

# Summary of MEND manifesto on Mayor of London and London Assembly elections 2016



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The election of the Mayor of London and 25 members of the Greater London Assembly on Thursday 5 May presents a renewed opportunity for Londoners of all backgrounds to engage with the governing institution for the capital and the elected representatives who hold the Mayor to account.

London is home to almost 40% of the UK's Muslim population making the 2016 election of the Mayor and Assembly Members of acute importance to Muslim residents in the capital. Housing, health, education, employment, crime and security and the cost of living in the capital, these are all issues that affect London's diverse communities and Muslim communities in particular given their concentration in the capital.

According to the Home Office report on Hate Crime in England and Wales in 2014/15, 42.4% of all religious hate crime recorded in the UK occurred in London. In the same period, London accounted for 28% of all police recorded hate crime motivated by racial or religious hostility. For Muslim Londoners, strategies to tackle Islamophobia in the capital are of paramount importance.

The key issues covered here can be summarised as racial and religious equality, transparency, accountability, crime reduction and civil liberties.

## 1. Recording Islamophobic hate crime properly

- The introduction in April 2016 of a new recording process which will see Islamophobia recorded as a separate category of crime provides a further opportunity for the MPS to address hate crime reporting systems for accurate data collection on Islamophobia. Data collection on anti-Muslim hate crime is currently inadequate and fails to reflect the true scale of Islamophobic hate crime occurring in London.
- Recording anti-Muslim hate crime relies upon proper training of police officers to correctly identify 'bias motivation' and to consider the victim's perception of the perpetrator's hostility. The introduction of the new recording system must be coupled with better training for officers.
- Third party reporting centres play a vital role in marginalised communities who may struggle to report hate crime incidents directly at their local police station. Our assessment of third party reporting centres in England and Wales shows that provisions for Muslim communities is far from satisfactory. There are a number of London Boroughs where TRCs are not clearly displayed on council-run websites. Working with Muslim communities across the capital to improve provisions for hate crime reporting must be a priority in the Mayor of London's hate crime strategy.
- The announcement by the Prime Minister of new funding to be made available for security measures at "faith establishments" is welcome and local Muslim communities in the capital must be supported in funding applications to secure premises such as local mosques and Muslim schools from Islamophobic attacks.

- The far right continues to present a major threat to Muslim communities with convictions for murder, assault and arson serving as a reminder of the criminal actions of individuals motivated by anti-Muslim hostility. Low level intimidation that accompanies on-street protests by far right groups in town and cities across the country and the drain on police budgets of policing protests is a further area that needs attention by the Mayor of London and the GLA. The Metropolitan Police Service estimated the cost of EDL protests in 2012/13 and 2013/14 to amount to £3.6 million.

## 2. Race, Policing and Muslim Communities

- Despite suggested recommendations on the use of stop and search powers and the threat of statutory legislation to limit its use in a bid to improve stop-to-arrest ratios and curtail the disproportionate use against ethnic minorities, stop and search usage continues to show evidence of 'institutional racism'. Muslim communities continue to face disproportionate use of terrorism stop and search powers, Section 43 (TACT 2000) and Schedule 7 stops and search. The impact on community policing of these excesses, which fall foul of the 'Best use of stop and search scheme' will need careful attention to enforce compliance with the scheme and to tackle 'unconscious bias'.
- The Vision 2020 strategy, which supports BME communities in employment, education, apprenticeships and recruitment to the police force sets ambitious targets for increasing diversity in police recruitment. Small steps have been taken by some forces to open up recruitment to BME applicants with recorded improvements in the MPS, but figures show that the police force remains predominantly White. Achieving the targets in the Vision 2020 strategy will require greater drive to increase recruitment and considered attention on retention and progression if BME communities are to be better represented in the police service at all ranks.
- Consultative forums in the form of Independent Advisory Groups are a brilliant mechanism to provide a police force with 'critical friends' and a broad range of advice during 'critical incidents' but while IAGs are intended to reflect communities in the force area, a lack of transparency on composition renders it difficult to ascertain whether communities are indeed represented, and by whom. Greater transparency is vital to ensuring IAGs perform effectively in the purpose for which they are designed: a forum for dialogue between a local force and the local community.
- Crime reduction is a priority for all Londoners and upholding the Met's budget to tackle crime in the capital as cuts roll out over the next mayoral term will remain a priority for the capital's residents.



