? (by gender)

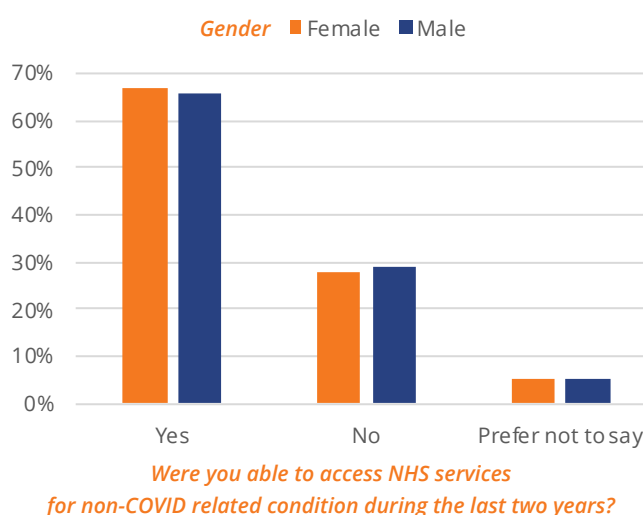
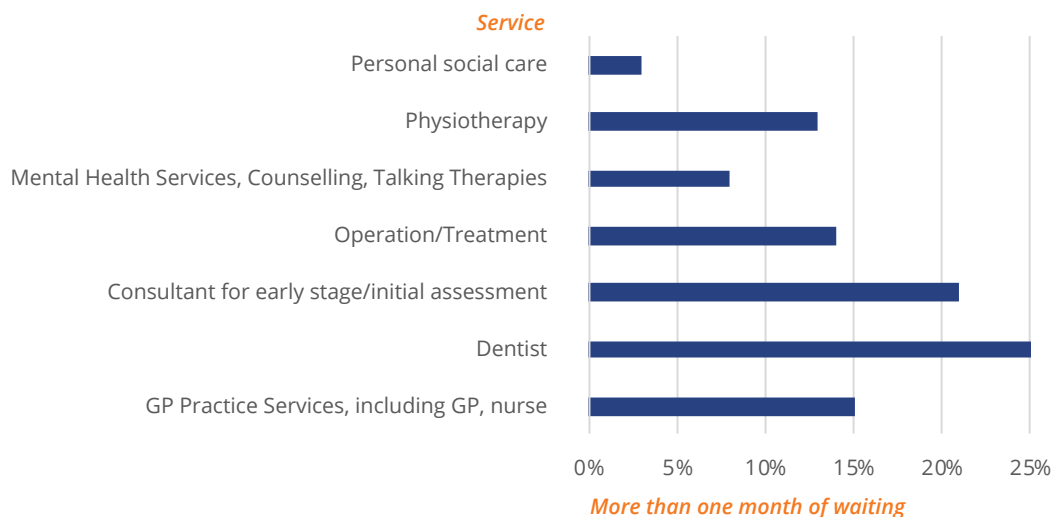


Figure 6.3

Waiting for an appointment longer than one month in last two years?



7. General health and fitness

The repeated lockdowns and restrictions during the course of the pandemic on various activities have adversely affected many people's health. The BSR 2022 survey asked respondents about their perceptions of their own health, fitness, diet and obesity. The results are below.

Overall health was described as excellent or good by 52% of women and 62% of men, and bad or poor by 12% of women and 7% of men. By age, 47% of those aged 65 or more reported excellent or good health, compared with over 60% of those aged 34 or less.

Overall health

Figure 7.1

How would you describe your overall health at present? (by gender)

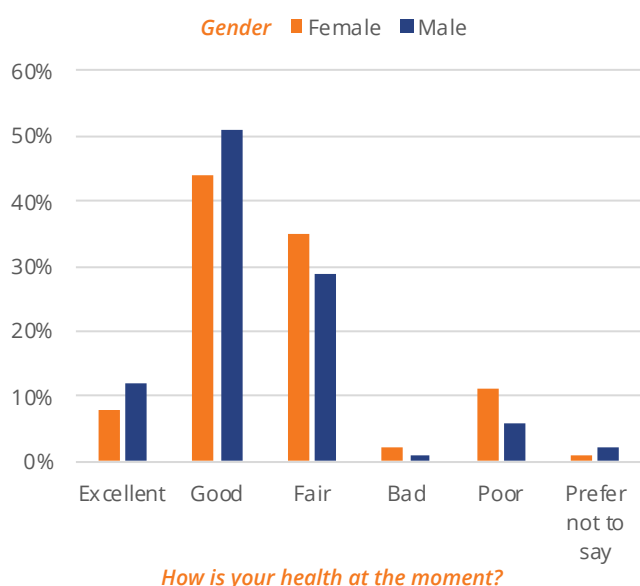
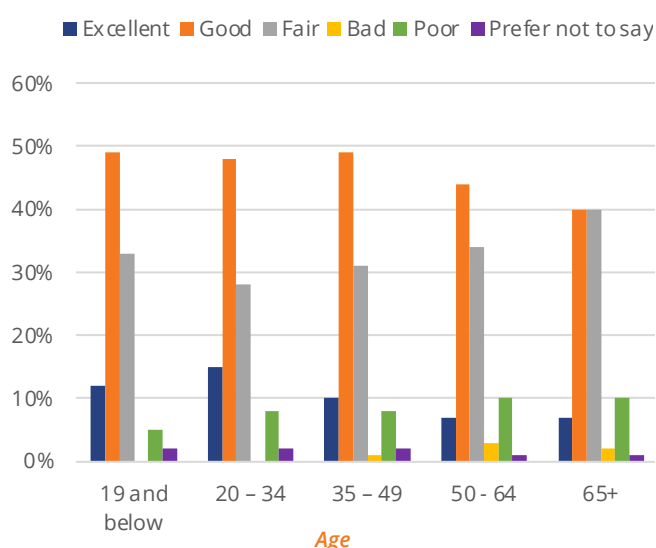


Figure 7.2

How would you describe your overall health at present? (by age group)



Overall level of fitness

47% of men reported their level of fitness as being excellent or good, compared with 35% of women. 21% of women thought that their level of fitness was poor, compared with 12% of men.

As may be expected, the younger age groups reported higher percentages of having excellent or good levels of fitness, compared with the older age groups.

Figure 7.3

How would you describe your overall level of fitness? (by gender)

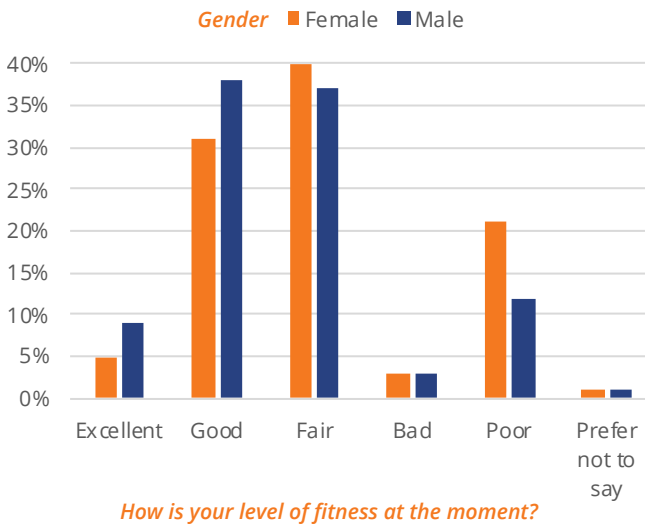
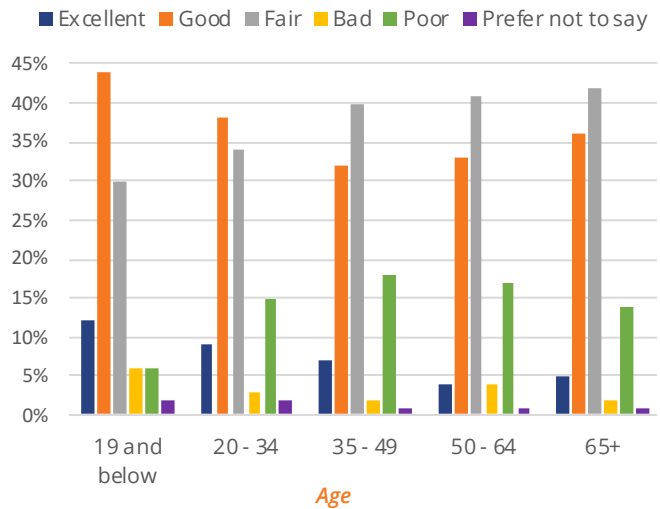


Figure 7.4

How would you describe your overall level of fitness? (by age group)

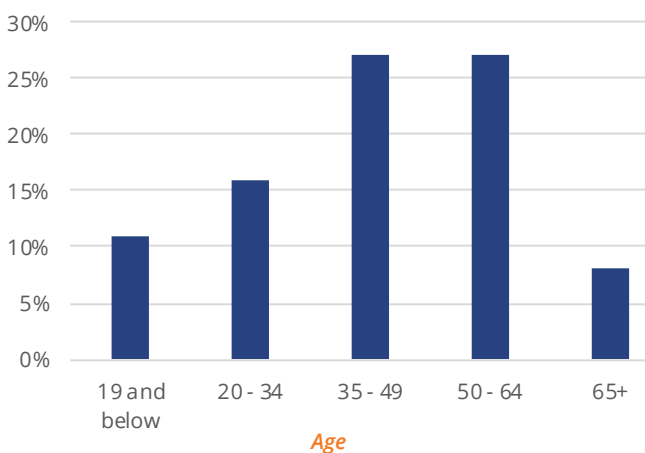


Obesity

Overall, 23% of British Sikhs described themselves as being obese (24% of women and 21% of men), although this varied by age, with 27% of those aged 35-49 and 50-64 considering themselves to be obese. This compares with only 8% of those aged 65 and above who thought that they were obese.

Figure 7.5

Would you describe yourself as obese?

