



# Making space for faith:

## values, beliefs and faiths in the learning and skills sector

A report on the national enquiry into opportunities for  
spiritual and moral development in further education

National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education (NEAFE)  
and the  
Faiths in Further Education Forum (FIFE)

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**NEAFE**



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## Forewords

### Bill Rammell MP



I welcome the national enquiry led by NEAFE into this crucial area. Understanding faith needs is an important part of personalisation and meeting learning needs in FE. The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the issues around learners' needs in relation to their values and beliefs, which will be of use to national agencies and individuals. It includes some very helpful examples of good practice and research material on faith needs.

**Bill Rammell MP**

Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education

### Dr Ann Limb



It has been a privilege to chair this first ever national enquiry into values, beliefs and faiths in FE. It is clear from what learners, as well as their tutors and leaders, told us that people are more likely to feel part of a college that actively encourages dialogue and activities between people from diverse belief and faith backgrounds. Colleges have a critical role to play in community integration and cohesion, and by working actively with their local faith and belief communities, can fulfil this role effectively.

**Dr Ann Limb**

Chair National Enquiry, Chair National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education

## Lynne Sedgmore CBE

Understanding the views and needs of learners and staff on issues of values, beliefs and faiths is an important part of our commitment to ensuring equality and diversity of opportunity throughout the further education system. We believe that faith issues should have a higher profile within leadership dialogue in the 21st century, and that the FE system has a valuable role to play in encouraging community cohesion and providing opportunities for all. We are delighted to be involved with NEAFE in publishing the findings of this national enquiry.

**Lynne Sedgmore CBE**  
Chief Executive, Centre for Excellence in Leadership



## Paul Head

This report is an important contribution to the debate about how colleges can engage with one of our core concerns, namely that of community cohesion and citizenship. Faith issues play an important part in the debate on how we create educational institutions based on respect, tolerance and understanding of each other's views, the foundation of a democratic society.

**Paul Head**  
Principal and Chief Executive, the College of North East London





# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2006, the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) commissioned the National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education (NEAFE) and the Faiths in Further Education Forum (FiFEF) to undertake a sector-wide review of opportunities for spiritual and moral development in FE focusing on a national enquiry into values, beliefs and faiths in the further education system.
- 1.2 The phrase *values beliefs and faiths* (VBF) rather than the term *spiritual and moral development* (SMD) was used throughout the enquiry because it was judged to be inclusive, easily understood, and accessible. The term *spiritual moral social and cultural development* (SMSC) was also encountered during the course of the enquiry and can be found in this report. However, it is used here specifically in connection with references to the 1944 Education Act in which the term SMSC first appeared. This Act places a statutory duty upon schools to offer an entitlement to SMSC for all 16 to 19-year-olds. The same legal obligation does not exist for 16 to 19-year-olds in the FE system.
- 1.3 It was judged timely to examine the further education system's role in and contribution to the place of values, beliefs and faiths in 21st-century British life for a number of reasons as follows:
- the impact of the FE reform white paper<sup>1</sup> on the system and the opportunities this presented for the sharing of good practice in the field
  - the government's commitment to undertake equality impact assessments (EIAs) across the system and the need to explore the role of VBF in these
  - the importance to the FE system of the DfES white paper *Every Child Matters* and the green paper *Raising expectations: staying in education and training post-16*
  - the possible implications on the system of the DfES-funded RE Council's proposals for work with 16 to 19-year-olds

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1 Following publication of the Foster Report, the government's white paper *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* highlighted *the invaluable role colleges play in promoting community cohesion and integration, providing settings where people and adults from every ethnic, faith and social group can come together.* (p 29, paragraph 2.35).

- the role of VBF in LSC’s Equality and Diversity National Strategy
- the impact on the FE system of recent changes in the legislative environment relating to human rights and discriminatory practices and the setting up of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)
- the creation of the Commission on Cohesion and Integration and the role of the FE system in contributing to its work.

1.4 It was also critical to this enquiry that *the experiences and needs of learners* on the issue of VBF were sought and given appropriate opportunities for expression. The enquiry took as its starting point the view that **learners’ voices** should be heard and that they would provide the vital and principal driver for any changes recommended.

1.5 As chair of NEAFE, I led the enquiry team, chaired the steering group and oversaw production of this report. In order to ensure that evidence was gathered in an independent and robust manner and the surveys and interviews conducted impartially, NEAFE engaged a specialist organisation, Focus Consultancy Ltd, and contracted their not-for-profit arm Purple International to complete the research. The enquiry team explored the experience of students, staff and providers in the nine English LSC regions over a nine-month period from July 2006 to March 2007.

1.6 **The purpose of the enquiry was to build up a picture of:**

- **the role of the sector in enabling all members of society, irrespective of age, gender, ethnic background, values, beliefs and faiths to engage with one another in shaping a positive approach to 21st-century pluralism**
- **the views of learners and staff in colleges and in workplaces on issues of values, beliefs and faiths**
- **how the system and its stakeholders could improve responses to learner and staff needs in relation to issues of values, beliefs and faiths in a way that is in keeping with the sector’s economic mission (to raise skills levels), its educational mission (to improve retention and achievement rates) and its social mission (to widen participation and promote community cohesion and integration).**

1.7 The white paper recognises the importance of people’s faith and beliefs backgrounds and endorses multi-faith student support activities and multi-faith chaplaincy provision as one appropriate means of meeting identified needs. In the 2001 census, 77% of the population identified themselves in terms of the values, beliefs and faiths of recognisable faith groups and 15% of the population indicated that they had no faith affiliation.<sup>2</sup>

1.8 The research concentrated on gathering data from

- anonymous online and paper-based short questionnaire surveys
- fieldwork involving nine regional consultations and detailed face-to-face interviews with small focus groups
- in-depth face-to-face or telephone interviews
- a national call for submission of written evidence
- a consultation seminar with governors, principals, senior staff and employers at the Association of Colleges national conference in November 2006.

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2 2001 Census data – 15% No faith affiliation, 72% Christian, 3% Muslim, 1% Hindu, 0.6% Sikh, 0.5% Jewish, 0.3% Buddhist.

- 1.9 The research focused on the following **key lines of enquiry**:
- **listening to learners’ voices and gathering the views of students, staff and stakeholders on issues concerning values, beliefs and faiths, particularly in relation to curriculum and personal entitlement and in relation to the sector’s role in community cohesion**
  - **documenting examples of existing good practice in addressing these issues in order to assist governing bodies and staff in implementation of the white paper**
  - **formulating evidenced-based proposals for action that could be taken by government and their strategic, funding and delivery agencies as well as by colleges and work-based learning providers to ensure that respect for issues of diversity in 21st-century British society is strengthened and enhanced.**
- 1.10 The overall findings of this enquiry concur with and reinforce earlier LSC and Ofsted work in this field and also corroborate international studies on the subject. This is fully documented in Appendix A.
- 1.11 The enquiry’s conclusions and recommendations are based on a statistically significant, viable, and reliable evidence base and reflect and record the views of those who chose to take part in the activities outlined in 1.8 above. The enquiry included the views of as wide a range of interested learners and stakeholders as possible within the college settings covered. The enquiry team notes that this evidence base does not constitute a fully representative sample of all further education learning settings, as this was not possible within the limitations of the review.
- 1.12 The enquiry team saw a significant amount of good practice in the field of VBF taking place in colleges, workplaces and faith communities. Some of it is captured in the form of the case studies and illustrations presented in the report. This is not, however, a complete list of all the excellent practices currently found across the system.
- 1.13 I should like to thank everyone who has shared their ideas, views and work with us through this report and also encourage those of you whose work we were not able to see, hear about or record to spread your good practices within your region and beyond. We all have much to learn from one another.
- 1.14 The enquiry found that almost three quarters of staff surveyed think that there should be a legal entitlement to spiritual moral social and cultural development *for all students over the age of 16 regardless of their place of study, work or training*. However, there is also widespread acknowledgment that there are other equally powerful levers for change to ensure that issues of VBF are appropriately addressed in a contemporary context provided *they are consistently applied and adequately funded across the system*. These **alternatives to legislation** include:
- a) **clear policy drivers from government**, eg the further education white paper *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances*, the green paper *Every Child Matters*, the DfES policy paper *Personalising Further Education*, the LSC’s *Developing a Learner Involvement Strategy* and the establishment of Learner Panels, QIA’s publication *Pursuing Excellence: the National Improvement Strategy for the Further Education System*
  - b) **supportive leadership** from the governing body/board of directors and principal/chief executive
  - c) **assessment and inspection frameworks**, eg the Common Inspection Framework and Inspection Handbook , which overtly assess a provider’s response to issues of VBF
  - d) the implementation of **equality and diversity policies**, which include VBF
  - e) the **provision of personal and pastoral support** through a student services team which includes a chaplain and/or multi-faith student support worker



- f) a college/work-based learning provider's adoption of a **business case** for VBF based on the beneficial role in and positive contribution to improvements in college recruitment, retention and achievement rates and student employability that can ensue
  - g) **acceptance that within the curriculum, issues of VBF need to be included appropriately** within vocational courses in order to prepare students adequately for employment and working life in a multicultural, multi-faith society.
- 1.15 The enquiry draws a number of conclusions from the evidence collected through the research and these are recorded in detail in section 6 of the report.
- 1.16 There is a **growing body of evidence, documented in Appendix A, to demonstrate that a significant number of learners and providers, when given an opportunity to express their views, indicate that there is a place for VBF in their lives, studies, and work.**
- 1.17 The overwhelming majority of learners and staff do want to be part of a culturally rich, racially and socially harmonious, safe learning environment that not only promotes the values of equality, diversity and tolerance but also acknowledges that for a significant number of people spiritual, moral and emotional needs, whether articulated or not, are integral parts of their daily life.
- 1.18 **Many learners and staff want to make a space for faith in their personal and professional lives.**
- 1.19 This report therefore is aimed at a wide audience in the FE system and in society as a whole, including government and policymakers, FE and sixth-form college students, staff and governors, workplace learning providers and other delivery and stakeholder agencies, chaplains of all faiths, training and staff development officers, adult educators, youth and community workers, and members of faith and belief communities.
- 1.20 Many people from all these agencies and organisations assisted the enquiry team in putting together this report and on behalf of everyone involved, Harjinder Singh, Chair of Faiths in FE Forum, and I extend NEAFE and FiFEF's warmest thanks to you for your support, participation, guidance, challenge and comment. We hope you will be able to use some of the report's findings and implement some of its recommendations.

