A useful reference guide to understanding the UK’s diverse faith & ethnic communities

PROMOTING DIVERSITY  East of England Fire and Rescue Services Working Together
Foreword

Working with Diverse Communities

This publication has been developed in direct response to requests from Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) employees, and has been developed in partnership with our staff and our local communities in which we serve.

This handbook aims to assist FRS employees in providing services to people in their own home as well as out in the community. It recognises that we have a multi-cultural community and a workforce from a wide range of religions and backgrounds.

This will help us to build strong and positive relationships between people of different backgrounds, including those from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and different faith communities. By focusing on what people have in common, as well as recognising the value of diversity, we can foster a shared sense of belonging and a shared sense of the future.

The challenge for our employees is to make sure that we establish effective, respectful, two-way communication, which enables us to deliver our services to the highest of standards.

Furthermore the FRS Equality and Diversity Strategy in May 2008 gave the clearest signal of a collective commitment to transform the FRS into an organisation which is best equipped to understand and meet the needs of all our diverse communities and deliver a first class service to everyone.

This handbook will support better social cohesion in our communities, and help our services to meet their core objectives of community safety, call reductions, and community engagement.

We recommend this publication as it draws together a range of information, to help inform the everyday contacts that our employees make, as well as develop and maintain relationships within our diverse communities. It focuses on providing the practical basic information on how best to work with a wide range of different cultures and faiths.

This publication will help:

- Inform employees so that they can ensure engagement with local communities is empathetic and built upon genuine understanding;
- Lead to a better understanding between the many different communities that exist in the region today;
- Ensure that we deliver an excellent service to all; and,
- Promote dignity and respect for our staff and with our communities.
Asian Fire Service Association

As the Chair of AFSA, I am pleased to add my support for this handbook which I am sure will enable not only the FRS in the East of England but also in many other parts of the UK to understand all of our communities and help us to deliver excellent services to all. I am pleased to note that in the first year of the launch of AFSA we have been able to contribute to a document that will help not only to better service delivery but also help us to build a better understanding of employees from diverse backgrounds within the FRS.

I am sure AFSA members will also find this handbook very useful and it is my intention to ensure every AFSA member receives a personal copy of this handbook on joining. I congratulate the East of England for taking on this project and inviting AFSA to be stakeholders in the project.
Introduction

‘An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be’.1

Britain today is a country of great cultural diversity. It is a multi-ethnic and multi-faith country. Ten per cent of the population would describe themselves as from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background. Approximately eight per cent of people in Britain were born in another country. 2

While no British village, town or city is truly homogenous, different parts of the country have varying concentrations of people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups living in them. In 2005, people from minority ethnic groups accounted for around one in every three people in London; but for less than one in every 20 people living in the South West and North East regions (each with four per cent respectively).

These figures are useful but do not show the complexities that lie behind why people categorise themselves, nor of the individuals that fall within a particular grouping. It does not include information on how strongly people identify with the category or share cultural characteristics. As a report from the Home Office – Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society (published in 2005) – stresses, such a complex picture merits:

‘…. more sophisticated, tailored approaches to meeting the specific needs of different minority communities… rather than treating all minority groups as disadvantaged or having the same needs. This is the time to move on from one-size-fits-all approaches to meeting Black and Minority Ethnic need’.

Why is it Important to Understand Cultural Diversity?

‘Multi cultural communities are often multi-faith communities and this should be fully recognised in policies aimed at promoting diversity. Fostering understanding and respect between different faiths is vital in practically implementing community cohesion strategies’ – Communities and Local Government.

There are three key reasons why understanding around Cultural Diversity is crucial to the FRS:

- Community Risk issues;
- Fire Service Core Values;
- Legal Imperatives.
"We are the change we have been waiting for."

Barack Obama

Risk Issues

Surveys suggested that Asian families had the lowest number of fires per 100 households, and the 1996 survey noted that:

‘Although Asian households tend to be larger, which is associated with higher fire risks, they actually have lower risks than white households when the household size and other factors are taken into account. African-Caribbean’s also have lower risks than whites, but the difference is not statistically significant’.

The figures from both surveys are, in reality, relatively similar but other factors suggest that people from BME groups are at increased risk. For example, the same report found that:

- BME households had higher odds of not owning a working smoke alarm; with Asian households the least likely to do so.
- Households from multi-ethnic and low income areas were most likely to have suffered a fire in the previous 12 months.

In fact, evidence shows that multiple deprivation is a key factor in the increased risk of fire and people from BME groups are more likely to experience poor housing, low incomes, ill-health and disability.

Together with low ownership of smoke alarms, other factors affecting risk among BME communities are:

- The use of hot oil and naked flames in cooking;
- Low fire safety awareness; and,
- High rates of smoking in some communities.

‘The available data demonstrates that, while there is much variation within and between different ethnic groups, overall, people from minority ethnic communities are more likely than others to live in deprived areas and in unpopular and overcrowded housing’.

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According to the Cabinet Office Social Exclusion Unit:

‘Minority ethnic communities experience a double disadvantage. They are disproportionately concentrated in deprived areas and experience all the problems that affect other people in these areas. But people from minority ethnic communities also suffer the consequences of racial discrimination; services that fail to reach them or meet their needs; and language and cultural barriers in gaining access to information and services’.

London Fire Service carried out research to evaluate the impact of fire safety campaigns on the behaviour and attitudes of people of Bangladeshi origin, where smoke alarm penetration was lower than the London average. The research found that smoke alarm ownership increased (from a fifth to a third of households), but that people from the targeted groups needed to be assured that the smoke alarm message, and fire safety actions in general, were a priority for everyone, not just home owners and those who speak English.

Research for the Fire Kills Campaign, which was carried out as part of the April 2000 Fire Action Plan pilot campaign in the Yorkshire TV region, highlighted the marked fire safety differences between white and Asian samples covered by a tracking survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have smoke alarms</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have an escape plan</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV advertising recall</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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Qualitative research on the Fire Action Plan leaflet, carried out among Urdu speakers (Pakistani) and Gujarati speakers (Indian) in Bradford, showed some awareness of fire safety issues and recent fires in the community, but that this was coupled with a lack of knowledge and motivation to plan what to do if a fire did occur.

FRS Core Values

The FRS core values underline the importance of work with specific groups by:

- Emphasising a commitment to serving all parts of the community; recognising that diverse needs, expectations and risks need diverse solutions; and,
- Fulfilling responsibilities to people, communities and the environment.
The Challenge for the Fire and Rescue Service

The challenge for professionals working in a diverse community is to make sure there is effective, respectful, two-way communication, and that services are delivered in culturally appropriate and acceptable ways. This may mean using empathy or cultural knowledge to work out why people are behaving as they are. That in turn may mean questioning our own assumptions about different faiths and communities. In writing this handbook it became apparent that if there is a secret to working across cultures, it is all about knowing your own culture and being able to ask the right questions about the difference of other cultures in a sensitive and empathetic way.

This handbook has been developed to bring together information about “what works” and best practice, in both a concise and systematic way. The result has been a vital addition to the practice and knowledge base for all involved in assessing and meeting the needs of people from ethnic minority/faith communities within the UK.

This publication is merely the first step, designed primarily to aid FRS employees. The overall future aim will be for increasingly more culturally competent FRS employees to inform and enlighten the services that we deliver, and how we measure our success.

The FRS currently has a positive reputation with the people of this country – its customers – however this position can only be sustained through recognising the benefits of cultural diversity and the contribution that all sectors of the community make to improve the overall safety of our community.

The Service will:

- Reduce fire death and injuries;
- Make a significant contribution to road safety;
- Make a significant contribution to water safety;
- and,
- Help and support social cohesion.

The additional benefits to the FRS will be:

- Increased customer satisfaction;
- Improved consultation on safety issues;
- Increased take up of safety campaigns by the community;
- and,
- Reduced cost of operational response.

Also, please remember that this handbook simply provides information and advice, it is not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive.

Legislation - Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty

The existing duties to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups in the fields of race, disability and gender will be replaced by a single duty that is extended to cover all the protected characteristics with the exception of marriage and civil partnerships.

There are now nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Act also places a new duty on certain public bodies to consider socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions about how to exercise their functions. Disadvantage could include inequalities in areas such as education, health, housing, crime rates, or in other matters associated with socioeconomic disadvantage.

The Equality Duty will require public authorities to consider the way their employment practices, spending decisions and service delivery affect different disadvantaged groups in the community. The duty will underpin policies promoting social cohesion, public participation, and will require public authorities to take account of the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
What is Culture?

Culture is not static. What we think of as traditional may only go back one or two generations. When people from one culture are in regular contact with another, aspects of their original culture may change dramatically. The culture of most immigrant groups in the UK has been modified considerably as they have lived here. This means that there is not a single view of what is right and wrong in any given culture. There may be religious or other texts that recommend certain behaviour, but everyone has an individual relationship to the culture, or cultures, that they were born into, accepting some aspects, and rejecting or down-playing others.

Everyone has an identity that is composed of a number of elements. It is important when you meet someone from a different culture not to reduce them in your mind to just one element. Find out how other people see themselves, and how they want to be seen. This is essential to working with differences.

A Word of Caution

The aim of this handbook is to provide general information and guidance, and to help with planning of services.

There are many different communities living in the UK and this handbook is not intended to cover every one of them. It includes communities with either a significant population or which are expected to grow in the near future.

In addition, within any group there will be a wide diversity of backgrounds and beliefs. It is impossible to describe this diversity within this document and so the characteristics described here will not apply to everyone from a particular ethnic, religious or cultural group. It is up to individual people to choose how they wish to identify themselves; they do not have to adhere to a certain set of characteristics to be part of a certain group.

It is recognised that there is a danger in producing a document such as this, that stereotypes and prejudices can be reinforced. It is vital that in planning and delivering services we respond to the needs of the individual. We need to ask and to listen to find out about these individual needs and to seek to meet them sensitively and appropriately.

Two Key Messages

- Simply do not to make assumptions or generalise.
- When in doubt, ask! People won’t expect you to know everything about their attitudes and customs. It’s better to ask than to get it wrong.
Buddhism

A Buddhist strives for a deep insight into the true nature of life and does not worship gods or deities. Buddhism is a tradition that focuses on personal spiritual development.

Beliefs
In Buddhism, the purpose of life is to end suffering. The Buddha taught that humans suffer because they continually strive after things that do not give lasting happiness.

A Buddha is not a god, but rather one who, through complete wisdom and compassion, has attained full enlightenment and is thus beyond the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

A Buddha exemplifies the highest form of morality and is the supreme teacher, showing people the way to relieve suffering.

Places of worship
Buddhist temples are designed to symbolise the five elements: fire, air, earth, water and wisdom.

Some Buddhists, as an expression of reverence only, enter shrines through a side door. The central opening is formally reserved for the master and monastic. Therefore some temples may have been constructed with triple-opening entrances to various halls.

Prayers
Key Buddhist scriptures include the Sutras (teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha), the Vinaya (rules for monastic life), and the Abhidharma (Buddhist philosophy and psychology).

Meditation is seen as way of promoting calm and often lasts for 10 minutes. Chanting is viewed as an opportunity to learn, reinforce, and reflect upon various Buddhist teachings, and to show respect to various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the virtues they embody. Also bowing and prostration are a humble way to express respect and appreciation for the Buddha.

It is common for Buddhists to use prayer beads as a guide when reciting Buddha’s name. The cord stringing all the beads together can be said to represent the strength of the Buddha’s teachings.

Greeting
It is customary for Buddhists to greet people with palms pressed together at chest level and reciting the phrase ‘omitofo’, which is the Chinese pronunciation for Amitabha Buddha’s name.

Dress
No special dress codes for lay Buddhists, although when visiting their local temple or centre Buddhists may dress in simple white clothes for the day.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

Nirvana Day
The celebration of Buddha’s death when he reached total Nirvana, at the age of 80 (8th/15th Feb)

Magha Puja
Marks the day Buddha addressed a meeting of 1250 Arhantas (Feb/March)

Theravada New Year
New Year festival for Theravada Buddhists, celebrated for three days (from the first full moon day in April)

Vesak/Buddha Day
Celebrates the Buddha’s birthday, and, for some Buddhists, also marks his enlightenment and death (May)

Asala/Dharma Day
Marks Buddha’s first sermon, “The Wheel of Truth”, after his enlightenment (July)

Bodhi Day
Some Buddhists celebrate Gautama's attainment of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, India (8TH Dec)

There are approximately 150,000 active Buddhists in the UK. Likely languages spoken include English, Cantonese, Hakka, Japanese, Thai, Tibetan, Sinhalese.

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Diet
While the traditional Buddhist scriptures do not mandate vegetarianism, you may find that many Buddhists are vegetarian. Vegetarianism is seen in connection with the concept of rebirth, in terms of humans may be other forms of life in their past and/or future lives, thus it follows that an animal could be a past and/or future next-of-kin. Therefore killing an animal could be seen as synonymous with destroying one’s own relatives.

When entering a home
It is customary for Buddhists to have a room dedicated in their home which is viewed as a shrine. The room may contain a statue of Buddha, candles, and an incense burner. Prostrating to an image is seen as the same as bowing to a Buddha.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Candles and burning incense are commonly used.
- Triple-opening and separate entrances for different people may impact on evacuation and fire exit practice.
- In an emergency all exits and entrances may be used by FRS employees.

Providing Emergency Assistance
It is generally viewed that members of the opposite sex can provide comfort and medical assistance.

Buddhist meditation is not hypnosis nor will this induce a trance, so this should not impact upon assistance offered.

Prayer beads are often used when reciting Buddha’s name so take care not to step on them. If found during a fire, take care of them and hand them to the occupants.

Dealing with incidence of Death
Many Buddhists believe that the soul does not leave the body immediately. Therefore it is crucial that the corpse is treated like a living person and moved with respect.

It is customary for Buddhists and family members to chant sacred texts at the time of death.
Christianity

Christianity has a wide variety of forms, beliefs, and practices, but all centre around faith in Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Bible.

There are around 42 million Britons who see themselves as nominally Christian, and there are approximately 6 million who are actively practising. The majority of Christians in the UK are Anglican (known as Church of England), though there are many other Protestant churches, and Roman Catholics.

