

Women and Equalities Committee

Oral evidence: Community cohesion, HC 340

Wednesday 19 March 2025

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[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Sarah Owen (Chair); Alex Brewer; David Burton-Sampson; Kirith Entwistle; Catherine Fookes; Christine Jardine; Samantha Niblett; Rachel Taylor.

Questions 59 - 91

Witnesses

I: Danny Stone, Chief Executive, Antisemitism Policy Trust; Jonny Newton, Director of External Relations, Community Security Trust.

II: Councillor Sara Conway, Member of Safer and Stronger Communities Board, Local Government Association, and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Resident Participation, Barnet London Borough Council; Kelly Fowler, Chief Executive, Belong Network.

Written evidence from witnesses:

Antisemitism Policy Trust [[CCI0012](#)]

Community Security Trust [[CCI0042](#)]

Local Government Association [[CCI0052](#)]

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Danny Stone and Jonny Newton.

Chair: Good afternoon and welcome to the Women and Equalities Committee. Today we are holding our second evidence session on community cohesion and will hear from stakeholders from communities across the UK.

First, we will hear from Danny Stone, chief executive of the Antisemitism Policy Trust, and Jonny Newton, director of external relations at the Community Security Trust. Welcome to you both. I know there are Members here you will have worked with, but we have three panels today so we are trying to keep answers as brief as possible. But if you feel there is something we need to know more details of, please provide



written evidence afterwards if it saves you going into masses of detail.

Q59 David Burton-Sampson: Hi, Danny and Jonny; thanks for coming in. Obviously we are focusing on antisemitism, so maybe we could start with you, Danny. How would you describe the current situation for Jewish people in the UK, and how has this maybe changed over the last few years?

Danny Stone: Can I pass to Jonny to start? CST collects the incidents on antisemitism, so the question is probably better answered by him.

Jonny Newton: Thank you, Danny, and thank you for the question. First and foremost, when thinking about the Jewish community in relation to antisemitism and community cohesion, it is really important to state that the Jewish community is a proud community—a proud British community; a proud Jewish community—and it is extremely well integrated into wider British society. That fits into the mission of CST, which is not only to protect Jewish life but also to protect the Jewish way of life. That is not something that we take for granted because, sadly, we know from sister Jewish communities, in particular across Europe, that it is not uncommon for members of the Jewish community to feel that they have to hide their Jewishness because of antisemitism, which impacts to such a level. That has never really been something that the Jewish community in the UK has had to consider, but in the last 18 months it has been shaken. We have started to see those seeds of change, and that is ostensibly because of the reaction here in the UK to the events of 7 October and the ongoing war in the Middle East.

Effectively, there has been a change in paradigm—like a pre-7 October paradigm and a post-7 October paradigm for the community—and that is for many different reasons. The community is small. There are only 270,000 to 300,000 Jews in the UK, and 15 million globally, of whom half live in Israel, so there is direct contact between many members of the Jewish community and Jewish Israelis. There has been a trauma that has impacted the community as a result of those events and the ongoing regional escalation in the conflict and, of course, there has been a significant rise in antisemitism. That is not uncommon.

CST and the Jewish community are aware that whenever there is an escalation of the conflict, it spikes antisemitic incidents here. What came as a surprise in 2023 was the intensity and the amount of incidents that occurred. In 2023, CST recorded its highest annual total of incidents: around 4,300 incidents from reports that came to us from the Jewish community. You need to take into account the size of the community and the proportionate impact on the community. That is played out in Home Office and police stats, where basically a member of the Jewish community is about 10 to 12 times more likely to be a victim of hatred based on their religious identity than the next ranked community, which is really worrying.



With regards to the incidents, in the last year we have seen a decrease in incident numbers and a levelling off, but not at 6 October 2023 levels. We recorded our second highest annual total last year, at around 3,400 antisemitic incidents. That is a significant number. When we look at how those incidents manifest themselves, we record a few incidents of extreme violence when there is threat to life. Quite a low percentage of incidents are assault, but the majority of incidents are around abusive behaviour—for example, a random verbal attack against a Jewish person on the street. A lot of the incidents that are reported to us occur online, and we bracket those as abusive behaviour. That is by far the largest incident category.

We also drive down into ideological drivers. Something that has been really stark over the last year has been that the Israel-Gaza escalation in the conflict has been a significant driver towards antisemitic incidents. That continued throughout 2024, and we are continuing to see that as a driver where that language, rhetoric and discourse has been used alongside clear antisemitic motivation. And it cuts across all sectors. We have seen it in the school sector, the university sector, in cultural sectors and in the health sectors. When we are thinking about community cohesion, which is obviously the focus of this inquiry, what we have seen is an increased marginalisation and vulnerability of the Jewish community that did not exist before this paradigm shift.

We are seeing the community being more inward focused, a growth of Jewish support groups across sectors and, therefore, less of an opportunity for there to be good community cohesion spaces because of that. To some extent, that has led to a breakdown in some interfaith relationships, which is really sad. There have been some really good, high-level initiatives—in particular Muslim-Jewish—that have been announced in the last few months, and we really hope that they will be good, but there is a need for that to filter down to the grassroots so that communities can start engaging in a more positive way.

I spend a lot of time talking about things that are doom and gloom and negative impacts on the Jewish community. It is important to finish on recognising the strength and the resilience of the Jewish community—that there is an absolute desire and need, from how we see it, that the community wants to continue with that proud and confident British Jewish tradition and not see a tapering off of that strong identity. It is also very important to note that, outside that bubble of the Jewish community and the space that consumes me, quite frankly, the Jewish community is still held in high regard or is thought of positively by wider British society. For a lot of people, it does not impact them. They are more interested in their children, schooling, education and those sorts of things, and they do not think about the sorts of issues that impact the Jewish community.

Q60 David Burton-Sampson: Thank you for that, Jonny. Danny, maybe you can add to this. Are there particular aspects of life where you find there is



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a greater level of antisemitism—for example, in healthcare or employment? In my Southend West and Leigh constituency I have quite a large Jewish population, and I was interested by the fact that there are different sects within the community. Are there any particular sects that are more prone to antisemitism than others?

Danny Stone: Certainly in the past, all-party inquiries that I can think of have looked at the levels of antisemitism. It is the case that where communities are more visible—where you have a community that is outwardly more visibly Jewish—they will be susceptible to attack, because they are more identifiable, and that happens at certain times of the year.

