



# Understanding your Communities

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) is fully committed to the safety of the community in which it serves. For many years the organisation has gone to great lengths to understand the population of South Yorkshire in order to identify the most vulnerable in society. This has proved extremely successful with fire deaths and injuries now at an all time low. Unfortunately fire deaths still occur and people's homes and livelihoods are still at risk from fire. SYFR has recognised that within South Yorkshire the demographics for each station area is very different and the needs of those communities vary greatly.

As a result, this handbook has been produced for SYFR personnel to gain a better understanding of their community needs, the associated risks and potential barriers to engagement at a station level. Contained within this document is useful information relating to ethnic groups, religions, community risks and cultural diversities within South Yorkshire.

It is envisaged that armed with this easy to read accessible document, SYFR personnel and partners can fully immerse themselves into all aspects of the local community, thereby, fully embedding a culture of understanding and acceptance.

For further information or support regarding work with diverse communities please contact;

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Within any community, there will be a wide range of backgrounds and social heritage, this handbook is designed as a guide only and the characteristics described may not apply to everyone. Members of the same ethnic group may follow different religions, members of the same ethnic background may have differing political and social views. Understanding the community and knowing how they view themselves is essential to meeting their needs during community work or emergency situations.

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# Cultural Communication



be aware

Handshaking between genders may not be considered appropriate in certain cultures, don't be offended if an outstretched hand is not taken

Don't assume that a lack of eye contact during conversation is a sign of guilt, misunderstanding or conflict. - in some communities it may be the opposite

Do appreciate how cultural differences in body language might contribute to misunderstandings and conflict

Don't assume that because someone is raising their voice, that they are losing control or becoming aggressive

When dealing with people from any community, their own self-classification is important and should be recorded in line with their wishes

Do not assume that if a person answers in English that they fully understand what you are saying

If you are unsure of how an individual or group may wish to be identified or addressed, then ask politely

Different cultures can take significantly different approaches to personal space

Ask for a person's 'first' and 'last' name instead of a 'Christian' name

In some communities, some women may not feel comfortable being alone in a room with a man who is not a relative

What do you know already? Many of the communities that come to Britain have been here a long time

Many people remove their shoes before entering some rooms at home

consider

# African Caribbean

## Origin and Background

The term African Caribbean usually refers to people whose ancestors were primarily indigenous to Africa and were deported to Caribbean Islands to work on tobacco, sugar and cotton plantations during the slave trade in the 1500's. The majority of migration of African-Caribbean people to Britain took place due to labour shortages during the 40's, 50's and 60's, when they were encouraged to migrate by the British Government. The Caribbean Islands portray a great diversity of cultures and traditions that reflect colonisation from the English, Chinese, African, French and Dutch.



## Language

As the Caribbean is made up of many islands many different languages are spoken, including English, Spanish, Dutch, French and Creole (dialect of the Caribbean).

## Greeting a member of the community

Greetings will be dependent on the language spoken by the individual, however many individuals will be bi-lingual, therefore use of English is widely spoken.

## Dress

Most members of the community wear Western clothes, however, some groups are influenced by their African history, which can be reflected in the colour and style of their clothes.

## Family and Community traditions

Many African Caribbean people enjoy close family relationships and a great sense of community, with men and women often playing distinctly different roles within their communities. Many families live with extended families and older members of the community are traditionally shown great respect. Many families prefer to have their older relatives living with them, or close by, so they can be supported by the family.

The African Caribbean perception of personal space can be different, with men often bringing their face very close to that of the other person, this gesture is not usually considered a threat.

## Dietary Customs

The Traditional diet of African Caribbean communities is very varied and includes foods such as plantain, rice, sweet potato, yams and black-eyed beans.

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- This may depend on people's religion, see Faith Sections on Christianity Rastafarianism, Islam and Hindu
- Candles and Fireworks may be used to celebrate festivals

### Considerations during emergencies

- This will be influenced largely by religious beliefs, see Faith Sections on Christianity Rastafarianism, Islam and Hindu.

### Occurrence of death or dying

- Attitudes to death will be influenced largely by religious beliefs

#### Religions

African Caribbean people are predominantly Christian or embrace Rastafarianism, with a small number of Muslims, Hindus and other religions. Please see the faith section for further details.

#### The Windrush

The Empire Windrush brought the first group of immigrants to London in 1948, an advertisement had appeared in a Jamaican newspaper offering cheap transport on the ship for anyone who wanted to come and work in the UK. Work in post war Britain was freely advertised by the British government, especially in the public sector services, unfortunately many new arrivals were to endure prejudice, intolerance and extreme racism.

#### Carnival

Music, dancing and carnivals are central to the social lives of the Caribbean islands; carnivals are religious in origin, and have since developed into celebrating community and culture. Music has historically served as a vehicle of protest about social and economic deprivation. The best known event in Britain is the annual Notting Hill Carnival in London.

# Bangladeshi

## Origin and Background

Bangladesh is located in the Bengal region of the Eastern Indian subcontinent and was previously known as East Pakistan before civil war resulted in independence in 1971. The majority of Bangladeshi migration into the UK occurred in the 50's and 60s; this was largely due to economic hardship in East Pakistan and a shortage of labour in the UK. Most Bangladeshi people have migrated from the Sylhet region of Bangladesh.



## Language

Bengali is the official language of Bangladesh; the most common dialect spoken in the UK is Sylheti. English is also widely spoken.

## Greeting a member of the community

As the majority of Bangladeshis are Muslim and the greeting 'Assalam-a-Alaikum' is usually used (see Islam section). A small minority of Bangladeshis may be Hindu, therefore they may use the traditional 'Namaste' greeting (see Hinduism section).

## Dress

Both men and women of Bangladeshi origin may wear both traditional and western clothes. Traditionally, the *Shalwar Kameez* and the *Sari* are the main dresses of Bangladeshi women. The *Shalwar* or *Salwar* are loose pajama-like trousers where the legs are wide at the top, and narrow at the ankle. The *Kameez* is a long shirt or tunic where the side seams are left open below the waist-line, giving a greater freedom of movement. Bangladeshi men sometimes wear a *kurta* (a loose shirt falling just below the knees) on religious and cultural occasions.

## Family and Community traditions

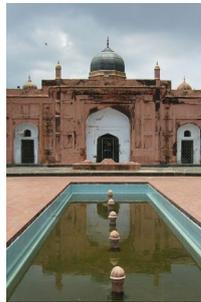
Bangladesh families are traditionally very family focused, often living in large extended families. The traditions of Islam play a large role in both family and community life (see Islam section for further details).

## Dietary Customs

Bangladeshi cuisine is definitively South Asian in nature, however, it is unique in its use of fish and variety of spicy pastes made from ground roots, spices and chilies. Bengali cooking is also known for its wide array of sweets made from milk such as *Rasho-gollah* and *Kalo-jam*. Muslim Bangladeshis will usually follow a Halal diet (see Islam section).

# Bangladeshi

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Frequent use of cooking with oil
- Traditional clothing is often flowing and may be hazardous during cooking
- Statistically a high percentage of Bangladeshi men smoke cigarettes
- Possible overcrowding in homes
- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in homes
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given

### Considerations during emergencies

- Women usually prefer to be in the company of a male family member when communicating with members of the public/emergency services etc.

### Occurrence of death or dying

- As most Bangladeshis are Muslim they will usually adhere to Islamic customs (see Islam Section).

## information

#### Religion

Most Bangladeshis are Sunni Muslims with a majority following the Hanafi School and a small number follow the Shafi School. A minority may be Hindu, Buddhist or Christian.

#### Sylheti Culture

Sylheti people are a district cultural group in Bangladesh and are generally more family orientated and conformist Muslim. Marriages are often practiced in a traditional Muslim style, including a henna ritual and often include contracts of marriage outlining both the rights and obligations of both partners. Many Sylheti families in the UK will send money back to their families in Bangladesh.

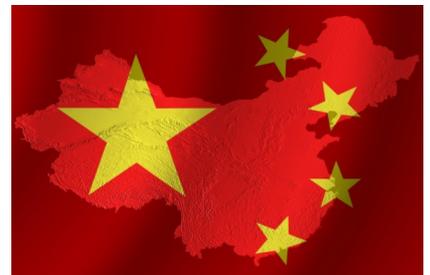
#### Family and Caring

Over the next 20 years, the proportion of older people will increase within Bangladeshi communities. The role of carer usually falls to female relatives; wives, daughters and daughter in laws; outside formal care is not usually received.

# Chinese

## Origin and Background

Most of the Chinese communities that come to Britain are from former British colonies, such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. People from mainland China, Taiwan and their descendants constitute a relatively minor proportion of the British Chinese community. Chinese communities are found in most major cities and are the fastest growing ethnic group in the UK.



## Language

Cantonese is the most widely spoken language, Mandarin, Hakka, Hokkien and English also widely spoken.

## Greeting a member of the community

'Ni hao' (pronounced 'nee haow') is the basic greeting in Chinese. The literal translation is 'you good' or in other words, 'how are you?'

## Dress

Most Chinese people in the UK will wear western dress, however traditional men are sometimes seen at social occasions wearing a traditional Chinese long gown, and women often wear the *Ch'i-p'ao*, a modified form of a traditional Ching Dynasty fashion, on formal occasions.

## Family and Community traditions

Chinese traditions will vary between families. The family is the centre of Chinese society and respect for elders is high; most Chinese families have a hieratical order where the male/father is the head of the family. Once married, children will usually move into their own homes, although married couples may also stay with the parents of the groom for a short while before moving out. Religion has influenced roles adopted by members of the family in Chinese society, religions such as Christianity, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are prevalent; belief in astrology is also widespread.

## Dietary Customs

Southern Chinese (Cantonese and Fujian): seafood, fish, pork, poultry, green vegetables, soup, rice, rice noodles and fresh fruit. Northern Chinese: bread, wheat dumplings, meat dumplings, noodles, pork, lamb, chicken, green vegetables. Beef and cheese are least preferred food. Soya milk is preferred to cow's milk as many Chinese people are allergic to cow's milk. Many Buddhist/Taoist Chinese people will eat a vegetarian diet before major festivals.

# Chinese

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Chinese wish lanterns are released at annual celebrations, such as Chinese New Year
- Fireworks and lighting are often used to celebrate Chinese New Year
- Stir frying and deep frying with very hot oil are common cooking techniques

### Considerations during emergencies

- Although there is no gender barrier, women usually prefer to be medically examined by female health professionals when possible
- Injections are preferred in the belief that they are more effective than pills. Family units usually stay together and do not like being separated in emergencies, this includes extended family members

### Occurrence of death or dying

- Traditionally, all family members gather at the bedside. A Chinese Christian pastor is called to pray for and to counsel the dying person. In the UK this practice is also common among Chinese with no religious convictions or who are traditional Confucian/Taoist. Buddhists call for a priest/monk from a Buddhist association or temple with links to Taiwan or Hong Kong. Burial or cremation may take place a week after the person has died. Friends and relatives visit the bereaved family,

## information

### Naming

Chinese names start with the family name first, followed by the generation name and the personal name. Chinese Christians usually have Christian names in addition. Always ask the person how s/he would like to be addressed.

### Religion

The main religions practiced by Chinese communities are Christianity, Buddhism and Taoism. In addition to the two main Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter, Chinese Christians celebrate the Chinese New Year.

Chinese Christians read bilingual bibles printed in English and Chinese. Bibles printed in the traditional script are preferred by Chinese from Hong Kong and Taiwan whilst the simplified script is read by people from China and Singapore. Buddhist scriptures are available in traditional script. At least one Chinese community association, community centre or church exists in every city in the UK.

# Indian

## Origin and Background

India is a diverse nation made up of a number of ethnic groups which are reflected in British Indian communities. The largest subgroup of British Indians are those of Punjabi and Gujarat origin. In addition, the UK also has a sizable number of Anglo – Indians and Bengalis.

India is known as the land of spirituality, and many of the world's religions originate from India. The most dominant religion in India today is Hinduism (about 80%) however other religions include Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Sikhism, Judaism, Zoroastrian and Islam.



## Language

There are over 400 languages spoken throughout India, including local dialects. Each state in India has its own regional language, however Hindi is the national language of India. Other major languages include; Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tamil and Urdu.

## Greeting a member of the community

The traditional Hindi greeting is *Namaste* meaning *I bow to you*. See faith sections for Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism for other greetings.