Likely languages spoken include English and many other languages. Please note that for some Christian immigrant communities from Europe, Africa and South Asia, English may be a second language.

Beliefs
Christianists believe in one God, shown in three forms: as God the Father; Jesus, his Son, sent to earth in human form; and the Holy Spirit, the essence of God working in the world today.

The essence of Jesus’ teaching was to love God, and to love one’s neighbour. The traditional belief is that we will all be judged after our death, according to how we lived our life, and sent for ever either to heaven or to hell, but that all the dead will be resurrected at the second coming of Jesus. Catholics also believe in purgatory, where people will be punished for their sins but eventually allowed to rejoin God in heaven.

Places of worship
Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox people worship in churches and cathedrals (the main church for an area). Other Protestant groups may have churches or chapels. Quakers however call their place of worship the Meeting-House.

Prayers
Christian rituals and religious practices differ between denomination, individual church and individual Christian, but some practices are common to virtually all forms of Christianity.
Most practising Christians attend worship services at church on Sundays, which generally include singing, prayer and a sermon. At home, most practicing Christians pray regularly and many read the Bible. Religious observance for Catholics includes saying the rosary, the sacrament of confession and prayers to patron saints.

**Greeting**
There is no formal common greeting for Christians around the world and it will depend on local customs and etiquettes.

**Dress**
No distinctive dressing is associated with Christians though some women may cover their heads when in church. Type of dress code is likely to be influenced by cultural or national origin, therefore Christians from the Indian sub-continent may choose to wear a garment such as shalwar kameez or sari that reflects their cultural background or national origin.

**Diet**
Generally all foods are permissible though some may follow Jewish and Muslim custom and avoid pork. Christian dietary habits tend to be culturally rather than religiously determined. Some Christians avoid alcohol, but at the same time some will drink wine (in moderation) as this plays a symbolic role in Holy Communion for some Christians.

**When entering a home**
The most common symbol of Christianity is the cross, representing the cross on which Jesus Christ died. Many Catholics and Orthodox people have a crucifix: the image of Jesus on the cross. Catholics may also have a statue of the Virgin Mary, Jesus’ mother.

**Potential Fire Hazards**
- Candles at Easter and Christmas, Fairy lights, Christmas trees and decorations at Christmas time.

**Providing Emergency Assistance**
Some Christians may decline conventional medical treatments and some may have special procedures for blood transfusions (Jehovah Witnesses). Generally most Christians would not object to being treated by members of the opposite sex. Take care if you find any religious artefacts, jewellery, or holy books such as the Bible. If found keep clean and hand them to the occupants.

**Dealing with incidence of Death**
Some Christians will appreciate quiet contemplation and others will value prayers and reading of scriptures. A priest or minister may be called to say prayers for someone who is dying. Catholics and Orthodox people may want to confess to a priest before they die. Funeral services may be held in churches and chapels. People may then be buried or in some cases cremated. Many Catholics oppose cremation, because of the belief in resurrection of the body and soul at the second coming of Jesus.
Hinduism

Hinduism developed in India. Hinduism has developed over five thousand years, under the influence of different cultures and civilizations. It is a way of life as much as a set of beliefs.

Beliefs
Most Hindus believe in a Supreme God, whose qualities and forms are represented by the multitude of deities which emanate from Him. Hindus believe that existence is a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, governed by Karma.

The oldest sacred texts of Hinduism are called the Vedas. They are broken down as the Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, and Atharva-Veda. Although, there are other texts that are considered just as important to the Hindu faith, such as the Upanishads, the Puranas, the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavad-Gita.

Places of worship
Some people visit the temple (Mandir) to worship. Certain rules should be observed when entering a temple.

Everyone should remove their shoes before entering, and women should cover their heads.

Prayers
Hindu worship (Puja) is usually individual rather than communal. Many homes have a family shrine with statues or pictures of the gods worshipped by the family. The part of a home reserved for worship should not be entered without an invitation.

Hindus pray at least once a day and must purify themselves by showering or washing before prayer.

Greeting
The Hindu greeting is “Namaste”, pronounced Namastay, with the accent on the second syllable (“I greet you respectfully”).

Dress
Both traditional and western style clothing is worn by Hindus in the UK.

In the UK the wearing of saris of brightly coloured silk amongst older women is common. Younger women may wear a salwar kameez – a tunic and pyjama trousers. This is worn with a dupatta (scarf) which can be used to cover the head. Men usually wear western style trousers and shirt.

Diet
Hindus regard the cow as a sacred animal (the cow is revered as Mother Nature as it provides food in the form of milk, butter, and cheese, and also works the land) and therefore Hindus do not slaughter cows or eat their meat.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

- **Mahashivaratri**
  Night sacred to Shiva (Feb/March)

- **Holi**
  Festival of colours and Spring (Feb/March)

- **Rama Navami**
  Birthday of Lord Rama (April)

- **Raksha Bandhan**
  Renewal of bonds between brothers and sisters (July/Aug)

- **Dussera**
  Victory of Rama over demon king Ravana (Sept/Oct)

- **Diwali**
  Festival of lights and Laksmi (Oct/Nov)

There are around 1.5 million Hindus living in the UK. Likely languages spoken include English, Bengali, Guajarati, Hindi, Punjabi, and Tamil.
Most Hindus are likely to be vegetarian, and for them eggs, being a source of life, are also prohibited. For devout Hindus alcohol and smoking is also not permitted.

**When entering a home**

Visitors should remove their shoes (in non-emergency situations) and should not enter the part of the home reserved for prayer unless invited.

The syllable Om, which is central to Hindu prayers, is also used as a written symbol; it appears on documents, on pendants, in family shrines and temples.

**Potential Fire Hazards**

- During festivals candles and fireworks are commonly used, and typically there is a lot of cooking that is undertaken involving the use of oil and cooking pans.

- Large numbers of worshippers at religious venues, possible overcrowding, and cars obstructing access to roads in and around places of worship is also possible.

- You may also find under representation of smoke alarms in Hindu homes.

**Providing Emergency Assistance**

Some Hindus would prefer to be comforted and treated by someone from the same sex.

Some boys wear a ‘Sacred Thread’ (Yagno Pavit) over the right shoulder and around the body. If possible, close family should be consulted before removal. If the Thread has to be cut or removed it should be retained and given to the person later.

**Dealing with incidence of Death**

Do not remove jewellery, sacred threads and other religious objects.

Cover the body with a plain sheet without any religious markings.

Avoid washing the body since this is part of the funeral rites carried out by relatives.

Post-mortem examinations are not prohibited by Hindu belief however the idea may be distasteful to some Hindus, if required this should be discussed with the family. All adult Hindus must be cremated, not buried; but infants and young children may be buried, and it is usual for this to be done as soon as possible, preferably the same day.

There has been some demand in the UK for a full open air ceremony to be conducted on cremation of a dead body according to ancient Hindu rites. These rites stipulate that the body be cremated by means of a wood-fuelled fire in an open air facility exposed to daylight. At present such practice is illegal in the UK.
A Humanist is someone who emphasises that they can make sense of the world using reason, experience and shared human values without religious or superstitious beliefs.

Western Europe has a tradition of non-religious ethical thinking that can be traced back some 2,500 years to the philosophy of the Ancient Greeks. This way of understanding the world, of finding meaning in life, and of grounding moral thinking can also be found in China and India and many other cultures.

### Beliefs

Humanism is a naturalistic view, encompassing both atheism and agnosticism and a direct response to established religions.

The core of Humanism is that it is a way of being that brings out the best in people. Human Rights law is fundamental to Humanist beliefs.

Humanism is an approach to life based on humanity and reason and not based on supernatural beings or sacred texts. Science is seen as the key source of knowledge about the universe. Afterlife and reincarnation are not recognised with emphasis on this life. Ethical and moral lifestyles can be practiced without reference to religious beliefs and moral codes can be gained from reference to the lessons of history, personal experience and thought.

Humanists also stress individual rights and freedoms, but believe that individual responsibility, social cooperation and mutual respect are just as important.

They gain insights and encouragement from art, culture, and the rich natural world.

### Places of worship

The term worship is not applicable to Humanism. Humanists meet regularly in all main centres of population to talk, learn and share ideas, to debate, discuss and campaign on social and moral issues, and to socialise and celebrate life and significant events.

For those of us with no religious belief it’s important that we can mark these occasions with honesty, warmth and affection, using words and music that are personal and appropriate to the lives and the people involved.

Each of the ceremonies we conduct is unique, created specially for the people involved and based on shared human values with no dependency on religion or superstition. What’s important to us, as it is to you, is the occasion and the person or people being celebrated or commemorated. There are no special rules or strict observances beyond basic legal requirements.

### Prayers

Humanists do conduct non-religious ceremonies to observe life rites (e.g. birth, coming of age, marriage, death) and other occasions. These events have no
religious content in the ceremonies, any hymns or prayers. Prayers and hymns at most formal gatherings are replaced with poetry and readings, and for instance, classical music.

**Greeting**
Humanists send goodwill to all people, stressing greater happiness and mutual understanding to all.

**Dress**
No particular requirements.

**Diet**
There are no special dietary requirements as this is down to individual choice.

**When entering a home**
No particular requirements.

**Potential Fire Hazards**
- No identified hazards.

- This will depend on cultural and economic conditions that the person lives in.

**Providing Emergency Assistance**
No particular requirements.

**Dealing with incidence of Death**
The death of someone we have known and loved, whether someone in our extended family, a friend or colleague, an elderly person, a parent, sibling, child or baby, is no less sad, shocking or painful for those of us who have chosen to live without religion.

A Humanist funeral is increasingly common. It’s simply more appropriate for those who neither lived according to religious principles, nor accepted religious views of life or death. A Humanist Funeral or memorial ceremony recognises no ‘after-life’, but instead uniquely and affectionately celebrates the life of the person who has died. Proper tribute is paid to them, to the life they lived, the connections they made and have left behind.
Islam

A Muslim is someone who believes that “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet.” The word ‘Muslim’ means “one who submits to Allah.”

Beliefs
There are five pillars of Islamic faith, i.e. i) believe that there is only one God, who is worthy of worship and Mohammad is God’s last messenger, ii) five times regular daily prayer, iii) fasting in the month of Ramadan, iv) every year paying specific charity called Zakaat (2.5% of their annual savings) and, v) pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj) once in a life time.

Places of worship
Muslims can pray anywhere, but many find it especially good to pray with others in a Mosque. Praying together in a congregation helps Muslims to realise that all humanity is one, and that all are equal in the sight of Allah.

Most communities in the UK have their own local Mosque, where religious services and classes are held these can range from grand buildings to a small hall or a room in a house. Mosques and other buildings are decorated with beautiful calligraphy and geometric patterns, usually verses of the Quran and words of the Prophet.

Prayers
Salat is the obligatory Muslim prayers, performed five times each day by Muslims. Prayers must be said with the head facing Makkah (south east) and the forehead must touch the ground. Hygiene is very important and Muslims must wash before praying. They can pray anywhere providing the place used is clean; a prayer mat is often used for this purpose.

There are specified times for prayer but Muslims in this country may try to fit their worship into convenient times of the day. Friday is the holy day for Muslims when men usually go to the mosque for a special service. The Quran is the Muslim's holy book. It is the word of Allah (God) as told to the prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Before one touches the book one must perform ritual washing to ensure cleanliness.

Greeting
The Muslim greeting is “Assalaam-o-Alaikum” (peace upon you), to which the reply is “Wa-Alaikum-us-Assalaam” (peace be upon you also).

Dress
Dress code varies with men and women, western clothes, and sometimes clothes that reflect their ethnic and cultural background. Some women may cover their head and or the face, and also may wear a long robe. All are expected to dress modestly. Men may wear a scull-cap and some may also have a beard.
**Diet**

Islam prohibits Muslims from consuming alcohol. This includes alcoholic beverages such as wine and liquor, as well as any food items that contain alcohol.

Pork or any pork products, such as lard, ham and pepperoni are forbidden. This includes consuming any food that contains these items in any concentration or amount.

With regard to blood, raw meat must be soaked in water to drain out the blood before cooking. Muslims are permitted to eat only well-done cooked meat where no trace of blood can be found after cooking.

All vegetarian foods are acceptable.

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**When entering a home**

It is generally expected that visitors should take off their shoes when entering the house. In an emergency it is courteous to explain why you have not time to do this (only if you have time). A Muslim woman alone at home may be reluctant to answer the door to a male caller in situations that are not an emergency. A formal style of conversation is seen as respectful. Visitors should address the father of the family first and then speak to whoever leads the conversation. As a sign of respect it is best to avoid eye contact while speaking to a member of the opposite sex.

Prayer rugs may be found in rooms that are used by Muslim people to provide for themselves a clean space to pray. It is advisable not to stand on these rugs. Scrolls giving the sayings of Muhammad (Pbuh) are often to be found decorating the wall of houses. They are kept very high as a sign of respect. Calligraphy is the supreme art form for Muslims, particularly of the verses of the Quran.

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**Potential Fire Hazards**

- During Ramadan and Eid Festivals candles and fireworks are commonly used and usually there is a lot of cooking undertaken involving the use of oil and cooking pans.
- Large numbers of worshippers at religious venues, possible overcrowding, and cars obstructing access to roads in and around places of worship is possible.
- Bright lights are used at the time of celebration such as weddings and these can be the cause of electrical fires.
- Possible under representation of smoke alarms in Muslim homes.

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**Providing Emergency Assistance**

If there is a fire in a mosque or in the home where religious books are present, staff should handle religious books with sensitivity and respect. Both men and women prefer to be assisted by members of the same sex though recognition that the value of saving life always takes priority. When a Muslim is near death those around her or him are called upon to give comfort and reminders of God's mercy and forgiveness. They may recite verses from the Quran, give physical comfort, and encourage the dying one to recite words of remembrance and prayer.