In terms of particular sectors, we at the trust have been doing training across various sectors. The healthcare sector is where it has been the most challenging. We have run training for trusts, royal colleges, medical schools and other elements of the healthcare world. The reports we are getting from individuals—from junior doctors, from staff and from others—is that they are feeling isolated and sometimes bullied. Again, I always try to draw this out. The best response to that from the healthcare sector is, “What are the policies that are in place? How do you support people at work?” And not just in respect of antisemitism but, “What are your uniform policies, and your social media policies?” and so on and so forth.

I want to say a word, if it is appropriate, on the impact on Jewish women, given the focus of this Committee. We do not have Jewish Women’s Aid here. I am not a woman. Of course, I do not have the lived experience of antisemitism as a Jewish woman, but Jewish Women’s Aid and Sam Clifford, its chief executive, are excellent and have been doing this for decades. They have submitted evidence to you, and they have seen that there has been a rise in domestic abuse and sexual violence.

But, so too, as antisemitism has risen, those affected by that violence or abuse have chosen to stay at home with their abusers, because of an anxiety about being out in society. There have been concerns raised about interfaith relationships, the dynamics there, and the impact the conflict has had. When they report, they are finding that the organisations they report to do not have the expertise, the sensitivity or the resource to deal with those complaints, so there is a gap there.

More generally, intersectional abuse of Jewish women is an issue that we at the trust have looked at and reported on. Online, we are seeing fluid ideologies; people have discussed this in relation to the Southport attacks. We have seen the intersection of misogyny and antisemitism on small platforms, with people being primed with antisemitism then moving to larger platforms and speaking openly in those, whether it be X, Meta or others. I am sure we will come on to talk about that. As a result, Jewish women are vacating democratic spaces—and this is the case for others, not just Jewish women, which is a major problem. In my mind, the language that is used, the training that is available, and a specific understanding of the impact of misogynist antisemitism is important.



Q61 David Burton-Sampson: That is really helpful; thank you. What are the significant barriers to tackling antisemitism and achieving better community cohesion?

Jonny Newton: I have spoken about the increased marginalisation and vulnerability that the Jewish community is feeling, which can lead people to silos and, therefore, there are less touchpoints for wider community cohesion engagement. One of the ways that it is manifesting itself is this sense of identity safety. I have spoken about the significant amount of incidents that occur within that abusive behaviour space and how it makes the Jewish community feel. When I think about the sorts of barriers from the perspective of CST, which is responsible for the security of the Jewish community, I think about the threat from antisemitic extremism and antisemitic terrorism that, sadly, always hovers over Jewish communities. I think about what the impact would be if something was to occur that would potentially have a catastrophic impact on the Jewish community and would deepen that sense of existential threat.

Last week, three people in Wales were sentenced for kidnap and assault of a Jewish Israeli person. The sentencing judge very clearly said that she felt that that person was being targeted because of his Jewish heritage. There is going to be a trial later this year of two people, possibly more, for an alleged ISIS-inspired plot—a shooting attack against the Jewish community. A 15-year-old boy from Northumberland has been arrested because of an alleged far-right-inspired plot to attack synagogues. That is always hovering. If something like that was to happen, that would obviously cause significant issues and that big existential threat.

The other thing I would like to draw on is bad-faith actors. There are loads of really great initiatives to deepen and improve community cohesion that do not just come from the Jewish community—they come from many other communities—but there are also bad-faith actors who try to undermine that as a result of their prejudices. Some of those bad-faith actors can curry a lot of support and a lot of traction, and it would be good to see something done around that.

Chair: Before we get on to other questions, I want to flag that we are going to have multiple votes. They are coming a bit earlier than we expected, so the sitting will be suspended until we come back.

Sitting suspended for Divisions in the House.

On resuming—

Chair: Welcome back to the Women and Equalities Committee. We resume now after the votes. We have one more vote, but I think that will be a lot later on. We consolidated this session: we will not be having the second panel and will skip straight to panel 3. Thank you all very much for your patience.

Q62 David Burton-Sampson: We talked about the different sects within the



Jewish community. You said, "The more Jewish you look, the more likely you are to be targeted." Can you give us a bit more of an overview of the different communities? For example, in my community we have Reform, Orthodox and Hasidic communities. Could you give a bit more in-depth understanding of how different communities are impacted?

Jonny Newton: Yes, we can go into some more detail. As Danny mentioned, the more you present as Jewish, the more likely you are to be a target of antisemitism. From what I understand, we see something similar within the Muslim community—for example, Muslim women who present as Muslim women by wearing the hijab are more likely to be targeted. So there is a similarity there.

We have done some interesting work looking at how far people will travel to target the Jewish community, and I gave an example of the person in Northumberland. He is probably quite far from targeting a Jewish community because he is a far distance away from one. Antisemitism can just hit wherever it hits. It does not really depend on how you present with regards to the threat of terrorism. If somebody wanted to undertake a specific action against the Jewish people, they are more likely than not to look at Google and see how far they have to travel to the nearest community building or location.

The broad theme is that, around the abusive behaviour impact of antisemitism, the more you present as visibly Jewish the more likely you are to be at the receiving end of verbal incidents.

Q63 **Chair:** Does the data you collect break it down to that level?

Jonny Newton: Not that I know of.

Chair: Not that you know of. Okay.

Jonny Newton: Not that I know of, but I can check and if it does then I can submit.

Q64 **David Burton-Sampson:** When I met the Hasidic community I was quite shocked that they accept abuse in the street as part of life. They did not see it as hate; they see it as part of life. They said to me, "What do you expect when we walk around dressed like this?" They accept it as normal, and obviously we respect that that is not normal. Is that commonplace?

Jonny Newton: Exactly, yes. That is an issue that we at CST have been trying to focus on for a long time. Across all forms of hate crime, we know that hate crime is under-reported. According to all the data we have seen, only around 20% of hate crimes are reported, and that is likely to be the same for antisemitism. Some reasons are exactly that. Some people shrug their shoulders and they go, "Well, we look like this—we look different. We are used to it. These are the sorts of things that happen to us and it is just a regular part of us being Jewish and visibly Jewish." To which we and you would say that that is not acceptable. We



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would encourage people who experience that to report to the police, to CST, and to other organisations that can provide that support. Importantly, it provides more datasets to understand the data.

Q65 Chair: David has talked about the most significant barriers to tackling antisemitism. How difficult would it be to tackle antisemitism without a defined definition of antisemitism, Danny?

