


✓ Get Out & ✓ote!

# **mend**

**Policy Pledges  
Muslim Manifesto**

# **2019**



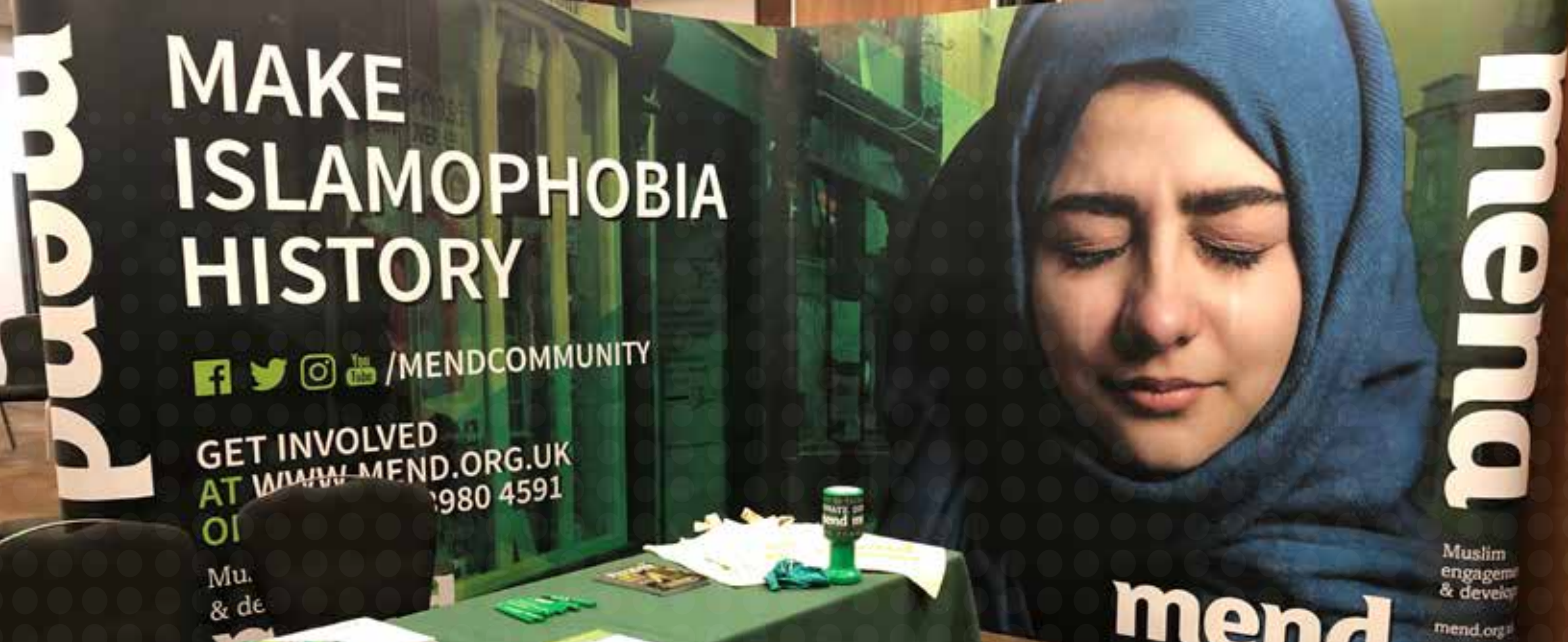
*“A healthy  
democracy does not  
require agreement on  
every issue. Rather, we  
contribute to positive  
social change through  
solidarity in issues of  
mutual agreement and  
critical discourse on  
issues in which  
we differ.”*

*– Isobel Ingham – Barrow  
Head of Policy, MEND*



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## Introducing Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND)

### MEND

Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) is a community-funded organisation that seeks to encourage political, civic, and social engagement within British Muslim communities through empowering British Muslims to interact with political and media institutions effectively.

Our approach to achieving this involves a combination of community engagement (through education, community events, local campaigns to encourage voting etc.) and advocacy work (involving victim support, submissions to parliamentary inquiries, media analysis, election resources, briefings etc.).

Our work has been recognised through the following accolades:

- The World Economic Forum commended our work as “best practice” in Human Rights “protection and promotion”.
- The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights rated us as the “best example for civil society organisations”.
- The EU Parliament Magazine stated that “The EU could learn a lot from MEND’s work on counter-radicalisation through engagement”.

## The Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU)

The Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU) was founded by MEND in response to rising anti-Muslim attacks across Europe and a growing tide of anti-Muslim sentiment. The IRU offers a platform for victims of Islamophobic hate crime and discrimination to report and share their experiences and serves as a source of free advice, support, and referral services.

The IRU serves three main functions:

- Data collection and monitoring,
- The provision of free legal advice and police liaison,
- Provision of basic emotional support, and signposting to further professional sources of emotional support if required.

## How MEND Assists Parliamentarians and Policymakers:

- Providing briefings, information, analysis, and expertise on the issues facing British Muslim communities.
- Arranging opportunities for MPs to engage with their local Muslim communities.
- Conducting research within Muslim communities.
- Connecting MPs to local stakeholders.



## A Note from our CEO

Within the space of only a few years, the political landscape of Britain has changed dramatically. Although Brexit dominates the political scene, questions and issues pertaining to British Muslims are also important. This manifesto highlights these issues, including those of integration, identity, belonging, counter-terror, hate-crime, discrimination, media representation and human rights.

From these, we have developed a number of key policy pledges that we hope that political parties will critically engage with, and to which they will confirm their commitment. These key pledges sought are summarised overleaf.

MEND works to promote greater Muslim engagement at all levels in our democracy. This manifesto is our contribution to furthering the social, civic, economic, and political participation of British Muslims in UK society.

**Dr Shazad Amin**

CEO, MEND





# MEND's Policy Pledges

MEND's policy pledges are developed and ratified by our National Council. This council consists of the MEND Core Network (MCN) of volunteers and staff. As such, and in accordance with the principles of representative democracy, our pledges are designed to truly reflect the diversity and interests of our 700 volunteers across the country and the vast number of Muslim communities that they represent. MEND's policy pledges serve as the primary basis on which we engage with political parties, parliamentarians, councillors and policymakers. Indeed we call upon all political parties to adopt them in their manifestos and policy documents. In essence, they summarise the key principles, values, and beliefs on which is MEND is founded, and are as follows;

## Racial and Religious Equality

1. Commit to adopting the definition of Islamophobia produced by the APPG for British Muslims: "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness", and apply this definition in conjunction with the guidelines that MEND has produced.
2. Commit to a review of the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act with a view to strengthening legal protections afforded to religious communities.
3. Implement primary legislation to deal with social media offences and hate speech online and commit to working with social media companies to protect free speech while developing an efficient strategy to tackle hate speech online in consultation with Muslim grassroots organisations.
4. Commit to financing mosque security in a manner that is proportional to risk, in line with what is already correctly provided to Jewish religious institutions.

## Youth and Education

5. Commit to prioritising PSRE (Personal, Social and Religious Education) and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) within the national curriculum and ensure grassroots Muslim organisations are enlisted to assist in developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia.
6. Commit to supporting academic freedoms and initiatives to decolonise education, whilst giving greater emphasis within the national curriculum to shared histories and the contributions of minority communities in building our society.
7. Commit to developing training programmes for teachers focussed on tackling and addressing bullying based on race, religion, disability, or sexuality.
8. Commit to supporting faith school provisions in the state sector for Muslim pupils and parents.
9. Commit to implementing Shariah-compliant student loans to encourage more British Muslim students to attend university.

## The Labour Market

10. Commit to tackling religious, racial and gendered discrimination in the workplace through

targeted interventions at all stages of recruitment, retention and promotion.

11. Commit to the use of name-blind applications and targeted interventions within employment aimed at tackling the triple penalty and improving access to employment for British Muslim women specifically.
12. Commit to supporting employers to recognise and accommodate religious festivals and religious observance within the workplace, including the provision of halal meat, prayer rooms, and flexible work hours during Ramadan.

## **Media and Broadcasting**

13. Commit to the full implementation of the Royal Charter on press regulation.
14. Commit to the commencement of the second part of the Leveson Inquiry, including an investigation into the prevalence of Islamophobia within the media.
15. Support initiatives by the broadcasting industry to promote positive portrayals of Muslims in the media.

## **Crime, Policing, and the Criminal Justice System**

16. Commit to investigating structural Islamophobia within the Criminal Justice System.

## **Security and Counter-Terror**

17. Commit to independently reviewing all counter-terrorism legislation enacted since 2000 with a view to curbing the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties.
18. Commit to recognising the role of UK foreign policy in individuals being drawn to political violence.

## **Political Engagement**

19. Commit to proactively engaging and consulting with representative and grassroots organisations within British Muslim communities, including but not limited to Muslim Engagement and Development.
20. Commit to recognising that Palestinian activism is a legitimate form of political dialogue and commit to protecting the rights of British Muslims to advocate and support Palestinians' right to self-determination.

## **Minority Rights and Integration**

21. Commit to preserving human rights and the protection of minority rights, including, but not limited to, the rights to religious slaughter, male circumcision and the wearing of religious dress or symbols as currently enshrined within UK legislation.
22. Commit to supporting the protections afforded by 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, within UK law post-Brexit.

# Executive Summary

## Racial and Religious Equality

MEND urges the UK Government to adopt the definition of Islamophobia produced by the APPG for British Muslims: “Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness” and apply this definition in conjunction with the guidelines outlined within this Manifesto (see p17-18). There is also a need to tackle inadequate legislation on racial and religious hate crime and similar Islamophobic hate speech on social media.

## Youth and Education

Islamophobia in the education system impacts Muslim children and their development in a wide variety of ways. From being bullied explicitly regarding their faith, to being stigmatised and reported to the PREVENT strategy for views they may hold, and to being interminably questioned on their apparent divergence from (thus far ill-defined) “British Values”, Muslim children are struggling to navigate this complex maze. Meanwhile, controversies such as the alleged “Trojan Horse” affair and Amanda Spielman’s proposals as Chief Inspector of Ofsted to question schoolgirls who wear the hijab highlight the obsessive scrutiny and problematisation of Muslims within the sphere of education.

## The Labour Market

Studies have shown that Muslims encounter discrimination at all levels of recruitment, retainment and progression; face high levels of unemployment; and are disproportionately confined to unskilled professions or jobs with limited opportunities for progression.<sup>1</sup> The Government’s Social Mobility Commission cited a number of barriers to success for Muslims in the employment sphere, including ethnic minority sounding names being less likely to be offered interviews and Muslims feeling forced to work “10 times as hard” as their white counterparts in order to achieve equivalent levels of success.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, Muslim women face a *triple penalty* in the employment sphere due to being women, being from an ethnic minority background, and for being Muslim.

## Media and Broadcasting

Studies have also shown that, with 21 negative references to Muslims within the British press for every single neutral or positive reference,<sup>3</sup> the media plays an integral role in spreading prejudice, stereotypes, and xenophobic views of British Muslims. This, in turn, directly contributes to hate crime, discrimination, and marginalisation of Muslim communities.

Meanwhile, the failures of the current regulator, IPSO, and the Government’s continued failure to fully implement the Royal Charter on Press Regulation leaves little recourse for tackling Islamophobia in the mainstream press. At the same time, the lack of diversity within broadcasting and the continued confinement of Muslim actors and characters to stereotypical roles and representations is an issue in need of redress. Therefore, the broadcasting industry needs to be supported in devising initiatives to promote positive portrayals of Muslims.

1. Roger Dobson, “British Muslims face worst job discrimination of any minority group, according to research”, Independent, November 30, 2014, accessed June 12, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-muslims-face-worst-job-discrimination-of-any-minority-group-9893211.html>.

2. Anushka Asthana, “Islamophobia Holding Back UK Muslims in Workplace, Study Finds”, The Guardian, September 07, 2017, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/sep/07/islamophobia-holding-back-uk-muslims-in-workplace-study-finds>.

3. See Baker, Paul, Costas Gabrielatos, and Tony McEnery. Discourse analysis and media attitudes: the representation of Islam in the British Press. Cambridge: University Press, 2013.



## Crime, Policing, and the Criminal Justice System

Over the past decade, the number of Muslims in prison increased by over 48%, with Muslims now constituting 15% of the total prison population, despite amounting to less than 5% of the general population.<sup>4</sup> MEND urges policymakers to commit to investigating structural Islamophobia within the Criminal Justice System. Any examination of the overrepresentation of Muslims within the Criminal Justice System must take into account cultural stereotypes, socio-economic challenges, and a lack of diversity within the Criminal Justice System itself.

## Security and Counter-Terror

MEND calls on political parties to commit to independently reviewing all counter-terrorism legislation enacted since 2000 with a view to curbing the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties. MEND is of the firm belief that the PREVENT duty should be repealed and welcomes the independent review of PREVENT as a crucial first step in tackling the detrimental impact of ill-conceived counter-terror strategies on Muslims' abilities to fully enjoy their social, civic, religious, political, and economic rights. However, there are signs that this review may not be truly independent nor wide enough in its scope to examine all of the factors that may lead someone to be drawn into acts of politically motivated violence, including the role of foreign policy in such a trajectory. It is interesting to note that, with the announcement of Lord Carlile as the Independent Reviewer, questions have already been raised about his own independence, given his previous support for PREVENT.<sup>5</sup>

## Political Engagement

While data shows a growing trend of Muslim engagement in the field of politics, there remain significant challenges Muslims face when operating within the political sphere. Ultimately, political parties must address structural barriers that exclude Muslims and other minority groups. Meanwhile, studies have identified PREVENT as contributing towards a deficit in civic engagement amongst Muslim students; impacting their ability to engage in certain discussions and deterring them from running for elected positions.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, as recommended by the 2017 Citizens UK report, *Missing Muslims*, the Government must mend its "broken relationship"<sup>7</sup> with Muslim communities by reconsidering its policy of disengagement with credible mainstream Muslim organisations that have the trust and support of British Muslim communities.

## Minority Rights and Integration

Despite the protections afforded by the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights), and the Human Rights Act, recent years have witnessed public debates that have challenged Muslim religious practice and observance in the UK. Particular public controversy has surrounded the right to halal meat, the building of mosques, the right to access Shariah councils, and the right to religious dress. Such debates also demonstrate how discourse around issues of religious rights can be used as a proxy argument to marginalise minority communities and Muslims specifically. With continued Brexit uncertainty, it is essential that Human Rights are protected as they are currently enshrined within UK legislation.

4. "The Lammy Review: final report", Gov.uk, September 8, 2017, p. 3, accessed 23.10.2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report>

5. Lizzie Dearden, "Home Office faces legal challenge over appointment of 'biased' reviewer of Prevent counter-extremism programme", The Independent, August 2019. Accessed: 13th September 2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-legal-challenge-prevent-counter-extremism-lord-carlile-a9083486.html>

6. "Our Research into the Experiences of #MuslimsInEducation" NUS Connect, March 18, 2018, <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/our-research-into-the-experiences-of-muslimsineducation>.

7. Citizens UK, *The Missing Muslims: Unlocking British Muslim Potential For The Benefit Of All*, 2017, accessed 05.09.2019, [https://www.barrowcadbury.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Missing\\_Muslims\\_Report\\_-full-report.pdf](https://www.barrowcadbury.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Missing_Muslims_Report_-full-report.pdf)

*Muslim voters have been  
estimated to make up 10%  
or more of voters in 83  
parliamentary seats*





# British Muslim Communities

## Understanding Muslim Communities

The 2011 Census provides the most up-to-date and comprehensive data available on the characteristics of the UK's Muslim population, following the introduction of a religious identifier in the 2001 Census. The data revealed that the UK's Muslim population had risen 75% over the intervening period, from 1.6 million in 2001 to 2.8 million by 2011.<sup>8</sup> Muslims make up 4.4% of the overall population in the UK, 95% of which live in England, 3% in Scotland, 1.6% in Wales, and just 0.1% in Northern Ireland.<sup>9</sup> Muslims are also concentrated in specific areas of the UK, with roughly half of Muslims in England and Wales residing in the cities of London, Birmingham and Bradford,<sup>10</sup> and almost 60% of Scottish Muslims living in Glasgow and Edinburgh.<sup>11</sup>

British Muslims are incredibly diverse in terms of ethnicity, culture, and language. Two-thirds of UK Muslims are of Asian ethnicity, with 10% being of Black ethnicity and 7% being of Arab ethnicity, while white British Muslims comprise 3% of the UK Muslim total.<sup>12</sup> Beyond English and Welsh, the range of languages spoken by British Muslims is also vast, including but not limited to, Arabic, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Turkish, Somali, Kurdish, and Pashto. Moreover, British Muslims are hugely diverse in their ideologies, beliefs, and practices. While the majority of Muslims in the UK follow Sunni schools of thought, an estimated 1 in 10 classify as Shia.<sup>13</sup>

Despite this rich diversity, Muslims are still often represented as a monolithic group within public and popular discourse. This representation frequently leads to negative stereotypes and essentialising of Muslim practices, identities, and beliefs. As such, British Muslims are overwhelmingly portrayed as a threat and as a group of questionable loyalty. However, such misperceptions are not borne out by the evidence. For example, a BBC commissioned ComRes poll in 2015 found that 95% of British Muslim feel a loyalty to the UK, while a Channel 4 commissioned ICM poll in 2016 showed that 86% of British Muslims felt a strong sense of belonging to Britain (a figure that was actually *higher* than the national average of 83%).

Considering this vast diversity, it is rare to find unchallenged consensus amongst British Muslim communities on any topic. As such, any issue involving British Muslims must take into account a broad spectrum of perspectives that encompass this multiplicity of experiences, values, identities, beliefs, and practices. However, rather than engaging with a broad spectrum of Muslim organisations and voices, the Government has traditionally insisted in dealing with a pre-established minority who already support their policy positions, particularly on issues such as counter-terror, media regulation, and the practice of religious rights. Consequently, think-tanks and NGOs which do not possess the confidence of British Muslims have exercised considerable influence in shaping public policies, thus resulting in policies that do not necessarily reflect the interests of the majority of British Muslim communities and their consequent feelings of alienation and frustration.

As recommended by the 2017 Citizens UK report, *Missing Muslims*, it is of pressing urgency that the Government reassesses its engagement with Muslim communities and seeks to mend the “broken relationship” by taking steps to end this impasse.<sup>14</sup> The Government must, therefore, urgently reconsider its policy of disengagement with credible Muslim organisations that have the trust and support of mainstream British Muslim communities. Engagement does not mean agreement on every issue, but facilitating the exchange of ideas and perspectives is an integral component of a democratic society

8. Aisha Gani, “Muslim Population in England and Wales Nearly Doubles in 10 Years,” The Guardian, February 11, 2015, accessed May 8, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/11/muslim-population-england-wales-nearly-doubles-10-years>.

9. Khadijah Elshayyal, Scottish Muslims in Numbers: Understanding Scotland's Muslim Population through the 2011 Census, report, The Alwaleed Centre, The University of Edinburgh, December 2016, accessed May 8, 2019, [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish\\_muslims\\_in\\_numbers\\_web.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scottish_muslims_in_numbers_web.pdf).

10. Sundas Ali, British Muslims in Numbers: A Demographic, Socio-economic and Health Profile of Muslims in Britain Drawing on the 2011 Census, report, Muslim Council of Britain, January 2015, accessed May 8, 2019, [https://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport\\_2015.pdf](https://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf).

11. Scottish Muslims in Numbers.

12. Ibid.

13. “The Diverse Origins of Britain's Muslims” BBC, January 18 2016, accessed 05.09.2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-33715473>.

14. Citizens UK, The Missing Muslims: Unlocking British Muslim Potential For The Benefit Of All, 2017, accessed 05.09.2019, [https://www.barrowcadbury.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Missing\\_Muslims\\_Report\\_-full-report.pdf](https://www.barrowcadbury.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Missing_Muslims_Report_-full-report.pdf).

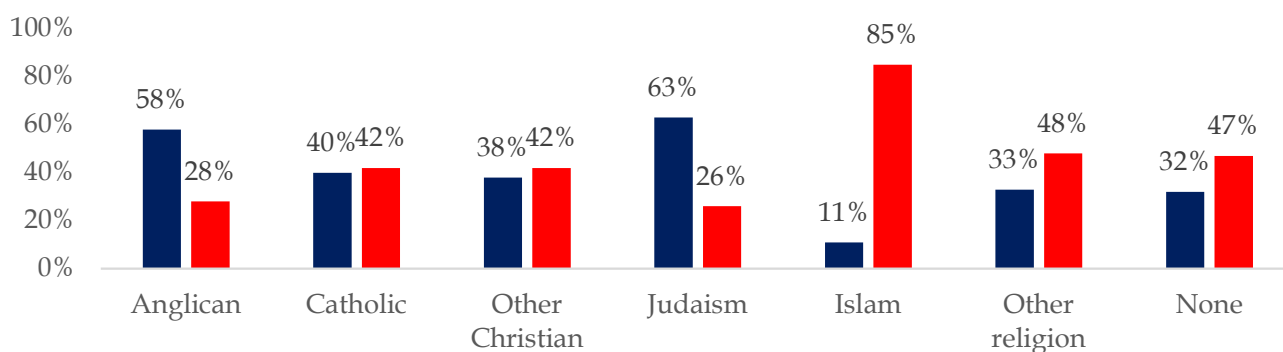


and is the most fruitful way to approach meaningful policies that have the potential for positive social impact.

## Why the Muslim Vote Matters

Historic migratory patterns have led to a concentration of Muslims in specific geographic areas of the UK, making the vote of Muslims critical in a large number of parliamentary seats. Muslim voters have been estimated to make up 10% or more of voters in 83 parliamentary seats (13% of constituencies).<sup>15</sup> Certain council areas such as the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham as well as Blackburn with Darwen in the North West of England feature Muslim populations above 25%. Just under a quarter of Bradford residents are Muslim, while 22% of the population of Birmingham, the UK's second-largest city, are Muslim. Muslims living in London make up 1 in 8 of the population of the UK's capital, exceeding 1 million.<sup>16</sup> Blackburn with Darwen also contains the most concentrated area of Muslims across the whole of the UK, with the council wards of Bastwell and Shear Brow both having local Muslim populations above 75%.<sup>17</sup>

### Religious Affiliation and Party Choice at the 2017 General Election



British Religion in Numbers, August 11, 2017, accessed 05.09.2019 <http://www.brin.ac.uk/religious-affiliation-and-party-choice-at-the-2017-general-election/>

The table on the next page includes the 24 constituencies with the highest proportion of Muslim voters in the UK. Interestingly, every single one elected a Labour MP in the 2017 general election.

In the 2017 General Election, the Conservatives lost their outright majority, going from 331 seats down to 318. Labour gained a significant number of seats, going from 232 to 262 seats. The national vote share was closer than many forecasters anticipated, with the Conservatives polling 42.4% of the overall vote compared to 40% of the overall electorate who voted Labour. Meanwhile, Labour gained 27 seats directly from the Conservatives, including eight seats where the size of the estimated Muslim electorate was two or more times greater than the standing MP's majority from 2015. In the same election, the Conservatives gained five seats directly from Labour.

Three seats in which the Muslim vote was likely to have been important in overturning Conservative majorities were Bedford, Keighley, and Peterborough. In all three of these seats, the estimated number of Muslim voters ranged between 5,000 and over 10,000, with Labour triumphing in each seat by less than 800 votes. In areas with large Muslim electorates, the Labour vote was strengthened considerably. In all 25 constituencies with the largest estimated number of Muslim voters, Labour candidates won with a greater majority than in 2015. In seven of the ten seats with estimated Muslim voter numbers above 25,000, the Labour majority increased by over 10,000 between the 2015 and 2017 elections.

<sup>15</sup>. MEND analysis, using ONS 2011 Census and Electoral Statistics data

<sup>16</sup>. British Muslims in Numbers.

<sup>17</sup>. Ibid.

While causality cannot be definitively established for any seat being ‘won’ or lost’, these statistics do suggest the Muslim vote should be a crucial consideration for any political party. Moreover, while the voting pattern of any minority community cannot be seen as homogenous, there is evidence to suggest that Muslim communities have an overwhelming tendency to vote Labour. Overall, political parties must be made aware that failing to engage with Muslim communities and reflect their concerns can impact upon their electoral successes or failures at the ballot box.

## Parliamentary constituencies with the highest proportion of Muslim voters

	Constituency	Population	Muslim population	Percentage of population that is Muslim
1	Bradford West	116,556	58,872	50.51%
2	Birmingham Hodge Hill	127,751	63,417	49.64%
3	Birmingham Hall Green	118,546	53,990	45.54%
4	Blackburn	107,221	38,887	36.27%
5	Bradford East	116,943	42,056	35.96%
6	East Ham	158,283	56,008	35.38%
7	Ilford South*	141,102	45,757	32.43%
8	Birmingham Ladywood	138,025	44,626	32.33%
9	Bethnal Green and Bow	141,267	44,409	31.44%
10	Poplar and Limehouse	153,969	43,287	28.11%
11	Manchester Gorton	116,889	32,010	27.38%
12	Leicester South	122,724	33,152	27.01%
13	Walthamstow	115,849	28,207	24.35%
14	West Ham	174,534	42,448	24.32%
15	Oldham West and Royton	105,833	25,220	23.83%
16	Luton South*	118,448	27,874	23.53%
17	Rochdale	109,009	25,429	23.33%
18	Edmonton	118,834	27,488	23.13%
19	Slough	139,210	31,942	22.95%
20	Birmingham Perry Barr	109,312	24,268	22.20%
21	Luton North**	102,594	22,142	21.58%
22	Leyton and Wanstead	109,591	23,582	21.52%
23	Westminster North	128,945	26,431	20.50%
24	Brent Central	143,760	29,198	20.31%

\* The MP has since switched to Change UK

\*\* The MP has since become an Independent

Sources: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland

1. Constituency population data is based on Office for National Statistics' Parliamentary Constituency Mid-Year Population Estimates for 2015

2. Muslim population figures are based on data from Office for National Statistics' Census 2011 outputs

*Islamophobia, as  
a phenomenon and  
as it is experienced by  
Muslim communities,  
encompasses far more  
than hate crime and  
physical or verbal  
abuse.*





# Racial and Religious Inequalities

## Approaching Islamophobia

In March 2019, the world witnessed devastating far-right terror attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. There are few reminders of the danger of Islamophobia internationally that are more poignant. In the UK, the threat of racially and religiously motivated violence is a constant presence in the daily lives of our Muslim communities and urgent action is required to combat all forms of hatred which leave innocent individuals vulnerable to marginalisation, discrimination, and even attack.

Islamophobia, as a phenomenon and as it is experienced by Muslim communities, encompasses far more than hate crime and physical or verbal abuse. However, these types of incident are often its most overt and visible manifestations.

As MEND, we believe that there are five areas that require attention in order to combat Islamophobic hate crime and religiously motivated violence directed at Muslims:

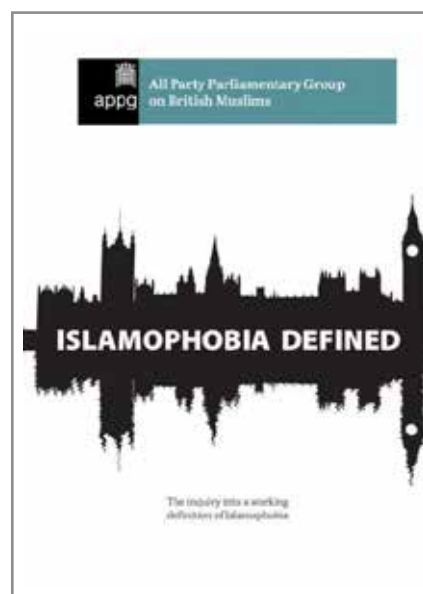
- Defining Islamophobia
- Hate crime
- Social media
- Legislative Imbalance
- Mosque Security

## Defining Islamophobia

In 2018, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Muslims launched an inquiry into a definition of Islamophobia. The APPG concluded this inquiry by proposing the following definition:

Such a development is hugely important and a significant step in tackling the prejudice and discrimination facing British Muslims. Defining Islamophobia is essential as it will provide much-needed clarity in legislation and policies that are intended to protect vulnerable minorities. As duly observed by Gottschalk and Greenberg, “movements against discrimination do not begin until a commonly understood label evolves that brings together under one banner all forms of that particular prejudice”.<sup>18</sup> Once established, terms such as sexism, homophobia, racism and anti-Semitism became important tools to oppose and tackle the various discriminations and prejudices these labels embody; prejudices and discriminations which at one time were considered normal and thus remained unchallenged. As such, a working definition is vital for the following reasons:

- It is a critical tool for awareness-raising in communicating to the public the serious prejudice and discrimination faced by Muslims.
- It is an asset in formulating effective and meaningful legal protections.



