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THE GLOBAL PEACE AND UNITY FESTIVAL

A home for extremists, endorsed by officialdom

A Policy Exchange Briefing

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Foreword by Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE KC

About the Authors

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Foreword

In this briefing Policy Exchange correctly and forcefully has identified patent weaknesses in the struggle against extremism. Surely the private sector, including the wealthy owners of the Excel Centre and other venues, should accept that (like the public sector) they have an ethical responsibility to refuse their premises to extremists?

Why did they and the Metropolitan Police not carry out due diligence before apparently becoming involved in the so-called 'Global Peace and Unity Festival' [GPU]? I commend the police for making clear they are not "supporting partners" of the GPU, but there should never have been any indication of their involvement in it in the first place.

Why did neither the Excel Centre nor the police feed into a search engine the names of those rostered to participate in GPU against the words 'antisemitism', 'religious hatred' and 'hate crime'? Such a search would have revealed at least seven planned participants who variously have praised the 7th October attack as justified, denied that it ever took place, advocated that husbands are entitled physically to punish their wives, or described Jews as 'filth'.

For both private organisations and public services the current definition of extremism, as well as Counter Terrorism legislation, are the key reference points.

The conclusions raise important issues about police staff networks. The need for a clear governance system for such networks is long overdue. Police staff groups are legitimate and potentially valuable, but not if they are concealed facilitators of hatred.

I hope that government and Mayor of London will heed this briefing, and act upon it at speed.

Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE KC

Summary

This weekend (the 19th – 20th October 2024), the Excel Centre in London will host the Global Peace and Unity Festival (GPU), an event that will platform a substantial number of extremists, misogynists, antisemites and supporters of the 7/10 attack on Israel.

This report documents, and collects in one place, the objectionable, racist or pro-terrorist views of many of GPU’s speakers. We recommend that GPU be boycotted by anyone with official responsibilities – or anyone with any genuine interest in peace or unity.

Alarming, until Saturday 12 October 2024, the Metropolitan Police was listed on GPU’s website as a “supporting partner” of the event. A Government Minister along with a Labour backbencher were also listed amongst the speakers.

After Policy Exchange published its research to journalists, the Metropolitan Police’s logo was removed from the event’s website. The Government Minister has said he will withdraw. We welcome this.

Any police endorsement for this event would have been in direct conflict with the Metropolitan Police’s duty of impartiality, particularly given its often fraught role policing London’s pro-Palestinian marches. Indeed, two of the GPU speakers co-organise the marches. It would have been deeply unwise, less than two weeks after the anniversary of 7/10, to explicitly support and partner with an event which platforms those who back one side and several of whom have expressed such hatred for the other side.



Screengrabs showing the GPU website before and after the logos of the Metropolitan Police and Association of Muslim Police were removed

Any Ministerial participation at GPU is also incompatible with the Government's duty to promote community cohesion. Recognising this, Conservative ministers were banned from the event by the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, as early as 2010 (though a Lib Dem minister in the Coalition went).¹ GPU is not new or unfamiliar to policymakers: it is an event with a long history as a shop window for extremists. At a previous GPU event, suicide bomber headbands and T-shirts glorifying terrorism were on open sale.²

It remains unclear how the Met and a Minister's participation in GPU 2024 came to be advertised. The Met declined to respond to Policy Exchange when we asked them on Wednesday 9 October 2024 about their apparent participation. Only two days later, when a national newspaper journalist became involved, did they say that they were not taking part.

One possible explanation lies in the growth of "staff networks" within the police: identity-based groups of officers and employees allowed to operate within forces with official sanction. The Met's Association of Muslim Police (AMP) was listed as a "supporting partner" of GPU alongside the force itself. Its logo, too, has now been removed. As Policy Exchange reported in detail last year, some of these groups – including the Met AMP's national counterpart, the National Association of Muslim Police – engage in overtly political commentary and lobbying, threatening police impartiality.³

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary's recent report into impartiality in policing said that forces' engagement at some public events risks making the police appear less impartial. He also confirmed that the activities of some police staff networks were having a negative effect on the public's trust in policing.