## Dress

Clothing within Indian communities will vary greatly depending on the ethnicity, religion, cultural traditions and family customs, however most Indians in the UK will wear western dress. Popular styles of dress include draped garments such as a *Sari* for women and a *Dhoti* or *Lungi* for men (long pieces of cloth to wrap around the waist).

## Family and Community traditions

Traditionally, an Indian household will include extended family, with the eldest male as the head of the family. A high amount of respect is given to all elders of the community. Today, many of the younger generation are more independent and may move out of the family home after marriage.

Worshiping is an important part of daily life; Indians are associated with a variety of religions and there may be a personal place of worship in the home. Hospitality is very important, with the guest being treated as per the Sanskrit verse *Atithi Devo Bhav* (the guest is god), a code of conduct on how to treat a guest.

## Dietary Customs

Many Indians will follow the dietary customs of their religion. See faith sections for Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism.

# Indian

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible overcrowding in homes
- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in homes
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given
- Possible use of candles/incense for religious observance
- Possible frequent use of hot oil for daily cooking

*Also see Faith Sections depending on their religion*

### Considerations during emergencies

See relevant faith sections for Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism

### Occurrence of death or dying

See relevant faith sections for Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism

## information

#### Naming

Names are based on a variety of systems and naming conventions and can vary depending on religion, caste and original region. Western naming systems may also be adopted.

#### Bindi

A bindi is a forehead decoration worn in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Mauritius. Traditionally it is a dot of red color applied in the center of the forehead close to the eyebrows as this area is said to be the sixth chakra, the seat of "concealed wisdom". In modern times, bindis are worn by women of many religious dispositions in South Asia and Southeast Asia.

#### Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi is known as the 'Father of the Nation' and his birthday is celebrated as a national holiday. The Satyagraha movement was founded by Gandhi and his contribution to the freedom struggle which led India to independence.

# Iranian

## Origin and Background

The Islamic Republic of Iran was formally known in the west as Persia; the name *Iran* was officially adopted in 1935. Iran lies in the Middle East and is the fourth largest country in Asia having a population of over 70 million. Iran is home to one of the world's oldest civilizations, the first dynasty in Iran formed during the Elamite Kingdom in 2800 BC.



Many Iranians came to the UK before the Islamic revolution in the late 1970s to access education and to start businesses; since the revolution many Iranians have come to the UK as refugees and asylum seekers.

## Language

The main language spoken by Iranians in the UK is Farsi, however other languages spoken include Turkish, Arabic, Blochis, Kurdish and Torkomans.

## Greeting a member of the community

The most widely used greeting used by Iranians is *Dorood* which is a Farsi word, meaning *praise* or *greeting*. Muslim Iranians may use the greeting *Assalam-a-Alaikum* (see Islam section).

## Dress

Many Iranian women follow the traditional Islamic dress code and often wear the a Hijab, however this dress code is often more relaxed within the UK and the majority of women wear western dress.

## Family and Community traditions

Family hierarchy is traditional within the Iranian family. The father is usually the head of the household, followed by the mother, then sons and daughters; this has developed of the years and is now more dependant on levels of education. Families are usually small, having only 1 or 2 children. It is common for some Iranian people to avoid eye contact, particularly traditional Muslim women. It is polite for an Iranian person to refuse an offer of food or drink at least once before accepting it. There is a wide variation amongst Iranians with regards to the style of living however, the majority have similar needs to the Muslim community.

## Dietary Customs

Muslim Iranians will usually observe a *Halal* diet; pork and alcohol are essentially excluded from the diet. Rice forms a staple part of the Iranian diet, either cooked plain or with fresh herbs. Fresh fruit is popular as are fresh greens and herbs. For less traditionally families in the UK the consumption of alcohol is acceptable.

# Iranian

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in homes
- Candles and fireworks may be common to celebrate festivals and cultural events
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given

### Considerations during emergencies

- See Islam section

### Occurrence of death or dying

- Iranians mostly follow the Islamic faith so will adhere to those customs. Please see Islam section

## information

#### Naming

Iranian women usually keep their own family name after marriage, however as a sign of respect to their husband, socially and verbally they are called and known by their husband's family name.

#### Religion

Iran is predominantly an Islamic country with majority being Shi'ite Muslims and a minority of Sunni Muslims. There are also small minority of Christians, Bah'ai, Jews and Zoroastrians (please see relevant faith sections for further details).

#### New Year

The Iranian New Year is celebrated on the first day of spring, 20th or 21st March and is called Nowruz (New Day). It lasts for 13 days in which gifts are exchanged.

# Iraqi

## Origin and Background

Since the late 1940's the UK has had a significant Iraqi population; many individuals dissatisfied with Iraq's monarchist regime moved to the UK as refugees during this time. Subsequently many supporters of the monarchy fled to Britain when it was overthrown in 1958. During the 50's and 60's many Iraqi migrants moved to the UK for business and educational purposes. Some religious minorities were forced to leave Iraq, seeking political asylum during the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, during 70s and 80s and later as result of the instability that followed the 2003 Iraqi War.



## Language

Prior to the Iraqi War during 2003, Arabic was the sole official language of Iraq. Since the new constitution of Iraq both Arabic and Kurdish are official languages.

## Greeting a member of the community

The typical greeting amongst Muslim Iraqis' is *Al-salamu 'alaykum* (May peace be upon you). Young Iraqis may greet with a less-formal Arabic greeting *Marhaba* (Hi).

## Dress

Most Iraqi women dress modestly and many choose to follow to traditional Islamic dress code by wearing a *hijab* (head scarf) or *abayas* (black floor length cloak), however many young or British Iraqis now choose to wear westerns clothes. Some Muslim Iraqi men wear a traditional checked Arabic head scarf called a *Keffiyeh*.

## Family and Community traditions

A man is commonly addressed as *Abu* (Father of) followed by his oldest son's first name, a woman is similarly addressed the same preceded by *Um* (mother of) for example *Um Abbas* (Mother of Abbas). Husband and wife also refer to each other in this way, both in public and in private. It is considered impolite to address a person by their first name unless the individual is a close friend and from the same generation and social class.

## Dietary Customs

Most Muslim Iraqis will observe a *Halal* diet and abstain from eating pork and alcohol. (see *Islam section*) Wheat, barley, rice and dates (Iraq is the world's largest producer of dates) are the staple foods of Iraq. A combination of meat and grain will form the basis for most dishes.

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible use of candles/incense for religious observance or cultural events/celebrations
- Some community members may be suspicious of authority or uniform and less likely to engage with safety advice
- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in homes
- Possible wearing of traditional flowing garments while cooking and near naked flames
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given
- Possible overcrowding in homes

### Considerations during emergencies

- See Islam section

### Occurrence of death or dying

- See Islam section

#### Diversity

Approximately 77% of Iraqi people are Arabs and 19% are Kurds however, ethnic Kurds are the most numerous ethnic group amongst Iraqis in the UK. There are also large numbers of Arabs, Assyrians and Jews, as well as Turcoman, Armenians, Mandeans and other ethnic groups.

#### Interactions

Muslims of many cultures may avoid direct eye contact during a conversation as a sign of respect for the speaker. This is especially the case with many Muslim women, whose cultural norm of modesty discourages direct eye contact with unfamiliar males, similarly touch between members of the opposite gender or strangers is not usually acceptable. Iraqis use the right hand to pass items to another person and use the right hand or both hands to receive items; the left hand is considered unclean in many Muslim cultures.

#### Religion

The majority of Iraqis are Muslim

# Irish

## Origin and Background

Since 1922, Ireland is been politically divided between the Republic of Ireland, which covers just under five-sixths of the island, and Northern Ireland, a part of the United Kingdom, which covers the remainder and is located in the north - east of the island.



A large amount of UK residents are either from Ireland or have Irish ancestors. It is estimated that as many as six million people living in the UK have an Irish grandparent.

## Language

The majority of Irish people speak English; however communities in Southern Ireland may speak Gaelic.

## Greeting a member of the community

People who are second or third generation Irish and will speak English. A common Gaelic greeting is 'dia duit' which literally means 'god be with you'.

## Dress

There is not a specific form of dress. Although green may be worn on St Patricks Day.

## Family and Community traditions

It is common for Irish families to have close links both in Ireland and UK where family loyalties are considered very important. Irish communities traditionally have a strong sense of hospitality towards both visitors and unfamiliar people.

The Irish place a great emphasis on the nuclear family and look to establish residency independent from extended family, usually in a home that they own or will come to own. Due to Catholic traditions, some families may have more than the standard 2.4 children.

## Dietary Customs

There are no significant dietary restrictions or requirements with within the Irish culture, however traditional dishes include use of local ingredients to make dishes such as Irish stew, Dublin Coddle, soda and potato bread. Guinness is the national drink.

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible use of candles/incense for religious observance

### Considerations during emergencies

- No particular considerations

### Occurrence of death or dying

- The majority of people of Irish descent are Christian, either Protestant or Roman Catholic and may follow certain rites/rituals in the event of a death. *See faith section*

#### Naming

Many Irish Surnames are prefixed with Mac (meaning son of) and O' (meaning grandson of), whilst given names can be representatives of Saints, or derived from the Irish language (e.g. Kathleen from Caitlin).

#### Religion

Irish communities are diverse in their religious preferences; however the main faith groups are Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Individuals from the Republic of Ireland are more likely to be influenced by the Catholic faith. While the Roman Catholic Church is the largest single denomination in Northern Ireland as well as the Republic of Ireland, the majority of residents in Northern Ireland are recorded as members of the various Protestant Churches.

#### Potato Famine

The Potato Famine was a watershed in Irish history, it invoked mass starvation, disease and emigration between 1845 & 1852, thus affecting the demographics, politics and culture of the island. Many Irish fled during this time settling in England, Scotland, US, Canada and Australia.

# Kosovan

## Origin and Background

Kosovo is a small south Eastern European state which sits between Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. The capital of the Republic is Pristina. Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008. Approximately 90% of the population of Kosovo are Kosovar Albanians, however there are a minority of Serbians who remain living in separated areas and have been monitored by Nato peacekeepers since 1999.



## Language

Albanian is the most widely used language (Gheg dialect). The language of state institutions, education, books, media and newspapers is the standard dialect of Albanian, which is closer to the Tosk dialect. Serbian, Turkish, Romani, and Bosnian may also be spoken in some parts of Kosovo. English is also widely spoken, especially by youth.

## Greeting a member of the community

Typical Albanian greetings are Mirëmengjes (Good morning), Mirëdita (Good afternoon), and Mirëmbërëma (Good evening). Serbian greetings include Zdravo (Hello) and Dobar dan (Good day).

## Dress

Most people from Kosovo dress in Western clothing. Although mostly Muslim, many women and girls choose not to wear head scarves. Many older men still wear a traditional brimless white cap, or *Plis*.

## Family and Community traditions

Kosovan Families tend to live in large extended families which are traditionally patriarchal and the Husband/ Father makes most decisions on behalf of the family. Although the majority of Kosovans are Muslim they are usually relaxed in their practices, for example most younger Kosovans do not follow a strict Halal diet.

## Dietary Customs

Typical Kosovo dishes are made from potato, beans, peppers, meat, dairy products, legumes, rice and pastry; the food is usually prepared by roasting not boiling. Traditional baked goods include *Börek* which is a family of baked or fried filled pastries made of a thin flaky dough which can be filled with cheese, often feta, sirene or kaşar, minced meat, or vegetables.

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



# Kosovan

### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible overcrowding in homes
- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in the home
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given
- Recent migrants may be suspicious of authority/uniform and less likely to engage with safety advice
- Possible general lack of fire safety awareness

### Considerations during emergencies

- In the case of emergency male and females are generally comfortable with assistance by members of the opposite sex, however may prefer to engage with same sex individuals in the case of non emergency

### Occurrence of death or dying

- No particular considerations, may be determined by Islamic beliefs (*see Islam section*)

## information

### Religion

The most widespread religion among Albanians in Kosovo is Islam (mostly Sunni). A significant proportion of Muslims are only nominally so; many do not regularly attend mosque services, although fasting for Ramadan is widely practiced. The other religion Kosovar Albanians practice is Roman Catholicism.

### Declaration of Independence

Kosovo was a former territory of Serbia and declared independence in February 2008. International reaction was mixed; Britain, United States, France & Germany recognised Kosovo as an independent country, whereas Serbia & Russia denounced it as a violation of international law. After the International Court of Justice reviewed the declaration of Kosovo Independence, it ruled that it did not violate international law, but it also did not declare that the state of Kosovo is legal. This was considered a compromise to both sides, sixty nine countries have acknowledged Kosovo as an independent state.

