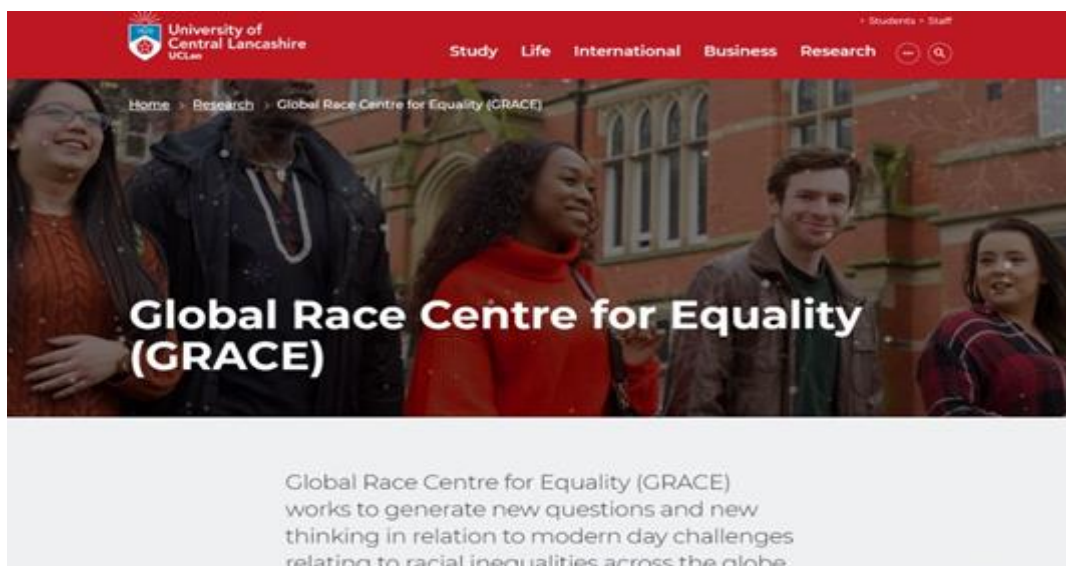


Evaluation of Lancashire BME's Citizens' Jury and Muslim Young Men's Project

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Criminal Justice Partnership



Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
CITIZENS' JURY	4
MUSLIM YOUNG MEN'S PROJECT	4
INTRODUCTION	6
1. POLICY BACKGROUND.....	6
1.1 <i>Resettlement and Desistance of Muslim Male Offenders</i>	<i>6</i>
1.2 <i>Citizens' Juries – U.K. Context</i>	<i>7</i>
1.3 <i>(South Asian) Muslim Young Men – Post Prison Project</i>	<i>8</i>
1.4 <i>Citizens' Jury.....</i>	<i>8</i>
RESEARCH OVERVIEW.....	10
2. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH	10
2.1 <i>Aim.....</i>	<i>10</i>
2.2 <i>Objectives.....</i>	<i>10</i>
2.3 <i>Methodology.....</i>	<i>10</i>
FINDINGS.....	12
4.1 CITIZENS' JURY – PURPOSE	12
4.2 AN ESTABLISHED TRACK RECORD.....	13
4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION	13
4.4 MULTI-DISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONAL PANEL	14
4.5 THERE ARE CRIMES AND THERE ARE CRIMES	15
4.6 UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES OF CRIMES.....	16
4.7 CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING.....	18
4.8 CITIZENS' JURY – CONNECTING WITH MUSLIM YOUNG MEN'S PROJECT.....	19
4.9 MUSLIM YOUNG MEN'S PROJECT.....	19
<i>The Parameters of the Project</i>	<i>19</i>
4.10 HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT	20
4.11 SERIOUS OFFENDING	21
4.12 COMMUNITY ANCHORS	22
4.13 PROJECT OUTCOMES	24
DISCUSSION	25
CITIZENS' JURY	25
MUSLIM YOUNG MEN PROJECT	26
CONCLUSION	29
REFERENCES.....	30

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Executive Summary

Citizens' Jury

The project workers from LBN, Preston United and Healthy Living, who supported and facilitated the Citizens' Jury Project and the Muslim Young Men's Project, demonstrated a commitment and passion for it to be a success and achieve meaningful change.

Those from the local South Asian Muslim community and criminal justice professionals were enthusiastic about the purpose of and the opportunities for rehabilitation that the Citizens' Jury could provide for the Muslim Young Men who had left prison.

This Citizen's Jury had some successes, notably it produced a forum for mutual knowledge exchange and learning amongst community members and criminal justice professionals.

The Citizens' Jury brought in a wide range of speakers to attend the forum from different perspectives and enabled both learning and the potential for change for the Muslim Young Men who had been involved in offending behaviour and the families and communities affected by it.

The Citizens' Jury has been an effective way in engaging the South Asian Muslim (and other) communities in the democratic process of decision making in the criminal justice and wider social welfare systems. This can inform future plans for decision making and interventions for the rehabilitation of Muslim Young Men who have left prison.

Yet, the Citizens' Jury seemed to have no demonstrable impact on the interventions by LBN and Preston United on the Muslim Young Men's Project or the outcomes for the same. In theory the Citizens' Jury and Muslim Young men are two connected projects; in practice they are separate.

Muslim Young Men's Project

The Muslim Young Men's Project had notable success in engaging with several of the MYM in programmes of rehabilitation into the community. Central to this success was establishing the *Community Anchor* role making connections with Mosques, community organisations and the family in supporting the MYM's rehabilitation.

The *Community Anchor* role enabled positive outcomes for the MYM with regard to re-connection with the family home, employment and, to a certain extent, re-engaging with the community.

The positive outcomes that were achieved with MYM who had left prison, were with those who had committed less serious offences. Where the MYM had committed a serious offence, the project had a limited impact.

