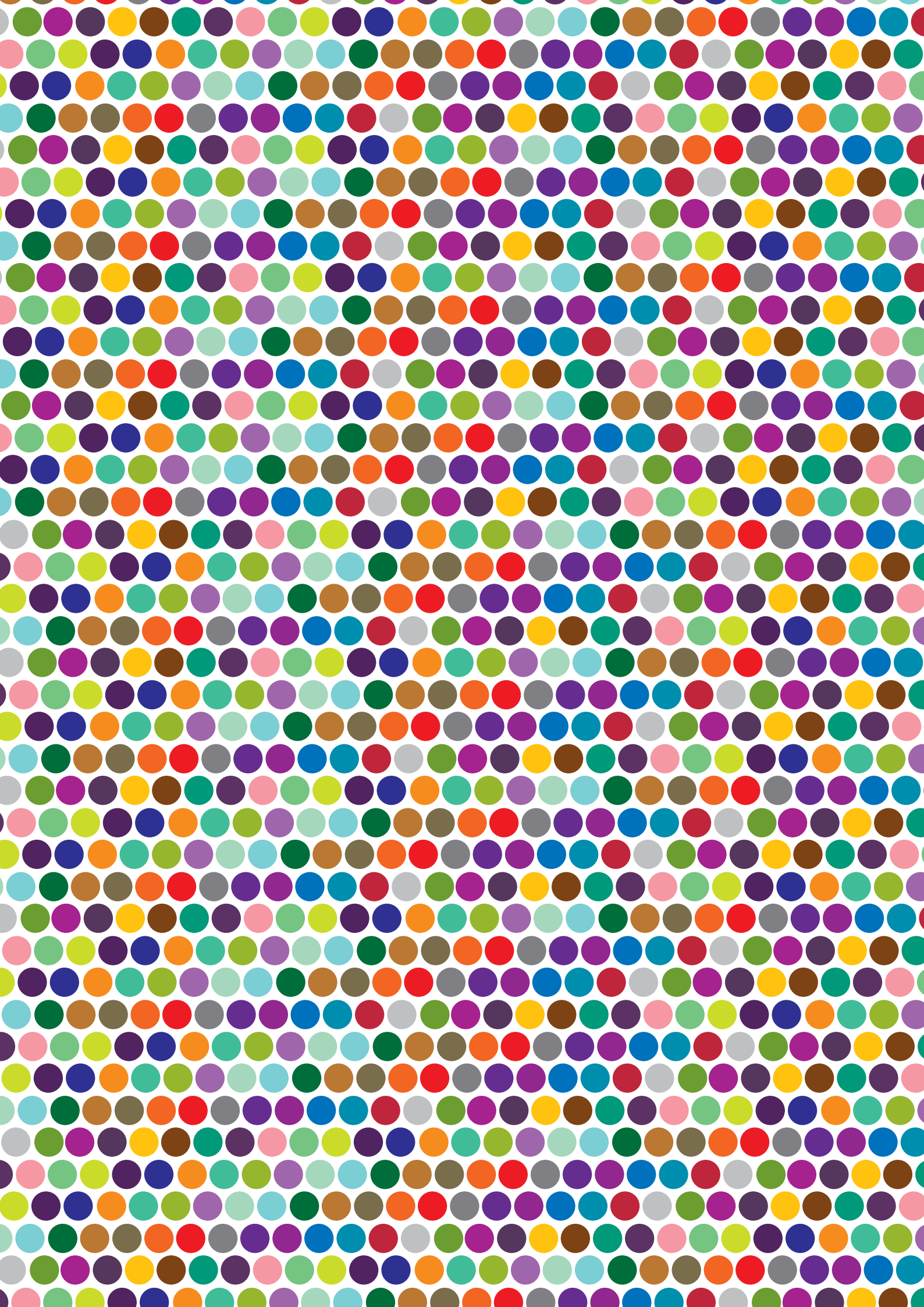


# Reaching all Communities on Merseyside

An Intentional  
Inclusion Strategy



"An Excellent Authority"



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# Introduction

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Merseyside is culturally and socially diverse, with a mixture of people from different backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and from different walks of life. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MF&RS) is committed to ensuring that people who live, work and visit the region should do so safely and be treated with dignity and respect in accordance with their differing needs.

Historically some minority communities have been excluded, either intentionally or unintentionally, from public services. This guide provides some background to the principle minority communities on Merseyside as identified in the 2001 Census. MF&RS is committed to strategy of intentional inclusion to ensure that everyone benefits from the service we provide.

MF&RS has a statutory duty to promote equality on grounds of race, disability and gender. We have included the promotion of equality on grounds of age, sexual orientation and religion or belief as part of our Service Plans.

The promotion of equality and diversity is embedded into all that we do.

**Our Vision** is  
“Making Merseyside a  
safer, stronger, healthier  
community”.

**Our Mission** is “To work in partnership to provide an excellent, affordable service to all the diverse communities of Merseyside that will:

- Reduce Risk throughout the community by protective community safety services
- Respond quickly to emergencies with skilful staff who reflect all the diverse communities we serve
- Restore and maintain quality of life in our communities

Staff need to be aware of and sensitive to the various needs of the different communities we serve and value the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances.

This guide aims to increase staff awareness, so that the highest quality of service can be offered, with heightened sensitivity and perception and by providing some practical experience. It includes information about the main cultures and different communities in Merseyside, including the lesbian, gay and bisexual community (LGB) and disabled communities.

MR&RS has a number of advocates who work actively within and across the various communities of Merseyside. The advocate team includes people who work with people in the disabled community, deaf community, those with drug and alcohol problems, people whose first language is not English and older people. They can be contacted free on 0800 731 5958.

Advice on any of the issues within this document can also be sought from the Diversity Team, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle, Liverpool, L30 4YD.



# Cultures & Communities



# African-Caribbean

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The term African-Caribbean reflects the fact that most people from the Caribbean are descendants of people transported from their homes in West Africa to work as slaves in the West Indies on the cotton, sugar and tobacco plantations.

Not all people from the Caribbean islands are of African descent. After the slave trade was abolished by parliament in 1807, and slavery in the British Caribbean ended in 1834, people from India and China were recruited as indentured labour to work on the plantations.

Many African-Caribbean men arrived in the UK during the Second World War to work in the munitions factories, the Merchant Navy or the Armed Services. With the reconstruction of the UK after the Second World War, there were huge labour shortages in the transport industry and the National Health Service. Many African-Caribbean workers were recruited from the Caribbean islands with promises of a higher standard of living in the UK, to fill the labour-scarce sectors of industry.

About 60 per cent of African-Caribbeans who migrated to the UK originated in Jamaica. Other African-Caribbeans have origins in islands such as Barbados, Dominica, Trinidad, St Lucia and St Vincent.

**Religion** Although most major religions of the world are to be found in the Caribbean islands, Christianity is the predominant religion among the British African-Caribbean community. Many are more active in non-traditionalist churches and Christian revivalist movements, such as the Pentecostal Church.

**Language** By the mid-1700s every Caribbean island was controlled by a European country. Consequently, the most commonly spoken languages throughout the Caribbean islands are English, French and Spanish.

**Naming system** The names given to individuals are diverse and depend upon the island from which an individual's family originates. English names were generally given on many of the British controlled islands. Other names have Asian, Dutch and French origins such as:

- Asian: Kanhai, Patel, Singh
- Dutch: Eickhof, Maartens
- French: Francois, Pierre

**Death** Death is dealt with in accordance with the religion followed by the deceased. However, it should be noted that in many African-Caribbean households several people from the community who are outside the direct family are likely to stay with the close relatives of the deceased in the period of mourning.

**Other information** Within African-Caribbean families there is an established family support network. The extended family – grandmothers, uncles, aunts and cousins – plays an important role within this. Often this extended family structure includes close neighbours.

Arabs may be described as those people who originate from North Africa and the Middle East (from Western Morocco to Oman in the East and to Yemen and Sudan in the South).

The Arab heartland is Hijaz (now Western Saudi Arabia). A popular misconception is that Arab identity is determined by religion and that if you are Muslim you are an Arab. This is not so. For example, the nation of Iran is composed of Muslims who are Persians, not Arabs. Likewise Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, is inhabited by Malays not Arabs. Many British Muslims originate from non-Arabic countries, such as Pakistan and Somalia. There are also Christian Arabs throughout the Middle East.

**Religion** More than 85 per cent of all Arabs are Sunni Muslims, and ten per cent are Shi'ite Muslims (located around Yemen, Iraq and the Gulf Coast). Less than five per cent are Christians, who generally live in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan and Israel.

**Dress code** Traditional Arab male dress is a long-sleeved dress that covers the whole body and is called a dishdashah or thoub. This garment is intended to keep the body cool by allowing air to circulate. In the Northern Gulf Arab states (such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, U.A.E) men also wear a three-piece head cover. The bottom piece is a white cap (thagiyah), which is used to keep the hair in place.

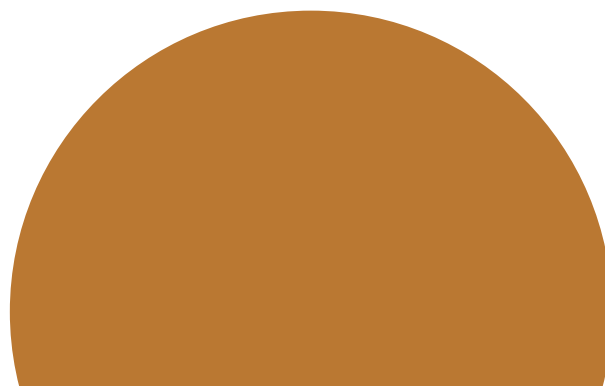
On top of the thagiyah is a scarf-like head cover: a light version for summer (gutrah) and a heavier red-and-white checked version worn in winter (shumag). The head covers are held in place by a black band called an ogal. The head covering is not worn inside the home unless guests are present. In the UK many Arab men now wear western clothes.

Arab women often wear a long black garment called an abayah, which covers the body from the shoulders to the feet. This can be worn over a traditional Arabian dress or the latest international fashion. More conservative women and girls may wear a face and head cover; others may wear a scarf-like cover called a hijab that covers the hair but not the face.

**Language** The spoken and written language of the Arab people is Arabic.

**Other information** Privacy is important in the Arabic culture. When visiting Arabic households it is considered polite to stand so that, when the front door is opened, you cannot see inside.

When meeting an Arab man or woman only shake his/her hand if he/she extends it to you. Greeting with words only is generally more appropriate. The Arabic culture encourages humble behaviour and respect for other people's dignity. A way of resolving conflicts and avoiding embarrassment is a concept known as 'save face'. This involves using compromise, patience and occasionally looking the other way to allow a situation to return to normal.



# Bangladeshi

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Bangladeshis originate from Bangladesh, known as East Pakistan before gaining independence from Pakistan in 1971. East Pakistan had originally been carved out of the Indian State of Bengal when British India was partitioned into the two states of India and Pakistan in 1947.

Today, Bangladesh shares a border with the Indian State of West Bengal, whose inhabitants are also Bengali.

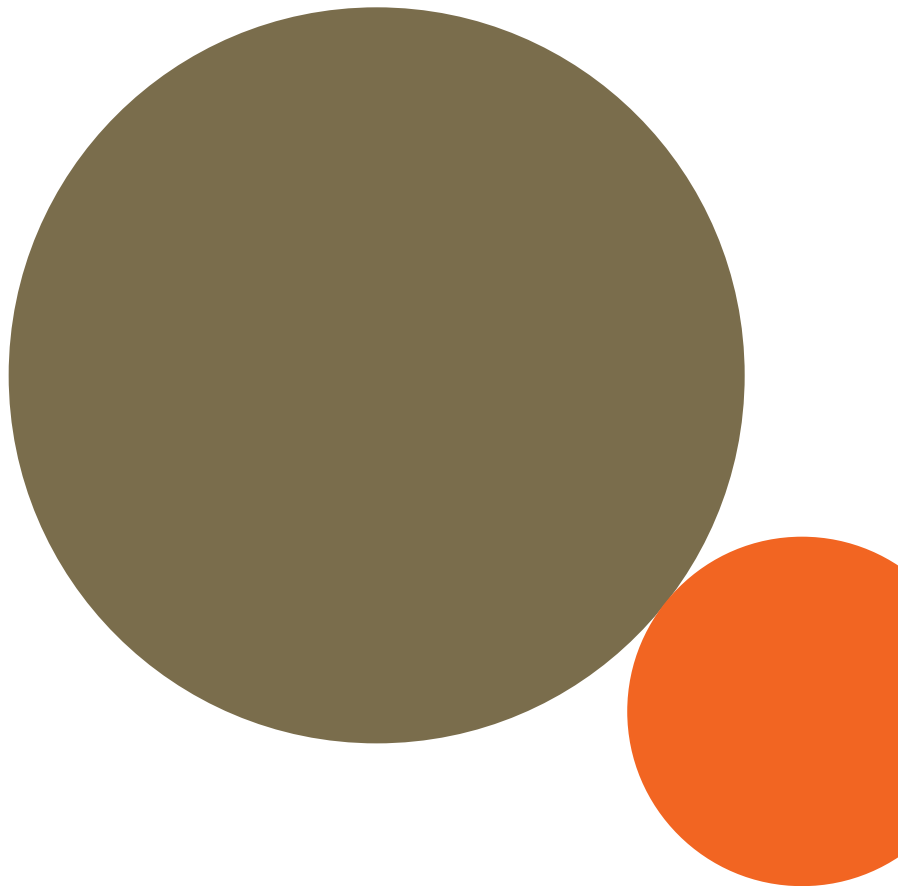
The first Bangladeshis arrived in the UK in the early 1950s. Many came from Sylhet, a rural district in the north east which has strong links with the UK and its colonial past. Historically, many of the men worked as merchant seamen.