# Kurdish

## Origin and Background

Kurdish people (known as Kurds) are an ethnic group who have a uniquely recognised historical identity and culture stretching back centuries. Geographically, Kurdish people inhabit an area which extends across eastern Turkey, Northern Iraq and North West Iran, and the fringes of Syria, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Most Kurds currently in the UK are from Iraq and Turkey.

## Language

The Kurdish language is made up of a number of different dialects; Sorani and Kurmanji are the most widely spoken. Turkish, Georgian, Armenian, Russian and Arabic may also be spoken.

## Greeting a member of the community

The Kurdish for Hello is *Silaw*, and Good Morning (*Beyanî baş*) or Good Afternoon is often used (*Roj baş*).

## Dress

Western dress is usually worn by Kurds in the UK. Traditional dress for men includes loose trousers with a shirt and jacket, cummerbund and skull cap covered by a turban. Women usually wear baggy trousers under long, bright dresses that feature a brocade of silver and gold threads, a headscarf usually completes the costume.

## Family and Community traditions

Traditional family values are important to Kurdish people and relationships between family members are usually very close. Kurds treasure family loyalty and honour, with the wellbeing of the group emphasized over individual preference. Kurdish families are usually large and include extended family members.

## Dietary Customs

Kurdish cuisine has its own distinct flavours due to the combination of spices used in preparation. A typical diet centres around bread, dairy products, vegetables, dates, meat and tea. Most of the traditional dishes incorporate either mutton, beef or chicken.



## The Kurdish Community

The Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein (1979 – 2003) conducted severe repression against the Kurdish minority and since the 1980s Kurds have sought asylum and claimed refugee status in the UK and Europe, fleeing political violence and discrimination.

# Kurdish

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible overcrowding in homes
- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in the home
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given
- Recent migrants may be suspicious of authority/uniform and less likely to engage with safety advice
- Lack of general fire safety awareness
- Use of fireworks during celebrations such as *Noruz*, the Kurdish New year (21st March)

### Considerations during emergencies

- See *Islam* section

### Occurrence of death or dying

- See *Islam* section

## information

#### Social Etiquette

It is appropriate to make eye contact when speaking with Kurds. When greeting, handshakes are usually appropriate between and within the sexes, and a two-handed handshake is considered especially warm and polite. The exception here is that it is inappropriate for a man to shake the hand of an elderly women.

#### Religion

Kurdish people mainly follow the Sunni tradition of Islam, although there are smaller numbers of Shia Muslims, Christians, Jews and a number of locally specific religions, Kakaii, Yazidi and Zardashti being the main examples. Religion is not, however, a dominating factor in Kurdish cultural and social life.

#### Celebration

On March 21st, the first day of spring, the Kurds celebrate *Noruz*. This is a celebration of the new year and lasts 13 days. The celebration consists of food, flowers, bonfires, and fireworks. This has been celebrated for the past 3,000 years.

# Latvian

## Origin and Background

Latvia is situated in north-eastern Europe with a coastline along the Baltic Sea and borders with Estonia, Russia, Belarus and Lithuania. For centuries Latvia was primarily an agricultural country, with fishing and forestry as other important factors in its economy. The first significant wave of migration from Latvia to the UK took place in 2004 when Latvia joined the European Union, which mainly involved moderately skilled people from the countryside, where unemployment levels were the highest, heading to the UK to find employment.

## Language

The official language of Latvia is Latvian (sometimes referred to as Lettish) which belongs to the Baltic language group of the Indo-European language family.

## Greeting a member of the community

The formal greeting of 'Good Day' in Latvian is *Labdien*.

## Dress

Most Latvian people wear western dress, however there are hundreds of different national costumes in Latvia, as every region has its own folk costume which may be worn during festivals or performances. Traditional Latvian women's clothing, consists of a skirt, blouse or tunic, head scarf or other head covering, and can also include a shawl and a sash.

## Family and Community traditions

Latvia is traditionally a hierarchical society where people are respected because of their age and position, older people are viewed as wise and are granted respect. Latvians expect the most senior person to make decisions that are in the best interest of the family. Although friendly and informal with close friends and family, Latvians may be reserved and formal when communicating with members of the public. Many Latvians believe that self-control is a behaviour to be emulated and are usually private people who do not readily display emotion. Individuals may ask for shoes to be removed before entering the house in a non-emergency situation.

## Dietary Customs

Potatoes and meat are generally considered staple food of Latvia. Soups are commonly made with vegetables and broth or milk. Fish is commonly consumed due to Latvia's location on the east coast of the Baltic Sea. Common ingredients in Latvian recipes are found locally such as wheat, barley, cabbage, onions, eggs and pork.

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



# Latvian

### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in the home
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given
- Possible overloading of plug sockets/use of EU adaptors
- High rates of smoking within community

### Considerations during emergencies

- No particular considerations, however may be influenced by religious beliefs

### Occurrence of death or dying

- Traditionally when death occurs, the body is cleaned and the family sit with it for some hours or, in some regions of Latvia, for three days. Funerals usually must take place within 3 - 7 days but not on a Sunday. Traditionally the female family members wear black for 30 days after the funeral and the widow cannot remarry for a year, however traditions are held differently in each family.

## information

### Religion

The main religion traditionally practiced in Latvia is Christianity. 'Lutheranism' is the main Christian denomination among ethnic Latvians, other denominations include Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox.

### The Singing Nation

Latvia was under foreign rule from the 13th until the 20th century, but managed to keep its unique language and rich cultural and musical traditions alive. Latvia is called "the singing nation" - it is unusual to find a Latvian who has not sung in a choir or some other group at some point in their life. Every few years all Latvian choirs, as well as folk dance groups, gather together for the Song Festival, which includes several thousand singers. Folk songs are one of Latvia's national treasures. The Latvian folk song ("*daina*") is one of the distinguishing features of Latvian culture.

# Lithuanian

## Origin and Background

Officially the Republic of Lithuania, it is the largest of the three Baltic states. Lithuania borders and shares many Christian traditions with Poland. The Lithuanian communities in the UK are relatively new and began to arrive after the reinstatement of Lithuanian independence in 1991; emigration increased after Lithuania became part of the European Union in 2004.



## Language

The official language is Lithuanian, which is closely related to Latvian. English is commonly spoken as well as French, German and Russian.

## Greeting a member of the community

The Lithuanian word for Hello is *Sveiki*. A firm handshake with direct eye contact and a smile is considered polite.

## Dress

Most Lithuanians wear western dress. Lithuanians may wear traditional clothing for special occasions and both men and women's folk costumes portray a variety of colors, designs, textures, and patterns. Aprons embroidered with geometric designs cover long plaid skirts and hats trimmed with ribbon and vests are also typical elements to Lithuanian traditional costumes.

## Family and Community traditions

Together with religion, family is the centre of the social structure of which many events and occasions are focused around. The average family has 1 or 2 children, larger families are unusual. Anniversaries, birthdays as well as national holidays are widely celebrated; Mother's Day is thought of a community holiday as the mother's role is very important in society. Women in Lithuania have had full political rights since Lithuanian independence was proclaimed in 1918, and women and men have had equal voting and legal rights ever since.

## Dietary Customs

Lithuanian cuisine has much in common with other Eastern European countries but with German and French influences. The most frequently used meat is pork; sausage making is an art form and men will retreat to smokehouses to perfect procedures. The centrepiece of Lithuanian meal is usually dark rye bread, and dairy products play an important role with butters and creams unusually rich.

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



# Lithuanian

### Contributors to Fire risk

- Transient occupiers who have not received safety advice
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given
- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in homes
- Possible overloading of plug sockets/use of EU adaptors

### Considerations during emergencies

- No particular considerations but may be influenced by religious beliefs. See faith section *Christianity*

### Occurrence of death or dying

- Attitudes to death may be influenced by religious beliefs. See faith section *Christianity*

## information

### Religion

The majority of Lithuanians are members of the Roman Catholic Church with a small minority that is Eastern Orthodox, mainly those of Russian origin. The constitution of Lithuania cites that persons can freely practice a religion of their choosing.

### Naming

Similar to British culture, a personal name consists of two main elements, the given name, followed by the family name. Surnames are hereditary and generally passed from the father to his children, a married woman usually adopts her husband's name but can legally keep her maiden name or add her husband's surname to hers.

# Pakistani

## Origin and Background

The modern state of Pakistan was formed out of the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, after India gained independence from Great Britain. The majority the Pakistani population are Muslims; Islam is central to the community's way of life and governs most aspects of life, however there are a small number of Christian and Hindu communities.



## Language

Urdu is the national language of Pakistan, most Pakistani's can speak fluent English, however this should not be presumed. There are a number of other languages spoken by Pakistani communities, including Mirpuri, Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi.

## Greeting a member of the community

The most common greeting for Muslim people is *Asalaam Alaykum* –(roughly translated to “Peace be upon you.”) and the reply is *Wa Alaykum Asalaam* (which means “and peace be upon you also.”)

## Dress

The national dress of Pakistan is the *Shalwar Kameez* and is worn by men and women from all four provinces. Men often wear a traditional rounded cap called *Taqiyah*. Pakistani women may wear a *Sari* over a short blouse and underskirt. It is traditional for Muslim women to dress modestly, often wearing a long dress covering their arms and legs, many will wear a head scarf (Hijab) as a symbol of modesty. *See Islam section for further details.*

## Family and Community traditions

Family ties are very important within the Pakistani community and families tend to be large and extended. The eldest male is usually considered to be the head of the family. Consideration may need to be taken when addressing Muslim female members of the family, as some may not feel comfortable unless a male relative is present. Loyalty to the family is very important and will usually come before other social relationships.

## Dietary Customs

Most of the Pakistani community will observe Muslim dietary requirements (halal) and will not drink alcohol. Pakistani dishes are known for having aromatic and sometimes spicy flavours, the majority of dishes will contain meat (apart from pork). Pakistanis often eat with their hands, scooping up solid food along with sauce with a piece of naan or rice, it is also considered proper to eat with the right hand only, as per Islamic tradition. Many Pakistani families, particularly when guests are too many to fit at a table, eat sitting at a cloth known as *dastarkhwan* spread out on the floor.

# Pakistani

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible overcrowding in homes may increase risk
- Frequent use of cooking with hot oil
- Traditional flowing garments worn while cooking may be hazardous
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given
- Possible overcrowding at religious festivals/venues and obstruction of exits

### Considerations during emergencies

- See Faith Sections for Islam, Christianity and Hinduism

### Occurrence of death or dying

- See Faith Sections for Islam, Christianity and Hinduism

## information

### Naming

Male and females have different naming systems, women do not take their husbands name on marriage. Children may be given one or two names at birth, if the person has more than one given name, one of them is chosen as the person's *most called name*. For Males, Mohammed may be given as their first name, but they will be called by their other given name.

### In the Home

It is customary to take off shoes before entering the house and respect is shown to elders by greeting them first. Titles are very important and denote respect, it will be expected to use the title and surname of a person until invited to use their first names.

### Indirect Communication

Pakistanis can be rather diplomatic and frequently use indirect communication when conversing, consequently, a direct question may not always receive a direct answer, so open and closed question should be more helpful to get a point across. Direct communication is usually used when individuals are more familiar.

# Polish

## Origin and Background

A large number of the Polish community living in Britain are descendants of immigrants that came to Britain after World War II, as a consequence of the German and Soviet occupation. More recently, Polish communities have arrived after Poland joined the European Union in 2004 and migrated as they have friends or relatives already in the UK, or to seek employment.



## Language

Polish is the official language of Poland.

## Greeting a member of the community

Greetings are generally reserved yet courteous. A handshake is the most common form of greeting. Good morning/afternoon is *dzien dobry* and good evening is *dobry wieczor*. Most Polish people prefer the use of titles, Mrs (or Pani) and Mr (or Pan).

## Dress

Most Polish People wear western clothes; national and traditional Polish costumes are sometime worn at folk festivals, weddings and other special occasions.

## Family and Community traditions

The family is the centre of the social structure in the Polish community; traditional family values and loyalty are strong in most Polish families. Polish people may interact differently with close friends and family than they will with unfamiliar people. Families will usually spend holidays and religious festival together.

