



# Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) & PREVENT

*A response from the  
Muslim Community*

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## 1.0 Introduction

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The vast majority of Muslims are against violent extremism and terrorism and would like to help to counteract it. They are as appalled by violent extremism as anyone else and reject any justification that it can be condoned by Islamic teachings.

However, the government's approach to dealing with terrorism by targeting the whole Muslim community as 'potential terrorists' in its **Prevent Strategy** is flawed and fraught with perils. We believe that rather than creating community cohesion and eliminating terrorism it has the potential to create discord and inflame community tensions. Furthermore, we believe this unprecedented strategy constitutes an infringement of civil liberties and human rights.

There is a danger that PVE is becoming a well-funded industry with vested interests. Our concern is that political considerations and frictions that have nothing to do with the Muslim community or the hundreds of people who, like us, have been working on the ground for decades are obstructing the vital work of producing communities at peace with themselves and each other.

As an organisation with extensive experience of working for the welfare of Muslim families we are seriously concerned about the implications of the Prevent strategy and how it is impacting in local Muslim communities.

In this paper we intend to highlight why we believe the government's approach towards its Muslim community is flawed and will offer constructive recommendations as to what the government should be doing.

## 2.0 Executive Summary

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### **Prevent Strategy**

The most glaring concerns of the Prevent strategy are the targeting of the whole Muslim community as potential terrorists, the fusion of counter terrorism with community cohesion and community development initiatives and the mainstreaming of Prevent in the core services of local councils.

The strategy has a heavy surveillance focus, which has considerable risks involved and is morally dubious.

The strategy is confusing and unclear. It aims, for example, to strengthen the 'capacity' of Muslims to resist violent extremism and to build 'resilience.' Whatever that means is open to differing understandings. At one level, the euphemistic and vague terminology serves the purpose of getting the strategy past the Muslim community with little protest. The loose definitions also leave the strategy open to interpretation at the risk of being counter productive. It gives officers substantial leeway in implementation with no accountability to Muslims, who are the subject of it.

The government is giving responsibility to ill equipped local authorities to wade into a highly sensitive area when most have limited experience and understanding of Muslims to properly identify the risk of terrorism. There is a great potential for blunders, which could destroy lives.

Funding grassroots Muslim groups to deliver Prevent is unhelpful as it causes them to lose credibility and trust with the very groups the government wants them to engage. Hardened extremists are not likely to attend projects funded by the government. Nor are parents going to send their children to 'preventative' projects that will stigmatise them. There is so much hostility to the strategy amongst Muslims once they become aware of it, that local councils and funded groups finding implementation difficult, are resorting to disguising the source and objectives of the funding by being 'economical' with information and using misleading labels.

The crucial element that is missing to crystallise the government's strategy is the lack of a credible Muslim voluntary sector and grassroots representative structures that

local councils and central government can work and consult with and to whom they would be accountable.

It is significant that national Muslim groups who claim to represent the Muslim community have not made any statements on such an important issue. This demonstrates their lack of understanding of the issues affecting British Muslims and their failure in advocating on Muslim issues and making the government accountable. It is extremely worrying considering the serious and far reaching implications for the Muslim community.

There has been a considerable investment of public funds in delivering Prevent, but it is doubtful that the return in terms of preventing violent extremism will justify the cost in monetary terms and in the loss of goodwill of the Muslim community.

We believe that it will be more productive for the government to build trust, and address the needs of the Muslim community in the interest of social justice, rather than through the lens of anti-terrorism. This will be more constructive and helpful in the fight against violent extremism and will get Muslims on board as equal partners.

Decades of Muslim socio-economic disadvantage was statistically hidden until the Census 2001, which finally had a question on faith identity. This at long last brought to public attention the extreme social exclusion of the Muslim community. We believe that this social exclusion is a contributory factor to making a tiny minority vulnerable to violent extremism

The staggeringly high levels of deprivation in the Muslim community means there is every justification for the provision of capacity building, community development and community cohesion strategies to specifically target Muslims without delivering it through the PVE agenda.

By tackling social exclusion and addressing institutional anti-Muslim discrimination the pressures on the Muslim community will decrease and the end result will be the diminishing of marginalisation and radicalisation without vilifying an entire community.

### 3.0 Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) & The Prevent Strategy

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#### Counter-terrorism Strategy - CONTEST

To respond to this threat, (of violent extremism) the Government has developed a counter-terrorism strategy known as **CONTEST**. This has four main components, each with a clear objective:

1. **Pursue** – to stop terrorist attacks;
2. **Prepare** – where we cannot stop an attack, to mitigate its impact;
3. **Protect** – to strengthen our overall protection against terrorist attacks; and
4. **Prevent** – to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremists.

#### The Prevent Strategy

The Prevent part of CONTEST has five key strands:

1. **Challenging** the violent extremist ideology and supporting mainstream voices;
2. **Disrupting** those who promote violent extremism and supporting the institutions where they are active;
3. **Supporting** individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism;
4. **Increasing** the resilience of communities to violent extremism; and
5. **Addressing** the grievances that ideologies are exploiting.

*"The most severe terrorist threat currently comes from individuals and groups who distort Islam to attempt to justify murder and their attacks on our shared values...The Prevent strategy sets out how we are addressing this threat to improve the security of the UK in the long term.*

**The Prevent Strategy**

<http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications/publication-search/prevent-strategy/>

The Prevent Strategy is managed by the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) in the Home Office. As part of the Strategy the government is investing £86 million in a programme of work around 'preventing violent extremism' (PVE). In 2007 the government gave local authorities £6 million of this money for local projects

through the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund (PVEPF).

In 2008 the government started to further roll out its Prevent strategy through which £80 million more will be spent on this agenda over the next three years. £45 million of this money is being given to 94 local authorities because they have large Muslim communities, to “*support local authorities and community groups in improving the capacity of local communities to resist violent extremism.*”

The government aims to mainstream Prevent into the core business of local councils and other statutory agencies for the long term. This means across services such as housing, education and social services.

