



Making Information & Services More Accessible





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Make yourself accessible!

1. Introduction

Nottingham is a diverse city, with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. This guide is designed to help Nottingham City Council employees communicate with the full range of people that make up Nottingham, whoever they are and whatever the situation.

The guide covers communicating with people who speak a different language, cross-cultural communication, asylum seekers and refugees, people of a different gender or sexual orientation, faith groups, older and younger people, disabled people, and getting in touch with working and single parents. It looks at a wide range of situations from sending a letter, holding a meeting or commissioning a survey to house visits, catering or publishing information.

The guide is split into three sections. The first section covers general principles and inclusive language. The second section looks at specific requirements in relation to various different communities. The third section identifies good communication practice situation by situation.



2. Accessible services and good customer care

Making information and services accessible is a vital component of good customer care. Customer care and access to services both require us to take account of the requirements of individual customers in order to make sure everybody receives the same quality of service.

This means that we must be aware of the principles and standards of good customer care when we are considering how to make information and services accessible to all communities - and that we must be aware of the particular needs of different communities in order to deliver on those standards.

Every member of staff should be aware of the standards of service required of them both corporately and within their own teams. The corporate standard is for all requests to be replied to in full, or at least acknowledged, within 12 working days of receipt (5 working days in the case of requests from Councillors and Members of Parliament). In addition, teams may have their own specific sets of standards. For further information on service standards, contact Customer and Information Services on 54950, or your line manager.

The particular requirements of different communities mean that making information or services accessible in some formats may take longer than usual - for example, translating documents into Braille and other community languages. This means that you need to be aware of the information in this guide to be able to respond to all requests within the target time.



3. How to use this guide

Section one is an easy-to-use general reference. Sections two and three are useful in developing an idea of some specific requirements in relation to particular communities or particular situations. They contain background information and a list of 'Do's and Don'ts'.

It is important to know that many people will fit into two or more categories. For example, many elderly people are from minority ethnic groups, some people with learning disabilities may be hard of hearing, and many working parents may suffer from anxiety. This means that it is vital to treat everybody as an individual, with individual preferences and needs - never 'typecast' a person by assuming that they fall into a single category. If in doubt - simply ask the person in question if there's anything you can do to help.

The back pages of the guide contain a list of useful contacts. If you would like advice on any of the issues discussed in this guide, you can contact the Action on Diversity Team at 14 Hound's Gate on 0115 915 57224 or by sending an email to actionon_diversity@nottinghamcity.gov.uk.

The Action on Diversity Team
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General Principles

- **Be patient** and take time to listen.
- Keep communication as **short and simple** as possible. Avoid jargon and abbreviations.
- **Don't assume how people want to communicate.** For some people, face-to-face contact is best, while others may prefer a letter. Don't guess - ask!
- **Confidentiality is vital.** Take care in communication to keep people's information private, especially where a sensitive issue such as a complaint or harassment is involved.
- **Feedback:** Make sure that where possible, people get the chance to say if they understand, or if they have any special requirements.
- **Give people as many communication options as possible.**
 - ❖ Include a direct line number and named contact, fax number and email address on letters and faxes.
 - ❖ Make sure communications equipment such as fax machines, loop systems and minicomms are working.
 - ❖ Check email accounts regularly.
- **If you find out that a person has a particular preference or requirement, note it down on that person's file for future reference.** Make sure people use the information!
- **Don't typecast people** - everybody has individual preferences and needs.
- **Don't make assumptions about what people can or can't do, or what help they might want.**
- **If in doubt,** just ask this simple question:





Inclusive Language

- Be aware of what your body language is saying.
 - ❖ For example, don't sit or stand too close to people, and avoid excessive hand gestures.
- Be aware that different people have different understandings of what is an acceptable language style.
 - ❖ For example, some people may be more comfortable in a conversation where both sides have a longer time to say what they want.
- Try to be positive. For example, instead of saying 'what's wrong with you', try asking if there is anything you can do to help.
- Don't use profanities such as 'Jesus', 'Christ' or 'oh my God', as many people may find this offensive.
- Saying something is a 'joke' is no excuse when you have offended someone.
- Some people may find it patronising to be asked if there's anyone at home who can help them with something.
 - ❖ Instead, ask how you can help.
- Be aware that over the course of time, language styles may change.
 - ❖ For example, the word 'Black' is currently acceptable, but some people may prefer 'African-Caribbean' because of what they see as negative implications.
 - ❖ Likewise, some disabled people prefer the term 'condition' to the terms 'problem' or 'impairment', while others have a different preference.
 - ❖ If in doubt, find out what a person's particular preference is - ask 'which expression should I use?'.
- Try to be a good listener by paying attention to what people say, acknowledging their points and maintaining a good level of eye contact.



- Try not to patronise people by calling them 'pet', 'love', 'darling', 'dear', 'son', 'mate' and so on.
- Try not to interrupt or finish people's sentences for them.

| Avoid | Use instead |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Only using 'his' in examples ✗ 'Policeman', 'Chairman' ✗ 'Homosexuals' ✗ 'Sexual preference', 'sexuality' ✗ 'Coloured' ✗ 'Oriental' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use 'his' and 'hers', or 'their' ✓ Police officer, chairperson ✓ Gay men or Lesbians ✓ Sexual orientation ✓ Black ✓ Asian, or preferably 'Chinese', 'Japanese', or 'Malaysian' and so on as appropriate |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ 'Jew' ✗ 'Half-caste' ✗ 'Non-white' ✗ 'The old', 'the young' ✗ 'The disabled', 'handicapped' ✗ 'Normal people' ✗ Problem ✗ 'Mentally handicapped', 'backward', 'retarded', 'subnormal' ✗ 'Mongol', 'mongoloid' ✗ 'Spastic' ✗ 'Able-bodied', 'fit' ✗ 'Mad', 'crazy', 'lunatic' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Jewish person ✓ Mixed race or dual heritage ✓ Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) ✓ Older people, younger people ✓ Disabled people ✓ Non-disabled people ✓ Condition ✓ Has a learning difficulty |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ 'An epileptic', 'a diabetic' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Person with Down's syndrome ✓ Person with cerebral palsy ✓ Non-disabled ✓ Person with a mental health condition ✓ Person who has epilepsy or diabetes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ 'Cripple' ✗ 'Blind' ✗ 'Wheelchair bound', 'confined to a wheelchair' ✗ 'Deaf and dumb', 'deaf mute' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Person with a mobility impairment ✓ Visually impaired person ✓ Wheelchair user ✓ A person who is deaf without speech, or a Deaf person |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ 'Midget', 'dwarf' ✗ Fits, spells, attacks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A person of short stature, a person of restricted growth ✓ Seizures |



SECTION I

Age

- o Young people
- o Older people



Young People

Background

- There are 30 000 young people aged 13-19 in Nottingham.
- In 2003, a Best Value review of the City Council stated that Nottingham needed to do more to include young people and young people's issues into mainstream policy-making, consultation and decision making.
- From 2006, new legislation will make it illegal to discriminate against people on the grounds of their age.

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Nottingham's Youth Service supervises several youth projects for different community groups. The team is in close contact with the Nottingham Youth Council, whose young people represent a wide range of communities and discuss a wide range of issues.
 - ❖ To involve young people in your service or policy planning, consider asking the Youth Council to comment on your ideas - contact the Youth Service.
- ✓ Make sure information is as interesting and relevant as possible. Make your points short and snappy, and avoid boring language and long-winded paragraphs.
- ✓ Try to use innovative and interesting methods to give information to young people. Consider things like interesting websites, emails, posters, flyers and videos- a boring letter may not be read, never mind found interesting!
 - ❖ Did you know that Nottingham City Youth Service is the first in the country to contact young people by text message? To find out about their system, contact Darren Cashin who leads the Youth Engagement Unit on 58807.
- ✓ If you do use mobile phones to contact young people, be aware that they may change handsets every year or even more frequently.
 - ❖ Try to keep an alternative means of contact as well.



- ✘ Don't patronise young people, and beware of trying to be too 'cool'! Don't assume you know what young people find interesting.
- ❖ If in doubt as to how to make information and services accessible to young people, ask the experts. David McWilliams (58635) is the service manager of the Youth Service.

Older People

Background

- In 2001, 49% of those aged 75 and over lived alone.
- By 2010, 40% of the UK population will be over the age of 45.
- By 2006, there will be more than 11 000 000 people over pensionable age.
- 90% of visually impaired people are over the age of 60.
- More than half of people over 60 have a hearing loss.*
- From 2006, new legislation will make it illegal to discriminate against people on the grounds of their age.

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Be aware that older people may have hearing or visual impairments, or mental health conditions.
- ✓ Be prepared to speak more slowly than you might do normally.
- ✓ Make allowances for the difficulty older people may have in getting around or hearing what is going on in meetings.



- ❖ You might consider providing transport to and from a meeting for older people in a particular area.
- ✓ Some older people may find it difficult to attend public meetings, and so might prefer a written letter.
 - ❖ Try to make sure written material is short and uncomplicated. Wherever possible, use well-known words rather than jargon.
- ✗ Don't assume that just because someone is an older person, they must have a hearing or visual impairment, or a mental health condition.
- ✗ Don't make assumptions about the level of knowledge of older people seeking advice or support. Very many older people have a high level of intellectual function.
- ✗ Don't patronise older people - speak as you would want somebody to speak to you.
- ✗ Don't assume that older people will be able to access the Internet.
- ✗ Don't assume that older people are incapable. Very many older people do not have a disability.

* Figures: Royal National Institute for the Blind, Royal National Institute for the Deaf, Employers' Forum on Disability



SECTION 2

Disability

- The Social Model
- Disability Etiquette
- People with a visual impairment
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing
- People who have dual sensory impairment
- People with speech or language difficulties
- People with reading, writing or learning difficulties
- People with learning disabilities
- People with facial or body disfigurement
- People with mental health conditions
- People with mobility impairments
- People with a chronic illness
- People with HIV or AIDS



Disability

Background

- o The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it illegal to discriminate against anybody on the grounds of disability - this includes access to services.
- o It covers a wide range of conditions including visual and hearing impairments, speech and language difficulties, learning difficulties and dyslexia, mobility impairments and mental health conditions such as depression.
- o More than 15% of the UK population are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act, or approximately 10 million people.*
- o The majority of disabled people acquire their disability during the course of their life, often as a result of injury or industrial accident.

The Social Model of Disability

- Nottingham City Council uses the social model of disability.
- The social model of disability understands disability as a problem created and imposed by society - so what causes problems are the barriers and restrictions that fail to take individual differences into account.
- What this means for us as individuals is that we have the responsibility to develop the knowledge and confidence to treat everybody equally.
- The key to developing that confidence is knowing how to minimise barriers in different situations, for different people. This section covers the way in which those barriers can be minimised for different types of disability. It starts with some general advice, and moves on to talk about some specific conditions.
- It is important to remember that everybody is an individual, with individual preferences and needs - never assume that you know what assistance, if any, a disabled person requires.
- If in doubt, ask if there is anything you can do to help - and don't assume that everybody wants or needs help.

* Disability Rights Commission



Disability Etiquette

- **Don't patronise disabled people.**
 - ❖ For example, if a person has a personal assistant or interpreter, speak to the person and not their assistant. If necessary, speak to both.
- **Treat disabled people with the same respect, courtesy and manners that you would give to anyone else.**
 - ❖ For example, use the same physical contact, such as a handshake or greeting, that you would use with anybody else.
- **Only ask about a person's disability if it is wholly relevant to the situation.**
- **Don't impose assistance** - ask the person if they want help, and if so what the best way is for you to help.
- **Don't assume a person has or hasn't got a particular disability.**
 - ❖ For example, don't confuse mobility impairments with learning difficulties - likewise, many people may have disabilities that are not immediately obvious.
- **Don't be afraid to use the same language for disabled people that you would for anyone else.** For example, it's perfectly acceptable to say things like 'I see' in a conversation with a visually impaired person.
 - ❖ If in doubt, it might be useful to say, 'I don't know if this is the right way to say this, but...'
- **Keep your databases updated to take a note of any particular requirements such as large print or access requirements.**
 - ❖ Make sure people use the information!
- **Find out where recording equipment and minicomms are stored and make sure you have access to them if you need them.**

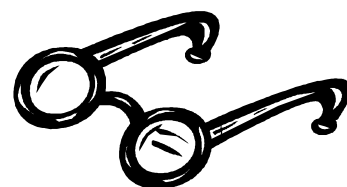


- ❖ In public-facing areas, make sure a clipboard and pen are always available to help people write information down.
- **Make sure seating and office arrangements are easy to use and uncluttered.** Make sure that people have access to a private room in which to discuss sensitive or difficult issues.
- **Find out where accessible entrances and exits, toilets, telephones and lifts are located.**

People with a visual impairment

Background

- o The term 'visually impaired' includes people who are blind and people who are partially sighted.
- o 9 out of 10 visually impaired people have some sight.
- o Less than 1% of blind people in the UK have a guide dog.
- o Less than 2% of blind people use Braille.*



Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Try to make sure that posters, signs and flyers don't use small print. This makes it difficult for many visually impaired people to read.
- ✓ Visually impaired people may find open spaces disorientating. If possible, try to arrange meetings in a quiet place.
- ✓ When meeting visually impaired people, speak when you approach them.



- ✓ Make sure you let people know you're moving away. Don't leave them talking to an empty space.
- ✓ Say who you are and what you are doing clearly, but without shouting.
- ✓ Ask the person if they would like to be guided, and if so how they would prefer to be guided. Many people prefer you to walk slightly in front while holding your arm.
- ✓ Warn of steps in advance, and whether they're up or down. Point out any important or relevant items of information.
 - ❖ For example, if you are walking down the street you might mention that you are passing Marks & Spencers or a flock of pigeons. In an office, you should warn of any trip hazards.
- ✓ Visually impaired people may prefer large print - but be aware that a Blind person won't be able to read large print!
 - ❖ For printed material, make sure there is high contrast between text and background - always use dark text on a light background.
- ✓ Blind people may prefer emails and electronic documents, which they may be able to read using screen reading software.
 - ❖ Avoid the use of pictures, charts, diagrams and tables - if you can't provide alternative text, always provide a description of what the picture or diagram is showing.
- ✓ Make a note of any particular requirements people may have on their file or on your database.
 - ❖ Make sure people use this information!
- ✓ For further information, contact the Action on Diversity Team on 0115 91 57224 or the Visual Impairment Team on 59069.

* Royal National Institute for the Blind



- ✗ Don't move any belongings or furniture without asking. This applies in an office just as much as in a home.
- ✗ Don't patronise people by speaking, or walking, too slowly.
- ✗ If there is a guide dog, don't make a fuss of it. They are working dogs, not pets - speak to the person.
- ✗ Don't assume that a visually impaired person can't see anything.

Be aware that all staff are expected to reply to all requests for information within 12 working days (5 working days for Councillors or Members of Parliament). Producing information in alternative formats such as Braille may take up to two weeks.

If this means that a request cannot be met within 12 days, make sure that the customer is aware that their request is being handled - you could call to acknowledge their request - and when they will receive a response.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing

Background

- o Many people who are hard of hearing may communicate by voice, but also use lip reading and sound enhancement, such as a hearing aid - however, very few people who are profoundly deaf communicate by voice.
- o Nottingham City Council recognised British Sign Language (BSL) as an official Community Language in November 2003.
- o British Sign Language and Sign Supported English (SSE) are used by around 50 000 Deaf people in the UK as a main method of communication.
- o About 700 000 people in the UK are severely or profoundly deaf.



Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ To hold a meeting or conversation with a Deaf person who uses British Sign Language, you will need to book an interpreter - See the section on Translations and Interpretations, below.
 - ❖ BSL interpretation is physically very demanding - If the meeting will last three or more hours, you will need to book two interpreters.
 - ❖ Be aware that it may take several weeks to book an interpreter.
- ✓ If you need to attract a Deaf person's attention, use a light touch on the shoulder or a wave of the hand.
- ✓ If possible, find a quiet place to talk.
- ✓ When a person is lip reading:
 - Keep still, maintain eye contact and speak clearly.
 - Speak at a moderate pace and use plain English - avoid jargon and technical terms where possible.
 - Use hand and body movements to help them understand you.
 - Don't exaggerate lip movements or shout, as this makes it more difficult to lip read.
 - Keep your face and mouth visible to the person - for example, don't cover your mouth with your hand.
 - Use pauses to check for understanding.
 - Be ready to repeat where necessary.
- ✓ Deaf people may prefer to communicate by fax or minicom to telephone calls. For a guide to how to use a minicom, see the Appendix at the end of this guide.
 - ❖ Try using text messages to keep in touch!
- ✓ When holding a meeting or presentation which Deaf people or people who are hard of hearing will be attending, you will need an induction loop system which allows hearing aid users to hear what is being said by switching their hearing aid to the 'T' setting.





