RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

AND CULTURES

IN DERBY

A GUIDE FOR ALL

July 2004
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Population and Religions in Derby</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rastafarianism</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Visiting Minority Ethnic Service Users</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Language and Race</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Employee Religious and Cultural Needs – Manager's Guidance</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

1.1 Derby is a multi-cultural city with many religious and cultural groups. This booklet aims to promote greater understanding, awareness and sensitivity and is a general guide to some of the religions and cultures of minority ethnic communities in Derby. It is also a brief guide to acceptable language and behaviour for helping people of different religions, cultures and customs.

1.2 Summarising the religions, culture and customs of many people in such a limited space is difficult. Whenever possible, talk to members or representatives of a particular religious and cultural group to find out more about their religion and culture. This booklet does not contain all the denominations of religions and cultures existing in Derby. We advise further research and reading to find out more about denominations and cultures not included in this booklet. We also stress that dress is not a major requirement of belonging to a faith. You will find that in today’s society many people of different faiths would use Western dress.

1.3 There is guidance for managers to aid decision-making when receiving requests for observance of prayer, religious leave, dress and fasting.

Acknowledgements

The information in this booklet about the religions and cultures was given to us by the various religious and community organisations. The Minority Ethnic Advisory Committee (MECAC) and the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE) have approved this basic guide.
2. Population and Religions

Minority ethnic population trends

2.1 The 1991 Census figures revealed that almost 10% of Derby’s population belonged to minority ethnic groups. The largest group was Indians followed by Pakistanis, African-Caribbean’s, Chinese and Bangladeshis.

2.2 The 2001 Census figures revealed that 12.6% of Derby’s population belonged to minority ethnic groups. The largest group is Pakistani, with 1.5% growth, followed by Indian and Black Caribbean. There has been a shift in population with 2.6% growth in minority ethnic groups and 2.9% decline in the white population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>1991 Census</th>
<th>2001 Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African/Caribbean</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Heritage</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Black</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Religion

2.2 Derby’s population can be further categorised into different religious groups. The religions we have included are those most representative of the minority ethnic communities in Derby.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>2001 Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rastafarianism</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Religions have followers, which overlap different ethnic categories e.g. Muslims may be of European, Asian, African, and Caribbean or Bosnian origin.

2.4 Within any religion there is considerable diversity of beliefs and practices

2.5 Members of a faith group may choose to subscribe to some beliefs and practices but not others. This is a matter of individual choice.

2.6 Members of a particular faith are not always practising believers

2.7 People of a particular ethnic background, may vary in the extent to which they follow particular traditions or customs

2.8 The above aspects ought to be kept in mind to avoid stereotyping of religions and or ethnic groups

2.9 While some people may not consider religion to be of importance in their life, it is very important to many other individuals and communities. This needs to be recognised and respected in dealings with other people.
3. **Buddhism**

**History**

3.1 Buddhism was founded approximately 2,500 years ago by Prince Siddhartha Guatama in northeast India. According to tradition, the Prince decided to abandon his privileged life to search for the meaning of suffering in the forest. In the forest, he experienced enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, which is now a sacred symbol of Buddhism. After experiencing enlightenment, he returned to the city and became known as ‘Buddha’, the awakened one. Buddha created the Sangha, which was the community of monks and nuns to teach ‘Dharma’; Buddha’s teachings on the way to achieve enlightenment.

**Beliefs**

3.2 Buddhists do not explicitly state a belief in God, nor do they deny belief. Buddhists believe in Buddha’s readings, which are embodied in the ‘four noble truths’. These state that:
- human life is full of suffering
- people create suffering because they are attached to desire or selfishness
- if selfishness and desire are destroyed, suffering will cease
- the Eightfold path is a guide, which will lead to an end of suffering.

**The Eightfold Path**

3.3 The Eightfold path is a way of life, which Buddhists see as the way to overcome suffering. It is sometimes symbolised as an eight-spoked wheel called the Dharma Chakra or the Wheel of Truth.

3.4 Here is a summary of this path . . .

1. **Right views** - to have a positive mind, to think of the good things in you and others
2. **Right thoughts** - to care for others whilst being sympathetic and understanding
3. **Right speech** - not to tell lies or say hurtful, stupid things
4. **Right action** - not to kill or cause injury or steal
5. **Right livelihood** - to make sure that a job does not cheat anyone or cause harm
6. **Right effort** - to work hard to follow the Eightfold path
7. **Right mindfulness** - to be aware of thoughts and actions
8. **Right concentration** - this is the peaceful state of mind that someone should gain if they have followed the Noble Eightfold path.

**Holy Book**

3.5 The ‘Pali Canon’ is only one of the Buddhist sacred books and is written in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese. However, the ‘Pali Canon’ is also an important law or rule for all other Buddhist traditions.

**Worship**

3.6 Buildings designated for worship are varied and reflect the different traditions between groups of Buddhists. A shrine may be in the home or in a temple. Meditation is directed towards a statue or image of Buddha in the shrine. People also take offerings of flowers, fruit, incense and water to the shrine. It is respectful to remove your shoes when visiting a Buddhist shrine.

**Lifestyle**

3.7 Lifestyles of different Buddhist individuals vary. Some Buddhists live monastic lives while others have families.

**Food**

3.8 Many Buddhists are vegetarian due to the need to avoid intentional killing. Some may eat fish or eggs and avoid what they would call higher forms of life. Chinese Buddhists avoid blood and onions, which are thought to affect meditation adversely.

**Dress**

3.9 There is no particular dress worn by Buddhists. Clothes are reflective of the different cultural backgrounds of the followers. Some Buddhist monks do wear special recognisable robes.

**Holy days and Festivals**

3.10 Festivals tend to focus on the life of Buddha and are commemorated by meditation.

3.11 **Wesak - Buddha day** – May - June full moon
This festival commemorates the birth, enlightenment and passing away of Buddha. Generally, Buddhists will fast the night before, water the Bodhi tree and meditate.

