SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS (STUC) BLACK WORKERS' COMMITTEE (BWC) BRIEFING ON TACKLING ISLAMOPHOBIA

Muslim engagement & development

mend

Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) Black Workers' Committee (BWC) Briefing on Tackling Islamophobia

A Submission from Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND)

MEND's contribution to the consultation

This submission from Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) seeks to provide stakeholders of the Scottish Trade Union Movement with an explanation of what Islamophobia is, as well as views and ideas about how to best tackle Islamophobia whenever and wherever it occurs.

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.). As MEND's primary aim is to represent issues that affect British Muslim communities, this submission ultimately concerns disparities in terms of religion and ethnicity.

MEND has produced this document on the basis of the STUC's invitation to submit evidence regarding the following themes:

1. Contextualising Islamophobia in the labour market.

2. Understanding the manifestations of Islamophobia and how to approach it as a phenomenon.

3. Creating a policy model to address Islamophobia.

Considering MEND's expertise in structural and institutional inequalities and their impact on minority communities, we hope that our contribution will provide valuable insights for the STUC in developing their plan to develop, refine, and implement their strategy to tackle Islamophobia.

Contextualising Islamophobia 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.[1]

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[1] "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.

Studies have also shown that Muslims have been disproportionately confined to unskilled professions or jobs with limited opportunities for progression.[2]

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.[3] Employer attitudes have frequently been cited as a reason for the barriers to Muslims' progression in the workplace. Indeed, in research conducted by BBC "Inside Out" it was 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.[4] Meanwhile, the National Equality Panel previously found that Muslims receive, on average, 13-21% less pay than their white Christian counterparts with equivalent qualifications.[5]

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.[6]

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".[7] 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.[8]

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 gap", was ten percentage points.[9] 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.[10] 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.[11] Meanwhile, amongst all minorities, Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers were more likely to be concentrated in the three lowest-skilled occupation groups, with more

[2] 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.

[3] 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.

[4] 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.

[5] 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.

[6] MEND (2016) Tackling racism and employment discrimination in the UK

[7] 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.

[8] Ibid.

[9] "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.

[10] 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.

[11] "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/.

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."[12] 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.
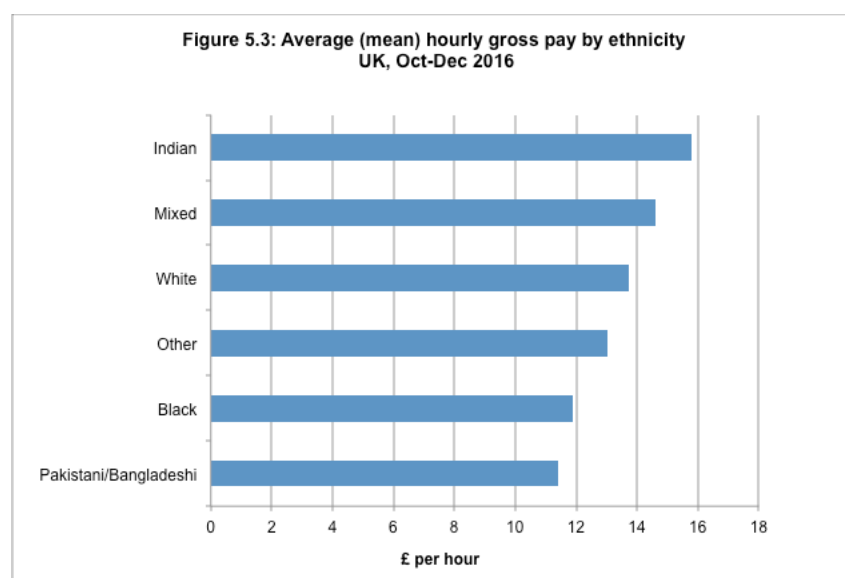
Figure 5.3: Average (mean) hourly gross pay by ethnicity UK, Oct-Dec 2016

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.

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.[13]

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.[14] 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.[15]

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] 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.

[15] Ibid.

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.[16]

Evidence from the 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.

Employment-based discrimination is the largest area of our discrimination work at the IRU, with 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.[17]

- A Muslim candidate was asked in a job interview if he would consider becoming an Iman and what he thought of Muslim converts. The interviewer then continued to state that she believers two staff members were crazy for converting to Islam.[18]

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.

Understanding the manifestations of Islamophobia and how to approach it as a phenomenon.

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:

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

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

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[16] *Tackling Racism and Employment Discrimination in the UK*, Presentation, MEND (2016).

[17] MEND, Islamophobia Response Unit: Case No. GY41/21

[18] MEND, Islamophobia Response Unit: Case No. CZ67/11

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".[19] 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.

- 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.

- While being an act of recognition for victims of Islamophobia, 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."[20] 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

[19] Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg, *Islamophobia Making Muslims the Enemy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), p11.

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

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."[21] 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."[22]

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

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[21] 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/cerd.aspx

[22] 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/

- *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 policymakers 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.

"Factors to be aware of"

On page 3 of the STUC BWC's briefing, the highlighted "factors to be aware of" regarding Islamophobia are:

1. *"Islamophobia can affect the different groups of protected characteristics;*

2. *Islamophobia can affect all the diverse communities that exist in Scotland i.e. Arab, South East Asian, African, Sunni, Shia, White Converts;*

3. *The media includes social media and not just the traditional print and broadcast media;*

4. *It may not be in the interest of the powerful, who often tend to be white, middle aged and male, to challenge discrimination and make change happen;*

5. *Change does not happen overnight – often it requires collective action, over a sustained period of time, and an appeal to hearts and minds."*

MEND would generally agree with the importance of recognising these factors, however they are not the only factors that must be taken into account.

