



A Guide to  
**Equality and  
Diversity**  
in the Third Sector

*olmec*

***Religion  
or belief***



## *EQUALITY STRAND*

This chapter on religion or belief has been updated and is taken from the publication by Olmec *A Guide to Equality and Diversity in the Third Sector (2008)*. The update has been commissioned by the National Equality Partnership. A full copy of the Guide can be downloaded from Olmec's website: <http://www.olmec-ec.org.uk/documents/website%5CPublications%2FGuide%20to%20Equality%20and%20Diversity%20in%20the%20Third%20Sector.pdf>

# Religion or belief

The United Kingdom is made up of people of many different belief and faith systems that live side by side. The table below shows the major religions and the number of followers according to the 2001 census (more up to date local figures will be available from local authorities).

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>% of Total Population</i>
<b>Christian</b>	<b>41,014,811</b>	<b>71.8</b>
<b>Muslim</b>	<b>1,588,890</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Hindu</b>	<b>558,342</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Sikh</b>	<b>336,179</b>	<b>0.6</b>
<b>Jewish</b>	<b>267,375</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Buddhist</b>	<b>149,157</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Any Other Religion</b>	<b>159,167</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>No Religion</b>	<b>8,596,488</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Religion not Stated</b>	<b>159,167</b>	<b>7.8</b>

Source: 2001 Census

## Legislation

### The Equality Act 2006

It is now unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of religion and belief:

- In any aspect of employment;
- When providing goods, facilities and services;
- When providing education;
- In using or disposing of premises; or
- When exercising public functions

A religion, for the purposes of the Act, must be recognised as being cogent, serious, cohesive and compatible with human dignity.

The followers and believers of the religions listed below are among those protected by the Act:

- Baha'i Faith;
- Buddhism;
- Christianity;
- Hinduism;
- Islam;
- Jainism;
- Judaism;
- Rastafarianism;
- Sikhism;
- Zoroastrianism<sup>1</sup>

Belief is considered to be philosophical systems which are similar to religion.

People who have no religion or belief are also protected under the Act. This includes atheists and agnostics.

There are some exceptions to the rules. If there is a genuine occupational requirement that the person employed or delivering the service should be of a certain religion then they will be able to exempt the post from the Act. For example, churches can legitimately decline/refuse to ordain people from other religions. However, an exemption is unlikely to be justified if for example, someone was not employed in a Catholic nursing home because they were not a Catholic. Similarly, a nursing home that is open to all communities would have to provide care to people regardless of their religion.

It is always important to seek guidance before deciding to apply a genuine occupational requirement to any post.

It may be useful for any organisation to seek to find out about different religions. People may ask for time off during religious festivals; they may need a room for prayers; or they may have special dietary requirements such as eating kosher food, halal meat or vegetarian food.

Employment policies should be revised so that employees with different religions and beliefs do not face any type of employment discrimination.

1. <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/religion-and-belief>

## Resources

### ***A Guide to Diversity in the UK (Diversity Solutions)***

*A Guide to Diversity in the UK* contains a considerable amount of information on the main religions practised in the UK. It provides practical information on belief systems, food, greetings and prayers. The information contained in the publication would be very useful to any organisation seeking to implement better practice.

[www.diversity-solutions.com](http://www.diversity-solutions.com)

### ***Anderson, L. et. al. (2002) Regenerating London: Faith Communities and Social Action. London Churches Group for Social Action, with Greater London Enterprise.***

A report on worshipping communities in London and their social action and regeneration activities.

### ***Barnes, S. & Berkeley, N., Coventry University (2007) Church Urban Fund: Impact Study Final Report. Church Urban Fund.***

### ***Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs (Inter Faith Network)***

The interfaith network has produced short guidelines for when people and organisations are intending to work in a multi-faith background and getting people to work together. This can also be downloaded from the website.

<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/buildinggoodrelations.pdf>

### ***Cahill, A., Diversity Solutions Ltd. (2006) A Survey - Support and funding for local faith groups and communities in the borough of Basingstoke and Deane. Community Action Hampshire.***

### ***Challenge and Opportunity: Changing the Pattern of Interfaith Engagement in the UK (Inter Faith Network).***

This is a study on interfaith engagement across the UK.