Danny Stone: Incredibly difficult is the answer. We see some complications with it, because there are alternative definitions that people throw up, or they try to adopt two different definitions and try to use them side by side which, essentially, means they take the path of least resistance. The IHRA definition is the globally agreed definition of antisemitism. It has been adopted by Government and Opposition parties. It is used by the judiciary, by the police, footballing authorities, and so on and so forth. To the best of my knowledge, it is not being used to inhibit freedom of expression in respect of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Indeed, that is not what it is there to do, and people who use it properly know that it requires context in a given situation. It tells you what may or may not be antisemitic, not what is or is not, and it is a helpful guide particularly in, say, HR places. To my mind, it is crucial. People should adopt it, and they can always consult us on how to use the IHRA definition.

Q66 Chair: What is the big difference between the two definitions that you say people are working between?

Danny Stone: Well, there are a few that people use. We have a guide on our website that I can send in, which gives the details on how the two definitions are different. To give you one example, one of the other definitions talks about antisemitism being against Jews as Jews. Let us take Hungary and the antisemitism directed at George Soros: it is of course perfectly possible to criticise him, but it was not directed at him as a Jew; it was more a conspiratorial antisemitism that wrapped itself around ideas of him and his Jewish heritage. It is things like that, but there are many more examples.

Q67 Chair: Were either of you working in the space before the definition was agreed?

Danny Stone: Well, it went through some different iterations. I was there at its very earliest stages when a European group, the EUMC, had a working definition. I was there in its earliest stages, and I may have been around—I am really old—just before it, but not much.

Chair: If you could send us that information, that would be really good.

Q68 Catherine Fookes: Sorry about the break earlier, witnesses—it is a trial of being in this place. How well do you think the police balanced the right to protest with the need to protect the Jewish community in the recent process over the conflict between Israel and Hamas?



Jonny Newton: As you say, it is obviously hugely important to balance the right to protest and freedom of speech against the freedom of religious practice and the public's desire to avoid disruption. When we are looking at the policing of demonstrations that have had an impact on community cohesion and on the Jewish community since 7 October, the Jewish communal perception of how those demonstrations were policed is negative. It has been informed by the earlier demonstrations, which the police themselves have stated they did not get it quite right, including the comms around them.

From CST's perspective, policing has certainly improved over the demonstrations. There has been the process of Operation Tarlac, which is the police operation ensuring, to the best of their ability, that the fallout from the conflict does not impact communities here. That has provided a really good touchpoint for the Jewish community to engage with the police on these issues.

When you look at the protests themselves, over the last 18 months there have been hundreds of arrests, from public order offences through to people demonstrating support for proscribed terror organisations, through to incitement to racial and religious hatred. There has certainly been police action there.

You are referring specifically, I think, to the furore over the protest in January about the root of the demonstration. From a Jewish communal perspective, we welcomed how the police were firm with that and the public order conditions that they put into place, because we were very aware of the negative community impact on local Jewish communities when previous demonstrations had occurred in the vicinity of synagogues. We had heard from synagogues about ongoing issues around a decrease in attendance, services being changed or times being changed, and people saying they did not want to come into town to go to synagogue at that time. We felt the police were pretty strong and that pretty reasonable public order conditions were imposed.

With regards to making suggestions—we were advised to get our suggestions in early for this part of the session—I would suggest that there is some thinking about systemising this process because, at the moment, each time there is a demonstration in the vicinity of a synagogue, the police will come and they will talk to the synagogue and community organisations to assess the community impact. It would make more sense if there was a more systematic approach—some mechanism whereby demonstrations did not take place within the immediate vicinity of any place of worship during times of worship—and therefore there would not have to be various hoops for any community to have to jump through.

Q69 **Catherine Fookes:** Danny, what changes would you like to see?

Danny Stone: You just heard from Jonny about the impact of the protests. The Home Affairs Committee heard about it as well. There was



an EDM tabled specifically in relation to the protest that Jonny was talking about in January—EDM 633—which 45 Members of the House signed. It said there has been no impact on synagogues and the Met Police is not being straight with you. I interpreted that as saying that the Jewish community is lying about this.

At one of the protests this weekend, one of the leading figures in the Palestine Solidarity Campaign said to the crowd that the leadership groups in the Jewish community “do not want us to remember the children of Gaza.” To me, that speaks to an idea that Jews are evil and heartless, and it is demonstrably untrue. Rabbi Charley Baginsky, Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, the Chief Rabbi and Claudia Mendoza from the Jewish Leadership Council have all talked to the suffering of Palestinians.

To my mind, a bit of kindness injected into the discourse around the conflict would be important. Specifically, I have not seen direct challenge from the leadership of those groups to stop the antisemitic slogans, symbols and placards that have been occurring. For example, briefings for stewards is something very simple and straightforward that could be done, or calling it out when you see it at a protest. Those are things that are very easy to do and I think would be very welcome.

Q70 Rachel Taylor: Thank you for bearing with us. It is never easy; we do not know how long we are going to end up being when the votes are called. What do you think is the role of social media in enabling antisemitic abuse and spreading antisemitism? Do you think this has evolved over time?

Danny Stone: The answer is yes, it has. We just did a report that showed, for example, that before the Musk takeover of X, we estimated there were approximately two antisemitic tweets per Jew in the UK per year—so half a million per year. We now estimate that number to be four antisemitic tweets per Jew per day—so 1 million per day. That gives you a sense of the growth of the threat.

You were talking about getting our recommendations in early. At the moment, we are in an embrace with the US trying to work out what is happening in respect of social media. We need to protect the defences that we have already established. The Government have signalled there will not be a rollback in terms of online safety, but I think your Committee would do well to be asking about the negotiation terms of any trade agreements to ensure that, for example, we are not forfeiting even the most basic protections in terms of violence against women and girls.

Similarly, no Committee was set up especially to review the implementation of the Online Safety Act. Your Committee could play a very important part in bringing in DSIT and other officials to look specifically at the harms that are online. We need to talk about social media itself, where people are primed on small high-harm platforms and then move on to larger platforms. Again, that features in our report.



The language that is being used about AI is not picking up on the threats. We are not talking enough about the threats of AI. We just did a report that shows that the classifiers that are used in AI commercial systems are not finding antisemitic deepfakes. I have here a picture of a rat as a visibly Orthodox Jewish person. The classifiers are not finding that stuff. I would like to see more safety by design baked into the systems. I am worried about the levels of transparency and the protocols attached to AI in relation to the Government's relationship with AI. Are companies providing researchers to individual MPs? Are those companies being awarded contracts? What do we know about that? There is a gap there.

