



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Cross Party Group on Challenging  
Racial and Religious Prejudice

Report of the inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland  
by the Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia

# Scotland's Islamophobia - Update 2023

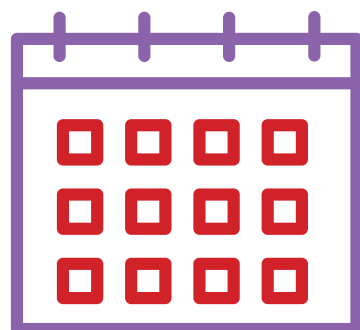
**Education – Media - Gender**

Peter Hopkins



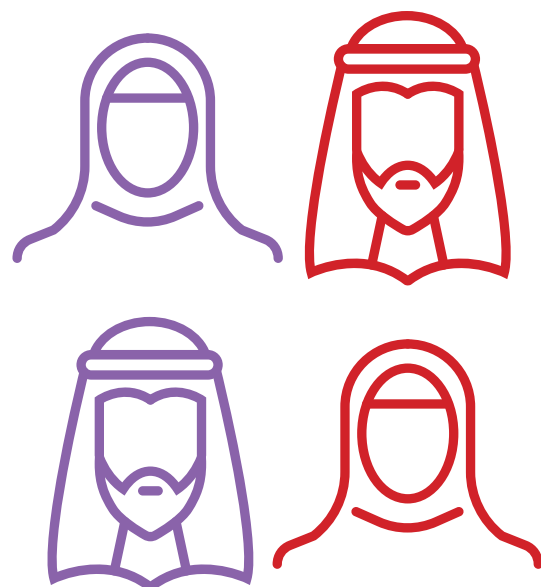
# Scotland's Islamophobia

Key findings from the inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland concluded in 2021 found that:

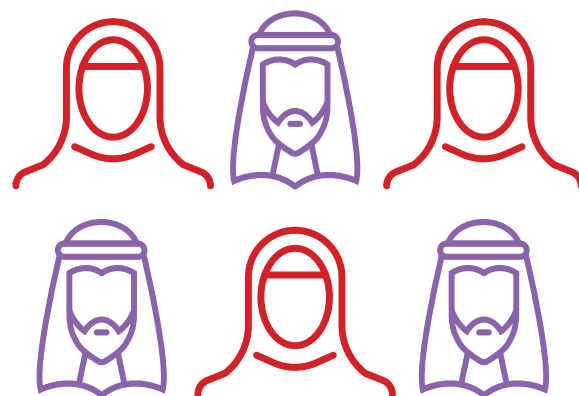


75% of Muslims say that Islamophobia is a **regular** or **everyday** issue in Scottish society.

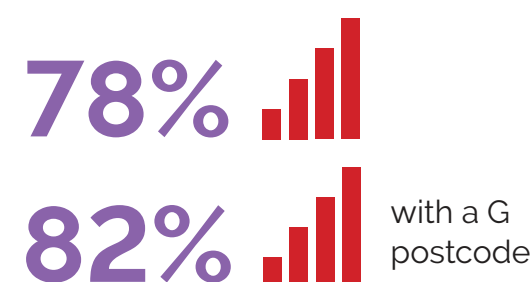
Over 80% of all Muslim respondents to the survey have a **friend or family member** who has experienced Islamophobia.



Muslim women are more likely to encounter Islamophobia than men: 56% of survey responses say that **women are at most risk**, and 58% of Glasgow residents think that **women are at greater risk** of experiencing Islamophobia.



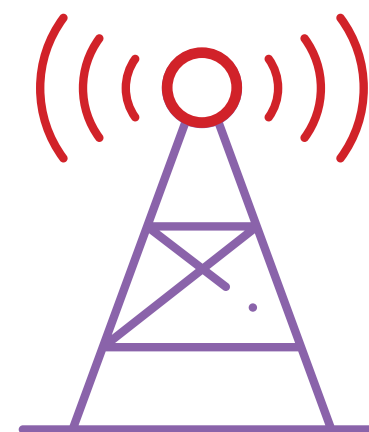
78% say that **Islamophobia is getting worse**, and this rises to 82% of Muslim respondents with a Glasgow postcode.



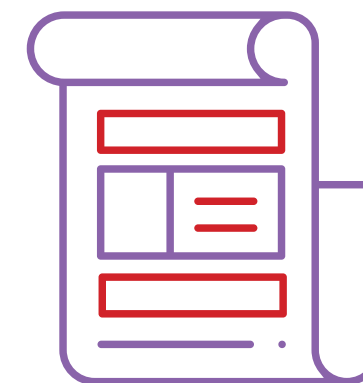
79% of Muslim respondents are **fearful** of experiencing Islamophobia



85% believe that **broadcast media promote Islamophobia**, and the percentage of Muslim respondents selecting this option is 89%

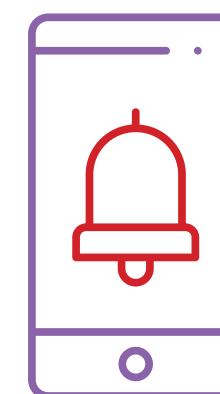


Islamophobia has an **impact on the educational outcomes of Muslims** (and those perceived to be Muslim) in Scotland, according to 74% of survey respondents and 77% of Muslim respondents



89% of survey respondents believe that **print media promote Islamophobia**. Among Muslim respondents, the overall level rises to 93%

84% argue that **social media increase Islamophobia**



# Three key priority area for immediate attention

## Education – Media – Gender

### Islamophobia and education

Recommendation	Action to be taken by
Integrate an understanding of Islamophobia into compulsory components of the Scottish education curricula and all teacher training education.	Scottish Government Education Scotland Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) AREP (Anti-Racist E) Colleges and universities Universities Scotland Scottish Council of Deans for Education SBTE (Strategic Board for Teacher Education)
Provide all teachers and lecturers in Scotland regularly with compulsory training to counter Islamophobia.	Schools, colleges and universities Local education authorities ADES (Association of Directors of Education in Scotland)
Require all educational institutions to create safe spaces for discussion, prayer and reflection.	Schools, colleges and universities Local education authorities
Require schools to establish dress-code policies that are sensitive to the needs of Muslims.	Schools Education Institute for Scotland NASUWT Local education authorities
Encourage colleges and universities to establish links with employers with a good and/or leading record for diversity and championing ethnic diversity and anti-racist initiatives/policies.	Colleges and universities Universities Scotland
Conduct a review of Education Scotland's framework, 'How Good is Our School'.	Education Scotland AREP
The Scottish Government should ensure that the Public Sector Equality Duty is enforced in schools and provide additional training so that this can be better implemented and enforced.	Scottish Government Schools
Encourage COSLA to develop and implement appropriate programmes of race equality in the school workforce.	Local education authorities ADES (Association of Directors of Education in Scotland) AREP (Anti-Racist E) SBTE (Strategic Board for Teacher Education)
Improve the reporting and recording of Islamophobia in schools.	Local education authorities ADES (Association of Directors of Education in Scotland) Police Scotland Third party reporting services AREP
Scrutinise Education Scotland and the Race Equality Action Plan to see where improvements can be made.	Education Scotland

3.

Deadline
December 2023
December 2023 and ongoing
December 2023 and ongoing
December 2023 and ongoing
December 2023 and ongoing
December 2023
December 2023 and ongoing
December 2023 and ongoing
December 2023
December 2023

*“Many of our fellow Scottish citizens face racism and intolerance on a daily basis and are scared to leave their homes. As politicians we have a duty to come together on a cross-party basis to address the recommendations in this report and seek to make Scotland a more tolerant nation. As with so many changes in society, that work starts in our classrooms.”*  
Anas Sarwar, MSP and Scottish Labour Leader

*“The report of the inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland remains a landmark intervention; it provides a clear and detailed exposition of the meaning and nature of Islamophobia and the different ways in which it can manifest, be it within education or the media. It also puts forth pragmatic recommendations, that if acted upon by the Scottish Government, would prove effective in tackling the scourge of Islamophobia across sectors of society and make Scotland a model of cohesion and equality. Islamophobia - has become increasingly pervasive, and its impact on the lived experience of everyday Scottish Muslims is profound. The time to act is now.”*  
Zara Mohammed, Secretary-General, Muslim Council of Britain

*“As a great woman once said: “The struggle for equality is never truly over, you have to win it with every generation.” In these recommendations we see the measure of the challenge before our generation when it comes to the insidious reality of islamophobia in our country.”*  
Alex Cole-Hamilton, MSP, Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats

*“The report was a landmark moment for Muslim communities, as it smashed the illusion of Scottish exceptionalism- the idea that Islamophobia exists but it's not as pervasive here. It also highlighted how prevalent and deep-rooted Islamophobia is; its systemic nature, and how it manifests itself and impacts life choices, particularly for young Muslims and Muslim women. We are now more than two years on from the publication of the report and this year, the publication of a new hate crime strategy too. Our focus must go back to actioning the report recommendations, particularly those which can make an immediate impact. Only then can we truly begin to tackle Islamophobia head on.”*  
Omar Afzal, Scottish Association of Mosques

4.



Islamophobia and the media

Recommendation	Action to be taken by	Deadline
Require all journalists in Scotland to participate in regular and compulsory training on the role that the media play in fostering Islamophobia. This should include the use of visual imagery.	Newspaper editors and journalists	December 2023 and ongoing
Require all editors to consult regularly with the Muslim community in order to promote understanding and prevent misrepresentation.	Newspaper editors and journalists	December 2023 and ongoing
Actively promote careers in journalism to graduates within Scotland's diverse communities.	Schools, colleges, and universities	December 2023 and ongoing

*"Islamophobia, like all forms of racism is an abhorrent occurrence whereby even one report of islamophobia is one too many. The Report of the inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland by the Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia was an incredibly detailed piece of work which shone a spotlight on the experiences of Islamophobia in Scotland today. Although the report was heavily detailed, I found most alarming the finding that nearly 90% of people surveyed believed that both print and social media worsened instances of Islamophobia in society. I wholeheartedly urge those in the media to take on board the report's constructive recommendations, especially those pertaining to requiring all journalists in Scotland to participate in regular and compulsory training on the role that the media play in fostering Islamophobia."*  
Fulton MacGregor MSP

