



Afzal Khan MP
Member of Parliament for Manchester, Rusholme
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Dr Mary-Ann Stephenson
Chair
Equality and Human Rights Commission
Arndale House
The Arndale Centre
Manchester, M4 3AQ

27th May 2026

Dear Dr Stephenson,

We, the undersigned, are writing to formally request the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) investigate whether Reform UK has breached its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for political parties to discriminate against its members, prospective members or its guests based on their religion or ethnicity. Over the last few years, we have seen a number of Reform UK politicians and members make comments that are clearly racist and discriminate against ethnic minorities, and in particular, Muslims. As more and more reports of racism and Islamophobia in Reform UK come to light, we believe there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that there is a case to answer of systemic unlawful acts.

As you know, Islamophobia in Britain is rising in both visibility and severity. British Muslims are facing a growing threat as Islamophobic incidences escalated over the summer last year, with the Government's most recent figures on anti-Muslim hatred for the year ending March 2025 showed 45% of all religious hate crimes were targeted towards Muslims. This is a 19% increase on the previous year.

You recently gave evidence to the Joint Committee on Human Rights before your appointment as Chair, in which you reiterated your commitment to looking into Islamophobia in Britain at the EHRC, particularly to "look at institutions where there might be practice that is effectively Islamophobic" and "to act as a champion to highlight where Islamophobia is taking place".¹ As you set out, Islamophobic attitudes of intolerance, hostility and hatred towards Muslims have no place in our society. In a democratic country, political parties must not be exempt from this.

The prevalence of racism within Reform UK does not exist in a vacuum and has real world consequences for the millions of British Muslims in our country. When elected politicians – be they councillors or Members of Parliament – make comments that seek to spread hatred against Muslims because they are Muslim, this leads to a culture of intolerance and discrimination against Muslim party members and voters and has an impact on social cohesion across the country.

The list of examples provided in the appendix is not exhaustive but is a mere snapshot of some of the Islamophobic comments that have been made by individuals representing Reform UK which have been picked up by the media. Despite this, these examples show there is a clear problem of widespread Islamophobia and racism towards Muslims demonstrated by sitting Members of Parliament and councillors representing Reform UK. This, in turn, creates an

¹ [Uncorrected oral evidence: Appointment of the Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, HC 1138, Houses of Parliament, Tuesday 1 July 2025](#)

environment of hostility for Muslims within the party, within constituencies and wards represented by Reform UK, and for Muslim voters across Britain. It is also evident that there is no adequate disciplinary process within the party, given a number of the individuals cited in the appendix have faced no repercussions for their actions. As such, we believe this indicates a serious problem within Reform UK, and a clear mandate for the EHRC to take meaningful action.

We hope the EHRC recognises the importance of launching a formal investigation into Reform UK's obligations under the Equality Act 2010, and we look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Afzal Khan, Member of Parliament for Manchester Rusholme
Kim Johnson, Member of Parliament for Liverpool Riverside
Bell Ribeiro-Addy, Member of Parliament for Clapham & Brixton Hill
Oliver Ryan, Member of Parliament for Burnley
Paula Barker, Member of Parliament for Liverpool Wavertree
Diane Abbott, Member of Parliament for Hackney North and Stoke Newington
Abtisam Mohamed, Member of Parliament for Sheffield Central
Peter Lamb, Member of Parliament for Crawley
Tristan Osborne, Member of Parliament for Chatham and Aylesford
Mohammad Yasin, Member of Parliament for Bedford and Kempston
Navendu Mishra, Member of Parliament for Stockport
Ian Byrne, Member of Parliament for Liverpool West Derby
Neil Duncan-Jordan, Member of Parliament for Poole
Marie Rimmer, Member of Parliament for St Helens South and Whiston
Michael Wheeler, Member of Parliament for Worsley and Eccles
Dr Allison Gardner, Member of Parliament for Stoke-on-Trent South
Dr Simon Opher, Member of Parliament for Stroud
Sarah Smith, Member of Parliament for Hyndburn and Haslingden
Kerry McCarthy, Member of Parliament for Bristol East
Ian Lavery, Member of Parliament for Blyth and Ashington
Tahir Ali, Member of Parliament for Birmingham Hall Green and Moseley
Clive Lewis, Member of Parliament for Norwich South
Dr Peter Prinsley, Member of Parliament for Bury St Edmunds & Stowmarket
Jeff Smith, Member of Parliament for Manchester Withington
Matt Western, Member of Parliament for Warwick and Leamington

