UK Government

Protecting What Matters: Towards a more confident, cohesive, and resilient United Kingdom

CP 1540

Government of the United Kingdom

Protecting What Matters: Towards a more confident, cohesive, and resilient United Kingdom

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government by Command of His Majesty

March 2026

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
Tel: 030 3444 0000

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Foreword from the Prime Minister

By any fair standard, Britain can be proud about of its approach to social cohesion. Simple things we take for granted – like inter-faith marriages, or religious freedom – are in fact a departure from the historical or international norm. Indeed, the ease with which people of different cultures and races live side-by-side in our diverse democracy is both envied and feared around the globe. Feared, because it provides a banal yet profound challenge to the increasingly noisy politics that says it simply cannot be done; people who are different cannot come together united under one flag. In our communities we show, daily, that it can.

This Call to Action recommits Britain to that quiet act of defiance against the forces of division and renews our approach to social cohesion. As ever, we draw deeply on our shared values. Not just our core liberal principles such as tolerance, protection for minorities, the rule of law or the freedom to live and let live. Nor just the natural pluralism that has always characterised an island country containing our four distinct and proud nations. We also draw on the distinctively British approach to integration that has always been grounded in the fairness of the two-way street: in rights and responsibilities. And we draw on our pragmatic, common-sense decency which means that people who come here to contribute can become, not just citizens, but our friends and neighbours. That bound by our common good, they become part of the greater us.

Yet as this Action Plan also sets out, we cannot be blind to the dangers or the stakes. Because the truth is while our values remain strong, in recent years their practice has often been poor. Too often, we have taken our eye off the ball when it comes to being clear about the responsibilities of cohesion, as well as the rights. We should rightly be proud of having some of the toughest anti-hate and anti-discrimination laws anywhere in the world. But this should be underpinned by a collective responsibility to pursue integration.

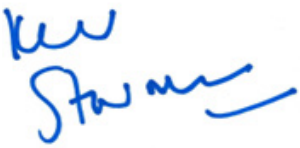
This has always been vital for social cohesion. But in a world as dangerous and volatile as ours it becomes an emergency. The blunt truth is that in the coming decades geopolitics will test the strength of our communities like never before. Not least because hostile states will actively seek to divide us as part of their hybrid strategies. Social cohesion is therefore not just a good in and of itself. It is also a vital front in the resilience of our national security. To put it simply: if we are to be strong on the global stage, we must have strong and united communities at home. And so, to weather the storms of this volatile world, it follows that our 'social contract' must now also be strengthened.

Across Government, that work is already under way. On the economy, our focus on tackling the cost-of-living crisis, investing in the public realm, a confident industrial strategy and a total rejection of the failed austerity project, provides a much stronger foundation for stronger communities. On migration, we are restoring trust by recognising contribution as the fundamental principle that consent for effective migration and a compassionate asylum system depend upon. Meanwhile, our Pride in

Place programme gives communities, in an uncertain world, the agency and control to strengthen themselves. It is a rejection of the remote liberalism that merely dispenses transfers and targets from Whitehall, in favour of active community-building from the ground up.

But we can and must do more. In a world where so many people – digital grifters, hostile states, politicians of grievance – have a vested interest in division, we need to be much more active in asserting British values and the responsibilities of integration. We must be stronger when it comes to rooting out extremism and rejecting the passive tolerance that sometimes prefers to look the other way. And we must be clear that patriotic pride is something to be embraced as a force for good in our communities. That it is, by its nature, a collective act of community-building that is totally opposed to exclusion and those who seek to divide us.

Because ultimately, this is the only way we can sustainably strengthen society. That is the challenge this Action Plan takes on. And in doing so it shows a new path for a united, proud, confident and cohesive Britain.



The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC
MP Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury, Minister for the Civil Service, and Minister for the Union

Foreword from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government

Our first duty as a government is to protect our country. That means uniting those of us who are proud of the UK together in pursuit of a safer, stronger more prosperous country against those hostile actors who want to divide us.

As a nation we are proof that people from different backgrounds can live, work and contribute together. But the foundations on which this country has been built, from which our principles of compassion and community were originally drawn, are under threat.

Economic shocks, austerity, technological change, demographic changes and a rise in extremism have each made people feel as if they have lost a sense of control over their lives, their country and their community. Many have reacted through online echo chambers exacerbated by malevolent algorithms, and in the polarisation of public life leaving us more detached from one another and less resilient.

The threat this presents to our cohesion is not academic. People from different backgrounds getting on together isn't a nice to have, it is a fundamental pre-condition to the Britain we have come to expect and that is needed for Britain to thrive in the 21st Century. Without our multiethnic democracy there is no NHS, without cohesion there is no stability to plan ahead or weather attacks, without pride in Britain, there is no better future for our children.

This call to action does not claim to address every underlying cause of division. That is a whole of government effort, which includes our reforms to create good jobs and get people into them, giving long term fairer funding to local authorities, fixing the broken asylum system and giving greater power and resources to communities through devolution. Alongside that, this call provides the first steps towards a more confident, cohesive, and resilient United Kingdom.

We also know that people around the country are already conducting acts of service to their community and their country – from litter picking to volunteering teaching English to serving in our armed forces. Those people might not be as loud as those who seek to divide us but they are far greater in number. It is those people, who have already chosen to come together to make their country and their community better, that we are backing up. Our patriotism is being on their side.

These are meaningful steps to improve social cohesion. We are protecting young people with tougher regulation of home education, and we are strengthening national pride through new major sporting moments. New investment is being made available for cohesive communities, and local areas that have been ignored and let down will benefit from an expansion of the Pride of Place programme. Decisive action will finally be taken on extremism, and unsafe campuses

and workplaces will no longer be tolerated. And we are championing the importance of a shared language in bringing our communities together.

This is our expression of real patriotism. A pride which is hopeful about the future for people's communities and the country, not pining for some imagined past. Open to all those who call these islands home, regardless of the colour of their skin.

We will welcome those who want to join us and be unwavering in our approach. We are answering the questions which previous governments have shied away from. That failure to act left the country with antisemitic and anti-Muslim hatred at a record high, extremism unchecked, and an asylum system utterly broken. We have made a different choice: in place of division, we will always choose unity.

The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Executive Summary

The United Kingdom has endured rapid technological, demographic, and economic change, alongside a rising tide of extremism and malign foreign influence. These factors, among others, are putting social cohesion in the UK under strain. Trust in institutions is declining. Tensions between communities are worsening. And extremists are exploiting people's fears for their own purposes.

Protecting What Matters sets out the steps government is taking to improve social cohesion and protect what matters. The approach is built on the following key pillars:

1. Confident Communities

Restoring pride in place. Investment in local communities and communal life is central to rebuilding pride and belonging. The government will expand the Pride in Place programme, putting more communities at the heart of decision-making in their neighbourhoods, and providing them with the funding to deliver change. This comes alongside further support for local media, reviving our high streets, and tackling crime and environmental harm.

Bringing people together. We will invest in initiatives that create opportunities for connection across backgrounds, including cultural and sporting events, youth and community infrastructure, and targeted programmes to address loneliness and support young people. We will strengthen oversight of home education by raising legal standards. Education reforms will strengthen citizenship, British history, and religious education.

Teaching our values and history. We will mandate citizenship classes in schools and teach digital literacy to help young people navigate the modern world. We will improve the national curriculum's teaching of our nation's history and ensure Holocaust awareness stays a compulsory topic in schools.

Celebrating faith and belief communities. Working closely with faith and belief communities, we will expand Inter Faith Week, boost faith and belief literacy in government and wider society, and strengthen the role of Religious Education, including through improved engagement with Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs). The government will also deliver the £92 million Places of Worship Renewal Fund to protect religious heritage buildings and support community cohesion. Internationally, the government will also champion freedom of religion or belief through diplomatic partnerships to promote tolerance and protect minorities.

2. Cohesive Communities

Integration based on values. We know that migration needs to be managed to support communities and cohesion. The government will implement reforms to the points-based system, continue our efforts to reduce irregular migration, whilst restoring order to the asylum system so that it operates swiftly, firmly and fairly. This will include ending the use of asylum hotels and returning them to local communities. We will also implement reforms to bolster Community Sponsorship to put power in the hands of local communities to be directly

involved in welcoming and supporting those seeking refuge. We will set clear expectations for integration (including English language proficiency and participation in work) and develop a cross-government integration strategy. Efforts will focus on removing barriers to participation, supporting underrepresented groups, and fostering a shared sense of values across the UK.

Tackling hate and discrimination. We will ensure hate crimes are prosecuted with the full force of the law. We will provide further protective security funding for faith communities also take forward a series of actions to tackle religious hatred. We are adopting a non-statutory definition of anti-Muslim hostility and will appoint a special representative on tackling anti-Muslim hostility. In addition to the range of actions the government has already taken to combat antisemitism, we will also act on the recommendations of Sir David Bell's review into antisemitism in schools and colleges, and on the recommendations of Lord Mann's review of how the healthcare system deals with antisemitism and other forms of racism. We will roll out training on religious hatred across the Civil Service.

We will also work with schools to tackle racist abuse and understand disparities in exclusions, alongside research into improving the recruitment and progression of teachers from ethnic minority groups.

3. Resilient communities

Protecting institutions from extremist abuse. We will embed the 2024 extremism definition across government, working closely with frontline partners such as the police. We will update and embed the 2024 engagement principles so that public bodies do not confer legitimacy, funding or influence on extremist groups. We will publish an annual State of Extremism report setting out the nature of the foreign and domestic extremist threat to the UK and government's response. We will connect our local and national networks to ensure a coordinated and effective response. Across specific sectors, we will strengthen Charity Commission powers to tackle extremist abuse, including the power to shut down charities. We will also introduce measures to tackle extremism in university campuses, including strengthening monitoring and oversight of Prevent compliance issues to enable enforcement action where necessary.

Disrupting wider extremist influence and activity. We will develop new tools and powers to disrupt organisations that spread extremism, hate, and threaten public safety. We will also introduce a State Threats Designation Power – based on counter terrorism proscription – disrupting and deterring the most egregious state and proxy organisations carrying out hostile activity against the UK. We will transform our Disruptions capacity to detect, expose, and counter extremist influence across the UK. We will expand the reach of our VISA taskforce to stop extremists entering the UK. We will work with the Crown Prosecution Service and the Police to ensure robust use of existing hate crime and public order legislation on harmful extremist conduct, and terrorism legislation wherever conduct meets the appropriate threshold. We will also ensure the Police are equipped to respond to those who try to intimidate, threaten and harass others for so-called 'blasphemy' related incidents.

Securing online spaces. We will make use of robust powers to require platforms to mitigate risks related to their algorithms. We will give people greater control over what they are exposed to online and reduce accidental exposure to hateful content. We will increase transparency about how online platforms operate and how they comply with the Online Safety Act. We will give independent researchers access to platform data so they can help to build the evidence base to hold companies to account.

4. The road ahead

Building confident, cohesive, and resilient communities is a whole-of-society effort. A new Social Cohesion Taskforce will drive this work from within government to identify new policy solutions, ensuring strong ministerial oversight. Collaboration with devolved governments, local and strategic authorities, civil society, and the public will be essential. This programme marks the beginning of a sustained, transparent, and accountable effort to protect what matters and unite the country for the future.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Across all four nations, the United Kingdom is a proud, multi-ethnic, democratic country. We are accepting of our neighbours, proud of our varied experiences, traditions and customs, and of how these differences enrich our communities and our country. Throughout our history, the UK's ability to withstand external challenges has been underpinned by a strong social fabric – a shared sense of pride, tolerance, generosity, respect, and courage.

But the social cohesion that has kept us united in the face of adversity can no longer be taken for granted. Trust in institutions is in decline, making people increasingly susceptible to finding answers elsewhere – often from those who do not share our values. Over the last decade, we have seen emerging signs that cohesion is fraying. Government will take a leading role to heal divides and protect what matters.

Trends and challenges: rapid change in the UK

The reasons for this shift are complex and include a potent mixture of factors which have brought rapid change, including:

Economic: Over the last fifteen years, households have experienced the weakest real income growth in generations.[1] Polling across England, Scotland, and Wales shows that people are increasingly pessimistic about the economic situation, with 76% describing the economy as poor and 77% concerned about the personal impacts of the cost of living.[2] Austerity compounded these effects by cutting off many of the support systems that helped communities, particularly the most deprived, to navigate these struggles. The visible deterioration of public services, from closed youth centres to understaffed hospitals, has been seen as tangible evidence that the state is no longer delivering for ordinary people. When people experience prolonged hardship and a lack of opportunity, their social confidence and sense of cohesion can erode.

Technological: The deindustrialisation of the 1980s and 1990s not only reshaped the UK's economy, but fundamentally altered the social fabric of entire regions. Mining communities, factory towns, and docklands had their own civic institutions, social clubs, trade unions, and collective identities. When industries collapsed, these structures often collapsed with them, leaving populations without their traditional sources of belonging and identity. Now, the rise of remote working and more precarious, less secure work is driving similar shifts in the amount of time people spend with their colleagues. It is another pressure on the organic community connections that historically allowed for daily exposure to neighbours and colleagues with alternative perspectives.

At the same time as work has shifted to be more online, our social lives have too. In 2025, 54.8 million individuals used social media platforms, representing 80.8% of

[1] Past 15 years have been worst for income growth in generations | Institute for Fiscal Studies
[2] Economic pessimism continues as 76% of Britons describe economy as 'poor' amid ongoing cost-of-living concerns | Ipsos

internet users in the UK.[3] As people spend more time online, there is less immediate need to connect with the communities and places around them. It also becomes easier for people to fall into 'rabbit holes' or 'echo chambers', where they are vulnerable to misinformation and radicalisation via content they see online. As physical spaces of connection have also been in decline following years of under-investment, it becomes even more important for the government to invest in cohesion and to create the spaces and places that can support communal life and social connection.

Demographic: Immigration policy under the last government created a system that is unsustainable, and so too is the record level of net migration we inherited. Net migration reached a historic peak at 906,000 in June 2023, nearly five times the level recorded in 2019.[4] Since coming to office, this government has taken concrete steps to slow the pace of change, with net migration falling to 204,000 in 2025,[5] but there is more to do. Economic migration rose while training of the domestic workforce dropped and the proportion of UK residents in work fell. This rise in migration, particularly in lower skilled sectors, also saw an increase in the abuse and exploitation of workers, paid at wage levels that undercut reputable employers, and in many cases broke the law. For many living in the UK, the changes brought about by this surge in migration have been too much, too quickly and have put huge pressure on services and housing that were already struggling.

These changes have not been felt evenly across communities. This applies to the impact of the asylum system as well as to economic migration. In March 2024, the distribution of asylum seekers was concentrated in London, the North West of England, and the West Midlands. Just ten local authorities hosted 22% of asylum seekers.[6] This allocation often disproportionately affects poorer neighbourhoods where housing is cheaper and can inflame tensions between communities, as seen during the unrest of summer 2024.

The policy of housing asylum seekers in hotels is seen as a visible symptom of decline. The use of hotels has contributed to poor integration outcomes for both existing communities and new arrivals. They have been a focal point of community tensions in certain areas of the country, leaving residents worried about the consequences for crime and public safety, which is why this government has committed to ending the use of asylum hotels. While integration into the UK has generally been a success story over decades, with many communities integrating well and performing better than other European countries, this hasn't been universal.[7] Multiple reviews, from Ted Cantle,[8] to Baroness Casey,[9] through to Dame Sara Khan have warned of communities in the UK living segregated or parallel lives.[10] When

[3] Digital 2025: The United Kingdom - We Are Social UK
[4] Net migration report (accessible) - GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/migration-advisory-committee-report-on-net-migration/net-migration-report-accessible
[5] Long Term International Migration Flows: Scotland - Migration Observatory https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/long-term-international-migration-flows-to-and-from-scotland/
[6] Where do migrants live in the UK? - Migration Observatory
[7] Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023 | OECD https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/indicators-of-immigrant-integration-2023_1d5020a6-en.html
[8] Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team - Home Office https://tedcantle.co.uk/pdf/communitycohesion%20cantlereport.pdf
[9] The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80c4fded915d74e6230579/The_Casey_Review_Report.pdf
[10] The Khan Review: Threats To Social Cohesion And Democratic Resilience: A New Strategic Approach https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-khan-review-threats-to-social-cohesion-and-democratic-resilience/the-khan-review-executive-summary-key-findings-and-recommendations

communities live separate lives from others around them this can exacerbate tensions and limit the opportunities that a diverse society brings.

Extremism and wider geopolitics: Extremism poses a real threat to UK communities. Hostile nations and foreign actors – including influential figures, politically or ideologically affiliated groups and individuals, and state-backed organisations – promote extremist narratives and disinformation in an attempt to sow further division.[11] Extremists foment division and target UK institutions, including schools, universities, charities, and even local bodies such as Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education, to serve their purposes. They have played on and weaponised grievances to undermine social cohesion. In addition, conflicts abroad can now more than ever directly impact social cohesion at home. Most notably, following the conflict in Israel and Gaza, tensions between and towards different faith groups has spiked, with antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate crime reaching record highs. Unrest in Leicester in 2022 was partly linked to the import of nationalist rhetoric and religious extremism, creating tensions between the city's Hindu and Muslim communities. The Extreme Right, though fragmented across various ideologies, is becoming increasingly interconnected globally, including via social media and other channels.

Impact on social cohesion

These factors have challenged this country. They have tested, and in some cases threatened, social cohesion over the last decade and a half – slowly chipping away at community bonds to a point where, in many places, cohesion is now under strain. Communities that lack cohesion are less resilient to extremism. For example, communities with high deprivation indices have suffered disproportionately during recent civil unrest. By contrast, cohesive communities tend to be better placed to identify concerns early, support individuals, and prevent escalation towards hostility or violence.

This is accompanied by the fact that, for many UK citizens, the last decade has felt like one crisis after another, both at home and internationally. The 2008 financial crash was followed by austerity, then Brexit and subsequent political turmoil, then the pandemic, then the War in Ukraine and its resulting impact on energy bills, and throughout, a continuing and deepening cost of living crisis. Each crisis has demanded governmental attention and resources, therefore eclipsing, and at times exacerbating, social cohesion in the UK. Successive governments have failed to give this issue the attention and time it deserves.

In the face of such serious challenges, a focus on social cohesion can sometimes seem like a 'nice to have', but a significant body of evidence shows that not only is it vital to the wellbeing of people across the country, but a key tool of national resilience in the face of a more uncertain world.

What we are working towards

Despite these challenges, there is lots to celebrate and build upon. The UK has "strong foundations on which to build"[12], with many examples of great work across the country to improve social cohesion. Up and down the country, people show pride in their country and their community through their

[11] Press Notice: Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament https://isc.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20200721_Russia_Press_Notice.pdf

[12] 'Powder keg' of tensions and grievances remain, one year on from UK riots – new report - British Future https://www.britishfuture.org/state-of-us-report-news-story/

work supporting friends, neighbours and their local area. They are the overwhelming majority and this government is on their side.

This plan sets out the actions we are taking to back those who are already uniting against division. Councils who are making a difference. Civil society and faith groups who bring people together. And ordinary people giving up their time to improve their neighbourhoods – from those picking up litter – like the Edinburgh Litter Busters – to those who stand up to antisocial behaviour, religious hatred, racism, or extremism. There are countless examples up and down the country of where communities are already pulling together – like the community who came together and, with government backing, are restoring their local pub in Tafarn y Plu to support social clubs, create jobs and offer volunteering opportunities. Volunteering and community activity gives people from different backgrounds the chance to meet – and when they do, they are far more likely to say that communities get along well in their local area.

A great strength of our national identity is its pluralism. Whether we are from England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland; whatever our religion or belief; whether we were born here or abroad; or whatever the colour of our skin, we can all embrace our shared identity, celebrate what we have in common, and be proud of our country's long history and heritage. People should feel empowered to express their national pride openly, while also respecting the differences between one another. We recognise the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland and the importance of the principle of parity of esteem, as set out in the "Belfast" / Good Friday Agreement.

Those in positions of power and responsibility have a role in promoting a confident, modern patriotism – not least because the failure to do so in recent years has created space for the extreme right to equate being English with being White, or being Christian – exploit national identity as an ethnic construct, tied to race or religion – something the vast majority of people reject.[13]

People should feel confident celebrating national pride — flying flags, wearing colours, and marking our festivals, successes, and commemorations. Celebrating what we share helps bring people from different communities and cultures together.

This government's vision is for everyone to have pride in Britain, and pride in place, and for people to feel a sense of belonging to their nation as they do for their family, community, and hometown.

Resetting the social contract

Strengthening social cohesion means renewing the relationships between citizens, the state and those who come to the UK. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the social bonds that hold the country together and respect the rights and values of others. This is the basis of our social contract. A key part of being a UK citizen is tolerance and openness to views, cultures and traditions that are different from our own: we expect everyone who lives here to treat others with respect. At the same time, we also rightly expect new arrivals to make an effort to integrate into our shared culture and respect our traditions and uphold our values.

Similarly, the rights and freedoms we enjoy should not be used to intimidate or harass others. This country has a proud tradition of free speech. For example, in recent years, many people who feel passionately about the situation in Gaza have exercised their right to peacefully protest about the situation on the streets of the UK's major cities, in one of the largest protest movements in

[13] Race, heritage, and British / English identity: what do white and ethnic minority adults in England think? | YouGov (polling is England only)

recent decades. However, some people have gone to protests chanting or carrying antisemitic slogans on placards, or instead misappropriated protests to target Jewish communities in the UK. Freedom of expression is fundamental to our democracy but, when people abuse these freedoms, they undermine social cohesion, leave minority groups feeling unsafe, and weaken support for freedom to protest.

Government's role in protecting what matters

It is government's job to support this social contract by setting the standards and expectations, enabling people to meet them, and taking action against those who undermine the rights and freedoms of others.

Government policy has not kept pace with social and political developments. Austerity, fragmented approaches and a reluctance to confront difficult issues have weakened trust and allowed frustration to build. Previous reviews led by Colin Bloom,[14] Dame Sara Khan,[15] and Baroness Louise Casey[16] have all shone a light on difficult issues, many of which have been neglected for years, or dealt with inadequately.

In contrast, this government is determined to grip these challenges.

We can no longer afford to assume that cohesion and integration will occur organically. Without proactively taking steps to address what are increasingly serious problems, the risks are clear: more unrest on UK streets, more people being radicalised towards extreme viewpoints, and more opportunities for malign foreign actors to intervene in our democracy and threaten the stability of our society. The forces driving division and hate will not stop because we ask nicely. They require a deliberate, clear-eyed and resolute response – delivered with the clarity and commitment that comes from knowing we stand on the right side of a threat to all we hold dear in this country.

Government has committed to confronting these realities honestly. We will listen to people's concerns, reset how we talk about integration and cohesion, and ensure these ideas are grounded in shared values and meaningful action that people can see and feel. Government will also work to ensure ensure local communities are safe, supported, and able to thrive. This requires close working between central government and local partners across the UK. The devolved nature of this policy area requires close working with the Devolved Governments to ensure a joined-up and complementary approach to strengthening social cohesion.

From words to action

Many people feel as though they cannot air perfectly legitimate concerns about the change they are seeing in their local communities. There must always be space for honest discussion without assuming bad intentions or policing language. Otherwise, these issues will continue to be exploited by those who do not want to see solutions, but further division. Only through frank and constructive conversations can we form a basis for real common ground and respect across society. We also need to build spaces and focal points for celebrating our shared

[14] Does government 'do God?' An independent review into how government engages with faith

[15] The Khan Review: Threats To Social Cohesion And Democratic Resilience: A New Strategic Approach https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-khan-review-threats-to-social-cohesion-and-democratic-resilience/the-khan-review-executive-summary-key-findings-and-recommendations

[16] The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80c4fded915d74e6230579/The_Casey_Review_Report.pdf

heritage, endeavours and successes, and to bring people together to build tolerance and a sense of community.

This call to action is the start of a path to get where we want to be. It outlines the state of play and the initial policy changes we are implementing to address the issues identified. It is not the end of the conversation or a 'job done' – we are clear that there is much more work to be done in this space and are committed to long-term focus on social cohesion. We will continue to be open with the public as we build this response, and develop the tools necessary to hold government to account for its ability to do what is required to improve social cohesion.

As part of this, the UK Government will need to work closely with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government, and Northern Ireland Executive where there is an intersection between devolved and reserved responsibilities. **Annex A** details which of the four UK nations each policy referenced in this document applies to. We will continue to work with the Devolved Governments to align priorities across governments and support social cohesion in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In a time of greater geopolitical uncertainty and technological upheaval, the UK's ability to navigate these changes will depend on the strength of its communities. Social cohesion is not something that simply matters in of itself, it touches on almost every other area of public policy. The evidence is clear that greater social cohesion can help contribute to economic growth and prosperity, whereas fragmentation will hold us back from achieving our vision for the country we know we can be. A country where people feel connected through common values, identity, pride, trust, decency, and a sense of belonging, is a country that is stronger, fairer, and more united for generations to come.

Chapter 2: Confident communities

The government has a crucial role to play in promoting cohesion – one that has only grown more important, as technology enables frictionless forms of connection that often weaken social bonds, and the cost of socialising in person continues to rise.

But too many people feel that this sense of shared endeavour has been broken. They look at their towns and neighbourhoods and see shuttered shops, neglected public spaces, and local venues closed by funding cuts. They feel their area is changing at a pace they cannot absorb, driven by decisions made elsewhere, with little sense that those in authority are listening to their concerns.

This reflects a genuine erosion of the foundations on which local pride and belonging are built. Disrepair, disillusionment, and disengagement do not foster the shared identity and mutual trust that cohesion depends on. They strip away the time, space, opportunity, and inclination required for people to come together.

A government that asks its citizens to unite must also create the conditions that make unity possible. That means investing in places so people can take pride in where they live. It means strengthening local communities so they feel secure, full of opportunity, and worth being proud of. And it means managing the pace of change – particularly on migration – so communities have the time and support they need to adapt. Without this, it is difficult to see how people can be expected to engage meaningfully with those around them and build the bonds that are so important to our social fabric.

Restoring pride in place

People who feel proud of where they live are more likely to invest in their communities, to build relationships with their neighbours, and to feel a stake in the future of the place they call home. Pride in place gives people greater security and confidence and fosters the sense that what happens locally matters, and that individuals have a part to play in shaping it.

Conversely, when people feel that their area has been left behind or forgotten, that sense of shared investment erodes. Disillusionment with the local can feed disillusionment with the national. It is difficult to ask people to buy into a vision of the UK as a place worth belonging to if they do not feel that their own corner of it is valued. When people feel their area is on the path of decline, they understandably become increasingly zero-sum in their thinking, further fraying community relations.

Last year, the Government published the Pride in Place Strategy,[17] setting out the action we are taking to support local pride. At its core was the Pride in Place Programme, which announced up to £5 billion of funding and support over the next decade to 244 communities that have for too long been overlooked and left behind. At the heart of this programme

[17] Pride in Place Strategy

is the simple idea that local people know best what change is needed to revive their neighbourhood - indeed, we see examples of this every day, from people taking care of local parks to picking up rubbish in their spare time. Local people should therefore be given the power, agency and resources to drive this change. This is a flagship programme that sees Government working in a different way: not telling communities what to do, but putting them front-and-centre in determining their own futures, and providing the support so that they can achieve that vision.

Local people will come together on Neighbourhood Boards, engage their wider community in a conversation about what change they want to see and their priorities for the area and develop a joint plan for their neighbourhood. Communities will then decide how every penny of this investment is spent in their place. Through this shared endeavour communities can build common ground, strengthen their sense of belonging and improve social cohesion.

Neighbourhood Boards have already been established in 75 places and plans for the future of their area developed. This includes ideas to regenerate town centres, to revitalise community centres and social clubs. This isn't just short-term funding for short-term projects – it's a long-term investment in our communities and the people who live there. Pride in Place brings every part of the local community round the table to shape the future of their neighbourhood. And by building pride in local communities, we also build pride at national level – supporting a form of patriotism that is accessible to all.

Case studies: Pride in Place Programme Phase 1

Shared pride and collaborative decision making can help bring people together and foster cohesion:

- In Wrexham, more than 3,000 local young people from different backgrounds have come together to engage with the Pride in Place Programme through work led by the Senedd Yr Ifanc and supported by the Children's University. Young people overwhelmingly emphasised the need for safer, cleaner spaces and more things for them to do in the city centre.
- In Hastings, wide-ranging in-person and online engagement with over 4,000 residents, businesses, and partners at community events, supermarkets, football games and colleges generated more than 7,000 ideas. People said they wanted improvements to their streets and the public realm, better play and sports facilities, and a vibrant town and seafront. These priorities are now at the heart of the plan with a commitment to set aside money every year to increase pride in our streets, neighbourhoods, and town.
- In Elgin, an Active Youth Engagement bus, complete with gaming set-up, is being used to reach young people and give them a place to play and chat about what they want to see in the town – they have been clear that they want more to do, and more places to have fun. As a result, the Board plans to pursue youth investment including new multi-use games areas, a pump track, and new equipment for a local park.

Pride in Place will forge partnerships across communities and build institutions that are led by and for the community, that can crowd in philanthropy and build wealth in communities well beyond this decade of funding. The Pride in Place Programme represents a genuine shift in power into our communities.

To build further on this work and restore pride in place, we will:

- **Provide £800 million over ten years to a further 40 areas where social cohesion is under pressure.** This will provide some of the most left behind and disconnected communities with long term funding to tackle the things that matter most to them, bringing them together to collectively set local visions for the places they live. We will encourage community organisation and faith communities to proactively work in these areas to bring people from different backgrounds together to deliver this shared endeavour.
- **Give all communities across the country new powers and tools to revive their neighbourhoods and build pride in place.** We will require all local authorities in England to establish effective neighbourhood governance so that communities can have a stronger voice and control over the decisions that impact on their area. Through a new **Community Right to Buy**, communities will be given the powers to take ownership of the spaces and assets they value in their neighbourhoods from community centres to pubs, social clubs, local parks and sports grounds. And with a new **Co-operative Development Unit** we will support communities to grow their co-operative and mutual sectors and build community wealth.
- **Invest £1.5 billion in cultural organisations, recognising the ability of cultural organisations to unite communities in the face of division and restore pride in place.** This includes continued funding of the Creative Foundations Fund, Museum Renewal Fund, Heritage at Risk Fund, Heritage Revival Fund and Libraries Improvement Fund.
- Set out our support for local media as essential for giving voice to communities that can otherwise struggle to be heard, holding local institutions to account and countering false narratives. **We will shortly publish the Local Media Strategy to guarantee the long-term sustainability of local journalism.** As part of this we will provide new funding for local media publishers to adapt to commercial and technological changes and revive a local news presence in areas where it has retreated. We will also further boost community radio so that it can support community radio in more places annually.
- **Take action to revive high streets and town centres across England through a new High Streets Strategy, backed by a new £150 million innovation fund.** We will restore pride, raise standards, and rebuild confidence in our high streets – with coordinated action on public services, community, and cultural assets to bring life back to the streets. We will back our businesses to thrive and innovate, encourage partnership between public and private sectors, root out crime and exploitation, and give local councils and the people they serve a greater stake in the future of their high streets.

- **Do more to crack down on waste crime.** Having respect for one another includes respecting the environment of those around us. **To protect our communities, we will soon publish a Waste Crime Action Plan.** This plan will outline the measures that we are taking in England to prevent future harm and disrupt and prosecute offenders. This will also set out the coordinated and targeted action across government, regulators, industry and local partners we are taking to protect our communities.
- **Help communities be safer in their neighbourhood by tackling low level crime such as shoplifting, phone theft, anti-social behaviour and vandalism that can have a cumulative impact on people's wellbeing, pride in place and community spirit.** Through our Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, we will increase patrols to town centres and every neighbourhood now has named, contactable neighbourhood officers to turn to. We will move police officers to the front line, with **13,000 additional neighbourhood personnel by the end of this parliament. Every police force in England and Wales has now appointed a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) lead who will shortly publish a local ASB Action Plan developed with their communities.** This will be matched by stronger **police powers to tackle ASB via the Crime and Policing Bill – including new Respect Orders for persistent offenders**.
- **Work closely with local organisations who know their communities best and can offer the most effective support to offenders to integrate into society.** This includes working with partners to halve the proportion released from prison homeless and providing support to the most complex individuals facing significant barriers, including through services like Creating Future Opportunities (CFO).

Bringing people together

As government, we strive to support communities by bringing people together from different backgrounds and creating the opportunity for connection that is the basis of a strong society. In an era where the easy option, whether facilitated by technology or made necessary by the cost of socialising, is to retreat from in-person interaction, more will be done to do more to enable people to come together and build common ground.

As an initial step, we will:

- **Invest £11.5 million in Local Covenant Partnerships** to bring civil society organisations, local authorities and public service providers together to deliver more services through trusted community venues, reaching people who are currently underserved or excluded. This will support the delivery of the Civil Society Covenant.
- **Establish a decade-long pipeline of major cultural and sporting events** – including UK City of Culture, a new UK Town of Culture competition, UEFA EURO 2028, the 2027 Tour de France and Tour de France Femme Grand Departs, and a bid for the 2035 FIFA Women's World Cup. We will require each to deliver strong community engagement and legacy programmes that bring people together and strengthen local pride.
- **Invest £500,000 to fund additional community-led school linking projects – on top of the local authorities already funded.** This money will deliver new social and educational opportunities for children from different backgrounds to meet, learn and play during their formative years.

- **Invest over £750 million over the next four years in youth, sport and community infrastructure to ensure people across the country have high-quality shared spaces to meet, mix and build stronger bonds.** This includes £350 million to build and refurbish youth spaces and at least £400 million for new and upgraded grassroots sports facilities.
- **Support adults working with young people to better spot the signs of loneliness to intervene earlier through evidence and best practice.** This includes investing £15 million over the next 3 years to upskill the existing youth sector workforce in tackling issues such as online misogyny and to increase the number of trusted adults providing safe support to young people.
- **Tackle loneliness among young men and boys.** This will ensure that those living in the places most underserved are given access to opportunities for in-person social connection. For example, we are investing £330,000 in Rugby League Cares to deliver pilots in Wigan and Wakefield that aim to improve the confidence of young men not in employment, education or training. Rugby League legends Keith Senior and Adrian Morley are among more than a dozen former players involved in the programme.
- **Strengthen oversight of home education** to ensure all children receive a suitable education and meaningful opportunities for social development. This includes:
  - Mandating the introduction of local authority registers of children not in school, and for the first time ever requiring parents to notify their local authority when they are home educating their children;
  - Requiring local authority consent before the most vulnerable children can be withdrawn from school for home education;
  - Piloting mandatory local authority meetings with parents, in selected areas, before children can be withdrawn from school for home education. If pilots are shown to be effective we will consider national roll-out; and,
  - Requiring local authorities to consider the child's home and wider learning environments – and empowering them to request to visit the child at home – when assessing whether the education is suitable and whether a School Attendance Order should be issued. This includes consideration of whether the education enables sufficient socialisation and supports the child to participate fully in life in the UK.

Teaching our values and history

Young people should be aware of and understand our shared values, including how they shape and continue to benefit our country. As first steps, we will:

- **Mandate that citizenship is taught in both primary and secondary schools** to highlight the relevance of the democratic process and constitutional principles such as the rule of law, as well as raise awareness of threats to democracy. We will ensure that vital applied knowledge and skills in financial, media and digital literacy are embedded into the revised curriculum to help young people become confident and resilient when navigating our modern world.
- **Strengthen the national curriculum and qualifications in England to ensure high quality teaching of our nation's history.** We will also continue to include the Holocaust as a compulsory topic within Key Stage 3, as confirmed by the Government last year.
- **Drive up standards in the teaching of Religious Education.** We will carefully consider including Religious Education in the national curriculum, subject to the sector reaching consensus on the content of, and approach to delivering, a curriculum.

Celebrating faith and belief communities

Over half of us identify with a religion and, for many, their faith or belief is the cornerstone of their way of life, including how they interact with other people.[18] Faith and belief can be an enormous force for good in promoting inclusivity, understanding, and respect across our society and faith and belief groups are often anchors for their members and wider communities. They are an important part of the national conversation. To foster cohesive communities, more will be done to bring together neighbours who share values even if they are from different faiths or beliefs. We will work with and celebrate our faith and belief communities to improve societal understanding of different religions to support tolerance and build a more cohesive and resilient country. To begin with, we will:

- **Continue to support programmes like Near Neighbours**, an initiative led by the Church of England which brings people together in religiously and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods to get to know each other better, build relationships of trust and collaborate on community initiatives.
- **Grow Inter Faith Week to strengthen understanding and interaction between people of different faiths** – supporting its development into a more sustainable, grassroots and youth-led annual event, building on the findings of the recent MHCLG funded consultation.

[18] Religion, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021

- **Boost faith and belief literacy – recognising Colin Bloom's recommendation to do so.** This will include gauging our current levels of faith and belief literacy in government, identifying ways to upskill, and developing an approach that improves the quality and inclusivity of policy making. We will also consider how to strengthen faith and belief literacy across society as a whole.
- **Promote the role of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs)** by supporting improved analysis of their annual reports, to better understand the role they play in communities including in relation to cohesion.
- **Deliver the £92 million Places of Worship Renewal Fund.** This will target our capital funding to the areas where it is needed most, focusing on repair and conservation of our religious heritage buildings and the role they play in our wider communities. The Fund will help to secure the future of our heritage while supporting the government's missions for national renewal and community cohesion.
- **Champion freedom of religion or belief globally through sustained diplomatic engagement and multilateral partnerships.** Working with he United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), we will use our diplomatic network to press for laws and policies that protect religious or belief minorities and promote inclusive, tolerant societies. Promoting freedom of religion or belief internationally strengthens UK security, strengthens our response to extremism and helps address the drivers of instability and migration.

Giving communities the confidence to practice their values and the spaces to come together is one of main ways the Government can build confidence and pride. However, this will be more difficult if these communities are fractured by language or religious divides. The next chapter outlines how the Government can start to address this fragmentation and make our communities more cohesive.

Chapter 3: Cohesive communities

Most people living in the UK are tolerant and accepting of their neighbours. Yet, the foundations of strong social cohesion that have long kept the UK united in the face of challenge are under strain. Strengthening social cohesion is in part about improving the ways we treat others. It is about everyday interactions that build trust or erode it: whether we greet a neighbour, how we speak about those who are different from us, and whether we feel able to extend the benefit of the doubt to strangers. The Government will do more to create the spaces for new arrivals to the UK to properly integrate into our shared national culture, and to allow those who already live here to feel part of a cohesive and connected community.

For centuries, people have come to this country to build a better life, contributing economically and culturally to our society and helping to rebuild it after major shocks, such as the Second World War. We should recognise the benefits and remarkable success story of the modern, multi-ethnic, multi-faith United Kingdom. To continue this success, we must be clear that we are a society built on shared values.

We all have a responsibility and role to play in building a cohesive, modern UK. This means creating the conditions for people to integrate and live full lives in this country. It does not allow the importing or stoking of ideas and practices that go against our national values of mutual respect and tolerance, individual liberty, and the primacy of democracy and the rule of law. This chapter will explore how the government can begin to address this.

Integration is a two-way street: we all share a role in providing opportunities for people to participate free from fear of discrimination or bigotry, while newcomers have a responsibility to engage with and embrace what it means to be British. There is strong public support for this approach – polling by More in Common shows that 73% of people believe more should be done to encourage integration of different ethnic-backgrounds, while 77% feel it is a responsibility shared by everyone.[19]

To achieve this, we will be clear-eyed about the challenges. Insufficient focus on our shared responsibility to support integration has, in some parts of the country, led to the creation of social silos with people living largely separate, parallel lives from mainstream UK customs and culture. This was highlighted over ten years ago, when Baroness Louise Casey found in her 2016 review that there is evidence of some communities refusing to integrate and failing to embrace our shared values that make the UK great. This has reinforced the challenges we have in some areas – those who feel anxious about migration, new arrivals, or changes in their local communities lack meaningful contact with either the people or the issues that they are worried about.

Tensions between some communities have festered unchecked. Hate targeted at people because of their religion or ethnicity is on the

[19] Social cohesion: A snapshot

rise. Extremists and religious fundamentalists use religion as a shield for spreading their pernicious ideology, hatred and, in some cases, violence. Online spaces amplify conflict and reward division, making it harder for people to see those with different views or backgrounds as fellow citizens deserving of respect. Race hate crimes rose by 6% in the year ending March 2025,[20] and we know that not all crimes are reported. But hate crime statistics only scratch the surface. Behind them lies a quieter erosion of trust: the Hindu family whose local temple has been vandalised, people of Roma heritage who face prejudice, the Muslim woman who avoids certain areas when walking alone, or the Jewish family who are less open about their identity. The result is a climate in which prejudice can harden, grievances can fester, and extreme voices find a receptive audience.

Rebuilding social cohesion means addressing not only the acts of hatred that are recorded, but the root causes of the climate of suspicion and hostility that makes so many feel unwelcome in their own communities.

The UK is a diverse, pluralistic, and equal society. We respect and value people of all races, religions, sexualities, and genders. But respect for religion or culture does not require us to tolerate behaviour which attacks or undermines our fundamental values as a society. Gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, and freedom from discrimination are fundamental to who we are. Integration means understanding and embracing these values. Attempts to impose extremist views, restrict the rights of others, or pressure people to conform to an intolerant world view are not acceptable and religious pluralism should not come at the expense of another person's freedoms or right to exist safely. We will not tolerate efforts of individuals to sow division, stir anger against those with religious, political or social views different to theirs, or spread extremist, intolerant beliefs that undermine our shared values.

Managing the pace of change

We know that migration needs to be managed to support communities and cohesion. Where the pace of migration has been too fast, it can make it harder to maintain community bonds and relationships.

This government published the Immigration White Paper[21] and Asylum and Returns Policy Statement[22] in 2025, to bring order and control to our immigration system. Since this government came to office, net migration has fallen from 649,000 in the year ending June 2024 to 204,000 in the year ending June 2025.[23] To begin delivering a system that is considered fair and transparent and works better for communities, we will:

- **Implement reforms to the points-based system** to ensure that we are more selective about who we allow to enter the country, focusing on those who can make a significant contribution to our communities.
- **Continue our efforts to reduce irregular migration,** working to return more people to France and other third countries to act as a deterrence for small boats, while restoring order to the asylum system so that it operates swiftly, firmly, and fairly, and opening safe and legal routes.

[20] Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2025 - GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025
[21] Restoring Order and Control - GOV.UK https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/691ae05b493305b49ce6e845/Restoring_Order_and_Control_-_A_statement_on_the_Government_s_asylum_and_returns_policy_final.pdf
[22] Asylum and returns policy statement - GOV.UK
[23] Long-term international migration, provisional - Office for National Statistics

- **End the use of asylum hotels and return them to local communities**. This government's view is that hotels are not suitable to accommodate asylum seekers in the long term. We are clear that hotels are not a good use of public money and act as a lightning rod for community tensions. We will work proactively with local authorities to consider a range of more appropriate sites to accommodate asylum seekers so we can reduce the impact on communities and build strong community consent.
- **Implement reforms to bolster Community Sponsorship to put power in the hands of local communities to be directly involved in welcoming and supporting those seeking refuge, within caps set by the Government.** This will support the accommodation and early integration needs of new arrivals, building on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Integration based on values

A new approach to integration will consider both the broader immigration system and what level of immigration is tenable in maintaining a cohesive society and meeting the needs of existing communities. Government will also set out clear and firm expectations of the social contract for everyone who lives in the UK: to learn and use English,[24] to respect and uphold our shared values, to participate in work and civic life, to obey the law, and to demonstrate appreciation for what it means to be a citizen of the UK, in order to enjoy the opportunities and protections offered by life in the UK. English language is a key facilitator of cohesive communities, and proficiency provides key opportunities for individuals, including improved social connections, participation, access to employment and access to essential services.[25]

It is impossible for people to engage with others, build relationships, and develop mutual understanding if they lack the words to do so. The ability to use and understand our shared language should be a fundamental basis for participating in society and an expectation of those who wish to call the UK home.

Localised integration policy responsibility is often devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, there are some areas, relating to the immigration system, which are reserved matters, and the UK government will engage the devolved administrations as policies develop.

To begin addressing these issues, we will:

- **Set clear national integration expectations across the country, focused on stronger social connections, shared identity, English language proficiency, and participation in work.** These expectations will provide a transparent way to track where progress is being made and where more needs to be done. To ensure they are grounded in evidence and lived experience, we will launch a national consultation later this year to refine and strengthen them with local leaders and communities. This will form part of a more coherent approach across Government to integration.
- **Develop an effective cross-government integration strategy** to help existing and new migrants effectively

[24] or, where relevant, other indigenous languages such as Irish, Welsh, or Scots Gaelic.

[25] This includes, English language and other indigenous UK languages, including the Welsh, Scots, Scots Gaelic and Irish language. As of 2021, approximately 1.04 million of the population in England and Wales could not speak English or Welsh well or at all (Language, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics). The UK Government recognises that Welsh language is treated on the same legal footing as English and supports the Wesh Government in its Cymraeg 2050 ambition (1 million Welsh speakers by 2050).

integrate into their communities, find sustainable work, and make a positive contribution to their area. This will be underpinned by strong collaboration with local government and the voluntary and community sector to deliver a community-led approach to integration.

- **Review English language provision to identify best practice, and explore how innovation, including digital delivery, can increase the numbers able to speak English, with conclusions published in Autumn 2026.**[26] A shared language is the basis of a cohesive and inclusive society and we are committed to making that happen. We have already strengthened English language requirements for new arrivals through the immigration system, including Earned Settlement, and jobcentres can require individuals to learn English where it is a barrier to work and cut their benefits if they fail to comply.
- **Set clearer expectations for how new arrivals and migrants integrate into society.** This includes introducing an 'Earned Settlement' system. Under the new framework, settlement will no longer be an automatic entitlement but gained through demonstrated contribution, such as long-term compliance, economic activity, and alignment with British values. We will increase the standard qualifying period for settlement to ten years, though individuals may reduce this period through significant contributions to the UK. We are gathering views on how best to measure contribution and integration via a consultation which closed on 12 February and will publish findings in due course.
- **Refresh the content of the Life in the UK test** so that it better reflects the knowledge people need to live, work, and take part in everyday life in the UK today.
- **Support communities who are underrepresented in the workplace.** Everyone should be able to access the labour market. To remove barriers, we will:
  - Continue to improve employment support to help women into work, including tackling cultural reasons that may be a barrier to work.
  - Ensure the Jobs and Careers Service is designed and tested to meet the needs of diverse communities, delivering support through trusted local settings. Embed consideration of ethnic minority participation in local jobcentre planning and delivery, including through Get Britain Working Plans, and share practice across the network.

Building community resilience and infrastructure to respond to division and hate

At various points in our history, community tensions have erupted into social disorder, from the riots in Northern Mill towns in the early 2000s to the asylum hotel protests in 2024.

How these tensions arise and spread has been revolutionised by technology and social media. In addition, foreign actors, and hostile states, particularly Russia, which is engaged in information warfare against the UK and Ukraine, often attempt to fan the flames of such violence, exploiting people's frustrations and concerns, through

[26] The UK Government recognises that Welsh language is treated on the same legal footing as English and supports the Wesh Government in its Cymraeg 2050 ambition (1 million Welsh speakers by 2050). Language, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/bulletins/languageenglandandwales/census2021

spreading or amplifying disinformation online. Such Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) also poses a threat to community cohesion and our national security and demands a robust, joined-up response from government.

While we cannot predict the future and can never fully insure against such disorder occurring again, we will take immediate action to help build resilience in our communities, towns and cities – by listening, understanding and then acting to tackle the challenges they face. This requires a long-term approach working with local people and local government to build resilience.

After all, when people mix and get to know each other it becomes clear that there is more that unites than divides them. Civil society and local government play an important role in facilitating bridge building. There are countless initiatives to strengthen communities and forge connections among people from different backgrounds. We should take heart in the myriad examples of civic resilience, remembering how communities rallied to provide mutual support during the pandemic. This work of bringing communities together helps tackle extremism and combat isolation and segregation between communities.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Community Cohesion Unit works across central and local government and with local and community stakeholders to support places to build capacity and tackle divide. However, we will go further to build community resilience and provide local places with the infrastructure required to respond to tensions. Regional and local government play a vital role in building cohesion – to begin supporting more place-based cohesion and integration, and provide councils, communities and other partners with the support they need to face down the challenges of today, we will:

- **Continue the Common Ground Resilience Fund with up to £5 million over financial year 2026/27 to deliver targeted cohesion and integration interventions.** The Fund will support local authorities and grassroots organisations to run practical initiatives that bring people together – these could include community events and interfaith programmes, school and youth projects tackling prejudice, harmful extremist narratives, media literacy and frontline training to counter misinformation, neighbourhood-led action to strengthen local leadership and volunteering, and wellbeing programmes that reduce isolation among vulnerable groups.
- **Establish a cross-government Cohesion Support and Interventions Function (CSIF) to provide rapid, joined-up support to councils and communities facing serious tensions or unrest.** Through CSIF, local leaders will have direct access to experienced practitioners – including senior council leaders, police chiefs and national security experts – alongside tailored briefings on emerging threats, practical tools to disrupt radicalising or dangerous actors, and immediate access to Common Ground Resilience funding where unrest or violence occurs.
- **Establish an Advisory Board to support local authorities should tensions arise.** This will include frontline practitioners from across the country, with experience responding to crisis incidents such as the Southport attack and ensuing unrest in 2024, the disorder witnessed in Leicester in 2022 and other similar incidents, enabling them to be 'on call' to local leaders at times of crises and provide practical assistance and support.

- **Work with Belong and the Local Government Association to embed shared guidance on social cohesion.** This guidance, published in January 2026, provides local authorities the tools to address challenges, including on the statutory duties they will need to consider, and shares good practice.
- **Recognise the centrality of this work to wider UK security and resilience efforts.** National Security is the first mission of this Government, and to tackle this we need to take a whole of society approach – ensuring local places are equipped to support tackling upstream cohesion threats in places and communities, Local Communities have a huge stake in National Security, and it is important that we bridge the gap between Local Government and the National Security Community – to do that we need to manage risk collectively and ensure that our local communities are supported, heard and respected when decisions are made to protect our nation.
- **Develop a Social Cohesion Measurement Framework – responding to calls from experts, including Dame Sara Khan, for clearer, consistent metrics to measure local cohesion.** This will enable local areas to assess cohesion in a robust and comparable way. The Framework will be available to local government, civil society and impact investors across England, supporting early identification of emerging tensions and ensuring that public and philanthropic investment meets local needs. We will also engage Devolved Governments as part of this work.
- **Introduce a local cohesion risk assessment tool to help councils identify and respond to emerging tensions earlier.** The tool will create a clear information-sharing link between local and central government – including Prevent and other relevant partners – underpinned by consistent national metrics so risks can be assessed quickly and acted on before they escalate.
- **Increase and improve mechanisms for join-up across government to tackle Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference directed at the UK and our partners overseas,** from whose experience we can learn important lessons.

Tackling hatred and discrimination

In recent decades, there have been growing reports of hatred committed against people on the basis of their religion or ethnicity in all corners of British life – on public transport, at work, on campus, and in hospital - and high-profile flaring of tensions between different groups in the UK. Many of the actions set out in other sections of this plan will contribute to tackling hatred and hostility.

To strengthen links with ethnic minority communities, we have established the new Race Equality Engagement Group, chaired by Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon OBE. Members are providing expert advice, lived experience, and help ensure government proposals are developed in partnership with the communities who are most affected by racial inequalities.

We have already taken action to **combat hatred in the NHS** by ensuring that all NHS organisations align with the NHS Core Skills Framework. The existing module on equality, diversity, and human rights is being expanded to cover discrimination and antisemitism in greater depth, with new assessment questions developed with subject experts.

To further tackle religious and race hatred across everyday life, we will:

- **Include diverse perspectives in public service reform.** The Race Equality Unit will undertake a programme of engagement with a diverse range of communities across the country to further understand the important connection between public service delivery, inequality, and social cohesion. This will ensure the government is better attuned to the needs, risks, and opportunities at play, putting the public back in public services.
- **Tackle racist abuse in schools.** Children learn best when they feel safe and supported. We will work with pupils and teachers, and interrogate the evidence, to understand what drives disparities in school exclusions between different ethnic groups. The Race Equality Unit will also undertake research to explore effective mechanisms to improve recruitment, retention and progression of the ethnic minority teaching workforce.
- **Ensure hate crimes are prosecuted with the full force of the law.** While we work with policing bodies on implementing the protest and public order provisions in the Crime and Policing Bill after Royal Assent, we have also asked Lord Macdonald to review existing public order and hate crime legislation to test whether it is effective and proportionate, particularly in response to protests and the 'stirring up' of hatred. The review will conclude in spring 2026.
- **Strengthen national reporting and response mechanisms for hate crime,** including support for the True Vision platform and the government-backed helpline, run by the British Muslim Trust, for reporting anti-Muslim hatred.
- **Combat online hate crime by making sure offences are swiftly investigated.** To make reporting easier for victims, we have established an online hate crime reporting portal, and the National Online Hate Crime Hub has been stood up to support police investigations. While the police operate independently, they are expected to fully investigate hate crimes and work with the Crown Prosecution Service to bring perpetrators to justice.

We are taking specific action to tackle religious hatred. We have already brought forward new legislation in the Crime and Policing Bill to address protests outside places of worship, the use of face coverings to conceal one's identity, and the disruption to our faith communities caused by repeated protests.

We also recognise that there is a gap in our understanding of the deeper drivers of religious hatred, and have commissioned academic research papers on antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, anti-Sikh hatred, and online religious hatred. The findings of these research papers will enhance the government's ability to develop proportionate, effective and evidence-led responses, support meaningful engagement with affected communities, and ensure policy interventions are informed by robust analysis. We know that religious hatred is not just about people attending their places of worship. It affects people every day, as they go about their daily business, including in healthcare settings, while studying, and at work. We will:

- **Build on protections in the Employment Rights Act 2025 and the Equality Act 2010 and lead by example by rolling out training across the Civil Service** – starting with senior leaders – to improve understanding of how religious hatred manifests and how it should be addressed.
- **Work with major employers, including the NHS, to encourage robust policies and training that prevent and respond to religious hatred across the workforce.** This will include roundtables – led by the Department

for Business and Trade (DBT) – with businesses and trade unions to better understand best practice.

