

# Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey



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# Foreword

From the time it was founded in 1987, the Inter Faith Network for the UK has seen the encouragement and development of effective broadly based local inter faith activity as vital for strengthening mutual respect, understanding and cooperation between different faith communities.

In the last few years local inter faith initiatives have been launched in increasing numbers and are becoming involved in a growing range of activities, many in partnership with local authorities and other public bodies. The project carried out this year by the Network to survey the pattern of local inter faith activity across the UK is therefore a most timely one. The Network is grateful for the grant from the Community Cohesion budget at the Home Office which has made this project possible.

This report is one of the fruits of the project. Another is the recently published short good practice booklet: *Partnership for the Common Good: Inter Faith Structures and Local Government*. A detailed listing by area of local inter faith councils and regional inter faith structures and groups is under preparation. We hope that this material will be a useful resource for all those engaged in helping to develop and strengthen local inter faith work

The final paragraphs of the Introduction record the gratitude of the Network for the co-operation and help received in the course of the project from many individuals and organisations. We should like to add our particular thanks to Dr Harriet Crabtree, the Network's Deputy Director, who has carried out, with considerable personal commitment, the research for the project and the writing of this report.

**Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler   Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE**  
*Co-Chairs, Inter Faith Network for the UK*



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# Key Points

## **Scope of the survey**

1. The project surveyed local inter faith activity in the UK during March to July 2003. It gathered information about all forms of local inter faith activity, with a particular focus on inter faith and multi faith groups, councils, forums and networks involving all the key faiths in their respective areas.
2. The project also gathered information about how local authorities in England and Wales (and those with multi faith populations in Scotland) are responding to faith and inter faith issues.

## **Increasing significance of work to build good inter faith relations**

3. The UK is now one of the most religiously diverse areas of Europe in terms of the number of different faiths with substantial communities here. Relations between people of different faiths are therefore of increasing importance. In the last five years, there has been a very rapid increase in local inter faith activity in the UK.
4. Factors which are contributing to this high level of local inter faith activity include: the increasing religious diversity of the UK; the inter faith work of faith communities and inter faith organisations; increasing interest on the part of the UK Government, the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, representative bodies in Northern Ireland and local authorities; the example and encouragement offered by high profile examples of inter faith cooperation and inclusion; and the impact of social factors in the UK and of overseas events (particularly, the events of 11 September 2001 and military action in Afghanistan and war in Iraq).
5. The climate for inter faith dialogue is in some respects a challenging one at present (particularly in the context of the impact of overseas events) but respondents to this project were generally optimistic and proud of inter faith achievements in their areas.

## **Practical suggestions for inter faith work**

6. Good practice examples are included throughout the report.
7. A number of suggestions for extending and deepening local inter faith dialogue and cooperation emerge from the project's findings. These are included in the last chapter of this report.

## Local inter faith activity

8. Local inter faith bodies play a key role in bringing people of different faiths together to: increase trust, mutual understanding and respect; help defuse inter-community tensions when these arise; build community cohesion; provide advice and information on religious issues; foster cooperation on local issues; and work jointly on social and educational projects.

9. There are now nearly 140 inter faith and multi faith local bodies in the UK. Of the inter faith bodies which replied by questionnaire, 43% have come into existence since the start of 2000.

10. Local inter faith bodies vary in size, patterns of faith involvement, management, staffing and funding.

11. Most local inter faith bodies are based on individual membership but 42% have corporate members (such as places of worship). They vary in the degree to which they reflect in general membership and committee membership the faith make up of their area. The majority see themselves as “fairly representative”.

12. Budgets of local inter faith bodies range between a nominal “£0” (19%) and over £25,000 (5% ), with 46% of local inter faith bodies operating on less than £500 a year. For most bodies, donations and membership fees are the chief source of funding but other sources such as local authority grants, and Community Empowerment Fund and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund support are also important to a significant number.

13. Inter faith bodies with annual budgets of £500 or above are considerably more likely to be functioning as consultative forums than those with budgets below £500 (76% compared with 36% of bodies with budgets under £500) and are more than three times as likely to be involved in regeneration or neighbourhood renewal work.

14. Groups with higher budgets are also more likely to see themselves as “very representative”.

15. “In kind” support from local authorities helps a number of local inter faith bodies. For example, 18% receive staff support from this source.

16. Some of the smaller inter faith bodies, especially those with a focus on dialogue and friendship, do not wish to carry out activities such as consultation on policy or involvement in bodies such as Local Strategic Partnerships. They are content to continue operating with slender budgets and carrying out activities to deepen inter faith understanding between individuals in their areas.

17. Local inter faith bodies' work spans a wide range of activities.

18. Most local inter faith bodies have, as one of their key functions, inter faith dialogue and relationship building. However, among the aims of many local inter faith bodies founded since 2000, social action and policy consultation are coming to the fore and there is often less or no focus on inter faith dialogue as such. This is reflected in the choice of names such as “multi faith forum”, “faith and social action forum” and “multi faith consultative forum”.

19. Many local inter faith bodies have close working relationships with a range of other bodies, such as Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education, Race Equality Councils, Councils for Voluntary Service and Community Networks.

20. Only a quarter of responding inter faith bodies have offices and 90 of the 110 (82%) have no paid staff at all. Most run through the energy and commitment of volunteers.

21. Committee structures and operating methods of local inter faith bodies differ widely. Higher budget bodies are more likely to be ones with elected committees, elected officers and a constitution which outlines the pattern of faiths on the committee.

22. In a few cities with local inter faith bodies, meetings of “faith leaders” also take place.

23. 31% of local inter faith bodies presently produce a newsletter and 22% have a website.

24. Relatively few local inter faith bodies are as yet making their work known through local press, radio and television.

25. Inter faith activity is also going on in many other contexts: chaplaincies in hospitals, prisons, and institutions of higher education; neighbourhood renewal and regeneration projects; policing; asylum seeker and refugee projects; schools and youth organisations; education centres; inter faith events and special occasions; bilateral and trilateral dialogues between particular faiths; initiatives run through particular programmes; and initiatives involving places of worship of different faiths.

26. In some cases these activities and projects are explicitly “inter faith” and focus on relationships between people of different faiths. Others are “multi faith”, involving people of different faiths working together on particular projects, but contributing to good inter faith relations through the relationships of trust and friendship that are built while working together.

## Local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships

27. Local authorities are increasingly seeking ways to work in partnership with faith communities and inter faith structures and to seek their input on policies and initiatives.

28. Particularly significant factors in this increased level of involvement have been the statutory duty placed on local authorities to develop a Community Strategy and the establishment of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in most local authorities. In the context of both community strategies and development of LSPs, faith frameworks which are consultable are proving highly desirable and, where no frameworks yet exist, new multi faith forums are coming into existence to meet the need. The broader Community Cohesion agenda is also significant.

29. 44% of authorities in England and Wales now have an officer responsible for liaison with faith groups and/or for faith issues. Only 11% have a councillor designated to hold this brief.

30. Responding authorities were generally aware of inter faith initiatives in their areas and 18% had been directly involved in setting up an inter faith or multi faith body. Many authorities have also been involved in arranging inter faith events such as conferences, consultations and services and celebrations.

31. 13% of local authorities indicate current support of a local inter faith group or council or multi faith forum. Grants for “one off” events are most common, although 6% note grants for core work and grants for projects. A number of others provide staff support, free use of venues, mailing facilities and other forms of “in kind” assistance. In a few cases, a local inter faith forum is fully serviced by the local authority.

32. Most grants and in kind support noted have been given by Unitary Authorities, Metropolitan Authorities and London Boroughs.

33. Local authorities use a range of methods to consult faith communities in their areas, including direct engagement with individual faith groups and their umbrella bodies, and engagement through inter faith structures, Black and Minority Ethnic Forums, and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education. Increasingly, inter faith or multi faith councils or forums are seen as useful and desirable and some local authorities are actively fostering the development of new ones (where no suitable consultable forum already exists in their areas).

34. Local authorities (and LSPs and Community Empowerment Networks) are proceeding cautiously to ensure that structures for multi faith consultation and for encouraging inter faith cooperation and community cohesion are appropriate to the faith make up of the area and have the support of key figures in the faith communities. Local authorities with small and scattered

minority faith community populations face particular challenges in this regard.

35. In some areas, new multi faith networks are emerging alongside existing inter faith bodies. The work of these is generally complementary and relations between them appear, overall, to be good.

36. The agendas of local inter faith bodies and of local authorities and LSPs overlap to some degree but they are distinct. The dimension of explicitly religious dialogue is sometimes downplayed in multi faith forums with a primary agenda of consultation and social action. In partnership working, there needs to be sensitivity to the differing needs of the different types of body involved.

### **Regional inter faith activity**

37. Regional inter faith structures have come into existence in the East, South East, South West and West Midlands and, at the time this survey was completed, were under discussion in the East Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber. A regional inter faith structure is imminent in the North West.

38. Regional inter faith structures face the challenge of involving and reflecting, appropriately, the faith make up of their regions in a context where many faiths do not have regional structures.

### **Capacity issues**

39. There are capacity issues for both local and regional inter faith bodies. Many can find it difficult to respond as they would wish to consultation opportunities due to lack of staff and inadequate funding. Increased funding for them could make a significant difference to their impact.

40. Local inter faith work could be extended and strengthened through a strategy involving UK, national and local government; national inter faith bodies; local inter faith bodies; and a range of other significant contributors such as Community Networks, Councils for Voluntary Service, Race Equality Councils, and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education.

# Introduction

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Aims, management and methodology
  - 1.2.1 Aims of the project
  - 1.2.2 Project management and resources
  - 1.2.3 Fact finding methods and response levels
- 1.3 Research priorities and report scope
- 1.4 The role of this report
- 1.5 Acknowledgements

## 1.1 Background

The UK is now one of the most religiously diverse areas of Europe in terms of the number of different faiths with substantial communities here. Its population includes Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Zoroastrians and people of other faiths and beliefs. Yet as little as ten years ago inter faith work was still seen by many as marginal and relatively unimportant. This reflected, in part, a low estimate of the significance of religious identity and a lack of awareness of the importance of the religious members of the UK's population coexisting harmoniously and drawing on their distinct faith traditions to contribute to society.

In the last ten years, however, a combination of religious, political and social developments in the UK and world wide has brought home to many the significance of religious identity and the vital importance of work to promote understanding and cooperation between people of different faiths. This dynamic has been assisted by the fact that increasing attention has been given by the Government to relationships with the major faith communities and to inter faith relations. This has been linked to Government's commitment to creating a plural society where people of all faiths are active and valued participants in national life and its recognition that faiths, as part of the third or voluntary sector (albeit a distinct part), have great potential to contribute to civil society.

In 2002 and early 2003 the Inter Faith Network for the UK discussed with Government the possibility of a project to survey the pattern of local inter faith activity across the UK and gather examples of successful projects which might be shared more widely. The information from the project would be the basis for an extended programme of work to support and strengthen local inter faith work. It would also assist both those wanting to start or to work with existing inter faith initiatives as well as the many local inter faith groups who regularly ask how similar groups are working and what good practice they might benefit from sharing. In March 2003 the Network was pleased to receive a grant from the Community Cohesion budget of the Home Office to help fund such a project.<sup>1</sup>



## **1.2 Aims, management and methodology**

### **1.2.1 Aims of the project**

In this new climate of increased awareness of the importance of inter faith understanding and cooperation, inter faith relations have risen swiftly up the agenda and new initiatives are appearing at a rapid pace – particularly at local level. The information from the present project, gathered in the Spring and Summer of 2003, provides a collection of snapshots in time of this increasingly diverse picture. The project's principal aims were to gather:

- information about existing inter faith initiatives (in particular, multi faith inter faith groups and councils)
- information about which local authorities have staff officially responsible for inter faith and religious issues and/or work in partnership with local inter faith initiatives or have set these up.

and to look at:

- examples of particularly good practice in terms of partnership working between local authorities and public services and local inter faith initiatives.
- examples of how faith community members come to serve on local inter faith councils and groups and how inter faith councils and groups themselves nominate individuals to represent them on external bodies, for example, local strategic partnerships.

These aims were extended at an early stage in the project to include a wider range of information about local authority support of local inter faith initiatives.

### **1.2.2 Project management and resources**

To take the project forward a steering group was formed. This had representation from the local inter faith sector (Fawad Bhatti of Blackburn with Darwen Inter Faith Council and Alan Schwartz of Cardiff Interfaith Association) as well as representation from the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Local Government Association. It met three times to review progress, to assist on development of the questionnaires used in the project and to discuss particular issues which arose in the course of the work. The project benefited separately from the valuable assistance of the Inter Faith Council for Wales, the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum and the Scottish Inter Faith Council as well as from the advice of a range of other organisations and individuals.

Research and writing were the responsibility of the Network's Deputy Director, Harriet Crabtree. Good practice visits, to supplement existing information, were carried out to two locations: Leeds (by Harriet Crabtree) and Leicester (by Bhupinder Singh of the Network and a Home Office official). Assistance on data input and management was provided by temporary Network staff member, Diane Toothill, and on production by Bhupinder Singh.



### 1.2.3 Fact finding methods and response levels

The project was carried out using letters and questionnaires as its primary tools, supplemented by extensive telephone follow up and by site visits.

The questionnaire to local inter faith groups and councils included detailed questions about their aims, activities, structures and resources. It is reproduced at Appendix 1. The questionnaire for local authorities asked about awareness of inter faith structures in their areas, responsibilities for handling faith and inter faith issues and patterns of financial and in kind support for local inter faith structures. It is reproduced at Appendix 1.

The questionnaires to local inter faith organisations could, of course, only be sent initially to those which were already known to the Inter Faith Network office.<sup>ii</sup> To find out about others which had recently come into existence, a question was included about local initiatives known to respondents on the questionnaires to local authorities and also in the short question sheets about local inter faith activity sent to faith community personnel responsible for inter faith issues (of which a sample is reproduced at Appendix 1); Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education; Race Equality Councils; Councils for Voluntary Service; the Faith Based Regeneration Network; and One World Groups.<sup>iii</sup> Together, these different types of return operated as a net to draw in contacts for newer initiatives. If one type of body in an area had not heard of an initiative, another frequently had.

Although the project's primary focus was on ongoing inter faith structures involving the key faiths in their areas, the net was cast wide to draw in reports on all types of local inter faith activity and the report reflects this wider context.

All data from returned questionnaires to local authorities and local inter faith groups was entered in Excel spreadsheets and later analysed using Excel and SPSS. The answers from other types of question sheet were typed up and drawn on for this report but not broken down or coded into manipulatable data since they were mainly free text information about initiatives known to the sender. By agreement with those who responded in the faith categories, copies of their returns will also be shared with their faith community bodies to assist these bodies in their own inter faith work.

Questionnaire response levels for the project are shown in the table at Appendix 3. Responding organisations are listed at Appendix 2. The final return rates for local authorities, local inter faith bodies, RECs and SACREs were the result of reminder mailings and of subsequent telephone follow up to all local inter faith groups who had not responded and to those local authorities 1.9% or more of whose population identified themselves in the 2001 census as following a faith other than Christian and which were eligible for the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.<sup>iv</sup>

Because of the project's focus, great care was taken to establish with the UK faith representative community bodies the pattern of people whom they wished the project to contact for information. The project wrote to umbrella bodies of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian communities asking them about their involvement in promoting local inter faith activity and for names of any of their members

around the UK who they thought would have valuable information to offer about local inter faith activities in their areas. In the Christian Churches, following consultation with the relevant ecumenical bodies, this led to question sheets being sent to personnel of different denominations who operate at regional, diocesan, conference and district levels. The Board of Deputies of British Jews supplied details for contacts for Jewish Representative Councils and other faith communities provided names on the basis of individuals known to them with an interest in the topic being researched. However, in many cases, members of the faith communities were already responding through other routes, for example in their capacity as Secretary or Chair of a local inter faith group or Director of a Race Equality Council. National inter faith organisations also supplied information about their activities at local level and their responses are reflected, along with other sources, in this report.

### **1.3 Research priorities and report scope**

In a six month project covering inter faith activity in the whole of the UK it was not possible to follow up every individual comment on activity ranging from *ad hoc* inter faith meetings to social projects being carried out by individual places of worship. The basic strategy pursued was:

- to prioritise follow up relating to new local inter faith councils and forums
- to follow up on notes included by respondents about projects or initiatives involving two or more faiths
- to follow up selectively some examples of churches, synagogues, temples, or other places of worship which had set up inter faith visits or programmes for their members
- to seek a wider pattern of information for major multi faith cities
- to follow up selectively a few examples of inclusion of minority faith communities in projects in parts of the country which are almost wholly mono cultural/mono faith

There are now many specialist organisations, such as regeneration linked consultancy services, which are working with local faith communities on particular projects. This survey mentions some such projects highlighted by respondents but does not attempt to document this activity as a whole. Also, because the report is concerned with local inter faith activity it does not deal with the wide range of national inter faith activity which influences and is influenced by local inter faith activity.

It should be noted that this project does not claim to be (and was not set up as) a piece of detailed sociological research, with the degree of detail of analysis which one might expect in a longer project carried out in an academic context. It was carried out on a short timescale as part of the general work of the Inter Faith Network. We have tried, in this report, to ensure that all information is accurate. If any errors remain, we apologise for this and will be glad to receive updates or amendments for possible use at future stages of the project.

## 1.4 The role of this report

In the following chapters, we hope to convey something of both the richness and complexity of local inter faith activity in the United Kingdom. Necessarily, the examples chosen are selective because of the constraints of space but it is hoped that the good practice cases set out at regular intervals in the report will be helpful to those working on local inter faith initiatives. As noted earlier, the report is a collection of snapshots in time. By the time it is published the picture will already be changing. The Inter Faith Network looks forward to hearing from readers of new developments and to finding ways to share these with others as part of its ongoing work.

At the time the project wrote to gather information, it was intended that a good practice booklet and a single report would result from this. The good practice booklet, *Partnership for the Common Good: Inter Faith Structures and Local Government*, has already been published.<sup>v</sup> However, the sheer wealth of information that came in from the earliest days of the project made it clear that the report material would need to be handled in at least two stages. The first of these is the present report which presents an overview of findings from the project. The second stage is under preparation and will be a guide to regional and local inter faith structures by area, with brief information and contact details. This is being published separately from the present report to make it easier to use and update.

## 1.5 Acknowledgements

The Inter Faith Network is most grateful to the many individuals and organisations who provided advice on contacts to approach for this report. It is also most grateful to all who have helped supply information: to those in Leeds and Leicester who provided good practice information and hospitality on site visits and to all who kindly filled in questionnaires and patiently answered subsequent questions – in a number of cases supplying several pages of helpful follow up contacts. The depth of knowledge and the commitment of respondents have been inspiring.

The project is also very grateful to those who have read and commented on drafts of the report, including members of the Inter Faith Network's Executive Committee and of the Inner Cities Religious Council and the Equalities Executive of the Local Government Association, and for the assistance of the Scottish Inter Faith Council and the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum as well as of the Inter Faith Council for Wales. A particular debt of gratitude is owed to the members of the Working Group for their expert assistance and also to Dr Rose Crabtree of Oxfordshire County Council for her donation of time and expertise to analyse and present data from the questionnaires from local inter faith bodies and local authorities. This enabled a valuable extra statistical dimension to the project.

The report covers activity which is the fruit of the work of men and women of different faiths across many years. It is fitting, therefore, to conclude with a recognition of their contributions – their vision and their gift of time and commitment underlie the richness of the landscape that this report reflects and the positive prospects for the future of inter faith cooperation and harmonious coexistence in the UK.

<sup>i</sup> The grant was for work relating to England and Wales and the Inter Faith Network, which covers the UK as a whole, supplemented it from its core budget to ensure that Scotland and Northern Ireland were also covered by the project.

<sup>ii</sup> It went to all known groups and councils in England, Wales and Scotland. The Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum advised that there were no local inter faith groups in Northern Ireland.

<sup>iii</sup> Following discussion with the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, Alan Schwartz on behalf of the Inter Faith Council for Wales, and the Scottish Inter Faith Council, question sheets were sent to RECs across the UK, but only to SACREs and CVSs in England.

<sup>iv</sup> The authority by authority table of religious identity data from the Census is included at Appendix 4.

<sup>v</sup> Inter Faith Network in association with the Local Government Association, the Home Office and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Partnership for the Common Good: Inter Faith Structures and Local Government. Good Practice Guidelines*, Inter Faith Network, London, 2003.

# A time of rapid change

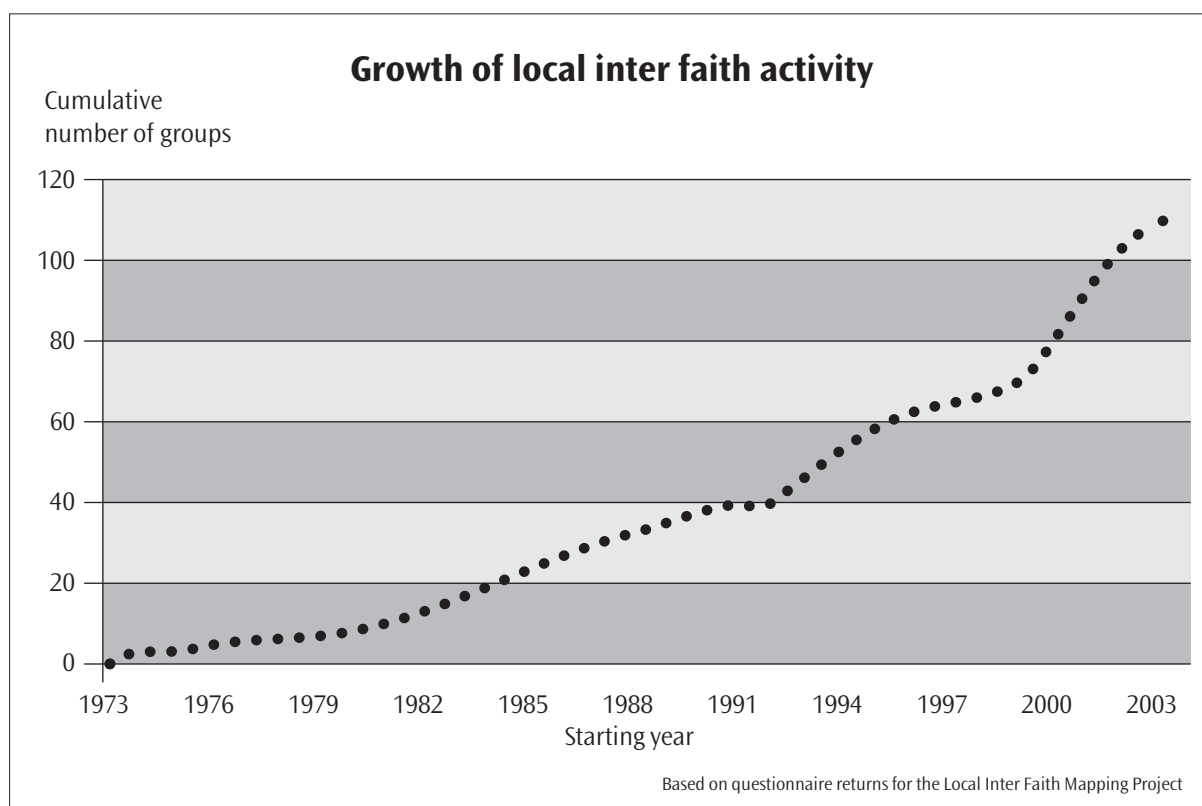
- 2.1 The increasing level of inter faith activity in the UK
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  - 2.2.5 Impact of high profile examples of inter faith cooperation and inclusion
  - 2.2.6 Overseas events
- 2.3 A difficult climate for dialogue
- 2.4 Progress and optimism about the future

## 2.1 The increasing level of inter faith activity in the UK

Someone asked to survey the inter faith scene in the UK in 1970 might have been able to do this quite adequately in about ten minutes. They would probably have mentioned the two earliest extant multi faith organisations in Britain: the national chapter of the International Association for Religious Freedom and the World Congress of Faiths (founded in 1900 and 1936 respectively) and two bilateral bodies: the London Society of Jews and Christians, founded in 1927, and the Council of Christians and Jews, formed in 1942. To these, they might have added, as a footnote, fledgling local initiatives in one or two cities such as Leeds, plus a handful of privately initiated dialogue groups.

By 1980 the UK and Ireland chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace had come into being (founded in 1974), as had around a dozen new local inter faith initiatives but the picture was still a relatively simple one. During the 80s and 90s, inter faith activity increased slowly but quietly.<sup>1</sup> By the beginning of 2000 there were over a dozen national inter faith bodies operating and close to a hundred known local inter faith groups and councils. Inter faith activity in the UK continues to grow at a fast pace. Nearly 140 multilateral local inter faith groups, councils and associations have been identified by the present project. There are also a large number of bilateral and trilateral dialogue groups and councils.

The graph overleaf, based on the 110 inter faith groups and councils which returned usable questionnaires, illustrates well the process of growth over the last thirty years:



*Fig 2.1 Growth in the number of local inter faith groups and councils since 1973*

## 2.2 Factors contributing to this growth in of inter faith activity

A number of factors are contributing to this growth in inter faith activity – many of which are mutually reinforcing.

### 2.2.1 Increasing religious diversity of the UK

At one level, the volume of inter faith activity can be seen as a natural outcome of the UK's increased religious diversity. In the second half of the 20th century, parts of our islands became very religiously diverse.<sup>ii</sup> Economic migration and refugee settlement meant the arrival of new communities, including faith communities.<sup>iii</sup> Today the UK population includes Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Zoroastrians and many others such as Mormons, Pagans, and Rastafarians, as well as atheists, agnostics, humanists, and those with no formal belief system.<sup>iv</sup> As schools, workplaces, and other places of encounter in many parts of the UK become ever more religiously diverse it is unsurprising that questions of inter faith relations rise higher up the social agenda.

### 2.2.2 Impact of the work of faith organisations

Another factor contributing to the development of inter faith activity is the growing commitment of the faith communities to inter faith work. Although the present project did not set out to explore the inter faith projects of particular faith traditions *per se*, it is clear that increasing inter faith engagement is happening within all traditions. The Buddhist community is typical. Individual Buddhist places of worship, such as the London Buddhist



Vihara, play an active role in local inter faith activity and education. The Lam Rim Buddhist group in Bristol wrote of its active role in helping run the Bristol Inter Faith Group. The Chairman of the Buddhist Hospice Trust noted the steady trickle of invitations to take part in multi faith study days and seminars on the spiritual dimensions of death and dying. The Amida Trust described a range of inter faith activities spanning engagement in local inter faith councils, hosting talks by members of other faiths, contributing to inter faith coverage on Radio Leicester, cooperating with other faith groups in peace activities and the “Meditate to Liberate” campaigns (for animals), and a Buddhist-Christian e-group.

Other faith communities also noted their engagement in inter faith work at both national and local levels. In most cases, this was through involvement in existing multi faith national inter faith organisations, such as the Inter Faith Network and the Scottish Inter Faith Council and through regional structures such as the South East Forum of Faiths and local inter faith bodies. Their members were also involved in inter faith organisations such as the Council of Christians and Jews and the Three Faiths Forum, and in dialogue initiatives such as the Jain-Jewish meetings in London or the Hindu-Muslim and the Hindu-Christian dialogues under way in the Leicester area.

Some faith community respondents commented on particular inter faith initiatives in which their members were involved. For example, a Muslim respondent in the North West particularly commended the joint working, over a period of years, of the Lancashire Council of Mosques and the Anglican Bishop and Diocese of Blackburn (this was echoed by the respondent for Churches Together in Lancashire) and a Hindu respondent in the South East highlighted the inter faith dimension of the Crawley Ethnic Minority Forum.

Given the pattern of religious identity in the UK (in the 2001 Census 72% of respondents declared their religion as ‘Christian’) it is not surprising that initiatives linked to the Churches were widely reported and for this reason a section on the Churches’ work is included at the end of chapter 4.

### **2.2.3 Impact of the work of inter faith organisations**

Alongside the work of single faith organisations, the ongoing work of national inter faith organisations, such as the World Congress of Faiths, the World Conference on Religion and Peace and faith focused programmes such as the *respect* project (an initiative of TimeBank with the Prince’s Trust) is important as a factor stimulating the growth of local inter faith initiatives.<sup>v</sup>

The Inter Faith Network for the UK, which was founded in 1987 to promote good inter faith relations and to link inter faith initiatives has also contributed to the development of local inter faith activity. Its regional link meetings for inter faith organisers to exchange news and ideas, and its publication, *The Local Inter Faith Guide*, were mentioned by a number of respondents as having helped the development of their initiatives.<sup>vi</sup>

In Scotland, the Scottish Inter Faith Council links local inter faith groups and holds meetings enabling them to learn about each other’s work. In Wales, the Inter Faith Council for Wales does not at present have this role as there are only two known functioning local multi faith groups in Wales as yet (in Cardiff and Newport). In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum

acts as both a national and local body because the majority of members of other faiths live in and around Belfast where its work is centred. <sup>vii</sup>

#### **2.2.4 Increasing Government interest in faith and inter faith issues**

The pattern of inter faith activity is also linked to the increasing interest of national and local government in involving faith communities in policy consultations and service delivery. This is reflected, for example, in the work of consultative bodies such as the Inner Cities Religious Council in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Inter Faith Council for Wales (chaired by the National Assembly's First Minister), the work of the Faith Practitioners' Group of the Community Cohesion Unit, and the setting up of the new Faith Communities Unit in the Home Office. It is also reflected in the degree of seriousness with which faith identity is taken in such documents as *Faith and Community* <sup>viii</sup> and *Guidance on Community Cohesion*. <sup>ix</sup>

New legislative and regulatory frameworks, such as the relevant provisions of the Local Government Acts of 1999 and 2000, have led local authorities in England and Wales to increase their level of engagement with faith communities and inter faith structures. A more detailed account of these is given in Appendix 5. This also describes the important role of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in bringing different parts of the public sector together with the private community and voluntary sectors to work cooperatively to ensure that public services meet the needs of local people, along with the development of Community Empowerment Networks, which have the role of bringing together community and voluntary sector organisations in an area and providing a link between these and the LSP. As is described in this report in Chapter 5, Section 8 these developments are leading in an increasing number of areas to the formation of new multi faith forums to link to the LSPs.

#### **2.2.5 Impact of high profile examples of inter faith cooperation and inclusion**

Encouragement to local people to start or strengthen local inter faith projects has also come from initiatives which have addressed social inclusion and community cohesion at what might be called the "symbolic" level of life. The Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment by the Faith Communities of the United Kingdom, held on 3 January 2000 in the Houses of Parliament and televised by the BBC, has had a noticeable impact. <sup>x</sup> Some of the materials sent in for this project show that the Act of Commitment text has found its way around the country and is being used at the heart of civic and other multi faith events – embodying the idea of faiths working together for the common good, drawing on values held in common by their traditions.



## **ACT OF COMMITMENT BY THE FAITH COMMUNITIES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

In a world scarred by the evils of war, racism, injustice and poverty,  
we offer this joint Act of Commitment as we look to our shared future.

We commit ourselves,  
as people of many faiths,  
to work together  
for the common good,  
uniting to build a better society,  
grounded in values and ideals we share:  
community,  
personal integrity,  
a sense of right and wrong,  
learning, wisdom and love of truth,  
care and compassion,  
justice and peace,  
respect for one another,  
for the earth and its creatures.

We commit ourselves,  
in a spirit of friendship and co-operation,  
to work together  
alongside all who share our values and ideals,  
to help bring about a better world  
now and for generations to come.

*Act of Commitment by the Faith Communities of the United Kingdom,  
Houses of Parliament, 3 January 2000*

At last year's Golden Jubilee celebrations marking 50 years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, the Government and the Royal Household placed a special emphasis on multi faith involvement. A reception was hosted by The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh at Buckingham Palace for over 700 men and women of different faiths from all over the UK. During the Golden Jubilee year, the Queen and other members of the Royal Family visited one place of worship of each of the major faiths (in the case of some faiths for the first time). Another Golden Jubilee event was a special Youth Faith Forum which the Inter Faith Network helped the Government arrange. 80 young people of different faiths aged from 16 to 25 from all over the UK came together to discuss growing up as young people of faith in 21st century Britain and to talk about how their faiths' teachings call on them to help others, both within their faith community and in wider society.<sup>xi</sup> This forum caught people's imaginations and several respondents from Standing Advisory Committees on Religious Education (SACREs) mentioned plans for similar forums in their areas to increase inter faith understanding between young people.

The reception, the Royal visits and the youth forum had great symbolic significance for members of Britain's faith communities. They have sent a powerful signal to the British people that the more recently settled faith communities are truly a part of their country's life and that good relations between the different faiths are tremendously important.

### **2.2.6 Overseas events**

It is clear that the events of 11 September 2001 in the USA have also been a trigger for a rapid increase in awareness of the importance of good inter faith relations and for an increase in local inter faith activity. From many areas, such as Exeter, Leeds, Llandudno, Newcastle and Sheffield, came news of special events and programmes which developed from these sad events. In some places, there was a strengthening and development of inter faith relationships, for example in Glenrothes, Fife where leaders from the local Christian and Muslim communities have been meeting regularly since the 11 September attacks. From a respondent in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead came the following comment:

After the events of 11 September 2001 there was an upsurge of interest in inter faith issues in the town, largely driven by lay people but fully shared by faith leaders. An open meeting was held in late September and...an inter faith peace event was organised. This took place outside the Town Hall in Maidenhead and was attended by hundreds of people. The event involved prayers and scriptural readings from all Maidenhead's faith groups, and the lighting of candles by children representing each group. After the event, most of the organising team felt that it wanted to continue to be involved in inter faith work, and it is this group of people which is now known as Maidenhead Inter Faith Group. It includes leadership and lay people from each faith group in Maidenhead.

British military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq also appears to have contributed to increased local inter faith encounter and activity, with commemorative services, statements by faith leaders and peace vigils bringing different faiths together. In Bolton, for example, a special meeting was held on possible implications of an Iraq war for faith communities. Building Bridges Burnley wrote of an inter faith prayer vigil which was held in Burnley's Peace Garden on a bitterly cold Saturday morning in February when war with Iraq seemed inevitable. In Epsom, a series of meetings took place between the diocesan bishops, ecumenical partners and leaders of the Muslim communities and, in February, the Mayor of Epsom and Ewell met with Christian and Muslim community leaders and a joint statement was issued. Similar meetings, vigils and issuing of statements happened in many other parts of the UK.

“The events of 11 September, in the United States of America, and the war against terrorism in Afghanistan were the spur for the proposal to create a Forum of Faiths which would engage in dialogue with Glasgow City Council and Strathclyde Police. In the light of these events it was felt that there was a place for an initiative that helps faith communities to listen and to build up relationships with each other. Faith communities can often be distrustful of each other. The current world situation has exposed the fragility of inter faith relations even in our own city. There is an urgent need to show the general public that religion should not be a cause of strife and that inter faith activity is worthwhile. The role of the Forum of Faiths, therefore, is envisaged as bringing together the civic authorities and the leaders of the various faith communities to work together for mutual understanding and the good of Glasgow.”

*From the proposal to Glasgow City Council for a Forum of Faiths  
(now founded, see below at page 25)*

## 2.3 A difficult climate for dialogue

The overall tenor of the survey responses is of optimism and hope for the future, but it is tempered, in some cases, with anxiety about the impact of overseas situations and domestic political and social factors on inter faith relations in the UK.

Pessimism was voiced by some respondents about the impact of overseas events on local inter faith relations. From a multi faith town in the East of England, one Race Equality Council respondent offered the personal view that: “For as long as Palestine, Kashmir, Iraq, probably followed by Iran, and such situations remain, to expect and hope for good inter faith relationships is a dream. These are the kind of views expressed regularly here in our town. People cite examples of hundreds of people being killed very day. Under these circumstances [he says] it is extremely difficult to bring different faith communities together.”

There was also an undertow of anxiety in some responses relating to the impact of social problems in the UK. These include responses commenting on areas where extremist political groups are active and fomenting anti-Muslim prejudice or where there have been other serious other difficulties, such as in East London where nearly 400 graves in a local Jewish cemetery had been desecrated. They also included responses from areas with multi ethnic, multi faith populations where people were working at a rapid pace on community cohesion issues, including inter faith projects, in part because of a concern to avoid the kind of disturbances experienced in 2001 in Burnley, Bradford and Oldham.

In one town in the South East, which has in the past experienced some tensions between young people of different faith backgrounds, a faith community respondent commented with frankness on the absence of any effective framework for inter faith action: “Just random one-off events which

are few and far between. No substantive or sustained inter-faith connections. No cohesion! No connection! No interaction! No mutual exchange of good wisdom!”

## **2.4 Progress and optimism about the future**

Despite anxieties over the impact of overseas situations and domestic political and social factors on UK inter faith relations, most respondents of all faiths highlighted the considerable progress that was being made in their areas, often noting successes in beginning to make this better known publicly through civic events and good media coverage. Although sometimes cautious about the state of inter faith relations in their areas because of particular shortcomings or problems which they identify, these respondents remain broadly confident that inter faith relations are developing in positive ways. Returns from many areas are robustly optimistic, displaying a pride in their area’s diversity and a confidence that good relations between its residents of different faiths are a positive strength now and for the future.

The returns for the project point to many reasons for hope for the future – not least of these is the dedication of the people involved in inter faith work through local groups and projects, in local government and in education and in other sectors. Institutional change and greater financial and staffing resources will help inter faith relationships deepen and grow but the commitment of individuals and communities and their willingness to encounter each other with openness and respect is there at the heart of all long lasting and effective inter faith work.

“So often, as in any human endeavour, personal relationships are critical for they determine how much enthusiasm (and in some cases ultimately endurance) is brought to whatever is proposed.”

*Churches Together Ecumenical Officer, Berkshire*

“Community cohesion begins on the ground in how ordinary people are living their lives and choosing to come together. It is the many smallscale actions of committed individuals that lie behind large scale change and personal and community development.”

*Social Inclusion Manager, Maidstone Borough Council*

- i The changing picture over the last decade can be seen from the chapters on inter faith activity and inter faith organisations in the successive 1993, 1997 and 2001 editions of *Religions in the UK*, edited by Paul Weller, University of Derby in association with the Inter Faith Network for the UK.
- ii There had, of course, been faith diversity in previous eras: various forms of Paganism existed before and at the same time as Christianity; since the third or fourth century Christianity has existed here in increasingly diverse forms; there has been a Jewish presence from the 11th century, interrupted by persecution and expulsion from the 13th to the 17th centuries; and religious diversity increased quietly but significantly during the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century.
- iii Some of the growth in diversity can also be attributed to the fact that some faiths have gained new adherents because of shifts in belief and membership between traditions. There are no reliable figures, however, relating to religious conversion in the UK so the impact of this factor is hard to judge.
- iv Census figures for religious identity for the UK as a whole and broken down by local authority are at Appendix 4.
- v Information about the work of national inter faith bodies which have local branches is found at Appendix 7.
- vi Inter Faith Network in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council of the Department for Transport, Environment and the Regions, *The Local Inter Faith Guide: Faith Community Cooperation in Action*, (London: Inter Faith Network, 1999).
- vii See Appendix 9 for information about the Inter Faith Network and Appendix 6 for information about the work of the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum; the Scottish Inter Faith Council; and the Inter Faith Council for Wales. The last three bodies are members of the Inter Faith Network.
- viii Local Government Association in association with the Active Community Unit of the Home Office, the Inner Cities Religious Council of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Inter Faith Network, *Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities*, (Local Government Association, 2002). This document was developed following a conference held by the Inter Faith Network in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council in 2000. A report on this was published: Inter Faith Network in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council, *Inter Faith Cooperation, Local Government and the Regions: Councils of Faith as a Resource for the 21st Century*, (London: Inter Faith Network, 2000). *Faith and Community* was sent to all local authorities in England and Wales and has been a significant factor in encouraging local authorities to develop work with faith and inter faith structures, with a number of project respondents mentioning it specifically.
- ix Local Government Association in association with the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Inter Faith Network, *Guidance on Community Cohesion*, (London: Local Government Association, 2002).
- x This event was developed and organised by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport with the assistance of the Inter Faith Network as part of the official Millennium Celebrations. A full transcript is available from the Inter Faith Network.
- xi Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *Report on Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum*, 10 June 2002 (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2002).

# Local inter faith groups and councils

- 3.1. The importance of local inter faith groups and councils
- 3.2. Who responded?
- 3.3. What is the pattern of involvement?
  - 3.3.1 Size of inter faith groups and councils
  - 3.3.2 Which faiths are involved?
  - 3.3.3 “Representativeness”
- 3.4. Aims and names
- 3.5. What are inter faith groups and councils doing?
- 3.6. Making the work known
- 3.7. Resources
  - 3.7.1 Financial resources
  - 3.7.2 Other resources
  - 3.7.3 Offices
  - 3.7.4 Staffing
- 3.8. Management structures
- 3.9. Meetings of faith leaders
- 3.10. Successful working
  - 3.10.1 Successful projects and events
  - 3.10.2 Joint working
  - 3.10.3 Successful patterns of activity
- Annex: Successful events and projects

## 3.1 The importance of local inter faith groups and councils

Where structured local inter faith initiatives work well, they make a significant difference to their area.<sup>i</sup> They bring people of different faiths together to learn more about each other’s faiths and to co-operate in giving advice on religious issues to local public service providers. They also ensure that key members of the different faith communities in a locality meet regularly at meetings or special functions. These personal links are crucial to ensure rapid and effective response if occasional problems occur such as attacks on places of worship or disagreements between young people of different communities. This bringing together of members of the different faiths, in meetings and in civic contexts, also has symbolic importance – not to be undervalued – giving a visible sign of principled, peaceful coexistence and co-operation within our society.

## 3.2 Who responded?

The information in this section of the report is based on 110 local inter faith groups and councils which returned questionnaires by the deadline for inclusion.<sup>ii</sup> The table below shows the areas where these are based.

Area	Number of LIFBs <sup>iii</sup>	Percent
East	8	7.3
East Midlands	12	10.9
Greater London	17	15.5
North East	4	4.0
North West	16	14.5
South East	14	12.7
South West	11	10.0
West Midlands	10	9.1
Yorkshire and Humber	12	12.0
Wales	2	1.8
Scotland	4	3.6
Total	110	100.0

*Fig 3.1 Table of numbers of responding local inter faith bodies by area*

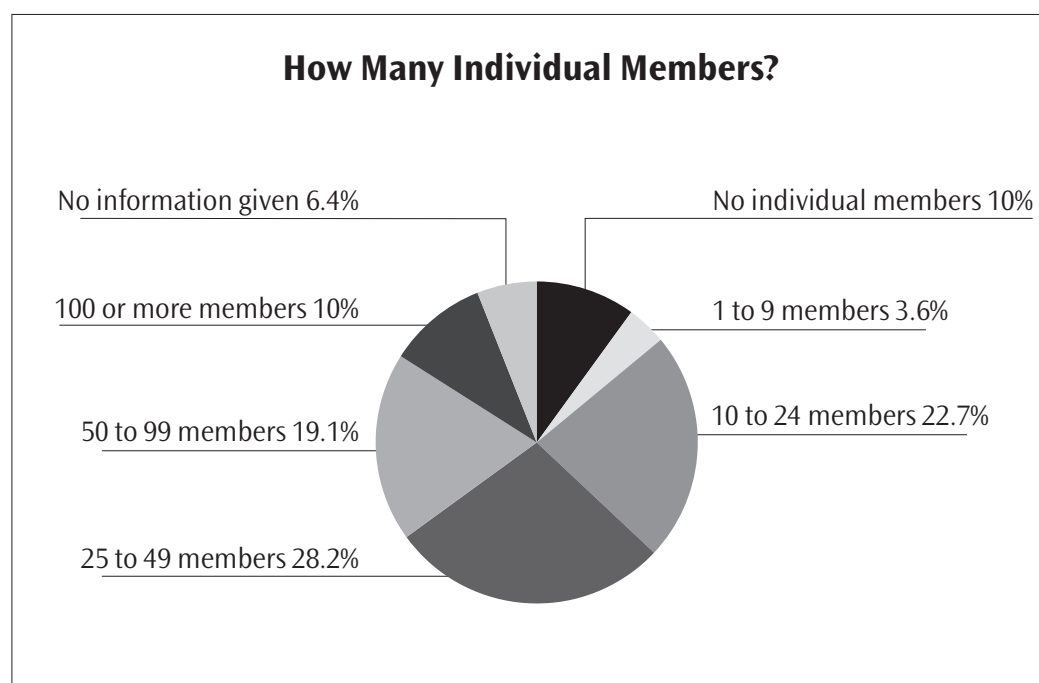
Of these responding bodies, 39 (43%) have come into existence since the start of 2000.<sup>iv</sup>

### 3.3 What is the pattern of involvement?

The questionnaire asked local inter faith groups and councils about their pattern of membership.

