



Putting faith in communities

## Active Faith Settings



# What is Active Faith Settings?

- **What** – Planning & delivery of sports/physical activity with children & families involving mosques/madrasas
- **Aim** - Reduce health inequalities for children & families from disadvantaged, ethnically diverse areas of North Bradford.
- **How** – Organise local health groups in faith setting & implement a coproduced **toolkit** targeting:
  - Physical activity
  - Healthy diet
  - Organisational behaviour change



Faithincommune



[www.faithincommunities.co.uk](http://www.faithincommunities.co.uk)

# The Journey So Far ...



- ✓ **2017-2018** - Born in Bradford (BiB) research on “Using Islamic Religious Settings to prevent obesity among South Asian children living in the UK” (funded by NIHR)
- ✓ **2019-2022** - Trailblazer Childhood Obesity Programme Facilitated by Bradford Council, implemented by BiB in collaboration with Faith in Communities.
  - ✓ Purpose: to develop an intervention to prevent childhood obesity using madrasas as an opportunity where healthy behaviours can be encouraged and implemented with children and families.
- ✓ Through ‘test and learn’, BiB co-produced a ‘toolkit’ with madrasahs, which combines NHS/PHE guidelines on obesity prevention initiatives with Islamic teachings on the same.
- ✓ Islamic narrative was added by Mufti Mohammed Zubair Butt.

# The Journey So Far ...



- ✓ **Summer 2022** - the Trailblazer Programme branched out into two brand new programmes:
  - ✓ **Living Well Faith Settings** - funded by the Department of Health and Wellbeing, Bradford Council
  - ✓ **Active Faith Settings** - funded by the JU:MP Programme
- ✓ Living Well Faith Settings implemented the Healthy Diet and Healthy Places components of the **Toolkit**.
- ✓ **Active Faith Settings** was to be implemented under **JU:MP** with a focus on providing technical input and training for the delivery of physical activities.
- ✓ Faith in Communities was the delivery arm of both programmes.

# AFS Highlights



- ✓ Engaged **30 madrasas** in neighbourhoods with deprivation:
  - ✓ Manningham, Girdlington, Frizinghall, Scotchman Road, AllerGrange, City, Peel Park and Fagley
- ✓ Identified **health champions** & organised **health groups** affiliated with madrasas
- ✓ All madrasas have delivered **physical activity** and **healthy diet** workshops from the **toolkit**.
- ✓ Physical activity and healthy diet has become a **permanent focus** of **madrasah management** in varying degrees.
- ✓ Staff/volunteers are **better informed and engaged**.
- ✓ All madrasas have **introduced/increased** physical activity as a regular feature.
- ✓ All madrasas have **reduced/stopped** consumption of junk food and fizzy drinks.



# AFS Highlights



- ✓ Some madrasas have become **sweets/fizzy drink free zones**.
- ✓ Physical activity and healthy diet **messages have filtered down** to and engaged parents and families.
- ✓ **Discussions** on physical activity and healthy diet are being **normalised**.
- ✓ Physical activity workshops supported by healthy diet workshops as a **holistic approach**.
- ✓ Sustained engagement is bringing about **behavioural change**.

# Challenges



- Packed curriculum/time limitations
- Facilities/infrastructure not conducive
- Funds/dedicating funds to extracurricular
- Capacity issues to engage with external bodies
- Volunteers' time limitations
- Training
- Sustainability: What will happen after 2024?

# Solutions



- **Trust, Trust, Trust:** messenger before the message
- Enabling, aligning with & complementing what madrasas offer rather than replacing
- Understanding the individual strengths and challenges peculiar to each madrasa
- Avoiding overburden of madrasa
- Fostering relationships with the leadership
- Empowering female staff
- Lots of patience

# The next phase ...

## ✓ Summer 2025-2028

- ✓ JU:MP has selected the following areas:
  - ✓ Bradford Moor
  - ✓ Keighley
  - ✓ Holme Wood
- ✓ Faith in Communities will deliver the AFS programme with 20 madrasahs in these areas over the tenure of the program.
- ✓ Faith in Communities will also maintain a 'light touch' with the 30 madrasahs it has thus far engaged.





# Onboarding message

- Utilise the 'Toolkit' for childhood obesity prevention
- Identify at least one 'health champion' to lead on the AFS program
- Identify at least one physical activity and one healthy diet workshop the madrasah can implement as part of routine learning
- Identify at least one physical activity and one healthy diet workshop that can be done as an extra curricular activity
- Develop an individualised madrasah plan for physical activities and healthy diet