I do not want to pre-empt your questions but, if I may, because this is so important, on the Act itself, I personally think we could do with new legislation with a high-level duty of care, but at the very least we need a bold regulator. Ofcom is the regulator and, so far, I have seen it act in a very narrow way. Its advice to Peter Kyle about the categorisation of small high-harm platforms, was poor, narrow, and ignored the will of Parliament. It said to me, "We just need to look at the Act. We don't need to really take into account what was said in Parliament." I am sure your Committee would hope that Ofcom is listening to the things you say and the questions you are posing to it, and you will no doubt want to question it.

We also need a Government that is not going to roll back on protections. I noted that Ian Russell talked about losing faith in the Technology Secretary the other day. I would associate myself with those comments. He said on LBC that the Government will try to amend the online safety provisions in a quick fashion. There are things that could be done now, which hopefully this Committee will recommend. For example, the VAWG guidance could be a code of practice. There should be minimum terms of service for platforms, so we do not see a rollback like Meta has announced. There is a whole series of things the Government could do, including on researcher access and minimum standards on terms of service. Over the next few months I hope we will see announcements from the Government that, despite what is happening in the US, they will amend online safety legislation to ensure we have the strongest provisions that we can.

Q71 Rachel Taylor: Do you think the social media companies are doing enough, or even want to do enough, to tackle antisemitism on their platforms?

Jonny Newton: No. I have nothing to add to what Danny has mentioned on the Online Safety Act, but what we have seen over the last 18 months to two years, and increasingly so, from very high-profile mainstream, massive social media platforms, has been a rolling back of community standards—a complete reassessment of content moderation, certainly not to the benefit but to the worst for antisemitism.

Listen, it was never hard to find antisemitism online. It was just about scratching the surface. But it used to be that when we saw violent,



aggressive incitement to antisemitism—the worst type of far-right or antisemitism across all extremist ideologies—you would have to dig a little deeper on the fringe platforms. In recent months and years, those hostile actors—those antisemites—alongside that rhetoric, discourse and incitement, are now moving back or have moved back on to mainstream platforms. It has absolutely gone the other way. Certainly, CST and other organisations, not just within the Jewish community, have been working for many, many years to try to tighten content moderation to some success and then try to hold the social media companies to account.

Q72 Rachel Taylor: Obviously, it is something we have looked at around nonconsensual intimate image abuse online as well, and some platforms are better than others. Which platforms would you say are the biggest culprits for enabling antisemitism?

Jonny Newton: At the moment, what is coming through our antisemitic incident reports is that in any given year about 30% or 35% of the incidents that we report occur online. The caveat is that when people report antisemitism online to us, for us to count it, it has to be reported to us proactively, and either the victim or the offender or both have to be based in the UK. We do not go out trawling for antisemitism, and the vast majority of antisemitic incidents that are reported into us and published on our antisemitic incident reports occur on Twitter, or X.

Danny Stone: Of course, it is important to differentiate that X and Meta are large platforms and the ones that people regularly access. Some small high-harm platforms are designed to cause harm and to bring people to those spaces, and they are full of antisemitism.

Q73 Chair: I know that through your work previously you had great success in getting antisemitic material taken down, and it was quite quick. Since the change in leadership in America, have you noticed any delays or any difference to the speed at which some major platforms like Facebook, and X in particular, are in taking down antisemitic material and conspiracy theories?

Jonny Newton: Quite frankly, we used to have quite a good relationship with Twitter, as it was, but over the last 18 months we have not engaged with X in the same way. It has got to the point where there is just no point in reporting it because very little is done. With regards to the other big social media platforms, I can look into that and come back to you. When you are talking about a change in leadership, do you mean the presidential change?

Chair: Presidential change, yes.

Danny Stone: Essentially, they had in place a no-platform policy. There were people they believed were not conducive to good on their platform. Of course, we need to remember this is not a public space: this is a private company that is looking at and feeding through material in a very deliberate way. If you look at Stephen Yaxley-Lennon and his re-platforming, the offline results of him being allowed back on to X are



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significant. HOPE not hate has done work in this area. With so much of this online hate, the serious concerns are about the way in which it moves offline. We have seen it in respect of the Muslim community, and we have certainly seen it in respect of terrorist attacks on the Jewish community. So yes, some changes in approach have direct impacts to offline effects in our country.

Q74 **Chair:** Would you say X is no longer a safe space?

Danny Stone: I have a take on freedom of expression, which is that if people are crowded out of those spaces, be it minorities, women, whoever it might be, it is no longer a free speech space. This is just a hateful cesspit really.

Q75 **Chair:** In terms of Ofcom, you mentioned consequences and holding platforms and sites to account. Do you think Ofcom has the teeth, the support and the resources that it needs to genuinely hold these large companies, many of which are based abroad, to account?

Danny Stone: Not really. I would like to see it have emergency powers. I would like it to have stronger powers in respect of transparency. There should have been the potential for proper long-term criminal sanctions on social media companies that could have been applied, and Ofcom could do more in that space. It has a committee on misinformation and disinformation that was a kind of fudge in the Online Safety Act. It is not up and running. We do not have any further detail about it. It has a small high-harm platform group that we are not hearing much about, and I would like to know a lot more. There is a great job of work to do. I have said this to Ofcom as well. There is nothing I would not say to it directly.

Q76 **Samantha Niblett:** I come at this from a different angle, but some things you have said today have really made me stretch it out a little. At the minute the Data (Use and Access) Bill is going through. It has just been through the House of Lords; it is coming back to us. There are some real concerns about the lack of clauses on transparency in there. There is this huge, bold ambition for us to be able to do incredible things with AI, and the opportunity in this country is magnificent, but there is some concern around big tech companies being able to take what they like without saying who they are, what they are, or what they are doing with it, which means you also cannot find things that have been scraped.

To Rachel's point around NCII, that becomes easier if everything is done anonymously. I met the Center for Countering Digital Hate, which mentioned the thing you spoke about. A few years ago, we spoke about imposing restrictions on the big tech companies so that they could not roll back on standards. Back then it was, "Of course they wouldn't. Reputationally it would be a disaster." But now, of course, we have seen what has happened and they have absolutely done that.

