Supplementary written evidence submitted by the
Home Office and the Solicitor General

Letter from Sarah Newton MP, Minister for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism, and
Robert Buckland QC MP, Solicitor General, to the Chair of the Committee, 29 March 2017

Home Affairs Committee - Hate Crime and its Violent Consequences, HC 609

Further to our appearance before the Home Affairs Select Committee on 21 March 2017,
we agreed to write to the committee on several issues. I, Sarah Newton, wrote to you on
24 March on what requests the Government made to Google to remove National Action
videos from YouTube before the Committee raised this with the company on 14 March;
and what checks the Government subsequently carried out on whether all National Action
videos had been removed.

The outstanding questions from the evidence session are answered below:

How the Home Office engages with academics on hate crime and the far right

Home Office analysts conduct a wide range of analysis on potential extremism threats,
with extensive work on the far right. They have completed and continue to update a range
of assessments including, for example, on the far and extreme right wing in the UK,
ideologies of the far and extreme right and on extreme right wing speaking events.

The Home Office continues to study the behaviour of far right groups and openly available
social media data for far right sentiment and potential hate crime.

In their work on the far right, Home Office analysts have engaged with academics from a
range of disciplines. These include Mark Littler, Ben Gidley, Kenneth Benoit, Kamaldeep
Bhui, Aisha Gill, Stuart Croft, Ben Gidley, Joel Busher, Daniel Pearce and Matthew
Feldman.

To ensure the latest evidence feeds into our thinking on radicalisation, we have engaged
with numerous academics on various topics including the profiles and pathways of lone
actor terrorists; methods to assess vulnerabilities and risk of an individual being radicalised
and drawn into terrorism; community members’ willingness to engage with authorities
around issues of radicalisation; the strategy of Daesh for spreading terrorist material online;
and the prevalence of terrorist material online including how accessible the material is for
different types of users. To support new areas of research, we are sitting on the project
board for an Erasmus funded project to better understand how the radicalisation of young
people can be addressed in schools, universities, prisons and online. The research focuses
on building upon positive aspects and opportunities of young peoples’ lives in order to
address their vulnerabilities.

In their work on radicalisation, Home Office analysts have engaged with academics from a
range of disciplines. These include a wide range of academics through the Centre for
Research and Evidence for Security Threats (CREST); as well as a variety of subject matter
experts such as Paul Gill, Donald Holbrook, Ali Fisher, Jas Singh, Monica Lloyd, Sheryl
Prentice.
On what date did the Government first become aware that its adverts were being posted alongside extremist and hateful videos on YouTube? What is the Government’s advertising strategy in terms of platforms and standards? How much money has the Government spent on advertising on YouTube; has a refund has been requested; and if so how much?

In 2016 Government spent £3,878,600 on YouTube advertising. Government’s advertising plans are based on evidence of impact and cost effectiveness. Cabinet Office, which is responsible for government advertising, has conducted evaluation which shows that digital advertising is a cost-effective way for the government to engage millions of people in vital campaigns such as military recruitment and blood donation. For example, around 35% of all people who contact the Army about jobs come from digital advertising, and a digital campaign has helped recruit 37,000 new blood donors since last April.

Cabinet Office has agreed a four step process for assessing digital advertising, using white lists, black lists, technology and human assessment. However, government and other advertisers hold platforms responsible for ensuring that high standards applied to government advertising are adhered to and that adverts do not appear alongside inappropriate content.

Cabinet Office became concerned about the risk of fraud and misplacement in government digital advertising in late November 2016 and initiated a review of internal and industry standard practice. Shortly after, it instructed the government’s media buying agency to assess the level of exposure and to re-examine the safeguards in place to protect against these risks. Specific examples of our advertising appearing alongside extremist or hateful content on YouTube were brought to government’s attention on 10 February 2017.

In light of the recent Times investigation Cabinet Office pulled all government advertising from the YouTube platform and it will not be reactivated until such time as Google can give definitive assurance that government messages will be delivered in a safe and appropriate way. Cabinet Office has asked its media buyers to assess the costs for the misplacement of adverts and any additional costs we might occur. Initial advice is that the costs of misplaced adverts are very small.

The Cabinet Office continually reviews standards and is working with platforms to ensure they deliver the high quality of service government demands on behalf of the taxpayer. It is engaging with the marketing industry on a collective approach to Google in relation to the company’s proposals to tighten up its approach to advertising.

Please provide examples of action taken and resources deployed to tackle far-right extremism, including CLG community projects; and details of the number of people reached by those projects.

