

## Transmission and Trust:

# The Impact of Covid-19 on British Jewish and British Muslim Communities

### Executive Summary



## About the Woolf Institute

The Woolf Institute was founded by Dr Edward Kessler MBE and Revd Professor Martin Forward in 1998. Their aim was to provide an academic framework and space in which people could tackle issues of religious difference constructively. Dr Esther-Miriam Wagner became the Institute's Executive Director in 2021.

Beginning as the Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations, the Institute later expanded to include the Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations – the first centre in Europe dedicated to fostering a better understanding of relations between Muslim and Jews – and the Centre for Policy and Public Education. In 2010, these Centres were amalgamated under the designation “Woolf Institute”, in honour of Harry, Lord Woolf, former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales.

The Woolf Institute is internationally recognised as a global leader in the academic study of relations between Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith communities. The Institute uses its research and experience to educate and to foster greater understanding between people of different faiths and none. It is focused on outreach into society by providing practical tools and consultancy to improve relationships, working with interfaith practitioners and professionals, for example, in schools, the NHS, the Foreign Office and the Armed Forces. Through these three core functions – academic study, education and practical outreach - the Woolf Institute seeks to encourage discussion and engagement to overcome prejudice and intolerance.

## About the authors

### **Dr Julian Hargreaves**

Dr Julian Hargreaves is Director of Research at the Woolf Institute and holds a PhD in Applied Social Science (Lancaster University) awarded in 2016. His PhD thesis – titled “Islamophobia: Reality or Myth?” – studied the statistical evidence for Islamophobia in the UK.

He has a decade of experience conducting quantitative and qualitative social science research with work published in leading international academic journals and broadcast and news media including the BBC TV and Radio, The Times and The Guardian.

Dr Hargreaves is an adviser for the University of Cambridge's Black British Voices Project and served on the Advisory Group of the Home Office-funded Commission for Countering Extremism.

Dr Hargreaves is an Affiliated Lecturer at the University of Cambridge (Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies), a Research Fellow at the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre of Islamic Studies and a Research Associate at St. Edmund's College, Cambridge.

### **Dr Philip Rushworth**

Dr Philip Rushworth was an independent researcher during the analysis stages of the project but has since joined the UK Civil Service as a User Researcher.

He holds a PhD in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Cambridge. His thesis explored the integration of refugees in Germany. He also holds an MPhil in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Cambridge and a BA in International History from LSE.

**Report design: Top Floor Creative**

**Illustrations: Emma Heyn**

# Methods

Nationally representative survey data were collected by Survation using a random sample. Data from the UK-wide and Jewish samples were collected between 14 and 19 April 2021. Data from the Muslim sample were collected between 16 and 22 April 2021. The study sampled

1,053 respondents for the UK-wide dataset, 404 respondents who self-described as Jewish and 400 respondents who self-described as Muslim. All respondents were 18 years old or older and living in the UK. (For full details of the methods used, please see the full report.)



# Findings

## Testing for Covid-19

Confirming Public Health England and Office of National Statistics studies, Muslim people are more likely to have tested positive for coronavirus than Jewish people and the general population (but are also more likely to have been tested than the general population).

We looked at those testing positive or negative or remaining untested.

**Muslim group untested = 38.6%**

**UK-wide group untested = 51.1%**

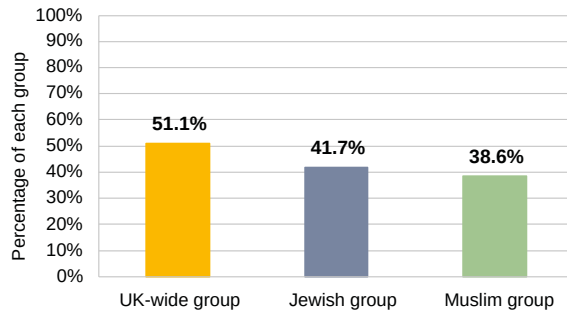
(Differences are statistically significant at the 1% level)

**Muslim group testing positive = 23.6%**

**UK-wide group testing positive = 5.5%**

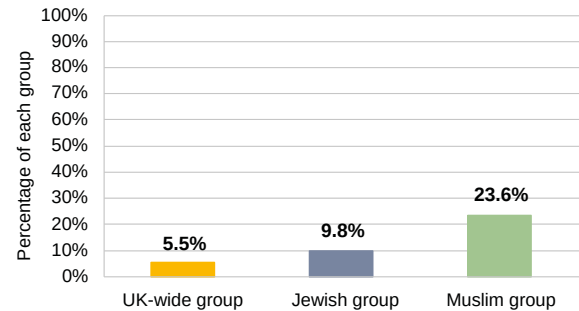
(Differences are statistically significant at the 1% level)

**Fig. 1. Respondents who reported not being tested for Covid-19**



Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

**Fig. 2. Respondents who reported testing positive for Covid-19**



Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021



## Covid-19 symptoms

Muslim people are more likely to have experienced coronavirus symptoms than Jewish people and the general population.