The referral criteria from the National Probation Service (Lancashire) to LBN and Preston United needs to be re-negotiated and clarified to ensure that all the agencies involved in the process are clear about the purpose, expected interventions and the outcome for the MYM.

In particular, the referral criteria needs to establish with the Muslim Young Men and the agencies involved, that referral to the project with LBN and Preston United is on a voluntary basis.

The recruitment of Muslim Young Men could also be improved by referrals to the project coming directly from prison. This would enable the rehabilitative work to commence at an earlier stage and a realistic assessment of the chance of positive outcomes for the MYM and the project could be established.

The challenges that the young men experience are complex and therefore require complex solutions. These could include early intervention with the MYM's families, mental health assessment and therapeutic interventions.

The challenges experienced in the Muslim community could be an additional focus of work including the educational and community development programmes that focus on the specific causes of offending behaviour for Muslim Young men and strategies to address it.

In sum, both the Citizens' Jury and the Muslim Young Men projects demonstrate that focused input that is sensitive to the specific cultural and religious needs of the young men, does provide good outcomes for the MYM in terms of desistance from offending and rehabilitation into the community. However, there needs to be clarity in the referral process, the expectations of all parties involved, and the outcomes that need to be achieved.

Introduction

Lancashire BME Network (LBN) works to enhance the lives of, 'primarily, but not exclusively minority ethnic and deprived communities in Lancashire' (LBN,2022). LBN do this by collaborating with minority ethnic and other community organisations throughout Lancashire to deliver projects that focus on improving the lives of the local BME communities. This evaluation explores two such projects, that aim to work with minority ethnic and deprived communities in Lancashire with regard to the Criminal Justice system.

1. Policy Background

1.1 Resettlement and Desistance of Muslim Male Offenders

It is acknowledged that BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) and Muslim young men have been and are increasingly over-represented in the criminal justice system at every stage of intervention. This is often as a result of discrimination and/or racism (Lammy, 2017; Wainwright and Larkins, 2017). The Young Review highlighted these disproportionately negative outcomes for Black and Muslim Young Men (18-24) in the criminal justice system (Mullen et al, 2014). The aim of this review was to explore how knowledge of prevailing disproportionality would be affected by the (then) Transforming Rehabilitation reforms (Mullen, 2014).

At time of implementation, the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda had been widely criticised for not addressing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, using a 'one size fits all to offender supervision' (Frazer et al, 2014: 93). In this vein, a study undertaken by Arooj, an organisation working with BAME and Muslim Young Men who have been involved in offending behaviour, found that 36% of the 115 respondents felt that specialist cultural and religious support would help them desist from offending behaviour (Mahmood and Hanif, 2014). Further criticisms pointed out that third sector BAME organisations were particularly negatively affected by these reforms because of the target setting and payment by results system (Clinks, 2018; National Audit Office, 2019). For example, a study of a BAME/Muslim third sector organisation demonstrated that a target/result based system was detrimental, as it did not consider the qualitative and relationship-based work undertaken with Muslim men that engaged with their service (Hough, 2016).

When it comes to the resettlement and desistance of BAME and Muslim offenders, the importance of focusing on developing social capital is critical to rebuild and sustain relationships with families and their local communities (McNeil and Maruna, 2008). Although studies have suggested that resettlement needs for BAME and Muslim ex-prisoners do not differ radically from their white counterparts, ethnic and cultural sensitivity by staff towards BAME and Muslim young men who had been in prison remains important. LBN have established the Muslim Young Men's Project in partnership with Preston United to work with ex Muslim prisoners to address these specific cultural needs. This is specifically addressed by building a qualitative relationship with the young men that is sensitive to cultural, religious and familial needs, aiming to improve community resettlement outcomes and reconnecting with their family.

1.2 Citizens' Juries – U.K. Context

First developed in the 1970s by the Jefferson Centre in the U.S.A., a Citizens' Jury fosters public discussion and debate on an emerging issue (Hayden and Pidgeon, 2006; van der Veer, 2021). Citizens' Juries, as the name suggests, are loosely modelled on a legal jury. They are a cross-section of lay people not necessarily personally involved with an issue, who answer questions, then make recommendations on said issues (Hayden and Pidgeon, 2006). The process involves around 12-16 members of the public over a 3-4 day period (Maer, 2007; Barnes et al., 2009). The lengthy process, although time-consuming for jurors, encourages development of their own normative views (Bennett and Smith, 2007). Jurors meet to consider the issue at hand, within which they are briefed by expert witnesses who provide evidence (Bennett and Smith, 2007). Once the evidence has been reviewed and recommendations confirmed, the Citizens' Jury response is provided in written and oral form to the sponsoring organization, for example, a local government authority (Finney, 1997).

The use of Citizens Jury enlarges public participation in public policy decision making. In particular, Barnes et al (2009) comment on their utility when an issue involves considerable technical information, and where it is feasible that members of the public will be able to reach a decision of agreement/disagreement on a motion. Prior to the Citizens' Jury process, most jurors have little to no knowledge of the issues they are debating. The views of jurors are therefore shaped by the Citizens' Jury proceedings itself. The expert/lay division is transcended throughout the course of the process (Bennett and Smith, 2007). Through a process of knowledge building and deliberation, lay jurors are able to comprehend this information and arrive at a well-informed and well-reasoned conclusion.

They have added value in providing public understandings to ‘an arena dominated by ‘expert’ opinion’ (ibid; Abstract).

The first Citizens’ Jury in the U.K. was held in 1996, commissioned by Cambridge and Huntington Health Authority on the topic of health-care rationing (Finney, 1997). Since then, topics deliberated by Citizens’ Juries in the U.K. have ranged from artificial intelligence decision-making (van der Veer et al., 2021), climate change (Lancashire County Council, 2020), the commercial use of health data (Tully et al., 2019) and waste management (Kuper, 1997).

