



# End of Year Report **2022/23**

March 2023

Robin Simcox meets Cathrine Thorleifsson,  
Head of the Norwegian Government's  
Commission on Extremism, January 2023



**“Our core values must be robustly defended in the face of extremist ideologies. The Commission for Countering Extremism will help increase the sophistication of our response to extremism by scrutinising the approach taken not only by government but also wider society.”**

Robin Simcox, on being appointed substantive Commissioner for Countering Extremism

July 2022



Robin Simcox meets  
Jane Hutt MS, Welsh  
Minister for Social  
Justice, at the Senedd,  
October 2022

# Commissioner's foreword



Robin Simcox speaking  
at a CCE conference,  
December 2022

The challenges England and Wales face from extremist ideologies were once again laid bare in the last 12 months.

We have seen an immigration centre firebombed, inter-community violence on the streets and attempts to silence the basic right to free expression. The fight against extremism is a relentless one and, in such moments, it can also feel like a hopeless one.

However, these events should also serve to remind us all why counter-extremism matters. They should remind us that striving for a more harmonious society – one free from terrorist violence, sectarianism and the restriction of basic rights – is as worthy a goal as ever. And that pluralism, democracy and liberty not only need to be defended: they need to be championed.

My dedication to doing so is just one reason why I was honoured to be appointed substantive Commissioner for Countering Extremism by the Home Secretary in July 2022. Under my leadership, the Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE) will provide the independent advice and scrutiny required to ensure government's response to extremism is as refined and robust as it can be.

We have set about our task with the urgency required to meet the size of the problem. That means frank discussions with political leadership, key decision makers, and communities across England and Wales about the roots of extremism in all its forms.

It means delivering on the asks made of the CCE in the Independent Review of Prevent concerning training and upskilling government's understanding of extremist ideology.

It means scrutinising the government's response to the Independent Review of Prevent's findings, to ensure its recommendations are implemented in both letter and spirit.

It means commissioning innovative and practical research that will clarify our understanding of a range of extremism-related matters.

It also means bringing together practitioners, academics, experts and policy leads to help ensure a thorough understanding of the current extremism landscape and horizon scanning for any emerging trends.

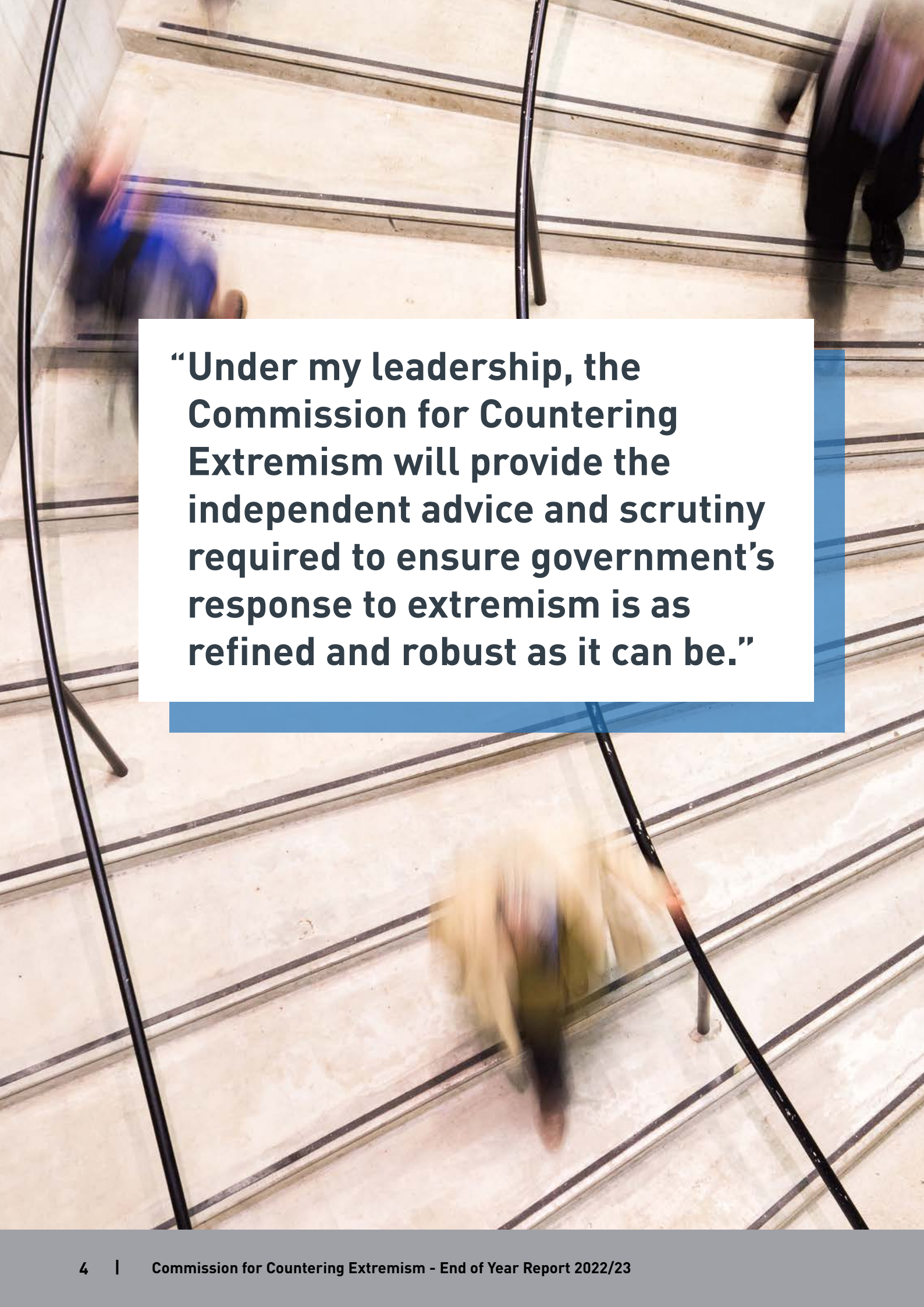
In short, it means helping shape solutions to problems that have blighted our attempts to counter extremism for decades.

