

SACREs and the Local Community



Report on the WASACRE survey of SACREs in Wales

June 2012

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Produced by the St Mary's Centre on behalf of WASACRE in June 2012
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- The Inter Faith Network for the UK and NASACRE for providing the context for the survey;
- The SACREs in Wales for their engagement with the survey;
- The St Mary's Centre (part of the religion and education charity of the St Mary's and St Giles' Centre, Wales) for designing the survey and writing the survey report in collaboration with the Executive Committee of WASACRE.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The motivation for the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) to conduct the *SACREs and the Local Community* survey in Wales in April 2010 was influenced by two factors. Over the past four years, WASACRE has been actively supporting a number of national community cohesion initiatives and encouraging SACREs to engage with these. This support has been given because WASACRE appreciates the distinctive contribution that religious education, collective worship, and SACREs are able to make to community cohesion within our communities in Wales. The specific impetus to conduct a survey of SACREs in Wales, however, can be traced back to the survey of SACREs in England administered by the Inter Faith Network for the UK and the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) in 2009. This survey of SACREs in England explored the relationship between SACREs and local interfaith organisations. On the basis of these two factors, WASACRE felt that it would be useful to conduct a similar survey of SACREs in Wales, but to broaden the scope of the survey to include other areas relevant to community cohesion and interfaith understanding.

The *SACREs and the Local Community* survey report presents the findings of the WASACRE survey of SACREs, which had a 95% response rate. These findings relate to four main areas: SACRE representation on Committee A (Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations); SACRE co-opted representation; SACRE relations with Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations; and SACRE involvement with local interfaith organisations and other local interfaith initiatives. The results present the range of SACRE activities that contribute to relevant aspects of community cohesion, involving both Christian denominations and other religions in their localities, and eight main findings are identified.

In terms of the next steps to be taken in light of the Report, it is requested that both SACREs in Wales and WASACRE respond to the survey by giving consideration to the Report's recommendations.

The Executive Committee of WASACRE
June 2012

1 SURVEY CONTEXT

1.1. Introduction

This section sets the context for the report by presenting the background to the *SACREs and the Local Community Survey*, and by providing an overview of the role of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) and the role of the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE).

On 12 June 2009 the Inter Faith Network for the UK and the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) for England held a seminar in Coventry on the theme ‘Local Interfaith Organisations and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education: working together for understanding and community cohesion’. One of the objectives of the seminar was to share the findings of a NASACRE and Inter Faith Network for the UK survey exploring the relationship and collaboration between SACREs and local interfaith organisations. This survey included two questionnaires: one for local interfaith organisations in England and Wales and one for SACREs in England. The Inter Faith Network for the UK and NASACRE published the findings of the survey and a full report on the seminar in 2010.

In response to the seminar (where WASACRE was represented on the Panel), WASACRE saw benefit in a modified version of the SACRE questionnaire being distributed to the 22 SACREs in Wales. This decision to administer the questionnaire (with modifications for Wales) was influenced by two main factors.

First, SACREs in Wales were not included in the original survey, and the survey focused on areas of interest to the work of WASACRE and SACREs in Wales, with particular reference to ‘community cohesion’. WASACRE and SACREs in Wales are aware of the distinctive role that they play in community cohesion both from the perspective of their inherent constitutions (through the representation of a variety of faith communities on SACRE and WASACRE, and the nature of the curriculum areas with which they are concerned) and from the perspective of their current activities (through their contribution to the RESilience project and the Celebrating RE month as well as associations with the Inter Faith Network for the UK, the Religious Education Council for England and Wales, the European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education, and the Inter-European Commission on Church and School).

Second, it was recognized that Wales is different from England, and the original SACRE questionnaire would need to be modified if it were to access current practice relevant to community cohesion for SACREs in Wales. The original SACRE questionnaire focused on SACRE relationships with local interfaith groups, which are far less numerous in Wales than in England. Therefore, the questionnaire distributed to SACREs in Wales was re-conceptualized to include a broader understanding of SACRE relations with the local community.

1.2. The role of SACREs

Each Local Authority is required by law to establish a SACRE. The main role of SACREs is to monitor and to support the provision of religious education and collective worship in the Local Authority. The provision of religious education and collective worship in state-maintained community schools and state-maintained schools with a religious character became a statutory

requirement with the 1944 Education Act. Further clarification and flexibility were introduced to the legal requirements with the 1988 Education Reform Act. The 1988 Education Reform Act identified religious education as a statutory part of the basic curriculum to be determined at Local Authority level in contrast to the National Curriculum, which is determined at national level. While the 1944 Education Act empowered each Local Authority to establish a SACRE, the 1988 Education Reform Act made this a statutory duty.

SACREs in Wales comprise three committees in accordance with the statutory requirement set out in paragraph 390 of the 1996 Education Act.

Committee A: Representatives of Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations, reflecting the principle religious traditions of the local area.

Committee B: Teacher representatives.

