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Muslim Manifesto 2015



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& development



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48%

of Muslims are aged 24 and under

British Muslims make up 4.8% of the UK population. They are the second largest faith group in the UK after Christians.

Introduction

British Muslims make up 4.8% of the UK population. They are the second largest faith group in the UK after Christians and have the youngest age profile of all religious groups with 48% of Muslims aged 24 and under.

British Muslims are widely dispersed across the UK with a number of parliamentary constituencies in which they constitute less than 5% of the local population. There are however, a good number of parliamentary constituencies in which Muslims constitute a sizable proportion of the local population ranging from 15% to over 50%. These constituencies are presented in Appendix 1.

The Ethnic Minority British Election Study from the 2010 general election found that Muslims are less likely than other minority groups to be registered to vote.¹ A poll by Ipsos Mori for the Electoral Commission in 2010 found an estimated voter turnout rate among Muslims of 47%. Other studies point to a turnout rate of between 53 – 63% among British Muslims.² The poll also revealed that British Muslims had the highest number of first time voters in the 2010 general election, more than any other religious group.³ Given the young age profile of the British Muslim community, the same is likely to be the case in the 2015 general election.

This manifesto highlights a range of policy areas that matter to or have an impact on British Muslims and on which specific policy asks are presented for the betterment of the community and its needs.

This manifesto has been developed to encourage British Muslim participation in the general election by making policy initiatives and their impact more amenable to Muslim voters.

This manifesto is also developed to elicit support and encouragement from candidates seeking election for the policy asks presented here. The key manifesto pledges sought are summarised overleaf.

British Muslims evince the highest level of identification with a ‘British-only’ identity, bar British Sikhs, and display higher than average levels of affinity with national identity and national institutions.⁴ British Muslims also face the worst level of job discrimination in employment and are highly represented in the most deprived local authority areas in the UK.

This manifesto is a contribution to furthering the social, civic, economic and political integration of British Muslims in UK society.


1. Heath, A. and O. Khan. (2012). Ethnic Minority British Election Study – Key findings. London: Runnymede Trust.

2. A. Heath and S. Fisher et al. (2013). ‘Eligibility, Registration and Turnout’ in The Political Integration of Minorities in Britain. Oxford: Oxford University Press.


3. Vote 2012: ‘Alienated’ Muslims urged to use right to vote, BBC News, 1 May 2012.

4. The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations.


Policy pledges




Commit to a review of the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act as advised by the Law Commission's Hate crime: the case for extending the existing offences report and introduce legislation to extend legal protection to cover religion, homophobia and disability hate crime.




Commit to (a) recording of Islamophobia as a category of hate crime by all police forces in England and Wales, as is currently done with other types of hate crime (b) working with social media companies to protect free speech while developing good guidelines to tackle hate speech online (c) consider primary legislation to deal with social media offences and hate speech online.




Commit to developing teaching materials to educate young people on Islamophobia, racism and anti-Semitism; to fund projects to promote educational programmes on Islam awareness; to prioritise religious education in the national curriculum to prepare young people for life in a religiously plural society.



Commit to supporting faith school provisions in the state sector for Muslim pupils and parents; support 'twinning' of faith and non-faith schools to encourage cultural exchange between pupils of different racial, religious, ethnic and other backgrounds.



Commit to strengthening powers of teachers to deal with racist and Islamophobic bullying in schools; support the education sector in developing Islamophobia awareness programmes for teaching staff to equip them with skills to identify and tackle hate incidents in schools.



Commit to tackling religious discrimination in the workplace and address the low level of economic activity among Muslims through targeted interventions at stages of recruitment, retention and promotion; improving access to employment for British Muslim women.



Commit to media reform and the full implementation of the Royal Charter on a Leveson compliant regulator; support industry initiatives to promote positive, diverse representations of Muslims and minorities in the mainstream media.



Commit to improving ethnic diversity in all sectors of business, politics and media through schemes encouraging BME recruitment, mentoring and promotion.

Commit to offering shari'ah compliant student loans to make higher and further education accessible to British Muslims; support the growth of the shari'ah compliant financial services industry.

Commit to preserving the Human Rights Act and the protection of minority rights including rights to religious slaughter, circumcision and wearing of religious dress or symbols.

Commit to fostering social cohesion and community resilience to all forms of extremism; support de-radicalisation programmes that work with Muslim communities not against them.

Commit to tackling the high number of Muslim prisoners through schemes to facilitate rehabilitation, cut re-offending and develop pathways for social inclusion.

Commit to curbing the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties.

Commit to support for an independent Palestine and end of Israeli occupation by December 2017.

Commit to support the adoption of the EU Equal Treatment Directive to advance protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion to education, healthcare, housing, access to goods and services and social protection.

Commit to democracy and human rights promotion abroad, including the rights of religious minorities.

Commit to furthering Turkey's progress on the path to eventual EU membership.



Islamophobia and racial/ religious equality

The Runnymede Trust in its seminal report ‘Islamophobia: a challenge for us all’ defined Islamophobia as a cluster concept stemming from attitudes towards the religion and faith community that corresponded to ‘open’ or ‘closed’ views of Islam.

The European Convention on Human Rights, incorporated into UK statute as the Human Rights Act (1998) provides for the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion in Article 9 and for the prohibition of discrimination, including on grounds of religion, in Article 14.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU also guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion under Chapter 2 (Freedoms) Article 10 and in Chapter 3 Articles 21 and 22 on Non-discrimination and cultural diversity.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, defined Islamophobia as:

“...a baseless hostility and fear vis-à-vis Islam, and, as a result, a fear of and aversion towards all Muslims or the majority of them. [Islamophobia] also refers to the practical consequences of this hostility in terms of discrimination, prejudices, and unequal treatment of which Muslims (individuals and communities) are victims and their exclusion from major political and social spheres.”⁵

Current legislation that enables the prosecution of anti-Muslim hate crime is an extension of established race relations legislation where ‘religiously aggravated’ crimes have been added to the extant racial motives for prosecuting offenders. Since Muslims do not form a racial group, race relations legislation which protects communities such as Jews and Sikhs, does not extend to Muslims.

5. 6th Report of the UN Human Rights Council, 2007.



The Racial and Religious Hatred Act establishes different criteria for racial and religious incitement restricting the latter to acts that are intended to stir up religious hatred. The scope of the provisions also varies between protections afforded on grounds of race and those available to faith communities. The Act covers 'threatening, abusive and insulting words' in the context of racial groups but only 'threatening words and behaviour' in relation to faith groups. This is further qualified by the need to prove 'intent' for a criminal offence on incitement to religious hatred to have been committed.

The disparity in legal protection has been keenly exploited by the far right claiming they are not 'anti-Muslim' but 'anti-Islam'. The burden of 'intent' which has stymied prospects for successful prosecution has been a major hindrance in stemming the prevalence of Islamophobia.

Commit to a review of the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act as advised by the Law Commission's Hate crime: the case for extending the existing offences report and introduce legislation to extend legal protection to cover religion, homophobia and disability hate crime.

In recent years, race equality has slipped off the Government agenda. The last major piece of policy by the Coalition government was the Equality Strategy in 2010 and priorities have shifted to 'integration' of which race equality is said to play a part. Government rhetoric on integration seems to have shifted from integration being a two-way process to the promotion of 'British values'.

The rhetoric on 'British values' provides a fertile environment for the festering of far right ideas and the myth of 'non-integration' by Muslim communities. Evidence suggests that Muslims are the most patriotic of Britons and are more likely to proclaim a 'British-only identity'. Promoting 'British values' should take heed of the racial, ethnic and religious plurality of the UK and should recognise the many success stories of minority integration into British society.

Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crime has a negative effect on minority integration and makes Muslims more vulnerable to being singled out on grounds of race or religion. Islamophobia accounts for a significant proportion of religious hate crimes in a number of police force areas, far in excess of the size of the Muslim population as a proportion of the total population by police force area. Reporting hate crime can be a difficult and traumatic experience for many victims. It is important that officers are properly trained to deal with religious hate crimes and for such crimes to be accurately recorded so that crime strategies reflect the incidence of attacks and their type.

Commit to (a) recording of Islamophobia as a category of hate crime by all police forces in England and Wales, as is currently done with other types of hate crime (b) working with social media companies to protect free speech while developing good guidelines to tackle hate speech online (c) consider primary legislation to deal with social media offences and hate speech online.

The National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) has encouraged schools and colleges to adopt an all-encompassing definition of racism which includes Islamophobia as well as anti-Muslim prejudice. Their advice for tackling Islamophobia includes ensuring that race equality policies in schools deal with anti-Muslim prejudice and that policy be supported with clear procedures and strategies for dealing with discrimination in the learning environment.

Commit to developing teaching materials to educate young people on Islamophobia, racism, and anti-Semitism; to fund projects to promote educational programmes on Islam awareness; to prioritise religious education in the national curriculum to prepare young people for life in a religiously plural society.

Anti-Muslim hatred has been identified in the Government's 2014 Hate Crime Strategy as an area of work which is 'more important than ever before' given the fact that Muslim adults are more likely to be victims of religiously motivated hate crime and racially motivated hate crime.⁶ The aftermath of the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby saw a surge in Islamophobic hate crime including the horrific murder of Mohammed Saleem in Birmingham and targeted attacks on mosques and other Islamic centres by far-right groups in London and the West Midlands.

Despite the Coalition's claim to support Muslim communities and tackle hatred on grounds of religion, there has been little concrete action to encourage structural change towards Islamophobia or to educate the public about the dangers of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic sentiments. Policies that can sustain long term changes in attitudes and behaviours towards British Muslim communities have not been sufficiently supported.

Some limited progress has been made in the battle to combat Islamophobia with improved reporting of hate crimes, and some funding of organisations which aim to tackle this form of discrimination. However, there is a long road ahead. Government policy continues to conflate religion with extremism, casually linking it to British Muslims. This is dangerous for social cohesion and feeds into myths popularised by the far-right about Muslims.

The integration narratives based on 'British values' and 'national unity' is concerning given the vast number of ethno-religious communities in Britain who share a tendency to observe British values alongside the legitimate expression of minority culture.

'British values' encompasses "tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs". It is important that in championing strategies for integration and inclusion, we do not lose sight of the rich diversity of modern Britain.

Social media offences and hate speech online is a growing area of concern as more and more people utilise the anonymity of the web to share or post hate messages online. Working with social media companies to develop good practice guidelines to root out extremists from using social media platforms to disseminate hate is a vital area that needs to be tackled.

6. Challenge It, Report It, Stop It: Delivering the Government's hate crime action plan. ((2014). HM Government. Downloaded from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307624/HateCrimeActionPlanProgressReport.pdf [Accessed on 25/10/2014] p. 9



Muslim youth and education

The demographics of the British Muslim population are changing. The Census 2011 statistics indicate the overall Muslim population in England and Wales is 4.8% but the Muslim youth population is significantly larger. Almost a tenth of babies and toddlers in England and Wales are Muslim. Of the 3.5 million children aged 0-4 years, 320,000, or 9% are Muslim and 33% of British Muslims are aged 15 or under.

The Census 2011 reveals Muslims make up an average of 9.15% of the age groups 0-4 and 5-9 years across England and Wales. Muslim youth within the age categories of 18-19 and 20-24 years on average make up 6.15% the general youth population.⁷

Muslims are concentrated in some of the most deprived local authorities with 46% of Muslims living in the 10% most deprived districts in England and Wales. Policies on educational attainment, social mobility and policies tackling bullying in schools will subsequently have a larger impact upon Muslim youth. Using figures from the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR2) and Free School Meals, the Independent Commission on Fees found that in 2010, school leavers in England who were in the least disadvantaged POLAR2 quintile were 3.2 times more likely to enter higher education than the most disadvantaged. This ratio fell to 2.8 by 2013.⁸

Although the gap in application and entry rates between advantaged and disadvantaged students have slightly narrowed, the Independent Commission on Fees concluded that it remains “unacceptably large”.