**Dr Ann Limb**  
Chair National Enquiry  
Chair National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education

**Harjinder Singh**  
Vice Chair Faiths in Further Education Forum



## 2. Key issues

2.1 **Many learners and staff want to make a space for faith in their personal and professional lives.**

2.2 Staff and students alike want colleges and workplaces that actively encourage, through their mission, ethos and values, respect and tolerance of differences and provide opportunities for dialogue and common spaces for discussion and exploration. They want colleges and workplaces that recognise that learners and staff have an interior life and they want the ethos of the college or workplace to resonate with this.

### Key findings from learners

- Over half the students who responded (57%) indicated that VBF are important in their own lives.
- Almost three quarters of students (74%) indicated that they were more likely to feel part of a college or workplace that actively encouraged dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse faiths and beliefs.
- Almost three quarters of students (73%) think that colleges should recognise that VBF are important to some people even if they themselves do not consider VBF important in their own lives.
- 79% of students, regardless of their own personal beliefs, think that colleges should provide for people's faith and beliefs needs.

### Key findings from staff, providers, and external stakeholders

- Almost three quarters of staff surveyed (73%) think that legal entitlement to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provided for learners in schools sixth forms through the 1944 Education Act should be extended to cover students and trainees over the age of 16 in the learning and skills sector.
- Provision for VBF exists in 80% of the colleges surveyed.
- 92% of staff responded that provision of VBF should be made in colleges and workplaces.

- 80% of staff responded to say that colleges and workplace learning providers who work with faith groups and who cater for the needs of students with diverse VBF play a critical role in community cohesion.
- Over three quarters of staff (82%) indicated that they were more likely to feel part of a college or workplace that actively encouraged dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse faiths and beliefs.

## Key recommendations

### Government and government-funded agencies

- In considering whether or not legislation is needed to drive change, government should have regard to the fact that there is widespread recognition that colleges already have within their powers a number of levers for change that, when applied consistently across the sector and accompanied by clear policy guidance and adequate resources from government and other agencies, empower them to respond to the needs of both staff and students to address issues of VBF.
- Consideration should be given to providing a stronger and more prominent policy steer and guidance on issues to do with VBF, particularly in fulfilling the role of the college and workplace provider in relation to issues of equality and diversity, integration and community and social cohesion.
- An entitlement to pastoral and learning support that contains an element relating to VBF could be included as part of the personalisation of learning agenda.
- The curriculum and assessment aspects of the new national diplomas should recognise the need to ensure that young people are trained for employment in a pluralistic society.
- Government should acknowledge the increased importance of faith in the 21st-century society by requiring colleges to assess VBF in Equality Impact Assessments.

### Colleges and learning providers: principals, chief executives and senior managers

- Colleges could work collaboratively, regionally and nationally to share good practice and learn from providers who effectively and successfully include issues of VBF in their work.
- Working relationships with local faith communities through outreach, community engagement and partnership can be a major driver of provision in relation to values, beliefs and faiths.
- The business case for responding to learner needs on issues of values, faiths and beliefs should be recognised by senior managers because of its beneficial role in and positive contribution to improvements in student recruitment, retention, achievement rates and student employability.
- The community cohesion case for responding to learner needs on issues of values, beliefs and faiths should be recognised by senior managers because of the benefits to local communities as well as to the achievement of excellence.
- A college's commitment to VBF can be visibly demonstrated by sustained public profiling through a clear communications strategy that recognises the role of VBF.
- When conducting estates management reviews or designing new buildings, colleges could consider ways in which the VBF needs of students and staff can be accommodated innovatively.

### College governing bodies and boards

- Colleges should ensure that students are consulted through emerging learner forums on their needs and interests in relation to VBF.
- College pastoral services could be reviewed to ensure that learners' needs in the area of values, beliefs and faith are fulfilled along the lines suggested in the white paper.

- Colleges' equality and diversity and outreach policies should include appropriate references to VBF.
- College policies on curriculum and learner support need to have regard to issues of VBF.
- Colleges should work collaboratively regionally and nationally to share good practice and learn from providers who effectively and successfully include issues of VBF in all their work.

### Colleges and learning providers: curriculum managers

- Within the curriculum, issues of values, beliefs, faiths and culture need to be included in vocational courses in order to prepare students adequately for employment in a multicultural, multi-faith society.
- Curriculum managers could consider the following good practices:
  - a varied curriculum content to comply with religious demands, eg food and hygiene regulations in a catering course
  - personalisation, tutorial and student enrichment programmes which raise issues of VBF to students from faith and non-faith backgrounds
  - celebration of significant festivals and the publicising of events on behalf of and in partnership with faith communities.

### Colleges and learning providers: student services

- Student services teams could ensure that any initiatives planned are based on solid data on student faith and non-faith backgrounds through the undertaking of a faith audit.
- Such initiatives could also build multi-faith spiritual and moral development into a holistic approach to student support.
- Where specific provisions are available for staff and students, student services should ensure that access and use are determined and managed through consultation with student representatives and faith communities.

### Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

- The LSC should ensure through its policy guidance and funding priorities that learning providers have regard to the findings of this review.

### Ofsted

- Although under the Common Inspection Framework inspectors are required to assess college provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, reference to this does not appear in the Inspection Handbook and is not consistently applied across the system. This should be addressed and further guidance on this requirement developed and communicated to providers.
- Ofsted inspectors should ensure that when issues of VBF are inspected, attention is given to their role in implementing equality and diversity policies and in promoting social cohesion and integration.

## Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL)

- CEL's *Faith Communities Toolkit* should be reviewed in order to take account of developments since publication and should be more widely disseminated.
- Leadership and equality and diversity programmes for governors and principals and staff could include more specific attention to the contribution of values, beliefs and faith as a dimension of achieving excellence.
- CEL should continue to take the lead for the sector in modelling ways in which the dimensions of 'spirited leadership' and 'the spirit at work movement' can be appropriately adopted throughout the system.

## Quality and Improvement Agency (QIA)

- The Agency's quality improvement strategy and its support for the sector's work on citizenship and pastoral care, as well as its research policies, should have regard to the findings of this enquiry.

## Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and awarding bodies

- The curriculum and assessment aspects of the new national diplomas should recognise the need to ensure that young people are trained for employment in a pluralistic society.

## Learning and Skills Network (LSN)

- LSN should look at ways in which the findings of the review can link with its project activity across the system.

## Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)

- In developing continuing professional development (CPD) and other professional programmes of training for the sector, LLUK could have regard for issues of VBF.

## Employers and employers' organisations

- Employers, where issues of VBF are important in the workplace, could get more involved in the skills and work agenda of their local college to ensure that students funded by them are prepared for the actual world of work that is multi-faith and diverse.

## NEAFE, FiFEF and the National Chaplains Network

- These organisations should continue to work closely with government and funding agencies on implementing and embedding provision and developing appropriate training materials and support and opportunities for VBF in the system.

## Churches and faith communities

- Churches and faith communities should be proactive locally, regionally and nationally – in conjunction with NEAFE and FiFEF and other key stakeholders – in developing strong partnership working with local providers.
- Local networks of chaplains and faith workers need to drive the VBF agenda as their collective target.
- Local faith communities need support in building their capacity to fulfil their roles in colleges and the resources to fully participate in a full-time chaplaincy and multi-faith student support.



### 3. Methodology and approach

3.1 Using a variety of techniques, the purpose of the enquiry was to gather evidence on:

- the role of the sector in enabling all members of society, irrespective of age, gender, ethnic background, values, beliefs and faiths to engage with one another in shaping a positive approach to 21st-century pluralism
- the views of learners and staff in colleges and in workplaces on issues of values, beliefs and faiths
- how the system and its stakeholders could improve responses to learner and staff needs in relation to issues of values, beliefs and faiths in a way that is in keeping with the sector’s economic mission (to raise skills levels), its educational mission (to improve retention and achievement rates) and its social mission (to widen participation and promote community cohesion and integration).

3.2 Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to gather evidence. A total number of 41 colleges and 924 individual students and staff responded – as shown below:

Source of evidence	Total sample size
Total participating colleges	n=41
Staff and stakeholders survey responses	n=195
Regional consultation with staff and stakeholders	n=94
Students survey	n=635
Total number of individual responses	n=924

- 3.3 Between September 2006 and November 2006, nine regional consultation events were held to gather the views of students, staff, stakeholders and local and faith communities on the three key areas of the enquiry.
- 3.4 Providers and faith communities were invited to take part in the regional consultations and colleges agreed to host the events. The meetings were chaired by representatives of NEAFE and FIFEF and were attended by the NEAFE regional development officers and evidence recorded by staff from Purple International.
- 3.5 A national call for evidence was issued in September 2006 to give stakeholders and interested parties an opportunity to present views and information in writing, in person or online.
- 3.6 Pre-contact and invitation letters were sent to all college principals and stakeholders in the early part of autumn 2006. During each day-long enquiry, colleges, providers and faith and belief communities were invited to contribute to a general discussion and call for evidence, **after which** participants split into smaller groups to consider the questionnaire in a more detailed facilitated discussion.
- 3.7 Face-to-face consultation in this way occurred with 94 participants from the 41 colleges and communities who responded to the call for evidence. Faith and other communities participating included representatives from the Humanist, Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Jewish and Hindu traditions.
- 3.8 Students were surveyed both online and face-to-face.
- 3.9 In addition, there were two national opportunities to consult with a wider constituency. The first was a consultation seminar held on 22 November 2006 at the Association of Colleges conference and the second was on 12 January 2007 at NEAFE and FIFEF's annual conference *Values, Beliefs and Faiths: their contribution to college excellence and community cohesion*, where an interim report on the national enquiry's emerging findings was presented for discussion.
- 3.10 All of these different forms of data collection enabled the research team to build up a rich contextual picture of student and stakeholder views drawn from a statistically valid and reliable sample of colleges, providers and communities.
- 3.11 A steering group, chaired by the National Enquiry chair, was established to help review each stage of the research and provide a quality assurance mechanism. Membership comprised senior NEAFE and FIFEF staff and officers, the Churches National Adviser, a QIA representative and a senior independent researcher from the University of Lancaster.



## 4. What learners say and do

- 4.1 The VBF Student questionnaire contained six questions: Questions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 were close-ended “Yes/No” answers and question 4 was open-ended. Participants were also invited to add comments to questions 1 and 2, while many also added comments to other questions. The enquiry’s questions to students can be found in full in Appendix B and a statistical analysis of their responses in Appendix A.
- 4.2 A detailed analysis of learners’ responses to the survey is given below.