Committee C: Local Authority representatives.

A SACRE may choose to co-opt members, where this is viewed to contribute to the work of the SACRE.

1.3. The role of WASACRE

The SACREs of all twenty-two Local Authorities in Wales are members of WASACRE. WASACRE was formed in 1995 to provide a national forum for the exchange of good practice and to represent the aims, work, and views of its member SACREs. In addition, WASACRE contributes to relevant national initiatives in the areas of religious education and collective worship and engages on behalf of SACREs with relevant bodies and organisations in Wales, England, and Europe. These bodies and organisations include among others:

- Welsh Government;
- National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE);
- WJEC;
- Estyn;
- Religious Education Movement Wales (REMW);
- Religious Education Council for England and Wales (REC);
- Inter Faith Network for the UK;
- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) for England;
- European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education (EFTRE);
- Inter-European Commission on Church and School (ICCS).

2 SURVEY DESIGN

2.1. Introduction

This section provides information about the survey, including the aims of the survey and how the questionnaire was designed, administered, and analysed.

2.2 Aims of survey

The survey aims to enable WASACRE to map the relationships between SACREs and their local communities and to share information, experiences, and practice in relation to four specific areas:

- SACRE representation on Committee A (Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations);
- SACRE co-opted representation;
- SACRE relations with Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations;
- SACRE involvement with local interfaith organisations and other local interfaith initiatives.

2.3 Survey questionnaire

Method

The questionnaire used in the survey was based on the Inter Faith Network for the UK and NASACRE questionnaire for SACREs administered in April 2009, which explored the relationships between local interfaith organisations and SACREs in England. This questionnaire was extensively modified in order to reflect that Wales has comparatively few local interfaith organisations or forums and to capture a broader range of information about practice relevant to community cohesion in relation to SACREs and the local community.

The following modifications were made to the original Inter Faith Network for the UK and NASACRE questionnaire.

- Three extra sections were added to the Wales version of the questionnaire, which explored SACRE representation on Committee A, co-opted representation on SACREs, and SACRE relations with Christian denominations and other religions.
- Section D of the Wales questionnaire relating to SACREs and local interfaith involvement largely reproduced the original Inter Faith Network for the UK and NASACRE questionnaire, although some questions were collapsed into a single question, reworked, or omitted.
- The questionnaire was made available in both Welsh and English versions in recognition of the bilingual character of Wales.

Procedure

Welsh and English versions of the questionnaire were emailed to the SACRE clerks of all 22 SACREs in Wales in April 2010, with a request for the SACRE questionnaire to be discussed and completed in the SACREs' summer term meeting and returned to the Secretary of

WASACRE by 20 July 2010. A copy of the questionnaire circulated to SACREs is included in appendix 3.

Analysis

The questionnaires were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the first instance, a quantitative overview was produced using SPSS by placing the response to each question into one of three categories: 'yes', 'no', or 'no response' (?). The 'yes' category included responses which had selected the 'yes' option offered in the question or, in questions where this option had not been given, had responded in the affirmative to a direct question. The 'no' category included responses which had selected the 'no' option offered in the question or, where this option had not been given, had responded in the negative to a direct question. The 'no response' (?) category included either absence of a response or the SACRE's position was self-designated as unclear. SPSS was used to produce a quantitative overview of response frequencies for each question and (where relevant) responses to selected questions were cross-tabulated to explore the relationships between questions.

Following the quantitative analysis, a content analysis categorised and described the written responses to each question.

3 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

This section provides the results of the survey. Of the 22 SACREs in Wales, fully completed questionnaires were returned by 21 SACREs. A list of these SACREs is included in appendix 2. The following analysis presents the SACRE responses to each of the five sections of the questionnaire from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. The five sections are:

- SACRE representation on Committee A (Section A);
- co-opted representation on SACREs (Section B);
- SACRE relations with Christian denominations and other religions (Section C);
- SACREs and local interfaith involvement;
- additional comments.

Collated survey results (quantitative) are included in appendix 1.

3.2. SACRE representation on Committee A (Section A)

Who is represented on Committee A?

All 21 SACREs identified their representatives on Committee A (that is, representatives of Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations, reflecting the principle religious traditions of the area). All 21 SACREs had places for one or more representatives from Free Churches and the Church in Wales; 20 SACREs had a place for a representative from the Roman Catholic Church; and one SACRE had a place for a Pentecostal Church representative. For other religions, there was a Muslim place on 9 SACREs, a Sikh place on 7 SACREs, a Hindu place on 7 SACREs, a Jewish place on 6 SACREs, a Buddhist place on 4 SACREs, and a Baha'i place on 3 SACREs. (However, for co-opted membership, see 3.3.)

Those SACREs with representatives on Committee A from other religions in addition to Christian denominations tended to be located in the more densely and diversely populated south-east Wales, and a northeast Wales SACRE was seeking to extend membership to other religions in response to the shifting demographics of the area.