3.12 **Uposatha Days**
Any new or full moon days are held sacred. At these times, people take offerings to the monasteries and shrines paying their respects to Buddha.
3.12 **Sanga Day** - November
A global celebration for the Buddhist community.

3.14 **Dharma Day** - July full moon
This is a celebration of the teachings of Buddha and the wheel of knowledge, which symbolises the Eightfold path described on page 4.
4. Christianity

History

4.1 Christianity was founded approximately 2,000 years ago by followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

Who are Christians?

4.2 Christians live according to the loving nature of God revealed by the life and death of Jesus. Most Christians believe in God as a trinity of persons, the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and The Holy Spirit. All have equal, divine status. Jesus is believed to be the son of God, born to the Virgin Mary. Mary is particularly important to Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Churches as the Mother of God.

Holy Book

4.3 The Christian holy book is the Bible. It consists of the Old and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains writings, poems and songs that speak of God as the ruler of the Universe. The New Testament has writings about Jesus, including books that describe his life and how the religion developed. The final book of Revelation vividly describes the end of time.

Forms of Christianity

4.4 There are many forms of Christianity including Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant churches. The Protestant churches have many denominations such as Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Quaker, Pentecostal and the United Reformed churches.

African and Caribbean Churches

4.5 African and Caribbean or Black Christian churches are particularly important in Derby. African and Caribbean Independent churches began in the early 1950s in Derby. They were formed to combat the racism and alienation that Black Christians felt on arrival in Britain. These churches were an important social function for African and Caribbean people reflecting the doctrine, church teachings and social activities which came from the Black Christian heritage from ‘back home’.

4.6 In Derby, there are approximately 16 African and Caribbean Christian churches of various denominations, such as the Church of God of Prophecy, Seventh Day Adventists and the Pentecostal Church.
Family Life

4.7 Both men and women are given the same rights in terms of religious ceremonies in Christianity. Christian family structure tends to take the form of family units with a strong emphasis on marriage and family life.

Food

4.8 There are few dietary restrictions for Christians. Some Christians associate Friday with eating fish and some impose restrictions on certain foods during Lent. Lent is the six weeks leading up to Easter.

Holy days and Festivals

4.9 The traditional day of worship, rest and peace is Sunday; some Christians refer to this day as the Sabbath.

Palm Sunday is a celebration of Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem, greeted by crowds waving palm leaves and is always the Sunday before Easter.

Maundy Thursday commemorates the last supper Jesus ate with his disciples before he was put to death on the cross. Christians may remember this by taking communion by sharing bread and wine.

Easter, for many Christians, is the central festival of the Christian calendar. The festival celebrates Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. People give Easter eggs to symbolise new life, share special meals and there are church services to give thanks to God.

Good Friday is when Christians remember Jesus’ crucifixion. It is said to be ‘good’ because Jesus showed love and forgiveness and obeyed God’s will in offering himself as a sacrifice.

Easter Day occurs during late March and early April. It is a joyous celebration of the new life of Jesus after his death on the cross.

Ascension Day is celebrated 40 days after Easter and marks Jesus’ return, or ascension, to God.

Christmas Day is 25 December, the birth of Christ. Celebrations begin on Christmas Eve when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus, in a stable in Bethlehem. Many churches have midnight services. On Christmas Day, there are feasting, families and friends give each other gifts, and there are church services.
5. Hinduism

History

5.1 The Hindu religion began over 5,000 years ago in India. It is known as ‘Santana Dharma’, eternal truth in the scriptures. There is no recognised founder.

Who are Hindus?

5.2 The fundamental belief of Hinduism is that the truth is with all of us.

5.3 For many Hindus, worship or Puja is centred on the home, and the eldest member performs religious and ceremonial rites when all the family gather together. Temple worship is also important on special occasions. In Derby, the Hindu Temple, Geeta Bhawan, is on Normanton Road.

5.4 Hindus worship many gods, but ultimately believe in one God. They believe that gods and men and women come from one eternal creative force. Their religious aim in life is to be drawn back to the divine origin and to be released from the need to be reborn. Reincarnation is of central importance, and their belief that behaviour in this life decides status in the next life. Various Hindu sects differ in their interpretation of ultimate salvation. Some believe in re-absorption in divinity, others maintain a distinction between God and individual souls.

Holy Books

5.5 The Hindu holy books are Vedas, Uprishad, Puranas, Ramanayan, Mahabharata and Gita. Gita is ‘the song of the Lord Krishna’. They have a number of chapters that consist of religious and philosophical poems and are the supreme religious work of Hinduism. The Bhagavadgita forms a part of the great religious epic, the Mahabharata.

The Caste System

5.6 The caste system is the Hindu hierarchy, which divides people into different groups. The system had influence over all aspects of life especially family matters and marriage. Traditionally, the caste system divided the Hindu population into four groups . . .

- **Brahmin**, priestly caste
- **Kshatriya**, the warrior and ruling caste
- **Vaishya**, the caste of farmers, merchants and craftsmen
- **Shudra**, the caste of servants - untouchables.

5.7 There is a lot of misunderstanding in Britain about the caste system. There was a time when each caste was exclusive to one another, and intermarriage was strongly discouraged. Nowadays, the strict caste
system has been gradually relaxed. Many Hindus regard the caste system as a traditional code rather than a way of determining social position.

Greeting

5.8 “Namaste” - I greet you respectfully.

Dress and Appearance

5.9 Traditionally, many Hindu women wear saris, which are still very popular among Indian women. They may also wear shalwar - loose trousers and kameez - tunic. Some younger women, in particular, regularly wear western clothes. Married women may wear a bindi, a red powder spot, on their forehead or in the parting of their hair, just above the forehead. Women around the world also wear the bindi as a fashion accessory. Hindus should be modest about their bodies and dress with respect and dignity. Hindu men usually wear western clothing.

Food

5.10 In Hindu religious philosophy, eating meat is strongly forbidden, particularly beef, since the cow is a sacred animal. Most Hindus will not eat fish, eggs or foods containing eggs. There is also great emphasis on personal hygiene and methods of cooking and eating food.

