

BRIEFING FOR THE FIRST MINISTER

Inaugural Faith and Belief Conference

Wednesday 30 October 2024

Key message	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• [REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]• [REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]• [REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]
What	<p>The FM has agreed to provide the opening address to delegates at the inaugural Faith and Belief conference hosted by SG.</p> <p>The conference theme is “Faith, belief and community cohesion: building a peaceful and inclusive Scotland”</p>
Why	<p>The conference is a commitment in the Faith and Belief Engagement Strategy 2023. The conference has been developed in partnership with faith and belief stakeholders. It aims to bring Scotland’s Faith and Belief leaders and communities together to build on relationships and explore the important role they have at the heart of community cohesion.</p>
Who	<p>Approximately 80-100 attendees from diverse faith and belief communities including our Faith and Belief Representatives group, clerical faith leaders, Interfaith groups, Police Scotland and relevant crosscutting SG policy officials. See Annex I (to follow)</p>
Where	<p>Mansfield Traquair Centre 15 Mansfield Place Edinburgh EH3 6BB</p>
When	<p>Wednesday 30 October 2024 09:45am to 16:30pm FM to attend from 10:00am to 11.45am Keynote speakers will be seated, with each then moving to lectern for speeches. Chair (Nick Bland, DD Mainstreaming and Inclusion) will provide the welcome and then introduce the First Minister who will then pass over to the Minister at the end of his opening address.</p>
Media	<p><i>No external media</i> <i>FM Communications team to provide handling plan separately</i></p>
Supporting official	<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]– Mainstream and Inclusion Division Tel: [REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i> <i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]– Mainstream and Inclusion Division Tel: [REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i></p>

Attached documents	Annex A – Agenda and Summary Annex B – Sensitivities and attendees Annex C - Faith and Belief Key Lines Annex D - Community Cohesion and Hate Crime lines including antisemitism and islamophobia Annex E – Faith and Belief Community Cohesion projects Annex F- Engagement Strategy Review Annex G – Faith and Belief Funded organisations Annex H – Bios
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Agenda - Faith and Belief Conference 2024

- From 9.45 Conference Registration – *tea/coffee provided*
- 10.15 Welcome by Chair: Nick Bland, Deputy Director, Mainstreaming and Inclusion Division
- 10.20 **Opening Address by First Minister**
- 10.25 **Address by Minister for Equalities**
- 10.30 Keynote speech by *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*– ‘Cohesion and the limits of pluralism’
- 10.40 Chair: **Sharing best practice examples of faith and belief work:**
Respect – **A Jewish-Christian Glossary** – *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*UK Council of Christians and Jews
Collaboration – **Senior Public Sector Policy Adviser role** – *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*
Collaboration – **Challenging Conversations and Difficult Dialogues** - *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*, Interfaith Glasgow
Collaboration – *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*–
Blood Donation Campaign Scotland – *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*
 Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society and *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service
Education and Understanding – **Edinburgh Interfaith Association Roadshows** – *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*
Reassuring the Public – **Community Engagement** – Chief Superintendent *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*– Policing Together, Police Scotland
- 11.45 **Networking break** – *tea/coffee provided*
- 12.15 *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*– **Scottish Interfaith Week & Dundee Conference**
- 12:25 Individual ‘roundtable’ **Discussion Sessions** – facilitator and delegates at each table to discuss:
- How do we foster **respect** in community cohesion?
 - How do we build and improve upon **collaboration** with Faith and Belief communities?
 - How do we develop **education and understanding** of Faith and Belief communities?
 - How do we enhance **public reassurance** with Faith and Belief communities?
- 13:20 **Feedback** from table discussions
- 13:30 **Lunch + Networking opportunity** and ‘exhibition’ space
- 14.30 **BBC Scotland panel session:** led by *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* BBC Scotland and *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* Religion & Ethics, BBC Scotland
- 14.45 **The Faith Forum** – *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* is joined on stage by *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*, *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*and *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* to present an off air example of the radio panel show format discussing personal faith perspectives on topical news stories
- 15.15 **The Faith Forum – Q&A**
- 15.45 Chair: **Closing remarks** - main message(s) from conference
- 16:00 **Additional networking opportunity** - *tea/coffee provided*

16.30

Chair: End

Summary

The hosting of the 'in person' conference is a commitment from our Faith and Belief Strategy's [external engagement plan](#). In the context of the ongoing Israel/Gaza/Middle East conflict and to bridge relationships across faith and belief communities, the conference will provide a crucial step in fostering relations across communities and reaffirming the Scottish Government's commitment to working with them *"To strengthen communication, engagement and collaboration between Scottish Government and Scotland's diverse faith and belief communities"*.