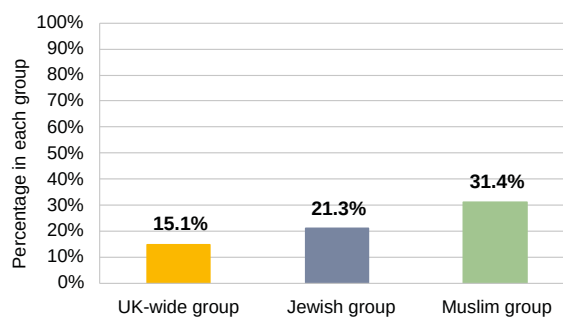
**Muslim group with symptoms = 31.4%**

**Jewish group with symptoms = 21.3%**

**UK-wide group = 15.1%**

(Differences between the Muslim group and the UK-group are statistically significant at the 0.1% level. Differences between Muslim and Jewish group are more indicative but still statistically significant at the 5% level.)

**Fig. 3. Respondents who reported having had Covid-19 symptoms**



Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

## Self-isolation

In sharp contrast to some national and local media reports, British Jewish and British Muslim people are more likely than the general population to have self-isolated during the pandemic. Our data suggest that public health guidance was followed.

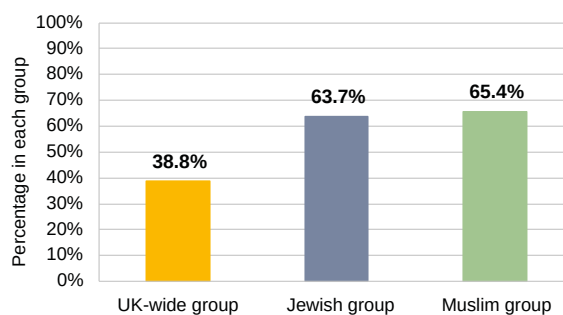
### Self-isolated during the pandemic

**Jewish group = 63.7%**

**Muslim group = 65.4%**

**UK-wide group = 38.8%**

**Fig. 4. Respondents who reported having self-isolated during the pandemic**



Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

## Trust

We found high levels of trust towards the NHS and the UK Government within British Jewish and Muslim communities, and rather less towards local religious leaders.

Within Jewish and Muslim communities, levels of trust in the NHS and UK Government as sources of Covid-19 information were higher than in the general population.

Within Jewish and Muslim communities, levels of trust in local religious leaders as sources of Covid-19 information were lower than for more official sources such as the NHS.

### High levels of trust in the UK Government

**Jewish group = 55.9%**

**Muslim group = 68.6%**

**UK-wide group = 43.6%**

(All differences are significant at the 5% level)

### High levels of trust in local religious leaders

**UK-wide group = 34.1%**

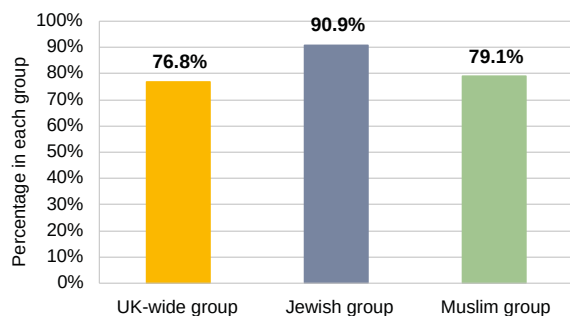
**Jewish group = 42.1%**

**Muslim group = 45.2%**

(Difference between UK-wide and Muslim group are significant at the 5% level)

