

West Midlands Faith Alliance Strategy 2024 – 2026

ACTION PLANS

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FOREWORD

The West Midlands Faith Alliance (WMFA) Executive Group continue to be inspired by the commitment of the Steering Group and wider Faith Alliance network, who advocate for faith-based perspectives and approaches to be included in the national agenda of preventing and reducing violence.

We recognise the need to work in partnership if we are to develop effective solutions that will address the complex issues associated with violence in local neighbourhoods, where many of our faith-based organisations and places of worship are embedded. Keeping this in mind, the WMFA has undertaken a rigorous process of research, collaboration and co-production, resulting in the development of a three-year Strategy, now accompanied by the enclosed Action Plans.

The continued support of our partners, as we begin this exciting new chapter for the WMFA, is encouraging and testament to the growing recognition of the valuable contributions made to society by faith communities. Building on the strong foundations of work undertaken since 2019 to expand the WMFA network and equip faith communities, the new Strategy and Action Plans provide a clear vision and roadmap for how faith communities can contribute to the work of tackling serious violence.

We are grateful for the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership's (WMVRP) pledge to fund the first year of our three-year Strategy, and we ask for God's blessing over what we pray shall be a year marked by meaningful action and lasting impact.

At this time, we recognise that many communities are experiencing deep divisions and rising tensions. In this context, we are proud that the Faith Alliance stands as a beacon of hope in what can be achieved when diverse communities unite around the Common Good, in particular the safety and flourishing of our young people and neighbourhoods.

We encourage you to get involved and help deliver this vital work by joining one of the four Pillar Delivery Groups (PDGs) that will be responsible for implementing the Strategy and Action Plans over the next three years, tracking progress and measuring impact. Please contact vrp@westmidlands.police.uk for more information.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who took part in the co-production of these Action Plans and we would also like to extend our thanks to the team at the WMVRP who have diligently prepared and compiled these plans on behalf of the WMFA.

Thank you for your ongoing support on this journey together.

Faith Alliance Executive Group

INTRODUCTION

The following pages are the culmination of many months of listening to faith communities, statutory and voluntary organisations, and young people on how the West Midlands Faith Alliance (WMFA) network can best help prevent and reduce violence, particularly violence affecting young people.

Published in November 2023, the **Faith Alliance Strategy 2024-2026**, outlined the WMFA’s vision and identified four pillars (Listen, Connect, Act, and Share), each with two strategic objectives. Between December 2023 and March 2024, further co-production was undertaken with faith communities and young people to help shape the Action Plans contained within this document.

The Action Plans, one for each of the four pillars, complements the Strategy by providing additional information and guidance on how the pillars’ strategic objectives shall be delivered in practice. Each Action Plan contains proposed projects (those most requested by participants), measures of impact, a project lead, and an expected cost per year.

The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership is preparing to invest in the WMFA over the 2024/2025 financial year. This funding will provide an important ‘kick-start’ to this work, but further funding will need to be secured for future years.

METHODOLOGY

A partnership approach was adopted where communities and young people were actively involved in helping to shape the Action Plans, a process known as co-production.

Research activity	Description	Participants
Projects Survey 22nd Dec 2023 – 2nd Feb 2024	Consultation with the Faith Alliance network identifying prioritisation of projects under each pillar. Suggestions for projects and ‘Other’ box were provided.	47 participants
Youth Workshop 13th Feb 2024	Police and Crime Youth Commissioners provided input into which projects should be prioritised under each pillar, and voted on their favourites.	11 Youth Commissioners (aged 13-18) participated
Pillar Roundtables Listen - 12th Feb 2024 Connect - 15th Feb 2024 Act - 19th Feb 2024 Share - 22nd Feb 2024	The survey and youth workshops led to four online roundtables that were held with participants identifying potential projects, impact measures and targets to be included under each pillar’s Action Plan.	Listen - 12 participants Connect - 8 participants Act - 10 participants Share - 4 participants

PILLAR 1: LISTEN

Aim: To create opportunities to engage, listen to and co-produce solutions with communities and young people

Strategic Objective A - Create more opportunities for young people's voices to be heard

