Written evidence submitted by the
Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace

About the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace

The Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace (The Foundation for Peace) was founded in memory of two boys, Tim Parry and Johnathan Ball, who were tragically killed in the IRA's bombing of Warrington in March 1993. The Foundation for Peace is an independent charity with no political or religious affiliations and works nationally and internationally to support those affected by terrorism and violent conflict.

The Foundation's work and reach has grown significantly in recent years and our experience in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding means we are well placed to respond to some of the contemporary challenges facing our society. We work with those who have been impacted by war, terrorism and politically motivated violence and our wide range of programmes bring us into contact with individuals ranging from young people susceptible to extremism, women in diverse communities, veterans of conflict and their families as well as survivors and witnesses to acts of terrorism and violent conflict. As well as working closely with the Home Office, the Foundation works with the Ministry of Justice, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Metropolitan Police, local and city authorities, the Irish Government and other Non-Governmental organisations.

www.foundation4peace.org Registered Charity No: 1048990 Company No: 3042409

Executive summary

- As a voluntary sector, frontline organisation challenging attitudes that underpin extremism, The Foundation for Peace is well placed to respond to the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into hate crime and its consequences. Our work is likely to be of interest, particularly as this inquiry is looking at hate crime motivated by extremism.

- It is logical to conclude that if we are to effectively and consistently prevent serious, violent conflict and hate crime from occurring in our communities, the focus of efforts must be as heavily on prevention as it is on resolution and response.

- We hope the Committee will look at the Foundation’s Survivors Assistance Network (SAN) when developing plans to improve and increase support for victims of hate crime.

- We ask the Committee to consider the work of the Foundation for Peace, particularly those programmes and projects outlined in this submission, when planning strategies to tackle hate crime. We urge the Committee to recognise the importance of

1 http://foundation4peace.org/projects/survivors-assistance-network-san/
peacebuilders within communities and of working with young people, community leaders, teachers and women in diverse communities to prevent, resolve and respond to hate crime. We hope the Committee will look at, and take inspiration from, the Foundation’s projects when putting plans in place to prevent and resolve hate crime and to support individuals affected by hate crime.

Introduction

1. The Government’s definition of hate crime is that which involves “…any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic. Hate crime can be motivated by disability, gender identity, race, religion or faith and sexual orientation.” 2 In the wake of the EU referendum result in June 2016, incidents of racism increased dramatically, with the National Police Chief’s Council announcing that complaints filed to police online hate-crime reporting site True Vision had increased fivefold in the week following the referendum result. 3 Police forces across the country are working to encourage members of the public to report incidents of hate crime and the Home Office’s Hate Crime Action Plan 4 sets out the Government’s programme to tackle hate crime until May 2020 by, among other things, seeking to equip schools with tools and guidance.

2. The Foundation for Peace works nationally to support those affected by terrorism and conflict. With over twenty years of experience, we believe that addressing the causes of violence before, during and after conflict situations is the most effective way to promote peace. Our projects are built around the firm belief that in order to tackle serious, violent conflict it is essential to deal with the prevention, resolution and response. We work closely with schools and local authorities, supporting young people to turn away from violence and extremism, helping them to develop the skills needed to consider carefully the consequences of their actions. We recognise the important role of women in preventing violent conflict, working with them to recognise how they can positively influence others to prevent violent extremism. We work with local communities throughout the UK, to resolve violent conflict, provide neutral platforms for safe and productive dialogue and work to help others envisage a society where differences are embraced, not feared. We support families and individuals affected by and drawn into violent conflict. We aim to break the cycle of violence through providing the assistance that they want or need to ‘cope and recover’ with the added hope that they may, in turn, become advocates of promoting peace.

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3 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/30/police-report-fivefold-increase-race-hate-crimes-since-brexit-result
3. We are making this submission to the inquiry in the hope that the Home Affairs Select Committee will find it useful to consider some of the strategies and tools we employ when working on these issues. There is likely to be much of mutual interest, particularly as this inquiry is looking at hate crime motivated by extremism. The Foundation for Peace is a voluntary sector, frontline organisation challenging attitudes that underpin violence, terrorism and conflict. We hope that the Committee will be able to learn from our programmes and projects when putting plans in place to prevent and resolve hate crime and to support individuals affected by hate crime. It is logical to conclude that if we are to effectively and consistently prevent serious, violent conflict and hate crime from occurring in our communities, the focus of efforts must be as heavily on prevention as it is on resolution and response. Over the course of this submission, we will seek to explain some of our most applicable work and projects in more detail.

