

# NEWSLETTER

World religion day is celebrated each January on the third Sunday of the month, and this year it falls on the 19th of January.

## What is the aim of World religion day?

Its aim is to 'promote understanding and peace between all religions, encouraging people to learn about other faiths and their followers.'

Initiated in the Bahá'í faith, the first observation of World Religion Day took place in 1950 and is a movement to encourage people to respect all religions equally. People of the Bahá'í faith believe that all religions have common features and that there is one God who is known by different names in all religions.

For centuries, religions and faiths have fought each other, ignoring common values. Followers of the Bahá'í faith believe that all humans are born equal, and that we all have the same rights, regardless of faith. World Religion Day aims to promote the unity of religious peoples to help us overcome historical differences and to work towards a peaceful understanding between faiths.



There are six major religions of the world, these are:



It is estimated that nearly 75% of the world's population practices one of these religions. World Religion Day highlights commonalities between them and the role religion can play in uniting people across the planet. The world's primary religions can be classified into two categories: Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) and Indian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism). There are approximately 2 billion practicing Christians across the globe, thereby making Christianity the most widely observed faith. The second most widely practiced religion is Islam, with an estimated 1.8 billion people adhering to its teachings worldwide. As of 2020, over 31% of the world's population observed the Christian faith whilst just under 25% observed the Islamic faith.

Since the start of the 21st century, many countries have seen a rise in the number of people claiming to have no religious affiliation. Irreligion encompasses a wide range of viewpoints drawn from various philosophical and intellectual perspectives, including atheism, agnosticism, religious scepticism, rationalism, secularism, and non-religious spirituality. These perspectives can vary, with

individuals who identify as irreligious holding diverse beliefs about religion and its role in their lives.

## How can we celebrate World Religion Day?

World Religion Day is an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the many different faiths and beliefs that people hold around the world. It encourages the joining together of different faiths and backgrounds, interfaith conversations to celebrate and learn about each other, as well as to develop new ways to work together.

The Awareness Days website has outlined some of the many ways we can celebrate World Religion Day as a meaningful and educational experience.

- **Interfaith Gatherings:** Attend interfaith events, discussions, or gatherings in your community to learn about various religious traditions and engage in dialogue.
- **Study Different Religions:** Take the time to study and appreciate the beliefs, practices, and values of different religions. Visit religious sites or read books about world religions.
- **Share Your Beliefs:** Share your own religious beliefs and practices with others, fostering understanding and respect through open and honest conversations.
- **Teach Religious Tolerance:** Educate children and young people about the importance of religious tolerance, respect, and acceptance of diversity.
- **Support Interfaith Initiatives:** Support organizations and initiatives that promote interfaith dialogue, cooperation, and peacebuilding efforts.

## Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Week 3rd – 9th February 2025

Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week aims to shine a light on the impact of sexual abuse and violence, promote education, and empower individuals to seek help.

### Why It Matters:

Sexual abuse doesn't just leave physical scars, it impacts mental health, relationships, and the ability to trust others. Many survivors feel isolated, believing they must carry the burden alone. Raising awareness helps break this silence and creates a culture where survivors feel believed, supported, and empowered.

### Key UK Statistics:

- Over 1 in 5 women (20.7%) and 1 in 20 men (4%) in England and Wales have experienced some form of sexual assault since the age of 16 (ONS, 2023).
- In the year ending March 2022, there were 199,021 sexual offences recorded by the police, marking the highest figure on record (ONS, 2022).
- Approximately 85% of victims do not report sexual violence to the police, often due to fear, shame, or stigma (Rape Crisis England & Wales).



