MCSF

MUSLIM COMMUNITY
SAFETY FORUM
(Serving West Yorkshire)

MCSF Conference
Report

Muslim Community Safety Conference Report
from workshops held on 24th November 2015

Hamara
Bringing Communities Together

mend

"Islamophobia"

An exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life.

Center for American Progress, 2011

Supporters of MCSF

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A note on Brexit...

Despite there being no rise in *reported* hate crimes in West Yorkshire over the period of 24th June - 5th July 2016 [13 cases reported in total compared to 41 in the same time period last year, according to West Yorkshire police] this is by no means a reason to remain complacent or even to see it as reflective of what is happening within communities. Set against the backdrop of a 42% rise in hate crime across the UK, countless anecdotes, online and offline, have been shared by people coming across hateful comments and actions in their daily lives. One woman in Bradford received two hateful incidents in one day: **"I was walking off the bus and was told by a lady to go back to my country. I was angry at her ignorance. The colour of my skin does not define me. And as if that wasn't enough, on the same day I encountered a woman who came out of a pub with a group of friends and said to me "these smelly p*ki's need to f*** off out of the EU!" Other people around me, some Asian, looked too scared to answer."** Female, 24 years old.

Another 24 year old Muslim man was shocked to experience cars driving past and having comments like **"bomb"** shouted at him, multiple times. One particular incident involved two older gentlemen: **"Bullying two old people in their 80's isn't beyond these racists. It's like we're back in 1985."** Male, 44 years old.

The Vote Leave campaign during the EU Referendum was heavily criticised for a disproportionate focus on border control and immigration, with particular condemnation of the distasteful "breaking point" poster depicting Syrian refugees fleeing war. There are concerns across communities that the rhetoric used during the referendum has emboldened anti-Muslim, anti-migrant and racist behaviour.

Going forward, it will be important to address the very specific challenges facing the Muslim community post-Brexit in West Yorkshire. The under-reporting of hate crime is a critical area, recognising and raising awareness of the intersecting nature of racism and Islamophobia will be key, as well as giving people the confidence to challenge hate crime as it happens.

Executive Summary

The West Yorkshire Muslim Community Safety Forum (MCSF) has been established since 2014. Whilst the forum is still in its infancy, it has been gathering momentum in raising awareness around hate crime and the importance of reporting. The forum is made up of volunteers who are from community, voluntary and public sector roles.

In November 2015, as part of the Islamophobia Awareness Month (IAM) – MCSF planned and delivered its second annual conference to stakeholders in West Yorkshire. The conference hosted speakers from the various interested parties such as the Police, youth leaders, educational leaders and community members.

The findings from this work have generated new and significant insights into the nature, forms and impacts of hate offences. This Executive Summary presents these key findings in concise form.

The conference workshops were structured with exercises on how to identify religious and race hate and reporting avenues. Further questions were raised about the issues of under reporting despite recent figures showing a dramatic increase of incidents against Muslims.

The lack of reporting was discussed in detail and the findings pointed to a number of areas, including: the absence of confidence in the Police; fear of not being believed; and fear of reprisals. There were many variations of the listed issues.

The points presented within this summary are necessarily brief, and offer only a partial and decontextualized account of the full range of findings when read in isolation from the full findings. We sincerely hope that this body of work makes a real and sustained difference with respect to helping organisations and individuals challenge hate crime.

Background to the forum:

The Muslim Community Safety Forum has six broad aims:

> To promote the safety and well-being of Muslim communities across West Yorkshire

> To promote a culture of reporting hate crime among Muslim communities

> To facilitate the exchange and sharing of information, experience and expertise among statutory bodies, voluntary and community services

> To promote and encourage the development and adoption of the highest professional standards and codes of practice

> To encourage research, study, dissemination of information & to publish results & findings relating to Islamophobic & religious hate crime and faith-based religious incidents.