The Sutton Trust has found that children who have parents in professional and managerial positions are 3 times more likely to enter a high status university than those with working class parents.⁹ The 2011 Census shows the proportion of Muslim parents in the professional and managerial class to be only 5.5%.

Similarly, 66.4% of White students studying first degrees received a first class or second class honours qualification in comparison to only 48.1% of BME students and 37.7% of Black students.¹⁰ In addition, students who are from low socio-economic backgrounds and attending lower status universities are also more likely to drop out.¹¹

7. Office for National Statistics, (2011) Census: Aggregate data for England and Wales. Downloaded from: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> (accessed 12/11/2014).

8. Ibid.

9. Jerrim, J. (2013) Family Background and access to 'high status' universities. Sutton Trust. Downloaded from: <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/john-jerrim-report-final-4.pdf> (accessed 21/10/2014).

10. Equality Challenge Unit (2009) cited in Weekes-Bernard, D. (2010) "Inequity and Access in Higher Education", Widening Participation and Race Equality. Runnymede Trust. Downloaded from: [http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/WideningParticipation-2011\(Online\).pdf](http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/WideningParticipation-2011(Online).pdf) (accessed 20/10/2014).

11. Jerrim, J. (2013) Family Background and access to 'high status' universities. Sutton Trust. Downloaded from: <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/>



In their analysis of university applications, Noden, Shiner and Modood found that in the 2008 admissions cycle Bangladeshi, Asian other, and mixed white and Asian candidates were less likely to apply to 'higher ranking' institutions than 'elite' universities and Pakistani candidates were more likely to apply to 'higher ranking' institutions than 'elite' institutions compared to their white British counterparts. Despite this, the assessment concludes that when a range of variables were controlled for, including academic attainment, applications made by BME candidates from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Black African, Indian, Black Caribbean, Chinese and various 'other' groups were less likely to receive an offer than those made by their British white counterparts.¹²

Although the gap in accessing higher education between advantaged and disadvantaged students has narrowed slightly, the figures demonstrate the extent to which social mobility and a pathway out of poverty or disadvantage remains significantly low among minority ethnic groups. Fifty percent of British Muslims now enter higher education compared to 38% of their White counterparts.¹³

Addressing low educational attainment in school and prospects for a university education among students of minority backgrounds must take its rightful place in any strategy on integration. Economic inclusion should not be overlooked in its value as a metric to measure levels of minority integration.

BME groups face further inequality post-university. Weekes-Bernard states that despite high rates of participation for some BME groups, there are high initial graduate unemployment rates among Pakistani and also Chinese men.¹⁴

Commit to offering of shari'ah compliant student loans to make higher and further education accessible to British Muslims.

In its 2010 White Paper the Coalition put forward plans to strengthen head teachers' authority and empower them *"to take a strong stand against bullying, especially racist, homophobic and other prejudice-based bullying."*¹⁵

However, bullying motivated by racism remains a widespread problem in schools. In a review of counselling offered to young people during the period 2012/13 ChildLine found a 69% increase on the previous year in counselling related to racist bullying.¹⁶ In more recent times, Islamophobic bullying in schools has been correlated with incidents of domestic and international terrorism with pupils reporting a high number of cases of verbal and other abuse denigrating Muslim young people as

12. Noden, P., M. Shiner and T. Modood. (2014). 'University offer rates for candidates from different ethnic categories', Oxford Review of Education.

13. Bunglawala, Z. (2008). Valuing Work, Valuing Family. (London Development Agency.) p. 4

14. Weekes-Bernard, D. (2010) "Inequity and Access in Higher Education", Widening Participation and Race Equality. Runnymede Trust. Downloaded from: [http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/WideningParticipation-2011\(Online\).pdf](http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/WideningParticipation-2011(Online).pdf) (accessed 20/10/2014).

15. Department for Education (November 2010) The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper. Downloaded from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf (accessed 31/10/2014).

16. ChildLine (2014) Can I Tell You Something? Downloaded from: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/childline-review-2012-2013.pdf>. Accessed: 14/11/2014).

Incidents of bullying, motivated by racism, are likely to stifle the potential of students in attainment and subsequently affect their life chances in the future. The capability of teachers to deal with bullying incidents is therefore of vital importance so that schools are environments in which children prosper, not ones they fear or avoid. A report compiled by Show Racism the Red Card on bullying in schools found that 83% of 48 teachers who completed a survey questionnaire said they had witnessed racist attitudes or behaviour amongst students, including name calling and stereotyping. In addition, 31% of respondents admitted to witnessing racist attitudes or behaviour among teachers.¹⁷

Young people are shown to be more at ease with diversity and are less likely to hold views that are intolerant or prejudicial towards those of other backgrounds. Schools are an important place where diversity, difference and prejudice can be discussed and young people made aware of the dangers of hatred of minorities.

Evidence suggests that teaching materials on Islam awareness and on Islamophobia are underdeveloped and underutilised in the education sector. The failure to develop adequate tools for use by teachers to address Islamophobia has been highlighted by Christine Blower, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers.

The low priority given to religious education in the national curriculum is a further factor that inhibits the ability of schools to create environments in which pupils can learn about other religions and cultures and appreciate their significance to fellow pupils and members of their local communities. Religious education is a primary means of helping young people understand the value people at home and abroad attach to religious belief and the role it plays in the lives of religious people.

Commit to developing teaching materials to educate young people on Islamophobia, racism, and anti-Semitism; to fund projects to promote educational programmes on Islam awareness; to prioritise religious education in the national curriculum to prepare young people for life in a religiously plural society.

State maintained faith schools and academies are one of the ways in which parents are able to exercise choice over their child's education. The number of Muslim faith schools is negligible in comparison to faith schools accounting for around 0.06% of the total number state maintained faith schools. An FOI in 2010 revealed the number of Muslim faith schools to be 11¹⁸, this figure rose to 26 in an FOI request from 2012.¹⁹

Muslim faith schools operate at both primary and secondary levels of education and are voluntary aided, free schools or academies. Recent controversies sparked by the 'Trojan horse' takeover plot in Birmingham and widespread coverage of failing Muslim academy schools has had a significant impact on the perception of faith schools as socially divisive and selective. Yet, faith schools are noted for high achievement with some Muslim faith schools serving as good practice models for non-faith schools in the state sector.

17. Show Racism the Red Card (July 2011) The Barriers to Challenging Racism and Promoting Race Equality in England's Schools.

18. Department of Education, FOI release: Maintained faith schools, 20 July 2010.

19. 'Only 0.06% of UK state schools are Muslim', Daily Mirror, 7 May 2014.

Providing parents with choice in education and removing the stigma attached to faith schools is necessary to cultivate a context in which faith school provision is not seen as an exemption for religious minorities but as part of parcel of the mainstream education system.

Commit to supporting faith school provisions in the state sector for Muslim pupils and parents; support ‘twinning’ of faith and non-faith schools to encourage cultural exchange between pupils of different racial, religious, ethnic and other backgrounds.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015 introduces a statutory duty on local authorities to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorism. Under the Channel programme, young people considered at risk of radicalisation are referred for de-radicalisation measures.

According to the Prevent Strategy 2011 report, 290 referrals were made for children under 16 and 55 referrals related to children under 12.²⁰ An FOI request in 2014 revealed that 153 children under 11, 690 children aged 12-15, and 554 aged 16-17 had been referred since 2007. In 2013-2014, the total number of young people referred was 940, an increase of just over a quarter on the 748 cases in 2012-13.

In the Extremism Task Force report published in December 2013, the Coalition outlined plans to introduce a voluntary code of practice for supplementary schools as well as non-statutory guidance, subsequently issued in December 2014, on “requirements to actively promote fundamental British values in schools”. Since the Trojan horse affair, Ofsted has introduced a regime of unannounced schools inspections.

It is important that young people experience security and trust in the school environment to aid their learning and development. While interventions to protect young people are important, these must not become the prism through which young people come to be viewed, or worse, come to view themselves.

20. Home Office (2011) Prevent Strategy.

Employment and labour market participation

The 2003 Cabinet Office report, *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market* noted that Muslims would account for one quarter of the growth in the working age population between 1999 and 2009, based on figures from the 2001 Census.²¹ The growth in the size of the UK's ethnic minority population, from 8% in 2001 to 14.1% in 2011, means that the number of ethnic minorities accounting for the growth in the working age population will rise further in the future making minorities an important contributing variable to the UK's future economic growth.

Furthermore, the young age profile of British Muslims compared to the White majority and other ethnic groups means that the number of Muslims entering the labour market in years to come will grow farther than for other groups bringing with it the dynamism and innovation that comes with youth. Moreover, projections on the increase in the Muslim population of working age can be further gleaned from the proportion of Muslims aged 0-15. The Census 2011 statistics indicates that 8.5% of those aged 0-15 in England and Wales are Muslim.

Despite the potential presented from the size and demographic profile of British Muslims, employment opportunities remain worse than for all other groups when comparing Muslims to the White majority and other ethnic minorities.

The disproportionately high levels of unemployment experienced by British Muslims compared to other minority groups in the UK was highlighted in the 2003 Cabinet Office report which introduced the concept of an 'ethnic penalty'. The term explains discrimination faced by minorities in the labour market when other factors, such as qualifications, are controlled.²² The 2003 report found the Muslims suffered more from an 'ethnic penalty' than other minority groups. This was affirmed in the report by the National Equality Panel which found that "*Muslims are paid 13-21% less than their White Christian counterparts of equal qualification*". It further noted that while "*all minority groups suffer some form of 'penalty'...Muslim ethnic groups suffer the largest 'ethnic penalty'.*"²³

21. Cabinet Office (2003) *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market*. p.7.

22. *ibid* p.163.

23. Hills, J. et al. (2010) *An anatomy of inequality in the UK: Report of the National Equality Panel*. p. 114.

The National Equality Panel concluded that 60% of White British men are in full time employment compared to 35% of Pakistani and 33% of Bangladeshi men.²⁴ In relation to minority women, 44% of Pakistanis and 49% of Bangladeshis are economically inactive, the highest figures among minority groups. The Equality and Human Rights Commission noted that Muslim women face practical barriers preventing them from participating in the labour market.²⁵

The high levels of discrimination faced by Muslims in the UK labour market was more recently evaluated using statistics from the Labour Force Survey, a quarterly summary of UK employment statistics. The study found that Muslims are 76% less likely to have a job of any kind compared to white, male British Christians of the same age and with the same qualifications and Muslim women are up to 65 per cent less likely to be employed than white Christian counterparts.”

Dr Nabil Khattab, author of the study, concluded that this was a result of dual discrimination based on skin colour, culture or religion with Islamophobia further affecting Muslim employment prospects as employers demur from offering opportunities to a minority that is perceived to be problematic.²⁶

Discrimination is also evident at the recruitment stage with 33.8% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi men reportedly experiencing job refusal while 40.9% experienced both refusal and blockage. In comparison, 20.8% of white men reportedly experienced job refusal and 27.5% disclosed that they experienced both refusal and blockage. Similarly, 33.4% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women disclosed that they experienced job refusal and 39.1% experienced refusal and blockage. This is in comparison to 17.6% of white women who disclosed they experienced job refusal and 23.8% who experienced refusal and promotion blockage.