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**Dealing with incidence of Death**

Upon death those with the deceased are encouraged to remain calm, pray for the departed and begin preparations for burial. The eyes of the deceased are closed and the body covered temporarily with a clean sheet. It is forbidden for those in mourning to excessively wail, scream, or thrash about. In preparation for burial the family or other members of the community will wash and shroud the body. Muslims strive to bury the deceased as soon as possible after death avoiding the need for embalming or otherwise disturbing the body of the deceased. An autopsy may be performed if necessary but should be done with the utmost respect for the dead.

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**Star and Crescent**

Today it is most widely recognised as a symbol of Islam. The symbol is also featured on the flags of several Muslim countries.
The number of Jewish people in the UK is around 280,000. Likely languages spoken include English, Hebrew and Yiddish. Most Jews in the UK are second and third generation or have been here for a very long time in the economy and the culture of the UK community.

**RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS**

- **Rosh Hashanah**
  The beginning of the Jewish New Year (Sept)
- **Yom Kippur**
  The Day of Atonement, the last 10 days of penitence, this marks the opening of the New Year (Sept/Oct)
- **Sukkot**
  A harvest festival giving thanks for the safe 40-year journey from Egypt to Israel (Sept/Oct)
- **Hanukkah**
  An eight day festival which commemorates the re-dedication of the temple in Jerusalem after expelling the occupying Syrians in 164 BCE (December)
- **Purim**
  Celebrating the Saving of the Persian Jews, as told in the biblical book of Esther (Feb/March)
- **Passover/Pesach**
  Week long memorial retelling the Israelites’ release from Egypt (March/April)
- **Shavuot**
  Harvest festival celebrating the gift of the Torah to Moses (May/June)
- **Shabbat/Sabbath**
  Day of rest, worship and fasting, from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, requiring strict observance for Orthodox Jews.

**Judaism**

The definition of a Jew varies but it can be said that being Jewish is largely based around viewing Abraham as the father of the Jewish people and seen as trusting and obeying God. There are three main forms of Judaism – Orthodox, Conservative and Reform.

**Beliefs**

Jews believe that there is a single God who not only created the universe, but with whom every Jew can have an individual and personal relationship. The Hebrew word for this one true God is JHWH, or Yahweh.

Jews believe that God appointed the Jews to be his chosen people in order to set an example of holiness and ethical behaviour to the world.

**Places of worship**

While solitary prayer is valid, attending the Synagogue to pray with a minyan (quorum of 10 adult males) is considered ideal.

Men and women usually sit separately in the Synagogue. Men and women are required to cover their heads. In most cases worship takes place in Hebrew.

**Prayers**

The most holy Jewish books are the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible). Others include Judaism’s oral tradition, the written form of which is known as the Talmud.

Jews are supposed to pray three times a day to build their faith and relationship with God. Study and public prayer takes place in a Synagogue.

**Greeting**

It is customary to say “Shalom” (shah-lohm) which literally means peace. A way of saying “hello” or “goodbye”.

**Dress**

Most Jewish people wear western dress. Orthodox Jewish men wear the skull-cap (Yarmulka/Yarmulke) at all times. Some men wear black clothes and have side locks and beards. Women are expected to dress modestly and for very Orthodox women this means covering the whole body except for the hands and face, so they will wear stockings and long sleeves.

Married women wear head covering, scarves or hats. In accordance with the Jewish faith only their husband should see their natural hair. Some women do wear a wig but they do not shave their heads as it is commonly thought.

**Diet**

Kosher foods are those that conform to Jewish law. This means no mixing of dairy and meat, no pork, or pork products, and no shell fish.
When entering a home

On the doorposts of some Jewish homes you will find a small case similar to a door stop placed upon the doorposts of the house. It is called the Mezuzah and is a constant reminder of God’s presence.

One of the oldest symbols of the Jewish faith is the Menorah, a seven-branched candelabrum. The Magen David (Shield of David, or as it is more commonly known, the Star of David) is the symbol most commonly associated with Judaism today.

Potential Fire Hazards

- Candles to welcome Shabbat.
- Hanukkah and Sukkot, because of temporary open air structure.
- You may find a mezuzah, this is a small piece of paper inscribed with the biblical passages rolled up in a container and affixed by many Jewish households to their door frames in conformity with Jewish law and as a sign of their faith.

Providing Emergency Assistance

Many Jews sway their body back and forth during prayer which may be misunderstood by others. For some Jewish men and women it is not permissible to be touched by a person who is not close family though the need to save life takes precedence.

A Jewish person involved in a life threatening situation may wish to recite the Shema “The Lord our God is one’.

Take care of items you find at operational incidents such as religious artefacts, jewellery and holy books such as the Torah. If such items are found, keep them clean and hand them to the occupants.

Dealing with incidence of Death

It is usual for a companion to remain with the dying person until death. The dying person should not be touched or moved. It is common for some Jewish communities to have a special group of volunteers, the ‘holy society’ (chevra kaddisha) whose job is to care for the dead. They are responsible for washing the body and preparing for burial in accordance with Jewish custom.
Paganism

Paganism is an umbrella term covering people who follow nature-based religions, which often have their roots in ancient beliefs. There are many traditions within Paganism, such as those based on Norse, Celtic, Greek or Egyptian beliefs, and Wicca.

The 2001 census recorded around 40,000 people describing themselves as Pagan or Wiccan, and Paganism is believed to be one of the fastest growing religions in the UK. In 2006, the Pagan Federation of Great Britain estimated that there were between 50,000-200,000 Pagans in Britain. Most Pagans in the UK are indigenous, and so speak English.

Beliefs

There are a diverse range of beliefs in Paganism. There is no creed or book that all Pagans must believe in. However, there are certain beliefs that most Pagans have: for example, the central tenet: if it harms none, do what you will.

Pagans revere nature as divine. Some Pagans believe in many gods; some use gods and goddesses as symbols of the spirits of nature; others do not use any god-based symbolism.

The female is celebrated within Pagan religions – there are many priestesses, and both gods and goddesses are worshipped. Sexuality in all its (consensual) forms is also something celebrated.

Pagans often believe in magic: i.e., that there is more to life than is materially visible, and that we have the power to affect things with our will. However, Pagans acting according to tradition will only use this power in ethical and positive ways.

Pagans do not worship or believe in the devil, contrary to popular belief. Some Pagan traditions worship a horned god, but this is completely unrelated to the Christian/Muslim/Jewish idea of Satan.

Places of worship

Pagans tend to celebrate outside in places like woods, mountains and sacred spaces denoted by ancient stone circles. Pagans often worship in groups, and by creating a sacred space within a circle marked out by people, candles, and other symbolic objects. It is important not to break the circle once it has been created (by crossing it, for example).

It is important to Pagans not to disturb nature, so all signs of the worship will usually be removed when the ritual is complete.

Prayers

Chanting, music, dance and meditation are common. Prayers can be offered to the gods and goddesses.

Pagans may also worship or meditate alone at home, and may have a shrine.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

- **Samhain** (known as Halloween to non-Pagans)
The festival of the dead, where the spirits of the ancestors & loved ones passed are remembered. Also the Pagan New Year (Oct 31st)

- **Yule/Winter Solstice**
The shortest day of the year, using lights and fire to banish darkness and welcome back the spring (December 21st/22nd)

- **Imbolc**
An early spring celebration, associated with artistic creativity, such as poetry and story-telling (February 2nd)

- **Spring Equinox/Eostre**
When the length of the day and night are equal. Celebrating the coming of spring (March 20th/21st)

- **Beltane** (known as May Day to non-Pagans) – A celebration of fertility and the spring, especially associated with nature and agriculture (May 1st)

- **Summer Solstice/Midsummer**
The longest day of the year. A celebration of the sun, and the oncoming winter (20th or 21st June)

- **Lughnasadh/Lammas**
Celebrating the start of the harvest. (August 1st/2nd)

- **Autumn equinox/Harvest home**
When the length of the day and night are equal. Celebrating the end of both the harvest and the year as marked by the agricultural cycle. A time of reflection. (September 22nd/23rd)
Greeting
Since Pagans in the UK are usually indigenous, greetings are usually common British greetings. Pagans also can use their own formulas to greet (and part with) each other, such as “Merry meet” and “Blessed be”.

Dress
Pagans will usually dress according to their cultural background, like other British people.

Jewellery is likely to be important – symbols such as the pentagram or pentacle (5-pointed star within a circle) can bear special significance.

Some Pagans, such as Druids, dress in clothes relating to the ancient traditions, especially during worship. This can include robes and cloaks.

Pagans sometimes use a special knife, known as an athame, during worship – but never as a weapon to harm anything living.

Diet
There are no rules about diet for all Pagans. However, because of the nature-revering aspects of Paganism, Pagans are more likely to be strict vegetarians or vegans, or at least to want to eat organic and/or free-range foods.

When entering a home
It may be necessary to remove shoes, since Pagans can pray on the floor. Avoid disturbing any shrines or prayer spaces.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Candles and incense are commonly used.

Providing Emergency Assistance
Avoid removing jewellery, unless necessary.

Dealing with incidence of Death
Avoid removing jewellery, unless necessary.

Many Pagans believe in ‘transmogrification’, which is similar to reincarnation, but does not impose a hierarchy in which the achievement of human form is judged as superior, or the pinnacle of being.

The emphasis in funerals is often on celebration, as well as consolation for loved ones. Pagans may be cremated or buried, sometimes with any religious items of significance.
Around 5,000 Rastafarians are recorded to live in the UK. Most will speak English and dialects of Jamaican patois.

**RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS**

- **Ethiopian Orthodox Christmas**
  Christmas is celebrated on this date as Rastafarians view Ethiopia as the God-Given homeland (7th January)

- **Anniversary of the Battle of Adawa**
  (16th March)

- **African Liberation Day**
  (25th May)

- **Birth of Haile Selassie**
  Celebration of the Ethiopian Emperor’s birth in 1891 (23rd July)

- **Birth of Marcus Garvey**
  Marcus Garvey was a Jamaican politician who predicted the crowning of a king in Africa, and was the head of the ‘Back to Africa’ movement, encouraging all people of African decent to return to the country of their ancestors (17th August)

- **Ethiopian New Year**
  (11th September)

- **Coronation Day**
  Celebration of the anniversary of Haile Selassie’s 1930 coronation as the Emperor of Ethiopia (2nd November)

### Rastafarianism

A Rastafarian is someone who is a follower of African centric theology, which centres on Haile Selassie being accepted as God, and does not have a specific concept related to creation. They do, however, follow a number of old Testament Laws.

**Beliefs**

The Rastafarian movement takes the Bible as its sacred text but interprets it in an African-centric way in order to reverse what Rastafarians see as changes made to the text by white powers.

Spirituality is central to Rastafarianism with a particular emphasis on mysticism. Recognising the dignity of each individual, the assertion of self and the importance of humility and peace come through strongly in their beliefs and attitudes. The Old Testament is a major source of scripture, although the notion of original sin is rejected.

The movement took as its spiritual head Haile Selassie I, former Emperor of Ethiopia, who was lauded for being a black leader in the heart of Africa. To Rastafarians, Haile Selassie became Jah, or God incarnate, who would one day lead the people of African origin to a promised land.

Although Haile Salassie died in 1975, his death is not accepted by Rastafarians, who believe he will one day return.

**Places of worship**

Some communities, in London, Birmingham, Manchester and parts of Yorkshire, have permanent meeting places, and Rastafarians from across the country gather at these places for festivals. Some may also attend Ethiopian Orthodox churches in this country.

**Prayers**

Rastafarians may pray individually or together depending on the group they belong to locally. People gather for prayer and celebration of the major festivals and some groups will arrange their own services between festivals.

**Greeting**

It is usual to say “Greetings”, rather than “Hello” or “Good morning”.

**Dress**

Modesty in dress is important. Clothes influenced by traditional African fabrics and designs are often worn. Some Rastafarians dress in a robe and turban and women may wish to keep themselves covered at all times.

The cutting of hair is forbidden and one of the Rastafarian symbols includes dreadlocks. Although not worn by all Rastafarians, the movement believes the hairstyle is supported in the bible. Some Rastafarians, both male and female, keep their heads covered: hairnets or scarves for women; knitted woollen hats for men.
Diet
Rastafarians use as little animal flesh as possible. They avoid eating pork, shellfish, scaleless fish or snails, etc.

Dairy products, white flour, sweets, sugar-based beverages and anything containing salt is generally avoided. Preserved foods, such as those in tins and foods containing additives are also avoided. The most orthodox Rastafarians are vegans. Alcohol is rarely taken.

Rastafarians believe smoking marijuana (ganja) is sanctioned by the Bible as it is claimed it cleans the body and mind and brings the soul closer to God.

When entering a home
There are no particular rules to observe. The colours red, gold, green, and black have special significance. Red symbolises the blood of the race shed in the past, gold symbolises sunshine, green the promise of a new life in Africa, while black symbolises pride in the black skin. The name of the ancient city of Babylon has been adopted by Rastafarians to embody the whole concept of white domination and conditioning, which presents Black people as inferior.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Candles during religious services.
- Tobacco and marijuana use can lead to fire if smoking materials are not disposed of safely.

Providing Emergency Assistance
In emergency situations many Rastafarians may not agree to have their hair cut or shaved. Where this is necessary, it should only be done as a last resort and kept to the minimum required. You should inform the person being treated or a close friend or family member.

Dealing with incidence of Death
At times of death drumming, singing and scriptures are traditionally read.

Friends and relatives are likely pray for a gravely ill patient. Others may wish to avoid touching a dead body as to do so would require them to shave off their hair.
It is estimated that around 750,000 Sikhs live in the UK. Likely languages spoken include English, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, and for Sikhs who have emigrated from East Africa, Swahili.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

- The birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Ji
  The last of the Sikh Gurus, who declared that the text of the Guru Granth Sahib would be treated from there on as a living Guru, and that no Sikh would again assume that position (5th Jan)

- Baisakhi/Vaisakhi
  Celebrates the decision by the Ten Gurus to transform the Sikhs into a family of soldier saints, known as the Khalsa Panth (14th April)

- Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji
  The fifth Guru who commissioned the construction of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, and was executed by the Moguls at Lahore in 1606 (16th June)

- Bandi Chor (Diwali)
  Commemorates the release from prison of the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind (October/November)

- The birthday of Guru Nanak
  The first Guru and founder of the Sikh religion (November)

- Remembrance of the first reading of Guru Granth Sahib Ji
  The holy text containing the teachings of the Ten Gurus, as well as writings by other spiritually enlightened individuals from various religions.

Sikhism

A Sikh is an individual who is a monotheistic, who believes that there is only one God, who is the same for all religions, and that everyone has the same direct access to God, and therefore, all are equal.

Beliefs

Sikhs believe that there is only one God; He is the creator of life and death. They believe that God exists throughout our daily lives although He may not be visible; He is with us in spirit everywhere we go (‘Ik O Ang Kar’). Equality is a very important element within the Sikh religion, regardless of caste and class, all humans are seen as equal.

Sikhs who are Initiated and make a special commitment to Sikh way of life go through an ‘Amrit’ ceremony. They are all required to wear the five Ks to represent this unity and spiritual being. The five Ks represent: 1. Kesh (hair) – uncut hair and beard as it is given to us by God. 2. Kangha (wooden comb) – to be worn in the hair at all times, as a symbol of cleanliness. 3. Katchera (shorts) – cotton underwear which symbolise purity. 4. Kara (steel bangle) – worn on the wrist to symbolise truth and freedom. 5. Kirpan (sword) – to defend the truth.

Places of worship

The Gurdwara is a Sikh meeting place. It serves as a place of worship, school, meeting room, communal kitchen (Langar hall) and if necessary a Gurdwara will provide a place to sleep for travellers.

The role of the Gurdwara is to disseminate and learn spiritual wisdom, undertake religious ceremonies, and it is a place where children learn the Sikh faith, ethics, customs, traditions, and texts. In the Gurdwara it is extremely bad manners to put your feet out in front of you, in the direction of the holy book when sitting in the main worship hall. It is advisable to try to sit on your legs, point them in a different direction, or cross them.

Prayers

The Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the Holy Scriptures for the Sikhs. The Holy Scriptures contain writings of the Sikh Gurus, Muslim Fakirs, and Hindu Saints. It also contains a collection of prayers (Shabads) written by the Gurus, which are recited to music (raags). There are no priestly caste’s in Sikhism, because of the belief that everyone can be in touch with God. Sikh temples are known as Gurdwaras and the most famous Gurdwara (also known as the Golden Temple) is at Amritsar.

There are both individual and community prayers. Individual prayers may be said anywhere. There are also services which are carried out every day of the week at the Gurdwara (Sikh temple). Both individual and community prayers are recited morning and evening.

Greeting

The Sikh greeting is “Satshri akaal”, (God is the truth) ”Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,
Diverse Faiths - Sikhism

The Khanda

An important symbol the khanda is like a "coat of arms" for Sikhs.

Dress

Most Sikh men and women in the UK wear western or traditional clothes. Older women usually wear the shalwar kameez (long tunic and trousers). Younger women generally only wear traditional dress for formal occasions. Men generally wear western dress except for special occasions. Initiated Sikhs wear the traditional five K symbols: See Beliefs, second paragraph.

Other Sikhs may wear some of these symbols. Long hair is kept up in a knot at the top of the head and is covered by a turban, which has also become a religious symbol. Women may cover their head and wear a Turban or use a Dupatta (shawl).

Wahguru Ji Ki Fateh" (The Khalsa belongs to God and the victory also belongs to God). It is usual to put the hands together at the chest level and bow the head slightly while saying this.

Diet

Many Sikhs are vegetarian and do not eat eggs or fish.

Those who do eat meat will generally avoid beef. The consumption of alcohol and tobacco is forbidden for Sikhs.

When entering a home

Some Sikh families have a prayer room where the Holy Scripture’s reside. There may be a room set aside for prayer. Before entering you should remove your shoes and have your head covered as a sign of respect.

A Sikh woman may feel more comfortable if she is spoken to in the presence of a member of her family.

Potential Fire Hazards

- During festivals candles and fireworks are commonly used, and usually there is a lot of cooking undertaken involving the use of oil and cooking pans.

- Large numbers of worshippers at religious venues, possible overcrowding, and cars obstructing access to roads in and around places of worship is possible.

- You may also find under representation of smoke alarms in homes.

Providing Emergency Assistance

Under the Motor Cycles (Protective Helmets) Regulations 1980 there is a specific exemption for Sikhs wearing turbans.

In general, cutting or removing any body hair should be avoided. If it is necessary to do so it is recommended that the hair is retained and given to a fellow family member or friend to dispose of.

Some Sikhs would prefer to be comforted by someone from the same sex.

Dealing with incidence of Death

Deliberate expressions of grief are discouraged.

When a death occurs, the body is first washed and dressed in clean clothes, complete with the Five K’s (in case of initiated Sikhs). If the death occurs in a hospital, the body is taken home for the final view of the relatives and friends before cremation.
The description ‘African-Caribbean’ reflects the fact that in Britain, most 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 until the 1830s, to work on the cotton, tobacco and sugar plantations as part of the notorious slave trade. Even after slavery was abolished, the Caribbean islands continued to be exploited by the European countries that controlled them, and their peoples have looked for work in other countries ever since.

**Naming System**
As a result of the slave system and the influence of Christianity, most African-Caribbeans 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.

**Language**
English and Creole languages.

**Greeting**
Older people prefer a more formal greeting such as “Good Morning” or “Good Afternoon”.

**RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL FESTIVALS**
Apart from religious festivals, the Independence Day of the country of origin is usually celebrated.

**October – Black History Month**
African-Caribbean communities organise and participate in Caribbean Carnivals (Caribbean style carnivals) throughout the UK. The best known of these is the annual Notting Hill Carnival.
Dress
Generally people wear western dress, except for cultural events and parties.

Family Life
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 loss of the influence of the grandparent generation caused some problems for some families.

Today the situation has improved as the grandparent generation has become more established. While the traditional roles may have changed and adapted over time, the family support system is still there.

Food & Drink
There are no particular common issues in relation to diet.

Where West Indian communities reside you will often find the serving of traditional Caribbean dishes such as curried goat, fried dumplings, cake and salt fish (the national dish of Jamaica), roti (the national dish of Trinidad and Tobago), cou-cou and flying fish (the national dish of Barbados), Pudding and Souse, as well as another tasty delicacies known as Fish Cakes from Barbados. The spices known as jerk and the traditional Sunday West Indian meal of rice and peas are also common.

Pork is not acceptable for Rastafarians/Muslims and Seventh-day Adventists.

When entering a home
Personal privacy should be respected. Cleanliness is very important and great attention is paid to care of the skin and hair.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Candles, fireworks and decorations are commonly used to celebrate the festivals.

Providing Emergency Assistance
See Faith Section – Christian, Muslim and Rastafarian.

Dealing with incidence of Death
People prefer to die at home with their family around them. Funerals tend to be big affairs. Families are usually prepared to contribute to the cost. Coffins are open for family and friends to view in the church.
See Faith Section – Christian, Muslim and Rastafarian.

African & Caribbean Community Association (ACCA)
Well Being Centre, Graylaw House, Chestergate, Stockport SK1 1LZ
Tel: 07901 848 504 Fax: 0161 474 7040 Email: info@accastockport.org.uk

There are around 40,000 African-Caribbean Muslims in the United Kingdom.
Bangladesh was formed in 1971 when it achieved independence from Pakistan after a civil war. Previously, it had been known as East Pakistan. Ninety-five per cent of Bangladeshis in Britain come from the Sylhet region of Bangladesh which has one of the wettest climates in the world. It is a flat land of wide rivers, very prone to flooding. During the monsoon season much of the area can only be reached by boat.

Naming System
A Muslim man will often not be called by the first of his names, which may be a title, e.g. Mohammed, although religious names should not be used alone, they are sometimes used together with the personal name. A personal name is the name by which a man should be known e.g. Ibrahim (Abraham). Women have a personal name, which comes first, followed by a female title or by another personal name. (e.g., Begum, Bibi), which is similar to Mrs or Miss: e.g., Amina Begum. A woman would be addressed informally by her personal name or formally by her full name – but never as Mrs Begum or Mrs Bibi.

It is now more common among some second and third generation Bangladeshis settled in Britain to have a shared family name following a personal name, as in the British system and for wives to take the family name on marriage. Popular Bangladeshi family names include Uddin, Ullah, Miah, Ali, Hossain, Ahmed and Gani.

Language
Britain's Bangladeshis speak the Sylheti dialect of Bangla. Younger Bangladeshis may be more fluent in English than in Sylheti Bangla.

Greeting
Greetings usually take place between members of the same sex. The hand shake is common, although they may feel rather limp. Women will only really be met within business contexts, therefore it is best to wait to see if a hand is extended before doing so.

The usual greeting is “Assalam-o-Alaikum” (peace upon you) and “Apni kemon achen?”, (How are you?). There are only a handful of Bangladeshis who follow the Hindu faith and thus use the term “Namaskar” for greeting.

Dress
The traditional dress of a man involves 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.

Similarly, dress for women is a Saree (traditionally made of fine cotton for everyday use and silk for special occasions) and Shalwar Kameez.

However, men and women of Bangladeshi origin tend to wear both traditional and western clothes.
Family Life
Generally most households will have at least one or more members of the family that speak English. Family, religion and tradition dominate Bangladeshi life and culture. Community members revere religious, family and community elders – extended families live in close proximity. Islam dominates and informs the community’s lives, culture and thinking.

Families tend to be strict with their children; the community has high moral values and tends to be hard working and self policing. Second generation members and UK members tend to be more ‘dual culture’ seeing themselves as ‘transitional’, revering their culture but enjoying interests outside of it like western music and dress. Older groups lean more toward their traditional Bangladeshi culture, are less English speaking, more religious and dress traditionally.

Food & Drink
Muslim Bangladeshis only eat halal food, and do not drink alcohol. Hindu Bangladeshis do not eat beef. Rice, lentils and fish form a big part of the staple diet.

When entering a home
It is recommended that when visiting homes involving a non emergency arrange a visit on a Friday when husbands are likely to be returning from the Mosque, to ensure a visit when the women are not alone; and visiting the homes at half term when the children would be at home and therefore able to translate for their parents. It is generally expected that visitors take off their shoes when entering the house unless it is an emergency.

Men will shake hands using the right hand as a greeting, but in general, women will greet with a polite nod of the head. It is advisable not to offer your hand when greeting a woman, wait to see how she greets you first, then return the greeting. When people of the same sex talk or discuss issues, they stand quite close to each other; while opposite sexes will keep a noticeable distance between them.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Forty per cent of Bangladeshi men smoke compared to 29% of the general population.
- There have been some issues with cooking – especially chapattis – as many residents forget to close kitchen doors and open windows and are not happy to change their cooking habits.
- Fire prevention campaigns aimed at the Bangladeshi community have focused on issues such as the safe use of cooking with large quantities of oil, ensuring that flowing traditional garments are not a fire hazard while cooking and encouraging women to tie their hair up whilst they are cooking.

Providing Emergency Assistance
During emergency situations whether the fire is in a Mosque or at home any contact with religious books should be undertaken with sensitivity and respect. Generally both men and women prefer to be assisted by members of the same sex though it is recognised that in emergencies this may not be possible. In times of emergency, individuals fearing death, may recite verses from the Quran.

Dealing with incidence of Death
Bangladeshis mostly follow Islamic death customs. The family has an important role in arranging the funeral. Usually the body is buried rather than cremated. Muslim Bangladeshis have a period of up to 40 days mourning after death, when the immediate family are supported and fed by friends and relatives.

Hindus have a 30-day mourning period. See also Section under Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism and Buddhism.

Bangladeshi Community Association
Bangladeshi Community Association, Surma Building, Kensington Street, Keighley BD21 1PW
Tel: 01535 604359 Fax: 01535 - 609394 Email: enquires@bca-kieghley.org
National identity for Bosnians is inextricably tied to ethnic and religious identity. The majority of Bosnians in the UK are likely to be Muslim, though Bosnian Serbs, are primarily Eastern Orthodox, and Croats, are mostly Roman Catholic. Before the civil war forced them into separate camps, all three groups identified strongly as Bosnian.

**Naming System**

People generally have one given name and one surname. Women change their surname on marriage, and children take their father’s surname.

*The following is a Bosnian Muslim example:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Fadil</td>
<td>Muksimovic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Dzulsa</td>
<td>Muksimovic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Lejla</td>
<td>Muksimovic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Almir</td>
<td>Muksimovic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Language**

Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian languages are very similar, but with some differences in vocabulary.

**Greeting**

The usual greeting in Bosnian is “Dobrar jutro”, (Good morning), or “Dobrar dan”, (Good day).

**Dress**

People generally dress in western-style clothing.

Muslim women can be distinguished by their attire as they usually cover their heads with scarves. Traditional Serbian and Croatian costumes include caps, white blouses, and elaborately embroidered vests. These outfits are worn only for special occasions such as weddings and festivals.

**RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL FESTIVALS**

For Bosnian Muslims, the end of Ramadan (a month of fasting from sunrise to sunset) is celebrated with a large family meal and with Turkish-style sweets and pastries. Both Catholics and Eastern Orthodox believers celebrate Easter with special breads and elaborately decorated eggs. Christmas is an occasion for special family meals among the Christian population.

- New Year’s Day, 1st January
- Republic Day, 9th January (25th November in the Federation)
- Independence Day, 1st March
- Day of the Army, 15th April
- Labor Day, 1st May
- Victory Day, 4th May

There is an annual Sarajevo Film Festival in late August and a Winter Festival in February and March that is observed with theatrical and musical performances.

**LOCAL COMMUNITY CONTACT**
Family Life
The traditional domestic unit often includes parents, grandparents, and young children. This pattern has been disrupted in many cases due to the war as many people were relocated to refugee camps or other countries.

Bosnians have a strong patriarchal tradition, though this is being challenged due to education and lifestyle opportunities which have increased significantly since that time. However, there are still disparities.

Food & Drink
Bosanski Ionac is a cabbage and meat stew. Cevapcici are lamb sausages that often are eaten with flat bread called somun.