There is an argument to say that that Bill should also make sure that if you want to make any significant changes like that, you should have to be hauled up in front of a Committee or Ofcom. Was anything around



potential lack of transparency reviewed in that Bill? If you do not know right now, it would be great to hear from you later. Are you aware of anything at all that you have campaigned for that is not in it?

Jonny Newton: I am not familiar with the data access Bill. Around transparency and online issues with the Online Safety Bill, the sorts of things we were talking about were issues around anonymity, understanding that there absolutely is a space for online anonymity but thinking there should be a mechanism whereby if the courts or the police needed to find out details of people who were targeting Jewish people from an anonymous account, they could be de-anonymised within a safe space. From my understanding that was not picked up on.

Danny Stone: I will send through letters that we have sent. The Antisemitism Policy Trust is part of the Online Safety Act Network, an amazing organisation that brings together different groups that have concerns about this space. We have written to the Government with suggestions for amendment but, as yet, have not had a reply, so it may be something that you are able to take up.

Samantha Niblett: I am sure we can follow up, yes.

Danny Stone: Thank you.

Q77 **Christine Jardine:** Before I start, I should probably refer Members to my Register of Interests. How would you assess the work of central Government and local authorities in combating antisemitism and promoting community cohesion in the way you have talked about? What more do they need to do?

Jonny Newton: Broadly, the Jewish community is in a really good space with the Government. There are good laws and, with the current Government and previous Governments, there absolutely is support for tackling antisemitism. There have been various hate crime strategies that have now lapsed. One recommendation would be for the Home Office or MHCLG to start thinking about a hate crime strategy, because they provided really good guidance, recommendations and policy details that we used to help clamp down on not just antisemitism but all forms of hate crime.

When looking at the community cohesion piece, local authorities are really, really important in this space, because they have direct engagement and access to local communities, to schools and to the sorts of spaces where there are issues of hate crime and antisemitism. I am really glad that Councillor Sara Conway from Barnet is going to be on the next panel to talk about some of that.

There are good things that occur that can be rolled out. CST engages a lot with, for example, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, on various outreach programmes that we have. MOPAC has convening powers where it can bring together communities. We have a programme called SAFE, which stands for Security Advice for Everyone, where we



seek to share our niche expert expertise on communal security with other communities. It provides that space to showcase that and to engage with other communities. There is also funding that it provides for other spaces.

With regards to central Government, there is a desire and a need for a community cohesion strategy and a proper think about this. We have outlined some issues and some challenges around community cohesion in particular over the last 18 months. The challenge to the Government is to be able to confidently define fundamental values: what it means to be British, to have a sense of civic duty and to be part of the fabric of our society, which can be defined pretty broadly. Then, underneath that, there needs to be a whole load of mechanisms to start thinking about this stuff, in particular in the education sector, to encourage critical thinking, target misinformation and disinformation, identify good grassroots interfaith programmes and give them the energy and the oxygen to grow to start to counter some of the issues with cohesion we have been seeing.

Danny Stone: There was an all-party parliamentary inquiry into antisemitism that reported in 2015, I think, after the intensification of the Middle East conflict in 2014. It had some recommendations which, again, I can send through, about highlighting good practice, resource for interfaith activity, and intensifying the activity around conflict, because so much of it falls apart. There is a role for local authorities and, as Jonny said, fostering this kind of civic good.

The one thing I did not mention before about Jewish Women's Aid was that it said that after 7 October it had not felt support among fellow organisations in that sector. It felt isolated and unsupported, in contrast to the good feeling and support that there was when they came together after the Southport riots and they kind of held one another up. The role of local communities there is important.

We provide the secretariat to Lord Mann. He does a really good job in terms of bringing people together and trying to join up central Government, local government, football and other areas in respect of antisemitism. But there is also a job for Parliament. Too often we see Members of Parliament and others in cultural spaces engaging in antisemitism, and a lack of challenge. That applies to the press too. We had an antisemitic joke on GB News the other day. We had an antisemitic comment in the House of Lords. It really takes parliamentarians and others to stand up and call this stuff out across the piece.

Q78 **Christine Jardine:** You have talked a lot about the work the Government need to do. What work do you do with other community groups to improve social cohesion? I am particularly thinking about communities that are more likely to be a source of abuse than support. Is there a lot going on there?



Danny Stone: I think Jonny will have more to say on this but, for our part, I do a lot of work with Tell MAMA, which is excellent. It records anti-Muslim attacks. Its director Iman and I have shared panels, training events and training materials. It is superb, and it is a very powerful message when the two of us are on a panel together. But I have also engaged with, for example, the Sikh community over the Online Safety Act. I worked with Preet Gill and others in the House to try to ensure that the Sikh community was able to engage equally in respect of online safety and what we were going to do about it together. We work with different communities at different times on different things.

Jonny Newton: I agree with what Danny mentioned about Tell MAMA. It is a really core and important partner to CST. We have been working with it for 12 years; there is a level of trust that we have built up over that period. In fact, Christine and I have been in meetings together with Iman. That is really important, and a really important relationship.

We take the need and our desire to engage with other minority and faith communities very seriously. I mentioned beforehand the Security Advice for Everybody programme. It has been going for a few years now. If I get this correctly, I think we have had about 16,000 attendees to free SAFE talks and webinars covering over 4,000 places of worship. That is a really important mechanism whereby we recognised that we were custodians of quite a niche expertise around community security, and that there was the need to be able to share that so that other communities can pick and choose what they need or want from that in order to improve their community security.

We have not spoken about the youth sector in schools that much, but it is an important area, because we have seen increased amounts of antisemitism and hate crime within that space. We have an excellent programme called Stand Up! that goes into schools free of charge. It is a collaboration between ourselves, an organisation called Maccabi GB, and Tell MAMA. Muslim and Jewish educators go together to talk about anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish hatred in school settings in a youth-appropriate manner. That is a really important programme in displaying community cohesion and interfaith work, and educating around all forms of hate crime. But it can also be used as an intervention: when there are problems in schools this can be used to come in and engage with people in an appropriate manner about those issues.

Q79 **Christine Jardine:** You have covered most of my next question about the role that schools can maybe play, but I wonder whether there is anything else. You have talked about how going into schools can help, but is there anything you think the schools themselves or education generally can do? What role can they play?

Jonny Newton: A few years ago, we had some interesting conversations with an academy trust in the midlands about embedding antisemitism education in the curriculum. This is important and is a more innovative way of engaging in this issue, especially when I mentioned that the



Jewish community is so small and quite geographically isolated. Many children will go to school across the country and never have anything to do with any Jewish person or engage with Jewish people, just because of where they live. That was a really interesting and innovative idea.

The curriculum is very good at doing holocaust education and that is really important. There is a huge amount of value to that and it should absolutely be encouraged. But looking at the antisemitism within that, we would hope that there is also a focus on contemporary antisemitism and that people who provide the holocaust education in schools are not stopping at the holocaust, and it therefore being something that is consigned to history that does not impact Jewish communities nowadays.

Q80 Christine Jardine: Is this not something Lord Mann looked at specifically in his report?

Danny Stone: Yes, he did in relation to Outwood Grange Academies Trust. There has also just been a commission on countering conspiracies in schools, which had some useful recommendations but found that the more that children are in this online conspiracy space, the less trustful they are of teachers and what have you, and the formal institutions, so there is a real job of work to do in this space.

Q81 Chair: You said that schools tend to do holocaust education very well. Do you think there is a need for talking about religion and cultures in a way that is not always just negative? For example, always talking about the Jewish community in the context of antisemitism or talking about the Muslim community in the context of Islamophobia. Is there a space where schools need to do that a bit more proactively, or perhaps maybe leaders and others need to do that?

Jonny Newton: I have not assessed how schools celebrate diversity and other faiths, but I assume we are coming to the end of the panel, and this is a really good place to end, because it brings us back to what I was saying at the beginning about the confidence of the Jewish community. It should not be framed by vulnerability, and it should not be framed by attacks against the Jewish community. I am really proud of being Jewish. We have just had a wonderful celebration of Purim, which I was talking to David about recently. It is a joyous celebration where people dress up and have lots of fun. There is a lot of joy within Judaism to be celebrated, and it would be very helpful to shift that dial.

Danny Stone: I entirely agree. The last time I appeared in front of a Committee was around Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and I offered them all honey cake. It has just been Purim and we have a special type of biscuit, so I pledge to get every single one of you the special Purim biscuit. There was a Jewish Member of Parliament who dressed up as a pickle.

Chair: Yes, he did dress up as a pickle.



Danny Stone: There is some brilliant stuff. Jews have a depth of love, celebration and fun, and it is so enjoyable to talk about it. This is the heart of it. We have to do this because we want to protect the environment in which we do all that. But, yes, there is a lot of joy to be had and, as I say, my pledge to you is Purim biscuits.

Chair: Thank you very much. That is a good place to bring this panel to a close. Thank you for your patience, and I should put on the record that that Member of Parliament completely rocked the pickle outfit. Thank you very, very much to you both.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Councillor Sara Conway and Kelly Fowler.

Chair: We thank you very much for your patience, Kelly and Sara; it is very much appreciated. I am going to hand over to David.

Q82 **David Burton-Sampson:** Thank you both for coming in today. I am sorry about the delay.

To get straight into it, how would you assess the work of central Government and local authorities in combating antisemitism and promoting community cohesion? What more do you need them to do? Who would like to go first?

Councillor Conway: I am okay to go first. Thank you very much for having us here. I am the LGA's community cohesion champion and I am also a Barnet councillor. It is worth giving the context: Barnet is 14% Jewish and 12% Muslim, so obviously there is a lot of practical experience that we have dealt with, particularly since 7 October.

What I am going to say about antisemitism is relevant to local government as a whole. Councillors and councils are there in a convening, holding role, particularly at moments of crisis, but always in terms of the relationship, similar to you as MPs, but different because of the concentration focus within a ward. Having those voices and that trust to reach out to people is really critical at a key time. That is why, although you need the national level of policy and the right framework—the things that were talked about by CST earlier—you also need that very practical experience locally to be able to sit down properly with your communities and have full and frank conversations.

You have asked about antisemitism, but the same goes for Islamophobia; I was aware of the conversation around the definitions. It has been very important for us locally, as it is for councils across the country, to be able to have those conversations with all our minority communities. The robustness that is needed to be able to convene and hold space in local communities with the support of a central Government framework is vital on all these issues.



Q83 David Burton-Sampson: Absolutely. Kelly, would you like to add anything? In particular, what more do you think needs to be done by central Government?

Kelly Fowler: I am from the Belong Network, a membership organisation that supports cohesion and integration efforts across the UK. Our members are all working on the frontline in and across communities.

Certainly, the challenges in terms of antisemitism and Islamophobia have been felt acutely by many of our members, many of whom are also working with faith communities, in particular with the conflict that has been going on in the Middle East. We know that our members have really felt that, and it has been incredibly challenging at a local level. The reports we have had from our members is that they have almost seen—as we heard from colleagues previously—the collapse of interfaith work at that local level. They are seeing the same faces—those who appear to engage in interfaith dialogue type work—but it is increasingly difficult to actually reach out to communities because of the pain that is being felt and the challenges that have continued.

In terms of national Government, this speaks to the wider issues around cohesion and the call, certainly from a Belong Network perspective, for a national cohesion strategy. I very much echo what Sara says. We feel it is absolutely critical that we get national leadership from central Government. While a lot of social cohesion relies on local actors, local leadership and local civil society organisations, at the same time we need to have national guidance in place to ensure that we are getting strong leadership from the top. I am sure that we will have the opportunity to talk about that further, but it is about the resourcing of that as well. Again, Belong knows, through our members, that where the resources are in place and there are organisations able to work in that cohesion space, it can have a huge impact for not too much investment, so that is something we are calling for very strongly from a Belong perspective.

Q84 David Burton-Sampson: You would have heard us ask this question to the previous panel, but what role do you think schools can play in tackling antisemitism? Looking beyond that, what role do you think other community groups can play in working together to build greater social cohesion?

Kelly Fowler: I know you have heard this from the previous contributors as well, but the role of schools is absolutely critical. I am very conscious that schools are often the frontline, particularly for young people, and we call on them so often to play a role in targeting lots of different social harms.

Particularly in terms of any social cohesion efforts, schools are critical players, whether that be through building young people's abilities to think critically or through initiatives that can help to link children and young people across difference and across faith, and obviously building that into the curriculum as well. There are so many opportunities. We know that



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some members of our network, and organisations such as Protection Approaches, are working to build critical thinking in young people, to equip them with the skills to hold difficult conversations and to be able to engage in a safe way and have difficult dialogues.

