

**FAITH &
BELIEF
ADVISORY
PANEL**

**DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER**

**Faith and Belief in Greater
Manchester**

A statement



This statement affirms the significant role of Faith and Belief in society and the support faith organisations provide, often to the most disadvantaged, both in terms of spiritual wellbeing and practical services.

This was clearly demonstrated throughout the pandemic and is continuing to develop within the ongoing commitment to achieving the shared ambitions for the city-region.

The role of Faith and Belief within the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector is equally important.

This statement sets out:

- (i) The importance of values
- (ii) The distinctive role of faith in society
- (iii) The contribution of faith groups
- (iv) The practical collaborations
- (v) The aspects essential to the development and sustaining of good partnerships

(i)The importance of values

The values of faith groups provide the basis for more effective and sustainable partnership and policy development.

‘Shared values’ are much more likely to lead to ‘shared outcomes’.

The values include:

- Compassion,
- Social Justice (including an end to discrimination and poverty),
- Friendship,
- An ethos of service,
- Kindness,
- Empathy,
- And hope.

These values are part of an ‘ethical framework’ for people of faith.

(ii)The distinctive role of faith in society *

- Challenging hate
- Promoting emotional and spiritual wellbeing
- Fostering community cohesion
- Providing inclusion
- Developing interfaith and intercommunal awareness and collaboration

(iii)The contribution of faith groups

- Resources: i.e. important assets such as buildings and volunteers, but also networks of engagement that spread deep and across localities and communities. Also, expertise on how to engage and understand the experience of key communities and stakeholders that other sectors sometimes struggle to connect with;

- Credibility: i.e. being trustworthy and effective, but also derived as being perceived to lie outside bureaucratic (often referred to as 'top-down') structures; and
- Motivation: i.e. an asset deriving from the values and beliefs that faith groups bring to issues of commitment to their local communities. Their desire to problem-solve and collaborate for the sake of improving the life chances of not only their own members but also those of the wider community.

Faith and Belief offers:

1. People (volunteers for social action)
2. Plant (community assets)
3. Purpose (hope – embodying the language of hope – living with a hopeful attitude) within each locality

There is fluidity and flexibility within the delivery of “faithful capital”.

(iv)The practical collaborations

Faith and Belief delivery is towards firstly the Greater Manchester Strategy and secondly the VCSE Accord.

Faith and Belief is involved and leading within the Action Networks and the Task Forces including homelessness, food security, climate action, digital and Real Living Wage.

Faith and Belief’s delivery includes:

- Emergency food relief and food distribution,
- Mental health,
- Public health,
- Domestic violence,
- The care and integration of refugees and migrants
- Mentoring highly vulnerable families and individuals,

- Being the conduits for other clinical and public health interventions in their recovery,
- Emergency childcare services via fostering and adoption services.

The growing use of worship and other faith-based centres in the delivery of statutory mental health and public health and in social prescribing is likely to be a permanent feature of health and social care provision going forward.

(v) The aspects essential to the development and sustaining of good partnerships

- Developing trust;
- Cultivating transparency;
- Sharing values, ethos and motivation;
- Embracing new mindsets, including reimagining the structures of governance and finance;
- Committing to a potential culture shift;
- A commitment to talking honestly about conflict and misunderstanding;
- A willingness to communicate regularly;
- Coming with data-backed solutions;
- Developing shared goals (derived from shared values) and action plans; and
- Telling good stories and celebrating achievements

*** The distinctive role of faith in society**

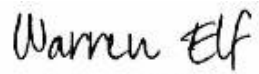
- Challenging hate
 - Promoting greater understanding of each of the protected characteristics, including faith
 - Involves education and training

- Curating a safe space for difficult dialogues
- Standing together (Challenging Hate Forum)
- Responding and supporting others that work on victim/hate
- Crime advocacy
- Pursuing peace
- Promoting emotional and spiritual wellbeing
 - Holistic health concept
 - Chaplaincy
 - Help within hospitals but also in community
 - Providing other health care settings
 - Social prescribing
- Fostering community cohesion
 - Communities within communities
 - Ability to coordinate and disseminate messaging to large constituencies/faith congregations including health and emergency services
- Providing inclusion
 - Addressing societal issues together
 - Fostering mutual respect
- Developing interfaith and intercommunal awareness and collaboration
 - Celebrating cultural diversity

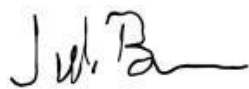
Endorsed by



Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester



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