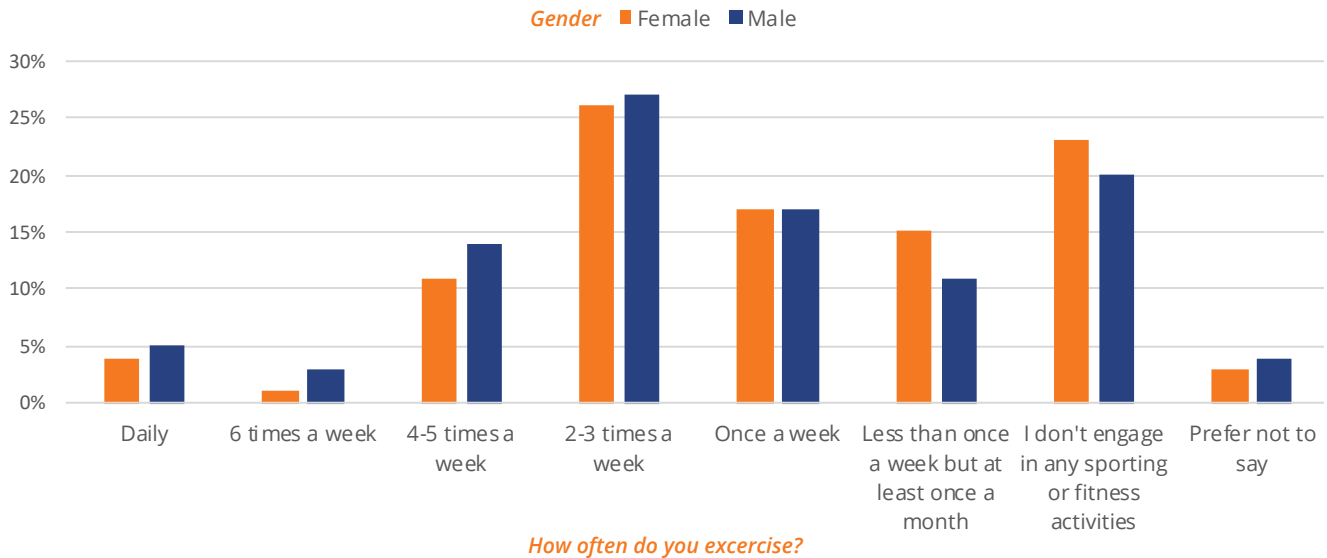


Fitness Activities

Fitness activities are key to maintaining good health. 59% of women and 66% of men said that they took part in such activities at least once a week.

Figure 7.6

How often do you play sports or take part in fitness activities each week?



Diet

Those aged 65 or above reported the highest percentage (82%) making an assertive effort to eat healthy on a daily basis, compared with 52% of those aged 34 and below, with increasing percentages for the intermediate age groups. 25% of those in the 20-34 and 35-49 age groups found it difficult to eat healthily because of the time needed, compared with just 3% of those aged 65 and above.

Figure 7.7

Which of the following statements best describes your diet? (by age group)

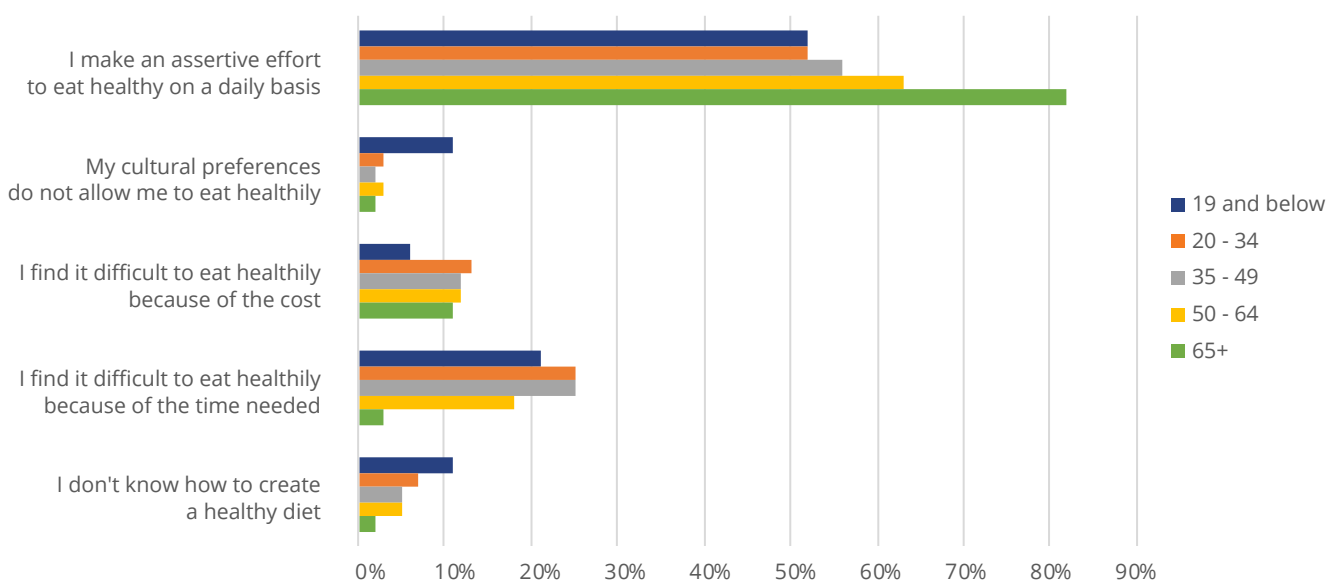
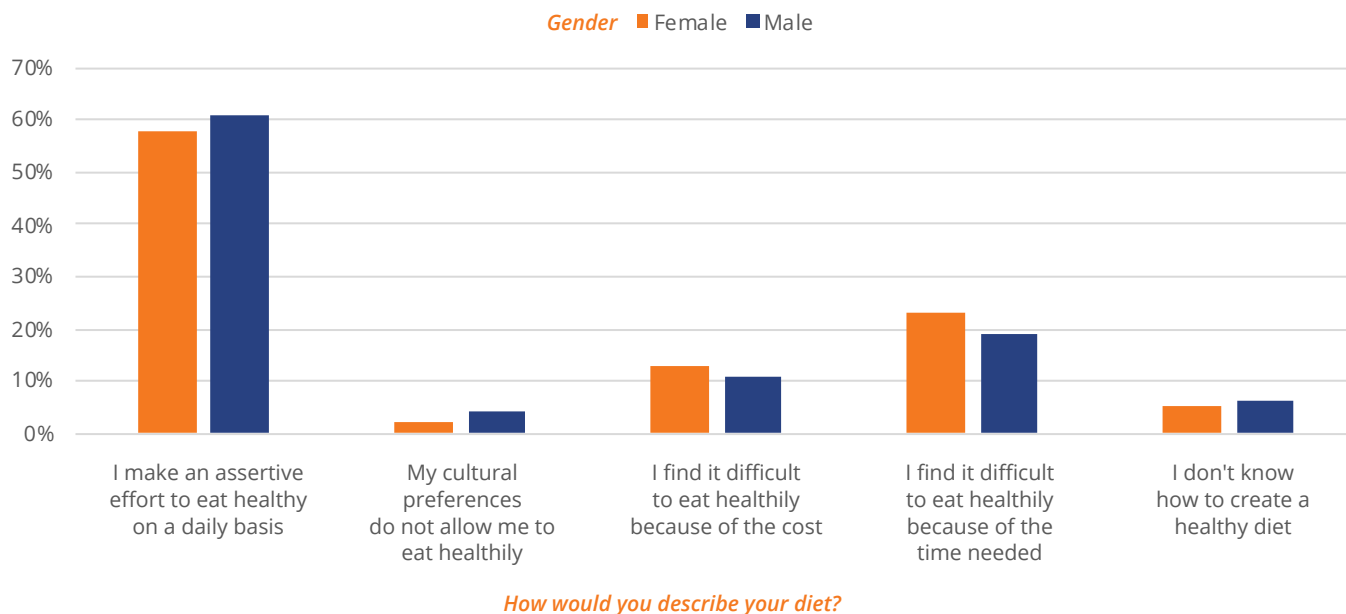


Figure 7.8

Which of the following statements best describes your diet? (by gender)



8. Cost of living and household finances

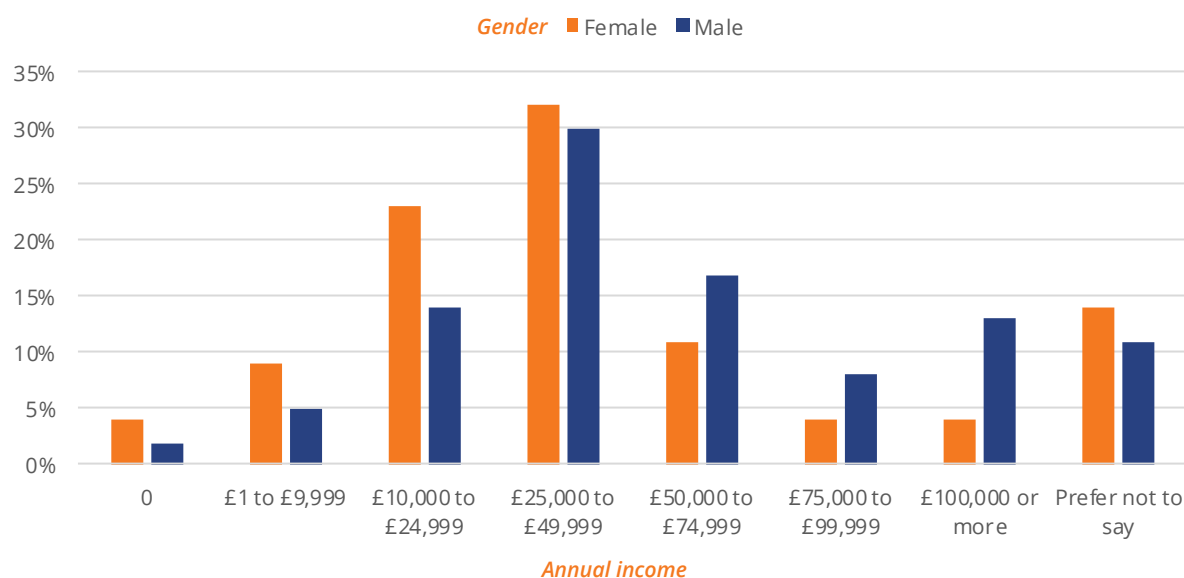
The article at the beginning of this report has focussed on the impact of the cost of living crisis on Sikhs living in Britain. The BSR survey this year asked a series of questions about personal incomes, costs of living and impacts on household finances. The results are reported in the tables and charts that follow.

BSR asked respondents about their annual personal and combined household incomes. Asking people to disclose their income can be sensitive, and 12% of respondents preferred not to share this information, although the survey is completely anonymous with no individual being identified.

About a third of all respondents earned between £25,000 and £50,000. Higher percentages of women reported the lowest levels of income, with 9% earning less than £10,000 per year (5% for men), and a further 23% between £10,000 and £25,000 (14% for men). At the other end of the income range, 13% of men reported earning over £100,000, compared with 4% of women.