Proposed Project	Project Description	Measures of Impact	Project Lead	Costs
Training pathway for young leadership	<p>Establish a Young Faith Leadership Training Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + To train young people in the skills needed to become effective emerging faith leaders, and who can advocate for violence reduction. + Where possible, work with other partners to contribute to a joint programme, with different policy options for young people. 	<p>Key: Number of young people trained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Pre and post feedback from young people + Number of young people who go on to access opportunities at their faith settings + Number of young adults joining the Faith Alliance Steering Group + Testimonials/case studies of impact on young people 	Commissioned organisations	Up to £10,000 per year
Valuing youth voices - Guidance for faith leaders	<p>Develop Valuing Youth Voice - Guidance for faith leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + To support faith-based organisations and places of worship to include and value youth voice in their work + Commission an organisation to convene a working group that will develop training/resources for individual faith settings, including self-audit of youth voice and work opportunities 	<p>Key: Number of faith-based organisations supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of faith leaders trained + Pre and post attitudes to youth voice + Testimonials/case studies of impact on organisation 	Commissioned organisation	Up to £5,000 per year
Opportunities for youth in the workplace	<p>Create workplace opportunities for young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + To include employment, apprenticeships, work experience and volunteering opportunities. 	<p>Key: Number of workplace opportunities created</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of workplace opportunities taken up by young people 	Supported organisations	

Strategic Objective B - Facilitate deeper listening within and between faith communities.

Proposed Project	Project Description	Measures of Impact	Project Lead	Costs
Facilitated listening spaces	<p>Commission an organisation to train community facilitators to deliver listening spaces.</p> <p>Topics to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Lived experiences of violent crime and other social issues + Sensitive topics in the community, for example, domestic abuse, racism, etc. + Addressing and de-escalating community tensions + Under-represented and minority voices being heard 	<p>Short-term (6 months after launch): Training facilitators</p> <p>Key: Number of facilitators trained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Pre and post feedback <p>Medium-term (12 months after launch): Listening spaces</p> <p>Key: Number of facilitators trained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of people attending + Pre and post feedback <p>Long-term (18 months after launch): Sharing impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Case studies and testimonies + Impact of support received + Number of referrals to services + Reporting crime trends 	Commissioned organisation	Up to £5,000 per year

Listen Pillar - Key Delivery Objectives 2024-2026

Pillar	Projects	By end of 2024	Total by end of 2025	Total by end of 2026
Listen	Young leaders trained	30	45	60
	Faith-based organisations supported	10	15	20
	Workplace opportunities created	20	30	40
	Community facilitators trained	10	20	30
	Listening spaces delivered	5	10	15

PILLAR 2: CONNECT

Aim: To provide opportunities for Faith Alliance members to connect and collaborate with each other

Strategic Objective A - Organise more regular in-person, localised and regional events

Proposed Project	Project Description	Measures of Impact	Project Lead	Costs
Events	<p>Organise various events. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Two large symposium events (Annual General Meeting and Report Launch) + Networking and social events + Roundtable discussions and workshops + Lectures, seminars, webinars + Visits by faith leaders to other places of worship and schools 	<p>Key: Number of events organised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of people attending + Pre- and post- feedback 	WMFA Steering Group	Up to £10,000 per year

Strategic Objective B - Improve awareness of other faith-based projects that are taking place across the region

Proposed Project	Project Description	Measures of Impact	Project Lead	Costs
Connect Directory	<p>Publish and update online, mapped directory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Showcasing member organisations of the WMFA network 	<p>Key: Number of organisation profiles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of website visitors + User feedback + Good, fair and equitable representation of communities 	WMVRP	Up to £1,000 per year
Printed resources	<p>Distribute resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Print flyers and posters with QR codes to website and further resources 	<p>Key: Number of resources distributed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of resources printed + User feedback 	WMVRP	Up to £1,000 per year

Connect Pillar - Key Delivery Objectives 2024-2026

Pillar		Projects	By end of 2024	Total by end of 2025	Total by end of 2026
Connect	A	Events organised	4	8	12
	B	Connect Directory Profiles published	100	150	200
		Resources distributed	500	1,000	1,500





VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

“I think that religious spaces would be a safe space for a lot of people with people they trust, to talk about these things and it gives people an opportunity to speak out and reach out for help”

“The more opportunities we have as teenagers the less kids would be out on the street causing problems and getting involved with drugs and stuff”

“When you go to apply for a job, they ask for work experience, we don’t have anywhere to go to get that”

“I’m honestly not aware at all of like the faith groups in my community or like any kind of religious groups in my community”

“Sometimes discussions well, like youth voice opportunities, can be really heavy. But I think actually as well as those conversations creating spaces where people can celebrate their culture and an enjoyable way and kind of celebrate their religious festivals can be equally as valuable”

“I think [networking events are] a good idea and that also breaks down stereotypes of others like thinking that a certain faith is a bad faith”

“[round tables and workshops are] a good opportunity for young people to get to understand each other’s viewpoints and discuss things and also talk in front of people higher up in the community who can solve those problems”

PILLAR 3: ACT

Aim: To train and equip faith communities to act and deliver violence reduction projects and initiatives across the West Midlands

