

Response of the Equality and Human Rights Commission to the Call for Evidence:

Call for evidence details

Title:	Intimidation of Parliamentary candidates
Source of consultation:	Committee on Standards in Public Life
Date:	15 September 2017

For more information please contact

Name of EHRC contact providing response and their office address:	
Rebecca Thomas	
Telephone number:	020 7832 7853
Mobile number:	
Email address:	Rebecca.thomas@equalityhumanrights.com

About the Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is a statutory body established under the Equality Act 2006. It operates independently to encourage equality and diversity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, and protect and promote human rights. It contributes to making and keeping Britain a fair society in which everyone, regardless of background, has an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential. The Commission enforces equality legislation on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It encourages compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and is accredited by the UN as an 'A status' National Human Rights Institution. Find out more about the Commission's work at: www.equalityhumanrights.com

Summary

The Commission welcomes the opportunity to respond to this call for evidence on the nature and degree of intimidation experienced by Parliamentary candidates. Since our inception, we have worked to understand and tackle harassment, hostility and hatred. We hope that our unique experience as the statutory body tasked with enforcing the Equality Act 2010 and promoting compliance by the UK with its obligations under domestic and international human rights law will assist the Committee.

Harassment and/or intimidation in any form are unacceptable. Everyone has the right to freedom from discrimination, and from inhumane or degrading treatment, and parliamentary candidates and public office holders are no exception. Given their role to represent and serve constituents in a democracy, their safety is vital. The Commission takes a zero tolerance approach to hate crime of any degree targeted at a person because of their disability, sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, or because they are transgender.

It is essential to a healthy democracy that everyone is able to participate in political and civic life and has the freedom to express their opinions and influence the local and national agenda.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental right which is also essential for democracy. It is protected by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights as incorporated into domestic law by the Human Rights Act 1998, and also in common law. The law protects not only uncontroversial opinions, but also those that may 'shock, offend and disturb'. And indeed, this protection is extended yet further during political campaigns, when the right to freely debate ideas and issues is critical.

However, freedom of expression is not an absolute right, and can be restricted, particularly when it relates to inciting violence or hatred against individuals.

The increasingly hostile and aggressive nature of public debate and behaviour towards people from different protected groups makes it essential for the UK Government and political parties to take effective action to address manifestations of harassment, hostility and hate crime directed towards candidates and

Parliamentarians, while ensuring that our fundamental right to freedom of expression is protected.

Examples include the tragic politically-driven murder of Jo Cox MP; charged political campaigns such as the recent election of Sadiq Khan as Mayor of London; and racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, homophobic, disabilist, and misogynist abuse of Parliamentarians including the well documented hostility directed towards Diane Abbott, Luciana Berger, Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh, Angela Eagle, and more recently, Jared O'Mara.

In our response to this call for evidence we will respond specifically to the inquiry questions on:

1. Whether social media has changed the nature, scale or effect of intimidation of Parliamentary candidates;
2. Whether existing legislation is effective in addressing intimidation of Parliamentary candidates;
3. What role political parties should play in addressing the intimidation of Parliamentary candidates; and
4. Whether experiencing intimidation discourages people from standing for political office.

We will also explore the tensions between freedom of expression and unlawful hate speech. Our response relates primarily to the UK Parliament, but occasionally refers to devolved issues where helpful to understand action that is being taken in other parts of Britain.

Role of social media

Particular attention should be paid to online harassment, hostility and hatred. Anonymity and the ease and convenience of using the medium of social media makes it a very effective tool to promulgate hate and abuse, with extensive reach.

The rise of online hate speech and harassment through the medium of social media is well documented in Britain. The Commission's research into the causes and motivations of hate crime found that cyber hate is a growing phenomenon which, reporting figures suggest, vastly outnumbers offline hate crime. For example, 74% of all anti-Muslim hostility reported to the charity Tell MAMA, a third-party reporting platform for anti-Muslim attacks and other incidents, occurred online, compared with 26% which involved offline incidentsⁱ. The emerging challenge of capturing and tackling the large number of online hate incidentsⁱⁱ ('cyber' hate) estimated to occur each day is a challenge for law enforcement agenciesⁱⁱⁱ.