<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/challenge2006meeting.pdf>

**Cradock, F., Oley, N., Reith, T., & Wallis, Z. (2005) *Building the Capacity of London's Faith Groups*. Faithworks.**

A research report on the capacity needs and the infrastructure support delivered to faith groups in London delivering local community projects and how this can be improved.

***Good Practice Guide Engaging and Empowering Faith Communities in Housing and Regeneration* (Faith Regen Foundation)**

Faith Regen Foundation has devised this guide as a step towards understanding how faith communities can play a practical role in the housing and regeneration field. It recognises the importance of engaging faith institutions and grass roots organisations from faith communities in social housing, job creation and enterprise development. This guide emphasises and calls for a holistic approach to the problem whereby all concerned actors, from government and social services agencies to faith groups and private sector actors, combine to provide long-term solutions for the community in question.

<http://www.faithregenuk.org/gpg.html>

**Face to Face – Side by Side: A Framework for partnership in our multi-faith society**

This framework sets out a three year plan for how the CLG will support a stronger dialogue between people of different faiths and beliefs in every community.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/facetofaceframework>

***Interfaith Organisations in the UK: a Directory* (Inter Faith Network)**

Gives a list of 250 organisations in the UK that work towards promoting good interfaith relations at a local, regional and UK wide level (2009). The publication can be obtained from their website for £8.95

<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/orderdirectory.htm>

***Keeping It Together – a reflective practice tool for faith-based community development practitioners***

<http://www.fbrn.org.uk/docs/Kit-Priceless.pdf>

**Khatun A. et al (2004) *Feasibility study into Capacity Building Muslim Groups in Tower Hamlets and Hackney*. Barnardo's CANDL.**

### ***Making Equality Simple (NCVO)***

A guide to the 2003 Employment Equality Regulations on religion, belief and sexual orientation for the voluntary sector with a focus on recruitment, retention and writing references.

The publication can be downloaded for free from:

<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/>

### ***Priceless, Unmeasurable? Faiths and Community Development in 21st Century England***

A reports that draws together existing and new research to provide a national overview on faith communities and community development.

<http://www.fbrn.org.uk/docs/Kit-Priceless.pdf>

### ***Religion and Belief (Equality and Human Rights Commission)***

Has a section dedicated to religion or belief, which explains the concepts and what the law says in more detail. The pages on religion and belief can be found at

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/religion-and-belief/>

### ***Religion or Belief in the Workplace: a Guide for Employer and Employees (ACAS)***

Gives information on the Employment Equality Regulations which were incorporated into the Equality Act. This includes pieces on religious festivals and practices.

ACAS (2003) Religion or Belief in the Workplace: Putting the Employment Equality Regulations (Religion or Belief) 2003 into Place (ACAS: London)

[http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/fll/religion\\_1.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/fll/religion_1.pdf)

### ***Tools for Regeneration – Practical Advice for Faith Communities***

A tool kit which provides information for faith communities on several aspects of running a community organisation such as fundraising, evaluation and performance measurement, staffing and social enterprise.

<http://www.fbrn.org.uk/fbrn-publications>

### **Guidance on Equality of Religion or Belief-**

This document aims to clarify the law and practice of the 'religion or belief' equality strand and bring the relevant information together in one place.

[http://www.humanism.org.uk/\\_uploads/documents/GuidanceFinal2.pdf](http://www.humanism.org.uk/_uploads/documents/GuidanceFinal2.pdf)

### **Religion or Belief Training Toolkit**

This toolkit is designed to support equality practitioners in their work by giving guidance and information about the 'strand' via exercises and presentations.

<http://www.humanism.org.uk/campaigns/equalities/equalityproject/toolkit>

## **Organisations**

### **Church Urban Fund**

Church Urban Fund is a not for profit organisation supporting social action in the most deprived areas of England.

#### **Church Urban Fund**

Church House  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3AZ  
Tel: 020 7898 1647  
Email: [enquiries@cuf.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cuf.org.uk)  
[www.cuf.org.uk](http://www.cuf.org.uk)

### **Churches Together in Cheshire**

Churches Together in Cheshire provides support for Churches Together Groups in towns and villages around the county and for churches and congregations working together in formal ecumenical partnerships.

