

Draft ACPOS Diversity Booklet Response of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

We welcome the Scottish Police Service's determination "to provide a quality service that is fair, accessible and meets the needs of all individuals" and fully support the "imperative [to] enhance the knowledge and understanding of officers and supply them with the correct information and guidance to allow for best working practice." However, we would point out that they can only be provided with correct information if an effort is made to obtain it from an authoritative source; this document itself is therefore unfortunately an example of bad practice.

(No) Introduction

The section headed "Hate Crime" (pp61-63) should therefore be moved to the beginning, rather than following sections on Age, Disability, Faith, Gender, and Gypsy/Traveller Communities, and preceding sections on Mental Health, Race and Asylum, and LGBT Awareness. This would make the information in the booklet more accessible to officers by providing background and legal information about hate crime in general before presenting issues specific to each of the equality "strands". We would also draw attention to the fact that identical summaries of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 appear in the "Faith" section (p47), and in "Hate Crime" (p63).

This section should also refer to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000, in addition to the other pieces of legislation which have been included, and should include reference to the House of Lords ruling (1983) that Jews and Sikhs are covered by its provisions.

Faith: Judaism

The attached information should be substituted for the whole of this section, which is serious misinformed. If however, this is not done, at least the following points should be amended.

- Judaism should be defined in its own terms, not, as is done twice at the beginning of this section, in terms of Christianity.
- It is probably more relevant to police officers in Scotland to know the number of Jewish people living here, rather than the numbers worldwide or even in the whole of Britain. 6580 people identified themselves as being Jewish in the 2001 census, but that is certainly an underestimate, since the question was optional, and, for historical reasons, many Jewish people hesitate to identify themselves as such on official forms. A number of academic analyses have put the true figure as around 10 000.
- The draft is correct in stating that the majority of Jewish people in Scotland speak English. In fact we are not aware of any (except perhaps a small minority of visitors) who do not. However it is untrue to say that "many" also speak Hebrew, Yiddish, and Ladino. Some, mostly Israelis, speak Hebrew, but there are few Yiddish, and almost no (if any) Ladino speakers in Scotland.

- Several major festivals are omitted, and some of the information provided about festivals is inaccurate. For example, on Purim a person is not "*required to drink until they can drink no more*". As we have stated below, Purim is one of the few occasions in the year when the consumption of alcohol is encouraged, and this may occasionally lead to isolated instances of antisocial behaviour. However, the statement in the draft Diversity Booklet is a common misinterpretation of the injunction that it is laudable to be in a condition in which one cannot distinguish between two of the characters in the Purim story. It is generally understood that this condition can be satisfactorily achieved by taking an afternoon nap!

Race

Arab: In general the only Arabs who speak Hebrew are Israeli Arabs (or scholars or diplomats), and all would in any case have Arabic as their first language. For practical purposes, the number of Hebrew-speaking Arabs in Scotland can be taken to be zero, so the note (p72) that "*Arabic is the dominant language although English and Hebrew are widely spoken*" should be revised.

Turkish: There are no Turkish Jews in Scotland that we or the Census are aware of, so the information (p82) that "*The majority of Turks are Muslims (mostly Sunni), followed by Christians and Jews*" gives a misleading picture, and should be revised.

Gender

We would take issue with the statement (p53) that "*HBV cuts across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities, transcending national and international boundaries*". We are not aware that honour based violence has taken place in, for example, the Jewish, Christian, or Buddhist communities, and suggest that the sentence is revised to read "HBV is not confined to a single culture, nationality, faith group, or community, and may transcend national and international boundaries."

Note: The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland comprising Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee as well as the more loosely linked groups of the Jewish Network of Argyll and the Highlands, and of students studying in Scottish Universities and Colleges. SCoJeC is Scottish Charity SC029438, and its aims are to advance public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community. It works with others to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality, and represents the Jewish community in Scotland to government and other statutory and official bodies on matters affecting the Jewish community.

We are concerned that, as such, the Scottish Council was not consulted about this document, but heard about it by accident. That is borne out by the number of factual errors noted above. It must be a basic principle of diversity policy that communities be empowered to speak for themselves. That this was not done does not bode well for any policy which follows from this.

Judaism

The earliest of the three major monotheistic religions, Judaism believes in an incorporeal God who is the universal creator of all that exists. The Jewish Bible, written in Hebrew, consists of three parts of which the *Torah* [the Five Books of Moses] is the most important. The others are the *Prophets*, and the *Holy Writings*. The word "*Tanach*" is an acronym for the Hebrew names of these three. It is obviously inappropriate to refer to the Tanach as the 'Old Testament' since this suggests that it is seen not in its own right, but merely in the context of the Christian 'New Testament'. The *Talmud*, which was compiled in its present form between 100 and 400 CE in Babylon and Israel, is in many ways the central text of Judaism, as it is based on oral traditions ascribed to Moses. It is mainly a record of rabbinic debates on Jewish law and the interpretation of the bible, and forms the basis of traditional Jewish law.

Despite their shared belief, the ethnic origins of Jews are diverse. The principal groups are:

- **Ashkenazim** – whose ancestry is in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia.
- **Sephardim** – properly of Iberian origin, although the term is often used to include those of other Mediterranean, Arabian and North African origin.

The vast majority of the UK Jewish community are Ashkenazim.

Cutting across these ethnic groups there are distinct denominations which have different understandings of the status of the Torah and of Jewish law:

- **Orthodox** – The principles of Orthodox Judaism have not changed significantly since Biblical times, since they presuppose that the Torah as interpreted in the Talmud was given directly by God. Within Orthodox Judaism there are two main groupings: the Charedim, or so-called "Ultra-Orthodox", and the Modern Orthodox. The latter participate more in secular activities than do Charedi Jews, but are nevertheless faithful to traditional religious practices. The Charedim are one of the largest and most conservative movements, with several subsections including various groups of Chassidim. They tend to reject many aspects of modern life, for example, generally wearing traditional clothing, whereas the Modern Orthodox engage more with the modern world, for example by entering secular employment.
- **Reform** – The Reform movement rejects much of orthodox practice while retaining many of the underlying teachings of Judaism. Unlike Orthodox movements it allows women to be ordained as rabbis, permits men and women to sit together in the synagogue, and regards cremation as acceptable.
- **Conservative** – known in Britain as Masorti (Traditional): This movement began as a reaction to Reform Judaism in the United State, and although based on a more liberal understanding of traditional texts, it still retains many orthodox practices. There are no Conservative communities in Scotland.
- **Liberal** – Liberal Judaism views the Torah as a product of its time rather than as the literal word of God, and therefore subject to change. Liberal Jews do not attach great significance to traditional codes for dress and diet but regard them as a matter of choice.
- In addition there are a number of Jews who regard Judaism as having less to do with faith than with cultural identity, but may still identify very closely with the Jewish community and observe its cultural traditions.

There are about ten synagogues in Scotland. Edinburgh has an Orthodox synagogue, and a Liberal community which does not have its own building. There are small synagogues in Aberdeen and Dundee, while in Glasgow there are five Orthodox synagogues, organised in a Council of Synagogues, and one Reform synagogue, while Lubavitch (a Chassidic sect) provides regular religious services in one of the community care homes. The synagogues provide a wide range of social, educational and cultural activities expanding the religious life of their congregations. There are also small groups and individuals living throughout the whole of Scotland, quite literally from the Borders to the Shetlands, many belonging to the informal Jewish Network of Argyll and the Highlands.

Shabbat (the Sabbath)

This commemorates the fact that God rested on the seventh day of creation, which Judaism regards as part of creation itself. Shabbat, like the Jewish day in general, begins at dusk and lasts until sunset, and is observed to varying degrees by the different Jewish denominations. In traditional Judaism there is a clear code defining which activities are permitted and which are forbidden on Shabbat. These concern creative work and ensure that the Sabbath is a family and home based festival free from work constraints. The prohibition on making fire includes turning on any electrical apparatus, such as lights, television, and telephone. Carrying, traveling, and writing are also prohibited, except in an emergency, since any prohibition can be set aside if life is in danger. As individual levels of Sabbath observance vary, it is always wise to ask people individually, in order to determine their needs.

Policing issues

- Non-emergency crimes will not usually be reported until after Shabbat has ended.
- Orthodox Jews will be unwilling to write statements or sign their names.
- Orthodox Jews will not answer the telephone on Shabbat.

Festivals

The principal festivals are also observed from dusk to nightfall, and are generally subject to the same rules as Shabbat, so the above policing issues also apply. The main festivals are:

- **Rosh Hashanah (New Year)** usually in September).

Policing issues

- Most Jewish people attend the synagogue, and may gather outside during and after services.
- On the afternoon of the first day (or the second day if the first falls on Shabbat), many Jewish people will walk to a river to symbolically 'cast away' their sins.

This is followed by a ten day period of repentance culminating in

- **Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)** marked by an entire day in worship and fasting.

