

Press release: Training introduced to help faith leaders support their communities

Over 300 faith leaders will benefit from new training to support their leading roles within communities, Faith Minister Lord Bourne today (8 February 2019) confirmed.

Developed following direct consultation with faith leaders, the Faith Leader Training programme will empower faith leaders with the confidence and knowledge to meet the changing needs of their congregations.

The voluntary training will be delivered in-person and online and will focus on improving the capacity of faith leaders to identify issues like domestic and sexual abuse and mental health concerns, as well educating them on equalities legislation and UK marriage law.

The initiative will help places of worship to have well-qualified, informed and confident faith leaders able to better support their congregants and signpost them to the relevant professional services.

Faith Minister Lord Bourne said:

Faith ministers are the heart and soul of our communities, acting as role models and leaders and providing support and guidance to their congregations.

Our Faith Leader Training programme recognises this central role and will ensure they are able to better support their congregations.

It is the first-step as we follow our commitment in the Integrated Communities Strategy green paper to support and listen to our faith communities

The Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion have been selected to deliver the training following an open tendering process.

They have a strong track record of working collaboratively with different faith communities across the UK. Their rich experience and expertise will help ensure the programme addresses the needs of faith communities in ways that are constructive, relevant and meaningful.

Andrew Davies, Director of the Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion:

Great leadership can have a transformative effect upon an organisation. Our faith communities are doing amazing work up and down the country and one of the reasons for this is the exceptional dedication, vision and passion of their leaders.

This training initiative will support them in their continued pursuit of excellence and help ensure that our faith leaders are confident in engaging with some of our pressing social challenges, committed to the highest standards of governance and effective and fulfilled in their ministries.

In designing and developing the Faith Leader Training programme, the government has engaged directly with faith leaders of various faiths and denominations to help collaboratively shape and structure the curriculum and ensure the training offer meets the needs of religious ministers themselves.

Imam Qari Asim, Senior Imam at Leeds Makkah Mosque and Executive Member of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board:

I welcome a dynamic and focused training programme for faith leaders as I believe that enhancing faith leaders' capacity to minister confidently in the British context will help them to engage and support their communities in a much more effective and cohesive way.

In March 2018, this government published the [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#), which invited views on our vision for building strong, integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

We anticipate the Faith Leader Training initiative will complement the following programmes:

- **Strengthening Faith Institutions (SFI):** A programme which helps places of worship build effective governance structures, develop robust financial management procedures and support Charity Commission registration
- **Register Our Marriage (ROM):** A campaign working with faith communities to raise awareness on elements of marriage legislation (i.e. the need for UK religious marriages to be registered / the fact that spouses are not protected by English law in unregistered religious marriages which have been conducted in the UK).