We therefore recommend that as well as boycotting the GPU event, the Metropolitan Police should publish a policy relating to which community groups it engages with and which events it will attend; should operate a policy of complete transparency in their staff networks, including publishing committee memberships, meeting minutes, workstreams and budgets; and should publish full details of both the force and the Met AMP's dealings with the GPU Festival.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/oct/24/baroness-warsi-islamic-conference-ban>

² Daily Telegraph, 26.10.10.

³ <https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Blurred-Lines.pdf>

To whom will GPU give a platform this month?

As of Thursday 17th October 2024 the speakers shown as appearing at the GPU event were: (the participant information was correct at time of this research note being published)⁴

Mahathir Mohamad: A former Prime Minister of Malaysia. He has described Jews as “hook-nosed”, suggested they 'instinctively' understand money. He has also stated that 'antisemitism' is an invented term to 'prevent criticism of Jews for doing wrong things'.⁵ Mohamad is listed as performing the “welcome” session of the event on 19 October.⁶

Abdurraheem Green: He has stated that "Islam is not compatible with democracy"⁷ and that to prevent a wife committing "evil" a husband has the right to "apply some type of physical force... a very light beating."⁸ He is chairman of IERA⁹ (under his original name Anthony Green), an extremist charity described as a “hate group.”¹⁰ He was once caught on camera demanding that a Jew be removed from his sight¹¹ and quoted a saying of the Prophet that if you meet a Christian or a Jew, you should “push them to the side.”¹² Green was banned from an event at Arsenal’s Emirates stadium for antisemitism.¹³

After a lengthy enquiry, IERA was condemned by the Charity Commission for for “recklessly providing misleading information” and for apparently trying to fabricate documents.¹⁴ The Commission said that Green and other trustees must

⁴ As of Thursday 17th October 2024 speakers shown at: <https://gpufestival.com/programme/> - participant information was correct at the time of going to press.

⁵ <https://www.thejc.com/news/oxford-union-criticised-for-inviting-antisemitic-malaysian-prime-minister-mahathir-mohamad-to-speak-fw8zrzwg> & <https://www.timesofisrael.com/virulently-anti-semitic-malaysian-pm-says-he-should-be-allowed-to-criticize-jews/>

⁶ <https://gpufestival.com/programme/>

⁷ http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_7886000/7886578.stm

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <https://gpufestival.com/speakers/>

¹⁰ <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/islamic-charity-rejects-report-labelling-hate-group/governance/article/1295981>

¹¹ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/10854579/Anti-Semitic-charity-under-investigation.html>

¹² <https://www.thetimes.com/article/3eb70b08-a91f-11e6-89ad-c090de2d496c>

¹³ <https://www.thejc.com/news/arsenal-ban-islamist-preacher-from-emirates-stadium-nzdvsxcq>

¹⁴ <https://www.thetimes.com/article/3eb70b08-a91f-11e6-89ad-c090de2d496c>

do more to prevent associating with those who “encourage or support terrorism and/or extremist views.”¹⁵ IERA will exhibit at the event.¹⁶

Ismail Patel: Patel is the founder of Friends of al-Aqsa¹⁷, one of the coalition partners of the pro-Palestine marches in the UK. On October 7 2023, Patel reposted X content glorifying the terror attacks, referring to Hamas as “freedom fighters” and the Israeli hostages as “occupation soldiers.”¹⁸ Patel has previously said “we salute Hamas for standing up to Israel”, described Hamas as a ‘noble’ resistance movement and praised Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh.¹⁹ (Another organiser of the Palestine marches, Ben Jamal, is also shown as speaking at the event.)