As highlighted by the examples above, Hayden and Pidgeon (2006) comment that topics for Citizens’ Juries often pertain to science and technology. Specifically, Citizens’ Juries in the U.K. appear to be centred around the broad topics of healthcare and the environment. That is not to say that a Citizens’ Jury is not an appropriate methodology for other areas of interest, including the criminal justice system. Research for jurisdictions outside of the U.K. has demonstrated this. For example, in Australia a Citizens’ Jury was convened to garner the opinions of the public towards approaches to offenders, deliberating on models of incarceration and potential alternatives. This demonstrates the potential use of community members in the U.K. to inform justice and penal policies, an area that is currently under researched.

1.3 (South Asian) Muslim Young Men¹ – Post Prison Project

This pilot project has been established as partnership with National Probation service (Lancashire), LBN and Preston United. LBN have subcontracted Preston United to work with Muslim Young Men who have just left prison. Preston United have developed a project that attempts to link community based resolutions to offending behaviour with the concept and practice of an alternative justice model that invests in community involvement in the decision making of offender destinies. The process for this model of working involves National Probation Service (Lancashire) referring Muslim Young Men who have left prison to Preston United. LBN have managed this process and contributed to the work with individual Muslim Young Men.

1.4 Citizens’ Jury

¹ This project is specifically developed to work with Muslim Young Men of South Asian heritage who have just left prison. It is important to name the project Muslim Young Men, as this is their identity. Being an (ex) offender, or more pertinently someone who has committed offences, is a transient status and this negative portrayal does not accurately reflect their lives, identities, talents and aspiration. Hence, for the purpose of this evaluation, this group will be referred to as Muslim Young Men (MYM).

Designed to work in tandem with and alongside of the Muslim Young Men's Project, is the Citizens' Jury Project. BN have worked with community partners to set up Citizens' Juries in Blackburn and Burnley that comprise of local members of the South Asian community, community development workers, professionals involved in the criminal justice system, welfare professionals, academics and ex-offenders. The purpose of these juries has been to explore potential pathways for the South Asian Muslim young men as they come to terms with life after prison. The Citizens' Juries discuss possible education, training and employment opportunities that would contribute to an individual's rehabilitation, along with issues that may contribute to difficulties re-joining their families. This has involved the Citizens' Juries deliberating on the Muslim Young Men's offending behaviour, with a view to addressing the cultural, ethnic and religious sensitivities of Muslim Young Men having to be supported to and if possible, resettle in their local community and re connect with their families.

Consistent with LBN's values, they have established the project as evidence suggests that Muslim Young Men (MYM) of South Asian heritage experience specific problems when they are released from prison. These difficulties are in part related to their communities' cultural and religious heritage, which impacts the MYM because of the *stigma* they may experience in their communities. The families of the MYM often have wives, partners and families who are financially dependent and also experience ostracism and exclusions from everyday life because of 'stigma', as a consequence of the MYM's offending behaviour. This may be because Muslim women have to navigate culturally defined spaces which may privilege a male presence in their household. Further, some wives and partners in the Muslim community are isolated because they need their male partners who have been in prison for support in everyday language communication with wider society. This isolation is within the context that the South Asian/Muslim community in Pennine Lancashire has high unemployment, poor housing, a high (re)offending rate, marginalisation and lack of engagement with the wider community (LBN, 2021).

Research Overview

2. Overview of the research

2.1 Aim

The aim of this evaluation was set out as the following:

To evaluate the effectiveness of the MYM's pilot project in engaging and rehabilitating Muslim Young Men who have been in prison and the efficacy of the Citizen's Jury in providing advice, support and enabling sustainable routes back into their local community and informing the development of ongoing work in the area.

2.2 Objectives

1. Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the Muslim Young Men's Project in supporting and rehabilitating young Muslim men back into their families and community.
2. Evaluate the process and outcome of the Citizen's Jury to provide support and strategies for Muslim young men to be re integrated into the community.
3. Evaluate the impact of these two community-based approaches in reducing re offending.
4. To Evaluate whether the two projects address (and improve) the breakdown of family and community relationships between Young Muslim men who have been in prison.

2.3 Methodology

Qualitative research methods have been used for this evaluation, specifically focus groups and semi-structured interviews. These took place online using Microsoft Teams through necessity due to Covid restrictions during the period of the study. An action research methodology has been employed as the Citizen's Juries have been active in the shape, design and development of the project (Somekh, 2006). Action research was an appropriate methodology as aspects of the Citizens' Jury mirrored the change brought about through action because of their interventions. The analysis of the conversations (the data) used Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Three focus groups were undertaken with participants in the Citizen's Juries in Blackburn. Both the Citizens' Jury and MYM projects gained full ethics approval from the ethics committee at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and members interviewed agreed to take part.

The Citizen's Jury in Blackburn consisted of five men of South Muslim South Asian heritage, seven women of Muslim South Asian heritage and one white British man. This number of participants included one South Asian Muslim man and one South Asian Muslim woman who were involved in facilitating and supporting the Citizens' Juries. There were also four semi-structured interviews conducted online via Microsoft Teams with two South Asian Muslim Women and two South Asian Muslim men. Three of these project workers - two South Asian Muslim women one South Asian Muslim man – facilitated and supported the Citizens' Juries and two of them, one male and female worked with the MYM project.

These focus groups contributed to an understanding of the purpose, process and intended outcomes of the Citizens' Jury. The conversations (data) that inform this report are from the three focus groups undertaken with Blackburn's Citizens' Jury.

