



SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT



A BOLDER HEALTHIER BIRMINGHAM

CONTENTS

Contents.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	4
Glossary of Sikh/Panjabi terms.....	5
Foreword.....	6
Background.....	8
Introduction.....	10
Current demographics.....	13
Health inequalities in Birmingham’s Sikh community.....	16
Understanding the wider determinants of health.....	17
Promoting healthy eating.....	20
Promoting physical activity.....	23
Promoting healthy relationships.....	25
Promoting healthy choices: conception and pregnancy.....	27
Promoting childhood health for Sikh children.....	30
Promoting ageing and dying well.....	32
Promoting good mental health and well-being.....	35
Promoting awareness for prevention of abuse and violence.....	37
Encouraging avoidance of risky behaviour: alcohol, smoking, gambling and substance misuse.....	39

Preventing against infection and promoting health protection.....	41
Promoting vaccination uptake.....	44
Promoting health screening.....	47
Managing diabetes.....	50
An overview of recommendations when exploring the health and wellbeing of the Sangat through Gurdwara initiatives.....	53
Financial support.....	55
Development opportunity checklist.....	56
References.....	70

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The health inequalities experienced within Birmingham’s citizens.....	9
Figure 2: Religion: Birmingham, 2021.....	13
Figure 3: Ethnicity of Sikhs: Birmingham, 2021.....	13
Figure 4: Age distribution of Sikhs: Birmingham, 2021.....	15
Figure 5: Age and gender distribution of Sikhs: Birmingham, 2021.....	15
Figure 6: Dahlgren and Whitehead’s social detriments of health model.....	17
Figure 7: Vegetarian Eatwell Guide.....	22

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Country of birth of Sikhs: Birmingham, 2021	14
Table 2: Sikh population by MSOA: Birmingham, 2021	15
Table 3: Checklist 1 (Vision).....	58
Table 4: Checklist 2 (Gurdwara Committee and the Sangat)	59
Table 5: Checklist 3 (Planning).....	60
Table 4: Checklist 4 (Training).....	62
Table 5: Checklist 5 (Resources and collaborations).....	63
Table 6: Checklist 6 (Communication)	64
Table 7: Checklist 7 (Evaluation and sharing good practice).....	65
Table 8: Checklist 8 (Topic specific: summary of tips)	66

ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR SIKH AND PANJABI STUDIES

The Centre for Sikh and Panjabi Studies at the University of Wolverhampton was commissioned by Birmingham City Council to produce this toolkit.

The Centre for Sikh and Panjabi Studies at the University of Wolverhampton is multi award winning for its research and community engagement and is the first and the only one of its kind in the UK, and across Europe. It is an internationally recognised hub which acts as a centre of excellence for matters relating to the Sikh and Panjabi Community in the UK. Its remit extends beyond academia and positions Sikh and Panjabi Studies on the global platform by raising awareness, sharing knowledge and increasing profile with key stakeholders and influencers.



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GLOSSARY OF SIKH/PANJABI TERMS

- **Amritdhari**
An initiated Sikh, therefore required to wear the 5 external symbols of Khalsa identity.
- **Chardi kala**
Remaining in 'high spirits' as highlighted in Sikh teachings.
- **Kesdhari**
A Sikh with uncut hair.
- **Khalsa**
Created in 1699 CE by Guru Gobind Singh, literally the 'Pure Ones'.
- **Giani**
One who is learned in Sikh teachings and reads from the Guru Granth Sahib.
- **Gurdwara**
The Sikh place of worship' Literally 'the entrance to the Guru'.
- **Mona**
A Sikh who cuts the hair.
- **Mun**
The mind in Sikh teachings, also extended to feelings and emotions.
- **Panj Kakkar** (5Ks)
The 5 external symbols of the Khalsa.

- **Panth**
The global Sikh community.
- **Sikhi**
The teachings, beliefs and practices of Sikhs.
- **Waheguru**
A term widely used to refer to the Divine which is gender-free.



FOREWORD

Too many people in Birmingham experience poor health too early in their lives and there is much to be done to improve the situation for individuals, families and communities.

At the forefront of pastoral care and community development, Faith Leaders are and are well placed to support improvements in health and wellbeing. To enable Faith Leaders in this endeavour, Birmingham City Council are producing a set of Healthy Faith Communities Toolkits for the six dominant faith communities in Birmingham.

THE AIM

The aim is to help Faith Leaders to build health improvement into their day-to-day work. The toolkits describe opportunities to improve physical and mental health, alongside information on mainstream services and how to access them.

ENGAGEMENT

From July 2022 to July 2023, the Sikh Healthy Faith Settings Toolkit was piloted across five Gurdwaras across Birmingham. The engagement was led by the Centre for Sikh and Panjabi Studies at the University of Wolverhampton. The engagement sessions with the Gurdwaras collected community feedback on the health topics included in the toolkit, allowing Sikh community members to discuss how Gurdwaras can more greatly support the health and wellbeing of their faith users.

During the pilot year the toolkit sections on promoting childhood health for Sikh children, protecting against disease, health screening and vaccinations were not explored due to time constraints and low engagement with the pilot project. Additionally, the sections on promoting healthy relationships and family planning were not explored, this was largely due to discomfort among the communities and Gurdwara committee. These sections may be more relevant to community centres with Sikh attendees. If looking to improve health outcomes for Sikhs in these areas within faith settings, it must be acknowledged that there is a challenge in engaging with some faith settings around these topics.

USING THE TOOLKITS

The toolkit is divided into a set of 'health outcomes' for community wellbeing highlighting any specific challenges for each community. Topics cover the life course and include issues such as healthy eating, preventing infections and health screening. Each section contains a snapshot of local health and wellbeing needs and local service and support information. At the end is a development opportunity checklist for organisations and groups to identify training and development requirements. This is designed for the faith setting to reflect on their current practices in supporting, signposting and offering interventions which look to address the health needs of the Sikh users.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Feedback from community members across the different toolkits revealed that some health topics may be more suitable promoted at community centres, rather than at faith settings. For these topics, it may be useful for the faith setting to signpost their members to these centres.

The toolkits have included signposting and resources that are both generic and specific to each faith, however, if any further support (such as signposting, service provision, professional speakers, or other key resources) is required from Gurdwaras, they can contact the Communities Team, Public Health Division via the email:

CommunitiesTeam@birmingham.gov.uk

Alongside the developed toolkits, the Communities Team has also created PowerPoint slides that include information from the toolkits. Where health topics are relevant or similar to one another, they have been merged together to support delivery of sessions that present multiple topics. As our engagement found some discomfort in delivering some health topics in their regular service, Gurdwaras have the autonomy to use the slides that are more appropriate to them and remove the ones that they feel they cannot deliver.

We hope the toolkits prove to be a useful resource and look forward to their continuing evolution and development.

Public Health Team

Birmingham City Council



BACKGROUND

Good health is not a given in Birmingham. Too many of our citizens become unwell too early and for too many years of their lives. The picture is not uniform across our City and there are stark differences in health status and the opportunities to be healthy between different communities.

Birmingham's Public Health Green Paper highlighted some of the significant issues that affect our individuals, families and communities in Birmingham. Our city has poorer health in many areas than the West Midlands, national and European averages. Some of these are highlighted within Figure 1.