Ali Hammuda, who said the massacre at the pop festival on October 7 2023 was journalists “concocting stories that simply never happened.”²⁰ He told teenagers at the Cardiff mosque where he was imam that they were allowed to have sex slaves²¹ and held classes at a local state school where he described music as a “sickness.”²² A high number of the boys at the mosque went to Syria to fight for Isis. Hammuda was accused by the former Labour minister Kim Howells of waging a “war on women” after he posted videos telling them that wearing make-up was a sin.²³

Hammuda is senior researcher and lecturer for the Muslim Research and Development Foundation, the body founded by the extremist cleric Haitham al-Haddad to propagate his views.²⁴ Hammuda describes Islam as an “alternative to the spiritual vacuum in the UK...defiantly strong in its identity before the storms of modernity.” In the same article he attacks “Western conceptualisations of equality” and football fans’ “chanting and singing of club anthems, face-painting

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a809f6ce5274a2e87dbade4/islamic_education_and_research_academy_iera.pdf

16 <https://gpufestival.com/exhibitors/>

17 <https://gpufestival.com/speakers/>

18 The post is at <https://x.com/palinfoen/status/1710535819864199364> - click on the three dots at top right, then “view post engagements” to see that Patel reposted it.

19 <https://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/RADICAL-ISLAM-ON-CMAPUS.pdf>

20 <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1827945/keir-starmer-south-wales-islamic-centre-ali-hammuda>

21 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3716280/Yes-boys-sex-slaves-Outrage-British-Muslim-cleric-mosque-Cardiff-jihadis-radicalised-tells-teenagers-captives-permissible-Islam.html>

22 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10930805/Muslim-extremists-are-a-thorn-in-our-community.html>

23 <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/leading-former-mp-accused-welsh-11743288>

24 <https://courses.mrdf.co.uk/>

and flag-waving” as “masks to cover the disturbing reality of discontented souls seeking comfort in illusory relationships.”²⁵

NB: At the time of going to press with this research note, Ali Hammuda's entry disappeared from the speaker list on the GPU website.

Fatima Barkatulla, who posted on Oct 8 2023 saying “this Palestinian uprising is 100% legitimate. It is an uprising again[st] European settler colonialism.”²⁶

Abdullah Hakim Quick: Quick has denounced the “filth” of Jews and given a lecture in which he said the Islamic position on homosexuality is “death”.²⁷ He was listed as an “extremist speaker” in the 2016 *Shakeel Begg v BBC* libel case.²⁸

Ilan Pappé, an academic who just after 7/10 said he “admire[d] the courage of the Palestinian fighters who took over a dozen military bases, overcoming the strongest army in the Middle East... Hamas had to act, and quickly so.” He also called for “de-Zionised, liberated and democratic” Palestine “from the river to the sea.” He also said that Hamas was not a terrorist movement. He now says he condemns the attacks.²⁹

Paul Williams, who condemned the “lies and slander against [Jeremy Corbyn] by prominent Jews...the UK just takes the Jews’ side.”³⁰ A self-described “race realist,”³¹ he says “the alt-right have a number of good ideas”³² and praised the “superb” interview done by the Islamist website 5Pillars with the far-right leader Nick Griffin.³³

Maulana Tariq Jamil, who blamed the spread of Covid on “scantily-dressed” women.³⁴

Jahangir Mohammed, who was closely associated³⁵ with the terrorist-sympathising organisation CAGE (which praised the Isis executioner Jihadi

²⁵ <https://www.islam21c.com/islamic-thought/britain-under-siege-increasing-muslim-numbers-census/>

²⁶ <https://archive.ph/9hBR4#selection-457.1-457.98>

²⁷ <https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/islamic-preacher-who-called-jews-filth-to-speak-at-london-university-6713828.html>

²⁸ <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/shakeel-begg-v-bbc-judgment-final-20161028.pdf>

²⁹ <https://archive.ph/5IFqV#selection-2643.27-2643.116>

³⁰ <https://x.com/freemonotheist/status/1199384641561616384>

³¹ <https://archive.ph/xzTKe>

³² <https://archive.ph/BKxM0>

³³ <https://archive.ph/fafyi>

³⁴ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1552038>

³⁵ <https://www.cage.ngo/articles/cage-to-release-new-report-on-disturbing-government-counter-terror-policy-monday>