**Religion** Bangladeshis are predominantly Muslims.

**Diet** The staple diet of Bangladeshis is rice, fish and curry. Many Bangladeshis also eat meat. Bangladeshis are Muslims and are not permitted to eat pork. All other meat is acceptable, provided it is halal.

**Dress** Bangladeshi women may wear Muslim dress or a sari, which is worn over a short blouse and an underskirt. It would be unusual for the midriff to be left bare. Some women may wear a shalwar kameez (loose fitting trousers and long shirt).

**Language** The official language of Bangladesh and the language most commonly spoken by Bangladeshis is Bengali. British Bangladeshis speak the Sylhet dialect of Bengali (known as Bangla or Sylheti). Among older Bangladeshis, Bengali is still the principal language of communication. Younger Bangladeshis are more likely to speak English. Today, at least 40 per cent of the Bangladeshi community in the UK is aged under 20 years.



# Chinese

The latter half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century saw large numbers of Chinese emigrate to many parts of the world in search of work. Migration to the UK began in the early 19th century with the arrival of Chinese sailors, who settled in the major port areas of Bristol, Cardiff, Liverpool and London.

In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s and 1970s large numbers of Chinese migrated to the UK from the New Territories of Hong Kong. Today, more than a third of the UK's Chinese community originates from Hong Kong.

Today, the Chinese community in Britain is the third largest racial minority group, and Liverpool in particular is renowned as one of the longest established Chinese communities.

**Religion** The principal religions practiced in China are Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism (pronounced Daoism). Some Chinese are Roman Catholics or Protestants, and significant minorities in China also practice Islam and Hinduism.

Although Confucianism is a social philosophy, some Chinese practice it as a form of worship. However, the second and third generation are less likely to observe the doctrine than the first generation.

**Naming system** The family name can be regarded as the surname for British purposes. For example:

Female	Yeung Lan-Ying (family name) (personal name)
Male	Xu Nai-Gang (family name) (personal name)

Examples of the more common Chinese names found in the UK are Chang, Cheung, Lam, Lee, Leung, Man and Wong. It is usual for a wife and children to take the husband's family name. For example: Lee May-Lin would become Yeung Lee May-Lin.

However, it is not unusual for married Chinese woman to use both maiden and married names interchangeably.

Many Chinese follow the British naming system, giving their family name last. For example: Nai-Gang Xu.

The Chinese may also use a European name as well, which they will give with their family name, e.g. Wendy Chang.

**Language** The official language of China is Cantonese, although a variety of other dialects are also spoken. In the Southern Chinese province of Guangdong, Cantonese is the principal language, and this is also spoken in Hong Kong and Macau. Cantonese is therefore the language predominantly used by the majority of the UK's Chinese population. Those who have emigrated from Singapore and Malaysia are more likely to speak Mandarin.

**Death** Death and dying are very sensitive issues to the Chinese. Chinese people do not like talking about death if possible, as they think it may bring ill fortune to their family. There are certain customs that many Chinese adhere to during the Chinese New Year: Everyone should refrain from using unlucky words. Negative terms and the word 'four', which sounds like the word for death, should not be uttered. The Chinese tradition is that, once deceased, a person becomes an ancestor who must be respected. It is important to the Chinese that they bury the deceased as soon as possible because they believe that a body left above the ground allows its spirit to interfere with the living. Remember that any shrines or objects in the home may be dedicated to the family's ancestors or deities should be treated with respect. To damage or remove them will cause great offence.

**Other information** The tradition of guanxi (pronounced gwan-shi), which means 'relationship' or 'connections', underpins many relationships among the Chinese. At the heart of guanxi is the notion that relationships should be useful. Chinese guanxi relationships are expected to last for a lifetime and are formed on an expectation that the other party is a 'good person to know'.

The Chinese community is group-orientated, and members often feel responsible for the behaviour of others within a particular group. In East Asia, and particularly in China, there is a culture that views saving face as vital to one's name and integrity. It is always important to bear this in mind when dealing with all East Asians.

The Chinese tend to have a traditional respect for authority, although they are also wary of it. They will not respect persons in positions of authority who show little understanding of their culture. The male head of the Chinese family should always be accorded respect and addressed politely. It is advisable to approach him before contacting female or younger members of the family.

# Indian

Today's India was, with Pakistan and Bangladesh, part of British India until it was granted independence on 14 August, 1947. India is made up of 22 states and nine union territories, which are each separate administrative entities with their own defined powers and responsibilities.

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Each of these states demonstrates diversity in language, religion and culture. South Asians may differ in religion, culture and nationality through their national origins in Bangladesh, Pakistan or India, and Indians are equally diverse.

The UK first established links with Gujarat when the British East India company set up its first trading post on the Gujarat coast in the 17th century. The 19th century saw the first Gujaratis arrive in the UK as students. The most famous of these, a law student, Mohandas Gandhi, later led India to independence and became known as 'Mahatma' (noble hearted).

Following the labour shortages after the Second World War, the British government encouraged immigrants from Gujarat to come to the UK, bringing with them their experience of the steel and textile industries. Another group came from Uganda as refugees in 1971, expelled by the dictator Idi Amin.

The majority of Punjabis now living in the UK are Sikhs. One reason for Sikhs coming to the UK is their historical connection with the British Armed Forces, with many of them having served during the Second World War.

**Religion** About 85 per cent of the population of India is Hindu, about 10 per cent is Muslim and the rest of the population is made up of Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jews.

**Dress** South Asian women of all the religions of India traditionally wear the sari, which is worn over a short blouse and an underskirt. The midriff is usually left bare. The shalwar kameez, though traditionally Sikh dress, is now being worn very widely by other groups.

Married Hindu women also wear a small circular spot, known as a bindi, on their forehead. The bindi is usually red, but these days may be different colours and not only restricted to Hindus.

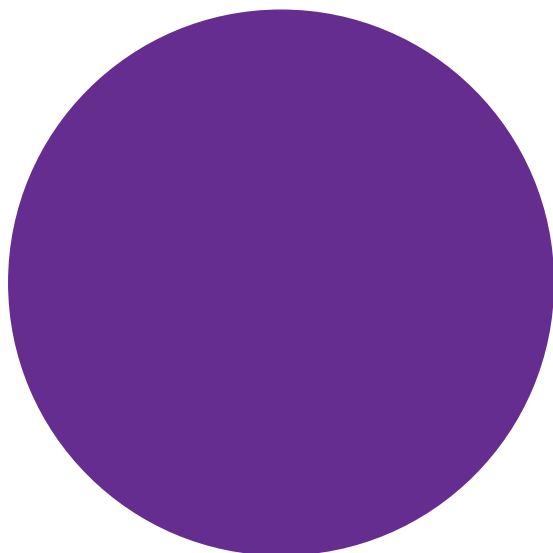
**Language** There are more than 15 major languages used throughout India and more than 500 different dialects. The most common languages are Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Gujarati.



Irish people make up the largest and longest established resident minority ethnic community in the UK. Irish immigrants and their descendants represent the first settlers from Ireland and began to arrive in London towards the end of the 12th century.

From 1 January 1801 until 6 December 1922, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. On 6 December 1922 the island of Ireland seceded from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The following day the Parliament of Northern Ireland exercised its right under the Anglo-Irish Treaty to opt back into the United Kingdom. The southern part of Ireland became known as the Irish Free State. Eventually, on 29 December 1937 the Republic of Ireland was formally established when its constitution came into force.

Northern Ireland was established as a distinct region of the United Kingdom on 3 May 1921 under the terms of the Government of Ireland Act 1920.



During the Great Famine from 1845 to 1849 the island's population of over 8 million fell by 30%. One million Irish died of starvation and another 1.5 million emigrated, which set the pattern of emigration for the century to come and would result in a constant decline up to the 1960s. It is estimated that by 1851 more than 100,000 Irish were living in London, where they accounted for about one in 20 of the population. In fact, the relationship between Britain and Ireland is the longest that either country has shared with another.

Immigration into the UK from The Republic of Ireland slowed during the 1960s as a result of an economic boom in Ireland. However, by the 1980s rising unemployment in Ireland led to many young Irish once more heading for London. Today, more people migrate from the UK to Ireland than vice versa.

**Religion** Most members of the Irish community who originate from Ireland are Catholic. Nonetheless, care must be taken not to make assumptions about which religion an Irish person practices. Irish people from Northern Ireland may be Catholic, Protestant or Presbyterian.

**Language** Both Gaelic and English are spoken in Ireland. Most members of the Irish community will speak English.

**Death** Catholics are always buried as soon as possible after death. The wake is often held at the family home and is a celebration of the deceased's life.

# Kurdish

10 Kurds are, together with the Arabs, Persians, and Armenians, one of the most ancient peoples of the Near East. They originate from an area called Kurdistan, that encompasses eastern Turkey (approximately 15 million), north western Iran (6 million), northern Iraq (5 million), north eastern Syria (1 million) and parts of the Russian Federation (500,000), and there are believed to be about 35 million in total throughout the world. Many Kurds, including those who have emigrated to other countries, would like to see a separate country formed of those regions.

As a result of the Gulf War in 1991, the Kurds in Iraq have enjoyed a relatively prolonged period of self-rule under the protection of the United States and Great Britain.

In the 1920s and 1930s the Turkish Kurds rebelled against the government who suppressed them with great ferocity deporting thousands from their homeland. The continued stringent suppression of over 9 million people has resulted in the rise of a Marxist guerrilla group.

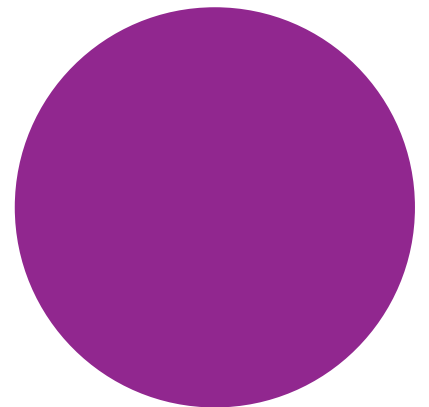
In Iran the Kurds were similarly brought under control in the 1920s. In 1946 the Kurds of Mahabad succeeded in declaring an independent republic, but it only lasted a few months, and the authorities hanged the ringleaders. Tribal chiefs were allowed to register tribal lands as personal possessions and were welcomed into the Iranian ruling elite, in return for making sure their tribes obeyed the government. After the Shia revolution the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) rebelled after demands for autonomy were refused by Tehran.

In Iraq there were numerous revolts against Baghdad, mainly by Mullah Mustafa Barzani, the famous leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq. From 1964 until 1975 Barzani was strong enough to maintain an intermittent state of war and peace negotiations. In 1974 the governing Ba'th party offered the Kurds autonomy, but the Kurds believed it lacked substance and they reverted to war, strongly supported and encouraged by Iran. But in 1975 the Shah of Iran, who had supported Barzani, signed the Agreement of Algiers with the Iraqi government, abandoning the Iraqi Kurds to their fate and as a result the Kurdish resistance virtually collapsed and they were again repressed.

The Kurdish language is actually a number of languages. The predominant languages within the Merseyside Kurdish Community are Sorani and Bahdini. Kurds may also speak a variety of languages, mainly Arabic and English, reflecting the society they are from. Kurdish communities are often male orientated, conservative and clan based.

**Religion** The vast majority of Kurds are Sunni Muslims or Alevite Muslims, although there are some Shia Muslims, Jews or Christians.

**Names, Conventions and Customs** Kurds tend to follow the customs and conventions of the religion with which they are associated.



# Kosovan

Kosovo was once part of the Turkish Empire, but anti-Turkish resistance succeeded in expelling the Turks and Kosovo became part of the newly founded state of Albania in 1912. However, in the following year the great European powers, including Britain, forced Albania to relinquish Kosovo to Serbia, which itself was incorporated into the new Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1918.

After the Second World War, Kosovo was granted autonomy within Serbia and this autonomy grew as a result of pressure and riots from the ethnic Albanian population. Riots in 1981 incited a Serbian backlash and increased Serbian resentment of Albanians. This led to the rise of power of the Serbian nationalist Slobodan Milosevic. The Albanian media were suppressed, all Albanian language education was halted and the autonomous Kosovan parliament was abolished in 1990. In 1998/9 Serb militias, extremist groups from Belgrade and paramilitary police units drove Muslims from their homes in carefully planned operations, which were known as 'ethnic cleansing'.

The situation became so serious that in early 1999 NATO forces launched an air campaign to force the withdrawal of all Serbian military personnel from the province. Hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians fled to neighbouring countries.

Following Serbian withdrawal from the province in 1999, Kosovo is once again an autonomous region of Serbia under the present governance of an international peacekeeping force, KFOR (Kosovo Force).

Although many of the Kosovar Albanian refugees have now returned home, Kosovo remains a dangerous place, with ethnic conflict still an everyday occurrence. Many Kosovar Albanian refugees remain in the UK, too frightened to return home.

**Religion** The majority of Kosovar Albanians are Muslim, although they are not strict. The older generations tend to be more orthodox, although they are still less likely to be as orthodox as other Muslims.

Many younger Kosovar Albanians are not strict about their diet and will eat meat that is not halal. This may differ among Kosovar Albanians who have originated from more rural areas. To the older, more orthodox generations of Kosovar Albanians the issue of whether or not meat is halal may be more important.

**Language** Most Kosovans speak Albanian.

**Other information** Many Kosovans had to leave their country in difficult circumstances. Some refugees may be wary of uniformed services because of their past experiences.



# Pakistani

The modern state of Pakistan (formerly West Pakistan) was created in 1947 as a result of the partition of British India along religious lines. West Pakistan was defined by drawing a dividing line through Kashmir, thereby separating it from India and recognising that the majority of West Pakistan's population were Muslim and those of India were predominantly Hindu. A civil war in 1971 led to East Pakistan seceding from Pakistan to become Bangladesh. West Pakistan became known as Pakistan. The division of Kashmir was bitterly opposed by both India and Pakistan at the time and has remained a source of tension and conflict.

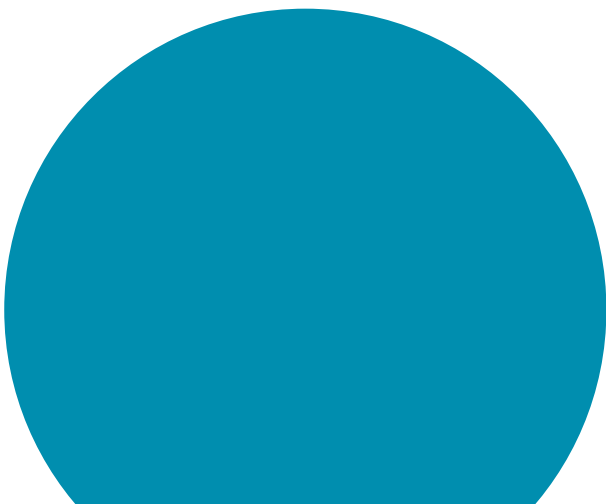
Many early Pakistani settlers arrived in Britain from the Mirpur region of the Punjab in the early 1890s. Others settled after the Second World War, having served in the British Armed Forces. Encouraged by the British government, further immigrants from Pakistan arrived in the 1950s and 1960s, to assist with Britain's post war reconstruction.

**Religion** Pakistan was created for the majority followers of Islam (Muslims) who inhabited the area. To that extent, Islam dictates the life and culture of the Pakistani people.

**Dress** Pakistani women traditionally wear the salwar kameez (loose trousers and a long tunic). Many also wear a sari over a short blouse and an underskirt. Some women wear traditional long dresses and cover their heads with a scarf (hijab).

**Language** The official language of Pakistan is Urdu, although Sindhi, Pashto and Punjabi are also spoken. The majority of people from Pakistan will, however, speak Urdu or Punjabi.

**The Biraderi support system** Pakistan's social system is based upon a structure made up of levels of Biraderi: an association of people of similar status and often from the same occupational group. The purpose of Biraderi is to provide a system of common support for those who suffer poverty or sickness. The advantages and obligations created by the Biraderi are similar to those imposed by the Indian caste system and, although Islam does not acknowledge caste, its influences remain among those whose families converted from Hinduism many generations ago.



# Polish

Poland joined the European Union in 2004, and as a result of EU regulations there are a significant number of new Polish settlers in Merseyside, the results have been noticed all over the city with Polish food shops catering for the growing Polish community, and a fast growing congregation at the Polish Mass held at Liverpool's Catholic Cathedral.

In April 2007, the Polish population of the United Kingdom had risen to approximately 300,000. Many Poles choose to migrate to the UK because of the high unemployment rates in Poland, seeking better work opportunities here. A high proportion of Merseyside's Polish community live in Sefton, with many working in the service industry in Southport and the agricultural industry in West Lancashire.

**Religion** Around 97% of Poles are Roman Catholic and Poland is considered to be one of the most devoutly religious countries in Europe.

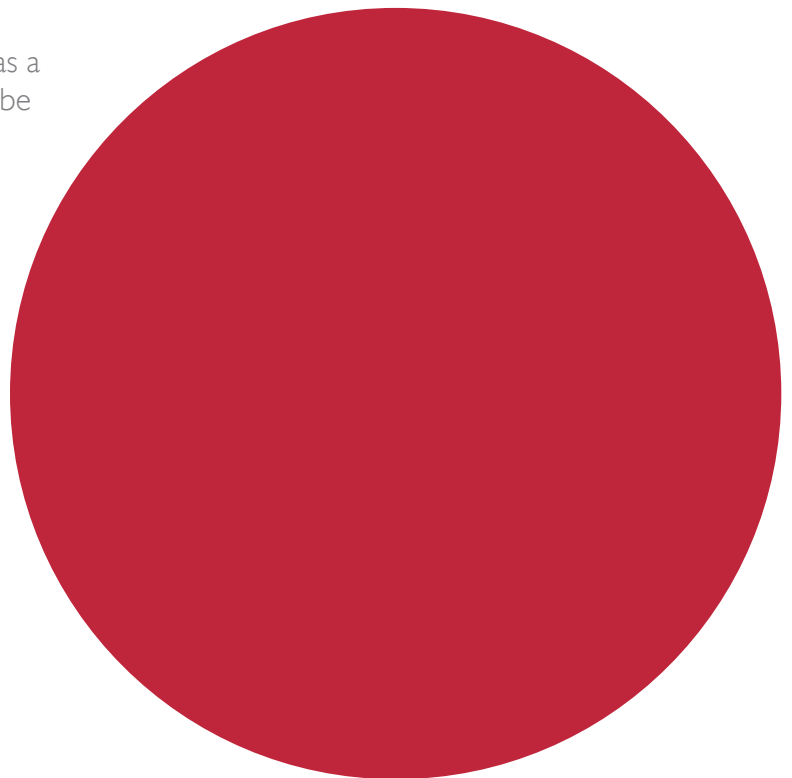
**Language** Polish. However, English is taught as a second language in Poland and many Poles will be relatively fluent in the language.

**Festivals** Poles celebrate the major Christian festivals. Polish Christmas celebrations start earlier than they do in Britain with the feast of St. Mikolaj (St Nicholas) on December 6th. Religious holidays are observed very strictly in Poland and Poles may be reluctant to work on certain days throughout the year in accordance with their Faith.

**Diet** As per Christian beliefs.

**Naming System** A Polish personal name, like names in most European cultures, consists of two main elements: imię, or the given name, followed by nazwisko, or the family name.

**Death** As per Christian beliefs.



# Somali

Somalis originate from Somalia, located on the Horn of Africa. The Somalis or Samaal consist of six major clan-families. Four of the families represent about 70 per cent of Somalia's population. These are the Dir, Daarood, Isaaq and Hawiye families who originally led a predominantly pastoral life style. The remaining two clan families, accounting for 30 per cent of the population, are the Digil and Rahanwayn clans who originally followed an agricultural way of life.

The first refugees from Somalia came to the UK in the late 1980s at the outbreak of the civil war. They were mainly from the urban areas. Others followed later from the rural communities, their flights paid for by relatives already living in the UK, under a Home Office scheme that allowed residents to bring their families to the UK to join them.

Despite sharing the same language, religion and customs, Somalis have developed a clear clan consciousness. This has led to conflict between different clans and sub-clans.

**Religion** Somalis are generally Sunni Muslims.

**Dress** Somali men in the UK will generally wear western clothes, although they may also wear a white cloth cap. Somali women wear a scarf to cover their heads and a long gown known as a jilbaab, which drapes from the neck to the ankles. This is because religious practice requires women to keep their bodies covered at all times.

**Language** The predominant language of the Somali people is Somali. This had no written form until an official script was introduced in 1973. Because of this, many older people in the Somali community are unable to read and write, particularly those originating from the rural communities.

**Diet** Somalis do not eat pork or pork products. Any meat consumed must be halal, which is produced by slaughtering the animal in accordance with religious practices. Alcohol is forbidden.

**Naming system** The Somali naming system differs from most Muslims. A Somali name is made up of the first/personal name with either the father's or grandfather's name used as a last name/surname. This naming system is used by both men and women.

A typical male name is:

(Personal Father Family Name)  
Mohammed Jama Abdi

A typical female name is:  
Sashra Omar Hassan

Women have traditionally maintained their own name on marriage and a husband and wife will often have names that have no common element although a woman may take her husband's name if she wishes.

Many Somalis had to leave their country in dangerous circumstances. To enable safe passage out of the country and avoid detection by rival clans, they had to use false names. These false names have subsequently appeared on their documentation in the host country and have by default become their legal names.

However, members of their clan who are in their community in the host country are likely only to know them by the original name they had in Somalia.

**Other information** Islam teaches high moral values, which require that men and women should remain separate in public places. Men may not be allowed to enter a house if a male family member is not present. A woman may refuse to be examined by a male doctor.

Islam requires that Muslims keep their bodies covered at all times.

Refugees who have limited contact with uniformed services may be afraid because of their past experiences of torture and brutality in Somalia.

# Vietnamese

Most Vietnamese arrived in the UK as refugees from political persecution following the Vietnam War and the Chinese invasion of Vietnam in the late 1970s, with some coming from Hong Kong where they had been temporarily settled.

They were equally drawn from North and South Vietnam, and from rural and urban backgrounds. Their plight was highlighted in the mass media with dramatic pictures of the 'boat people' and their precarious voyage on the South China Sea. Now a quarter of the current Vietnamese population speaks English as their first language and the majority of Vietnamese consider themselves to be permanent residents in the UK.

**Religion** Most Vietnamese are either Buddhists or Catholics. Some also follow Chinese and Vietnamese customs of ancestor worship.

**Language** The predominant language of the Vietnamese is Vietnamese, although a few also speak Cantonese.

**Diet** Vietnamese who are practicing Buddhists may not eat meat. Those who are practicing Catholics may not eat meat at Lent or on Fridays, when fish provides a suitable alternative.

**Naming System** There are three parts to a Vietnamese name, with the family name coming first, followed by a complementary name and then a personal name. In the UK, many Vietnamese anglicise their names by giving their family name last.

It is unusual for a married woman to adopt her husband's family name. Often, it is not possible to determine gender from an individual's personal name. However, complementary names can sometimes indicate sex: Van is often used by men and Thi by women as a complementary name.

**Death** Traditionally the body of a deceased family member is kept at the family home for between one and three days before the funeral. Upon death a person becomes an ancestor who must be respected. It is important to the Vietnamese that they bury the deceased as soon as possible because they believe that a body left above the ground allows its spirit to interfere with the living.

Any shrines or objects in the home that are dedicated to the family's ancestors should be treated with respect. To damage or remove them will cause great offence.

**Other information** The tradition of guanxi (pronounced gwan-shi), which means 'relationship' or 'connections', underpins many relationships among the Chinese. This also applies to the ethnic Chinese originating from Vietnam. Refer to the section on guanxi within the Chinese section of this document.



# Yemeni

The presence of Britain's Yemeni communities can be traced back as far as 1885 in the NE of England. Many of the first settlers were sailors who had served on British merchant ships or soldiers in the army. Liverpool has one of the largest Yemeni communities in the UK.

Aden, in Southern Yemen was also a British Protectorate which allowed many Yemenis British Citizenship and ease of travel around Britain and her colonies.

Many Yemenis came to Britain during the labour shortage in the steel industry trades across Yorkshire, but industrial decline led to unemployment and many left the UK between the 1970s and 1980s, yet many decided to stay. They diversified, improving educational qualifications and setting up a variety of businesses.

