



# **Britain United: Tackling Anti-Muslim Hatred Is Part of the Solution**

---

June 2025

Dr Mohammed Sinan Siyech

# Contents

---

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Strengthening the UK’s Social Fabric</b> .....                  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Key Findings</b> .....  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Impacts of Anti-Muslim Hatred on Social Cohesion</b> .....      | <b>5</b>  |
| 1. Intercommunity Relations .....                                  | 5         |
| 2. Trust in the Political Establishment .....                      | 6         |
| 3. Economic Burden on the Country .....                            | 7         |
| <b>Attitudes on British Muslims</b> .....                          | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Tackling Anti-Muslim Hatred Using Digital Advertising</b> ..... | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Policy Recommendations</b> .....                                | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Working Together for a Socially Cohesive Society</b> .....      | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Endnotes</b> .....  | <b>20</b> |
| <b>About the Author and Equi</b> .....                             | <b>24</b> |

# Strengthening the UK's Social Fabric

The UK has a long, rich history as a multicultural society, with people from various ethnic, religious and racial backgrounds having shaped modern-day Britain over time. Yet, at times, intercommunity relations have come under strain, threatening the social cohesion of the nation. This report examines the risk anti-Muslim hatred poses to social cohesion in the UK and formulates recommendations on how to effectively address it.

In the UK, there is no formally recognised definition of anti-Muslim hatred. The current UK government has commissioned an independent working group to help it address this challenge, with a report of findings and recommendations expected to be published in August 2025.<sup>1</sup> However, anti-Muslim hatred, which is also often referred to as Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism, can broadly be defined as 'hostility, mistrust or hatred towards Islam and Muslim people, because of their Muslim identity (or perceived Muslim identity)'.<sup>2</sup> This can include attacks on and discrimination against Muslims or those perceived to be Muslims in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to public spaces, the media, workplaces and educational institutions.<sup>3</sup>

Social cohesion refers to the bonds between members of society from diverse backgrounds, including those from different faiths and ethnicities. A socially cohesive society is one where individuals and communities recognise themselves as being part of a united and coherent collective, based on feelings of belonging, trust and a sense of mutual responsibility for each other.<sup>4</sup>

While discussions on social cohesion have been a part of government discourse for over two decades, recent events have underscored its importance as a matter of national importance. The summer riots of 2024, targeting Muslims and ethnic minorities, were a strong reminder of the need to work against anti-Muslim hatred and racism and for social cohesion in the UK.

This report highlights the social, political and economic costs of anti-Muslim hatred. Drawing on a nationwide poll of Muslims and people of other (and no) faiths, focus group discussions and the analysis of a public advertising campaign, the report presents recommendations for the government on how to tackle anti-Muslim hatred and advance social cohesion for the benefit of all members of British society.

# Key Findings

- **Anti-Muslim hatred has significant social, political and economic impacts.** It affects social cohesion and trust between communities and the government, especially following events like the 2024 summer riots.
- **Anti-Muslim hatred leads to a breakdown of intercommunity relations.** Many British Muslims feel unfairly targeted under anti-terrorism measures like the Prevent strategy. Mistrust between British Muslims, the government and broader society undermines social cohesion and fosters alienation.

- **Anti-Muslim hatred constitutes a significant economic burden on the country, with the total estimated costs of the summer riots of 2024 amounting to a minimum of £243 million.** Direct economic costs include the effects of violent hate crimes, riot policing expenses, prison costs, as well as insurance and riot compensation claims.

- **Targeted public awareness campaigns with examples of Muslims' positive role in society can lead to positive shifts in attitudes.** The majority of the UK population hold positive views or are neutral towards British Muslims, even if their overall knowledge of Islam is low. Public awareness campaigns that increase people's knowledge about this faith, for example through highlighting the generosity of British Muslims to charitable causes locally, can shift public sentiment.



# Impacts of Anti-Muslim Hatred on Social Cohesion

Anti-Muslim hatred has had a significant impact on social cohesion in the UK, with severe social, economic and political repercussions. Data from Tell MAMA, a government funded body monitoring such incidents, shows a clear spike in anti-Muslim hatred incidents from 2023 to 2024, reporting a 43% year on year increase.<sup>5</sup> These incidents included the riots in summer 2024 when people attacked Muslims and ethnic minorities alongside mosques and refugee hostels, following false reports that a Muslim immigrant was behind the killing of three children. However, these numbers represent just a snapshot of the challenge, as many Islamophobic incidents go unreported.

Anti-Muslim hatred can have a significant impact on Muslims, their local community, but also wider society. This includes, for example:

## 1. Intercommunity Relations

A significant consequence of anti-Muslim hatred is the breakdown of intercommunity relations between Muslims and other communities. Bias and prejudice against specific groups can fracture community relations and undermine mutual trust and understanding.

In 2024, a national survey revealed that 71% of Muslim respondents (making up a representative sample of the British Muslim population) believed interfaith relations in Britain required further improvement, highlighting attitudes towards social and interreligious harmony.<sup>6</sup>

According to human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, a key factor in this context is experiences with the Prevent strategy.<sup>7</sup> There is a prevalent perception that British Muslim communities are disproportionately singled out by Prevent. This has created a general atmosphere of mistrust between parts of Muslim communities and law enforcement, but also wider society. This perception of prejudice and discrimination fosters alienation and resentment, weakens community cohesion and damages trust between British Muslims, the government and broader society.<sup>8</sup>

More recently, heightened tensions have arisen within British society as a consequence of conflict in the Middle East. This has had a significant impact on British Muslim and Jewish communities in particular. Members of both communities experience misplaced blame for international developments which they had no direct involvement in, leading to feelings of collective blame, isolation and frustration.<sup>9</sup> Home Secretary Yvette Cooper condemned the rise in antisemitic and anti-Muslim hate crimes, characterising them as a “stain on society”, assuring the public of the government’s unwavering commitment to combat such hatred.<sup>10</sup> Cooper stressed the importance of protecting all communities and ensuring the prosecution of those inciting division, both online and offline.<sup>11</sup> The research underpinning this report suggests that the government’s commitment to tackling the rise in hate crime has to be accompanied by a commitment to support interfaith and community relations and combat anti-Muslim hatred as well as antisemitism and other forms of racism.

