

Muslim news site 5Pillars ordered to pay back COVID grant after publishing anti-gay video

From [Daily Mail](#)

Last year, *5Pillars* received a £3,000 COVID emergency grant from the Public Interest News Foundation (PINF), which supports independent news providers in the UK.

PINF is led by Jonathan Heawood, founder of the state-backed press regulator Impress. It was launched in 2019 with Impress support to promote public-interest journalism.

Last summer, PINF began to receive complaints that *5Pillars* was supporting conspiracy theories, including that MI5 had been responsible for the murder soldier Lee Rigby in 2013.

Now we can reveal that the website breached Impress's standards code by broadcasting a video in which deputy editor Dilly Hussain said homosexuality was 'a gross crime against Allah'.

Mr Heawood said last night that PINF would ask *5Pillars* to repay the grant, which was part of a Covid emergency fund.

Asked why the website had received the money, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, he added: '5Pillars presented to us examples of their journalism which seemed to be providing a valuable service, for instance dispelling Covid myths.

5Pillars came under fire last year after Quillam, a counter-extremism organisation, highlighted how it published an article questioning whether Michael Adebolajo, the killer of

Fusilier Rigby, was an MI5 agent. The website also carried a piece querying whether James Foley, a US journalist beheaded by Islamic State in 2014, was killed by Western spies.