<sup>18</sup> Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg, *Islamophobia Making Muslims the Enemy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), p11.

*“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”*



- It encourages a full and holistic exploration of the phenomenon, which in turn presents effective methods for approaching and challenging it.
- It is also an act of recognition. For British Muslims, it demonstrates that the Government recognises the hardships they face and has given it a name. It officially validates their experiences and cements these experiences as undeniable facts in need of address. Furthermore, it reassures Muslim communities that these hardships can and will be tackled in a critical and dedicated manner.
- It also forms a basis for countering the vocal minority in our society who deny Islamophobia's very existence, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

### *A Holistic Understanding*

As the various sections of this manifesto attest, Islamophobia encompasses far more than merely hostility and hate crime. Islamophobia infiltrates every aspect of public life and creates barriers to Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslim) in overt ways, but also in subtler ways, which are thus harder to detect and demonstrate. For example, the CV that is passed over because it boasts a Muslim sounding name; or the British-Pakistani man who is repeatedly assumed a threat at the airport on the basis of his beard; or the child who feels unable to ask questions in class because she is worried she may be swept up into the apparatus of PREVENT.

### *Approaching a Policy Applicable and Robust Working Definition*

We firmly support the APPG's decision to adopt the term "Islamophobia" over "anti-Muslim hatred" and the fact that this definition locates Islamophobia within the framework of racism. In Todd Green's seminal work, *The Fear of Islam*, he states that "Islamophobia is not racially blind, nor is it simply a manifestation of older forms of racism rooted in biological inferiority. It is an example of what some scholars have labelled "cultural racism". This form of racism incites hatred and hostility based on religious beliefs, cultural traditions, and ethnic backgrounds."<sup>19</sup> This is an important understanding to have, for while animosity towards religion is frequently used as a justification for prejudicial sentiments, this hostility is also a product of animosity towards race, ethnicity, and culture, with Muslims becoming treated as a racialised group. A case in point is the conflation between ethnic and religious insults (such as the application of "p\*ki" in reference to a Muslim as well as an ethnic identity), or the reality that British Sikhs have frequently been the unfortunate targets of Islamophobic abuse on the basis of their ethnicity and assumed connection to a Muslim identity. Therefore, rather than viewing Islamophobia in a vacuum, it is important to approach it through the lens of racism as it often manifests itself and functions through these logics.

According to The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the United Nations defines racial discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."<sup>20</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation further clarifies that "discrimination may be distinguished from **prejudice** which is made up of unfavourable or discriminatory attitudes (not actions) towards persons of different categories. Racial, sexual and other types of discrimination can exist at the level of personal relations and individual behaviour as well as be institutionalised as legal or administrative policy."<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, if the logic of the APPG's definition follows the UN's conceptualisation of racism, it provides

19. Todd H. Green, *The Fear of Islam: an Introduction to Islamophobia in the West* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 27.

20. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination", accessed 05.09.2019 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/icerd.aspx>

21. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, "Discrimination", accessed 05.09.2019 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/discrimination/>



the scope to encompass the public exclusions and discriminations contained within Islamophobia that extend further than simply hate crime and abuse. However, from the perspective of policy implementation, we feel that the definition would benefit from greater clarity regarding this relationship with the UN's formulation of racism.

Moreover, the APPG's final report states that "in analysing the quantitative and, mostly, qualitative data, a thread of three key factors emerged: the **process** of Islamophobia, the **actions** that qualify as Islamophobic, and the **impact** of Islamophobia... any definition must include the aforementioned three factors" (our emphasis). We applaud this recognition and feel that it is important to fully highlight these three key factors of process, actions, and impact within the policy implementation of this definition. Too often, Islamophobic actions are highlighted, but the processes that lead to these and the consequential impacts are overlooked. One example of this can be found in the Government's counter-terror strategy, PREVENT. Within this example, Islamophobic *actions* in the form of false referrals made on the basis of stereotypes and practitioner biases are perhaps the most obvious manifestation of Islamophobia. However, the *process* of Islamophobia in PREVENT's evidentiary underpinnings and the way that it has been developed must also be taken into account. Likewise, the stigmatising consequences and wider social ramifications of false referrals on Muslim communities must be explored in order to understand the *impacts* of PREVENT fully. It is only through such an analysis can the structural nature of Islamophobia be fully comprehended.

Therefore, in addressing these considerations and ensuring that this definition has real potential to be policy applicable, MEND proposes the addition of the following guidelines:

*Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness. It is demonstrated in, and articulated through, speech, writing, behaviours, structures, policies, legislation or activities that work to control, regulate or exclude Muslim participation within social, civic, economic and political life, or which embody hatred, vilification, stereotyping, abuse, discrimination, or violence directed at Muslims.*

*Taking into account the overall context, examples of Islamophobia in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere may include (but are in no way limited to):*

- *Any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference against Muslims that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.*
- *Causing, calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim due to their religious identity.*
- *Causing, calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of individuals due to their perceived or actual connection to or support of Muslims.*
- *Charging Muslims with conspiring to harm humanity and/or the Western way of life or blaming Muslims for the economic and social ills of society.*
- *Making mendacious, dehumanising, vilifying, demonising, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims.*
- *Objectifying and generalising Muslims as different, exotic or underdeveloped, or implying that they are outside of, distinct from, or incompatible with British society and identity.*
- *Espousing the belief that Muslims are inferior to other social or religious groups.*

- *Accusing Muslims as a collective of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person, group or nation, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims.*
- *Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other social, religious or ethnic group.*
- *Applying ethnocentric approaches to the treatment of Muslims (judging another culture solely by the values and standards of one's own culture), for example, evaluating Muslim women's choice of dress exclusively through the speaker's expectations and without reference to the personal cultural norms and values of the women in question.*
- *Acts of aggression within which the targets, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Muslim(s) or linked to Muslims.*

*While criticism of Islam within legitimate realms of debate and free speech is not in itself Islamophobic, it may become Islamophobic if the arguments presented are used to justify or encourage vilification, stereotyping, dehumanisation, demonisation or exclusion of Muslims. For example, by using criticism of religion to argue that Muslims are collectively evil or violent.*

**Thus, MEND urges the UK Government to:**

- **Adopt the definition of Islamophobia produced by the APPG for British Muslims: “Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”**
- **Apply the above definition in conjunction with the aforementioned guidelines.**

It is through the adoption of these guidelines that the APPG's definition of Islamophobia may be applied in a holistic manner that captures Islamophobia in all its diverse manifestations.

### **Policy Pledge:**

**1. Commit to adopting the definition of Islamophobia produced by the APPG for British Muslims: “Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness”, and apply this definition in conjunction with the guidelines that MEND has produced.**

## Hate Crime

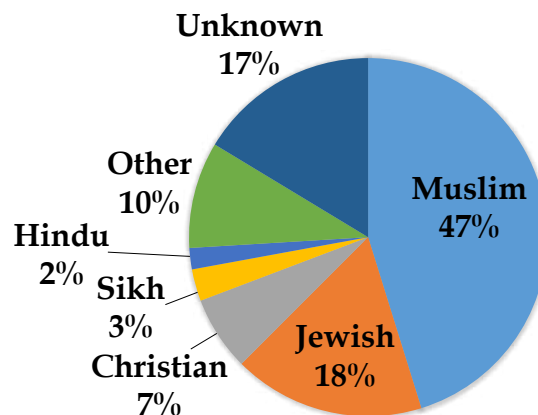
Hate crime is perhaps the most overt, visible, and undeniable symptom of the Islamophobia prevalent across certain segments of society. Over recent years, British Muslims have suffered from increasing levels of hate crime, while major socio-political events, such as terror attacks and the EU referendum, often mobilise acts of hostility towards Muslims. The impacts of these crimes are long-lasting, with many victims left feeling anxious and fearful for their safety.

*47% of religiously aggravated hate crimes are directed at Muslims*

The most recent hate crime figures published by the Home Office in their 2019 report, entitled: “Hate crime, England and Wales, 2018/19”,<sup>22</sup> illustrated a poignant picture of the rise of hate crime. Hate crime is defined by the Home Office as “any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s race/religion/sexual orientation/disability/ or who is transgender, or perceived race/religion/sexual orientation/disability/ or who is perceived to be transgender”.<sup>23</sup>

The total number of religiously aggravated hate crimes that occurred in 2018/19 is 8,566, which translates to around 165 offences every week and 24 offences every single day. Meanwhile 47% of religiously aggravated hate crimes are directed at Muslims, meaning that the Muslims are by far the biggest religious group to suffer such crimes.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, a recent report from Citizens UK, focusing on the impact of hate crime in Nottingham, found that 3 in 5 of the city’s Muslim population have been victims of hate crime, more than any other religious group in the city.<sup>25</sup>

### Victims of religious hate crime



“Hate crime, England and Wales, 2018/19”, Home Office, October 2019. Accessed: 8th November 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>

Meanwhile, over 80% of reports for racially or religiously aggravated offences do not lead to charge or summons.<sup>26</sup> For public order offences, only 13% resulted in charge or summons; for criminal damage, only 7%; and, for assault with/without injury or harassment, only 12%.<sup>27</sup> In other words, 9 in 10 hate crimes which involved violence against the person did not result in a charge or summons; and 19 in 20 hate crimes which involved criminal damage and arson did not result in a charge or summons.

22. “Hate crime, England and Wales, 2018/19”, Home Office, October 2019. Accessed: 8th November 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Andy May, “Nottingham Citizens Hate Crime Study Reveals Surge in Verbal and Physical Harassment,” Citizens UK, accessed June 20, 2018, [http://www.citizensuk.org/hate\\_crime\\_study\\_reveals\\_surge\\_in\\_verbal\\_and\\_physical\\_harassment\\_in\\_public](http://www.citizensuk.org/hate_crime_study_reveals_surge_in_verbal_and_physical_harassment_in_public).

26. Ibid.

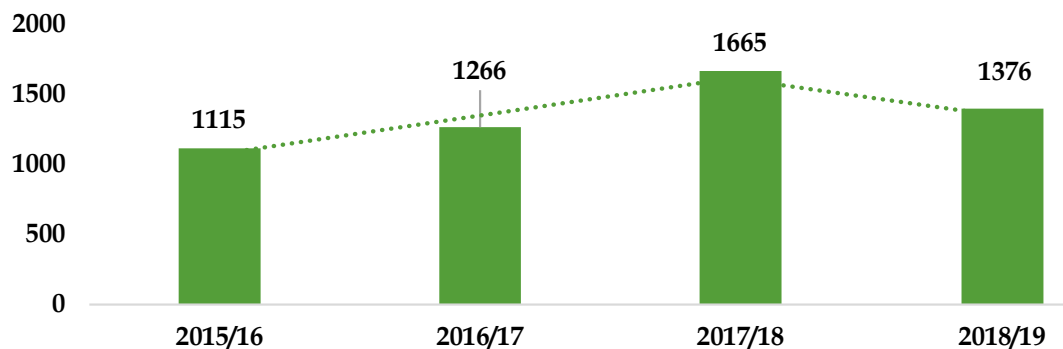
27. Ibid.



## Rising Levels of Islamophobic Abuse

In the wake of the June 2016 referendum, there was a considerable increase in hate crimes nationally. Home Office statistics detailed a 44% rise in racially or religiously aggravated offences in the month following the referendum result compared to the same month the previous year.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, Islamophobic hate crimes recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service in London have risen almost 50% in just two years,<sup>29</sup> as the graph below demonstrates.

### Islamophobic hate crimes recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service



'MPS FY 2016/17 Crime Statistics,' Tableau Public, accessed May 08, 2017, <https://public.tableau.com/profile/metropolitan.police.service#!/vizhome/MPSFY-201617CrimeStatistics/NOTES>.

This trend is also observed at a national level, where the number of reported hate crimes increased by 17% between 2016/17 and 2017/18.<sup>30</sup> Three-quarters of these hate crimes were racially aggravated, while 9% were religiously aggravated.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the number of religiously aggravated offences increased by 40% in 2017/18.<sup>32</sup>

MEND's Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU) is at the forefront of tackling these types of crime and supporting victims through the process. The types of crime reported to the unit range from verbal abuse to physical assault. The following are but a small sample of cases that the IRU has dealt with in the past two years.

A gentleman was attacked by two men and their dog. The victim's three small children (all under the age of five) witnessed the attack. The eldest child has suffered severe mental difficulties since the attack which has culminated physical symptoms. The family is now seeking mental help support.<sup>33</sup>

In an example from January 2019, a video clip was widely circulated of a man filming himself hurling racist and Islamophobic abuse at school girls in East London.<sup>34</sup> In the 2-minute clip, the suspect can be heard making references to Dr Mengele, an SS officer and physician, infamous for his role in the Nazi regime for conducting inhumane experiments on prisoners at Auschwitz concentration camp. Abhorrent language litters the video, including reference to the girls as "black c\*\*s" who are going to "breed like f\*\*\*ing rats" and calling for their sterilisation. He continued "This was England," and "We're going to be f\*\*\*ed with this lot. I think what we might have to do is think of something like old doctor Mengele [...] so the c\*\*ts can't f\*\*\*ing multiply". The IRU was in contact with the school providing advice to

28. Full Fact Team, "Hate Crime in England and Wales," Full Fact, October 17, 2017, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://fullfact.org/crime/hate-crime-england-and-wales/>.

29. 'MPS FY 2016/17 Crime Statistics,' Tableau Public, accessed May 08, 2017, <https://public.tableau.com/profile/metropolitan.police.service#!/vizhome/MPSFY-201617CrimeStatistics/NOTES>.

30. Home Office, Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/17, by Aoife O'Neill, October 17, 2017, accessed May 10, 2018, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf).

31. Home Office, Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/17, by Aoife O'Neill, October 17, 2017, accessed May 10, 2018, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf).

32. "Hate crime, England and Wales, 2017/18," Home Office, October 2018. Accessed: 29th May 2019. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/748598/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748598/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018.pdf).

33. MEND, Islamophobia Response Unit: Case No. TK67/13

34. "Man arrested after disturbing racist video goes viral", MEND, February 2019. Accessed: 29th May 2019. <https://www.mend.org.uk/news/man-arrested-disturbing-racist-video-goes-viral/>.

teaching staff.<sup>35</sup> The perpetrator was subsequently arrested through the use of CCTV images captured at the school.

In a further example from September 2017, Ms Zaynab Hussein was walking home after taking her children to school when Mr Paul Moore ran her over with his car. As she lay on the ground, Mr Moore turned his vehicle around and drove over her again. During the attack, Mr Moore also attempted to run over Muslim children who were making their way to school, including a 12-year-old girl. He would later gloat to his brother that he ran over a “P\*\*i”. Ms Hussein suffered fractures of the pelvis, legs and her arm; with doctors noting that she would not be able to walk again. Following the attack, Ms Hussein’s husband stated: “Our family has been heartbroken by the attack, whatever sentence Paul Moore receives will be less than the life sentence that my wife will have to live with”. MEND supported Ms Hussein and her family throughout the aftermath and court process, including assisting with interactions with the police, media, and local council. MEND also attempted to support the wider community by organising platforms for the police to engage with local residents to discuss their concerns. Mr Hussein later stated that “My family and I would like to thank the passers-by who helped my wife in her time of need, also we would like to thank Leicestershire police, the CPS, the prosecution legal team, the court and MEND for helping bring justice to my family and for ensuring our story is heard”.<sup>36</sup> Paul Moore was jailed for a minimum of 20 years.

## Gendered Targets

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that there is also a gendered dynamic to Islamophobic hate crime. This trend can be seen within the reports received by MEND’s IRU. 75% of reports to the IRU come from Muslim women. This number rises to 80% when just looking at physical attacks alone - meaning that Muslim women are overwhelmingly the targets of acts of violence and aggression. As the perpetrators are overwhelmingly males, it is clear how gender violence and hierarchical structures of gendered power are intrinsic to Islamophobic hate crime. Female victims are almost exclusively visibly Muslim, meaning they were wearing the hijab (headscarf), niqab (face veil), or abaya/jilbab (full-length outer garment) when they were targeted in public. In one case reported to the IRU, a veiled Muslim woman was pelted with food and called a “f\*\*\*ing ninja” by a passenger in a white van who then sped away.<sup>37</sup>

The study “Still No Place for Hate” also provided evidence that Muslim women are particularly vulnerable to abuse and criminal acts.<sup>38</sup> Researchers revealed that one respondent had been told to take off her “f\*\*\*\*\* headscarf” in the city centre. Another Muslim woman said, “I wear the Islamic dress, and the perpetrator was shouting that I was hiding a bomb. On another incident whilst driving in my car, a passer-by was shouting and calling me Bin Laden.”<sup>39</sup> Other victims reported being called a “terrorist s\*\*\*” and being spat on their hijab. One woman described travelling on the bus with her sons, aged two and four, and being told by a fellow passenger that she was raising terrorists.<sup>40</sup>

Another seminal study was undertaken by Dr Hannah Mason-Bish, Director of Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Sussex, and Dr Irene Zempi, a lecturer at Nottingham Trent University. The study, entitled: “Misogyny and Islamophobia: street harassment at the intersections”,<sup>41</sup> drew upon the experience of 60 individuals and 20 focus group interviews with British Muslim women who wear the niqab and had suffered from harassment in public. The study noted that “all the participants reported feeling unsafe in public spaces because of concerns that they were likely to be approached, intimidated,

35. MEND, Islamophobia Response Unit: Case No. FC29/27

36. MEND, Islamophobia Response Unit: Case No. HZ36/25

37. MEND, Islamophobia Response Unit: Case No. SS36/18

38. Jason Pandya-Wood, “Still No Place for Hate: Analysis of the Findings of the Nottingham Citizen’s Hate Crime Survey including Recommendations,” Nottingham Citizens, May 10, 2018, accessed June 20, 2018, [https://d3n8a8pro7vhnmx.cloudfront.net/newcitizens/pages/2982/attachments/original/1525939473/Still\\_No\\_Place\\_for\\_Hate\\_-\\_Final.pdf?1525939473](https://d3n8a8pro7vhnmx.cloudfront.net/newcitizens/pages/2982/attachments/original/1525939473/Still_No_Place_for_Hate_-_Final.pdf?1525939473).

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Hannah Mason-Bish and Irene Zempi, “Misogyny and Islamophobia: street harassment at the intersections,” University of Sussex. Accessed: 29th May 2019. <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/76134/3/Misogyny%20paper%20revised%20versionaccepted%20versionMARCH2018.pdf>

threatened or attacked” because of “previous experiences”.<sup>42</sup> They noted that in the context of a society where sexual harassment is so widespread, the niqab can be perceived as “sexual ‘non-availability’ of Muslim women” which means that men “find it difficult to forgive those who ‘disrupt’ the ‘pattern of the masculine gaze’”. The consequence is that Islamophobia manifests itself with a framework of misogyny, with some participants reporting that they had received comments such as: “I want to cut that black thing off your face!”; “Show me what you’re wearing under there!”; and, “Give us a flash!”.<sup>43</sup>

### *Reporting of Islamophobia*

A critical problem facing Muslim communities in tackling the widespread prevalence of Islamophobic hate crime is the significant level of underreporting, which results in an incomplete and inaccurate picture of the rate of hate crime targeting Muslim communities. As with all types of hate crime and other forms of violent crime, a significant number of cases are not reported due to factors such as victims facing intimidation from the suspect; anxiety from the incident; a lack of confidence in the police; and a lack of knowledge regarding how to report an incident. There are also concerns that there are issues of misreporting religiously aggravated hate crimes as racially aggravated hate crimes. This is particularly relevant for cases of Islamophobia due to the way it is frequently conflated with other forms of racism, and as such, it may be difficult to determine the true motivation of a perpetrator.

*The Home Office estimates that there were around 39,000 religiously aggravated hate crimes during 2018/19*

The Home Office has also provided a conservative estimate as to how many religiously aggravated hate crimes actually occur. This was derived using incidence rates and population estimates. The Home Office estimates that there were around 39,000 religiously aggravated hate crimes during 2018/19, nearly five times the recorded offences.<sup>44</sup> It is, therefore, imperative that further initiatives are promoted to encourage greater levels of reporting in order to glean an accurate understanding of the scale of these incidents.

### *Emotional Impacts of Islamophobia*

The emotional impacts of hate crime on victims are vast, but the effects of Islamophobia on mental health are largely unexplored in research. As such, the trauma associated with these types of crimes remains poorly understood. Testimonies from victims reporting to the IRU reveal a picture of social isolation, depression, and anxiety. Many victims of Islamophobic hate crime discuss how they avoid crowded spaces and public transport and report that they choose to stay indoors more often, take time off work, and avoid public spaces – revealing how hate crime can impede their participation in public life.

Indeed, one of the most worrying adverse community consequences of hate crimes is that of avoidance behaviour following an attack (for example, avoiding certain roads or areas, or ceasing to go out altogether). In a study of the impacts of racial discrimination on mental health, Wallace et al. found high rates of avoidance behaviour after incidents of racial discrimination.<sup>45</sup> The rates of avoidance were highest in Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups with rates of 10-20% reported. Whilst the research did not record the nature of the incidents, it is likely that some of this abuse was religiously rather than racially motivated, noting slightly lower rates in the Indian group. It is well recognised that perpetrators may conflate race with religion, (and indeed there may be dual motivations), hence in the absence of more religiously focussed research, ethnicity may serve as a proxy for religion in this respect.<sup>46</sup>

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42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. “Hate crime, England and Wales, 2017/18”, Home Office, October 2018. Accessed: 29th May 2019. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/748598/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748598/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018.pdf).

45. Wallace, S., Nazroo, J., & Bécarea, L. (2016). “Cumulative effect of racial discrimination on the mental health of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom”, *American Journal of Public Health*, 106(7), 1294-1300.

46. Maureen McBride, “A Review of the Evidence on Hate Crime and Prejudice: Report for the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion,” The Scottish Centre for Crime & Justice Research, September 2016, accessed June 20, 2018, <http://scjcr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/A-Review-of-the-Evidence-on-Hate-Crime-and-Prejudice.pdf>.



Also reported to the IRU is some female victims’ desires to remove the hijab after being targeted. This points to a loss in confidence and an underlying fear that displaying a symbol of their faith in public will make them more prone to abuse. Panic attacks, flashbacks, sleeplessness, and anxiety are also commonly observed psychological impacts.

<i>Spitting incident victim,</i>	<i>Victim on public transport,</i>	<i>Victim of physical assault,</i>
<i>Female, 32, Birmingham</i>	<i>Female, 24, London</i>	<i>Female 28, London</i>
<i>“After the attack, I’ve been afraid to leave the house. I spend most of my time indoors. I don’t even want to go out and do the shopping. I hate being out even in my own local area. I don’t feel safe anymore.”</i>	<i>“I don’t want to take the tube or buses anymore. I feel really anxious in public spaces after being targeted in this way. I just try to walk everywhere or get a lift from a family member.”</i>	<i>“I feel so paranoid walking the streets; I feel like everyone is out to attack me. I’m super self-conscious in public now.”</i>

Social Media

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 hateful messages. As such, there remains a great deal of scope to ensure hate speech is efficiently tackled on social media. Currently, due to the sheer scale of social media sites, abusive posts are largely brought to the attention of social media companies only if users themselves report them. However, not all instances of online hate are reported for their racist or Islamophobic content online.

Demos have noted that, between March 2016-March 2017, 143,920 Tweets were sent from the UK that were considered to be derogatory and anti-Islamic – this amounts to almost 400 per day.<sup>47</sup> Such anti-Muslim sentiments are particularly acute following incidents such as the London Bridge attack in 2017, following which the Guardian reported that 32 of the top 100 most shared tweets expressed negative sentiments about Muslims.<sup>48</sup> A more recent report by Demos, entitled: “Russian Influence Operations on Twitter”, considered the exploitation of ‘Twitter bots’ by the Russian state, looking at a dataset of “9 million tweets from 3,841 blocked accounts” which were associated with the Internet Research Agency (IRA).<sup>49</sup> The report found that there was a significant amount of effort expended by the network of bots to propagate hate rhetoric against Muslims in particular. Indeed, the “most widely-followed and visible troll account” shared more than 100 tweets, 60% of which related to Islam. One such tweet was “London: Muslims running a campaign stall for Sharia law! Must be sponsored by @MayorofLondon! #BanIslam” another was “Welcome To The New Europe! Muslim migrants shouting in London “This is our country now, GET OUT!” #Rapefugees”. The report found that the most frequent topic of tweets sent during the six months prior to the 2016 EU

*between March  
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anti-Islamic*

47. Carl Miller and Josh Smith, “Anti-Islamic content on Twitter”, Demos, April 2017. Accessed: 29th May 2018. <https://demos.co.uk/project/anti-islamic-content-on-twitter/>.  
48. Mark Townsend, “Anti-Muslim online surges driven by fake accounts”, The Guardian, November 2017. Accessed: 29th May 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/nov/26/anti-muslim-online-bots-fake-accounts>.  
49. “New Demos analysis finds Russian influence operations on Twitter targeted at UK were most visible when discussing Islam”, Demos, November 2018. Accessed: 29th May 2019. <https://demos.co.uk/press-release/new-demos-analysis-finds-russian-influence-operations-on-twitter-targeted-at-uk-were-most-visible-when-discussing-islam/>.

referendum was “Islam” and “Muslims”.<sup>50</sup>

A report by the New York-based research institute, Data & Society, entitled *Alternative Influence: Broadcasting the Reactionary Right on YouTube*,<sup>51</sup> was a project that aimed to highlight a network of far-right and non-far-right channels that operate in synchrony to spread far-right narratives. They are described as the *Alternative Influence Network* (AIN), with the report investigating 81 channels on YouTube that gave platforms to around 65 political influencers. The report describes “political influencers” as individuals “who shape public opinion and advertise goods and services through the ‘conscientious calibration’ of their online personae” by building audiences and “selling” them far-right ideology. Members of this network include infamous far-right activists such as: Stephen Yaxley Lennon, also known as Tommy Robinson, founder of the English Defence League (EDL) which is considered an “Extreme Right Wing activity” group by Max Hill, QC, the former Independent Reviewer of Counter-Terror Legislation; Richard Spencer, a prominent American white supremacist; and Lauren Southern, a Canadian far-right activist who was denied entry to the UK because of her anti-Islamic views.<sup>52</sup>

### Policy Pledge:

**3. Implement primary legislation to deal with social media offences and hate speech online and commit to working with social media companies to protect free speech while developing an efficient strategy to tackle hate speech online in consultation with Muslim grassroots organisations.**

## Legislative Imbalance

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 existing racial motives for prosecuting offenders. Since Muslims are not legally defined as a racial group, race relations legislation which protects communities such as Jews and Sikhs does not extend to Muslims.

Furthermore, the Racial and Religious Hatred Act, 2006, contains a disparity between the protections afforded on the grounds of race versus the protections afforded to religious groups. In terms of racial hatred, a person is protected against abusive, insulting, or threatening words or behaviour. However, the protections afforded on the basis of religion only extend to threatening words or behaviour. This specifically excludes the protection from abusive or insulting words or behaviour that is included under racial hatred.

Moreover, within the protections against religious hatred, there is an added condition that intent must be proven. In other words, it must be proven that the perpetrator intended to stir up religious hatred. This differs from incitement to racial hatred, wherein the *likelihood* that the offence would have stirred up racial hatred is enough to prosecute; there is no need to prove that the perpetrator *intended* to stir up racial hatred. This requirement of intent makes the burden of proof within this legislation almost unachievably heavy. Indeed, the intention of the perpetrator is virtually impossible to prove. The consequence is that, since the legislation was enacted in 2006, only a very small number of successful prosecutions have occurred under incitement to religious hatred legislation.