Findings

4.1 Citizens' Jury – Purpose

There seemed to be a common understanding of the purpose of the Citizens' Jury from those that participated. This included the Citizens' Jury providing clear evidence of the offending rates of MYM and how this had a detrimental impact on the South Asian communities of Blackburn:

I think raising this issue was fundamental within our Community. I attended the first session so I provided some of the stats of some of the reoffending to the community. And it's their reaction was really um, so I think some of these hard statistical facts providing to the community was helpful for us all, and then then having that knowledge to say yes, it needs to be addressed. It can't be just brushed under the carpet and they see that it's. I know a lot of the sort of offences that we talked about. You know there were some very extreme opinions. There were some sort of more conservative opinions, so it's it was quite refreshing and to make this citizens jury members be secure. I'm comfortable enough for them to speak openly without feeling judged. (South Asian Muslim Woman 1)

This process of education of jury members and reflection of offending behaviour impact on the local South Asian Muslim community and the MYM was informed by information gained within the Jury and outside. The Citizens' Jury managed to bring in a wide range of speakers who helped develop a broader understanding of the issues from different perspectives. The connections and networks of the partner organisations (LBN and Blackburn with Darwen Healthy Living) were central to this happening. The Jury members were engaged and interested in this educational process and wanted to continue supporting the activities going forward:

Been really good, very educated. There's a community opinion and professional opinion. Problems identified, many BAME people have gone into prison, due to issues identified, for example, financial reasons. Families are suffering needlessly, there is a support network, but it needs to grow and needs to strengthen, and they don't need to suffer abuse and online abuse and things like that. (South Asian Muslim Woman 2)

Support for the Citizen Jury process emphasised the value of community involvement informing aspects of the criminal justice system, especially desistance:

That we can offer a culturally sensitive support system, so people and to get that you need part of the community. As part of the key, when they come out of prison or whether they're at risk of going into prison because they keep reoffending. And I think there's a responsibility on the community to look at actually what is causing those issues for them to keep in that cycle. So this is the whole point of the Citizens' Jury too.
(South Asian Muslim Woman 1)

Here the participant makes an important connection between the education and cultural support from the local community for the MYM in attempting to rehabilitate him in the community.

4.2 An Established Track Record

LBN have established partnerships with BAME, statutory and third sector organisations in Lancashire. This facilitates collaborative working to develop new and innovative initiatives. Some of these partner organisations (for Instance, Blackburn with Darwen Healthy Living) have a track record of experience in working with other agencies regarding Citizens' Juries and were able to contribute helpful practical advice:

We are quite experienced as an organization in running Citizens Juries and have run numerous Citizens' Juries across the borough previously for public health and the council. So, we always over recruit because you know that some people are likely to drop out, but you want a diverse group in terms of age and ethnicity, especially with this sort of project. (South Asian Muslim Woman 1)

4.3 Demographic Representation

All the participants felt that the Citizens' Jury reflected the diverse demography of their community with a wide age range of contributors. This representation included participants with heritage from the three countries that constitute a significant proportion of the South Asian community in Pennine Lancashire. The Jury had also engaged with professionals

involved in working with MYM in the Criminal Justice system. This included probation officers, senior police officers, community leaders and an ex-offender:

So, we started the youngest person we had who was 18 at the time, but during the process turned nineteen and I think the eldest member was 68 and it was a female so we've got South Asian females and males and again it was important to also have even if they were South Asian, the three to cover the three South Asian countries as well. So, we've had Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi members who were residents. And, also to represent demographics like disability as well. So, we made sure that we were able to get different views because, you know, it's a matter what and professionals as well in the sense that you know there are not that any opinion can, but it can depend on what profession you've worked in as. (South Asian Muslim Woman 1)

Although the representation on the juries is diverse and inclusive of the Muslim/South Asian community, some participants felt, because of the importance of Islam in the community, the Juries should engage more with Mosques and faith leaders. This was felt to be important generally, with regard to the value of engaging with key community institutions, and, specifically in relation to a perceived denial of the extent of problems:

As we've had Bengali, Pakistani and Indian residents of the panel and everybody came away saying the mosques need to play a bigger role. They need to not turn a blind eye and say our community doesn't do that. Yes, we (Muslims) are offending. Yes, this is your community that you know. Do they belong, what can the Mosques do? (South Asian Muslim Woman 2)

4.4 Multi-disciplinary professional panel

Those who participated in the jury felt that they had gained much from their experience, and it contributed to their knowledge and understanding of the Criminal Justice system and the experiences of MYM who had left prison. They particularly valued the diverse opinions that were shared in the forum:

Enjoyed it, it's been good to have a look at other people's perspectives on this issue and other points of view. (South Asian Muslim Woman 7)

Been really interesting that we've come out with different points and what people's thoughts are on the Muslim community. (South Asian Muslim Man 5)

This view was supported by the project workers and the those that participated on the jury. It suggests that there is a value of engaging directly, and as early as possible, with professional representatives:

This is how we should approach this subject. This is how it should be, so it's very grassroots. Is sort of opinion in the sense how we set it up and if it works we have to make sure the probation service are on board. We have to make sure the police are on board. We have to make sure even set up some of the prisons that we may work with in terms of the referral pathway that they're on board. So, when we had those professionals on our panel that already involves. (South Asian Muslim Woman 2)

Although, there was a probation and police officer involved in the Citizens' Jury this participant's reflection suggests that there is not always a clear process or protocol between the prisons service, probation and the function of the Citizens' Jury.