The importance of peacebuilders and agents for change within communities

4. The Foundation for Peace is not a ‘think tank’ but a ‘do tank’. Our programme ‘For Peace’ consists of a portfolio of projects. Our work has three components – prevention, resolution and response. In prevention we seek to stop violence before it starts but when conflict does arise, we seek resolution through dialogue and actions to deal with issues without recourse to violence. In situations where violent conflict has already occurred, we are there to respond, to help those affected to cope and recover and, in many cases, to become active peacebuilders and agents for change themselves. We offer non-formal, accessible, participatory and highly flexible programmes for individuals and communities. While work with individuals is crucial, working with diverse peer groups who can take these messages and embed in communities, even more so. We work with partners including local groups and statutory bodies as they are essential to sustaining impact.

5. Participants in our projects learn ways of doing things differently through highly interactive programmes integrating multimedia, specialist facilitators and speakers. They are then encouraged to simulate and tailor these new ways of managing conflict, putting them into practice and continuing to learn and share as part of a network. We focus on inclusivity in all our programmes and ask only that those we work with pursue non-violent means of conflict resolution to their exhaustion and that they reject the use of illegal violence. We aim to transform radical and dehumanising views and do this by directly challenging them rather than shouting people down. We believe we add value by working with the most difficult cases and defying radical expectations of further marginalisation.

Educating, training and influencing

6. The Foundation for Peace’s work focuses on three key themes – self-awareness and identity, conflict resolution and leadership. We deliver these core elements in workshops in communities, via educational resources and through hosting intensive residentials at our iconic Peace Centre in Warrington. From encouraging individuals to think about how their beliefs and values motivate behaviour, to exploring and confronting conflict, recognising prejudice and engaging in dialogue, our projects are
aimed at educating, training and influencing individuals and communities so that they can prevent, resolve and respond to conflict in ways that work for them. The following paragraphs briefly explain some of The Peace Foundation's key projects, likely to be of interest to this inquiry.

**Holding difficult conversations**

7. For those working with young people, from teachers to public sector professionals, discussing difficult subjects, such as hate crime and its violent consequences, can be a challenge and it is tempting to close these discussions down, so as to prevent extreme views from being aired. But this is not an effective way of dealing with prejudice and division. Breaking the cycle means finding ways to ensure that these viewpoints are aired and listened to and engaging in constructive confrontation. The Foundation for Peace recognises that many professionals now have a duty to safeguard young people and build their resilience. We help educators understand what triggers radicalisation leading to violent extremism and we explore vulnerability and motivations and help professionals develop new ways of questioning to draw out different perspectives.

8. Over the past year, we have trained 390 teachers and frontline practitioners from 185 different schools, sixth form colleges and other service providers across the North of England. This has led to teachers using our programme to provide their own in-house trainings or develop their own curricula to address issues.

**Think**

9. The Foundation’s ‘Think’ project helps young people to play a leading part in confronting the challenges our communities face. Extremism and suspicion towards ‘the other’ looms large for young people and ‘Think’ focusses on that and builds resilience in young people. The curriculum focuses on identity and belonging, prejudice and exclusion. Participants debate and discuss the issues that threaten to divide them and their communities. Over the years, we have worked with schools across the UK in Prevent-based programmes, facing specific challenges. We look to build resilience in young people before problems manifest themselves. Participants hear from survivors, experts, and former extremists who share their stories. They role-play real life situations, putting in place new strategies to manage conflict and to challenge extremism, prejudice and discrimination, aimed at finding solutions that are constructive rather than destructive. Teachers attend with the young people to help support them in taking the learning back to school.

**Women for Peace**

10. We also look towards the important role of women in preventing violent conflict, working with them to explain how they can positively influence others to prevent violent extremism. Extremist organisations are prepared to advocate the use of illegal violence to pursue their goals, and are showing a growing interest in grooming young
people. Mothers have a unique role when it comes to communicating with their children but those we have spoken to often feel uncomfortable and unable to engage in discussions about radicalisation and extremism. ‘Women for Peace’ is one of the Foundation’s newest programmes and over the past year, we have delivered in three major cities in the North West, directly involving over 162 women from 16 different ethnic backgrounds. The curriculum concentrates on how women can play a role in challenging the divisive ‘us and them’ narratives that threaten to polarise our communities. Key to our approach has been working with mixed groups from diverse backgrounds so that perspectives can be heard and experienced first-hand.

**Community Dialogue**

11. Falling within the ‘resolution’ area of our work, the community dialogue projects set out to work with residents, local leaders and service providers to confront conflict and to listen, discuss, collaborate and find solutions to the challenges they face.