Research undertaken by Demos in 2016^{iv} explored the scale of misogynistic abuse through Twitter, and Amnesty UK's recent analysis of the online abuse experienced by women MPs in the run up to the 2017 general election^v indicates that black and Asian women MPs in Westminster received 35% more abusive tweets than white women MPs. Diane Abbott MP received nearly a third of all online abuse recorded in this survey, which found that intersectionality of identities, such as race and sex, drove particularly high levels of abuse. Earlier this year, Police Scotland confirmed

they were looking into abusive tweets directed at Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon.

More recent research by Demos also explored the increase in anti-Islamic sentiment on Twitter in relation to significant terrorist attacks^{vi}. While the findings are concerning, there is some comfort to be found in the fact that evidence indicates that Twitter is also used widely to counter hate speech and offensive narratives. Although this is positive, the onus should not be on users to counter hate speech, and the processes by which users can report online abuse and harassment need to be greatly improved.

In October 2016, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee highlighted the 'viscerally anti-Semitic nature and volume of tweets directed specifically at Members of Parliament'^{vii} and recommended that Twitter expand its enforcement remit and devote more resources to identifying abusive users.

In our submission to the Home Affairs Committee inquiry into hate crime, we noted and endorsed the concerns raised by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in relation to online hate speech, and its concluding observation that the UK Government should 'adopt comprehensive measures to combat racist hate speech and xenophobic political discourse, including on the Internet, particularly with regard to the application of appropriate sanctions'.

We are now seeing a number of approaches to address the increasing problem of online abuse. In 2016 the European Commission, in conjunction with several social media companies including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, announced a Code of Conduct on illegal online hate speech^{viii}. This code sets out a number of commitments to address conduct that incites violence or hatred on the grounds of an individual's race, colour, descent, ethnicity, nationality, or religion. It does not cover any other protected characteristic.

Earlier this year, a review of the code's effectiveness indicated that while a number of challenges still remain, there had been significant progress. For example, in the six months the code had been in operation, the number of posts removed for offensive or illegal content had doubled, and the number of notifications reviewed within 24 hours had increased by 11%^{ix}. We welcome this code and will be watching closely to see how effective voluntary approaches are.

Germany has also recently legislated to fine social media companies up to €50m if they persistently fail to remove illegal conduct from their sites^x. We will be observing the implementation of this legislation closely in order to learn from their approach.

In April 2017, the Home Affairs Committee published the report of its inquiry into online hate crime^{xi}. This report contained a number of recommendations for social media companies to take greater responsibility for preventing and responding to hate crime offences on their platforms. They also asked for the government to review the entire legislative framework governing online hate speech and harassment, to ensure that it was fit for purpose.

The relevant legal framework

Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression is a fundamental right protected by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and extends to the expression of views that may shock, disturb or offend the beliefs of others. But this right is not absolute and can be limited if, for example, the aim is to protect others from violence and discrimination.^{xii}

As a result of increased public dialogue about the nature of free speech, the Commission published guidance on freedom of expression in 2015^{xiii}. We explain there are legitimate ways the state may restrict what we can say, but that democracy depends on people being free to express, debate and criticise opposing viewpoints, and much that is offensive or insulting is still protected by Article 10. It also explains how freedom of expression can be restricted in certain circumstances, for example, where someone incites violence against others or promotes hatred based on the colour of someone's skin or their sexual orientation or religion.

The boundary between the expression of intolerant or offensive views and hate speech is not always an easy one to draw, and a wide degree of tolerance is accorded to political speech and debate during election campaigns, and also to the media. We recognise that the preservation of pluralism and diversity in a democratic society depends on the freedom to exchange ideas, express robust opinions and conduct dialogue and debate in a way that may upset others, as long as it is within the limits of the law.

Section 106 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 also makes it illegal to make false or misleading statements about the personal character or conduct of an election candidate during an election period. The Election Court upheld a complaint by the unsuccessful Liberal Democrat candidate about the conduct of the Labour MP Phil Woolas during the 2010 General Election, as a consequence of which Mr Woolas was required to vacate his seat, resulting in a by-election. Mr Woolas appealed unsuccessfully against this verdict^{xiv}. The High Court held that the restriction on the right to freedom of expression was in this case permissible because false statements undermined free and fair elections.

At first glance, the section 106 offence would not apply to many kinds of hate speech since it only prohibits false or misleading statements about a candidate's 'personal character or conduct' while hate speech is generally directed at social groups. However, a false or misleading statement about a candidate's ethnic or religious group could lead to prosecution. Examples would include an election pamphlet that suggested that a candidate's religious beliefs made him sympathetic to terrorists.