Securing representation on Committee A

Of the 21 SACREs, 16 SACREs identified an issue with securing appropriate representation for Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations, 4 SACREs had not experienced any such issue, and 1 SACRE did not respond to the question. Among SACREs identifying an issue, some related past experience where the problem had been resolved, and others described current experience where the problem had not been resolved. In terms of securing representation of Christian denominations, 8 SACREs had had difficulty filling Free Church vacancies; however, in five of these cases this had been addressed successfully with the assistance of Cytûn. There were 3 SACREs that reported difficulties filling Roman Catholic Church vacancies.

In terms of securing representation from other religions and their denominations, 9 SACREs reported that they had experienced difficulties. These difficulties were clustered around three

areas: first, the problem of finding appropriate representative bodies for other religions which were able to provide assistance in identifying representatives; second, the problem of regular attendance at SACRE meetings by some members from relevant groups (including those who were already members and those who had been approached with a view to becoming members); third, the problem of small numbers belonging to other religions in the local area, which affected decisions related to definitions of appropriate local community representation.

A number of SACREs stated their commitment to ensuring adequate representation from other religions in Committee A, with some detailing their current activity in relation to this objective. Other SACREs stated that they invited individuals from non-represented religions to SACRE meetings where appropriate and included them in the convening of syllabus conferences. A number of SACREs also commented that they had used the Census statistics relating to the ‘religion’ question to inform their review of membership of Committee A.

Despite issues encountered by some SACREs securing appropriate representation, 15 of the 21 SACREs were confident that Committee A reflected the relevant Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations in their Local Authority. The remaining 6 SACREs referred back to their responses to question two of this section, with 4 responses related to finding representatives from specific Christian denominations and two responses related to securing representation from other religions.

Table 1: SACRE representation on Committee A (N = 21)

<i>Section A</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>?</i>
A1 representatives identified	21	0	0
A2 issues securing representation	16	4	1
A3 Committee A represents local area	15	6	0

3.3. Co-opted representation on SACREs (Section B)

Who is co-opted to SACRE?

Of the 21 SACREs, 15 SACREs had one or more co-opted members. These included individual teachers (7 SACREs), the British Humanist Association (5 SACREs), RE Centres in Wales (6 SACREs), Evangelical Movement Wales (3 SACREs), Cyngor Ysgolion Sul Cymru (2 SACREs), Welsh-medium schools (2 SACREs), as well as co-options which applied to single SACREs – Muslim, Buddhist, Baha’i, Sikh, Pentecostal, Religious Education Movement Wales (REMW), FE College, and HE College.

Co-options and the local area

Only one of the 21 SACREs reported that it was not satisfied that its co-opted representation was appropriate for the area, indicating that SACRE would like to establish a link with a local Initial Teacher Training institute, but no representative was available. However, of those SACREs which were satisfied with their current co-opted representation, 2 SACREs commented that they would welcome consideration of new co-options and 1 SACRE commented that although it had

no co-opted members at that time, the SACRE was open to discussion about co-opted members as a result of the questionnaire.

Table 2: Co-opted representation (N = 21)

<i>Section B</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>?</i>
B1 co-opted members on SACRE	15	6	0
B2 co-opted members appropriate for local area	20	1	0

3.4. SACRE relations with Christian denominations and other religions (Section C)

SACRE contacts in the local area

In terms of their local area, all 21 SACREs provided a list of Christian denominations and other religions with which they had contacts. Of these, contacts were listed by 13 SACREs with both Christian denominations and other religions, 7 SACREs with Christian denominations only, and 1 SACRE with another religion only. The SACREs that had contacts with only Christian denominations only usually tended to be in more rural areas of Wales.

Almost all the SACREs (19) identified SACRE membership of Committee A as an important connection with relevant religious bodies and communities in the local area, and 12 of these also identified local community links external to SACRE.

The external contacts SACREs had in the community were drawn from a range of Christian denominations and other religions. Those that were related to Christian denominations included specific local faith communities or ecumenical bodies such as ‘Cytun’, ‘Churches Together’, or a Church Leaders’ Fellowship, for example. Those that were related to other religions included specific local faith communities as well as those that brought together representatives from a number of faiths, for example, the All Faith Leaders’ Gathering, local interfaith groups, and the Valleys Faith Forum. There were also a number of examples of SACREs understanding their contacts as including education institutions such as their schools with a religious character and a local HE institution which provided connections with a diverse range of contacts and this was a useful resource for the SACRE.

Where the nature of these relationships was described a number of themes emerged. First, in some cases SACRE members were involved with a particular body or a forum and reported back to the SACRE on its activity. Second, some SACREs invited these groups to make presentations in their meetings. Third, some SACREs had made contacts through working on shared initiatives, such as the Holocaust Memorial day. Fourth, some SACREs held their meetings in a different place of worship each term, which included tours and presentations by their hosts. Fifth, some SACREs held their meetings in schools with a religious character, such as Church in Wales and Roman Catholic (one SACRE received a presentation from a Roman Catholic school about the school’s philosophy, religious education and collective worship, and relationship with the local community).

