

Draft Wolverhampton Faith Covenant

THE FAITH COVENANT

The City of Wolverhampton recognises the immense contribution made by both the Faith and non-Faith communities within the City. This Covenant seeks to reaffirm the commitment to work with the Faith Sector in Wolverhampton. The Faith Covenant is a joint commitment between faith communities and statutory bodies (inc. the City of Wolverhampton Council, Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group, West Midlands Police) and key strategic partnerships (including Safer Wolverhampton Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, Children's Trust Board, and the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Boards) to a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to remove any mistrust that exists and to promote open, practical working on all levels.

The Faith Covenant is built on the following principles:

Faith communities are free to practise their beliefs and religious observances without restriction, and to raise their voice in public debate and to be respected, within the framework of UK law.

Public services and faith-based social action should respect service users from all backgrounds, with no discrimination on the grounds of religion, gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

The voice, participation and solutions that faith communities bring are important, and consultation should enable them to be brought to bear for the benefit of the wider community.

Organisations and services are stronger for drawing on diverse sources of funding; monopolies of funding, action and participation are damaging.

The Faith Covenant entails the following commitments:

Statutory bodies and partnerships commit to welcome the involvement of faith groups in the delivery of services and social action on an equal basis with other groups. In addition, they commit to:

- Building relationships and trust with faith groups;
- Adopting and enhancing strategies for the engagement of faith communities in consultation exercises;
- Encouraging faith groups and their members to be involved in helping to meet community need;
- Establishing clear guidelines around funding;
- Sharing training and learning opportunities between faith communities and statutory services and local partnerships.

Faith-based organisations commit to work actively with local authorities in the design and delivery of services to the public. In addition, they commit to:

- Seeking opportunities to bring people together to serve the community, particularly its poorest and most isolated members;
- Serving equally all local residents seeking to access the public services they offer, without seeking to influence their faith or belief, irrespective of their religion or belief (including those with no religion or belief), gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, mental capability, gender identity or disability;
- Using resources provided for delivering a service wholly for that purpose, and not for any other;
- Ensuring excellence in child and adult protection, health and safety, accountability and transparency;
- Responding to consultations where appropriate;
- Sharing training and learning opportunities between faith communities and partners