Building Stronger Inclusive Communities

Community Resource Pack

Published May 2026

Voscur
Building Community Power

SARI
STAND AGAINST RACISM & INEQUALITY

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

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Introduction

Following the 2024 UK racist riots, SARI and Voscur partnered to respond to Bristol City Council's request to develop community-based strategies to prevent disorder and promote social cohesion with a series of community forums.

The community forums were held at community venues across Bristol and online. They were:

June 2025: Disunited Kingdom - Bringing communities together to set the scene and understand what's behind the issues

October 2025: From Challenge to Change - How to build resilience and inclusion in Bristol's neighbourhoods

November 2025: Navigating difficult conversations and building community cohesion

January 2026: Using community-focused strategies to tackle racist violence and hate incidents for improved cohesion and wellbeing

February 2026: Tackling Islamophobia and supporting communities

March 2026: Tackling Inequality - Race, class and the importance of allyship

This community resource pack is designed as a practical guide and incorporates the wealth of ideas and content from the forums. It aims to support community organisations to foster inclusion and respond effectively to hate crimes and incidents. This will help ensure that the VCSE sector is better equipped to respond to potential future incidents and help advance social justice work in complex, ever-changing times.

As a roadmap to build resilience and community cohesion following the UK racist riots, it focuses on three core pillars:

- **Education** for our minds
- **Prevention** of future harm
- **Response** which enables unified action

We thank all those who attended and facilitated our sessions; contributed to the creation this resource; and supported us in any way to tackle racist violence and hate crime.

Education

This section aims to provide clarity on false narratives; equipping communities in how to tackle misinformation, and move from passive awareness to proactive understanding and allyship.

Misinformation

With so many sources of information online, it can be a struggle to make sense of what is true.

Misinformation	False information spread by people who think it's true.
Disinformation	False information spread by people who know it's false.
Deepfake	Deepfakes are videos or audio recordings that manipulate a person's likeness. They then appear to do or say something they never did.

Source: www.internetmatters.org

Encouraging individuals to verify sources of information strengthens communities' resilience against divisive tactics and fosters social cohesion. Equipping people to identify and address misinformation is essential for maintaining healthy public discourse. The links below provide additional guidance on how to recognise and prevent the spread of false information:

A quick guide to spotting misinformation
Tips from UNICEF for fact-checking, staying informed and talking it out.
www.unicef.org/eca/stories/quick-guide-spotting-misinformation

Fake news and misinformation facts & advice
Resources to help children understand misinformation and learn how to combat it.
www.internetmatters.org/issues/fake-news-and-misinformation-advice-hub

Top Tips for Tackling Misinformation

- Combat online hate by promoting critical thinking, digital literacy, and resilience.
- Trace the origin of funding sources. Cross-reference and corroborate information.
- Spot AI and 'deepfakes' by looking for lighting inconsistencies or unnatural movements, particularly in high-emotion videos.
- Use a reverse image search to check if an image is being used out of context.

Full Fact
A national charity who fact check claims made by politicians and the media, as well as viral online content.
fullfact.org

The following information is taken from a presentation given by Moestak Hussein (Event #4).

Misinformation is effective because it uses strong emotions such as fear, anger, and threat to identity. It creates panic, reinforces "us vs them" thinking, triggers moral outrage, and simplifies complex problems into blame narratives. People are more likely to accept misinformation when they are searching for certainty, belonging, meaning, or someone to blame.

It has to have conditions that enable its spread, and spreads most easily in environments affected by economic insecurity; housing pressures; social isolation; political polarisation; cultural anxiety; and digital echo chambers.

In moments of crisis, misinformation follows a predictable psychosocial pathway into fear, polarisation, and violence. The longer misinformation circulates unchallenged, the deeper harm and violence go.

The Psychosocial Pathway: From Misinformation to Violence

1. Fear Activation - Threat perception, anxiety, survival instincts.

2. Identity Polarisation - 'Us vs Them' thinking, in-groups vs out-groups.

3. Moral Justification - Rationalisation of harm, group authorisation.

4. Social Contagion - Amplification, validation, emotional momentum.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The following definitions have been provided by Bristol-based charity, Aid Box Community:

Refugee	A person who has fled their home country and has been granted protection to stay in another country. This is because the country they have been granted legal protection in recognises that they were at risk of serious human rights violations, such as violence, conflict, war, or persecution for reasons of race, gender, religion, nationality, membership of a social group, or political opinion in their home country.
Asylum Seeker	A person seeking asylum is someone who has been forcibly displaced from the country they were living in and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations, but who hasn't been legally recognised as a refugee yet.

In Bristol, there are a range of organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

Under the banner of 'Bristol Refugee & Asylum Seeker Partnership' (BRASP), they work together to: coordinate services in the city; collaborate on new projects and improve support for asylum seekers and refugees; and encourage lived experience leadership in our sector.

bristol.cityofsanctuary.org/bristol-organisations

Who is a refugee, an asylum seeker, and a migrant?
The UNHCR provides teaching materials and videos on refugees, asylum and migration.
www.unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees

Resources for Schools
Aid Box Community's website aims to equip schools with resources to educate students on the experience of refugees and the role they can play in supporting them.
www.aidboxcommunity.co.uk/for-schools

Training from Bristol Refugee Rights
These training packages are designed to help organisations understand the issues facing asylum seekers and refugees.
www.bristolrefugeerights.org/training

Right to Remain Toolkit
A step-by-step guide to the UK immigration and asylum system. It's for people who want to learn more about the legal process, or a particular part of the legal process.
righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit

The Islamic Faith

Muslims in Bristol and Britain
This booklet aims to inform a range of audiences about Islam and Muslims in Bristol and Britain, and includes highly useful myth-busting information and FAQs.
www.bmslg.org/muslims-in-bristol

Common Myths

- ***Myth: "All Muslims believe the same thing."***
- **Fact**: Islamic faith in Britain is made up of lots of different traditions and groups. Each group brings its own way of thinking and practising the faith, whether that's in how they pray, organise their community, or their daily lives.

- ***Myth: "Sharia Law is taking over UK courts."***
- **Fact**: Sharia councils have no legal jurisdiction; they offer voluntary arbitration, similar to Beth Din courts that operate in the Jewish community.