Figure 8.1

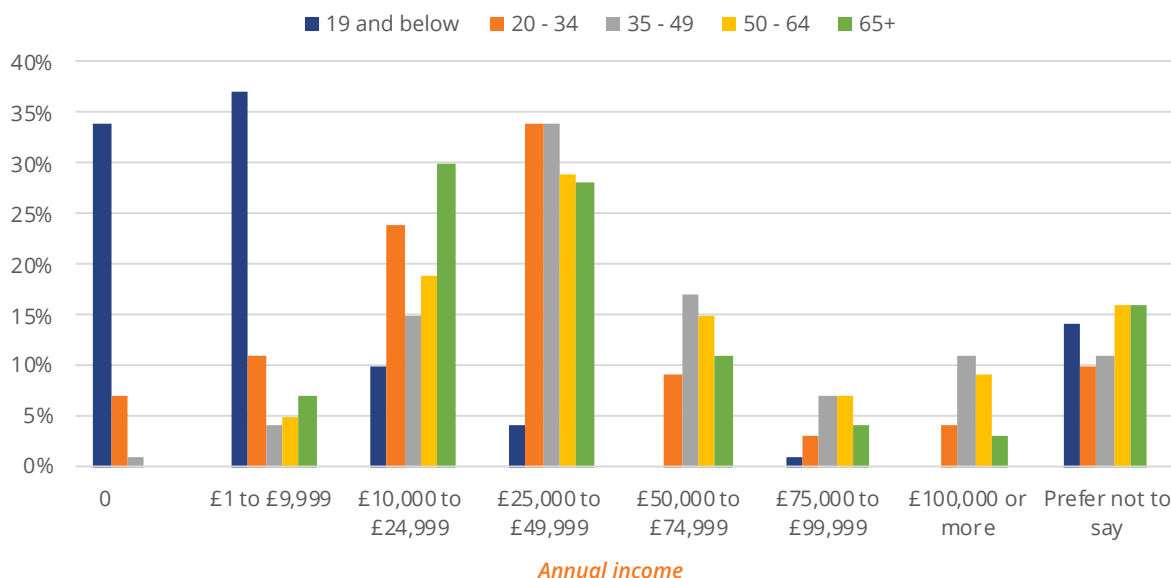
Personal Income (by gender)



The age groups with the highest percentages of those earning over £100,000 were those aged 35-49 and 50-64 years. 34% of those aged 19 or below did not earn anything, and were most likely to be in education. Another 37% of this age group earned less than £10,000 per year.

Figure 8.2

Personal Income (by age group)



When asked whether they would be able to save money in the coming year, 54% of 20-34 year olds said that they would, but this went down in older age groups, declining to 38% for those aged 65 and above.

Figure 8.3

Will you be able to save in the next year? (by gender)

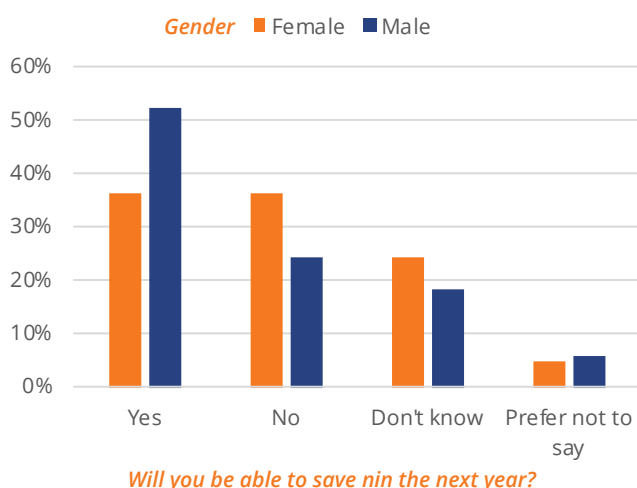
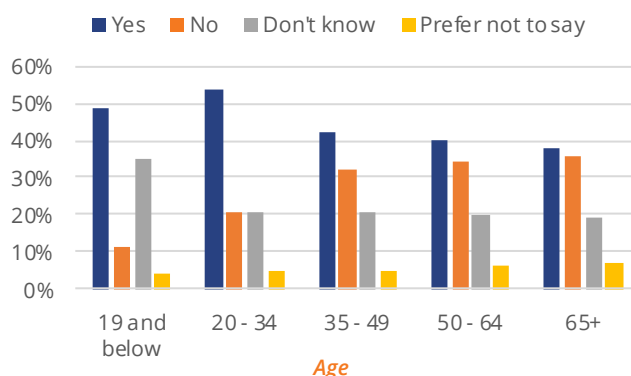


Figure 8.4

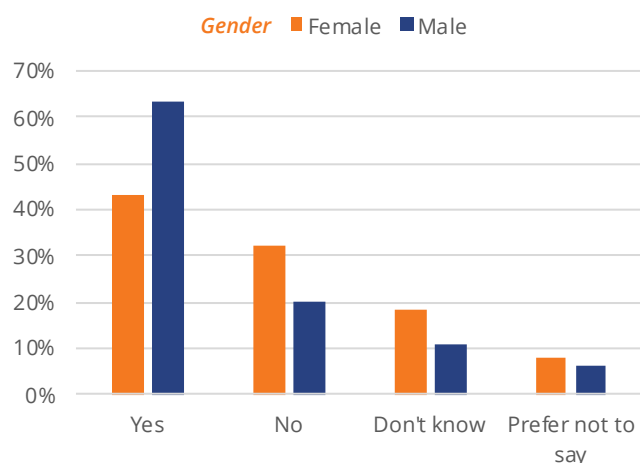
Will you be able to save in the next year? (by age group)



32% of women and 20% of men said that they would not be able to pay an unexpected bill of £850 if it was to arise. A further 18% of women and 11% of men did not know if they would be able to pay such a bill. Overall, about 26% said that they would not be able to pay an unexpected bill of £850, with the situation being similar in most age groups.

Figure 8.5

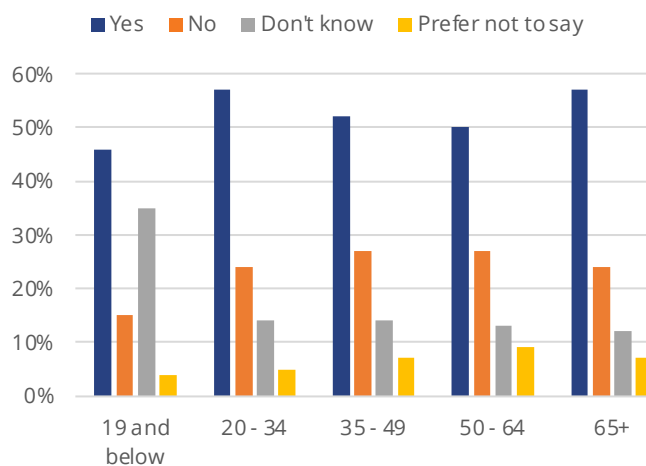
**Will you be able to pay unexpected bill over £850?
(by gender)**



Will you be able to pay unexpected bill over £850?

Figure 8.6

**Will you be able to pay unexpected bill over £850?
(by age group)**

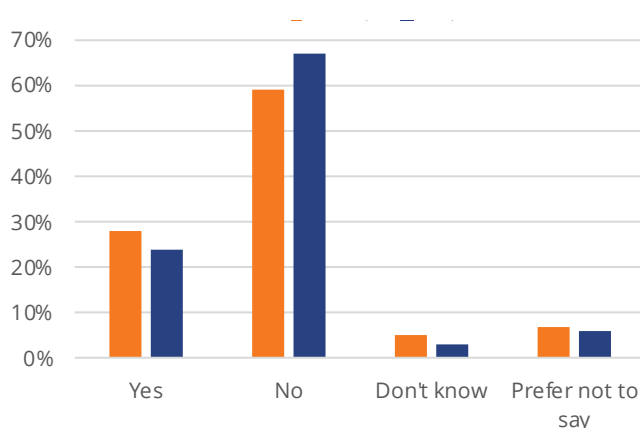


Age

28% of Sikh women and 24% of Sikh men had borrowed more money this year than last year, with 31% those aged 35-49 saying that this was the case, compared with just 11% of those aged 65 and above.

Figure 8.7

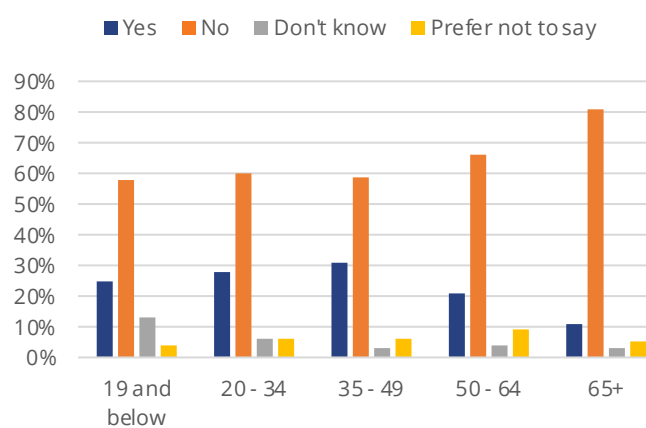
**Have you borrowed more money than last year?
(by gender)**



Have you borrowed more money than last year?

Figure 8.8

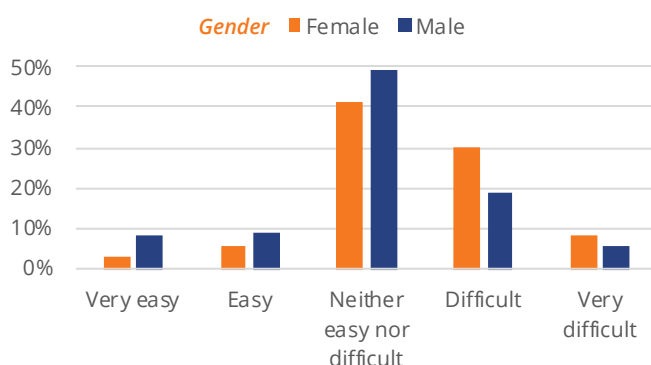
**Have you borrowed more money than last year?
(by age group)**



Age

Figure 8.9

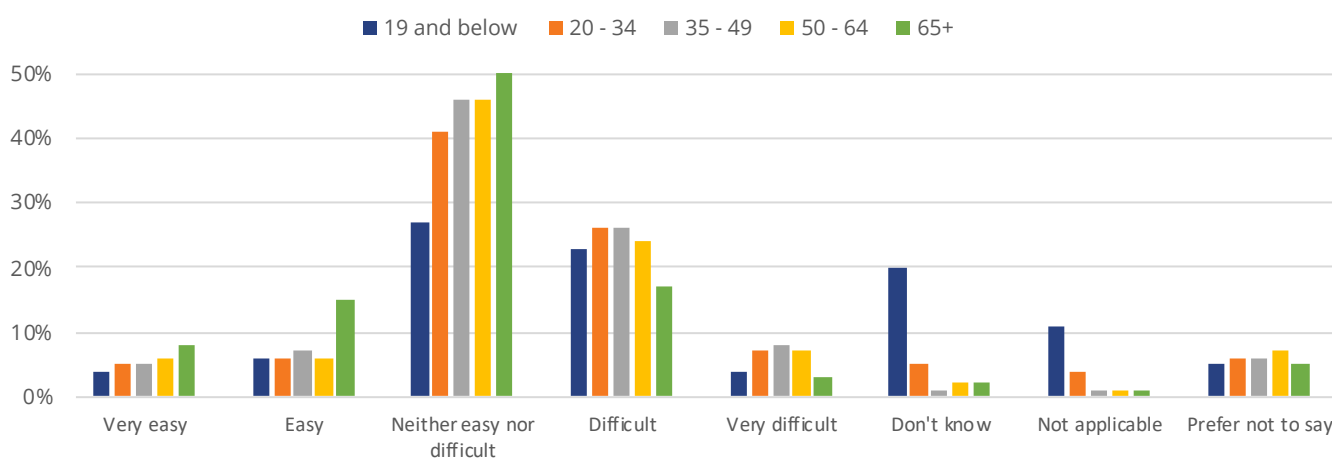
**Are you finding it easy or difficult to pay bills?
(by gender)**



38% of women and 25% of men are finding it difficult or very difficult to pay bills. By age group, those aged 20-34 and 35-49 are finding difficulty paying bills, at 33% and 34% respectively.

Figure 8.10

Are you finding it easy or difficult to pay bills? (by age group)



When asked if their cost of living had changed in the previous month, 88% of men and 89% of women said yes. 91% of those aged 35-49 reported increasing cost of living, compared with 71% of those aged 19 or below.

Figure 8.11

Has your cost of living changed in last month? (by gender)

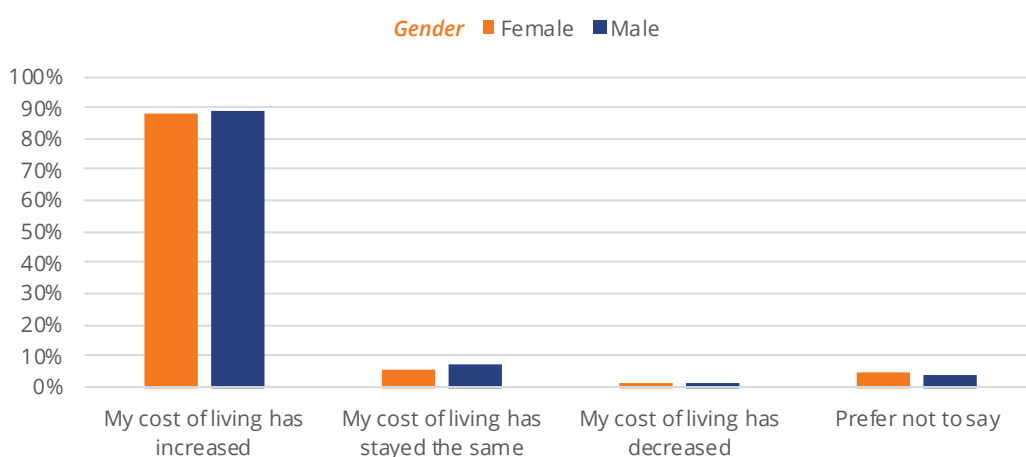
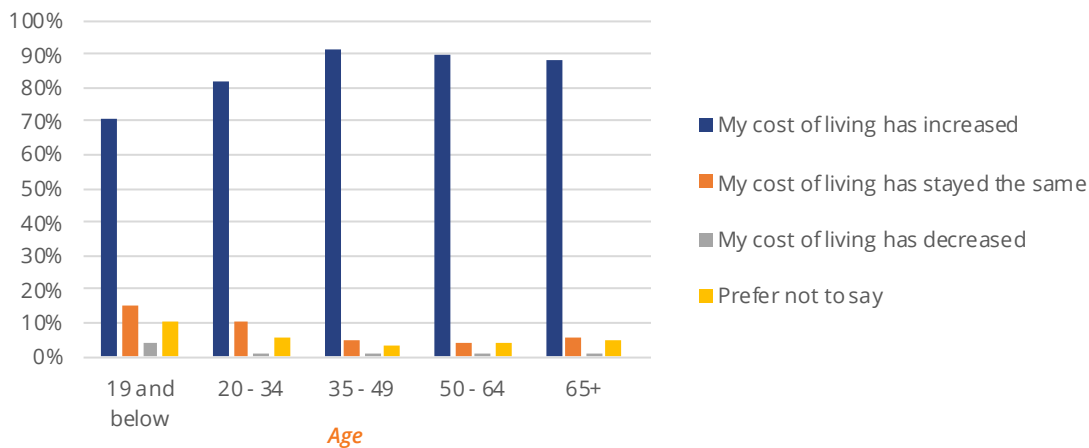


Figure 8.12

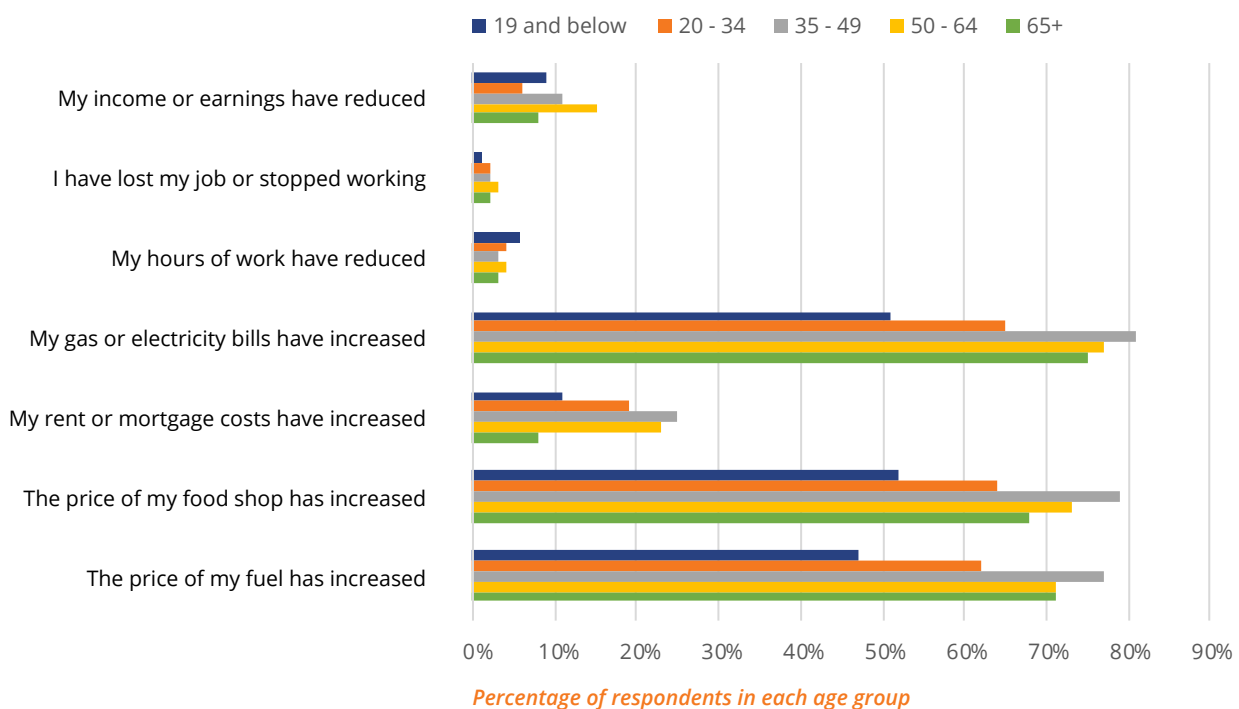
Has your cost of living changed in last month? (by age group)



Respondents who said that their cost of living has increased were asked what reasons led to the impact on their cost of living. Although the difference in responses was marginal between men and women, there were significant differences between age groups, as follows.

Figure 8.13

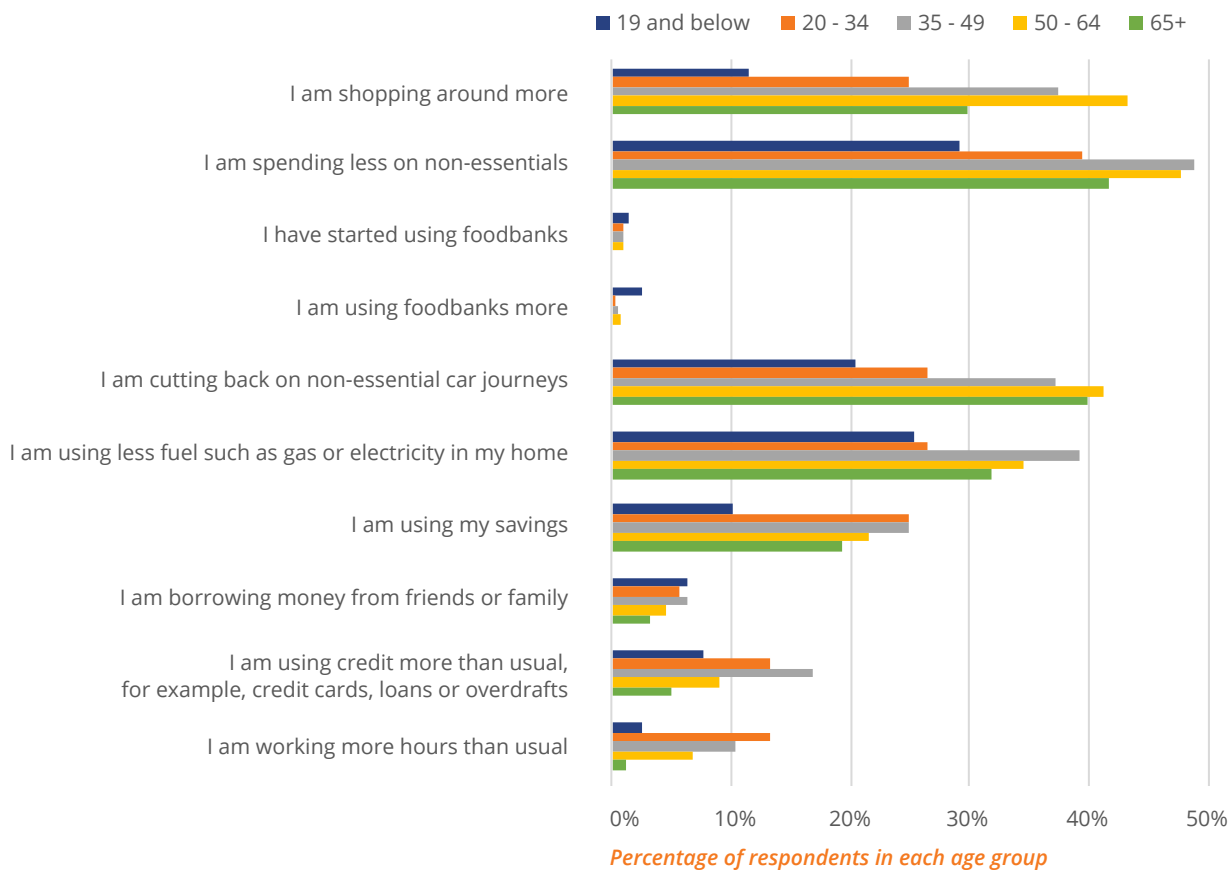
What reasons have led to your cost of living increasing?



Respondents were asked what they were doing to cope with the increased costs of living. 50% of women and 41% of men said that they are now spending less on non-essential items. 25% of women and 21% of men are dipping into their savings to make ends meet. 14% of women and 11% of men are also using more credit than they were doing previously. Whilst these were the major differences between women and men, there were more differences between age groups in several types of actions to help cope with the cost of living, as shown in the table below.

Figure 8.14

What are you doing to cope with the increased costs of living?



Energy bills are proving to be the most difficult household expenses to cover, with 58% of women and 52% of men saying that they were either very difficult, or somewhat difficult to afford. This was as high as 65% for those aged 50-64.

