

Consultation Response Form

This is the response form for the consultation on the green paper, *Integrated Communities Strategy*. If you are responding by email or in writing, please reply using this questionnaire pro-forma, which should be read alongside the consultation document. The comment boxes will expand as you type. Required fields are indicated with an asterisk (*).

Full details of the proposals being consulted on can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>.

The consultation will begin on Wednesday 14th March 2018 and will end on 5th June 2018. All responses should be received by no later than 23:45 on 5th June 2018.

To prevent losing your responses, you may wish to draft your response to the questions in a Microsoft Word document, before copying and pasting into the form.

Navigating the form

There are 14 questions in this form. You **do not** have to answer every question.

Submitting additional information

At the end of the form information is provided on how you can submit additional information or evidence to support your consultation response.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Your responses will inform how we take the proposals forward.

Your details

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Are you happy for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to contact you to discuss your response?

Yes

Are the views expressed on this consultation your own personal views or an official response from an organisation you represent?*

Please select an item from the drop down menu:

Official Response

Please provide the name of your organisation:

The Muslim Council of Britain

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please select the option which best describes your organisation.*

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Choose an item.

If you selected 'Other', please state the type of organisation:

Voluntary and Community

General Overview

The questions in this section relate to the Introduction – Building Integrated Communities.

Question 1

We define integrated communities as communities where people - whatever their background - live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Do you agree with our definition?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

No

Please enter any additional comments below:

Our vision of integrated communities is a positive one. It is one where people live, work and socialise together, based on a celebration of our rich diversity and a commitment to shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

We agree with the Green Paper when it states that integration is a 'two way street', for us this means more than just the definition as set out in the Paper. There are allusions to the celebration of diversity and that people should feel "proud of their identity and heritage" [Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, page 10]; and that integration is not assimilation.

We welcome these broader sentiments. Integration has to take into account individuals being able to retain their religious, ethnic and racial identities. Account has to be taken of people's diverse backgrounds and perspectives on a plethora of social issues. The essence of integration for us, then, is respect of all people, irrespective of their backgrounds and perspectives.

A definition of integration that truly respects diversity, but encourages all Britons to live, work, and socialize together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities, is one that we would support.

Question 2

We believe that the varied nature and scale of integration challenges means that tailored local plans and interventions are needed to tackle the issues specific to particular places. Do you agree?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Yes.

Please enter any additional comments below:

If localized integration strategies are to work, genuine consultation needs to be had with the relevant affected communities. Integration strategies and social engineering cannot be derived solely by national and local government officials, without taking in to account the lived experiences of local communities.

Localized strategies for integration are particularly helpful when meeting the challenges faced by economic migrants. As the APPG on Social Integration rightly points out, a regionally led immigration system, “might bring about greater alignment between the economic needs of each part of the UK and immigrant settlement patterns” [APPG: Integration not Demonisation, page 10].

It is important however, for alignment between local and national strategies to be maintained. It should not be the case that minority and local communities are treated in a significantly disparate way depending on the locality they live in. If we want to foster a welcoming atmosphere for all, in all parts of Britain, people need the comfort of being able to expect consistent treatment as regards to housing and welfare policy, throughout the UK.

We also note, that not all local communities necessarily want more autonomy; in the mayoral referendums of 2016, only 16 out of 53 local communities voted to have a directly elected mayor. Yet, we do agree that, in order to properly meet the needs of local communities, specific plans and interventions are needed to tackle specific issues; with the caveat that those communities are consulted properly, and in a timely manner when developing these plans.

Question 3

Do you have any examples of successful approaches to encourage integration that you wish to highlight, particularly approaches which have been subject to evaluation?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Yes

Please enter any additional comments below:

The Muslim Council of Britain has, over the past number of years, been running a mosque open day project known as ‘Visit My Mosque’ day. In 2018, over 200 mosques throughout

the country participated and opened their doors, and actively invited in their non-Muslim neighbors to increase dialogue and bonds within the local community.

A poll commissioned by the MCB showed that prior to Visit My Mosque 2018, over 70% of Britons had not been inside another faith's place of worship and 90% had never set foot in a mosque [YouGov poll: <http://www.mcb.org.uk/90-of-people-havent-been-inside-a-mosque-change-that-this-weekend/>].