### Question 1: Are issues of VBF important to learners?

- 4.3 Responses to this are shown below and are given statistically in Table 1 of Appendix A:
- 57% of learners indicate that VBF are important in their own lives
  - 42% of learners indicate that VBF are not important in their own lives
  - 1% do not know.



### Some comments made by learners included:

It's really important  
in my life.

I try to be open-minded  
to those of other beliefs.

I am a follower and a disciple of the Lord  
Jesus Christ. I wish to declare this but  
I respect all people's choice of faith,  
beliefs, lifestyle choices and values.

My values and beliefs give  
me some sort of guideline  
to my life.

- 4.4 An analysis of the comments indicates that some students do not appear to know how to articulate whether they have spiritual needs or not and some students were unable to make a connection between faith and spirituality and their contemporary context. It also became clear from discussions with staff that sometimes a learner's need manifested itself through a behavioural or ethical crisis, and student services would then recommend students to a chaplain, person of faith or a counsellor, from which it emerged that the learner actually needed some form of spiritual support.
- 4.5 Staff also commented that some students do not make full use of the services offered. Where chaplains and student support teams actively engage with students, for example by joining them for lunch, or by walking around the college and making themselves known and available, students are more likely to make an approach.

## Question 2: Are VBF important to learners' friends and work colleagues?

4.6 Responses to this are shown below and are given statistically in Table 2 of Appendix A:

- 59% of learners indicate that VBF are important to their friends and work colleagues
- 39% of learners indicate that VBF are not important to their friends and work colleagues
- 2% do not know.

### Some comments made by learners included:

VBF does not affect me in the slightest.

I am not religious, it's not important to my friends or colleagues but my college should recognise that it's important to some people.

VBF is not important but I believe that the college should have a lot of facilities for different faiths.

I don't have a belief or faith so if the college were to cater for people's needs it might actually benefit me.

I think colleges should recognise all beliefs are not always Christian.

My colleagues are a mixture of Christians, Muslims, agnostics, atheists and humanists. Values, beliefs and faiths are therefore bound to be important to them.

I feel there is no need to have a separate place for people that have beliefs.

Most of my friends/ work colleagues have beliefs.

All of my friends have quite strong views about this issue.

## Questions 3 and 4: Do you think your college or workplace should recognise in some way that VBF are important to some people? What support and facilities should be provided?

4.7 Responses to this are shown below and are given statistically in Table 3 of Appendix A:

- 73% of learners indicate that irrespective of their personal views colleges and workplaces should recognise VBF
- 26% of learners indicate that irrespective of their personal views colleges and workplaces do not need to recognise VBF
- 1% do not know.

4.8 Those students who are interested in values, beliefs and faith seemed to want to have a greater understanding of the beliefs and values of their own faith as well as others. It was perfectly acceptable therefore to have many religions co-existing in one place and to want to engage in dialogue with each other. In fact, for those students who attempted to qualify their ideas, the recurring theme was that the college should create a tolerant environment where all faiths and none were respected equally. They wanted the college to promote understanding and awareness of all faith groups along with respect for their beliefs, values and cultures.

### Some comments made by learners included:

When I was at college they provided an ecumenical chaplaincy, which was great, and at university they provided Anglican chaplaincies as well as a support for other faiths (eg Muslims). In both educational establishments they provided areas for people to pray. At college it was a multi-faith prayer room and at university the two chaplaincies share a worship area (the chapel) and there is a mosque for Muslims. There are probably other areas for prayer for other religions that I don't know about.

Extra time in a lesson to discuss this.

Support groups for different values, beliefs and faiths.

More prayer rooms, celebrate different festivals.

Just respect.

Make a building for this reason and get staff that will support the students.

Make an area for people of the same faith, values and beliefs to meet.

Not sure that a college can do these things.

- 4.9 Learners also asked for prayer rooms and reflective spaces, people to talk to and confide in, education to promote awareness and facilities for praying. Even if they are not used, and each college would need to ascertain this for themselves, the fact that these facilities exist appears to be valuable to a student's conception of what a diverse and tolerant environment is.

### Some comments made by learners included:

Display/provide phone numbers for people who are involved with faiths and beliefs in the college.

Provide information leaflets, talks.

People need to talk about values and beliefs they have and a room should be provided for this.

## Question 5: Should FE colleges and workplaces provide support and services for students/trainees who hold different VBF?

4.10 Responses to this are shown below and are given statistically in Table 4 of Appendix A:

- 79% of learners think that colleges and workplaces should provide support and services for students and trainees who hold different VBF
- 19% of learners do not think that colleges and workplaces should provide support and services for students and trainees who hold different VBF
- 2% do not know.

### Some comments made by learners included:

Time to observe people's faiths.

Celebrate different festivals.

A prayer room is provided but areas for separate faiths are needed so there are no confrontations and disputes. I know that crosses and Christian symbols have been covered by another faith group.

Just that someone feels like their personal issues are valued.

Absolutely – where everyone appreciates each other for who you are.

Classes that recognise this and understand the issue.

Colleges should recognise different kinds of cultures.

Meetings, information fairs.

More prayer rooms, celebrating different festivals, different cultural staff.

Help all faiths to understand each other's values and beliefs to encourage tolerance and acceptance.

## Some comments made by learners included:

Posters around the college giving quick information on different faiths, values and beliefs, so people aren't disrespectful to other people and know what they are discussing or forming an opinion about.

Teachers/lecturers should be educated and aware of faith/religious belief in prevention of offence.

To have a separate place for worship if need be.

Just to make sure that people are not discriminated against.

Be equal no matter how different someone is.

I don't think it is important to have particular facilities at college or workplace but that what is more important is to be tolerant towards people of different beliefs.

## Question 6: Are learners more or less likely to feel part of a college that encourages dialogue and activities between communities of diverse values, beliefs and faiths?

4.11 Responses to this are shown below and are given statistically in Table 5 of Appendix A:

- **74%** of learners say they are more likely to feel part of a college or workplace that encourages dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse VBF
- **19%** of learners say they are less likely to feel part of a college or workplace that encourages dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse VBF
- **6%** of learners think it makes no difference
- **1%** of learners do not know

### Some comments made by learners included:

I am not sure whether I'd feel more part of a college that encourages dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse values, beliefs and faiths because the freedom of speech needs to be protected so that all can express themselves only in a peaceful way. I have no need to enter into dialogue personally only to express my faith, which others can accept or dismiss as they wish. I accept others. I hope they accept me; if not, then let it be.

It doesn't matter who believes in what. If it were RE, it would be a different story, but like I said, everyone is here because we have chosen what course we want. When you are at work, you live your life behind work and that is how it should be.



## 5. What staff say and do

- 5.1 The VBF staff questionnaire contained six questions: questions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 were close-ended “Yes/No” answers and item 4 was open-ended. Participants were also invited to add comments to questions 1 and 2, while many also added comments to other questions. The enquiry’s questions to staff, providers and stakeholders can be found in full in Appendix B and a statistical analysis of their responses in Appendix A.
- 5.2 A detailed analysis of staff, providers and stakeholders’ responses to the survey is given below.

### Question 1: Is there a need for legislation to guarantee an entitlement to spiritual, moral and cultural development for learners in FE?

- 5.3 Responses to this are shown below and are given statistically in Table 6 of Appendix A:
- 73% of staff say there is a need for legislation
  - 25% of staff say there is not a need for legislation
  - 2% of staff do not know.
- 5.4 Staff who argue that there is a need for legislation indicate that learners and trainees in the sector are just as likely to want to explore questions of identity, faith, culture and spirituality in college and in the workplace as they are in schools.
- 5.5 However, the more in-depth discussions at the regional consultations reveal that staff who support an extension of the legal entitlement to FE tend to heavily qualify their “yes”. For them, entitlement in a post-16 environment, where governors, staff and students are dealing with issues of race, class and community, is likely to be about creating innovative opportunities for engagement that respond to diverse college environments.



## Some comments made by staff included:

At school we had assemblies so as a group we were made to get together. There was a sense of togetherness, really, unlike now where people hardly meet and hardly have anywhere to meet because the campus is so spread out.

I think there should be the opportunity. If legal entitlements means "must", then no.

One of the main challenges with students today is sexuality and how this is dealt with/seen by the different faith groups. The openness with which this is discussed/talked about by some groups is frowned upon by others and could cause conflict. Also the need to be cautious when inviting people into college sometimes restricts some of the activities in which chaplains might engage.

No for religion because I think it is a very personal thing; but for social, moral and cultural values, yes.

It should be repealed for students under that age.

Some years ago we had Liberal Studies in FE. Our industrial and commercial day release students would spend at least one session per day usually an hour studying literature (book club style) or discussing religious, ethical and cultural issues. Those who have read Tom Sharpe's 'Wilt' books will be familiar with the pattern. Unlike contextual essential skills, which really do need to be embedded to improve delivery, I really don't think that faith issues can or should be embedded into main curriculum or tech 'n voc subject delivery. Bring back Liberal Studies and factor faith and ethics therein.

## Case study: A personal testimony

I became a chaplain in FE three years ago because education transforms people and that is what God is all about. In the rest of my ministry, I found I was always being drawn to the places where people had the opportunity to learn.

People in FE have decided for themselves that they want to make a change in their lives. They want a different job opportunity, they want to learn to read after all these years, they want to push a hobby to another level and get a qualification. And every person who has decided to make a change has issues about who they are, why they're here, what their place is in the world. Sometimes education uncovers major issues like these, sometimes it is small things, but there are always questions.

What motivates me now? Day-to-day joys, like every time I see someone reading one of my displays about festivals or getting an email from a member of staff saying something I sent them was helpful.

I think that the longer I am here, the more the college understands and supports the role. They had an instinct that chaplaincy was the way to support people of faith and keep contact with faith communities. I think as time goes on and we have stories to tell it is easier to explain why. I'm a Church of England minister and the dioceses I work in are also getting on board more and more with developing chaplaincy in FE. We can always do better, but that's understood in a sector which is about lifelong learning.

Full-time chaplain

## Question 2: Does provision for students/trainees' needs for VBF exist in your college or workplace?

5.6 Responses to this are shown below and are given statistically in Table 7 of Appendix A:

- **79%** of colleges/workplaces that responded have provision to meet the VBF needs of learners/trainees
- **13%** of colleges/workplaces that responded do not have provision to meet the VBF needs of learners/trainees
- **8%** of staff who responded do not know.

5.7 It is clear, however, that there is a continuum of practices, ranging from poor to excellent. A variety of routes into VBF exist – from references in an equal opportunities policy or the provision of a prayer room to VBF activities embedded in the curriculum and pastoral life of the provider.

## Case study: Working under pressure

For the last 16 years I have been involved in the supporting of student and, to a lesser extent, staff Christian Union groups in FE colleges. Everywhere I go, the pressure on rooms, rolling dinner hours and short dinner hours preventing people from coming to the meetings from adjacent campuses and sudden changes in timetabling have all posed huge obstacles for the groups. Even in colleges where there has been the provision of a prayer room there have often been tensions because of the main users, Christians and Muslims, wanting to use the room at the same time or with insufficient time to switch use.

The meetings are generally facilitated by a member of staff or the chaplain but run by the students themselves. Many colleges give permission for the students to eat their lunch, even where there is a no-eating policy, on the understanding that the room will be left clean. The format is usually very simple and includes a sharing of praise and prayer requests, some groups sing a hymn or a song, a short bible study, perhaps a video or a visiting speaker, plans for charity events and awareness weeks. Many of these Christian Unions organised Christmas carol services for their colleges and the reports I have received this year have been most encouraging.

The groups are often relatively small in size, averaging eight students, but can be over 20 in the sixth-form centres. They are generally the only student group in the college besides the sports clubs.

College chaplain

- 5.8 At one end of the continuum, some colleges refer to faith in their general equal opportunity policy and implement this with the provision of a prayer room. Others reject chaplaincy provision, even through multi-faith student support, as outdated, irrelevant to education's purpose and challenging to implement and sustain.

### Some comments made by staff included:

We want to have a multi-faith arrangement, but how do we go about it? How can one person know equally about each different faith? If we have an Anglican chaplain, how is it possible to be seen as a bona fide representative of all religions; knowing that Halal food is not acceptable for Sikhs, for example? How can one chaplain be equally available to all? I query this.

- 5.9 However, for those colleges further along the continuum, there is evidence that many staff and stakeholders have begun to envisage and plan for what such a learning space (where people of different faiths might encounter each other with respect, mutuality, and equality) might look like. This is more likely to be evident where student services teams work in collaboration with a multi-faith chaplaincy, and with the support of the governors and the principal.
- 5.10 Some colleges are actively and creatively working, in conjunction with NEAFE and FiFEF, to develop appropriate multi-faith models for nurturing spiritual development in a learning community.

- 5.11 Good practice also involves some form of monitoring or mapping of need. This can take several forms but among the most common were taking care that staff who hold specific beliefs are not disadvantaged in any way, determining when staff might need leave for festivals, fasting or daily prayer or ascertaining whether issues of retention and progression might affect students from specific religions, faiths or beliefs.
- 5.12 The most common examples of provision include a college setting aside a quiet room or area for prayer or private contemplation, providing separate storage facilities for ceremonial objects and helping all staff and students to understand the religious observances of their colleagues thus avoiding embarrassment or difficulties for those practising their religious obligations.

**Questions 3 and 4: Whether or not provision currently exists, do you think that colleges and workplaces should recognise in some way that VBF are important to some people and what facilities and support should colleges provide?**

- 5.13 Responses to this are shown below and are given statistically in Table 8 of Appendix A:
- 92% of respondents recognise that VBF are important to some people
  - 5% of respondents do not recognise that VBF are important to some people
  - 3% of respondents do not know.
- 5.14 Stakeholders were asked what sort of facilities and support colleges and workplaces could provide to cater for people's VBF needs. That the majority of staff assumed VBF meant "religion" was evident from the range of suggestions they provided to this item. Respondents provided the following as examples of facilities and support that colleges could provide to cater for the VBF of their students and staff:
- Well-informed staff
  - Prayer room
  - Church facilities
  - Recognised holidays for different beliefs
  - Places of worship
  - Acknowledgment of differences between faiths
  - Suitable food and dress code
  - Meeting halls
  - Opportunities and links with church, mosque, etc
  - Inter-faith dialogues
  - "Chaplains" drop-in and group sessions
  - Place for quiet reflection
  - Someone to listen
  - Opportunity to discuss and share problems
  - Multi-faith chaplaincy.

## Some comments made by staff included:

Faith is a matter of personal choice. It does not belong anywhere public other than where attendants have made the choice to meet and share their faith, ie a place of worship, not educational establishments.

Colleges could provide access to local religious leaders to enable them to engage with people of the same faith and help educate people of other faiths. [Colleges] could have activities that raise awareness and promote greater understanding of world religions.

- 5.15 In response to questions 3 and 4, two further areas were highlighted in the enquiry as examples of what can be achieved without legislative requirement. These relate to:
- college leadership and the system's role in the promotion of inclusion, integration and community cohesion
  - new thinking on chaplaincy and multi-faith student support.

### Question 5: Do learning and skills providers who work with faith groups and who cater for the needs of students with diverse VBF play a critical role in community cohesion?

- 5.16 Responses to this are shown below and are given statistically in Table 9 of Appendix A:
- **79%** of respondents believe that learning and skills providers who work with faith groups and who cater for the needs of students with diverse VBF play a critical role in community cohesion
  - **13%** of respondents believe that learning and skills providers who work with faith groups and who cater for the needs of students with diverse VBF do not play a critical role in community cohesion
  - **8%** of respondents do not know.
- 5.17 The Foster Report and the government's white paper *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances*, highlighted the invaluable role colleges play in promoting community cohesion and integration, providing settings where people and adults from every ethnic, faith and social group can come together. Respondents agreed with this approach, and felt equipped to respond to this challenge where the colleges and chaplaincies had developed good links with local faith communities.

## Case study: Multi-faith chaplaincy

Our college has successfully developed a model based on equality and diversity that reflects a notion that people of all religious backgrounds should be equally valued and that no one voice should dominate. Our multi-faith chaplaincy now consists of nine associate chaplains, including amongst them, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Catholic and Protestant Christian and Unitarian Universalist chaplains. The team sits under teacher development. We want to build capacity and to create a space where students are comfortably challenged by their own beliefs and religions and those of others.

The multi-faith chaplaincy team is decidedly not inter-faith, but we believe that each religion should be represented in its own right. We are interested in dialogue between ourselves, but there is a relational process of inviting each other into an encounter of learning so that there is equity of voice.

We also believe that there is a way to collectively create rituals for the community that mark moments in the life of a community, which is done not by universalising everything and taking out all the specific religious language – which leaves everybody feeling lost and the traditions unrecognisable – but by creating spaces of expression for each religious experience held together by common themes.

### Some comments made by staff included:

Challenging stereotypes and constantly debating up to date issues such as Islam's role in current affairs such as terrorism.

We have seen an increase of Muslim students due to positive past experiences of previous students – this has increased the college profile within the community (and) attracts new Muslim students.

When students are proud of the diversity of their college, they defend another culture's needs and rights.

Faith and superstition adversely affect community cohesion. We should not be working to encourage inappropriate displays of faith in college. Faith and superstition prevent rational discussion in an educational institution. It is intolerable that we should pander to any faith-based organisation.

## Some comments made by staff included:

No – and I don't think this is a "fair" question. I do believe diverse values and needs of students should be catered for and that it is important that communities are "educated" in the variety and differences between cultures and backgrounds. But my opinion is that dwelling on incompatible faiths can damage community cohesion – one should focus on the individuals and diversity of individuals as well as their similar moral values (aside from religion) within the community.

Teaching several students who were asylum seekers illustrated the point that a knowledge/understanding of the cultural background of ANY student is a vital part of helping them not only to learn but to understand and integrate into our society without feeling that their needs are being ignored. As ever, a balance between recognising diversity and promoting integration/inclusion can be difficult but vital.

Our prayer room is shared by people of at least five different faiths. We often have people of two different faith groups in the room at the same time praying openly together. This harmony has helped many who are fiercely protective of their own faith to open up and be more relaxed and accepting.

As a detention centre chaplain, I find that the detainees value my visits greatly as often I am the only outside visitor they get. People of South Asian origin who speak Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Nepalese etc, are drawn to me because I am able to communicate with them. I have had long debates with Muslims about the Hindu faith that does not always happen in other settings. Recently some Sikh ladies asked me to explain the reason for vegetarianism as they were debating this with Muslim and Hindu colleagues.

## Case study: Reaching out into the community

What makes our college outstanding is its comprehensive and innovative perspective of faith, identities, inclusion and equality. This joined up thinking has enabled us first and foremost to build contacts in the private, public and voluntary sectors as well as with the complex and small BME communities of their area. Our strong approach to diversity has come to liberate us, freeing us from the daily grind of monitoring equal opportunity data to attempt more interesting and innovative aspects of community cohesion and diversity. Slowly we are heading towards the respect agenda, which we hope will only improve upon our work around inclusion and cohesion.

The college has access to BME communities, through the mosques, the Chinese association and the Gurdwara. Our full-time chaplain runs a multi-faith chaplaincy and a prayer room and together with another member of staff we have built contacts through a good and long-standing relationship with the bishop who has helped us to access an array of industrial chaplains who work in the private and public sectors. The college also works with the economic migrant worker communities, many of them Polish ESOL students at the college, who are typically transient but yet still integral to the economy of the area. Finding that they were not linked to traditional BME associations we found that they could, however, reach them through the Catholic Church.

This soon developed into a partnership with a chaplain who runs a migrant workers association and who enabled the college to recognise the growing challenges and needs of the migrant worker population that has grown up in the region.

The college has also set up a breakfast club for business leaders in the private sector on diversity. Around 40 business leaders are charged to come and listen to an array of different speakers on different subjects such as age, race, gender and disability. We have debates on a range of issues and are presented with many inspirational speakers. One of the emerging issues in the breakfast club has been what to do with migrant workers and how to integrate them into the workforce and make them productive and effective. A chaplain came along for this and shared with us his expertise and experience in a bid to integrate faith, business and education.

The college regularly monitors the student body for faith and ethnicity, as an early warning system and to identify any measures that will ensure the retention of students. The focus on inclusion and diversity is sustained in a fully integrated programme of activities that includes a diversity week, where service areas put on shows and presentations and exhibitions around diversity such as the recent *We were there* Ministry of Defence exhibition.

Over the last year, with funding from the DfES, we have produced an hour-long documentary of faith and BME communities in the region. We have footage of all these communities talking about what it's like to live and work in the region in the 21st century. The DVD has become a powerful resource, used with learners throughout the college, and has also been provided to schools in the area.

In the last year we arranged bus trips to local faith centres, to the synagogue, the mosque and the Gurdwara. Their aim is to take behaviourally challenged young people and integrate them with other classes.

## Question 6: Are you or your colleagues more or less likely to feel part of a college or workplace that encourages dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse values, beliefs and faiths?

5.18 Responses to this are shown below and are given statistically in Table 10 of Appendix A:

- **82%** of respondents are more likely to feel part of a college or workplace that encourages dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse VBF
- **12%** of respondents are less likely to feel part of a college or workplace that encourages dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse VBF
- **1%** of respondents say it makes no difference
- **5%** of respondents do not know.



## Case study: From HE to FE

I am a team leader of an HE chaplaincy team that includes an FE college and college chaplain. Our university is also coordinating a Federation of Further Education Colleges that link to the university. I also have experiences in working with FE colleges in establishing chaplaincy.

The core objectives of our chaplaincy team, which includes the FE college chaplain, are to advance an inclusive, responsive, community in which personal potential and human spirituality can flourish. This means that we try to offer high quality, professional and effective spiritual and pastoral care; promote resources and opportunities for religious, spiritual and ethical exploration; and work collaboratively and in partnership with others – in the university, in local communities, in the region and nationally towards the establishment of authentic community and a more just and humane society.

The college chaplain establishes contact with everyone in the college and offers a service consistent with the core objectives. He makes himself available to all students and staff and organises activities, groups and events as appropriate, networks externally, particularly with local faith communities – this is currently embryonic.

The chaplain is mentored and supported by myself as overall team leader. Unfortunately there is a big gap in understanding with college staff of what a chaplain does so this can be frustrating and irritating. It sometimes feels like having to justify one's existence all the time. The college chaplain is appreciated but not fully enough and not yet included enough in the life of the college – though the post is a part-time post and time is a factor.

## Some comments made by staff included:

How does my college support me? Well, the college director, student support manager and team are helpful and support the work totally and I use the counselling rooms when necessary. Other members of staff also form part of the 'chaplaincy' team. Travelling expenses are met by the college.

I feel appreciated within the college now – but not initially. However, I still don't feel my role is understood by colleagues or for that matter by church members who I talk to. For me, there is a great advantage in the fact that the college makes a quarterly contribution towards the costs of the chaplain (half stipend plus pension and NI), but that goes to the diocese and not to me personally. This preserves my independence from the institution, but guarantees that chaplaincy is valued (in that you value what you pay for). There is a chaplaincy advisory group made up of representatives from the church and the college, and in a sense governs performance management issues.

## Some comments made by staff included:

The diocesan pastoral code of conduct describes the confidentiality protocol adequately, and is viewed in the same way as BACP guidelines govern the counsellor chaplain.

More likely – if values and morals (without linking it to “God”) are shared and different people brought together to understand each other and each other’s background.

Less likely – if you go OTT on faiths because I am an atheist! I am not naïve enough to try and completely disassociate “religious beliefs/faiths” from the complexity of culture and background, but I like freedom of attitude and choice.

No difference – feeling part of a college doesn’t depend on dialogue between faiths! It might make a difference if faith was acknowledged and what it stands for was more in evidence.

Very much so – education is a right for all.

## A personal testimonial

I am the first chaplain in the college who is a member of staff and not just a visiting cleric/lay reader. I live in a small office with the Students' Union. This gives me a base to work from, access to the telephone and college intranet and the internet. The expectations of the college are that I will be a presence in the college, who can address spiritual issues and queries, especially those posed by the students.

The student body consists of physically disabled students, 75% of whom are in wheelchairs. Many have other disabilities related to brain injuries caused by injury or birth circumstances. I am part-time and have no other team members, but the building of a multi-faith team is part of my objectives.

I am available to meet students and staff when I am in college – everyone passes by my office. I have taught in citizenship groups discussing marriage and personal relationships. I am invited to teach rather than being part of the education staff. I am line-managed by the manager for student support services; she is a trained nurse by profession. I am running a college service each half term and involve different departments in providing input through creative writing and images.

The harvest thanksgiving service was "managed" by a tutor group who organised a harvest collection in the college, which was taken to a local day centre for the elderly by the students. The interaction of elderly ladies in high-backed chairs and young students in electric wheelchairs, many with communication problems, was a wonder to behold. The harvest service was also very well received. These services take place in the college theatre using all the latest technological aids and the expertise of the performing arts staff.

My introduction to the college was after the death of a student and dealing with the grief within the college, both by students and staff. We are now looking at the best procedures for dealing with death of a student (and staff) and I am involved in the working group. I am making contacts with local faith groups to enable students to use their places of worship. Getting students about is a major logistical exercise. There have been many enquiries by staff for my services as a spiritual mentor and as a sounding board. I don't believe that the college foresaw this development.

I have been supported but not always understood. Much of my time has been to explore, and explain, the nature of being, that is of being available but also of being able to be proactive and sympathetically reactive. There is only so much you can plan to do, much of what you do must reflect what the college (ie the student body, staff and management) requires and asks for. Being now a feature of the college I am seen as a resource and a friend (I think!).

I am a paid member of the college staff and am required to abide by the rules of the college in training standards and outlook. The college is full of people from the caring professions and I am one among many, with specific skills and interests. This does mean that the position is valued.

There are some difficulties about contract and the hours that are done – but that has been resolved by negotiation and practice. I can see positives for being employed by the diocese and serving at the college, and also for being an employee of the college. I think you make it work whichever model is used.

Confidentiality is an issue, but in the environment that I work the safety of the student is paramount. The issues are those that apply to being a parish priest that you do not raise the expectations of someone who is sharing confidences with you – you do not get into the position whereby you might be tempted to break that trust.

I recently had a question about what happened in a church service that a student attended off campus and the effect that it might have on a vulnerable and impressionable student. A member of the behavioural psychologists raised this after other staff had reported incidents. My request for further information and an explanation of the nature of the worship helped to allay any concerns.

When equality and diversity are high on the college agenda, faith issues are often very much part of that issue and the need for chaplaincy to be seen as multi-faith. This places great demands on chaplains to meet those expectations, and also how they deal with issues regarding their own faith beliefs – how faithful they are, especially when seen by their own faith communities!

## Alternatives to legislation

5.19 Even though a significant majority of staff surveyed supported the introduction of a legal entitlement to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for 14-16 year olds in the FE system, there was also a clearly expressed acknowledgment that there are other **equally powerful** and, many people argued, **more effective**, levers for change – *provided these are consistently applied and adequately funded across the system*.

5.20 At least **seven alternatives** to legislation were highlighted:

- **equality and diversity policies** and single equality schemes that include VBF
- **government policy drivers** including *Every Child Matters*, the FE white paper, personalisation and learner involvement proposals
- **embedding VBF in the curriculum** in order to prepare students for employment and working in a multicultural and multi-faith society
- the adoption of a **business case** for responding to student interest in VBF, and its ownership by managers because of its beneficial role in and positive contribution to improvements in college retention and achievement rates and student employability
- **assessment and inspection frameworks** eg The Common Inspection Framework that assesses a college's response to issues of VBF
- **supportive leadership to respond to the needs of new communities** taken by the governing body/board of directors and the principal/chief executive
- the **provision of inclusive pastoral and personal support** through a student services team that includes a chaplain or multi-faith student support worker.

### 1. Responding to VBF through the implementation of equality and diversity policies

5.21 Respondents indicated the importance of a college having in place a range of policies including the promotion of an equal, diverse and tolerant learning and working environment. They argued that this can positively affect rates of retention, achievement and recruitment. This is corroborated by the LSC/NEAFE study, published in July 2003 by NEAFE, which demonstrated that college/faith community partnerships can help improve student retention and encourage the recruitment of students from hard to reach groups. Nonetheless, the links between retention and provision of VBF in colleges has not been adequately researched and no attempt at quantification has been made in this study.

5.22 The more embedded equality and diversity policy is throughout a college the more likely a college is to embrace issues relating to values, beliefs and faiths needs.

5.23 Good practice emerged from colleges which had staff who were already thinking about how equality and diversity (cultural, racial, ethnic, ideological and religious) are key to making a vital and vibrant learning community. Colleges that are most likely to embrace issues of values, beliefs and faiths are notable for their strong diversity ethos and already provide a genuinely inclusive environment.

## Some comments made by staff included:

What I have found is that both students and staff are very receptive and I am inundated with questions and invitations from staff who want me to do work with them/their students. I have as yet had no open hostility or confrontation. Most of my work at college has been with non-Hindus as there are so few Hindus there. My skills and experience in the equality and diversity field are valued just as much as my knowledge of Hinduism and chaplaincy skills. My college is happy to involve me in wider things, eg International Women's Week.

## Case study: Student services and faith communities

At our college, equality and diversity is integral to the college's ethos; all the college's staff have been trained in the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. Equal opportunity is communicated throughout by the principal's newsletter – there are guidance notes; fast days and prayer times are identified for the duration of the religious period. Respect for faith, values and beliefs is linked to both their equal opportunities and equality and diversity policy. We have drafted a religious equality policy.

Few colleges can prove categorically that providing for the faith needs of their students improves recruitment and retention. However, given its diverse constituencies and its experience with them, we believe that it does. Faith and cultural imperatives are taken note of and embedded in the curriculum, for example in tutorials and in cookery and hairdressing in order to prepare students for a diverse clientele. The aim is to make students feel as though they belong. Guaranteed student intake is not taken for granted even though in a city with three sixth-form colleges, four schools with sixth forms, an adult education college and around 90 private training providers the college stands out as an easy choice candidate.

The college began to recognise faith as opposed to national or geographic origins when new arrivals in the area from Somalia and Eastern Europe in 2000 began to complicate and blur traditional boundaries. The multi-faith co-ordinator undertook a faith mapping of the college and has been successful in identifying individuals of each faith in the communities, assessing their suitability and experience and persuading them to come in and work with the college. This is no easy feat and is a testament to the strong links the college has built up in the community. These faith volunteers are part of the support team of career and welfare advisers and they provide pastoral and spiritual services to students using a hospital chaplaincy model. Faith responsibilities come under student services and are linked to enrichment and counselling.

Aside from faith being at a strategic and policy level and embedded in the curriculum, student services also respond to need and demand, regardless of which faith. We facilitate room bookings for faith needs. If a room is needed for prayers, they book it. During Ramadan, if students need to use the sports facilities we will arrange it.

## 2. Responding to VBF through clear government policy guidance

- 5.24 Many colleges pointed out that, in the absence of legislation, the main drivers and motivating factors that exist to encourage a college to provide for VBF were government policies. During the regional consultations, an array of staff, including diversity managers, principals, heads of departments and student services staff, pointed to the *Every Child Matters* agenda as being extremely valuable to them. For some, this was even more important than the white paper, for it allowed them to be innovative around faith issues, to offer equality of opportunity and to respond creatively within a broader personalisation agenda.

### 3. Responding to VBF through curriculum development

5.25 In some colleges, issues of culture and faith were being tackled head on in the curriculum by embedding them in areas such as catering, hairdressing, business, hospitality, childcare and early years.

#### The cutting of the shika

We were told that a Hindu man had wandered to the barbers to get his hair cut. Without thinking to ask, the hairdresser cut off his shika, (a small knotted tuft of hair worn at the back of the head, as a symbol of their belief). Such a mistake could not be made on a hairdressing course which included faiths and beliefs in any context of what might be construed as discriminatory to clients and customers.

#### Preparing food

We were told that it was entirely possible for a person who, for faith or belief reasons, could not serve and prepare meat which has not been slaughtered in a manner he or she considers to be humane, to have this incorporated into their study.

#### Some comments made by staff included:

For me, embedding SMSC is crucial, eg in curriculum specifications, tutorial programmes etc. That way would guarantee that SMSC has to be taken seriously. There are issues around embedding, however. Key skills have now been embedded, but the experience has been difficult; for example, employers wonder why their apprentices need to have key skills, particularly when this is not a requirement for the private sector. Would there also be additional funding? Nevertheless, I am basically in favour of this development.

### 4. Responding to VBF by making a sound business case

5.26 The enquiry found evidence from the North East, the Midlands and the South West where three colleges have undertaken a faith audit. Building a business case for faith on this basis, as one head of student services remarked, takes time but is rewarding.

5.27 A few colleges pointed out that in the context of their work with equality and diversity it was considered good practice to be aware of the Religion and Belief Regulations (2003) as the regulations extended beyond the better known religions and faiths to include beliefs such as Paganism, as well as Humanism and those without religious beliefs. This has allowed them to build a business case for faith similar in approach and justification as the business case for diversity. One example of this is the work done by the multi-faith coordinator at Leicester City College in a pilot faith audit at the college.

5.28 The enquiry also found that in other colleges the business case for the inclusion of issues relating to VBF arose from the college's response to the needs of new communities of students, eg asylum seekers, refugees, immigrants and overseas students.

## Case study: A faiths audit

At our college, the diversity manager, multi-faith coordinator and inclusion coordinator wanted to ascertain the faiths represented in college and brought in an external faiths consultant to help discover the faiths represented within the College and identify what requirements individuals from those faiths had whilst in college. It was too late to add a question about a person's religion to the enrolment form when the work began in June 2006 so the mapping exercise was carried out using a separate questionnaire that would also allow the addition of questions about the provision of services or support that an individual might want the college to provide.

After brainstorming with different departments in the college including registration and the programme area managers, we decided that the most feasible ways of contacting students was through induction roadshows, fresher fairs and tutorials. A total of 507 students from four different campuses were consulted in this process. 72% of students surveyed identified themselves as having a faith, of those, 56% stated they were practising and of those practising 37% identified facilities they wanted in college, such as a prayer room, wash facilities, copies of holy books for all faiths and group meetings. This information can be further broken down by curriculum area.

In order to have a better understanding of the faiths represented in college and therefore to be able to plan and provide services to target groups more effectively, it is recommended that faith data is collected as part of the enrolment process. The simplest method of doing this would be to include a section on the standard enrolment form.

The research revealed that a permanent, confidential and private space for chaplaincy work to take place was important for students to receive the support that they need. Also, for chaplaincy to be held together and managed effectively, it would be highly advantageous for the college to have a part time coordinating chaplain, providing a vital link between the college, students and the wider community willing to engage with the college. We also found that a space for reflection and prayer was a significant need. Student services decided to ensure that in lieu of such a space students were made to feel welcome to use space as and when it is needed. It also emerged that another aspect of provision is that it is important to have good advertising of chaplains and the services they offer through dedicated notice boards on campuses, effective publicity for special events and effective use of the IT services.

## 5. Responding to VBF through assessment and inspection frameworks

- 5.29 Some principals were only too aware of the rigours and expanding parameters of inspection, particularly that of Ofsted. Recent inspection reports have profiled the important role of FE chaplaincy and faith provision in contributing to a college's inclusive ethos. The Common Inspection Framework incorporates the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students under the category Achievement and Enjoyment – one of the five outcomes in *Every Child Matters* to which all colleges must conform. Within the inspection framework, spiritual, moral, social and cultural are each rated separately. Colleges are unlikely to achieve more than a satisfactory grade for dealing with issues deemed to be *spiritual* unless there is a chaplaincy or similar provision.

## Some comments made by staff included:

Students who feel that they belong do better here.

The reputation that we provide for people's faith has helped us with recruitment.

### 6. Supportive leadership that responds to new communities of learners for whom VBF are important

- 5.30 Each LSC region has its own particular socioeconomic challenges – out-migration and poverty in rural areas, unemployment and deprivation, skills levels, and political and social challenges. These, in turn, influence national and regional educational strategies.
- 5.31 Colleges explained that it has often been the arrival of new migrants that required them to pay attention to specific needs. Whether it is the Polish or Somali community, the Bosnians or the Serbs, new migrants into rural and traditionally urban areas have changed the landscape in which colleges function. Moreover, as was pointed out at many colleges, good colleges in the UK are now attracting a range of overseas foreign students seeking professional training from all over the world, particularly Muslim students from the Middle East. Learners in colleges and in the workplace now readily encounter people of other religions as friends and colleagues as part of daily life.
- 5.32 Irrespective of their own personal views of VBF issues, responsible and responsive college principals and governing bodies recognise the changing landscape of contemporary Britain and want their own institutions to be in the vanguard of good practice. As a result, some college leaders are taking innovative and creative actions regardless of the lack of legislative requirement to do so.

### 7. New thinking on chaplaincy and student support that actively seeks to put into practice an inclusive approach to VBF

- 5.33 Almost 50% of all FE colleges that have chaplaincies have established them in the past 10 to 15 years, since the Anglicans and Methodists agreed to jointly fund the Churches' National Advisory Officer post to which the Free Churches and the Catholic church contribute funding for some activities. Catholic sixth-form colleges have full-time chaplaincy as standard practice. As an independent multi-faith national charity established to support the FE sector, NEAFE/FiFEF's staff, ie the executive director, multi-faith regional development officers, multi-faith project workers and administrative staff, receive no permanent sources of funding from faith communities or government and its funding agencies.
- 5.34 FE college chaplaincies have always been broadly ecumenical in character, and, increasingly, multi-faith in approach, understanding their role to provide for the spiritual needs of all students, of any faith or none.



## Case study: Committed staff

Some years ago I worked as an equal opportunities adviser in college. During that time, in discussions with staff and students, it became clear to me that, though the system and quality of education got high marks, we were not providing that added extra which made education a whole service. There were prayer rooms which some Muslim students used but no identified space for those of other faiths to spend time in prayer and quiet reflection if necessary. When problems arose or during special festival times of year, eg Lent, some staff would complain or would use classrooms or anywhere they found space. Eventually a few of us met and took the matter to senior management. Of course, evidence had to be shown that (1) a chaplaincy was needed and (2) it would be at no cost to the college.

So, why get involved? Perhaps I needed a challenge to get me started and this was the challenge. Perhaps it was the fact that I had been approached by students of different faith backgrounds about issues surrounding the ways people who professed the same faith worship, dress etc. Or perhaps it was because of someone I was supporting through a myriad of issues of faith and home and family. What I do know is that I simply had to work with others to make it happen.

As a retired person, I am no less interested in the welfare of others, however when the call to return came I needed to pray deeply about it. Due to many changes in personnel, the chaplaincy is being gradually rebuilt. I am encouraged and supported by people within the structures, my own family of Christians and the network of different faiths with whom I work.

Lay chaplain

## Case study: Making chaplaincy relevant to young people

When the college recently lost its chaplain of five years it responded by advertising for a new one and, in the interim, reviewed existing provision. The chaplaincy team surveyed its student body and found that in many ways traditional chaplaincy had become irrelevant to the student body, whose members were no longer seeking out their services. So the chaplaincy team came up with a new initiative which sought to rebrand the image of chaplaincy, to move it away from its strong association with Christianity so that not only could it be of significance to students of all faiths and none but also employ community resources to engage students in a new and exciting way.

The chaplaincy service is now known as *Konnekt to Faith*. A range of publicity materials have been used to promote the service to students and they have developed a range of activities which include: a group focused on worship through music, a Christian discussion group and inter-faith meetings to which speakers from a range of faith communities are invited to run workshops for students interested in learning about particular faiths. There have also been inter-faith discussion groups in which students from the Christian discussion groups and the Islamic society can meet together throughout the year to discuss their beliefs.

## Some comments made by staff included:

One other major obstacle for colleges is lack of funding. The government needs to see chaplains in FE as part of the fabric of the education of young people and be prepared to provide the funding. If the country as a whole is going to learn to work with other cultures, then it needs to start with the schools, the colleges and then the universities.



## 6. Conclusions

6.1 This enquiry concludes that:

- The FE sector has an important role to play in enabling all members of society, irrespective of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, values, beliefs and faiths to engage with one another in shaping a positive approach to 21st-century pluralism.
- VBF are important to learners and trainees in colleges and in workplaces and that learners and trainees value being asked to express their views on these matters.
- There are some excellent examples of what FE and work-based learning providers can do to respond to student and societal need to address issues of VBF.
- The current government's primary economic mission for FE (to raise skills levels) is more likely to be achieved to the highest standards where attention is given to fulfilment of its broad educational mission (to improve retention and achievement) and its social mission (to widen participation and promote community cohesion and integration). FE colleges and learning providers are eager to lead the way in demonstrating how these challenges can be resolved and how learners' needs in this area are best met, especially in colleges with a high population of BME staff and students.
- If community cohesion is "living, working, studying and playing together in harmony", then nurturing the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of FE learners must be a corporate goal for all colleges and providers.
- Successful initiatives that embrace values, faiths and beliefs can have an impact on antisocial behaviour and community cohesion as well as nurturing respect and tolerance of different religions, communities and practices.

