



# Inter Faith Week 2025 Community: Together We Serve



The  
Faith  
& Belief  
Forum



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# Overview

**Since 2009, one of the key fixtures of the interfaith calendar has been Inter Faith Week every November, coordinated in England by the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN).**

Inter Faith Week was established with the following aims:

- Strengthening good interfaith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

In addition to these foundational aims, Inter Faith Week creates the opportunity to showcase the diverse work that happens through the rest of the year, to get people involved in interfaith activity for the first time, and to build momentum for the interfaith movement.

Inter Faith Week is celebrated in a variety of different contexts, including faith and belief communities, interfaith bodies, schools, universities, local authorities, community and voluntary groups, businesses and workplaces, and many others.

Since the closure of IFN in the Spring of 2024, the Week has been coordinated by a National Steering Group of national and regional interfaith organisations (see Thanks and Credits for membership). For Inter Faith Week 2024 and 2025, the group was supported by a grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to cover staffing and delivery costs.

In the spring of 2025, the group also completed a national consultation on the future of Inter Faith Week, leading to the 'Bursting the Bubble: Recommendations for enhancing Inter Faith Week in England' report. The report highlighted the positive impact and importance of Inter Faith Week and the huge variety of activity across the country. Simultaneously, it identified the need to reach beyond those in the 'interfaith bubble' who are already involved in and committed to interfaith work, as well as to better include those from smaller faith and belief communities and non-religious worldviews. It also identified the need to integrate the existing work in schools and universities with work in local communities and vice versa, as well as the need for generating buy-in and support from outside the interfaith movement, for example: national and local government, national faith and belief organisations, schools and educational bodies, and the media.

Going into Inter Faith Week 2025, the National Steering Group prioritised work to address the themes and recommendations in the 'Bursting the Bubble' report. This included specific workstreams for engaging local communities, schools and young people; an internship programme; improved communications; and a national launch event.

Following the successful delivery of Inter Faith Week 2025, which took place from 9 to 16 November 2025, the National Steering Group conducted a comprehensive evaluation, which this report summarises. The evaluation, comprising a national survey, interviews, case studies, and statements of support, sought to build a robust national picture of the Week's reach and impact, as well as to help shape Inter Faith Week 2026 and beyond. The report does not seek to replace the 'Bursting the Bubble' report, but to evaluate how the themes and recommendations of the report were addressed in Inter Faith Week 2025.

# Engagement Across the Country

## Total number of activities

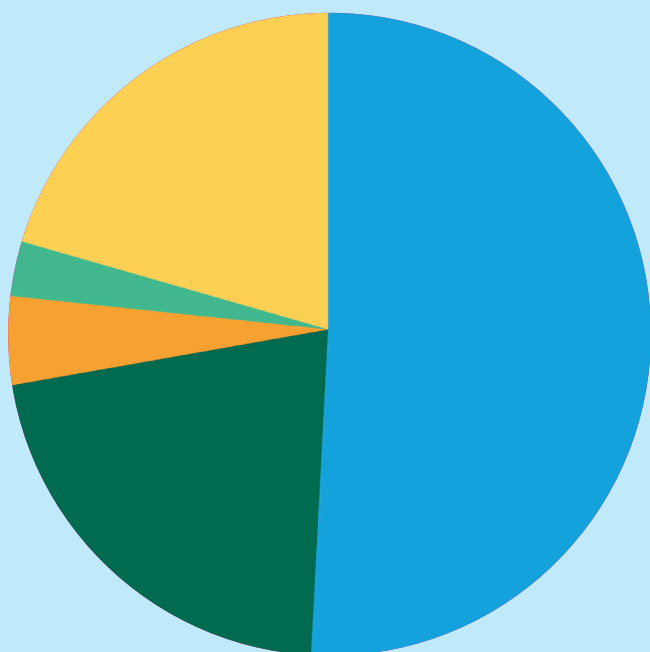
In 2025, 205 activities were registered on the Inter Faith Week website and a further 226 activities were found through trawling on social media in the weeks after Inter Faith Week. Together, there were 431 activities, excluding the likely large number of activities that were not publicised or reported on social media in the weeks after Inter Faith Week. For example, many more activities took place in schools, but these were not registered on the Inter Faith Week website. Through the recorded activities, Inter Faith Week 2025 had an estimated national reach of 21,550.

It's difficult to compare number of Inter Faith Week activities to pre-2024 iterations as previous reports included Mitzvah Day activities and listed social media posts as activities. In 2024, when there was limited support for Inter Faith Week and no encouragement to register activities, an estimated 250 activities took place. As such, in 2025 there was an increase of 72% in activities compared to the previous year.

## Types of activities

Local organisations have always been at the heart of the Week, and this trend continued in 2025, as 287 (67%) activities were categorised as local or general community-focused. A significant proportion of activities involved children and young people: 119 (28%) activities took place in schools and colleges and 26 (6%) activities occurred in universities or had a clear youth focus. This impressive engagement from children and young people is encouraging as it was one of the key recommendations in the 'Bursting the Bubble' report.

Unlike previous iterations, Inter Faith Week 2025 incorporated a national theme 'Community: Together We Serve'. The theme emphasised the importance of community and collaboration, reflected in this year's activities by the fact that 114 (26%) were organised in partnership, by two or more organisations.

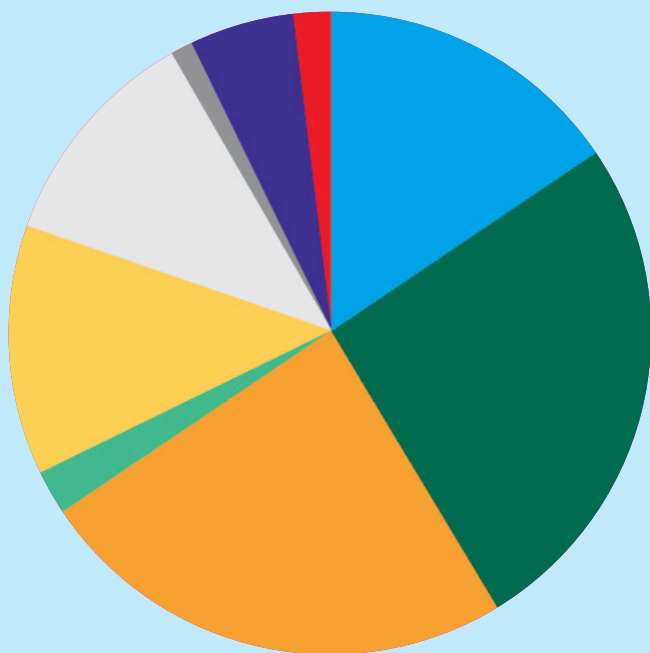


Type of activity	Number of events
Local or general community	287
Schools and colleges	119
Youth and universities	26
National	16
Partnership events	114

Inter Faith Week 2025 provided an opportunity for organisations to hold a variety of compelling and unique activities. Bringing together registered and unregistered events, 125 were categorised as a dialogue/discussion; 77 as a conference, seminar, talk or workshop; 61 as involving a meal or food; and 56 consisted of a visit to a place of worship/open door day.

The national theme encouraged activities that were linked to 'serving together' on social action topics such as climate change, racial inequality, and tackling homelessness.

25 activities focused on a social action theme or topic, but many of these were panel or discussion events rather than direct social action. It should be noted that the perceived decline in social action events this year than in previous years can partially be explained by the decision to not include activities from Mitzvah Day, the annual Jewish-led day of social action that this year fell outside of Inter Faith Week, in the Inter Faith Week reporting.

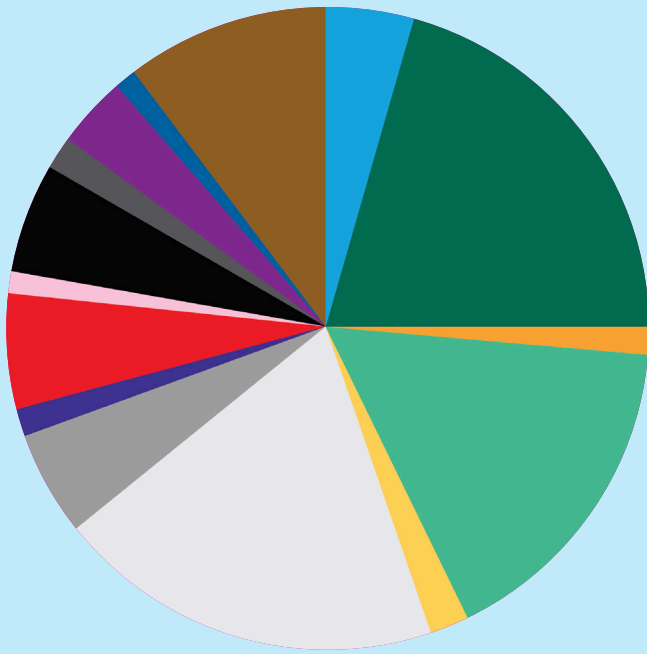


Type of activity (themes)	Number of activities
Conference/seminar/talk/workshop	77
Dialogue/discussion	125
School activity	119
Walk	10
Meal/food	61
Visit to place of worship/open door day	56
Sports event	6
Social action	25
Environment	9

## Which organisations took part in Inter Faith Week?

One of the great strengths of the Week is that it provides a focal point for organisations that regularly participate in interfaith work, but may have limited resources and rely on volunteers, to host activities. For example, of the 361 unique organisations that took part, 73 local/regional interfaith organisations and 16 national interfaith organisations hosted activities during the Week. Many of those organisations also hosted multiple events – 24 organisations hosted a series of events (more than two events).

However, the Week is also a useful conduit for engaging organisations that do not regularly engage in interfaith activity. Inter Faith Week 2025 saw significant engagement from non-faith-based organisations, including: local authorities and councils (21); higher education/further institutions (19); business or workplace/workplace network (19); hospitals, hospices and other healthcare (13); and sports organisations (4). This initial engagement with Inter Faith Week is therefore a springboard for new organisations and will hopefully lead people to engage more regularly with interfaith work.



Type of organisation	Number
National Interfaith Organisations	16
Local/Regional Interfaith Organisation	73
National Faith or Belief Bodies	5
Local/Regional Single Faith or Belief Body	58
Faith-based Charity/Voluntary Organisation	7
Schools	69
HE/FE Institutions and Chaplaincies	19
Youth Organisations	5
Local Authorities/Councils	21
Police/Emergency Service	4
Business or Workplace/Workplace Network	19
Museum/Gallery/Library/Arts Organisation	6
Hospitals/Hospitals/Other Healthcare	13
Sports Organisations	4
Other	36

## Media engagement

A press release about the Week was written at the beginning of November and was shared with a wide range of news outlets and traditional print media. 66 news/media outlets included a story which mentioned 'inter faith week', or 'inter-faith week', with a combined estimated potential reach of approximately 2 million people. As well as publicising Inter Faith Week, many local news outlets highlighted events taking place in their areas during the Week.

Some of these outlets included: BBC News Wiltshire; Jewish News; Yahoo! News; The Church Times, in a letter to the editor; Religion Media Centre; The Guide Liverpool; The London Post; Independent Catholic News; The Palatinate; Global Governance News; Business Mole; Redditch Today.

## Social media

There was a notable improvement in the quality and quantity of content on the Inter Faith Week core channels – Facebook and Instagram – compared with previous years, and a sharp uptake in the range of engagement. This was driven by a steady stream of photographic and video content, made possible by the presence of a specific working group on communications, as well as the Inter Faith Week Interns, who created national content and attended local events during the Week.