Pastries, both sweet and savory, are common; burek and pida (layered cheese or meat pies), zeljanica (spinach pie), and sirnica (cheese pie) are served as main dishes. Baklava, a Turkish pastry made of phyllo dough layered with nuts and honey, is a popular dessert, as is an apple cake called tufahije.

Kefir, a thin yogurt drink, is popular, as are Turkish coffee and a kind of tea called salep. Homemade brandy, called rakija, is a popular alcoholic drink.

When entering a home
In Muslim houses, it is traditional to remove your shoes and put on a pair of slippers.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Lack of fire alarms and awareness of fire safety.
- Language barrier.
- Suspicious of people in uniform.

Providing Emergency Assistance
Members of the community will have been likely to have witnessed unspeakable atrocities and therefore may be suspicious of individuals wearing uniform.

Dealing with incidence of Death
Christians and Muslims mourn the death of a loved one by dressing in black and paying visits to the family of the deceased.

Bosnian Cultural Centre
68 Stanhope Street, Birmingham  B12 0XB
Tel: 01213 824 007 or 0121 446 4969
Email: bosniancentreuk@firstbosnians.co.uk
Chinese

China has the world's largest population of over one billion people. Britain took control of Hong Kong after the first Anglo-Chinese Opium War in 1843. In 1898, China leased a further 365 square miles to Britain. This area is known as the New Territories. In 1997, when the lease on the New Territories expired, Hong Kong reverted back to China.

Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated areas of the world with a population of almost six million in an area roughly the size of Greater Manchester.

Naming System
The surname, or family name, is traditionally written first. Surnames often relate to a particular village or area where the family's ancestors originated from. After the surname there are usually two personal names. People from North China, however, have only one personal name. Women do not generally change their name on marriage (although, sometimes add the name of their husband), and children take their father’s surname.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Personal name</th>
<th>Personal name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Chan</td>
<td>Kwok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Wong</td>
<td>Piu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Chan</td>
<td>Jiang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Chan</td>
<td>Ah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some Chinese people have adopted the British system and will have a forename followed by the family name: e.g. Kwok Chan. It also very common for people of Chinese origin living in the UK to take an English forename followed by a family Chinese surname e.g. Michael Chang.

Language
Yue Chinese (Cantonese) is the most widely spoken language within the community. In addition Mandarin Chinese and Hakka Chinese are also spoken.

Greeting
The usual greeting in Cantonese dialect is “Neyee Ho?” which means “How are you?”. However, in Mandarin, it is “Nee How”.

Dress
Generally Chinese people wear western dress, except for cultural events and parties.

Family Life
The institution of family remains the centre of Chinese society. Family bonds are seen as sacred and honour them accordingly. UK Chinese family values have undergone many changes, whilst there are some aspects of the Chinese culture that are still the same. The traditional Chinese family has a hierarchical order with the man as the head of the family.
Food & Drink
The Chinese community in the UK is not homogenous, and dietary customs vary according to the country of origin. Muslim Chinese people do not eat pork. Chinese monks are generally vegetarian. Usually Chinese food is dominated by the extensive use of oil vinegar and garlic. Popular dishes include pasta, ravioli-dumplings, noodles, steamed stuffed buns, steamed bread and fried meat dumplings, chili peppers and rice.

When entering a home
Take your shoes off when entering a Chinese home or temple. It is advisable to greet the eldest person first whenever you visit someone’s house.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Chinese flying lanterns, also known as ‘wish lanterns’, have become increasingly popular worldwide as a means of celebrating special occasions – however, they carry a significant risk of fire or injury if not used wisely.
- Similarly, candles, fireworks, and decorations are commonly used to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

Providing Emergency Assistance
Most Chinese young people are well aware of British culture and its system. However, for many older people and recent migrants there is a severe language problem, and they may look for help in communication.

Dealing with incidence of Death
Funeral and mourning customs vary widely within the Chinese tradition, making it very difficult to generalise. It is important to Chinese people that they bury the deceased as soon as possible because they believe that a body left above the ground allows its spirit to interfere with the living.

Chinese funeral rites and burial customs are determined by the age of the deceased, the manner of his/her death, his/her status and position in society and his/her marital status.

Once dead, an individual becomes an ancestor to be respected. Before being placed in the coffin, the corpse is cleaned with a damp towel, dusted with talcum powder and dressed in his/her best clothes from his/her own wardrobe.

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 which is left behind.

Chinese Community Centre
Lower Meadow, Commonside Road, Harlow, Essex, CM18 7RT
Tel: 01279 414096 Email: contact@harlowchinesecentre.com

Communities have put down their roots, no longer looking to go back to China.
It is estimated that the Congolese community in the UK, equates to more than 12,000 people. They largely reside within the Greater London area. Also growing communities are based in Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle, Bristol, Leeds, Newport, Sheffield, Southampton and Glasgow.

The vast majority are either Roman Catholic, Protestant and a sizeable minority from a Kimbanguist and Muslim faith. Also most Congolese follow indigenous beliefs, a belief in witchcraft may be evident.

**RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL FESTIVALS**

These include:

- Christmas (December 25th)
- New Year (January 1st)
- Easter
- All Saint’s Day (November 1st)
- National Reconciliation Day (June 10th).

**LOCAL COMMUNITY CONTACT**

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a vast country in Central Africa, with a population of around 56 million. It was colonised in the nineteenth century by King Leopold of Belgium, for his personal benefit. In the early twentieth century, Leopold’s regime was recognised as brutal even among other colonising states, and the Belgian government took over, though still with little benefit for African people.

**Naming System**

Traditionally there is no fixed surname in Congolese families, only given names. This means there is generally no name in common between members of the family. Children may be named by grandparents or friends. Women do not change their name when they get married. However, some more educated families now adopt the western system, and children born in this country may have their father’s name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Ntima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Kiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Kabu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Zola</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Language**

The four main languages spoken amongst the ethnic groups from this community are Lingala, Swahili, Tshiluba and Kikonga. In addition, French and English are also spoken widely.

**Greeting**

The usual greeting in Lingala is “Mbote”.

**Dress**

Congolese people take pride in their appearance and are generally modestly dressed. Men’s clothing tends to be more westernised, while women may wear more traditional clothing, including a wrap made of printed (often brightly coloured) cloth, accompanied by a head cloth to cover the hair.
Family Life
The family lies at the heart of the community.

Congolese people take pride in coming from a good family, and are taught to contribute to the family’s well-being by respecting their elders and providing for family members. It is common for people to take in nephews and nieces if necessary.

Food & Drink
Fufu (which has a sticky consistency and is used to scoop up sauce) is the equivalent of mashed potato and is made with yams/plantain. In addition beans, corn, potatoes, vegetables, bananas, rice, maize, semolina/tapioca.

The consumption of alcohol is culturally acceptable, although the Muslim population do not drink it. Soft drinks and beer are popular beverages.

When entering a home
Making eye contact can be seen in some cases disrespectful, particularly when there is a difference in age or social position.

Congolese people are very conscientious about maintaining personal space between the sexes. Relationships are considered private and public displays of affection are frowned upon.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Lack of installed fire alarms and overcrowding in homes.

Providing Emergency Assistance
Assistance from staff from any gender is allowed though men may want to be treated by members of the same sex.

Dealing with incidence of Death
There are no particular issues of concern in relation to death customs. Small groups within the community, such as people from the same church, take the place of the extended family when someone becomes ill. Many people visit the sick person in hospital. If someone dies, people will visit the family before the burial, and stay for a week or more to comfort them.

Children and those who were born here are likely to be buried in this country. With adults, many families would prefer to send the body home, but for some this is too expensive.

Cremation is not practised.

Congolese Community Council
Well Being Centre, Graylaw House, Chestergate, Stockport SK1 1LZ
Tel: 020 7561 7480 Fax: 020 7561 7485 Email: izrg_coordinator@yahoo.co.uk
It is estimated 10,000-13,000 people of Eritrean origin live in the UK. The majority are based in London, but now there are also communities in Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle and Leeds.

Two main religions practiced within the UK Eritrean Community are Islam and Orthodox Christianity.

**RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL FESTIVALS**

- **Timket (Baptism) Eve**
  Where the baptism of Jesus is re-enacted.

- **Meskel**
  Is a Christian festival that marks the finding of the true cross, although its roots seem to be in a harvest ritual.
  The three main Muslim holidays celebrated and are:
  - **Eid-al-Fitr**
    The feast that marks the end of Ramadan
  - **Eid-al-adha**
    The pilgrimage to Mecca
  - **Mawlid al-nabi**
    Which is the prophet Mohammed's birthday.
    These occasions are marked with prayers and family gatherings.

**LOCAL COMMUNITY CONTACT**

Eritrea, in the Horn of Africa, was colonised by the Italians in 1890, and was under Italian rule until the Second World War. In 1941, Britain occupied Eritrea, and after the war administered the country for the United Nations.

**Naming System**

Eritrean Christians use a personal name, followed by a Christian name and their father’s first name. The naming system is the same as that used by Ethiopian Christians. On official documents, Eritreans may list their first personal name, followed by their father’s and grandfather’s name.

Some Eritrean women take their husband’s father’s name on marriage; others keep their own father’s name.

Eritrean Muslims use a traditional Islamic naming system: a personal name followed by their father’s name and their grandfather's name.

**Language**

Most Eritrean refugees in the UK speak Tigrinya, although there are also numbers of Tigre, Afar, and Arabic and Saho speakers. English is used in all formal education beyond the fifth grade.

**Greeting**

See Faith Sections – Islam and Christianity.

**Dress**

Western style dress is usually worn by both men and women. The traditional dress for women is a dress of white cotton with a colourful trim; the traditional dress for men is also white. However, it is seldom worn except for ceremonial occasions. For some Muslims, dress is influenced by religious standards.

**Family Life**

In Eritrea, seniors are the most respected people in the society. According to Eritrean culture, the criteria for seniority is not only age but also other factors such as social status, religious position, being a grandparent and so forth.

The family system is patriarchal, with men traditionally making the decisions. Eritreans believe children are the gift of God. Most will have as many children as they can, even if resources are scarce to support the family.

There is only a small community of Eritrean-born people in the UK, so there is no ready-made community to settle into. This can lead to isolation and exacerbate difficulty in accessing services.

**Food & Drink**

Bread and Pasta is very popular. They also eat a grain called teff and their bread is called injera/enjera. The majority of Eritrean seniors do not eat pork because of religious restrictions. This applies both to Muslims and Christians.
When entering a home
It is normal for a guest to take off her/his shoes when entering the house. In an emergency this is not essential.

Seniors are greeted with high respect and in most cases bowing down one’s head and handshaking with both hands simultaneously is a sign of great respect for an elder.

The language barrier and western lifestyle are extremely intimidating, limiting participation in senior activities available in their area. Therefore, the adult children are the decision makers, providers, the drivers to doctor’s appointments or church and social activities, and the resource for all their needs.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Lack of smoke alarms and possible overcrowded homes.

Providing Emergency Assistance
Women especially prefer to be treated by a female member of staff.

Some refugees have been persecuted, tortured or raped and suffer long-term psychological scars. They may have left their countries in traumatic circumstances.

Dealing with incidence of Death
People prefer to die at home with their family around them. Funerals tend to be big affairs. Families are usually prepared to contribute to the cost. Coffins are open for family and friends to view in the church.
See Faith Section – Christian and Muslim

Eritreans in Britain have played a significant role in fighting for their country’s independence and for an end to the conflicts.

Eritrean Community in UK (ECUK)
266/268 Holloway Road, London N7 6NE
Tel: 020 7700 7995 Fax: 020 7609 1539 Email: info@ericomuk.org.uk
Ethiopian

Ethiopia is a country with an ancient, independent culture. Unlike all other African countries south of the Sahara, it was never colonised. It has had a written culture for two thousand years, and the ancient alphabet is still used for the main Ethiopian languages.

Naming System
Most Ethiopian Christians have three names, having a first personal name, followed by a religious name and finally that person's father's first personal name. The Christian name is determined by the day that the child is born or baptised. Women usually keep their own name when they marry.

Ethiopian Muslims use Islamic names, having a first personal name, followed by their father's and their grandfather's name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Father's name</th>
<th>Grandfather's name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Mulat</td>
<td>Tadesse</td>
<td>Heregot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Zenebach</td>
<td>Abebe</td>
<td>Lemma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Aster</td>
<td>Mulat</td>
<td>Tadesse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Abraham</td>
<td>Mulat</td>
<td>Tadesse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language
Most Ethiopian people in Britain speak Amharic, Tigrinya or Oromo as their first language and may also speak a second language.

Greeting
The polite, formal greeting is “Tena yisitlegne”, pronounced tayna yissit-leeyn, (Good health to you).

Dress
Ethiopians in the UK generally wear traditional clothes for cultural events and holidays, and western clothes for every day.

It is estimated that around 20,000 people from Ethiopia have settled in the UK. The majority have settled in London, Sheffield, Liverpool, Leeds and Manchester.

The majority of Ethiopians living in the UK are Muslim or Christian.

RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL FESTIVALS
- Enkutatash (New Year),
- Meskel (Finding of the True Cross)
- Ledet (Christmas)
- Timket (Epiphany)
- Fasika (Easter)

Follows Islamic tradition, will also celebrate religious festivals in the Ethiopian calendar, notably:
- Muharram
- Milad-an-Nabi
- Eid-ul-Fitr.

LOCAL COMMUNITY CONTACT
Family Life
The extended family remains the focus of the social system. It includes relatives on both sides of the family as well as close friends. Quite often the husband’s parents will live with the nuclear family when they get older and can no longer care for themselves.

Food & Drink
Cuisine characteristically consists of spicy vegetable and meat dishes, usually in the form of wat (or wot), a thick stew, served atop injera, a large sourdough flatbread.

Traditional Ethiopian cuisine employs no pork of any kind, as most Ethiopians are either Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, Muslims or Jews, and are thus prohibited from eating pork.

When entering a home
It is advisable to remove shoes at the door. It is customary to bow when introduced to someone who is obviously older or has a more senior position. Children will often be seen doing so. The most common form of greeting is a handshake with direct eye contact.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Lack of smoke alarms, possible overcrowding and awareness around fire safety.
- Language barriers.