It should not be necessary for places of worship, faith institutions and communities to need security. But while they still do, the government will support them. As an immediate first step, we will:

- **Fund protective security for faith communities to keep places of worship and community sites safe** through the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme, and the Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme. We have increased funding to record levels and we will continue to work with the police and security partners to ensure protections for all faith communities remain proportionate and effective.
- **Deliver training as part of the new free to access Faith Security Training Scheme** to help faith groups improve their safety and security, particularly at places of worship.

Combatting antisemitism

This government is committed to stamping out antisemitism wherever and however it manifests. There has been an alarming rise in antisemitism both in this country and across much of the globe, including the horrific antisemitic terrorist attacks in Heaton Park and Bondi Beach.

Time and again, we have heard from the Jewish community that antisemitism is becoming normalised in many corners of society – from our schools and universities, to workplaces, and the NHS. The dramatic rise in online antisemitic incidents mean that Jewish people are also unable to escape this abhorrent content in their own homes.

This is not just anecdotal. In the year to March 2025, there were 2,873 religious hate crimes against Jewish people (106 per 10,000 population), the highest proportion for any group by some distance.[27] In the Community Security Trust's (CST) recent Antisemitic Incidents Report, for the first time ever, the CST recorded over 200 cases of anti-Jewish hate in every calendar month in 2025.[28] Shockingly, the CST also found that the terror attacks in Heaton Park and Bondi Beach triggered immediate spikes in antisemitism, ranging from face-to-face taunting to antisemitic social media posts. It is no wonder that, in this environment of pervasive violence and hatred, many Jewish people also feel like they have to hide their Jewish identity to protect themselves.

The government will continue to use the recommendations in Lord Mann and Dame Penny Mordaunt's Commission on Antisemitism report for the Board of Deputies of British Jews,[29] and in the Board of Deputies, Jewish Leadership Council and Union of Jewish Students' report following the antisemitic terrorist attack at Heaton Park to inform future policy decisions.[30] These will be tested with the Antisemitism Working Group, Lord Mann in his role as the Independent Adviser on Antisemitism, and Jewish communities.

This government has already taken several significant steps to combat antisemitism across all corners of society. We have committed £7 million of funding to tackle antisemitism in schools, colleges, and universities, and launched a Tackling

[27] Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2025 - GOV.UK
[28] CST Incidents Report 2025.pdf
[29] Commission on Antisemitism - A Board of Deputies Initiative https://bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/commissiononantisemitismreport-web.pdf
[30] After the Heaton Park attack: Towards a comprehensive strategy on antisemitism - Board of Deputies https://bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/251028-After-the-Heaton-Park-Attack.pdf

Antisemitism in Education innovation fund, which will help identify and tackle misinformation, improve media literacy, and promote tolerant debate and discussions. Additionally, we have encouraged local authorities to take practical steps to challenge and eradicate antisemitism. This includes sharing intelligence with the police, rethinking approaches to protests, making best use of Public Space Protection Orders, and adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Antisemitism – which most councils have already done. We welcome and strongly support the steps institutions such as the BBC have taken to foster a trusted, accurate media environment. The BBC's new mandatory staff training on antisemitism has been developed with the Antisemitism Policy Trust, the Community Security Trust, and Jewish staff.

In addition to the above, we will also:

- **Swiftly respond to the findings of the review led by Sir David Bell into antisemitism in schools and colleges led by Sir David Bell into antisemitism in schools and colleges.**[31] The review will look at whether the policies, processes and support are available to help schools and colleges across England identify and tackle antisemitism when it arises. This review is expected to conclude by Autumn 2026.
- **Act on Lord Mann's forthcoming review of how the healthcare system deals with antisemitism and other forms of racism.** We will set out the steps we will take to strengthen recognition, reporting and enforcement at every stage – from frontline employment to national oversight bodies.

This is complemented by the suite of measures set out later in this document to address extremism. Jewish people are often the targets of extremists - whether radical Islamists or those from the extreme right or left. We will clamp down on antisemitic extremism and its drivers, disrupting and targeting those that seek the harm of our Jewish communities.

These actions are only the beginning. We will continue to work closely with Jewish communities to ensure that our actions work for them, and drive real change.

Combatting anti-Muslim hostility

In recent years, our Muslim communities have faced growing hostility, discrimination and hate. This government is committed to tackling anti-Muslim hostility wherever, and however, it manifests. Home Office statistics show that hate crimes targeting Muslims are now at record levels: in the year to March 2025, there were 4,478 religious hate crimes against Muslims, representing almost half of all religious hate crimes.[32]

British Muslims tell us regularly that anti-Muslim hostility is experienced in all corners of British life. The impact of this on British Muslim communities is profound, with younger Muslims and Muslim women often bearing the brunt. Many Muslims now fear using public services, including transport and healthcare, and are wary of reporting crimes against them. Some feel forced to isolate themselves for their own safety. This drives communities further apart and entrenches the very problems that need to be overcome to build social cohesion.

[31] Independent review into antisemitism in schools and colleges - GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/independent-review-into-antisemitism-in-schools-and-colleges

[32] Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2025 - GOV.UK

Anti-Muslim hostility does not only affect Muslims. It can also be directed at anyone perceived to be Muslim, including people from other faith backgrounds or those who have left Islam. No one should feel unsafe, intimidated or excluded in this country. Protecting people from hostility and hatred is part of defending the liberties and freedoms that bind us together.

Much of what is set out in this document will help address anti-Muslim hostility through action on hate crime, online harms, public order, and strengthening local responses. Alongside the vital protections provided by existing law, we need the wider cultural, educational, and preventative work that stops religious hatred from taking root. We are taking sustained action to keep Muslims safe, support victims, and challenge unacceptable prejudice, while ensuring everyone's rights – including freedom of expression – are protected.

We have already introduced new free access to the Faith Security Training Scheme to help Muslim institutions improve their safety and security. We are funding the British Muslim Trust to provide a helpline to report incidents safely and access support. They are also working closely with partners across the country to help victims, listen to communities, and ensure that every person can live free from fear and hatred.

In addition to the above, we will also:

- **Adopt a non-statutory definition of anti-Muslim hostility.** The Government is adopting a new non-statutory definition to provide a clearer and more consistent understanding of anti-Muslim hostility. This definition is focused on protecting individuals rather than religion or belief and, by setting out clearer parameters, it will help tackle unacceptable hatred, prejudice or discrimination. In practice, the definition will serve as a tool for Government and organisations to better understand, measure, prevent and address anti-Muslim hostility. We are encouraging organisations across sectors to adopt the definition and to consider how it applies within their own contexts. The Government will work with partners to develop practical guidance and support effective implementation.

The UK Government's non-statutory definition of anti-Muslim hostility is the following:

Anti-Muslim hostility is intentionally engaging in, assisting or encouraging criminal acts – including acts of violence, vandalism, harassment, or intimidation, whether physical, verbal, written or electronically communicated – that are directed at Muslims because of their religion or at those who are perceived to be Muslim, including where that perception is based on assumptions about ethnicity, race or appearance.

It is also the prejudicial stereotyping of Muslims, or people perceived to be Muslim including because of their ethnic or racial backgrounds or their appearance, and treating them as a collective group defined by fixed and negative characteristics, with the intention of encouraging hatred against them, irrespective of their actual opinions, beliefs or actions as individuals.

It is engaging in unlawful discrimination where the relevant conduct – including the creation or use of practices and biases within institutions – is intended to disadvantage Muslims in public and economic life.

Full details of the UK Government's anti-Muslim hostility definition are available on GOV.UK. The accompanying text to the definition sets out important principles on freedom of speech. The definition is designed to protect Muslims from hostility while fully safeguarding open debate, discussion, lawful criticism of ideas or religious beliefs, and the raising of concerns in the public interest.

- **Increase the support and funding we provide to programmes that directly tackle anti-Muslim hate, including the Combatting Hate Against Muslims fund.** We are committing up to £4 million to tackle anti-Muslim hostility and implementation of the definition, as a first step.
- **Appoint a Special Representative on anti-Muslim hostility**, to champion efforts across the UK to tackle hostility and hatred directed at Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim. The Special Representative will engage with communities and stakeholders, and support cross-sector action to strengthen understanding, reporting and response. They will also lead on work to facilitate understanding and implementation of the definition of anti-Muslim hostility across various sectors and contexts.

We will continue to work closely with Muslim communities and relevant organisations to ensure that our actions are effective, proportionate and grounded in lived experience – and that they, too, drive real change.

Chapter 4: Resilient communities

The previous chapters set out what we should expect of each other. But citizens have a right to expect that the government will intervene where the rights, freedoms and safety of its citizens is under threat. Countering extremism is therefore critical to fostering social cohesion – which is the foundation upon which a safe, free society can flourish. Just as we have a cross-government approach to supporting community resilience to other threats – such as flooding or health crises – the same must apply to extremism.

This chapter sets out how we will begin to meet these obligations.

Tackling extremism

The state has a responsibility to protect its citizens from those who seek to divide and harm. Extremist groups and individuals threaten the fabric of our societies and exploit grievances, spread hatred, and seek to turn neighbour against neighbour. They attempt to insulate those who follow them from being able to understand and engage in modern UK life. Left unchecked, they create climates of fear, dependency and ignorance – and attempt to undermine the very systems and institutions there to protect and support our way of life. As set out in the 2024 extremism definition:

> *extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to: a. Negate or destroy the fundamental rights or freedoms of others; or b. Undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic right; or, c. Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the former.*

We are seeing rising extremism from a range of quarters – from Islamist extremism to the Extreme Right Wing – and the nature of this threat is fast changing.

Islamist extremism is a predominant threat. Islamism is a political ideology; its proponents seek to impose their interpretation of religion and 'sharia' as law by state power, and, in various manifestations, justify acts of terror to achieve their goal of a global Islamist state – their version of a 'caliphate' or 'Islamic state'. Islamists do not represent the Muslim communities of the UK.

Extreme Right Wing is an umbrella term that comprises a fragmented collection of groups, subcultures and leaderless movements. These ideologies feature a range of beliefs including White Nationalism and White Supremacism. While there are organisations, the current ERW landscape is a complex and fractured one directed more by overlapping beliefs than by traditional groups.

The range of extremist beliefs and ideologies individuals subscribe to is becoming more diverse. As the Director General of MI5 recently set out, labels like 'Islamist' and 'Extreme Right Wing' do not reflect the

"dizzying range of beliefs and ideologies we see".[33] It includes those from the extreme political left-wing as well as anarchists who seek to advance their cause in seeking to overthrow the State in all its forms. Conspiracy theories can act as gateways to radicalised thinking and sometimes violence. They often make unevidenced claims about the causes of social and political events, attempting to explain them by blaming groups or powerful actors. Many conspiracy theories are not new; they adapt old narratives to fit current circumstances and are not explicit to any one ideology. Common themes include religious or ethnic superiority, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hostility, misogyny, anti-establishment, and anti-LGBTQ+ grievances. Conspiracy theories can become a pathway to more extreme views and behaviour by introducing believers to radical content or increasing sympathy to extreme ideas and engagement with political violence.

Our new approach to countering extremism will keep pace with a threat that continues to evolve. Extremist actors have proven adept at exploiting new technologies, establishing footholds in institutions, and operating in ways that fall short of criminal thresholds but nevertheless cause serious harm. The summer 2024 disorder demonstrated how quickly online radicalisation can translate into real-world violence, and how misinformation can be weaponised to inflame tensions.

This government will carry out a fundamental reset of how government approaches countering extremism, ensuring we have the tools, capabilities, and partnerships to match the scale and nature of the threat and to respond to it as they evolve. This means addressing areas of vulnerability, whether that is online, or in the education and charity sectors, religious institutions, or tightening the controls against foreign extremists entering our country.

Protecting our institutions from extremist abuse

Extremists target our national and local institutions, from our educational establishment to our charities sector – to advance their ideological agendas, using the benefits – including reach, credibility and funding – that come with being a part of the institutional fabric.

The previous government did not properly embed the 2024 extremism definition, which hindered its ability to counter extremism consistently and effectively. We will:

- **Embed the 2024 extremism definition across government, working with frontline partners such as the police,** recognising that a consistent understanding of extremism is essential to tackling it effectively. We will do this by overhauling training and guidance to ensure a consistent understanding of extremism and extremist ideologies.
- **Update and embed the 2024 engagement principles** so that public bodies do not confer legitimacy, funding or influence on extremist groups. We will boost our due diligence capability to ensure we can take evidence-based decisions about engagement which are in line with these principles.
- **Publish an annual 'State of Extremism' report** setting out the nature and scale of the current threat facing the UK and government action to counter its activity and influence. This will be structured around specific ideologies, including Islamism, the Extreme Right, and the Extreme Left.
- **Connect our local and national networks** so that we can create a single and aligned assessment of extremism

[33] Director General Ken McCallum gives latest threat update | MI5 - The Security Service https://www.mi5.gov.uk/director-general-ken-mccallum-gives-latest-threat-update

and the impact this has on communities. This will help ensure we can both respond to threats and work to build resilience as a preventative factor.