## 2. Trust in the Political Establishment

While overall there are positive developments in how British Muslim communities view the government's role in their lives, there have also been significant strains due to concerns over the government's handling of anti-Muslim hatred. This has particularly been the case from the early 2000s onwards when, in the wake of the "war on terror" and the 7/7 London bombings, the UK solidified counter-terrorism policies, which then had a disproportionate impact on British Muslim communities. Many British Muslims felt unjustly targeted on the basis of racial and anti-Muslim/Islamophobic profiling, which has led to heightened distrust with severe repercussions for community-government relations and national policymaking.<sup>12</sup>

Significantly, the introduction of the Prevent strategy has raised additional concerns. Its disproportionate focus on Muslims has been acknowledged by various organisations which reported that the successes of the scheme were difficult to assess, and it largely led to increased stigmatisation of Muslims.<sup>13</sup> In this context, many cultural organisations and charities report having to refuse Prevent-related funding due to the nature of attached conditions which are perceived as a form of undue interference.<sup>14</sup>

Research also shows that despite the crucial role of national census data in assessing community needs and allocating resources, many British Muslims remain distrustful of how their information is used. This view stems from concerns that census data may be misused for surveillance purposes, particularly in a context where communities feel unjustly targeted by anti-Muslim hatred.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, anti-Muslim hatred has also seeped into political and media discourse,<sup>16</sup> where British Muslims are often portrayed as disloyal to the UK or inherently linked to terrorism. This stigmatisation intensified in the run up to the 2024 general election, due to many political candidates' stance on Israel/Gaza.<sup>17</sup> The relative surge in support for independent MPs among Muslim voters and others during the general election is believed to have at least partially taken place due to increasing numbers of voters - including British Muslims - losing faith in existing political parties to represent their views.<sup>18</sup> This loss of trust in mainstream politics (which is also reflected by the wider society)<sup>19</sup> has the potential of threatening social cohesion in the UK.



### 3. Economic Burden on the Country

Beyond social and political costs, the rise of anti-Muslim hatred and violence<sup>20</sup> places a significant economic burden on the UK government. Although hate crimes in the UK are often under-reported, rendering it challenging to accurately calculate, in 2024, we estimate that direct costs of anti-Muslim violence during the summer riots alone reached approximately £243 million.

|                          | Units                   | Cost per unit                  | Total                      |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| UK riot policing costs   |                         |                                | £32 million <sup>21</sup>  |
| Prison costs*            | 178 years <sup>22</sup> | £50,000 per year <sup>23</sup> | £9 million                 |
| Insurance claims         |                         |                                | £200 million <sup>24</sup> |
| Riot compensation claims | 88 claims <sup>25</sup> |                                | £2 million <sup>26</sup>   |
|                          |                         | <b>Total</b>                   | <b>£243 million</b>        |

**Table 1:** Calculating cost of anti-Muslim hatred in 2024

\*Using data reported by the BBC and other news agencies, we calculated average prison sentences for 177 individuals that were arrested for the 2024 riots. With the annual cost of the average prison place being £50,000 (according to government figures), we can estimate that the total cost is about £9 million. The estimated total number of individuals charged was 800. For the remaining 623 individuals, no public data is available, so we are unable to make further estimations.

Additionally, these figures do not include the range of associated judicial costs, such as court time, as well as costs for judges, lawyers, clerks and other administrative staff, which would also add to the total. Nor do the figures include the cost of violent or non-violent anti-Muslim hatred and discrimination outside of the riots. In the report 'The Economic Contribution of British Muslims and the Risk of Exodus'<sup>27</sup>, nationwide polling demonstrated that religious discrimination was among the top three reasons for Muslims wanting to leave the UK which could lead to tax losses of hundreds of millions of pounds per year. These figures were not included in the table above.

# Attitudes on British Muslims

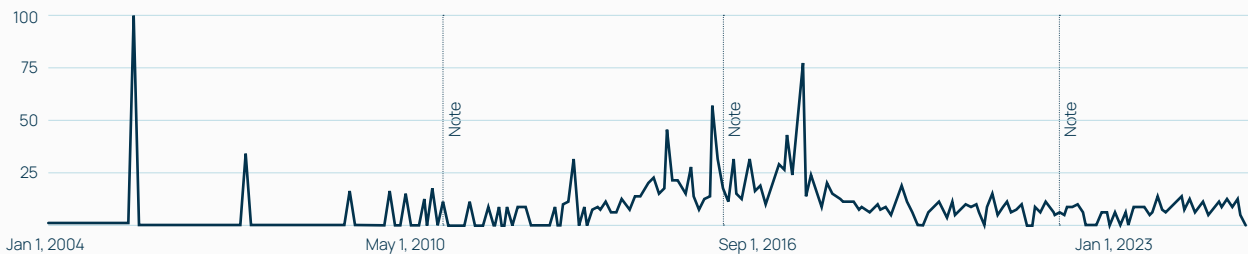
A 2018 Hope Not Hate report, which polled 10,000 people across the UK, reported that 33% of respondents believed that the UK had 'shariah-imposed no go zones' (Muslim-majority areas where people of other faiths are not allowed), an allegation that has been repeatedly proven not to be true.<sup>28</sup> In 2023 polling, this percentage reduced to 12%.<sup>29</sup> Though this decline is encouraging, it does not mask the rise in anti-Muslim hatred incidents as reported by Tell MAMA, especially in 2024.

To further explore social cohesion and anti-Muslim hatred, we used data from a national survey of 2000 respondents from across the UK, two focus groups of eight and six people each, publicly available data from Google Trends, and a month-long publicity campaign on social media conducted by the British Muslim charity Mercy Mission.<sup>30</sup>

The findings demonstrate that a majority of the UK population is either mostly positive or neutral towards British Muslims.

As part of the month-long online publicity campaign, posters showcasing the contributions of British Muslim communities to various local and global causes (such as activism for the environment or equality) were shared on social media platforms. Audience engagement on these platforms was then monitored to record positive and negative reactions. Most posters highlighting local impacts of Muslim contributions to public life elicited positive reactions. This campaign thus demonstrated the value of highlighting Muslims' contribution to society in positively shifting public attitudes towards Muslims and therefore reducing anti-Muslim hatred and improving social cohesion. Similar public campaigns led by national government could help promote social and intercommunity cohesion in the country.

One common expression of anti-Muslim hatred is a generalised linking of Islam with terrorism. However, analysis of Google Trends has demonstrated a decline in searches that linked Islam and terrorism in the UK (see figure below).<sup>31</sup>



**Figure:** Google Trends data on terms linking Islam and terrorism in the last two decades

Moreover, there have also been reductions in some other markers of hatred towards Islam. For example, from the polling in 2023, 52% of respondents felt that Islam being a force for good was neither true nor false, demonstrating neutrality at best, and indifference at worst, towards the religion.

Whilst negative views towards Islam in themselves are not necessarily always concerning, they can be problematic if translated into negative views of Muslims, which can lead to discrimination or violence.

### Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Islam is a force for good in the world”

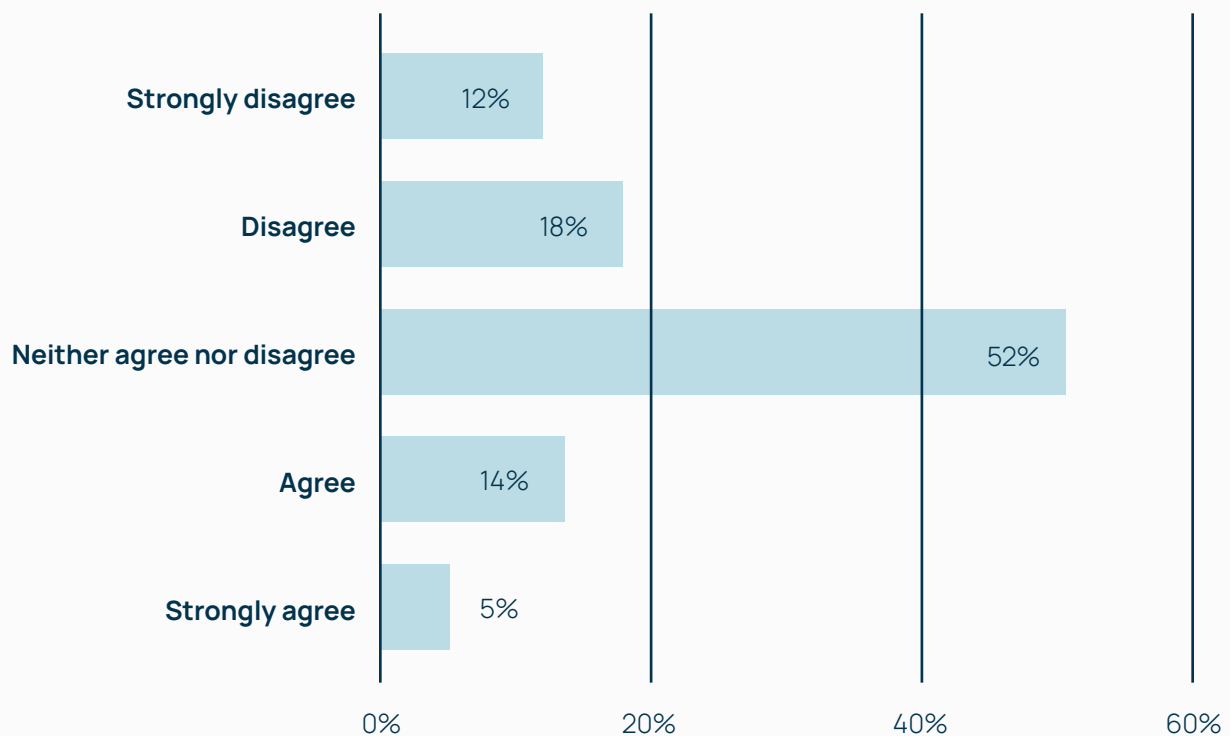


Figure: How respondents felt towards Islam (data taken from polling)

Focus group discussions showed that the general British public often do not have a detailed understanding of Islam, even if they consider themselves supportive. Overall, respondents felt that their knowledge of Islam was insufficient to defend British Muslims in public, when they saw anti-Muslim hatred. However, when presented with tangible, positive examples of Islam's role in people's lives, positive shifts in opinions were noted, even amongst segments of society that did not consider themselves supportive. These findings demonstrate that an active effort invested into dispelling myths can help promote better social cohesion while actively reducing hatred towards Muslims in the process.