We have made a start but there is still much to do. I am keenly aware that business as usual will not lead to the progress I want us to make in the coming years.

Tackling extremism is a generational challenge. The CCE will do all it can to help us meet it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Simcox'.

Robin Simcox  
Commissioner for Countering Extremism



**“Under my leadership, the Commission for Countering Extremism will provide the independent advice and scrutiny required to ensure government’s response to extremism is as refined and robust as it can be.”**

# Activities over the last 12 months

**Robin Simcox was appointed as substantive Commissioner for Countering Extremism in July 2022. This appointment was made via an open, Home Office-led recruitment campaign, following the conclusion of Robin's tenure as Interim Commissioner, which began in March 2021.**

The CCE has ramped up its engagement with government over the last 12 months while also ensuring it speaks to a broad range of external voices. A full list of our engagements between April 2022 and March 2023 can be found at Annex B.

Engagement helps the CCE to develop our knowledge of emerging trends, research and evidence gaps. Through this engagement we can facilitate collaboration between key partners across the sector.

In November 2022, Robin gave evidence to the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee meeting on counter-terrorism and radicalisation in London. The Committee put questions towards Robin on a range of issues, including Prevent, the impact of COVID-19, prisons and the Online Safety Bill.

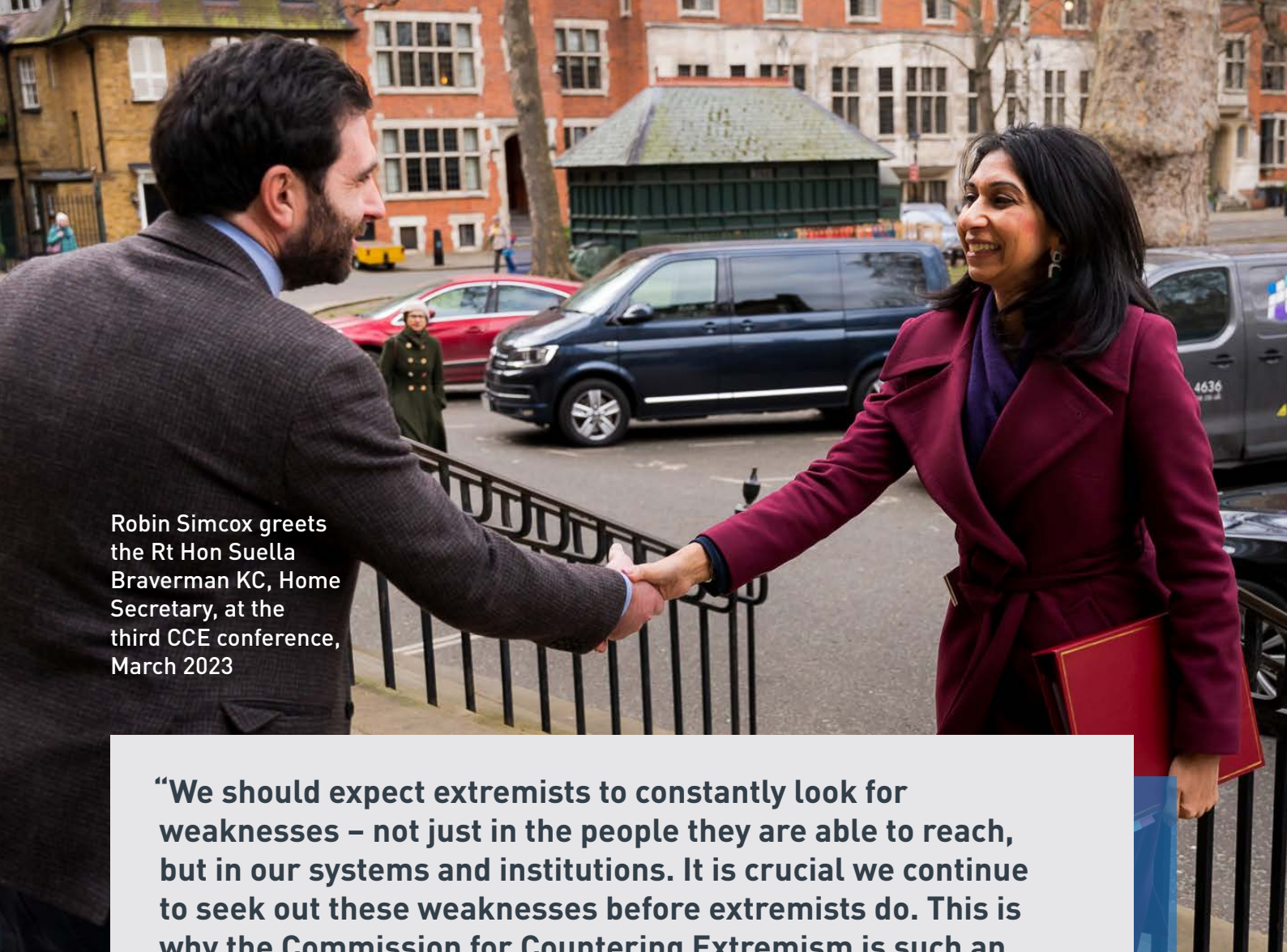
As Commissioner for both England and Wales, Robin was delighted to visit Swansea and Cardiff in October 2022. He held productive conversations with the Welsh Government and leading counter-extremism academics and professionals on the challenges of extremism.