5.11 Although many Hindus are strictly vegetarian, some have adopted western customs of eating meat. Drinking alcohol and smoking are religiously and socially disapproved of.

Names

5.12 Hindu names usually consist of a personal name, middle name and family or caste name. For example, ‘Vijay Kumar Sharma’ is a typical Hindu man’s name, and ‘Meena Kumari Chopra’ for a woman.

Family

5.13 Traditionally, women were seen as the homemakers. They looked after the home and the family and the man shouldered the financial responsibility. However, these days it is common for both partners to work and share home responsibilities.

5.14 Many Hindu households have an extended family unit with two or three generations living in the same house or close to each other. However, changing circumstances in Britain have led to a decline in its importance, especially when the family may live far apart. Despite this, links remain close and there is much mutual support.

Birth
5.15 When a Hindu baby is born, there are numerous ceremonies including the naming of the child. The last ceremony is the shaving of the child’s hair and this may either take place in the first, third or fifth year. Mothers are encouraged to rest and not prepare food for forty days. After this, they take a purifying bath. In some cases, when a boy reaches the age of seven, a sacred thread ceremony takes place to remind him of his religious duties.

Marriage

5.16 Hindu marriages are important social occasions, often very expensive for the family. The most important part of the ceremony is the seven steps, which the bride and groom take round a sacred fire. This symbolises food, strength, wealth, good fortune, the seasons, spiritual life and everlasting friendship.

5.17 Ceremonies are highly symbolic and crowned by a feast with many people invited. After the ceremonies, it is traditional for the newly-weds to live with the bridegroom’s family.

5.18 Sometimes the marriage is arranged by the couple’s relatives after considering caste, sub-caste, kinship and horoscope. Marriage arrangements are made usually with the consent of both partners after they have met each other. Horoscopes are part of a traditional pattern of Hindu religious life. They often involve choosing auspicious days for important ceremonies.

5.19 Hindu marriages are becoming more westernised. Personal choice, meeting and ‘dating’ are increasingly significant.

Death

5.20 Hindus are traditionally cremated, and their ashes are immersed, with rituals by the priest, in rivers, preferably the River Ganges. Before cremation, the relatives may bring the body home so that friends and relatives can pay their last respects. A further ceremony is often held between the 13th and 15th day after the death to assist the soul in its departure to its new life.

Religious Buildings

5.21 The Hindu place of worship is called the ‘Mandir’ - temple. Shoes are not worn. The head should be covered, but this is not essential.
Holy days and Festivals

5.22 **Raksha Bandham** or **Rakhi** is in August celebrating the bond between brother and sister. A coloured thread is tied on the wrist of a brother by his sister and is usually worn for nine days. In return, the brother expresses his love for his sister by presenting her with a gift or money.

5.23 **Dussehra** is in October and commemorates the time when Lord Rama fought with King Ravana and was victorious. Celebrations are over ten days, when the story of Ramayana is acted out in plays. On the tenth day, an image of King Ravana is burned.

5.24 **Durga Puja** is in October and involves four days of worship after which images of the warrior goddess Durga are immersed in the lakes and rivers.

5.25 **Diwali** is in October or November. The date is based on the lunar calendar and is not fixed. It is the festival of lights and commemorates Lord Rama’s return from banishment to his kingdom of Ayodhya. Colourful lights and candles, known as ‘divas’, are displayed around homes and temples. Families and friends visit each other and exchange gifts and sweets. There are also firework displays.

5.26 **Holi** is in March and is a festival of colour. People celebrate this festival by singing, dancing and throwing coloured powder and water over each other.
6. Islam

History

6.1 Islam began in the 6th Century AD in Arabia. Islam is an Arabic word meaning ‘surrender’. This means to accept the power of Allah and to follow his commands that he revealed to the Prophet Muhammed; ‘peace and blessings of Allah be upon him’ (pbuh). Islam is not only a religion, but also a complete way of life. This means that it shows how to live all aspects of life in the best possible way.

Who are Muslims?

6.2 Someone who believes in Islam is a Muslim. Muslims believe that Islam teaches the true and successful way of life for the whole human race. Islam is a way of life, governing religious practice and morality, but also social relationships, marriage, divorce, kinship, economic and political relations among Muslims.

Holy Book

6.3 The Qur’an is the sacred book for all Muslims. It is the word of Allah - Allah being the Arabic name for God, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh). It contains all the basic principles of the religion of Islam. It prescribes details of belief, the duties, which are compulsory for Muslims to perform, and a code of conduct, which Muslims must follow.

The Five Pillars of Islam

6.4 There are five requirements for Muslims, which are called the five pillars of Islam. These are . . .

- **Kalma** - the declaration of faith that there is only one Allah or God and Muhammed (pbuh) is his prophet
- **Salah** - five daily prayers at appointed times, facing Mecca. Namaaz, the act of prayer, is performed before sunrise, noon, mid or late afternoon, evening and night and can be read in congregation at a Mosque or alone at home
- **Zakah** - the giving of alms or money to the poor, 2.5% a year of a person’s accumulated wealth
- **Ramadhan** - pronounced Ramzan - fasting during the month of Ramadan, before sunrise to after sunset
- **Hajj** - making the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during a lifetime, by people who can afford it.

Greeting

6.5 “As-Salam-O-Alaykum” - peace be upon you.

Dress and Appearance

Page 15 of 38
6.6 Islam requires Muslims to dress modestly. Traditionally, women should cover their heads, by wearing a scarf or ‘Hijaab’, cover their bodies and avoid direct contact with unrelated men. The traditional dress of Pakistani and Indian Muslim women includes a shalwar or trousers, a kameez or tunic and a dupatta. However, many Muslim women now dress in western style clothing, especially at work.

6.7 Most men at work wear western clothes, but may wear a shalwar and kameez out of work.

Food

6.8 Muslims will eat all meat, except pork, providing that it is halal meat and killed in the Muslim manner. Muslims also avoid food containing non-halal animal fat. Alcohol is forbidden.

