

Strategic communications and public affairs support to confront identity-based harms amid rising authoritarianism

Protection Approaches
November 2025

Introduction

As we prepare to launch our 2026-29 strategic plan and ramp up our policy programming, we are looking for an experienced freelancer or hands on agency to work closely with our team to galvanise UK and international stakeholders, raise ambition, and build momentum to confront those who weaponise division, grievance, and identity-based violence.

A critical component of this work is the development and implementation of a communications strategy that maps our audiences, engages U.K. policymakers, and demonstrates the growing nature of identity-based harms in a rapidly changing security environment. This will involve developing and articulating compelling narratives, supported by talking points and evidence-based messages. Together, we will:

- Articulate a clear story about identity-based harms: what they are, how they manifest, their impact and why they represent a growing challenge.
- Reach new strategic audiences to build trust and understanding among key policy forums and audiences (policymakers, think-tanks, specialist security networks).
- Safeguard against backlash or misunderstanding of identity-based harms.

Building on our core mission, this work requires specialist expertise to collaborate with us at pace to identify and support implementing new ways of communicating complex issues to our audiences. You will also provide varied agile support to a distinct project seeking to demonstrate how identity-based threats related to the U.K.'s national security strategy.

We seek a package of support that helps us to map and prioritise target audiences, construct overarching narratives that articulate compelling stories and will resonate with those audiences, and a set of creative communications tactics that builds understanding of identity-based harms and delivers change in how these are perceived by policymakers, including those working within and around the U.K.'s national security establishment.

Could you be the partner who takes our organisation's work to the next level?

This document sets out our organisational background, the type of partnership we are looking to build together, and the application process itself. If you have any questions, please reach out to:

Dr Kate Ferguson – Co-executive Director
Protection Approaches

Email: kate.ferguson@protectionapproaches.org

Organisational background

Protection Approaches is seeking proposals for timebound communications support of our core and project work on identity-based violence and associated harms.

Protection Approaches is a London-based charity working to transform the way identity-based violence is understood and prevented. Operating across the domestic and international, we bring together communities, policymakers, and practitioners to build more resilient and inclusive societies. Our approach bridges frontline community engagement with high-level policy influence, ensuring that solutions are informed by lived experience as well as rigorous analysis.

We understand identity-based violence as any act of violence motivated by the perpetrator's conceptualisation of their victim's identity, for example their race, gender, sexuality, religion or political affiliation. It encompasses hate crime, violent extremism, and mass atrocities, and affects individuals as well as entire groups or communities all around the world. While its victims and the ways in which it manifests often look different, we maintain that the causes of identity-based violence have common roots. By understanding the common causes of these seemingly disconnected forms of violence, we seek to develop and promote effective, evidenced strategies of prediction, prevention, and protection.

No matter where it takes place and no matter whom it targets, every act of identity-based violence is a manifestation of the deadly idea that some lives are more valuable than others. For that reason, Protection Approaches believes that a spectrum of harms – including hate crime, violent extremism, and mass atrocities – should be seen as a shared global crisis. By emphasising the common attributes of different forms of identity-based violence, Protection Approaches has helped change the conversation on how to challenge, respond to, and prevent it. We have helped encourage a better appreciation of the shared responsibility to prevent all forms of identity-based violence, whether by States, militia groups, terrorist organisations, racist gangs, or prejudiced individuals.

We are a small and agile team that operates across community and policy spheres. We believe the scope and scale of the challenges facing our country and world require bold and creative thinking and so enjoy working with others who share that approach. Our office is based in Kennington, London and we would prefer to work with individuals or teams who are happy to spend time working our solutions together rather than preparing strategies at a distance and where responsibility for full implementation is returned to us. We work well in partnership, open conversation, and with creativity.

Objectives and scope of services

To realise our ambitious plans and drive our new strategic direction, we are looking for an experienced freelancer or hands on agency who can build on our previous learnings and deliver focused communications related to our organisational development and project objectives. You will:

- 1. Facilitate development of a compelling organisational narrative regarding identity-based threats in an era of deepening challenge and provide support on initial implementation**

As needed, curate communications around high-profile project events and milestones, e.g. convenings, relevant international events. Advise on and support on sequencing of communications to maximise influence in Q1-2 2026.

