Feedback from Participants in the Prevent Peers Programme Delivered by Faith Matters, 2009 / 2010

The Prevent Peers programme was a bespoke training programme on the Prevent (Preventing Extremism) programme that was delivered to 8 local authorities in the West Midlands by Faith Matters between October 2009 and March 2010. The work involved direct face to face training for councillors, council officers and faith leaders in the 8 local authorities, as well as Internet e-learning and e-mail support. The training supported learning on Al-Qaeda based extremism as well as Far Right extremism in the UK.

Comments from attendees included:

“I did write a bit on the evaluation form about how positive I felt about the training. I continue to feel buoyed up by the training and feel much more confident that working alongside my (mainstream, moderate) Muslim friends and encouraging them in their various interfaith activities is one very good way to support them and increase our good community relations. When asked what I think we can do about extremism I just say that supporting the majority Muslims, defending them when necessary and encouraging them to continue their own interfaith and community activities can help. Its very important now that we strengthen our friendships with the Muslims we are already working alongside.”

"As an elected member, this is the first real opportunity that I have had to listen to and question individuals on what is a complex agenda - Prevent. This programme is needed especially when members sometimes find themselves in such difficult situations. It was also important to see how Faith Matters and their trainers decoupled Islam and Muslims from the political versions of faith used by groups like Al-Qaeda. This helps to push back stereotypes. Well done and we need another round of this programme."

"The Far Right training courses provided an insight into the cyclical nature of support for such fringe groups. Their ideology seems to be growing in Europe and more work is needed on this. The sessions focussing on political extremism that Faith Matters ran were eye openers, whilst

being sensitive to faith communities."