From national polling, approximately 80% of the British public were inclined to engage positively with Muslims when targeted messaging, which highlighted positive stories about British Muslim communities, was used.<sup>32</sup>

Another notable finding of the poll, followed up with several focus group discussions, was the diversity of attitudes towards Islam as a faith, amongst the general population. A typology of the findings derived from the polling and the focus group discussions is provided below. Overall, focus group respondents differentiated between Islam as a religion and Muslims as people. Unfavourable views towards Islam did not always translate as hatred towards Muslims.

**“The only time you hear about Islam on the TV is usually extreme. That does give a fairly negative view, but when I interact with followers of Islam, they are often kind, gentle, family type people”**

Male, 60, rural, white British, Conservative



Riots following the 2024 Southport incident led to at least £243 million in costs.



|  | Percentage            | Type of group                       | Description   |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>People with positive views of Islam</b><br><br>Anyone who had a positive inclination toward Islam | 26-31% of the country | Young progressives                  | They have a positive international outlook and hold progressive values. They are often concerned about sustainability, trust experts, and are optimistic about change.  |
|  |                       | Middle-aged religious practitioners | This group tends to hold centre-right values and is generally more focused on their immediate environment and personal well-being than broader systemic change. Their values are shaped by religious affiliation, and they may prioritise stability and tradition in their engagement with public life.                                     |
| <b>Moderates</b><br><br>Everyone in between the other two groups                                     | 49-54% of the country | Young value-driven professionals    | Typically, women aged between 18 and their late 30s. They are young residents of urban areas. They are concerned with animal welfare and are either not currently working or are at an intermediate stage in their careers. When it comes to Islam, they tend to believe that Islam is not kind to animals but are otherwise neutral to it. |
|  |                       | Suburban males                      | This group of moderates are more likely to be male and tend to live in towns, especially in the South West. They are usually the main decision makers in their households. They are less likely to be progressive and tend to hold conservative views.  |
|  |                       | Non-religious ethnic minorities     | Non-religious ethnic minorities are generally Labour voters who interact with Islam or Muslims frequently. Regarding Islam, they do not believe that Muslims face more prejudice than others. This group would not stand up for Christians under attack either.   |

|   | Percentage            | Type of group               | Description   |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Least supportive of Islam</b><br><br>People who were least supportive of Islam | 14-20% of the country | Low-contact rural residents | Members of this group are more likely to be male and tend to vote Conservative. Demographically they are often middle-aged, white and religious. They live in rural areas and rely heavily on their cars for transportation. When it comes to Islam, they rarely encounter Muslims but often tend to hold the view that Islam is violent.   |
|   |                       | Religious ethnic minorities | This group refers to a small percentage of men from ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly Black and Asian non-Muslims. They are younger, but not very young, and are also religious. They live in urban areas. While they interact with practitioners of Islam regularly, they are very religious themselves and, as a group, are the least likely to hold positive views about Islam. This group makes up only a very small portion of the population. |