4.5 There are crimes and there are crimes

There was consensus among the Citizens' Jury members that those MYM they thought could be rehabilitated were those who had not committed serious, violent and/or sexual offences. These young men, it was felt, would be receptive to addressing their offending behaviour and considering the education, training and other opportunities that the Citizens' Jury could suggest. This was in contrast to those who had committed serious offences as the Jury members considered that these needed input from professionals with expertise in working with particular types of offending behaviour:

And it was interesting to hear even the youngsters saying there's certain crimes that you know cannot, they can't, you know, forgive. Uh, and that was interesting to see that you know that it's OK, everybody good at sorting motoring offences. And those sort of offences that they can work out. They've done their time. They can move on. And there were the crimes that are a lot more. Seeing especially like this, sexual crimes or even murder that you know they need to serve longer in prison, and you have to be really sure that you know they have changed and how can you be sure that they have so, those sort of things. It was quite interesting to hear that it was similar. Sort of

opinion. Didn't matter what age you are and what you know what you are. We had British white residents on the panel as well and it was the same sort of opinion. (South Asian Muslim Woman 1).

Some of the reticence in working with serious offending behaviour was because the jury members felt that they did not have the skills or expertise to do such work. However, there was an understandable moral reluctance to work with young men who had committed some of the more serious offences that were mentioned. This moral reluctance may quite reasonably be informed by faith and a revulsion of the more serious sexual and violent offences that take place.

4.6 Understanding the causes of crimes

Most of the participants that contributed to the Citizens' Jury felt that it was a valuable learning experience for them. Jury members were curious and eager to find out about the causes of offending for South Asian Muslim Young Men. They also felt that the Citizens' Jury could contribute to enabling MYM who had been in prison to develop strategies to desist from offending in the future. Yet evidently there was still much to do to ensure that the Citizens' Jury provided a clear, pragmatic and effective plan for MYM to desist from offending going forward:

What are the causes of reoffending? Is it because these young men?, uh, coming out are not finding a purpose making sure that they come out there in a position, so making sure in terms of housing, family around them or friends around them. There is that connection, connectivity, relationships or rebuild. Making sure even if faith, as I'd mentioned, a faith-based organizations to be involved. So, make sure that sort of mechanisms are in place when they come out. And if those mechanisms are in place. Is it gonna make a difference and in their lives are they gonna have not reoffended? So, at this time it's putting those things in place because they are not in place at the moment. Because if it is, it's not working because these young men are afraid of reoffending. What is it that's enticing them back into crime again? Whatever the crime, maybe. (South Asian Muslim Woman 3)

Another Citizens' Jury member felt that she had learned a significant amount from the MYM and other men who had been in prison because of their offending behaviour. Some of the young men who had been in prison had talked to members of the Citizens' Jury, and this first hand narration of experiences was appreciated:

It actually brought that awareness forward like it's highlighted an issue. Uh, which are really was wrong, so for me that's coming first. You know you never, ever get to hear from like the people like you know the offenders themselves and that we've had (name), who's kind of given quite an insight. So, for me, that's been like quite a major thing like you don't ever in any other situation. You don't ever kind of get this opportunity to hear. Well, actually this is an issue like you know he's an offender. He's gonna tell you from that perspective. (South Asian Muslim Woman 4)

For some on the Citizens' Jury, there was an ambivalent feeling of being able to contribute to the MYM's rehabilitation back into the community and their family, but also to hold them to account for their past offending behaviour. Such nuanced accounts also reflected the importance of understanding the emotions provoked by crime in communities; both for residents in terms of fear of offending and, conversely, for ex-offenders confronted by community interest in their behaviour:

So, that's quite a lot of things that I have learned from the jury, I used to be scared as when we had a lot of things going on in the estate. With all the situation or you know, but now since I've been in this group and I've learned quite a lot not to be scared of the youngsters because they are, they are dealing with the wrong. One thing that now they are scared of us. We can come and get them done; you know? (South Asian Muslim Woman 5)

This participant suggests that becoming involved in the Citizens' Jury had various positive impacts. First, it enabled them to learn about the criminal justice system and the contribution the local South Asian community can make to the rehabilitation of MYM who have been in prison. They also felt that it enabled them to feel more in control and safe when navigating and experiencing the offending behaviour of some MYM in their community. In this context, it was felt that families of offenders, particularly parents could play a role in intervening to address early desistance from offending, when young people are first being drawn into criminality:

The thing is the family know that the children are doing wrong things, and they can't say anything because the parents are scared of the children. The parents are the main focus, and they should be asking the kids where are you getting the money from? They [young people] should be focusing on education, not wandering around dealing, they use them as runners. The parents should put their foot down. The parents shouldn't take the money when they bring money. (South Asian Muslim Woman 6)

4.7 Cultural Understanding

The Citizens' Jury can provide a space for members of the South Asian community and professionals involved in the criminal justice system to discuss the experiences of young Muslim Men involved in offending behaviour. Participants consistently expressed a focus on culturally sensitive responses considering matters such as the importance of parental responsibility, the role the family can play, and the conflicting cultural traditional expectations between older and young generations. For this participant, some of these general concerns are complicated by changed family circumstances:

Parents are frightened. They are scared. I've approached a mother and have said to her, and she said I can't say anything since I got divorced. He might start abusing me and swearing at me. (South Asian Muslim Man 1)

The importance of emotion was returned to in this contribution stressing the value of an informed and engaged family response, in and out of prison:

I think traditionalism is declining, and can we physically stop people from going astray. Shouting and screaming could drive them away, instead of keeping them within the family and close by. From an emotional point of view, families need to get involved, when they come out of prison. Families can take steps and help give a pathway for the offenders to get the help they need. They can really make a difference with them, so it may mean that not letting them live in the home but guiding them to support. This can start while the person is in prison. (South Asian Muslim Woman 5)

The Citizens' Jury thus provided a safe, emotionally secure, space for empathy and support for families in such difficult circumstances. This helped foster dialogue and deliberations promoting understanding of the family's position, that of the MYM and also the experience and perspective of the wider South Asian community.