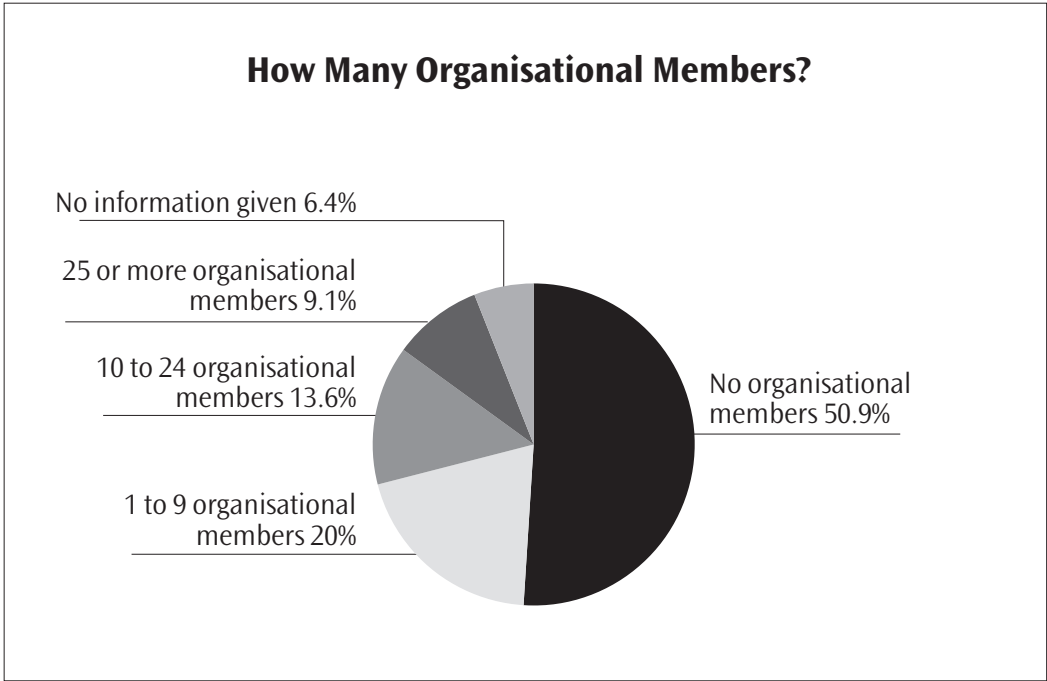
#### 3.3.1 Size of inter faith groups and councils

The number of bodies' individual members varies from no formal members to over 100 individual members.



*Fig 3.2 Numbers of local inter faith bodies' individual members*

The inter faith groups and councils also varied a great deal in the number of organisational memberships. Over half the responding bodies noted no organisational memberships at all.



*Fig 3.3 Numbers of organisational members of local inter faith bodies*

Local inter faith bodies vary in the proportion of individual and group memberships. There are bodies with high individual membership levels but no organisational memberships, while a few bodies have high levels of both.

Individual Memberships	Local Inter Faith Body Memberships				Total
	No organisational members	1 to 9 organisational members	10+ organisational members	No information given	
No individual members	5	1	5	0	11
1 to 24 members	15	8	5	1	29
25 to 49 members	23	5	3	0	31
50+	12	7	11	2	32
No information given	1	1	1	4	7
Total	56	22	24	7	110

*Fig 3.4 Relationship between the number of individual members and organisational members*

### 3.3.2 Which faiths are involved?

The questionnaire asked whether the Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths <sup>V</sup> were involved in the organisation’s overall work, and gave space to add additional religions where present. A similar question was asked about which faiths served on their elected committees or their steering groups (which 85 bodies indicated that they had). Of the 110 responses, 25 had incomplete data for one or both of



these sections which it did not prove possible to clarify through subsequent correspondence and this is reflected in the curious position reflected in the data below, apparently indicating that several local inter faith bodies have no Christians involved.

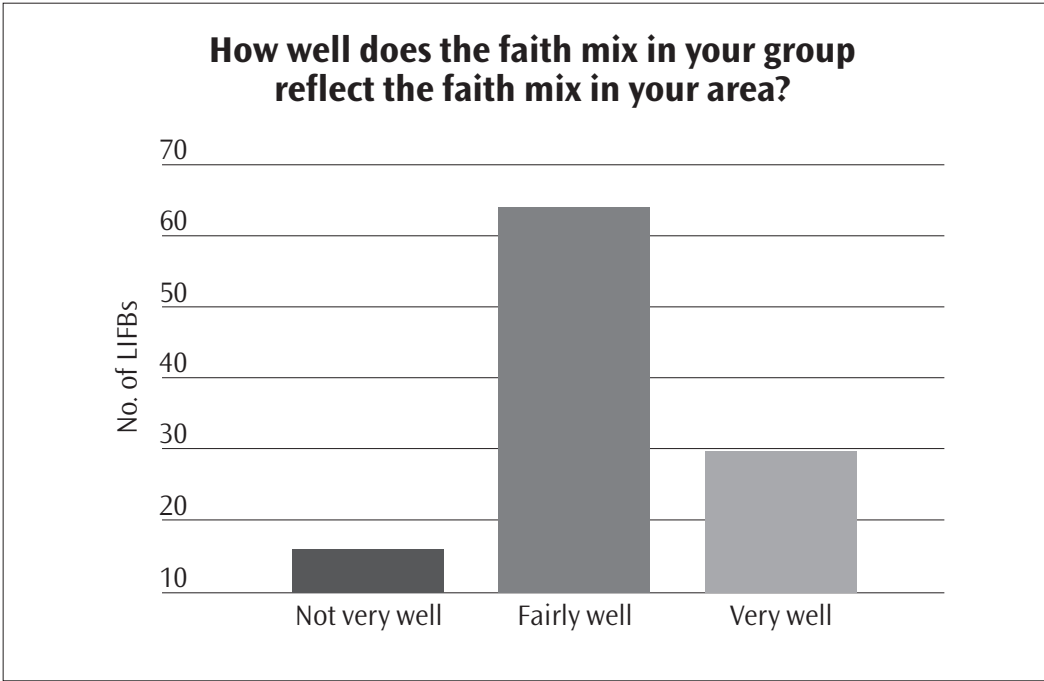
<b>Religion</b>	<b>No. of LIFBs where involved</b>	<b>No. of LIFBs where involved and on committee</b>
Christian	85	85
Muslim	81	70
Hindu	73	57
Sikh	67	47
Baha'i	61	53
Jewish	60	40
Buddhist	58	37
Brahma Kumaris	19	14
Zoroastrian	18	10
Jain	13	5
Pagan	12	8
Unitarian	12	7
Quaker	7	6
Humanist	5	3

*Fig. 3.5 Table showing involvement of members of particular faith traditions in bodies' general work and on their committees*

Additionally, involvement in three local inter faith bodies was noted for Shri Sathya Sai Seva and in two local inter faith bodies for Church of the Latter Day Saints; Hare Krishna (which the respondents identified separately from Hindu); and Unification. Involvement in one group each was noted for: Agnostic; Christian Scientist; Druid; Guru Ravidassi; Jedi <sup>vi</sup>; Monotheist; Mystic; Namdhari; Native American; New Age; No religious affiliation; Questing; Rastafarian; Sai Baba; Spiritualist; Sri Chinmoy; Subud; Taoist; World Spiritual University (which the respondent identified separately from Brahma Kumaris). In 11 cases, these were represented on groups' or councils' committees or steering groups.

### 3.3.3 "Representativeness"

Not all inter faith groups and councils are concerned about reflecting in their involvement or on their committees the faith composition of their areas. However, the question which asked, "How far do you feel your inter faith organisation reflects, in its overall membership, the general pattern of faith membership in your area" was answered by all respondents. The following chart shows the inter faith groups' and councils' self perception:



*Fig 3.6 How local inter faith bodies perceive their own level of representativeness*

In many cases, respondents wrote comments next to the tick box. For example, one recently initiated multi faith forum in Greater London commented on why it only had Christian and Sikh involvement at present, noting that the initiative was based on faiths with places of worship in the borough and saying “In [our borough] there are only Christian and Sikh places of worship. Adherents of other faiths who are resident will travel out of the borough to [their] mosque/temple. Through that they may well be involved with multi faith forums in neighbouring boroughs.” Similarly, a new inter faith forum in the North West noted, “Our organisation is based on ‘localised faith communities’ so there are members of other faiths that get involved in our activities but are not officially members because they do not have a local place of worship...”

A few respondents were aware of the 2001 Census figures on religious identity for local areas and recognised that these pointed to a need to think about the implications for their pattern of membership.

Anxiety was expressed by several respondents about an inability to engage sufficient members of particular faith groups in their organisations’ work. Some also commented on the difficulty of engaging women from faith traditions other than Christian and on drawing in young people. Occasionally there was disarming frankness about the faith mix: “Quite a few participants belong to fringe groups or have no faith. Our members do not represent the percentages of faith groups [in our area] properly.”

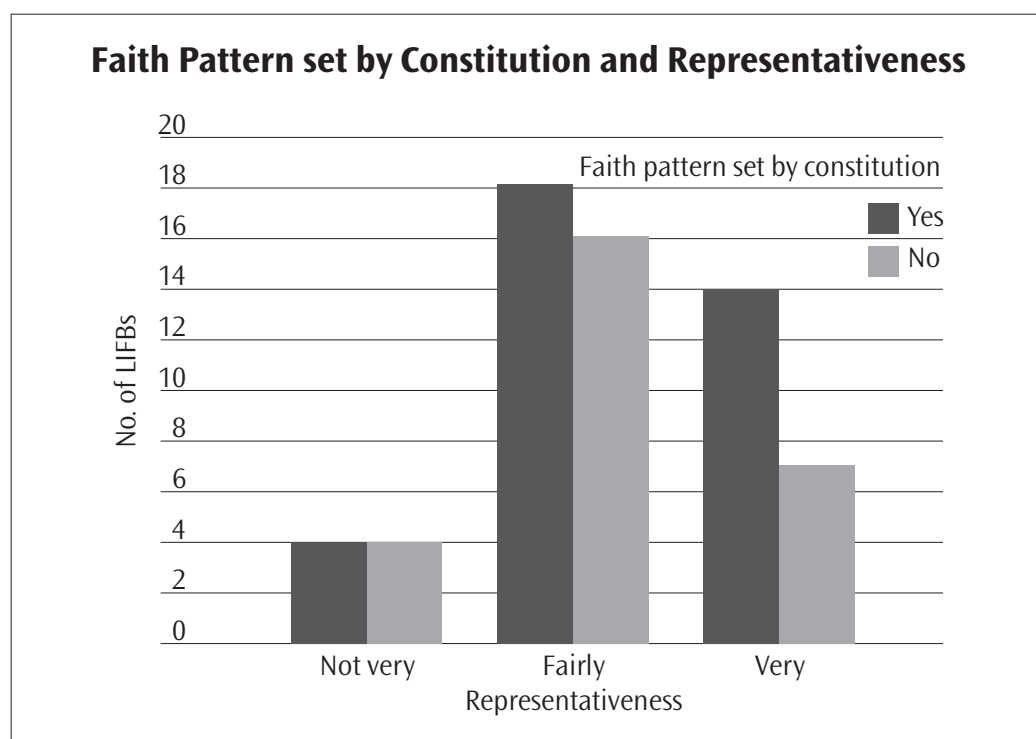
The following table shows that the local inter faith bodies with low numbers of participating religions may still consider themselves fairly or very representative of the faith mix locally.

How many religions involved?	Representativeness			Total
	Not very well	Fairly well	Very well	
2	0	3	2	5
3	2	6	1	9
4	0	6	3	9
5	4	10	0	14
6	3	8	5	1
7	0	10	5	15
8	1	5	6	12
9	3	6	5	14
10	2	6	2	10
11	0	1	0	1
12	0	2	1	3
13	1	0	0	1
14	0	1	0	1
Total	16	64	30	110

*Fig 3.7 Table indicating local inter faith bodies' perception of representativeness and the number of religions involved in their general work*

This reflects, in part, the fact that in many areas only one or two major faiths make up most of the population. It is, for this reason, possible to involve few faiths and still be representative.

There was a marked correlation between the presence of a constitution (especially one which specified the pattern of faiths on the committee) and the degree to which groups saw themselves as representative. Taking just the local inter faith bodies which have a constitution, more of those whose constitutions specify the pattern of faiths on the committee see themselves as 'very' representative than do those which have a constitution but one in which the pattern of faith participation on the committee is not specified:



*Fig 3.8 Relationship between representativeness and presence of constitution setting out patterns of faith participation in bodies' committees*

Some local inter faith groups and councils have put a particular emphasis on ensuring a pattern of faith involvement reflecting the make up of their area. An example of such a body is Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum, which is steered by a Council which includes Baha'is, Buddhists (from the Leeds Buddhist Council), Christians (Anglican, Catholic, Free Church, and the Black-led Churches), Hindus (from the main temple), Jews (from the Leeds Jewish Representative Council), Muslims (through the Leeds Muslim Forum), and Sikhs (through the Council of Sikh Gurdwaras (Leeds)). Leeds City Council is represented by a Councillor. <sup>vii</sup>

### 3.4 Aims and names

Questionnaire respondents were asked about the principal aims of their inter faith group or council. There was a high degree of similarity among the aims. Typical of what might be called "traditional" inter faith aims – and in particular typical of the aims of local inter faith bodies founded in the 70s, 80s and early 90s – are to:

- break down barriers of prejudice
- work together to overcome ignorance, fear and misunderstanding between faiths
- promote understanding and friendship between persons of different faiths
- heal painful memories of religious bigotry and intolerance and attempt to create new memories born of new experiences of peace, harmony and understanding
- promote understanding among people of different faiths and outlooks.
- explore opportunities for deepening our understanding and appreciation of

one another's spiritual traditions

- aid understanding and tolerance for both young and old people in the faith communities
- promote and maintain harmonious relations between people of different faiths in the city
- promote knowledge, understanding and mutual respect between the followers of different religions within our city
- explore shared values
- maintain and extend the existing network of positive relationships between leaders and people of different faith communities in our city
- be an inspiration and resource for the local community
- work together for harmony and cohesion in the community
- bring faith groups together for dialogue
- make a public "statement" by demonstrating that people of different faiths can talk and listen to one another
- be a point of contact for the faith communities in our area for anyone seeking information
- foster the common good
- involve faith and cultural groups in the civic life of the borough
- develop projects, programmes and events that improve inter faith education and outreach within the borough
- arrange occasions at which we experience each other's worship, witness each other's ceremonies, enter into dialogue with one another and celebrate our common commitment to spiritual values

However, particularly among some of the more recently formed inter faith groups and councils, more overtly social and political aims are coming to the fore as they seek to:<sup>viii</sup>

- enable the Council and local faith groups to discuss matters of mutual concern/interest. (1995 – a multi faith forum in Yorkshire and Humber)
- provide a means for faith communities to speak and act together on social and community issues (2003 – a multi faith forum in London)
- improve the quality of life for local people by working together on agreed projects demonstrating partnership between different faiths (1999 – an inter faith council in the North West)
- ensure that the public sector consults faith communities and to organise a regular programme of celebration and education (1993 an inter faith body in London)
- aid and facilitate effective networking among the borough's faith groups and promote the role of faith groups in influencing the design and delivery of community services (2003 – a multi faith forum in London)
- link government agencies and faith communities and ensure the 'voice of faith' is heard (2002 – a faiths forum in the East Midlands)
- promote inclusion of all faiths as part of an inclusive, cohesive society (1997 – an inter faith body in the East of England)
- be a representative voice for the faith communities (2002 – an inter faith forum in the North West)

- recognise formally the significance of religious identity in the life of our city and its potential for the creation of social capital and to provide a forum assisting the process of building understanding, tolerance and mutual co-operation between different religious communities and between them and all agencies of central and local government (2002 a faiths forum in the East Midlands)
- work with and lobby councillors, the police, health authority and other government bodies in the borough to ensure the voice of faith communities is recognised and taken on board and to support the development of faith based organisations and financing of faith based community projects by organising funding seminars and lobbying funders to allocate funds to faith based projects (2003 – a multi faith forum in London)
- disseminate information about faith issues to those providing services to the wider community in order that those providers can take into account faith sensitivities while discharging their duties (2002 – a council of faiths in the North West)
- encourage dialogue and provide an opportunity for faith based organisations to network with each other and the Council (2002 – an inter faith body in central London)

Often, this rather more social action focused agenda is reflected in the decision to use the name “multi faith forum”, “faith forum”, “faiths forum” or “faith communities forum” or variations on this such as “faith and social action forum”, “faith communities liaison forum” or “multi-faith consultative forum”.

Comments offered by some of the respondents from these types of organisation reflect a concern to present the work of their body as practically focused on social issues. A development worker for one of the new multi faith forums wrote: “As our aims detail, our focus is very practical i.e. on supporting faith based organisations to get involved in neighbourhood renewal and in the work of the local authority. In this way we believe that we can enable different faith based organisations to work with each other and with non-faith organisations which implicitly promote understanding between different groups. We believe it is vital that inter-faith groups work together on such practical activities to show their relevance to wider society and to promote genuinely positive inter-faith relations”. He added that one of the criteria for replication in all local authority multi-faith work was “having a very clear focus on practical work of all faith groups as opposed to theological “inter-faith” activities”.

A local authority staff member servicing another recently initiated faith and social action forum wrote, “We have found it useful to focus on community/social issues as a means of bringing people together. In [our authority] one of the strongest ...[faith groups] ..... tend(s) to be opposed to inter faith dialogue on matters relating to religious practice or worship but is willing to get involved where the focus is addressing community needs.” The choice of an appropriate name for a body clearly assists in this context.

The name and date of founding is not, however, always a reliable indicator of types of agenda. Some older inter faith groups and councils are taking on

board the new social action agenda even though their stated aims predate this and some recently founded faith forums take very seriously the need for inter faith dialogue alongside social action. An interesting example of this is the new Glasgow Forum of Faiths, formally launched earlier this year.

**Glasgow Forum of Faiths** brings together civic authorities and leaders of various faith communities:

- to work for the good of Glasgow
- to promote mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in the Glasgow area, including an awareness of their common ground and a respect for their distinctive features
- to recognise the problems experienced in the practice of any faith within the local community and to work together for their solution
- to work for harmony and peaceful coexistence and to promote dialogue and friendship between people of different faiths
- to oppose prejudice wherever it exists in the local community
- to work with faith groups and other inter faith organisations for shared religious values within civic society

In Mansfield, differing types of aim are being covered by the emergence of two interlinked developments: a “Mansfield Interfaith Spiritual Dialogue” coming into being at the same time as, and supported by, the Mansfield Interfaith Network (which has more of a community cohesion focus). There are other examples of parallel, complementary, local inter faith bodies in areas such as Leeds, Loughborough, Merseyside and Southampton.

Some inter faith bodies have aims which are linked to distinctive aspects of their make up or work. Thus, for example, Thames Gateway Women’s Multifaith Forum has as one of its aims: “To be a group of women recognised as a faith partnership working together to promote mutual respect and understanding”. And Brent Interfaith, which has a particular concern for religious education, has as one of its aims “to liaise with the local SACRE and promote understanding and common values of world religions and religious communities in schools”.

### 3.5 What are inter faith groups and councils doing?

What are inter faith groups and councils doing? The questionnaire gave 23 types of activity to select. The table below shows the picture:

Activity	LIFBs	%
Multi faith dialogue	90	82
Promoting harmonious race relations	87	79
Discussion meetings on religious topics	86	78
Discussion meetings on social topics	73	66
Inter faith awareness raising	69	63
Assisting in multi faith civic ceremonies	66	60
Social gatherings	66	60
Shared prayer/ worship	63	57
Shared meals	58	53
Acting as a consultative forum on local issues for local government	57	52
Educational events/ exhibitions	55	50
Multi faith pilgrimages/Peace walks	53	48
Providing advice/ assistance to public bodies	53	48
Making statements on current issues	49	45
Sending representatives to serve on local govt strategic initiatives	48	44
Sending speakers to schools	37	34
Involvement in regeneration/ neighbourhood renewal work	36	33
Events for young people	26	24
Bilateral dialogue	25	23
Diversity training	20	18
Trilateral dialogue	17	16
Women's meetings	13	12
Environmental projects	8	7

Fig 3.9 Table of types of activity carried out by local inter faith bodies

### 3.6 Making the work known

The project followed up on points made in comments on the returns which related to the media. A frequent lament among those involved in community relations and inter faith work is that “no one realises how many good things are happening”.

Some inter faith groups and councils are making a concerted – and successful – effort to get coverage in their local media. For example, Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel members met with the editor of *The Journal*, Tyneside’s local paper, and their conversations resulted in the publishing of a 16 page supplement entitled “Living Together”. Interfaith Milton Keynes (IMK) notes its ongoing relationship with the local press. Every month an article for the *Sunday Citizen* is written and different members take it in turn to write the articles. It also notes good relations with Three Counties Radio which has a local studio and often asks IMK to give a comment or to be involved in a discussion on a topic of interest. This same radio station also invites the Three Counties Inter Faith Group <sup>ix</sup> to contribute once a month on a Sunday to a radio slot (“Melting Pot”). In each slot there are three



different speakers, each from a different religion and from a different county of the three counties. So, for example a programme on marriage recently included a Baha'i from Bedfordshire, a Hindu from Buckinghamshire and a Christian from Hertfordshire.

Radio Ramadan, Glasgow, is a 24 hour a day station run by the Muslim community during the month of Ramadan. As part of the programming for Ramadan in 2002 the station invited two or three people of different faiths – Sikh, Jewish, Muslim – and Christian to talk about inter faith work. The participants talked about the ways that a faith perspective is being brought into Scottish public life and people are coming to know each other as they work together.

Alongside broadcast and print media, some local inter faith groups and councils use newsletters and websites to make their work known but perhaps less than one might expect, with only 34 (31%) producing a newsletter and 24 (22%) having a website. The groups that produce a newsletter are more likely to also have a website, as the table below shows:

<b>Does your organisation produce a newsletter?</b>	<b>Does your organisation have a website?</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Total</b>
No	66	9	75
Yes	19	15	34
Total	85	24	109

*Fig 3.10 Local inter faith body newsletter and website activity*

For examples of websites, see:

[www.24hrs-a-day.org/bcof/](http://www.24hrs-a-day.org/bcof/) Bedford Council of Faiths

[www.ifcg.co.uk](http://www.ifcg.co.uk) Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group

[www.cam.net.uk/home/interfaith/](http://www.cam.net.uk/home/interfaith/) Cambridge Inter-Faith Group

[www.leicestercounciloffaiths.org.uk](http://www.leicestercounciloffaiths.org.uk) Leicester Council of Faiths

[www.rmccq.co.uk](http://www.rmccq.co.uk) Medway Inter Faith Action

[www.interfaithnottm.org.uk](http://www.interfaithnottm.org.uk) Nottingham Inter Faith Council

[www.shu.ac.uk/city/community/si](http://www.shu.ac.uk/city/community/si) Sheffield Interfaith

[www.southampton-faiths.org](http://www.southampton-faiths.org) Southampton Inter Faith Link and Southampton Council of Faiths

[www.smff.org.uk](http://www.smff.org.uk) Southwark Multi-Faith Forum

[www.sifre.org.uk](http://www.sifre.org.uk) Suffolk Inter Faith Resource

[www.palaceavenue-methodist.org.uk/community/torbayinterfaith](http://www.palaceavenue-methodist.org.uk/community/torbayinterfaith) Torbay Inter-Faith Forum

<http://interfaithgroup.tripod.com/twig> The Wrekin Interfaith Group

The reason that websites are not more widely used may be that expertise in building and maintaining sites is not there in many groups. This may be an area where training and support would enable better outreach.

## 3.7 Resources

### 3.7.1 Financial resources

Funding proved the most difficult issue on which to get information from respondents because many of the more informal groups have no treasurer or official accounts. Some groups and councils said they had no operating budget at all. “Our budget really is £0” one respondent wrote, in response to a follow up query. A few bodies which indicated a nil budget were ones where some expenses were clearly being quietly absorbed by individual members or by their faith community organisations (sometimes members seem to be managing to get some quite sizeable expenses absorbed within running costs of larger projects or of the faith communities). For these reasons, the zero budget figures in the table below should be treated with some caution, but it provides a helpful indicator of levels of funding overall.

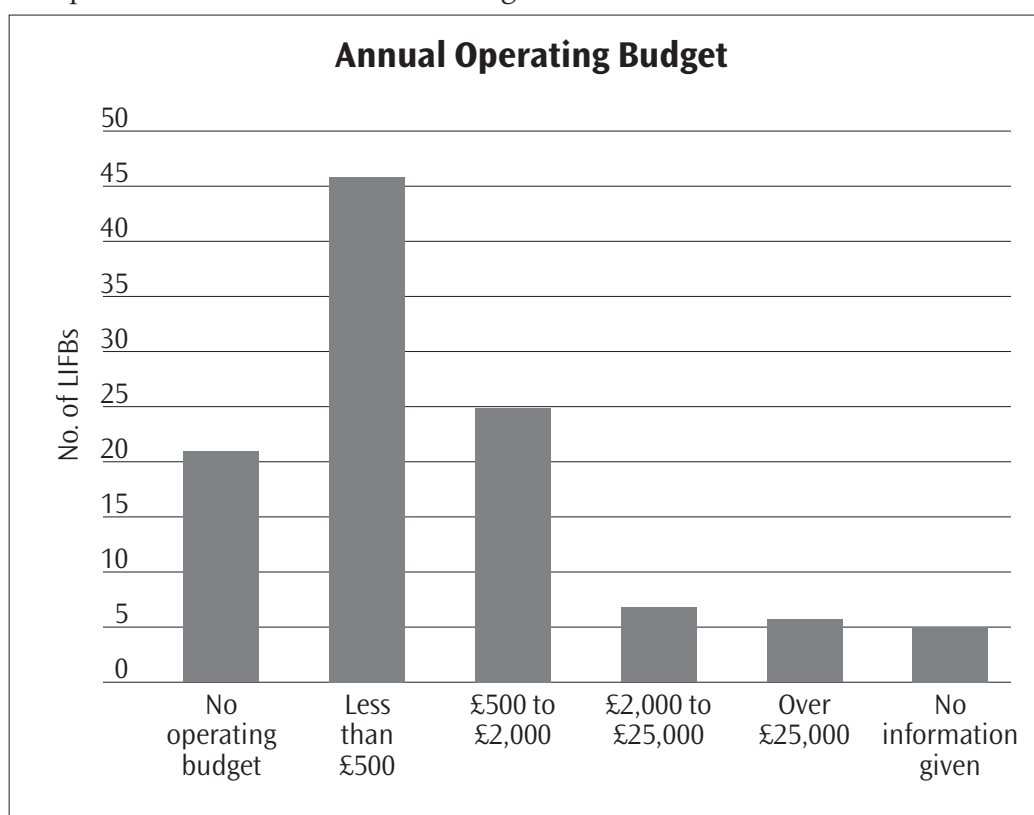


Fig 3.11 Annual operating budget of local inter faith bodies

Annual Operating Budget	No. of LIFBs	Percent
No operating budget	21	19.1
less than £500	46	41.8
£500 to £2,000	25	22.7
£2000 to £25,000	7	6.4
Over £25,000	6	5.5
No information given	5	4.5
Total	110	100.0

Fig 3.12 Table showing operating budget of local inter faith bodies

Where do inter faith groups and councils get their funding from? The questionnaire gave tick boxes for a number of possibilities and an “other” choice (see Appendix 1). The following table and chart show how many local inter faith bodies receive funding from each source.

Source of Funding	No. of LIFBs	Percent of cases
Donations	58	57
Individual membership fees	40	39
Other funds	37	36
Group membership fees	21	21
LA grants	19	19
Trust grants	10	10
Community Empowerment Fund	7	7
Fund raising events	6	6
Sales	5	5
Private sector sponsorship	4	4
Lottery	1	1

Fig 3.13 Table of sources of local inter faith bodies’ funding

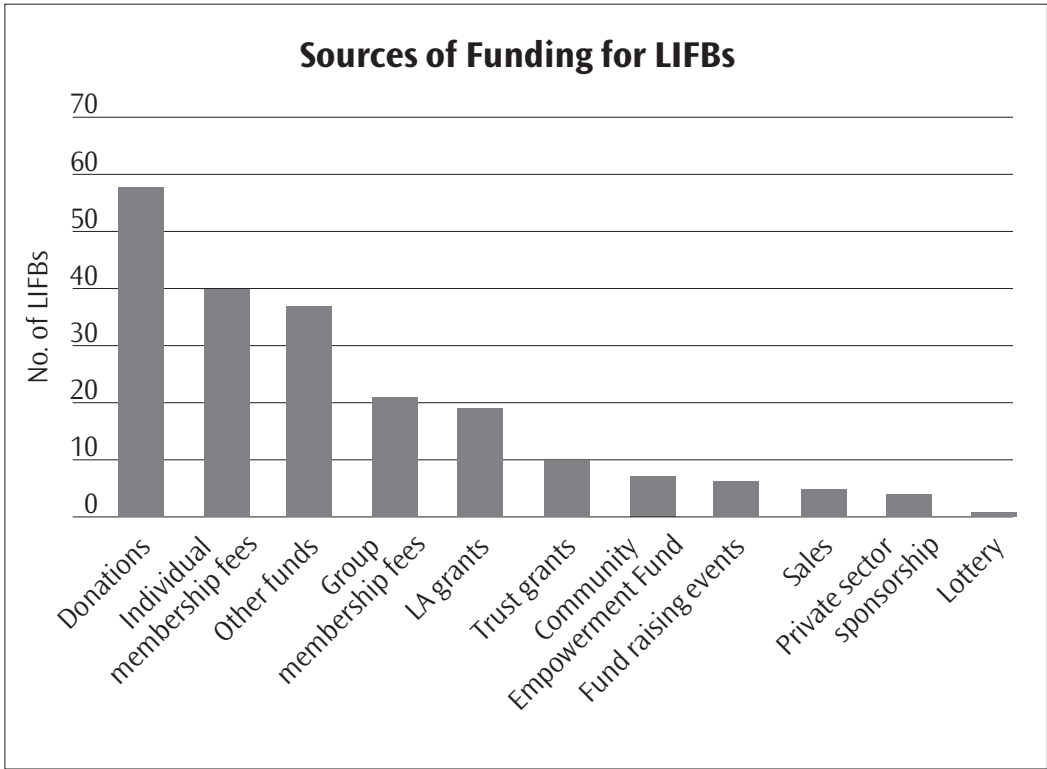


Fig 3.14 Chart of sources of funding of local inter faith bodies

Note that Figs 3.16 shows the *incidence* of receipt of *type* of funding – not the amount received from these sources.

27 local inter faith bodies reported current local authority funding (although only 24 ticked local authority grants as a source of funding, probably reflecting uncertainty about how to class certain types of funding such as Neighbourhood Renewal Fund monies) and 4 bodies which do not have

current local authority funding reported past local authority funding. 7 responding bodies mentioned Community Empowerment Fund monies but these have not in all cases been received direct. For example, during 2002–3 Dudley Borough Interfaith Network (DBIN) had a half time development worker for 12 months through Community Empowerment monies but the worker was employed by Dosti (Dudley’s Community Empowerment Network) and seconded to DBIN.

It is interesting to note that the pattern of types of funding for local inter faith groups is somewhat different depending on whether they are groups with a budget of between £1 and £500 or over £500:

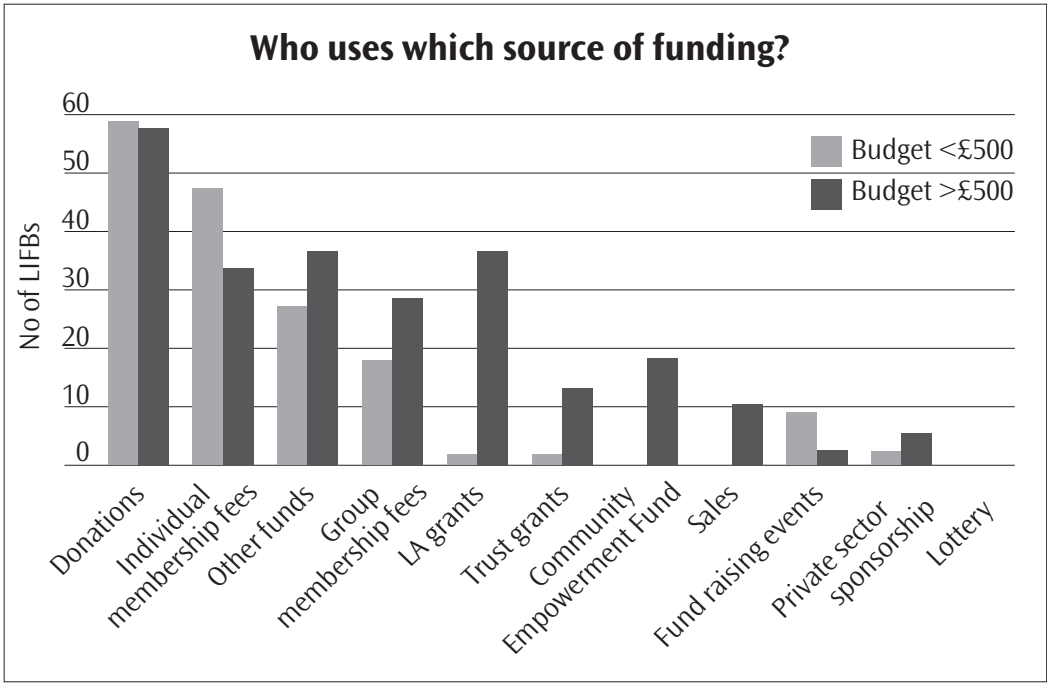


Fig 3.15 Chart showing budget levels and sources of funding

As one might expect, there is a quite strong connection between the pattern of activities groups carry out and the levels of their budget. There is a significant variation in levels of certain types of activities depending on local inter faith bodies’ budgets. For example, 35% of bodies with a budget of between £1 and £500 record that they act as a consultative forum on local issues for local government. The figure is 76% for bodies with a budget above £500. 63% of bodies with a budget under £500 listed discussion of social topics as one of their activities compared with 84% of bodies with a budget over £500. Local inter faith bodies in the larger budget bracket were also significantly more likely to be running environmental projects and events for young people and were more than three times as likely as the £1–£500 budget bodies to be involved in regeneration or neighbourhood renewal work. The chart below shows the picture in general terms:

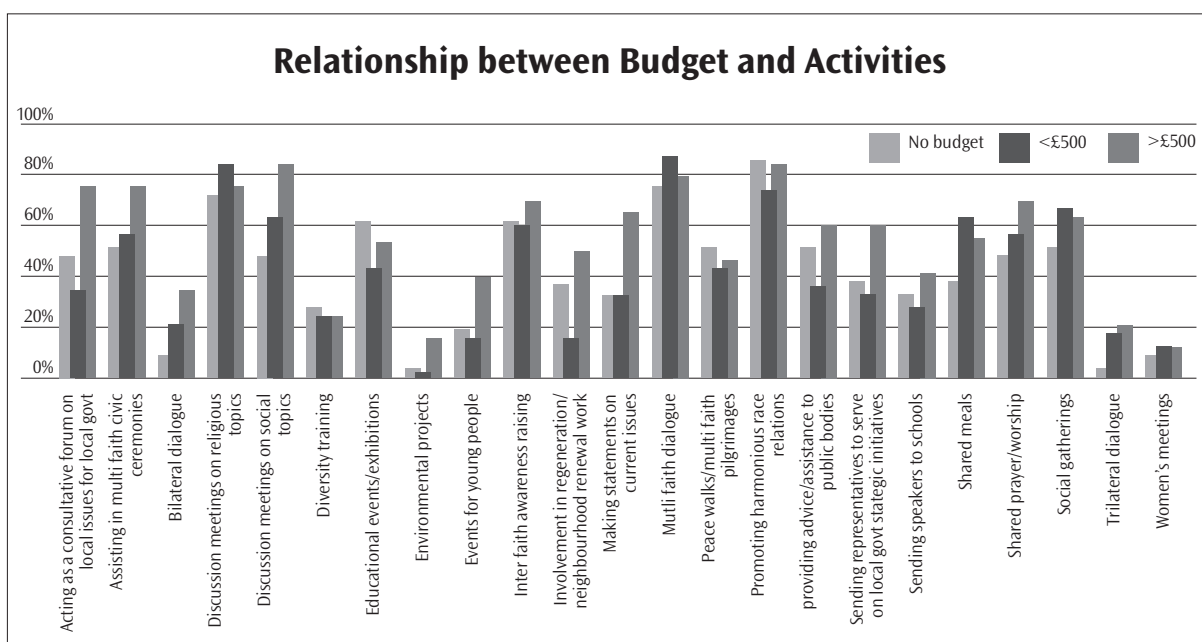


Fig 3.16 Relationship between local inter faith body budgets and patterns of activity.

The local inter faith bodies that report themselves as being rather poorly representative of the local faith mix tend to also indicate that they have low budgets:

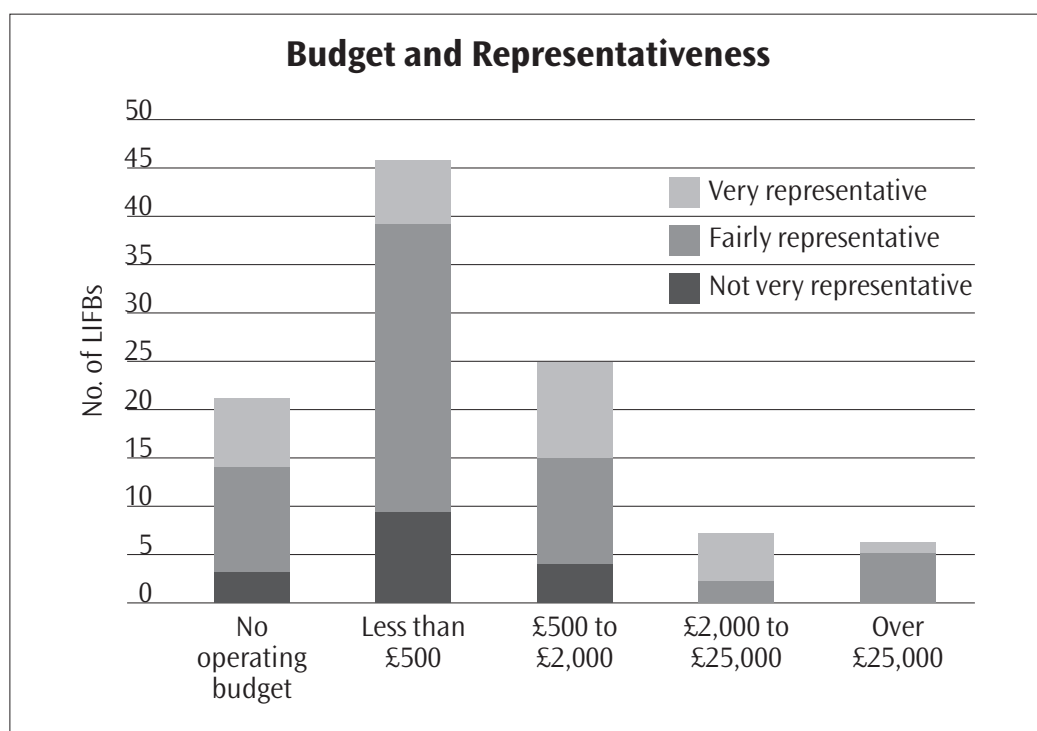


Fig 3.17 Chart showing correlation between budget levels and representativeness.

Free text comments on finance written onto returns (and sent subsequently in response to letters seeking clarification about budget figures) revealed considerable ambivalence about whether a bigger budget, permitting a wider range of activities, was desirable. Some of the smaller groups, especially those

with a focus on dialogue and friendship, have no desire to carry out activities such as consultation on policy or involvement in bodies such as Local Strategic Partnerships. They are content to continue operating with slender budgets and carrying out activities to deepen inter faith understanding between individuals in their areas. Low budget and dialogue centred activities are not, as some respondents emphasised, in any sense a marker of lack of success. They simply reflect a different agenda and choice of working methods. Those inter faith bodies which have secured significant grants for core costs or projects, however, have underlined the significance of these for them.

Membership fees are a key source of income for many groups and councils. A common query from local inter faith groups and councils is how much is “normal” to charge for membership. It is therefore of interest to see the patterns revealed by the project data of individual membership and group membership and the levels of subscription:

A third of the bodies charge an individual fee. The rate varies from less than £5 to the highest value of £15; most memberships are £5 a year.

Individual Membership Cost	Number of LIFBs	Percent
No fee	70	63.6
Under £5	4	3.6
£5 to £9	29	26.4
£10 or more	7	6.4
Total	110	100.0

Fig 3.18 Table of individual membership fee levels

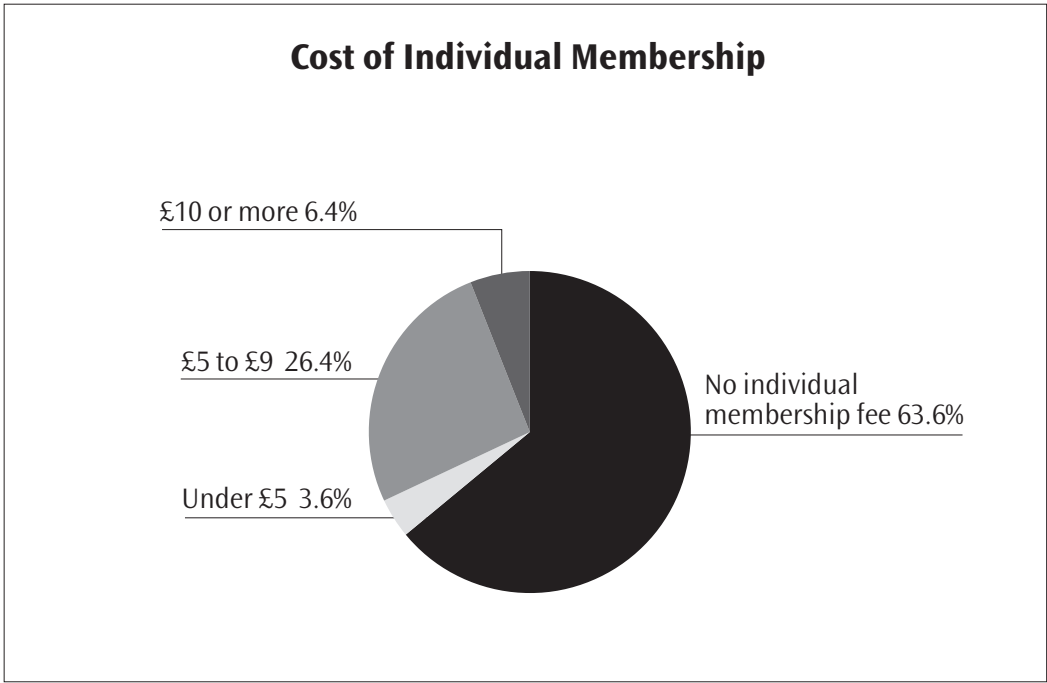


Fig 3.19 Individual membership fees charged by local inter faith bodies

Only the largest local inter faith bodies of all charged £10 or more for membership:

Number of Individual Members	Cost of Individual Membership				Total
	No individual membership fee	Under £5	£5 to £9	£10 or more	
No individual members	11	0	0	0	11
1 to 24 members	23	0	6	0	29
25 to 49 members	20	2	9	0	31
50 + members	11	1	14	6	32
Total	65	3	29	6	103

Fig 3.20 The relationship between individual membership fee and the number of individual members in LIFBs

As very few local inter faith bodies have organisational members, there are correspondingly few organisational membership fee rates.

Organisational Membership Fee	No. of LIFBs	Percent
No org'l membership fee	82	74.5
£10 or less	11	10.0
£11 to £20	9	8.2
Over £20	8	7.3
Total	110	100.0

Fig 3.21 Levels of membership fee for organisational members of local inter faith bodies



Fig 3.22 Cost of organisational memberships

### 3.7.2 Other resources

The questionnaire also asked about in kind support. 20 (18%) local inter faith bodies noted that they receive staff support from local authorities. 9 (8%) of these have an office in local authority premises. A number are directly serviced by the Council (see chapter 5). 12 (11%) reported some other type of ‘in kind’ support (such as assistance with mailings, meeting space or publicity). 4 inter faith bodies are benefiting from indirect support from Church of England dioceses through their costs being absorbed in particular programmes or through payment of some of the groups’ expenses. Similar support from other Christian denominations is mentioned in 3 cases.

### 3.7.3 Offices

Only about a quarter of the groups and councils have an office, and some work from more than one office. Some groups and councils have a worker who has an office at home.

Do you have an office?	No. of LIFBs	Percent
No information	1	1
No	76	73
Yes	29	26
Total	110	100

Fig 3.23 Table showing number of local inter faith bodies with offices

Some examples of inter faith bodies noting that they have their own or shared office space are: Building Bridges Interfaith Community Project – Nelson and Brierfield; Cardiff Interfaith Association; Dudley Borough Interfaith Network; Keighley Interfaith Group; Leicester Council of Faiths; Luton Council of Faiths; Mansfield Interfaith Network; North Staffs Forum of Faiths; Norwich Interfaith Link; Oldham Inter Faith Forum; Oxford Round Table of Religion; Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource; Waltham Forest Faith Communities Consultative Group; and Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group.

Finance has a large part to play in whether the group has an office, as the bodies with an office were mostly those with an operating budget of over £500 a year.

Annual Operating Budget	Do you have an office?			Total
	No information given	No	Yes	
No operating budget	1	14	6	21
Under £500	0	42	4	46
Over £500	0	19	19	38
Total	1	75	29	105

Fig 3.24 Table showing relationship between budget level and office space

Offices were located in a variety of locations (some bodies indicated office space in more than one location).



Office Location	Number of LIFBs
In a faith community building	8
In Local Authority premises	9
In an educational institution	5
In other premises	11

Fig 3.25 Table showing location of local inter faith body offices

### 3.7.4 Staffing

90 bodies had no paid staff at all. They run through the commitment and energy of volunteers.

