

Cross-Party Group on Racial and Religious Prejudice

Subgroup on Islamophobia

17th April 2024, 6-7pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Foysol Choudhury MSP

Non-MSP Group Members

Dr Mohammad Adrees
Sahin Firat
Faten Hameed
Naeem Ahmad
Amjid Bashir
Nauman Dar
Nurul Hoque Ali
Prof. Peter Hopkins
Daniel Gilius

Agenda item 1: Clarification on Role and Rules

- During the discussion, the role of the Subgroup was defined and the rules of how they will work were agreed upon.
- The role of the Subgroup has clearly been defined as a team which will aim to work together to support the mission of the wider CPG.
- Specifically, it will work towards the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Report of the inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland by the Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia – 2021 and the subsequent revised report of 2023.
- Regarding the rules of the Subgroup, Foysol confirmed that the subgroup can meet to setup an action plan and conduct our work outside of our official meetings at the Scottish Parliament.

- It was agreed that subgroup members will meet regularly as a team out with Parliament and will then officially convene at Parliament every quarter.
- Subgroup members were encouraged to attend these meetings in-person, with the exception of those living outside of the central belt for whom a Teams link will be setup.
- Action items agreed: Organise regular team meetings; Produce a Terms of Reference (TOR) document; Produce an Action Plan document; Organise meetings at the Scottish Parliament

Agenda item 2: Prof. Peter Hopkins Update

- Professor Peter Hopkins delivered an update on the work he has been conducting to encourage the Scottish Government and other institutions to adopt the recommendations made in the Islamophobia report.
- During his update he mentioned three key areas of his work: work with civil servants, government ministers, and journalists.
- Regarding his meetings with civil servants, Prof. Hopkins shared details about recent meeting he had with 10 Scottish Government civil servants.
- During this meeting he was glad to learn that the attendees had a depth of understanding of the issue of Islamophobia. They discussed the use of language around racism and Islamophobia, as well as areas where the team can work to improve their work to support victims of Islamophobia. Prof. Hopkins added that he is currently in the process of arranging a meeting with Jennifer M. Gilruth, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills of Scotland.
- On the topic of Islamophobia in journalism, Prof. Hopkins informed the group that his assistant is currently supporting his work to contact journalists and academic institutions which train journalists in Scotland to discuss the delivery of Islamophobia awareness training. So far, they have received a positive response from the Editor of The Herald who is keen to meet to discuss how the newspaper can improve their understanding of the Muslim community.