

## Catch up with news from Sheffield Faiths Forum

[www.sheffieldfaithsforum.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldfaithsforum.org.uk)

### ***Priorities for the coming year***

During the Sheffield Faiths Forum Annual Review event in March 2008 delegates were asked to prioritise potential issues that the Faiths Forum could address in the coming year.

Four clear priorities were identified through the exercise - this information is already being used by the Faiths Forum to plan work over the coming year and to direct available resources to the most important issues.

<b>Priorities identified</b>	<b>What the Faiths Forum has done since March</b>
Community Cohesion	Discussions with South Yorkshire Police regarding the Preventing Violent Extremism policy. Participation in the Sheffield First Community Cohesion Strategy Working Group. (See the enclosed green briefing paper)
Young People	Working with faith schools across the City. Meeting with the Childrens and Young People's Consortium about positive activities for 8 – 13 year olds.
Neighbourhood based work	Continuing work in Darnall - supporting faith communities to work together on a blood donation project.
Faith group visits	Publicising faith group open days (eg Al Madina Mosque) and identifying resources to support them.

### ***Strengthening faith communities' influence***

We are pleased to announce that Mike Fitter, Chair of Sheffield Faiths Forum, has been appointed on to the Sheffield First Partnership Board – the lead Board of Sheffield's Local Strategic Partnership. This means, for the first time, faith communities have a clear route to influence on Sheffield First, significantly strengthening the voice of faith communities in some of the key decisions being made about the future of Sheffield. This appointment has been facilitated by the establishment of Sheffield Faiths Forum which provides open routes to the wider faith sector in Sheffield. To find out more about Sheffield First and the influence of voluntary, community and faith sector representatives on the Boards please visit the OFFER website at <http://www.offer.org.uk/content.php?c=96>.

Members of Sheffield Faiths Forum have also been invited to be involved in the recruitment process for Sheffield City Council's new Chief Executive. We hope to use this opportunity to raise awareness about the involvement of faith communities in the city.

### ***Round up of the past 4 months***

**Events:** - Sheffield Faiths Forum Annual Review, held at Sheffield Town Hall on 4 March 2008, provided an opportunity to:

- hear about the work of the Faiths Forum over the past year
- find out about the contribution of faith groups to our local communities through the launch of the Faith Audit report
- allow faith communities to 'have their say' about the Faiths Forum's priorities for the future
- Network with other faith groups and communities

There were 68 attendees from a wide range of traditions and feedback about the event was excellent. A detailed event report can be downloaded from

<http://www.sheffieldfaithsforum.org.uk/resources>). The event also allowed us to display some of the photographic and video resources we have collected through the 'Sights and Sounds' project.

**Faith Leaders and Workers CPD Training:** - The NIACE supported course came to an end in March. There were 15 participants in the Sheffield pilot, and on 19<sup>th</sup> March the Pakistan Muslim Centre hosted the national celebration event with over 100 delegates, two Government Ministers and several TV crews. Due to the success of the course in Sheffield there are plans to run sessions later in the year targeted at Youth Workers and Women within faith communities. Further details will be announced after the summer.

**Audit of Faith Group Community Activity:** In March 2008 community consultant Ann Hindley produced her final report of the audit of faith related community activity which the Faiths Forum commissioned in October 2007 (the report is available to download from <http://www.sheffieldfaithsforum.org.uk/resources>).

Information was collected by circulating a survey form to 314 faith organisations and was analysed in relation to four key themes of Sheffield First: Strong economy; Successful neighbourhoods; Inclusive, healthy communities; and Great place to grow up. An analysis was also undertaken of how activities of faith groups contributed to the social capital of the city. The findings show that the amount of faith related community activity taking place in Sheffield is massive and the report will provide a useful resource for the Faiths Forum and individual faith groups to promote the value of their work and support discussions with partners and funders.

### **Successes from 2007/08**

Alongside the projects mentioned above, the table below sets out how we addressed the key priorities faith communities identified for the forum last year.

<b>Priorities you identified last year (consultation Jan 2007)</b>	<b>What the Faiths Forum did</b>
Support for asylum seekers and refugees	Worked with the City of Sanctuary campaign to hold an event on Sanctuary, Hospitality and refuge
Multi-faith initiatives at a neighbourhood level	Directly supported faith groups in Darnall to work together and address local issues.
Improving awareness of different faiths in the city	Provided free faith awareness training for members of faith communities and built up a library of images (photographic and video) of different faith communities in the city.

### **Other events coming up in the City**

- Refugee Week – various events, 16 - 21 June
- Al Madina Mosque (Wolseley Road) Open Day: 14:30 – 17:30, 19 June
- ASSIST AGM, 24 June
- Islamic Society of Britain – Islam Festival, Mount Pleasant Park 26 – 29 June
- Friday Prayers at Madina Mosque Wolseley Road, 27 June 1:15pm
- Getting Along Together – Community Cohesion consultation event, 17 July
- WalkTalk – Sheffield City Centre, 25 July

News, events and resources are regularly updated on our website: [www.sheffieldfaithsforum.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldfaithsforum.org.uk) – make sure you visit us for the latest information.

### **Contact us:**

[info@offer.org.uk](mailto:info@offer.org.uk)

OFFER, 4th Floor, The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 4FW

Tel 0114 2536730 Fax 0114 2536731 Web [www.sheffieldfaithsforum.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldfaithsforum.org.uk)