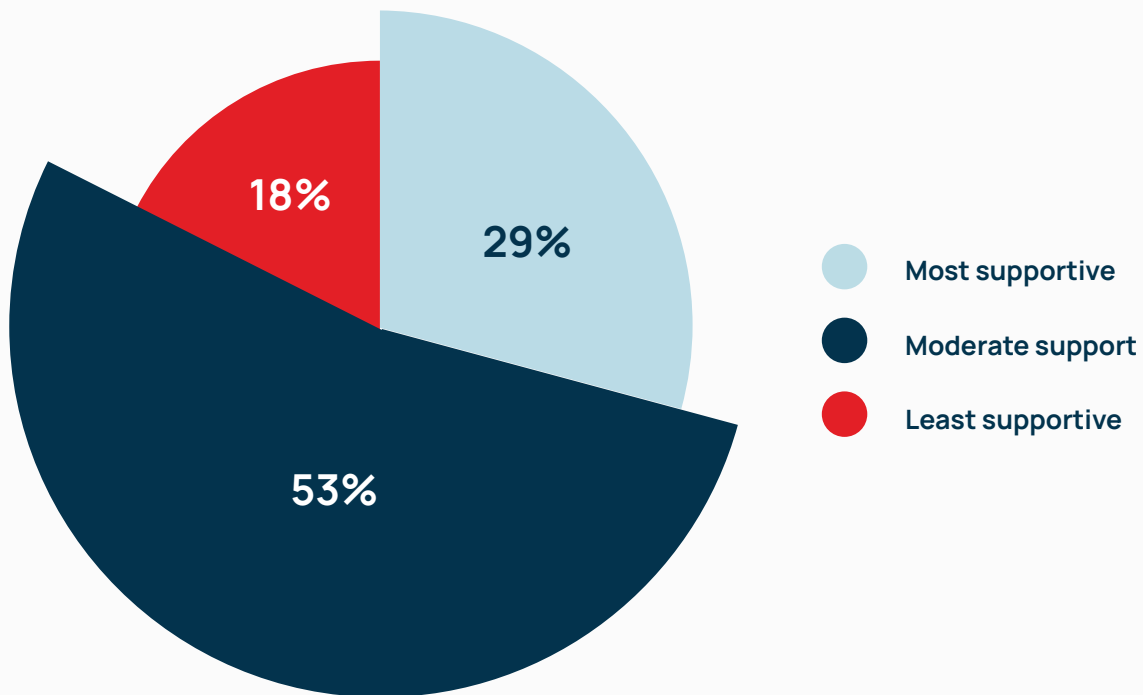


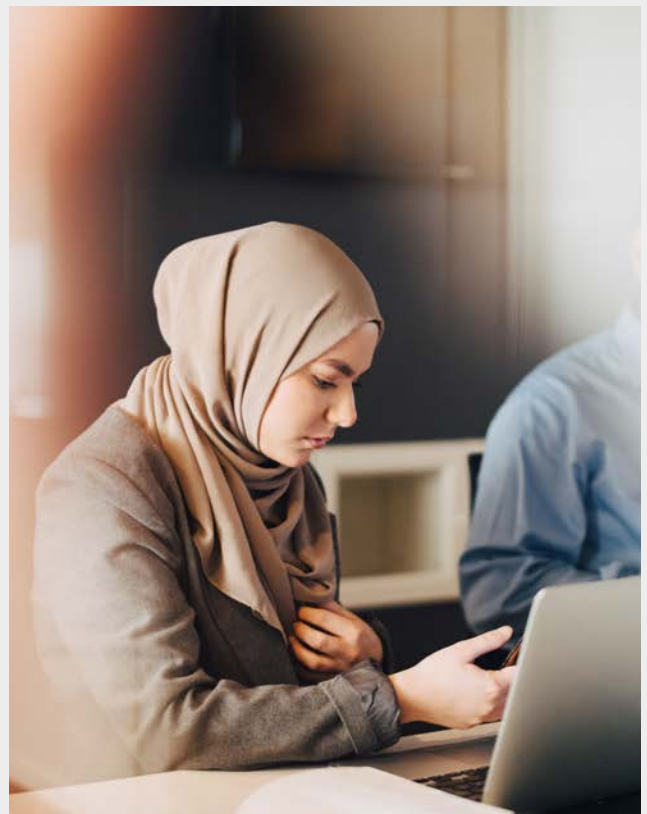
Figure: Distribution of views towards Islam

Sentiments of anti-Muslim hatred and social cohesion were measured by asking participants if they would defend a Muslim (or person of another faith) if they saw this person being harassed by other members of the public. Other questions were related to how participants viewed Islam and Muslims in the UK, and whether they were aware of some of the altruistic aspects of Islam, such as Zakat, a core pillar of Islam that obligates Muslims to pay a portion of their annual savings to vulnerable members of society.

**Key findings from the polling and focus group discussions revealed that:**

- 16% of participants had concerns about both Islam and Muslims. The remaining 84% were either neutral (38%) or proclaimed no negative sentiments towards Muslims (46%) specifically.
- Most participants were reluctant to overtly defend Islam, but 56% said they would stand up for an individual being harassed in public, including Muslims, demonstrating a differentiation between British Muslims and Islam as a religion.
- 56% believed that Muslims had a strong sense of community and 50% believed that Muslims felt a purpose to living their lives, demonstrating some level of positive sentiment towards Muslims.
- In the focus groups, there was a focus on how the media presented Islam negatively, and how there was an overwhelming lack of understanding about some of the core values of Islam.

- Most focus group participants were largely unresponsive and reluctant to engage when they felt they did not understand the religious practice they were asked about.
- Most people of non-Muslim backgrounds in the focus groups were not aware of Zakat, but when informed, they were broadly supportive and became more positive towards the religion.
- Focus group participants were much more engaged when given practical examples and demonstrations of the core tenets of the religion.



“Giving to charities is one of the five pillars of Islam? I think it’s brilliant. It helps give back to the community. If more people saw the work and how generous people of the Islamic community are, people would be a lot less hostile towards them. The media portrays Muslims in a certain way and that image has stuck with them.”

Female, 18, suburban, white British, Labour

---

“I’d like to know what form of charity it (Zakat) goes towards and what they have achieved by it. I wish I knew more about this. I think people would have a better opinion about Islam as it is a common goal (with the rest of the society).”

Male, 31, suburban, Black British, Conservative

---

# Tackling Anti-Muslim Hatred Using Digital Advertising

Using the findings from the focus groups, an advertising campaign was conducted on the digital platforms Facebook and Instagram, to counter anti-Muslim hatred and instead promote a positive understanding of Islam. This approach was based on earlier findings of UK parliamentary hearings<sup>33</sup> and past research<sup>34</sup>, which have pinpointed social media misinformation and hatred as a crucial driver of offline violence.

Clear links between online messaging and offline violence were most recently seen in the case of the 2024 summer riots.<sup>35</sup> By reverse-engineering this process and increasing engagement on positive content, the aim was to test mitigations, to see if they affect existing anti-Muslim hatred, which risks having a negative effect on social cohesion. Analysis of engagement with the tailored campaign found that:

- The content with the most positive engagement centred on personal experiences from the local community and how people of Muslim faith are involved in their communities. Messaging focused on how individuals lived out Islamic values at the heart of the community and on personal stories of how Islam can be a force for good.<sup>36</sup>
- The audience actively disliked messaging centred on linking broader issues such as climate change and equality with Islam. The comments section included many Islamophobic comments that echoed key negative tropes and narratives on Islam.

- Overall positive engagement was four times more likely than negative engagement, indicating that in general, the audience positively interacted with the content.

Further analysis showed that the most positive stories about Islam could be divided into four categories, namely:

- **Sport:** Any story that covered famous sports stars to local grassroots sporting organisations and their achievements was positively received. This aligns with a 2021 study of 8000 Liverpool Football Club fans, which demonstrated how the presence of footballer Mohammed Salah had led to many fans feeling that Islam was compatible with Britain.<sup>37</sup>
- **Local community:** This included stories on how local mosques gave back to the community or about Muslim people who have achieved great things.
- **Charity work:** Charity work carried out by Muslim organisations was mentioned frequently.
- **Women:** A lot of the positive news stories that were about individual achievements were more focused on Muslim women than men.