Figure 8.15

How easy is it for you to afford energy bills? (by gender)

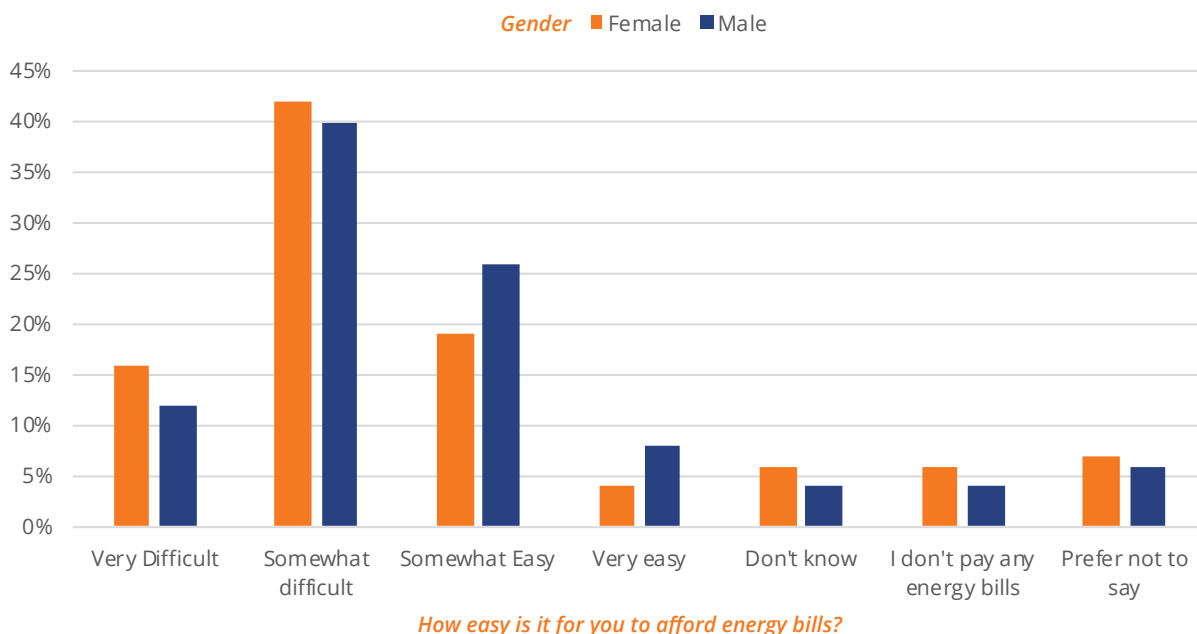
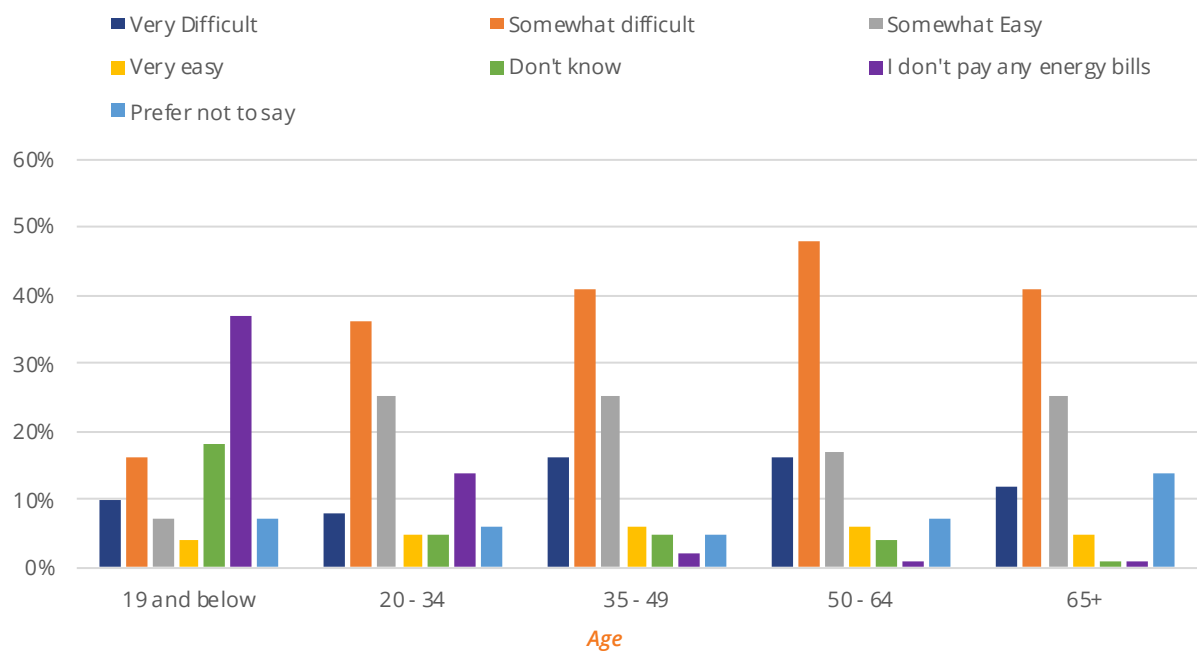


Figure 8.16

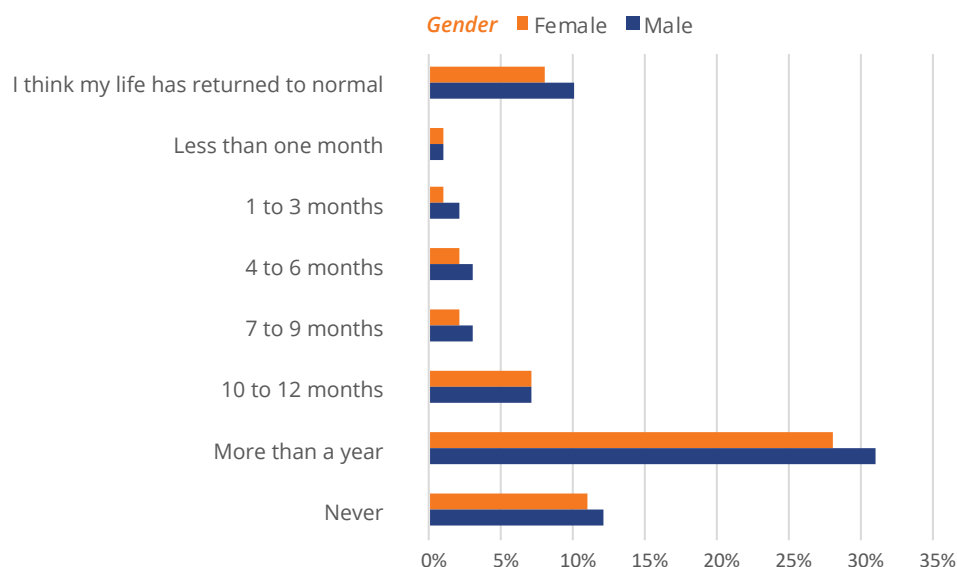
How easy is it for you to afford energy bills? (by age group)



The survey asked how long Sikhs thought that it would be before life would return to normal after the pandemic. 28% of women and 31% of men thought that it would be more than a year. 11% of women and 12% of men thought that it would never return to normal, while 8% of women and 10% of men thought that life had already returned to normal.

Figure 8.17

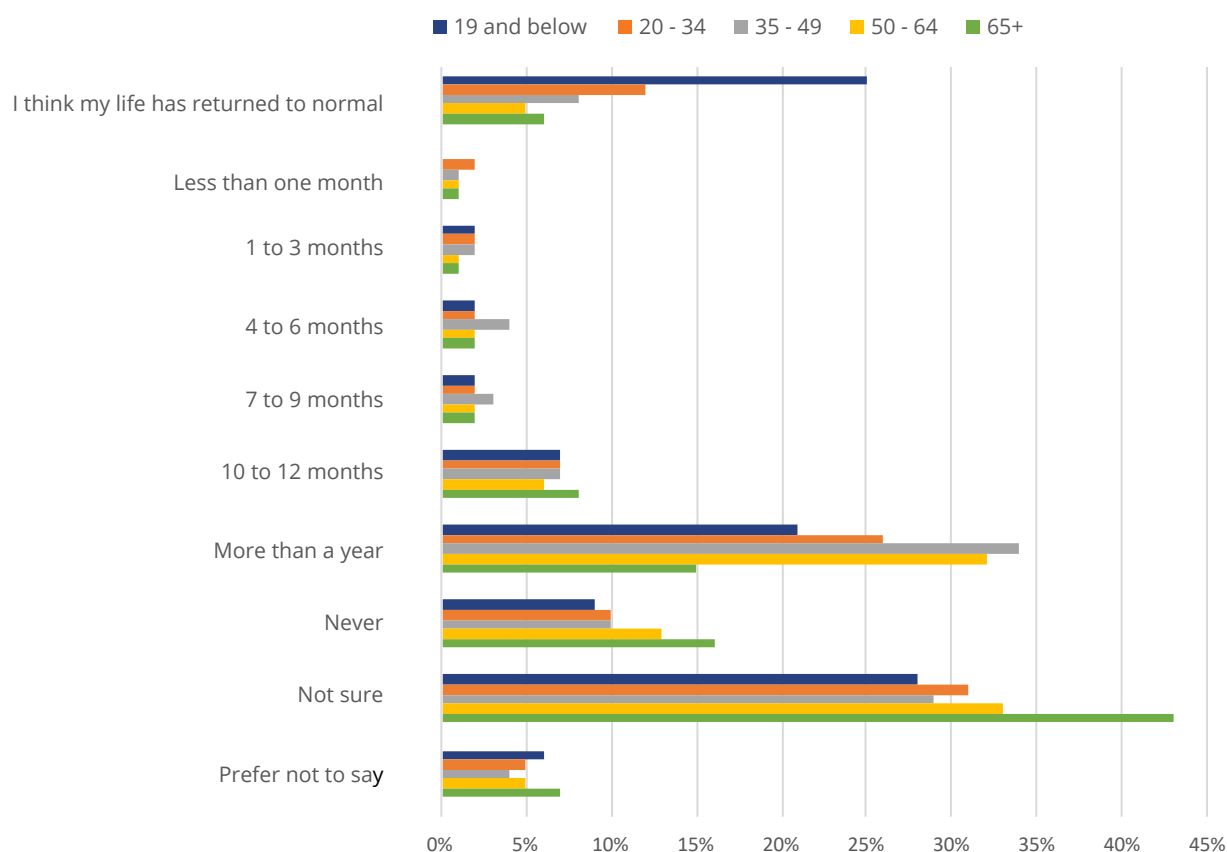
How long do you think it will be before life returns back to normal? (by age group)



Younger age groups were more likely to say that life had already returned to normal, while older age groups were more likely to say that life would never return to normal, or were not sure.