In addition to the above a commitment in the 24/25 Programme for Government (PFG) foreword sets out an intent that everyone who lives in Scotland feels safe, and a commitment to work with partners and faith leaders to safeguard Scotland against those who spread hatred, including antisemitism and Islamophobia.

First Minister has agreed to do an opening address to the conference. Once the First Minister has spoken there will be an opportunity for him to hear the following keynote speeches as well as examples of best practice of faith and belief work and learning about challenging conversations in relation to four key strands that contribute towards building community cohesion: fostering respect; building collaboration; education and understanding; and reassuring the public. It is anticipated that FM will depart at the networking break thereafter.

The Minister for Equalities is to speak immediately after FM also delivering an address, given their portfolio responsibility for Faith and Belief.

The conference programme has been developed with a small steering group from members of the Faith and Belief Representatives group. The attendee list includes people across Scotland's diverse faith and belief spectrum including our Faith and Belief Representatives group, clerical faith leaders, Interfaith groups, and Police Scotland. As part of the agenda, policy officials have worked closely with the BBC Scotland to develop a panel session which will be led by *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]*, *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* and *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* BBC Scotland.

An objective of the conference is to provide a platform to inform and exchange knowledge and expertise. It will offer a space to network and showcase the wealth of voluntary work happening in our communities as a direct result of the dedication faith and belief groups have in helping the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in communities.

Sensitivities

[REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]

[REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]

[REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]. [~~REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)~~]– [REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]

[REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]

Attendees

The attendees to this conference have been sought from a wide variety of faith and belief communities and interfaith organisations, along with representation from organisations who will find the subject matter of interest to their areas of operation. This includes Police Scotland, and relevant cross cutting Scottish Government policy officials. Members of the Scottish Government Faith and Belief Representatives' Group and clerical faith leaders will also be in attendance.

Faiths represented include:

- CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
- CATHOLIC CHURCH
- SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH
- JEWISH
- MUSLIM
- SIKH
- HINDU
- PAGAN
- HUMANIST

Top lines

[REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]

- [REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]
- [REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]
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Census Data

- [REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]
- [REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]

Church of Scotland	20.4% down from 31.4% in 2011
Catholic Church	13.3% down from 15.88% in 2011
Other Christian	5.1% down from 5.5% in 2011
Muslim	2.2% up from 1.45% in 2011
Hindu	0.55% up from 0.31% in 2011
Buddhist	0.28% up from 0.24% in 2011
Sikh	0.3% up from 0.17% in 2011
Jewish	0.11% no change from 2011
Pagan	0.35% not previously recorded.

[REDACTED * s.30(b)(i)]

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[REDACTED* s.29(1)(a)]

ANNEX E

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Bios – final list to

<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>– Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Scotland</p>	<p>The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Scotland has over 650 members across 3 Jammats in Glasgow, Dundee, and Edinburgh & Fife.</p>
<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>– - Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Scotland</p>	<p>The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Scotland has over 650 members across 3 Jammats in Glasgow, Dundee, and Edinburgh & Fife.</p>
<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>– - Al Gillani Foundation</p>	<p>Al Gilani Foundation is Sunni Faith-based organisation focusing on social and spiritual development in accordance to Sunni principles.</p>
<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>– - Career Ready Programme</p>	
<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>– - Catholic Church</p>	<p>The Catholic Church in Scotland is overseen by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference for Scotland. Catholicism is the second largest faith denomination in Scotland, with 14% of the population identifying as Catholic.</p>
<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>– - Catholic Church</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>– - Church of Scotland</p>	<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>–</p>
<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>– - Church of Scotland</p>	<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>–</p>
<p><i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>– - Church of Scotland</p>	<p>Public Life and Social Justice Manager & Scottish Churches Parliamentary Officer.</p>

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Church of Scotland

[REDACTED *
s.38(1)(b)]-

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Consultant

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Crossreach

Crossreach is a Social Care charity funded by the Church of Scotland.

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Crossreach CEO

As above

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

Member of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation as well as the University Jewish Chaplaincy team

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

As above

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Edinburgh Interfaith Association

Edinburgh Interfaith Association receive funding from SG to support their Building Bridges projects including interfaith education, including their religions roadshow that visits schools in partnership with Police Scotland to provide education on faiths and hate crime.

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Edinburgh Interfaith Association

As above

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Edinburgh Interfaith Association

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[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Edinburgh Interfaith Association

As above.

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Edinburgh Interfaith Association

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[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Edinburgh Interfaith Association

As above

[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]- -
Evangelical Alliance

The Evangelical Alliance is an umbrella organisation that represents many of the

smaller, independent Christian churches. They have been very supportive of the faith and belief engagement strategy and are keen to work in a proactive and positive way with government.