- ***Myth: "No-Go Zones exist in Britain."***
- **Fact**: British law is enforced equally in all neighbourhoods. There is no evidence of areas where authorities cannot operate.

Diverse Doors Open Day
An annual event giving people the opportunity to explore different places of worship, learn about one another's traditions, and strengthen community understanding.
bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk/diverse-doors

Muslim Census
A range of reports with detailed insight into issues and impacts on the UK Muslim community, with data collected by Muslim Census.
muslimcensus.co.uk/reports

Islamophobia and Its Effects

The following information is taken from a presentation by Rizwan Ahmed from Bristol Muslim Cultural Society (Event #5).

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

Source: All Party Parlimentary Group on British Muslims

In the year March 2024-March 2025, Home Office statistics recorded:

19%
increase in religious hate crimes targeted towards Muslims

45%
of all recorded religious hate crimes were targeted towards Muslims

Some types of stereotypical allegations that are made are around terrorism, grooming and holding Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of a state or individuals. Islamophobia can have a range of negative effects including:

- **Exclusion** from politics, government, employment and/or management and responsibility
- **Violence**, including physical assaults, vandalising of property and verbal abuse
- **Prejudice** in the media and in everyday conversation
- **Discrimination**, for example in employment practices and the provision of health and education services.

"Statistics do not show reality of lived experience and real world experiences. Islamophobia has the following impacts on the community:

- *High levels of anxiety / fear*
- *Some too scared to go out*
- *Not feeling welcome in the UK*
- *People making escape plans*
- *Not feeling supported by those in authority when there is no push back against hate"*

- Rizwan Ahmed, Bristol Muslim Cultural Society (Event #5)

The following information is taken from a presentation by Prof. Adeela ahmed Shafi, Bristol Muslim Strategic Leadership Group (Event #5)

The Bristol Muslim Conference 2025 brought together communities across Bristol to address rising hate, division, and fear. Workshops covering Women, Youth, Politics, and Media revealed consistent concerns around safety, Islamophobia, far-right intimidation, harmful political and media narratives, and institutional failings.

From each workshop, these were the top issues identified:

Women

- Rising Islamophobia
- Far-right intimidation
- Safety concerns on buses
- Misinformation about asylum seekers

Politics

- Under-representation
- Far-right narratives
- Lack of accountability
- Online harms

Young People

- Anxiety from hate crime
- Identity strain
- Workplace discrimination
- Refugee youth exclusion
- Barriers to mental-health access

Media

- Dehumanising coverage
- Fake news/clickbait
- Lack of newsroom diversity

Source: Bristol Muslim Conference 2025 Report

Hate Crime And Discrimination

The following information is taken from a presentation given by SARI (Event #3).

What is a Hate Crime?

Any criminal act motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone because of their:

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Transgender identity

A victim does not have to be a member of the group the hostility is targeted at. In fact, anyone could be a victim of a hate crime. For example, you could be called a homophobic slur, even if you're heterosexual.

What is a Hate Incident?

When someone targets you with hostility or prejudice, but their actions don't break the law. Examples include:

- Offensive gestures and comments
- Microaggressions (comments or actions that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally express a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalised group)

Even though these incidents aren't crimes, they can still be reported to authorities and recorded to monitor patterns of behaviour as these could escalate into a crime.

Types of discrimination	
Direct discrimination	Treating one person worse than another person because of a protected characteristic.
Indirect discrimination	Putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage.
Victimisation	Treating someone unfairly because they are taking action under the Equality Act (like making a complaint of discrimination) or because they are supporting someone else who is doing so.
Harassment	Violating someone's dignity or creating a hostile environment for them. Often 'drip, drip, drip'.
Discrimination by association	Treating someone unfairly because of their connection to a person with a particular protected characteristic.
Discrimination by perception	Treating someone unfairly because you think they have a particular protected characteristic.

Equality Act 2010: Guidance
The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.
www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Microaggressions: A Guide
A guide from the University of Bristol explaining microaggressions and how to respond.
voscur.org/microaggressions-guide

Tips for Dealing with Microaggressions
This video gives an explanation of microaggressions and tips on how to deal with them.
www.bbc.co.uk/videos/cek91zpzp7ro

Allyship

Allyship	When someone takes action to support a marginalised group.

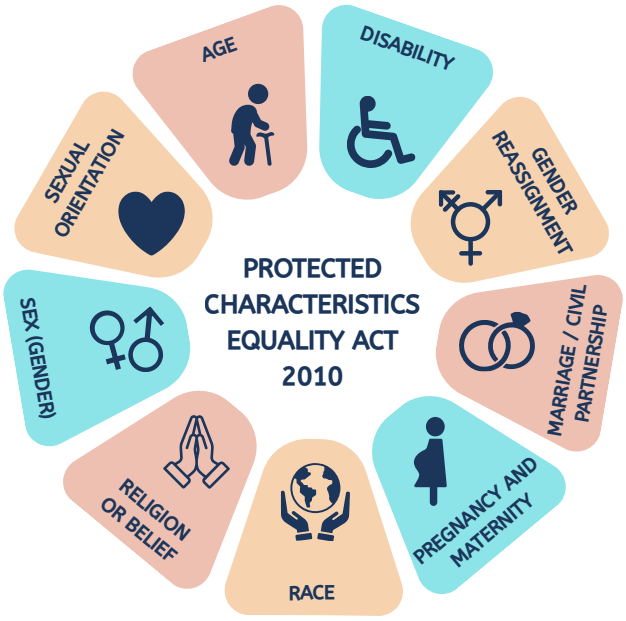
Source: www.mind.org.uk

What do allies do?

- Listen with intent
- Model inclusive behaviour
- Advocate for others
- Take Action

Active allyship goes beyond avoiding discriminatory behaviour; it involves consistently challenging prejudice.

Example:
Rather than staying silent when harmful language arises, allies should address it directly and respectfully, for example, by saying, "That kind of language isn't acceptable here."