The Counter-Extremism Strategy sets out a programme to tackle extremism in all its forms. Central to this work is countering extremist ideology and building a partnership with all those opposed to extremism. The Building a Stronger Britain Together (BSBT) Programme was established by the Home Office in early 2016 to deliver this, and was allocated £63m over years. In September 2016 the Home Office launched a national
programme of in-kind support and grant funding for community groups to:

- empower those who have a track record in challenging extremists;
- support a network of “credible commentators” who challenge extremist narratives and promote mainstream views online; and
- train a wide range of civil society groups to help them build and maintain a compelling online presence.

53 groups were successful in the first round and the Home Office will be announcing the successful projects shortly. 15 partners are delivering intensive project work with children and young people through the BSBT programme. Approximately 20,000 children and young people will be expected to be reached by these activities.

A second call for applications for grant funding and in-kind support closed on 6th February 2017. The Home Office is currently assessing 150 applications for grant support, and hopes to make awards in April.

The existing network of 53 civil society partners provides activity in every region of England and Wales, including a number of projects in major cities like London, Middlesbrough, Leicester, Birmingham, Blackburn, and Liverpool. Other projects meet specific local challenges in less populous urban areas, like Cornwall, Grimsby and Luton.

A broad range of approaches and activities enables the Home Office to evaluate impact and test more innovative ideas. A number of projects are focused on fighting far right extremism, including Show Racism the Red Card in Blackburn, Grimsby FC, and Liverpool World Centre.

The Government also announced in July last year an annual funding scheme to provide protective security measures at places of worship that have been affected by, or a vulnerable to, hate attacks. The Home Office has funded 59 places of worship in the first year and will be looking to launch the second year of the scheme in the near future.

Overall funding for the hate crime programmes (protective security for places of worship and the community demonstration projects) is £3.3m over three years.

Further to this, DCLG also funds 30 community projects designed to tackle hate and community cohesion.

Please provide the number of children reached through DfE and other programmes related to tackling hate and extremism online.

DCLG financially supports Stop Hate UK’s Counter Narrative training for young people to address online hatred. The No Hate Speech Movement equips, trains and supports young volunteers to operate on the Internet, supporting victims, reporting damaging material and challenging hate-fuelled perpetrators through ‘counter-narrative’ activity.
The Home Office also provides funding, through the Hate Crime Community Demonstration Projects, to tackle online hate, including a project run by GALOP on identifying and monitoring online LGBT hate crime, as well as supporting victims. Stop Hate UK is also being funded by the Home Office to enable young Trans people to come together to create their own online narratives and support mechanisms to reduce social isolation and directly challenge the attitudes which contribute to high levels of hate crime experienced by the Trans community.

DCMS is also leading the new cross-Government drive on internet safety. This will involve Ministers and officials from departments across Government including the Home Office, Department for Education, Department of Health and Ministry of Justice as part of a coordinated effort to make the internet safer. DCMS will be asking experts, social media companies, tech firms, charities and young people themselves about online safety during a series of roundtables this spring. This will provide further information about the scope of the problem, where the gaps are and what solutions there might be, which DCMS aim to develop in a Green Paper launched before the summer.

The Government’s Educate Against Hate website provides teachers, school leaders and parents with the information, guidance and support they need to challenge radical views and keep their children safe, including from online extremist influences. The website is visited by thousands of users every month and the Department for Education continue to update it with resources so that it remains a valuable tool. Recently DfE strengthened its statutory safeguarding guidance for all schools and colleges, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, to include for the first time a section on online safety. This includes a requirement for schools and colleges to ensure appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place. Schools and colleges must also ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety.

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety, which is a partnership between government, industry, law, academia and charities, provides resources for schools and parents. These have included online safety advice for governing bodies and a guide for parents and carers whose children are using social media.

**What is the Government’s position on whether social media companies are committing criminal offences by continuing to host videos from a proscribed organisation?**

The Government takes this issue very seriously, and we are committed to ensuring that the law is there to tackle criminal activity online.

As the Committee will be aware, decisions about investigation and prosecution are independent of Government, and it would be wrong for us to comment on individual cases, or material online where there is the potential for the Police to investigate and the Crown Prosecution Service to prosecute.

The Terrorism Act 2006 envisages the possibility that a company could potentially be prosecuted for encouraging terrorism, under section 1 or distributing or publishing terrorist material under section 2. Further, sections 3 and 4 of the Act apply directly to internet activity and provide for the service of notices to take down terrorist statements and posts.
The conditions under which this can be done are clearly set out in the Act and a failure to comply can be relevant when considering criminal liability under sections 1 and 2.

The area of law is particularly complex. Any case brought would need to be investigated by the police and referred to the Crown Prosecution Service for advice and a charging decision and be considered on its own merits in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Newton MP
Minister for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism

Robert Buckland QC MP
Solicitor General