



St Maximilian Kolbe House
63 Jeddo Road
London
W12 9EE

tel: 020 8749 1321
e-mail: info@catholicunion.org.uk
web: www.catholicunion.org.uk

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Sent by email only.

21 September 2021

Dear Secretary of State

Re: Faith brief within DLUHC

Firstly, many congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of State. I wish you every success in your new role.

As you may know, the Catholic Union is a membership organisation, which represents the views and interests of 4.5 million Catholics in Britain.

Following the recent changes to your department, I'm writing to ask you to clarify where responsibility for faith sits within the new Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The inclusion of the Prime Minister's levelling up agenda, and the Union, as part of the responsibilities of your department add to what was already a wide portfolio.

A key part of your department's work is engagement with faith groups. Your predecessor chaired the Taskforce on Places of Worship during the pandemic, which helped facilitate the safe opening of churches and other places of worship. This was extremely important work given the importance of places of worship to people across the country.

The Catholic Union is concerned that given the even wider portfolio of your department, the work of faith engagement risks being side lined. I would be grateful if you could take this opportunity to set out how your department plans to make sure that the voices of faith groups are heard in Government.

As part of this, I would be grateful if you could provide an update on when the Independent Faith Engagement Review will be published. The Catholic Union submitted evidence as part of the consultation which closed in December last year, and we are waiting for the final report.

I hope you will recognise the enormous value of faith groups to our society and the vital role they have to play in recovering from the pandemic.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Nigel Parker
Director
The Catholic Union of Great Britain
Email: director@catholicunion.org.uk

The Catholic Union of Great Britain: The Voice of Catholics in Public Life

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