

Breaking Down The Barriers

Produced by the Information Group of the
NW Authorities Ethnicity Project
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Sources

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Introduction

This booklet has been produced by a working group of Social Services staff from Halton, Knowsley, St Helens, Sefton and Warrington, working together to improve services and information to people from ethnic communities.

In each of the 5 boroughs there is a relatively small population of people from ethnic minorities, around 1% of the overall population. Unlike towns and cities with substantial numbers of ethnic minority residents the population in areas of low residence tends to be very 'diverse and dispersed', having little contact with social services. This can mean that on the rare occasions when there is a need for involvement both residents and staff may find that unfamiliarity can affect the quality of service. Although social work staff are well aware of 'non-discriminatory practice' and issues of race and ethnicity in social work they may not have the opportunity to develop this awareness into a confident practice.

This publication gives general advice and information about traditions, cultures and issues related to the major ethnic minorities in Britain. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy but it is acknowledged that **this advice has not got all the answers**. That's because we deal with people. People are individuals no matter what their background, colour or creed.

Part A Understanding Differences

Definitions, Words and Terminology

The use of words, phrases and terminology can feel like a minefield of potential misunderstandings and embarrassments. It *is* a minefield and there is no clear path through it.

It can be difficult to know what language is acceptable and what is not acceptable. There are no unambiguous “right answers” because the language continually shifts but there are two important reference points. One is the language that is used officially, in for example legislation or the Census. The Race Relations Acts have had to set out legal definitions of terms such as ‘race’ or ‘ethnic minority’; the Census has had to find a workable way of defining everyone’s ethnicity since it first included an ethnicity category in 1991 and while everyone won’t agree with these definitions they have wide acceptability.

The second reference point is how people define themselves. If for any reason you are unsure of the appropriate term ask the individual or group how they wish to be identified and addressed.

The information set out below is only intended as general guidance as individual opinions and views on certain wording will differ and the meanings of words may change.

African-Caribbean

“African-Caribbean” is widely used to acknowledge African roots and cultural origin. It has replaced “Afro-Caribbean”. As a generalised description of all the people of the Caribbean it can be misleading and inappropriate because of the ethnic diversity of the area.

African

The term “African” is acceptable and may be used in self-identification. However, many people will refer to themselves in national terms such as Nigerian or Ghanaian.

Asian

Some people in the Indian sub-continent may not consider themselves to be “Asians” and would rather refer to themselves by their national origins (such as Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi) or region of origin (Gujarat, Punjab, Bengal) or their religion (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh).

“Asian” as a term is acceptable where the exact ethnic origin of the person is not known or as a collective reference to people from the Indian sub-continent. It is preferable to refer to people as “South Asian” which gives distinction from South Eastern Asia (e.g. Malaysia and Vietnam) and from China. The term “oriental” as in ‘oriental gentleman’ is imprecise and offensive.

British-born South Asians may often accept the same identities and designations of their parents. However, some may prefer to describe themselves as “British Asians” or “Black”.

Black

Under the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) guidelines, the term “black” refers to African, African-Caribbean, Asian, Chinese and other minority ethnic people. It is used to unite all minority ethnic people on the basis of a common experience of racism. When used this way it is often referred to as a ‘political’ description.

In day-to-day use many of the people who are included within this ‘political’ description would not be comfortable in using the term for themselves. Most Chinese people would not see themselves as black, socially or politically, and many Asian people would dissent from its use. Its use as a political term may be gradually narrowing in Britain as the identity of different ethnic groups has become more distinctive but it is the term most commonly used for people whose background is African.

BME

In Housing and some sectors of government the initials 'BME' are used as an acronym for 'black and minority ethnic'. Although it is common this gives the impression of busy people who are mildly irritated by having to use four words where three letters is adequate and is inherently offensive.

Coloured

The term "coloured" is not acceptable.

British

Essentially, the term "British" is about citizenship. Nearly everybody born in Britain has British citizenship. The term does not directly relate to ethnic or racial origin and it is **not** a synonym for "white", "English" or "Christian".

Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity

Ethnic group is a term used to identify people who share characteristics such as language, history, upbringing, religion, nationality, geographical and ancestral origins and place. This provides the group with a distinct identity as seen by themselves and others.

Ethnic identity refers to the way that a person sees their own ethnicity and this is the information which is used in Ethnic Monitoring. In societies and communities which are ethnically diverse and where families may include people of different ethnic background a person's sense of identity may draw on different ethnicities and not always fit into conventional categories.

Ethnic Minorities

This is generally accepted as the broadest term to encompass all those groups who are different from the majority in terms of ethnic or cultural identity. It is thus based on social rather than physical characteristics such as skin colour. It is broader than "black" or "visible minorities" — including, for example, gypsies and travellers.

It has a legal meaning within the Race Relations Act and this meaning has been tested and extended by case law. For example Irish Travellers were not considered to be an ethnic minority covered by Race Relations legislation until a ruling in 2001.

The term 'minority ethnic' is frequently used to try to soften the negative feel of ethnic *minority* by emphasising the subject's ethnicity rather than their minority status.

Half-caste

An unacceptable term though it may still be in common use among older people in both black and white communities.

Mixed Race

Though it is widely used the term "mixed race" can also carry negative connotations. Alternatives are to refer to the person as being "of mixed parentage" or "dual heritage"; and "multi-racial"; or "dual cultural heritage" when referring to a household.

Race

The belief that people can be classified in any meaningful way on the basis of race is discredited but the word is in common use because it is a way of distinguishing between people who have different geographic origins and look different physically.

'Racism' refers to the set of ideas that different peoples have distinctive characteristics that determine their respective culture, essentially involving the idea that one race is physically, intellectually or morally superior to another. 'Racism' is also used as the term to describe the social process by which the ideas of inferiority/superiority are translated into inequality through discriminatory actions.

Political Correctness (PC).

Political correctness refers to a code of acceptable and unacceptable terms which is used to assess whether the speaker holds socially acceptable views. It originates in the belief that inequality can be tackled 'politically' by challenging the way people behave and act in public,

irrespective of what might be going on privately in their head. This is intended to create a social climate in which people quickly learn appropriate terms and ideas because of the fear of social disapproval.

A criticism of Political Correctness is that it restricts open discussion and that people learn more effectively if they have the opportunity to discuss and understand rather than obey. It hasn't had a good press in recent years and has become a term of caricature.

Visible Minorities

The expression "visible minority" has some acceptability and its scope is wider than "black" but it has never really caught on.

West Indian

The term "West Indian" has been widely used to describe all the peoples of the Caribbean but may be inappropriate unless people actually identify themselves in this way. The population of the Caribbean is made up of people from a wide range of backgrounds who generally prefer to be identified with their island origin and referred to as, for example, Jamaican or Antiguan.

Understanding Differences – Do's & Don'ts

Ethnic and cultural differences within society are seen as a part of a natural variety which enriches our lives. Mutual respect, knowledge and understanding help to ensure that difference does not become division.

Do

- Treat people as you would like to be treated yourself. People should be seen first as people not as stereotypes.
- Be flexible and treat people fairly. It is not simply about “treating everyone the same”. People should be treated fairly based on their individual needs.
- Ask questions if unsure. It is better to make mistakes and learn from them than to base actions and decisions on assumptions.
- Be prepared to check out the meaning of words for family relationships such as “uncles”, “aunts”, “cousins” etc. as they may have different meanings in different cultures.
- Be sensitive to the difficulties that using jargon, slang and certain “humour” may cause for some people.
- Appreciate how cultural differences in body language can contribute to misunderstandings and conflicts.
- Be aware that in some communities it may not be the custom to shake hands, especially with women.
- Be aware that in some communities a woman may feel very uncomfortable or may not wish to be in a room with a man who is not a relative.
- Be aware that an act of comfort, e.g. putting an arm around a victim, may cause embarrassment or offence.
- Be aware of the major religious customs of people so that dates of appointments and meeting places are appropriate.
- Remember that cultures and customs are continually evolving, sometimes very quickly, as we work with the world around us.

Don't

- Assume that your attitudes and beliefs are somehow culture-free. They aren't.
- Ask someone what their "Christian" name is unless you know that they are Christian. Do ask what their "first" and "family" name is or what they would prefer to be called.
- Assume that just because someone responds to questions in English that they fully understand what is being said.
- Assume that looking away rather than maintaining eye contact is necessarily a sign of dishonesty, lack of interest or disrespect. In some communities it may be the opposite.
- Under-estimate the influence of your own cultural background in the way it may affect your perception and behaviour towards others. The way vulnerable children are looked after here is an expression of our culture expressed through legislation and the traditions of social work.
- Enter a room unless invited to do so. Be sensitive to and respect customs such as removing shoes. Many cultural or religious customs have their origins in simple hygiene.
- Make assumptions about a person's religious beliefs based on their nationality or ethnicity.

Part B Children from black or ethnic communities who are in care

Children's Needs

The universal needs of children are not affected by their ethnicity. In areas where ethnic minority residence is small it is rare for children from ethnic minority families to be in care.

Almost all children of ethnic minority background in care in our boroughs are of mixed parentage and while race or ethnicity may be a factor in the circumstances leading to referral it may well have very little direct relationship with any specific *community* experience. The child may therefore not *belong* to any black or ethnic minority *community* through her or his black parentage or family networks and relationships.

For black and ethnic minority children in areas of low residence the ability to deal with different expressions of racism is a key social skill and difficulties in doing it successfully or comfortably can lead to emotional and behavioural problems at school or home, in family and social relationships, in social presentation and self care. An important 'need' is to have resources within family and friends, reinforced by the education system and messages from the community in general, so that the child learns to deal with racism and make sense of it in a way that does not do personal damage.

The essential and difficult role of social work where a child is looked after is to provide the resources to enable the child and carers in these circumstances to construct their identity to their own wishes and affirm it securely as they emerge into adulthood.

This will include acknowledging, and where necessary addressing, their

- **Physical needs:** Health, food, clothing, hair, skin care etc.
- **Emotional needs:** self-awareness, personal feelings, feelings of isolation, spiritual needs, and identity.

- **Cultural needs:** religion, history, identity, language.
- **Social needs:** participation in community groups, involvement with cultural festivals, and recreational activities.

The development of local resources to help social workers is at an early stage.

Racism and Racial Awareness

All children have the right to grow up in an environment free of racism, prejudice, discrimination and harassment.

Children being looked after, and their Carers, should have an understanding of race and racism to help them develop the survival skills to cope with institutional and personal racism in society.

Negative stereotyped images of black people and their culture, can and does have a major impact on a child's self esteem and confidence. Carers need to help black children and young people to cope with racist incidents as they occur. Some carers may find this hard, e.g. they may:

- fail to recognise such incidents
- fail to realise their importance
- have a lack of confidence in handling them, e.g. not know what to do or say
- hold racist views themselves
- not want to "make an issue" over the incident.

Challenging racism

Racism can be found in many forms - from name calling and taunting to physical assault. Left unchallenged, it can affect the thinking and expectations of white children, and leave them with a negative view of black and ethnic minority children.