Figure 8.18

How long do you think it will be before life returns back to normal? (by age group)

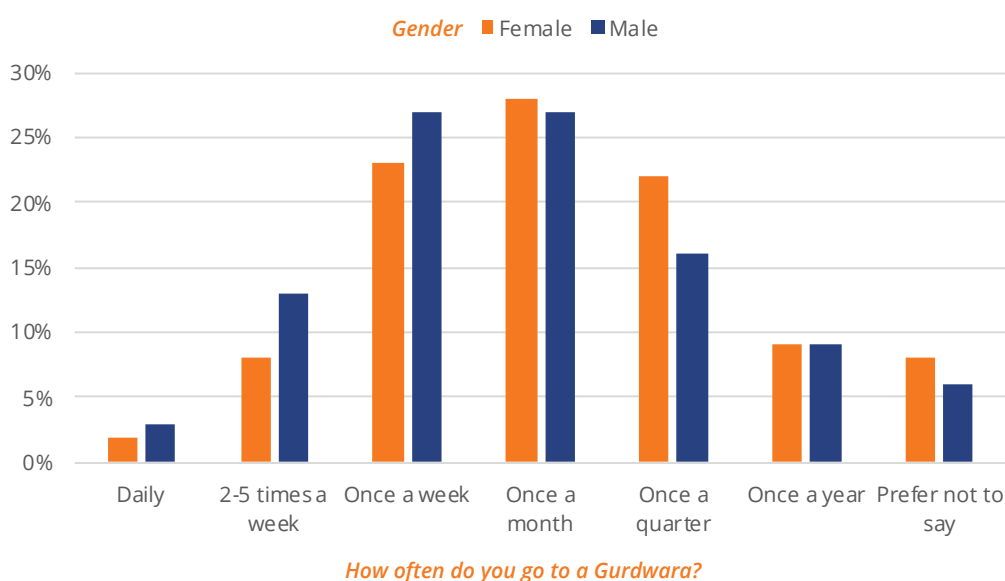


9. Attending gurdwaras, volunteering and donations

Going to the Gurdwara and taking part in sewa (selfless service and volunteering) is a very important part of many Sikhs' lives. The BSR survey shows that 33% of women and 43% of Sikh men go to the Gurdwara at least once a week.

Figure 9.1

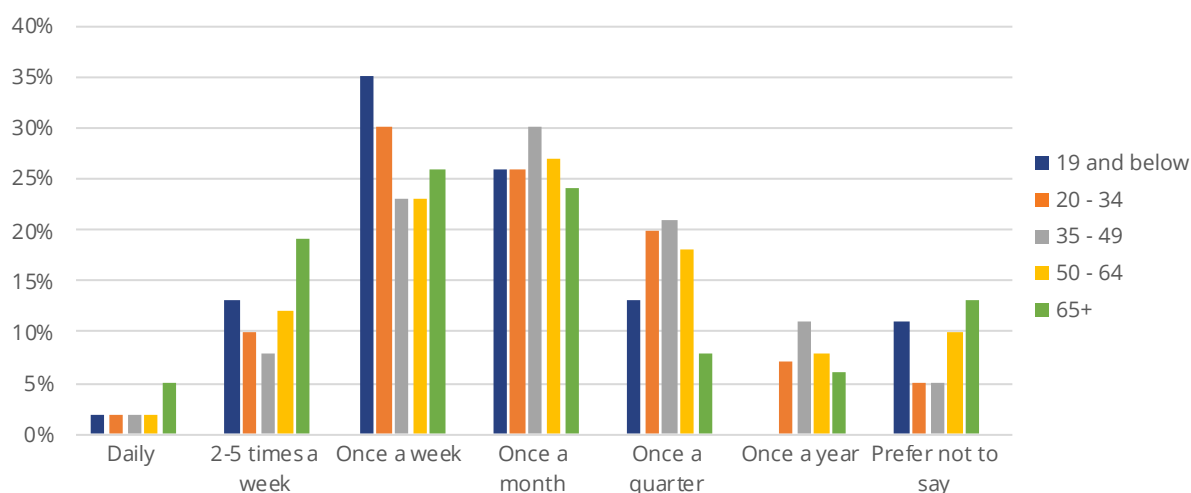
How frequently do you attend a Gurdwara? (by gender)



The age groups with highest percentages going to the Gurdwara at least once a week are the youngest and oldest, with 50% of both those age groups saying that they do this. 5% of those aged 65 and above say that they go daily, compared with 2% of all other groups.

Figure 9.2

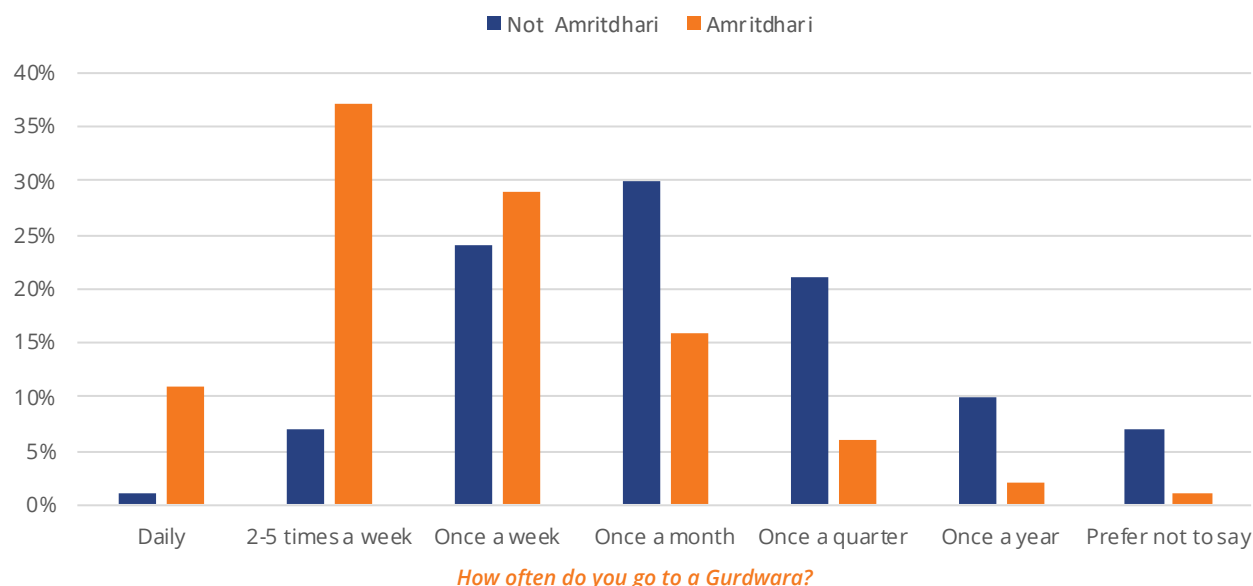
How frequently do you attend a Gurdwara? (by age group)



Those who have taken the Amrit initiation to become Khalsa Sikhs (Amritdhari) go to the Gurdwara much more frequently than others. 11% go daily and 37% go 2-5 times every week, compared with 1% and 7% respectively for non-Amritdhari.

Figure 9.3

How frequently do you attend a Gurdwara? (by whether Amritdhari or not)



37% of men and 28% of women volunteer to do sewa at the Gurdwara. Of those aged 65 and above, 52% said that they volunteer at the Gurdwara.

Figure 9.4

Do you volunteer at your Gurdwara? (by gender)

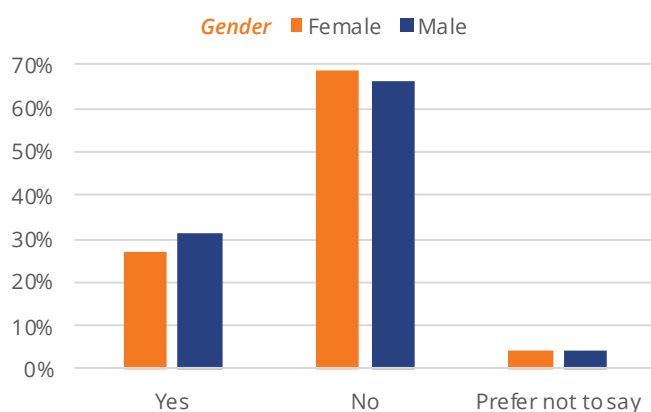
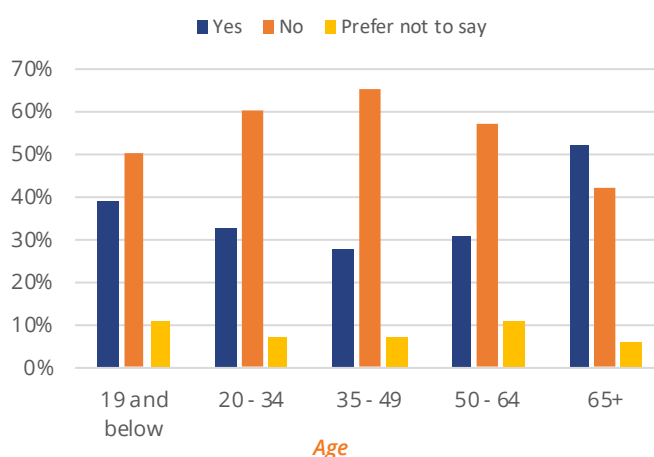


Figure 9.5

Do you volunteer at your Gurdwara? (by age group)



During the pandemic, many people were dependant on others to help them as they isolated at home due to being extremely vulnerable. Many gurdwaras were closed entirely or only partially open, and when open, the Sangat (congregation) was reduced in numbers due to people being concerned about contracting Covid. However, this does not seem to have deterred British Sikhs from volunteering in their communities more widely. 31% of men and 27% of women said that they did volunteer during the pandemic. By age, 38% of those aged 65 or above, and 35% of those aged 19 or below, said that they volunteered during the pandemic.

Figure 9.6

**Did you volunteer during the pandemic?
(by gender)**

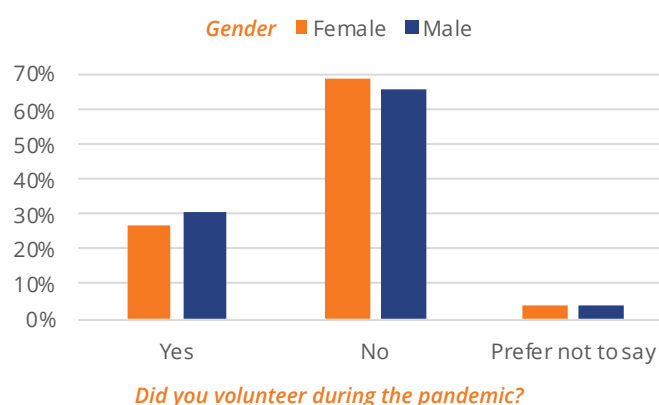
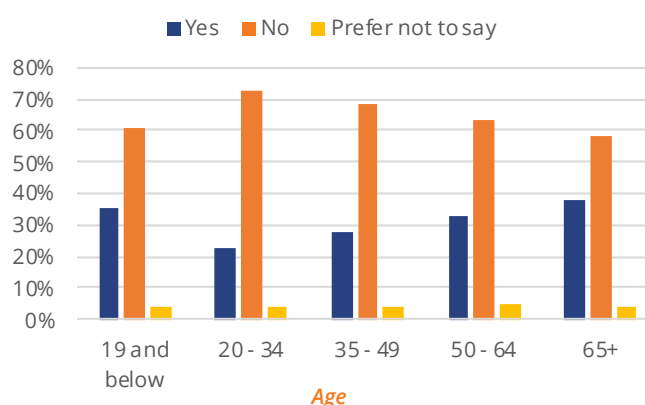