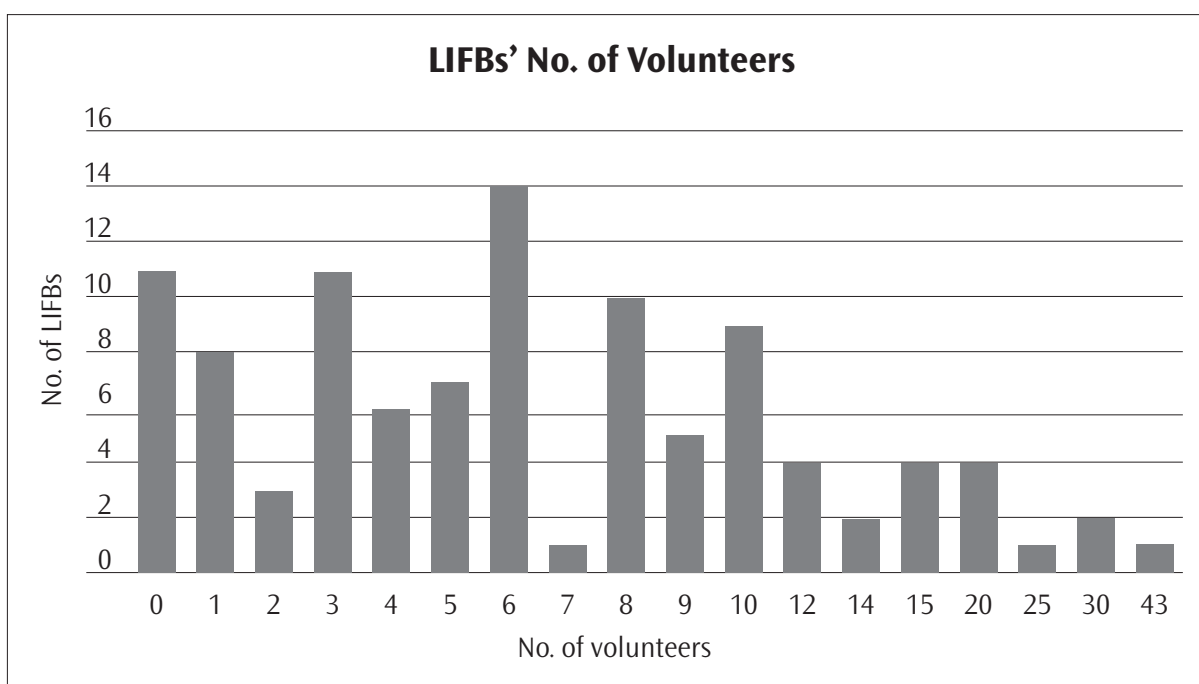


Fig 3.26 Chart showing number of volunteers of local inter faith bodies

Three responding bodies responded that they did not like the term “volunteer” because their work did not involve “staff” and “volunteers”, simply members who all join in to make the programme work.

Very few local inter faith bodies have full time employees. 7 bodies had one full time employee. 1 body (an inter faith body in the North West with a wide-ranging education programme) had 6 full time employees.

No. Full-time Employees	No. of LIFBs	Percent
0	102	93
1	7	6
6	1	1
Total	110	100

Fig 3.27 Table of local inter faith body full-time employee patterns

More bodies had part-time staff. However, some of these worked for bodies who had full-time staff.

<b>No. of Part-time Employees</b>	<b>No. of LIFBs</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0	94	85
1	13	12
3	1	1
4	2	2
Total	110	100

*Fig 3.28 Table of local inter faith body part-time employee patterns*

Numbers of local inter faith bodies employing staff – full and part-time.

<b>No. of Full-time Employees</b>	<b>No. of Part-time Employees</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	
0	90	10	0	1	101
1	3	2	1	1	7
6	0	1	0	0	1
Total	90	13	1	2	109

*Fig 3.29 Table of local inter faith body employee patterns*

### 3.8 Management structures

11 bodies which responded are registered charities and 6 are registered companies. 5 bodies are both a company and a charity. 63 bodies have a constitution (57%). 77 bodies elect their officers (70%). 49 bodies elect their committees (44.5%).

The following table summarises the various combinations of management arrangement. 39 (35%) of the bodies have a constitution, elected officers and committee.

<b>Management Arrangement</b>	<b>No. of LIFBs</b>	<b>Percent of LIFBs</b>
Only constitution present	3	2.7
Only elected officers present	10	9.1
Constitution and elected officers present	19	17.3
No constitution, but elected officers and committee	8	7.3
Constitution and elected committee but no elected officers	1	0.9
Elected officers, elected committee and constitution present	39	35.5
Other arrangement, or missing information	30	27.3
Total	110	100.0

*Fig 3.30 Table of different aspects of management arrangement*

There is a strong relationship between the management structure and the size of the operating budget:

Management Structures	Annual Operating Budget			No information given	Total
	No operating budget	Under £500	Over £500		
Only constitution present	0	1	2	0	3
Only elected officers present	2	8	0	0	10
Constitution and elected officers present	5	7	5	2	19
No constitution, but elected officers and committee	4	2	2	0	8
Constitution and elected committee but no elected officers	0	1	0	0	1
Elected officers, elected committee and constitution present	2	13	23	1	39
Other arrangement, or missing information	8	14	6	2	30
Total	21	46	38	5	110

*Fig 3.31 Table showing relationship between management arrangements and budget level*

### 3.9 Meetings of faith leaders

In four cities – Birmingham, Leicester, Newcastle and Manchester – meetings of “faith leaders” were reported by respondents alongside, and in cooperation with, inter faith groups or councils. <sup>x</sup>

In Birmingham, faith leaders from the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities have met between monthly and quarterly since the autumn of 2001. Chairs and venues rotate between faith communities. The meetings are serviced by the General Secretary of Churches Together in Birmingham and the Inter Faith Adviser to the Anglican Diocese of Birmingham but the meetings are held at the request of all the different faiths.

The meeting of faith leaders in Leicester is held every few weeks (convened by the Anglican Bishop and Diocesan Inter Faith Adviser) and concentrates on local implications of international issues. In Newcastle, the religious leaders meet around four times a year.

Faith Leaders Meeting, Manchester, has met four times a year since the end of 2001 and to this point has been convened by the Ecumenical Officer for Manchester Churches Together. The convenor explains that the forum “exists to build up relationships of trust so that leaders can come together – not just on occasions of urgency – to deal effectively with matters of common concern. To date, the Faith Leaders’ Meeting has involved Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh leaders. The leaders are mainly from the City of Manchester with some participation from surrounding areas such as Salford and Bolton (the Anglican Bishop of Bolton participates as well as the Anglican Bishop of Manchester). Those involved are keen that from time to time they are seen to act publicly together – for example as at the recent vigil relating to war in Iraq which they organised.”

Occasional meetings of faith leaders are mentioned in many other areas of the country such as Coventry, Guildford, Rochdale and Taunton but for the most part do not seem to be on a formalised or regular footing.

## 3.10 Successful working

### 3.10.1 Successful projects and events

The questionnaire asked local inter faith body respondents to describe two of the most successful projects or events run by their inter faith group or council in the last five years.<sup>xi</sup> A special section following this chapter highlights some of these.

### 3.10.2 Joint working

Some inter faith group and council respondents flagged up events co-hosted with other local inter faith bodies, such as branches of the Council of Christians and Jews.

Inter faith groups in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire have formed the Three Counties Interfaith Network (representatives met for the first time in December 2002) for support and sharing of information and good practice.

A number of inter faith groups have close working relationships with their local Race Equality Council. In some cases there is a direct relationship, for example, the Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Inter Faith Panel is part of the REC and receives support from this. Many inter faith groups and councils, such as Lincoln Inter Faith Group and Redbridge Council of Faiths, have participation in their work from members of the REC.<sup>xii</sup> Strong links with their local SACRE are a feature of the work of many local inter faith groups and councils, such as Brent Interfaith, Harrow Inter Faith Council, Islington Faiths Forum, Swindon Inter Faith Group and Torbay Inter Faith Forum.

Councils of Voluntary Service are also bodies with which local inter faith groups have links. Sometimes the local CVS has played an active role in helping to bring a new faith forum into being (examples include Community Matters Bucks' assistance in the forming of the Buckinghamshire Forum of Faiths and Mansfield CVS' initiatory role in relation to Mansfield Inter Faith Network) or is playing an important role in supporting it (as in Oldham and in Wigan and Leigh).

### 3.10.3 Successful patterns of activity

Some respondents flagged up aspects of their overall work as their "successes":

- Dudley Borough Interfaith Network forum meetings are being held at different Faith Centers with part of the evening being given over to getting to know not just the particular faith, but the particular community. The rest of the evening is given over to discussing a main theme, such as health and youth. The format has engendered an understanding of the local community and a sharing of common concerns that face religious congregations. *Dudley Borough Interfaith Network*

- “Starting the group in itself was ‘successful’ (and surprising to many people) since this is a rural area and there are scarcely any people of ethnic/religious minorities living in our local communities. Starting the group has, I hope, made a point about the importance of understanding, in order to live with harmoniously, people of other faith and cultural traditions, whenever and wherever.” *Kirbymoorside Interfaith Group*
- We would not single out any one event, but the continuing programme of visits to churches, mosques, temples, gurdwaras, synagogues, centres, and educational and hospital chaplaincies, together with the attendant talks about the faiths, has as a whole served to inform the groups’ members, and the members of the institutions being visited, and helped us to deepen our mutual understanding and form friendships. *Lancashire Forum of Faiths*
- All our monthly meetings are ‘successful’ – moving around different faith premises – average attendance 40 – sometimes up to 100 when meetings are shared with Council of Christians and Jews and with special speakers. *Merseyside Inter-Faith Group*
- Perhaps one of the major achievements of the Forum since its inception has simply been a readiness and a commitment, on the part of the leaders of the different faiths represented in Oldham, to work jointly to foster mutual understanding. The fact that we have assembled together on a regular basis, prayed together, worked together, eaten together and properly constituted ourselves as a legal entity has eloquently proclaimed the message of cohesion. *Oldham Inter Faith Forum*
- Continuous community gatherings bringing together faith communities in sharing of ideas and worship, building friendships, tolerance, respect through understanding each other. *Whalley Range Faith Council*

<sup>i</sup> See for example the good practice example of Leicester Council of Faiths at the end of chapter 5.

<sup>ii</sup> A list of inter faith groups and councils which responded will be found at Appendix 2.A. Nearly 140 local inter faith and multi faith bodies were identified by the project.

<sup>iii</sup> The abbreviation “LIFB” is used in charts, table and graphs for “local inter faith body”.

<sup>iv</sup> Fig 2.1 in Chapter 2 illustrates well this rapid growth.

<sup>v</sup> The nine faiths in direct membership of the Inter Faith Network.

<sup>vi</sup> “Jedi” was queried by the project on the basis that this was a term which had been used by respondents to the 2001 Census in what was generally perceived as a Star Wars inspired critique of the categories offered for selection or of the inclusion at all of a religious question in the Census. However, the respondent asked that it should be included, explaining that the term “Jedi” is used by some who have a commitment to spirituality outside religious groups and believe in “Cosmic Law”.

<sup>vii</sup> See also the good practice material at the end of Chapter 5.

<sup>viii</sup> The date of founding of the relevant body appears after the aim.

<sup>ix</sup> For “Three Counties Network” see 3.10, under “networking with other faith groups”.

<sup>x</sup> In Bradford similar meetings, called by the Anglican Bishop of Bradford, have taken place over the last ten years but not at the time of this survey.

<sup>xi</sup> The events and projects are attributed since one purpose of this report is to allow good practice be shared around the country and details of successful projects were sought on this basis. They are, for the most part, quoted verbatim. Space does not permit the inclusion here of all the examples of excellent work which were received.

<sup>xii</sup> 28 (55%) of the 51 RECs surveyed for the report were aware of inter faith groups and councils in their areas and most indicated a detailed knowledge of their work.

# Successful events and projects

## Defusing problems and building trust

- Following the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in the USA (9/11), there were serious concerns about some communities such as Muslims, and to some extent Sikhs, being targeted because of their physical resemblance to those who perpetrated atrocities, for abuse and violence by some misguided people who were being swayed by far-right groups. Verbal abuse, damage to property, offensive graffiti on some places of worship were some of the incidents reported by individual faith communities. The Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group took the initiative to organise a number of meetings in partnership with the City Council, Police, the local Race Equality Council and the local media for minority communities at the receiving end of racist assaults. The events were very well attended and received considerable publicity. The outcome was that the positive relations between communities were successfully sustained. That work still goes on.” *Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group*
- This year, as hostilities in Iraq were declared, a meeting was arranged at short notice with both mayors, our MP, representatives of all major faiths, schools, voluntary workers, police and fire services, to sign a declaration... that we would all support one another. *Watford Inter Faith Group*
- Our Chair was involved in helping to defuse the tension following the storming of the Mosque in Lye in July last year by Police to arrest asylum seekers. *Dudley Inter Faith Network*
- Work with a local secondary school in Oldham that had been experiencing inter-faith tension – “...the local authority contacted us after tensions arose and bubbled up into outright conflict on the streets outside the school. We carried out a) short-term mediation. b) long-term diversity work, including assisting the school to change its mission statement to express a definite commitment to building respect between people of different faiths and enabling each person to be proud of his/her race/faith identity. We also set up training for the senior management and staff in how to nurture race/faith identity through the content and delivery of the curriculum.” *Oldham Inter Faith Forum*

## **Assistance to local airports, hospitals and prisons**

- Involvement in the establishment of a multi-faith prayer room at the John Lennon Liverpool Airport. This was officially opened in October 2002. *Merseyside Council of Faiths*
- A meeting of our members with several Occupational Therapists from the City's hospitals to discuss points of cultural and faith importance for the treatment of patients: meeting at a room on hospital premises. *Coventry Inter Faith Group*
- Support for the development of the new faith centre at Dewsbury Hospital providing rooms for prayer and counselling for members of all faiths, with e.g. appropriate washing facilities. *North Kirklees Inter Faith Council*
- Working with Peterborough NHS hospitals trust and North Peterborough Primary Health Care Trust on issues surrounding chaplaincy and spiritual care. *Peterborough Faiths Forum*
- Helping to produce a ward guide to special needs and sensitivities of people of all faiths and working with staff on diet...working with two new chaplains...on design for a place for prayer in the new PFI hospital. *Swindon Inter Faith Group*

## **Policy consultation and social action**

- Obtaining and filling a "faith seat" on the board of directors of a local regeneration agency. *Keighley Interfaith Group*
- Launch of Community Cohesion work in Leeds in 2002. The Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum co-hosted the event with the BME Forum on behalf of the Leeds Initiative. *Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum*
- Because of our seat on the Local Strategic Partnership, which we took up in the autumn of 2001, the voice of faith is also heard on various other committees in the town – the Environmental Sub Group of the LSP, the handling of the theme "Engage with Communities" which is undertaken by the working group which services the LSP and the Land, Assets and Property Management Partnership which is an innovative group led by the borough. Other "political" engagements have grown out of this – including liaison at regional and subregional levels. *Northampton Faiths Forum*
- Involvement in activities of Local Authority Community Initiatives and promoting dialogue and possible joint action....with the Churches Together in Kent Council. *North Kent Inter Faith Relations Council*
- Our participation in Preston Strategic Partnership, the Community Network and a working group on Community Cohesion. *Preston Faiths Forum*



- The conference in April 2003 run by SIFRE with the County Council for 150 public service employees and representatives of faith communities on “Questions of Identity, Faith and Culture”. *Suffolk Inter Faith Resource*
- Consulting with Walsall MBC this year about their religious awareness policy and equal opportunities policy. We were contacted by the MBC, sent copies and had a representative from the MBC attend two of our meetings to discuss our comments. *Walsall Borough Multifaith Consultative Forum*

## Multi faith pilgrimages or peace walks

Multi faith pilgrimages or peace walks were also flagged up by many respondents. The best known of these is the Westminster Interfaith annual pilgrimage which has run for many years and is regularly joined by people of faith from across the country. Most other pilgrimages or peace walks are largely taken part in by people from their area although, increasingly, they are used by visitors from less multi faith parts of the UK as an opportunity to come and visit places of worship of other faiths. Just a few of the examples given were:

- The Annual Multi Faith Walk for Friendship which usually starts at City Hall and visits different places of worship (for example, this year it is visiting Bradford Cathedral, a mosque, Hindu cultural centre and a gurdwara). *Bradford Concord Interfaith Society*
- Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group has run three inter faith walks, the most recent in September 2002. Some 50 people took part; host communities prepared for our visit with a talk, participation in meditation or observation of prayers. Refreshments were offered by hosts. *Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group*
- Inter Faith Walkabout in 2002 which included visits to the Gurdwara, a Baha'i home, the Episcopalian Cathedral, the Friends Meeting House, the Jamia Mosque, a synagogue and Rokpa Dundee (Buddhist). *Dundee Inter Faith Group*
- Millennium Pilgrimage to the Dome in 2000. *Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum*
- An annual Friends of Faith Walk of Friendship walk around various places of worship. In 2003 combining with Westminster Interfaith Multifaith Pilgrimage in Southall and Heston. *Hounslow Friends of Faith*
- The annual pilgrimage of prayer for peace at the time of One World Week. In one evening a group of up to 50 people visit all the non-Christian places of worship in the town centre – plus one of the churches. *Loughborough Inter Faith Meetings*



- Friendship Walk 2002 and 2003 calling at places of worship, having the opportunity in each to talk about faith/religion and share refreshments. *Reading Inter Faith Group*
- Annual multi-faith pilgrimage – attracts 40–70 people. Local places of worship are visited and a brief talk on the venue and faith practised in each place is given. In 2001 a pilgrimage was organised jointly with Newham Association of Faiths. Around 80 people took part and visited the Mahalakshmi Hindu Temple, Sikh Gurdwara, Christian Anglican church (dating back nearly 800 years when there was a very small population in the whole of Newham and surrounds), Buddhist Vihara, St Mary's Church, Church Road Mosque and Bah'ai Prayer Room. *Redbridge Council of Faiths*
- Peace Walk in November 2001 led by Mayor, MP and leaders of faith communities – and involving planting of peace tree in front of Rugby Library. *Rugby Interfaith Network*
- Annual Interfaith Walk in July in different parts of South London held since 1997 and attended by 100+ people during the day. *South London Inter Faith Group*
- The annual peace walks. The June 2002 walk commenced at the “peace fountain” in Southampton and visited a gurdwara, a Hindu temple, a church, a synagogue, a mosque and finished at the Parish Hall with displays by Baha'i and Buddhist faiths. An estimated 200–300 people took part. *Southampton Interfaith Link*
- A Walk of the Faiths in October 2002 when approximately 100 people from the Mosque, Hindu Centre, Christian churches and other faiths walked round the streets visiting various places of worship. The procession was headed by various faith leaders and the Mayor of Wellingborough. *Wellingborough Multi Faith Group*

## Special events, services and gatherings

- Interfaith Service for Universal Peace 2002 including prayers for peace, readings from seven world religions, a specially composed peace mantra-song and a dance on the theme of peace by the Bedfordshire Youth Dance Company. As part of the service the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations was read by the Mayor of Bedford and a linked affirmation was led by a member of Bedford's United Nations Association. *Bedford Council of Faiths*
- Welsh National Holocaust Day Memorial service which incorporated eight faiths participating in Cardiff in the presence of the presiding officer and members of Welsh Assembly Government. *Cardiff Interfaith Association*

- Holocaust Memorial Day being led by Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council....a multi-faith event focussing on the mass genocide of Jews but including remembrance of victims of torture and oppression everywhere, particularly now. *Blackburn with Darwen Inter Faith Council*
- Civic inter faith celebration: annual event since 1993. Run jointly by the Lord Mayor's Office and Bristol Inter Faith Group. Faith communities offer readings, music, drama, prayers on a theme suggested by BIFG. The event takes place at the Council House and includes a buffet meal. Hospitality, printing, and publicity, costs are met by the Lord Mayor. *Bristol Inter Faith Group*
- Queen's Jubilee Multi Faith Celebration in June of 2002. Approximately 120 people attended City Hall for an event hosted by Lord Mayor. Representatives from all faiths were present. The programme included items such as poems, readings, and music presented by representatives of the faith groups. *Bradford Concord Interfaith Society*
- In 2001, a public prayer meeting was held on the Friday after the tragic events of 11 September...where Muslims, Christians and those of no faith stood side by side publicly in Nelson to pray together for all those affected by these events. *Building Bridges Interfaith Community Project – Nelson and Brierfield*
- Annual “civic celebration of community” attended by the Mayor with many faith groups’ contributions. It takes place in One World Week.... From about 1974–95 there was an annual United Nations act of dedication for peace. Cambridge Inter-Faith Group came into existence following a discussion at the 1980 meeting and were active participants. The “celebration” from 2001 onwards [has been] the initiative of CIFG and we organise it by writing to various faith communities and the Mayor asking them to contribute. *Cambridge Inter-Faith Group*
- ‘A time for reflection’ on 11 September 2002 at St Peters in Chains Church Hall in partnership with Doncaster Racial Equality Council and Doncaster Ethnic Minority Regeneration Partnership. The programme included reflections from people of many faiths. *Doncaster Interfaith*
- The world's first Inter-Faith Burns Supper. *Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association*
- A Civic Gathering in June 2002 at Saint Peter's Church, Loughborough, planned by representatives of our member faiths as a Celebration of the Diversity of the Borough of Charnwood. The gathering included prayers, dancing, singing and readings from the different faiths. Local dignitaries were among those who attended. *Loughborough Council of Faiths*

- Celebration of Faiths in September 2002 at Liverpool Town Hall. Hosted by the Lord Mayor, each of seven faiths had a seven minute programme/presentation of readings...from their faith. *Merseyside Council of Faiths*
- Annual inter faith service The service is organised by the City Centre Chaplain in consultation with the civic authorities, and held at the City Church. Since 1996, Interfaith MK has been invited to contribute to this. *Interfaith MK*
- In 1998 we jointly staged, along with Amnesty International and the United Nations Association, an event celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Local people of all ages and nine world faiths prepared and mounted a public evening of music, dance, readings and drama. Attended by the Lord Mayor of Norwich. *Norwich Interfaith Link*
- A Celebration of Friendship across Cultures and Faiths held in November 2001 (with United Nations Association, Twickenham and Richmond Branch). *Richmond Interfaith Group*
- 11 September Remembrance Day (2002). Declaration of peace made by all faiths in Sandwell. Each faith spoke about their faith's perspective on peace. People of all different faiths prayed together for those innocent people killed in all tragedies across the world. *Sandwell Multi-Faith Network*
- An Interfaith Service held at the Unitarian Church, Torquay in January 2000, with the participation of local Jews, Christians, Muslims, Baha'is, Quakers and Unitarians in the programme. *Torbay Interfaith Forum*
- Active participation in the commemorative service on the tenth anniversary of the Warrington bombing (by the IRA in which two children died). Faith members read texts during the ceremony, which was a widely publicised event. *Warrington Council of Faiths*
- In 2001 Wellingborough Multi Faith Group responded to a request to help the Borough Council's Mayor's Chaplain organise a town Prayers for Peace following the 11 September event. The leaders of the various faiths met with the Chaplain in the Victoria Centre and planned together the event which took place in the town's shopping centre. The event consisted of the leaders of the four main faiths saying a five minute prayer each in the language appropriate to their faith community, i.e. Hebrew, Gujarati, Arabic and English. *Wellingborough Multi Faith Group*
- We organise an evening of prayer and food annually and invite representatives from our different faith communities to lead a section of prayer. We also include the opportunity for other people to contribute a reading or a prayer. Last October we made a special effort to involve the

Mosque Committee in the planning, along with our Sharing of Faiths Committee. This was difficult but worthwhile, and the publicity went out in our joint name. This was a first and very encouraging. *Wycombe Sharing of Faiths*

- Parliamentary Election Question Time in 2001 at the time of the last Parliamentary elections. This enabled a multi faith audience of around 100 people to ask the candidates a series of questions on a wide range of issues. *Wimbledon Interfaith Group*

## Special projects

- September 2002 – Sacred Spaces conference. This took place at the Guildhall in Bath and involved members of all Bath’s faith communities. *Bath Interfaith Group*
- Annual Faith in Art Exhibition. *Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action*
- Women’s festival/exhibition during 2003. *Coventry Multi Faith Forum*
- Production of inter faith greetings cards based on designs by local school children. *Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association*
- Organising an inter faith blessing of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. *Gateshead Inter Faith Forum*
- Hidden Gardens: a Common Ground – meeting about an inter faith garden developing in Glasgow. *Glasgow Sharing of Faiths*
- Joint events with Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum, especially Radio Leeds broadcast in September 2002 ‘Remembering September 11th’. *Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship*
- Our “Who are we in Luton?” exhibition was an opportunity to meet other different cultural and ethnic groups who live in Luton and to learn from their diversity. Each community’s history, culture, faith tradition, customs, art, food and clothing was well depicted and articulated for those who did not know much about them. *Luton Council of Faiths*
- Southampton Council of Faiths has sought to build a relationship with the City Council as the representative body speaking on behalf of the faith communities of the city. One outcome of this developing relationship has been the rationalisation of burial fees for Muslims living outside the city. *Southampton Council of Faiths*
- A funding seminar for local faith based organisations. *Southwark Multi-Faith Forum*

- The most successful development has been the establishment of the Faith Communities Project. This is an initiative of the WFFCCG and the borough's faith communities. *Waltham Forest Faith Communities Consultative Group (WFFCCG)*
- The development and publication of a Westminster Calendar of Religious Festivals and a Directory of Faiths in Westminster. *Westminster Faith Exchange*

## Education

- We hosted sixth formers from one secondary school in our centre. Some 80 pupils came with their teachers and asked questions from a panel of speakers of different faiths. A panel of speakers of different faiths went to another secondary school and answered questions from GCSE candidates on religious education. *Brent Interfaith.*

From August 2001 we started setting up programmes for Social Inclusion for children aged 10 to 12 in the primary and secondary schools of Pendle. We are now delivering these programmes annually to nearly 1,500 children, through the schools. They have been very well received and are seemingly very effective. We are in the process of setting up objective evaluation and measurement procedures for objective monitoring of progress. These programmes are financed by the Lancashire Children's Fund and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. Such has been the interest and uptake of our programmes (six one hour sessions over a period of six weeks) that we are organising a major educational conference... so as to share what we are doing with others who may be interested, and to learn more about what is happening in other parts of the UK. *Building Bridges Interfaith Community Project – Nelson and Brierfield*

- Acting out of a Hindu wedding – with detail explained – large attendance from schools as it was also in curriculum. *Bolton Interfaith Council*
- Between January and June 2002 we had a series of talks on the theme of "Interfaith and Education" at which representatives of various faiths presented their talks around the central theme. *Exeter Inter-Faith Group*
- A 'Spring for Peace' festival in central Harrow in March 2003. We organised an art, poetry and essay competition for mainstream and weekend religion schools. The 300+ entries were displayed at a Saturday exhibition, alongside general exhibits from all the faiths. An afternoon presentation by young people, again a mixture of mainstream and religion schools, looked at the theme of peace from various religious perspectives. All of our members' faiths were involved and the event drew a fair number of people, boosted by shoppers drawn in by the young people giving out leaflets and playing trumpets in the neighbouring shopping centre. *Harrow Inter Faith Council*

- Sixth form conference on values and a sustainable world. *Medway Inter Faith Action*
- Faith speaker service to schools and organisations thus providing opportunities for children and adults to meet people from a wide range to faiths and cultures. *Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource Centre*
- Huge numbers of students and pupils and their teachers have participated in the visits to places of worship organised by the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group in partnership with local faith communities. The visitors not only gain first-hand experience of another faith, albeit very briefly, but also receive explanations from someone from that particular community. In order to make their experience meaningful, we have produced Faith Lives, resource material for schools and other agencies. This education pack tries to encapsulate the essential beliefs and practices of different faiths in the local context. *Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group*

### **Dialogues, talks and meetings on particular topics**

- Celebration of Faiths:- An evening of presentations by the different faiths in Aberdeen, each lasting about 10 minutes, with time afterwards for refreshments, mingling and exchange of views. *Aberdeen Inter Faith Group*
- Inter Faith evenings, with guest speakers, are arranged once or twice a year and these occasions are well attended. At a recent inter faith evening an exhibition of religious artifacts was arranged and this proved to be of great interest to all who attended. *Bury Mayoral Inter Faith Council*
- An inter faith dialogue in 2001 on the theme “Religion: Destructive? Constructive?” with Fr Michael Barnes SJ of the De Nobili Interfaith Centre. *Cleveland Interfaith Group*
- Celebration of Friendship Across Cultures and Faiths – October 2002. *Inter Faith in Croydon*
- A meeting on beliefs and rituals surrounding childbirth. *Deepdale Interfaith Group*
- The interaction of Shinto with Buddhism in Japan: an illustrated lecture by the Curator of the Shinto exhibition at the British Museum. *Hampstead Interfaith Group*
- We held an evening in October 2002 which looked at the use of music in both our faiths – this involved musicians from both faiths and a Christian church choir. It was extremely well attended (over 100) and very well received. All ages took part and attended. *Hitchin Sikh-Christian Forum*



- A mini-series in 2002 of speakers on different branches of Islam. *Kenton Interfaith Discussion Group*
- One World Week event 2002. “Things that matter and people that count” with Rabbi Janet Burden from West Central Liberal Synagogue and Ike Pentecost of the Lambeth Recycling Campaign. With music and refreshments. *Lambeth Multi-Faith Action Group*
- Meeting on refugees and asylum, with contributions from members of different faith groups and local MP. *Manchester Interfaith Forum*
- A Buddhist teacher talking about the life of the Buddha and guiding us through a short period of meditation. *Newport Interfaith Group*
- Faith based schools – an exploration and discussion open meeting in March 2002. *Sheffield Interfaith*.
- Three years of multi-faith activities on World Mental Health Day, including workshops, meditation, shared worship and fellowship. *Surrey Interfaith Friendship Group*
- Two very well attended talks in 2003 – one on Islam with Imam Said from Exeter and the other from Father Polycarpus, a Coptic monk on a two year visit to England. *Taunton Interfaith Group*
- Participation in International Meal each year which is organised by the Baha’is of York. The format is a friendly meal where tickets are bought in advance but folk can also bring a dish of their own choosing to share. There is usually entertainment from circle dancing to musicians. A number of sponsoring organisations underwrite the meal to ensure that it does not make a loss. *York Interfaith Group*

## Launches

- The Wrekin Interfaith Group launch, May 2002 in Meeting Point House in Telford Town Centre.

“A small planning group liaised with each of the major faiths in the area. Each faith was given the opportunity to have a table round the outside of the large meeting room and to put on it whatever objects they felt spoke about their faith. They could also put up display boards. There was the opportunity to bring some food to be put all together in a separate corner of the room. More people turned up than we ever expected or dared to hope. We had displays from Sikhs, Muslims, Bah’ai, Buddhists, Jews, Christians (including Greek Orthodox), Quakers, and Hindus. There was a welcome from our chair and the Ecumenical Dean. The aims of the group were explained and a clip-board passed around for people to sign if they wanted to be kept in touch with developments. This has proved to be the

foundation of our membership. Each faith was then asked if one member would like to come forward to say and demonstrate the correct way of greeting one another in that tradition. This turned into a very lighthearted ice breaker. We then broke up and spent the rest of the evening socialising and eating. The launch exceeded all expectations and reassured us that we were on the right track for the future.” *The Wrekin Interfaith Group (TWIG)*

- Launch of Interfaith Council in 2003 – about 180 people from all walks of life turned up for a multi-faith celebration. *Interfaith Council Huddersfield*
- High profile launch of our formalised constitution in May 2003. The venue was Swan Valley Community School, Swanscombe, which is situated in the middle of an area of massive development and regeneration. The event attracted media and local interest and will broaden and increase representation on the Forum. *Thames Gateway Women’s Multifaith Forum*

### **Exchange visits**

- We have established in the last two years a very good relationship with the Muslim community in Exeter. Following a visit by our group to them, we were hosts to quite a large group (14) of them to an all day event here, where we were able to make use of a huge house for a day of shared worship, meal, discussion and talks. *West Somerset Interfaith Group*



# Inter faith dialogues and projects

- 4.1 Hospitals, prisons and institutions of higher education
- 4.2 Joint working on particular issues
- 4.3 Police
- 4.4 Work with asylum seekers and refugees
- 4.5 Inter faith charity fund raising and support
- 4.6 Schools
- 4.7 Youth groups and special youth projects
- 4.8 Other educational projects and resources
- 4.9 Inter faith events and special occasions
- 4.10 Bilateral and trilateral inter faith dialogues
- 4.11 Special focus inter faith dialogues and activities
- 4.12 Initiatives run through particular programmes
- 4.13 Initiatives involving places of worship of different faiths
- 4.14 Christian denominational inter faith work
- 4.15 Christian ecumenical inter faith work

The project's findings reflect the rich pattern of inter faith activity in our United Kingdom: from multi faith chaplaincies in prisons, hospitals and universities, to joint action on social projects, to inter faith work with young people, to multi faith civic events and services, through to bilateral and trilateral dialogue groups, local initiatives building bridges between individual places of worship of different faiths, inter faith programmes of particular faiths, and fully fledged inter faith groups and councils (which have been discussed in chapter 3). Some examples follow in the sections below.<sup>i</sup>

## 4.1 Hospitals, prisons and institutions of higher education

From cities such as Bradford came news of multi faith chaplaincies which involve colleagues of different faiths working together to respond to the needs of patients from many religious backgrounds. This is also happening in less multi faith areas. At the Royal Cornwall Hospital Treliske Truro, for example, meetings have taken place for dialogue between the chaplaincy team and representatives of other faiths (Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist). Multi faith working by chaplains in prisons such as HMP Leeds at Armley and Whitemoor Prison, March, Cambridgeshire, Dovegate, and Ford Open Prison was mentioned.<sup>ii</sup> In Higher Education too, multi faith cooperation is evident in chaplaincies at universities such as Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Derby which have networks of chaplains and advisors of different faiths.

## 4.2 Joint working on particular issues

Information has come in about joint working on a range of areas.

Regeneration is a key area for inter faith cooperation and this is reflected in the work of bodies such as the South Tees Faith in the City Group and the Tees Valley Faith Communities Regeneration Group. A Regeneration Development Officer for Leicester's faith communities was appointed this year to encourage them to work together on regeneration.

Emergency planning is another area of cooperation. In Gwent, for example, the Emergency Planning Committee is working with local faith communities on plans for responding to major incidents.

A number of Black and Ethnic Minority organisations, such as Crawley Ethnic Minority Partnership, pointed to the fact that they have faith communities actively working on local issues alongside ethnic minority organisations. Similarly, multi cultural groups and forums, such as those in Barrow and Redditch, involve people of different faiths in their work.

Respondents from a number of localities mentioned projects which now have multi faith management, advice structures or staffing. For example, a "Faiths practitioners group" involving Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Sikh representation is contributing to the development of the Devon Children's Fund Black Minority Ethnic and Travellers theme of work. A respondent from Blackburn noted that recently Christian organisations have started to work with other faiths on service delivery, mentioning the particular example of "THOMAS" (Those on the Margins of Society), a Catholic organisation offering drug rehabilitation and mentoring, which has taken on Muslim staff to provide a more culturally and religiously sensitive service.

Trefnu Cymunedol Cymru (TCC) is a coalition of diverse local groups, schools, faith communities and community groups, which works together to make a difference on issues affecting the community. It is based at the Peace and Justice Centre in Wrexham. Many of the groups involved are Christian. The local Islamic Society has also been a member for several years and TCC has offered a context in which Christians, Muslims and others have worked together on particular issues and come into dialogue through this. The East London Communities Organisation (Telco) involves faiths in a similar way, alongside community groups, schools, hospitals, unions and others, in joint working on common issues.

One For Life, an initiative in Tower Hamlets, London, arranged a trip for religious leaders and the Leader of Tower Hamlets Council to Bradford to meet their opposite numbers.

In the North West, the North West Multi Faith Tourism Association (NWMFTA) meets at the Gujarat Hindu Centre in Preston. Its work is developed with advice from representatives from across the faiths including Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians. NWMFTA has recently organised events in Manchester and Liverpool to bring faith communities together to plan local faith trails and open days. The Association is working with the North West Tourist Board and the North West Development Agency to put together a project to resource places of worship that are open to visitors. In Liverpool the different faith communities

have been among those co-operating to develop a new “Walk of Faith” and accompanying guide taking in key sites of different faiths in the city.

### 4.3 Police

Many respondents mentioned initiatives involving the police.

London Borough of Barnet reports on Barnet’s Gold Strategy Group. This is a community safety initiative based in the south of the borough involving representatives from the Council, Metropolitan Police and the Jewish and Muslim communities. Its main remit is to share intelligence on anti-semitic and Islamophobic incidents and attacks and it works to prevent such attacks taking place. It also aims to ensure that such attacks, if and when they do occur, are responded to appropriately. The group is also proactive in developing good relations between the local Jewish and Muslim communities.

Enfield Borough Metropolitan Police Service has had a scheme in place since March of this year where an officer is appointed “Faith Officer” and spends allocated days making contact with various members of the different faiths. Also, police officers who practise a particular faith are encouraged to go and pray, in uniform, at their own places of worship. EBMPs have patrols where members of individual faith communities patrol with members of the police. They want to initiate joint faith patrols but this is just in the planning stage. A meeting, jointly organised with Enfield Council, to which they have invited all the faith organisations about which they have information, will be looking at how faiths can contribute to community safety.

Gwent Police Diversity Project held a seminar in Cwmbran offering an opportunity for the Police, Council members and other invited guests to acquaint themselves with various faith communities.

### 4.4 Work with asylum seekers and refugees

Multi faith work to assist asylum seekers and refugees was mentioned by a number of respondents. For example, the Asylum Seeker Multi Agency Support Group in South Tyneside (coordinated by Social Care and Health, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, the lead group in South Tyneside for asylum work) involves the South Tyneside Asylum Seekers and Refugee Church Help (STARCH) and also the mosque and a number of other faith groupings as well as other voluntary organisations and agencies. As part of its work, STARCH hosts a drop in centre for asylum seekers and refugees and mosque members also come and assist. A church led project working with asylum seekers and refugees in Derby also involves other faiths as does the Inter-Faith Refugee Network in London (which is linked with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster) and the Bromley Inter-Faith Refugee Group.

Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support Council’s work involves voluntary support from different communities and as part of last year’s Refugee Week it

held an open day and inter faith service. A Church of Scotland respondent noted that the dispersal of refugees and asylum seekers to Glasgow, in particular, has brought Christians into contact with people of other faiths as a result of initiatives to give support to families and individuals.

#### 4.5 Inter faith charity fund raising and volunteering

Shared work for charitable purposes was mentioned. For example, a Jain respondent mentioned the establishment of a charity 'Ahimsa for Quality of Life', with an international focus which has members from Jain, Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian faiths and works to alleviate poverty; improving quality of life and human dignity (through projects – for education, health, micro-enterprises for improving income and cultural projects). From Leicester it was reported that the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Group had recently raised significant funds for joint projects overseas and a Christian-Muslim women's dialogue group has been supporting an asylum seekers project run for women (the Women's Welcome Project in Leicester) by collecting children's clothes and toiletries and other basic necessities for women with small children alone in this country. In Blackburn, the Anglican Dean of Blackburn and a Muslim Councillor (both members of Blackburn with Darwen Inter Faith Council) co-chaired an appeal which collected money to be sent *via* Save the Children to help children in Afghanistan after regime change there. At Red Lodge, near Newmarket, after an arson attack on an Anglican-Methodist church, the Muslim family who run the local shop immediately started fundraising to help restore the church. The respondent from the Methodist Newmarket Circuit wrote, "It was a small act of kindness but its generosity of spirit and openness across faith barriers was immense and made a significant statement....Inter faith activity is not just concerned with the large multi-faith areas of our great cities but it is real and active in our small part of Suffolk."

Volunteering is another way that people of different faiths around the country support projects that matter to them.<sup>iii</sup> It can also be a context where inter faith friendship, respect and understanding can develop. *Respect* (an initiative of TimeBank with the Prince's Trust) is currently running a micro grants scheme for youth led community projects that demonstrate volunteering activities between members of at least two different faith groups.

#### 4.6 Schools

Inter faith work in schools is a growing area of great significance. News of many interesting inter faith projects came back through the SACRE returns.<sup>iv</sup> For example, Luton SACRE highlighted a strong inter faith programme at Luton Sixth Form College and Bournemouth SACRE reported that local 6th forms invite panel members from different faith groups to address issues. Portsmouth SACRE, mentioned the annual 'Year 10' conferences for GCSE students where students attend a one day conference with presenters from different faiths and take part in small group discussions, question and answer sessions, and other activities. In Leeds, there are plans for a possible multi faith centre, with facilities for resources and worship for all faiths, at Allerton High School. In Bradford, Catholic, Anglican and Muslim secondary aided schools

have recently formed a joint association and begun a number of initiatives to work together across faith and community boundaries. Bradford is also the home of a pioneering “student SACRE” project:

### **Bradford Student SACRE**

During the revision of the Local Agreed Syllabus 2000-01, the adult SACRE ran a “Student Agreed Syllabus Conference” for a day to discuss what should be taught in RE and how it should be taught, as well as what principles should underpin its philosophy and practice in schools. It was so successful that they decided to establish a permanent “Student SACRE” as a way of promoting understanding and respect for diversity. A grant of £3,000 from the National Association of SACREs and the St Peter’s Saltley Trust has helped turn this into a reality.

Each adult SACRE member nominated a “shadow” sixth form student from one of Bradford’s schools. The 22 young people at present involved reflect both different schools and different backgrounds (representatives include students from Baha’i, Christian, Hindu and Muslim backgrounds as well as no religious affiliation). The Student SACRE helps advise on RE but there are also discussion sessions such as an “Any Questions” one with a panel including a young Muslim woman, a young Sikh man and the Anglican Bishop of Bradford where question topics ranged from RE to race relations in Bradford to social and moral issues. The Strategy Manager of RE and Citizenship for Education Bradford writes: “The idea is quickly gathering popularity nationally and we strongly encourage others to follow suit. It will support and enhance other current initiatives – such as schools councils and youth parliaments – to promote participation and community involvement by young people...”

It is not just at secondary level that inter faith events and learning are happening. Dudley SACRE, for example, organises an annual exhibition called ‘Faith City’. This involves the participation of members of the different faith communities in Dudley. The exhibition runs for three days and is attended by over 700 primary school children. In Blackpool, in February this year, a special event for 300 9–11 year old children, supported by the Community Empowerment Fund and the National Children’s Fund, took place in the Tower Ballroom. The event was called Under One Sky and introduced children (last year of junior school) to the various cultures and faiths now represented on the Fylde. In Plymouth, the Race Equality Council is working with 12 different primary schools to produce a calendar, with art work by the pupils, depicting 12 major religious festivals.

### **Bridging areas as well as faiths**

During the school year 2002–3 around 200 pupils in eight East Sussex primary schools have had the opportunity to hold email conversations with pupils in inner city schools in Leicester on topics related to pupils' work in RE. The topics for email dialogue have been carefully planned by the teachers involved to link in with RE topics being studied. During the course of the year, all pupils are exchanging emails on four main themes: getting to know you; sharing experiences; questions of faith; ethical debate. A residential visit is being arranged for November 2003, when some of the Leicester children will come to stay in Battle and be met by some of the East Sussex children. The project is continuing in the current school year. <sup>V</sup>

As this example shows, e-dialogue is one way to enable dialogue in less diverse areas. Bringing in special inter faith exhibitions or speakers is another that is happening in various parts of the UK. In 2002 Omagh District Council booked the “In Good Faith” exhibition (put together by Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum and Diversity 21) and an open event and a dialogue on the Muslim faith were held in connection with this. The exhibition was booked again for January 2003 and the Western Education and Library Board was invited to contribute a stand providing information on their work in schools. Local primary schools were invited by the Council, on a cross community basis, to produce art using symbols of other faiths. The children were able to research and learn about symbols of other faiths from books and posters.

In Cornwall the SACRE reported that it has helped facilitate meetings with peoples of faith and also invited an imam from a London mosque down to meet teachers and has taken pupils (Y10) to London to meet peoples of diverse faith. These kinds of energetic inter faith programmes are ensuring that inter faith encounter is not just happening in multi faith areas. This, as one SACRE respondent remarked, is very important: “In Dorset, the non-Christian faith groups tend to be *numerically* small, but in my view that makes it all the more important for the rest of the local community to get to know them, and for the faith groups to play some part in the education of young people.”

## **4.7 Youth groups and special youth projects**

Inter faith encounter between young people is, of course, not just happening in schools. Respondents mentioned a wide range of initiatives. For example, on Merseyside, Liverpool Community Spirit has developed a youth council of about 12 young people between 14 and 19 from different faith and ethnic groups from within the inner city. The young people work together on projects such as helping primary school children with their reading (after training for this as part of a reading partnership scheme). One of their projects was visiting a mosque, a synagogue, a parish church, a gurdwara, the Caribbean Centre and the Somali Centre in Liverpool 8 (the most diverse part of the City). Before they went on their visits they took part in a workshop to discuss what “community” meant to them. At each place they visited they met



the leaders of the particular communities who spoke to them about the history and heritage of their communities.

In Oxfordshire, the International Interfaith Centre is running a project “Through Another’s Eyes” bringing local young people from different cultures together. After an initial skills workshop, the young people photograph and report about each other.

Typically, the youth activities reported did not focus overtly on “inter faith” discussion or activities, but rather on more general activities to counter prejudice and deepen understanding and tolerance. For example, the Arbour Youth and Community Centre on the Ocean Estate in Stepney, London runs a programme funded by St Dunstan’s Church of England and Youth Action UK. Its daytime programme and evening youth club work with a cross section of the community of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The focus is more multi cultural than inter faith but encourages respect between groups of different races and faiths. This summer’s project is being run jointly with the Bangladeshi Community and Resource Centre. Similar multicultural emphases characterize the “Cultural Harmony Project” in which the Newham Youth Parliament is involved and which is part of the Diversity Pathfinder project in the London Borough of Newham.

A respondent working with young people from the Bangladeshi community and others in Darlington suggested that inter faith issues were perhaps best not tackled directly, given the sensitive aspects of religious identity, particularly in the context of the current situation in the Middle East. Friendship building exercises were, he felt, a better starting place to open minds to others’ different faiths and cultures. The Maimonides Foundation’s football programme, which brings Jewish and Muslim children together to play football at Arsenal’s ground in Highbury is an example of play being used to open up bridges of friendship and understanding. Art is another way into inter faith understanding. Young people at Jellicoe Youth Club in London Borough of Camden have recently created a mosaic of the symbols of the principal world faiths to encourage understanding between the different religions.

In Slough, Aik Saath (“Together As One”) is a small charity which has, for the last five years, been working with young people of different backgrounds, including different faith backgrounds, to develop conflict resolution skills. In Kettering, Ekta (“Unity”) is a group of young people between 12 and 18 who attend schools within the Borough of Kettering.<sup>vi</sup> It was formed in 2001 to educate other young people about the effects of racism and provide help, advice and support for victims of racial abuse, racist assault, racial harassment and bullying in schools and the wider community. It is supported by Kettering Borough Council.