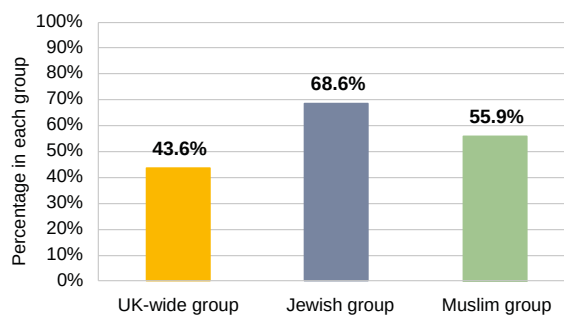


**Fig. 5. Respondents who reported high levels of trust in the NHS**



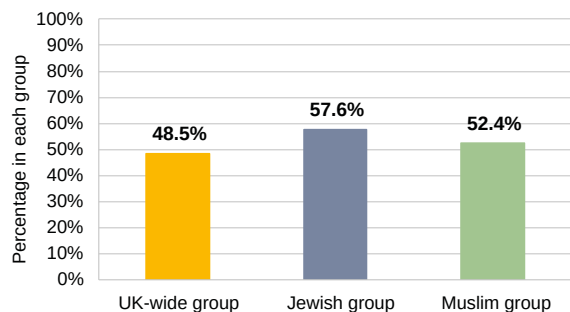
Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

**Fig. 6. Respondents who reported high levels of trust in the UK Government**



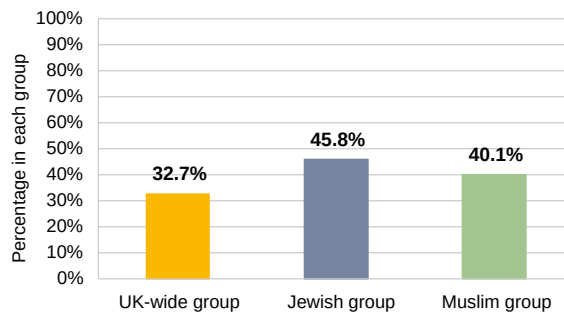
Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

**Fig. 7. Respondents who reported high levels of trust in a local council, county council or regional authority**



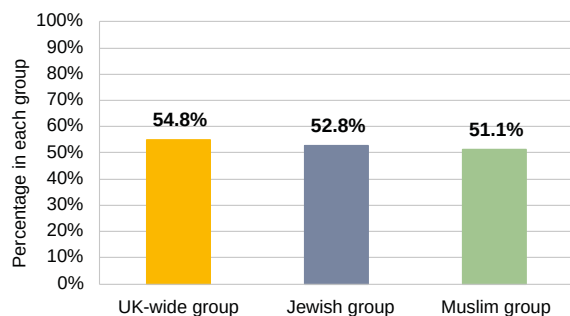
Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

**Fig. 8. Respondents who reported high levels of trust in the news media**



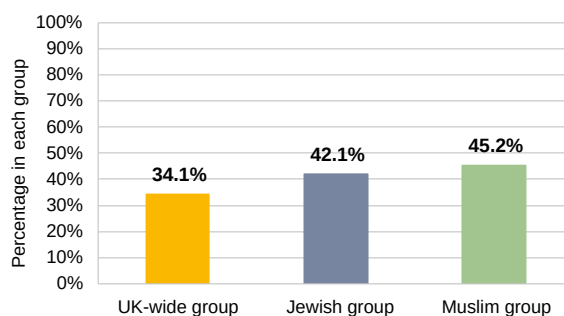
Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

**Fig. 9. Respondents who reported high levels of trust in friends and family**



Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

**Fig. 10. Respondents who reported high levels of trust in a local religious leader**



Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

## Vaccination

Jewish people are more likely to be vaccinated than Muslim people and the rest of the general population. At the same time, and contrary to some media reports, Muslim people are no more likely to refuse a vaccine than others (i.e. the general population). Again, our data suggest that public health guidance was followed.

### Vaccinated

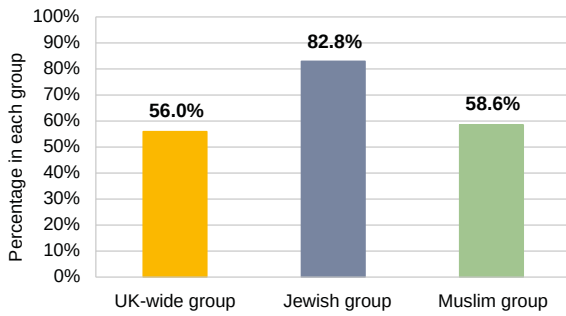
**Jewish group = 82.8%**

**Muslim group = 58.6%**

**UK-wide group = 56%**

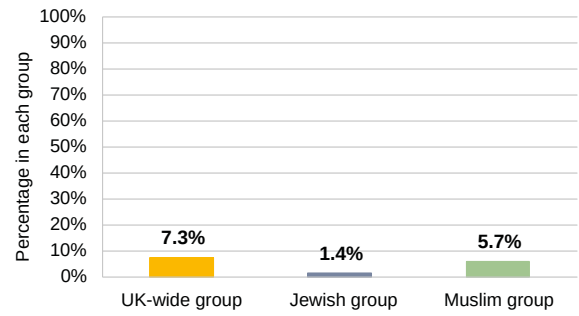
(Difference between Jewish and UK-wide groups are significant at the 0.1% level)