### How to Support and Raise Awareness:

- Recognise Signs: Emotional withdrawal, unexplained anxiety, and changes in behaviour can signal someone may need support.
- Respond Sensitively: If a learner or colleague discloses an experience, listen without judgment and encourage them to seek professional help.
- Signpost to Support Services:
  - Rape Crisis: **0808 802 9999 (24/7 helpline)**
  - Survivors Trust: **0808 801 0818**
  - National Male Survivor Helpline: **0808 800 5005**
  - Buttercups Training Safeguarding Team: **0115 937 4936, [Safeguarding@buttercups.co.uk](mailto:Safeguarding@buttercups.co.uk)**

**TOGETHER, WE CAN FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE SURVIVORS FEEL SAFE AND SUPPORTED**



### Case Study 1: Escaping the Cycle of Abuse

#### Name changed for anonymity\*\*

Liam\*\*, an 18-year-old college student in the UK, was in an unhealthy relationship where his partner used coercion and threats to control him. Over time, the relationship escalated into sexual violence. Liam felt ashamed and confused, believing that as a young man, he would not be taken seriously if he spoke out. He isolated himself, avoiding friends and family, while his academic performance began to decline.

#### Seeking Support:

One day, during a safeguarding awareness session at his college, Liam learned that men could also be victims of sexual abuse and violence. Encouraged by this, he confided in the college's safeguarding team. They reassured him, explained his rights, and supported him in contacting a specialist helpline for male survivors.

#### Outcome:

With professional guidance and ongoing emotional support, Liam ended the abusive relationship and reported the incidents to the police. He also accessed therapy through a local service specializing in supporting male survivors. Over time, Liam regained his self-esteem and began to rebuild his life. He later spoke about how critical it was to hear in the safeguarding session that anyone can be a victim, regardless of gender.

#### Why This Matters:

Liam's story highlights the often-overlooked reality that men can also be victims of sexual abuse and violence. In the UK, an estimated 4% of men have experienced sexual assault since the age of 16 (ONS, 2023). Many, like Liam, face stigma and fear seeking help. This case study emphasizes the importance of creating safe spaces and raising awareness to support all survivors.



## Safer Internet Day – 11th February 2025

### Why Internet Safety Awareness is Critical in 2025

In 2025, as digital integration continues to expand across every aspect of life, education, work, healthcare, and social interaction, Internet Safety Awareness is more critical than ever. With over 5 billion people online globally, the risks of cyberbullying, online scams, misinformation, and exploitation are at an all-time high. Vulnerable populations, such as young people and those with limited digital literacy, are particularly at risk from threats like online grooming, identity theft, and exposure to harmful content. Advances in AI and deepfake technology have made it easier than ever to manipulate information, creating new challenges for online trust and security. Promoting Internet Safety Awareness equips individuals with the tools to navigate these risks confidently, fostering safe and respectful online communities, protecting personal data, and ensuring that technology continues to be a force for good rather than harm.

#### Key UK Statistics:

- 1 in 5 young people aged 13–17 reported being cyberbullied in the year 2022 - 2023 (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2023).
- Over 50% of adults in the UK have experienced harmful content or harassment online (Ofcom, 2023).
- Online grooming crimes have risen by 82% over the last four years, with 6,156 offences recorded in 2022 (NSPCC).

#### Key Tips for Staying Safe Online:

- Privacy Settings: Ensure all devices and social media accounts use the highest privacy settings.

- Think Before Sharing: Avoid sharing sensitive personal or financial information online.
- Report Concerns: Platforms like CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) allow users to report online exploitation or grooming.

#### Resources for Support and Education:

- Internet Matters: Guides on privacy, cyberbullying, and safe browsing: [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)
- UK Safer Internet Centre: Advice and resources for educators: [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)

By promoting digital well-being and awareness of internet safety risks, we can empower our learners and colleagues to navigate the online world securely.



### Case Study 2: Online grooming and fraud

#### Name changed for anonymity\*\*

Amara\*\*, a 19-year-old learner, enjoyed connecting with others on social media. She was approached online by someone claiming to be a 21-year-old influencer who admired her art and wanted to collaborate. The “influencer” gradually built her trust, engaging in daily conversations and even sending fabricated photos and videos to appear legitimate. Eventually, they persuaded Amara to share personal details and financial information to support the “collaboration.”