>To recognize the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which outlines specific protected characteristics, the forum has adopted the following definition of hate crime:

'A hate crime refers to acts of violence, hostility and intimidation directed towards people because of their identity or perceived 'difference'.

This broad definition was used in order to capture acts of hate, prejudice and targeted hostility directed towards anyone, from any background, including victims whose experiences are often overlooked by academics, policy-makers and practitioners.

In order to address the forum's aims– and to improve policy responses for victims – the forum has begun to develop close collaboration with a range of organisations, including Police , the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, Victim Support, Stop Hate UK and other stakeholders.

Recommendations summary

• The police, local authorities and third party reporting centre's should actively raise awareness in the process of reporting anti-Muslim hate crime and what actually happens once an incident has been reported to the police and other third party reporting centres.

• MCSF should raise awareness across Muslim communities on best ways to challenge anti-Muslim hate crime at the time of incident.

• MCSF should play a pivotal role in increasing awareness of the diversity of Muslim communities across West Yorkshire and their varying needs to the police, statutory bodies and charity sector organisations.

• Anti-Muslim hate crime should be widely recorded and regular statistics provided by the police to the MCSF and other key stake holders.

• MCSF should increase its strategic reach across West Yorkshire, whilst simultaneously increasing its representation.

• The five local authorities should commit to discussing and implementing a strategy to tackle Islamophobia at a West Yorkshire level.

• Local authorities leads should be identified for the five West Yorkshire authorities to lead the work on anti-Islam hate crime reporting and to provide a quarterly update to MCSF and other interested parties.

• A commitment is required from the five local authorities to raise awareness of Islamo-phobia Awareness Month annually.

The relevance of these recommendations are that they can and should be used to support victims of a Muslim background. The acknowledgment of the faith based crimes inevitably will mean that specific targeted support is given where needed.

We need to deliver more effective personalised services for faith victims locally and regionally within West Yorkshire, ultimately contributing to the outcomes and priorities of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan, 2013- 2018.

Introduction

An event was organised jointly by the Hamara Healthy Centre and the Muslim Community Safety Forum (MCSF) on Tuesday 24th November 2015 in Leeds. It was prepared as part of the national Islamophobia Awareness (IAM) Month to look at issues of the recent unprecedented rise in anti- Muslim hate crime and ways in which to develop a more joined-up approach. The event brought together key people, including policy makers, statutory agencies, local authority officers, Police, youth & Education providers.

Purpose and aims

• To bring together key people, including policy makers, statutory agencies, local authority officers, Police, youth & Education providers to discuss an explore issues around anti-Musim hate

• Identify key agencies tackling hate crime

• Not another 'talk shop' – needs to be a starting point for future work in the region to address anti-Musim hate

• To identify the purpose of the Muslim Community Safety Forum moving forward

• To raise awareness of the importance of reporting a race crime

Desired Outcomes

• Generate information from attendees around the topic of anti-Muslim hate

• A report capturing these opinions with recommendations

• The conference becomes a catalyst for future work with key agencies across the region

• Develop network opportunities

Workshop Topics

A number of workshops were delivered in an attempt to help build awareness of how to identify an Islamophobic incident; how to report a hate crime and; what representatives of key organisations and community members wanted to see from the MCSF moving forward.

Narrative

Forty seven individuals and agencies gathered on the 24th November 2015 12-4.00pm at the Hamara Centre, Leeds, as part of the city-wide conference on the subject of Islamophobia. The event was part of the national Islamophobia Awareness Month which runs annually across the month of November. Attendees were asked why they were supporting Islamophobia Month, which was captured as they registered for the event (Appendix 1).

Presentations were given by key agencies and stake holders, including: Stop Hate UK; Regional Manager of Muslim Engagement and Development; District NUT, Police Hate Crime Coordinator.

Separate spaces were allocated for the facilitation of the three workshops and the participants were directed to their chosen workshops. Each workshop ran for 40 minutes but repeated three times, allowing all the attendees to attend each one. Notes were taken in the workshops capturing any issues raised and suggestions made. Please see Appendix 2 for full transcripts.