## Dietary Customs

Traditional meals are rich in pork, chicken and beef, with a variety of root vegetables such as cabbage and beetroot. Traditionally a main meal is eaten late afternoon and usually composed of three courses and can include chilled or hot soup, sauerkraut, vegetable or meat dumplings, *bigos* (stew with meat and sauerkraut), roasts and pickled vegetables such as gerkins, sausages and smoked sausages. Holiday meals are enjoyed as a family, the traditional Christmas Eve supper is called *Wigilia*. Catholics will celebrate 'Fat Thursday' on the last Thursday before Lent and Easter Breakfast where painted eggs are exchanged.

# Polish

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible overcrowding in homes
- Possible high rates of smoking
- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in homes
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given

### Considerations during emergencies

- No particular considerations

### Occurrence of death or dying

- The deceased are usually buried rather than cremated as cremation is relatively new in Poland. Members of the community who are Roman Catholic may want to be given the last rites.

## information

### Religion

The vast majority of Polish people are Roman Catholic with a small minority of Jewish people. The most important Catholic holiday is Christmas and celebrations last two and a half days. On Dyngus Day (Easter Monday) traditionally younger men spray ladies with water, using anything from high power water pistols to buckets.

### Naming

A Polish name follows most European cultures with a first name followed by a surname. Personal names can be influenced by religion and tradition, and unless the person is well known, first names will not be used unless invited to. Moving from the use of formal to the informal names is an important step into the family and close friends circle.

# Roma Slovak

## Origin and Background

The Roma (or Romani) are an ethnic group living mostly in Europe, who have been traced genetically to a community group migrating from the north-western Indian Subcontinent about 1500 years ago. Roma Slovaks (also known as gypsies) are Roma communities originating from Slovakia. Historically in Western Europe, Roma were forced to become nomadic because of persecution experienced in most countries. Slovakia joined the European Union in 2004, and since Roma Slovak communities have been moving to the UK to find work and escape discrimination. It is estimated that 90% of the Roma Slovak community are unemployed in Slovakia.



## Language

The most widely languages spoken are Romani dialects (also known as Romani , Romani chib , or Romanes ) Solvakian, Hungarian, and English may also be spoken by some Roma Slovaks.

## Greeting a member of the community

There is no universal greeting for Roma people and saying hello may depend on the Romani dialect spoken within the community. Many Roma from Slovakia will speak Slovakian, Hello in Slovakian is *Ahoj*.

## Dress

Most Roma Slovaks wear western dress. Some women traditionally cover all parts of their body apart from the hands and feet. Traditional costume is composed of a full, ankle-length skirt tied on the left side at the waist, a loose, blouse, a bolero vest, and an apron.

## Family and Community traditions

Roma have a nomadic tradition; culturally they have a strong sense of loyalty to the family rather than locality. Roma Slovak families are usually large and extended and children are included in all aspects of family and social life. Education is not a high priority within some families and many older Roma are not literate. Roma Slovak communities are proud of their history and strive to sustain their culture. A history of persecution by authorities and marginalisation by the general population has lead many of the Roma community to fear authority. Some members of the community may take assertive stances or maintain avoidance to mask anxiety.

## Dietary Customs

A western diet is usually adopted, however, the traditional basic components of the Slovak diet are potatoes, wheat flour, cow and sheep cheese, cabbage, onions, garlic and milk.

# Roma Slovak

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible overcrowded housing
- Possible high prevalence of smoking in community
- Possible concerns regarding the safe disposal of rubbish
- Many individuals fear authority and are unlikely to have sufficient fire safety advice
- Possible under representation of smoke alarms in homes
- Possible language barrier may impact on fire safety advice

### Considerations during emergencies

- No particular considerations, however may be influenced by religious beliefs

### Occurrence of death or dying

- In Roma culture, death is traditionally seen as *impure* and has an impact on the family who may also remain *impure* for a length of time after death. Personal possessions of the deceased are also perceived as impure and are usually buried along with the body.

## information

### Religion

There is no separate Roma Slovak religion; since the community are historically a nomadic community, they have traditionally adopted the dominant religion of the country in which they live. Many Roma Slovaks are practising Roman Catholics, however in Slovakia the Roma attend separate churches from the Slovaks.

### Romanipen

Romanipen is a complex set of ethical and philosophical codes a person must follow to become a true Roma. Traditions may vary from one Roma group to another, but purity, respect and health feature heavily and traditions around these are used to preserve culture. Those who are not ethnically Roma or do not live by the Romanipen are referred to as Gadjos.

# Somali

## Origin and Background

It is thought that the United Kingdom is home to the largest Somali community in Europe. The earliest Somali migrants in the UK were sailors and merchants who arrived in the 19th century. A second small group came during World War II and stayed in search of employment. During the 1980s and 1990s, the civil war in Somalia led to a large number of Somali refugees arriving in the UK. The majority of Somalis in the UK are Sunni Muslims.



## Language

The predominant language of the Somali people is Somali, which had no written form until an official script was introduced in 1973. Because of this, many older people in the Somali community are unable to read and write, particularly those originating from rural communities.

## Greeting a member of the community

The most common greeting for Muslim people is *Asalaam Alaykum* –(roughly translated to “Peace be upon you.”) and the reply is *Wa Alaykum Asalaam* (which means “And peace be upon you also.”)

## Dress

The Somali community will generally wear western clothes, however some men may also wear a white cloth cap. Many Somali women wear a scarf to cover their heads (*hijab*) and a long gown known as a *juba* which drapes from the neck to the ankles, dressing modestly is in keeping with Islamic traditions. See *Islam* section for further details.

## Family and Community traditions

Traditionally, Somalis live in large families with several generations and extended family members living together in one property. The father is considered the head of the household and family duties are often divided by gender. The social standing of women is relatively high and the work of women is respected and economically important.

## Dietary Customs

Traditional Somali foods are meat based, and like other Muslims, Somali do not eat pork or pork products. Any meat consumed must be *halal*. Rice flavoured with spices is often used in Somali cuisine. Alcohol is forbidden as per Islamic law.

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- The chewing of *khat* may impact on reaction to an emergency
- Possible overcrowding in homes
- Recent migrants may be suspicious of authority/uniform and unlikely to be exposed to fire safety advice
- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in homes
- Possibility of a language barrier may impede safety advice given
- Possible wearing of traditional flowing garments while cooking

### Considerations during emergencies

- See Islam faith section

### Occurrence of death or dying

- Somalis prefer to bury their dead as soon as possible after death. A post mortem is acceptable to Somalis only if there is a legal requirement for one to be conducted. The grief of the family and friends is openly expressed and the traditional mourning period can last from seven days to three months

#### Naming

Somali naming system differs from most Muslims. A Somali name is made up of the first/personal name with either the father or grandfather's name used as a last name/surname. Both men and women use this naming system. Women have traditionally maintained their own name on marriage and a husband and wife will often have names that have no common element.

#### Khat

The chewing of khat is used predominantly for socialising amongst Somali men. It is a stimulant which causes euphoria and loss of appetite. The chewing of *Khat* has a long history as a social custom in Somalia. There is concern that khat is contributing to mental health problems, social and economic deprivation.

#### Gesture

To use the finger as a way of beckoning or asking someone to approach you could be deemed offensive, in Somalia this gesture is used for dogs not humans.

# Thai

## Origin and Background

Thailand was known as Siam until 1939 and is located at the centre of the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia. It is bordered by Burma and Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia. The Thai community in the UK is surprisingly widespread; statistically the majority of settled Thai migrants are women and are likely to be spread across the country with their British partners. There are also an increasing number of Thai students coming to study in the UK.

## Language

The official language of Thailand is Thai (known as Central Thai), however the use of English is becoming more widely used.

## Greeting a member of the community

The usual Thai greeting when being introduced or greeting someone in Thai is **Sawatdee-krap** (said by a male) or **Sawatdee-kah** (said by a female). A traditional form of greeting between Thai people is the *Wai*, a prayer like gesture, accompanied by the bow of the head.

## Dress

Most Thai people in the UK wear western dress. The formal Thai national costume, known as *Chut Thai Phra Ratcha niyom*, (meaning Thai dress of royal endorsement), includes several sets of clothing designed for use as national costume in formal occasions. Traditional Thailand clothing is mainly manufactured in raw silk.

## Family and Community traditions

Traditionally Thai People are shy by nature and extremely polite; their behaviour is commonly controlled by etiquette, much of which is grounded in Buddhism. The family is the cornerstone of Thai society, with a form of hierarchy with the parents at the top; children are taught to honor and respect their parents from an early age. Traditionally the Head is the most sacred part of the body, it is not considered acceptable to touch a Thai on the head. The feet are the least sacred, so when sitting they should not point at anyone. To point with ones foot is extremely insulting. It is customary to take off your shoes before entering a house.

## Dietary Customs

Rice is the main dietary staple of Thailand; rice is eaten at almost every meal and also made into flour and used in noodles, dumplings, and desserts. Most main dishes use beef, chicken, pork, or seafood, but Thais also eat a variety of vegetarian dishes. Thai food is known for its unique combinations of sweet, sour, salty and spicy flavors.

# Thai

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Candles and incense may be burned as part of Buddhist practices
- Fireworks are commonly used to celebrate festivals and cultural events
- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in homes
- Language barrier may impede safety advice given
- Possible lack of general fire safety awareness

### Considerations during emergencies

- See Buddhism section

### Occurrence of death or dying

- Practices may differ between Thais living in the UK, however traditionally the body is kept for 7 days before cremation, a period of time in which prayer over the body is observed. During six of the seven days, visits are made by Buddhist monks, engaging in evening prayer by the body. Immediately after death family members engage in a ceremonial hand cleansing, each taking turn to pour water from a jug over the hands of others. The coffin is commonly adorned with lights, candles, garlands, flowers, and a picture of the deceased. After prayer, the body is burned to release the spirit, which continues onto the next stage of the afterlife

## information

### Religion

Over 90% of Thais are Buddhists, however Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and are also practiced.

### Regional Language

There are a large number of distinct Thai regional dialects spoken throughout Thailand. Chinese, Lao, Malay and Mon-Khmer are also spoken in some parts of Thailand.

### Social Status

Social relationships are defined as one person being superior to the other, parents are superior to their children, teachers to their students etc. When using the *Wai* greeting, social status is indicated by the height of the hands and the depth of the bow which is determined by the status of the people involved in the greeting; this form of greeting is not usually carried out by western people as seen as a tradition between Thai people only.

### Fruit & Vegetables

The fine art of fruit and vegetable carving which originated hundreds of years ago in Thailand at the Royal Court, and has been passed down over the generations. Today it is taught in Thai schools, at a more advanced level in Thai catering colleges, and put in to practice in hotels and around the world.

# Yemeni

## Origin and Background

The Republic of Yemen, commonly known as Yemen is a country located in the Western Asia. The modern Republic of Yemen was born in 1990 when traditional North Yemen and Communist South Yemen merged after years of clashes. Since unification Yemen has been slowly modernising and opening up to the world, but still retains much of its tribal character. Yemen has a population of approximately 24 million, approximately 53% of Yemenis are Sunni Muslims, while 45% are Zaydi Shias.



## Language

Arabic is spoken across all of Yemen, represented by three major categories or dialects, which are identified by the three major geographical zones of the country. English is also widely spoken.

## Greeting a member of the community

The Yemeni greeting is the same across the Arab world which is *Salam Alaikum*, roughly translated to “Peace be upon you’ and the reply is *Wa Alaykum Asalaam* which means “And peace be upon you also.”

## Dress

Most of the community will wear western dress, however men will traditionally wear a scarf around the neck and upper body or on the head, and a Yemeni skirt known as a *futa*. Wearing a Yemeni dagger known as a *Jambiya* is also common. Many Yemeni women wear a headscarf or ‘Hijab’ as per Islamic tradition.

## Family and Community traditions

Family is at the centre of the Yemeni community. Respect is given to elders in the family and to elders in general. Families usually visit other members of their family on a regular basis. The chewing of *Khat* has a long history as a social custom in Yemen.

## Dietary Customs

The Yemeni cuisine is entirely distinct from the more widely known Middle Eastern cuisines, and differs slightly from region to region. Chicken and lamb are eaten more often than beef. Fish is also eaten, especially in the coastal areas. *Saltah* is considered the national dish and *Aseed* is another popular local dish and considered a delicacy. Milk tea (after khat), black tea (with cardamom, clove, or mint), *qishr* (coffee husks), *qahwa* (coffee), *karkadin* (an infusion of dried hibiscus flowers), *Naqe'e Al Zabib* (cold raisin drink), and *diba'a* (squash nectar) are popular drinks.