Strategic Objective A - Provide more training for faith leaders and young people

Proposed Project	Project Description	Measures of Impact	Project Lead	Costs
<p>Youth work & mentoring training</p>	<p>Collaborate with partners to bring together training offers into a new training pathway for volunteer mentors for young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Include several modules, covering safeguarding and principles of youth work. + Provide a certificate and ongoing support to all youth support all volunteer mentors trained/mentors trained and who go on to utilise the training 	<p>Key: Number of volunteer mentors trained to engage young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Coverage of volunteer mentors across the West Midlands + Feedback from young people who have accessed mentoring + Level of co-design with young people about content of training (including lived experience) 	<p>Commissioned organisations</p>	<p>Up to £10,000 per year</p>
<p>Trauma-informed practice (TIP) training</p>	<p>Deliver faith-adapted TIP training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Continue to roll out Christian and Sikh adapted TIP training + Commission Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist adaptations of TIP training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of faith adaptations of training <p>Key: Number of faith representations trained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Pre and post feedback from participants 	<p>Commissioned organisations</p>	<p>Up to £2,000 per year</p>
<p>Safeguarding and exploitation awareness training</p>	<p>Promote and support the roll out of safeguarding and exploitation awareness training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Already offered by the VRP and partners (e.g. BSCP's 'Safeguarding in Faith Communities' training) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of organisations trained <p>Key: Number of faith representations trained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Pre and post feedback from participants 	<p>WMVRP and partner organisations</p>	<p>Up to £1,000 per year</p>
<p>Parenting/guardian training</p>	<p>Promote and support existing parenting/guardian support programmes</p>	<p>Key: Number of parents/guardians supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Feedback from parents/guardians + Number of young people supported 	<p>WMVRP and partner organisations</p>	<p>Up to £1,000 per year</p>

Strategic Objective B - Build local inter-faith collaborative partnerships to deliver violence prevention projects

Proposed Project	Project Description	Measures of Impact	Project Lead	Costs
Youth Spaces	<p>Commission hyper-local, multi-faith consortia to work together, pool resources and deliver a commonly-owned and run youth space pilot in their local neighbourhood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Youth space to be open and accessible to local young people (ages 11-17) of all faiths and none. + Three pilots in priority areas across the West Midlands of £20,000 each 	<p>Key: Number of new youth spaces established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of young people attending the youth spaces + Feedback from young people 	Commissioned organisations	Up to £60,000 per year
Pastoral Care	<p>Develop a Faith Alliance Response Framework that outlines response options in the wake of critical incidents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Establish and mobilise a team of multi-faith leaders to respond in a coordinated way after critical incidents 	<p>Key: Number of critical incidents responded to using Response Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of people supported + Feedback from service users 	WMFA Steering Group and local faith communities	Up to £10,000 per year
Community Cohesion	<p>Establish a Faith Leadership training pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + To upskill faith leaders in effective governance, ethical leadership and inter-faith working. + To work with community facilitators (Listen pillar) to defuse community tensions 	<p>Key: Number of participants to complete course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Number of community tensions de-escalated + Number of referrals to hate crime services 	Commissioned organisation	Up to £2,000 per year

Listen Pillar - Key Delivery Objectives 2024-2026

Pillar	Projects	By end of 2024	Total by end of 2025	Total by end of 2026	
Act	A	Youth mentors trained	50	100	150
		Faith leaders trained (Trauma-Informed Practice)	80	240	480
		Faith leaders trained (Safeguarding and Exploitation Awareness)	100	200	300
		Parents/guardians supported	50	75	100
	B	Youth spaces established	3	6	9
		Critical incident responses	5	10	15
		Faith leaders trained	20	40	60

PILLAR 4: SHARE

Aim: To collate, publish and share best practice/learning among the Faith Alliance regional network and across the country

Strategic Objective A - Share and celebrate good news and success stories

Proposed Project	Project Description	Measures of Impact	Project Lead	Costs
Social media	Set up social media channels for the WMFA	Key: Number of Faith Alliance posts per year + Number of public responses + Feedback from public	WMVRP	Up to £1,000 per year
Newsletter	Continue to develop and publish monthly newsletters for the WMFA network	Key: Number of mailing list subscribers + Feedback from subscribers	WMVRP	Up to £1,000 per year
Short films	Using various medias to create, publish and share short films to promote the WMFA	Key: Number of short films produced + Number of times watched + Feedback from public	WMVRP	Up to £1,000 per year

Strategic Objective B - Ensure collection of data, good evaluation and publishing of annual impact reports

