

# Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice

25 Jan 2022 at 6pm

## Present

Foysol Choudhury MSP  
Pam Gosal MSP  
Stephen Kerr MSP  
Anas Sarwar MSP (Chair)

## Non-MSP Group Members

Jordan Allison Show Racism the Red Card  
Steven Anson Gathering the Voices  
Abdulsami Arjumand MEND  
Shabir Beg OBE FRSA Scottish Ahlulbayt Society  
Ephraim Borowski Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)  
Fiona Brodie SCoJeC  
Alessandra Cecolin University of Aberdeen  
Mike Corbett NASUWT  
Nauman Dar  
Peter Hopkins Newcastle University (Secretary)  
Isobel Ingham-Barrow Community Policy Forum  
Eunis Jassemi Scottish Parliament  
Jacqueline Merchant Scottish Parliament  
Nina Munday Fife Centre for Equalities  
Caitlin Ryan John Smith Centre  
Dr Ali Salamati Al-Mahdi Foundation  
David Shapiro Gathering the Voices Association  
Mahrukh Shaukat Amina MWRC  
Paul Spicker Tayside and Fife Jewish Community  
Lindsay Taylor MEND  
Kasim Ukka MEND  
David Watt SEAS  
Hosney Yosef

## Apologies

Faten Hameed Scottish Iraqi Association  
Nicola Livingston Scottish Council of Jewish Communities  
Mohammed Razaq West of Scotland Regional Equality Council  
Nighet Riaz University of Glasgow  
Raza Sadiq Active Life Club  
Susan Siegel Glasgow Jewish Rep Council  
Maureen Sier Interfaith Scotland

## **Welcome and update**

Anas Sarwar MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those who had engaged with the CPG on Tackling Islamophobia in the last Parliament. The focus was on Islamophobia as there was also a separate CPG on tackling racism. However, we learnt about the shared challenges of diverse ethnic groups, how recommendations often reflect the needs of different groups, and that there is a need to build solidarity between and across groups. A decision was made to amalgamate the groups to explore the crossovers. Also, challenging prejudice and hate is relevant to all political groups.

It was noted that we will continue to share annual updates on the Islamophobia inquiry.

## **Discussion of data on race and religion**

Some headline data about racial and religious prejudice produced by SPICE was shared (see attached report). Key points noted by those in attendance included:

- Limitations of statistical data that is available and the utility of qualitative research
- Mental health issues and how this overlap with issues about racial and religious prejudice
- Hate crime charges in football contexts and the ethnicity of perpetrators
- Muslims living in poverty is a massive issue and how this interrelates with employment, gendered discrimination and so on. So, should we look at poverty overall as an issue. Not sure going over the ground again with respect to employment. It was noted that it would be useful to contact Scottish Poverty Information Unit and to send round survey about mental health.

The focus of specific area of work for the CPG could include:

- Gendered nature of prejudice
- Employment issues
- Poverty issues and ethnic and religious inequalities
- CPG to write to Public Health Scotland and ISD to disaggregate data on various health data
- Conviction and reporting rates.
- Paul Spicker agreed to share best practice in working with smaller communities
- Emerging communities

## **Update on Islamophobia inquiry report**

There was a brief update on developments since the publication of the Islamophobia inquiry report. It was noted that the report had been sent to the First Minister, to specific Scottish Parliament committees, and that written questions were addressed through the Scottish Parliament. The report has also been referred to in Westminster Hall debates on Islamophobia.

**Next meeting – Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March at 6pm**

7 January 2022

## **Race and religious inequality in Scotland**

### **Equality Evidence**

The first place to look for data on equality in Scotland is the Scottish Government's [Equality Evidence Finder](#). This helpfully gathers evidence by equality group across different subject areas.

The table below highlights some of the key information available from the Equality Evidence Finder, and I have supplemented the data in some places.

Some of the data may not be as detailed as you would wish in some subject areas. It may be that some data is not published, but is available on request from the source. It may also be that some data is simply not available because it is not collected in a detailed way.