Not dealing with incidents as they occur can make a black child or young person feel that they are unimportant. It can give the perpetrator the message that it is all right to behave in this way.

Health

The following health issues are relevant for children and young people from black or ethnic groups.

- **Sickle Cell**

Sickle Cell Anaemia is not an infection, it is inherited as a result of a child receiving sickle haemoglobin from both parents. The parents can be healthy, silent carriers of the Sickle Cell trait.

The haemoglobin (protein) in the red blood cell is affected. Under certain conditions the normally round cell changes to a sickle shape. When this happens, the cell becomes sticky and cells can clump together and block the blood vessels, resulting in excruciating pain. This is called a 'crisis'.

It is estimated that there are about 5,000 African-Caribbean Sickle Cell sufferers in the UK. Only rough estimates exist on how many carriers there are of the trait which are 1 in 10 African-Caribbean's and 1 in 4 West Africans being carriers.

Symptoms – rarely start until after the age of six months. Symptoms and their affects can vary from one individual to another. They can include painful swelling of the hands and feet, and anaemia. The classic swollen hands and feet ***symptoms can sometimes be mistaken for child abuse***. This misdiagnosis can cause unnecessary stress, anger and embarrassment to parents or carers. The illness may also cause frequent pain in the joints, abdomen and other parts of the body. Problems with the spleen, jaundice, strokes, leg ulcers, blood in the urine and eye problems can also be experienced. Those affected by Sickle Cell Anaemia are more susceptible to infection. In some cases there is an increased risk of meningitis.

A child's growth may be delayed giving rise to difficulties such as teasing in school. This may lead to embarrassment and feelings of inadequacy.

There is no cure for Sickle Cell Anaemia but certain treatments can prevent or relieve symptoms.

- **Thalassaemia**

In this case, the blood cannot get enough haemoglobin and so the bone marrow cannot produce enough red blood cells. The red blood cells that are produced are always nearly empty.

It is estimated that about 200,000 people carry Thalassaemia in Britain. Being a carrier of Thalassaemia is called 'Thalassaemia Minor' or sometimes 'Beta Thalassaemia Trait'. Carriers can be perfectly healthy themselves.

Beta Thalassaemia Major is a very serious blood disorder. Children with Beta Thalassaemia Major are normal at birth but become anaemic between three and eighteen months old.

Symptoms – include becoming pale, not sleeping well, not wanting to eat, and they may vomit when they do feed. If they are not treated, children would die usually between the ages of one and eight years old.

Treatment for Beta Thalassaemia Major is regular blood transfusions, usually every 4 weeks for the rest of their lives, along with other complementary treatment. Most children who are treated grow normally and live quite happily into their teens and beyond.

- **Mongolian Blue Spots**

These are discoloration's seen on children of African-Caribbean, Asian and Mediterranean descent. This can ***often be mistaken for child abuse as the discoloration's look like bruising***. It is commonly found over the scrotum or lower lumbar spine, although it can be found elsewhere. They usually fade as the child grows older.

- **Vitiligo**

A loss of pigmentation in the skin which affects about 1% of all people but is clearly more marked in darker skin. Loss of pigmentation is normally in patches. Affected areas are unprotected from sunburn but the major effects of the condition are how to cope with what is seen as a disfigurement.

- **Bruising**

A bruise on dark skin may not be as easy to recognise by someone who is not used to looking after a black child. It is therefore important to learn how to identify bruising on darker skin (a doctor or health visitor will be able to advise.)

- **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation is a practice which can be prevalent in some ethnic groups in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 makes it an offence except on specific physical and mental health grounds.

Personal Care

In all cultures a person's everyday personal care and appearance is very important. This includes how people dress, their hair, skin and teeth. For most young people, appearance matters. It is important for them to feel and look good as this often affects how others treat them.

Skin care

People's skin varies in colour texture and type. The colour depends on the level of melanin (natural skin pigment) in the skin. The more melanin the darker the skin. Some people have dry skin, some oily or a combination of both.

Black people's skin can be dry due to its natural makeup and climate conditions. Skin needs to be cared for by regular moisturising with creams and lotions. This will help to prevent excess dryness, particularly in winter months when it can be most prevalent.

Ordinary skin care may need the following:

- oil based products — body lotions and creams — specially developed for black skin can help with dry skin and keep the skin supple. Some everyday body lotions can be used to relieve skin dryness but are not as effective.
- Avoid alcohol-based products. They can dry the skin further.
- Lotions or creams should be applied daily (sometimes more often) especially to the face, arms and legs which tend to get very dry. Whilst bath oils can help, be careful not to use them too much as they can make the skin appear greasy.
- In particular pay attention to skin after showering or bathing. Skin that has not been moisturised can have an ashen appearance.

Exposure to the sun

Although lighter skin tones are more sensitive to sun all skins can get sunburnt. Black people can and frequently do get sunburnt if exposed to the sun for long periods.

Sun protection should be used, with high factor creams for babies and young children. Seek advice from high street chemists for creams especially developed for black people.

Cosmetics

Wearing cosmetics can help young people look good and feel more confident about themselves. There is a wide range of cosmetics designed for black skin tones. Cosmetic consultants at high street stores and some chemists can help to advise which suits people best and how to apply them.

Hair Care

In all cultures hair grooming is an important part of a persons every day care. Appearance should not be overlooked. Adolescence can present difficulties. For most young people appearance matters! It is important to feel and look right, as it often affects the way they are seen by others.

It can be difficult for carers of black children, as they may not know how to look after the hair of a black child. Children who have been removed from their birth families and communities may have been too young to acquire the skills themselves.

- Use shampoos and conditioners recommended for African hair.
- Avoid other shampoos and conditioners as they contain a high level of alkaline and alcohol which can dry and strip African hair of its natural oils.
- It is not necessary to wash hair daily, as that can also strip hair of its natural oils.
- Apply hair creams and pomades straight after washing and drying the hair. Take care to not over dry as this can cause breakage.
- Apply hair creams or oils before using hair dryers.
- Comb hair morning and night, to keep it free of knots.
- Plaiting hair, or adding extensions, is often considered the best way of keeping it tidy. It can be done to follow latest trends and fashions.

- Trimming and styling of hair should only be done by a hairdresser who is able to work with African hair.
- After swimming always shampoo, condition and moisturise hair.
- Black hair magazines can help to keep you up to date on styles and give you information and advice.

Be aware that for some black children and young people their hair should not be cut due to their religious beliefs (for example Rastafarians and Sikhs).

Religion plays a very important and significant role in the lives of many members of ethnic minority communities and can be a very important element in the culture of a community. The major religions combine a system of central beliefs or faith, with a clear social code which regulates how members should conduct their daily lives and this can create tensions in Britain where religion has little influence on social behaviour. Over time the ideals of religious practice are under pressure to adjust to social norms in Britain.

As with other aspects of community life, it is important to remember that people are individuals and will vary in the strictness of their religious observance.

The section provides a glimpse into some of the main religions and philosophies that might be met in contact with people from ethnic minority communities.

Islam

Islam is a world-wide religion with Muslims (the followers of Islam) totalling nearly one seventh of the world's population. Islam was founded by the **Prophet Mohammad** in the seventh century. Mohammad preached that there is only one God (**Allah**) and that he, Mohammad, was God's messenger. God gave the Prophet Mohammad the principles by which mankind should live. These principles were later recorded in the **Holy Book of the Koran (also written as Quran)**

Within Islam (as within Christianity) there are different branches, the two main ones being the **Sunnis** and **Shi'ites**.

There are around two million Muslims in Britain and most live in the inner city areas. The bulk of British Muslims originate from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, East Africa, the Middle East, Sudan, North Africa and Kurdistan.

The Principles of Islam

Islam is not just a religion but a complete way of life for the Muslim communities. The Koran (Quran) has been the guiding light for Muslims all over the world and set out the five basic principles or duties also referred to as **the 'Five Pillars of Islam'**. These are:

- Faith (**Shahadah**) — declaration of ones faith. Muslims are required to confess their faith *"I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammad is his Prophet"*.
- Worship (**Salah**) - the five obligatory daily prayers performed at dawn, at noon, in the afternoon and at nightfall. *(However, Muslims in this country may try to fit their worship into convenient times of the day)*. Prayers are said with the head facing south-east in the direction of the holy city of **Mecca (Mekkah)**. Hygiene is very important and Muslims must wash before praying. They can pray anywhere providing the place is clean.
- Charity (**Zakah**) - a certain percentage of a person's wealth is given to charity.
- Fasting (**Saum or Sawm**) - fasting during the month of Ramadan *(the ninth lunar month)*. Muslims abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset. Fasting is compulsory for all Muslims from puberty. Exemptions from fasting include the sick, pregnant and menstruating women and those embarking on long journeys, though such people will have to make up the days missed.
- Pilgrimage (**Hajj**) - every Muslim adult who is physically, financially and legally able must make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca (Mekkah). This is a once in a lifetime event of great magnitude and significance in the life of every Muslim. To visit Mecca (Mekkah) is to visit the **Ka'ba**, the house of God, built by Abraham about four thousand years ago.

The Koran (Quran)

This is the Holy Book of Islam and must be treated with the greatest respect. No other book may be placed upon it and nobody should talk, eat or smoke whilst it is being read and it must not be touched by non-Muslims.

The Mosque is the most important building and the centre of religious and community life for Muslims. A typical mosque has a mihrab that points to Mekkah, the direction Muslims face when praying. Few mosques in Britain are specially built, many being converted buildings, most communities have their own local mosques where religious services and classes are held. Each mosque will have an IMMAM or spiritual leader who reads the Quran and leads prayers.

Women are not usually allowed to enter the mosque and, when they do, they are segregated from the men. Anyone entering a mosque must remove their shoes. Muslim men tend to cover their heads for prayer while the women dress modestly with their head, arms and legs covered.

Visitors of any creed are welcome in mosques provided that they respect the courtesies specified above.

The Muslim Family

Muslim families are traditionally extended or joint families where grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives live together. This may not always be the case in Britain, though members of an extended family may choose to settle in a neighbourhood and maintain close contact.

Islam emphasises the equality of all people and consequently men and women have equal rights. While this is true, the roles and duties are different and clearly defined and this may conflict with Western ideas of equality. Islam attaches greater importance to the role of a Muslim woman as wife and particularly as mother compared to her other roles. Women are the centre of the family and the more traditional Muslim fathers and husbands may be reluctant for their daughters and wives to go out to work. However, under most Islamic teaching and practice, Muslim women are allowed the right to an education and career and many work outside the home.

Muslim women may feel uncomfortable in mixed company and may tend to avoid being in a room with a man who is not a relative. If you

need to speak to a Muslim woman it is better if family members (this includes children) or relatives are present. If this is not possible, it is more appropriate if another woman is present. If questions of a sexual nature need to be asked of a Muslim woman these should be made by a woman. Do not shake hands with a Muslim woman unless a handshake is offered. Islamic law forbids physical contact between a man and woman other than her husband. This may lead to problems, for example where medical examination is necessary and no female doctor is available.

