Who’ll care for YOU?

With the future bleak for funding Jewish care homes for the elderly and no solution in sight, we ask...

The head of the National Association of Jewish Homes this week warned it’s a “foregone conclusion” several Jewish care homes in the UK will fold in the next five years, as the community heads for a “car crash” scenario, writes Stephen Dryzekacz.

The message from Mark Cunningham comes as the head of Britain’s second biggest Jewish care home provider said the community could initiate an insurance-style social care fund.

Writing in Jewish News this week, Nightingale Hammerson’s Helen Simmons suggests a Jewish fund for care in later life, with regular payments made in a style similar to those made into burial funds through synagogues.

Addressing the idea, Cunningham said the Jewish community was not alone in facing a social care funding crunch, but said Jewish homes “outside the M25” in places like Leeds, Liverpool and Gateshead were under particular pressure. “The Jewish care homes that have survived with sufficient Jewish residents for last 10-20 years have struggled in last five,” he said. “Not all Jewish care homes will survive as Jewish homes in the next five years, that’s a given.”

Estelle Rowe, director of Birmingham Jewish Community Care (BJCC), which manages the 59-bed Andrew Cohen House, said UK Jews were ahead of their time in the early 19th century by creating Jewish care homes 120 years before a welfare state, but now needed similar revolutionary thinking to provide for the future. “The Jewish community has been at the forefront of welfare initiatives,” she said. “BJCC origins go back to 1788. It’s again time for us to take a lead with pioneering a new model.”

In January the Jewish Leadership Council convened a meeting of Jewish care home providers to consider reports produced by consultants at McKinsey which attendees described as painting a picture of a “car-crash scenario” for the community. Following the meeting, there was acknowledgement that something ought to be done to protect the provision of quality, culture-specific care for British Jews, but a dearth of concrete suggestions as to what that could be. Simmons’s idea represents the first.

Cunningham and Rowe welcomed Simmons’ suggestion of a Jewish community insurance-style social care fund but questioned whether there would be sufficient appetite to pay into it.

It’s a ‘forgone conclusion’ that Jewish care homes will shut in the next five years, as the community heads for a social care crisis
Jewish News celebrates religious leaders at groundbreaking awards

Our unique 21 For 21 project, with Church Times and British Muslim TV, honours individuals who boost dialogue and break down faith barriers

Young Jewish, Christian and Muslim interfaith leaders were honoured at Lambeth Palace last week as part of a groundbreaking project between Jewish News, British Muslim TV and Church Times, in partnership with Coexist House, writes Adam Decker.

The 21 for 21 project, the world’s first collaboration between media outlets from different faiths, identified inspiring young individuals aged under 40 who are increasing dialogue and breaking down barriers.

Nearly 100 nominations were received when the three outlets put out a call for interfaith heroes last year, and an expert panel of judges selected seven Jews, seven Muslims, and seven Christians, along with three highly commended entrants, who were each invited to the home of the Archbishop of Canterbury to pick up their trophies. They included a hip-hop artist, radio presenter, community café owner and a Muslim Hebrew teacher.

Host for the evening, ITN anchor Alastair Stewart, said: “My daily work is full of domestic and international conflicts between faiths. But we know these are conducted by a minority of people in the interests of a minority of people. The way forward for a more peaceful and collaborative world is respecting each other’s faiths, and the recognition that there is so much good that can be done together. The challenge for our winners is to beat that drum louder than our generation did – we are relying on you to do it.”

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan sent a video message congratulating the three media outlets on the “historic” project.

Communities Secretary James Brokenshire, who was unable to attend owing to the local elections, said: “21 for 21 is doing fantastic work in illustrating how faith leads to positive social action. It’s wonderful to see young people from all faiths leading interfaith cooperation and working hard to promote understanding between our diverse communities.”

Three of the winners, Georgia May, programme director of the Rose Castle Foundation, Philip Rosenberg, director of public affairs at the Board of Deputies and Arzoo Ahmed, director of the Centre for Islam and Medicine, also addressed the room.

