
Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	30 June 2022
Report By:	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Report No:	LS/056/22
Contact Officer:	Colin MacDonald	Contact No:	01475 712113
Subject:	Definition of Islamophobia – Request by Councillor McCabe on behalf of Muslim Engagement and Development		

1.0 PURPOSE AND CONSIDERATIONS

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of a request received from Councillor McCabe on behalf of Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND) in relation to the definition of Islamophobia.
- 1.2 The terms of the request are set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The Campaign Against Islamophobia guidelines on Islamophobia are attached as Appendix 2.
- 1.3 The Council is already committed to tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations in our workforce and across our communities, through the Equality Mainstreaming Reports and the Equality Outcomes 2021 – 2025, which ensures compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty which was established by the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.4 The 2010 Act prohibits discrimination in relation to protected characteristics, which includes a prohibition against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief. It should, therefore, be noted that adopting the definition of Islamophobia will not detract from or add to the Council's responsibility and commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty –

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty>
- 1.5 If the definition is adopted it will require a commitment to ensuring a shared understanding of its meaning within the Council and wider communities within Inverclyde. For some, the definition may not be clear and Muslimness may be a concept that many people are not familiar with. In addition, it should be noted that there are other definitions of Islamophobia.
- 1.6 It is understood that at least three other Scottish local authorities, being Moray, West Lothian and East Ayrshire, have adopted the proposed definition of Islamophobia, with at least one other also considering doing so. As noted in Appendix 1, in 2019 the definition was also adopted by all political parties in the Scottish Parliament.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council considers the request by Councillor McCabe on behalf of Muslim Engagement and Development.

**OPEN LETTER URGING SCOTTISH COUNCILS TO ADOPT THE
APPG DEFINITION OF ISLAMOPHOBIA**

23 February 2022

We, the undersigned, are calling on all city councils in Scotland to adopt the APPG definition of Islamophobia and the [accompanying guidelines](#) put forward by the Coalition Against Islamophobia.

The APPG definition states that:

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”

This definition has been [adopted](#) by all political parties in the Scottish Parliament.

The 2021 [report](#), “Scotland’s Islamophobia”, by the Scottish Parliament’s Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Tackling Islamophobia found that 83.4% of Scottish Muslim respondents have experienced Islamophobia directly. Islamophobic attacks in Scotland are becoming increasingly common and serious; for example, in December of last year, a neo-Nazi was [imprisoned](#) on charges of terrorism for threatening to burn down Fife Islamic Centre.

As per the Public Sector Equality Duty enshrined in the 2010 Equality Act, public bodies such as councils have a duty to advance equality of opportunity for members of communities with a protected characteristic. This includes Muslims, who should be able to participate in society on an equal footing with their non-Muslim counterparts.

Sadly, Islamophobia is one of the principal barriers to Muslim participation in public, economic, political, and social spheres of life and it must be urgently addressed. Without a definition of Islamophobia, policy-makers cannot identify how Islamophobia manifests itself and functions, and thus, they cannot devise meaningful strategies to address it. As such, a definition is essential.

We therefore call on all councils in Scotland to adopt the APPG definition of Islamophobia with accompanying guidelines. We firmly believe that this is a fundamental first step all councils must take to tackle the critical issue of Islamophobia in a targeted and effective manner.

SIGNED:

MEND (Muslim Engagement and Development)

Edinburgh Central Mosque, The Mosque of The Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques and Islamic Centre Of Edinburgh

Blackhall Mosque

Amal Charity (Dar Al-Arqam) Edinburgh

Masjid Salah-Aldin

Annandale Mosque

Ahl Al Bait Society Scotland

Iqra Academy Edinburgh

Idara Taleem Ul Quran Trust

Dundee Al-Makhtoum Mosque

Portobello Islamic Education Centre & Mosque

Church of Scotland

AMINA Muslim Women's Resource Centre

Colourful Heritage

CEMVO Scotland

Interfaith Scotland

Interfaith Edinburgh

West of Scotland Regional Equality Council

Central Scotland Regional Equality Council

Edinburgh and Lothian Regional Equality Council

Central Scotland Islamic Centre

Gilded Lily

Al Masaar

My Online School

8th Braid Salaam Scouts

Scottish Muslim Media

Radio Ramadan Edinburgh

Vibrant Scottish Mosques

North Lanarkshire Muslim Women and Family Alliance

Active Life Club

The Coalition Against Islamophobia believes that the APPG definition of Islamophobia should be adopted by the Government and other bodies in conjunction with the following guidelines, which demonstrate how Islamophobia is manifested in practice: Taking into account Islamophobia is demonstrated in, and articulated through, speech, writing, behaviours, structures, policies, legislation, or activities that work to control, regulate, or exclude Muslim participation within social, civic, economic and political life, or which embody hatred, vilification, stereotyping, abuse, discrimination, or violence directed at Muslims.

Causing, calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim due to their religious identity.

Causing, calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of individuals due to their perceived or actual connection to or support of Muslims.

Charging Muslims with conspiring to harm humanity and/or the Western way of life, or blaming Muslims for the economic and social ills of society.

Making mendacious, dehumanising, vilifying, demonising, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims.

Objectifying and generalising Muslims as different, exotic or underdeveloped, or implying that they are outside of, distinct from, or incompatible with British society and identity.

Acts of aggression within which the targets, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Muslim(s) or linked to Muslims.

While criticism of Islam within legitimate realms of debate and free speech is not in itself Islamophobic, it may become Islamophobic if the arguments presented are used to justify or encourage vilification, stereotyping, dehumanization, demonization or exclusion of Muslims. For example, by using criticism of religion to argue that Muslims are collectively evil or violent.

Espousing the belief that Muslims are inferior to other social or religious groups.

Accusing Muslims as a collective of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person, group or nation, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims.

Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other social, religious or ethnic group.

Applying ethnocentric approaches to the treatment of Muslims (judging another culture solely by the values and standards of one's own culture). For example, evaluating Muslim women's choice of dress exclusively through the speaker's expectations and without reference to the personal cultural norms and values of the women in question.

(Source: <https://coalitionagainstislamophobia.org/> accessed 15 June 2022)