Visit My Mosque brought thousands of non-Muslims in contact with their Muslim counterparts and has acted as a step towards lasting relationships between people in local communities that cross faith boundaries. The traffic goes both ways. Affiliates of the Muslim Council of Britain have also encouraged group visits from mosques to Churches and other places of worship.

Muslim charities have also had a significant positive impact on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable by running soup kitchens, blood drives and food banks among other initiatives [APPG on British Muslims – A Very Merry Christmas 2018]. These initiatives have served to increase interaction and contact between Muslims and those of other faiths in their local communities, and has also played a part in the dispelling of certain prejudices that exist around Muslims in the UK.

Chapter 1: Strengthening Leadership

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 1: Strengthening Leadership.

Question 4

The Green Paper proposes that we need to build the capacity of our leaders to promote and achieve integration outcomes. Do you agree?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

No.

Please enter any additional comments below:

If the intention was to build capacity for all leaders to promote and achieve promote and achieve integration outcomes, we would agree. We disagree with this because the Green Paper endorses Dame Louise Casey who singles out faith and civic leadership when she writes: *“Too many leaders in public and faith institutions and in communities have allowed diversity and difference to become separatism and segregation that has divided communities... Whether the drivers for this have been fear of accusations of racism, of wanting to be welcoming, tolerant and accepting of foreign cultures, or concerns about disrepute or loss of support, the results have been more harmful than good.”*

Our view is that diversity and difference is to be celebrated and that we must be careful not

to conflate service provision that is essential for single-faith or mono-ethnic communities with separatism and segregation. There are necessarily some services that are either only relevant to, or primarily needed by such communities; such as provision for: prayer, burial or the celebration of religious holidays.

In certain other circumstances, it may also be appropriate for provision to be made for these communities to socialize and gather among themselves on occasion. This cannot be viewed through the lens of suspicion, or seen as an unwillingness to mix with other social groups. As stated in response to Question 1, it is only right that communities are encouraged to hold on to and value their own identities, cultures and heritage. For many, this is done via a connection with community centres and mosques; and as these culturally sensitive services are not provided by local government or other institutions, it is only right that they are provided by mosque leadership.

Mosques serve as essential 'mediating institutions', with imams and mosque trustees often responsible for building and maintaining links with local schools, hospitals, politicians etc., which are so essential for social harmony and integration. This intermediary role of mosques and mosque leaders needs to be appreciated and encouraged.

An acceptance of a plurality of cultures and thought should form the basis of British society, as it has the potential to make the lived experience of all in the UK very rich. It is also this diversity that needs to be reflected in our civic leadership. Women, ethnic minorities and faith leaders need to be helped to make their voices heard. An increase of these voices in the mainstream alone could have a significant impact on social cohesion, integration and attitudes towards minorities.

Of course, leaders from all walks of life should -- and in the case of leaders from the Muslim community already do -- promote interaction with those from other social or faith groups. For many Muslims, this forms an essential part of their faith -- and in the examples cited above, this is being borne out throughout the country already.

Chapter 2: Supporting New Migrants and Resident Communities

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 2: Supporting New Migrants and Resident Communities.

Question 5

The Green Paper proposes measures to support recent migrants so that they have the information they need to integrate into society and understand British values and their rights and responsibilities. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

No.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Supporting recent migrants is essential and welcome, and an information pack can work well to ease their passage of settlement and becoming stakeholders in society.

However, the discussion on 'British values' should emerge in a national conversation.

Many years ago Professor Tariq Modood noted, "*The idea that there has to be a schedule of "non-negotiable" value statements to which every citizen is expected to sign up is not in the spirit of an open, plural citizenship. National identity should be woven in debate and discussion, not reduced to a list. For central to it is a citizenship and the right of all, especially previously marginalised or newly admitted groups, to make a claim on the national identity.*"[1]

Perhaps we need what Archbishop Welby alludes to when writing about the need of "reimagining" our vision of British society, with a narrative that recognises that immigration has been for Britain's better – a Britain "which starts from a point of hope, openness and generosity of spirit", rather than one focussed on creating a 'hostile environment' for unfortunate economic migrants.

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/may/23/comment.britishidentity>

Question 6

The Controlling Migration Fund was constructed to deal with the short-term migration pressures and associated costs that local authorities can encounter. Do you think it adequately achieves this objective?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Don't know.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Click here to enter text.