- ❖ An induction loop is a wire placed around a room that transmits the signal from a microphone to people's hearing aids.
- ❖ For advice on finding and using an induction loop, contact the Action On Diversity Team on 57224, or the City Deaf Team on 9475729.
- ✓ If you find out somebody's personal preference - for example, if they prefer corresponding by fax to talking on the telephone - make a note on their file or your database.
 - ❖ Make sure people use the information!
- ✓ You can contact the City Deaf Team on (0115) 9475729 or fax 9417098.
- ✗ Don't assume that a Deaf person can use British Sign Language.
 - ❖ They might have recently immigrated to the country, or they might have become deaf recently.
 - ❖ Ask and find out the best way of communicating!
- ✗ Don't guess how much a person can hear, or their preferred way of communicating. Instead, ask what they'd like you to do.
- ✗ Don't shout.

* Royal National Institute for the Deaf



People who have dual sensory impairment

Background

- o Deafblind people have combined sight and hearing loss, also known as 'dual sensory impairment'.
- o Deafblind people may be identified by red and white coloured canes or by a red and white harness on a guide dog.
- o Deafblind people communicate using the Deafblind alphabet, which uses hand-to-hand symbols.
- o People with dual sensory impairment may have some hearing and vision, although some may have near or complete loss of both.

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Be aware that if somebody does not respond to a visual or spoken cue, they may have dual sensory impairment.
- ✓ Deafblind people may have additional difficulties to do with balance, and so may find tasks such as crossing roads difficult - ask the person if they would like to be guided, and if so what you can do to help.
- ✓ For further information on dual sensory impairment, contact the Dual Sensory Impairment team on (0115 91) 59069 or fax 9417099.
- ✗ Don't guess how much a person can hear or see, or what their preferred method of communication is - if in doubt, ask.
- ✗ Don't assume that if someone is unresponsive, they are drunk or incapable. They may simply be unable to see or hear you.



People with speech or language difficulties

Background

- o Everybody has difficulty finding the right words from time to time, for a variety of reasons. Speech difficulties can include blocked speech and repeating items of speech, and come with a number of conditions such as stress, stroke, stammering, cerebral palsy or profound deafness.
- o Aphasia is an example of a speech difficulty. People who have aphasia may well be able to think clearly, but can have difficulty getting messages in and out.
- o People with speech or language difficulties may have difficulty finding the right words, or may use the wrong words. Some people may have almost no speech at all. Others may find it difficult to understand the words and sentences that are spoken to them.
- o People with speech difficulties will often plan better what they need to say, and so, given the opportunity, can get to the point quicker than other people.
- o Language difficulties may also result from trying to talk to somebody who speaks a different language.

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Try to make sure the conversation takes place in a quiet area.
- ✓ Take time to communicate - be patient. Give people time to finish what they are saying.
- ✓ It is very useful to write down things as you go along. Use simple bullet points.
 - ❖ Writing things down will help you establish what has been understood, keep a written record of a conversation, and will make it easy to give people a summary of the conversation.
- ✓ Communicate normally as you would for anyone else.





- ❖ For example, maintain eye contact and don't be patronising.
- ✓ Be aware that some people with speech difficulties may also have trouble understanding speech or written language.
 - ❖ However, most people with speech difficulties don't have any difficulty understanding information - only in expressing it.
- ✓ Focus on what a person is saying, not how they say it.
- ✓ Speak as you normally would - speaking quickly may make it more difficult for the person in question.
- ✓ Be prepared to repeat certain points, and be aware that the conversation may take a little longer than usual.
- ✓ Be flexible - it may be useful to try writing things down, using drawings and diagrams, bringing maps or photos, or communicating with gestures and mimes.
- ✓ When speaking, introduce one idea at a time using simple sentences.
- ✓ You may find it useful to ask 'closed' questions which require a simple answer.
 - ❖ For example, 'Would you like to speak to Mr. Brown, my manager?' is better than 'Who would you like to speak to?'.
- ✓ Reviewing what has been established is a good way to check if people understand each other.
- ✗ Don't assume that a person is drunk, just because their speech is unclear or slurred.
- ✗ Don't assume you know what somebody is trying to say. Never interrupt, or try to finish people's sentences for them.
- ✗ If you don't understand, don't be afraid to ask the person to repeat themselves as many times as necessary.
- ✗ Don't pretend to understand if you haven't - clarify what both sides have understood, and ask for clarification if necessary.



People with reading or writing difficulties

Background

- o People can have reading and writing difficulties for various reasons. For example, English may not be their first language, or they may have a learning difficulty such as dyslexia.
- o Current studies suggest that between 10 and 15 per cent of the population have a reading disability, and of these 85 per cent have dyslexia.*
- o Be careful not to confuse learning difficulties such as dyslexia with learning disabilities - these are covered in the next section.

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Keep communication clear and straightforward.
 - ❖ If possible, plan what information you are going to give or ask for. Summarise it in key bullet points, and be prepared to provide a written copy or verbal explanation.
- ✓ Some people may need extra assistance or more time to fill in forms or understand information. They may prefer to have an audio tape of a document or conversation to take away.
 - ❖ You might offer to make a short typed summary of a conversation, an electronic version, or an audio tape.
- ✓ If a person is having problems with understanding, reading or writing, ask the person if they would like to have time to go through something in a quiet area, such as a private office.
 - ❖ Some people may find it easier to take forms away, or to bring a friend or advocate to help them.
- ✓ If a friend or advocate is present, speak to the person in question or both the person and their helper as necessary - don't just speak to the helper.
- ✓ Reviewing what has been established is a good way to check if people understand each other.



- ✘ Don't assume that somebody won't be able to understand you. Start by assuming they can, and clarify or repeat as necessary.
- ✘ Don't hurry somebody if they are having trouble understanding, and don't force them to go away and come back later. Be patient and give the person in question as much time and information as they need.
 - ❖ If necessary, sit down with the person and go through the issue item by item. If you are in a customer-facing role, you may need to ask a colleague to cover for you.
- ✘ Don't assume you know what somebody is trying to say. Never interrupt, and never try to finish people's sentences for them.

* The International Dyslexia Association

People with learning disabilities

Background

- o Learning disabilities are significant intellectual impairments acquired before, during or soon after birth. They may result in difficulties with socialising, adapting to new situations and learning new information.
- o People with learning disabilities are individuals with unique personalities and aspirations. Most people with learning disabilities can make their own choices, with varying levels of support.
- o Makaton is an example of a system of symbols which can be used to make information easier to understand. Here are some examples:



People



Letter



Likes



Computer



Look



Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Communication needs to be in pictures as well as words.
 - ❖ Use Arial Size 14 minimum font size.
- ✓ Be prepared to go through information several times.
- ✓ If necessary, try asking a question or giving information in a different way.
 - ❖ For example, you could try writing down what you are asking, using simple pictures
- ✓ Audio tapes are helpful for some. The Translations and Interpretations Service offer this service - call 54498.
- ✓ Long written documents are not a good idea - even if the person has basic literacy they are unlikely to be able to comprehend complex information.
 - ❖ Keep documents short and simple.
 - ❖ If necessary, produce a short summary.
- ✓ Don't send questionnaires to people with learning disabilities - use a personal interview instead.
- ✓ Patience is essential.
- ✓ Always check out person has understood what you are discussing by restating the question.
 - ❖ It may help to express information in a different way. For example, 'Do you want to speak to anybody in particular?' can be expressed as 'Who would you like to talk to?'.
- ✓ Be aware that when you hear a 'yes -no' answer, you may have confused the person and they may be saying the first thing that comes into their heads, or may be saying what they think will please you.
- ✓ If giving options, be aware that if the person has not understood you they may just choose the final option.



- ✓ Always value and respect the person. Give them enough time and don't rush them.
 - ❖ Be prepared to allow extra time for meetings.
- ✓ During meetings, consider using a traffic light system with red, yellow, white and green cards. Make sure you have enough for everybody:
 - ❖ Red cards mean 'Stop, I don't understand'.
 - ❖ Yellow cards mean 'Please slow down'.
 - ❖ White cards mean 'I would like to speak'.
 - ❖ Green cards are used for voting.
- ✓ Consider using simple and clear pictures and symbols to make agendas, minutes, reports and signs easier to understand.
- ✓ Here are some examples of signs:



Fire Action

If you find a fire:

- Break the glass and press the button on the nearest alarm
- If the fire is small you can use a fire extinguisher to fight it - but make sure you are not in danger
- dial 999 and ask for **"Fire"**
 - tell the fire brigade **"Fire at 115, Golden Lane EC1Y 0RT"**
 - do not hang up until the fire brigade has repeated the address

999

2nd Floor Fire Wardens

The fire wardens on each floor will make sure that no-one is left in the building.

Kate Mullins
☎ 5574

Paul Redstone
☎ 6966

When the fire alarm rings:

- Everyone must leave the building by the nearest exit
- Do not use the lift
- Do not stop to collect anything
- Go across Baltic Street and wait outside the London College of Fashion

2nd Floor First Aiders

The first aiders can help if someone is sick or hurts themselves. Contact a first aider if you have an accident of any sort. If someone else is sick or hurt, please find a first aider to help them. The first aider will call an ambulance if one is needed.

Carmel King
☎ 5560

Jacqui Bridges
☎ 6951

- ✓ Use advocates - but always talk to the person.
- ✓ People with learning disabilities have a lot to offer if given the opportunity.



People with facial or body disfigurement

Background

- o Facial or body disfigurement can occur as a result of an accident, such as a stroke or severe burns, or at birth.
- o Disfigurements may be minor, such as prominent mole or birthmark, or more severe, such as facial paralysis.
- o Skin conditions such as acne, eczema, psoriasis and alopecia may result in disfigurement. Up to 25% of the U.K. population have a skin care condition that needs medical attention at some point in their lives.*
- o Around 400 000 people in Britain have facial or body disfigurement.**

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Focus on what a person is saying, not what they look like.
- ✓ Make eye contact, smile and shake hands as you would do with anyone else.
- ✓ Be aware that people who look different may find some public areas or social situations uncomfortable.
- ✗ Don't assume that because a person has a disfigurement, they will be different or be any less intelligent than anyone else.
- ✗ Don't avoid dealing with a person in the hope that somebody else will. How would this make you feel?
- ✗ Don't stare, it's rude!

* Skin Care Campaign

** Changing Faces



People with mental health conditions

Background

- o Mental health conditions range from anxiety and depression to phobias, delusions and panic attacks.
- o 1 in 4 people in the UK experience a mental health problem during the course of a year.*
- o Depression occurs in 1 in 10 adults in Britain at any one time.*
- o Mental health conditions can be ongoing, but visible signs may only occur at irregular intervals.



Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Be aware that virtually anybody you are in contact with may have a mental health condition of some sort, which you may be unaware of for most of the time.
- ✓ People with mental health conditions may have difficulty with everyday activities such as getting on a bus, going into a public building or filling in forms.
- ✓ Make allowances - be patient and be prepared to explain more than once if necessary.
- ✓ Make sure people have plenty of time to make decisions.
- ✓ Try to act in a calm and reassuring manner.
- ✓ If somebody has difficulty organising their thoughts, clear, written notes or diagrams may help.
- ✓ If you are visiting a person who you think might have a mental health condition, make sure you follow your department's lone working procedures - ask your manager or experienced colleagues.
- ✗ Don't take it personally if someone is irritable or unwilling to communicate - it could be part of a condition or a side effect of medication.



- ✗ Don't rush people - give them time to think.

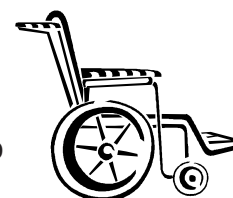
* Mind

** Employers' Forum on Disability

People with mobility impairments

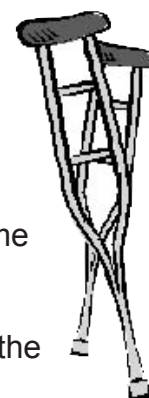
Background

- o Mobility impairments may vary from using a stick or crutches, to using a walking frame or wheelchair.
- o Mobility impairments may be temporary, such as somebody who has broken their leg and is using crutches.
- o The same person may use a stick, crutches or a wheelchair at different times depending upon the nature of their condition - at other times they may not use any of these.



Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Be prepared to offer help with doors, coats and heavy bags.
- ✓ Always offer a seat to a person using a walking aid, although some people may prefer to stay standing.
- ✓ Speak directly to a person. If possible, try to position yourself at the person's eye level. Ask them if they would like you to sit down.
- ✓ If possible, try to provide several different chairs at different heights for people to sit down on.
 - ❖ Try to have seats with arm rests available - some people find it much easier to get out of a chair by pushing on the arms.





- ✓ Offer to help with obstacles such as steep ramps, heavy doors and thick carpets.
- ✗ Don't push or lean on a wheelchair without being asked.
- ✗ Don't be surprised if a person doesn't want you to help them.
- ✗ Don't tidy away or move a person's stick, crutches or wheelchair without asking.
- ✗ Don't lean on somebody's wheelchair when you are talking to somebody - this is an intrusion into their personal space.

People with a chronic illness

Background

- o Chronic diseases include multiple sclerosis (M.S.), Crohn's disease, kidney or lung disease, cancer, and diabetes.
- o Diabetes and Myalgic Encephalopathy (M.E.) are examples of chronic illnesses. M.E. is characterised by severe fatigue, muscle pain or exhaustion, and problems with memory and concentration. It is estimated that there are up to a quarter of a million people in the UK with M.E.*
- o Diabetes can cause extreme tiredness and a need to go to the toilet frequently. People with diabetes may need to take insulin injections or tablets on a regular basis. 1 400 000 people in the UK have diabetes, and a further one million people are unaware that they have the condition.
- o One in three people will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. The disease mainly affects older people, with 65 per cent of cases occurring in those over 65. Cancer and chemotherapy may result in tiredness, nausea and anxiety.**



Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Talk to the person, not their friend, advocate or carer.
- ✓ Bear in mind that carers and relatives may be affected by stress or anxiety.
- ✓ Be aware that a person with a chronic illness may be affected in several ways. For example, they may tend to be tired, or they may have a mental health condition as well.
- ✗ Don't hold meetings in the morning.
 - ❖ For many chronic illnesses, symptoms are worse earlier in the day. This may prevent people with chronic illness from attending morning meetings, so afternoon or evening meetings are more accessible.
- ✗ Don't make the mistake of thinking that a person with a chronic illness is incapable. Their symptoms may vary from time to time, and may only appear at certain times.
- ✗ Don't assume that people want your sympathy - some may, but it is more likely that they will want you to treat them just as well as you would treat anybody else.
- ✗ People with chronic illness may have chemical insensitivities, so try to avoid glossy paper, strong perfume or the use of air freshener in spaces that will be used by the public.
 - ❖ This will also help people with asthma.

* Action for M.E.

** Cancer Research UK



People with HIV or AIDS

Background

- HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV attacks the body's immune system, making it hard to fight off infections.
- AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is no longer a widely-used term, and doctors now call this 'late stage' or 'advanced HIV infection'.
- HIV cannot be transferred through sweat, saliva or urine. It cannot be transferred through the air like a cold or flu virus.
- In 2002, nearly two-thirds of new diagnoses of HIV occurred as a result of heterosexual sex.
- It is estimated that there are currently 50 000 people with HIV living in the UK.*

Do's and Don'ts

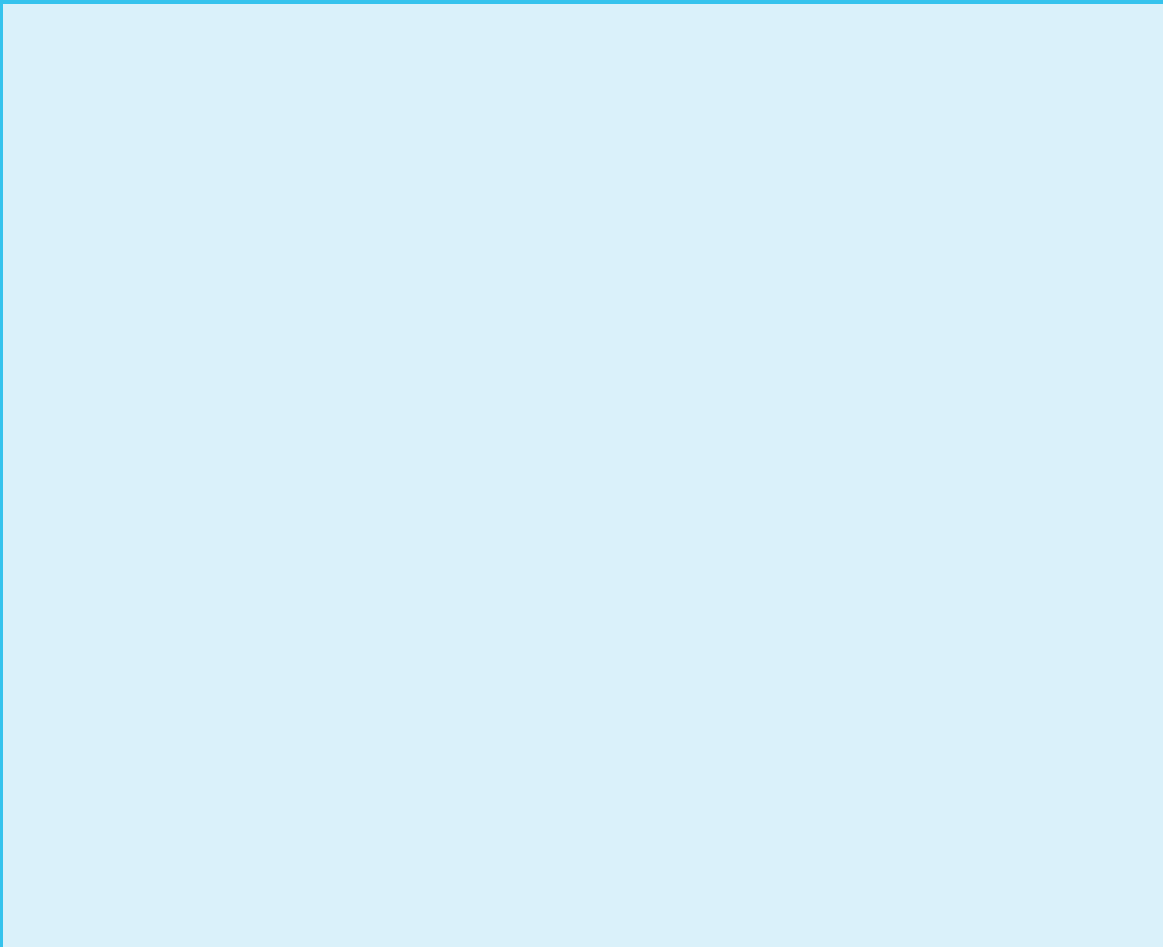
- ✓ People with HIV may remain in good health for many years, but may have experienced hostility and rejection as a result of their condition.
- ✓ Bear in mind that medication or medical conditions may make people tired, irritable or unhappy.
- ✓ Be aware that carers and relatives may be experiencing stress or anxiety.
- ✗ Try not to be patronising.