Local Context

Demographic overview

West Yorkshire is home to over 250,000 Muslims who live in the region's five Metropolitan districts of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. In percentages; Muslims form 11.3% of the total population of 2.2 million people living in West Yorkshire.

Of course, these Muslim communities will enjoy the diversity that is reflected in wider society. As such, it would be wrong to assume that the 250,000 Muslims living in West Yorkshire are homogenous in their experiences and lifestyles, but rather they will hail from different economic and social backgrounds, and some of its members will experience an intersectionality in presenting more than one protected characteristic, such as gender, sexual orientation and race.

The work of MCSF is to ensure West Yorkshire is a safer region for its Muslim population - though we extend our support to the work of groups that are working for the safety of other protected characteristics.

Table 1: Statistics from 2011 census, released in December 2012. *(Source:- ONS 2011 and 2012)*

Census 2011 protected characteristic information							
		Number	%			Number	%
Total Population		2,226,058		**Gender**	Female	1,132,794	50.9%
					Male	1,093,264	49.1%
Marital Status	Married	815,691	45.8%				
	Single	626,166	35.2%	**Race**	White British	1,746,295	78.4%
	Divorced	162,407	9.1%		White Other	73,523	3.3%
	Widow	121,971	6.9%		BME	406,240	18.2%
	Separated	50,009	2.8%		ASIAN	291,547	13.1%
	Same sex	3,620	0.2%		MIXED	48,126	2.2%
					BLACK	46,476	2.1%
Religion	Christian	1,216,266	54.6%		OTHER ETHNIC	20,091	0.9%
	No religion	557,775	25.1%				
	Muslim	252,370	11.3%	**Health/ Disability**	Activities Limited	399,669	18.0%
	Not Stated	146,052	6.6%		'Bad' Health	131,992	5.9%
	Sikh	18,123	0.8%				
	Hindu	14,921	0.7%	**Age**	0-15	446,194	20.0%
	Jewish	7,605	0.3%		16-24	287,027	12.9%
	Other	7,163	0.3%		25-64	1,162,083	52.2%
	Buddhist	5,783	0.3%		65+	330,754	14.9%
Other source protected characteristic information							
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	1,669,733	93.8%				
	LGB	33,599	1.9%				

In November 2015, Islamophobic offences had more than doubled since 2010. According to the Home Office reports on Hate Crime in England and Wales in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, racial and religious hate crime accounts for 88% of motivating factors for hate crime recorded by West Yorkshire Police.

The police force recorded 40 anti-Islam hate crimes in the first six months since sub-categories of the faith strand of hate crime reporting was introduced on the 13th October 2014. This figure equated to 57.2% of all faith based hate crimes.

This figure worryingly increased to 75 incidents between June and November 2015, equating to 84.3% of faith based hate crimes.

It is apparent that there is an increase in hate crimes against Muslim victims and after the 13/11/15 Paris attacks, out of 13 faith related occurrences, 12 were against Muslim victims.

Table 2: Recorded hate crimes 2012-2015 (*Source: www.westyorkshire.police.uk/sites/default/files/files/reports/equality_information_2014-15_final.pdf*)

Hate Non Crimes

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Change last year	% Change
Bradford	156	220	276	56	35.9%
Calderdale	96	97	94	-3	-3.1%
Kirklees	142	166	192	26	18.3%
Leeds	285	364	413	49	17.2%
Wakefield	56	67	63	-4	-7.1%
West Yorkshire	735	914	1038	124	16.9%

Strand	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Disability	32	54	64
Faith	15	31	54
Race	608	751	846
Sexual Orientation	88	79	65
Transgender	5	14	22