John.)³⁶ In a column about Charlie Hebdo, he wrote that "Muslim states must send a clear message to France that their history and era of demonising Islam and Muslims must come to an end, otherwise they should face political and economic consequences in the Muslim world."³⁷

He has said that "real positive change for Muslims can only come outside of the political system"; and that "Muslims must at all times exist as an independently organised political community with its own leadership and agenda, retaining a distinction and separate identity from the political system and political parties."³⁸

Mohammed is described as a founding director of the Ayaan Institute, which stated on the first anniversary of 7/10: "October 7th will be remembered in Muslim history as that moment when the Muslim world realised that everything they believed about the leaders of Western civilisation was wrong; the West never abandoned their instincts for racial supremacy, domination, and colonialism."³⁹

Note that Mohammed is speaking at the festival's charity symposium, whose speakers are listed separately.⁴⁰

Entertainers include:⁴¹

Abdul Fattah Owainat: Owainat has posted footage glorifying the Hamas terrorist attacks on October 7. This includes militants firing rockets, Israeli civilians screaming and running, and tunnel bodycam footage of Hamas fighters launching attacks.⁴²

Exhibitors include:⁴³

IERA, see Abdurraheem Green above.

Islamic Shakhshiyah Foundation: Runs two independent primary schools and attached nurseries and has been linked to the extremist group Hizb ut-Tahrir

³⁶ <https://www.asianimage.co.uk/columnists/12875131.cage-event-forced-to-find-an-alternative-venue-after-pressure/>

³⁷ <https://ayaaninstitute.com/expertise/charlie-hebdo-and-freedom-of-speech/>

³⁸ <https://5pillarsuk.com/2019/12/08/muslims-must-focus-on-political-change-outside-party-politics/>

³⁹ <https://x.com/AyaanInstitute/status/1843303092277719320>

⁴⁰ <https://symposium.gpufestival.com/speakers/>

⁴¹ <https://gpufestival.com/artists/>

⁴² https://www.instagram.com/p/CzT_u_dLM20/?img_index=1

⁴³ <https://gpufestival.com/exhibitors/>

(HT).⁴⁴ In 2009 the Telegraph exposed how multiple trustees of ISF were members or activists of HT, including the head teacher of their Slough primary school Farah Ahmed. Ahmed remains listed as a trustee on ISF's Charity Commission page.⁴⁵ The Telegraph reported that children in the ISF school had been taught HT ideology since the age of five, including a history curriculum that stipulates "there must be one ruler of the khilafah [caliphate]". ISF was described by then-opposition leader David Cameron in 2009 as a "front organisation" for HT. In 2015 the ISF primary school was rated inadequate by Ofsted for 'failing to promote British values' and classes were considered "too heavily based around Islam" and did not "deliver balanced viewpoints".⁴⁶

IIDR (Islamic Institute for Development and Research), who list Imam Siraj Wahhaj as one of their scholars.⁴⁷ Wahhaj was listed as an "unindicted co-conspirator"⁴⁸ in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, and provided a 'glowing' character witness for the 'blind Sheikh' Omar Abdel Rahman who "masterminded" the attack.⁴⁹ He is also reported to have called for *jihad* in America, promoted violent *sharia* punishments, and elicited financial support for an organisation banned by the US Treasury as a financier of terrorism.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/6475214/Council-suspends-funding-to-schools-linked-to-Hizb-ut-Tahrir.html>

⁴⁵ <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/-/charity-details/5043677/trustees>

⁴⁶ <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/education/islamic-shakhsiyah-foundation-school-tottenham-david-cameron-front-radical-islam-ofsted-report-inadequate-9997207.html>

⁴⁷ <https://www.iidr.org/people/42-siraj-wahhaj/>

⁴⁸ https://www.investigativeproject.org/case_docs/us-v-rahman-et-al/936/list-of-unindicted-coconspirators.pdf

⁴⁹ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6043759/Imam-father-Muslim-extremist-New-Mexico-compound-ties-1993-attack-World-Trade-Center.html>

⁵⁰ <https://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/HJS-Extreme-Speakers-and-Events-Report.pdf>

The Policy Questions

The GPU event is far from the first time that the Metropolitan Police has apparently been associated with questionable external groups or individuals. Similar issues were recently raised in Policy Exchange’s report [Might is Right? \(2024\)](#) within the context of protest and public order policing.

