'Working with Hackney's Muslim Communities'

Mapping and Needs Assessment

For Hackney Borough Council

on behalf of

The Community Safety Partnership

Final Report

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The project focuses on a mapping and research exercise with Hackney's Muslim communities and also identifying their key areas of concern. The project was commissioned by Hackney Borough Council and included a needs assessment around vulnerabilities and current activities in relation to the Prevent agenda within which the Government's Prevent programme forms an important part of the overall counter terrorism strategy, known as CONTEST. The national context for this strategy has placed Al Qaida inspired violent extremism as the major and priority international threat and the Prevent strategy nationally has stressed the importance of working with domestic Muslim communities with concerns about radicalisers using distorted interpretations of Islam to justify the use of violence.

Locally in Hackney, the Local Authority and stakeholder partners hosted an initial Muslim community consultation exercise with key community representatives to discuss the implementation of Prevent in the borough. The recommendation was to conduct a Muslim mapping and needs assessment, a thorough consultation on Prevent in order to construct a local policy response that was proportionate and relevant.

1.2 Objectives

The research specification called for the evaluation to contribute to an understanding of how to achieve a set of core objectives. These included:
- An assessment of local needs involving the engagement of Muslim communities, particularly hard to reach groups, including women and young people
- Working in partnership to assess whether Muslim communities in Hackney are satisfied with structures in place to manage the Prevent work
- Providing information to better understand the local challenge which includes:
  - Community perception on level of known violent extremist activities in the area, local threats and risks
  - More knowledge around drivers behind radicalisation and risk factors
  - Areas/locations vulnerable to violent extremist activities
  - Types of communities, groups or individuals most at risk
  - Cross cutting issues around local community cohesion, tensions, racial incidents, including Islamophobia
  - Capacity of community identifying vulnerable people
  - An assessment of community grievances
  - An assessment of community perceptions of the Prevent agenda
  - Overarching objectives for the Prevent programme
- A demographic mapping exercise through the consultation process including:
  - Race, ethnicity, age, migration, denominations, socio-economic status
  - Feedback on council services and access issues
  - Business ownership
- Programme of action based on the research findings

1.3 Methods

ISCRI used an action-research methodology, being the most appropriate for fulfilling the project objectives and outcomes. The terms of reference themselves called for an inclusive participatory research method and this was achieved by the application and suitable adaptation of ISCRI's well-developed and tested community-based research model that the School has used effectively over the last decade.

ISCRI developed an action-research methodology for the evaluation study in Hackney based on five key elements. These were:

- **Desktop Research** – this included review and confirmation of planned local research outcomes, review of key local documentation and a comprehensive literature review. The literature review by ISCRI for the project has served two principal functions: to provide a body of national and international published sources on the issue of violent extremism and associated approaches and reactions to its prevention; to be able to use this information to inform the community based fieldwork and raise local awareness in communities themselves.

- **Stakeholder interviews** - semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals from organisations operating in the following main areas:

  Muslim parenting, community college, police, council community safety, probation, youth offending, community association, council equality and diversity, independent advisory group, muslim forum, offender outreach, faith leader

  The main themes covered were: commentary and interpretation of the national Prevent programme; significance of the problem in Hackney and local awareness of the problem; far right extremism; recommendations for shaping future Prevent activity and preferred emphases; impact of the Coalition Government and Big Society

- **Local Fieldwork** – Community members from five local community organisations were provided with capacity building, training and support from ISCRI to help them undertake this fieldwork on an informed, focused and systematic way, while developing greater confidence and new skills. The community organisations at the centre of this fieldwork were:

  o Bangla Housing Association
  o Aspire to Learn
  o Faith in the Future Ltd
  o Ansarudeen Cultural Association
  o The London Merit Association

  In order to complete the exercise, ISCRI completed additional local fieldwork, with a total of seven separate focus groups taking place; these provided testimony from a total of 85 local community members (45 male and 40 female) including young people. As a result community researchers were able to gather new data from a wide range of local Muslim residents including:

- Women
- Young people
- Parents
- Community leaders
- Muslim faith schools
- Imams and mosque committee members

- **Local Capacity Building and Support** – was provided to participating local community organisations in three main ways. These were in the form of community research workshops; tailored information and awareness raising about preventing violent extremism and cohesion issues; and ongoing guidance and support.

- **Community Mapping** - the opportunity was taken also to gather a set of quantitative data to help inform existing socio-economic and demographic data available to local partners. This mapping data has been gathered to help further understanding of local Muslim communities in Hackney.

  Anonymised data as part of the project was gathered via the five participating community organisations from 421 local respondents on:

  - Age
  - Country of birth
  - Length of Residence in UK
  - First/Second Languages
  - Employment
  - School of Thought
  - Religion

  - Gender
  - Citizenship

  - Country of Origin
  - Education Level
  - Religious Sect
  - Religious Observance

  Data in these categories was collected from participants by self-completion questionnaires, and facilitated by the participating local community organisations in the project.

1.4 Findings – Consultations

In summary the focus groups sessions covered the following areas:
- Headline issues and priority concerns for the community (general) and experience of Council services
- Suggestions for Council and other services
- Understanding of violent extremism
- Understanding of Al Qaida inspired violent extremism
- Extent of the problem in Hackney
- Far-right extremism
- Risk factors to radicalisation and sympathy for the causes of violent extremism
- Vulnerable groups
- Potential solutions for addressing vulnerability and enhancing resilience
- Hackney Prevent work itself, awareness, focus and organisational arrangements

An evaluation of the 7 focus groups is presented thematically below. There was almost 50:50 representation of men and women, with young people's views also represented.

Experience of Council Services
Community participants in the focus groups were encouraged at the outset of the discussions to come forward with any observations and feedback that they felt important to air and bring into the discussion about the nature of their experiences of Council services. These did not necessarily relate directly to the subject of Prevent but were an opportunity for participants to express concerns that were initially foremost in their minds.

It was apparent from the focus groups that the participants had different experiences of Council services, were able to recognise specific facilities (such as the local library, transport and housing service) and in some cases made positive comments about quality (e.g. disability service). However, there were also clear concerns from respondents about a perceived distance and communication gap between the Council and their communities. For some this was expressed in terms of a lack of information, for others it revolved around a lack of cultural understanding or recognition of needs. There were calls for more information about services, concerns about the lack of facilities for young people, Muslim girls and older people and for one group in particular frustration at feeling unknown to the Council and a lack of recognition and action on its needs.

Priority Concerns of Community Members
As part of the needs assessment and aside from their experience of Council services used, focus group participants were invited to come forward with particular issues of concern and need that they would like government or the Council to address. These were not necessarily linked to the Prevent agenda.

Concerns about youth gangs and anti-social behaviour were prominent in people's concerns. This was reinforced by experiences of hate crime and a perception that local services, whether police or local authority, were dealing inadequately with these problems. Such concerns are reinforced later in the analysis by consideration of far-right extremism. Educational facilities were also clearly a priority that was sometimes expressed at length; similarly there were general concerns for young people and the need to ensure better youth provision in the Borough. Different communities sometimes expressed different priorities - for example issues around language difficulties for young Turkish children was highlighted and the need for additional support in this area.

Suggestions for Council and Other Services
Initial discussion in the focus groups also focused on inviting feedback on community members' awareness of where to go for various types of help and also to gather views on how services could be improved and made more accessible.

Respondents were clearly aware of some 'front-line' services that could be approached for assistance (e.g. GPs for health issues) but were sometimes unaware of others: where victims of gang crime and race hate could go, for instance. Few respondents knew who their councillor or MP was and there were mixed views about help available from the mosque. One mosque in Whitechapel was mentioned as being very helpful but some women felt that help from mosques for them was limited by their being male orientated.

Participants were not aware existing local drug and alcohol awareness services, but a need for this was stated. More generally, female respondents called for Council services to

become more approachable so that they could connect better. There was some awareness of Council surgeries but respondents were unclear about what they provided and when they were provided.

The need to engage more effectively with active local community organisations emerged as a clear and consistent message from all the focus groups. Often greater recognition and more effective, active partnership working with the Council was called for in the consultation sessions. This holds clear links for consideration in relation to the newly emerging Coalition agenda around 'Big Society'. A key theme that merged was a sense of frustration, dissatisfaction and disengagement that some communities feel – this can be a very significant risk factor behind alienation that ca be open to exploitation by those with extremist views intent on radicalising.

Far Right Extremism, Race Hate and Islamaphobia
With far-right extremism also being a concern of government, the focus groups were asked opinion specifically on this aspect. Discussion in the consultations clearly flowed easily into this subject area, given participants' concerns (above) about hate crime and Islamophobia.

Concerns exist in the community about race hate and the need for it to be addressed. The comments voiced indicate that there is a linkage between public policy which focuses on the Muslim community(ies) in relation to Prevent and can itself serve to fuel Islamophobic attitudes and far right extremism against Muslim communities which in turn can provide the basis for resentful and radicalised and extremist views.

Community Understanding of the Terrorist Threat
As part of the consultations, focus group members were canvassed for their views on how they understood the terrorist threat, specifically in relation to Al-Qaida inspired violent extremism.

Prior to the consultation events respondents from one focus group were not aware of the Council's Preventing Violent Extremism Agenda and these sessions helped raise greater awareness. No participants at the focus groups referred to the incidence of Al Qaida inspired terrorism being a specific problem locally and their immediate associations of it were to causal factors of foreign policy, some perceptions of conspiracy theories with government and media being implicated and false associations with the Islamic faith and concerns about the focus on the Muslim community being harmful. Whilst not considered a significant threat in Hackney, community members were concerned about vulnerabilities in general, especially for young people. For some young people, they resented the way that they can be labelled by association with the problems of knife and gang crime locally and there was a concern about the associations that are made between the terrorist threat and the Muslim faith can fuel Islamophobia – this in turn can become a risk factor leading radicalisation.

Risk Factors
Significant parts of the consultations were devoted to encouraging participants to consider the nature of factors which could increase the risk for some people to be attracted to getting involved in violent extremism. Discussion of risk factors was closely linked to the discussion of potential solutions and in some cases the obvious remedy lay in countering the risk factors themselves. In that sense 'risk factors' and 'solutions' tend to merge, there is not

always a distinct separation though we have attempted to separate these into two sections here but with clear overlaps existing between the two.

- Multiple factors – no single route
- Lack of true understanding of Islam
- Converts/reverts
- Western military involvement in Middle East and Afghanistan
- Poverty, poor social and housing conditions, unemployment
- Islamophobia, hate crime, Muslim community stylised as 'problematic' – leading to civil disengagement
- The youth in Hackney are vulnerable

Respondents in the focus groups made a number of different suggestions about risk factors, indicating that no single issue or factor predominated but that different factors could be relevant at different times, with different people and in different circumstances. Longstanding structural problems of deprivation were considered important; the impact of foreign policy was a recurrent theme and issues around the problematising of Muslim communities because of their faith. There was a sense that this caused the Muslim community to feel more isolated and disengaged which could be exploited by violent extremist causes and narratives.

Community based Solutions/Recommendations
Gathering local community perspectives on how best local stakeholders, partnerships and local communities themselves could help address these problems was a core purpose within this project's objectives. Participants in the consultation sessions were invited to provide a range of solutions and approaches and the ground they covered in the focus groups was extensive.

Many of the solutions suggested by participants in these consultations fell into three main categories. These were:

- the need to promote education in the Islamic faith itself to strengthen resilience and the positive roles of Imams and mosque committees;
- an all-community approach rather than only isolated interventions with the Muslim community; and
- linked to this accelerated work around community cohesion.

The latter emerged as a prominent suggestion in the focus groups and this is highlighted further in the next section.

The use of existing mosques and facilities generated discussion from focus group members about what they perceived as 'politics in mosques'. Concerns were expressed about access to facilities through mosques. Some wanted to see the democratisation of mosque committees with elections held for membership. Some were aware of exclusion from certain mosques, commenting that:

> *"You are very lucky if you have not come across division, and you have been made to feel welcome in every mosque, because I can tell you it is there."*

Similarly, Muslim respondents expressed positive interest in helping with preventative work, but pointed to the need for capacity building support, sometimes the need to overcome apathy and in some cases explore ways in which to involve male Muslims – the example of a parenting course was cited.

These are in addition to other issues that respondents had raised in other areas of the discussions – these included tackling issues of deprivation; poor social conditions such as housing; and the macro and global issue of foreign policy itself and perceptions of its adverse impact.

As indicated earlier, some respondents had not been aware of Council and partnership work on Prevent prior to the consultations which served to raise their awareness. There was an appetite to learn and contribute more with better links with the Council on these issues to be developed. As one female Muslim respondent commented:

> *"It was good to have Nazia [LB Hackney Prevent Officer] here [at the consultation event]; there needs to be more opportunities like that."*

Need to Address Cohesion
Respondents took the opportunity to raise a range of issues for attention on the Prevent agenda which in essence revolve around activity on community cohesion as a preventative measure. This formed a significant part of the dialogue in focus groups and links closely with concerns summarised earlier about hate crime and Islamophobia.

The flow of the commentary in the various consultations and focus groups consistently pointed to the need for continued work and an emphasis on addressing the various issues bound up in community cohesion. The discussions pointed to the need for the involvement of all local communities and a wide range of stakeholders in this endeavour and beyond a singular focus on Muslim communities.

Although a prominent theme, focus group members also highlighted some obstacles to working on cohesion. One focus group member commented that some parents do not like their children visiting places of worship for other religions and that often these parents are Muslim. Another respondent warned of resistance in some cases from within the Muslim community for joint activities with other religions.

1.5 Stakeholder Themes

Many of the issues raised in the community consultation were also echoed in the discussions with stakeholders. There were clear concerns about the Prevent programme from a national perspective, especially in its earlier stages, and its singular focus on Muslim communities which had alienated those communities and at the same time harmed cohesion, generating anti-Muslim sentiment. Violent extremism was not seen as a significant problem in Hackney itself, but stakeholders were by no means complacent about the risks and vulnerabilities in general, faced especially by younger people.

Both stakeholders and community consultees commented upon how Hackney generally has strong cohesive communities, However,   they also stressed that it was important for cohesion work to be developed and sustained in the future but separately from a Prevent

programme itself. Further work is needed to address concerns about stigma and Islamophobia, to tackle all hate crime and to be alert to far-right wing attitudes which some respondents suggested lay under the surface.

Remedies around vulnerabilities to violent extremism and vulnerabilities of at risk groups in general pointed both to national and local action. The issue of foreign policy was frequently mentioned and its impact on people's views on what they clearly saw as injustices around the world.

The need to continue to address often longstanding and underlying social problems was also apparent. These refer especially to tackling problems in health, poverty, housing, equal opportunities and fairness which different communities experienced in different ways and from different perspectives. Addressing these would help meaningfully to build a true sense of belonging for all communities and a feeling of having a genuine stake in local society.

Respondents spoke about how Prevent funding had been used constructively and well in Hackney but there were clear and understandable anxieties from stakeholders about future roles and resources. However, the strength and value of communities' contributions also stood out; it was striking that the community groups in the project had a clear appetite for more involvement and were already making significant contributions in many different ways. Indeed, some stakeholders commented that communities already play a key role in prevention-type work, are alert to risks and act to avert them.

The emerging 'Big Society' agenda will be very important here and there seem to be evident opportunities for stakeholders, not only to enhance how they communicate their services to communities, but also how they might possibly re-engineer delivery in focused partnership work in the future, given cuts in finance which are being heralded by Government.

1.6 Findings – Demographic Data

Anonymised data as part of the project was gathered via the five participating community organisations on:

- Age
- Born in UK and Length of Residence in UK
- First/Second Languages
- Employment
- School of Thought
- Religion
- Gender
- Citizenship
- Country of Origin
- Education Level
- Religious Observance
- Religious Sect

Data in these categories was collected from 421participants by self-completion questionnaires, facilitated by the participating local community organisations in the project. The headline features from this data were:

- 57% of respondents were male and 42% female;
- The ages of respondents ranged between 16-65+ with 60% being 34 years old and below;
- 81% were British Citizens;

- 47% of respondents had been UK born
- 63% of those who were born outside of the UK had been living in the UK for 11 years or more;
- Turkey and India was the most frequently stated country of origin of those self-completing as British Citizens; other countries of origin included Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Gambia, Iraq, Iran, Cyprus, Portugal, Senegal and Uganda;
- 19% were non-British Citizens with the largest group being Gambian;
- Of all respondents 19% were unemployed; 58% were in full or part-time employment;
- Of all respondents 7% were small business owners and nearly half of these were Turkish;
- 28% of those in employment worked the catering/fast food, retail/sales industries;
- 27% of respondents had university level education;
- The most popular first languages were English, Turkish, Bengali, Gujarati and Wollof:

Of 421 respondents, 395 confirmed their religion as being born to the Muslim faith; 18 completed as coverts to Islam and the remaining were not stated. The overwhelming majority of Muslim respondents (69%) cited 'Sunni' as their religious sect. 4 respondents cited 'Shia'; 9 respondents cited 'Sufi'; and 20 respondents indicated 'just a Muslim, with no sect'.

In terms of religious observance 48% described themselves as being a 'Practising Muslim' and 38% stated that they were Muslim and did their 'best to practice'. 6% stated that they practised 'very little' or were not practicing.

However, 8% of respondents did not complete entries about the degree to which they practised and/or positively stated that refused to disclose this information, the implication being that this was considered intrusive. Reluctance and/or refusal to provide further information about the religious sect, school of thought and identity of mosques attended was also a feature and reflects sensitivities reported and commented upon nationally around the Prevent agenda.

1.7 Literature Review

The development of government policy especially since 2005 around the subject of violent extremism has generated considerable commentary from academic, professional, management consultancy, community and media sources. This has been in addition to long-standing academic (and other) critique around the wider subject of terrorism more generically, historically, domestically and internationally. Since the end of 2009 there have been announcements of adaptations to Government approaches on Prevent, and most recently the House of Commons CLG Select Committee published the report of its Inquiry in to the Preventing Violent Extremism Programme on 30 March 2010. Its findings will no doubt be interpreted for action by Government post the General Election on May 6th 2010. The Inquiry report has picked up many of the themes and issues highlighted in this literature review and appeared in separate written and oral evidence to the Committee.

Consideration of sources cited in this review has allowed for an understanding to be built that goes beyond a definition of 'Prevent projects' that is merely descriptive. It also traces a progression of critique from different commentaries of which many hold consistent themes and messages. It is hoped that these are valuable to stakeholders in their consideration of policy and project interventions in this field.

The views of local residents in Hackney around 'Prevent' and cohesion issues have been echoed in this wider literature and commentary which itself helps to provide an evidence base and rationale for proposed interventions locally. By including the summaries of the wide range of literature available on these subjects we do not seek to endorse each and every proposition that is made by their authors. However, a number of key themes seem to emerge. Some of the most significant appear to be around the following issues:

- Concerns about the single focus on Muslim community(ies)
- Lack of easily definable violent extremist stereotypes
- Community vulnerabilities
- Treating violent extremism as a criminal act rather than aligning it with one section of the community
- The peaceful essence of the Islamic faith and its strength to promote resilience
- The engagement of local community groups
- The value of promoting cohesion as a preventative measure
- The impact of deprivation and discrimination on community vulnerability
- The role of foreign policy and foreign conflict
- Islamophobia and hate crime and the role of the police
- Concerns about surveillance

Clearly this is an evolving area in its own right and is likely to remain prominent as an area of public policy in coming years. This review alongside the new data gathered from local community members in Hackney itself will provide a helpful information base to inform future local interventions.

1.8 Discussion

A number of important principles and pointers have emerged from the data which it is hoped will assist Hackney Borough Council, their partners and communities in the development of initiatives and policy responses linked to the prevention of violent extremism and associated areas. The recommendations are underpinned by a brief discussion of some key aspects that have emerged from the local consultations and research. These features were:

- Local people's understanding of violent extremism
- The extent of the problem locally
- Far right extremism and race hate
- Headline local concerns
- Risk factors

In summary, though community respondents did not cite specific instances or examples of recruitment to Al Qaida inspired violent extremist causes, there were still concerns expressed about the *vulnerability,* especially of young people and particularly about race-hate crime, Islamophobia and experiences of discrimination. The latter were seen as a

repeated theme of concern from the consultations, thought to be made worse by associations of the Islamic faith with violent extremism and the damage this could cause to inter-community relations. There are concerns that the incidence of gang crime and gang culture may be indicative of a problem, acknowledged by stakeholders, of vulnerable and disaffected young people, with confusions about their identity and which can be exploited by extremist narratives and organisations. In this sense work to address anti-social behaviour and potentially extremist behaviour and allegiances can be seen as part of a more generic programme of addressing the various needs of vulnerable individuals.

The main risk factors behind vulnerability to violent extremism were seen as deprivation, discrimination and feelings of alienation, examples of inadequate teaching of the Islamic faith, confusion in identity felt especially by young Muslims and links to existing criminal activity. Concerns about foreign policy were also a clear theme underpinning people's views as a global causal factor. Evidence was provided that pointed to feelings of the Muslim community feeling marginalised and under surveillance with this sense of isolation capable of being exploited by violent extremist causes and narratives. These represented multiple issues – there was no single cause but different factors, operating in different circumstances, with different individuals at different times.

1.9   Recommendations

Commentary	Possible activities	Timescale	Lead Agency and Department
The current focus of Prevent on the Muslim community is at best crude and at worst counter-productive. There is evidence that the single focus on Muslim communities has fuelled both resentment and Islamophobia	**Support strategic changes to Prevent policy:** To lend support to the move to shift the focus of Prevent away from a single (Muslim) community focus and towards a focus on all communities. Also to support the move away from a focus on terrorism as a consequence of religious extremism and towards a focus on terrorism as a serious crime.	On-going – to review in March 2011	Mayor and Cabinet
Linked to the above, there is concern locally that Al Qaida inspired terrorism has become linked with Islamic faith as a causal factor. This needs to be countered.	**Information Strategy:** To ensure a positive portrayal of the Muslim community and counter the link drawn between Islam and terrorism. **Education in Islam:** To review the teaching of Islam and other religions in schools in order to ensure both accuracy of information and the promotion of tolerance and understanding.	On-going – to review in March 2011	Mayor and Cabinet Learning Trust
There is evidence that disillusionment and disengagement are one of the possible factors that can lead to radicalisation. It is important that local initiatives aimed at improving social, cultural and economic conditions are seen to benefit all communities, including Muslims. Specific concerns	**Tackling disenfranchisement and disillusionment:** To raise awareness of council services and address misconceptions held by community. Review current partnership work in connection with the 5 priority targets to ensure that the concerns and priorities of	On-going – to review in March 2011	All Council Departments Team Hackney

raised by the Muslim community in this study included anti-social behaviour, feeling safe, educational attainment and housing.	local Muslim communities are adequately reflected and addressed, specifically in relation to so called 'low level' and nuisance crime. To review the impact of strategic plans for improving neighbourhoods and the assess impact on and for Muslim communities. Specific attention needs to be paid to concerns over the speed of repairs and ghettoisation. To review language support for children and young people whose 1st language is not English.		Hackney Homes Learning Trust
Hackney has a vibrant and diverse community. There is evidence that community organisations and community businesses want to become more involved in civic activities.	**Sustainable communities:** To review procurement policies with a view to encouraging purchase from local businesses and providers wherever possible. To promote an asset based approach to community engagement and capacity building – this means changing the role of the state from one of provider to one of enabler.	On-going – to review in March 2011	Hackney Procurement Services Team Hackney
There is evidence that there has been a shift in hate crimes such that the focus for some of it is no longer on race but on faith. This needs to be explicitly acknowledged in local strategies.	**Tackling Far right extremism and Islamophobia:** To ensure that far right extremism is monitored and that incidents of Islamic hate crime are responded to appropriately.	On-going – to review in March 2011	Team Hackney

2 Introduction

The International School for Communities, Rights and Inclusion (ISCRI) from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) was appointed in 2009 by Hackney Borough Council to undertake a mapping and research exercise with the Borough's Muslim communities, identifying their key areas of concern. This particularly included an assessment around vulnerabilities and current activities in relation to the Prevent agenda.

The mapping, research and assessment exercise used an action-research model to engage Muslim communities in Hackney to explore access to and experience of service provision, community engagement and any grievances that could be exploited by proponents of violent extremist causes and narratives.

The research takes into consideration the following areas:

- An assessment of local needs
- Working partnership
- Understanding the local challenge
- A mapping exercise
- Targeted programme of action

The project is set firmly in the context of Hackney Borough Council and partners' goals to ensure that trust and engagement of local communities continue to be fostered, their needs and grievances are heard and listened to, and to understand better what their vision is for a safer community free from violent extremism. It has been especially important in the research project to engage hard to reach Muslim communities that are isolated from the mainstream.

This type of project required innovative ways of engaging and consulting hard to reach groups, particularly women and young people. This new research called for a proactive approach in involving local people not only as research subjects but also as community based researchers themselves. As a result, an inclusive, participatory research programme included a range of local people, including women and young people, which was able both to capacity build the participants themselves and to generate a body of new evidence from the heart of their communities on relevant issues of concern, linked to a set of specified objectives.