50. “Social media and the propagation of far-right hate”, MEND, November 2018. Accessed: 29th May 2019. <https://www.mend.org.uk/news/social-media-propagation-far-right-hate/>.

51. Rebecca Lewis, “Alternative Influence: broadcasting the reactionary right on YouTube”, Data&Society, September 2018. Accessed: 29th May 2019. <https://datasociety.net/output/alternative-influence/>.

52. “Social media and the propagation of far-right hate”, MEND, November 2018. Accessed: 29th May 2019. <https://www.mend.org.uk/news/social-media-propagation-far-right-hate/>.

## Policy Pledge:

**2. Commit to a review of the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act with a view to strengthening legal protections afforded to religious communities.**

## Mosque Security and the Rise of the Far-Right

The attacks at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, and the associated manifesto demonstrate the need to radically recalibrate the ways in which far-right violence is understood and tackled within security discourses and strategies. Indeed, the murder of Jo Cox by Thomas Mair in 2016 and the murder of Makram Ali by Darren Osborne in the Finsbury Park attack in 2017 are deadly reminders of the threat posed by far-right violence here in the UK that must be effectively tackled and eliminated. Meanwhile, the MEND ComRes poll in 2018 showed that 61% of the British public people believe that far-right political groups are responsible for Islamophobia in the UK.

Far-right violence is not a new nor isolated phenomenon. According to the Global Terrorism Index, the UK suffered 12 far-right attacks in 2017.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, the number of people imprisoned in relation to far-right activity has increased nearly five times since June 2016 – tripling in the space of a year.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, despite the inherent flaws within the current PREVENT strategy, the number of far-right referrals has increased by 36% between the year 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Research conducted by Queen Mary's University published in 2019 examined sympathies for violent protest and terrorism (SVPT) amongst different ethnic and religious groups.<sup>55</sup> It uncovered that twice as many white Britons (15%) expressed extremist sympathies with SVPT versus those of Pakistani origin (8%) and that 18% of Christians were found to hold extremist views, compared to 8% of Muslims.

Moreover, despite media coverage suggesting that Islamism inspires a large proportion of terrorist attacks, Europol figures show that less than 2% of all terrorist attacks across Europe were 'religiously motivated' between 2009-2013.<sup>56</sup> In reality, separatist and ethno-nationalist organisations pose a far more significant threat across EU countries.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, 87% of terrorist attacks in 2017 were perpetrated by such ethno-nationalist or separatist individuals or groups.<sup>58</sup>

While the murder of Jo Cox in 2016 and the attack at Finsbury Park in 2017 are arguably the most prominent examples of far-right violence in the recent UK context, they are by no means isolated incidences. Other examples over the past decade include, but are not limited to:

- 2009: Neil Lewington wanted to emulate his far-right heroes, including David Copeland and Oklahoma bomber Timothy McVeigh.<sup>59</sup> He was jailed for his plans to construct tennis ball shrapnel bombs to target Asian families, along with detonators and explosives. He is reported to have commented that "the only good P\*ki was a dead P\*ki".

53. Samuel Osborne, "Number of far-right terror attacks increases as overall deaths from terrorism fall, report finds", Independent, December 2018. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/global-terrorism-index-far-right-attacks-increase-overall-deaths-fall-institute-for-economics-peace-a8667031.html>.

54. Lizzie Dearden, "Number of far-right terrorists in UK prisons triples as arrests hit new record", Independent, June 2018. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/uk-prison-far-right-arrests-terrorists-conviction-national-action-a8398146.html>.

55. Lizzie Dearden, "White British people 'twice as likely to hold extremist views as people of Pakistani descent', Independent, March 2019. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/white-british-people-extremist-views-pakistani-research-a8822801.html>.

56. Beenish Ahmed, "Less Than 2 Percent Of Terrorist Attacks In The E.U. Are Religiously Motivated", Think Progress, January 2015. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://thinkprogress.org/less-than-2-percent-of-terrorist-attacks-in-the-e-u-are-religiously-motivated-ccc7d8ebdf6/#.vqfloh7s>.

57. "European Union Terrorism Situation And Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2016", 2016. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2016>.

58. Ibid.

59. "Neo-Nazi jailed indefinitely over racist bomb plot", The Telegraph, September 2009. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/6155880/Neo-Nazi-jailed-indefinitely-over-racist-bomb-plot.html>.



MUSLIMS  
OUT!!!

- 2013: Pavlo Lapshyn was jailed in 2013 for the murder of 82-year-old Mohammed Saleem and planting three bombs near mosques in Walsall, Tipton and Wolverhampton.<sup>60</sup> According to police, it was only because Lapshyn got the wrong time for Friday prayers that the blasts did not cause mass injuries.
- 2015: The neo-Nazi white supremacist, Zack Davies, was jailed after being radicalised online and using a claw hammer and machete to attack Dr Sarandev Bhambra in an attempt to decapitate him because he was Asian.<sup>61</sup>
- 2018: Jack Renshaw, an EDL supporter and former leader of the BNP youth wing attempted a plot to murder Rosie Cooper, MP, as part of his campaign to achieve a “white Britain by any means necessary”.<sup>62</sup> He stated that “The refugee problem is part of a bigger problem, it’s a symptom of a disease,” he added. “That disease is international Jewry. In World War Two, we took the wrong side... National Socialists there to remove Jewry from Europe once and for all. Instead, we let these parasites live among us.”
- 2019: In February an unnamed 33-year-old was arrested in West Yorkshire “as part of an investigation into suspected extreme right-wing activity”.<sup>63</sup>

When it comes to the vulnerability of mosques specifically, this could arguably be a result of their physical and visual representation of Islam, and their significance as a community hub for Muslim communities. Mosques visually and physically represent an identity that is often pitted against the perceived dominant group identity and is thus considered by some to be a threat to what it means to be British.

Parallel to physical attacks and threats directed at mosques, there is widespread use of harmful rhetoric specifically directed at Islamic institutions and buildings. This is particularly evident in anti-immigration and far-right protests,<sup>64</sup> which often have banners displayed with such slogans as “ban mosques” or “no more mosques”,<sup>65</sup> lest it become part of the “Islamification of Britain” process.<sup>66</sup>

In one instance, plans to build a mosque in Chipping Norton, were halted as an anonymous call alerted the landlord to threats to “burn it down”.<sup>67</sup>

In 2018, a man was jailed for posting Islamophobic messages online saying “‘It is time we started to fight back. The Government won’t do \*\*\*\* because of the PC brigade. Every time we have a terrorist attack, we should burn a mosque.”<sup>68</sup> This was followed by another post 3 hours later, which said: “To all the British murderers and serial killers out there, do us all a favour and concentrate on the Muslim community.”

Additionally, the “Punish a Muslim Day” letter gained notoriety in 2018 after it was distributed to mosques across the country with threatening messages such as “slaughtered very soon” and “P\*\*\* filth.”<sup>69</sup>

60. “Mosque bomber Pavlo Lapshyn given life for murder”, BBC News, October 2013. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-24675040>.

61. Brian Whelan, “National Action’s Zack Davies guilty of attempted murder”, Channel 4 News, June 2015. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.channel4.com/news/national-actions-zack-davies-guilty-of-attempted-murder>.

62. Lizzie Dearden, “National Action terror plot: How once-ridiculed BNP Youth leader planned neo-Nazi machete attack”, Independent, July 2018. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/national-action-terror-plot-jack-renshaw-bnp-edl-rosie-cooper-machete-dog-a8451126.html>.

63. “Police given more time to question terror suspect”, BBC News, February 2019. Accessed: 16th October 2019. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-47361054>.

64. “Islamophobia behind far-right rise in UK, report says”, BBC News, February 2019. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47280082>.

65. Peter Walker, “Ukip’s Gerard Batten reiterates his belief that Islam is a ‘death cult’”, The Guardian, February 2018. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/feb/18/ukip-gerard-batten-islam-muslims-quran>.

66. Dale Hurd, “Islamic Takeover: Why Mass Immigration Signals ‘the End of Britain’”, CBN News, March 2017. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2017/march/why-mass-immigration-may-mean-the-end-of-britain>.

67. Tom Jennings, “Plans for Chipping Norton mosque scrapped after threats”, Oxford Mail, February 2013. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10217776/plans-for-chipping-norton-mosque-scrapped-after-threats/>.

68. Tom Usher, “Man jailed for vile rants about burning down mosques and getting ‘revenge’”, Metro, July 2018. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://metro.co.uk/2018/07/01/man-jailed-after-posting-vile-rants-about-burning-down-mosques-and-getting-revenge-7674023/>.

69. “Lincoln man admits sending ‘Punish a Muslim Day’ letters”, BBC News, October 2018. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-45838506>.

With the threats facing Muslim institutions, it is important to examine current policies and procedures intended to protect them. As with the development of any social policy, the first step in addressing a problem is understanding it in terms of scale, origin, and consequences. Accurate data is central to that aim. However, there appears to be a disparity in how hate crimes against religious institutions are recorded between different police constabularies across the country. In response to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted by MEND which asked about hate crimes that targeted “mosques” and those that targeted “religious institutions”, a number of police forces responded that they do not record the data in a retrievable format. Other police forces responded that whilst they do record data for attacks targeting “religious institutions” they were unable to provide specific data in terms of breakdown for the particular religious institutions (i.e. mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras).

However, the data that could be retrieved shows that between 2013-2015 there were at least 138 attacks against mosques, and at least 200 reported attacks in 2016-2018. However, considering the disparity in how forces are recording this data, the actual number of attacks targeting mosque is likely to be many times the figures mentioned above. Without standardisation of how incidents are being recorded, it is very difficult to perform an accurate risk analysis that could be used to formulate funding strategies and protective policies to safeguard Islamic institutions.

Meanwhile, the Government commendably provides funds of £14million per year for synagogues and Jewish schools. However, with no regular funding for mosques, the last ‘Places of Worship Security Fund’ launched in 2016 provided only £2.4 million to be distributed across mosques, churches, temples, gurdwaras, and other institutions. While the Government has recently announced plans to increase the funding available to mosques for security, this must be accompanied by a comprehensive risk analysis in order to develop effective strategies and devise funding plans that are sufficient to address the threats that mosques face, and proportionate to the risk.

### **Policy Pledge:**

**4. Commit to financing mosque security in a manner that is proportional to risk, in line with what is already correctly provided to Jewish religious institutions.**





# Youth and Education

## A Young Age Demographic

Muslims have the youngest age profile of all religious groups in the UK,<sup>70</sup> with 33% aged fifteen or under and 48% below the age of twenty-five.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, Muslims account for 9% of babies and toddlers aged 0-4 years old.<sup>72</sup> The Census 2011 indicates that the overall Muslim population in England and Wales is 4.8%, while the Muslim youth population between 18-24 constitutes 6.2% of the general youth population within that age category. As such, Muslim youth have a huge potential to contribute positively to Britain's socio-economic life in the coming decades, particularly considering the creativity, innovation, and dynamism that is traditionally associated with younger generations. However, at the same time, policies and issues surrounding youth and schools will necessarily have a disproportionate impact upon Muslim communities due to their overrepresentation within young age demographics. Therefore, policy development and implementation must be sensitive to the needs of Muslim families.<sup>73</sup>

In particular, issues surrounding barriers to young Muslims' development must take into account religio-cultural factors. For example, university tuition fees are a concern for many young people across the UK. However, this barrier has an added layer of nuance when taking into account the desire of young Muslims to adhere to their religious beliefs in not paying interest, which is inherent in Government Student Loans. A solution in terms of offering Shariah compliant finance, also known as Alternative Student Finance (ASF), has been developed by the Government but has hitherto not been implemented.<sup>74</sup> We believe that the offering of Shariah-compliant student loans would not only encourage Muslim students from the UK who would otherwise be deterred from applying to university but would also be attractive to potential Muslim students from overseas.

### Policy Pledge:

#### **9. Commit to implementing Shariah-compliant student loans to encourage more British Muslim students to attend university.**

Islamophobia in the education system is a serious problem which impacts Muslim children and their development in a wide variety of ways. From being bullied explicitly in reference to their faith, to being stigmatised and reported to the PREVENT strategy for views they may hold, and to being interminably questioned on their apparent divergence from (thus far ill-defined) "British Values", Muslim children are struggling to navigate this complex maze. Meanwhile, controversies such as the alleged "Trojan Horse" affair and Amanda Spielman's recent proposals to question schoolgirls who wear the hijab highlight the obsessive scrutiny and problematisation of Muslims within the sphere of education. The impacts of these experiences can be long-term, damaging their ability to achieve success in the employment sphere and inhibiting their participation in wider civic society and the political arena.

There are four key areas that MEND believes are in need of address:

- Racially and religiously motivated bullying
- Religious rights in schools

70. "Ethnicity and religion by age," Office for National Statistics, accessed June 07, 2017, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/ethnicityandreligionbyage>.

71. "British Muslims in Numbers A Demographic, Socio-economic and Health profile of Muslims in Britain drawing on the 2011 Census," Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), accessed June 07, 2017, <http://www.mcb.org.uk/muslimstatistics/>.

72. Ami Sedghi, "Is it true there is a startling rise in the birthrate of British Muslims?," The Guardian, January 10, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/jan/10/rise-british-muslim-birthrate-the-times-census>.

73. Open Society Institute, "Muslims in the UK: Policies for Engaged Citizens," Open Society Foundations, 2005, <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/muslims-uk-policies-engaged-citizens>.

74. "Sharia-Compliant Student Finance," Hansard, accessed July 6, 2019, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2019-07-25/debates/EE789E3A-C4D8-4731-9FC4-B4DF2A6CE523/Sharia-CompliantStudentFinance>.

- Religious schools
- PREVENT in education

## Racially and Religiously Motivated Bullying

Muslim pupils frequently encounter worrying levels of religiously and racially motivated bullying. This is often particularly acute following episodes of violence and incidents such as the attack on Manchester Arena in May 2017. Childline has reported that it held over 2,500 counselling sessions for children concerned about race and faith-based bullying over the past three years. However, they noted a sharp increase in calls following attacks in London and Manchester in 2017. Children as young as nine reported being called terrorists and enduring abuse and threats of violence. Meanwhile, the charity also noted that girls who wear the hijab had frequently been victimised for their religious dress, with some expressing a desire to self-harm as a result of the cruel treatment they had received.<sup>75</sup>

Likewise, 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.<sup>76</sup>

A study from the NSPCC has found that children are attempting to whiten their skin in an effort to avoid being victims of abuse.<sup>77</sup> According to the NSPCC, this comes as racial abuse and bullying recorded by police of under-18s in the UK rose by 22% in three years, from 8,683 in 2015/16 to 9,752 in 2016/17, and finally to 10,571 in 2017/18.<sup>78</sup> This suggests that expressions of hate, such as Islamophobia, know no boundaries, and unless they are tackled in a targeted manner, they risk becoming embedded in all corners of society.

*A study from the NSPCC has found that children are attempting to whiten their skin in an effort to avoid being victims of abuse.*

Amongst the reports to the Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU), are cases such as that of a young boy who was attacked at his school by other boys using racial and Islamophobic slurs while being hit, kicked in the head, and receiving a black eye.<sup>79</sup> What made this incident even more worrying was the inaction of the school, to the point that the perpetrators of the violence were bold enough to continue taunting the victim in the school reception without being challenged. To help equip schools in protecting against this type of behaviour, school staff must have the appropriate training in place to enable them to deal with religiously and racially motivated bullying.

Incidents of identity-based bullying are likely to stifle the attainment potential of students and subsequently affect their future life chances. The capacity of teachers to deal with bullying incidents is, therefore, of vital importance so that schools are environments in which children may flourish and prosper, not ones that they fear or avoid. The Government should thus dedicate resources in building the capacity of teachers to tackle such issues, including through developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and other forms of hatred, as well as supporting community and school-led programmes that encourage cultural exchange between pupils of different racial, religious, ethnic, and other backgrounds.

Likewise, it is essential that school curriculums reflect the diversity and shared history of British society. It is only through the recognition of the legacy of the British Empire and the contributions of minority communities that a shared identity can be nurtured. Furthermore, it is important that the works and

<sup>75</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>. The Barriers to Challenging Racism and Promoting Race Equality in England's Schools, report, Show Racism the Red Card, June 21, 2011, <https://www.teachers.org.uk/files/srrc-barriers-final.PDF>.

<sup>77</sup>. "Race hate crimes against children reach 3 year high", NSPCC, May 28, 2019, accessed 05.09.2019, <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/race-hate-crimes-against-children-reach-3-year-high/>

<sup>78</sup>. "Children whitening skin to avoid racial hate crime, NSPCC finds", BBC, May 30, 2019, accessed 05.09.2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48458850>

<sup>79</sup>. MEND, Islamophobia Response Unit: Case No. UM16/20



figures studied within our education system extend further than the traditional ethnocentric focus upon the achievements of largely white western men, and expands to encompass a broad spectrum of perspectives and voices. It is only through this decolonisation of education that a truly shared history can be developed and children can be prepared for life in a pluralistic society with a rich culture of dynamic perspectives, interests, and experiences. In creating this appreciation for a shared heritage, minorities cease to be the 'other' and, instead, are simply part of the 'us'.

### **Policy Pledge:**

**5. Commit to prioritising PSRE (Personal, Social and Religious Education) and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) within the national curriculum and ensure grassroots Muslim organisations are enlisted to assist in developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia.**

**6. Commit to supporting academic freedoms and initiatives to decolonise education, whilst giving greater emphasis within the national curriculum to shared histories and the contributions of minority communities in building our society.**

**7. Commit to developing training programmes for teachers focussed on tackling and addressing bullying based on race, religion, disability, or sexuality.**

## **Religious Rights in Schools**

Recent times have seen increased scrutiny of religious rights in schools. Over the past year, MEND's Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU) has noted a significant number of reports concerning the ability of Muslim students to access their rights to religious dress and prayer in particular.

### ***Hijab in Schools***

In November 2017, Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector of Education, raised concerns surrounding young Muslim girls being "sexualised" by wearing the hijab at a young age and announced plans to question primary school girls who wear them. The NEU subsequently condemned Ms Spielman for pursuing a "draconian" and "Islamophobic" agenda against British Muslim children, which may lead to ramifications across the wider society. The NEU's motion warned that Ms Spielman's comments "have ramifications beyond the school gates and must be seen in the context of increased attacks on the Muslim community and particular stereotypes about Muslim girls and Muslim women". It also states: "These statements could have a negative impact on local communities and lead to further marginalisation of, and increased physical and verbal attacks on, Muslim women and girls".<sup>80</sup>

The policy was also criticised by over 1,000 teachers, academics, and campaigners who signed an open letter describing Ofsted's decision to question Muslim primary school girls as "discriminatory and institutionally racist". The letter stated that the schools' inspectorate had provided no evidence for the claim that "some children wearing the hijab creates an environment where 'school children are expected to wear the hijab'", nor Ms Spielman's claims that girls wearing hijab "could be interpreted as

80. George, Martin. 2018. "WATCH: Teachers Condemn 'Islamophobic' Hijab Comments From Ofsted Chief Inspector". Tes. <https://www.tes.com/news/watch-teachers-condemn-islamophobic-hijab-comments-ofsted-chief-inspector>.

sexualisation”.<sup>81</sup> Ms Spielman’s rhetoric and recommendations point towards a misunderstanding of the meaning and significance of the hijab for Muslim women. Indeed, the hijab is purely a religious symbol and is no more an indication of extremism than is the crucifix, the skull cap or the turban. The danger of influential public figures conflating religious dress with extremism without any evidence is to malign practising Muslim women and girls and to marginalise them within public life – which is Islamophobia manifested through public exclusion.

Further highlighted in the letter was the negative sentiment created around the choice of Muslim women and girls to choose the way they dress. The letter stated that Ofsted’s decision sends the message to Muslim women that “the way they choose to dress and the decisions they make in raising their children are subject to a level of scrutiny different to that applied to non-Muslim parents”.

Others, including the Runnymede Trust, have raised concerns that such a stance emanating from Ofsted may promote the introduction of discriminatory policies against Muslim children more widely.<sup>82</sup> The danger of this is particularly apparent when one considers the application of PREVENT in schools and the resulting discriminatory scrutiny its application places upon Muslim children. Ofsted’s support of discriminatory practices further institutionalises and provides tacit official consent for policies that overwhelmingly stigmatise and marginalise the Muslim identities of students.

While there can be no doubt that no woman should be forced to wear any item of clothing against her will, when it is her choice to wear the hijab, that right of choice is protected by her human rights to manifest and practise her religion. In the case of children, the responsibility and prerogative to secure this right to religious belief falls within the remit of parental rights and responsibilities. The right to wear religious clothing is protected by Article 9 of both the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act, 1998, which protects the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This includes the freedom to manifest one’s religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. Wearing the hijab is part of that religious observance. This right to dress is also enshrined within Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which gives ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities the right to enjoy their own culture. While some may question the religious requirements for a girl to wear the hijab before puberty, it is accepted that wearing it is also a cultural practice, and therefore, protected by the individual’s right to cultural identity.

Stigmatising young Muslim girls for wearing the hijab can only serve to fuel the perception that Muslim women are negatively judged and stereotyped on the basis of the clothes they wear, as opposed to the skills, qualities, and talents they have to offer.

### *Prayer in Schools*

In recent times, the IRU has been approached by around a dozen students across the country requesting support in accessing prayer space in schools. The provision of a multi-faith prayer space is relatively simple to facilitate and has wide-reaching benefits to both students and the school environment. With prayer as an integral principle of Islamic faith and practice, facilitating this observance allows Muslim students to develop their religious identities with confidence and feel secure in their positions as members of society. However, the benefits of a multi-faith prayer space are not restricted to Muslim children, but also contribute towards the healthy religious identity formation for the students of all faiths who may choose to access it.

Moreover, studies have repeatedly demonstrated the value of meditation, mindfulness, and contemplative practice for young people in combatting stress, improving social and academic skills, and generally promoting mental wellbeing. The University of Surrey found that participants who engaged in mindfulness showed a 58% reduction in anxiety and a 40% reduction in perceived stress.<sup>83</sup>

81. Gani, Aisha. 2017. “Teachers And Academics Say Making School Inspectors Ask Children About Their Hijabs Is “Racist””. Buzzfeed. [https://www.buzzfeed.com/aishagani/teachers-and-academics-hijab-ofsted?utm\\_term=.gvrWeaQJ1#.rjKj7AnRB](https://www.buzzfeed.com/aishagani/teachers-and-academics-hijab-ofsted?utm_term=.gvrWeaQJ1#.rjKj7AnRB).

82. Richardson, Hannah. 2018. “Extremists Trying To ‘Pervert Education’”. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-42902864>.

83. Querstret, Dawn, Mark Cropley, and Chris Fife-Schaw. 2018. “The Effects Of An Online Mindfulness Intervention On Perceived Stress, Depression And Anxiety In A Non-Clinical Sample: A Randomised Waitlist Control Trial”. *Mindfulness* 9 (6): 1825-1836.

Examples of good practice are numerous. Atkinson Road Primary Academy,<sup>84</sup> a non-faith school in Newcastle opened its first multi-faith prayer room in late 2016. The inspiration for the room came from a young Muslim pupil who needed to pray on the first day of school but was upset because the direction of Mecca was unclear. The room is equipped with prayer provisions for different faiths and includes bibles, rosary beads, skullcaps, hijabs and prayer mats. The room is intended for use during break and lunchtimes. Pupils at the school stated that “it’s a very nice thing for everybody”. Multi-faith rooms allow students of all faiths to practise their religion and have space for quiet reflection, which dramatically benefits their self-development.

Similarly, Leytonstone School,<sup>85</sup> a secondary school in East London, welcomes all students to use their prayer facilities for quiet reflection and operates a ‘prayer club’ for Muslim students to pray with a sermon delivered on Fridays by a member of staff.

The Public Sector Equality Duty, created by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force on 5 April 2011 and applies to public authorities listed in Schedule 19 of the act (e.g. local authorities, Further Education and Higher Education bodies, schools, health bodies, police, fire and transport authorities, government departments), as well as public, private, or voluntary organisations carrying out public functions. In the exercise of their functions, these institutions must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any other unlawful conduct in the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and,
- Foster good relations.<sup>86</sup>

As such, in their efforts to advance equality and foster good relations, schools are required to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people with protected characteristics due to having that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics that are different from people who do not have that characteristic; and,
- Encourage protected groups to participate in public life and in any other activity where participation is disproportionately low.

Simple accommodations, such as providing prayer space, are therefore important steps in fulfilling this Public Sector Equality Duty and encouraging Muslim students to fully engage with public life through encouraging security in their identity and belonging.

## *Representation*

Perhaps part of the reason for the controversies surrounding Muslim children in schools can be explained by the narrow spectrum of voices that are often engaged with in devising such policies. Rather than engaging with a broad range of Muslim organisations and voices, the Government has traditionally insisted on dealing with a handpicked minority who already support a priori policy positions. Consequently, think-tanks and NGOs which do not possess the confidence of British Muslims have exercised considerable influence in shaping public policies, thus resulting in policies that do not necessarily reflect the interests of communities and subsequent feelings of alienation and frustration amongst British Muslims.

This approach to engagement can often be found mirrored in the approach of Ofsted and schools

84. Hodgson, Barbara. 2019. “See Inside A School’s Prayer Room - Thought To Be The Region’s First”. Nechronicle. <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/see-inside-newcastles-schools-prayer-12277449>.

85. Leytonstone School. 2018. “Prayer Room - Leytonstone School”. Leytonstone School. <http://www.leytonstoneschool.org/our-students/student-services/prayer-room/>.

86. The Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>



themselves. In order to fully understand the concerns, perspectives, and impacts surrounding specific issues, a broad range of voices must be contracted. Failure to do so can only lead to the exclusion of communities in favour of a singular understanding that may not be the most widely meaningful or applicable. Ofsted's stance on hijab in schools is arguably a good example of this failure to engage with a broad spectrum of voices. In this instance, Amanda Spielman announced the policy after meeting Amina Lone from the little known Social Action Research Foundation<sup>87</sup>, and following the publication of a letter in the Sunday Times signed by Lone and Sara Khan (who was then co-director of Inspire and has since been appointed as the Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism), Stephen Evans (National Secular Society) and Tehmina Kazi (British Muslims for Secular Democracy).<sup>88</sup> Therefore, the narrative informing Ms Spielman's development of this policy had been provided by groups and individuals who perhaps hold more secular views than what may be found in a random sampling of the British Muslim population, and who have specific understandings and opinions surrounding the hijab that are not necessarily reflective of the attitudes of the wider British Muslim population.

Ms Spielman's failure to consult with mainstream grassroots organisations such as MEND or the MCB prior to formulating such guidance is an example of a failure to engage with representative, critical, and marginalised voices within policy development. Such a lack of engagement can only lead to a skewing in the understanding of Ofsted and their subsequent approach to the issue. Considering the vast diversity within the British Muslim population, meaningful policies can only be secured through consultations that reflect this diversity. Ultimately, a lack of consultation can only lead to a lack of representation which produces institutionally Islamophobic policies, practices, and procedures.

Supporting cultural and religious expression plays a vital role in encouraging students to develop secure and healthy religio-cultural identities and encourages them to engage confidently as social actors as they mature. Schools are important environments for nurturing and encouraging students' robust sense of self. As such, simple accommodations, such as facilitating religious dress and prayer, are highly constructive in supporting student development.