Hate crime legislation

In 2014, following a major report into the scale and nature of disability-related harassment, at the request of the Commission, the Law Commission undertook a review of hate crime legislation^{xv} for England and Wales. It set out a number of recommendations, including the need for a full scale review of all the legislation governing hate crime.

We have recommended that the UK Government commit to the Law Commission recommendation for this full scale review and to also include legislation that governs online hate speech. This is important because the main legal provisions in this field, in particular section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and section 127 of the Communications Act 2003, in great part predate the era of mass social media use. This recommendation was picked up by the Home Affairs Select Committee. We understand that the Government is considering its response to the Law Commission's review, but we are not clear on when this response will be made public. We feel this is an important consideration in the context of this review.

We also welcome the recent Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) announcement that online hate crime will be treated as seriously as offline incidents^{xvi} and their recently published guidelines^{xvii} on prosecuting online hate crime in England and Wales. However these need to be supported by a comprehensive and effective legislative framework, and the sentencing guidelines and powers which require the courts to increase the length of sentences for certain hate crimes must also be used more consistently, and monitored, so that potential perpetrators are sent a clear message that hate crimes will not be tolerated.

The recent launch of the Metropolitan Police's Online Hate Crime Hub scheme^{xviii}, a two year pilot programme which aims to improve the way in which online hate crimes are investigated, is also welcome. This scheme recognises the complexity of tackling online hate crime, and the importance of engaging with community groups, social media companies and the CPS to develop effective responses. We will be interested to see the outcome of this pilot and to what extent it manages to address incidents of online hate crime.

In Scotland, as in England and Wales, there are a number of offences under common law and legislation that apply to online bullying and harassment. The Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), Scotland's prosecution service, published guidance in 2014 on prosecuting communications sent by social media^{xix}.

Hate crime in Scotland is largely a devolved matter for the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Government commissioned an independent review of hate crime in 2015. The Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion reported in September 2016^{xx}. The Independent Advisory Group looked at a wide range of factors that could combat hate crime and prejudice. It concluded that the language used around hate crime was unclear and recommended that Scottish Government should explore this further. It also recommended that further consideration should be given to the scope of existing hate crime legislation and whether it should be extended.

The Scottish Government has subsequently set up a review of hate crime legislation chaired by Lord Bracadale to carry out an independent review of hate crime legislation in Scotland. The Commission in Scotland is participating in the reference group overseeing the review. This review is expected to report on its recommendations on changes to hate crime legislation in early 2018.

International human rights obligations

The United Kingdom has signed and ratified a number of international conventions which include obligations relating to hate crime, including the abovementioned International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). As a matter of international law, the UK is bound to respect, protect and fulfil the rights contained in these conventions.

The UN has recently made a number of recommendations to the UK Government on what it should do to tackle hate crime. The Commission is tasked by statute with promoting compliance by the UK with its obligations under international human rights law. In August 2016, UN CERD issued recommendations to the United Kingdom on what it should do to tackle hate crime. While these recommendations relate specifically to race, they have wider relevance for tackling hate crime related to other characteristics.

The Commission notes the concerns raised by UN CERD in relation to online hate speech and its concluding observation that the UK Government should ‘adopt comprehensive measures to combat racist hate speech and xenophobic political discourse, including on the Internet, particularly with regard to the application of appropriate sanctions’.^{xxi} The Commission agrees with the Committee’s observations which mirror the concerns we raised in our July 2016 CERD submission ‘Race rights in the UK’^{xxii}.

In its August 2016 concluding observations, the UN CERD requested an update from the UK on its recommendations regarding hate speech and hate crime within one year. In our update report to the CERD^{xxiii}, submitted in August 2017, we noted the abuse and intimidation experienced by Members of Parliament, particularly in the context of the June 2017 general election, much of it motivated by racial or religious prejudice. We also highlighted reports indicating a rise in online hate speech, especially following the EU referendum.

Earlier this year, CEDAW published a new general comment^{xxiv} stating that state parties should develop and implement measures to encourage social media companies, amongst others, to ‘eliminate discrimination against women’. They specified that measures should include the creation or development of voluntary mechanisms to address ‘gender-based violence against women that takes place through their services and platforms’.

Article 17 of the Council of Europe’s Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women^{xxv} echoes this comment. The UK Government has signed but not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention, though it affirmed its intention to take the steps to do so in June 2017^{xxvi}.

