



General
Medical
Council



Faith in Democracy

Thursday 26 January 2012, Stevenage

PRESENTATIONS AND NOTES

MORNING PRESENTATIONS

The new landscape: an overview of policy and legislation

*Revd. Dr. Malcolm Brown,
Director of Public Affairs for the Church of England*

Notes not available

Extending democracy

David Canning, Cabinet Office

PowerPoint as separate document.

Localism

*Warwick Hawkins,
Department for Communities and Local Government*

Notes not available

Equalities and Public Services

Ila Chandavarkar, MENTER

PowerPoint as separate document

Community organising

Rt Hon John Battle, Leeds Community Organising

Notes not available

AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

1. Engaging with faith groups on equalities issues

Leader: Sharon Robinson, Hertfordshire County Council

- Gaining faith literacy and building bridges is important – different communities and different faiths have a different perspective
- Have a dedicated link to a post rather than person
- Funding for faith groups – sparks debates over belief conflicts (i.e. extremism) but possibly misguided perceptions from all sides
- Using community facilities – has to be available for other groups to use but people of faith live their faith everyday and can't put it aside
- Faith forums are useful but often no political will
- Can be seen as a talking shop
- Don't necessarily want to see Local Authorities running these
- LA as enabler not in control – give them the space / interact with them but don't try and take over
- Need to involve key people but spiritual leaders may not be involved in the practical side
- Important for the local authority to train and mentor community organisations and bring people together
- Funding for admin support to faith forums important

2. The Elusive Ingredient:

Engaging young people in civic renewal and inter faith action

Leader: Jay MacLeod, Interfaith Advisor, Diocese of St Albans

- Work started with the children themselves, not with strategies
- Programmes weren't billed as inter faith, they were relational
- Analyse your capacity and do what you can
- Be patient, it takes time and energy
- Involve the whole community and keep it fun
- Issues around evangelisation need sensitivity, as do issues around alcohol, discipline, drugs
- Religious illiteracy may be a problem - there can be more understanding between different faith communities than between faith communities and external bodies
- 'We need each other to understand ourselves'
- 'Young people are not empty vessels to be filled but candles to be lit.'
- Useful links:

Using music to engage young people:

<http://www.allsaintsbedford.co.uk/church/index.php>

<http://www.allsaintsbedford.co.uk/youthmusic/index.php>

Using sport to engage young people:

<http://www.allsaintsbedford.co.uk/basketball/index.php>

Using Holy Land Pilgrimage to engage young people:

<http://www.j2jj.co.uk/J2JJ/Welcome.html>

3. What makes a good doctor?: improving mutual understanding on faith-related factors

Leader: Jo Wren, General Medical Council

This session ran twice, with 7 people in the first group and 6 in the second and included representatives from the local faith community and local Councils.

Summary of group brainstorm on 'what makes a good doctor?'

- Takes time to discuss things
- Polite
- Listens well
- Has respect for patients
- Has a partnership with patients while showing leadership
- Good personality – friendly
- Good diagnostic ability
- Maintains their knowledge, specifically relevant to their patients needs
- Perceptive
- Willing to learn
- Makes you feel comfortable
- Is available
- Sensitive to needs of patients, especially their religious beliefs
- Reassuring
- Pays attention
- Sees you quickly when you need it

Details of the consultation are now available on:

<http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/9879.asp>

4. Participatory Budgeting – how faith groups can influence public spending

Leaders: Kevin Ambrose, Participatory Budgeting Unit and Emma Hunter, Luton Borough Council

PowerPoint as separate document

A local DVD which the workshop group found quite helpful can be viewed following this link:

<http://www.elearningtv.co.uk/View.aspx?ID=2646~4s~tbtezAql>

5. Commissioning public services: how can faith groups compete?

Leader: Steve Miller, Director, Faith-based Regeneration Network

PowerPoint as separate document

- There is a wide variety of experience
- Faith communities are in it for the long haul, politicians have a short horizon
- Faith communities often choose to work in 'difficult' settings (e.g. Circles of Support) and this can be problematic for public sector bodies
- Faith Based Social Action - downloadable from FBRN website.

6. The Olympics: new opportunities for public service

Herman Beettege, More than Gold

People in this workshop were interested in the Athlete Family Homestay Programme which offers free accommodation to family member of athletes participating in the games.

- Relevant information for anyone interested in registering to host an athlete's family member during the games: www.staywimi.com/morethangold.
- Information flyer about the Athlete Family Homestay Programme – available as separate document

7. Finding and keeping volunteers from faith communities

Leader: Tanvir Ahmed, HMP Chelmsford Chaplaincy

Mr Ahmed leads a team of 50 or so people, 30 of whom are volunteers. He paid tribute to the variety of ways in which they help: supporting people when they enter and leave prison; helping prisoners' families when visiting; also providing information for parents on the criminal justice system. Community volunteers help young people stay out of crime.

Finding Volunteers:

- Times have changed, trust, knowing people, neighbourliness, sometimes seems to have gone.
- There are seasons in life – different factors draw people into and out of volunteering, at different stages of life.
- There are missing age groups from volunteering – many teenagers volunteer, as do older age groups, but fewer from the age group in between these.
- Recent graduates are often finding it hard to get jobs; if your volunteering opportunity would look good on a CV, that may help you find volunteers.
- The environment of the volunteering is important – make it welcoming.
- Every city and most towns have a Volunteer Centre, which advises groups on recruiting, supporting and rewarding volunteers, as well as advertising their volunteering opportunities. Your nearest Volunteer Centre can be located at: www.volunteering.org.uk/iwanttovolunteer/where-do-i-start
- Some groups are anxious about CRB and other checks on volunteers – who is accountable if something goes wrong? Volunteer Centres can advise groups on these questions. Alternatively, advice and example documents can be found on www.volunteering.org.uk/goodpractice

Keeping Volunteers:

- Volunteers should not be out of pocket through their volunteering, expenses should be refunded wherever possible.
- Volunteers need support, to avoid volunteer burnout.
- It is important to thank volunteers for their contribution, eg giving out certificates at an event, perhaps by the Sheriff or other dignitary.