The Scottish Government launched the first phase of its [Equality Data Improvement Programme](#) (EDIP) in April 2021. This will lead to a revised equality evidence strategy and a second phase of the programme in late 2022. The original [equality evidence strategy 2017-2021](#) set out a vision that "Scotland's equality evidence becomes more wide-ranging and robust, enabling policy makers to develop sound, inclusive policy".

## Ethnicity

<p><b>Population</b></p>	<p>5% of adult population were minority ethnic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2018, the largest ethnic group was 'White Scottish' at 76.7%</li> <li>Minority ethnic adults represented 4.6% in 2018</li> </ul> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2019</a> (Last updated: January 2021)</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>Minority Ethnic people more likely to experience discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2019 minority ethnic adults were more likely to have experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months (19 per cent) compared to white adults (7 per cent).</li> <li>Minority ethnic adults were also more likely to have experienced harassment (17 per cent) than adults from 'White' ethnic groups (6 per cent).</li> </ul> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Scottish Household Survey 2019</a> (Last updated: September 2020)</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>Minority ethnic employment gap was higher for women than men</p> <p>In 2018 in Scotland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The employment rate for the minority ethnic population aged 16-64 was 55.4 per cent which is lower than the white population with an employment rate of 75.1 per cent.</li> <li>The minority ethnic employment gap (difference between the employment rates for white and minority ethnic people) was 19.7 percentage points, higher than the gap in 2017 (14.5 percentage points).</li> <li>The minority ethnic employment gap was much higher for women than men; for women the minority ethnic employment gap was 26.8 percentage points and for men was 11.2 percentage points.</li> <li>The minority ethnic employment gap was largest for those aged 25-34 (40.9 percentage points), followed by 16-24 year olds (28.2 percentage points), 35-49 year olds (11.8 percentage points) and 50-64 year olds (2.9 percentage points).</li> </ul> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Regional Employment Patterns in Scotland: Statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2018</a> (Last updated: May 2019)</p>
<p><b>Education</b></p>	<p>Young people from minority ethnic groups have a higher participation rate than those of white ethnicity</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2020/21, 95.4% of young people (aged 16-19) from minority ethnic groups were participating in education, employment or training, compared to 92% of those from non-minority (white) ethnic groups.</li> <li>• The participation rate for minority ethnic groups has increased from 92.9% in 2015/16 to a record high in 2020/21.</li> </ul> <p><b>External Source:</b> <a href="#">Annual Participation Measure for 16 – 19 year olds in Scotland 2021</a> (Published: August 2021, Skills Development Scotland)</p>
<b>Enterprise</b>	<p>4% of SME employers were run by members of a minority ethnic group in 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2019, 4.0% of small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) employers in Scotland were run by a member, or mostly by members, of a minority ethnic group.</li> <li>• The proportion of SME employers in Scotland that were run by a member, or mostly by members, of a minority ethnic group in 2019 was higher than in 2018 (1.8%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Small Business Survey Scotland 2019</a> (Last updated: September 2020)</p>
<b>Poverty</b>	<p>Minority ethnic people more likely to be in poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People from minority ethnic (non-white) groups were more likely to be in poverty, both after and before housing costs, compared to those from the 'White - British' group (combined data for 2014-19).</li> </ul> <p>After housing costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 38% of people from 'Mixed, Black, Black British and Other' ethnic groups groups, and 39% of 'Asian or Asian British' ethnic groups were in relative poverty after housing costs.</li> <li>• In comparison 18% of 'White - British' people were in relative poverty.</li> </ul> <p>Before housing costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 33% of people from 'Mixed, Black, Black British and Other' ethnic groups groups, and 31% of 'Asian or Asian British' ethnic groups were in relative poverty before housing costs.</li> <li>• In comparison 16% of 'White - British' people were in relative poverty.</li> </ul> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2016-19</a> (Last updated: March 2020)</p>
<b>Health</b>	<p>Public Health Scotland provides some information on the <a href="#">health of ethnic groups and migrants</a>. It refers to a report by the Scottish Government in 2015 considered <a href="#">Which ethnic groups have the poorest health?</a> The results were based on responses to the Census 2011.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most ethnic groups in Scotland reported better health than the 'White: Scottish' ethnic group</li> <li>• Across most ethnic groups, older men reported better health than older women. Older Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women reported poor health, and considerably worse health than older men in these ethnic groups</li> <li>• Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland had by far the worst health, reporting twice the 'White: Scottish' rate of 'health problem or disability' and over three and a half times the 'White: Scottish' rate of 'poor general health'.</li> </ul> <p>In response to reports, both at UK and international level, that some minority ethnic groups may be at risk of a disproportionate impact from the pandemic, the Scottish Government established the <a href="#">Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity</a> (ERG).</p> <p>The ERG made recommendations in September 2020. These were provided in two reports, respectively focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">the data and evidence in relation to COVID-19 and race</a> (recs included the collection of intersectional data, such as religion)</li> <li>• <a href="#">systemic issues and risk in relation to COVID-19 and race</a>.</li> </ul> <p>The Scottish Government published an <a href="#">initial response</a> to the ERG in November 2021. It later confirmed in the <a href="#">PfG 2021-22</a> that it would implement the recommendations of the ERG. The PfG also made a commitment to improve collection and use of ethnicity data within Health &amp; Social Care.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Scottish Public Health Observatory</a> provides a range of information on health, based on equality group, including <a href="#">ethnicity</a>.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Scottish Health Survey</a> does not appear to publish data on ethnicity or religion. It focuses on sex and age.</p>
<b>Crime</b>	<p>In 2019-20 595 people were convicted in Scottish courts of an offence with an associated racial aggravation. Convictions with the racial aggravation were 6% lower than last year, and are at their lowest level in the past 10 years.</p>