Proposed Project	Project Description	Measures of Impact	Project Lead	Costs
Regular research	Conduct research and evaluation to monitor WMFA projects	Key: Number of project evaluations completed + Amount of evidence collected for faith-based approaches to violence reduction	WMVRP	Up to £1,000 per year
Publish good practice	Publish and share good practice	Key: Number of good practice guides published + Feedback from users + Number of other parts of the country to adopt good practice + Number of mentions in government publications	WMVRP	Up to £2,000 per year
Publish annual impact reports	Evidence and share impact through publishing of an annual impact report	Key: Annual impact report published + Feedback from users + Number of new funding opportunities created by government and others	WMVRP	Up to £2,000 per year

Share Pillar - Key Delivery Objectives 2024-2026

Pillar		Projects	By end of 2024	Total by end of 2025	Total by end of 2026
Share	A	Social media posts	50	100	150
		Mailing list subscribers	500	600	700
		Short films produced	1	2	3
	B	Project evaluations completed	3	6	9
		Good practice guides published	2	4	6
		Annual impact reports published	1	2	3

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF KEY DELIVERY OBJECTIVES 2024-2026

Pillar		Projects	By end of 2024	Total by end of 2025	Total by end of 2026
Listen	A	Young leaders trained	30	45	60
		Faith-based organisations supported	10	15	20
		Workplace opportunities created	20	30	40
	B	Community facilitators trained	10	20	30
		Listening spaces delivered	5	10	15
Connect	A	Events organised	4	8	12
	B	Connect Directory Profiles published	100	150	200
		Resources distributed	500	1,000	1,500
Act	A	Youth mentors trained	50	100	150
		Faith leaders trained (Trauma-Informed Practice)	80	240	480
		Faith leaders trained (Safeguarding and Exploitation Awareness)	100	200	300
		Parents supported	50	75	100
	B	Youth spaces established	3	6	9
		Critical incident responses	5	10	15
		Faith leaders trained	20	40	60
Share	A	Social media posts	50	100	150
		Mailing list subscribers	500	600	700
		Short films produced	1	2	3
	B	Project evaluations completed	3	6	9
		Good practice guides published	2	4	6
		Annual impact reports published	1	2	3

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH RESULTS

The following table outlines which were the most requested projects at each stage of the co-production process. Those in the summary column were adopted.

Pillar		Survey	Youth Workshop	Roundtable	Summary
Listen	A	+ Youth leadership training + Guidance for faith leaders	+ Youth leadership training + Create youth opportunities	+ Youth leadership training + Guidance for faith leaders	+ Youth leadership training + Guidance for faith leaders + Create youth opportunities
	B	+ Lived experiences + 'Taboo' topics + Community tensions	+ 'Taboo' topics + Lived experiences + Under-represented voices	+ Lived experience + 'Taboo' topics	+ 'Taboo' topics + Lived experiences + Under-represented voices + Community tensions
Connect	A	+ Roundtable discussions and workshops + Networking and social events + Lectures/seminars/webinars	+ Fair and equitable representation	+ Networking and social events + Roundtables + Lectures etc. / visits	+ Networking and social events + Roundtables + Lectures etc. / visits + Fair and equitable representation
	B	+ Connect Directory + Printed sources	+ Connect Directory + Printed sources	(Not discussed)	+ Connect Directory + Printed sources
Act	A	+ Youth work & mentoring + Trauma-informed practice + Safeguarding / Exploitation + Parenting support	+ Youth work & mentoring + Trauma-informed practice / Exploitation / Safeguarding + Parenting support / Capacity Building	+ Youth work / mentoring + (Not enough time to discuss others)	+ Youth work & mentoring + Trauma-informed practice + Safeguarding / Exploitation + Parenting support
	B	+ Youth spaces + Pastoral care + Community cohesion	+ Pastoral care / Youth spaces + Community cohesion / Education	+ Pastoral care (Not enough time to discuss others)	+ Youth spaces + Pastoral care + Community cohesion
Share	A	+ Social media + Newsletter + Blogs/Vlogs	+ Short films + Social media / Podcast	+ Social media + Newsletter	+ Social media + Newsletter + Short films
	B	+ Regular research + Publish good practice + Publish annual reports	(Not enough time to discuss)	+ Conference + Annual report + Research	+ Regular research + Publish good practice + Publish annual reports

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West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership
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Declaration of Hope

Today, we stand together as one community.

We call for an end
to the violence and aggression
in our towns and cities that causes
division, despair and death.

We live for a shared future
where our homes and streets
are safe places again.

We declare that the power of
love and forgiveness is stronger
than the power of fear and revenge.

We will not be afraid.
We will each play our part.

We will choose
to believe in hope.

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