

A Handbook and Guide for Agencies Working with Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in South Yorkshire



Part 2: A Guide to the Main Communities and Cultures

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Please note that the pictures in the text may not necessarily reflect either the religion or ethnicity of the people.

Religion

Islam

Muslims make up nearly one seventh of the world's population and Islam is practised in many regions including North Africa, the Middle East, parts of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This means that although all Muslims will share the same set of basic beliefs, the way that these are applied to daily life will vary widely according to the culture and tradition in the particular countries.

It is estimated that there are around 1.5 million Muslims living in the United Kingdom making it the country's second largest religion. Sheffield has the highest number of converts to Islam anywhere in the United Kingdom.

There are two branches of Islam. Over 90% of the world's Muslims are "Sunni" Muslims; the remaining 10% are "Shi'ite" Muslims. This branch of Islam is particularly strong in Iran, and can also be found in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Pakistan.

Both Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims believe in the Five Pillars of Islam (see below). The differences between the two branches relate to the early history of the religion.



Core Beliefs

The core belief of Islam is to submit to the will of Allah, as set out in the Qur'an. The "Five Pillars of Islam" set out the essential aspects of the faith which are:

- A declaration of faith,
- Praying five times a day,
- Almsgiving (giving to the poor and needy),
- Fasting during the month of Ramadan, between dawn and dusk,
- Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime.

There are 5 sets of compulsory prayers at dawn, noon, afternoon, evening and nightfall. Prayer times are governed by the sun and daylight hours and so will vary. It is advisable to ask about prayer times to avoid these during visiting. A prayer time calculator is available on the BBC Religion website (www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam). Privacy is required for prayer; a separate room is set aside in the home and should be in the workplace where possible.

Key Festivals

The Islamic calendar is based on lunar months. The lunar year is ten days shorter than the solar year. This means that that dates of festivals change each year and over time will fall in different seasons. The dates of festivals are determined by the appearance of the moon.

Below is indicated the dates of these festivals in 2003, as a guide only.

- The First of Muharram – begins the Islamic New Year, (March 4th).
- Milad-un Nabi – a day of prayer to commemorate the Prophet Mohammed's life, (May 14th).
- Lailat-ul Bara'at – a time of fasting and all-night prayer, (Oct 10th).
- Ramadan – the ninth month of the Muslim year. Fasting takes place between sunrise and sunset, (30 days beginning Oct 27th).
- Eid-ul Fitr – ending of Ramadan. A happy celebration, Eid cards may be sent. The first day after the end of Ramadan, (November 25th).
- Eid-ul Adha – thankfulness and feasting to mark the end of the time of pilgrimage, (Feb 12th).

Places of worship

The mosque is the communal building for prayers. Women may not be allowed to enter the mosque. It is usual to remove shoes when entering a mosque. The leader of the mosque is called the Imam (priest) and may be a useful contact in communicating important information to the community.

Languages Used

Muslim families in the UK may use several languages other than English, for example,

- Bengali,
- Sylheti (spoken only),
- Arabic,
- Urdu,
- Somali,
- Farsi.

Arabic is widely used as it is the language of worship, and also because the Qur'an is written in Arabic.

Naming

The Muslim naming system is complex, and is different for men and women. Names can include personal names, religious names, and sometimes family names. Muslims usually adopt their father's but not their husband's name.

It can be seen as disrespectful to address a Muslim by their religious name, for example, “Mohammed”, therefore it is important to ask people what they want to be called.

A woman may have two names – a personal name followed by a title (such as Begum or Bibi), which is reminiscent of Mrs or Miss. Therefore, it is not appropriate to address a woman as Mrs Begum or Mrs Bibi.

It is best to ask for the family name for record keeping; if there is not a family name, ask for the most used personal name. This can be recorded in OHMS in the field for family name. It may be useful to record the order in which the names are used, as OHMS may not reflect this.

- Do not ask a Muslim for their Christian name; ask for their first name.
- A baby may not be named for up to 21 days after birth.

Diet

Pork and pork by-products are strictly forbidden. Muslims eat Halaal food which includes meat that has been ritually slaughtered and must be cooked using separate utensils. Halaal food should not be stored or cooked with non-Halaal food. It is advisable to provide vegetarian food. This should be spicy, as bland foods are often considered unpalatable. This is important when organising events where food is to be served.



Drugs and alcohol are forbidden, and smoking may be restricted. During Ramadan, Muslims fast between sunrise and sunset. Children, older people and pregnant women are exempt. However children are encouraged to give up snacks and sweets. Remember that people who are fasting will often lack energy particularly in the afternoon, and may want to get home before sunset in order to eat, so bear this in mind when organising meetings.

Death

Muslims try to bury their dead within 24 hours of death. This should be borne in mind in contacting or visiting a household where there has been a death.

Social Customs

In Islam men and women are equal, although their respective roles can be very distinct. There is a strong sense of decorum amongst Muslim women and men should not shake hands with women or *vice versa*. Some Muslim women may not feel comfortable being alone with a male who is not a family member and

communications may be best through a male family member. Men are technically the head of the household, although in Islam men and women are equal.

Men and women may not gather socially in the same room where there are people from outside of the family present. (See below “Consultation and Meetings”)

Some Muslims may consider making direct eye contact to be rude and therefore may avoid making direct eye contact with other people.

Islam has rules on dealing in interest (*e.g.* on money). This means that some Muslims may feel unable to take out conventional loans, or have a mortgage or bank account. This may have an impact on the way that Muslims manage their financial affairs.

Housing Needs

Wherever possible Muslims should wash hands, face and feet in running water before prayer. This means that a bidet or another facility may need to be provided. Showers are generally preferred to baths.

Sexual segregation may be enforced after puberty. This means that boys and girls will need separate bedrooms, and this needs to be taken into account when allocating properties.

Muslim families may look for a property with two reception rooms so that men and women can meet separately when visitors come to the home.

Consultation and meetings

Men and women who are unrelated do not usually mix, and you may have to take this into account in arranging visits and meetings. For example, in carrying out consultation, you may need to hold separate meetings for women, or provide areas where men and women can be seated separately.

You should also check prayer times and dates of key festivals and avoid these. If you are holding an all day event, provide a break at prayer times and a quiet, private and clean space where people can pray.

Visiting a home

Muslims may often remove their shoes when entering the home, and you may feel it is appropriate to do the same. However, as in all circumstances you need to use your judgement about matters such as health and safety. One option is to carry plastic overshoes with you.

When visiting Muslims prayer times should be avoided (see above under Beliefs). These vary with the calendar so always check beforehand with the person. If you accidentally visit a Muslim home during prayers you may find that no-one answers the door even though you know someone is at home. Avoid visiting during Muslim festivals unless specifically requested to do so or in an emergency.

Women may prefer to have a male family member present during an interview, so it may be appropriate to arrange visits in advance so that this can be arranged.

Community Groups and Organisations

Pakistan Muslim Centre

Tel: 0114 243 6091

Fax 0114 261 9330

Muslim Association of Britain (Sheffield Branch)

Tel. 0114 296 9213

Hinduism

Hinduism is the world's third largest religion. The term Hinduism covers a huge variety of different beliefs that originated in India. Over 80% of people in India class themselves as Hindus. There are a variety of different holy books, although the Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita are widely revered.

Core Beliefs

Hindus seek to learn how to be reunited with God. Hindus usually believe in the sanctity of life, and tolerance of others. Hindus believe in reincarnation and that how they live their lives in the present will affect their lives in the future.

Many Hindus perform an act of devotion every day at home where most families will have a personal shrine.

A feature of the Indian Hindu society is the caste system, which ranks people within society according to their occupation, into four main traditional classes. These are Brahmins, or priests, Kshatriyas, or warriors, Vaishyas, or merchants; and Shudras, unskilled labourers or servants. At the lowest end of society are the Untouchables. There have been attempts to reform this system, and the concept of "untouchables" has been abolished by law in India. However caste identity may still be strong, preventing, for example, marriage between people of different castes.



Key Festivals

The exact dates of festivals vary from year to year and here months are given as a guide only. You will need to check to be sure, using the Festival Wall Chart.

- Holi - the death of winter (spring festival - March).
- Rama Navami - the birth of Rama, seventh incarnation of the deity Vishnu, (April).
- Raksha Bandhan - sisters tie colourful threads (called a Rakhi) round their brother's wrist as a sign of love and protection, (August).
- Janamashtami - the birth of Krishna, eighth incarnation of the deity Vishnu, (includes fasting until midnight).