Visiting a Muslim home

When visiting the home of a Muslim, it is important to show respect by observing the courtesies including the requirement to take off your shoes. It is also important to try and avoid prayer times.

Muslim Names

For personal naming system please refer to Part D

Dress

Islam does not state any particular form of dress but does require that standards of modesty are met. The minimum cover for a man is from the navel to the knees and for a woman from the head to her feet (leaving only her hands and face showing). Muslim women from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh may wear **shalwar khameez** (long-sleeved tunic). Women from the Arab Gulf may wear black cloaks covering themselves completely and a veil covering all or part of the face. Iranian and some Somali women may wear the same without the veil. Muslim women from other countries may wear long-sleeved or modest western dress and cover the head with a scarf.

Food

Muslims must not eat pork or anything containing pork. All other meat is acceptable provided that it had been killed in certain way (**halal**), similar to the Jewish requirement for meat to be "kosher". Alcohol and food or drink containing alcohol are forbidden as well as intoxicating drugs.

Death

The Islamic faith places a great deal of significance on death and funeral rites of deceased Muslims. A dying Muslim should be turned to face Mekkah (south-east). Prayers are said when a Muslim is near death and again after death. Muslims believe that the soul leaves at

the point of death and that the body does not belong to the individual but rather that it belongs to God. They also believe that unless the body is buried within 24 hours of death (ie. the soul leaving) the soul will be unable to progress to heaven. Islamic law also decrees that a body must not be interfered with once the soul has departed. Because of these laws and beliefs, a delay in burial and / or a post mortem examination can be deeply distressing for a bereaved family. Where either are unavoidable, the reasons must be carefully and tactfully explained.

Muslims are buried and never cremated. Only men attend a funeral even if the deceased is a woman. Traditionally Muslims are not buried in coffins, the bodies being wrapped in cloths. In Britain however, it is more usual for the body to be placed in a flimsy coffin before being returned to the home for viewing and followed by immediate burial.

Festivals

Eid-al-Fitr: Festival of breaking the Fast, occurs immediately following the end of Ramadan. It is both a community and family occasion and communal prayers conducted outside weather permitting. The occasion culminates with the exchange of presents such as new clothes and sweets.

Eid-al-Adha: Festival of Sacrifice marks the final stage of the pilgrimage to Makkah. It lasts for a maximum of four days and is celebrated in much the same way as Eid-al-Fitr with big communal prayers and the exchange of gifts. Its special feature is the sacrifice of an animal in commemoration of the story of Abraham and his son Ismail. The purpose of these festivals is to remind people of their duty at all times to submit to God's will.

Medical Treatment

Modesty is extremely important. A Muslim may strongly prefer to be treated medically by a person of the same sex and may prefer to expose only the part of the body to be treated. Post-mortems are only permitted when legally required.

Sikhism

Sikhism was founded in the Punjab — "*Land of the five rivers*" in the north of India over 500 years ago. The word Sikh comes from the Punjab and Hindi language and spoken by most Sikhs and means

Disciple. Sikhs follow the teachings of the 10 Gurus, the best known being Guru Nanak (*first Guru*) and Guru Gobind Singh (*tenth Guru*). The Gurus (*meaning religious leader*) are revered as saints by Sikhs but not worshipped. Their teachings are recorded in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sikh holy book.

Britain has over 500,000 Sikhs, the largest Sikh community outside India. They are predominantly from the Punjab and East Africa.

Beliefs

Sikhism is not based on rigid rules and laws but on the teachings of the 10 Gurus as set out in the holy book the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The main influences and beliefs are:

- there is one God who is almighty and eternal
- all human beings are equal and brethren
- earn your living by honest means and working hard
- giving to charity: donating a proportion of your income for the benefit of charity
- *Sewn* : selfless service to God and service to other human beings

The Khalsa

Modern Sikhism owes its form to the last Guru, Gobind Singh who founded the Khalsa “the pure ones” or Brotherhood. The Khalsa was a brotherhood of fighters who would dedicate themselves to the Sikh cause and were given certain distinctive features to identify them as Sikhs. There are five of these features, or symbols, the *Kakke*, which baptised or Khalsa Sikhs wear to this day. They are:

- **KESH OR KESHAS** - long hair usually worn under the turban to symbolise holiness.
- **KANCHA** - small wooden comb to keep the hair tidy and symbolise purity.
- **KARA** - steel bracelet/bangle worn on the right wrist to protect the sword arm and symbolises eternity.
- **KIRPAN** - a small sword symbolising readiness to fight oppression.

- **KACHA or KACHERA** - shorts worn as an undergarment, to symbolise modesty and sexual restraint.

Sikh Names

The Sikh naming system is similar to the Hindu with a personal name, a complementary name and a family name. The following are some differences which needs noting:

- All baptised, or Khalsa Sikh males have the complementary names or religious designation **SINGH**, meaning lion.
- All baptised, or Khalsa Sikh females have the complementary or religious designation **KAUR**, meaning princess.
- Some Sikhs have dropped the caste name because of the Sikh objection to the caste system, but this is not usually the case with British Sikhs.
- Males and females often use the same first names. For example:
JASWANT SINGH GILL (Male)
INDARJIT KAUR GILL (Female)

The polite form of address uses the first two names together, but in Britain it is usually acceptable for the final name to be used as a surname (Mr. Gill, Mrs. Gill). However, some families particularly those from East Africa may use Singh as the family name (Mr. Singh). Always check before addressing someone in this way as it may not be appropriate.

Worship

Sikh temples are known as "**GURDWARAS**" and the most famous Gurdwara (Golden Temple) is at Amritsar. It was where the original Guru Granth Sahib (Holy book) was compiled. The Gurdwara is the centre of Sikh social life as well as being the spiritual centre. Every Gurdwara has a kitchen (**LANGAR**) and communal dining area and it is customary to serve food to all who enter regardless of race, social status or religion. This symbolises the equality that is the basis of Sikhism - no discrimination based on caste.

As with all places of worship it is necessary to show respect when entering Gurdwara. Shoes are removed and everyone should cover their heads. Tobacco and alcohol are not permitted.

Food

Sikhism is unlike some Eastern religions which expect their followers to practice self-denials. Gure Nanak is reputed to have said "*Salvation is not incompatible with laughing, eating, playing and dressing well*". Many Sikhs are vegetarians although some eat meat. Even if they are not vegetarian, Sikhs tend not to eat beef because of their Hindu origins. They are forbidden to eat Halal meat (animal slaughtered according to Muslim laws) or kosher. In Britain gurdwaras tend to serve vegetarian food.

Dress

The turban has become an important symbol of the Sikh faith. Most Sikh men wear a turban as well as some Sikh women. Both men and women dress modestly. Sikh women may wear shalwar and kameeze (long trousers with a long top and scarf) or western dress. Devout Sikh men and women who are full members of their religion (Khalsa) wear the **five 'K's**. These represent the five articles of faith which distinguishes individuals as Sikhs. The five 'K's described under **KHALSA are KESH, KANGHA, KIRPAN, KARA and KACHERA.**

Festivals

All Sikh festivals except the **Vaisakhi** are based on the lunar calendar and have different dates each year. The main festivals are:

- **Birth of Guru Gobind Singh** (January/February) - celebrated with readings from the Guru Granth Sahib (the holy book) and food in the Gurdwara (Temple).
- **Hola Mohalla** (February/March) - celebration of Sikh military power, established by Guru Gobind Singh. Today, it is celebrated with sports events, music and poetry competitions to remind Sikhs of the festival the Guru began.
- **Vaisakhi** (13 April) - celebrates the formation of the Sikh brotherhood (The Khalsa) in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh. It is the Sikh New Year. It also celebrates the harvest festival.
- **Martyrdom of Guru Arjan** (May/June) - remembrance of the death in 1606 of the Guru who compiled the Holy Book (Guru Granth Sahib).

- **Diwali** (October) - festival of lights. It is celebrated with lights in the Gurdwara and firework displays. It is also a Hindu festival.
- **Martyrdom of Tegh Bahadur** (December/January) - celebrated with hymns and readings in the Temple (Gurdwara).
- **Birth of Guru Nanak** (October/November) - celebrated by a complete reading of the Holy Book, hymns, poetry and stories in the Temple (Gurdwara).

Hinduism

Hinduism is a long established religion which has gone through many changes and has been influenced by different cultures and civilisations in Indian society. It is estimated that there are about 650 million Hindus (the followers of Hinduism) throughout the world and approximately 300,000 living in Britain (many originating from the Punjab and Gujarat regions of India).

Like Islam, Hinduism is more than just a religion and describes a way of life as well as a set of beliefs. However, it is unlike Islam and indeed Christianity in a number of ways. It has:

- no single founder or leader.
- no single holy book.
- no organised church or hierarchy of spiritual leaders.

Beliefs

Hindus believe that there is a **Creator or Supreme Spirit** which is neither male nor female and is too complex for ordinary mortals to understand and worship. They also believe in reincarnation and that any incorrect behaviour on this earthly life may lead to reincarnation as a lower being such as an animal, and hence regard all life as related to them. The Creator or Supreme spirit is worshipped through one of the other gods and goddesses. The three main images of the Supreme spirit are:

BRAHMA (*The Creator*) has four heads indicating that he has a mind which thinks all things.

SHIVA (*The Destroyer*) has many sides to his character. Although frightening and often appearing in graveyards or on battlefields. He is also seen as the life force of the universe.

- **VISHNA** (*The Preserver and god of love*) sits in heaven with his wife, but does come to earth usually disguised in one of ten forms.

These three images symbolise the fact that everything in the universe is either being *created, preserved or destroyed*. Hindus may worship these images or human “manifestation” of them. For example Buddha, Rama and Krishna are manifestations of **VISHNU**.

Hinduism teaches that each living body is built around an eternal soul (**ATMAN**) which comes from the Supreme Spirit. It is the ultimate desire for each soul to return to the Supreme Spirit some day but to do so it must be clean. The purification needed is hard to achieve in one lifetime. So each soul has to be born over and over again, gradually cleansing and improving itself each lifetime until it is finally clean enough to return to its Creator.

This is the basis of the Hindu belief in reincarnation. The path through each life is called **DHARMA** and they believe that a person’s situation in this life depends on their actions (**KARMA**) in previous lives. So someone who behaves badly (*bad Karma*) may be born into the next life as an animal or insect or perhaps a human with some handicap. Everyone is responsible for their condition in life and can improve their next existence by behaving well and doing good deeds in this one.

Religious Worship

Most Hindu worship (**PUJA**) is usually individual rather than communal and takes place in the home. Communal worship also takes place in the **MANDIR (Hindu Temple)** usually on religious anniversaries and special occasions. Many Hindu homes have a family shrine with statues and pictures of the gods worshipped by the family. Hindu Temples (MANDIR) are beautiful buildings, often having statues carved in rocks and depicting gods and other religious idols.