**“Robin Simcox is extremely distinguished in the field of countering extremism and brings considerable experience and expertise to the substantive Commissioner role he is taking up at the CCE.**

**His wealth of knowledge will help to improve our understanding across a range of ideologies and behaviours, tackling extremism which has no place in our society.”**

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, on appointing Robin Simcox as substantive Commissioner for Countering Extremism

July 2022



Robin Simcox greets the Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC, Home Secretary, at the third CCE conference, March 2023

**“We should expect extremists to constantly look for weaknesses – not just in the people they are able to reach, but in our systems and institutions. It is crucial we continue to seek out these weaknesses before extremists do. This is why the Commission for Countering Extremism is such an important resource.”**

Dr Munira Mirza, speaking at a CCE conference

December 2022

The CCE held its inaugural Policy Week in October 2022, with a week-long agenda of virtual panel discussions to introduce government officials to our work and showcase debate and discussion between leading academics and experts. There was a total of just under 1,000 bookings from across government. Departments in attendance included the Home Office, the Cabinet Office, No. 10, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Department for Education.

The CCE remains committed to improving the evidence base around extremism and how it impacts England and Wales. In late 2022, the CCE commissioned a portfolio of academic research products focusing on:

- how blasphemy is viewed and presented by UK Islamists
- how various fringe ideologies promote anti-government messaging online
- incel networks
- the evidence bases around radicalisation and deradicalisation
- the national research environment for the study of extremism in the UK

These research projects will maximise the CCE's ability to advise and scrutinise the government's approach to countering extremism and improve wider society's collective understanding of the evolving extremism landscape. We look forward to sharing the outcome of this work.