* Terrence Higgins Trust



SECTION 3

Gender and Transgender





Gender and Transgender

Background

- o Gender often influences the way we communicate. For example, some men and some cultures expect women to be passive. Due to the experiences they may have had, some women may be afraid to talk to men.
- o To communicate with all people equally effectively, it is important never to stereotype people on the basis of their sex or gender.
- o Not every person is born male or female. About 1 in every 2000 people is born intersex, and many people make the change during their lives.*
- o The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 prohibits discrimination against transsexual people.
- o Nottingham is a centre for transgender support and reassignment.

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ It may often be better for a female member of staff to help a female customer, particularly where the customer is a victim of harassment, crime or abuse.
- ✓ Be aware of what your body language is saying. For example, very firm handshakes, using large hand gestures, aggressively shaking your head or speaking in a loud voice may be seen as a physical threat, and may discourage people from communicating.
- ✓ Gender reassignment can be a sensitive and difficult time. Be aware that a person going through this process may be tired, anxious or distressed.
 - ❖ Be polite, professional and helpful.
- ✓ If you aren't sure what to call someone, you can ask if it is 'Mrs', 'Mr.', 'Miss', or 'Ms.'. If in doubt, ask the person what they would like to be known as.
- ✗ Don't confuse gender and transgender with sexual orientation, and don't confuse transgender with transvestite. Intersex and transgendered people can be gay or straight.



- ✘ Don't let yourself be distracted by a person's appearance for any reason. Focus on what they are saying.
- ✘ Don't patronise people by calling them 'pet', 'darling', 'dear' and so on. This suggests you are stereotyping a person as a typical woman or older person, rather than treating them as an individual.

* Intersex Society of North America



SECTION 4

Sexual Orientation



Sexual Orientation

Background

- o Some people may be 'out' at home but not at work, and some people may not be 'out' at home.
- o Keeping control over who knows about their sexual orientation is a major source of concern for many people.
- o Some can be hostile to people with different sexual orientations.
- o Many gay men, lesbians or bisexuals may have experienced or may be afraid of hostility and prejudice, and so may be very unwilling to disclose their sexual orientation.

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Whether somebody is out or not or whether they are gay or straight makes no difference to who a person is, and how capable they are.
 - ❖ Treat people equally well, whoever they are.
- ✓ Make sure information concerning a person's sexual orientation is kept totally confidential in order to avoid causing anxiety and distress.
- ✓ Be a sensitive listener - bear in mind that people may be anxious and worried about disclosing personal information.
- ✓ It may help people if you discuss confidentiality issues beforehand.
- ✗ Never make assumptions about a person's sexual orientation, or about who they would want to know about it.
- ✗ Don't assume that a lesbian, bisexual or gay man will be able to draw on support from other members of his or her family.



SECTION 5

Other Service Users

- Working parents and lone parents
- Homeless people and vulnerable families
- Refugees and asylum seekers



Working Parents and Lone Parents

Background

- o There are nearly two million one-parent families in the UK and it is estimated that between one-third and a half of the next generation of children will live in a one-parent family at some point as they are growing up.*
- o 57% of lone mothers are economically active.†
- o The average number of hours worked by full time employees in a week was 43.6 in 2002.**
- o 12% of families work more than 60 hours per week.†

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Keep in mind that working parents will have major demands placed on their time, and may be stressed, tired or anxious as a result.
- ✓ In particular, both female and male lone parents may have to work full-time as well as being a full-time parent. This means they may well have very limited spare time, and making a trip into a Council office may be very difficult for them.
- ✓ Help working parents out by choosing a time and place to suit them, by offering them alternative options such as fax or email where possible, and by being aware that they will want to spend as much time as possible with their families.
 - ❖ What about using mobile phone text messages to keep in touch? The Youth Engagement Team has implemented a text message system which can both send and receive data. For details, contact Darren Cashin on 58807.
- ✓ Make allowances for working parents where you can - for example, by making it clear that people are welcome to bring young children to a meeting, by providing changing facilities, or by providing childcare costs for consultation events.



- ✓ For parents with young children, be aware of how difficult it may be for them to access some buildings with a pushchair or pram.
- ✓ Ask in advance if there is anything you can do to help - for example, you could find out where lifts and accessible entrances are, or where changing facilities are for parents of babies.
- ✓ If parents will be bringing children, try to make sure they will have a safe place to park as well as providing for children's' needs.
 - ❖ For example, you could reserve parking spaces for wheelchair users and family parking.
- ✓ Lone mothers may prefer to deal with female workers.
 - ❖ Your department may have specific guidelines for this.
- ✗ Don't schedule meetings or events during times when parents need to drop their children off (8 am - 9 am) or collect them from school (3 pm - 5 pm).
- ✗ Don't schedule meetings or events during half-term or school holidays.

* Families Online

† National Family and Parenting Institute

** National Centre for Social Research



Homeless people and vulnerable families

Background

- o Vulnerable families include low income families, families where one or both parents have a learning disability, and families where one or both parents have substance abuse problems.
- o Homelessness among families has increased by 17 per cent since 1997.*
- o Whilst many people tend to think of homeless people as rough sleepers, there are many others who, while not sleeping on the streets, can be seen as homeless as they do not have a decent place that can be considered a home.
- o The homelessness charity Crisis estimates that 95% of homelessness is hidden, which translates to 400,000 people in England alone.
- o Often people who fall into this category come from vulnerable sectors of society, such as people from minority ethnic groups, asylum seekers, women, people with mental health problems, and people with drug and alcohol problems.

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Be aware that some individuals and families may experience multiple discrimination through childcare needs, disability, and/or their ethnic background, as well as anything else such as their housing status.
- ✓ Make sure you take individual families and individual peoples' needs into account.
 - ❖ For example, you may need to arrange a home or hostel visit if a person isn't able to come to a council building.
- ✓ Be aware that because a person's contact address may change, they may not be able to receive letters and calls if their details are out of date.
- ✓ In addition, some people may live at different places at different times, moving from one place to another.



- ❖ You may need to establish a contact routine, possibly using a hostel or Housing Office as a drop-off point for correspondence.
- ✓ Homeless people and vulnerable families may well be living on a small or non-existent income. This means they may be unable to get to interviews in certain locations.
- ✓ If you have any concerns about a child's wellbeing, you can call the following numbers:
 - ❖ Social Services 0115 915 5555
 - ❖ (Out of hours 0115 915 9299)
 - ❖ NSPCC 0808 800 5000
 - ❖ Childline 0800 1111
 - ❖ Police 0115 967 0555
- ✗ Try not to use friends or associates as go-betweens.

* Shelter



Asylum seekers and refugees

Background

- o In 2003, a single pensioner received a guaranteed minimum income of £98.15 a week. A single asylum seeker gets only £37.77 a week.
- o Asylum seekers are not allowed to claim welfare benefits.
- o In recent years the number of people claiming asylum in the UK has dramatically increased from about 4,000 a year in 1988 to over 70,000 in 1999.
- o In the year 2003 over half (58 per cent) of all applications for asylum in the UK were from these main countries of origin: Somalia (10%), Iraq (8%), China (7%), Zimbabwe (7%), Iran (6%), Turkey (5%), India (5%), Pakistan (4%), Democratic Republic of Congo (3%), Vietnam (3%).*

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Make sure information is available in community languages, and make sure that an interpreter is available if needed.
 - ❖ See the section on Translation and Interpretation, below.
- ✓ Be aware that refugees and asylum seekers may have experienced discrimination or hostility and so may hesitate to co-operate with some procedures.
- ✓ Refugees and asylum seekers may be particularly unwilling to give details of their ethnic origin, as they may have experienced severe persecution on the basis of their ethnicity in their country of origin.
- ✓ Refugees and asylum seekers are likely to be living on a very small income. This means they may be unable or unwilling to use public transport to attend interviews.



❖ Home visits may be a better option.

- ✓ If you want to find out how you can make your service more accessible to refugees and asylum seekers, call Graham deMax, the Asylum and Refugee Manager, on 57399.
- ✗ Don't assume that just because a person speaks a different language, they are any less capable than anybody else.

* Commission for Racial Equality



SECTION 6

Racial and Cultural Diversity

- Gypsies and Travellers
- Translation
- Interpretation



Racial and Cultural Diversity

Background

- o Nottingham is a culturally diverse city whose citizens include members of many different cultures.
- o Culture is more than just the language we speak, the food we like to eat, or the religion we practise. Culture influences the way we see the world and the attitude we have towards different things.
- o To be sensitive to cultural differences, we need to be aware that people live their lives in many different ways, and that it is possible to see things from several different points of view.
- o Different cultures have different expectations. For example, some cultures may prefer strong physical contact, such as a handshake or embrace, while others may favour more formal relations.
- o The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origin, by individuals or public institutions.

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Be aware that some cultures may find certain things offensive, which are seen as acceptable in Western society.
 - ❖ For example, many cultures find it offensive for people to wear shoes inside the house.
 - ❖ Similarly, don't be surprised if somebody doesn't shake your hand, or makes less eye contact with you would expect- this might be due to a cultural difference.
- ✓ If in doubt as to what to do or say, just ask a person who has experience of a particular culture.



Translation

Background

- o Translation is the process of putting written material into different community languages.
- o The Translations and Interpretations department can translate material into or from any community language including Braille and audio cassette format.
- o Some words do not have equivalents in another language. This means that in order to find the right way to put something, the translator may have to consult with the person who wrote the document.
- o It takes a minimum of two weeks to translate a document.



Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Each department should have a procedure for putting information into community languages and/or accessible formats. Please check with your manager for your accessibility arrangements.
 - ❖ The Action on Diversity Team does not have a budget to cover these expenses.
- ✓ Keep written information as short and simple as possible. Avoid jargon and technical terms.
- ✓ It may sometimes be useful to produce short summary documents. As well as making the task of translating easier, these can help staff get an overview of a policy or issue.
- ✓ Define the audience for your information. Is your information aimed at members of a particular minority ethnic community? Young people? Older people? Users of particular City Council Services?
- ✓ This will help you decide which languages to use, appropriate formats for information and how much information to produce.



- ✓ If you need to translate a large amount of material or material on a regular basis, be aware that other service providers may be able to provide cost-effective services.
- ✓ When sending a document to be translated, provide contact details for the person who wrote the document. This will help them make the right choice of words in places where the meaning of a phrase isn't clear.
- ✓ Involve Translations and Interpretations as early in the process as possible - they will be able to help you decide the best approach to translating your document.
- ✓ If you think a document may need to be translated, or if you have any questions in relation to translation or interpretation, contact Translations and Interpretations on 54496.
- ✓ If possible, email a Word version of your document. However, always call before emailing to confirm your order.
- ✗ Don't assume you know what languages and what number of copies will be required - this may lead to producing useless copies, or essential information being unavailable to service users.
 - ❖ Use the widest range of information possible to find out what needs to be done.
 - ❖ Consider looking at your records and/or census data, consulting with community leaders, and asking other teams and departments what they do to find out service user needs.



Interpretation

Background

- o It is the right of service users to communicate in the language of their choice.
- o Interpreters are professionals who make conversations between people who speak different languages possible.
- o Interpretation is very demanding, and can place considerable mental, physical and emotional strain on the interpreter.
- o Interpreters cannot give advice or opinions and must remain neutral before, during and after a conversation.
- o **To book an interpreter, call Translations and Interpretations on 0115 9154498 or extension 54498.**
- o Be prepared to give the following information:
 - ❖ Your name and department
 - ❖ Address and telephone number
 - ❖ Service user name, address and telephone number
 - ❖ Date, time and place of the conversation, meeting, interview or visit.
 - ❖ Duration of the meeting (if known)
 - ❖ Purpose of the appointment
 - ❖ Background information for the interpreter (be prepared to fax or email briefing information as necessary).
- o In you come across an unexpected language barrier, **in an emergency situation only** you can call Language Line on 0845 310 9900.
 - ❖ This service will provide you with an interpreter on the line within the space of a minute. You will need your department's access code.
 - ❖ The service is extremely expensive, and so should only be used to establish basic facts in an emergency situation.





Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Book well in advance of a meeting or interview, unless the situation is an emergency. A minimum of 48 hours is needed to allocate a suitable interpreter, although for some languages such as British Sign Language it may take up to three weeks.
- ✓ Brief the interpreter as thoroughly as you can before the meeting takes place. Sending background information before the event and taking five minutes before the meeting to sketch out key issues will help them deliver a better service.
- ✓ Make sure you are well prepared for the meeting or conversation. Keep the conversation focussed and make sure you know the key issues or questions you need to resolve.
- ✓ Always ask the interpreter to introduce you and themselves to the customer.
- ✓ Behave as you would in a normal conversation. For example, if the conversation is face-to-face, maintain eye contact with the customer.
- ✓ Make sure you check that both the interpreter and the customer have understood you. Be as clear as possible and use short sentences and direct questions where possible.
- ✓ Be prepared to stop the conversation regularly to review what has been established and check for understanding.
- ✓ Make sure you provide regular breaks for the interpreter.
- ✓ Before ending the conversation, check whether the customer has any more questions to ask or anything to add.
- ✗ Don't speak too fast.
- ✗ Avoid jargon and technical terms.
- ✗ Don't ask more than one or two questions together.
- ✗ It is inappropriate to ask carers, friends or children to act as interpreters.
- ✗ Do not use Language Line other than in a genuine emergency situation.



- ❖ For example, you may need to know how to provide appropriate catering for members of a particular community.
- ✓ If you have a query in relation to a particular culture or community, contact the Action On Diversity Team on 57224.
 - ❖ We will be able to put you in touch with people who have an in-depth understanding of that culture or community.
- ✓ Be aware that some communities may be in conflict with other communities. While bringing different communities together is great for finding different points of view, it may sometimes be necessary to meet different communities at different times.
- ✓ Make sure meetings, events, conference and other dates do not clash with the religious or cultural event of particular communities.
 - ❖ For further information and to check, see the World Religions section or contact the Action on Diversity Team on 57224.
- ✓ Be aware that some groups and communities may have experienced extensive discrimination and hostility.
 - ❖ This might cause them to feel unwilling to co-operate, or to feel suspicious of the motives of different communities or the Council.
- × If possible, try to avoid forcing people to do things your way.
 - ❖ For example, don't set a formal dress code unless it's really necessary.
- × Don't assume you know what people want, or what they do or don't find offensive.
 - ❖ If in doubt - ask.



Gypsies and Travellers

Background

- o There are between 90 000 and 120 000 nomadic people in the UK, with a further 200 000 people from these groups living in housing.*
- o Since site locations can change frequently due to evictions, access to health, education and social services can be difficult or impossible for Gypsies and Travellers.
- o Gypsies and Travellers may find reading or writing difficult.
- o Gypsies have been a recognised ethnic group in England and Wales for the purposes of race relations legislation since 1988, and Irish Travellers since 2000.**

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Gypsies and Travellers may have experienced high levels of hostility and prejudice and so may be private, defensive or suspicious of the motives of people from outside their community.
- ✓ This may result in them being unwilling to come in to a Council office or to use a particular service. Being polite, courteous and helpful will help build trust.
- ✓ Gypsies and Travellers are apprehensive about giving information about themselves and may need to be assured about how data will be used.
- ✓ Try to make contact face-to-face where possible - accessing computers, postal services and telephones may be difficult for Gypsies and Travellers.
- ✓ If possible, ask if you can send correspondence to a contact address. If there isn't one, try to establish one.
- ✓ If in doubt as to how to communicate with Gypsies and Travellers, contact the Action On Diversity Team on 0115 9157224.
 - ❖ We will be able to put you in touch with people who have an in-depth understanding of Gypsies and Travellers.
- ✗ Don't assume that because a person hasn't been taught how to read or write, they are any less intelligent or capable.