#### **Churches Together in Cheshire**

81 Forge Fields  
Sandbach  
Cheshire, CW11 3<sup>RD</sup>  
Tel: 01270 750431  
Email: [ceo@cheshire-churches-together.org.uk](mailto:ceo@cheshire-churches-together.org.uk)  
[www.cheshire-churches-together.org.uk](http://www.cheshire-churches-together.org.uk)

### **Churches Together in Warrington**

Supports Communication Church to Church, Churches to Borough and Borough to Churches.

### **Churches Together in Warrington**

The Rectory  
Church Street  
Warrington, WA1 2TL  
Tel: 01925 635020

### **Diversity Solutions Consultancy Ltd**

Diversity Solutions is a consultancy and training organisation that helps organisations improve their work in equality and diversity.

### **Diversity Solutions Consultancy Ltd.**

Cavell House  
St Crispins House  
Norwich, NR3 1YE  
Tel: 0845 260 0038 or 01953 606 065  
Fax: 01953 607 254  
Email: [mail@diversity-solutions.com](mailto:mail@diversity-solutions.com)  
[www.diversity-solutions.com](http://www.diversity-solutions.com)

### **Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB)**

The Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) is the largest representative body for British Hindus with over 275 member organisations from different regions around the country. HFB's activities are broadly divided into three areas: public affairs and community consultation; capacity building and project development; and interfaith co-operation and relations to help build a cohesive and inclusive Britain.

### **Hindu Forum of Britain**

Unit 3, 861, Coronation Road  
Park Royal  
London NW10 6PT  
Phone: 020 8965 0671 or 07915 383 103  
Fax: 020 8965 0672  
Email: [info@hinduforum.org](mailto:info@hinduforum.org)  
[www.hfb.org.uk](http://www.hfb.org.uk)

### **The East of London Faiths Council**

The East of England Faiths Council was formed to facilitate the major faith traditions represented in the region in making input to regional strategy and issues, to act as a clear point of contact for regional governance and other bodies; and to promote the contribution of faiths to the life and well being of the region.

#### **East of England Faiths Council**

Unit 37 St John's Innovation Centre  
Cowley Road  
Cambridge CB4 0WS  
Contact Jenny Kartupelis  
Tel: 01223 421606  
Email: [eeec@cambcatalyst.co.uk](mailto:eeec@cambcatalyst.co.uk)  
<http://www.eefaihtscouncil.org.uk/>

### **Faith-based Regeneration Network**

The Faith Based Regeneration Network UK (FbRN) is the leading national multi faith network for community regeneration and social action. It reaches 9,000 individuals and projects, and all faiths. Their vision is to enable faith based regeneration practitioners to learn and gain inspiration from each other and to establish a conduit between policy makers and practitioners.

#### **FbRN UK**

Kensington Charity Centre  
4th Floor  
Charles House  
375 Kensington High Street  
London W14 8QH  
Tel: 020 7471 6791/2  
Email: [valr@fbrn.org.uk](mailto:valr@fbrn.org.uk)  
<http://www.fbrn.org.uk/>

### **Faith Matters**

Faith Matters provides the first port of call for all organisations on the following areas: faith diversity; learning and development; organisational change; community engagement; consultancy and resources. Faith Matters offer a flexible package for understanding faiths and working together for equality and diversity, for integration and cohesion.

#### **Faith Matters**

20 New Market Street  
Leeds LS1 6DG  
Tel: 0113 244 3413  
Email: [info@faithmatters.co.uk](mailto:info@faithmatters.co.uk)  
[www.faihtmatters.co.uk/](http://www.faihtmatters.co.uk/)

### Faith Regen Foundation

The purpose of this organisation is to increase social harmony through the empowerment and regeneration of individuals. It specialises in faith community and intercultural dialogue, capacity building and regeneration. It promotes greater understanding between faiths and identifies solutions for encouraging positive relationships within a multi-faith society based on collaboration.

The Faith Regen Foundation has a consultancy service and delivers training. It has recently created some toolkits and good practice guides that can be used by third sector organisations.