Hate Crimes

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Vol Change	% Change
Bradford	499	483	536	53	10.6%
Calderdale	137	151	152	1	0.7%
Kirklees	373	351	396	45	12.1%
Leeds	767	760	819	59	7.7%
Wakefield	231	224	256	32	13.9%
West Yorkshire	2007	1969	2159	190	9.5%

Strand	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Disability	120	101	92
Faith	39	62	57
Race	1671	1651	1882
Sexual Orientation	168	137	160
Transgender	9	18	18

Discussion

Recognising Hate Crime

Participants who took part in the workshops expressed a general awareness of how to recognise a hate crime, and also its various manifestations, although some expressed a 'lack of knowledge of what constitutes a hate crime'. What was revealing is the overall awareness of the channels of reporting hate crime, both offline and online including: '999', 'True Vision', Stop Hate UK and TELL MAMA.

The overall majority of participants had confidence in reporting a hate crime, whilst some expressed a level of apathy in reporting due to a 'lack of confidence' in challenging a hate crime and also reporting it to the 'police and public sector'.

This in the main was due to several reasons including: 'feeling vulnerable'; 'fear of reprisals'; 'not comfortable with the settings on offer to report hate crimes'; 'institutional racism still being rife'; the way reports [of hate crime] are investigated' and; a lack of confidence in reporting to statutory agencies'. There seemed to be a more intimate and 'friendly' environment provided by community settings that enabled more confidence in reporting.

Role of the MCSF

Participants for this workshop were split into three groups with each group getting the chance to take part in similar discussions. The workshop was designed to garner what the participants expected from the MCSF and how this could inform and shape it moving forward. The facilitator helped discussion take place by asking three main questions: what did they expect from the Forum; what role should the Forum play in the community and; how would it fulfill that function?

Overwhelmingly, the main role that participants suggested for the Muslim Community Safety Forum was to be a representative organisation that helps the victims of anti-Muslim hate crime i.e. one that plays an: 'advocacy role', but genuinely 'listens to the communities' and that it should even be a 'forum for reporting'. In order for this to happen and MCSF to be effective, it was suggested that 'real-time figures' of anti-Muslim hate crime are available.

It was suggested that the MCSF should help protect victims by being a 'safety network giving support to victims'. Moreover, the MCSF should 'provide safety advice' and 'share pertinent information around safety issues', all within the aim of 'raising the quality of life' for victims.

Participants also mentioned the importance of the MCSF being an: 'open' and 'accountable' organisation that is 'representative through consultation', through means of 'open events'. Several participants also suggested that MCSF should 'work alongside other agencies', 'joining forces', 'collaborating' with others and be involved in 'partnership work', particularly 'working with the local authority', but also be willing to 'challenge' where necessary.

Participants also saw the MCSF playing a role in community cohesion, specifically mentioning the importance of 'dialogue', the role of 'interfaith work' and 'learning from others' who have a successful track record in this area of work, ultimately in an attempt to 'bring communities together', through 'things that unite us'.

Other participants saw the role of the MCSF should include undertaking research and surveys to: 'find out issues across the region'; 'working with a university to undertake research across the region'; to 'gather pertinent information so that victims can be protected more'; thereby 'provide education and training' and perhaps a 'database/directory', involving 'mapping agencies across the region.'

Recommendations

Delegates attending the workshops were provided an overview of hate crime reporting arrangements currently on offer across the West Yorkshire districts. The emphasis on reporting anti Islam crime along with other strands of hate crime were discussed, reporting such crimes were of paramount importance in ensuring partners were able to reflect on the trends and ensure appropriate measures are in place to protect vulnerable individuals.

Some delegates expressed their concerns that they had a lack of confidence in reporting to the agencies. They perceived the crime would not be treated with sensitivity and taken seriously and that those that perpetrate the crime would not be dealt with the seriousness it requires. Thus, leaving them in a more vulnerable position and fear of repercussions placed on them and their family members.

It was necessary to evaluate the Third-party Reporting Centre's in relation to the standard of service on offer and to ensure that staff were aware of the process for reporting/recording hate crimes, and what support they would be able to offer to provide reassurance to the victim.

