



# Faith Action Audit

Plymouth 2010

Abbreviated  
Summary

# Faith Action Audit

## Plymouth 2010

### Abbreviated Summary

**This booklet presents an abbreviated summary of the findings of the Faith Action Audit carried out by the Social and Public Policy Research Group, Plymouth University. This abbreviated version has been compiled jointly by Churches Together in Plymouth and Cornerstone Vision.**

For the full report please go to [www.ctip.org.uk](http://www.ctip.org.uk)



## Contents

---

Chapter 1	Preface
Chapter 2	Introduction
Chapter 3	Questionnaire Research Findings
Chapter 4	Interview Findings
Chapter 5	Facts & Figures
Chapter 6	Conclusion

# 1. Preface

---

Faith is alive, well and active in the City of Plymouth, expressed through many of the world's major religions. The city has some 110 Christian Churches and 40 Christian ministries, two Mosques, the oldest Jewish Synagogue in Europe, a Buddhist centre and congregations of Hindus, Sikhs and others. This audit seeks to survey them all, so talks generically of 'Faith Based Groups' (FBG's).

Faith for the believer is an internal reality with an external expression. Most sacred texts have an equivalent of 'Love God with all your heart, Love your neighbour as yourself'. Worship goes up, but compassion goes out - and is expressed in action on behalf of those in need. This is reflected in the huge range and diversity of activities that are offered for community cohesion and spiritual enhancement throughout the city. Most of these are run by volunteers who turn up regularly

to offer their services, not for remuneration, but driven by vision, passion and compassion - these are most powerful motivations.

Faith communities also have a huge infrastructure across the city, with buildings that serve the whole community. Gone are the days when such premises were open for two hours of worship and shut for the rest of the week. Their doors are now open to become midweek venues for nurseries, mums & tots groups, youth-centres, sports facilities, keep-fit groups, AA meetings, senior citizens' luncheons, drop-in centres for help and counselling plus a host of other purposes.

# 1. Preface (Continued)

## Engaging with Plymouth LSP's 2020 goals

---

*“... a very diverse range of services that map well onto the strategic vision” - Quote from the full FAA Report*

This Plymouth Faith Action Audit (FAA) is pioneering in its approach in engaging with the city's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) 2020 Vision and Goals they have developed. These goals are to become a Healthy, Wealthy, Safe & Strong and Wise city.

Faith Groups contribute in many ways to each of these aims, and so the survey was constructed around these goals. The results therefore show how the Faith Community contributes to each, as well as to the well-being of the population of Plymouth as a whole.

One of the main aims of this FAA is to make visible and quantify the value of the contributions made by faith groups. This will enable providers and service users to identify what is available. It will also enable the network of faith groups to see areas where there are gaps and/or duplication. Best practice can be shared and services more easily accessed, when the picture of faith group provision is made clear.

In the current economic and political climate, where 'Big Society' is set to

**Chris Clewer**  
Chairman,  
Churches Together  
in Plymouth



replace 'big government' especially in the areas of provision of welfare services for local communities, this Audit will play a key role in informing local authorities and public service providers as they seek to bridge the gap between the needs of the population and the provision that is available.

*“The vast majority of services provided... are offered to the entire community and not just to people of faith. This signifies an enormous commitment to the City of Plymouth and its people.”*

*- Quote from the full FAA Report*

This work was commissioned by Churches Together in Plymouth and Cornerstone Vision. We are grateful for cooperation of The Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity and their contacts with other Faith Group leaders. The research was carried out by the University of Plymouth Social and Public Policy Research Group in order to ensure independence and objectivity. We thank them for their hard work and integrity throughout.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Clewer". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Chris Clewer

## 2. Introduction

---

*“The services provided have large impacts on the lives of the individuals and communities that are in receipt of them... and an equally large impact on those that deliver them.”*

*- Quote from the full FAA Report*

### 2.1 Research introduction

---

This research employed the Plymouth 2020 Vision as its conceptual framework, this aims to make Plymouth: healthy, wealthy, safe/strong and wise.

A mixed method design was employed combining a mail survey with semi-structured telephone interviews. The mail survey received a response rate of 45% (70 from 155 mailings) and 8 telephone interviews were conducted.

One of the key objectives of the report was to outline the scope of faith-based provision in the City, overall we identified a very diverse range of services that map well onto the strategic vision.

