

Evaluation of Strengthening Faith Institutions 2018-2019

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1. Executive Summary

Strengthening Faith Institutions (SFI) is a national programme which aims to help faith institutions better serve their congregations, communities and wider local areas by raising awareness of, and providing support to tackle, challenges which prevent these institutions from operating at an optimum level. This is to be achieved by identifying and addressing areas of organisational weakness, as well as upskilling, capacity building and resource sharing.

An overarching aim of this programme is to aim to increase social interaction and integration; all other outcomes of the programme feed into this to some degree. Greater capacity, stronger organisations and better resource sharing all play roles in facilitating integration and fostering social interaction. The programmes seek to achieve these aims by promoting inclusive faith leadership, safer and stronger governance in faith institutions, strengthening the profile of faith institutions and facilitating integration.

The 4 areas of programme focus evaluated and reported on here are:

- Inclusive Faith Leadership
- Safer, Stronger Governance
- Strengthening Profile
- Facilitating Integration

This report presents the work undertaken by the Coventry University team in assessing the impact and effectiveness of the SFI Programme against its aims. The approach taken, built on previous work with the programme, has been based on a significant investment of time in learning about SFI from those closest to the Programme and has resulted in a strong understanding of how the Programme operates, its distinctiveness and where and how its successes and impact can be measured. The SFI leadership team have been aspirational and outward facing in their approach to developing the programme and have worked with the evaluation team to make this a process that they have learned from and benefitted from whilst still ongoing.

The evaluation has found that the SFI programme has been effective in meeting its core objectives and has been successful in working towards its central aims of promoting inclusive faith leadership, safer and stronger governance in faith institutions, strengthening the profile of faith institutions and facilitating integration. Key findings from the data shows that in the 2018/19 funding period up to July 2019:

- 619 women have attended SFI training related to safeguarding, health and safety or first aid. This gives them the skills and opportunities to take on leadership and governance roles within their institutions.
- 299 Action Plans have been put in place and that these have been tailored to individual institutions. These have been positively received by the institutions. This is against a target of 160.

- 7,795 people have attended training or workshop events run by the SFI programme. These training events or workshops focus on organisational, community and interfaith themes.
- Those that have taken part in training are more confident and able to promote the work of their institution to the wider community.
- 86% of institutions involved believe that the programme has a positive impact on social integration.
- The open nature in which the SFI team has worked with the evaluators and other external partners is testament to a programme that has grown in confidence and is now seen an established and impactful actor in the faith sector in England. This recognition from others within the sector is hard earned.

The combination of on-going success and the established recognition within the sector are considerable achievements. These successes represent investment in financial resources, time and social capital that are now paying dividends in institutions and social impact. Institutions which took part in the 2016-17 programme are still undergoing positive institutional change as a result of this. Institutional change, particularly in the faith, community and voluntary sectors, is often a slow-burning process and the very nature of this means that many of the outcomes from the SFI interventions in 2018 and 2019 are unlikely to have been captured due to the timeframe of the evaluation and reporting process. Here, we see that the “nudge process” appears to be supportive the delivery of tangible results.

The evaluation also recognises that the programme's model of delivery works, and it does so in a way that enables it to reach and work with faith institutions which may be seen as “hard to reach” or isolated. The role of the Community Consultants is key here, as are the skillsets and tacit knowledge of the Consultants themselves. The importance of using trusted and well-connected individuals who are known to local faith communities and institutions cannot be understated. Individuals seen as credible and trusted, with the skillset to undertake health checks and action plans, are absolutely essential to the functioning of the SFI programme. That these individuals are able to lend their credibility to other organisations, such as the Charity Commission, is a further positive externality of the work.

Concluding this report are a short set of recommendations that link directly to the findings of this evaluation. The Coventry University team recommends that:

1. The programme continues to be funded. A multi-year programme which would allow for closer and longer term working with faith institutions would see greater benefit than a shorter, more remedial, piece.
2. A longer-term outlook for the programme will require different, and more ambitious, outputs and measurements of. A longitudinal study which focusses on the continuing stories of change of faith institutions already engaged with by the programme, but also which document, in detail, the journey of new institutions would capture the contributions of the programme and the context within which it works. An ethnographic study may wish to be considered here.
3. Closer working with other MHCLG and Home Office programmes which promote integration and share values be developed. There are natural linkages between many of the MHCLG funded integration programmes but, though SFI have reached out to Near Neighbours, formal links and referrals between the programmes are weak. This is a missed opportunity. MHCLG, as funder, is well placed to act as a convener and lead on developing partnerships and closer working between its funded programmes.
4. The programme appoints a lead female Community Consultant who can work across the country with the existing, largely male, Community Consultants. Though it is recognised that the existing Community Consultants have achieved in working with women and promoting greater inclusion and opportunity for women in faith institutions, the appointment of a lead female Community Consultant to work with women around sensitive issues or in environments which men may struggle to access could build on this.
5. The programme consults with target groups, such as women, young people and those from marginalised ethnic or national backgrounds, to see what opportunities they would like the programme to provide and how they feel that the programme could best realise these.
6. SFI and the Charity Commission produce a joint action plan for collaborative working going forward. This could be thematic or geographic and will allow a planned programme of works to take the place of the current reactive approach.
7. Closer working with the Department of Education be developed to link in with programmes which promote safeguarding in faith based supplementary schools associated with places of worship. The natural crossover here is obvious and both parties can gain much from working together. SFI should nominate a lead for the development of this.
8. A formal recognition award be developed, building on those that the programme already has in place, for community elders and those who have governed faith institutions for a long period of time. Status and prestige are often derived from holding positions of power or governance and a desire to hold on to these is often linked and block on the reform and change that the SFI programme aims to bring about. A formal show of recognition and respect of the work of elders and long-term governors may help to assuage concerns of loss of status and promote reform.

2. Introduction

The Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (CTSPR) at Coventry University undertook an evaluation of the first phase of the Strengthening Faith Institutions (SFI) programme in 2016/17 and have now been commissioned to work on evaluating the programme and the implementation of new areas of work up until the end of the 2018/19 funding cycle.

Previous work undertaken by CTSPR with the SFI programme and team had given an advantage in understanding how the programme works and why. This evaluation draws on the processes developed in the previous piece and refines these to meet the needs of the evaluators, the programme and the funder.

2.1. Introduction to Strengthening Faith Institutions

The Strengthening Faith Institutions programme aims to help faith institutions better serve their congregations, communities and wider local areas by raising awareness of, and providing support to tackle, challenges which prevent these institutions from operating at an optimum level. This is to be achieved by identifying and addressing areas of organisational weakness, as well as upskilling, capacity building and resource sharing.

An overarching aim of this programme is to aim to increase social interaction and integration; all other outcomes of the programme feed into this to some degree. Greater capacity, stronger organisations and better resource sharing all play roles in facilitating integration and fostering social interaction. The programmes seek to achieve these aims by promoting inclusive faith leadership, safer and stronger governance in faith institutions, strengthening the profile of faith institutions and facilitating integration.

3. Methodology

This evaluation takes a mixed-methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data gathered as an expected part of the programme delivery and supplemented by additional methods. The analysis brings together both primary and secondary data from across the project and builds upon the work of previous evaluations and associated frameworks (e.g. Theory of Change). A priority has been placed throughout the evaluation on longer-term change and elements of impact not covered, or not covered in depth, in previous research. The specific methods deployed are described below. Overall the evaluation was designed to be iterative and flexible in nature, allowing the methods and approach to change to fit the busy, changeable demands of project delivery.

3.1. Methods

Given the above ambition to study and reveal insights on longer-term impact and areas of the delivery not covered in detail previously, the evaluation team chose methods which fit with an ethnographic approach, specifically a micro-organisational ethnography (Wolcott 1990) – a compact method allowing the use of observation and conversational and unstructured interviewing. These methods were deployed into order to generate ‘an intensive, detailed examination’ (Bryman and Bell, 2003: 55) of the organisation, process and settings in which the project operates.

The SFI leadership team did request that the evaluation be conducted in a way in which there could be little to no “cherry picking” of institutions to feed into the evaluation. This was an unusual and bold request, but one which reflected both a confidence in the programme and an openness to criticism and learning. To this end, the original interview lists of institutions was drawn up by the evaluation team based on criteria around location, size and faith/denomination. From here interviews were conducted, where possible, and the list was expanded.

Additional participants were chosen using a combination of convenience sampling – people who are observed because of their proximity, and snowball sampling – future participants suggested by current participants. In ethnographic research, particularly within a busy environment, flexibility in data gathering is vital. These sampling methods allowed the researchers to use flexible conversational interviewing, from a series of ‘broken and incomplete conversations’ (Bryman and Bell 2003: 328), at key points such as chatting before a meeting or event. This was vital for minimising any detrimental effect or interference with project delivery. Data gathered from these interactions was then supplemented by more formal, unstructured interviews.

A micro-organisational ethnographic approach was used for this research. The purpose of this approach (and indeed all ethnographic approaches) is to enable the researcher to interpret the research subject in the way that research participants understand and see it. This model is particularly flexible and responsive to differing and changing circumstances, and so is an appropriate method for evaluating a project such as SFI where the project’s activities and approach differ from setting to setting. This flexibility enabled a tailoring to the circumstances of the programme in a way that a more rigid methodology could not. A one-size-fits-all, prescriptive approach is likely to be poorly received by participants and produce findings of less depth, nuance and, crucially, validity. By working with the SFI programme and participants to conduct the evaluation we ensured relevance and buy-in.

Parallel to this was quantitative data collection, including online questionnaires sent to every institution involved in the programme and an analysis of data collected by the SFI programme itself. The data collected by the SFI programme was designed in collaboration with the evaluation team to be captured in a way that saw process benefits to the programme and that provided good, robust data from which to build an evidence base. Online questionnaires were used in the earlier SFI evaluation, but with mixed success. A large number of responses were generated but these often lacked depth and detail as participants appear to have spent less time completing the qualitative answers than originally expected. In this evaluation, the online questionnaires were designed in a way that generated more detail, but it was accepted that, even with incentives offered, that this would lead to a lower response rate.