Chapter 3: Education and Young People

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 3: Education and Young People.

Question 7

The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that all children and young people are prepared for life in modern Britain and have the opportunity for meaningful social mixing with those from different backgrounds. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Yes

Please enter any additional comments below:

We agree that meaningful social mixing between children of different socio-economic, ethnic and faith backgrounds should be encouraged. The onus should not be placed on those schools that operate within lower socio-economic communities to create opportunities of meaningful contact with children from schools in more affluent areas. Nor should the burden be shared equally, rather schools from those more affluent areas must be tasked with reaching out to and creating contact time with children from diverse backgrounds. However the reality is that the British public school/fee-paying independent school system creates a privileged, exclusive elite, aloof from the rest of society.

Like other faith groups, we too would insist that faith schools are an essential part of society. Parents have a right to ensure the moral and spiritual values dear to them are also imparted to their children. It is equally important that faith schools reach out beyond their gates and build links. There are many role models of twinning projects of Muslim and Christian schools (like that between Quwwat al Islam and St Joseph's Catholic Junior as set out in the Green Paper).

So while social mixing is a laudable aim, what is more problematic is an agreed understanding of what it means to "prepare life for modern Britain". From a faith perspective, we would rather young persons inculcated with the values of family and community, than say an outright individualism, for example.

The Green Paper sets out the dangers of 'segregated schools', the contention is that those children which go to 'mono-ethnic' schools cannot be properly prepared for life in modern Britain.

Modern Britain, we believe is a diverse Britain; and as such, all children should be exposed to the heritage of this country as well as the richness that immigrant communities and cultures bring to life in the UK. The implication when the Green Paper talks of 'mono-ethnic' schools, is of schools from predominantly immigrant communities. There is no suggestion that those schools where the children are almost all white British have anything to consider with regards integration.

In fact, we know that parental school choice among white-British parents reinforces segregation; as white-British students make up 28% of those that attend London schools, but 49% of those students attend white-British majority schools [Runnymede 2017]. Again, this is an inconsistency that does not correlate with a 'two-way' approach to integration. The recent ruling on Al Hijrah school brings this into perspective. If segregation within a mixed school setting can run counter to 'British values', then what of single-sex schools? Too often then, the test of espousing 'British values' is set at a higher standard for Muslim faith schools, or state schools in predominantly Muslim areas, rather than all. It again feeds

the perception that Muslims need to do more to be accepted as true Britons by the establishment.

We reject strongly the notion that faith schools are a barrier to integration and hinder its school leavers from full participation in society in later life. Further, consistency needs to be applied in relation to Muslim faith based schools, which are often unfairly maligned, despite achieving excellent results.[1]

[1] <http://muslimnews.co.uk/newspaper/home-news/exclusive-muslim-schools-surpass-national-gcse-average-2/>

Question 8

The Green Paper sets out proposals to support parents with their choice of out-of-school education settings. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Yes.

Please enter any additional comments below:

Religious supplementary schools are a feature of community life of many religious communities. The welfare of children and the free choice of parents to place their children in trusted and safe environments is paramount. We would support moves that promote interaction between madrassa teachers and schools, so that there is a mutual understanding and appreciation of syllabi. One research study at the Department of Education, King's College, has noted how "*mutual discussions about the purposes if history between school-based and mosque-based practitioners that uncover and construct some shared understandings of history*" would contribute to enhancing academic achievement (T. Wilkinson, PhD 2011).

Though some religious supplementary schools need support with regards to governance, financial management and safeguarding; many provide excellent and professional services to the communities in which they operate. The welfare of children and the free choice of parents to place their children in trusted and safe environments is paramount. It is important to note that on the whole "*These schools discuss religious teachings that promote inclusion and help children to have an open and greater involvement in wider society through a shared sense of belonging.*" [Christian Muslim Forum Report: Religious Supplementary Schools, April 2017].

Chapter 4: Boosting English Language

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 4: Boosting English Language.

Question 9

(a)

The Green Paper proposes a number of measures to improve the offer for people to learn English. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Yes

Please enter any additional comments below:

English language proficiency is clearly important in achieving successful integration. Yet, with many aspects of integration, we cannot look at language in isolation. A lack of proficiency in English has knock-on effects in access to the labour market and other social provisions, as well as effective social mixing. It is, therefore an important area to target improvement.

