Dear Woolf Friends,

November is Islamophobia Awareness Month. Now in its tenth year, the campaign was originally established by a group of British organisations led by Muslim-interest charity MEND (Muslim Engagement and Development). Despite receiving political and public support, MEND has also attracted criticism and is clearly not everyone’s cup of tea. That said, the campaign has now developed something of a life of its own and offers opportunities for all to reflect on issues of prejudice and discrimination facing Muslim communities in Britain. The month is also a time to recognise the achievements of individuals and groups who work tirelessly to support communities. The term ‘Islamophobia’ is still rather contested – some like it, some don’t – but I use it here, as a non-Muslim, unashamedly and in solidarity with my Muslim neighbours.

Over the years, the Woolf Institute has taken the issue of Islamophobia seriously. Our interests and concerns have driven various projects. Building on my PhD work – a large-scale study of Islamophobia in the UK – I have published studies that explore anti-Muslim discrimination against women in Britain, sensitivities towards anti-Muslim sentiment and institutional forms of discrimination.

In 2020, our Diversity Study of England and Wales (now called the Woolf Diversity Study) found more prejudice towards Muslims than towards any other minority group. Our recent Covid-19 project – Transmission and Trust – responded to anti-Muslim media stories during the pandemic. We used survey data to portray Muslim communities in a much more
positive light. Our recently launched Faith in Mental Health project addresses fears of Islamophobia among some of those seeking mental health care. How can we build trust between Muslim communities and mainstream mental health services? We hope to have some of the answers next year.

Throughout Islamophobia Awareness Month, I welcome opportunities to reflect on one of society’s most pervasive and pernicious forms of hatred. More positively, perhaps, I will also value the sense of unity that comes when we work together to promote deeper understanding and more meaningful encounters between people of all faiths and none.

Best Wishes,

Dr Julian Hargreaves
Director of Research, Woolf Institute

PODCAST: REFLECTING ON ISLAMOPHOBIA
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We define our terms broadly:
"Faith" is taken to mean any belief in or acceptance of doctrines of a religion.
"Trust" is taken to mean believing in or reliance on the honesty, reliability and
ability of another.
"Relationships" is taken to mean connections between people, communities, or
religious, social and cultural practices.

We will start at 12:00 on 15 November and at 09:00 on 16 November

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**Woolf Institute**

**Research Afternoon**

**WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2022 @14:30 - 18:45**

Join the Woolf Institute to hear from its multidisciplinary researchers from around the world. For one afternoon, the Woolf Institute research team will convene in Cambridge to discuss their research and propose ideas for the future.

On Wednesday 16 November, researchers will report on their work in a wide variety of fields. We hope that the research afternoon will offer a unique opportunity to evaluate and further develop our diverse research into contemporary religion and society.

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Modern slavery is going on all around us. Brothels, nail bars, car wash outlets and some wealthy households all need victims who they can exploit, and people traffickers happily supply them. Kevin Hyland and Lauren Saunders square up to the problem...

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COMING SOON

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