



Covid 19 Update

Faith Leaders (National)

“As faith leaders in the UK we are united in our commitment to seeking the good of all especially in this time of crisis. In such a time our instinct is to gather as faith groups. We know, and affirm, that to do so at present is not only unwise but puts many lives at risk. We appeal again to all, please do not meet physically. Pray at home, share community online and by telephone, love and support the vulnerable and needy. Help contribute to food banks, reassure the fearful and lonely or isolated.”

Signatories: Archbishop Justin Welby (Archbishop of Canterbury), Qari Asim (Chair of Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board), Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh (Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha), Sanjay Jagatia (Hindu Think Tank UK, Hindus in UK), Nasir Zameer Akhtar (Imam, Abrahamic Foundation), Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner (Senior Rabbi to Reform Judaism), Yemi Adedeji (One People Commission, Evangelical Alliance), Presidents of Churches Together England, Archbishop Angelaelos (Chair of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland)

Birmingham Faith Leaders

The current Coronavirus Pandemic has correctly been described as the greatest challenge of this generation. We recognise that the rapid spread of the virus throughout the world is unprecedented in modern times. It speaks of profound realities about both the limitations of human understanding and capabilities and our capacity to work together for the good of the whole of humanity.

Our thoughts and our prayers are with those who suffer through the impact of Coronavirus. We remember and wish to stand with those who face the loss of jobs, businesses, livelihoods and homes. Particularly we remember those who have died, especially those in the Birmingham community, and for those who grieve the loss of loved ones.

We recognise and give thanks for the skills which enable humanity to fight this threat. We commend and give thanks for the skill and dedication of those working in the health and care services, often putting their own wellbeing at risk for the sake of others. We pledge to work in any way possible with Birmingham City Council and others in co-ordinated efforts to support those affected by the impact of the virus.

We are encouraged by the growing recognition that faith can offer a framework for understanding what is happening.

We commend the wisdom of the many statements over recent days, from leaders across our faith communities. We particularly value the fact that common themes are emerging from the different faith traditions. We are being directed towards a recognition of our interdependence and our responsibility towards the vulnerable in society. The priority of the wellbeing of others leads us to good works for the relief of suffering, and the recognition that our spiritual practices, rituals and worship are to be used in the service of the common good, and not as ends in themselves. Our practices as people of faith help to unite rather than divide us from

one another. Therefore, it has been possible for all our major faith communities to recognise that limitations on coming together are necessary at this time.

We encourage all people of faith to follow the recommendations of their leaders in acting for the greater good of humanity. We welcome the opportunities which the current crisis offers to find new ways to be communities of faith.

We advocate collaborative action wherever possible; a determination to serve the whole community rather than focusing only on our own particular part of the community.

Above all, we call on all people, during these difficult times, to live as people of hope; that the threat we all face can be overcome, and that we will emerge stronger, more resilient and wiser from the experience.



Everyone deserves good care. Healthwatch Birmingham listen to and understand peoples' experiences of health and social care services. We are keen to hear from people across all faiths, in all communities in Birmingham, particularly during this difficult time of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Have you and your family been able to access the services over the past few months? What was good? What was bad?

Please share your feedback by visiting our online feedback centre on <https://healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk/services/> or emailing us on info@healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk

During the 'lock-down' period we are homeworking so providing our information and signposting service mainly by email. If you require signposting to local services or support, please email info@healthwatchbirmingham.co.uk . If you do not have email, please leave a message on 0121 636 0990 and we will return your call.



It is important that adults and children:

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19); this includes a high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
2. Do not go to A&E or call 999, unless it is a life-threatening emergency (e.g. loss of consciousness, persistent chest pain, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding or severe allergic reaction)
3. Wash their hands more often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds

4. Avoid public transport, unless it is absolutely necessary
5. Work from home, where possible
6. Avoid gatherings with friends and family; instead keep in touch using by phone, internet, and social media
7. Use the telephone or online services to contact your GP.

This is particularly important if you:

- are over 70
- have an underlying health condition
- are pregnant

For more information – [click here](#).



The voluntary and community sector's efforts to support local residents through the coronavirus crisis have got off to an inspiring start, says Brian Carr, chief executive of Birmingham Voluntary Service Council.

A partnership effort between BVSC and Birmingham City Council was announced on Tuesday by the City's leader, Ian Ward. Councillor Ward said, "The coronavirus outbreak is the most significant public health challenge the city and the country has faced in recent years, and we're hugely grateful to community groups and individuals across the city who are stepping up."

Brian Carr commented, "A huge amount of spontaneous voluntary action is happening. We're seeing literally hundreds of 'coalitions of kindness' springing up across the city. Neighbours are reaching out to support each other with efforts ranging from regular welfare phone calls for elderly and self-isolating people, to shopping runs and deliveries that support local foodbanks and the less mobile. New friendships are being built, albeit at a prudent physical distance. It's nothing short of inspiring. It's what Birmingham is all about."

In addition to encouraging grassroots action across the city, BVSC has pulled together a group of local and specialist neighbourhood organisations and charities – the C19 Support Brum Partnership – to help coordinate this community-level response to coronavirus in ways that are safe and effective. Covering every part of the city and a range of relevant thematic areas – including homelessness, housing, mental health, food, disabilities, and older people – the partnership is working hard to connect local people to the support they need.

Founder members of the **C19 Support Brum partnership** are *Midland Mencap, Forward Carers, Birmingham Mind, Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid, the Diocese of Birmingham, West Midlands Housing, Bournville Village Trust, Crisis, Compass Support, The Active Wellbeing Society, Birmingham Settlement, Age UK Birmingham, Gateway Family Services, Northfield Community Partnership, the Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit, Witton Lodge Community Association, Accord, Pohwer, Age Concern Birmingham, the Disability Resource Centre, the Homelessness Partnership, and the city's Neighbourhood*

Network Schemes in Northfield, Edgbaston, Erdington, Hall Green, Hodge Hill, Ladywood, Perry Barr, Selly Oak, Sutton Coldfield, and Yardley. I have joined the partnership to represent Birmingham Council of Faiths.

Brian Carr said, "I'm immensely grateful to and proud of Birmingham's volunteers and voluntary sector, and of our firm partnership with friends and colleagues in the City Council, NHS, and the private sector. We've mobilised quickly, but we know this is just the beginning of our efforts. Coronavirus is a challenge for us all, but together we'll get through it."

If you are a community group which has developed (or is developing) a response to the coronavirus outbreak, BVSC wants to hear from you.

Please contact comms@bvsc.org or call 07388 376 945

UK Government

If you are vulnerable, or know someone who is vulnerable because of a medical condition, please register on <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>. You will be able to get help with the delivery of essential supplies and prescriptions, etc.



We will be focusing on the Corona Virus on our Connecting Communities programme at 4pm on Monday 30th March, co-hosted by Mahmooda Qureshi and Peter Rookes, so please tune in on 93.5. You can hear our previous programme on 'Places of Welcome' and 'Make Someone's Day' on YouTube -click the following link:

<https://www.mixcloud.com/UnityFM/connecting-communities-16032020/>

Stay safe and keep well

Blessings

Peter

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