- Navratri - a month before Divali - to worship Durga (mother goddess). Nine nights of colourful dance and feasting.
- Divali - celebrates the beginning of the year in October or November. To celebrate the symbolic reunion of Rama and his wife Sita. Divali cards are exchanged.
- Shivaratri – to honour the deity Shiva.

Not all Hindus will celebrate the same festivals.

Avoid visiting Hindu homes at festival times

Places of Worship

The Hindu place of worship is called the Mandir.

Languages used

As Hinduism is predominant in India, Hindus may speak Indian languages (see section on India). However, Hinduism is practised all over the world and so Hindus may speak a variety of languages.

Naming

Hindus usually have three names, a personal name first, a complimentary name (which may be joined with their first name) and lastly a family or subcaste name.

Gujerati men use their father's personal name, plus a suffix (-chand) as their middle name. Traditionally, Hindu women take their husband's family name upon marriage and use the family name for record purposes as a surname. Many families omit the middle name when registering the birth of a child in the United Kingdom.

If you are unsure it is advisable to ask which name to use for record keeping.

Diet

Hindus generally do not eat beef but other dietary requirements vary. Many Hindus are vegetarian, and may avoid all animal products including cheese made with animal rennet, and eggs. This should be taken into account when organising events which will include refreshments.

Death

Hindus generally prefer to die at home as death in hospital causes great distress. Hindus are then cremated. This may be important when working with older people, for example in sheltered housing.

Social Customs

Families are usually extended (this include grandparents, aunt and uncles and even neighbours as well as "immediate" family) and the male is often head of the

family. Marriages are usually only allowed within castes and divorce is viewed unfavourably. Many Hindus have arranged marriages.

Women may be uncomfortable if alone with a male visitor and they may not wish to shake the hand of a man. This should be borne in mind in arranging home visits. Women usually accompany men in social functions.

Housing Needs

Hindus prefer to wash under running water, for example, preferring a shower to a bath; bidets are also preferred.

A room may be set aside for prayer, and this could be a consideration for Hindu families in making choices about housing.

Consultation and meetings

You should check the dates of key festivals and avoid these when arranging meetings.

Visiting a Home

It may be appropriate to remove your shoes when visiting a Hindu home. However, you should use your judgement about matters such as health and safety. One option would be to carry plastic overshoes with you.

If you are offered food or drink during a visit, it is seen as polite to accept a little. However, you should use your judgement and if you do not wish to do so, refuse politely.



Some Hindu homes may have a shrine in them. This should be respected.

Hindus prefer to pray after bathing in the morning and possibly around midday. Any visits should take regard of this and of any festivals. Always ask for suitable times for visits and stick to them.

Community Groups and Organisations

Hindu Samaj – Hindu Community and Cultural Centre

Tel 0114 258 6663

Judaism

Judaism is unusual in that it has some of the characteristics of a race as well as a religion. In order to be Jewish, a person must have a Jewish mother, and not be practising any other religion. It is possible for a non-practising Jew to experience racism because of their Jewish origins. It is possible for a non-Jew to convert to Judaism.

Core Beliefs

Jews believe that God has made an eternal covenant with them that requires them to live according to the Torah (law). The aim of life is to live according to God's Law as revealed by Moses. Orthodox Jews practise their religion on a daily basis.

Jews have lived in Britain since the 11th century. Throughout their history the Jewish community has often experienced persecution, which in Britain resulted in them being expelled from the country in 1290.

The Jewish community began to return to Britain in the 17th century. Numbers increased as Jews fled from persecution in Russia in the 1880s, and then from the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s. During the Nazi Holocaust, six million Jews died or were killed.



According to the 2001 Census there are 259,000 Jewish people in the United Kingdom, and 760 in Sheffield.

Key Festivals

The Jewish calendar differs from the Western Gregorian calendar, which means that dates of festivals vary from year to year. As a guide, the dates for these festivals in 2003 are given here.

- Rosh Hashanah – New Year – a time for spiritual reflection and penitence. An autumn festival, (Sept 27 in 2003).
- Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) – a day of fasting and penitence. An autumn festival, (Oct 6 in 2003).
- Sukkot (Tabernacles) – commemorating the wanderings of the children of Israel, (Oct 11 in 2003).

- Simchas Torah – rejoicing in the Law, (Oct 19 in 2003).
- Chanukah (Hanukkah) – Festival of Light. An eight day festival, which is usually in late December, (begins Dec 20 in 2003).
- Purim – commemorating the story of Esther, (March 18 in 2003).
- Pesach (Passover) – commemorating the exodus from Egypt. A spring festival, (April 17 in 2003).
- Shavuot (Feast of Weeks) – commemorating the receiving of the Law, (June 6 in 2003).
- Tishah B'Av – commemorating the historical destruction of the Temple, (Aug 7 in 2003).

The main Jewish holy day is the Sabbath which extends from dusk on a Friday to nightfall on a Saturday. On this day orthodox Jews will not use the telephone, write, use electric lights or equipment or travel by car or public transport unless these acts are necessary to save life. These prohibitions also apply to Festival days.

Families at home during Tabernacles (which closely follows the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur) may build a temporary hut roofed with branches and decorated with fruit, in which meals and family activities take place.

Orthodox Jews pray three times a day (morning, afternoon, evening) and prayers should not be disturbed unless it is medically essential.

Check with the customer for appropriate times to visit and stick to the arrangement, to avoid disturbing festival or prayer times. (See below “Consultation and Meetings”).

Places of Worship

The Jewish place of worship is called a synagogue. The religious leader is called the Rabbi. The Rabbi may be a useful contact in consultation, and in conveying information to the Jewish community.

Languages Used

English is the main language used in the United Kingdom. Yiddish (a spoken language) may be used in the home.

Biblical Hebrew is only used for worship in the United Kingdom. Israelis speak modern Hebrew.

Naming

Jewish names usually consist of one or more given names followed by a family name.

Diet

Orthodox Jews observe the laws of Kashrut. This means that they may not eat meat and dairy foods together, nor do they eat products that contain non-kosher ingredients (see below). Milk and meat foods are stored and cooked separately and this necessitates two sets of cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery used exclusively for the preparation and eating of kosher food.

Only kosher meat (killed and prepared according to the laws of Kashrut) is eaten. Pork and pork products are strictly forbidden. The consumption of shellfish and fish without scales or fins is also forbidden.

These requirements should be borne in mind when arranging an event where a meal is to be provided. If kosher food is not available, vegetarian food may be acceptable.

Fasting is required on certain days. During the eight days of Passover, Jews refrain from eating bread and wheat products.

Death

Jewish burials usually take place immediately, either on the same day or the next. The body will not be moved or buried on the Sabbath. The period of mourning lasts for seven days. During this time the family will not be expected to return to work and relatives and friends will visit. This may have an impact on the ending of a tenancy on death, for example.

Social Customs

Many Jewish people feel a close bond with Jews from around the world, seeing themselves as part of a global Jewish community. The events of Holocaust have had a profound effect on Jewish identity.

Housing needs

After the age of 11 years girls and boys need to sleep in separate bedrooms to preserve modesty. This will be a consideration for Jewish families in making housing choices.

National research has identified a need for culturally appropriate housing for older Jewish people, for example, to meet dietary and other requirements.

Visiting a Home

No specific requirements on visiting the home have been identified.

Consultation and Meetings

Festival times should be avoided in organising meetings. As the Sabbath begins at dusk on the Friday, meetings on Friday afternoons should be avoided.

Community Groups and Organisations

Synagogue Ladies Guild
Sheffield Jewish Welfare Association
Tel: 0114 2367958

Sheffield and District Reform Jewish Congregation
Tel: 07719 209259

Sheffield Jewish Congregation and Centre
Tel: 0114 2756700

Christianity - The Christian Churches

There are many different traditions within Christianity, and the way that people practise their faith can vary widely. Some of these traditions, where they may highlight specific requirements in relation to the housing service, are explained in more detail under subheadings within this section.

Core Beliefs

Christians believe in living according to God's will, as taught by Jesus. Christians believe that the Holy Spirit helps them in doing this.

Christians try to live according to the example set by Jesus. This includes loving others, and also keeping the Ten Commandments found in the Old Testament.

The Christian holy book is the Bible. This is made up of the Old Testament (the Hebrew scriptures) and the New Testament (which gives accounts of Jesus' life, and events in the early history of the Christian Church).



Christians may pray every day, and may attend a service on Sunday.

For some Christian traditions, Holy Communion (also called Holy Mass or Eucharist) is very important, particularly at key festivals or when a person is ill. This involves the sharing of bread and wine which has been blessed.