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### 3. PREVENT and Channel

- One of the most troubled areas of police relationships with Muslim communities relates to their role in the delivery of Prevent; a strand of the counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.
- The introduction in 2015 of a statutory duty on Prevent across a range of specified authorities such as schools, hospitals, prisons, probation services, universities and local authorities has extended the 'securitisation' of relations between police officers and local communities. Interaction is most keenly felt in relation to Channel, the controversial programme which deals with individuals deemed 'at risk' of 'vulnerability to radicalisation'.
- We have found that the number of Channel referrals for children aged 10 and under and 11 to 15 (inc) has increased by 700% and 258% respectively in the period 2007 - March 2012 and 1 April 2012 - 10 Dec 2015. The MPS accounted for 4% and 12.5% of children aged 10 and below and 11-15 (inc), respectively who were referred to the Channel programme by regional Counter-Terrorism Units between April 2012 and 10 Dec 2015.
- While the MPS compares somewhat favourably to other forces in relation to Channel referrals, questions about the quality of training provided to agencies and frontline officers to prepare them for the enforcement of the statutory duty and the basis on which referrals to the Channel programme are made have come under sustained scrutiny as stories abound about pupils being spoken to by Prevent officers without parental consent or being referred to the Channel programme for innocent mix ups in spelling or speech. Campaigners in two London Boroughs, Newham and Waltham Forest, have rejected the Prevent programme as 'stigmatising' Muslim children and alienating Muslim communities.
- Data on Channel referrals is frequently denied when requested under Freedom of Information. Data disclosed by the National Police Chiefs Council shows that only 1 in 5 of those referred to the Channel programme between April 2007 and March 2014 required "supportive interventions." That means 80% of referrals exited the system at the preliminary assessment stage. This is a unusually high number of unwarranted referrals raising serious questions about training quality and impact on innocent victims.
- The available Channel referral data also reveals the high proportion of referrals that come from the education sector, compared to all other sectors. 75% and 68% of all Channel referrals of children aged 10 and under and 11 - 15 between April 2012 and 10 Dec 2015 came from the education sector. Fears among Muslim Londoners about racial profiling in the education sector are real and palpable.
- Publishing Channel data on the MOPAC and MPS websites on an annual basis can bring much needed transparency to this area of policing and can guard against intrusive inquiries and unjustified referrals to the counter-terrorism intervention programme.



## 4. Transport, Housing and Health in London

- London has the highest public transport costs compared to other major capital cities around the world and the high cost of travel affects those on low incomes more having consequences for health, prosperity and well-being. Tackling fare rises for public transport services in London and making services run more efficiently will be a challenge that will need to be addressed by the future Mayor.
- Housing costs in the capital is one of the most important policy areas for Londoners. Muslims are twice as likely to live in overcrowded accommodation (with an occupancy rating of minus 1) than the general population in London, 26.4% and 11.3% respectively. Overcrowding is a particular problem in areas of Newham, Brent and Ealing, London Boroughs with a large Muslim population.
- Muslims are more likely to suffer from 'bad' or 'very bad' health at all groups compared to the general population. For Muslims in London, almost twice as many in the age group 16-49 report 'bad' or 'very bad' health compared to the general population in London, 4.7% and 2.7% respectively. These disparities are reflected in other age groups with 22% of Muslims aged 50-64 reporting 'bad' or 'very bad' health and 32.2% of Muslims aged 65+ compared to 9.9% and 17.2% of the general population respectively.

## 5. Education and Employment

- London's BME primary school population in 2015, according to the school census, numbered 402,218 out of a total of 561,307, or 71.7%. At secondary school level, BME students were 329,492 out of a total of 480,367, or 68.6% . This is higher than the overall BME population in London, 40.2%.
- Education attainment levels among Muslim pupils in London have improved significantly since 2001 but an attainment gap remains between Inner and Outer London with Muslims in Inner London falling 10 percentage points behind the general population with Level 4 qualifications and above (18.1% and 28.1% respectively).
- Muslims continue to face disproportionately high levels of unemployment when comparing labour market outcomes across social groups with equal levels in education and qualifications. With London's primacy in the UK economy, the capital is well-placed to seriously tackle Muslim discrimination in the labour market and improve the correlation between rising educational attainment levels among young Muslims and employment outcomes. The Mayor of London's office should create a taskforce to examine Muslim labour market discrimination in the capital and work with public and private sector employers to tackle the high levels of unemployment among Muslim Londoners.



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