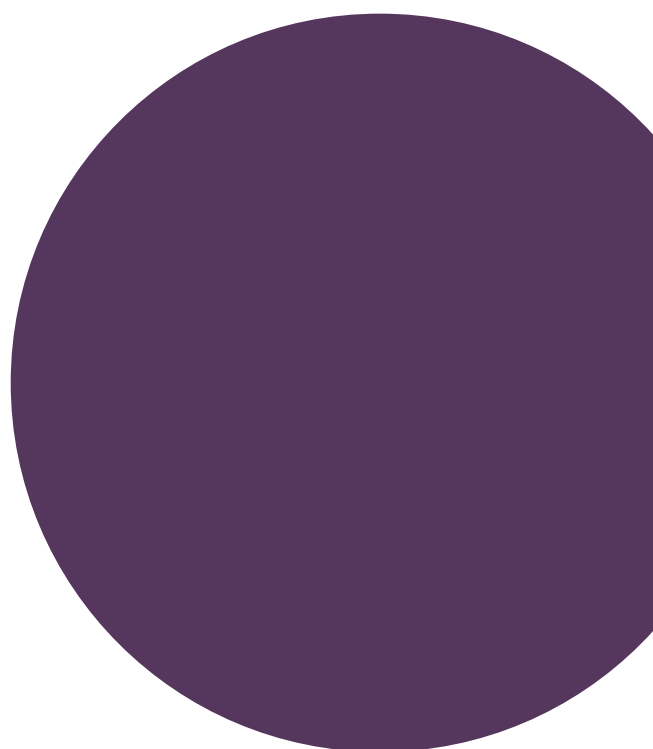
**Religion** The majority of Yemenis in Merseyside are Muslims. As such their religious festivals, death rites etc. are laid out within the Muslim section of this booklet.

**Language** The Yemeni is the largest Arabic speaking community in Liverpool.

**Death** Due to the effects of high temperatures on the deceased in many Arabic countries, burial normally takes place as soon after death as possible, a practice which continues in this country.

Death brings out the best of all grace the occasion demands in Islam. It is treated as the start of real life – eternal life. It is paramount that the body is cleansed, bathed and buried immediately.

Further information can be found under Islam.



# Asylum Seekers & Refugees

Asylum and immigration issues are controversial areas of public policy and debate. However, public opinion and policy formation are not well served when media coverage is inaccurate, misleading or unfair.

**An asylum-seeker is...** anyone who has applied for asylum against persecution under the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, and is waiting for a decision.

**A refugee is...** anyone who has been granted asylum under the UN Convention, to which the UK is a signatory along with 144 other countries. The precise legal definition in Article 1 of the Convention refers to a 'refugee' as a person who: "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

**What about those fleeing general conflict?** People who do not qualify for refugee status may be granted humanitarian protection allowing them 'leave to remain' in the UK for a defined or indefinite period, if they cannot safely return to their home country. UNHCR describes these people as 'refugees'.

**Who is an "illegal asylum seeker"?** NO-ONE. This term is always incorrect. It cannot be illegal to seek asylum since everyone has the fundamental human right to request asylum under international law. The term 'bogus asylum-seeker' is also inaccurate and misleading as it pre-judges the outcome of an asylum application - rather like describing a defendant as entering a 'bogus plea of innocence' during a trial.

**Are there 'failed asylum-seekers'?** YES. The term covers individuals who have exhausted all their legal avenues in seeking asylum. That does not necessarily mean their claim is 'bogus'; it means they have failed to meet the UK's current criteria, which change from time to time. Their lives may still be at risk, and they may qualify to remain in the UK on humanitarian grounds.

**Are 'asylum-seekers' the same as 'illegal immigrants'?** NO. Asylum-seekers have registered with the Home Office and are allowed to remain in the UK while their claim is being considered. The Convention acknowledges that someone fleeing persecution may enter a country by irregular means (and often without any documents) in order to claim asylum. The term 'illegal immigrants' could apply to people who can be shown to have:

entered the country illegally, without permission from an Immigration Officer, who then continue to reside in the UK without contacting the authorities or making an asylum application;

OR entered the country legally, with all the necessary documents, but then disregard limits placed on the length of stay set on their visa ('overstayers'); OR refused to co-operate with Home Office attempts to remove them for whatever reason.

**What do you call someone who tries to enter the UK by unlawful means?** Some of those smuggled into the UK (hidden in lorries, etc) will be seeking asylum, but it is inaccurate to categorise them all as 'asylum-seekers' since some may have no intention to seek asylum. The government refers to these as 'clandestines' although 'irregular migrants' might be a more accurate and less confusing term. People-smugglers are committing a crime but their clientele may not be.

**Talking to refugees and asylum-seekers** Asylum-seekers and refugees have a right to be heard, and many have amazing stories to tell. However fear of reprisals 'back home', stereotyping, negative coverage and public hostility in the UK make many reluctant to talk to other people.

When seeking meetings with refugees or asylum seekers:

- be clear about your purpose;
- be sensitive to requests for anonymity;
- inform yourself about countries of origin.

# The Gypsy & Traveller Community

Gypsies and Travellers are recognised as an ethnic group under the Race Relations Act 1976. They are sometimes known as Roma or Romany people or Romanies.

Gypsies and Travellers have been known in the UK since at least the early 16th century and are thought to number up to 120,000. Many have come from East Europe in the late 1990s and after EU expansion in 2004.

It is believed that they have their origins in India, but over time, they have lost their original identity and adopted the culture and religion of their host country.

Gypsies and Travellers have suffered discrimination and persecution over many centuries. Although no accurate pre-war census figures exist for the Roma, it is estimated that as many as a million and a half Roma people met their deaths in concentration camps during the Second World War.

In the UK the majority of Gypsies and Travellers are no longer nomadic, often because of the shortage of caravan site provision, although approximately 40% of Gypsies and Travellers are nomadic at any one time due to the lack of site provision. Those who are on the road are those who have failed to get on an official site, or who culturally choose not to go in to housing. Gypsies and Travellers who no longer travel still perceive themselves as belonging to their cultural group. Merseyside has several settled communities and from time to time there are visitors passing through.



# y

Traditionally Gypsies and Travellers place a high value on the extended family. Once married, the woman joins the husband's family where her main job is to tend to her husband's and her children's needs, and to take care of the in-laws as well. Men in general have more authority than women. As women get older, however, they gain respect and authority in the eyes of the community.

**Other Information** Taboos and rituals connected with water and cleanliness are part of the Gypsy heritage and are still adhered to by more traditional Gypsies. Water remains important for many Gypsies and Travellers on the road as it is sometimes difficult to access.

Common sense, courtesy and directness will be welcomed by the Gypsy community.

**Death** The death of a person within the Gypsy and Traveller communities will be accompanied by conspicuous and open shows of grief. A large fire will be lit if he/she is a Gypsy. The responsibility for the maintenance of the fire lies with the sons of the deceased or the eldest male relative where no son exists. The fire will be kept burning 24 hours a day and attended by the male mourners at the home of the deceased until the body of the deceased leaves for burial. The fire will then be allowed to go out. The fire and its attendant group of mourners may result in calls to both the fire service and the police service. Any attempt to extinguish the fire or break up the gathering will not only be considered offensive but will be vigorously resisted by those present.

In very traditional Gypsy and Traveller families there is a custom that the caravan of the deceased would be burnt together with favourite possessions. Similarly the clothing and unwanted possessions of the deceased will often be destroyed rather than passed on to family members.



# The Lesbian, Gay & (LGB) Community

The following information highlights issues in relation to the lesbian, gay and bisexual community. It is recognised, however, that many of the experiences of discrimination, victimisation and harassment affecting lesbians, gay men and bisexuals also apply to transgender people. Because of these links, a number of organisations have emerged in recent years that represent lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) communities.

It is estimated that LGB people make up around 10% of the UK population (although it is difficult to provide accurate figures)

Prejudice and homophobic attitudes are still prevalent in the UK.

**Coming out** Coming out describes the process whereby a lesbian, gay or bisexual person tells someone, publicly or privately, that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). Many LGB people are not out, often because of a fear of violence, ridicule or harassment from family, friends or work colleagues.

Young people are often attacked or evicted from their family homes when they tell family members they are LGB. Many face violence and homophobic bullying at school and on the street. LGB adults may already have endured years of keeping an important part of their lives and identities secret. Coming out may result in losing contact with parents, children, friends, community and work associates.

Even when a member of the gay or bisexual community is out, it does not mean they are out to everyone. They may have told family members or friends and not told work colleagues or associates. Conversely, they may have told work colleagues but not family and friends.

**Other issues** There is no reason why being LGB should be an issue in any situation involving contact with the MF&RS. LGB people do not expect preferential treatment – they expect, simply, the same standards of professional service as everyone else, delivered according to their needs.

There are many myths and stereotypes associated with the lesbian, gay and bi-sexual community, and these should be challenged wherever possible. The following are typical examples:

Lesbian women are masculine and gay men are effeminate: the reality is that gay and bisexual people express their femininity or masculinity no differently from heterosexual men and women.

Gay men are likely to be HIV positive: the reality is that infection rates of HIV are higher among the heterosexual community than among the gay community and that, proportionately, gay men are no more likely to be HIV positive than heterosexual men and women.



# Bisexual

**Family life** Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people are in committed long-term relationships. It is important to be aware of different family structures and recognise that not all families are representative of the traditional family structure.

For example, some children may have same-sex parents. Children raised within lesbian, gay and bisexual families often have extended family members who are also part of the LGB community. A common myth is that a child from an LGB family is likely to grow up to be lesbian, gay or bisexual or may be disadvantaged by not being brought up by parents from both sexes. This is unfounded, and recent research indicates that children who grow up in LGB families are just as healthy, balanced and well cared for as those brought up within a more traditional family structure.

Some communities, cultures and religions in the UK hold strong beliefs about 'traditional family life' and LGB issues. Faced with these circumstances, some lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people who remain in traditional family structures may never reveal or acknowledge that they are gay or bisexual. They have little choice but to conform to the perceived traditional values expected by their families, friends, work colleagues and other associates.

**Dealing with bereavement** As with all bereavements staff should be empathetic, impartial and treat each individual according to their needs. It should not be automatically assumed that the next of kin of the deceased will be a 'blood' relative, a member of the person's family or an opposite-sex partner.

When dealing with death and bereavement in an LGB family it should be considered that there may be a conflict between a surviving partner and members of the deceased's family. It is important to remember that some families or close relatives may not have been aware that the deceased was LGB, and this may add to their distress.

## Terminology

**Bisexual** Someone who is attracted to both sexes emotionally and/or physically.

**Closet** (as in 'in the closet'): An individual's choice not to tell others that they are gay or bisexual.

**Out** (as in 'coming out'): To tell other people, publicly or privately that one is gay or bisexual.

**Gay** A gay man or woman is someone who is attracted emotionally and/or physically to the same sex.

**Homophobia/homophobic** Animosity towards and/or irrational fear of gay men and women and bisexuals.

**Heterosexual** Someone who is attracted, emotionally and/or physically to the opposite sex.

**Homosexual** A medical term used to criminalise lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in the 19th century. The term should generally be avoided, although some older LGB people may describe themselves in this way.

**Lesbian** A woman who is attracted emotionally and/or physically to other women.

**Scene** (as in 'gay scene'): Commercial venues where lesbian, gay and bisexual (and to a lesser extent, some transgender) people socialise. Mainly pubs and clubs. In Merseyside the commercial gay scene centres around the Victoria St, Dale St, Stanley St and Cumberland St areas of Liverpool city centre.

# The Trans Community

The term Trans Community is used to include transvestite, transgender and transsexual people. It is important to establish a few basic facts, as the myths and stereotypes surrounding the Trans Community are in most cases ill-informed and incorrect. The following list of definitions should dispel some of the more commonly held misconceptions:

**Biological sex** being male or female as determined by chromosomes and body chemistry.

**Gender** expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity. It is how people present themselves and how they expect others to behave.

**Gender Dysphoria** medical term for those individuals who have a strong and persistent desire to be of the opposite gender.

**Gender identity** the gender we identify with or feel that we belong to, i.e. male or female.

**Transvestism** in the context of transgender people, the adoption, fully or partially, of the clothes normally identified as belonging to the opposite gender.

**Transsexuality** a profound form of gender dysphoria, in which an individual believes that they do not belong in the sex in which they were born, where the need to express oneself and to be, as far as possible, in the gender to which one feels comfortable irrespective of biological sex.

**Transphobia** animosity towards and/or irrational fear of transgender people.

**Transphobic incident** any incident that is perceived to be transphobic by the victim or any other person. In effect, any incident intended to have an impact on those perceived to have transgendered.



Very few people will “fit neatly” within one of these categories. Each person is unique and in many respects, as their feelings towards their gender and their levels of commitment many vary greatly. For example, a Transsexual may have undergone gender reassignment in so much as they have completed their courses of oestrogen injections (female hormones), electrolysis hair removal, speech therapy and the surgical removal of the Adams apple and the necessary alterations to their genital area. Many other Transsexuals will be at various stages along the course or merely starting to contemplate this next step. Many will never reach this level.