Georgia stated her belief that it was a “faith-based toolkit” that enabled all of the nominees to be “reconciling leaders within our communities”, while Arzoo spoke eloquently of the need for meaningful relationships that “build not just on our commonalities but our deep differences as well”. Rosenberg warned that the world was becoming increasingly polarised and divided, arguing that “isolationism means for a much more dangerous world while an inclusive world means a better world for all of us”.

Speaking on behalf of the judges, Rev Micky
Youngson, president of The Methodist Conference, and one of the judges, said: “Too often in my role I have to send letters of solidarity and support or attend vigils.

“That’s why I’m delighted to be here tonight celebrating those who are building hope not hate, defeating hate with love and building a more cohesive and peaceful society.”

Fellow judge Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra, assis-
tant secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain, told the gathering: “Our winners have been rolling their sleeves up and doing what really matters: action. We must send a clear message that we love each other.

The event was also supported by The Faith & Belief Forum and philanthropist David Dangoor, who handed out the awards with Stewart. He pointed to the stunning archi-
tecture of Lambeth Palace to praise the “successful bridge building” by all those nominated.

“Hopefully we are now moving into a world where we can put that all behind us, under-
standing the values of tolerance, coexistence and the celebration of our differences,” he added.

The project was developed to counter the narrative of faiths in constant conflict, taking that message to readers and viewers of the three outlets simultaneously, and to the wider country through national media coverage.

The project has already been covered by The Times and BBC Radio, while the unique collaboration also brought it to the attention of Press Gazette. Plans are now being developed to bring the group together for collaborative projects.

Justin Cohen, news editor of Jewish News, who conceived the 21 for 21 project, said: “Bringing this historic project to life has been a long road, but the reception wasn’t the end; we now look forward to bringing these young leaders together to develop projects to benefit faith communities and wider society. Consider what each of our 21 has achieved individually and then imagine what they could do together.

“Huge thanks to all our partners, especially Coexist House, the panel of judges diligently chaired by Andrew Gilbert and two true mer-
sches that helped make the reception a success; David Dangoor and our MC Alastair Stewart. The fact both agreed to support the event within minutes of being asked says all you need to know about them.”

Gilbert said: “The reception was a great success. Many of our winners had never met before, despite so often working in projects with a similar focus. To have this reception at Lambeth Palace made the evening even more special.”

Guests included the Archbishop of Canterbury’s adviser for reconciliation Canon Dr Sarah Snyder, who welcomed attendees to the palace.

21 REASONS TO HAVE FAITH IN THE FUTURE

BY SIR BERNARD RIX

CHAIR, COEXIST HOUSE

Last week, at Lambeth Palace, there was a remarkable event – unique even – where 21 young faith leaders from the Abrahamic tradi-
tions were recognised for their work in improving understanding of religion and bringing closer together people of different faiths.

They came from all over the country and their methods of interfaith work were as various as they were creative, but one thing united them – a dissatisfation with the ignorance, prejudice and misinformation that surrounds religion.

Not only is this religious illiteracy out of step with the rich mosaic of religious expression that surrounds us, but it is also dangerous and at its worst leads to acts of terror and violence that we have seen all too often in recent times.

If ever there was an antidote to the fear that the Sri Lankan and New Zealand massacres creates, it is to see young people determined to make their world a better place. Coexist House was proud to partner with the Jewish News, British Muslim Television and the Church Times to support the 21 For 21 initiative – the first time three religiously based media organisations have come together in this way.

The ambition and vision of 21 For 21 fits perfectly with Coexist House’s own plans to build a London centre to celebrate faith and improve religious literacy and to do all we can to make the world a place where all God’s children can come together and live in peace.

We wish all the 21 young leaders well with their projects and look forward to engaging with them in the coming months.

Above: Asmaa Ali receives her award

21 For 21 Interfaith Project / News

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