Key Festivals

The exact date of some Christian festivals varies from year to year, so check if you are not sure. It is preferable to avoid visiting a Christian home during a festival; check for an appropriate time to visit and stick to it.

- Christmas - a joyful festival when the birth of Jesus is celebrated, (24th and 25th December).
- Lent - remembrance of when Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness; a time which some Christians may use for reflection, prayer and fasting, February or March.

- Good Friday- Follows Lent, and remembers the death of Jesus on a cross. This is often a solemn time of prayer, March or April.
- Easter - The Sunday immediately following Good Friday, when the resurrection (coming back to life) of Jesus is remembered. This is a joyful time, when cards and Easter Eggs made of chocolate may be exchanged, March or April.
- Ascension - Remembers the time when Jesus ascended to heaven. Takes place on a Thursday 40 days after Easter.
- Pentecost / Whitsun – remembers when the Holy Spirit (often shown as a dove) came to Jesus' followers (disciples).

Places of Worship

These can vary widely with different Christian traditions, and may be called a church or chapel. Some Christian groups may meet to worship in someone's home.

Languages used

Christianity is practised in many countries across the world and so there are a wide range of languages which may be spoken by Christians.

Naming

Christians usually have one or more given names, referred to as "Christian names", followed by a family name, often that of their father. On marriage, a woman may often take the name of her husband.

Diet

Some Christian groups forbid tea and coffee, and alcohol and tobacco. In general there are no restrictions on diet in Christianity. Some Christians may choose to fast during Lent, or may give up certain foods during this time. Some Christians may wish to say a short prayer ("Grace") before eating a meal.

Death

Christians are usually either buried or cremated. People attending the funeral often wear black. The funeral service may take place at the place of worship attended by the person who has died.

Social Customs

Some Christians may have strong feelings about the significance of marriage, and may, for example, not feel able to live together as a couple before marriage. This may be a consideration in allocating properties.

Housing Needs

No specific housing needs have been identified.

Consultation and Meetings

Key festivals should be avoided when arranging meetings.

Visiting a Home

Some Christian homes may have religious symbols such as crosses or religious pictures, on display. Some Christians may wish to say a short prayer (“Grace”) before eating a meal. It is preferable to avoid visiting on a festival day; check for an appropriate time and stick to it.

Community Groups and Organisations

Christian Resource and Information Service in Sheffield

Tel: 0114 249 3956 (and answerphone)

Catholicism

The Catholic Church traces its origins to the people (the disciples or apostles) appointed by Jesus as the first leaders of the church. The line of succession from them (in particular the Apostle Peter) is known as the Apostolic Succession. It is maintained up to the present Pope who is based in Rome.

There are over a billion Catholics in the world with 5 million in the United Kingdom. Most Catholics in the United Kingdom are referred to as Roman Catholics but the Catholic Church in this country includes Ukraine Catholics, Chaldean Catholics and other eastern and Greek rites that are in union with the Pope.

Below are highlighted issues on which Catholics have specific beliefs or customs.

Core Beliefs

As well as the Ten Commandments of God the Catholic Church also has six commandments of the Church.

1. To hear Mass on Sundays and other special days called “holy days of obligation”,
2. To fast on specified days,
3. To observe the sacrament of reconciliation when conscious of having sinned gravely or at least once a year (see below),
4. To receive the Eucharist at least once a year. If only received once a year this should be at Easter time,
5. To support pastors,
6. To observe the Church’s laws on marriage.

Reconciliation

The sacrament of reconciliation includes declaring sins to a priest who can give absolution (forgiveness).

Social Customs

The Catholic Church says that it does not have the power to dissolve a valid marriage. Only the death of one of the partners can dissolve it. This means that some Catholics may be living separately from the person they married but not want a divorce. This may be relevant when dealing with a housing application.

Sacrament of the Sick

The Catholic Church has a special sacrament for people who are ill including those who are dying. Some Catholics may refer to this sacrament as “the last rites” for terminally ill patients. This may be relevant when working with older people, for example in sheltered accommodation.

Death

Catholics may be buried or cremated.

Community Groups and Organisations

Roman Catholic Church (diocese of Hallam)

Tel: 0114 2566401

Jehovah's Witnesses

The Jehovah's Witness movement was founded in 1870 in America by Charles Taze Russell. The movement is characterised by members going door to door to share their beliefs. A key tool in this is the “Watchtower” magazine.

Below are highlighted issues on which Jehovah's Witnesses have specific beliefs or customs.

Core Beliefs

Jehovah's Witnesses take all their beliefs from the Bible, which they believe is historically accurate and inspired by God. Jehovah's Witnesses call the Bible New Testament the “Christian Greek scriptures” and the Old Testament the “Hebrew scriptures”. They refer to God as “Jehovah”.

Key Festivals

Unlike other branches of Christianity, Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate festivals such as Christmas and Easter. This is because they believe that these festivals have their roots in Pagan festivals and rituals.

Jehovah's Witnesses tend to meet on Sundays to worship together, but there is no special significance to this day. They may also meet on other days. Therefore it is best to check an appropriate time to visit and stick to it.

Places of Worship

This is often called "Kingdom Hall".

Diet

Jehovah's witnesses may avoid "taking on blood", *i.e.* may avoid unbled meat. This is similar to the Muslim requirement to eat "halal" meat. This should be borne in mind in organising events where food is to be provided.

Social Customs

Jehovah's Witnesses may not celebrate birthdays. This is because it is thought that the celebration of birthdays is connected to superstition and horoscopes.

Community Groups and Organisations

Jehovah's Witness City Minister
0114 2873762



Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, of which Mormons are members, was founded in America in the 19th century. It has 180,000 members in the United Kingdom.

Below are highlighted issues on which Mormons have specific beliefs or customs.

Core Beliefs

Mormons believe that their church represents a return to the way that Jesus originally intended the Christian Church to be.

Key Festivals

Mormons only celebrate two Christian festivals; Christmas and Easter. They also celebrate "Pioneer Day", on 24th July. This celebrates the arrival of the first Mormons to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847.

Like most other branches of Christianity, Mormons regard Sunday as a day of rest and also the main day of worship.

Monday may be set aside for spending at home with the family in religious study. Families may pray together twice a day. This is important when arranging visits and meetings. Ask for a convenient time and stick to it.

Diet

Mormons may avoid tea, coffee, alcohol and tobacco, and also soft drinks which contain caffeine. It is important to provide a choice of drinks when arranging refreshments for meetings, including water.

Mormons may fast on the first Sunday of each month, by missing two meals. The money which is saved is given to the Church.

Social Customs

Mormons may "tith" their income, which means giving a proportion (sometimes one tenth) to the Church. This may be relevant when discussing budgeting with customers in rent arrears.

Mormons may avoid swearing and using bad language.

Men and women are regarded as equal in Mormonism. However, women are encouraged to give priority to their homes, husbands, family and to childbearing, alongside any career they choose. Men are expected to take an equal role in raising the children.

Community Groups and Organisations

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Tel: 0114 2397550

Buddhism

Core Beliefs

The religion is based on the teachings of Buddha and aims to achieve enlightenment. There are different traditions within Buddhism. Many members of the Chinese, Vietnamese and Sri Lankan communities are Buddhists.

Buddhists may meditate daily, and use the home shrine or visit a Buddhist centre as a focus for devotion.

Key Festivals

Buddhist festivals vary with different traditions. However commonly shared festivals are:

- Wesak, remembering the birth of Buddha, when cards are exchanged (May 16 in 2003).
- Full Moon Days, when the teachings of Buddha are remembered and Buddhists may spend some time meditating.



It is best to arrange appropriate times to visit and stick to them,

Places of Worship

The Buddhist place of worship is called the “Vihara”.



Languages used

There are Buddhists all over the world and so a variety of languages may be spoken.

Naming

Buddhists tend to have two or more names. The first name may be the family name, followed by the given names. Check if you are not sure how to record the name for record keeping purposes.

Diet

Many Buddhists are vegetarian. Strict Buddhists may also avoid eggs and other animal products such as cheese made with rennet. Some Buddhists may prefer to avoid onions and garlic. It is best to ask about special dietary requirements when arranging refreshments for meetings and events.

Buddhists may fast as part of their religious practices, for example on some festival days and on Full Moon and New Moon days.

Social Customs

Many Buddhists do not like shaking hands.

Housing Needs

Showers are preferred to baths.

Consultation and Meetings

As festivals vary it is a good idea to check with local people that dates of meetings do not clash.

Visiting a Home

In some Buddhists homes you may find a shrine with a statue of Buddha. You must not touch this.

