

Merseyside Faith Leaders on the current Covid-19 situation

Faith Leaders from across the Merseyside region joined in issuing the following statement on 14 January concerning the current Covid-19 situation:

“As leaders of faith communities in Liverpool and Merseyside, we are taking very seriously our region’s extremely high infection rate and the added concern around the spread of the new variant of Covid-19.

We believe that faith communities make an essential contribution to the common good - not just in the spiritual support which is provided, but in the practical action which is undertaken by faith groups, for example through our foodbanks or our education and support groups.

Unlike in previous lockdowns, the government has not prevented public worship, although a large number of places of worship have voluntarily suspended their services. The higher infection rates of the new variant mean that we must be correspondingly more alert to the possibility of infection.

For people of faith, human life is sacred. We are called to model a responsible reaction to the current situation, and that by our actions we can show leadership within our communities. We do this with the active support of Directors of Public Health in our local authorities.

We call members of our own faith communities, as well as people across the region of any faith or of none, to the following actions:

In all aspects of our lives, including in the practice of our faith, we must maintain COVID-secure behaviour so as to care for one another.

We strongly encourage everyone to take up the vaccine offer when it is made to us, and we should support other people in receiving the vaccine.

In these stressful days we must show kindness to one another, and especially to the anxious and those more vulnerable than ourselves.

Where asymptomatic mass-testing is available, we should participate in order to play our part in protecting others from infection.

Where faith communities are continuing to offer public worship, we expect our colleagues to have formal risk assessments, ensure that hand sanitizer is used, good quality face masks are worn, and proper distancing is rigorously observed. If a faith community cannot maintain public worship safely, then we expect them to suspend their services until the infection rates have decreased to a safe level.

We recognise that these times are difficult for all. But we ask people, of all faiths and none, to commit to the actions which we list above.

The Right Reverend Paul Bayes, Anglican Bishop of Liverpool

The Most Reverend Malcolm McMahon OP, Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool

Liverpool Region Mosque Network

Abdullah Quilliam Mosque

Al-Rahma Mosque

The Reverend Dr Sheryl Anderson, Chair of the Liverpool Methodist District

The Reverend Phil Jump, North Western Baptist Association

Liverpool Reform Synagogue

Allerton Synagogue

Princes Road Synagogue

Major Roger Batt, Divisional Commander, Salvation Army

Kadampa Buddhist Meditation Centre

Hindu Cultural Organisation

Liverpool Baha’i Centre

Childwall Hebrew Congregation

United Reformed Church Mersey Synod