• The police, local authorities and third party reporting centre's should actively raise awareness in the process of reporting anti-Muslim hate crime and what actually happens once an incident has been reported to the police and other third party reporting centres.

• MCSF should raise awareness across Muslim communities on best ways to challenge anti-Muslim hate crime at the time of incident.

• MCSF should play a pivotal role in increasing awareness of the diversity of Muslim communities across West Yorkshire and their varying needs to the police, statutory bodies and charity sector organisations.

• Anti-Muslim hate crime should be widely recorded and regular statistics provided by the police to the MCSF and other key stake holders.

• MCSF should increase its strategic reach across West Yorkshire, whilst simultaneously increasing its representation.

• The five local authorities should commit to discussing and implementing a strategy to tackle Islamophobia at a West Yorkshire level.

• Local authorities leads should be identified for the five West Yorkshire authorities to lead the work on anti-Muslim hate crime reporting and to provide a quarterly update to MCSF.

• A commitment is required from the five local authorities to raise awareness of Islamophobia Awareness Month on a yearly basis.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Why delegates were supporting IAM

Delegates were asked to make a comment on why they were supporting Islamophobia Awareness Month. Some of the comments are as follows:

I support Islamophobia Awareness Month because:

- *I'm against all forms of discrimination*
- *Awareness education is essential to prevent hit crimes - we are all responsible to stop it*
- *I'm thinking human*
- *It's an international worldwide issue we must tackle (it)*
- *If we leave it to the big players they will misrepresent and over-categorise people. Because Muslims living in Britain are as much a part of my community as others*
- *We are all equal regardless of religion, race, culture, age etc*
- *Tackling hate crime is everyone's responsibility*
- *I'm British and hold British values-you do with it*
- *I abhor Islamophobia*
- *We have more in common than you think let's work together for a better community*
- *I'm a Muslim*
- *The sooner we all learn to accept each other the better!*
- *I feel the media misrepresents us*
- *I believe Islamophobia is on the increase and needs to be put to an end*
- *I believe in justice for all*
- *It is important that all people are represented and prejudices are addressed*
- *I believe individuals are entitled to live peacefully without discrimination*
- *It'll help unite our communities*
- *Need to learn from other communities*
- *I believe in everyone is entitled to peace and life*
- *One day I hope that I don't have two*
- *We all deserve respect and support from our neighbours - report all hate crime*
- *It brings communities together*
- *To prevent increase by making awareness*
- *Believe in equality and right to life*
- *Because I hate, hate crime*
- *Islam is a message of peace and never encourage violence except for defence*
- *It's important to understand and support difference*
- *I believe it's so important that we understand and support each other*

Appendix 2: Workshop transcriptions

1. How to identify an Islamophobic incident

This was an intercative workshop where participants discussed the following:
The legal definition of hate crime: hate crime on the streets; at school and; in the workplace.

2. Reporting hate crime

Question 1 - In the group, please discuss where you can report-hate crimes?

Group 1
Schools, Police, One Stop Centres, stop hate, telephone, face-to-face, online social media, employer, charities, child line, religious centres, to vision, right measures, internal and formal reporting, college and educational facilities, hospitals, anywhere. Centres advertised as reporting centres, public transport, third-party reporting centres and to the Union.

Group 2
Police, MIND, CAB, MP, housing office, hate incident reporting centre, teacher, community member, charities (specific groups), TELL MAMA, Stop Hate, Hamara, One Stop Centre sand through social media.

Group 3
Online, places of worship, Police, hate crime reporting centres,One Stop Shop, TELL MAMA, community centres and workplace.

Group 4
Police, either 101 or 999, hate crime centre and TELL MAMA.

Group 5
Police, Stop Hate UK, council premises, online reporting and TELL MAMA

Question 2 - Now that you have discussed where you can report - would you report a hate crime?