Community Groups and Organisations

Gyaltsabje Buddhist Centre

Tel: 0114 250 9663

Sikhism

Core Beliefs

Sikhs aim to enable the soul to re-unite with God, by remembering God in daily life, living truthfully and serving others. The religion was founded by Guru Namak Dev Ji, and the holy book, the “Guru Granth Sahib”, is accorded great honour. Sikhs reject the caste system of Hinduism believing that people should be treated equally. (See section on Hinduism for more information about the caste system).

Religious Sikhs follow the 5 Ks as an outward sign of their religious devotion. These are:

1. Kesh - long hair which is never cut.
2. Kanga - a comb.
3. Kacha - short pants.
4. Kara - metal bracelet.
5. Kirpan - a ceremonial dagger.

These 5 items are sacred and should not be disturbed.

Key Festivals

These are mainly based on the lunar calendar and so change each year. You will need to check for precise dates to avoid clashes with meetings or events.

- Guru Nanak’s Birthday - three day celebration of the birth of the founder of Sikhism, (October / November).
- The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur - a commemoration of the Guru executed for his belief in religious freedom, (December / January).
- Guru Gobind Singh’s Birthday - to celebrate the birth of an important Guru, (January/ February).



- The Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev - commemoration of the Guru who completed the Golden Temple at Amritsar, (May / June).
- Divali - commemoration of a spiritual victory, (October).

Collective worship usually takes place on a Sunday.

Places of Worship

The Sikh place of worship is called the Gurdwara. It is also sometimes called a Sikh temple.

Languages Used

Sikh families in the UK may speak several languages:

Punjabi (main spoken language),

Gurmukhi (the written form of Punjabi),

English.

Naming

Sikhs usually have three names. There will be a personal name, and a title (Singh, meaning "lion" for a man, and Kaur, meaning "princess" for a woman), followed by a family name.

Sometimes Sikhs are reluctant to reveal their family name as a consequence of their rejection of the Caste system, therefore, you should ask for it tactfully if it is needed for record keeping.

A baby may not be named for several weeks after birth.

Diet

Beef is forbidden but dairy products are important. Many Sikhs are vegetarians.

Some Sikhs eat meat slaughtered to a special rite (Chakard or Chattka) but they will not eat Halaal meat. It may be advisable to provide vegetarian food, but avoiding eggs and cheese made with rennet. This should be taken into account in organising events where food will be provided.

Death

A dying Sikh may require a relative or reader from the local temple or another practising Sikh to recite hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib for them. If there are no family members to tend the person after death then the local Sikh temple must be consulted before any further action is taken. Sikhs are always cremated and their ashes scattered in running water, such as a river or sea or even a lake.

Mourning varies in length; a long and full life, with many offspring, grandchildren and great grandchildren may be a cause for celebration. A premature death may

be likely to call for a period of full mourning. Funeral rites, with a procession to the crematorium, are of great social significance.

After the funeral, the adults of the family may gather together to read the whole of the Guru Granth Sahib, which may take up to two weeks.

This may be important when a tenancy ends with a death.

Social Customs

Sikh women may feel more comfortable if spoken to in the presence of a family member, as modesty is important.

Sikh men may be gravely embarrassed if asked to remove their Kachia or turban and baptised Sikhs may refuse to accept work which requires them to remove their turban or cut off their hair. Similarly, girls may not be permitted to wear skirts, and if skirts are part of a uniform they should be allowed to wear Shalwar (loose fitting trousers) underneath.

Housing needs

Showers are often preferred to baths.

Consultation and Meetings

Avoid festival days when organising meetings.

Visiting the home

Some homes may have a shrine to the Guru Granth Sahib and shoes should be removed when entering this room and heads should be covered. Bear in mind health and safety considerations in the removal of shoes; one option is to carry plastic overshoes.

Prayer and some festival times vary so if any appointments are being made they should avoid these times.

If refreshment is offered it is seen as polite to accept a little, however you should use your judgement and bear in mind health and safety considerations. If you do not wish to accept, refuse politely.

Community Groups and Organisations

Sikh temple

Tel: 0114 2420108

Rastafarianism

Core Principles

The term 'principles' is used rather than 'beliefs'. Rastafarianism emerged from Jamaica. It is mainly based on the teachings of Marcus Garvey, which state that Black people had been oppressed by generations of slavery and must return to Africa. Ethiopia is seen as "the Promised Land" and it is believed that Emperor Haile Sellasie was the incarnation of God (Jah).

One of the Rastafarian principles is the "Nazarite Vow of Separation" which involves not cutting hair, not eating certain foods and shunning the dead, emphasising life not death. However, in practice some Rastafarians may cut their hair.

Key Festivals

- Ethiopian New Year's Day – 11th September,
- Crowning of Emperor Haile Selassie I – November 2nd,
- Ethiopian Christmas – 7th January,
- Ethiopian Constitution Day – commemorating the first Ethiopian constitution in 1931 – July 16th,
- Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie I – A holy day commemorated with drumming, hymns and prayers – July 23rd.
- Marcus Garvey's birthday – commemorates the birthday of the Jamaican prophet who foretold the crowning of a Black King in Africa – August 17th.

Festival days should be avoided when organising consultation meetings and events.

Places of Worship

Some Rastafarians may be members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Languages used

English,

Creole,

Jamaican Patois – a mixture of English, African and other European languages.

Naming

English names are often used.

Diet

Rastafarians are likely to be vegetarians, and will usually avoid pork, alcohol, milk and coffee. Herbal preparations, such as tea may be drunk. Rastafarians may prefer to eat 'I-tal' food prepared without chemicals. Some will not eat grapes, currants or raisins. This should be taken into account in planning events where food will be provided.

Death

Rastafarians emphasise life over death; this means that they may not speak about death, and may not attend funerals.

Social Customs

There is no formal marriage in Rastafarianism. Couples who live together are viewed as married.

One of the most well known customs in Rastafarianism is the use of marijuana. Many Rastafarians use a form of the herb called "ganga". Its use is a form of protest against oppression, which has declared its use illegal. Its use is also spiritual, as it is believed to bring about "oneness" with God. However, the use of ganga by Rastafarians is still illegal.



Housing Needs

There is no information on the specific housing needs of this group at this time.

Consultation and meetings

No specific needs have been identified as this time.

Visiting the home

No specific needs have been identified as this time.

Community Groups and Organisations

No information is available on local groups.

Bahá'í

Bahá'í originated in the Shi'ite sect of Islam in the 19th century, in Iran. Its history is complex and the subject of some dispute. There are now 5 million Bahá'ís worldwide.

Core beliefs

Bahá'ís believe that God is unknowable. The major figures in Bahá'í are “manifestations” of God; they reflect the characteristics of God and act as teachers. There have been nine manifestations in the last 500,000 years, including Moses, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed.

Bahá'ís believe that the human soul is essentially good, and that separation from God is caused by ignorance.

There are hundreds of volumes which seek to describe the Bahá'í faith.



Key Festivals

- Naw-ruz – New Year – which coincides with Equinox (March 21st),
- Feast of Ridvan – celebrates Baha'u'llah's declaration of his revelation to his followers. There are three holy days within this festival, the first day, the ninth day and the twelfth day (April/ May),
- Declaration of the Bab – declaration by the Bab that he is the messenger from God. (May),
- Ascension of Baha'u'llah (his death) – (end May),
- Martyrdom of the Bab – who was executed in 1850. Prayers. (July 9th),
- Birth of the Bab - Commemorates the Bab's birth in Iran in 1819. (October 20th),
- Birth of Baha'u'llah – A day of prayer and a communal meal. (November 12th).

Bahá'ís try not to work on holy days, and children do not go to school if possible.

The dates of festivals should be avoided when planning events or meetings.

Bahá'ís may pray every day, and also meditate. They may wash before prayer. Prayers must be said facing the direction of the shrine of Baha'u'llah.

Places of Worship

Bahá'ís have no clergy or rituals, although they do meet together for communal prayers.

Languages Used

Bahá'ís is a worldwide religion and so followers may speak a variety of languages.

Naming

There is no specific information available.

Diet

Bahá'ís may avoid alcohol.

Bahá'ís may fast for nineteen days before the Bahá'í New Year (between 2nd and 21st March).

Death

There are no specific rituals associated with death apart from a prayer for the dead recited at funerals.

Social Customs

The Bahá'í religion teaches equality for men and women. The family is seen as very important. Decision making within the family is shared by a process of consensus, called "consultation".

Housing needs

There is no information available on Bahá'í housing needs currently.

Consultation and Meetings

Holy days should be avoided in organising meetings.