The previous evaluation recommended that attempts at capturing longer term change should be made. The intervention of the programme is the first step in a chain that must take place in order for the broad and ambitious societal aims of the programme to be achieved and though it is recognised that there is a need for immediate results in terms of justifying funding decisions and policy, the lack of a longitudinal study does mean that much of the impact of the programme was unrecorded. To meet this recommendation, attempts were made to visit and involve the 6 institutions which were engaged directly with in 2016/17. This was only possible with 4 of the 6.

In addition to this, the following fieldwork was undertaken:

- Telephone interviews with representatives from 16 of the institutions involved. These took place, where possible, at the start of their involvement in the programme and towards the end of this evaluation period.
- Structured interviews with key internal and external stakeholders involved with the programme. This includes all of the SFI delivery team, leadership team and partners including the Charity Commission.
- Observation of Community Consultant training days interviews with all who attended. These were further supplemented by telephone interviews.
- Observation of training sessions provided by SFI for institutions and individuals.

3.2. Limitations

It is vital to recognise the limitations of evaluative research in order that the findings and recommendations can be understood within an appropriate context and for caveats to be applied by the audience, where relevant.

Though this evaluation strove to engage with groups and individuals in a way that was as representative of the programme as was possible, it was not always the case that full representation was possible. The sample size of institutions from some ethnic and religious backgrounds is very small and as many of the institutions involved are neither large or particularly outward facing at this stage, much engagement, at least initially, needed to be brokered by a Community Consultant.

Additionally, yet representative of the environment within which the programme operates in, the voice of women and young people was not heard enough. Nearly all institutional leads interviewed or visited were male and it is likely that the vast majority of respondents to the online questionnaire were too. The evaluators are still able to draw strong conclusions, despite these limited gaps.

The SFI core programme team and Community Consultants were, in proportional terms, over-represented in their engagement with the programme when compared to faith institutions. Nearly all those who work on the programme took part in the evaluation as compared to only a small proportion of the faith institutions involved. This is not unusual or necessarily problematic. Engagement with those who work on

the programme can give an overview of the programme and detail into inner workings that is not available from institutions that have had one off engagements. Data collected in interviews was, where possible, corroborated with data or in other interviews.

Finally, there are potentially limitations related to using logic models designed by the project themselves because the project team have a hand in deciding what they will be measured against which may lead to bias. Although this was not observed by researchers, it is also mitigated by the fact that the outcomes from the Theory of Change were not the only measures as a set of outcomes were also provided by the funder, providing more balance in the assessment. The combination of these is used throughout to ensure rigour.

4. Findings

The findings are organised around a set of questions proposed by the evaluation team and agreed by the SFI team and MHCLG. These are:

1. What are the aims of the project and does the project have a clear understanding of what it is trying to achieve and how it seeks to do this?
2. How effective is project delivery?
3. What evidence is there that the programme has a positive impact?

When assessing the evidence as to whether or not the programme has had a positive impact, this piece will break the aims and outputs of the programme down into 4 key areas. These have been identified early in the research via the Theory of Change process and have been agreed with SFI and MHCLG. Contractually agreed, as well as targets and outputs that were developed during the programme, will then be mapped onto these key areas to produce an evidence base which demonstrates where and how the programme is achieving, where it is not and which contextualises this in a way that is relevant to the real world delivery of the programme.

The 4 key areas of focus here are:

- Inclusive Faith Leadership
- Safer, Stronger Governance
- Strengthening Profile
- Facilitating Integration

The evaluation will also provide practical and realistic recommendations that the programme could undertake to improve effectiveness, reach and delivery.

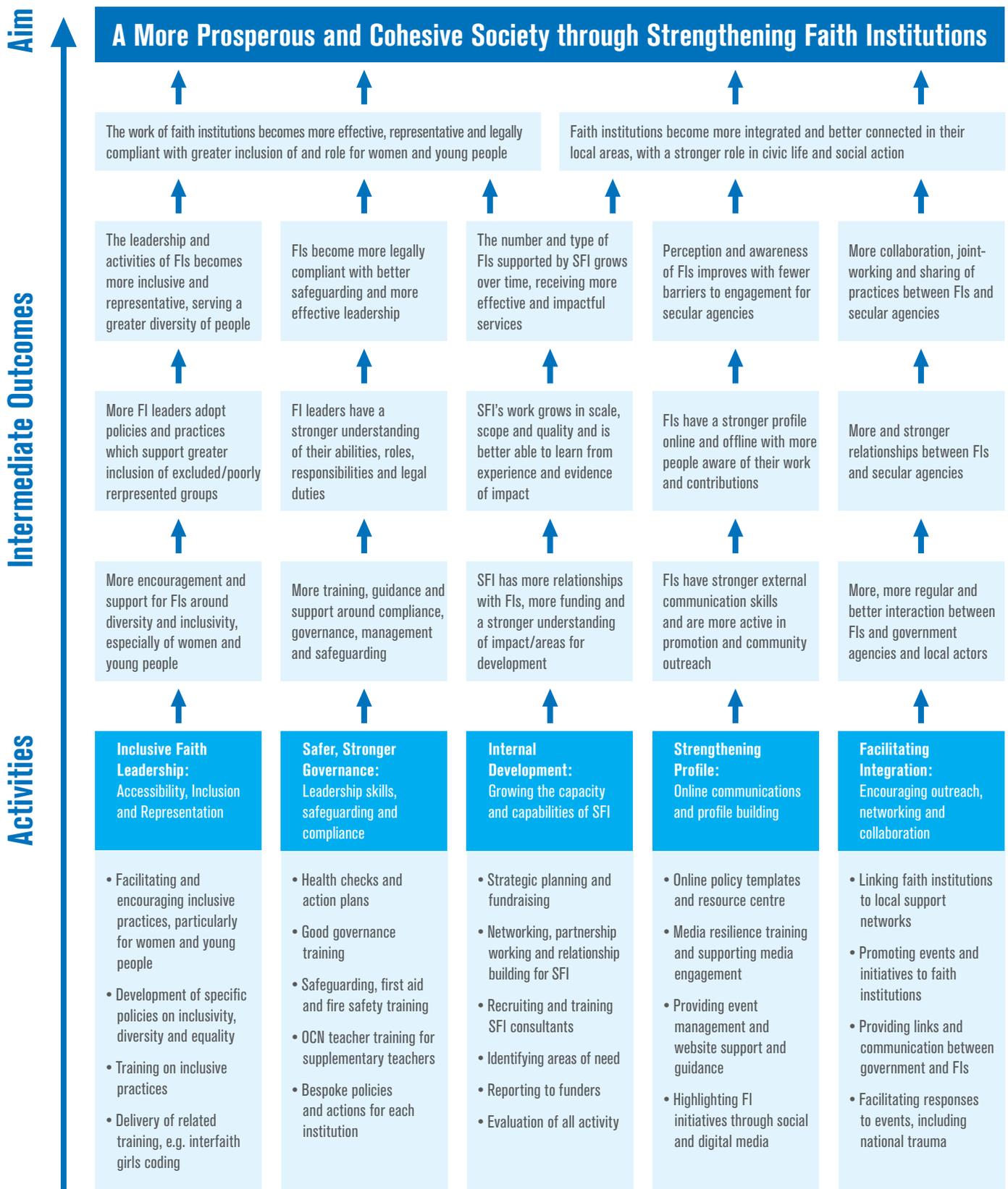
4.1. What are the aims of the project and does the project have a clear understanding of what it is trying to achieve and how it seeks to do this?

As a precursor to the full evaluation process, the evaluation team conducted a Theory of Change exercise with SFI in December 2017. This was attended by members of staff at all levels of involvement at SFI and a representative of MHCLG.

The initial Theory of Change exercise identified the underlying logic of the programme. Based on this Theory of Change, and in consultation with the SFI team and DCLG, the evaluation team identified suitable qualitative methods (interviews, observation and practitioner field diaries) and quantitative methods (collated data on referrals, mentoring and community engagement) through which to evaluate the programme.

This exercise demonstrated that SFI has a clear and focused understanding of what it is trying to achieve, with a consistent set of objectives articulated by those at all levels within the programme. The Theory of Change session run with this project was one of the most coherent, cohesive and clearly articulated of those facilitated in any CTPSR evaluation to date. The team demonstrated a very high degree of common understanding of the aims and objectives of the programme which is particularly impressive given the Community Consultant based model of project delivery. Community Consultants on the programme have a high degree of autonomy and are recruited to work in specific areas. It may therefore be expected that there would be a lack of clarity across the team or that Community Consultants have their own local agendas or interests, but this factor was not apparent in either the Theory of Change session or subsequent interviews and observations.

The final diagram (below) shows clear and logical links between the myriad of activities delivered and the desired intermediate outcomes and overarching aims. The activities undertaken include promoting stronger governance, inclusion at institutional levels, internal development and promoting and facilitating integration and social interaction. These activities and the aims and outcomes which come from them are all directly related to the aims of both the programme and MHCLG.



A Theory of Change for Strengthening Faith Institutions

Figure 1 Theory of Change for SFI

4.2. How effective is programme delivery?

The SFI programme has been effective in programme delivery. Where hard targets exist, these have either been exceeded (as is the case with the number of institutional Action Plans drawn up) or have been revised as the programme has developed. Where there are targets outstanding, action plans have been put in place to ensure that these are fulfilled by September 2019. This is the case with the shortfall around NRCSE Supplementary Teacher Training course accreditations. The evaluation team are satisfied that the measures put in place are sufficient to meet or exceed outstanding targets.

Though targets exist for SFI, as with nearly all large funded programmes, it is, by its very ethos, not target driven. A repeated theme of conversation around faith institution engagement with the SFI team and the wider Community Consultants has been the uniqueness of every institution with which the programme has worked and a recognition that if all institutions were treated and handled by the programme in a formulaic manner, that the programme would not function well. Faith institutions are not “widgets” (Community Consultant) and the programme does not treat them as such.