SACRE contacts outside the local area

In terms of outside the local area, of the 21 SACREs, 17 SACREs reported that they had contacts related to Christian denominations and other religions, and provided details. Of these, contacts were cited by 12 SACREs with both Christian denominations and other religions, 3 SACREs with Christian denominations only, and 2 SACREs with other religions only.

The contacts SACREs had made outside the local area were wide-ranging. Among Christian-related contacts the following organisations were cited, and were usually from Wales but also on occasion from England: Christian Aid, Welsh Sunday Schools Council, Religious Education Movement Wales (REMW), Christian Education, and Cytûn. In addition, Christian denominational contacts existed through SACRE members at both a wider regional and national level.

Among both Christian-related and other religion-related contacts, some SACREs had developed contacts with a range of faith communities in different Local Authorities. In the case of some SACREs, participating in events and projects had also created these wider external links, for example, Cathedral Experience Days, the Jewish Way of Life Exhibition, and the Tapestry of Life and Faith Festival, which had enabled links with Cytûn, the Inter-faith Council for Wales, and a Buddhist community in Birmingham.

A number of SACREs reported that WASACRE brought together SACRE representatives from across Wales, which broadened their range of contacts and connected them with relevant initiatives. In addition, a number of SACREs had access to a wider range of contacts where an RE Consultant or Advisor was also involved with another SACRE or SACREs. Another source of access to various faith communities came through the educational resource material produced by various religious organisations, such as the Jewish Way of Life CD ROM, REQuest and Church in Wales material.

SACRE involvement in local projects or activities

Of the 21 SACREs, 18 SACREs reported about their work in projects or activities that involved Christian denominations and other religions in their local area. Of these, 16 SACREs cited projects involving both Christian denominations and other religions, while 2 SACREs referred to projects involving Christian denominations only. Many of these projects fell into three broad categories: projects initiated by SACREs; projects in which SACREs were committed contributors; and projects to which SACREs offered their support in other ways.

Projects initiated by SACREs included: establishing a network of faith representatives who were available to visit schools to support RE provision; composing a directory of local places of worship and communities suitable for school visits; creating pastoral care leaflets by Jewish and Baha'i faiths; organizing visits to places of worship associated with Committee A members; receiving presentations from relevant local organisations and charities about their work in the community and their relationship to schools; conducting a SACRE survey about local religious communities which resulted in a compendium of places of worship willing to host school visits; providing an Annual Lecture; organizing a rites of passage training day for year 7 pupils involving a number of churches.

Projects in which SACREs are committed contributors included: Holocaust Memorial Day (and a range of events associated with this); the Tapestry of Life and Faith Festival; conferences for schools on topics such as RE and ESDGC, and community cohesion); Cathedral Experience Days; a school's interfaith forum; the GSUS Live bus visiting secondary schools in the area; an Easter labyrinth project working with a local church and primary schools to trial and to widen the project to county level.

Projects to which SACREs offered their support in other ways include: attending a range of events and encouraging their schools to participate (for example, the Anne Frank exhibition); involvement with a project for young disaffected people of the area through a SACRE member; working with Christian Aid to provide workshops and conferences to schools; launching of a replica mobile mosque which is available to schools.

Other projects named but where SACRE involvement is not described included: JC2000; sacred spaces; Open Churches Network; Prayer Week; a school faith garden; and Agathos Trust work with schools.

SACRE involvement in other local community cohesion initiatives

Of the 21 SACREs, 15 SACREs reported their involvement in other initiatives that promote community cohesion in their local area.

These initiatives included: promoting UK-wide surveys to local schools (for example, the AHRC Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity survey) and securing school participation; receiving presentations from schools and others who have participated in relevant projects (for example, Lessons from Auschwitz visits and a school's House of Religions initiative); receiving presentations on community cohesion (for example, the work of VALREC developing aspects of community cohesion in a local primary school); involvement with the Getting On Together project; having a representative from the Local Authority's Ethnic Minority Service on SACRE, who gives presentations on the Service's work in promoting community cohesion and supporting ethnic minority groups); involvement with the One Wrexham Charter; involving schools in the Local Authority's HMD activities (through SACRE teacher representatives) which SACRE members also attended; hosting a Jewish exhibition open to schools and the wider community; working with the police and members of the public to stop an anti-Muslim march in the locality.

SACREs felt that the production of resources, guidance, and training was significant. A number of SACREs noted their role in relation to agreed syllabi and support materials, which they ensured were appropriate and supported community cohesion in terms of content and local information guidance. One SACRE wrote about the small numbers of religious communities present in the Local Authority that were not Christian, and had addressed this issue by providing resources and training for schools on the use of persona dolls as well as making available RE resources on a website. Other specific examples of resources produced by SACREs included: RE support material for local non-maintained playgroups and nursery settings; a list of websites for schools for local places of worship; a DVD entitled 'Faith matters in Education' to communicate the role and work of SACRE. A number of SACREs mentioned their support of the national REsilience project, which provided training to RE teachers in areas directly relevant to community cohesion.

