

Sara Khan
Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism

31 March 2021

Dear Sara,

As your term as Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism comes to an end, I wanted to pass on my immense gratitude for the work you have undertaken over the past three years. My ministerial team and I also wanted to wish the best of luck in your exciting new role as Independent Advisor on Social Cohesion and Resilience. I know you will bring to that new role the same dedication, knowledge, and vision that you have demonstrated as the Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism. The counter extremism agenda is never easy, but through your hard work and great insight you have helped shape thinking and policy on this essential government priority.

You have always been a trusted advisor and a valued partner in considering the difficult, often sensitive, issues relating to extremism. Your considerations on big issues, such as the future of online regulation, have been insightful and informative. Your knowledge on the harms caused by extremism, particularly to vulnerable communities and those who stand up to extremists, has been extremely valuable. In a year when the UK, and indeed the world, has faced numerous challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I appreciate more than ever the work that the Commission has been able to carry out and the insights that you and your team have provided. Your research on how extremists have used the pandemic to spread damaging conspiracy theories, and exploit vulnerabilities during this time, has made an important contribution to the Government's thinking and response on this issue.

Your keystone report, *Challenging Hateful Extremism*, set out a robust approach to tackling extremism that reflected the wide-ranging public engagement, academic research, and working with communities across England and Wales, that you have undertaken as Lead Commissioner. The report highlighted the scale and shape of extremism and has made a significant contribution to the Government's consideration of how we tackle it. This includes our manifesto commitment to protect practitioners that stand up to extremists – a crucial issue you have continued to be a passionate advocate for. As you assessed in the *Challenging Hateful Extremism* report, we have delivered on the vast majority of commitments set out in the 2015 Counter-Extremism Strategy and, in moving forward, we will seek to build on these achievements and refresh our approach to tackling those who seek to promote

hatred and division and to undermine the values of freedom of speech and tolerance that are the bedrock of our society.

Finally, I wanted to thank you for your recent report, *Operating with Impunity*, on the legal powers to tackle extremism. We will consider very carefully the recommendations that you have made in that report as we move forward.

I am pleased that in your new role you will continue to play a significant part in shaping our response to extremism and that we will continue to work closely on this agenda.

With all good wishes
P
Patel

Rt. Hon. Priti Patel MP