



JOB TITLE

Faith Links Development Adviser

RESPONSIBLE TO

Partnership Development Officer

JOB PURPOSE

To promote and develop links between the Faith Sector (churches and faith communities) and Public and Civil Society organisations for their engagement in service provision in the County for the social improvement and well-being of Surrey by:

- Developing relationships between the different faith groups and the Voluntary & Community Sector and key officers in local, district and county public sector bodies.
- Ensuring that locally based faith groups are aware of and involved in the partnership and service delivery strategies of central and local government.
- Encouraging the Faith Sector's contribution in sustainable community strategies and enabling local partnership engagement in regeneration and delivery of services, particularly in "priority areas" and among "hard-to-reach" groups.
- Building and maintaining awareness and understanding among the Voluntary & Community and Public service Sectors, of the diversity of Faith, Religion and Belief organisations in the County.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Faith Links Development Adviser will be line-managed by the Partnership Development Officer as part of the Department for Social Responsibility (DSR) development team. A steering group drawn from the faith groups across Surrey and those with a working understanding of partnerships will advise on working practice.

TASKS:

- To nurture the thriving engagement of the Faiths sector as a major part of the Surrey Voluntary & Community sector.
- To maintain and develop the Faith Links Database.
- To produce the monthly Surrey Faith Links Newsletter and extend its promotion across the sectors.
- To maintain and be responsible for re-developing the Surrey Faith Links Website.
- To encourage the use of the information/web resources by multi-faith groups.
- To maintain good open communication with the various county-wide religious and Christian denominational bodies
- To build strong working relationships with key people in the County and district local authorities.
- To maintain and continuously update a cross-sector contact list that can be used for faith events.
- Work with the Surrey County Council 2012 Olympics co-ordinator and local groups in order to encourage faith communities' involvement.
- To promote and maintain partnership links within the relevant Local Authority areas.
- To maintain awareness of evolving government policies especially as they relate to Partnership and Regeneration issues
- Facilitate increased involvement of multi-faith organisations with Voluntary & Community Organisations and other partners including Surrey Strategic Partnership and Strategy & Policy Development in relation to Single Equality and Resilience.
- To develop initiatives for providing opportunities for young unemployed people among hard-to-reach groups including those who belong to faith communities.
- To devise, design and organise events that promote effective links across the faith, public and civil society sectors that will contribute to the more effective delivery of services in the community.
- To be an active and collaborative member of the Department for Social Responsibility (DSR) working in partnership with other faith structures and departments as appropriate.
- To liaise with the other Faith advisory posts of the Department (Police Faith Coordinator, Inter-Faith Adviser etc.).
- To work with the Health & Well-Being Adviser to encourage health and well-being improvements for local groups.
- Undertake any other tasks which the Director of Social Responsibility may reasonably ask in relation to this work.

BACKGROUND

Surrey Faith Links (SFL) began in 2009 as a joint initiative between The Church of England Diocese of Guildford and Surrey County Council.

It developed out of the realization that there was a comprehensive and complex infrastructure of faith organisations in the County alongside the other public and community service infrastructures.

There was some engagement between faith and public and civil society organisations, however there was room and opportunities for much development.

The SFL Project was created to promote links and engagement between the Surrey Faith Sector and the Public and Civil Society Sectors at all levels, county, district and local, with the aim of encouraging better mutual understanding among the sectors. The main purpose has been to improve service delivery outcomes across the County's many diverse communities.

The first SFL Development Adviser was appointed and took up her post in October 2009 and in two years has established the place and appreciation of SFL. The information base, website and monthly newsletter she has developed, as well as the many contacts, meetings, partnerships, forums and events she has been part of, have increased cross-sector understanding and the importance of the faith infrastructure in the other service infrastructures in the County.

Her marriage and move to The United States means that she will not be able to continue her work with SFL.

So SFL is now seeking to appoint a successor who will build on and develop the Faith Links Development Adviser's role.

[It is important to note that "Faith Links" is complimentary to but different from "Inter Faith" work. Faith Links focuses on the building relations between "Faith" and "Public & Civil Society"; Inter Faith focuses on building relations between Faith organisations.]

Up until 2011 the local authorities at county and district levels, spurred on by central government initiatives such as Face to Face and Side by Side and Equality requirements, were very keen to engage faith organisations.

They initiated a number of partnership events with a strong invitation for faith involvement.

Similarly the Voluntary & Community bodies warmly adopted "F"faith into the VCFS sector and recognized the importance and value of the partnership.

However, the strong drives to include "faith" seem to have fallen from their priorities, as economic, financial, organizational and new policy constraints have taken over.

But their need for good, strong links with faith organisations, proved and evidenced over the last few years, still remains.

So, the initiative to create opportunities to enable and drive the engagement needs to be taken by the Faith Infrastructure's main bodies.

The Surrey Faith Links Development Adviser will play an important role in this.