It was especially important to engage locally with the following key groups at the heart of the project:

- Women
- Young people
- Parents
- Community leaders
- Muslim faith schools
- Imams and mosque committee members

3   Objectives

The terms of reference in the research specification call for the evaluation to contribute to an understanding of how to achieve a set of core objectives. These included:

- An assessment of local needs involving the engagement of Muslim communities, particularly hard to reach groups, including women and young people
- Working in partnership to assess whether Muslim communities in Hackney are satisfied with structures in place to manage the Prevent work
- Providing information to better understand the local challenge which includes:
    - Community perception on level of known violent extremist activities in the area, local threats and risks
    - More knowledge around drivers behind radicalisation and risk factors
    - Areas/locations vulnerable to violent extremist activities
    - Types of communities, groups or individuals most at risk
    - Cross cutting issues around local community cohesion, tensions, racial incidents, including Islamophobia
    - Capacity of community identifying vulnerable people
    - An assessment of community grievances
    - An assessment of community perceptions of the Prevent agenda
    - Overarching objectives for the Prevent programme
- A demographic mapping exercise through the consultation process including:
    - Race, ethnicity, age, migration, denominations, socio-economic status
    - Feedback on council services and access issues
    - Business ownership
- Programme of action based on the research findings

Information supporting these objectives has been derived from a major literature review, quantitative data gathered from the consultations and interviews, and via an action-research methodology from local community consultations.

4   Methods

ISCRI used an action-research methodology, being the most appropriate for fulfilling the project objectives and outcomes. The terms of reference themselves called for an inclusive participatory research method and this was achieved by the application and suitable adaptation of ISCRI's well-developed and tested community-based research model that the School has used effectively over the last decade (Fountain et al 2007).

ISCRI's community engagement model has been particularly effective in undertaking research in so-called 'hard to reach' communities and on issues that are especially sensitive or controversial. Our work in the criminal justice field, for example, working with Muslim community members in prisons as part of the Home Office sponsored Drugs Intervention Programme and our work on the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Community Engagement Pathfinder programme bear this out.

The Pathfinder Programme, managed by ISCRI and sponsored by the MPS in London, was especially pertinent to the design of methods for this research project for Hackney. The Programme in London, completed in 2008, examined issues around the prevention of violent extremism and these amply demonstrated the difficulties of conducting research in communities on this subject. Our experience demonstrated an acute awareness of the current tensions, pressures, anxieties and concerns, felt especially by Muslim communities on this issue, the feelings of vulnerability of members of their communities and the need for inclusive and sensitive approaches to engage around this complex and controversial area of public policy.

ISCRI's community engagement model is a participatory, peer-led design method which enables

- More effective access to community members as research respondents
- Valuable and rich qualitative and quantitative data
- The overcoming of traditional obstacles associated with academics 'parachuting in' to communities
- A legacy of community awareness raising, capacity building and relationships with stakeholders for the future

Against this background ISCRI developed an action-research methodology for the evaluation study in Hackney based on three key elements. These were:

- **Desktop Research** – this included review and confirmation of planned local research outcomes, review of key local documentation and a comprehensive literature review. The literature review by ISCRI for the project has served two principal functions.

    o First, it provides a body of national (and international) published sources on the issue of violent extremism and its prevention. This included a summary of national policy and guidance, mapping and good practice guides and a wide range of commentaries on counter-terrorism and reactions to what the UK government has termed 'Prevent'. This provides Hackney and local partners with a valuable information base of very recent perspectives (including academic sources) on Prevent to consider in framing the design and development of Prevent programme interventions.

- o Second, ISCRI was able to use this literature and documentary review to inform community based fieldwork in Hackney and help local community researchers conduct their interviews and consultations from positions of much greater information and to raise awareness in local communities themselves.

- **Local Fieldwork** – this was based on the collection of primary research data by local community members themselves. Community members from five local community organisations were provided with capacity building, training and support from ISCRI to help them undertake this fieldwork in an informed, focused and systematic way while developing greater confidence and new skills. The community researchers were selected through the appointment of five local community organisations which together were able to access views and perspectives from the wider local Muslim communities and target groups. The community organisations at the centre of this fieldwork were:

  - o Bangla Housing Association
  - o Aspire to Learn
  - o Faith in the Future Ltd
  - o Ansarudeen Cultural Association
  - o The London Merit Association

  As a result community researchers were able to gather data from a wide range of local Muslim residents including:

  - Women
  - Young people
  - Parents
  - Community leaders
  - Muslim faith schools
  - Imams and mosque committee members

Data has been gathered in three main forms.

First quantitative data has been collected and analysed from 421 local community members from a structured questionnaire via the participating community organisations on the project to map the gender, age, employment, faith and other key characteristics of the communities.

Second, rich qualitative information on perceptions of Prevent and related issues has been collected from a series of local consultation events, organised and facilitated by the aforementioned local community organisations. In total they organised seven events that were attended by 85 local people. The events were also supported and facilitated with the assistance of ISCRI staff team members. Typically, the consultation events were also used to provide opportunities for local Council officers and other stakeholders to give short talks/presentations to those attending on their Prevent related work, the work that is being delivered and how decisions are being made. Data gathered via these consultations has been transcribed, analysed and presented in this report.

Third, a sample of data from 12 interviews with local stakeholders from organisations such as the police, probation, youth services, the Council and others has also been included.

- **Local Capacity Building and Support** – was provided to participating local community organisations in three main ways. These included:

    o **Community research workshops** – covering skills training on how to organise and run a consultation event, focus groups, the maintaining of written diaries, ethical issues, risk assessment, confidentiality and informed consent.
    o **Information and awareness raising** - also included in the community research workshops, these helped equip the community researchers with relevant subject knowledge so that they were able to conduct their research from positions of greater information. Subjects covered national Prevent policy, local Hackney initiatives and approaches, and critiques and understanding more widely of the preventing violent extremism agenda.
    o **Ongoing support and guidance** – the community researchers from the five local organisations also received regular support sessions from ISCRI support staff assigned to the project to help guide their work, offer advice, help in developing research tools and to help address problems as they arose or were anticipated. These took place face-to-face and electronically via email and telephone as necessary.

5 Findings – Consultation Events

For the final report this section evaluates the qualitative data generated from seven local focus groups, facilitated in local community venues respectively by:

- Bangla Housing Association
- Aspire to Learn
- London Merit Association
- Ansarudeen Cultural Association
- Faith in the Future

These formed part of a wider programme of consultations facilitated by the respective local community organisations alongside ISCRI project staff. Discussions were wide ranging and covered a lot of ground on what is a subject area of some complexity. Discussions were informed by the facilitators using a 'Focus Group Topic Guide' which had been carefully developed with the local community groups, ISCRI project staff and Hackney Borough Council.

The Focus Group Topic Guide helped the focus of discussions, but was used flexibly to encourage participants to expand on particular points and issues of concern and to probe meaning further. The content of the Guide had been developed from information and learning from the preparatory training sessions which included key issues from the literature review and awareness raising about local projects and initiatives.

The semi-structured approach to the focus groups and their natural fluidity meant that, with time constraints also relevant, it was not always possible to address each and every issue highlighted in the Guide or always in depth. Facilitators of the sessions were also mindful of the need to allow participants to raise and expand on issues that were of importance from their own perspectives rather than to insist on following a rigid agenda of discussion.

In summary the focus groups sessions covered the following areas:

- Headline issues - experiences of Council services and priority concerns for the community in general
- Suggestions for the Council and other services about how things could be improved
- Understanding of violent extremism
- Understanding of Al Qaida inspired violent extremism
- Extent of the problem in Hackney
- Far-right extremism
- Risk factors to radicalisation and sympathy for the causes of violent extremism
- Vulnerable groups
- Potential solutions for addressing vulnerability and enhancing resilience
- Hackney Prevent work itself, awareness, focus and organisational arrangements

An evaluation of the seven focus groups is presented thematically below. In total testimony was gathered from a total of 85 local community members with approximately equal numbers of men (45) and women (40). Community participants in the focus groups highlighted particular issues, sometimes representing views and perspectives shared in common between the different community representative community organisations – and

some of which were specific to individual groups. Each of the seven focus group sessions included young people and for logistical and organisational reasons the young people participated alongside adult male and female members from the community groups.

5.1 Experience of Council Services

Community participants in the focus groups were encouraged at the outset of the discussions to come forward with any observations and feedback that they felt important to air and bring into the discussion about the nature of their experiences of Council services. These did not necessarily relate directly to the subject of Prevent but were an opportunity for participants to express concerns that were initially foremost in their minds. Young people's views are also represented in the focus groups

- Discussion sometimes reflected low levels of knowledge about the availability of local services, mixed experiences about the quality of Council services used and use of a limited number of services about which respondents had specific knowledge and direct experience (e.g. of using a Library, housing and homeless services, local transport, council tax services etc.)

Other themes to emerge included:

- Lack of information
- The need for improved cultural understanding and greater recognition of specific needs

These concerns are illustrated by reported comments, such as:

London Merit Association (mixed male/female focus group)
The group commented positively about local libraries and about some attempts by local schools to link up with their community group for the benefit of young people. They also appreciated the way in which the police were willing to come into schools and discuss issues with students.

However, in general the group found it difficult to offer specific comments about other Council services, commenting instead upon general perceptions of a lack of support from the Council. This is reiterated in the next section on 'Priority Concerns'.

"We need more information about Council services – something like a brochure that will list all the services."

Bangla Housing Association (female focus group)
The female focus group highlighted problems of inadequate communication between the Council and their community. The main issues revolved around inadequate publicity, lack of facilities and their perception of cultural barriers which impeded access. Though use of the libraries, waste collection and housing benefit advice were mentioned, facilities were described as being 'rare' and people didn't know where to go for help. They expressed concern about the lack of activities available for younger and older Muslim girls. More facilities for older people were also needed.
"...the Council doesn't understand our culture."

"You have a problem if you can't speak or understand English – they don't cater for your needs."

"The Council signposts you and you keep going round and round in circles – you don't get the information you need – you end up either using a voluntary group or just do your own research."

"Council is not really for us, is it?"

"Generally we need to be housed, so we use that service."

"Facilities throughout the Borough are not consistent."

"The Council needs to provide more affordable activities for young people, especially in the holidays – the ones out there were too expensive for us to use."

Bangla Housing Association (male focus group)
Such concerns were also echoed in the male focus group. This included a low awareness of Council projects, of local consultation structures such as ward panels and of the identity of local elected councillors.

"There is no information about Council services."

"There is a big gap between us and the local government...I feel a stranger, even though I live here."

Aspire to Learn (mixed male/female focus group)
"They [Council services] are not all the same. Sometimes they are good; others they are not."

"Housing is an issue. I have asked for a bigger place for my kids and me for four years. They tell me I need to bid, but that does not get me anywhere."

"I would like them to act more quickly, not just be a number on a list."

Ansarudeen Cultural Association (mixed male/female focus group)
The emphasis during the session was on their feelings of marginalisation and the inadequacy of services to meet their needs as local residents and citizens. Though having been in London (Hackney) as communities since the 1950s, they felt their community remained largely unknown to Council services and when the Council did make contact with them, nothing seemed to happen.

"I don't think the council is aware of the number of Senegal / Gambian people in the area - there are at least 500 households."

Housing was stated as a major concern for their community with frustration at long waiting lists and a lack of suitable accommodation:

"We have been in the queue for ages and we see other people get housing and we are still waiting – they are jumping the queue – it's favouritism – it's not fair."

"Overcrowding is a big problem - people are becoming homeless – and they're getting angry!"

"They (housing association) don't repair our homes – we want to go back to Hackney council!"

"I believe Hackney Council is running away from housing".

Faith in the Future (mixed male/female focus group)
There was frustration expressed in the group at the inaccessibility of the academy developments in the Borough and Muslims found it difficult to communicate with them effectively:

"They are out of the area...we have problems using their jargon – this in itself is a barrier to inclusion."

Other issues raised by the group in relation to the Council are found in the related section below about 'priority community concerns'.

Commentary
It was apparent from the focus groups that the participants had different experiences of Council services, were able to recognise specific facilities (such as the local library, transport and housing service) and in some cases made positive comments about quality (e.g. disability service). However, there were also clear concerns from respondents about a perceived distance and communication gap between the Council and their communities. For some this was expressed in terms of a lack of information, for others it revolved around a lack of cultural understanding or recognition of needs. In many instances the community expressed frustrations at what it perceived to be inadequate or poor services – in some instances these may have been fuelled by misconceptions and/or lack of accurate information or knowledge.

5.2 Priority Concerns of Community Members

As part of the needs assessment and aside from their experience of Council services used, focus group participants were invited to come forward with particular issues of concern and need that they would like government or the Council to address. These were not necessarily linked to the Prevent agenda.

Priority concerns included:

- Gangs and community safety
- Antisocial behaviour
- Deployment of community officers on estates
- Housing allocation and waiting lists
- Domestic violence
- Hate crime and Islamophobia
- Low faith in the police – e.g. hate graffiti post 7/7 bombings
- Stop and search
- Education
- Dedicated community facilities – e.g. mosque, youth facilities

These concerns are illustrated by reported comments, such as:

London Merit Association (mixed male/female focus group)
The educational needs of young Turkish children emerged as a clear and priority concern with a need for both general and Islamic education.

"Islamic education is very important – if people don't understand Islam properly...they can misinterpret and get on the wrong track."

Problems and vulnerabilities of young Turkish children were compounded by two factors that were highlighted in the session: language problems and difficult social/family circumstances faced by some.

Schools were felt not to be always bridging the gap effectively for Turkish young people with a weak command of English:

"Some children were arriving from Turkey as old as 10 and were struggling in schools – the schools can't cope either."
"The schools are not catering for the language needs of Turkish children – the children do go to school but are getting poor grades."

Problems for young people were compounded by the lack of a consistent presence and influence of fathers which was stressed as a particular issue for the community. This seemed a result of high divorce rates which were mentioned together with fathers' need to devote much of their time to working:

"Fathers are busy with work, working long hours...."
"The role of the father is very important – he is the head of the family."

The group also expressed concern about the problems faced by young people, particularly in relation to gang activities. There was concern about the need not to stereotype young people and to recognise their needs in terms of suitable role models, much better youth facilities and for more support for families. There were also calls to build better relationships between the police and the local Turkish community.

Aspire to Learn (mixed male/female focus group)
"I rang the neighbourhood officer a few times about a gang that was hanging around near my house and abusing me, but they said if they have not got a knife they cannot do anything. It is really scary, as I have to walk past them with my daughter."

"I contacted them about gangs but they did not do anything to help. They were throwing rocks at me and everything."

"We are really scared around the time when our kids are coming home from school."
"It is not that they [neighbourhood and police officers] cannot do anything; they are unwilling to do anything about it. They refuse to report crimes as hate crimes so they

do not go on the statistics – they do not want to be seen not to be acting on hate crimes, so they record them as something else."

"You can tell when the police are refusing to acknowledge as a hate crime, as attempts to gather evidence are not made. It is like we are just speaking to ourselves. It is not a matter of not being able to do more; they don't want to do more."

"I was a victim of horrific domestic violence and I tried to complain but nothing was done."

Bangla Housing Association (female focus group)
The group expressed general concern about youth nuisance, anti-social behaviour and in not feeling safe where they lived.

"We feel restricted and frightened to go out alone after 7.00pm – we're worried about our safety."

"My nephew was attacked by a gang of youths."

"We want more stuff for the youth, to get them off the streets so we feel safe."

"The problem is across Hackney – there's nowhere safe and there are no services."

"Hackney's Muslim community suffered after the 7/7 bombings. The community felt vulnerable and isolated. Graffiti sprayed on houses 'terrorists go back home.'"

"Unhappy with the way the police dealt with this – little or no faith in the police."

Ansarudeen Cultural Association (mixed male/female focus group)
The group's chief concerns revolved around concerns for community safety, lack of diversionary activities and facilities for young people, the lack of a dedicated place of worship and concerns about cohesion. These were also compounded by a sense of the community's isolation and marginalisation.

Gang related crime was a general concern for them as parents with a tendency to keep their young children in the house:

"There is street violence – the gangs are mixed – it's territorial."

"We are afraid to take our children to the park – there are dogs there and the owners don't have them on a leash."

"Older people are worried about gangs – they have nowhere to go."

"There are no diversionary activities for children - all the places are closed – they have nowhere to get together – they end up on the streets."

The group also pointed to the unsuitability in practice of worshipping in existing mosques, feeling that these did not adequately cater for their (West African) cultural needs. Their community felt 'pushed from pillar to post' in their dealings with the Council to find a suitable and affordable building for prayer.

"We have tried sending our children to the other Mosques but our culture is different and there are some things that we differ on – so we need our own space."

Faith in the Future (mixed male/female focus group)
Education was an issue of high priority for the group. Concerns were expressed about the availability and quality of education locally and a key issue:

"...is where our identity is accepted and respected."

There were clear requests in relation to the importance of history teaching, particularly in relation to culture and the positive role and contributions of Muslims:

"Education is the main issue – a curriculum that recognises and accepts our (Muslim) history and identity- its about the quality of education."

"Education is important to us – we are not susceptible to Al Qaeda ideology."

"The schools in Hackney have very poor educational standards."

Other priorities cited were:

Diversionary and leisure activities for young people:

"Services were reduced in the 1980s – you are seeing the effect of that now..."

Employment discrimination was a source of concern and respondents noted that the Council employed very few Muslim officers and called for equal opportunities to be properly applied for recruitment and progression in Council posts:

"There is a large Turkish / Kurdish community but there are very few people from our community are working in the Council."

Commentary
Concerns about youth gangs and anti-social behaviour were prominent in people's concerns. This was reinforced by experiences of hate crime and a perception that local services, whether police or local authority, were dealing inadequately with these problems. Such concerns are reinforced later in the analysis by consideration of far-right extremism. Educational facilities were also clearly a priority that was sometimes expressed at length; similarly there were general concerns for young people and the need to ensure better youth provision in the Borough

5.3 Suggestions for Council and Other Services

Initial discussion in the focus groups also focused on inviting feedback on community members' awareness of where to go for various types of help and also to gather views on how services could be improved and made more accessible.

Key suggestions included:

- More outreach work with men – hard to engage with to get them involved in helping
- Male orientated mosques and the need to accommodate female perspectives
- More approachable council service for women
- More information about times and locations of Council surgeries
- Information needed on drug and alcohol awareness services
- More active partnerships with community organisations who have valuable skills and trusted access to their communities
- Greater recognition of community needs

London Merit Association (mixed male/female focus group)
"We need to be taken more seriously – we need a prominent role in decision making structures in the Council."

"We have done this by ourselves [providing supplementary education] – without any support from the Council."

"In future the Council will have less money and should work with us to meet the needs of the Turkish community."

Focus group members stressed the valuable work that is and can be done by community groups such as theirs in filling gaps in statutory provision, in reaching fathers and providing positive guidance to young people. It was suggested that the Council look at ways of working more actively through community organisations and supporting their efforts.

Bangla Housing Association (female focus group)
The women in the focus group were unaware of local consultation structures such as ward/neighbourhood panels and expressed real doubt about the effectiveness of public forums and meetings as vehicles for the community to raise issues and get them addressed. Such concerns were linked also to under-reporting of incidents to the police, police performance and police community relations.

"It's just lip service – nothing gets followed up."

"People are not reporting hate crime – they think 'what's the point – nothing's going to happen."

"People have had eggs thrown at them, spat at, scarves pulled – but they're not reporting it – we are suffering in silence."

Bangla Housing Association (male focus group)

The group cited the value in the Council making more use of the local community organisations like their association to provide services and through which different work for the community might be commissioned. The example of a successful initiative was provided where the Association had helped in promoting a previously under-used training fund for unemployed Bangladeshi women.

"Give us the resources, the space, the opportunity. The Council should be helping to develop our capacity."

Ansarudeen Cultural Association (mixed male/female focus group)

There was a strong sense and feeling of being disengaged from local democratic structures and frustrations with Council bureaucracy. They have no contacts or representation within the Council and feel disempowered in comparison with other Black and minority ethnic communities. A degree of jealousy towards the facilities achieved by some other communities was expressed.

"When you ring the council they just signpost you – the information they give us we can find that out ourselves – they don't help you."

"We are disadvantaged – the environment in UK is different to back home – they should try and understand our cultural differences."

"There is no equal opportunity."

"There is racism in the job market (economic disadvantage) and (social) prejudice from other Muslim groups."

"If you are Muslim <u>and </u>black...you are double trouble!

"People are changing their names to get jobs."

The group expressed considerable frustration as a community in the sense of being 'overlooked' by services and opportunities; as a young female group member commented:

"It seems there is always something that knocks us back; we are a community of great potential but we are a community blocked off."

"Generation after generation...it does not make good sense."

Such frustrations were seen by the group as having a detrimental effect on the attitudes and aspirations of their young people who feel angry from a lack of a true sense of belonging, compounded by experiences of being stopped and searched by the police.

"The police aggravate the situation - they deliberately target and discriminate against black young men..."

Ansarudeen clearly advocated the need for the Council to make more strenuous efforts to engage more closely and effectively with their community and to take a proactive approach in this regards:

"The Council needs to get much closer to the communities"

"It's unacceptable the time it takes for officers to meet with us."

"They [the Council] just need to come out of their office, instead of thinking 'if they [the community] need something they will come to us'[at the Council]"

"We are not asking for the world, but just something...just [for the Council] to step on that first stone..."

Aspire to Learn (mixed male/female focus group)
The majority of the focus group were unaware of local engagement, consultation and decision making structures involving the local authority. Only 3 people at the consultation session (out of 19 participants) had heard of the local Hackney Community Action Panels. As one female respondent commented:

"These structures are not aimed at us."

There was cynicism about public meetings and neighbourhood committees, with a feeling that these were largely ineffective and there were requests for better forms of local consultation.

Community Action Panels could be better publicised; the need to capacity build the community so they are better equipped to take part; consider different structures for consultation and commissioning as part of Big Society and ensure that these are not dominated by the already well-equipped and articulate groups; and ensure the opinions of women, including young women, are adequately heard. Suggestions were made to boost employment of local BME members through the development of local purchasing policies.

Commentary
Respondents were clearly aware of some 'front-line' services that could be approached for assistance (e.g. GPs for health issues) but were sometimes unaware of others: where victims of gang crime and race hate could go, for instance. Few respondents knew who their councillor or MP was and there were mixed views about help available from the mosque. One mosque in Whitechapel was mentioned as being very helpful but some women felt that help from mosques for them was limited because most were male orientated.

Participants were not aware any existing local drug and alcohol awareness services, but a need for this was stated. More generally, female respondents called for Council services to become more approachable so that they could connect better. There was some awareness of Council surgeries, but respondents were unclear about what they provided and when they were provided.

The need to engage more effectively with active local community organisations emerged as a clear and consistent message from all the focus groups. Often greater recognition and more effective, active partnership working with the Council was called for in the consultation sessions. This holds clear links for consideration in relation to the newly emerging Coalition agenda around 'Big Society'. A key theme that merged was a sense of frustration, dissatisfaction and disengagement that some communities feel – this can be a very significant risk factor behind alienation that could be open to exploitation by those with extremist views intent on radicalising.

5.4 Far Right Extremism, Race Hate and Islamophobia

With far-right extremism also being a concern of government, the focus groups were asked opinion specifically on this aspect.

Participants expressed concerns about far right extremism, race hate and Islamophobia. They talked about:

- Examples of personal attacks
- Worries about BNP and EDL and its growing support
- Sophistication of BNP via website promotion
- Islamophobia and incitement to attack – role of the media and central government
- Dangers of terms such as "Muslim terrorist" – social consequences on Muslim community in terms of fostering hate crime and attitudes, freedom to practice religion openly (e.g. choice of dress and attire for women)
- A perceived unresponsiveness of authorities to hate crime incidents
- Concerns that the focus on Al-Qaida extremism has led to relative inattention given to far right extremism

These concerns are illustrated by reported comments, such as:

Bangla Housing Association (female focus group)

"This group [EDL] is definitely violent extreme; it should be banned and targeted to stop...there is a big imbalance with what they are allowed to get away with."

"BNP and EDL are gaining more support; that scares us...they should and need to be banned."

"I grew up with being called a 'Paki'; it's changed now to 'terrorist'."

"I have been stopped and search 'cos I wear the hijab and look Muslim."

Similar concerns were strongly echoed in the male focus group.

Aspire to Learn (mixed male/female focus group)

"I have been attacked several times; sometimes I am on my own but I have also been attacked when I have been with my husband and children; sometimes on the bus – sometimes on the street."

"I have witnessed a transformation of the BNP, through websites like 'Storm Front' you can see web discussion. The BNPs are Nazis; they will always jump on the bandwagon."

"All the focus on Al-Qaida means they miss out on EDL and BNP."

"The way they talk about us, as if we are a different breed; it spreads hate. Anyone can kick a Muslim and that's where radicalisation comes from."

"Islamophobia is a problem; the media portrays Muslims as violent trouble-makers who force their religion on others and that causes a lot hate crime."

Commentary

The concerns raised demonstrated that important concerns exist in the community about race hate that need to be addressed. The comments voiced indicate that there is a linkage between public policy which focuses on the Muslim community(ies) in relation to Prevent that can itself serve to fuel Islamophobic attitudes and far right extremism against Muslim communities which in turn can provide the basis for resentful and radicalised and extremist views.

5.5 Community Understanding of the Terrorist Threat

As part of the consultations, focus group members were canvassed for their views on how they understood the terrorist threat, specifically in relation to Al-Qaida inspired violent extremism.

Key themes to emerge were:

- Discussion of attraction to Al-Qaida cause
- One focus group – unaware of the PVE agenda prior to the consultation event
- Ignorance and incomplete understanding of Islamic faith by extremist radicalisers
- True belief and practice of Islam does not lead to terrorism
- Emotional attraction to message of extremists
- Conspiracy theories with government being implicated and driven by a media hoax
- Perpetuation of the problem by a focus on Muslims - hate
- Military involvement in Middle East and Afghanistan as grievances
- Military withdrawal not the only solution
- Needs inter community dialogue and mutual understanding – Ireland as an example
- Recruitment possible in many locations – university, night clubs, schools, madressas
- Grooming via the internet

These concerns are illustrated by reported comments, such as:

Bangla Housing Association (female focus group)

The group was most concerned about the unfair targeting of the Muslim community. They commented about young people that they were aware of violent extremism but didn't represent a high risk group for radicalisation.