One of the most egregious recent examples of these issues related to the Chair of the London Muslim Communities Forum (LMCF) – described by the Metropolitan Police when it was created in March 2012 as a “new strategic advisory body for the MPS [Metropolitan Police Service] to help build better relations with London’s Muslim communities, and to improve how we engage and consult with them”.⁵¹ The Chair of the LMCF, Attiq Malik, was alleged to have led chanting of the slogan “from the river to the sea” – recognised by many as a call for the destruction of Israel – at a rally in Luton in 2021.⁵² As a result the Metropolitan Police ended its relationship with Mr Malik stating that the “past language and views expressed by Attiq Malik that appear to be anti-Semitic and contrary with our values”.⁵³

In the aftermath of these events the Metropolitan Police stated, “We are already working on a new advisory group ‘charter’ that will include a shared commitment to engage through mutual respect and inclusivity”.⁵⁴

As of October 2024, no such ‘charter’ has been published. The delay is difficult to comprehend.

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, in his [inspection into activism and impartiality into policing \(2024\)](#) similarly highlighted concerns over the use of ‘advisory groups’.⁵⁵ He identified that the relevant College of Policing guidance document into independent advisory groups is now nine years old.⁵⁶ The HMICFRS recommended that the College of Policing publish new guidance to

⁵¹ Metropolitan Police Service, London Muslim Communities Forum launched, 27th March 2012, accessed via webarchive on 12th October 2024, [link](#)

⁵² The Telegraph, Met Police adviser led ‘from the river to the sea’ chant, 4th November 2023, [link](#)

⁵³ Metropolitan Police Service, Response to video shared by the Telegraph, Attiq Malik’s role on the London Muslim Communities Forum, 5th November 2024, accessed via webarchive on 12th October 2024, [link](#)

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, An inspection into activism and impartiality in policing, 10th September 2024, [link](#)

⁵⁶ College of Policing (2015), Independent Advisory Groups: Considerations and advice for the police service on the recruitment, role and value of IAGs, [link](#)

forces on the role and use of external advisory groups. This is welcome, however the Metropolitan Police should not delay their own charter for any more time while waiting for national guidance to be produced.

In their report HMICFRS also recognised, specifically in relation to public events, that:

“engagement at some public events may make the police appear less impartial, and the actions of individual officers and staff can undermine the best-laid operational plans. Sometimes, officers and staff get things wrong and the resulting images or footage, propelled by modern media formats, can be extremely damaging.”⁵⁷

The HMICFRS also recognised that getting decisions such as these wrong “can influence wider public perceptions about police impartiality”.⁵⁸

One of the features of the last decade in policing has been the significant growth in internal Staff Networks. Since 2010 there has been an 83% increase in the number of national police Staff Networks in England and Wales. In addition, there are now over 200 local networks operating within police forces across the country. These networks cover a range of different activities and characteristics – the Met alone has at least twenty.

The Metropolitan Police’s Staff Networks⁵⁹

The Association of Muslim Police
Association of Senior Women Officers
British Association for Women in Policing
London Christian Police Family
Metropolitan Police LGBT Network
Jewish Police Association
Metropolitan Black Police Association
Metropolitan Police Service Chinese and South East Asian Staff Association
Metropolitan Police Humanists
Metropolitan Police Service Emerald Society

⁵⁷ His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, An inspection into activism and impartiality in policing, 10th September 2024, [link](#)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Metropolitan Police Service Website, last accessed 9th October 2023, [link](#) – the Metropolitan Police Service refers to their Staff Networks as ‘Staff Support Associations’