### Policy Pledge:

**21. Commit to the preservation of human rights and the protection of minority rights, including, but not limited to, the rights to religious slaughter, male circumcision, and the wearing of religious dress or symbols as currently enshrined within UK legislation.**

**19. Commit to proactively engaging and consulting with representative and grassroots organisations within British Muslim communities, including but not limited to Muslim Engagement and Development.**

87. "Inspectors to question primary school girls who wear hijab", The Guardian, November 19, 2017, accessed 05.09.2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/nov/19/school-inspectors-to-question-primary-school-girls-who-wear-hijab>

88. "Hijab has no place in our primary schools", The Times, September 10, 2017, accessed 05.09.2019, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/letters-to-the-editor-6zv27zmc>

## Religious Schools

Since the first wave of Muslim migrants began bringing their wives and children to the UK, Muslims have invested in education as a means of raising the aspirations and opportunities for their families and the wider community. The first Muslim school, Darul Uloom Al-Arabiya Al-Islamia was opened in Lancashire in 1979, but it took another 18 years for the first state-funded Muslim school, Islamia Primary School, to open in London in 1997.<sup>89</sup> The progress of Muslim schools in recent years has been noteworthy, with many schools achieving excellent results and national accolades. Tauheedul Islam Boys and Girls Schools in Blackburn, run by the Tauheedul Educational Trust, were ranked first and second in the country in 2016 by the Government's Progress 8 measures. This means that the schools were the highest rated for improving pupils' attainment across the whole country.<sup>90</sup> In more recent data from 2019, the top three secondary schools on Progress 8 measures were all Muslim; Taheedul Islam Girls' High School in Blackburn, Eden Boys' School in Birmingham, and Eden Girls School in Coventry.<sup>91</sup>

Despite the overwhelming achievements of many of these schools, Islamic schools have frequently been the topic of intense scrutiny. This has intensified in the wake of the infamous Trojan Horse affair in 2014; ostensibly a plot to 'Islamify' several state schools in Birmingham, which was widely reported in the national media. However, there was no such plot and the affair was largely used as a vehicle to justify an expansion of the Government's counter-extremism agenda.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, a Parliamentary Committee concluded that "no evidence of extremism or radicalisation, apart from a single isolated incident, was found by any of the inquiries and there was no evidence of a sustained plot nor of a similar situation pertaining elsewhere in the country".<sup>93</sup> The Trojan Horse Affair is thus one of the best examples of structural Islamophobia in recent years.

Considering the heightened attention and scrutiny given to Islamic schools, it is also noteworthy that the actual number of Muslim children attending such schools is comparatively tiny. In 2013, the Association of Muslim Schools estimated that 95% of Muslim pupils attend mainstream state schools, with just 5% attending state-funded or independent Muslim schools.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, considering the small number of Muslim children attending such schools, the media hysteria that often surrounds religious schools seems disproportionate when understood in the context of how many children actually attend them.

### Policy Pledge:

#### **8. Commit to supporting faith school provisions in the state sector for Muslim pupils and parents.**

## PREVENT in Education

PREVENT has been heavily criticised by experts, academics, activists, and politicians across all sectors of public life. The concerns primarily centre around its lack of evidentiary basis leading to inadequate training, discriminatory application and the marginalisation of Muslims. Since the largest proportion of referrals to PREVENT emerge from the education sector (32% of all referrals in 2016/17<sup>95</sup> and 33% of all

89. Serving Muslim Schools | Serving Future Generations, report, Association of Muslim Schools UK, December 2013, accessed May 10, 2018, <http://ams-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/AMS-Brochure.pdf>.

90. Richard Adams, "Two Blackburn Faith Schools Top Charts for GCSE Progress," The Guardian, October 13, 2016, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/oct/13/two-blackburn-faith-schools-top-charts-gcse-progress-tauheedul-islam>.

91. "All Schools and Colleges in England - GOV.UK," Find and compare schools in England (UK Government), accessed October 23, 2019, <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=phase&geographic=all&region=0&phase=secondary&for=secondary>.

92. John Holmwood, "Countering Extremism in British Schools? The truth about the Birmingham Trojan Horse Affair", Policy Press, 2017.

93. "Extremism in schools: the Trojan Horse affair Seventh Report of Session 2014–15", House of Commons Education Select Committee, (London: The Stationary Office, 2015), accessed 21.06.2018, <http://dera.ioc.ac.uk/22429/>

94. "Serving Muslim schools | Serving future generations."

95. "Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2016 to March 2017", Home Office, Statistical Bulletin 06/18, March 27, 2018, accessed 11.06.2018, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/694002/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2016-mar2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/694002/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2016-mar2017.pdf)





referrals in 2017/18),<sup>96</sup> the impact of PREVENT on the learning and development of young people is of primary concern. While the problems inherent within the strategy are discussed within this manifesto's section on Counter-Terror and Security, it is worthy at this point to explore some of the specific impacts of PREVENT within the context of education.

### *Conflicts with Safeguarding*

PREVENT causes grey areas in safeguarding. Ordinarily within safeguarding, it is the welfare of the individual person in question that is of concern because you're trying to protect that person. However, within the duties of PREVENT, the aim is to protect the state from that person. This creates confusion in how to approach safeguarding needs. Research into safeguarding in the NHS found that less than half of practitioners thought that PREVENT was a "genuine safeguarding procedure".<sup>97</sup> As concluded by the civil rights campaigners, Liberty, "requiring teachers and others in sensitive positions of trust to report those with dissenting views risks undermining professional obligations of confidentiality, sewing mistrust and pushing those with grievances further underground."<sup>98</sup>

### *A Lack of Trust in the Classroom*

The classroom environment is predicated upon trust. If students feel that they are being spied upon by their teachers, this destroys the relationship of trust that is so important. Aside from the obvious damage that this has upon the student's ability to learn, if students do not feel that they can ask questions to their teachers, there is a danger that they may resort to finding answers online, where a wide range of false information can be found.

### *Creating a Pre-Criminal Space*

Children require encouragement and nurturing to flourish and achieve their potential. However, the pre-criminal space that is created by PREVENT stigmatises students, thereby potentially damaging their self-confidence and their confidence in societal structures and institutions.

### *Schoolyard Bullying*

As previously mentioned, the racially and religiously motivated bullying that Muslim children are confronted by is acutely concerning. Schools should not be required to enact policies that serve to securitise and stigmatise students further. Counter-terror strategies infiltrating the school environment and the pre-criminal space created by PREVENT can only result in exacerbating this situation.

### *Hindrance to Learning and Development*

Schools should be environments where students feel safe, confident and supported. Therefore, the aforementioned concerns obviously have a high potential to severely impact the way in which children perceive and interact with their education; whether that be through asking questions and participating in debates, engaging in extra-curricular activities and responsibilities, involving themselves in activism and critical thinking, having the confidence to engage in public speaking, or having the motivation to achieve their potential.

### *Impacts in Universities*

In 2017, the National Union of Students (NUS) launched a report into the experience of Muslim students in British universities.<sup>99</sup> The report concluded that "Prevent is a key issue for respondents' ability to

96. "Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2017 to March 2018", Home Office, Statistical Bulletin 06/18, December 13, 2018, accessed 05.09.2019, <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2018/12/13/factsheet-prevent-and-channel-statistics-2017-2018/>

97. Dr Charlotte Heath-Kelly & Dr Erzsebet Strausz, "Counterterrorism in the NHS: Evaluating Prevent Duty Safeguarding in the NHS", December 2018. Accessed: 16th October 2019. <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/counterterrorismminthenhs/>.

98. "Liberty's Second Reading briefing on the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill..." p. 25.

99. "The experience of Muslim students in 2017-18", NUS, accessed 29.05.2018, [https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/41267/29d43267ae2f2f0906450a27487fed36/The\\_Experience\\_of\\_Muslim\\_Students\\_in\\_2017-18.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1527604654&Signature=5loqW0HKBDTFvttKJCeSaU85FJpA%3D](https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/41267/29d43267ae2f2f0906450a27487fed36/The_Experience_of_Muslim_Students_in_2017-18.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1527604654&Signature=5loqW0HKBDTFvttKJCeSaU85FJpA%3D)

engage meaningfully with the structures of their institutions, unions and NUS, in particular around democratic engagement. It is particularly notable that being affected by Prevent has a negative impact on respondents' engagement with political debates. This negative impact persists whether or not respondents articulated that fear around Prevent was the cause. This correlation demonstrates the chilling effect of Prevent, and that being affected by Prevent accompanies an erosion in trust of institutions who have responsibility to combat Islamophobia."<sup>100</sup> Thus, this highlights several key problems with the implementation of PREVENT in university settings:

### *Impacts on Free-Speech*

Universities are intended to be centres of critical debate and learning. As such, the freedom to express ideas and explore arguments is integral to this mission. Indeed, universities' duties with respect to free speech are reflected in the Education Act 1986,<sup>101</sup> the Education Reform Act 1988,<sup>102</sup> the Human Rights Act 1998,<sup>103</sup> and the Equality Act 2010.<sup>104</sup> However, the requisites of the PREVENT duty undermines these principles as speakers and topics of discussion become regulated. Moreover, Muslim students have reported a reluctance to engage with certain discussions due to a fear they will be referred to PREVENT. According to the NUS report, one-third of surveyed students reported being negatively affected by PREVENT. This included having been referred to authorities under the scheme, having organised events that were cancelled or significantly changed because of it (30% of those affected) or having disengaged from political debate specifically due to concerns around being reported under PREVENT.<sup>105</sup>

### *Limiting Political Engagement*

The NUS report noted the potential of PREVENT to deter students from political engagement. According to the findings, 43% of those who reported being affected by PREVENT felt unable to express their views or be themselves, and 30% do not feel comfortable attending NUS events.

### *Being Used as a Tool to Shut Down Opposing Voices*

According to the Department of Education at the University of Oxford, "Criticising government policy, expression of support for specific groups, identifying causal relations between policies, processes and events, subjecting public arguments to evaluation and critique – these are all legitimate aspects of academic work. They also contribute to public and political debate."<sup>106</sup> Therefore, it is clear by all academic standards that, in voicing and debating concerns, students perform their duty both as academics and as engaged members of civil society.

However, there are organisations such as Student Rights (a project of the Henry Jackson Society), who present the criticisms of Muslim students – especially those in connection with counter-terror or Palestinian rights – as threats to security. Furthermore, Student Rights has been accused of performing "witch hunts" against Islamic societies and using the arguments of PREVENT to attack societies and events that host speakers with whom they disagree and subsequently label as 'extremist'. At the same time, Student Rights have simultaneously opposed no-platforming policies directed at far-right speakers, such as the BNP.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, the use of PREVENT by organisations such as Student Rights in excluding Muslim voices from legitimate debates cannot be ignored within the wider context of institutional Islamophobia within the application of security strategies.

100. "The experience of Muslim students in 2017-18", NUS, accessed 29.05.2018, [https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/41267/29d43267ae2f2f0906450a27487fcd36/The\\_Experience\\_of\\_Muslim\\_Students\\_in\\_2017-18.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNO&Expires=1527604654&Signature=5loqW0HKBdTFvkJcSaU85FJpA%3D](https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/41267/29d43267ae2f2f0906450a27487fcd36/The_Experience_of_Muslim_Students_in_2017-18.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNO&Expires=1527604654&Signature=5loqW0HKBdTFvkJcSaU85FJpA%3D)

101. "Education Act 1986", available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/40>

102. "Education Reform Act 1988", available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/contents>

103. "Human Rights Act 1998", available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42>

104. "Equality Act 2010", available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

105. "The experience of Muslim students in 2017-18", NUS, accessed 29.05.2018, [https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/41267/29d43267ae2f2f0906450a27487fcd36/The\\_Experience\\_of\\_Muslim\\_Students\\_in\\_2017-18.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNO&Expires=1527604654&Signature=5loqW0HKBdTFvkJcSaU85FJpA%3D](https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/41267/29d43267ae2f2f0906450a27487fcd36/The_Experience_of_Muslim_Students_in_2017-18.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNO&Expires=1527604654&Signature=5loqW0HKBdTFvkJcSaU85FJpA%3D)

106. "Academic Freedom and Values", Oxford University Department of Education, accessed June 20, 2018, <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/about-us/academic-freedom-and-values/>.

107. Emma Fox, "Censorship on campus must be thwarted from every angle", The Henry Jackson Society. Accessed: 16th October 2019. <https://henryjacksonsociety.org/news/censorship-on-campus-must-be-thwarted-from-every-angle/>.

MEND is of the firm belief that the PREVENT duty should be repealed and welcomes the independent review of PREVENT as an important first step in tackling the detrimental impact of ill-conceived counter-terror strategies that hinder Muslims' abilities to fully enjoy their social, civic, religious, political, and economic rights.

Lord Carlile has been appointed as Independent Reviewer, and whilst questions have been raised as to the appropriateness his appointment to the role,<sup>108</sup> it is nonetheless imperative that he and his team are truly independent, credible, and will be afforded access to any data or materials in the true spirit of openness and transparency. The review must engage with all stakeholders, including grassroots Muslim organisations. Furthermore, the terms of reference for such a review must include an examination of all possible causes for becoming drawn to politically motivated violence, including the role of foreign policy.

### **Policy Pledge:**

**17. Commit to independently reviewing all counter-terrorism legislation enacted since 2000, with a view to curbing the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties.**

108. Lizzie Dearden, "Home Office faces legal challenge over appointment of 'biased' reviewer of Prevent counter-extremism programme", Independent, August 2019. Accessed: 13th September 2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-legal-challenge-prevent-counter-extremism-lord-carlile-a9083486.html>





# Economic Exclusion: Islamophobia in the Labour Market

## Muslims in the Labour Market

Numerous studies in recent years have demonstrated the failure of Muslims to progress and reach levels of success in the workplace which their non-Muslim counterparts enjoy. These studies have pointed to a combination of Islamophobia, racism, and discrimination as reasons for Muslims to be less likely to be in work; less likely to be in skilled and professional occupations; and less likely to break through the glass ceiling to access top-level executive positions. Indeed, only 6% of Muslims in the workplace are in higher managerial, administrative, and professional occupations, compared to 10% of the overall population.<sup>109</sup>

Studies have also shown that Muslims have been disproportionately confined to unskilled professions or jobs with limited opportunities for progression.<sup>110</sup> Census data shows that, while a fifth of people are employed in the highest category of socio-economic classifications, such as higher managerial and higher professional occupations, this proportion falls to just 1 in 8 for Muslims. Additionally, while only 4% of the general adult population had never worked, this figure was five times higher for Muslims, with 21% of Muslim adults having never worked.

The Government's Social Mobility Commission, chaired by former Labour minister, Alan Milburn, cited a number of barriers to success for Muslims in the employment sphere, including ethnic minority sounding names being less likely to be offered interviews and Muslims feeling forced to work "10 times as hard" as their white counterparts in order to achieve equivalent levels of success.<sup>111</sup> Employer attitudes have also been given as a reason for failure to progress in the workplace in research by BBC "Inside Out", which found that CVs submitted under a non-Muslim name were three times more likely to be offered an interview than those with a Muslim name.<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile, the National Equality Panel previously found that Muslims receive, on average, 13-21% less pay than their white Christian counterparts with equivalent qualifications.<sup>113</sup>

MEND undertook a survey of over 1000 British Muslims in 2016 and found that 29% felt that they had been discriminated against when turned down for a job, and over a third felt that they had been discriminated against in seeking a promotion.<sup>114</sup>

The above findings as a whole are particularly disappointing given that academics found a strong work ethic and high resilience among Muslims, which "resulted in impressive results in education".<sup>115</sup> Unfortunately, these achievements are not translated into the workplace, with previous data showing that only 20% of Muslim adults were in full-time employment, compared to 35% of the general population.<sup>116</sup>

## Ethnic Discrimination

The Government published its revised Race Equality Audit in March 2018, amalgamating research and data from various sectors to shine a light on the disparities ethnic minorities face in the UK. The Race Audit showed that while 74% of people from white ethnic groups were employed in 2016, only 64% of those from other ethnic groups were similarly employed. This means that the difference in the employment rate for ethnic minorities compared with the overall population, also known as the "employment rate

109. "Young Muslims in the UK Face Enormous Social Mobility Barriers," GOV.UK, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/young-muslims-in-the-uk-face-enormous-social-mobility-barriers>.

110. Roger Dobson, "British Muslims face worst job discrimination of any minority group, according to research", Independent, November 30, 2014, accessed June 12, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-muslims-face-worst-job-discrimination-of-any-minority-group-9893211.html>.

111. Anushka Asthana, "Islamophobia Holding Back UK Muslims in Workplace, Study Finds," The Guardian, September 07, 2017, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/sep/07/islamophobia-holding-back-uk-muslims-in-workplace-study-finds>.

112. Zack Adesina and Oana Marocico, "Is It Easier to Get a Job If You're Adam or Mohamed?" BBC News, February 06, 2017, accessed May 10, 2018, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-38751307>.

113. John Hills et al, "An Anatomy of Economic Inequality in the UK, report, National Equality Panel, January 2010, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28344/1/CASEREport60.pdf>.

114. MEND (2016) Tackling racism and employment discrimination in the UK

115. Anushka Asthana, "Islamophobia holding back UK Muslims in workplace, study finds", The Guardian, September 2017. Accessed: 16th October 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/sep/07/islamophobia-holding-back-uk-muslims-in-workplace-study-finds>.

116. Ibid.

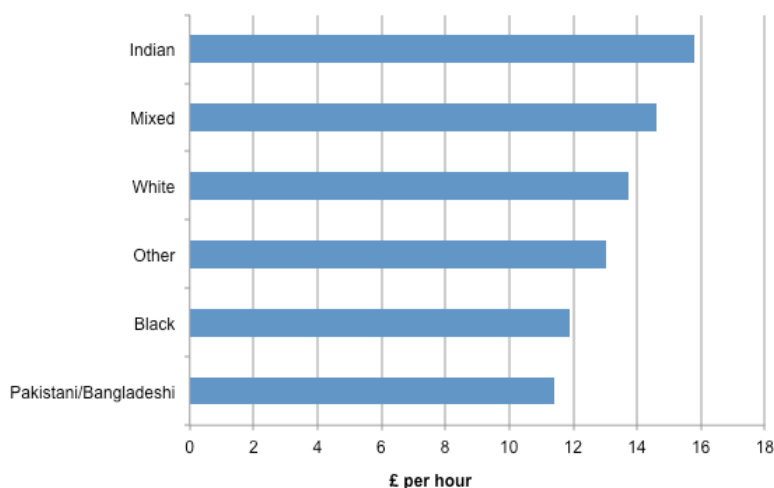
gap”, was ten percentage points.<sup>117</sup> This represents a slow improvement from the 15 percentage point gap recorded over ten years previously, in 2004, but highlights how much intervention is still required to give people from BAME backgrounds the opportunity to both enter the workplace and then succeed in fulfilling their potential.

*The Race Equality Audit also showed that people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicity suffered from the highest levels of unemployment and low pay*

The Race Equality Audit also showed that people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicity suffered from the highest levels of unemployment and low pay.<sup>118</sup> Pakistani and Bangladeshi people were also the most likely to be unemployed. Indeed, 11% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi people were unemployed in 2016, almost three times the rate (4%) of unemployment amongst white British people.<sup>119</sup> Meanwhile, amongst all minorities, Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers were more likely to be concentrated in the three lowest-skilled occupation groups, with more than 2 in 5 Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers in these lower-skilled occupations, compared to 1 in 4 of white workers.

Bangladeshi and Pakistani employees also earned the lowest average hourly pay; £11.42, compared to £13.75 per hour received by their white counterparts. Interestingly, the report attests that the “average hourly pay (before deductions) for employees in the Pakistani or Bangladeshi group was £11.42 in the last three months of 2016, which was £4.39 per hour less than Indian employees.”<sup>120</sup> While many socio-economic factors may contribute to this disparity, it is an interesting observation and suggests a need to examine the reasons that it exists critically. Certainly, the main difference between Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi groups is not ethnic, but religious. Therefore, research is needed to assess whether Islamophobia is a factor in lower hourly wages, whether this is through discrimination in terms of access to training, access to employment, or access to promotion.

**Figure 5.3: Average (mean) hourly gross pay by ethnicity UK, Oct-Dec 2016**



Cabinet Office, *Race Disparity Audit*, October 2017, accessed June 12, 2018, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/686071/Revised\\_RDA\\_report\\_March\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686071/Revised_RDA_report_March_2018.pdf).

117. “Employment,” GOV.UK Ethnicity Facts and Figures, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/employment/employment/latest>.

118. Cabinet Office, *Race Disparity Audit*, October 2017, accessed June 12, 2018, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/686071/Revised\\_RDA\\_report\\_March\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686071/Revised_RDA_report_March_2018.pdf).

119. “Findings of ‘Race Disparity Audit’ Call for Action against Racial Inequality in Britain.” Muslim Engagement and Development. November 17, 2017. Accessed June 12, 2018. <https://mend.org.uk/news/findings-race-disparity-audit-call-action-racial-inequality-britain/>.

120. Ibid.



## Gendered Discrimination

Research has also found that Muslim women face greater difficulty in being accepted in the workplace. The Social Mobility Commission noted how this adversity was amplified for Muslim women wearing the hijab. Researchers found that women were confronted with situations ranging from “assumptions they were forced to wear the headscarf to jokes and casual comments in the workplace about Muslims”. Muslim workers were also faced with “a feeling of a need to apologise and explain” every time a terror attack occurred.<sup>121</sup>

In 2016, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee stated that Muslim women face a *triple penalty* in the employment sphere due to being women, being from an ethnic minority background, and for being Muslim. Another study found that 1 in 4 employers admitted to being reluctant to hire Muslim women, due to concerns they would prioritise their family commitments above professional duties.<sup>122</sup>

One of the more disturbing revelations from research into the difficulties ethnic minority women face in entering employment was that 1 in 8 Pakistani women had been illegally asked about marriage and family aspirations in job interviews, compared to 1 in 30 white women, demonstrating the levels of preconceived bias and racially and religiously shaped assumptions that Muslim women face.<sup>123</sup>

Discrimination against Muslim women also continues once they enter the workplace. Research conducted by MEND in 2016 revealed that more than 60% of Muslim women who wear a hijab felt they had been treated differently at work due to religious discrimination.<sup>124</sup>

## Evidence from the IRU

Employment-based discrimination is the largest area of our discrimination work at the IRU. 60% of our Islamophobic discrimination reports are from those who have been mistreated at work because of their faith.

We have received a variety of employment discrimination reports at the IRU. Some include:

- A Muslim teacher who was falsely accused of gender segregating a classroom. The IRU supported him in taking the case to an employment tribunal and secured him £5,000 as a settlement.<sup>125</sup>
- A Muslim candidate was asked in a job interview if he would consider becoming an Imam and what he thought of Muslim converts. The interviewer then continued to state that she believes two staff members were crazy for converting to Islam.<sup>126</sup>

The impacts of this form of discrimination on victims can be long-lasting. Many victims report to us that they suffer a loss of confidence in the workplace, diminished job prospects, and a desire to work in more diverse work settings.

It is clear that in order for Muslims, and Muslim women in particular, to progress with their careers, changes are required at both employer and government levels in order to remove barriers and give Muslims the opportunities to achieve their career aspirations.

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<sup>121</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>. Siobhan Fenton, “6 Charts Which Show the Employment Barriers Faced by British Muslims,” The Independent, August 11, 2016, accessed May 10, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/muslims-more-likely-to-be-unemployed-than-any-other-social-group-in-the-uk-mps-warn-a7185451.html>.

<sup>123</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>. Tackling Racism and Employment Discrimination in the UK, Presentation, MEND (2016).

<sup>125</sup>. MEND, Islamophobia Response Unit: Case No. GY41/21

<sup>126</sup>. MEND, Islamophobia Response Unit: Case No. CZ67/11



### **Policy Pledge:**

**10. Commit to tackling religious, racial and gendered discrimination in the workplace through targeted interventions at all stages of recruitment, retention and promotion.**

**11. Commit to the use of name-blind applications and targeted interventions within employment aimed at tackling the triple penalty and improving access to employment for British Muslim women specifically.**

**12. Commit to supporting employers to recognise and accommodate religious festivals and religious observance within the workplace, including the provision of halal meat, prayer rooms, and flexible work hours during Ramadan.**

AMOPHOBIA IN BRITAIN

# MEDIA NEGATIVITY

MUSLIM CONTRIBUTION TO BRITAIN

## MUSLIM INVESTMENT

### IN THE UK

*“one of the best ways to sell newspapers...is to raise issues of fear... pick a group which is an ‘other’ group...at the moment a good one is Muslims”.*



# Media and Broadcasting

## Media Representation as a Barrier to Civic Engagement

In conducting research for our submission to the House of Lords Select Committee inquiry into citizenship and civic engagement,<sup>127</sup> MEND noted that one of the most significant barriers faced by Muslim communities was felt to be a toxic atmosphere of hatred that is fuelled and maintained by the effects of stereotyping, misrepresentation, and stigmatising discourse in print and online media.

Indeed, studies have shown that, with 21 negative references to Muslims within the British press for every single neutral or positive reference,<sup>128</sup> the media plays an integral role in spreading prejudice, stereotypes, and xenophobic views of British Muslims. These negative representations of Muslims are incredibly detrimental to community cohesion and the subsequent ability of British Muslims to fully participate and engage as equal members of society.

In the fast-paced world in which we live, the majority of the public lacks the time and resources to go out of their way to thoroughly research, critically analyse, and evaluate every article that they read. Therefore, the British press has considerable power over public narratives and perceptions surrounding important issues. As such, the repetitive negative misrepresentation of a particular community by newspapers inevitably results in distorted understandings and, ultimately, the fostering of prejudices. Indeed, numerous polls have shown that the British public derives much of its information from the media and is generally quite ill-informed about the Islamic faith and Muslims. A YouGov poll conducted in 2018 by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) found that of the 1,629 Britons surveyed, 90% had not been inside a mosque in recent years.<sup>129</sup> Another poll conducted by YouGov in 2002 found that of the Britons surveyed, 74% knew “nothing or next to nothing about Islam” and 64% stated that what they did know was “acquired through the media”.<sup>130</sup> MEND’s commissioned ComRes poll, 2018, found that the majority of Britons also agreed that the mainstream media was a key source in perpetuating Islamophobia in our society.

Considering the overly negative representation of minorities and British Muslims within the British press (which will be discussed further below), the media’s significant role in forming public understanding has detrimental impacts which are acutely felt by minority social, ethnic, and religious communities, and Muslims in particular. What should perhaps be even more concerning is that negative perceptions are arguably often being fed to the public in a calculated method to drive profit. This was noted by the Chair of the Ethics Council at the National Union of Journalists, Professor Chris Frost, who highlighted to the Home Affairs Select Committee during an evidence session in 2018 that “one of the best ways to sell newspapers...is to raise issues of fear...pick a group which is an ‘other’ group...at the moment a good one is Muslims”.<sup>131</sup>

## Evidence of Islamophobia in the British Press

The prevalence of Islamophobia within the British press has been highlighted by several studies, including that of Paul Baker, Tony McEnery, and Costas Gabrielatos.<sup>132</sup> In conducting a discourse analysis on over 200,000 newspaper articles from 11 newspapers mentioning “Islam” or “Muslims”, this study highlighted the frequency with which Muslims and Islam were associated with conflict, with “Islam” and “terror” co-occurring in more than one-third (37.9%) of the texts analysed. This led to the authors concluding that “[the] most salient finding is that the British Press most frequently positions Islam and

127. “MEND submission to the House of Lords Select Committee Hearing on Citizenship and Civic Engagement”, MEND, September 8, 2017, accessed 20.06.2018, [https://mend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MEND-Submission-to-the-House-of-Lords-Select-Committee-Hearing-on-Citizenship-and-Civil-Engagement\\_v1.pdf](https://mend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MEND-Submission-to-the-House-of-Lords-Select-Committee-Hearing-on-Citizenship-and-Civil-Engagement_v1.pdf)

128. See Baker, Paul, Costas Gabrielatos, and Tony McEnery. Discourse analysis and media attitudes: the representation of Islam in the British Press. Cambridge: University Press, 2013.