Visiting the home

It may be helpful to arrange visits in advance if possible, and stick to the time arranged in order to avoid disturbing prayers or meditations, or festivals.

Community Groups and Organisations

The Bahá'í Faith

Tel: 0114 2363758

Paganism

There are a lot of misconceptions about Paganism. For instance, Pagans are not Satanists, do not practice black magic and do not harm animals or people.

It is estimated that there are between 50,000 and 200,000 Pagans in the United Kingdom.

Core Beliefs

Paganism, or neo-Paganism, is a term which covers a diverse range of beliefs which are often associated with nature and on the traditional religions of indigenous people.

Key Festivals

Most Pagans celebrate eight festivals during the year. The Pagan seasonal cycle is called the Wheel of the Year. These festival dates vary so check before organising events.

- Yule / Winter Solstice – December 20/21st,
- Imbolc – 1st / 2nd February – from the Celt festival where rituals were performed as food stores were running low, to ensure a supply of food until the harvest. Now involves making candles, story telling and planting spring flowers,
- Spring Equinox – March 20 / 21st – celebration of the spring renewal of the earth. Egg hunting and egg painting may take place,
- Beltane – April 30th / May 1st – a fire festival celebrating the coming of summer and fertility. Festivals are held in involving the lighting of fires,
- Summer Solstice – 21st or 24th of June – the longest day of the year. Celebrates the power of the sun,
- Lughnasadh – 2nd – 4th August – a harvest festival,
- Autumn Equinox – 20th / 21st September,
- Samhain – 31st October / 1st November – marks the beginning of the year for most Pagans. Remembrance of people who have died.



Places of Worship

Many Pagan rituals take place outside. There are ancient places which have a special significance, such as Stonehenge.

Languages Used

Paganism is a western religion so Pagans may speak a variety of languages depending upon their country of origin.

Naming

See relevant country of origin section.

Diet

Many Pagans are vegetarian, and will often seek to eat a healthy and natural diet. This may be important in organising events which will include food.

Death

In Paganism death is not something to be feared. Funerals may be conventional depending on the wishes of the family, and there may be a conventional cremation or burial. There may also be a memorial service.

Social Customs

Pagans are likely to try to live in a way which respects the environment. Paganism places emphasis on equality of men and women, and women often play a central role.

Housing Needs

There is no information available on specific housing needs at this time.

Consultation and Meetings

There is no information on specific requirements at this time.

Visiting a Home

Pagan homes may contain altars for use in rituals, and pagan symbols. These should be treated with respect.

Community Groups and Organisations

The Pagan Federation (North-Eastern Region)

Country of Origin

The Irish Community

History

The Irish often go unrecognised and unacknowledged as a minority ethnic group. In 1997, a groundbreaking report by the Commission for Racial Equality found that,

'There was extremely strong resistance to recognition of the distinctiveness of Irish experience in Britain which results in a lack of acknowledgement of Irish needs and rights, but at the same time there is widespread and almost completely unquestioned acceptance of anti-Irish racism in British society.'

Following this report and after many years of lobbying the Irish in Britain were afforded the same rights in law as other minority ethnic groups.

The Irish continue to experience racism and discrimination often associated with stereotypes of the Irish as being lazy, stupid or heavy drinkers. There is also an association of the Irish with violence and terrorism. Many Irish people choose to hide their cultural identity rather than face such prejudice.

Irish migration to Sheffield was first recorded in 1433 and the Irish may be the oldest minority ethnic community in Sheffield. In the 2001 Census about 4,000 respondents from Sheffield ticked the 'Irish' ethnic category. (This may not include all of those born to Irish parents or of mixed parentage.) Irish migration is known as the 'Irish Diaspora' and several waves of migration have taken place to England and across the world.

Many Irish immigrants came to Sheffield in the 1950s and 60s in a response to a demand for labour in the building trade and the coal and steel industries. Workers were also actively recruited to the National Health Service. Though many Irish people have done well in Sheffield and make a significant and valuable contribution to the economy of the city there is hardship too. There is a sense of independence and a reluctance to seek help even when there is significant disadvantage.

Religion

Though the Irish are as diverse in their religious preference as any other group the main faith groups are Roman Catholicism or Protestantism. People from the Republic of Ireland are more likely to have been brought up in the Catholic faith. Broadly speaking, religion is more likely to be a feature of cultural and family life than in the indigenous British population.

Languages

Most Irish people speak English as a first language though there are communities in Southern Ireland that also speak Gaelic. There are moves to increase the use of Gaelic that parallel the way in which the Welsh have reclaimed the Welsh language and there are Gaelic speakers and Gaelic language classes in Sheffield.

Naming

Many Irish names are distinctive and recognisable e.g. Kelly, though non-Irish people may well inherit Irish names and Irish people will also have names that are not distinctive. Most distinctive is the prefix 'O', e.g. 'O'Neill', and the tradition of gender specific prefixes that derive from the Gaelic.

Diet

There are no restrictions on diet within Irish culture and tastes vary greatly. However, some foods are considered traditional and traditional meals tend to focus on meat, and are high in fat and carbohydrate. Traditional food is plainly cooked and strong tastes are liked, though spices are rarely used. Sweet foods such as cakes and biscuits and puddings are seen as an important part of the meal. There are strong traditions of hospitality and sharing. This may be important in planning catering for events.

Social Customs

Irish people are more likely to have close links with family members both here and in Ireland. There is a greater reliance on family networks for support and a closer involvement with family members socially. Family ties and loyalties are very important.

The Irish follow the Christian traditions with regard to death though there is a strong tradition of a 'wake' or party following the death to celebrate the life of the deceased. The Irish are also more likely to remember the anniversary of the death of family members and may choose to be together at such times to mark the occasion.

There is a strong tradition of hospitality and welcome within the Irish community combined with an openness to visitors and strangers that is characterised as the 'craic' though this has been misrepresented as merely being to do with the consumption of alcohol. There are also strong cultural themes about service to others and charitable work.

St Patrick is the Patron Saint of Ireland and the Irish and others all over the world celebrate St Patrick's Day on March 17th.

Housing Needs

Research has suggested that the Irish people in Sheffield are more likely to be unemployed, and to be affected by ill health than the general population. There is evidence that there are higher levels of mental ill health and suicide in the Irish community than in the UK population as a whole.

Evidence from the 2001 Census has yet to be analysed. The 1991 Census showed that the Irish in Sheffield experienced significant disadvantage in housing status compared with the white population. For example, the Irish are more likely to live in private rented accommodation with shared facilities and there is evidence that the elderly Irish, in particular, are inappropriately accommodated. The Irish are also over represented amongst the homeless population. Irish agencies in the city are working to progress an Irish Cultural Centre that would include housing units for the community.

The Irish in Britain experience significant health disadvantages. There are significantly increased mortality rates, especially amongst Irish men where death rates are up to 35% higher than the white population. The Irish are the only ethnic group whose health worsens on arrival in Britain and this is reflected in the second and third generations. Health problems include heart disease and cancers. The Irish are significantly over-represented in diagnosis and admission for mental health problems under the Mental Health Act and suicide rates are rising. Lifestyle behaviours such as drinking and smoking are not enough to account for these differences.

Irish Travellers form a large part of the traveller population in the United Kingdom and have a history going back many centuries. (see Section on Travellers).

Visiting a Home

There is a tradition of hospitality within the Irish community (see above).

Community Groups and Organisations

Cara – Yorkshire

Tel: 0114 221 0481

The Pakistani Community

History

The Pakistani community is the second largest in Sheffield after the Irish. Immigration to the United Kingdom began in earnest in the 1950s when people were encouraged by the British Government to come to meet labour shortages in the United Kingdom. The first immigrants were mainly male as they intended to earn some money and then return to Pakistan. However many chose to settle permanently and brought their wives and families to live here, establishing a settled community.

A large proportion of Pakistanis tend to be self-employed, but currently the unemployment rate runs at about 40%. Household incomes tend to be below the national average.

Religion

Most Pakistanis are Sunni Muslims. (See Islam section).

Languages Used

Urdu and English,
Mirpur,
Punjabi (several dialects),
Pashto,
Sindhi,
Balochi.



Many Pakistanis will speak Urdu or Punjabi. Urdu is the main written language. A significant proportion of Pakistanis, particularly women, have difficulties with English, and some Pakistanis may be unable to read Urdu.

Naming

The naming system is complex and has Muslim origins (see Islam section). For record keeping purposes ask which name the person would prefer to use, and remember that not all members of the family may share a “family name”.

Diet

See Islam section for information. This should be borne in mind when arranging catering for events.