During the Week itself, the number of engagements with Inter Faith Week highlighted posts rose from just 85 in 2023 to 1,011 in 2025. Across the 300+ accounts taking part on Instagram and Facebook, posts generated a total of 16,586 interactions (likes, reactions and comments). With an average engagement rate of 3% for non-profits, it can be reasonably inferred that Inter Faith Week content was seen by approximately 550,000 people on social media across all participating accounts.

For Inter Faith Week 2025, the National Steering Group decided to no longer use the Inter Faith Week X account. This decision was made following a rise of antisemitic, Islamophobic and far-right content on the platform and because many other organisations in the sector had made their accounts inactive. Despite there being no X posts from the Inter Faith Week account, 158 posts used #InterFaithWeek and, following the Week, an additional 104 activities were found using the platform. Since X clearly remains a platform where significant engagement with Inter Faith Week occurs, the National Steering Group must re-consider whether to use the platform in the future.

## Inter Faith Week Website

The Inter Faith Week website is a key resource for individuals and organisations to find out information about the Week, download materials, view the activity map, and register their events. Leading up to the Week, a range of engaging content was posted, including: 9 articles and features and 12 letters of support from national faith and belief communities. Several resources were also published: Interfaith Action Starter Pack; Inter Faith Week 2025 Podcast; United by Common Values Part 1; Getting Local Press for Your Inter Faith Week Event. Consequently, between 1 September and 31 December, 13,500 people visited the website and 694 users downloaded a file from the website. As anticipated, this engagement peaked during November when over 7,500 people visited the website.

[www.interfaithweek.org/](http://www.interfaithweek.org/)

## ifw4schools Website

As part of the offerings for Inter Faith Week 2025, free resources were available on the ifw4schools website, consisting of four sets of PowerPoint slides on the significance of Inter Faith Week, tailored to different key stages.

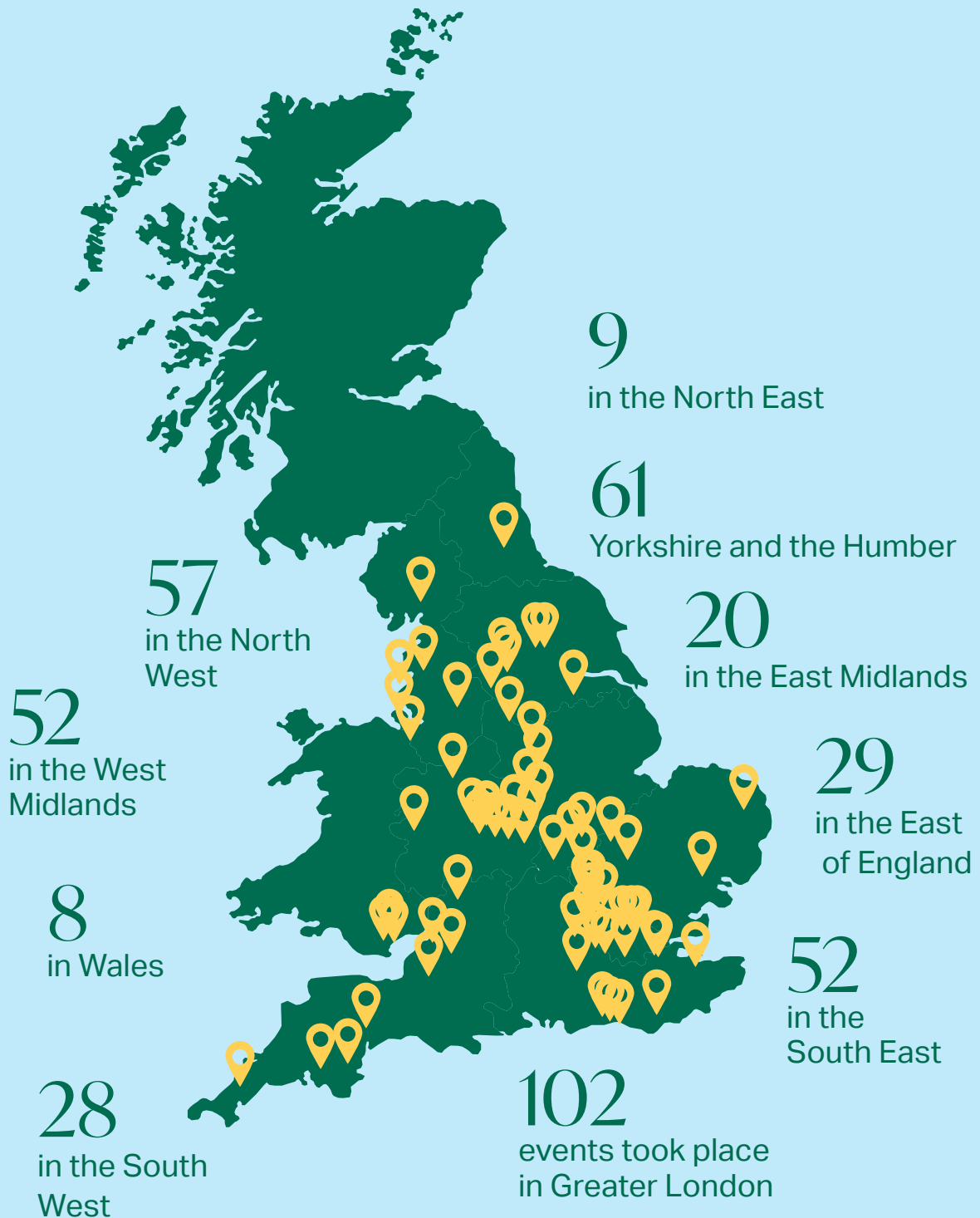
To support evaluation and better understand how the resources were being used, a simple download and survey gateway was introduced to collect information about school type, demographics and intended pupil reach. To date, 857 survey submissions have been received, many representing multiple schools through downloads by organisations such as local authorities. In total, the resources were used in 735 schools to an approximate 665,500 students. Teachers used the resources across the key stage settings, the most popular being Key Stage 2 (474 times) and Key Stage 1 (338 times). 48% of participating schools reporting that they had never previously marked Inter Faith Week or would have been unlikely to do so without these materials.

[www.ifw4schools.co.uk/](http://www.ifw4schools.co.uk/)



Key Stage	Number of times used in that context
EYFS	101
KS1	338
KS2	474
KS3	187
KS4	169
KS5	98

# Inter Faith Week 2025 activities were widespread in England and Wales.



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**CASE STUDY**

# Birmingham Council of Faiths

## Region: West Midlands

For the 17th annual celebration of Inter Faith Week in the West Midlands, Birmingham Council of Faiths ran 23 events in a vibrant programme across the week, including shared meals, poetry and lantern workshops, and panel discussions.

The week began with a launch event at the Birmingham City Council House, where the Lord Mayor, Cllr Zafar Iqbal, officially opened the Inter Faith Week in the city. On a panel, local interfaith activists discussed the significance of interfaith work in Birmingham, and the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety, and Equalities shared insights on how faiths serve the community and the importance of partnerships between the City Council and local faith organisations. Along with speeches, reflective interludes were offered through a poetry recital and musical performance. The event concluded with Interfaith Flags, candle lighting and a homily from Dr Andrew Goldstein, BCF Membership Secretary.

On Remembrance Day, the Prayers for Peace event took place in Catherine de Barnes. This event is led by Solihull Faiths Forum and the Solihull Baha'i community, supported by Birmingham Council of Faiths. The two faith forums are committed to working with each other, especially during Inter Faith Week when Birmingham Council of Faiths supports several events in Solihull. Attended by around 50 participants from across the faith and belief spectrum, including Deputy Lieutenant Everton Burke. After a shared potluck meal, participants shared readings and prayers on the theme of peace, against a backdrop of beautiful music.

Later in the week, the Birmingham branch of Dialogue Society ran an academic panel discussion titled, Can We Unite the Kingdom? Attended by 40 people, panelists shared their perspectives on the relationship between nationalism and progressive patriotism. One standout moment was the flag-designing activity, highlighting how differently we relate to symbols like the Union Jack. Some attendees were indifferent, while others felt very deeply about it. Overall, the event encouraged critical and constructive dialogue on identity and belonging.

Together, these events deepened connections, supported cross-cultural understanding, and created momentum for continued interfaith engagement. In recent years, the partnership between Birmingham Council of Faiths and Solihull Faiths Forum has strengthened the provision and delivery of Inter Faith Week. The programme has also grown in its success, especially over the last five years. The variety of events that are engaging allows a larger audience to be reached.

*“When we are engaged in an activity together, whether it is singing, tree planting or a craft like making lanterns, we are learning from each other and sharing ideas, such that our differences become irrelevant.”*

**Peter Rookes, Secretary of Birmingham Council of Faiths**

*“In a time when discrimination is so widespread, it is incredibly meaningful and important that people can still come together and hold hands despite everything. Activities like this absolutely need to continue. I felt so hopeful.”*

**Attendee**

[www.bhamfaiths.org/](http://www.bhamfaiths.org/)



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**CASE STUDY**

## **Lathom Junior School, Newham**

### **Region: London**

At Lathom Junior School in Newham, the school held an exhibition specifically for parents on the Friday of Inter Faith Week. Children from different year groups ran the stalls, presenting their work on what they had been learning in their RE lessons, during Inter Faith Week and from their recent Diwali festival. The stalls included submissions to the national ifw4schools poetry competition, brainstorming on why interfaith is important and artwork inspired by religious symbols. The school also invited local religious leaders to attend, including those from the local gurdwara and church, to talk to the parents about their religions. Having presentations from both the children and local religious leaders worked well, sharing both basic and expert knowledge. Since the school does not have a specific budget to bring in speakers, Inter Faith Week offered a unique opportunity for faith leaders to come in and share their experiences.

This is the second time that Lathom has hosted the exhibition, so built on last year's child-led approach and focus on parental engagement. This is particularly important, since many children come from families that have low religious literacy, so the exhibition offers an opportunity to teach parents through their children.

The key message from the Exhibition was that children can learn so much from one another when they explore different faiths together. There was a sense of pride and excitement in the room, especially from the students showing their artwork and poems.

*“It is valuable for children to know their own faiths and to identify “who you are” and be able to express it to other people and then learn about other people’s faiths to promote understanding.”*

**Helena Akter, RE Lead at Lathom Junior School**

*“I think we should learn about Interfaith because I am a muslim and I like humanists because they want to protect the world. I am similar to them because I want to be a scientist when I grow up and this is important to me.”*

**Pupil**

[www.lathom.newham.sch.uk/](http://www.lathom.newham.sch.uk/)



# Feedback from the Survey

**Following Inter Faith Week 2025, two surveys were circulated via mailing lists and social media to gather feedback from organisers and attendees on their experiences of the Week.**

In total, 47 people completed the survey for event organisers, which represents 23% of the activities registered on the Inter Faith Week website. 60 people filled in the survey for attendees, which included questions on why participants attended an Inter Faith Week activity and their experiences of the activity.