Bristol Equality Charter
A city-wide project and toolkit to enable continuous improvement in equality.
www.bristol.gov.uk/council/policies-plans-and-strategies/equality-diversity-and-cohesion-policies/bristol-equality-charter

A Quick Guide: What is Allyship?
A blog with basic information about allyship and related terminology.
www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk/blog/quick-guide-to-allyship

Becoming an Active Bystander
A guide about when and how to intervene when witnessing discriminatory behaviour.
leeds.ac.uk/support-and-resources/becoming-an-active-bystander

Prevention

This section brings together learning from our event contributors and participants, to give ideas on ways to build strong and resilient communities as part of our everyday culture.

A Neighbourhood Lens On Community Cohesion

During Event #2, we heard from representatives of Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust about the ways that community cohesion are embedded into their approach to community development within a neighbourhood in North Bristol.

"Lockleaze is the fourth most diverse ward in Bristol, according to Census 2021, and with over 2500 people moving into new homes in the area, community cohesion really matters. What has worked well?

- *Indirect approach*
- *Community feasts*
- *Community 'Ideals'*
- *Advice drop-in rota*
- *Informal listening spaces"*

- Melissa Blackburn & Maria Perrett,
Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust (Event #2)

For place-based community organisations like Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust, fostering a sense of belonging and bringing residents together are central to their mission. Although much of their work takes place within the community venues they manage, these organisations also prioritise outreach through door-knocking and community events. Additionally, they cultivate relationships with a broad range of partners (including schools, police, health services, and other local groups) to promote collaboration and strengthen community ties.

Following the presentation, participants shared their ideas on a selection of themes:

New Ways of Community Togetherness – what are they?

- Using common interests to connect people
- Having difficult conversations. Training people to be able to facilitate them.
- Creating spaces for conversation where people feel safe and respected
- The old ways - not reinventing the wheel
- Rayne "Places we meet" - importance of community centres
- Training young people in peer mediation and conflict resolution
- Multi-agency, cross sector, involving lived-experience
- Online/WhatsApp - whether you like it or not, need to engage with it. Some streets have WhatsApp groups.
- Solidarity work. Understanding how your community relates to another within the same system. Showing up for each other
- Community activism and protest

Citizen Power - community meetings for this moment

- Unjudgmental listening spaces with clear co-created ground rules
- Representation - who's leading the meetings?
- Build community-based power not relying on existing political structures but creating new ones
- Community in the lead - citizen assemblies
- Share meals
- People with lived experience shouldn't be assumed to 'represent' or to be the advocate for their community
- How to create events where two 'sides' can be together with safety and respect - is it even possible right now?
- Zero tolerance approach can shut down any chance of conversation between sides
- Who gets to lead/hold that space? Who chooses?

Asset-Based Community Development – how can we be more representative?

- Ensure communications are available in all languages
- Be open to new ideas and learning
- Be brave! Try something new
- Share toolkits from what has worked
- Listen. Listen. Listen.
- Go to where residents are and start a conversations
- It's ok to start slow with no agenda
- Be open to new kinds of assets in the community i.e. different art forms, foods, music to bring people together
- Don't make assumptions about what people can/can't do
- Support for what is working
- Be careful not to patronise people – build up a relationship before highlighting their assets – can be a tricky conversation if people feel under resourced
- Train local people - find out what people need to develop and support them

Refugees and Asylum Seekers – building belonging in community spaces

- Build bridges to community spaces – link champion
- Co-creation - positive representation and visibility.
- Welcome signs in community languages
- AI translation – wordly.com
- Free access to rooms and kitchens
- How we build long term belonging?
- Getting people to turn up.
- Contact Better Bilingual who can be a bridge between schools and communities
- Sharing of food - culturally appropriate e.g. Peace Feast
- Appropriate interpreting, someone with cultural understanding, not always family
- Know when people arrive into the community

Myth busting/fact-based challenges - terminology, media agenda and language

- Challenge terminology and language, where comfortable
- Use trusted (evidence-based) content creators
- Support people to know enough to counter effectively in the moment
- Educate in neutral territory
- Support others to upskill e.g. learning circles
- Avoid jargon language
- Support people to safely tell their story as this contradicts the myths
- Put accurate information on billboards
- Knowing enough and where to sign post
- Find ways of finding mutual reality understand false info and conspiracies. What does it offer and how can we replace that offer? False realities = escapism
- Support people to engage in online community forums e.g. Facebook groups
- Share clear local Bristol facts

Reaching across the divide - working with those drawn into riots/far right views

- Ensure people feel heard and understood
- Rediscovering local histories and current context
- Create connection through music, food and stories
- Listen to why they have become involved
- Positive success story telling
- Exploring their motivation - what is the appeal of the spaces they are in and how can we offer something equally appealing to get them in the room?
- Challenge gently
- Share yourself – lead by example
- Work with national organisations e.g. Hope Not Hate, Exit Hate, Educate Against Hate
- Peer support/role modelling from people leaving radicalised far right groups
- Avoid mentioning political parties and talk about values, stories and experiences
- Get to know the individuals instead of lumping them into one group

Ideas for Promoting Community Cohesion

Throughout each of the community forums, we gathered ideas and examples of activities from community organisations across the city and compiled the list into a shareable space:

Ideas for Promoting Community Cohesion from Bristol
A list of ideas and links to examples of activities that have happened across the city to bring different people together.
padlet.com/voscur/bristolcommunitycohesionideas

A Million Acts of Hope
A national campaign to celebrate the everyday acts of kindness and connection.
millionactsofhope.org/community-hub

"New people arriving in Hartcliffe are welcomed and connected and engaged through local WhatsApp groups. They are then included and feel a sense of local connection."

- Avril Marshall, Cameron Powell and Hanad Mohamed, Vision BAME CIC (Event #6)

Navigating Difficult Conversations

The following information is taken from a workshop from Bridges For Communities about how to navigate difficult conversations (Event #3).

"It's not our differences that are the issue, it's our distance."