Increasingly in this world we are finding that young people are being drawn towards polarising narratives; we have to equip them to handle those with confidence and to learn to disagree agreeably. It is so important that we are building that ability in young people, and it applies to antisemitism alongside lots of other different types of difference as well. So yes, schools are absolutely central to those efforts.

Councillor Conway: I have a couple of other points to make. Obviously, the decision to stop funding Prevent officers has been incredibly difficult, and the timing of that for communities and councils in the past year or so has been really hard. Locally, we made the decision to carry on funding that officer, because it is absolutely vital. Structurally, at the national level, there needs to be a dialogue around this. You are all here to help with that, between the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office, because on the one hand you are looking at a cohesion strategy, but on the other hand where are you going on countering extremism at the local level? The Prevent officers are absolutely vital to that.

Going back to the previous question, it is about collaboration and co-production. You need that at every level: in the communities, with local government, with the mayors, and nationally as well. So it is that whole framework pulling together.

In terms of the actual school space, from all our community listening—following 7 October in particular—what concerned me greatly was that it was not a space to be able to say anything. People were self-censoring themselves, and then you have all those feelings, and where do you go for that? How do you keep schools and school pupils safe when they come out on to the roads and the buses if that is all unable to be discussed properly with conflict resolution skills, in order to agree or disagree agreeably, as Kelly said? That becomes a real issue. We have talked about social media and will do more, but you lose all those skills. The leadership from different communities can do that and go into those school spaces together.

For example, I recently went to see Solutions Not Sides in a local sixth form college. The ability to have an Israeli and a Palestinian in the room, to have those conversations and to equip people to be able to discuss things safely is vital, and faith leaders, women leaders and so on have a real role to play in that.

Last night I was at a mosque for a Jewish and Muslim women's event. That kind of leadership is difficult at the moment, but it is absolutely essential to our communities. Photos of that event will be shared, not in a publicity way but to show leadership and to show that it is possible to be



in together in a space. We all have a duty, particularly in a convening role for local government, to help to hold those spaces, and schools are integral to that.

- Q85 **David Burton-Sampson:** Last night's event that you talked about is the perfect example. What was the engagement level like? Was it well attended, and was the attendance pretty much split between the two communities?

Councillor Conway: In all these spaces it is about the care for our communities. You would expect me to say this, but local government, multi-faith institutions and so on are very well placed to do that. What works best, particularly at a difficult time, is to have a core group of people who know each other well and who can bring people into that space. There is something about the spirit in which this is done that either works for people or does not.

We said prayers together, we held a candle together. We have done that several times. We even did that very early on when there were not really any words to say. It is about being able to hold those spaces. Central Government need to work with local government completely on this. Cohesion is our bread and butter—it is what we do without even thinking about it really—and you learn so much from the communities that we are all honoured to represent.

- Q86 **Samantha Niblett:** I have a quick question. Data suggests that some people feel that multiculturalism is not working. What do you think is driving this feeling?

Kelly Fowler: Times are hard, resources are scarce and there are divisive narratives that are driving people to look for people to blame. That is certainly something that Belong is increasingly picking up in the work it is doing. We are working in nine of the 27 areas that were affected by the violent disorder that took place last summer, and increasingly this idea that multiculturalism is failing in one way or another is a theme that we find coming through when we are having conversations with communities, right the way through to speaking to local leaders. And it is a narrative that is deliberately being driven, particularly through social media.

I have a quick anecdotal example. We were working in a city where there had recently been an increase in Nigerian students moving into accommodation in the local area. They are actually bringing economic benefits into the city, but a narrative has taken hold that they are asylum seekers—immigrants who have come in and are buying up or benefiting from local housing stock and driving up the prices of rent in the private rental sector. That is an anecdotal example of the way in which people are starting to pick on the other, and we are seeing increasing cases like that.



The HOPE not hate report, "Fear and HOPE", which was released earlier this year, was mentioned by previous contributors. It talks about how economic pessimism has been exploited by extreme right-wing influences, with 52% saying that multiculturalism is not working, and that there has been a 61% increase of tensions between different groups. So it really is a challenge, and it is certainly something we are seeing come through in our work.

Q87 Samantha Niblett: You talk about right-wing influencers, but would you say that anti-immigration rhetoric from politicians reflects anti-immigration sentiment, or drives it?

Kelly Fowler: We are certainly hearing that this rhetoric is being driven by extreme right-wing actors. There is no doubt that what politicians are saying, certainly at a local and at a national level—from across the piece, not necessarily just one particular group—is a repeated theme that Belong are identifying in the work we are doing in place. There is no doubt that it fans the flames in terms of the challenges that are playing out at that local level.

Councillor Conway: I would add that these things do not happen in a vacuum. There is an organised operation behind it that is very well resourced and beholden on all the other voices to be there. Again, local government has a key role not only as part of the national dialogue, but also within local areas. It is all about holding the space for awkward conversations. That is really important. Councils say, "We listen," but it is also about having the conversation. Locally, we have done a lot of listening and conversation so that we understand where people's fears are coming from, where these ideas are coming from, and can talk it through.

You also need to look at cohesion in the round. I am aware that we have put in our submission with housing, with the economy, and so on. It cannot just be that you have a cohesion strategy, as welcome as that is, without funding local government properly, and without funding things that are needed properly and enabling some grievances to fall away. It is that collective discussion—really hearing people and what they are saying and being able to respond quite robustly—that really matters. That will vary from area to area, and there are nuances within it. I find it really interesting to hear from different voices in northern and rural areas and so on within the LGA, because you get that perspective and that understanding in the round.

Kelly Fowler: I would add that the single biggest area of training and support that we are being asked for at the Belong Network is around counter-narrative. It is really interesting, because for many years organisations like the ones that are part of our membership network talked about the need for democratic dialogue and wanting to see conflict-resolution approaches, but increasingly people are feeling really stretched with the narratives that are going on and with the extreme pressures that are coming in, if you like, from those political narratives.



In a recent conversation, we were talking about this and about the benefits of putting counter-narrative training and programmes in place, and somebody was saying, "Actually it should be us, and it should be Government, it should be the politicians that are holding that narrative." It is for those in opposition to provide a counter-narrative. That should fall on rocky ground, because we should be trying to drive a narrative that is cohesion focused, and that is about protecting and building resilience in our communities. That is one of the single biggest themes that should underpin our drive to want to see that national cohesion strategy.

