



Home Office

Home Secretary

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BY EMAIL ONLY

25 March 2019

To all our faith communities

Protective security at Places of Worship

I am writing following the horrific events in New Zealand earlier this month. Our thoughts and prayers remain with all of those affected by this tragedy. I want to reassure communities of all faiths across the UK who may feel worried about their own safety following this dreadful attack that their security remains our highest priority.

The police and their partners are doing everything they can to ensure the safety of the public. The police have already put in place additional patrolling and security measures around places of worship to enhance safety and reassure the public.

I recognise however that our communities remain anxious and recent incidents in the UK have heightened these fears. We are committed to working with faith groups and engaging them on existing measures that fund and protect all places of worship. We will be engaging with groups across all faiths, to review what more can and should be done to protect faith institutions. We will be outlining how to engage on Gov.UK shortly. I will be listening closely and stand ready to do what is needed.

However, as an immediate priority, I have announced an uplift of funding for the next year of the Places of Worship Protective Security Fund to £1.6 million. This is double the amount awarded last year. The fund will provide financial support to places of worship for the purchase of physical protective security measures such as fencing, lighting and access control. Responding to feedback from faith representatives, we will make it easier for places of worship to apply by reducing the administrative burden and streamlining commercial requirements. We intend to put in place arrangements so that places of worship have a central provider for assessments, quotes and installation. At the same time, we will be widening the criteria so places no longer need to show they have already experienced hate crime. Our focus will be on helping those who are vulnerable to hate fueled attacks.

Physical security measures are only part of the solution. That is why the Government is also announcing a new £5 million fund over 3 years to provide security training for Places

of Worship. We will be working closely with communities and faith leaders to develop this new scheme.

We are urgently progressing the commercial arrangements and we will be opening both these schemes for applications as soon as possible. Information will be available on Gov.UK We will share links to these pages in due course.

The attack in New Zealand is an attack on the values that unite us all I take comfort that our communities in the UK have united in grief and support to show that no faith, race or community will ever be alone. I recognise that our protective security work by itself is not enough. I remain committed to countering all forms of hate from the prejudice at its root to the robust criminal justice response needed. Political leaders like me, have a clear role to play in both our words and our actions. I hope these new commitments reassure you of my steadfast support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Javid', with a comma at the end.

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP