

What views or perception did you have of street drugs before you started taking Drugs?

"Enough people were smoking it before I started taking Drugs, it was everywhere. It was just normal stuff you did. It must have been alright since everyone was taking it you know what I mean"

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

"Yeah, Yeah, it was all good. All my mates were on it. The girls at school thought druggies were well bad"

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

"To be honest bro, I could not stand it, the smell of cigarettes used to really get to me".

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

"For losers only! huh look at me now!"

Pakistani young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

'There was never a concern for those who took cannabis that just a common harmless Drug. However I always hated Crack & cocaine'.

Bangladeshi young man: 30 - 39 yrs old

"We all knew drugs were bad, then up to a point you just don't care anymore"

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

"My parents told me they were bad"

Bangladeshi young female 22 -24 yrs old

What views or perception did you have of drugs users before you started taking Drugs?

"I started taking it at a young age, about 17. I did not know any users, the 1st time I took it was the 1st time I knew any drug user"

Bangladeshi young man: 19 - 21 yrs old

"I used to hate smack heads (Heroin Users), when ever I came across one or conversation about them took place I would just ridicule them"

Bangladeshi young man: 30 - 39 yrs old

"Alright I guess, they were just doing their thing. It was cannabis users then, not getting in anyone's way; now we just robbing people and that"

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

"One of them spurred up in front of me house whilst me mum was in the garden. I came out of the house cursing him and flipped. I knocked him a few times and just thought he was a waste of space. Some mates would be sympathetic and say they need help, but me I thought they just outta clean themselves up. And now I'm using heroin and ain't getting off it"

Pakistani young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

"Me brother was on it, so I just felt sorry for them"

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

'I was very eager to find out what kind of feelings you can experience, I was aware that drugs are illegal; however I still wanted the experience. Drug users were not dangerous or anything, I have known them all my life '.

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

Please describe the events that lead you to become a Drug user?

“Close friends of mine started selling hard Drugs. It was past onto me to try & I started taking heroin. I was also going through a period of a lot of pressure in my life; I was under the impression that it would be a stress reliever. I think if they were not around I would not start using Drugs, I certainly would not go looking for it”.

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“I got involved by selling drugs. Then it went to a stage when friends were taking drugs. One thing led to another and I was also taking drugs!”

Pakistani young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“I started straight away on hard drugs, heroin! I just had a bust up with me parents. They were going off on one about anything and everything. There was this gaff that the boys would go to. Everyone my age knew about it, so I just went round to clear me head and that. In the back of me head I knew what I was going for, but as I got there just pretended I had just gone to chill out; but they knew the score. I had a bit of heroin and man! I was in a bubble and my problems just went away, after that I was hooked”.

Bangladeshi young man: 30 - 39 yrs old

“I did not consider it bad company (this user tick bad company as the reason he started taking drugs), we was at a party and they were all friends, we was all students and did not get involved in crimes or anything disruptive. So at the time I took it just to mingle in the party.

Bangladeshi young man: 19 - 21 yrs old

“God! I was going through a bad. People do not understand how hard we girls have it. I just needed to get out. I felt strangled, but then I got mixing with a bad crowd and got into a bad relationship I was in a spiral of drugs and alcohol”

Bangladeshi young women 22 – 24 yrs old

How were you introduced to street drugs?

“At a party with friends”

Bangladeshi young man: 19 - 21 yrs old

“I went looking for it really, some guys I knew were at a house using it and I just went round. I was at two minds whether I should take it or not, but once I took it I was hooked”.

Bangladeshi young man: 30 - 39 yrs old

“I do not deserve to be on Drugs you know, these guys started dealing and they were just looking to get people on it. They started giving it to me for free, and then when I went looking for it they said I had to pay. I thought it was only cost a few pounds, boy was I wrong! Now I spend most of my money on Drugs even my kid's child benefit money”.

Bangladeshi young man: 30 - 39 yrs old

“I have been smoking cannabis for time, since I was at school; some kid who moved from London used to smoke it regular and we thought he was just so cool. Then me and some mates just started taking harder drugs, we kind of just blended into it; 1st cannabis, then LSD & Whizz, then the hard drugs like heroin and crack”.