"Young people do know what is happening in the world, but that doesn't mean they're getting radicalised."

"Young men are aware [through internet]...but not leaning in that direction in Hackney."

"Young people are concentrating on other things."

"Hackney is safe from groups like Al Mahajiroon...I have seen them in Whitechapel but we are safe from them."

"It's ['violent extremism] how we Muslims are being portrayed today. Muslims are being singled out – it's a way of attacking us."

"It's a reaction to the British and American foreign policy."

"...this violent extremism from so-called Muslims has come about because of Palestine and what is happening in that region."

Bangla Housing Association (male focus group)

The group expressed suspicions about the causes of Al-Qaida influenced terrorism, suggesting the western powers themselves had had a role to play and were suspicious about the origins. They stressed the significance of western foreign policy as a causal factor, suggesting that:

"If the Middle East problem was resolved, this would have a dramatic effect on terrorist violence."

"No-one really knows what happened [re 9/11]... Al Qaida is an American invention."

The male focus group spoke at length about the negative impact felt by the targeting of the Muslim community following 9/11 and 7/7 and warned that there was a danger that the risks for radicalisation could be over-exaggerated:

"There are very few people leaning towards extremism. Muslims in this country have nothing to do with Al Qaida."

"It's a case of a few people falling into the trap..."

"There is no place for extremism in Islam or society...we came here to work, not to harm anyone and to live in harmony."

Aspire to Learn (mixed male/female focus group)

"It is the government's fault. If you are going to go to war and kill innocent kids and women, and then you expect us to integrate."

"If Britain withdrew [from Iraq and Afghanistan] then terrorism would stop."

"I am not happy with the term 'Al Qaida'. We do not know if Al Qaida are really involved all the time – it might just be the media making us think it is."

"They [suicide bombers] might be paid by the government to say they are linked to Al Qaida...they might not even be dead for all we know."

"Al Qaida inspired terrorism? I would prefer it if you called it 'Ignorance inspired terrorism'. Al Qaida gives something to those who are ignorant, something to attach to...Those with a lack of knowledge of the real message of Islam will attach to it."

"I find the use of these terms [7/7 and 9/11] distressing. They are so simple terms to describe real beautiful human beings created by Allah being murdered."

London Merit Association (mixed male/female focus group)

For some community organisations the issue of Al-Qaida inspired terrorism was not seen as a major problem for their own community, though the fact of young people being involved in gangs was acknowledged as a potential risk factor that made them potentially vulnerable:

"I've lived here since 2007 and not come across such issues...I've never met anyone involved in such things."

"If we are concerned we call in the parents [into the school]...so far we have never encountered this problem."

There were particular concerns about how the media treatment of the Al-Qaida problem had led to harmful stereotyping of the Muslim community as a whole:

"The media puts Al-Qaida into one box and suggests that all Muslims must be involved in the highest type of crime...the media distorts everything."

Ansarudeen Cultural Association (mixed male/female focus group)

The group contended that violent extremist tendencies were not a problem in their community at the moment but had some worries about potential dangers in the future:

"We are worried for our children."

Faith in the Future (mixed male/female focus group)

The group expressed concern about the problem but above all perceived the issue in terms of the Muslim community 'feeling under siege'; violent extremism was an issue for very few people but the whole counter-terrorism programme had led them more sharply to ask questions about their own identity.

The young people stressed how education was important to them and that they didn't feel associated with violent extremism though some were curious about it:

"We are not susceptible to this extremist ideology...but young people are researching it on the internet."

The young people at the focus group were clearly concerned about being stigmatised and typecast unfairly by Hackney's reputation as being a deprived and high crime area:

"It can be a situation where a lot of people label you."

They were worried about crime, gangs and knife crime but were not overwhelmed by it as a phenomenon:

"We just get on with it...knife crime generally happens to those in the system."

They did comment though on how children tend to stay within their own locality:

"Children want to stay in their comfort zone – they don't feel safe going out of the area."

Relationships between the police and young people was also raised as an issue with complaints about harassment and a tendency to under-report crime through a concern about ineffective action being taken, though one young member of the focus group did speak favourably about a positive experience she had had where police intervention had been effective and was welcomed.

Affordable housing and planning permission for Muslim schools were also cited as priorities. Similarly, concerns were expressed about facilities for Muslim girls and the lack of Muslim sports role models.

Commentary
Prior to the consultation events respondents from one focus group were not aware of the Council's Preventing Violent Extremism Agenda and these sessions helped raise greater awareness. No participants at the focus groups referred to the incidence of Al Qaida inspired terrorism being a specific problem locally and their immediate associations of it were to causal factors of foreign policy. Some respondents talked about 'conspiracy theories', with government and media being implicated in perpetuating myths about reality.

There was considerable and widespread concern about the way that terrorism had become increasingly and falsely linked with the Islamic faith. The focus on the Muslim community as a threat was seen as harmful – both in setting back relationships with other communities and under-mining cohesion and in terms of raising the risk that the resultant backlash against Muslim communities could promote an environment where radicalisation of Muslims could become more likely.

Whilst Al Qaida inspired terrorism was not considered a significant threat in Hackney, community members were concerned about vulnerabilities in general, especially for young people. The Muslim community(ies) experiences of being stigmatised and the subject of Islamophobia can themselves lead to Muslim communities feeling more isolated – such feelings can be useful tools for those who would radicalise members of those communities into extremist positions. The impact of Islamophobia as a risk factor is examined further in the next section.

5.6 Risk Factors

Significant parts of the consultations were devoted to encouraging participants to consider the nature of factors which could increase the risk for some people to be attracted to getting involved in violent extremism. Discussion of risk factors was closely linked to the discussion of potential solutions and in some cases the obvious remedy lay in countering the risk factors themselves. In that sense 'risk factors' and 'solutions' tend to merge and there is not always a distinct separation between the two. Although we have attempted to separate these into two sections here for the sake of clarity and analysis clear overlaps exist.

Key themes to emerge were:

- Multiple factors – no single route
- Lack of true understanding of Islam
- Converts/reverts
- Western military involvement in Middle East and Afghanistan
- Poverty, poor social and housing conditions, unemployment
- Islamophobia, hate crime, Muslim community stylised as 'problematic' – leading to civil disengagement
- The youth in Hackney are vulnerable

The risk factors identified are illustrated by reported comments, such as:

Aspire to Learn (mixed male/female focus group)

"They are led in by different or a multitude of reasons. Those described as 'radicalised' have been done so through different factors."

"...attacks would not happen if the army withdrew."

"Poverty, overcrowded dysfunctional families, unemployment are all risk factors. There needs to be more facilities, more people engaging with youths and we need funding to do this."

Bangla Housing Association (female focus group)

"Violent extremism has no religion."

Bangla Housing Association (male focus group)

The group expressed concern about feelings of unfair treatment, discrimination and stigmatisation which could be a risk factor in radicalisation. Frequency of 'stop and search', negative media portrayal of Muslims all fuelled feelings of isolation.

"We do feel intimidated and harassed."

"Why can't the media show good news stories about us."

"The Bangladeshi community feel isolated."

Ansarudeen Cultural Association (mixed male/female focus group)

Foreign policy was seen as a very important factor and that:

"The worst thing that has come out of UK and America is their foreign policy...people dying in war is getting us nowhere.

"The war has contributed...that is why we are in this mess...young people see the injustice and know it's not fair."

Commentary
Respondents in the focus groups made a number of different suggestions about risk factors, indicating that no single issue or factor predominated but that different factors could be relevant at different times, with different people and in different circumstances.

Longstanding structural problems of deprivation were considered important; the impact of foreign policy was a recurrent theme and issues around the problematising of Muslim communities because of their faith was also present.   There was a sense that this caused the Muslim community to feel more isolated and disengaged which could be exploited by violent extremist causes and narratives.

5.7 Community based Solutions/Recommendations
Gathering local community perspectives on how best local stakeholders, partnerships and local communities themselves could help address these problems was a core purpose within this project's objectives. Participants in the consultation sessions were invited to provide a range of solutions and approaches and the ground they covered in the focus groups was extensive. The principle approaches in summary were:

- Encouragement and capacity building for Muslim community to engage more in initiatives and funding
- Interventions helped by the support from Imams and Mosque committees
- Mosques as effective way to communicate
- Crucial role of women – to the family and beyond as communicators

- Positive and unbiased portrayal of Muslims in the media
- Prominent suggestions linked to cohesion as ways to address discrimination, disenfranchisement, mistrust and ignorance
- All community approach – not isolated interventions alone with Muslim community
- Joint activities with different religions – but warnings about resistance from some Muslims
- Parenting courses – difficulties in recruiting the involvement of Muslim men
- Good Islamic education (lack of 'good Muslim schools' on a par with local Jewish schools)
- Education in terminology - e.g. true meaning of Jihad "in plain English"
- Address foreign policy issues
- Internet safety and role of parents in educating young people

Some of these propositions are illustrated by reported comments, such as:

Aspire to Learn (mixed male/female focus group)

 "You need to start with teenagers, teaching them how to stay away from radicalisation. Give them the knowledge about Islam and the other bad things that are happening. It needs to be taught in school as then you would get all kids, not just Muslims."

"...the media are a problem; there is not enough positive media about Muslims."

"For the last six months I have been doing Prevent but I need an Imam to support this through the mosque...it is not always the Imam; it could be a committee member."

"Schools can get parents involved."

"If you can get into the mosque; this is the most effective way to get to people. Then schools and community groups."

"You need to piggy back on other things already taking place, as by doing something around Prevent just for Muslims, it puts Muslims off...and will link Muslims and Prevent. Should be open to all."

Bangla Housing Association (female focus group)

"Good Islamic education is needed...the term Jihad should be explained to us in plain English."

"Our kids go on the internet and find out about Jihad, but it's our responsibility as parents to teach the true meaning about this...it's not about taking innocent lives: that's haram and wrong in our religion."

"Internet safety training for parents...young people being groomed on the net."

"Women to openly encourage discussion with daughters and sons... [women as] good, safe communicators of this agenda to the family and beyond."

Ansarudeen Cultural Association (mixed male/female focus group)
The group recommended the media should avoid inflaming the coverage with such exaggerated language and that de-radicalisation activity is best undertaken by local leaders with street and community credibility.

Faith in the Future (mixed male/female focus group)

Concern was expressed about the perceived waste of resources by government support for organisations with debatable confidence of Muslim communities on the ground and a concern about the unfair targeting of the Muslim community as part of the Prevent programme:

"There is wasting resources in targeting irrelevant and innocent people...the security services are partly using the terrorist legislation as an excuse to victimise Muslims."

"The government needs to put this into perspective…we believe that the government is not happy about Muslim beliefs".

"We are always under the microscope."

Similarly, distortion in the media was a cause for concern:

"We are seen as angry by the media, but we are actually humble and trying to better ourselves."

Commentary
Many of the solutions suggested by participants in these consultations fell into three main categories. These were:
- the need to promote education in the Islamic faith itself to strengthen resilience and the positive roles of Imams and mosque committees;
- an all-community approach rather than only isolated interventions with the Muslim community;
- and linked to this, accelerated work around community cohesion.

The latter emerged as a prominent suggestion in the focus groups and this is highlighted itself in the next section.

The use of existing mosques and facilities generated discussion from focus group members about what they perceived as 'politics in mosques'. Concerns were expressed about access to facilities through mosques. One consultation specifically raised this issue, introducing views in favour of the democratisation of mosque committees with elections held for membership. Some were aware of exclusion from certain mosques, commenting that:

"You are very lucky if you have not come across division, and you have been made to feel welcome in every mosque, because I can tell you it is there."

Similarly, Muslim respondents expressed positive interest in helping with preventative work, but pointed to the need for capacity building support, sometimes the need to overcome apathy and in some cases explore ways in which to involve male Muslims – the example of a parenting course was cited.

These are in addition to other issues that respondents had raised in other areas of the discussions – these included tackling issues of deprivation; poor social conditions such as housing; and the macro and global issue of foreign policy itself and perceptions of its adverse impact.

As indicated earlier, some respondents had not been aware of Council and partnership work on Prevent prior to the consultations which served to raise their awareness. There was an appetite to learn and contribute more with better links with the Council on these issues to be developed. As one female Muslim respondent commented:

> *"It was good to have Nazia [LB Hackney Prevent Officer] here [at the consultation event]; there needs to be more opportunities like that."*

5.8 Need to Address Cohesion

Respondents took the opportunity to raise a range of issues for attention on the Prevent agenda that in essence revolve around activity on community cohesion as a preventative measure. This formed a significant part of the dialogue in focus groups and links closely with concerns summarised earlier about hate crime and Islamophobia.

The main themes that came through included:

- A need for greater cohesion between communities based on improving mutual understanding of and between communities
- Concerns about hate crime and right wing extremism
- Respondents in some cases were worried about the potential for public policy to create a sense of hatred towards Muslims
- Extended discussion of teaching world religions and resistance to this by some – some religious protectionism in some communities
- "Violent extremism has no religion"
- Discussion of sectarianism within different Islamic sects, mosque committees and access to facilities
- Dangers of community jealousies from exclusive or prioritised funding to Muslim communities and organisations
- Mistaken stereotypes of Muslim women (wearing hijab, burkha) not wanting to be involved in wider community
- Hatred and stigmatisation of Muslims has shifted from ethnic background (e.g. country of origin, Pakistan) to their religion.

Supporting comments included:

Aspire to Learn (mixed male/female focus group)

"Children's needs are not recognised. Teachers are not being educated correctly in religions like Islam and Christianity."

"I would like teachers to be trained correctly so they fully understand religions and not give incorrect definitions."

"If they are taught properly through faith schools, they are more equipped to deal with mistruths that they might encounter when people try to approach them with extreme thoughts. This should also be replicated in mainstream schools."

"Joint activities with other religions like Jewish in schools increases understanding."

"...people are not doing more to include Muslims in community activities. They are stopping planning permission for mosques and community centres for Muslims."

"Prevent should not be aimed at specific groups as this prevents some people getting involved...when I engage people I do some from a different platform, that of the environment and when we find the common ground...then I talk about Islam."

Bangla Housing Association (female focus group)
Problems of hate crime and Islamophobia were a prominent concern but the group were positive about the prospects for greater cohesion in London which they saw as a multi-cultural major city in its own right. The emphasis recommended was on maintaining different communities' own identities but with greater mutual understanding and awareness to dispel negative myths.

"Improvements can be made with community forums, combined community activity..."

"Social clubs that educate you about different communities."

"Hard to get good jobs or prosper in the community because of this term ["Muslim terrorist" as an inappropriate term]."

"Good portrayal of Muslims in the media to get rid of prejudice and bias attitudes."

"More community cohesion."

Bangla Housing Association (male focus group)
The male group stressed the need to highlight the good work of Muslims and Muslim organisations such as the London Muslim Centre against drugs, calling for more cohesion and inter-faith work.

"We should celebrate Muslim history and help create a sense of identity."

Ansarudeen Cultural Association (mixed male/female focus group)
The group expressed the desire to integrate more with the local white community but expressed a concern of their perception that other ethnic minorities were being housed in the same area and used the term 'ghettoised' which they felt was hindering integration.

Cohesion was also impaired by lack of knowledge about their cultural and religious identity:

"Other Muslims question if we are 'proper' Muslims - because we're Black – I've tried explaining to them that a Muslim is a Muslim but you can see they're suspicious – we get it from both sides – from white people and from other Muslims."

Again, the group felt that whilst strongly in favour of cohesive relationships across all communities, this alone was an inadequate answer to their own aspirations as a community which felt denied resources and a sense of being marginalised:

"We feel we are at the back of the queue..."

"We have been giving and giving – for the community to benefit, we now have to become more selfish now."

Faith in the Future (mixed male/female focus group)

The group reiterated a reality about cohesion that within some communities there is a natural resistance to cohesion and there is:

"...a natural segregation anyway between different types of Muslims"

And that there was a need to look for common ground for natural cohesion building between communities around music, sports and environmental programmes. An exhibition in the Museum to celebrate Muslim achievement was an idea tabled locally in the past but had not been taken up.

Commentary

The flow of the commentary in the various consultations and focus groups consistently pointed to the need for continued work and an emphasis on addressing the various issues bound up in community cohesion. The discussions pointed to the need for the involvement of all local communities and a wide range of stakeholders in this endeavour and beyond a singular focus on Muslim communities.

Although a prominent theme, focus group members also highlighted some obstacles to working on cohesion. One focus group member commented that some parents do not like their children visiting places of worship for other religions and that often these parents are Muslim. Another respondent warned of resistance in some cases from within the Muslim community for joint activities with other religions.

6   Findings - Stakeholder Themes

12 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of professionals from organisations operating in the following main areas:

- Muslim parenting
- Partnership advisor
- Community College
- Police
- Council Community Safety
- Probation
- Youth Offending
- Community Association
- Council Equality and Diversity
- Independent Advisory Group
- Muslim Forum
- Offender Outreach
- Faith Leader

Interviews each lasted approximately 45 minutes, representing upwards of 9 hours testimony. It was important to capture the perspectives of people from a range of professionals from local stakeholder organisations whose work contributed to and impacted on the key objectives outlined by the Prevent strategy. The main themes covered were:

- Commentary and interpretation of the national Prevent programme
- Significance of the problem in Hackney and local awareness of the problem
- Far right extremism
- Recommendations for shaping future Prevent activity and preferred emphases
- Impact of the Coalition Government and Big Society

Many of the issues raised in the community consultation have been echoed in consultations with stakeholders. These have highlighted the importance of accelerated work needed on community cohesion and although some pointed to strong building blocks being in place in Hackney to deal with this, inter-community tensions do exist and sometimes tensions and fears around far right extremism are there but "hidden" and under the surface with a sense of inter-community uncertainty.

Stakeholders reported an awareness that some, especially young people, may be at risk of being radicalised. They reported that this is being addressed sensitively through processes of helping vulnerable groups and individuals who are or are at risk of being disaffected. There was an awareness that at least parts of the Muslim community felt marginalised and that at times a sense of nervousness pervaded it, especially around the Prevent agenda, and that and it needed support on difficult issues such as this.

The problem of violent extremism and risks of radicalisation were seen often as being part of addressing vulnerabilities of at risk groups more generally; young people's confusion and uncertainty about their identity could feed this vulnerability and were linked to the genuine fears about youth gangs, gun and knife crime.

Suggestions were also made about the positive contributions from Mosques and the value of modernisation in standards.

6.1   Critique of Government Approach in Prevent

Stakeholders were invited to offer views about the broad approach taken by the government in the Prevent programme. Principle comments and views were:

- The single focus on the Muslim community has not been correct and has alienated that community
- The government policy has harmed cohesion
- Has fuelled far right groups – 'PVE and the focus on Muslim communities has given the far right something to chew on'
- The concerns about the policy being about 'spying' on the community have alienated Muslims and 'shut doors' for some services to engage quite as easily with that community
- Suggestion that professionals are uncertain about what their role in Prevent is – the policy has lacked clear definition
- Policy has generated anti-Muslim sentiment and criminalised Muslims
- Over emphasis on religious, Islamic aspect of the programme
- Focus on prisons as a source for radicalisation is exaggerated
- Concerns for mosque involvement in Prevent re feelings that this can risk compromising their confidentiality and confidence of the community
- Stigma of spying attached to the programme but the potential for problems has been avoided in Hackney – funding used constructively and well in Hackney
- Focus of Prevent should be to revise foreign policy – it's this that has spawned suicide bombing – focus of Prevent on communities is therefore misplaced
- Prevent SO15 (MPS Counter Terrorism Command) officers - inhibits ability to build a relationship with communities

6.2   Significance of the problem in Hackney

Stakeholders were invited to offer views on the extent of the problem of violent extremism in Hackney and how far ordinary community members know about the issue. Principle comments were:

- Not seen as a significant problem in Hackney
- Though not a significant problem in Hackney itself, the borough could be a transit route and therefore can't be ignored
- The real risk comes from converts with mental health issues or drug related problems who are vulnerable to grooming
- Hackney generally has strong cohesive communities – social class rather than faith is more of a barrier to social cohesion
- Some concerns about the risks of radicalisation amongst young people
- Important not to exaggerate the problem of violent extremism per se – but people do discuss what they see as injustices around the world
- Local people may generally feel vulnerable as terrorist acts are indiscriminate in whom they attack

- Some concerns about newer communities who may be poorly educated and vulnerable to extremist messages

6.3 Far right extremism

Stakeholders were invited to offer views about the threat and incidence of far right extremism in Hackney. Principle comments were:

- Not aware that far right extremism is on the local policy agenda but surprise that the only element of extremism on the agenda seems to be re the Muslim community
- Far right extremism tends to be ignored but one respondent described it as 'menacing' and needing to be addressed
- A small presence in Hackney but being monitored
- Seen as more of a problem in neighbouring Boroughs rather than Hackney
- Welcome focus on all forms of extremism
- Hate crime a problem
- Far right extremism not a major issue locally – Hackney is a very multi-cultural Borough
- Support for far right candidates at elections may be a protest vote against mainstream parties – difficult to assess extent of pro-active genuine support for the far right.
- Need to monitor developments in neighbouring areas but Al Qaida influenced terrorism remains the top priority
- Little evidence of explicit far right recruitment – but far right attitudes do lie beneath the surface – used to be about race, now about faith – 'but people don't quite say it' – a problem but a hidden one that lies under the surface
- School settings are active in promoting learning about diversity and through history – e.g. partnerships with Anne Frank Trust and Facing History

6.4 Solutions

Stakeholders were invited to offer views about preferred approaches and recommendations for addressing the problem:

- Changes to UK foreign policy and 'stop invading Muslim countries'
- A gesture i.e. change in foreign policy would 'go a long way'
- End singular focus on the Muslim community which is resented and causes alienation – it also inhibits involvement of Muslim community
- The major problem in Hackney is gangs (e.g. Turkish Kurdish gangs) rather than terrorism
- Tackle Islamophobia
- More grass roots work by communities is important
- Education from primary school age onward is key especially about different communities' identity and history – build a sense of value and belonging to help integration
- Address underlying social problems in health, poverty, housing, and equal opportunity and fairness – tackling feelings of exclusion and fostering a real sense of belonging – and an all community focus
- Need to build greater trust in services from communities – e.g. tackle tendency for Muslim women not to report low level harassment

- Police need to build trust in the community – personal qualities and the right communication skills are essential
- Need to ensure that needs of all communities are addressed fairly – ensure tackling injustice of any preferential treatment of certain communities (e.g. education provision)
- Education about Islam in college/school settings
- Good work by Imams with ability to connect with and understand young people
- Police work and contact in Mosques very professionally carried out – example of good practice cited
- Strip away the Islamic link and focus on criminal activity – this is the link
- Better services to help criminals with histories of mental health or substance misuse to overcome them
- Diversionary activities and alternatives for vulnerable adults and young people
- Influential role of women – raise their awareness re children and dangers of the internet
- Young children – 6-12 years – no real plan in place for this age group - felt it was important to address issues of cohesion and community harmony at an early age
- Cohesion and multi-faith forums as a safe place for young people to discuss issues – gangs, life, international issues – aim to get better representation at such forums from all communities
- Communities already play a key role in prevention work – they are alert to and suspicious of new individuals/groups that promote particular extremist messages – even before any police involvement – community needs to continue to be a key part in the future; communities are already resilient

6.5   Prevent policy integration

Stakeholders were invited to offer views about the integration of Prevent into workstreams and any views about the Coalition's programme re Big Society

- Prevent needs much better integration
- Important that services continue to provide support to vulnerable families, avoid alienation by ensuring 'promises are not broken' re support offered
- Council will need to consider policy approach in relation to Big Society
- Big Society a good opportunity potentially for communities – but latter need to be trained and resourced – danger of relying purely on voluntary efforts
- Continuity generally comes through a trusted individual rather than an organisation – this needs protecting
- Need to address all vulnerabilities for young people – drugs and gangs – can increase risks of being radicalised
- Properly resourced community groups and capacity built
- Impact of cuts very likely – but demand for some form of Prevent will continue due to international events and conflicts
- Key value of communities; but need to overcome complications of many and diverse local communities resident locally to ensure balanced representation in policy and programmes - there will be practical difficulties for stakeholders to ensure involvement from communities in a Borough which is so richly diverse

- Council can lead - police in background – acknowledgement that police are there to support all aspects to promote the safety of all communities, but there are sensitivities which need to be understood in presenting and delivering interventions with the police in the lead sometimes with anxieties around 'police initiatives'
- Prevent needs to focus on the 'pre-criminal space' and crime prevention – vulnerable groups
- Separate Prevent from cohesion – Big Society and cohesion needs building up – not under Prevent – tackle all hate crime, build a sense of belonging and accelerated activity of minority groups
- Police focus on enforcement and criminal activities
- Future role of Councils still very uncertain and anxious about reduced resources for Prevent in the future
- Prevent seen as sub level of safeguarding – part of a more holistic model
- College engaging with Prevent programme at a strategic policy level

Commentary

Opinion from stakeholders consulted represented a broad consensus on the key issues raised. There were clear concerns about the Prevent programme from a national perspective, especially in its earlier stages, and its singular focus on Muslim communities which had alienated those communities and at the same time harmed cohesion, generating anti-Muslim sentiment. Violent extremism was not seen as a significant problem in Hackney itself, but stakeholders were by no means complacent about the risks and vulnerabilities in general, faced especially by younger people.