Discrimination against Muslims in the workplace is further apparent in case studies. Two investigations into job discrimination were conducted by the BBC, in 2004 and in 2010. In the first study, 50 companies were sent fictitious applications from six different applicants, two with traditional English names and four with ethnic sounding names two of which were Muslim names. The investigation found that 25% of applications from applicants with traditional English names prompted a positive response and an interview offer while only 9% of the ‘Muslim’ applications resulted in the same.²⁷

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community in a report on Ethnic Minority Female Unemployment found that minority women faced discrimination at all levels of recruitment.²⁸

24. *ibid.* p. 113.

25. Equality Human Rights Commission. *How Fair is Britain?*

26. *Ibid.*

27. Five Live survey suggests ethnic minority applicants still discriminated against in UK job market, BBC News, 12 July 2004.

28. All Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community, *Ethnic minority female unemployment: Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage women* (London: Runnymede Trust).

While entering the labour market is a considerable obstacle for many Muslims, and disparity in salary levels further evidence of discriminatory treatment, the low representation of Muslims at the top end of professions is further evidence of lost potential and frustrated ambition. In terms of occupational distribution, the Census 2011 results indicate that Muslims make up 2.8% of the overall population who are in managerial and senior official positions and 2.9% of the population in professional jobs. On the other end of the spectrum, Muslims tend to be more concentrated in semi-skilled and low skilled jobs such as the process, plant and machine sector (5.6%), sales and customer service roles (4.9%), closely followed by elementary roles (4%).

The body of empirical evidence demonstrating the nature and impact of employment discrimination faced by Muslims is well established but despite a good number of recommendations proposed in the seminal 2003 report by the Cabinet Office and since, remarkably little progress has been made in the last decade to address these issues.

The Equality Act introduced a ‘public sector duty’ requiring public bodies to have due regard for the need to:

- remove unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- promote equality of opportunity between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.²⁹

As a legal obligation, the duty requires public bodies to consider how policies and delivery of services are informed by equality considerations.³⁰ Furthermore, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has sought to ameliorate the negative impact of faith identity by urging the “reasonable accommodation” of religion in public life to promote equality for all groups. Given the strong attachment Muslims evince for a faith based identity, this is a commendable suggestion which, from the evidence presented above on discrimination based on grounds of religion, suggests is not being fully observed.

Labour’s 2010 manifesto emphasised legislation enacted by previous Labour governments urging employers to increasingly use equality checks to ensure the legislation was having the desired effect and welcomed the role of trade unions in providing protection and advice to employees and mainstreaming equality in the workplace. However Asian/Asian British, Chinese and other ethnic groups are underrepresented in union membership.³¹

The Conservative Party’s 2010 manifesto referred to promoting equality of opportunity as “*the progressive challenges of our age*” stating, “*By promoting equality and tackling discrimination, our policies... will give everybody the chance to play their part.*”³²

The most progressive promise to tackle discrimination and inequality was proposed by the Liberal Democrats whose 2010 manifesto acknowledged that discrimination in the workplace was prevalent having a significant impact upon Black and Minority Ethnic communities. The party promised to introduce a requirement for name-blind job application forms to reduce sex and race discrimination in employment, initially for every company with over 100 employees.³³

29. Equality Human Rights Commission. Public Sector Duty.

30. *ibid*

31. *ibid*. p.8.

32. *ibid*. p.35.

33. Liberal Democrat Party Manifesto (2010). p.30.

In the aftermath of the election in May 2010, the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties formed a coalition agreement that envisioned Britain to be a place in which “social mobility is unlocked; where everyone, regardless of background, has the chance to rise as high as their talents and ambition allow them.”³⁴

From evidence compiled before and since the Coalition came to power in 2010, job discrimination faced by British Muslims remains a major problem impacting on poverty, equality, and socio-economic integration. the 2003 Cabinet Office report alluded to a ‘double dividend’ where advancing opportunities for minority and Muslim employment would unleash the potential for growth while tackling the deeper problems that arise from social exclusion.

It is time to take the problem of job discrimination seriously and to implement policies to address the wasted potential of the UK’s burgeoning Muslim and other minority populations.

Commit to tackling religious discrimination in the workplace and address the low level of economic activity among Muslims through targeted interventions at stages of recruitment, retention and promotion; improving access to employment for British Muslim women.

The young age profile of British Muslims makes youth unemployment a particular concern. Figures from the 2011 Census show that 36% of young Muslims (those aged under 25) are students, higher than the figure for those of other backgrounds (19%). Census figures however also show that young Muslims are more likely to suffer from unemployment than both those within their faith group, 23% to 16.4% and when compared to the national average for young people, 17%. For those young Muslims with the least qualifications, unemployment approaches 40%.³⁵

Youth unemployment is a wider problem affecting young people of all backgrounds. Figures for 2014 show the unemployment rate for 16-24 year olds not in full-time education to be 14.4%. The young age profile of British Muslims means that youth unemployment has a larger impact of young people of Muslim background. Targeted interventions for tackling youth unemployment must address the specific problems faced by particular ethnic and religious minorities when devising policies to get young people into work.

34. Cabinet Office (2010). The Coalition: our programme for government. p.7.

35. The lost Muslim generation, New Statesman, 11 February 2010.

Integration and community cohesion

Integration and community cohesion has been a major policy area in recent years contending with the growing problem of far right extremism, tensions arising from expressions of religious extremism by fringe groups and the wider issue of rising trends in racial prejudice, anti-immigrant and anti-minority attitudes. The use of social media platforms as a space where hate speech festers has grown in recent years with policy failing to keep up with the newer challenges to integration and community cohesion.

A British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey in 2014 found that 1 in 3 Britons self-declares holding racist attitudes.³⁶ Other BSA surveys point to a “hardening” of attitudes toward immigrants³⁷ and particular hostility towards Muslim immigrants to the UK.³⁸

Against this context, the Coalition proposed an integration strategy in 2012 which placed an onus on five factors as contributing to integration: common ground, responsibility, social mobility, participation and empowerment and tackling intolerance and extremism.

In respect of common ground and tackling intolerance and extremism, the role of the media in representing Islam and Muslims is an important concern. With the decline in religious programming in sections of the media that might otherwise aid in religious literacy, how the media represents Islam and Muslims plays a significant role in cultivating the common ground on which a successful integration strategy rests.

Media representations of Islam and Muslims has been shown in academic studies to be overwhelmingly negative with much media coverage dominated by conflict paradigms and negative associations with the words ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslims’.

Based on a content analysis of 974 newspaper articles about British Muslims and Islam in the press from 2000 to 2008 and focusing on five alternate years during this period, Moore, Mason and Lewis found that media coverage of British Muslims

36. 30 years of British Social Attitudes self-reported racial prejudice data, NATCEN, 28 May 2014

37. More than 3 in 4 want reduction in immigration, NATCEN, 7 January 2014

38. British Social Attitudes report 29, NATCEN, 2012.



increased dramatically following 11 September 2001.³⁹ The findings indicated 'terrorism' accounted for 36% of stories and 'Muslim extremism' accounted for 11% of all stories.⁴⁰ The study consequently concluded that the coverage of British Muslims tended to focus on Muslims as a 'threat' or as 'a problem'.⁴¹

Assessing almost 2,800 news items of which 60% were Muslim related, 39.4% were Irish related and 0.6% were related to both, Hickman, Nickels and Silvestri found both Muslim and Irish communities have been predominantly defined in juxtaposition to perceived 'British' values. For example, the communities are deemed 'suspect' and judged by news publishers as groups who do not share these values.⁴² The study highlighted the binary opposition between perpetrators of violence and the innocence of civilians. In relation to Muslims, researchers found the terms 'extremist', 'radical' or 'terrorist' are juxtaposed with the term 'moderate Muslims' and those who are 'law-abiding' composing a binary construction in which other representations of Muslims are largely absent.⁴³

The prevalence of negative media coverage on Islam and Muslims can be further seen in the wide-ranging study by Baker, McEnery and Gabrielatos which examined over 200,000 news articles and 150 million words over the period 1998-2009.⁴⁴ The body of data is the largest sample of news articles to date to examine media representations of Islam and Muslims. Baker et al. found that portrayals of Muslims and Islam were predominantly presented in contexts related to conflict, terrorism and extremism. For example, the terms 'extremist' or 'fanatic' occurred next to the word Muslim/Muslims in approximately 1 in 20 cases and next to the word Islamic in 1 in 6 cases. Researchers concluded that the associations were so frequent and consistent that the word Islamic was difficult to use in a neutral context because of the strong negative overtones.⁴⁵

The negative coverage of Muslims and Islam takes on a gendered dimension too with the high volume of news output on Muslim women and in particular, the debate on the veil. Baker et al. found that Muslim women are referred to almost twice as often as Muslim men. Further, the study observed that the veil was the most frequent topic under which Muslim women were represented.⁴⁶ Front page articles in national newspapers in the UK have pervasively suggested women are coerced into wearing the burqa, overlooking the role of female agency, and present the garment as an obstacle to integration. The debate is used as a proxy measure to assess how far Muslims share social mores with the right to freedom of religion being superseded by the demand that Muslims 'respect' and 'adopt' British values.

The Leveson Inquiry into the Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press has been the major conduit through which policy attention has been brought to the area of media representation of Muslims and minorities and the social impact of alarmist reporting. The Leveson report noted "there are enough examples of careless or reckless reporting to conclude that discriminatory, sensational or unbalanced

39. Moore, K. Mason, P. and Lewis, J. (2008) Images of Islam in the UK: the representation of British Muslims in the national print news media 2000-2008. (Cardiff: Cardiff University School of Journalism). p. 9.

40. *ibid.* p. 10.

41. *ibid.* p.21.

42. Hickman, M. J., Nickels, H. and Silvestri, S. (July 2011) 'Suspect communities'? Counter-terrorism policy, the press, and the impact on Irish and Muslim communities in Britain. (London Metropolitan University). p. 18

43. *ibid.* p. 17.

44. Baker, P., McEnery, T. and Gabrielatos, C. (2013) Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The representation of Muslims in the British press 1998-2009. Cambridge University Press. p. 29.

45. *ibid.* p. 256.

46. *ibid.* p. 203.

reporting in relation to ethnic minorities is a feature of journalistic practice in parts of the press, rather than an aberration...there has been a significant tendency within the press which leads to the publication of prejudicial or pejorative references to race [and] religion..."⁴⁷

Among recommendations proposed for the improved regulation of the press and premised on the full independence of the regulator from the industry and politics, was the inclusion of a third party complaints mechanism in the revised Code of Practice to allow groups affected by discriminatory reporting to seek redress of grievance.⁴⁸

Despite the Leveson report being released in November 2012 and the Royal Charter adopting its main recommendations being sealed in October 2013, major newspaper publishers have shown tremendous reluctance to abide by the regulatory framework envisaged in the Charter preferring to set up a rival regulator that mimics the failed system that preceded it; the Press Complaints Commission.

The Royal Charter offers a significant improvement in the production and regulation of print media output with proposals to advance a third party complaints mechanism; the power to 'direct' apologies; credible sanctions for breaches of the Code; and wide consultation on the Code of Practice. Given the high volume of negative media coverage on Islam and Muslims and the poor redress system operated by the press regulator to date, the impact on social attitudes and community cohesion deserves proper attention and policy intervention.

Commit to media reform and the full implementation of the Royal Charter on a Leveson compliant regulator; support industry initiatives to promote positive, diverse representations of Muslims and minorities in the mainstream media.

Ahead of the BBC's current Royal Charter ending in December 2016 and a review of the Charter expected to be completed next year, an inquiry into the future of the BBC, including how the broadcaster should be governed, regulated and held accountable after 2016 will be a major area of work for the next Government.⁴⁹

The recent termination of the post of Head of Religion at the BBC, and findings from an Impartiality Review conducted by the public sector broadcaster, raise important questions about the role of the BBC in advancing religious literacy and undertaking its Charter commitments to inform, educate and entertain.