129. “90% of people haven’t been inside a mosque – change that this weekend!” Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), February 13, 2018, accessed 20.06.2018, <http://www.mcb.org.uk/90-of-people-havent-been-inside-a-mosque-change-that-this-weekend/>

130. Chris Allen, “A review of the evidence relating to the representation of Muslims and Islam in the British media”, University of Birmingham, October 24, 2012, accessed 20.06.2018, <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/IASS/news-events/MEDIA-ChrisAllen-APPGEvidence-Oct2012.pdf>

131. “Oral Evidence: Hate crime and its violent consequences”, Home Affairs Select Committee, February 2018. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/oral/78630.pdf>

132. Paul Baker, Costas Gabrielatos and Tony McEnery, Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).



Muslims in stories or contexts that relate to conflict”.<sup>133</sup>

Similarly, another study by Cardiff University found that the bulk of coverage on British Muslims was focussed on “Muslims as a threat (in relation to terrorism), a problem (in terms of differences in values) or both (Muslim extremism in general)”. The study noted that in more than a quarter of the articles investigated, Islam was posed as being “dangerous, backward or irrational” and being in contrast to ‘British Values’.<sup>134</sup>

Studies have also demonstrated that within media discourse Muslim men and women are consistently presented as homogenous and unitary groups to fit a particular narrative that portrays the former as misogynistic, angry, and violent extremists and the latter as passive, oppressed victims. Referring once again to the study conducted by Baker, McEnery and Gabrielatos, the authors made a number of interesting observations on the portrayal of Muslim women in the media. They found that the veil was the most frequent topic that was directly associated with Muslim women, with a total of 9,681 references to the word veil.<sup>135</sup> According to the data, the most frequent construction is of Muslim women being forced to wear the veil, thereby fuelling the stereotype that Muslim women are lacking in agency and are oppressed by their male relatives.<sup>136</sup>

Another significant study was performed by the Centre for Media Monitoring which analysed stories from 31 online media platforms and five broadcasters, over the last quarter of 2018.<sup>137</sup> The report analysed 10,931 articles and found that 59% of all articles examined associated Muslims with negative behaviours.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, over one third of all articles that were analysed “misrepresented or generalised about Muslims”.<sup>139</sup> They also noted that the *Daily Mail Australia* had the “highest proportion of articles” that were rated by the authors to be “very biased”.<sup>140</sup>

This media creates a hostile image of British Muslims and minorities, thus sowing Islamophobia, xenophobia, and racism into the milieu of British society. Notable tabloid publications have therefore developed an infamous reputation for publishing controversial, xenophobic, and Islamophobic stories, including *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail*; both being singled out for criticism by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI).<sup>141</sup> The ECRI accused the *Daily Mail*, of playing a “prominent role in encouraging prejudice” against vulnerable groups, whilst also reporting that both the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* “are responsible for most of the offensive, discriminatory and provocative terminology”. Concluding that “hate speech in some traditional media continues to be a serious problem”,<sup>142</sup> the report highlighted articles such as the *Sun*’s “Rescue boats? I’d use gunships to stop migrants”, in which the columnist, Katie Hopkins, likened migrants to cockroaches, and also highlighted *The Sun*’s front-page headline “1 in 5 Brit Muslims’ sympathy for jihadis” which was subsequently found to be wholly inaccurate and a forced retraction was issued. Furthermore, in 2017, the *Daily Mail* was banned as a reliable source on Wikipedia due to its “reputation for poor fact checking and sensationalism”.<sup>143</sup>

Also highlighting the role of certain elements of the British press in fuelling moral panic, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) similarly pointed to the questionable journalism of the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail*, arguing that, “The two right wing tabloids in our sample, the *Daily Mail* and *Sun*, were unlike anything else in our study... what really differentiated these two titles was their aggressive editorialising around threat themes, and in particular how they presented refugee and migrants as a **burden on Britain’s** welfare state. Both papers also featured humanitarian themes at a much lower level

133. Baker, Paul, Costas Gabrielatos, and Tony McEnery. *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

134. Kerry Moore, Paul Mason and Justin Lewis, “Images of Islam in the UK: The Representation of British Muslims in the National Print News Media 2000-2008”, Cardiff University, July 7, 2008, accessed 20.06.2018, <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/53005/1/08channel4-dispatches.pdf>

135. Ibid.

136. Ibid.

137. “State of Media Reporting on Islam & Muslims”, Centre for Media Monitoring, 2019. Accessed: 13th September 2019. <https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CfMM-Quarterly-Report.pdf>

138. Ibid.


139. Ibid.

140. Ibid.

141. “ECRI Report On The United Kingdom”, Council of Europe, October 4, 2016, accessed 20.12.2017, [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/united\\_kingdom/gbr-cbc-v-2016-038-eng.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/united_kingdom/gbr-cbc-v-2016-038-eng.pdf)

142. “ECRI Report On The United Kingdom”, Council of Europe, October 4, 2016, accessed 20.12.2017, [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/united\\_kingdom/gbr-cbc-v-2016-038-eng.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/united_kingdom/gbr-cbc-v-2016-038-eng.pdf)

143. Jackson, Jasper. “Wikipedia bans *Daily Mail* as ‘unreliable’ source.” *The Guardian*. February 8, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/fcb/08/wikipedia-bans-daily-mail-as-unreliable-source-for-website>.



*Studies have also demonstrated that within media discourse Muslim men and women are consistently presented as homogenous and unitary groups to fit a particular narrative that portrays the former as misogynistic, angry, and violent extremists and the latter as passive, oppressed victims.*

than any other newspapers in our study. Overall, this meant that the Sun and the Daily Mail exhibited both a hostility, and a lack of empathy with refugees and migrants that was unique.”<sup>144</sup>

However, the Sun and the Daily Mail are reflective of a wider problem. Indeed, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Al-Hussein, drew similar conclusions in 2015, when he noted that “decades of sustained and unrestrained anti-foreigner abuse, misinformation and distortion” were identified as a significant problem in the British press. He called on all European countries to take a firmer line on racism and xenophobia which “under the guise of freedom of expression, are being allowed to feed a vicious cycle of vilification, intolerance and politicisation of migrants, as well as of marginalised European minorities”.<sup>145</sup>

## A Case Study: The Times

In June 2019, an academic report entitled *Unmasked* by Brian Cathcart and Paddy French was published highlighting potentially unethical and anti-Muslim editorial practices at the Times.<sup>146</sup> The report examined three ‘scandals’ covered by the award-winning journalist, Andrew Norfolk, who is considered one of Britain’s leading journalists, writing for one of Britain’s most respected newspapers.

The authors discovered that:

- These ‘scandals’ did not happen as reported,
- Some of the allegations were simply untrue,
- The author sacrificed “basic journalistic standards” in creating the stories.

The report concludes that the evidence indicating a potential Islamophobic editorial process within the Times necessitates an independent investigation. The primary findings of the report was that, over a period of “15 months”, Andrew Norfolk had published three stories “purporting to expose scandals”, however, the authors argue that “examination of the facts leads [the authors] to conclude that the scandals Norfolk described did not occur”. The three cases used as evidence include a story from August 2017, “Christian child forced into Muslim foster care”; a story from July 2018, “Terror police boost MP’s security over criticism of Asian sex gangs”; and, a story from November 2018, “Jailed rapist given chance to see his victim’s child”.

The first relates to a story in which Mr Norfolk claimed that the failure of Tower Hamlets Council resulted in a “white Christian child” being “forced into Muslim foster care”. The authors of the report note that “every relevant, credible authority now agrees that the claims against the carers were unfounded and that they treated the girl well, while it is clear that the child in question was actually far more familiar with a Muslim home environment than a Christian one”.

In the second story, Mr Norfolk targeted a human rights charity, *Just Yorkshire*, and claimed that a report by them had resulted in Labour MP for Rotherham, Ms Sarah Champion, receiving death threats. The charity – most of whose trustees were Muslims – was forced to close because of the allegations. It has since been found that the Times had no evidence to substantiate their claim that the report had led to death threats being invoked.

In the third story, Mr Norfolk accused Rotherham Council of transgressing its safeguarding duties by seeking to allow a rapist the “chance to see his victim’s child”. The authors of the new report note that “all official bodies now agree that the council followed court rules that apply to all local authorities”. This meant that the council had to notify the father of the child of care proceedings; the council did not encourage the father to participate in the process.

144. “Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries”, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), accessed 20.12.2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/operations/56bb369c9/press-coverage-refugee-migrant-crisis-eu-content-analysis-five-european.html> p. 253.

145. “UN Human Rights Chief urges U.K. to tackle tabloid hate speech, after migrants called “cockroaches””, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15885>.

146. Brian Cathcart and Paddy French, “Unmasked: Andrew Norfolk, The Times Newspaper and anti-Muslim reporting”, MEND, June 2019. Accessed: 19/07/2019. [https://www.mend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Norfolk\\_Report\\_TCE\\_T2\\_all.pdf](https://www.mend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Norfolk_Report_TCE_T2_all.pdf).



The authors of the report, both experienced journalists, concluded that the Times needs to initiate an independent investigation into the conduct of Norfolk and the poor journalistic standards within such stories. To date, not only has the Times refused to countenance such an investigation but has remarkably defended Norfolk's reporting, ironically stating that "honest reporting needs defending" and suggesting that any criticism is politically motivated.<sup>147</sup> Such blasé attitudes towards journalistic standards and promotion of Islamophobic stories at such a widely read broadsheet publication as the Times epitomises the Islamophobic biases within parts of the British Press.

## The Impacts of Media Negativity on Muslim Communities

The level of bias, misinformation, and distortion within reporting on British Muslims has fostered a sense of distrust of media institutions amongst sections of Muslim communities, and for many individuals has led to a disengagement from traditional media. Moreover, it creates a sense of suspicion and unwillingness to engage even with journalists who may genuinely wish to represent a nuanced understanding of issues facing these communities honestly.

This frustration in the face of misrepresentations and stereotypes is also often accompanied by a sense of frustration and insecurity with regards to British Muslims' perceived place and value in society. Furthermore, the culmination of distorted images and the ultimate impact on public understanding of Muslims and Islam can only lead to severe damage to the relationships between Muslims and wider communities. MEND's ComRes poll found that more than a third of Britons thought the British Muslim population was around four times its actual size.<sup>148</sup> Such misunderstandings fuelled by media distortion have a variety of consequences, including, but not limited to:

### *Hate Crime*

The Home Affairs Select Committee on Hate Crime and its Violent Consequences has specifically looked into the impact of media representation of minority communities and hate crime levels, recognising the unambiguous link. Rt Hon Baroness Warsi of Dewsbury, giving evidence on the impact of media representation on hate crime, noted that "There is evidence to show that this does play into the way people react on the street, the kind of things people quote back when they engage in hate crime".<sup>149</sup>

### *Discrimination*

As the section in this manifesto outlining Islamophobia in the employment sector demonstrates, stereotypes of Muslims infiltrate the biases of employers and result in patterns of workplace discrimination that has a vastly detrimental impact to Muslims' ability to fully realise their potential in the labour market.

### *Marginalisation*

The fuelling of public misconceptions surrounding scapegoated communities (in this case, Muslims) often culminates in public misunderstandings and calls for restrictions, punitive laws, and the curtailment of their civil liberties and freedoms.<sup>150</sup> This can readily be seen in issues surrounding areas such as education (debates surrounding hijab in schools), integration (including issues inherent within the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government's "Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper"), and security (such as the Counter-Terror and Border Security Act 2019), all of which are discussed in separate sections of this manifesto.

147. The Times, "The Times view on media campaigners and Andrew Norfolk: Press Gang", June 27, 2019, access 05.09.2019 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-media-campaigners-and-andrew-norfolk-press-gang-7fd352sds>

148. "MEND Islamophobia poll October 2018", ComRes, October 2018. Accessed: 16th October 2019. <https://www.comresglobal.com/polls/mend-islamophobia-poll-october-2018/>.

149. "Oral Evidence: Hate crime and its violent consequences", Home Affairs Committee, February 20, 2018, accessed 20.06.2018, <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/oral/78630.pdf>

150. Richardson, "Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism..."

## A Lack of Accountability

In July 2011, following revelations about phone hacking and other illegal practices committed by the News of The World, the Leveson Inquiry was established to look into the culture, practices and ethics of the press. Amongst his findings, Sir Brian Leveson concluded that the existing Press Complaints Commission (PCC) was unfit for purpose. As such, Leveson recommended the establishment of a new regulatory body to hold the media to account which was independent and free from both government and press influence. He further stated that this regulator must include a group complaints provision. This is amongst the recommendations that have yet to be enacted. Under the current primary regulator (which is now IPSO), only the individual affected by a published story can make a complaint about discrimination. In practice, this means that there is no protection against whole groups – such as Muslims or refugees – being demonised or stereotyped.

However, not only were the Leveson recommendations never fully implemented but in 2018, the Government announced that it would be discarding the second part of the Leveson Inquiry into the relationship between journalists and the police. The Royal Charter was signed in a cross-party agreement and, therefore, the Government should not unilaterally change a policy that was the product of cross-party and cross-house agreement involving compromises from their opponents. Furthermore, the provisions underpinning the Charter in the Crime and Courts Act 2013 (some of which – including Section 40 – have not been triggered) were passed overwhelmingly by a vote in the Commons<sup>151</sup> and approved in the House of Lords without division. As such, it is an abuse of Parliament to change policy through non-commencement of legislation, rather than by seeking its repeal.

## IPSO failings

Despite Leveson's recommendations, the regulator which arose to replace the PCC was the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). IPSO fails to be Leveson-compliant and routinely fails to investigate breaches, fails to demonstrate adequate professionalism in dealing with complaints, and fails to impose punishments that are proportionate to the significance of the story contested. Dr Martin Moore, Director of the Media Standards Trust, giving evidence to the Lords Select Committee that held an inquiry into press regulation in 2015, highlighted that IPSO failed the majority of the recommendations put forward by the Leveson report and that "the [recommendations] IPSO failed on were really fundamental, with regard to independence, arbitration and complaints".<sup>152</sup> This criticism was echoed and supplemented by Hugh Tomlinson QC, media law expert and Chair of the Board of Hacked Off, who noted that "[IPSO's] constitution is exactly what Sir Brian Leveson said should not be done; it is under the control of an industry-funding body that has a veto over the way in which it works".<sup>153</sup>

## Ineffective Remedies

The corrections demanded by IPSO for breaches in the editor's code of practice are typically severely delayed and far less prominent than the original inaccuracy. This is especially so where the whole story is false, or the headline is part of the breach. A case in point is that IPSO has never ordered a front-page correction for a front-page breach in a national newspaper.

An example of this can be found in IPSO's dealing with the Sun in 2015. In November 2015, the Sun published a front-page story with the misleading and inflammatory headline *1 in 5 Brit Muslims' sympathy for jihadis*. This article was run ten days after the Bataclan terrorist attack, during a time when British and European Muslims were experiencing heightened suspicion and hostility. This article was proven to have been radically inaccurate and misrepresentative of the poll it was citing. The polling company

<sup>151</sup> "Daily Hansard – Debate", *Commons Debate, Parliament Publications and Debates*, accessed 10.01.2018, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130318/debtext/130318-0003.htm#13031836000001>

<sup>152</sup> "Press Regulation: Where are we now", Lords Select Committee, accessed 21.05.2019 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldselect/ldcomuni/135/13506.htm#note87>

<sup>153</sup> "Press Regulation: where are we now?", Lords Select Committee on Communication. Accessed on: 19/07/2019. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldselect/ldcomuni/135/13506.htm>

itself condemned the way that the Sun interpreted and used its findings.<sup>154</sup>

Four months after complaints were brought to IPSO, the publication was required to print a short piece buried on page 2 with the vague title “Ipso ruling is upheld”, in which the nature of the complaint was obscured. Given the original headline’s prominence and its deeply misleading and damaging potential impact, this failure to demand a correction of equal prominence in a timely fashion did nothing to mitigate the social damage of the piece, nor did it encourage improved future journalistic practices.

### Inaction

Between October 2014 and September 2018, IPSO had received 22,652 complaints under clause 1 (accuracy) and 16,310 complaints under clause 12 (discrimination). Of these, only 5.6% (1,269) of complaints under clause 1 have been resolved or a breach determined, and 0.5% (73) of complaints under clause 12.

In particular, of the 0.5% complaints resolved for clause 12, **only two complaints (0.012%) have resulted in the publication of an adjudication**, none have resulted in the publication of a correction. Moreover, 92.1% of complaints under clause 1 and 99.2% of complaints under clause 12 have been rejected, not pursued or considered to be outside the remit of the clause.

Action	Clause 1	Clause 12
Breach – action offered by publication	121	1
Breach – publication of adjudication	46	2
Breach – sanction: publication of correction	32	0
No breach – after investigation	520	65
Resolved – IPSO mediation	329	25
Resolved – directly with publication	747	46
Rejection	12,191	6,794
Not pursued	2,852	770
Outside remit	5,814	8,607
Total complaints	22,652	16,310

Rulings and resolution statements, IPSO. Accessed: November 2018.

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/rulings-and-resolution-statements/?expression=&publications=&clauses=34%2C45&outcomes=&startDate=2018%2F5%2F01&endDate=2019%2F5%2F31>

IPSO frequently fails to act upon complaints in a way that seems to defy both common sense and their duty to regulation. One of the cases explored by Cathcart and French in the aforementioned *Unmasked* report fits precisely into this category. In August 2017, the Times printed a story headlined *Christian child forced into Muslim foster care*. The article made a series of misleading statements and provided an inaccurate account of the situation. For example, the report falsely claimed that the child was fostered by a family who “don’t speak English”,



154. “Statement on Survation’s Poll of Muslims for The Sun”, Survation, accessed 10.01.2017, <http://survation.com/statement-on-survations-poll-of-muslims-for-the-sun/>



while the London Borough of Tower Hamlets stated that the child was fostered by an “English-speaking family of mixed race in this temporary placement”. In response, MEND submitted eight individual concerns to IPSO regarding the inaccurate and distorted content of the article under Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Editors’ Code. IPSO stated that it would not investigate any of these complaints due to its concern about the effect investigating the facts of the case would have on the child. This justification for refusal to investigate is unreasonable, given that the Times had already published stories on the subject, and given the extensive wider public debate that had subsequently occurred. For IPSO, taking no action to verify the information published is an abdication of its responsibility and demonstrates an inadequate commitment to upholding press standards and ethics.

## Lack of Impartiality

Lack of impartiality is an issue that is well highlighted in the case of Fatima Manji. In July 2016, Fatima Manji reported on the Nice terror attacks for Channel Four. In response, Kelvin MacKenzie wrote a piece in the Sun attacking Channel Four for having a Muslim woman wearing a hijab while reporting on a terrorist incident. When Manji and ITN filed an IPSO complaint on the basis of discrimination, harassment, and inaccuracy, IPSO rejected the complaint,<sup>155</sup> stating that MacKenzie’s comment that Islam “was clearly a violent religion” was his opinion and could not, therefore, be deemed inaccurate.

Meanwhile, IPSO board member and former political editor of the Sun, Trevor Kavanagh, publicly defended MacKenzie and stated that Manji had “made a fool of herself.”<sup>156</sup> A cross-party group of MPs and peers subsequently wrote to IPSO, expressing concern that Kavanagh made these comments while sitting on the regulator’s board. IPSO responded that while Kavanagh sits on its board, he is not a member of the Complaints Committee that passes judgements and therefore “has no involvement in any rulings made by IPSO. The views expressed by Mr Kavanagh in his column following the IPSO ruling on Manji v The Sun were made in a personal capacity and do not represent the view of IPSO.”<sup>157</sup> This response from IPSO brings into question its ability to function as a genuinely independent and effective regulatory body.



155. Decision of the Complaints Committee 05935-16 Manji v The Sun, IPSO, accessed 10.01.2018, <https://www.ipso.co.uk/rulings-and-resolution-statements/ruling/?id=05935-16>

156. "Gary Lineker forgets that we're not racist - we just don't like being conned, *The Sun*, October 24, 2016, <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2035066/gary-lineker-forgets-that-were-not-racist-we-just-dont-like-being-conned/>

157. "Response to Trevor Kavanagh's column in yesterday's Sun", IPSO, accessed 10.01.2018, <https://www.ipso.co.uk/news-press-releases/press-releases/response-to-trevor-kavanagh-s-column-in-yesterday-s-sun/>

## Lack of Oversight for Opinion Articles:

The media plays a valuable role in providing a platform for healthy democratic debate. However, there must be a distinction between fact and opinion. Comment pieces within print and online media news outlets are frequently replete with heavily distorted or invented ‘facts’ or opinions that are presented as fact.<sup>158</sup> As such, content that presents itself as objectively authoritative must be held to the same requirements of accuracy as any other news item.



quite rightly, not be tolerated and one would hope it to be instantly condemned, with both publisher and author experiencing severe punitive measures.



To give one example of a current vacuum in protection against opinions masquerading as news, pieces titled as ‘opinion’ are currently exempt from many of the clauses contained in IPSO’s editors’ code of practice. Combined with a lack of protection against group discrimination, this lack of oversight has led to authors such as Trevor Kavanagh being permitted to discuss the “Muslim Problem” (evoking memories of Nazi-like rhetoric); no remedy for the Fatima Manji case (see above); and Rod Liddle being free to argue that “there is not nearly enough Islamophobia within the Tory party”<sup>159</sup> and to urge suicide bombers to blow themselves up in Tower Hamlets, which he described as being a “decent distance from where the rest of us live”.<sup>160</sup> It is also worth considering the ramifications of such statements if they were applied to other communities. For example, it is unlikely that a newspaper would be free to discuss the “Jewish Problem”, nor argue that “there is not nearly enough anti-Semitism within the Tory party”. Were a newspaper to print such vitriol, it would,

### Policy Pledge:

**13. Commit to the full implementation of the Royal Charter on press regulation.**

**14. Commit to the commencement of the second part of the Leveson Inquiry, including an investigation into the prevalence of Islamophobia within the media.**

<sup>158</sup> See Kelvin MacKenzie’s comments on a “clearly violent religion” in the Fatima Manji case below.

<sup>159</sup> Rod Liddle, “Why Boris is wrong about burkas”, The Spectator, August 2018. Accessed: 13th September 2019. <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2018/08/why-boris-is-wrong-about-burkas/>.

<sup>160</sup> “Sunday Times’ Rod Liddle suggests extremists should blow themselves up in London’s Tower Hamlets away ‘from where the rest of us live.’ The Independent, accessed 21.05.2019 <https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/TowerHamlets>

## Broadcasting

Media broadcasting is crucial in nurturing a nation's sense of shared identity, history, and social norms. It is the mirror through which society recognises and continually evaluates itself. With the consequent potential for societal cohesive benefit being so tremendous and indelible, it is essential that we construct, develop, and maintain popular images that are inclusive of our highly diverse and multicultural nation. The lack of inclusive images because of a lack of minority representation within broadcasting results in a vision which neglects segments of society and thus alienates and marginalises minority communities. One historical example of this is the blockbuster 2017 film *Dunkirk*, "that told the story of the mass evacuation of Allied soldiers in World War II, contained no non-white actors. It has thus been criticised for whitewashing the brave contribution of Muslim and black soldiers".<sup>161</sup>

Various studies have shown that there is a considerable lack of minority representation in the British film industry, with high levels of discrimination experienced by BAME individuals attempting to enter the industry and those within the industry. One study concerned with diversity within the British film industry and conducted by the CAMEo Research Institute at the University of Leicester,<sup>162</sup> found that BAME workers comprised 4.4% of the broadcasting workforce, compared to 13% of the UK population. This figure was even lower when considering BAME directors who were limited to 3.5%. Another study, by Grugulis & Stoyanova (2012), found that "members of ethnic minorities or working class were less likely to secure jobs and were often restricted in the jobs they held".<sup>163</sup> Numerous other studies corroborate these findings, giving rise to the conclusion that BAME individuals are heavily underrepresented, restricted to particular jobs and denied progression within the field.

These findings are paralleled in studies which have investigated minority representation in the television industry, with significant concern arising from the failure of broadcasters to monitor the diversity of their workforce adequately. A study by Ofcom, the UK's communication regulator, found that broadcasters surveyed were only able to provide ethnicity data on 81% of the industry's employees and religious data for only 33% of employees.<sup>164</sup> As there is a considerable lack of data monitoring on the contribution of minorities within the field, it is difficult to analyse the diversity of the industry accurately. Perhaps the only firm judgement one can make is that the procedures through which broadcasters are currently organising and collating data on diversity and minority representation are thoroughly inadequate. That said, there is still ample evidence to suggest that BAME groups are under-represented at particular levels within the TV industry. A study by Directors UK in 2015, noted that of the programmes sampled at the time only 1.5% were made by a BAME director.<sup>165</sup> Furthermore, the study also added that "analysis at sub-genre level revealed there are a number of areas where 0% of episodes have been made by a BAME director". This included genres such as sketch shows, children's comedy, reality, and period drama, amongst others. Therefore, the question is not one of whether or not there is a problem; instead, it is an issue of how it is being monitored, investigated, and tackled.

A study conducted from 2006-2016 found that of the British films produced in the period nearly 60% failed to cast a single Black actor.<sup>166</sup> In 2014, a number of British BAME actors and writers who had left the UK for international markets wrote an open letter to the heads of the British TV industry calling for greater diversity, with signatories including the likes of Idris Elba and David Oyelowo, who had travelled to the US to make their major breaks.<sup>167</sup>

161. Robert Fisk, "When you watch *Dunkirk*, remember that it's a whitewashed version which ignores the bravery of black and Muslim soldiers", *The Independent*, August 3, 2017, accessed 20.06.2018, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/dunkirk-france-1940-french-soldiers-algeria-commonwealth-white-wash-a7874501.html>

162. "Workforce Diversity in the UK Screen Sector: Evidence Review", Cameo Research Institute: Leicester, 2018, accessed 20.06.2018, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-workforce-diversity-in-uk-screen-sector-evidence-review-2018-03.pdf>

163. Irena Grugulis and Dimitrinka Stoyanova, "Social Capital and Networks in Film and TV: Jobs for the Boys?", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 33, Issue 10, 2012.


164. Diversity and Equal Opportunities in Television", OFCOM, September 14, 2017, accessed 20.06.2018, <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/information-for-industry/guidance/diversity/diversity-equal-opportunities-television>

165. "UK Television Adjusting the Colour Balance: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Directors in UK Television Production", Directors UK, accessed 20.06.2018, <https://d29dqe14uxvcr.cloudfront.net/uploads%2F1447243539508-os03d6qe4pmsra4i-7e96b125575ce06ca956559154962a0a%2FDirectors+UK+-+UK+Television%2C+Adjusting+the+Colour+Balance.pdf>

166. "New BFI research reveals representation of black..."

167. "Letter to BBC and other broadcasters: actors and writers call for action over diversity", *The Guardian*, August 20, 2014, accessed 20.06.2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/aug/20/bbc-broadcasters-open-letter-actors-writers-diversity-bame>



A professional video camera is shown from a side-on perspective, mounted on a rig. The camera's LCD monitor is flipped out and displays a woman with blonde hair standing in a library with bookshelves in the background. The camera body is black and features several control buttons and dials. A white cable is connected to the side of the camera. The background is blurred, showing more of the camera rig and some indistinct shapes.

*Within movies, it is easier  
to imagine individuals with  
superpowers than ‘just a  
normal Muslim’*

An excellent analysis of this lack of diversity has been produced by Mukti Jain Campion, who explores the reasons behind these issues based on interviews with over 100 media professionals and her own extensive experience in the industry. She argues that many factors underpin the lack of cultural diversity in this area, including conservative commissioners leading to “safe” conservative commissioning and a lack of BAME faces at a senior level, especially in senior creative and editorial roles. She cites challenges at recruiting and then retaining talented BAME professionals, and the problem of them leaving due to disillusionment, especially in large traditional organisations such as the BBC. The solution to the problems, she argues, lies in embedding the concept of “cultural intelligence”, which is defined as a “way of valuing diverse cultural knowledge and experience in programme-making”, and which includes sensitive and intelligent portrayal of marginalised groups, reflecting “authentic voices” from those groups, helping to understand others and, therefore, ourselves. She states that cultural intelligence needs to be built into each stage of programme development, including commissioning, production, scheduling, and promotion. She also advocates the use of cultural intelligence masterclasses to promote such a dialogue and instil change.<sup>168</sup>

Taking into account the lack of minority representation in the industry, this problem is exacerbated with the few BAME actors who do manage to break through the barriers being cast in stereotypical roles, with the BFI Creative Director, Heather Stewart, noting in 2016 that the “types of films in which they [BAME actors] have had leading roles suggests stereotyping.”<sup>169</sup> Therefore, the simultaneous absence of both minority representation and normalised images of minority communities means there is a persistent development of a broadcast narrative which either excludes or stereotypes minority communities.