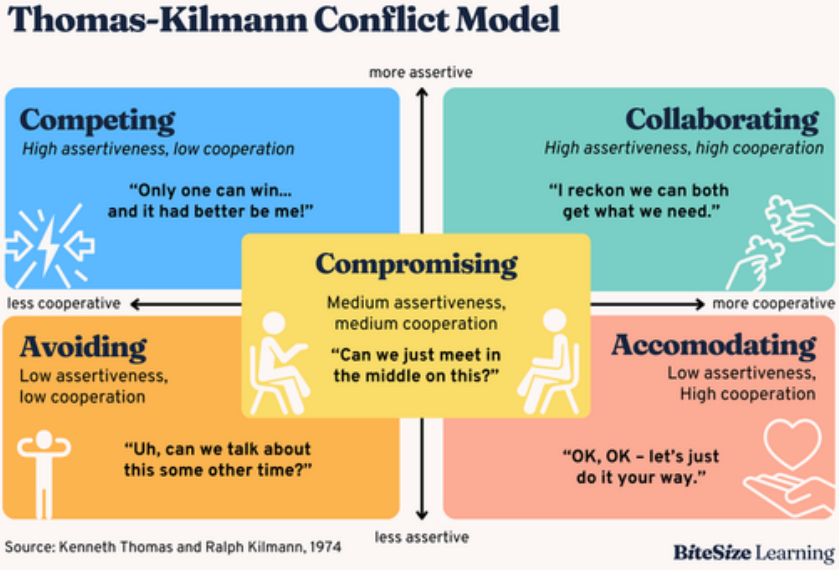
- Dan Green, Bridges For Communities (Event #3)

Because no two individuals have exactly the same expectations and desires, conflict is a natural part of our interactions with others.

'Conflict situations' are those in which the concerns of two parties appear to be incompatible.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model model is a widely recognised framework designed to describe an different responses to conflict situations.

It identifies five primary 'modes' of dealing with conflict, distinguished by two dimensions:



Source: www.bitesizelearning.co.uk/resources/thomas-kilmann-conflict-model

- **Assertiveness** - the extent to which an individual attempts to satisfy their own concerns, and...
- **Cooperativeness** - the extent to which an individual attempts to satisfy the concerns of the other person

How Do I Have Difficult Conversations?
Imam Adam Kelwick interviewed by Bridges for Communities, offering practical advice for having tricky conversations and building friendship across divides.
www.bridgesforcommunities.com/get-equipped

Start Having Courageous Conversations
A printable poster with tips for having courageous conversations about refugee rights - although transferable to other topics as well.
cityofsanctuary.org/2025/03/25/22280

Knowing when to engage

- Is it **safe**?
- Do you have the personal / emotional **capacity**?
- What is your **role** here?
- Is it the right **time**?

Exit strategies

- "I value our friendship and I'm worried we might fall out if we continue to discuss this right now. **Shall we talk about something else?**"
- "It's been good to hear your thoughts, but **I don't want to continue** with this conversation at the moment."
- "I'm not comfortable having this conversation right now. **I'm going to leave**."
- **Walk away**

Tips for staying in the conversation

- Be tuned in to your own **feelings**.
  - How do you know when you are feeling defensive?
  - What calms you down?
- Get **curious** - adopt a different mindset by being curious about the differences in opinion.
- Avoid increasing tension:
  - **Reset:** "I want to continue this discussion in a calm, respectful way. Let's take five..."
  - **Name it:** "Can we try to use a more respectful term?"
  - **Set a boundary:** "I want to have this discussion with you, but I find it hurtful to hear you talk about ... in that way. If we can't keep it respectful then I'll need to...(end the conversation / change the subject / come back another day).."
- Be aware of **intent vs impact** - how could words be misinterpreted?

Groundwork - how to prepare yourself

- Is your environment one where there **space to challenge and disagree in a healthy way**?
- Where can you **practise these skills in low stakes situations** so you're better prepared when difficult conversations arise?
- How are **expectations** communicated and upheld?

Reflection and learning

- **Look after yourself** with self care and debrief
- **Repair / respond** - is there a relationship to tend to or something to follow up?
- **Seek support, advice or a second opinion** if you are interested in reflection and feedback
- **Avoid** drawing in others unnecessarily with gossip

5 Bridge-Building Skills We All Need Right Now
Here are 5 bridge-building skills that go along way to bridging the divides and starting to mend some of the fractures in our communities.
www.bridgesforcommunities.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Copy-of-Top-tips-to-use-stitching-to-bring-people-together-1.pdf

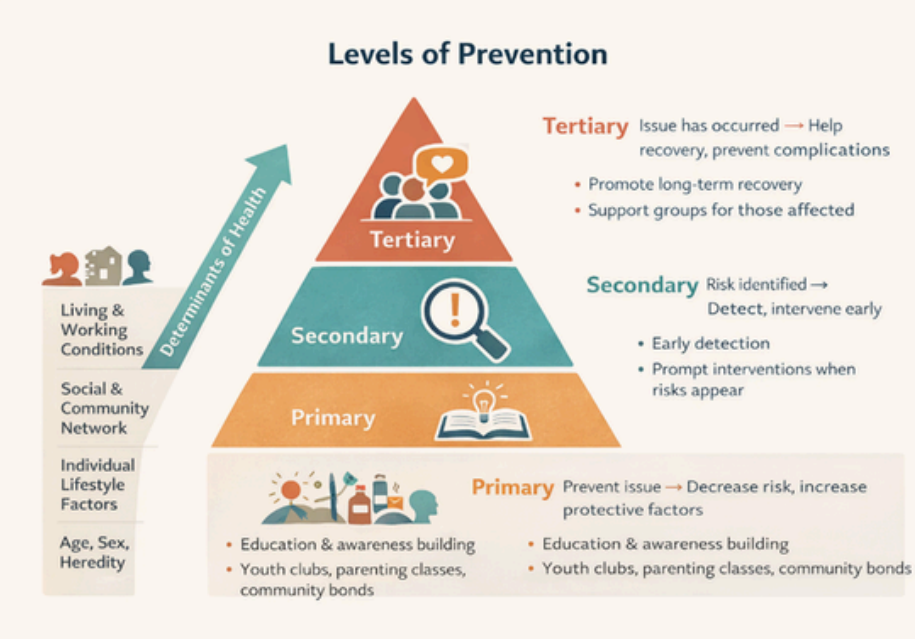
A Public Health Lens On Prevention Of Serious Crime

The following information is taken from a presentation given by Moestak Hussein (Event #4).

