



Hateful extremism is undermining the social fabric of our country and is having a devastating impact on the lives of individuals, communities and the country as a whole. Having gathered extensive research from across the country over the last 18 months, my report “Challenging Hateful Extremism” makes clear inaction is quite simply not an option. My independent Commission has put forward recommendations for how to do more to tackle it that your party should adopt in Government.

My report the first and most in-depth of its kind, sets out how hateful extremism, which includes the incitement or amplification of hatred, engagement in persistent hatred or making the moral case for violence can lead to harms wider than terrorism. I gathered evidence of social division, violence and harassment, economic and mental harm, as well as censorship and the undermining of the very democracy you want to be elected Prime Minister for.

More needs to be done to counter extremism and 73% of people we polled agree with us. The victims are often targeted because of who they are or what they believe. Individuals from ethnic, racial or religious minorities are targeted, as well as women, LGBT people, and those who hold differing political views. The active attempts to diminish pluralism, normalise hateful narratives, which often include making the moral case for violence, demands an urgent response.

Those on the frontline of countering extremism, whether local authorities or civil society groups, like the attendees at a conference of northern English councils I am speaking at tomorrow, often describe the lack of support they receive in delivering this vital work. They see how extremists of all kinds are organised, active and effective. My report shows that extremists are adept at exploiting local tensions in our towns and cities to cause division; to spread their extremist propaganda as well as actively promote disinformation to recruit supporters and mainstream their views.

Many of our towns and cities are vulnerable to this; and yet as my review has revealed, our country’s response to hateful extremism is weak, insufficient and often ineffective. In the interests of our country, we need to do better.

We must take strategic action to counter the growing erosion of our democracy through strengthening the values, rights and responsibilities that underpin it. My report shows how challenging hateful extremism can be done while protecting democratic debate. My report also makes clear the need to challenge all forms of hateful extremism that manifests in our country. Holding a consistent approach is vital in supporting victims.

Challenging Hateful Extremism sets out recommendations for Government and civil society that will strengthen our response:

- A clear vision and definition for a whole-society effort to counter hateful extremism that is proportionate, rights-based and victim-centred;
- A review of existing legal powers to ensure they are being used effectively; and

- A Home Secretary-led taskforce to prioritise and coordinate efforts across society against the most pressing incidents and issues.

In these polarised times, I have witnessed many people across our country receive frequent abuse, hatred and hostility, it is clear a strategic response is required. There are organisations and individuals across our country who are doing vital work to counter all forms of extremism. Yet too frequently rather than support they receive abuse; this is further hampering counter extremism efforts.

I hope your manifesto and the campaign you run will recognise the impact of hateful extremism on our society, as well as the need to support new and innovative ways to counter it as I have put forward in my report. The current Counter Extremism Strategy expires in April 2020 – your Government needs to prepare its plans for tackling hateful extremism ahead of this, to protect our democratic values and the rights of everyone in this country.

I and my Commission stand ready to help, support and guide you as you develop your plans. My Commission is committed to promoting a peaceful, plural and inclusive Britain; a vision for Britain that hateful extremists are seeking to undermine.

Yours faithfully

Sara Khan
Commissioner for Countering Extremism