**Other information** It is important not to make assumptions. A person who believes that they were born in the wrong gender body and who is taking steps to change this situation should not be referred to as a transvestite.

Transgender people can be heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual (just as those for whom there are no trans issues).

**Advice for dealing with transvestites and transsexuals** We must ensure that we treat transvestites and transsexuals with the same respect and dignity as any other member of the public.

Staff will encounter transgender people in exactly the same situations as they would any other member of the public as well as victims of hate crime. Most of these encounters will cause no difficulty at all, being no different from encounters with other members of the public.

In day-to-day encounters staff must deal with the person as the gender they present. Where a person will not or cannot indicate how they would like to be dealt with, for example if they have been involved in an incident/accident, staff should treat the person as though they are the gender they appear. Where appearance does not help, the birth gender of the person will be used.

It is important to respect an individual's need for confidentiality. Many transgender people are living quite happily in their chosen role and have no wish for others to be made aware that they are transitioned. Most transvestites need confidentiality. Often families, neighbours and employers are not aware of their situation, and the person could be greatly embarrassed if such information were made known.

When talking on the telephone listen to the name offered by the person and refer to the person in the gender suggested by their name. Transgender people can be deeply offended if they are referred to in the wrong gender.

Transgender people represent an aspect of diversity with which most staff have little or no experience. Transgender people must be treated with the same courtesy and are entitled to the same level of service as everyone else. By being sensitive and attempting to deal with the issues in the way that the person wants.

# Disability

This section of the handbook includes guidance on how to:

- Assist people with specific impairments.
- Help develop a greater understanding of the views and preferences of disabled people in general and,
- Recognise and avoid the attitudes and behaviour which could create barriers and misunderstandings.

**The changing climate** The position of disabled people in society is changing. With improved technology and a better understanding of disability, a greater number of disabled people are able to access both services and the workplace.

**Social Model of Disability** The Service is committed to the social model of disability in its management of all disability issues in the workplace.

The social model of disability advocates that rather than explaining restriction in terms of an individual's impairment, society itself is seen as having a powerfully disabling effect on the lives of people with a range of impairments. Barriers that impede the independence of people with differences are seen as the problem, rather than a person's impairment.

## **These barriers include:**

- Systems and organisations that operate in ways that do not take account of human difference.
- Policies and procedures which are not inclusive
- Negative attitudes towards disabled people
- Discrimination
- Physical barriers in the built environment
- Economic barriers
- Barriers of communication

**Definition of disability** The Disability Discrimination Act was introduced in 1995. The first provisions of the Act came into force in 1996, and since then the Act has been amended to reflect European Legislation and the general need to provide increased civil rights for disabled people.

The Act gives protection from discrimination to a "disabled person" within the meaning of the Act.

A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. That effect must be:

- substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial), and
- adverse, and
- long-term (that is, it has lasted or is likely to last for at least a year or for the rest of the life of the person affected).

Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairment. Hidden impairments are also covered (for example, mental health problems, learning disabilities, dyslexia, diabetes and epilepsy).

People who have had a disability in the past are protected from discrimination even if they no longer have the disability. For example, a person who experienced depression for two years but has since recovered could be covered by the Act if at the time their condition fitted the definition contained in the Act.

People who have progressive conditions like HIV, multiple sclerosis, some types of cancer, motor neurone disease, Parkinson's disease and arthritis are also covered by the Act when their condition fits the definition.

The definition is not about a diagnosis but the impact on day-to-day activities. However, the Service is aware that the law is likely to change to ensure that a few groups of people, such as those with HIV, receive protection from the point of diagnosis because they may experience discrimination from that point.

If a person uses medication, mobility aids or another type of equipment to manage the effects of their disability, the effect that the person's condition has without treatment or aids should be considered. For example, a person who uses insulin to control diabetes is a disabled person because without this medication they are likely to suffer serious consequences. Similarly, a person who uses a walking stick or wears a prosthetic limb would be considered disabled if, without these items, their daily lives would be substantially affected by their condition.

**Terminology** Language is a very powerful tool. The words we choose to express ideas can have a strong influence on the way we define and understand issues. Disability is an area where language is contentious, and people may wonder whether or not the words they choose are appropriate.

Defining and categorising disability is a difficult task and many different terms and definitions exist. This is in part because terminology that is acceptable changes over time.

The way specific disabilities are referred to is subject to debate and change. This is sometimes referred to as political correctness. Politically correct terminology excites strong feelings in many people, both positive and negative, but there are problems both with taking it to an extreme and with ignoring it completely. The danger with taking it to an extreme is that it can prevent people from asking questions and dealing with their real reactions and attitudes - using the right words can become more important than promoting a positive attitude.

However, language should be used in as positive a way as possible. For example, people are often referred to by their conditions as if that constitutes their whole identity, eg 'he is an epileptic', 'the deaf'. Taken a step further, this can lead to negative and technically inaccurate labelling that can dehumanise or belittle a person. 'Wheelchair bound' and 'deaf and dumb' are examples of phrases which can be replaced by both more accurate and less offensive language such as 'wheelchair user' or 'deaf'.

There are reasons why some people find some words offensive. Terms such as 'brave' and 'special' may seem positive at first, but their capacity to be offensive is linked to a stereotype of disabled people being less capable than others. 'Able-bodied' people often admire disabled people for being 'courageous' and 'pioneering', or they may be 'their own worst enemy'.



# Disability

## Meeting people with impaired vision.

- Introduce yourself and others clearly, and describe where people are in the room (e.g. 'to your left/right')
- If the person seems to need assistance, ask 'may I offer you my arm?'
- Remember that a guide dog is a working dog.
- When offering a seat, guide the person's hand to the back or the arm of the seat, and say that is what you are going to do.
- Tell the person if you are going to move away, so that they are not left talking to an empty space.

## Meeting people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

There are different degrees and types of deafness, and different ways for deaf or those people who are hard of hearing to communicate.

- Where possible, find out the person's communication preference in advance, in order that you can book interpreters or other support in advance.
- For interviews and meetings, use a qualified sign language interpreter. The diversity department at SHQ, Bridle Road, can provide details of our BSL interpreter service provider and can provide assistance in making a booking.
- Where an interpreter is present, address comments to the deaf person, and not to the interpreter.
- Ensure a deaf person is looking at you before you start to speak.
- Speak normally, as shouting or talking slowly will distort your lip movements.
- Attempt to keep background noise to a minimum.
- Where possible, ensure that only one person speaks at a time.
- Try not to use exaggerated gestures.
- Do not block your mouth with your hands.



### **Meeting people who have personal assistants.**

Some disabled people have a personal assistant at work, in meetings or in social activities.

- If you are planning a meeting you may need to provide for personal assistants, in terms of seating, catering and so forth; some assistants, such as interpreters and palantypists (speed-text typists, who type speech on a laptop or large screen), may require better lighting, different seating, a small table, short rest breaks.
- Some disabled people will prefer not to introduce their assistant when they are working; take your lead from the person with the disability.

In any case, remember to communicate directly with the disabled person.

### **Meeting people who use a wheelchair.**

- If you are talking for more than a few moments to a wheelchair user, try to position yourself so that you are at the same level, or at least ask the person if they would prefer for you to sit down.
- If there is a high desk or counter, where possible, move in front of the desk.
- Do not lean on a wheelchair when talking to a wheelchair user.

### **Meeting people with a learning disability.**

Many people with a learning disability or learning difficulty live full and independent lives in the community, making their own choices, with a varying level of support. These notes will apply in varying degrees, depending upon the level of support the person accesses.

#### **Some tips**

- Start by assuming the person will understand you; be prepared to explain things more than usual.
- Break down complicated information to give one piece at a time; preview and review it.
- Keep distractions (incl background noise) to a minimum, where possible.

### **Meeting people with a mental health problem.**

Having a mental health problem is not the same as having a learning disability. One in four people in the UK will, at some point, experience a mental health problem, and most people will make a full recovery.

It is important not to assume that someone who uses a mental health service lacks the capacity to make decisions.

The major barriers people with mental health problems face are attitudinal rather than physical, and in many instances you will not know that someone has a mental health problem.

Some tips:

- Be patient and non-judgemental.
- Give the person time to make a decision.
- Remove sources of stress or confusion, for example, overly loud background noise or flashing lights.
- A person may require an advocate to help access information, or attend meetings or appointments.

# Faith Groups

To understand the needs of the different faith and belief communities it is important to take into consideration specific features and requirements of the main faith and belief groups in relation to:

- **Language**
- **Diet including fasting**
- **Dress**
- **Physical contact, medical treatment, hospital stays, rest centres**
- **Daily acts of faith and major annual events**
- **Dying and death customs**
- **Resources (e.g. important texts, facilities communities can offer)**
- **Names**

Each of the faith groups represented in the United Kingdom, as well as in non-religious humanist belief, are considered within this document:

## **Faith & Belief Groups**

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Humanism
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Judaism
- Mormonism
- Seventh Day Adventism
- Sikhism
- Rastafarianism



# Buddhism

Buddhism originated around 2,500 years ago in Nepal and is based on the enlightenment and teachings of Prince Siddhartha Gautama, also known as Shakyamuni and more popularly known as “The Buddha” meaning “The Enlightened One”. There are an estimated 330 million Buddhists worldwide, the majority living in the Far East, with an estimated 152,000 in Britain.

**Language** Either English or the language of the country of origin, although Members in the UK may speak several languages other than English, including Tibetan, Cantonese, Hakka, Japanese, Thai and Sinhalese.

**Dress** Generally, no religious requirements for forms of everyday dress for lay Buddhists. Buddhist monks or nuns of the Theravada school shave their heads and wear orange or ochre-coloured robes.

**Beliefs** The essence of the middle way is a view of morality which prohibits the taking of a life, lying, theft, sexual misconduct and the use of intoxicating substances. This is supported by meditation aimed at clearing the mind so that it can rise beyond everyday preoccupations. Buddhists do not acknowledge the existence of god or creator but neither do they deny it.

**Places of worship** Buddhist temples (vihara) are often built to symbolise the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and earth). A statue of Buddha is present. It is a place for meditation and teaching. Buddhists remove their shoes when entering the temple, visitors should do the same. Buddhists do not pray in the generally-accepted sense, but meditate regularly.

**Holy Books** The Pali Canon contains the teachings of the Buddha and his disciples and is used in the Theravada school of Buddhism. Mahayana schools use texts either in Sanskrit or their own languages, such as Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Tibetan. Books of Scripture, liturgy etc should, at all times, be handled with the utmost respect. In many traditions it is considered disrespectful to place them on the ground or to cover them.

**Festivals** There are many Buddhist festivals which will vary from one group to another. The Buddhist calendar is lunar and festival dates may vary. The main festivals are:

Vaisakha Puja – (Buddha day in the West), the celebration of the birth, enlightenment and passing of Buddha. Usually takes place in the month of vesak on the full moon (usually May).

- Parinirvana – February 15th
- Dhamma Day – Full moon of July
- Sangha Day – Full moon of Oct/Nov

**Diet** Buddhists are vegetarian, because of the emphasis of compassion to all living things, and therefore the avoidance of all intentional killing.

**Death** Many Buddhists wish to maintain a clear mind when dying. There is respect for the doctors' views on medical treatment, but there may sometimes be a refusal of pain-relieving drugs if these impair mental alertness. This is a matter of individual choice. It is helpful for someone who is dying to have some peace, and it is customary to summon a monk to perform some chanting of sacred texts in order to engender wholesome thoughts in the mind of the dying person.

After death, the body of the deceased may be handled by non-Buddhists. In some cases a monk may perform some additional chanting, but this is not a universal practice. There are no objections to post-mortems. Preparation of the body for the funeral is generally left to the undertaker, but in some instances relatives may also wish to be involved.

# Christianity

Christianity is the largest and most widespread religion. About a third of the world's population identify themselves as Christian. Christians belong to a number of denominations and some groups which run across denominations.

The most numerous in the UK are Anglicans (Church of England, Church in Wales, Church of Ireland, Scottish Episcopal Church); Roman Catholics, Church of Scotland and Free Church (including Baptist, Methodists, United Reformed, Pentecostal, Presbyterians, etc) and Quakers. Independent churches; in large cities especially there are communities of Orthodox Christians (from the historic churches of Greece, Russia, etc). Seventh-day Adventists (Mormons) are part of the Christian tradition but differ in some key respects from mainstream Churches.

**Language** Most Christians in the UK will speak either English or the language of their country of origin.

**Dress** No special code of dress for Christians except for clergy and members of religious orders.

## Beliefs

### • Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholicism is characterised by its doctrinal and organisational structure.

The Roman Catholic Church was first established by the Apostles, who followed Christ. Catholicism, which means universal, was described as 'Roman' by other Christian Churches. This was partly because of the Church's adoption of the organisational grid of the Roman Empire and partly because Saint Peter founded the Church in Rome, where subsequently he and Saint Paul were buried. About half of the world's Christians are Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic Church is led by the Pope. Roman Catholics believe that the Pope derives his authority in direct descent from St Peter, who Jesus appointed as the leader of the Apostles.