Community Consultants are essential to the on the ground effectiveness of the programme. This is a strong finding from both this and the previous evaluation. The high levels of tacit knowledge that they possess, coupled with their trusted status in the communities in which they work, allows the programme to operate as it does. Tacit knowledge is that which cannot be easily conveyed to others or systematically learned (Chugh, 2015); it is the knowledge that an individual has, often unique to them, which has been learned by doing and experiencing (Schmidt & Hunter, 1993). Though the term was not named explicitly by interviewees, allusions to it were a recurring theme:

“They know who to speak to and everyone knows them. They just get things done.” (Institutional Representative)

“They have that community status, but they’ve also got that accumulated experience of doing this. They don’t need to find things out to solve problems. Most of the time, they’ve already seen the issue somewhere else before” (Partner interviewee)

The accumulated experience of the Community Consultants was seen as a positive in the way that it enables them to act quickly and assertively. Accumulated experience is also an important reason to why the programme as a whole is more effective now in programme delivery than it has been at any stage in the past. SFI have been open to approaches of continuous learning and have approached evaluative principles which go beyond monitoring. This has led to a continuous refinement of practice.

Over the course of this evaluation the SFI project team has implemented several changes with regards to programme administration and monitoring that have increased both the effectiveness of delivery and improved the evidence base for the programme. Evaluation and monitoring forms for training and workshops have been redrafted and refined from rather general pieces to forms which aim to capture outputs specific to the programme in a systematic way. The language of these forms have also been adapted and clear and concise English has been used in an attempt to improve the quality of responses.

Additionally, a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has now gone live. This is aimed at improving the working with individual faith institutions and should formalise and internalise links with the institutions beyond the Community Consultant model.

With regards to faith institutions, user satisfaction with the programme is high. Figure 2 below shows that 96% of respondents would recommend the programme to another faith institution which they personally know whilst Figure 3 shows that 81% feel that the health check process has positively impacted on their institutional aims and outcomes. These are strong indicators that those involved as users of the programme feel that the programme delivers and is effective in doing so.

Would you recommend the SFI programme to other faith institutions that you personally know?



Figure 2 Recommending SFI

To what extent do you believe that the healthcheck process has positively impacted on the activities and aims of your institution?

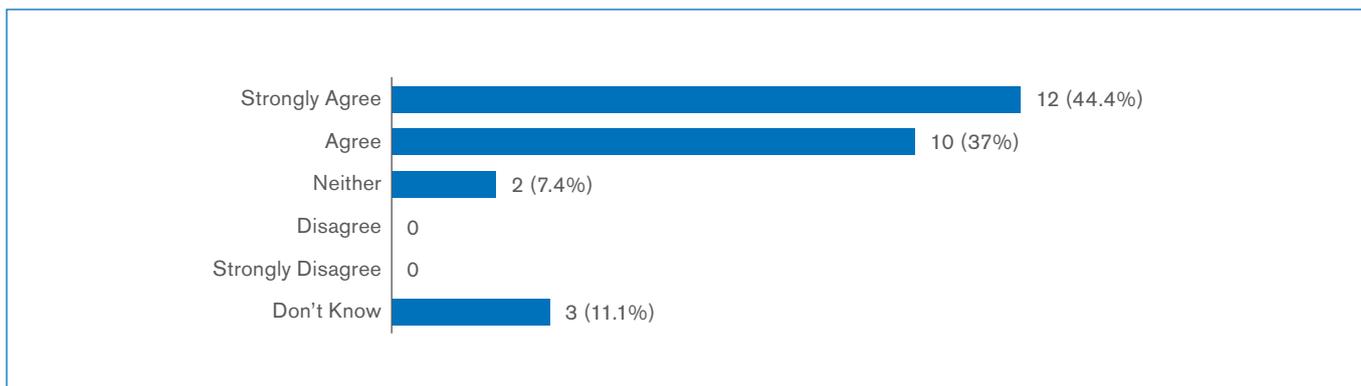


Figure 3 Positive Impact from the Healthcheck

The Theory of Change document highlights programme effectiveness and the need to grow this over time under the outcomes related to “Growing the capacity and capabilities of SFI”. These outcomes are closely related and lead logically into one another. Here, to see success, we should be observing:

- SFI having more relationships with faith institutions and a stronger understanding of both impact and areas for future development.
- The work of SFI grows in scope, scale and quality and that it is better able to learn from experience and evidence of impact.
- That the number of faith institutions engaged with grows over time and they receive more effective and impactful services.

On these criteria, coupled with those outlined by the funder around numbers of engaged faith institutions, we see that the programme has been effective in delivery. Against a target of issuing 160 new Action Plans, the programme has delivered 299 and there are more institutions engaged with the programme than ever before, and these are drawn from a wider range of sources than existing networks (Figure 13). Institutions are satisfied with the support that they have received to the extent that they believe it has positively benefited their organisation in a way that is in line with the programme aims and are willing to recommend it to others.

The evaluation team, in working closely with the SFI programme team, have seen first-hand that learning takes place and that delivery is amended in a way that improves

the effectiveness of delivery. We are confident that the programme knows what effective delivery looks like and which aspires to work as closely to that as is possible. Steps taken towards this have been pragmatic and successful.

4.3. What evidence is there that the programme has a positive impact?

From the data gathered, there is evidence of a wide and varied range of positive effects from the project's activities. The starting point to understanding and demonstrate this impact is the project's Theory of Change, developed with and by those closest to the project's delivery. Alongside this logic map, there are specific, prescribed indicators of effect of particular interest to the project's funders. This section is thus structured primarily using 4 of the 5 areas of activity from the Theory of Change (excluding the area focused on the internal workings of the project). Within each of those four areas, there is a discussion of outcomes relevant to the theory of change and the objectives set by the funder, showing the considerable overlap and complementarity between these two frameworks.

4.3.1. Inclusive Faith Leadership

A core aim of the programme is around building inclusive faith leadership. This has a particular focus on the participation and inclusion of women, young people and people from different ethnic or national backgrounds. These are discussed thematically within this section.

Inclusion and inclusivity in this context pertain to the actions or states of individuals or distinct groups, such as those identified by the programme, being included within the structure, aims or activities of the faith institution that they belong to. On the part of the faith institution this is expected to be an active rather than a passive role with excluded or marginalised groups being taken account of and specifically included. That a group or individual is not specifically excluded does not mean that they are included or made to feel that they are.

Here the programme had 4 key areas of outputs. These were:

- A change in leadership attitudes towards women in positions of authority;
- Responsibility for key functions within faith institution delivery will be undertaken by women;
- The leadership and activities of the faith institutions become more inclusive and representative, serving a greater diversity of people; and
- The activities of faith institutions become more inclusive and representative, serving a greater diversity of people.

The programme uses a "nudging process" of moving institutions softly and slowly towards the desired outcomes. Drawing on concepts of Nudge Theory (Thaler and Sunstein), the programme presents options to involved institutions which influence their choices in a way that makes a favourable outcome in relation to the aims of the programme both more likely and which presents it as a choice of the institution rather than a decision enforced from above. An obvious example of this is if an institution is identified by the programme action plan as needing a safeguarding lead officer and the programme makes safeguarding training free, available and targeted towards women, that there are likely to be women attending the training and becoming lead officers for safeguarding. The faith institutions choose to act on the action plan and they choose who to send on the safeguarding training. The programme has, however, engineered their "choice architecture" in a way that leads to optimal outcomes.

Promoting female leadership and involvement

The government Integration Strategy green paper (March 2018) identifies that women and girls are disproportionately held back in society and from integrating more widely by both cultural practices and a fear of facing discrimination or prejudice. The UN also recognise that whilst women's political participation at national level is an important step towards gender equality, meaningful participation starts at the grassroots level as this is commonly the arena where decisions that directly affect women are made. Enabling and promoting women's meaningful participation and access to all areas of public and private life will benefit society at large. The World Economic Forum, similarly, highlight several factors such as unconscious bias, social norms and tradition as being factors that mean that achieving gender parity is a slow process, both globally and locally. They estimate that gender parity globally is still 170 years away.

The SFI programme recognises that transforming existing power relations should start at the grassroots level. For the project team, focussing on promoting women’s meaningful participation at local level will not only empower women and their skills, but also benefit the institution. This was a common theme in interviews with Community Consultants and with many faith institutions; interviewees recognised that positive change needs to start at a local level and that women need to be empowered to take on positions of responsibility and leadership in their communities.

Also, as a part of the ‘gender equality nudge’ the programme was given a target of 100 women to be trained as primary Safeguarding, First Aid, Health and Safety, and/or Fire Officer leads at SFI institutions. 25 of these women were expected to be in Integration Areas. The below table shows the numbers of female attendees on relevant training sessions in the 2018/19 phase of the work. These training programmes vary in pitch with some being aimed at beginners and others at designated officers. Women are represented at all levels of training and the integration areas are prominent hosts of training sessions.

The total number of female attendees is used as opposed to the numbers that became primary leads in their respective area for their faith institution. This is in part because of the lack of clarity in outcomes beyond the training itself and also because it is recognised that the programme can only deliver the training and put attendees in a position where they are qualified and capable of becoming lead officers.

Training Topic	No. of Female Trainees from SFI Institutions (since beginning of 2018/19 reporting period)
Safeguarding	434
First Aid	85
Health and Safety	100
Total	619

It is also crucial not to focus only on the number of women represented and active in the decision-making bodies but also that they will have a meaningful influence in decision-making processes. In many cases women were regarded as being an underutilised asset in local communities, particularly where there was a low formal skills base amongst established leaders:

“We know that there are women who come to the mosque who have qualifications. They work in accounting and finance. They know how to look after money. But we don’t involve them here. We should. We know that.”
(Committee Member)

“We have female teachers who can contribute to the betterment of the institution.”
(Respondent)

By encouraging the women who have skills to use them in their faith institutions and by providing training and development opportunities for those who want them, the programme aimed to avoid tokenistic female appointments. An awareness of this and a desire to see meaningful, as opposed to contrived or superficial, change was a recurring theme in interviews with the SFI core team and with Community Consultants. Figure 4 below shows that the programme has succeeded in encouraging 46% of institutions that underwent health checks to seek the greater involvement of women in the institutions’ governance. This is progress and only 11% have definitely not been encouraged.

Has the healthcheck process encouraged your institution to seek the greater involvement of women in its governance?