Social Customs

Family ties are traditionally very important. The male is the head of the extended family (this may include grandparents, aunt and uncles and even neighbours as well as "immediate" family) and the elderly are accorded great respect.

Housing Needs

Research has shown high levels of unemployment, and low incomes in the Pakistani community. Significant numbers of households are overcrowded. Pakistani people often prefer to own their own home. This can cause difficulties with maintenance for people on low incomes.

Although traditionally households were large with extended families living together, some younger people now prefer to live in smaller units.

Some women experience depression due to overcrowding, and may also feel isolated.

Visiting a Home

Some women may prefer to be accompanied by a male relative during an interview or a visit from a male officer, depending on their religion. It may be appropriate to book visits in advance so that this can be arranged.

Community Groups and Organisations

ROSHNI (Asian Women's Resource Centre)

Tel: 0114 250 8898

Fax 0114 258 4008

Pakistan Muslim Centre

Tel: 0114 243 6091

Fax 0114 261 9330

Asian Welfare Association

Tel: 0114 250 0097 (and answerphone)

Fax 0114 255 2412

The Indian Community

History

There have been Indians in Britain since the 17th century. The peak of immigration occurred in the 1960s. The Indian community in Sheffield originates from The Punjab, West Bengal and Gujurat areas of India. Some emigrated from Uganda when Idi Amin expelled them from the country in the early 1970s, and some from Kenya. A few Indians in Sheffield are Tamils.

Religion

Most Indians in Sheffield are Sikhs or Hindus. Tamil Indians may be Christians, Hindus or Muslims. (see relevant religion sections).



Languages Used

English,
Hindi,
Gujerati,
Punjabi,
Urdu (occasionally)
Tamil.

Many Indians communicate well in English although this may be less so for women and older people.

Naming

Depending on the religion of the person, either the Hindu system or Sikh system may be used. (see relevant sections)

Diet

Many British Indians are vegetarian. Of those who eat meat, Hindus and Sikhs will often avoid beef. This may be important in arranging catering for events.

Social Customs

The Indian community has integrated very successfully into the city and currently has a low level of unemployment. The community is now dispersed throughout the

city. The family is often highly valued, and families may be extended, although younger generations prefer to live in separate houses from their older relatives.

Indian people may traditionally greet by saying “Namaste” with hands folded in front of the body.

Housing needs

There is no specific information about the needs of the Indian community at this time; this will be added as it becomes available.

Visiting a Home

See relevant religion section.

Community Groups and Organisations

See relevant religion section for details.

The Iranian Community

History

The Islamic Republic of Iran has long been known as Persia. In 1935 the name changed to Iran. Iran means “the land of Aryans”. It was ruled by a monarchy up until 1977 and changed to the Islamic Republic in 1978.

The Islamic Republic of Iran lies in the Middle East. Iran is the fourth largest country in Asia, and has a population of over 60 million.

Iranians came to the United Kingdom before the revolution in the late 1970s, for business and education. Since the revolution Iranians have come to the United Kingdom as refugees and asylum seekers, and have come to Sheffield through the dispersal programme.

Religion

Iran is a Muslim country. The majority of Persians and Azerbaijanis are Shi’ite Muslims. Other ethnic groups are mainly Sunni Muslims. There are small minorities who are Christians, Bah’ai, Jews and Zoroastrians (see relevant religion section).



Languages

Farsi - spoken by 50% of the population,

Turkish – spoken by Azerbaijanis – 27% of population,

Arabic,

Blochis,

Kurdish,

Torkomans.

Naming

Iranian women keep their own family name after marriage, in documents. However as a sign of respect to their husband, socially and verbally they are called and known by their husband’s family name. If you are unsure, check which name should be used for record-keeping purposes.

Diet

Rice forms a staple part of the Iranian diet, either cooked plain or with fresh herbs. Pork is excluded from the diet. Fresh fruit is popular as are fresh greens and herbs. This is important in arranging catering for events and meetings.

Social Customs

Traditionally, the hierarchy in the Iranian family is ranked in the following order: father, mother, sons, and daughters. However this has changed over the years and may now be based on the level of education.

It is common for Iranian people, particularly traditional women, to avoid eye contact. Similarly, shaking hands is not common.

Elaborate greetings and enquiries about health are considered good manners, as is drinking tea during an interview or visit.

It is polite for an Iranian person to refuse an offer of food or drink at least once before accepting it.

Iranian New Year begins on 20th – 21st March, during which time gifts are exchanged.

Housing Needs

There is a wide variation amongst Iranians with regards to the style of living, from traditional to westernised. However, the majority have similar needs to the Muslim community. They may prefer showers to baths, as well as a bidet or similar washing facility in the toilet. It is useful for wet areas such as shower, toilet and kitchen to be tiled. Hard floor coverings are preferred.

Iranians may prefer to keep their home very warm in the winter, and may have little appreciation of the costs of energy in this country. They may also be liberal with the use of water, as they prefer to wash everything under running water. This can result in high household bills.

Visiting a Home

Iranians may prefer home visits to be arranged by appointment. Also see above under “social customs”.

Community Groups and Organisations

Burngreave Ethnic Network

Tel. 0114 272 4448

The Chinese Community

History

The first Chinese immigrants to Britain came in the late 19th and early 20th century, and were merchant seamen who settled in ports such as Liverpool and London. A small number of Chinese men came to Britain following the First World War, after they had been recruited by Britain to work as labourers on the Western Front.

With the Second World War large numbers of Chinese people again came to Britain as seamen. Many people were unable to return home following Japanese conquests in China, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Economic changes in Hong Kong led to further immigration in the early 1960s. The last significant immigration was the arrival in the 1970s of Vietnamese refugees, many of whom were Cantonese speaking ethnic Chinese people.

Many Chinese people in Britain started out working in laundry and later moved into catering amongst other professions. There are no major unemployment problems.



It is believed that the Chinese community has been in Sheffield from the early part of the 20th century. Chinese people tend not to live exclusively with their own community, but there are concentrations in Broomhall and Sharrow.

Historically there has been a culture of self-reliance within the Chinese community. This means that their needs have often been overlooked by service providers, who have tended to concentrate resources on larger minority groups who have campaigned more vocally.

Research has highlighted problems of overcrowding in the Chinese community. Social changes have meant that the traditional arrangement of extended families (this may include grandparents, aunt and uncles and even neighbours as well as “immediate” family) living together is becoming less common, and this means that older people can find themselves isolated and in need of support services.

The Chinese community are particularly reluctant to report racial harassment, and therefore there is significant under-reporting of this problem.

Religion and Beliefs

Chinese people may be influenced by a variety of beliefs including Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, and ancestor worship. For this reason specific information on festivals is included here.

- New Year – follows the lunar calendar and so changes each year, but is usually around the end of January / beginning of February,
- Ching-Ming – usually in April,
- The Dragon Boat – usually in June,
- The Mid – Autumn – in September,
- Chung-Yung – usually in October.

Death

Many Chinese do not like to speak about death. It is believed that a person should be surrounded by their family and preferably at home at the time of their death. They also believe that the body should be kept intact after death.

Languages Used

A number of dialects are spoken mainly:

Cantonese,

Mandarin,

Hakka,

Hokkien,

Chou.

Mandarin is the official language, which is the main written language and leaflets and forms translated into Mandarin can be read by any literate Chinese person, regardless of the dialect spoken.

Older Chinese people in particular often do not speak English fluently.

Naming

There are often three names, traditionally the family name comes first, then the personal names. Some Chinese people add an English personal name in which case the family name will usually be last. There are also variations, in that married women retain their maiden name or may relinquish their maiden name and adopt their husband's name.

It is respectful to use a person's title (e.g. Mr) and family name when addressing them. It is best to check how names should be recorded for record-keeping purposes.

Diet

Chinese Buddhists may not eat meat on the 1st and 15th day of each month. Older Chinese people often do not like milk or cheese as these are unfamiliar in a traditional Chinese diet. This may be important in planning events which will include catering.

Social Customs

Traditional Chinese families are large and extended families may include grandparents, aunt and uncles and even neighbours as well as “immediate” family, although this is changing. The man is head of the family and should be accorded respect and addressed using his title.

Respect is important to the Chinese, which means they are often very polite but reserved. Chinese people have respect for authority but will not respect authority which does not show understanding of their traditions. An over-intrusive approach may cause offence.

Traditionally in Chinese society there is little or no display of emotion or physical contact.

Housing Needs

Fung Shui, which literally translated means ‘wind and water’ refers to the feeling or ambience associated with a place. It is important to establish good Fung Shui and Chinese people may go to quite elaborate lengths to achieve this. This may involve the style or character or location of a building for example, and may also influence the housing choices of Chinese people.