Pakistani young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“You know what, you can ask any guy that smokes it, it just happens; it is part of youth culture. Ok yeah sure, hard drugs are bad fair enough, but smoking cannabis is not looked as a bad thing and acceptable in our culture; it is a pity we end up on hard drugs”.

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“I started straight onto heroin! Just went to some friends gaff and they were ‘chasing the dragon’ I had never seen anything like it before. I just had to try it out”

Pakistani young man 22 -24 yrs old

What views did you have of Drug users after you yourself started taking Drugs?

“Not every Drug user comes from a bad background. You realise that half of them are taking drugs because they have a problem that leads them to it. I thought that all Drug users are thieves, but now I sympathise with some of them; mind you not all of them. I believe that some Drug users can come off their habit if they are given the right help! But they need to be given that opportunity to deal with it in their own time & space, not on a prescribed time”.

Bangladeshi young man: 30 - 39 yrs old

‘I could understand why drug users were lead to steal or any other illegal act in order to feed their habit. There are those who work to feed their habit, yet at times it is never enough.’

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“Look! I am a user; things I have done are bad. In my normal state I was fine! I looked after my parents, studied hard, worked hard. It’s the Drugs that are messing my head up. So I want people to know were not bad people, it is the things we do that are bad; I just wanted you to note that thanks”.

Pakistani young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“What can I say? Actions speak for themselves, and I am a user”

Bangladeshi young man: 19 - 21 yrs old

“Just coz I take drugs doesn’t mean I shouldn’t say the truth; Drugs is bad and the people who take them are bad”

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

“Drug Users are bad news”

Bangladeshi young women 22 – 24 yrs old

What drug did you initially take?

“Cannabis at school. Anyone who was cool was doing it”

Pakistani young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“I started straight on Heroin, bad problems at home you know”

Bangladeshi young man: 30 - 39 yrs old

“Just smoked weed with some lads, we used to get a right buzz out of it”.

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“Skunk with some mates”

Bangladeshi young man 19 – 21 yrs old

“Weed and alcohol, just with a bad crowd”

Bangladeshi young women 22 – 24 yrs old

What drug or drugs are you currently taking?

What Drugs are you currently taking?

“Heroin! Started taking cannabis then moved up to the harder Drugs; just went that way”

Pakistani young man: 22 -24 yrs old

“Heroin! I thought it was a bit more buzzing to take on some hard drugs”

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“Heroin & Crack! It just sort of happened, someone turned up with a bag and before you knew it we was all trying it”

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

“Heroin & Crack! I was scammed into it, I thought you could just take now and again and that was it you know. Now I can't get off it”

Bangladeshi young man 30 – 39 yrs old

“Heroin & Crack! My new business was booming and I started looking for something a bit different, I got careless and lost everything”

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

Please tell us as much as you can about the circumstances around that particular crime(s)?

Benefit Fraud:

“You don’t look upon it as a crime, everyone does it whether you a druggie or not. I know people who are partners in a business, receive a wage as a chef and claiming all the benefits. He must be earning £1500+ a week. I work in a low key take away; I claim full family credit and child tax credit. Get my council tax paid for and receive housing benefit. It gives me enough to pay for my habit and look after my family. I have never been arrested or in trouble with the police for the benefits, someone did grass on me once and I had to go through several interviews with some people from the benefits agencies, but everything turned out alright. I have been in trouble with the police for fighting but that had nothing to do with Drugs, just a brawl with some lads.

After I started taking drugs I met up with all sorts of characters, I do not really hang out with them much it is just that if you need anything on the cheap then there is someone who can get it. Smack heads can even get milk for you babies”.