- The vast majority of respondents believe that colleges and workplaces along with faith communities are tied to 'place' and that their work is intrinsic to the building of cohesion in an area. The majority of staff and stakeholders stressed the important contribution that Britons of all faiths, ethnicities and beliefs can make when they can engage with one another to shape a positive pluralism.
- There is a significant demand from some staff in colleges for legislation to enable issues of values, beliefs and faiths to be addressed.
- However, there is also widespread recognition that colleges already have at their disposal a number of levers for change that, when applied consistently across the sector and accompanied by clear policy guidance and adequate resources from government and other agencies, can empower them to respond to the needs of both staff and students to address issues of VBF.
- Evidence of innovative and sustained engagement with VBF issues are generally found in organisations where either the CEO or principal personally drives, or enables other senior managers to drive, the agenda strategically, and where the college has in place mechanisms for responding actively to students' needs.
- Different hierarchies of provision and need exist between what staff surveyed think students want and what the students surveyed indicate they themselves want.
- The view expressed by a very small number of respondents to this enquiry was that colleges should be kept secular; and that, although institutions have a duty to provide pastoral care to those within their community, it is neither possible nor desirable to cater for every kind of difference or group that exists.



## 7. Recommendations

### Government and government-funded agencies

- In considering whether or not legislation is needed to drive change, government should have regard to the fact that there is widespread recognition that colleges already have within their powers a number of levers for change that, when applied consistently across the sector and accompanied by clear policy guidance and adequate resources from government and other agencies, empower them to respond to the needs of both staff and students to address issues of VBF.
- Consideration should be given to providing a stronger and more prominent policy steer and guidance on issues to do with VBF, particularly in fulfilling the role of the college and workplace provider in relation to issues of equality and diversity, integration and community and social cohesion.
- An entitlement to pastoral and learning support which contains an element relating to VBF could be included as part of the personalisation of learning agenda.
- The curriculum and assessment aspects of the new national diplomas should recognise the need to ensure that young people are trained for employment in a pluralistic society.
- Government should acknowledge the increased importance of faith in the 21st-century society by requiring colleges to assess VBF in equality impact assessments.

## Colleges and learning providers: principals, CEOs and senior managers

- Colleges could work collaboratively, regionally and nationally to share good practice and learn from providers who effectively and successfully include issues of VBF in their work.
- Working relationships with local faith communities through outreach, community engagement and partnership can be a major driver of provision in relation to values, beliefs and faiths.
- The business case for responding to learner needs on issues of values, faiths and beliefs should be recognised by senior managers because of its beneficial role in and positive contribution to improvements in student recruitment, retention, achievement rates and student employability.
- The community cohesion case for responding to learner needs on issues of values, beliefs and faiths should be recognised by senior managers because of the benefits to local communities as well as to the achievement of excellence.
- A college's commitment to VBF can be visibly demonstrated by sustained public profiling through a clear communications strategy that recognises the role of VBF.
- When conducting estates management reviews or designing new buildings, colleges could consider ways in which the VBF needs of students and staff can be accommodated innovatively.

## College governing bodies and boards

- Colleges should ensure that students are consulted through emerging learner forums on their needs and interests in relation to VBF.
- College pastoral services could be reviewed to ensure that learners' needs in the area of values, beliefs and faith are fulfilled along the lines suggested in the white paper.
- Colleges' equality and diversity and outreach policies should include appropriate references to VBF.
- College policies on curriculum and learner support need to have regard to issues of VBF.
- Colleges should work collaboratively, regionally and nationally, to share good practice and learn from providers who effectively and successfully include issues of VBF in all their work.

## Colleges and learning providers: curriculum managers

- Within the curriculum, issues of values, beliefs, faiths and culture need to be included in vocational courses in order to prepare students adequately for employment in a multicultural, multi-faith society.
- Curriculum managers could consider the following good practices:
  - a varied curriculum content to comply with religious demands, eg food and hygiene regulations in a catering course
  - personalisation, tutorial and student enrichment programmes which raise issues of VBF to students from faith and non-faith backgrounds
  - celebration of significant festivals and the publicising of events on behalf of and in partnership with faith communities.

## Colleges and learning providers: student services

- Student services teams could ensure that any initiatives planned are based on solid data on student faith and non-faith backgrounds through the undertaking of a faith audit.
- Such initiatives could also build multi-faith spiritual and moral development into a holistic approach to student support.
- Where specific provisions are available for staff and students, student services should ensure that access and use are determined and managed through consultation with student representatives and faith communities.

## Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

- The LSC should ensure through its policy guidance and funding priorities that learning providers have regard to the findings of this review.

## Ofsted

- Although under the Common Inspection Framework, inspectors are required to assess college provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, reference to this does not appear in the Inspection Handbook and is not consistently applied across the system. This should be addressed and further guidance on this requirement be developed and communicated to providers.
- Ofsted inspectors should ensure that when issues of VBF are inspected, attention is given to their role in implementing equality and diversity policies and in promoting social cohesion and integration.

## Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL)

- CEL's *Faith Communities Toolkit* should be reviewed in order to take account of developments since publication and should be more widely disseminated.
- Leadership and equality and diversity programmes for governors and principals and staff could include more specific attention to the contribution of values, beliefs and faith as a dimension of achieving excellence.
- CEL should continue to take the lead for the sector in modelling ways in which the dimensions of 'spirited leadership' and 'the spirit at work movement' can be appropriately adopted throughout the system.

## Quality and Improvement Agency (QIA)

- The Agency's quality improvement strategy and its support for the sector's work on citizenship and pastoral care, as well as its research policies, should have regard to the findings of this enquiry.

## Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and awarding bodies

- The curriculum and assessment aspects of the new national diplomas should recognise the need to ensure that young people are trained for employment in a pluralistic society.

## Learning and Skills Network (LSN)

- LSN should look at ways in which the findings of the review can link with its project activity across the system.

## Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)

- In developing continuing professional development (CPD) and other professional programmes of training for the sector, LLUK could have regard for issues of VBF.

## Employers and employers' organisations

- Employers, where issues of VBF are important in the workplace, could get more involved in the skills and work agenda of their local college to ensure that students funded by them are prepared for the actual world of work that is multi-faith and diverse.

## NEAFE/FiFEF and the National Chaplains Network

- These organisations should continue to work closely with government and funding agencies on implementing and embedding provision and developing appropriate training materials and support and opportunities for VBF in the system.

## Churches and faith communities

- Churches and faith communities should be proactive locally, regionally and nationally – in conjunction with NEAFE and FiFEF and other key stakeholders – in developing strong partnership working with local providers
- Local networks of chaplains and faith workers need to drive the VBF agenda as their collective target
- Local faith communities need support in building their capacity to fulfil their roles in colleges and the resources to fully participate in a full-time chaplaincy and multi-faith student support.



## Appendices



# Appendix A: Statistical and research data

## Learner responses

**Table 1:** Responses to question 1: Are issues to do with VBF important to you in your life?

	N	%
Yes	363	57.2
No	266	41.9
Don't know	6	0.9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>100.0</b>
		$p = .05, \pm 3.9\%$

**Table 2:** Responses to question 2: Are they important to any of your friends or work colleagues?

	N	%
Yes	372	58.6
No	245	38.6
Don't know	18	2.8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>100.0</b>
		$p = .05, \pm 3.9\%$

**Table 3:** Responses to question 3: Irrespective of your own personal views, do you think your college or workplace should recognise in some way that VBF are important to some people?

	N	%
Yes	466	73.4
No	164	25.9
Don't know	5	0.7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>100.0</b>
		$p = .05, \pm 3.9\%$

**Table 4:** Responses to question 5: Do you think colleges and workplaces should provide support and services for students/trainees who hold different VBF needs?

	N	%
Yes	501	78.9
No	119	18.7
Don't know	15	2.4
<b>Totals</b>	635	100.0
		$p = .05, \pm 3.9\%$

**Table 5:** Responses to question 6: Are you more or less likely to feel a part of a college or workplace that encourages dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse VBF?

	N	%
More likely	468	73.7
Less likely	123	19.4
No difference	37	5.8
Don't know	7	1.1
<b>Totals</b>	635	100.0
		$p = .05, \pm 3.9\%$

## Staff, provider and stakeholder responses

**Table 6:** Responses to question 1: Do you think legal entitlement to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provided for learners in schools sixth forms through the 1944 Education Act should be extended to cover students/trainees over the age of 16 in the learning and skills sector?

	N	%
Yes	141	73.1
No	49	25.4
Don't know	3	1.5
<b>Totals</b>	193	100.0
		$p = .05, \pm 7.1\%$

**Table 7:** Responses to question 2: Does provision for VBF needs exist in your college/workplace?

	N	%
Yes	153	79.3
No	25	12.9
Don't know	15	7.8
<b>Totals</b>	193	100.0
		$p = .05, \pm 7.1\%$

**Table 8:** Responses to question 3: Whether or not provision exists, should colleges and workplaces recognise VBF are important to some people?

	N	%
Yes	178	92.2
No	10	5.2
Don't know	5	2.6
<b>Totals</b>	193	100.0
		$p = .05, \pm 7.1\%$

**Table 9:** Responses to question 5: Do learning and skills providers who work with faith groups and who cater for the needs of students with diverse VBF play a critical role in community cohesion?

	N	%
Yes	153	79.3
No	25	12.9
Don't know	15	7.8
<b>Totals</b>	193	100.0
		$p = .05, \pm 7.1\%$

**Table 10:** Responses to question 6: Are you or your colleagues more or less likely to feel part of a college or workplace that encourages dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse VBF?