These findings show the potential value of civil society organisations and government working in tandem to help reduce animosity and unfounded negative sentiments towards British Muslims. Using narratives that are centred in local communities and not exclusivist in nature can help to improve harmony among different societal groups.

**British charity's blood donor record bid aims to save 150,000 lives**

Independent, Aug 28, 2022

**Morocco's meteoric rise at the World Cup is smashing stereotypes**

The Guardian, Dec 13, 2022

**Oldham 10-year old takes home British Muslim award**

Oldham Evening Chronicle, Mar 09, 2022

**Coventry Mosque cleans up local area after rubbish seen 'spewing' onto streets**

Coventry Live, Feb 09, 2022

**Curry house owner's pride after receiving honorary degree from University of Northampton**

Northampton Chronicle, Feb 24, 2022

Figure: A snapshot of some headlines that received positive engagement

# Policy Recommendations

**1) The government must champion a unifying vision for the UK, countering the rise of misinformation, political polarisation and divisive rhetoric.** The government must recognise the damage that is done in allowing language that exacerbates divisions to go unchallenged. It should use its unique platform to articulate a unifying vision for the nation. Rather than focusing on responding to divisive narratives, leaders should emphasise shared values like respect for all, equality and liberty. In addition, the government should promote positive signalling, including on social media, that is local and community-centred, to help reduce hatred towards any specific group and nurture community relations. This should be supported by a national public campaign promoting digital literacy, including training, workshops and resources to help people critically evaluate online content and reduce the spread of harmful misinformation.

**2) The government should make the tackling of anti-Muslim hatred a priority in their efforts to improve social cohesion.** Addressing anti-Muslim hatred, alongside other forms of group-based discrimination such as racism, xenophobia and antisemitism, is key to improving social cohesion. Tackling and reducing anti-Muslim hatred will help strengthen societal ties, improve trust in government and save the resources needed to respond to hate crime, violence and rioting.

**3) The government should develop a cross-departmental strategy to engage community groups, including faith and belief actors, as key delivery partners in the fight against anti-Muslim hatred and for improving social cohesion, with clear mechanisms for funding, capacity-building and accountability.** The government should recognise faith and belief groups as key civil society actors who are often embedded in the heart of communities and trusted by them. These groups reach citizens who are disengaged from other institutions, particularly in underserved areas. This is not about bringing faith into politics, but rather, having politics benefit from, and better respond to, the belief systems underpinning the lived realities of Britain's diverse communities. At a national level, the government should establish an inclusive "Citizens' Assembly on Social Cohesion" to gather diverse perspectives and co-create solutions, ensuring the voices of women and young people are included.

**4) The Department for Education (DfE) should ensure schools play a central role in tackling anti-Muslim hatred and promoting social cohesion.** Efforts to tackle anti-Muslim hatred and advance social cohesion must start young. Curricula that emphasise citizenship, empathy and the value of diversity can help young people grow into more inclusive and engaged citizens and be able to spot and counter misinformation. This can help counter anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of anti-group resentment, such as racism or antisemitism. Beyond the classroom, the government should invest in inclusive youth services and extracurricular activities, particularly in underserved areas. Funding local youth clubs can help young people develop connections across socio-economic and cultural lines, fostering long-term cohesion.

**5) The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) should introduce a “shared spaces” urban grants scheme for inter-community cohesion.**

Shared, practical experiences foster greater trust than dialogue alone. The implementation of an urban grants scheme would help transform underused public buildings and existing community centres into locally managed, safe spaces for community exchange, interfaith collaboration, youth engagement and community enterprise. These spaces should be co-led by diverse civil society groups, including faith and belief groups, and respond to local needs through inclusive programming. This scheme should be embedded within existing community cohesion and regeneration strategies, with funding administered via local councils and housing associations. Participation of local council and government members will help to improve visibility of government involvement at community level, helping rebuild trust in the government’s ability to respond to community needs.

**6) DCMS should encourage mainstream media channels to showcase the contributions of diverse faith and belief groups, including British Muslims, to their local communities.**

Highlighting the positive contributions of diverse faith and belief groups can help improve social cohesion and reduce anti-Muslim hatred. Emphasising that British Muslims are part of the local community leads to positive interactions and helps reassert British Muslims as part of the social fabric of the UK. Work in this area can build on existing initiatives.<sup>38</sup> Engaging with the growing British Muslim creative industry would help to increase exposure to diverse stories and experiences.



# Working Together for a Socially Cohesive Society

The challenges of improving social cohesion and tackling anti-Muslim hatred are intertwined. Developing a society that embeds strong links and trust between communities and the government, alongside targeted efforts to tackle anti-Muslim hatred, will benefit everyone in the country - socially, politically and economically.

Strong bonds and mutual trust between different communities and the government enable us to work together for a society in which everyone feels welcome and safe, no matter their personal background. Moreover, at a time where public funds are scarce, minimising the financial costs of responding to hatred and violence is crucial. In protecting, promoting and improving social cohesion, we do not just protect communities in the short term, we strengthen the very foundation of a more united, resilient and prosperous Britain.

It is welcome that the government has stated that tackling anti-Muslim hatred, alongside other forms of group-based hatred and discrimination, and promoting social cohesion is a key priority. This report demonstrates how the rise of anti-Muslim hatred extracts a heavy social, political and financial toll on the country, with implications which cannot be ignored for the future prosperity of our nation. It reinforces what the government needs to do: targeted, focused action, that addresses anti-Muslim hatred, to help foster better social cohesion.



# Endnotes

**1** “Government Launches Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred/Islamophobia Definition”, *Gov.uk*, February 28, 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-working-group-on-anti-muslim-hatredislamophobia-definition>.