According to findings from research conducted by the BBC into its own religious programming output "*a large number of non-believers know little about religion, are almost entirely indifferent to it and find it extremely difficult to understand the "world view" of the believer.*"⁵⁰

The research further noted that "*those from a Muslim background and those of other faiths felt that they wanted a more rounded portrayal of Muslims. The BBC has provided thoughtful and compelling output on Islam but portrayal goes wider than that.*"⁵¹

47. The Leveson Inquiry (2012) An Inquiry into the Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press. Volume 2. Para. 8.51-8.52. p.673.

48. *ibid.*

49. Culture Media and Sport Select Committee Inquiry into the Future of the BBC: Terms of reference. Downloaded from:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/culture-media-and-sport-committee/news/131022-future-of-the-bbc-tor/> (Accessed on 31/10/2014)

50. *ibid.* p.10.

51. *ibid.*

The analysis shows that “coverage of Islam was often framed by negative debate because of the stories on the news agenda”⁵² concluding that “there is an onus on all media, particularly the BBC, to ensure that such coverage separates out the beliefs and acts of radicalised religious groups from others. The higher the sensitivity the more the BBC has a duty to explore these issues and ensure audiences are informed, however unpalatable the views involved.”⁵³

The low levels of diversity in the media has been duly recognised in the industry and by politicians. Comparisons made with other sectors, such as business, show that broadcasting remains disproportionately ‘White’ and the representation of minorities within the industry and in programming is far lower than per proportion of the population. The BBC’s former Head of Religion, Aqil Ahmed, noted in relation to Muslim minorities and their representation in broadcasting output, “What [Muslim viewers] want is more programmes that explain what they believe in and more programmes where they see themselves.”⁵⁴

A recent survey conducted by the Centre for Law, Justice and Journalism at City University found that two broadcasters, BBC and Sky One, accurately represent the ratio of white people to ethnic minorities in England and Wales in their programming. Channel 4 achieves a ratio of only 1:10 black, Asian and visible ethnic minority (BAVEM) to white people across its programming. The BBC, in comparison, had a ratio of 4:1 white people to BAVEM overall (82% white). In contrast, ITV’s overall ratio was the poorest at 7:1 (88% white to 12% BAVEM). Although Channel 5 had a ratio of 4:1 white people to BAVEM, there was a marked negative portrayal of BAVEM contributors.⁵⁵

Commit to support industry initiatives to promote positive, diverse representations of Muslims and minorities in the mainstream media

The Director General of the BBC, Tony Hall, recently announced new plans to address the on and off-screen representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) at the BBC but the budget set aside to tackle the low level of representation amounts to 0.12% of the BBC’s total budget, according to Simon Albury, the chair of the Campaign for Broadcasting Equality.⁵⁶

A qualitative study by Muir and Smith based on interviews with journalists of Muslim heritage who work or have worked on mainstream papers highlighted the benefits that minorities bring to the field including the possibility of bringing in stories that would be otherwise be absent from news pages.⁵⁷ Muir and Smith found that all interviewees in the study agreed that improved coverage of Muslim issues in the media would be helped if there were more good journalists of Muslim background employed in the media because they are more likely to approach issues about Muslims and Islam more sensitively and with an awareness of complexity.

Commit to improving ethnic diversity in all sectors of business, politics and media through schemes encouraging BME recruitment, mentoring and promotion.

52. *ibid.*

53. *ibid.* p.11.

54. BBC’s head of religion Aqil Ahmed calls for more ‘literacy’ at the top, *The Independent*, 26 December 2014.

55. Centre for Law, Justice and Journalism (21 August 2014) New survey reveals level of ethnic minority representation on TV. <http://www.city.ac.uk/news/2014/aug/new-survey-reveals-level-of-ethnic-minority-representation-on-tv>

56. BBC announces raft of new measures on diversity, *The Guardian*, 20 June 2014.

57. Muir, H. and Smith, L. (2011) Keeping your Integrity – and your job: Voices from the Newsroom. In Petley, J. and Richardson, R. (eds) *Pointing the Finger: Islam and Muslims in the British Media*. p. 227.

Minority rights

Recent years have seen a number of policy issues pertaining to minority rights and the right to freedom of religion, and religious practice particularly, dominate public debate. Whether on Muslim women's dress or animal slaughter according to religious rites, the right to religious practice and the accommodation of minority culture has been a sometimes fractious issue. The widespread condemnation of the remarks by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, in 2008 on the "unavoidable" presence of aspects of shari'ah law in the British legal landscape and the need for a "transformative accommodation" that enabled a harmonisation between the values of the Enlightenment and the freedoms of religious persons to abide by communal rules governing religious duties, continues to shape the context in which discussion about minority rights is constructed.⁵⁸

Dovetailed to this has been the more benign appreciation of the monetary and business value of exploiting the potential for shari'ah compliant financial products as the Islamic Finance industry continues to grow globally.

The potential for tapping into shari'ah compliant banking has been duly recognised across all the main political parties. The Labour government initially fostered the development of the Islamic finance sector in Britain as early as 2003 when it commenced work addressing the tax and regulatory framework to establish fairness between the conventional and Islamic banking sectors.⁵⁹ Gordon Brown, as Chancellor in 2006, undertook to transform London into a "gateway" for Islamic finance and a leading centre of investment targeting Middle East investors by taking advantage of its "well-placed" position as a world leader in financial services.⁶⁰ In early 2008, Chancellor Alistair Darling proposed plans to approve the UK's first shari'ah compliant bonds issue.⁶¹ However, the government concluded in its 2008 budget that the feasibility of a sovereign sukuk still needed to be explored.⁶²

The policy advanced by the previous Labour government has been continued under the Coalition. In March 2013, the Coalition launched the UK's Islamic Finance Taskforce co-chaired by Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Greg Clark, and Baroness Sayeeda Warsi. The Taskforce was launched ahead of the World Islamic Economic Forum conference in October 2013 to facilitate the development of Islamic finance in the UK.

Due to the vast growth of the Islamic Finance sector, the UK has increased efforts to attract funds from Islamic sovereign wealth funds as foreign investment in the UK.

Inward investment based upon shari'ah compliance have been used in major infrastructure projects such as:

58. Civil and Religious Law in England: a religious perspective, Full text of the speech delivered by Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, The Guardian, 7 February 2008

59. Straw, J. (30 October 2008) Islamic Finance and Trade Conference. Downloaded from: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/sp301008.htm>

60. UK's Brown backs Islamic finance, BBC News, 15 June 2006

61. New sharia row over Chancellor's plans for Islamic bonds, Daily Mail, 17 February 2008

62. HM Treasury (March 2008) Budget 2008 Sustainability Opportunity: building a strong, sustainable future.



- The Qatari 95% investment share in the Shard⁶³
- Redevelopments at Chelsea Barracks - the Prime Minister acknowledged that the Qatari investment represented the largest Islamic finance deal in European history⁶⁴
- Malaysia's £400 million investment into Battersea Power Station property development⁶⁵
- Olympic Village owned by Qatari Investment Authority (QIA)⁶⁶
- London Gateway on the Thames - one of Europe's biggest ports being built by DP World⁶⁷
- Emirates investment in the new Arsenal Stadium⁶⁸
- Etihad investment into Manchester City⁶⁹
- Canary Wharf complex bought by a consortium led by Qatari Investment Authority⁷⁰
- Purchase of 10% share in the company that owns British Airways by Qatari Investment Authority⁷¹

Islamic investors have also financed Thames Water. The Qatari Investment Authority (QIA) is reportedly the biggest shareholder of Barclays Bank.⁷² Qatar not only owns Harrods, the London landmark, but also over a quarter of Sainsbury's and a 20% slice of Camden market. In addition, the Qataris were the largest foreign sovereign wealth buyers of real estate in London in 2013.⁷³

Islamic Finance and sovereign wealth funds run on a shari'ah compliant basis are a major source of foreign investment in the UK. In developing this potential, the Coalition have introduced a number of other initiatives in the shari'ah compliant finance sector to facilitate the availability of shari'ah compliant financial products in the domestic market from halal student loans for Muslim students⁷⁴ to halal loans for Muslim entrepreneurs through Start Up Loans, a government funded scheme to provide advice, business loans and mentoring to startup businesses.⁷⁵

Commit to supporting the growth of the shari'ah compliant financial services industry and product development.

Other areas of Islamic practice have been less well received in public debate with, at times, active hostility evinced towards the right of Muslim minorities to seek advice and counsel from shari'ah tribunals, compose last testament and will in accordance with shari'ah compliant inheritance rules and practice religious slaughter.

63. How much of London is owned by Qatar's royal family?, The Guardian, 9 December 2014

64. Cameron, D. (29 October 2013) World Islamic Economic Forum: Prime Minister's speech. Downloaded from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/world-islamic-economic-forum-prime-ministers-speech>.

65. ibid.

66. How Qatar bought Britain: They own the Shard. They own the Olympic Village. And they don't care if their Lamborghinis get clamped when they shop at Harrods (which is theirs, too), Daily Mail, 10 March 2012

67. Cameron, D. (29 October 2013) World Islamic Economic Forum: Prime Minister's speech.

68. ibid.

69. ibid.

70. Canary Wharf: Qatar bid wins battle, BBC News, 28 January 2015

71. Qatar buys 10% stake in British Airways owner, BBC News, 30 January 2015

72. How Qatar bought Britain: They own the Shard. They own the Olympic Village. And they don't care if their Lamborghinis get clamped when they shop at Harrods (which is theirs, too), Daily Mail, 10 March 2012

73. How much of London is owned by Qatar's royal family?, The Guardian, 9 December 2014

74. Cameron, D. (29 October 2013) World Islamic Economic Forum: Prime Minister's speech.

75. Cameron, D. (21 October 2013) PM announces new measures to help Muslim students and entrepreneurs

In the Arbitration Act 1996, statute introduced due recognition of the jurisdiction of religious parties to regulate certain behaviours among adherents in accordance with religious rites. Article 1 (b) of the Arbitration Act provides that “*parties should be free to agree how their disputes are resolved, subject only to such safeguards as are necessary in the public interest.*”⁷⁶ Article 33 of the Act enforces rules on religious tribunals to act in a fair and impartial manner between parties seeking its intervention in civil disputes and permits the use of alternative religious tribunals for arbitration in matters under civil law.⁷⁷

The remit of religious tribunals and their rulings based upon religious law are limited in three ways. Firstly, religious rulings are invalidated where conflict arises between its rulings and the secular law. Secondly, it is restricted to civil disputes and has limited application in relation to family law. That is, while a religious tribunal can grant religious divorces, it cannot authorise legal divorces. Any mediation and dispute resolution sought through a religious court is also not binding but voluntary and based on the consent of contracting parties. Thirdly, it has no jurisdiction over criminal law.

The role of shari’ah tribunals in the UK has been vastly misrepresented with estimates as to the number of such tribunals in existence giving way to claims of a ‘parallel legal system’ being set up by minority communities. Moreover, the work of tribunals has been cast as gender biased, with claims that Muslim women are coerced into seeking its counsel against their will and are invariably discriminated against in its rulings. Such claims lie behind the Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill introduced by Baroness Caroline Cox in the House of Lords on 11 June 2014.

The disproportionately negative attention the work of shari’ah tribunals attract are at variance with the similitude of Beth Din courts, which provide similar services to British Jewish communities, and to the reliance of Muslim women on services offered by the tribunals, particularly in relation to the granting of religious divorce. A more informed and less emotive, error strewn debate on the issue of protecting the rights of minorities to adhere to religious duties is desirable to advance communal rights within the context of the national legal system.

There has been much policy investment in eradicating the evil of forced marriages and the blighting of lives that arise from a coerced marital state. Much less has been done to address the structural problems that persist in regards to the official recording of Muslim marriages such that the present dual registration process, of an Islamic marriage (nikah) and civil marriage can be overcome and a single, streamlined process enacted. The weak legal protection of women married under Islamic rites and whose marriages are not officially recorded is just one reason why a system of registration operated by Islamic institutions is desirable. The Church of England registers a marriage at the same time as performing the religious ceremony. In the case of Jewish and Quaker marriages, the authorisation is also automatic. For all other religions, however, if the official performing the ceremony is not authorised, a Registrar is required to attend the religious ceremony or partners will need to have separate religious and civic ceremonies.⁷⁸ We would welcome a change that would allow Islamic institutions to officiate in ceremonies that were at once religious and conformed to registration rules under civil law.

Lord Justice Thorpe in 2006 referred to the provisions in the Marriage Act 1949 Section 26(1) (A) under which a religious marriage is granted immediate legal effect if it is conducted “*in a registered building according to such form and ceremony as the persons married see fit to adopt*”,

76. Arbitration Act 1996. Downloaded from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/23/contents>

77. *ibid.*

78. Marriages and civil partnerships in the UK. Downloaded from: <https://www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships/religious-ceremonies>

suggesting that the provision allows for minority groups to take advantage of legal recognition of marriage conducted in religious settings on the condition that *“the mosque, church or temple must be duly registered”*.

With regards to Islamic wills and the disbursing of one’s personal estate in a shari’ah compliant manner, the Law Society introduced a practice note in March 2014 to assist the legal profession in the preparation of shari’ah compliant wills for clients requesting the service.⁷⁹ Its aim was to *“assist solicitors who have been instructed to prepare a valid will, which follows shari’ah succession rules.”* The practice note clearly asserted that *“Practice notes are not legal advice”* and acknowledged the purpose of providing such guidance as meeting the needs of clients desiring the service.

Despite this, the practice note was profoundly criticised for “encouraging” a “parallel legal system” for Muslim communities in Britain.⁸⁰ The Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling, asserted that the guidance and the Law Society’s subsequent launch of a training programme in Shari’ah Law was likely to “undermine” the rule of law.⁸¹ The practice note was subsequently retracted by the new President of the Law Society, Andrew Caplen, who apologised for the guidance having been issued. Among detractors of the practice note was the Lawyers Secular Society.

The episode further highlights the kneejerk, reactionary responses often visited upon interventions which address the “reasonable accommodation” of religion in public life. The claim that wills written in a shari’ah compliant manner discriminate against women overlooks the liberty individuals freely exercise to exclude any progeny and relatives, male or female, from a share of their estate. This liberty is not curtailed by law and it is not the case that shari’ah compliant wills necessarily result in the uneven dispersion of an individual’s estate.

Perhaps the most pervasive debate over the last few years in the area of minority rights and religious practice has been religious slaughter. Widespread media coverage of the preparation and distribution of halal meat in the UK has tended to emphasise the high volume of slaughter conducted in the halal manner, exceeding the pro rata proportion of Muslims in the British population, and the absence of food labelling to denote whether meat has been prepared using “stunned” or “unstunned” methods.

Regulations on the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (WATOK) entered into force in 2013. Correspondingly, at the EU level, the European Commission established the EU Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012-2015.⁸² The four year strategy was adopted as a Commission Communication to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee. In addition, EU Regulation 1099/2009, which came into force on 1 January 2013, replaced Directive 93/119/EC.⁸³ The changes in EU regulations have been reflected in reforms to domestic legislation though EU regulations in this area are not concluded with a Commission report expected in 2015 on the subject of food labelling.

Regulations on animal slaughter state that it is an offence to cause or permit an animal *“to suffer avoidable excitement, pain or suffering.”*⁸⁴ While animal rights activists have lobbied for the singular use of “stunning” in animal slaughter, these interests have conflicted with the exemption in law granted to religious minorities to practice animal slaughter in accordance

79. Law Society (13 March 2014) Practice Note: Sharia Succession Rules. Downloaded from: <https://lawyerssecularsociety.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/law-society-sharia-succession-rules-13-march-2014.pdf>

80. Islamic law to be enshrined in British law as solicitors get guidelines on ‘Sharia compliant’ wills, The Independent, 23 March 2014

81. Law Society risks ‘undermining’ rule of law by promoting sharia, Chris Grayling warns, Daily Telegraph, 10 May 2014 and High street lawyers to get formal training in Islamic Sharia law, Daily Telegraph, 26 April 2014

82. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (May 2013) Summary of Responses to the Consultation on the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing from 13 September 2012 to 24 October 2012.

83. Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 (24 September 2009).

84. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (29 August 2012) Guidance: Slaughter of livestock: welfare regulations.

with religious rites, halal and shechita. The right to religious slaughter has been recognised as a “religious right” though the EU regulations grant Member States the power to impose stricter rules on animal slaughter and is deemed to conform to Article 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU on the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Countries such as Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Ireland have adopted “stunning” only methods in animal slaughter.

In the UK, the British Veterinarian Association and other animal welfare charities have sought to impose similar “stunning” only methods overriding the rights of religious minorities, such as Muslims and Jews, to observe religious dietary laws. Food labelling of halal and kosher meat has also been advanced as a means of singling out meat that has not been stunned at slaughter. A Private Members’ Bill was introduced by MP Philip Davies in 2012. The debate has since continued in both Houses of Parliament with some members urging clearer labelling rules on stunned or unstunned meat.

Muslim and Jewish representatives have supported the calls for clearer labelling urging that labelling be adopted with as wide a framework as possible, and avoiding discriminatory treatment or burdens on Muslim and Jewish producers, by requiring labels for electrocution, strangling and other methods used in non-religious stunned slaughter.

Policies which are seen to promote good practice in animal slaughter, such as the installation of CCTV in slaughter houses and clear labelling to offer consumer choice have been supported by Muslim and Jewish groups.

Commit to preserving the Human Rights Act and the protection of minority rights including rights to religious slaughter, circumcision and wearing of religious dress or symbols.

Muslim women’s dress has been a recurring issue with high volumes of news coverage especially devoted to the wearing of the face veil. Though the UK has not introduced the restrictions imposed in other EU Member States, which have enacted policies on the wearing of face veils in public spaces and bans on the wearing of “conspicuous religious symbols” in state schools, political and media debate has agitated in its favour. The consequent debate has, according to research, contributed to a climate in which Muslim women are more vulnerable to abuse and hate crime.

A further area of Muslim life in Britain that has attracted widespread hostility and physical restrictions to the freedom to practice religion have been organisations and campaigns which have sought to frustrate planning applications for the building or extension of mosques and other religious buildings in towns and cities across the UK. British Muslims are geographically dispersed throughout the country with small and large communities living in many different parts of the UK. Far right organisations and self-styled ‘mosquebusters’ have made no secret of their efforts to oppose applications submitted by local Muslim communities even providing training programmes on how to block mosque applications. There are examples of sites for proposed mosques being vandalised, of frenzy-feeding leaflets being distributed and further examples of applications being withdrawn by Muslim communities on the back of hostile anti-mosque campaigns.

It is vital that public debate on subjects such as minority rights, including the role of mosques in Britain, do not inadvertently promote hostility or prejudice towards the UK’s religious and ethnic minorities.

Counter terrorism and civil liberties

The brutal murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby in May 2013 was a stark reminder of the dangers of violent extremism and the vulnerability of young people to narratives that espouse violence and hatred. Events over the summer of 2014 with the heinous murders of Western journalists by extremists affiliated to 'Islamic' State (ISIL) and more recently, in Paris and Copenhagen, have reinforced the scale of the threat we face. Muslim communities in the UK and Europe, which have acutely suffered from policies dealing with violent extremism, continue to harbour fears of stigmatisation due to poor policy development and its inadvertent contribution to anti-Muslim prejudice. While countering violent extremism is a policy priority, it should not be pursued at the expense of civil liberties that define our society and culture or in a manner that provokes a two-tier landscape in which Muslims are simultaneously blamed for the violent actions of others while demonised as contributing to the problem.


The 2013 'Tackling Extremism in the UK' report from the Prime Minister's Extremism Task Force reiterated the need to distinguish between Islam as a religion and 'Islamism' as a distinct ideology. The report defined 'Islamist' ideology as:

*"An ideology which is based on a distorted interpretation of Islam, which betrays Islam's peaceful principles, and draws on the teachings of the likes of Sayyid Qutb. Islamist extremists deem Western intervention in Muslim-majority countries as a 'war on Islam', creating a narrative of 'them' and 'us'. They seek to impose a global Islamic state governed by their interpretation of Shari'ah as state law, rejecting liberal values such as democracy, the rule of law and equality. Their ideology also includes the uncompromising belief that people cannot be Muslim and British, and insists that those who do not agree with them are not true Muslims."*⁸⁵

The business of defining 'Islamist' extremism has been fraught with tensions between distinguishing moral agency exercised by Muslims, including in the sphere of politics, and the narrative of violent extremists who cloak their actions in the garb of legitimacy emanating from Islamic texts.

The revised Prevent strategy of 2011, defined Islamism as: "a philosophy which,

85. 2013 Tackling extremism in the UK: Report from the Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism

A background image showing a person's hands holding a large knife and a handgun. The person is wearing a white shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a street or outdoor setting.

in the broadest sense, promotes the application of Islamic values to modern government. There are no commonly agreed definitions of 'Islamism' and 'Islamist'; and groups or individuals described as Islamist often have very different aims and views about how those aims might be realised.

"Some militant Islamists would endorse violence or terrorism to achieve their aims. Many Islamists do not."

The distinction is a vital component to creating a space in which Muslims are able to engage in society and politics drawing on their religion, as many do, to inform their moral choices and decisions. It is important to remember that Muslim majorities around the world reject al-Qa'ida's violent and binary worldview⁸⁶ preferring to integrate in society and seek accommodation of minority or majority rights within the context of the nation-state, parliamentary democracy and constitutional rule.⁸⁷

There have been many criticisms levelled at the way in which counter-radicalisation and counter-extremism policy has been developed and implemented in recent years with many of these focused on the excessive attention paid to religion and theology over more relevant, influential factors such as socio-economic background, political disaffection, personal and familial relations and in-group membership and dynamics. One of the biggest problems in counter-terrorism policy has been the extent to which it is devoid of empirical evidence to justify its orientation. The lack of evidence-based analysis in contemporary approaches have been highlighted by researchers who have pointed to the flawed premise on which much policy has been erroneously based with dangerous consequences.

Numerous reports have highlighted these policy failures and the consequences of approaching counter-terrorism in a way that marginalises Muslim communities, creates widespread distrust within Muslim communities and between Muslim communities and the wider society, and which privileges certain expressions of Islamic belief over others. It is not the business of Government to legislate on religious belief, much less disburse public funds to socially engineer "acceptable" expressions of Islamic belief and practice. In the past, this has taken the form of privileging Sufi or secular expressions of Islamic belief. In the present, it takes the shape of labelling Muslims as "Islamists" to cast them beyond the pale and extinguish their involvement in partnership approaches to tackling the vulnerability of individuals to violent extremism.

But by the Government's own definition of "Islamist", Many Islamists do not endorse violence or terrorism to achieve their aims. Maintaining a clear distinction between those who embrace particular strains of religion, socially conservative, Sufi, secular or other, is necessary to avoid conflating forms of religious practice with dispositions congenial to violent extremism.