Policing issues

- Synagogues are open all day and are extremely busy, especially for the evening services.
- Many people will walk home during the day for a short break from prayers. There is likely to be a continuous flow of people on the streets throughout the day.
- Since most Jewish families will be in synagogue for the opening and concluding services of Yom Kippur, their homes may be more vulnerable to burglars.

- **Sukkot (Tabernacles)** – autumn festival, five days after Yom Kippur, that lasts nine days (eight in Israel and for non-orthodox groups). Orthodox Jews build a *sukkah*, a temporary hut roofed with vegetation, in which to eat during the festival, to commemorate the nomadic lives of the Israelites after leaving Egypt. The final days include **Simchat Torah (Celebration of the Torah)**, when the annual cycle of readings from the Torah is concluded and immediately recommenced.

Policing issues

- Some people carry long cases containing palm tree leaves to and from synagogue. This is a tradition of the holiday.
 - Synagogues will build a *sukkah* on their premises which may be vulnerable both to arson and forced entry..
- **Pesach (Passover)** – spring festival (March–April) lasting eight days (seven in Israel and for non-orthodox groups) that commemorates the Exodus from Egypt. The *Seder* [ceremonial meal] eaten in the home on the first night includes many elements symbolising the escape from slavery and the foundation of the Jewish Nation. *Matzah* [unleavened bread] replaces bread for the entire week, and orthodox Jews are meticulous about avoiding any leavened food.

- **Shavuot (Pentecost)**

Shavuot takes place seven weeks after Pesach (usually around late May/early June) and celebrates the Jewish people receiving the Torah. The festival lasts for two days and it is traditional to eat dairy products.

Policing Issues

- It is traditional to study all night on the first evening of this festival, so larger synagogues are open all night, and some people may be walking home late at night and in the very early morning.

Other festivals on which the prohibitions of Shabbat do not apply include:

- **Chanukah** – winter festival of lights, commemorating the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Maccabees, following its desecration by the Greeks, marked by some by the exchange of gifts.

Policing issues

- It is traditional for families to display (often expensive) lit candelabra in their front windows. Therefore burglaries and fires can occur, and the community leaders should be given the appropriate advice.
 - Some communities hold Chanukah ceremonies in public places.
- **Purim** – in early spring, marks the deliverance of the Jews in ancient Persia following the intervention of Queen Esther; celebrations include fancy dress, charitable giving, and exchange of gifts.

Policing issues

- It is traditional for young children, often in fancy dress, to walk through the local neighbourhood distributing charity and delivering gifts
- Purim is one of the few occasions in the year when the consumption of alcohol is encouraged, and this may occasionally lead to isolated instances of antisocial behaviour

- ***Yom HaAtzmaut (Israel Independence Day), and Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day)***

These are now established as festivals marking the anniversaries of these important events in modern Jewish history, in 1948 and 1967 respectively.

Policing issues

- Communal events to mark these anniversaries may attract anti-Israel demonstrations.

- ***Yom HaShoah*** – Holocaust memorial day

- ***Tisha B'Av*** – a mid-summer fast day commemorating the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem, the first by the Babylonians in 586 BCE, and the second by the Romans in 70 CE.

Policing issues

- Services at the beginning and end of Tisha b'Av take place late in the evening, so larger synagogues will be open later than normal, with people arriving and leaving very late at night.

Kosher food

Jewish dietary laws, *kashrut*, dictate what constitutes kosher food. There is a popular misconception that the production of kosher food requires the performance of some "ritual". This is false. Kosher food is simply food that is supervised by someone competent to ensure that it complies with Jewish religious law. Neither is kosher food "blessed by a rabbi", as is sometimes thought. According to the Torah, meat is only kosher if it is from an animal that chews the cud and has cloven hooves. Domestic poultry and fish with fins and scales are also permitted. Meat and poultry must be killed in accordance with the Jewish Laws of *shechitah*. Vegetarian food may be broadly acceptable to some Jewish people where no kosher facilities exist, but not all vegetarian food meets kosher dietary rules. Guides to foodstuffs available to the general market which meet most kosher standards can be found in the *Kashrut Guide* produced annually by the Kashrut Division of the London Beth Din (the Court of the Chief Rabbi), and more detailed information is available on their website at www.kosher.org.uk

- Pre-packaged kosher meals can be made available for meetings, or if required by a detainee or a prisoner.
- Do not bring any food into a Jewish home without permission.
- On all matters of kashrut, it is important to consult a Rabbi or other reliable authority nominated by the Jewish community.