Both stakeholders and community consultees commented upon how Hackney generally has strong cohesive communities, However, they also stressed that it was important for cohesion work to be developed and sustained in the future but separately from a Prevent programme itself. Further work is needed to address concerns about stigma and Islamophobia, to tackle all hate crime and to be alert to far-right wing attitudes which some respondents suggested lay under the surface.

Remedies around vulnerabilities to violent extremism and vulnerabilities of at risk groups in general pointed both to national and local action. The issue of foreign policy was frequently mentioned and its impact on people's views on what they clearly saw as injustices around the world.

The need to continue to address often longstanding and underlying social problems was also apparent. These refer especially to tackling problems in health, poverty, housing, equal opportunities and fairness which different communities experienced in different ways and from different perspectives. Addressing these would help meaningfully to build a true sense of belonging for all communities and a feeling of having a genuine stake in local society.

Respondents spoke about how Prevent funding had been used constructively and well in Hackney but there were clear and understandable anxieties from stakeholders about future roles and resources. However, the strength and value of communities' contributions also stood out; it was striking that the community groups in the project had a clear appetite for more involvement and were already making significant contributions in many different ways.

Indeed, some stakeholders commented that communities already play a key role in prevention-type work, are alert to risks and act to avert them.

The emerging 'Big Society' agenda will be very important here and there seem to be evident opportunities for stakeholders, not only to enhance how they communicate their services to communities, but also how they might possibly re-engineer delivery in focused partnership work in the future, given cuts in finance which are being introduced by Government.

7 Findings – Demographic Data

Whilst the main emphasis of the primary research was the collection of qualitative data from local participants attending various consultation events, anonymised profiling and mapping data was also collected from 421 local Muslim people. This mapping data has been gathered to help partners further understanding of local Muslim communities in Hackney.

The data has been analysed and grouped under the following headings:

- Age
- Country of birth
- Length of Residence in UK
- First/Second Languages
- Employment
- School of Thought
- Religion

- Gender
- Citizenship

- Country of Origin
- Education Level
- Religious Sect
- Religious Observance

Data in these categories was collected from participants by self-completion questionnaires. Access to participants was facilitated by the 5 participating local community organisations in the project. As project managers we were mindful of sensitivities of seeking such profiling data, especially in the context of controversies that have been evident in different parts of the country in other Muslim communities on the Prevent agenda.

A demographic analysis of respondents to the survey showed the following main characteristics. The sample is based on 421 self-completed questionnaire received.

Gender

Male	57%
Female	42%

Gender of Respondents
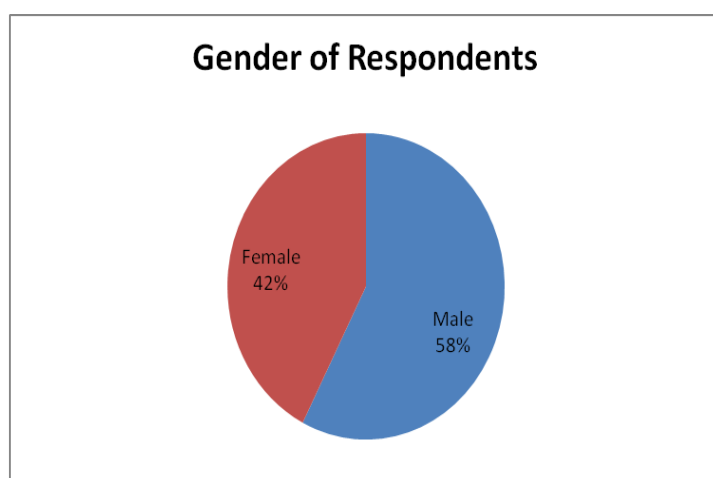
Female 42%
Male 58%

The gender split is comparable to the Household Survey in Hackney completed 2004 by BMG Research which cited 52% male and 48% females. Age ranges are not strictly comparable between the two surveys with BMG research respondents being 41% (25-39), 29% (40-54) and 25% (55+).

Age Ranges		
	16-19 years	10%
	20-24	21%
	25-34	29%
	35-44	22%
	45-65	16%
	65+	2%
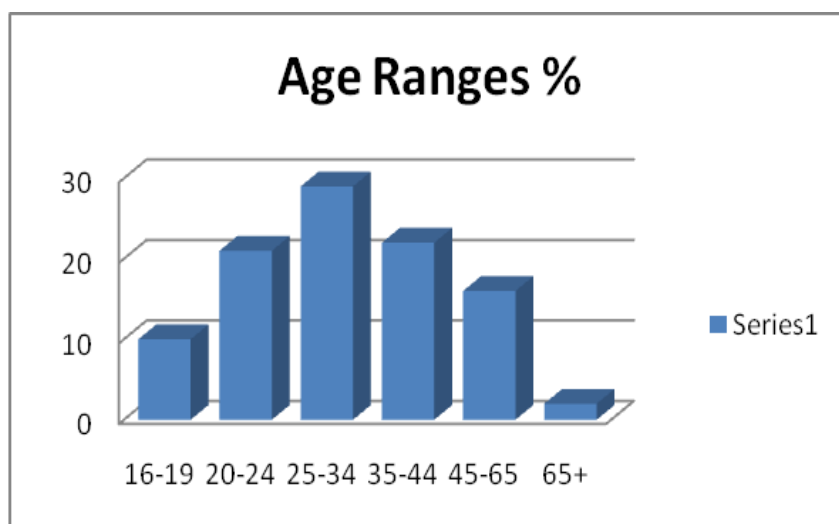
Citizenship		
	British Citizen	81%
	Refugee	0.5%
	Asylum Seeker	1%
	Other	17.5%

[74 respondents self completed as 'other' with 4 on indefinite leave, 3 other permanent residents, 13 not specified and 57 cited status as Gambian, Turkish, Indian, African, Bangladeshi, Nigerian]
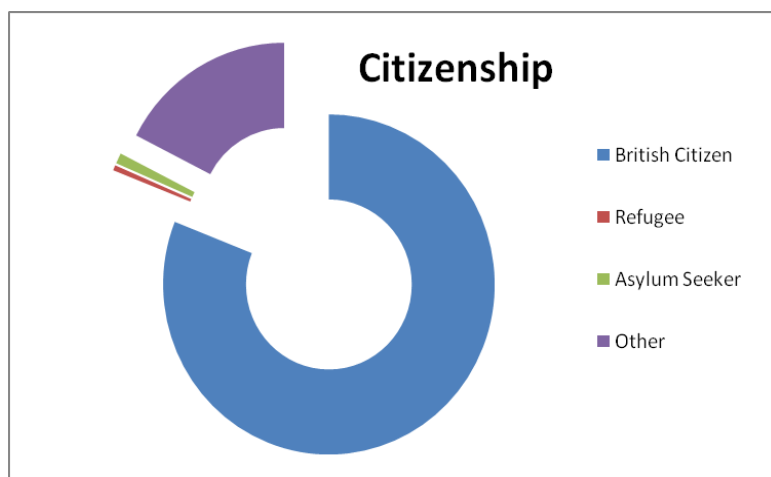
Place of Birth

UK Born	47%
Non UK Born	53%
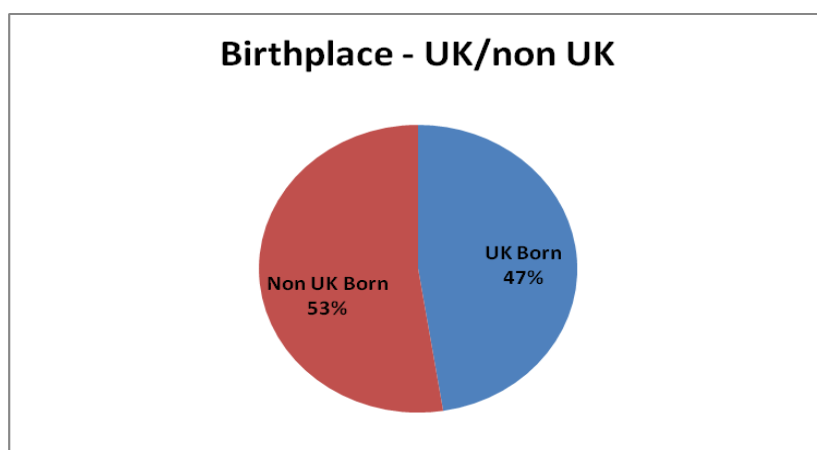
Length of Residence in UK for Non UK Born (i.e. of the 53% above)

Less than 1 year	1%
1-5 years	3%
6-10 years	32%
11 years+	62%
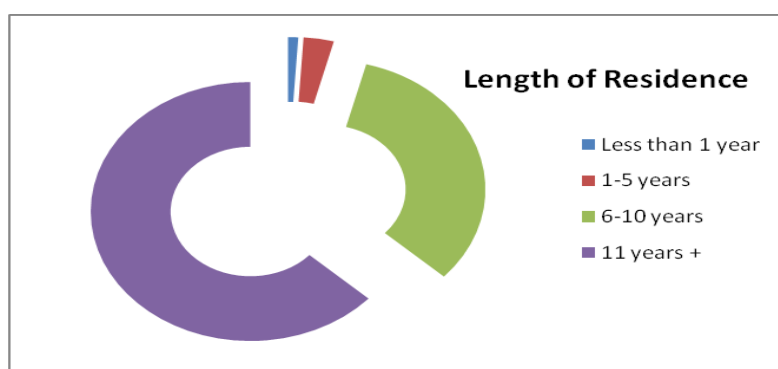
Marital Status (all respondents)

Single	30%
Married	64%
Divorced	2%
Widowed	3%

Country of Origin (stated as British Citizens – 81% of total respondents – n=341)

Turkey	19%
India	11%
UK	5%
Pakistan	5%
Bangladesh	9%
Blanks/nil recorded	36%
Other	13%

The remaining 13% (other) is made up those stating as being from Gambia, Iraq, North Africa, Iran, Afghanistan, Cyprus, Portugal, Senegal and Uganda.
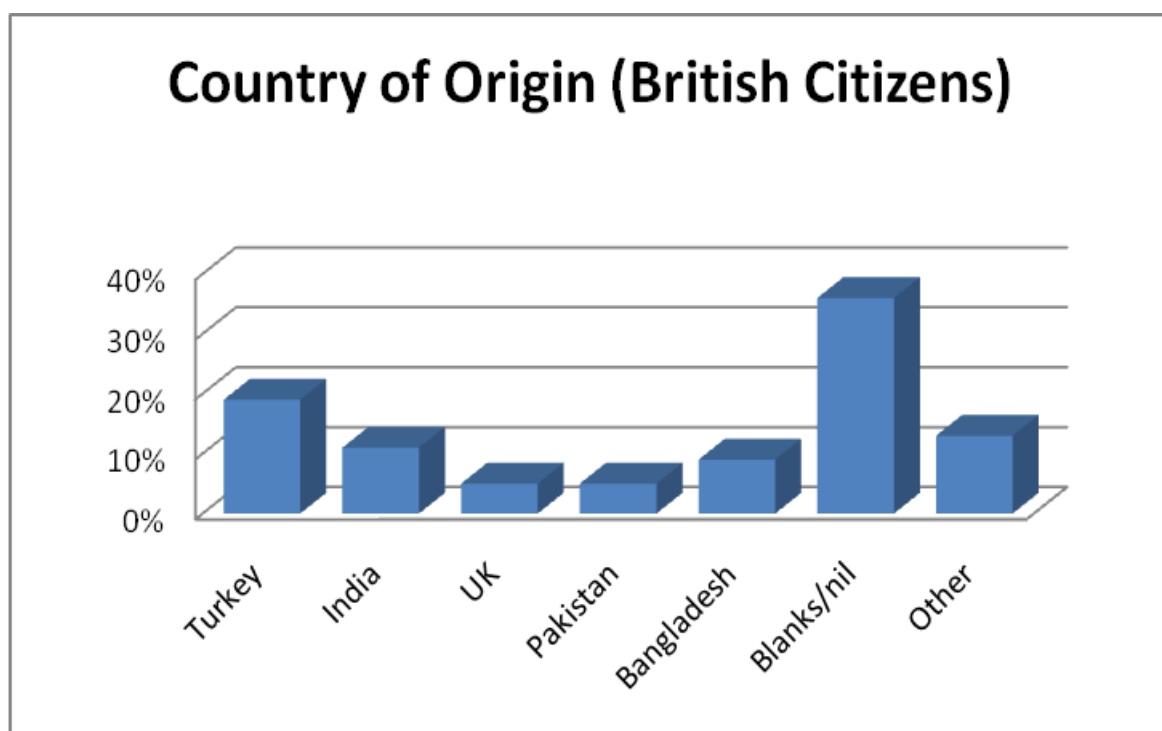
Country of Origin (stated as non-British Citizens, including 6 refugees and asylum seekers -19% of total respondents – n=80)

Gambia	39%
India	8%
Turkey	11%
Not stated	21%
Other	21%

(Portugal, Senegal, Malawi, Algeria, Bangladesh)

Employment Status - Stated as British Citizens

Over half (55%) of respondents in this category were in some form of employment with one fifth (21%) stated as unemployed.

(81% of total respondents – n=341)		
	Unemployed	21%
	Fulltime employment	37%
	Part-time employment	18%
	Full time student	13%
	Part time student	3%
	Other	9%

[nb 'other' includes retired, volunteers, nil returns].

Employment Status- All respondents

The proportions between the different categories of employment status are generally the same as with the group (above) defined as British Citizens – no significant variation.

(total respondents – n=421)		
	Unemployed	19%
	Fulltime employment	37%
	Part-time employment	21%
	Full time student	12%
	Part time student	2%
	Other	9%
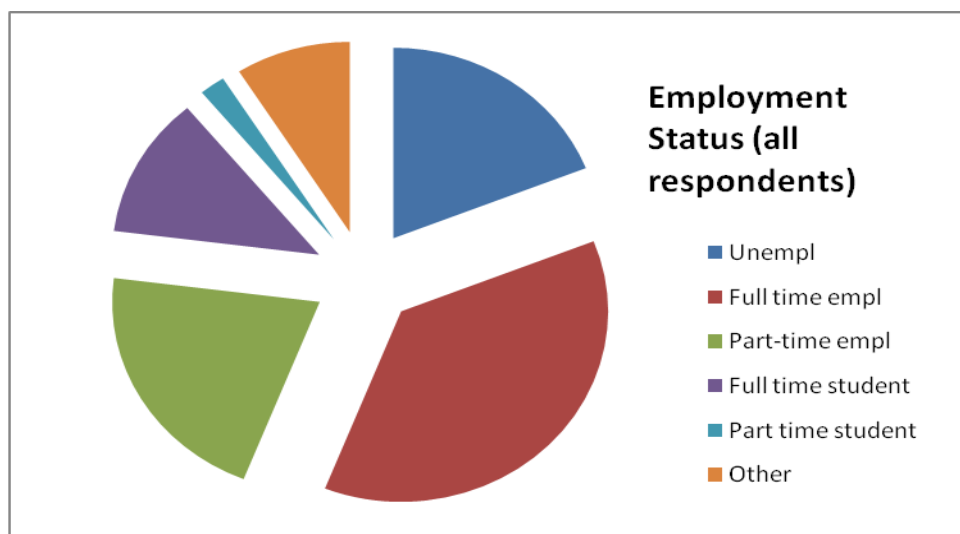
Business Ownership

7% of the total cohort [31 respondents of 421) self completed as business owners. Over 45% of the business owner cohort self completed as Turkish with business in fast food outlets, small shops and mini-cabs. The remaining business owners were Gambian, Indian, Bangladeshi, Malawi or not specified variously operating small businesses in education, fashion, wholesale, catering and imports.

General Employment Categories

58% of the total cohort self completed as in full or part time employment. This represented a sample of 245 respondents. Principal employment categories were:

Catering/Fast food	12%
Retail/sales	16%
Managerial	5%
Admin/Financial	6%
Education	7%
Other professional	7%
Social care	5%
Manual	11%
Not supplied	31%

Employment Categories
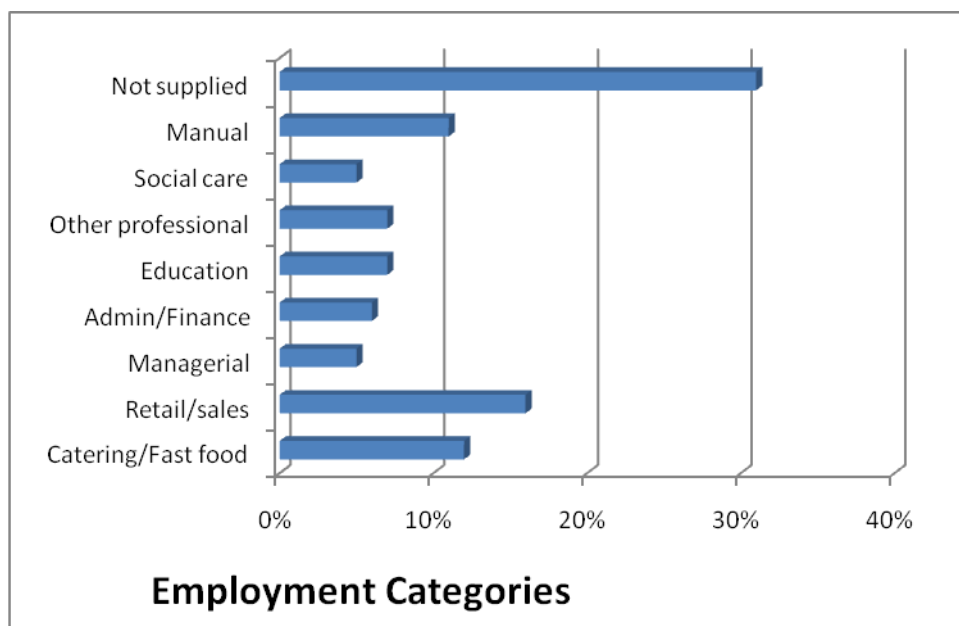
The BMG Household Survey (2004) cited significantly larger percentages working in 'higher order' occupations (50%) where those cited in this project in managerial, admin/financial, educational and other professional were 25% of respondents.

Education Levels

(All respondents – n= 421)

University	27%
Secondary/College	59%
Primary	9%
None/Blanks	5%

Comparisons of educational standards with the BMG Household Survey (2004) are not strictly comparable as BMG cited specific qualifications achieved rather than the level of attendance.
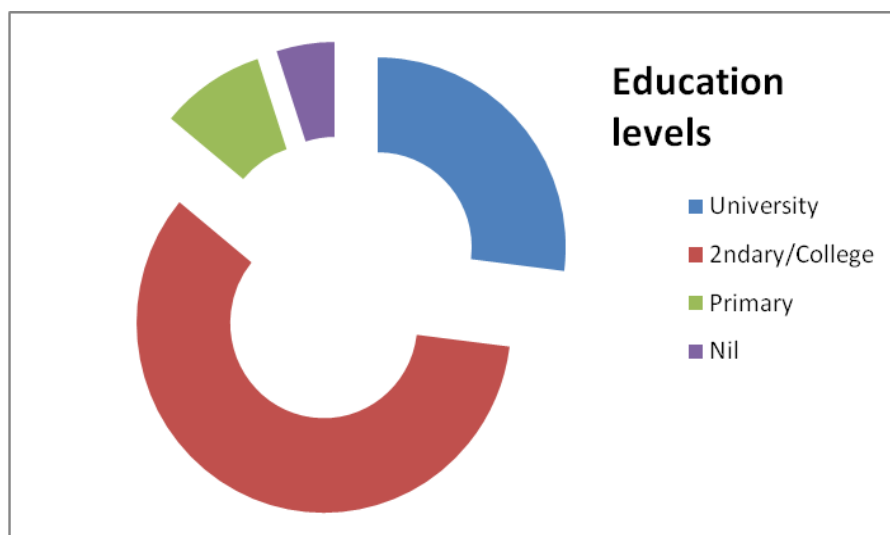
Languages

(All respondents – n= 421)

First Language

English	24%
Turkish	22%
Bengali	17%
Gujarati	10%
Wollof	12%

The remaining 15% of first languages spoken includes single figure returns for Arabic, French, Hausa, Hindi, Igbo, Kurdish, Mandingo, Persian, Polish, Punjabi, Somali, Timini, Urdu and Yomba.

Second Language

English	67%
Gujarati	7%
Bengali	4%
Urdu	2%
None stated	11%

The remaining 8% of second languages spoken includes single figure returns for Dutch, French, Punjabi, Turkish, Wollof, and Mandingo.

Religion

Of 421 respondents, 395 confirmed their religion as being born to the Muslim faith; 18 completed as converts to Islam and the remaining were not stated.

The overwhelming majority of Muslim respondents (69%) cited 'Sunni' as their religious sect. 4 respondents cited 'Shia'; 9 respondent cited 'Sufi'; and 20 respondents indicated 'just a Muslim, with no sect'.

In terms of religious observance 48% described themselves as being a 'Practising Muslim' and 38% stated that they were Muslim and did their 'best to practice'. 6% stated that they practised 'very little' or were not practicing.

However, 8% of respondents did not complete entries about the degree to which they practised and/or positively stated that refused to disclose this information, the implication being that this in particular may have been considered intrusive. Whilst, this was not the only question in the survey that was not answered, as facilitators for the project we were aware (for example from comments made in focus group sessions) that detailed questioning about religious practice caused some consternation. Such views are, of course, reinforced in focus group testimony, other stakeholder interviews and in literature/commentary on the Prevent programme more widely, in relation to discontent at linkages between violent extremism and Islamic faith.

Reluctance and/or refusal to provide further information about the religious sect, school of thought and identity of mosques attended was featured in some of the returns as below.

Religious Sects

Sunni	70%
Tijannia	8%
Salafi/Wahabi	1%
Sufi	6%
Shia	1%
Other	1%
No sect	5%
Prefer not to say Not supplied	9%

School of Thought

Hanafi(Sunni)	58%
Maliki	13%
Other	3%
Don't know	9%
Prefer not to say Not supplied	14%

Mosque Attendance

Masjid-E Quba	14%
Sulemanyie	23%
Aziziye	9%
Madina	13%
Shackwell	5%
Dalston Lane	4%
Morning Lane	2%
Valide Sultan Mosque	13%
Other	18%
Prefer not to say Not supplied	26%

[n.b. percentages represented as of total 421 cohort of respondents and frequency of more than one mosque attended by individuals]

UK Muslim Organisations Most Closely Reflecting Respondents' Views

Muslim Council of Britain	9%
Al Khoei Foundation	0.5%
Islam 4 UK	0.25%
Sufi Muslim Council	5%
British Muslim Forum	1%
Islamic Society of Britain	0.25%
Muslim Association of Britain	1.5%
Muslim Public Affairs Committee	0.25%
UK Islamic Mission	0.5%
Other	10%
None	57%
Prefer not to say Not supplied	19%

[n.b. percentages represented as of total 421 cohort of respondents and frequency of more than one organisation specified by individuals]

That 57% of respondents indicated that no organisation represented their views may indeed be significant with such bodies typically being national organisations.

8   Literature Review

This literature review provides a foundation and background in existing key documented sources to help guide and inform the mapping exercise and overall project, commissioned by Hackney Borough Council. This review has been structured to provide a desktop analysis of literature at national, regional and local levels that are particularly pertinent to the 'preventing violent extremism' / 'Prevent agenda.

This includes key information sources on policy and practice, academic and recent consultancy analysis and commentary together with an interpretation of emerging issues from these that can be used to inform the mapping project itself and its new local engagement work with local communities as part of this exercise. The review also highlights some of the key implications for policy and delivery that may need to be considered in the future by the Council and partners working in this field.

8.1   National Policy and Guidance

National context for this project lies in the Government's revised version of the UK strategy for tackling international terrorism, known as CONTEST (HM Government (2009). *The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism,* TSO (The Stationery Office)). Delivery of the strategy is organised around four main workstreams:

- *Pursue*: to stop terrorist attacks
- *Prevent*: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism
- *Protect*: to strengthen protection against terrorist attacks
- *Prepare*: to mitigate the impact of attacks where they cannot be stopped.

Each of these workstreams has a series of objectives within CONTEST's strategic framework. This strategy is said by government to co-ordinate closely with counter-insurgency work overseas with work led by FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and the MOD (Ministry of Defence) with the Armed Forces playing the major operational role (HM Government, 2009, p. 53).

Of the four workstreams, *Prevent* provides the detailed and relevant context for Hackney Borough Council's work as a local authority in this field and for this project specifically. Principal responsibility for preventing extremism passed to the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), following the re-shuffle in 2006, and acting in concert with other government departments and bodies.

The trajectory of policy on *Prevent* has been articulated in a number of guidances and developments since 2001 which the overarching CONTEST strategy (HM Government, 2009) outlines as including:

- An immediate post 2001 focus after the disturbances in northern towns on interfaith dialogue and social cohesion,
- Preventing Extremism Together (PET) consultations with Muslim communities nationally following the London bombings on 7th July 2005
- Publication in 2006 of the overarching CONTEST strategy (revised 2009)
- Articulation of a community-led approach to tackling violent extremism in Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) in April 2007 of *Preventing Violent Extremism: Winning Hearts and Minds*,
- Followed by the £6m Preventing Violent Extremism Fund to support priority local authorities
- Involving the *Prevent* strategy with more government departments and agencies, including local authorities, health, education, cultural and social services and those involved in offender management as well as integrating the contribution of policing

The nature of the government's Prevent strategy has become increasingly informed by a facilitation of collaborative work with communities to address violent extremism.

HM Government (2009, p. 84) states in its CONTEST strategy that:

> Strong and empowered communities are better equipped to effectively reject the ideology of violent extremism... CLG has a central role in ensuring that communities are at the centre of our response to violent extremism

The strategy stresses that work on *Prevent* is co-ordinated particularly with three other policy areas: community cohesion; race equality; and community empowerment, citing the CLG 2008 Empowerment White Paper: *Communities in control: real people, real power* which is intended to influence individuals' capacity to influence democratic processes and air grievances through legitimate channels.

The government's emphasis in *Prevent* is based on assessment that support for violent extremism in UK is the result of a combination of five main factors. These are stated as:

- A persuasive ideology to legitimise terrorism
- Ideologues and social networks that promote that ideology and help those prepared to support it
- Individuals vulnerable to violent extremism messaging for a variety of personal reasons
- An absence of resilience in vulnerable communities
- Real or perceived grievances that may be international or local in character

The revised CONTEST strategy (2009) also makes important and specific reference to the promotion of what it describes as 'shared values'. In HM Government (2009, p. 87) the strategy sets out the government proposition with an avowed focus on challenging in effect wider:

> views which fall short of supporting violence and are within the law, but which reject and undermine our shared values and jeopardise community cohesion…we have no intention of outlawing these…our challenge…will continue to be reflected in the groups we support and the projects we sponsor.

The revised Prevent strategy seeks to address each of these factors and has five core and two cross-cutting or supporting objectives. These are:

- Objective 1: Challenging the violent extremism ideology and supporting mainstream voices
- Objective 2: Disrupting those who promote violent extremism and supporting the institutions where they may be active
- Objective 3: Supporting vulnerable individuals
- Objective 4: Increasing the capacity of communities to resist violent extremism
- Objective 5: Addressing grievances

Cross-cutting objectives:

- Objective 6: Developing Prevent-related research and analysis
- Objective 7: Strategic communications

These objectives have been articulated in depth in government policy documents, providing a rationale for each and supported by examples of the types of activities that can be designed and delivered to help achieve them. Details can be found in the CONTEST strategy itself (HM Government (2009, pps. 88-92)) and in HM Government (2008) *The Prevent Strategy: A Guide for Local Partners*.

Under these objectives a selection of key activities and features cited by government in the CONTEST strategy are possible, including:

Objective 1: Challenging violent extremism ideology
- working alongside Muslim scholars and faith groups
- programmes to sponsor wider teaching of Islam
- developing citizenship in education in mosque schools
- address gaps in Islamic studies teaching
- counter-radicalising theological advice available on the internet
- toolkit for schools on preventing violent extremism, using the curriculum to help children challenge extremist narratives
- Radical Middle Way series of scholars roadshows
- training for Muslim chaplains

Objective 2: Disruption to those who promote violent extremism
- inhibit radicalisers' ability to use ungoverned and other locations as platforms for promoting their messages
- use of legal powers of prosecution under Terrorism Act 2006 against those who glorify terrorism
- reduce access to illegal content on the internet
- support for NOMS work in prisons and how to better manage extremist offenders in custody and in the community
- monitoring of venues at risk (community centres, youth clubs, colleges and universities) utilising police advice
- government support for Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) to raise standards in mosques

Objective 3: Support to vulnerable individuals
- improving capacity to identify the vulnerable (Youth Offending Teams, community based facilities, sharing information)
- trialling and implementing various interventions – e.g. peer mentoring, diversionary activities, leadership programmes, de-radicalisation projects

Objective 4: Increase community resilience
- collaborative work undermines the narrative of separation and conflict used by extremists
- local communities actively engaged and at the centre of the response
- enhanced police community engagement through neighbourhood police teams
- National Women's Advisory Group on empowering Muslim women and their civic participation and representing their views
- build community capacity to be active and strong
- developing community leadership to give communities a strong voice against extremism
- promote positive alternative activities (volunteering, build on equalities agenda, sports and educational outreach)

Objective 5: Address grievances
- using existing government programmes to address a range of grievances that may persist (e.g. racism, Islamophobia, access to services, perceptions of inequality)
- government commitment to continuing to debate and explain foreign and defence policy
- encourage safe places for debate

- local people capacity to influence local policy
- ACPO work with UK Youth Parliament
- identify and action grievances
- reassurance after police counter-terrorist actions and arrests

Consistent with the CONTEST and *Prevent* strategies' focus on the importance of community involvement, HM Government (2008) *The Prevent Strategy: A Guide for Local Partners* also provides guidance on recommended engagement criteria. These include engagement by local authorities with community organisations and partners that demonstrate that they actively condemn, and work to tackle violent extremism and uphold specified shared values.

Dedicated *Prevent* funding is available for local partnerships via CLG with £45m allocated between April 2008-March 2011. Seventy-nine local authorities have been provided with £12m for 2008-09. Funding has been distributed based on the size of Muslim communities. Further funding for Prevent work has been allocated for the police, Youth Offending Teams, Community Leadership Fund through CLG, the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism and other supportive sources including the association of Charitable Foundations, Capacitybuilders, Futurebuilders, The Office of the Third Sector, Arts Council England, Sport England and a range of European Funding sources and programmes which can be brought to bear.

The prevention of violent extremism is also embedded in performance management frameworks, including National Indicator 35 (NI 35) and Assessments of Policing Community Safety Indicator 63 (APACS 63) so that the effectiveness of local authority, police and local partnership activities on building community resilience can be measured and their performance assessed.

8.2   UK Mapping and Good Practice Guides

Some early stage evaluation of *Prevent* interventions by local authorities and partnerships has been undertaken and sponsored by government, though it is acknowledged that there are inherent difficulties in assessing impact of what is essentially an embryonic programme through the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Pathfinder Fund.

This section of the literature review sets out details of the pattern and nature of selected local PVE projects across England described in two reports.

8.2.1   BMG Research (2009) *PVE Pathfinder Fund Mapping of Projects 2007/08,* for Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).

The mapping exercise reviewed 261 projects nationally against both the seven *Prevent* objectives (above) and three Pathfinder Fund objectives stated as intending to develop a community in which Muslims:

- identify themselves as a welcome part of a wider British society and are
  accepted as such by the wider community
- reject violent extremist activity, support and co-operate with the police and
  security services
- develop their capacity to deal with problems when they arise and support
  diversionary activity for those at risk

The table below summarises the range of activities by the projects mapped against five broad themes:

1. Promoting shared values (64% of the projects)	1.1 Providing effective local campaigns to confront extremist ideologies. 1.2 Promoting local role models able to counter negative imagery and comment.

	1.3 Promoting understanding of the benefits that Muslims have brought to local areas. **1.4** Promoting understanding and acceptance of key shared values, and promoting dialogue and engagement between communities in support of those values.
2. Supporting and nurturing civic and theological leadership (61%)	**2.1** Supporting local community leaders, role models, local mosques, imams and madrassahs to tackle violent extremism and equip them with the skills necessary for these roles. **2.2** Promoting democratic participation, engagement and civic involvement. **2.3** Enabling members of communities to debate and question political and social issues in safe environments. **2.4** Providing support networks for at risk and vulnerable groups within local communities. **2.5** Promoting volunteering opportunities for local members of communities, particularly on work relevant to tackling extremism but also to foster greater engagement in community voluntary activities. **2.6** Promoting Islamic awareness amongst Muslim communities and local communities more widely
3. Increasing the resilience of key organisations and institutions and supporting early interventions (23%)	**3.1** Improving the gathering and sharing of intelligence at a local level. **3.2** Developing mechanisms to identify vulnerable communities and individuals in local areas, and develop strategies to address those at risk. **3.3** Developing targeted programmes of counter- and deradicalisation work in local areas, particularly in key institutions – such as universities, colleges and schools.
4. Capacity and skills development (31%)	**4.1** Supporting local forums on extremism and Islamophobia, in line with the Local Government White Paper. **4.2** Learning and development programmes relating to violent extremism for local leaders and members. **4.3** Providing guidance and awareness training for front-line staff and managers in organisations providing services or community support. **4.4** Conducting research and attitudinal surveys of local Muslim and other communities – using shared methodologies to which local partners will have contributed.
5. Other (3%)	(eg a young peoples cohesion project)

Within these broad themes local PVE projects focused on seven types of activity. These were:

- Facilitating local debates on the issue of extremism
- General educational activities and presentations about Islamic beliefs and culture
- Leadership and management training for management committees from mosques, voluntary sector
- Non-accredited training on how Muslim women can access local services, skills for active citizenship, English language training for Imams
- Arts and cultural training, theatre productions to raise awareness of extremism in communities
- Sports and recreation diversionary activity
- Accredited ESOL training for imams and mosque management committees

Nearly half the projects were 6-11 months long with an emphasis on Muslim beneficiaries (61%) and 20% from 'the general population'. The authors estimated that the projects reached 44,000 people.

8.2.2   HM Government (2009) *Delivering the Prevent Strategy - Guidance 2: Good Practice Examples.* Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).

The guidance outlines advice to local authorities, drawn from local practise examples across England on *Prevent*. This includes details for working in partnership and on gaining a better understanding of the local challenge. This literature review draws particular attention to the need for partners to have a sophisticated knowledge of the drivers and causes of violent extremism which can be enhanced by an assessment of local risks and vulnerabilities which can be based on a combination of:

    - confidential covert and overt police sources

    - community needs assessments

    - miscellaneous sources of information.

The guidance draws attention to advice for partnerships on short, medium and long term planning, mapping activity against the 7 *Prevent* objectives with clearly structured activities, milestones, partners and financial allocations specified.

The document outlines a series of good practice examples nationally. In summary these include the following:

Location	Project
Peterborough	Imam training on personal development
Birmingham	History project on how Islam connects positively with British history
Birmingham	Governance of mosques
Tower Hamlets	Advice to community groups, internet cafes about abuse of internet by users – sign up to a voluntary code
Channel Project	Multi-agency risk management of identified 'at risk' individuals
South London	Community outreach to identify at risk youngsters (eg gang members) – mentoring and diversionary
Yorkshire	12 week course to at risk young people and on religion, Ghandi, Mandela, 7/7 survivors experiences , visits to Belfast and Auschwitz
Barnet	Sports and leadership diversion
Dudley	Develop a women's Muslim network – conference – act on female issues arising
Walsall	Hear me now project – young people's newsletter and forum
Peterborough	Addressing grievance Forums
Dudley	Question time sessions
Southampton	Needs assessment – part of evaluation – found that the Needs

	Assessment was superficial – used local people and trained them to consult
Redbridge	Muslim newsletter
Coventry	*Citivision* newsletter to all homes in the city conveying positive track record on cohesion; plus develop positive news releases for wider local media

8.3   Commentaries on Counter-Terrorism and Reactions to *Prevent*

The literature on understanding the nature of terrorism is highly complex. Its study represents a mature industry of academia, consultancy and other commentary over a considerable duration, range and pedigree. These include in-depth studies taking in perspectives from forensic psychology research, terrorism and criminology, commentary and analysis from religious and doctrinal perspectives, sociological aspects of radicalisation together with evaluation and commentary from think-tanks and professional management consultancies, nationally and internationally.

All are illuminating but the purposes of this project have required ISCRI to apply reasonable, practical limitations around the literature review to make it both manageable within the timescale and resources available, as well as tightly focused on the specific requirements of the project itself.

As a result, this section outlines what we consider some of the most pertinent issues and 'matters arising' from recent studies and commentary. By reflecting these against the thrust of government policy and practise around *'Prevent'*, we hope that a number of key features and principles are apparent which Hackney Borough Council and its partners can consider in forming and developing its approach in the longer term to the *'Prevent'* agenda locally.

In the shorter term, these features and principles will be used also to inform the training and subject matter for community consultation as part of the local engagement aspect of this project on the ground in Hackney.

8.3.1   BMG Research (2009) *PVE Pathfinder Fund Mapping of Projects 2007/08*   London: Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).

The evaluators (BMG) cited a number of features and weaknesses in their findings from their national survey of PVE projects. We have drawn out some specific findings that BMG Research commented had impacted on the design and delivery PVE projects. These included:

- Sensitivities and issues of confidentiality which led to difficulties in accessing key respondents
- The use of PVE language was considered contentious and a dislike of the term 'Preventing Violent Extremism'
- Receipt and use of PVE funding could be perceived as negative and could create a backlash against Muslims and may counter efforts to build community cohesion
- Tensions and local politics between local partners and stakeholders (e.g. council, police and community groups)
- At risk groups and the vulnerable seemed rarely to be reached by projects
- Low participation for PVE project events
- Some mosques were hard to engage
- Sensitive issues of extremism and terrorism rarely tackled
- High frequency of projects to promote inter-faith/cultural understanding

8.3.2   An-Nisa Society (2009*) Preventing Violent Extremism – A response from the Muslim community* London: An-Nisa

The report by a London-based community charity is highly critical of the government's PVE programme. Its principal concerns are:

- A confusing and unclear strategy which is open to different interpretation and the risk of being counter-productive
- Participation in PVE projects by extremists unlikely
- Participation in PVE projects by wider Muslim community unlikely and reluctant due to fears of stigmatisation
- Use of loose and euphemistic language (building resilience and capacity) is considered suspiciously and 'serves the purpose of getting the strategy past the Muslim community with little protest' (An-Nisa 2009, p. 4)
- Making terrorism synonymous with Muslims
- Mainstreaming across government services leads to constant surveillance of Muslim community
- Risks of exacerbating further Muslim discrimination and victimisation
- Tiny minority vulnerable to extremist views
- Structural causes lie in longer-term social exclusion, marginalisation and wider youth disaffection
- PVE as a strategy to obtain intelligence and ethically suspect, and to gather information under false pretences via local mapping exercises
- Erosion of civil liberties and human rights
- Lack of transparency and attempts to focus state attention away from the Muslim community's real needs

The report contends that the deployment of PVE funding has been counter-productive in making the Muslim community more disaffected and heightened its vulnerability to radicalisation.

8.3.3   McDonald , B., Mir, Y. and Crompton , N. (2008). *Narrowing the Gap: Solutions, Community Engagement Pathfinder Programme Report 2.* **Preston: ISCRI UCLan.**

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) was commissioned by the Metropolitan Police Service to undertake a major research-engagement programme with police, stakeholders and Black and minority ethnic communities across five London Boroughs 2007-08. The Pathfinder programme was peer-led and engaged the opinion of 10 Muslim ethnicities in-depth on the issue of violent extremism.

Amongst causal factors underpinning vulnerability to recruitment or sympathy for violent extremism were found to be:

- Continued long-standing structural factors of deprivation and discrimination
- Islamophobic attacks and hate crime
- Causes were not always around issues of poverty
- Causes were not always around issues of poor integration in mainstream British society
- Tools of recruitment by extremists and sympathisers included a focus on perceived injustice of western foreign policy
- Tools of recruitment by extremists and sympathisers included a focus on perceived distortion of the Islamic faith
- Community respondents' testimony pointed to how no single causal factor predominated and that there was no simple stereotype – factors can influence different individuals in different ways but with a similar outcome.
- Whilst accepting the problem with testimony universally condemning suicide bombing, Muslim respondents expressed despair at how the PVE programme represented public sector victimisation of Muslims as a whole faith community that further fuelled feelings of isolation, vulnerability and hence was counter-productive.

The UCLan programme had a strong solution focus to the engagement programme and community participants offered the following as recommendations for mitigating and preventing recruitment into causes of violent extremism:

- Consistent support for an all-community approach to the problem rather than one which even implicitly focused predominantly on the Muslim community(ies).

- A focus on commonly held values of tolerance, citizenship and cohesion was one which demanded an all-community rather than a singular-community emphasis
- The threat from violent extremism was a criminal act that needed diffusing from what respondents saw as inappropriate religious connotation and one that affected society as a whole
- The challenges and causal risk from discrimination and Islamophobia demanded an all-community response
- The challenges and causal risk from deprivation and lack of social/economic opportunity also demanded an all-community response
- Advocacy for citizenship and cohesion to be promoted in Islamic contexts rather than as secular concepts and consistent with the dynamics of Muslim communities
- Faith-based interventions to challenge extremist messages according to different community preferences
- Facilitation of internal debate, discussion and debate for all communities
- Genuine engagement of grass roots community infrastructure with trust and access to provide safe space and opportunity

The report was strongly critical of police intervention as a tool for prevention of violent extremism. From over 1,100 respondents from Black and minority ethnic communities in east, north east and west London, the testimony stressed how trust and confidence in the police was low, largely unmitigated by the emergent 'safer neighbourhoods' programme for neighbourhood policing and too great to be a productive or welcomed PVE instrument whilst everyday community concerns about safety and policing styles and performance remained poorly addressed.

The findings also highlighted significant weaknesses inherent in local authority, police and community safety partnership structures for achieving meaningful and effective engagement of Black and minority ethnic communities in the capital in the conduct of crime and community safety policy and initiatives. Existing structures lacked genuine representation from minority groups and were seen as mechanisms to impose top-down agendas rather than meet communities' own determined needs and priorities.

The report has the virtue and strength of methodologically drawing on primary data collection from a large community cohort (Muslim and other of over 1,100 community respondents, with a 50:50 male-female gender split and predominantly aged under years) of local community members experiencing the impact of state interventions in this area, as well as from the experiences of practitioners in the field of counter-terrorism.

This is particularly important given the acknowledged tendency for reliance in counter-terrorism research on state-based perspectives and secondary sources. (Breen Smyth, 2007[1]; Jackson, 2007[2]). The challenges faced by the authors are documented extensively in their first project report, serving to illustrate the difficulties, rarity and hence value in achieving such an evidence base.[3] Similarly, the qualitative data collection methodology generated a richness in data from close contact with respondents, creating a rounded understanding (Richie, 2003) with individuals on a peer-to-peer basis able to reveal their own experiences and the impact on their world and immediate social environments (Hopkins, 2004).

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[1] Breen Smyth , M (2007). *'A Critical Research Agenda for the Study of Political Terror'* European Political Science (6) 260-267

[2] Jackson, R (2007), *'The Core Commitments of Critical Terrorism Studies'.* European Political Science: 6

[3] McDonald , B., Collins , C, Mir, Y. and Crompton , N. (2008). *Narrowing the Gap: Problems and Processes, Community Engagement Pathfinder Programme Report 1.* Preston: ISCRI UCLan.

8.3.4   Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) (2009). *Prevent: Progress and Prospects.* **London: HMIC**

The report is an early inspection of police implementation of the ACPO strategy.[4] Findings highlight *Prevent* as a new challenge for police as well as partners and communities and that forces are at different stages of implementation nationally. The report acknowledges that police involvement in *Prevent* is 'potentially controversial' (HMIC (2009 p.2)) and includes a need for clarity for accountability in engagement and delivery. Some of the key problems faced include that of assessing local risk and of addressing prevention work upstream at points where radicalisers groom and exploit vulnerable people, and in better understanding the causes of grievance and alienation.

Other key points highlighted include:

- Academic and research material on causes is growing but not in a readily useable form for use by local decision makers
- Clearer understanding of causes is needed to determine proportionate and effective responses
- Greater analytical capability is needed to utilise intelligence gathered effectively

The report highlighted the importance of having in place specific communication, engagement and reassurance activities about community safety and any police action, especially in relation to complexities that arise from counter-terrorism (CT) related incidents and police interventions.

Whist acknowledging the existence of Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) and/or Key Individual networks (KINs) for these purposes, HMIC (2009 p. 29) recognised that a few forces:

> have recognised that IAGs and KINs do not reflect communities sufficiently within their areas sufficiently to support delivery of 'Prevent' objectives and are working to improve representation of vulnerable groups.

The report concludes that future harsh domestic economic conditions and unemployment could disproportionately affect minority communities, increasing senses of alienation and grievance, increase community tension and increase risks of exploitation by radicalisers in the future.

8.3.5   Change Institute (2008). *Study on the best practices in co-operation between authorities and civil society with a view to the prevention and response to violent radicalisation.* **Brussels: DG JLS European Commission**

The report examined national and emerging themes with good practice examples from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the UK and wider internationally. The study confirms the importance of civil society organisations (CSOs) as key partners in public policy and cohesive, democratic societies with public institutions turning to civil society as a key component in tackling terrorism and violent radicalisation.

However, in parallel with this, it also cites an international trend (and in the US 'war on terror') for the extension of power by the state over civil society and the curtailment of their advocacy functions.

> With many national governments clamping down on the activities of domestic CSO organisations. (Change Institute 2008, p. 21)

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[4] Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) (2008). *'Prevent': The Policing Response to the Prevention of Terrorism and Violent Extremism Implementation plan.* London: ACPO

(Parallels may obtain in UK with recent government guidance on the suitability of community organisations and partners for local authority collaboration on the PVE funded activity and the sponsoring or creation of new community forums for this purpose.)

The authors highlight CSO concerns in Western Europe about levels of regulation and their targeting and monitoring by security services.

The report nonetheless stresses the value that a vibrant and supported civil society can bring to countering violent radicalisation as part of a 'hearts and minds' strategy to promote anti-violent narratives and promote integrated, cohesive communities and democratic institutions and practices within the state. Parallels are given with activity post Cold War in US and in India (ibid. p. 26-27).

The typology of best practice researched includes the need for civil society and government co-operation as well as the maintenance of constructive relations based on mutual trust.

Hindering factors and obstacles to building trust are:

- The securitisation of co-operation agendas that then undermine trust between civil society and authorities
- Risk averse authorities
- Hostile wider political climates
- Lack of capacity and resources within CSOs.

In relation to 'Muslim civil society' the report stresses the crucial role that can only be played by it in countering violent radicalisation:

> a strong, vibrant, engaged and discursive civil society is in itself an alternative to violent radical narratives and actors. (ibid. p. 135)

Particular strengths include:

- responding to needs and providing services, filling key gaps in authority services or market provision;
- relevant skills, knowledge and competences in addressing violent radicalisation
- social capital across dense, horizontal social networks
- already have understanding of the issues and often already taking steps to counter violent radicalisation
- knowledge of the threat in local contexts
- more likely to embody participatory / consensual and organic approaches likely to be effective in civil society

Similarly, faith alone should not be the sole determinant for co-operation:

> Rather than simply co-operating with those perceived as 'moderates' and / or 'representative', it is necessary that authorities engage with a wider range of both progressive groups as well as with those groups who may make less comfortable ideological partners but are nonetheless opposed to violence for political ends. (ibid. p. 138)

Emphasis is placed on the need to develop co-operative relationships between authorities and CSOs that enable the latter to preserve their key strengths, as state security and control measures are of only short term value.

> Protecting the actual and perceived autonomy and initiative of civil society organisations is central to the development of effective activity (ibid. p.5)

8.3.6   Gallup Inc (2009). *The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations.* **London and Washington: Gallup inc.**

The analysis provides an insight into relations between peoples of different faiths across four continents of Europe, North America, Africa and Asia with an analysis of Muslim integration in France, Germany and the U.K.   The study examines issues around monochromatic national identity, common ground for integration together with the relationship between radicalisation, isolation and religiosity.

Findings reinforce analysis elsewhere in the review. Prominent results included the following:

- European population diversity itself was not found to be an exclusive negative factor in integration within host societies.
- Findings reflected common ground as well as divides between European Muslims and their fellow non-Muslim Europeans in relation to the integration debate.
- British, French and German Muslims may identify more strongly with their faith but are as likely as their general publics (if not more so) to identify strongly with their countries of residence.
- However, the perceptions of majorities in UK, France and Germany are of uncertainty about Muslims' loyalty in their respective countries to their countries of residence.
- European Muslims have a great sense of purpose but face barriers to realising their ambitions and potential, facing poorer standards of living and expectations for improvement:

     in the UK, Muslims are eight times less likely than the British population as a whole to fall under the thriving category (Gallup 2009, p. 9)

- Vast majority of Muslims rejected violence.
- Religiosity is not a reliable indicator of radicalism: religious impulses as well as non-religious mentalities both led to moral rejection of attacks on civilians.

Findings doubt the appropriateness for conflating radicalisation with religiosity where many observers imply 'that to guard against the latter could stave off the former' (ibid. p. 41).

The study concludes by challenging notions held by 'significant segments of European societies' (ibid. p. 45) of disloyalty to the state by Muslim nationals and perceptions of ambiguous allegiances and anachronistic values.

> Public expression of religiosity should not…be understood as a lack of loyalty to one's country, nor should relinquishing one's religious or ethnic identity be a litmus test for patriotism (ibid. p. 45)

The report associates the importance of tackling deprivation, discrimination and equal opportunity for citizens of all and no faiths with endeavours to promote better social integration and mutual respect. It calls for the integration debate to widen its terms of reference beyond the limited focus of security and religion and address socio-economic disadvantage which can create psychological barriers preventing European Muslims becoming active members of society that can be important in tackling processes of radicalisation.

8.3.7   Cantle, T (2009). *'The Prevent Agenda and Community Cohesion'.* **Overview paper for the Capita National Conference, London 28 April 2009: Institute of Community Cohesion.**

The author provides an overview of policy, partnership and funding on the PVE agenda. The paper advocates a merging of community cohesion activity into *Prevent*, based on an all-community approach being more effective than targeting specific sections of communities, described as limiting, damaging and even counter-productive.

The paper expresses concerns about the way the PVE programme has targeted principally the Muslim community, citing:

- Discontent amongst Muslim communities about this approach.

  the Prevent programme demonises them [Muslim communities] in the eyes of others by identifying the community as a problem and attaching guilt by association. (Cantle 2009, p. 1)

- Reluctance from Muslim communities to take part in the programme.
- Other communities' perception of an inherent unfairness in targeting one community
- Less than enthusiastic involvement by local authorities.
- Local authority scepticism about schemes that seem to revolve around support processes that spy on the Muslim community which can lead to a sense of alienation and lack of trust.