### **National Indicator 35: *Building resilience to violent extremism***

National Indicator 35, which is about building resilience to violent extremism, is an assessment framework that evaluates the effectiveness of Prevent related work programmes on a 1-5 scale against four main criteria. These include:

- ***Understanding of, and engagement with, Muslim communities***  
Highest score is when a ‘sophisticated understanding of local Muslim communities is used to drive policy development (i.e. Prevent agenda) and engagement.’
- ***Knowledge and understanding of the drivers and causes of violent extremism and the Prevent objectives***  
Highest score is for a “Strong understanding of the Prevent objectives and the drivers of violent extremism, as well as of the interfaces with related policy areas. Full use of local, national and international research, guidance and expertise on the agenda, including good information sharing between partners. Good understanding of local circumstances and drivers.”
- ***Development of a risk-based preventing violent extremism action plan, in support of delivery of the Prevent objectives***  
Highest score is for “Risk based and strategically focused action plan with strong links to the knowledge and understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, the ‘Prevent’ strategy and to extensive consultation with communities and local partner agencies. Agenda effectively **‘mainstreamed’** through consideration of existing service delivery and policies, alongside the development of specific actions, projects and capabilities. Awareness of agenda throughout partner organisations. Full range of activities across all strands of the ‘Prevent’ strategy.

Innovative actions, projects and capabilities clearly identified. Strong evidence of multi-agency approach to deliver across a broad range of partners and agencies, including synergies with CDRPs (Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships) and other bodies.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/747537.pdf>

Local authorities were asked to select NI 35 as one of 35 from the government's 198 national priorities. However there was resistance and concern.

*The selection or non-selection of National Indicator 35: Building resilience to violent extremism emerged as a contentious issue during LAA negotiations.*

*The Home Office (HO), via the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT), have produced a 'heat map' which identifies 30 areas with a high risk of producing violent extremists and are seeking a good take-up of NI: 35 across this group. Around nineteen areas across the country have indicated that they will pick up the indicator in their priority 35 set.*

*The HO believe that local authorities that do not select NI:35 are not prioritising PVE and concluding that little or no PVE work is being undertaken. To persuade local authorities to select NI:35, the HO is applying pressure via the Police, and senior officials during LAA (Local Area Agreements) negotiations which has had only limited success...*

*Local authorities are reluctant to pick up the indicator because the term "violent extremism" could alienate communities, undermining cohesion work and are extremely cautious about making public statements around PVE. There is also concern about the measurability of the indicator.*

**Strategic issues - Preventing Violent Extremism**  
**LGA Office Holders Item 2a 16 April 2008**

*“The LGA understand and share central Government's determination to fight terrorism, but we are keen to ensure there is a distinction between efforts focused on dealing with terrorist threats, and broader approaches to community cohesion.”*

**The Local Government Association (LGA) Website**

*LGA reviewed the final draft of the PREVENT Delivery plan and commented that the Plan focuses heavily on Police objectives and the performance management of NI: 35 while lacking detailed links to local government, particularly elected members. The Plan makes no references to the tension for local authorities and partners between PVE work and maintaining community cohesion and no recognition that progress on PVE can occur without being performance managed by NI:35.*

**Strategic issues - Preventing Violent Extremism Local Government**

## 4.0 Background

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In the decades before 9/11, Muslim communities fell through the gaps while the government addressed poverty, drug abuse, homelessness and mental health through the prism of race. As a multiethnic faith-based community, Muslims were effectively invisible to the government. The consequences were devastating.

An-Nisa Society set up in 1985 to cater for the welfare of Muslim families and already in the mid 80's we were seeing the extent of the damage being done to Muslim families by our statistical invisibility and institutional anti-Muslim-discrimination/Institutional Islamophobia. We began to see spiralling family breakdown, disproportionate numbers of young Muslim males in prison, soaring physical and mental health problems and youth disaffection.

An-Nisa worked to bring the extreme social exclusion of the Muslim community to the attention of the government. We argued for the recognition of our Muslim identity, for religious discrimination legislation to be brought in as a priority and for Muslim disadvantage to be addressed.

The 9/11 attacks in America and the 7/7 attacks here changed everything. The government suddenly woke up to the 2 million of us not as citizens but as “potential terrorists” and counter-terrorism and “Preventing Violent Extremism” (PVE) is now the government’s primary vehicle for dealing with British Muslims.

Prior to 9/11 there had been an almost total lack of engagement between government, policy makers, providers of services, media, business and others with the Muslim community. 9/11 served to highlight the dearth of knowledge and understanding of British Muslims in central and local government.

The government was left floundering. Since then the government has relied on ‘representative’ bodies, Muslim advisors and advisory groups to ‘fix’ the community rather than find out for itself why there is a crisis in the Muslim community and develop holistic strategies. This has resulted in one failed strategy after another, which is damaging to the Muslim community and community cohesion.

In ‘**Fairness not Favours**’, Fabian Society 2008, Sadiq Khan MP argues that an effective agenda to provide opportunity and tackle extremism across all communities must go beyond a narrow approach to security, and sets out new proposals for a progressive agenda on inequality and life chances, public engagement in foreign policy, an inclusive Britishness, and rethinking the role of faith in public life.

“(The government) cannot let how we win votes, or how we tackle terrorism or extremism become the primary factors when we consider how best to reconnect to constituencies that are often disillusioned, disengaged and disadvantaged.”

“Instead our priority must be to address major obstacles that prevent many Muslims becoming fully active participants in mainstream civic society, while helping individuals to climb the social ladder and take up new opportunities.”

## 5.0 Our Concerns about the Prevent Strategy

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### 5.1 The Whole Community Approach

The Prevent Strategy deals with the whole Muslim community as a 'potential terrorist' risk. The difference between other counter-terrorism work and Prevent is that the government has moved from specific and identifiable anti-terrorism measures into a community-based approach targeting the whole Muslim community through a range of initiatives normally delivered through community cohesion and community development.

The approach is wrong **in principle** because there should not be an approach to tackling violent extremism, which smears a whole community as potential terrorists.

All Muslims are not potential terrorists - the vast majority of ordinary law-abiding Muslims should not be stigmatised in this way. This extensive and well-funded programme, which is to be embedded in the core services of local councils for the long-term, makes terrorism permanently synonymous with Muslims. It is humiliating and demeaning to the majority of decent law abiding Muslims.

With all the parallels between the Irish community and the Muslim community, even during the height of the IRA terror campaign in the 1970's the whole Irish community in the UK did not get targeted in this way.

The fact that the Prevent Strategy is managed by the Office for Security & Counter Terrorism in the Home Office leaves no doubt as to its objectives. However, by merging community cohesion and community development initiatives with the preventing violent extremism agenda, the government has blurred the boundaries between them.

This is not only stigmatising all British Muslims, it is placing the entire Muslim community under surveillance in every area of their lives and further alienating the very community the government needs to have on board as an ally.

Prevent has been brought in without consultation with the Muslim community and despite protests from a wide range of local councils, agencies, professionals and members of Parliament.

Kris Hopkins, Leader of Bradford Council, which is number 2 in the security heat map, said in an interview in September 2008 on Newsnight, BBC2:

*"What they (the government) said is if we were willing to go out and monitor the Muslim community and use the resources of the local councils to do that, they would release an amount of money to us. The local council should be there to promote education, caring for elderly people, making sure we're living in a safe place. And not become a wing of the security service."*

Newsnight reported that 70 councils identified as 'risk' areas were told they had to sign up to National Indicator 35, which would assess how well they were tackling extremism. Two thirds of the councils had refused to sign up. When Bradford Council refused to sign, Kris Hopkins said:

*"We had a lot of pressure from officers and politicians. They were trying to suggest we were soft on terrorism, which is completely wrong."*

*"What worries me about the way the government handles this - the government talks about it in terms of community cohesion and the assumption is that it is, in brackets, about dealing with Muslim extremism. Can you imagine any Muslim organisation wanting to take that on and that badge that goes with it? What a lot of it boils down to is just basic good community development without labelling it to any one religion, actually its about looking at the organisations that are serving their community and giving them the support they need, rather than trying to intervene." Turning to Geoff Hoon... "Do you think funds like preventing violent terrorism and forcing some councils to take them on board with that title actually achieves... moderation and understanding?"*

**Julia Goldsworthy MP, Liberal Democrat, Question Time October 2008**

As more information has begun to emerge about the Prevent Strategy, grassroots Muslim voices have begun to be raised across the country. However, lack of experience and capacity in the grassroots Muslim voluntary sector means that most do not understand the full implications of the Strategy. Those that have begun to understand it and have concerns do not know how to translate their fears and concerns into concerted action. This has allowed the government to go forward with the Prevent Strategy with little resistance from the Muslim community.

## 5.2 Increasing Risk of Discrimination & Victimisation of Muslims

The Strategy validates the belief amongst bigots, including the far right, that all Muslims are terrorists, and have now received confirmation of this by the government's actions. Not only is this placing Muslims at risk of physical danger it will increase indirect discrimination in the provision of goods, services and facilities.

*"One of the biggest mistakes that we made locally (in Stoke) was to accept this ... (Pathfinder) fund...because for a long time the BNP had a problem really convincing people that that part of the community (Muslims) was a problem. But when central government is saying that here is a fund because there is violent extremism throughout them...the climate (of Islamophobia) is being built in Stoke...(and) Islamophobia is at fever pitch."*

**Dr Ajmal Hussain, from Stoke-on-Trent Question Time BBC1 - October 2008**

The British National Party (BNP) already targets Islam and Muslims in its campaigns – in Stoke on Trent they have gained nine councillors. This increases danger and risk to British Muslims by far right extremism. Recently, the BNP's leaked membership database revealed that many BNP members are working in public services as civil servants, teachers, doctors, former police officers and prison officers as well as soldiers and estate agents. BNP members, and others who may not be paid up members but who are inclined to their views, are likely to be in positions where they may be working with and delivering services to Muslims. This will affect how they deal with Muslims as their clients and potentially they may be responsible for making decisions on identifying Muslims as 'potential terrorists.'

The government, however, is not robustly addressing far right extremism.

*Members of the British National Party (BNP) working in universities should not be allowed direct contact with students, the higher education equality watchdog has said.*

*Several higher education staff were among BNP members whose details were recently leaked on the Internet.*

*Nicola Dandridge, chief executive of the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), said this week that while “primacy of freedom of speech is fundamental”, universities had legal obligations to promote good race relations on campus. “It is hard to see how institutions can reconcile their duty to promote good race relations with staff being members of the BNP. Institutions may therefore consider that it is inappropriate for BNP members to have teaching and/or pastoral care responsibilities, or other direct contact with students,” she said. Academics named as members of the far-Right party included Arthur Nightingale, head experimental design engineer at the University of Cambridge’s Centre for Industrial Photonics. The university said staff political affiliations were “a matter for them” as long as they did not affect the workplace, so no action would be taken.*

*Strathclyde University, whose estates manager William MacLachlan appeared on the list, said that political beliefs were “a personal matter” but it would consider its position if “such beliefs should impinge on a staff member’s professional activity”.*

<http://rinf.com/alt-news/contributions/watchdog-wants-bnp-to-be-denied-right-to-teach/4935/>

### **5.3 Blaming the Victims**

The government’s PVE approach places the entire blame on the Muslim community and that it needs to be ‘fixed’ and monitored. This absolves and detracts from decades of governmental and mainstream failures towards the Muslim community, resulting in its extreme social exclusion. Although foreign policy has been a contributory factor we believe that social exclusion and marginalisation has also made a tiny minority vulnerable to extremist views. This has been as the result of a community under intense pressure, leading to spiralling social problems and family dysfunction.

A contributor to this marginalisation has been the failure of social policy towards Muslims as a faith-based community and institutionalised anti-Muslim discriminatory policies and services in the mainstream.

An-Nisa Society led on the campaign to bring in religious discrimination legislation since the mid-1980's. When the Labour government came into power it promised to bring this legislation into force but it was only in 2006 that a Single Equality Act, which included religious discrimination, was enacted. If this legislation had been prioritised when this government first came to power, much progress could have already been made in addressing the social exclusion of the Muslim community. This is the biggest failure of the government with regards to the Muslim community and a major factor in the Muslim community's downward spiral.

As it is, the Act has only been in force for two years and has yet to impact in the work of local authorities and other agencies in addressing institutional anti-Muslim discrimination (institutional Islamophobia) in the provision of goods, services and facilities. The government does not seem to have levered enough pressure on local authorities and others to address this as a priority. Three decades of a race-based only approach to communities and their needs is difficult to rethink. Without governmental pressure change will not happen.

The government needs to take responsibility for its failures towards its Muslim citizens. By doing so, it will create good will in the Muslim community.