# Yemeni

## Ethnicity in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible regular burning of frankincense
- Chewing *Khat* may cause disorientation
- Possible frequent cooking with deep hot oil
- A minority of families may have a steel tandoor which is run by gas cylinders which are kept inside the home
- Some Yemeni families use a wrought iron pan which runs from a gas cylinder to cook local delicacy Aseed

### Considerations during emergencies

- See Islam Faith Section

### Occurrence of death or dying

- See Islam Faith Section

## information

#### Naming

Yemeni people are likely to adopt the Arab Muslim naming pattern which uses names derived from Islam and can indicate a person's lineage or family's origins. Traditionally, Arab Muslim women do not alter their name upon marriage, although some women may adopt their husband's family name.

#### The hijab

A hijab is a veil which covers the hair and neck. It is worn by Muslim women particularly in the presence of non-related adult males. The hijab represents modesty, privacy and morality. See Islam section for further details.

#### Tribes

The majority of Yemen's population is divided into tribal groups, especially in the northern areas of the country where 85% of local residents belong to various tribes. Each tribe has its own unique culture and social history. Tribal values have had a strong influence on shaping the political culture and state-society relations in the Middle East.

# Buddhism

## What is Buddhism

Buddhism is a spiritual tradition over 2,500 years old, and is founded in the story of one man (Siddhartha Gautama) and his spiritual journey to enlightenment and teachings that arose from his experiences and ways of living. Buddhists do not believe in a personal God, but a belief system that focuses on personal spiritual development and the achievement of deep insight into the true nature of life. Buddhists believe the development of morality, meditation and wisdom leads to the path of enlightenment. To Buddhists, existence is a cycle of life, death, rebirth and suffering that they seek to escape altogether.



## Greeting

It is customary for Buddhists to greet people with their palms pressed together at chest level and say 'Namaste', which is a Hindu greeting, but also a non contact form of respectful greeting and can be used universally when meeting people.

## Dress

Generally, there are no religious requirements for forms of every-day dress for lay Buddhists. Buddhist monks or nuns of the Theravada school shave their heads and wear orange or ochre-coloured robes.

## Dietary Customs

Buddhists are often vegetarian although not always. Some Buddhist do not eat onions or garlic, as such foods are believed to have the propensity to disturb thoughts and prevent clear thinking. Many Buddhists will also not drink alcohol or take drugs which have a similar effect and prompt *heedlessness*. Some Buddhists may fast on days of the new an full moon as well as some festival days for various schools of Buddhism. On days of fasting, a Buddhist may eat before noon but not afterwards.

## Religious Observances

Buddhists do not pray in the traditional sense, but many meditate regularly. Other than in Zen Buddhism, the Buddhists calendar is lunar; the dates will therefore vary from year to year. Traditional observance days are the full moon, new moon and quarter days. There are different social events during the year, but those celebrated by all schools of Buddhism are: *Wesak & Full Moons days*. The calendar observed by Buddhists is not standardised and different traditions within Buddhism may observe the same Festival on significantly different dates. It is therefore wise to ask about the practice within the tradition involved, rather than making an assumptions that for instance, *Wesak* is observed on the same day by all Buddhists.

# Buddhism

## Faith in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Candles and incense can be used during meditation or as part of a shrine
- Candles, burning incense and fire works may be used to celebrate festivals/cultural events

### Considerations during emergencies

- In the case of medical examination, treatment or comforting by strangers, a Buddhist may be touched by a person of either sex. There are no religious objections to blood transfusions or transplants. In cases of hospital stays, the use of either a bath or a shower is a personal matter. Provision of a quiet space set aside in a hospital or rest centre is not a necessity, but if available it can be used for silent reflection and medication

### Occurrence of death or dying

- Many Buddhists wish to maintain a clear mind when dying. It is helpful for someone who is dying to have some quiet. After death, the body of the deceased may be handled by non-Buddhists. There are no objections to post mortems. The body may be out in a coffin or wrapped in cloth (sometimes white) or dressed in the deceased own clothes. It may be surrounded by candles, flowers, incense, photographs and coloured lights, but this is a matter of individual choice. The body is usually cremated

## information

#### Language

As Buddhism is practiced worldwide, Buddhists will speak the language of their origin, e.g. English, Tibetan, Cantonese, Hakka, Japanese, Thai and Sinhalese, French, German etc.

#### Naming

Buddhists usually have two or more names. The last name is the family name, and the preceding name(s) are given at the time of birth.

#### Worship

Buddhists can worship both at home or at a temple, at home a room or part of a room may be set aside as a shrine. A Buddhist temple is called a Vihara.

#### Meditation

By meditating, Buddhists aim to bring the body and mind into one entity, the person becomes peaceful, focussed and more aware.

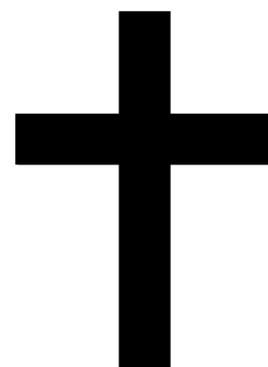
#### Wheel of Life

The Wheel or Life is a complex picture representing the Buddhists view of the universe.

# Christianity

## What is Christianity

Christians believe there is only one god, but there are three elements to him; God, Jesus & the Holy Ghost. Christianity is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ who they believe is the son of God and that he was sent by God to save humanity from the consequences of sin and he died on the cross and rose from the dead on the third day.



## Greeting

There is no common greeting for Christians, it may depend on denominations and local customs.

## Dress

There is no particular code of dress for Christians except for clergy and members of religious orders.

## Dietary Customs

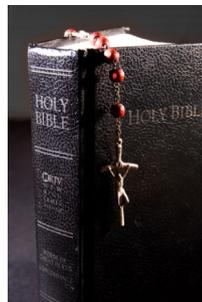
In general, Christians are not religiously forbidden to eat any foods, but this should be checked with the individual; some Christians will not consume alcohol. Roman Catholics may abstain from meat on Fridays and Orthodox Christians may abstain from meat in the fasting seasons of Advent and Lent. Those of African and African Caribbean origin may fast at other times.

## Religious Observances

Many Christians pray daily, and often use the Lord's Prayer. Daily reading from the Bible, and/or other aids to prayer such as a Cross or Crucifix (a Cross with the figure of Christ), a hymnbook or prayer book, a rosary (prayer beads with a small crucifix), or an icon of Christ or the Virgin Mary are all widely used. Sunday is the special day, set apart for prayer, reflection, and church attendance. Christians pray in congregations, small groups or individually. The most important event for most congregations is the Eucharist (the Mass, Communion Service, Lord's Supper), when Christians share bread and wine. The most widely celebrated Christian festivals are:

*Christmas, Holy Week and Easter (including Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday) Pentecost/Whitsun, Ascension Day, the seasons of Advent (leading up to Christmas) and Lent (leading up to Easter) and Remembrance Sunday*

## Faith in the Community South Yorkshire



# Christianity

### Contributors to Fire risk

- Candles may be lit during Easter and Christmas
- Christmas lights and tree decorations may pose a risk

### Considerations during emergencies

- Most Christians would have no objection to being touched by members of the opposite sex in an emergency. Treatment such as blood transfusions, surgery, organ transplants or the administration of drugs is permissible. Jehovah's Witnesses (not regarded as Christians by most Christian organisations) are forbidden to receive blood transfusions and transplants

### Occurrence of death or dying

- If a person is terminally ill, or dying, they may wish to keep a copy of the Bible close at hand. Christians involved in a disaster may value prayers being said for them, or with them, and short readings from scripture, such as the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm. Those who are injured or distressed may wish to receive Holy Communion and/or the Sacrament of the Sick (which used to be called Extreme Unction). The Sacrament is not limited to those who are dying, but is part of the healing ministry of the Church. Other Christians may ask for prayer for healing with the laying on of hands

## information

### Naming

Christians have one or more given names, usually called Christian names because for most Christians these were given historically at the service of baptism, which for most happened when the infant was a few weeks old.

### Denominations

The most numerous denominations in the UK are Anglicans (Church of England, Church in Wales, Church of Ireland, Scottish Episcopal Church); Roman Catholics, Church of Scotland and Free Church (including Baptist, Methodists, United Reformed, Pentecostal, Presbyterians, etc) and Quakers.

### The Cross

The cross is a universal symbol of Christianity and the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Many Christians will wear the cross as a symbol of their faith.

### The Bible

The Bible has two sections, the Old Testament which is the original Hebrew Bible and the New Testament which was written by Christians in the first century. The Bible is not just a book, but a library of stories, songs, poetry, letters and historical events.

# Hinduism

## What is Hinduism

Hinduism is formed from a number of diverse traditions and has no single founder; is an accumulation of distinct intellectual and philosophical perceptions, opposed to a rigid or common set of beliefs. Most Hindus believe in a *Supreme God*, whose form is can be represented by a number of deities. Hindus believe that life is governed by Karma, a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.



## Greeting

The traditional Hindu greeting is 'Namaste' where the palms are pressed together and the head bowed.

## Dress

Dress is usually based on country of origin and western dress is usually worn in the UK. Generally, modesty and decency are considered essential factors in dress code. Traditionally a *Sari* may be worn, which is a one-piece female garment wound around the lower body in different styles to suit the occasion. Women also wear a dress and baggy trousers (shalwar). Men may sometimes wear a loose shirt (Kurta) and baggy trousers.

## Dietary Customs

Hindus regard the cow as sacred and do not eat beef. Orthodox Hindus are strictly vegetarian, which also excludes fish, eggs and animal fat for cooking. Some may also prefer to refrain from alcohol, and some orthodox Hindus may refrain from garlic and onion. Salt free salads, rice, vegetables, yoghurt and milk products and fruit are frequently eaten. Fasting is commonplace and frequent. Fasts generally last one day or one day a week (e.g. Lord Shiva's fasting every Monday for 17 weeks), where yoghurt at lunch with water or fruit juice and a normal light meal in the evening is permitted. Married Hindu women observing the *Karva Chauth* fast from sunrise to moonrise for the safety and longevity of their husbands. A British diet may be adopted by British Hindus.

## Religious Observances

Practicing Hindus will perform a daily act of personal devotion at home, either alone or with others; ritual washing normally accompanies prayer. The most widely celebrated Hindu festivals are:

**Holi:** A celebration to mark the start of spring, with much use of colour

**Rama Navami:** Rama Navami celebrates the birth of Lord Rama, son of King Dasharatha of Ayodhya

**Janamashtami:** there is fasting until midnight

**Diwali:** the festival of lights

**Shivaratri:** the night is spent in prayer, fasting and meditation

## Faith in the Community South Yorkshire



# Hinduism

### Contributors to Fire risk

- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms in the home
- During festivals, candles and fireworks may be used; Diwali is known as the 'festival of lights' as many homes and public places are decorated with candles or oil lamps
- Possible overcrowding at religious venues during religious events

### Considerations during emergencies

- There is no stated preference in respect of medical examination and treatment. Some groupings within the Hindu community are *men only* or *women only* and organisations should always appoint a person of the appropriate sex to liaise with such a grouping. Blood transfusions, organ transplants, and all types of medicine for the purpose of saving life are usually permitted. It is preferable not to remove jewellery or sacred threads where possible

### Occurrence of death or dying

- Traditionally a Hindu will appreciate being with someone if fatality ill, preferably of the same sex. It is preferred if all Hindu bodies can be kept together after death. Any detached body parts must be treated with respect as if they were a complete body. Post mortems are permitted, usually with prior agreement of the immediate family. The bereavement in the family usually lasts a minimum of two weeks during which several rituals are followed. Hindus believe in cremating the body so that the soul is completely free of any attachment to the past physical matter

## information

### Naming

Members of Hindu families may have three or four names, depending on cultural background and tradition. Suffixes to the first name are used, e.g. *Bhai* or *Ji* for males and *Ben* for females. In some traditions the father's first name is one of the middle names. Sometimes the surname is clan based e.g. *Patel*. Some Hindu women may adopt *Devi*, *Kumari* or *Wati* in place of a family surname. For records, it is advisable to ask the individual's family name and use that as the surname. Hindu equivalents to Mr and Mrs are *Shri* and *Shrimati*, commonly used.