Rather than treating violence as random or inevitable, a public health lens encourages us to treat it the way we would treat an outbreak. It invites us to:

- explore where, when, and why harm happens, and what stops it from happening again
- look at individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels to understand the broader patterns that shape risk
- identify risk factors to understand the pathways through which harm spreads and design interventions that prevent recurrence

Primary Prevention	This is the work we do to stop harm before it ever takes hold. It's long-term work: countering racism; strengthening digital literacy; building belonging; supporting young people; and shaping environments where narratives of hate cannot take root. These are the structural conditions that communities understand intimately, because they live them daily.
Secondary Prevention	This is the moment when early warning signs appear: a rise in online hate; local tension; rumours circulating; fear building quietly in neighbourhoods. Communities are the first to hear this and because they move quickly, they can intervene early - challenging rumours; de-escalating fear; connecting residents to support; and working with partners to prevent escalation.
Tertiary Prevention	Healing after harm - this is recovery, rebuilding, and restoring the social fabric so that trauma doesn't feed future extremism. Communities lead this by supporting each other emotionally; rebuilding trust; creating spaces for connection; and helping people feel safe again. In this model, healing isn't something that happens after prevention; healing is prevention.



"Violence is not inevitable; it spreads in predictable ways; and because of that, it can be prevented in equally predictable ways - but only if communities are equipped, empowered, and recognised as essential partners in the work."

- Moestak Hussein (Event #4)

Putting Prevention Into Practice

The following scenarios were used as an activity during Event #4 to explore the levels of prevention. Below each scenario, you will see the notes from the discussion groups.

Scenario 1:

A secondary school is experiencing rising racial and religious bullying, increased peer fights, and online misinformation spreading among students and carers. Anxiety grows among Global Majority pupils, safeguarding referrals increase, and tensions escalate between families. After rumours spread online that a fight is planned on school grounds, groups of parents and carers arrive at the school intending to confront one another, forcing the school into full lockdown. News of the lockdown spreads rapidly online, intensifying fear, misinformation, and community anxiety.

Primary Prevention – Prevent harm before it happens:

- Working with parents – can we engage and communicate with them to help tackle misinformation.
- Celebrating different cultures to create a positive culture and understanding of difference e.g. assemblies around diversity and people from different backgrounds
- Social events at the school should be inclusive, celebrate culture and create connections that prevent tensions rising.
- All staff at the school need to be trained, not just the teachers – this helps them be observant and pick up on tensions rising (identifying risk).
- The school needs to also have a culture where all staff feel like they can report when tensions are rising, and their concerns are going to be taken seriously.
- Tension monitoring is a toolkit & monitoring system that can be used.

Secondary Prevention – Early intervention:

- Talk and listen to everyone – hear all the different perspectives to find out what has happened and to understand it fully.
- People need to feel heard – this can help de-escalate a situation.
- School communications are often a few steps behind how kids communicate and often is not cross-cultural. Language can be one of the systemic barriers faced.
- We can utilise local assets such as mosques, local shops, green spaces, pop-up events, they can support at this stage.

Tertiary Prevention – Healing after harm:

- Support the affected pupils – ensuring that the victims have the support they need, but also thinking about the perpetrators, what education do they need and what are the root causes of their behaviour.
- Understanding that this event affects the whole neighbourhood.
- We need to support the communities affected in the long-term.

Scenario 2:

Rumours spread via social media claiming that asylum seekers are being prioritised for housing in a new development in a local neighbourhood. Soon, images of local delivery and bus drivers from the same community are circulated online, falsely linking them to the housing claims. Muslim families report rising fear, graffiti and hate symbols appear, and buses serving the area are vandalised, leading the local bus service to suspend all routes into the area. Police call-outs increase, local businesses close early, and tensions escalate rapidly.

Primary Prevention – Prevent harm before it happens:

- What are your 'ins' with people? Play, sport, food, and nature are all ways to bring people together.
- How do you create curated space which feels natural?
- Arts and performance as tools mix people together in different ways and help put yourself in someone else's shoes by taking on other characters
- Proactively trying to hear the voices of those who might be likely to be at risk. Linking with groups and families

Secondary Prevention – Early intervention:

- Likely to be many incorrect assumptions so find out facts to inform next steps
- Early consultation is necessary in housing so local people know
- Community centres bring people together
- Digital literacy is an issue – young people have greater digital literacy
- Digital literacy workshops should help people understand about misinformation
- Education in schools to help dispel myths and avoid misinformation
- Who are our trusted voices?
  - Understanding the community – informal community leaders
  - Head teachers in the local schools – have contact with lots of families
  - Local businesses – shops, restaurants, takeaways – people in these places could be supported

Tertiary Prevention – Healing after harm:

- After care for people who are affected
- Safe walking home apps - prevention methods
- Creating networks to build a sense of not being alone or isolated
- Messages of support from the community
- What lessons are learned – go back to the start for a cycle of review, early prevention in future
- Policy changes – putting things in place to prevent further harm

Scenario 3:

Following a violent incident in a neighbouring city, local news reports highlight that "nine men from the same ethnic group have been arrested" publishing their names and neighbourhoods. Shortly after, a viral online post falsely claims that a local faith organisation is sheltering extremists and that police are covering it up. The video spreads rapidly across several social media platforms, triggering fear, hostility, and online threats. Within hours, abuse is directed at community leaders, families feel unsafe, children are targeted in school groups, and tensions escalate both online and offline.

Primary Prevention – Prevent harm before it happens:

- Build skills to review social media platforms; look for trigger words; spot it early and get social platforms to take action earlier.
- Get advice out to communities on how to de-escalate rather than escalate social media and what they can do to take positive action e.g. report – don't engage.
- Arrange in-person discussion groups where all are invited to come together, as a community, make all feel welcome. Get people talking to each other as neighbours.
  - Could use these discussions to dispel myths, give information.
- Cross-community events that simply bring everyone together for fun and celebration.
- Regular meetings for community organisations from a range of sectors. Use to share information as each will take info back to the people they are connected to e.g. Horfield and Lockleaze Breakfast Network – has schools and churches involved too.
- Different groups have access to different parts of the population e.g. older people's clubs vs. youth groups. Get as wide a range of groups as possible. Then reach widest range of audiences.
- Education on how to spot misinformation for all ages. Older people are also very involved in social media - negative comments as well as positive. Need to reach younger people who can be susceptible too – may believe everything they read, not understand AI.