Names

6.9 Muslim names include one name, such as Muhammed, Farooq, Syed, Tariq, for a man, and Fatima, Amina, Shamim, for a woman. These religious names could be before or after other names, such as Muhammed Akhtar, or Salim Ahmad. For women, Bibi or Begum is usually used at the end of a woman’s name. All Muslim names have an Islamic meaning.

Family

6.10 The Muslim family is usually an extended one with different relations having different responsibilities. Islam affirms the equality of men and women as human beings, but roles for the sexes are different and free mixing between the two is disapproved of.

6.11 Economic necessity and the greater availability of education have meant many more women are in paid employment and are active in community life.

Birth

6.12 After the birth of a Muslim child, the father, or a Muslim priest or Imam, will whisper in the child’s ear the ‘Azaan’, the Muslim summons to prayer, in Arabic. Within seven days, the baby’s head is shaved and a name will be given. Aqeeqa, a symbolic thanksgiving or livestock, is observed if the family can afford it.

6.13 In Islam, every Muslim male child born must be circumcised. This may take place as early as seven days after birth. It is done for hygienic and religious purposes.
Marriage

6.14 Marriage is seen in a very positive light by Muslims both because of the teachings of the Qur’an and the example of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), whose life Muslims seek to emulate. Traditionally, marriages are arranged with the consent of both partners. Suitability is assessed through a number of criteria such as education, status and background.

6.15 The religious ceremony, known as ‘Nikkah’ may be in the bridegroom’s home or in the Mosque. The couple must repeat their consent to the marriage three times in front of independent witnesses.

6.16 Non-Muslims must convert to Islam on marriage to a Muslim.

Death

6.17 Death is seen as progression from one stage of life to another, passing into the after-life until the Day of Judgement, when individuals will either be given places in Heaven or in Hell. Everyone will be accountable for their intentions or actions.

6.18 When a Muslim dies, prayers are said either at home or in the Mosque. Arrangements are made for washing the body and preparing it for burial. Only a shroud of white cloth is wrapped around the body before burial.

6.19 The funeral, or Janaza, will be at the Mosque and it is customary for only men to attend the burial. Muslims are always buried, and the body always faces Mecca.

6.20 Some people take their dead relatives back home to their country of origin for burial.

Religious Buildings

6.21 The Mosque, or Masjid, is where people attend for prayers. Usually only men pray at the Mosque, with the women praying at home. Shoes are not worn and the head is covered by a topi, or hat. This is optional for men and essential for women when praying.

Holy days and Festivals

6.22 Muharram – Islamic New Year.

6.23 Ashura – first month of the Muslim calendar. Muharram is commemorated for the martyrdom of the grandson of the prophet by Shi'a Muslims.

6.24 Milad-un-Nabi - commemorating the birth and death of the prophet Muhammed (pbuh).
6.25 **Ramadhan** - a month of fasting from Sunrise to Sunset and performing the Namaaz Taraweh in congregation, at a Mosque in the evenings before fasting, during the nightly prayers.

6.26 **Eid-ul-Fitr** - after the month of fasting, Muslims wear new clothes, feast and visit friends and relatives to celebrate the successful completion of Ramadhan.

6.27 **Eid-ul-Adha** - a three-day festival that marks the end of Hajj. It reminds Muslims of the sacrifice Prophet Abraham made for the prophet Ishmael.
7. Judaism

History

7.1 Judaism began 3,500 years ago in the Middle East. Jewish people believe that the religion was founded by Abraham and Moses and is a parent faith of Christianity. Judaism means ‘living the faith’.

Who are Jews?

7.2 Jews base their daily life on rules, which were given to Moses. They follow daily laws such as being honest, being generous to the poor, or about health and cleanliness. They also believe that they are special people because of God’s covenant with them. Jews believe in one God. A Jew is someone who is the child of a Jewish mother, and who has not adopted another faith. Someone who is not born a Jew can convert to Judaism, but it is not easy to do so. Jews pray three times a day – morning, afternoon and evening.

7.3 Majority of Jews in Britain belong to the Orthodox ‘traditional’ tradition. There are also Reform and Liberal Jews known as ‘Progressive’ Jews, who have interpreted parts of the Torah so it accords with the modern world. Orthodox Jews pray in Hebrew, have male Rabbi’s, women and men sit separately in synagogues. The Reform and Liberal Jews use languages of the land they live, men and women sit together in synagogues and have women Rabbi’s.

Holy Book

7.4 Hebrew Bible or Tanakh – especially the first five books called the Torah.

7.5 Torah: Book given to Moses after fleeing out of Egypt. It contains the first five books of the Bible detailing rules for the people to live by, a well recognised rule is the Ten Commandments but there are also a further 603 rules which Jews follow to help to guide their lives.

Greeting

7.6 ‘Shalom’, meaning hello, peace or goodbye. English greetings are mainly used.

Dress and Appearance

7.7 Men and boys over 13 wear a ‘Tallith’, a prayer shawl when they pray in the morning. The tallith has fringes, called ‘tzitzit’ or ‘katan’. There are 613 tassels and fringes on the tallith which remind people of the laws of Torah. Men also wear a small round cap called ‘yarmulke’ or
‘kippah’. Some also wear the ‘tephillin’ which are two small boxes containing the words of ‘shema’ on the forehead and the arm.

7.8 Women are encouraged to wear a prayer shawl but are not obliged to do so.

Food

7.9 Jewish people only eat ‘Kosher food’ which meet the requirements of the Jewish law. Shellfish and fish that do not have fins or scales are forbidden and animals that do not have cloven hooves and chew the cud, such as the pig and birds of prey are unacceptable. Milk and meat is never eaten at the same meal.

Family

7.10 ‘Shabbat’ is very much a time when families come together in the presence of God in their own home. It lasts for 25 hours starting at sunset on Friday. It is a day of rest shared by the whole family and consists of prayer, study and relaxation. The shabbat meal is the focus of the whole week and an important occasion.

