

Hackney Faiths Network

Terms of Reference

July 2025

1. Background

Hackney faith communities are an important part of the fabric of the borough, playing a vital role in all areas of life. Hackney Faith Forum was formed in 2016 in partnership with Hackney CVS, to celebrate the contribution of the faith community, bring collective efforts together and identify areas of future focus. It aimed to harness the unique positions faith leaders and organisations hold across their communities, in an effort to work together to tackle systemic challenges and issues, such as poverty and inequalities.

A review of the Forum was carried out in 2025, to better understand whether its role, purpose and relationship with other forums and groups had changed at all since it was established. One of the main changes following the review was to call the forum **Hackney Faiths Network** so it reflects the breadth of ways in which Hackney Faith Communities connect and allows for both formal and informal ways to meet and operate.

2. Hackney Faiths Network Aim

- To bring the faith communities, faith based community organisations, Hackney Council and voluntary sector organisations closer to build a stronger and more cohesive Hackney where people of all faiths and none are welcomed and valued.

3. Objectives

- To support community cohesion.
- To share news, information, opportunities and learning between faith communities in Hackney, with a focus on increasing support for those facing poverty and inequality.
- To provide essential briefing and training sessions on statutory and community services.
- To contribute to policy and strategy consultations in partnership with the Local Authority and Voluntary & Community Sector.
- To continue coordinated social action when needed; e.g. relief efforts in an emergency or pandemic.

Partnership working and collaborative approaches are essential to the success of the Hackney Faiths Network. In order to successfully meet the objectives, the Network members will work in partnership with each other, and with wider statutory and community services to better utilise resources, knowledge and experience.

4. Membership

The Network operates in an informal way and is open to any residents of Hackney who are members of faith communities and faith based organisations that serve Hackney. Anyone wishing to be part of the Network can request to be added to the Network mailing list - more details below.

5. Operational Information

Hackney Faith Network will convene a minimum of four quarterly meetings each year including;

- Two formal meetings

**Hackney Faiths Network
Terms of Reference
July 2025**

- Two informal meet ups/networking opportunities (one women-only event)

These meetings will focus on helping faith partners better serve their communities by;

- Improving coordination and understanding between the local authority, wider statutory and voluntary sector and faith communities;
- Improve links between services provided by faith communities with those of the wider voluntary and community, and statutory sectors.

6. Role and Responsibilities for the members of the Network

Hackney Faith Network will be co-chaired by Deputy Mayor Anntoinette Bramble, the Cabinet Lead for Faith Communities and Councillor Ian Rathbone.

We will be appointing community co-chair for the Hackney Faith Network in 2025/26.

The coordination of the Network is currently carried out by a Strategic Delivery Officer (SDO) in the Policy & Strategic Delivery team, at Hackney Council. The SDO has the following responsibilities:

- Acts as the first point of contact for any queries relating to the Network.
- Maintains an up to date mailing list of faith partners which constitutes the Network - requests can be made to the SDO to be added to the mailing list.
- Organises formal and informal meetings.
- Sends monthly newsletters to the Network, when there is news and opportunities to share.

Members of the Network are responsible for;

- Helping shape the agenda of the formal and informal meetings.
- Providing information to share in the monthly newsletter to the Network.
- Sharing information and resources about events, training and services to wider faith communities.
- Helping track the impact of the work of Hackney Faith Network.