



Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

Petition Number: [PE1737](#)

Main Petitioner: Puneet Dwivedi on behalf of the Hindu Forum of Britain

Subject: Review of Hate Crime Legislation and Security Funding in Scotland

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to address increasing levels of hate crime in Scotland by providing security funding similar to that in place in England and Wales

Introduction

The title of the petition refers to reviewing both hate crime legislation and security funding. However, the petition focuses on funding to protect religious premises from hate crime.

The main content of this briefing reflects the focus of the petition. Nevertheless, it may be noted that the Scottish Government has consulted on amending hate crime legislation. Some information on this is included below.

UK Government's Hate Crime Action Plan

The petition refers to funding, available under the UK Government's [Hate Crime Action Plan](#), to provide additional security for places of worship. The action plan relates to England and Wales. It does not cover Scotland or Northern Ireland.

As part of the action plan, the [Places of Worship \(POW\): Protective Security Funding Scheme](#) provides finance to enhance security at places of worship, and associated faith community centres, against hate crime. Financial support for security at Jewish community sites is dealt with separately through a grant administered by the [Community Security Trust](#).

In a news release ([Places of Worship to get Security Funding Boost](#), 19 March 2019), the UK Government stated that funding for 2019-20 had been increased:

“The Home Secretary has boosted funding for next year’s places of worship protective security to £1.6 million to reassure communities and safeguard mosques and other places of worship. This is double the amount awarded last year. In addition a new £5 million fund will be opened to provide security training. (...)

The places of worship fund, established in 2016 as part of the government's hate crime action plan, provides financial support for physical protective security such as fencing, lighting and CCTV. Government previously committed funding of £2.4 million over 3 years."

Security of Religious Premises in Scotland

In a [parliamentary question](#), lodged in July 2018, Anas Sarwar MSP asked the Scottish Government:

"whether there is any funding scheme in Scotland for the securing of places of worship similar to the scheme recently announced by the UK Government".

The Scottish Government responded in August of that year:

"We are clear that any form of hate crime or prejudice is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We are taking a range of steps to tackle hate crime as set out in our ambitious [Tackling Prejudice and Building Connected Communities Action Plan](#), and have established a multi-agency Action Group to drive this work forward.

While there is no specific security funding scheme for places of worship, we are fully committed to working with Police Scotland and others to safeguard all communities and potentially vulnerable people and sites and would encourage organisations with concerns about their security or the safety of their members to contact Police Scotland.

We are working to build inclusive, resilient and safe communities in Scotland where everyone feels connected, has a sense of belonging and feels valued."

In August of this year, relevant officials provided the following update on the Scottish Government's position:¹

"The Scottish Government remains committed to tackling hate crime as set out in our ambitious Tackling Prejudice and Building Connected Communities Action Plan. We have established a multi-agency Action Group, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government, Aileen Campbell, to drive this work forward.

Any form of hate crime or prejudice is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We must all play our part to challenge it.

We believe that places of worship should be places of peace and sanctuary and our faith communities should feel safe and secure when they visit them.

The Scottish Government is committed to working with Police Scotland and others to safeguard all communities and we would encourage organisations with concerns about security or safety to contact Police Scotland in the first instance.

¹ Communication with author.

Ministers are exploring what more can be done to provide reassurances to all faith communities and their places of worship, including the issues around safety and security and we will keep stakeholders updated.”

Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Scotland

The final report of the [Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Scotland](#) was published in May 2018.

Following this, the Scottish Government consulted on amending hate crime legislation – [One Scotland: Hate Has No Home Here](#) (responses sought by February 2019). The Scottish Government’s website, under the heading of [Consultation on Scottish Hate Crime Legislation](#), currently states that it is considering consultation responses as it continues to develop consolidated hate crime legislation to be introduced during the current parliamentary period

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