* The Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition

** Commission for Racial Equality



SECTION 7

Religion and Belief

- o World Religions



Religion and Belief

Background

- o Nottingham is a diverse city with people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and with a wide range of different beliefs. Many people define themselves as much or more by their religious beliefs than they do by their ethnic origin, and for many people religion is central to their way of life.
- o Each faith is represented in a wide range of different communities. It is important not to assume that a person from a particular community will follow a particular faith, and not to assume that they don't.
- o It is important to bear in mind that each religion or faith is not followed in the same way by all of its followers. Different places of worship have their own practices, and some followers will be less strict than others.
- o Each faith has its own traditions, practices, and religious festivals. If you need to know more about a particular faith, contact the Action On Diversity Team on 57224, and we will be able to put you in touch with somebody who has in-depth knowledge.
- o An introduction to the most widely-followed world faiths is included as an appendix.





World Religions



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Note: Based on the HM Land Registry booklet 'Cultural Diversity: A resource booklet on religious and cultural observance, belief, language and naming systems'.

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We all work with, or through our work come into contact with, people who have different religious beliefs. We live in a multi-racial and multi-cultural society in which several major world faiths are represented. An understanding of the history of these major religions and their basic beliefs will help you to recognise some of the things which people from different faiths take for granted and which form part of their culture. It may help you in appreciating and responding to the needs of staff from minority ethnic communities and in developing effective liaison with those communities, particularly in recruitment activities. In fact, many people from minority communities define themselves more by their religious beliefs than by their ethnic origin.

It is important to remember that all faiths are practised by people from differing backgrounds and traditions and with varying degrees of adherence. For example, not all the Muslims you meet say their prayers five times a day, just as not all Christians go to church every Sunday. However, even people who do not strictly adhere to all of the practices of their religion are affected by the beliefs, rituals and history of the faith they were born into or later adopt.

It is equally as important to recognise and respect those people who have no religious belief.

The aim of this section is to give managers, colleagues and staff involved in recruitment activities and those working with our customers a basic understanding of these different faiths, to help them to respond in a positive way to people whose beliefs differ from their own.

A note about language

It is important to remember that in a diverse workforce we all need to make sure that our language is sensitive and relevant and that we do not use words or phrases that could offend people, either intentionally or unintentionally. Sensitivity to other people's beliefs and cultures includes being aware that using the name of a particular God as a swear word often causes offence.

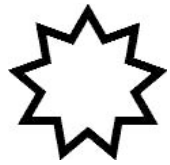
A note about non-belief

People are non-believers for many reasons and it is important to respect non-belief too.

Atheism is the absence of belief in God and takes different forms including Humanism, Secularism and Rationalism. Buddhism does not believe in a God and is a form of atheism.

Agnosticism has come to mean a doubt about the existence of God. Popularly agnostics don't believe that God exists but they don't believe that God doesn't exist either.

The original meaning of agnostic is someone who believes it is only possible to know about the material world and so we can never be certain whether God exists or not.



Bahá'í

The Bahá'í faith, dating from 1844, is the most recent of the world's monotheistic religions. The faith's founder, Bahá'u'lláh, an Iranian nobleman whose name translates as "the Glory of God", spent much of his life in exile.

The Bahá'í faith has an estimated 5 million followers in 235 countries and territories throughout the world. There are around 6,000 Bahá'ís in the UK.

The Bahá'í faith is an independent world religion, and has its own scriptures, places of worship and administration. It is not a branch of Islam.

Key beliefs

Bahá'ís believe that humanity is a single race with a common destiny. In the words of Bahá'u'lláh, the faith's founder, "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

Bahá'u'lláh taught that all the great religions come from one divine source. They are parts of a single historical process taking humankind from its beginnings to the global civilization that Bahá'ís believe to be an inevitable development in human life.

Bahá'ís believe that Bahá'u'lláh is the most recent in the long line of divinely inspired prophets and messengers of God - including Zoroaster, Moses, the Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad. Bahá'u'lláh has brought teachings that address the particular moral and spiritual challenges of the modern world. But he explicitly states that there will be further messengers from God in the future.

Bahá'u'lláh's writings also deal with private morality, stressing the importance of searching out truth for oneself, trustworthiness, refraining from backbiting, generosity, bringing happiness to others, sexual chastity and so on. Bahá'ís strive to develop these and other virtues in their lives and to prepare for the life after death.

Bahá'ís believe that the soul continues to progress towards God throughout eternity. Bahá'ís pray for those who have passed away, but leave questions of forgiveness and judgement to God.

Holy Books

- The writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are regarded as Divine Revelation.
- The writings of Abdul-Bahá are recognised as sacred.
- The scriptures of other faiths, which include the teachings of previous Manifestations of God (such as Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad) are also regarded as Divine Revelations.



- The Quran is recognised as fully authoritative and the Judaeo-Christian Bible as substantially authentic.

While readings from other religions form part of Bahá'í worship, their teachings are not binding in matters of Bahá'í belief and practice. This is because Bahá'í teaching asserts that each Manifestation brings laws and teachings appropriate for its own time.

Education and Spirituality

Education is a central theme in Bahá'í teaching and spirituality, and education for women is a priority, as nurturers of the next generation. Religion and science are not seen as contradictory: science is seen as leading to truth through investigation whilst religion brings truth through revelation.

There are three "obligatory" prayers and every Bahá'í over fifteen years old must pray one of these daily as well as reading scriptural extracts every morning and evening. To pray, Bahá'ís turn in the direction of Bahji, the burial place of Bahá'u'lláh, which is near Akka in Israel.

Organization

The Bahá'í community has no priest, ministers or other spiritual leaders. The community's affairs are governed by elected nine-member councils at local, national and world levels. These councils (the Local Spiritual Assembly, the National Spiritual Assembly and the Universal House of Justice) are sacred institutions for Bahá'ís and participation in their elections is a sacred privilege for Bahá'ís aged 21 and over.

Bahá'í communities gather in local Bahá'í centres or in Bahá'í homes on the first day of the Bahá'í month for the Nineteen Day Feast. This three-part gathering opens with prayers and devotional readings, followed by reports from the Local Spiritual Assembly, consultation by the community about its activities and plans, and closes with a time for socializing.

Bahá'í calendar

The Bahá'í community follows a special calendar for sacred purposes. Nineteen months of 19 days each together with the four intercalary days (five in a leap year), known as the Ayyám-i-Há, make up the full solar year. The Bahá'í day begins at sunset.

Holy Days and Festivals

There are no set practices or services to commemorate the various holy days of the Bahá'ís. Different communities may organise devotional days of prayers and readings appropriate to the day in question.



There are 11 holy days, of which 9 are major holy days.

Bahá'ís wish to refrain from work on all major holy days unless specifically disallowed in their terms of employment. Children should not attend school on these days, if possible.

- Naw-Rúz (New Year): Naw-Rúz is celebrated on the 21st March, the spring equinox.
- The Ridván Festival: This is the most important Bahá'í festival and it marks the declaration in the Garden of Ridván in 1863. The festival, which starts on 21 April and finishes on 2 May, includes three major holy days, the First Day of Ridván (21 April), on which Local Spiritual Assemblies are elected, the Ninth Day of Ridván (29 April) and the Twelfth Day of Ridván (2 May). National Spiritual Assemblies are elected during this festival.
- The Declaration of the Báb: This is celebrated from the 22nd to the 23rd May from 2 hours after sunset on the 22nd.
- Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh: This major holy day is commemorated on the 29th May, commemorated at 3am in the morning.
- Martyrdom of the Báb: This major holy day is commemorated on the 9th July at noon.
- Birth of the Báb: This major holy day is celebrated on the 20th October.
- Birth of Bahá'u'lláh: This major holy day is celebrated on the 12th November.
- The day of the Covenant: This minor holy day is celebrated on the 26th November and work is not suspended on this day.
- The passing of Abdul-Bahá: This minor holy day is commemorated on the 28th November and work is not suspended on this day.



Buddhism

Buddhism was founded 2500 years ago in North East India (Nepal) by Prince Siddhartha Gautama who, after having undergone a spiritual experience now known as Enlightenment, was thereafter known as Buddha, which means "the awakened one".

There are estimated to be 300 million Buddhists worldwide, the majority in South East Asia and the Far East. Within the UK there are around 100,000 and this number is growing. Nearly every Buddhist tradition is represented in the UK, with approximately 17 monastic centres and 18 meditation centres between them.

Key beliefs

Buddhists do not believe in a creator God, nor do they worship gods. Instead, the Buddha taught that a natural law of moral causation exists in the universe and that transgression of this natural law brings with it certain adverse consequences. The essence of Buddhist belief is the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths, which were revealed to the Buddha during his meditations:

- suffering and imperfection are part of life (dukha);
- they are caused by selfishness and desire (samodaya);
- release from suffering is possible (nirodha);
- it can be achieved only by following the 'Eightfold Path' which makes it possible to reach the state of bliss and freedom known as Nirvana (magga).

The "Eightfold Path" consists of:

- right understanding - to see life as it is and understand the Four Noble Truths;
- right thought - a pure mind free from ill-will, lust and cruelty;
- right action - love, charity, generosity, honesty, compassion etc;
- right vocation - an occupation which harms no-one;
- right speech - free from lies, harshness, gossip and slander;
- right effort - to seek and maintain good;
- right mindfulness - concentration to become aware of the truth about the body, mind, feelings and thoughts;



- right concentration - meditation as a means to right understanding.

Buddhism is a very practical religion or way of life and aims at helping people to live happily and harmoniously and to identify the path to Nirvana.

Buddhists undertake to live according to five precepts:

- to refrain from injuring living things;
- to refrain from taking things which are not given;
- to refrain from using one's body to hurt or harm oneself or others;
- to refrain from falsehood, prejudice and anything less than the truth;
- to refrain from the abuse of elements which cloud the mind.

There is a general belief in rebirth with the status of the next life dependent on right action in the present one (karma).

Buddhist Scriptures

The basic collection of scriptures is made up of the teachings of the Buddha and is known as the Pali Canon. The whole of this has been translated into English. There is also a vast collection of Buddhist writings in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese.

Places of Worship

Buddhists offer incense and flowers to the Buddha in their temples as an act of recollection and gratitude. Every Buddhist home also has a corner which is regarded as a shrine. The Buddha is not worshipped as a god, but venerated as a great teacher who taught his people the way out of suffering.

Main festivals

All Buddhist festivals are celebrated on full moon days. The full moon day in May celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha.

Diet

Many Buddhists are vegetarian, believing that it is wrong to kill or harm living things, although there are no special dietary rules.



Chinese Religion

China is a vast land of different regional cultures, languages and cuisines. In the same way, Chinese religion is a fusion of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and traditional beliefs. During the Communist period religion was officially frowned upon, but since that time laws and attitudes have been relaxed and many millions of Chinese people practise a religion. In addition to indigenous practises, tens of millions of Chinese people are practising Muslims or Christians.

The language commonly referred to as Chinese is Mandarin, also called putonghua or Standard Chinese, Chinese people may also speak in Cantonese or any one of dozens of regional languages.

There are an estimated 300 000 Chinese people living in the UK, as well as tens of thousands of Chinese students.

Mahayana Buddhism

Buddhism split into two major trends quite early on in its development: Greater Vehicle (Mahayana) and Lesser Vehicle (Hinayana). Hinayana remained closer to the original Buddhism and is the variation of Buddhism practised in the countries of South East Asia. The Buddhism of China, Korea, Japan, Nepal, Tibet, and Vietnam stems largely from Mahayana Buddhism which incorporated some more traditional religious practices such as the belief in repetitive prayers, heaven and deities (bodhisattvas) who would help people gain salvation.

Confucianism

Based on the teachings of K'ung-fu-tzu (Confucius), Confucianism is an ethical belief system rather than a religion, based upon the concept of duty. In Confucianism every relationship has the dual aspect of responsibility and obligation. Therefore the relationships between mother and child, husband and wife, brother and sister all have responsibilities and obligations. However, Confucianism goes beyond the family, and incorporates the relationships of individuals with the state, subject and ruler, bureaucrat and civilian. Confucianism teaches that if these responsibilities and obligations are observed, then society will be a just and harmonious one.

Taoism

In the Chinese language the word tao means "way". Pronounced 'daoism', Taoism is a philosophy or 'way of life' attributed to the teachings of a wise man called Lao-tzu. The Tao is considered unnamed and unknowable, the essential unifying element of all that is. Because all is one, matters of good and evil and of true or false, as well as differing opinions, can only arise when people lose sight of the oneness and think that their private beliefs are absolutely true. This can be likened to a person looking out a small window and thinking he sees the whole world, when all he sees is one small portion of it. Because all is one, life and death



merge into each other as do the seasons of the year. They are not in opposition to one another but are only two aspects of a single reality. Taoism seeks to promote the inner peace of individuals and harmony with their surroundings.

The Chinese Calendar

Although the Gregorian calendar was adopted in China in 1912, Chinese people the world over continue to regard the date given in the old Chinese lunar calendar as the beginning of the new year. According to the Chinese lunar calendar, the year has 354 days and 12 lunar months, about half of them with 30 days and the other half with 29. In order to make the months correspond with the movements of the earth around the sun, a 13th month is inserted every two or three years.

The New Year begins on the new moon and may occur at any time from January 1 to February 19, inclusive. The years are named for the animals of the Chinese zodiac - as the year of the rat, the ox, the tiger, the hare the dragon, the snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig. 2004 is the Year of the Monkey, and 2005 will be the Year of the Rooster.

Main festivals

- Yuan Tan (Chinese New Year or Spring Festival). January to mid-February based on the lunar calendar.
- Teng Chieh (Lantern Festival). Early- to mid-February, held at the end of Chinese New Year celebrations.
- Chi'ing Ming (Remembrance of Ancestors Day). This is a ceremonial date for visiting and sweeping the graves of ancestors. Normally held on the 4th or 5th of April.
- Tuen Ng (Dragon Boat Festival). Celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month (normally during June), this festival commemorates a faithful but unappreciated public official, Chu Yuan, who leapt into a river in protest at state policy. During a day of competition and celebration, boats symbolically chase the fishes away from his body with loud noise and firecrackers.
- Chung Yeung (Autumn Remembrance Day). Held during September or October, this is the second of two days dedicated to worshipping ancestors, the first being Chi'ing Ming. This is traditionally a day on which families go hiking.

Chinese New Year

The oldest and most important festival in China is the Spring Festival, more commonly known in the West as Chinese New Year. Like all Chinese festivals, the date of the New Year is determined by the lunar calendar rather than the Western (Gregorian) calendar, so the date



of the holiday varies from late January to mid February.

The Spring festival celebrates the earth coming back to life, and the start of ploughing and sowing. In the past, feudal rulers of dynasties placed great importance on this occasion, and ceremonies to usher in the season were performed.

Preparations for the New Year festival start during the last few days of the last moon. Houses are thoroughly cleaned, debts repaid, hair cut and new clothes bought. Doors are decorated with vertical scrolls of characters on red paper whose texts seek good luck and praise nature, this practice stemming from the hanging of peach-wood charms to keep away ghosts and evil spirits. In many homes incense is burned, and also in the temples as a mark of respect to ancestors.

On New Year's Eve houses are brightly lit and a large family dinner is served. In the south of China sticky-sweet glutinous rice pudding called nian gao is served, while in the north the steamed dumpling jiaozi is popular. Most celebrating the festival stay up till midnight, when fireworks are lit, to drive away evil spirits. New Years day is often spent visiting neighbours, family and friends.

The public holiday for New Year lasts 3 days in China, but the festival traditionally lasts till the 15th day of the lunar month and ends with the 'Lantern Festival'. Here, houses are decorated with colourful lanterns, and yuanxiao, a sweet or savoury fried or boiled dumpling made of glutinous rice flour is eaten.

A brief note about Chinese customs

Chinese culture sees lavish meals as an important way of bringing people together. There is a great emphasis on the importance of personal relationships (guanxi) or reciprocal obligation. In addition, in social situations Chinese people seek to respect the stature of each participant and avoid embarrassment (losing 'face') to anyone involved. Chinese people are unlikely to say "No" or criticise directly. A "maybe" or "yes" could be a diplomatic "no."

The numbers 4 and 7 and the colours yellow and white are associated with death, and so are considered unlucky. The number 8 and the colour red are considered lucky.



✝ Christianity

Christianity was founded about 2000 years ago and is based on the teachings of Jesus, known as Christ or Messiah, meaning "the anointed one". There are estimated to be 1.2 billion Christians worldwide. Many different forms of Christianity are practised in the UK, with an estimated total of 7 million adherents.