## Survey for organisers

### **The impact of Inter Faith Week and activities**

Almost all of the survey respondents (96%) agreed that their activity/event was at least fairly successful in promoting good community relations between people of faiths, and a large number of survey respondents (79%) stated that Inter Faith Week had at least contributed a slight improvement to positive relations in organisers' local communities. 87% of respondents said that their activity was at least fairly successful in creating opportunities for people to meet someone new from a different faith or belief background, and 94% of respondents said that their event was at least fairly successful in creating opportunities to learn about different faith and beliefs.

Speaking from a school context, a teacher reflected, *"I think the calendar [Inter Faith Week] works well. It goes up everywhere - from classrooms to public buildings to homes. In a world where everyone is obsessed with flags, it's a kind of flag in itself - it says 'I believe in taking an interest and caring about people who are different to me'".* Another respondent, who organised a workshop in a hospice, noted how it inspired them to create a 'forum' to continue conversations from their event.

### **Reaching new communities**

One of the central themes of the 'Bursting the Bubble' report was that Inter Faith Week needed to reach beyond people already in the 'interfaith bubble'. To address this recommendation, the National Steering Group included a range of measures to involve younger and more diverse audiences.

Generally, survey respondents noted involvement from a range of different communities. 79% of respondents answered that they were at least fairly successful in reaching new groups, and 85% of respondents said that the faith diversity of attendees was at least quite diverse. Some respondents noted engagement with non-religious people, e.g. *"One thing that unified all of our events was that we had a number of non-religious people attending and taking part"*.

Some respondents highlighted a lack of participation from young people, evidenced by the fact that 30% of respondents described the age diversity of their activity as not very diverse. However, one organiser noted fresh engagement with young people, following the appointment of a paid development intern responsible for dedicated outreach to young people.

*"Almost all of the survey respondents (96%) agreed that their activity/event was at least fairly successful in promoting good community relations between people of faiths"*

## Publicity and support for events


Survey respondents listed many ways that they had publicised events, including through: word of mouth; social media; email lists; and online notices. The overwhelming majority of respondents (85%) said that they were at least fairly successful in publicising and promoting their activities.

However, a minority of respondents struggled to reach new constituents, e.g. one respondent said: *"We used our online channels, but that was it for the most part. We struggled to reach those who are seldom reached or are digitally excluded. It was challenging to get the message out due to capacity"*.

Other respondents intentionally did not promote their event too publicly for fear of safety: *"We had to be cautious about publicity in 2025 due to concerns about 'flags' that we observed around the city, and we did not want to risk any particular faith group being targeted by unwanted attention from negative people."*

## Reflecting on the Inter Faith Week theme

Inter Faith Week 2025 was the first year that used a theme: 'Community: Together We Serve'. 61% of survey respondents said that their activity factored in the theme. However, some respondents said that they were either unaware of the theme or had already planned their activities before preparations for the Week had begun, e.g. *"We had already made plans before the theme was announced"*. Despite this, many of those who were unaware of the theme said that their activity still fitted in broadly with the subject: *"The theme was what we do anyway, those who welcomed visitors served as much as those who organised the event or looked after the crowds and the publicity."*



*"79% of respondents answered that they were at least fairly successful in reaching new groups."*

## The Inter Faith Week structure

In the lead up to the Week, the National Steering Group shared a range of resources, social media posts and broader publicity about how it could support different constituencies.

Organisers found worth in the resources provided by the National Steering Group, particularly the website, activities map, and the resource pack, which included publicity materials such as bunting and stickers. For example, one respondent noted: *"The Inter Faith Week map was helpful to publicise our own events, but also to see the events happening in the wider area. We also liked the resource pack, which was of high-quality and added something to our events."*

For others, there was a lack of awareness of the available support, e.g. *"We didn't realise we could seek their help."* Further still, other respondents suggested that, although helpful, preparations for the Week should have begun much sooner. Speaking about the planning webinar held in October 2025, one respondent said that *"the Inter Faith Week webinar would have been more helpful had it been held much earlier in the year. It was far too close to the actual week itself, which would not have been a help to anyone who hadn't got anything planned by that time."*

## Looking forward to Inter Faith Week 2026

Respondents provided a spectrum of recommendations for improving next year's Week. Many responses emphasised the importance of involving new demographics in interfaith work, including: *"better involvement for non-religious organisations and people"*; *"encouraging young people to get involved or at least look at what is being offered"*; and *"more leadership/involvement from black, brown and working-class networks"*.

Other survey respondents had specific requests to the national Inter Faith Week structure, such as beginning publicity much earlier, resource packs to *"include flyers and posters as in earlier years"*, *"help to actively contact different groups to invite them to participate"* and *"ideas on events we can run in a workplace"*.

23% of respondents suggested that nothing could be improved for Inter Faith Week 2026, one respondent suggesting that *"having the same set of organisations planning the Week again - this will foster stability and ensure the future of the Week"*.

## Survey for attendees

Survey respondents listed a range of reasons for their attendance at an Inter Faith Week activity. Many responses focused on the potential for the Week to improve relations and foster encounter between different faith and belief groups in local areas:

*“I believe it is important to celebrate the diversity of cultures and worldviews in the city. Unfortunately, Plymouth was a city that experienced disruption in September 2024 and has a ‘flag force’ contingent who littered main highways, roundabouts and bins with their flags. There is much to celebrate as we strive to be a welcoming city and reflect inclusive values.”*

This sentiment is reflected in another participant's words: *“[Inter Faith Week] is the ideal time for meeting individuals practising a different belief, learning and experiencing aspects of other practices and building closer bonds of friendship in the community.”*

Through attending an Inter Faith Week event, the vast majority of respondents (93%) were able to meet someone new whose faith or belief background differed from their own. One respondent noted that their attendance at an activity *“enabled me to make new friends from different cultures and faiths and also advise others on my own faith.”*

These encounters aided in improving religious literacy through increased learning, demonstrated by the fact that 82% of respondents stated that they had learnt something new about a faith or belief different to their own. This had a transformative effect on some participants:

*“Through open discussions, I became more aware of both the similarities we share and the differences we hold, and I learned how those differences can be discussed respectfully. The experience made me more open-minded and reinforced the importance of dialogue, respect, and cooperation in building inclusive communities.”*

*“The interest, reactions, questions and comments by other attendees to a faith group different to their own expanded everyone's thinking and highlighted the value of open dialogue about beliefs amongst people of different faiths and cultures.”*

Since attending an Inter Faith Week activity, 92% of respondents said that they agreed at least to some extent that they felt more connected to their local community.



*“Since attending an Inter Faith Week activity, 92% of respondents said that they agreed at least to some extent that they felt more connected to their local community.”*

# Interfaith Week 2025 North East Conference, Dialogue Society

## Region: North East

The Dialogue Society hosted a successful conference in Newcastle on the Wednesday of Inter Faith Week. The event welcomed over 60 faith representatives from a range of faith and belief communities, providing a platform to explore interfaith collaboration, shared values, and youth engagement.

The half-day conference opened with a keynote by Lucy Winskell OBE, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Tyne & Wear. Lucy highlighted the vital role that faith communities play in building compassionate, resilient communities and addressing social challenges through shared values such as service, compassion, and justice. Her remarks set the tone for the discussions that followed, encouraging participants to focus not only on dialogue but also on practical collaboration that benefits the wider community. Following this, the day focused on sharing experiences, finding common goals, and generating strategies for building inclusive, resilient communities.

On the first panel, Sikh, Jewish and Christian local faith representatives explored how interfaith relationships can strengthen community resilience and offered practical steps for collaboration beyond dialogue, and the role of shared moral and ethical values in preventing extremism. On the second panel, Muslim and Anglican

chaplains from nearby universities explored how interfaith engagement in higher education can support young people through questions of identity and belonging. The day concluded with an interactive workshop, providing participants with practical tools and strategies for fostering dialogue and collaboration across faith communities.

Bringing together faith and community representatives, educators, young people, Northumbria Police, and local authorities, the event celebrated diversity, strengthened unity, and showcased the power of shared values in building trust and inclusion across the region. From rich discussions to shared brunch, the atmosphere was filled with positivity, connection, and a genuine commitment to building a more compassionate and united North East.

*“In a time when conflicts across the world can influence relationships within our local communities, it is essential that we build stronger interfaith and intercultural bridges. Through dialogue, we create opportunities to understand one another better.”*

**Tugay Yalcin, Regional Director of the North England Branch at Dialogue Society**

[www.dialoguesociety.org/branch/north-east/](http://www.dialoguesociety.org/branch/north-east/)



# Community, Together We Serve, Nottingham Trent University

## Region: East Midlands

Now in its sixth year, this annual event organised by the Nottingham Trent University's Faith Department and student Faith Ambassadors has become a key moment in NTU's calendar that brings together students, staff and members of the local community, for an intergenerational conversation on faith.

For 2025, over 80 people attended the event, which this year centred on the national theme Community, Together We Serve. A panel of local faith leaders and student society representatives from diverse faith and belief backgrounds discussed how religious principles of service, compassion and charity were a motivation for care and action. Following the presentations, student Faith Ambassadors facilitated roundtable discussions, with participants moving tables mid-event to encourage networking and connection across generations. The event closed with inspirational remarks from the Chair of the Nottingham Interfaith Council, reinforcing the value of these shared conversations.

Throughout the evening, students from the Faith Ambassador programme played a central role in shaping and delivering the event. Their involvement helps them build confidence, develop leadership skills, and find their voice in interfaith spaces.

Each year, attendance increases and the programme expands, featuring a wider range of speakers, including faith leaders from the local community. Through these connections, the event helps to improve relations between NTU and local faith communities. In summary, the event served as a strong reminder that everyone can contribute to making campus a welcoming place to study, grow, and belong.

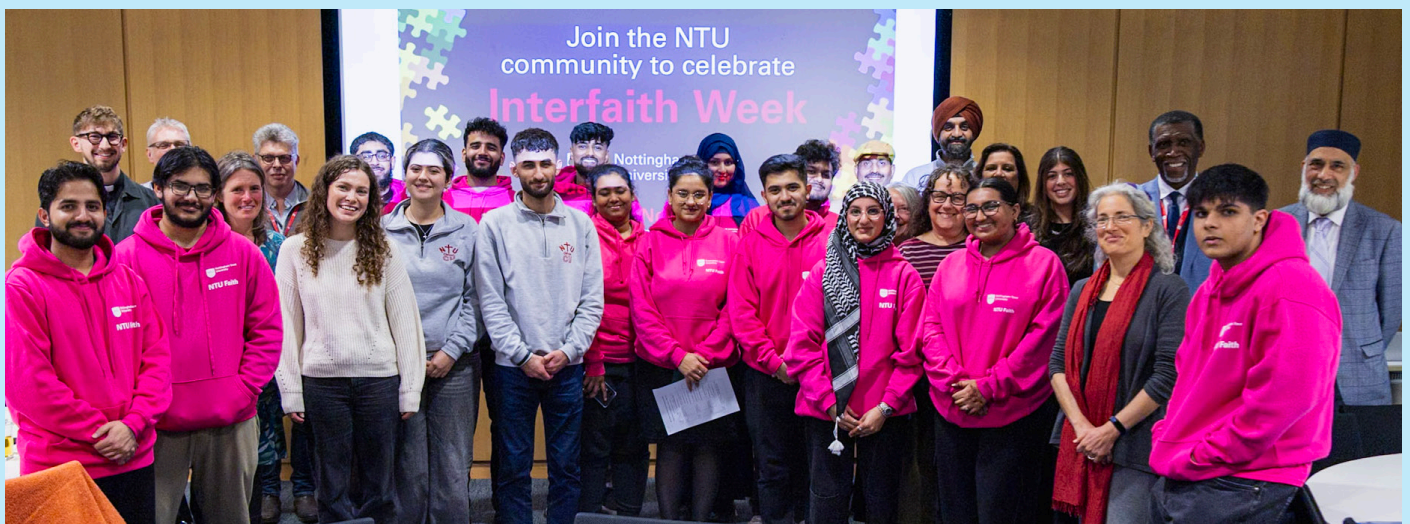
*“Inter Faith Week at NTU has been a focal annual event that creates a space for people from diverse backgrounds to come together and share why faith matters to them. Today’s event demonstrates how valuable this conversation still is. We have come together to explore how similar our values in service can be, whilst recognising the significance of celebrating our differences too.”*