A further criticism of the approach to date has been the near exclusion of far right extremism from policy concern in the area of counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation.

86. Muslim Publics Share Concerns about Extremist Groups, Pew Research Center 11 September 2013

87. The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society, Pew Research Center May 2013

While references to the brutal murder of Muslim pensioner Mohammed Saleem Khan in Birmingham in 2013, months after the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby, have been raised in consideration of further counter-terrorism measures deemed necessary to tackle the threat to security, there is proportionately less regard for far right extremism and violence despite evidence suggesting that ‘Islamist’ extremism is not the most pervasive form of violent extremism experienced in Europe. Figures suggest that deaths resulting from al-Qai’da inspired terrorism are greater in number than those resulting from other forms of violent extremism, but the example of Anders Behring Breivik, Pavlo Lapshyn and a host of other far right extremists in the UK who have been prosecuted for terrorism related offences caution against neglecting far right extremism as a clear and present danger.

Commit to fostering social cohesion and community resilience to all forms of extremism; support de-radicalisation programmes that work with Muslim communities not against them.

The 2012 revised approach made it clear that the Prevent strategy was cross-departmental, led by the Home Office and involving the departments of Education, Health, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Justice, while the strategy’s implementation spanned local authorities considered ‘priority areas’ and engulfing universities, schools and prisons.

The scope of the Prevent strategy has been widened and strengthened in the newly enacted Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which places Prevent on a statutory footing and requires compliance with Guidance across authorities such as schools, prisons, universities, probation services, healthcare agencies and local councils.

There is a very real danger that problems first identified in earlier phases of the policy will be revisited as Muslim encounters with public services across a range of agencies interact with counter-terrorism strategies.

In the field of education, the Department of Education has issued new guidance to teachers to help them to challenge and discuss extremism in classrooms. Schools are being encouraged to engage with the Prevent programme and teachers have been told explicitly that their actions should not “undermine fundamental British values.” The Channel programme, which entails the referral of individuals of school age, primary and secondary, feared to be vulnerable to radicalisation to a process for de-radicalisation has attracted some concern over the metrics used to identify and evaluate “vulnerability to radicalisation”. It has attracted further criticism from teachers’ unions for placing an unnecessary and impractical burden on teachers to undertake the work of the security services.

The charity sector has been singled out in the Draft Protection of Charities Bill which advances an expansion to the powers of the Charity Commission to remove trustees from charities and to shut down charities found to breach the regulator’s code of practice. Furthermore, the Charity Commission is to be granted an £8 million budget to tackle the abuse of charities for terrorism purposes. While the Charity Commission chairman, William Shawcross, has claimed that the “deadliest threat” faced by charities comes from ‘Islamist extremism’, Shawcross has not substantiated the claims through presentation of evidence involving any one Islamic charity.

The implementation of counter-terrorism powers has been an area of human rights concerns given their disproportionate use against Black and Ethnic Minority groups. The Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation has cautioned against the “excessive enthusiasm” with which the powers are used.

A number of policy reviews have introduced welcome revisions to counter-terrorism powers, such as the consultation on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and on Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000. The latter show some amendments passed in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The abrogation of section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 was passed in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, bringing in section 47a on stop and search and removing the dispensation to stop and search without “reasonable suspicion”.

While these legislative changes have contributed to a long awaited recalibration of counter-terrorism policy in favour of civil liberties, the newly passed Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 raises huge concerns over regression.

Powers to seize passports for up to 14 days without legal redress, temporary exclusion orders which could see British nationals exiled for up to 2 years (possibly more), authority to carry schemes widened beyond individual passengers to include “groups of passengers” including those defined by “nationality” and the statutory duty introduced in the operation of the Prevent strategy evoke major concerns over the steady and cumulative erosion of civil liberties and Muslim civil liberties in particular.

Commit to curbing the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties by reviewing all counter-terrorism legislation enacted since 2000.

Crime and policing

The subject of race and policing has been a salient one with 2013 marking two decades since the murder of black teenager, Stephen Lawrence. The MacPherson Inquiry, which was established to scrutinise the Metropolitan Police Service's investigation into Lawrence's murder, produced a critical report in 1999 accusing the MPS of "institutional racism" and advanced 49 recommendations to improve policing and its impact on racial minorities.

The MacPherson report found that ethnic minorities were "over policed . . . and under protected" with encounters between race groups and police forces influenced by the high incidence of stop and search. The MacPherson report proposed as a priority measures to "increase trust and confidence in policing among minority ethnic communities" through policy directives regulating the use of stop and search procedures and improvements in the recruitment and retention of ethnic minority officers in the police force.⁸⁸

Stop and search powers have been a recurring factor in analyses of race and policing and the effects of police powers on ethnic minority experiences of the criminal justice system. Stop and search is mandated under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, and Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000, later abrogated and replaced with Section 47A. Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000 also permits the use of stop and search powers varying from Section 44 and subsequently Section 47A by allowing the exercise of the power without requiring "reasonable suspicion".

Ethnic minorities are now more likely to be disproportionately stopped and searched than at the time of the MacPherson report with the ratio of black to white stops increasing from 5 to 1 in 1999 to 8 to 1 in 2002.⁸⁹ Figures published by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in separate reports in 2010, 2012 and 2013 found that the ratios have steadily increased demonstrating a growth in the degree of disproportionality. In its 2010 'Stop and Think!' report, the EHRC found that Black people were at least six times as likely to be stopped and searched as a White person and an Asian almost twice as likely to be stopped and searched.⁹⁰ The EHRC's 2012 findings further validated the prevalence of disproportionality demonstrating that between April 2008 and March 2011, Black people experienced the highest rate of stop and search in each of the years assessed. In 2013, the EHRC

88. MacPherson Report (1999) The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report. Para 45.7

89. Bowling, B. and C. Phillips. (2003) Policing ethnic minority communities.

90. Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2010) Stop and think: A critical review of the use of stop and search powers in England and Wales. p. 10





concluded that during 2010/11 and 2011/12 Black people were 29 times more likely to be stopped and searched in some areas when stops and search were assessed by police force area and the respective size of the BME population. The highest force area disproportionality rate for Asians was 6.0 in the West Midlands.⁹¹

The Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, David Anderson QC, in his 2011 annual review, noted Section 44 stop and search as the “single greatest focus of resentment among Muslims” which had failed to produce “a single terrorism conviction in Great Britain.”⁹²

Following the repeal of Section 44 and its replacement with Section 47A, Home Office statistics including in the latest annual statistics for 2014 indicate there have been no Section 47A stops and searches recorded across England and Wales suggesting that the higher threshold introduced in 2012 has a moderating effect on the decision to exercise the power.

The Coalition has commissioned an important review into stop and search powers in the UK with a report produced by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary in 2013 influencing policy direction on the future of stop and search powers. HMIC found that over a quarter (27%) of stops and search were unlawfully conducted with insufficient grounds to justify its use. HMIC further found that in over half (30) of the 43 forces in England and Wales the “training of officers was insufficient either to improve their understanding of their legal powers; or to help them...decide when they had reasonable grounds for suspicion”. The report further found that police forces collected “insufficient information about stop and search encounters.”⁹³

The findings are significant when assessed against the impact of stop and search on ethnic minorities with BME respondents who were stopped and searched being significantly more likely to report they felt upset (17%) by the encounter compared to White counterparts (7%) and angry; 26% to 19% respectively.⁹⁴

The move by police forces therefore to introduce greater transparency on stop and search data is to be welcomed with the dissemination of stop and search information by police force area, including details of age, gender and ethnicity of individuals stopped on the crime map portal www.police.uk. The initiative will allow for greater public scrutiny and contribute positively to community trust in policing and local accountability.

Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act and the powers to stop and search at ports and airports without “reasonable suspicion” has been another major source of antagonism in minority communities with the issues of disproportionality resurfacing in studies assessing the impact of the powers on Muslims.

91. Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2013) Race Disproportionality in Stops and Searches, 2011-12. p. 33.

92. Anderson QC Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation (2011) The Terrorism Acts in 2011. p. 98

93. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (2013) Stop and Search Powers: Are the police using them effectively and fairly?

94. Jansson, K. (2006) Black and Ethnic Minority groups’ experiences and perceptions of crime, racially motivated crime and the police: findings from the 2004/05 British crime survey

An experimental analysis conducted by the EHRC on Schedule 7 powers assessing the prevalence of race disproportionality in stops and examinations under Schedule 7, found that Asians and individuals of ‘other’ ethnic groups were 11.3 times more likely than White people to be stopped and questioned. Comparatively, Black people were 6.3 times more likely and those of Mixed Race were 3.6 times more likely to be stopped and searched.

The study further concluded that although the total proportion of examinations of Asians or ‘other’ ethnic minorities at all ports and airports was 46.6% in 2010/11, an analysis of airports indicated that 63.5% of total examinations were of Asians and ‘other’ ethnic minorities. In addition, 65.2% of examinations and detentions with a duration of over an hour at all ports and airports also were of Asians or other ethnic minorities⁹⁵

The consultation opened by the Coalition on the use of Schedule 7 powers in 2012 offered an important opportunity to address the impact of these powers on Muslims. Our analysis submitted in contribution to the consultation found:

- Almost 1 in 5 (22.9%) under-the-hour examinations are likely to be of Muslims
- Over 1 in 3 (35.9%) over-the-hour examinations are likely to be of Muslims
- About 2 out of every 5 individuals detained (41.9%) are likely to be Muslim

The Independent Reviewer, David Anderson QC, also noted that Schedule 7 detentions and examinations were imposed upon members of ethnic minority groups to a greater extent than “their presence in the travelling population would seem to warrant”⁹⁶ indicating clear evidence its of disproportionate use.

The detrimental impact of the stop and search powers were to be observed in their effect on Muslim males which the EHRC noted in a report in 2011: *“For many young Muslim men on the streets, stop and search under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act (s44) has become their most frequent and regular contact with the police... Such measures were seen to add to perceptions of racial and religious profiling and discrimination.”*⁹⁷

Following the consultation, Schedule 7 powers were amended in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to introduce such changes as reducing the maximum examination period in detention from 9 to 6 hours; granting individuals detained access to legal counsel; and to repeal powers to take ‘intimate samples’ of biometric data. The Independent Reviewer further called for the introduction of a “suspicion threshold” in the exercise of the powers. While changes introduced in the 2014 Act are a positive step towards addressing the encroachment on civil liberties enjoyed by minority communities, the changes do not go far enough with, for example, recommendations by the Joint Committee on Human Rights to collate data on the self-declared religious identity of individuals stopped not adopted. With the broadening of powers at the disposal of border officials, including passport seizure powers, collecting data that enables evaluation of compliance with Equalities legislation is of paramount importance as is the proper training of officers to ensure racial stereotyping is avoided at all cost.

Two recent developments which are cautiously welcomed for their potential to contribute to mitigating disproportionate use of the powers against Muslims and other minorities and

95. Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2013) An Experimental Analysis of Examinations and Detentions under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000. p. 7.

96. Anderson QC Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation (2011) The Terrorism Acts in 2011. p. 105.

97. Choudhury, T and H. Fenwick, ‘The impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities’, Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2011).

evidence of racial profiling are the creation of a Privacy and Civil Liberties Board in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, including the power of oversight on all counter-terrorism legislation by the Independent Reviewer, and the threat to introduce primary legislation if ‘stop-to-arrest’ ratios do not improve.

An area that has attracted less attention in policing and race relations despite being addressed in the MacPherson report, is BME recruitment and promotion in the police force.