The majority of Chinese people are owner occupiers. This can cause difficulties with maintenance for people on low incomes. Research has shown that some Chinese older people experience isolation and have difficulty accessing care and support services. (see above).

Visiting a Home

It is polite to accept refreshments if offered them. However, you should use your judgement and if you do not wish to do so, refuse politely. When visiting socially Chinese people will take little gifts of fruit, sweets or cakes.

Community Groups and Organisations

Chinese Community Centre

Lai Yin Association (Chinese Women)

Tel: 0114 250 0931

Fax 0114 250 0931

The Bangladeshi Community

History

Bangladeshis began to arrive in the United Kingdom sometime after 1945, when the area now known as Bangladesh was still part of India and Pakistan. Immigrants, at the invitation of the British government, came to address the severe labour shortages that the United Kingdom was experiencing. Many Bangladeshis came to Sheffield because there was work available in factories.

The majority of Bangladeshi people come from the district of Sylhet. Many Bangladeshis are self-employed in the catering industry but a significant proportion are unemployed.

Religion

Most Bangladeshis are Sunni Muslim. (See Islam section for more details.)

A minority may be Hindu, Buddhist or Christian.

Languages

Bengali (or Bangla) many with a Sylheti dialect, English.

Naming

The naming system is complex and has Muslim origins. It is best to check how they record names for record-keeping purposes. (See Islam section.)

Diet

See Islam section for details.

Social Customs

Traditionally Bangladeshi families are very family focussed and live in large extended families (this may include grandparents, aunt and uncles and even neighbours as well as “immediate” family) who live and work together. Marriages may be arranged. This may be significant for rehousing applications.



Housing needs

Research has shown that unemployment and low incomes are common amongst Bangladeshi households. Some Bangladeshi households are experiencing overcrowding. A high proportion of households rent their home from the Council or a housing association.

Visiting a Home

See Islam section for details.

Community Groups and Organisations

Bangladeshi Citizen Neighbourhood Welfare Project

Tel: 0114 243 1270

Fax 0114 243 1270

Bangladeshi Community Development Group

Bangladeshi Welfare Association

Bangladeshi Elderly Community

The African Caribbean Community

History

The Caribbean is made up of a large group of islands speaking many languages, for example English, French, Dutch, Spanish and Creole. Due to the British colonial era, Guyana is also closely linked to the Caribbean, although it is actually a South American country.

Although there was a small community in the United Kingdom earlier, the majority of African Caribbean people came to Sheffield during the labour shortages of the 1950s, when they were encouraged to do so by the British Government.

African Caribbean people traditionally live in Pitsmoor, Nether Edge and Sharrow, although many live throughout the city.

Unemployment rates are amongst the highest of any ethnic group, particularly amongst young people. A high percentage of African Caribbean men work in manual jobs.



Religion

The majority of African Caribbeans living in Britain are Christian although some are Rastafarians, Muslim and Hindu. Religion plays a major role in African Caribbean people's lives.

Languages

English – many are bi-lingual,
Creole – a dialect of the Caribbean,
African words are in use too.

Naming

See relevant religion sections for information.

Diet

There are not normally any specialist dietary requirements. Rastafarians will only eat 'I-tal' food. See section on Rastafarianism for more information.

Social Customs

People may live in extended families (this may include grandparents, aunt and uncles and even neighbours as well as "immediate" family) and there is a large proportion of the community who are under 16 years of age. Older members of the community are traditionally shown great respect. Grandparents may play an important role in raising grandchildren. Many African Caribbean people prefer to have their older people living with them or close by so that they can be supported by the family. This is important to bear in mind in planning services for older people.

Funerals can be large occasions with a wake or 'nine night' held nine days after the death which tend to be held in community centres.

Housing needs

Traditionally, African Caribbean people aspire to own their own home. However, with high unemployment and high house prices, many people rely on Council housing, or on grants to help them to maintain their homes.

According to the 1991 census, African Caribbean people in Sheffield are much more likely to have a long term illness than the White community.

Visiting a Home

See relevant religion sections for details.

Community Groups and Organisations

SADACCA

Tel: 0114 273 1975

The Somali Community

History

Somalia is on the horn of Africa. Somali people were traditionally nomadic, and have a long history over thousands of years.

Somalia has had links with Britain for over a hundred years; in the 1880s the northern part of the country became a British colony called “British Somali Land”.

The southern part of the country became an Italian colony in 1908. In 1960 the country gained independence, and the two parts merged as the Republic of Somalia. In 1969 there was a coup resulting in a military dictatorship. Opposition to the dictatorship grew, until civil war broke out in 1988.

Government attacks in the north of the country, where opposition was strongest, caused 600,000 people to flee. The war is still continuing.

Somalis have been coming to the United Kingdom since the beginning of the twentieth century. The first Somalis came to live in Sheffield prior to the 1930s. This increased in the 1950s and 1960s when people were invited to come to Britain to work. In Sheffield,

Somali people came to do unskilled jobs in the steel industry. There was a dramatic increase in the number of Somali people coming to Sheffield following the outbreak of Civil War in 1988. The government’s “family re-union arrangements” brought people to Sheffield who already had relatives here.

Many people fleeing Somalia have seen friends and relatives killed and tortured, and their homes and villages destroyed. The journey involved a long trek to Ethiopia, where many people lived in refugee camps with a lack of sanitation, food and water, and where disease was common.

Many families are divided, with family members left behind in Somalia or Ethiopia.

There are many different clans in Somalia and conflict between them has contributed to the current civil war. These different clans will be represented in the Somali community in this country and so there may be tension between different parts of the community.



The Somali population is concentrated in Darnall, Broomhall and the Burngreave area of Spital Hill. There is a high incidence of unemployment among the Somali community.

Religion

The majority of Somalis are Sunni Muslims. (See Islam section for more details.)

Languages

Somali,

Arabic,

English,

Italian (may be spoken by a minority).

The Somali language was first written down in 1972, and so some Somali people do not read or write Somali (particularly people who were nomads in Somalia).

Naming

Both men and women use a system which consists of a first name, followed by their father's name and then their grandfather's name. The family name reflects the clan origins. Women may not change their name on marriage, and therefore their name will differ from that of their children and husband. You should check how to record names for record keeping.

Diet

See relevant Religion section for details.

Social Customs

Somalis often live in extended families (this may include grandparents, aunt and uncles and even neighbours as well as "immediate" family) with the man as the head of the family. Confrontation between men and women hardly ever occurs as roles are often closely defined.

Qat is a plant-based stimulant, used by Somali and Yemeni males which is normally chewed. It is legal in Britain. Qat is seen as an aid to decision making by Somali men.

Housing Needs

Many Somali households are overcrowded. This has come about as a result of wanting to help people newly arriving in the country. There are significant problems with homelessness amongst single people, which are often not recognised by the Council.

Commonly, people would prefer to live in smaller family units but close together for support. Research has suggested that ideally Somali families would like to live in

homes set around a central courtyard or garden, reproducing the semi-communal living arrangements in Somalia.

A lot of Somali refugees have physical disabilities as a result of the war. Also, a significant number of people have mental health problems as a result of the trauma they have experienced.

Visiting a Home

See section on Islam.

Community Groups and Organisations

ISRAAC

Tel: 0114 273 1021 (and answerphone); 0114 275 9233

Fax 0114 276 9772

Somali Community Association

Tel: 0114 275 7178

Somali Women's Association

Other African Communities

It is recognised that there are people living in Sheffield originating from other parts of Africa. However there is a lack of information on the needs of these communities at the present time. Further sections will be added here as information becomes available.

The Yemeni Community

History

Yemen is an Arabic speaking country in the south west corner of the Arabian Peninsula. Since independence Yemen has experienced a turbulent period including its separation into two states. The country is now reunited, although unrest continues.

Yemeni people began to come to Britain in the 1950s when British engineering firms recruited in Yemen. Many Yemenis have come to Sheffield as refugees following the unrest in the Yemen. In addition, Yemenis came to Sheffield to work in unskilled positions because there was a labour shortage in the steel industry. Yemeni people often lived and worked closely together and so did not learn English. When a rationalisation of the steel industry took place in the 1970s, many Yemeni people lost their jobs. As unskilled workers with little knowledge of English, it was difficult for them to find another job.



Religion

The majority of the Yemeni community are Muslims – Shias from the north and Sunnis from the south of the country. (See Islam section for more information)

Languages

Arabic,
English.

The lack of knowledge of the English language has caused difficulties in accessing services such as housing for some people.