Q88 Kirith Entwistle: I want to ask a little more about local authorities, so this is probably one for you, Sara. What steps do you think local authorities need to take to improve community cohesion? What role do you think different stakeholders such as schools, police and so on need to play in promoting community cohesion? I know you touched on this before.

Councillor Conway: Thank you very much for the question. There is so much going on already. I was at a meeting of the relevant board at the LGA yesterday, and there is a need to be sharing and showcasing learning. We have a list in the evidence of what is already there, and with those conversations it is important to have discussions with national Government as well. It needs to be everybody together.

Collaboration and co-production with communities is really important, but the funding and resource has to be there. It is not something you can just wish would happen, and the barriers can be very large. We run restorative justice locally, which has been very helpful between some schools. We were targeted as an area last summer and we had a counter-protest. Communities know their areas best, and good dialogue with local government is really important. They have responded with a quilt they are crafting locally, and they will be doing a digital online version of all the events that are around.

Your last session ended very positively. Picking up on what was said, there is a need to push back on a lot of this and a need to collaborate and work with local communities, and central Government as well, on the very real stories that are happening in a community, so that it is not just all about the negative. If people can see the events, the groups and everything that is happening—the care for place that local government and communities are intrinsic to delivering—that is a really powerful thing. But it needs resourcing.

Kelly Fowler: As I mentioned earlier, Belong is working with local authorities as a partner not only to provide local engagement and act as an impartial third party engaging with communities, but also helping to devise social cohesion strategies at that local authority level. It is very much a theme that we are involved in at the moment.



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What we are increasingly finding when we go into an area is that many years of cuts to local government funding settlements means that things like youth services and social cohesion are seen as the nice-to-haves, so they are the first to be cut. We have been going into areas and we have said, "Okay, let us look at your starting point, what do you have in place?" A social cohesion effort from a local authority might be one officer, if they are lucky, but that individual is responsible for trying to almost mend society and pull the fabric of society together. It is an incredibly difficult task. Support and services have been hollowed out, which is obviously what Sara commented on.

This is where I will make the case for the civil society organisations as well, because it is those organisations that have actually been doing that vital work of social cohesion in communities. It is very much about getting longer-term sustainable funding and commitment to social cohesion from an authority's perspective, but also recognising the opportunities with partners in local areas. So often they can be there and, if treated as a trusted partner in this work, with a little investment and support they can help to deliver really effective results.

Q89 Chair: I want to dig a little deeper in terms of schools and the police. Do you think there is enough being done in that regard, Sara, particularly around religious education and cultural education? We know it is patchy from school to school, but are there areas where we could see improvement? Maybe Kelly would be better to answer that one. Is religious education suitable? Is it adequate? Is it patchy across the country?

Kelly Fowler: Clearly there is differentiation in what is being delivered in terms of religious education and whatever else, but it is also about being really clear on what we are asking schools to do now. We have talked about the proliferation of social media, the rise of online harms—all those things. There is a broader question about whether our schools are fit for purpose in terms of their ability to tackle this and to deal with the scale of the challenge. Schools are not just dealing with what they are doing in the classroom and what is happening during school hours: it is everything else that is going on outside and all those other issues as well.

There is a role for things like religious education, but it is about, as we say, building in the ability to think critically, having a look across the piece in terms of education, and making sure that we are genuinely helping schools to build conflict resolution methods into everything they are doing, because our young people increasingly need them.

Q90 Chair: Sara, I am going to ask a bit about the police. We heard from the previous panel about the level of under-reporting, especially in terms of hate crimes. Do you think there is a lack of understanding from the police around hate crimes? With Islamophobia in particular, does the lack of definition mean we are not actually capturing the levels of Islamophobic hate crime correctly?



Councillor Conway: I will answer the second bit first, if that is okay. This was shocking. I was in a mosque a while ago and someone told me that his wife, who was wearing a hijab, was standing with her two children when a car drove towards them and moved away at the last minute. That went unreported. No hate crime is okay, but that is a level that is deeply concerning.

It probably will not surprise you that in my borough we have brought community groups and the police together to have those conversations. The bit that I think everybody will agree on—there has been a lot of agreement—is about prosecutions. It is important to encourage hate crime reporting, but then it is very much about what happens with the courts and so on.

We must also create an environment where people are heard and listened to. Hate Crime Week happens, but we are having a year-long conversation. That conversation is around community connections, and it has been co-produced and branded with the community. It is focused on the positive, which is not to say, “All that does not happen,” but it should create a different space for those conversations to happen. In terms of our local police force, it is very engaged and very involved and there is a lot of full and frank conversation.

I am pleased you touched on the police, because I felt that was a part of this that was missing. The police are absolutely critical local partners, and the Safer Communities Partnership Boards and so on need sustained and clear funding. Again, there needs to be that framework and that collaboration. It does happen, but there should be consistency, and the way you do that is with proper, sustained funding over several years, and sharing what works.

This is a very long answer, but I will reference as well that we were London’s first pilot in Barnet—there are examples across the country—of Clear, Hold, Build, which is a police operation targeting serious organised crime. The police do the clearing bit, and the holding and building are done together. I personally think there is a lot of learning and good practice from different areas across the country, with local government very much at the heart of it, on building and sustaining collaborative relationships on the ground with the voluntary and community sector and residents. It is all about connection and trust. It takes resource but it takes those relationships very strongly as well.

Q91 **Chair:** Thank you. We have some other questions, but we are sadly running out of time. We will write to you, particularly around the social media questions, if that is okay. If you can provide written answers, that would be really helpful. Kelly, did you have anything to add quickly on the police side of things?

Kelly Fowler: I will quickly refer to a case study from one of the local areas that we have been working in: the city of Sunderland. I want to echo Sara’s point. We recently held a cohesion summit whereby we have



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been doing engagement at a local level—working with different statutory partners and bringing them together—but the policing element is key.

As with many areas that were affected by the violent disorder last summer, the police bore the brunt of that violence. Subsequently they have been doing their own engagement work out on the streets of Sunderland, engaging with residents and so on, and we felt it was absolutely critical to bring them in as part of that wider piece of work. It has been incredibly successful in highlighting how, when those different entities come together—local authorities, the university, health providers and so on—along with the police, we can build cohesion across the piece. It is not just the job of one desk officer: it is a role that everybody needs to take responsibility for. So yes, the role of the police was a really great example in that work.

Chair: Thank you both very much again for your patience with us today. We really appreciate it, and your expertise in this area. That brings this session to a close.