Secondary Prevention – Early intervention:

- Reach out to those who are likely to be targeted, at high risk, make them safer, let them know where they can go.
- Police to do outreach and be as transparent as possible to dispel misinformation – can do online / via news but also in-person but need to make sure not seen as 2-tier.
  - Need trusted organisations alongside the police and also doing their own engagement. They add local legitimacy. Also, to do myth-busting.

Tertiary Prevention – Healing after harm:

- As well as events together, run separate events, allowing for people to share their difficult thoughts, what they are upset or angry about but should be with an experienced facilitator who can manage difficult conversations.

During Event #5, participants were invited to explore the actions their organisation would take to address and reduce discrimination.

Organisational Change

How can we overcome reporting barriers to address challenges to reporting Islamophobia and make support systems more accessible?

Education and training

- Train staff to be able to hold safe spaces for participants
- Pursue training on the issues that cause division so that advocacy workload doesn't fall on specific organisations working in hate crime space
- Raise awareness of reporting hate crime/discrimination processes/avenues
- Be aware of different holidays from different cultures
- Trauma-informed practice - runs through all work

Communication

- Be more visible in combating hate crime and discrimination
- Make space for difficult conversations
- It's okay to not have all the answers, but instead harbour greater institutional humility / accountability and do not speak over others. Make space for others to have those conversations and come up with solutions
- Be intentional with language - use 'Islamophobia' in discussions of race to narrow in on specific issues and not overlook particular experiences
- Value lived-expertise and trusted voices
- Have a specific worker to work with certain populations (intersectionality reflected in practice and employment demographic) to build trust in outreach work
- Partnering with allied organisations to provide translation and interpretation service - builds trust with communities

How can the VCSE sector review current practices to develop effective, accountable policies?

Recruitment and policies

- Accessible and inclusive recruitment processes
- Bullying and Harassment policy - specific sections on Xenophobia and Islamophobia
- Reviewing current policies - people affected by policy need to review them (get together a community group for assessment and review)
- Anti-Racism Charter

Working with others

- Collaborate with other organisations to skills share skills and strategies, and strengthen organisational position

How do we strengthen collaborative partnerships to follow up actions and make sustained actions?

- Bristol was reaccredited as a 'City of Sanctuary' in 2025. Organisations can engage with support available from Bristol City of Sanctuary to take action and contribute towards this e.g. Schools of Sanctuary, Churches of Sanctuary, Bristol City of Sanctuary Business Network

Community and Wellbeing

How can community-led initiatives promote engagement and solidarity?

Communication

- Counter the misinformation about refugees and asylum seekers
- Work with organisations to help people understand the context of being an asylum seeker
- Education on myth busting and difficult conversations - ripple effect into communities

Bringing people together

- Events with food to connect and celebrate - counter negative narrative on social media
  - Peace Feasts (Bridges for Communities)
  - International Feast (Ebenezer Church)
  - Bring your culture to the table (Knowle West Connections)
  - Community Iftar
  - Halal meals on offer to ensure people are feeling welcome
- Provide spaces where asylum seekers can come together and befriend other parents
- Help communities to understand each other and create friendships
- Using Welcoming Spaces as a low barrier entry for reaching people who are underserved - space for connection and signposting
- Stop being restricted by invisible boundaries (e.g. wards) which perpetuate tensions

Education and Awareness

How can we address stereotypes through campaigns and learning?

- Increasing people's understanding of Islam and the diversity within Muslim culture - for those who aren't Muslims
  - Involve Islamic study educators from the local area so people learn from those who know
  - Use key celebrations as a teaching moment e.g. Iftars during Ramadan
  - In workplaces, ensure colleagues are aware of Ramadan, and how to best support colleagues who are fasting
- Work with grass-roots community organisations to reach people who wouldn't naturally opt into learning
- Training in schools, and for councillors, health workers and those running community groups e.g. understanding discrimination, myth-busting
- School curriculum to reflect communities that exist now

How do we support the mental health of victims of Islamophobia?

- Create safe spaces for people who have been victims to come forward and talk together
- Community coaches - some people who are trained as good listeners to give people space to talk/validate, and could signpost to counselling / groups
- Be ready with support available 'in the moment'
- Empower and train the wider community in allyship - the difference you can make in the moment if you see something happening
- Guidance on challenging hate speech - conversations in the pub/post office queue, how to respond that is not immediately oppositional, keeps yourself safe and gives the other person something to think about
- Be aware that the current flags make some people feel unsafe

Response

This section aims to equip community organisations with tools for how to respond when a hate crime or incident has occurred in their community or with individuals they support.

"Community organisations are actually the first diagnosticians and the first healers in moments of tension, fear, or division.

Why? Because they hold the things statutory systems often can't reach:

- *They hold trust - people speak to them honestly.*
- *They detect fear early - they hear it before it becomes visible.*
- *They understand cultural nuance - they know what things mean within communities.*
- *They move faster than statutory systems - they can respond in real time.*
- *And they rebuild belonging - which is the antidote to division.*

And when we recognise this, it allows us to shift from a mindset of: 'How do we police a problem?' to a mindset of: 'How do we heal a community?'"