**Robina Din, Multifaith Manager (Interim)**

*“From this event, I felt I truly learned how powerful and essential it is for us to know one another and build trust within our community. By understanding both our differences and our similarities, we can support one another more genuinely and take meaningful steps forward together. This event strengthened my motivation to continue to work for the community.”*

**Attendee**

[www.ntu.ac.uk/about-us/faith-and-chaplaincy](http://www.ntu.ac.uk/about-us/faith-and-chaplaincy)



# Working Group Delivery

## Working Group 1: Embedding youth voice and leadership

**The scale and quality of youth involvement marked a significant advance for Inter Faith Week. Through the internships, events and resources, new youth-accessible pathways into interfaith engagement were created. Embedding young people meaningfully in delivery and decision-making demonstrated a shift from consultation towards genuine co-production.**

Six paid interns were recruited to support the Inter Faith Week delivery. Over 100 applications were received, demonstrating strong interest in graduate roles within the faith sector. Each intern supported a different working group. During Inter Faith Week, interns attended 30 events around the country and created a bank of case studies documenting these activities.

A Youth Advisory Panel was also established, with 20 young people aged 18–35 recruited to participate. Fortnightly meetings were held to plan youth-led events and resources, as well as to provide input into wider Inter Faith Week communications and launch event planning. Panel members also contributed to the launch event programme by hosting, interviewing the Faith Minister, and leading discussions in the dialogue marketplace.

A two-part online series was delivered with youth interfaith charity, The Feast. Part 1 featured a panel of young activists exploring the challenges and opportunities of interfaith work. Part 2 was an interactive workshop on effective interfaith practice. Over 30 young people aged 18–35 attended, many new to interfaith events. A Human Library event also took place in Manchester, with speakers sharing experiences of living out faith and belief at university, alongside a discussion on making campuses more inclusive. One participant described the events as “eye-opening”, helping her meet new people and build skills for engaging with difference.



Several resources were also developed, including a podcast series planned and produced by interns showcasing interfaith stories and conversations from across the country (including an episode with Miatta Fahnbulleh MP, Minister for Devolution, Faith and Communities), an opinion piece written by members of the Youth Advisory Panel highlighting the importance of youth involvement in interfaith work, and an Interfaith Action Starter Pack designed by Youth Advisory Panel members to support young people in running their own interfaith events.

In future years, more capacity is needed for outreach to broaden engagement with young people across the country and reach young people not already connected to interfaith networks. This could include more strategic partnerships with universities and secular youth organisations, as well as targeted outreach through social media platforms popular with young people, such as TikTok. Greater support may also be needed for local and regional interfaith groups to design events that appeal to younger audiences, including guidance, resources and examples of good practice. Ensuring that young people are not only participants but also meaningfully involved in the planning and delivery of local events will be important for sustaining engagement and building long-term pathways into interfaith leadership.

## Working Group 2: Communications

**Inter Faith Week 2025 demonstrated remarkable digital resilience and growth, successfully capturing significant attention despite a busy national news cycle. Social media engagement was a major highlight, with over 300 participating accounts generating 16,586 user interactions. Based on high engagement rates, it is estimated that Inter Faith Week content reached approximately 550,000 people across various platforms. Traditional media also provided a strong platform for the campaign, with an estimated 66 news outlets, including ITV Border, BBC Breakfast, BBC News Wiltshire and Yahoo! News, sharing Inter Faith Week stories with a potential audience of 2 million people. Interestingly, while official phrasing "Inter Faith Week" saw a dip in engagement, search interest in "Interfaith Week" remained robust, indicating a deep-rooted public recognition of the campaign's core mission.**

The 2025 campaign achieved a breakthrough in content quality, particularly on Inter Faith Week's core channels, where engagement surged impressively. Instagram engagement rose from just 85 interactions in 2023 to 1,011 this year, driven by a steady stream of vibrant photographic and video highlights. A key success was the strategic use of digital platforms; while many partners used social media as a substitute for their own websites, Inter Faith Week effectively leveraged these channels to drive dynamic storytelling. This shift towards visual content over outdated timeline cards paid significant dividends in audience retention.



The campaign successfully united a diverse array of voices, securing endorsements from high-profile figures such as Cardinal Nichols and various parliamentarians. Most encouragingly, the data revealed a growing potential for mass appeal beyond the traditional faith sector. The most successful posts originated from partners such as AFC Bournemouth and influencer Wantoe Teah Wantoe, proving that Inter Faith Week's message of cohesion resonates with a broad, mainstream audience. This engagement from high-reach accounts outside the faith space provided crucial awareness-driving power that exceeded the campaign's conventional boundaries.

Building on this momentum, Inter Faith Week has a fantastic opportunity to further modernise and deepen its impact for 2026. While local events remain the heart of the Week, journalists have expressed an appetite for more human hooks and visual storytelling. By curating two or three flagship media moments and developing a library of authentic human-interest stories, the campaign can better showcase how interfaith work transforms lives. Strengthening early alignment with major institutional stakeholders, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury, will also help ensure the campaign remains at the forefront of the national conversation.

For the 2026 cycle, Inter Faith Week can reach even greater heights by implementing a clear theory of change and introducing tangible policy asks, such as a two-page manifesto, to give the campaign a fresh, unique identity. Expanding the digital strategy to include growth channels like TikTok and Instagram will empower young people to share their own organic content. Additionally, creating sector-specific partner packs for employers and HR professionals will make it easier for new collaborators in the corporate and sporting worlds to champion the cause. By fostering these bilateral relationships early, Inter Faith Week 2026 is well-positioned to achieve its highest profile yet.

## Working Group 3: Schools and colleges engagement

As part of Inter Faith Week engagement with schools and colleges, a Religious Education (RE) partnership group was developed and coordinated to ensure that resources, events and support were aligned with current best practice and relevant to the curriculum. Members represented the following organisations: The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education, Association of RE Advisors, Consultants and Inspectors, Religious Education Council, RE Today, Culham St Gabriel's Trust, RE Hubs, National Association of Teachers of RE, The Feast, Facing History & Ourselves UK. This collaborative approach helped ensure that the offer was both practical for teachers and meaningful for students across different key stages.



A dedicated schools website was also relaunched and maintained, providing theme-aligned resources, events and guidance for 2025. Since its relaunch, engagement with the ifw4schools website increased by 165% compared with the previous year, reaching 5,159 site sessions and 3,549 unique visitors. Website analytics demonstrated a broad national reach, with positive feedback from teachers on the design, accessibility and ease of use. When the Department for Education shared the website and resources in their schools newsletter, there was a marked spike in site visits and downloads, demonstrating the importance of Departmental endorsement and communications channels.

A key element of this work was the development of a flexible five-session "learning journey", designed to be delivered either as a drop-down day or during form time. The programme included newly developed lesson resources, PowerPoint presentations and detailed teacher notes tailored for each key stage, culminating in either a poetry competition or a community action activity. The Poetry Competition was also a new initiative launched, with winners and runners up awarded with book vouchers and certificates.

Feedback from teachers and RE advisers has been highly positive. One teacher commented, "I can recommend these resources – the slides are simple and easy to follow, and have generated lots of discussion with my pupils when I use them."

Alongside classroom resources, a programme of enrichment opportunities for educators and students was delivered. This included a teacher webinar sharing over 20 years of classroom practice on building sustainable links with local faith communities; an author Q&A exploring themes of belonging in the classroom; and both primary and secondary live assemblies delivered in partnership with education organisations, reaching 85 classes and whole-school audiences. Additional recorded resources were also launched in partnership with Jewish and Muslim community organisations, featuring panel discussions on community and social action, alongside a short video showcasing interfaith education in action. Together, these initiatives supported schools to explore interfaith themes in creative, accessible and impactful ways.

Starting the work earlier this year meant new resources could be created that complemented the theme. It also meant that communications could be sent before the end of the summer term, via schools newsletters, SACRE newsletters, Local Authority Bulletins, and on RE partners social media channels. This ensured teachers were able to plan, before going on summer holiday.



## Working Group 4: Local and regional community engagement

**Working Group 4 was responsible for supporting local and regional interfaith groups and other local partners, such as Councils, running Inter Faith Week at the local and regional level around England. Those planning events were encouraged to register them on the Inter Faith Week website to provide public information and to assist with analysis. 205 events were registered on the Inter Faith Week website, participated in by some 20,000 local residents. Although this represents only around a half of the 431 estimated activities that took place during the Week, it was a significant improvement on the 50 events registered in 2024.**

130 Resource Packs were assembled and sent to local groups and local authorities. These contained a booklet on running and publicising an Inter Faith Week event, a Golden Rule poster, a tea light, and Inter Faith Week branded bunting, stickers, badges and pens. The packs were not branded 'Inter Faith Week 2025', so can be used in subsequent years.

The Inter Faith Week website was refreshed to make it more user friendly and to add new resources. A new GDPR-compliant database of active local groups was created, increasing ease and regularity of contact; and one-to-one support was provided through a dedicated intern and email inbox for enquiries. A webinar was conducted on 22 October for local groups wishing to ask questions or share suggestions for events. Local groups from Harrow and York gave presentations, and advice on communications was provided. The seminar was attended by 35 local groups.

For the first time since the closure of the Inter Faith Network, those planning Inter Faith Week activities at the local and regional level had access to one-in-one advice and encouragement as well as new resources. The sector responded well, and it seems likely that many more local bodies arranged events than would have been the case without the efforts of Working Group 4 (and the Government funding that made this possible). The Resource Pack was a new innovation that the IFN never provided; it was much welcomed. Feedback on the refreshed website was highly positive, for instance at a post-Week sector meeting on 26th November. The webinar was well attended, and the wish expressed that it should be repeated in future years.

In future years, there are several areas for improvement. Local organisers would benefit from more specific resources on engaging with schools, young people, and the local press. Additional webinars, offered sooner, could help upskill local organisers, particularly if offered on a regional basis to enable the exchange of good practice and invitations with neighbouring communities. Increasing capacity for the working group lead to attend events across the country would also be beneficial, as physical attendance sends a strong signal that the work of local groups is valued and should be reinforced in the years ahead.