#### **5.4 Wider Issues of Youth Disaffection**

There is no understanding that the problems we are seeing with a minority of young Muslims are part of the wider picture of youth disaffection. This is particularly affecting what can be said to be the most socially excluded communities in the country such as the Muslim, African-Caribbean and white working class young people. These groups are manifesting their anger and alienation in different ways, whether it is Islamist extremism, membership of gangs, gun and knife crime, 'black on black' crime or far right extremist ideologies. This is a consequence of the failure of government and society that needs to be addressed by all of us collectively.

*“My experience...is that people are attracted to extremes when their sense of self confidence in who they and what they are is undermined. In the case of the BNP it is immensely attractive to white people who feel their sense of national identity – they actually don’t exactly know what it is. If they haven’t acquired it through the education system and far from turning them into people who might be ready to accept multiculturalism, it makes them defensive, it makes them aggressive and they go and adopt a form of political outlook which is steeped in a confrontation towards others...it’s the same for people who are attracted to Muslim extremism – it’s exactly the same phenomenon in my view.”*

**Dominic Grieve, Shadow Home Secretary, speaking on Question Time,  
October 2008**

The PVE agenda is a diversion from addressing what is going on with troubled young people. For example, a Muslim social worker told us:

*“There are increasing numbers of young people becoming Muslim especially those who are in care (looked after) and those identified as children in need. The local authorities are not equipped right now to look at that and with the whole convert experience. If LAs just focus on PVE agendas the neglect of this just leads to further marginalisation, alienation, discrimination or at worst a self fulfilling prophecy of extremism.”*

### **5.5 Mainstreaming of PVE and Prevent**

The government wants to further extend and mainstream the Prevent agenda across local councils core services in the long term. They are expected to take a multi-agency approach, which will extend the reach of Prevent to primary care trusts, mental health trusts, schools, colleges and other agencies. This means that Muslims will be permanently labelled as ‘potential terrorists’ in the provision of all their services and constantly under surveillance by staff delivering services.

Social workers, health workers and housing officers, for example, will be expected in their assessments and home visits to be on the look out for any signs of extremism.

*The PVE agenda is becoming an increasingly important part of the core services delivered by local authorities and will remain a high priority for the foreseeable future.*

**Strategic Issues - Preventing Violent Extremism - LGA**

Professionals have expressed their reluctance at being placed in the position of 'spy-catchers.'

*"We have a duty of care to try to prevent any young person descending into any kind of illegal activity which could ruin their lives. But teachers are not trained to deal with radicalisation. We're not spy-catchers."*

**Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers**

### **Mainstreaming**

*I said earlier that local government is on board with **Prevent** but we need to move our activity to the next phase...preventing violent extremism must be seen as a long-term objective... But in order to address the grievances which extremists exploit, we need to sustain these projects by mainstreaming **Prevent** into other work areas. The objectives of **Prevent** have widespread crossover into many areas of core council business.*

### **But how do we mainstream Prevent?**

*The answer is leadership. We need councillors to lead mainstreaming by setting a broad strategic vision for their council that is not constrained by policy silos.*

*Similarly, councillors on Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships can use their influence with local partners to broaden the delivery of **Prevent** at a strategic level.*

*I do believe that councillors have the necessary skills and abilities to lead their council in mainstreaming **Prevent**.*

*Firstly, through strengthening the relationship between the council and the community.*

*And secondly, by linking across the range of council services and departments, councillors can lead their local authority, and their local partnerships, to regard **Prevent** as core business....*

**Chairman Margaret Eaton OBE**  
**LGA PVE conference 7 November 2008**

## **5.6 Intelligence through the back door**

It is clear that information gathered through funded grassroots projects will be used for intelligence. Muslims will be required to spy on each other and will be infiltrated to

identify 'potential terrorists' and risk. For example, through boys' football clubs, peer ambassadors, women's domestic violence projects and forums for women and young people.

Not only is this ethically suspect, intelligence gathered in this way can be misleading and misconstrued leading to wrongful labelling of young Muslims as potential terrorists and even arrests, such as with the Khar brothers in Ilford. Mistakes such as that can be very costly in terms of loss of trust, for example in this case, with the police leading to lack of future co-operation.

*"I recall at the meeting that although the PVE council representative started off with an apology and a questioning of the government's approach the team were not having any of it. They stated in their experience that a few young people have been recruited in custody and come out with extremist and anti-western views but to feel anti-western and have extremist views was, in their belief, not the same as committing actual violence.*

*Members of my YOT team felt that it was going down a slippery slope once we paint everyone with these views as terrorists. Many of my colleagues in the YOT team said most young people, whether Muslim or not, among our clients are anti-establishment and anti-system. This is because they are in the criminal justice system and are very mistrustful of adults in positions of authority such as the police, courts and that includes government."*

**Social Worker, Youth Offending 2008**

Muslim community fears are exacerbated by incidents such as when in November 2008, Shadow Immigration Minister Damian Green MP, was "arrested on suspicion of conspiring to commit misconduct in a public office and aiding and abetting, counselling or procuring misconduct in a public office" with the involvement of up to 20 counter-terrorism police. Muslims fear that if an elected Member of Parliament can be treated in this way what hope have ordinary Muslims?

There are to be 300 PVE police officers embedded in local communities which is very worrying to Muslims who, in this climate of paranoia, may very well end up at the receiving end of mistaken action by counter terrorism police.

*Police powers have been used disproportionately against the Muslim population in the UK. The majority of arrests have been Muslims, a large number of whom have been subsequently released without charge, or charged with offences unrelated to terrorism. All of those detained under Part 4 of ACTA (Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001) have been Muslim men.*

*The way in which anti-terror powers are being used, has led to feelings of isolation amongst many of the 1.6 million Muslims in the UK. There is disillusionment with a government which, rather than protecting them from this backlash, is effectively criminalising them as a community. The group as a whole is stigmatised...*

*This has a serious impact upon the efficacy of anti-terrorism measures, and renders them to a large extent counter-productive...Key to tackling terrorism is the use of reliable intelligence. The way in which anti-terrorism measures have operated has alienated the one group which has a vital role to play in this context. ...*

*The way in which Muslim are being treated by the authorities, however, is making them reluctant to come forward and assist. In addition, the mood of resentment which has developed can foster and encourage extremism amongst a small number of an increasingly marginalised group.*

**Reconciling Security & Liberty in an Open Society, Liberty,  
August 2004**

### **5.7 Erosion of Civil Liberties & Human Rights**

By targeting the whole Muslim community in this way the government is eroding civil liberties and violating human rights. It is not being open and honest with the Muslim community. It should rather build trust in the community and address its legitimate needs and concerns through the mainstream, rather than simply because they are 'grievances' that extremists can exploit. This will encourage the Muslim community to have faith and trust in the government and facilitate their involvement in PVE strategies as equal partners.