Responsibilities of Political Parties

Much is said and reported about the adversarial style of political discourse in the House of Commons Chamber. Unprofessional, sexist and exclusionary language

and behaviour should have no place in the House. There is a risk that such discourse normalises abusive and intimidatory language towards elected officials.

We believe that there is a responsibility on all political parties and Parliament to address hostile treatment of politicians, and to address offensive speech and culture more broadly. Our elected representatives and the media (mainstream as well as social) should reflect and foster the best values of our society and engage people on contentious issues in a responsible and considered way.

While the Equality Act 2010 applies to certain activities of political parties, it does not cover campaigning in an election period nor conduct during proceedings in Parliament. Neither political parties nor candidates are subject to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty). However, the Equality Act 2010 does apply to how political parties select candidates for elections, and may also apply to the conduct of councillors and MPs if they are exercising a public function or when they are providing a service to the public.

The Commission published guidance (Equality and Human Rights Law during an Election Period^{xxvii}) prior to the 2015 General Election. This document was subsequently reissued for the 2017 local and general elections, and was disseminated by the Electoral Commission and Local Government Association, amongst others. The guidance provided advice for political parties and candidates, and local authorities, on freedom of expression and restrictions prescribed by law. It also provided information on how to complain and the role of regulators during elections, and how to report hate crime. The guidance was widely welcomed by parties and we will be revising and reissuing for future elections.

Prior to the 2017 General Election we also published an open letter to all political parties^{xxviii}, as well as a set of voluntary principles on standards for political discourse. These called on parties to commit to ensuring that their members, whether elected representatives, candidates or campaigners, refrain from using racist, Islamophobic or anti-Semitic language or materials likely to generate division, and to deal effectively with complaints of such behaviour made against their representatives. That way political parties can role model positive and constructive public debate.

In 2013, the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism undertook an inquiry into electoral conduct, with particular focus on discrimination and racism. They set out a number of recommendations for a range of bodies, including the police, the Commission, and political parties themselves. The final update report^{xxix} by the APPG reports that it had been difficult to secure any progress towards meeting those recommendations, which ranged from improving welfare support to members to providing training on discrimination and racism. They also noted that political parties had still failed to do more to prepare candidates for the ruthless nature of campaigning. We would encourage all parties to consider ways in which they could meet those recommendations.

The wider recommendations of this report are also worth looking at in some detail as they extend beyond party activity to include, amongst other issues, the importance of an effective legislative framework, and improved police reporting processes and victim support.

Barriers to standing for elected or appointed public offices

Unequal representation in public life reflects and accentuates inequality in society and the narrower the range of backgrounds in public life, the narrower the range of experiences that are brought to bear in political decision making. This can ultimately result in exclusive and unresponsive political systems. Lack of diversity in public life can make diverse candidates ‘stand out’ as targets for abuse and hate campaigns.

The 2017 election saw an increase in the diversity of candidates. But progress is slow and difficult to measure.

Despite an increase since the 2015 election, with 208 MPs elected, women still only make up 32% of the Commons.

The recently published House of Commons Library paper into Ethnic Minorities in Politics and Public Life^{xxx} also sets out the levels of under-representation of MPs from ethnic minority backgrounds. Only around 8% of MPs are BAME, compared to 13.6% of the population as a whole, and only 12.5% of women MPs are from an ethnic minority.

Disabled people are also under-represented in political office and public appointments^{xxxi}, and face continued challenges to achieving equal representation. For example, it is estimated less than 1% of MPs elected in 2017 were disabled compared to estimates that up to 20% of the working population are disabled (including long-term health conditions such as diabetes). Extensive research (see below) into the barriers to political participation also indicates a negative impact of a hostile working environment on efforts to increase diversity.

There is an urgent need for the implementation of section 106 of the Equality Act 2010^{xxxii}, which requires political parties to publish diversity data about their Parliamentary candidates. Enacting section 106 will establish a robust evidence base in regards to how well represented particular protected characteristics are in Westminster.

The recent Government Response to the Women and Equalities Committee Report^{xxxiii} on Women in the House of Commons has proposed not to accept any of the Committee’s recommendations. The Commission regrets this includes not enacting Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 and we encourage the Government to reconsider this position. In the meantime, we encourage political parties to gather and publish this data voluntarily, and we are reassured to see that both Labour and the Liberal Democrats have started to do so.

Our 2011 Pathway to Politics report^{xxxiv} explored the relationship between common routes into politics and under-representation of groups protected by the Equality Act 2010, such as disabled people. The findings suggested focusing on re-framing debate to include the positive electoral consequences for all of having more diverse candidates.