## Working Group 5: National launch event

**Working Group 5 delivered the national launch event for Inter Faith Week 2025, designed to revitalise Inter Faith Week and broaden engagement beyond the traditional interfaith sector. Hosted at St Martin-in-the-Fields Church in central London, the event brought together faith leaders, policymakers, educators, artists, youth leaders, and community organisations in a programme combining ministerial engagement, youth leadership, creative performance, dialogue sessions, and exhibition spaces. The launch was delivered by Faiths Forum for London in collaboration with other working groups, particularly Working Group 1 (Youth Engagement), whose interns played a central role as co-hosts, facilitators, and dialogue leaders. Working Group 2 (Communications) supported promotion and media outreach.**

The event attracted 220+ attendees, including approximately 155 registered participants, alongside speakers, performers, volunteers, and visiting school groups. The programme included speeches from senior faith and civic leaders, cultural performances from Khayyal Theatre and Faith in Tunes, youth-led dialogue sessions on topics such as online engagement and gender equality, and interactive exhibition spaces that encouraged reflection and networking. Ministerial engagement was achieved through participation from Miatta Fahnbulleh MP, Minister for Devolution, Faith and Communities, who delivered a speech and engaged with participants. Additionally, a youth-led on-stage interview with the former Faith Minister, Lord Khan, enabled direct dialogue between young people and policymakers.

Participant feedback indicated strong impact. 75% of respondents reported being more likely to participate in Inter Faith Week activities, while 91% valued the networking opportunities provided. 81% agreed that youth participation was meaningfully embedded in the event, and 88% reported feeling inspired by the ministerial and parliamentary contributions.

A key success was the integration of youth leadership, moving beyond consultation towards genuine co-production. Interns took visible roles as hosts, facilitators, and interviewers, demonstrating how younger generations can actively shape national interfaith engagement. The programme design also proved effective. Combining storytelling, performance, dialogue, and exhibitions created a dynamic and accessible environment that appealed to a diverse audience beyond traditional interfaith stakeholders.

Strong collaboration between working groups ensured that youth engagement, communications, and programme delivery aligned effectively. The event also secured political recognition, with ministerial participation reinforcing the importance of interfaith relations in responding to contemporary social tensions. However, there remains an opportunity to engage additional senior government figures, such as Secretaries of State, in supporting Inter Faith Week.

Several lessons emerged for future delivery. A short lead time and ministerial scheduling changes limited opportunities for deeper engagement, highlighting the importance of securing political participation as early as possible. National media coverage proved difficult to secure, with journalists often prioritising stories related to conflict or global tensions rather than cooperation. Future launches may benefit from clearer media hooks.

Accessibility was another area for improvement. Some participants highlighted the London-centric location, and the length and diversity of the launch made navigation slightly difficult for some attendees. Greater lead time would allow for operational improvements such as clearer programmes, name badges, and additional seating. While the venue constraints were known when booking the event, they reflected the need to balance ministerial availability with venue accessibility. Planning future national launch events will likely require at least four months' lead time to ensure smoother delivery.



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**CASE STUDY**

## Light For Leeds

**Region: Yorkshire and the Humber**

A decade on from the first event held back in 2015, the tenth annual interfaith event at Abbey House Museum in Kirkstall was a celebration of what all beliefs and none have in common. The event is organised by the staff at Leeds Museums and Galleries, with support from a dedicated steering group of community members, as well as the Leeds City Council Religion or Belief Hub and Concord Interfaith Fellowship.

Based on the theme of light that connects many faith and belief communities, the event is now shaped around light-based activities, including a dusk walk and the ceremonial Lighting of the World Peace Flame. With performances, moments of contemplation, stalls, and an opportunity to hear from faith and non-faith representatives, the event attracted over 300 attendees this year, including many families, the Deputy Lord Mayor of Leeds, and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire.

From the first pilot event with only five faith communities, the event has organically grown, now becoming more structured, with the support of funding and strong community relationships. As a free event with a mix of different activities, the event

is successfully engaging different types of people, including a diverse range of ages and faith and belief communities. In recent years, Humanist partners have helped make the event inclusive of those with non-religious worldviews.

*“Over the many years I’ve had the privilege to host this interfaith event, first at Kirkstall Abbey and then since 2023 at Abbey House Museum, I have watched it grow from a few stalls in 2015 to a regular fixture in the city’s calendar, where all faiths and none can feel welcome, learn about each other, find common ground and be together, enjoying the rich tapestry of music and different practices.”*

**Dr Patrick Bourne, Assistant Community Curator, Abbey House Museum and Kirkstall Abbey**

*“It was truly inspiring to see so many communities come together in a spirit of unity, respect, and celebration. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, and the event beautifully highlighted the importance of dialogue and understanding between different faiths and cultures.”*

**Dr Kuldip Bharj OBE, DL**

[www.museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/](http://www.museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/)



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**CASE STUDY**

## **Atam Academy, Redbridge**

### **Region: London**

2025 was the first year that Atam Academy fully participated in Inter Faith Week. As a Sikh School, Atam Academy encourages students to respect other faith traditions. One way in which they do this is through the Redbridge Ambassadors of Faith and Belief (AFAB), an extra-curricular volunteering programme for sixth-form students. AFAB students are trained up, then visit local primary schools to talk about the faith they follow.

At the start of the week, AFAB students from Atam and other schools in Redbridge joined a virtual assembly with five hundred pupils from ten schools in Cumbria, organised by North West RE Hubs. The students spoke on the different ways in which Diwali is celebrated in the Dharmic religions, including from Sikh, Hindu and Jain perspectives. This offered a wonderful opportunity for the AFAB students to share the religious and spiritual significance of this important festival with students who live on the other side of the country and have a very different experience of faith. Pupils from the Cumbrian schools asked a multitude of questions in response to the wonderful visual presentations, exploring the nuances of how each speaker celebrated Diwali.

Hindu, Muslim and Christian AFAB students from other local schools in Redbridge came to Atam to speak to Atam's younger students. This unique exchange gave Atam students the invaluable chance to learn first-hand how different faiths are practiced, complementing the primary RE curriculum, as well as the chance to ask thoughtful questions in a safe, open

space. This peer-to-peer learning model encourages students to be confident in speaking about their faith and being inquisitive of others in a respectful manner.

To finish the week, the school community came together for a drop-down day to celebrate the 556th Gurburab of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and commemorate the 350th shaheedi purab of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji. Over 1,000 students and 25 external visitors and members of the PTA came together to reflect, pray and learn about the teachings of the Gurus.

Atam found out about Inter Faith Week through the local council, which contacted the school to encourage participation. At short notice, teachers adapted the ifw4schools resources to plan lessons, as well as to set homework.

*“Inter Faith Week was a wonderful opportunity for our school to share the teachings and universal values of Sikhi locally and nationally and also provided students with invaluable experiences to connect with others from different backgrounds, demonstrating that strong connections can be built through faith and community”*

**Manjaspreet Kaur Ghuman, Director of Faith and Ethos, Atam Academy**

*“I enjoyed educating young pupils on the different aspects of Diwali and Bandi Chor. I also enjoyed answering the questions that the student had.”*

**AFAB Student**

**[www.atamacademy.com/](http://www.atamacademy.com/)**

# Practitioner and Expert Reflections

## Laura Marks

**Laura Marks is Founder and Chair of Mitzvah Day, a Jewish led organisation that leads the UK's largest faith-led day of social action. She is also member of the National Steering Group for Inter Faith Week, contributing to its oversight and planning. In an interview, we asked Laura to reflect on the steering group structure, and the role of social action in Inter Faith Week.**

On the national steering group, Laura acknowledged the large task of bringing together many organisations with different aims and methodologies on one initiative. Relationship building in such a structure takes time and requires good will and commitment and clearer shared goals. For 2026 and beyond, Laura suggested that the steering group needs both increased credibility through buy-in from key community leaders and a stronger, more formal structure that enables effective decision-making.

On social action, Laura emphasised that it is a natural fit for interfaith work, since most faith communities are motivated by a shared desire to make the world a better place. However, she stressed that social action is not easy and requires significant organisation, expertise and coordination at a grass roots level based on strong relationships. This helps explain why so few social action activities took place during Inter Faith Week, since the planning and delivery required does not necessarily fit into the Inter Faith Week timeline. Laura suggested that organisers could partner with established social action charities, supporting and resourcing existing initiatives rather than creating new projects that duplicate effort solely for one week that are hard to deliver. Doing so would enable Inter Faith Week to act as a catalyst for activity throughout the year.

## Mike Stygal

**Mike Stygal is National Interfaith Manager of the Pagan Federation. He was previously a trustee of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. In an interview, we asked Mike to reflect on the successes and challenges of Inter Faith Week 2025, and his ideas for future Inter Faith Weeks.**

Mike opened by emphasising the central role of grassroots interfaith organisations in Inter Faith Week, describing local groups as *"the lifeblood of interfaith in the country."* He was keen to celebrate and commend the determination of many of these groups to continue running Inter Faith Week locally following the closure of Inter Faith Network for the UK.

Mike was also fully in support of the work of the National Steering Group in coordinating Inter Faith Week at the national level. In particular, he welcomed the use of a national theme, noting that a loose theme can prompt reflection while allowing local groups to interpret it in ways that suit their local context. He also felt that the national launch event brought together *"all the right people and voices,"* highlighting the presence of Lord Khan of Burnley and Miatta Fahnbulleh, as well as the involvement of children, which helped create a particularly positive atmosphere.

Mike identified the need for stronger year-round national support. In particular, he argued that having a dedicated staff member working on Inter Faith Week throughout the year would make a significant difference, both in promoting the Week and in supporting local groups to develop ideas, troubleshoot challenges, and plan events. He also stressed the value of building longer-term relationships with partners and stakeholders, including schools, businesses, and the media. To aid this, Mike supports multi-year funding, earlier promotion, and practical resources for local groups, to sustain and grow participation in Inter Faith Week 2026 and beyond.

## Stacey Burman

**Stacey Burman is an Independent RE advisor working with RE Hubs and on the Executive committee of AREIAC. She was also a member of the Inter Faith Week 2025 RE Partners group. In an interview, we asked Stacey to reflect on the schools and colleges engagement element of Inter Faith Week 2025.**

Stacey reflected very positively on schools engagement during Inter Faith Week 2025, highlighting the development of a dedicated, easy-to-use website where teachers could directly download ready-made resources. She noted that a key improvement in 2025 was that materials were fully prepared for teachers, rather than simply providing a list of resources that schools had to adapt themselves. Given the time pressures on teachers and the specialist knowledge required to develop additional content, this approach made participation much easier. The resources were clearly linked to the theme and structured as complete learning activities, which teachers found particularly helpful. Stacey also emphasised the longer-term legacy of this approach, highlighting how many teachers are now embedding these materials into their Religious Education curriculum.

Stacey also highlighted the importance of strong partnerships and coordination. As a member of the RE Partners group, she noted that the group brought together a high level of expertise, which helped make the programme successful.

Looking ahead, Stacey identified several suggested priorities for Inter Faith Week: engaging headteachers more directly, strengthening relationships with Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education and local authorities, all of which may support and encourage schools in developing closer collaboration between schools and local interfaith groups when planning events.

## Atma Kaur Narinder

**Atma is a social impact director and was a member of the Inter Faith Week 2025 Youth Advisory Panel, ensuring that young people shaped Inter Faith Week 2025 planning and delivery.**

Atma reflected positively on youth engagement during Inter Faith Week, highlighting the creation of the Youth Advisory Panel as a welcoming space where young people could network and connect with like-minded peers across the UK. Panel members came with varying levels of expertise but shared a strong desire to make a difference. Atma emphasised the successful approach to collaboration: tasks were split among members, with everyone contributing feedback to all parts of the project, allowing work to be distributed while remaining a collective effort.

