

31 May 2022

# Independent Review of Social Cohesion and Resilience - **NSS response**

Submitted online:

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=EGg0v32c3kOociSi7zmVqLAvxFsmpeJAuen06HliI0VURVFVV0JNRkVNQ0FFUDgzMFczS1c0MTBJNy4u>

7. Which of the following best describes the work done by you/your organisation?

Other: Promoting secular democracy

10. Have you or anyone you know personally been targeted by extremists within the last five years?

Yes, someone I know personally has been targeted

11. Do you think your experiences or the experiences of those targeted by extremists are adequately recognised in law, by police or by Government?

No

12. Please expand on your answer above, explaining why you think experiences are or are not recognised:

Police and other government agencies are reluctant to intervene when “Ex-Muslims”, people who have left Islam, are targeted by extremists. They often advise victims not to provoke the extremists, thus putting the blame on them for speaking out about the persecution they face.

The person interviewed for this response reported that she had given up reporting incidents to the police as nothing is done.

13. Did this targeting of yourself, or others take place online or offline?

Both

14. How were you/the individual(s) who you know personally targeted by the extremist individual/organisation?

(you may select more than one)

Harassment

Intimidation

Ostracisation

Propagation of smears, conspiracy theories or disinformation (defamation and false inflammatory information)

Stalking

Threats to family/friends

Threats of a sexual/violent nature

Verbal abuse

Victim shaming/blaming

15. Without providing names or personal details of anyone involved, please briefly explain what happened.

The individual faced a targeted campaign of harassment due to public criticism of Islam. She received numerous abusive messages, including threats, many of which were sexual. She has also been the victim of a smear campaign. The result is that many others will not work with her.

16. In your opinion, did the perpetrator(s) target you/the individual (who you know personally) because you/they work(ed) or volunteer(ed) in any of the following roles?

(you may select more than one)

Human rights campaigner

Political activist

17. In your opinion, were you targeted because you or the individual (who you know personally) hold or were perceived to hold any of the following protected characteristics?

(you may select more than one)

Faith or belief (including differing intra-community opinion/belief or non-belief)

Sex/Gender

18. Please select what you feel was the context or trigger of the perpetrator's extremist behaviour targeting you or the individual (who you know personally)?

(you may select more than one)

Involved in activism

19. How often did this targeting occur?

Multiple times

20. Please select which of the following describes the perpetrator(s):

Extremist or hate activist

Extremist or hate group/organisation

Faith activist

Other: Government of country of origin

21. What has happened as a result of this extremist behaviour?

(you may select more than one)

Extremist behaviour is ongoing

22. What, if any, was the impact on you or the individual of the targeting by extremists?

Guidance: The following questions ask about one event in particular when you or an individual you personally know were targeted by extremists and the impact this had. If you have multiple relevant experiences, please use the one that you feel had the largest impact on your/the individual's life. The final question asks for any further information, where you can indicate brief details of other episodes. This applies whether you were targeted yourself, know the person who was targeted or work for an organisation that supports victims.

(You may select more than one)

Damage to mental health

Damage to professional, personal or social life

Loss of career

Negative impact on family

Ostracization from local community

Reputational damage

Took additional security measures

### 23. How long has this occurred for?

More than 6 months

### 24. If you/the individual (who you know personally) reported the incident, who did you/they report it to?

The following questions ask about whether you or the person who was targeted reported the incident to anyone and if so, what was that response and how adequate was it.

Police/ enforcement (e.g., probation officer, community support officer etc)

### 25. Please rate the following in terms of importance for describing how cohesive an area is:

	Not important	Minor importance	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat important	Very important
Trust in democratic institutions, including Parliament	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Trust and engagement with local council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Engagement in civic participation, civic consultation and civic activism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
People from different backgrounds in local area get on well together	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Strong feeling of belonging to local area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Mixing socially with people from different ethnic or religious backgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Satisfaction with local area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Lack of fear of crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Lack of racial or religious harassment/discrimination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Public rejection/challenge in community of extremist actors who seek to divide and/or who are promoting hatred of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 37. Do you believe local communities, have a responsibility/role to challenge extremism and protect social cohesion in their local area?

Yes

38. Please rate how important a role you think the following play in challenging extremism and protecting social cohesion

	Unimportant	Minor importance	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat important	Very important
Faith leaders/places of worship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local authorities/public bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Civil society groups (anti-racism group, social movement etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Schools and colleges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Charities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local leaders (Councillors, local MP etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local businesses (shop, sports club, music group, pub etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. Please rate how well you feel these organisations/bodies are currently playing an effective role in challenging extremism and protecting social cohesion?

	Counter-productive	Ineffective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Effective	Very effective
Faith leaders/places of worship	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local authorities/public bodies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Civil society groups (anti-racism group, social movement etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schools and colleges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charities	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local leaders (Councillors, local MP etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local businesses (shop, sports club, music group, pub etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 42. What are the key obstacles to local communities and civil society challenging extremism and protecting social cohesion?

(you may select more than one)

Inadequate funding

Inadequate guidance

Influence or support of extremist groups on communities and civil society groups

Lack of central Government support/guidance

Lack of community support and partnership

Lack of local/national political support

Lack of resource and capacity

Lack of strategy

Lack of support from local authority

Lack of tools and training

Low knowledge of or access to extremist actors/organisations

Poor join up and collaboration between communities, civil society organisations and local authorities

Source of extremist narrative is external to local community (e.g., national or international politics/events)

Threats and abuse from extremists and/or those who oppose counter extremism efforts

Other: Fear of speaking out against certain forms of extremism

#### 43. Please share one example of good practice of communities and civil society organisations empowering local communities to come together and challenge extremism

We are encouraged by the work of Fiyaz Mughal through his organisations Faith Matters and Muslims Against Anti Semitism.

Our own organisation also tries to empower local communities to come together to challenge extremism. In April we held a successful event for members of the Bengali diaspora in Britain to come together to discuss challenging extremism and promoting secularism:

<https://banglamirrornews.com/2022/04/26/bengali-diaspora-come-together-for-secularism/>

#### 44. Without mentioning any names, please share one example of poor practice of communities and civil society organisations countering extremism and/or social cohesion

Poor practice occurs when organisations with extreme views, for example those who support violence against blasphemers and apostates from Islam, are allowed to frustrate attempts to tackle extremism. Such groups will often counter criticism of their views and practices with allegations of “Islamophobia” and racism.

#### 45. How would you rate the adequacy of support and protection from local authorities and public bodies for those working in, promoting, reporting, or teaching counter extremism and social cohesion?

Please rate from: 1 – counterproductive, 2 – inadequate, 3 – minimal, 4 – good, 5 – outstanding

2 – inadequate

#### 46. Where there are low levels of support and protection for those who work in counter extremism or those involved in it from local authorities and public bodies, what has been the wider social impact?

(you may select more than one)

Increased engagement and legitimacy of perpetrators

Increase in extremist and divisive narratives in the community

Reduction in counter-extremism/social cohesion work

47. What, if any, are the major barriers to local authorities, institutions and public bodies being able to provide the right level of support for those working in, promoting, reporting or teaching counter extremism and social cohesion?

(you may select more than one)

Insufficient funding, resources and capacity

Lack of courage, institutional blindness or fear of causing offence

Lack of understanding of extremist ideologies and individuals/organisations

Support/influence of extremist organisations

48. Please expand on your previous answer

(50 word limit)

Extremism is poorly recognised. Even charities sometimes promote extremism, often under the cloak of the charitable purpose "the advancement of religion". This may be exacerbated by local authorities outsourcing service provision to religious groups. There is a hesitancy to confront extremism where it may lead to accusations of anti-religious bigotry.

49. Without naming individuals please provide one example of good practice from local authorities, institutions, and public bodies in supporting those working in counter extremism and social cohesion?

(100 word limit)

Ofsted have been doing good work confronting extremism and ideas that undermine social cohesion in independent faith schools, in addition to cracking down on unregistered schools which are toxic to social cohesion. This is despite individuals in Ofsted being viciously targeted by extremists. However, Ofsted still needs powers to tackle this thoroughly.

50. Without naming individuals, please provide one example of poor practice from local authorities, institutions, and public bodies in supporting those working in counter extremism and social cohesion, and explain why this poor practice occurred?

(100 word limit)

Very little has been done to protect the rights of teachers accused of offending religious sensibilities. Multiple schools have recently faced aggressive protests from religious extremists for teaching that same-sex couples exist and have been forced to change the curriculum as a result. And a teacher at Batley Grammar School lost his job and is still in hiding after protests from religious extremists because he showed a picture of the Islamic prophet Muhammad in an RE lesson about blasphemy.

51. In your opinion, what more protection and support should be offered to those working in counter-extremism and social cohesion?

(you may select more than one)

Advice on security and safety

Advice on where to receive further support

Financial

Legal

Local authority public backing

52. Where should this support primarily come from?

(you may select more than one)

Central government

Counter-extremism organisation

Local authority

Public body e.g. police, school, please specify: police

53. As part of the review, the Independent Adviser, Sara Khan will be using examples of peoples lived experiences as case studies or quotes. These will not include any identifiable information. Are you happy for extracts of your responses to this survey to be included by the Adviser?

Please note choosing not to agree will not result in your survey being removed, or exempt from further analysis.

Yes