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**Case study**

A recent example of a ‘Community Dialogue’ project is our work in the Moston and Harpurhey area of Manchester. This community has witnessed a great deal of change in recent years and while the changes are welcomed by some, others are nostalgic for the area they remember from their childhoods. For some residents there is a natural fear of difference. For some there is anger and resentment over a perceived limit to local services. In addition, cultural and behavioural differences can be difficult to comprehend which can create a “them” and “us” mentality leading to self-segregation, assumptions and community conflict. The Foundation for Peace was commissioned as a neutral third party to take a look, ‘audit’ the potential sources of conflict, and present recommendations for moving the community forward together, equitably and peacefully. Having engaged with over 250 local residents and business owners, the Foundation’s team of facilitators used quotes and themes drawn from interviews to create a short, provocative play to ‘name the elephant in the room’ and reach the heart of the matter quickly.

67% of participants recorded improvement in understanding of extremism.

72% of participants recorded improvement in their understanding of personal triggers that can lead to conflict.

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**My Former Life**

12. Twenty years of experience in conflict resolution and peacebuilding has taught us the power and value of former extremists in breaking the cycle of violence. Their unique credibility means that they can plant seeds of doubt in closed minds who have armoured themselves against any contrary view voiced by ‘outsiders’. My Former Life is a multimedia educational resource that is aimed at people aged from 14-19. It is based around a documentary film that explores and shares the personal stories of four former extremists, or ‘Formers’. The educational film explores the reasons for which these people decided to become involved in violent conflict, the consequences of their decisions, their reasons for leaving their respective groups, and finally shows
how their lives have progressed since they moved on from violence. The film runs alongside a series of workshops that facilitate conversations about a challenging subject matter. The aim of this resource is take young people through a journey of understanding and learning about the causes, effects, and legacies of violent extremism. By drawing on the experiences of people who have already gone down that path, My Former Life is a unique project that allows participants to engage with first-hand accounts of radicalisation, extremism and their consequences.

Conclusion and recommendations

13. We note that the Home Office’s Hate Crime Action Plan highlights working with young people and teachers and giving them the tools to tackle hatred and prejudice as a key area of work and we welcome this. We hope the Committee will look at and take inspiration from the Foundation’s projects already working in this area (particularly ‘Holding Difficult Conversations’) when thinking about how to “equip teachers to facilitate conversations about ‘difficult topics’…”

14. We note that the Action Plan also highlights the need to improve support for victims of hate crime. We hope the Committee will look at the Foundation’s Survivors Assistance Network (SAN) when developing this. SAN provides support and assistance to victims and survivors of terrorism and political violence, aiming to help heal division and move individuals to help break the cycle of violence. One such example of this is our ‘Families Living with Trauma’ programme, which directly works with the families of those affected to develop coping strategies and to support their recovery.

15. The role that family members can play in preventing extremism should also be considered by the Committee. At the time of writing, it was reported that Kadiza Sultana (the London schoolgirl who left home in February 2015 to join the so-called Islamic State) was believed to have been killed by an airstrike in Raqqa. Much of the media comment on this case had since focussed on what role her family members could have played in preventing her radicalisation. While there is not a ‘one size fits all’ solution, The Foundation for Peace recognises the important role that family members and authority figures - such as teachers, community and faith leaders - play in preventing extremism and violent conflict. Our ‘Women for Peace’ and ‘Community Dialogue’ programmes work with individuals to try and achieve this. In April 2016, a report by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) looked at how families are

8 http://foundation4peace.org/projects/survivors-assistance-network-san/
affected by their relatives’ radicalisation, especially when it involves going abroad and joining a group like so-called Islamic State. The report notes the importance of families choosing to share experiences, in creating awareness of the risk of radicalisation and in encouraging other families to seek help. It recommends that “Governments should recognise the value of families in prevention efforts, and systematically review their policies to see how they can be given a more prominent role.”

16. The Foundation for Peace does not encourage the use of the terminology, ‘lone wolf’ being applied to crime motivated by extremism. This is a simplistic label that does not, in any way, uncover or explain the complex and multitude of reasons that an individual may become involved in violent extremism and hate crime. We do not encourage its use in practice, when working with individuals or when communicating about these issues.

17. More broadly, we encourage the Committee to consider that prevention, resolution and response are three key strands when addressing violence and conflict. In undertaking the important task of understanding how to address hate crime and violence arising from extremism, we urge Committee members to reflect on the evidence and recommendations herein.

Contacts

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