Strengthening Charity commission powers to tackle extremism

To challenge extremist abuse of the UK charity sector, we will:

- **Strengthen the Charity Commission's powers to tackle extremist abuse of charities by extending its ability to suspend trustees and shut down charities.** The Commission will seek to streamline decision-making, and Government will review the appeals process to support and enable faster and more effective regulatory action.
- **Strengthen the Charity Commission's oversight of the sector by introducing trustee ID verification and digitising charity accounts to improve transparency and accountability.** We will also increase fines and strengthen local authorities' enforcement powers to tackle unlicensed street fundraising.
- **Implement automatic disqualification of trustees with unspent hate crime convictions or convictions for providing false or misleading information to the Charity Commission.** We will also ensure the Commission has discretionary powers to disqualify trustees who have been excluded from the UK, deprived of British citizenship, subject to sanctions or engaged in conduct promoting terrorism, violence or hatred.

Countering extremism in schools and universities

Extremists have targeted education settings – schools and universities – to radicalise the minds of children and young people. To begin to tackle this:

- **We will co-design with students a Cohesion Charter, which brings together a set of agreed principles that guide students' conduct and engagement on issues that underpin – or undermine – campus cohesion.** The Charter will focus on tackling extremism alongside principles relating to civic participation, environmental responsibility, and other areas that contribute to a safe and cohesive university environment. Once agreed, universities will be strongly encouraged to incorporate the principles into their own student codes of conduct, policies and processes.
- **The Office for Students (OfS) will further strengthen its monitoring of universities' efforts to prevent individuals from becoming involved in terrorism or supporting it.** Universities should not only be alert to violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, including certain divisive or intolerant narratives which can reasonably be linked to terrorism. It will publish a new framework and guidance in September, which will come into force at the start of 2027. The Home Office will also set up a dedicated horizon-scanning function to better identify and disrupt individuals and events of extremist concern which will cover extremist activity within local communities, such as in hireable venues and outdoor spaces; within charity organisations, which falls under the remit of the Charity Commission; and on campuses, including activity by Student Unions and non-affiliated student groups.

- **We will strengthen Department for Education's oversight of compliance issues and take appropriate enforcement action.** Department for Education is committed to using its enforcement powers and will issue directions to providers under s30 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 where necessary to secure compliance with the Prevent duty. Such directions are enforceable by court order.
- **We will work with the OfS to bring together clear and concise information on HE complaints into a single online portal,** giving staff, students and others quick and easy access to the organisations best placed to support them. We will also work with DBT to add the OfS to the list of prescribed bodies under the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2024 to help ensure whistleblowers are able to speak up with confidence about wrongdoing concerning registered Higher Education Providers. These steps will enable staff and students to make a confidential, protected disclosure if they do not feel able to raise the concern directly with the setting.
- **We will enhance higher education sector-wide capability to meet Prevent duty obligations while upholding freedom of speech.** To do this, DfE will issue non-statutory guidance on Managing External Speakers and Events with regard to the Prevent Duty in the Spring. This will provide practical advice to strengthen how providers should assess, manage, and mitigate risks, associated with external speakers and events, that could risk drawing people into terrorism. It also introduces principles to help providers assess when speech might be unlawful as it is likely to amount to a terrorism-related offence or is lawful but could enable a 'permissive environment' for radicalising influences.

Disrupting wider extremist influence and activity

Extremists rely on spreading their narratives and ideas throughout society – both on and offline. They deliberately target those who challenge their worldview via intimidation, harassment, and threat. To bolster government's ability to disrupt extremist influence and activity, we will:

- **Develop new tools and powers to disrupt organisations that spread extremism, hate and threaten public safety. We will also introduce a State Threats Designation Power – based on counter-terrorism proscription** – that will create a new offence of glorifying organisations involved in state threat activity.
- **Transform our specialist Disruptions Unit to detect, expose, and counter extremist influence across the UK** – including online, mobilising coordinated action across central and local government to disrupt online and offline extremist activity and influence by improving our harms assessment framework and reporting mechanisms.
- **Make the Home Office's visa taskforce permanent and expand its reach to block hate preachers and extremists of all kinds from entering the UK.** We will also establish a cross-government referral system to flag high-risk individuals early and enable swift immigration action where appropriate.
- Recognising that Jewish, Muslim and other minority communities are facing rising levels of hatred and extremism, **we will work with the Crown Prosecution Service and the Police to ensure robust use of existing hate crime and public order legislation on harmful extremist conduct, and terrorism legislation wherever conduct meets the appropriate threshold.**

- **Stand against those who try to intimidate, threaten, and harass others because they are offended by so-called 'blasphemy'. We do not recognise blasphemy law in the UK and will ensure the Police are equipped to respond to these incidents** in a way that prevents public disorder and sectarianism and protects the freedom and safety of the public.

Securing online spaces

Technology underpins modern life, connecting communities and enabling access to jobs and public services. Online communities provide people with a different kind of social connection, which for many people is more accessible and affirming than in-person social activity. But loneliness is also a risk-factor, and a potential driver, of extremism of various kinds, including misogyny. To benefit fully from technology, people must feel confident and safe online, particularly children. Yet online spaces too often expose users to harm such as hate, extremism and misinformation, which disproportionately affects women and minority groups and can damage community cohesion and public trust.

The UK's Online Safety Act sets out a world-leading framework, requiring platforms to have systems and processes to identify and remove illegal content, protect children, curb harmful algorithmic promotion, and give adults greater control. Companies operating in the UK must comply, with Ofcom empowered to enforce the law.

We will go further calling out unacceptable practices, challenging harmful business models, promoting healthy relationships with technology from childhood, and strengthening digital and media literacy so people can engage critically with online content and access reliable information.

As a first step to helping protect present and future generations and increase their resilience to online extremism and hate, we will:

- **Make use of robust powers to require platforms to mitigate risks related to their algorithms.** Under the Online Safety Act, Ofcom can require these companies to share information with them regarding their algorithms to ensure they operate them safely.
- **Give people greater control over what they are exposed to online and reduce accidental exposure to hateful content.** We know that people often feel that their experiences online are dictated by algorithms that promote unwanted yet divisive content, and that this is contributing to setting norms online that are different from those in our communities. We will explore options to require platforms to provide users with greater control over their algorithmic feeds, such as options to reset their personal algorithms, building on existing user empowerment duties under the Online Safety Act. We will consider delivery options, testing which will most effectively deliver greater safety for users.
- **Take further steps to increase transparency about how online platforms operate and how they comply with the Act.** Platforms will be required to publish regular reports, summarised by Ofcom for public understanding, to give the public a clearer picture of platform compliance.
- **Give independent researchers access to platform data so they can help to build the evidence base to hold companies to account.** This will sit alongside the new super-complaints regime – a robust redress mechanism for advocacy groups where they have evidence that companies are not meeting their duties.

- **Have launched a national consultation on further measures to prepare children for the future in an age of technological change.** This will seek views from parents, civil society and young people themselves on measures including a minimum age for social media, raising the age of digital consent, restricting addictive design features and limiting children's use of VPNs to prevent access to harmful content. Government will respond to the consultation in summer 2026 and take swift action in response to the findings.
- **Publish a Media Literacy Action Plan to set out cross-government actions to build resilience to misinformation, disinformation and harmful online content.** The refreshed National Curriculum will also equip all children with the digital and media literacy skills they need to think critically, challenge false information and engage responsibly online.
- **Deliver a pilot communications campaign in Yorkshire and the Midlands to equip parents and carers with practical tools to help children build resilience to harmful, divisive and polarising online content.** Subject to evaluation, we will expand the campaign across the UK. We have also developed a dedicated Kids Online Safety Hub providing clear guidance on media literacy and online safety for parents and carers.
- **Bring major streaming services into line with TV rules on harmful content.** Using powers in the Media Act 2024, we will apply a new Standards Code to mainstream video-on-demand services so they are subject to similar rules on hate speech and material that could incite crime or disorder. Ofcom will consult on the detail of the Code in 2026.
- **Work with the advertising industry and others to develop options for addressing harmful content monetisation.** While the Online Safety Act provides strong protections against illegal content and content that is harmful to children, bad actors can exploit and profit from the advertising-based business models that social media platforms are designed on, producing highly engaging but divisive content which can be unknowingly monetised by advertisers or by other means. The government has already convened cross-sector roundtables on this issue and will explore a full range of options.
- **Strengthen our response during periods of heightened vulnerability by convening civil society, experts, and platforms.** The public disorder that followed the Southport attack in Summer 2024, or that was seen during the Leicester unrest in 2022, demonstrate how viral, harmful content can destabilise communities. In response to any future such events, we will bring together civil society, experts, and tech platforms to provide real-world insights. In parallel we will also review the crisis powers in the Online Safety Act to ensure that they are fit for purpose. This will include looking at giving trustworthy media due prominence, so people have access to authoritative sources to counter mis and disinformation. This will build on ongoing Ofcom consultation on additional Codes of Practice measures to combat illegal content during crisis periods.

- **Ensure swift implementation of the Online Safety Act, to make sure that all of its powers are live as soon as possible.** This includes the introduction of new duties on Category 1 services. These will empower adults to choose whether to engage with legal but harmful content and filter out content from non-verified users, helping to reduce the spread of extremist content to new audiences. The UK continues to work with international partners, including through multilateral fora and bilateral agreements to find common solutions to the threat to our citizens posed by online harms. The Online Safety Act represents an innovative and comprehensive approach.
- **Work with the tech industry to establish clear safety standards for AI systems,** ensuring they protect users – particularly children – from harm. This will include requiring data sharing with approved researchers to assess risks, applying provenance and watermarking standards to identify synthetic content, and adopting robust safety frameworks for vulnerable users. We have also tabled amendments to the Crime and Policing Bill which will allow government to close gaps in the Online Safety Act and require AI chatbot providers to protect users from illegal content.
- **Review the evidence base on the impacts of misinformation.** The Government Chief Scientific Adviser has commissioned an evidence review on misinformation, focusing on how to measure the problem, assess harms and counter and mitigate these harms. The review will be published in 2026.

Chapter 5: The road ahead

As set out above, this document outlines the initial steps the Government is taking to improve social cohesion and counter extremism in the UK. We know this will take hard work and focus. It will be part of a sustained, proactive and long-term effort. As threats change and evolve, so will our policy response.

Therefore, Government will take proactive efforts to renew focus on social cohesion. To achieve this, we will:

- **Empower the Social Cohesion Taskforce to drive forward this agenda from the heart of Government.** This central team will work with all Government departments to implement the commitments set out above and bring forward new policies and approaches as the threats and opportunities change.
- **Ensure strong ministerial oversight through a new ministerial steering group and regular reporting to the Prime Minister.** This will facilitate further joint working between departments and bolster overall governance across integration, cohesion, and counter extremism.
- **Build our evidence base on the drivers and state of cohesion and extremism.** As set out in an earlier chapter, we will develop a Social Cohesion Measurement Framework to measure social cohesion in place and use this quantitative evidence base to track on monitor changing levels of social cohesion in local communities.
- **Update on progress across social cohesion and the delivery of commitments in this document annually.** This will provide public accountability for the social cohesion agenda and transparently convey the work Government is carrying out in this space.

As we progress this work, we also welcome input and insight from external experts, particularly those who have led important reviews for Government and through which we have developed this initial programme of work. The government will continue to engage with experts to make sure we are bringing new and independent thinking and scrutiny to this area of work.

This document does not contain all the answers – it is the first step the government is taking to help bring communities together, strengthen social cohesion, and combat those who seek to undermine our shared values.

Finally, responsibility does not – and cannot – solely fall to Whitehall. Building cohesion is a whole of society effort and Devolved Governments and local partners have a critical role to play. The UK Government will engage effectively with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive, local government and partners across civil society so that we can support and learn from practice on the ground. Together, we can help protect what matters and build a confident, cohesive and resilient society.

Annex A: Policy table

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Restoring pride in place		
Provide £800 million over ten years to a further 40 areas where social cohesion is under pressure. This will provide some of the most left behind and disconnected communities with long term funding to tackle the things that matter most to them, bringing them together to collectively set local visions for the places they live. We will encourage community organisation and faith communities to proactively work in these areas to bring people from different backgrounds together to deliver this shared endeavour.	MHCLG	England
Give all communities across the country new powers and tools to revive their neighbourhoods and build pride in place. We will require all local authorities in England to establish effective neighbourhood governance so that communities can have a stronger voice and control over the decisions that impact on their area. Through a new **Community Right to Buy**, communities will be given the powers to take ownership of the spaces and assets they value in their neighbourhoods from community centres to pubs, social clubs, local parks and sports grounds. And with a new **Co-operative Development Unit** we will support communities to grow their co-operative and mutual sectors and build community wealth.	MHCLG	England

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Invest £1.5 billion in cultural organisations, recognising the ability of cultural organisations to unite communities in the face of division and restore pride in place. This includes continued funding of the Creative Foundations Fund, Museum Renewal Fund, Heritage at Risk Fund, Heritage Revival Fund and Libraries Improvement Fund.	DCMS	England
Set out our support for local media as essential for giving voice to communities that can otherwise struggle to be heard, holding local institutions to account and countering false narratives. **We will shortly publish the Local Media Strategy to guarantee the long-term sustainability of local journalism.** As part of this we will provide new funding for local media publishers to adapt to commercial and technological changes and revive a local news presence in areas where it has retreated. We will also further boost community radio so that it can support community radio in more places annually.	DCMS	Local Media Strategy – England Community radio – UK-wide
Take action to revive high streets and town centres across England through a new High Streets Strategy, backed by a new £150 million innovation fund. We will restore pride, raise standards, and rebuild confidence in our high streets – with coordinated action on public services, community, and cultural assets to bring life back to the streets. We will back our businesses to thrive and innovate, encourage partnership between public and private sectors, root out crime and exploitation, and give local councils and the people they serve a greater stake in the future of their high streets.	MHCLG	England