Other concerns are expressed about:

- single group funding (SGF) to Muslim organisations which goes against recommendations from the Commission for Integration and Cohesion[5] and the work on Ireland's experiences by Paddy Hillyard who has reinforced the limitations of a single focused approach.[6]
- The author draws on Amartya Sen[7] who draws the connection between violence and the tendency to associate identity with a singular trait (often religion) as being unhelpful and dangerous.
- government need to address not only local community grievances as causal factors to vulnerability when the impact of foreign policy clearly is also a cause for concern

Cantle (2009) also specifies the limitations of trying achieve interventions with funding that is targeted as:

- Difficulties in actually identifying specific individuals as terrorists or potential terrorists
- Low likelihood of the alienated themselves taking part in a Prevent project
- Illogicality of Prevent schemes aimed at the wider Muslim community which should actually be part of a cohesion programme associated with alienated people from all communities.

In Cantle 2009, p. 5 the paper suggests that Councils sometimes anyway 'skirt around the difficult issues', by disguising controversial terminology and focusing on cohesion activity.

The paper concludes by asserting the need to challenge extremism of all types, challenge poverty and disadvantage and provide a sense of belonging for all communities, being an approach which is 'proportionate to needs and to risk and has a basic level of fairness and justice' (ibid. p. 7).

8.3.8   Khanna, A. (2009). 'Eastern Eye's Aditi Khanna interviews Rt Hon John Denham MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on PVE Programme'. 7 August 2009

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is reported in an Eastern Eye newspaper interview to be preparing plans to re-define government policy relationships with British Muslim communities, following concerns that its counter-terrorism strategy has been alienating the communities that it is seeking to work with on this agenda.

A new revised guidance around PVE is being prepared by government later in the year.

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[5] Commission for Integration and Cohesion (2007). *Our Shared Future.* London: ICoCo
[6] Hillyard, P. (1993) *Suspect Community: People's Experience of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts in Britain* (London: Pluto Press).

[7] Sen, A. (2006). *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny (Issues of Our Time).* New York: W. W. Norton.

The Secretary of State indicated a shift in the emphasis of policy away from defining government relations with the Muslim community entirely around tackling extremism.

> Muslims want to engage on a wider range of issues and while we are committed to that, it may not always come across as such…It has come to our attention that some of the labelling around government policy may be working as a disincentive. Some local authorities have already dropped the phrase 'preventing violent extremism' because they feel it identifies them with the problem.   (Khanna 2009)

John Denham MP was appointed Secretary of State in June 2009. The purpose of citing this article lies in its potential in signalling and anticipating a shift in government policy on PVE that may appear more in line with recent commentary and critique and may influence local partnership programme responses in the future. Further guidance is awaited.[8]

The home affairs editor of the Guardian Newspaper, Alan Travis, has also reiterated a likely shift in government policy in PVE on this basis in his article of 10 August 2009.[9]

8.3.9   Turley, A. (2009). *Stronger Together. A new approach to preventing violent extremism.* London: New Local Government Network (NLGN).

This vein of press commentary during August 2009 has coincided with publication of a discussion document by NLGN which specifically recommends a revised approach by government to addressing violent extremism. The paper draws on well-documented and current government policy sources on PVE together with delegate commentary drawn from Local Government Association (LGA) conferences (2008, 2009) and other senior local government officers and LGA sources.

The paper's thrust advocates a more powerful and influential role for local government in general and for councils to be awarded the benefit of greater information sharing by the police and intelligence sources so as to improve the targeting of its activities and resources. The thrust is based on the positioning and status of local authorities having direct and virtuous interventionist approaches as:

> community representatives and as local leaders…to help people feel confident…to protect the vulnerable people and to limit harmful behaviours (Turley 2009, p. 5)

> local government's role as a 'place-shaper'…no longer just a deliverer of services…a key role in leading and shaping the way we lead our lives with one another (ibid. p. 7)

With a strong focus on the PVE agenda from a local government perspective, the author contends that the current government approach to 'Prevent' has been hampered by a prescriptive approach from the centre in which tackling threats to community cohesion are not able presently to support the aims of the Prevent agenda adequately.

The paper expresses concerns about how the focus on Al-Qaida inspired extremism has diverted attention damagingly away from other forms of extremism and racist hate crime, encouraged prejudice against Muslim communities and stigmatised the latter by association with violent extremism, thereby undermining trust and the development of relationships with the very community on whose support delivery of this agenda depends (ibid. p. 12)

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[8] Research, Information and Communications Unit RICU (2009) *Prevent Funding Update August 09* London: Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The news update confirmed priority to addressing Al-Qaida linked violent extremism, desire not to see terrorism defining government relations with Muslim communities, the promotion of shared values and asserted importance of addressing all forms of extremism.

[9] http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/aug/10/john-denham-uk-muslim-community

The author calls for a new approach that examines integrating the Prevent Agenda with wider approaches to building community cohesion; and an emphasis in cohesion policy to target all violent extremism ideologies and not just, what the report terms 'Islamist' ideology. The report includes recommendations for greater facilitation of local debating forums for citizens of all backgrounds, especially in order to achieve more meaningful democratic inclusion in examining issues such as foreign policy, immigration policy, housing and employment which may contribute to grievance, resentment and vulnerability to radicalisation.

The document questions the validity of the NI35 performance indicator and concludes by an appeal for a better defined role for local government and a more inclusive approach to community cohesion alongside a more 'open and constructive relationship with the security services' (ibid. p. 27).

The report has received positive comment in a number of published Muslim sources, including the Muslim Council of Britain.[10]

8.3.10 Spalek , B., El Awa . S. and McDonald . L. (2008) *Police Muslim Engagement and Partnerships for the Purposes of CT: An Examination; Summary Report.* Birmingham: University Of Birmingham.

The report is an examination of the components of effective partnership working on the Prevent agenda, including structures and processes of Muslim community and police partnerships. It acknowledges the shift in emphasis in government policy in this field away from one focusing on surveillance to one aimed at productive interaction and engagement with citizens. This has placed the police at the forefront of arrangements.

> This enhanced community focus in CT and the central role of policing here raises a number of questions…to the ways in which such engagement is being carried out, its impact on Muslim citizens and its effectiveness in contributing to both state and human security. (Spalek 2008, p. 7)

The authors stress the how community trust and confidence in the police is vital in this context and requires an appreciation of a number of key ingredients that can help its achievement. Community experiences since 9/11 and public sector approaches in England have contributed to increasing difficulties, citing how Muslims:

- Feel treated as suspect communities,
- Feel more suspect by hard policing approaches of 'stop and search'
- Feel pressured to explain the construction of their Muslim identities in relation to their Britishness

The so-called 'New Terror' discourses on both sides of the Atlantic have led to making normative assumptions also about what kinds of Muslim communities should indeed be engaged by partnerships.

> 'New Terror' discourses are founded on the construction of Muslim minorities as comprising of communities who are at risk from violent extremism (ibid. p.9).

Acknowledging the difficulties characterised by this environment, the report stresses the need for partnership building which defers from attempting simplistic 'informer-handler' style relationships

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[10] http://www.salaam.co.uk/themeofthemonth/september03_index.php?l=12#clgstronger
http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2009/aug/11/prevent-islam-religion-extremism
http://www.mcb.org.uk/media/presstext.php?ann_id=363

which can actually be counter-productive to ones which value those specific community partners who can actually help mutual objectives of preventing violence, even if politically problematic.

> the problematic nature of the term 'radical' as highly subjective, multifariously defined, and embedded in politicised, often ethically questionable discourses (ibid. p. 13).

The report stresses the valuable contributions to be gained from working with women and young people with both often enjoying the ability to reach the most marginalised members of communities. Hard counter-terrorism policing approaches, including the pressure to act as informers, can work against achieving that engagement. The efforts by Muslim youth workers should be supported as they are well placed to deal with the most challenging issues that are relevant to security and the report calls for the need to

> Connect with grassroots practitioners rather than 'representatives' (ibid. p.18).

Research was carried out using qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis and participant observation of meetings, drawing on evidence from individuals, police, council and partnership officers involved in PVE projects and related activities.

8.3.11 Lambert , R (2008). *Salafi and Islamist Londoners: Stigmatised Minority Faith Communities Countering al-Qaida.* Arches Quarterly European East and West: Conflict and Continuum 2 (1), pp 35-41. London: The Cordoba Foundation.

The paper examines the paradoxes of Salafi and Islamist communities in the capital countering Al-Qaida (AQ) propaganda and recruitment activity, whilst at the same time typically facing, what the author proposes as, ill-founded criticism from 'other Muslim communities and secular political lobbyists' (Lambert 2008, p.35).

The author describes characteristics of Salafi and Islamist adherences in comparison with the more numerous groupings of 'more traditional, quietist strands' (ibid. p.35) of Deobandi, Barelvi and Sufi orientated Islamic practice which has led to a tendency for the latter to be courted by politicians as more valid community resources against the influence of radicalisation and violent extremism.

Lambert reflects on his experiences as the former head and founder in 2002 of the Muslim Contact Unit (MCU) and Detective Inspector at the Counter Terrorism Command (SO15), Metropolitan Police Service. Established to develop partnerships with the Muslim community in London to counter Al-Qaida influence, he found Salafi communities to be actively and effectively working in partnership to tackle violent extremism in the capital.

The report criticises the undue public and press credence given to the work and opportunistic propositions of Ed Hussain[11] and an unwarranted significance given by Hussain to the role of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) in radicalisation and recruitment into violent extremism.   HT is damned as a fringe group with a high turnover of typically student recruits who become bored by its political campaigning:

> To describe Hizb ut-Tahrir as a radicalising conveyor belt for terrorism, as Hussein does, is hardly warranted and discloses a lack of knowledge of terrorism (ibid. p.37).

Lambert equates HT to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), ridiculed by left-wing terrorist groups as 'armchair revolutionaries' or 'weekend activists', while Al-Qaida propagandists dismiss HT on exactly the same basis (ibid. p27).

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[11] Hussein, Ed. (2007). *The Islamist.* London: Penguin.

Historical parallels are drawn between a contemporary muddled conflation of London's Salafi and Islamist communities with links to Al-Qaida based terrorism, and the conflation with terrorism by populist politicians and opinion in late 19th and early 20th centuries of minority sections of London's Jewish and Christian communities. Precedents included the examples of terrorist attacks by London-based Jewish anarchists in the 1890s used in political discourse to invoke wider anti-Semitism and guilt by association against the Jewish immigrant community.

Similarly, the author draws similar parallels in later 20th century Irish precedents where since 1970

> Irish Catholic communities in London, as well as Northern Ireland, were regularly stigmatised and conflated with the terrorism of the Provisional IRA (ibid. p38)

Such examples highlight the risk of generating notions of 'suspect communities' which also provides tools for terrorist recruiters and their strategies through what the report describes as the highly developed Al-Qaida propaganda of today, aimed at vulnerable young Salafi and Islamist community members. The author contends that AQ propagandists need to 'invoke and subvert' Salafi and Islamist approaches to Islam in order to legitimise their causes of violence and stresses how the genuine faith-based beliefs in themselves are inadequate tools for profiling terrorists:

> Salafism and Islamism, as causal or predictive factors, are no more significant to the profile of an Al-Qaida terrorist than Catholicism was to the profile of a Provisional IRA terrorist (ibid. p38).

Indeed, the deployment of their faith is described as providing often the best tool to undermine AQ propaganda within youth communities and most effectively delivered by Salafi and Islamist members themselves. The latter have the best antidotes to AQ propaganda and are effective against recruitment.

However, the paper highlights how political/policy conduct has tended to denigrate the role in counter-terrorism by the latter groups in favour of the promotion and support of bodies such as the Sufi Muslim Council and the Quilliam Foundation who lack credibility and knowledge of AQ activity, as being

> reminiscent of loyalist Protestant condemnation of Catholic communities as terrorist sympathisers in Northern Ireland during the Troubles (ibid. p39).

The approach to counter terrorism recommended is based on the capacity to identify and support credible community figures who can negotiate with vulnerable young people with an emphasis on empowerment and facilitation of community expertise. MCU and partnership efforts are described as pioneering, stressing the value in supporting minority groups of different faiths, rather than isolating or alienating them which risks assisting terrorist propagandists.

8.3.12 Lambert , R (2007). *Reflections on Counter-Terrorism Partnerships in Britian*. Arches Quarterly Embracing diversity not clash 5 (1), pp 3-6. London: The Cordoba Foundation.
The article provides valuable insights into the determinants of effective partnership working in this field from the experience of a senior officer in the Metropolitan Police's Muslim Contact Unit. The author draws on reflections on the impact of Al-Qaida inspired terrorism, the Troubles in Northern Ireland and comparisons with forging partnerships with London's Black communities as part of 'operation trident'.

Some of the key features include:

- The long-understood need to deny terrorists community support and sympathy
- Indiscriminate and disproportionate counter terrorism efforts generate reluctance amongst communities to participate in police partnerships
- Muslim communities believe special anti-terrorist powers unfairly target them
- Those involved in counter terrorism need to understand better the distinction and tensions between coercive and partnership approaches
- Young Muslim youth workers who might become key partners will be further alienated if they are approached as potential informants
- Source recruitment is coercive and weakens community confidence
- Successful pro-active preventative youth workers need religious and street credibility in equal measure
- The use of extra-judicial powers and disproportionate responses can further alienate a minority of young Muslims

The author recommends a grasp of historical perspective by those involved in counter terrorism efforts, including politicians. The tactic of provoking disproportionate responses from the state is a frequent terrorist weapon and needs avoiding.

For example, internment in Northern Ireland led to increased violence and the unbending approach to Bobby Sands and fellow hunger strikers gave the 'IRA its biggest ever recruitment boost' (Lambert 2007, p. 6). The author contends that Al-Qaida seeks to provoke similar disproportionate acts by government to generate community support from those further alienated. Well-intentioned public policy can result in being counter-productive by increasing community vulnerability and aiding terrorist recruitment and propagandists.

8.3.13 Thomas , P (2009). *Between Two Stools? The Government's 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Agenda.* The Political Quarterly 80 (2): Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
The article highlights concerns about the effectiveness of the content of the PVE agenda in achieving its aims, being counter-productive to community cohesion efforts and failing to address the drivers behind any evident attraction of extremism dialogues and doctrines.

The report contextualises its critique within a UK social/political environment in which concerns about the incidence of home-grown suicide terrorism have occurred in parallel with the example of Muslim alienation, heated debate about national identity, shared values, integration, multiculturalism and cohesion post 2001 violent disturbances in northern English towns.

The author charts progress of the deployment of PVE policy from the centre to local government and partners, with its avoidance of

> 'aggressive rhetoric *[in government strategy and guidance]* and use language that encourages the positive involvement of Muslim communities' (Thomas 2009, p. 283),

and contends a number of policy contradictions and problems. These include:

- Exclusive focus on Muslim communities
- Avoidance of attention to violent extremism in other communities
- Self-defeating contradiction in promoting a Muslim-specific focus on PVE within a community cohesion agenda
- Inadequate cohesion has reinforced 'inward looking…ethnic specific and defensive identities' (ibid. p. 285) shared both by Pakistani, Bangladeshi communities as well as white working-class communities, who become attracted to BNP support.
- Such failings in cohesion facilitate moves towards extremism
- Contradiction in PVE in further supporting ethnic-specific funding in regeneration

The author maintains that the logic of such contradictions should mean a less exclusive PVE focus on Muslim young people and greater deployment of accelerated integrated programmes of cohesion.

The report suggests a significant flaw in the lack of focus on other types of politically motivated violent extremism, such as associated with the far-right. Opaque language by government in shorting the title of the counter-terrorism programme from PVE to 'Prevent' and use of 'Pathfinder' terminology suggest acknowledgement of inherent contradictions and a desire to achieve Muslim community acquiescence.

The focus on PVE within Muslim communities may unintentionally harden defensive Muslim identities when associated with a lack of focus on racist extremism within white communities. The author points to historical precedent in the failure of 1980s anti-racist educational programmes in white communities which were resented by them in he way they labelled those communities with externally imposed assumptions, which only served to breed resentment and feelings of unfairness at being implicitly labelled as racist and ignorant, thereby only achieving non-compliance with a new multi-cultural agenda.

The author cites a good practise case study in the progressive work of a Leeds-based community group on the PVE agenda which is both enabling Muslim youth to explore issues of identity and extremism within a wider context of democracy but also linked with wider cohesion contact with other ethnic/religious groups (ibid. p.289).

The article warns that the pathways to terrorist sympathy pre-date 9/11and invasion of Iraq. It concludes by asserting the resolution of policy contradictions which are at variance with community cohesion imperatives which should be pre-eminent in the tackling the PVE agenda. Echoing other studies, the author calls for greater opportunity in addressing the need amongst Muslim people to explore and understand their identity and faith, locally and globally, and to engage in discussion of controversial foreign and social policy in cohesive and inclusive community contexts.

8.3.14 Birt, Y (2009). *Promoting Virulent Envy? Reconsidering the UK's Terrorist Prevention Strategy.* RUSI Journal Aug 2009 Vol 154:4 pp.52-58

Based on an outline derived from the Lokahi Foundation[12], Birt describes how community involvement in counter-terrorism in Britain falls into two main schools of thought. These alternate between a 'values based' approach that sees the Al-Qaida threat as the promotion of theological error which needs to be delegitimised by the promotion of partnership with Muslim moderates, stressing the compatibility of mainstream Islam with mainstream liberal/secular values; and, second, a 'means based' approach that seeks to isolate the impact of Al-Qaida as a socio-political movement by closer engagement with the vulnerable by partnering those who can most credibly work with them.

Within this conceptual framework, the 'values based' approach provides the logic variously for the promotion of initiatives such as the publicly funded Radical Middle Way, the promotion of citizenship education, 'liberal notions of inclusive citizenship…international law, human rights…cultural inclusion of Muslim communities' (Birt, 2009, p. 53). The author cites the approaches of the US Bush administration, falling into this school, as well as being reflected in UK government stances on the promotion of non-negotiable shared values and Contest 2, the revised UK Prevent strategy and guidance on suitable community partners.

The 'means based' approach highlights personal social, emotional and psychological factors that can attract young people to Al-Qaida and is said often to be favoured by counter-terrorism practitioners.

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[12] Griffiths-Dickson, G (2008), Lokahi Foundation. 'Countering Extremism and the Politics of Engagement', Conference presentation, Gresham College, Oxford, 29 April 2008.

Both schools of thought can be applied according to specific situational needs and interpretations of needs, with each generating in principle criticism from its counterpart. The 'values based' approach can be accused of:

> 'promoting out-of-touch Muslim partners, and taking a wide focus that can alienate ordinary Muslims (ibid. p.54)

While the 'means based' approach can be criticised for:

> 'political naïveté…and legitimising reactionary or quasi-extremist elements at the expense of core values and social solidarity (ibid. p.54)

The difference in the two approaches rests on a judgement of how best to influence terrorist narrative and objectives: by delegitimising its religious values and goals; or by moderating at risk groups, by emphasising shared interests. The latter raises the debate about the merit and appropriateness of political engagement and providing public funding with 'Islamists', illiberal, radical and ultra-conservative groups to 'temper violent extremism' (ibid. p.54) and de-radicalisation.

Birt highlights the dilemmas facing authorities to identify desirable community groups with which to partner (within either approach, 'values' or 'means'), given complex internal Muslim theological and political diversity. But basic and fundamental efforts by the state, centrally and locally, are undermined by the emphasis in Prevent to engage with Muslims as an 'at risk' (or 'suspect') community, rather than as citizens.

The conflation of integration policies with security has proven socially divisive and generated criticism from local authorities, often as reluctant participants in Prevent, with the author suggesting that some Muslim community organisations themselves also grapple conscientiously with the dilemma of the need for capacity building funding in general and strong dislike of the funding source (i.e. Prevent) for it.

Birt's consideration of the U.K.'s prevention strategy provides a useful framework of understanding complex and varied initiatives that have been promoted in its name. The underlying concern remains that in seeking to c-opt community involvement and support in this process, the strategy has been widely criticised and its effectiveness seriously questioned.

8.3.15 International Crisis Group (2009). *Women and Radicalisation in Kyrgyzstan.* Asia Report No. 176. 3 September 2009: Bishkek/Brussels.

The report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) provides an apposite survey of recent growing radicalisation in Kyrgyzstan and the greater involvement of women in Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) (the Party of Liberation). Its relevance to this literature review lies in some striking parallels and similarities with the incidence of the terrorism issue and its public sector response, as articulated in UK through the Contest and Prevent programmes.

Headline parallels include (ICG 2009, p. i-iii):

- Perceptions of heavy handed policing fuelling more sympathy for radicalisation
- The need to tackle economic failure and improve living conditions
- The need to provide employment schemes and vocational training for women
- Failure by the state to address grass-roots needs (e.g. after school programmes for young children)
- Increased funding on grassroots projects to address practical concerns of religious women and beyond traditional gender issues

- Feelings of local communities being socially and politically dispossessed with an inadequate stake in civil society
- Flawed conflation of renewed religious faith; e.g. its expression in adoption of traditional attributes of Islamic dress (beards, re. men and headscarves, re. women) with radicalisation
- Inability of women in government and NGOs to connect credibly with local religious women in grassroots communities because they inadequately reflect their views
- Enhanced understanding of Islam at the neighbourhood level with study groups led by respected, knowledgeable women from local communities
- Decrease the influence of law enforcement agencies in inter-agency work on de-radicalisation
- Greater public discussion on causes and solutions to address radicalisation
- Avoid disproportionate emphasis on security measures

The corollary to these headline recommendations is that their neglect will serve only to fuel discontent, reinforce the promoted view by HT of the failings of society (western/soviet), swell sympathisers of HT, its membership and push some HT members towards violence and more radical organisations.

> The government needs to redefine its approach to religious radicalisation as primarily a socio-economic and political, not law-enforcement challenge…The government needs to realise that if people no longer believe in the state to provide justice and well-being, they will look elsewhere (ibid. p.26).

Many of these findings find traction with studies and literature cited elsewhere in this review which similarly stress the importance of grassroots community organisations, their local credibility and contributions, the securitisation of issues of identity and integration, the importance of socio-economic grievance and the risks of counter-productive interventions by the state in various forms as perceived by significant sections of the domestic population.

8.3.16 Fink, N., Hearne, E. (2008). *Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism.* New York: International Peace Institute (IPI).

The report examines the under-researched subject area of factors behind the *withdrawal* of individuals and groups from violent extremist and radical causes worldwide. It draws specifically on the work of John Horan and Tore Bjørgo[13], together with reflections on international conference discussions on this issue hosted by the IPI and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 22 April 2008 in New York City.

A better understanding of why individuals move away from and leave violent activism (disengagement), can hold important lessons for global counter-terrorism efforts. The authors contend that the processes of disengagement have several common characteristics. These are:

- First, transformation taking place following a 'cognitive opening' (Fink, N., 2008, p.3) in which a person becomes receptive to alternative (i.e. non-violent extremist) worldviews; (this could be triggered by trauma, revulsion, stress, disillusionment);
- Second, this is then secured by education, social and economic assistance and counselling

Depending on political sensitivities in different countries, the latter process is referred to variously as deradicalisation, rehabilitation, resocialisation or dialogue.

The report draws on case studies of disengagement of extremist nationalists, 'neo-Nazis' and white supremacists via 'exit programmes' operating in Sweden, Norway and Germany; case studies in

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[13] Horgan, J. (forthcoming 2009) *Walking Away From Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements.* New York: Routledge
Bjørgo, T,, Horgan, J. eds (forthcoming 2008). *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement.* New York: Routledge

Columbia, and jihidist terrorists in Yemen , Egypt, Saudi Arabia and South East Asia. It also highlights how deradicalisation programmes need to take into account forms of terrorism operating in different locations:

> A number of different states face more than one type of violent extremist group, ranging in ideology from racist to religious, nationalist, or separatist (ibid. p.12)

Some like Al-Qaida are transnational in character and export their ideas to self-starting and leaderless groups in various countries worldwide. These provide nuanced context specific, local cultural and environmental factors that need to be taken into account, but which do not contradict the two main features in the process mentioned above.

The key features drawn out in the report resonate with findings elsewhere in this literature review. These include:

- Provision of socio-economic incentives to help reintegration
- Alternative employment options
- Long term efforts to boost literacy and skills
- Different models of re-education around religion
- The use of respected clerics independent from government in re-education
- Debating and discussion models
- Engagement of families
- Financial assistance to reduce dependency on violent groups
- Disengagement programmes being dependent for their effectiveness on local cultural and religious norms
- The effectiveness of using 'civil society groups'

As the report states, case studies:

> suggest a close relationship between radical extremists and economic and social marginalisation, educational opportunities, human rights, and the rule of law (ibid. p.4)

Counter-terrorism research reviewed in this report suggests further consideration is needed of UK Prevent strategy content. Prominent features include the re-iteration of addressing socio-economic issues which literature elsewhere cites as an important causal factor and this report (Fink, 2008) cites as a viable disengagement and deradicalisation mechanism; intellectual deradicalisation in religious and cultural contexts with trusted religious figures; independent status of the latter from governments; the value of local social capital and civil society groups providing grassroots approaches to help state-level actors.

8.3.17 Local Government Association (2009*) Communities and Local Government (CLG) Group Inquiry on Prevent.* **London: Local Government Association (LGA)**
The LGA Report summarises the view from the perspective of local government to the Government's Prevent strategy, submitted as evidence to the CLG Select Committee Inquiry of 2009. The LGA emphasises the importance of the role that local authorities can play in this agenda, as part of the process of building safer, stronger communities and building resilience to extremism at local levels. It particularly commends the partnership working between councils and the police (on counter terrorism local profiles (CTLPs)) and helpful relationships between local government and regional government offices that have been developing.