Birth

7.11 Boys are circumcised within eight days of being born.

Names

7.12 Jewish names are not structured any differently than English names and many are anglicised. Joseph (Joe), Isaac, Benjamin and David are common Jewish first names for males. Ruth, Rebecca and Naomi are common Jewish female names. Levy, Chapman, Black, Rosenthal, Meyer, Goldberg and Harris are common surnames.

Marriage

7.13 The groom usually wears a white robe known as a ‘kittel’ to indicate that life is starting anew with a clean white slate. The couple meet at the ‘Chuppah’, a decorated piece of cloth held aloft as a symbolic home for the new couple. The bride circles the groom seven times with her mother and future mother-in-law, while the groom prays. An honoured ‘Rabbi’ then recites a blessing over wine and bride and groom then drink from the wine. The groom would then take a plain gold ring and place it on the finger of the bride, which symbolises the concept of the groom encompassing, protecting and providing for his wife. After this the Rabbi recites the seven blessings. This is called ‘Sheva Brachos’ and begins with praising god for his creation in general and creation of the human being as a ‘two part creature’ woman and man.
7.14 The couple share in drinking a cup of wine and the groom breaks the glass by stamping on it to symbolise the idea of keeping Jerusalem and Israel in their minds even at time of joy.

Death

7.15 During the time between death and burial, known as the period of ‘Aninut’, Jews usually celebrate and appreciate life. There is a seven day mourning period called ‘Shiva’ with means seven in Hebrew which begins after burial, survivors concentrate on their inner feeling to begin the healing process and take the first step into re-entering normal life without the deceased.

7.16 Every prayer recited speaks of life, gratitude and appreciated. A prayer called ‘Kaddish’ is recited in memory of the dead, but does not mention the word death.

Religious Buildings

7.17 The Jewish religious building is the ‘synagogue’, which is used for worship, study and often a community centre. Written services are recited aloud at the synagogue. The Jewish prayer book called ‘siddur’ is also used. The formal prayer in the synagogue provides a weekly (if not daily) revision class in the fundamentals of Jewish belief. Women and men sit separate and everyone except unmarried women, up to a certain age, wear a hat.

Holy days and Festivals

7.18 Sabbath – The holy day, one day each week. Usually sunset Friday to sunset Saturday.

7.19 Rosh Hashannah – Jewish New Year.

7.20 Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement. The most sacred and solemn day.

7.21 Passover or Pesach – Jewish spring festival marking the escape from captivity in Egypt.

7.22 Shouvat – The time that Jews received God’s laws at Mount Sinai.

7.23 Sukkot – The Festival of Tabernacles – Commemorating the years the Jews spent in the desert on their way to the promised land and the way God took special care of them under impossible conditions.

7.24 Simchat Torah – The ending of the Sukkot. The whole Torah is read and the new cycle starts.

7.25 Purim – marking the defeat of the attempt to wipe out Jews by Haman by Esther.
7.26 **Hannukah** – Festival of lights marking the restoration of the temple by the Maccabees in 614 BCE. Hannukah is celebrated at roughly the time of Christmas.
8. Rastafarianism

History

8.1 The religion originated in Jamaica in the 1930s. Marcus Garvey is seen as a prophet by Rastafarians. He was the person who said ‘look to Africa where a Black King will be crowned and he will be the redeemer of all Black people’.

8.2 The religion is based around these doctrines:

- the belief that Haile Selassie I, late Emperor, is the black reincarnated Christ
- the goal of redemption through repatriation to Ethiopia.
- that Ethiopia is the spiritual home of all black people.

Who are Rastafarians?

8.3 Rastafarians regard Rastafari, His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I, as the Messiah of the black race. He is believed to be the reincarnation of Jesus. Their beliefs are based on the Bible, especially the Old Testament, and the Book of Revelation in the New Testament.

8.4 The principles of Rastafarianism are linked to early Christianity and Judaism, and Rastafarians also identify themselves with the chosen people or Israelites. There are various Rastafarian groups . . .

- 12 Tribes of Israel
- Nyabingi
- Ethiopian Orthodox Church
- Ethiopian World Federation – EWF.

Holy Book


Greeting

8.6 Haile Bredren, hello brother, Haile Sistren, hello sister. The term “I and I” is used to stress unity and the relationship with Jah.

Dress and Appearance

8.7 Rastafarians will sometimes wear the colours of the Ethiopian flag - red, gold and green - as Ethiopia is seen as the Promised Land.

8.8 The colours of the Ethiopian flag have specific meanings . . .

- **Red** - the bloodshed in the Rastafarian historical struggle
- **Gold** - faith, prosperity and sunshine
Green - the land of Ethiopia.

8.9 Both men and women Rastafarians normally wear their hair in dreadlocks. Dreadlocks are symbolic of a lion’s mane and also the Masai warriors of Ethiopia. When visiting places of worship, men usually keep their heads covered with a tam - knitted, leather or cloth crown. Women also wear a wrap or a tam covering their hair.

Food

8.10 Most Rastafarians are vegetarians and have Ital food, which is natural and cooked without salt. Rastafarians do not drink alcohol, tea or coffee. Smoking is permitted, especially the smoking of cannabis. Cannabis is believed to enhance wisdom and facilitate meditation and prayer.

Names

8.11 Rastafarians identify strongly with Africa because it is the spiritual homeland of all Black people. Many Rastafarians are now changing their names to reflect their African roots.

Religious Buildings

8.12 Rastafarians do not have a name for their place of worship. Instead, people congregate in houses or community halls to worship. However, some Rastafarian groups have bought buildings for worship.

Holy days and festivals

8.12 Birthday of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I – 23 July. This day is celebrated by congregational prayer and chanting usually to the rhythm of drumming.

8.13 Ethiopian New Year's Day is on 11 September.

8.14 Ethiopian Christmas falls on 7 January.

8.15 Anniversary of the crowning of His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie – 2 November.
9. Sikhism

History

9.1 The Sikh religion is about 500 years old. It was founded by Guru Nanak Devji in the Punjab, which now forms part of Pakistan. The first Guru was followed by nine successors all called Gurus. The last human Guru Gobind Singh died in 1708 so Sikhism developed by a continuous evolutionary process over about 200 years.