Providing Emergency Assistance
Assistance from staff from any gender is allowed, though men may want to be treated by members of the same sex.

Dealing with incidence of Death
Serious illness and death are taken very seriously in the Ethiopian community, and felt deeply, even where the person is not a friend or relative. Many people visit when someone is ill, even if the disease is known to be infectious.

The whole community comes to the house to mourn together when someone has died. Close family members cut their hair as a sign of mourning. The period of mourning is up to a year, though people will continue to talk about the dead person for much longer. There is a preference for taking the body back to Ethiopia, unless the children are going to be here to visit the grave. The beliefs and practices concerning rituals and rites at the time of death, funerals, and the afterlife follow some of the norms of the two religions, Christianity and Islam.

Ethiopian Community Centre in the UK
Selby Centre, Selby Road London N178JN
Tel: 020 8801 9224 Fax: 020 8801 0244 Email: post@eccuk.org

Today there are around 20,000 Ethiopian people living in the UK, with roughly 84% based in London.
It is estimated that in the region of 1.2 million people of Indian origin reside in the UK. The main religions that the people follow include Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism.

The majority of people in the UK of Indian origin hail from the Gujarat and the Punjab. In addition the UK also has sizeable numbers of Anglo Indians.

**RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL FESTIVALS**

See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.

**LOCAL COMMUNITY CONTACT**

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**Language**

Gujarati, Urdu, Hindi and Tamil, Bengali and Punjabi.
Anglo-Indians are persons who have descended from a mix of British and Indian parentage.

Greeting
See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Christianity.

Dress
See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Christianity.

Family Life
Similar to other south Asian communities, grandparents often stay with the family. Recently there has been a growing independence among the younger generation who purchase property and move away after marriage.

Food & Drink
See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.

When entering a home
See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.

Potential Fire Hazards
See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.

Providing Emergency Assistance
See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.

Dealing with incidence of Death
See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.

Indian Community Centre Association: ICCA,
99 Hucknall Road, Carrington, Nottingham NG5 1QZ
Tel: 0115 9693402 Fax: 0115 9246897 Email: info@theicca.co.uk
It is estimated that around 75,000 Iranians reside in the UK. Iranian Communities can be found in London, Manchester, Bradford, Leeds, Glasgow, Newcastle, Southampton, and Slough.

**RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL FESTIVALS**

- **Nowruz**
  Celebration of the start of spring ('Rejuvenation'). It starts on the first day of spring (also the first day of the Iranian Calendar year) and lasts for 13 days.

- **Sizdah Bedar**
  Persian Festival of ‘Joy and Solidarity’. The 13th/last day of Nowruz celebration ("Getting rid of the thirteen!"). It is celebrated outdoors along with the beauty of nature.

- **Mehregan**
  Festival of Mehr (or Mihr). A day of "Thanksgiving".

- **Jashne Sade**
  A mid-winter feast to honour fire and to "defeat the forces of darkness, frost and cold".

- **Shabe Chelle**
  The turning point. End of the longest night (darkness) of the year, and beginning of growing of the days (lights). A celebration of Good over Evil.

**Language**
Largely Farsi though also Turkish, Arabic, Blochis, Kurdish and Torkomans.

**Greeting**
A typical Iranian greeting is "Dorood", (Greetings).

**Naming System**
Women do not take their husband's name when they get married, however children take their father's surname.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Soroush</td>
<td>Abadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Shirin</td>
<td>Paidar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Parveneh</td>
<td>Abadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Reza</td>
<td>Abadi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Until 1935, Iran was known in the West as Persia. The country has an ancient and sophisticated culture, with outstanding literature, music, art and architecture going back thousands of years. Some British people make the mistake of thinking that Iran is an Arab country. In fact Iranian ethnicity, language and culture are all quite distinct.

Predominantly of the Shia Islamic faith with smaller minorities of Zoroastrians, Bahá’í, and Christians. The UK also has a large Iranian-Jewish community, primarily based in London.

**LOCAL COMMUNITY CONTACT**

Working with Diverse Communities
Dress
Generally most Iranians here wear western dress, and even in Iran, the rules about women’s clothing are being relaxed. A small proportion of women choose to wear the hijab.

Family Life
The family is the basis of the social structure. Families tend to be small, only one or two children, but the extended family is quite close.

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

It is common for Iranian people to avoid eye contact, particularly traditional women.

Food & Drink
Rice (berenj) is a staple building block of any Iranian meal with yoghurt or egg used to produce a tasty crunchy crust, adding saffron, berries, herbs, spices and meat for colour and flavour.

More religious Muslims eat only halal food. For most there are no dietary restrictions. Alcohol is accepted in some families.

When entering a home
The majority of Iranians take off their shoes when indoors. They will understand if emergency service staff do not take off their shoes when dealing with an emergency. In strict Islamic households, a stranger will be expected to address the father.

Potential Fire Hazards
See Faith Section – Islam.

Providing Emergency Assistance
See Faith Section – Islam.

Dealing with incidence of Death
See Faith Section – Islam.

Iranian Community Centre
266-268 Holloway Road, London N7 6NE
Tel: 020 7700 0477 or 020 7700 0341 Fax: 020 7700 3248
Email: iraniancommunitycentre@yahoo.co.uk
The Kosovo Government declared independence from Serbia in February 2008. The Republic of Kosovo won recognition from the United States and major European Union countries. But Serbia, with the help of Russia, is still blocking Kosovo from taking up a seat at the United Nations.

Naming System
The Kosovan naming system is similar to the British one. People generally have one given name and one surname. Women change their surname on marriage, and children take their father’s surname. Some Kosovan people use their father’s first name.

Language
The common language amongst Kosovans is Albanian. The Albanian language has two main dialects – Tosk and Gheg.

Greeting
In Albanian, “Mire dita”, (Good day) pronounced meer deeta.

Dress
Traditional western dress is usually worn.

Family Life
Families from rural areas are generally patriarchal, with the father making all major decisions. Families from urban areas throughout the region function in similar ways to those in the UK.

There are approximately 50,000 Kosovans living in the UK and Over 60% are based in London. The majority of Kosovans are Muslim, although may not be strict. The older generations tend to be more orthodox.

RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL FESTIVALS

Independence Day
25th September
Festivals and holy days will largely be dictated by Islamic beliefs.

LOCAL COMMUNITY CONTACT

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Kosovans living in the UK and
Over 60% are based in London.
The majority of Kosovans are
Muslim, although may not be
strict. The older generations tend
to be more orthodox.

Working with Diverse Communities
The Kosovan Community in the UK seems to be stabilising.

**Food & Drink**
Flija (sweet layered pastry).

Many younger Muslim Kosovans are not strict about their diet and will eat meat that is not halal.

**When entering a home**
Visitors are expected to take off their shoes before entering. In an emergency it is courteous to explain why you cannot do this. Visitors are also given the opportunity to wash their hands when they arrive.

**Potential Fire Hazards**
- Lack of smoke alarms and awareness of fire safety.
- Language barrier.
- Suspicions of people in uniform.

**Providing Emergency Assistance**
Assistance by any members of any sex is allowed in emergencies though in non-emergencies both men and women prefer to be treated by members of the same sex.

**Dealing with incidence of Death**
There are no particular issues in relation to death customs; however these may be dictated by Muslim beliefs.

British Albanian Kosovar Council
32-36 Loman Street, London SE1 0EE
Tel: 020 7922 7900 Fax: 020 7922 7706 Email: info@bakc.org.uk
Kurdish

Most Kurds in the UK are from the Kurdish areas of Turkey and Iraq. This publication therefore concentrates on these two groups; however some historical and cultural information also applies to Kurds from Iran and Syria. The Kurds are an ethnic group of 40 million people, with a distinct ancient culture and language. For the past 500 years, the Kurdish region has been divided and incorporated into other nations.

After the First World War, Britain and France first agreed to create a Kurdish homeland, but then in 1923 revoked this decision and divided the Kurdish territory between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Armenia (then part of the Soviet Union). Kurdish people have been oppressed in differing ways in each of these states.

**Naming System**

People have a given name and surname, in that order. Women do not change their name on marriage. Children take their father’s surname.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Adnan</td>
<td>Shaswar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Fazilya</td>
<td>Aziz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Lara</td>
<td>Shaswar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Mashkall</td>
<td>Shaswar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People are generally called by their given name alone: e.g. Adnan, rather than Mr Shaswar.

**Language**

Kurdish Sorani and Kamenji dialect, Turkish, Georgian, Armenian, Russian, Azeri Arabic and Persian.

**Greeting**

The usual greeting in Sorani is “Beyani Bas”, (Good morning).

**Dress**

Largely western dress, except for celebrations such as Nawroz, and cultural events.

**Family Life**

The Kurds are traditionally very family oriented and patriarchal. Family lines are patriarchal – traced along the father’s ancestry.

This has been disrupted due to migration to countries like the UK. People generally arrived on their own or as a nuclear family, and this is how most people live here.
Food & Drink
Bulghur (cracked wheat) used to be the staple food for Kurds. Rice is becoming more popular. The Kurdish diet includes a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Cucumbers are especially common. In the valleys where grapes are grown, raisins and grape jam are common. Meat is only eaten on special occasions. The usual beverage is tea. Kurdish specialties include a type of wafer bread eaten for breakfast, and any kind of grain cooked in whey.

When entering a home
It is usual to take your shoes off when entering the home.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Lack of Smoke Alarms and awareness of fire safety.
- Language barrier.
- Suspicious of people in uniform.
- Overcrowding.

Providing Emergency Assistance
See Faith Section – Islam.

Dealing with incidence of Death
See Faith Section – Islam.

Kurdish Community Centre
Fairfax Hall, 11 Portland Gardens, London N4 1HU
Tel: 020 8880 1804, Fax: 020 8802 9963 Email: info@kurdishcentre.org

After many years of oppression, Kurdish people are now being recognised.
Nigerian

Nigeria is one of the largest countries in Africa, with a population of around 120 million. It is very diverse, with around fifty major tribal groups, and over 250 languages spoken. Even within the larger tribal groups, there are considerable differences of culture, religion, lifestyle and economic status.

Naming System
Nigerian people have several given names, which may include the grandmother or grandfather’s name, a name reflecting the circumstances of their birth, and a religious name. Children have their father’s surname. Most women take their husband’s surname when they marry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Ekene</td>
<td>Orie</td>
<td>Oji</td>
<td>Nkwo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Chidi</td>
<td>Adaeze</td>
<td>Ijeoma</td>
<td>Nkwo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Ijeoma</td>
<td>Adjoa</td>
<td>Nkwo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Valentine</td>
<td>Ejike</td>
<td>Isonto</td>
<td>Nkwo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language
English, Yoruba, Igbo, and Edo.

Greeting
Most Nigerian people in the UK will be happy to be greeted with a “hello” and a smile.
Dress
Most Nigerian people adapt their clothing to the weather in this country, wearing warmer, western clothes in winter and traditional dress in summer. Some wear Nigerian robes over western dress.

Family Life
Traditionally extended families were seen as the backbone of the social system. Grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers and in-laws all work as a unit through life. This is largely the case but may be receding.

Food & Drink
Corn, yams, and sweet potatoes form the base of the diet. This is often served with a palm oil based stew made with chicken, beef, goat, tomatoes, okra, onions, bitter leaves, or whatever meats and vegetables might be on hand. Muslim Nigerians observe the usual rules about diet, not eating pork or drinking alcohol.

The traditional Nigerian diet is high in meat and oil.

When entering a home
It is respectful to address the man of the family first if he is present and to remove shoes at the door when entering a house.

Potential Fire Hazards
- The use of hot oil and naked flames in cooking, low fire safety awareness and high rates of smoking.

Providing Emergency Assistance
Assistance by any members of any sex is allowed in emergencies though in non emergencies both men and women prefer to be treated by members of the same sex.

See also Faith Section – Islam and Christianity.

Dealing with incidence of Death
Regardless of religion, Nigerians bury their dead.

This is customary among Christians and Muslims, but it also is based on traditional beliefs that the body should be returned to the earth that sustained it during life.

See also Faith Section – Islam and Christianity.

National Association of Nigerian Communities - UK
c/o United Nigeria Welfare Association
Bank House, 6 Hockley Hill, Birmingham, B18 5AA
Tel: 07931 331 178 Email: info @ nanc.org.uk

Nigeria now has a civilian government, and is rich in natural resources.
Pakistani

The present country of Pakistan was created as West Pakistan in 1947 when India became independent. The partition with India was made because most of the population was Muslim, whereas the majority of Indians were Hindu.

Naming System

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. Men usually have two or more names. First is a religious title then a personal name. Most Muslim women traditionally have two names – a personal name, followed by a female title (e.g., Begum, Bibi or Khatoon), which is similar to Mrs or Miss. A woman would be addressed informally by her personal name or formally by her full name – but preferably not as Mrs Begum or Mrs Bibi or Mrs Khatoon.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Shamina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Nasreen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Language

The majority of people of Pakistani origin will speak Urdu or Punjabi.

Greeting

The usual greeting for Muslim people is “Assalam-o-Alaikum”, (Peace upon you). The reply is “Wa-Alaikum-us-Salaam” (Peace upon you, too). Pakistani Christian people often use English greetings.

Dress

Women may wear the shalwar kameez (long tunic and trousers), western dress or a sari for special occasions. Younger women are less likely to wear traditional dress for every day. Some men wear the shalwar and skull-cap; others wear western clothes for work but traditional at home.

Family Life

The Pakistani family involves distant relatives, in a grouping, which exists to provide support for its members. Members of the extended family support each other whenever needed by lending money, helping out when members are sick and so on.
Food & Drink
Pakistan cuisine is based on curry or masala (hot and spicy) sauces accompanying chicken, lamb, shrimps and a wide variety of vegetables. The national drink in Pakistan is tea, drunk strong with milk and often very sweet.

Pakistani people observe the Muslim dietary laws: they don’t eat pork, require meat to be halal and do not drink alcohol.

When entering a home
See Faith Section – Islam.

Potential Fire Hazards
See Faith Section – Islam.

Providing Emergency Assistance
See Faith Section – Islam.

Dealing with incidence of Death
See Faith Section – Islam.