### Language

In addition to English, Hindus in the UK are most likely to speak Gujarati Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali or Tamil.

### Religious Texts

The Hindu ancient scriptures are called the *Vedas* and contain, amongst other texts, the *Upanishads*, philosophical works discussing the purpose of life, and the *Brahmanas*, which contain advice on ritual. The *Bhagawad Gita* is a prominent holy book with condensed spiritual teachings, and the *Ramayana* sets the highest ideals.

# Islam

## What is Islam

Islam is the second largest religion in the world and was founded in Arabia over 1,400 years ago. Those who follow the Islamic faith are called Muslims and believe there is one God, called 'Allah'. Muslims believe God sent prophets to humanity to teach them how to live, Jesus, Moses and Abraham are respected prophets sent by God, they believe that Muhammad was the final prophet.



## Greeting

Muslims will usually use the Arabic greeting *As-Salamu Alaykum*, which means 'peace be upon you' and the reply is *Wa Alaykum Asalaam*, which means "and peace be upon you also."

## Dress

Many observant Muslim women wear a headdress called a Hijab. In Islam the *Hijab* has a broader meaning which includes the principle of modesty and includes behaviour as well as dress. Muslim women are required to observe the *Hijab* in front of any man they could not theoretically marry, therefore is not obligatory in front of the father, brother, uncles etc. Modesty rules will differ between individuals and communities; some women choose to wear full body garments and expose only their eyes, or cover all parts of the body apart from the hands and face. Some women believe its is compulsory to cover their hair or cleavage and some women do not observe any dress requirements.

## Dietary Customs

Most Muslims will observe a *Halal* diet which follows the dietary principles of Islam. According to these guidelines which are gathered from the Qur'an, Muslims cannot consume pork or pork by-products, alcohol or carnivorous animals. All animals must be slaughtered in the name of Allah. *Halal* food and drink should be clearly labelled where other food is being served. Vegetarian meals and fresh fruit/vegetables are acceptable.

## Religious Observances

Practicing Muslims usually pray five times a day facing Mecca (SW): before dawn, around midday, late afternoon, after sunset and late evening. Sunrise and sunset determine the exact timings. Ritual washing (*Wudu*) is usually performed before praying. Men and women will not usually pray together, though in emergencies this is acceptable if a temporary partition is erected.

Most Muslims fast from dawn to sunset to mark the month of *Ramadan*, and some will fast at other times during the year. Fasting during *Ramadan* is compulsory for all except menstruating, pregnant or lactating women, young children and the infirm.

## Faith in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Candles and fireworks may be used to celebrate *Ramadan* and *Eid* festivals
- Frequent use of hot oil in cooking
- Possible wearing of traditional flowing garments while cooking
- Possible overcrowding at religious festivals/venues may lead to obstruction of exits
- Possible language barrier may impede fire safety advice given

### Considerations during emergencies

- Treatment by medical staff of any religion is permissible, but men and women prefer to be treated by staff of the same sex where possible

### Occurrence of death or dying

- If a Muslim is terminally ill or dying, the face should be turned towards Mecca (south west), the patient's head should be above the rest of the body. The dying person will try and say the *Shahadah* prayer (the testimony of faith). Post mortems are acceptable only where necessary for the issue of a death certificate or if required by the coroner. Ideally only male Muslims should handle a male body, and female Muslims a female body. Detached body parts must be treated with respect. Next of kin or the local Muslim community will make arrangements to prepare the body for burial. Muslims believe in burying their dead and would never cremate a body. Burial usually takes place quickly, preferably within 24 hours

#### Naming

Muslims usually have several personal or religious names. The name of the family into which someone has been born is not necessarily used. Where names are required for record purposes, it is advisable to register the most used personal name as a surname, followed by the lesser used names.

#### Religious Texts

The Qur'an is a source of guidance for life. If in the original Arabic it should not be touched by non-Muslims except with a cloth (translations may be handled by all, with respect) or by menstruating women.

#### Major Events

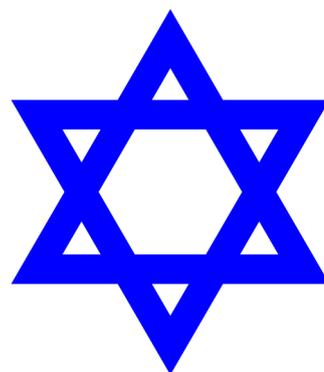
- The First Muharram: Begins the Islamic New Year
- Milad-un-Nabi: (Not celebrated by orthodox Sunni)
- Lail-un-Qadr: A time of fasting and all night prayer during Ramadan
- Eid-ul-Fitr: The end of Ramadan, a day of celebration
- Eid-ul-Adha: The end of the time of the annual *Hajj* pilgrimage

# Judaism

## What is Judaism

Judaism is one of the worlds oldest religions, originating in the Middle East around 3,500 years ago. Jews believe there is only one God, and that he appointed the Jews as his chosen people. They are to keep God's laws and set an example of holiness and ethical behaviour to the world.

The Jewish faith is one of community with many religious customs centred around family, it is usual that families join together for the Sabbath meal.



## Greeting

*Shalom* is a common greeting, meaning 'hello' or 'peace' in Hebrew.

## Dress

Most Jewish people will wear western dress. Devout Jewish men and women will keep their heads covered at all times. Men wear a hat or skull-cap, the *yarmulka* or *kippa*. Orthodox women will wear a hat, scarf or wig covering the top of their head. Orthodox women and girls are required to keep the body and limbs covered with modest clothing. Strictly Orthodox men are likely to wear black clothes (sometimes 18<sup>th</sup> century dress) and may have ringlets or beards.

## Dietary Customs

Observant Jews are required to uphold the *Kashrut*, a series of dietary laws. Jews do not eat pork in any form. Fish must have both fins and scales: shellfish is not permitted. Red meat and poultry must comply with *kosher* standards of slaughter. Meat and milk products must not be cooked together, and separate dishes must be kept. A vegetarian meal is often acceptable. *Yom Kippur* is a major annual 25-hour fast observed by the majority of Jews. Additionally, no leavened bread is eaten during the period of Passover, when unleavened bread known as *matzah* may be consumed instead.

## Religious Observances

All practising Jews say prayers three times a day. The Sabbath (*Shabbat*) is observed from sunset on Friday evening until sunset on Saturday evening. Prayers and a family meal are part of the observance. The *Synagogue* is the Jewish place of worship, but may be used as a community centre. Passover is one of the most important festivals in the Jewish calendar. The Feast of Passover commemorates the liberation of the Children of Israel who were led out of Egypt by Moses.

## Faith in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Candles are commonly used to welcome the Sabbath

### Considerations during emergencies

- Strictly Orthodox men and women actively avoid physical contact with people of the opposite sex and will not welcome being comforted by someone touching or putting their arm around them. In regards to medical treatment, all laws normally applying on the Sabbath or a festival can be overruled for the purpose of saving life or safeguarding health

### Occurrence of death or dying

- It is usual for a companion to remain with a dying Jewish person until death, reading or saying prayers. The dying person should not be touched or moved, since it is considered that such an action will hasten death, which is not permitted in any circumstance. He or she may wish to recite the *Shema (The Lord our God is One)*. The prompt and accurate identification of the dead is particularly important for the position of a widow in Jewish law. Post mortems are forbidden unless ordered by the civil authorities. Body parts must be treated with respect and remain with the body if possible. When a person dies, eyes should be closed and jaws tied; fingers should be straight. The body is washed and wrapped in a plain white sheet and placed with the feet towards the doorway.

#### Language

English is generally used, although Hebrew and Yiddish are also spoken.

#### Religious Scriptures & Artefacts

The Jewish scriptures are known as the *Tanakh* and include the Torah, the *Nevi'im* and the *Ketuvim*.

#### Naming

Individuals usually have one or more Hebrew names, often taken from Biblical sources, followed by the Hebrew names of their father.

#### Worship

Both men and women attend the Synagogue to worship, and usually sit separately. Heads are covered at all times.

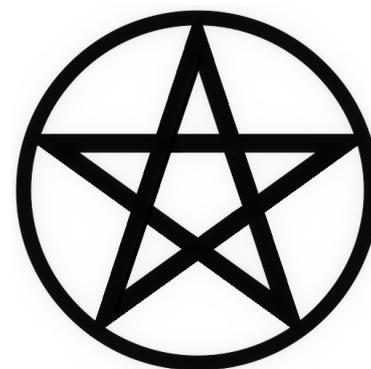
#### Star of David

Can also be referred to as the Shield of David is a six pointed star and is most usually identified with Judaism.

# Paganism

## What is Paganism

Paganism describes a group of faiths based on the worship of nature, which historically draws on traditional and ancient religions of indigenous people throughout the world such as Norse, Celtic and Egyptians beliefs. Wiccans, Druids, Shamans and Sacred Ecologists also make up parts of the Pagan community. Most Pagans share an ecological vision stemming from the belief in the organic vitality and spirituality of the natural world; the recognition of the divine in nature is at the heart of Pagan belief and is worshiped in many different forms, in feminine as well as masculine imagery and also without gender. The most widely recognised of these are the God and Goddess (or pantheons of God and Goddesses) whose annual cycle of procreation, giving birth and dying defines the Pagan year.



## Greeting

Traditional Pagan greetings may be used such as *Merry Meet*, and *Blessed Be* when departing, however most pagans in the UK use British greetings.

## Dress

Most Pagans will dress according to their cultural background, however some pagans such as *wiccans* or *druids* may wear cloaks and robes during worship, relating to ancient traditions. During worship some Pagans may use a traditional symbolic knife called an *Athame* and many pagans wear jewellery with symbols such as *pentagram* or *pentacle*.

## Dietary Customs

Some Pagans are vegetarian or vegan, and will often seek to eat a healthy and natural diet, however there are no religious restrictions regarding diet and should not be presumed.

## Religious Observances

Many pagans worship in groups, however many individuals practice alone. Forms of meditation, dance, music and chanting are common in pagan worship and prayers are offered to the gods and goddesses. Pagans often create a symbolic '*sacred space*' to worship within and many rituals take place outside. There are many ancient places in the UK which have a special significance to Pagans, such as Stonehenge. At home Pagans will often have an altar or shrine which includes pagan symbols or artefacts where worship takes place.

## Faith in the Community South Yorkshire



# Paganism

### Contributors to Fire risk

- Candles and incense are commonly used during rituals and worship

### Considerations during emergencies

- Avoid removing jewellery or threads unless necessary

### Occurrence of death or dying

- Traditionally in Paganism, death is not something to be feared. Funerals are often a celebratory event, however some may be more conventional depending on the wishes of the family. There may be a conventional cremation or burial, often along with religious items of significance

## information

### Naming

There are no specific naming traditions relating to Paganism, however many pagan families will hold a naming ceremony for new arrivals

### Pentacle

The Pentagram is a symbol of a star usually encased in a circle. Always with 5 points (one pointing upward). The upward point of the star is representative of the spirit and the other four points all represent an element; earth, air, fire, and water

### Key Festivals

- **Yule/Winter Solstice:** December 20th/21st
- **Imbolc:** 1st/2nd February – from the Celt festival to ensure a supply of food until the harvest, now involves making candles, story telling and planting spring flowers
- **Spring Equinox:** March 20th/21st– Celebration of the spring renewal of the earth
- **Beltane:** April 30th/ May 1st– A fire festival celebrating the coming of summer and fertility
- **Summer Solstice:** 21st or 24th of June – The longest day of the year
- **Lughnasadh:** 2nd– 4th August – A harvest festival
- **Autumn Equinox:** 20th/21st September

# Rastafari

## What is Rastafari

The Rastafari religion was developed in Jamaica in the 1930s following the coronation of Haile Selassie I as King of Ethiopia. Rastafarians believe Haile Selassie is God and he will return all members of the black community, who are living in exile as a result of the slave trade and colonisation, to their homeland in Africa.



## Greeting

It is customary to say *Greetings* rather than *Hello* or *Good day*.

## Dress

Rastafarians usually wear western dress; that some Rasta men will wear *crowns* or *tams* (hats) and Rasta women, wear headscarves. The wearing of headwear can be deemed as part of a Rastafarian's attire, with some Rastafarian men and especially women never uncovering their heads in public. Many Rastafari wear their hair in dreadlocks; Rastafari associate dreadlocks with a spiritual journey that one takes in the process of locking their hair. It is taught that patience is the key to growing locks, a journey of the mind, soul and spirituality.