	<p>The majority of these were for a main charge of breach of the peace (410), or common assault (71).</p> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Criminal Proceedings in Scotland, 2019-20</a> (Last updated: May 2021)</p> <p><a href="#">Hate Crime Statistics 2020-21</a>, published by COPFS (June 2021) show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The majority of hate crime charges contain a racial element. However, the proportion that contain a racial element has generally decreased over the last ten years, from 75% in 2011-12 to 59% in 2020-21.</li><li>• There were 3,285 charges relating to race crime reported in 2020-21, an increase of 6% compared to 2019-20. The number of charges has increased since 2018-19 but is still 28% lower than the peak in such charges in 2011-12, when 4,547 were reported.</li></ul>
--	--

## Religion

<p><b>Population</b></p>	<p>About half of adults belong to no religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2018, Christian (Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic and Other Christian) represented 46% of the adult population.</li> <li>• Over the past decade there has been an increase in the proportion of adults reporting not belonging to a religion, from 40% in 2009 to just over a half of adults (50%) in 2018.</li> <li>• There has also been a corresponding decrease in the proportion reporting belonging to 'Church of Scotland', from 32% to 23%.</li> </ul> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2019</a> (Last updated: January 2021)</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>People of non-Christian religions most likely to have experienced discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2019 adults belonging to the Church of Scotland were least likely to have experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months (4%).</li> <li>• In contrast, 10% of Roman Catholics, and 9% of other Christians had experienced discrimination.</li> <li>• Adults belonging to another religion were most likely to have experienced discrimination (24%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Scottish Household Survey 2019</a> (Last updated: September 2020)</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>Employment rates decreased between 2017 and 2018 for all religious groups except for Christians</p> <p>In Scotland in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the highest employment rates were seen for those with no religious beliefs (75.3 per cent) followed by Christians (74.1 per cent), Other religion (64.8 per cent), Buddhists (60.8 per cent), Hindus (54.8 per cent) and Muslims (52.3 per cent). The employment rate for Scotland as a whole was 74.1 per cent.</li> <li>• Over the year, there were decreases in the employment rates for all religious groups except for the employment rate for Christians which remained unchanged.</li> </ul> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Regional Employment Patterns in Scotland: Statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2018</a> (Last updated: May 2019)</p> <p>*Other includes Jewish, Sikh and any other Religion</p>
<p><b>Education</b></p>	<p>Information is not currently available in this section of the Equality Evidence Finder on Education relating to religion.</p>



