

Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice

26th February 2025, 6pm, CR3 (Hybrid)

Minute

Present

MSP

Foyso! Choudhury MSP (Convenor)

Non-MSP Members

Amjad Hossain
Shahid Farooq
Shahin Firat
Rajnish Singh
Ephraim, SCoJeC/J-CoS
Naeem Ahmed- Muslim Council of Scotland
Marilyn Gordon , Brahma Kumaris
Cecolin, Alessandra
Sara Medel Jimenez, Edinburgh University
Kimberley Wong, CRER
Nina Munday
Hatice Tugba Ikizler
Naseem Anwar
Nahid Aslam
Sameer Hussain
Cllr Nurul Hoque Ali

Apologies

Pam Gosal MSP
Dr Adrees, MSC Scotland
Bushra Riaz
Michael (CARE)
Shaukat Sultan

Agenda item1

Welcome

- Foyso! Choudhury MSP welcomed CPG Members and set out purpose of meeting i.e planning for the year ahead and ways of moving forward as a group; setting out how many meetings CPG should aim to have for the year ahead, topics to cover; encouraging presentations to be done in person if possible; reminded purpose of CPG and clarified some aspects of the CPG operation.
- Previous minutes agreed

Agenda item 2: Update from CPG Convenor

- Foyso! provided updates on recent hate crime report Tell Mama Report 2025 Tell Mama report
- Convenor reminded CPG members that group was open to any organisation, individuals who wish to talk on issues impacting communities whether racial or religious by nature; further noting we need to tackle issues of prejudice together.
- Foyso! further emphasised the door is open to all organisations who would like to cover a topic and do a presentation with advice that any press release should ensure information provided is correct to any misinformation in public domain; CPG cannot endorse reports as such but is there to listen and support any research findings.
- Reminded group that this is a non-political group.

Agenda item 3: Discussion

- Ephraim noted that focus of CPG meeting was on Hindu community in Scotland – unfortunate that Scottish Hindu Foundation were not able to attend and provide an update.
- Hinduphobia item scheduled for this meeting to be postponed at later date *when organisation is able to lead on it.*
- Noted need to fix items of business for rest of the year
- Members noted good work of Scottish Hindu Foundation – which acts as umbrella body for smaller organisations.
- CPG members emphasised importance of listening to all with the CPG open to anyone who wished to contribute and importance of respecting each other's opinions.
- Convenor noted need to recognise that various community groups will have common experiences they face – need to set common grounds and build on how to best tackle these issues in unison as a group.
- Issues should not be compartmentalised but rather complement one another – to be in line with purpose of CPG.

- Ephraim noted that issues can be presented from various religious groups so that Non-Muslim Communities have an accurate picture of islamophobia, for non-Hindus to know issues regarding Hinduphobia and non-Jewish be aware of issues within Jewish communities – to create community integration, harmony and understanding of each other's experiences.
- Need to understand each other's issues and tackle them collectively

Agenda item 4: CPG Priorities/Roadmap for 2025

- **New Secretariat:** Peter Hopkins stepped down, looking to secure a New Secretariat – To be confirmed as soon as possible.
- New members can get in touch with Convenor to join the CPG
- Bring unheard voices from communities who are facing similar abuse and discrimination
- CPG to invite Sikh communities – one or two Gurdwaras
- Work in unison and establish common themes to tackle prejudice as a CPG.
- **Intersectional approach:** Member noted need to discuss issue of discrimination in a more intersectional way. Issue of discrimination against people seeking asylum raised – with need to address underrepresented people who do not have agency.
- Academic from Aberdeen University noted growing number of asylum seekers in Aberdeenshire - who are facing daily discrimination, noting rise of Police harassment and systematic discrimination against minority groups. Currently publishing an article. – issue to be considered on the Agenda at next meetings.
- Ongoing Israeli Gaza conflict and rise of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia raised.
- Edinburgh University Equality Representation noted good initiative taken by Edinburgh University sending out email to staff with guidelines on how to support Muslim colleagues during Ramadan –
- Noted issue of mainstream media representations and wording used -what action is the Scottish Government taking?

Actions/Follow-ups

- Get up to date data from Police Scotland regarding racially motivated incidents

AOCB

Next Meetings – Date suggested in May 2025 from 6pm (TBC)

- To invite Scottish Government Minister at table for communities to raise issues and get an update
- To get presentations from Jewish community, Sikh community.