The critique weighs advantages and shortcomings in the Prevent strategy but is supportive overall, welcoming a more nuanced approach which is moving away from an earlier 'heavy handed' focus on Muslim communities and latterly acknowledging the impact of foreign policy on community sensitivities. The LGA still has concerns, however, about an unfair focus on Muslim communities.

In line with its ambition as a membership body to promote success of local government, the LGA seeks to augment the authority of councils and the roles of councillors, a view reflected in its criticism of the recent 'direct support' introduced by government to local councils which it sees as adversely affecting local freedom of action. Commending various peer-led initiatives across the country, the LGA comments that it was:

> "...disappointed by the Government's decision to introduce 'Direct Support', now called the Prevent Exemplar Partnership Programme. ...we feel a national-Government-led programme of this kind undermines the commitment to freedom and flexibility in local delivery." (LGA 2009, p. 5)

Arguably, the submission's most significant concern lies in the need for government and its delivery partners to address the problem of violent extremism in a broader social context of equality and community cohesion, with this providing the more effective means of identifying and dealing with deeper causal factors that goes beyond 'pursuit' of those individuals with extremist profiles:

> "Prevent must be practically situated within a wider context of equality, human rights, social cohesion and social justice." (ibid. p. 3). .

In this context the LGA does not see differentiation between policy around Prevent, integration and cohesion as confusing or problematic. Accepting the complexity of the agenda, it recommends Prevent is positioned in an overall mainstreamed approach to supporting and maintaining stronger, safer communities:

> "It should not be problematic that some aspects of Prevent overlap with community cohesion, integration, or equality. Local authorities are experienced and sophisticated about joining policy up at a local level, and in looking at diverse outcomes and impacts within their communities." Ibid. p. 8)

Government-created advisory structures such as the Muslim Women's Advisory Group are commended though in calling for them to be refreshed and broadened there is an implicit concern about their local validity.

The LGA recommends that NI35 (resilience) be abandoned as a technical measure for evaluating the effectiveness of Prevent, asserting that its value is limited as it concentrates on processes rather than outcomes. It recommends consideration of utilising other pre-existing performance indicators (such as NI12 'belonging') to report Prevent delivery. Similarly, it expresses concern about the perceived dismissal by central government of research findings:

> "We would like to see Government taking a more active role in reviewing and debating the findings of these reports, rather than generally dismissing them. We feel we are more responsive on this" (ibid. p. 7)

The LGA submission has little to say about the empowerment and contributions of local civil society and community groups, associating local influence by implication with that provided by local government itself.

8.3.18 Suleiman , Y (2009) *Contextualising Islam in Britain: Exploratory Perspectives.* **Cambridge: Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge in association with the Universities of Exeter and Westminster.**

The report is a compendium of philosophical and theological perspectives on the meaning of living as a Muslim in Britain today. The 9 month study draws on the contributions from 26 Muslim scholars, academics and activists and was conducted independently and with funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government.   In a wide-ranging discourse, the report introduces perceptions of contextualising Islam in modern Britain, demographic and socio-economic contexts, political context of secularism, Islam in a secular nation state, human rights and Shari'ah, pluralism and political and civic engagement.

The subject matter relates closely to contemporary debate and understanding of identity, citizenship, equality, cohesion and democracy in relation both to the Islamic faith and in the context of a diverse, multi-cultural, multi-faith population.

The document is intended as a start for wider discussion and debate on these issues in the Muslim community and wider society at a time when radicalisation and public policy is seeking to address threats from violent extremism and the promotion of vibrant, safe communities in modern Britain. Though not explicitly claiming its production as part of the Prevent (violent extremism) agenda, the report has many insights that can be used to consider alongside issues of so-called de-radicalisation initiatives and trends in public policy in related fields.

The report acknowledges that such issues are 'complex and politically charged' (Suleiman 2009, p. 25) and precision is needed in the choice of language and terminology with which to discuss them.

8.3.19 Kundnani, A (2009) *Spooked! How not to prevent violent extremism.* **London: Institute of Race Relations.**

Kundrani (2009) offers a broad assessment of the UK government's Prevent strand of its counter-terrorism strategy, drawing on the testimony from a survey of local activists, local authority staff, Prevent board officers, and voluntary sector and community workers.   Detailed context of the historical development of recent government policy and programmes since 2004 is provided, focusing on those interventions attempting to mobilise community support to oppose the ideology of violent extremism. It particularly critiques the revised Prevent strategy of March 2009 which promotes the adoption of shared values as well as opposition to violent extremism which, it claims, has further fuelled the construction of the UK Muslim population as a 'suspect community'.

The author contends that the early evolution of the Prevent strategy in 2007 in effect saw a rejection of the 2005 Preventing Extremism Together taskforce recommendations which stressed that the ultimate solution to extremism lay in addressing four key issues that affected Muslim communities – discrimination, inequality, deprivation and foreign policy – to one focusing on an ideological campaign that needed to be embedded in Muslim communities themselves. This found expression in the DCLG strategy 2007 *Preventing Violent Extremism: winning hearts and minds*.

The report traces the growth in government funding for Prevent, distributed through local authority structures to English regions with higher percentages of Muslim populations but one:

> "driven by central government than rather than by locally perceived needs" (ibid. p.15)

Prevent activity locally has predominantly focused on targeted capacity building of Muslim community organisations, police 'community engagement', the Channel programme and other de-radicalisation initiatives, supporting counter-terrorism in institutional settings (schools, colleges, universities and prisons), and communication campaigns with domestic and overseas audiences.

A shift in strategic emphasis in March 2009 led Prevent work to be sanctioned more explicitly only with those community organisations and influencers who were able or willing to demonstrate an overt, publically expressed espousal of shared British 'core' values and a rejection of anti-western views, thereby social re-engineering a domestic UK environment where extremist views might otherwise more easily thrive, and

> suggesting that there was a danger of excessive tolerance of diversity impeding this programme (ibid. p.21),

Kundnani contends that the emphasis of Prevent is discriminatory in its sole focus on Muslims and has undermined progressive elements in previous community cohesion work. Prevent has displaced the community cohesion, multiculturalism and race equality agendas, subordinating them in terms of priority and funding (ibid. p.23) with demands for assimilation to ill-defined values of Britishness which has caused further alienation amongst Muslim communities themselves as well as with other communities who resent the predominantly singular focus of funding.

Examples of local interventions to broaden the scope of Prevent to other forms of extremism (e.g. far-right extremism) are so far considered perfunctory, with little funding and no meaningfully focused application. The concentration on the Muslim population remains.
Muslim community disquiet of Prevent is based in large degree on a perception of it as a vehicle for unjustifiable surveillance. Community mapping is used not only for the investigation of criminal activity but to identify those perceived to hold questionably defined 'extremist' views. Kundnani cites five forms of evidence:

- Expectations on Prevent funded council workers and voluntary sector organisations to provide information to the police;
- Information Sharing Agreements as protocols between police and Prevent funded providers;
- A 2008 ACPO briefing promoting the police's involvement as community engaged in Prevent to improve intelligence flow;
- The creation of dedicated police officers to work locally with Prevent programmes nationally;
- Examples of the counter terrorism police themselves managing Prevent programmes.

The report highlights conceptual flaws in *Prevent's* application of ineffectual dependence on definitions of 'moderate' and 'extremist' views as foundations for its policy of ideological prevention and de-radicalisation against Al-Qaida inspired terrorism and sympathies. The 'elevation 'of moderates is seen as containing three main problems:

- The distinction is too closely linked to the degree to which Muslims support or oppose government or council policies;
- 'Moderate' is defined sometimes by a theological interpretation and there are dangers associated with state sponsored religion, undermining its value as independent;
- It imposes a notion of Britishness from above which is in itself illiberal

Kundnani contends that the government's Prevent strategy is flawed and counter-productive in its cultural and theological approach which is waging a 'battle of ideas' with the attitudes and opinions of mainstream Muslims in Britain. In this a danger lies in Muslim community members no longer being treated as citizens to whom the state is accountable but as 'potential recruits to a global counter-insurgency that is threatening to the state's prospects of prevailing in Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere' (ibid. p.40).

> The central problem with this 'battle of minds' strategy is that, despite all its efforts to map and survey Muslims in Britain, it ends up creating a false image of Britain's Muslim citizens. The dichotomy between 'moderate' and 'extremist' does not correspond to the ways in which Muslims actually live their lives and the extent to which ordinary Muslims are caught up in an

ideological struggle between competing versions of Islam is hugely overstated. An al-Qaida-type ideology does not constitute a viable alternative belief system for all but a tiny number of individuals in Britain. To believe otherwise is to conceive of Muslims as living in a moral universe that is separate from the rest of the population. Not only is this inaccurate but it also stigmatises Muslims as morally retrograde. (ibid. p. 40)

8.3.20 House of Commons – Communities and Local Government select Committee Inquiry – Preventing Violent Extremism 2009

Written submissions to the Inquiry can be found on the Parliament website with contributions on the subject of Prevent from a wide range of organisations including community and voluntary sectors, think-tanks, representative bodies, local government, statutory bodies and academia.

Available at: Communities and Local Government Memoranda: Preventing Violent Extremism (2008-09) available at
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmcomloc/memo/previoex/contents.htm

8.3.21 House of Commons – Communities and Local Government Committee (2010) *Preventing Violent Extremism*. London: The Stationery Office

Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/65/65.pdf
The cross-party Select Committee report was published 30 March 2010 based on consideration of a wide range of written and oral evidence provided to the Inquiry. Whilst supporting the requirement for a targeted *Prevent* strategy at national level, the report recommends some significant changes in content and emphasis. It expresses concern at how the Prevent programme has stigmatised and alienated those it is most important to engage and that the single focus on Muslims in Prevent has been unhelpful. Allegations of spying made by witnesses to the Inquiry lead in the report to a call for an independent inquiry into these claims. Other key concerns and recommendations included:

- Concern at a misplaced and persistent preoccupation with the theological basis of radicalisation;
- Invigorated efforts in future preventative work to address factors of deprivation, alienation and foreign policy;
- A more risk-based approach to tackling all kinds of extremism;
- More projects aimed at encouraging direct participation in democratic means of debate;
- Greater empowerment and civic engagement with democratic institutions, to strengthen the interaction and engagement with society not only of Muslims, but also of other excluded groups;
- Greater acknowledgement of community cohesion work as a sharper tool in the long term fight against violent extremism and build senses of identity and belonging;
- Refocus and clarify responsibilities around cohesion activity and preventing crime between Home Office and CLG respectively; less of a role for CLG in counter-terrorism and focus more on building strong and cohesive communities;
- Targeted interventions for vulnerable individuals;
- Concern at previous failure to engage with more 'radical' voices which do promote violent extremism;
- More informed local risk-based assessments and to understand the 'local story' from community perspectives;
- Changes to Prevent funding formal on lines of Connecting Communities risk-based approach than purely on the size of the Muslim population.

Clearly the adoption of recommendations is subject to the current (April 2010) political and general outcomes which are imminent.

8.3.22 Miscellaneous Commentary

It is instructive to extract a number of issues raised by a miscellany of sources in relevant press commentary and critiques which echoes the trend in literature. These are highlighted briefly.

Alvensleben, Bruno von (2008)*. Homegrown Terrorism: breaking the vicious circle of marginalisation and radicalisation.* The European Weekly: New Europe Issue 800. Available at http://www.neurope.eu/print.php?id=89824. Accessed 24 September 2008.

> The author, German Foreign Ministry commentator, raises a range of key issues of relevance, especially in relation to the incidence of homegrown terrorism in Europe. These include a series of implications for policy response, including:
>
> - Common patterns of uncertainty about identity amongst those attracted by the jihadi message
> - Links between radicalisation and vicarious experiences of marginalisation and discrimination
> - Impact of US military interventions in Muslim countries
> - No automatic correlation between condoning use of violence and Islamist sympathies
> - Political factors play a greater role in radicalisation than religious ones
>
> The article doubts the existence of a 'movement' of homegrown terrorist recruits, as potential supporters are statistically equivalent in western societies to percentages likely to be involved in violent crime.

Ghannoushi, Soumaya (2008). *The Blears fallacy: Islam cannot be controlled by the state*. Guardian.co.uk. Available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/july/25/isalm.religion/print. Accessed 11 November 2008.

> The author casts doubt on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the government's plans through Department of Communities and Local Government to tackle radicalisation by the creation of state sponsored 'engineered' political and religious representatives such as the Sufi Council or committees of theologians.[14]
>
> The article contends a serious fallacy in the view that the root of Britain's terrorist problem lies in Islamic theology.

Neville-Jones, Pauline (2009). *MI5 must use persuasion – not coercion.* The Independent. Available at http://www.license.icopyright.net/user/viewFreeUse.act?fuid=MzUyNT15OA%3D%3D. Accessed 21 May 2009.

> The article urges sensitive approaches to the integration of counter-terrorism work into community policing, made hazardous by risks to counter-productive reductions in trust, communication and community relations. The author warns of the reliability of recruiting informers whose evidence may be unreliable, heighten community fears of stigmatisation which limit potential for voluntary co-operation from communities who are in fact best placed to understand potential sources of radicalised behaviours locally.

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[14] Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board   (MINAB)

Milne, Seamus (2009). *This counter-terror plan is in ruins. Try one that works.* **Gurdian.co.uk. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentis free/2009/mar/mar/26/. Accessed 8 April 2009.**

The commentary criticises the newly launched government 'Contest 2' counter-terrorism strategy and especially its early versions that sought to base the revision on broad government definitions of non-violent as well as violent extremism, and the requirement for their wide community rejection as pre-requisites for government assistance.

The author casts doubt on the validity of government advice from Islamist defectors and neo-conservative thinktanks who have tended to conflate the domestic terrorist threat with a broad, populace Islamist movement rather than 'tiny takfiri groups' intent on specific indiscriminate violent acts against which almost all Muslims and non-Muslims are united.

The article welcomes acknowledgement in the strategy of the impact of western foreign policy and military intervention on radicalisation.

Keane, N (2008) National Community Tensions Team. *National Police Improvement Agency, Neighbourhood Policing Programme.* **Available at http://www.acpo.police.uk/NCTT/default.asp. Blog accessed 10 June 2008.**

Taken from the author's blog to the NCTT website on counter terrorism, the note comments on tensions between neighbourhood policing, community cohesion and PVE. Specifically, the author stresses the need to position PVE 'thoughtfully', and terrorism has been found to be introduced more effectively by not making it a headline issue but by mainstreaming as part of the process of other policing activities.[15] This is referred to as "less heat – more light".

Basian (Black and Asian Service in Alcohol and Narcotics 2009). *Personal communication by email 31 July 2009.* **Reading: Engage project.**

'Engage' is a challenging local project working on the PVE agenda with vulnerable members of Reading's young Muslim communities to counter radicalisation and violent extremism. Basian are addressing the phenomenon of radicalisation as a problem of criminal behaviour being fostered by subverted interpretations of Islamic faith. Young people are being encouraged by criminal propagandists to quote Quranic text to justify criminal behaviour, suggesting it is *halal* (permitted) to commit 'economic jihad' by fraudulent practice such as through stolen credit cards, VAT and benefit fraud and to promote non-co-operation with the police on tackling crime as religiously forbidden (*haram*). De-radicalisation efforts are being delivered by interventions with young people seen as vulnerable to indoctrination through their social exclusion, unemployment, low aspirations and poor religious literacy and understanding.

Trusted community outreach is targeting vulnerable gang members, ex-drug users and ex-prisoners, intervening with positive mentoring to raise skills, opportunities, religious understanding and principles of citizenship and cohesion from Islamic perspectives.

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[15] This echoes findings from McDonald , B *et al* (2008a) which found that the subject of PVE emerged in the engagement project with Black and minority communities in London for MPS as part of an overall peer-to-peer scoping of issues of crime, safety and policing issues; PVE was not imposed externally as a subject for community consideration, rather it emerged from a wider process of contact and engagement, thereby helping to overcome sensitivities.

The project seeks to equip young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to articulate and defend themselves with a positive identity against potential extremist messages of radicalisation.

Muslim Directory (2008). *The only 'proper' Muslim is a non-political one. 11 August 2008*. **Available at http://www.muslimdirectory.co.uk/viewarticle.php?id=299. Accessed 26 March 2009.**

The lead article criticises the stretching of the term 'Islamism' into anyone who uses Islam as a political ideology and rejects conflation of terrorism with the philosophy of Islam. The author promoted the contention that terrorist acts need to be treated as criminal, rather than religious issues where the consequence has been merely to create a hostile and prejudiced environment 'where criminal activities cannot be properly attacked'.

Travis, Alan (2008*). MI5 report challenges views on terrorism in Britain.* **The Guardian. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/aug/20/uksecurity.terrorism1/print Accessed 27 August 2009.**

Commentary by home affairs editor reports a restricted MI5 research report which concludes that there was no single, stereotypical pathway to violent extremism. Key points about those involved in British terrorism include:

- Lack of psychotic behaviour or mental illness[16]
- Most are religious novices and lack religious literacy, rather than Islamist Fundamentalists
- Very few brought up in strongly religious households
- Downplaying the importance of radical extremist clerics
- A well-established religious identity actually protects against violent radicalisation
- Assumptions cannot be made about suspects based on skin colour, ethnic heritage or nationality
- The 'terrorist loner' is a mythical stereotype – most are over 30 and have steady relationships and children
- Educational achievement ranges from a total lack of qualifications to degree-level education
- Almost all are employed in low-grade jobs

MI5 research concludes that traditional law enforcement tactics could backfire if handled badly (e.g. against illegitimate targets); and underlines the need for attractive alternatives to terrorist involvement.

Brennan, John (2009*). A New Approach to Safeguarding Americans.* **Washington 6 August 2009: White House Press Office, Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Available at:: http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-John-Brennan-at-the-Center-for-Strategic-and-International-Studies/ Accessed 11 September 2009.**

Recent White House press statements from the 'Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism' have indicated new US thinking on the promotion of national security and countering the threat from violent extremism. The policy shift highlights a revised understanding of the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of the problem which requires attention beyond military and intelligence operations and law enforcement to include action on

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[16] A view reinforced by Dr Andrew Silke, forensic psychologist and UN adviser, who discounts the view that terrorists are isolated with paranoid or borderline personality disorders and echoes views by a German psychiatrist who has assessed Baader Meinhof terrorists. Terrorists are often motivated by violent events, that they do not need to experience first-hand, and the desire for revenge.

political, social and economic factors that contribute to the vulnerability of individuals to violent extremism.

The language of US policy has also changed in line with this revised approach, abandoning previous terms such as 'the war on terror', 'global war' and 'a fight against jihadists'. Such terminology is seen as unhelpful, serving only to distort US approaches and unwittingly to enhance the Al-Qaida narrative and a false reputation as a 'highly organised, global entity capable of replacing sovereign nations with a global caliphate'.

The new approach claims a more accurate understanding of the causes and conditions that fuel violent extremism, and seeks to address upstream political, economic and social factors which enable extremists to thrive:

Poverty does not cause violence and terrorism. Lack of education does not cause terrorism. But…there is no denying that when children have no hope for an education, when young people have no hope for a job and feel disconnected from the modern world, when governments fail to provide for the basic needs of their people, then people become more susceptible to ideologies of violence and death. Extremist violence and terrorist attacks are therefore often the final murderous manifestation of a long process rooted in hopelessness, humiliation, and hatred (Brennan 2009 p.7).

The revised policy stance seeks to build faith and confidence in the political process and the rule of law, demonstrating that harsh localised socio-economic problems can be resolved by legitimate political processes, diplomacy and dialogue.

Githens-Mazer, J and Lambert, R (2009). *Reshaping Prevent.* Guardian.co.uk. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2009/oct/31/counter-terrorism-prevent-muslims?commentpage=1. Accessed: 2 November 2009.
The article is a response to government denials that the Prevent programme is intended for spying and large-scale surveillance, following Arun Kundnani's report for the Institute of Race Relations. The authors repeat their previously published opinions that Prevent policy has shifted from its original intention of building on community engagement and partnership focused on counter-terrorism into a policy to

control how and what Muslim communities are thinking and saying

This metamorphosis is articulated as a battle for and to change hearts and minds, and hence one for counter ideology/counter insurgency and confidential informants to promote 'shared values and beliefs'. This change was seen into government practice by former CLG secretary Hazel Blears, and promoted by the example of Quilliam:

A previously domestically focused counter-terrorist policy suddenly became an all encompassing policy of counter-radicalisation, counter-extremism, and counter-insurgency...as a platform for surveillance (ibid. p.1)

Githens-Mazer and Lambert contend this policy metamorphosis has left 'isolated and betrayed' ordinary Muslims perceived originally as potential partners but now into those whose minds now need to be won over, ignoring their genuine ownership already of a shared sense of obligation to British society.

Denham, Rt Hon John, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (2009). Speech at National Prevent Conference 8 December 2009, Birmingham. Available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/nationalpreventconf
Accessed 9 December 2009.
The speech sought to outline and clarify government policy on Prevent within the UK's overall Contest Strategy, seeking to address recent criticisms and controversies. The Secretary of State stressed the importance of public support and consent for Prevent's effectiveness and highlighted the determination of Government that while Al-Qaida inspired terrorism remained a problem to be tackled 'it must never be seen as the defining issue for British Muslims'. He reiterated Government determination with the community to address racism and discrimination and to work together on all issues of mutual concern.

The Secretary of State stressed that the pursuit, identification and apprehension of those who commit acts of violence is the proper role of the police and security services, rather than Prevent. Prevent's role lay more properly in community resilience and the capacity to challenge those who seek to legitimise violence together with ensuring that no-one is actually drawn into supporting violent extremism. He spoke of bringing to bear the power of the majority of the Muslim community to this end and to win active community support from those who may be currently reluctant to participate. He enumerated six key points:

i) Prevent is a crime prevention programme, rather than seeking agreement necessarily with Government foreign policy, for example
ii) Prevent must not stigmatise or demonise Muslim communities – it also tackles all forms of violent extremism and hate crime. Additional resources were heralded for community cohesion
iii) The programme is open and transparent and about building trust, not about secret information sharing
iv) The use of locally tailored terminology which doesn't stigmatise the Muslim community as a whole
v) Sharing knowledge and expertise amongst partners on understanding problems and responses and the unambiguous involvement of those opposed to violent extremism
vi) Initiatives tailored to addressing vulnerabilities and weaknesses and sharing good practice

There is common ground between Prevent and cohesion but without a complete overlap.

8.3.23 Terrorism – Psychological Perspectives
Limitations of time and resources preclude further examination of the extensive academic research on psychological perspectives on terrorism.

Briefly, these include psychological theories and levels of analysis addressing issues that are:

- Social-psychological
- Behavioural
- Cognitive
- Psychoanalytic
- Personality
- Mental illness, and;
- Interactionist analysis

Each enjoys wide-ranging academic research and propositions including those around group psychology, socio-political conditions, in-group – out-group theories, deprivation hypotheses, frustration-aggression hypotheses, goal directed behaviours, thinking and ideology, cognitive dissonance theories, imagery and narrative, paranoia, sadomasochistic theories, narcissism and self-esteem hypotheses and those of psychotic characteristics.

Further consideration of these would involve significant review, analysis and exposition which must therefore lie outside the scope of this literature review. This would add a valuable level of in-depth background and theoretical understanding to the general field of terrorism, but its absence here does not detract from the learning to be derived in the main body of the literature review which is specific to the current attention on the UK PVE agenda.

8.4. Summary of Emerging Principles and Features from the Literature
UK Government literature on the issue of terrorism prevention has developed consistent characteristics in line with domestic political and internationally determined priorities on addressing Al-Qaida linked violent extremism since 2001. Terrorism attacks in United States (11 September 2001) and London (7 July 2005) and the perceived emergence of homegrown terrorism in UK have been at the forefront in influencing subsequent policy formulation.

Policies in UK have been set out by Government in a range of documents of which the most prominent and comprehensive is the all-embracing UK strategy for tackling international terrorism, *Contest* (HM Government, 2009cii). Its four workstreams around the '4 Ps' are interlinked, though the Prevent strand is the main focus of this review, as it actively seeks to engage local communities and their stakeholders at the forefront of counter-terrorism efforts.

Contest is supported by a range of other government documents, guidances and studies which are designed both to inform partners of detailed requirements in their work on the Prevent agenda, as well as to provide support and advice. Government sponsored reviews of Prevent activities nationally (e.g. BMG Research, 2009; HM Government, 2009ci) usefully describe existing practise by local partnerships, though they are limited in articulating what may constitute 'best practice' and why. They also acknowledge that many Prevent projects are at early stages of development which also works against feasibility of mature impact assessments at this stage

At the time of writing, there have been recent announcements of adaptations to Government approaches on Prevent, though their implication and significance await further consideration (e.g. Khanna, 2009; RICU, 2009). Similarly, the House of Commons CLG Select Committee published the report of its Inquiry in to the Preventing Violent Extremism Programme on 30 March 2010 and its findings will no doubt be interpreted for action by Government post the General Election on May 6th 2010. The Inquiry report has picked up many of the themes and issues highlighted in this literature review and appeared in separate written and oral evidence to the Committee.

The deployment of Government Prevent policy has excited considerable commentary from academic, professional, management consultancy, community and media sources. This has been in addition to long-standing academic (and other) critique around the wider subject of terrorism more generically, historically, domestically and internationally.