Research conducted by BFI between 2006-2016 found that Black actors were highly unlikely to be cast into lead roles of dramas (255 out of 387 films failing to cast any black actor, 66%), comedies (178 out of 287, 62%) or thrillers (100 out of 169, 59%), but were very likely to be cast as lead in crime films (69 out of 107 films featured black actors, 65%), fantasy (24 out of 39, 61%) and musicals (8 out of 15, 53%).<sup>170</sup> The study stated that the most frequent themes of the productions in which Black actors were featured included “slavery, racism, colonialism, crime and gangs” and noted that this “suggests a pattern in which black actors are being cast mainly in stereotypical stories”. Another study by Sam Friedman and Dave O’Brien found that there was an “oversupply of leading roles for white, male, middle-class actors” and BAME actors were restricted to “largely socially caricatured roles”.<sup>171</sup>

Though it may be tempting to treat these figures as abstract and inconsequential to society, there is significant evidence highlighting the very tangible impact of the underrepresentation of minorities and the systemic inequalities prevalent in broadcast media. Repercussions of underrepresentation include the disenfranchisement of viewers from minority communities and the departure of actors from minority backgrounds to international markets.

Research conducted by Webber, a specialist research and insight consultancy, in 2016 found that audiences from minority communities were generally less likely to watch major TV channels compared to the general population, with the gap increasing if the particular channel demonstrates lower levels of on-screen diversity.<sup>172</sup>

The restricted roles available to BAME actors representing highly varied minority communities means that stereotypes bias the way society perceives these communities and how the community members perceive themselves. In 2011, a study, *Media Representations and Impact on the Lives of Black Men and Boys*, looked into the impact of stereotypical roles of Black males on “their actual life chances”.<sup>173</sup> The results demonstrated that the portrayals reinforced general antagonism towards Black males; reduced attention

168. Mukti Jain Campion, “Look who’s Talking. Cultural Diversity, Public Service Broadcasting and the National Conversation”, Nuffield College Oxford, October 2005, accessed 20.06.2018, <http://www.nuff.ox.ac.uk/guardian/lookwhostalking.pdf>

169. “New BFI research reveals representation of black actors in UK film over last 10 years”. BFI: 06/10/2016. Accessed on: 12/06/2018. <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-press-release-new-bfi-research-reveals-representation-of-black-actors-in-film-2016-10-06.pdf>.

170. “New BFI research reveals representation of black...”

171. Sam Friedman and Dave O’Brien, “Resistance and resignation: responses to typecasting in British acting”, *Cultural Sociology*, 2017, 11 (3), accessed 20.06.2018, [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/84231/1/Friedman\\_Resistance%20and%20resignation.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/84231/1/Friedman_Resistance%20and%20resignation.pdf)

172. Trevor Phillips, “British media: not quite black and white”, *Open Democracy*, March 2, 2016, accessed 20.06.2018, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourbeeb/trevor-phillips/british-tv-not-quite-black-and-white>

173. “Media Representations and Impact on the Lives of Black Men and Boys”, *The Opportunity Agenda*, October 2011, accessed 20.06.2018, <http://racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Media-Impact-onLives-of-Black-Men-and-Boys-OpportunityAgenda.pdf>

to structural and other big-picture factors; and exaggerated views related to criminality and violence associated with BAME communities. They further noted that the images resulted in BAME community members being “demoralised” and having “reduce[d] self-esteem”.<sup>174</sup>

One example of the limitation of Muslim characters to stereotypical roles can be seen in the popular BBC TV series, *The Bodyguard*, which was broadcast in 2018. The opening scene of the pilot episode reveals a female Muslim character wearing hijab, who is a would-be suicide bomber with explosives strapped to her. Interestingly, this character (Nadia) was played by a non-Muslim actress (Anjili Mohindra), whom herself commented that “I didn’t feel the hijab was completely necessary. I think the same message could have been made [without it].”<sup>175</sup>

The Riz Test – a project inspired by Riz Ahmed’s 2017 speech in the House of Commons<sup>176</sup> regarding on-screen diversity – sets out five criteria to analyse the broadcast representations of Muslims. If the film or TV programme features at least one character who is identifiably Muslim (by ethnicity, language, or clothing), it questions whether the character is:

- 1) Talking about, the victim of, or the perpetrator of terrorism?
- 2) Presented as irrationally angry?
- 3) Presented as superstitious, culturally backwards, or anti-modern?
- 4) Presented as a threat to a Western way of life?
- 5) If the character is male, is he presented as misogynistic? Alternatively, if female, is she presented as oppressed by her male counterparts?

If the answer to any of the above questions is yes, the film or episode fails the test.

It is initiatives such as these that are being pioneered in order to promote discussion and wider scrutiny of how minority communities are presented within popular discourse. The founders of the Riz Test argue that “the Riz Test is just a way of measuring Islamophobia in films”.<sup>177</sup> They argue that, within movies, it is easier to imagine individuals with superpowers than “just a normal Muslim”.<sup>178</sup>

### Policy Pledge:

#### **15. Support initiatives by the broadcasting industry to promote positive portrayals of Muslims in the media.**

<sup>174</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>175</sup>. Chris Harvey, “Bodyguard star Anjili Mohindra: ‘Nadia isn’t an Islamophobic stereotype – playing her was empowering’”, The Telegraph, September 2018. Accessed: 13th September 2019. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/0/bodyguard-staranjili-mohindra-nadia-isnt-islamophobic-stereotype/>

<sup>176</sup>. “Riz Ahmed warns Parliament that a lack of diversity in TV is leading people to Isis”, The Independent, March 4, 2017, accessed 06.09.2019 <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/riz-ahmed-warns-parliament-that-lack-of-diversity-in-tv-leads-people-to-isis-a7610861.html>

<sup>177</sup>. Salim Kassam, “The Riz Test: Challenging how Muslims are portrayed on screen”, The Muslim Vibe, March 2019. Accessed: 13th September 2019. <https://themuslimvibe.com/podcast/the-riz-test-challenging-how-muslims-are-portrayed-on-screen>.

<sup>178</sup>. Ibid.



# Crime, Policing, and the Criminal Justice System

Institutional Islamophobia and discriminatory practices ingrained within the Criminal Justice System require examination because of both their disruption to the lives of many Muslims and for their long-term consequences to their future social engagement as equal members of society. Institutional racism is not a new concept in the analysis of the workings of the Criminal Justice System. The 1999 Macpherson Inquiry, which was established to scrutinise the Metropolitan Police Service's investigation into Stephen Lawrence's murder, produced a critical report accusing the Metropolitan Police Service 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"<sup>179</sup> with interactions and trust between race groups and the police influenced by a high incidence of stop and search. The Macpherson report proposed 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.<sup>180</sup> While noteworthy and commendable steps have been made to improve equalities in the Criminal Justice System since the publication of the Macpherson report, Muslims and ethnic minorities remain over-represented. Therefore, Islamophobia must be examined as a mechanism potentially maintaining inequalities at all levels of the Criminal Justice System.

## Overrepresentation of Muslims and Minorities in the Criminal Justice System

In 2016, the Lammy Review exposed a high level of discrimination and a disproportionate representation of British Muslims in the Criminal Justice System. Indeed, despite making up just 14% of the population, BAME individuals constitute 25% of prisoners, while over 40% of young people in custody are from BAME backgrounds. Meanwhile, over the past decade, the number of Muslims in prison increased by over 48%, from 8,900 to 13,200. As such, Muslims make up 15% of the total prison population, while amounting to less than 5% of the general population.<sup>181</sup> Interestingly, as Lammy pointed out, this dramatic rise in the number of prisoners is not linked to terrorism offences, as only 175 Muslims were convicted of terrorism-related offences between 2001 and 2012.<sup>182</sup> Indeed, research shows that more than a quarter of all Muslims currently in prison have been incarcerated for drug offences, compared to 13% of all non-Muslim prisoners.<sup>183</sup>

At the time of the Macpherson report, the ratio of Black to White stops increased from 5 to 1 in 1999 to 8 to 1 in 2002.<sup>184</sup> Subsequent reports from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in 2010 and 2013,<sup>185</sup> as well as Home Office data from 2015/16,<sup>186</sup> showed that Black people were between six and 29 times more likely to be stopped than white people. Figures also showed that just 16% of stops led to an arrest, with 76% of stops resulting in "no further action".<sup>187</sup>

The detrimental impact of the stop and search powers can be observed in their effect on Muslim males. As 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."<sup>188</sup>

179. William Macpherson, The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, report, February 24, 1999, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277111/4262.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf)

180. Ibid.

181. "The Lammy Review: final report", Gov.uk, September 8, 2017, p. 3, accessed 23.10.2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report>

182. Ibid.

183. The Independent, March 20, 2018, accessed 05.09.2019 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/muslims-jailed-drug-offences-surge-england-wales-prison-population-drop-a8259466.html>

184. Ben Bowling, Alpa Parmar, and Coretta Phillips, 'Policing ethnic minority communities', Handbook of Policing, 2003, <http://thinkethnic.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Policing%20ethnic%20minority%20communities.pdf>

185. Stop and think: A critical review of the use of stop and search powers in England and Wales, report, Equality and Human Rights Commission, March 2010, [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/ehrc\\_stop\\_and\\_search\\_report.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/ehrc_stop_and_search_report.pdf)

186. Home Office, Police powers and procedures England and Wales year ending 31 March 2016, October 27, 2016, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/562977/police-powers-procedures-hosb1516.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562977/police-powers-procedures-hosb1516.pdf)

187. Home Office, Police powers and procedures England and Wales year ending 31 March 2016, October 27, 2016, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/562977/police-powers-procedures-hosb1516.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562977/police-powers-procedures-hosb1516.pdf)

188. Tufyal Choudhury and Helen Fenwick, The impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities, report, Equality and Human Rights Commission, May 12, 2011, <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-72-the-impact-of-counter-terrorismmeasures-on-muslim-communities.pdf>







## Explaining Overrepresentation

Over the last few decades, political discourse has led to a climate wherein Muslim identities have become increasingly securitised and viewed through the lens of counter-terror, violence, and threat. This has led to the public perception of a community 'at risk'. However, in reality, there are a number of structural issues that contribute towards creating the conditions for Muslims, and the BAME population more generally, to suffer from disproportionate representation in the Criminal Justice System.

### *Cultural Stereotypes*

According to Dr Zubaida Haque, a researcher on race disparity for the equalities think-tank, the Runnymede Trust, the increase in the representation of Muslims in the Criminal Justice System can only be explained as a result of "cultural stereotypes" and poverty. She suggests that the widespread Islamophobia that has developed throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has had an impact on the Criminal Justice System and the unconscious bias against Muslims across the whole spectrum of the justice system and its approach to Muslim individuals. Indeed, over the past decade, the public discourse on Muslims has been almost exclusively associated with crime, terrorism, and issues of integration, which creates the impression that young Muslims are less integrated, have less in common with their non-Muslim peers, and possess ambivalent loyalties.

### *Socio-Economic Challenges*

Considering the severe economic deprivation experienced by many Muslims (with nearly half living in the 10% of the most deprived areas in England and Wales)<sup>189</sup>, the increase of Muslim inmates should be seen not only as a result of discrimination but as a result of this socio-economic realities. Indeed, the Race Disparity Audit showed that 31% (or around 343,000) of the Pakistani population and 28% (or roughly 113,000) of the Bangladeshi population lived in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in England. All Black ethnic groups were also disproportionately more likely to live in the most deprived areas.<sup>190</sup> Research has further demonstrated that living in deprived neighbours has a negative spill-over effect on multiple aspects of life, including general well-being, education, employment, and crime.<sup>191</sup> The socio-economic issues faced by BAME individuals, and Muslims particularly, are critical to understanding and tackling criminality through meaningful policy development.

### *Homogeneity in the Criminal Justice System*

Another issue affecting the treatment and judgement of BAME individuals within the Criminal Justice System is a potential lack of understanding of the experiences of minorities. At the core of this problem is homogeneity and a lack of diversity within the system itself. According to the Government's Race Disparity Audit, in 2016, 6% of court judges who declared their ethnicity were from non-white ethnic groups. As pointed out by the research conducted by T2A Alliance, a senior probation officer emphasised the importance of a lack of diversity amongst magistrates: "I would argue whether you could even say a magistrate has been through any type of formal training. They are people from a particular background who won't understand the needs of ethnic minority communities."<sup>192</sup>

### *Lack of Understanding of British Muslim Diversity*

Muslims are often perceived as having a homogenous identity. Many working within the Criminal Justice System lack the understanding of the different Muslim communities, whether they are Somali or Pakistani, Shia or Sunni, or how their lives are affected if they live in different areas of the country. It is crucial to understand the rich diversity of intersectional experiences within Muslim communities

189. Muslim Council of Britain, 2015, accessed 05.09.2019 [http://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport\\_2015.pdf](http://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MCBCensusReport_2015.pdf)

190. "Race Disparity Audit Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website", Cabinet Office, October 2017 (revised February 2018), accessed June 21, 2018, <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/static/race-disparity-audit-summary-findings.pdf>

191. "Communities in recession: the impact on deprived neighbourhoods", Joseph Rowntree Foundation, October 2009, accessed 05.03.2018, <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/communities-recession-impact-neighbourhoods.pdf>

192. "Young Muslims on Trial", Maslaha, March 2016, accessed May 29, 2018, [https://www.t2a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Young\\_Muslims\\_on\\_Trial.pdf](https://www.t2a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Young_Muslims_on_Trial.pdf)



if holistic understandings of contributing factors to criminality are to be achieved and if meaningful rehabilitation strategies are to be devised.

The issue of the Criminal Justice System's perceived homogeneity of British Muslims is significant for a variety of reasons. Firstly, because it frames Muslims within the war on terror narrative, thus making the simplistic distinction between "bad" and "good". The Runnymede Trust points out that, "Muslim communities are constructed as 'suspect' through the frequent implicit and explicit juxtaposition of the terms 'law-abiding majority' and 'extremist minority' when discussing both sets of communities".<sup>193</sup> In the Criminal Justice System, this can result in discrimination occurring on the simple basis of prejudice deriving from the mainstream interpretation of what constitutes an acceptable interpretation of Islam.<sup>194</sup> Moreover, such a simplistic characterisation disregards other key factors that can lead to more equitable understandings and treatment within the Criminal Justice System, such as ethnicity, education, class, place, gender and political outlook. The failure to acknowledge the inherent difference among the many Muslim communities thus results in the inability to understand the proclivities and aspirations of young Muslims living in the UK. This not only results in a broad-brush application of the law but also in difficulties in addressing the root cause for criminality within these communities.<sup>195</sup> In short, "to ensure that everyone receives fair and equal treatment, it is critical to understand the needs of equality and minority groups and identify what separate provision may be required. *This is likely to be different not just across different protected characteristics but within them.* Indeed, one of the key things highlighted... was the importance of not assuming homogeneity amongst the needs of all individuals from a particular group."<sup>196</sup>

## Mistrust

The issues mentioned above combined with broader issues concerning ethnic and religious minorities' interactions and relationships with the state create a mutual feeling of distrust that has a profound impact on the lives of Muslims,<sup>197</sup> and has unavoidable repercussions in the relations between Muslims and the Criminal Justice System. For example, the justice system provides incentives for those who have committed crimes to admit guilt, such as potential reductions of sentences or access to interventions that keep them out of prison altogether. However, pleading "guilty" implies a level of trust between the accuser and the accused that many BAME individuals may not have due to a real or perceived disparity in the way they experience state institutions. As the Lammy Review suggested, "Many BAME defendants neither trust the advice that they are given, nor believe they will receive a fair hearing from magistrates" and are thus instinctively more prone to plea "not guilty" than their white counterparts.<sup>198</sup> However, this means that BAME defendants face harsher sentences if found guilty. While a concerted and durative effort to build trust between BAME groups and the Criminal Justice System needs to become a priority, the Criminal Justice System also needs to establish systems which facilitate greater intervention prior to a plea.<sup>199</sup>

A study published by *The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context* showed that white individuals had a higher degree of satisfaction with the outcomes received from the justice system, as well as with the legal processes and procedures. Conversely, citizens belonging to ethnic minorities perceived more unfairness in both cases.<sup>200</sup> This is due to the fact that societal discrimination, and specifically discrimination encountered within the Criminal Justice System itself, reduces the level of confidence that individuals have in it. The issue of trust in the Criminal Justice System is important

193. Kjartan Páll Sveinsson, "Criminal Justice v. Racial Justice Minority ethnic overrepresentation in the criminal justice system", Runnymede, accessed 15.02.2018 <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/CriminalJusticeVRacialJustice-2012.pdf>

194. Scott Poynting and Victoria Mason, "Tolerance, Freedom, Justice and Peace?": Britain, Australia and Anti-Muslim Racism since 11 September 2001", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Volume 27, 2006 - Issue 4.

195. Gabe Mythen and Fatima Khan, "Futurity, Governance and the Terrorist Risk: Exploring the Impacts of Pre-emptive Modes of Regulation on Young Muslims in the UK", accessed 20.02.2018 <https://www.kent.ac.uk/scarr/events/beijingpapers/Mythenppr.pdf>

196. "Tackling inequality in the Criminal Justice System", Clinks, May 2015, accessed 20.02.2018, [http://www.recoop.org.uk/dbfiles/news/246/Tackling\\_Inequality\\_within\\_CJS\\_Clinks\\_Report.pdf](http://www.recoop.org.uk/dbfiles/news/246/Tackling_Inequality_within_CJS_Clinks_Report.pdf)

197. "Young, Muslim and British: Between rhetoric and realities", LSE Blog, accessed 24.10.2017, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionpublicsphere/2017/04/young-muslim-and-british-between-rhetoric-and-realities/>

198. "The Lammy Review: final report", p6.

199. Ibid, p27-28.

200. Estefanía Estévez, Marina Rachitskiy, and Carla Rodríguez, "Is perception of the mainstream legal system homogeneous across ethnic groups?", *The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context*, 5 (2013), pp. 155-161, accessed June 21, 2018, [https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1889186113700052/1-s2.0-S1889186113700052-main.pdf?\\_tid=spdf-03747654-b1a3-4bcd-9374-3ace337938bd&acdnat=1518710571\\_1338a41fbbd1369ef42ab7f9d421fa57](https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1889186113700052/1-s2.0-S1889186113700052-main.pdf?_tid=spdf-03747654-b1a3-4bcd-9374-3ace337938bd&acdnat=1518710571_1338a41fbbd1369ef42ab7f9d421fa57)

because people can accept decisions and outcomes from the justice system more willingly when they believe that the authorities are using fair procedures based on trustworthy motivations.<sup>201</sup>

## Recruitment of BAME Communities within the Police Force

For many people, the police form the most visible representation of the state. As such, the relationship between minority communities and their local police must be characterised by trust and understanding. Therefore, recruitment and adequate representation of minorities within the force becomes a fundamental asset in nurturing understanding, trust, and a feeling of representation within this relationship. The “Police Diversity” report prepared by the House of Commons found that there has been a steady increase in the overall proportion of officers and staff who are of a BAME background, particularly since this issue was brought to the attention of the Government in 2013. However, progress remains somewhat slow, with a wide variation in the demographic composition of local forces and BAME police officers remaining overwhelmingly amongst junior ranks. Even allowing for appropriate career progression, the number of BAME officers above the rank of inspector remains very low. These results were thus deemed “unacceptable” by the committee.<sup>202</sup> The issue of BAME representation at senior levels is particularly problematic. Indeed, the lack of BAME representation at senior levels within the police service affects its leadership, culture, and understanding of the community it serves. Meanwhile, people of a BAME background wishing to develop their careers within the police service often lack role models, encounter barriers when trying to access necessary training, and face selection panels which are frequently lacking in diversity.<sup>203</sup>

It is crucial that steps are taken to ensure that police forces are representative of the many segments of British society and the communities they serve. This need is evidenced by the Race Disparity Audit, published by the Government in late 2017, which found a significant disparity in the representation of minorities in both the police force and employed within the wider Criminal Justice System. In 2016, 94% of prison officers in England and Wales who disclosed their ethnicity were white. The same year, around one police officer in every 17 was from a non-white ethnic minority group. While this ratio differed significantly according to rank, type of work, and geography, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of officers from a non-white background over the last ten years, indicating promise.

However, the responsibility for greater representation within police forces lies not only with the police service but also with communities themselves. Perhaps due to a long history of negative interactions between the police and BAME communities, there is a notorious lack of trust, which creates barriers for communities to meaningfully engage with their local police. This is a relationship that requires considerable effort from both sides if it is to be rectified. MEND’s own work in this area includes hosting roundtables and forums designed to create a platform for communities to interact and build constructive relationships with their local police, which should in time promote greater trust and improved recruitment of Muslims into the police force. Until trusting relationships are achieved, recruitment from within these communities will remain a significant challenge.

### Policy Pledge:

#### **16. Commit to investigating structural Islamophobia within the Criminal Justice System.**

<sup>201</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>202</sup>. “Police diversity First Report of Session 2016–17”, House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, accessed 20.02.2018, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/27/27.pdf>

<sup>203</sup>. Ibid.



# men

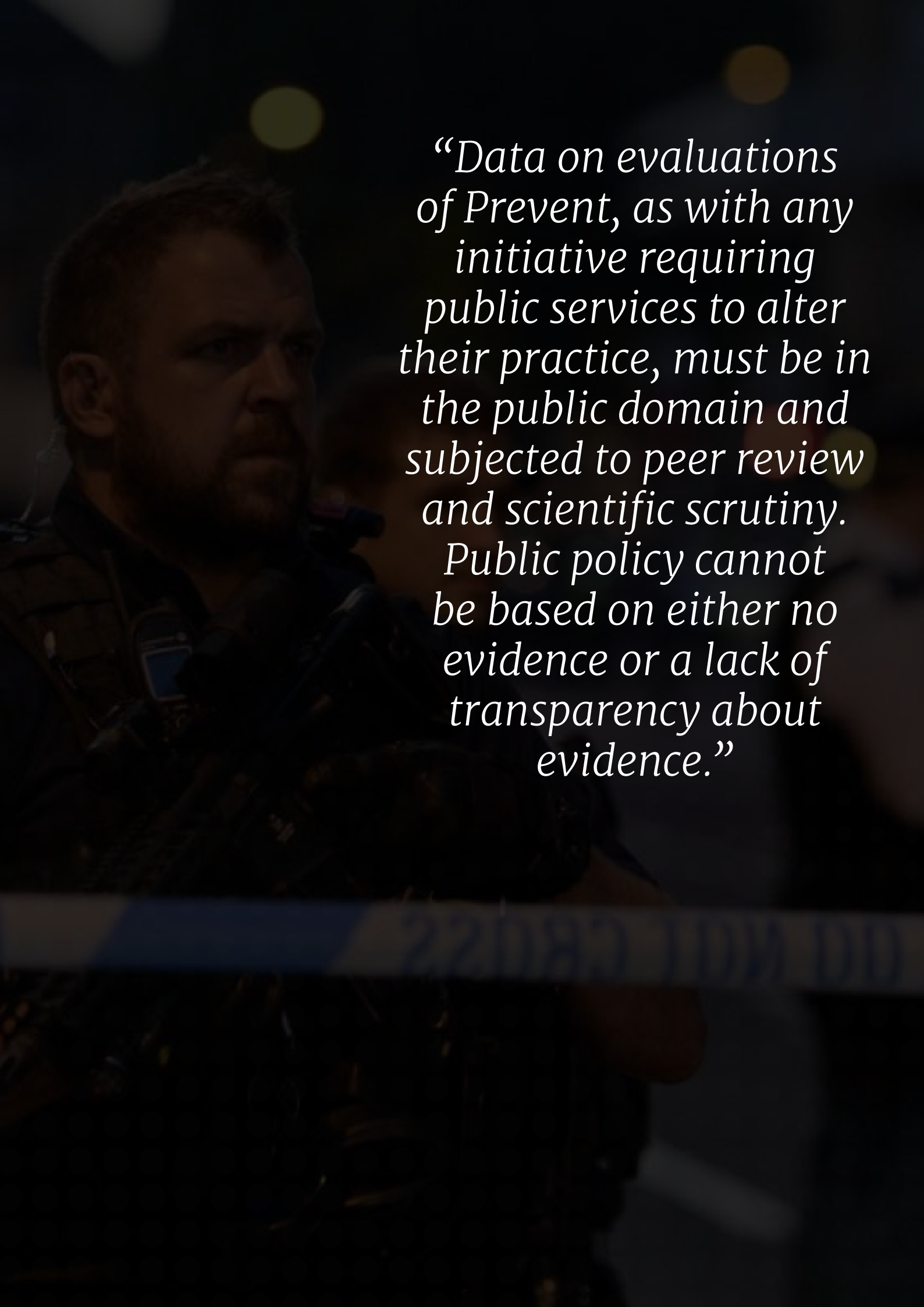
Muslim  
engagement  
& development

[mend.org.uk](http://mend.org.uk)

# men

Muslim  
engagement  
& development



A man in a military uniform is speaking into a microphone. The image is dark and has a grainy, high-contrast appearance. The man is on the left side of the frame, looking towards the right. The background is dark with some blurred lights.

*“Data on evaluations of Prevent, as with any initiative requiring public services to alter their practice, must be in the public domain and subjected to peer review and scientific scrutiny. Public policy cannot be based on either no evidence or a lack of transparency about evidence.”*

# Security and Counter-Terror

## The Impacts of Counter-Terror Legislation on Muslim Communities

Current counter-terror legislation is centred upon the idea that, because the magnitude of the terrorist threat is too great to rely on traditional post-crime jurisprudence, measures and policies need to exist that pre-empt violent acts of terror and criminalise individuals who are believed to be in the process of committing such acts. This transition was one of the key consequences of the 'War on Terror', which has effectively resulted in the implementation of legislative systems that blur "the boundary between foreign and domestic and between law enforcement and military action."<sup>204</sup> However, due to the inherent difficulty in preventing and pre-empting crime, the application of pre-criminal legislation results in an often arbitrary and over-conjectural application of the law, whereby individuals perceived to belong to a community at risk are increasingly problematised and even criminalised on the basis of acts that would not be considered criminal in different circumstances.

In other words, attempts to predict crime inherently involve subjective judgements and hypotheses, ultimately culminating in issues of racial profiling and overt scrutiny on a 'suspect' community – Muslims. Within this subjective framework, it is, therefore, inevitable that innocent individuals will become suspect and caught up in the apparatus of security measures, primarily on the basis of their religious, cultural, or ethnic identities. There are two key areas within the sphere of counter-terror that MEND believes are in particular need of address; the PREVENT strategy and Schedule 7.

### PREVENT

PREVENT is part of the Government's broader counter-terror strategy, CONTEST, which aims to protect the public against acts of terrorism. Whilst this is a laudable objective, in recent years there has been sustained criticism of the PREVENT strategy put forward by experts from across society, including three special rapporteurs to the UN,<sup>205</sup> the NEU (formerly known as the NUT),<sup>206</sup> the NUS,<sup>207</sup> the former Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation,<sup>208</sup> Rights Watch UK,<sup>209</sup> the Open Society Justice Initiative,<sup>210</sup> the Joint Committee for Human Rights,<sup>211</sup> and more than 140 academics, politicians and experts in one instance alone.<sup>212</sup> As a result of this criticism, amendments to the Counter-Terror and Border Security Bill were proposed by the House of Lords, and the Government has conceded to an independent review of the PREVENT strategy.

Although MEND welcomes such an independent review as the first step in scrapping the PREVENT strategy for the reasons that follow, we feel it necessary to raise concerns that there are signs that this review may not be truly independent nor wide enough in its scope to examine all of the factors that may lead someone to be drawn into acts of politically motivated violence, including the role of foreign policy in such a trajectory. It is interesting to note that with the announcement of Lord Carlile as the Independent Reviewer, questions have already been raised about his own independence, given his previous support for PREVENT.<sup>213</sup> Similarly, in examining the terms of reference that have recently been published, it is striking to see an absence of the key question as to whether the PREVENT strategy is even

204. Jude McCulloch and Dean Wilson, *Pre-crime: Pre-emption, Precaution and the Future*, (London, New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 631.