Who are Sikhs?

9.2 A Sikh is someone who believes in One God, and in the teachings of the ten Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib Holy Book. Sikhs who practice the faith must wear Panj Kakke, the ‘Five Ks’.

9.3 The five Ks of Sikhism are . . .

- **Kesh** - uncut hair. For Sikh men, hair must not be cut and must be covered by a turban or scarf
- **Kangha** or comb - to keep the hair clean and tidy
- **Kara** or steel wristlet
- **Kirpan** or a small sword - for self-protection and to protect those who cannot protect themselves
- **Kachera** - a special undergarment, like shorts.

Holy Book

9.4 The Sikh holy book is the Guru Granth Sahib. Originally called the Adi Granth, it is a collection of hymns by the Sikh gurus, as well as Muslim and Hindu saints. Guidance is sought by opening the holy book at random and reading verses.

Greetings

9.5 ‘Sat Sri Akal’ - God is truth and eternal.

9.6 Waheguru ji Ka Khalsa, waheguru ji Ki fatah! This means Khalsa belongs to Guru ji and victory belongs to Guru ji.

Dress and Appearance

9.7 Some Sikhs dress according to the rules of the five Ks. Traditionally, many Sikh men wear a turban and Sikh women either a sari or shalwar or loose trousers, kameez or tunic and chadar or long and wide scarf. Sikh women do not wear a veil. However, many Sikh men and women have adopted a western dress code.
Food

9.8 Many Sikhs are vegetarians. Those who are not are prohibited from eating Halal meat. For orthodox Sikhs intoxicants, including alcohol, and smoking are strictly forbidden.

Names

9.9 All Sikh names include a personal name, a middle name, Singh, which means lion for men, or Kaur, which means princess, for women, and a family name. For example, Joginder Singh Dhillon for a man's name and Kulwinder Kaur Bassi for a woman. Sikhs’ first names are unisex.

9.10 These Sikh titles are broadly equivalent to Mr, Mrs, and Miss . . .

- Sirdar Mr
- Sirdarni Mrs
- Bibi Miss

Family

9.11 Sikhism accepts the equality and brotherhood of man, and gives women and men equal status and rights. The extended family structure can still be observed in some cases although it is not as common in Britain. However, family members may live close to one another.

Birth

9.12 When a Sikh child is born, the first words they should hear are those of the Mool Mantar, the beginning of the Sikh holy book, which are whispered into the baby’s ear. A few weeks later, the child is taken to the Gurdwara, the Sikh place of worship, where Amrit, a mixture of water and sugar blessed by hymns, may be sprinkled on the baby.

9.13 The child’s name is chosen at the same time by opening the Guru Granth Sahib at random, and taking the first letter of the hymn for the beginning of the name. The first letter having been decided, the family choose the rest of the name.

Marriage

9.14 Marriage is seen as bringing together two families, as well as the close relationship of a man and a woman. A Sikh wedding may be held anywhere, as long as the Guru Granth Sahib is present.

9.15 During the ceremony, the couple are joined by a cloth or scarf and proceed to walk around the Guru Granth Sahib four times. The couple show their consent to the marriage by bowing to the Guru Granth Sahib.

9.16 The traditional system of arranged marriages has declined in today’s modern, educated society. Although partnerships are arranged, women
and men have begun to have a definite say in the choice of partner and are allowed to meet before marriage.

Death

9.17 When a Sikh is dying, friends and relatives will gather at the bedside and recite hymns from the Guru Granth. After death, the body is washed and dressed in new clothes and then taken for cremation.

9.18 The son, or a close relative, starts the cremation and their ashes are scattered on running water. A religious ceremony is usually held following the funeral to aid the departure of the soul.

Religious Buildings

9.19 The Sikh place of worship is called the Gurdwara, the door of the Guru. Shoes are removed at the entrance and heads should be covered in the Gurdwara.

Holy days and Festivals

9.20 Vaisakhi is New Year's Day in the Punjab and falls on 13 April. The date is based on the solar calendar and is fixed. It celebrates the founding of the Khalsa, or the Sikh brotherhood. It coincides with the harvest festival.

9.21 Diwali or Bandi Chorh Diwas is the festival of lights. Sikhs celebrate Diwali to commemorate the self-sacrifice of Haur Govind against Moghul rule. It is held at the start of winter.

9.22 Guru Nanak's birthday - this is the anniversary of the birth of the first Guru, the founder of the faith. The day usually falls in November.

9.23 Hola Mohala is a three-day festival held in spring, usually a display of physical strength and Martial Arts activities.
10. Visiting minority ethnic service users

10.1 Normal or acceptable behaviour in one culture may be considered offensive in another e.g. an Asian youngster would show respect to an adult by addressing them as ‘uncle’/‘auntie’ – not by using the person’s name.

10.2 Behaviour patterns are often determined by religious duties and attitudes to family life. Invitations to weddings/social events for instance are to families not individuals, and generally children accompany adults to social events.

10.3 In many communities, family responsibilities are more important than the interests of the individual.

Age

10.2 Attitudes towards others are governed by age. In many homes the older someone is, the more respect they have. Be aware of this when talking to older people.

10.3 Be aware that decisions being made in a household will often need to be approved by the eldest in the family, given the status and respect afforded to such a person.

Body Language

10.4 Many men, and especially women and young people, may avoid making eye contact because of their cultural attitudes and customs.

10.5 Be sensitive to cultural differences in body language and behaviour

Clothing

10.6 Always wear appropriate clothes, even in hot weather. Ideas of modesty are different among minority ethnic groups.

10.7 Some people may find it offensive if you remove your shirt or wear shorts in public.

Gender

10.8 Be sensitive to different cultural/religious groups having distinct rules or practices about male and female relations e.g. there may be segregation of the sexes at gatherings - or even in the home. Be sensitive to these rules and practices

10.9 Don’t behave in an insensitive manner towards members of the opposite sex. Avoid sexual innuendoes/comments.
10.10 Avoid prolonged eye contact and respect the physical space of individuals.