## Dietary Customs

Traditionally most Rastafarians are vegetarian and avoid stimulants such as alcohol, tea and coffee. Sacred food is called *I-TAL* (organic vegetarian food). Some Rastafarians will eat fish, but only certain types. Fasting is observed, and can take place at any time; nothing is usually consumed from noon until evening.

## Religious Observances

Worship takes place at various times depending upon each Rastafarian commune. A service is conducted at least once a week. Rastafarians consider Saturday to be the Sabbath day. *Nyahbinghi* drumming and chanting is an important part of Rastafarian culture which is used for spiritual development and can last for many days. At the start of this spiritual time a *Fire Key* also takes place: a fire is lit and must be kept burning until the drumming and chanting have stopped.

# Rastafari

## Faith in the Community South Yorkshire



### Contributors to Fire risk

- Candles and burning incense are commonly use to celebrate festivals/cultural events
- Possible smoking of marijuana may impact reaction action time

### Considerations during emergencies

- Cutting of hair is prohibited in any circumstances. Dreadlocks symbolise the 'mane of the Lion of Judah' (reference to the divine title of Emperor Haile Selassie). In a medical emergency this issue would need to be discussed with the patient

### Occurrence of death or dying

- No particular rituals are observed. The dying person may wish to pray. When a Rastafarian person dies a gathering usually takes place where there is drumming, singing, scriptures read and praises given; usually on the 9th and or 40th night of the person passing

## information

### Naming

No particular tradition. Older men may take the prefix *Ja* or *Ras*.

### Major Festivals

- *Ethiopian Constitution Day* (16 July)
- *Birthday of Haile Selassie* (23 July): one of the holiest days of the Rastafarian year
- *Birthday of Marcus Garvey* (17 August)
- *Ethiopian New Year's Day* (early September): a four-year cycle, with each year named after a Biblical evangelist.
- *Anniversary of the crowning of Haile Selassie/Ethiopian Christmas*: 2 November

### Language

The vocabulary is largely that of the Jamaican patois of English. English is also widely spoken.

### Green, Gold, Red & Black

Green, Gold & Red are the colours of the Ethiopian flag and represent the blood of the martyrs, green the vegetation and gold the wealth of Africa. Black signifies the pride of the black skin.

# Sikhism

## What is Sikhism

Sikhism was founded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the Punjab district of India and Pakistan. It is a monotheistic religion and is based on the teachings of *Guru Nanek* and the 9 Sikh Gurus who followed him. The most important element of Sikhism is the internal religious state of the individual, it stresses the importance of doing good actions, to treat everyone equally, be generous to those less fortunate, to live honestly and work hard.



## Greeting

Sikhs greet each other by putting their hands together, palms touching, parallel to their chest, and while slightly bowing say *Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh*, meaning the Wonderful Lord's Khalsa, Victory is to the Wonderful Lord. For non-baptised Sikhs or a more common way of greeting is *Sat Sri Akaal* meaning *God is truth*.

## Dress

All initiated male Sikhs wear the five K symbols: *Kesh* (uncut hair); *Kangha* (a comb to keep the hair neat); *Kara* (a steel bangle which symbolises the unity of God); *Kirpan* (a short dagger which symbolises the readiness of the Sikh to fight against injustice); and *Katchera* (breeches or shorts to symbolise modesty). Women will often wear these symbols, except for the Turban, which is obligatory for men, it is optional for women who may instead wear a *chunni* (a long Punjabi scarf) to cover the Kesh. The removal of the Turban or the *Katchera* will cause great embarrassment to a Sikh and should be avoided unless in an emergency situation.

## Dietary Customs

Dietary practice varies, however devout Sikhs do not use tobacco, alcohol or drugs and are vegetarians, who will also exclude eggs. Those who do eat meat, fish and eggs will refrain from eating beef, halal and kosher meat. Salads, rice, dahl (lentils), vegetables and fruit are widely acceptable.

## Religious Observances

Sikhs are required to shower or bathe daily, especially before conducting their dawn prayers. Prayers are said three times a day: at sunrise, sunset and before going to bed. A Gurdwara is the place where Sikhs come together to worship, there is no set day for collective worship, though in the UK this usually takes place on Sundays. Festivals are normally celebrated with a continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib (Holy Scriptures) over a period of 48 hours.

## Faith in the Community South Yorkshire



# Sikhism

### Contributors to Fire risk

- During festivals candles and fireworks may be used, such as *Diwali* which is the festival of lights, and rows of oil lamps and candles are commonly placed in windows, doors and outside buildings

### Considerations during emergencies

- Treatment by medical staff of any religion is permissible, but men and women prefer to be treated by staff of the same sex where possible. There are no specific medical requirements and no religious objections to blood transfusion and organ transplants. The views of the family/ individual concerned should be sought. The Turban should not be removed unless necessary

### Occurrence of death or dying

- The dying person will want to have access to the Sikh scriptures where possible. The five Ks should be left on the body, which should, if possible, be cleaned and clothed in clean garments before being placed in a coffin or on a bier. According to Sikh etiquette, comforting a member of the opposite sex by physical contact should be avoided, unless those involved are closely related. Deliberate expressions of grief or mourning by bereaved relatives are discouraged, though the bereaved will want to seek comfort from the Sikh scriptures

## information

### Naming

Sikhs generally have three names: their given name; a title *Singh* (Lion) for males and *Kaur* (Princess) for all females, along with a family name. Where names are required for records, the family name can tactfully be asked for, bearing in mind that Sikhs generally prefer to use and will usually offer, their first name alone or their first name together with their title (Singh or Kaur).

### Language

The Punjabi and English languages are widely spoken. Swahili, Urdu and Hindi may be understood by some Sikhs.

### Religious Texts

The Sikh Scriptures (*Adi Granth*) are treated with the utmost respect and reverence. Additionally, Sikhs may refer to the writings of *Guru Gobind Singh* (*Dasam Granth*) and the Sikh Code of Conduct.

### The Gurdwara

Is a place to learn spiritual wisdom and a place for religious ceremonies. A *Gurdwara* is where children learn the Sikh faith, ethics, customs, traditions and texts. A *Gurdwara* is also a community centre, and offers food, shelter, and companionship to those who need it.

# Age



## Older People

Statistics show that if you are aged over 60 you are more likely to die in a house fire than any other age group. As people grow older, they may start to suffer from mental ill health or a physical disability which may increase vulnerability. For many older people fire safety is not a priority and it can be hard to change life long habits to make themselves safer, without appropriate advice and support. Many harder to reach communities are known to other local agencies and not the Fire & Rescue Service, until it's too late.

Many elderly people live in their own homes, maintaining their independence and will continue to do so for as long as they can. The number of people living beyond their 70's, 80's and even 90's is expected to dramatically increase within the UK, which will increase the risk of fire.

## Children & Young People

There is also a risk for children and young people as the majority causes of Accidental Dwelling fires in homes of parents with dependent children cite 'Distraction' as a factor. Research suggests there is an established link between unemployment, income inequality and increased crime rates, including deliberate fire setting and anti social behaviour.

Educating young people about Fire Safety has been a long standing priority for SYFR and is a crucial part of our ongoing work to reduce house fires, hoax calls and arson. SYFR aims to effectively engage with children and young people to prevent antisocial behaviour and other associated fire crimes and to provide education in fire safety skills and responsible citizenship. SYFR may face some future challenges with young people and teenagers as youth unemployment has recently increased significantly within the county.

### risk contributors

#### Older People

- May have an impairment or disability
- Increased risk of dementia
- May use an electric blanket
- May be using medication
- May smoke in bed
- May have poor mobility
- May live alone
- House may be in poor repair
- Possible use of open fire/risky heat sources

#### Children & Young People

- Increased youth unemployment may lead to more fire related crime and anti social behaviour
- Pressure on the finances of our partnership agencies may mean that external sources of funding for our youth engagement activities become more difficult to access

# Anti Social Behaviour



Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) usually occurs in the more deprived areas of South Yorkshire. The main perpetrators of ASB tend to be teenagers. Many teenagers in deprived areas are not involved in youth engagement initiatives and after-school projects. Many teens who commit ASB do so out of boredom or frustration and do not understand the consequences of their actions.

ASB can be a result of many factors, including poor education, troubled family life, social exclusion or poverty. Research suggests that many perpetrators of ASB are subject to peer pressure, wanting to fit in and not seeming to be scared of committing such a crime in front of their peer group. Many young people lack role models to encourage and promote appropriate behaviour and encourage take up of opportunities to improve wellbeing and future prospects.

Getting to know the perpetrators, gaining their trust and understanding their problems may go a long way in tackling ASB, not just for fire setting but also for crime and nuisance behaviour.

## risk contributors

### Anti Social Behaviour

- Emergency services can be tied up at small ASB fires, and ultimately are not able to attend more serious incidents
- Arson attacks are often committed by people with psychological or emotional issues requiring supportive intervention
- Often a lack of support for family and young children in deprived areas
- Young people's lack of pride and commitment to their surroundings
- Anti Social Hate Crimes can occur because of a prejudice against other community groups, beliefs and cultures

# Asylum Seekers & Refugees

A Refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their country due to fear of persecution and has been granted leave to remain in the UK.

An Asylum Seeker is a person who has been forced to leave their country due to fear of persecution and has applied for Refugee status from the Home Office.

In recent years there have been a number of Refugees and Asylum Seekers arriving in South Yorkshire, all having different needs and bring a variety of different customs and practices from their country of origin. Many Refugees and Asylum Seekers are from Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities and share similar risks. However, they may also experience further disadvantages due to age, sexual orientation, gender and disability.

Some Refugees and Asylum Seekers may come to the area because of already settled communities from their country of origin, in these cases there may be established centres and organisations dedicated to welcoming and integrating these communities. Fire Services can increase fire awareness by providing literature in a range of different languages or using volunteers and partners who are familiar with the community to deliver safety advice. Fire Services can also work with partners and other services to make sure those who have just arrived are aware of what services are provided and how to recognise safety and fire risks.

## risk contributors

### Asylum Seekers & Refugees

- Often live in overcrowded households
- May smoke heavily
- May overload plug sockets
- Cultural practices such as religious observance and cooking may result in high risk of fire
- May use old or defective electrical appliances
- Language barriers may prevent people from expressing their needs and impede fire safety advice given
- May be suspicious of authority and uniforms because of past persecution
- Reliance on younger members of family to translate information

# Deprivation & Child Poverty



Deprivation refers to a general lack of community resources and opportunities. The Index of Multiple Deprivation is a measure of deprivation in an area, not the individuals living within it, not all deprived people live in deprived areas and not all people living in a deprived area are deprived. According to government research reports there is evidence of a correlation between accidental dwelling fires, deprivation levels and income support beneficiaries.

In the UK, there are approximately 23 million children living in poverty; this is 27% of children, or more than 1 in 4. This means that a proportion of children are growing up in households where there isn't always enough money to pay for what most people would consider the essentials, such as a healthy diet, a warm home or the opportunity for children to take part in school trips and activities. Growing up in a deprived household may contribute to a child's health problems and reduced educational opportunities which could generate lower skills for employment and possibly social interaction.

## risk contributors

### Deprivation

- Low Income families
- Poor accessibility to housing and local services
- Unemployment
- High rates of crime in area
- Increase in poor health & disability
- Poor quality of living environment (indoors & outdoors)
- Lack of access to education, skills & training

### Child Poverty

- Families with more than three children
- Households where a family member has a disability
- Living with only one of their parents
- Having learning difficulties
- Having a teenage parent
- In a household where one or more parent is in low paid, part-time work or unemployed
- From BME families



# Disability



There are many different types of disability which can affect a person's ability to carry out normal daily activities, including mobility and physical impairments, vision and hearing disabilities, cognitive or learning disabilities and psychological disabilities including mental health.

Physical and psychological disabilities can affect anyone at any time during their lives. It can be for a short period of time or be life-long. Having a disability can present many complex risks in terms of fire safety and other emergencies.

The Equality Act 2010 has widened the definition of a disabled person to someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

It is important to remember that many disabilities are not visible and individuals can become disabled at any time in their lives.

There are approximately 10 million disabled people in the UK, but the actual number is hard to gain as the statistics are based on people who are in receipt of disability benefits. There are many more people who may consider themselves to have a disability, however are not known to agencies, which mean the specific numbers are unknown.