The research also explored the common barriers facing under-represented groups seeking elected office. These varied from prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes at

local party levels (e.g. women being asked about their family plans or marital status, ethnic minorities being asked about their religion or belief, a perception of disability to mean ‘inability’) to financial costs. Election to Parliament is usually the last step in a long process of civic and/or political participation, and these barriers at the grassroots level limit the experience of diverse candidates and therefore their potential to eventually become Members of Parliament.

The findings also indicated the existence of unconscious bias towards, white, middle aged, middle class and professional men, often reflecting the characteristics of those selecting candidates and of previously successful candidates. The informal, unwritten rules and conventions governing politics, including ‘knowing how to play the game’, work to exclude those who do not meet this model of the archetypal candidate. Established cliques and systems of informal patronage within parties have the effect of reinforcing existing under-representation.

Particularly relevant was the finding that *‘the House of Commons has a reputation for not embracing difference and being a male-dominated environment... The adversarial and ‘yah boo’ culture was seen as off-putting to under-represented groups and there was a sense that the House of Commons was reluctant to instigate radical change’* (p. ix)

These findings are echoed by those in the recent Fawcett Society report *‘Does Local Government Work for Women’*^{xxxv} which found that ‘an outdated sexist culture’ dominated many town halls in England and Wales. It detailed widespread sexist practices and sexual harassment that goes unchecked and unchallenged. The report goes on to recommend a formal commitment to equality in councillors’ codes of conduct, and the need for a commitment from all the political parties to provide leadership to effect change.

Political parties are key gatekeepers to political office, as well as wider civic participation. There is a great deal more that the parties could and should be doing to ensure that they select more diverse candidates and ensure equality of participation amongst MPs once they are elected to the House of Commons.

Finally, The Good Parliament report^{xxxvi} published in 2016, which followed the Speakers Conference on Representation, sets out 43 recommendations for a more representative and inclusive House of Commons. The report states that the House of Commons as an institution should acknowledge its collective responsibility to redress current limitations in representation and inclusion. The recommendations cover a wide range of issues including enacting section 106 of the Equality Act and securing cross-party support for a concord regarding what constitutes unacceptable and unprofessional behaviour in the Chamber. Enacting these may help ensure diverse and inclusive representatives in our political and public life.

Conclusion and recommendations

The Commission believes there are a number of actions that can be undertaken which would help prevent and address the critical issue of online abuse.

We recommend that:

- The UK Government commit to a full-scale review of hate crime offences and enhanced sentencing powers in England and Wales, in recognition that the piecemeal development of the legislation that applies to this area has resulted in an unequal and overly complex array of legal provisions rendering it difficult to secure fair and appropriate access to justice for victims.
- The review should include a review of relevant legislation to ensure offences effectively balance sanctions for abuse and hate speech with the right to freedom of expression in private electronic communications
- UK Government to consider developing and implementing measures to ensure more social media companies remove offensive and abusive content, similar to models and approaches taken in other countries.
- Police and other criminal justice agencies improve intelligence derived from data collection to inform practice in relation to both online and offline demonstrations of hostility and hatred to elected officials, for example by adopting more consistent data collection methods across the country to allow comparative and chronological analysis.
- Police and other criminal justice agencies improve support to victims and witnesses to report both online and offline hostility and intimidation; and parties set up systems and structures to provide support to members, candidates and MPs experiencing online abuse.
- The UK Government enacts section 106 of the Equality Act. This would require political parties to monitor and publish diversity information of their candidates so that we have a better understanding of progress towards more diverse political representation which may or may not be curtailed or hindered by perceived or real hostility towards and intimidation of elected officials. We are disappointed that the Government has stated it will not do so, and encourage them to reconsider.
- The UK Government should work with political parties to reinstate or replace the Access to Elected Office fund, which provided funding for disability related costs for disabled people to stand as candidates, in time for the next general and local elections. This will help embed a culture of a level playing field for all candidates and elected officials and help normalise the presence of disabled elected officials.
- Political parties should sign up to the set of voluntary principles on standards for political discourse that the Commission published last year, to ensure that members refrain from using offensive language or materials, and to implement processes to deal effectively with complaints of such behaviour made against their representatives
- The UK Government should invest in further research into online abuse of this kind as an extension of offline gender and race relations which are marked by misogyny, violence against women and girls and institutional racism, as well

as in relation to other bias motivated hostility, including disability, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation and transgender status.

