

Young Imams

The project aims to build resilience within communities of young people.

Who is it for?

Young people between the ages of 16-19 from independent faith sector schools who demonstrate leadership potential.

What is it?

The project aims to build resilience within communities of young people by developing a cohort of Safeguarding Peer Mentors, who are equipped to answer questions and signpost individuals for additional support.

What it involves?

Up to 20 participants will be led by a facilitator to explore a whole range of issues around ideology and grievance and psycho-social health and wellbeing. Experienced facilitators, who invariably have learned experience to share, will also help the young people to develop the awareness and knowledge they need to support their peers and recognise issues that need addressing within their locality. The whole programme is underpinned by social media presence, to support conversation between the participants and encourage ongoing dissemination of the information shared.

Topics explored include:

Ideology and grievance

- Understanding community grievances
- Social media and online propaganda
- On Road or on Deen-faith and desistance
- Islamophobia and the far right narrative
- Extremist ideologies unpicked
- Far right extremist ideology

Psycho-social and wellbeing

- Emotional resilience
- Counselling and mediation
- Ethical dilemmas
- Substance misuses awareness
- Sexual health awareness
- Mental health awareness
- Respect and integrity
- Legal issues in relation to female genital mutilation, DV and forced marriage

How long does it take?

The programme runs for between 12 to 16 weeks with a series of 1.5hr workshops and facilitated sessions on school premises. The sessions can be delivered as one off modules or as part of a package that investigates related issues over a period of time.

What it achieves?

At the end of the course, participants will have developed the capabilities to be a voice of reason within their communities and a source of information and advice for their peers.

Throughout the process they will have developed a number of key skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills – an ability to think critically and confidently about themselves and others as well as personal, social and political conflict and its consequences;
- Appreciation of Values - an ability to recognise how beliefs and values directly affect attitudes and behaviour;
- Ongoing Support - as part of a wider network of graduate peacebuilders, participants will have the support of others working to counter despairing narratives and find personalised, constructive ways to effect change;
- Safe Space Group Support - knowledge of other projects within the Safe Space Group network that they can refer individuals to for support.