Metropolitan Police Service Greek & Cypriot Association
Metropolitan Police Hindu Association
Metropolitan Police Ibero-American Association
Metropolitan Police Italian Association
Metropolitan Police Polish Association
Metropolitan Police Sikh Association
Metropolitan Police Disability Staff Association
Metropolitan Police Service Turkish Police Association
Metropolitan Police Romanian Association
Network of Women

The Metropolitan Police states that Staff Networks:

“...provide support; guidance and information to their members and the wider Met to ultimately improve what it’s like to work in the Met for everybody. Our [Staff Networks] are used as a sounding board within the Met, providing their insight to shape how the Met does things, both internally and externally with our communities of London.”⁶⁰

However, the activities of staff networks in policing often go further than might be imagined given this limited description. The activities of staff networks can broadly be divided into five categories:

- Providing pastoral support to their members, including coaching and mentoring.
- Community ‘engagement and outreach’.
- Supporting forces and police commanders in making operational policing decisions.
- Supporting police forces to achieve ‘internal’ goals such as achieving recruitment objectives or improved employment conditions for staff through direct activities or influencing police policy design.
- Publicly attempting to influence government or policing policy.

The issues around staff networks were raised by the Policy Exchange report [Blurred Lines \(2023\)](#) and more recently by HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, in his [inspection into activism and impartiality into policing \(2024\)](#). Both highlighted the inconsistencies in governance surrounding staff networks and concerns about the activities and impartiality of some staff networks. Both reports

⁶⁰ Metropolitan Police Service Website, [link](#)

made recommendations that the National Police Chiefs Council and forces should reset the governance arrangements under which staff networks operate.

In their report His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services stated:

“The activities of some networks can have a negative effect on trust and confidence

Most forces we inspected had governance arrangements to support their networks, and make sure that their networks operated in line with the force's strategic direction. However, in one force, we weren't confident that senior leaders were effectively managing their networks. We found evidence of network leads attending public force performance meetings and attempting to hold senior officers to account. A senior officer said:

“It was like taking on a beast. They present like they are independent of [the] police, and they are paid officers. They tread the line very closely.”

We heard about one example of an event organised by a force network that attracted negative publicity. This staff awareness development event appeared to have a legitimate purpose. But there were no rules or guidance to follow when arranging for outside speakers to attend. Event organisers need to assure themselves and the force that external speakers, the organisation they represent, and their views are appropriate. But in this instance, we couldn't find any evidence of that.”⁶¹

⁶¹ His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, An inspection into activism and impartiality in policing, 10th September 2024, [link](#)

Conclusion

The GPU Festival case study outlined in this research note may be an example of the Metropolitan Police failing to appropriately navigate their involvement with external groups and individuals. Given the secrecy that often surrounds the force's approach to 'community engagement', advisory groups, staff networks and other 'para-political' activities it is difficult to conclude exactly what has occurred. Too often the approach taken by the Metropolitan Police exposes the force to credible charges that they are failing to act "without fear or favour" in the exercise of their duties.

The Commissioner must take urgent steps to address these issues. Otherwise, he risks sustaining yet further falls in the public's already tenuous confidence in the Metropolitan Police.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Metropolitan Police, including any staff networks, should publish full details of their dealings with groups and individuals concerned with the GPU Festival.**
- 2. The Metropolitan Police should publish a policy relating to which community groups it engages with and which events it will attend. A register of the groups it engages with and events it attends should be published on a regular basis.**
- 3. The Metropolitan Police should publish their new 'charter' relating to advisory groups without delay. It should include the publication of all minutes of meetings between the police and advisory groups, including those involving meetings with internal police staff networks.**
- 4. The Metropolitan Police should bring all of their staff networks under a consistent internal governance framework. This should include how each network should be constituted, organised and run. It should be clear that staff networks are part of policing and not independent organisations.**
- 5. There should be full public transparency of how staff networks operate. This should include publishing committee memberships, minutes of meetings, workstreams, priorities and budgets.**