There is a strong sense of community involving distant relatives called ‘Biraderi’ a kind of clan organisation.

Pakistan Community Centre
Marley Walk, Off Station Parade, Willesden Green, London NW2 4PU
Tel: 020 8452 4103  Fax: 020 8452 4103  Email: pakcc47@yahoo.co.uk
Many of the Polish British community formed after World War Two had friends and relatives in Poland. Partly because of this bond, there was a steady flow of immigration from Poland to the UK, which then accelerated after the fall of communism in 1989. Throughout the 1990s, Poles used the freer travel restrictions to move the UK and work in the grey economy.

Naming System
The naming system is similar to the system in the UK. Some people are given middle names but hardly anyone uses both names in everyday life. The typical Polish surname finishes with – ski (for males) and –ska (for females). Middle-aged couples are usually married. Younger couples might not be married and live in partnership.

Language
Polish.

Greeting
A usual greeting includes “Dzien dobry”, pronounced “Jen dobrej” (Good day). A more informal greeting is “Czesc” pronounced chest (Hi!).

Dress
Polish people wear western clothes except for cultural events.
Family Life
Polish people are very family-orientated. It is very important for them to spend the most popular festivals (e.g. Christmas and Easter) with their family.

Food & Drink
There are no particular issues in relation to dietary requirements.

The most typical ingredients used in Polish cuisine are sauerkraut, beetroot, cucumbers (gherkins), sour cream, kohlrabi, mushrooms, sausages and smoked sausage. A meal owes its taste to the herbs and spices used; such as marjoram, dill, caraway seeds, parsley, or pepper. The most popular desserts are cakes and pastries.

A shot of vodka is an appropriate addition to festive meals and helps you to digest the food.

When entering a home
When greeting Polish people, it is proper etiquette to shake hands with members of both sexes, although it is also polite to wait for a woman to be the first to offer her hand. Some Polish men may even kiss the hand of a woman. But when shaking hands you should retain a firm grip and an adequate amount of direct eye contact.

However, be aware that too prolonged and direct eye contact might be interpreted as challenging.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Lanterns are used to celebrate religious and cultural events, low fire safety awareness; and, high rates of smoking and overcrowding.

Providing Emergency Assistance
No specific restraints.

Dealing with incidence of Death
There are no particular issues in relation to death customs although it is very important for Roman Catholics to be given their last rites.

Usually the family wishes to bury the deceased in their home country in a family grave or close to the graves of other family members who have passed away.

In Poland, generally speaking, the deceased are buried as opposed to cremated. Cremation is relatively new in Poland, however due to transport difficulties families might choose cremation for practical reasons and take the ashes to Poland to bury.

Polish Social and Cultural Centre
238-246 King Street, London W6 0RF
Tel: 020 8741 1940 Fax: 020 8746 3798 Email: info@posk.org
Portuguese in the United Kingdom (also known as Portuguese Britons or the British Portuguese Community) is a term that refers to citizens or residents of the UK whose ethnic origins lie in the South Western European nation of Portugal. The greatest number of Portuguese, however, came to the UK in the 1960s and 1970s during the rule of Portuguese dictator António de Oliveira Salazar. Prior to membership of the European Union in 1986, Portugal was one of the poorest countries in Western Europe. The pressure on the land and limited opportunities in the manufacturing sector meant that there was often no alternative to looking for work abroad.

Naming System
The naming system is different to the system in the UK. Most people have two or more surnames (mother and father’s family names). Some people are given many names but are just called Maria (a common name for women) and Brazilians tend to have many European names due to the variety of backgrounds and mixed cultures. The typical old fashioned Portuguese name for women is Maria and José and João for men. Middle-aged couples are usually married. Younger couples might not be married and may live in partnership.

Language
Portuguese and English are spoken by the majority of the new and established members of Portuguese in the UK.

Greeting
A usual greeting includes “Bom dia!”, pronounced “bon dee-ya” (Good day or Good morning). A more informal greeting is “Olá!” pronounced “o-la” (Hi!).

Dress
Portuguese people wear western clothes.

Family Life
The family is the foundation of the social structure and forms the basis of stability. The emphasis is around the extended family and individuals derive a social network and assistance from the family. It is very important for them to spend the most popular festivals (e.g. Christmas and Easter) with their family, hence so many of them fly back to the county of their birth at these times of year.

Food & Drink
The main meals usually start with a soup made with a variety of vegetables and Caldo Verde (green cabbage soup) is one of the most typical. There is a plentiful supply of fish and bacalhau (salted cod) and is considered the national dish. Sardinhas assadas (grilled sardines) are also very popular. Typical meat dishes contain enchidos (sausages), chicken, pork and goat meats with aromatic herbs, such as fresh parsley, fresh coriander, garlic...
and sweet paprika. Cozido à portuguesa (portuguese boiled dinner) and feijoada (a rich bean stew) are traditional. Portuguese desserts are rich and often egg based, some with almond such as toucinho do céu (egg and almond sweet), pastéis de nata (egg custard tarts) and arroz doce (a lemon and cinnamon-flavoured rice pudding).

When entering a home
The proper form of address is the honorific title 'senhor' and 'senhora' with the surname. Portuguese people generally retain a sense of formality when dealing with each other, which is displayed in the form of extreme politeness. The handshake is likely to be accompanied by direct eye contact and the appropriate greeting for the time of day. Once a personal relationship has developed, greetings become more personal: men may greet each other with a hug and a handshake and women kiss each other twice on the cheek starting with the right.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Candles are used to celebrate religious and cultural events, low fire safety awareness; and, high rates of smoking and overcrowding.

Providing Emergency Assistance
No specific restraints.

Dealing with incidence of Death
There are no particular issues in relation to death customs, although it is very important for Roman Catholics to be given their last rites. Usually the family wishes to bury the deceased in the country of their birth in a family grave or close to the graves of other family members, who have passed away. In most of the countries, generally speaking, the deceased are buried as opposed to cremated. Cremation is however becoming popular; due to transport difficulties families may choose cremation for practical reasons and take the ashes to bury.

Aliança Portuguese Community Centre
56 Clapham Park Road, Clapham, Lambeth London SW4 7BG
Tel: 020 7498 9951 Fax: 020 7498 9951 Email: info@accstockport.org.uk

East of England Fire and Rescue Services Working Together
Romany Traveller

This section covers three groups of people: British Roma, Roma people from other European countries, and other Travellers, who also have a traditional nomadic lifestyle.

Naming System
Roma children are usually given names from the country where they are born. Women change their name on marriage, and children have their father’s surname. Strangers should ask for the person’s full name. If they give two names, they should be addressed as Mr or Mrs, with the second name as the surname. If they only give one name that should be used without the title Mr or Mrs.

The following table is for a family from Romania.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Vasile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Maria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Loredana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Sfantu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language
The Romani language is derived from old Punjabi or Hindi. There are different dialects in different countries, but there are core common words. There is no universal written Romani language as literacy and numeracy are rare; there is a strong oral tradition of transmitting information from one generation to the next. The majority of Roma also speak the language of the country where they have settled or spend most of their time.

Greeting
No universal greeting.

Dress
There is a strict dress code for married Roma women, who must cover all parts of the body except the face and hands. Traditionally women wear two or three long skirts, one on top of the other, to prevent accidentally showing their feet or bare skin. Men generally wear western-style clothing.

Family Life
Togetherness of the family is important. There is a balance in that the man is the head of the family and the woman is the heart of it: both are important for its well-being.

Men make decisions on behalf of the family. It is typical for all the members of the community to take part in the upbringing of children. Children tend to have a lot of knowledge of people and human nature from quite an early age and learn to deal with the difficulties they may face.

RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL FESTIVALS
For the most part, Roma have also adopted the religion of their country of residence. They may be Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant or Muslim. Many carry out religious rituals in their home rather than in churches or mosques.

The best known Romani festival is the pilgrimage to Saintes Maries de la Mar in France.
The traditional Romanies place a high value on the extended family. Rules of Romani Code describe relationships inside the Romani community and set limits for customs, behaviour and other aspects of life. The Romani Code is not written; the Romani people keep it alive in oral tradition.

Nowadays the majority of Romanian Travellers are settled, living in houses rather than caravans. Ninety per cent of Romani Traveller Gypsies across the world now live in houses. Being nomadic is more common in Western Europe. Within the UK only 50% live in caravans.

**Food & Drink**
There is no Romany cuisine as such. Their gastronomy used ingredients indigenous to wherever they travelled. These included wild fruits, vegetables, herbs, fish, shellfish and game, which were free for the taking in lanes, fields, hedgerows, meadows and streams.

**When entering a home**
It is normal to take off your shoes when entering a house.

**Potential Fire Hazards**
- Sites poorly managed, poorly located, overcrowded and safety concerns.
- Use of gas bottles. No access to mains electricity, gas, water or sewerage.

**Providing Emergency Assistance**
Parts of the human body are considered impure: the genital organs, because they produce impure emissions, and the lower body. Fingernails and toenails must be filed with an emery board, as cutting them with a clipper is taboo.

Clothes for the lower body, as well as the clothes of menstruating women, are washed separately. Items used for eating are also washed in a different place. Childbirth is considered ‘impure’ and must occur outside the dwelling place; the mother is considered ‘impure’ for 40 days. The community has the lowest life expectancy and highest rate of child mortality in the UK.

**Dealing with incidence of Death**
Death is seen as ‘impure’ and affects the whole family of the dead, who may remain ‘impure’ for a period after the death; also, usually private items of the dead are considered to be impure and are to be buried in his/her grave or given to non-Romani poor people.

Many of these practices are also present in Hindu cultures. However, unlike the Hindu practice of burning the deceased, Romani culture requires that the dead must be buried, not burned. It is believed the soul of the deceased does not officially enter Heaven until after the burial.

**The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups**
Ernest Bailey Community Centre New Street, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3FE
Tel: 01629 732744 Email: info@nationalgypsytravellerfederation.org

Roma people eat most foods, as long as they are prepared in the traditional way.
There have been Russians in the United Kingdom since the nineteenth century. Some sources state that there was a large influx of Russian immigrants in the mid-2000s, with the result that the Russian population was estimated at 300,000 in 2006.[4] The supposed population surge led to jocular nicknames for London such as "Londongrad" and "Moscow-on-the-Thames".

**Naming System**
A full Russian name consists of personal (given) name, patronymic, and family name (surname).

**Language**
Russian and English are commonly spoken by new and established immigrants from Russia.

**Greeting**
“ZDRAV-stvuy” – “Hello”.

**Dress**
Western dress is favoured by both Russian men and women in the UK from Russia.

**Family Life**
The Russian family is dependent upon all its members. Most families are small, often with only one child because most women must also work outside of the house, in addition to bearing sole responsibility for household and childrearing chores.

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## LOCAL COMMUNITY CONTACT

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Food & Drink
Dominated by plentiful fish, poultry, game, mushrooms, berries, and honey. Crops of rye, wheat, barley, and millet provided the ingredients for a plethora of breads, pancakes, cereals, kvass, beer, and vodka. Flavourful soups and stews are centered on seasonal or storable produce.

When entering a home
Many Russian communities consider it is impolite to point with your finger, but if you must point, it is better to use your entire hand instead of your finger. In addition sometimes, simply showing the soles of your shoes is considered rude and this should be avoided.

Potential Fire Hazards
See Faith Sections on Christianity.

Providing Emergency Assistance
It is often considered taboo to step over people, or parts of their body, which are on the ground. It is often said that it will prevent the person from growing. It is better to politely ask the person to move or to find a way around them.

Dealing with incidence of Death
See Faith Sections on Christianity.

Russian Community Centre
66 High Street, Thornton Heath CR7 8LF
Tel: 020 8684 6360 Email: info@russiancommunitycentre.org.uk
Somali

Somalis in the United Kingdom include British citizens and residents born in, or with ancestors from, Somalia. The United Kingdom (UK) is home to the largest Somali community in Europe. Most Somalis in the UK are recent arrivals, but the earliest Somali immigrants were traders and sailors who arrived in the 19th century. A Muslim community, Somalis in the UK have produced numerous politicians, sports figures and filmmakers, with established business and media networks.

Naming System
Somalis use three names: their own given name, their father’s given name and their grandfather’s however. Women do not change their name on marriage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Father’s given name</th>
<th>Grandfather’s given name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>Khalid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Hodan</td>
<td>Abdi</td>
<td>Adam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Faduma</td>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>Omar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Mohammed</td>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>Omar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language
Arabic, English and Swahili.

The 2001 census suggested there were 43,000 Somalis in the UK, however experts suggest there are at least 95,000 living in the UK. Established communities can be found across London, Cardiff and Liverpool. Somalis are generally Sunni Muslims, and follow Islamic traditions.

RECOMMEND & CULTURAL FESTIVALS

Muslim festivals are celebrated (See Faith Section: Islam)

They also celebrate two independence days, 26th June and 1st July.

LOCAL COMMUNITY CONTACT

Working with Diverse Communities
Greeting
Muslim greeting, “Assalaamu aleikum”, “Sidee layahay”, (How are you?).

Dress
Traditional dress for women is the Juba, a long loose dress which, together with a headdress, ensures that the whole body except the hands and face are covered.

Men may also wear the Juba but trousers are more commonly worn in this country.

Family Life
Somalis have long formed close-knit communities in Britain. Recent arrivals may not necessarily have the same social networks.

Food & Drink
Most Muslim Somalis will only consume halal food.

Traditional Somali foods are meat based. Like other Muslims, Somali do not use pork in their diet and they do not drink alcoholic beverages. In addition to meat, rice is used often in the Somali cuisine. Common foods in Somalia include a type of homemade bread called anjara (it looks like a large, spongy pancake) and sambusas, which are deep-fried triangular-shaped dumplings usually filled with meat or vegetables. Somalis have scrumptious meat and chicken dishes called baris, often served with basmati rice that has been flavoured with cardamom and cinnamon.

When entering a home
See Faith Section – Islam.

Potential Fire Hazards
- The smoking of khat.
- Poor housing and overcrowding.
- Recent arrivals may have lived through traumatic experiences of war and displacement and therefore may be suspicious of people in uniform.