During July 2002, Young People Priority Action Group (a subgroup of the Gloucester Partnership) Gloucester Partnership put on a programme of summer activities, funded by the Home Office Community Cohesion Unit, for local young people of many different cultural and religious backgrounds. Part of these activities was a cultural programme of community based activities, inter community activities, a youth input to Barton Fair and a “United Inspirations” youth celebration (which had a number of inter faith dimensions). Grants were made to enable local organisations to participate.

For example, the Hindu Youth Association received a grant to promote Hindu culture and give Hindu young people the chance to learn about other cultures.

Some initiatives have a European link. For example, Coventry is home to “Legacy House” where Minorities of Europe is based which is working to bring European youth intercultural projects to Coventry and the West Midlands and to work locally with young people and minority communities.

A church based youth project with an inter faith dimension is the Cross Cultural Web in Birmingham. This is a programme sponsored by the Lozells Methodist Church and involves members of a Christian youth programme and of the Bangladeshi Youth Forum, both of which meet at the church. It brings together African Caribbean and Bangladeshi youth from different faith backgrounds in shared activities (for example, at the end of Ramadan bringing the two groups together for Eid to break the fast.)

Some inter faith youth projects on which information was gathered were “one off” special events:

**‘Stop Prejudice – Celebrate Diversity’** was the theme of an event held in Glasgow’s Govanhill in June 2003. The event brought together 800 children of various faiths from across the southside of Glasgow. It celebrated the five faiths in the Govanhill area – Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Islam and Hinduism – through music, dance and art displays. The Govanhill Social Inclusion Project and Future Visions Youth Action Group and Strathclyde Police hosted the multi-faith extravaganza (which was funded through the Sense Over Sectarianism Millennium Award Scheme, Glasgow City Council Culture and Leisure and Glasgow City Council Education Services).

To jump start the event, kids leaped through a huge paper stop sign which contained the message ‘Stop Prejudice – Celebrate Diversity’. In addition, youngsters decorated the event with giant papier maché globes, a stained glass window, a mural and a host of colourful religious art exhibits. A fusion of different music raised the church roof during the event, including Asian drummers, Gaelic singers, songs in Urdu, Spanish and French, along with Irish dancers. A specially written song about living in harmony was also performed and the event was compered by Clyde Two DJ Dave Marshall and followed by a disco for the young participants.

#### **4.8 Other educational projects and resources**

Inter faith education resource centres such as Bradford Inter Faith Education Centre, Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource and Suffolk Inter Faith Resources are playing an important role in helping good relations in their area, providing resources and training and hosting inter faith events and groups. <sup>vii</sup>



**Banbury RE Centre** has been hosting a series of inter faith meetings since summer 2001. This began with a series of visits to places of worship of different faiths. A member of the faith community being visited hosted the relevant evening, providing some information about the faith, answering questions and providing hospitality. The Centre manager writes, " In the Autumn of 2001 we convened a meeting of the representatives of the six main world religions at the Centre.....What followed was a series of three meetings, one a month discussing aspects of each faith – Prayer, Sacred texts and Family life. These proved to be so interesting that we decided to open them to the general public." Further meetings took place in Autumn 2002, looking at festivals, rites of passage and pilgrimage. Meetings have continued to take place in 2003 and a further programme is planned.

A Connecting Communities grant has been received to help set up and resource seven education centres within the main faith communities in North and South Kirklees. The idea is for each centre to have facilities for religious education for both students and adults and to provide visitors with the opportunity to examine resources relating to the religion of the community in question, supported by guides from that community. Each centre will also provide visitors with the opportunity to compare and contrast elements of all the other major religions. It is intended that these linked centres will be a faith network which contributes to mutual learning, inter faith respect and understanding in the area. A pledge of part funding has also been received from Kirklees Council.

In Scotland a key resource is St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow. Opened in 1993, it is described as the UK's first museum dedicated to religion and plays host to a range of inter faith events. A "Get to know your neighbour" initiative is held there every year in June.

Specialist centres in a number of cities provide important resources for those living locally as part of their overall work. Among these are the Centre for Christianity in Dialogue with Other Faiths, Heythrop College and St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, London; the Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations in Cambridge; and the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations and the Centre for the Study of Asian Religions and Christianity in Birmingham; the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby; and the Centre for the Study of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Coventry. <sup>viii</sup>

A "global centre" is due to open this Autumn in Exeter, among the sponsors of which are the Anglican Diocese of Exeter and the Islamic Centre of the South West. In Oxford the International Interfaith Centre is working to establish an Oxford Centre for Interfaith Studies.

Some resource centres are linked with a particular faith: London Inter Faith Centre, opened in 1998, is a Christian hosted centre for meeting, study and dialogue among the world's religions. Meetings take place there of a number of inter faith initiatives, including the World Congress of Faiths and the World Conference of Religions for Peace, UK Chapter.

## 4.9 Inter faith events and special occasions

Several inter faith occasions were mentioned as particularly significant in terms of raising the profile of inter faith relations in the locality and signaling cooperation and inclusivity. For example, representatives of the Baha'i, Brahma Kumari, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh, communities joined in signing a 'Common Statement of the Faith Communities of Cardiff'. The Lord Mayor of Cardiff and other dignitaries were present and the event received wide publicity and so was a very public symbol of inter faith cooperation.<sup>ix</sup>

### **Many Faiths, One People:**

#### **A Common Statement of the Faith Communities of Cardiff**

We bring greetings from the faith communities to the Lord Mayor, Council and the people of Cardiff.

We offer to Cardiff our commitment to seek to live together in peace and goodwill.

We affirm our desire to promote respect and tolerance for the integrity of each other's beliefs, cultures and traditions. This desire arises not only from our common humanity but also from our being people of faith and prayer.

We recognise that as neighbours we have responsibilities to the community, the world and ourselves.

We urge all our fellow citizens to put aside intolerances, malice and strife, in order to attain peaceful and fruitful coexistence and cooperation.

In June 2002 a multi faith celebration – “A Celebration of Life” – took place at Dunblane Cathedral to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Children's Hospice Association, Scotland and the work of Rachel House which provides specialist respite, terminal care and bereavement support, for families with a child / young person who is not expected to live into adulthood. As part of this, presentations were made to the hospice of faith artefacts by members of the Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh traditions.

Edmonton Council of Churches is working in partnership with Edmonton Community Regeneration Alliance, Edmonton Green Good Neighbours and Claverings Managed Workspace (Community Hall) to promote multi faith and multi cultural activities in Edmonton. An inaugural event was held in April 2003 involving Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Jews. Over 120 people attended it, including the Mayor and other dignitaries. An evening of cultural entertainment was enjoyed with a multi cultural bring-a-dish buffet. The partnership has identified over 200 different cultural groups in the area and hopes to repeat the event in the autumn with a wider range of cultures and faiths attending. *Report from the London Borough of Enfield*

Events highlighting particular communities were noted by a number of respondents. For example, at the time the Community Cohesion programme was launched by Leeds Initiative, Leeds Grand Mosque and the Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum invited participants to observe prayer and to break the fast (as it was Ramadan) with the Muslim community and a presentation of an engraved cut glass bowl was made to the mosque on behalf of Leeds City Council and the Leeds Initiative.

An inter faith event organised by the South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Racial Harassment brought together religious communities across South Gloucestershire to remember the tragedy of 11 September 2001 but also to celebrate the diversity of faiths across the region. Religious guest speakers from national and international shores were joined by musicians and dancers. A linked tree planting ceremony took place to commemorate those who lost their lives. In Worcester, there was a special “international/inter faith social” to socialise and to discuss the possible formation of an inter faith resource group.

Festivals and *melas* in places such as Charnwood and Huddersfield were flagged up as events with a significant inter faith dimension.

An annual peace walk supported by a range of Christian and other faith groups in Birmingham is now in its fifth year. <sup>x</sup>

#### **4.10 Bilateral and trilateral inter faith dialogues**

Around the UK, bilateral and trilateral dialogues and discussion groups are now widespread. <sup>xi</sup> Some are linked to major national organisations – as are the branches of the Council of Christians and Jews and the groups linked to the Three Faiths Forum. <sup>xii</sup> Others are independent groups which have sprung up in multi faith areas.

### **Dialogues in Leicester**

As well as having a thriving Council of Faiths, Leicester is particularly rich in trilateral and bilateral dialogues. These include

- The Council of Christians and Jews, Leicester Branch;
- a Muslim-Christian Dialogue Group which has met since November 2000. It meets alternately every six weeks in a Christian and a Muslim centre and discusses theology, scriptures, spirituality, social issues and international issues. It has also raised funds for joint projects overseas and held a joint dinner as well as fasting days.
- A recently founded Hindu-Christian Group which meets in temples and churches, sharing dinner and addressing common themes. Its meetings are jointly planned and about 60 people attend.
- A Muslim/Jewish/Christian group which has met about five times.
- A Christian-Muslim Women's Group which has met since May 2002, involving Christians of various denominations from Leicester and Muslims from Leicester, Loughborough and Markfield. The Group has been exploring various aspects of each other's faiths.

Another city where bilateral dialogues are increasing and deepening is Birmingham. Among the various dialogues in the City, are some that have been operating for a long time. An example is Sparkbrook Muslim-Christian Group:

### **Sparkbrook Muslim-Christian Group.**

Started by a Baptist minister and a member of the local Muslim community nearly 20 years ago, this meets on the third Thursday of each month at the Sparkbrook Islamic Centre. Discussions are led/started on an alternating basis by each faith and cover religious topics and also issues such as education.

Alongside Christian-Jewish dialogue, the most widely found form of bilateral dialogue is Christian-Muslim. Christian-Muslim dialogues are mentioned in various areas, such as Blackburn, Bradford, Clitheroe, Epsom, Exeter (described as "discussions" rather than an ongoing dialogue); Glasgow, Leicester, London (Islington), Loughborough, Portsmouth, St Albans, Sheffield and Wakefield. For some years there has been an informal Jewish-Muslim forum in Hackney in London and early stage Jewish-Muslim discussions are mentioned by respondents from a few other areas such as Bristol, Cardiff and Leeds.<sup>xiii</sup>

"Abrahamic", Christian-Jewish-Muslim dialogues, are mentioned in a number of cities. Several are linked to the Three Faiths Forum. Others are separate groupings which have been operating for a number of years. For example, a small dialogue group of Christians, Jews and Muslims has met two or three times a year since the early 1990s at the house of the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool. In the Anglican diocese of Oxford, the Bishop of Oxford's Abrahamic Group has met twice a year since 1992. The meetings involve

presentations from a member of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions and discussion after each presentation. <sup>xiv</sup>

Bilateral dialogues are also in progress between Baha'is and Christians (for example in Dumfries and Shetland) Buddhists and Christians (for example in Birmingham, Glasgow, and London), between Hindus and Christians (notably in Leicester, see the boxed piece on Leicester above), Jains and Christians (in London), Jains and Jews (primarily in London), and Sikhs and Christians (for example a flourishing initiative in Hitchin).

In a few areas, bilateral or trilateral dialogues are developing into multi faith ones or are in principal open to this possibility.

#### **A developing dialogue in Solihull**

Solihull Inter Faith Dialogue Group has been meeting for the last two years on a six weekly basis at St Peter's Sixth Form Centre in Whitefields Road. Meetings are hosted by the Solihull Muslim Community Association. SIFDG evolved out of a consultation on design for a multi faith prayer room in Touchwood Shopping Centre, beginning as Muslim-Christian dialogue group and growing as members of other faiths have discovered and joined the dialogue. The focus of the group is on dialogue and mutual understanding.

However, for the most part bilateral and trilateral dialogues have been set up with very specific faith relationships as their focus to enable in depth dialogue between the faiths in question and remain focused directly on these.

### **4.11 Special focus inter faith dialogues and activities**

Some dialogues have a particular focus or constituency. For example, a number have been set up in university contexts such as the Students Dialogue Forum in Manchester (linked to the Maimonides Foundation) and Council of Christian and Jews' initiatives on a number of campuses. A postgraduate inter faith discussion group in Newcastle and an inter faith initiative at the University of Glasgow are interesting examples of inter faith work linked to chaplaincies:

#### **Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria**

An inter faith discussion group, "Kaleidoscope", involving postgraduate students of a range of different faiths, has been running since summer 2002 at the Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria. At meetings there is a presentation from one of the different faiths (a different one each time) and discussions of differences and commonalities between the students' faith traditions. The meetings are supported and assisted by the Roman Catholic chaplaincy to the two adjacent universities which makes space in its building available to the students.

*Roman Catholic Chaplaincy to the Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria*

#### **University of Glasgow**

The Chaplaincy of the University of Glasgow ran an inter faith week in May this year in the student union and the chaplaincy. This involved the student religious groups and included presentations about the different faiths and a linked exhibition. The University of Glasgow is presently in the process of creating an inter faith council, drawing on the resources of the student religious organisations. This will be a forum where people can meet as equals in a context of respect and trust. *Chaplaincy to the University of Glasgow*

Other dialogues have been set up by and for women of different faiths, such as the Leicester Christian-Muslim dialogue group mentioned in the boxed information above about Leicester. Its organiser commented on the informal and friendly dimension of the group which, although it discusses religious topics such as “scripture” and “revelation”, has also become very much a friendship group. Another inter faith friendship and discussion group for women has begun recently in St Albans. In Oldham, a women’s inter faith forum is under discussion, linked to the Oldham Inter Faith Forum. In Bradford, Interfaith Women for Peace (BIWP) is an ongoing initiative which meets monthly. An example of their initiatives is a peace vigil attended by people of all faiths which they arranged in January 2002 when there was tension at the borders of India and Pakistan. This was featured on Yorkshire Television. BIWP is also an interesting example of local dialogues focused on “peace”.<sup>xv</sup>

Some initiatives have been started at the initiative of local MPs or, in the case of Muslim-Jewish meetings in East Renfrewshire, both the MP and MSP.

#### **4.12 Initiatives run through particular programmes**

In a number of areas, One World Groups are making an energetic contribution to inter faith understanding.<sup>xvi</sup> For example, One World Week in Bath holds an annual International Evening involving participants of different cultural and religious backgrounds. One World Week is marked in Cardiff by a programme involving many different faiths and recent years’ programmes have included visits to places of worship, such as the Hindu temple; meditations arranged by the Brahma Kumaris; a multi faith pilgrimage for peace organised by Cardiff Interfaith Association; lectures on inter faith cooperation; and inter faith celebrations. One World Week is also marked with inter faith programmes in a number of universities, such as Cambridge University. In some areas such as Sheffield, there is a close link between One World Week inter faith activities and inter faith activities linked to the World Development Movement.

**One World Week in Burton upon Trent** has a strong inter faith dimension to its activities. These have included displays in centres of different communities and processions through the town centre, taking in some of the community buildings; invitation of members of the Muslim community to special services at the Parish church; an inter faith garden party hosted by the Anglican Bishop of Stafford at his residence; attending worship with Sikhs who use the church hall at St Chad's (there is no gurdwara yet in Burton) and sharing in their meal; visits to mosques by representatives of other faiths; discussions about possible working together between charities of different faiths (such as Muslim Hands, Christian Aid, CAFOD and Traidcraft); special events such as a Christmas/Eid event which raised funds for charity appeals on three continents and an event "Celebrating Creation" through the eyes of different faiths; visits to places of worship further afield (such as Neasden Temple in London); and special events for women of all faiths. *One World Week Burton upon Trent*

Some United Nations Association local groups in areas such as Bedford, Peterborough, and Richmond Upon Thames, are also involved in inter faith events and cooperate with their local inter faith bodies on these. Amnesty groups in a few areas, such as Norwich and Sheffield, have also been involved in arranging inter faith events.

**People to People North East** is an initiative which developed out of the International Friendship League which began in Newcastle upon Tyne in the early 60s. It serves Newcastle Upon Tyne and the surrounding area as well as Northumberland and Durham. It is run by a number of participating organisations interested in bringing together people of diverse origins and religions for cultural and social activities which promote harmony, understanding and unity among the peoples of the North East. Its programme includes multi cultural events, such as one hosted by the Chinese Community Centre, and visits to places of cultural and religious interest, such as the Hindu temple and the Newcastle and South Shields mosques, to learn about the traditions and religions of people who have come to live in the area from all over the world.

#### **4.13 Initiatives involving places of worship of different faiths**

In a number of areas, individual places of worship or clergy have hosted inter faith events or forged links with other faiths.



**Bournemouth Reform Synagogue** hosts a biannual inter faith tea. This year's was attended by people from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian (including two bishops and the rural dean), Hindu, and Muslim faiths as well as the Mayor and 40 RE teachers from local schools. As the guests arrived they were shown into the Synagogue where the rabbi gave a demonstration of the Seder service as the tea was near the time of Passover. Guests then were shown into the Simcha Hall for tea and the head teacher of the Cheder (religious school) gave a demonstration of a day at the school.

**The Llandudno Junction Mosque** opened in the autumn of 2002 and had an Open Day to meet local community leaders and groups. That has sparked informal relations between individuals and because of the post 11 September situation, led to some formal links between the Llandudno CYTUN (Churches Together) and the mosque. On the anniversary of 9/11 there was a gathering at the Cenotaph, which whilst a Christian act of remembrance, was attended by local Muslims by invitation. The same happened in the run up to the Iraq war with vigils for peace.

Scunthorpe mosque has had a number of groups visit it, including the "Friends of the Quakers", "Justice and Peace" and "Humberside International Women". Muslims, in turn, visited "Friends of the Quakers". Members of the mosque have received a number of invitation to talk to local churches about Islam. In Bradford, the Manningham Churches and the Council of Mosques have established the "Manningham Steps for Peace" initiative to celebrate together the good things of their common life, especially those which have developed since the 2001 disturbances.

In an unusual inter faith venture, a local vicar and an imam in Burnley "job swapped" for a day earlier this year to gain a better understanding of each other's faiths and were recorded by BBC local radio as part of a "Voices in Burnley" feature. Each took on some of the appointments of the other. The vicar went and talked to children at the Brougham Street mosque and the imam took assembly at Calder View school.

Unsurprisingly, given the religious make up the UK, most of these worship place based initiatives involved a link between a Christian church or churches and another faith or faiths. For example:

- A Methodist District Adviser in the East of England told of his meetings for worship and dialogue on a monthly basis with a local Jewish group of about 20 members.
- In Carlisle, a small group of Quakers have met with local Muslims to study the Qu'ran.
- The "Reconcile" group at St Michael's Church of England, Amersham, has forged links with the Bellingdon Road Mosque in Chesham and there are now exchange visits and hospitality between members of each.
- The linked Church of England churches of Eton, Wick and Dorney have



exchanged visits with members of the local mosque and an inter faith meeting with speakers from different faiths is under discussion.

#### **Visits in Skipton**

After September 2001, the Rector of Holy Trinity Skipton and the Chairman of Churches Together in Skipton and District went to the mosque in Skipton to express the friendship and solidarity of the local Christian Churches with the Muslim community at a sensitive time for community and faith relations. They were shown around the mosque, sat in on prayers and were invited to the Imam's house to share a meal. Occasional visits by church leaders and then by lay people followed and then members of the mosque came to visit Holy Trinity church and were given a tour of the church by the local Methodist minister, after which refreshments were served. The Christian churches were then invited to a celebration at the mosque with Imams from across the North of England. More recently, at the time of build up towards war with Iraq, letters were sent by the local Catholic community and by Churches Together and at the time of the outbreak of hostilities, the Chairman of Churches Together paid an unannounced visit to the mosque and was invited to speak after prayers when he assured the Muslim community of the friendship and understanding of the Christian community and the need for people of faith to hold together at difficult times. *Churches Together in Skipton and District*

#### **4.14 Christian denominational inter faith work**

From Christian Church respondents came detailed information about inter faith work from particular denominations. A number of local Anglican churches had been running inter faith education series. For example, St Michael and All Angels Church, Shefford, wrote in about the "Dialogue" series it was holding to help Christians understand and relate to Muslims and Islam. St John's Church in Accrington had just run, with the assistance of Blackburn with Darwen Inter Faith Council, a series of talks "Learning about the Faith Next Door" with speakers from the Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh traditions and discussion about the different traditions. The Well Advice Centre in Glasgow (funded by the Church of Scotland through the Presbytery of Glasgow) has clients of other faiths.

Some respondents mentioned inter faith projects particularly linked to their denomination:

**Touchstone, Bradford** – A Methodist project which specialises in city issues and inter faith work and whose expertise is drawn on by other agencies including the local authority for help on a range of inter faith issues – reported on its work. Examples of this included an inter faith day at St Paul’s, Manningham for 90 staff and students from the Northern Ordination Course (arranged with the Bradford Inner Ring Group) and an “Interfaith Writers for Peace” initiative to share fellowship and understanding of other faiths through cultural issues. It also produces materials for use in inter faith contexts such as the “Guidelines for Happy Coexistence with Muslim Neighbours” leaflet.<sup>xvi</sup> Examples of other work linked to Touchstone include a widely distributed leaflet encouraging Christians to counter racism in their multi faith city ( a revised edition of which was printed following the election of the first West Yorkshire BNP Councillor in Mixenden, Calderdale).

**Active Faith Communities (AFC).** AFC is a charitable company which assists faith communities in West Yorkshire to increase their capacity to engage with the wider community and encourages the public sector and individual faith communities to work together to achieve common policy objectives. It is an initiative started and funded by the Anglican Diocese of Bradford but with a board including both Christian and Muslim directors. One of its programmes is the Bradford Faith Cohesion Programme which is developing a number of faith cohesion projects.<sup>xvii</sup>

Other respondents noted wide ranging programmes of inter faith work by their denomination in their area. For example, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, which recently changed its ‘Ecumenical Commission’ into ‘Commission for Christian and Interfaith Relations’, with two separate committees, had been contacting Catholics who are interested in inter faith relations at grass roots level and is offering parish sessions for advice and information to raise the profile of inter faith relations. An Interreligious Relations Commission in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Leeds (which covers Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale, Wakefield, and parts of North Yorkshire, East Yorkshire and Lancashire) has recently been launched. It seeks to build capacity for inter faith dialogue amongst Catholics. Its first meeting involved representatives visiting Keighley Mosque and Muslim community.

The Church of England has a network of Diocesan Inter Faith Advisers and some Dioceses have active programmes of inter faith work. For example, Southwark Diocesan Interfaith Group organises training and education events and is developing a diocese-wide network of deanery link people for promotion of inter faith matters locally. The Oxford (Anglican) Diocesan Committee for Inter Faith Concerns, for example, drew attention to *Friends in Faith*, a compilation of reports on various inter faith projects and initiatives that have taken place in the three counties of the Thames Valley: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, including personal stories, theological reflection, and reports of successful projects and ideas for activities that others might wish to try or adapt.<sup>xviii</sup> This was put together by the Committee with

contributors also from Christian denominations and from other faith communities.

The Encounter Youth Exchange Programme is an inter faith initiative between the Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford and the Maronite Diocese of Haifa and the Holy Land. It brings 16 to 19 year old Christians, Jews and Muslims from the Holy Land and East London together for a 10 day residential encounter each summer to break down barriers and encourage learning between the different cultural, ethnic and faith groups. The programme has just completed its fourth year and to date 48 young people and 12 youth workers have taken part.

### **Lenten talks at Clonard Monastery, Belfast**

“Clonard Monastery has become quite renowned as a centre for peace and reconciliation and as a centre for ecumenism, during the period of the troubles here in Northern Ireland. It played a significant role in helping to initiate and facilitate the current, ongoing peace process. Geographically, it lies in the heart of West Belfast, and straddles the so called ‘peace wall’ that divides Catholic and Protestant West Belfast. It is home to a religious community of 21 priests and brothers who are members of the worldwide Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, otherwise known as the Redemptorists.

This year [2003] we decided to run the series of Lenten talks on different world religions and faiths that have a presence here in Belfast and Northern Ireland. For each of the six Sunday nights we focused on a different religion. We began with Islam, followed by Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese and Baha’i. The format was simple and straightforward. We made contact with representatives of each of the above, explained what we were about, and invited two or three representatives to come and talk to us on the respective nights. They were asked to provide some historical background and general insights into the basic tenets of their beliefs and faith, as well as some personal insights and experiences that would last for about 45 minutes. We would then break for 10 minutes or so, and then resume for another period of about 45 minutes where people would be free to ask questions of the speakers.

The series was very successful, and greatly appreciated by all who attended, as well as by those representatives of the different faiths who were invited to talk. For many it was their first time to be invited by any Christian church or organisation to come and share something of their faith stories with others, and for many who attended it was their first opportunity to meet with, hear from, and speak with members of non-Christian faith traditions.

Most were struck by the similarities that existed between the various faith practices and beliefs of the major world religions. All the feedback was extremely positive. Approximately 100 people would have attended each of the sessions. All the talks were recorded and can be accessed through our website at [www.clonard.com](http://www.clonard.com).” *Clonard Monastery*

De Nobili House in Southall, London, opened in 2000 at the home of the Jesuit community in Southall. It is a centre closely associated with the Centre for Christianity in Dialogue with Other Faiths, Heythrop College which is dedicated to developing positive relations with people of different faiths and cultures. It is a resource for dialogue of all kinds, sharing and information, hosting and enabling inter-faith events, supporting different initiatives in the local area.

#### **4.15 Christian ecumenical inter faith work**

Ecumenical working involving several Christian denominations was also mentioned. For example:

- A picture emerges of particularly strong ecumenical working on inter faith issues in some counties of England, notably Lancashire where Churches Together in Lancashire's Inter Faith Development Officer has helped bring about a Lancashire Forum of Faiths and is involved in linking and supporting a very wide range of initiatives.
- The North East Ecumenical Network for Interfaith Dialogue (NEENIFD) organises lectures, workshops, study days and visits to encourage Christians to think about the theology of inter faith dialogue and to develop skills and understanding for working with people of other faiths.
- Leicester Ecumenical Interfaith Group brings Christians from several different denominations together for discussion every two months.
- In Cumbria, the leaders group (from the main denominations and church networks in Cumbria which meet as Churches Together in Cumbria) has initiated work to increase inter faith understanding, beginning with a visit to a Hindu temple and centre and a mosque in Preston.
- An Inter-Faith Day of Dialogue was held at St Alban's High School in Ipswich in May 2003. This was organised by the Roman Catholic Ecumenical Commission, with support from Churches Together in Suffolk and Suffolk Inter Faith Resource.
- Irish School of Ecumenics' Education for Reconciliation Programme includes an 18 week course: Understanding Neighbour Religions: The Abrahamic Faiths and a 6 week course: God of Many Names: Exploring Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Christian spiritualities.
- Christians Aware Faith Awareness Programme runs inter faith programmes in Leicester and in Southall, London.

### **Ecumenical inter faith working in Bradford**

The Bradford Inner Ring Group (focusing particularly on the area inside Bradford's Outer Ring Road) is a Christian ecumenical partnership, the mission of which is to "support the Christian communities of Bradford in their common discipleship of Jesus and to encourage them to be good neighbours in their differing contexts." As part of this, one of its programme aims is "developing open and peaceable human relationships in the multi faith context of the Inner Ring".

The Inner Ring Group has an Other Faiths Resources Group which meets every two weeks and has developed several initiatives such as the Intercultural Leadership School (developed with Bradford University Peace Studies Department and the Council of Mosques). This project regularly takes a group of young people between 18 and 30 – 6 Christian, 6 Muslim, and 6 of no formal faith – identified as potential leaders in their own community, away on a five day leadership school. The Inner Ring Group's Education and Training Resource Group has also been developing inter faith training resources such as a workshop on "Ministry in a Multifaith Context". In collaboration with Active Faith Communities, it has been developing further training courses for faith communities: Understanding your Christian Neighbour; Understanding your Hindu Neighbour; Understanding your Muslim Neighbour; and Understanding your Sikh Neighbour. <sup>xix</sup>

i The project had a particular focus on inter faith groups and councils but it also sought information on a wide range of local inter faith initiatives. Some of these were, in effect, more "multi faith" than "inter faith", in that they involved faiths working side by side rather than specifically in interaction. However, this is in many ways an artificial division because it is often in joint working that the deepest bonds are formed and that understanding quietly grows. Therefore both "multi faith" and explicitly "inter faith" initiatives are reflected in the examples below of the expanding range of inter faith activity around the UK.

ii These local examples mirror linked national level developments within the Prison Service, National Health Service and Higher Education to develop multi faith chaplaincy. Many of the other examples of inter faith working at local level also reflect the engagement with multi faith and inter faith issues of their national bodies. There are, of course, instances where local good practice has led the way for national guidelines and developments.

iii For an insight into the many ways people of different faiths volunteer their time, see Priya Lukka and Michael Locke, with Andri Soteri-Procter, *Faith and Voluntary Action: Community, Values and Resources* (London: Institute for Volunteering Research and the University of East London, Centre for Institutional Studies, 2003).

iv As part of this project, questionnaires were sent to SACREs – Standing Advisory Religious Councils on Religious Education. Respondents were asked about a number of issues, including awareness of inter faith projects in their area and inter faith work happening in local schools. Many respondents in other categories also mentioned youth projects in their returns.

v Charlotte Gravestock *East Sussex and Leicester Primary Schools Building E-Bridges: Exploring Diversity by email. Report and Evaluation.* (East Sussex SACRE supported by CfBT, 2003. CfBT and East Sussex County Council, 2003.)

vi *Aik saath* and *ekta* are words which have similar meanings in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.

vii A number of more general education resource centres, such as Aylesbury Development Education Centre (ADEC) also have an inter faith dimension to their programmes and to the resources they provide.

viii There are other significant academic resources which could be mentioned but the present project's focus is local inter faith relations and this report refers mainly to those resources which have been mentioned by respondents in their areas as significant in terms of local inter faith relations. The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby publishes, with the Inter Faith Network, a directory covering faith and inter faith organisations around the country: *Religions in the UK: A Directory 2001–3*, ed. Paul Weller, (Derby: The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby, in association with the Inter Faith Network, 2001.

ix Similar civic greetings and statements of commitment have been made by faith communities in a number of towns and cities such as Brighton and Hove and Newcastle-Upon-Tyne (where the first declaration of this kind was developed).

- x Further examples of pilgrimages are noted in Chapter 3 “Local inter faith groups and councils.” The Birmingham pilgrimage is an example of one not linked specifically to an inter faith group.
- xi Multi faith inter faith groups and councils are discussed in Chapter 3 and not therefore covered in this chapter.
- xii See Appendix 7 for a description of the work of the Council of Christians and Jews and the Three Faiths Forum as well as of the Maimonides Foundation and the United Religions Initiative and their branches and groups. As noted in 1.3, because the report is concerned with local inter faith activity it does not deal with the wide range of national inter faith activity which influences and is influenced by local inter faith activity. Appendix 7 therefore includes only those national inter faith organisations which have indicated that they have local branches.
- xiii Jewish-Muslim initiatives are the subject of a recent report, Fiona Hurst, Mohammed Nisar, and Keith Kahn Harris, *Positive Contacts Between British Muslims and Jews: A Model of Good Practice for all British Communities – First Interim Report*, (London: Stone Ashdown Trust, 2003).
- xiv There are a number of other key Abrahamic initiatives, such as the influential Manor House Group, which it is not possible to cover in the present report on local inter faith activity as they draw their membership from a wide geographical area.
- xv Inter faith vigils were also noted in a number of areas, such as St Albans and links between inter faith initiatives and peace groups were also noted in a number of areas, such as Birmingham.
- xvi Awais Dominic and Diane Coleman “Guidelines for Happy Coexistence with Muslim Neighbours”, Touchstone, Bradford.
- xvii Bradford is particularly rich in inter faith initiatives linked to the various Christian denominations. As well as those detailed in the main body of this chapter, respondents noted the work of the Society of St Columban based at Columba Community at Horton Grange; the Inter Religious Dialogue and Peaceworks initiative from the Thornbury Centre; and the Thornbury Mission Partner Project.
- xviii Hugh Boulter ed. *Friends in Faith: Some Examples of Good Interfaith Practice in the Thames Valley area*, (Oxford: Oxford Diocesan Committee for Interfaith Concerns 2001.)
- xix There are a number of other significant ecumenical inter faith initiatives in Bradford, such as that of the Columba Community at Horton Grange, and the Inter Religious Dialogue and Peaceworks initiative from the Thornbury Centre.

# Local authorities and inter faith relations

- 5.1 Taking seriously the involvement of faith
- 5.2 Pattern of response
- 5.3 Awareness levels of inter faith work
- 5.4 Financial support for local inter faith groups and councils
- 5.5 Other types of resourcing
- 5.6 Representativeness and consultability
- 5.7 Alternative consultable forums?
- 5.8 Creating new inter faith and multi faith networks and forums: the impact of Local Strategic Partnerships, Community Empowerment Networks and Community Strategies
- 5.9 Multi faith meetings, forums and partnerships linked to local authorities
- 5.10 An abundance of riches
- 5.11 Community Cohesion
- 5.12 Local authorities in Scotland
- 5.13 Good practice in partnership working on inter faith issues
- Annex: Partnership working: some good practice examples

## 5.1 Taking seriously the involvement of faith

Local authorities in England and Wales provide the framework for the delivery of local public services. With a budget of £70 billion a year they account for 25% of public spending and their policies and programmes have an enormous impact on the everyday life of communities.<sup>i</sup> Over the last five years, local authorities have shown a progressively greater interest in the role that faith communities and inter faith structures can play in helping develop the community strategies that each local authority has a duty to develop and in helping bring about social inclusion and community cohesion.<sup>ii</sup>

*Guidance on Community Cohesion* highlights the importance for local authorities, as part of their community leadership role, to “build cross-cultural networks and inter faith structures” and to help facilitate an agreed vision which will have as one outcome a reduction in racial and inter-religious tension and conflict.<sup>iii</sup> It notes that: “At community level it is important to foster understanding and respect between different faith traditions as well as between different cultural and ethnic groups”.<sup>iv</sup>



“The development of effective local inter faith structures, bringing together representatives of different faith communities in a local authority area, can provide a valuable framework both for promoting mutual understanding and co-operation between them and as a mechanism for consultation by the local authority and other public bodies. Local authorities can provide valuable encouragement and support for the launching of initiatives of this kind in areas where they have yet to be established and also in helping to sustain existing local inter faith structures.” *Guidance on Community Cohesion*<sup>v</sup>

This guidance complements the more detailed advice on partnership working with faith communities and inter faith structures in the 2002 Local Government Association publication, *Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities*.<sup>vi</sup>

*Faith and Community* highlighted the contribution that faith communities can make to society, noting a number of faith based social projects. The kind of contribution that faiths can make in this way has been well researched in recent times.<sup>vii</sup> The focus of the present project’s approach to local authorities was primarily on the “*inter* faith” dimension of their engagement with faith rather than their engagement with faith communities in general. The questions therefore covered such issues as: Are authorities aware of inter faith bodies in their areas? Have they been involved in helping to establish local inter faith bodies? Have they funded inter faith work? And do they have officers and/or councillors with a specific responsibility for faith and inter faith issues?

The responses showed a wide variation in the level of engagement with the issues. In some cases multi faith engagement was low because the authority’s area was fairly mono faith and monocultural. Many of these authorities did, however, flag up the importance of their relations with Christian groupings. A typical comment from a district council in the North East was: “This is...very much a mono-faith area. There is a Churches Together Group which is both very active and supported....” In some other authorities, inter faith issues were felt to be low on the agenda because, in part, of absence of problems within or between faith communities. A respondent from another district council in the North East, for example, commented: “In our district we endeavour to create equal access and mutual understanding on a variety of issues. [But] in terms of demographics, we don’t have great divisions in the community as some other authorities [do]..... If we had these divisions, our resources and attention would have been focussed on fostering positive inter-faith relations.”

Some local authorities had considerable difficulty establishing who should deal with the questionnaire because responsibility for faith and inter faith issues was, perhaps not surprisingly, spread across a number of departments. One authority in Yorkshire and Humber, for example, noted “ambiguity within the Council as to whether inter faith initiatives should be dealt with within general, equal opportunities, cultural, education or community service areas.”



**Is there an officer responsible  
for liaison with local faith communities**

<b>and/or faith related issues</b>	<b>No of LAs</b>	<b>Percent</b>
don't Know	5	2
N	136	54
Y	109	44
Total	250	100

*Fig 5.1 Table showing number of local authorities with officers responsible for liaison with local faith communities and/or faith related issues*

Overall, the tenor of the responses was of active engagement, even from areas low in faith diversity.

## 5.2 Pattern of response

250 (61%) of the 410 of local authorities in England and Wales responded to the questionnaire. The response rate for England was 63%. The table below shows the response rate by region:

<b>Local Authority Location</b>	<b>No. of LAs Responded</b>	<b>No. of LAs in Region</b>	<b>Response Rate %</b>
East	32	54	59
East Midlands	27	45	60
Greater London	29	33	88
North East	15	25	60
North West	25	46	54
South East	46	74	62
South West	34	51	67
West Midlands	24	38	63
Yorkshire and Humber	11	22	50
Wales	7	22	32
Total	250	410	61

*Fig 5.2 Table showing response rate of local authorities in England and Wales by region.*

The charts below show the response level by region and also by type of authority.<sup>viii</sup>

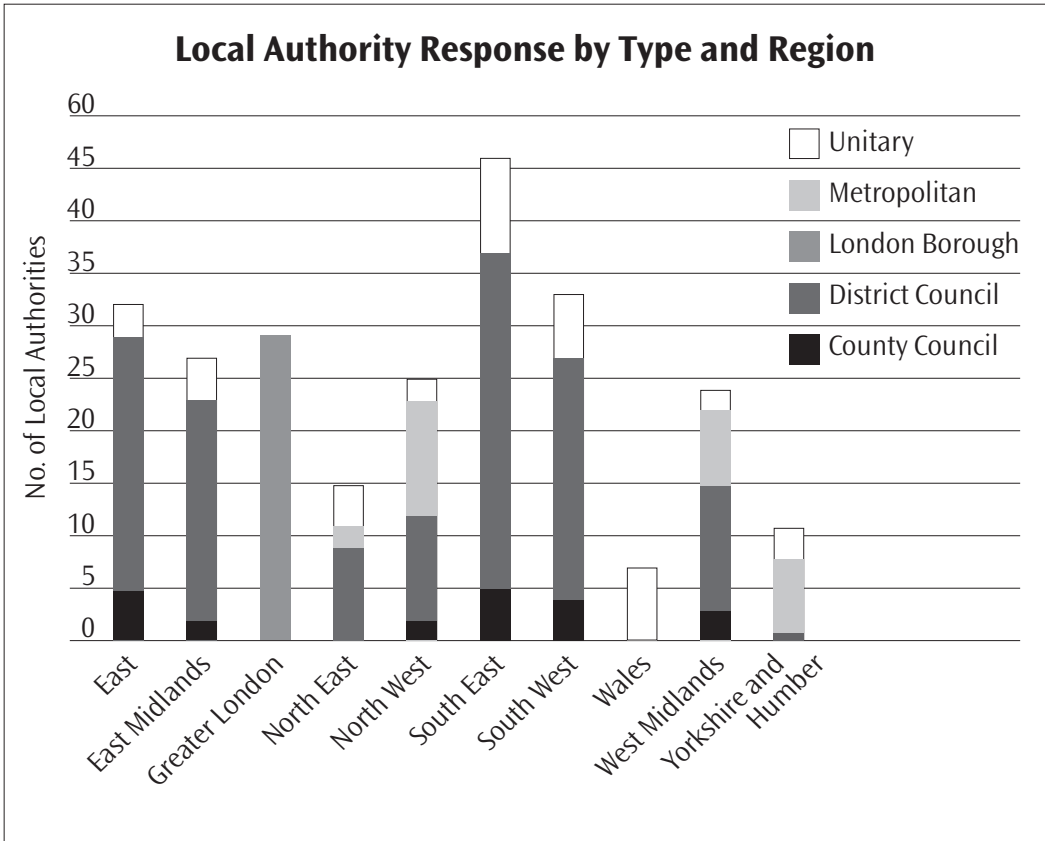


Fig 5.3 Chart showing local authority response by type and region.

### 5.3 Awareness levels of inter faith work

The questionnaire asked local authorities if there was an inter faith group or council in their area. This was designed to elicit information about any new initiatives that were not known to the project and also to gauge awareness of older initiatives. A number of new initiatives were discovered through this route, such as the recently formed Bexley Multi Faith Forum and the Interfaith Council under development in Calderdale. 95 local authorities (38%) knew of a local inter faith group or council in their area. 8 authorities (3%) also knew about a second inter faith group or council in their area. 44 of responding local authorities (18%), had helped to set up an inter faith group and a further 5 (2%) had helped with a second local inter faith group in their area. In a number of areas, however, there seemed to be low or no awareness of fairly significant inter faith initiatives but this may have been because the respondent was new in post or not working in the section of the authority that would normally deal with faith and inter faith matters.

Authorities were also asked about other inter faith activity in their areas and many respondents sent useful information about this.<sup>ix</sup>

Some of the information provided by local authorities related to inter faith encounter within service provision contexts. For example, Bedford Borough Council noted that within the North Bedfordshire Community Safety

Partnership Group there is a sub group of local religious leaders who meet with the police on local community safety matters. Information also came in on local projects with an inter faith dimension. The London Borough of Haringey, flagged up Haringey Peace Alliance – an organisation, primarily focusing on peace activities and supporting young people which organises a peace week in September and a range of other related activities (such as campaigning against gun crime, and for positive action and safer community awareness). The respondent noted that although this is primarily a Christian organisation, it has close working links with other faith groups in the borough. A wealth of information was supplied about multi faith and inter faith initiatives, from the multi faith prayer room at Canary Wharf in Tower Hamlets, to the Bradford Interfaith Education Centre, to the Sparkhill and Sparkbrook Christian and Muslim Dialogue Forum, to the Tees Valley Inter Faith Regeneration Group.

A number of authorities such as Maidstone Borough Council, London Borough of Croydon and London Borough of Camden provided information about initiatives they themselves had carried out which had an important inter faith dimension. Camden was one of the first authorities to appoint a staff member with particular responsibility for faith issues and over the last two years a wide programme of work with faith communities has taken place. This work is described in the annex to this chapter.

### **Maidstone**

Maidstone Borough Council and Church in Society jointly sponsored a conference entitled “Faith in action” in May 2003. Over 60 people attended the conference which focused on the role of faith groups in combating social exclusion in Maidstone. Attendees included local faith group leaders, members of the public and local Councillors. Topics included how Maidstone Islamic Community centre saw its social mission in the town, examples of good practice such as how different faith groups had joined together to establish a community IT centre on a deprived estate, and how rural isolation issues were being addressed in the borough. The conference looked at good examples of capacity building practices. It was intended that the conference would become an annual event. The Borough’s Social Inclusion Manager commented, “Community cohesion begins on the ground in how ordinary people are living their lives and choosing to come together. It is the many smallscale actions of committed individuals that lie behind large scale change and personal and community development. That is what the conference was about.”

*Social Inclusion Manager, Maidstone Borough Council*

### London Borough of Croydon

The London Borough of Croydon worked during 2002–3 with local partners representing faith communities to introduce and encourage development of social enterprises. Those involved were the Employment Forum UK, and the following faiths and denominations: Baha'i; Black Churches; Buddhist; Christian (including the Anglican Diocese of Southwark); Hindu; Humanist; Jewish; Muslim; Sikh; and others. Refugee communities were also involved. The programme of work built on the work highlighted in the *Croydon Churches in the Community* study in 1998. It began with initial research contacting individual faith groups and updating contact details and mapping current and intended social enterprise activity of faith groups. With the assistance of the local Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education, the Council approached 100 local faith representatives and explored with them whether there was interest in a social enterprise project. The result was a roadshow in October 2001. Three minibuses set out from the Town Hall, taking 38 people of different faiths to visit three operating social enterprises in Thornton Heath. The Roadshow concluded with a lunch where six areas of interest were identified. These six themes became the basis for follow up lunches and presentations.

Coming out of the project, four new fair trade cafes have been established, 15 existing social enterprises have been identified and are being supported, 8 new jobs and 18 learning opportunities have been created. Also a mechanism to visit places of worship in the borough has been created so that there can be a deeper understanding of each other's customs. The programme was also an important opportunity for members of local faith communities to come together, get to know each other better in project focused context and develop better links between their communities.

*Economic programme Manager, London Borough of Croydon*

Inter faith work was also reported in less multi faith areas. South Ribble Borough Council, for example, had held, in Leyland, with Churches Together in South Ribble, a multi faith "Celebration for Peace" in 2002 and a "Time for Peace" for those of all faiths and none.

## 5.4 Financial support for local inter faith groups and councils

Local authorities were asked if they were making any grant aid available to their local inter faith groups or councils. A number were, as the table below shows.