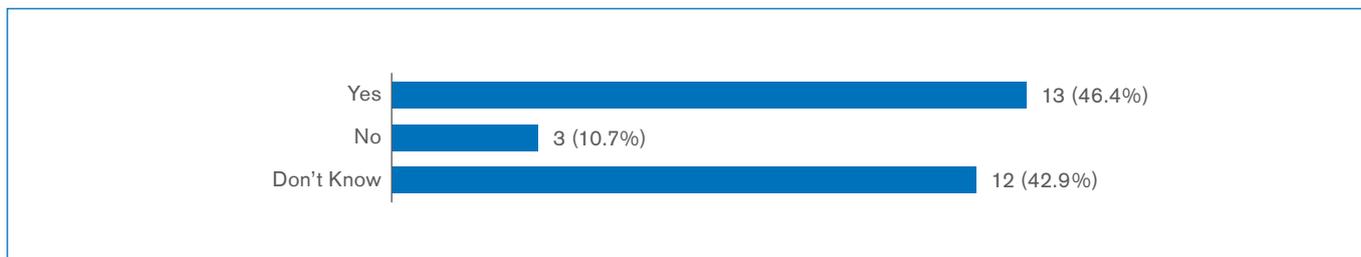


Figure 4 Governance and the Inclusion of Women

Figure 5 also shows that there is a tangible increase in awareness of the importance of the inclusion of women in faith institutions. 43% of responding institutions reported being encouraged to seek greater involvement of women in their aims and activities. This, in the interview data, is attributed firmly to the programme's intervention:

"No, I don't think that they'd be considering women and young people in their activities, or at all, without the programme. Lots of them haven't done it ever in their history, so why would they just start without any prompting?"
(Consultant)

"We've been encouraged to put on more services for women" (Institutional Representative)

"There are now more women's activities and involvement in decision making processes" (Institutional Representative)

Has the healthcheck process encouraged your institution to seek the greater involvement of women in its aims and activities?

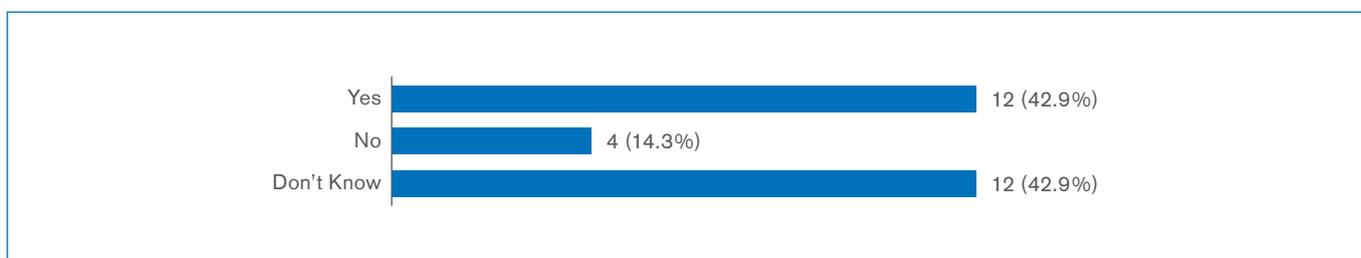


Figure 5 Aims, Activities and Inclusion of Women

That this is a slow and iterative process was mentioned by nearly all Community Consultants interviewed. Having an awareness of the need for provision for women in decision making and governance is definitely regarded as a first step towards inclusive leadership, rather than a jump towards the end:

“Some places are good at having both men and women on their decision making. A lot of places haven’t gotten there yet...but what you have to understand is that these organisations were set up in a certain way. But going into the future, even though a lot of these institutions may not have young people and women in their boards, but they do have women and young people participant in everything they do with regards to their activities” (Consultant)

However, the provision and training that the programme delivers was criticised by some internal interviewees as having been developed without the consultation of women (and young people). Whilst it seems an effective strategy to target key areas, such as safeguarding and health and safety to move institutions towards the inclusion of women in governance, it is a gap that this group has not been consulted on. Consultation with women already in leadership positions in the faith institutions and with those who aspire to be in may be a useful exercise for the programme in identifying gaps in delivery and challenging assumptions made by the programme and the funder.

A further area of female representation that the programme may wish to look at in the future is increasing the number of female Community Consultants and/or raising the profile of those already working on the programme. Nearly all Community Consultants on the programme are male and there are felt to be some institutions and issues where a female Community Consultant may be more effective in engaging than a male one.

Promoting youth leadership and involvement

The inclusion of young people in education, employment and wider society are cornerstones of the government Integration Strategy green paper and the principles which underpin this run through the SFI programme. The green paper clearly states that young people who do not have access to opportunities run the risk of being marginalised and disengaged from wider society.

The Muslim faith has the youngest age demographic in England and Wales with 17% of all Muslims being aged between 10 and 24 at the time of the 2011 Census. This is compared to 12% of all people in England and Wales being in the same age band. Similar young demographics are also seen on a smaller scale in Pentecostal Christian faith groups. Young people in these, and other, faith institutions need to feel included and have access to opportunity to keep them positively engaged and to reduce the risks associated with marginalisation. The SFI programme is a clear vehicle for this.

With this in mind, it is positive that the data shows 43% of institutions having been encouraged to seek the greater involvement of young people (as defined by the respondent) in their governance and 48% seeking greater involvement of young people in their aims and activities.

Has the healthcheck process encouraged your institution to seek the greater involvement of young people in its governance?

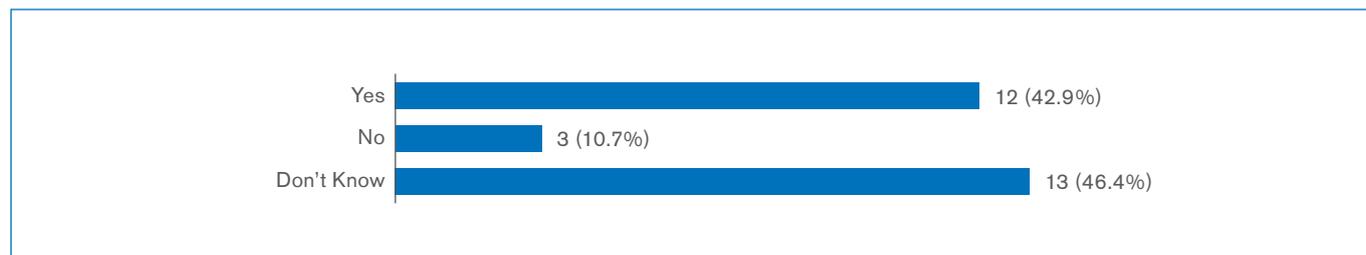


Figure 6 Governance and Inclusion of Young People

Has the healthcheck process encouraged your institution to seek the greater involvement of young people in its aims and activities?

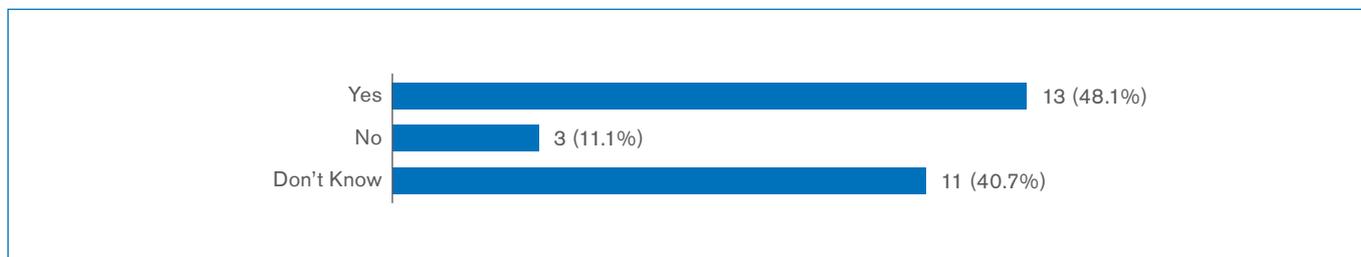


Figure 7 Aims, Activities and Inclusion of Young People

However, a common theme amongst interviewees, from both the programme and faith institutions themselves, was around hierarchy and age in different cultures and traditions and how this plays out in implementing policies that promote the greater involvement of young people in decision making:

"I'm in my 40s and some people here still regard me as a youngster. That's the way that it is in our community. You need to earn your stripes" (Institutional Representative)

"Young means different things to different people and we need to be aware of that." (Community Consultant)

Also recurrent was the theme, particularly outside of London, that there is a "brain drain" of young people who are active in their communities but then are forced to move away either to attend university or for work. They may still be involved in the faith sector but in a different institution and a different area or they may, and often do, distance themselves from the sector again until later in adulthood. This phenomena, and that of people in different communities and contexts being viewed as young despite being, in some cases, more than two decades into adulthood, are not unique to the faith sector. The average age of a Member of Parliament was cited by one interviewee as an example of hierarchies often being weighted towards older generations.

The programme is facing very real challenges in trying to promote the greater inclusion of young people but is making clear progress. That this progress is realistic with regards to seeking to raise awareness of the importance of including young people in institutional aims and activities is good. A programme which aimed to get young people into positions of leadership in faith institutions which have entrenched values and hierarchies is a programme that poorly designed and set up to fail. That SFI instead starts young people on the

journey towards becoming leaders by providing them with practical skills with which to serve their institution and therefore "earn their stripes" whilst also raising an awareness of the importance of including younger people in decision making and activities provides scope for development and positive change.

More could, however, be asked of the programme with recording the impact of their work in targeting young people. Core reporting data that is required by the funder asks for the gender of training participants to be reported, but it does not require that the age of participants is recorded. If this were reported, it would provide a better evidence base for the effectiveness of this element of the work.

Promoting diverse leadership and involvement

The UK is now more ethnically diverse than ever before (Census 2011, ONS 2017) and with this has come an increase in the numbers and proportion of the BAME population compared to the White British population, but also a greater level of diversity and difference within the BAME populations. This increased diversity and demographic change, particularly in large cities, has seen faith institutions which were established to serve a particular single national or ethnic group now drawing new members of their congregation from other groups. In parts of London, for instance, a growing Somali population has seen the numbers of Somalis worshipping at well-established mosques run and predominantly used by Pakistani heritage Muslims.

Such population change and the arrival of new groups and individuals in established institutions can be a positive dynamic in many cases, but is also not without potential issues. Ethnic or national groups which have worked over long periods of time, and at considerable cost to themselves, to establish their place of worship may feel threatened by newcomers or may feel that the institution belongs to their ethnic or national group,

even though they share the same faith as the newcomers. On the reverse side of this, incoming groups and individuals may feel that they are not adequately represented in with regards to their culture, particular faith practices or even language. Over time this can, on both sides, lead to a marginalisation, entrenchment of existing power and resentment.