- The UK Government ensures human rights are complied with when addressing harassment, hostility and hate crime^{xxxvii}.

ⁱ Copsey, N., Dack, J., Littler, M. and Feldman, M. (2013), *Anti-Muslim hate crime and the Far Right*. Available at: https://www.tees.ac.uk/docs/DocRepo/Research/Copsey_report3.pdf, referenced in Walters, Brown and Wiedlitzka (2016), *Causes and motivations of hate crime*. Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report 102. Available at: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/research-report-102-causes-andmotivations-hate-crime> [Accessed 21 July 2016].

ⁱⁱ Chakraborti, N. and Garland, J. (2012), 'Reconceptualising hate crime victimization through the lens of vulnerability and "Difference"'. *Theoretical Criminology*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 499-514; Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (2012), *Facing up to Offending: Use of restorative justice in the criminal justice system*. Available at: <https://www.justiceinspectores.gov.uk/hmic/media/facing-up-to-offending-20120918.pdf> [Accessed 30 August 2016]; Walters, M. A. (2014), *Hate Crime and Restorative Justice: Exploring Causes, Repairing Harms*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Walters, M. A. (2013), 'Why the Rochdale Gang should have been sentenced as "hate crime" offenders', *Criminal Law Review*, vol. 2, pp. 131-44

ⁱⁱⁱ Even if the offending material is published on a website hosted overseas, it may be possible for a criminal offence to be prosecuted if a substantial measure of the activity that constitutes the offence, such as composing, editing and uploading material to an overseas server, takes place in England, Wales or Scotland, where the offence applies

^{iv} <https://www.demos.co.uk/blog/misogyny-online/> [Accessed 12.09.17]

^v <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/online-violence-women-mps> [Accessed 12.09.17]

^{vi} <https://www.demos.co.uk/project/anti-islamic-content-on-twitter/> [Accessed 12.09.17]

^{vii} <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/136/13610.htm> [Accessed 12.09.17]

^{viii} http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1937_en.htm [Accessed 12.09.17]

^{ix} http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1471_en.htm [Accessed 12.09.17]

^x <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/jun/30/germany-approves-plans-to-fine-social-media-firms-up-to-50m> [Accessed 12.09.17]

^{xi} <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/609/60902.htm> [Accessed 12.09.17]

^{xiii} <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/freedom-expression-legal-framework>

^{xiv} Woolas, R. (*on the application of*) *v Speaker of the House of Commons* (2010).

^{xv} <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/> [Accessed 12.09.17]

^{xvi} http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest_news/cps-publishes-new-public-statements/ [Accessed 12.09.17]

^{xvii} http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a_to_c/communications_sent_via_social_media/ [Accessed 12.09.17]

^{xviii} <https://shar.es/1VaGzI>

^{xix}

http://www.copfs.gov.uk/images/Documents/Prosecution_Policy_Guidance/Book_of_Regulations/Final%20version%2026%2011%2014.pdf

^{xx} <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/09/3565> [Accessed 12.09.17]

^{xxi} http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/GBR/CERD_C_GBR_CO_21-23_24985_E.pdf [Accessed 12.09.17]

- xxii https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/.../race-rights-in-the-uk-july-2016_0.pdf
- xxiii <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/race-rights-uk-submission-un-committee-elimination-racial-discrimination>
- xxiv http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/GC/35&Lang=en [Accessed 12.09.17]
- xxv <http://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/text-of-the-convention> [Accessed 12.09.17]
- xxvi <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-allow-ratification-of-istanbul-convention> [Accessed 12.09.17]
- xxvii <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/equality-and-human-rights-law-during-election-period-guidance-local-authorities>
- xxviii <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/standards-political-discussion-letter-all-political-parties>
- xxix <https://files.graph.cool/cj3e6rg8y906h0104uh8bojao/cj4sjq5ig01ii0111biq3f3ft>
- xxx <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01156> [Accessed 12.09.17]
- xxxi <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/being-disabled-britain-journey-less-equal>
- xxxii <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/106> [Accessed 12.09.17]
- xxxiii <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-women-and-equalities-committees-report> [Accessed 12.09.17]
- xxxiv <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/research-report-65-pathways-politics>
- xxxv <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/does-local-government-work-for-women-final-report-of-the-local-government-commission>
- xxxvi <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2016/july/female-prime-minister.html> [Accessed 12.09.17]