

## **Cross Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia**

30<sup>th</sup> January 2018 TG20/21, Scottish Parliament

### **Present**

Mark Adams	Sense over Sectarianism Glasgow City Council
Muhammed Adrees	Muslim Council of Scotland
Zavina Ahmed	CEMVO
Rehan Ahmed Raza	Minhaj-al-Quran
Khadija Afandi	MCS
Smina Akhtar	University of Glasgow
Junaid Ashraf	
M Ashraf	Islamic Educational Trust (Cumbernauld)
Harris Aslam	Kirkcaldy Central Mosque and Community Centre
Osama Aslam	
Iman Abou Atta	TellMAMA
Muna Ausat	Community Advisor for Police Scotland
Syed Ausat	Falkirk Muslim Forum
G Avan	Amina mwrc
Nazim Azad	Council of British Pakistanis Scotland
Shaheen Baber	Police Safer Communities
Julia Davidson	Scotland Against Criminalising Communities (SACC)
Samena Dean	
Khadijah Elshayyal	University of Edinburgh
M S Farooq	Pakistan Association
John Finnie	MSP
Arun Gopinath	CSREC
Rhoda Grant	MSP
Mark Griffin	MSP
Faten Hameed	Scottish Iraqi Association
Mohammed Hameed	SACRO
Peter Hopkins	Newcastle University
Khalida Husaain	
Yasmin Hussain	Craigholme School
Zahra Hussain	
Zareen Islam	Muslim Women's Association of Edinburgh
Mazhar Khan	The Ark
Tabah Khan	
Z A Khan	BAMK
Monica Lennon	MSP
Richard Leonard	MSP
Rebecca Marek	CRER
Arzu Merali	IHRC
Azzam Mohamad	MCB
Ajaz Mohammed	Dunfermline Central Mosque
Khadija Mohammed	University of West of Scotland and SAMEE
T Mohammed	Scottish Muslim Scouts
Paul Morron	Glasgow Jewish Representative Council
Fiyaz Mughal	TellMAMA
Nina Munday	Fife Centre for Equalities
Khaleda Noon	Action for Children
David Pettigrew	Police

Abdul Qadar	NFRN
Habibur Rahman	Dunfermline Central Mosque
N Rahmatulla	
Mo Razzaq	South Lanarkshire Labour and NFRN
Anas Sarwar	MSP
Ali Salamati	Al-Mahdi Foundation
Alan Smith	Bauer Media
Iain Stewart	Edinburgh Interfaith
Lindsay Taylor	MCS
Annie Wells	MSP

### **Welcome**

Anas Sarwar welcomed everyone to the meeting and set out the agenda for the day.

### **Election of Office bearers**

Chair – Anas Sarwar MSP was proposed and seconded to serve as Chair

Vice Chairs – Annie Wells MSP was proposed as second as one of the Vice Chairs

Secretary – Peter Hopkins was proposed and seconded to serve as Secretary

### **Presentations**

Presentations were then delivered by Professor Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University and by Iman Abou Atta from TellMAMA with Fiyaz Mughal (see attached slides).

### **Future actions**

Anas Sarwar then presented future actions focusing on:

- Further research
- Legislative framework
- Police Scotland/reporting
- Media monitoring
- Employability
- Education

### **AOCB**

Anas Sarwar chaired an open discussion about the direction of the CPG with those attending sharing personal experiences and ideas for the agenda and future direction of the group. Key issues raised were:

The focus and direction of the group

- Focus on solutions rather than the problems
- The CPG not being a forum for commentary but for action
- The need to have a close relationship with the CPG on race equality
- Framing – how are the issues we are discussing being framed?
- Documentation – how are we documenting all of the work that is going on?
- The need to focus on strategic solutions
- The need to educate specific politicians about Islamophobia
- Not a talking shop but a forum for action
- Working with local authorities
- Sharing good practice
- Engagement working both ways

Issues about the Scottish context

- The Lord Bracadale review
- The lack of a diverse anti-racist movement in Scotland
- The need to challenge the idea of Scotland being all inclusive and welcoming
- Numbers may be low but the impact can be disproportionate

#### Specific issues to be attentive to:

- The issue of rural racism and Islamophobia
- The importance of communication
- The challenges posed by Brexit and increase in racism
- The challenge of changing internal perceptions within the Muslim community
- Issues specific to refugee and asylum-seeking communities

#### Policing and crime

- Need to have a direct relationship with the Police.
- Need to develop a relationship with a Senior Procurator Fiscal
- The need to face up to the hatemongers and challenge them
- How to engage with the perpetrators

#### Education and employment

- Work with young people in schools
- Teacher training – 1.3% of teaching workforce are BME yet 60% want to leave.
- Gendered Islamophobia
- The workplace and Islamophobia
- The need to educate our own communities (e.g. Eid in the Park and “meet a Muslim”)
- Employability issues – more graduates from BME backgrounds but does this feed through

#### Online Islamophobia and the media

- Online issues/social media
- Issues of belonging and home
- Promotion and progression, brain drain and institutional racism
- Empower people to respond to issue of media misrepresentation by engaging editors etc

#### Politics and politicians

- The need to challenge the absence of Islamophobia in key debates
- Issues about being a BME in politics

Anas Sarwar closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their contributions. He emphasised the importance of working towards solutions and a focus on tackling Islamophobia.