Figure 9.7

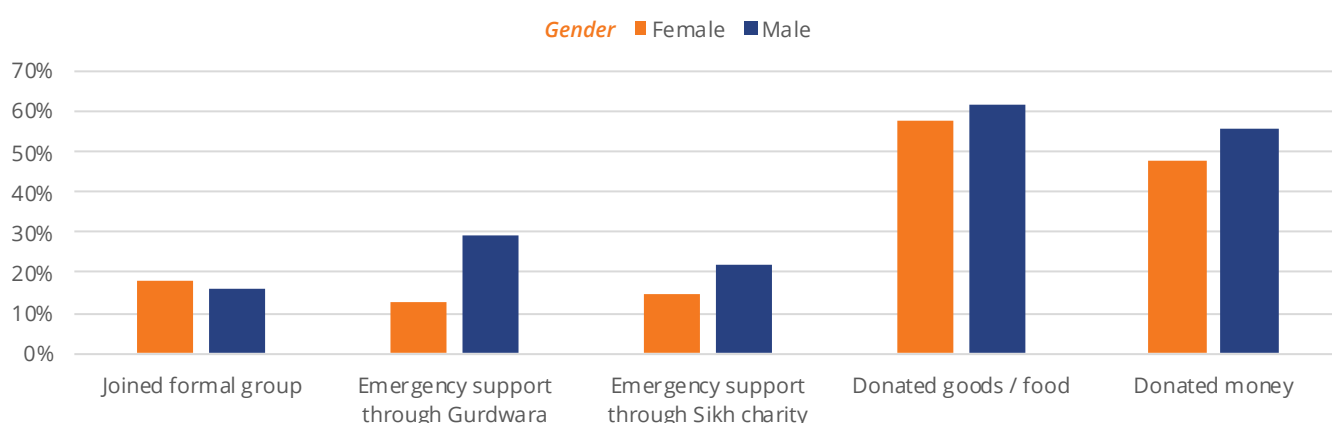
**Did you volunteer during the pandemic?
(by age group)**



When asked what type of volunteering had been undertaken, 60% said that they had donated goods and/or food; 53% said that they had donated money; 21% helped with emergency support through Gurdwaras; 19% through other Sikh charities; and 17% joined formal groups or organisations.

Figure 9.8

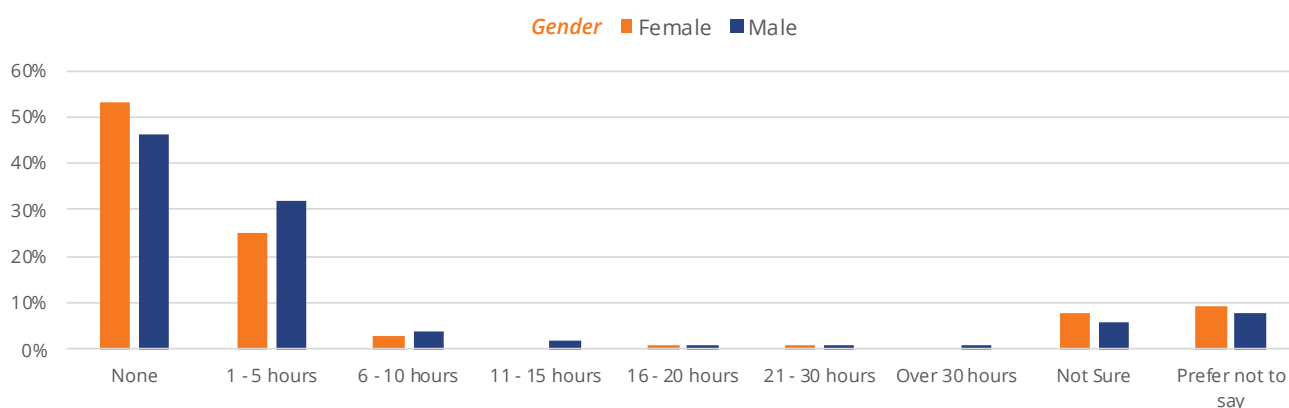
If volunteered, type of volunteering during pandemic:



A quarter of Sikh women and a third of Sikh men said that they volunteered up to 5 hours per week, while there are some (1%) who volunteer for over 30 hours every week, either at Gurdwaras or elsewhere.

Figure 9.9

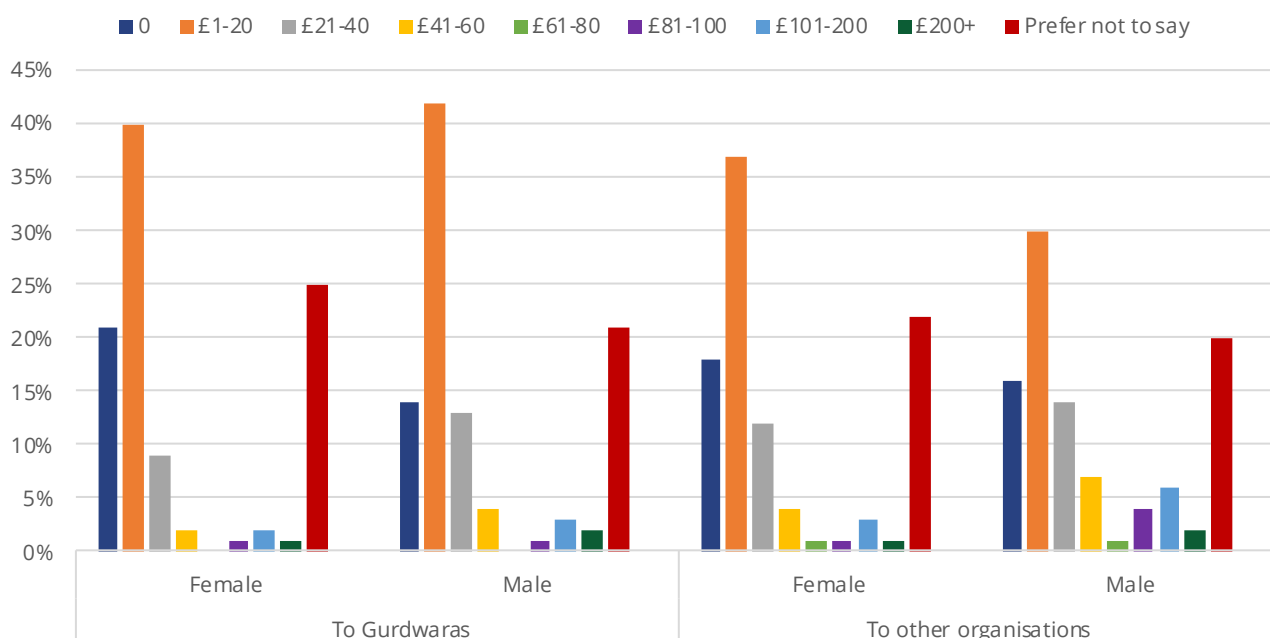
Number of hours volunteered per week



A high percentage of Sikhs donate regularly to Gurdwaras or charities, in line with teachings of Sikhi. About 40% said that they donated up to £20 per month to Gurdwaras, and around 34% to other charities. Under 20% said that they do not donate anything, and just over 20% preferred not to say whether they donated or not. However, the remaining 60% reported donating regularly in amounts ranging from £1 to over £200 every month.

Figure 9.10

Monthly donations



10. Organ, blood and plasma donation

For several years, the British Sikh Report survey has monitored the trends amongst the community concerning attitudes towards blood, live and passed organ donations. The pandemic and allegations of institutional racism in NHSBT may have impacted on attitudes amongst Black and Asian communities, however the data captured here does not consider these recent public discussions about health inequalities within the service.

The trends across all age groups is consistent, with around 50% of all ages agreeing to be organ donors. This is in keeping with the findings of the 2019 BSR survey when the same question was asked. However, one notable exception is the under 19s where there has been a decisive and positive shift in the awareness and willingness to become organ donors. In 2019 only 17% of respondents were registered for organ donation or carried an organ donation card. The 2022 survey shows that now 42% of this age group would be agreeable to donating organs. In part the shift can be attributed to funding being invested in the British Sikh community to promote organ donation.

Regarding donating blood, both men and women were equally willing to donate (women 52% and men 55%). Just under a quarter were definite in their decision not to be a blood donor, and about a quarter were either unsure or preferred not to say. Whilst there was not much difference between men and women in willingness to donate blood, there were differences between age groups. 62% of those aged 19 or less were agreeable to donating blood, compared with 34% of those aged 65 or more, and there was a gradual decrease through the age groups.

There seems to be less understanding or awareness of plasma donation, with slightly lower levels of donations across all ages in comparison to blood donation. Only 39% of women were willing to donate plasma, compared to 45% of men, whereas for organ donation, more women are willing to donate (53%) compared with men (46%).

Figure 10.1

Do you donate or would you be agreeable to donating organs? (by age group)

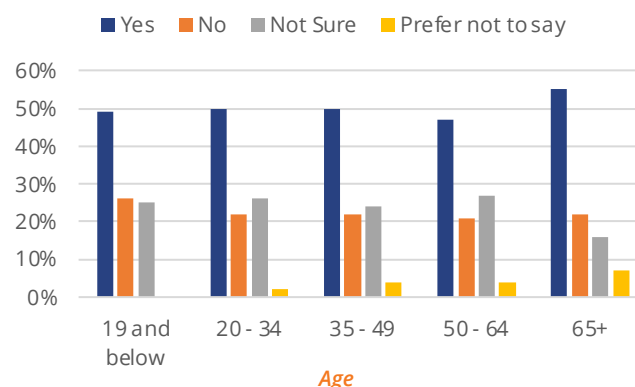


Figure 10.2

Do you donate or would you be agreeable to donating blood? (by age group)

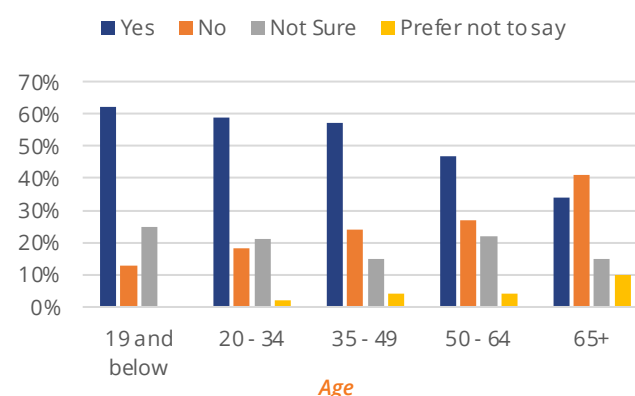
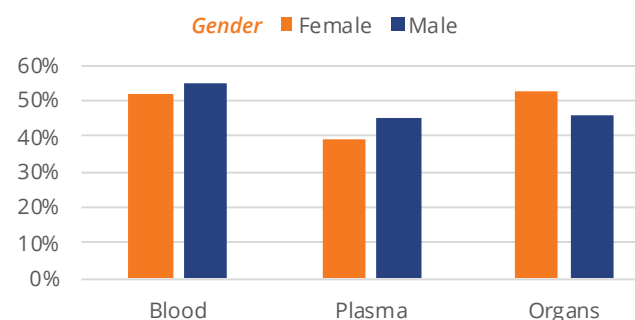


Figure 10.3

Agreeable to donating blood, plasma and organs? (by gender)



II. The sikh community's engagement with CPR

Within the South Asian community, much public education has been focused on raising awareness around healthy living and lifestyles to prevent the onset of heart-related conditions. Nevertheless, this is only part of the solution. As well as awareness raising to prevent poor health, there is critical need to enable people to save lives in an emergency, and nowhere is this more pivotal than in learning to provide CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation).