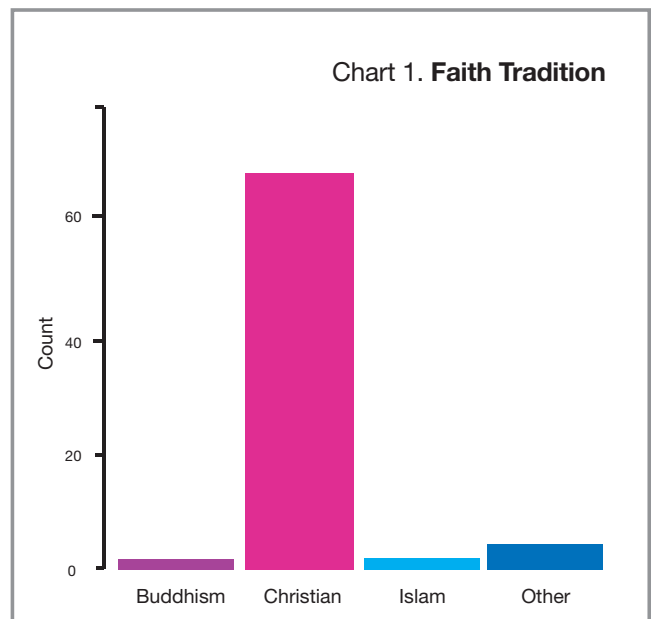
We have also tried to measure the number of hours volunteers provide, to put a cost on that unpaid labour (albeit a gross underestimate, for reasons that will be set out below) in order to demonstrate the monetary value of their work.

## 2.2 Demographic information

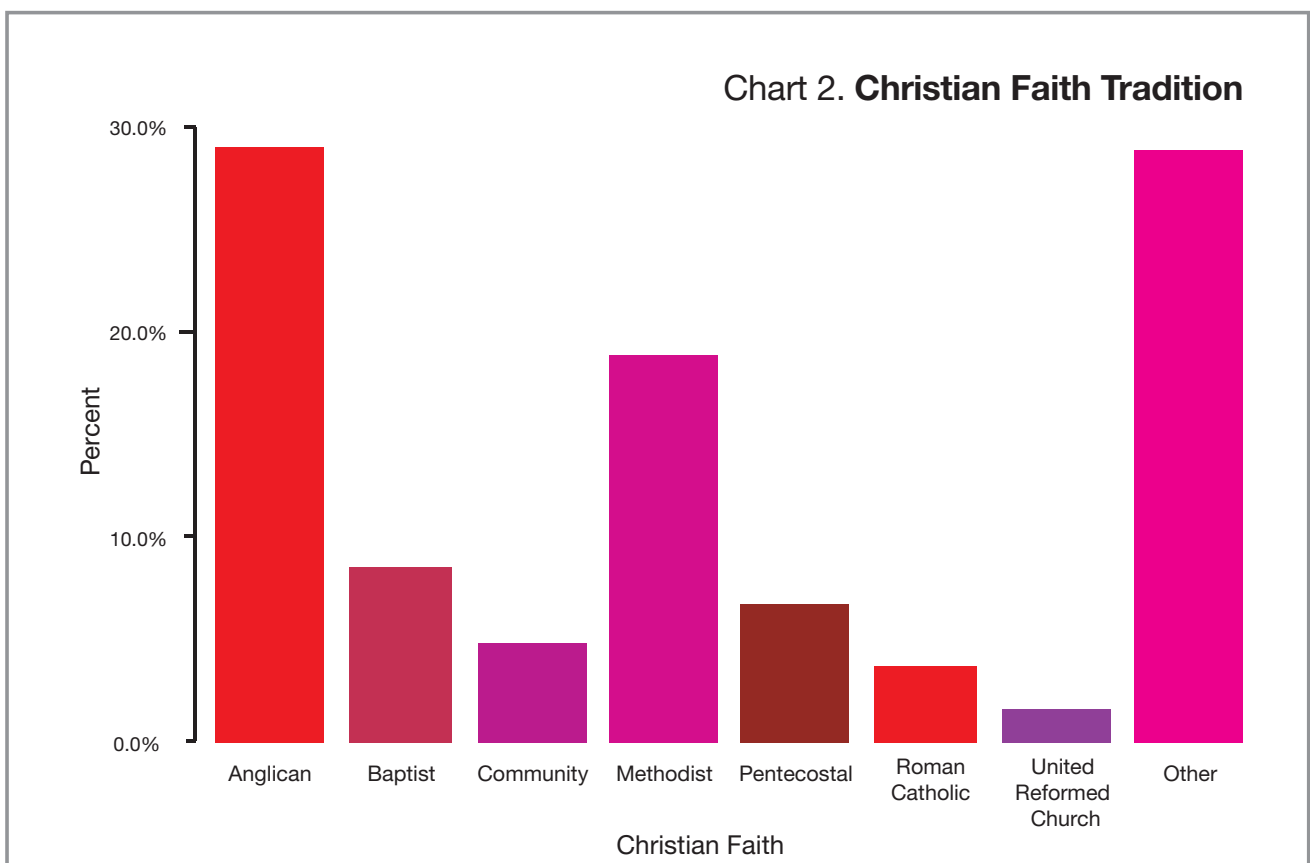
Overall data were obtained from seventy respondents. Some further responses were received but not before the final deadline and so were not included in the data set. One was Buddhist, sixty six were Christian, one Islam and two 'other'. These two were groups who probably consider themselves to be multi-faith.

See Chart 1.

Of the Christian respondents the largest group were either 'other' or



Anglican. The full breakdown can be seen in Chart 2. The 'other' category included non denominational groups such as YMCA and the Soup Run.



# 3. Questionnaire

## Research Findings

---

The following details are the 'headlines' from the full report. Each section shows the number of hours dedicated to the activity. The activities and hours shown here are representative and not the full picture, which is seen in the complete Faith Action Audit. Activities are grouped under the four main headings of the Local Strategic Partnership's goals for meeting the Plymouth 2020 Vision.

### 3.1 LSP Goal: 'Healthy'

**Total reported hours per annum: 175,180.5**

**Faith Groups activities in this category include: Counselling services; Healing ministry; Caring work among the homeless, destitute, refugees and asylum seekers; Help for those in crisis or overcoming trauma and abuse; Care and facilities for families and older people.**

Faith groups make a significant contribution when we look at particular groups of vulnerable people in society. Much of the work they do is focused

on providing support for children and families and for the elderly specifically. The total time reported in the full Faith Action Audit for this category is made up in part (but not exclusively) by the following:

#### **Families and Children**

Support or activities for families

#### **The Elderly**

43% of the respondents said that they provided support for the elderly





*“An intricate web of provision exists which is often insufficiently recognised.” - Quote from the full FAA Report*

### **Lunch or Coffee Mornings**

Much of the provision for lunch or coffee mornings (although open to all) is designed to provide support for the older people.

### **Sport and Health Related Activities**

Many and varied sport related activities

### **One-to-one Counselling, Bereavement and Divorce Counselling**

Unsurprisingly one area of particular importance was the support given to people needing general one-to-one counselling and specifically bereavement and divorce.

### **Street (or sex) Workers**

Faith groups provide many services on the streets -10 of the 70 respondents said that they provided support for street workers.

### **Support for Vulnerable Adults**

Faith groups have traditionally provided help and support for a wide range of vulnerable groups in society. The provision of things like soup runs, food banks and refugee support is vital to many of the needy in Plymouth. Drop in centres for vulnerable adults also provide advice and support.

## 3.2 LSP Goal: 'Wealthy'

**Total reported hours per annum: 196,433.5\***

**Faith group activities in this category include: Providing employment; Wealth sharing through offerings; Chaplaincy services to Business; Debt counselling; Preparation for employment; Credit Unions; Buildings infrastructure across the city for faith needs, and let to other organisations as a facility either free or at low-cost rates.**

\* The total reported hours includes contributions reported in the other sections as well. The fact that Faith groups are contributing massive volunteer hours to all kinds of activities in Plymouth means that they are contributing to the wealth of the City. Thus the total contribution of the Faith groups for all activities is worth emphasising here.

### **Buildings and capital contributions**

The buildings owned and leased by faith based groups provide a vital resource for the community and for

other community groups, who either rent space or have it provided for free.

Most, (49 out of 70) faith based groups had their own buildings.

Apart from meeting rooms groups also had offices and other rooms in their buildings. Of the groups who had their own buildings only four of them did not provide space for other groups or individuals, albeit at a charge in most cases. Four groups provided free space.

*“The impact of faith-based provision is substantial whether we are looking at individuals, groups or communities.”*

*- Quote from the full FAA Report*

### 3.3 LSP Goal: 'Safe & Strong'

**Total reported hours per annum: 1,733**

**Many youth and children's groups have the by-product of providing safety by keeping young people off the streets. However, a major contribution towards this aspect is the Street Pastor project involving Faith believers from some 35 different churches, patrolling during the night time economy. There is also care of offenders and ex-offenders to help reduce recidivism. Improving safety in communities has involved litter clearance and environmental projects.**

**The total time reported in the full Faith Action Audit for this category is made up in part (but not exclusively) by the following:**

#### **Crime Reduction**

Street Pastors contribute to the safety of the City and also provide help and support for people who may be vulnerable due to excessive drinking.

#### **Environmental Issues**

Also included in this section is the contribution made to environmental or 'green' issues. Perhaps surprisingly the Faith Based Groups did not seem to be as engaged in these issues as would have been anticipated. Litter picking was specifically mentioned.

#### **Community Cohesion**

Timebank is a project aimed at getting individuals - such as Asylum seekers who are not allowed to work - to volunteer for a range of activities / skills sharing.

#### **Partnership Committee Work**

Also included in this section is the contribution made by volunteers to partnership committee work.

## 3.4 LSP Goal: 'Wise'

**Total reported hours per annum: 76,981.5**

**Contributing to the wisdom of the city starts young with mums & tots groups and nurseries; then homework clubs, youth groups, centres for special needs support and education plus language lessons for refugees and asylum seekers. Add to this, one of the prime purposes of faith meetings, to explain sacred text, impart wisdom and truth.**

Areas of note include:

### **Children and Young People**

Mother and toddler groups providing the initial context for learning.

Tens of thousands of hours every year are provided in the form of Youth Group provision by FBG's

### **Education**

Training and education in various forms is provided by FBG's  
There is also a contribution in terms of activities designated as arts, crafts, drama or music.

*“The organised provision of services to those in need emanated from Faith Based Groups and until recently those services were the mainstay of individual and community support.”*

- Quote from the full EAA Report

# 4. Interview Findings

---

*“Caring came through as a passionate commitment for those interviewed, for individuals, groups and communities”*

*- Quote from the full EAA Report*

One of the central themes which emerged from the interviews was the commitment and passion respondents feel for the care and support they provide for the whole community, rather than directed simply at people of faith.

One of the issues that came up during the interview survey was the training of volunteers and the relative lack of provision in this area. It was suggested that, while training is provided by Faith Groups in the city for volunteers, this could be better co-ordinated and supported.

Another theme that emerged in relation to funding was the issue of sustainability. This did not appear to be simply an echo of the current policy emphasis on sustainability, but a strong determination to build projects with good long-term prospects:

# 5. Facts & Figures

According to the full Faith Action Audit: “The vast majority of the activities and services provided are offered to the entire community and not just to people of faith. This signifies an enormous commitment to the City of Plymouth and its people. One way of demonstrating the scale of this commitment is to total up the number of hours contributed; and then to assign a monetary value to them of

minimum wage (£5.80p.h.) It should be noted that the figures here constitute a massive underestimate as only 45% responded and we used the Minimum Wage as our benchmark.”

City Goal	Voluntary Hours -Per annum	Monetary value -Per annum
HEALTHY	175,180.5	£1,043,886.90
WEALTHY	196,433.5	£1,139,314.30
SAFE & STRONG	1,733	£10,283.40
WISE	76,981.5	£587,571.90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>450,328.5 hours</b>	<b>£2,781,056.50</b>

# 6. Conclusion

---

*“The number of hours and the monetary value detailed here are undoubtedly a massive underestimate of the level of work being done by Faith Based Groups in the City” - Quote from the full FAA Report*

It has already been said by the Researchers, that these figures constitute a massive underestimate. Added to this is the value of food, clothing and other goods that are distributed, and also the value of those services that are more skilled than minimum wage.

As well as this, the buildings infrastructure across the city is much used, and still has greater capacity, but as yet, has not been valued.

Faith Groups provide not only caring services but also a moral, social and spiritual compass for the city itself.

The work that is undertaken and the services provided have large impacts on the lives of the individuals and communities that are in receipt of them, and, something that is often overlooked, provision of services has an equally large impact on those that deliver them. In the current political climate, this only looks set to increase.



*“This report is a starting point with more planned, particularly in terms of mapping the contributions of Faith Based Groups across the City.”*

This booklet presents an abbreviated summary of the findings of the Faith Action Audit carried out by the Social and Public Policy Research Group, Plymouth University. This abbreviated version has been compiled jointly by Churches Together in Plymouth and Cornerstone Vision.