#### **Faith Regen Foundation**

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Ringway

Bounds Green

London N11 2UT

Tel: 0208 361 2288

Fax: 0208 920 0946

Email: [info@faithregenuk.org](mailto:info@faithregenuk.org)

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

### Faithnetsouthwest

Faithnetsouthwest helps faith groups to work in partnership to engage in social and community action and get their voice heard in local and regional decision-making.

#### **Faithnetsouthwest**

Bristol BS5 0TX

162 Pennywell Road

Contact Alistair Beattie

Tel: 0117 3042298

Email: [info@faithnetsouthwest.org.uk](mailto:info@faithnetsouthwest.org.uk)

<http://www.faihrefnetsouthwest.org.uk/joomla/>

### Faiths Forum for London

The Faiths Forum for London will focus on social policy, community development and civic engagement and will be able to improve access to London governance for all of London's faith communities.

### **Faiths Forum for London**

(under development)  
c/o London Civic Forum  
18a Victoria Park Square  
London E2 9PB  
Tel: 020 8709 9770  
Fax: 020 8709 9771  
Email: [Harmander@londoncivicforum.org.uk](mailto:Harmander@londoncivicforum.org.uk)  
[www.londoncivicforum.org.uk](http://www.londoncivicforum.org.uk)

### **Faiths Forum for the East Midlands**

Contact: Daphne Beale  
Email: [c/o\\_dbeale06@aol.com](mailto:c/o_dbeale06@aol.com)

### **Interfaith Network for the UK**

The Inter Faith Network's aim is to promote good relations between people of different faiths in the UK. It is a membership organisation whose members include organisations from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and Zoroastrian communities, national and local inter faith bodies; and academic institutions and educational bodies concerned with inter faith issues.

### **The Inter Faith Network for the UK**

8A Lower Grosvenor Place  
London SW1W 0EN  
Tel: 0207 931 7766  
Fax: 0207 931 7722  
Email: [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)  
[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

### **North East Regional Faiths Network**

The North East Regional Faiths Network promotes good relations between people of different faiths in the region. It aims to bring together people and organisations from all faiths in the region in a network for sharing information, learning from one another, developing skills and projects, and forming partnerships.

### **North East Regional Faiths Network**

c/o Churches' Regional Network  
Ushaw College  
County Durham  
Tyne and Wear DH7 9RH  
Tel: 0191 373 5453  
Email: [info@nerfn.org](mailto:info@nerfn.org)  
<http://www.nerfn.org>

### **Northwest Forum of Faiths**

The Northwest Forum of Faiths is a 'forum of forums'. Membership is not open to individuals but to representatives of existing sub-regional and local inter faith bodies. The purpose of the Northwest Forum of Faiths is: to promote good practice in relations between faith communities at every level of society and to ensure that faith communities are engaged at a strategic and policy level in the region through representation and consultation; and to improve the understanding of the expertise and value of faith communities among strategic decision makers.

### **Northwest Forum of Faiths**

c/o NW Regional Development Agency  
Renaissance House  
PO Box 37  
Centre Park  
Warrington WA1 1XB  
Contact Carlo Schroder  
Tel: 01925 400139  
Email: [carlo.schroder@nwda.co.uk](mailto:carlo.schroder@nwda.co.uk)  
<http://www.faithnorthwest.org.uk>

### **Shap Working Party**

The Shap working party was set up in 1969 to campaign for and support the development of teaching about the World's Religions in schools and other educational settings. Shap members produce, in different formats, an annual calendar detailing the festival dates of many world religions and an annual Journal. The back catalogue of the Journal provides a resource for those seeking information on a wide range of topics about religions in the modern world. The Shap advisory service offers free information about all aspects of religion. Their most recent production is the audio glossary, which offers you not only a definition of many of the words that crop up in the study of religions, but also the opportunity to hear the word pronounced by a speaker from the relevant religious tradition.