The Synagogue

Synagogue practice depends on the denomination of the worshipper. In Orthodox synagogues traditional dress code is observed and the sexes sit separately, whereas in Reform and Liberal synagogues men and women may sit together. Shabbat services involve prayers, reading from the *Torah*, and generally a sermon. Orthodox Jews pray in Hebrew

(with some Aramaic – the language of the Talmud), while Reform and Liberal Jews use varying amounts of English.

The synagogue also operates as a community and education centre, and one of its roles is generally the teaching of Hebrew and Torah studies to children.

Policing issues

- It is not necessary for a male police officer to wear a skullcap when entering a
- synagogue. However, this gesture (or not removing his headgear) will be appreciated, especially when prayer services are taking place

Home and family

Home and family are central to Jewish life and are frequently regarded as being more significant than the synagogue. Traditionally women play an important role in raising children, giving them a religious education and creating a kosher domestic environment, but they often also have responsibility outside the home in both community activities and paid employment. Orthodox girls and women generally dress modestly, with sleeves covering the elbows and skirts reaching well below the knees. Nudity may be an issue for orthodox and conservative Jews, for example, where public changing and showering is required.

Orthodox Jews place a *mezuzah*, a small scroll containing passages of the Bible, on all doorways (except the bathroom and toilet) in fulfilment of a biblical command, whilst others place them only on their front door.

Men are required to pray three times daily – morning, mid-afternoon, and at night, but the obligation on women is more flexible. More generally, women are exempt from most obligations for which there is a fixed time.

Death has its own customs in Judaism. Some Jews will wish to sit with the deceased until burial has taken place, and, where possible, a room where family may be present should be made available. The expectation is that the body should be buried intact and that no organs will be retained without due reason, information, and prior consent. Jewish funerals are held speedily, usually on the same or following day after death. No impediments should be put in the way of these arrangements as the formal week of mourning only begins with the burial, and delay can cause anguish for the family. When there are clear indications for a post-mortem, these should be discussed with the family and their rabbi, but, in general these should only be done where legally mandatory or where compelling medical reasons pertain, because of the imperative to bury the body intact. In some places the medical and legal authorities have approved non-invasive post-mortems using scanning technologies that are preferred by the Jewish community.

Policing issues

- Religious observance varies widely amongst Jews of different affiliations so officers should not make assumptions but should discuss each person's requirements on an individual basis.
- Whilst officers should always be conscious when they are in a Jewish home, but there is no requirement for them to behave or dress in a particular way, and they are not required to follow Jewish practices.

- Orthodox Jewish men and women may not shake hands with officers of the opposite sex, and any offer to do so will be politely refused. However, no offence will be taken.
- Most Jewish people will prefer that, if required, a body search should be conducted by an officer of the same gender.
- Orthodox men who are detained overnight will wish to have with them their *tallit* (prayer shawl) and *tefillin* (leather boxes containing parchments on which are written biblical passages) which are worn for morning prayers. They should be provided with a suitable private room in which to pray.

Contacting the Jewish community

- **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)**
0141 638 6411 / scojec@scojec.org / www.scojec.org

The Jewish communities of Scotland are all represented on the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, which was formed in 1998 as a democratic umbrella body in the wake of the establishment of a devolved Parliament and administration. During the past ten years, SCoJeC has taken the lead in identifying Jewish concerns, flagging up incidents of antisemitism, co-operating with other faith and ethnic communities in promoting good relations, and defending the rights of members of the Jewish community. It also organises activities for the smaller communities and isolated individuals living outwith any formal community, and maintains an Enquiry Desk to help callers make contact with Jewish organisations and answer questions about Judaism.

- **CST (Community Security Trust)**
0161 792 6666 (Northern HQ, Manchester)
0141 577 8205 (Glasgow, answering machine only)
www.thecst.org.uk

CST is the defence organisation of the British Jewish community, which exists to protect the community from antisemitism and terrorist threats. It provides trained security volunteers for Jewish synagogues, schools and events. It liaises closely with the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, has a strong relationship with the Government and Police, and represents the community on Gold Strategy Groups and Independent Advisory Groups.

Further information

- A Police Officer's Guide to Judaism (Community Security Trust)
http://www.scojec.org/resources/files/police_guide.pdf
- Guide to Jewish Facilities in Scotland
<http://www.scojec.org/communities/guidebook.pdf>
- Scotland's Jews: A Guide to the History and Community of the Jews in Scotland
http://www.scojec.org/resources/files/scotlands_jews.pdf