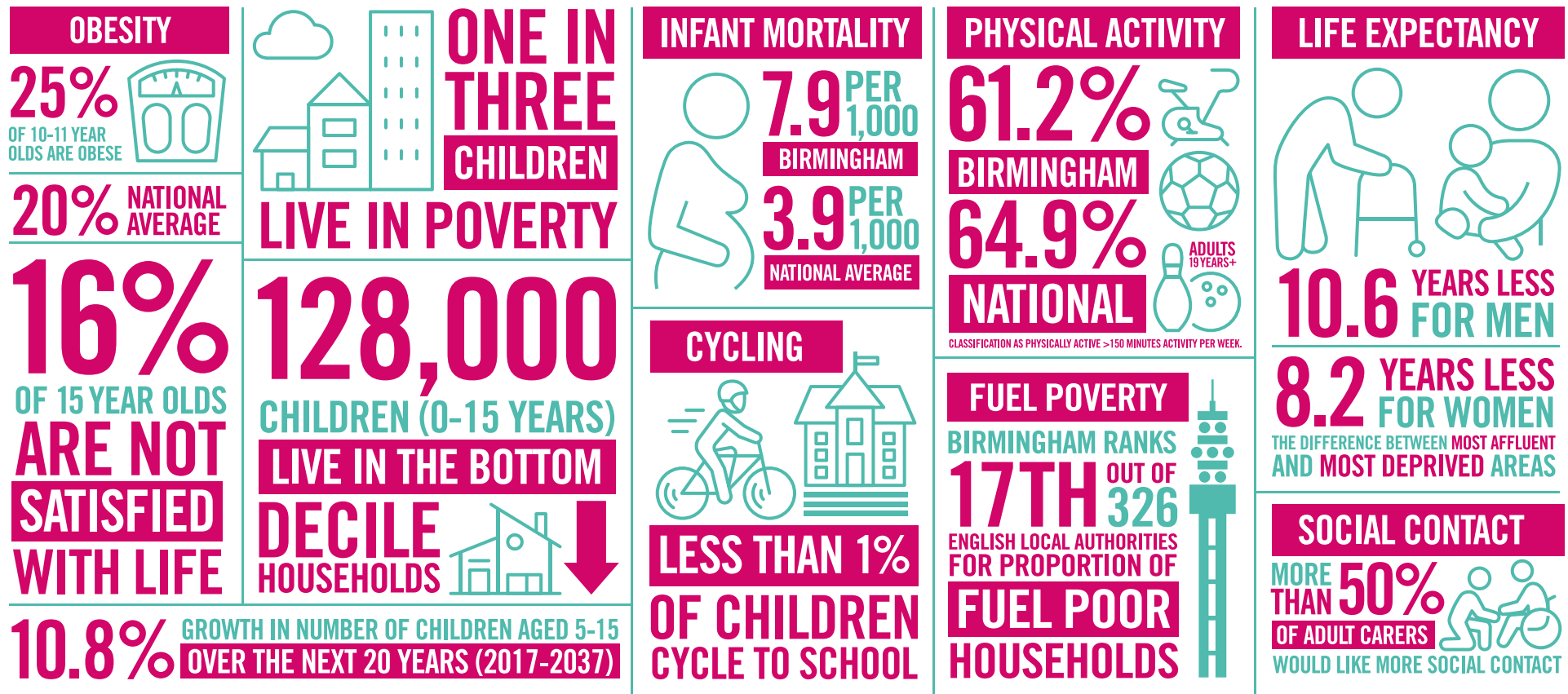
Improving our health and wellbeing requires a concerted effort across society and we all have a part to play. Faith leaders and faith settings are in ideal positions to support health improvement and create opportunities to enhance physical and mental wellbeing. Faith leaders were active COVID Champions who played an essential role in the city's response to the pandemic. The Public Health Division recognises the key role that faith leaders play and would like to support and empower faith settings and leaders to improve the health of their communities.

Recognising this opportunity, Birmingham City Council are producing a set of Healthy Faith Communities Toolkits for the six dominant faith communities in Birmingham. The initial version, developed with community partners, will be tested and further developed and improved. Case studies will be collected to highlight faith setting-led activities that address the health needs.

This Sikh toolkit seeks to explore the health inequalities experienced within Birmingham in the context of the Sikh faith. The toolkit will discuss how Sikhs relate to the health inequalities experienced by the citizens in Birmingham, as well as highlighting health issues that are experienced within our Sikh communities.



Figure 1: The health inequalities experienced within Birmingham's citizens



Source: Birmingham City Council Public Health Green Paper 2019

INTRODUCTION

Birmingham City Council together with the Centre for Sikh and Panjabi Studies at the University of Wolverhampton have produced this guide to address important health issues within the Sikh community in Birmingham and to provide guidance and signposting to faith organisations within the community.

The migration of Sikhs to Birmingham was most significant in the 1950s and 1960s, when a shortage of labour invited migrants from the Commonwealth countries¹. The foundries in Smethwick in the 1950s employed significant numbers of Sikhs. The Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Smethwick was formally opened in 1958. This guide is intended for Gurdwaras and their Sangats (congregations) so that the health and wellbeing of the community can be harnessed. To begin with, an overview of the Sikhs and their faith is highlighted. This is followed by practical approaches on health-related issues amongst Sikhs in Birmingham.

Although the youngest of the major world faiths, Sikhs constitute the fifth largest following globally². Collectively, the Sikh community across the world is referred to as the Panth. Current narratives and preference amongst Sikhs is to use the term 'Sikhi' when referring to their faith, beliefs and practices since the suffix of the 'ism' is very much viewed as a colonial intervention to homogenise the Sikh way of life. The majority of Sikhs in Birmingham trace their heritage to the Panjab region in India, and therefore, the majority of Sikhs in Birmingham will have an understanding of the Panjabi language and the Panjabi culture, which is embedded in the Sikh way of life. Much of the cultural aspects are to be found in eating habits. A small

number of Sikhs in Birmingham will also trace their heritage to East Africa, and then the migration to the UK following their expulsion from Uganda in 1972.

The outward identity of a Sikh was made compulsory for all Sikhs who were initiated through the creation of the Khalsa in 1699 CE under the leadership of the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. Initiated Sikhs, referred to as Amritdhari are required to wear the five symbols of the Khalsa at all times, referred to as the panj-kakkar, the 5K's⁴.

These are the:

Kesh - uncut hair and beard of the Sikh.

Kangha - the comb which is used to keep the hair tidy, symbolising spirituality and discipline.

Kara - the steel bracelet which is usually worn on the right wrist, symbolizing the eternal nature of the Divine.

Kaccha – shorts, also worn as an undergarment, symbolising a Sikh's readiness to defend the weak and vulnerable.

Kirpan – a small sword symbolising dignity, self-respect and readiness to uphold the religious liberty of humanity as a whole.

Most Sikhs also wear a turban to keep the hair neat and tidy, and to resemble Guru Gobind Singh.



Gurdwaras are Sikh places of worship, and are located in a number of Birmingham wards with large numbers of Sikhs. In addition to spiritual centres, they are also social hubs for the community where activities such as Panjabi language classes, Sikhi classes, physical exercise, well-being workshops, and so forth are offered to the Sangat (congregation). A growing number of Gurdwaras in Birmingham also have a gym on premise for the Sangat. Wards such as Sandwell have a number of Gurdwaras which may be caste specific. A number will also have their own religious figures referred to as Sants and Babas. The focus in the Gurdwara is the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the living Guru for Sikhs which is the authority on Sikh teachings, collectively referred to as Gurbani. Sikhs are guided by the teachings in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib in their daily lives. Hence, each of the sections highlighted in this Toolkit will have Sikh references in order to highlight both its spiritual as well as practical approach to life, health and well-being.

There are different types of Sikhs ⁵:

Amritdhari – a Sikh who has undergone the initiation ceremony and is therefore required to observe the rules and regulations of the Khalsa. An Amritdhari is required to wear the 5K's at all times. Due to the lack of an ordained priesthood amongst Sikhs, it is misleading to refer to Amritdharis as orthodox Sikhs. This term has no place in Sikhi.

Kesdhari – a Sikh who wears the external symbols of the Khalsa but is not necessarily initiated.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Mona – A Sikh who cuts the hair and does not wear any or all of the 5K's. It is popular for mona Sikhs to wear the Kara, to symbolise their Sikh identity.

The three core principles ⁶ in Sikhi which find expression in everyday living are:

Nam Simran – meditation on, or recitation of, the Name of the Divine.

Kirt karo – working hard and earning an honest living.

Vand ke chakko – sharing one's food and wealth with the less fortunate.

This toolkit, in the following sections, highlights a number of themes around healthy behaviours. The self-assessment checklist is a guide for Gurdwaras to assess their health and well-being activities and to identify gaps through which to strengthen the health profile of their Sangats. The concept of the mun, which loosely translates as the mind, one's feelings and emotions, is central to the teachings of the Sikh faith, which emphasises that the calming of the mind is the first step towards a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

ਮਨ ਚੂਰੇ ਖਟੁ ਦਰਸਨ ਜਾਣੁ ॥

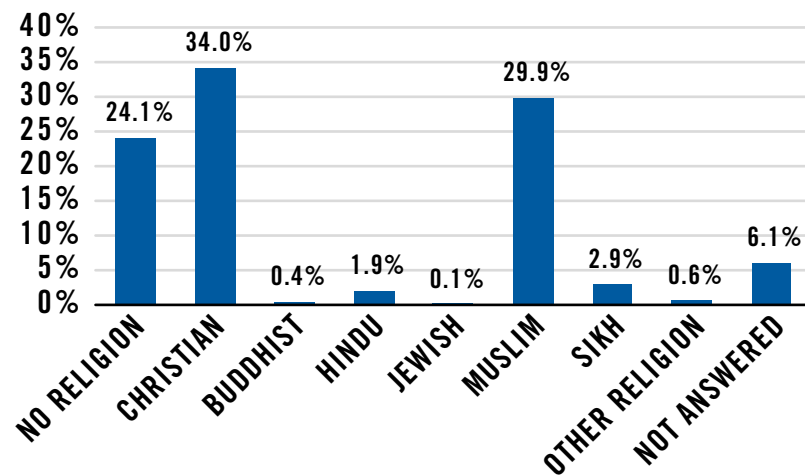
ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਮਰੈ ਦਾਰੂ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

TO CONQUER THE MIND IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SIX SHAASTRAS.

CURRENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 2 below shows the most followed religions in Birmingham according to the 2021 census. The most followed religion is Christianity (34.0%). The next most followed religion are Islam (29.9%) and 'no religion' (24.1%). Sikhs comprised 2.9% of the total Birmingham population.

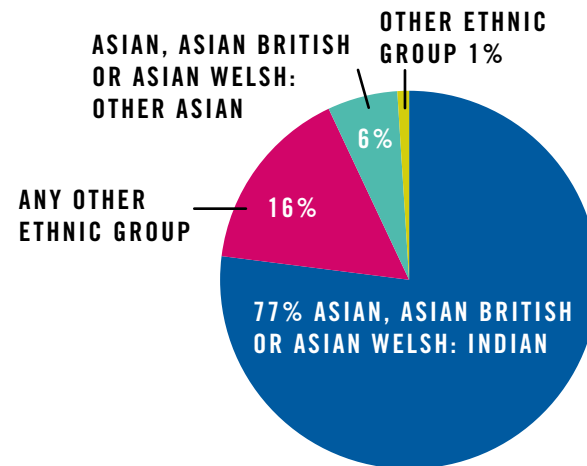
Figure 2: Religion: Birmingham, 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2021

Figure 3 shows the ethnicity of Sikhs living in Birmingham, according to the 2021 census. The highest percentage ethnic group among Sikhs was 'Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian' (77%), followed by 'Other ethnic group: any other ethnic group' (16%). In the 2021 census, 6,139 people in Birmingham listed their ethnic group as 'Sikh'.

Figure 3: Ethnicity of Sikhs: Birmingham, 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2021

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Table 1 below shows the top countries of birth for Sikhs in Birmingham according to the 2021 census. The most common countries of birth were 'Europe: United Kingdom: England' (61%) and 'Middle East and Asia: Southern Asia' (33%).

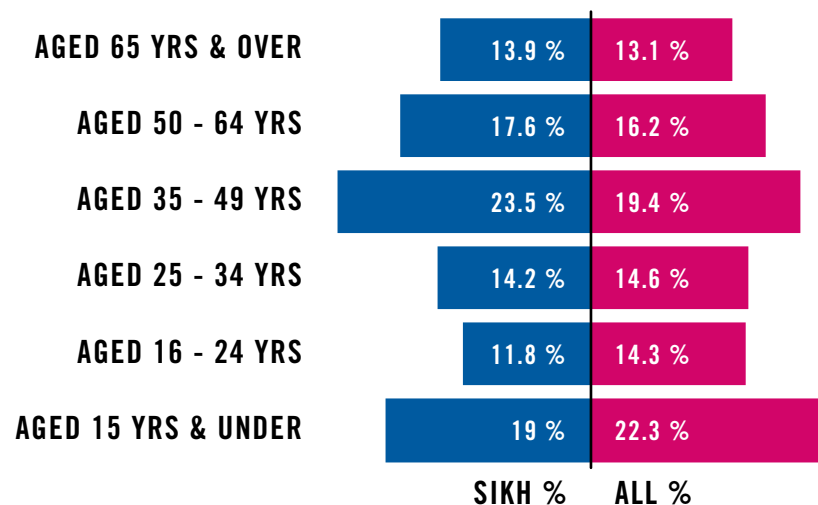
Table 1: Country of Birth of Sikhs: Birmingham, 2021

Country of Birth	Observation %
Europe: United Kingdom: England	61
Middle East and Asia: Southern Asia	33
Africa: South and Eastern Africa	3
Europe: Other Europe	1
All other countries	2

Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2021

Overall, the age of Sikhs living in Birmingham is slightly older than the city's average. In the 2021 census, there were 23.5% of Sikhs aged 35 to 49, compared to 19.4% of the total city. 22.3% of Birmingham's total population are aged 15 and under, compared to 19.0% of Sikhs in Birmingham.

Figure 4: Age distribution of Sikhs: Birmingham, 2021

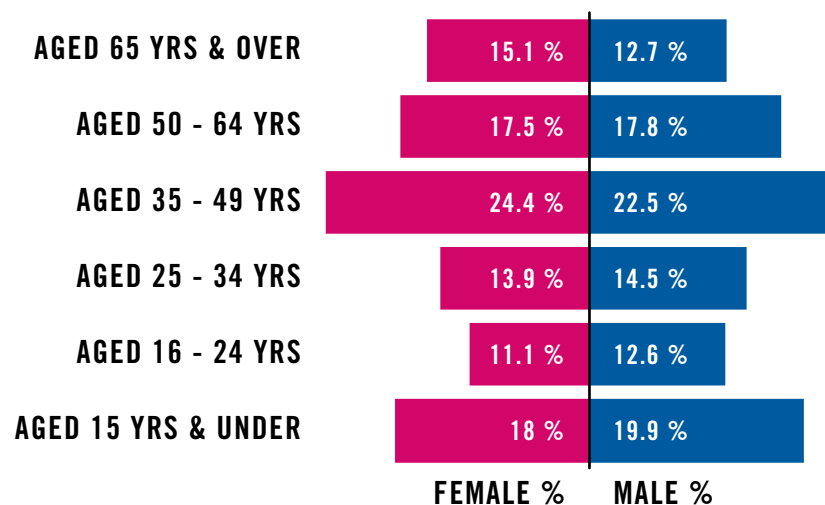


Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2021

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Figure 5 shows the age and gender of Sikhs in Birmingham. There was an even distribution of male and female Sikhs (50% each) in Birmingham. The age of both males and females is comparable between male and female Sikhs. However, there was a higher percentage females aged 35 to 49 (24.4%) compared to males (22.5%).

Figure 5: Age and Gender Distribution of Sikhs: Birmingham, 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2021

Table 2 outlines the top 10 MSOAs where Sikhs lived, according to the 2021 census. 10.6% of Sikhs in Birmingham lived in Handsworth Wood in 2021.

Table 2: Sikh Population by MSOA: Birmingham, 2021

MSOA	Sikh Population	% of Total Sikh Population
Handsworth Wood	3,508	10.6
Middlemore	2,057	6.2
Handsworth South	1,915	5.8
Handsworth West	1,539	4.6
Rotton Park	1,399	4.2
Harborne West	1,279	3.9
Handsworth East	1,110	3.4
Winson Green & Gib Heath	1,076	3.2
Perry Beeches West	686	2.1
Edgbaston North	645	1.9

Source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2021

HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN BIRMINGHAM'S SIKH COMMUNITY

Concerns of the ethnic minority communities facing challenges in accessing professional help have recently arisen, which have led to policies being developed to help reduce discrepancies in access and experiences of the use of services⁷.

The higher prevalence of mental health difficulties in the British South Asian community has been highlighted as a concern by the Department for Health; this has been attributed to inequalities in health care settings by additional research⁸. For example, research has found South Asians are at a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes when compared to White British counterparts⁹. It has been reported that South Asians are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes at a lower BMI. This suggests although the South Asian population have a lower prevalence of overweight and obese individuals who have diabetes¹⁰. This begins to question why. It has been explained the higher risk may be because South Asians are more likely to have less muscle and more abdominal fat which increases insulin resistance¹¹. Even if an individual is South Asian and is not overweight there is still a risk for diabetes. South Asians can also develop diabetes due to a certain diet or lifestyle trend. For example, white rice is associated to increase risk of diabetes, which can make up a large proportion of daily intake in their diets¹².

As well, unhealthy saturated fats are commonly consumed by the South Asian community such as cooking oils. Research has found that 50% of adult men in South Asian countries smoke regularly which is associated with higher abdominal and saturated fat which leads to the risk of developing diabetes¹³.

Sikhs who were born in the UK are not confounded in a new environment, but cultural attitudes and behaviours can be passed down from parents and grandparents as well as visits to cultural countries. Sikhs would like to have access to good quality data in the Sikh population in the UK which will be beneficial for decision making to better understand attitudes and practices of British Sikhs which could hopefully one day improve policy planning and community engagement¹⁴. The consequences of not having data specifically on Sikhs results in policy makers making decisions based on opinion or assumptions which can have a detrimental effect on policies and practises. In the census of 2011, it was reported over 83,000 Sikhs rejected the existing tick-box options and chose to select 'Other' and write 'Sikh'¹⁵. Furthermore, in relation to inadequate resource allocation to Sikhs, there has been no data presented in the public domain regarding healthcare and educational funding.



UNDERSTANDING THE WIDER DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Personal, social, economic, and environmental factors that influence health are referred to as the determinants of health^{16,17}. They affect people in various ways at different stages throughout their lives. Socioeconomic factors – such as income, social status, education, and occupational background – lead to health inequalities in society; it is these factors that can determine a person's risk of getting ill, preventing illness or access to healthcare.

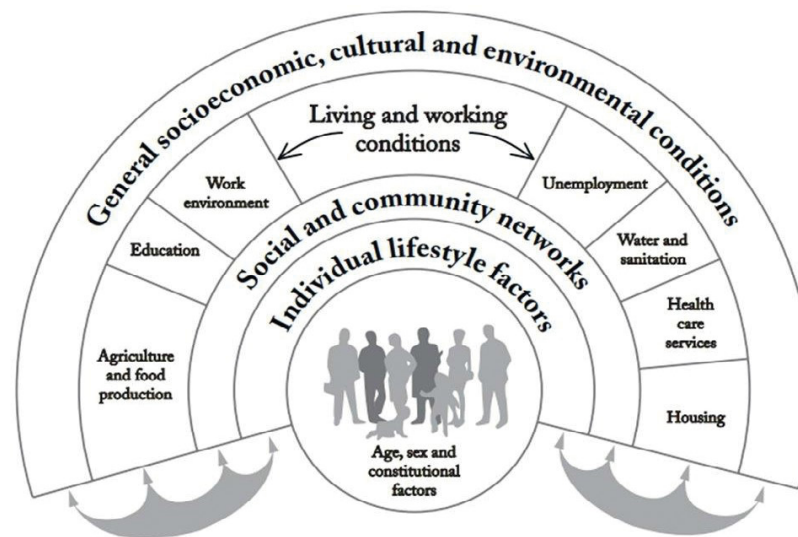
The Birmingham Sikh community profile¹⁸ identified that there is very limited evidence or data on health inequalities for the Sikh communities¹⁹; however, the study did identify the following:

- Higher prevalence of polycystic Ovary Syndrome, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes compared to the general population
- Evidence of high prevalence of alcohol drinking and alcohol related issues, such as Liver cirrhosis.
- Lower uptake levels across different cancer screening programmes.
- Low levels of physical activity, particularly among women, with culture and family expectations being highlighted in research as barriers.
- Lower levels of awareness on the causes and disease management among patients with long-term illness.
- Lack of cultural sensitivity and language barriers.

The environment, social issues and the physical conditions in which people live has been identified to have a significant effect on a range of health and wellbeing outcomes.

Birmingham faces challenges when it comes to health and wellbeing. In general, the quality of Birmingham's health is poorer than the rest of the UK²⁰. Much of the content covered in this toolkit can be linked to wider determinants of health.

Figure 6: Dahlgren and Whitehead's Social Determinants of Health Model



The Dahlgren and Whitehead's Social Determinants of Health Model outlines the wider determinants of health and is a useful model in providing a framework for raising questions about the layers that influence health and how the relationship between individual, their environment and disease relate²¹.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

The first layer of the model represents age, sex and other genetic factors. The second layer represents the individual and how their lifestyle can make their health better or worse. The third layer shows social and community networks which represents interactions between groups of people and/or organisations and the effects on a person's health. The fourth layer shows the living and working conditions such as access to essential medical services and housing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Be aware of what helps you maintain good health – taking exercise, rest and eating well will have a positive impact on your physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Engaging in social and community networks and your Sikh faith will help you to maintain good mental and emotional health.
- Working to improve your living and working conditions will also help to maintain and improve your health and wellbeing.
- Sewa is a fundamental part of being a Sikh, and making time for selfless service, whilst comes without any reward or personal gain, can help to give you a sense of purpose and wellbeing.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Gurdwaras can help their community to access health services and health advice in Panjabi. By working with local health providers advice can be provided to people within the gurdwara through educational talks in Panjabi and other information.
2. Gurdwaras are well placed to help address the social factors that

can influence health. Gurdwaras can provide training and classes for their Sangat in a range of areas, they can also help to educate their own community and others to reduce discrimination and violence, as well as provide space for recreation, and opportunities for social interaction and engagement.

3. Gurdwaras could provide additional community services and activities – religious discussion groups, healthy cooking classes, physical activity classes and arts and crafts are all examples of group work that can enable people to interact with each other.
4. Gurdwaras could work with local authorities and health providers to explore and understand the specific socioeconomic, cultural and environmental factors that impact on the Sikh community.
5. Media campaigns can be developed to raise awareness of the increased risk of specific illnesses in the Sikh community through the use of images of Sikh people and messages in Panjabi language.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਜੋਬਨਿ ਸਾਸੁ ਹੈ ਤਬ ਲਗੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇ ॥

As long as there is youth and health, meditate on the Naam.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 82

ਆਸ ਅਨਿਤ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮਿਟੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਅਰੋਗ ॥੧॥

Hopes and desires for transitory things are erased for the Gurmukh; O Nanak, the Name alone brings true health. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 254

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਆਰੋਗ ਕੰਚਨ ਦੇਹੀ ॥

By Divine Grace, you have a healthy, golden body.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 270

RESOURCES:

- **Mental health for Sikh community** – Taraki works with Panjabi communities to improve access to mental health awareness, education, social supports, and research through culturally safe activities to benefit individual and community-level care.
<https://www.taraki.co.uk/>
- **Alcohol and drug recovery for Sikhs**
<https://sikhrecoverynetwork.org/>
- **Sikh Helpline** – for a range of help on a variety of issues.
<https://www.sikhhelpline.com/>

CASE STUDIES

- **Awareness events – Sikh Assembly**
The Sikh Assembly aims to connect and represent the spectrum of Sikhs across the UK, their work has focussed on a number of awareness raising events including International Women’s Day and Women’s History Month, discussions around disability awareness, vaccination, and alcohol awareness, to name but a few. They also provide a range of services such as career advice and mentoring. (See <https://sikhassembly.org.uk>)
- **Education and sports classes - Ramgarhia Sikh Temple, Birmingham**
The Gurdwara provides a range of sports and physical activity classes for the Sangat. In addition to these, they provide healthy cooking classes and Panjabi language classes. These help to ensure people can maintain their physical and mental wellbeing. (See <https://www.rstuk.com/sports-classes>)



PROMOTING HEALTHY EATING

BACKGROUND

Much academic work has been published on Sikhs, diet and food but largely in a non-UK context²². We know that India has one of the highest levels of diabetes in the world and rates of those who have migrated into the United States has also remained high²³. It is widely known that South Asians, particularly those 'representing individuals from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are said to have an elevated risk of developing disabilities and India has the second highest number of individuals with diabetes worldwide'.

Patterns of eating amongst Panjabi Sikh men are known to contribute to high rates of diabetes and cardiovascular disease²⁴. Connections between masculinities and diet highlight how varying gender ideals can influence the practice of senior Panjabi Sikh immigrant men, which were said to be rooted in spirituality and traditional cultures²⁵. Panjabi Sikhs are said to have strong family connections, both from social networks with member and their cultural communities, and they also participate in religious activities which tends to help extend the longer term relationship with cultural traditions.

We have learnt about the importance of trying to understand masculinities and how they intersect with dietary patterns, which adds another layer of complexity between diet and tradition and the complex nature and assumptions of Western cultures. When we think about migrants, we also think of a globalised south and especially so when migration occurs in the globalised north.

CASE STUDY

- Food and meaning: 'Langar' and Sikh kitchens as new food banks.

The literal meaning of langar is community dining hall and this refers to the offering of free vegetarian food to all who come to the Gurdwara. The Sikh tradition of langar was innovative because everyone was to eat together and it was open to all, regardless of gender, age, caste, disability or race. Whilst Sikh food is traditionally served in the Sikh temple, i.e. Gurdwara and prepared and cooked within the home, we have started to witness how Sikh kitchens are becoming the new food banks²⁶. Sikh organisations have been sending food relief to victims in post-earthquake Nepal, contributing 25,000 daily food packets and sending teams of cooks and volunteers in order to set up community kitchens²⁷. In the UK, people experiencing homelessness have started turning to Sikh community kitchens for hot meals following the increase in food bank usage and Sikh based organisations in Birmingham have become known for trailblazing such movements. We cannot think about Sikhs and food in Birmingham without considering the Midland Langar Seva Society (See Fig. 1). This is an organisation which was founded in 2013 by the CEO Randhir Singh and Parmjit Singh and was set up based on the Sikh ethos, which is to support people, regardless of their culture or background²⁸. During COVID-19, we also saw another charity set up in Birmingham, known as The Sikh Soup Kitchen founded in March 2020 which is a community street food bank service for the vulnerable and homeless, with hot meals available for home delivery, particularly to those who are elderly and vulnerable²⁹.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To understand consumption patterns of Sikhs in Birmingham, we must observe the events, religious practices, third sector organisations and charities in the food industry. These will support the way in which eating habits are to be changed.
- When considering the context of Panjabi Sikhs and their relationship with food, the social context of food and identity needs to be given close attention alongside the dietary patterns of food choices. For instance, observations during Langar would be useful and conducting research with the 'users' of Langar would also help to learn more about dietary choices.
- Only then can we learn about experiences and consumption and only then can we learn about the relationship between daily practices of food consumption for the Panjabi Sikh community. Healthy food options and a balanced diet within the Langar setting are available, and it is about teaching the 'users' how to manage such consumption. For example, volume of intake can be controlled, but this is not always a straight-forward conversation and encouraging physical activity is crucial.
- For educators and local councils, to work effectively with Sikh Panjabi communities, it is important to consider positive aspects of Indian foods and food preparation methods that are both healthy by western standards, alongside being acceptable within the Sikh Punjabi community. It is important that we do not simply police foods by attaching a binary label, i.e. 'good' and 'bad' foods.
- Therefore, with regards to health promotion and nutrition practices, it is crucial to acknowledge the diversity within the community as not all Sikh Panjabi individuals necessarily define

'healthy eating' in the same way. More can be gained with time spent in the setting such as the Langar service.

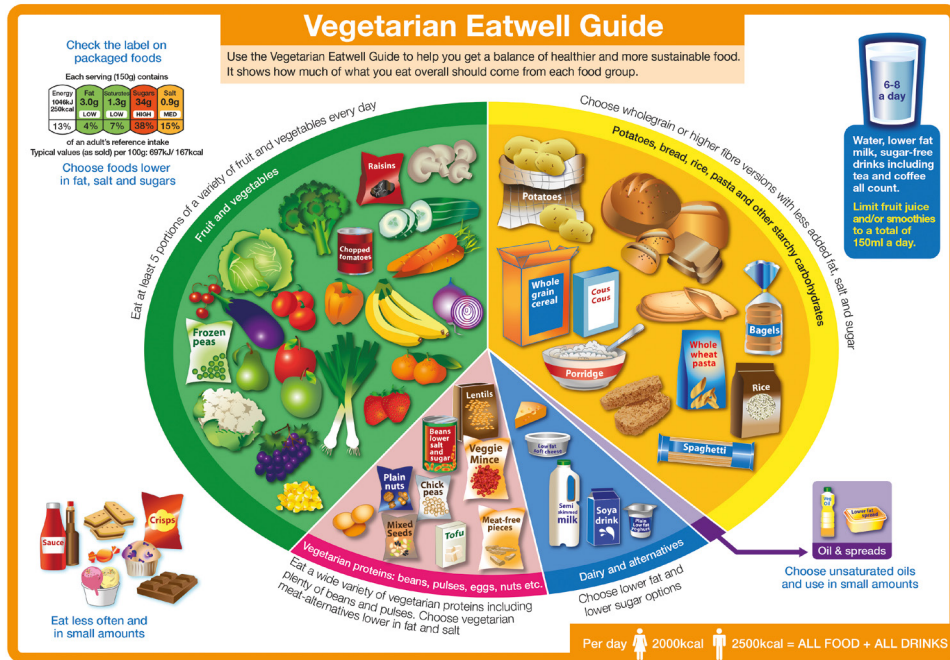
- In order to teach collective generations about health care education, informed learning strategies that are collaborative are needed. For example, learning more about young people and their health choices, but ultimately have impacts on their peers and families.
- Co-creation is crucial in developing health care interventions and speaking to younger family members in trying to reach the older generations is crucial as this can help to deliver important messages where language barriers and cultural sensitivities might be at play. More research which allows for a deeper understanding of potential barriers is much needed.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. When thinking about healthy eating, consideration for Sikhs eating habits need to be considered, so reducing the volume of food can certainly help in controlling health related issues.
2. The resources that are developed for Sikhs need to be culturally sensitive.
3. Developing a targeted set of interventions which include holding forums to allow citizens within the Sikh community to share their views is critical.
4. Targeted healthy eating programmes geared towards both the younger and older Sikh populations, to ensure opportunities are provided to learn about home cooked food.
5. Diets are not always the answer, but to consider changing life habits for the longer term within Sikh communities.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Figure 7: Vegetarian Eatwell Guide.



Source: The Vegetarian Society

The Eatwell Guide shows the proportions of the main food groups that form a healthy, balanced diet:

- Eat at least 5 portions of a range of fruit and vegetables every day.
- Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates, choosing wholegrain versions where possible.
- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soy drinks); choosing lower fat and lower sugar options.
- Eat some beans, pulses, eggs, nuts and other proteins (eat a wide variety of proteins including plenty of beans and pulses).
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts.

- Drink 6 to 8 cups/glasses of fluid a day.

The langar at the Gurdwara can be prepared in a healthy way to encourage healthy eating by using fresh vegetables and less butter/ghee.

RESOURCES

- Food: A fact of life – Heathy eating resources for children.
- Heathy Eating: Food fact sheet, The Association of UK Dietitians.
- Heathy Langar, Healthy Hearts, Exploring perceptions of Langar.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥੨॥

While laughing, playing, dressing and eating, he is liberated
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 522

ਮੈਲਾ ਖਾਇ ਫਿਰਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਵਧਾਏ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਮੈਲੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਵਣਿਆ ॥੧॥

Eating filth, the self-willed manmukhs become even more filthy. Because of their filth, they suffer in pain. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 121

ਖਾਤ ਪੀਤ ਖੇਲਤ ਹਸਤ ਭਰਮੇ ਜਨਮ ਅਨੇਕ ॥

Eating, drinking, playing and laughing, I have wandered through countless incarnations. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 261

PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

WHAT'S THE STORY?

The importance of physical activity is voiced throughout Sikh teachings and within the community through much emphasis recently on Gurdwaras working with local organisations and charities in offering activities such as group walking and cycling. The second Guru, Guru Angad Dev ji, promoted physical activity and sports for the Sikhs. He set up a wrestling area, referred to as Mal-akharas to emphasise the importance of physical training.

Physical activity is known to improve a healthier lifestyle through managing stress and aiding a better night's sleep . Physical activity as a group is also central to community engagement and therefore can aid towards combating social isolation, amongst all generations of Sikhs. This has been particularly voiced through the lockdown periods where many elderly Sikhs were feeling lonely and isolated as a result of Gurdwaras having to close their doors. Many Sikhs joined walking groups, as well as taking regular walks on their own in order to remain physically active.

Local charities and organisations are keen to work with Gurdwaras in order to be able to offer physical activities to the Sangat. The Council will have a list of such activities and organisations. Gurdwaras can also apply for various funding bids to provide activities in their places of worship. Yoga is becoming increasingly more popular amongst Sikhs³². Science proves that physical activity has lots of physical, mental, and social benefits, particularly, the role everyday physical activity has on our heart, lungs, skeleton, and muscles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- If you enjoy time chatting with friends, you could link this with physical activity.
- Cultural etiquette should be addressed especially when offering swimming classes for elderly Sikh females who may feel uncomfortable when wearing a swimming costume.
- Gurdwaras are often seen as safe spaces where group activities are welcome in a familiar environment.
- Marketing of activities is important when addressing cultural needs.
- Schedule in regularity and prioritise this time.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. When looking at physical activity it is important to review what you want it to bring into your life.
2. Involve active members of the Sangat to become ambassadors for physical activity in the Gurdwaras.
3. Hold regular sessions with times and days cleared advertised to the Sangat through social media and the community networks.
4. Display posters for physical activity in the Gurdwara which are tailored at different age groups.
5. Encourage group visits to the local leisure centres by providing transport from the Gurdwara.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਕਬੀਰ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਦਿਲ ਸਾਬਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਤਾ ਕਉ ਕਹਾਂ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥੧੮੫॥

Kabeer, one whose heart is not healthy and whole - how can they attain the Divine?
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 1374.

ਬੋੜੇ ਨੇ ਕਪਰੁ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੇ ਜੇ ਪਾਤਣ ਰਹੈ ਸੁਚੇਤਿ ॥੮੬॥

What can the whirlpool do to the boat, if the boatman remains alert?
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 1382.

ਨਿਵਲੀ ਕਰਮ ਭੁਅੰਗਮ ਭਾਠੀ ਰੇਚਕ ਪੂਰਕ ਕੁੰਭ ਕਰੈ ॥

You may perform exercises of inner purification, and fire up the furnace of the Kundalini, inhaling and exhaling and holding the breath.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 1343.

RESOURCES

- Sports England Faith Groups: Faith groups | Sport England.
- Early years physical activity: 10 Children's Physical Activities for PE | Early Years Resources.
- British Heart Foundation National centre for Physical Activity: https://ihv.org.uk/news_tag/british-heart-foundation-national-centre-for-physical-activity-and-health/

CASE STUDY

• **Marathon Runner – Fauja Singh**

At 102 Years old, Fauja Singh is an inspiration to Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike in his title of the 'World's oldest Marathon runner.' He retired from competitive races in February 2013 after completing a 10k race in Hong Kong.



- **The Skipping Sikh**
During the lockdown, a 73 Year old Sikh, Rajinder Singh's exercise videos went viral in promoting physical activity to remain fit and mentally healthy. He emphasised skipping for all ages and also an important exercise in overcoming self-isolation and loneliness during the pandemic.



PROMOTING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Relationships are essentially connections between two or more people and include family relationships, work relationships, relationships with partners, or relationships with friends, neighbours and our community. However, the term 'relationship' is also used when referring to the way we connect with objects, our Sikh faith and even with ourselves. Sikhs are expected to get married and have a loving relationship with all members of the family. Many Sikh families continue to live in the extended family structure with grandparents, and often uncles, aunties and cousins all living in the same dwelling^{33,34}.

As in all communities, relationships for Sikh communities are complex and diverse, and they can have an impact on our health and wellbeing and on those around us. The Sikh way of life encourages having children. Divorces are increasingly taking place in the Sikh community, but is seen as the last resort. Sikhs do have homosexual relationships, however this is rarely talked about in the community or in the Gurdwaras.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Speak to family members, friends and community members at the Gurdwara about relationships – talking can lead to better and healthy relationships.
- If you are suffering from Intimate Partner Violence^{35,36,37}, speak to someone you can confide in at the Gurdwara, or contact

someone for support and help.

- Be honest and open with your husband, wife or partner, by being so you will avoid any misunderstandings and have healthy relationships.
- Recognise the range of relationships that people may be involved in, and respect people's choices around sexuality and gender identity by following the Sikh belief that everyone should be treated the same.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Educate younger people about healthy relationships.
2. Gurdwaras should work with existing service providers to carry out targeted work with particularly vulnerable groups – for example, working with couples to raise awareness of positive healthy relationships.
3. Gurdwara committees could arrange talks or workshops by trusted healthcare professionals and include Sangat who are happy to share their own experiences around these issues.
4. Although not openly talked about, Sikhs do have homosexual relationships. Respect the many different relationships that people may enter into and do not negatively judge or discriminate against them.
5. Life and work commitments mean that family members may not all eat at the same time, try and put aside some time each day or each week when the family come together as one.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਸੰਬਤਿ ਸਾਹਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਿ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਤੇਲੁ ॥

The day of my wedding is pre-ordained. Come, gather together and pour the oil over the threshold. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 12

ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਾਬੁਲਾ ਹਰਿ ਦੇਵਹੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਮੈ ਦਾਜੇ ॥੪॥

O my father, please give me the Name of the Lord God as my wedding gift and dowry. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 79

ਸੁਰਿ ਨਰ ਗਣ ਗੰਧਰਬ ਮਿਲਿ ਆਏ ਅਪੁਰਬ ਜੰਵ ਬਣਾਈ ॥

The angels and mortal beings, the heavenly heralds and celestial singers, have come together and formed a wondrous wedding party. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 775

RESOURCES

- The Government's forced marriage unit provides a range of resources such as how we can spot signs of forced marriage: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>
- Sarbat LGBT+ Sikhs aims to create awareness, tackle homophobia/biphobia/transphobia and build bridges within and beyond Sikh communities: <https://www.sarbat.net/>
- The Sikh Helpline provides specific support for a range of issues: for anyone who is feeling lonely, support around forced marriage and intimate partner violence, and sexuality and other relationship advice: <https://www.sikhhelpline.com/loneliness-sikh-helpline>

CASE STUDIES

• Sarbat LGBT+ Sikhs

An online service that provides awareness, support and resources for Sikhs as well as gurdwaras. They have worked with gurdwaras to hold talks and awareness sessions across the UK. (See <https://www.sarbat.net>)

• Guru Nanak Gurdwara - marks domestic abuse awareness month

Smethwick's most iconic building and one of the largest Sikh Gurdwaras in the UK, the Guru Nanak Gurdwara Smethwick, joined up with Black Country Women's Aid to raise awareness of domestic abuse. In October 2018, they lit the Gurdwara building in purple in support of domestic abuse awareness month. This was accompanied by talks from professionals and discussions with the Sangat.

(See <https://blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk/guru-nanak-gurdwara-lights-up-purple/>)



PROMOTING HEALTHY CHOICES: CONCEPTION AND PREGNANCY

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Conception and pregnancy

In Sikh communities, family planning practices are informed by culture as much as by Sikh teachings. For example, Guru Nanak Dev ji advocated marriage and having children within the confines of a marriage that has been blessed in front of the Guru Granth Sahib. However, family planning is left to the couple and there are no specific teachings in Sikhism against the use of contraceptives within a married relationship.

From the religious viewpoint, there should be no preferences between girls and boys in Sikhism; however, there is a cultural bias towards male children^{39,40}. Evidence suggests that some Sikh couples are undergoing abortions if they are pregnant with a girl. Sikhs believe that the soul is “born” immediately on conception, abortion is therefore generally not accepted. However, there is no specific teaching against abortions for health reasons⁴¹. Many Sikhs therefore make a personal decision when confronted with a non-viable pregnancy. Amongst Sikh families, an abortion is not generally approved except when an unmarried woman becomes pregnant.

There is other evidence of prejudice against women within Sikh communities. For example, Sikh women are more likely to get family and community blame for not having children or for their husband's sexually transmitted diseases and infections.

Breast feeding is positively encouraged within the Sikh faith as it is considered a completely natural process and the best nourishment for the infant⁴². Research from India demonstrated Sikh children are less likely to be breast fed compared to other religious groups in India⁴³. It is also the case that ‘lower caste’ Sikh children were more likely to die than ‘higher caste’ Sikh children⁴⁴.

Sexual health

Sikh women also face barriers in getting cervical cancer screening; for instance, Sikh women strongly preferred to have female health practitioners for sexual and reproductive health services⁴⁵. Many Sikh patients and their families had limited understanding of sexually transmitted diseases and infections (such as HIV/AIDS). Not speaking English is an additional barrier for some in understanding the disease/infections and seeking treatment⁴⁶.

Fertility treatment

Sikh communities would prefer fertility treatment (e.g., IVF) which lets them have a genetically related child. Sikh couples were more likely to report wanting a genetically related child compared to White participants. Sikh participants were more likely to be negative and uncomfortable with the decision to be voluntarily childless. Sikh women were less likely to report that they have family and community support to donate eggs to other couples⁴⁷; there was also a preference to not use donated eggs in their own fertility treatment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Counselling provisions for abortions: Gurdwara leaders and Health care professionals in the Sangat should be aware that some unmarried Sikh women may undergo an abortion due to their unwed status and some Sikh couples may abort a female foetus due to a preference for male children. There should be some provisions of counselling available for some Sikh women who undergo abortions (often in secret).
- Tailored sexual health resources: Sexual health (including cervical and prostate screening) and sexually transmitted diseases/ infections resources need to be developed which are in English and Panjabi languages and culturally relevant. Religious leaders need to lead and encourage open and honest conversations about sexual health in their communities.
- Community led interventions against anti-women bias: Gurdwara committees and health care professionals offering sewa in the Sangat should be aware that some Sikh women may face stigma at home. Targeted intervention is needed to tackle anti-female biases within the Sikh community and religious and community leaders need to be included in the centre of these interventions.
- Culturally relevant breast-feeding programmes: Sikh mothers should be encouraged to breast feed. Breast feeding programmes needs to be developed which are culturally relevant and language appropriate.
- Infertility related discussions: Health care professionals should be aware that Sikh couples would often prefer genetically related children and are less likely to choose not to be parents than white couples. Further, Sikh women are less likely to prefer to receive or

to donate eggs for fertility treatment. Religious and community leaders need to encourage open and honest conversations about infertility and its impact on Sikh couples and families to help stop stigma and open up other treatment options available to couples (e.g., receiving donated eggs/sperm and adoption).

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Gurdwaras should openly condemn those who abort their pregnancy n preference for a son – female foeticide is strictly against Sikhi.
2. Sexual and reproductive health resources need to be developed and widely distributed in English and Panjabi and which are culturally sensitive and relevant.
3. Gurdwaras and community leaders need to lead on open and honest conversations about sexual and reproductive health.
4. Community led strategies are needed to tackle anti-women biases within Sikh communities.
5. Sexual and reproductive health educational resources and community led interventions need to be developed with diverse members of Sikh community, particularly women⁴⁸.

RESOURCES

- Information on pregnancy and labour: www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/
- Sexual health services in Birmingham: www.birmingham.gov.uk/sexualhealthcommissioning
- Information on infertility: www.nhs.uk/conditions/infertility/
- Information fertility treatment and access to treatment: www.hfea.gov.uk

CASE STUDY

- **Gurdwara facilitated intervention in educating and tackling stigma**

In some instances, Gurdwaras in the Midlands and nationally have played a pivotal role in Sikh communities in educating and tackling taboo subject matters such as sexual and reproductive health. For example, Gurdwara Guru Nanak Parkash in the West Midlands hosted an event by Cysters (a non-profit charity which aims to educate the public about reproductive health & education) in 2018. The event discussed polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and other reproductive health concerns with women and men from the Sikh community. Sikh members were asked to “join us for Chai and a chat about PCOS”. This event even attracted regional news exposure to help spread their positive message about opening communication amongst Sikh communities about reproductive health. ¹¹ Similarly, The Shepherd’s Bush Gurdwara launched a period policy and provided free sanitary products and ran educational workshops on menstrual health, which was positively received within and outside the Sikh community in tackling discrimination and period poverty. These examples illustrate the positive and successful role of Gurdwaras and religious leaders in educating and tackling stigma.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਵਡ ਪਰਵਾਰੁ ਪੂਤ ਅਰੁ ਧੀਆ ॥

The family with sons and daughters is blessed.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 392.

ਹਲੁ ਜੇਤੈ ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਪੁਤੁ ਧੀ ਖਾਇ ॥

They plow and work the fields, so that their sons and daughters may eat. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 166.



PROMOTING CHILDHOOD HEALTH FOR SIKH CHILDREN

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Sikh children are a population group that need the most attention since health and well-being of children is often the most valued asset by parents, extended families and community leaders. From a health and social care perspective, protecting children's health is everyone's responsibility⁴⁹. 'Children are our future,' is a term commonly used to emphasize the intensity of support and considerations given to investing time, money and effort at a community level. It is possible to create effective partnerships between community organisations, families and multi-professional agencies that enable initiatives to be planned and implemented locally to achieve better population health for Sikh children⁵⁰.

Most Sikh children grow up feeling the warmth and security of parents who work hard to support their children's development into adulthood. Schooling is taken seriously and the ambition for children to secure respectful careers are a strong focal point of a Sikh child's life from an early age. Children are also expected by adults to behave. In reality, Sikh children, like many other children, grow up in their private and public environments facing many challenges⁵¹. The Institute of Public Policy Research⁵² and UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of the Child⁵³ reminds stakeholders of opportune moments to take giant leaps toward preventative measures for children of all ages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Religious and community leaders should agree with key stakeholders such as NHS and Local Authority public health and education officers, to support healthy and educational initiatives targeting Sikh parents and children.
- Gurdwaras and community centres should plan Sikh parent-led and grandparent-led cultural activities that are age-specific and suitable for infants, toddlers and pre-school children, primary school aged children and secondary school aged children to support community cohesion and eliminate social isolation.
- Health practitioners should provide local support for pregnant Sikh women and new mothers by arranging informal get-togethers in community rooms e.g. in Gurdwaras.
- Health practitioners and education welfare workers should promote healthy and education based talks targeting parents at weekends and evenings to enable working parents to attend.
- Gurdwaras should ensure that langar is prepared in as healthy a way as possible to be able to target growing obesity rates in children.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Have a rolling programme with key themes of discussion, for example: healthy eating for all the family
2. Involve and be open and flexible to ideas generated by youths and new parents.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

3. Start small groups and run these at different times to involve more parents and grandparents.
4. Have a regularly maintained display board at the Gurdwara sharing local information that is specific to parents and children.
5. Cultural Arts and Crafts workshops attract mothers and children to learn skills whilst engaging in Sikh culture and religion.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਅਪਣੇ ਬਾਲਕ ਆਪਿ ਰਖਿਅਨੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ॥

The Divine Guru protects and preserves the children.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 819.

ਪਾਲੇ ਬਾਲਕ ਵਾਗਿ ਦੇ ਕੈ ਆਪਿ ਕਰ ॥

The Divine Guru cherishes all children, and reaches out with the hands. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 957.

ਤੁਮ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੇਰੇ ॥

You are both our mother and father, we are all your children.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 268.