Can SACRE promote faith community relations further?

Of the 21 SACREs, 15 SACREs thought of ways in which they could promote further their relations with Christian denominations and other religions in the local area.

SACRE responses focused on the continuation of current work and activities of SACRE, and on the exploration and development of new areas. Among these new areas, SACREs planned to approach new religious communities with a view to establishing links with SACRE and then with schools; to encourage more school visits to faith communities and faith visitors to schools; to encourage schools to promote opportunities for interfaith dialogue either within the school or across schools; to offer more interfaith days in schools; to develop the SACRE website to provide opportunities for faith communities to network, as appropriate; to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible; to discuss the use of co-opted membership to include, where relevant, other religions not represented.

A number of SACRE responses referred to the significant role of the forthcoming Celebrating RE month (March 2011) for developing productive relations with local faith communities and enhancing relationships with schools.

Can SACRE promote local community cohesion further?

Of the 21 SACREs, 14 SACREs thought of further ways they could promote community cohesion in their local area.

A number of responses referred back to the previous question about how SACREs could promote further their relations with Christian denominations and other religions in the local area. Among the points not previously included are the following initiatives: developing the SACRE website to promote the work of SACRE and local schools; distributing the SACRE newsletter more widely; inviting officers responsible for community cohesion to address SACRE.

One SACRE commented that needs, opportunities, and finance were rare in the Local Authority in relation to this area.

Table 3: SACRE relations with Christian denominations and other religions (N = 21)

<i>Section C</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>?</i>
C1 contacts in local area listed	21	0	0
C2 contacts outside local area listed	17	4	0
C3 involvement in local projects/activities	18	3	0
C4 involvement in other local CoCo initiatives	15	6	0
C5a SACRE can promote relations further	15	4	2
C5b SACRE can promote local CoCo further	14	4	3

The results in this section show that there are strong links between SACREs’ contacts with Christian denominations and other religions and SACREs’ participation in activities involving different faith groups in the local community. All the SACREs involved in such activities cited

their contacts with different faith groups; however, the presence of such contacts did not always predict related activity, which is seen in the case of three SACREs.

3.5. SACREs and local interfaith involvement (Section D)

Awareness of local faith forum or interfaith council

Of the 21 SACREs, 10 SACREs were aware of a forum of faiths or interfaith council in their local area. These included (as identified by the SACREs): the All Faiths Leaders' Gathering, Vale of Glamorgan Interfaith Forum, interfaith group linked to VALREC, Valleys Faith Forum, community cohesion group in Torfaen, Newport Interfaith group, Newport Interfaith Council, an interfaith group meeting at the University of Glamorgan, Three Faiths Forum, interfaith organisation in Cardiff, Cardiff Christians and Jews (CCJ), and South Wales Police Community Cohesion Group [?]. Some of these may be references to the same group, although using different names.

One SACRE had a representative at a consultation event organised by the Inter-faith Council for Wales exploring the possibility of setting up a new regional interfaith group, and although this had not been possible at the time, the SACRE intended to continue involvement in this objective, as appropriate. A number of SACREs recognized that no such faith forum or interfaith council existed in their local area, but took the opportunity to highlight the existence of known ecumenical Christian groups. In addition, some SACREs were keen to emphasize the existence of a number of groups involving faith representatives in the locality, which were not a local forum of faiths or interfaith council. This may well indicate that for these SACREs there is a broad understanding of what may be included as an interfaith initiative.

Relationships with local faith forum or interfaith council

Of the 10 SACREs that were aware of a local forum of faiths or interfaith council in their local area, 8 SACREs reported that one or more SACRE members were 'involved' in at least one of these groups. In all of these cases apart from one, the members were not officially representing SACRE, but were present in another capacity. This may reflect the relatively small number of representatives in relevant capacities available to SACREs, who are also actively representing other groups. It is clear from the responses given, however, that SACREs benefited from these links, and from receiving reports enabled through them.

Work with 'interfaith' groups on projects

Of the 8 SACREs that were involved in at least one of these groups, 3 SACREs reported that they had worked with an interfaith group on a particular project. These projects included sourcing faith community members to visit schools to support religious education or collective worship; hosting visits by schools to local places of worship; developing or providing information about different faiths for a website or Local Authority publication; working together on the biennial Tapestry of Life and Faith Festival; participating in the One Wrexham Charter; and contributing to the Interfaith One World Week.

Work with other local interfaith initiatives on projects

With reference to the broader notion of working on other local interfaith initiatives, 4 SACREs (of the 21 SACREs) reported that they had done so. These initiatives included working together on the HMD planning group; producing tours around local places of worship and a DVD about

Anna Bergman (Holocaust survivor); and the annual planning for Holocaust Memorial Day. The responses to this question may well have been relevant to Section C (which focused on relations with the local community and community cohesion) and some of the responses in Section C may also have been relevant here. This raises the question of how the term ‘interfaith’ was being interpreted by SACREs in this broad context and whether other terms such as community cohesion and establishing relevant relations with different faith communities (Section C) were generally perceived as more natural descriptors of SACREs’ activities.