<b>Enterprise</b>	Information is not currently available in this section of the Equality Evidence Finder on Enterprise relating to religion.
<b>Poverty</b>	<p>Muslims most likely to be in poverty</p> <p><i>Relative Poverty After Housing Costs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2014-19, 49% of people who identified their religion as Muslim were living in poverty after housing costs.</li> <li>• Those who identify their religion as Church of Scotland had a slightly lower poverty rate after housing costs (15%) than found for the other groups.</li> <li>• All other religious groups and those with no religion had a relative poverty rate after housing costs similar to that found for the whole population.</li> </ul> <p><i>Relative Poverty Before Housing Costs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2014-19, 40% of people who were Muslim were living in poverty before housing costs.</li> <li>• All other religious groups had a similar relative poverty rate before housing costs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2016-19</a> (Last updated: March 2020)</p>
<b>Health</b>	<p>As mentioned above, the Scottish Government's <a href="#">Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity</a> (ERG) made recommendations which included the collection of intersectional data, such as religion.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Scottish Public Health Observatory</a> provides a range of information on health, based on equality group, including <a href="#">religion, spirituality and belief</a>. It provides the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religion and belief can have both positive and negative associations with health.</li> <li>• Some attitudes and practices may have an unequal impact upon public service access for religious groups. This requires service providers to adapt their procedures and address staff attitudes and knowledge.</li> <li>• Gender roles and behavioural differences may be influenced by religious beliefs.</li> <li>• There are associations between religion and ethnicity. For example among White groups in Scotland, Catholicism is associated with Irish or Polish ethnicity and the Muslim and Hindu religions with Asian ethnicity.</li> <li>• The prevalence of health behaviours varies across religious group. For example: Muslims and Other Christians are least likely to smoke; Muslim and</li> </ul>

	<p>Hindu religious groups are most likely to exceed the 5-a-day recommendation; and those with no religious affiliation were most likely to exceed the recommended drinking guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mortality varies by religious group. Those raised as Roman Catholic or of no religion tend to have the highest mortality rates. People reporting being raised as Church of Scotland Christians show moderate rates, while Other Christians and non-Christian religions have lower rates.</li> <li>• There is a difference between the health benefits (or risks) associated with particular religions and the general health and social implications of holding any religious or spiritual belief.</li> </ul>
<b>Crime</b>	<p>In 2019-20 230 people were convicted in Scottish courts of an offence with an associated religious aggravation. There was an increase in the past year for convictions with a religion aggravation by 12%, but the 2019-20 figure was the second lowest in the past ten years. The majority of these were for a main charge of breach of the peace (202), or common assault (11).</p> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="#">Criminal Proceedings in Scotland, 2019-20</a> (Last updated: May 2021)</p> <p><a href="#">Hate Crime Statistics 2020-21</a>, published by COPFS (June 2021) show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were 573 charges with a religious aggravation reported in 2020-21, 14% fewer than in 2019-20.</li> </ul>

### A note about terminology

In the Scottish Government’s [Race Equality Action Plan: Final Report](#) (19 March 2021), it explains the terminology used. It is based on the definition of race in the [Equality Act 2010](#), which is colour, ethnicity, nationality and citizenship. The Scottish Government uses the term Minority Ethnic (ME), instead of BME or BAME as ME is inclusive of both visible and non-visible (ie white) ME groups.

The report states:

“It is crucial that our policies and services meet the needs of all our minority ethnic communities. This includes both visible and non-visible minority ethnic groups, as per the legal definition of ethnicity. The Census 2011 figures showed that the percentage of the population belonging to all minority ethnic groups was 8% (this figure is expected to be significantly higher in the 2022 Census). This is the definition and the figure the Scottish Government uses. We will use data in order to focus our interventions on specific communities within that definition of minority ethnic. There may be occasions in which we need to focus our work on, for example, visible minority ethnic groups for

some of our work on colour-based prejudice. Accurate gathering and maintenance of data, along with clear and consistent terminology, are important so that policies and interventions are designed around/delivered to minority ethnic communities in the right way.”

This approach to terminology has been restated in a recent FOI (20 Dec 2021):  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202100250058/>

I hope you find this information helpful, but do let me know if you require anything more specific.

Best wishes  
Nicki

**Nicki Georghiou**  
**Senior Researcher**  
**Justice and Social Affairs Team**