Has your LA given grants to local inter faith groups or councils?	No. of LA s	Percent
No information	7	2.8
No	211	84.4
Yes	32	12.8
Total	250	100.0

*Fig 5.4 Table of local authority grant support to local inter faith bodies*

The table below shows grants by type of authority:

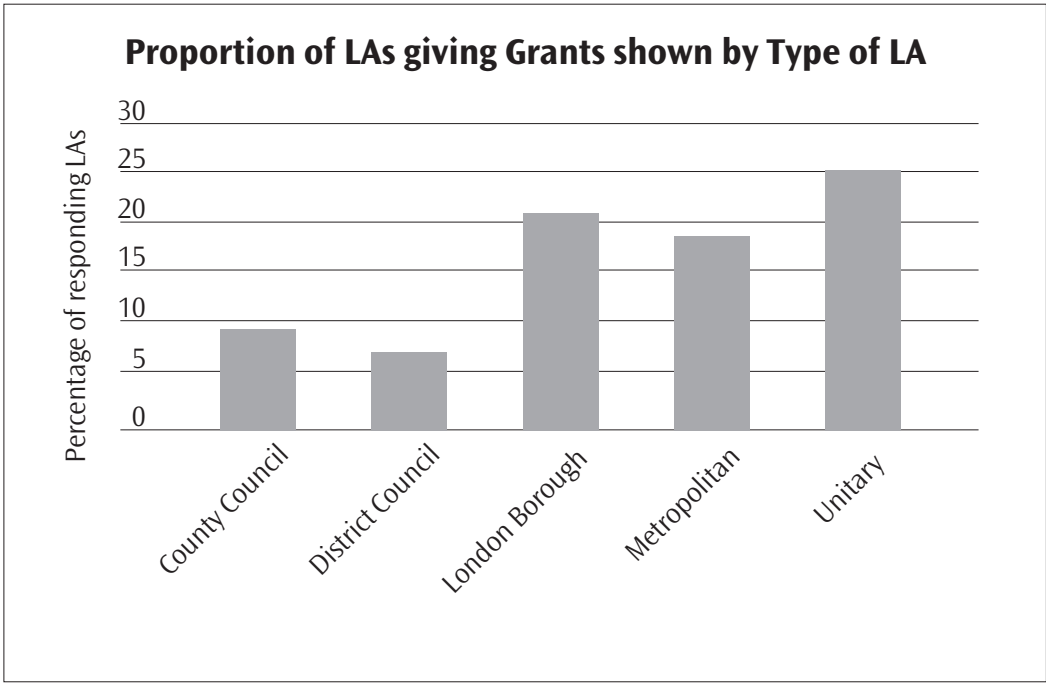


Fig 5.5 Chart showing local authority grants to local inter faith bodies by type of local authority

The table below shows the purposes for which local authority grants were given.

Purpose of Grant	No. of LAs giving grants
Grants for core work	14
Grants for projects	15
Grants for events	21
Grants for other purposes	7

Fig 5.6 Table of purposes for which local authority grants given

A few authorities, such as Leicester (see the good practice case study in the annex to this chapter), Nottingham and Wolverhampton, indicated that they were offering support towards the work of their local inter faith group or council. Some, such as Suffolk County Council and Plymouth City Council, noted grant aid to inter faith centres which have an educational focus. <sup>x</sup> Nottingham City Council have helped fund a part-time worker for Nottingham City Council since 2000:

“Nottingham City Council’s financial support through grant aid for the local Inter Faith Council was to enable the development of the Inter Faith Council’s role in disseminating information or available resources to assist with the initiation of multi-cultural education programmes. This work has contributed towards a growing understanding of the different beliefs and practices, and fostering growing trust and respect between communities in the city.”

*Service Manager, Voluntary and Community Sector, Nottingham City Council*

Local authorities were also asked about whether they had funded other inter faith work (not that of the local inter faith group or council). Only 13 (5%) had, although a number noted funding of other types of organisation or activity which involved an inter faith dimension, although not as its primary purpose. For example, London Borough of Haringey's Head of Health, Safer Communities and the Voluntary Sector commented: "... the Council corporately core funds the voluntary sector by £2.9m. While this is primarily secular funding, over 70% of it is targeted to black and ethnic minority communities, many of which have a strong involvement from the faith communities. These indirectly support a range of projects that would have links to faith communities e.g. Afro Caribbean Centre, Chinese Centre, Greek Cypriot Centre, Kurdish Centre, Irish Centre and many other similar organisations." A number of local authorities, such as Bolton MBC, Coventry City Council and Lancashire County Council, mentioned funding for individual faith based social projects or capacity building.

### **5.5 Other types of resourcing**

9 local authorities (2%) indicated that they were providing support in kind, such as free meeting space or assistance with mailings, to their local inter faith groups and councils. However, this figure may be misleadingly low because in a number of instances a multi faith forum is serviced directly from within the local authority and therefore the respondents did not see staff support for this as being "given", but simply as part of the relevant staff member's work. <sup>xi</sup>

Some local inter faith initiatives, such as Barnsley MBC Faith Communities Forum, Bury Mayoral Inter Faith Council, Forum of Faiths Kensington and Chelsea (see good practice case study in the annex to this chapter), Lewisham Faith and Social Action Forum, Kingston Inter-Faith Forum, North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership and Westminster Faith Exchange, are presently directly serviced by local authority staff. This sort of support can make a big difference to a forum. The Chair, from the Christian Churches, of North Lincolnshire MFP commented that on its progress that, "a good deal of this has to be due to the enormous support shown to us by North Lincolnshire Council."

### **5.6 Representativeness and consultability**

The questionnaire asked local authorities about the degree to which they thought their local inter faith group or council reflects, in its membership, the general pattern of faith membership in their area. <sup>xii</sup>

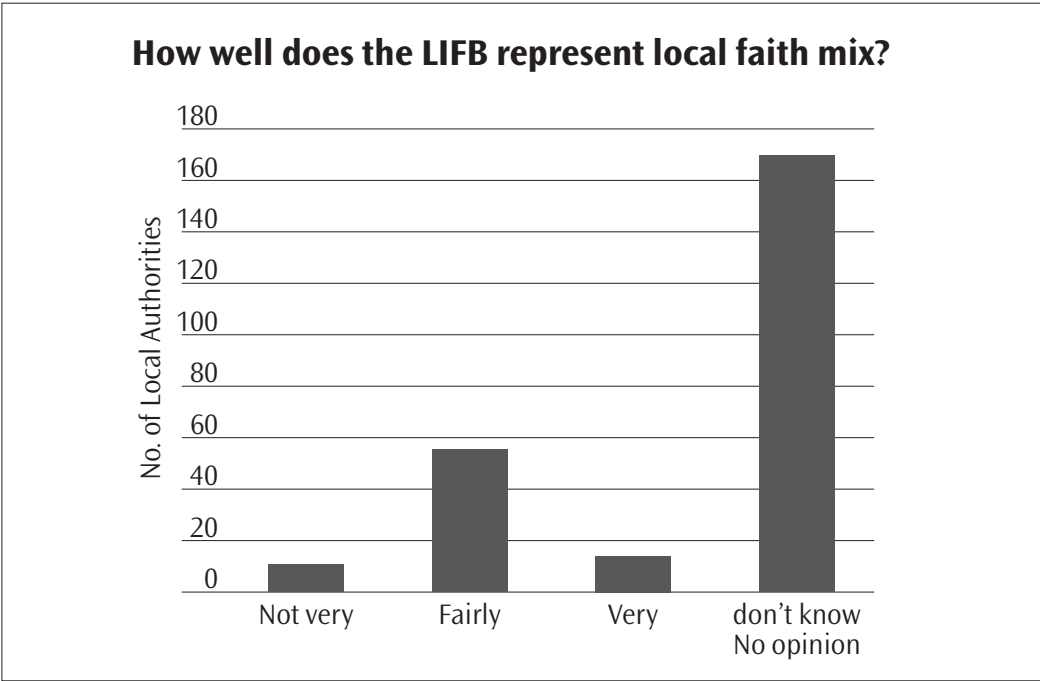


Fig 5.7 Chart showing degree to which local authorities see their local inter faith body as representative of the faith mix of the area

The questionnaire also asked whether, if there was a local inter faith council in the authority’s area, it saw it as a forum which could be consulted on policy matters.

Is the local inter faith body a consultable forum?		
	No. of LAs	Percent
No opinion	161	62
No	12	5
Yes	82	33
Total	250	100

Fig 5.8 Table of local authorities’ opinions on consultability of local inter faith bodies in their areas

There was a noticeable correlation between the degree to which inter faith bodies were seen as reflecting their areas’ faith mix and the degree to which they were seen as consultable on policy matters:

Is the LIFB a consultable forum?	Is the LIFB representative of the local faith mix?				Total
	Not very well	Fairly well	Very well	Don't know / No opinion	
No	8	6	0	154	168
Yes	4	50	15	13	82
Total	12	56	15	167	250

Fig 5.9 Table showing local authorities’ estimations of representativeness and consultability of local inter faith bodies

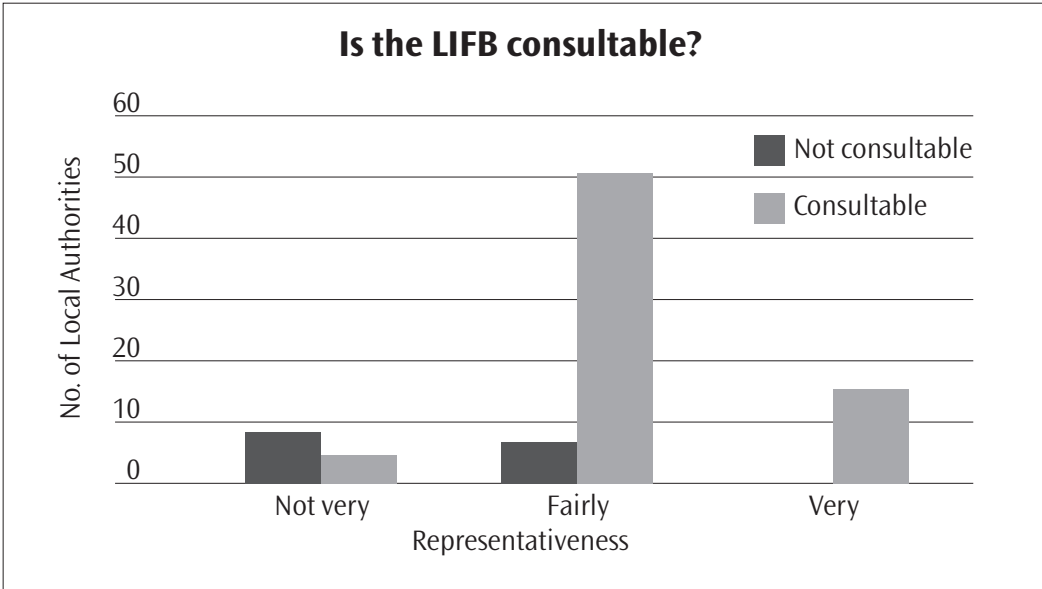


Fig 5.10 Table of local authorities’ views on “consultability” of local inter faith bodies in their areas

“Consultability” affects grants as a much higher proportion of the ‘consultable’ local inter faith bodies had been given a grant. However, a lot of the “not very” consultable groups and councils had also been given grants.

Has your LA given grants to IF groups or councils?	Consultable Forum?		Total
	No	Yes	
Don't know	6	1	7
No	153	58	211
Yes	9	23	32
Total	168	82	250

Fig 5.11 The relationship between past grant giving and whether LAs consider the LIFBs to be consultative forums

### 5.7 Alternative consultable forums?

In a few authorities, such as the City and County of Swansea, the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education was mentioned as having been used for consultation purposes both on its primary area of focus (religious education generally and the Locally Agreed RE Syllabus) but also on some other topics. In the questionnaire to SACREs in England, SACREs were asked if they were consulted by the local authority on civic religious events; pastoral care issues; local inter faith issues; and other issues. 31 SACREs (36%) had been consulted on civic issues, 7 SACREs (8%) on pastoral care issues, 23 SACREs (26%) on local inter faith issues, and 17 (19%) on other issues. Overall, however, authorities tended to see the SACRE as a sounding board specifically for education matters. A member of a SACRE in the West Midlands, sounded a cautious note:

“I have some concerns about SACRE being seen as the forum for inter faith dialogue. SACRE’s responsibilities are to do with RE and Collective Worship,



and members are recruited for their interest and expertise in these areas. Inter-faith discussions and good relationships are facilitated by the existence of SACRE and obviously this is a desirable by-product of meetings. It would, however, be inappropriate to see SACRE as the prime mover in this area.”

The main other type of body mentioned as a locus for local authority consultation on faith issues were ethnic minority forums or multi cultural forums in which individuals of different faith backgrounds were involved (although usually not in a representative capacity).

**Barnet Council** has, in partnership with local ethnic minority and faith communities, supported the development of a local community forum, the Celebrating Diversity Action Team. This team brings together over 25 representatives from the ethnic minority and faith communities, as well as the voluntary sector and from the Council, police, health agencies and education institutions. The Celebrating Diversity Action Team therefore has a remit and membership wider than “faith”. Barnet is a very diverse community so efforts have been made to ensure that all the faith communities are represented. The delegates representing faith communities are listed as such against their faith. Other delegates are listed as members representing voluntary, community and statutory organisations. If any of our faith delegates were to resign then we would certainly make every effort to find a replacement. The faith communities presently represented include Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim.

*Principal Equalities Adviser, London Borough of Barnet*

However, it should be noted that Barnet is also considering the possible development of a faith network.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) networks or forums are not, however, without complexities as a locus for consultation on faith issues. In one local authority in the North East, for example, there have been expressions of disquiet on the part of some in the faith communities about the fact that the BME network was used to nominate an occupant for the “other faith” faith seat on the Local Strategic Partnership. Members of BME networks and forums may sometimes be of different faiths but not actually have been chosen for this purpose or appropriately nominated by the relevant faith bodies with this in mind.

## **5.8 Creating new inter faith and multi faith networks and forums: the impact of Local Strategic Partnerships, Community Empowerment Networks and Community Strategies**

Local authorities (and Community Empowerment Networks and Local Strategic Partnerships) have a natural interest in finding and using a suitable inter faith or multi faith structure for consultation on policy or for helping nominate to a CEN, LSP or LSP subgroups.

In some authorities there has already been an inter faith mechanism which can be used to nominate a person or people to fill the faith (seats) on the LSP. In Northampton, for example, a representative from the recently formed

Northampton Forum of Faiths was invited to fill a “faith seat”. In other areas, such as Walsall, a new inter faith body has come into being largely in order to nominate and give input into the Community Empowerment Network and the LSP.<sup>xiii</sup> This impetus provided by LSPs and their sub-groups has also contributed to the recent emergence of bodies such as Blackpool Faith Forum, Liverpool Faith Network and Wigan Faith Network.

This need on the part of local authorities, CENs and LSPs for suitable “consultative” inter faith forums has been a contributing factor to several local authorities, CENs and LSPs becoming involved in helping develop one. For example, Burnley Community Network has contracted with Blackburn Diocesan Board for Social Responsibility to carry out a wide range of faith related work, two aspects of which are: promoting the development of a “network of networks” for the faith communities, linked to strategic decision-making partnerships; and enabling Burnley’s local faith communities (including existing local inter faith structures) to be involved at an early stage in the discussion and decision making process in partnership with the local communities, linking with the evolving LSPs, with particular emphasis on forging links with Burnley’s LSP (Burnley Action Partnership).

In some areas, research is being carried out to look at a range of different ways of ensuring representative and effective input from the faith sector into the LSP and other local initiatives. In Lincoln, the Community Network (the community arm of the LSP) is presently researching how to develop a structure for inter faith activity in the City which can enable participants to cooperate on social issues and can also feed into the LSP. This will complement existing inter faith initiatives. In Derby a project team at the University of Derby is carrying out a research and development project, “Religious Group Participation, Inter-Faith Infrastructure, and Capacity-Building in Derby” which will

- identify and initiate the most appropriate way of appointing the two places allocated for participants from religious groups on the Board of Derby City Partnership
- explore the potential for religious group involvement in related developments
- identify and develop appropriate means through which the views and experience of the broad range of religious groups in the city might be drawn together and participate in wider public life
- identify how religious groups in Derby might appropriately contribute to the development of community networks more generally

Elsewhere, faiths have been brought together to discuss input to the LSP, with an inter faith or multi faith forum or network as a likely outcome rather than a precursor to this:

### **Faith Groups and the Local Strategic Partnership in Reading**

Reading has a thriving voluntary sector, which has been involved with the Local Strategic Partnership from the start. While a number of faith groups receive funding from the authority, we felt that it was important to recognise the wider involvement of faith groups in the life of the town. However, like many others involved in designing a representative and inclusive LSP, one of the questions that faced us was how to involve the faith groups.

Working with our Voluntary Sector Support Unit, the Sustainability Policy Officer and an external consultant, a multi faith day workshop was organised and held in Reading Town Hall. Invitees ranged across all major and many minor faiths, and were drawn from contacts that the VSSU already had or by personal recommendation from initial contacts. One comment back to the organisers of the meeting was that “this was the most ecumenical meeting” he had ever attended.

The day was organised around raising awareness of what the LSP could do and asking delegates how they thought that faith groups might be involved. Various ideas were put forward, but the consensus view was that faith groups should be represented at Board level. Although Reading has an existing Inter Faith Group, which makes an important contribution to inter faith understanding, this group did not wish to take on the strategic role of LSP representation.

A multi faith group was therefore established with the purpose of discussing this and identifying representatives for the Board, organised by Reading Churches Together. Initially two representatives were proposed – one to represent the Christian Churches and another to represent other faiths. After some discussion at the LSP Board, one representative and a fully briefed deputy was the model proposed. Currently, the Board member is a Christian and the deputy a Muslim.

It was the LSP Board’s view that the faith groups should themselves tackle the complexity of how multiple faith view points could be represented at Board level by one person. This will require the development of a robust multi faith group in Reading, geared up to considering strategic and service delivery issues. This raises issues of capacity, but already we can see the formation of an active and interested group, with LSP minutes and papers being distributed amongst a group of leaders from the main faiths in Reading

In the London Borough of Wandsworth, a “Faith Communities Meeting” has been under development since February 2001. The link with the LSP is, again, an important factor although the agenda is wider:

### **London Borough of Wandsworth**

For many years the Council has had formal and informal contact with faith groups. For example, through the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE); through direct one-to-one contact with particular groups or through regular meetings with the Borough's Ecumenical Deans on a variety of issues like affordable housing or contact with refugees and asylum seekers.

Following the events of 11 September 2001, the Mayor and leading Councillors visited a number of places of worship of minority faith groups. These visits were primarily to reassure faith communities of the Council's concern to maintain social cohesion and to promise action in the face of any religious or racial harassment, graffiti or intimidation. As a result of this initiative, and the range of issues raised by faith groups with him, the Leader of the Council decided to convene the Faith Communities Meeting.

In February 2002 the first Wandsworth Faith Communities Meeting was held. Representatives from the main faith communities in the borough, identified through the Census, were invited to meet with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

The aim of the meeting was:

- To update and inform representatives about important developments such as the Local Strategic Partnership
- To develop the group's links to the Local Strategic Partnership and hence provide a "voice" for faith communities into the LSP
- To explain the various consultation exercises planned where faith communities' input would be helpful
- To discuss any issues of mutual interest
- To provide an opportunity to resolve potential concerns or tensions quickly and effectively.

The Faith Communities Meeting is still at an early stage of development. Three meetings have been held and attendance and representation still needs some development. Nevertheless, representation has been broadened at the request of members and now includes the following: Christian; Muslim; Sikh; Hindu; Buddhist; Jewish; Baha'i.

The group has also become formally established as a sub-group of the Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership. Representatives from the local Primary Care Trust and the Wandsworth Community Empowerment Fund Network will be joining the enlarged group.

Recent meetings have discussed broad strategic developments like the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. They have also discussed local services such as community clinics for elderly Asian residents.

During the summer of 2003 the Faith Communities Meeting is being consulted directly on the draft Community Strategy for Wandsworth to ensure that the views of the borough's diverse faith groups are fully reflected.

*Head of Quality and Review Coordination, London Borough of Wandsworth*

Authorities, LSPs (and others involved in setting up bodies for consultative purposes) are clearly proceeding with care in an area with many sensitivities and some have been keen to learn from good practice elsewhere:

**Bristol City Council** is exploring the possibility of a network for faiths to come together to respond to policy issues at local authority and sub-regional level and through which the faiths might proactively encourage faith community action on social issues. The social action focus of such a network would complement the work of the longstanding Bristol Inter Faith Group which has done much to promote good inter faith relations over the years.

As part of this exploratory process the Council has recently held a small meeting with members of local faith communities and other interested voluntary and community umbrella organisations. They invited to this a member of Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum to hear of the experiences of a faith forum in another major city and also the Secretary to the Inner Cities Religious Council. Participants welcomed the idea of a network. Consideration is now being given to the next steps. As a first practical step, an experimental “Bristol Diverse Doors Open Day” is being organised to supplement the long established national “Open Doors Day”. This will give an opportunity for people to visit local mosques, gurdwaras and synagogues and will strengthen their understanding and appreciation of the diversity of the community of Bristol.

*Cabinet Services Manager, Bristol City Council*

**Calderdale Faith Communities Partnership** has recently appointed, with funding linked to the Community Facilitation Programme, an Inter Faith Development Worker. The Development Worker’s programme of work will include developing and assisting with the launch of the Calderdale Interfaith Council.

**Bradford Vision** has recently appointed a Faiths Forum Development Worker to assist with the development of a broad based faiths forum for the Bradford District which strengthens and reflects the contribution of faith communities and faith leaders.

It is not only large, mainly urban, authorities that are looking at these issues. The county councils of East Sussex and West Sussex, with the Sussex Police Authority and Churches Together in Sussex, have recently set up a steering group to pull together plans for a conference to begin a dialogue to bring the faith groups in Sussex together. The hope is that a forum will emerge which can be used for consultation on policy issues and feed into the community planning process.

For authorities containing large rural areas and where the population belonging to the smaller faith communities is scattered, it can be a challenge to find the best ways to draw these into the pattern of consultation. East Riding

of Yorkshire Council noted that it is actively seeking appropriate bodies to involve and has recently, for example, established links with the Hull and East Riding Hindu Cultural Association but said “The Council and the Local Strategic Partnership are keen to link with people from non Christian faiths (and also ethnic groups) but this is a real challenge in an area with a low ethnic minority population and a small number of people from non Christian faiths dispersed across a wide area and without formal faith networks which we could approach.” An interesting example of a district council with similar challenges comes from Braintree:

We are a rural District Council with a small ethnic minority population (1.8%). We do not have a great diversity of faith groups in our area. Contact was made with faith groups in our District as part of last summer’s programme of public consultation on our Community Strategy. We asked faith group representatives to an interactive consultation session and then provided them with the resource pack to repeat the consultation session with their faith communities. An individual analysis of their views was given to each faith group who participated. We recently invited faith groups back to receive feedback on priorities identified during the consultation process. We were pleased that our Muslim community were represented at this meeting and this has given us the opportunity to move forward to start some meaningful engagement with this community.

We have also asked our faith groups to consider how best they could be represented on our Community Strategy Steering Group. There is no ecumenical group in the District so we are looking for a way forward that will ensure that:

- we can find a faith group representative for the Steering Group who is acceptable to all groups
- this representative has opportunities to give feedback to the groups they are representing

We can already identify the following barriers to effectively engagement with our faith groups:

- the same faith groups are not always represented at the meetings
- those who do attend do not always send the same representative to meetings

In the long term we would like to encourage our faith groups to establish a framework for working together as this would make our engagement with them more effective.

*Braintree District Council*

The challenge is also one experienced by local authorities where numbers of faiths other than Christian are comparatively low and where networking is at an early stage.

Inter faith or multi faith forums were not always the first or most obvious choice for local authorities thinking about consultative patterns. Some respondents noted the importance for their authority of using a number of different routes for consultation to ensure maximum input and as great a degree of “representativeness” as possible:



Birmingham City Council is actively working with the faith communities and inter faith organisations to ensure that people of faith are consulted and effectively involved. The nature of the relationship is being developed carefully to ensure that community organisations are fully engaged in the process of crafting the relationship, its purpose, etc. A key element to a quality partnership between the communities and local authority is the communities' ability to engage with the local authority on relevant and suitable issues and the community representatives' capacity to act as "representatives" with a suitable mandate for doing so, and/or have authority from their respective communities.

*Policy Implementation Officer, Equalities Division, Birmingham City Council*

For many local authorities and LSPs, faith mapping exercises are helping discern the contours of the local religious landscape and also to identify the faith structures and personnel with whom consultation will be important, individually and through multi faith channels. An example of a recent mapping exercise of this kind is that carried out in Sefton in 2002–3.<sup>xiv</sup>

Faith directories have been published in a number of local authorities such as London Borough of Camden and are being developed in others such as Oxford.

## **5.9 Multi faith meetings, forums and partnerships linked to local authorities**

Some local authorities, such as LB Islington, already have inter faith or multi faith consultative forums, with a close link to the authority (although usually independent of it), up and running.<sup>xv</sup> For example, in Wellingborough a Faith Forum has met annually for the last two years. Its meetings are an opportunity for dialogue between religious leaders and the Council and also for faith leaders from Wellingborough to meet and exchange information. The Forum was started and continues to operate out of a joint concern by the Chief Executive of the local authority and the Anglican Rural Dean.<sup>xvi</sup> In the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames, the Ecumenical Borough Deans had been meeting with the Chief Executive of the authority. Last year it was agreed to widen the membership of the meetings. The name of the meeting was changed to "Inter Faith Community Leaders (meeting with the Chief Executive)". The group meets twice a year. The Mayor of London and his officers have quarterly meetings with London faith leaders. London Civic Forum has, as one of its electoral sectors, a "faith sector" which elects 8 members and has met as a separate group.

The North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership is an interesting example of a forum with a strong link to a local authority and a positive working relationship with this.



### **North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership**

The North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership has been operating in its present multi faith form since 2001. It is used by North Lincolnshire Council as a consultative body and also often used as a consultative body by external partners such as the police and organisations from the voluntary sector.

The Multi Faith Partnership's aims are:

- to provide a forum for exploring faith issues and developing dialogue between faith communities
- to help develop mutual respect amongst people of all different faiths in the North Lincolnshire area
- to help raise awareness of faiths and faith issues amongst the community of North Lincolnshire
- to aid understanding and tolerance for both young and old people in the faith communities

It has a secretariat made up of Chairman (from the local Churches), Secretary (who is presently the PA to Chief Executive), Treasurer and Press Officer. Cabinet members, the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive are all members. The council has also authorised a budget for the Partnership and allows use of council premises for meetings. Annual funding comes as part of the Strategic Partnership Budget. A post of Project Worker is currently under discussion.

As well as acting as a forum for discussion on policy and other issues, the MFP has taken part in public events. For example, in September 2002 there was a procession of the Partnership and members of the public and the dedication of a stone to mark International Peace Day by the Multi Faith group. All faiths were involved in this event and it is hoped to repeat a similar event this year.

*North Lincolnshire Council*

How a multi faith forum relates to the authority in structural terms is an interesting question. They are generally seen by authorities as freestanding even if very closely linked and serviced by the authority.

The new Southwark Multi Faith Forum is an interesting example of the development of a consultative body but also of arrangements designed to allow autonomy while encouraging a close working relationship with the local authority. The post of Multi Faith Coordinator was created and funded through Neighbourhood Renewal Fund money and the Council is supporting the NRF funded post/work by hosting the post in Council offices. As the post is funded by NRF the official aim of the Forum is to encourage direct involvement of faith based organisations and faith communities in renewal and regeneration initiatives. The respondent notes that the Coordinator's work plan is managed by the Multi Faith Forum itself but he is based within the Community Involvement and Development Unit (CIDU) in the Council. This means that the Forum retains control over the Coordinator's work but that he is more involved on a day to day level with the Local Authority than he

would be if based elsewhere. This was flagged up by the respondent as a good practice model which could be useful elsewhere.

Inter faith initiatives with a link to local government tend to have a strong focus on social action and to describe themselves as “multi faith” rather than “inter faith”. Their naming and their distinctive identity and focus has been described at greater length in chapter 3.

## 5.10 An abundance of riches

In a number of areas, new multi faith consultative structures are emerging alongside existing inter faith bodies.

### **Merseyside – a place where faith meets faith**

Merseyside is an area rich in inter faith initiatives. Since the mid 80s, Merseyside Inter Faith Group has worked to promote friendship, understanding and cooperation between individuals from different faiths in the area.

In 2001 Merseyside Council of Faiths came into existence, with the assistance of Merseyside Inter Faith Group, to contribute to this and also to articulate concerns of religious minorities and provide channels of consultation with other groups/agencies/ and local government.

Recently, Liverpool Community Spirit has been commissioned by Liverpool Council for Voluntary Service and Merseyside Council of Faiths to facilitate a faith community network specifically for Liverpool.

In April 2003 over 80 members of Liverpool’s faith communities came to a meeting to hear about and participate in discussion on the new Faith Network.

Now in its early stages, “Liverpool Faith Community Network” is independent, Liverpool specific and has a strong focus on regeneration issues. It meets every six weeks. Its work spans a wide area, with participants from Liverpool and also from surrounding areas such as Knowsley, Sefton, St Helen’s, and Wirral.

The Liverpool Community Spirit Co-ordinator is the Faith Network Facilitator. With Community Empowerment Funding a Network Administrator has recently been appointed.

In such situations, harmonious and complementary working arrangements, of the kind noted in most instances, are clearly the result of very careful processes of consultation.

## 5.11 Community Cohesion

The examples of local authority linked forums discussed above in Section 9 show that there is often, in these, a very clear connection to specific policy initiatives and to the work of Local Strategic Partnerships and their subgroups. The social goods that these are designed to encourage – local communities with a shared vision of life in their area; improved health care; crime reduction; better housing and physical environment; reduced worklessness – are important ones in which faith groups have a natural interest.

There is also a broader and less easy to define good which many authorities are seeking through their structures or through existing local inter faith structures: community cohesion. As noted in Section 5.1, the LGA's *Guidance on Community Cohesion* stresses that "at community level it is important to foster understanding and respect between different faith traditions as well as between different cultural and ethnic groups". It encourages local authorities to "build cross-cultural networks and inter faith structures" because: "The development of effective local inter faith structures, bringing together representatives of different faith communities in a local authority area, can provide a valuable framework both for promoting mutual understanding and co-operation between them..."

This is a harder process to define, initiate and measure. To some degree, the authority linked multi faith forums can be seen as forwarding the agenda because they are places where faith community members meet, in the context of the work of the forum, and to develop relationships of trust. However, the kinds of work that need to be carried out actively to engage different faith communities with each other – education, conflict resolution, and work on shared projects – do not fit easily with the local government and LSP agendas. They shade into the area of "inter faith dialogue" of which some authorities and LSPs are wary and require extensive programmes of work which do not, in all cases, match well the categories for which grants are given from local authority core budgets or through sources such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund or the Community Empowerment Fund. <sup>xviii</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that some of the most wide ranging programmes, designed to strengthen and deepen community cohesion in their areas, continue to be carried out by inter faith organisations which have a good working relationship with their authorities but a very definite separate existence and role. A very good example of this is the Leicester Council of Faiths (see the good practice example in the Annex to this chapter).

## 5.12 Local authorities in Scotland

The project wrote to the City Councils of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow and sought information by phone from East Renfrewshire. <sup>xx</sup>

Questionnaires were returned from all four authorities. The information from this small sample, together with the information from East Renfrewshire, reflects for the most part a high level of awareness on the part of the councils in Scotland with multi faith populations of the importance of consulting faith communities and, in most cases, of the importance of inter faith structures.

One Scottish local authority had recently been involved in setting up a local inter faith group which it saw as representative and consultable on policy matters. Another had played an active role in instigating a faith forum for their city. A third authority noted that it consulted with local faith groups "on matters where there is a clear overlap between ethnicity and religious belief" and had good working relationships with these. It noted that although it were not aware of any grant aid *per se* to the local inter faith group, it would "usually give grant aid for a specific project, for example, a project working with young people aimed at reducing religious intolerance". A fourth authority was unaware of its local inter group and of any local inter faith

activity. In the fifth, initial groundwork has been done by the authority looking at whether there is a need and interest in an inter faith forum.

Glasgow Forum of Faiths<sup>xx</sup> held its first meeting in March 2003 at St Mungo's Museum. The Forum brings together leaders of faith communities with civic authorities to work for the good of Glasgow. The administration of its work is the responsibility of a broadly representative Steering Group drawn from faith communities. It is supported by Glasgow City Council which services it and is responsible for expenses incurred in its running.

In addition to inter faith bodies, East Renfrewshire Council noted its Minority Ethnic Community Forum. This brings people from different minority ethnic communities, including faith groups, together to engage with the local authority. They work together on particular issues, some of which are linked to faith – for example women from some of the faith communities jointly working to get access to single sex bathing sessions for religious reasons.

### 5.13 Good practice in partnership working on inter faith issues

The project chose four examples of good practice in partnership working between local government and local faith and inter faith structures to look at in greater depth. Material about these follows in an annex to this chapter.

i This chapter focuses particularly on England and Wales. On the advice of the Scottish Inter Faith Council the project also wrote to the 4 local authorities in Scotland with the most multi faith populations, rather than to all of them. See section 12 of this chapter for discussion of the Scottish returns.

ii See, for example, Local Government Association, in association with the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Inter Faith Network, *Guidance on Community Cohesion* (London: Local Government Association, 2002) 11–17. See chapter 2 and Appendix 6 of the present report for discussion of other factors leading to increased local government interest in inter faith relations and multi faith consultation patterns.

iii *Guidance on Community Cohesion*, 12.

iv Ibid, 21.

v Ibid.

vi Local Government Association in association with the Active Community Unit of the Home Office, the Inner Cities Religious Council of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Inter Faith Network, *Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities*, (London: Local Government Association, 2002).

iv See, for example, Jenny Kartupelis, Zoe Morris and Kath Maguire, *Faith in Action: A Report on Faith Communities and Social Capital in the East of England*, (East of England Faiths Leadership Conference, 2003). Julie Lewis and Elizabeth Randolph-Horn *Faith, Hope and Participation: Celebrating Faith Groups' Role in Neighbourhood Renewal*, (London: New Economics Foundation and Church Urban Fund, 2001). *Regenerating London: Faith Communities and Social Action*, London Churches Action Group and Greater London Enterprise, 2003. Richard Farnell, Forbert Furbey, Stephen Shams Al-Haqq Hills, Marie Macey and Greg Smith, "Faith" in *Urban Regeneration: Engaging Faith Communities in Urban Regeneration*, Joseph Rowntree, (Bristol: Policy Press, 2003) explores some the practicalities of engaging faith groups in the regeneration of communities. See also, Doreen Finneron and Adam Dinham ed, *Building on Faith: Faith Buildings in Neighbourhood Renewal* (London: Church Urban Fund, 2002).

viii Unitary (some in England are Shire Unitaries and some are Metropolitan Unitaries), Metropolitan and London Boroughs are "single-tier" authorities, responsible for all local authority functions. Elsewhere the system is "two tier", with responsibilities divided between separate district and county councils. See the downloadable LGA factsheets "Local Government Structure" and "Types and Names of Local Authorities in England and Wales" for further information – [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk).

ix Information relating to multi faith forums is covered under sections 7–9 below and, where separate information has been supplied by these forums, also in Chapter 3.

x Suffolk Inter Faith Resource and Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource Centre, both of which carry out dual, overlapping, educational and inter faith functions. See Chapter 4 section 8 for further discussion of these initiatives.

- xi Local inter faith groups reported a wider pattern of financial and in kind support from local authorities. 20 groups noted receiving staff support. 12 reported some type of 'in kind' support and 27 reported some current local authority funding. The information on financial and in kind support which came in from the separate approaches to local inter faith bodies and to local authorities could not, however, easily be drawn on for a combined picture since in some cases there was no reply from a local authority from whose area an inter faith body had responded. In other cases, local inter faith groups were aware of small grants and in kind support of which the local authority respondent from their area was evidently not aware (presumably because the grant or in kind support had been made by a different part of the authority).
- xii The "no opinion" column reflects both places where there was no inter faith group or council and those places where there was one but the respondent did not know how well it reflected the local faith make up.
- xiii Walsall Borough Multifaith Consultative Forum. At the time of this project the Forum has nominated a Christian member to the CEN and a Muslim member to the LSP.
- xiv Ultan Russell, *Living Faiths in Sefton: Report and Recommendations on a Mapping Exercise of Faith Communities in Sefton*, (Liverpool: Sefton Council for Voluntary Service; Sefton Community Empowerment Fund and Diocese of Liverpool, 2003.) Camden Council, *Neighbours: A Directory of Faith Communities in Camden*, (London: Camden Council, 2002).
- xv The Islington Faith Forum has been running since 2001. It is presently chaired by the Executive member responsible for communities.
- xvi Although Chief Executives of authorities such as Wellingborough and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea are playing key roles in multi faith developments, Leaders of Councils as well as councillors are also involved in a number of authorities. However, it should be noted that the survey found only 27 of responding authorities (11%) as yet have a councillor with particular responsibility for faith and inter faith issues.
- xvii In London, a London Borough Faiths Network is being developed, linking people working within local authorities on faiths development work, people representing faiths on Local Strategic Partnerships and others working in these areas.
- xviii Here it should, perhaps, be noted that a few authorities are wary of funding or helping set up any projects with a link to religion. For example, of inter faith forums, one respondent who recognised the importance of good inter faith relations commented, even so: "It would seem more appropriate and less invidious (on a political level) if church/religious leaders take it upon themselves in establishing such a lobbying group".
- xix This pattern was agreed following discussion with the Scottish Inter Faith Council.
- xx See page Chapter 2, Section 2 (e) for the background of its formation and Chapter 3, Section 4 for its wide ranging aims.

# Partnership working: some good practice examples

## A. London Borough of Camden

Note by London Borough of Camden's Senior Policy Officer (Faith Communities)

In 1999 Chief Officers acknowledged that there was little Council engagement with faith communities. So work began to redress this situation.

In February 2000 the Council commissioned the Office for Public Management (OPM) to open dialogue with faith communities about relations with the Council, their main areas of concern and how to overcome any barriers.

In the summer of 2000 the OPM produced its report: *Building Bridges Through Faith Communities*. This report identified two key tasks for the Council to address:

- to acknowledge that for faith communities religion is integral to their culture and ways of working
- to be more explicit about religion as an issue of equality and diversity

The report also recommended that the Council appoint a part – time inter faith liaison officer.

In December 2000 the OPM report was presented to the Council's Policy Development Committee (PDC), which agreed to continue work in this area, developing and maintaining links with the borough's faith communities. The PDC agreed to create a new post working with faith organisations and the communities they represent to develop links with groups and individuals in the borough, and co-ordinate this approach with initiatives being undertaken across the Council's Departments. This would form part of the Council's ongoing long-term work meeting its priorities of inclusion, capacity building, community development and its response to the MacPherson Report.

The proposal to create a post was taken forward and designed under the title Senior Policy Officer (Faith Communities) in Corporate Policy and Projects, Chief Executive's Department and the holder began work in September 2001. The post was initially a temporary two year agreement, but has now been mainstreamed and made permanent.

In May 2002 a multi faith meeting was held to discuss community cohesion. Individuals were seated in the Council Chamber next to their geographical neighbours to facilitate inter faith contact. This has been the practice for all multi faith gatherings since.

During 2002, a directory of faiths in Camden was put together following individual discussions with at least forty local faith leaders. The directory, called *Neighbours*, was the result of collaboration between the Council's Senior Policy Officer (Faith Communities) and Camden Information Services.



As well as listing places of worship and other religious groups by neighbourhood (ward), the directory includes information about nine of the world's major religions, and a 2003 calendar of religious festivals. Photographs of local religious sites illustrate the directory. It was launched in October 2002 at a multi faith gathering. A reprint was issued in January 2003.

In February 2003 a meeting between Social Services and black majority Churches called Supporting Families and Protecting Our Children was held. It resulted in an action plan aimed at raising understanding between Social Services and the black majority Church leaders and ultimately increasing the number of foster carers and potential adopters of African and African Caribbean origins.

In April 2002 the Council arranged a multi faith tour of the treasures of the British Library. Sacred texts from many of the world's major faiths were viewed by members of Camden's faith communities: Christians; Muslims; Jews; Hindus and Zoroastrians all saw parts of each other's histories and heard information about them from the library's curators. The Mayor and Leader hosted the event at the British Library. At least one hundred and sixty individuals from the faith communities attended the event, which was very well received.

In June 2003 a meeting of faith leaders was convened by the Council to discuss the idea of establishing a network. As a consequence of this meeting the Camden Faith Communities' Partnership (CFCP) was established and a steering group set up. The Council will be facilitating the development of this partnership, anticipating that it will be fully independent of the Council by September 2004. It has met twice since its establishment; the second meeting's main feature was a discussion between the Council's newly appointed Chief Executive and the CFCP members.

For October 2003 during One World Week the Council has organised a tour of Camden, visiting different places of worship in a mini bus with a multi faith group. The aim is to increase understanding between people of different faith traditions and use the tour to send the message of understanding and valuing diversity out to a wider audience.

## **B. Forum of Faiths Kensington and Chelsea**

Soon after 11 September 2001, the Chief Executive of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) held his quarterly meeting with the Borough Deans and they suggested that the representatives of the Muslim faith should be brought into the meetings. The Chief Executive and a number of key members of the Churches went to the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre for exploratory conversations with key personnel there. The Muslims welcomed the idea of extending the Borough Deans meeting but felt that other faiths should also be involved and were keen to see a multi faith forum developed. The Community Relations Section of RBKC supported this idea and further exploration of this idea began.

At a meeting at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre in December 2001, the objectives and nature of such a forum were discussed and an initial meeting of what would become the forum took place in January 2002 at which the Chief Executive of the Council was present. All the major faiths in Kensington and Chelsea were invited to the meeting (using the Community Relations Section's *Guide to Ethnic and Faith Organisations in the Royal Borough*). There was further discussion of objectives and of the possible name for the Forum.



Participants wanted it to be an independent body and opted for the name “Forum of Faiths Kensington and Chelsea”. The Forum of Faiths came into existence after this meeting.

RBKC volunteered the time and support of the Community Relations Section’s Information and Initiatives Officer who has, since the outset, had responsibility for servicing the Forum. It was decided to work in a relatively informal way, with two Co-Chairs of different faiths (presently Christian and Muslim). Forum meetings are open meetings. Votes have not needed to be taken because people work on the basis of trust and shared interest. The Forum is used as a sounding board by many different Council departments (and by others such as the Police) who are given slots to come and speak with the Forum at its meetings. The Forum validated the position of the current holder of the faith seat on the LSP and will in future be involved in the process of nomination for this position.

Over the past year, the Council and those involved in the Forum have been using all their networks to ensure full involvement of all key faiths. The Forum is also working actively to encourage greater participation from women of different faith traditions. In January 2003 a five person steering group (presently with Christian, Hindu and Muslim members) was appointed to plan forward work. The Mayor will be hosting a public launch of the Forum in October in the Mayor’s Parlour. A series of faith exhibitions organised with the Forum with the theme “serving the community” will also happen in October. The ten exhibition panels will be shown successively in the Civic Suite of Kensington Town Hall, the Chelsea Old Town Hall and the Isaac Newton Centre in North Kensington.

### **C. Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum**

Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum serves as a forum for faith communities to enter into dialogue with each other and with relevant organs of government, including the City Council, Yorkshire Forward and the Regional Chamber for Yorkshire and Humberside.

It has a strong focus on issues such as regeneration and faith based social action and it presently has Council members serving on the Board of the Local Strategic Partnership and on both its Economy and Neighbourhood Strategy Groups. It has a special concern for activity and policy development that addresses social exclusion and religious discrimination. In November 2002 it co-hosted the launch of the Community Cohesion work in Leeds on behalf of the LSP.

LFCLF developed out of a process which began in 1998 with a series of open forum style meetings. Its emphases complement those of Leeds’ longer established inter faith body, Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship (which in general has more of a focus on spiritual dialogue), with which it works in partnership on various projects. Concord is open to individuals to join and the Forum only has group membership. Much of the work is shared and there is a big overlap in the people involved in both groups.

LFCLF is steered by a Council which was launched in March 2001 and includes Baha’is, Buddhists (from the Leeds Buddhist Council), Christians (Anglican, Catholic, Free Church, and the Black- led Churches), Hindus (from the main temple), Jews (from the Leeds Jewish Representative Council), Muslims (through the Leeds Muslim Forum), and Sikhs (through the Council of

Sikh Gurdwaras (Leeds)). Leeds City Council is represented by a former Councillor.

Secretarial assistance is provided by Leeds VOICE and Leeds Church Institute have provided 2 days a week of staff time to assist the Forum.

#### **D. Leicester Council of Faiths**

In 1986, members of different faith communities in Leicester met at the town hall at the initiative of the Lord Mayor and went on to form themselves into a council of faiths. Leicester Council of Faiths' (LCF) members represent, on a faith community basis, the eight principal faiths in the City: Buddhists, Baha'is, Christians, Hindus (including Swaminaryan representatives), Jains, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs.

LCF has retained a strong link with Leicester City Council. It is consulted by the Council on a range of issues from education to neighbourhood renewal and community strategy. The City Council provides funding, *via* the Education Department, towards the rent of LCF's Welcome Centre, some running costs, and the salary of a part-time coordinator. A Leicester City Council Policy Officer, part of whose role involves supporting the Council of Faiths, said:

"The Authority sees the Council of Faiths as a key Partner and stake holder. It wishes to assist capacity building, project development, participation in the Community Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal as well as strengthen Community Cohesion. Faith communities contain in depth resources and people that will help build Leicester as a model multi cultural multi faith city over the next decade. We want to involve more young people and create opportunities for all communities to increase their understanding of each other's spiritual patrimony. The 2001 Census revealed large Hindu and Muslim groups but also significant secular humanist opinion in the city. How we educate our young people will be vital to this process. Many departments will be working on this evolution."

LCF's wide programme of activity includes:

- work with local bodies such as the City Council, the universities, schools, City hospitals, Fire and Rescue Services, Police and many others to support and encourage them in building a multi-faith and multi-cultural society (for example, work with hospitals and the University of Leicester on matters of chaplaincy provision and faith-sensitive provision of services)
- organising events such as the first Holocaust Memorial Day (Genocide Day in Europe) on 27 January with a special civic observance; an inter faith observance for the victims of the Gujarat Earthquake in 2001; and a memorial service in November 2001 for the victims of the attack on the Twin Towers
- producing a directory of places of worship in Leicester
- input to Leicester's Cultural Strategy Partnership (one of LCF's members is presently Chair of this)
- diversity training seminars for public and commercial organisations providing an overview of the major faiths in Leicester
- conferences
- publications, such as *An Overview of the Major Faiths in Leicester*

# Inter faith working at regional level in England

In the last five years, the developing importance of faith networks at regional level in England has become apparent. The agenda of regionalisation and the need for suitable structures for faith and inter faith bodies across a region to be able to feed into Regional Assemblies and the work of Regional Development Agencies and regional initiatives has led to a development of initiatives in a number of the English Regions.

The South West Council of Faiths was the first regional inter faith structure to be founded. It started in 1997 and its aims are: to elect a representative of the faith communities in the South West to the (nominated) SW Regional Assembly and to foster discussion within and amongst the faith communities on issues within the competence of the SW Regional Assembly. It meets approximately four times a year. Although individual members, representing faith communities, are often involved in inter faith groups and other inter faith activities, the SWCF does not, of itself, discuss religious issues. Members are nominated by their originating faith community group. SWCF as yet has not received any funding for its work.

The South East of England Faith Forum(SEEFF) was founded in 2001. Its aims are to encourage and enable faith communities in the South East England Region to: offer welfare, support and education services to local communities, particularly communities suffering poverty and deprivation; contribute to the social, community and religious well being of the region; work together to develop and share experience, practice and learning, for the benefit of local communities more generally as well as of faith communities themselves; and to represent their views and experience to structures in the region. The South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) representatives and the Executive Members are appointed at the Faith Forum where elections take place. Executive members meet at least three times in the year to develop work and to discuss any relevant issues. The Regional Development Agency, South East Economic Development Agency (SEEDA) provides office space and facilities to enable Forum administration.

SEEFF has held two conferences: one in September 2001 on issues of social inclusion and the other in October 2002 on the role of faith groups and regional issues. A further conference is planned for March 2004 entitled 'Faith at Work- building sustainable communities.' SEEDA has funded 50% of a research officer's time for one year, from 2003–4, and various Christian denominations have matched this. This is enabling a programme of research looking at the extent of faith sector work in North Kent, Thanet, Hastings, Brighton and Hove and the Isle of Wight. A report on the research is expected to be published in March 2004.

The East of England Faiths Council (EEFC) was established in early 2002 to bring together the leaders of the main faiths in the East of England so that they

can provide a point of contact with bodies of regional governance and facilitate the major faiths speaking with a common voice on regional, secular issues; and achieve faith seats on the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), and act as an electoral college for these. It meets every 2/3 months and has four co-chairs, any two of whom can chair a meeting. All major faiths of the region (as noted by the 2001 census) attend meetings. Nominations for membership are canvassed from all members on mailing list. EEFC has a number of projects running. It has submitted position statements to EERA, is in dialogue with EERA, the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and GO-East and now has a representative for a “faith seat” in the expanded EERA. It has recently published *Faith in Action: A Report on Faith Communities and Social Capital in the East of England*<sup>i</sup>. This project was supported by EEDA and Go-East. EEFC itself, has as of yet, received no public funding, and is presently reliant on the East of England Churches Network for its funding and secretariat.

The East of England Faiths Agency, was founded in 2001. With funds provided by the Regional Strategic Engagement Fund, it has appointed a field worker whose remit is to establish a database of all the faith and inter faith groups in the region, to establish contact with them, and to set up an email link with each. EEFA intends to keep abreast of the work of the East of England Development Agency and the East of England Regional Assembly and inform the faith and inter faith groups of relevant proposals; to receive feedback from the groups and collate it in a form suitable for submission to the East of England Development Agency and the East of England Regional Assembly. EEFA is presently managed by a Steering Group which was appointed at a meeting of members in Cambridge. The Steering Committee holds ‘virtual’ meetings using email. When fully mapped, the faith groups will be involved in nominating and electing the managing body of EEFA. Occasional meetings are held in various locations.

A representative West Midlands Faith Forum was launched in June 2003. Its aims are: “to explore contemporary issues around faith and regeneration; to celebrate approaches within faith communities which promote social cohesion; to inform around faith and mainstreaming in the wider regeneration of the region; and to promote the participation of faith communities in the life of the region”. The process of founding the Forum was initiated by the West Midlands Regional Assembly which set up a Faith Task Group to advise the Assembly on means of engaging with faith communities and on the potential role for a forum of this kind.<sup>ii</sup> The Forum’s Executive is having its first meeting in September this year. In addition to the Executive Committee, an Advisory Panel reflecting faith leaders in the Region is being formed. A wider membership group will also have an important part to play in the life of the Faiths Forum. Three years funding for a Secretariat has been granted through the Regional Strategic Engagement Fund. The charity Human Cities Initiative, based at Birmingham University, is providing administrative support.

In the East Midlands, where the East Midlands Regional Assembly has two faith representatives: Christian and “other faith” (presently a member of the Hindu community), discussion is in progress about a possible support and guidance group or forum with representatives from inter faith groups and

faith communities. As part of this discussion process, there have been two meetings this year with participants from inter faith organisations across the region. A constitution is now under development.

In the North West, the Regional Assembly presently has one faith representative who is from the Christian Churches but with a brief to represent all faiths. This post is currently filled by the Churches' Officer for the North West who is based for part of his time at the Regional Development Agency and works with the regional strategy team to encourage faith participation in the Regeneration and Social Inclusion agendas. He is Vice-Chair of the Economic and Social Partners Group on the Regional Assembly and, as such, sits on the Executive of the Assembly. The post of Churches' Officer for the North West was established and funded by 26 ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the North West Region (Anglican, Baptist, Friends, Methodist, Roman Catholic, United Reformed, and Salvation Army at Diocesan/District level) to assist the Churches in relation to the NW Development Agency, the Regional Assembly and Government Office North West. The Churches' Officer is working to establish a NW Regional Inter-Faith Forum to 'validate' the 'faith' seat on the NW Regional Assembly. An initial regional faith conference was held in Blackburn in April 2002. Preparatory work on setting up the forum includes a mapping exercise of all faith communities in the North West and a survey of all community activity undertaken by faith communities other than worship. The launch of the document is due to take place in November.

The Regional Assembly for Yorkshire and the Humber has one faith seat, currently held by the Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber. The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly has commissioned independent research into the viability of a Regional Faith Forum which would link to the Assembly and provide mechanisms for networking amongst faith groups and organisations.<sup>iii</sup> This research has been managed by the Churches Regional Commission.

No regional inter faith structure exists at present in the North East, although there are some regional inter faith developments, for example, the Faith Communities Regional Rural Development Officer Steering Group, which is an initiative of the Churches Regional Commission, following a series of regional rural consultations. Membership of the Steering Group is primarily Church-based but it is chaired by a Hindu member of the Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel and Newcastle Faith Leaders Group. The Group is looking at ways to support faith communities engaging in rural regeneration. The intention is for any funded posts ultimately to be managed by an inter faith group.

From the returns from different regions and from follow up conversations with some of the respondents, it is clear that regional inter faith structures are in various stages in development but that they are facing similar challenges:

- Trying to build region-wide inter faith structures in a context where few faiths have regional structures (or even county ones) and where many in the faith communities have as yet low awareness of regional issues and opportunities.
- A lack of awareness on the part of many of the importance of regional working.



- Lack of funding. Most regional inter faith forums are running with no financial support for their administrative costs or core work from the regional bodies which are asking for their assistance. Two regional inter faith structures are, in effect, being largely supported by one or more Christian denominations. One respondent commented: “If the faith groups are going to respond to the encouragement to become engaged in social community activity at regional level, central Government needs to set aside funding to each RDA to ensure this happens without the necessity for faith groups and regional inter faith structures to bid competitively – and with a huge input of time and energy – for project funding from specific government programmes.”
- Complexities over ensuring that patterns of nominations to the forums ensure that members are reasonably reflective of the faith pattern of the region and have appropriate ways to convey the views of their faith community to the forum and to be able to report back to it from the forum.
- The question of how best to work with the pattern of inter faith groups and councils that exist in towns and cities within the Region and with cross county initiatives which may straddle two Regions.
- Faith community participants who are balancing a large number of requests for assistance because they are involved both in their local inter faith council and in the regional initiative.

As well as regional forums, a sub-regional inter faith grouping has emerged in the Black Country. Established in 1999 the Black Country Consortium is a public private voluntary sector partnership whose goal is to explore sub regional ways of working where added value to work and commitment at district level can be achieved. The four local authorities of the Black Country – Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton – were instrumental in setting up the Black Country Consortium. The Black Country Consortium has allocated one faith seat which is presently occupied by the Anglican Bishop of Wolverhampton. He works with a Contact Group to seek to cope with representing adequately the range of faiths in the area, and to identify and prepare possible successors in ‘sitting’. Each inter faith body in the area covered by the Consortium elects 4 members onto the Contact Group which meets once a year.

i Jenny Kartupelis, Zoe Morris and Kath Maguire, *Faith in Action: A Report on Faith Communities and Social Capital in the East of England*, East of England Faiths Leadership Conference, 2003. East of England Faiths Leadership Conference was the earlier name of the East of England Faiths Council.

ii A report on the process leading up to the formation of the Forum, *Exploring the Formation of a Regional Faith Forum for the Faith Communities of the West Midlands*, by Elizabeth McDonnell, looks at issues of role, scope, structure and purpose.

iii The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly and the Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and Humber published jointly in 2003 a second edition of *Religious Literacy: A Practical Guide to the Region’s Faith Communities*.

# Capacity, resources and differing agendas: some challenges in partnership working

- 7.1 Consultation capacity
- 7.2 Programme capacity
- 7.3 Funding dilemmas
- 7.4 Local inter faith bodies and local government: complementary or competing agendas?
- 7.5 Making the case for inter faith structures: a shared agenda

Opportunities for local inter faith engagement now present themselves on many fronts. For local inter faith bodies, there are increasing possibilities of work with faith communities and with local authorities and other public sector bodies to increase inter faith understanding and cooperation in their areas. For local authorities and other public sector bodies there are corresponding opportunities for partnership working. With the opportunities for engagement, however, come some challenges for those engaging in inter faith work.

## 7.1 Consultation capacity

Phone calls to individuals who had received questionnaires but not yet returned them often revealed a combination of satisfaction at being consulted on an increasing range of issues by an increasing range of bodies and a simultaneous feeling of being completely overwhelmed by consultation exercises.

The overload phenomenon can occasionally be attributed to ill thought out or administered consultative exercises with impractical deadlines.<sup>1</sup> However, it is also due to the fact that most faith community members dealing with issues such as Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) participation or involvement are not paid employees of faith organisations and have to take leave from work to attend day time meetings. They rarely have secretarial assistance and have to play a time consuming role in organising meetings of their community at which they can report back or draw in views to present to the LSP or other body (particularly if their faith has no authority-wide representative council or forum). One local authority respondent from a unitary authority in the North East commented: “The small BME community have been overwhelmed with the level of consultation and the positions and participation offered.” This



particular authority was mindful of the issues and also commented, “We are working with them to develop capacity and ensure that representation is tailored to their needs.” This degree of up front assistance was not noted in many other authority returns (although it may be happening in some areas but simply not have been reported).<sup>ii</sup>

This same feeling of limited capacity was expressed by some members of local inter faith bodies. As noted earlier in the report, over 80% of these bodies have no paid staff at all and of those which have staff, most are part time. This means that most responses to consultations and to invitations to participate in inter faith projects are being responded to by people working in a voluntary capacity and who are often extremely busy as they are involved in several voluntary initiatives. The same person, may well, for example, be secretary of the inter faith group, treasurer of the local Council of Christians and Jews branch and a member of their local REC board. A number of local inter faith bodies expressed the view that they could respond more effectively if they had at least a part time member of staff.

In this context of increasing requests for assistance but absence, in the case of many faith communities, of local or regional faith community umbrella body structures that can feed into or support these, it is clear that much is sometimes expected of the Christian Churches. There appears to be an expectation in some areas that the Churches will, in effect, resource local, and even regional, inter faith structures. Although they are clearly active and willing partners in inter faith work around the country (and particular individuals are playing key roles), there were a few comments offered in follow up phone calls by members of the Christian community who felt anxious about the burden this was putting on their increasingly slender resources but also about the possibly “colonial” aspect of the Christians being the “providers” and “hosts” of meetings and programmes.

## **7.2 Programme capacity**

There are similar challenges relating to ability to carry out programmes of work to promote good inter faith relations locally. As noted in chapter 2, most local inter faith bodies operate on budgets of between £0 and £500 a year. This, allied with absence of staff and, in most cases, of any office space, makes for a programme heavily reliant on energetic and committed volunteers who are willing to dig deep into their own pockets to make projects and events happen. Many excellent developments certainly do happen this way but resources frequently do not match up to what groups see as the local needs.

Inter faith groups and councils which have secured core or project funding are quite clear about the significant impact this has made. Gateshead Inter Faith Forum, for example, notes the establishment, with other partners, of a Positive Images Project with Home Office funding. This has enabled the recruitment of a development officer and an administrative worker, “so allowing much more action than our voluntary forum members could hope to achieve alone.” Some inter faith bodies have been able to carry out extensive programmes as a result of funding, for example the programmes for Social Inclusion for children aged 10 to 12 in the primary and secondary Schools of Pendle run by Building Bridges Interfaith Community Project – Nelson and

Brierfield and made possible by grants from the Lancashire Children's Fund and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. Grants for core work or salaries have also made a considerable difference to the work of local inter bodies such as Nottingham Inter Faith Council, Leicester Council of Faiths and Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group and to inter faith bodies linked to education centres, such as Suffolk Inter Faith Resource and Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource Centre.

### 7.3 Funding dilemmas

A big challenge for local inter faith bodies is to secure adequate funding. Reasons include the fact that: many trusts exclude "religious activities" from their areas of support; local faith groups usually have limited funds from which to find support for inter faith initiatives; and lottery money is not acceptable to some faith groups, notably Muslims and some Christian denominations, and therefore accepting this can sometime cause disagreement within inter faith groups.

Also, local authorities are cautious about the nature of what they are prepared to support and fund. This is sometimes because of anxieties that an inter faith group is very unrepresentative of its area, or that it might be used by faith groups for proselytising. The caution can also stem from the fact that there is a thin line between a consultative forum and a forum which becomes a base for independent campaigning or lobbying which is out of keeping with the ethos and purpose of the local authority. So, for example, as noted in chapter 5, one respondent from a district council in the North East recognised the importance of good inter faith relations but commented: "It would seem more appropriate and less invidious (on a political level) if church/religious leaders take it upon themselves in establishing such a lobbying group". Respondents from a number of other authorities were careful to explain that their authorities provided funding for faith based social projects (on the basis of social needs in the area) and for occasional special events such as Diwali lights or multi cultural melas, but they were wary of funding faith or inter faith projects which could move away from the "safe" territory of contributing to neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion through policy input and into uncharted territories of inter faith dialogue. This, of course, leaves inter faith bodies with an agenda of promoting mutual understanding and respect through dialogue at something of a disadvantage. <sup>iii</sup>

It is certainly true that shared social action by different faiths is very important and that it gives a practical and extremely helpful context for faiths to build up relations of trust. <sup>iv</sup> However, it is also true that work to educate people of different faiths about each other and to bring them into dialogue is vital and inter faith groups and councils which prioritise this need to feel affirmed in their work rather than put onto the back foot. There is evidence from the project that local inter faith groups and councils which *are* prioritising this work are the least well funded, partly because most of the money finding its way to local inter faith work at present is coming from funds directly or indirectly linked to social action, such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Community Empowerment Fund. That these sources are enabling funding for local inter faith work is excellent and is creating new

and much needed opportunities for encounter and cooperation and for making a real difference to the areas in question. That this funding needs supplementing by other sources which can also support the educational and inter-community understanding dimension of local inter faith work is also clear.

Some funding dilemmas are, however, linked to ambivalence on the part of the local inter faith bodies, not of their potential funders. In some responses and follow up comments, there was a detectable anxiety about possible loss of autonomy. Faith community participants in forums are usually keen to safeguard their autonomy and that can be hard to do when all the funding comes from another source, such as the local authority. So it seems to be in the interests of both local authorities and local inter faith bodies that ways be found to enable funding of particular aspects of the latter's work but on the basis that autonomy is preserved. In this regard, there is a mirroring of the general issues involved in the funding aspects of service delivery agreements between local authorities and other public service providers and voluntary organisations.<sup>v</sup>

#### **7.4 Local inter faith bodies and local government: complementary or competing agendas?**

In some ways, local authorities (and LSPs) and local inter faith groups and councils are like strangers who have barely met before they are asked to step out to the dance floor and waltz. There is anxiety about a little known partner, puzzlement about who leads and worry about how the performance will be judged.

Both sides have reasons for caution and, although there is genuine and important common ground, the separate agendas do not overlap 100% so it is perhaps unsurprising that there is anxiety about how to negotiate differences

Local authorities and LSPs cannot avoid interaction with faith communities but some faith groups and inter faith bodies appear to be sidestepping any significant involvement with local authorities and LSPs. Part of the motivation behind this is anxiety on the part of faith groups and inter faith bodies about the possible bureaucratic overload. A district council in Lancashire noted, "Many groups are wary of local government involvement as they feel unsure as to the level of bureaucracy they might bring". But it is also related to a strong wish, on the part of many faith groups and inter faith bodies, to pursue their own agenda without compromise. There is a wish to retain a "prophetic" role – being able to offer robust criticism of government structures and initiatives (even where offering invaluable assistance on these) and to focus with appropriate seriousness on *religious* matters, not just to be invited to come to tables to talk about social issues.

Many local inter faith groups and councils value very highly their traditions of building friendship and trust through encounter of individuals over many years and their work to encourage dialogue on religious topics between members of different faiths. They are, in most cases, very willing also to take on social issues (resources permitting) but they do not want to find themselves in situations where the dialogue dimension comes to play second fiddle to consultation and social action initiatives.

Again, as in the case of funding, it would appear to be in the interest of both partners to find ways to dovetail, where possible, their agendas – each appreciating the distinctive contribution of the other to local life. Perhaps easier said than done but there are examples of local authorities and local inter faith organisations working in harmonious and effective ways which allow differing roles and strengths of both to work to each other's and to the locality's advantage.<sup>vi</sup>

## 7.5 Making the case for inter faith structures: a shared agenda

Finally, it is perhaps worth noting that the man or woman who encounters inter faith and multi faith activity and consultation for the first time is sometimes puzzled by the agenda of creating multi faith structures for consultation purposes, regardless of under whose aegis these are developed. For example, participants in a consultation exercise across nine community committee areas of one North Western local authority area thought, overall, that there should be an effective faith network but had some questions: "Is the faith forum just another talking shop?" "Why are the faith communities required by the LSP to speak with one voice? If we spoke with one voice we would all be part of the one faith community".<sup>vii</sup> The case for consultative faith forums, including the value of people talking together about matters of mutual concern and having one structure for consultation purposes, needs advancing with care and with clarity (as it has been in the authority area in question) with use of examples of how a forum can deliver some practical outcomes which contribute to regeneration, renewal, or some other form of community development.

The same careful and convincing case needs to be made at local level for inter faith work more generally because, while most people would agree that good inter faith relations are desirable, there remain many who see this as a very low priority. Local authorities, local inter faith bodies and faith groups will need, as part of their ongoing partnership, to find ways to increase public awareness of the importance of faith communities working in cooperation and of inter faith respect and understanding.

i See Home Office, *Compact on Relations Between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England. Consultation and Policy Appraisal: A Code of Good Practice*, (London: Home Office, 2000) for an analysis of this kind of problem and ways that it can be tackled.

ii "The LSP should consider payment of expenses and travel costs to community representatives. It is difficult for local and unpaid community representatives and community groups to pay costs.....LSPs should consider setting up a special pot of money to cover costs and travel expenses incurred by representatives of .... The community and voluntary sectors sitting on the LSP, especially those LSPs in the areas where the community and voluntary sectors are not receiving Community Empowerment Fund money." Local Government Association, *Learning from local strategic partnerships: LGA Advice Note for working with the community and voluntary sectors*, (London: 2002), 9.

iii As was noted in Chapter 3, a careful distinction is often drawn between "multi faith forums" with a social action agenda and other types of inter faith engagement. This has understandable roots but can lead to some rather divisive rhetoric implying that multi faith forums with a social action focus are somehow more "valuable" than those which also put a priority on discussion between faiths about problems between them or about specifically faith issues.

iv Although even those who prefer the social action approach note one important limiting factor. One commented "I am sceptical (partly from personal experience) of the 'get to know your neighbour' type of events: it is too easy for them to be simply polite, fairly banal exchanges. In my view people get to know each other best when they work together and I would encourage joint social action projects, for example. The problem, though, with these is that most faith-based projects are very locally based where there may not be much practical scope for joint action – e.g. mother

and toddler groups and groups for the elderly are likely to be based within a particular community of one culture and faith.”

v Against the background of the Compact framework between central Government and the voluntary sector, there is a strong case for a review by central Government of the adequacy of the present sources of funding for local inter faith activity.

vi See, for example, the good practice examples relating to Leicester and Leeds at the end of Chapter 5.

vii See *Faith Network Locality Meetings, Responses of Attendees of Faith Network Meetings held in June and July 2003* by the Salford Community Organisers programme of the Salford Community Network in all Community Committee areas of Salford, collated by David Fraser.

# Looking ahead: suggestions for future action

- 8.1 Local inter faith groups and councils
- 8.2 Local authorities
- 8.3 Community Empowerment Networks and Local Strategic Partnerships
- 8.4 Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education and schools
- 8.5 Central Government and devolved administrations
- 8.6 National faith and inter faith organisations
- 8.7 Future work of the Inter Faith Network

The project described in this report surveyed existing patterns of local inter faith activity and identified examples of good practice. It has provided a detailed information resource on which to build for the future.

From the findings of the project emerge various pointers for possible action to strengthen and deepen local inter faith work in the UK. These are listed below in the hope that they may be of help to those involved in this work.

## 8.1 Local inter faith groups and councils

The responses of local inter faith bodies and other categories point to some suggestions for increasing the impact of local inter faith bodies' work. Many groups and councils have, of course, already taken some of the following steps. Inter faith groups and councils differ widely in their ethos and programmes and these suggestions are in no way prescriptive.

- a) exploring the resources offered by national inter faith and faith organisations, including publications such as *The Local Inter Faith Guide*
- b) considering whether there are projects or events run by other groups which might be worth using as a model for an event in the group's area (of which some examples are included in this report)
- c) reviewing the ways that faith communities are encouraged to be involved in the group or council's work. Consider a fact finding exercise including talking with key members of local faith communities to find out how they see inter faith relations in the area and how they envisage their community might be involved in the work of the inter faith group/council
- d) holding a day event to discuss inter faith relations in the group's area – possibly in partnership with the local authority, faith bodies and other interested parties
- e) developing partnerships with other relevant bodies such as other local inter faith initiatives, SACREs, United Nations Association groups and One World groups and considering co-sponsoring occasional events
- f) making the inter faith group or council's work better known, for example by setting up and maintaining a simple website



- g) developing a relationship with the local press, television and radio and encouraging them to run positive inter faith stories
- h) nominating a member of the group to keep in touch with the local authority, the LSP, the Community Network (if there is one); the SACRE, the REC, and the CVS
- i) keeping contact details for these bodies up to date and sending them an update at least twice a year on the group's programme and activities
- j) discussing the local statistics on religious identity which have come out of the recent Census and whether it would be helpful to develop the group or council's work to reflect even better the pattern of faiths in its area
- k) finding out how the Community Network (if there is one) and the LSP are reflecting views of faith and inter faith bodies in the group's area and finding a way to ensure the group/council's input (if this is something it wishes to do)
- l) discussing with the local CVS or Community Network the possibility of training in areas such as fund raising and effective use of resources

## 8.2 Local authorities

The responses of local authorities and other categories point to the following suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of working in partnership with local inter faith structures. A number of authorities are, of course, already doing some or all of the following:

- a) finding out about any existing local inter faith councils or groups
- b) mapping inter faith initiatives in the area (as well as faith groups if this has not already been done)
- c) making use of existing guidance on inter faith issues to be found in *The Local Inter Faith Guide*; *Faith and Community*; and *Partnership for the Common Good: Inter Faith Structures and Local Government* (see under resources)
- d) considering a day seminar or workshop for faith communities and local inter faith organisations to discuss inter faith relations locally – possibly in partnership with the local inter faith group or council, faith bodies and other interested parties
- e) if there is no existing inter faith structure or there is an inter faith group which is not keen to participate in working with local government on local issues, convening a meeting of relevant parties to discuss the possibility of initiating an inter faith or multi faith forum
- f) carrying out an audit of how relations with local faith communities and inter faith structures are being handled by the authority: which departments/sections etc are dealing with these
- g) looking at how relations *between* faiths are being handled within the authority – does a staff member or a councillor have a special brief for this area?
- h) ensuring that there are staff and a designated councillor who have a brief to cover faith and inter faith issues
- i) part-funding appropriate programmes of work of local groups and councils (see good practice examples from, eg, Leicester and Nottingham noted in chapter 5)



- j) making staff time available to support, where appropriate, local inter faith initiatives and projects
- k) making local authority venues available at low or no cost for local inter faith meetings and events

### **8.3 Community Empowerment Networks and Local Strategic Partnerships**

The suggestions at a-e above for local authorities are also relevant for Community Empowerment Networks and Local Strategic Partnerships. Some additional suggestions emerging from the report which are particularly relevant to these bodies are:

- a) ensuring that existing local inter faith bodies are involved in development of faith networks designed to feed into the CEN and LSP
- b) being aware of the pattern of faiths in the area but also of diversity within faiths
- c) finding ways to ensure that faith “representatives” are chosen by a wide range of local faith bodies, have credibility and standing within their own faith communities, and that there are adequate mechanisms to get input from these communities and to report back to them
- d) enabling the involvement from faith communities of women as well as men

### **8.4 Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education and schools**

Education is vital to create inter faith understanding and combat ignorance and prejudice. Ways in which SACREs and schools can contribute to this include:

- a) continuing and developing existing work on Religious Education (and Citizenship Education) which contributes to pupils’ engagement with inter faith issues
- b) promoting inter faith forums, building on the success of the Golden Jubilee Young People’s Faith Forum and drawing on advice from the National Association of SACREs on this
- c) setting up “student SACREs” for those in the 16–18 age range
- d) working with local inter faith groups and councils on inter faith projects

### **8.5 Central Government and devolved administrations**

It will be important for central Government and the devolved administrations to review ways in which they can help to encourage the growth of effective local inter faith structures and activity. These might include:

- a) reviewing existing guidance to ensure that inter faith structures are recognised as legitimate and significant partners in community cohesion and regeneration projects
- b) encouraging relevant bodies to network and share inter faith good practice between different geographical areas
- c) reinforcing resources available at UK, national, regional and local levels for inter faith work, possibly supported by a dedicated fund
- d) considering whether a programme of small grants to supplement funding available from local authorities might be established to strengthen inter faith activity

- e) considering the implications of the gap between resources available to faith communities and inter faith structures in Neighbourhood Renewal areas and other areas
- f) finding ways to underline the fact that faith groups and inter faith structures are eligible for public funding in appropriate circumstances

## 8.6 National faith and inter faith organisations

As this report shows, national organisations, including faith and inter faith organisations, are contributing in valuable ways to the development of local inter faith activity. It is hoped that the report's findings will be helpful to them as they consider the future shape of their distinctive programmes.

## 8.7 Future work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

From its outset the Inter Faith Network for the UK has seen the encouragement and development of effective and broadly based local inter faith activity as being of crucial importance in developing a cohesive society, strengthened through relations of mutual respect and understanding between Britain's different faith communities, based on the values which they hold in common. The Network has lent its support and resources to the development of local inter faith work through facilitating regular meetings between local inter faith initiatives in different parts of the country; the production of *The Local Inter Faith Guide* drawing on the experience and good practice of these initiatives; working with the Local Government Association, the Inner Cities Religious Council and the Home Office on *Faith and Community*; and its involvement with central and local government in taking forward issues relating to community cohesion.

The Network intends to continue and develop its own role in this area of work, as resources permit, in consultation with the Inter Faith Council for Wales, the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, and the Scottish Inter Faith Council. Plans include:

- a) preparing an updated and expanded edition of *The Local Inter Faith Guide*
- b) developing a "nuts and bolts" set up pack for local inter faith groups and councils, including sample constitutions, activity programmes and details of funding sources
- c) meetings/workshops for the exchange of inter faith news and good practice between local inter faith groups and councils, including sessions on fundraising
- d) media workshops for local inter faith and faith community members to learn how to present positive stories more effectively through local media
- e) programme of work with local authorities to assist the growing number of them seeking advice on appropriate ways to develop patterns of consultation and partnership work with faith communities and inter faith structures
- f) creating a dedicated website about local inter faith activity which would include: details of local inter faith initiatives; dialogue and social cooperation resources; and links to relevant sites useful to local inter faith bodies

# Questionnaires

- A. Questionnaire to local inter faith groups and councils
- B. Questionnaire to local authorities
- C. Sample question sheet for faith community contacts

This appendix contains the questionnaires sent to local inter faith groups and councils and to local authorities. It also contains a sample of the shorter question sheet sent to faith community members, including personnel with particular responsibility for inter faith relations. Comparable short question sheets, tailored to the respondents in question, were sent to Councils of Voluntary Service; One World Groups; Race Equality Councils; and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education.

## A. Questionnaire to local inter faith groups and councils

### Local Inter Faith Activity Mapping Project

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the questions in this booklet. Your information and advice is very much appreciated.

A stamped reply envelope has been sent with this question booklet for its return by [      ]. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the project, or to request a large print version or an email version of this question booklet, you can ring: Harriet Crabtree on 020 7388 0008 at the Inter Faith Network office or email [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk), marked for her attention.

Your contact details in case of any query on this completed booklet:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of your organisation:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Role in the organisation:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address, including postcode:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

1. What year did your organisation or initiative begin?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What geographical area does the inter faith council or group cover/serve?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Our organisation's main aims are:

a)

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b)

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c)

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4. Approximately how often does your organisation meet?

☐ Once or twice a year

☐ About once a month

☐ Quarterly

☐ No fixed pattern

5. Does your organisation produce a newsletter?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. Does your organisation have a website?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, its address is:

---

7. What activities would you describe your inter faith organisation as carrying out? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Discussion meetings on religious topics

☐ Discussion meetings about social issues

☐ Acting as a consultative forum on local issues for local government

☐ Sending representatives to serve on local government strategic initiatives  
(such as Local Strategic Partnerships)

☐ Peace walks/multi faith pilgrimages

☐ Multi faith dialogue (between all faiths involved in the group or council)

☐ Bilateral dialogue (eg Hindu-Muslim or Jewish-Christian dialogue)

☐ Trilateral dialogue (eg Christian-Jewish-Muslim dialogue)

☐ Promoting harmonious race relations

☐ Women's meetings

☐ Events for young people

☐ Environmental projects

☐ Providing advice/assistance to public bodies such as the local police  
and hospitals

☐ Sending speakers to schools for RE, Citizenship Education

☐ Social gatherings

☐ Shared meals

☐ Assisting in multi faith civic ceremonies

☐ Shared prayer/ worship

- ☐ Involvement in regeneration/neighbourhood renewal work
- ☐ Making statements on current issues
- ☐ Inter faith awareness raising, eg through the media
- ☐ Diversity training
- ☐ Educational events/exhibitions promoting understanding of the faiths

8. What would you say are the two most successful events or projects that your inter faith council or group has run in the last five years? Please describe:

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9. Which faiths are involved in your initiative's work: (tick all that apply)

- |                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baha'i      | <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jain        | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zoroastrian | <input type="checkbox"/> Other    |

Please list any other participating faiths:

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10. How far do you feel your inter faith organisation reflects, in its overall membership, the general pattern of faith membership in your area:

- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Fairly well
- ☐ Not very well

If you would like to add any comment on this, please use the space below:

---

11. Are you a registered charity?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

12. If you are a registered charity, what is your registered charity number?

---

13. Are you a registered company?

☐ Yes

☐ No

14. If you are a registered company, what is your company number?

---

15. Do you have a constitution?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. Do you have elected office holders such as “Chair”, “Treasurer”, “Honorary Secretary”?

☐ Yes

☐ No

17. Is your committee an elected one?

☐ Yes

☐ No

18. Which faiths are represented on your committee this year?

☐ Baha’i

☐ Jewish

☐ Buddhist

☐ Muslim

☐ Christian

☐ Sikh

☐ Hindu

☐ Zoroastrian

☐ Jain

☐ Other

Please list other faiths on the committee:

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19. If you have a constitution, is the pattern of faiths on your committee set out in this?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

20. How many members does your inter faith organisation have at present?

Individuals 

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Organisations 

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21. Do you have an annual membership fee?

☐ Yes

☐ No

22. If you do have an annual membership fee, what is its present level?

Individual membership

£

Organisational membership

£

23. Our operating budget for the last financial year was:

£ 

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24. Our funding comes from the following sources: *(please tick all that apply)*

- ☐ Individual membership fees
- ☐ Membership fees from faith community organisations
- ☐ Sales of goods and services (including educational services)
- ☐ Fund raising events (such as dinners)
- ☐ Local authority grants
- ☐ Trust grants
- ☐ Private sector sponsorship
- ☐ Community Empowerment Fund
- ☐ Lottery
- ☐ Donations
- ☐ Other

If you have ticked “other”, please describe:

---

25. If you *presently* receive financial support from your local authority, which authority or authorities have provided this and for what sort of purposes (eg one off projects, staffing, an office, a special event)?

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26. If you have, *in the past*, received financial support from your local authority (but do not do so at present), which authority or authorities have provided this and for what sort of purposes (eg one off projects, staffing, an office, a special event)?

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27. Does your local authority provide help with your organisation’s work in the form of staff support?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

28. Do you have an office?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

29. If so, is the office in: *(please tick as appropriate)*

- ☐ A faith community building
- ☐ On local authority premises
- ☐ In an educational institution
- ☐ Other (please describe below)

---

30. Do you hold your meetings at: *(please tick all that apply)*

- ☐ Members’ homes
- ☐ A particular faith community venue
- ☐ Your own offices
- ☐ Different faith community venues in rotation



- ☐ School buildings
- ☐ Other public buildings
- ☐ Other

If you have ticked “other”, please describe:

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31. If you have paid staff, how many do you have?

Full time employees

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Part time employees

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32. How many volunteers give their time regularly to running the work of the group or council?

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33. Are you are aware of any other inter faith initiatives in your area (such as projects involving two places of worship of different faiths or branches of national bodies such as the Council of Christians and Jews or the Three Faiths Forum)

☐ Yes

☐ No

34. If you are aware of other initiatives, please give brief details if you have these:

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35. Which of the following services that the Inter Faith Network presently provides do you, as a local inter faith organisation, find most helpful? Please number in order of usefulness, with 1 = most useful and 6 = least useful.

- ☐ Telephone information and advice service
- ☐ Newsletter (*Inter Faith Update*)
- ☐ Regional meetings for local inter faith organisers
- ☐ Speaker suggestions for events
- ☐ Publications such as *The Local Inter Faith Guide*
- ☐ Circulars (for member local organisations)

36. Are there other types of support from the Network (or elsewhere) which your organisation would find helpful? Please describe:

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37. Please use the following space for any comments or suggestions you may wish to offer on the general issue of ways to foster positive inter faith relations at local level.

38. Please add details of a contact person whose details can be made publicly available for those wishing to contact your inter faith organisation.

Organisation name:

Contact person same as on page 2 of question sheet ☐ Yes ☐ No

Contact details: (if different from those entered on page 2 this questionnaire):

Name:

Address:

District

Town/City

County

Postcode

Phone number:

Email:

Website:

Details can be listed in printed publications ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please return this completed question booklet by [ ] to:



Dr Harriet Crabtree  
Deputy Director  
The Inter Faith Network for the UK  
5-7 Tavistock Place  
London WC1H 9SN

Thank you.

## B. Questionnaire to local authorities

Inter Faith Network for the UK

### Local inter faith activity mapping project

Thank you for taking the time to respond to these questions about local inter faith activity in your area. Building good inter faith relations at local level is an increasingly important dimension of working towards community cohesion and your information and views are much appreciated.

The questions are part of a short study being carried out by the Inter Faith Network for the UK and funded by the Community Cohesion Unit of the Home Office, with involvement from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Local Government Association.

Please reply by [     ], to the Inter Faith Network, in the envelope provided. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the project, or to request an email version of the question sheet, please contact:

Harriet Crabtree: Tel 020 7388 0008

Email [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)

Your contact details in case of any questions about the returned sheet:  
(Please print)

Name:

Local Authority:

Position:

Address:

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Phone number including extension:

Email address:

1. Is there a council of faiths or an inter faith group in your area?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. If there is a local inter faith group or council of faiths, please give its name:

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3. Was your local authority involved in helping set this up?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. Are you aware of any other local inter faith initiatives within your area (such as projects involving partnership between a local church and a mosque or branches of national inter faith organisations such as the Council of Christians and Jews).

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please give brief details below:

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5. Are you aware of local inter faith initiatives mainly focusing on or involving women?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please give brief details below:

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6. Are you aware of local inter faith initiatives mainly focusing on or involving young people?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please give brief details below:

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7. Has your local authority made grants to the local inter faith group or council?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. If it has made grants to the local inter faith group or council, have these been:

☐ For core work

☐ For projects

☐ For one off events

☐ Other

If "other", please describe:

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9. Has your authority made grants to other inter faith projects?

☐ Yes

☐

No

If yes, please describe

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10. What level of grant aid in the last financial year was given for this kind of work?

£

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11. If there is a local inter faith council in your area, do you see it as a forum which can be consulted on policy matters?

☐ Yes

☐

No

12. Do you think your local inter faith council reflects, in its membership, the general pattern of faith membership in your area:

☐ Very well

☐ Fairly well

☐ Not very well

13. Does your authority have an officer or officers with responsibility for liaison with local faith communities and/or faith related issues?

☐ Yes

☐

No

14. If your authority does have such an officer or officers, in what sections/divisions of which departments are they based?

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15. Has a member of the council been allocated formal responsibility for faith issues?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. Please use the following space for any comments or suggestions you may wish to offer on the general issue of local government involvement in fostering positive inter faith relations:

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Please return this completed question sheet by [      ] to:



Dr Harriet Crabtree  
Deputy Director  
The Inter Faith Network for the UK  
5–7 Tavistock Place  
London  
WC1H 9SN

Thank you.

## C. Sample question sheet for faith community contacts

Inter Faith Network for the UK

### Local inter faith activity mapping project

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the questions on this sheet.  
Your information and advice is very much appreciated.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the project, or to request an email version of this sheet, you can ring: Harriet Crabtree on 020 7388 0008 at the Inter Faith Network office or email [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk), marked for her attention. A stamped reply envelope has been sent with the sheet for its return by [     ].

Your contact details

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Jewish Representative Council: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Is your Representative Council aware, in its area, of:

- Local inter faith groups and councils
- Regular meetings of religious leaders
- Bilateral dialogues (eg Jewish-Christian discussion groups)
- Trilateral dialogues (eg Christian-Jewish-Muslim discussion groups)

If so, please could you give names or brief descriptions of these.

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2. The Representative Council may also be aware of other inter faith activity including, for example,

- Synagogue or Jewish organisation led (or other faith led) community projects with significant involvement from other faiths (eg work with refugees)
- Synagogue or Jewish organisation based projects with an inter faith dimension
- Fundraising projects for humanitarian purposes involving different faiths
- “Get to know your neighbour” type initiatives
- Multi faith social projects

Please use the space below to describe any that you feel are of significance. (You may find it helpful to know that, in England and Wales, SACREs are being approached separately about school based inter faith activity.)

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

3. In your view, are there any significant gaps in inter faith activity in your area (for example between particular religious groups or in particular neighbourhoods not served by existing local inter faith initiatives) where new initiatives would be helpful?

[illegible]

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Thank you.

# Responding local inter faith groups and councils and local authorities

- A. Responding local inter faith groups and councils
- B. Responding local authorities

Chapters 3 and 5 draw for their in depth analysis on the detailed questionnaires returned by local inter faith groups and councils and local authorities. This appendix lists the bodies which responded.

## A. List of responding local inter faith groups and councils

### Questionnaires were returned by the following bodies:

Aberdeen Inter Faith Group	Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum
Barnsley MBC/Faith Communities Forum	Hampstead Interfaith Group
Bath Interfaith Group (Sharifh)	Harrow Inter Faith Council
Beaminster One World Fellowship	Hitchin Sikh-Christian Forum
Bedford Council of Faiths	Hounslow Friends of Faith
Bexley Multi Faith Forum	Huddersfield Interfaith Council
Birmingham Council of Faiths	Hull and East Riding Inter-Faith
Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council	Keighley Interfaith Group
Blackpool Open Faith Forum	Kenton Interfaith Discussion Group
Bolton Interfaith Council	Kirkbymoorside Inter-Faith Group
Bradford Concord Interfaith Society	Lambeth Multi Faith Action Group
Brent Interfaith	Lancashire Forum of Faiths
Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group	Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship
Bristol Inter Faith Group	Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum
Building Bridges in Burnley	Leicester Council of Faiths
Building Bridges Interfaith Community Project – Nelson and Brierfield	Lewisham Faith and Social Action Forum
Bury Mayoral Inter Faith Council	Lincoln Inter-Faith Group
Calderdale Faith Communities Partnership*	Loughborough Council of Faiths
Cambridge Inter-Faith Group	Loughborough Inter Faith Meetings
Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action	Luton Council of Faiths
Cardiff Interfaith Association	Manchester Interfaith Forum
Chorley Council of Faiths	Mansfield Interfaith Network
Cleveland Interfaith Group	Medway Inter Faith Action
Coventry Inter-Faith Group	Merseyside Council of Faiths
Coventry Multi-Faith Forum	Merseyside Inter-Faith Group
Inter Faith in Croydon	Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)
Deepdale Inter-Faith Group	North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership
Derby Open Centre Multi-Faith Group	Newport Interfaith Group
Doncaster Interfaith	Northampton Faiths Forum
Dudley Borough Interfaith Network	North Kent Inter Faith Relations Council
Dundee Inter Faith Association	North Kirklees Inter-Faith Council
Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association	North Staffs Forum of Faiths
Exeter Inter-Faith Group	Norwich Interfaith Link
Forum of Faiths, Kensington and Chelsea	Nottingham Inter Faith Council
Gateshead Inter Faith Forum	Oldham Inter Faith Forum
Glasgow Sharing of Faiths	Oxford Round Table of Religions
Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action (GIFA)	Peterborough Faiths Forum
	Peterborough Inter-Faith Council

Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource Centre  
 Preston Faith Forum  
 Reading Inter-Faith Group  
 Redbridge Council of Faiths  
 Richmond Interfaith Group  
 Rugby Interfaith Network  
 Sandwell Multi-Faith Network  
 Sheffield Interfaith  
 South London Inter Faith Group  
 Southampton Council of Faiths  
 Southampton Inter Faith Link  
 Southwark Multi-Faith Forum  
 Stockton Inter Faith Council\*  
 Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource  
 Surrey Interfaith Friendship Group  
 Swindon Interfaith Group  
 Taunton Interfaith Group  
 Thames Gateway Women's Multifaith Forum  
 Torbay Interfaith Forum  
 Totnes and District Inter Faith Forum

Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith  
 Panel  
 Wakefield Inter Faith Group  
 Walsall Borough Multifaith Consultative Forum  
 Waltham Forest Faith Communities Consultative  
 Group  
 Warrington Council of Faiths  
 Watford Inter-Faith Association  
 Wellingborough Multi-Faith Group  
 West Somerset Interfaith Group  
 Westminster Faith Exchange  
 Westminster Interfaith  
 Whalley Range Faith Council  
 Wigan Faith Network\*  
 Wimbledon Interfaith Group  
 Woking Multi-Faith Group  
 Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group  
 The Wrekin Interfaith Group (TWIG)  
 Wycombe Sharing of Faiths  
 York Interfaith Group

\* It was later decided, following consultation with respondents, to use free text information, rather than questionnaire data, from these early stage initiatives.

