

Action plan launched to build stronger communities

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The government is launching a rallying call for action, setting out the first steps towards a more connected, cohesive and resilient United Kingdom

Millions of families, friends and neighbours will feel a stronger sense of community, unity and national pride thanks to renewed efforts to stamp out extremism, hate and division announced today.

Today the government is launching a rallying call for action, setting out the first steps towards a more connected, cohesive and resilient United Kingdom – a place where neighbour continues to look out for neighbour and people come together with a shared sense of values, pride, and belonging.

The action plan follows decades of rapid change – technological advancements, demographic change, local industries collapsing, the increasing cost of living and the decline of vital public services. This has caused a strain on social cohesion. Bad actors, including from abroad, have sought to stoke community tensions and promote toxic division and extremist ideology in our communities.

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Steve Reed will tell the House of Commons:

Today, through the publication of Protecting What Matters, we set out the first steps towards a more confident, cohesive, and resilient United Kingdom. This plan is what patriotism means to this government. We choose to celebrate our national successes and historic achievements, we choose to come together in the best of times and the worst of times, and we choose to take on those who try to divide us.

This publication – Protecting What Matters – puts the emphasis on healing divided communities, setting out clear expectations around what it means to live together and integrate into society, tackling those trying to subvert our shared values and ultimately promoting pride, unity and tolerance.

This comes as the latest statistics show that hate crime is rising, with Jewish people disproportionately more targeted by hate crime than any other group.

To tackle antisemitism head on, the government is investing at record levels to scale up security at synagogues and schools, clamping down on antisemitic extremism, and rolling out training on antisemitism in the workplace.

Religious hate crimes targeted at Muslims are also at record levels, with almost half of these crimes targeted towards the Muslim community and many living in fear that they will be targeted because of how they look or assumptions over where they come from. This government has a duty to act but cannot tackle something that has not been defined.

The government is taking the historic step of adopting a non-statutory definition of anti-Muslim hostility which makes it clear what is unacceptable prejudice, discrimination and hatred directed at Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim.

Crucially, this definition protects the fundamental right to freedom of speech while protecting people from unacceptable abuse and violence. A special representative on anti-Muslim hostility will also be appointed to support action to strengthen understanding, reporting and response.

This sits alongside a new suite of measures to bring communities across the country together:

- Tough action on extremism with stronger powers to shut down charities promoting extremism and transformed capability to disrupt extremists, including stopping hate preachers entering the UK, and an annual State of Extremism report.
- Clear expectations will be set around integration for people looking to settle in the UK, focused on shared language, local participation and respect for shared values. To support this, the Government will look at how English is taught, and if new technology can help more people can speak the language confidently.
- A £500,000 investment in community-led school linking projects will bring children from different backgrounds together, helping them forge friendships and understand what they have in common. And tougher oversight of home education – including the first-ever mandatory register of children not in school – will ensure no child misses out on the shared values and experiences that bind communities together.

This all builds on the £5.8 billion committed to hundreds of areas through the Pride in Place programme, with power put in the hands of local people.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-plan-launched-to-build-stronger-communities>