



## Religious Education's hidden contribution to community cohesion in Wales

Tania ap Sion

An article by Dr Tania ap Sion has recently been published in the journal *Contemporary Wales*, which identifies and explores the role that Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) play in promoting interfaith dialogue and community cohesion in Wales.

The provision within each local authority of a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is a statutory requirement under the Education Reform Act 1988 designed to monitor the implementation of the locally determined syllabus of religious education. As part of their statutory constitution SACREs bring together representation of Christian denominations and religious groups active within the local authority. Drawing on a recent survey conducted throughout the twenty-two local authorities in Wales, Dr ap Sion demonstrates the significant contribution made by SACREs to interfaith dialogue and community cohesion in Wales relevant to the Welsh Government's community cohesion strategy, 'Getting on Together: A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales' (2009). She argues that any erosion of the capacity of SACREs in Wales to connect with local representatives of diverse religious traditions may carry unintended consequences of damaging the community cohesion strategy.

Dr Tania ap Sion is Director of the St Mary's Centre and currently serves as Chair to the Wales Association of SACREs.

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