Comments on experiences of working with ‘interfaith’ groups

Of the 21 SACREs, 6 SACREs provided feedback on their experiences of working with a local interfaith body. Of these, 4 SACREs had involvement with a local interfaith group and two SACREs had not. All the experiences were positive and included the observations that a SACRE had found these partnerships very rewarding for the work of RE in schools, and communication and mutual awareness enabled joint working; a SACRE welcomed further participation in the events of a local forum and the SACRE members involved would encourage more events; SACRE members involved with interfaith groups believed that they were harmonious but some members were more active than others; interfaith groups were always very keen and willing to participate in any projects; and a SACRE that had no involvement with an interfaith group or initiative would welcome such involvement, but was not aware of a local body with which to make contact (similarly, the comment that a SACRE normally makes contact on a personal basis but would welcome involvement with interfaith bodies).

Can SACREs promote relations with local interfaith bodies further?

Of the 21 SACREs, 14 SACREs reflected on ways that their SACRE could further develop relations with local interfaith bodies that would increase interfaith understanding and community cohesion. Not surprisingly, there was a relationship between SACREs’ awareness of a local interfaith organisation and reflections on what SACREs could do further in this area. All 10 SACREs that were aware of a local interfaith body saw this as an area to promote further. However, 4 SACREs that were unaware of such a local body also agreed with this statement.

For those 10 SACREs who had access to interfaith organisations, the reflections included: being open to the findings and recommendations of the WASACRE survey; encouraging involvement of local interfaith bodies in the Celebrating RE month and closer community links with schools; deciding to make formal contact with a local interfaith council; and establishing a youth SACRE which would provide an opportunity for young people to discuss relevant issues. For the 4 SACREs that were unaware of a local interfaith body, reflections included, making formal contact with an interfaith council in a neighbouring Local Authority and considering the feasibility and value of an interfaith forum in the local area (in light of recent local faith developments and the contribution this could make to SACRE and local schools); and looking at co-opted membership.

Table 4: SACREs and local interfaith involvement (N = 21)

<i>Section D</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>?</i>
D1 awareness of local faith's forum/council	10	11	0
D2 involvement with local forum/council	8	13	0
D3 SACRE representation on local forum/council	1	20	0
D4 worked with local interfaith groups on project	3	18	0
D5 worked with other local interfaith initiatives on projects	4	17	0
D6 comments on experiences in this area	6	14	1
D7 SACRE can promote relations with local interfaith bodies further	14	6	1

3.6. Additional comments

Of the 21 SACREs, 9 SACREs offered additional comments when invited to so at the end of the questionnaire. Two main points were iterated by a number of SACREs. First. The recognition that additional good work in this area may be happening in the Local Authority of which the SACRE is unaware or not involved in directly. Therefore, the content of the survey would not reflect the whole work of the Local Authority in this area. Second. The recognition that faith groups represented in local populations differed considerably depending on location in Wales. This had an impact also on the presence of interfaith forums. Therefore, SACREs in some parts of Wales were representative of their local area, even if this did not involve other faiths in addition to Christian denominations.

3.7. Summary of results

The results of the survey show how SACREs in Wales represent and are involved with their local communities, and how this informs their service of monitoring and supporting the provision of religious education and collective worship in their Local Authorities. By not restricting the survey to the exploration of SACRE relationships with local faith forums and interfaith councils only (of which there are comparatively few in Wales, depending on regional demographics), a fuller awareness is gained of the range of SACRE activities that contribute to relevant aspects of community cohesion, involving both Christian denominations and other religions in their localities.

There were eight main findings of the survey.

1. The majority of SACREs were satisfied that Committee A represented appropriately the Christian denominations and other religions in their local area. Where particular Christian denominations or religions were not represented on Committee A because of local demographics, some SACREs would employ other methods to involve individuals from these groups in the SACREs' activities. This included the use of co-opted membership, places on agreed syllabus conferences, or invitations to SACRE meetings to make a specific input.
2. Some SACREs experienced problems securing appropriate representation on Committee A. These problems included finding an appropriate body to advise on representation issues (often, although not exclusively, this related to other religions, rather than Christian denominations).

3. Around two thirds of SACREs reported that they had contacts with both Christian denominations and other religions in the local area. Almost all SACREs cited Committee A members as important contacts for the groups they represent, and over half the SACREs also had contacts which were located outside the SACRE membership. WASACRE was named as one of a number of national and regional organisations that provided significant opportunities for SACREs to make wider contacts.