Roman Catholics recognise the New Testament and the Old Testament (the Hebrew scriptures of Judaism). As well as the scriptures, the Catholic Church recognises other texts that are not recognised by Protestants. These are known by the Catholic Church as Deuterocanonicals and by Protestants as the Apocrypha. The emphasis of the faith is on prayer and the seven sacraments (baptism, penance, confirmation, the Eucharist, holy orders, matrimony, and the anointing of the sick). The Eucharist commemorates Christ's last supper by the consecration of bread and wine.

### • Protestantism

Protestantism grew out of a movement to reform the Catholic, or universal, church. It emphasised ways in which Christians should communicate with God, by reducing ritual and placing less importance on the role of the priest.

Although Protestantism started in Western Europe, it has spread to almost every nation. There are now several branches of the Protestant Church, including Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, the Society of Friends and the Salvation Army.

### • Anglicanism

The Anglican Church is a worldwide group of independent churches under the Church of England. It was established in 1534 by King Henry VIII, who took control of the Church of England away from the Roman Catholic Pope. In 1549, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer recast many Roman Catholic texts into the Anglican Book of Common Prayer.

Today, the Anglican Church embraces a diverse range of Christian faiths, from elements of Roman Catholicism to the newer Evangelical Churches. In this respect, the Anglican Church acts as a bridge between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches. In recent times the Church of England has proved to be revisionist. For example, after much debate and internal conflict among its members, it has admitted women to the priesthood. In some cases this had led to entire congregations joining the Roman Catholic Church in protest.

### • **The Orthodox Church**

The Orthodox Church has no single leader analogous to the Pope, although it is led in each country by a senior archbishop called a Patriarch. The Orthodox Church exists in Greek and Russian forms and places great emphasis on tradition.

All Orthodox services are rich in presentation and involve singing and bells, with incense, candles and glowing icons.

**Places of worship** God is worshipped in 3 forms: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (collectively known as The Trinity). Although Christians have built churches since the end of the 3rd century they can worship anywhere.

**Holy Books** The Bible – incorporating the Old and New testaments. There are a number of translations and interpretations.

**Festivals** The most important event for most congregations is the Eucharist (the Mass, Communion Service, Lord's Supper), when Christians share bread and wine. The most widely celebrated Christian festivals are:

- Christmas
- Holy Week and Easter (including Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday)
- Pentecost/Whitsun
- The seasons of Advent (leading up to Christmas) and Lent (leading up to Easter)

**Diet** At one time Roman Catholics would not eat meat on a Friday. More recently this restriction has been lifted. However, restrictions regarding eating meat still apply to all Roman Catholics on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Although restrictions on the diet of Roman Catholics on Friday have been relaxed, it is important to consider that older Roman Catholics may still wish to adhere strictly to these rules. It would be usual for them to eat fish on a Friday. Fish is also a suitable alternative to meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

**Death** It is very important for Roman Catholics to be given their last rites. Staff at an incident should consider this if approached by a Roman Catholic priest.

Christians believe that Jesus will return to earth to rule forever and that the dead will be resurrected to join in his glory. Because of this conviction, in the past, most Christians believed that they should be buried and not cremated. Nowadays, however, cremation is acceptable to Protestants, Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

# Hinduism

Hinduism is the dominant religion of India, where approximately 80 per cent of the population is Hindu. It is about 3,500 years old. In Britain, Hindus comprise 20 per cent of the South Asian population and are predominantly from the state of Gujarat in India, with a smaller number from the Punjab. It is estimated that there are about 400,000 Hindus in the UK.

Variations in Hindu practice depend on their country of origin. Some variations are also due to the interpretation of philosophies and scriptures by different Gurus (religious leaders). For example, the Iskon (Hare Krishna) movement has certain practices that are not followed by the majority of Hindus.

**Language** In addition to English, Hindus in the UK generally speak Gujarati (most common), Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali or Tamil.

**Dress** Generally, modesty and decency are considered essential factors in dress code. The sari is a one-piece female garment wound around the lower body in different styles to suit the occasion and the tradition from which the person comes. (NB Older Bangladeshi and Indian Muslim women also wear saris). Women also wear a dress and baggy trousers (shalwar). Men may sometimes wear a loose shirt (Kurta) and baggy trousers but generally they wear Western clothes.

Hindu women also wear a small circular spot, known as a bindi, on their forehead.

**Beliefs** The basic premise of Hinduism is that it has no dogmatic creed and its worship has no fixed form. What makes or determines a Hindu rests on the fact that Hinduism is a way of life rather than a form of thought.

Hindus believe that Parabrahma is the supreme spirit of all creation. This spirit is perfect and unchanging and is neither male nor female. Although there are hundreds of Hindu Gods, the three most important, known as the trinity, are:

- Brahma – the creator, who created the Hindu Gods;
- Vishnu – the protector;
- Shiva – the destroyer.

All of the Gods and Goddesses are seen as manifestations of the same God.

**Karma and Rebirth** Hindus believe that the soul of human beings must be cleansed of earthly sins before it can return to Brahma. A person's karma is formed by their good or bad actions, and by religious merit gained in each life. This karma dictates what a person will be in their next life. Very bad karma may lead to a person being reborn as an animal or insect. When the person's soul is pure enough it returns to the Spirit of Creation.

**Places of worship** Hindu worship may take place in either the home (domestic) or the mandir (temple). The heart of the temple is the central shrine, the home of the chief divinity. In the mandir women usually sit with the younger children, separate from the men.

On festival days small images of the chief divinity are taken out and paraded. Hindus are encouraged to pray at dawn and dusk, but the actual time is not critical. Worship at temples is between 6.30 am and 8.00 am and 7.00 pm and 8.30 pm. Hindus must wash thoroughly and change their clothes before praying.

**Holy Books** The Hindu ancient scriptures are called the Vedas and contain, amongst other texts, the Upanishads, philosophical works discussing the purpose of life, and the Brahmanas, which contain advice on ritual. The Bhagawad Gita is a prominent holy book with condensed spiritual teachings, and the Ramayana sets the highest ideals.

**Festivals** The Hindu calendar is lunar and timings vary:

Holi - in February or March. A spring festival of colour, people throw coloured powder and water over each other.

Diwala - in October or November when celebratory lights are displayed and fireworks are set off.

- Janamashtami - in August or September.
- Lord Krishna's Birthday. Fasting takes place and special prayers are said in the congregation.

**Diet** Most Hindus are strict vegetarians. Some Hindus may be vegans (they do not eat any meat, fish, eggs or dairy produce) and many will not eat onions or garlic. The cow is the most sacred animal to Hindus and to kill a cow is one of the greatest religious crimes. The pig is considered to be unclean and so pork products are not eaten. Hindus may not accept food that has come into contact with meat or meat products. They may insist on eating only food that has been prepared at home. Fasting is common among Hindus. This usually lasts for a day. Devout and orthodox Hindus do not smoke tobacco or drink alcohol (this particularly applies to women).

**Death** Hindus believe that a body without a soul is a carcass that should be returned to nature and so it is cremated. A dying person may ask to be placed on the ground during their final breaths so they can be closer to nature. Children under the age of five are buried.

Post mortem examinations are considered extremely objectionable and deeply disrespectful to the dead and the deceased's family. The preference is not to have an post mortem unless required by law. A Hindu priest must be called to give his blessings to the deceased. He may tie a thread around the neck or wrist of the dead person and this thread should not be removed. The body should not be touched until relatives arrive. A Hindu family may want the body at home at some stage before cremation, usually between the funeral parlour and the crematorium.

# Islam

Followers of Islam are called Muslims. Mohammed (born in 571AD), the 'Prophet and Messenger', was commanded by Allah (the one Muslim God) to convey His message. Prophet means 'one who tells' and Messenger means 'carries a message from God'. Islam is seen as the youngest of the world's great religions. However, many, if not most, of the followers of Islam believe that:

- Islam existed before Mohammed was born;
- the origins of Islam date back to the creation of the world;
- Mohammed was the last of a series of prophets and messengers of God.

**Language** Muslims may speak several languages other than English; the most common are Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati, Arabic and Turkish.

**Dress** Observant Muslim women usually have at least a head covering (Hijab), and are often covered from head to toe when in public or in the presence of men who are not family members. Covering the area between the navel and knees is a requirement for Muslim men and some devout male Muslims may prefer to keep their heads covered at all times.

## Beliefs

Muslim is an Arabic word that refers to individuals who submit themselves to the 'Will of God'. Muslims believe in one God in Arabic, Allah. Their Holy Book is the Qur'an. The religious duties of Muslims are described in the Five Pillars of Islam:

- To testify shahadah (the creed, 'God is one and only one supreme creator, and Mohammed is the Messenger of God'). Most Muslims will repeat this once a day.
- To perform the salat (prayer) five times a day. This is recited while facing towards Mecca (from the UK this is south east). Prayers are said at dawn, early afternoon, mid-afternoon, after sunset and after nightfall.

- To donate annually to charity known as "zakat".
- To fast during the month of Ramadan. The period when Ramadan occurs differs from year to year as Islam follows the lunar calendar.
- If economically and physically possible/practical, to make at least one hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca (the Muslim holy city).

There are two main groupings of Islam: the Sunni and the Shi'ite (pronounced shee-a). Both adhere to the same body of beliefs, but differ in community organisation and in theological and legal practices. Central to these differences is the Shi'ite belief that only the descendants of the prophet Mohammed may adopt the title and role of imam (religious leader), while the Sunni (who comprise 90 per cent of Muslims) choose the imam by consensus.

**Places of worship** The religious centre for Muslims is the mosque. Inside a mosque men and women must have no physical contact. Ritual cleansing (wudu) of the hands, arms up to the elbows, feet, face and top of the head takes place before prayer.

Shoes are removed and the head is covered with a cap. Prayers are said on small mats facing south east (in the UK) towards the Ka'ba in Mecca. Friday is the Muslim Holy day and congregational prayers are said at the mosques.

Muslims do not represent God in any shape or form, although Muslim families may have pictures of the Holy Ka'ba and the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina. They also have copies of the Qur'an holy scriptures in their homes.

Shoes must be removed before entering a mosque; this may be waived in critical situations.

In the interests of purity, dogs are not allowed in the mosque or in homes, other than in life-threatening situations. When visiting a Muslim's home, remember the five prayer times and try to avoid them. If the obligatory prayer time is interrupted, it is essential that time is given for the person(s) to finish.

**Holy Books** The Qur'an is a source of guidance for life. If in the original Arabic it should not be touched by non-Muslims except with a cloth (translations may be handled by all, with respect), or by menstruating women.

**Festivals** The three main festivals observed by Muslims are:

- Eid-ul-Fitr - breaking of the fast (Ramadam) after the ninth (lunar) month,
- Eid-ul-Adha - the festival of sacrifice held on completion of the Hajj, (the pilgrimage to Makkah) in the eleventh month, and
- Islamic New Year - which falls in the month of Muharram.

**Diet** Muslims do not eat pork in any form, and foods and utensils that have come into contact with pork should not touch any food to be eaten by a Muslim. Consumption of alcohol in any form (e.g. desserts) is strictly forbidden. Muslims may eat fish, they can eat poultry, mutton and beef, providing the meat is halal, i.e. killed and prepared according to Islamic law. Halal food and drink should be clearly labelled where other food is being served. Vegetarian meals and fresh fruit/vegetables are acceptable. Food is eaten with the right hand only.

**Death** Muslims believe in the resurrection of the body after death. Cremation is not acceptable. For this reason they bury their dead. Burial is expected to take place as soon after death as possible, and related matters to be left to their closest relatives.

## Other information

- Some Muslim cultures consider that it is disrespectful for a male to approach or speak to a woman outside his immediate family. For this reason male Muslims may be reluctant to speak to women they do not know (including a female member of staff).
- Generally, Muslim men and women do not shake hands with someone from the opposite sex. When meeting a Muslim woman, only shake her hand if she extends it to you.
- The left hand is not used for giving, pointing, shaking or eating.
- Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet (and also that his mother, Mary, produced him from a virgin birth). For this reason Muslims will generally feel offended when 'Jesus!' or 'Jesus Christ!' is used as an expletive.
- Muslim men are forbidden by the Qur'an to wear gold (wedding rings are silver, if worn) or silk.
- In war, the Qur'an forbids harm to non-combatants. Also, no damage should be done to crops and buildings.
- Those who commit suicide are believed by most Muslims to spend eternity being forced to relive the day of their death over and over again.
- Jihad is a struggle between good and evil. It is not a 'holy war' on unbelievers as claimed by some extremists. The greater jihad is the individual's struggle with their own internal evils. The lesser jihad is the struggle against evil in the world.
- A fatwah is an opinion on what the correct legal position is under Islamic law.
- The establishment of Islam in the world is promoted by setting a good example to, and educating, non-believers. This is called da'wa. However, the Qur'an states that there is 'no compulsion in religion' and respects Judaism and Christianity.