There are certain rules which must be observed when entering a temple - shoes must be removed and women should cover their heads. Non-Hindus are welcome in the temples provided they show respect and observe the rules. ***However, when visiting an Hindu home, care must be taken never to enter the part of the home reserved for worship unless invited to do so.***

Hindus pray at least once a day and before any religious ceremonies or worship, they must purify themselves through ritual cleansing by abstention from food and the removal of all leather items including shoes.

Unlike Christians and Muslims, Hindus have four **Holy Books (The Vedas)**. These are:

- **The BHAGAVAT GITA**
- **The RAMAYANA**
- **The UPANISHADS**
- **The MAHABHARATA**

The **BHAGARAVAD GITA** is the most sacred of the Holy Books. Like the Bible and Koran (Quran), these texts must be respected by Hindus and non-Hindus alike.

The Caste System

Hindu society is traditionally divided into hundreds of castes or groups based on social and occupational status. The grouping influences a range of family matters such as marriage, food and dress customs. The system goes back thousand of years and is a basic aspect of Hindu religion. Every Hindu belongs to a caste group and the many different castes are grouped into four main social classes (**VARNA**):

- **BRAHMINS** The highest caste, traditionally priests and teachers but now includes people in business and government
- **KSHATRIYAS** Warriors and Policemen
- **VAISHYAS** Farmers, craftsmen, tradesmen
- **SHUDRAS** Manual workers, labourers, servants

Each caste forms a separate division in society and people from different castes do not normally mix or do the work of other castes. A Hindu's caste is determined by his Karma or behaviour in a previous life.

There is a fifth group outside the caste system traditionally referred to as the **HARRIJANS (The Untouchables)** who are not allowed to take part in Hindu rites. Although Indian law forbids the caste system it nevertheless continues as an accepted tradition. In Britain the system is not strictly followed especially by younger people but it is normally expected that people will marry within their own caste.

Hindu Festivals

The temple becomes the focal point for Hindus at festival times. There are many Hindu festivals but the most important festivals are the HOLI and DIWALI which are marked in India with holidays and family celebrations like Christmas in Britain.

HOLI - This is the spring festival and is usually celebrated in March with bonfires and dancing. It is often associated with Krishna and all barriers of caste and rank are forgotten.

DIWALI - Often called the “**festival of lights**” because *divas (small lamps)* are lit to guide the God Rama on his return from exile. It is celebrated in October and marks the beginning of the year - New Year in the Hindu calendar.

There are so many Hindu festivals that it is possible to celebrate a festival each day of the year.

Hindu Names

There can be up to four parts to Hindu names as follows:

- A First or personal name, for example Lalita (female) or Naresh (male) which is used by family and friends. Male and female are different.
- A Complimentary name, for example Devi (female) or Lal (male) used only in a polite form of address and never on its own.
- Father’s Personal name, for example Jayendra or Mohan, to differentiate between large numbers of people who may share a Family or Caste name.
- And a Family or caste name, for example Sharma or Patel, used as a surname and taken by women on marriage and by children.

Buddhism

The religion takes its name from **Gautama Siddhartha**, a Hindu prince born in the foothills of the Himalayas in about 500BC. Gautama came to be known as “**BUDDHA**” which means the “**Enlightened One**”. Dissatisfied with his comfortable life as a prince, he adopted a very austere lifestyle of self-denial and penance in an attempt to understand the mysteries of life. He eventually became convinced that

the secret of understanding or enlightenment, lay in a “**Middle Way**” between the extremes of sensual pleasure and a self-denial, a path leading to a state of supreme happiness and peace known as **NIRVANA**.

Today there are around 330 million Buddhists worldwide, the majority living in the Far East. In Britain there is an estimated 130,000 Buddhists. There are three main branches of Buddhism- **THERAVADA, MAHAYANA and VAJRAYANA**.

Beliefs

The starting point for Buddhism is mankind and the way in which people suffer (whether physical pain, dissatisfaction with life, wanting more, fear of change, death etc.). Buddhism seeks to give a person peace of mind and encourage and develop love and compassion towards all living things. The goal of all Buddhists is enlightenment which means to be fully awake to the reality of life - to have an understanding of why there is suffering in the world and how it may be overcome.

Buddhists believe that the answer to all suffering is set out in the **Four Noble Truths** which are

- Suffering is universal and a manifestation of evil.
- The cause or origin of suffering is desire.
- Suffering can only be ended by putting an end to desire.
There are however six hindrances - greed, hatred, laziness, restlessness, indecision and lack of trust.
- This can be achieved by adopting the “**Middle Way**” between self-indulgence and self-denial.

The Middle Way can be achieved by undertaking the following eight steps known as **The Noble Eightfold Path**. They are having the *Right View; Right Intention; Right Effort; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Livelihood; Right Mindfulness and Right Contemplation*.

This is supported by learning to think, behave and meditate aimed at clearing the mind so that it can rise beyond, or transcend, everyday preoccupations (*transcendental meditation*).

Buddhism is sometimes described as a philosophy or a system of thought consisting of practical advice rather than a religion. Buddhists

do not acknowledge the existence of God or Creator but neither do they deny it.

Worship

Buddhist temples vary in design from one country to another. They are usually built to symbolise the five elements - **wisdom, water, fire, air and earth**. Buddhist temples in Britain have common features. A typical temple (**Vihara**) will have the statue of Buddha: it is where teaching and meditation takes place and an accommodation for resident monks and nuns.

Buddhists remove their shoes as a sign of respect when entering a temple. Visitors should do the same. It is best not to shake hands with a monk or nun unless a handshake is offered.

Dress

Buddhist monks wear robes of an orange-yellow colour called saffron and go barefoot. They shave their heads and carry bowls known as *begging-bowls*, in which they carry the gifts other Buddhists give them.

Food

Buddhists emphasise the avoidance of intentional killing as a result most Buddhists are vegetarian.

Festivals

There are many festivals but the main one is the **Vaisakha Puja**. This festival is celebrated in the month **Vesak** on the full moon (usually in April — May), the Buddhist New Year commemorates the birth, enlightenment and passing of Buddha. On this day captive birds and fish are released as a symbol of Buddha's love and compassion for living things. In many countries Buddhists hang up paper lanterns and flowers in their homes, light candles and burn incense in the temple in front of Buddha's statue.

Death

Buddhist funerals vary a great deal from country to country. Buddhists see death as natural and inevitable, and this is the main theme of Buddhist funerals. The dead may either be cremated or buried.

Taoism

Taoism is the teachings of **Lao-Tzu** who lived in the same era as

Confucius. In China Taoism is known as Taochia or Taochiao. The early followers of Taoism were involved in the search for immortality and their ascetic lifestyles involving alchemy and natural remedies gave the religion a mystical reputation.

Taoism promotes the qualities of gentleness and unassertiveness as the means of achieving one's aims and the spirit of Tao has been described as being like water: following the low ground, passive, yielding yet powerful precisely because of its ability to flow around obstacles in its path.

Taoism is also linked to the well-known Chinese concepts of **YIN** and **YANG** which are central principles in traditional Chinese medicine, for example. It is believed that the world was formed from the interaction of two forces, one being **passive, reserved, and cold** known as **YIN** and the other **active, warm and bright** known as **YANG**. Yin is the female principle and Yang the male principle. The well-being of all things requires these two principles to be in harmony.

The main moral issues of Taoism are based on **Five Prohibitions**: - *the killing of living creatures; alcoholism; hypocrisy; stealing, loose living* and the **Ten Instructions**: *be obedient to parents; be obedient to one's master; display kindness to every creature; bear evil received; settle arguments and not harbour hatred; help the poor by one's own sacrifice; free animals; plant trees and construct bridges; be useful to your fellow men and recite Taoist books and burn incense in glorification of Taoism and its principles.*

Confucianism

Confucius — the westernised version of **KUNGFU-TZU** or **KUNG FUZI** — was born in what is now the Shangtung (**Shangdong**) province of China in 551BC. He was a teacher of social and moral teachings, who endeavoured to establish a practical philosophy to meet the needs of a generation forgetful of its duty to the state and unable to comprehend the teachings of **Lao Tzu**.

The two fundamental principles of Confucianism are the worship of ancestors and the belief that by maintaining the morals and cultures of history present day life will be enhanced. According to Confucian ethics, the whole duty of a person is summed up in the word **"Reciprocity"**. **"What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others"**. Confucianism, more a moral and social code than a religion, is at the heart of many aspects of Chinese culture.

Rastafarianism

The Rastafarian religion developed in Jamaica as an expression of the African identity of Black people in the West Indies. It is based on the ideas of **Marcus Garvey** who founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (**UNIA**) in the 1920s as a means of restoring the dignity of the Black people lost through many years of domination and colonisation by Europeans.

The Rastafarian religion takes its name from **Ras** (prince) **Tafari Makonem**, born in 1892 who took the title **Haile Selassie 1** when he was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia in November 1930. Marcus Garvey had prophesied earlier: “**Look to Africa, when a Black king shall be crowned, for the day of deliverance is near**” and his followers believe that this event marked the second coming of Christ in the person of Haile Selassie.

Beliefs

Rastafarianism is based on the Christian faith but it rejects the European concept of God as white, believing that it is equally valid to believe in a black God. Rastafarians believe that **Haile Selassie 1, Ras Tafari**, is the true and living God (**Jah**) and is regarded as fully incarnate. They also believe that the Bible provides evidence that the Israelites were black and that Rastas now living in exile in Jamaica are their descendants. Rastafarians share the moral values of Christianity. Their faith is derived from a very detailed reading of the Bible especially the Old Testament and the **Book of Revelations in the New Testament**. They also believe strongly in the power of nature and believe that the human race should live in harmony with nature and that the destruction of the environment by developed nations is evil.

Worship

Music is important to Rastafari. Reggae music has often expressed their struggle for liberation and is an important medium through which black pride is projected. Music, drumming (the instrument rooted in African traditional music) and dancing form part of the worship. For many Rastafarians smoking marijuana (**ganja**) is an important part of their worship and a ritual aid for meditation. The shape of the hand when praying is a symbol for both peace and war. It represents a heart and a spear.

Dress

The best known symbol identified with Rastafarianism is the wearing of hair in "**dreadlocks**". This is derived from a reference in the Book of Numbers (Chapter 6, Verse 5) in the King James Bible, the version of the Bible which is very important to Rastafarians. The dreadlocks represent the lion's mane and the hair of the African warrior.

The colours **red, gold, green** and **black** have special significance. Red signifies the blood of the race shed in the past; gold symbolises the faith, prosperity and sunshine; green symbolises the promise of a new life in Africa and black symbolises pride in the black skin.

Food

A preference for natural foods is to be expected from Rastafarian beliefs and although there are no formal dietary restrictions a vegetarian diet is preferable to meat, especially pork. The use of marijuana (**ganja**) is of course highly controversial, and indeed illegal, in Britain. It is believed to assist prayer and meditation and to have medicinal properties. It is also used in cooking.