Providing Emergency Assistance
See Faith Section – Islam.

Dealing with incidence of Death
See Faith Section – Islam.

Somali Community Centre
1-2 Lismore Circus, London NW5 4QF
Tel: 020 7267 8897 Email: admin@somalicentre.org

The Somali language is the mother tongue of the Somali people, and the official language of Somalia.
Almost all Tamil people in the UK are from Sri Lanka, where they form around 25% of the population; the other 75% are Sinhalese. Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon, was a British colony from 1815 until 1948, when it gained independence. Under British rule, many Tamils were highly educated and held significant posts in the majority of government offices.

**Naming System**
Men have their father’s given name and their own given name. Women have their given name and their father’s name. Married women do not generally take their husband’s name, though some now choose to fit in with the British system for convenience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father’s name</th>
<th>Given name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Savrimutti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Stanislaus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Priya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Tushendi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Language**
Tamil people speak Tamil as a first language. Some may also speak Sinhalese and English.

**Greeting**
The usual greeting is “Vannakam”, (Greetings) or in informal settings you may also hear “Kuhomadu” (How do you do?).

**Dress**
Tamils wear both western and traditional dress. Men generally wear western clothes for work, and traditional dress to go to the temple, for weddings and festivals. Women may wear either a sari or western dress for everyday, as well as wearing a sari on special occasions.

**Family Life**
In Sri Lanka, grandparents generally live with their children. In this country this is generally the case; although families are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain the same system here and older people are finding their own homes.

In most, but not all, families the father is the one who makes decisions; in some the mother has that role, or it is shared.

**Food & Drink**
Most Hindu Tamils are vegetarian, and even those who are not do not cook meat on a Friday as it is the day that they go to the temple. Hindus also don’t eat beef.
Alcohol is drunk in moderation. The staple diet of Tamils in the UK is rice. It is eaten with curry and a variety of chutneys, pickles and sambals. The rice may be boiled and served with curries or it may be cooked with spices and in coconut milk, as yellow rice. It is also baked in meat stock as a biriyani. Meats, seafood and vegetables are cooked as a curry with a base of coconut milk.

**When entering a home**
Traditionally, a stranger should address the father first. Most Hindus, and some Tamils of other religions, expect guests to take off their shoes when they enter the home, and to come into the sitting room. In an emergency, it is courteous to explain if you cannot comply with this.

Men may shake hands with other men and women may shake hands with other women. Many Sri Lankan women may not want to shake hands with men. Wait for a woman to extend her hand.

**Potential Fire Hazards**
See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

**Providing Emergency Assistance**
See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

**Dealing with incidence of Death**
See Faith Sections – Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.

**Tamil Community Centre (TCC)**
York House, 1 York Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 1LA
Tel: 020 8570 7750 or 07947 816 273 Email: tccentre@googlemail.com

Henna markings are important in many ceremonies including marriage.
Vietnamese

Vietnam was a French colony from 1885 until 1954, when the country was divided into North and South. The Vietnam War began as a conflict between the South Vietnamese government and Vietcong guerrillas supported by the North. The United States was involved on the side of the government for many years. A cease-fire was signed in 1973, and the US withdrew; but the war only ended in 1975 when North Vietnamese troops took Saigon, the Southern capital.

Naming System
The naming system is complex and it is best to ask which name people want to be called by.

Vietnamese people have three names: a surname, a middle name and a given name, in that order. For instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Middle name</th>
<th>Given name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen</td>
<td>Van</td>
<td>Tam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The middle name denotes gender, for example, Van (male), Thi (female).

In some cases the middle name and surname have to go together for the sake of meaning, effectively creating a double-barrelled surname:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname and middle name</th>
<th>Given name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ton That</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, some people choose to conform to the British system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Middle name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tam</td>
<td>Van</td>
<td>Nguyen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Married women do not generally take their husband’s surname, though some choose to, now that they live in the UK. Children take their father’s surname.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Middle name</th>
<th>Given name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Nguyen</td>
<td>Van</td>
<td>Huong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Le</td>
<td>Thi</td>
<td>Mai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Nguyen</td>
<td>Thi</td>
<td>Loan Anh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Nguyen</td>
<td>Van</td>
<td>Dan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language
Vietnamese, English, Vinish and various other Languages of Vietnam.

Greeting
The Vietnamese greeting to a man is “Chao ong”, (How are you, sir?) and to a woman “Chao ba”, (How are you, madam?).
When entering a home
People generally use the English Mr. or Mrs. before the title or the title and the first name. They also use the Vietnamese word ‘Thua’, which stands for ‘please’, to add a note of reverence. They give more importance to their family name and put it first, then their middle name and finally their first name.

They are generally averse to any kind of physical contact in public, especially among the opposite sex. Hence they do not generally shake hands but bow down a little to greet each other. At times they also join their hands and sometimes an elderly person touches a child’s head.

Potential Fire Hazards
- Lack of smoke alarms, possible overcrowding, lack of awareness around fire safety and language barriers.

Providing Emergency Assistance
Assistance from staff from any gender is allowed though men may want to be treated by members of the same sex.

Dealing with incidence of Death
Mourning begins even before death is imminent. When death is about to take place, the entire family assembles around the dying relative. A strict silence is observed. The eldest son or daughter bends close to record the last words of advice or counsel. At this time, the eldest child suggests a name for the dying person, for it is considered unfortunate to continue the same name used in life after the relative has died. Men usually take the name ‘Trung’ which means faithfulness, or ‘True’ which means loyalty. Women are usually called ‘Trinh’ which means devotion, or ‘Thuan’ which means harmony.

According to ritual, when the parent has died, the children do not, initially, accept the idea of death. They place a chopstick between the teeth of the deceased and place the body on a mat on the floor in an effort to “bring it back to life”. The next rite in this tradition is for the eldest son or daughter to take a shirt the deceased has worn in life and to wave it in the air and call upon the soul of the dead to return to the body. After this rite has been completed, the descendants then perform the ceremonial cleansing of the body. The corpse is bathed which symbolises washing off the dust of the terrestrial world; hair is combed and nails clipped. Money, gold and rice are placed in the mouth of the dead to indicate that the deceased has left this world without want or hunger. The corpse is then wrapped in white cloth and placed in a coffin. Members of the family form a honour guard around the clock until a propitious time for burial is selected.

Food & Drink
Fish sauce, soy sauce, rice, fresh herbs, fruits and vegetables are all commonly used. Vietnamese recipes utilise a very diverse range of herbs, including lemongrass, mint, Vietnamese mint, long coriander and Thai basil leaves. Traditional Vietnamese cooking is greatly admired for freshness of the ingredients and for the healthy eating style.

The most common meats used in Vietnamese cuisine are pork, chicken, fish, and various kinds of seafood. The Vietnamese also have a strong vegetarian tradition influenced by Buddhist values.

Dress
Vietnamese men and women generally dress very casually at home, often in t-shirts and jogging trousers. They dress more formally to go out. Traditional dress is only worn on special occasions and not at home.

Family Life
The family is considered a social unit within Vietnamese communities. They continue to live in large patriarchal joint families, with generations residing together.

An Viet Foundation
12-14 Englefield Road  London N1 4LS
Tel: 020 7275 7780   Email: anviet@anvietuk.org

East of England Fire and Rescue Services Working Together
Working with Diverse Communities

Some organisations have produced similar resources to what we have produced here; however, very few have taken the time to consult or to make the handbook bespoke for their target group. As far as we are aware, this is the first time that a handbook has been produced on such a scale, based on detailed research, carried out by working not only with the very FRS employees that will be using the handbook, but also by talking to members of the various communities and faiths featured within.

The Fire and Rescue Service has been using literature for guidance for many years, but the problem is that it has never been literature that has been specifically written for it. We are aware of some very good practice over the years; in particular the CFOA Multi Faith Conferences and the CLG National Communities’ Safety Campaigns that focus on faith festivals. We would also like to acknowledge the good work of Shropshire FRS, which was one of the first to produce a similar handbook many years ago and that has been widely copied by many services.

Acknowledgement

This project would not have been possible without the contribution of many individuals and the support of our FRS services in the East of England. We have listed communities and community groups in this handbook who helped in the drafting and proof reading the various sections, however we do need to acknowledge the support of all the East of England Equality and diversity officer in providing guidance on content for sourcing the photographs that we have used throughout the handbook. We also wish to thank those E&D officers who drafted sections of the handbook and provided the detailed proof reading that make this book what it is.

The project directors Jagtar Singh (OBE) and Jayne Dando received excellent support from Muhammad Ahsan, Manjit Singh E&D out reach staff of Essex FRS, and Anna Szwagiel, Raymond White who wrote a number of the sections. We will always be indebted to Terry Todd our Graphic Designer who showed great patience with us as we continued to make changes over the ten month period of drafting this handbook. We hope you agree with that this was well worth the effort of energy of many and this will contribute greatly to supporting FRS’s to deliver excellent service that meet the needs of all.
Community Media

When looking to engage with the many communities listed in this handbook you may wish to consider using the following. This is not a comprehensive list and you should consider consulting your local communities for advice and support of the media they prefer and use.

Radio stations:
- Asian Sound Radio (East Lancashire) – music, news and information for the Asian community.
- Radio Ceredigion (West Wales Coast) – bilingual community station.
- Choice FM (Brixton) - soul, dance, R&B, reggae and local news.
- London Greek Radio (North London) – music, news and information for Greek-speaking listeners.
- London Turkish Radio (North London) – programmes for the Turkish and Turkish-speaking community.
- Sabras Radio (Leicester) – 24-hour Asian programming.
- Spectrum International Radio (Greater London) – music, news and information for ethnic communities.
- Sunrise FM – music, news and information for the Asian community.
- Radio XL (Birmingham) – music, news and views for the Asian community in the West Midlands.
- Club Asia (London) – 24-hour a day commercial station.

Ethnic language publications

**Weekly newspapers**
- Eastern Eye
- Asian Times
- India Today
- The Asian Post
- News Lanka

**Weekly & fortnightly newspapers**
- The Voice
- New Nation
- Caribbean Times
- African Times
- The Weekly Gleaner
- The Trumpet
- Nigerian News
- Kasmo magazine (Somali)
- Hürriyet Newspaper (Turkish)
- Zaman (Turkish)
- Avrupa newspaper (Turkish)
- Londra Gazette (Turkish)
- Olay Newspaper (Turkish)

**English language publications**

- Des Pardes
- Punjabi Times
- The Daily Jung
- The Nation
- The Pakistan Post
- Surma
- Janomot
- Potrika
- Sylhetter Dak
- Notun Din
- Garavi Gujarat
- Gujarat Samachar

Punjabi Sikh community
Punjabi Sikh community
Pakistani community
Pakistani community
Pakistani community
Bangladeshi community
Bangladeshi community
Bangladeshi community
Bangladeshi community
Gujarati community (bilingual)
Gujarati community (bilingual)
Useful Community Contacts

Islamic Cultural Centre
146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG
Tel: 0207 724 3363
Fax: 020 7724 0493
Website: www.iccuk.org
e-mail: info@iccuk.org

The Board of Deputies of British Jews
6 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2LP
Telephone: 020 7543 5400
Fax: 020 7543 0010
Website: www.bod.org.uk
e-mail: info@bod.org.uk

Network of Sikh Organisations
Suite 405, Highland House,
165 The Broadway, Wimbledon SW19 1NE
Telephone: 020 8544 8037
Website: http://www.nsouk.co.uk/index.html
Email: sikhmessenger@aol.com

Hindu Council
National body of UK Hindus and their organisations.
Boardman House, 64 Broadway, Stratford, London E15 1NT
Tel: 020 8432 0400
Website: http://www.hinducounciluk.org/
Email: admin@hinducounciluk.org

The Buddhist Society
58 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PH
Tel: 020 7834 5858
Website: http://www.thebuddhistsociety.org/
e-mail: info@thebuddhistsociety.org

Chinese Information Advice Centre
4th Floor, 104-108 Oxford Street, London W1D 1LP
Telephone: 020 7323 1538
Website: www.ciac.co.uk
e-mail: info@ciac.co.uk

The Refugee Council
240-250 Ferndale Road, London SW9 8BB
T 020 7346 6700
F 020 7346 6701
Website: http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/

Other useful addresses:
World Congress of Faiths
London Inter Faith Centre
125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG
Telephone: 020 8959 3129
Fax: 020 7604 3052
Website: www.worldfaiths.org/
E mail General Enquiries: enquiries@worldfaiths.org

Equality & Human Rights Commission (ECHR)
3 More London, Riverside Tooley Street, London SE1 2RG
Telephone 020 3117 0235
(non helpline calls only)
Fax 0207 407 7557
info@equalityhumanrights.com

References

In writing this handbook we have consulted many sources and communities below we have listed a few of the web sites we found useful.

Useful Links
Cultural Diversity Resources
http://www.aarc.org/resources/cultural diversity/toolcd.cfm
http://www.ache.org/policy/diversity resources.cfm
http://www.hrsa.gov/culturalcompetence
http://www.cirtl.net/DiversityResources
http://www.diversityresources.com
http://www.swap.ac.uk/resources/themes/inclusion.html
http://www.voiceit.com/eod pack.php

Population Estimates
http://www.statistics.gov.uk
http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=7&b=276743&c=london&d=13&e=13&g=325264&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1255543520204&enc=1&dsFamilyId=1809
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_the_United_Kingdom
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_UK_locations_with_large_ethnic_minority_populations
http://www.equalitybritain.co.uk/
https://www.equal-works.com/PPractice.aspx?ety=369c9d2a-f440-4587-bfa2-fff4b11fd37a
Within this publication we have tried to show pictorially the various Faiths and Communities that make up the UK. Many pictures were sourced from different websites and on behalf of the Jagtar Singh Associates Ltd we would like to thank the numerous photographers and the relevant Faiths and Communities represented.

All details correct at time of going to press.
We do hope you find this publication a useful resource, it has been produced by the East of England Fire and Rescue Services working together with Jagtar Singh Associates.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further copies or wish to be notified on the launch of the updated Second Edition of this Handbook or would like to produce your own bespoke publication.

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