## risk contributors

### Disability

- May be distracted/impaired whilst cooking
- May excessively hoard possessions
- May use a wheelchair or mobility aid
- Barriers encountered with identifying disabled individuals and receiving appropriate support
- May use medication
- May have lack of fire safety education
- Disability may affect response and reaction
- May smoke in bed

# Domestic Abuse



Domestic abuse is any incident (or pattern of incidents) of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members. This can encompass (but is not limited to) the types of abused such as psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

Domestic abuse also includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage - these types of crime are often called 'hidden crimes'. It is important to remember anyone can experience domestic abuse, regardless of their gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity etc.

Domestic abuse happens in all cultures and social groups at similar levels. It is mostly women who are abused by male partners or ex-partners, however many men also experience domestic abuse and women can be abusers; both women and men can suffer domestic abuse in same-sex relationships.

Children can also be seriously affected by living with and witnessing domestic abuse and teens and young people can be vulnerable to abuse in their own relationships. Young people can be abusive to their parents and carers can be abusive to the people in their care.

**risk contributors**

Domestic Abuse

- Victims of domestic abuse can find it hard to seek assistance and can be isolated from support services
- Attacks can include arson attacks on houses
- Evidence or signs of domestic abuse can be hidden, not recognised, or ignored by service providers
- The mental and psychological effects of domestic abuse can affect a person's ability to carry out a normal life e.g. keeping a job, accessing health care services etc
- There is a lack of understanding regarding the spectrum of forms of domestic abuse e.g. may include victims experiencing financial deprivation or manipulation, denial of rights and threats of deportation

# Drugs & Alcohol



Misusing drugs or alcohol can make a person more vulnerable to fire and other emergencies. Statistics show that if a person misuses drugs or alcohol they are more likely (than non-users) to die or be injured in a fire or road traffic collision (RTC).

Research suggests a high proportion of people who misuse substances live in rented or shared accommodation; according to statistics if a person lives in rented accommodation they are seven times more likely to have a fire.

Many people who misuse drugs and alcohol live alone. If they are not known to drug and alcohol support services or other partner agencies, individuals can often become isolated.

For some people who misuse drugs and alcohol, fire safety is not a priority. Many do not know what to do in the event of a fire, or could be incapable of reacting effectively, or have little fire safety knowledge. Fire safety talks and presentations to key workers assists our partners to identify vulnerable households that would benefit from Home Safety Checks.

SYFR staff can also, at any time, signpost someone who is misusing drugs or alcohol to appropriate support services.



## risk contributors

### Drugs & Alcohol

- Short term and long term affects of substance abuse may have a significant impact on reacting to a fire or other emergency
- Often live in poor housing
- Often smoke heavily
- Often have bad housekeeping
- Often have low income
- May lack care or concentration when cooking
- Often live alone
- Often have no smoke alarms or working smoke alarms

# Gypsy & Traveller Communities



Gypsies and Traveller communities have been part of British society for over 500 years. Today there are an estimated 300,000 Gypsies and Travellers in the UK, with approximately 5000 living in South Yorkshire.



Historically Gypsies and Travellers travelled around the country and Europe; today, 90% of Traveller families live in permanent housing and others in designated Traveller sites. Strong cultural and traditional values within travelling communities are sometimes misinterpreted, often resulting in discrimination and exclusion by the local community.

**Irish Travellers:** research shows that this community separated from the settled Irish community approximately 1,000 years ago and can be seen to have a distinct ethnic identity and maintain their own traditions and customs. Not all families date from the same point in time as some adopted traveller customs in the last centuries. Irish travellers speak English, and a language called Shelta which is a Creole or Irish, Gaelic and English.

**Gypsy:** can describe a variety of people who choose a nomadic lifestyle but more specifically refers to people of Romani origin. Romanichals are a Romani subgroup who arrived in Britain in the 16th Century, they originally spoke the Romani language but now mostly speak a Creole of English and Romani. The nomadic lifestyle brought with it very strict rules about hygiene which are still upheld even in static communities. Travel is usually for work and can follow a set route with stopping places that have been established for hundreds of years.

## risk contributors

### Gypsies and Travellers

- Gas heaters are commonly used to heat properties
- Gas canisters may be kept on traveller sites
- Often sites are near to waste ground, and fly tipping and burning of rubbish can be a problem
- Most communities experience barriers to local services, including family planning, elderly persons care, smoking cessation, maternity services and education
- Communities may be victims of Hate Crime
- Often lack of smoke alarms in property of caravans

# Homelessness



Homeless people often live on the streets or find temporary accommodation such as a hostel or a homeless person's unit. People can become homeless for a number of reasons, such as relationship breakdown, substance misuse, leaving an institution (prison, care, hospital etc.), physical or mental health problems, lack of affordable housing, high levels of poverty, unemployment or lack of work.



Many homeless people experience drug and alcohol addiction and many have mental health problems which makes this community vulnerable. People who sleep rough are 35 times more likely to commit suicide than the general population.

Due to the transient nature of homeless people, many individuals are not known to social services or other support agencies and can often become isolated, which presents further risks and vulnerability.

Many homeless people face a number of issues in addition to, but often compounded by, their homelessness and many people find it difficult to access the help they need.

## risk contributors

### Homelessness

- The short and long term affects of substance and alcohol abuse
- May experience mental health problems
- May have poor health
- May smoke heavily
- May live in isolation
- May have no income or very low income
- Possibility of poor housing if living in temporary accommodation
- Possibility of no smoke alarms or working smoke alarms
- Possibility of bad housekeeping

# Mental Health



A 'mental health problem' can include a wide range of issues which affect a person's ability to carry out daily activities and can be the result of complex biological, social, psychological and environmental factors. Research suggests 1 in 4 people in the UK will at some point in their lives experience problems with their mental health.

Emerging data and research into the relationship between mental health related problems and risks linked with death from fire suggest that people with mental health problems are at a significantly higher risk of death or injury from fire. Around 15% of fatal fires involve victims who have suffered some form of mental impairment.

Research shows that mental health problems are more common in certain community groups, such as: people living in poor living conditions, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled people, homeless people and offenders.

People with mental health problems commonly experience discrimination or victimisation, which can heighten the risk of social exclusion and make mental health problems more severe.

Research suggests the number of people with mental health problems who smoke is significantly higher than the general population, for example, the smoking rate amongst adults in the UK who experience depression is twice as high as those who do not. It is estimated that 80% of individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia are smokers and tend to smoke more heavily.

## Mental Health in the Community

It still may be a taboo issue within certain communities for people to acknowledge mental health problems. Individuals may be dispersed within the area and within different types of families.

It is important to remember when meeting someone with a mental health problem to not assume that they lack the capacity to make decisions.

### risk contributors

#### Mental Health

- May be forgetful due to illness or medication
- May drink alcohol or smoke heavily
- May be disorganised and/or lead a chaotic life styles
- May use substances
- May take medication
- May hoard possessions/waste
- May lack care or concentration when cooking
- Fire safety may be seen as a low priority

# Newly Arrived Communities



Newly arrived communities include people coming from the European Union accession states who have come to live in South Yorkshire. Community numbers are measured using national data for National Insurance number applications and numbers joining the Workers Registration Scheme. Newly arrived communities could include BME, Asylum Seekers and Economic Migrants.



Because of potential low English language skills, engaging with these communities may be difficult. As a Fire and Rescue Service, we need to increase the awareness of key fire risks within the home and wider society and instil a sense of personal responsibility for fire safety amongst the community.

There may also be potential problems with private landlords and the properties they are offering newly arrived communities; due to the lack of knowledge of landlord legal responsibilities, residents may not feel confident enough to approach the landlord with safety concerns or issues. The fire service can work with partner agencies and encourage private landlords to take full responsibility for their legal obligations and carry out Home Safety Checks.

## risk contributors

### Newly Arrived Communities

- UK fire safety knowledge may be limited
- Migrant communities often live in overcrowded housing
- May smoke heavily
- May overload plug sockets and plus adapters
- May not dispose of smoking material carefully
- Accidents may take place during cooking due to cultural practices

# Safeguarding



Safeguarding is about how we protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation and about promoting their general well-being. Traditionally we may think about activity focused around the needs of children and elderly or disabled people but safeguarding is a broad theme which could cover all the groups at risk of fire or emergencies' anyone can be vulnerable at certain times in their life and unable to protect themselves.



SYFR is committed to protecting and supporting vulnerable people including children, young people and adults at risk of being abused or neglected. Safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility** and all staff who have direct or indirect contact with children, families and vulnerable adults, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

Agencies and professionals have a responsibility to report on abuse and neglect through their services onto their Councils local arrangements for safeguarding and through the way we work to ensure all staff are able to promote the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. This could mean reporting abuse or alerting agencies to needs and risks, for instance, where a vulnerable person is in urgent need of care services.

If you are concerned about the safety of a child or adult at risk of abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation please contact the following;

## SYFR Contact

**Mon - Fri** - For advice and to raise the ALERT contact the Safeguarding Officer on 07775938782

**Out of Hours** - Contact CONTROL who will advise on which Group Manager is deputising for the Safeguarding Officer

## risk contributors

### Safeguarding in the Community

- Hard to reach families, situations of poverty, family crisis or unsupported parents
- Support services which are inaccessible or do not fully understand people's needs
- Barriers to accessing services - often support agencies are seen as authority figures
- Living chaotic lifestyles, carrying out risky behaviours, lack of positive role models as parents or peers
- Anti-social behaviour, power and control used in relationships, domestic violence and links with arson

# Sexual Orientation



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people have many different identities and lead very different lifestyles. Different identities lead to different cultural, social and economic experiences of being LGBT. LGBT people are not a homogenous group and therefore consideration needs to be given to the particular issues faced by variations in situations and lifestyles. For example, age, gender, class, ethnicity, disability and religion will all impact on the experiences and needs of LGBT people. There are many factors which can affect a LGBT person's ability to carry out their life due to their sexual orientation. There is a legal requirement under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent discrimination of LGBT people in service provision; consideration should be taken when presuming heterosexuality or marriage, e.g. asking a man about his wife rather than partner or the use of incorrect pronouns (male /female) with trans people could be considered discriminatory or offensive.



## Definitions

**Lesbian** is a term used to refer to a woman who has sexual and/ or romantic feelings towards other women (some women prefer the term 'gay woman')

**Gay Man** is a term used to refer to a man who has sexual and/ or romantic feelings towards other men. Gay is now the preferred term which has replaced homosexual

**Bisexual** refers to a person who is sexually and/ or romantically attracted towards both men and women

**Trans** is a wide umbrella term used to include people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex. The term may include, but is not limited to; people who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment. 'Trans' includes people who identify as transvestites, transgenderists and transsexuals

## risk contributors

### LGBT

- Experience of homophobia & Hate Crime can increase risk of Arson and violent attacks, either in the home or in a public area
- Some LGBT people are more likely to use drugs and have higher rates of substance abuse
- Domestic abuse is a significant problem, research suggests 1 in 4 LGBT will experience abuse at some point
- Research suggests 41% of LGBT people have had thoughts about suicide and 18% have actually attempted suicide
- Barrier in FRS engaging with LGBT community due to perceived negative attitudes towards LGBT community members
- Possible underrepresentation of smoke alarms

# Sheltered Housing



In the United Kingdom, housing associations are usually private, non-profit making organisations that provide low-cost "social housing" for people in need of a home. Sheltered housing provides accommodation specially designed for elderly people and some are specially designed to support people living with a disability. Sheltered housing schemes have also been developed to assist other vulnerable people in the community.



There is a wide range of community groups living in sheltered housing schemes including young vulnerable people, people with an offending history, people with mental health problems, teenage parents, people who have misused drugs or alcohol, people fleeing domestic violence and single homeless people.

Many of the residents living in this type of accommodation are deemed to be some of the more vulnerable members of the community and fire risk can be high, especially for those who smoke. Flame retardant bedding and throws can be provided for those most at risk, with fire safety awareness session aimed at both residents and staff.

## risk contributors

### Sheltered Housing

- Residents may smoke heavily
- Possibility of bad housekeeping
- Residents may overload electrical plug sockets
- Possible hoarding within the accommodation
- Accidents may take place during cooking
- Large number of residents living within one building
- Residents may use defective electrical appliances
- Residents may have mental health problems or misuse drug and alcohol



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**South Yorkshire  
Diversity in the Community**