

Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial & Religious Prejudice

CPG Subgroup on Islamophobia (Hybrid) Launch Meeting

Thursday 8th February 2024, 17:30-19:00,

Committee Room 1, The Scottish Parliament

In Attendance

MSP

Foyso Choudhury MSP

Non- MSP CPG Members

Prof. Peter Hopkins (Newcastle University)
Daniel Gilius (MEND)
Cllr Nurul Ali (Aberdeen Council)
Md A Qaium (Glasgow Muslim Community Scotland)
Dr Wali Tasar Uddin MBE – (Council of Bangladeshis in Scotland)
Sabah Aslam (Interfaith Scotland)
Furrah Riaz (AMINA)
Amjed Hussain (Idera Taleem Ul Quran Trust (Polwarth Mosque)
Dr Abdul Mukit (Bangladesh Medical Association UK)
Nauman Dar (NHS Lanarkshire Board Member)
Omar Afzal (Scottish Association of Mosques)
Amjid Bashir
Faten Hamid- (Scottish Iraqi Society)
Tehmina Mohammed (Board Member of Blackhall Mosque)
Sameer Hussain - Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society SABS
Dr Muhammad Adrees (Muslim Council of Scotland)
Mr Shaukat Sultan (Muslim Council of Scotland)
Naeem Ahmad (Muslim Council of Scotland & Chair of Hamilton Mosque)
Khaled Hussein
Parveen Ishaq (ELREC)
Hawana Ali (SAHARA Glasgow)
Sara Medel, Jimenez (NASAWT)
Mixar Kham
Aladdin Ali
Md Abdul Khayyum (Dawatul Islam Glasgow Masjid)
Bushra Riaz (Kidney Research UK)

MSP

Foysol Choudhury MSP

Invited Guest

Cllr Thomas Kerr – Glasgow Council

Apologies

Cllr Mo Razzaq – South Lanarkshire Council
Community Policy Forum
Shahnila Shafiq
Naseem Anwar

Agenda item 1: Welcome & Introductions

Foysol welcomed CPG Subgroup members and guests to the meeting stating the CPG on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice will remain the same, relaying CPG Members request to have a Subgroup on Islamophobia to have a working focus group to discuss and identify various issues impacting the Muslim communities in Scotland and find solutions to remedy them. Foysol encouraged other CPG members to create other subgroups and for someone to take the lead. Foysol gave way for members and guests to introduce themselves.

Agenda item 2: Nomination of CPG Subgroup Working Group

The group decided on the following members to lead the Sub-Group (this was later in a Teams meeting on 14th February 2024)

CPG Members nominated the following Subgroup Working Group

Lead: Dr Muhammad Adrees (Muslim Council of Scotland)

Deputy Lead: Tehmina Mohammed (Board Member of Blackhall Mosque) ?

Secretariat: Daniel Gilius (MEND)

Deputy Secretariat: Amjid Bashir

Agenda item 3: Discussing the way forward and priorities for combating Islamophobia in 2024

- Members expressed need to expand, have more events to be co- sponsored by cross-party MSPs, as well as spreading the word about the CPG and membership as a solution to raise awareness – suggestion was made to have roundtable across the nation and among communities as well as reaching out to mosques who are not aware of the CPG Group.

- Aberdeen Cllr suggested booking committee room to engage with Aberdeen communities.
- CPG Members noted the Subgroup needs to establish different strands of work to mirror the Islamophobia report thematic approach e.g. Islamophobia in the media, in education, gendered islamophobia, its intersection with poverty etc.. → CPG Secretariat suggested focusing on two or three themes to ensure they're actioned.
- Definition of Islamophobia was discussed with suggestion for Councils to adopt its definition – Glasgow Cllr Kerr was happy to try pushing for a motion.
- Cases of injustice highlighted by members – noting that the Equality Act was not sufficient and that there was a need to push – questioning how to achieve this?
- Members expressed their continued concerns with wording used in media.
- Prof. Peter Hopkins updated the Subgroup regarding follow-up on the Islamophobia inquiry; confirmed he will be meeting with Education & Skills Minister, Jenni Gilruth MSP in March and has a student who is currently doing work to follow-up on media guidelines and find if they are being used and if not, why not?
- A Member raised the issue of the recent circumcision petition (concerns have been raised by Jewish & Muslim community leaders) → Foyso Choudhury MSP confirmed the petition has now been rejected.

Some suggestions for future Subgroup Action Points:

- Foyso suggested for now Sub-group lead to come up with proposal to follow-up with action points.
- Letter to hospital chiefs to raise awareness and encourage reporting religious prejudice incidents.
- Education awareness – target heads across communities – report where discrimination is felt and report back to public services heads such as hospitals, university, schools..etc
- Members raised concerns of community members who fear expressing their views which often leads to underreporting - reassuring the community of their Equal rights and need to rebuild trust within the community.
- Must be reported back at Local authority level (CPG must put pressure on Councils/Local Authority level); noting Edinburgh Council has been working on it.
- Members reminded that Chief Inspector of Police Scotland admitted Police Scotland is racist last year ([Police Scotland Chief Constable Sir Iain Livingstone addresses institutional discrimination. - Police Scotland](#));
- Call to tackle institutional racism and find ways to tap into these institutions to tackle Islamophobia and hold them to account, but also put efforts around education and awareness and some sort of judicial law.
- Further noting need to have a Strategic impact instead of recreating things that already exist

Foyso Choudhury MSP thanked all for attending the meeting and reaffirmed to the group they will be kept up-to-date and looks forward to hearing from the subgroup how they want to move forward.

Agenda item 4:

Date and Time of **Next Meeting** to be confirmed by Subgroup Secretariat, Daniel Gilius from MEND

AOCB