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The publication of this guide was part of a joined project by Faithworks, the Hindu Forum of Britain, the Muslim Council of Britain, the Network of Sikh Organisations and the United Synagogue and was funded by the Department for Trade and Industry.

We have done our best to give you the most accurate advice possible. However, the contents of this document cannot be regarded as formal legal guidance.

# foreword

Our gurdwaras and other Sikh organisations exist to promote an understanding and commitment to Sikh teachings on the oneness of God, the timeless Creator of all that exists. The ethos of Sikh organisations is centred on recognition of the complete equality of all human beings, including the full equality of women, and a total commitment to a life of service to God through service to His Creation. This in turn, requires, as our Gurus taught, every Sikh to work for personal self- improvement, while at the same time striving for social justice for all people. In the closing words of our Ardas, 'Sarbat ka bhalla' (the well-being of all). It is therefore important that the ethos of our gurdwaras and other Sikh organisations is reflective and supportive of what it means to be a Sikh.

While our religion respects the integrity and equality of all people, and respects and supports the right of freedom of worship, the path of Sikhism has its own discipline and commitment which requires a distinctive Sikh ethos in our gurdwaras and similar organisations. While Sikhs welcome the new employment legislation forbidding discrimination on religious grounds, the same legislation rightly recognises that there are certain jobs within faith-based organisations with a Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR) which can only be carried out by members of a particular faith.

The new legislation provides an excellent opportunity for Sikhs to look afresh at 'who we are' (our being or ethos). This in turn will help us in deciding which posts in gurdwaras or similar organisations have a GOR for the exclusive employment of Sikhs.

The new legislation should not be seen as a threat, but as an opportunity to look with clarity at what it means to be a Sikh in the 21st century, what makes us tick, and the nature and ethos of our organisations.

The Faithworks team and the Network of Sikh Organisations have created this pack to guide you in this important task.

**Indarjit Singh,**  
**Director Network of Sikh Organisations UK**



# introduction

The primary purpose of this pack is to help gurdwaras/Sikh organisations understand and apply the religious discrimination legislation of 2 December 2003. This is important because the new legislation makes discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief illegal.

When a gurdwara or another Sikh organisation advertises for a Sikh or chooses to employ a Sikh, this is exactly what the employer is doing – discriminating on the grounds of religion.

The legislation does however provide some flexibility to allow gurdwaras and other Sikh organisations to maintain their faith basis. In other words, discrimination is acceptable within the law in our case in favour of Sikhs, *but only where this can be justified*.

Justifying that a post needs a Sikh to carry it out requires the employer to demonstrate that there is a “*genuine occupational requirement*”, referred to as a GOR, for the post-holder to be a Sikh and that the requirement relates to the Sikh ethos of the organisation.

In other words, Sikh organisations can advertise for, recruit and employ Sikhs, but this is only lawful if the employer can demonstrate in each case the specific reason, and relate it to their Sikh ethos.

In addition we hope that the process set out in these guidelines will provide added value by helping you both to clarify and promote your Sikh distinctiveness, i.e. what makes you distinctively Sikh. This guide will help you describe the Sikh ethos of your gurdwara or Sikh organisation.

As you reflect on how your Sikh faith basis makes you as an organisation distinctive, you will begin to describe the organisation’s religious ethos. Becoming more specific about your Sikh ethos and values provides you with an opportunity to consider how these relate to your gurdwara or Sikh organisational practices and procedures.

Ensuring that your practices match your Sikh ethos – that you are who you say you are – will not only strengthen your organisational identity but will also help you to have more authenticity as a gurdwara or a Sikh organisation – an essential characteristic in this increasingly diverse world.

Finally, please note that the purpose of this pack is not to advocate which staff, how many staff or that all staff should be Sikhs. Our purpose is simply to explain the legislation and to help you as a gurdwara or a Sikh organisation to employ Sikhs, within the law, in situations where it has been identified that there is a genuine need for them.

# legislation

## The summary

The overall purpose of the new anti-discrimination legislation is to protect all employees from being discriminated against at work because of their religion or belief.

The introduction of regulations for religion or belief makes religious discrimination unlawful for the first time in the UK\*.

The regulations apply to employment – including recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training.

For all employers this means that the regulations make it unlawful on the grounds of religion or belief to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone – that is to treat them less favourably than others because of their religion or belief.
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone – that is to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular religion or belief unless it can be objectively justified i.e. where there is a legitimate aim (a real business need) and where the practice is proportionate to that aim (necessary and there is no alternative means available).
- Subject someone to harassment on the grounds of their religion or belief.
- Victimise someone because they have made a complaint or allegation or have given evidence against someone else in relation to a complaint of discrimination.
- Discriminate against someone after the working relationship has ended.

As stated previously, there is an exception within the legislation for religious employers to discriminate in order to maintain the faith basis of their organisation. The exception states that discrimination on grounds of religion or belief is only lawful if it can be demonstrated that there is a “genuine occupational requirement” (GOR) for it, which relates to the nature of the employment, to the context in which it is carried out, and to the ethos of the organisation\*\*.

\*with the exception of Northern Ireland

\*\*Because this guide is aimed at religious organisations, we refer in this document to the GOR in regulation 7 (3) which is available only for organisations with a religious ethos as opposed to the GOR in regulation 7 (2) which can be used by any organisation. For more information about the use of the GOR in regulation 7 (2), please go to <http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality/eeregs.htm>



## Summary of implications for gurdwaras or other Sikh organisations

The law therefore allows gurdwaras and other Sikh organisations to recruit only Sikhs when the following criteria are fulfilled:

- The organisation has a Sikh ethos.
- There is a “genuine occupational requirement” (GOR) for the post to be filled by a Sikh.
- The GOR relates to the nature of the employment, to the context in which it is carried out and to the Sikh ethos of the organisation.

# justifying posts for Sikhs

## Identifying which posts need Sikhs and why

The law says that if an employer wishes to advertise for, select, employ or promote only a Sikh the employer needs to be able to justify the reason. Simply preferring a Sikh is not sufficient!

This means that the employer must be able to determine the “genuine occupational requirement” (GOR) for any post to be filled by a Sikh.

The following guidance is designed to help you to identify the GORs in your organisation. There is no case law in this area yet, so there are no proven reference points.

ACAS, (Advisory, Conciliation and Advisory Services) have produced official guidance to help employers put the legislation into practice in the workplace. This can be found on [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk). Their guidance, an extract of which is provided below, specifies characteristics of a GOR but it does not tell you what is acceptable as a GOR in a gurdwara or any other Sikh organisation and what is not.

At the end of this section we have provided possible examples of functions, which could give rise to GORs in a gurdwara or any other Sikh organisation. These must be considered ONLY as a guide. They are NOT provided as standard GORs for gurdwara or other Sikh organisations. There is no official definition of GORs in gurdwara or other Sikh organisations and our examples cannot be treated as such. They are simply guides from which you can work to establish your own.

## Identifying a Genuine Occupational Requirement

The starting point is to describe the whole job, not just the tasks of the job, which only a Sikh can do. We recommend that you do this by using the template in Appendix 1 (where we have also included a sample job description for Head Granthis).

The generic template in Appendix 1 guides you to describe the job you want doing and then to identify the criteria – the skills/knowledge and experience – you are looking for in the person. To ensure that you get the right person you will need to do this exercise before you start your recruitment process.

Next identify those tasks of the job which require a Sikh to do them.

When writing up the genuine occupational requirement in the job description and person specification (see template in Appendix 1) it is essential that:

- A central function of the job must reflect the GOR.
- There are clear links between the religious purpose and ethos of the organisation, described in the organisation context section, and the job as stated in this description.
- The GOR is clearly featured in the list of the main tasks in the job description.
- The knowledge/skills/experience required to carry out the GOR and so reflect the ethos are clearly stated in the person specification.



**In determining the GOR for any job it may be helpful to be aware of the following guide notes from ACAS:**

- The employer must be able to show that having a specific religion or belief is a central requirement of the job and not just one of many relevant factors.
- When considering applying such a requirement, the employer must look at each post individually both in terms of the duties of the job and the context in which it is carried out.
- Employers should not expect to apply a blanket occupational requirement to all its posts.
- Employers should consider whether there are alternatives to applying an occupational requirement. For instance, if only a small part of the job needs someone from that religion then it may be possible to redistribute work or re-organise roles in such a way as to avoid applying a religious requirement to a particular post.
- Employers should be clear about the link between the requirements of the job and the need to maintain the organisation's ethos.
- Employers can reasonably expect their staff to keep to the organisational values and culture and should bear in mind that people may be able to maintain those values and culture without actually belonging to the particular religion or belief.
- Employers should be clear about the link between the requirements of the job and the need to maintain the organisation's ethos as, in the event of an Employment Tribunal claim on the grounds of religion or belief, the burden of proof will be on the employer to show the GOR.

ACAS guidelines are available on [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

**In summary a GOR is**

- Central to the job
- Reflected in the duties of the job or the context in which it is carried out
- Linked to the personal requirements for the job
- Related to the ethos of the organisation
- Individual to each job – cannot be applied as a blanket exception

## justifying posts for Sikhs

### **Possible examples of posts that give rise to Genuine Occupational Requirements in a gurdwara or other Sikh organisations**

The following are possible examples of job functions, which may give rise to GORs for posts to be filled by Sikhs. The purpose of this list is to help you think through which posts in your gurdwaras or Sikh organisations carry GORs. No two jobs are the same but as a general principle remember that to give rise to a GOR a job function must always help the organisation achieve its Sikh religious mission and purpose and to be Sikh in its ethos.

Please note that this is not a comprehensive list, nor is it, because there is no case law in this area yet, a tried and tested list. The validity of any GOR depends entirely on the extent to which you can demonstrate, through the clarity of your Sikh purpose and expression of your ethos, the genuine requirement for the post to be held by a Sikh.

- Leading the religious purpose of the organisation, setting the vision and strategy, understanding and articulating the religious beliefs of the organisation
- Leading the development of or delivering the main religious activity/ies of the organisation
- Representing the religious purpose of the organisation, speaking, preaching, advocating on behalf of the organisation
- Being the face-to-face contact with the public, delivering the religious purpose of the organisation to those whom the organisation serves
- Being the “voice” of the organisation, representing the organisation to enquirers, being the point of contact for the organisation
- Being responsible inside the organisation for representing, promoting, maintaining and ensuring the transference of the religious ethos of the organisation
- Leading or supporting the spiritual life of the organisation, conducting acts of worship, prayer times, retreats, responsible for spiritual development





It is important to remember that (as the ACAS guide makes clear) employers should consider whether there are alternatives to applying an occupational requirement. For instance, if only a small part of the job requires a Sikh then it may be possible to redistribute work or re-organise roles in such a way as to avoid applying a religious requirement to a particular post.

For example, some jobs can further the general purpose and functions of a Sikh organisation without being specifically about the Sikh purpose, activity, voice and knowledge of an organisation. A non-Sikh Maths teacher could represent a Sikh school in a meeting about the development of the Maths curriculum at the Local Education Authority meeting. However, there may be a need for a Sikh to represent the school at a conference to discuss the development of the special religious ethos and spiritual atmosphere which the school is seeking to establish.

In Appendix 2 we have given the example of how the post of Granthi in a gurdwara can give rise to a GOR.

# equal opportunities issues

## **Equal opportunities issues for Sikh employers**

- With the introduction of the new equality and diversity legislation, religious discrimination, whilst unlawful for most employers, is lawful for religious employers though only where they can justify the genuine requirement for it.
- Therefore, as Sikh employers, while we subscribe to equal opportunities, we cannot say in our equal opportunities policy that we do not discriminate on any grounds. That's because we do discriminate, where appropriate and within the law, on the grounds of religion.
- We therefore need to make a statement in our Equal Opportunities policy that, in the light of our Sikh ethos and purpose, we reserve the right to recruit Sikhs where there is a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) to do so.
- It would then be helpful to indicate which posts this applies to, either by attaching a list or referring to one held elsewhere, although it will be essential that this is kept under review.

There is a sample Equal Opportunities policy in Appendix 3



# Sikh ethos

## The importance of defining your ethos

- The regulations say that the GOR for any job should relate to the ethos of the gurdwara or Sikh organisation.
- Identifying your organisational ethos is vital because it will be impossible to claim a GOR unless you can demonstrate that your organisation has a Sikh ethos.
- If the need for a Sikh in a certain post has nothing to do with the organisation itself being Sikh, then the need for a Sikh cannot be valid.
- In other words, the law says that if the organisation does not practice a Sikh ethos, then the need for a Sikh in any post cannot exist.
- Clarifying the distinctive ethos helps to make sure that **what** you do in the community as Sikhs is rooted in **who** you are as Sikhs.

## The definition of ethos

- Ethos can be defined as the spirit or shared motivation of a people or an organisation. It's why people do what they do. In other words, the unique flavour or essence of an organisation – what makes it tick. It is its distinctiveness that makes it different from another organisation and gives it its identity. It is the environment within which the organisation's mission and activity are formed and delivered.

The key principle is this - who I am speaks more loudly than what I say. In fact, who I am speaks so loudly that if it is not in harmony with what I say my words will be ignored, misunderstood, distorted or even obliterated. Authentic and distinctive faith is about connecting our *being* with our *doing*.

So we need to think about who we are, what our ethos and values are as a Sikh organisation, before we set about doing what we want to do. If we don't spend time thinking about the identity of our organisation there is a danger that we will build it into something which does not reflect the Sikh motivation which has got us this far.

# Sikh ethos

## Identifying your Sikh ethos

### Step 1

When writing an ethos statement for your gurdwara/Sikh organisation it is important to make it clear that the ethos of the gurdwara/Sikh organisation flows from working together in conformity with the teachings of 10 Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib.

The first step in identifying your ethos is therefore to look at the faith basis of the organisation. Below we have summarised some of the teachings that lie at the heart of the Sikh religion and form the basis of the Sikh ethos and values. In your ethos and values statements you can refer to these beliefs to explain why certain aspects are important to the identity of your gurdwara or organisation.

### **Belief in one God**

Sikhs are taught that,

- 'There is but one God who is the truth, and is the creator of this universe.
- God is without fear and without enmity, is not born and does not die to be born again.
- God is beyond time and immortal. God is self illumined and is by grace revealed'.  
*(Guru Granth Sahib 1)*

Sikhs believe in one God, who is neither a male nor a female but is imageless, formless, does not take birth and never dies, is present everywhere, and is the creator of the universe.

### **Attitude to different religions**

Sikhs believe that God is not personal or exclusive to any one religion. Different religions are different paths leading to the same Reality, and no religion has a monopoly of truth. This does not mean that that all religions are the same or that they are equally relevant for all. They are different routes for people to choose from, and Sikh Gurus emphasized the right of people to choose their own path through life.

Sikhs are taught to respect other people's views and show tolerance towards those who do not agree to the Sikh point of view. Guru Nanak and the following nine Gurus practised these teachings to show their importance in life. The English meaning of the word tolerance is too weak to fully express Sikh belief in this area. For Sikhs, tolerance is a readiness to lay down one's own life for the sake of others as shown by Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, who was martyred for defending the right of others. When the Hindus were being forcibly converted into Islam by the Mughal Rulers in India, Guru Tegh Bahadur gave his life defending their right to worship in the manner of their choice.



### **Oneness of humanity - Equality**

As there is one God who has created the universe, it clearly follows that all human beings belong to one family of God. Guru Nanak in his first sermon said, 'Na koi Hindu na koi Musalman' - meaning there is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, but only human beings. Similarly in God's eyes, there are neither Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sikhs nor any other religious grouping. God is not interested in the labels but in the conduct of people. Guru writes:

'From the divine light the whole creation sprang.  
Why then should we divide human beings into high or low.  
God the maker has moulded one mass of clay  
Into vessels of diverse shapes'

*Guru Granth Sahib 1349*

Again Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru writes,

'Recognise there is only one race and that is of all humanity'.

Our gurdwaras are open to all; anyone and everyone who wants to pray to one God can come. Regardless of social status everyone sits on the floor. There are no assigned places or reserved areas. Men and women are given equal position. Sikh women take equal part in leading services and conducting ceremonies.

### **Congregation - (The Sangat)**

Sikhs worship only one God. Anyone who believes in the Oneness of God and wants to worship can join the Sikh congregation. No one can be barred on the basis of caste, religious belief or sex. There is no priesthood in Sikhism, so any Sikh male or female who can read the Sikh scripture – Guru Granth Sahib – and is knowledgeable about Sikhism can take the service. However, as volunteers do not always have the time, the gurdwara management committees appoint staff to lead services, and conduct ceremonies and the celebration of festivals.

### **The Guru Granth Sahib - (The Sikh scriptures)**

Sikhs believe that the highest authority is God, and that his truth is revealed through the Gurus and is contained in the Guru Granth Sahib. It contains the writings of the Sikh Gurus and of followers of Hindu and Islam whose views were similar to the Gurus. They include writings of a king and poor artisans who were considered of low caste according to Hindus. Since the scriptures take the place of the living Guru, it is treated with the utmost respect and is central to the Sikh way of life, its ceremonies, festivals and code of conduct.

### **Langar**

Each gurdwara contains a langar (common kitchen). After every service the members of the congregation eat together. This is to show that people of diverse backgrounds eat together as they all belong to the one family of God. No distinction is made between rich and poor, giver and the receiver.

# Sikh ethos

## Step 2

The next step will be to write your ethos statement. In Appendix 4 there is a sample ethos statement. If you want to use this as a model, take care to ensure that you reflect on the unique characteristics of your gurdwara/Sikh organisation. Statements typically include sentences which describe:

- Shared motivation - why people are working with your organisation.
- The value base - what your gurdwara/Sikh organisation stands for e.g. equality of all human beings, caring and standing up for the rights of those who cannot look after themselves.
- Internal practice - how the motivation and Sikh value base are practised internally – the way people are treated and treat each other.
- External expression - how the motivation and Sikh value base are expressed externally – the way people are served by your gurdwara/Sikh organisation.

## Step 3

The next thing to do is to think about how to ensure that this statement of ethos happens in practice on a day-to-day basis. It is one thing to say these things about ourselves as a gurdwara/Sikh organisation; it is another altogether to live by them. This is the point about being authentic. Remember who we are speaks more loudly than what we say or do. One way to start working on this is to develop a list of values that reflect the ethos statement. In Appendix 5 there are some values, which might be helpful for you to consider as you work out what your values are. Again, these are model statements and are provided here only as a guide.

In the next section we will suggest a number of steps which will help you in the practical process of identifying your organisational ethos.



## Steps to help you in the practical process of identifying your Sikh ethos:

- **Set up a small group**

Hearing the reasons why others are involved and ensuring that their views have been considered may help in creating an ethos statement, which everyone will accept and commit to.

- **Research**

Describing the ethos is more than describing the purpose; it's about articulating the unique characteristics of the organisation, what makes it distinctive and different to other organisations. Ethos therefore is more about what the values are and what your organisation stands for than what it does.

Having said that ethos is not about purpose, nevertheless, a good starting point for this process is to refer back to the mission or purpose statements of your organisation. These may be documents like your Constitution, the Memorandum and Articles, Trust Deed - depending on how your organisation is set up.

Other documents might be the organisation's mission/vision statement and basis of faith. Despite the fact that these documents are about aims and objectives, they do carry, either implicitly or explicitly, indications about what your organisation values and stands for.

- **Survey staff**

Another technique at this stage is to ask people what motivates them to work with the gurdwara or your Sikh organisation. This process might be easier to explain and manage in a smaller, rather than larger, organisation. Hearing the reasons why people have chosen to work with your gurdwara/Sikh organisation in preference to another can be a useful reminder about its genuinely distinctive and unique characteristics.

# ethos and practice

## **Applying your Sikh ethos to your gurdwara/Sikh organisational practice**

Stating your ethos and values is a big step towards being clearer about your Sikh identity. The next step is to ensure that who you say you are as Sikhs (your distinctive identity – what you stand for and what you value) is reflected in all your actions.

This is about relating your ethos and values to your gurdwara/Sikh organisational practices. A perfectly crafted ethos and values statement is worth only the paper it is written on if it is not applied in reality. Indeed, if you use your ethos as the reason for a genuine occupational requirement, and then it is discovered that your ethos statement does not actually reflect reality, your defence for your GOR would probably not be valid.

To consider how ethos and values relate to the everyday life of your gurdwara/Sikh organisation and ensure that a religious agency is distinctive because of its particular basis of faith, this next section looks at 5 different areas of organisational practice. Apart from the last area, they constitute the organisational framework used by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

The organisational practices (as suggested below) reflect the values expressed in the organisation's ethos and values.





## Recruitment

The focus here needs to be on ensuring the continuity of your gurdwara/Sikh organisation's ethos through recruitment, selection and appointment.

A religious organisation should be distinguished by clarity and transparency about what the organisation believes and how it understands and promotes its ethos. This enables it to be fair.

The Sikh ethos should be emphasised throughout the selection procedures.

- **Sikh posts**

There needs to be a clear understanding in the organisation about those posts which carry GORs and are therefore to be filled by Sikhs. It is important that staff are kept informed about which posts these are so that any expectations about promotion/transfer into these posts are based on reality and not on out of date or wrong information.

- **Job descriptions/person specifications**

Job descriptions and specifications must reflect the need to recruit someone who can both carry out the job and maintain the Sikh ethos. The person must have skills to do the job and be equally capable of implementing the gurdwara/Sikh organisation's ethos.

- **Recruitment literature and advertising**

Copy needs to state not only the activities of the organisation but also the Sikh identity of the organisation. It needs to be clear and transparent about the Sikh ethos of the organisation; what the organisation believes and stands for; what its Sikh basis is and what this all means in terms of culture, standards and expected behaviours.

- **Selection process**

The selection process needs to recognise that getting the right person who can relate to the gurdwara/ Sikh organisation's ethos is as important as getting someone who can technically do the job; in other words, as well as matching the skills and experience of the candidate to the job description, consideration should be given to a person's relational ability.

The process should also recognise the candidates' commitment and effort to the selection process and, as part of their own learning and development, feedback should be offered to each of them.

## ethos and practice

### Relations

The focus here needs to be about building the ethos through strengthening relationships.

- **Contracts**

A contract of employment is central to the employer/employee relationship. It represents the commitment of both parties to each other and as such must be treated with care, respect and attention to detail.

- **Induction**

The process should include a focus on welcoming new people, how to ensure that they feel a sense of belonging as soon as possible, what they need to know, how to get involved etc. It should begin to hand on the distinctiveness of the gurdwara/Sikh organisation by describing its culture and ethos, the values and organisational ways and customs.

- **Communication and relational skills development**

Within the development programme for leaders and managers relational skills should be recognised and developed as equal to the skills required to drive, develop and deliver the job. For this, it would be necessary that the person employed is well versed in Punjabi and use of English would be desirable. S/he should be given opportunities to learn English in order to relate to, and explain Sikh teachings to those who have little or no knowledge of Punjabi.

- **Investment in relationships**

Investment in delivering the gurdwara/Sikh organisation's mission needs to be balanced with investment in helping teams relate to each other and to the ethos.

There also needs to be an understanding by leadership and management of the role that ethos can play in terms of setting the organisational culture.

- **Strategic planning**

In the strategic plan it is helpful to have objectives which not only develop the delivery of the mission but also help the organisation improve its Sikh ethos by focussing on its working practices.

- **Disciplinary procedures**

Within the framework of disciplinary procedures the aim needs to be both to improve understanding where relationships have failed, and performance (with the appropriate training and support), where the standard achieved is lower than required.

The procedures themselves should be in accordance with organisational values.

- **Concerns policy**

Procedures should also be made available to staff and volunteers should they wish to raise a concern. Staff/volunteers must know how to access procedures and management/trustees know how to deal with procedures in order to handle staff concerns. Again, in a style which represents the ethos.

- **External accountability**

The organisation must be accountable in its external relationships with other Sikh organisations and stakeholders e.g. to funders, donors, partner organisations. It is important to have an understanding and, where appropriate an agreement, about the nature of the relationship and expectations held by both parties.



## Development

The focus here needs to be on understanding that the development of the Sikh ethos and mission is dependent on the commitment of staff and volunteers to the organisation's ethos.

- **Learning organisation**

The organisation itself strives to be a learning organisation.

- **Learning and development policy**

A learning and development policy is a useful tool to develop people's understanding of the ethos at a personal, professional and spiritual level.

- **Budget**

Learning and development need to be planned for and generally require investment, although few resources should not limit commitment to finding creative solutions.

- **Development plan**

A development plan for each individual which embraces their personal, professional and spiritual needs signals real commitment to individuals' growth.

- **Spiritual direction**

Spiritual direction and spiritual refreshment need to be recognised as essential to the successful delivery of the gurdwara/Sikh organisation's mission.

## Reward

The focus here is on maintaining the Sikh ethos by seeing the reward policy as an expression of its values.

- **Theology**

The organisation needs to think through what it understands by reward and the different aspects of reward within a framework of a theology of reward.

- **System for evaluating complexity of jobs**

A method of job evaluation to create a rank order of jobs indicates the gurdwara/Sikh organisation's respect for the principles of fairness. This approach can help the organisation embrace the values of equal pay for work of equal value.

- **Rates of pay**

Transparency about rates of pay is critical to a felt sense of organisational fairness.

## ethos and practice

### Faith

The focus here is to enable Sikhs to experience, explore and express the shared motivation for the work. This can take a variety of different forms – joint acts of worship, personal or group prayer, individual or guided spiritual retreat/reflection etc.

- **Prayer and worship**

This aspect of working life clearly contributes significantly to the distinctive nature of it but does not exist in isolation as the only distinctive feature. Sikh distinctiveness is expressed in the ethos and the mission as well as in prayer and worship.

Anyone can join in the Sikh prayer irrespective of gender, creed or social status and eat in the langar after the prayers. Gurdwaras are open to Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike. Therefore, Sikh employees and voluntary workers need to show sensitivity and courtesy to non-Sikh visitors.

- **Expectations**

These need to be clear in recruitment literature, at induction and in staff literature about expected attendance at such gatherings/events.

- **Leadership**

It is important to clarify which staff posts are required to lead prayer and worship, give spiritual direction, preach, attend religious meetings and contribute theologically. As there is no priestly class in the Sikh religion, it should be made clear when and if volunteers are likely to take responsibility or assist in these responsibilities, which staff are required to take part in sehaj path and akhand path and be part of amrit ceremony and celebrations of festivals. These requirements should be included in the relevant job descriptions.

### Development of policies and procedures

If a gurdwara/Sikh organisation is committed to being true to its ethos and values and therefore able to promote distinctive Sikh behaviours as outlined above, there are obvious implications for leadership and management. The bottom line is the extent to which a gurdwara/Sikh organisation is prepared to invest in the development of policy and procedures to help strengthen the organisational infrastructure. The policies and procedures, which help to shape the organisation and provide a context for the practices above, are in the appendices as follows:

- Equal opportunities policy – Appendix 2
- Recruitment policy - Appendix 6
- Terms and conditions of employment – Appendix 7
- Induction and Review – Appendix 8

The Network of Sikh Organisations can help you with the implementation of these and other areas of policy. Please contact us on [sikhmessenger@aol.com](mailto:sikhmessenger@aol.com) or call 020 8540 4148.



# appendix 1:

# job description template

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**Name of Organisation**

**Job Title**

**Responsible to**

**Line Manager's job title**

**Job purpose**

Two sentence summary of the job (including link to ethos where there is GOR)

**Organisation context**

2 – 4 paragraphs providing information about the organisation or department within which the post is based, and some information about the specific area of work (linking to the ethos where there is a GOR).

Ideally attach an organisation structure chart.

**Job tasks**

Description of the main duties and responsibilities, which can be grouped together under headings if this is useful. Ideally, there will be between ten to fifteen duties and responsibilities in most jobs. One or more of these will demonstrate why the job needs a person of a particular faith to fill this post (if this is the case).

**Person specification/key competencies**

8 - 12 essential skill requirements for the job, which reflect the demands of the job as shown through the duties and responsibilities including:

**Knowledge**

Knowledge required, whether gained through education, training or experience.

**Experience**

Specific experience required for the job, whether gained through life or work or volunteering.

**Skills/abilities**

Personal qualities, transferable skills and abilities required for the job. This section will require some of the values, where appropriate, described in the ethos and values statement.

Religious commitment (where there is a GOR).

**Job description agreed on (date)**

**by:**

Post-holder's signature

Line Manager's signature

Job Title

Job Title

## appendix 2:

# possible examples of posts giving rise to a GOR

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### **Post of Granthi**

A gurdwara wishes to recruit a Granthi to work in the gurdwara and with the Sikh community.

The main purpose of the role is to lead and support the spiritual life of the community, to read, interpret and explain the Guru Granth Sahib and conduct acts of worship and prayer times.

### **Additional duties:**

Perform all ceremonies such as marriage, naming and death. Other ceremonies as required by the members of the community, such as amrit chhakna, celebrations of birthdays, marriage and death anniversaries. Take part in Sikh festivals.

Teach Punjabi, kirtan, Sikh history and basic principles of Sikh religion as written in the Guru Granth Sahib and developed by the 10th Guru Gobind Singh.

See to the spiritual needs of the community members and visit homes to conduct services if and when required. The granthi is to work in the gurdwara all seven days a week ensuring prayers are conducted according to the times defined by the management committee.

A granthi is to ensure that all prayers, ceremonies are conducted according to Sikh teachings and any non-Sikh practises are forbidden.

The granthi needs to be fluent in Punjabi so that s/he can speak, read, and write Punjabi fluently and understand Punjabi culture such as food habits, expectations of elderly of respect from young people and an extended family works among Sikhs.

The GOR for the job therefore is the need to relate to Sikh faith, in a variety of contexts both in and outside the gurdwara.

Other people who work in the gurdwaras are: Ragis, Sewadars, Youth Worker, Women's Support Worker, Senior Citizens' Co-ordinator, Gurdwara Administrator, Langar supervisor, Teachers for Punjabi, Sikh religion and Sikh history. To find out whether there is a GOR in place to recruit a Sikh in any of these posts, the employer needs to consider what the actual purpose of the job is and whether this requires a Sikh to carry out the job.



## appendix 3:

# equal opportunities

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### **Equality of opportunity**

The concept of Equal Opportunities is about ensuring that all personnel decisions concerning pay, recruitment, promotion and access to training and development are based solely on an individual's ability to do their job. Equal Opportunities is about using fair procedures to enable you to make fair decisions, creating an environment in which you can treat people equally regardless of who they are, their background or lifestyle.

### **Diversity**

Diversity, as a concept, is more wide reaching. It embraces the principle that people are different and their differences should be valued and respected. It recognises that people from different backgrounds bring fresh ideas and a different approach which can make the way we work and learn more creative and innovative.

### **Equal opportunities policy and religious discrimination**

With the introduction of this legislation, discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, whilst unlawful for most employers, is lawful for religious employers though only where they can justify the genuine reason for it.

Therefore, as gurdwara/Sikh organisation employers, while we subscribe to equal opportunities, we cannot say in our equal opportunities policy that we do not discriminate on any grounds - we do discriminate lawfully on the grounds of religion.

Therefore it is important that we make a statement in our Equal Opportunities policy that, in the light of our Sikh ethos and purpose, we reserve the right to recruit Sikhs where there is a genuine occupational reason to do so.

It would then be helpful to indicate which posts this applies to, either by attaching a list or referring to one held elsewhere, and ensuring that it is kept under regular review.

### **Equal opportunities and sexual orientation**

At the same time as the introduction of the religious discrimination legislation (2 December 2003), regulations to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation within employment practices also became law.

## appendix 3:

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### Exceptions

There are two exceptions within the Sexual Orientation Regulations that allow employers to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. For both exceptions there has to be a genuine occupational reason that relates to the requirements of the job for a post-holder to be of a particular sexual orientation.

The first exception is what is known as a "general exception". This exception can be used if the context and nature of the job need the post-holder to be of a certain orientation e.g. for counselling on sexuality.

There is a second specific exception which can only be applied to those posts which are for the purposes of organised religion (e.g. granthis, ragis, langri, kathakars).

For this second exception to be valid the employer must be able to demonstrate that a GOR is necessary either:

- To comply with doctrine; or
- To avoid conflicting with the strongly held religious convictions of a significant number of followers.

#### **Can this exception be applied to all gurdwara/Sikh organisations' staff?**

As stated above, this exception relates to those posts whose primary purpose is for organised religion. This is a tightly drawn exception which will allow a GOR to be applied to those posts which lead the purposes of organised religion e.g. ministers, leaders and priests. All of this legislation is as yet untested in court and, accordingly, the extent to which this exception can be applied lawfully to other leadership posts is also unproven. However, in light of the wording of the regulations, wider application of the exception would depend on the extent to which it can be demonstrated that any other role has, as its primary purpose, organised religion.

#### **Can this exception be applied to Sikh organisations?**

This exception applies where the employment is for the primary purpose of organised religion. It is generally understood that "organised religion" does not mean "religious organisations" since the primary purpose of religious organisations may not be to represent or lead organised religion. However, once again, as this legislation has not yet been tested by case law, the answer to this particular question can, at this stage, only be determined by considering the extent to which the post in question is for the purposes of leading or representing organised religion.





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### **What if neither of these exceptions apply to your situation?**

Beyond the exceptions described above, the law is clear – it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation.

If your organisation is committed to upholding the sanctity of sex as being part of marriage, The Network of Sikh Organisations would advise you to take the following steps:

- Make this commitment clear in your organisation’s ethos statement
- Ensure that this value is included in your organisation’s value statements and in standards that determine expected behaviours of staff
- Make sure that your staff know the standards expected of them
- Make sure that any action taken against staff in relation to this standard is applied consistently to all staff

Please note that this approach does not exempt you from the legislation.

The law does not allow any employer to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation unless there is a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) to do so.

Clarity about your organisational values simply ensures that existing staff and potential recruits know where your organisation stands in relation to this issue so that a process of self-selection can take place if appropriate.

### **Creating an Equal Opportunities policy**

In order to create a comprehensive Equal Opportunities Policy it is necessary to agree a statement first.

## appendix 3:

### Model Equal Opportunities Statement

\*[ ] is a Sikh organisation committed to social justice and actively opposed to discrimination in society.

[ ] seeks to provide services on a fair and equitable basis, taking into account only the needs of people referred. No person requiring services from [ ] will be treated less favourably than any other person on any grounds.

As an employer [ ] aims to ensure that no job applicant or staff member receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, age or sexual orientation, except where the job in question requires a commitment to Sikh teachings on the sanctity of marriage.\*\*

Entry to employment and promotion or change of post is determined by personal merit and ability relevant to the purposes of [ ].

[ ] aims to ensure that people with disabilities are given equal opportunity to enter employment. In doing so, it will fully consider reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises to ensure that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability. In addition, when staff members become disabled in the course of their employment, every effort will be made through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment to enable them to remain in the employment of [ ].

[ ] is a Sikh organisation committed to building the tenets of Sikhism. Accordingly, as a Sikh organisation, there are posts which can only be filled by Sikhs. They are noted below and kept under regular review. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried and their link to the ethos of the organisation give rise to a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the post-holders to be Sikhs. All staff in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear, personal commitment to the Sikh faith.

It is the intention of [ ] that no individual or organisation connected with its activities shall hinder the positive implementation of this policy. Any form of discrimination, other than where legally allowed within the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, is unacceptable to [ ].

Any employee may use the grievance procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct. No individual will be penalised for raising such a grievance unless it is proved to be untrue and made in bad faith. Any complaints will be fully investigated. Any discrimination or harassment proven to have taken place will be regarded as misconduct for the purposes of disciplinary procedures.

#### Examples of posts that are to be filled by Sikhs:

Granthi, langri, Ragi, teachers of Sikh history and religion and in some cases administration staff, youth leaders and workers for elderly and women's groups.

\*name of the organisation

\*\* see notes in sexual orientation paragraphs



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### **Process for implementing the policy**

Your Equal Opportunities Policy should be backed up by an agreed process of implementation as follows:

- The designation of responsibility for the oversight of the policy
- The communication of the policy to make it known and understood; the provision of training for all
- The implementation of procedures to ensure that discrimination, however slight, does not occur
- The implementation of a procedure for handling complaints of discrimination, including harassment, and ensuring that people are aware of it, how it works and how to use it
- The collation of statistics and analysis of them in order to monitor the effectiveness of the policy and to determine the nature of any corrective action
- The use of all the above as part of an ongoing personnel audit

### **Examples of how to apply equal opportunities to recruitment and promotion procedures**

- Job descriptions and person specifications for each post should be drawn up and reviewed to eliminate references to non-essential experience or qualifications which might directly or indirectly discriminate against some candidates.
- Job advertisements should be displayed and promoted internally and, where appropriate, externally and be visible to all those who work in the organisation. They could also be placed in the press.
- The premises used for interview should be easily accessible for disabled candidates.
- Questions about the candidate's personal/family circumstances should not be asked.
- The timing of interviews should be flexible to facilitate family commitments.
- Interviewers should treat each candidate equally and interview them on the basis of the person specification.
- Selection should be conducted solely on the basis of the candidate's relative merits, abilities and qualifications.
- The gender, disability, status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national background of the candidates should be monitored by including a detachable questionnaire with the application form.
- Although it is not currently illegal to discriminate against candidates on the basis of their age, it is good practice not to do so, especially as 20% UK employees are over the age of 50. Legislation outlawing discrimination on grounds of age is expected to come into force in October 2006.

## appendix 4:

# sample ethos statement

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The ...Gurdwara/ .....organisation is a place where people can develop an understanding and appreciation of the thrust of Sikh teachings as required by the Guru Granth Sahib and the Sikh Rehat Maryada on: equality of all human beings, including gender equality; respect for other religions, balanced living that recognises spiritual dimension in life; service to others and the need to stand up for the right of others. The organisers and officers maintain their own Sikh identity and aim to encourage others to do so.

Our principles and practices are derived from our faith in the ten Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib. We advocate that all members should live a Sikh life by taking amrit and keeping the 5 Ks. These symbols link us to the Sikh principles of belief in one God, service of humanity, treating everyone equal, tolerance for people of other religions and to be prepared to support other's right to worship in the manner of their choice. We have the example of Guru Tegh Bahadur who was martyred for defending the right of Hindus to worship in the manner of their choice.

Our..... gurdwara/Sikh organisation is committed to upholding the sanctity of sex as being part of marriage. We are inspired by the Sikh Gurus' message that there is but one God who has created all the human beings and the whole of humanity is equal. Therefore we welcome all people of any faith, colour, caste, or sex to join in the worship of one God and eat in the langar as one big family of God.



## appendix 5:

# sample value statement

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A Sikh is any person who believes in one God, the Ten Gurus, and the Guru Granth Sahib. S/he must believe in the necessity and importance of 'amrit' started by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru and have no other religion. Sikhism is concerned with a person's life as an individual and with the corporate life as a member of the Sikh Community.

### **Individual life**

Sikhs are to remember the three golden rules. They are:

- Nam Japna- to remember God;
- Kirat karni- to earn one's living by honest means and hard work;
- Vand Chhakna- to share with others who are less fortunate.

### **Nam Japna**

Nam Japna is meditation on the qualities of God as described in the Guru Granth Sahib. Sikhs are to read appropriate scriptures in the morning, evening and late evening before going to bed. Reading of these is not a mechanical repetition of saying the hymns (shabads), it is also necessary to understand the meaning, and then to act upon what they teach. Sikhism teaches that prayer should go side by side with working life. Sikhs, to live a good life, must also constantly work to improve society. As Guru Nanak taught, 'There can be no worship without performing good deeds'.

We believe that it is the responsibility of each of us to move from manmukh (self-orientated) to gurmukh (God-orientated) living, both for ourselves as individuals and as a society. As we grow and change, not only are we transformed but also we influence the world around us. We believe that everyone is a learner and should be encouraged, supported and challenged to become what he or she can be. Learning who we are in God is as important as learning how to do the job.

### **Kirat Karni**

Kirat Karni is to work hard to earn one's own living. A Sikh is to lead the life of a family person, with all the responsibilities it entails, and while earning the daily living should meditate on God's name for personal uplift. It is in relation with others that God is found. Sikhs should work hard to earn a living by honest means to pay for basic needs such as food, clothing and housing. Sikhs must not beg or be parasites or exploit others to become rich.

### **Vand Chhakna-Sewa**

The third golden rule, Vand Chhakna, is to share one's earnings and serve others. The story of Duni Chand is a good illustration of this rule. The other aspect of vand chhakna is 'sewa', meaning serving others. Sewa is to help everyone whatever their colour, creed or gender. Sewa may mean giving money, time, or using one's expertise.

## appendix 5:

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Sikhs are to serve with **tan** (doing physical work), **man** (using the mind/intelligence) and **dhan** (with money). The Gurus taught that a Sikh should give **daswandh**, which means giving one tenth of one's earnings for charitable work. Individuals decide how much they are going to give for charity, using the daswandh principle as a guide. This money may be used for such things as providing **langar** (the community dining hall) in the gurdwaras, building schools, hospitals, orphanages or helping victims of natural or man-made disasters. Sewa often involves doing jobs in the langar, which is considered the training ground for learning to serve. Even very young children are encouraged to serve there.

Sikhs should serve others without any expectation of reward, honour or position. Sewa helps to eliminate haumai (ego) and progress on the spiritual path. Rich or poor Sikhs alike learn to do 'lowly' jobs when they go to the gurdwara. On entering a gurdwara, one can see Sikhs cleaning the shoes of the visitors, fanning the congregation in the intense heat of India, cleaning dishes, cooking food, scrubbing floors or engaged in maintenance work.

### **Corporate Life**

Our motivation and our actions are rooted in our faith in the 10 Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib. We advocate that all members should live a Sikh life by taking amrit and keeping the 5 Ks, which symbolises our dedication to service to society. Sikhism recognises that effective service is best done by collective or organised effort. Every Sikh is required to be an active member of Panth (Sikh Community). S/he should take amrit (Sikh initiation) and retain the five K's.

### **Equality**

Guru Gobind Singh's teachings that 'recognise the oneness of human race' encapsulate our attitude to equality. We stand for respect and freedom for everyone and tolerance and understanding between people of different opinions. The work of the gurdwaras/Sikh organisations mirrors these values in emphasising equality of all people, social justice and equality of opportunity.

### **Sewa - serving others**

On a corporate level the principle of sewa means that we believe in working for the common good, where appropriate, through partnership with other Sikh organisations, gurdwaras, other faiths and inter-faith organisations and voluntary and statutory agencies. In the spirit of Guru Tegh Bahadur who gave his life upholding the rights of others, we believe that people of different opinions and different religious beliefs can live together in peace and in working together we want to endeavour at all times to trust one another, being patient and forbearing. We should work at paying attention to the way we speak to one another, attempting to listen well, even when it is uncomfortable to do so, being able to confront difficulties carefully and with compassion.



## appendix 6:

# sample recruitment policy

### Recruitment policy

A recruitment policy statement outlines your organisation's approach to recruitment. Below is a sample.

The recruitment of people into [\* ] at all levels is a vital activity. It is the first step in the process whereby its principle aims of ..... can be achieved.

The standards of recruitment practice and the quality of people recruited have a major influence on the image and direction of [ ] and its capacity to deliver its stated objectives.

The primary aim when recruiting staff is to ensure that the best person is selected for the post. The selection process for each post in [ ] is carried out in accordance with:

- The purpose and faith basis of [ ]
- Procedures which are efficient, effective and fair and which embody those aspects of legislation which have implications for recruitment
- [ ] Equal Opportunities Policy

It is recognised by [ ] that all people concerned with the recruitment process must have a clear understanding of the above.

As an employer [ ] is committed to the spirit and intention of equal opportunities and aims to ensure that no job application is discriminated against on the grounds of sex, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, or age.\*\*

[ ] is a Sikh organisation committed to the tenets of Sikhism. Accordingly, as a Sikh organisation, there are posts which can only be filled by Sikhs. They are noted below and kept under regular review. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried and their link to the ethos of the organisation give rise to a genuine occupational requirement for the post-holders to be Sikhs. All staff in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear, personal commitment to the Sikh faith.

### Examples of posts that are to be filled by Sikhs:

Granthi, langri, Ragi and in some cases administration staff, youth leaders, workers for elderly and women's groups.

\*name of organisation

\*\* see Equal Opportunities – appendix 2 – paragraphs on sexual orientation

## appendix 6:

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### **Recruitment procedures**

Your recruitment process will be made up of numerous steps:

#### **Job description**

The place to start for all vacancies is with the job description. Even if it has already been written for a previous vacancy, it is always helpful to take time to review it.

The job description is the basis for the rest of the following process.

If your job description is not accurate, it is likely that your selection will be flawed.

The job description should define:

- The main purpose of the job
- The role of the job-holder
- The main tasks to be carried out
- The areas and level of responsibility
- The context in which the job is carried out

If the job requires someone with a particular faith it will be important to clarify the genuine occupational requirement (GOR) and the expectations – e.g. responsibility to lead worship/prayers, to preach, advocate on behalf of the organisation etc (see Appendix 2).

#### **Person specification**

This is an assessment of the knowledge, skills and aptitude required to carry out the job description satisfactorily. It describes the requirements of the job in relation to the individual. Broadly speaking there are two parts to this process:

- The technical ability for the job i.e. the qualifications, knowledge and experience required for the post
- The personal qualities required of the post-holder i.e. aptitude, religious commitment

It's important that both the technical abilities and the personal qualities included in the person specification relate precisely to the needs of the job. If this is not the case, then an employer may limit the number of people who will apply for the job and also, indirectly and unfairly, discriminate against some candidates.

#### **Pay and benefits**

Before it is possible to advertise, the question of pay should be considered (see Contracts of Employment, Appendix 7).





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### **Application forms**

Using application forms is preferable to asking for letters of application, CVs or simply relying on questions at interviews. It facilitates easier comparison, like with like, and therefore helps in the initial sift of candidates. It also provides a basis for the interview and records the candidate's details. Unlike secular organisations the application form for religious organisations will include a request for information about religious commitment e.g. place of worship attended, nature of involvement etc. In order to avoid misunderstanding it is helpful to include a note for all candidates explaining why this information is requested i.e. if this job requires someone with a particular faith it will be important that the relevant details are provided. If the job does not require someone with a particular faith, it will be important to explain that this information is not required and that non-completion of this box will not prejudice the application.

### **Advertisement**

The aim of any job advertisement is to produce a number of applicants who are able to do the job, whilst at the same time minimising the number of unsuitable applicants. If you decide not to advertise, you are likely to limit your opportunity for finding the best candidate. The advertisement should include:

- The name of the project
- Brief information about the project
- Job title and information about the key tasks, level of responsibility and possible development
- Essential requirements of the job, including whether the job requires a Sikh. There needs to be a strong link here to the religious ethos of the organisation
- Hours of work
- Salary (and other terms and conditions where appropriate)
- Closing date for applications together with the proposed interview date, if known
- Name and address to apply to

If you have not already done so, you need to decide whether you are going to recruit from within your organisation/project or whether you will consider external applicants. (If you are using statutory funds you are likely to be required to advertise externally as well as internally.)

### **Recruitment packs**

Prepare a pack of material that you wish to forward to prospective candidates. This should include the application form, job description and person specification, plus any other relevant information about the project, including its religious purpose together with your gurdwara/Sikh organisational ethos and values statement.

## appendix 6:

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### Shortlisting

Shortlisting is the first stage in a selection process. However, it is also true to say that effective advertising should help people to self select. The key point about shortlisting is that the process is purely about assessing the candidate according to the information available on the application form.

Ideally a minimum of two members of your selection/interview panel should be involved in shortlisting. Together they should agree which criteria they will use for the shortlisting process and compare results after each has undertaken this process separately. The results should be recorded.

### Selection

Depending on the nature of the vacancy, it may be appropriate to use different assessment techniques, in addition to an interview, at the final stage of selection. For some jobs part of the selection criteria may include competent use of machinery (e.g. catering equipment), the ability to draft a letter, use a balance sheet, give a presentation etc. In these situations it is helpful to design a simple exercise to test ability. In other jobs the criteria may include the ability to express oneself clearly to others or to work well in group situations. The candidates could, for instance, be asked to take part in a group discussion exercise with selectors acting as observers.

### Interviews

In spite of the limitations of interviewing, it is still the main method by which selection decisions are made. Well-prepared interviews and interviewers can provide essential evidence for good selection.

### Interview Best Practice

- Avoid questions which require only a 'yes' or 'no' answer
- Ask only one question at a time. Rephrase bad questions if the candidate struggles to answer
- Avoid long questions, or those that need a long preliminary explanation
- The best questions are: When? Which? Who? Where? and Why?
- Good questions lead from past answers. When you get a lead follow it by asking subsidiary questions
- Give your full attention to the candidate and make it obvious you are doing so – they need some form of feedback
- Listen to the candidate. Do not do all the talking. The ratio should be in favour of the candidate
- Whilst you want your questions answered, in order to collect as much evidence as possible, don't be surprised if you receive unexpected answers. You'll make the candidate nervous if you suggest that this is not the answer you expected. Try suggesting that there may be an alternative response if you think that the candidate has misunderstood the question
- Never argue or give advice – give information when this is required
- Pay attention to what the candidate wants to say; does not want to say; cannot help saying



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### **Getting a match**

Whatever method of selection you use, one of the key considerations within the process, apart from finding evidence that the person meets your criteria, is to establish that there is a match between the candidate and your organisation. To ensure that you do this, the aptitudes and skills, required to reflect your organisational ethos, need to be expressed in the person specification for the job.

### **Informing candidates of the outcome of the interview**

All candidates should be informed as soon as possible after your decision has been made. Be prepared to debrief the unsuccessful candidates. Given the time and effort which most people put into an application it is good practice to offer to explain why an application was not successful. This will require that you keep a record of the selection process which you have to hand. Do not attempt to do this without providing evidence of the reason for de-selection.

### **Conditional offer**

Any offer made to the successful candidate should be subject to satisfactory references and where appropriate, a satisfactory medical examination/questionnaire. A statement of terms and conditions of employment, detailing salary and job title should be enclosed.

### **References**

No offer of employment should ever be confirmed before satisfactory references and other checks, as appropriate, have been received:

- Wherever possible written references, either from the previous employer or from current voluntary work, should be obtained
- References should be checked for factual information e.g. length of service
- If the post applied for involves working with children or young people, the reference request form should always ask for comments on suitability for this type of work

### **Checks to verify suitability for work with children and young people**

Employers have a statutory duty to carry out certain checks in this area.

### **Medical checks**

If the job involves physical fitness (e.g. lifting, travel) it is very important to check out the candidate's fitness to do the job before he/she takes it up and suffers illness/absence. To do this you need to tell the candidate that this will be a condition of the job offer and you need to set up the process with a local GP. This may incur a charge. It will also require you to provide the GP with a job description.

## appendix 7:

# terms and conditions

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### **Terms and conditions of employment**

#### **Who should have a written statement of Terms and Conditions of employment?**

All employees whose employment lasts for one month or more are entitled to receive a written statement detailing their terms and conditions of employment. This forms the basis of the employment relationship. This is often a difficult area for religious organisations where there is an unwritten but nebulous assumption that because we all want to support one another it will therefore not be a problem to accommodate each other's needs. However, because employment is such a classic area for misunderstanding proper management is essential. Writing down the terms is a way to minimise disagreements later.

#### **What information should be in the written statement?**

It must cover:

- The names of the employer and the employee
- The date when the employment (and, where previous employment counts as previous employment, the date when the period of continuous employment) began
- Remuneration and the intervals at which it is to be paid
- Hours of work
- Holiday entitlement
- Entitlement to sick leave, including any entitlement to sick pay
- Pensions and pension schemes
- The entitlement of employer and employee to notice of termination
- Job title or a brief job description
- Where it is not permanent, the period for which the employment is expected to continue or, if it is for a fixed term, the date when it is to end
- Either the place of work or, if the employee is required or allowed to work in more than one location, an indication of this and of the employer's address.
- If there are no particulars to be given for one of the items required to be covered in the statement (for example, where there is no pension entitlement), this should be indicated.



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The written statement of employment should also include the employer's disciplinary and grievance procedures. Please note that employers are now required to follow minimum statutory disciplinary and grievance procedures. The written statement should also include details stating whether or not a pensions contracting-out certificate is in force for the employment in question.

### **When must the contract of employment be given?**

It is preferable if the employment contract can be given at the time of confirming employment after the selection. This should be conditional on receiving acceptable references and checks. However, in law, all the required terms must be given within two months of the date when the employee's employment began.

### **What to pay?**

By comparing the position offered with other similar jobs or considering Local Authority rates you can arrive at the rate of pay. Doing this will give you a 'feel' for the rate of pay and guide you in your decision making. However, it is not a precise science and, if you have several jobs to pay, it is helpful to have a method of evaluating the size and complexity of different jobs in relation to one another. Job evaluation schemes provide you as an employer with a tool to enable you to measure the value of each job in relation to others and then link them, by using a grading system, to a salary scale.

The overall package you offer can be enhanced by benefits including provisions like holiday entitlement, occupational sick pay and a contribution to a pension. Remember that recent legislation requires employers to give employees access to a stakeholder pension and paid holidays. Other benefits can also include flexible working arrangements – e.g. working from home, flexi hours, term-time contracts and opportunities for training or study leave. Take care to document these arrangements.

Aim at an annual pay review. This is important to keep up with inflation, not just from the employees' point of view, essential though this is, but also from the employer's point of view. Whenever you fail to do this, it makes the increase in future years much harder to bear as well as making you less attractive as an employer.

Finally, remember that the adult rate of the minimum wage (for workers aged 22 and over) should increase from its present hourly rate of £4.85 to £5.05 in October 2005, and to £5.35 in October 2006. More information is available from [www.dti.gov.uk/er/nmw](http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/nmw).

### **Pay Details**

It is necessary to provide employees with a written pay statement each time salary is paid. This must show the gross amount payable, all amounts deducted (tax, national insurance, etc.) and the net amount payable.

Make sure payment is made on time each month.

## appendix 8:

# induction and reviews

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The benefits of a process of induction are self-explanatory. It helps the new person to settle in quickly, to know where they fit, to whom they relate, to feel valued and to operate effectively as part of the team. However, because resources are always limited and the pressures are great, it's the less tangible things like induction that tend to get played down or completely overlooked. A compromised or non-existent induction programme is bound to affect how an employee feels about his/her work and colleagues, which in turn can easily affect his/her relationship with your clients/users and may eventually even influence whether they stay or not.

### **Induction tips**

- Make arrangements for the new person before the job starts – desk, phone etc
- On the first day or so go through the job description – explain how it fits in with the rest of the work and responsibilities of other team members
- Introduce the new person to other staff and volunteers – inform others in advance when the new person is starting
- Explain the staff/volunteer relationship with the management committee
- Go through the terms and conditions of employment again – check that all the pay (NI/bank) details have been forwarded to the right place. Deal with any queries at the beginning
- Explain where things are, ordering processes etc
- Explain the reporting process – who is in charge
- Explain any rules, particularly health and safety procedures. Location of first aid facilities, etc
- Refer to any rotas – who does them – what are the expectations of the new person?



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## **Work and Personal Development Review**

When people take up the kind of work you have to offer them it represents a serious personal commitment. For them it's a way to work out their faith in their lives. It forms part of their spiritual journey and is therefore an intensely personal matter.

The way in which you, as an employer, respect this level of commitment is all important. There are a number of positive ways in which you can achieve this. One way is to develop a set of agreed objectives for your employee and then to review them on a regular (annual or bi-annual) basis. This exercise needs to take place between the member of staff and their line manager (i.e. the person responsible for them). You can also enhance this process by offering the employee an opportunity to identify and work on a series of personal development goals, which are then reviewed in the same way. In this way their work can become not only a tool to develop the project, but also themselves.

The ACAS booklet *Employee Appraisal* provides guidelines for setting up this system.

## **Resources and contacts**

DTI Publications Orderline  
Tel 0870 1502 500  
Email [dtipubs@eclogistics.co.uk](mailto:dtipubs@eclogistics.co.uk)

ACAS Reader Ltd.  
PO Box 16  
Earl Shilton  
Leicester  
LE9 8ZZ  
Tel 01455 852225  
Website [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

CRB  
PO Box 91,  
Liverpool  
L69 2UH  
CRB info line 0870 90 90 811  
Website [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)

See also Appendix 10 for services offered by The Network of Sikh Organisations

## appendix 9:

# job description head granthi

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### Job Description

<b>Job Title</b>	Head Granthi
<b>Responsible to</b>	Gurdwara Management Committee
<b>Line manager</b>	Chair of Personnel Committee

### Job Purpose

- To ensure all granthis carry out the duties specified in their job descriptions and to assist in their personal development.
- Read interpret and explain the Guru Granth Sahib
- Ensure that all services in the gurdwara are conducted according to the Sikh Rehat Maryada (Code of Conduct)
- Perform all ceremonies such as naming, marriage, and death. Other ceremonies as required by the members of the congregation, such as celebrations of birthdays, wedding anniversaries any other for thanksgiving or commemoration.
- Teaching of Punjabi, teaching of reading the Guru Granth Sahib, guidance on understanding and analysing the scriptures. Teaching of kirtan, Sikh history and Sikh religious philosophy as and when required.
- If required, visit Sikh families to provide spiritual comfort and console them at the time of sickness or death.

### Organisational context

The ...Gurdwara works for the advancement of the Sikh religion, in accordance with the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib.

The Gurdwara .. is located within a thriving Sikh community and a large number of Sikhs live close to the gurdwara and many within walking distance (only a few Sikhs live near the gurdwara and most of the congregation come from long distances). Gurdwara is open from 4.00am to 8.00pm everyday and people visit as and when they will. Sunday is the main service (some gurdwaras will have the main service on Saturday evenings) starting from 4.00am and finishes at 3.00pm. About 1000 people visit during the day.

Many ceremonies such as marriages, deaths and birth are held according to Sikh Rehat Maryada (code of Sikh conduct) to meet the requirements of Sikhs or non-Sikhs. Sometimes two to three different functions are organised. Sikh festivals commence with Akhand path starting on Friday and completing on Sundays, and on these occasions sometimes over 5,000 people visit the gurdwara.

When necessary, facilities and resources are provided for the purpose of encouraging the voluntary acts of religious, educational, social and welfare duties (public or voluntary), an essential characteristic for any practising and responsible Sikh.

The Gurdwara committee liases with other religious groups, through interfaith, increasing a better understanding between different faiths.





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## Management Structure

Management Committee is elected every two years and all employees are responsible to this committee. The whole management makes all appointments and any dismissals. The Chairman of the Personnel Committee, (a sub-committee) deals with day-to-day affairs.

## Job Tasks

- Read and explain the Guru Granth Sahib to the members of the congregation whenever required by them.
- Lead all Sikh services. Bring the Guru Granth Sahib ceremoniously and place it in the prayer hall at 4.00am daily. Say the Ardas asking for God's grace to start the service. Open the Guru Granth Sahib and take the vak and sit in attendance or make arrangements for someone to be in attendance throughout the service. Short services daily and full service on Sundays, celebrations and festivals.
- Service to be conducted according to the programme arranged by the Management Committee.
- Carry out the Kirtan if and when required.
- Take part in the Akhand Path (continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib) and sehaj paths reading of the Guru Granth Sahib (at a convenient pace) as and when required.
- Take part in the Amrit ceremony.
- Take part in the celebration of festivals.
- Assist any person who wants to hold any function regarding birth, death, marriage or any other celebration at home or in the gurdwara.
- Provisionally book private individuals' functions subject to confirmation by the committee member in charge of booking functions.
- See to individual, family or group needs for prayer including reading the Guru Granth Sahib saying the ardas, and taking vak.
- Attend to the spiritual needs of any member of the congregation.
- Ensure everybody in the prayer and langar halls work in accordance with Sikh practices and forbid any non-Sikh practices being carried out.

## appendix 9:

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### Person Specification

- Must be a Sikh: a person who believes in the teachings of the ten Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib and does not have any other religion.
- Must be an Amritdhari Sikh (taken amrit and wears 5Ks).
- Must be fluent in speaking, reading and writing in Punjabi.
- Must be able to read the Guru Granth Sahib fluently, accurately and with good enunciation.
- Must have a good understanding of the Guru Granth Sahib so that s/he can explain the meaning to the congregation. If required, with assistance from translations.
- Must have a very good knowledge of the Sikh religion: Teachings of the Gurus, and their life histories. Should be able to articulate and explain the teachings of Sikhism to the community members.
- Must have a good knowledge of Sikh History.
- Should have the skill to give appropriate advice and assistance at times of sorrow or happiness.
- Should maintain respectful attitude towards all members of the gurdwara community.
- Should be able to keep the confidentiality required for dealing with members of the gurdwara community.
- Knowledge and understanding of the English language is highly desirable.
- Should know Punjabi culture.
- Should be able to speak, preach and advocate Sikh principles in all the dealings with public.
- Should represent the gurdwara community in functions held both outside and inside the gurdwara.
- Should be courteous to all as will be the first contact point in the gurdwara.
- Should be able to represent Sikhism positively.
- Should lead a good Sikh life and be able to support others in their spiritual life.



## appendix 10:

# how can we help?

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### **The Network of Sikh organisations' (NSO's) existing service provision is to be expanded in the following areas.**

The NSO's service exists to empower, inspire and equip gurdwaras and Sikh organisations to develop their role with professionalism at the hub of the local community.

- **Audits**  
NSO will produce self-help packs to enable you to audit the needs of your community, identify the resources available to your gurdwaras/Sikh organisations and ensure that your working practice is consistent with your Sikh ethos
- **Consultancy**  
The NSO Skills Bank will endeavour to provide access to consultants who are able to offer advice and assistance in all areas of community development
- **Conferences**  
To help gurdwara and other Sikh organisations' management committees to ensure that their employment practices reflect their Sikh ethos and that they adhere to the Employment Regulations (Religion/Belief) of December 2003
- **Seminars**  
Offered to groups of gurdwara workers to help them develop their role within the community, resource them to engage with local government structures and ensure that their employment practices comply with the changes within the Employment Regulations (Religion/Belief) of December 2003
- **Training**  
NSO will provide training to groups of gurdwara and other Sikh organisations on this legislation.

For more information on any of these options please contact [sikhmessenger@aol.com](mailto:sikhmessenger@aol.com) or call 020 8540 4148.

## appendix 11:

# further sources of information

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**More information on any issues related to employment regulations is available from:**

**Department for Trade and Industry – Employment Relations**

A wide range of publications is available from [www.dti.gov.uk/er/](http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/)

This website also contains contact information for specialist enquiry points on a wide range of topics relating to employment regulations.

**ACAS Publications – a Handbook for small firms**

ACAS Reader Ltd

PO Box 16

Leicester

LE9 8ZZ

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

**NCVO Publications – The Good Employment Guide**

Regents Wharf

8 All Saints Street

London

N1 9RL

[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk)

**Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development –  
Recruitment Code of Good Practice for Both Recruiters and Applicants**

CIPD House

Camp Road

London

SW19 4UX

[www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)

Book Sales: 01752 202 301

Book Enquiries 020 8263 3387