Babylon

The name of the ancient city has been adopted by Rastafarians to embody the whole concept of white domination and conditioning aimed at persuading Blacks to accept that they are inferior. It has become a sort of code-word particularly for young Blacks who use it to symbolise the racial prejudice, social injustice and social exclusion which they experience in Britain.

It is worth emphasising that many young people find the cultural identity provided by the symbols of Rastafarianism attractive without being believers in the faith and living by its codes of behaviour. True Rastafarians often resent the effect this behaviour has on people's perception of their faith.

Festivals

The Rastafarian year is based on the Ethiopian calendar. The main celebrations are:

- Ethiopian Constitutional Day (July 16)
- Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie 1 (July 23)
- Birthday of Marcus Garvey (August 17)
- Ethiopian New Year's Day (September 11)

- The Anniversary of the coronation of Haile Salessie 1 (Nov 2)
- Ethiopian Christmas (January 7)

Death

Rastafarians believe in reincarnation; life is eternal, moving from one generation to the next through spiritual and genealogical inheritance. There are no special ceremonies following death.

Judaism (Jewish)

General

Although primarily a religion Judaism is also recognised as an ethnicity within Race Relations in Britain.

Key beliefs, sacred texts and language

Judaism is a monotheistic faith: Jews believe there is only one God and assert this in their prayers daily in their prayers, e.g. "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one". The most important sacred text, the Torah, which is part of the Bible (Old Testament) written and studied in Hebrew. The "Torah" actually consists of the first five books but frequently the whole text is called "Torah". These early books form the basis of Jewish beliefs and practice, tell the story of the beginning of the world and the early history of the Jewish people. The Torah is substantiated by "Oral Law" contained in the Talmud.

Different schools of thought have arisen regarding the understanding of these books. Many Jews are "Orthodox" (ie they maintain the traditional understanding of the texts). Others (Reform, Liberal, Progressive) to differing degrees may partly rethink beliefs and practice in the context of the modern world.

Places of worship, prayer rituals and religious leaders

- Congregational prayers are led by a "Rabbi": a leader and a scholar. Sometimes the leader may be called "Reverend".
- Congregational prayers are said in the Synagogue which contains "the Law" - hand-written on parchment by a scribe and housed in "The Ark" - a cupboard or alcove situated in the wall which faces Jerusalem.
- Devout Jews pray three times daily. The men, with heads covered, often wear a prayer shawl. On weekday mornings "Tefillin" (boxes containing portions of the law) are strapped to the arm and forehead, reminding them to think about and act upon their prayers.

Holy days and festivals

The Jewish day runs from sunset to sunset. The Jewish weekly holy day (the Sabbath) is Saturday (beginning at sunset on Friday evening). The Sabbath is a day of rest from many daily activities — shopping, cooking, occupational work etc. — allowing time for worship but also for family and group activities. It is intended as a day without stress.

Rites of passage

- Jewish boys are circumcised on the eighth day after birth, if health permits. The birth of a baby girl is often marked by an announcement at the Synagogue Shabbat service.
- Jewish boys are considered to be ready to accept some responsibility for their lives at the age of 13 when they become “Bar-Mitzvah (son of the law). A ceremony is held at the synagogue. Today, in many synagogues, a “Bat-Mitzvah (daughter of the law) ceremony is held when a girl reaches the age of 12.
- Jewish marriage is both a civil contract and a holy covenant. Divorce is permitted after all attempts for a reconciliation has failed.
- Jews bury their dead, although some reform groups do accept cremation. There is a week of private mourning (Shivah). During the next three weeks normal life is gradually resumed, though a quiet lifestyle may be followed for up to a year.

Family Life

- Traditional nuclear family.

Status of women

- The Jewish race is perpetuated through the female line.
- The religious duties of women differ slightly from those of men.
- Women do not need to attend synagogue, or perform daily prayers, so frequently, but they perform the ceremony inviting the Sabbath into the house.
- In many synagogues women sit separately to men e.g. in a balcony.

Naming

- Naming patterns of the home country tend to be adopted.
- Make sure you ask for the **Surname** and **Personal name**.
Don't ask for the Christian name.

Food

- Pork and shellfish are forbidden.
- Only meat that is kosher can be eaten.
- Do not eat dairy products with meat.

Dress

- Usually adopt the patterns of the home country.
- Men — Skull caps in the Synagogue and sometimes outside.
- Some very orthodox women cover their heads after marriage with a scarf or wig (Sheitel).
- Hasidic (ultra-orthodox — mainly from eastern Europe) Jews: Men - long dark coats, distinctive hats, beard and long locks of hair. Women cover their arms and legs.

Salutations

- Jews may greet each other with the Hebrew word “Shalom” —e.g. “Shabbat Shalom” — a peaceful Sabbath.

When you go into a traditional Jewish home

- Small box (mezuzah) near the door which Jews touch as a sign of respect.
- The Sabbath is from dusk on Friday to dusk on Saturday.

Workplace best practice

- Allow time off for festivals and holy days.
- On the Sabbath, Jews may need to leave the workplace early on Friday to reach home before sunset.
- Make acceptable arrangements for dietary laws wherever possible e.g. provide disposable plates, cutlery and offer vegetarian food.

Christianity

General

- There are many different denominations of Christians but all share a belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
- Most fall into the Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant traditions — each varies in precise beliefs and practices.
- Some are evangelical.
- The Anglican Church is the established Church in the UK.

Key beliefs, sacred texts and language

- The Christian sacred text is the Bible, which contains the Old Testament, largely based on the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament, which contains four Gospels (good news). The New Testament covers the life and teachings of Jesus, his death and resurrection appearances, the Acts of the Apostles speaking of Jesus' ascent to heaven, the early church and letters of an early missionary — St Paul and others.
- Key Christian beliefs are contained in Creeds known as the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed. These can be found in many Church services and prayer books.
- Christians affirm that Jesus is the visible or human expression of God, often using the term “Son of God”. Christians also believe that the Holy Spirit, sent by Jesus, can enter those who believe. God the father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are called “The Trinity”, but all are seen as part of the “One God”.
- Central to Christian life is the commandment Jesus described as his own and new - “love one another as I have loved you”. Roman Catholics and some Anglicans have a special regard for Mary, the Mother of Jesus, often portrayed with the infant Jesus in her arms.

Places of worship, prayer rituals and religious leaders

- Places of worship include Cathedrals, Monasteries, churches, chapels, meeting places etc - depending on denomination.
- Religious leaders titles can also be denominational and can include Priest, Vicar, Bishop, Arch Bishop, Cannon, Minister, Pastor.
- The head of the Roman Catholic Church is the Pope. Other protestant faiths have their own leaders - e.g. The Archbishop of Canterbury (Church of England).
- Some denominations (e.g. Church of England) allow women priests. In others (e.g. Roman Catholic) women priests are forbidden.

Holy days and festivals

- Major festivals include Christmas (celebrating the birth of Jesus) and Easter (remembering the death of Jesus and his subsequent resurrection).
- Saints days can be important festivals, particularly with people whose roots are from continental Europe.

Rites of passage

- Baptism and/or naming ceremonies may be performed during babyhood or early childhood. This involves the sprinkling with holy water and tracing a cross on the forehead with the water. Adult baptism is also practised, e.g. in the Baptist tradition where total immersion in water takes place.
- Personal commitment, confirmatory or dedication services take place as children become older and gradually accept for themselves promises made for them by parents and friends when they are very young.
- Marriage involves promises of commitment for life but many denominations now accept that this is not always possible and accept divorce after serious thought.
- Christians may bury or cremate their dead according to personal choice.

Family Life

- Traditional nuclear family in the UK.
- Some (e.g. Roman Catholic) are given Godparents upon Christening, with whom they may have a close relationship.

Status of women

- Some denominations (e.g. Church of England) allow women priests. In others (e.g. Roman Catholic) women priests are forbidden.

Naming

- The tradition of giving a child a 'Christian name' at baptism to mark their membership of the faith has all but disappeared. Surname, First name or Christian name are commonly used.

Food

- Christianity has no special dietary laws although some may reject the drinking of alcohol (e.g. most Quakers, Salvation Army and some Baptist and Methodists).
- Particular foods may be given up during Lent with fasting on significant days (e.g. Good Friday).
- Some may abstain from eating meat on Fridays.

Traditional Dress

- No specific dress, but may wear a crucifix (jewellery).
- White dresses, white shirts etc may be worn at commitment or naming ceremonies e.g. baptism, confirmation, weddings.
- Black is no longer as widely worn at funerals (although not wearing a dark colour may cause offence).
- Some denominations (e.g. Salvation Army) may wear a uniform.
- Bishops and Archbishops wear elaborate robes for services.
- Most priests, vicars and ministers have special robes for services and may wear a white collar and dark clothing at other times.
- Many monks and nuns wear robes (cassocks/habits). Other may now wear ordinary clothes with perhaps one distinctive item, e.g. a special collar or large cross/crucifix worn around the neck.

Salutations

- Many familiar phrases and words of greeting derive from Christian sayings e.g. “goodbye” is from “God be with you”.

When you go into a traditional Christian home

- You may see a crucifix displayed.
- Those of the Greek or Orthodox Church will have an icon, a significant religious picture or prayer.
- Roman Catholics may have pictures of the Pope, the Virgin Mary, or any of the Saints displayed.

Workplace best practice

- Major Christian festivals and seasons are already built into the national holiday network, e.g. Christmas, Easter.

Part D Ethnic Minority Communities

African-Caribbean Community

The description “African-Caribbean” reflects the fact that in Britain most of the people from the Caribbean are originally of African descent. In many cases their ancestors were forcibly removed from their homelands in West Africa and transported to the West Indies to work on the cotton, tobacco and sugar plantation as part of the slave trade up to the 1830s. Since the abolition of slavery, Caribbean people have looked for work in other countries. Several thousand found employment in Britain during the First World War when they were encouraged by the government to come here at a time of labour shortage. Similarly, in the 1950s many came over to fill jobs in the transport industry and other sectors where labour was scarce. Not all the people from the Caribbean are of African descent. Some were recruited from the Indian sub-continent to work in the plantations after the abolition of slavery and some of Britain’s Caribbeans are Guyanese who originated from India.

Language

European involvement in the West Indies began in 1492 with the arrival of Christopher Columbus. Soon after several European nations including Spain, France, Holland and Britain had seized many of the Islands which came to be known as the West Indies. By the mid 1700 every Island was controlled by a European country. As a consequence most of the languages spoken in the Caribbean are European, the three most common being Spanish, French and English. The language of the original people disappeared long ago and the African slaves were not allowed to speak their own languages.

In the Islands where Britain was involved, there developed a distinct difference between the English spoken by the whites and educated classes, and the ‘**patois**’ spoken by the ordinary people. Patois is a special dialect invented by the slaves to communicate amongst themselves without the overseers understanding. Today, it is considered a language in its own right. In fact the language has been adopted and adapted by Britain’s young Blacks as a badge of identity and used in Rap and Reggae music.