#### **Examples include:**

- Using the 'cover' of community cohesion strategies to infiltrate Muslim communities who are not suspected of any wrong doing for intelligence through grassroots projects and mapping exercises.

- Through monitoring and reporting of all Muslims when they access public services.
- The sharing of intelligence gathered in the above manner between agencies, the police and security agencies.

Blears is expected to tell those involved in the (Prevent) programme that better information-sharing and greater trust between the security services, police, councils and government is needed if they are to deliver on this crucial part of the counter-terrorism strategy.

**Alan Travis, Home Affairs Editor, Guardian 8 November 2008**

### 5.7.1 Mapping

One of the government's measures to ascertain terrorism risks is the recommendation that local authorities undertake mapping of their Muslim communities. The mapping exercise is being presented to Muslim groups, as a tool to find out and address Muslim needs. However, it is clear from various official reports that it is intended to identify security risks and that information gathered would be shared with the police and security agencies. Obtaining information from unsuspecting Muslims under false pretences is highly dubious.

*"The strategy document confirms for the first time an attempt by Whitehall to map the country by the religious denominational background of the population, to better understand where radicalisation is taking place. Critics, however, say that last month's attempted bomb attack in Exeter, which does not have a large Muslim population, demonstrates the limits to this approach."*

**LGA Website 2008**

*“The threat of individuals and communities in the local area becoming involved in, or supporting, violent extremism should be assessed and regularly reviewed using information from the community, local partners such as the police, and other sources...”*

*“A deeper understanding of local communities should be developed to help inform and focus the programme of action – this may include mapping denominational backgrounds and demographic and socio-economic factors as well as establishing community infrastructure and ways of accessing and influencing communities. “*

**The Prevent Strategy**

Many local authorities are ‘selling’ the mapping exercise to unaware grassroots Muslims by downplaying the anti-terrorism agenda. This is ethically unacceptable, as communities should be made fully aware of what they are participating in. We have had feedback from groups who gave interviews under the impression that the Mapping exercise was simply to find out about Muslim needs.

*‘A couple of nice Muslim girls contacted us about the mapping research. We were really pleased, as it was the first time the council was showing any interest in Muslims. We invited them to come around. Over a cup of tea we started telling them about all our issues and needs. But then they started to ask us some strange questions about terrorism, which made us very uncomfortable. We said, ‘please close your tape we don’t want to take part in this.’*

**An-Nisa Society interview with a Muslim women’s group**

**December 2008**

### **5.7.2 Confidentiality**

There are concerns about confidentiality of information collected and how and who it will be shared with. There are ample opportunities for information to be misused. For example, a youth project may identify a troubled young boy as a potential terrorist risk. Where will his personal information be kept and who will have access to it?

### 5.8 Muslim Voluntary Sector

The Prevent Strategy assumes the existence of infrastructures in the Muslim community such as a resourced and experienced Muslim voluntary sector, which will work in partnership with local councils and other agencies. The Strategy states that the involvement of the voluntary sector is key to its success. Mosques are not what we normally consider to be the voluntary sector, which caters for a wide variety of needs at a local grassroots level, advocates for the community and works on influencing policy and planning at a local and national level. Generally speaking we do not have a viable Muslim voluntary sector, which has the ability, due to lack of experience, sustained funding and capacity, paid staff and premises, to;

- (a) support the Muslim community in taking a 'lead' on matters/issues that concern it rather than have things 'done' to it,
- (b) make the government, local authorities, police and others accountable; and
- (c) lead on or work in partnership as equals with mainstream agencies such as by providing expertise and support services within the community.

As a result there is a danger that local authorities and the police will set the agenda and unaware and inexperienced local Muslim communities will allow actions to be taken without full knowledge of the implications and that may possibly be against the community's interest.

*The Government has always been clear that communities must be at the centre of the response to violent extremism.*

**Prevent Strategy**

### 5.9 Example of Mainstreaming Prevent & Implications of the Lack of Muslim voluntary sector

The following is an example of what will be expected of social workers, health workers and other professionals delivering services and the lack of safeguards without the involvement of a Muslim voluntary sector.

### Toolkit for Schools on PVE

The government has issued a toolkit entitled 'Learning together to be safe,' providing guidelines to schools on preventing violent extremism.

Teachers are expected to report any child they deem to be demonstrating extremist views. The Quilliam Foundation has provided advice on the danger signs that teachers should look out for, which is highly simplistic and subjective. They suggest that teachers should look out for students who have opinions on the following:

"Political ideology — use of political propaganda that describes political systems and countries as 'Kufr' or anti-Islamic, and expressing the need to replace them with 'The Islamic system', or Caliphate...' Suspended morality...; Conspiratorial mindset and 'westophobia'... Ultra conservative outlook..."

They point out that "It is important to note that individually these points would not be problematic; but combined would be a cause for concern that should be pursued and referred through appropriate mechanisms."

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/violentextremism/quilliam/>

Many questions are raised by these guidelines such as:

- What are the 'appropriate mechanisms?'
- What will happen to a child identified as a 'potential terrorist?'
- Where are the Muslim voluntary sector agencies that will ensure that the child is dealt with appropriately?
- What safeguards are there to ensure that a child or young person is not wrongly labelled for life?
- Who will make these agencies and schools accountable?
- Where are the Muslim voluntary sector support services that can help Muslim families placed in such a situation with, for example, counselling, advocacy and legal help and so on?

This sort of scrutiny of Muslims and referrals to various agencies is to be replicated across all council services.