#### **Additionally, information was supplied by the following local inter faith groups and councils**

Altrincham Interfaith Group  
 Bishop's Stortford Inter Faith Group  
 Brent Faiths Project  
 Buckinghamshire Forum of Faiths  
 Bury Faith Community Council  
 Bushey Forum of Faiths  
 Camden Faith Communities Partnership  
 Cherwell Faith Communities Group  
 Mid Essex Inter Faith Group  
 Glasgow Forum of Faiths  
 Guildford Interfaith  
 Interfaith Women's Group, St Alban's  
 Islington Faiths Forum  
 Kingston Inter-Faith Forum

Liverpool Faith Community Network  
 Maidenhead Inter Faith Group  
 Newham Association of Faiths  
 Newton Inter Faith Group  
 Rochdale Interfaith Action  
 Salford Faith Network  
 Shetland Inter Faith Group  
 Slough Inter Faith Forum  
 Solihull Inter Faith Dialogue Group  
 Stamford Hill Multi Faith Group  
 Stockport Inter Faith Group  
 Wellingborough Faith Forum  
 Wolverhampton Faith Network

## **B Responding local authorities**

Aberdeen City Council  
 Arun District Council  
 Avon Fire Authority  
 Aylesbury Vale District Council  
 LB Barking and Dagenham  
 LB Barnet  
 Barnsley MBC  
 Bath and North East Somerset  
 Bedford Borough Council  
 Bedfordshire County Council  
 Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council  
 LB Bexley  
 Birmingham City Council  
 Blaby District Council  
 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council  
 Blackpool Borough Council  
 Blyth Valley Borough Council  
 Bolton MBC  
 Boston Borough Council  
 Bournemouth Borough Council  
 City of Bradford Metropolitan City Council

Braintree District Council  
 Breckland Council  
 LB Brent  
 Bridgnorth District Council  
 Brighton and Hove City Council  
 Bristol City Council  
 Broadland District Council  
 LB Bromley  
 Buckinghamshire County Council  
 Burnley Borough Council  
 Bury MBC  
 Calderdale Council  
 Cambridge City Council  
 LB Camden  
 Cannock Chase District Council  
 Canterbury City Council  
 Caradon District Council  
 Cardiff Council  
 Carmarthenshire County Council  
 Charnwood Borough Council  
 Chelmsford Borough Council

Cherwell District Council  
 Chester-Le-Street District Council  
 Chesterfield Borough Council  
 Chichester District Council  
 Chiltern District Council  
 Chorley Borough Council  
 Christchurch Borough Council  
 Colchester Borough Council  
 Congleton Borough Council  
 Corby Borough Council  
 Cornwall County Council  
 Corporation of London  
 Cotswold District Council  
 Coventry City Council  
 Crawley Borough Council  
 LB Croydon  
 Cumbria County Council  
 Dacorum Borough Council  
 Darlington Borough Council  
 Dartford Borough Council  
 Derby City  
 Derbyshire County Council  
 Derbyshire Dales District Council  
 Devon County Council  
 Doncaster MBC  
 Dorset County Council  
 Dudley MBC  
 Dundee City Council  
 Durham City Council  
 LB Ealing  
 Eastbourne Borough Council  
 East Cambridgeshire District Council  
 East Dorset District Council  
 East Hampshire District Council  
 East Northants Council  
 East Riding of Yorkshire Council  
 East Sussex County Council  
 East Staffordshire Borough Council  
 Eastleigh Borough Council  
 Edinburgh City Council  
 Elmbridge Borough Council  
 Epping Forest District Council  
 Erewash Borough Council  
 Essex County Council  
 Fenland District Council  
 Flintshire County Council  
 Forest Heath District Council  
 Fylde Borough Council  
 Gateshead Council  
 Glasgow City Council  
 Gloucester City Council  
 Gosport Borough Council  
 Great Yarmouth Borough Council  
 LB Greenwich  
 Guildford Borough Council  
 Hambleton District Council  
 LB Hammersmith and Fulham  
 Hampshire County Council  
 Harlow District Council  
 LB Haringey  
 LB Harrow  
 Hart District Council  
 Hartlepool Borough Council  
 LB Havering  
 Hertfordshire County Council

Hertsmere Borough Council  
 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council  
 LB Hounslow  
 LB Islington  
 Ipswich Borough Council  
 Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
 Kettering Borough Council  
 Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames  
 Kirklees Metropolitan Council  
 LB Lambeth  
 Lancashire County Council  
 Leeds City Council  
 Leicester City Council  
 LB Lewisham  
 City of Lincoln Council  
 Liverpool City Council  
 Luton Borough Council  
 Macclesfield Borough Council  
 Maidstone Borough Council  
 Manchester City Council  
 Mansfield District Council  
 Medway Council  
 Mid Beds District Council  
 Mid Devon District Council  
 Mid Sussex District Council  
 Middlesbrough Council  
 Milton Keynes Council  
 Monmouthshire County Council  
 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council  
 New Forest District Council  
 Newark and Sherwood District Council  
 Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council  
 LB Newham  
 Newport County Council  
 Notts County Council  
 North Cornwall District Council  
 North Devon District Council  
 North Dorset District Council  
 North Kesteven District Council  
 North Norfolk District Council  
 North Lincolnshire Council  
 North East Lincolnshire  
 North West Leicestershire District Council  
 North Shropshire District Council  
 North Wiltshire District Council  
 Northampton Borough Council  
 Norwich City Council  
 Nottingham City Council  
 Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council  
 Oadby and Wigston Borough Council  
 Oldham MBC  
 Oxford City Council  
 Oxfordshire County Council  
 Pendle Borough Council  
 Peterborough City Council  
 Plymouth City Council  
 Preston City Council  
 Portsmouth City Council  
 Purbeck District Council  
 Reading Borough Council  
 LB Redbridge  
 Redditch Borough Council  
 Restormel Borough Council  
 Richmondshire District Council  
 Ribble Valley Borough Council

LB Richmond Upon Thames  
 Rochdale MBC  
 Rochford District Council  
 Rushcliffe Borough Council  
 Rushmoor Borough Council  
 Rutland County Council  
 Ryedale District Council  
 St Helens  
 Salisbury District Council  
 Sandwell MBC  
 Sedgemoor District Council  
 Sefton MBC  
 Sheffield City Council  
 Shrewsbury and Atcham  
 Slough  
 Solihull MBC  
 Somerset County Council  
 South Bucks District Council  
 South Derbyshire District Council  
 South Gloucestershire Council  
 South Hams District Council  
 South Norfolk District Council  
 South Northamptonshire Council  
 South Ribble Borough Council  
 South Shropshire District Council  
 South Somerset District Council  
 South Staffordshire Council  
 Southampton City Council  
 Southend on Sea Borough Council  
 LB Southwark  
 St.Edmundsbury Borough Council  
 Staffordshire County Council  
 Stockport Council  
 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
 Stoke On Trent City Council  
 Stratford-on-Avon District Council  
 Suffolk County Council  
 Sunderland City Council  
 Surrey Heath Borough Council  
 LB Sutton

City and County of Swansea  
 Swindon Borough Council  
 Tameside MBC  
 Taunton Deane Borough Council  
 Teesdale District Council  
 Telford and Wrekin Council  
 Test Valley Borough Council  
 Tewkesbury Borough Council  
 Thanet District Council  
 Three Rivers District Council  
 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council  
 Torridge District Council  
 LB Tower Hamlets  
 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
 Vale Royal Borough Council  
 Vale of White Horse District Council  
 Walsall MBC  
 LB Waltham Forest  
 LB Wandsworth  
 Wansbeck District Council  
 Warwickshire County Council  
 Wealden District Council  
 Wear Valley District Council  
 Wellingborough Council  
 West Berkshire District Council  
 West Devon Borough Council  
 West Dorset District Council  
 West Somerset District Council  
 West Sussex County Council  
 City of Westminster  
 Wigan MBC  
 Winchester City Council  
 Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead  
 Woking Borough Council  
 Wolverhampton City Council  
 Worcester City Council  
 Worcestershire County Council  
 Worthing Borough Council  
 Wycombe District Council  
 Wyre Borough Council

# Table of response rates

The table in this appendix shows the numbers of different types of respondents which were sent questionnaires or question sheets and the number of each category which responded.

The low number of respondents put forward by some faith communities reflects in part the absence of personnel with specific responsibilities for inter faith issues or the fact that their network of contacts was only recently established. In part, however, it reflects the fact that it was known to those who put forward suggested names that many of their key people were already receiving questionnaires in other capacities (such as chair or secretary of a local inter faith body). They therefore did not resubmit these names and their numbers of suggested contacts are low as a result.

Category	Number of questionnaires sent to category	Number of responses received from category	Percentage of category replying
Local authorities in England and Wales	410	250	61
Local Authorities in Scotland	4	4	100
CVSs	355	174	49
RECs	105	52	50
SACREs in England	150	87	58
Local Inter Faith Groups and Councils in England, Wales and Scotland	125	110	88
Regional Inter Faith Bodies	4	4	100
Regional Development Agencies	9	5	56
Faith Based Regeneration Network	15	4	27
Ecumenical Officers of Churches Together in England	57	28	49
Churches Regional Network	9	5	56
Church of England Diocesan Inter Faith Advisers	49	34	69
District Advisers of the Methodist Church	14	10	71
Diocesan Inter Faith Coordinators of the Roman Catholic Committee for Other Faiths	24	6	25
Inter Faith Advocates and Contacts of the United Reformed Church	15	2	13
Clergy in Scotland	4	3	75
CYTUN Regional Groups	15	6	40
Welsh Denominational Headquarters	17	6	35
Additional individual Welsh clergy	5	2	40
Clergy in Northern Ireland	3	3	100
Baha'i community members	45	14	31
Hindu community members	3	2	67
Jain community members	4	3	75
Jewish Representative Councils	18	6	33
Muslim community members	14	4	29
Sikh community members	12	3	25
Zoroastrian community members	13	2	15
Additional respondents suggested by the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum	2	1	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>55</b>

*Note: the Network of Buddhist organisations circulated an email which resulted in five responses from member bodies. This information was also used.*



# Census Data

## A Census 2001 religion statistics

### B Census 2001 religion statistics by local authority (England and Wales)

In 2001 a question about religious identity was asked on the Census for the first time since 1851.

This appendix includes figures for the UK population as whole and also figures broken down by local authority. The religious demographic make up of an area is a significant factor for local authorities and others considering appropriate patterns for inter faith engagement and faith consultation.

## A. Census 2001 religion statistics

### The UK population: by religion, April 2001

Religion	Thousands	Percentage
Buddhist	152	0.3
Christian	42,079	71.6
Hindu	559	1.0
Jewish	267	0.5
Muslim	1,591	2.7
Sikh	336	0.6
Other	179	0.3
Total all religions	45,163	76.8
None	9,104	15.5
Not stated	4,289	7.3
Total None/not stated	13,626	23.2

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## B. Census 2001 religion statistics by local authority (England and Wales)

Percentage of people of different faiths living in each local authority area in England and Wales

Table KS07 Religion

All people	Percentage of people stating religion as:									
	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religions	No religion	Religion not stated
ENGLAND AND WALES	52,041,916	71.75	0.28	1.06	0.50	2.97	0.63	0.29	14.81	7.71
ENGLAND	49,138,831	71.74	0.28	1.11	0.52	3.10	0.67	0.29	14.59	7.69
NORTH EAST	2,515,442	80.09	0.12	0.17	0.13	1.07	0.19	0.15	10.98	7.09
Darlington UA	97,838	79.76	0.14	0.12	0.04	0.57	0.29	0.16	11.40	7.51
Hartlepool UA	88,611	80.73	0.08	0.16	0.02	0.42	0.04	0.09	9.42	9.05
Middlesbrough UA	134,855	76.83	0.12	0.25	0.04	4.22	0.34	0.11	10.12	7.96
Redcar and Cleveland UA	139,132	82.12	0.07	0.05	0.03	0.45	0.04	0.15	9.80	7.30
Stockton-on-Tees UA	178,408	81.58	0.12	0.18	0.03	1.42	0.21	0.10	10.01	6.34
Durham County	493,470	83.52	0.12	0.08	0.03	0.22	0.09	0.17	9.32	6.44
Chester-le-Street	53,692	84.04	0.14	0.05	0.03	0.23	0.08	0.12	9.79	5.53
Derwentside	85,074	84.25	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.12	0.08	0.20	9.39	5.84
Durham	87,709	79.67	0.29	0.24	0.09	0.62	0.10	0.24	12.49	6.26
Easington	93,993	85.25	0.08	0.06	0.01	0.16	0.17	0.13	7.15	7.00
Sedgefield	87,206	83.55	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.08	0.05	0.15	9.06	6.99
Teesdale	24,457	83.95	0.11	0.06	0.03	0.07	0.02	0.26	9.35	6.15
Wear Valley	61,339	84.67	0.12	0.08	0.02	0.11	0.07	0.17	7.93	6.83
Northumberland	307,190	81.07	0.11	0.08	0.04	0.22	0.13	0.19	11.77	6.39
Alnwick	31,029	82.60	0.14	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.01	0.19	10.83	6.14
Berwick-upon-Tweed	25,950	82.42	0.14	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.02	0.17	10.76	6.41
Blyth Valley	81,265	79.55	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.27	0.10	0.19	13.16	6.60
Castle Morpeth	49,001	81.23	0.17	0.29	0.09	0.41	0.30	0.18	11.10	6.24
Tynedale	58,808	80.81	0.20	0.04	0.07	0.09	0.01	0.24	12.21	6.33
Wansbeck	61,138	81.85	0.05	0.08	0.01	0.27	0.22	0.18	10.94	6.40
Tyne and Wear (Met County)	1,075,938	78.11	0.14	0.25	0.24	1.43	0.26	0.15	12.03	7.38
Gateshead	191,151	80.25	0.07	0.08	0.82	0.60	0.16	0.15	10.94	6.94
Newcastle upon Tyne	259,536	70.64	0.27	0.64	0.32	3.63	0.45	0.19	16.02	7.84
North Tyneside	191,659	78.19	0.11	0.15	0.05	0.53	0.16	0.17	13.73	6.91
South Tyneside	152,785	81.85	0.07	0.25	0.02	1.14	0.28	0.11	8.90	7.37
Sunderland	280,807	81.48	0.10	0.09	0.04	0.75	0.19	0.13	9.63	7.58
Tees Valley	638,844	80.30	0.11	0.15	0.03	1.53	0.19	0.12	10.12	7.45
Tees Valley (less Darlington)	541,006	80.40	0.10	0.16	0.03	1.70	0.17	0.12	9.89	7.44
Former county of Durham	591,308	82.90	0.13	0.09	0.04	0.28	0.12	0.17	9.66	6.62
NORTH WEST	6,729,764	78.01	0.18	0.40	0.42	3.04	0.10	0.16	10.48	7.23
Blackburn with Darwen UA	137,470	63.29	0.12	0.31	0.04	19.40	0.10	0.14	7.99	8.62
Blackpool UA	142,283	78.63	0.17	0.12	0.21	0.44	0.03	0.23	11.39	8.78
Halton UA	118,208	83.83	0.10	0.08	0.03	0.13	0.03	0.10	8.69	7.00
Warrington UA	191,080	82.03	0.12	0.19	0.06	0.58	0.14	0.14	10.26	6.48
Cheshire County	673,788	80.50	0.16	0.15	0.12	0.36	0.05	0.15	11.84	6.67
Chester	118,210	78.15	0.20	0.17	0.11	0.53	0.05	0.17	12.98	7.63
Congleton	90,655	81.46	0.12	0.11	0.06	0.17	0.04	0.16	11.46	6.43
Crewe and Nantwich	111,007	80.25	0.14	0.11	0.04	0.41	0.04	0.15	11.91	6.94
Ellesmere Port and Neston	81,672	82.52	0.13	0.08	0.06	0.27	0.04	0.08	10.21	6.62
Macclesfield	150,155	79.59	0.19	0.26	0.31	0.51	0.06	0.19	12.75	6.14
Vale Royal	122,089	82.08	0.16	0.10	0.05	0.17	0.06	0.14	10.91	6.33
Cumbria	487,607	82.15	0.17	0.05	0.04	0.15	0.01	0.16	10.37	6.91
Allerdale	93,491	85.24	0.09	0.04	0.03	0.11	-	0.12	8.17	6.20
Barrow-in-Furness	71,980	81.03	0.10	0.06	0.03	0.25	0.01	0.13	10.79	7.59
Carlisle	100,739	80.68	0.14	0.05	0.03	0.23	0.02	0.13	10.95	7.76
Copeland	69,318	86.31	0.10	0.06	0.02	0.18	0.01	0.12	7.00	6.21
Eden	49,777	81.35	0.16	0.01	0.03	0.07	0.01	0.18	11.44	6.75
South Lakeland	102,301	79.14	0.36	0.04	0.07	0.07	0.01	0.24	13.27	6.81
Greater Manchester (Met County)	2,482,328	74.15	0.21	0.70	0.88	5.04	0.15	0.17	11.33	7.37
Bolton	261,037	74.56	0.10	2.00	0.06	7.07	0.03	0.15	8.75	7.28
Bury	180,608	73.68	0.14	0.37	4.94	3.74	0.11	0.17	10.16	6.70
Manchester	392,819	62.42	0.55	0.73	0.78	9.12	0.43	0.28	15.97	9.72
Oldham	217,273	72.62	0.11	0.61	0.04	11.06	0.03	0.12	8.92	6.47
Rochdale	205,357	72.10	0.12	0.24	0.09	9.37	0.04	0.14	10.79	7.11
Salford	216,103	76.46	0.22	0.32	2.40	1.20	0.11	0.15	11.01	8.12
Stockport	284,528	75.43	0.21	0.47	0.58	1.75	0.07	0.23	14.18	7.09
Tameside	213,043	75.54	0.13	1.36	0.04	2.52	0.03	0.17	12.10	8.11
Trafford	210,145	75.80	0.17	0.59	1.10	3.32	0.49	0.16	11.98	6.39

All people	Percentage of people stating religion as:									
	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religions	No religion	Religion not stated
Wigan	301,415	86.85	0.09	0.17	0.03	0.33	0.02	0.09	6.88	5.55
Lancashire County	1,134,974	78.33	0.15	0.45	0.08	3.43	0.10	0.18	10.42	6.85
Burnley	89,542	74.46	0.11	0.28	0.03	6.58	0.03	0.18	11.04	7.27
Chorley	100,449	84.04	0.20	0.18	0.05	0.64	0.05	0.14	9.08	5.63
Fylde	73,217	82.42	0.12	0.16	0.54	0.25	0.04	0.19	9.63	6.65
Hyndburn	81,496	76.30	0.08	0.05	0.03	7.19	0.05	0.13	9.20	6.98
Lancaster	133,914	76.31	0.25	0.13	0.09	0.59	0.05	0.27	13.63	8.68
Pendle	89,248	65.40	0.14	0.08	0.03	13.43	0.02	0.20	13.08	7.61
Preston	129,633	71.46	0.17	2.59	0.05	8.24	0.56	0.17	9.80	6.98
Ribble Valley	53,960	85.31	0.12	0.14	0.05	0.61	0.01	0.14	8.22	5.41
Rossendale	65,652	75.68	0.13	0.10	0.06	2.87	0.02	0.21	13.91	7.02
South Ribble	103,867	84.71	0.14	0.43	0.03	0.32	0.04	0.11	8.65	5.58
West Lancashire	108,378	83.77	0.12	0.20	0.04	0.18	0.06	0.16	8.89	6.59
Wyre	105,618	83.06	0.15	0.14	0.10	0.18	0.05	0.22	9.40	6.73
Merseyside (Met County)	1,362,026	82.40	0.17	0.18	0.28	0.61	0.06	0.12	8.67	7.51
Knowsley	150,459	85.63	0.07	0.11	0.03	0.17	0.01	0.04	5.84	8.09
Liverpool	439,473	79.48	0.27	0.26	0.61	1.35	0.09	0.13	9.67	8.13
St. Helens	176,843	86.88	0.09	0.17	0.03	0.20	0.02	0.11	6.28	6.22
Sefton	282,958	84.38	0.13	0.17	0.25	0.32	0.03	0.12	8.10	6.49
Wirral	312,293	80.64	0.15	0.13	0.10	0.28	0.07	0.14	10.49	8.00
Former county of Cheshire	983,076	81.20	0.15	0.15	0.10	0.38	0.06	0.14	11.15	6.67
Former county of Lancashire	1,414,727	76.90	0.15	0.41	0.09	4.68	0.09	0.18	10.28	7.22
YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER	4,964,833	73.07	0.14	0.32	0.23	3.81	0.38	0.19	14.09	7.77
East Riding of Yorkshire UA	314,113	79.67	0.13	0.18	0.13	0.27	0.06	0.16	11.90	7.50
Kingston upon Hull; City of UA	243,589	71.74	0.15	0.11	0.11	0.87	0.09	0.16	18.32	8.45
North East Lincolnshire UA	157,979	75.71	0.10	0.19	0.06	0.48	0.07	0.14	14.61	8.63
North Lincolnshire UA	152,849	79.45	0.12	0.19	0.03	1.14	0.31	0.12	11.43	7.21
York UA	181,094	74.42	0.21	0.19	0.11	0.58	0.05	0.30	16.57	7.57
North Yorkshire County	569,660	80.30	0.16	0.11	0.10	0.18	0.02	0.19	11.96	6.97
Craven	53,620	78.08	0.18	0.06	0.07	0.61	0.03	0.23	13.77	6.97
Hambleton	84,111	83.00	0.12	0.05	0.04	0.10	0.01	0.15	10.40	6.14
Harrogate	151,336	79.00	0.19	0.07	0.22	0.21	0.03	0.20	13.08	7.01
Richmondshire	47,010	81.98	0.27	0.66	0.07	0.05	0.01	0.14	10.44	6.38
Ryedale	50,872	82.28	0.12	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.01	0.17	10.66	6.63
Scarborough	106,243	78.85	0.15	0.07	0.07	0.22	0.01	0.23	12.52	7.87
Selby	76,468	81.13	0.11	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.15	11.23	7.17
South Yorkshire (Met County)	1,266,338	75.34	0.13	0.20	0.07	2.52	0.15	0.19	13.68	7.72
Barnsley	218,063	81.10	0.06	0.08	0.02	0.23	0.08	0.14	10.74	7.54
Doncaster	286,866	79.56	0.08	0.16	0.03	0.74	0.28	0.19	11.34	7.63
Rotherham	248,175	79.42	0.05	0.10	0.02	2.18	0.08	0.15	10.22	7.78
Sheffield	513,234	68.55	0.21	0.33	0.15	4.64	0.15	0.24	17.90	7.82
West Yorkshire (Met County)	2,079,211	68.08	0.15	0.52	0.44	7.20	0.75	0.21	14.69	7.97
Bradford	467,665	60.14	0.11	0.95	0.08	16.08	1.02	0.21	13.31	8.11
Calderdale	192,405	69.63	0.18	0.20	0.08	5.30	0.12	0.23	16.40	7.87
Kirklees	388,567	67.20	0.10	0.31	0.04	10.12	0.70	0.20	14.01	7.31
Leeds	715,402	68.86	0.22	0.58	1.16	2.99	1.06	0.21	16.79	8.12
Wakefield	315,172	78.21	0.10	0.20	0.04	1.14	0.08	0.18	11.74	8.32
The Humber	868,530	76.69	0.13	0.16	0.09	0.63	0.12	0.15	14.11	7.92
Former county of North Yorkshire	750,754	78.88	0.17	0.13	0.10	0.28	0.03	0.21	13.07	7.12
EAST MIDLANDS	4,172,174	71.99	0.18	1.60	0.10	1.68	0.80	0.24	15.94	7.48
Derby UA	221,708	67.42	0.20	0.61	0.06	4.49	3.23	0.25	15.88	7.86
Leicester UA	279,921	44.72	0.23	14.74	0.15	11.03	4.21	0.42	17.43	7.07
Nottingham UA	266,988	57.67	0.42	0.83	0.23	4.63	1.24	0.33	24.84	9.80
Rutland UA	34,563	79.82	0.17	0.07	0.14	0.31	0.08	0.19	13.11	6.11
Derbyshire County	734,585	76.99	0.12	0.12	0.04	0.17	0.24	0.19	14.65	7.47
Amber Valley	116,471	75.61	0.10	0.09	0.05	0.05	0.10	0.20	16.14	7.66
Bolsover	71,766	78.06	0.07	0.08	0.02	0.09	0.12	0.14	12.61	8.81
Chesterfield	98,845	77.87	0.12	0.11	0.02	0.40	0.09	0.21	13.30	7.89
Derbyshire Dales	69,469	79.42	0.16	0.04	0.09	0.16	0.03	0.22	12.89	6.99
Erewash	110,099	72.30	0.11	0.30	0.03	0.15	0.25	0.18	18.93	7.74
High Peak	89,433	76.54	0.22	0.05	0.04	0.19	0.03	0.26	15.83	6.84
North East Derbyshire	96,940	79.95	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.15	0.10	0.17	12.19	7.25
South Derbyshire	81,562	78.20	0.14	0.17	0.04	0.19	1.27	0.17	13.26	6.55
Leicestershire County	609,578	74.21	0.15	2.02	0.10	0.81	0.82	0.21	15.23	6.46
Blaby	90,252	73.67	0.13	1.87	0.08	0.41	1.42	0.19	15.92	6.31
Charnwood	153,462	69.55	0.23	3.98	0.10	1.57	0.52	0.27	17.26	6.52
Harborough	76,559	77.98	0.14	0.47	0.13	0.23	0.30	0.14	14.04	6.56
Hinckley and Bosworth	100,141	78.43	0.11	0.51	0.05	0.27	0.24	0.19	14.19	6.02
Melton	47,866	79.21	0.09	0.34	0.06	0.09	0.04	0.17	13.40	6.61

All people	Percentage of people stating religion as:									
	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religions	No religion	Religion not stated
North West Leicestershire	85,503	78.17	0.10	0.20	0.05	0.13	0.09	0.21	14.50	6.55
Oadby and Wigston	55,795	64.76	0.16	5.98	0.30	2.78	4.16	0.24	14.68	6.93
Lincolnshire	646,645	80.32	0.13	0.13	0.06	0.24	0.07	0.20	11.88	6.98
Boston	55,750	80.16	0.12	0.18	0.07	0.44	0.04	0.15	11.43	7.40
East Lindsey	130,447	79.91	0.13	0.10	0.07	0.21	0.05	0.22	11.67	7.65
Lincoln	85,595	73.87	0.17	0.21	0.06	0.43	0.08	0.26	16.91	8.01
North Kesteven	94,024	82.40	0.10	0.09	0.05	0.17	0.05	0.18	10.86	6.10
South Holland	76,522	82.59	0.10	0.05	0.07	0.16	0.10	0.18	9.74	7.01
South Kesteven	124,792	81.33	0.15	0.19	0.06	0.25	0.08	0.21	11.51	6.23
West Lindsey	79,515	81.84	0.11	0.09	0.04	0.09	0.06	0.19	10.93	6.65
Northamptonshire	629,676	71.51	0.24	0.90	0.11	0.90	0.29	0.27	17.99	7.81
Corby	53,174	69.39	0.08	0.17	0.05	0.19	0.17	0.18	21.35	8.41
Daventry	71,838	76.14	0.18	0.26	0.10	0.31	0.14	0.25	15.76	6.86
East Northamptonshire	76,550	73.34	0.17	0.20	0.09	0.12	0.09	0.24	17.77	7.98
Kettering	81,844	71.65	0.19	0.47	0.09	0.49	0.83	0.26	18.32	7.72
Northampton	194,458	68.29	0.34	1.15	0.17	2.07	0.38	0.34	19.10	8.17
South Northamptonshire	79,293	77.75	0.11	0.23	0.11	0.18	0.05	0.21	14.53	6.83
Wellingborough	72,519	68.19	0.37	3.35	0.07	0.92	0.13	0.26	18.38	8.32
Nottinghamshire County	748,510	74.77	0.15	0.29	0.11	0.47	0.31	0.20	15.97	7.73
Ashfield	111,387	72.87	0.08	0.10	0.04	0.13	0.10	0.17	17.79	8.74
Bassetlaw	107,713	81.53	0.09	0.13	0.05	0.33	0.07	0.21	9.99	7.61
Broxtowe	107,570	70.57	0.32	0.57	0.12	0.86	0.62	0.22	19.01	7.71
Gedling	111,787	71.75	0.17	0.33	0.11	0.62	0.43	0.20	18.66	7.72
Mansfield	98,181	76.03	0.10	0.22	0.01	0.25	0.17	0.15	15.23	7.82
Newark and Sherwood	106,273	79.12	0.11	0.06	0.06	0.18	0.07	0.17	12.91	7.33
Rushcliffe	105,599	71.83	0.22	0.62	0.37	0.91	0.68	0.25	17.99	7.13
Former county of Derbyshire	956,293	74.77	0.14	0.23	0.05	1.17	0.93	0.21	14.93	7.56
Former county of Leicestershire	924,062	65.48	0.17	5.80	0.12	3.89	1.82	0.27	15.81	6.63
Former county of Nottinghamshire	1,015,498	70.28	0.22	0.43	0.14	1.56	0.55	0.23	18.30	8.27
WEST MIDLANDS	5,267,308	72.58	0.19	1.08	0.09	4.10	1.97	0.21	12.30	7.48
Herefordshire; County of UA	174,871	79.01	0.20	0.06	0.07	0.10	0.04	0.26	12.55	7.71
Stoke-on-Trent UA	240,636	74.74	0.11	0.18	0.03	3.18	0.23	0.19	13.39	7.95
Telford and Wrekin UA	158,325	74.26	0.26	0.40	0.04	1.28	1.16	0.22	15.07	7.30
Shropshire County	283,173	79.93	0.16	0.07	0.04	0.21	0.05	0.22	12.24	7.08
Bridgnorth	52,497	81.59	0.10	0.03	0.05	0.12	0.10	0.20	11.34	6.47
North Shropshire	57,108	82.29	0.13	0.05	0.03	0.20	0.04	0.18	10.55	6.54
Oswestry	37,308	79.47	0.15	0.07	0.04	0.20	0.02	0.22	12.31	7.53
Shrewsbury and Atcham	95,850	77.94	0.20	0.11	0.04	0.27	0.07	0.20	13.66	7.50
South Shropshire	40,410	79.62	0.18	0.04	0.05	0.19	0.03	0.35	12.34	7.20
Staffordshire County	806,744	80.06	0.11	0.19	0.05	0.75	0.23	0.17	11.74	6.70
Cannock Chase	92,126	80.78	0.07	0.10	0.02	0.17	0.22	0.16	11.32	7.16
East Staffordshire	103,770	77.45	0.12	0.20	0.05	3.98	0.19	0.18	11.54	6.28
Lichfield	93,232	80.44	0.08	0.22	0.07	0.26	0.28	0.14	11.95	6.56
Newcastle-under-Lyme	122,030	78.45	0.15	0.20	0.08	0.55	0.14	0.18	13.10	7.15
South Staffordshire	105,896	83.53	0.10	0.24	0.03	0.16	0.47	0.14	9.24	6.09
Stafford	120,670	79.91	0.12	0.25	0.08	0.42	0.29	0.23	12.08	6.62
Staffordshire Moorlands	94,489	82.79	0.09	0.04	0.03	0.08	0.04	0.17	9.80	6.95
Tamworth	74,531	76.79	0.09	0.24	0.02	0.17	0.17	0.18	15.47	6.87
Warwickshire	505,860	76.59	0.17	0.70	0.09	0.66	1.34	0.22	13.13	7.09
North Warwickshire	61,860	81.10	0.10	0.16	0.05	0.14	0.21	0.14	11.19	6.92
Nuneaton and Bedworth	119,132	76.94	0.09	0.60	0.02	1.58	1.50	0.18	11.72	7.36
Rugby	87,453	74.83	0.19	2.04	0.05	0.64	0.57	0.20	13.77	7.72
Stratford-on-Avon	111,484	81.09	0.16	0.10	0.14	0.17	0.13	0.24	11.68	6.29
Warwick	125,931	71.28	0.27	0.67	0.16	0.50	3.37	0.28	16.27	7.19
West Midlands (Met County)	2,555,592	66.58	0.23	1.94	0.13	7.50	3.60	0.21	11.95	7.88
Birmingham	977,087	59.13	0.30	1.98	0.24	14.33	2.93	0.26	12.44	8.39
Coventry	300,848	65.26	0.26	2.58	0.07	3.88	4.64	0.24	15.06	7.99
Dudley	305,155	77.73	0.13	0.55	0.03	2.45	0.88	0.16	10.69	7.38
Sandwell	282,904	68.62	0.12	1.97	0.03	4.61	6.87	0.16	10.42	7.19
Solihull	199,517	78.19	0.17	0.93	0.19	0.82	0.78	0.15	12.05	6.72
Walsall	253,499	72.09	0.09	1.60	0.03	5.37	3.04	0.16	10.04	7.57
Wolverhampton	236,582	66.49	0.31	3.89	0.04	1.72	7.58	0.22	11.38	8.37
Worcestershire County	542,107	78.67	0.14	0.14	0.07	0.88	0.14	0.21	12.64	7.11
Bromsgrove	87,837	80.09	0.12	0.21	0.10	0.29	0.33	0.20	11.82	6.84
Malvern Hills	72,172	78.34	0.21	0.10	0.10	0.16	0.05	0.28	13.49	7.27
Redditch	78,807	75.03	0.13	0.23	0.10	2.38	0.16	0.19	14.50	7.28
Worcester	93,353	76.71	0.18	0.13	0.04	1.81	0.11	0.21	13.62	7.18
Wychavon	112,957	81.27	0.09	0.05	0.08	0.21	0.09	0.21	11.46	6.53
Wyre Forest	96,981	79.43	0.14	0.12	0.04	0.59	0.08	0.19	11.69	7.72

All people	Percentage of people stating religion as:									
	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religions	No religion	Religion not stated
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	716,978	78.75	0.15	0.12	0.07	0.69	0.11	0.22	12.62	7.26
Former county of Shropshire	441,498	77.90	0.20	0.19	0.04	0.59	0.45	0.22	13.25	7.16
Former county of Staffordshire	1,047,380	78.84	0.11	0.19	0.05	1.31	0.23	0.18	12.12	6.99
EAST	5,388,140	72.14	0.22	0.58	0.56	1.46	0.25	0.29	16.74	7.75
Luton UA	184,371	59.65	0.25	2.73	0.29	14.62	0.81	0.35	14.08	7.23
Peterborough UA	156,061	68.32	0.16	0.89	0.09	5.74	0.53	0.22	15.63	8.41
Southend-on-Sea UA	160,257	68.65	0.26	0.58	1.70	1.22	0.06	0.38	18.84	8.30
Thurrock UA	143,128	75.09	0.17	0.55	0.17	1.07	0.70	0.21	15.51	6.52
Bedfordshire County	381,572	72.51	0.18	0.91	0.16	1.44	0.83	0.23	16.17	7.58
Bedford	147,911	68.77	0.24	1.74	0.12	3.25	1.85	0.29	14.94	8.80
Mid Bedfordshire	121,024	75.24	0.15	0.25	0.15	0.26	0.20	0.19	16.78	6.78
South Bedfordshire	112,637	74.50	0.12	0.53	0.21	0.32	0.16	0.19	17.12	6.84
Cambridgeshire County	552,658	71.32	0.36	0.40	0.27	0.84	0.13	0.30	18.16	8.23
Cambridge	108,863	57.65	1.05	1.19	0.78	2.44	0.19	0.49	26.61	9.61
East Cambridgeshire	73,214	74.76	0.18	0.14	0.13	0.22	0.14	0.33	15.46	8.65
Fenland	83,519	77.68	0.12	0.12	0.08	0.26	0.09	0.15	13.02	8.48
Huntingdonshire	156,954	74.47	0.17	0.19	0.13	0.63	0.12	0.29	16.52	7.48
South Cambridgeshire	130,108	72.92	0.29	0.32	0.23	0.47	0.09	0.24	17.87	7.57
Essex County	1,310,835	74.12	0.20	0.38	0.47	0.58	0.10	0.27	16.47	7.41
Basildon	165,668	73.34	0.19	0.45	0.23	0.57	0.06	0.26	17.42	7.49
Braintree	132,179	74.23	0.15	0.19	0.15	0.31	0.04	0.25	16.99	7.70
Brentwood	68,456	79.24	0.21	0.75	0.29	0.56	0.07	0.26	12.58	6.05
Castle Point	86,608	75.66	0.12	0.23	0.23	0.29	0.06	0.27	15.52	7.62
Chelmsford	157,072	74.73	0.22	0.40	0.20	0.68	0.05	0.25	16.43	7.03
Colchester	155,796	71.57	0.35	0.49	0.15	0.76	0.08	0.36	18.49	7.75
Epping Forest	120,896	72.44	0.21	0.96	3.07	1.17	0.58	0.26	14.07	7.24
Harlow	78,768	67.30	0.32	0.39	0.26	1.31	0.09	0.21	22.37	7.74
Maldon	59,418	75.78	0.13	0.10	0.17	0.25	0.05	0.23	16.47	6.81
Rochford	78,489	75.83	0.11	0.24	0.31	0.21	0.04	0.22	15.65	7.39
Tendring	138,539	76.03	0.13	0.10	0.15	0.23	0.02	0.27	14.94	8.13
Uttlesford	68,946	76.64	0.23	0.14	0.29	0.42	0.03	0.26	15.19	6.81
Hertfordshire	1,033,977	70.21	0.26	1.03	1.63	1.65	0.39	0.32	17.07	7.43
Broxbourne	87,054	76.35	0.16	0.52	0.34	1.24	0.08	0.23	13.90	7.19
Dacorum	137,799	70.70	0.20	0.76	0.45	1.23	0.08	0.25	18.36	7.98
East Hertfordshire	128,919	74.50	0.24	0.35	0.29	0.54	0.11	0.24	16.99	6.73
Hertsmere	94,450	63.04	0.32	2.00	11.34	1.35	0.15	0.52	13.36	7.91
North Hertfordshire	116,908	69.76	0.27	0.65	0.22	0.73	1.94	0.31	18.70	7.43
St. Albans	129,005	71.03	0.27	0.73	0.92	2.62	0.14	0.24	17.46	6.59
Stevenage	79,715	67.05	0.20	0.68	0.20	1.09	0.33	0.37	21.89	8.19
Three Rivers	82,848	70.83	0.21	2.59	2.08	1.53	0.27	0.45	14.88	7.16
Watford	79,726	66.45	0.33	1.73	1.12	6.11	0.49	0.36	16.10	7.31
Welwyn Hatfield	97,553	69.93	0.37	1.06	0.67	1.13	0.22	0.33	18.07	8.20
Norfolk	796,728	74.01	0.20	0.12	0.11	0.26	0.04	0.30	16.79	8.17
Breckland	121,418	75.60	0.13	0.04	0.09	0.15	0.04	0.30	15.65	8.01
Broadland	118,513	76.58	0.16	0.12	0.08	0.18	0.04	0.25	14.90	7.68
Great Yarmouth	90,810	74.58	0.16	0.12	0.09	0.31	0.01	0.24	16.61	7.88
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	135,345	78.18	0.14	0.14	0.08	0.17	0.05	0.24	13.03	7.96
North Norfolk	98,382	77.53	0.16	0.03	0.10	0.09	0.02	0.28	13.87	7.92
Norwich	121,550	60.41	0.40	0.29	0.20	0.73	0.08	0.51	27.78	9.61
South Norfolk	110,710	75.79	0.20	0.08	0.12	0.15	0.04	0.25	15.38	7.99
Suffolk	668,553	73.98	0.17	0.14	0.10	0.40	0.06	0.28	16.63	8.24
Babergh	83,461	75.53	0.16	0.07	0.10	0.16	0.01	0.27	16.34	7.36
Forest Heath	55,510	74.72	0.22	0.06	0.16	0.25	0.03	0.26	14.13	10.17
Ipswich	117,069	68.10	0.18	0.42	0.09	1.25	0.21	0.34	20.34	9.07
Mid Suffolk	86,837	76.82	0.12	0.04	0.07	0.11	0.01	0.27	15.07	7.50
St. Edmundsbury	98,193	74.26	0.17	0.10	0.12	0.28	0.02	0.25	16.77	8.03
Suffolk Coastal	115,141	75.82	0.18	0.11	0.11	0.30	0.06	0.26	15.60	7.54
Waveney	112,342	74.28	0.19	0.06	0.06	0.19	0.04	0.29	16.34	8.56
Former county of Bedfordshire	565,943	68.32	0.20	1.50	0.20	5.73	0.82	0.27	15.49	7.47
Former county of Cambridgeshire	708,719	70.66	0.32	0.51	0.23	1.92	0.22	0.28	17.60	8.27
Former county of Essex	1,614,220	73.66	0.21	0.42	0.57	0.69	0.15	0.27	16.62	7.42
LONDON	7,172,091	58.23	0.76	4.07	2.09	8.46	1.45	0.51	15.76	8.66
Inner London	2,766,114	54.57	1.00	1.90	1.78	11.67	0.51	0.44	18.34	9.79
Camden	198,020	47.10	1.31	1.53	5.63	11.57	0.22	0.59	22.02	10.03
City of London	7,185	54.98	0.58	1.52	3.15	5.61	0.26	0.72	24.59	8.59
Hackney	202,824	46.56	1.14	0.81	5.29	13.76	0.85	0.57	19.03	11.99
Hammersmith and Fulham	165,242	63.65	0.77	1.09	0.79	6.85	0.19	0.43	17.64	8.59
Haringey	216,507	50.07	1.05	2.05	2.64	11.26	0.33	0.52	19.98	12.09
Islington	175,797	54.21	1.05	1.00	1.05	8.11	0.34	0.41	23.72	10.12

All people	Percentage of people stating religion as:									
	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religions	No religion	Religion not stated
Kensington and Chelsea	158,919	61.96	1.16	1.00	2.23	8.41	0.20	0.57	15.25	9.20
Lambeth	266,169	58.82	0.86	1.27	0.45	5.39	0.16	0.47	21.70	10.88
Lewisham	248,922	61.25	1.09	1.69	0.28	4.62	0.17	0.46	20.40	10.05
Newham	243,891	46.84	0.65	6.93	0.20	24.31	2.83	0.27	9.01	8.95
Southwark	244,866	61.58	1.07	1.09	0.41	6.85	0.24	0.36	18.51	9.89
Tower Hamlets	196,106	38.64	0.99	0.79	0.93	36.40	0.35	0.27	14.19	7.44
Wandsworth	260,380	61.81	0.71	2.28	0.65	5.20	0.25	0.36	19.99	8.77
Westminster	181,286	55.05	1.32	1.93	4.27	11.77	0.22	0.52	16.16	8.76
Outer London	4,405,977	60.52	0.61	5.44	2.28	6.45	2.04	0.55	14.15	7.95
Barking and Dagenham	163,944	68.99	0.22	1.14	0.33	4.36	1.07	0.19	15.29	8.40
Barnet	314,564	47.32	1.09	6.68	14.84	6.16	0.35	1.02	12.82	9.72
Bexley	218,307	72.94	0.40	0.89	0.13	1.41	1.35	0.22	14.73	7.93
Brent	263,464	47.71	0.95	17.17	2.45	12.26	0.66	1.13	9.96	7.71
Bromley	295,532	72.03	0.32	1.13	0.37	1.67	0.20	0.30	16.34	7.64
Croydon	330,587	65.07	0.48	5.08	0.30	5.34	0.40	0.55	14.71	8.08
Ealing	300,948	50.74	1.00	7.77	0.49	10.31	8.51	0.42	13.44	7.31
Enfield	273,559	63.18	0.49	3.35	1.95	9.62	0.33	0.62	12.35	8.12
Greenwich	214,403	61.53	0.93	1.98	0.22	4.29	2.19	0.29	19.29	9.27
Harrow	206,814	47.29	0.67	19.61	6.34	7.21	1.00	2.03	9.03	6.82
Havering	224,248	76.13	0.18	0.76	0.50	0.80	0.42	0.19	13.18	7.83
Hillingdon	243,006	64.10	0.39	4.61	0.81	4.63	4.55	0.40	13.37	7.13
Hounslow	212,341	52.11	0.69	7.57	0.32	9.13	8.60	0.56	13.46	7.56
Kingston upon Thames	147,273	64.58	0.80	3.63	0.68	3.92	0.59	0.42	18.00	7.38
Merton	187,908	63.33	0.76	4.65	0.47	5.80	0.27	0.33	16.55	7.85
Redbridge	238,635	50.73	0.44	7.82	6.20	11.94	5.46	0.43	9.62	7.36
Richmond upon Thames	172,335	65.83	0.66	1.46	0.91	2.26	0.66	0.42	19.54	8.27
Sutton	179,768	70.46	0.40	2.07	0.35	2.28	0.14	0.28	16.67	7.35
Waltham Forest	218,341	56.80	0.44	1.83	0.66	15.07	0.57	0.39	15.36	8.89
SOUTH EAST	8,000,645	72.78	0.28	0.56	0.24	1.36	0.47	0.36	16.50	7.46
Bracknell Forest UA	109,617	72.01	0.28	0.99	0.17	0.68	0.19	0.29	17.96	7.43
Brighton and Hove UA	247,817	59.10	0.70	0.52	1.36	1.47	0.10	0.85	27.02	8.88
Isle of Wight UA	132,731	73.72	0.18	0.10	0.10	0.28	0.02	0.45	17.27	7.89
Medway UA	249,488	71.97	0.22	0.68	0.08	1.05	1.22	0.34	16.70	7.76
Milton Keynes UA	207,057	65.54	0.36	1.25	0.23	2.34	0.38	0.40	21.56	7.94
Portsmouth UA	186,701	68.07	0.40	0.44	0.13	2.15	0.17	0.39	19.95	8.31
Reading UA	143,096	62.63	0.48	0.99	0.29	4.00	0.55	0.36	22.00	8.70
Slough UA	119,067	53.75	0.25	4.48	0.12	13.35	9.09	0.30	10.97	7.70
Southampton UA	217,445	65.55	0.33	0.71	0.13	1.92	1.29	0.44	21.62	8.01
West Berkshire UA	144,483	75.93	0.25	0.24	0.19	0.40	0.10	0.28	15.71	6.90
Windsor and Maidenhead UA	133,626	73.68	0.34	0.99	0.43	2.39	1.21	0.27	13.86	6.82
Wokingham UA	150,229	72.78	0.28	0.82	0.36	1.33	0.97	0.26	16.59	6.60
Buckinghamshire County	479,026	72.59	0.23	0.62	0.33	3.62	0.35	0.26	15.12	6.89
Aylesbury Vale	165,748	73.78	0.20	0.45	0.20	2.67	0.10	0.27	15.69	6.64
Chiltern	89,228	74.72	0.23	0.50	0.54	1.88	0.12	0.27	15.02	6.72
South Bucks	61,945	75.58	0.33	1.23	0.52	1.13	1.58	0.26	12.46	6.91
Wycombe	162,105	69.06	0.23	0.62	0.27	6.49	0.25	0.24	15.59	7.24
East Sussex County	492,324	73.61	0.26	0.16	0.21	0.61	0.03	0.50	16.49	8.13
Eastbourne	89,667	72.80	0.34	0.24	0.29	0.98	0.05	0.46	16.70	8.14
Hastings	85,029	67.39	0.32	0.27	0.13	0.75	0.04	0.47	21.36	9.28
Lewes	92,177	72.02	0.30	0.15	0.29	0.44	0.03	0.40	18.18	8.21
Rother	85,428	76.50	0.18	0.14	0.15	0.64	0.03	0.35	13.91	8.10
Wealden	140,023	77.20	0.20	0.08	0.19	0.37	0.01	0.70	13.86	7.38
Hampshire County	1,240,103	76.19	0.18	0.25	0.11	0.35	0.14	0.33	15.55	6.91
Basingstoke and Deane	152,573	74.02	0.16	0.45	0.12	0.51	0.22	0.33	16.98	7.22
East Hampshire	109,274	77.03	0.21	0.13	0.16	0.25	0.03	0.34	15.36	6.50
Eastleigh	116,169	76.67	0.17	0.34	0.07	0.31	0.50	0.29	15.23	6.43
Fareham	107,977	77.96	0.14	0.15	0.08	0.35	0.06	0.45	14.19	6.61
Gosport	76,415	75.33	0.15	0.13	0.04	0.31	0.03	0.33	16.59	7.07
Hart	83,505	77.17	0.21	0.30	0.13	0.37	0.12	0.27	15.06	6.38
Havant	116,849	73.58	0.14	0.14	0.09	0.25	0.06	0.29	17.44	8.01
New Forest	169,331	78.31	0.12	0.08	0.11	0.17	0.03	0.31	13.96	6.91
Rushmoor	90,987	73.03	0.39	0.62	0.07	0.74	0.10	0.33	16.78	7.95
Test Valley	109,801	78.11	0.14	0.23	0.11	0.32	0.25	0.30	14.20	6.35
Winchester	107,222	76.16	0.24	0.24	0.17	0.36	0.07	0.35	15.91	6.51
Kent County	1,329,718	75.13	0.22	0.37	0.13	0.49	0.61	0.32	14.92	7.80
Ashford	102,661	76.45	0.17	0.26	0.12	0.56	0.07	0.30	14.63	7.44
Canterbury	135,278	73.28	0.38	0.38	0.16	0.64	0.09	0.42	16.66	7.99
Dartford	85,911	73.28	0.24	0.76	0.07	0.69	1.10	0.22	15.05	8.59
Dover	104,566	76.60	0.17	0.15	0.07	0.29	0.04	0.28	14.18	8.22

All people	Percentage of people stating religion as:									
	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religions	No religion	Religion not stated
Gravesham	95,717	72.30	0.25	0.63	0.06	0.80	6.66	0.27	12.02	7.02
Maidstone	138,948	76.31	0.23	0.48	0.12	0.53	0.11	0.52	14.33	7.38
Sevenoaks	109,305	77.02	0.20	0.20	0.15	0.34	0.09	0.27	14.43	7.30
Shepway	96,238	75.43	0.22	1.04	0.11	0.35	0.02	0.33	14.63	7.87
Swale	122,801	75.89	0.13	0.20	0.08	0.36	0.09	0.28	15.38	7.58
Thanet	126,702	73.58	0.27	0.19	0.24	0.49	0.07	0.33	15.86	8.97
Tonbridge and Malling	107,561	76.13	0.15	0.16	0.12	0.30	0.07	0.24	15.01	7.83
Tunbridge Wells	104,030	75.03	0.26	0.19	0.17	0.57	0.04	0.31	16.02	7.41
Oxfordshire	605,488	72.52	0.33	0.30	0.33	1.32	0.13	0.31	17.46	7.29
Cherwell	131,785	75.56	0.20	0.18	0.15	1.22	0.25	0.27	14.98	7.19
Oxford	134,248	60.41	0.80	0.78	0.81	3.85	0.23	0.49	23.89	8.73
South Oxfordshire	128,188	75.46	0.19	0.18	0.24	0.34	0.05	0.24	16.54	6.75
Vale of White Horse	115,627	75.84	0.22	0.20	0.20	0.48	0.07	0.23	15.75	7.01
West Oxfordshire	95,640	77.39	0.17	0.11	0.16	0.23	0.02	0.30	15.13	6.49
Surrey	1,059,015	74.56	0.32	0.70	0.30	1.34	0.19	0.31	15.21	7.07
Elmbridge	121,936	74.40	0.46	0.91	0.77	1.32	0.22	0.29	14.69	6.95
Epsom and Ewell	67,059	72.98	0.50	1.84	0.35	1.91	0.12	0.27	14.79	7.22
Guildford	129,701	73.62	0.35	0.51	0.22	0.85	0.12	0.33	16.85	7.16
Mole Valley	80,287	75.42	0.23	0.36	0.25	0.56	0.06	0.26	15.57	7.28
Reigate and Banstead	126,523	73.77	0.25	0.78	0.25	1.29	0.11	0.31	16.12	7.13
Runnymede	78,033	74.87	0.38	0.64	0.33	0.98	0.28	0.32	14.33	7.88
Spelthorne	90,390	75.29	0.25	1.05	0.24	0.94	0.72	0.24	14.07	7.20
Surrey Heath	80,314	76.35	0.34	0.65	0.18	1.17	0.29	0.24	14.12	6.65
Tandridge	79,267	76.18	0.22	0.45	0.22	0.52	0.05	0.55	14.94	6.87
Waverley	115,665	76.34	0.25	0.21	0.19	0.52	0.04	0.31	15.40	6.74
Woking	89,840	71.34	0.29	0.68	0.26	5.06	0.11	0.29	15.12	6.84
West Sussex	753,614	74.45	0.23	0.61	0.19	1.01	0.14	0.41	15.60	7.35
Adur	59,627	73.29	0.22	0.24	0.26	0.70	0.07	0.40	16.82	8.00
Arun	140,759	76.60	0.18	0.10	0.19	0.38	0.02	0.29	14.68	7.56
Chichester	106,450	77.28	0.29	0.09	0.17	0.26	0.02	0.46	14.24	7.20
Crawley	99,744	67.28	0.19	3.42	0.11	4.43	0.68	0.28	16.77	6.85
Horsham	122,088	76.34	0.22	0.19	0.18	0.37	0.08	0.36	15.44	6.82
Mid Sussex	127,378	75.85	0.21	0.30	0.18	0.61	0.07	0.63	15.34	6.79
Worthing	97,568	72.14	0.34	0.22	0.26	0.75	0.11	0.46	16.99	8.73
Former county of Berkshire	800,118	68.75	0.32	1.34	0.27	3.52	1.88	0.29	16.30	7.34
Former county of Buckinghamshire	686,083	70.46	0.27	0.81	0.30	3.23	0.36	0.30	17.06	7.21
Former county of East Sussex	740,141	68.76	0.41	0.28	0.59	0.89	0.05	0.62	20.02	8.38
Former county of Hampshire	1,644,249	73.86	0.22	0.33	0.11	0.76	0.29	0.35	16.86	7.22
Former county of Kent	1,579,206	74.63	0.22	0.42	0.12	0.58	0.71	0.32	15.20	7.80
SOUTH WEST	4,928,434	73.99	0.23	0.17	0.14	0.48	0.09	0.37	16.75	7.79
Bath and North East Somerset UA	169,040	71.02	0.33	0.16	0.12	0.39	0.07	0.36	19.51	8.03
Bournemouth UA	163,444	70.91	0.35	0.19	1.02	0.94	0.05	0.52	17.94	8.08
Bristol; City of UA	380,615	62.07	0.42	0.56	0.22	2.01	0.47	0.46	24.52	9.28
North Somerset UA	188,564	74.98	0.17	0.10	0.09	0.24	0.03	0.35	16.58	7.45
Plymouth UA	240,720	73.56	0.20	0.09	0.08	0.37	0.02	0.29	18.27	7.13
Poole UA	138,288	74.34	0.16	0.15	0.32	0.41	0.03	0.33	16.23	8.03
South Gloucestershire UA	245,641	73.92	0.14	0.28	0.06	0.36	0.14	0.23	17.46	7.42
Swindon UA	180,051	70.07	0.28	0.56	0.07	1.03	0.56	0.36	19.13	7.95
Torbay UA	129,706	76.19	0.15	0.05	0.12	0.26	0.04	0.37	14.91	7.90
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	501,267	74.32	0.19	0.05	0.09	0.13	0.02	0.46	16.70	8.04
Caradon	79,649	75.47	0.16	0.03	0.08	0.14	0.02	0.40	16.19	7.52
Carrick	87,865	73.64	0.21	0.12	0.09	0.20	0.03	0.45	16.96	8.29
Kerrier	92,517	73.64	0.16	0.02	0.08	0.10	0.02	0.44	17.42	8.12
North Cornwall	80,509	75.39	0.16	0.06	0.08	0.04	0.00	0.48	15.62	8.17
Penwith	63,012	72.29	0.31	0.03	0.11	0.19	0.01	0.65	18.19	8.22
Restormel	95,562	75.18	0.16	0.03	0.09	0.15	0.03	0.42	16.02	7.93
Isles of Scilly	2,155	70.39	0.32	0.14	-	-	-	0.28	20.14	8.72
Devon County	704,493	74.84	0.24	0.05	0.09	0.21	0.02	0.40	16.25	7.90
East Devon	125,520	77.85	0.18	0.03	0.10	0.10	0.01	0.37	13.89	7.47
Exeter	111,076	69.12	0.34	0.11	0.14	0.77	0.07	0.43	20.45	8.57
Mid Devon	69,774	75.40	0.19	0.04	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.37	15.98	7.87
North Devon	87,508	75.11	0.17	0.05	0.06	0.18	0.04	0.33	15.95	8.11
South Hams	81,849	74.68	0.39	0.05	0.11	0.07	0.01	0.47	16.53	7.68
Teignbridge	120,958	75.56	0.23	0.03	0.07	0.11	0.02	0.43	15.68	7.87
Torridge	58,965	75.54	0.21	0.03	0.05	0.06	0.01	0.40	15.62	8.08
West Devon	48,843	76.42	0.19	0.02	0.12	0.14	0.01	0.34	15.41	7.34
Dorset County	390,980	77.88	0.23	0.07	0.14	0.21	0.02	0.32	13.74	7.39
Christchurch	44,865	79.06	0.21	0.03	0.26	0.21	0.01	0.34	13.18	6.69
East Dorset	83,786	79.90	0.15	0.08	0.20	0.17	0.02	0.27	12.61	6.61



All people	Percentage of people stating religion as:									
	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religions	No religion	Religion not stated
North Dorset	61,905	77.75	0.27	0.17	0.10	0.19	0.01	0.33	13.61	7.57
Purbeck	44,416	78.36	0.29	0.03	0.08	0.17	0.02	0.27	13.81	6.96
West Dorset	92,360	77.55	0.27	0.05	0.11	0.22	0.02	0.36	13.61	7.81
Weymouth and Portland	63,648	74.67	0.21	0.03	0.12	0.30	0.03	0.32	15.89	8.43
Gloucestershire	564,559	75.93	0.18	0.28	0.09	0.62	0.07	0.32	14.97	7.55
Cheltenham	110,013	72.34	0.27	0.70	0.12	0.49	0.11	0.34	18.23	7.41
Cotswold	80,376	80.13	0.18	0.07	0.14	0.13	0.02	0.28	12.87	6.16
Forest of Dean	79,982	77.07	0.16	0.06	0.04	0.07	0.07	0.28	13.86	8.37
Gloucester	109,885	74.34	0.14	0.44	0.06	2.25	0.08	0.29	14.25	8.14
Stroud	107,898	74.96	0.22	0.04	0.10	0.16	0.03	0.43	16.13	7.92
Tewkesbury	76,405	79.12	0.11	0.18	0.08	0.20	0.08	0.24	13.05	6.95
Somerset	498,093	76.66	0.21	0.08	0.07	0.19	0.02	0.38	14.85	7.55
Mendip	103,869	74.51	0.29	0.11	0.08	0.15	0.01	0.66	16.09	8.10
Sedgemoor	105,881	77.75	0.19	0.05	0.06	0.22	0.03	0.27	14.08	7.34
South Somerset	150,969	78.02	0.16	0.07	0.07	0.14	0.01	0.25	13.98	7.31
Taunton Deane	102,299	75.94	0.16	0.13	0.07	0.29	0.03	0.39	15.75	7.25
West Somerset	35,075	76.01	0.33	0.04	0.07	0.14	0.01	0.40	14.57	8.42
Wiltshire County	432,973	76.62	0.21	0.09	0.08	0.27	0.05	0.34	15.04	7.30
Kennet	74,838	77.92	0.17	0.10	0.14	0.17	0.02	0.35	14.34	6.80
North Wiltshire	125,372	75.90	0.21	0.10	0.06	0.26	0.11	0.32	15.62	7.43
Salisbury	114,613	78.29	0.21	0.10	0.06	0.24	0.03	0.33	13.58	7.17
West Wiltshire	118,150	74.95	0.23	0.07	0.08	0.38	0.04	0.36	16.28	7.61
Bristol/Bath area	983,860	69.04	0.29	0.33	0.13	0.98	0.23	0.36	20.37	8.25
Former county of Devon	1,074,919	74.71	0.22	0.06	0.09	0.25	0.03	0.37	16.54	7.73
Former county of Dorset	692,712	75.53	0.24	0.11	0.38	0.42	0.03	0.37	15.23	7.68
Former county of Wiltshire	613,024	74.70	0.23	0.23	0.08	0.49	0.20	0.34	16.24	7.49
Dartmoor National Park	33,552	72.19	0.39	0.01	0.12	0.13	0.02	0.57	17.73	8.84
Exmoor National Park	10,873	77.43	0.30	0.06	0.11	0.03	-	0.49	13.65	7.93
Lake District National Park	41,831	78.33	0.29	0.04	0.07	0.05	0.01	0.32	14.05	6.85
Northumberland National Park	1,937	79.50	0.15	-	0.15	0.15	-	0.46	12.55	7.02
North York Moors National Park	23,938	81.82	0.19	0.01	0.07	0.11	-	0.28	11.03	6.48
Peak District National Park	37,937	78.89	0.16	0.02	0.12	0.11	0.02	0.21	13.66	6.81
The Broads National Park	5,876	76.31	0.31	0.05	0.12	0.17	0.05	0.31	14.98	7.71
Yorkshire Dales National Park	19,654	78.77	0.18	0.02	0.12	0.03	-	0.23	13.16	7.49
WALES/CYMRU	2,903,085	71.90	0.19	0.19	0.08	0.75	0.07	0.24	18.53	8.07
Blaenau Gwent/Blaenau Gwent	70,064	64.19	0.12	0.07	0.02	0.22	0.04	0.23	25.08	10.03
Bridgend/Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr	128,645	70.21	0.20	0.18	0.03	0.23	0.01	0.27	21.29	7.57
Caerphilly/Caerffili	169,519	65.84	0.09	0.09	0.03	0.13	0.05	0.20	24.16	9.42
Cardiff/Caerdydd	305,353	66.93	0.33	0.78	0.31	3.69	0.30	0.25	18.81	8.60
Carmarthenshire/Sir Gaerfyrddin	172,842	74.58	0.15	0.12	0.05	0.18	0.04	0.31	16.45	8.11
Ceredigion/Sir Ceredigion	74,941	70.76	0.36	0.08	0.08	0.33	0.04	0.62	19.73	8.00
Conwy/Conwy	109,596	77.72	0.19	0.09	0.08	0.25	0.02	0.24	14.00	7.43
Denbighshire/Sir Ddinbych	93,065	77.81	0.20	0.13	0.07	0.26	0.02	0.17	13.38	7.96
Flintshire/Sir y Fflint	148,594	79.21	0.12	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.02	0.13	12.92	7.34
Gwynedd/Gwynedd	116,843	74.54	0.22	0.10	0.04	0.29	0.02	0.32	16.53	7.94
Isle of Anglesey/Sir Ynys Mon	66,829	79.38	0.13	0.04	0.03	0.13	0.02	0.27	13.55	6.46
Merthyr Tydfil/Merthyr Tudful	55,981	69.81	0.11	0.17	0.03	0.25	0.04	0.21	21.00	8.38
Monmouthshire/Sir Fynwy	84,885	74.76	0.17	0.16	0.05	0.15	0.05	0.18	16.69	7.80
Neath Port Talbot/Castell-nedd Port Talbot	134,468	72.09	0.10	0.08	0.03	0.25	0.09	0.22	19.03	8.11
Newport/Casnewydd	137,011	71.88	0.18	0.17	0.06	2.55	0.06	0.21	16.76	8.13
Pembrokeshire/Sir Benfro	114,131	75.62	0.20	0.10	0.05	0.15	0.02	0.28	15.99	7.59
Powys/Powys	126,354	74.76	0.28	0.15	0.07	0.12	0.02	0.32	16.54	7.74
Rhondda; Cynon; Taff/Rhondda; Cynon; Taf	231,946	64.93	0.11	0.12	0.03	0.25	0.06	0.23	25.29	8.98
Swansea/Abertawe	223,301	70.96	0.24	0.13	0.08	0.97	0.07	0.20	19.83	7.52
Torfaen/Tor-faen	90,949	70.83	0.11	0.08	0.02	0.17	0.05	0.19	20.39	8.16
The Vale of Glamorgan/Bro Morgannwg	119,292	73.01	0.19	0.18	0.09	0.40	0.06	0.24	18.65	7.18
Wrexham/Wrecsam	128,476	77.30	0.13	0.13	0.04	0.27	0.03	0.10	14.50	7.50
Brecon Beacons National Park	32,609	75.19	0.39	0.49	0.08	0.09	0.01	0.29	16.12	7.34
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park	22,542	76.00	0.32	0.04	0.10	0.07	0.02	0.34	15.56	7.54
Snowdonia National Park	25,482	76.07	0.20	0.06	0.03	0.12	0.03	0.35	15.33	7.80

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# Some legislative and regulatory factors contributing to increased local inter faith activity

A number of legislative and regulatory factors have contributed to increased local inter faith activity by local authorities and other public bodies.

For example, the Local Government Act 1999 imposes a duty on each local authority in England and Wales to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. [Sec 3(1)]. This duty to seek “Best Value” entails consulting local domestic and business rate taxpayers, service users and “representatives of persons appearing to the authority to have an interest in any area within which the authority carries out its functions”. [Section 3(2)(d)]. The statutory guidance on implementing Best Value reminds authorities to “Engage with users and potential users of services.... It is important that authorities seek out the views of all potential users, especially those who have traditionally been under-represented”. Since faith communities are among potential users (and certainly, other than the Churches, have been among those traditionally under-represented), this is one context in which local authorities with multi faith populations are likely to opt to consult them.

The Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities in England and Wales a statutory duty to prepare community strategies for “promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area...” [Section 4(1)] and the power to do anything which supports the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area (Section 2(1)]. Again, wide consultation is encouraged by the relevant guidance, *Preparing Community Strategies: Government Guidance to Local Authorities*: “Special efforts should be made to involve representatives from under-represented groups, such as ethnic minorities, women, faith communities, older people, young people, children and disabled people. Such groups need to be taken seriously as contributors to both the preparation and delivery of a community strategy”.<sup>i</sup> This is a further impetus to engaging with faith communities.

Similarly, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 brings with it the likelihood of consultation with local faith communities because it requires the responsible authorities for an area to review, analyse and report on local levels and patterns of crime and disorder and “obtain the views on that report of persons or bodies in the area....whether by holding public meetings or otherwise” [Section 6(2)] and to formulate a strategy for reducing local crime and

disorder. [Section 6(1)] The Police Reform Act 2002, which says that the chief officer of police of any police force may establish and maintain a community safety accreditation scheme [Section 40(1)], is encouraging consultation in the process of creating such schemes. <sup>ii</sup>

However, the legislation and guidance mentioned here could simply prompt periodic discussion with individual local faith communities. What are the factors that are encouraging local authorities, among others, to become interested in supporting or developing inter faith and multi faith networks and forums? The principal factor appears to be the arrival of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). <sup>iii</sup>

LSPs bring different parts of the public sector together with the private, community and voluntary sectors to work together to ensure that public services meet the needs of local people. Their four key tasks are to 1) prepare and implement a community strategy <sup>iv</sup>; 2) bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives; 3) work with those local authorities that are developing public service agreements; 4) develop a neighbourhood renewal strategy.

LSPs can to some extent determine their own composition and working pattern. <sup>v</sup> However, “If they are to genuinely reflect the needs and concerns of local people, it is vital that all sectors of the community are represented on the LSP.” <sup>vi</sup> To tackle their tasks effectively, “They will need to make real efforts to involve people who are traditionally underrepresented, such as faith, black and minority ethnic communities.” <sup>vii</sup>

“Appropriate representation” on LSPs from faith communities necessitates, at the most basic level, being aware of local religious demographics and ensuring that ways are found for the faiths to cooperate in putting forward their views and enabling these to be represented. Community Empowerment Networks are important in this context. They have the role of bringing together community and voluntary sector organisations in an area and providing a link between these and the LSP. They must help such organisations engage with their LSP. Among their tasks is “Facilitating the selection of community and voluntary sector members of the LSP” and “In doing so they should use fair, impartial and appropriate mechanisms, and should ensure that deprived areas and marginalised groups are properly represented”. <sup>viii</sup> The Community Empowerment Network should also ensure that community and voluntary sector members of the LSP have “The support of their constituency – which might be a local area or neighbourhood; a community of interest (for instance a minority ethnic or faith community....); an overview of the problems faced by their constituency...and the solutions that they propose.” <sup>ix</sup>

Given the expectations about representation of faiths (and other Third Sector groupings) on LSPs and about how Community Empowerment Networks must help achieve this, it is not surprising that a number of these networks have become very engaged by the question of how to marshall local faith community input. They have looked to see if there is a forum where these can come together to offer their perspectives and to select and validate nominations for the Community Network and for the LSP (and relevant LSP subpartnerships). <sup>x</sup> In many areas, however, they have found individual faith communities going about their business with little interconnection with other

faiths and no forum for the kind of discussion required. Unsurprisingly, therefore, community networks have, alongside the LSPs and the local authorities, been instigating work or actively supporting ongoing work to create multi faith forums.

This process is perhaps most clearly in evidence in some of the 88 local authority areas designated by the Government as the most deprived in England.<sup>xi</sup> This is partly because these areas in England are eligible for the “Neighbourhood Renewal Fund” – but to draw down this funding, they have had to set up LSPs and get these accredited by Government Offices in the Regions. Accreditation is not automatic. “Government Offices in the Regions will not accredit LSPs unless they are satisfied that there is both a good basis of community and voluntary sector participation, and a realistic action plan to sustain and improve on this.”<sup>xii</sup> In the 88 most deprived areas, the Community Empowerment Networks’ role of ensuring that LSPs properly reflect the voluntary sector, including faith, is a significant one. Several, in areas such as Bolton (where the Community Network is working with *Bolton Interfaith Council* to employ an Inter Faith Development Worker, funded through the Community Empowerment Fund) are undertaking broad programmes of work to ensure that Community Empowerment Fund monies are being used, amongst other things, to strengthen connections across the faith sector, thus improving input to the community network and the LSP.<sup>xiii</sup>

i Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, *Preparing Community Strategies: Government Guidance to Local Authorities*, (London: Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, December 2000), para 48.

ii There are many other initiatives which could be pointed to as triggers for widespread local consultation, among these: Health Action Zones, Sure Start and New Deal for Communities, and Local Compacts with the voluntary and community sector, all of which encourage consultations and partnerships which reflect the local community.

iii Local authorities are not legally obliged to have an LSP (although the 88 local authorities eligible for the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund must have an accredited LSP to qualify for this) but most now do. The work of LSPs is described in Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, *Local Strategic Partnerships: Government Guidance*, March 2001, 1.1–1.37. This guidance relates to England.

iv The statutory duty to produce such a plan is on local authorities but Government envisages that LSPs will play a key role in this alongside authorities. See *Local Strategic Partnerships: Government Guidance* 3.3).

v *Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships: Report of a Survey of all English LSPs*, 2003, a survey commissioned by three research units of the ODPM LRGRU, NRU, RAE) and the Department for Transport, looks at a number of aspects of how LSPs are working and at their composition. *Learning from Strategic Partnerships: LGA Advice Note for Working with the Community and Voluntary Sectors*, (London: Local Government Association, 2002) looks particularly at LSPs involvement with the sector within which “faith” is usually located.

vi *Community Empowerment Fund: Preliminary Guidance*, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, DTLR, 2001, 3.9. This guidance relates to England.

vii *Local Strategic Partnerships: Government Guidance*, Summary, para 8).

viii *Community Empowerment Fund: Preliminary Guidance*, 4.6.

ix *Community Empowerment Fund: Preliminary Guidance*, 4.7.

x *Local Strategic Partnerships: Government Guidance* notes that, in the context of involving local people, “Inter-faith initiatives such as Councils of Faith or Multi-Faith Forums can provide valuable links to faith communities...” 1.24. The point about the importance of inter faith (and faith) networks is also flagged up in *Learning from Local Strategic Partnerships: LGA Advice Note for Working the Community and Voluntary Sectors*, (London: Local Government Association, 2002). The latter document draws on a guidance note of the same name issued in 2001.

xi “New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: A National Strategy Action Plan”, a report by the Social Exclusion Unit, Cabinet Office January 2001, set out a strategy to tackle the problems of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England and to: a) significantly improve outcomes in deprived neighbourhoods in five key areas: health, crime, unemployment, education and housing and the physical environment; b) narrow the gap between deprived areas and the rest of the country. The action plan involves, among other things, engaging the voluntary sector in neighbourhood renewal, both as service providers and as participants in planning. LSPs are a key vehicle for this.

- xii *Community Empowerment Fund: Preliminary Guidance*, 3.14. The basis for accreditation is outlined in *Accreditation Guidance for Local Strategic Partnerships*, October 2001, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. Subsequent guidance has not altered the fundamental criteria outlined here which include involving all the key players, including faith groups (3b).
- xiii The Community Empowerment Fund is providing £36 million over a three year period, ending in 2004, for the 88 most deprived local authority areas. It provides funding for outreach and support so that local people can be aware of the opportunities for participation and so that the voluntary and community sectors can increase the effectiveness of their involvement in LSPs (*Community Empowerment Fund: Preliminary Guidance*, 3.14) Government Offices in the Regions are responsible for overseeing the Community Empowerment Fund. There is also another smallscale grant scheme, “Community Chests” for activities at neighbourhood level which encourage greater community involvement and better management of community activities in the 88 deprived areas. Among those to be target for support are “faith communities” and one of the objectives of the programme is “to help BME and other communities to explore their history, their cultures, and their traditions, and through a better understanding of cultural diversity, promote racial harmony and community cohesion. Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, *Neighbourhood Renewal Community Chests: A Grant Programme Supporting Community Involvement in Neighbourhood Renewal*, October 2001, 2.15. This document relates to England.

# Inter faith bodies for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

- A. Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum
- B. Scottish Inter Faith Council
- C. Inter Faith Council for Wales

## A. Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum

Inaugurated in May 1993, the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum now comprises about 150 members drawn from a wide variety of religious backgrounds including the Jewish, Bahá'í, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Chinese and Sikh communities as well as the Christian Churches. In accordance with its essentially educational and humanitarian aims, Forum activities centre on inter-faith dialogue and the promotion of mutual understanding across the spectrum of religious life in Northern Ireland. Quarterly meetings are normally held in Stranmillis University College, Belfast, at which inter-faith issues are presented and explored in an atmosphere of honest enquiry and positive appreciation of cultural diversity.

The Forum operates as both a local and national organisation, and so far there are no other local inter-faith groups in Northern Ireland, although the Forum would be pleased to see such groups developing, especially outside the Greater Belfast area. Good relations are maintained with the Northern Ireland branch of the Council of Christians and Jews, with which there is some overlap of membership, and with inter-faith bodies in the Republic of Ireland.

A number of important initiatives have been developed by the Forum, including:

- the encouragement of small groups of people, representative of the various faith communities, to meet in each other's homes for informal fellowship and exchange of views and concerns
- annual publication of a Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Calendar, with wide circulation to schools, public bodies, voluntary organisations, etc.
- with assistance from the Community Relations Council's European Programme Learning Fund, the development of resource materials entitled *Yours Faithfully* (involving a series of customised training programmes on religious diversity, designed to support public bodies and community organisations in developing policies and practices that are sensitive to the beliefs of faith traditions in Northern Ireland)
- an awareness-raising touring exhibition entitled *In Good Faith*, supported by Diversity 21, the Community Relations Council and the BBC



- the establishment of a “Quiet Room” at Belfast International Airport (in association with the Airport and supported by the N.I. Community Relations Council) as a space for private reflection or prayer by all who wish to use it
- publication in 2002 of two background booklets:
  - *A Handbook of Faiths* – a brief introduction to faith communities in NI
  - *Check Up!* – a guide to special healthcare needs of ethnic-religious minority communities
- a continuing campaign to promote teaching about world religions in Northern Ireland’s Religious Education syllabus for schools, including the issuing of A Statement on Religious Education in January 2001 and research on the attitudes of minority faith parents to RE in schools.

For further information contact:

The Secretary  
Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum  
c/o Stranmillis University College  
Stranmillis Road  
Belfast BT9 5DY

Tel: 028 9038 4328  
email: [interfaithni@stran.ac.uk](mailto:interfaithni@stran.ac.uk)

## **B. Scottish Inter Faith Council**

The Scottish Inter Faith Council was officially launched on the 10th of October 1999 by the then Presiding Officer of the new Scottish Parliament. Its key aims are:

- to provide and maintain an information service for any person or organisation interested in making contact with the faith communities in Scotland
- to provide a forum for discussion between representative members of different faiths
- to encourage public awareness of the importance of inter faith dialogue and understanding
- to help ensure that the needs of minority faith communities are met by public authorities
- to help facilitate the fuller and more effective participation of religious communities in public life
- to promote conferences, meetings and seminars that encourage reflection and debate on issues of national importance
- to encourage the formation of local inter faith associations and, where these are established, to support them in their work

The faiths that the SIFC represents and works with are, Baha’i, Buddhist, Brahma Kumaris, Christian (Catholic, Church of Scotland, Scottish Episcopal,



Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Salvation Army, Methodist), Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and Unitarian. Currently the Pagan Federation and the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints have observer status.

In order to carry out its key aims the Scottish Inter Faith Council disseminates information via *Parliamentary News* (every two months) and general inter faith newsletters (3 per year). The general inter faith newsletter always contains news about what inter faith activities that are going on locally in Scotland. The SIFC, wherever possible in partnership with local inter faith groups, also hosts regular forums, seminars and conferences around issues relevant to faith communities. An example of such conferences is the hosting of a networking conference for local inter faith groups where Dundee Inter Faith Association played a key role in helping make the conference a success. Another example would be Aberdeen Inter Faith Group hosting a meeting regarding 'religious observance in schools' and also a meeting to consult with faith communities on the 'tackling religious hatred' document issued by the Scottish Executive.

With the objective of ensuring that the needs of minority faith communities are met the SIFC is very active in encouraging multi-faith chaplaincy in the health service, prison service and in higher education nationally. This work will be extended so that local inter faith groups can become involved in multi-faith chaplaincy at a local level.

Meetings have been held locally in Glasgow with Muslim women, Hindu women and asylum seekers and refugees to assist them in understanding how the Scottish parliamentary system works, and for the Muslim and Hindu women to encourage them to have their voices heard by voting in the Scottish elections. This has led to close collaboration between the Muslim Women's Resource Centre and the Scottish Inter Faith Council.

For further information contact:

The Scottish Inter Faith Council  
St Francis' Centre  
405 Cumberland Street  
Glasgow  
G5 0SE

Tel: 0141 429 4012

Email: [admin@interfaithscotland.org](mailto:admin@interfaithscotland.org)

## **C. Inter Faith Council for Wales / Cyngor Rhyng-grefyddol Cymru**

Following the meeting between the First Minister and other Assembly Party Leaders and faith representatives in October 2001, it was agreed that a working group should be formed to take forward the concept of establishing a permanent inter faith group for Wales. A Working Group was duly established. The Working Group met on a number of occasions in the latter part of 2001 and formulated the proposals upon which the present Inter Faith Council is based.

Initially the membership comprises representatives of those faiths represented on the Working Group (the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist faiths) and representatives of the Baha'i faith. Those on the Council are chosen by their faith communities. Additional membership is open to:

- bodies which respect the values of inter faith dialogue
- bodies representing the whole or part of a faith community

The National Assembly is represented by the First Minister and Party Leaders. The Secretary of State for Wales is a member of the Council. Meetings of the Council are chaired by politicians.

The Council is a vehicle for facilitating discussion between politicians and the various major faiths in Wales on any matters affecting economic and social life in Wales. Within this broad definition, any matters of concern to faith communities in Wales can be raised and similarly, any matters on which politicians might wish to consult faith communities can also be raised. Matters of concern between faith communities will also be appropriate for discussion and consideration within the Council.

The Council meets at least twice yearly. It is empowered to establish working groups on any specific matters that arise from time to time.

For further information contact:

The Secretariat  
The Inter Faith Council for Wales  
Room B.5  
The National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

E-mail [interfaith@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:interfaith@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

# National inter faith organisations with local branches and groups

- A. Council of Christians and Jews
- B. Maimonides Foundation
- C. Three Faiths Forum
- D. United Religions Initiative

The UK has a number of national inter faith organisations, each of which offer helpful resources for local inter faith work. The Inter Faith Network can supply contact details for these.

Four national inter faith bodies have local groups, branches or councils. This appendix contains contact information for their central offices and details provided by these bodies about their work at national and local level. By agreement with these bodies their work has been covered in this appendix in order to allow more detailed coverage than possible in the main body of the report.

## A. Council of Christians and Jews

The Council of Christians and Jews was founded in 1942, as a result of an initiative between Chief Rabbi Hertz and Archbishop Temple, in order to promote good relations between Christian and Jewish communities. Today it has more than 4000 members, most of whom are involved in one of over 50 branches throughout the United Kingdom. These branches have their own constitutions, and are devoted to the CCJ aims of tolerance through understanding, particularly between Christian and Jewish communities, but also more widely throughout British society. CCJ's Presidents include leaders of the Churches and Jewish community in the United Kingdom.

In addition to an All-Party Parliamentary Group and Faithshare groups on University campuses, CCJ has branches in:

Avon	Ealing	Havering
Belfast	Eastbourne	Hendon and
Berkshire	Edgware	Golders Green
Birmingham	Edinburgh	Hillingdon
Bournemouth	Enfield	Hull
Brighton	Exeter	Kent
Cambridge	Finchley	Leeds
Cardiff	Guildford	Leicester
Central London	Hampstead	Lincoln
City of London Group	Harlow	Manchester
Dittons	Hastings	Marches

Merseyside	Richmond and	South London
North East	Twickenham	Southport
North London	SANE (Suffolk and	Staines
North West Middlesex	North Essex)	St Albans
Norwich	Sheffield	West of Scotland
Nottingham	Southampton University	Willesden
Oxford University	South East London	Wimbledon
Radlett	Southend	
Redbridge	South Hampshire	

Each local branch organises its own programme of events and initiatives and has its own character, receiving funding for expenses from the national office. An example of good branch programming is the Manchester ‘Friendship Week’, involving services in different places of worship, civic events and speakers, aimed at welcoming others into one’s own community.

CCJ’s work brings together people and communities in Britain and Northern Ireland and enables encounters with groups in Europe and Israel/Palestine. It supports where possible projects which encourage co-operation and co-existence. A range of publications, including the journal ‘Common Ground’, promote these concerns to a growing number of people.

The key work of CCJ is delivered through its national ‘*dialogue*’ programme and is largely educational. Staff and members work through schools and colleges and extensively in adult education, broadcasting and addressing and running conferences. The Council also offers expertise and classroom materials for use in Religious Education, Citizenship initiatives and Holocaust Education. The Young Leadership Section (‘YES!’ to Dialogue) encourages students and others to consider aspects of dialogue, reconciliation, identity and citizenship through seminars, conferences and practical trips abroad. They are able to form networks with similar young people both in Europe and throughout the world through the International Council of Christians and Jews.

The small professional staff of the Council advises journalists, politicians and educational and religious bodies. Broadcasting and writing form a major feature of CCJ’s work and an All-Party Parliamentary group provides an opportunity for members of both houses to discuss issues of mutual concern at a national level. CCJ is neither a missionary nor a political organisation.

For further information contact:

Council of Christians and Jews  
5th Floor Camelford House  
87–89 Albert Embankment  
London  
SE1 7TP

Tel: 020 7820 0090  
Email: [cjrelations@ccj.org.uk](mailto:cjrelations@ccj.org.uk)  
[www.ccj.org.uk](http://www.ccj.org.uk)

## **B. Maimonides Foundation**

The Maimonides Foundation was founded in 1994 and became a joint Jewish-Muslim charity in February 2002. Its aims and objects are:

- to foster good relations and understanding based on dialogue and mutual respect between Jews and Muslims in this country and abroad.
- to facilitate dialogue, interaction and co-operation between Jews and people of different faiths.

The Foundation has set up a variety of Muslim-Jewish academic, cultural and educational programmes. The following are a few of the projects:

- Annual Jewish-Muslim Lecture Series, in association with the Leo Baeck College and the London School of Oriental and African Studies, held at SOAS. The lectures are published.
- Annual Theology Seminar – An invited group of theologians and academics discusses issues which have caused division between Jews and Muslims. Summaries of the discussions are included in a consultative paper distributed to educational institutions locally and nationally.
- Cultural events – The Foundation is to hold regular cultural events to create dialogue through the universal language of art.
- Foreign visits to many countries in the Middle East on goodwill missions. Symposia have been held outside the UK.
- Football – One of the Foundation's most successful initiatives has been its football project. Every year up to a hundred children aged 9–11 from Muslim and Jewish schools get together for four Sundays to play football. The scheme is supported by Arsenal Football Club, which gives coaching to the children at their football ground in London.
- Inter faith meetings – involving visits by members of the Foundation to mosques and synagogues in order to meet with religious leaders from Jewish and Muslim communities.

Two local groups function under the auspices of the Foundation:

- Student's Dialogue Forum (Manchester) – in order to reduce the tension at the University campus, the Foundation has initiated a students' dialogue group. The emphasis is on Muslim and Jewish students learning about each other's differing opinions through dialogue and discussions.
- Daughters of Abraham (London) – a group of Muslim and Jewish women have been meeting regularly for the last six years. The meetings include talks and discussions on topics of mutual interest for the women of both communities.

For further information contact:

Maimonides Foundation  
Nour House  
6 Hill Street  
London  
W1J 5NF

Tel: 020 7518 8282  
[info@maimonides-foundation.org](mailto:info@maimonides-foundation.org)

## C. Three Faiths Forum

The Three Faiths Forum was set up in 1997 at the initiative of Sir Sigmund Sternberg and Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi, to promote dialogue between the three Abrahamic communities of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. It is primarily a UK body open to all who, while adhering to their respective faiths, are committed to the task of developing attitudes of mutual respect. The Three Faiths Forum is a registered charity and is directed by an Advisory Council, drawn from the three faith communities, which meets bimonthly. The Forum has a medical group and is presently working to form a lawyers group and a Parliamentary group. Its work includes the giving of lectures to local groups of Jews, Christians and Muslims as well as at conferences. It assists those wishing to set up local groups to further the aim of building friendship, trust and understanding between members of the Abrahamic faiths.

The Three Faiths Forum is a loosely structured voluntary association and regional and local groups linked to it work autonomously. The events of local groups are varied. An example of a recent successful meeting was the meeting on the theme “Our Holy Scriptures and their authority” with speakers from the three faiths held by East London Three Faiths Forum at the Ilford Islamic Centre.

The Three Faiths Forum has groups in:

- Brighton
- Central Southern England (Winchester, Southampton and Bournemouth)
- Durham University
- East London (Barking, Newham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest)
- Ireland (Northern Ireland – Belfast – Irish Republic – Dublin)
- Leicester University
- Liverpool (Three Faiths in Common)
- University of Lampeter, Wales
- West London

Groups are in the process of formation in:

- Birmingham
- Manchester
- South East London

For further information contact:

Mr Sidney Shipton, Coordinator  
Three Faiths Forum  
Star House  
Grafton Road  
London  
NW5 4BD

Tel: 020 7485 2538  
[Sidney@Sternberg-foundation.co.uk](mailto:Sidney@Sternberg-foundation.co.uk)

## **D. United Religions Initiative (UK)**

The United Religions Initiative UK (URI-UK) is an interfaith movement connected to URI globally. Its stated purpose is ‘... to promote enduring, daily interfaith co-operation, to end religiously-motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings’.

The first URI UK gathering was held at St. George’s House, Windsor, in 1998. In the light of consultations with faith leaders and interfaith organisations, it was agreed that URI’s focus in the UK should be on young people and programmes of action.

URI operates through an open structure based on Co-operation Circles (CCs), organised around areas, themes or activities. These are connected to a Global Council, responsible for URI worldwide. Individuals, associations or organisations seeking membership in the URI create a Co-operation Circle or join an existing Co-operation Circle. At present there are local URI Cooperation Circles in: Bradford, London, Liverpool, Manchester and Oxford.

Groups are called Co-operation Circles because they are created by people who come together to initiate acts of interfaith cooperation. Every URI Circle determines its own unique purpose, membership, and ways of making decisions that are relevant and consistent with the URI Charter. If a Co-operation Circle chooses to co-ordinate its efforts with other Co-operation Circles, it may decide to form a Multiple Co-operation Circle (MCC).

To provide initial stability and interfaith diversity, Co-operation Circles must have at least seven members who represent at least three different religions, spiritual expressions or indigenous traditions.

For further information contact:

URI (UK),  
Luther King House,  
Brighton Grove,  
Manchester M14 5JP.  
Tel: 0870 020 5577.  
Email: [info@uri.org.uk](mailto:info@uri.org.uk)



# Inter Faith Network's partners in the Mapping Project

The survey for the Local Inter Faith Mapping Project was carried out by the Inter Faith Network for the UK with funding from the Community Cohesion Unit of the Home Office and in partnership with the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Local Government Association.

## Home Office

The recently formed Faith Communities Unit in the Home Office leads on the Government's engagement with faith communities. Its purpose is to ensure that policies and services across Government are delivered in a way that is appropriate to faith communities and that these communities' experience and skills are recognised and utilised.

The Home Office Faith Communities Unit, Allington Towers,  
19 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EB.

Tel 020 7035 5431.

Email: [public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

## Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

The Inner Cities Religious Council is based in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It is chaired by a Government Minister and provides a forum where faith communities and government can work together on urban renewal, social inclusion and community cohesion. Further information from ICRC's webpages at:

[www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm\\_index.hcst?n=3006&l=2](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=3006&l=2)

Inner Cities Religious Council, Urban Policy Directorate, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 4/J10 Eland House, Bressenden Place, London, SW1E 5DU.

Tel 020 7944 3704.

Email [icrc@odpm.gov.uk](mailto:icrc@odpm.gov.uk)

## Local Government Association.

As the national voice for local communities, the Local Government Association speaks for nearly 500 local authorities. Its mission is to secure the conditions in which local government can thrive; promote local government's achievements; and help councils improve.

The Local Government Association,

Local Government House, Smith Square, SW1P 3HZ.

Tel: 020 7664 3131.

Email [info@lga.gov.uk](mailto:info@lga.gov.uk)

[www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

# The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to link inter faith activity and to develop good relations between people of different faiths in this country. Its members include the representative bodies of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths; national and local inter faith organisations; and educational and academic bodies specialising in inter faith relations. It is run by Trustees of all the faiths whose representative bodies it links.

With its member bodies, the Network works to “advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain, including an awareness both of their distinctive features and of their common ground” and to “promote good relations between persons of different religious faiths”. It does this by:

- holding meetings of its member bodies where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- setting up multi faith working groups, seminars and conferences to pursue particular issues in greater depth
- proceeding by consensus wherever possible and not making statements on behalf of member bodies except after full consultation
- fostering inter faith co-operation on social issues
- running an information and advice service
- publishing materials to help people working in the religious and inter faith sectors
- in consultation with member bodies, helping to provide contacts and participants for inter faith events and projects and for television and radio programmes

Further information about the Inter Faith Network can be found on its website: [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk) or by writing to the Network office.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK  
8A Lower Grosvenor Place  
London  
SW1W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766  
Fax: 020 7931 7722  
Email: [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)  
Web: [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

## Member Organisations of the Inter Faith Network for the UK 2003–04

### Faith community representative bodies

Afro West Indian United Council of Churches  
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (UK)  
Baha'i Community of the United Kingdom  
Board of Deputies of British Jews  
Buddhist Society  
Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland  
Churches' Commission for Inter-Faith Relations  
Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches (UK)  
Friends of the Western Buddhist Order  
Hindu Council (UK)  
Imams and Mosques Council (UK)  
Islamic Cultural Centre  
Jain Samaj Europe  
Jamiat-e-Ulama Britain (Association of Muslim Scholars)  
Muslim Council of Britain  
National Council of Hindu Temples  
Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)  
Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)  
Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations  
Roman Catholic Committee for Other Faiths, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales  
Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of G.B  
Swaminarayan Hindu Mission  
Unitarian and Free Christian Churches Interfaith Subcommittee  
Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)  
World Ahlul-Bayt Islamic League  
World Islamic Mission (UK)  
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

### Inter faith organisations

Inter Faith Council for Wales  
Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum  
Scottish Inter Faith Council\*

Calamus Foundation  
Christians Aware Interfaith Programme  
Council of Christians and Jews  
Interfaith Foundation  
International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter)  
International Interfaith Centre  
London Society of Jews and Christians  
Maimonides Foundation  
Three Faiths Forum  
United Religions Initiative (Britain and Ireland)  
Westminster Interfaith  
World Conference on Religion and Peace (UK Chapter)  
World Congress of Faiths

### Local inter faith groups

Bedford Council of Faiths  
Birmingham Council of Faiths  
Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council

Bolton Interfaith Council  
Bradford Concord Interfaith Society  
Brent Inter Faith  
Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group  
Bristol Inter Faith Group  
Cambridge Inter-Faith Group  
Cardiff Interfaith Association  
Cleveland Interfaith Group  
Coventry Inter Faith Group  
Derby Open Centre Multi-Faith Group  
Dudley Council of Faiths  
Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action  
Harrow Inter Faith Council  
Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)  
Huddersfield Interfaith Council  
Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship  
Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum  
Leicester Council of Faiths  
Loughborough Council of Faiths  
Luton Council of Faiths  
Manchester Interfaith Forum  
Merseyside Council of Faiths  
Merseyside Inter-Faith Group  
Nelson and Brierfield Building Bridges  
Newham Association of Faiths  
Nottingham Inter-Faith Council  
Oxford Round Table of Religions  
Peterborough Inter-Faith Council  
Reading Inter-Faith Group  
Redbridge Council of Faiths  
Richmond Interfaith Group  
Rochdale Interfaith Action  
Sheffield Interfaith  
South London Inter Faith Group  
Southampton Council of Faiths  
Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource  
Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel  
Watford Inter Faith Association  
Wellingborough Multi-Faith Group  
Whalley Range Inter Faith Group  
Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group  
Wycombe Sharing of Faiths

### Educational and academic bodies

Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations  
Community Religions Project  
Institute of Jainology  
Islamic Foundation  
Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby  
National Association of SACRE's  
Religious Education Council for England and Wales  
Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education  
Study Centre for Christian-Jewish Relations (Sisters of Sion)

*\* links faith community, inter faith and educational bodies in Scotland*

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