- Moestak Hussein (Event #4)

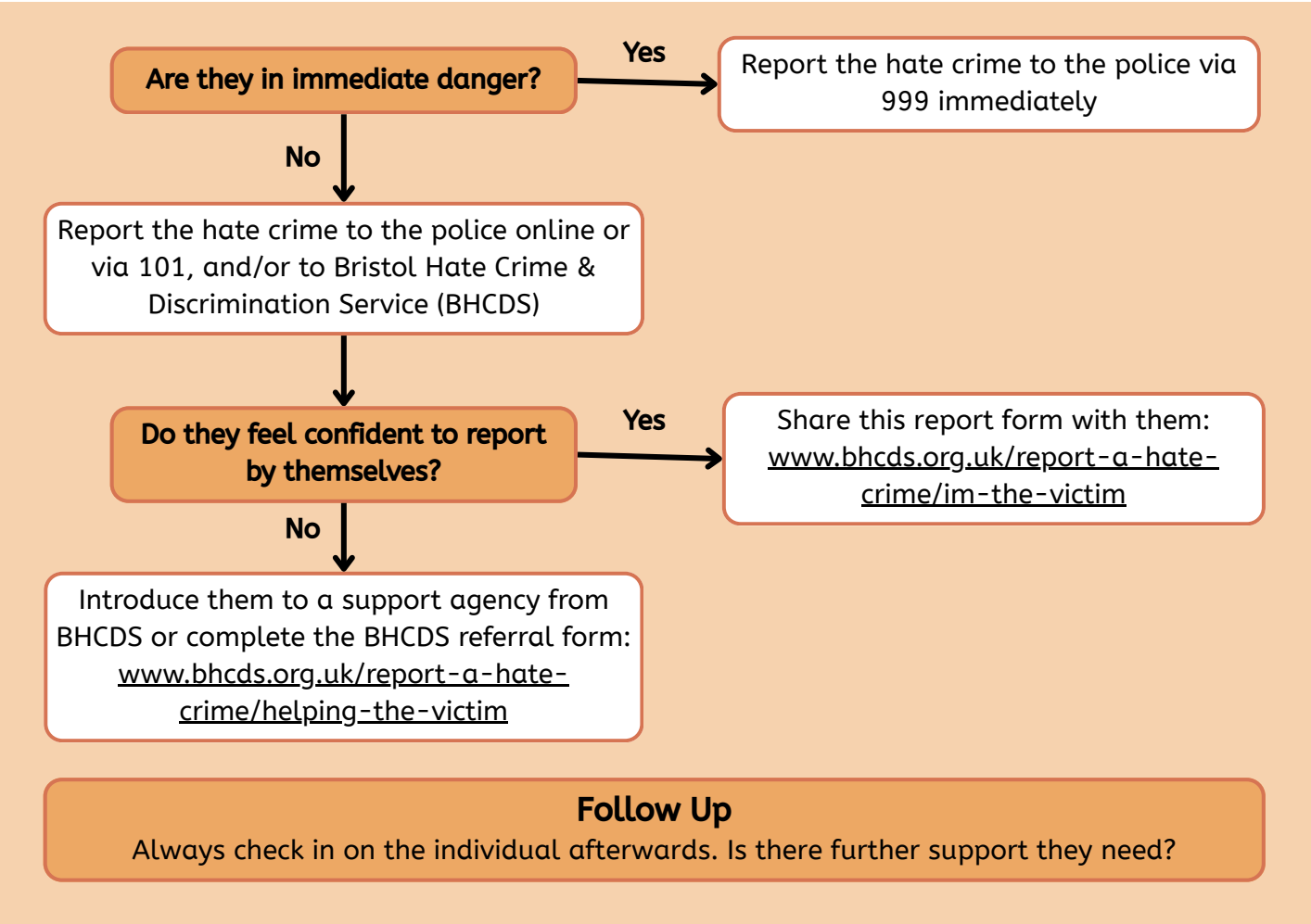
What can you do when confronted with hate crime?

Taking immediate action can help prevent further incidents and ensure the safety of our communities. Below are practical tips from SARI (Stand Against Racism & Inequality) and Bristol Hate Crime & Discrimination Services (BHCDS):

sarichariy.org.uk/what-can-you-do

Supporting a victim of hate crime

This flowchart has been devised using information from the resources on the following page.



Key Contacts

Purpose	Contact details	Agency
Support with immediate / life-threatening danger	999	Emergency Services
To report crime and get a Crime Reference Number	101 www.police.uk/pu/contact-us	Police Non-Emergency
Support for victims of hate crime	0800 171 2272 bhcds.org.uk	Bristol Hate Crime & Discrimination Service (BHCDS)
	0117 942 0060 saricharity.org.uk	Stand Against Racism & Inequality (SARI)
	0808 1689 111 www.victimsupport.org.uk	Victim Support

Bristol Hate Crime and Discrimination Service
Resource Pack with information about the support available for victims of hate crime in Bristol, and guidance on what to do if you are a victim of hate crime or discrimination.
saricharity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/BHCDS-Resource-Pack.pdf

How Do I Counter Hate Crime?
Temba Mahari interviewed by Bridges for Communities, sharing some practical advice on what to do if you witness or experience hate crime, and how to support victims of hate crime.
www.bridgesforcommunities.com/get-equipped

Stop Hate Crime
A range of resources from True Vision about how to respond to hate crime.
www.report-it.org.uk/resources

Practical tips from SARI and Bristol Hate Crime and Discrimination Service
Tips on how to respond to hate crime from Bristol-based organisations.
voscur.org/practical-tips-from-sari-and-bhcds

Responding to trauma

Victims of hate crime and discrimination are likely to experience feelings of trauma in the aftermath of an incident. There is also significant trauma caused to the witnesses of the hate crimes and often involves the family members of the victim (Stop Hate UK).

What is trauma?
Information about trauma and its effects from Mind.
www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/trauma

Training to be trauma-informed
Training for organisations to understand trauma and how to support others is available from:

- Trauma Foundation South West
- Bristol Mind

Responding to a critical incident in your community
Organisations in Knowle West and Hartcliffe produced a leaflet for local residents to support themselves and each other following the tragic deaths of two young people.
www.knowlewest.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Knowle-West-Community-Response-Leaflet-FINAL-v4.pdf

Reponding to Islamophobia

Bristol Muslim Conference 2025 invited local Muslims to share their ideas for actions that Bristol's statutory organisations could take to tackle Islamophobia in Bristol.