Gendered Islamophobia

Recommendation	Action to be taken by	Deadline
All initiatives about Islamophobia in Scotland must pay specific attention to its gendered nature	All relevant stakeholders working in this field.	With immediate effect
The Scottish Government should fund and support organisations and initiatives that promote social cohesion and integration, particularly for Muslim women.	Scottish Government	December 23 and ongoing

*"The intersectional experience of Muslim women brings into focus how they experience discrimination and disadvantage on a number of fronts. To have joined up thinking around different aspects would make a major difference for them. Key areas such as how Muslims are portrayed in the media, positive role models and myth busting about the Muslim way of life in general, but in particular challenging stereotypes and encouraging critical thinking would help greatly."*  
Farkhanda Chaudhry, Public Sector Officer

*"I welcome the work of the CPG in gathering evidence and producing this report. Many of the recommendations simply call for good practice in inclusion and diversity in settings such as schools and in the media industry. Focusing specifically on gendered islamophobia is important as discrimination against Muslim women takes a specific form and is a specific problem. I hope the report will contribute to serious conversations about how government organisations and civic society can better tackle islamophobia and promote diversity in all our communities."*  
Kaukab Stewart MSP

*"The inquiry into Scotland's Islamophobia was a much needed piece of research which shines a light on how much work there is still to do to tackle this issue, and I'm proud to be a member of the CPG which set this inquiry up in the previous parliament. The inquiry's report made several recommendations to tackle islamophobia in schools in order to stamp out this issue at an early stage. But crucially, it also highlighted the disparity across between how men and women experience islamophobia. Going forward, I hope that these recommendations will be carefully considered across different levels of government, and will help to lead to a fairer environment for Muslims across Scotland."*  
Pam Gosal



# Additional recommendations requiring action

## Islamophobia in Scotland

The Scottish Government should work to address the shortfall in data about Islamophobia in Scotland.

The Scottish Government should fund research and projects that adopt an intersectional approach to Islamophobia.

The Scottish Government and other authorities should pay specific attention to improving the analysis of the intersections of religious and racial discrimination.

The Scottish Government should work towards adopting a formal definition of Islamophobia to promote understanding, to encourage reporting and to indicate their commitment to addressing it.

## Misrecognition and Islamophobia

Include in all training on countering Islamophobia an acknowledgement that people from diverse ethnicities and religious backgrounds can experience Islamophobia, as they may be mistaken for being Muslim.

## Reporting Islamophobia

The Scottish Government should actively support initiatives to recruit more officers from within Scotland's diverse communities, including Muslim officers, into Police Scotland.

Require all local authorities, schools and Police Scotland to ensure that all officers are regularly provided with high-quality training on countering Islamophobia.

The Scottish Government should fund awareness-raising programmes about the safe reporting of Islamophobia.

The Scottish Government should review all legislation relevant to Islamophobia and adjust this where appropriate to ensure the full inclusion of Islamophobia within this.

The Scottish Government should fund restorative justice initiatives to work with offenders.

Promote and encourage the reporting of Islamophobic incidents, with support offered to victims

## Factors Enabling Islamophobia

The Scottish Government, all leaders of political parties and Council leaders should be proactive in taking a public stance against Islamophobia.

The Scottish Government should instigate an independent review into Islamophobia in Scotland. l The Scottish Government should integrate considerations about Islamophobia into the ongoing work of the Race Equality Framework.

The Scottish Government should work to ensure the appointment of Muslims to public boards, advisory groups and other senior positions.

The Scottish Government should provide funding for initiatives, organisations and agencies that challenge Islamophobia and racism.

Given the weight of evidence against 'Prevent', Schedule 7 and related counter-terrorism legislation, the Scottish Government should take steps to encourage the withdrawal of these and related strategies.

## Islamophobia and Employment

Develop a workplace discrimination toolkit to aid in the identification and combatting of Islamophobia in the workplace.

Include representatives from Scotland's diverse communities – where possible – on interview panels in the workplace.

The Scottish Government should pay specific and ongoing attention to issues relating to ethnic and religious health inequalities, employment experiences and poverty.

Require the STUC to develop a comprehensive strategy to challenge Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice in Scottish workplaces.

Promote the creation and enforcement of 'dignity at work' policies that pay specific attention to Islamophobia.

## Islamophobia and health, well-being and housing

Include training to counter Islamophobia and its impact in all education for medical and health professionals.

Include training to counter Islamophobia and its impact in all education provided to mental health professionals and organisations.

NHS training should include material on Islamophobia and its impact on NHS doctors, nurses, staff and patients.

## Politics and participation

The Scottish Government should promote the positive contributions of Muslim politicians and leaders so that these role models are made visible to current and future generations.

All political parties in Scotland, at all levels, should proactively adopt a 'no tolerance' approach to Islamophobia.







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