Key beliefs and holy writings

Christians believe that God is a trinity of three persons in one: Father, Son (Jesus Christ) and Holy Spirit. All have equal divine status. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth has led, especially among Catholics, to the veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The holy book of Christians is the Bible, which is in two parts: the Old Testament, roughly equivalent to the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament, which includes the Gospels (Jesus' life and teachings) and the letters of St Paul and other saints, as well as writings from other authors.

Places of Worship

Christians normally worship in churches, which range in style and grandeur from St Paul's Cathedral to small mission halls in urban areas and homes. However, there are many different forms of meeting place.

Holy days and festivals

The Christian holy day is Sunday, when congregations gather for worship. The chief festivals of the Christian year are:

- Christmas. This celebrates the birth of Jesus. This is held on 25 December in Western Christendom and on 6 January in Eastern Christendom.
- Lent. A forty day preparation for Easter, during which time some Christians impose restrictions on themselves, such as eating less or "giving something up".
- Easter. This commemorates the death (on Good Friday) and resurrection (on Easter Sunday) of Jesus. The exact dates, in late March or early April, vary from year to year.
- Ascension Day. This celebrates Jesus' ascension into Heaven, 40 days after Easter.
- Whitsun or Pentecost. This falls on the 7th Sunday after Easter and marks the coming of the Holy Spirit on the first followers of Jesus.



Practices and symbols

Unlike the other two faiths of the Abrahamic tradition, Judaism and Islam, Christianity has no special dietary laws, although some Christians abstain from alcohol and tobacco. Apart from the robes of church leaders (for those denominations with leaders), priests, monks and nuns, there are also no distinctive items of clothing. The symbol of the cross is, however, very significant for Christians, representing the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In recent years the symbol of the fish has also seen a resurgence. This is because the letters in the Greek word for fish can be related to the words "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour".

The central ritual of the majority of Christian worship is the Eucharist or Holy Communion, a sharing of bread and wine which commemorates the last supper of Christ with the apostles. Baptism is also a feature of most Christian denominations, whether of infants or adults.

The black-led churches

One of the areas in which Christianity is currently growing most rapidly is in the black-led churches of the UK. These churches represent 160 different denominations with over 100,000 members. Most of the churches are of African-Caribbean origin and developed because some black people felt excluded in traditional English churches.

The majority of African-Caribbean Christians now attend a black-led church, although none of these churches exclude white members. Services are generally longer and more exuberant than the traditional "English service" and the interpretation of the Bible is often more literal and conservative. One of the largest black-led churches in the UK is the New Testament Church of God, which has its headquarters in Northampton; it has 30,000 members in over 100 congregations throughout the UK.

Calendars

The date of Jesus' birth was established after the actual event and there is not complete agreement about the actual date. The Gregorian calendar assumed that from the moment of Jesus' birth it became the Year of Our Lord 1 (AD). The Orthodox Christian Churches celebrate the Christian festivals on different dates to the West. The time lag arose following the adoption in the West of the Gregorian calendar.



ॐ Hinduism

Hinduism is the name of the religion of the majority of people living in India; the name derives from a word meaning "India". It is an ancient religion, with such a wide variety of practices and beliefs that the following information cannot do more than scratch the surface and indicate some of its more common features. Worldwide there are estimated to be around 500 million Hindus, the majority in India. Hindus in Britain number about 400,000 with sizeable Hindu communities in London and Leicester.

Key Beliefs

Hinduism is a religion personified by many gods, who are themselves regarded as manifestations of different attributes of one supreme God. The three main gods are Brahma, creator of the world, Vishnu, preserver of the world and Shiva, the destroyer. Vishnu is often worshipped in the form of his incarnations, Krishna and Rama.

At the heart of Hindu philosophy lie the concepts of:

- reincarnation;
- karma, or past action, and the belief that right living and good deeds in one life lead to reincarnation in a higher form or salvation; and
- dharma or duty, appropriate to an individual's status and caste in the present life.

Holy writings

The most revered of the Hindu sacred writings are the Vedas. The Bhagavad-Gita is another very popular Hindu sacred book and forms part of the Mahabharata epic, which recounts the deeds of the Hindu gods, thousands of years ago.

Places of worship

In India, Hindu temples are usually places where the priests serve the gods on behalf of the people. Only at festival times do they become the focal point of congregational worship. Daily worship is offered in the home.

Although Hindus in the UK still worship mainly at home, more emphasis is placed on regular congregational worship in the temple. Before entering the temple the hands are washed and shoes removed. The central ceremony includes lighting the sacred fire using ghee (clarified butter) as well as prayers and the singing of hymns.

The river Ganges in India has a particular significance for Hindus; it is a holy river and Hindus who bathe in it believe they are purified.



Main festivals

The principal festivals of the Hindu year are:

- Holi. An exuberant spring festival which takes place in **February or March** and is associated with Krishna.
- Maha Shivratri. A festival for Lord Shiva usually in **February or March**.
- Ramnavmi. Lord Rama's birthday usually in **April**.
- Janmashtmi. Lord Krishna's birthday usually in **August**.
- Navratri. A nine nights festival as a prelude to **Dasara**.
- Dasara (Dassehra). A celebration in honour of Rama, which occurs in **September or October**.
- Diwali. The New Year Festival, which takes place around **October or November**. It has light as its theme and is often celebrated with fireworks.

Diwali - The Indian Festival of Lights

In India, Diwali, the festival of lights, marks the new year on the Hindu calendar. People worship the goddess of wealth, pray for the prosperity of the world, meet and greet friends and relatives, wear new clothes, exchange gifts and sweets and set off firecrackers. People share food and clothing with those in need.

Diwali is a time for fun and revelry. Diwali is also time for pooja and traditions. Just as one cannot imagine Diwali without crackers and sweets; so too one cannot imagine this festival without the rituals of lighting the lamp and Laxmi pooja. Each of these traditions are rooted in beliefs that have been established by Indian culture and Hindu religion.

The festival of Diwali is celebrated on the amavasya (moonless night) of the month of Ashwin (October - November). It celebrates the victory of good over evil and the glory of light. The common story of Diwali concerns the return of Lord Rama, a Hindu god, to his kingdom, after 14 years of exile. People of all castes and creed meet and celebrate Dipawli, commonly known as Diwali.

Diwali is one of India's most auspicious celebrations. The holiday commemorates the "home-coming" of Lord Rama and Sita. It's the biggest holiday in India, and signifies the beginning of the new year too.



The day is also marked by "Laxmi pooja", where Laxmi, the goddess of wealth is worshipped for prosperity and happiness.

It is believed that for these few days of Diwali, the souls of the ancestors return to their earthly homes, to share a few moments with their living relatives. Thus, it is important to be bright and happy on these days. The spirits of the ancestors partake of the happy company in their households and then return satisfied to the netherworld.

In presentation of Diwali, homes in India are whitewashed, painted and decorated. At sundown houses are lit up with diyas, small earthenware lanterns. It is a time of happiness, love, forgiveness and thanksgiving. Everywhere there is a joyous atmosphere.

Dietary laws and dress

Most Hindus do not eat beef, or are completely vegetarian, and many do not use either tobacco or alcohol.

Many Hindus wear Western clothes, although at home and on social occasions even Westernised Hindu women will often wear a sari. In fact, saris have now become more popular among younger Hindu women in this country. Hindu women often wear a red spot, known as a tika, on their forehead.

The caste system

Historically, Hindus have been identified with the caste system. Although the caste system remains important in India, attitudes and practices have changed. For example, Mahatma Gandhi ensured that, by law, no person could be ascribed to the lowest caste and everyone had a right to enter the temples. Educated Hindus now come from all castes and the system is considered outdated.

Upon entering a Hindu home, do not offer to shake hands. An acceptable greeting is the 'Namaste' (hands raised palm to palm and slight bow of head). Shoes must be removed in the area of the house which accommodates a shrine. When Hindu women are addressed by a man, another family member should be present.



Islam was founded about 1400 years ago by the Prophet Muhammad; people who follow this faith are known as Muslims.

Muslims number about 1 billion worldwide, with an estimated 2 million living in Britain. Most Muslims in Britain originate from the Indian subcontinent - India, Pakistan and Bangladesh - as well as from East Africa, the Middle East and North Africa.

Key Beliefs

Muslims believe in one God whose name in Arabic is "Allah". They also honour a succession of prophets from Abraham and Moses, through Jesus to Muhammad in the 7th century, but do not regard Jesus as divine.

Muslims are required to follow the "Five Pillars of Islam":

- affirmation that there is no other God but Allah (Shahada);
- five daily ritual prayers, at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and night (Salah);
- fasting during the month of Ramazan (often written as Ramadan). To keep strictly to the fast, Muslims will abstain from food and drink from dawn until sunset (Sawm);
- giving money to the poor (Zakah); and
- making a pilgrimage to Islam's most holy shrine, the place of the Prophet Muhammad's birth at Mecca, at least once in a lifetime (Hajj).

Holy writings

The holy book of Muslims is known as the Qur'an, which contains the revelations given by God to Muhammad.

Places of Worship

Muslims worship in mosques, which are social centres and centres of learning, as well as places of worship. The best way to approach the local Muslim community is usually through the mosque. The Imam (religious leader) or the mosque secretary are the best people to contact initially.

Dietary laws and dress

Muslims do not eat pork or ham and many eat only halal meat (from animals slaughtered in a ritually acceptable way). Alcohol is forbidden to all Muslims.



Most Muslim women dress modestly and some keep their head covered at all times. If a non-Muslim woman enters a mosque it is appreciated if she too covers her head as a mark of respect. In the prayer hall itself, shoes are removed by both men and women.

Holy days and festivals

The Islamic holy day of the week is Friday and communal prayers are said at mid-day. One of the most important festivals in the Islamic calendar is Id al-Adha (the festival of sacrifice) which is celebrated over four days, to mark the ritual slaughter of a lamb by the Prophet Abraham, in the place of his son. The end of the period of Ramazan is marked by the festival of Eid al-Fitr.

A Brief Note about Ramazan

Ramazan - Festival of Charity and Piety

Ramazan (often written as Ramadan) is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. This is the month of fasting (Sawm). It begins with the sighting of the new moon. The month of Ramazan is part of the lunar calendar and since this is eleven days shorter than the Gregorian calendar, Ramazan comes eleven days earlier every year which allows fasting in various seasons and weather throughout a life time.

What is sawm?

Sawm or fasting during the holy month of Ramazan is the fourth pillar of Islam. The fast is an act of deep personal worship in which Muslims seek a richer perception of God. Sawm during Ramazan or any time is recognised as physically demanding but spiritually rewarding. It is the duty of all healthy Muslims to observe the fast for this whole month. It is done so that Muslims will know what humility is. Fasting is also an exercise in self-control whereby one's sensitivity is heightened to the sufferings of the poor.

Who it is prescribed upon?

Fasting of Ramazan is an act of worship which is required of every adult Muslim male or female if he/she is mentally and physically fit and not on a journey. Exceptions: women during their period of menstruation and while nursing their child, and also in case of travel and sickness for both men and women. If they are unable to fast, they must feed a needy person for every day missed.

Abstention and self-control

Abstention means abstention completely from eating, drinking and intimate sexual contact from dawn to dusk and curbing even the smallest of evil intentions and desires.



Fasting does not mean starvation since food and drink are permitted at night although it is recommended they are taken in a mood of asceticism. As one conquers the daily routines of eating, drinking and endures hunger and thirst, Ramazan furnishes a firstclass drill in self-restraint and will power.

Eating and drinking

Ramazan is also a joyful month. Muslims break their fast at sunset with a special meal, IFTTAR and perform additional worship, TARAWIH, after an evening prayer.

Improving physical and mental health

A fast does have positive health benefits. The stomach has been working for 24 hours a day non-stop, so fasting will give it a rest. Although beneficial to health it is regarded principally as a method of self-purification. By cutting oneself off from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person gains true sympathy with those who go hungry as well as spiritual growth. Fasting is a very enriching experience as one transcends the needs of the body and cherishes the spiritual aspects. The month passes quickly and is almost like recharging one's batteries for rest of the year.

Teaching mankind

Muslims believe that Fasting teaches humans the principle of sincere love of God. It teaches patience, unselfishness, moderation, will power, discipline, spirit of social belonging, unity and brotherhood.

What happens at the end of Ramazan

At the end of the holy month of Ramazan, comes the occasion of celebration called EID UL FITR. Prior to the commencement of festivity of EID, it is compulsory for well to do Muslims to donate a prescribed amount to charity. Festivities of "EID" begin with an EID prayer in the morning. Customarily, it is a time for family reunion and the favoured holiday for children who receive new clothing and gifts from family members and friends.

Ramazan begins on or near:

November 6 2002
October 27 2003

The exact date depends on the sighting of the new moon.



Other points to note

Muslims form two distinctive groups, the Sunni Muslims and the Shi'a or Shi'ite Muslims. The former is the mainstream, orthodox branch of Islam and accounts for 88% of the Muslims in the world. The Shi'a are mainly concentrated in Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and India.

Recent world events have caused Islam to be misrepresented in the minds of many people. In fact, its teaching strongly emphasises the brotherhood of mankind and sets the tone for most Muslims' relationship with others.



Jainism

There are thought to be between 25-30,000 Jains in Britain. Estimates vary although the community is probably growing.

No statistics are officially collected but community sources say that the most popular areas for the Jain community are North West London, Leicester and Coventry. In the UK there are four Jain places of worship of which three are in the Greater London area and one in Leicester.

The precise origins of Jainism cannot be traced, but it began in India. The term Jain means a follower of the Jinas (Spiritual Victors), a line of human teachers who are believed to have existed from time immemorial and to have attained kevalajnana (infinite knowledge) and perfect purity through their own spiritual efforts. The Jinas are also known as Tirthankaras. Jains believe that in the present cosmic cycle there have been twenty-four Tirthankaras who have taught others the tenets of Jainism.

The twenty-fourth Tirthankara was Vardhamana, usually called Mahavira (the Great Hero).

When he was thirty years old he left home on a spiritual quest. Jains affirm that after twelve years he attained kevalajnana (omniscience). Shortly after this, eleven learned men came to the place where Mahavira was in order to challenge him, but when he answered their doubts they became his disciples and later on the Ganadharas (leaders) of the fourfold order of monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen which he founded.

Key beliefs and holy writings

Jain scriptures are known as the Shruta, Agamas or Siddhanta (doctrine) which comprise the canonical literature containing the teachings of Mahavira and other Tirthankaras.

Ahimsa

The cardinal principle of Jainism is ahimsa, generally translated as non-violence, although it goes far beyond that to encompass the avoidance of all physical or even mental harm to any living being.

Jainism is a religion without a belief in a creator god. According to its scriptures, there is akasha (infinite space) within which there is a finite area called loka (the universe). Within this universe there are an infinite number of jiva or atmas (sentient beings).

A lay person who undertakes to refrain from all forms of intentional violence expresses this by assuming the anuvratas (five life-long minor vows).

The vow of ahimsa (not harming) is the cardinal principle of Jainism. It includes not hurting sentient beings, and is therefore expressed in a strictly vegetarian diet. Jain scriptures permit



the consumption of dairy products such as milk, curds and ghee (clarified butter), but prohibit the eating of meat, eggs and honey.

They also prohibit the consumption of certain vegetables that grow underground such as potatoes, or fruits with many seeds such as figs, as well as fermented products such as alcohol.

Some lay people, as well as all mendicants, observe the restriction of not eating after sunset or before sunrise.

The principle of ahimsa also underlies the remaining vows of satya (truthfulness), asteya (not stealing), brahmacharya (refraining from sexual activity outside of marriage) and aparigraha (placing limits on one's possessions). Employment is also restricted to occupations where there is only a minimal likelihood of harm to human or animal life.

Jains consider that the true path of emancipation does not begin until one renounces the household altogether in order to lead the celibate life of a sadhu (male mendicant) or sadhvi (female mendicant) by taking the mahavratas (the great vows). The vows taken by a mendicant are the same as those taken by a lay person, but are much more restrictive.

Personal Puja

Jains may offer puja (worship) at their home shrines three times a day, before dawn, at sunset and, at night, by chanting mantras (litanies). The second important ritual is pratikramana, a confession of transgressions against one's religious vows committed knowingly or unknowingly.

There are two main monastic groupings, the Shvetambara (originally known as white robed, whose monks and nuns wore simple clothing) and Digambara (originally known as sky robed who, believing that clothing was a possession, went naked). These terms are also used to describe their lay followers. There is not a great deal of theological disagreement between them, most of the differences revolve around which Holy Scriptures are used. The Shvetambaras are thought to be the most common in the UK.

Jains do not believe in the caste system. Family life is extremely important: relationships outside marriage are not acceptable and people honour their parents throughout their lives. Education is vital and many people go into the professions, traditionally those that require science qualifications.

Language

The main community language is Gujarati but almost everyone will be fluent in spoken and written English. Many older people will also be able to speak East African community



languages. About 5% of Jains speak Hindi, Punjabi or Marwari.