- 2. Develop a rapid project specific communications strategy**

- Identify key message frames, detailed messages and proof points that provide evidence and examples to engage target audiences, along with recommendations for action and how identity-based threats should be perceived and addressed in the context of the U.K.'s national security strategy.
- Provide support in strategic outreach to key targets and to support high-level political engagement and activity

3. Contribute to the implementation and delivery of communications outputs to reach target audiences

- Translation of narrative and core arguments into compelling content and assets.
- Media coverage – e.g. placing comment pieces, op-eds and securing interviews in targeted and relevant UK and international media.
- Direct stakeholder engagement activities.

4. Monitoring and reporting

- Track reach and impact.
- Provide updates on media traction, stakeholder engagement and influence within key media and policy networks.
- Consideration of quality, not pure quantity of coverage, ensuring consistency and clarity of message, and with a discipline on the priority areas of activity listed above.

Key deliverables

Fulfilment of key objectives will see delivery of:

- Bespoke communications strategies.
- Facilitation of a narrative strategy and messaging workshop, and summary document that outlines an overarching narrative, key messages and talking points for both our strategic plan and current flagship project.
- Messaging toolkit for Protection Approaches and which can be shared with partners.
- At least 6 placed media pieces in priority forums.
- A stakeholder engagement plan.
- Communications support for events and convenings (press packs, media outreach).
- Final impact report summarising reach, uptake, and lessons learned.

Budget

£40,000-£50,000. We are open to suggestions of how freelancers or agencies would best use their budget towards their proposal. We are open to taking on more than one source of support should there be clear complementary, for example across the strategic communications and public affairs deliverables.

Timeline and proposal requirements

Contract duration: ASAP Dec 2025 – June 2026.

Monday 17th November	Brief document published. In line with our organisational policy, this request for a consultant will go out to public tender on our website. It will also be
--	--

	circulated through strategic communications consultancy networks.
Monday 24th November	Deadline for submitting a proposal To keep the tendering and selection process manageable for all parties, we'd like your response to include answers under the following headings, please: Freelancer/agency name Brief background on your relevant expertise ▪ Your core values. Demonstrated expertise in public affairs, national security communications or related fields. ▪ Evidence of work with charities, think tanks or policy organisations. ▪ A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. ▪ Why you're interested in working with us. Ways of working brief ▪ An outline of how you'd approach working with a small charity ▪ What you feel you could bring to help us achieve our organisational and project aims. ▪ Examples of any strategic partnerships that you are proud of delivering. Potential conflicts of interest We're particularly interested in any work with defence companies, or other charities working in a similar space to us. Please detail the nature and status of these relationships (i.e., current/historic, scope of work). Requirements for the pitch meeting Please share any access requirements your team have for the pitch meeting so we can make sure to accommodate them. Please keep your submission to no more than 4 pages, although feel free to include hyperlinks to your website or other relevant work examples etc.
Friday 28th November	Invitations to pitch will be issued following a review of responses We will also provide more details on both our strategic plan and ongoing project, but this will be on a strict no share basis.
Tues 2nd/ Wed 3rd December	Pitch meeting In person at our Kennington office, lasting approximately an hour and a half. This will be structured to include a short presentation, set questions from the panel and a chance for more informal discussion. A light touch budget breakdown on how best you'd use the budget towards the proposal Provided upon arrival at the pitch meeting but for review thereafter.

	Your presentation – 15 mins During this presentation slot, we'd like to hear from you about your approach to the brief and the project development process, specifically: ▪ Your understanding of and approach to the brief and further strategic documents ▪ How you would structure the project timeline including the milestones you anticipate through from contracting to June 2026 ▪ An example of a short media strategy around a project event (details of which will be shared with you when invited to pitch) ▪ How you see working collaboratively with the Protection Approaches team through the duration of the contract. Questions from the panel and informal discussion – 20 mins Our panel will be asking questions to all agencies. This is also an opportunity for us to ask any follow up questions to the response to tender document you submitted and for you to ask us questions. Please note: As with the response to tender stage, we do not expect to see fully worked up media strategies. This is an opportunity to focus on setting out your approach, responding to the core assumptions in the brief and ways of working together.
--	--

Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be assessed against:

- Experience and expertise in strategic communications.
- Quality and suitability of proposed approach.
- Degree of knowledge and expertise around issues of foreign policy, national security and domestic challenges.
- Agility and ability to work in collaboration.
- Value for money.
- Alignment with charity values and sensitivity to context.

Submission instructions

- Deadline: Midday Monday 24th November
- Submission: please email your proposal as a PDF to Callie.Lewis@protectionapproaches.org.
- Subject line: Tender submission – strategic communications consultancy

NB: late submissions will not be considered due to project timelines.