4. SACREs cited a wide range of different types of activity that had taken place involving Christian denominations and other religions in the local area. In this context, over three-quarters of SACREs had been involved in projects that included both Christian denominations and other religions. Some of these were SACRE initiatives and others were activities that SACREs supported in a variety of ways.

5. There were strong links between SACREs' contacts with Christian denominations and other religions and SACREs' participation in activities involving different faith groups in the local community.

6. Around three quarters of SACREs suggested ways in which they could promote further their relations with Christian denominations and other religions in their local area. Around the same number also suggested ways in which they could promote community cohesion further in their local area.

7. Slightly under half of the SACREs were aware of a forum of faiths or interfaith council in their local area. In most of these cases, SACRE members were involved in at least one of these bodies; only rarely, however, was a SACRE officially represented. Responses demonstrated that SACREs valued the involvement of their members in these groups and benefited from them. Only a few SACREs, however, had worked on particular projects together with a forum of faiths or interfaith council in their local area.

8. Around three quarters of SACREs suggested ways in which they could develop further their relations with local interfaith bodies that would increase interfaith understanding and community cohesion, detailing a number of projects and activities for the future.

4 NEXT STEPS

4.1. Introduction

The survey has mapped the relationships between SACREs and their local communities by exploring four relevant areas:

- SACRE representation on Committee A (Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations);
- SACRE co-opted representation;
- SACRE relations with Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations;
- SACRE involvement with local interfaith organisations and other local interfaith initiatives.

The results of the survey show the range of activities that take place in SACREs in Wales, which are of relevance to community cohesion and interfaith understanding. These are widely viewed by these SACREs as making a significant contribution to their work with local schools. The enthusiasm and commitment of many SACREs to developing relevant relationships with local ‘interfaith’ groups has been apparent. The results of the survey have also shown some of the difficulties that SACREs have encountered, with particular reference to securing some types of representation.

The report on the survey of SACREs and the Local Community enables SACREs to share their experience and practice in this area, and (in response) to reflect on their own practice. In order to facilitate responses to this report, a number of recommendations are made to SACREs in Wales and to WASACRE.

4.2. Recommendations to SACREs

For SACREs in Wales the recommendations are:

- to receive the survey report on SACREs and the Local Community;
- to consider the Report’s recommendations;
- to appoint a working group to feedback to SACRE on the implications of the Report.

Using the Report as a starting point, SACRE working groups may wish to explore:

- representation on Committee A;
- co-options to SACRE;
- SACREs contacts and activities with Christian denominations and other religions;
- SACREs contacts and activities with local interfaith organisations;
- other aspects of SACRE’s work relevant to community cohesion and interfaith initiatives.

4.3. Recommendations to WASACRE

For WASACRE the recommendations are:

- to publicize the findings of the Report;
- to liaise with nationally recognized interfaith bodies or faith groups in Wales with a view to informing SACREs about where to seek advice regarding the securing of appropriate representation;

- to continue to offer presentations at WASACRE meetings relevant to community cohesion;
- to continue to promote national and international initiatives relevant to community cohesion;
- to continue to provide WASACRE representation on relevant forums and committees working in this area;
- to explore the updating of the publication, *So you're joining you're local SACRE ...: a handbook for SACRE members in Wales*;
- to explore how the RESilience project resource may continue to have a role in schools in Wales.

APPENDIX 1

Collated quantitative results

Table 1: SACRE representation on Committee A (N = 21)

<i>Section A</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>?</i>
A1 representatives identified	21	0	0
A2 issues securing representation	16	4	1
A3 Committee A represents area	15	6	0

Table 2: Co-opted representation

<i>Section B</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>?</i>
B1 co-opted members on SACRE	15	6	0
B2 co-opted membership appropriate for area	20	1	0

Table 3: SACRE relations with Christian denominations and other religions (N = 21)

<i>Section C</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>?</i>
C1 contacts in local area listed	20	1	0
C2 contacts outside local area listed	16	5	0
C3 involvement in local projects/activities	17	4	0
C4 involvement in other local CoCo initiatives	14	7	0
C5a SACRE can promote relations further	15	4	2
C5b SACRE can promote local CoCo further	13	5	3

Table 4: SACREs and local interfaith involvement (N = 21)

<i>Section D</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>?</i>
D1 awareness of local faith's forum/council	10	11	0
D2 involvement with local forum/council	8	13	0
D3 SACRE representation on local forum/council	1	20	0
D4 worked with local interfaith groups on project	3	18	0
D5 worked with other local interfaith initiatives on projects	4	17	0
D6 comments on experiences in this area	5	15	1
D7 SACRE can promote relations with local interfaith bodies further	14	6	1

Of the 21 SACREs, 9 SACREs offered additional comments when invited to so at the end of the questionnaire.

APPENDIX 2

List of participating SACREs in Wales

Anglesey
Blaenau Gwent
Bridgend
Caerphilly
Cardiff
Carmarthenshire
Conwy
Denbighshire
Flintshire
Gwynedd
Merthyr Tydfil
Monmouthshire
Neath Port Talbot
Newport
Pembrokeshire
Powys
Rhondda Cynon Taf
Swansea
Torfaen
Vale of Glamorgan
Wrexham

SACREs and the Local Community



SACRE Survey

This survey is being sent to all SACREs in Wales by WASACRE. The survey aims to access information concerning SACRE representation on Committee A (Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations), co-opted representation, SACRE relations with Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations, and SACRE involvement with local interfaith organisations and other local interfaith initiatives.

On the basis of your responses, WASACRE will produce a report mapping the relationships between SACREs and their local communities with the aim of collating and sharing information, experiences, and practice.

Please return the completed survey to Tania ap Siôn, Secretary to WASACRE, by email or post by **20 July 2010**:

Email:

What is the name of your SACRE:

SECTION A

The questions in SECTION A are about SACRE representatives in Committee A (i.e. representatives of Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations which reflect the principle religious traditions of your area).

1. Which Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations are represented on your SACRE (please include numbers of places allocated to each group)?
2. Has your SACRE experienced any issues with securing appropriate representation for Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations?

YES / NO

If YES, please provide details.

3. Is your SACRE satisfied that its membership appropriately reflects the relevant Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations in your area?

YES / NO

If NO, please provide details.

SECTION B

The questions in SECTION B are about co-opted SACRE representatives.

1. Do you have any co-opted representatives on your SACRE?

YES / NO

If YES, please list the bodies/organisations they represent.

2. Is your SACRE satisfied that its co-opted representation is appropriate for SACRE in your area?

YES / NO

If NO, please provide details.

SECTION C

The questions in SECTION C are about SACRE relations with Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations in your area.

1. List the contacts your SACRE has with Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations in your area.
2. List any relevant contacts your SACRE has with Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations outside your area.
3. Has your SACRE been involved in any projects or activities which have involved Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations in your area?

YES / NO

If YES, please provide details.

4. Has your SACRE been involved in any other initiatives which promote relevant aspects of community cohesion in your area.

YES / NO

If YES, please provide details.

5. Is there anything further that your SACRE could do to promote:

(a) relevant and productive relations with Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations in your area.

YES / NO

If YES, please provide details.

(b) relevant aspects of community cohesion in your area.

YES / NO

If YES, please provide details.

SECTION D

The questions in SECTION D are about your SACRE's relations with local interfaith organisations and involvement in other local interfaith initiatives or projects.

1. Are you aware of a local forum of faiths or interfaith council which brings together members of the major faiths in your area? (that is, the 'main' local interfaith body – where one exists – usually with some kind of council or forum).

YES / NO

If YES, what is its name/s?

2. Are any members of your SACRE involved in this group(s)?

YES / NO

If YES, please provide details.

3. Is your SACRE represented on this group/s?

YES / NO

If YES, please provide details.

4. Has your SACRE worked with one or more local interfaith groups on particular projects?

YES / NO

If YES, please provide details.

5. Has your SACRE worked with any other local interfaith initiatives on particular projects?

YES / NO

If YES, please provide details.

6. Have you any comments on your SACRE's experiences in this area, for example, of working jointly with the local interfaith body (or other local interfaith initiatives), or equally of **not** being able to work jointly, or achieve a satisfactory mode of communication and mutual awareness.

7. Is there anything further that your SACRE could do with regard to its relations with local interfaith bodies that would increase interfaith understanding and community cohesion?

YES / NO

If YES, please provide details.

Are there any additional comments that you wish to make?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY.

APPENDIX 4: List of Recipients

The 22 Local Authorities in Wales (Chairs of SACRE and Council Leaders):

Anglesey
Blaenau Gwent
Bridgend
Caerphilly
Cardiff
Carmarthenshire
Ceredigion
Conwy
Denbighshire
Flintshire
Gwynedd
Merthyr Tydfil
Monmouthshire
Neath Port Talbot
Newport
Pembrokeshire
Powys
Rhondda Cynon Taf
Swansea
Torfaen
Vale of Glamorgan
Wrexham

The Welsh Government:

The First Minister of Wales
The Minister for Education and Skills

Interfaith bodies:

Inter Faith Network for the UK
Inter-faith Council for Wales
Valleys Faith Forum

National Faith bodies:

Baha'i Council for Wales
Baptist Union of Wales
Church in Wales (Education)
Cytûn
Free Church Council for Wales
Methodist Church (Wales Synod)
Muslim Council of Wales
Presbyterian Church of Wales
Roman Catholic Church in Wales (Education)
Union of Welsh Independents
United Reformed Church (Wales Synod)

Higher Education sector:

North and Mid Wales Centre for Teacher Education
South West Wales Centre for Teacher Education
South East Wales Centre for Teacher Education and Training

Other organisations:

Estyn

European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education (EFTRE)

Inter-European Commission on Church and School (ICCS)

National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE)

National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)

Religious Education Movement Wales (REMW)

Religious Education Council for England and Wales (REC)