See also: Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: The Intensification of Racism Against Muslim Communities in the UK*, November 2024, <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/islamophobia-the-intensification-of-racism-against-muslim-communities-in-the-uk>.

**2** Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: The Intensification of Racism Against Muslim Communities in the UK*, November 2024, <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/islamophobia-the-intensification-of-racism-against-muslim-communities-in-the-uk>.

**3** Zahed Amanullah, “Islamophobia and anti-Muslim Hatred”, *Institute for Security Dialogue*, November 20, 2024, <https://www.isdglobal.org/explainers/islamophobia-anti-muslim-hatred/>.

**4** “Tackling Islamophobia and anti-Muslim Hatred: Practical Guidance for UK Universities”, *Universities UK*, December 2021, <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-12/tackling-islamophobia-and-anti-muslim-hatred-uuk.pdf>.

**5** Tell MAMA, *The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate: Tell Mama Report 2025*, January 2025, <https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/TheNewNormofAnti-MuslimHate-TellMAMAREport2025.pdf>.

**6** Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life, *The Social Contribution of British Muslims*, March 2024, <https://iifl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/The-social-contribution-of-British-Muslims.pdf>.

**7** Amnesty International, *The Prevent Duty and Its Chilling Effect on Human Rights*, April 4, 2025, [https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2023-11/Amnesty%20UK%20Prevent%20report%20%281%29.pdf?VersionId=.hjlwRZuHiGd1\\_IEXroFwg25jyBtwur](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2023-11/Amnesty%20UK%20Prevent%20report%20%281%29.pdf?VersionId=.hjlwRZuHiGd1_IEXroFwg25jyBtwur).

**8** Amnesty International, *The Prevent Duty and Its Chilling Effect on Human Rights*, April 4, 2025, [https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2023-11/Amnesty%20UK%20Prevent%20report%20%281%29.pdf?VersionId=.hjlwRZuHiGd1\\_IEXroFwg25jyBtwur](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2023-11/Amnesty%20UK%20Prevent%20report%20%281%29.pdf?VersionId=.hjlwRZuHiGd1_IEXroFwg25jyBtwur).

**9** Shehab Khan, “One Year on from 7 October, the War in Gaza has Transformed Muslim and Jewish Communities – and British Politics”, *Hyphen Online*, October 19, 2024, <https://hyphenonline.com/2024/10/09/gaza-october-7-one-year-muslim-jewish-communities-politics-shehab-khan/>.

**10** “Religious Hate Crimes at Record Levels in England and Wales, Official Figures Show”, *The Guardian*, October 10, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/oct/10/religious-hate-crimes-at-record-levels-in-england-and-wales-official-figures-show>.

**11** “Religious Hate Crimes at Record Levels in England and Wales, Official Figures Show”, *The Guardian*, October 10, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/oct/10/religious-hate-crimes-at-record-levels-in-england-and-wales-official-figures-show>.

**12** Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: The Intensification of Racism Against Muslim Communities in the UK*, November 2024, <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/islamophobia-the-intensification-of-racism-against-muslim-communities-in-the-uk>.

**13** Jamie Grearson, "My Son was Terrified": How Prevent Alienates UK Muslims", *The Guardian*, January 27, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jan/27/prevent-muslim-community-discrimination>.

**14** See, for example, our report written by Elizabeth Teixeira and Mohammed Sinan Siyech: *Tackling Loneliness: Learning From British Muslim Experiences*, (Equi, December 2024), <https://equi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Equi-Report-Tackling-Loneliness.pdf>.

**15** Serena Hussain, "British Muslims and the Census: The Need for Statistical Visibility vis-à-vis Government Surveillance Concerns", *Religion, State and Society*, 53, no. 1, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2024.2380202>.

**16** Tell MAMA, *The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate: Tell Mama Report 2025*, January 2025, <https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/TheNewNormofAnti-MuslimHate-TellMAMAReport2025.pdf>. See also: Faisal Hanif, *British Media's Coverage of Muslims and Islam (2018-2020)* (Center for Media Monitoring, November 2021), <https://cfmm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CfMM-Annual-Report-2018-2020-digital.pdf>.

**17** Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: The Intensification of Racism Against Muslim Communities in the UK*, November 2024, <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/islamophobia-the-intensification-of-racism-against-muslim-communities-in-the-uk>.

**18** Julian Hargreaves, "Three Steps to Mending Relations with the Muslim Voters who Turned Away from Labour in 2024", *The Conversation*, August 1, 2024, <https://theconversation.com/three-steps-to-mending-relations-with-the-muslim-voters-who-turned-away-from-labour-in-2024-235789>.

**19** Will Jennings, 'A crisis of trust in our politics spells trouble for the government', *Sky News*, April 25, 2024, <https://news.sky.com/story/a-crisis-of-trust-in-our-politics-spells-trouble-for-the-government-13122344>.

**20** Tell MAMA, *The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate: Tell Mama Report 2025*, January 2025, <https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/TheNewNormofAnti-MuslimHate-TellMAMAReport2025.pdf>.

**21** These numbers were taken from Tell MAMA, *The New Norm of Anti-Muslim Hate: Tell Mama Report 2025*, January 2025, <https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/TheNewNormofAnti-MuslimHate-TellMAMAReport2025.pdf>.

**22** This data was taken from the UK government's Cost of Crimes Report. See: Matthew Heeks, Sasha Reed, Mariam Tafsi and Stuart Prince, *The Economic and Social Costs of Crime: Home Office Research Report*, July 2018, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b684f22e5274a14f45342c9/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime-horr99.pdf>.

**23** Amy Claire, "Policing Riots Cost £31.7m and Foreign Bots 'Turbo-Charged' Misinformation, Says Counter-Terrorism Chief", *Independent*, November 20, 2014, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/southport-riots-cost-police-foreign-bots-b2650567.html>.