#### The Turning Point:

Soon after, Amara noticed unauthorised transactions in her bank account and realised her personal photos had been misused. Feeling embarrassed and scared, she hesitated to tell anyone but eventually confided in her tutor. The tutor reported the situation to the safeguarding team. The safeguarding team escalated the concern to Action Fraud, the UK’s national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre.

#### Outcome:

With support from Action Fraud and her bank, Amara was able to secure her accounts and limit further losses. The safeguarding team provided her with online safety sessions and emotional support to rebuild her confidence. The police tracked down the perpetrator, who had been targeting other young people as part of a larger fraud operation. Amara now actively shares her story to raise awareness about online scams and catfishing.

#### Why This Matters:

Amara’s story underscores the growing risks of online fraud and catfishing, which often exploit the trust and vulnerability of young people. In the UK, victims lost over £2.7 billion to online scams in 2022, with many cases involving social media platforms (Action Fraud, 2023). This case highlights the importance of teaching young people to verify online identities, protect their personal information, and seek help without fear of judgment when something goes wrong.



## International Women's Day 8th March 2025

**International Women's Day was first celebrated more than one hundred years ago in 1911.**

The struggle for women's rights began long before International Women's Day was established. Only since the women's suffrage movement in the early 20th century did women get the right to vote here in the UK. In early 1918, women over the age of 30 who were either a member or married to a member of the Local Government Register, had their first opportunity to vote. Approximately 8.4 million women won the vote at that time and, later that same year, the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918 was passed, allowing women to be elected to parliament.

Constance Markiewicz was the first woman elected to the British Parliament, but the first to take a seat in the British House of Commons was Nancy Astor in 1919. Nancy supported the lowering of the age of the women's vote to 21 years of age, she advocated for increasing the school-leaving age and carried through the bill that raised the minimum drinking age to 18, which remains today.

Women received the same rights to vote on the same terms as men in 1928 and, since then, 68 women have been appointed to positions in the Cabinet of the United Kingdom. England has welcomed three female Prime Ministers, Scotland a First Minister and Northern Ireland recently elected its second female First Minister.

### WOMEN CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS AND THERE IS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO.

#### How did the women's right movement start?

In 1848, an American rights activist, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, held the first women's rights convention in New York. She called for changes to be made to the laws so that women could have an equal place within society. Elizabeth, and others like her, wanted women to have the right to vote and to have control over their own property and money. She finally forced changes in the law for women in America and people took notice.

In 1869, the National Woman Suffrage Association was formed in the US, and its main aim was to make sure women had the right to vote. Countries all around the world witnessed a rise in women's suffrage movements and, in 1888, the International Council of Women was formed, to promote equality and human rights for women.

#### How is International Women's Day celebrated around the world?

International Women's Day is a national holiday in many countries with thousands of events take place globally, including marches, talks, concerts, exhibitions and debates.

In China many women are given a half day off work, as advised by the state council.

In Italy International Women's Day is called La Festa della Donna and Italians traditionally give mimosa blossoms to wives, sisters and mothers, as a symbol of love. The flower is said to represent women as the blooms grow on difficult terrain despite its apparent fragility.

Flower sales in Russia typically double around International Women's Day.



#### Why do people wear the colour Purple for International Women's Day?

Purple, green and white are the colours of International Women's Day, according to the International Women's Day website. Purple signifies justice and dignity. Green symbolises hope, and white represents purity. These colours were used by the Women's Social and Political Union, a group set up in the UK in 1903 to fight for women's votes.



We can all appreciate a good night's sleep, but just how much does sleep impact our health and wellbeing? Sleep Awareness Week takes place in March, and we will be holding sleep workshops to explore the importance of sleep on our physical health and wellbeing, as well as gaining an awareness of tools and techniques to support a better night's sleep. **Look out for more information in the coming weeks.**