**Fig. 11. Respondents who reported having had one dose or both doses of a Covid-19 vaccine**



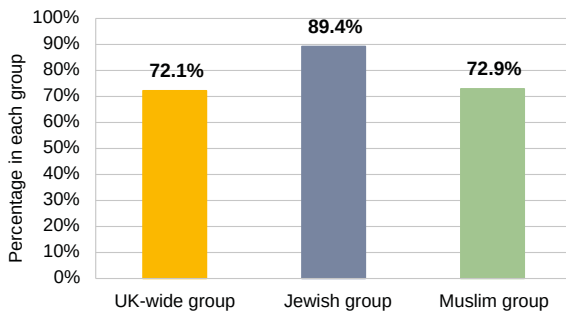
Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

**Fig. 12. Respondents who reported having been offered a vaccine and refusing it**



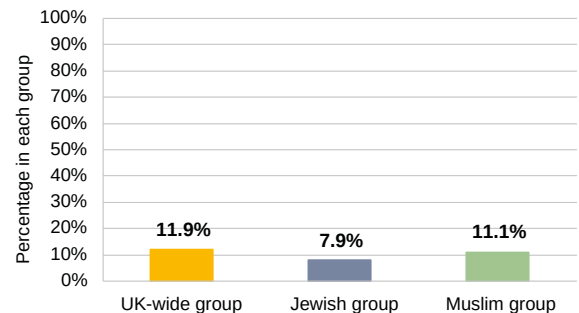
Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

**Fig. 13. Unvaccinated respondents who reported that they will take a vaccine when offered one**



Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

**Fig. 14. Unvaccinated respondents who reported that they will not take a vaccine when offered one**



Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021



## Following rules and restrictions

Muslim people are no more likely to break lockdown rules than the general population. Jewish people are slightly more likely to break some of the rules, although a majority of those we surveyed followed all or most of them.

### Following ALL the rules

Jewish group = 45.5%

Muslim group = 57.1%

UK-wide group = 55.8%

### NOT following all the rules (i.e. breaking at least some)

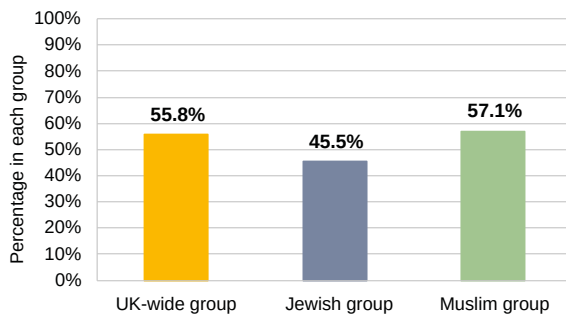
Jewish group = 54.4%

Muslim group = 42.6%

UK-wide group = 42.9%

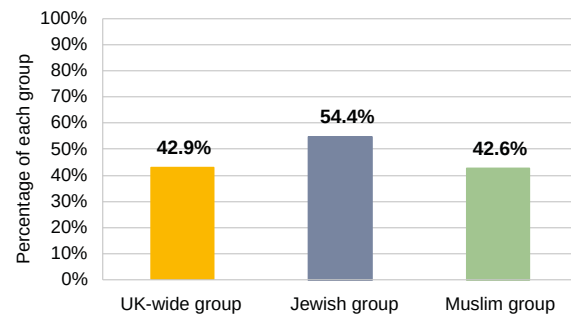
(Differences between Jewish and non-Jewish groups are significant at the 5% level)

**Fig. 15. Respondents who reported following all the Covid-19 rules and restrictions**



Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021

**Fig. 16. Respondents who reported not following all the Covid-19 rules and restrictions**



Source: Survation and Woolf Institute 2021





**Woolf Institute**

Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0UB

+44 (0)1223 761984

[www.woolf.cam.ac.uk](http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk)

Charity No: 1069589 | Company No: 3540878