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Do more to crack down on waste crime. Having respect for one another includes respecting the environment of those around us. To protect our communities, we will soon publish a Waste Crime Action Plan. This plan will outline the measures that we are taking in England to prevent future harm and disrupt and prosecute offenders. This will also set out the coordinated and targeted action across government, regulators, industry and local partners we are taking to protect our communities.	DEFRA	England
Help communities be safer in their neighbourhood by tackling low level crime such as shoplifting, phone theft, anti-social behaviour and vandalism that can have a cumulative impact on people's wellbeing, pride in place and community spirit. Through our Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, we will increase patrols to town centres and every neighbourhood now has named, contactable neighbourhood officers to turn to. We will move police officers to the front line, with **13,000 additional neighbourhood personnel by the end of this parliament. Every police force in England and Wales has now appointed a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) lead who will shortly publish a local ASB Action Plan developed with their communities.** This will be matched by stronger **police powers to tackle ASB via the Crime and Policing Bill – including new Respect Orders for persistent offenders.**	HO	England and Wales
Work closely with local organisations who know their communities best and can offer the most effective support to offenders to integrate into society. This includes working with partners to halve the proportion released from prison homeless and providing support to the most complex individuals facing significant barriers, including through services like Creating Future Opportunities (CFO).	MoJ	England and Wales

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Bringing people together		
Invest £11.5 million in Local Covenant Partnerships to bring civil society organisations, local authorities and public service providers together to deliver more services through trusted community venues, reaching people who are currently underserved or excluded. This will support the delivery of the Civil Society Covenant.	DCMS	England
Establish a decade-long pipeline of major cultural and sporting events – including UK City of Culture, a new UK Town of Culture competition, UEFA EURO 2028, the 2027 Tour de France and Tour de France Femme Grand Departs, and a bid for the 2035 FIFA Women's World Cup. We will require each to deliver strong community engagement and legacy programmes that bring people together and strengthen local pride.	DCMS	UK-wide
Invest £500,000 to fund additional community-led school linking projects – on top of the local authorities already funded. This money will deliver new social and educational opportunities for children from different backgrounds to meet, learn and play during their formative years.	DfE; MHCLG	England
Invest over £750 million over the next four years in youth, sport and community infrastructure to ensure people across the country have high-quality shared spaces to meet, mix and build stronger bonds. This includes £350 million to build and refurbish youth spaces and at least £400 million for new and upgraded grassroots sports facilities.	DCMS	England
Support adults working with young people to better spot the signs of loneliness to intervene earlier through evidence and best practice. This includes investing £15 million over the next 3 years to upskill the existing youth sector workforce in tackling issues such as online misogyny and to increase the number of trusted adults providing safe support to young people.	DCMS	England

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Tackle loneliness among young men and boys. This will ensure that those living in the places most underserved are given access to opportunities for in-person social connection. For example, we are investing £330,000 in Rugby League Cares to deliver pilots in Wigan and Wakefield that aim to improve the confidence of young men not in employment, education or training. Rugby League legends Keith Senior and Adrian Morley are among more than a dozen former players involved in the programme.	DCMS	England
Strengthen oversight of home education to ensure all children receive a suitable education and meaningful opportunities for social development. This includes: • Mandating the introduction of local authority registers of children not in school, and for the first time ever requiring parents to notify their local authority when they are home educating their children; • Requiring local authority consent before the most vulnerable children can be withdrawn from school for home education; • Piloting mandatory local authority meetings with parents, in selected areas, before children can be withdrawn from school for home education. If pilots are shown to be effective we will consider national roll-out; and, • Requiring local authorities to consider the child's home and wider learning environments – and empowering them to request to visit the child at home – when assessing whether the education is suitable and whether a School Attendance Order should be issued. This includes consideration of whether the education enables sufficient socialisation and supports the child to participate fully in life in the UK.	DfE	England

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Teaching our values and history		
Mandate that citizenship is taught in both primary and secondary schools to highlight the relevance of the democratic process and constitutional principles such as the rule of law, as well as raise awareness of threats to democracy. We will ensure that vital applied knowledge and skills in financial, media and digital literacy are embedded into the revised curriculum to help young people become confident and resilient when navigating our modern world.	DfE	England
Strengthen the national curriculum and qualifications in England to ensure high quality teaching of our nation's history. We will also continue to include the Holocaust as a compulsory topic within Key Stage 3, as confirmed by the Government last year.	DfE	England
Drive up standards in the teaching of Religious Education. We will carefully consider including Religious Education in the national curriculum, subject to the sector reaching consensus on the content of, and approach to delivering, a curriculum.	DfE	England
Celebrating faith and belief communities		
Continue to support programmes like Near Neighbours, an initiative led by the Church of England which brings people together in religiously and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods to get to know each other better, build relationships of trust and collaborate on community initiatives.	MHCLG	England
Grow Inter Faith Week to strengthen understanding and interaction between people of different faiths – supporting its development into a more sustainable, grassroots and youth-led annual event, building on the findings of the recent MHCLG funded consultation.	MHCLG	England

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Boost faith and belief literacy – recognising Colin Bloom's recommendation to do so. This will include gauging our current levels of faith and belief literacy in government, identifying ways to upskill, and developing an approach that improves the quality and inclusivity of policy making. We will also consider how to strengthen faith and belief literacy across society as a whole.	MHCLG	England
Promote the role of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) by supporting improved analysis of their annual reports, to better understand the role they play in communities including in relation to cohesion.	MHCLG; DfE	England
Deliver the £92 million Places of Worship Renewal Fund. This will target our capital funding to the areas where it is needed most, focusing on repair and conservation of our religious heritage buildings and the role they play in our wider communities. The Fund will help to secure the future of our heritage while supporting the government's missions for national renewal and community cohesion.	DCMS	England
Champion freedom of religion or belief globally through sustained diplomatic engagement and multilateral partnerships. Working with the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), we will use our diplomatic network to press for laws and policies that protect religious or belief minorities and promote inclusive, tolerant societies. Promoting freedom of religion or belief internationally strengthens UK security, strengthens our response to extremism and helps address the drivers of instability and migration.	FCDO	UK-wide
Managing the pace of change		
Implement reforms to the points-based system to ensure that we are more selective about who we allow to enter the country, focusing on those who can make a significant contribution to our communities.	HO	UK-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Continue our efforts to reduce irregular migration, working to return more people to France and other third countries to act as a deterrence for small boats, while restoring order to the asylum system so that it operates swiftly, firmly, and fairly, and opening safe and legal routes.	HO	UK-wide
End the use of asylum hotels and return them to local communities. This government's view is that hotels are not suitable to accommodate asylum seekers in the long term. We are clear that hotels are not a good use of public money and act as a lightning rod for community tensions. We will work proactively with local authorities to consider a range of more appropriate sites to accommodate asylum seekers so we can reduce the impact on communities and build strong community consent.	HO	UK-wide
Implement reforms to bolster Community Sponsorship to put power in the hands of local communities to be directly involved in welcoming and supporting those seeking refuge, within caps set by the Government. This will support the accommodation and early integration needs of new arrivals, building on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.	HO	UK-wide
Integration based on values		
Set clear national integration expectations across the country, focused on stronger social connections, shared identity, English language proficiency, and participation in work. These expectations will provide a transparent way to track where progress is being made and where more needs to be done. To ensure they are grounded in evidence and lived experience, we will launch a national consultation later this year to refine and strengthen them with local leaders and communities. This will form part of a more coherent approach across Government to integration.	MHCLG	England

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Develop an effective cross-government integration strategy to help existing and new migrants effectively integrate into their communities, find sustainable work, and make a positive contribution to their area. This will be underpinned by strong collaboration with local government and the voluntary and community sector to deliver a community-led approach to integration.	MHCLG	England
Review English language provision to identify best practice, and explore how innovation, including digital delivery, can increase the numbers able to speak English, with conclusions published in Autumn 2026. A shared language is the basis of a cohesive and inclusive society and we are committed to making that happen. We have already strengthened English language requirements for new arrivals through the immigration system, including Earned Settlement, and jobcentres can require individuals to learn English where it is a barrier to work and cut their benefits if they fail to comply.	MHCLG	England
Set clearer expectations for how new arrivals and migrants integrate into society. This includes introducing an 'Earned Settlement' system. Under the new framework, settlement will no longer be an automatic entitlement but gained through demonstrated contribution, such as long-term compliance, economic activity, and alignment with British values. We will increase the standard qualifying period for settlement to ten years, though individuals may reduce this period through significant contributions to the UK. We are gathering views on how best to measure contribution and integration via a consultation which closed on 12 February and will publish findings in due course.	HO	UK-wide
Refresh the content of the Life in the UK test so that it better reflects the knowledge people need to live, work, and take part in everyday life in the UK today.	HO	UK-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Support communities who are underrepresented in the workplace. Everyone should be able to access the labour market. To remove barriers, we will: • Continue to improve employment support to help women into work, including tackling cultural reasons that may be a barrier to work. • Ensure the Jobs and Careers Service is designed and tested to meet the needs of diverse communities, delivering support through trusted local settings. Embed consideration of ethnic minority participation in local jobcentre planning and delivery, including through Get Britain Working Plans, and share practice across the network.	DWP	GB-wide
Building community resilience and infrastructure to respond to division and hate		
Continue the Common Ground Resilience Fund with up to £5 million over financial year 2026/27 to deliver targeted cohesion and integration interventions. The Fund will support local authorities and grassroots organisations to run practical initiatives that bring people together – these could include community events and interfaith programmes, school and youth projects tackling prejudice, harmful extremist narratives, media literacy and frontline training to counter misinformation, neighbourhood-led action to strengthen local leadership and volunteering, and wellbeing programmes that reduce isolation among vulnerable groups.	MHCLG	England

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Establish a cross-government Cohesion Support and Interventions Function (CSIF) to provide rapid, joined-up support to councils and communities facing serious tensions or unrest. Through CSIF, local leaders will have direct access to experienced practitioners – including senior council leaders, police chiefs and national security experts – alongside tailored briefings on emerging threats, practical tools to disrupt radicalising or dangerous actors, and immediate access to Common Ground Resilience funding where unrest or violence occurs.	MHCLG	England
Establish an Advisory Board to support local authorities should tensions arise. This will include frontline practitioners from across the country, with experience responding to crisis incidents such as the Southport attack and ensuing unrest in 2024, the disorder witnessed in Leicester in 2022 and other similar incidents, enabling them to be 'on call' to local leaders at times of crises and provide practical assistance and support.	MHCLG	England
Work with Belong and the Local Government Association to embed shared guidance on social cohesion. This guidance, published in January 2026, provides local authorities the tools to address challenges, including on the statutory duties they will need to consider, and shares good practice.	MHCLG	England
Recognise the centrality of this work to wider UK security and resilience efforts. National Security is the first mission of this Government, and to tackle this we need to take a whole of society approach – ensuring local places are equipped to support tackling upstream cohesion threats in places and communities, Local Communities have a huge stake in National Security, and it is important that we bridge the gap between Local Government and the National Security Community – to do that we need to manage risk collectively and ensure that our local communities are supported, heard and respected when decisions are made to protect our nation.	MHCLG	UK-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Develop a Social Cohesion Measurement Framework – responding to calls from experts, including Dame Sara Khan, for clearer, consistent metrics to measure local cohesion. This will enable local areas to assess cohesion in a robust and comparable way. The Framework will be available to local government, civil society and impact investors across England, supporting early identification of emerging tensions and ensuring that public and philanthropic investment meets local needs. We will also engage Devolved Governments as part of this work.	MHCLG	England
Introduce a local cohesion risk assessment tool to help councils identify and respond to emerging tensions earlier. The tool will create a clear information-sharing link between local and central government – including Prevent and other relevant partners – underpinned by consistent national metrics so risks can be assessed quickly and acted on before they escalate.	MHCLG	UK-wide
Increase and improve mechanisms for join-up across government to tackle Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference directed at the UK and our partners overseas, from whose experience we can learn important lessons.	FCDO	UK-wide
Tackling hatred and discrimination		
Include diverse perspectives in public service reform. The Race Equality Unit will undertake a programme of engagement with a diverse range of communities across the country to further understand the important connection between public service delivery, inequality, and social cohesion. This will ensure the government is better attuned to the needs, risks, and opportunities at play, putting the public back in public services.	CO	UK-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Tackle racist abuse in schools. Children learn best when they feel safe and supported. We will work with pupils and teachers, and interrogate the evidence, to understand what drives disparities in school exclusions between different ethnic groups. The Race Equality Unit will also undertake research to explore effective mechanisms to improve recruitment, retention and progression of the ethnic minority teaching workforce.	CO; DfE	England
Ensure hate crimes are prosecuted with the full force of the law. While we work with policing bodies on implementing the protest and public order provisions in the Crime and Policing Bill after Royal Assent, we have also asked Lord Macdonald to review existing public order and hate crime legislation to test whether it is effective and proportionate, particularly in response to protests and the 'stirring up' of hatred. The review will conclude in spring 2026.	HO	England and Wales
Strengthen national reporting and response mechanisms for hate crime, including support for the True Vision platform and the government-backed helpline, run by the British Muslim Trust, for reporting anti-Muslim hatred.	MHCLG	England and Wales
Combat online hate crime by making sure offences are swiftly investigated. To make reporting easier for victims, we have established an online hate crime reporting portal, and the National Online Hate Crime Hub has been stood up to support police investigations. While the police operate independently, they are expected to fully investigate hate crimes and work with the Crown Prosecution Service to bring perpetrators to justice.	HO	England and Wales
Build on protections in the Employment Rights Act 2025 and the Equality Act 2010 and lead by example by rolling out training across the Civil Service – starting with senior leaders – to improve understanding of how religious hatred manifests and how it should be addressed.	CO	GB-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Work with major employers, including the NHS, to encourage robust policies and training that prevent and respond to religious hatred across the workforce. This will include roundtables – led by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) – with businesses and trade unions to better understand best practice.	DBT; OEO; CO	UK-wide
Fund protective security for faith communities to keep places of worship and community sites safe through the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme, and the Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme. We have increased funding to record levels and we will continue to work with the police and security partners to ensure protections for all faith communities remain proportionate and effective.	HO	Jewish Community Protective Security Grant – UK wide; Protective Security for Mosques Scheme – UK wide; Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme (for all other faiths) – England and Wales
Deliver training as part of the new free to access Faith Security Training Scheme to help faith groups improve their safety and security, particularly at places of worship.	HO	England and Wales
Combatting antisemitism		
Swiftly respond to the findings of the review led by Sir David Bell into antisemitism in schools and colleges. The review will look at whether the policies, processes and support are available to help schools and colleges across England identify and tackle antisemitism when it arises. This review is expected to conclude by Autumn 2026.	DfE	England

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Act on Lord Mann's forthcoming review of how the healthcare system deals with antisemitism and other forms of racism. We will set out the steps we will take to strengthen recognition, reporting and enforcement at every stage – from frontline employment to national oversight bodies.	DHSC	England
Combatting anti-Muslim hostility		
Adopt a non-statutory definition of anti-Muslim hostility. The Government is adopting a new non-statutory definition to provide a clearer and more consistent understanding of anti-Muslim hostility. This definition is focused on protecting individuals rather than religion or belief and, by setting out clearer parameters, it will help tackle unacceptable hatred, prejudice or discrimination. In practice, the definition will serve as a tool for Government and organisations to better understand, measure, prevent and address anti-Muslim hostility. We are encouraging organisations across sectors to adopt the definition and to consider how it applies within their own contexts. The Government will work with partners to develop practical guidance and support effective implementation.	MHCLG	England
Increase the support and funding we provide to programmes that directly tackle anti-Muslim hate, including the Combatting Hate Against Muslims fund. We are committing up to £4 million to tackle anti-Muslim hostility and implementation of the definition, as a first step.	MHCLG	England
Appoint a Special Representative on anti-Muslim hostility, to champion efforts across the UK to tackle hostility and hatred directed at Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim. The Special Representative will engage with communities and stakeholders, and support cross-sector action to strengthen understanding, reporting and response. They will also lead on work to facilitate understanding and implementation of the definition of anti-Muslim hostility across various sectors and contexts.	MHCLG	UK-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Protecting our institutions from extremist abuse		
Embed the 2024 extremism definition across government, working with frontline partners such as the police, recognising that a consistent understanding of extremism is essential to tackling it effectively. We will do this by overhauling training and guidance to ensure a consistent understanding of extremism and extremist ideologies.	HO	England
Update and embed the 2024 engagement principles so that public bodies do not confer legitimacy, funding or influence on extremist groups. We will boost our due diligence capability to ensure we can take evidence-based decisions about engagement which are in line with these principles.	HO	England
Publish an annual 'State of Extremism' report setting out the nature and scale of the current threat facing the UK and government action to counter its activity and influence. This will be structured around specific ideologies, including Islamism, the Extreme Right, and the Extreme Left.	HO	UK-wide
Connect our local and national networks so that we can create a single and aligned assessment of extremism and the impact this has on communities. This will help ensure we can both respond to threats and work to build resilience as a preventative factor.	HO	UK-wide
Strengthening Charity commission powers to tackle extremism		
Strengthen the Charity Commission's powers to tackle extremist abuse of charities by extending its ability to suspend trustees and shut down charities. The Commission will seek to streamline decision-making, and Government will review the appeals process to support and enable faster and more effective regulatory action.	DCMS, HO	England and Wales

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Strengthen the Charity Commission's oversight of the sector by introducing trustee ID verification and digitising charity accounts to improve transparency and accountability. We will also increase fines and strengthen local authorities' enforcement powers to tackle unlicensed street fundraising.	DCMS, HO	England and Wales
Implement automatic disqualification of trustees with unspent hate crime convictions or convictions for providing false or misleading information to the Charity Commission. We will also ensure the Commission has discretionary powers to disqualify trustees who have been excluded from the UK, deprived of British citizenship, subject to sanctions or engaged in conduct promoting terrorism, violence or hatred.	DCMS, HO	England and Wales
Countering extremism in schools and universities		
We will co-design with students a Cohesion Charter, which brings together a set of agreed principles that guide students' conduct and engagement on issues that underpin – or undermine – campus cohesion. The Charter will focus on tackling extremism alongside principles relating to civic participation, environmental responsibility, and other areas that contribute to a safe and cohesive university environment. Once agreed, universities will be strongly encouraged to incorporate the principles into their own student codes of conduct, policies and processes	DfE	England

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
The Office for Students (OfS) will further strengthen its monitoring of universities' efforts to prevent individuals from becoming involved in terrorism or supporting it. Universities should not only be alert to violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, including certain divisive or intolerant narratives which can reasonably be linked to terrorism. It will publish a new framework and guidance in September, which will come into force at the start of 2027. The Home Office will also set up a dedicated horizon-scanning function to better identify and disrupt individuals and events of extremist concern which will cover extremist activity within local communities, such as in hireable venues and outdoor spaces; within charity organisations, which falls under the remit of the Charity Commission; and on campuses, including activity by Student Unions and non-affiliated student groups.	DfE, HO	OfS monitoring – England HO horizon scanning – UK-wide
We will strengthen Department for Education's oversight of compliance issues and take appropriate enforcement action. DfE is committed to using its enforcement powers and will issue directions to providers under s30 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 where necessary to secure compliance with the Prevent duty. Such directions are enforceable by court order.	DfE	UK-wide
We will work with the OfS to bring together clear and concise information on HE complaints into a single online portal, giving staff, students and others quick and easy access to the organisations best placed to support them. We will also work with DBT to add the OfS to the list of prescribed bodies under the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2024 to help ensure whistleblowers are able to speak up with confidence about wrongdoing concerning registered Higher Education Providers. These steps will enable staff and students to make a confidential, protected disclosure if they do not feel able to raise the concern directly with the setting.	DfE, DBT	England

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
We will enhance higher education sector wide capability to meet Prevent duty obligations while upholding freedom of speech. To do this, Department for Education will issue non-statutory guidance on Managing External Speakers and Events with regard to the Prevent Duty in the Spring. This will provide practical advice to strengthen how providers should assess, manage, and mitigate risks, associated with external speakers and events, that could risk drawing people into terrorism. It also introduces principles to help providers assess when speech might be unlawful as it is likely to amount to a terrorism-related offence or is lawful but could enable a 'permissive environment' for radicalising influences.	DfE	England
Disrupting wider extremist influence and activity		
Develop new tools and powers to disrupt organisations that spread extremism, hate and threaten public safety. We will also introduce a State Threats Designation Power – based on counter terrorism proscription – disrupting and deterring the most egregious state and proxy organisations carrying out hostile activity against the UK.	HO	UK-wide
Transform our specialist Disruptions Unit to detect, expose, and counter extremist influence across the UK – including online, mobilising coordinated action across central and local government to disrupt online and offline extremist activity and influence by improving our harms assessment framework and reporting mechanisms.	HO	UK-wide
Make the Home Office's visa taskforce permanent and expand its reach to block hate preachers and extremists of all kinds from entering the UK. We will also establish a cross-government referral system to flag high-risk individuals early and enable swift immigration action where appropriate.	HO, FCDO	UK-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Recognising that Jewish, Muslim and other minority communities are facing rising levels of hatred and extremism, we **will work with the Crown Prosecution Service and the Police to ensure robust use of existing hate crime and public order legislation on harmful extremist conduct, and terrorism legislation wherever conduct meets the appropriate threshold.**	HO	England and Wales
Stand against those who try to intimidate, threaten, and harass others because they are offended by so-called 'blasphemy'. We do not recognise blasphemy law in the UK and will ensure the Police are equipped to respond to these incidents in a way that prevents public disorder and sectarianism and protects the freedom and safety of the public.	HO	UK-wide
Securing online spaces		
Make use of robust powers to require platforms to mitigate risks related to their algorithms. Under the Online Safety Act, Ofcom can require these companies to share information with them regarding their algorithms to ensure they operate them safely**.**	DSIT	UK-wide
Give people greater control over what they are exposed to online and reduce accidental exposure to hateful content. We know that people often feel that their experiences online are dictated by algorithms that promote unwanted yet divisive content, and that this is contributing to setting norms online that are different from those in our communities. We will explore options to require platforms to provide users with greater control over their algorithmic feeds, such as options to reset their personal algorithms, building on existing user empowerment duties under the Online Safety Act. We will consider delivery options, testing which will most effectively deliver greater safety for users.	DSIT	UK-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Take further steps to increase transparency about how online platforms operate and how they comply with the Act. Platforms will be required to publish regular reports, summarised by Ofcom for public understanding, to give the public a clearer picture of platform compliance.	DSIT	UK-wide
Give independent researchers access to platform data so they can help to build the evidence base to hold companies to account. This will sit alongside the new super-complaints regime – a robust redress mechanism for advocacy groups where they have evidence that companies are not meeting their duties.	DSIT	UK-wide
Have launched a national consultation on further measures to prepare children for the future in an age of technological change. This will seek views from parents, civil society and young people themselves on measures including a minimum age for social media, raising the age of digital consent, restricting addictive design features and limiting children's use of VPNs to prevent access to harmful content. Government will respond to the consultation in summer 2026 and take swift action in response to the findings.	DSIT	UK-wide
Publish a Media Literacy Action Plan to set out cross-government actions to build resilience to misinformation, disinformation and harmful online content. The refreshed National Curriculum will also equip all children with the digital and media literacy skills they need to think critically, challenge false information and engage responsibly online.	DSIT	UK-wide
Deliver a pilot communications campaign in Yorkshire and the Midlands to equip parents and carers with practical tools to help children build resilience to harmful, divisive and polarising online content. Subject to evaluation, we will expand the campaign across the UK. We have also developed a dedicated Kids Online Safety Hub providing clear guidance on media literacy and online safety for parents and carers.	DSIT	UK-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Bring major streaming services into line with TV rules on harmful content. Using powers in the Media Act 2024, we will apply a new Standards Code to mainstream video-on-demand services so they are subject to similar rules on hate speech and material that could incite crime or disorder. Ofcom will consult on the detail of the Code in 2026.	DCMS	UK-wide
Work with the advertising industry and others to develop options for addressing harmful content monetisation. While the OSA provides strong protections against illegal content and content that is harmful to children, bad actors can exploit and profit from the advertising-based business models that social media platforms are designed on, producing highly engaging but divisive content which can be unknowingly monetised by advertisers or by other means. The government has already convened cross-sector roundtables on this issue and will explore a full range of options.	DSIT; DCMS	UK-wide
Strengthen our response during periods of heightened vulnerability by convening civil society, experts, and platforms. The public disorder that followed the Southport attack in Summer 2024, or that was seen during the Leicester unrest in 2022, demonstrate how viral, harmful content can destabilise communities. In response to any future such events, we will bring together civil society, experts, and tech platforms to provide real-world insights. In parallel we will also review the crisis powers in the Online Safety Act to ensure that they are fit for purpose. This will include looking at giving trustworthy media due prominence, so people have access to authoritative sources to counter mis and disinformation. This will build on ongoing Ofcom consultation on additional Codes of Practice measures to combat illegal content during crisis periods.	DSIT	UK-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Ensure swift implementation of the Online Safety Act, to make sure that all of its powers are live as soon as possible. This includes the introduction of new duties on Category 1 services. These will empower adults to choose whether to engage with legal but harmful content and filter out content from non-verified users, helping to reduce the spread of extremist content to new audiences. The UK continues to work with international partners, including through multilateral fora and bilateral agreements to find common solutions to the threat to our citizens posed by online harms. The OSA represents an innovative and comprehensive approach.	DSIT	UK-wide
Work with the tech industry to establish clear safety standards for AI systems, ensuring they protect users – particularly children – from harm. This will include requiring data sharing with approved researchers to assess risks, applying provenance and watermarking standards to identify synthetic content, and adopting robust safety frameworks for vulnerable users. We have also tabled amendments to the Crime and Policing Bill which will allow government to close gaps in the Online Safety Act and require AI chatbot providers to protect users from illegal content.	DSIT	UK-wide
Review the evidence base on the impacts of misinformation. The Government Chief Scientific Adviser has commissioned an evidence review on misinformation, focusing on how to measure the problem, assess harms and counter and mitigate these harms. The review will be published in 2026.	DSIT	TBC
The road ahead		
Empower the Social Cohesion Taskforce to drive forward this agenda from the heart of Government. This central team will work with all Government departments to implement the commitments set out above and bring forward new policies and approaches as the threats and opportunities change.	MHCLG	UK-wide

Policy	Departmental owner	Territorial extent
Ensure strong ministerial oversight through a new ministerial steering group and regular reporting to the Prime Minister. This will facilitate further joint working between departments and bolster overall governance across integration, cohesion, and counter extremism.	MHCLG; HO	UK-wide
Build our evidence base on the drivers and state of cohesion and extremism. As part of this, we will develop a Social Cohesion Measurement Framework to measure social cohesion in place and use this quantitative evidence base to track on monitor changing levels of social cohesion in local communities.	MHCLG	UK-wide
Build our evidence base on the drivers and state of cohesion and extremism. As set out in an earlier chapter, we will develop a Social Cohesion Measurement Framework to measure social cohesion in place and use this quantitative evidence base to track on monitor changing levels of social cohesion in local communities.	MHCLG	UK-wide

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