Main festivals

Mahavira Jayanti (March/April)

Marks the anniversary of the birth of Mahavira.

Akshaya-tiritiya (April/May)

Means "Immortal Third" and celebrates the first time that alms were given to Jina Rishabha, the first Tirthankara of this cosmic cycle.

Shruta-pancami (May/June)

Or Guru-pancami, meaning "Teacher's Fifth", is celebrated by the Digambaras on the fifth (pancami) day of May/June. Among the Shvetambaras this day is known as Jnana-pancami (Knowledge-Fifth) and is observed in October/November. It commemorates the day on which the Jain scriptures were first written down.

Paryushana-parva (August/September)

A period of eight to ten days which marks the most important religious period during the four months of the rainy season in India. During this time, lay people often observe special vows of eating only one meal or of fasting from sunrise to sunrise.

During the festival, each day is devoted to a discourse on one of ten virtues. The final day is the holiest in the year and is marked by the celebration of Samvatsaripratikramana.

This is an annual ceremony of confession in which all Jains participate, requesting forgiveness from relatives and friends for offences of thought, word or deed.

Vira-Nirvana (November)

This coincides with the Indian festival of Diwali, when Jains mark the death and nirvana of Mahavira.

Kartika-purnima (December)

Is the day on which the rainy season retreat for monks and nuns comes to an end, and they resume their travels on foot. This marks the end of the Jain religious year.



Judaism

Judaism was founded about 4000 years ago by Abraham, who taught his people to worship one God - Jehovah or Yahweh. The character of the Jewish faith has been shaped by its history of exile and persecution. The most traumatic event in modern Jewish history was the Holocaust, when Hitler attempted the genocide of the Jewish people. Jews currently number about 15 million worldwide, with approximately 300,000 in the UK. The largest UK communities are in Greater London, Manchester and Leeds.

Key beliefs and holy writings

Jews believe in one God and assert this daily in their prayers. The Old Testament of the Bible contains the sacred Jewish writings. The first five books comprise the Torah and reveal the will of God. They are central to the Jewish faith.

Places of worship

The Jewish centre of worship is the synagogue; the Hebrew word means "to gather together". It is the focal point of Jewish activity, being the place for prayer, meeting others and a centre of administration. The Rabbi is a teacher to the community. The Rabbi's time is spent partly in pastoral duties, studying, teaching and sometimes conducting services.

Holy days and festivals

The Jewish holy day is Saturday, the Sabbath (Shabbat), which runs from sunset on Friday to nightfall on Saturday. It is a day of rest and prayer, and is strongly family-centred. Jews who observe the Sabbath strictly need to be able to leave the work place on Friday in time to be home before sunset.

The main festivals of the Jewish year are:

- New Year (Rosh Hashana). The Jewish calendar is based on the cycles of the moon and the New Year occurs in September or October. It is marked by two days of reflection and prayer.
- Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). This follows ten days after the New Year and is the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar. It is spent in prayer and a 25 hour fast.
- Sukkot. Five days after Yom Kippur, this is also known as the Feast of Tabernacles and commemorates the Biblical story of the Jews wandering for 40 years in the wilderness.
- Hannukah (sometimes spelt Chanukah). A festival of lights which commemorates the rededication of the temple in ancient times. The festival lasts for a week and each night candles are lit on a 9 branch candelabra, known as a Chanukah Menorah. It is celebrated during November and December.



- Passover (Pesach). A Spring festival which commemorates the deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

Dress

Most of Britain's Jewish people dress in the same way as the wider community. It is traditional for men to cover their head when in the synagogue and devout Jewish men and boys wear a skull cap at all times. There is one group, however, which is particularly distinctive in its manner of dress. Male Hassidic Jews (chiefly from Eastern Europe) wear dark clothing and wide brimmed hats, and curl their side burns.

Dietary Laws

The Jewish faith has many dietary laws; the extent to which they are upheld will depend on the individual and the degree of their orthodoxy. Many Jews do not eat pork, or shellfish, or dairy and meat products at the same meal. Food which has been prepared in a ritually acceptable way is known as 'Kosher'. In the case of meat, for example, this means that the animal has been slaughtered by a qualified person in a way which allows its blood to drain away. In the case of other food, there must have been no contact with banned items. An example of this would be an egg which, if fried in bacon fat, would not be permissible.

Rites of passage

All Jewish boys are circumcised eight days after birth. They are considered to come of age in a religious sense at 13 when their Bar-Mitzvah ceremony is held. The Jewish marriage is both a contract and a holy covenant. Divorce is permitted after all attempts at reconciliation have failed. Most Jews bury their dead, as cremation is strictly prohibited in Jewish law. This is followed by a week of private mourning and by a further ceremony one year after the death.



Rastafarianism

Rastafarianism dates back to the early 1930s when the Prince Regent, Ras ('Prince') Tafari, was crowned as Emperor Haile Selassie 1 of Ethiopia (1930-74). It is from Ras Tafari that this Revivalist Movement gained its name. Rastafarians believe in one God (Jah) and that they and all Africans who have migrated are but exiles in 'Babylon'.

They are destined to be delivered out of captivity by a return to Zion or Africa - the land of their ancestors. There are believed to be about 250,000 adherents to this religion world-wide, of whom approximately 5,000 live in the United Kingdom.

Key beliefs

The modern characteristics of the Rastafarian movement include a loosely defined belief system. Some consider the Rastafarian movement to be influenced by Marcus Garvey's own set of beliefs. He established the Universal Negro Improvement Association in 1914 in both the United States and Jamaica. This organisation was the vehicle for Garvey's aim to return Black to Africa. His teaching remains the key influence upon this Black religion. Garvey was thought to have predicted the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie with his alleged phrase "Look to Africa when a Black king shall be crowned, for the day of deliverance is near".

Despite the lack of a central authority, Rastafarianism is guided by key tenets of faith.

The Bible is the main religious text of Rastafarianism. The African race is one of God's chosen races, one of the twelve Tribes of Israel. Jamaica is the biblical 'Babylon', although all the places to which Africans have been exiled are also included. 'Babylon' is the place which will never see spiritual reform and liberation. 'Jah' is believed to reside in each person and there is 'Oneness' between the individual and God.

Revivalism, the belief that they are destined to be delivered out of captivity by a return to Zion or Africa, is the key tenet of faith held by the adherents to Rastafarianism.

Rites and observances

Worship takes place at various times depending upon each Rastafarian commune.

Nevertheless, a service is conducted at least once a week. Central to the service is music and, sometimes I-TAL (vegetarian, organic and natural food prepared in the colours red, green and gold). Fasting is observed, sometimes as often as twice each week or simply on the first Saturday of every month. On these days, nothing whatever is consumed from noon until evening. Adherents to Rastafarianism consider Saturday to be the Sabbath day. Cutting of hair is prohibited. Dreadlocks symbolise the 'mane of the Lion of Judah' (reference to the divine title of Emperor Haile Selassie).

Language, Culture and Diet

Since the Second World War, the influence of Rastafarianism on Jamaican society has been very significant. Music, language and cultural styles of dress have become symbolic of both Jamaica and Rastafarianism. As a consequence, it is difficult to ascertain where Rastafarianism ends and Jamaican culture begins. It would be a mistake to assume that



everybody wearing their hair in dreadlocks or even the 'Tam' (a woollen hat used by 'Dreads' to cover their locks) is an adherent of Rastafarianism.

Nevertheless, some adherents choose to express themselves in music rather than religious observance. Furthermore, the vocabulary of Rastafarianism is largely that of Jamaican Patois. Rastafarianism has, in the past, played a significant role in the politics of Jamaica. Indeed, Rastafarians remain very critical of many aspects of Jamaican politics and way of life.

Most adherents of Rastafarianism are vegetarian and avoid stimulants such as alcohol, tea and coffee. However, marijuana (ganja) is consumed and plays a significant role within Rastafarianism.

A note on Social life and the role of Women

Within Rastafarian communities, men and women play distinct roles and have different status. Traditional Rastafarianism, in its attitude and expectations of women (womyn), is very similar to traditional Judaism and Islam. Just as women's equality has become a serious issue in other faiths, Rastafarianism is adopting more open-minded and progressive ideas about women. It is accepted that women, within the Rastafarian religion, may become educated. Abortion or birth control are opposed.

Main Festivals

Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie 23 July
Ethiopian Christmas 7 January



Sikhism

The Sikh religion was founded in Northern India in the fifteenth century by Guru Nanak. It was originally conceived as a synthesis between Hinduism and Islam, but rapidly took its own distinctive identity.

There are estimated to be about 20 million Sikhs throughout the world, with around 500,000 in Britain. The Sikh community in Southall, London, represents the largest concentration of Sikhs outside the Indian sub-continent.

Key beliefs

Sikhs believe in one God, whose word was revealed to mankind through ten major prophets called "Gurus". Salvation comes from achieving union with God through devotional worship. Until that union is achieved, Sikhs believe they must live through many reincarnations.

Holy writings

The holy texts are known as the Guru Granth Sahib and consist of a collection of hymns and prayers of the Gurus. They include texts from followers of other faiths such as Islam and Hinduism.

Main festivals

Baisakhi is the most important of the Sikh festivals and falls on or around 13 April, marking the beginning of the Sikh New Year.

The festival of Hola Mohalla is celebrated in February or March over a three day period, and was originally adapted from the Hindu festival of Holi.

Diwali falls in October or November and is a similar festival to that of the Hindus, with central themes of light and joy.

Most Sikhs also celebrate the birthdays of the first and last Gurus, and the martyrdom of the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev and the ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur.

Holy places

The Sikh temple is known as a Gurdwara and is the focus for public worship. Temples range in size from the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the focal point of the Sikh religion, to converted houses in urban Britain.

Regardless of the size of the building, there is always a central place for the Guru Granth Sahib.

Before entering the temple the hands should be washed, shoes removed and head covered.



Dietary laws and dress

Sikhism specifically prohibits smoking as it is considered that smoking causes impurities to enter the body. Many Sikhs are vegetarians and most Sikhs do not eat beef.

Some Sikh men wear a turban but, apart from this, wearing Western dress is common. The Sikh religion encourages modesty in women; this is interpreted by many to be fulfilled by wearing trousers.

Other practices and symbols

Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the ten Gurus, founded an inner circle of Sikhs called the "Khalsa" (meaning "the pure ones").

Khalsa Sikhs are distinguished by five sacred symbols of the faith, often called "the five Ks":

- Kes - or uncut hair, which men keep tidy under a turban;
- Kangha - a comb, which men wear inside the turban;
- Kara - a steel bracelet;
- Kaccha - knee-length underwear;
- Kirpan - a small replica sword which is generally worn at the waist. Sikhs regard the kirpan as a ceremonial item and not a weapon of aggression.

Sikh names

Sikh men commonly adopt the name Singh, meaning "lion" and women the name Kaur, "princess". These names symbolise the unity and equality between men and women which are key concepts of Sikh philosophy.



Guidance on Naming Systems

Introduction

As not everyone you come across will be a Christian you should ensure that you avoid using the term 'Christian name' and use 'first name' instead.

Chinese

The traditional Chinese naming system places the family name first followed by the personal name. Chinese people living in the UK may use either the traditional method or the UK system where the personal name comes first followed by the family name.

In China around 90% of people share around 100 family names and 70% share 50 names. The most popular family names are: Zhang, Wang, Li, Zhao, Chen, Yang, Wu, Liu, Huang and Zhou.

The family name is nearly always followed by a two-part personal name. The two names are usually hyphenated and should be used together.

Gujarati

The basic pattern for males is: Personal Name - Father's Personal Name - Family Name

For example: Father's name - Karam Chand Gandhi

Given name - Mohan Das

Full name - Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

The basic pattern for females is normally to have a personal name and a family name only.

Patel and Shah are very common names within the Gujarati community.

As a sign of respect title affixes are often used: Ji, Bhai and Lal for males, e.g. Gandhiji.

Bai or Min for females.

Hindu

The basic pattern is:

Personal Name - Complementary Name - Subcaste Name (First Name) (Middle Name) (Family Surname)



The personal name usually indicates the sex of the owner, e.g. Arima = female, Naresh = male.

The complementary name is like a second first name; it is not a surname.

Some common middle names are:

Lal, Nath, Chand, Kumar, Ram = male Devi, Kumari, Bai = female

The "subcaste" name is not exactly equivalent to a UK surname.

This name, to someone who understands the caste system, gives information about the social status and traditional occupation of its owner.

It should be borne in mind that attitudes and practices have changed and the Indian constitution frowns on the caste system. Therefore, because caste is built into the Hindu naming system, many Indians have now stopped using the subcaste name.

This can cause some confusion because the middle name, used as a surname is not common to all members of the same family.

Muslim

A typical pattern is: Religious Name(s) - Personal Name - Clan/Family/Regional Name

The religious name is not used as a personal name but is in fact a religious title. The most common one is Mohammed, but any of the 99 names of Allah may be given. Other names include Abdul, Allah, Ullah.

The titles Allah and Ullah are usually used together with the personal name, e.g. Allah Dittah, Hafeez Ullah.

As the personal name may come first or may be followed by another religious name or used with a title, the real personal name (the one by which a person should be addressed) can normally only be established by asking the individual.

Examples (with personal name underlined>)

Abdul Aziz, Syed Khalid Hussein

There is no equivalent to our surname. Some Muslims have a final name which may be a clan, regional or family name or a title and may be used as a surname in our terms. However, as with Hindu family names these are associated with social position.



Thus when Muslims feel they are doing well in life they might, if they are traditionalists, decide to add a name of this sort.

Some examples are: Khan, Shah, Chaudry, Bhatti.

Conversely, many Muslims in this country, particularly the young have dropped their final name and adapted to our system by using only two names.

It must be remembered that members of the same family usually have completely different names thus kinships cannot be identified or assumed.

Sikh

The basic pattern is:

Personal Name - Singh or Kaur - Family Name (First Name) (Religious Identification)

The personal name is similar to the UK forename but the same name can be given to males and females.

The religious identification names of Singh and Kaur were originally complementary middle names on the Hindu naming pattern. Singh, meaning lion, is taken by all male Sikhs and Kaur, meaning princess, by all female Sikhs.

The family name is often associated with place of origin or caste and is avoided by many Sikh families. The use of Singh and Kaur as 'surnames' means a great deal to Sikhs as a mark of religious identification and rejection of the caste system. On marriage a woman takes her husband's family name where he uses it, otherwise she calls herself Mrs Kaur or sometimes Mrs Singh.

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Acknowledgements

HM Land Registry booklet 'Cultural Diversity: A resource booklet on religious and cultural observance, belief, language and naming systems'

HM Customs & Excise booklet 'Employing People of Different Religions'

Home Office 'A Brief Guide to Major Religious and Cultural Observance in the UK'

Multicultural Matters Newsletter (www.multicultural-matters.com)

BBC Religions of the World website

Chinatown-online.co.uk

COI Translations



SECTION 8

Different Situations

- o Reception
- o In the office
- o Telephone calls
- o Fax and email
- o Home Visits
- o Catering
- o Places of Worship
- o Organising meetings and giving presentations
- o Conducting interviews
- o Consultation and community engagement
- o Using positive images of different communities
- o Publishing reports, plans, strategies and policy documents
- o Putting information online
- o How to use a Minicom



Different Situations

Reception

- **Have a clipboard and pen available to help people write things down.**
 - ❖ Some people may find it easier to write down what they are looking for.
- **If you have difficulty hearing what somebody is saying, ask the customer or member of staff to write things down.**
- **Make sure you know what to do when a person who speaks a different language arrives.**
 - ❖ You might need to make a quick call to the Translations and Interpretations unit on 54496, or even use Language Line.
 - ❖ For details of how to use Language Line, see the section on Interpretation. You will need an access code to use the service.
- **Don't be afraid to leave your desk for a while, for example to help people get through a door or access a lift.** Make sure you give blind people or disabled people all the assistance they need.
 - ❖ You may need to ask a colleague to cover for you for a short while.
- **If many people are waiting and you are dealing with a phone call, take the caller's name and number and ask if you can call them back.**
- **If somebody calls to make an appointment in the building, ask them if they have any particular requirements in accessing the building.** For example, they might need a map, or they might need to know how to find an accessible entrance.
- **Make sure you know where accessible entrances, lifts and exits are located, so that if somebody calls to ask for this information you can give it to them.**
- **If a person arrives and has brought a friend or helper, try to speak to the person and not the friend or helper.**
- **For guidance on how reception areas should be set out, see 'Your Essential Guide to Good Customer Care, produced by Customer and Information Services. For copies, ring 54950.**





In the office

- **If somebody calls to make an appointment in the office, ask them if they have any particular requirements in accessing the office, or information.**
 - ❖ For example, they might need a map or large print copies of certain documents, or they might need to know how to find an accessible entrance.
- **Find out where accessible routes in and out of your office and lifts are located.**
- **Make sure you know what to do when a person who speaks a different language arrives or tries to use a service.**
 - ❖ You might need to make a quick call to the Translations and Interpretations unit on 54496, or even use Language Line.
 - ❖ For details of how to use Language Line, see the section on Interpretation. You will need an access code to use the service.
- **Try to make yourself more accessible to people.** Don't assume that people should come and see you - ask them where a good time and place is to meet.
 - ❖ This could be as simple as meeting them in reception, or it might help them to meet in another Council building or going to the place they live or work. A working parent might only be available in the early evening, while an older person might be afraid of travelling at that time.
- **If you are going to send information to someone, ask the person what format they would like to receive it in.**
 - ❖ It might be as simple as the difference between a PDF file and a word document, or as important as sending information in a language they understand or large print to a visually impaired person.
- **If you know or if you find out that somebody has a particular requirement, make a note of it in your file or database, and make sure that when other people access that person's information they will be made aware of that requirement.**
 - ❖ Imagine how frustrating it is to be sent information in small print when you have already let someone know that you won't be able to read it!