# Humanism

Humanism is not a faith. It is the belief that people can live good lives without religious or superstitious beliefs. Most humanists would describe their beliefs as either atheist or agnostic, and humanists reject the idea of any god or other supernatural agency and do not believe in an afterlife. However, Humanism is more than a simple rejection of religious beliefs.

**Language** English, or any other language depending on the individual's background.

**Dress** No special requirements

## **Beliefs**

Humanists believe that moral values are founded on human nature and experience, and base their moral principles on reason, shared human values and respect for others. They believe that people can and will continue to solve problems, and should work together to improve the quality of life and make it more equitable.

## **Places of worship, Holy Books, Festivals**

No specific requirements.

**Diet** No particular requirements. Some humanists are vegetarian or vegan, and many who do eat meat would refuse meat that has been slaughtered by methods they consider inhumane (Halal or Kosher meat).

**Death** No specific requirements. The choice between cremation and burial is a personal one, although cremation is more common. Most will want a humanist funeral, and crosses and other religious emblems should be avoided. However, since many humanists believe that when someone dies the needs of the bereaved are more important than their own beliefs, some may wish decisions about their funeral and related matters to be left to their closest relatives.



# Jehovah's Witnesses

The religious beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses are in many ways similar to those of mainstream Christians. For instance, Witnesses rely on the authority of the Bible, worship only one God, and trust in Jesus' death and resurrection for salvation.

## **Beliefs**

For deeply-held reasons of religious faith there are basically only two medical interventions that Jehovah's Witnesses object to: elective termination of pregnancy and allogeneic blood transfusion. Baptised Jehovah's Witnesses usually carry on their person an Advance Medical Directive/Release document directing that no blood transfusions be given under any circumstances, and this document is renewed annually.

**Holy Books** The Bible, which is read daily.

**Festivals** Witnesses commemorate the death of Jesus according to the Hebrew calendar (late March/April). They do not celebrate other traditional festivals, nor do they celebrate birthdays.

**Diet** While Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Christians are required to abstain from blood and the meat of animals from which blood has not been properly drained, there are no religious restrictions on what they can eat. Use of alcohol is a personal matter.

**Death** There are no special rituals to perform for those who are dying, nor last rites to be administered to those in extremis. Pastoral visits from elders will be welcomed. The dead may be buried or cremated, depending on personal or family preferences and local circumstances.

# Judaism

Judaism originated in the Middle East and dates back more than 4,000 years. Jews originated in Spain, Portugal, and Arab and North African countries; Ashkenazi Jews are of Central and Eastern European origin. Orthodox (strict) Jews believe that the Jewish laws and teachings of the Torah must be followed exactly as they were laid down in the time of Moses.

Non-orthodox or progressive Jews believe that some of the Torah's teachings may be adapted to make them more relevant to modern life. Progressive Jews are known by different names (for example Reform, Conservative and Liberal Jews), depending on which movement they follow.

**Language** English is generally used although Hebrew or Yiddish are also spoken.

**Dress** Devout Jewish men and women will keep their heads covered at all times. Men wear a hat or skull-cap (the yarmulka or kippa). Orthodox women will wear a hat, scarf or wig. Orthodox women and girls are required to keep the body and limbs covered with modest clothing. Strictly Orthodox men are likely to wear black clothes (sometimes 18th century dress) and may have ringlets and beards.

**Beliefs** Jewish people believe that a single transcendent God created the universe and continues providentially to govern it. This same God revealed himself to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. The content of that revelation is the Torah (revealed instruction). God's will for humankind is expressed in the Ten Commandments.

A second major concept of Judaism is the covenant, or contractual agreement between God and the Jewish people. They would acknowledge God, agreeing to obey his law; God, in turn, would acknowledge Israelites as his chosen people.

**Places of worship** The synagogue or shul is a house of prayer and study as well as a community centre. Three prayer sessions are taken daily, although prayers can be said anywhere. Normally men, and sometimes women, come together for prayers. For communal prayer to take place it is necessary for a minyan to be present: a group of 10 adult male (progressives include female) Jews.

Most synagogues will have a Rabbi who can advise the community about the interpretation of religious laws. The Rabbi may lead the service and read a different part of the Torah each week. Although the Rabbi is usually the person leading the service, anybody who is able to may lead the service.

All men must cover their heads when entering a synagogue.

Some Jews will not wear leather on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). This does not apply to those of other faiths who have to enter a Jewish home or synagogue.

All practising Jews say prayers three times a day. The Sabbath (Shabbat) is observed from sunset on Friday evening until sunset on Saturday evening. Prayers and a family meal are part of the observance.

**Holy Books** The Jewish scriptures are known as the Tanakh and include the Torah, the Nevi'im and the Ketuvim.

**Festivals** The main religious festivals are:

- Passover - a spring festival lasting 8 days celebrating the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt,
- Rosh Hashanah - held on the first day of the Jewish New Year in September/October, following which Jews observe ten days of penitence and a 25-hour fast, which leads to: Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).
- Hanukkah - the festival of lights held in December.

**Diet** Some Jews are very strict about following dietary laws (kashrut). Animals, birds and fish are either kosher (permitted) or treif (forbidden). Animals that chew the cud and have cloven hooves (such as cows, sheep and goats) all fowl (apart from birds of prey) and fish with fins and scales are kosher as long as they are prepared according to Jewish laws. Pork and shellfish are forbidden. Foods that contain or have been cooked in forbidden products are also unacceptable.

Orthodox Jews will not eat milk and meat products together on the same plate or at the same time. Separate sets of utensils are kept for cooking meat and dairy dishes. Utensils used for dairy products are washed in a separate sink from those used for meat dishes. Some orthodox Jews may wait for several hours after eating a meat dish before eating a milk product. Fruit and vegetables are eaten.

**Death** It is usual for a companion to remain with a dying Jewish person until death, reading or saying prayers. The dying person should not be touched or moved, since it is considered that such action will hasten death, which is not permitted in any circumstances.

The prompt and accurate identification of the dead is particularly important for the position of a widow in Jewish law. Post mortems are forbidden unless ordered by the civil authorities. Body parts must be treated with respect and remain with the corpse if possible.

In many Jewish households, families sit shiva, mourning for up to seven days after the deceased has been buried or cremated. Friends and relatives of the deceased visit the house of the immediate family to offer help and comfort. Prayers are held each day during shiva, although one does not mourn on the Shabbat. Members of the immediate family sit on low stools during shiva.

All first-degree relatives, both men and women, tear their clothes as part of the mourning ritual.

## Other information

- On entering a Jewish home you may see a small container fixed on the door post of the front and back door and on some of the door posts within the home. These containers are called mezzuzah and hold part of the Shema (scrolls). Jews often touch the mezzuzah when entering or leaving their home.
- Work is prohibited during the Shabbat (from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday). Work includes phoning, writing, cooking, turning on electricity and travelling by car and public transport. Exceptions are made to these restrictions only if it is necessary to save life – it would be better to avoid routine visits at this time.
- The Shabbat is a day of rest, to be spent at home with the family. Traditionally the family will visit the synagogue in the morning, and then return home for a special meal.



# Mormonism

## (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - day Saints)

**Dress** Those who have been endowed in a Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints wear a special undergarment next to the skin. Mormons are always soberly dressed.

**Beliefs** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe in, hope in, rejoice in, and testify of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the World. Mormons attest to the validity of the Bible and modern-day revelation and have a core belief in the importance of eternal families. They assert that Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820 with the express purpose of restoring His Church and gospel in its purity and fullness to the earth.

**Places of worship** Scripture reading is considered an important part of daily life. The Sabbath is observed on Sundays, with services conducted by lay leaders called bishops.

**Holy Books** The Bible and the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ – are regarded as the word of God.

**Festivals** Christmas and Easter are important celebrations in the Church.

**Diet** The drinking of alcoholic beverages, tea, or coffee is forbidden. A healthy lifestyle and a diet rich in grains, fruits and vegetables is encouraged. Grains (including wheat in particular) are given special emphasis. Latter-day Saints are also counselled to “eat meat sparingly,” though meat is not forbidden.

**Death** Church or family members will usually arrange for the body to be clothed for burial. Burial rather than cremation is recommended by the Church, but the final decision is left for the family of the deceased.

# Seventh Day Adventism

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Protestant Christian denomination which is distinguished mainly by its observance of Saturday, the “seventh day” of the week, as the Sabbath. The denomination grew out of the Millerite movement in the United States during the middle part of the 19th century and was formally established in 1863.

## **Beliefs**

Distinctive teachings include the unconscious state of the dead and the doctrine of an investigative judgment. The church is also known for its emphasis on diet and health, for its promotion of religious liberty, and for its culturally conservative principles.

The Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath is kept from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. It is a day of rest and worship, when Adventists like to practice fellowship and worship together. During this time most Adventists avoid secular activities such as watching television. Communion, or the Eucharist, is celebrated once every three months. Adventists celebrate Christmas and Easter as commemorative events, usually marking the occasions by a special service on the closest Sabbath day.

**Holy Books** As with other Christians, Adventists accept the Bible as the inspired word of God. Many Adventists also cherish books by Ellen G White, who they believe had the spiritual gift of prophecy.

**Death** Adventists would prefer to have an Adventist clergyman or woman present when facing death. However they would appreciate general prayers and other spiritual care from clergy of other Christian denominations if Adventist clergy were not available. Adventists do not hold the sacraments as required rituals; hence Sacrament of the Sick would not be necessary. Cremation or burial is a matter of personal or family preference.

# Sikhism

The Sikh religion, was founded by Guru Nanak (1469–1538), who was born in the village Talwandi, now called Nanakana Sahib, near Lahore (Pakistan). Guru Nanak and the Nine Gurus who succeeded him set an example of living spiritually while taking an active part in the secular world. The teachings and the divine message of the Ten Gurus, enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib (one of the highly respected Holy books), was written and compiled by the Gurus themselves and recorded in the Granth Sahib.

It is estimated that there are more than 500,000 Sikhs in the UK, which would make this the largest Sikh community in any country outside India.

**Language** The Punjabi and English languages are widely spoken and used. Swahili, Urdu and Hindi may be understood.

**Names** All boys are given the middle name or last name Singh and all girls are given the middle name or last name Kaur.

**Beliefs** The word Sikh means disciple or student. Any human being who faithfully believes in the following and does not owe allegiance to any other religion is a Sikh:

- one immortal being;
- Ten Gurus, from Guru Nanak Sahib to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib;
- the Guru Granth Sahib;
- the utterances and teachings of the Ten Gurus;
- Khande di Pahual (the baptism ceremony) bequeathed by the tenth Guru.

The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708), initiated the Sikh baptism ceremony (Amrit) on 30 March 1699. Baptised Sikhs are called Khalsa (God's own). The initiation day of the Sikhs' baptism is called Vaisakhi Day, meaning the birth of Khalsa; hence, this day has a significant religious importance for Sikhs all over the world. The Sikhs acquired their religious uniform, consisting of the Five Ks, on this day.

Sikhism emphasises the truth and creativity of a personal God and urges union with him through meditation and surrender to his will. Sikhs do not believe in the worship of idols or rituals. Gods and Goddesses are considered non-entities. The religion embraces practical living, rendering service to humanity and engendering tolerance and love to all. Sikhs conform to a code of conduct called the Sikh Rahit Marayada.

This code of conduct forbids:

- cutting or trimming hair;
- cohabiting with a person other than one's spouse;
- consuming intoxicants such as drugs, tobacco and alcohol;
- eating halal or kosher meat;
- worshipping idols or icons.

**Dress** All initiated male Sikhs wear the five K symbols: Kesh (uncut hair); Kangha (a comb to keep the hair neat); Kara (a steel bangle which symbolises the unity of God); Kirpan (a short dagger which symbolises the readiness of the Sikh to fight against injustice); and Kachhera (breeches or shorts to symbolise modesty). Men wear a Turban. Women wear a chunni (a long Punjabi scarf) to cover the Kesh. The removal of the Turban or the Kachhera will cause great embarrassment to a Sikh and should be avoided.

**Places of worship** Sikhs worship in a gurdwara (gur-dwa-ra, from the word guru dwara meaning place of worship). A triangular orange flag indicates that an otherwise ordinary building is a gurdwara. Sikhs worship everyday – mornings and evenings. Working families may attend the gurdwara only on Sundays, the only convenient or common day for them.

A large room in the gurdwara containing the Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Holy Book) is used for prayer and worship. Worshippers and visitors alike must remove their shoes and cover their heads prior to entering this room. Gurdwaras are not all identical but certain features are always present; in particular, they all have the dais (takht), from which the Holy Book is read, with a whisk (chaur) and a canopy above it (wherever the Holy book is displayed, even in houses, it will have a canopy above it).

Women play an active and equal role in all gurdwara worship. They may conduct services, read from the Holy Book in public and vote on all matters related to the running and function of the gurdwara.