*"Teachers will be asked to monitor pupils' behaviour and inform the authorities - including police - if they suspect teenagers are being drawn into violent extremism, under government guidance published today... The advice, (is) contained in a "toolkit" for teachers and schools...*

*...The most controversial element of today's plan will be to extend the "in loco parentis" responsibilities of teachers to monitoring whether their charges are developing extreme views and informing the authorities where there are concerns.*

*...The toolkit sets out a range of contacts for advice on serious concerns, including social services, community workers and police. Teachers will be asked to report any pupil with violent extremist views... Similar guidance issued to lecturers in universities caused a storm after unions claimed they were being asked to spy on their students. There was particular objection to the emphasis on Muslim students and the guidance was revised to refer to all extremist views.*

*It is understood that draft versions of today's guidance originally only mentioned Islamist extremism - al-Qaida in particular - but were amended to include far-right groups after complaints from teaching unions during consultation.*

*Some teaching unions last night expressed concerns about the onus put on teachers to decide what amounted to violent extremism. Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said: "We have a duty of care to try to prevent any young person descending into any kind of illegal activity which could ruin their lives. But teachers are not trained to deal with radicalisation. We're not spy-catchers."*

*Christine Blower, acting general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "For the objectives of government guidance to be achieved, trust has to be maintained in schools. No teacher will ignore obvious information about a specific, real threat, but it is vital that teachers are able to discuss with and listen to pupils without feeling that they have to report every word."*

**Polly Curtis, Guardian, 8 October 2008**

### **5.10 Implications of Lack of Experience of Muslim Community in the Mainstream**

Local authorities, police and other agencies have a patchy track record of engaging and working with Muslim communities.

Generally speaking, there is little understanding or competency in working with Muslims as a faith-based group within the mainstream. Most of their experience is based on working with communities as racial/ethnic groups. Faith and more specifically Muslims is a new area. Most are likely to have little experience and knowledge of the Muslim community and its issues.

Not only will this impact on their ability to work on this very sensitive agenda with their Muslim communities but also without the prerequisite of trust and long established engagement, local authorities, police and others are likely to find suspicion and distrust if their first encounter is about preventing violent extremism. Many agencies themselves have expressed concerns in this regard.

Lack of experience and knowledge of Muslims and possible anti-Muslim prejudice amongst some staff in the various agencies and institutional Islamophobia within their structures is very likely to lead to incorrect assumptions and decisions which can be disastrous not only in creating more distrust but in ruining people's lives. We know that councils and other agencies make mistakes and there can be a breakdown of communication, such as with the recent case of Baby P and Haringey Council. There can be no margin of error in labelling a person as a potential terrorist risk and damaging whole families forever.

There have been countless examples of incorrect assessments made by social workers, for example, of Muslims when assessing them for example, for child protection and fostering and adoption, and children have wrongly been taken into care. Muslims have been wrongly assessed as mentally ill and had children taken away.

We have been involved in a number of such cases and we have had anecdotal examples from other Muslim groups.

#### **5.11 Muslim Groups will lose credibility and trust**

Many Muslims believe that this funding is being given to make funded Muslim groups 'compliant' and non-critical of the government. It will make groups that receive this funding lose all credibility with disenfranchised Muslims. Those truly veering towards violent extremism are hardly likely to participate in projects as part of this strategy. Any 'preventative' work with young people is not going to be taken up if parents learn that funding is via Prevent. It will be tantamount to accepting that their children have a propensity to violent extremism.

There is also the fear that this is the well known strategy of 'divide and rule' whereby Muslim groups will start fighting over small pockets of funding thereby getting distracted from the wider issues that affect the community and of making central and local government accountable.

### **5.12 Transparency & Accountability**

The fact that no national representative body has made the government accountable on Prevent demonstrates that they do not have the necessary expertise and understanding of such issues or a connection to the grassroots. This leaves the Muslim community exposed to national policies and strategies being developed without critical overview by an organisation acting in its interests. It also means there is no one with the ability to co-ordinate a grassroots response, which will be taken seriously by the government.

It is disappointing that Muslim-led efforts to create genuine representative bodies have not been supported by the government. For example, the London Muslim Coalition (LMC) was an attempt after 9/11 to set up a representative body for the capital. It consisted of groups across London that spontaneously came together at the Greater London Authority to engage constructively with the London government. These groups wanted to meet the legitimate needs of the community strategically and be part of the solution in fighting against terrorism. They were working on the ground in projects targeting families, young people and women. The LMC had the potential to be a model that could have been replicated across the country. Rather than investing in this truly grassroots community-led development both the Greater London Authority and central government chose to disregard it.

The way the Prevent Strategy has been brought into most local areas has raised concern. There seems to be very little transparency and accountability to the Muslim community, which it is targeting. It can be said that it has been brought in by stealth, which adds to the suspicion that the government's intentions are not honourable. Information is only slowly beginning to emerge as to the government's wider plans and intentions. This meant that even Muslim groups who took part in the Pathfinder funding were not made fully aware of what Prevent is really about. For most it was an opportunity to access much needed resources without really understanding the implications.

*Last year (2007), along with other Muslim organisations, we also accepted money from the Pathfinder fund in the hope of using it to address some of the dire needs of our community. But from the start, we had grave concerns about this funding being packaged in the name of countering terrorism. However, at that time most of us did not really understand the full implications of the Prevent Strategy and what the government's intentions were.*

*...At every meeting we went to and with discussions with other Muslims around the country also delivering on this programme we found fears and concern. At an evaluation meeting in Hounslow conducted by the external evaluators, the Office of Public Management, there was much criticism of the programme, including its anti-terrorism tag, from all the Muslim groups attending. Groups also felt that by delivering this work through anti-terrorism it made them lose credibility with the very groups the government wanted them to engage.*

**An-Nisa Society 2008**

*The reality of the PVE agenda has changed considerably from the time when the initial Reading Forum Against Extremism (RFAE) pathfinder was announced 2 years ago...The initial RFAE was described as a short term project and was received with goodwill from the Muslim community. However we are now faced with an agenda that has evolved considerably and is so misguided that it is causing anxiety within the Muslim community, has the potential to cause mass alienation and is proving to be counter productive against its own stated aims...*

*...It...strikes us as odd that on the one hand members of the Local Authority have on many occasions tried to package the PVE work in Reading as something distant from the intention of Central Government but have now clearly joined the local work in Reading with the agenda of Central Government through NI35.*

**Reading Muslim PVE Crisis Group Blog 27 Oct 2008**

<http://pvecrisisgroup.com/>

Some local councils are under the mistaken belief that changing the labels at the point of delivery is acceptable, to make the 'bitter pill more palatable.' However, it is more than just about changing terminology when the aims and objectives remain the same and councils will still be delivering to National Indicator: 35.

#### **Why words matter in the fight against terrorism**

Renaming a scheme to engage the Muslim community in preventing violent extremism has been vital in one council's efforts...often groups we wanted to work with were reluctant and feared they would lose credibility if they worked under the PVE banner. They said the title connects Muslim people with violent extremism in a way that is unjustified, ignoring the fact the majority are law-abiding citizens.

We agree. Associating Islam with this crime in such a crude way puts Muslims in a similar position to the Irish at the height of attacks by the IRA. West London boroughs therefore came up with a new title, Building a Stronger and United West London: Working with Muslim Communities. This is not to say we hid the government's name, but our new title made a positive statement about local Muslim people and our commitment to them.

In this context, tact and careful use of language is essential... The government's new national strategy, which picks up the baton from PVE, is called simply the Prevent Strategy. This is a step in the right direction. As Superintendent Goldby puts it: "The moment you use the wrong terminology, people disengage."

**Jennifer Crook, Guardian, Tuesday 14 October 2008**

The lack of a credible Muslim voluntary sector in most areas means that there is no one to make local councils accountable to their Muslim communities. Foreseeing resistance to the Strategy, some local authorities are getting Prevent by their Muslim communities covertly. For example, in some areas there has been no public consultation and no Muslim voluntary sector representation on Prevent Boards. In many areas, decisions are being made without any consultation with the very people this Strategy will directly affect.

There is no requirement that the Strategy should be scrutinised by council committees, even many elected members are not aware of it. In Birmingham, for example, Salma Yaqub, an elected councillor, told a Guardian online programme that she did not know how over £2 million allocated to Birmingham is to be spent. At a

Council meeting she said *"many projects have taken place in wards without the consultation and participation of ward members and without accountability to the local communities through the ward structures."* She wanted to know *"how will the existing structures which bring transparency and accountability ... be utilised in any planning for this programme?"*

## 5.0 Recommendations

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We believe the government needs to undertake the following with the same robustness that it has with the Prevent Strategy.

1. Rethink its strategy towards the Muslim community. It should cease dealing with the whole Muslim community through the prism of anti-terrorism but rather as citizens who need the support of their government and through mainstream strategies.
2. Cease linking community cohesion and community development to counter terrorism. This approach risks de-legitimising much needed community building of the Muslim community. Security measures should be separate and distinct so that there is no doubt as to their objectives.
3. Promote the mainstreaming of initiatives targeting Muslims as a socially excluded community, as separate and distinct from PVE, and make it core business. Prioritise community development, community cohesion, social inclusion and capacity building for the Muslim community through the mainstream. Set targets in strategies and plans both nationally and locally so that progress can be monitored.
4. Prioritise addressing Islamophobia and Institutional anti-Muslim discrimination (Islamophobia) within mainstream agencies such as within central government, local authorities, health services, police and others.
5. Facilitate the building of local infrastructure in the Muslim community through, for example, the development of a Muslim voluntary sector that will cater for a wide variety of Muslims needs. The voluntary sector will then have the capacity to formulate itself into community-led grassroots local advocacy and consultative forums and eventually national representative bodies. Such a programme will

provide tangible relief to distressed local Muslim communities and directly affect their quality of life, increase engagement and give people a stake in society as citizens and not as 'pariahs.' This will enable the Muslim community to take the lead on its own issues and concerns and engage on an equal basis.

6. Bring together Britain's diverse communities to work to address the wider issues that are affecting all of us including what is causing large numbers of young people, from different communities, to feel hostile and alienated from society. This will do more for community cohesion than anything else.

If you have any comments on this paper please email us on [info@an-nisa.org](mailto:info@an-nisa.org)

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## Definitions of Terms

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### **Institutional Islamophobia**

There is a lack of understanding as to what is Institutional Islamophobia. Therefore, to demonstrate how it operates An-Nisa Society uses the device of transposing definitions of Institutional Racism with Institutional Islamophobia.

*"The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their religion.*

*It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and anti-Muslim stereotyping which disadvantage Muslim people."*

***Adapted from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report***

*"Institutional Islamophobia is that which, covertly or overtly, resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture of public or private institutions - reinforcing individual prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn."*

***Adapted from A. Sivanandan, Director, Institute of Race Relations***

*"If Islamophobic consequences accrue to institutional laws, customs or practices, that institution is Islamophobic whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have anti-Muslim intentions."*

***Adapted from The Commission for Racial Equality***

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### **Social Exclusion**

*Social exclusion describes a situation where certain groups within a society are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against...Social exclusion exists to some degree in all societies, and can occur across a number of dimensions: economic, social, political and cultural. These different forms of disadvantage form a self-reinforcing cycle.*

*Exclusion can be official or unofficial and can take place in a number of arenas, from the legal, health and education systems to the household and community. Processes of exclusion can be highly visible and deliberate, but can also be hidden and unintentional...*

[Governance & Social Development Resource Centre](#)

Social exclusion is a multidimensional process of progressive social rupture, detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions and preventing them from full participation in the normal, normatively prescribed activities of the society in which they live.

To be "excluded from society" can take various relative senses, but social exclusion is usually defined as more than a simple economic phenomenon: it also has consequences on the social, symbolic field.

[Reference Wikipedia](#)

### **Social Inclusion**

**Social inclusion**, its converse, is affirmative action to change the circumstances and habits that lead to (or have led to) social exclusion.

[Reference Wikipedia](#)

**Mainstreaming & Equality**

**The following definitions are for mainstreaming equality but the concept is the same whether mainstreaming Prevent or mainstreaming Muslim needs and issues.**

**What is mainstreaming?**

Mainstreaming equality is the systematic consideration of the particular effects of all policies, at the point of planning, implementation and evaluation, on disadvantaged groups. Equality is the goal. Mainstreaming is a process that aims to achieve the goal.

Mainstreaming should bring consideration of equality issues right into the core of all policy work, so that they are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy, dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects etc. This should come not only from 'equality specialists' but should involve everyone working in any aspect of policy.

**What are the benefits of mainstreaming?**

Mainstreaming should ensure that equality considerations are "built in" from the beginning, rather than "bolted on" at the end. With careful and considered implementation, it can be a strategy for transformation, with the potential to achieve sustainable change.

**What are the problems with mainstreaming?**

Without the backing of political will, mainstreaming is likely to fail. If it is to be effective it requires high level commitment, an enabling policy environment, broad-based support and the close involvement of communities of interest.

Mainstreaming needs to be backed up by effective performance indicators, monitoring and review. If allowed to lose impetus it could degenerate into tokenism, where public commitment is given but little is actually done.