Bangladeshi young man: 30 - 39 yrs old

Insurance Fraud:

“Once you’re known in the community that you can get hold of things for people then they will always come to you. Amongst all the other stuff I do I get hold of Insurance documents for people. Mainly car insurance documents, you are not going to believe the number of people who do not insure their car! I charge £150 - £200 for the paperwork. It is expensive, but the customer knows that if they have to ‘produce’ and the police called on the number it would be all cleared up coz my guy on the other end would confirm the insurance. Before I started taking Drugs I was involved with people who were involved in all sorts of illegal stuff. Once I started taking drugs I had to get more involved with these guys, they got me involved with other guys who could get things done. Most of these have families and good jobs, they don’t rob from people you know; they just do those sorts of clever things that you’re least likely to get caught in. I got arrested once for on the way from Leeds, I was driving a car that was not in my name and one of the tail lights was out. I got pulled on the motorway and the officer asked me about the car and my details. I gave him some false details but he did not believe me and arrested me. Once inside the police station I told them who I really was, but when I got checked they found credit cards in other people’s names! There was also documents in the car showing a TV had been rented under one these guys name and address and delivered somewhere else. It was case of identity theft. Anyway the police let me out and I was never called back in for it. Maybe it was just too complicated for them or something, but I never got charged; and I was not in long enough to go on a turkey”.

Pakistani young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

Credit Card Fraud:

"I work in a restaurant and claim benefit, but habit is quite expensive so do not get enough to cover all my expense. These guys have given me a cloning machine for cloning credit cards. The way it works is that when the customer pays for their meal I just swipe once on the restaurant PDQ machine and another time on the cloning machine. It duplicates all the information from the card and can be transferred to a dummy card. They give me £50 a card and I do about 5 – 7 cards a week. Theirs some guys in the east end of London who are selling a neat system that will actually rip the Chip & Pin number from the card, so you can basically duplicate the card and just key in the pin and take cash. It is expensive to buy but some of us are trying to get the money together. Before I was taking smack you heard of all these things that was going around, after I started taking Drugs I was taking money from my parents as well so I had to look at other ways of making money, dealing was the 1st thing I started doing and made a lot of money, in the back of my mind I had it that I was going to get caught and end up doing 10 years or something in Prison. So then I hooked up with them who gave me the 'cloning' job, in the 1st night I got 5 cards and the following day they gave me £200; I was buzzing".

Bangladeshi Young Man: 25 - 29 yrs old

Identity Fraud:

"There was this lad who worked for a mortgage place in Rochdale, it wasn't a big place I think only 2 of them worked there; the boss and him. If you wanted a mortgage you had to produce everything, driving licence, passport copies, bank statements, utility bills, etc. I got done once for fighting and ended up on community service; I met a lad from Denton who could get the blank paper licences. I got an old typewriter and printed up exactly as a duplicate a licence for this man who had £18,000 in his account. I went to his bank in Rochdale, and reported the book lost for the account, they reproduced me one there and then. I went to a branch in Manchester and requested a £5000 loan, but told them I wanted it to go to a separate savings account. They wanted me to give them sort code and account number for an account that they monthly payments would go out of, there and then I phoned up another bank that did a security check and gave me the sort code and account number. The account manager that was processing the loan was happy with the security check and put the money in the account and it was good as cash! I also cleared the £18,000 out of that account in a matter of 1 week".

Pakistani young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

Benefit Fraud:

“I do taxi’s and in taxi’s most of the money you handle is cash. People have been evading tax for years in taxis; it’s not anything new, I am sure the tax man knows the score. Most taxi drivers claim more family credit by showing lower income, I do not think a lot of them claim job seekers allowance or anything like that but I share a taxi with a mate so I am not really on the books, so i also claim job seekers allowance. I know if I get caught I could get in serious trouble, my mates a bit dumb, well he’s always sorting me out and he thinks as long as I am not robbing and that it’s alright. I am trying to give up but it’s too hard. I am only on a 10 bag a day so I have got control of the drug it does not control me and I have never taken it while I am driving. I do not hang out or know any guys who are into criminal activities. I suppose the dealers yeah, not anyone else though”.