In December 2022, the CCE hosted its second conference, bringing together government policy officials, academics and public sector practitioners to consider how best to tackle extremism within our communities. Panels included in-depth conversations on blasphemy and free speech, the distinctions between political activism and extremism, and the personal costs faced by counter-extremism practitioners and public figures. Speeches for the event were delivered by the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and Dr Munira Mirza, Chief Executive of Civic Future and former Director of the No. 10 Policy Unit.

The Independent Review of Prevent was published in February 2023. The Home Secretary has asked Robin and the CCE to support the understanding and implementation of many review recommendations across government. This includes several recommendations around training, ideology and advisory boards. Given the unique position of the CCE to independently advise and scrutinise government, we welcome the opportunity to progress this work into the next business year.

Robin Simcox chairs a Resilience in Unity event at King's College London, February 2023



The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC, Home Secretary, delivers the keynote speech at the third CCE conference, March 2023



**“I applaud you [Robin Simcox] and your team for organising such an important and timely event. I’m always in awe of your encyclopaedic knowledge of the threat we face and how it has evolved. We are privileged to have you and your team offering the government independent, expert advice.**

**It’s essential that we continue to work closely with you and the Commission.”**

The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC, Home Secretary, speaking at a CCE conference

March 2023

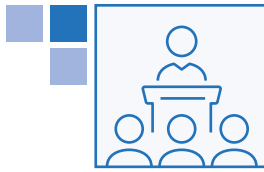
Finally, the CCE hosted its third conference in March 2023, which considered European responses to extremism and brought together officials, practitioners and academics from across the continent. Panels discussed the developments and challenges faced in countering extremism and terrorism across Europe, as well as how best to avoid giving extremists legitimacy through funding or engagement. All panels were moderated by award-winning journalist and author John Ware, with a keynote speech delivered by the Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP, Home Secretary. As we move into the next business year, the CCE remains committed to sharing expertise, scrutiny and insights with partners on significant and emerging themes.

As an arm’s length body of the Home Office, our budget and spending are negotiated with the Home Office. They are subject to Home Office finance policy and HM Treasury rules, including value for public money, and follow systems and processes for HR and procurement. The CCE’s budget allocation and expenditure for 2022/23 is in Annex A.

The CCE also recognises the importance of transparency. While we are not covered by the Freedom of Information Act, to support transparency in our work we respond to appropriate requests that come directly to us or via the Home Office. We received four freedom of information requests over the last 12 months and responded to all of them.



# Highlights from the last 12 months



## APRIL 2022

- Robin meets Holly Lynch MP, Shadow Security Minister, and Sarah Jones MP, Shadow Policing Minister, on the challenges the UK faces in countering extremism.
- Robin conducts a series of external meetings, including with Tell MAMA and Twitter.



## MAY 2022

- Robin meets the office of Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee.



## JUNE 2022

- Robin meets Kemi Badenoch MP, Minister for Local Government, Faith and Communities, to discuss the ongoing work of the CCE to tackle extremism.



## JULY 2022

- Robin meets with Diana Johnson MP, Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee. Topics of conversation include incels and the Online Safety Bill.
- Robin meets with the Youth Justice Board and the Charity Commission.
- Robin is appointed as substantive Commissioner for Countering Extremism by the Home Secretary.



## AUGUST 2022

- Robin meets Paul Scully MP, Minister for Local Government, to discuss the role that government can play in combating extremism.



## SEPTEMBER 2022

- Robin meets with Grant Donaldson SC, Australia's Independent National Security Legislation Monitor, to discuss the shared challenges faced by the UK and Australia from extremism and terrorism.
- Robin meets with the Singaporean International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research.
- Robin delivers a speech to the Counter Extremism Group Fellowship 2022 cohort.



## OCTOBER 2022

- Robin engages with the Welsh Government and leading counter-extremism academics and professionals on the challenge of extremism.
- The CCE hosts its inaugural Policy Week, putting on a week of virtual discussions and presentations for officials across government.



## NOVEMBER 2022

- Robin gives evidence at the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee investigation into counter-terrorism and radicalisation in London.



## DECEMBER 2022

- Robin speaks at the second Vienna Forum in Austria on countering segregation and extremism.
- The CCE hosts its second full-day conference on extremism in our communities.