Culture

There are more than a hundred islands in the Caribbean in an area covering two thousand miles from Cuba in the west to Trinidad off the coast of Venezuela. Each island has its own cultures and traditions so there does not really exist a common Caribbean culture except that they share the fundamental influence of the history of slavery and colonial rule.

Music and Carnivals

Music, dancing and carnivals are central to the social lives of the Caribbean islands. Carnivals are religious in origin, but will normally have developed around local events on each island. Music has often served as a vehicle of protest about social and economic deprivation.

Naming System

As a result of the slave system and the influence of Christianity, most African-Caribbean's from the former British West Indies will probably follow the British naming pattern, i.e. British personal name or Christian name followed by a family name/surname. While in most cases the family name is passed from the husband to the children, in some cases the family name is inherited from the mother. This may reflect women's family status which has tended to be stronger than in Europe.

Family

It was common for the grandmother to play a focal family role, sometimes taking major responsibility for the upbringing of the grandchildren, allowing the mother to work. During the migration to Britain in the 1950s/60s many children were left with their grandparents while their parents sought employment overseas. When these children joined their parents in Britain, the absence and influence of the grandparent's generation in Britain caused some problems for some families. Today the situation has improved as the grandparent generation become more established. While the traditional roles may have changed and adapted over time, the family support system is still there.

Religion

The main religions of the islands have both European and North American influence. Roman Catholicism is predominant in those islands with former Spanish and French influence and Protestantism prevailed elsewhere. Other religions include those with the old African

influence such as Voodoo and Obeah and also Hinduism and Islam, which are practiced by the East Indians in Trinidad.

There are many “folk religions” in the islands adding a colourful dimension to religious life. These include Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists, Shango (mainly Trinidad and Grenada), Pocomania and Rastafarians (mainly in Jamaica) and Shouter (mainly Trinidad). Rastafarianism is outlined in detail under “Main Ethnic Minority Religions”.

The Chinese Community

China is the world's largest country with a population of approximately 1.3 billion people. Most of Britain's Chinese communities originated in Hong Kong and the New Territories.

Significant Chinese migration to Britain did not start until about the early nineteenth century with the arrival of Chinese seamen who settled in the major seaport areas including Liverpool, Cardiff and Bristol. Until the 1950s the majority of Chinese immigrants tended to be seamen or professional people, students and nurses who arrived from different parts of the world. In the late 1950s/60s large numbers of Chinese migrated to Britain from the New Territories of Hong Kong, mainly from the farming and rural areas. It is believed that between 70-80 percent of the Chinese in Britain are from the New Territories.

The Chinese community including those who migrated from Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam are the third largest ethnic minority group in Britain, after Asians originating from the Indian sub-continent and East Africa and African-Caribbean's. Chinese settlement has tended to be of a scattered nature, partly due to their involvement in the catering trade.

Language.

Inevitably a country the size of China has a range of dialects but the two main languages are **MANDARIN** and **CANTONESE**. Mandarin is the official language and used by people from mainland China. Cantonese is the language used in the Kwangtung province of mainland China and also by the majority of Hong Kong Chinese and therefore the majority of Britain's Chinese population.

Cantonese is spoken by more people than any other language in the world, although Mandarin is gradually starting to replace Cantonese as the mother tongue of China. English was the official language of Hong Kong until 1974 but it has never been widely used.

Although there are different spoken languages and dialects in China, the pictorial characters used in the written language are common to all of them.

Religion

Traditionally Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism are the main religions although ancestor worship is still very strong in the Chinese belief system. Islam, Christianity (predominantly Roman Catholicism and Protestantism) and Hinduism (to a lesser degree) are also practiced. A detailed outline of Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Hinduism can be found under “The Main Ethnic Minority Religions”.

Naming System

Traditionally the names of Chinese people have consisted of a family name followed by a personal name. The personal name is usually made up of two Chinese written characters (often hyphenated) in English. The family name can be regarded as the surname for British purposes.

The following are examples of the most common Chinese family names found in Britain: **Man, Cheung, Leung, Chang, lam, Lee and Poon**. A wife and children will normally take the husband’s family name, for example, **Wong May-Lin** would become **Chang Wong May-Lin**.

Many Chinese in Britain have adapted their names to the British system and give their surname (family name) last, e.g. Lan-Yin Cheung. If the personal name is hyphenated the family name is clear, if not, always check with the individual concerned.

The Chinese may also use a European as well as a Chinese personal name. The European name may be given with the family name only e.g., Alice Cheung or Michael Man or it may preface the full Chinese name, for example, Alice Lan-Ying Cheung or Michael Wen-Zhi Man.

The Family

The family is very important in Chinese culture, a tradition strongly influenced by the teachings of Confucius. The family is not just the unit living now, but stretches back through generations of ancestors and forward to generations yet unborn and ancestors are held in great respect. Thus the behaviour of a member of the family reflects not just on himself and his immediate family but also on the reputation of his ancestors and on future generations, making for very strong family loyalty.

The father is the head of the family, with responsibility, wealth and property being passed through the male line. Daughters are considered to have joined their husband's families on marriage and they effectively break the links with their own families. Like most ethnic minority communities in Britain the Chinese community faces the problem of maintaining a distinctive culture against the pressure to conform to the British way of life. As usual there is a generation factor: as the younger Chinese exposed to British education and western lifestyles are seen by their parents as abandoning the traditions which the older generation wish to continue. Even the question of language may be a matter for contention with the younger generation being able to speak English fluently whilst their parents, perhaps cannot.

Death

This is an event which must be placed in the family context. On death, an individual becomes an ancestor to be respected. Chinese bury their dead close to the family home as quickly as possible, as leaving the body above ground is thought to allow the spirit to interfere with the living. The funeral is a time to celebrate the wealth and strength of the family and offerings are given so that the spirit can continue to give guidance to the family left behind.

Festivals

The celebration of traditional Chinese festivals provides an important means of maintaining their distinctive cultural identity for the Chinese communities in Britain. The main festivals are:

- Chinese New Year (**Yuan Tan**) is the most important festival of the Chinese calendar and marks the beginning of the first lunar month. The festival is colourfully celebrated with fireworks, dances (the famous Lion and Dragon dance), the giving and receiving of gifts, flowers and sweets. The celebrations last for about three or more

days. This is still less than the twenty days the festival traditionally lasted.

Chinese New Year does not fall on the same day as the European New Year because the Chinese use the lunar calendar. This means that it falls on a different date each year according to the European calendar - late January/early February.

- **Ching Ming** (usually in April) is the Spring festival and a time to remember deceased relatives. Family members visit the graves of ancestors and the practice of kite flying, an ancient Chinese pastime, is associated with this festival.
- **The Dragon Boat** commemorates a celebrated poet, Ch'u Yuan who committed suicide by drowning in protest against a powerful Emperor's treatment of his people over 2000 years ago. In China and Hong Kong the festival is celebrated with boat races featuring teams of rowers in large canoes decorated with dragons' heads, recreating the attempts to save Ch'u Yuan. Special food — rice, beans, pork, seeds and eggs wrapped in bamboo leaves, for example, is an important part of the festival.
- **The Mid –Autumn Festival** falls during the full moon and is surrounded by many legends. Moon cakes made from flour and filled with lotus seeds and bean paste are eaten to celebrate this festival
- **Chung Yung** is another festival dedicated to remembrance of ancestors.

The Bangladeshi Community

Bangladesh gained its independence from Pakistan in 1971 following a civil war. It was previously known as East Pakistan. The name Bangladesh means "*land of the Bengali people*". The country shares its border with the Indian state of West Bengal whose people are also Bengalis.

Bangladesh is less than two thirds the size of the UK but has more than twice as many people, making it one of the most densely populated countries in the world. 95 percent of Bangladeshis in Britain come from the Sylhet region of Bangladesh which has one of the

wettest climates in the world. In Britain, the Bangladeshi people mirror the locations of other people from the Indian sub-continent, with majority of them living in Greater London with the largest concentration in the Borough of Tower Hamlet in East London.

The first Bangladeshi people arrived in Britain in the early 1950s, at first almost exclusively unaccompanied men intending to earn enough money to support their families back home. Many served in the merchant navy in the Second World War and there was a long seafaring tradition with many men serving as stokers and cooks. After the war many settled in the port towns of Britain and took up jobs such as porters in hotels.

Language

Bangla (Bengali) is the language spoken and the official language of Bangladesh. Britain's Bangladeshis speak the Sylheti dialect of Bangla. Younger Bangladeshis may be more fluent in English than in the Sylheti Bangla though the situation may be reversed in the case of the older generation.

Religion

Islam is the main religion. About 87% of the population are Muslims. Other religions include Hindus (12%), Buddhists (0.6%), and Christians (0.3%). A detailed outline of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism is provided under the Main Ethnic Minority Religions.

Family/Culture

The extended family is extremely important in Bangladeshi life both in Bangladesh and in Britain. Members of the family will assist one another and will share responsibilities. Bangladeshi culture and tradition places considerable importance on politeness and respect for elders and for those in authority. However, Bangladeshis in this country live in a society in which respect for authority seems to be breaking down and younger Bangladeshis are inevitably influenced by these attitudes despite their parents attempts to uphold traditional values.

Most Bangladeshi's came mainly from a farming and rural background and their cultural tradition is largely based on folk music and story-telling. Bangladeshis also have a proud literary heritage with writers and artists of great repute, notably Zainal Abeden, Nazrul and Tagore.

Dress

The usual dress for men consists of a **Lungi** (cotton cloth wrapped around the waist and legs) and a vest, which is very comfortable in the hot climate. **Pyjamas and Punjabi suits** are also worn by the men. The normal dress for women is a **Saree** (traditionally made of fine cotton for everyday use and silk for special occasions) and **Shalwar Kameez**. However, most Bangladeshi men in Britain tend to wear western clothes.

Naming System

The naming system used by Muslims from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India is complex and subject to variations. It is difficult, therefore to give precise guidance about Bangladeshi names and the situation is further complicated by the fact younger people are increasingly adapting the traditional naming format to fit in with British convention.

Traditionally, many do not have a family name, although Bengalis in Britain have started to use one from their own family members to tag onto their 'own' name purely to comply with the British naming system.

Most Bangladeshi Muslims have a personal name, but this is often changed to comply with the naming tradition in Britain whereby people have a personal name and a family name. Some common last names used by Bangladeshis are:

Uddin, Ullah, Miah, Ali, Hossain, Ahmed, Gani

The personal name is usually the first name of the person, the second name may well be the name of another family member (father, elder brother, mother etc.) or may be a religious one

Personal Names

Male: Tahir, Amjad, Abbas, Badsha, Salik, Nazrul, Abdul, Rahim

Female: Zoreena, Rahima, Runa, Khaleda, Sabanna, Amina, Hasina

Second Names:

Male: Miah, Uddin, Ali, Rahman, Karim, Khan

Female: Begum, Bibi, Khatun, Akhtar, Nessa

Akhtar can be both male and female (Ahkhtar Nessa is female and Akhtar Ahmed is male).