CPR is used when a person suffers a cardiac arrest where the heart stops pumping blood around the body. A cardiac arrest is a medical emergency requiring prompt treatment to prevent brain damage and eventual death.

In the UK, no research is known to have been undertaken to date on how different ethnic and faith groups view and understand CPR. The British Sikh Report is working with RESUS on the first exploration of awareness and confidence of the Sikh community in CPR. RESUS is the Resuscitation Council, the United Kingdom body responsible for setting central standards for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and related disciplines.

The findings make for interesting reading. Just over a quarter of respondents across all age groups had received training on chest compressions, with those aged between 35-49 most likely to have attended courses on CPR and those aged over 65 least likely. There was less confidence in using a defibrillator, with just under one-fifth being confident in using one. In keeping with the low levels of awareness and engagement on the issue, when asked if they would be interested in receiving training on the issue, about 15% across all age groups responded positively. A clear indication that there is much work to do within the community to raise awareness and understanding of CPR

Figure 11.1

Which, if any, of the following have you ever received training on, to help someone experiencing a cardiac arrest? (by age group)

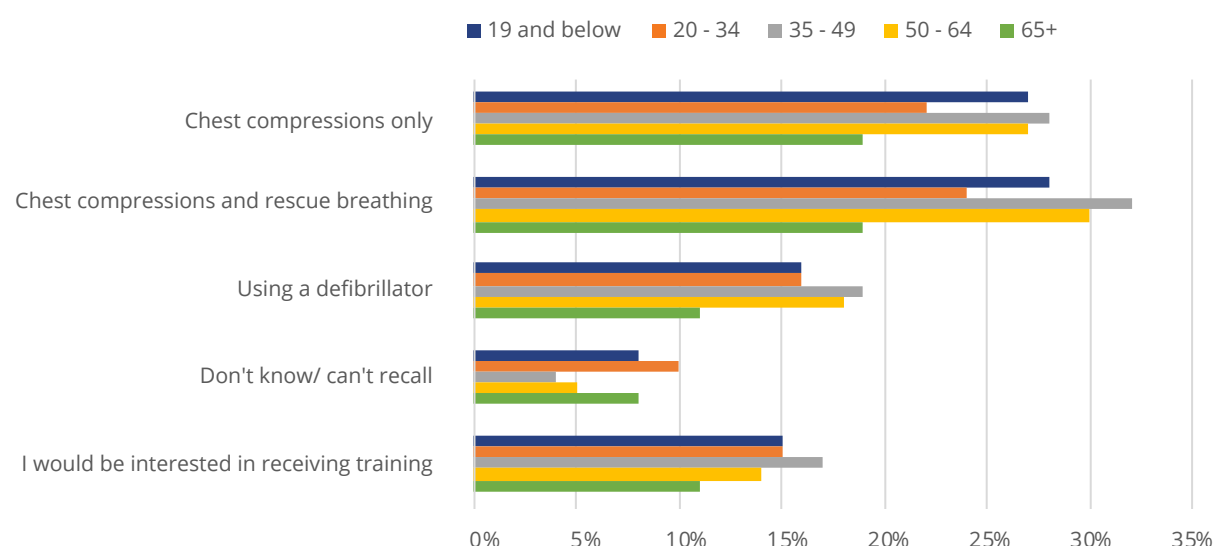
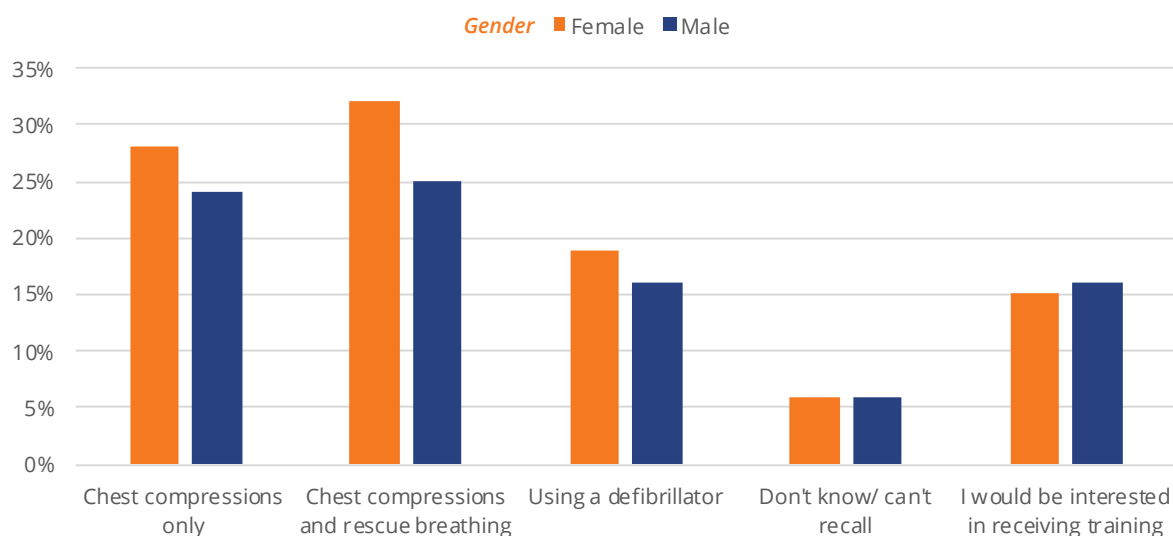


Figure 11.2

Which, if any, of the following have you ever received training on, to help someone experiencing a cardiac arrest? (by gender)



When stratified by gender, those identifying as female were more likely to have received training than males. However, both groups were more confident on chest compressions and mouth-to-mouth rather than defibrillators.

Overall, the low levels of awareness and engagement on CPR, given the higher than average prevalence of severe heart conditions in the community, suggests that action should be taken to address the need. Many more lives could be saved every year in the Sikh community if more Sikhs learned about CPR, as well as being of benefit to the wider community as a whole.



12. Mentoring

Mentoring is recognised as an important part of a person's development, both in their career and as an individual. The BSR survey this year asked respondents about their experiences of both being mentored, and providing mentoring to others.

About 19% of men and women said that they had been mentored. Over 20% of those aged 20-34 and 35-49 had been mentored, compared with just 11% of those aged 19 or under, and those aged 65 or more.

Much higher percentages, 39% of women and 44% of men, said that they had mentored others. This was highest amongst the age groups of 50-64 (47%) and 35-49 (46%).

Figure 12.1

Have you been mentored?

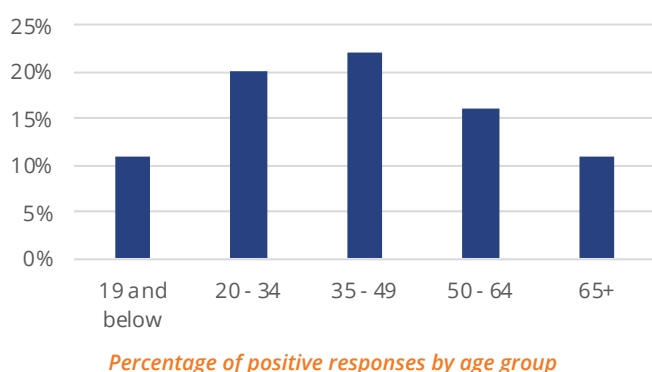
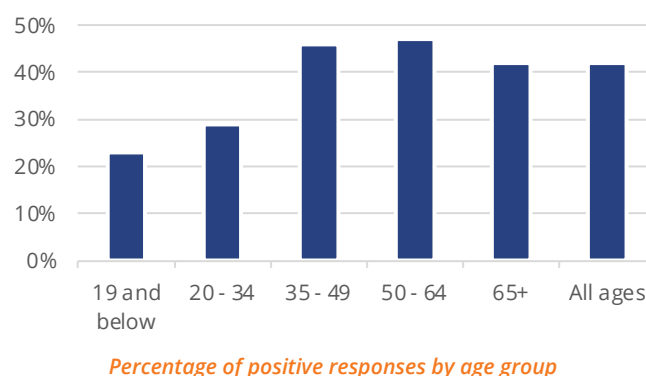


Figure 12.2

Have you mentored others?



Looking ahead, around 30% of respondents overall said that they would like to be mentored, with 39% of those aged 20-34 years and 36% of those aged 35-49 years expressing this preference.

Figure 12.3

Would you like to be mentored?

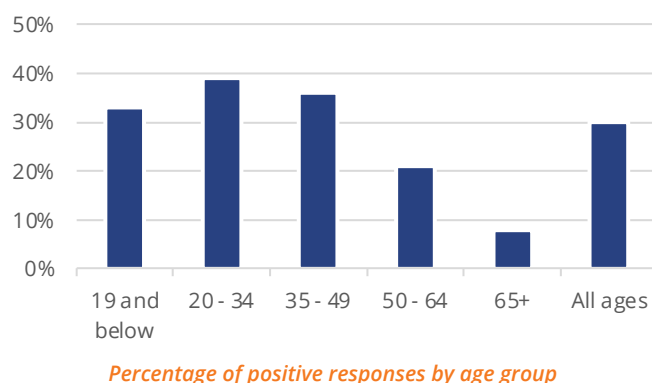
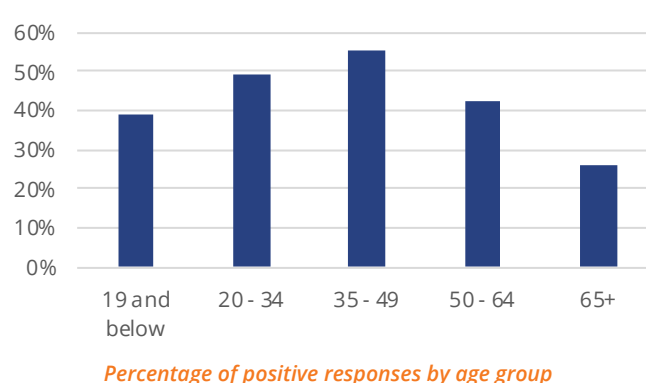


Figure 12.4

Would you like to mentor others?



There is a high level of willingness to mentor others. 35% of women and 51% of men said that they would like to mentor others, and the willingness to do so is particularly high in those aged 35-49 years (55%) and 20-34 (49%).

13. Acknowledgements

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British Sikh Report 2022

The British Sikh Report (BSR) has been published annually since 2013. It is based on a survey of Sikhs living in the UK, gathering information about views on their faith, and on topical British issues – political, economic, social and cultural.

British Sikh Report website: <http://www.britishsikhreport.org>

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2022

British Sikh Report

An Insight Into The British Sikh Community



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