### **Shap Working Party**

PO Box 38580  
London SW1P 3XF  
Tel: 0207 898 1494  
Email: [admin@shapworkingparty.org.uk](mailto:admin@shapworkingparty.org.uk)  
[www.shapworkingparty.org.uk](http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk)

### **Sikhs in Britain**

Email: [contacts@siksinbritain.com](mailto:contacts@siksinbritain.com)  
[www.sikhsinbritain.com](http://www.sikhsinbritain.com)

### South East England Faith Forum

The South East England Faith Forum enables faith communities to provide welfare support and education service to local communities; be represented at regional structures and enables the sharing of learning and expertise for the benefit of local communities.

#### South East England Faith Forum

c/o Department for Social Responsibility  
Diocesan House  
Quarry Street  
Guildford  
Surrey GU1 3XG  
Email: [contact@se-faithforum.net](mailto:contact@se-faithforum.net)  
<http://www.se-faithforum.net/cms/>

### The British Humanist Association

The British Humanist Association is an organisation whose mission is to represent the interests of those people without religious belief in this country. It is committed to an open and inclusive society that respects human rights and equality.

#### The British Humanist Association

1 Gower Street  
London WC1E 6HD  
Tel: 020 7079 3580  
Fax: 020 7079 3588  
Email: [info@humanism.org.uk](mailto:info@humanism.org.uk)  
<http://www.humanism.org.uk>

### The Muslim Council of Britain

The Muslim Council of Britain is a national representative Muslim umbrella body with over 500 affiliated national, regional and local organisations, mosques, charities and schools. The MCB is pledged to work for the common good of society as a whole; encouraging individual Muslims and Muslim organisations to play a full and participatory role in public life.

#### The MCB (Muslim Council of Britain)

PO Box 57330  
London E1 2WJ  
Tel: +44 (0) 845 26 26 786  
Fax: +44 (0) 207 247 7079  
Email: [admin@mcb.org.uk](mailto:admin@mcb.org.uk)  
[www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

### **The National Secular Society**

The National Secular Society campaigns for the rights of atheists and agnostics in Britain and to challenge religious privilege.

#### **The National Secular Society**

25 Red Lion Square  
London, WC1R 4RL  
Tel: 020 7404 3126  
Fax: 0870 762 8971  
Email: [enquiries@secularism.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@secularism.org.uk)  
[www.secularism.org.uk](http://www.secularism.org.uk)

### **The Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)**

The Network of Buddhist Organisations was founded in 1993 to promote fellowship and dialogue between Buddhist organizations, to facilitate co-operation in matters of common interest and to work in harmony with Buddhist and likeminded organizations around the world.

#### **The Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)**

6 Tyne Rd, Bishopston  
Bristol BS7 8EE  
Tel: 0845 345 8978  
Email: [secretary@nbo.org.uk](mailto:secretary@nbo.org.uk)  
[www.nbo.org.uk](http://www.nbo.org.uk)

### **Warrington Council of Faiths**

Aims to develop mutual understanding between World Faiths which have a Warrington Community and represent them.

#### **Warrington Council of Faiths**

Warrington Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Warrington, WA1 1UH  
Tel: 01925 246900

### **West Midlands Faith Forum**

The West Midlands Faiths Forum was launched in June 2003. It is an independent body aiming to provide a 'meeting place' for the voices of the diversity of faith groups that will provide a medium whereby views can be heard and gathered in a structured manner by regional bodies, including the Regional Assembly.

#### **West Midlands Faith Forum**

138 Digbeth  
Birmingham B5 6DR  
Contact Jane Gallagher / Gareth Jones  
Tel: 0121 678 8840 / 64  
Email: [j.gallagher@wmfaithsforum.org.uk](mailto:j.gallagher@wmfaithsforum.org.uk)  
[www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk](http://www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk)

### **Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum**

The Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum was established in 2005. The Forum works in the region and beyond to advance the contribution of faith communities, to encourage partnerships and to challenge injustice and discrimination.

#### **Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum**

Suite E12  
Joseph's Well, Hanover Walk  
Leeds LS3 1AB  
Tel: 0113 245 6444  
Fax: 0113 245 6333  
Email: [info@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk](mailto:info@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk)  
<http://www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk/>

# A Guide to Equality and Diversity in the Third Sector



[www.improvingsupport.org.uk/equalityanddiversity](http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk/equalityanddiversity)

Your gateway to third sector support, information and resources.