At the core, they would benefit from a holistic understanding of what Islamophobia actually encompasses. It is for this reason that the above discussion on defining Islamophobia is paramount. It is through approaching a holistic understanding of the phenomena that a full understanding of all the integral factors can be brought forth.

In particular, there needs to be recognition of Islamophobia as a form of racism that acts to exclude Muslims from full and equal socio-economic participation. In viewing it through this lens, it is easier to identify forms of indirect discrimination that Muslims face (for example, meetings and social gatherings being exclusively held in settings predicated upon alcohol) which function to create barriers to Muslims' socio-economic progression.

As such, these factors would benefit from more comprehensive guidelines regarding how Islamophobia should be understood and how it is manifest in workplace environments.

Creating a policy model to address Islamophobia

On page 3 of the STUC BWC's briefing, the "action required" section lists the following suggested activities:

1. *"Talk to people who have lived experience of islamophobia within and out with the Scottish Trade Union Movement;*

2. *Promote existing tackling islamophobia toolkits and tailoring these for the Scottish Trade Union Movement;*

3. *Use education resources such as Unions into Schools and recruit champions to educate young people about islamophobia and how to tackle it;*

4. *Recruit more Muslims into trade unions and encourage their greater participation in trade union structures and the wider Scottish Trade Union Movement;*

5. *Identify Muslims already active in the Scottish Trade Union Movement and showcase their experience, talent and activism through creating case studies;*

6. *Challenge State and Media bias and behaviours which are deemed to demonstrate Islamophobia;*

7. *And enforce policies and regulate guidelines that been developed and published in an effort to tackle islamophobia in the Scottish Trade Union Movement and across Scottish Society."*

MEND would wholeheartedly agree with these actions, however, we would also suggest that they could be strengthened by a robust framing through the lens of the relationship between the following avenues for change:

- Legislative change,

- Government and industry initiatives,

- Muslim community empowerment,

- and wider community engagement.

The STUC BWC should consider how they can engage in each of these areas, whether through working to implement changes where the power is in their remit, or through encouraging other governmental and state institutions and policymakers to make change.

Legislative Changes:

Press regulation: STUC BWC should call on policymakers to commit to the full implementation of the Royal Charter on press regulation (including the implementation of Section 40) 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: STUC BWC should call on the Government 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. At the same time, STUC BWC should work to ensure that policymakers commit to removing the obligation for Scottish employers, educational institutions, healthcare services, and other public bodies to enforce the PREVENT strategy.

Incitement to religious hatred legislation: STUC BWC should commit to working with legislators to ensure that the Hate Crime (Scotland) Bill does not include the stipulation for proving "intent", whilst also maintaining the protections against "insulting" behaviour in relation to the stirring up of racial hatred and mirroring this protection in relation to the stirring up of religious hatred.

Primary legislation to deal with social media offences and online hate speech: STUC BWC should call on the Government to 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 Brexit, STUC BWC should call on policymakers to support 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, including through:

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

- 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.

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

- Helping employers explore and understand the various manifestations of Islamophobia, including indirect forms of discrimination that may exclude Muslims from fully engaging as equal partners in workplace settings.

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: STUC BWC should encourage public figures to show greater maturity and responsibility when discussing controversial topics and take care not to cause hysteria for the sake of political popularity and agendas. At the same time, STUC BWC should work to ensure that all political parties outline their strategies to improve diversity within candidate selection ahead of all Scottish elections.

Crime and policing: STUC BWC should call on policymakers to support:

- 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.

- Ensuring that Police Scotland record Islamophobic hate crimes as a separate category of hate crime.

- Increasing diversity at all levels of seniority within Police Scotland and at all levels of the criminal justice system, including through positive intervention and mentorship programs for BAME members.

Muslim Community Empowerment:

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 STUC BWC could be integral to supporting positive change, including:

- Promoting greater awareness of Islam.

- Promoting greater inter-community engagement.

- Prioritising PSE within schools and enlist grassroots Muslim organisations to assist in developing teaching materials to educate young people on the dangers of Islamophobia.

- Supporting academic freedoms and initiatives to decolonise education, whilst including emphasis on colonialism, shared histories, and the contributions of minority communities in building our society as a compulsory component within the curriculum for excellence.

- Tackling the production and reinforcement of unconscious bias through educational syllabi by investigating the presentation of minority groups in teaching materials across all subjects and implementing awareness training for all teachers in conjunction with representative grassroots organisations.

- Developing training programmes for both teachers focussed on tackling and addressing bullying based on race, religion, disability, or sexuality. Such training must include increasing the confidence and willingness of teachers to enforce policies and procedures and to report incidences to the appropriate authorities when dealing with such cases.

- Establishing faith school provisions in the state sector for Muslims and other faith communities.

- Implementing Islamically-compliant student loans to encourage more Scottish Muslim students to attend university.

- Increasing the diversity within teaching, particularly at senior leadership levels, and through mentorship programs for junior BAME staff.

- Supporting community and school-led programmes that encourage cultural exchange between pupils of different racial, religious, ethnic and other backgrounds.