Group 1
• Not always confident to challenge at the time of the incident
• The general feeling was that there was a reluctance due to fear of reprisals
• Indviduals felt that those intoxcated by alcohol and/or drugs were not challenged due to their state of wellbeing

Group 2
• The group felt that they would have the confidence in reporting hate crime
• General awareness of hate crime reporting and availability of where to report was discussed at local areas

Group 3
• The group felt that they would have the confidence in reporting hate crime
• If an incident was experienced a screenshot would be taken and provided as evidence
• If an incident was witnessed, indivuduals expressed support for providing a witness statement and would also record the incident
• Include social media incidents/ pages
• Raise the awareness of hate crime reporting to members of the community
• Disucssion on 'freedom of expression' entailed and it was important to be able to have a global understanding of the issues presenting

Group 4
• The group felt that they would have the confidence in reporting hate crime – generally when serious cases where experienced.
• Need to raise more awareness of services on offer from both the Police and public sector.
• Individuals seem to have more confidence in community settings as they provide a friendly environment.

Group 5
• The group outlined they were aware of reporting hate crimes and would in most cases report to the Police, TELL MAMA (if faith related) and Stop Hate UK.
• They felt there was a need to promote cases that had been successfully prosecuted by the CJS. The feeling was that this did not take place too often thereby a lack of confidence transpires as communities feel hesitant and vulnerable when expereincing hate crime.

Question 3 - If not, why would you not report a hate crime?

Group 1
• Feeling vulnerable should the perpetrator be spoken to and further reprisals take place – especially if you are a single parent, elderly or do not have any support around the area you live in.
• Isolated
• Disengaged at corporate and local level and no willingness to accept change
• Not comfortable with the settings on offer to report hate crimes
• Engagement (with) any form of hate crime
• Rural communities have difficulty in accessing local services thereby are disengaged
• It's a British problem – more inclusivity is required

Groups 2 and 3 (No answers)

Group 4
• Lack confidence in reporting to statutory agencies
• Institutional racism still rife – McPherson Report
• Lack of confidence in how such reports are investigated and the outcomes seem to favour the alleged perpetrator as the CJS is not serious about hate crimes
• Lack of knowledge

Group 5
• Lack of confidence in reporting hate crimes to agencies
• Lack of knowledge of what constitutes a hate crime and what service are on offer to supportvicitms or witnesses
• Islamophobia is rife and it is becoming more prominent

3. What do you want from the Muslim Community Safety Forum?

Group 1

A representative organization e.g. reporting hate crime advocacy	[brings] Different communities together	Co-ordination
Safety network (support)	Celebrate culture	Finding things to unite as (commonalities)
Open events	Challenge	Responsible people/accountable
Collaborate more e..g diversity	Face on, not ideaway	
Have dialogy easy walking group	Work with good people	Advertise better
Listen to the communities	Learn more from others	

Group 2

Safer space e.g. intergenerational gap	Clear communication	Self defence e.g. safety advice
Education	Gather information e.g. protection	Totally inclusive
No wider community e.g. interfaith dialogue	Have to bring committees together	
Small steps	Engagement	Resources easy database/directory
Targets easy short/medium/long-term	Free training available	Clear aims and objectives
Accountability e.g. represent/consultation	Partnershop working	Economic issues
Invite people e.g. what needs to be addressed	Good news stories	

Group 3

(Get) views from the community - share information	Find out demographics/issues from the area	University research (annoyance/ relevance) - measurable/achievable
Raise quality of life = aim	Identify advantages/disadvantages	Appeal to everybody
Understanding others' views e.g. neighbour problems	Authority to be trained e.g. new to them	Working with local authority
Reporting	Make a forum for reporting	Join forces
Work alongside agencies	Feedbck to forum e.g. systems in place	Dialogue
Public Awareness	Surveys	Mapping Agencies
Real-time figures	Belongs to the community	Agreements of moving forwards