Appendix

Members of Parliament

Nigel Farage MP (Leader of Reform UK)

- During his time as leader of UKIP, Farage suggested that Muslim immigrants were coming to Britain to “take us over”,² and labelled Muslim migrants as a group that want to form “a fifth column and kill us” and “change who we are and what we are”.³
- In a 2024 interview with Sky News, Farage suggested that Muslims do not support British values and claimed that 46% of British Muslims support Hamas. This perpetuates harmful and untrue stereotypes about British Muslims, and deliberately fuels unrest between communities.⁴
- Farage called for the Government to ban public prayer for Muslims in the UK in response to a 2026 Ramadan event in Trafalgar Square. He called the peaceful event an “attempt to overtake, intimidate and dominate our way of life”.⁵

Sarah Pochin MP

- In Prime Minister’s Questions, Pochin called for the Government to ban the burqa.⁶ This prompted a temporary resignation from Zia Yusuf, the party’s then-chairman and most senior Muslim, demonstrating the hostile environment these remarks have on Muslims within Reform UK.⁷
- Pochin posted a picture of a women’s entrance to a mosque with a caption that called its existence the ‘opposite’ of progress, implying that Muslims discriminate against women despite gender segregated spaces in places of worship being commonplace across faiths.⁸
- Pochin defended “British patriots” who attended a ‘Unite the Kingdom’ rally, organised by far-right activist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon. At the protest on the 16th May, a number of Islamophobic incidents took place, including campaigners calling for ‘remigration’, for Islam to be removed from public institutions and a performance that mocked Muslim women who wear a niqab.⁹

Suella Braverman MP

- Braverman wrote a column in The Telegraph stating that “Islamists are bullying Britain into submission” and that “Islamist cranks and leftwing extremism” are taking over universities and the judiciary. She has also labelled pro-Palestine protests as “hate marches” and “mobs”, contributing to dangerous stereotypes about Muslim protestors.¹⁰

Lee Anderson MP

² <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/aug/31/boris-johnson-nigel-farage-in-quotes> (2014)

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/mar/12/nigel-farage-british-muslim-fifth-column-fuels-immigration-fear-ukip> (2015)

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/may/26/nigel-farage-under-fire-said-muslims-not-share-british-values> (2024)

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/mar/19/nigel-farage-condemned-over-call-to-ban-public-prayer-for-muslims-in-the-uk> (2026)

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sawlKG5lEmM> (2025)

⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/6/5/chairman-of-uks-radical-right-reform-party-quits-after-burqa-row> (2025)

⁸ <https://x.com/SarahForRuncorn/status/2055368896081809659> (2026)

⁹ <https://www.newarab.com/news/london-hate-march-sees-anti-muslim-rhetoric-and-niqab-mockery?amp> (2026)

¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/feb/26/anti-muslim-rightwing-politicians-hate-crime-lee-anderson> (2024)

- Prior to his defection to Reform UK, Anderson accused London Mayor Sir Sadiq Khan of being controlled by Islamists. Anderson’s comments reflect the wider pattern observed above of Reform UK MPs suggesting Muslims are aiming to take over British society, causing great damage to social cohesion and legitimising Islamophobia within the party and in public life.¹¹

Members of the Scottish Parliament and Senedd

Senga Beresford MSP

- Prior to her election as a Reform UK MSP for South Scotland, Beresford used her social media to express support for Tommy Robinson and Enoch Powell, replying “yes” to a post asking if the UK should deport all Muslims. Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar urged Nigel Farage to sack her from the party, but no action was taken. Reform UK’s Scottish Leader Malcom Offord defended her comments, urging people to “grow up” and “not take offence at every moment in time”.¹²

