

Equality and Diversity Newsletter



April 2009

Introduction

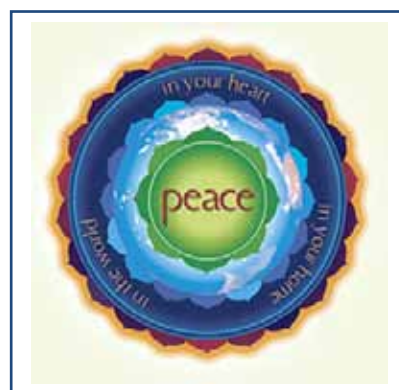
Welcome to the Learning World Equality and Diversity Newsletter. The newsletter aims to communicate with all our teams on important topics to make sure that everyone is kept fully up to date with new legislation, our policies and practices.



'Learning World is an equal opportunities training provider and welcomes applications from females and minority groups working in the industry'

Sikhism

Sikhism was founded in the 15th century in the Punjab district of India, and it is based on the teachings of Guru Nanak. Sikhism is a monotheistic religion (a belief in one god), and they believe in many cycles of rebirth. The internal religious state of an individual is very important, with an emphasis on doing good actions, in order to reunite with God. To achieve this, they remember God daily by truthful living, and place great emphasis on putting others first. The Sikh scripture is a book called the Guru Granth Sahib, which has the status of a Guru and is treated with the utmost respect.



Beliefs

Sikhs believe that the way to lead a good life is to:

- ⦿ Serve others
- ⦿ Be generous to the less fortunate
- ⦿ Treat everyone equally
- ⦿ Work hard and live honestly
- ⦿ Keep God in the heart and mind at all times

Worship

Sikhs worship on a Sunday and their place of worship is called a Gurdwara. This is a centre for communal worship, social, educational and welfare activities. Inside the Gurdwara, the Sikh Scriptures are kept covered and offerings are made of sugar, milk and fruit.

Entering the Sikh Temple (Gurdwara)

Everyone entering the Gurdwara must cover their head and shoes should be removed as a mark of respect. Worshippers are seated on the floor with their legs crossed or positioned to the side (pointing feet towards the Guru Granth Sahib or turning your back to it are both considered to be disrespectful).

After Worship

After worship blessed food (karah prashad) is shared as a sign of equality.



The Khanda symbolizes God's universal and creative power. In its center is a double edged sword, symbolizing the primal and almighty power of the creator. The 'Chakra' or the circle is a symbol of continuity. The two swords on the outside are symbols of the spiritual and political balance in the universe.

'There exists but one God, who is called the True, the Creator, free from fear and hate, immortal, not begotten, self-existent, great and compassionate.'

- from Guru Nanak's hymn

Sikh Baptisms

Both male and female Sikhs wear the five 'K' symbols as a sign of their initiation into the Sikh community.

- § **Kesh** (uncut hair. Men may tie it up and wear a turban. Some women may also wear a turban).
- § **Kangha** (a comb in the hair to keep it neat).
- § **Kara** (a steel bangle to symbolise unity with God).
- § **Kirpan** (a short dagger to symbolise the fight against injustice and to protect the weak and oppressed).
- § **Kaccha** (knee length shorts to symbolise modesty).



More cartoons by Dalbir at Sikhpark.com

The Right to Wear a Sikh Holy Turban at Work

The Health and Safety Executive's guidance on head protection informs employers that Sikhs wear turbans in accordance with their religion and in some circumstances the turban offers adequate protection against injury to the head. The Construction (Head Protection) Regulations 1989 state that 'everyone, except turban wearing Sikhs, working in the construction industry should wear suitable head protection whenever there is a risk of injury to the head from falling objects or hitting the head against something.' The Employment Act 1989 exempts a follower of the Sikh religion from any legal requirement to wear a safety helmet whilst on a construction site.

Raising Awareness of Equality and Diversity:



The Quality Team is developing a library of resources to help raise awareness of equality and diversity in the workplace. Line Managers will be able to book resources as and when required for team meetings. Some of the DVD resources available at the moment include 'Disability Rights Commission – Talk', 'Respect the Difference Value the Mix', and 'Visible and Valued'.

The Multifaith Festival Year – April 2009 to May

JEWISH

April 9

PESACH - also known by its English name of 'Passover', is a Jewish festival that celebrates the deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptians.



BUDDHIST

May 9

BUDDHA DAY - celebrates the life of the Buddha and his teachings. Celebrations begin before dawn.



SIKH

April 13

BAISKHAI - also spelled Vaisakhi, is the festival which celebrates the Sikh New Year and the founding of the Sikh community known as Khalsa.



CHRISTIAN

May 31

PENTECOST – this festival is when Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is regarded as the birthday of the Christian church.



The Government's New Plans for Achieving Equality

The Communities Secretary, Hazel Blears, has announced a wide-reaching consultation on improving opportunities for Black, Asian and minority ethnic people. The consultation will consider the challenges posed by the economic down-turn. Similar economic conditions have demonstrated that Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, as well as disadvantaged white people, are hit harder because they live in deprived areas or because of the type of job they have. Hazel Blears stated: "I don't believe there is any one 'silver bullet' to solve these problems. If we are to make further progress, especially in light of new challenges such as the downturn, we need to identify what has and hasn't worked." 24 February 2009



The Equality Bill - Update: Under its manifesto, the Government is committed to introducing the Single Equality Bill, which is due to be introduced to Parliament by late spring 2010. A spokeswoman from the Government Equalities Office has recently stated: "The Equality Bill is going ahead as planned. Fairness will not be put on the back burner when times get tough. The Equality Bill will streamline and strengthen the law, replacing nine major pieces of legislation, making it easier for people and businesses to know their rights and obligations." 23 February 2009

Quiz

(please note that the term black refers to people from all different minority ethnic communities)

1. The largest immigrant group in Britain are Pakistanis.
True False
2. In the year of its inception, which Act saw the most employment cases taken to an Employment Tribunal?
Sex Discrimination Act Disability Discrimination Act
Race Relations Act Race Relations (Amended) Act
3. Political correctness creates confusion
True False
4. In the UK, 1 in 5 people of working age have a disability.
True False
5. Sexuality and sexual orientation should be viewed as the same thing.
True False
6. Approximately 1 in 4 adults in the UK are 'functionally illiterate'
True False
7. The minimum font/type size recommended by the RNIB for a general audience is:
10 point 12 point
14 point 16 point
8. Positive action which favours black people, people with disabilities and men is unlawful
True False
9. The largest ethnic group in England is African Caribbean
True False
10. British society is, on the whole, a tolerant society
True False

Answers to the Quiz: Z Drive: Quality Improvements, Library – Equality and Diversity or send an email to fgeorge@constructionlearningworld.com for the answers