Women

- Increase visible policing
- Rapid response to intimidation
- Anti-Islamophobia training
- Family/mental health support

Young People

- Trauma-informed youth services
- School-based anti-Islamophobia work
- Refugee mentoring
- Support young professionals

Politics

- MP/Councillor forums
- Public stance against Islamophobia
- Strengthen hate crime reporting
- Advocate online harms regulation

Media

- Community–media engagement
- Diversity targets
- Media literacy in schools

Source: Bristol Muslim Conference 2025 Report

Prof. Adeela ahmed Shafi, a representative of Bristol Muslim Strategic Leadership Group and one of the organisers of the conference, shared suggested solutions to the negative impact of Islamophobia on women and people with refugee or asylum seeker status:

- *Rapid response to intimidation*
- *Responsible media*
- *Kindness and understanding - recognition of trauma*

- Prof. Adeela ahmed Shafi, Bristol Muslim Strategic Leadership Group (Event #5)

Some solutions proposed through the community forums included:

- Engaging with the Bristol Muslim Cultural Society experiences
- Fostering direct interaction and relationships within communities
- Real world interaction – move out from online to in person, for example Mosque open days and community volunteering
- Education that myth-busts
- Communication that offers positive counter-narratives
- Encouraging allyship both in the community and at work

Reporting Islamophobia
Printable poster with information about reporting hate crime towards Muslims.
sarichar ity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Reporting-Islamophobia-You-Are-Not-Alone-Leaflet-from-BMCS.jpg

Support for dealing with racism and Islamophobia
Tips and useful links aimed at parents, caregivers and schools, compiled by SARI.
voscur.org/sari-for-tips-for-parents-care-givers-august-2024

Responding in partnership

The following information is taken from a presentation given by Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust (Event #2).

In September 2025, when racist graffiti was spotted outside a school and health centre in Lockleaze and Horfield, local organisations came together to speak against acts of hate and division and to promote a message of community where everyone can feel safe.

Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust reached out to fellow community partners, including VCSE organisations, faith groups, schools and health centres, inviting them to work together in light of the incident. Together, they created a joint statement that condemned hate crime and discrimination, ensured residents knew where to access support, and promoted the activities taking place locally that celebrate the diversity of the neighbourhood.

www.lockleazent.co.uk/lockleaze-graffiti-our-response

VCSE Sector Networks
A list of networks across Bristol bringing community organisations together.
voscur.org/vcse-sector-networks

Partnership and collaboration - the basics
A guide for VCSE organisations about to how to approach partnership and collaboration opportunities.
voscur.org/partnership-and-collaboration-the-basics

Support for staff and volunteers

Crisis events, hate crimes and discrimination can directly and indirectly affect staff and volunteers' safety and wellbeing.

Supporting Employees During Times of Racial Unrest
A guide to providing meaningful support to employees during times of racial unrest, fostering a workplace environment of empathy, understanding, and active allyship.
member.inclusivecompanies.co.uk/supporting-employees-during-times-of-racial-unrest/

Supporting your workforce through exceptional events
Key considerations and resources to help you support your people in uncertain times.
www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/crisis-events-support

Additional resources

Below is a selection of resources aimed at community organisations wishing to be more prepared for how to work within difficult situations.

The Power of Local News
A guide for how to promote positive narratives about migration and diversity. It focuses on the role of local news outlets and ways of challenging misinformation.
www.hopefultowns.co.uk/local-news-guide

Safety and Security Advice
This resource brings together practical guidance for community organisations facing increasing hostility, harassment and intimidation linked to far-right activity in the UK.
hopenothate.org.uk/communities/community-resources

Keeping Safe Online
A guide for organisations looking to improve digital security in light of online threats.
saricharity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Keeping-safe-online-HOPE-not-hate-resource.pdf

Community Resilience Resource Pack
A guide for community, faith and public venues with simple, practical steps to help ensure your organisation or community is ready to face emergencies.
www.saricharity.org.uk

Resource Library from Jo Cox Foundation
Several resources on the themes of connecting communities; loneliness and belonging; and bridging divides and tackling inequalities.
www.jocoxfoundation.org/our-work/stronger-communities/resource-library

NCVO Statement, Advice and Support
Statement from the National Council of Voluntary Organisations in 2024, plus links to several useful resources for VCSE organisations.
ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/england-riots-statement-from-ncvos-chief-executive

Message of Support Template
An adaptable template for sharing public support and safety information for service users, created by British Red Cross.
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1j2hU5IhnmQb_Of1tQcTf1ct8f7FeghHB/edit

How charities can respond to the current hostile environment
This guidance aims to provide clarity, practical steps, and reassurance to help charities navigate difficult circumstances.
www.gov.uk/guidance/how-charities-can-respond-to-the-current-hostile-environment

Further reading

The following reports were commissioned in response to the violent disorder of August 2024 providing insights into the local and national context.

'Reflections on community cohesion in Bristol'
A report commissioned by Bristol City Council following the violent disorder of August 2024 to explore the roots of tensions and gather insights into how people feel about community cohesion in the city.
https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/10109-community-cohesion-report/file

'Understanding the Racist Riots of 2024 and what should be done'
A publication by the Race Equality Foundation, outlining how the UK government has failed to tackle the underlying causes of the 2024 summer riots.
raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/press-release/understanding-the-racist-riots-of-2024-and-what-should-be-done

What Does It Mean to Be Working Class?
A report presenting findings from community listening research carried out by Ambition Lawrence Weston, in 2025, to:

- Understand how residents define "working class"
- Explore whether and how this identity has changed over time
- Examine how class is understood in relation to wealth, education, housing, and opportunity
- Capture cultural values, pride, and challenges associated with being working class

voscur.org/lawrence-weston-working-class

Acknowledgements

With thanks to our each of our event contributors:

Ellie Cartwright (Hope Not Hate)
Heather Williams (Knowle West Health Park)
Neil Maggs (Independent journalist)
Kamaljit Kerridge-Poonia (Independent Consultant)
Maria Perrett and Melissa Blackburn (Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust)
Tia Bale (SARI)
Dan Green and Susannah Gooch (Bridges for Communities)
Moestak Hussein (NHS)
Prof. Adeela ahmed Shafi (Bristol Muslim Strategic Leaders Group)
Rizwan Ahmed (Bristol Muslim Cultural Society)
Avril Marshall, Cameron Powell and Hanad Mohamed (Vision BAME CIC)

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