205. Muslim Engagement and Development. (2018). UN Special Rapporteur: UK Government should consider PREVENT impact on minorities which is "dividing, stigmatising and alienating communities" - Muslim Engagement and Development. Available at: <https://www.mend.org.uk/news/un-special-rapporteur-uk-government-consider-prevent-impact-minorities-dividing-stigmatising-alienating-communities/> Accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

206. Adams, R. (2016). Teachers back motion calling for Prevent strategy to be scrapped. The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/mar/28/teachers-nut-back-motion-calling-prevent-strategy-radicalisation-scrapped> Accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

207. Nusconnect.org.uk. (n.d.). Preventing Prevent - We are Students Not Suspects @ NUS Connect. Available at: <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/campaigns/preventing-prevent-we-are-students-not-suspects> Accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

208. Batty, D. (2016). Prevent strategy 'sowing mistrust and fear in Muslim communities'. The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/03/prevent-strategy-sowing-mistrust-fear-muslim-communities> Accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

209. Rnwk.org. (2016). Available at: <http://rwuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/preventing-education-final-to-print-3.compressed-1.pdf> Accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

210. Justiceinitiative.org. (2016). Available at: [https://www.justiceinitiative.org/uploads/f87bd3ad-50fb-42d0-95a8-54ba85dce818/eroding-trust-20161017\\_0.pdf](https://www.justiceinitiative.org/uploads/f87bd3ad-50fb-42d0-95a8-54ba85dce818/eroding-trust-20161017_0.pdf) Accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

211. Publications.parliament.uk. (2016). Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201617/jtselect/jtights/105/105.pdf> Accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

212. Ross, A. (2016). Academics criticise anti-radicalisation strategy in open letter. The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/sep/29/academics-criticise-prevent-anti-radicalisation-strategy-open-letter> Accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

213. Lizzie Dearden, "Home Office faces legal challenge over appointment of 'biased' reviewer of Prevent counter-extremism programme", The Independent, August 2019. Accessed: 13th September 2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-legal-challenge-prevent-counter-extremism-lord-carlile-a9083486.html>

required, as well as a neglect of its past application and theoretical underpinning (see below). Indeed, it appears that the starting point for the review is that the PREVENT strategy will remain in place, with the review's primary focus being concentrated on future improvements.<sup>214</sup>

### *Lack of Evidentiary Basis*

People referred to PREVENT are assessed using the Vulnerability Assessment Framework, which uses the Extreme Risk Guidance (ERG22+) as a risk assessment tool. The ERG has been criticised for its reliance upon undisclosed research conducted with a small and unrepresentative sample of convicted terrorists in prison, the conclusions of which have been problematically extrapolated as being applicable to the wider population and the evidence for which is not available for public scrutiny.<sup>215</sup> Even the original authors of the research have commented that "The current lack of demonstrated reliability and validity remains the main limitation of the ERG at this time" and stated that "The ERG is work in progress".<sup>216</sup> Despite these limitations, combined with a lack of both independent replicating studies and a credible external peer review process, such preliminary research appears to have underpinned a statutory duty upon all public sector workers to implement the PREVENT strategy in their work. This is problematic, as the Royal College of Psychiatrists has commented, "Data on evaluations of Prevent, as with any initiative requiring public services to alter their practice, must be in the public domain and subjected to peer review and scientific scrutiny. Public policy cannot be based on either no evidence or a lack of transparency about evidence."<sup>217</sup>

### *Lack of Viable Definitions*

At present, the Government has no clear working definition of 'extremism', 'non-violent extremism', 'British Values', nor 'radicalisation'. With hundreds of thousands of staff having already been trained through the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP-training), these practitioners are attempting to identify 'radicalisation' to tackle 'extremism' without appropriate guidance as to what it is that they are identifying. This lack of definitions leaves public sector workers in a position to determine risk based on personal understandings, stereotypes, and bias. Consequently, a lack of objective understanding causes confusion in PREVENT's application and has been strategically used to exclude Muslim voices and events through the use of ill-defined and liberally applied labels. As one example, this is a problem that often arises in the context of universities and particularly affects Islamic and Palestinian societies. It is often the case that events may be cancelled due to accusations of 'extremism' emanating from right-wing groups such as Student Rights. These accusations are often lacking in substance, but the emotional weight held by the term 'extremism' is sufficient to deter universities or other venues from allowing events that find themselves in this situation.

### *Inadequate Training*

PREVENT trained public sector workers may often receive only 45-60mins of online training to identify signs of radicalisation. Equally worrying is the fact that there appears to be no formative examination nor on-going assessment for those who have been through PREVENT training. Indeed, this lack of effective training was highlighted by the Home Affairs Committee who noted: "We are concerned about a lack of sufficient and appropriate training in an area that is complex and unfamiliar to many education and other professionals, compounded by a lack of clarity about what is required of them."<sup>218</sup> The lack of an evidentiary basis combined with inadequate training and a lack of definitions has led to a situation where every day normative practices of the Islamic faith (for example, wearing the hijab or going on Hajj),

214. Home Office, "Independent Review of Prevent: Terms of Reference," GOV.UK, September 13, 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-prevent-terms-of-reference/independent-review-of-prevent-terms-of-reference>.

215. "The 'science' of pre-crime: The secret 'radicalisation' study underpinning PREVENT", Cage UK, September 2016. Accessed: 16th October 2019. <https://www.cage.ngo/the-science-of-pre-crime>.

216. Lloyd, M., & Dean, C. (2015). The development of structured guidelines for assessing risk in extremist offenders. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, 2(1), 40.

217. "Counter-terrorism and psychiatry", Position Statement PS04/16, Royal College of Psychiatrists, August 2016. Accessed: 16th October 2019. [https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS04\\_16.pdf](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS04_16.pdf).

218. House of Commons, "Radicalisation: the counter-narrative and identifying the tipping point – Eighth report of Session 2016-17", August 25, 2016, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaaff/135/135.pdf>



cultural practices (watching an Arabic news channel),<sup>219</sup> or taking an interest in politics (criticising foreign policy) can be seen as a sign of being drawn to political violence. Indeed, taking PREVENT in the NHS as an example, research conducted by Warwick University has found that 70% of the respondents “were ‘likely’, or ‘very likely’” to refer someone for the “possession of Islamic/ Anarchist philosophy books”. This is important as the PREVENT training programme does not indicate this as a factor indicative of radicalisation, but it is reflective of the subtle structurally Islamophobic nature of the current PREVENT strategy. The authors of the research, in line with the overarching concerns surrounding the PREVENT duty, conclude that “respondents are drawing their attitude from popular culture rather than official training or academic research”.<sup>220</sup>

### *Heavy Focus on Ideology*

PREVENT’s heavy focus on ideology often obscures due consideration of other factors, such as mental health issues, foreign policy, individual isolation, unemployment, socio-economic deprivation or a whole host of other factors. However, experts and academics agree that such factors are pivotal in an individual potentially becoming drawn to political violence.<sup>221</sup>

### *Unacceptable Levels of ‘False Positive’ Referrals*

There have been numerous cases where individuals have been referred to PREVENT who did not pose a risk of being drawn to political violence. In 2016/17, of the 6,093 individuals referred, 3,704 (61%) were referred for concerns related to “Islamist extremism”, and 968 (16%) were referred for concerns related to “right-wing extremism”.<sup>222</sup> In 2017/18, of the 7,318 individuals referred, 3,197 (44%) were referred for concerns related to “Islamist extremism”, and 1,312 (18%) were referred for concerns related to “right-wing extremism”.<sup>223</sup> However, in 2016/17 only 5% of those referred went on to receive CHANNEL support for de-radicalisation, with just over 5% receiving CHANNEL support in 2017/18.<sup>224</sup> There is a paucity of research on the effects of false referrals on these individuals, but it is likely that the stigmatising effects of being flagged as a “security risk” will be adverse and affect individuals from a psychological, social, educational, and employment perspective.

Recent revelations of the National Police PREVENT Case Management (PCM) database serves to compound such concerns. According to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted by the civil rights group, Liberty, all PREVENT referrals are added to the PCM database by individual police forces, including personal details and reasons for the referral, but the person is not notified.<sup>225</sup> Other agencies are then able to request information held on the database.

Considering the established inadequacy of training and definitions embedded within the PREVENT strategy and the high levels of unwarranted referrals, it is inevitable that individuals run the risk of being added to this database unnecessarily. At the same time, the lack of transparency and lack of accountability is an issue that must be recognised and investigated by any genuinely holistic independent review.

### *Targeting Muslims as a Suspect Community*

Data shows that a British Muslim is 41 times more likely than a non-Muslim to be referred to CHANNEL programme under PREVENT, despite representing less than 5% of the population.<sup>226</sup> It is, therefore, unsurprising that numerous critics have condemned the PREVENT strategy as being inherently

219. Charlotte Heath-Kelly and Erzsébet Strausz “Counter-terrorism in the NHS: EVALUATING PREVENT DUTY SAFEGUARDING IN THE NHS”, accessed 29.05.2018, [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/counterterrorismnhs/project\\_report\\_draft\\_60pp.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/counterterrorismnhs/project_report_draft_60pp.pdf)

220. Ibid

221. Nicolas Campelo, et al., “Joining the Islamic State from France between 2014 and 2016: an observational follow-up study”, Nature, 2018. Accessed: 16th October 2019. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-018-0191-8>.

222. Assets.publishing.service.gov.uk. (2018). Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/694002/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2016-mar2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/694002/individuals-referred-supported-prevent-programme-apr2016-mar2017.pdf) accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

223. “Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2017 to March 2018”, Home Office, Statistical Bulletin 06/18, December 13, 2018, accessed 05.09.2019, <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2018/12/13/factsheet-prevent-and-channel-statistics-2017-2018/>

224. Ibid

225. Jamie Grierson, “Counter-Terror Police Running Secret Prevent Database,” The Guardian, October 6, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/oct/06/counter-terror-police-are-running-secret-prevent-database>.

226. “Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2015 to March 2016”, Home Office, November 9, 2017, accessed 05.09.2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/individuals-referred-to-and-supported-through-the-prevent-programme-april-2015-to-march-2016#history>

discriminatory. Beyond issues of equality and social justice, such a discriminatory application may also prove to be counterproductive. Indeed, MI5 has concluded that “experiences of inequality, marginalisation, or victimisation, particularly racial or religious attacks, both physical and verbal” play a direct role in the radicalisation of individuals.<sup>227</sup> Likewise, Andy Burnham has described the PREVENT strategy as contributing to “creating a feeling in the Muslim community that it is being spied upon and unfairly targeted. It is building a climate of mutual suspicion and distrust. Far from tackling extremism, it risks creating the very conditions for it to flourish”.<sup>228</sup>

### *Conflicts with Safeguarding*

PREVENT being embedded within safeguarding creates grey areas and confusion in how to approach safeguarding needs. As concluded by the civil rights campaigners, Liberty, “while everyone in society has moral and ethical obligations to report suspected criminality, requiring teachers and others in sensitive positions of trust to report those with dissenting views risks undermining professional obligations of confidentiality, sowing mistrust and pushing those with grievances further underground.”<sup>229</sup> Research has also shown that less than half of NHS staff agree that PREVENT is a genuine safeguarding procedure, with safeguarding professionals alerting researchers of the significant differences between PREVENT safeguarding and established safeguarding practice.<sup>230</sup>

**MEND is of the firm belief that the PREVENT duty should be repealed and welcomes this independent review of PREVENT as an essential first step in tackling the detrimental impact of ill-conceived counter-terror strategies that hinder Muslims’ abilities to fully enjoy their social, civic, religious, political, and economic rights.**

### *Schedule 7*

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

An experimental analysis conducted by the EHRC on Schedule 7 powers published in 2013 assessing the prevalence of racial disproportionality in stops and examinations 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 ethnicity were 3.6 times more likely to be stopped and searched.<sup>231</sup>

While the overall number of Schedule 7 examinations has fallen since 2011/12, the proportion of those stopped who are from Asian or “other” ethnic backgrounds continues to grow. Despite individuals of Asian ethnicity comprising of just 8% of the overall population, 2015/16 marked the first year where those stopped of Asian ethnicity (30%) outnumbered those stopped of white ethnicity (27%), with those of Asian or Asian British ethnicity being most likely to be detained under Schedule 7 powers.<sup>232</sup>

The former Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, David Anderson QC previously said that the use of Schedule 7 powers has “given rise to resentment among some Muslim groups who feel they

227. “The making of an extremist”, The Guardian, August 20, 2008, accessed 30.11.2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/aug/20/uksecurityterrorism>

228. “Andy Burnham calls for ‘toxic’ Prevent strategy to be scrapped”, The Guardian, June 9, 2016, accessed 01.02.2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/09/andy-burnham-calls-for-toxic-prevent-strategy-to-be-scrapped>

229. Libertyhumanrights.org.uk. (2018). Available at: <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/sites/default/files/Liberty%27s%20Second%20Reading%20Briefing%20on%20the%20Counter-Terrorism%20Bill%20FINAL.pdf> accessed 17 Jun. 2019.

230. Charlotte Heath-Kelly and Erzsébet Strausz “Counter-terrorism in the NHS: EVALUATING PREVENT DUTY SAFEGUARDING IN THE NHS”, accessed 29.05.2018, [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/counterterrorisminthens/project\\_report\\_draft\\_60pp.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/researchcentres/irs/counterterrorisminthens/project_report_draft_60pp.pdf) Ibid

231. Karen Hurrell, An Experimental Analysis of Examinations and Detentions under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, report, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Winter 2013, accessed May 29, 2018, <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/briefing-paper-8-an-experimental-analysis-of-examinations-and-detentions-under-s7-of-the-terrorism-act-2000.pdf>

232. Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000, financial year ending March 2016, accessed 29.05.2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000-financial-year-ending-march-2016/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000-and-subsequent-legislation-arrests-outcomes-and-stop-and-search-great-britain-financial-y>

are being singled out” by authorities.<sup>233</sup> While stopping short of labelling it as discriminatory, he further 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”,<sup>234</sup> suggesting evidence of disproportionate use.

### **Policy Pledge:**

**17. Commit to independently reviewing all counter-terrorism legislation enacted since 2000 with a view to curbing the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties.**

**18. Commit to recognising the role of UK foreign policy in individuals being drawn to political violence.**

<sup>233</sup> Rowena Mason, 'UK terror law watchdog calls for end to detention at borders without suspicion,' The Guardian, December 01, 2013, accessed 29.05.2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2013/dec/01/uk-terror-law-watchdog-detention-borders-schedule-7>

<sup>234</sup> David Anderson, QC, The Terrorism Acts in 2011, June 27, 2012, <https://terrorismlegislationreviewer.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/report-terrorism-acts-2011.pdf> accessed 17.06.2019



# Political Representation and Exclusion

Islamophobia should be understood as a mechanism which marginalises and excludes Muslims from being able to participate in social, political and civic life fully. While data shows a growing trend of Muslim engagement in the field of politics, there remain significant challenges Muslims face when operating within the political sphere and barriers to participation still exist. Ultimately, our political institutions need to reflect the communities they serve. In these efforts, political parties must address structural barriers that exclude Muslims and other minority groups. Moreover, the Government's policy of disengagement with credible mainstream Muslim organisations and leaders must be urgently reversed so that the relationship between the Government and Muslim communities may be recalibrated.

## Muslim Representation

According to Dr Lucy Michael, the “integration of minority groups in equality terms” can be measured by engagement in party politics and governance.<sup>235</sup> To some extent, this can be demonstrated by the election of the first Muslim MP, Mohammad Sarwar, in 1997. In two decades since this historic landmark, the number of Muslim MPs has risen to 16, eight of whom are women.<sup>236</sup> Also, politicians who identify as Muslim or are of Muslim heritage have served as ministers in the past four governments under Gordon Brown, David Cameron, Theresa May, and Boris Johnson - with Baroness Warsi becoming the first Muslim female minister under the Cameron administration in 2010.

While barriers have been broken by individuals such as Mohammad Sarwar, Sayeeda Warsi, Naz Shah, Yasmin Qureshi, Shabana Mahmood, Afzal Khan, Rushanara Ali, and Nusrat Ghani to name but a few, Muslim representation of 2% of the House of Commons still lags far behind what is proportional considering the population of British Muslims, which stands at 4.4% according to the 2011 census. This highlights the lack of equitable representation of Muslims in public life and, therefore, according to Michael's assessment of integration and equality, one may argue that Muslims are far from equal. The reasons for this underrepresentation ranges from political parties fearing a backlash for fielding more Muslim candidates, discrimination against Muslims within political party structures, the centralised nature of the party system, and Muslims feeling alienated from the democratic system.<sup>237</sup>

As a brief insight into the harassment Muslim political figures face, in 2019, it emerged that Conservative councillors Martyn York and David Abbott, and Conservative candidate Dorinda Bailey, were moderators and administrators of the Facebook group *Boris Johnson: Supporters' Group*,<sup>238</sup> which frequently hosted hateful comments, including advocating for the bombing of mosques around the UK and referring to Muslims and refugees as “ragheads” and “cockroaches.”<sup>239</sup> Amongst the calls were also demands that Muslims be banned from joining the police or army and blocked from holding any position in Government.<sup>240</sup> Meanwhile, users referred to the Mayor of London, Mr Sadiq Khan, as a “conniving little muzrat”, and told Ms. Naz Shah, MP, to “p\*\*\* off to [her] own country”.<sup>241</sup>

## Barriers to Political Engagement

Experiences of discrimination and Islamophobia are rife at all levels of political engagement. Baroness Warsi, for example, remarked that “being a Muslim in public life has been brutal”, adding that “Muslims who engage with politics or any other institutions are to be viewed as suspicious and Muslims who

235. Michael, Lucy. 2009. “Securing civic relations in the multicultural city”. 164-186, in Krause, W. (Ed.) *Citizenship, Security and Democracy: Muslim Engagement with the West*, Surrey: Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK) and Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, 177 – 197. Cited in p.22 of Mustafa, Anisa. 2015. “Active Citizenship, Dissent And Power: The Cultural Politics Of Young Adult British Muslims”. PhD, University of Nottingham.

236. “Record of 13 Muslim MPs elected, 8 of them women” *The Scotsman*, May 10 2015, <https://www.scotsman.com/news/uk-news/record-of-13-muslim-mps-elected-8-of-them-women-1-3768726>


237. Anisa Mustafa, “Active Citizenship, Dissent and Civic Consciousness: Young Muslims Redefining Citizenship on Their Own Terms,” *Identities* 23, no. 4 (2015): 22.

238. Shehab Khan, “Tory councillor suspended over Islamophobic comments about bombing mosques made in Facebook group he moderates”, *The Independent*, March 2019. Accessed: 30th April 2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tory-islamophobia-councillor-mosque-facebook-martyn-york-a8804486.html>.

239. Ibid.

240. Johnston, “Boris Johnson's Facebook Page 'littered with Hundreds of Racists Posts' from Supporters”.

241. Tom D. Rogers, “EXCL: Tory politicians are running a vile Facebook group where members joke about bombing mosques and shooting immigrants”, *Evolve Politics*, March 2019. Accessed: 16th May, 2019. <https://evolvepolitics.com/excl-tory-politicians-are-running-a-vile-facebook-group-where-members-joke-about-bombing-mosques-and-shooting-immigrants/>.



*The Government  
must, therefore,  
urgently reconsider  
its policy of  
disengagement with  
credible mainstream  
Muslim organisations  
that have the trust  
and support of  
British Muslim  
communities.*

don't engage are to be treated as suspicious for being separatist".<sup>242</sup> Adding to this notion of suspicion, Muslim MPs, Rupa Huq and Tulip Siddiq, recently spoke out about being disproportionately stopped by security staff within Parliament and having their credentials questioned, with Huq stating that "Because of our pigmentation we are treated differently".<sup>243</sup>

Scepticism towards Muslims engaging within the political realm is further evidenced in the fact that 14 out of 15 constituency Labour parties (CLPs) placed under "special measures" have sizeable Muslim populations, varying from 11% (Brentford & Isleworth) to 50% (Birmingham Hodge Hill).<sup>244</sup> "Special measures" refers to the administrative mechanism introduced first in the 1980s to prevent "hostile takeovers of constituency parties and local councils".<sup>245</sup> When imposed on constituency groups, members are vetted and selection processes are centrally controlled. While special measures may be the appropriate course of action in a few extreme situations, it is only meant to be a short term measure, as highlighted by the Chakrabarti Report into anti-Semitism and other forms of racism within the Labour Party.<sup>246</sup> However, some CLPs had been under special measures for more than two decades before being reinstated under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership.<sup>247</sup> Craig, in a piece about Birmingham Hall Green CLP, points out that the four Birmingham CLPs in special measures are in areas with a high Muslim or Pakistani population, and emphasises that there is "a feeling of injustice from members of these groups that they are under suspicion, that having lots of members from these communities in the party is regarded as a bad thing".<sup>248</sup>

Islamophobia in politics is also characterised by divisive discourses which fuels hate and promotes a fear of Muslims. The dog-whistle politics displayed during the London mayoral election against Sadiq Khan, where he was branded an "extremist" by opponent Zac Goldsmith was arguably the most high-profile example of what is a regular experience for Muslims participating in electoral politics. In the eyes of Muslims, it translated fundamentally into a message that despite Muslim communities being accomplished in their education and professional careers, they may still never be fully accepted into mainstream society.

Indeed, as noted by Peter Osborne at the time, "if Goldsmith's campaign succeeds it tells every single British Muslim that there is no role for them anywhere in the British democratic system."<sup>249</sup> Mr Goldsmith's tactics also drew strong criticism from senior Conservative figures, including Mr Mohammed Amin, the former Chair of the Conservative Muslim Forum;<sup>250</sup> Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, former co-chair of the conservative party;<sup>251</sup> and Mr Andrew Boff, former leader of the London Assembly's Conservative group.<sup>252</sup> Mr Amin, in an article in the *Conservative Home*, argued that "Zac had abandoned any attempt to appeal to Muslim voters, and was instead seeking to maximise his vote amongst non-Muslim voters by attempting to frighten them about 'Khan, the alleged Muslim extremist.'" <sup>253</sup> Mr Boff further added that he was "really troubled by one particular aspect and that's when [Mr Goldsmith] started equating people with conservative religious views with sympathising with terrorism."<sup>254</sup> The Conservative Party

242. Homa Khaleeli, "Sayeeda Warsi: 'Where Are My Grandkids Going to Call Home? What World Will They Grow Up In?'" *The Guardian*, March 25, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/mar/25/sayeeda-warsi-where-are-my-grandkids-going-to-call-home-what-world-will-they-grow-up-in>.

243. "The Londoner: Rupa and Tulip in Racist Security Row," *Evening Standard*, May 24, 2018, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/londoners-diary/the-londoner-rupa-and-tulip-in-racist-security-row-a3847451.html>.

244. Mark Ferguson, "The Kafkaesque Farce of the Labour Party 'special measures' Revisited...", *LabourList*, July 03, 2013, <https://labourlist.org/2013/07/the-kafkaesque-farce-of-the-labour-party-special-measures-revisited/>.

245. Radhika Sanghani, "Labour Reveal Constituencies Under Central Control," *The Telegraph*, July 03, 2013, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/labour/10156596/Labour-reveal-constituencies-under-central-control.html>.

246. Hattie Craig, "23 Years in 'special measures'", *The Clarion*, October 01, 2016, <https://theclarionmag.org/2016/10/01/23-years-in-special-measures/>.

247. "Labour Reveal Constituencies Under Central Control."

248. "23 Years in 'special measures'."

249. Osborne, "How Zac Goldsmith imported Donald Trump's politics into Britain".

250. Rowena Mason, "Top Conservatives condemn Zac Goldsmith's 'disturbing' mayoral campaign", *The Guardian*, May 2016. Accessed: 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/may/07/top-conservatives-condemn-zac-goldsmiths-disturbing-mayoral-campaign>.

251. Ashley Cowburn, "Zac Goldsmith criticised by former Tory minister Baroness Warsi over Sadiq Khan 7/7 London terror bus image", *The Independent*, May 2016. Accessed: 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/zac-goldsmith-london-mayor-campaign-sadiq-khan-baroness-warsi-a7009126.html>.

252. Paul Waugh, "Zac Goldsmith's 'outrageous' anti-Sadiq Khan campaign slammed by senior London Tory Andrew Boff", *The Huffington Post*, May 2016. Accessed: 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2019. [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/zac-goldsmith-sadiq-khan-andrew-boff-outrageous-extremism\\_uk\\_572c5c18e4b05c31e571c1bf](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/zac-goldsmith-sadiq-khan-andrew-boff-outrageous-extremism_uk_572c5c18e4b05c31e571c1bf).

253. Mohammed Amin, "Mohammed Amin: I'm a Conservative and voted for Zac. But I was disgusted by his repeated, risible attempts to smear Khan", *Conservative Home*, May 2016. Accessed: 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019. <http://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2016/05/mohammed-amin-im-a-conservative-and-voted-for-zac-but-i-was-disgusted-by-his-repeated-risible-attempts-to-smear-khan.html>.

254. Paul Waugh, "Zac Goldsmith's 'outrageous' anti-Sadiq Khan campaign slammed by senior London Tory Andrew Boff", *The Huffington Post*, May 2016. Accessed: 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2019. [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/zac-goldsmith-sadiq-khan-andrew-boff-outrageous-extremism\\_uk\\_572c5c18e4b05c31e571c1bf](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/zac-goldsmith-sadiq-khan-andrew-boff-outrageous-extremism_uk_572c5c18e4b05c31e571c1bf).



has failed to distance itself from and condemn Mr Goldsmith's 2016 election campaign, with former Prime Minister, Theresa May, failing to apologise for the incident as recently as April 2019 when questioned by Naz Shah, MP, in the House of Commons.<sup>255</sup>

Seeing high-profile Muslim politicians being subjected to a vilification campaign with racial and Islamophobic undertones reaffirmed the feeling of disillusionment with the political process that many Muslims felt, and has undoubtedly negatively impacted the aspirations of young Muslims in pursuing public office.

## Obstructing Political Engagement in Universities

The fear of being labelled "extremist" is pervasive throughout Muslim student populations at British universities. What should be spaces of empowerment for young Muslims have become more heavily securitised under the PREVENT duty, particularly impacting the work of Islamic societies and pro-Palestine societies. Student events have become subject to increased bureaucratisation, and at times even shut down outright. We note that the findings of a recent report by the NUS Black Students' and Women's Campaign, echoed these concerns and experiences, identifying PREVENT as contributing towards a deficit in civic engagement amongst Muslim students; impacting their ability to engage in certain discussions and deterring them from running for elected positions.<sup>256</sup>

Indeed, it appears that there are frequently targeted efforts by neo-conservative organisations, such as Student Rights (a project of the Henry Jackson Society), to stifle political engagement of Muslim students by using the language of counter-extremism to demonise Muslim students and societies. As an example, Student Rights frequently directs concerted efforts to demonise students who do not support their neo-conservative worldview and particularly those who are vocal about their support for the Palestinian cause and those critical of counter-terror strategies.

As such, Student Rights has been accused of seeking to pressure universities to "impose restrictive measures on Muslim students that would, in effect, institutionalise Islamophobia" and its work has been described as seeking "to narrow the space for all radical political dissent on campus."<sup>257</sup> Student Rights has also been condemned by the NUS for its use of flawed methodologies and has subsequently been widely criticised for its "dishonest pseudo-science in support of a toxic narrative".<sup>258</sup> Meanwhile, the conclusions of Student Rights' reports have been discredited and labelled as "a witch-hunt which makes sweeping judgments about student Islamic societies".<sup>259</sup>

Interestingly, Student Rights claims to protect free speech and has expressed opposition to student unions' no-platform policy for the BNP.<sup>260</sup> However, it has simultaneously severely criticised speakers it sees as "extremists" who have been invited by Islamic and Palestinian societies,<sup>261</sup> as well as Muslim students who criticise the current PREVENT strategy.<sup>262</sup>

In fact, pro-Palestinian activists across the UK have often been the target of silencing tactics used by organisations such as Student Rights, which are deployed solely to close down opposing debate and exclude voices who may disrupt their neo-conservative narrative. A common phenomenon is for activists to be labelled either as 'extremist' or anti-Semitic in their opposition to the human rights abuses of the Israeli government. While anti-Semitism must never be tolerated and should be challenged wherever it is found, the use of the term as a political tool for shutting down criticism of the Israeli government

255. @NazShahBfd, Twitter, April 2019. Accessed: 14th May, 2019. <https://twitter.com/NazShahBfd/status/1113436177196113920>.