Pakistani young man: 30 - 39 yrs old

Mobile Phone Fraud:

“It is hard to explain how it works but what I do basically is someone comes to the shop and they purchase a mobile phone on a contract then I can get them £250 worth of credit on the tariff every month and they do not pay anything more then the standard rate that they are charged for the monthly contract. Obviously I do not promote to everyone that comes to the shop, just people I know. One of my mates was caught for it and he was just sacked, once the police was called as another person was doing it blatantly to customers coming into the shop and asking them to pay an additional £200 in cash extra! I don’t know what happened to him. There is a few of us who did this sort of thing at the place I work, and since the manager is in on it; he makes sure all the paperwork gets done right and covers the tracks. I have never been in trouble with the police.

Pakistani young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

Sex Work:

“It has led me to having sex with strangers and I hate it”

Bangladeshi Young Women: 22 – 24 yrs old

False sales:

"I've been working in telesales for years and in sales you can make a lot of money in commission; the main job is to promote sales. When a customer comes on the phone you start "blagging" about the product so most of them buy it because they think it's a bargain and the fact I work for a reputable company very few customers doubt what you're saying. Even if a customer doesn't buy the product you just add it onto the account, it costs them about £3 a month by direct debit and most customers do not notice this in the account. I get about £10 a sale, so if I do 5 -7 a day I am laughing.

Bangladeshi Young Man: 25 - 29 yrs old

"I was doing all these before I started taking class A Drugs. It was a buzz and it made quick money, and it was easy.

Most of the characters (in the game) I know from before".

Bangladeshi Young Man: 25 - 29 yrs old

"I have done and probably would do anything including begging to fund my habit.

Desperate measures lead you to associate with people whom I would never associate with; it became a habit to know all the low lives of the area".

Bangladeshi Young Man – 30 – 39 yrs old

What differences occurred in your lifestyle the further you went on in taking Drugs? I.e. the type of people you associate with, change of routine, etc?

'Obviously. I started associating with Pimps, prostitutes, a general bad crowd. I went through a time when I literally had not taken a bath for 3 months! There was no routine to food; you ate whenever you could be bothered'.

Bangladeshi young man 30 – 39 yrs old

'Yes, if you keep on taking drugs; you start to associate with drug users. Your main priority becomes getting the drug and your lifestyle is shifted around this.'

Bangladeshi young women 22 – 24 yrs old

"I was a calm and responsible person. But now I am wild! There is no fixed sleeping or eating pattern, I not with it all the time. My mind goes blank and I forget what I am supposed to be doing and that".

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

“God, I do not take my family out, I don’t do the shopping. I hardly see my kids. Spaced out in my own world. There was a point when I started taking drugs that I was bringing to my house with 3 – 4 boys, my family were thinking what’s going on. I just went from bad to worse”

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“At the beginning there was a little change, but I got back onto track. I think I am in total control and have got this control of my habit. I do all the normal things that are expected of me”

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

Did or Have relatives & friends become aware that you are a Drug user?

‘There was a reaction of shock & amazement. The family have tried their best in order to help me give up, but at the same time they go about it the wrong way. It has reached a point that I have lost their faith and trust; I have put them in a position of embarrassment within the community because of my behaviour and actions’.

Bangladeshi young man 30 – 39 yrs old

‘Family was shocked, however I am not around most of the time, therefore have not observed any changes in their attitude.’

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

“My dad was asking anybody and everybody to come and have words with me, to explain what I am doing is so bad and that. He started showing that he cared for me, but he was 20 years late to show that now. We were drifting apart anyway and I just do not get involved with anything they do. My mam loves me and is always there for me, but I just don’t really want to know anymore”

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

“My parents have been in the UK for a long time so when they knew I was on heroin they were really upset and confused my mum blames my dad and says it is his fault. They thought of sending me to Bangladesh at one time and bought the ticket and everything, but I just did one and stayed with a friend for a week”

Bangladeshi young women 22 – 24 yrs old

“My family is really understand and have stood by me throughout supporting me, it is getting to them now because I am not giving up the habit and they just do not know what else to do”

Bangladeshi young man 22 – 24 yrs old

Have the family sought advice/information or even outside help from the local community or local services?

‘They have tried every possible way in order to provide me help. I was sent over to Bangladesh to rid me of the habit. Members of the community have attempted to talk to me, convince me. At one point the community was willing to tie me up. They have contacted local services, even attempted to find a place to commit for Detoxifying, at any cost’.

Bangladeshi young man 30 – 39 yrs old

‘Last year my sister passed onto me some leaflets that contained information about drugs, she also bought some leaflets for my mum that was written in Bengali.’

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“They get some my friends and members of the community to have words with me, but they just looked down on me. There was a girl who used to work for some health agency who used to come round and speak to me, she was nice; she doesn’t come round any more and I do not know what has happened to her”

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“My brother called up a few services to get help. I attended a few appointments but nothing came out of them I just couldn’t get up in the morning to travel”

Bangladeshi young man 22 – 24 yrs old

“No not really, they wouldn’t know the 1st place to go to”

Bangladeshi young women 22 – 24 yrs old

Has the community responded to acknowledge that there are users within the community & offered services to help?

'Of course. The community looks down on me; I have obviously contributed to this through my behaviour. People are wary of association with me and obviously those who do are careful about carrying out any financial transaction. Basically I am outcast even if I am physically there'.

Bangladeshi young man 30 – 39 yrs old

'You do not interact as much as you may have done before.'

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

"They don't give a damn about nothing except for politics and money. The community looks down on you all the time and just wants to have a laugh when you are down"

Bangladeshi young man 22 – 24 yrs old

'The drug problem is growing and the community is in denial over the drugs issue! I have not heard of anything that the community is doing to tackle the drugs problem. I just do not associate with the people in the community; you know they are laughing at you. I used to go to the mosque before now I don't go at all'

Pakistani young man: 22 -24 yrs old

"You mix with people as less as you can I guess, Druggies got there only circle that you hang out with. But I have tried to blend in as much as I can"

Bangladeshi young women 22 – 24 yrs old

Do you know of others within the community who are Drug users?

"Me and my mates started taking drugs around the same time, there was this one mate who got on it 1st and told us how good it was; then we started on it"

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

"You know who's on it and who's not, it is a small community nothing is hidden"

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

"I didn't know any drug users until I started looking for it, you start finding those who are just like you and then start to hang out together"

Bangladeshi young man 19 – 21 yrs old

“They’re the ones that got me on it in the first place. They convinced me it was the best thing ever and that it was cheap. After a few goes I was hooked then they told me I had to pay for it”

Bangladeshi young man 30 – 39 yrs old

There is this house that everyone would go to and hang out; everyone knew who went there and what went one. So I went there and got sorted out”

Bangladeshi young man 22 – 24 yrs old

Is your experience that the community are aware of drug use?

‘No. People have the attitude that since one of their own is not on it why should I bother! I believe my family would have the same attitude if I was not a Drug user’.

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

‘I am aware that the community acknowledges there are drug users, I am not aware if anything is being done about it.’

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

“Drugs are an issue which has not been addressed as a community”

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“We know this problem is a high priority, but why are the community leaders not doing anything about it”

Bangladeshi young man: 25 - 29 yrs old

“There is loads of people smoking heroin in the community, but I do not see anything being done about it”

Bangladeshi young man 22 – 24 yrs old

What were the Pro's and Con's (Of accessing local services)?

"It is a good thing that the services are there for people to access, but it was a bit text book. This I am going back a while now so I don't know what has changed"

Bangladeshi young man 30 -39 yrs old.

"Obviously the waiting was too long. But once I got in there and was willing to put the effort in I could succeed in giving up drugs. '

Bangladeshi young man 25 – 29 yrs old

"I just do not think they address the needs; methadone is just as bad as the heroin. So why do they put it on the script?"

Pakistani young man 25 – 29 yrs old

"The distance and the time were not right for me. I could not get up in the morning and appointments were set at times that I could not meet. But there was this guy and he really knew his stuff and was understanding".

Bangladeshi young man 25 – 29 yrs old