As one Jury member explains there needs to be a triangle of support, empathy and action:

There are three people involved in supporting the offender, the ex-offender, the family, and the support network. If all three groups can sing from the same page, it can make a big difference. (South Asian Muslim man 2)

4.8 Citizens' Jury – Connecting with Muslim Young Men's Project

The key to the success of the Citizens' Jury is to connect the experiences of Muslim Young Men to the decision making of the jury and the MYM's project. Looking to the future, this involved a clear valuing of ongoing community involvement and the importance of a lived experience contribution. As one of the community workers explained:

We would like to continue the process and collaborate with other organisations out there and begin with when offenders are in prison. And we think there are no better people than those who've been through the system, who have an opinion, and someone who's been through the system is best for that, as they understand and were in that situation. Getting people like that involved. (South Asian Muslim Man 3)

4.9 Muslim Young Men's Project

The Parameters of the Project

The initial understanding for the project was that ten MYM who were leaving prison would be referred from Lancashire Probation Service via LBN to Preston United to undertake rehabilitative and supportive work with them. However, there appeared to be more referrals than LBN and Preston United expected and often the MYM referred to the project had more complex needs than the project could accommodate. Moreover, several of the MYM were not interested in engaging with the project and because it was provided on a voluntary basis, they were not inclined to co-operate with it:

When we started this project because probation work with that many people that would be ten people would be now, we've had over I think 17 referrals now. I think there needs to be a proper understanding about the project, because it sometimes has been completely inappropriate referrals whereby they need particular support like they've got mental health issues, like they have been sectioned, that's a completely different remit. So, I think sometimes that has been a challenge in itself or trying to say well the probation officer feels they need to support, but the person referred to us doesn't want it. (South Asian Muslim Man 3)

The MYM's project was established as a voluntary provision that was available for MYM who had left prison and wanted to work with a community group that understood their culture, language, religion, and the stigma that they were experiencing in the community. The problems surrounding referrals merits further attention alongside possibilities for early engagement:

More thought needs to go into the referral system. If we could create a referral system again, I think we need to catch them in prison. We need to catch them before they're going out the gate. I think that allows us a real chance to assess who we are talking to and if they're going to... we will not cherry picking. I'm not saying I'm going to give them, but it's not fair on young men themselves, right? (South Asian Muslim Man 3)

However, because there was a limited number of referrals from the probation service and only four MYM who had left prison engaged in the project, this enabled some in depth work to be undertaken with those who did attend:

Because we didn't get the numbers through the referral system, we spent longer and the time I spent with him we managed to get him back into the mosque. [He] had 60 hours to do on community service so I asked his probation officer [if he could do it there]. (South Asian Muslim Man 3)

4.10 Holistic assessment

The MYM project had to work with young men with multiple needs who require a holistic assessment when they leave prison. It is suggested that if the intervention with them is to have any meaningful impact on their behaviour, encourage desistance, and re-integration into their community, it needs to be delivered over a few months, drawing in support from other welfare agencies:

Basically, initially while doing the diagnostic assessment, in terms of data needs support with housing, have they got drug addiction issues etc? So, looking at that and identifying what they need sounds 'cause sometimes some people aren't ready. So, basically it's looking at what their needs are. And what they need support with, what

they feel is keeping him in that cycle and then trying to find holistic support for that individual. And if they need support with the family trying to get that support, be it mediation between building the family relationships or having difficult conversations. To give one example, one young boy he was a drug dealer so it's having that conversation. Unfortunately, he's on Universal Credit. He's got his own debt to payoff, so you know you want to help pay towards it, but you're going to have to accept sometimes that he has to address these difficult times, the imminent future. Until he's ready to move back into employment, etc. So it's having those difficult conversations on all areas. (South Asian Muslim Man 3)

A big part of the work that LBN and Preston United undertook with the MYM was relationship building with them, with their families, and to provide support to re-enter the community:

We provide an intensive month of support. As we have huge issues with alcohol and drugs, and domestic violence. There has often been a lot of trauma in the lives of the young men who have left prison. So, we provide patience and try to open up the chance to talk to their families. It takes time and effort and stuff going wrong. (South Asian Muslim man 3)

4.11 Serious Offending

The serious offending and taboos that all communities struggle to understand, or accept, were evident both in the Citizens' Jury and the MYM project. It is because of this that within Lancashire and beyond, it is an area of work that some in the Muslim voluntary sector (and wider community) feel should be acknowledged and addressed:

For your project officers how to deal with certain situation and probably the community as well because. We've not worked with sex offenders on this project, but in the future, that's not something that we've got to recognize. Just happening all communities. (South Asian Muslim Woman 4)

For the both the Citizens' Jury project and the MYM project, there needs to a clear understanding and criteria of the level of offending behaviour they are equipped to address, the level of support they can provide and the protocol and process for this intervention.

4.12 Community Anchors

The MYM project had success in working with MYM who have left prison and, with those that engaged, making connections to act as community anchors. These 'anchors' included with family members, within the mosques and within community organisations. In successful cases, these enabled the young men to move on with their lives and gain positive outcomes including employment and stability in the family home:

Every three months he would, you know, go out and do some community work. On his own, without us telling him to do it, so you know, go and do a little to help people. The mosque organizer provided support. (South Asian Muslim Man 3)

A core part of the work that Preston United and LBN workers undertook with MYM was exploring the idea of community reparation. Developing a notion with the MYM that if they were to be accepted back into their families' lives and their community, there had to be an acceptance of their offending behaviour and how this had impacted negatively on others. Community reparation, also meant the MYM engaging in community work to demonstrably pay back to those who had been negatively impacted by their offending. It was about making a public and physical statement of their contrition through undertaking work of good deeds for their community:

But it needs to be fair for both him and in the community now he feels as though that stain on his character is starting to be removed, especially because he did a lot of work in the mosque and people were looking at him a bit in a good way. (South Asian Muslim Man 3)

Restorative Justice is the practice of those who offend taking responsibility for their behaviour, acknowledging the damage and negative impact it has on the community and beginning to repay through community work and/or other selfless endeavours. This was woven into the interventions with the MYM that made connections between some community anchors in the Mosque and elsewhere with a view to reintegration. There was expectation that the young men should be reflectively conscious of their role in the community and make efforts to change aspects of their identity, including how they express themselves:

Successful religious side of the community. So we just gotta work on his community contribution payback. I know he didn't even zone, but I want him to do something that you know. He had to look at his language as well, you know, just when I first met him, he was still in that street lingo. 'innit go bro.' All this kind of stuff. (South Asian Muslim Man 3)

Two examples of work that LBN and Preston United undertook with the MYM were reported as follows:

Case Study example 1

The first one I got was a young man. The offence was driving offence, but he got a two year suspended sentence. Fantastic, absolutely fantastic. Straightaway engaging, straightaway understood responsibility or ownership over his criminal activity. Knew he made a mistake; it was his first mistake. Costly mistake because he has criminal record. I met with his family on day one, a very conservative Muslim family who were really horrified at what he had done but were supportive. They wanted him to move on and they were very glad of the external support that we were offering. So, every week I would go down to spend an hour with them. (South Asian Muslim Man 3)

This provides evidence of how provision of support from this project that is culturally and religiously sensitive to the needs of the MYM and their family, can provide a pathway to rehabilitation into the community and desistance from further offending. There is also a strong sense of participating individuals and their families desiring this support and appreciating it and how it was delivered.

Case Study example 2

He sells drugs, burglaries and robs and has had a beating. He has been beaten many, many times from people in the community. This guy will not change and, you know, you are wasting your time on working on it. So, I asked these people I've known for many years to give him an opportunity and ... So, a warehouse where I could get him a job they just said "look" no one, no one is going to give this kid [a chance], because he is still selling crack on the street. I don't know why you working with him. So when I confront him about it, he became very dismissive. In my experience he suffers from bipolar, or he's very intelligent when to switch it on and switch it off, so that he is playing me and tells me what I need to hear, but [regardless] there was no movement in HIS behaviour and not changing his behaviour. (South Asian Muslim Man 3)

This example provides evidence of the complexity of the work that needs to be undertaken. It suggests that an assessment regarding the support that needs to be provided to address the MYM's complex needs is required. Part of the identified complexity and challenges are the issues of cooperation and trust, between the support workers and the offender, and between both and the community at large. It is also important to understand whether the MYM chose to be involved with this project or was made to be involved.

4.13 Project Outcomes

Despite the challenges and complexities illustrated above, the wider evaluation findings show the MYM project made a significant difference to encouraging some young men to work towards desisting from offending:

I think the outcome will be reduction in reoffending and being able to integrate back into society and not the residents. Being informed that there's so many reasons that people offend as well, I think that must be really important that somebody has served their time. How we do that in terms of changing mindsets, it's inner, maybe having some sort of a group of people that do some sort of campaigns around, but it's I think the main put outcome would be that [a reduction in] reoffending. (South Asian Muslim Woman 8)

Discussion

Citizens' Jury

The community project workers from LBN, Preston United and Blackburn with Darwen Healthy Living were passionate about the work on both projects and a lot of time and commitment was invested into ensuring their success. Those from the local South Asian community and others who participated were also very enthusiastic about the purpose and opportunities the Citizens' Jury could provide for the rehabilitation of Muslim Young Men (MYM). Separately, the two areas of work had some significant successes in their individual aims. The Citizens' Jury enabled a reciprocal knowledge exchange. Community members were able to learn about and inform the development of criminal justice work with Muslim young men, and they brought into the deliberations their knowledge of the wider community and issues faced by the families affected by crime and connected to offenders.

The Citizens' Jury managed to bring in a wide range of speakers who helped develop a broader understanding of the issues from different perspectives. The connections and networks of the partner organisations Lancashire BME Network (LBN) and Healthy Living were central to this happening. The jury members remain engaged and interested and want to continue supporting the activities going forward. The Citizens' Jury has been an effective way of engaging the local South Asian and wider community in the democratic process of decision making for social welfare and criminal justice in their local community (Barnes et al., 2009). Further, this model can effectively inform decision-making for future support, opportunities, and education for MYM (and white British men) that leave prison and need to return to their families and wider community. They can be an important component of the local South Asian Muslim community becoming educated about the causes and outcomes of offending behaviour and engaging the criminal justice process (Simpson et al., 2004). The Citizens' Jury also facilitated an opportunity for different demographics and generations of the Muslim South Asian community to discuss, and come to understand different perspectives regarding culture, faith and the causes and impact of offending behaviour in their families and the wider community. They also enabled colleagues who were professionals in the probation, police and wider welfare services (some of whom were of South Asian, Muslim heritage) to enter into a dialogue to understand different perspectives in the criminal justice system and wider welfare state.

However, there is no evidence of there being any tangible impact from the Citizens' Jury activity on the outcome of the MYM project. The Citizens' Jury had been a democratic forum to explore possibilities to support MYM who had left prison back into the community;

the ability to follow this through with the MYM's Project and provide a pathway from the Jury seemed limited at this point. The Citizens' Jury has provided a forum for participants from the local South Asian Muslim community, people who had been in prison and/or through the criminal justice system and professionals who worked in the criminal justice system to develop pathways of opportunity and rehabilitation for MYM. The next step is to make the concrete, practicable move to follow these plans through to impact and effect the outcomes for MYM.