Consideration of sources cited in this review has allowed for an understanding to be built that goes beyond a definition of 'Prevent projects' that is merely descriptive. It also traces a progression of critique from different commentaries of which many hold consistent themes and messages. It is hoped that these are valuable to stakeholders in their consideration of policy and project interventions in this field of endeavour. This section highlights some principal considerations and features that appear from the evidence as having a degree of consistency from the literature review. They may be useful to consider by stakeholders in the design of project activity.

Emerging trends in critiques included a combination of macro concerns about the Prevent programme as a whole, including those of a 'first principle' nature, as well as of micro issues about specific

aspects of policy and project interventions for local partners. Reflections on the body of sources as a whole demonstrate that both macro and micro propositions are often linked and can influence each other. Both can impact significantly on how Prevent is designed, delivered and received. Equally, some are more readily adaptable at a local level than others that would demand a more significant shift in central policy or approach.

On a point of consensus, none of the critiques in the review expressed denial of the problem posed by Al-Qaida influenced terrorism in itself. This was an implicit feature of sources, though in their engagement study McDonald *et al* (2008b) also cite explicit evidence from London-based community respondents acknowledging the problem. There appears an acknowledgement underlying sources that all partners are in agreement, seeking to achieve the desirable common goal of addressing violent extremist threats.

Whilst not in denial of the problem, a repeated macro-theme is well-documented Muslim community disaffection with Prevent as an unpopular intervention by state authority (central and local) whose objectives against terrorism are accepted but other aspects and consequences have received muted support, especially from communities affected (e.g. Cantle, 2009) and a reluctance to take part in the programme.

Scepticism and a lack of enthusiasm have been evident also from other non-Muslim communities as well as some local authorities themselves (e.g. Khanna, 2009).

Compounding the contentions of an unpopular policy intervention, sources also propose that the Prevent strategy is counter-productive and alienates the very community that the strategy seeks to influence positively (e.g. Turley, 2009), and heightens the vulnerability of individuals to being radicalised by terrorist propaganda. International studies also bear out the risks of state counter-terrorism policies actually fuelling (rather than reducing or 'preventing') sympathy for radicalisation and support for violence; a recent study of radicalisation trends in Kyrgyzstan make reference to these concerns (International Crisis Group, 2009).

One of the recurring themes within many sources and a macro concern from the evidence is the proposition that Prevent has fuelled notions of a whole and undifferentiated 'suspect (Muslim) community'. This is examined in various aspects and lies behind many of the reported perceptions of the strategy's unpopularity and counter-productivity (e.g. Lambert, 2007 and 2008). Concerns emerged repeatedly about the propensity within the overall macro approach of Prevent for risks of demonising Muslim communities in the eyes of others, reinforcing notions of alienation which in turn create tools for terrorist recruiters.

Recent international research on integration and preventative responses to violent radicalisation (e.g. Alvensleben von, 2008; Change Institute, 2008; Gallup Inc, 2009) challenge notions of religious or ethnic identity producing questionable loyalties to one's country of residence. British, German and French Muslims demonstrate greater religiosity as well as equally strong, if not stronger identification with their respective countries as the majority populations . Religiosity is neither a reliable indicator of radicalisation, nor of lack of patriotism. Hillyard (1993) has reinforced the limitations of a single focused approach in relation to the experience of the Irish Troubles, whilst Sen (2006) points to the dangers of labelling communities themselves with a narrow, singular (often faith-determined) identity in itself. Indeed MI5's own research (e.g. Travis, 2008) concludes there is no single, stereotypical pathway to violent extremism , and that most of those involved in British terrorism are religious novices, lack religious literacy, rather than being Islamic Fundamentalists.

Literature also warns of basing preventative and counter-terrorism assumptions on the opinion of Islamist defectors as well as the unjustified credence and impact of certain Islamist propaganda sources (e.g. Lambert, 2008; Milne, 2009).

The need for Prevent to move away from an exclusive focus on the Muslim community towards a greater focus on community cohesion is a theme tracing through the progression in the recent literature (e.g. Cantle, 2009; McDonald *et al* 2008b; Turley, 2009). Some local authorities appear to prefer such approaches by choice and have tailored their Prevent vocabulary accordingly, though some in communities and in commentary treat these stances suspiciously, viewing an emphasis on cohesion with non-aggressive language as merely decorative and as a way of achieving Muslim acquiescence and support (e.g. An-Nisa Society, 2009). The preference for accelerated cohesion activity (e.g. Thomas, 2009) is based on a number of factors.

These include disquiet by some (including Muslim and non-Muslim communities and local authorities) at an inherent moral injustice of a single community focus; public policy contradictions (e.g. Thomas, 2009; Turley, 2009) of a Muslim-specific focus in Prevent within a longer-standing community cohesion agenda; the unintended stimulus a single-community focus gives to discriminatory attitudes against Muslims, and fuelling hate crime, Islamophobia and right wing extremism (e.g. McDonald *et al*, 2008a). Community cohesion is seen as a relevant, focused and sharp tool in the reduction of those vulnerable to extremist radicalisation and recruitment which seeks to exploit the 'hunting ground' (ibid p. 7) created by defensive, withdrawn and disaffected communities.

One of the logical micro consequences of a macro change in emphasis would be for less exclusive concentration in Prevent on Muslim youth and more on accelerated community cohesion work with all communities. Addressing hate crime across all communities would also be a measure to tackle extremist radicalisation. Recent announcements by UK Government (Denham, 2009) on the Prevent programme have articulated the importance and context of work on community cohesion in relation to the prevention of violent extremism.

However, despite concerns about stigmatisation, sources readily acknowledge community vulnerabilities, as they do the reality of threats from radicalisation and terrorism. Interventions need to be proportionate and relevant, features which are not seen consistently in Prevent hitherto by much of the commentary (e.g. Lambert, 2007).

There is a macro concern about the emphasis on social engineering of a reputedly suspect and undifferentiated whole community, rather than a focus on terrorism as a criminal act, perpetrated by a small number of individuals. Sources contend the redundancy of treating the phenomena of violent radicalisation as a religious issue or as a broad populace domestic Islamist movement. Effectiveness in policy would be increased by an articulation of the problem as one of violent crime around of which all communities are united in their condemnation (e.g. Muslim Directory, 2008; McDonald *et al*, 2008; Milne, 2009).

The literature points to three critical areas, that may for convenience simplistically be termed 'causes' lying behind vulnerabilities to violent radicalisation and terrorism recruitment. These are the vitiating experiences of discrimination, deprivation and forms of intellectual radicalisation. The three are linked and mutually reinforcing. No single factor predominates; they can influence different individuals in different ways, but with a similar outcome (e.g. McDonald *et al*, 2008b).

Discrimination as a risk factor has been referred to above in the context of the need to design an approach around community cohesion dynamics, thereby denying the 'hunting ground' and conditions for community disaffection that extremist recruiters foster and find helpful (e.g. McDonald *et al*, 2008; International Crisis Group, 2009). Islamophobia by definition affects the vulnerability of Muslim

communities directly, whilst other communities can also be affected, including white communities, through breeding resentments (e.g. Thomas, 2009).

There is agreement in the sources for an emphasis on addressing socio-economic disadvantage and deprivation (e.g. Gallup, 2009; McDonald *et al*, 2008) rather than a limited focus on security and religion. These may be well-known structural issues but can be critical in helping those at disadvantage become active citizens and members of society and can be important in tackling processes of radicalisation. This has implications for beneficial impact via mainstreaming Prevent in education, training, skills development and widening participation, albeit with some Muslim community disquiet about perceptions of intrusive, community surveillance (e.g. An-Nisa Society, 2009). The important emphasis needs to be that the measure is seen as addressing genuine community need, rather than as a means for surveillance of a so-called suspect community.

Policy shifts announced in press statements from the United States government have also recently emphasised the importance of addressing socio-economic issues as preventative measures to combat violent extremism (Brennan, 2009). The importance of tackling economic/social failure and of providing focused resources and opportunities are also cited as important factors in facilitating the disengagement and deradicalisation of those who seek to leave radical and violent groups or movements (Fink, 2008).

Commentaries agree on the influence of a persuasive ideology in the radicalisation process, which is 'legitimised by a particular reading of Islam and conceived within a mythic religious narrative' (e.g. Burke, 2007) with Al-Qaida's objectives couched in religious language and imagery. Sources assert the uncertainties about identity, shared especially by Muslim young people, as a risk factor in vulnerability to radicalisation and terrorist recruiters. Antidotes lie both in the provision of opportunities to debate, explore and understand issues about faith and identity and also to discuss controversial foreign and social policy in inclusive community contexts (e.g. Thomas, 2009).

Birt (2009) proposes a framework for understanding UK prevention policy based on two different schools of thought. Approaches in policy and practice alternate between 'values based' approaches which see the Al-Qaida threat as the promotion of a theological error which needs countering by community wide promotion of 'liberal' attributes of Islamic faith in partnership with Muslim 'moderates'; or 'means based' approaches that moderate the behaviour and impact of at risk or radicalised individuals by fostering (publicly or privately) interventions by credible intermediaries who may tend themselves to hold views considered by some as illiberal or ultra-conservative.

Sources variously stress the value of virtuous religious intervention in intellectual discussion, challenging and de-radicalisation processes. Indeed, the need to engage and foster the Islamic faith in these processes is seen as a pivotal remedy. References suggest this is conditional on a number of factors. These include the identification and support by credible community figures with street and religious credibility (e.g. Lambert, 2007); the use of trusted community intermediaries rather than organisations and groupings that may alienate the same communities by their status as being created and controlled by the state, centrally or locally (e.g. Ghannoushi, 2008); and an opportunity to debate and share issues of concern on an all-community basis.

Indeed, the literature moves towards a consensus on the positive and critical value in engaging grass-roots local social capital of Muslim communities to tackle the threat of violent radicalisation. International studies (e.g. Change Institute, 2008; International Crisis Group, 2009) assert the generic value of vibrant 'civil society organisations', themselves providing alternatives to violent radical narratives, and often enjoying understanding of the issues and access across dense, local, horizontal, social networks. Partnership of such community networks with state organisations is welcomed, but the latter need to ensure that the actual and perceived autonomy of such civil organisations is

protected. The state should act in supportive, rather than dominant, controlling and determining ways for the social interventions to maintain their community acceptability and effectiveness (e.g. McDonald *et al*, 2008).

Sources also point to tendencies, however, for authorities to be risk averse and contend the value of engaging with progressive local groups (e.g. Lambert, 2008), with most effective delivery often by Salafi and Islamist members themselves, for example, rather than courting only those deemed 'moderates' but who lack credibility and the knowledge to achieve effective interventions with young people: Salafi and Islamist members often have the best antidotes to countering Al-Qaida propaganda which the latter invokes and subverts in order to legitimise its cause. Work with communities by trusted grass roots practitioners, including women and young people, is crucial.

An approach which promotes the relative primacy of the community sector in this way may be at odds with aspirations of some local authorities. For example, Turley (2009) advocates a more influential and powerful role in Prevent for local government and to be equipped with greater access to intelligence sources. Such enhanced roles would fit with traditional ambitions to control agendas, memberships, funding and activities as 'responsible authorities' recognised by central government. However, community concerns persist in complaints of local authorities using Prevent funding mainly to create officer posts, rather than to build further capacity in the community sector itself. Organisational structures for community safety planning also receive community criticism for being seen as devices for imposing 'top down' agendas on communities who feel poorly equipped and lack confidence to participate in them meaningfully (e.g. McDonald *et al*, 2008).

Consideration needs to be given to community preferences for a different balance in partnerships: state bodies such as local authorities and their partner agencies should provide support, expertise in advisory but not in lead capacities that are so obviously dominant. This imbalance in the community-state power relationship has been a factor in the unpopularity of the Prevent strategy and programme with such communities hitherto.

The literature also refers to the deficits and disadvantages in Prevent programme activity that can accrue from approaches by police and criminal justice agencies, deemed disproportionate and coercive. Assertions on the detrimental impact of a singular focus on the Muslim community as a whole have already been mentioned.

The police are seen by government as having crucial roles not only in Prevent but also the wider *Contest* strategy (HM Government, 2009cii) and have become embedded in a wide range of local Prevent activities. Police involvement is acknowledged by them as being potentially controversial (HMIC, 2009) and requiring better definition. Sources raise two issues in particular about their role.

First, community evidence points strongly in McDonald *et al* (2008) to being strongly critical of police intervention as a tool for prevention of violent extremism; trust and confidence was low, largely unmitigated by the emergent 'safer neighbourhoods' programme and there were consistent demands for the police to build trust around addressing everyday community concerns more genuinely and effectively. Communities gave greater recognition to the police's role in the *Pursue*, rather than *Prevent* workstream of *Contest* (HM Government ,2009cii). Such aspirations would complement those of treating violent radicalisation as a crime rather than a social deficit in the whole community. Source examples point to interesting community work being undertaken with ex-offenders and vulnerable youth where violent extremism and radicalisation are seen acts of criminality where community based intervention requires street and local religious credibility in order to take effect (e.g. Basian, 2009). It would also complement the inclusion of violent radicalisation as one of a number of crime and safety issues that emerge from enabling the community to articulate its concerns unprompted (e.g. Keane, 2008). This approach is evidenced as an effective means of engaging

community consideration of the issue of Prevent and of overcoming sensitivities of stigmatisation. Denham (2009) has significantly defined the Prevent programme in terms of 'crime prevention'.

Second, trust in the police is seen as critical in achieving an effective community focus in counter terrorism (e.g. Spalek, 2008) and hard policing approaches of 'stop and search', together with coercive 'informer-handler' style relationships further erode confidence of a community already treated as suspect and pressured to explain its identity and allegiances. Such approaches can undermine efforts to deny terrorists with the community support and sympathy they crave. Potential key community partners become alienated further if approached as potential informers (e.g. Lambert, 2007). Well-intentioned public and police policy to promote safety can be counter-productive by increasing alienation and thereby vulnerability, aiding terrorist recruitment and propagandists.

Such considerations are important for local partnerships in their design and development of Prevent programme interventions.

9   Discussion and Recommendations

The research in Hackney used an action-research methodology to involve local people not only as research subjects but also as community-based researchers, helping to shape and deliver the research process.

The research has attempted to assess the needs and views of local Muslim communities in order to provide information to help better understand the local challenges and appropriate strategic responses to countering violent extremism and building resilience.

Gathered together in this report are four main bodies of information: a literature review of key sources; primary qualitative data on community views/perspectives; quantitative demographic data from community participants to the project; and a summary of stakeholder interviews.   It has been acknowledged, not least by the recently reporting House of Commons (CLG) Select Committee on Preventing Violent Extremism, that the subject of this project represents a very complex and sensitive agenda with varying perceptions. This makes the process of searching for definitive conclusions and recommendations difficult. There is no single, stereotypical pathway to violent extremism.

However, we believe that a number of important principles and pointers have emerged from the data that will help Hackney Borough Council and its partners – including local communities - to develop initiatives and policy responses linked to the prevention of violent extremism. In drawing together the main themes and recommendations we have drawn on the data collected from the community consultations as supported by the stakeholder interviews and the literature review. The key emerging themes and suggestions are highlighted below.

Data from the mapping exercise demonstrated the diversity of the local Muslim population. While most of those mapped (>80%) were British citizens, only 47% of these had been born in the UK and 53% elsewhere. The largest single group if Muslim British citizens described their ethnic group as Turkish (19%), but there were substantial numbers of Muslim British citizens who described their ethnic group as Indian and Bangladeshi. In total, Muslim British citizens reported their origins from 14 different countries and 3 different continents. The largest numbers of Muslim non-British citizens said that they came from Gambia.

The largest single religious sect that respondents subscribed to was Sunni (70%), but respondents also reported belonging to 5 other discrete sects and those describing themselves as Sunni also reported allegiances to several different schools of thought.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the above, respondents reported attendance at 8 different named mosques (plus several others that were not specified). Most however (57%) did not feel that their views as Muslims were represented by any specific Muslim organisation.

Both the literature review and the data from communities highlighted the risks of focussing Prevent activities exclusively on Muslim communities emphasising that to do so risks

alienating the very community that the strategy seeks to influence positively and risks demonising the Muslim community in the eyes of others. The diversity of the community as described above is further evidence of the difficulties of adopting an approach that seeks to target *the* Muslim community.

One of the unintended consequences of a single (Muslim) community focus is the fuelling of hate crime, Islamphobia and right wing extremism. Reports of and concerns about such activities were mentioned both by community and stakeholder respondents. Discrimination is one of the risk factors for radicalisation identified as a consistent theme in the literature.

20% of the mapped respondents were unemployed. Specific problems in relation to housing and education were raised by community respondents alongside concerns about inadequate responses to so called 'low level nuisance' crime and incidents of hate crime. Many respondents felt distant from the council and the democratic structures that were supposed to represent them. Deprivation and disengagement are both identified as risk factors for radicalisation in the literature.

The literature identifies the importance of working in partnership with credible community figures with street and religious credibility in order to counter the influence the influence of persuasive ideology in the radicalisation process. There is consensus on the positive value of engaging grass-roots local social capital to tackle the threat of violent extremism, with the emphasis being on the need for the state to play a supportive and enabling role, rather than a dominant and controlling one. Community respondents were keen to see a greater role for local organisations in the delivery of engagement, capacity building, cohesion and preventative activities.

Summarised below is a brief discussion of key issues that emerged from the project which provide the backdrop for more specific recommendations. This includes a discussion of:

- Local people's understanding of violent extremism
- The extent of the problem locally
- Far right extremism and race hate
- Headline local concerns
- Risk factors

9.1   Meaning of Violent Extremism and Extent of Problem Locally

Perceptions from the consultations revolved mainly about the problem of Al Qaida inspired violent extremism as a global phenomenon and concern but made no specific references to active local examples of attempts to promote its cause by groups such as Al Mahajiroon. There was clear concern about a need to be able to understand the nature of the global threat better and its causes were seen by some as being wrapped up in conspiracy type theories involving western governments and the media. A recurrent theme that emerged was the contention about the impact of western foreign policy and military conflict in the Middle East and Afghanistan. What was apparent and uppermost in consultees' minds was their resentment and criticism of how the phenomenon of Al Qaida inspired terrorism had become linked with Islamic faith as a causal factor. This was also seen to be having a

detrimental effect on community relations. Concerns about the linking of the Islamic faith as a causal factor were also reflected in respondents reluctance or refusal to provide further information in structured survey questionnaires on details of their own religious practice, Islamic denominations and mosque allegiances, for example.

Though both community consultees and stakeholders commented that Al Qaida inspired violent extremism was not a major concern locally in Hackney, there were concerns in general about vulnerabilities, especially for young people and some saw the future of Prevent as sub-set of a general safeguarding against the risks (especially for young men) of drifting into things like knife crime, gangs and extremist groups and views.

9.2 Headline Local Concerns

The consultations at their outset were organised to enable community participants to come forward with their immediate and most prominent issues of concern locally – aside from a more directed focus on the specific issues associated violent extremism. In that sense such concerns were 'unprompted'.

The problem of hate crime and Islamophobia was a prominent theme and is discussed later in this section. Other local social problems that appeared to be both persistent and not adequately addressed in local community members' minds revolved predominantly around anti-social behaviour, gangs, community safety and being able to feel safer locally. Other concerns included issues of housing and domestic violence. Some communities highlighted concerns which they felt were particular to them; one community consultation, for example, highlighted the prominence of educational need and a great deal of attention was devoted to this; at the same time this was not that community's only concern but was certainly given prominence during the discussion that was facilitated.

For another community there was a very strong sense of feeling overlooked by local services, despite a longstanding presence in Hackney. They called for greater recognition and attention and practical action for their own needs. Indeed, to varying degrees some of the communities expressed a sense of frustration and disengagement from those public sector bodies and structures that were their to cater for their needs. Such a sense of disengagement can erode confidence in a sense of local belonging which has been shown to be a risk factor which extremist organisations can exploit.

9.3 Far Right Extremism, Race Hate and Islamophobia

Local people's experiences of race hate and worries about activities by far right organisations such as BNP and EDL were clearly of considerable concern. There was a perception by some that the focus on tackling Al Qaida inspired terrorism had led to inadequate attention being paid to the incidence of far right extremists and hate crime locally. The problem seemed to participants to be exacerbated by the negative portrayal of Muslims associated with Al Qaida extremism which served to heighten community mistrust and animosity which could result in hate crime incidents themselves. Commentaries in the literature on this subject have also warned that experiences of such hate crime can render its victims more vulnerable to Al Qaida narratives.

9.4   Risk Factors

Much of the local consultations focused on discussions of risk factors behind and potential solutions to help address people's vulnerability and increase 'resilience' to causes and effects of violent extremism. Risk factors and remedies are in effect two sides of the same coin and quite extensive community commentary was provided on both. As indicated earlier, the consultations did not reveal specific examples of active recruitment locally to Al Qaida inspired extremist causes, but respondents contributions to discussions of risk highlighted areas of concern within and between communities to be addressed. No single factor predominated with different factors being influential at different times, with different people and in combination. Perhaps, the over-riding risk factor which in a sense united these issues was a concern to tackle feelings and experiences of the community being 'disengaged' and more isolated.

The main risk factors cited were deprivation, discrimination and feelings of alienation, inadequate teaching of the Islamic faith, confusion in their identity felt especially by young Muslims and links to existing criminal activity. Concerns about foreign policy were also a clear theme underpinning people's views as a global causal factor.

9.5 Recommendations

In considering the testimony particularly from the local consultations together with recent literature and commentary, we would propose the following areas as recommendations for future and/or continued action by Hackney Borough Council and its partners. Reflecting the contention that the problem of violent extremism is complex and there is no single cause or solution, the overall recommendation is for a package of measures which are complementary, often inter-linked and taken together can impact more effectively on the problem as a whole.

Hackney's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018

Recommendations and their basis from this project enjoy strong links and compatibility with the Mayor's sustainable community strategy in many key ways. The synergy between the strategy and the views collected as part of this project are perhaps best summed up by the strategy's vision as documented:

The vision for a sustainable Hackney: a place that values the diversity of its neighbourhoods...a green, cosmopolitan part of London with safe, strong and cohesive communities, and a shared sense of fairness, citizenship and social responsibility*.*

Some of the messages and citations from the strategy which echo the findings include:

- We need to look now at how we do things differently with the same or fewer resources;
- ...ensure that all our residents can share in the borough's growing prosperity

- We recognise that ensuring that diversity continues to be a strength in the context of growth is a challenge, but also that the borough's diversity is one of its greatest strengths

Similarly, the six core priorities set for the 10 year strategy are focused on all the key issues that emerged from the project. In abbreviated form they relate to:

- Reducing poverty and promoting employment opportunities
- Raising qualifications and educational aspirations
- Health and well-being
- Local safety
- Promotion of mixed communities and accessible high quality, affordable housing
- Sustainable communities with pride in and taking care of Hackney and its environment

Specific recommendations are set out below. Although specific lead departments have been identified and linked to each recommendation it is suggested that the Mayor and local Cabinet should take responsibility for over-seeing the implementation of them collectively. We recognise the uncertain context in which local partners are operating currently, both financially and politically (for example, given the current review of Prevent). We have therefore suggested that all recommendations should be implemented immediately as on-going actions with a review in March 2011.

Commentary	Possible activities	Timescale	Lead Agency and Department
The current focus of Prevent on the Muslim community is at best crude and at worst counter-productive. There is evidence that the single focus on Muslim communities has fuelled both resentment and Islamophobia	**Support strategic changes to Prevent policy:** To lend support to the move to shift the focus of Prevent away from a single (Muslim) community focus and towards a focus on all communities. Also to support the move away from a focus on terrorism as a consequence of religious extremism and towards a focus on terrorism as a serious crime.	On-going – to review in March 2011	Mayor and Cabinet
Linked to the above, there is concern locally that Al Qaida inspired terrorism has become linked with Islamic faith as a causal factor. This needs to be countered.	**Information Strategy:** To ensure a positive portrayal of the Muslim community and counter the link drawn between Islam and terrorism. **Education in Islam:** To review the teaching of Islam and other religions in schools in order to ensure both accuracy of information and the promotion of tolerance and understanding.	On-going – to review in March 2011	Mayor and Cabinet Learning Trust
There is evidence that disillusionment and disengagement are one of the possible factors that can lead to radicalisation. It is important that local initiatives aimed at improving social, cultural and economic conditions are seen to benefit all communities, including Muslims. Specific concerns raised by the Muslim community in this study included anti-social behaviour,	**Tackling disenfranchisement and disillusionment:** To raise awareness of council services and address misconceptions held by community. Review current partnership work in connection with the 5 priority targets to ensure that the concerns and priorities of local Muslim communities are adequately reflected and addressed, specifically in	On-going – to review in March 2011	All Council Departments Team Hackney

feeling safe, educational attainment and housing.	relation to so called 'low level' and nuisance crime.		
	To review the impact of strategic plans for improving neighbourhoods and the assess impact on and for Muslim communities. Specific attention needs to be paid to concerns over the speed of repairs and ghettoisation.		Hackney Homes
	To review language support for children and young people whose 1st language is not English.		Learning Trust
Hackney has a vibrant and diverse community. There is evidence that community organisations and community businesses want to become more involved in civic activities.	**Sustainable communities:** To review procurement policies with a view to encouraging purchase from local businesses and providers wherever possible.	On-going – to review in March 2011	Hackney Procurement Services
	To promote an asset based approach to community engagement and capacity building – this means changing the role of the state from one of provider to one of enabler.		Team Hackney
There is evidence that there has been a shift in hate crimes such that the focus for some of it is no longer on race but on faith. This needs to be explicitly acknowledged in local strategies.	**Tackling Far right extremism and Islamophobia:** To ensure that far right extremism is monitored and that incidents of Islamic hate crime are responded to appropriately.	On-going – to review in March 2011	Team Hackney

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