Sikhs are renowned for their hospitality. Apart from being a place of worship and a house for the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the gurdwara is also a guesthouse where passing travellers may find free food (Langar) and shelter during their stay.

Many Sikhs keep a room at home where the Holy Book is permanently installed and where they can go for meditation, prayer or to hold a religious gathering of friends and relatives.

**Holy Books** The Sikh Scriptures (Adi Granth) are treated with the utmost respect and reverence. Additionally, Sikhs may refer to the writings of Guru Gobind Singh (Dasam Granth) and the Sikh Code of Conduct (Rahit Maryada).

**Festivals** Festivals are normally celebrated with a continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib (Holy Scriptures) over a period of 48 hours. Major annual festivals are:

- Guru Nanak's Birthday: A three-day celebration
- The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur
- Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday
- The Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev
- Baisakhi
- Divali

**Diet** Dietary practice varies, but devout Sikhs do not use tobacco, alcohol or drugs and are vegetarians, who will also exclude eggs. Those who do eat meat, fish and eggs will refrain from eating beef, halal and kosher meat. Salads, rice, dahl (lentils), vegetables and fruit are generally acceptable.

**Death** The dying person will want to have access to the Sikh scriptures where possible. The five Ks should be left on the dead body, which should, if possible, be cleaned and clothed, in clean garments before being placed in a coffin or on a bier. According to Sikh etiquette, comforting a member of the opposite sex by physical contact should be avoided, unless those involved are closely related. Deliberate expressions of grief or mourning by bereaved relatives are discouraged, though the bereaved will want to seek comfort from the Sikh scriptures. The dead person should always be cremated, with a close relative lighting the funeral pyre or activating the machinery. This may be carried out at any convenient time. The ashes of the deceased may be disposed of through immersion in flowing water or dispersal.

# Rastafarianism

Rastafarianism originated in Jamaica in the 1930s, gaining its name from Ras (Prince) Tafari, who later became Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia. Much more a way of life than a religion, it was a response against the oppression of the ruling colonial powers, inspired by the black Jamaican, Marcus Garvey, who spent much of his life fighting for the rights of black people. Garvey had prophesied "Look to Africa when a black King shall be crowned for the day of deliverance is near". Followers recalled this and became convinced that the new Emperor Haile Selassie, a direct descendant of King Solomon, was the living God Oah.

Of the estimated 250,000 followers of Rastafarianism worldwide, approximately 5,000 of them live in the UK.

**Language** Many Rastafarians speak their own lyrical style of English (patois) based on local Jamaican dialects.

**Dress** Rastafarians wear standard Western dress, except that some Rasta men will wear crowns or tams (hats) and Rasta women, wraps (headscarves). The wearing of headwear can be deemed as part of a Rastafarian's attire, with some Rastafarian men and especially women never uncovering their heads in public. Cutting of hair is prohibited in any circumstances. Dreadlocks symbolise the 'mane of the Lion of Judah' (reference to the divine title of Emperor Haile Selassie).

**Beliefs** Rastafarianism has strong links with Christianity and Judaism. Followers believe that the African race is one of the twelve tribes of Israel and that salvation can come to black people only through their return to Africa (Zion), the land of their ancestors, a tenet that Marcus Garvey held dear.

Jamaica is the biblical "Babylon" although all places where exiled Africans live may be so described. God or Jah is believed to reside in each person and a "oneness" exists between Jah and the individual.

The Rastafari faith is derived from very detailed readings of the Christian Bible, especially the Old Testament and the Book of revelations in the New Testament.

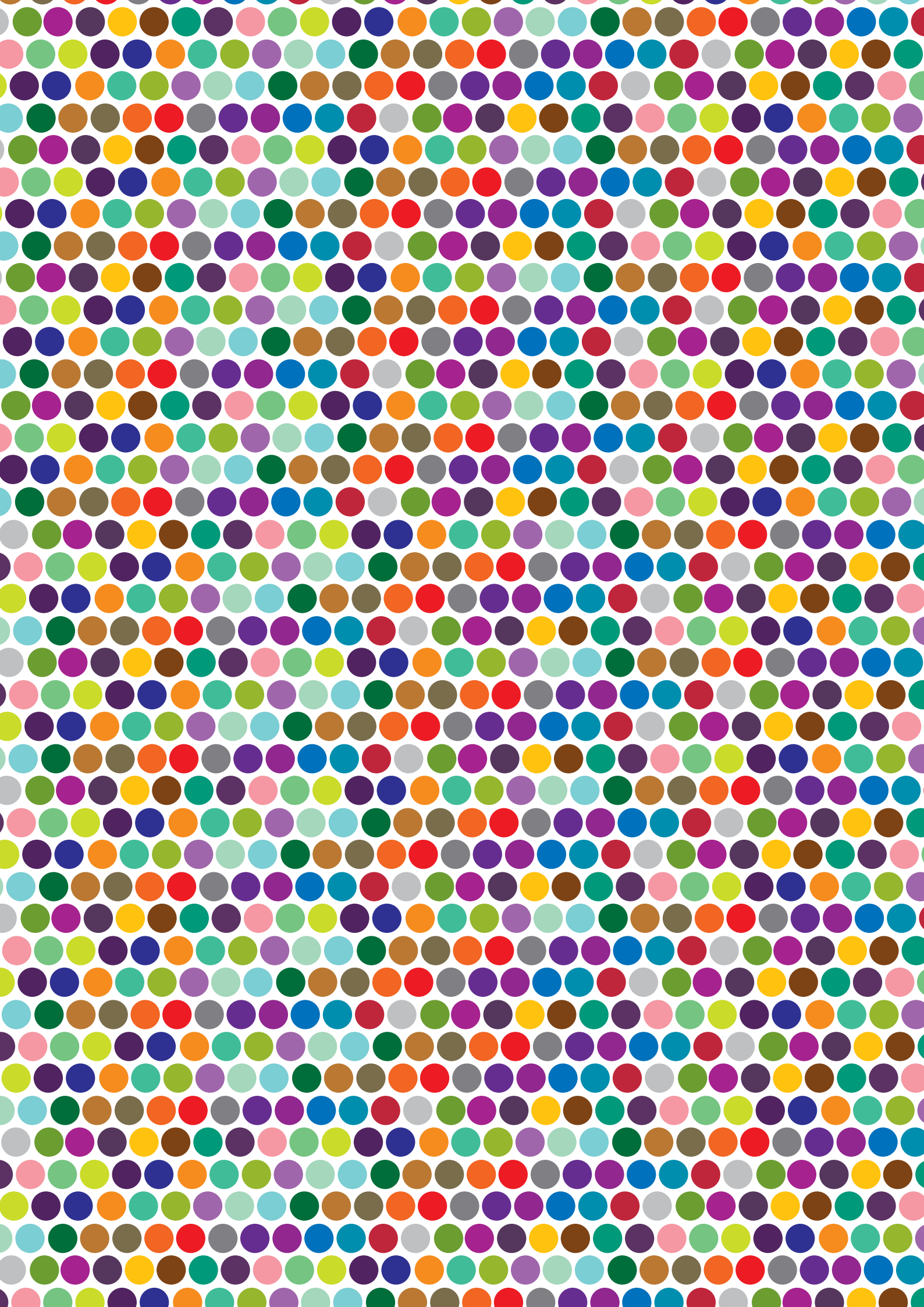
**Places of worship** Congregations are usually held once a week at a community centre or someone's home, and are a time for worship, discussion and often music, which plays an important part in Rastafarian culture. Rastafarians consider Saturday to be the Sabbath day.

**Festivals** The Rastafari year is based on the Ethiopian calendar. Main celebrations include:

- the Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie - July 23,
- the Birthday of Marcus Garvey - August 17, and
- the Ethiopian celebration of Christmas - January 7.

**Diet** Most adherents of Rastafarianism are vegetarians or eat organic or natural foodstuffs. They avoid stimulants such as tea, coffee and alcohol. However, they do use Marijuana (ganga), as a ritual aid in their meditations, and may include it in their cooking.

**Death** No particular rituals are observed. The dying person will wish to pray. When a Rastafarian person passes (dies) a gathering takes place where there is drumming, singing, scriptures read and praises given. Usually on the 9th and/or 40th night of a person passing.



# Useful Contacts

## Cultures and Communities

### Arabic Cultural Foundation

326 Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool, L8 7QL

### Bangladeshi Community Association

101-107 Park Road, Liverpool, L8 7NY  
0151 726 0294

### Kurdish Turkish Community Organisation of Liverpool

5 Princes Road, Streatham Towers, Toxteth, Liverpool, L8 1TG

### Liverpool Arabic Centre

(formerly Liverpool Yemeni Arabic Club (LYAC))  
163 Lodge Lane, Liverpool, L8 0QQ

### Liverpool Somali Community

57 Granby Street, Liverpool, L8 2TU  
0151 709 3853

### Merseyside Bangladesh Association

0151 726 0294  
Jamshed1@hotmail.com

### Merseyside Caribbean Association

1 Amberley Street, Toxteth, Liverpool, L8 1YJ  
0151 709 9790

### Merseyside Indian Association

0151 426 7469

### Merseyside Somali Community Association

145 Granby Street, Toxteth, Liverpool, L8  
0151 726 0594  
Somali@merseyemail.com

### Merseyside Yemeni Community Association

167 Lodge Lane, Liverpool, L8 0QQ

### Pakastani Association Liverpool

60 Mulgrave Street, Liverpool, L8 2TF

### St. Michaels Irish Centre

6 Boundary Lane, Everton, Liverpool, L6 5JG  
0151 263 1808

### Wah Sing Chinese Community Centre

149 Duke Street, Liverpool, L1 4JR  
0151 709 9842

### Wirral Vietnamese Association Merseyside

c/o Wirral Multicultural Organisation  
111 Conway Street, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 4AF

## Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual (LGB)

### Armistead Project.

Musker Buildings, 1 Stanley Street, Liverpool  
Helpline: 0870 990 8996  
Fax: 0870 990 8997  
Minicom: 0151 227 1478  
Admin: 0151 227 1893  
Email: info@armistead-project.com

### Shoutline

Merseyside Police confidential reporting line  
0800 3282244

### True Vision

Online Homophobic Hate Crime Reporting.  
<http://www.report-it.org.uk/>

**Queer Notions** (support and info for LGB individuals around mental health issues)  
c/o Armistead Project, Musker Buildings,  
1 Stanley Street, Liverpool

## Transgender

### Press for Change

BM Network, London, WC1N 3XX

## Asylum & Refugee

### Asylum Link Merseyside

St. Anne's Centre, 7 Overbury Street,  
Liverpool, L7 3HJ  
0151 342 4425

### Refugee Action

64 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5SD  
0151 702 6300

## Disability

### Merseyside Society for Deaf People

Liverpool Office , Queen's Drive, West Derby  
Merseyside L13 0DJ  
Telephone (Voice/Minicom): 0151-228 0888

### RNIB (North West)

The Gateway Centre, 71 London Road, Liverpool, L3  
8HY  
Tel: 0151 298 3222  
Fax: 0151 298 3250  
e mail: RNIBNorthWest@rnib.org.uk

### Liverpool Association of Disabled People (LADP)

[www.ladp.org.uk](http://www.ladp.org.uk)

### Merseyside Disability Federation

<http://www.merseydisability.org.uk/>

### St Helens Disability Empowerment Network

[www.disabilitysthelens.org.uk](http://www.disabilitysthelens.org.uk)

## Faith & Belief Groups

### Anglican Diocese of Liverpool

The Diocese of Liverpool, St James' House,  
20 St James Road , Liverpool, L1 7BY  
Tel: 0151 709 9722  
Fax: 0151 705 2165

### Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool

Liverpool Archdiocesan Centre for Evangelisation,  
Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool, L17 1AA  
Tel: 0151 522 1000

### Liverpool Baha'I Centre

3-5 Langdale Road, Liverpool, L15 3LA.  
Tel: 0151 733 8614/4700

### Gurdwara Sikh Community Centre

Wellington Avenue, Liverpool  
Tel: (051) 773 0076

### Liverpool Muslim Society

The AL-Rahma Mosque, 29-31 Hatherley Street  
Liverpool, L8 2TJ  
Tel: 0151 709 2560

### The Merseyside Jewish Representative Council

Shifrin House , 433 Smithdown Road,  
Liverpool, L15 3JL  
Tel: 0151 733 2292

### Liverpool Buddhist Centre

Floor 7, Gostin Building, 32/36 Hanover St  
Contact Buddhashanti on 0161 281 2291  
email: buddhashanti@supanet.com

### Hindu Cultural Centre

253 Edge Lane, Liverpool, L8 7LF  
Tel: 0151 263 7965





# An intentional Inclusion Strategy



"An Excellent Authority"



Bridle Road | Bootle  
Liverpool | Merseyside  
L30 4YD | t: 0151 296 4000

[www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk)