

11<sup>st</sup> May 2018

## **BMG Research/BBC survey highlighting drink problem in Punjabi community drives positive change**

**Increasing number of UK Punjabis are seeking help from alcohol support services after a groundbreaking survey by BMG Research on behalf of the BBC revealed a significant problem within the community.**

The BMG survey for the BBC indicated that 27% of UK Punjabis have a family member with a drink problem, but that shame often stops those most needing help from seeking it.

The BBC gave broad coverage to the survey's results, making it the central item on its flagship Radio 4 Today news programme, as well as running it on BBC News and across its websites.

It is believed many Sikh's originally turned to alcohol 1950s, 60s, and 70s as a way of alleviating the stress of moving to a new culture with language barriers, and where they both struggled to assimilate and often ended up working long hours in poorly paid jobs. This helped create a culture of drinking among British Punjabis which was passed on to subsequent generations.

The issue is sensitive among members of Britain's 430,000 Sikhs as drinking alcohol is forbidden in Sikhism. It's a problem that hitherto has rarely been spoken about openly in the community.

But that is now changing with ethnic minority alcohol support services seeing an increase in contacts from both alcoholics and other members of the community volunteering to help them. Nottingham's Bac-In website has seen an almost sixfold increase in hits.

Robert Struthers; Senior Research Executive at BMG Research said, *Our survey on behalf of the BBC highlights the extent to which alcohol misuse, said to be*

*something of a 'taboo' subject within the Sikh and Punjabi community, may have become a problem.*

*"The findings suggest that a significant minority of the Sikh community have a family member with an alcohol problem, and that many UK Sikhs associate alcohol abuse with feelings of shame and embarrassment. Around half of respondents to our survey said they would be 'very' or 'fairly' worried about others finding out about another family member's drinking problem.*

*"It is therefore [heartening to learn](#) that since the survey that the BBC reported in April 2018, there has been a significant spike in inquiries, suggesting that greater awareness of the issue has encouraged more people to look for support."*

BMG surveyed over 1,000 British Sikhs to find out how they think and feel about alcohol abuse. You can read our full review of the survey [here](#).

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## **Notes to editors**

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