Naming

See relevant religion sections for details. If you are unsure it is best to check how names should be recorded for record-keeping purposes.

Diet

See Islam section for details.

Social Customs

The male is traditionally head of the family and families tend to be large. Contacts with Yemen are strong.

The Yemeni community is traditionally self-sufficient and isolated, with an emphasis on support and mutual respect between generations. Families and elders may prefer to live close together, to provide mutual support, and help with childcare. However, as with other communities, these traditions are changing and this may affect the preferences of younger people and the support needs of older people, for example.

Qat is a plant-based stimulant used by Somali and Yemeni men and is normally chewed. It is legal in the UK. Qat is believed to be an aid to decision making for Yemeni males.

Housing Needs

Many of the Yemeni people coming to Sheffield to work were single men, who lived in boarding houses where meals were provided. Many of these were overcrowded. Some men are still living in these types of properties, although they are now unemployed. They may have health problems or have disabilities due to industrial injury.

There are significant problems with overcrowding in the Yemeni community, caused by "hidden homelessness", with young families continuing to live with their parents.

There are concentrations of the Yemeni community in Firth Park, Page Hall and Pitsmoor. There are also high levels of dissatisfaction with property condition in these areas.

Visiting a Home

See relevant religion section for details.

Community Groups and Organisations

Yemeni Economic and Training Centre

Telephone 0114 261 8620

Fax 0114 255 0266

The Vietnamese Community

History

Many Vietnamese came to the United Kingdom after the end of the Vietnam War. This included Ethnic Vietnamese people and some Ethnic Chinese people.

Religion and Beliefs

Ancestor worship is important to the Vietnamese and this may extend to national heroes and heroines. Many Vietnamese are Buddhists, and some are Roman Catholics. It is common to combine these belief systems, for example, in Buddhist and Catholic families, there may be a family shrine dedicated to ancestors, often featuring photographs of recently deceased relatives. Set forms of prayer are only used in Catholic families.

Languages

English,
Cantonese,
Vietnamese,
French (spoken by some older people).



Naming

Vietnamese names have three parts, a family name, a complementary name and a personal name. Some Vietnamese in the United Kingdom reverse this traditional order, giving the family name last. If in doubt ask for the family name. Married women do not adopt their husband's family name.

A Vietnamese person should always be addressed by their title (e.g. Mr) and their family name to show respect.

Diet

Vietnamese Buddhists may have vegetarian days each month. Lamb is not eaten and there is an emphasis on fish, shellfish, poultry and pork. This may be important when organising events which include catering.

Social Customs

The Vietnamese tend to be very family focussed and extended families (this may include grandparents, aunt and uncles and even neighbours as well as "immediate" family) are important. The three generational household is the most important social unit in Vietnam, upon which the care of the sick, the young, the

old and the poor depend. These family ties are strong and significant to the Vietnamese people and may explain the extreme sense of loss felt by many Vietnamese in the United Kingdom, particularly those who came alone. The head of the household is often male and parents have great influence over their children. Older people are traditionally greatly respected.

When a family member dies, the body is usually kept at home for one to three days. During this time friends and relatives come to pay their respects with offerings of money or food. On the day of the funeral, the coffin is carried in procession to the grave and often a priest or Buddhist monk is invited to come, to pray for the soul of the dead person.

Housing needs

There is no specific information available at this time. This will be added as it comes to light.

Visiting the home

See relevant religion section for information.

Community groups and organisations

Vietnamese Community Association

Tel: 0114 270 1429 (and answerphone)

Fax: 0114 270 6515

Travelling Communities

History

There are approximately 8.5 million Roma / Gypsies in Europe. About 70% of these are in Central or Eastern Europe. There are three main travelling communities – Romanies, Irish travellers, and European Roma. Romas were originally from India. The name “Gypsy” comes from the incorrect perception that Romas originated in Egypt.

When Romas came to Europe they came into contact with other groups from Ireland, Spain and Germany. This means that they have a complex history, identity and culture.

Romas or Romanies are an ethnic group protected by the Race Relations Act. The term Romany is defined as “A person of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin but does not include members of an organised groups of travelling showmen, or of persons engaged in travelling circuses travelling together as such.”



Roma / Gypsies throughout history have experienced persecution and discrimination. Up to half a million died in the Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War.

Gypsies have lived in England in substantial numbers since the beginning of the 16th century. It is estimated that the nomadic (travelling) population of England is about 90,000, of which 70,000 are gypsies.

Religion

European Roma may be Roman Catholic and others Muslim.

Languages

Romani Cant or Gammon,

Irish travellers may speak Shelta,

Roma would not be used to non-Roma people. It is likely that the language of the country of origin would be spoken commonly,

Illiteracy is widespread and this should be remembered if communicating with travellers.

Naming

No specific information is available at this time.

Diet

See relevant section on religion.

Social Customs

Travellers tend to belong to extended families (this may include grandparents, aunt and uncles and even neighbours as well as “immediate” family) and are fiercely independent. This means that their views are poorly represented in the wider community.

Housing Needs

It is estimated that the majority of Gypsy / Traveller people live in houses. However, most people continue to maintain their cultural and ethnic identity, and their traditions.

There are major health problems among the traveller community, with lower life expectancy and higher levels of child mortality (child deaths) than within the general population. This is due to difficulties in accessing health services and information, and also to high levels of poverty.

Visiting a Home

You should wait to be invited into a traveller’s home and it is considered polite to accept refreshments if offered, however you should your judgement about this and refuse politely if you do not wish to accept. There may be an unwillingness to allow people who are non-travellers into their homes. Personal cleanliness and a clean home are important to Romanies.

Traveller women are modest and may prefer to be dealt with by a woman rather than a man.

Community Groups and Organisations

Gypsy and Traveller Support Group

Tel: 0114 244 4377

Fax 0114 244 5575

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

As indicated in the previous sections, some of the established BME communities in Britain originally came to this country as refugees (for example, the Somali community). This section focuses specifically on “newer” communities.



Afghan

Afghanistan was a country created by colonial powers, and therefore Afghans represent a variety of different ethnic groups. The main groups are Pashtuns who speak Pushto, Tajiks who speak Dari, and Uzbeks who speak Uzbek. There are many other smaller ethnic groups and languages. There may be tensions between some members of these groups.

The majority of Afghans are Sunni Muslims, while a few may be Shi'ite Muslim, Sikh or Hindu. It is customary to shake hands on meeting and taking leave. Among men, embracing is a traditional form of greeting.

The family is very highly regarded. Afghans see family matters as strictly private. People are generally reluctant to share personal and family issues with non family members, including health care professionals, though women may discuss their problems with friends, including non-Afghans.

Kurds

These come from a variety of nations, Turkey, Iran and Iraq. The majority are Sunni Muslims with some Christians and Alevi (non-orthodox Shia Muslims).

Languages spoken include Arabic, Kurdish (one of four dialects) and English. There are likely to be problems living in the United Kingdom as English is not the second language of the Kurds and this therefore makes life more difficult.

Despite their variety of nationalities and languages Kurds have a strong sense of their common culture. Kurdish nationalism is often a unifying bond between Kurds, although there are political differences. Kurdish society is clan based, and some Kurds may not speak to interpreters if they are from a different clan.



The family is very important in Kurdish society and the male is the head of household. For most Kurdish men, his family and their lives are private affairs, and so officers should ensure that direct personal questions are not asked. There may be suspicion of perceived intrusion into family affairs.

Kurds value hospitality to strangers, and the men will shake hands with strangers. It will be considered rude to refuse hospitality.

It must be remembered that not all Iranian, Turkish or Iraqi asylum seekers are Kurds.

Former Yugoslavia (Kosovo, Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia)

The majority of people from the former Yugoslavia in Sheffield are Kosovan, which is partly in Serbia and partly in Albania. The majority of Albanians and Kosovans are Muslims but are relaxed about their religious observances. They speak Albanian.

There are smaller numbers of Bosnians who are mainly Muslims and again relaxed about their religion. They speak Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian. Croatians are mainly Roman Catholics and Serbs are mainly Serbian Orthodox Christians. It is important to note that there is likely to be tensions between these communities.

Community Groups and Organisations

Northern Refugee Centre

0114 275 3114 (and answerphone)

Fax 0114 276 6807

Refugee Care Association Sheffield

Tel: 0114 276 0853

Fax 0114 276 0748

Refugee Lifeline

Tel: 0114 270 1073

Fax 0114 279 8582

Exchange House Travellers Service Dept for Education and Employment
www.exchangehouse.ie

Roma / Gypsies: A European Minority (MRG Report)

Guardian Newspapers website (www.guardian.co.uk)