256. "Our Research into the Experiences of #MuslimsInEducation" NUS Connect, March 18, 2018, <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/our-research-into-the-experiences-of-muslimsineducation>.

257. *Critical Perspectives on Counter-terrorism*, p.192.

258. Hilary Aked, "Student Rights 'Campus Extremism' Study: Dishonest Pseudo-Science in Support Of a Toxic Narrative," HuffPost UK, July 15, 2013, [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/hilary-aked/student-rights-campus-extremism-study\\_b\\_3277503.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=uk-student-rights](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/hilary-aked/student-rights-campus-extremism-study_b_3277503.html?utm_hp_ref=uk-student-rights).

259. "Extremists' preaching to UK student societies," BBC News, May 13, 2013, accessed 07.11.2017, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-22509757>.

260. "London Student issue 10 (March 1st 2010)," Yudu - Your Digital editions, accessed July 27, 2017, <http://content.yudu.com/Library/A1nkge/LondonStudentissue10/resources/index.htm>.

261. "Student Rights - Tackling Extremism on Campuses," Student Rights - Tackling Extremism on Campuses, accessed July 27, 2017, <http://www.studentrights.org.uk/>.

Also see Asa Winstanley, "How front group 'Student Rights' undermines Palestine solidarity," The Electronic Intifada, February 11, 2017, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/how-front-group-student-rights-undermines-palestine-solidarity/12991>.

262. "Salford Student President who opposes Prevent reveals troubling views on social media," Student Rights, accessed August 08, 2017, [http://www.studentrights.org.uk/article/2466/salford\\_student\\_president\\_who\\_opposes\\_prevent\\_reveals\\_troubling\\_views\\_on\\_social\\_media](http://www.studentrights.org.uk/article/2466/salford_student_president_who_opposes_prevent_reveals_troubling_views_on_social_media).

devalues the experiences of those who face anti-Semitic abuse on a daily basis. The Palestinian cause is an issue that is of great importance to large swathes of British communities, and there must be a recognition that Palestinian activism is a legitimate and necessary form of political dialogue. Therefore, in the current political climate, the smear tactics of organisations such as Student Rights and the Henry Jackson Society must be exposed as lacking in evidence and critical analysis.

Moreover, the danger that such smear campaigns pose to the individuals that they target must also be recognised. The Institute of Race Relations has noted with concern that Student Rights' work and reporting has been used by far-right groups to target Muslim student events.<sup>263</sup> Indeed, several British

### Policy Pledge:

**20. Commit to recognising that Palestinian activism is a legitimate form of political dialogue and commit to protecting the rights of British Muslims to advocate and support Palestinians' right to self-determination.**

universities have been forced to cancel events after material from Student Rights has resulted in threats of violence from far-right groups, including the EDL.<sup>264</sup>

## Policies of Disengagement

At the heart of Islamophobic rhetoric, what we see is a concerted effort to regulate, exclude, and marginalise Muslims within civil society and political life. Indeed, Muslim organisations have been progressively isolated and excluded from the realm of legitimate political discussion, as highlighted by the Government's current policy of non-engagement with organisations such as the Muslim Council of Britain, and MEND.

Levied against such organisations are accusations of "extremism" that are frequently baseless but accompanied by long-lasting stigma. In turn, allegations of "segregation" and "refusal to integrate" are used as justification to enact increased surveillance and securitisation of Muslim communities. Meanwhile, attempts to engage with political life lead to smears and suspicion, thus creating a damaging and inescapable cycle. As demonstrated by Sayeeda Warsi,<sup>265</sup> Muslims become restricted between two very uncomfortable positions of "isolationism" and "entryism". This places Muslims in a double bind position, whereby they are penalised if they engage, and they are penalised if they do not.

Rather than engaging with a broad spectrum of Muslim organisations and voices, the Government has traditionally insisted in dealing with a handpicked minority who already support their policy positions, particularly on issues such as counter-terror, media regulation and Palestine. Consequently, think-tanks and NGOs which do not possess the confidence of British Muslims have exercised considerable influence in shaping public policies, thus resulting in widespread feelings of alienation and frustration amongst Muslim communities. As recommended by the 2017 Citizens UK report entitled "Missing Muslims",<sup>266</sup> it is of pressing urgency that the Government reassesses its engagement with Muslim communities and seeks to mend the "broken relationship" by taking steps to end this impasse. The Government must, therefore, urgently reconsider its policy of disengagement with credible mainstream Muslim organisations that have the trust and support of British Muslim communities. Engagement does not mean agreement on every issue but facilitating the exchange of ideas and perspectives is an integral component of a democratic society.

263. "Far Right targets Islamic events," Institute of Race Relations RSS, accessed July 28, 2017, <http://www.irr.org.uk/news/far-right-targets-islamic-events/>.

Also see UniofReading, "Statement on Discover Islam Week events at the University of Reading – the University of Reading," the University of Reading, accessed July 28, 2017, <http://www.reading.ac.uk/news-and-events/releases/PR490014.aspx>.

264. "EXPOSED: Quilliam leadership directly involved with neocon Douglas Murray's Henry Jackson Society," Loonwatch.com, August 20, 2016, <http://www.loonwatch.com/2013/12/exposed-quilliam-leadership-directly-involved-with-neocon-douglas-murrays-henry-jackson-society/>.

265. "Sayeeda Warsi: 'Where Are My Grandkids Going to Call Home? What World Will They Grow up In?'"

266. *The Missing Muslims: Unlocking British Muslim Potential For The Benefit Of All*, p46.

## Islamophobia in Political Parties

Over recent years, several organisations, including Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND), the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), and Hope Not Hate, have repeatedly called for an inquiry into the prevalence of Islamophobia within the Conservative Party. These calls have largely either been ignored or dismissed as irrelevant by the party leadership, including Mr Brandon Lewis,<sup>267</sup> Mr Henry Smith,<sup>268</sup> Ms Nicky Morgan,<sup>269</sup> and many others.

During a TV debate for the Conservative Party Leadership in June 2019, Mr Sajid Javid announced that all the rivals for the leadership would commit to an independent investigation of Islamophobia in the party if elected. While there was no vocal agreement from his opponents, each “appeared to nod and express agreement”, to which Mr Javid declared “It’s great that we all agree on that”.<sup>270</sup>

However, even before he was elected the new Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, had already backtracked on this commitment, announcing that he is instead in favour of a “general investigation” into all types of prejudice.<sup>271</sup>

As Prime Minister, it is incumbent upon Mr Johnson to ensure the cohesion, safety, and prosperity of every citizen of this nation. This must begin with him publicly disavowing the regrettable racist and disparaging comments he has made on multiple occasions towards members of Britain’s ethnic and religious minorities, resulting in their victimisation, harassment, and “othering”, including his Islamophobic comments comparing Muslim women wearing the niqab with bank robbers and letterboxes.<sup>272</sup>

In the words of John Maxwell, “A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way”. We thus call on Mr Johnson to reconsider his current position and show true leadership by announcing an immediate Independent Inquiry into Islamophobia within the Conservative Party.

This must be the cornerstone of any attempt to tackle the hatred that is pervasive throughout the party and in society more broadly. Only by taking meaningful steps towards eliminating hate in his own party can religious and ethnic minority communities have confidence in Mr Johnson and his government’s willingness and ability to tackle hate crime in wider society.

**MEND calls upon the Chairman of the Conservative Party to initiate an immediate Independent Inquiry into Islamophobia within the party, with a view to explicitly including protections against Islamophobia in the Members’ Code of Conduct.**

**If the party fails to do this, we urge the Equalities and Human Rights Commission to use its statutory enforcement powers to initiate an immediate Independent Inquiry into Islamophobia within the Conservative Party.**

### Policy Pledge:

**19. Commit to proactively engaging and consulting with representative and grassroots organisations within British Muslim communities, including but not limited to Muslim Engagement and Development.**

267. Brandon Lewis, “A single case of anti-Muslim hatred in the Tory party is one too many”, *The Times*, April 2019. Accessed: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-single-case-of-anti-muslim-hatred-in-the-tory-party-is-one-too-many-6t2tvlvsl>.

268. Albert Evans, “Tory MP criticised for saying there’s no Islamophobia in the party because Sajid Javid is a Muslim”, *iNews*, February 2018. Accessed: 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2019. <https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/tory-mp-henry-smith-islamophobia-tory-party-sajid-javid-muslim/>.

269. Adam Payne and Adam Bienkov, “The Conservative party does not have an Islamophobia problem, says Nicky Morgan”, *Business Insider*, March 2019. Accessed: 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2019. <https://www.businessinsider.com/nicky-morgan-conservative-party-does-not-have-islamophobia-problem-2019-3?r=US&IR=T>.

270. Kevin Rawlinson, “Sajid Javid Puts Rivals on the Spot over Tory Party ‘Islamophobia’”, *The Guardian*, June 18, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jun/18/sajid-javid-puts-rivals-on-the-spot-over-tory-party-islamophobia>.

271. Peter Walker, “Tory Islamophobia Inquiry Now ‘general Investigation’, Says Boris Johnson”, *The Guardian*, June 27, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/jun/27/tory-islamophobia-inquiry-will-be-general-investigation-boris-johnson-sajid-javid>.

272. “Boris Johnson describes Muslim women as ‘letter boxes’ and ‘bank robbers’”, *MEND*, August 2018. Accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019. <https://www.mend.org.uk/whats-new/action-alerts/boris-johnson-describes-muslim-women-letter-boxes-bank-robbers/>.





# Integration

## Government Integration Strategies and Muslims

Britain has always claimed to embody a proud history of supporting multiculturalist principles advocating respect and celebration of the multitude of diverse ethnic and religious identities that have lent themselves to a British identity built upon pluralism and collaboration. However, recent years have seen simmering resentments and debates surrounding national identity, security concerns, immigration, and a perceived “ghettoisation” of minorities. These fears have culminated in calls for the UK to reassess its policies towards multiculturalist principles. The result is an increasingly restrictive integration strategy, within which examples of Islamophobic assumptions and institutional racism can be readily witnessed regarding the treatment of Muslim communities.

In 2018, the Government closed its consultation on its “Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper; Building Stronger, More United Communities”. This green paper sets out the Government strategy and approach towards integration. As a starting point, the Green Paper heavily relies on the highly criticised 2016 Casey Review.<sup>273</sup> As a consequence, its analysis and suggested strategies are inherently tainted by the same flawed evidence and lack of understanding that has guided the Government’s policies on community cohesion and integration in the past. As such, there are several key areas wherein the infiltration of Islamophobic narratives and assumptions have directed the development of this strategy, and therefore, limit its potential to make a positive difference.

### *Overlap with Counter-Terror*

The Green Paper is littered with references and allusions reminiscent of counter-terror strategies that have previously been condemned as hugely damaging to community cohesion and the inclusion of minorities. This fear was then heightened with the publication of the Home Office’s counter-terror strategy “CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism”, which explicitly mentioned the Green Paper in outlining its strategy. This CONTEST strategy has since crystallised in the form of the Counter Terror and Border Security Act 2019. It is imperative that strategies of community integration and counter-terror do not overlap, as this can only result in the further securitisation of an already problematic tripartite relationship between government, society, and minorities.

### *Prescribed Views of “Acceptable Islam”*

The green paper’s call for a “clearer interpretation of Islam for life in the UK” is extremely worrying for the Muslim community and needs to be clarified. The concern is that a specific interpretation of “acceptable Islam” will be championed by consultation with the Government’s selected Muslim representatives, whilst mainstream Muslim views may be marginalised as “extremist”. Furthermore, it is concerning that Islam has been singled out without reference to any other faiths.

### *De-Contextualising Challenges and an Absence of Introspection*

The overall approach of the Green Paper is highly problematic. By unilaterally shifting the responsibility and blame for a lack of social inclusion almost entirely onto minority communities, it de-contextualises barriers to inclusion and examines them in a vacuum. While there are brief mentions of hate crimes contributing to isolation, there is a concerning lack of analysis of institutionalised and systematic racism in Britain. Similarly, there is no mention of the way developments, such as the Government’s “hostile environment” policy, the PREVENT strategy, and Brexit, have further contributed to creating a climate of fear, mistrust and disillusionment that prevents BAME individuals from fully and actively participating in British society.

Moreover, the absence of any form of introspection and self-criticism results in a very limited

273. “Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper: Building stronger, more united communities”, HM Government, March 2018. Accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/696993/Integrated\\_Communities\\_Strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696993/Integrated_Communities_Strategy.pdf).



understanding of some of the primary barriers to integration between minorities and broader society. For example, there is no mention of the impact of the Government's policy of austerity and how cuts to public services affect minorities' access to health services, nor is there mention of severely reduced police budgets at a time in which hate crime against minorities is on the rise. Furthermore, there is an absence of commentary on how elements of the British media contribute to spreading harmful narratives surrounding minorities, as well as a lack of analysis regarding the Government's cancellation of the second part of the Leveson Inquiry.

Without a stronger focus on the broader issues and mechanisms of socio-economic discrimination and exclusion, any integration strategy will be confined to be a collection of half measures that will be insufficient to bring about positive change.





# Minority Rights

## Protecting Minority Rights

When considering Islamophobia and its infiltration into discussions surrounding the rights of minority communities and the place of Muslims in society, it is important to briefly acknowledge the national and international legislative commitments that the United Kingdom observes with regards to protecting civil rights, minority rights, and human rights more broadly. Important pieces of legislation include the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, the 1998 Human Rights Act and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

### *The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)*

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), originally drafted in 1950, is an international treaty that protects fundamental freedoms and human rights in Europe that all the 47 Council of Europe member states must observe. The treaty provides a series of legal provisions that protect British Muslim and other minority communities. Amongst these protections are Articles 9, 10, 11, and 2 of the First Protocol:

- **Article 9, Freedom of thought, belief and religion:** “The right to put your thoughts and beliefs into action. This could include your right to wear religious clothing, the right to talk about your beliefs or take part in religious worship.”
- **Article 10, Freedom of expression:** “The right to hold your own opinions and to express them freely without government interference. This includes the right to express your views aloud”.
- **Article 11, Freedom of association:** “the right to form and be part of a trade union, a political party or any another association or voluntary group.”
- **Article 2 of the First Protocol, Right to education:** “Parents also have a right to ensure that their religious and philosophical beliefs are respected during their children’s education.”

### *Human Rights Act*

The UK strengthened the provisions outlined in the ECHR by introducing them into domestic law as part of the 1998 Human Rights Act. The intention of this act was to provide remedies for human rights breaches within the UK court system and, therefore, not requiring an individual to go through the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Specifically, the Human Rights Act makes it unlawful for any public body to act in a way which is incompatible with the ECHR, unless to do so would contravene any other primary legislation. The Human Rights Act requires judiciary bodies to take any decisions, judgment, or opinion of the European Court of Human Rights into account, and to interpret legislation, as far as possible, in a way which is compatible with the protections afforded by ECHR.

It thus includes the same protections afforded by the ECHR, with Articles 9, 10, 11, and 2 of the First Protocol being particularly relevant for minority communities. These Articles mirror those found in the ECHR:

- **Article 9, Freedom of thought, belief and religion:** “The right to put your thoughts and beliefs into action. This could include your right to wear religious clothing, the right to talk about your beliefs or take part in religious worship.”
- **Article 10, Freedom of expression:** “The right to hold your own opinions and to express them freely without government interference. This includes the right to express your views aloud”.



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- **Article 11, Freedom of association:** “the right to form and be part of a trade union, a political party or any another association or voluntary group.”
- **Article 2 of the First Protocol, Right to education:** “Parents also have a right to ensure that their religious and philosophical beliefs are respected during their children’s education.”

### *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) demands that all member states, of which the UK is one, must commit themselves to ensuring for “all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”<sup>274</sup>

There are three particularly relevant articles within the covenant in need of mention; Articles 1, 18, and 21.

- **Article 1:** All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
- **Article 18:** Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice. Freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.
- **Article 27:** In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.<sup>275</sup>

### *The Practice of Religious Rights*

Despite the protections afforded by the ICCPR, the ECHR, and the Human Rights Act, recent years have witnessed numerous controversies, scandals, and intense public debates that have challenged Muslim religious practice and observance in the UK context. Particular public controversy has surrounded the right to halal meat, the building of mosques, the right to access Shariah councils, and the right to religious dress, amongst other topics of public interest. Such debates demonstrate how religious practice, whilst protected by national and international legislation, can still be contested and the discourse around it used as a proxy argument to marginalise minority communities and Muslims specifically.

### *The Right to Religious Dress*

Muslim women’s dress has been a topic of much controversy in recent years. An obvious example of this fascination can be found in Amanda Spielman and Ofsted’s foray into the debate in November 2017, which is discussed in detail in the chapter of this manifesto concerning youth and education. However, it is not an isolated incident. Even the current Prime Minister, Mr Boris Johnson, has taken issue with Muslim women’s dress in an article in August 2018 in which he likened Muslim women in niqab to

274. “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,” The United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner, accessed May 18, 2017, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>.

275. “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.”

“letterboxes” and “bank robbers”. Despite these debates, the right to religious dress is protected by both the ICCPR and Article 9 of the EHRC and Human Rights Act.

## *Halal Meat*

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 with religious rites, including halal and shechita.

In the UK, the British Veterinarian Association and other animal welfare charities have sought to impose stunning only methods, and a series of proposals have been put forward advancing the labelling of meat according to whether it is stunned or unstunned. Muslim and Jewish representatives have supported the calls for clearer labelling. However, they have urged that labelling be adopted with as comprehensive a framework as possible (including labels for electrocution, strangulation, and other methods used in non-religious stunned slaughter), in order to avoid any discriminatory treatment of Muslim and Jewish producers.<sup>276</sup>

Animal welfare is rightly a serious concern, and any debates must include balanced analyses of all issues that are endemic across the industrialised meat industry. These debates must not be used as a proxy to target minority communities in a discriminatory manner.

## *Shariah Councils*

According to the 1996 Arbitration Act, in issues requiring arbitration, any two individuals are entitled to select an arbiter of their choosing to adjudicate between them. Shariah Councils operate within this legal framework. Additionally, UK law does not recognise Shariah Councils as ‘courts’, and they have no power to substitute for or overrule UK justice. As such, their operation and ‘rulings’ are completely subject to UK legislation. For example, a Shariah Council has the prerogative to give a religious ruling on the permissibility of a divorce; however, the claimants still retain the unalienable right to seek a legally binding divorce through the UK courts system. Therefore, such councils may only give guidance, not formal judgements, and their decisions are non-binding on all parties.

Despite this, Shariah Councils have been widely and erroneously viewed as ‘Shariah Courts’, which are believed to operate a parallel legal system to UK law. This has led to widespread opposition to their existence, and in 2017 UKIP formally stated their policy position was to ban them.<sup>277</sup> This was accompanied by a petition to the UK Government to “close shariah courts set up in the UK and make shariah law illegal in Britain” which attracted over 50,000 signatures”.<sup>278</sup>

Despite these misconceptions, these councils represent an essential service for Muslim communities, by providing culturally and religiously relevant guidance. A Government-commissioned Independent Review in 2018 into Shariah Councils by Professor Mona Siddiqui concluded “it is clear that sharia councils are fulfilling a need in some Muslim communities ... we consider the closure of sharia councils is not a viable option”.<sup>279</sup> Moreover, for those who consider issues such as marriage to be a core element of their religion, a favourable ruling from such a council is required in order to be compatible with their beliefs. Consequently, the Muslim Women’s Network highlighted the importance of these councils to the Home Affairs Select Committee arguing that, if they were abolished, women would have no recourse to get an Islamic divorce and could potentially remain trapped in unhealthy and even abusive marriages.<sup>280</sup>

276. “Muslims and Jews united over non-pre-stunned meat labelling”, *Muslim Council of Britain*, November 2013. Accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019. <https://mcb.org.uk/press-releases/muslims-and-jews-united-over-non-pre-stunned-meat-labelling/>.

277. Jessica Elgot, “Ukip to campaign to ban burqa and sharia courts, says Paul Nuttall”, *The Guardian*, April 2017. Accessed: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/23/ukip-to-campaign-to-ban-burka-and-sharia-courts-says-paul-nuttall>

278. “Close sharia courts set up in the UK and make sharia law illegal in Britain”, *Petitions, UK Government and Parliament*, January 2017. Accessed: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019. <https://petition.parliament.uk/archived/petitions/160883>

279. “The independent review into the application of sharia law in England and Wales”, Home Office, February 2018, accessed 06.09.2019, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/678478/6.4152\\_HO\\_CPEF\\_Report\\_into\\_Sharia\\_Law\\_in\\_the\\_UK\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/678478/6.4152_HO_CPEF_Report_into_Sharia_Law_in_the_UK_WEB.pdf)

280. Ibid

## Minority Rights and Brexit

As members of the European Union (EU), the UK is currently subject to the protections afforded by a corpus of EU human rights and equality legislation. These include the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,<sup>281</sup> as well as the many protections EU law affords to our equality and non-discrimination rights through its directives and general principles. Until our formal withdrawal from the EU, its laws will continue to apply directly or indirectly. However, human rights experts such as Amnesty International and Liberty have argued that the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (the 'Withdrawal Act') may significantly weaken our current human rights and equality law protections.<sup>282</sup>

Moreover, the Withdrawal Act, through so-called "Henry VIII powers", hands ministers broad powers to make changes to both primary and secondary legislation using statutory instruments, which are capable of officially becoming part of the law faster due to being subject to less parliamentary scrutiny.<sup>283</sup> Essentially, they allow the Government to change or repeal an act of Parliament after it has been passed without the need to go through Parliament for a second time. If ministers are afforded unchecked powers on matters of human rights, there are fears that rights protections may be compromised in favour of trade, particularly if the UK emerges as economically fragile in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Indeed, there have been reports – as confirmed by the former International Trade Secretary, Liam Fox – that the UK has received demands from some countries that Ministers are pushing to secure agreements with, to scale back its human rights standards in exchange for post-Brexit trade deals.<sup>284</sup>

Moreover, the potential disengagement from EU Directives is of particular concern for minority rights in the UK. Directives are a very common manifestation of EU law. While they do not have *direct* application in the EU member states, they nevertheless set out an objective to be achieved. Member states are then left to individually achieve these objectives however they see fit through a what is known as "transposition", which is the process through which an EU directive is translated into national law.

The European Commission protects various rights through numerous equal treatment directives. These include:

- **Directive 2000/43/EC** against discrimination on grounds of race and ethnic origin.<sup>285</sup>
- **Directive 2000/78/EC** against discrimination at work on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.<sup>286</sup>
- **Directive 2006/54/EC** equal treatment for men and women in matters of employment and occupation.<sup>287</sup>
- **Directive 2004/113/EC** equal treatment for men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services.<sup>288</sup>
- **Directive Proposal (COM(2008)462)** against discrimination based on age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief beyond the workplace.<sup>289</sup>

While the full impacts of Brexit on human rights remains to be seen, it is an important area that must not be overlooked while the complex negotiations inherent in the Brexit process are ongoing.

281. Equality and Human Rights Commission, "What is the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union?", <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/what-are-human-rights/how-are-your-rights-protected/what-charter-fundamental-rights-european-union>, accessed on 13/10/2019.

282. Liberty, "Brexit: where have we got to on human rights?", <https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/news/blog/brexit-where-have-we-got-human-rights>, accessed on 13/10/2019.

283. Institute For Government, "EU Withdrawal Act", <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/eu-withdrawal-act>, accessed on 17/10/2019.

284. Guardian, "Post-Brexit trade partners ask UK to lower human rights standards", <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/13/post-brexit-trade-partners-ask-uk-to-lower-human-rights-standards>, accessed on 17/10/2019.

285. EUR-LEX, "CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION", <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>, accessed on 17/10/2019.

286. Ibid.

287. Ibid.

288. Ibid.

289. Ibid.



### **Policy Pledge:**

**21. Commit to preserving human rights and the protection of minority rights, including, but not limited to, the rights to religious slaughter, male circumcision and the wearing of religious dress or symbols as currently enshrined within UK legislation.**

**22. Commit to supporting the protections afforded by 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, within UK law post-Brexit.**

# Appendix

## MEND's Policy Model to tackle Islamophobia

To solve a society-wide problem, a combination of legislative change, Government and industry initiatives, Muslim community empowerment, and wider community engagement is required. As such, MEND humbly proposes the following initiatives and policy changes to tackle the causes, driving forces, and impacts of Islamophobia.

### *Legislative Changes:*

**Press regulation:** We call on policymakers to commit to the full implementation of the Royal Charter on press regulation and the commencement of the second part of the Leveson Inquiry, including an investigation into the prevalence of Islamophobia within the media.

**Counter-terror legislation:** While the agreed independent review of PREVENT is a significant development, the Government must commit to independently reviewing all counter-terrorism legislation enacted since 2000 with a view to curbing the encroachment of counter-terrorism policies on civil liberties.

**Incitement to religious hatred legislation:** Considering the disparities between the protections afforded for racial and religious hatred, it is essential to review the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act with a view to strengthening legal protection afforded to religion and equalise it with those granted to race.

**Primary legislation to deal with social media offences and online hate speech:** The Government should consider primary legislation to deal with social media offences and work with social media companies to protect free speech while developing an efficient strategy to tackle online hate speech.

### *Government and Industry Initiatives:*

**Racial and religious equality:** In the context of current Brexit negotiations, attention needs to be given to supporting the principles 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, within UK law post-Brexit.

**Employment:** The barriers to Muslim economic empowerment is an area that needs to be tackled by both governmental and industry initiatives designed to address religious, racial and gendered discrimination in the workplace through targeted interventions at all stages of recruitment, retention and promotion, including through the use of name-blind applications.

**Media and broadcasting:** There needs to be an emphasis on promoting positive and normalised images of Muslims within media and broadcasting. It is also essential that support is given to educative and industry initiatives designed to attract Muslim and BAME individuals into the spheres of journalism and broadcasting.

**Public exclusion:** Public figures must show greater maturity and responsibility when discussing integration debates and take care not to cause hysteria for the sake of political popularity and agendas. Meanwhile, especially considering the unclear status of Human Rights commitments within Brexit negotiations, we must ensure that the tenants of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act are preserved within UK law post-Brexit.

**Crime and policing:** Areas in need of government support include:

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

- Launching research into the underlying reasons for the disproportionately high numbers of Muslim prisoners, including issues of socio-economic deprivation and structural issues within the judicial system.
- Supporting educative and industry initiatives to attract BAME individuals into the police force.

### *Muslim Community Empowerment:*

The Government's current disengagement policy is a clear barrier to British Muslim's participation in social and political life. It is therefore essential that the Government mends its broken relationship with Muslim communities by committing to engaging with and listening to a broader spectrum of representative Muslim grassroots organisations, such as MEND and MCB.

Muslims themselves have a responsibility to ensure that they are engaging with processes of democracy to overcome the challenges they face. As such, there are a number of ways in which British Muslim communities may be empowered to play their full role as civic actors. Strategies to achieve this include:

- Supporting educative and industry initiatives designed to attract Muslims and BAME individuals into the spheres of politics, civil service, media, and broadcasting.
- Placing greater emphasis on educational programs aimed at empowering minority communities to be actively engaged within politics and media.
- Encouraging grassroots and community-led movements to overcome barriers to reporting hate crime and encourage maximum reporting of Islamophobic incidents to the police.

### *Wider Community Engagement:*

Islamophobia, like all forms of hatred, is an issue of social justice, and therefore, it is inherent upon every member of society to contribute towards ending it. As such, there are certain areas that MEND feels should be addressed:

- Promoting greater awareness of Islam.
- Promoting greater inter-community engagement.
- Prioritising PSRE (Personal, Social and Religious Education) and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) in the national curriculum to prepare young people for life in a diverse and pluralistic society.
- Developing training programmes and resources for teachers focussed on tackling bullying based on race, religion, disability or sexuality.
- Developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and other forms of hatred.
- Supporting community and school-led programmes that encourage cultural exchange between pupils of different racial, religious, ethnic and other backgrounds.
- Supporting academic freedoms and initiatives to decolonise education, whilst giving greater emphasis within the national curriculum to shared histories and the contributions of minority communities in building our society.





Email: [info@mend.org.uk](mailto:info@mend.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 7247 7707

[www.mend.org.uk](http://www.mend.org.uk)  
**mend**

    /mendcommunity