[http://www.scvo.org.uk/Equalities/resource\\_base/mainstreaming/what\\_is\\_mainstreaming.htm](http://www.scvo.org.uk/Equalities/resource_base/mainstreaming/what_is_mainstreaming.htm)

## Community Cohesion

Can be described as:

1. Equality of opportunity, access, treatment and services
2. Engagement and participation
3. Respect for diversity and social trust
4. Meaningful interaction across groups
5. Solidarity and collective community action.

The bullet points below paraphrase the range of concepts mentioned by stakeholders directly, or discussed in this context.

- Positive relationships between faith communities, ethnic groups, the able bodied and people with disabilities, people from different geographical areas and of different age, gender and sexual orientation
- interaction between people from different backgrounds
- recognition and appreciation of difference
- civic engagement and participation
- sense of ownership and genuine stake in the community
- sense of belonging to the area
- different communities learning from each other
- responsive public services to which all groups have equal access
- economic well-being and empowerment
- living safely and feeling safe
- equal voice (everyone having the opportunity to participate, influence decisions)
- civic pride (closely linked to sense of belonging, but goes beyond this; feeling proud to be part of a community/neighbourhood)

**Adapted from 'What Works' in Community Cohesion  
Research Study conducted for Communities and Local Government  
Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Our Interim Statement*.**

### Community Development

“The process of developing active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. It is about influencing power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives.

“Community workers (officers) facilitate the participation of people in this process. They enable connections to be made between communities and with the development of wider policies and programmes.

“Community Development expresses values of fairness, equality, accountability, opportunity, choice, participation, mutuality, reciprocity and continuous learning. Educating, enabling and empowering are at the core of Community Development.”

[The Community Development Exchange](#)

See also link in Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community\\_Development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_Development)

### The Difference between Equal Opportunity and Social Justice

Equal Opportunity concentrates on treating all people equally and providing people with equal rights. Basically, it is about giving everyone a 'fair go'. However, since inequality still exists in society treating everyone the same does not necessarily mean fairness of treatment. The provision of equality of opportunity must be combined with social justice principles to provide substantive equality to marginalised groups. **Social justice** provides equitable outcomes to marginalised groups by recognising past disadvantage and existence of structural barriers embedded in the social, economic and political system that perpetuate systemic discrimination.

While equal opportunity rights are applicable to everyone, **social justice** targets the marginalised groups of people in society – it focuses on the disadvantaged. Social justice recognises that there are situations where application of same rules to unequal groups can generate unequal results. Social justice provides a framework to assess the impact of policies and practices.

[Murdoch University, Australia](#)

**Appendix 2****Personal Experience On Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) By A Social Worker Based In A Youth Offending Team (YOT)**

I first got to know about the funding given to local boroughs from central government to prevent violent extremism (PVE) at a team meeting in early September 2008. The officer responsible for PVE explained that they, along with other councils were not happy that the Muslim Community should be targeted in this way and that the funding should combat all sorts of violence and extremism, such as fascism and far right extremism.

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) agreed and stated that we had a few cases of young people espousing racist views and terrorising ethnic minorities and would welcome funding to cut down this kind of crime.

I recall at the meeting that although the PVE council representative started off with an apology and a questioning of the government's approach the team were not having any of it. They stated in their experience that a few young people have been recruited in custody and come out with extremist and anti-western views but to feel anti-western and have extremist views was, in their belief, not the same as committing actual violence.

Members of my YOT team felt that it was going down a slippery slope once we paint everyone with these views as terrorists. Many of my colleagues in the YOT team said most young people, whether Muslim or not, among our clients are anti-establishment and anti-system. This is because they are in the criminal justice system and are very mistrustful of adults in positions of authority such as the police, courts and that includes government.

We all said increasing numbers of young people feel alienated anyway as no one is listening to them, whatever community they come from. Members of the team - mostly non-Muslim - felt that this government does not like any one being anti-government and are using anti-terror legislation to shut up public opinion.

Members of my team also said that a lot of the terrorists charged were university graduates and educated middle class young people and these are not our client group as we deal with 10-18 year olds many of whom are not educated. We questioned the fact that the government has ploughed all this funding into local councils and there is no clear idea what to do with it and how to target it so that it does prevent violence and extremism.

We told the PVE officer that we would not like to do anything specifically with Muslim young people with PVE money, as this was very discriminatory. In our opinion this money should be targeted

at all community groups to prevent all sorts of extremism. We asked the council representative if any money was available for group work to prevent offending, violence and extremism but, like all funders, she said there is money but little bits for lots of organisations and lots of projects. We all questioned who she had gone to, to spend this (PVE) money and what sort of young people had she reached. The officer did not have a clue how to spend it effectively having only really been in partnership with the Ahmadiyaah community. Although she did not name them I know this council has strong links with them.

I also said that while I have no issue in trying to prevent offending and violent extremism in whatever form it takes we, as local government officers, not only have a duty to young people we work with but we also have a duty towards public protection. More training may be needed as to how to conduct assessments on those coming out of custody being at risk of committing violent offences. We advised her to approach custodial institutions and stated that work often needed to be done in custody.

There was one member of the team who stated that preventing violence and extremism was the responsibility of the Muslim community - so some Islamophobic views - but I was positively amazed at the views of my team who apart from me and another social worker are all non-Muslim.

### **My own thoughts**

The whole way funding is offered and projects evaluated illustrates the institutionally racist and Islamophobic nature of government. The government seems to be letting local authorities spend money unwisely and ineffectively to prevent violent extremism. The guidelines are unclear as to how money should be spent, and councils are confused trying to work out how to deliver PVE through community cohesion etc. It seems the government is spending this money to 'appear' that it is trying to prevent violent extremism.

With the Muslim community, however, funding monitoring and evaluation is tight, specific and exploitative and increases the marginalisation and discrimination they suffer. When it comes to Muslim organisations, the government wants to have a very tight control and is very specific and clear as to how they want them to tackle and prevent violent extremism. They seem to want the Muslim community to identify young people that may be extremists and so spy on ourselves. When Muslim organisations want to spend the money in tackling years of Islamophobia and discrimination, funding is not given.

It appears the PVE money instead of preventing violent extremism has made the Muslim community, who want to be mainstream and address issues of disaffection more broadly, more disaffected.

**Name withheld**