	N	%
More likely	158	81.9
Less likely	23	11.9
No difference	2	1.0
Don't know	10	5.2
<b>Totals</b>	193	100.0
		<i>p</i> = .05, ± 7.1%

**Table 11:** Participation by region, shown as a percentage of total participation in the enquiry

Region	Percentage of colleges attending regional consultations	Percentage of staff responses by region	Percentage of student responses by region
Yorkshire & Humberside	5.0	4.1	3.7
North East	13.0	14.7	13.7
North West	19.0	15.5	17.2
East Midlands	15.0	20.2	19.0
West Midlands	10.0	8.7	9.8
London	6.0	7.9	6.0
East of England	16.0	15.4	10.6
South West	13.0	12.0	15.0
South East	3.0	1.5	5.0
<b>Totals</b>	100.0 (N=32)	100.0 (N=193)	100.0 (N=635)

## Notes

### Tests of statistical validity and reliability

Tests for statistical significance were conducted. At a confidence level of 95% (<.05), population estimations were subject to confidence intervals  $\pm 7.1\%$  for staff and  $\pm 3.9\%$  for students. Bivariate analysis and associations, also at the 95% level, were carried out on Question 1 of both the staff and student survey forms. Using the result of the assessment of the independent variable (Question 1), questions 3, 5 and 6 were examined and tested for significance using chi square ( $\chi^2$ ) or lambda ( $\lambda$ ). When significance was found, Cramer's V was used on chi (obtained) to test for degree of association. (Lambda tests for both significance and association.)

### Comparative studies

There are a number of similar studies with related themes, methodologies and sample sizes to this enquiry that can be used for comparative purposes.

### Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2005

In January 2005, consultants from SHM Limited were commissioned by the DfES to undertake research exploring young people's educational mindsets. They carried out stand-alone research to help DfES understand the mindsets of young people in order to improve activities such as information, guidance and curriculum design and to input into a major programme of research by NFER that investigated the processes by which young people make decisions at the end of key stages 3 and 4. Overall, 58 young people took part in activities and discussions during workshops. The first workshops focused on exploring the choices open to young people and why they might make certain choices. This enabled the researchers to gain an insight into young people's possible educational mindsets which they then 'tested' during the second workshops. Participants were asked to place themselves on the mindset dimensions identified in the first workshops and discuss their places. Eight educational mindsets were identified by SHM, each of which is 'built' on four dimensions. See DfES Research Report (RW67) *Mindset Profiles: Segmenting Decision-Makers at Ages 14 & 16, findings from exploratory research by SHM*.

### NFER study, 2005. *How do young people make choices at age 14 and 16?* by Blenkinsop, S, McCrone, T, Wade, P and Morris, M

DfES commissioned research published in Research Report no 773 (London: DfES) which explored how young people make the educational choices required of them at ages 14 and 16. 165 young people were interviewed across 14 schools between 2005 and 2006. Amongst the findings were that schools make a difference to how young people make decisions. In their methodology the researchers decided that it was necessary to obtain credible, qualitative information that would provide the detailed insights that are often more difficult to obtain from quantitative approaches. The research design that was adopted, therefore, was primarily qualitative, involving detailed one-to-one interviews with young people, teachers and parents.

### LSC (LSC) and National Youth Agency (NYA) 2003-04

In 2003 and 2004, the LSC and the National Youth Agency researched the views and aspirations of a cross-section of young people to determine which subjects they were most interested in learning about in the post-14 curriculum. Responses indicated that spiritual, moral and ethical issues came near to the top of young people's agendas and that religious education was the fastest growing GCSE, AS and A level subject. Over 60% of young people take some form of external examination in religious education. This research was carried out by SHM Ltd.

### Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) 1996

In 1996, SCAA commissioned a Mori poll of 196 young people to look at their attitudes to spiritual and moral development; 73% said they were interested in thinking about what life is for and how the universe began.

## Other related recent research and commentary

In a survey administered by Headspace of primary and secondary head teachers in 2005, carried out by Education Guardian and EdComs, and administered by ICM, many heads were shown to be deeply concerned about the effects of faith schools on the education system. In a sample of 801 headteachers who replied to the questionnaire – of whom 28% actually work in religious schools – 47% felt there should be either fewer or no faith schools, while 32% felt there should be no change. 9% agreed with the government's policy of increasing the number of faith schools.

Theos, a new Christian think tank, heralded its launch in 2006 by commissioning a poll from Communicate Research. They asked if people agreed with the statement that *Faith is one of the world's great evils, comparable to the smallpox virus but harder to eradicate*. Communicate Research telephoned 1,008 adults throughout Great Britain on 18 and 19 October 2006. Data were weighted to be representative of all adults in Britain. Communicate Research is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. 42% of people said they agreed with the statement and 44% disagreed. The rest of the survey found that 53% of people thought that, on balance, religion was a force for good in society; 39% of people thought that it was not. 58% of people thought that Christianity has an important role to play in public life; 37% disagreed. On the latter question there was an age difference: the older respondents were the most likely to think that Christianity has a role in public life – 69% of over 65s agreed, with only 24% disagreeing. Amongst the youngest age group, under 25s, 43% agreed and 52% disagreed.

In 2006, BBC Radio broadcast a series, *Humphrys in Search of God*, in which the veteran journalist and broadcaster John Humphrys explored the issue of VBF with three of the main faith leaders in contemporary Britain. In commenting on public reaction to the programme, John Humphrys himself wrote:

*“I have been a journalist for almost half a century and a broadcaster for more than forty years and in all that time I have never received a response anything like this. I received several thousands of letters and emails. Many more people have written to the BBC.”*

## Appendix B: Survey forms

### Values beliefs and faiths: National enquiry students' survey form

1. Are issues to do with values, beliefs and faiths important to you in your life?

Yes

No

Comments:

2. Are they important to any of your friends or work colleagues?

Yes

No

Comments:

3. Whether or not these issues are important to you personally, do you think your college or workplace should **recognise** in some way that values, beliefs and faiths are important to some people?

Yes

No

4. If you answered yes to question 3 above, what sort of **facilities and support** could your college or workplace **provide** to cater for people's values, beliefs and faiths needs?

5. Do you think FE colleges and workplaces should **provide support and services** for students/trainees who hold different values, beliefs and faiths?

Yes

No

6. Are you or your friends or work colleagues **more or less likely** to feel part of a college or workplace that encourages dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse values, beliefs and faiths?

More likely

Less likely

## Values beliefs and faiths: National enquiry staff, providers and stakeholder survey form

1. The 1944 Education Act gives students in school sixth forms a legal entitlement to 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development' as part of their education.

Do you think this entitlement should be extended to cover students/trainees over the age of 16 in the learning and skills sector?

Yes  No

2. Does provision for students/trainees' needs in relation to issues of values, beliefs and faiths exist in your college or place of work?

Yes  No

3. Whether or not provision currently exists, do you think that colleges and workplaces should **recognise** in some way that values, beliefs and faiths are important to some people?

Yes  No

4. If you answered yes to question 3 above, what sort of **facilities and support** could colleges and workplaces **provide** to cater for people's values, beliefs and faiths needs?

5. The government's recent white paper *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* draws attention to the "role colleges play in promoting community cohesion and integration by providing settings where young people and adults from every ethnic faith and social group can come together".

Do you agree that providers in the learning and skills sector who work with faith groups and who cater for the needs of students with diverse values, beliefs and faiths play a critical role in community cohesion?

Yes  No

Please give an example from your own experience which illustrates this.

6. Are you or your work colleagues **more or less likely** to feel part of a college or workplace that encourages dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse values, beliefs and faiths?

More likely  Less likely



## Appendix C: Bibliography and list of participants

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## List of participating colleges, universities, organisations and individuals

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Ashton Sixth Form College	Lewisham College	Dare to Engage Organisation
Bede College	Leyton Sixth Form College	Diocese of Bath and Wells
Bolton Community College	National Star College	Diocese of Bristol
Blackburn College	New College Durham	Diocese of Durham
Cambridge Regional College	North Warwickshire & Hinkley College	Diocese of Gloucester
Carshalton College	Pendleton College	Diocese of Guildford and Portsmouth
Castle College Nottingham	Preston College	Diocese of Worcester
City College Birmingham	Runshaw College	Gravesend Hindu Group
City of Bristol College	Sheffield College	Hindu Centre Bristol
City of Sunderland College	Solihull Sixth Form College	Leicester Diocesan Board of Education
Colchester Institute	Stockport Riverside College	Muath Trust, Birmingham
College of North East London	St George's Sixth Form Centre, Birmingham	North East FE Inter Faith Forum
Doncaster College	University of West of England, Bristol	Queens Foundation, Birmingham
Filton College	University of East Anglia	St Peter's Saltley Trust
Grimbsy Institute	University of Birmingham	West Midlands FE Forum
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Hartpury College	Usworth Sixth Form College	
Hartlepool College	West Kent College	
Hugh Baird College	Yeovil College	
John Leggott College		
Leicester College		

## NEAFE

The National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education is a national independent inter-faith charity working with the learning and skills sector, faith and local communities and national and local faith and belief-based groups. Chaired by Dr Ann Limb, NEAFE operates as a cross-sectoral, UK-wide infrastructure body, providing policy and research functions for the sector and for faith communities and supporting members from colleges, providers and communities with information, advice and resources. NEAFE publishes the *Journal of Chaplaincy in FE* and promotes good practice through the Churches' Beacon Award for Sustainable Community Development and the Helena Kennedy Foundation NEAFE award for students entering the teaching profession.

Established over 30 years ago by FE college principals, tutors and chaplains to foster and develop partnership working and community engagement, largely with and through local Christian faith groups, NEAFE exists to help encourage the sector to respond to student, staff and community needs in relation to spiritual moral social and cultural (SMSC) values in further education settings, the community and the workplace.

In 2004, NEAFE established the Faiths in FE Forum to recognise the changed context for education and society as a result of 9/11. FiFEF currently operates as a partner organisation comprising educational professionals and faith leaders drawn from the range of faith communities.

NEAFE and FiFEF are in the process of forming a single new body, the National Councils of Faiths and Beliefs in FE, to replace both NEAFE and FiFEF and to reflect the changing needs of the sector and society in relation to social integration and community cohesion and the critical role that colleges play in working with faith and belief groups. The NCFB will be launched in 2008.

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## CEL

The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) was launched in October 2003, as a key national agency within the Government's *Success for All* initiative, and has a crucial role to play in developing organisational leadership in the learning and skills system to anticipate, influence and respond to government policy initiatives.

CEL's remit is to foster and support leadership improvement, reform, transformation, sustainability and quality improvement. It serves the existing and future leaders of all providers within the further education system, including FE colleges, training and work-based learning providers, adult and community providers, offender learning, specialist colleges and voluntary organisations.

Following the publication of the further education white paper, CEL has been involved in the introduction of a mandatory qualification for principals and the development of the quality improvement strategy for further education. The white paper also heralded an expansion of CEL's diversity and equality remit.

CEL now operates through a charitable trust formed by its operating company on 1 April 2006.

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**NEAFE**