**Hospitality**

10.11 Accept refreshments, when appropriate, if they are offered to you as a sign of hospitality.

**Language**

10.12 If you feel a minority ethnic member does not understand you, get help from someone who speaks their language. If necessary arrange another visit with an interpreter.

10.13 Don’t assume a person can’t speak English well because of the way they are dressed.

10.14 Never solely rely on children to help you communicate. Always leave a written message outlining what you have done and any further action to be taken if you are visiting someone’s home or place of work to carry out some task.

**Names**

10.15 Never dismiss a person’s name as unpronounceable. Attempt to pronounce names correctly.

10.16 Do not anglicise non-English names (and non-English nicknames)

10.17 If you are unable to communicate properly don’t:
- Speak Pidgin English
- Use condescending language
- Sign language
- Speak very loudly

**Religion**

10.18 It may cause offence if you enter a house/particular room with your shoes on – some rooms in the house may be used for prayers. You should remove your shoes and you may be asked to cover your head in prayer room(s).

10.19 Don’t walk across places of worship, or in front of people worshipping. Don’t comment on religious objects. Do not touch holy books unless invited to do so.

10.20 Don’t comment on, or ask Sikhs to remove their turban or Muslim women their Hijab - even as a joke.
Seating

10.12 Be aware that you may offend, or make people uncomfortable, if you sit too close to them.

Greetings

10.13 Be aware that all communities do not greet each other with handshakes. If you feel comfortable with using culturally appropriate greeting, like Namaste or As-Salam-O-Alaykum, do try to use them. Your attempt to greet people in this way does generate goodwill.
11. Language and Race

11.1 Many terms are used to refer to people of minority ethnic communities, which may be patronising, insulting or suggest inferiority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Black people, Asian people</td>
<td>Coloured people, immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ White people</td>
<td>Host or indigenous population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Minority ethnic communities</td>
<td>Ethnic minority group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Black British people</td>
<td>Second generation immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Dual heritage</td>
<td>Half-caste, mixed race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ African-Caribbean - this has superseded Afro-Caribbean</td>
<td>West Indian, unless you know someone describes themselves this way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.2 Don’t generally use the term ‘Christian name’. It excludes many groups who do not have ‘a name given in Christ’s name’ such as Sikhs, Muslims, Jews, and agnostics. Instead, use ‘first name’ followed by ‘family name’.

Specialist Language

11.3 A range of specialist language has developed and is used when referring to issues relevant to our multi-ethnic society. When selecting words to use, make sure you understand what their meaning is, and what connotations they have. Below are some of these words and their meanings.

Culture

A combination of attributes given to a group of people made up of language, history, social conventions, laws, arts and sciences.
Prejudice

Preconceived ideas about someone or a group of people, which is not based on any factual knowledge of the individual. It can lead to negative stereotypical views and to unfair and unequal behaviour.

Race

The idea of ‘race’ is socially constructed and is not grounded in scientific fact. However, for several centuries the prevailing view was that ‘races’ were fixed entities that were biologically distinct. In addition it was believed that there was a pecking order of ‘races’ within which ‘races’ covering Black people were believed to be inferior. To some degree these attitudes and beliefs still exist in Britain today. Since the mid-1980s there has also been confusion between the ideas of ‘race’ and ethnicity. At times people mistakenly use the term ethnicity to refer to a person’s ‘race’. The term ‘race’ has several meanings, such as people:

- of common descent
- with a distinctive nature
- with common characteristics

Racial prejudice

This is unfavourable opinions, or feelings of hostility, towards particular groups (or members of those groups) because of their race, colour or ethnicity. We are not born prejudiced. We learn it through socialisation and the influences of the family, the education system, media and society at large.

Racism

Racism, in general terms, consists of conduct, words or practices which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It is usually underpinned by a belief in a ‘racial’ pecking order with certain (stereotyped) values and norms associated with particular ‘races’ or ethnic groups. Subtle forms of racism are just as damaging as open or blatant racism.

Institutional racism

Institutional racism is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotypes which disadvantage minority ethnic people. *(Macpherson Report on the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.)*
Racist

A racist is someone who holds racially prejudiced beliefs, believes in racial superiority and acts in a manner consistent with such attitudes.

Racist society

This means a society whose values, as well as economic and social institutions are organised on (or in effect act on) the principle of racial superiority to the detriment of supposed inferior ‘races’.

Racial discrimination

When racially prejudiced beliefs are put into practice, this results in acts of racial discrimination. There are a number of ways in which racial discrimination can be described, such as:

- treating someone less favourably because of their race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins
- having laws or social policies which only apply to some people
- exercising discretion in applying rules, which results in differences in treatment between people on the grounds of their origin or skin colour.

Racist incident

A racist incident is any event, which is perceived to be racist by the victim or anyone else.  
(Macpherson Report on the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.)

Ethnic Community/Ethnicity

A group of people with a shared heritage in terms of language, culture and history can be described as an ethnic group or ethnic community e.g. Scottish, Irish, English and Welsh peoples. A strong sense of identity and belonging is associated with a person’s ethnicity. However one’s ethnicity is not fixed at birth but is an aspect that is learned and formed over a period of time through learning a particular language and culture.

