

Muslim-friendly phrasebook issued to civil servants

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Local councils and government departments have been advised on how to communicate with Muslim communities without unknowingly threatening or alienating them with a new phrasebook.

The phrasebook compiled by the Home office is aimed at making government communication more sophisticated and prevent misunderstandings, the guide instructs civil servants to "avoid implying that specific communities are to blame" for extremist activities.

"This is not intended as a definitive list of what not to say but rather to highlight terms which risk being misunderstood and therefore prevent the effective reception of the message," the guide reads.

"This is not about political correctness, but effectiveness -- evidence shows that people stop listening if they think you are attacking them."

The guide advises civil servants not to use terms such as "Jihadi/fundamentalist" because they suggest there is "an explicit link between Islam and terrorism" and suggests terms such as "criminal/murder/thug" instead.

A Home Office spokeswoman confirmed that the guide had been forwarded to "key delivery partners", such as police chief constables, local authorities and government departments in the last few weeks.

"The pack is the first of a series of communications intended to brief partners about recent work to develop the "prevent" strand of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy and help them to identify further contributions they can make to this agenda," she said.

"Coherent and effective crossgovernment communications are important in relation to countering terrorism. Language is part of this work."

However, criticism was not too far away as many feel; this new initiative is simply a way of softening the voting Muslim public and doesn't in any way tackle the serious issues of Islamophobia and bias within certain organisational bodies.