The issue of language proficiency should not be over-played. A finding from the 2011 Census was that in the Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic categories, the percentage who could not speak English was 4.2 and 5.5 % respectively (ONS Table CT 0065, English Language Proficiency by Country of Birth).

Nor can we look at the figures provided in the Green Paper in isolation. Though the numbers of BME women who lack proficiency in English are relatively high, in many instances, lack of childcare and the high cost of travel prevents access to ESOL classes [Runnymede 2017].

To be clear, the issue of proficiency in the English language is one of integration and for an increase in the access to opportunity for those communities who are currently lagging behind. There is no evidence to suggest that language proficiency has any bearing on radicalisation, as has been suggested by the previous Prime Minister[1].The conflation of integration with radicalisation means that neither problem is adequately addressed, and should be kept separate, as the evidence base suggests.

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jan/18/david-cameron-stigmatising-muslim-women-learn-english-language-policy>

(b)

Do you have any other suggestions on how we can improve the offer for people to learn English?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Yes

Please enter any additional comments below:

For English language provision to be effective, it must take into account childcare needs, as well as shift work. Classes based in mosques, libraries, community centres and workplaces can also serve to make them more accessible [Good Things Foundation, 2017].

We also suggest that the English language provision linked with the Syrian Resettlement Programme, where 12 regional coordinators mapped language demand and support is expanded. The programme worked well, as where provision was inadequate, they provided extra support. [Runnymede 2018]

Chapter 5: Places and Community

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 5: Places and Community.

Question 10

The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that people, particularly those living in residentially segregated communities, have opportunities to come together with people from different backgrounds and play a part in civic life. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Yes

Please enter any additional comments below:

It is quite clear from the Green Paper that ethnic minorities not socially mixing with their white-British counterparts due to residential segregation is a problem that those ethnic minorities need help in overcoming, rather than the other way around.

Social mixing between ethnic minority groups is not seen as important or valuable as mixing with the white-British majority [page 43 Green Paper]. This then leads to the idea that those areas where the white-British population are in a minority, there is isolation and segregation; lumping all ethnic minorities in one. [Runnymede 2017]

Census data points to a trend of decreasing residential segregation. Where these occur the factors at play have been availability of low-cost housing and the way settlements grow organically, rather than a self-selected preference for ghettoization!

Research shows that the ethnic minority populations of England and Wales have grown, and live in more mixed areas in 2011 than before. This 'spreading out' has accelerated in the past ten years. The Indian, White, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, African, Irish, Caribbean, Mixed White/Caribbean, White/African and White/Asian populations are all more evenly spread in 2011 than in 2001. Thus it is not the case that the BME are self-segregating.

The White British population is the only group that lives in relative isolation from others, on average living in Districts with 85% of White British residents. All ethnic minority groups live in Districts where on average they make up fewer than 10% of the residents. In smaller areas than local authority Districts, White British and other groups live in greater concentrations than this [Ludi Simpson (2012), More segregation or more mixing? ESRC Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE)].

Though we agree with the principles of social mixing as set out in this section of the Green Paper, we again fear that ethnic and faith minorities are being unduly asked to undertake steps to enhance their social circles, while the white-British population is under no such obligation, save in relation to racist and xenophobic hate-crime. There is also little mention of the phenomenon of 'white flight' that shows quite clearly, the unwillingness of sections of our society to accept and integrate with those who look different to them.

Chapter 6: Increasing Economic Opportunity

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 6: Increasing Economic Opportunity.

Question 11

The Green Paper proposes measures to provide tailored support to people, especially those who may not currently be active in the labour market, to build their confidence and skills to take up employment. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Yes

Please enter any additional comments below:

We welcome initiatives that help bring ethnic and faith minorities out of economic inactivity, and upskill them such that they can become active in the labor market. We do, however, need to be conscious of structural inequalities that lead to cycles of poor socio-economic prospects for certain communities.

We know that 46% of all Muslims in the UK live in the 10% least well-off local authorities, while only 1% live in the top 10% [MCB, Muslims by Numbers]. This not only impacts on the relative quality of education but also on aspiration and in the determining of a route toward affluence.

The proportion of Muslim women in employment is significantly lower than the national average - 28% of Muslim women (aged 16+ years old) are in employment, compared to 51% of the overall female population.

This is not to want of trying, as noted in a Young Foundation report (whose

recommendations sadly were not taken up):

Many British Muslim women value work and careers; they want to succeed in education and at work. Most have positive attitudes to work and many have high career aspirations. The majority also want to return to work after having children and combine family life with a career. Some of the barriers which affect British Muslim women affect all women, such as gender discrimination, inflexibility, and lack of childcare. But British Muslim women also face additional challenges, including discrimination based on clothing and faith. Also, existing labour market programmes are neither shaped to their needs, nor seen to be shaped to their needs. (Z. Bunglawala, 2006)

The MCB concern with this issue was highlighted in its submission to the Women and Equalities Committee's Employment opportunities for Muslims in the UK inquiry (March 2016) and other briefings (http://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/BMINBriefing5_Oct2015.pdf)

Account must also be taken of those who choose to remain economically inactive, without of course unduly burdening the welfare system, for legitimate reasons. Parents who choose to stay at home and raise their children should not only be looked down as economic sponges who do not contribute, rather, they should be seen as significant shapers of the future of our country through the instilling of civic values in their children. [World Economic Forum: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2014/04/german-women-feel-need-choose-kids-career/>].

Chapter 7: Rights and Freedoms

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 7: Rights and Freedoms.

Question 12

The Green Paper proposes measures to encourage integration and resist divisive views or actions. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

No.

Please enter any additional comments below:

We welcome the commitment made in the Green Paper to free speech, the holding of traditional views and the free practice of religion. However, we find the disproportionate attention and concern placed on Muslim communities troubling.

The Green Paper raises the issue of Sharia councils, some of which undertake practices that may be seen as discriminatory and unacceptable. As the independent review on Sharia councils sets out, these councils have no legal power, and as such cannot override UK legislation. Any malpractice then is not so much an issue of integration, as one of law enforcement. Further, no mention is made, as is the case in the review on Sharia councils that they "fulfill a need in some Muslim communities" [Report into Sharia Councils in the UK,

2018]. For many Muslim women, these councils serve the purpose of providing a religious divorce, which in many instances may be necessary for them to lead fulfilled lives after their marriage has broken down.

There is also a characterization of religious communities being unduly and disproportionately discriminatory towards LGBT people in their own communities. While this may be an issue in some minority communities, it continues to be a widespread issue in mainstream society. The Green Paper itself makes it clear that only 25% of the service users of the Albert Kennedy Trust were from a faith community – making it clear that 75% identified as not being from a faith community. Discrimination against the LGBT or any other minority community is abhorrent and unacceptable and all communities must do what they can to fight bigotry.

We are also concerned with the seeming conflation of integration, as a strategy and policy, and tackling extremism. Though there may be areas of overlap, as social policies concerning local communities often do, a conflation here is damaging and serves only to alienate the Muslim community and thereby undermining the government's integration efforts.

Question 13

The Green Paper proposes measures to address practices which can impact on the rights of women. Do you agree with this approach?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Yes

Please enter any additional comments below:

It can only be right that women are able to and do play an equal part in society. The MCB is committed to increasing the number of female mosque leaders through our Women's in Mosques initiative, where we are fast tracking and providing mentors to young Muslim women to become mosque trustees and managers.

Muslim women, as has been said above, face double and sometimes triple levels of discrimination due to their gender, faith and ethnicity. We must work to break down each of these barriers, and we welcome such initiatives.

It is also clear that minority communities need to do more ensure the rights of women are maintained and that cultural practices do not impinge on those rights. More often than not, these cultural practices, which may take place in Muslim communities, have no basis in theology or faith. This needs to be highlighted and spoken of more within the Muslim community.

We have already discussed in details issues pertaining to Muslim women entering the job market.

Chapter 8: Measuring Success

The questions in this section relate to Chapter 8: Measuring Success

Question 14

The Green Paper proposes core integration measures for national and local government to focus on. Do you agree these are the right measures?

Please select an item from the drop down menu

Yes.

Please enter any additional comments below:

We firmly agree that any policy of integration or further social change needs to be one that is measured and amended according to the results of those policies on the ground. The identification of five key areas of implementation, and an inter-governmental approach make sense. It is key that central government closely and genuinely listens to the concerns and assessment of the policies by those in local government, faith institutions and community groups in those five key areas once these policies start taking hold.

Increased sincere consultation with relevant stakeholders is the main key to success in the implementation of good social policy, in our estimation.