Francesca O’Brien MS

- O’Brien, who was recently elected to the Senedd has been linked to the far-right hate group ‘Voice of Wales’, who are known for targeting immigrants and Muslims. She recently thanked them for their support in her election campaign.¹³

Councillors and local candidates

- **Stuart Prior**, was briefly a Reform UK member of Essex County council. Despite public exposure of white supremacist comments online, and an X account that claimed “Muslims are dirt” emerging the week before the election, the party did not drop him as a candidate, only expelling him from the party after his election in 2026.¹⁴
- **Ben Rowe**, recently elected to Plymouth City Council, was expelled from the party for making a series of Islamophobic and antisemitic posts. The posts were known to Reform UK over a week before the election, yet they only took action after he had been elected.¹⁵
- These are just two of several newly elected Reform councillors that have been linked to white supremacist, antisemitic and anti-Muslim posts online. This includes one councillor claiming that Oswald Mosley was “100% right”, another claiming that if you vote Labour, you “get sharia”.¹⁶
- Across Greater Manchester, Reform UK council candidates and election agents were found to have a number of Islamophobic and racist posts online, including an election agent exclaiming “Allah is Satan” on his X account.¹⁷
- **Lynn Smith**, the Reform UK candidate for Blackfen and Lamorbey was found to have posted a number of Islamophobic posts online, including praising Tommy Robinson as a “hero” for tackling “radical Islam”.¹⁸

¹¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-nottinghamshire-68433463> (2024)

¹² https://www.thenational.scot/news/26092010.scottish-reform-uk-msp-backed-deporting-muslims-elected/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwY2xjawRwEyRleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETFyaUaMzUItzBiSmEyWXBCc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5MgABHICWJkFf5tRwe2vMRETUBUJSTD4MHAXYEJAg3slmdR6POYx5X44WMMRoZVLkf_aem_5ydCT65aoK5oozjpExr55g#Echobox=1778314226 (2026)

¹³ <https://nation.cymru/news/reform-senedd-member-thanks-hate-group-for-election-support/> (2026)

¹⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c152ned1dl5o> (2026)

¹⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9v3r1lr07ro> (2026)

¹⁶ <https://observer.co.uk/news/politics/article/extremist-reform-candidates-elected-to-councils-across-the-country-warn-campaigners> (2026)

¹⁷ <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/greater-manchester-reform-candidates-posts-33835032> (2026)

¹⁸ <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/2642572/world> (2026)

- Whilst some candidates have faced consequences from the party since becoming elected, the sheer scale of Islamophobic attitudes amongst those selected as candidates suggests a systematic tolerance for racism within party selection processes, as revealed by Hope Not Hate.¹⁹
- A senior Reform UK councillor in Leicestershire argued that teaching Muslim children to pray in schools could lead to radicalisation or a spike in crime during a meeting of Leicestershire council.²⁰

Wider party (leadership and members)

Matthew Goodwin (Reform UK's parliamentary candidate in the Gorton and Denton by-election, and president of Reform UK's student wing)

- Goodwin has previously called for “an immediate ban on all migration from predominantly Islamic nations”, supports banning the wearing of burqas in public, and questioned whether Islam could be at all “compatible with western liberal democracy”.²¹
- Goodwin has made frequently made claims associated with the “Great Replacement” theory, a white supremacist ideology that suggests that non-white people are plotting to dominate Western nations.²²

Party Membership

- Undercover Channel 4 recordings find several party members spouting racist slurs whilst campaigning for Nigel Farage in the 2024 General Election. Roger Parker is heard calling Islam “the most disgusting cult out” and tells voters Reform would be “kicking all the Muslims out of the mosques and turning them into Wetherspoons”.²³

¹⁹ <https://hopenothate.org.uk/reform-watch/> (2026)

²⁰ <https://www.itv.com/news/central/2026-01-08/reform-uk-councillor-slammed-for-linking-muslim-prayer-to-crime> (2026)

²¹ <https://hopenothate.org.uk/2026/02/04/reform-watch-19/> (2026)

²² <https://hopenothate.org.uk/state-of-hate-2025-matthew-goodwin/> (2025)

²³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c10l5qd8p60o> (2024)