The programme aims to tackle this by raising awareness of, and promoting the inclusion of people from different ethnic groups or of other nationalities in the governance, aims and activities of faith institutions. Figure 8 below shows that 37% of responding institutions have acted positively with regards to governance following the programme.

Has the healthcheck process encouraged your institution to seek the greater involvement of people from different ethnic groups or of other nationalities in its governance?

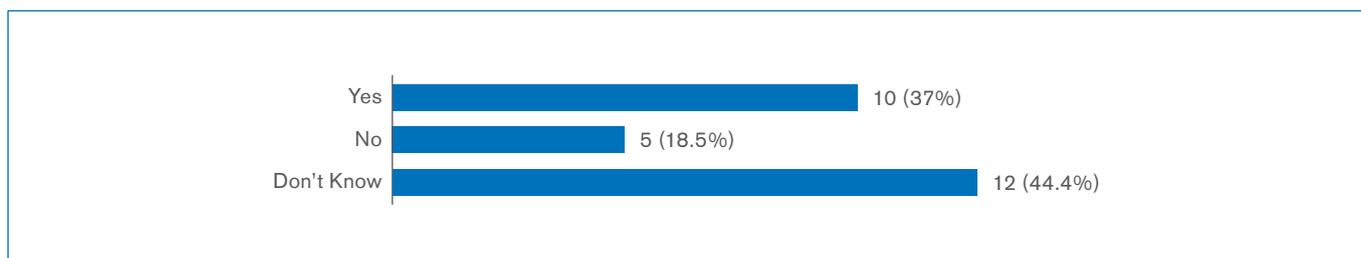


Figure 8 Governance and Ethnicity & Nationality Inclusion

Less positively, Figure 9 below shows that only 20% of faith institutions which responded have acted positively with regards to seeking to include people from different ethnic and national backgrounds in their aims and activities. This is lower than the other target groups but interview data with consultants and institutions themselves suggests that this may in part be due to a greater focus on the inclusion of women and young people. Also, some of the areas that the programme worked in, or groups that it worked with, were rather monocultural. In one example that was given, was that it would be hard to encourage a gurdwara to include Sikhs not of Indian, and more specifically Punjabi, heritage to be involved given that the vast majority of Sikhs are of Indian or Punjabi heritage. Similarly, there are some areas in

England covered by the programme where the vast majority of Muslims in the local area are from a single cultural or ethnic background. It may not be realistic in these cases to expect a wider engagement in the same way women and young people are readily available and accessible.

It is, however, also the case that in some faith institutions other ethnic groups and nationalities are already included and well served. In one institution that was visited the evaluation team were told that the congregation is drawn from at least 25 countries.

Has the healthcheck process encouraged your institution to seek the greater involvement of people from different ethnic groups or other nationalities in its aims and activities?

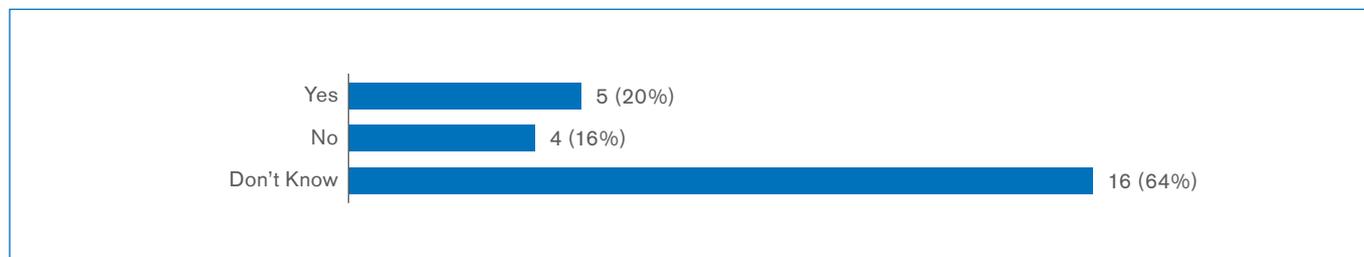


Figure 9 Aims, Activities and Ethnicity & Nationality Inclusion

With regards to promoting inclusive faith leadership, the work around different ethnic groups and nationalities is weaker than that around women and young people. In part this is likely to be due to the higher profile that is placed by the funder and the programme on the inclusion of women and young people, but also it is likely to be due to the more challenging and varied nature of the task in this strand. Some institutions show good working and inclusion across diverse groups, whilst others are resistant entirely to change here. Future work in this area would likely benefit from a clearer focus and very defined outcomes, whilst also recognising that issues around different ethnic or national group representation in faith institutions are not as prevalent as those around the inclusion of women and young people.

Conclusion

Overall the use of “nudging” to achieve a process of gradual change appears successful and is met with less resistance from institutions than an outright aim being set for institutions to undergo immediate and more dramatic internal reform. This is true in the cases of promoting the greater involvement of women, young people and minority groups within institutions. By “nudging” these target groups towards established positions in institutions through, for example, providing training as First Aid or Safeguarding Officers, they begin to move in the same spheres, and come into contact with, trustees and/or committee members whilst also removing the risk of being appointed in a tokenistic manner. The appointment of women, young people and minority groups to trustee or committee positions to fill quotas was an anxiety of the funder and the programme team, and one which SFI were upstream and mindful of. The pathways that have been chosen for ensuring greater inclusion in governance by the programme have avoided this.

This process of “nudging” towards longer term change is also a pragmatic acceptance of the realities of the governance and

management of many faith institutions and is something that the SFI team have learned over the duration of the SFI programmes. Fast-paced, sweeping changes in the governance of small faith institutions, which are often governed by their founder or founders – many of whom have devoted time, energy and their own finances over long periods to the institutions – is not likely to be feasible as it requires an often voluntary relinquishment of power and prestige. This is not in any way a criticism of the SFI programme but rather a reflection of the reality in which the programme operates. That the programme recognises this and has mitigated for it, is a positive and should be recognised as such. This context, it must also be recognised, is not unique or even overly prevalent in faith institutions when compared to other community, voluntary or social bodies. Examples of other similar organisations in which elder members retain status at the expense of younger or more diverse groups of individuals were often cited by interviewees. These included rotary clubs, trade unions and school governing bodies.

Overall, findings related to inclusive faith leadership are positive. Across the board, data from the online questionnaires show that the health check processes have encouraged institutions to seek out the greater involvement of women, young people and people from more diverse ethnic or national backgrounds in their aims and activities. This represents a tangible attitudinal and behavioural change on the behalf of the institutions with these outcomes being directly attributable to the programme intervention. Institutions that have gone through the health-check process are now doing work that they previously would not have been doing and are considering the SFI target groups when doing this. There has been more of a focus on promoting female inclusion and opportunity than there has for young people and those from diverse backgrounds and this is represented in the findings. This level of focus is not inappropriate, nor problematic, but it may be something that the programme benefit from being internally aware of going forward.

4.3.2. Safer, Stronger Governance

Many faith institutions in England are small and are run locally by volunteers and lay people. Others may have paid faith leaders but are unlikely to have professional support teams to deal with the day to day running of the institution. There therefore exists a gap in governance whereby institutions are active and led by well-meaning individuals driven by positive, faith-led desires to do good work for their congregations and their local areas but who are often unaware of, or too busy to focus on, the seemingly more mundane issues around compliance and governance.

In many cases, institutions have unwillingly lapsed into legal non-compliance. They were compliant when they were established but have not kept abreast of legal and legislative changes and so are using outdated policies and practices. Similarly in terms of internal governance, leaders institutions are either in a situation whereby the internal hierarchy is so entrenched that proper procedure is not followed and decisions are “waved through” (Institutional Representative) or they are so focused on “keeping the lights on and the roof fixed” (Institutional Representative) that the need for safe and strong governance fades into the background.

Throughout the evaluation there were no clear examples seen by the evaluation team of wilful malpractice with regards to safeguarding or legal compliance. Generally, all issues related to these were of ignorance of the need for policies and practices or of outdated ones. There were incidents of malpractice around governance with regards to the holding of elections and terms of appointments. Some of these may have been wilful consolidations of power and others may be representative of other internal, institutional priorities.

Institutions being made aware of, and able to practice, safer and stronger governance was a key focus of the programme. Here expected outcomes were that faith institutions:

- become more legally compliant with better safeguarding and more effective leadership.
- are more aware of, and better able to access, training guidance and support around compliance, governance, management and safeguarding.
- leaders have a stronger understanding of their abilities, roles, responsibilities and legal duties.
- are more resilient to extremist attitudes, and more willing and open to working with authorities to create transformative change

To achieve this, the SFI programme was given a target of 160 new faith institutions (48 of these in integration) were to be audited, with institution specific action plans developed. These were to include safeguarding policy and procedures, Health and Safety policy and procedures, the appointment of relevant designated officers, wider community engagement outreach and, where required, registration with the Charity Commission.

Here the programme has significantly overachieved and should be recognised as such. As of July 2019, 299 action plans are in place with new institutions and another 41 are likely to follow as a result of health checks having taken place. 554 institutions in total have been engaged with, with only 14 then being either removed from the programme or a decision being made not to run the healthcheck. This suggests that this still a backlog of institutions awaiting health checks and actions plans.

Level of Engagement	Number of Institutions engaged with 2018-19
Initial Consent gained (includes those that have since undergone health checks and action plans)	554
Health Check but no action plan as yet	41
Action Plan in place	299

The health check process is the first step that the programme take in working with an institution on a formal basis. Often this follows a great deal of pre- health check dialogue and conversation to establish a relationship and necessary levels of trust. Figures 10 and 11 below show that 92% of respondents feel that this process has positively impacted on their institutions governance and that 81% feel that it has positively impacted on their aims and activities. This is a success for both the way that the programme is designed and structured but also in the way that it is implemented.

To what extent do you believe that the healthcheck process has positively impacted on the governance of your institution?