Festivals

Bangladesh has a rich tradition of various cultural events celebrated in dance and music including:

- Shohib Dibosh (Language Day) - 21 February
- Independence Day - 26 March
- Victory Day - 16 December

As Islamic people, Bangladeshi's also celebrate the Muslim festivals of Ramadan, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Adha and the birth of the Prophet Mohammad. Hindu festivals are also celebrated by Bengali Hindus (The dates of these events are determined by the lunar cycles and are not fixed. See detail under Islam and Hinduism in the section Main Ethnic Minority Religions).

The Pakistani Community

Pakistan was created in 1947 as West Pakistan when India became independent. Its creation was in recognition of the fact that most of the population of the area was Muslim whereas the majority of Indians were Hindus. The dividing line that created the two countries runs through Kashmir with Pakistan controlling the area around MIRPUR while India controlled the KASHMIR valley. Sovereignty of this area is disputed.

Mirpur is a hilly farming area in the foothills of the Himalayas with a dry climate. Most of Britain's Pakistani community originated from this small area, while a small number came from the North West Frontier province near the Pakistan — Afghanistan border.

Settlement in Britain started around the 1920s with a number of seamen deciding to stay and earn their living in the port areas of Britain. Other people from what is now Pakistan served in the British forces during the Second World War and then settled here at the end of the war. During the conflicts in the Mirpur area of Pakistan, a number of the displaced people from that area came to Britain to live with relatives who were already settled here.

Language

The majority of Pakistanis speak **Punjabi** although those from the Mirpur area will speak the Mirpur dialect of Punjab. Pakistanis from the North West Frontier province speak **Pashto**. The official language is **URDU**.

The Family

The extended family concept is very much in operation within the Pakistani culture. The concept involves distant relatives in a grouping which exists to provide support for its members. Indeed its widest form is the idea of the "**BIRADERI**" a kind of clan organisation which is one of the basic foundations of society in much of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Members of the extended family support each other whenever needed, e.g. by lending money, helping out when members are sick and so on. New arrivals in this country could look to the "family" already here to help with accommodation, a job, or setting up in business.

Under Islam men and women are considered equal. However, it is accepted that the man is the provider and decision maker whilst the woman is the centre of the family. The importance of family loyalty is instilled in children from an early age and it is a matter of family honour that older and vulnerable members are supported.

This contrasts sharply with the overall trend in contemporary Britain where the extended family concept is rare. This can pose problems for the young people from Pakistani families who may find themselves torn between two cultures — one based on family values and loyalty and the other on individuality.

Naming System

The naming system used by Muslims from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, is complex and subject to variations. It is difficult, therefore, to give precise guidance about Pakistani names and the situation is further complicated by the fact younger people are increasingly adapting the traditional naming format to fit in with British convention. However, the following may be helpful:

Males and females have different naming systems so members of the same family may have completely different names. Women do not adopt the husband's name on marriage.

Male Names

There are two or more names:

Religious Name/Title	Mohammad
Personal Name	Anwar
Family/Regional Name	Khan

A Muslim should never be addressed by his religious name alone since this is disrespectful and likely to cause offence. The personal name can be used alone but the full name e.g. Mohammad Anwar, is the polite formal mode of address.

Note the following variations:

- Some men do not have a religious title/name and use two personal names, e.g. **Anwar Salim** or **Salim Malik**. In this case the second is used as the surname though not always. If in doubt ask which names to use as surname. **Do not** ask a Muslim for their Christian name.
- Some men may have a family name i.e. one which is shared by other members of the family. Example, Khan, Chaudrey and Shah. They may, therefore, have three names - a religious name, a personal name and a family or clan name, e.g. **Mohammad Anwar Khan** or two names, e.g. **Anwar Khan** if there is no religious name. The family name, if there is one, should be used as the mode of address.

Female names

Most Muslim women traditionally have two names - personal name, followed by a female title (e.g. Begum, Bibi) which is similar to Mrs or Miss. Example of female personal names are: **Amina, Fatima, Nasreen, Yasmin** etc.

So we would have, for example **Amina Begum** or **Fatima Bibi**.

A woman will be addressed informally by her personal name or formally by her full name — but never as **Mrs Begum** or **Mrs Bibi**

Note the following variations to the traditional system:

- Some women may have two personal names and no title e.g. **Nasreen Akhtar**

- Some may have a family name as well, e.g. **Nasreen Akhtar Khan**

It is however, more common amongst some second and third generation Pakistanis settled in Britain to have a shared family name following a personal name as in British system and for wives to take the family name on marriage.

Religion

Islam is at the heart of life and culture for most Pakistanis in this country. Islam plays a very significant part in all aspects of life, including, dress, food and naming processes etc. Therefore some knowledge of its principles is essential to any understanding of the community. (see details of Islam in the section Main Ethnic Minority Religions).

The Indian Community

India is similar in size to Europe and with variations of climate and lifestyle much greater than those in Europe. Along with what is now Pakistan and Bangladesh it was part of the British Empire before independence in August 1947. Most of the migrants to Britain from India came from the state of Gujarat, with the other main group coming from the state of Punjab. Others came from East Africa.

Gujarat

Gujarat, on the west coast, is one of the richest parts of India with agricultural wealth and industry, particularly in textiles. Britain has had commercial links with Gujarat since the early seventeenth century when the British East India Company set up its trading post in Surai in 1612. The first Gujaratis to come to Britain were students in the late 1800, one being **Mahatma Ghandi** who came as a law student and later led India to independence. The main growth of Gujarati communities in Britain came after the Second World War when their experience in the textile and steel industries was welcomed at a time of labour shortage in Britain.

Many Gujaratis share the name "**Patel**" which means "**landowner**" because originally Patels were farmers in the Kaira district of Gujarat. On arrival in Britain they took any available job but eventually by hard work and a flair for business started up grocery shops, newsagents

and similar concerns, many of which have since become very successful.

Most Gujaratis are Hindus, but some are Muslims. Their first language is Gujarati though people from the Kutch region in the north speak a dialect of Gujarati called Kutchi.

Punjab

The Indian Punjab (there is also a Punjab province in Pakistan) in northern India is mainly a farming area where the traditional culture is based on village life. However, it now also has a thriving manufacturing industry producing goods for export.

Punjab is the homeland of the Sikh people (about 60%) though in India as a whole Sikhs only account for about 2% of the population. However, most British Punjabis are Sikhs. Sikhs are proud of their reputation as fighters and many served in the British forces in the Second World War. The link with Britain is much older than that though because of the British rule in India and there have been Punjabi communities in Britain for a hundred years

As is the case with Gujaratis and other nationalities from the Indian sub-continent, the main growth of Punjabi communities in Britain was in the post war period, particularly the 1950s and 1960s. The first language of the people of Punjab is Punjabi, though like Gujaratis they will be more or less familiar with Hindi, the official language of India.

East Africa

In the late nineteenth century Britain had colonised parts of East Africa and brought people from the Gujarat and Punjab to build transport systems and work in government administration. The main countries involved were Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi.

The main settlement of Asian families in East Africa took place between 1890 and 1935 and again between 1945 and 1960. Because of their history as traders and junior administrators many had established successful businesses or professional careers. However, when the East African countries became independent they were given the option to become citizens of these countries or remain British. About two thirds from Kenya chose to exercise their British rights and come to Britain and when in 1972 Idi Amin of Uganda expelled all Asians with a British passport a large number were evacuated to the UK.

Language

The official language of India is Hindi. However, there are other main languages spoken particularly in the various regions or states. For example, Punjabi is predominantly spoken and used for literature in the state of Punjab and Gujarati which is related to Hindi and Sanskrit is widely spoken in the state of Gujarat. The importance of Gujarati has spread with the historical movement of migrant workers from India to East and West Africa and then to Britain.

English is also widely used as an associate language for the majority of official purposes such as the administration of the Civil Service and the Police

There are known to be over 1600 mother-tongues in India and the Indian constitution encourages the use of regional languages in education, literature and cultural affairs.

The cross-over from one language to the next and the adjoining dialect and regional variations in India are tremendous. This often causes confusion. For example, the people of the Indian and Pakistani Punjab areas both speak Punjabi, but the Indian Punjabis write the language using Gurmukhi whilst the Pakistani Punjabis use the Perso-Arabic script.

Family

Like other Asian peoples, those from India place a strong emphasis on the family whatever their religion. The sense of family responsibility remains strong even though in Britain it is often not possible for extended families to live together. Children are automatically expected to respect their parents and their wishes and to look after them when they are old.

Religion

Religion is a very powerful influence in the lives of members of Indian communities. There are several religions but the main ones are Hinduism (practiced by 80% of the population), Sikhism (2%), Islam (10%) and the rest covering a wide range of minority religions. An outline of the main religions is provided under Main Ethnic Minority Religions.

Gypsy and Traveller Communities

Gypsies have lived in England in substantial numbers since the beginning of the sixteenth century. Other groups of Gypsy/Travellers including those of Scottish, Welsh and Irish heritage share in general terms a common history. More recently, a small but growing number of Gypsies from Eastern Europe have sought asylum in England. Both Gypsies and Irish Travellers are acknowledged as ethnic minorities within Race Relations legislation.

Size of population

Data on Gypsy/Travellers is difficult to establish. The population census does not currently identify Gypsy/Travellers as a separate group. A recent estimate by the Office for Standards in Education put the total size of the nomadic population in England at about 90,000 persons. This is broken down as follows:

- Gypsy/Travellers 70,000
- Fairground/Show people 10,500
- Circus people 2,000
- New Travellers 6,000
- Bargees/boat dwellers 500.

However these figures are estimates and do not include those Gypsy/Travellers who may be living in houses. There is a pattern of Gypsy/Travellers moving in and out of housed accommodation but it is estimated that the majority of Gypsy/Travellers live in houses and have abandoned a fully nomadic lifestyle. This does not inevitably mean relinquishing their ethnic identity or cultural traditions. It is estimated that the number of Gypsy/Traveller children of compulsory school age in England is in the region of 50,000.

Traveller communities have tight kinship networks. Intervention or involvement of social services is rare although there are concerns about cultural attitudes to schooling with very little attendance at secondary level, and high levels of ill health, including accidental injury.

The experience of council sites in St Helens and Halton suggest that, for some, the present time may be an important period of transition within gypsy and traveller communities. Both sites now have no turnover and have long waiting lists and there are no plans for expansion of provision.

Discrimination against travellers has a high level of social acceptance. Traveller issues do not yet tend to be approached within the terms of 'race, ethnicity or diversity'.

Part E Race Relations Legislation

The Race Relations Act 1976

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origins. The Act deals with acts (not intentions) which constitute direct or indirect discrimination, or victimisation. The 1976 Act was however, limited to employment, training and provision of education, housing and other services within local authorities.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

The Act came into effect in April 2001 and draws on the key elements of the Report of the Lawrence Inquiry including in particular its definition of institutional discrimination. The Government believes that public bodies have a special responsibility as employers, policy makers and service providers to deliver race equality and that they should set the pace in race equality and lead by example. Consequently a number of very radical changes were made to the Race Relations legislation. This Act:

- extends the powers of the 1976 Race Relations Act in respect of public authorities to include areas not previously covered, notably the police;
- places a new DUTY on public authorities to work towards the elimination of unlawful racial discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunity; and
- makes a number of other detailed amendments.