Telephone calls

Make sure you and your team are aware of the service standards expected of all staff:

- Every effort should be made to answer all telephone calls within 6 rings (15 seconds)
- Be polite, courteous and friendly
- Always greet customers appropriately, stating your name and department or section
- Try to make sure the tone of your voice is welcoming and helpful
- Make it clear you take the call seriously and respond appropriately by saying 'yes, I see', 'OK' and so on
- Always remain calm, diplomatic and professional
- Always try to deal with calls promptly
- Speak clearly and concisely. If necessary, take a caller's details and call them back.
- Avoid jargon

- Communication can be much more difficult by phone because we can't see non-verbal cues such as hand gestures and facial expressions.
- It is often better to speak to someone in person.
- Try to speak clearly, and don't speak too quickly.
- Don't be afraid to repeat information or to ask people to clarify things as necessary.
- Some people may prefer correspondence by letter or email to a telephone conversation.
- When you take a call for somebody else, take down as many details as you can. Find out their name, number, and ask if you can take a message or tell the person what it's about. You might be able to help by booking a room or giving advice yourself.
- ❖ This will stop the person who is calling having to repeat all of their information again, and it will provide a handy summary for the person who will be dealing with the inquiry.





- **Make sure you take the caller's name and number.** If you don't hear a person's name the first time, don't be afraid to ask them to repeat it or spell it out.
- **If possible, don't just send people back to the switchboard or tell them you can't help them.**
 - ❖ Try asking other members of your team if they can help, or who the right person to contact is.
- **If you need to set a voicemail message, try to make sure your message:**
 - ❖ Is friendly, clear and concise
 - ❖ Provides details of your name, department and section
 - ❖ Lets the caller know when you are likely to respond
 - ❖ Provides callers with an alternative number/extension to call
- **If you need to leave a voicemail message, try to make sure the message:**
 - ❖ Clearly and concisely states the message
 - ❖ Is friendly, clear and polite
 - ❖ Gives an appropriate number to call you back on
 - ❖ Indicates when you would like the person to respond by
- If the phone rings and you hear something that sounds like a fax message, an electronic voice saying 'Hearing Impaired Caller', rapid pips, static or silence, it could be a Deaf person calling using a minicom.
 - ❖ Be aware that all calls, including minicom, should be answered within 6 rings or 18 seconds
 - ❖ Make sure your minicom is ready and you know how to use it!
 - ❖ See the guide to communicating using minicom in the Appendix.

For more information on the standards that apply to telephone calls, general customer care good practice, how to handle complaints and more, see 'Your Essential Guide to Good Customer Care', available from Customer & Information Services on extension 54950.



Fax and email

Be aware that customer queries by fax and email are governed by the same standards as telephone and written requests.

The corporate standard is for all queries to receive a response (either in full or at least an acknowledgement) within 12 working days, or 5 working days in the case of Councillors and Members of Parliament.

Your team may have its own set of standards - ask your line manager.

Fax -

- **Always include a cover slip saying who the fax is for the attention of (FAO), what the subject of the fax is, the number you are sending it to, and your own contact details.**
- **If you are sending a long document, state the number of pages that will follow on your cover sheet.**
- **It is good practice to call later and check if your document has been received.** This means you can also check to see if the faxed copy is readable, and if any further information needs to be sent.
- Further guidance on using fax machines is available in '**Your Essential Guide to Good Customer Care**'. To order a copy, ring 54950.



Email -

- **Don't assume that just because somebody has an email address means they will check it on a regular basis.** Some people may not even check their email once a week, and it is often better to call.
- **Emails often don't need to be as formal as letters, but don't be too informal.** Emails can still count as a binding contract or agreement.
 - ❖ If in doubt, keep the structure and language of your email as if you were writing a letter. Try to avoid spelling mistakes and abbreviations.



- **Provide your physical address and telephone number in the signature line so that people can contact you by another means if necessary.** For details of how to do this, contact the IT Helpdesk on 54966.
 - ❖ If you are going to be away for more than a day or two, set up an out of office reply using Outlook or the Horde system, with contact details for another member of staff who can help with inquiries. For details of how to do this, contact the IT Helpdesk.
- **When sending people documents, don't assume that everybody can read Adobe Acrobat documents.** It is often better to send Microsoft Word documents.
- **If you can't deal with an inquiry immediately, send a 'holding reply'.** State that you are dealing with the inquiry and indicate when you will be able to give a full answer.
- Customer and Information Services produce guidance on **'How to use email and the internet effectively'**. For copies, call this department on 54950.

Further guidance and information on the standards that apply to the use of fax and email are available in 'Your Essential Guide to Good Customer Care'. For copies, call Customer and Information Services on 54950.



Home visits



- **For many people, home visits make accessing services far easier than going into a Council building, or making a telephone call.**
- **Don't assume that someone would like a home visit - and don't assume that they wouldn't want one!**
 - ❖ If in doubt as to whether a home visit would be useful, ask the person in question.
- **Try not to arrive unexpectedly.**
 - ❖ Always arrange a visit beforehand, and call before you are due to arrive in case the person forgets.
 - ❖ Find out what particular requirements the customer has - for example, they might need you to bring a particular form or document, or they might be visually impaired.
- **Don't enter the house uninvited.** Always knock or ring the bell, and ask if you can come in.
- Ask if it's acceptable to wear shoes in the house. Many people don't like you to do this. If you need to keep them on to do some work, ask if some paper can be put down on the floor.
- **Be aware that older people and women may be afraid to open the door to strangers, even if they know you are from the Council.** This is particularly the case in the evening.
 - ❖ Female customers may feel more comfortable meeting a female member of staff.
- **Setting a password may help people feel more secure.** Ask the person what arrangements they would like to put in place - they may prefer to ring the office before letting you in to check who you are.
 - ❖ Make sure you remember to bring the password with you.



- **Don't move things around in people's houses**, particularly when the customer is an older person or has a visual impairment.
 - ❖ See the section on visual impairment for more guidance on this issue.

- **Look after your own safety.** Your department should have its own lone working procedures - find out what they are, and follow them.
 - ❖ Don't allow a person to lock doors behind you, and make sure your office knows where you are at all times and when you are expected back.

Refreshments and catering



- Providing refreshments can be a very positive gesture, and should be considered for meetings which last longer than an hour.
- However, it can also backfire if the wrong choices of food or drink are made. You may create a situation where some people in a meeting are forced to watch others drink and eat.
- You can minimise the risk of this happening by doing the following. For further advice, contact the Action on Diversity team on 57224.
 - ❖ **Find out before an event what people want.**
 - o You could ask this question on an invitation:

"If you have any dietary or access requirements, please let us know using the contact details below..."
 - ❖ Don't just offer tea and coffee, as many people can't drink caffeine or milk. Make sure **fruit juice and fruit/herbal tea** is available.



- ❖ If you are providing food, make sure you include a range of vegetarian dishes. **Vegetarian food** is generally a safe option - but make sure that vegan dishes are available if you know a vegan may be attending.
- ❖ Try to find out in advance if you can get food which is suitable for people with **nut allergies**.
- ❖ Particularly when holding meetings involving members of the Muslim, Jewish and other faith groups, you may need to make sure you have **halal or kosher** dishes available.
- ❖ Be aware of **religious festivals** which may affect people's eating habits such as Eid and Ramadan - see the guide to World Religions .
- ❖ Make sure dishes are **labelled** appropriately and clearly.
- ❖ Be aware that many people and several major religions do not drink **alcohol**. Try not to book meetings in pubs and bars, and make sure soft drink alternatives are available where necessary.
- ❖ Provide a bowl of water for **guide dogs**.
- ❖ **Check before the event** that the options you need will be available, and make sure you have a number to ring in the event of a problem.



Places of Worship

- **Be aware that places of worship may be governed by certain customs, and not following these customs may result in causing offense.**
- **These customs may include:**
 - Not wearing footwear in the place of worship
 - Not wearing headwear in the place of worship
 - Not speaking loudly or swearing in the place of worship
 - Not having bare arms or legs in the place of worship
 - Not wearing short trousers or skirts in the place of worship
 - Not smoking or drinking in the place of worship.
- **In addition, some faiths have rules relating to which entrances and areas men and women use.**
- **In general terms, you should do the following when visiting a place of worship:**
 - If in doubt, ask what is appropriate.
 - Dress appropriately, avoiding short trousers or skirts.
 - Observe customs which are in place, such as by taking your shoes off before entering.
 - Talk quietly and avoid shouting or swearing.
 - Avoid smoking or drinking.
- **For further information on different religions and religious festivals, see the World Religions section.**
- **If you are going to an event in a place of worship and you want further advice on these issues, contact the Action on Diversity team on 57224.**
 - We will be able to put you in touch with practising members of a religion, or places of worship.



Organising meetings and giving presentations



- **Where possible, choose a place and time that is convenient for the people who will be attending.**
 - ❖ For example, avoid times when parents need to pick up or drop off school children.
- **Make sure the venue is physically accessible inside and out.** Make sure everybody can get to it - provide maps, directions, and if necessary, arrange transport.
 - ❖ Find out which venues are accessible.
 - ❖ Visit your venue to make sure it is accessible.
 - ❖ Make sure your equipment is working.
- **Find out in advance if people have special requirements** - when an invitation or letter is sent out, give contact details for people to get in touch with you if they do have any.
 - ❖ You might need to book an interpreter for a different language, such as British Sign Language - this could take up to several weeks.
- **Give people an agenda or summary of what the meeting or presentation will cover beforehand, as well as any relevant documents.**
 - ❖ This is common courtesy, and will give people time to think about the issues.
- **When sending out invitations or posters, make sure they state that your material is available in different formats if required.**
 - ❖ During the event, if possible try not to introduce material that people haven't had a chance to prepare for.
- **When presenting to Deaf people or older people, make sure they can hear you** - if possible, organise seats at front for the hard of hearing.
 - ❖ You may need to use an induction loop. Find out if your venue has this facility, and if it hasn't, how to obtain one.



- ❖ Reserving seats at the front will also help wheelchair users enjoy the presentation.

- **If possible, provide handouts to give people an alternative information format.**

- ❖ Make sure handouts are legible, printed in at least font size 12 or size 14.

- ❖ This may also help people who are unable to attend the meeting.



- **Speak slowly and clearly.** It is good practice to check at an early stage if everybody can understand what you are saying - you may need to speak slower, louder or more quietly as necessary.

- ❖ If you ask the question, 'Can everybody hear me?' you won't find out if somebody is having difficulty.

- ❖ Instead, try saying, 'Put your hand up if you can hear me!'.

- **Make sure you check for understanding.** Be sure to leave enough time at the end for questions, and if necessary take people's contact details so that you can send information or answer a question in more detail later.

- **Try to keep your language simple.** Use drawings, diagrams and visual aids to help people understand, but be prepared to describe something in a different way.

- ❖ For example, somebody you are presenting to might be unable to see the picture or diagram clearly - or your projector might break down!



Conducting Interviews

- Recruitment and selection plays a vital role in deciding the make-up of your workforce.
 - ❖ There are close links between equal opportunities and good employment practice.
- Interviews are likely to be the first contact people have with Nottingham City Council.
 - ❖ First impressions count, so make it a positive experience.
- Between 15% and 20% of the working age population in the UK, or more than 10 million people, have a disability.
 - ❖ This is a huge pool of potential employees.
- The Disability Discrimination Act places a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment process.
- When sending an invitation to interview, make sure you ask clearly if people have any particular requirements, both in getting to the interview and for the interview itself.
 - ❖ For example, a wheelchair user might require the interview to take place in an accessible location, while a Deaf person might require the use of a British Sign Language interpreter.
- Make sure you give several options for people to let you know their requirements, including telephone, email and in writing.
- Make sure somebody is available to bring a person from reception to the place of interview.
- Smile! A friendly and welcoming manner will help a candidate feel at ease with the process.
- During the interview, speak clearly and concisely throughout.
 - ❖ Do not use jargon or highly specialised terminology.
- Don't ever be interrupted by the telephone or a message during an interview. If necessary, set up a divert or take the phone off the hook.
- Listen to what the candidate has to say and ask them reasoned questions based on their responses.



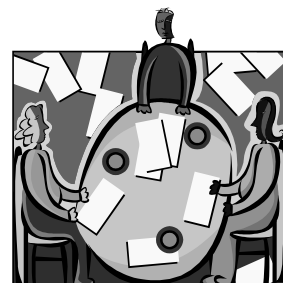


- ❖ Be prepared to rephrase questions if asked.
- Ensure all correspondence, including instructions for any tests, is clearly and simply written, and available in alternative formats and other community languages as necessary.
- Make sure people are briefed fully and properly before taking a test.
 - ❖ Make sure they are asked directly if they understand what they have to do, and if they have the materials they will need.
- Make sure selection criteria are applied consistently to avoid subjective decisions being made.
- Be aware that people from diverse cultural backgrounds may have different expressions of body language. For example, women from some Asian cultures may not make eye contact.
- Avoid interviews on Fridays as people from certain religions (particularly Islam and Judaism) will be unable to attend.
- Be sensitive to the requirements of parents, especially lone parents, and try to accommodate them with interviews during school hours.
- Try to avoid unnecessary physical barriers between the interview panel and the candidate such as straight rows of tables.
- Try to provide a selection of chairs at different heights for people to sit down on.
- Don't make assumptions about a person's ability on the basis of how they may appear, speak or dress.
- Don't mislead people by giving them false hope.
- Don't enter into an interview uninformed about either the candidate, their individual needs or requirements, or how to meet those requirements.
 - ❖ For specific guidance, try looking in this guide or getting in touch with people who know about specific requirements. The Action on Diversity Team is available on 57224.
 - ❖ For inquiries concerning recruitment and selection, ask for Niki Burton who is the team's HR Officer.



Consultation and community engagement

- **Before initiating any consultation process** - contact Sheila Badiani, the Service Marketing Officer on 54667 or Tony Leafe, the Consultation Strategy Officer on 54474 in order to avoid duplicating efforts.
- **Consultation is a vital part of community engagement.** It helps make sure that the Council delivers the services people want, in the way that they want them to be delivered.
- **Consultation is a vital part of the Council's communication with its community** - if it isn't done properly, or if it doesn't work, it can leave people disappointed and unwilling to participate in future.
 - ❖ You must make sure you include all different groups in a community - sometimes this might involve running separate meetings or events. For guidance on including different communities in consultation, see the Consultation intranet site 'Key2Consultation' or contact the Action on Diversity team on 57224.
- **Before thinking about 'what' you want to find out, and 'how' you will go about consulting, make sure you know exactly 'why' you are consulting.**
- **You must be clear about what it is you are doing.**



Will you:

- o Merely **INFORM** people what you plan to do?
- o **CONSULT** - offer some options, listen to feedback, but not allow new ideas?
- o **DECIDE TOGETHER** - encouraging additional options and ideas, and providing opportunities for joint decision-making?
- o **ACT TOGETHER** - not only let different interests decide together on what is best, but form a partnership to carry it out?
- o **SUPPORT** independent community initiatives with funds, advice or other support to develop their own agendas within guidelines?



- If you raise people's expectations about what the consultation process is about, they may be very disappointed and unwilling to participate again as a result.
- **Follow the '40-20-40' rule:**
 - ❖ At least **40%** of the time should be dedicated to **planning**
 - ❖ No more than **20%** of the time should be spent **carrying out** the consultation
 - ❖ At least **40%** of time should be given to **analysing** the results.
- **Make sure you feed back the results of your study not just to staff within the Council, but to the communities and people who took part in it and who will be affected by the result.**
 - ❖ It may be that you would have liked to adopt a community's favoured option, but financial or other constraints meant another option had to be chosen. In this case it is essential to let people know this - if you don't, they will assume that what they said was of no importance in making the decision.
- **If you want to find out how you can save time and improve your consultation process, visit the Consultation intranet site 'Key2Consultation'** - follow the link from the intranet home page - or call Sheila Badiani, the Service Marketing Officer on 54667 or Tony Leafe, the Consultation Strategy Officer on 54474.
 - ❖ The site contains a wealth of useful, clear guidance on how to go about consultation.