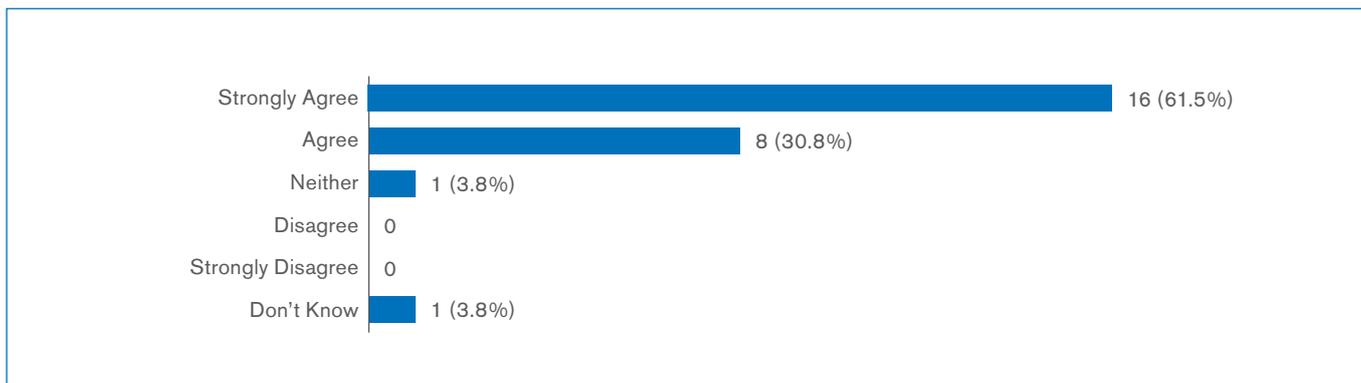


Figure 10 Positive Impact on Governance

To what extent do you believe that the healthcheck process has positively impacted on the activities and aims of your institution?

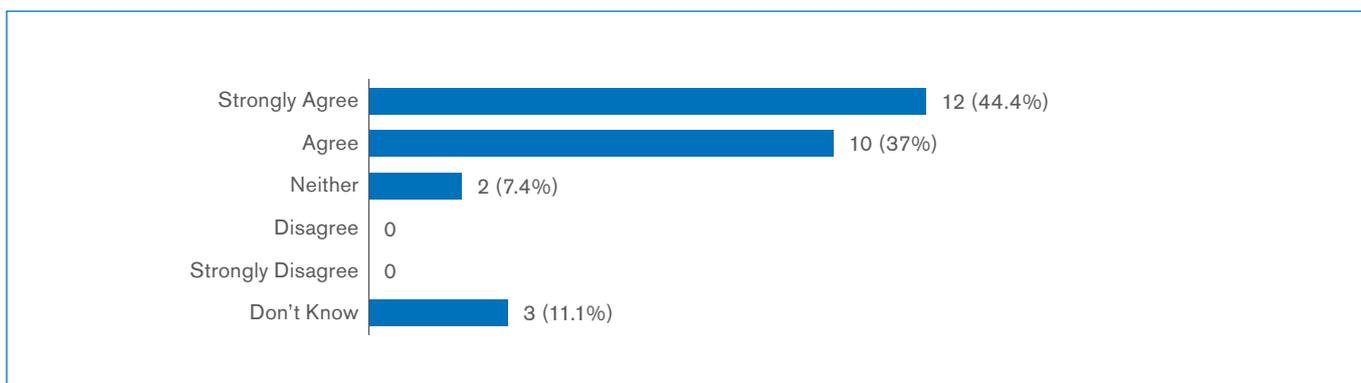


Figure 11 Positive Impact on Aims and Activities

Action Plans follow on from the health check process and are a key area of work for the programme in ensuring that change is put onto the agenda for faith institutions and that it is done in a formalised way that is attainable and realistic. Figure 12 demonstrates very well that the programme is achieving its aim of providing a tailored Action Plan to all institutions that it works with. The previous evaluation of the programme found that this tailored approach was both a good vehicle for getting institutions to engage and be a part of the process as it showed that they were being listened to and that their needs were being addressed, but also that this led to impactful action plans which were realistic and linked to the core aims of the programme and the wider Integration Strategy. This has, again, been corroborated in fieldwork for this evaluation.

Additionally, that all institutions involved in the programme receive tailored Action Plans differentiates the programme from other governance and safeguarding initiatives and, coupled with the successes in working with institutions which need a high degree of one to one support or “*handholding*” (Consultant) is a success for the model. A recurring theme in interviews with faith institutions is that they do not believe that their Action Plan could have been developed and implemented if the programme provided either off the shelf advice and if they did not have one point of contact to work them, often physically, through the process.

Was this Action Plan tailored to your institution?

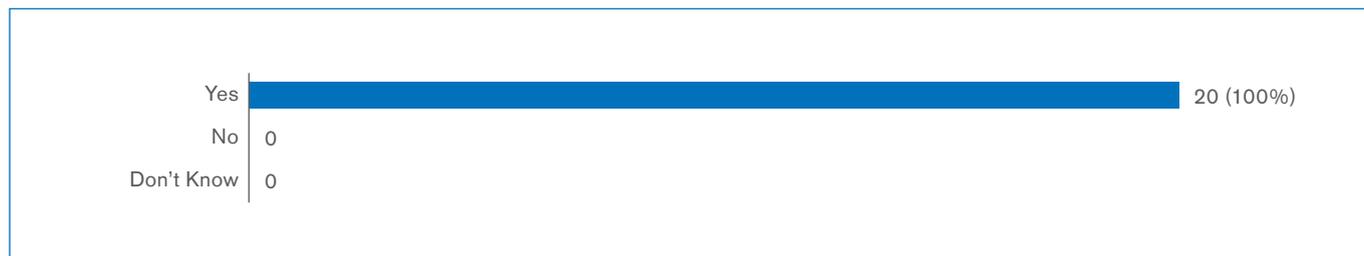


Figure 12 Tailoring of Action Plans

Safeguarding and safeguarding practices were issues which dominated interview responses around safer and stronger governance. In part this is likely to be because of high profile safeguarding failures in faith and statutory bodies across the UK, but also because much safeguarding legislation is relatively new in comparison to the life-cycles of established faith institutions. Institutions which were compliant when they were established in the 1980s have, in some cases, been using policies from that era up until the intervention of the programme. That updated policies and practices have been highlighted to institutions and that boilerplate policies have been made available to them is objectively a successful intervention.

Many of the institutional safeguarding issues which have been flagged up as a result of the programme, and many of the risk areas, are not typically seen as high risk or representing a significant level of institutional or individual wilfulness to endanger others. Radicalisation and sexual abuse, though significant areas of the safeguarding agenda, appear to have been much less prevalent than low level, often ‘culturally-tolerated’ (Interviewee) physical abuse. Most safeguarding incidents are:

“Kids getting given a clip round the ear by an ‘uncle’”
(Interviewee)

This is not to denigrate the importance and the impact of such safeguarding issues. This did, however, give the team a closer insight into how safeguarding issues in faith institutions were managed than would have been possible around higher risk themes. The following case study was recorded by a Community Consultant after his work with a London mosque:

“They had received a specific Action Plan from the charity commission as there was a safeguarding incident that took place over a year ago at their premises. A student in their Madrasah programme complained to their parents that a teacher was shouting at them and threatened to slap them.

The parents then forwarded this issue to the relevant services. Once the Charity Commission had received word of this they did a review of that faith institutions management. They found that the faith institution was lacking in management structures, most of the trustees had little grasp of English and they needed to improve their safeguarding procedures. They produced for them a specific and clear Action Plan and after they were given the Action Plan, they reached out to SFI as we were one of the listed organisations to provide support.

I worked with them over a period of 2 months to cover different aspects of the Action Plan. I also engaged with the specific charity officer that was working with them to follow up about certain questions. I made sure to keep them informed throughout and touch back with them. I met with them in person a total of 3 times as well as having weekly phone call catch ups with them, as well as following up emails and etc. The work that was done resulted in the Charity Commission closing the case. I was extremely pleased with this outcome. I knew that if this institution didn’t get this personal follow up and further action they wouldn’t have been able to meet the needs of the Action Plan as well as they did.”
(Community Consultant)

This case study is included in full as it highlights a typical safeguarding issue that the programme works with and also the level of support offered by the Community Consultants through the programme. In this example, the Community Consultant does not feel that the institution would have been able to follow through on completing the safeguarding needs highlighted by their action plan. The importance of the role of the Community Consultant was spoken of in several interviewees with faith institutions and their ability to work around complex issues, such as safeguarding, as an external “friend” (Interviewee) was seen as key in action taking place. Where individuals or institutions are not familiar or confident in dealing with issues that are often new to them, such as safeguarding or legal compliance, is where issues go unresolved or drift.

Finally, with regard to direct interventions with faith institutions, the programme has been very effective in providing training and resources which promote safer and stronger governance. In the 2018/19 funding period up until July 2019, the programme has run 207 workshops aimed at organisations. These have been attended by 2,657 people, 713 of whom were women. This is an impressive figure for the size of the programme and the timescale in question.

A growing area of the work of the SFI programme has been with the Charity Commission in encouraging faith institutions to register as charities to ensure proper governance and legal compliance. This has developed over time from the Charity Commission speaking at SFI events but now includes Community Consultants working closely with the Charity Commission to “get them through the door” (Charity Commission) of faith institutions which otherwise would be unlikely to engage. Here the strong networks and community trust in the Community Consultants is viewed as being key in brokering introductions and de-mystifying the role of the Charity Commission. On occasion the Community Consultants have also acted informally as translators.

In the 4 months from March 2019 to the end of June 2019, SFI Community Consultants have brokered introductions

and first meetings between the Charity Commission and 8 unregistered faith institutions. In 2018, this happened 14 times. Both the SFI programme and the Charity Commission believe that this is representative of a joint initiative which has taken root and can be expected to “snowball” (Charity Commission) in time, given appropriate planning and structure.

Working with faith institutions to develop safer and stronger governance is an area of success for the programme that is relatively easy to quantify to form hard evidence and one in which it has excelled. There is a clear niche and market for the offer and real strategic planning should be put in place to ensure that recruitment to the programme in the form of health checks and action plans continue. The previous evaluation expressed concern that a high proportion of institutions recruited were recruited through existing relationships and networks. Amongst even the most well connected, these are finite. The recruitment base of the programme does appear to have spread beyond these (Figure 13) and the high numbers of new institutions engaged with as well as the large figures of training and workshop attendees is testament to this. Greater strategic link up with partners, such as the Charity Commission or Department for Education, will further bolster this.

How did your institution get involved with the programme? Please select all that apply.

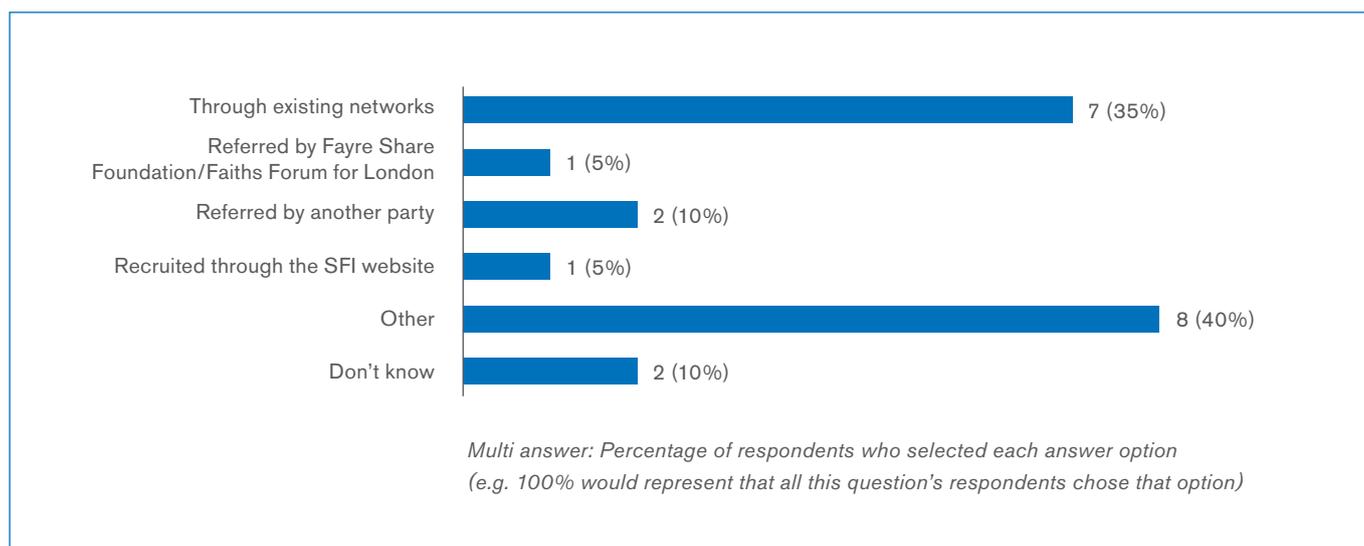


Figure 13 How Does SFI Attract Beneficiary Partners?

4.3.3. Strengthening Profile

In order that faith institutions and their influence on local communities and areas can grow outside of their own congregation, it is vital that they have a presence, both online and offline, that is outward-facing and which represents the aims and ethos of the institution in a professional and appropriate manner. In many faith institutions, online skills and presence are low. This is possibly related to both the older demographic of leadership and proficiency in English.

With this in mind, the expected outcomes of the programme here were that faith institutions have stronger:

- profile online with more people aware of their work and contributions.
- external communication skills and are more active in promotion and community outreach.
- profile offline and online with more people aware of their work and contributions.
- external communication skills and are more active in promotion and community outreach.

It was also initially planned that the programme would oversee the development or creation of 50 Websites and/or Facebook home pages would be created by SFI for faith institutions involved in the programme. This was revised early on in delivery as websites were developed and launched for two faith institutions but went unused and it was felt that the resources allocated to creating websites and/or Facebook home pages could be better used in other ways. These included training the key personnel at selected faith centres in online communication, including setting up their own websites or Facebook pages. The logic here was that this would mean that online presence was led by the institution rather than implemented on them from above whilst also upskilling those who take part in the training. Here, enabling was viewed as preferable to doing.

Feedback from institutions which attended the training was overwhelmingly positive. Participants were asked to self-assess their relevant abilities and skills before and after the training. Any difference in the participant perceptions can

therefore be attributed to the intervention. All scoring is from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The results were as follows:

	Pre	Post	Change
I have good knowledge of strategic communications	2.02	3.52	+1.5
I am confident in developing effective messaging for my faith centre	2.09	3.58	+1.49
I am confident to engage with the media	2.18	3.34	+1.16

Participants were also very likely to recommend the training to family, friends or colleagues. Successful interventions such as these fulfil the aims of the programme but also add to the “snowballing” effect of the work whereby reach becomes wider and recruitment more organic over time.

A key aspect of developing profile is in bestowing the confidence on a faith institution to be more outward facing. Figure 14 demonstrates that participation in the programme does this. Institutions which have been through the health check process feel that they are more likely to be viewed positively in their local community. Interview data suggests that this is partly related to an inner confidence found from legal compliance and assurance that they are a sound institution as a result of completing their Action Plan but also because the idea of being “externally audited” (Institutional Representative) is viewed positively by others. Institutions are seen as “having nothing to hide” (Institutional Representative).

To what extent do you believe that your institution, having gone through the healthcheck process, is now more likely to be viewed more positively in your local community?

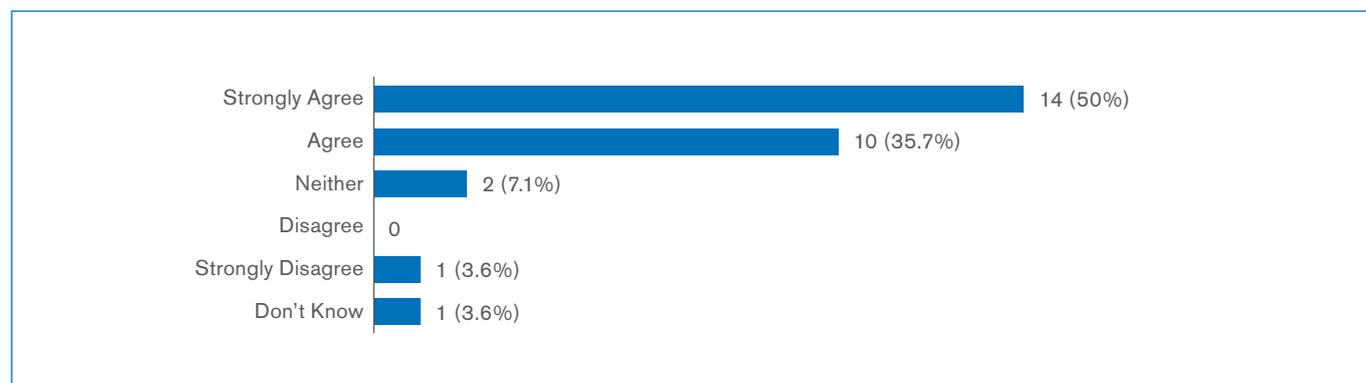


Figure 14 Healthchecks and Positive Image in the Local Community

Though the programme has moved on from the idea of “beacon” institutions and formalised kitemarking, some degree of branding and publicity around involvement beyond the current award ceremonies may be beneficial. One suggested concept was that of an online directory of institutions which have been health-checked and completed their Action Plans. Sign up to this would be on a voluntary basis but it would allow other institutions to know who in their area has been through the process. This may also be then used to encourage joint working between institutions.

4.3.4. Facilitating Integration

The basic logic and premise of this programme means that the expected outcomes which facilitate integration, and the measures which capture these, have a good deal of overlap with outcomes and measures in other areas. If the programme successfully promotes inclusive faith leadership, safer and stronger governance and encourages institutions to strengthen their profile and be more outward facing, then it should be expected that it also facilitates integration and closer relationships between individuals and groups who are different.

With this natural overlap in mind, here it was expected that the programme produces the following outcomes:

- Faith institution leaders have a stronger understanding of their abilities, roles, and responsibilities;
- Faith institution leaders increasingly collaborate with leaders of other faith communities and secular organisations;

- More faith institution leaders adopt policies and practices which support greater inclusion of excluded and poorly represented groups;
- More encouragement and support for faith institutions around diversity and inclusivity, especially for young people;
- More Faith based supplementary schools teach students to understand and internalize British values and critical thinking skills; and
- More regular and better interaction between faith institutions.

Recognising the importance of strong and competent contemporary leaders within faith institutions, it was expected that 96 Leadership Development graduates (40 from the Integration areas) would be developed from the SFI accredited leadership training programme. As of July 2019, there have been 65 Leadership Development graduates with 31 drawn from nominated integration areas. 31 of the 65 are female. Additionally, 180 Supplementary School Teachers (60 in integration areas) were to be accredited via NRCSE Supplementary Teacher Training courses. Again, as of July 2019, 173 people have been accredited on NRCSE Supplementary Teacher Training courses with 111 of these being women. 41 are drawn from the nominated integration areas.

The SFI programme has currently missed both of these targets by small margins with this, in part, being attributed by the programme to the late receipt of funding for 2018/19. There are plans in place, which have been seen by the evaluation team

to run sessions in London in September 2019 which aim to fulfil the targets around both NRCSE Supplementary Teacher Training course accreditations and Leadership Development numbers. Recruiting a significant number of participants from integration areas has been seen as a challenge by the programme and Community Consultants. Not only are they “targeted for a reason” (Community Consultant) with the implication here being that they are seen as areas in which it is traditionally a challenge to engage, but also these areas have seen significant focus from other funded programmes too over the same period and there is perceived as being a limit as to the amount of engagement volunteers can be expected to give.

Figure 15, below, shows that institutions involved in the programme do have a very positive belief that the programme will have a positive impact on social integration through the work that it does.

Overall, do you feel that the SFI programme is like to have a positive impact on social integration through the work that it does?