According to figures to 31 March 2013 there were 6,555 Minority Ethnic police officers in the 43 forces of England and Wales accounting for 5.0% of all officers. This figure is unchanged from March 2012. The Metropolitan Police had the largest proportion of Minority Ethnic officers (10.5%), followed by West Midlands (8.3%), British Transport Police (7.5%) and Leicestershire (7.1%). Minority Ethnic officers in the 43 police forces of England and Wales were also under-represented at senior ranks (compared with other ranks), accounting for 3.8% of officers at the rank of chief inspector or above, compared with 5.4% of constables. Between 2007 and 2011, the percentage of BME police officers in post rose from 3.9% to 4.8%.⁹⁸

This is consistent with targets set in 1999, to attain 4% representation in BME officers by 2009. But the figures remain woefully unrepresentative of the proportion of BME in the population at large, 14.1%.

The Metropolitan Police Service, the largest force in the UK, introduced ‘positive action options’ to meet its target of 40% of a new cohort of 5,000 recruits coming from BME backgrounds, including coaching by senior officers and bursaries for new recruits.

Commit to improving BME recruitment to the police service including with affirmative action measures.

The Labour Party has indicated that it would introduce affirmative action policies to improve BME recruitment into the police. Such initiatives are to be supported not just for encouraging a police force that reflects the diversity of the population it serves but also for the wider impact BME representation has on BME communities and on race relations and policing.

Among some of the most troubling figures emerging from the 2011 Census is the number of Muslim prisoners serving sentences. The 2011 Census puts the figure at 13% with more recent data showing that Muslims as a proportion of the prison population went from “one in 16 in 1997 to one in seven” in 2012.⁹⁹

The figures, which are greater than the figure for Muslims as a proportion of the UK population, show that more needs to be done to understand the factors that lead to criminal conduct and lifestyles and to find ways in which minorities can be supported to embrace a life away from crime and its devastating effect on families, communities and society.

Commit to tackling the high number of Muslim prisoners through schemes to facilitate rehabilitation, cut re-offending and develop pathways for social inclusion.

98. Home Office (31 March 2013) Police workforce, England and Wales.

99. Muslim prison numbers soar as staff warn of Islamic “gang culture” in jails, Sunday Mirror, 22 June 2013

International affairs and human rights promotion abroad

British foreign policy is an area which tends to attract significant interest among British Muslims both on account of the community being the most ethnically diverse faith group in the UK and because 53% of British Muslims were born outside the UK.

From the events of the Iraq and Afghan wars of 2001 and 2003 to the Arab Spring of 2010, to the unresolved conflict in the Middle East to the emergence of a deadly transnational force straddling Iraq and Syria, ISIL - events in recent years have brought Muslim majority countries to the fore of British foreign policy.

Security and trade have been the major focus of foreign policy with attracting foreign investment and increasing British exports taking priority alongside a commitment to dispense a fixed amount of GDP in annual foreign aid and democracy promotion abroad. Tackling failed states and the threat they pose to national security has been an overriding factor in foreign policy concerns. Military adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan and the withdrawal of combat troops from these regions have raised new questions about the purpose and outcome of British involvement in the US led wars in 2001 and 2003.

Several inquiries into misconduct by HM Armed Forces have resulted in large payouts to Iraqi civilians and their families. Wider inquiries into professional misconduct have been commissioned with the creation of the Al Sweady Inquiry, investigating circumstances around a gun battle between British troops and Iraqi insurgents in May 2004. Allegations of torture were dismissed but the Inquiry found that the conduct of British soldiers had fallen below the required standard and resulted in “actual or possible ill-treatment”.

The Baha Mousa Inquiry into the death of the Iraqi civilian in September 2003 led to calls for a wider inquiry into torture and misconduct by British forces in Iraq after the inquiry concluded that forces had subjected Mousa and a group of nine other



men to painful and inhumane interrogation techniques that had been banned for more than 30 years. In 2008, the Ministry of Defence agreed to pay Baha Mousa and the families of a further nine victims £2.83 million in compensation.

The Gibson Inquiry into the use of torture and rendition, or complicity in its exercise by others, was stalled after allegations brought by two Libyan men whose cases were being investigated by the inquiry began criminal proceedings against the former head of MI6, Sir Mark Allen, and former foreign secretary, MP Jack Straw. One of the cases, that of Sami al-Saadi, was settled out of court in 2012 when the victim accepted £2.2 million in damages from the British Government. The case of Abdel Hakim Belhadj is ongoing though further aggressions against law came to light recently with disclosure of the intercept of confidential communications between Belhadj and his lawyers by the security agencies.¹⁰⁰

The Chilcot Inquiry, established in 2009 to “consider the period from the summer of 2001 to the end of July 2009, embracing the run-up to the conflict in Iraq, the military action and its aftermath” has been the most eagerly awaited inquiry report. The Inquiry stopped taking evidence in 2011 and has since been mired in procedures to pave the way for its publication.

A report by Human Rights Watch, *Cruel Britannia*, has shed further light on a shameful episode in recent history documenting allegations of torture, rendition and mistreatment by British officials in contravention of human rights law. The publication in 2014 of a report by the US Senate’s Intelligence Committee on the use of torture techniques by the CIA has reinforced demands for the expedited publication of the Chilcot Inquiry report.

The Justice and Security Act 2014 introducing ‘closed material procedures’ in cases involving national security is understood to have been prompted by legal challenges mounted by individuals alleging misconduct by state officials and human rights violations.

The Palestine-Israeli conflict has made little progress towards peace in the last five years despite stated commitments by all three main parties in their 2010 manifestos to support the Middle East peace process and the creation of two states living alongside each other, a viable Palestine and a secure Israel.

A backbench motion in October 2014 on recognising Palestinian statehood was overwhelming supported by MPs with a resounding vote in favour; 274-12. The vote did little to sway the position of the Government which chose to abstain in a UN vote in December 2014 calling for a peace settlement with Israel within a year and an end to Israel’s military occupation of the Palestinian Territories by 2017.

The failure of the UK’s role in the Middle East peace process was scathingly framed by former International Development Minister, Sir Alan Duncan, in a speech at the Royal United Services Institute in October 2014, days after the backbench motion was debated in Parliament, in which he criticised the Government’s failure

100. Spy agencies snooped on conversations between lawyers and suspects for FIVE YEARS without safeguards protecting people’s human rights, Daily Mail, 18 February 2015

to do more to halt the growth in illegal settlement building in the Occupied Palestinian Territories calling the actions by the State of Israel “theft”, “annexation” and “a land grab”. Duncan criticised the cumulative failures of successive British Governments to put greater pressure on Israel to reach a peace settlement saying the Government had an obligation to challenge “settlement endorsement” with the same zeal with which it has approached racism, sexism, homophobia and anti-Semitism.

Commit to support for the creation of an independent state of Palestine and the end to Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories by December 2017.

Despite the heavy involvement of the UK in Muslim majority countries around the world, in conflict zones and in terms of strong bilateral relations, the number of British Muslims who serve in HM Armed Forces remains significantly low and far lower than the proportion of Muslims in the wider population. Muslims in the British Army number 480 out of 88,500, or 0.54%. The Army has announced plans to try and recruit more Muslims and individuals from BME backgrounds by targeting regions where Muslim population density is high, such as Bradford and Birmingham.¹⁰¹

The UK’s relations with Europe continues to animate sections of the political spectrum. Muslim communities across Europe total around 13 million with larger populations found in Germany, France and the UK and smaller populations in Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium and the Scandinavian countries.

There is little empirical evidence available on whether Muslims are pro- or anti-European. In the UK context, where Euroscepticism is prevalent in the print media, it would be useful to understand better Muslim perceptions on the UK’s membership of the EU.

What is apparent is the contribution of EU directives on legislation for protection against discrimination on grounds of race and religion. The Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC protects individuals against discrimination on racial grounds in employment, education, social security and healthcare, membership and involvement in organisations of workers and employers, and in access to goods and services, including housing. The Employment Equality Framework Directive 2000/78/EC protects individuals against discrimination in the workplace on grounds of religion. Both Directives were adopted in 2000 and came into force in January 2003.

While the Racial Equality Directive is far reaching in its scope, covering a range of goods and services, the Employment Equality Framework Directive covers discrimination on grounds of religion in the workplace only.

The EU Commission’s proposed Equal Treatment Directive would extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion beyond the workplace. Similar to the Racial Equality Directive, the Equal Treatment Directive would advance equal treatment on grounds of age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief to social protection, including social security and health care, education, and in access to and supply of goods and services, including housing. The Equal Treatment Directive was proposed in 2009.

101. British army aims to recruit more Muslims after worries over low numbers, The Guardian, 6 February 2015

It requires unanimous support from EU Member States to be adopted, a process which has not progressed in the last six years.

Commit to support the adoption of the EU Equal Treatment Directive to advance protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion to education, healthcare, housing, access to goods and services and social protection.

Consideration of Muslim minorities abroad has been a consistent feature of foreign policy concerns in recent months with frequent reports of restrictions to religious belief and practice imposed by foreign governments. Violence perpetrated against Muslim minorities in the Central African Republic, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and in others parts of the world has raised concerns about the UK's speaking up for the rights of religious minorities in its bilateral and multilateral relations with other countries.

Commit to democracy and human rights promotion abroad, including the rights of religious minorities.

Britain's relations with Pakistan and Afghanistan remains a matter of priority. In its fourth report on UK's role in the AfPak region, the foreign affairs select committee observed, "We conclude that despite 10 years of international assistance designed to bolster the Afghan state, the international community has not succeeded in materially extending the reach and influence of the central Afghan government or in improving governance more generally. We further conclude that the current international approach has yet to fully reflect Afghanistan's history, regional differences and realities on the ground, and is in danger of failing despite the vast sums of money expended."

State-building in Afghanistan will remain a concern for the UK as troop withdrawal from major bases in Helmand ends the UK's military role in the region.

In Afghanistan, the UK maintains an interest in supporting civil society and institution building, including the training of the Afghan police force. The foreign affairs committee report notes the contribution of the UK to advancing education in Afghanistan stating, "UK funds have helped increase school enrolment in the Helmand province from 55,000 in 2008 to 90,000 today, 22 percent of which are girls. In 2007 only 47 schools were in operation in Helmand, today [2012] there are 117."

The UK's role as a force good in the world is evident in the many policy interventions that have improved life chances and quality of life for people in other countries. The commitment to maintain 0.7% of GDP in foreign aid is an admirable contribution to alleviating poverty and need among the world's poorest peoples.

The UK has long been a strong supporter of Turkey's EU accession promoting her membership for a number of factors including Turkey's geostrategic position, her moderating influence on other Muslim majority countries, particularly those of the Middle East, her landmass as a conduit for Europe's energy needs in the future and her demography and young population.

Commit to furthering Turkey's progress on the path to eventual EU membership.

The rise of ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) in the region covering Iraq and Syria is likely to continue to present a major threat to the UK for the foreseeable future. Figures on the numbers of young British and European Muslims lured to the area by means of social media and internet forums is a great concern with Muslim parents seeking the help of law enforcement agencies to prevent their children from escaping on flights abroad.

The situation abroad and counter-terrorism efforts at home will again focus attention on British Muslims. In defeating those who like ISIL construct Muslims and the West as entities that are diametrically opposed, it is important to remember that the vast majority of law-abiding British Muslims are a vital asset in the struggle against terror to be effectively used not indifferently abused.

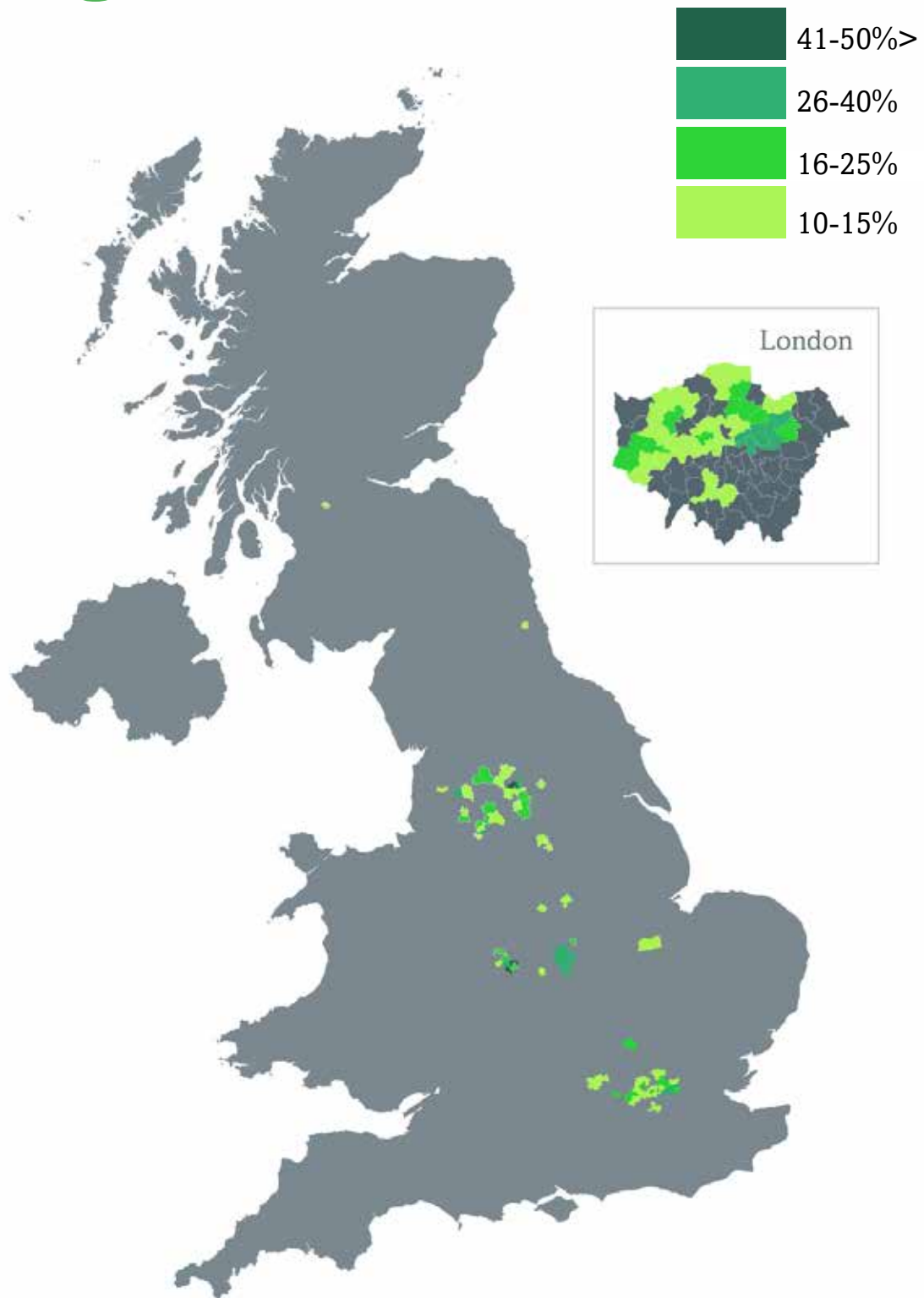




Informational posters displayed on stands:

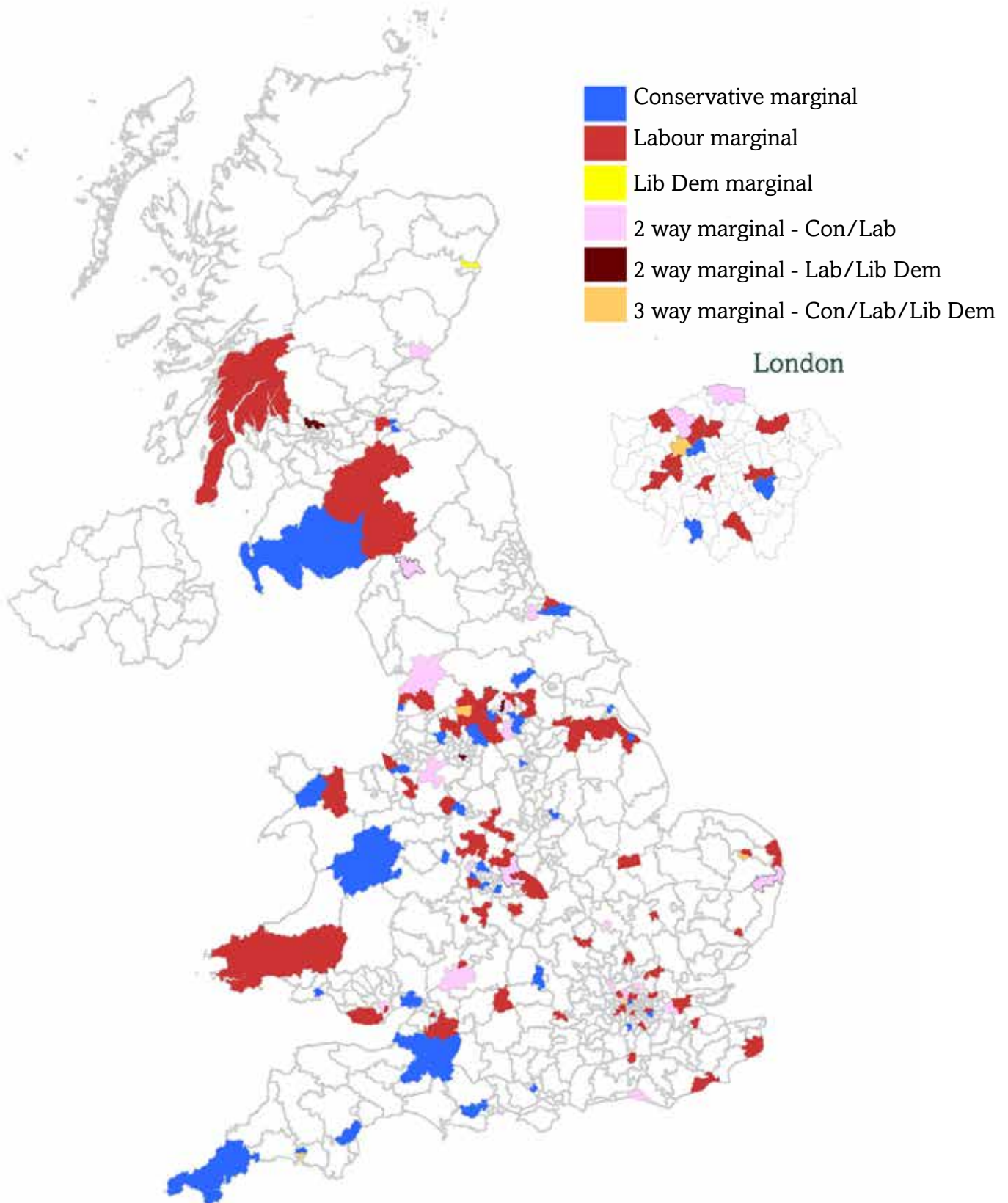
- Poster 1:** Features statistics: 55%, 44.7%, 25%, and 61%. Includes the text "Terminating Community" and logos for "MEND" and "Extremist Voices".
- Poster 2:** Titled "(Mis)Representing Muslim Women". It features an image of a padlock and the text "Being a Muslim".
- Poster 3:** Titled "Demonising Muslim Youth". It features a portrait of a young man and the text "Being a Muslim".
- Poster 4:** Features the "mend" logo and the text "This exhibition is brought to you by". It also includes social media handles for @menduk.org.uk, @menduk, and @mendukuk.

Muslim population density by parliamentary constituency and region



Appendix 1

Marginal seats by party 2015



Appendix 2



MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Leveson Inquiry - Only Muslim organization to give oral evidence to Leveson Inquiry. All 8 MEND recommendations featured in Lord Leveson's final report and all 8 adopted in the Royal Charter.

Independent Press Standards Organization (IPSO) – Officially recognized as 'a representative body for the Muslim community' by the Independent Press Standards Organisation.

Media monitoring and corrections – Over 3,000 stories on British Muslims featured with commentary on our website with numerous apologies and corrections gained from having worked with press regulatory body. Celebrities such as Russell Brand have highlighted the quality of our coverage.



POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Party Conferences – Amongst the most popular fringe events at party conferences each year with high profile speakers such as Lynton Crosby, Peter Osborne, Rt. Hon Keith Vaz MP, Owen Jones and more.

MEND's Muslim Manifesto – MEND has worked extensively with policy units in the main political parties to establish pledges on tackling Islamophobia as well as the protection of civil liberties. MEND has also published its 'Muslim Manifesto' leading up to the 2015 general election on issues which matter to the Muslim community.

APPG on Islamophobia – Assisted in establishing and served briefly as Secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia.



GRASS ROOTS PRESENCE & COMMUNITY

Grass Roots presence – MEND* has over 20 national working groups consisting of local Muslims who are dedicated to tackling Islamophobia in their localities across the UK.

Community Master Classes – MEND has designed and delivered the UK's first ever Master Classes on media and political engagement to empower British Muslims and enable them to engage more effectively in these fields. Over 1,000 attendees have been through these courses in mosques, community centres, university Islamic societies, women's groups and more.

***iENGAGE was rebranded as MEND in 2014**

Community Resources and Tools – MEND has developed an unparalleled series of community resources and tools such as media monitoring toolkits, Islamophobia exhibitions and 'easy read' guides for the Muslim community on topical issues.





RESEARCH RECOGNITION

World Economic Forum – Recognised MEND as an example of ‘best practice and partnership’ in ‘Human rights protection and promotion’.

World Class Research – Published over 15 briefing papers on wide-ranging topics such as Stop and Search, Islamophobia, Palestinian Statehood, Police & Crime Commissioners, press regulation and more.

Annual Submission on Hate Crime – Submit data annually to the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). In 2013, our submission was highlighted as a model submission for other NGOs.



POLICE, CPS & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Crown Prosecution Service – MEND sits on the CPS Community Accountability Forum subgroup on Hate Crime to aid prosecutors in improving the response of the criminal justice system to hate crime offences.

Police Constabularies – have successfully worked with Police forces nationally to ensure a quarter of police forces now record attacks on Muslims as a separate category of crime (Islamophobia). Now on target to increase this number to 50% of forces recording Islamophobic attacks by mid-2016.

Electoral Commission – MEND is officially a partner of the Electoral Commission for the 2015 general election. One of MEND’s key objectives is to maximize voter registration and participation amongst British Muslims.



Y EMPOWERMENT

Get Out and Vote (GOAV) – Prior to each election MEND goes live with its renowned GOAV website and grass roots strategy. GOAV aims to ensure Muslims are registered to vote and vote in an informed manner, alongside helping them organise hustings in their localities.

Islamophobia Awareness Month (IAM) – Every November, MEND spearheads IAM, a national initiative aimed at raising awareness of Islamophobia amongst non-Muslims alongside showcasing positive contributions of Muslims to the UK.

MEND is backed by leading Muslim scholars and Islamic institutions nationally.



100% Community funded – MEND is 100% backed by grass roots British Muslims, it receives no governmental funding of any description.

18 reasons why you should work with **mend**

mend

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Find out more. Visit our website or join our online community and add to the discussion.

  /mendcommunity