Atma led on the development of the Interfaith Action Pack, a simple guide to help young people run their own interfaith events. Atma noted that developing the resource with research and feedback enabled the Youth Advisory Panel to create a resource with tangible benefits for those who would use it. She also shaped and attended the youth-focused events. She commended the mix of national and local, online and in-person events for engaging young people across the UK. However, she highlighted the need for better representation of smaller faith and belief communities.

Looking ahead to 2026, Atma described the need for more advertising, particularly via social media and local channels, to broaden participation. She also recommended selecting a national theme that would resonate widely with the public, focusing on issues that are accessible and inclusive rather than faith-specific.

## Sienna Sexton

**Sienna Sexton is Senior Consultant at Good Faith Partnership and Project Manager for Faith in Labour. In an interview, we asked Sienna to reflect on the political engagement element of Inter Faith Week 2025.**

Sienna reflected that political engagement during Inter Faith Week would be strengthened by earlier and more strategic planning to allow more time for meaningful engagement. She noted that political outreach can be challenging and unpredictable, and that attempts do not always yield results.

She also suggested that, in the current climate, language around faith, multifaith, and multiculturalism may resonate more strongly than the term "interfaith" alone, helping to build cross-party support by framing the work as part of a wider vision of multicultural Britain.

For future Inter Faith Weeks, Sienna highlighted the value of more structured approaches to engaging MPs. This could include a national campaign contacting all MPs several months in advance with tailored guidance on how to participate at both the local and national levels. She also suggested considering closer collaboration with All Party Parliamentary Groups, such as the All Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society and the All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief. She recommended planning to ensure early notice and tailored engagement with MPs and Peers already interested in faith issues, focusing on clear and practical asks.

Finally, Sienna suggested that a youth-focused national event in Westminster could generate interest from MPs and Peers, given the enthusiasm and importance of engaging young people in politics.

## Ruth Peacock

**Ruth Peacock is Project Lead for the Religion Media Centre, an independent, impartial body helping journalists and media professionals cover world religions and beliefs. In an interview, we asked Ruth to reflect on the media engagement element of Inter Faith Week 2025.**

Ruth reflected that media engagement during Inter Faith Week was limited, recognising that national coverage is challenging for faith and interfaith groups. At present, stories about social cohesion or responses to community tensions are more likely to attract coverage, as journalists often look for a clear angle that makes a story relevant to a national audience. Linked to this, reports about individual local gatherings are rarely picked up unless they connect to a wider national issue.

Stories are more likely to be covered if they include a strong news hook, such as the involvement of a dignitary, a new initiative, funding announcement, or commentary on a local community concern, as well as a good photograph.

Despite the challenges, Ruth highlighted opportunities for stronger engagement with national and local media. She emphasised the need to build relationships with journalists, send press releases with all the key information, and stressed that images are particularly important in helping a story gain traction. Alongside traditional media, Ruth stressed the importance of local groups producing their own social media content, such as photos, short films, and blogs, to reach wider audiences.

Looking ahead to 2026, Ruth recommended selecting a theme that acts as the hook, which encourages visible action and connects to issues currently present in public debate, as well as creating a major national moment that could act as a clear media focus for the Week, ideally involving a prominent dignitary making a significant announcement to generate wider press interest.

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**CASE STUDY**

# Walk for Unity, Southport Interfaith Group

**Region: North West**

Organised by Southport Interfaith Group on the last day of Inter Faith Week, around two hundred individuals, including political leaders and faith leaders took part in the second annual Walk of Unity. After a shared refreshments at Southport & District Reform Synagogue, the one-and-a-half-mile walk trailed through the town centre, stopping at Christ Church, Lord Street and finishing at Southport Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre.

Following the Southport murders and subsequent riot in 2024, the Southport Interfaith Group was founded to promote friendship, understanding and cooperation among faith communities, working together for peace in Southport. Through this event during Inter Faith Week, they brought that vision into the public arena. On a cold but sunny afternoon, people of many faiths and of none, walked (not marched as a recent Southport demonstration) side by side to show a different kind of story – one of unity, respect and solidarity.

The walk was led by representatives from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, Bahá'í, and Quaker communities, supported by volunteers and Merseyside Police, reflecting strong collaboration across society. The walk was also attended by the Mayor of Sefton, the Southport MP, and Deputy Lieutenant of Merseyside, which led to local and national press picking up on the story and contributing to the success of its message.

*“As people from different religions and from none, we walk for peace, but not bland, empty peace. But an uneasy peace that does not ignore difference, difficulty and challenge. One that looks for hope and yearns for a new way forward.”*

**Revd Graham Turner, Chair of Southport Interfaith Group**

*“We want our town to flourish, a place where everyone has space to belong. By walking, we demonstrated this.”*  
**Attendee**



Photo provided by MAF Photography and Stand up For Southport



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**CASE STUDY**

## **Youth Debate, Islington Faiths Forum**

### **Region: London**

Starting as an annual lecture in 2008, the Islington Faiths Forum event morphed into the youth debate in 2017, aiming to give young people a neutral platform on which to debate their faith, beliefs and values and to allow the wider community to listen to and share with young people. Whilst the Faiths Forum executive team organised the event, it was young people who led the event on the night.

This year, the question up for discussion was, “Can Patriotism and Diversity Coexist?” The topic, always posed as a question to help attendees reflect on their position, was chosen in response to recent anti-immigration protests. Six young people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim and secular backgrounds shared their perspectives on a panel, sharing teachings from their own traditions, and highlighting the need to approach religious and cultural diversity with curiosity. After the panel, attendees engaged in round table discussions, exploring what healthy patriotism looks like, and what young people’s role is in this. The thoughtful contributions from the panel sparked lots of ideas and conversation in the table discussions. 40 people attended, representing a broad range of ages and a variety of different local faith communities, youth charities and community organisations.

*“As a borough made up of people from many diverse backgrounds, it is incredibly important to hear the views of young people from different backgrounds in our aim to promote understanding and cohesion. The annual youth debate is successful in creating a safe space for young people to be open and explore their thoughts, as well as to improve intergenerational relations.”*

**Roz Miller, Director of Islington Faiths Forum**

*“It was a valuable experience that allowed me to learn from others, improve my public speaking, and feel more connected to different voices across the community. I would definitely encourage other young people to get involved next year, as it’s a great platform to speak openly, be listened to, and contribute to meaningful conversations.”*

**Youth panelist**

**[www.islingtonfaithsforum.org.uk/](http://www.islingtonfaithsforum.org.uk/)**

# Intern Reflections



*“One of the most important things I learned during this internship was the value of meaningful conversations and creating spaces where people feel safe to share their experiences. Inter Faith Week placed me in environments where people spoke openly about their faith, identities, and the challenges they had faced, and it taught me how moving honest dialogue can be. My biggest takeaway is that there is no greater wealth than learning from people’s experiences. Everyone carries a story worth listening to, and engaging with these stories makes us gentler, more hopeful, and more aware of the good that still exists in a world often dominated by loudness and polarisation.”*

**Nirali Sawartha**

*“Having previously worked on Inter Faith Week, one of the main learning curves from this experience has been the appreciation that collaboration between different organisations can lead to innovation. The national steering group that came together to organise the Week brought different specialisms and backgrounds, which have extended engagement to new audiences. The emphasis on youth participation during the Week, through the internship programme and the creation of a Youth Advisory Panel, has resulted in a new generation of interfaith practitioners, which ultimately will lead to the sustainability of interfaith initiatives. From the national context to the local level, Inter Faith Week 2025 was a tremendous success and has provided an invaluable springboard with which to advance the interfaith cause.”*

**Leo Taylor (Project Officer)**

*“This has been one of the first times I participated in an environment where faith is not something which is somewhat concealed, but rather something to celebrate and use to connect with others within and beyond your own community. I learnt that authenticity is the cornerstone of building trust, being able to connect on shared values and collectively combatting the challenges facing different communities. In welcoming such discussions, I am leaving this internship with more confidence articulating my genuine experiences, a richer understanding of so many faiths and beliefs, and a new perspective on interfaith.”*

**Lauren Amdor**

*“During Inter Faith Week, I attended seven community events, created comms materials, and supported post-event tasks. Meeting people from Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Christian, and Zoroastrian communities was eye-opening. These interactions showed me that despite our different traditions, we share common values such as compassion, peace, and mutual support. This is what I will carry with me long after the internship ends.”*

**Ying Zhang**

*“During the internship I often found myself talking to people about subjects that were very personal to them and I knew that every word spoken was one that came from the heart. This taught me to understand the value of every word spoken when having a conversation with someone and listen to each word attentively. Words and how they’re expressed find their sources in all sorts of places and you can never underestimate how much those sources mean to someone.”*

**Yusuf Amin**

*“Throughout the internship, I’ve developed a deeper understanding of interfaith dialogue and the importance of ensuring that less-represented faiths and marginalised communities are actively included in this work. Being involved in schools engagement showed me how early these conversations can and should begin, and how powerful interfaith education can be when delivered thoughtfully.”*

**Abimbola Akintoye**



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**CASE STUDY**

## Medway Inter Faith Action

### Region: South East

Medway Inter Faith Action (MIFA) has been running a programme of events for Inter Faith Week for many years, as part of its regular annual programme calendar. Over the last decade or so, the programme has been made up of a series of talks from different faith leaders. In more recent years, the programme has evolved into a series of opportunities to visit different places of worship and experience their local faith practice. The transition from talks to visits came about to reach audiences. The events also took place at different points throughout each day to offer more opportunities for people with diverse work-life commitments to be part of Inter Faith Week and experience something new.

The week started with an Opening Service of Interfaith Prayers for Peace and Unity in Community. The gathering involved readings and prayers read from different faiths, highlighting the similarities in the unity of shared faith and the oneness of humanity. The event was attended by roughly 20 people, including Councillor Nina Gurung, who attended to show her ongoing support for interfaith activities in Medway.

Through the week, 14 events were held in a variety of meeting places showcasing the Ahmadiyya, Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, ISKCON, Islamic, Jewish, Mormon, Sikh, Spiritualist, Quaker and Unitarian faith groups. The events provided the opportunity to experience the regular practices of different faith and belief traditions, as well as making new friends. Each event was attended by roughly a dozen people representing many different faith and belief traditions, as well as the neighbourhood support police officers. Many people attended places of worship for the first time.

Alongside the official programme, attendees were given a 'daily challenge', an encouragement to spend five minutes over lunch for contemplation, prayer or meditation remembering those in need across Medway and beyond. The idea was to enable everyone to participate in Inter Faith Week, regardless of whether they could attend the actual events.

The programme was a success through its diverse events that were accessible to different types of people who had different routines. It was also a success due to the strong partnerships that have been built up between MIFA and local faith communities. Since the local faith communities arranged the individual visits, this spread out the planning and allowed for a large programme. MIFA is also a member of Medway Diversity Forum, which enhances their opportunities to interact with more people in the community.

*"We were very pleased to participate in Inter Faith Week 2025. It was a very positive experience for members of different faiths to come together to share common values."*

**Beth Atkins, MIFA Vice Chair**

*"Bringing communities together socially and spiritually is a wonderful expression of Oneness."*

**Attendee**

[www.facebook.com/groups/medwayinterfaith/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/medwayinterfaith/)

# Springfield School, Wilmslow

## Location: North West

Springfield is a specialist school for cognition and learning. It provides education for pupils aged 4 to 18. Their curriculum is based on four key areas: Learning (Academic and Vocational studies); Independence (including life skills and preparing for adulthood); Medical and Health needs, including mental health and well-being; and Additional Therapy (Sensory OT, Play Therapy, Music Therapy, Counselling etc). The school leadership strongly believe that children should have access to the same subject areas as those taught in mainstream education, with content carefully adapted to meet individual needs.

