

EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY (RELIGION OR BELIEF) REGULATIONS 2003

What does the regulation say?

The regulation applies to all aspects of employment. It makes it unlawful on the basis of religion or belief to:

- discriminate directly against anyone. That is, to treat some less favourably than others.
- discriminate indirectly against anyone. That is to apply criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages some.
- harass anyone. That is to create an environment in which some are degraded, intimidated or humiliated.

Exceptions can be made in circumstances when there is a genuine occupational requirement for the worker to be of a particular religion and belief.

The Network of Sikh Organisations UK (NSO) has established a Sikh Consultancy Service to provide guidance to employers and employees on employment issues relating to the Sikh religion. For example, the need for Sikhs to wear a turban, carry a small kirpan, and the impact of this at the workplace.

The Sikh Consultancy Service can provide seminars, written guidance or answer queries on any aspect of Sikh beliefs and practices such as dress code, diet, festivals and celebrations. The new Regulations are designed to ensure fair employment and greater community cohesion, by requiring employers to give due attention to genuine religious requirements of Britain's multi faith workforce, in a framework of equal opportunities for all.

Please contact:

Dr Kanwaljit Kaur-Singh

Email: kaursingh3@aol.com

Tel. 020 8540 4148 M. 07886571712

Further information on the implications of the new legislation for employers and Sikh employees can be found on the NSO website: www.nsouk.co.uk

The Department for Communities and Local Government is supporting the promotion of the Sikh Consultancy Service.