

Services funded by public money should be open to all, without alienating anyone.

The recent drive to contract out public services to faith groups risks undermining equal access.

Help us keep public services free from discrimination and evangelism.

The government is increasingly pushing for more publicly-funded services to be provided by religious organisations.

Many faith-based groups have carried out social service without imposing their beliefs. But religious groups taking over public service provision raises concerns regarding proselytising and discrimination.

65% of people have no confidence in church groups running crucial social provisions such as healthcare with only 2% of people expressing a lot of confidence.

Any organisations involved in delivering public services should be bound by equality law and restrictions on proselytisation.

Those advocating for faith organisations to take over more public services risk undermining these restrictions, which exist to protect both the public and third sector.

"We have concerns that some religious groups that seek to take over public services, particularly at local level, could pursue policies and practices that result in increased discrimination against marginalised groups, particularly in service provision and the employment of staff. Non-religious people and those not seen to confirm to the dominant ethos of a religious body, such as being in an unmarried relationship or divorced and being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered, could find themselves subject to discrimination."

Unitarian Church (Submission to the Parliamentary Public Administration Select Committee about the Big Society agenda)

There are also concerns about faith-based mental health and pastoral care in public institutions, including chaplaincy programmes in the NHS and the armed forces. Where such services are funded by the state, they should not be organised around religion or belief.

Religious commentators are often keen to document the contribution of religious organisations to the third sector and social activism. But they fail to demonstrate why it should be the state's role to build this capacity or why local authorities shouldn't have legitimate concerns about religious groups running services.

Take Action!

1. Write to your MP

Ask your MP to protect secular public services.

Enter Postcode:

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2. Share your story

Tell us why you support this campaign, and how you are personally affected by the issue. You can also let us know if you would like assistance with a particular issue.

- [Share your story](#)

3. Join the National Secular Society

Become a member of the National Secular Society today! Together, we can separate religion and state for greater freedom and fairness.

- [Join us!](#)

Latest updates

[NSS welcomes Network Rail decision to remove religious messaging](#)

Posted: Wed, 20 Mar 2024 10:59

Following NSS criticism, Islamic hadith calling for 'sinners to repent' removed from departure board at King's Cross station.

[Regulator to investigate GP who led proscribed Islamist group](#)

Posted: Mon, 19 Feb 2024 13:43

Following NSS intervention, medical regulator says there are "potential fitness to practice concerns" over GP who led Islamist group.

- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [3](#)
- [4](#)
- [5](#)
- [6](#)
- [7](#)
- [8](#)
- [9](#)
- [10](#)
- ...

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