The key feature of this Act is that it gives teeth to the concept of placing a duty on public authorities to take action on race equality. It is an attempt to tackle institutional discrimination. It requires organisations to have effective systems in place to avoid racial discrimination and a public scrutiny of relevant policies and procedures in this area.

Public Bodies Covered By the Act

- All functions of local government, central government, the police and the NHS.
- Voluntary and private sector agencies that carry out public functions, for example, prisons, some aspects of residential care etc.

General Duties Expected by Public Bodies

The Government believes that the key features of an organisation seeking to promote racial equality are that it:

- Monitors its workforce, taking steps to ensure that ethnic minorities are treated fairly.
- Assesses how its policies and programmes could affect ethnic minorities, identifies any potential for adverse differential impact and takes remedial action if necessary.
- Monitors the implementation of its policies and programmes to ensure they meet the needs of people from ethnic minorities.
- Has a publicly stated policy on race equality.

Specific Duties to support the General Duties are:

- Prepare and publish a race equality scheme setting out how it intends to meet its obligations under the general duty and any other proposed specific duties to promote race equality which are relevant to it.
- Assess which of its functions and policies are relevant to the general duty with regular subsequent reviews, for example, three yearly.
- Set out its arrangement for assessing and consulting on the impact on the promotion of race equality of policies it is proposing for adoption.
- Set out its arrangement or monitoring for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality of policies it has adopted or is proposing to adopt.

- Set out its arrangements for publishing the results of assessments, consultations and monitoring for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality of policies.
- Set out its arrangements for ensuring ethnic minorities have access to information and to services it provides.
- Set out its arrangements for training staff on issues relevant to the duty to promote race equality.

The Commission for Racial Equality (**CRE**) will issue Codes of Practice which will provide practical guidance on how to fulfil both the general duties and specific duties.

Enforcement of the Act

- ***Unlawful Racial Discrimination***
 - Individual employees can pursue race discrimination claims through the employment tribunal.
 - Individuals can pursue claims through the County Court of unlawful discrimination, for example against the Chief Constable.
 - Informal action can be taken by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE).
 - A formal investigation can be undertaken by the CRE who will be empowered to serve non-discrimination notices on public bodies. Failure to comply with the notice could amount to contempt of court and the ultimate sanction for this is imprisonment of directors.
- ***General and Specific Duties***
 - there is no provision for individuals to bring a challenge in the County Court, although judicial review will remain available
 - Complaints will be channelled through the CRE who will take informal action first.
 - The Commission For Racial Equality (**CRE**) is empowered to secure a Compliance Notice upon a public body which it

believes is not fulfilling a general or specific duty. If necessary it will be able to seek a court order to enforce the notice. If the notice is not complied with this may constitute contempt of court and the ultimate sanction for this is imprisonment. No financial remedies are available.

Some Important Definitions

- **Discrimination:**

Under the Act there are two kinds of discrimination:

- **Direct Racial Discrimination:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably on racial grounds than other people are, or would be, treated in similar circumstances.
- **Indirect Racial Discrimination:** This occurs when a condition or requirement is applied equally to people of all racial groups, but many fewer people of a particular group are able to comply with it. Such indirect discrimination is unlawful when it cannot be justified other than on racial grounds.
- **Victimisation:**
This is when a person is treated less favourably than others because they have taken a case of racial discrimination, or given evidence relating to a case, or alleged that discrimination has occurred.
- **Racism:**
A belief that human races have distinctive characteristics that determine their respective culture, usually involving the idea that one's race is superior and has the right to rule others, which is enforceable by some source of power, e.g. policies, systems and procedures.
- **Prejudice:**
This literally means "pre-judging" - knowing next to nothing about someone but forming some opinions and jumping to conclusions because of some characteristic, like their appearance.

- **Institutional Discrimination**

This is the failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in the way the organisation operates — in processes, attitudes and behaviour. This amounts to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people.

(MacPherson Report – The Stephen Lawrence Case)

Getting more information

Getting useful information on practice issues which social services might have to deal with means entering a network of agencies and contacts which is not that well signposted.

Internal sources

All local authorities are required to produce a Race Equality Plan (see Race Relations Amendment Act) which sets out arrangements for service development. Someone will therefore hold the brief for race, equality or diversity issues and be part of the network of groups and meetings which deal with these issues. Similarly there will be arrangements in place in your Authority for the co-ordination of work with Asylum Seekers and Refugees and for access to interpretation or translation services.

Local Sources

There is no local Race Equality Council in Sefton, Knowsley or St Helens. Halton and Warrington are covered by the Race Equality Council in Chester (Tel: 01244 400730) and this is a good resource for generalist information or links into communities. However there are few ethnic minority communities organisations in the boroughs though there are individuals who may be able to act as a useful contact.

National Sources

The Commission for Racial Equality has offices in London, Birmingham and Manchester and a useful website at www.cre.gov.uk. It has officers who specialise in social services issues though these may tend to have a generalist knowledge. Tel: 0161 835 5500. Manchester

REU, formerly the Race Equality Unit attached to the National Institute for Social Work, was intended as the professional centre for issues of race and ethnicity but has been affected by shifts in the organisation and funding of social work. It is a source of information but no longer maintains a website or other accessible or dedicated information system.

Tel: 0207 619 6220

Internet searches can be useful for identifying resources. Otherwise **ask**, and if there is no satisfactory response, discuss. Difficult questions with unsatisfactory answers is familiar territory for social work staff.

Part F Ethnic Monitoring

Ethnic monitoring of staff and service users is now a requirement in local authorities and a new set of categories based on those used in the 2001 census has been introduced as a national Standard. (www.doh.gov.uk/ethnicity2001guidance/ethnicguidance.pdf)

Self Classification

The Guidance from the Department of Health stresses the principle that people should define their own ethnicity and that, in carrying out monitoring, service users must have the opportunity to state which of the categories they consider that they belong to.

The Guidance makes a distinction between a person's 'ethnic group' which is the way they see their own identity within the categories on offer and which can quite subjective, and their 'ethnic origins' which in some circumstances may have biological implications which may be medically significant.

In some ways this is similar to the occasional issue within child care work where a child, young person or their family may describe themselves one way but the social worker may consider that this is objectively inaccurate and obscures issues of ethnicity in the child's background which need to be acknowledged.

Practice v Monitoring Data

A recent review of social work practice in the Borough has noted that there can be a difference in the quality of information needed for practice and for monitoring. It has recommended the following 3 steps in recording information about the ethnicity of all looked after children.

Establish the facts of ethnicity within the child's family

- Establish ethnicity within the child's family background, of parents and grandparents, as accurately as is possible.
- Use the new ethnic categories to allow parents and child to define their own ethnicity.

Assess the relevance of ethnicity for practice.

For looked after children the key issues to establish are whether ethnicity leads to health needs or leads to a liability that the child will

be subject to racism, and/or affects the child's opportunities to form a positive sense of identity. Questions to be considered are:

- Does the child need to be tested for inherited blood disorders?
- Is the child, on the basis of their name, physical appearance or family associations liable to be treated negatively within this society?
- Irrespective of external signs does the child's family background include groups that are viewed negatively within this society?
- Does the work with the family and child to define ethnic background indicate issues related to the child's identity that need to be addressed in practice?

Plan practice and use of resources.

The information from the above sources should enable a clear decision to be taken on whether and how ethnicity may need to be addressed and to identify the resources which can be drawn upon, through life work, other identity work, placement or support for carers.

Defining Ethnicity: New Basic Categories (DoH 2001)

Ethnic Categories*	Codes
a. White	-
<input type="checkbox"/> British	A
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	B
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other White background	C
b. Mixed	-
<input type="checkbox"/> White and Black Caribbean	D
<input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African	E
<input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian	F
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other mixed background	G
c. Asian or Asian British	-
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	H
<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	J
<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	K
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background	L
d. Black or Black British	-
<input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean	M
<input type="checkbox"/> African	N
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black background	P
e. Other ethnic Groups	-
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	R
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group	S
f. Not Stated	-
<input type="checkbox"/> Not stated	Z
* Based on 2001 Census	

The DoH has produced a much more detailed framework as an option for Local Authorities. It is reproduced here for information only and should not be used without reference to the Authority's guidance.

* Based on 2001 Census

DESCRIPTION	Proposed code
WHITE GROUP	
01 British, Mixed British	[A*]
02 Irish	[B*]
03 English	[CA]
04 Scottish	[CB]
05 Welsh	[CC]
38 Northern Irish	[C2]
06 Cornish	[CD]
07 Cypriot (part not stated)	[CE]
08 Greek	[CF]
09 Greek Cypriot	[CG]
10 Turkish	[CH]
11 Turkish Cypriot	[CJ]
12 Italian	[CK]
13 Irish Traveller	[CL]
14 Traveller	[CM]
15 Gypsy/Romany	[CN]
16 Polish	[CP]
17 All republics which made up the former USSR	[CQ]
18 Kosovan	[CR]
19 Albanian	[CS]
31 Bosnian	[CT]
32 Croatian	[CU]
33 Serbian	[CV]
34 Other republics which made up the former Yugoslavia	[CW]
36 Mixed white	[CX]
37 Other white European, European unspecified, European mixed	[CY]
39 Other white, white unspecified	[C3]
MIXED GROUPS	
21 White and Black Caribbean	[D*]

22 White and Black African	[E*]
23 White and Asian	[F*]
24 Black and Asian	[GA]
25 Black and Chinese	[GB]
26 Black and White	[GC]
27 Chinese and White	[GD]
28 Asian and Chinese	[GE]
29 Other Mixed, Mixed Unspecified	[GF]
ASIAN or ASIAN BRITISH GROUP	
41 Indian or British Indian	[H*]
42 Pakistani or British Pakistani	[J*]
43 Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi	[K*]
44 Mixed Asian	[LA]
45 Punjabi	[LB]
46 Kashmiri	[LC]
47 East African Asian	[LD]
48 Sri Lanka	[LE]
49 Tamil	[LF]
50 Sinhalese	[LG]
51 British Asian,	[LH]
57 Caribbean Asian	[LJ]
59 Other Asian, Asian unspecified	[LK]
BLACK or BLACK BRITISH GROUP	
61 Caribbean	[M*]
62 African	[N*]
63 Somali	[PA]
64 Mixed Black	[PB]
65 Nigerian	[PC]
66 Black British	[PD]
69 Other Black, Black unspecified	[PE]
OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS	
81 Chinese	[R*]
84 Vietnamese	[SA]
85 Japanese	[SB]
86 Filipino	[SC]
87 Malaysian	[SD]
89 Any Other Group	[SE]
(99) Not stated	[Z*]
Note: Classification "99" is not included on the census code list and is included here for completeness.	