**24** Although various reports exist on the number of years that people were sentenced for, the most recent estimate as of December 2024 notes that the total number of years was 178. See: Jonny Humphries, "Boy, 13, Held for Attacking Police in Summer Riots", *BBC*, December 11, 2024, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq62ydnqpl0>.

The cost per prisoner was provided by the Ministry of Justice: TheyWorkForYou, "Prisoners: Per Capita Costs", September 9, 2024, <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2024-08-30.3546.h#:~:text=The%20overall%20average%20cost%20for.%2D2022%2Dto%2D2023>.

The number of prisoners was estimated from the following source: "Who are the rioters and what jail sentences have they received?", *BBC*, August 8, 2024, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm23y7l01v8o>.

**25** Ministry of Justice, "Costs per place and costs per prisoner by individual prison", March 21, 2024, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f4229810cd8e001136c655/costs-per-place-per-prisoner-2022-2023-summary.pdf>.

**26** This is a conservative estimate. According to industry estimates, insured losses from the 2024 UK riots are expected to remain below £250 million. See: L. S. Howard, "Insured Losses from UK Riots Will Be Manageable, with Claims Below £250M," *Insurance Journal*, August 13, 2024, <https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/international/2024/08/13/788157.htm>.

**27** Alix Hattenstone and Tracy Higgins, "Almost £2m Claimed in Riot Compensation so far", *BBC*, November 19, 2024, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crez2lgpyl1o>.

**28** Alix Hattenstone and Tracy Higgins, "Almost £2m Claimed in Riot Compensation so far", *BBC*, November 19, 2024, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crez2lgpyl1o>.

**29** Mohammed Sinan Siyech and Sofiah Shah, *The Economic Contribution of British Muslims and the Risk of Exodus* (Equi, September, 2024), <https://equi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Equi-Economic-Contribution-Report.pdf>

**30** Safya Khan, "Islamophobia – It's Real", *Hope Not Hate*, October 10, 2018, <https://hopenothate.org.uk/2018/10/10/islamophobia-its-real/>.

**31** This polling was conducted by Savanta/ComRes in January 2023. We received the data from British Muslim organisation Mercy Mission. See also: Samantha North, "Can Google Search Data Help Solve Islamophobia?", *Fair Observer*, July 15, 2017, <https://www.fairobserver.com/region/north-america/google-search-data-islamophobia-racism-culture-society-world-news-76512/>.

**32** The focus group discussions were conducted by Mercy Mission between 2021 and 2023.

**33** See graph below. The information was taken from Google Trends.

**34** This data was provided by Mercy Mission. The polling was conducted by Savanta/ComRes in the first half of 2023.

**35** Science, Innovation and Technology Committee, "Oral Evidence: Social Media, Misinformation and Harmful Algorithms", *House of Commons*, January 21, 2025, <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/15274/pdf/>.

**36** Gabriel Ahmanideen and Derya Iner, "The Interaction between Online and Offline Islamophobia and Anti-Mosque Campaigns: The Literature Review with a Case Study from an Anti-Mosque Social Media Page", *Sociology Compass*, 2023, 18, no. 1, <https://compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/soc4.13160>.

**37** Brian Fung, "UK Riots Show how Social Media can Fuel Real-Life Harm. It's Only Getting Worse", *CNN*, August 9, 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/08/09/tech/uk-protests-social-media>.

**38** This engagement was recorded by Mercy Mission. Engagements with ads were scored against the engagement matrix below and standardised by measuring per 'reach of 1000 people'. This ensured that results were comparable despite differences in spend within each region, and the different audience sizes. Positive and negative comments receive different scores, as do different 'reacts', so as to discern when messaging was received negatively or positively. The engagement was measured as follows:

- A 3-second video view was assigned a value of 1 point.
- A 100% (full) video view was valued at 5 points.
- A negative reaction (such as a thumbs down or angry emoji) resulted in a deduction of 20 points.
- A positive reaction (like a thumbs up or heart emoji) added 20 points.
- A negative comment led to a deduction of 30 points.
- A positive comment added 30 points.
- A share of the video contributed 50 points.

**39** This data was provided by Mercy Mission based on their research between 2021 and 2023.

**40** BBC Media Centre, "BBC Announces Boost to Creative Diversity Commitments Following Review by Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity", *BBC*, September 4, 2024. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/2024/bbc-announces-boost-to-creative-diversity-commitments>.

# Acknowledgments

---

We would like to thank Sofiah Laila Shah and Shmailish Anwar for their research assistance.

Supporting data for this research was provided by Mercy Mission UK, for which we are extremely grateful.

We would also like to thank the Sycamore Foundation for Global Leadership for their support in the production of this report.

# About the Author

---



Dr Mohammed Sinan Siyech is Senior Researcher at Equi. He has a PhD from the University of Edinburgh and teaches politics at King's College London and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). He regularly publishes and speaks about politics, religion and security in Europe, South Asia and the Middle East in various platforms across the world.

# About Equi

---

Equi is a pioneering think tank. An independent, non-partisan organisation whose mission is to develop and promote new public policy ideas for a just and prosperous society for all. Born from a recognition that British Muslims are not included in the crucial arena of public policy formation, it has been driven by a desire to contribute more fully to the health and wellbeing of our nation, bringing into play our dearly held values and ethics of public service. Outcomes are driven by British Muslims, but not simply for British Muslims.

Equi is committed to an evidence-based approach to policy development and retains copyright and full editorial control over all its written research. We work in partnership with academics and other experts and commission studies involving empirical research.