# 2023



## JANUARY 2023

- Robin holds a peer-to-peer discussion on counter-extremism trends with the Norwegian Government's Commission on Extremism.



## FEBRUARY 2023

- Robin meets with the Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC, Home Secretary, to discuss the work of the CCE and our role in supporting the implementation of the Independent Review of Prevent.



## MARCH 2023

- The CCE hosts its third conference, discussing European responses to terrorism and extremism with a range of international partners.

# Annex A – CCE finances

(2022/23)

The CCE’s budget for financial year 2022/23 is £1,000,000 for staff pay and administration, and £750,000 for programme and research. This is in line with HM Treasury’s guidance on managing public money (the consent for our expenditure was based on HM Treasury’s consent under the guidance in Box 2.6) and agreement from the Home Office.<sup>1</sup>

On staff pay and administration, up to the end of February 2023, the CCE has spent £627,912. The financial end of year forecast for 2022/23 is £756,715. This includes £200,000 underspend accrued due to delays in staff recruitment and returned to Home Office Finance in September 2022.

Expenditure on programme and research includes £13,765 up to the end of February 2023. The financial end of year forecast for 2022/23 is £269,290. This includes £400,000 underspend accrued due to delays in setting up project work and returned to Home Office Finance in October 2022, and a further £80,000 in February 2023.

Robin Simcox claimed £1,286.37 in expenses from April 2022 to the end of February 2023.

<b>Total budget</b>	<b>£1,750,000</b>
<b>Expenditure up to end of February 2023</b>	<b>£641,677</b>
Pay up to end of February 2023	£562,453
Non-pay (includes IT and accommodation, media subscriptions, staff learning and development, and staff travel and subsistence)	£65,459
Programme and research (includes research projects and conferences)	£13,765
Returned underspend	£680,000

1. HM Treasury, 2019: [Managing Public Money](#) (accessed: 9 January 2023)

# Annex B – Commissioner’s engagement

## (April 2022 to March 2023)

To respect data protection requirements, organisation names are listed rather than individuals, except in the case of politicians and public figures.

The Commissioner’s engagement includes one-to-one meetings, workshops, conferences and group discussions.

### Central government, regulators and law enforcement

- Home Office
- Department for Education
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- Ministry of Justice
- No.10
- Counter Terrorism Policing
- National Probation Service
- Youth Justice Board
- Charity Commission
- Ofsted
- IMPRESS

### Parliamentarians

- The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP (as Secretary of State for the Home Department)
- The Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP (as Minister of State for Levelling Up in Communities)
- Paul Scully MP (as Minister of State and Minister of London)
- Jane Hutt MS (as Minister for Social Justice, Wales)
- The Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP (as Home Affairs Select Committee Chair)
- Holly Lynch MP (as Shadow Security Minister)
- Sarah Jones MP (as Shadow Policing Minister)
- Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE KC
- Lord Walney (as Independent Adviser on Political Violence and Disruption)
- Lord Mann (as Independent Adviser to UK Government on Antisemitism)

### Other public sector

- Dame Sara Khan DBE (as Independent Adviser for Social Cohesion and Resilience)
- Jonathan Hall KC (as Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation)
- London Assembly Police and Crime Committee
- Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group
- Cardiff City Council

## Academics, experts and thinktanks

- Anglia Ruskin University
- Cambridge University
- City, University of London
- Coventry University
- King's College London
- Richmond American University London
- Swansea University
- University of Birmingham
- University of Exeter
- Academic Consulting Ltd
- Academic-Practitioner Counter Extremism Network
- Centre for Countering Digital Hate
- Counter Extremism Group
- Counter Extremism Project
- Institute for Strategic Dialogue
- Institute for Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy
- Policy Exchange
- Spectrum Universal
- Meta
- Twitter
- American Enterprise Institute

## Civil society

- Civic Future
- Community Security Trust
- Faith Matters
- Groundswell Project
- Nahamu
- Resilience in Unity Project
- Tell MAMA

## International

- Federal Chancellery Republic of Austria
- French Embassy, London
- International Centre of Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Singapore
- Dr Cathrine Thorleifsson (as Head of the Norwegian Government's Commission on Extremism)
- Grant Donaldson SC (as Australia's Independent National Security Legislation Monitor)
- National Defence College, Sweden
- Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Germany
- George Washington University Program on Extremism
- US National Security Council

