

Sikh Articles of Faith:
A Good Practice Guide for Employers and Service Providers in Scotland
Response from the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities welcomes the development of this guidance. Information and education about the beliefs, practices, and customs of different religions are of immense value in demystifying the unknown, and promoting the development of good relations between communities. However, it is essential that all information is accurate and appropriate, and we would therefore emphasise that all materials must be referred to the relevant community for checking. When this does not take place errors may frequently be incorporated which may result in an inaccurate, and possibly even a negative impression of the community concerned. Since we are not in a position to comment on the accuracy of the guidance, we are pleased to read that it has been developed in consultation with the Sikh community, and hope that it has the approval of individuals and organisations that the community itself recognises as authoritative.

In our view, the guidance will prove useful to a wide range of organisations. However, since descriptions may sometimes be misunderstood, especially when they relate to objects entirely outside the readers' experience, we recommend that the guidance should also include photographs of each of the articles of faith.

We commend this initiative by the EHRC and hope that it will not remain a lone publication, but will be followed in due course by guidance about other faith communities in Scotland.

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.

In preparing this response we have consulted widely among members of the Scottish Jewish community.