Muslim Young Men Project

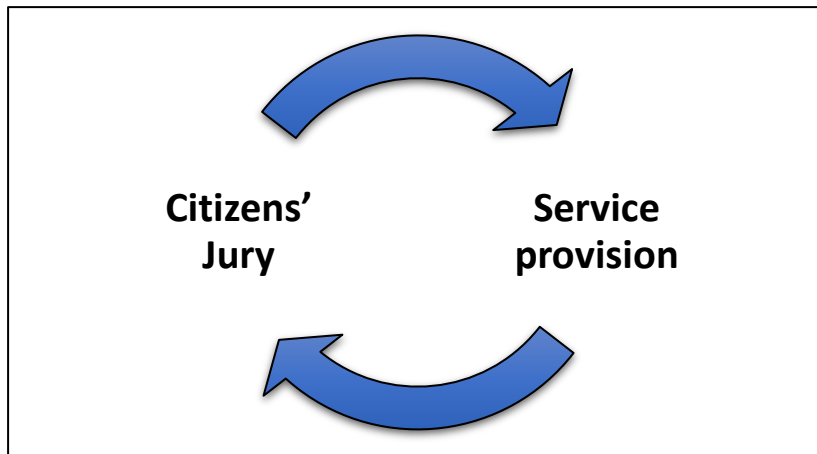
The MYM project provided by Preston United and managed by LBN had success in working with MYM who had been in prison and with those that engaged, making connections to act as community anchors. The community anchor role included making connections with family members, within the mosques and within community organisations. In successful cases, these enabled the young men to move on with their lives and gain positive outcomes including employment and stability in the family home (Hough, 2016). However, the MYM that tended to respond positively to support from Preston United community anchors were those that had committed less serious offences. Where the offences committed by the MYM were more serious and the individuals needs were more complex (as described in case study example 2), the community anchor role, and support provided by the MYM project had a limited impact. This arguably however would likely have been the case had they been supported by the probation service.

Due to the funding criteria negotiated with the probation service, the project outcomes had to be delivered in a short time frame. Although successfully completed, there were a number of areas whereby the project could have been improved, given more time and appropriate resources. The project could have been more successful had all staff in the probation service committed to the model of MYM project delivering culturally and religiously appropriate services in the community (Mahmood and Hanif, 2014; Hough, 2016)

The MYM project and the Citizens' Jury functioned quite separately from each other. The projects would have been more effective by integrating their approaches and developing systems to ensure that learning from each project informed the other. In this way the knowledge developed and gained from the Citizens' Jury could have helped refine the service delivery, while the development of the service would allow a specific focus for the Citizens' Jury to deliberate, which could effectively act as an advisory group to the service. The two projects are good examples how South Asian Muslim community participation and co-operation with professionals in the criminal justice system can have a real impact to

improve the life chances and outcomes for MYM who have left prison. However, there needs to be a developed system, process and protocol for both projects to work together to ensure projects

impact possible
MYM



that the achieve maximum and the best post prison outcomes for (see Figure 1)

Figure 1 – The need for collaboration between Citizens' Juries and Service provision

The referral process and criteria into the MYM service requires clarifying and finessing. The MYM project workers at Preston United and LBN felt that some of the referrals were inappropriate because the needs of the individuals were beyond the skillset of the support able to be provided. In these instances, the trauma and dysfunction that the MYM had faced meant that they struggled to engage with the MYM project and may have needed more intensive therapeutic support. Secondly, it became clear to staff that the MYM did not feel that their involvement in the project was on a voluntary basis. Instead, they may have felt it was mandatory to be involved. One of the principles of the project is that the MYM volunteer to be involved, so that they are invested and committed to making the changes through building their social capital, engaging with their community, in turn requiring efforts to repair trusting relationships with family and community. If continuing in the future, the project would need to clarify the referral criteria of people they can work with and refine the referral procedure to ensure the MYM are voluntarily signing up to the support provided. The recruitment of MYM could also be changed to include direct recruitment via prisons before release into the community.

The challenges that these young men are facing are complex and may need more complex solutions. This could include more early intervention work with families as the issues arise,

alongside wider support. A team approach with other services, particularly around mental health, would be useful for the service to call upon. This could be augmented with equitable access to mental health assessments and support for the MYM delivered in culturally sensitive ways.

Further, the challenges experienced specifically in the Muslim community could be an additional focus of work; including of educational and community development approaches addressing the causes of offending behaviour and the subsequent challenges that emerge. These complex contributing factors include such underlying difficulties as poor educational outcomes, domestic abuse and neglect, inadequate family support, lack of input from religious organisations and parenting. There is the opportunity for these challenges and difficulties to be addressed with interventions from the Citizen's Jury and MYM, on a broader scale, with the Citizens' Jury approach ensuring authentic community participation.

Conclusion

The two projects of the Citizens' Jury and MYM's project are evidence of LBN providing strategic leadership in combining statutory, community based and voluntary sector provision to address the specific needs of Muslim Young Men who have left prison and need to be supported to rehabilitation back into their families and communities. This is not an easy task and provides evidence of LBN's capacity to develop creative, innovative approaches to criminal justice challenges for the South Asian Muslim community and the Muslim Young Men who have committed the offences. There is evidence of democratic involvement of all the stakeholder this process, and a clear purpose of the Citizens' Jury affecting the pathways available to MYM who work with Preston United who have been in prison. The outcomes for those who had committed less serious offences were encouraging, for the more complex cases, further work, thought, and planning needs to take place between the probation service, LBN and Preston United. However, the model of the Citizen's Jury and MYM have been established, with all stakeholders committed to it and working together in a dynamic, innovative and solution focused process that is culturally and religiously sensitive. The model has much to commend it for improving the outcomes of MYM, reducing reoffending and protecting the local communities from crime going forward.

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