

Press release: Sara Khan to lead Commission for Countering Extremism

Ms Khan, who is expected take up her post in the next month, was selected following an open, rigorous and transparent recruitment process. The role is for a period of 3 years.

Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, said:

The Commission for Countering Extremism will form a crucial part of this government's work to stop the scourge of extremism in all its forms and Sara Khan is expertly qualified to lead its important work.

She will bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the Commission which will prove vital as it works to identify and challenge extremism and provide independent advice to the government.

Last century we challenged racism by uniting civil society and the state. We have the same ambition to confront extremism. This government will not stand by and allow the menace of extremism to undermine the fundamental, pluralistic values which underpin our society.

The Commission has a clear remit to support the government, the public sector, civil and wider society to identify and challenge all forms of extremism. It will:

- provide the government with impartial, external advice on the tools, policies and approaches needed to tackle extremism
- support the public sector, communities and civil society to confront extremism wherever it exists
- promote fundamental, pluralistic British values

Initially, the Commission will widely and openly enter a discussion about extremism and Britain's values with individuals from all areas of society, independently selecting who it will engage with.

It will also produce a strategic assessment of the threat extremism presents as well as the current response and in this initial phase will also advise on the Commission's future structures and work programmes.

Sara Khan said:

I am honoured and humbled to have been announced as the Lead Commissioner.

I recognise the scale of the challenge we face in confronting extremism and I am deeply committed to this role. I will create a Commission that is forthright in challenging extremism in the name of our shared values, fundamental freedoms and human rights.

To those in our country who recognise the harm and threat extremism continues to pose in our society, I am eager to collaborate and engage; I extend my hand out to you to work with me in supporting the Commission's work in building a Britain that defends our diverse country while demonstrating zero tolerance to those who promote hate and who seek to divide us.

The government is already taking robust action to tackle extremism. In recent years it has:

- grown a network of over 160 civil society groups that are standing up to extremism in their communities through our £63 million 'Building a Stronger Britain Together' programme
- published a new Hate Crime Action Plan (in July 2016). We have committed £3.4 million funding for protective security measures for places of worship and innovative community-led projects to tackle hate crime. We have also taken steps to increase reporting of hate crime, and ensured the police are now recording hate crimes by the religion of the victim
- continued to act to prevent extremism from gaining a foothold in our schools, including through strengthening regulations to safeguard children missing from education (introduced in September 2016)