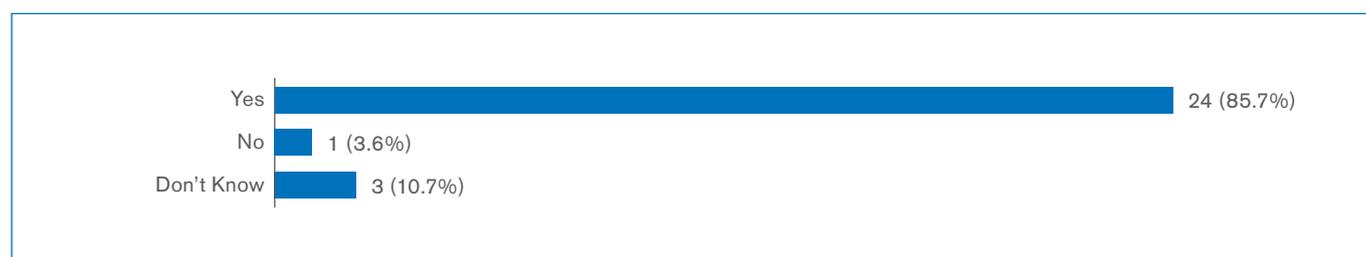


Figure 15 Positive Impact of Social Integration

The reasons behind this positive outlook are largely linked to into skills and confidence development and being exposed by the work to other local faith institutions. It is a positive externality of running training sessions in local areas that these sessions, whilst focussed on skills development, also bring people from different institutions, faiths and backgrounds together. This, in many cases, has been an initial step in closer working and collaboration.

“We were able to make better connections with other faith orgs.” (Institutional Representative)

“Met more people from the local community that we are new to and because we are better and improved so our users will find it more trusting” (Institutional Representative)

The data in Figure 16 further corroborates this link between having gone through the health check process and a tendency to wish to work more widely with other faith institutions and organisations.

To what extent do you believe that your institution, having gone through the healthcheck process, is now more likely to work with other faith and community organisations?

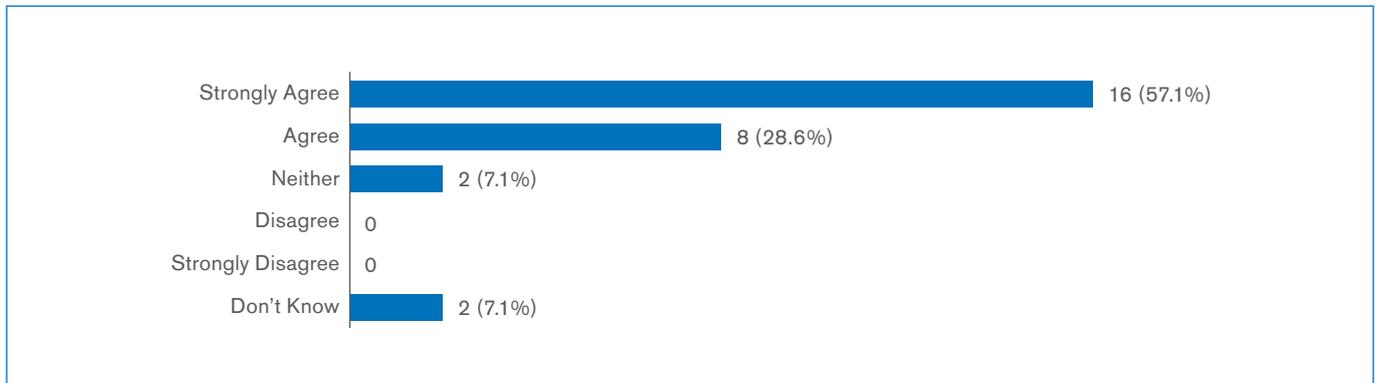


Figure 16 More likely to work with other organisations

Overall, the programme has been a positive force in developing faith institutions which are more willing to be outward facing and both more willing and able to work outside their existing congregations. Enabling institutions to do this, and making them aware of one another and shared concerns or interests, is the first step towards future collaborations and greater integration.

Integration underpins the work that SFI does and works towards. The programme has a tight focus on the core areas of promoting inclusivity, stronger governance and raising the profile of faith institutions. In doing this, a virtuous circle is created which enables the realisation of the wider aim of a more cohesive and prosperous society through stronger faith institutions.

5. Conclusion

This evaluation has found that the SFI programme has been effective in meeting its core objectives and has been successful in working towards its central aims of promoting inclusive faith leadership, safer and stronger governance in faith institutions, strengthening the profile of faith institutions and facilitating integration. The data shows that in the 2018/19 funding period up to July 2019:

- 619 women have attended SFI training related to safeguarding, health and safety or first aid. This gives them the skills and opportunities to take on leadership and governance roles within their institutions.
- 299 Action Plans have been put in place and that these have been tailored to individual institutions. These have been positively received by the institutions. This is against a target of 160.
- 7,795 people have attended training or workshop events run by the SFI programme. These training events or workshops focus on organisational, community and interfaith themes.
- Those that have taken part in training are more confident and able to promote the work of their institution to the wider community.
- 86% of institutions involved believe that the programme has a positive impact on social integration.
- The open nature in which the SFI team has worked with the evaluators and other external partners is testament to a programme that has grown in confidence and is now seen an established and impactful actor in the faith sector in England. This recognition from others within the sector is hard earned.

The combination of on-going success and the established recognition within the sector are primary reasons why the evaluation recommends that the SFI programme continue to be funded. These successes represent considerable investment in financial resources, time and social capital that are now paying dividends in institutions and social impact. Institutions which took part in the 2016-17 programme are still undergoing positive institutional change as a result of this.

Institutional change, particularly in the faith, community and voluntary sectors, is often a slow-burning process and the very nature of this means that many of the outcomes from the SFI interventions in 2018 and 2019 are unlikely to have been captured due to the timeframe of the evaluation and reporting process. Here, we see that the “nudge process” appears to be supportive the delivery of tangible results. Whilst

recognising the pressures of funding cycles and external factors in decision making, the evaluation team would like this to be recognised at a policy making and objective setting level for future programmes that are similar in nature.

The programme’s model of delivery works, and it does so in a way that enables it to reach and work with faith institutions which may be seen as “hard to reach” or isolated. The role of the Community Consultants is key here, as are the skillsets and tacit knowledge of the Consultants themselves. The importance of using trusted and well-connected individuals who are known to local faith communities and institutions cannot be understated. Trust in academia is widely defined as making oneself vulnerable to the actions of another (Rousseau et al 1995). Making themselves vulnerable by exposing organisational, and often legal, failings is exactly what faith institutions and those who govern them are doing when they voluntarily chose to take part in the SFI programme. Individuals seen as credible and trusted, with the skillset to undertake health checks and action plans, are absolutely essential to the functioning of the SFI programme. That these individuals are able to lend their credibility to other organisations, such as the Charity Commission, is a further positive externality of the work.

This is not to say that there are not areas for improvement in delivery and target as this evaluation finds there are. Data has not always been recorded in a standardised way or one which allows for easy tracking against targets and, though this has now largely been addressed it is something that the programme should keep on top of. In part the lack of standardisation has come about because of the semi-autonomous nature of the Community Consultant role, but also because the programme has grown and changed over the past 3 years. In a similar vein, productive working relationships have developed with other organisations, including the Charity Commission, but these are very much organic and not formalised. It would be expected that the SFI programme has now gone through its infancy and that effectiveness in developing and formalising partnerships and in recording and storing data in a standardised manner will be greater going forwards.

The SFI leadership team have been aspirational and outward facing in their approach to developing the programme and have worked with the evaluation team to make this a process that they have learned from and benefitted from whilst still ongoing. We have seen first-hand that changes and recommendations have been adopted and that programme delivery has been improved and refined. The evaluation team are confident that this positive approach will continue and, with this in mind, we provide the following recommendations.

6. Recommendations

1. The programme continues to be funded. A multi-year programme which would allow for closer and longer term working with faith institutions would see greater benefit than a shorter, more remedial, piece.
2. A longer-term outlook for the programme will require different, and more ambitious, outputs and measurements of. A longitudinal study which focusses on the continuing stories of change of faith institutions already engaged with by the programme, but also which document, in detail, the journey of new institutions would capture the contributions of the programme and the context within which it works. An ethnographic study may wish to be considered here.
3. Closer working with other MHCLG and Home Office programmes which promote integration and share values be developed. There are natural linkages between many of the MHCLG funded integration programmes but, though SFI have reached out to Near Neighbours, formal links and referrals between the programmes are weak. This is a missed opportunity. MHCLG, as funder, is well placed to act as a convener and lead on developing partnerships and closer working between its funded programmes.
4. The programme appoints a lead female Community Consultant who can work across the country with the existing, largely male, Community Consultants. Though it is recognised that the existing Community Consultants have achieved in working with women and promoting greater inclusion and opportunity for women in faith institutions, the appointment of a lead female Community Consultant to work with women around sensitive issues or in environments which men may struggle to access could build on this.
5. The programme consults with target groups, such as women, young people and those from marginalised ethnic or national backgrounds, to see what opportunities they would like the programme to provide and how they feel that the programme could best realise these.
6. SFI and the Charity Commission produce a joint action plan for collaborative working going forward. This could be thematic or geographic and will allow a planned programme of works to take the place of the current reactive approach.
7. Closer working with the Department of Education be developed to link in with programmes which promote safeguarding in faith based supplementary schools associated with places of worship. The natural crossover here is obvious and both parties can gain much from working together. SFI should nominate a lead for the development of this.
8. A formal recognition award be developed, building on those that the programme already has in place, for community elders and those who have governed faith institutions for a long period of time. Status and prestige are often derived from holding positions of power or governance and a desire to hold on to these is often linked and block on the reform and change that the SFI programme aims to bring about. A formal show of recognition and respect of the work of elders and long-term governors may help to assuage concerns of loss of status and promote reform.

9. Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University

The [Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations \(CTPSR\)](#) is a multidisciplinary, applied research centre based at Coventry University. Our focus is on research and action which grows the capacity of all actors to work towards peaceful and resilient societies. Building on Coventry's history in peace, reconciliation and social cohesion, we bring together expertise from across the world and every aspect of the social sciences and humanities to strengthen our understanding of the greatest challenges and opportunities arising from an ever-changing and connected world. We provide evidence and support on issues as diverse as local multifaith action in the UK to national peacebuilding initiatives across Africa, aiming to support the work of local practitioners, governments, global organisations such as the UN and everyone in-between.

CTPSR has a strong belief in the importance and power of fair, nuanced and rigorous evaluation research. Our approach is grounded in a commitment to understanding not only the difference made through community-based action but also the processes, barriers and challenges experienced along the way: we believe it is vital to understand both what the impact is and how it is achieved. Wherever viable, our research is undertaken collaboratively with projects and participants – evaluation should be done *with* and not *to* people. Our evaluation approaches are always tailored to the needs of busy projects, working alongside delivery and ensuring wherever possible that everyone is able to benefit from their participation in some way.