We also believe you can assess the success of integration strategies by measuring:

- Decreases in hate crime;
- Increases in educational attainment among faith and ethnic minority communities;
- Decreases in workplace unconscious bias;
- Equality Impact Assessments; and
- Increases in ethnic and faith minority leaders

Additional information

Building Our Two-Way Street

'Integration is a two-way street': those were the famous words of former Prime Minister David Cameron just over 10 years ago after staying with a Muslim family. It is a mantra that has also been repeated in this Green Paper, and is perhaps one of the best expressions of what 'Britishness' is all about; simple and inclusive, it is an articulation a vision where we all had a part to play without singling out any one group for special treatment or special opprobrium.

Integration is a laudable policy objective. Yet too often we see the conception of a 'top-down, mono-nationalist and establishment 'British values' approach' which assumes the 'other' needs to be civilised into our way of thinking, and in essence puts the 'moral onus on ethnic minorities for the supposed failures of integration.' Such an approach betrays not only a

refusal to fully understand our challenges but also flies in the face of the pragmatic reality that we are a nation of immigrants, demonstrated all too clearly recently with the revelation that the first modern Briton – Cheddar Man – had ‘dark to black’ skin.

This ‘two-way street’ approach apportions responsibilities on all of our society to aspire to universal values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

Integration for us means integration for everyone. Since the former Prime Minister articulated his two-way street metaphor, the path has narrowed with traffic expected to come from one way only. This stems from a moral panic that has generated in the last decade primarily around Muslims. It is one where Muslims are the victims of a culture war not of their own choosing. So, when Muslims embrace the value of democracy by entering public life, too often their motives are questioned and they are accused of ‘entryism’. Or take the other value of the rule of law, which when some Muslims uphold, becomes ‘lawfare’. Individual liberty, too, cannot be foregone because a public does not like the clothing choices made by a small minority of Muslims, while mutual respect excludes Muslims when over 30% of young children think Muslims are taking over England.

The academic Tariq Modood’s words frame the discussion of integration powerfully:

‘we have to understand that there are different modes of integration and none of them – including multiculturalism – is to be dismissed. Because in a multicultural society different groups will integrate in different ways. Some ethnic minorities may wish to assimilate, some to have the equal rights of integrated citizens, some to maintain the cultural differences of their group identities, and some to be free to choose cosmopolitan mixed identities. Equally, the majority society may look on different minority groups in all these different ways. Each approach has a particular conception of equal citizenship but the value of each can only be realised if it is not imposed but is the preferred choice of minority individuals and groups. No singular model is likely to be suitable for all groups. To have a reasonable chance of integrating the maximum number of members of minorities, none of these political responses should be dismissed.’

When it comes to integration, the British Muslim story is positive but still challenging. There are over 2 million Muslims in this country. 33% are aged 15 and under, 47% were born in this country. Only 6% of Muslims are struggling to speak English and 73% are proud to state that their national identity is British.

The current anxieties around integration – expressed implicitly and explicitly – include the myth that many Muslims do not or are not capable of integrating because of the supposed strictures of their faith. The grassroots reality, however, is very different. In actual fact we have a lot to celebrate: a growing proportion (89% in 2015-2016) thought ‘their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well,’ and despite claims to the contrary, Muslim communities have become less segregated according to the latest Census.

When looking at the challenges of the rise of the far-right in many parts of Europe, and of Trumpism in the United States of America, we have a lot to be thankful for. However, the expectation that an immigrant must show ‘gratitude to the country that offered his mother and him so much,’ is a xenophobic attitude that undermines the equality that all citizens should be afforded.

In the Muslim Council of Britain submission to the Casey Review, we highlighted that a ‘culture of fear is emerging which is a big driver in preventing a more united and cohesive

society.' We said: 'We must recognise that our public discourse and conversation has a part to play in furthering integration. Integration is fostered when the media reports on stories that speak of achievement of minorities, of people coming together and where national moments are shared by all.' The good, the bad, the normal – all Muslims in their full diversity – cannot and should not be treated as anything but equal citizens, and our expectations cannot be different.

The Muslim Council of Britain published its own compendium of views on integration from across the spectrum of Muslims in the UK, with nearly 50 contributors, men and women. You can find a full version of that report here: http://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Our-Shared-British-Future-Report_Integration-14-March-2018.pdf.