As above

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Evangelical Alliance

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Faith in Community Dundee

Founded in 2010, and a sub-division of Faith in Community Scotland
Founded in Edinburgh in 2007 to support the elderly community.

The Free Church are a recent addition to this group and this is quite a significant step for a church which regards independence from the state as fundamental to its identity.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Faith in Older People

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Free Church of Scotland

They have a Presbyterian structure (organized on a local level led by elders), but also have clear processes and structures for consultation with their members.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
the *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* - of Humanist Society Scotland.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Humanist Society of Scotland

Humanism is a non-religious belief system and approach to living an ethical life that is based on reason, compassion and tolerance. Many of its functions are quasi-religious, including Humanist marriage ceremonies and funerals, which are increasingly in popularity.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Humanist Society of Scotland

As above

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Interfaith Glasgow

Interfaith Glasgow support good relations between people of all faiths and none.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Interfaith Scotland

Interfaith Scotland receive funding from us as the national organization working in the area of interfaith

dialogue and supporting good relations between people of all faiths and none.

~~[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]~~ -
~~[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]~~ -

~~[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]~~ -
Muslim Council of Britain

~~[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]~~ -
Muslim Council of Scotland

Muslim Council of Scotland are the largest representative umbrella body for Muslim communities and Mosques in Scotland. The board is an elected body and the organisation has over 100 affiliates of mosques and Islamic centres.

~~[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]~~ -
Police Scotland

~~[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]~~ -
Quakers in Scotland

~~[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]~~ -
Redeemed Christian Church of God

ScoJec have a longstanding, positive relationship with Scottish Government. The First Minister met with them most recently on 19 May to discuss various issues of concern to the community, including antisemitism in higher education, hate crime and accurate recording of population information in the Census to give a true picture of communities across Scotland.

~~[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]~~ -
ScoJeC

The Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society represents the Shi'a Muslim community in Scotland.

~~[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]~~ -
Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society (SABS)

SABS are actively engaged in practical work tackling social isolation and loneliness, (they previously received some SG funding to support this work) as well as supporting those

	struggling with the cost of living.
<i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i> - Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society (SABS)	As above.
<i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i> - Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society (SABS)	As above
<i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i> - Scottish Association of Mosques	The Scottish Association of Mosques was set up last year to enable more direct representation for the mosques in Scotland. The board is comprised of the religious leaders (Imams) of the largest 13 mosques, including Glasgow Central Mosque.
<i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i> - Scottish Catholic Parliamentary Office	The Catholic Church in Scotland is overseen by the Catholic Bishops' Conference for Scotland. Catholicism is the second largest faith denomination in Scotland, with 14% of the population identifying as Catholic.
<i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i> - Scottish Episcopal Church	<i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i> <i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i>
<i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i> - Scottish Episcopal Church	The Scottish Episcopal Church is the third largest Christian denomination in Scotland, with around 300 churches and they are part of the global Anglican community. Episcopal means they have a hierarchical structure of Bishops. The Primus is the Bishop in overall charge.
<i>[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]</i> - Scottish Hindu Foundation	This is a recently formed organization formed in the past year and the first time that the Hindu Mandirs (temples) in Scotland have been represented by one organization. There is no authoritative or formal structure for the Hindu faith as a whole.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Scottish Hindu Foundation

As above

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Scottish National Blood Transfusion
Service

The Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) is the specialist provider of safe high quality blood, tissues and cells products and services in Scotland.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Scottish Pagan Federation

The Scottish Pagan Federation is a membership organisation for Pagans.

There are no formal structures for the religion and no consistency of practice amongst Pagans – they are a very diverse and varied group.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Scottish Religious Forum, Chair

The Scottish Religious Leaders' Forum is a sub-division of Interfaith Scotland dedicated to improving relationships between Scotland's religious communities.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Scottish Religious Leaders Forum
(Baha'i)

As above

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Senior Public Sector Policy Adviser

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -

Sikh Sanjog was set up in 1989, under the name 'Leith Sikh Community Group.' Its aim was to provide support for women in the Sikh community who had been settling in Edinburgh since the 1950's.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Sikh Sanjog

From cultural events to global aid projects, to community meals and community education, Scottish Sikhs are playing their part in making Scotland a fairer, inclusive and stronger nation.

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
Sikhs in Scotland

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -
The Salvation Army

*[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* - ris an officer of The Salvation Army, and currently appointed as the *[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]* -

~~s.38(1)(b)]~~, taking day-to-day responsibility for The Salvation Army's political engagement and national ecumenical affairs in Scotland.

~~[REDACTED * s.38(1)(b)]~~ -
United Reformed Church

The United Reformed Church is a Protestant Christian church in the United Kingdom. As of 2024 it had approximately 44,000 members in around 1,250 congregations with 334 stipendiary ministers.