Minority Ethnic Community

Within Britain there are a variety of ethnic communities, although certain ethnic communities are numerically larger than others. The numerically smaller groupings have been termed ethnic minority communities e.g. Italians, Greeks, Pakistanis, Indians etc. Due to their different experiences and treatment, Pakistanis, Indians, Bangladeshis, African Caribbeans have distinguished themselves from other minority communities by describing themselves as minority ethnic communities. The terms tends to be reserved for people of colour e.g. Black communities. For example, the Sikhs are considered to be a minority ethnic community.
Black

This is a *political* term that covers all people of colour e.g. African Caribbeans and Asians. (In the same way, White is a political term covering people of European origin.) Over the last decade it has increasingly been used by governments and local authorities to cover people of African heritage. Despite its widespread use, strictly speaking, terminology such as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups is inaccurate. Black people of African heritage fall into the category of minority ethnic group and some of the minority ethnic groups in political terms consider themselves as Black.
11. Employee religious and cultural needs - Manager’s guidance

The Need for a Code of Practice/Guidance

11.1.1 Derby Homes is committed to making sure that all employees are treated with respect and fairness. It also cares about its employees’ cultural and religious needs, in relation to their work environment. This puts an important responsibility on you, as managers, to employees within your section. Our Personnel Handbook contains advice on this matter in the form of Derby Homes' *Employees' Religious and Cultural Needs – Managers Guidance, April 2002*. This information is also included in the public folders. Managers ought to also take into consideration our *Religion and Belief Regulation: Policy and Procedure*.

11.2 This guide (which repeats much of the advice incorporated in Derby Homes’ *Employees’ Religious and Cultural Needs – Managers Guidance, April 2002*) will help you respond reasonably, sensitively and fairly to employee’s requests on religious and cultural needs. It includes advice on cultural dress, requests for time for prayer at work, for leave to participate in religious and cultural events or for religious fasting.

Observance of Prayer

11.4 Some employees may need to pray during work times. The employee has a right to make this choice, which may be based on their beliefs. However, it is up to the employee to make you aware of their religious requirements, and for you to deal with their requests sensitively and appropriately.

11.5 When an employee requests time for prayer at work you should:

- speak to the employee and find out exactly what they need to help them observe their prayers
- explain that they would have to make up the work time spent in prayer, possibly using the flexi-time scheme
- make reasonable arrangements to provide appropriate facilities for employees to observe prayer, such as a quiet room or office making sure that the prayers are not disrupted in any way
- some employees may need to pray in congregation at a place of worship, for example, the Friday prayer for Muslims. Understand the importance of this and allow for adjustments to working arrangements
explain what is happening to other employees, ask them to respect
the employee’s religious needs and make sure the employee is not
ridiculed by colleagues in any way for their religious belief, taking
firm action where this exists.

11.6 You must get advice from the Equalities Adviser if you are not sure how
to deal with a request from an employee or cannot arrange facilities for
them to observe prayer.

Cultural Dress

11.7 Some employees may want to wear their cultural dress at work
because of their beliefs and culture and you must deal sensitively with
this. Make sure the employee does not receive unwanted comments
from colleagues, or the public, because of their cultural dress and is not
harassed in any way.

11.8 Do not discourage employees choosing to wear their cultural dress as
long as it is appropriate to their job and does not affect Health and
Safety requirements. If you are concerned about health and safety, contact your departmental Health and Safety Officers and the
Equalities Adviser for advice.

11.9 If their job involves wearing a uniform and the employee wishes to wear
cultural dress, discuss it with them and explain the need to wear a
uniform. Allow full-length trousers in place of wearing a skirt, if a skirt is
required as part of a uniform. Some organisations will accept cultural
dress if the colours match those of the uniform. If in doubt, please get
advice from the Equalities Adviser.

Granting Leave for Religious and Cultural Events

11.10 Whenever possible, allow employees to attend and participate in their
religious and cultural events. Some employees may also request leave
for cultural observation such as the Independence Day of their country of origin and anniversaries of the birth or death of respected leaders.

11.12 The Equalities Adviser can provide you with a calendar identifying all
the religious and cultural events for the year. Managers should note
that certain religious events are based upon a lunar calendar and
therefore the same event in subsequent years will not occur at the
same date according to the calendar adopted by European nations e.g.
Eid does not fall on the same date each year in relation to the British
calendar. The date for Eid celebrations is usually confirmed after
sighting of the moon. This confirmation of the date often does not occur
until the day before the celebrations are actually due take place. Managers need to be aware that this could result in the employee
asking for leave at short notice. In such cases, the employee should
inform you in advance, of the week within which the celebration of Eid
will take place.
11.13 It is good practice to speak to employees at the start of the leave year, or when they join the section/team as part of their induction, to find out what their religious and cultural needs are, if any, for the year.

11.14 Use the discretion available to you within the Derby Homes’ policies for granting annual leave, time off in lieu, and flexi-time and unpaid leave to facilitate requests. Our policies always put the needs and the efficiency of services first.

11.15 Follow these guidelines when employees request leave to participate in religious and cultural events . . .

- Give the request serious consideration and deal with each case sensitively, fairly and consistently.

- Consider the use of annual leave to allow employees to participate in religious and cultural events and the option of unpaid leave in exceptional circumstances.

- When considering the use of flexi-time or time off in lieu, allow employees to build up time to use when attending religious and cultural events.

- Whenever possible, consider adjusting rotas to allow employees time off to attend and participate in religious and cultural events.

- Make sure teams respect each other’s religious and cultural beliefs, and that anyone requesting leave for religious and cultural reasons is not faced with hostility or resentment from colleagues.

11.16 Seek advice from the Equalities Adviser if the employee’s request for leave for a religious and cultural event or observance is not granted and they feel aggrieved.

Fasting

11.17 Recognise the importance of fasting in some religions and follow these guidelines to help an employee who is fasting . . .

- Allow the employee flexibility in start and finish work times. This can be achieved by using flexi-time, time off in lieu and annual leave arrangements.

- Allow the employee the opportunity to work a reduced lunch hour so that they may start late or finish early.

- Make sure that employees requesting religious and cultural leave, or requesting flexibility to observe fasts, are doing their contractual hours. Importantly, consider the flexibility in how these hours are worked.
For further information on this document contact:

Shahid Ashrif
Housing Equalities Adviser
Telephone 01332 711023
E-mail: Shahid.Ashrif@derby.gov.uk

Contact address is: Housing Equalities Adviser,
Derby Homes
Floor 2,
South Point
Cardinal Square,
10 Nottingham Road
Derby
DE1 3QT