Using positive images of different communities



- Using positive images of different communities, including all of those which have visibly identifiable features - race, gender, disability and age - is a great way of communicating the message that a service welcomes people from every background.
- However, getting it wrong can send all the wrong messages, and can suggest a 'tick-in-the-box', token approach to equality and diversity.
- Try to make sure that the images you use are:

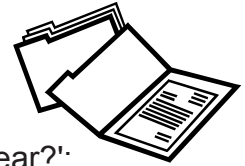
- ✓ **Fully representative** - try to use images that include people from the widest possible range of backgrounds, including race, gender, disability and age.
 - ✓ **Fully inclusive** - Make sure people from different communities are shown as a key part of the team, rather than 'extras'. Don't use images which suggest people from different groups are outsiders.
 - ✓ **Balanced** - try to vary and balance the way in which different groups are presented. Avoid always showing male managers, female receptionists, white male builders, or young office staff, as these images may promote stereotypes.
 - ❖ Disability isn't just about wheelchair users - try to avoid reinforcing this stereotype, and consider referring to other types of disability such as visual and hearing impairment and learning disability.
 - ✓ **Professional** - Don't use amateur photography as this will adversely affect the image of the Authority.
 - ✓ **Positive** - Try to avoid associating different communities with negative situations such as hospitalisation, access problems or crime.
 - ✓ **Up-to-date** - don't use old, tired images that have been used dozens of times before.
- Be aware that Data Protection legislation prevents the use of images without a person's consent to the exact way in which their picture will be used.





Publishing reports, plans, strategies and policy documents

- Try to keep documents as short and simple as possible.
- If you or somebody you know have difficulty keeping things short and simple, Mencap produce a useful guide called 'Am I Making Myself Clear?':

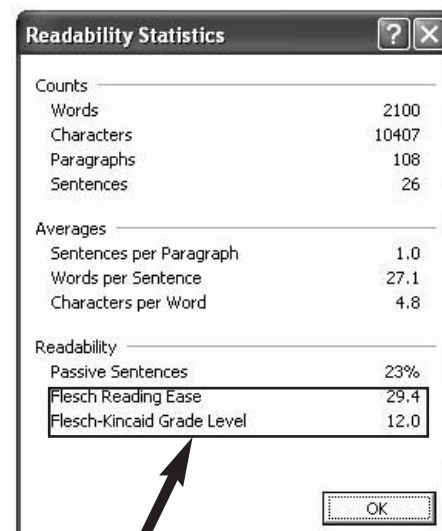
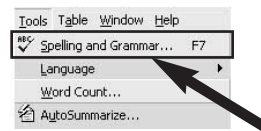
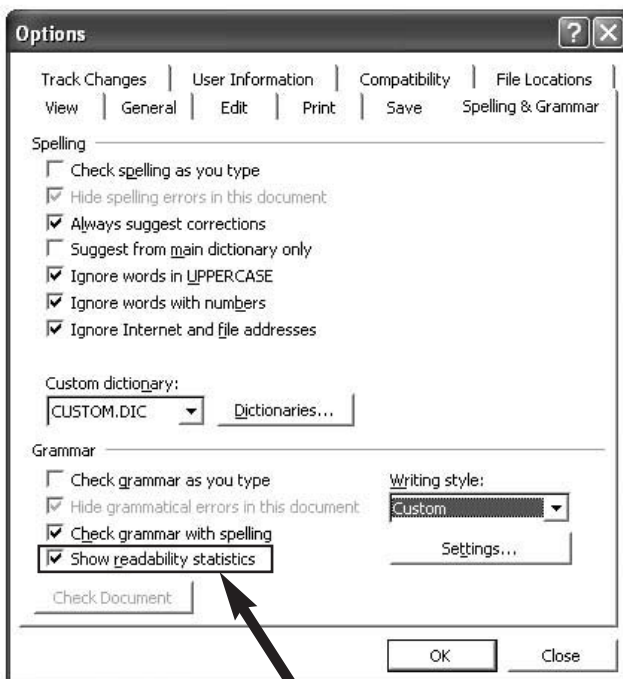


http://www.mencap.org.uk/html/accessibility/accessibility_guides.htm

- You can use Microsoft Office to check how readable your document is. To do this, first make sure that Readability Statistics are turned on:

- Go to Tools > Options.
- Click on the Spelling & Grammar tab.
- Make sure the 'Readability Statistics' box is ticked.

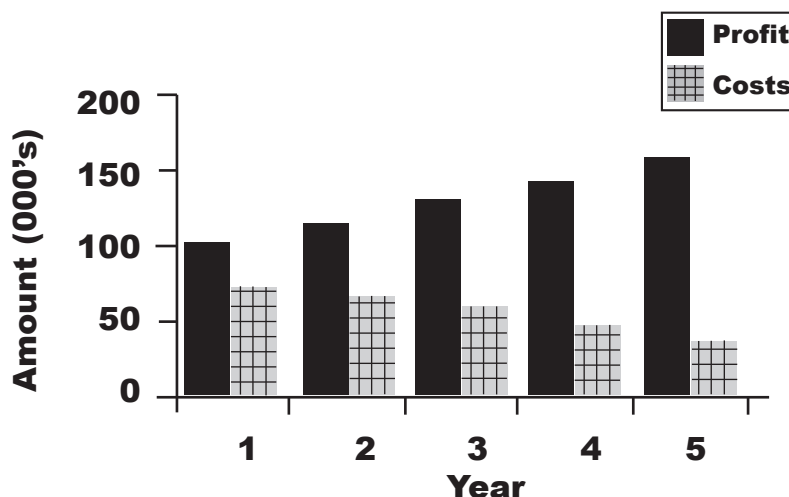
- Readability Statistics are produced when you run a complete spelling and grammar check on your document. '**Flesch Reading Ease**' suggests a score out of 100 for how easy the document is to read, based on average sentence length and average number of syllables per word. '**Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level**' shows a score from 1 to 12 based on a similar calculation, where 1 is the most simple to read and 12 is the most difficult.





- Don't justify text: This makes it harder to read. Instead, leave the right-hand edge ragged:
- If you use colour to convey information, make sure there is an alternative way of explaining that information. If you use colours on diagrams and charts, make sure you use a texture as well:

Profit and Costs for Years 1 to 5



- ❖ It is also good practice to provide a summary and explanation of what a chart or diagram is showing.
- **Consider using simple and clear pictures and symbols to make agendas, minutes, and reports easier to understand.**
- **Try to avoid using tables and text boxes where possible.** They can cause major problems with putting a document into another format. Instead, try to use plain text.
- **It is good practice to offer copies of the document in a range of formats as required, along with details of how to get an accessible copy.**
 - ❖ One way to say this is, "If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, contact...". Give contact details for whoever is responsible for the document including address, telephone and email.



- If you think the document might need to be translated into different languages, involve Translations and Interpretations as early as possible in the process.
- **If possible, tailor your document to suit your audience.**
 - ❖ For example, if there is a chance that a report will be read by older people, make sure that a large print version will be available. Use well-known words, and keep sentences as short as possible.
- **Keep your style balanced between formal and informal.** Make sure the points you make are laid out clearly - bullet points are a good way of summarising information.
- Be aware that under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, any document may need to be made available to members of the public.
- **Don't jabber!** Wherever possible, don't use the following:

Jargon such as 'Almo', 'on the back burner', 'utilise'

Acronyms such as 'LGR', 'DDA', 'AD', 'BVKPI'

Abbreviations such as 'etc.', 'i.e.', 'e.g.'

Elongated sentences and long paragraphs

Rambling sentences and waffle





Online information



- **The Internet can be a highly efficient way of making information available to a wide range of people.** It can also make it easier to publish changes to a document.
- **However - don't assume that all people can use the Internet.** In particular, older people and those from low-income families may find it difficult to find or use an Internet computer.
- **Keep it simple.** Plain text is easy to access for visually impaired people using read-aloud software, but the more frames, pictures and diagrams on a page, the more likely it is that some people will not be able to read or understand the information.
- **Where you do use images, provide alternative text to describe what the picture is showing.**
- **Keep text to short paragraphs and bullet points.** This is much easier to read on a computer screen than continuous text.
- **Try to provide alternatives file formats wherever possible.** For example, don't just provide Acrobat files (.pdf), and don't just provide Word files (.doc).
- **When writing for a website, make sure text size is set to standard.** This lets people choose the text size they need when reading. Use the text styles in Microsoft Word such as 'body text' for writing and 'Heading 1' for titles.
- **When choosing a colour scheme, make sure there is high contrast between the text and the background.** Avoid low-contrast schemes such as black on blue or red on pink.
- **If you use pictures or colour to convey information - make sure that there is an alternative means of communicating that information.**
 - ❖ For example, combine the use of textures and colours on graphs and charts.
- **For a guide to making websites accessible, go to this address:**
<http://intra.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/obtree/accessibility/>



Using a minicom/textphone

- o A minicom (also known as a textphone) is used by Deaf people to convert typed letters into sound tones, and sound tones into typed letters.
- o Minicomms work on a standard telephone line. A minicom user can type what they want to say and read what another minicom user types back instantly.
- o Make sure that you know how to use a minicom, and make sure that your minicom equipment is working and on hand.

To answer a minicom call

- o The phone rings and you hear something that sounds like a fax message - an electronic voice saying 'Hearing Impaired Caller', rapid pips, static or silence. Any of these could be a deaf person calling using a minicom.
- o Place the phone handset on top of the minicom as in the diagram. The place where you speak into the phone goes on the left hand cup.
- o Switch the Minicom on. The words 'Minicom 5000' or 'Minicom 6000' will appear on the screen.
- o Type a greeting including your name, department and 'can I help you?', followed by 'GA'. GA stands for 'go ahead'.
- o The caller will respond to your greeting and will type 'GA' when they have finished their sentence.
- o Remember to put 'GA' at the end of all responses.
- o For example:

A CHEQUE FOR £43 IS IN THE POST GA

- o Don't type too quickly, and give people plenty of time to finish what they are saying. Wait for people to type 'GA' before you take your turn.
- o When the conversation has finished, type 'BIBI'. This means 'goodbye'.
- o This is followed by 'SKSK'. This stands for 'stop keying'.





- o When both people have typed 'SKSK' the conversation is over and you can hang up.
- o Switch the minicom off.

Staff should make every effort to answer all telephone calls from customers within 6 rings (18 seconds).

To call a minicom from a minicom

- o Switch the minicom on and place the handset on the cups.
- o Dial the number you wish to call.
- o Press **Ctrl** and **Space** to send an automatic message asking the person receiving the call to use minicom.
- o Carry out your conversation as above.
- o You can lift the handset at any time and speak to the person on the other end during the conversation, providing they can hear you.

To call a minicom from an ordinary phone

- o To call from a standard phone to a minicom dial 18002 before the full national number. For example, to contact the Action On Diversity Team call 18002 01159157224.
- o The operator will type what you say, and tell you what the person receiving the call types.
- o This is a free service.

For further details about minicoms and for guidance for different minicom models, contact the Royal National Institute for the Deaf information line on 0808 8080123.

The Action On Diversity Team
14 Hound's Gate, NG1 7BA
0115 91 57224





SECTION 9

Useful Contacts



External Contacts

| Organisation | Website | Telephone | Notes |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------|---|
| ACAS | www.acas.org.uk | 08457 474747 | The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service works to improve employment relations. |
| Action for M.E. | www.afme.org.uk | 01749 670799 | |
| Age Concern | www.ageconcern.org.uk | 0208 7657200 | |
| Cancer Research UK | www.cancerresearchuk.org | 0207 009 8820 | |
| Commission for Racial Equality | www.cre.gov.uk | 020 7939 0000 | |
| Disability Rights Commission | www.drc-gb.org | 0845 7622644 | |
| Employers' Forum on Disability | www.employers-forum.co.uk | 0207 403020 | |
| Homeless Pages | www.homelesspages.org.uk/ | | Information resource on homelessness |
| Mencap | www.mencap.org.uk | 0207 6965540 | Mencap works with people with learning disabilities. |
| Mind | www.mind.org.uk | 0845 7660163 | Mental health charity |
| Multikulti | www.multikulti.org.uk | | Multikulti provide guides to welfare law in community languages. |



External Contacts contd.

| Organisation | Website | Telephone | Notes |
|--|--|---------------|---|
| Royal National Institute for the Blind | www.rnib.org.uk | 0207 3881266 | |
| Royal National Institute for the Deaf | www.rnid.org.uk | 0808 8080123 | |
| Scope | www.scope.org.uk | 0808 800 3333 | Scope works with people with cerebral palsy. |
| Shelter | www.shelter.org.uk | 0207 505 4699 | Shelter campaigns on behalf of homeless people. |
| Stonewall | www.stonewall.org.uk | 0207 881 9440 | Stonewall campaigns for equality and justice for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. |
| Terrence Higgins Trust | www.tht.org.uk | 0845 122 1200 | THT is the largest HIV & AIDS charity in Europe. |
| Transsexual.org | web.ukonline.co.uk/transsexual.org | | Information resource on transsexual issues. |



Internal Contacts

| | | Telephone | Fax |
|--|--|---------------|---------------|
| Action on Diversity Team | John Cowings (Service Manager) | 0115 91 57224 | 0115 91 57431 |
| | Niki Burton (HR Officer) | 0115 91 57429 | 0115 91 57431 |
| | Maya Sisodiya (Policy Officer - Disability, Gender and Sexual Orientation) | 0115 91 57429 | 0115 91 57431 |
| | Veronica Sterling (Policy Officer - Race, Religion/Belief and Age) | 0115 91 57244 | 0115 91 57431 |
| Asylum and Refugee Manager | Graham de Max | 0115 91 57399 | 0115 91 57358 |
| City Deaf Team | | 0115 9475729 | 9417098 |
| Corporate Access Manager | John Devonport | 0115 91 58114 | 0115 91 58156 |
| Dual Sensory Impairment Team | | 0115 91 59069 | 0115 9417099 |
| Equality Officer- City Development | Jenny Browne | 0110 91 56239 | 0115 91 56627 |
| Equality Officer- Corporate Services | Lindsey Trueman/ Elaine Mitchell | 0115 91 54380 | 0115 91 54769 |
| Equality Officer- Education | Catherine Conchar | 0115 91 57899 | 0115 91 50650 |
| Equality Officer- Housing | Jenny McLean | 0115 91 57306 | 0115 91 57431 |



Internal Contacts contd.

| | | Telephone | Fax |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Equality Officer- Leisure and Community Services (DOLACS) | Bob Dixey | 0115 91 58767 | 0115 91 58760 |
| Equality Officer- Neighbourhood Services | Sharon Bramwell | 0115 91 52253 | 0115 91 52120 |
| Equality Officer- Nottingham City Building Works (NCBW) | Carol Aaron/Loyd Baker | 0115 91 52590 | 0115 91 52669 |
| Equality Officer- Social Services | Brandon Scott-Omenka/ Gary Nuttall | 0115 91 57044 | 0115 91 57014 |
| Mediation Service | Astrid Hutchinson | 0115 91 54975 | 0115 91 54539 |
| Translations and Interpretations | | 0115 91 54498 | |
| Visual Impairment Team | | 0115 91 59060 | 0115 9417099 |
| Youth Engagement Team | | 0115 91 58807 | 0115 91 56828 |



Further information on Religion and Belief

| Organisation | Website | Telephone | Notes |
|---|---|---------------|--|
| The Baptist Union of Great Britain | 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XD | 01235 517700 | www.baptist.org.uk |
| Board of Deputies of British Jews | 5th Floor, Commonwealth House, 1/19 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1NF | 020 7543 5400 | www.bod.org.uk |
| The Buddhist Society | 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PH | 020 7834 5858 | www.thebuddhist-society.org |
| The Catholic Communications Centre | 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PB | 020 7233 8196 | www.catholic-ew.org.uk |
| Chinatown Online | | | www.chinatown-online.co.uk |
| Church of England | Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ | 020 7898 1000 | www.cofe.anglican.org |
| Council of Churches for Britain & Ireland | Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL | 020 7620 4444 | www.ctbi.org.uk |
| Derby Multifaith Centre Website | The Multi-Faith Centre, The University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1FX | 01332 591285 | www.multifaithnet.org |
| Federation of Jain Organisations in UK | 11 Lindsay Drive, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 0TA | 020 8204 2871 | www.jainism.org |
| Greek Orthodox Church | 5 Craven Hill, London W2 3EN | 020 7723 4787 | www.nostos.com/church |
| Islamic Cultural Centre | 146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG | 020 7724 3363 | www.iccuk.org |



Religion and Belief contd.

| Organisation | Website | Telephone | Notes |
|--|--|---------------|--|
| The National Council of Hindu Temples (UK) | Bhaktivedanta Manor, Dharam Marg, Hilfield Road, Aldenham, Watford, Herts WD2 8EZ | 01923 856269 | |
| National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom | 27 Rutland Gate, Knightsbridge, London SW7 1PD | 020 7584 2566 | www.bahai.org.uk |
| Network of Sikh Organisations UK | Alice Way, Hanworth Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 3VA | 020 8577 2793 | |
| Rastafari Universal Zion | 290/296 High Road, London N15 4AJ | 020 8808 2185 | |
| BBC Religions of the World website | | | www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/world_religions/ |



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