This year, Springfield school took part in Inter Faith Week for the first time, as part of its RE and PHSE curriculum. Teachers used the national ifw4schools resources, adapting them to be appropriate for pupils across the school's different pathways.

In the primary classes, activities focused on the theme of 'what makes us different and unique' as well as looking at what 'togetherness' means. Some pupils explored sensory activities, such as placing their hands in different materials including sand and water, while others traced their hands and drew or wrote reflections

about their identities. In secondary classes, pupils took part in the national poetry competition, writing poems on themes of community, togetherness, and service. Artwork and creative outputs from the activities were then displayed around the school.

These activities offered pupils the chance to step outside their usual routines and engage in something creative and different, while still aligning closely with the school's core values of respect and inclusion. Although the school community is not very diverse from a faith perspective, celebrating different faiths is seen as an important part of pupils' learning. This approach is strongly supported by both school leadership and parents.

*"It was truly a joy to take part in Inter Faith Week. The experience helped build pupil confidence, deepen their understanding of the wider world, and reinforce the values of respect, inclusion and kindness that sit at the heart of our school community."*

**Fiona Hartley, Deputy Headteacher**

[www.springfield.cheshire.sch.uk/springfield-wilmslow-1](http://www.springfield.cheshire.sch.uk/springfield-wilmslow-1)



# Key Learnings

**The evaluation indicates that Inter Faith Week 2025 delivered strongly against the 'Bursting the Bubble' report, especially in terms of widening participation beyond the 'interfaith bubble', elevating youth leadership, increasing regional reach, strengthening digital infrastructure, and diversifying ways to engage.**

2025 also marked significant improvements to the interfaith movement, following a challenging few years following the pandemic and the closure of the IFN. Inter Faith Week specifically contributed to this, offering a point in the year to celebrate the amazing work that is continuing to take place around the country. Through Inter Faith Week, an updated list of active interfaith groups has been built, allowing connections and partnerships to slowly rebuild.

Inter Faith Week 2025 also featured a positive working relationship between the interfaith sector and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, who have shown their commitment to supporting interfaith activity across the country.

## National coordination

For the first time, Inter Faith Week delivery was divided into workstreams. This model was broadly successful, allowing expert organisations to lead different areas. Each working group also worked with an intern, partner organisations and volunteers, to bring in additional capacity and expertise. One example of good partnership working was the RE Partners group in the schools workstream. This model was innovative and effective, allowing more schools and students to be reached than ever before. A broad understanding of the RE ecosystem and strong preexisting relationships facilitated the creation of a partner group that holistically represented the sector and the diversity of audiences we wanted to reach. Another example of good partnership working was the Youth Advisory Panel in the youth workstream, which ensured that the planning and delivery of Inter Faith Week 2025 had a strong youth voice. The panel provided advice, ideas, and constructive challenge to strengthen youth engagement, particularly regarding Inter Faith Week communications, resources, and events.

The working group partners met regularly to join the dots between the work. However, all working group partners agree that improved project management was needed to keep the work on track and aligned. Partners also agreed that whilst the longer lead-in time for 2025 compared to 2024 improved delivery, year-round funding is needed to facilitate more effective planning, better quality outreach, integrating beneficiary need and feedback, and would allow Inter Faith Week to better integrate into year-round interfaith work.

The working group partners were supported by the national steering group, which offered oversight and feedback on delivery. However, more work is needed to formalise the group and increase diversity of membership.

## Internship

In 2025, five interns were recruited from a pool of 100 applicants to support delivery. This shows the appetite for paid entry-level opportunities within the interfaith movement. The internship was successful in bringing new young people into the movement and served towards upskilling interfaith activists of the future. A highlight of the internship was their attendance at 30 events across the country during the Week, and their production of the Inter Faith Week 2025 podcast. Overall, the internship programme provided valuable capacity and engagement opportunities.

## Theme

The theme 'Community: Together We Serve' invited organisers to plan activities based on community, social action and service. This was taken up by some local groups and schools through conferences, panel discussions, and workshops. However, few direct social action activities took place, which is something to explore for 2026.

For future years, the theme should act as a communications hook in addition to providing a topic for local groups to plan and run events. It could do so by tying into an existing social issue or civic moment that would generate media and press coverage.

## Bursting the Bubble

Inter Faith Week 2025 demonstrated that many local and regional groups are continuing to do great work since the closure of the IFN. There were lots of examples around the country of groups making a clear effort to reach out to new audiences, especially young people and those from smaller faith and belief backgrounds. There was also an increase in partnership working at the local level between councils, local interfaith groups and schools. In future years, this could be supported by more outreach and partnership resources for local groups.

Inter Faith Week 2025 saw a significant improvement on previous years in the provision for schools and youth engagement, through resources, events and expert support. In 2025, many people ran or attended events for the first time, due to the new tailored resources created in 2025.

## National stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships

At the local and regional level, many religious leaders, politicians, and other dignitaries attended events during Inter Faith Week 2025. At the national level, support from Miatta Fahnbulleh MP, Minister of Devolution, Faith and Communities, and other MPs and Peers, contributed to the promotion of the Week. Some national religious leaders and national religious bodies also gave statements of support, which were shared on the website and social media. More could have been done to work with both religious leaders and politicians to help promote Inter Faith Week through their networks and communities, but this was beyond the capacity of the working partners.

For Inter Faith Week 2026, more strategic partnerships could be built to reach new networks and communities that are adjacent or completely separate to faith and interfaith communities. For example, engagement with secular organisations and movements could help to reach new audiences, such as u3A, UK Youth, NCVO and Scouts and Guides. Partnerships would have to be managed well to ensure that activities are in line with the Inter Faith Week aims.

## Communications

For 2025, the website and social media refresh was a huge success. Within the boundaries of the funding and without a full rebrand, considerable and effective work was done to improve the website and develop the social media strategy. The website was simplified to ensure accessibility and ease of navigating, and the Facebook and Instagram pages were regularly posted on to ensure continued engagement.

Some work was also done to engage national media outlets. However, in future years, more expertise and capacity are needed to create a compelling national story on the impact of Inter Faith Week that can make it into the press. This includes a longer campaign leading up to the Week to build momentum and encourage participation.

## Launch event

For the first time in England, a national launch event was held to open Inter Faith Week 2025. Hosted a few days before Inter Faith Week began, the event was youth-led and creative, with a combination of speeches, panels, workshop discussions, and interactive activities. For 2026, this trial can be built upon to run another launch event in a different region, with a larger focus on gaining media coverage to help promote Inter Faith Week on a national scale.

## Direction for 2026

Given the successes of Inter Faith Week 2025, there is a desire to continue momentum, and build on the learnings to make 2026 even better. The national steering group suggest that this would be aided through:

- Formalising the national steering group and increase diversity of membership
- Annual year-round funding for national coordination
- A national communications strategy and campaign leading up to the Week
- More resources and support for local and regional interfaith groups and schools, including seed funding for local activities.



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**CASE STUDY**

## Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs

### Region: West Midlands

For Inter Faith Week 2025, the Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education in Coventry and Warwickshire joined forces to deliver an inspiring Peace Festival, a two-week programme at the beginning of November offering a meaningful opportunity to reflect, remember and celebrate the region's long-standing commitment to peace, resilience and shared action.

The festival began on 1 November with a Peace Walk to four places of worship located in Coventry's "Religious Square Mile." Members of the Coventry Multifaith Forum met at Priory Gardens, then moved to the Holy Trinity Church, Noor ul Islam Jamia Masjid, Krishna Mandir and finished at Guru Nanak Parkash Gurdwara. For many participants, this marked the first time they had stepped inside a different place of worship, a simple but profound act of connection and understanding.

Pupils and staff in Coventry and Warwick took part in a range of activities exploring this year's theme Community: Together We Serve, encouraging the school community to learn about different faiths and beliefs, celebrate shared values, and take part in acts of service. Across the week, classes engaged in discussions about how people of different religions and worldviews contribute to their communities.

Poetry workshops brought creativity and reflection to life across the region. Pupils from five schools in Coventry joined former Poet Laureate Emilie Lauren Jones to create poetry around community and service. Meanwhile, sixth formers from a Coventry School supported pupils from three Bedworth schools to explore themes of inner and outer peace, culminating in a special performance for the Mayor of Nuneaton, a proud moment showcasing the power of youth leadership in interfaith dialogue.

Overall, the programme and the strengthened partnership between the two SACREs were a resounding success, demonstrating how collaboration across communities and generations can deepen understanding and build lasting relationships.

*"Inter Faith Week brought children, young people, adults and communities together across Coventry and Warwickshire. This shows how education more than inform minds, it can inspire purpose, build understanding, and nurture a shared future."*

**Manjit Kaur, Chair of Coventry SACRE and Co-chair of Warwickshire SACRE**

# Canary Wharf Multifaith Chaplaincy

## Region: London

Made up of a team of chaplains from a range of faith and belief backgrounds, the Canary Wharf Multifaith Chaplaincy provides pastoral care and faith-informed advice to the Canary Wharf Estate community, including office workers, retail staff, construction workers, security staff, and residents. In November, they support local businesses to mark Inter Faith Week.

For one business, the Chaplaincy supported the EDI team to host an event on faith and resilience. Chaired by a member of senior leadership, chaplains from the Multifaith Chaplaincy and representatives from the faith staff networks shared their perspectives and experiences on the topic in a panel discussion. For the first time, the event successfully brought together the five active faith networks. Following a successful first Inter Faith Week, the EDI team are now planning further events at other times of the year to continue the momentum. At another business, the Chaplaincy supported a panel discussion exploring how visible expressions of identity (e.g. head coverings, beards, turbans, hair braiding) can lead to bias and misunderstandings. The discussion was followed by an interactive hair braiding and hijab styling workshop, creating a space for connection and learning.

For another business that has been celebrating Inter Faith Week for several years, the Chaplaincy supported them for their annual exhibition. The four established faith-based staff networks set up stalls in the foyer, offering a chance for staff to drop in, chat to the different groups, learn about different faiths, and try some foods! The Chaplaincy team came along to act as friendly faces, mingling with the different groups, and sharing some of the work they did. This event was a simple format and easy to organise, therefore replicable in any business with existing staff faith networks.

*“Each year, we’re privileged to support a range of businesses across the estate as they explore how faith, belief and shared values shape their workplace culture. What continues to inspire me is seeing how people respond when they’re given the chance to connect across difference. Those moments of listening and learning don’t just enrich Inter Faith Week; they strengthen the whole community here at Canary Wharf.”*

**Alanna Harris, Lead Chaplain at the Canary Wharf Multifaith Chaplaincy**

[www.canarywharfchaplaincy.co.uk/](http://www.canarywharfchaplaincy.co.uk/)



# Statements of Support

*“Inter Faith Week creates powerful opportunities for open dialogue, meaningful connection and shared action. For some, the Week offers an introduction to others from different faith and belief backgrounds. For all, it builds trust and strengthens community relationships based on shared values, inspiring a more inclusive, respectful and united society. In 2025, Inter Faith Week showed faith groups uniting communities through local and youth leadership, highlighting lessons for growing Inter Faith Week as a key part of the civic infrastructure of the UK and an impactful tool for social cohesion.”*

**Miatta Fahnbulleh MP, Minister of Devolution, Faith and Communities**

*“Strategic cohesion opportunities, like Inter Faith Week, are an important opportunity to push back against the forces of division and push towards what we all need to see: a truly United Kingdom.”*

**Phil Rosenberg, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews**

*“Inter Faith Week 2025 showed how collaboration across faiths strengthens social cohesion, counters division, and builds hope for future generations.”*

**Julie Siddiqi and Imam Qari Asim, Co-founders of the UK Muslim Network**

*“We are fortunate in having established the “tradition” of holding regular annual Inter Faith Week which provides a great opportunity for diverse faiths to come together in a spirit of mutual respect.”*

**Mohinder Singh Chana, Committee Member (Inter Faith) at Network of Sikh Organisations**

*“HCUK wholeheartedly supports Inter Faith Week as it gives opportunities to create a better future and put an end to discrimination and hatred.”*

**Krishna Bhan, Chair of Hindu Council UK**

*“Fostering mutual understanding, harmony and collaboration, Inter Faith Week continues to provide significant opportunities to develop good relations between people and organisations from different backgrounds.”*

**Jo Backus, Chair of Network of Buddhist Organisations UK**

*“By fostering fellowship and trust among people of diverse beliefs, we strengthen the moral and spiritual foundations of our society, so critical for social cohesion.”*

**Marco Milone, Secretary of National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom**

*“The Pagan Federation is firmly committed to interfaith engagement and the values that lie at the very heart of Inter Faith Week.”*

**Mike Stygal, National Interfaith Manager of the Pagan Federation**

*“Humanists UK values the Week as a space for people of all worldviews to collaborate on shared values and mutual understanding for a better world.”*

**Andrew Copson, CEO of Humanists UK**

*“In an age of polarisation, Inter Faith Week calls us to courageous encounter, urgent solidarity, and hope stronger than fear shared.”*

**Rt Revd Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy, Church of England Bishop of Willesden and Lead Bishop for Interfaith Relations**

*“Inter Faith Week offers opportunities for dialogue which promotes mutual understanding and respect, and which helps reduce ignorance, prejudice and hatred.”*

**Rt Rev Patrick McKinney, Catholic Bishop of Nottingham and Lead Bishop for Interreligious Dialogue**

*“Faith and Belief are at the very core of most of the world's population, and so providing platforms for collaboration, co-operation and celebration through Inter-Faith Week are essential in supporting the diverse fabric of our Nation.”*

**His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos OBE, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London and Papal Legate to the United Kingdom**

*“Inter Faith Week 2025 was inspirational. It was wonderful to see such a wide range of events in which more schools than ever participated.”*

**Sarah Lane Cawte, Chair of the Religious Education Council for England and Wales**



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**CASE STUDY**

## **Standing Together, REFCEMI and AFN**

### **Region: London**

Organised by Refcemi and the All Faiths Network, this interfaith panel discussion on hate crime brought together contributions from experts, reflecting on the role of practical solidarity. Opening remarks by Archbishop Angaelos provided a framing on why this matters now, in the current context of rising hate crimes against faith and belief communities. Panellists from Barnet Multi Faith Forum, Uyghur Sunday School, UK Bahá'í Office of Public Affairs and Stop Hate UK then shared their perspectives on how to create active partnerships that respond to hate crimes. The panel referred back to the Looking After One Another 2023 report by the Inter Faith Network on the safety and security of faith communities.

The event centred on the shared commitment of different faith communities to responding to hate crime. A powerful theme was the importance of solidarity in the face of rising digital hate, highlighted by a speaker who emphasised that online religious hatred must be addressed with the same urgency as offline incidents, but that social media should be harnessed for its power to unite rather than as a tool to divide.

Roughly 25 people attended, representing Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Uyghur, and Scientologist communities. Several representatives from organisations involved in anti-hate or community cohesion work also attended, highlighting the importance of bridging the gap between the interfaith and cohesion sectors.

*“This event was a great learning opportunity for me, as well as understanding the extent of actions being done to combat hate crime with other groups. It was most definitely worthwhile to bring all these people together and see concrete steps that are, and will be taken in the future.”*

**Martin Weightman, Chair of All Faiths Network**

[www.allfaithsnetwork.org/](http://www.allfaithsnetwork.org/)

[www.refcemi.org/](http://www.refcemi.org/)

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**CASE STUDY**

# Interfaith Football Tournament, Building Bridges in Burnley

## Region: North West

For Inter Faith Week 2025, Building Bridges in Burnley hosted its annual interfaith football tournament in partnership with Burnley Football Club. Pupils from two local primary schools and local clubs participated in this fantastic night of fun and friendship. Teams are intentionally mixed up, so that players meet other young people from lots of different faith and belief backgrounds, and build new friendships, often based on trying to win the game! Parents are also welcome to attend, and are encouraged to mingle from the sidelines. As a prize for participating, all children and parents win a free ticket to see a Burnley FC game along with an adult.

The event started as a one-off 10 years ago, and has continued strongly due to the strong relationships built over the last decade with Burnley FC and the local schools and community clubs, including the Community Faith hub. The tournament also had a strong history of support from local civic and religious leaders. This is especially important since the event relies on volunteers. The event is successful in bringing children together from different communities, who might normally get involved in interfaith activities, and ultimately creating the fans of the future!

*“Sport is a great way of bringing young people together and these interactions lead to lifelong friendship. We are proud of the work we have been doing for many years with Burnley FC in the community and local schools to bring our communities together. The Interfaith tournament is now a permanent fixture in our Inter Faith Week calendar.”*

**Cllr Afrasiab Anwar MBE, Chair of Building Bridges in Burnley and Leader of Burnley Council**

*“I loved meeting new people from the other school and learning about them. I am a Burnley fan so it is great to go with my friends to watch them play.”*

**Hidayah, Youth participant**

[www.buildingbridgesburnley.com/](http://www.buildingbridgesburnley.com/)



## u3a Exploring World Faiths webinar

### Region: National

The u3a is a UK-wide movement of locally run interest groups that offer opportunities for people to come together to learn and have fun. Members explore new ideas, skills and activities collaboratively. Within u3a, the Exploring World Faiths subject area creates opportunities for all members of the national u3a to explore and learn about different faith and belief traditions, through online webinars held every two months.

For Inter Faith Week 2025, the Exploring World Faiths subject area hosted a special webinar exploring the statement made by the late Jo Cox MP that “we have more in common than that which divides us.” The webinar was attended by over 90 participants from a wide range of faith and belief backgrounds. For many attendees, this was their first exposure to interfaith engagement.

Three panelists from different faith backgrounds, including a representative from a national interfaith charity, reflected on the extent to which they understood Jo Cox’s statement to be true. The presentations were largely introductory, offering accessible frameworks for the attendees who were new to interfaith.

In the Q&A after the presentations, attendees shared thoughtful reflections and asked great questions, demonstrating a high level of engagement. Some participants spoke openly about previous misconceptions about other faith and belief traditions, while others shared in ways that showed their limited religious literacy and understanding of interfaith work. Creating a safe environment for these new attendees to learn was crucial for highlighting the power of interfaith dialogue and shared action, especially when it comes to division in society.

Overall, the webinar was a strong example of “bursting the bubble”, bringing new audiences into the interfaith movement by working in partnership with an existing organisation and meeting people where they are.

*“I always try to attend these webinars because I am interested in hearing the views of different faiths on the topics discussed. I was happy to hear so much agreement between the different speakers.” Dr Peter Rookes, National u3a Subject Advisor for Exploring World Faiths.”*

**Dr Peter Rookes, National u3a Subject Advisor, Exploring World Faiths)**

[www.u3a.org.uk/members-area/subjects/exploring-world-faiths](http://www.u3a.org.uk/members-area/subjects/exploring-world-faiths)



# Interfaith Week: a guide to religious observances.

Richard Harris and Leshanthi Corea, Faith and Belief network Co-Chairs



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**CASE STUDY**

## Nationwide Building Society

### Region: National

As part of Inter Faith Week 2025, colleagues at Nationwide came together for two online events that explored faith, belief, and belonging in the workplace. Organised by the Faith & Belief Staff Network, the sessions focused on how inclusive environments are built when people are supported to bring their whole selves to work.

The week began with an 'Ask Me Anything' session, offering a safe and respectful space for colleagues to hear directly from faith group leads and ask honest questions. Representatives from Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism shared personal reflections on how belief shapes values such as integrity, kindness, resilience, and respect at work. 30 colleagues actively asked thoughtful questions, sought clarity on language and practice, and explored connections between different faiths.

Building on this foundation of understanding, the second event, 'Whole Selves, Shared Spaces', focused on how these shared values translate into everyday working life. The keynote panelist was Sumit Bose, Head of Talent Development at Tata Consultancy Services. Drawing on his experience of leading diverse, multicultural teams, Sumit spoke about inclusive leadership practice. Christian, Muslim and Sikh faith representative then shared on authenticity and navigating difference specifically within Nationwide.

The session was well attended, with many more colleagues watching the recording in the days and weeks following.

This sense of curiosity and learning was reinforced across the week through Society-wide communications from the faith and belief staff networks, including daily recipe posts from faith leads that used food and family as accessible ways to explore religious traditions and shared values. Reaching 17,000 employees, supported at board level, Nationwide runs Inter Faith Week events every year, offering a focal point to bring together the seven faith and belief staff networks, make new connections and build curiosity.

*“These events reminded us that the staff network is not just about representing employees, it’s about reflecting the rich diversity of the members we serve. Faith, belief, and true representation are the foundation of a workplace where everyone belongs and thrives.”*

**Richard Harris, Chair of the Faith & Belief Staff Network at Nationwide Building Society**

*“Being able to ask questions openly made a real difference. Learning about language, traditions, and shared stories helped different faiths feel more familiar and human.”*

**Attendee**

# Thanks and Credits

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**All who organised and attended events during Inter Faith Week 2025.**

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**Working Group Partners:**

Working Group 1:

Embedding youth voice and leadership:  
Sophie Mitchell, Faith & Belief Forum

Working Group 2:

Communications:  
Stuart Diamond, United Religions Initiative UK

Working Group 3:

Schools and colleges engagement:  
Carrie Alderton, Amy Ark, Sarah March,  
Faith & Belief Forum

Working Group 4:

Local and regional community engagement:  
Warwick Hawkins, United Religions Initiative UK

Working Group 5:

National launch event:  
Mustafa Field and Stewart Yarlett,  
Faiths Forum for London

**Interns:**

Ying Zhang  
Yusuf Amin  
Nirali Sawartha  
Abimbola Akintoye  
Lauren Amdor  
Leo Taylor (Project Officer)

**National Steering Group:**

Deepak Naik, United Religions Initiative UK  
Laura Marks, Mitzvah Day  
Georgina Bye, Council of Christians and Jews  
Martin Weightman, All Faiths Network  
Denise Chaplin, NASACRE  
Bill Moore, NASACRE  
Peter Rookes, Birmingham Council of Faiths

**Report Designer:**

Luke Peraux

*“In 2025, Inter Faith Week showed faith groups uniting communities through local and youth leadership, highlighting lessons for growing Inter Faith Week as a key part of the civic infrastructure of the UK and an impactful tool for social cohesion.”*

**Miatta Fahnbulleh MP,  
Minister of Devolution, Faith and Communities**

With thanks to the National Steering Group:

