



# Home Office

## **Preventing Extremism Together: Response to Working Group reports**

The Government today welcomes the reports from the seven 'Preventing Extremism Together' Working Groups, which were brought together over the summer to develop practical proposals for tackling violent extremism.

These reports are the result of intensive work over the summer on the part of 104 working group members – who have provided advice on a voluntary basis, and have committed time to the groups over and above their existing commitments to work and family life.

Their proposals are rooted in the case studies and experiences that were raised with Ministers during visits over the summer, but working group members have brought new experience and expertise to bear – and the result is a set of practical actions that represent the first step in a longer term partnership between government and Muslim communities.

There are clearly themes that cut across all of these actions. Many of the discussions during working group meetings and at the groups' residential weekend focused in particular on the importance of developing a youth-oriented counter-narrative to terrorist justifications of violence, for example. Others looked at how young Muslims and Muslim women in particular could be supported to better engage with civic society.

There are also themes that emerge that will inform the Government's future thinking in this area. Proposals from across the groups focus on strengthening communities, and supporting their members to thrive more generally – suggesting new ideas for Mosques to serve as hubs for community services, for example, or considering how the police and Muslim communities can interact going forward. Others look more technically at how to build capacity in community organisations, recognising that an evidence base of good practice already exists, and looking to share it as widely as possible through beacon centres.

Some of the proposals in the report are aligned with work already underway, being delivered both by the Home Office and by colleagues in other departments. Some of the proposals are new and will be able to inform policies across government to be taken forward in partnership with Muslim communities. We will need to consider how to fund this work from existing sources such as the £5m Capacity Building Fund for Faith Communities,

recognising that we need to both prioritise the proposals and allocate resources fairly across all faith communities.

But many will be taken forward by Muslim communities themselves. Good progress has been made on the three proposals announced by working group conveners on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, for example, and we will continue to work with conveners to get towards a launch of these three proposals later this calendar year / early next.

Putting the others into practice will not be straightforward for the working group members aiming to deliver them, particularly given the diversity of the Muslim communities they have sought to represent. But the report represents real progress, and a unique achievement given the time available. The pace at which working group members have had to work has been rapid, and the diversity of the groups has been both their strength and challenge in terms of developing a consensus.

We are committed to exploiting the momentum that has been created as part of this process in partnership with working group members responsible for implementing these proposals going forward. Although the groups in this form are being disbanded on publication of this report, we will continue to consult them as an informal network and look forward to continuing to work closely with them in support of their future efforts.