Knowledge brief on:

Extreme Heat and the Potential Role of Faith-Based Organisations in Ealing

NIHR | Health Determinants Research Collaboration Ealing

Key messages

Extreme heat is an increasing health risk in Ealing, with impacts likely to be greatest among vulnerable populations

Faith-based organisations (FBOs) can support heat-health protection through trusted relationships, community reach and local assets

FBOs vary substantially in their capacity, resources, facilities and relationships with local communities

Effective collaboration depends on building relationships before periods of extreme heat, rather than relying on emergency mobilisation

Greater coordination across council teams is needed to embed FBOs within Ealing's approach to heat-health preparedness

This research explores the potential role of faith organisations in strengthening heat-health protection in Ealing, and how partnership working could support local planning for extreme heat.



Methods

1. Narrative review of academic literature on extreme heat, FBOs and statutory partnerships
2. Seven semi-structured interviews with faith leaders and Ealing Council staff
3. Thematic analysis of interview data, informed by the literature and local policy context

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Findings

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Existing reach: Faith organisations maintain regular contact with older, isolated and at-risk residents through routine activities (elders' groups, communal meals, services), reaching people beyond statutory services.

Willingness and assets: All faith leaders interviewed were willing to support the heat response; several offered premises, which were typically cool or air-conditioned.

Practical constraints: Main considerations were funding, short notice on alerts, and existing demands on leaders' time; running any service would remain a council responsibility.

Early-stage activity: None of the organisations had specific plans for hot weather or had raised heat with residents.

Engagement patterns: Relationships vary across council teams and often rest on individual officers; participation and grant uptake to date have come mainly from churches and central areas, with lower representation from other faith communities and outer neighbourhoods.

Implications

Recommendations are organised under Ealing Council's Enable/Mobilise/Inspire framework and were developed from stakeholder interviews and the narrative review.

- **Enable:** name a public-health lead and cross-departmental group; build an opt-in faith directory; provide capacity-building; review grants for equity.
- **Mobilise:** co-produce a heat-health protocol (roles, thresholds, two-way communication); pilot with a small, diverse group; align evaluation with the Climate Resilience Report.
- **Inspire:** develop culturally appropriate messaging; use the Faith Leaders Forum and networks, plus targeted outreach to under-represented groups.



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Further info

Full report: ‘Extreme Heat and the Potential Role of Faith-Based Organisations in Ealing: A Health Policy Report’ (MSc Public Health, LSHTM, 2026).

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Contact: full report and further detail available on request.

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Further info

Key sources

- Heat Ready London (Greater London Authority)
- Ealing Climate Adaptation Strategy (2026–38) and Better Living Framework
- Ealing Health & Wellbeing Strategy (Together in Ealing)
- Evidence base: 15 studies on statutory–faith partnerships

With sincere thanks to the council officers and faith leaders who generously shared their time. This research is by Eleni Zotos (MSc Public Health, LSHTM), completed with the NIHR HDRC at Ealing Council.

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