RESOURCES

- Advice for new-to-be parents: <https://bwc.nhs.uk/parent-education/>
- NSPCC Positive parenting guide: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/leaflets/positive-parenting>

- BBC parenting guides: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/parents>
- Birmingham Safeguarding team: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20019/children_young_people_and_families/602/who_to_contact_if_you_re_worried_about_a_vulnerable_adult_or_child

CASE STUDIES

- **Guru Nanak Gurdwara Walsall** - engaging children with Sikhi. The Gurdwara has a website with a rich variety of resources through which to engage children with Sikhi and also to learn Panjabi through interactive resources: <http://www.gnst.org.uk/childrens/childrens-page.html>
- **Tabla classes in Gurdwaras for children**
Research has shown that music can be uplifting in terms of mental and overall wellbeing.



PROMOTING AGEING AND DYING WELL

WHAT'S THE STORY?

The elderly Sikh population in the UK is growing and needs additional support⁵⁴. For the Sikh elderly population, work brought a sense of usefulness and purpose in life and retirement often brings to an end this feeling of being a provider for one's family and a useful part of society. As a result, older people often feel - and are viewed by some - as a group of people who no longer contribute to their families and societies and may even be considered as a burden to them⁵⁵. Gurdwaras and Sikh community activities are essential in combatting social isolation and loneliness amongst Sikh elders. The Gurdwara functions as both a social as well as religious hub where very often the elderly will spend time talking to their friends and taking part in seva, by carrying out cooking and cleaning duties, in the Gurdwara.

The Birmingham City Council Sikh Community Profile⁵⁶ highlights that there is very limited data on specific health conditions by religion, most recording these by ethnic group, which leads to an analysis based on ethnicity. However, there are clearly many areas that can and should be considered when examining and addressing the health of Sikh elderly people. Whilst there is limited research in this area that focusses on Sikh communities, studies have identified that depression, loneliness and dementia, are key issues for South Asian (Sikh) elderly people⁵⁷.

It was once common practice for elderly Sikh family members to be looked after within their own families. Whilst this is still the practice

in the majority of cases, with families living further apart - as a result of migration, work or other reasons - more elderly people are living without the wider family support network that may have been common practice when they were younger⁵⁸.

Dealing with this, and the lack of regular social contact upon retirement and often a reduced social network as we age, can lead to depression and loneliness. Therefore, Gurdwaras are increasingly focussing on activities for their elderly such as light physical exercise as well as group outings with transport being provided.

FALLS

Ageing is associated with an increased risk of falling, due to many factors including sight and muscle loss, as well as worsened balance influenced by hearing loss and the use of certain medications⁵⁹. Bones weaken as we get older, meaning that elderly adults are more prone to bone fractures when they fall. Falls are the most common cause of injury-related deaths in people over the age of 75 with over 5,000 older adults dying as a result of a fall in 2017⁶⁰. Gurdwaras must ensure that they are mindful of trip and slip hazards to prevent the risk of falls and church communities can offer support to elderly users who are recovering from a fall.

DEMENTIA

Dementia refers to a group of related syndromes associated with a decline of brain functioning. The risk rises after you age, especially after the age of 65. The most common forms of dementia are

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Alzheimer's Disease and vascular dementia. One in 14 people over the age of 65 have dementia, and the condition affects 1 in 6 people over 80⁶². The number of people with dementia is increasing because people are living longer. It is estimated that by 2025, the number of people with dementia in the UK will be more than 1 million⁶².

DIGITAL POVERTY

Digital exclusion is common within people of older age. Around 4 million people over the age of 65 have never used the internet⁶³. As many parts of society move online, there are a rising number of older people who are less connected to society, as they have limited access to online services. This can cause a lack of opportunity, access, knowledge and information that can be useful for older adults.

BEREAVEMENT

Grieving the death of a loved one is an individual process. Not everyone deals with death in the same way, but grieving is part of the process that helps one to come to terms with a loss of a friend or family member⁶⁴. Sikhs host funerals called Antam Sanskaar, which is a ceremony that celebrates the soul, rather than focusing on pain or grief of losing a loved one^{65, 66}. Still, it is imperative to ensure that individuals are not alone when they lose a loved one and compassion must be given at the gurdwara so that people are well supported as they grieve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Gurdwaras must connect with the elderly Sikhs. Religion, spirituality and connection with others can help to reduce isolation and feelings of loneliness.

- Elderly Sikhs should be encouraged to join social groups in your local community, but with phones and internet technology you can remain connected with family who may be living in the Panjab or in other countries. Members of local Gurdwara can help the elderly to learn how to use this technology.
- Remain physically active and eat healthily.
- Sewa and volunteering can help you to use skills that you gained in your working career to help others
- Get regular health check-ups and speak to your GP if you have any concerns about your health.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Organise outreach work and targeted work with particularly vulnerable and socially isolated elders in the Sangat. Volunteers can be trained to help with this work.
2. Gurdwaras could provide additional community services and activities to enable elderly people to interact with each other – for example religious discussion groups, healthy cooking classes, physical activity classes and arts and crafts. These also have the added benefit of assisting in memory and recall.
3. Work with local health providers in some needs assessments and research to understand the specific issues for the Sikh elderly population in your community.
4. Appreciate that not all elderly family members will be living with their extended families: work and travel have meant that elderly people are increasingly living on their own and may feel isolated or have a number of health and social care needs.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਭਾਂਡਾ ਭਾਉ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤਿਤੁ ਢਾਲਿ ॥

In the crucible of love, melt the Nectar of the Name.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 8

ਰਤਾ ਪੈਨਣੁ ਮਨੁ ਰਤਾ ਸੁਪੇਦੀ ਸਤੁ ਦਾਨੁ ॥

My mind is imbued with Divine Love; it is dyed a deep crimson.
Truth and charity are my white clothes. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 16

ਰੰਗਿ ਰਤਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

My beloved is all loving; My beloved is totally permeating and pervading all.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 23

RESOURCES

- Supporting elders with dementia: <https://www.dementiauk.org>
- Alzheimer's UK: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk>

CASE STUDIES

- **Sikh Elders Service, Leeds.**

Whilst this is a Leeds based service, what they have learnt through their work and the initiatives they provide can be replicated for other areas. It provides specific initiatives that aims to improve the health and well-being of Sikh elders by supporting them to live independently, and to live fulfilling lives. They provide specialised provision and support in Panjabi through initiatives such as Cha Da Cup - a weekly group where people can meet to engage with each other. Bhoolee Bisree Yaadein, is their social event for Sikh elders and their family and friends to join in with, which focusses on the use of music which

has been proven to be a powerful memory retention tool.
(See <https://touchstonesupport.org.uk/community-services/sikh-elders-service>)



PROMOTING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Sikh teachings emphasise the importance of positive mental wellbeing through the concept of the *mun*, which can be loosely defined as the mind. Importantly however, there is no one overall term that refers to mental health in the Panjabi language which results in derogatory terms such as *kamla/kamlee* and *pagal* being used. Discussing mental health in the Sikh community is largely seen as a sensitive and taboo subject, which is overshadowed by stigma in both addressing it, as well as seeking support from organisations and the community itself. It therefore tends not to be discussed within Sikh families. Such attitudes are largely cultural (Punjabi), rather than having a faith-based (Sikh) foundation. Gurdwaras are key to promoting support, either themselves, or signposting to organisations.

The belief that mental health is a result of black magic is common amongst some of the older generation of Sikhs. This stems wholly from Panjabi culture and is not supported by the Sikh faith which encourages a Sikh to steer clear from superstitious beliefs and practices. However, some Sikhs believe that wearing an amulet to ward off evil spirits is much more effective than seeking help from mental health organisations. The notion that mental health is a result of a lack of religious orientation is also prevalent in the Sikh community. As a result, Gurdwaras run classes on combatting mental health through listening and meditating on Sikh religious philosophy⁶⁸.

However, due to community attitudes, not all Sikhs feel comfortable in turning to the gurdwaras for support. Any services must therefore be offered by Gurdwaras in complete confidentiality and by trained counsellors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Any support offered through the Gurdwara must ensure confidentiality for the service user.
- The Guru Granth Sahib has abundant references to the mind (*mun*)⁶⁹ which is constantly referred to as being fragile. Gurdwara intervention must ensure that the individual is supported through positivity.
- Boost self-confidence by using skills that the individual have and make them feel welcome at the Gurdwara.
- Kirtan and physical activity boost positive mental health – organise classes at the Gurdwara to address this.
- Bright spaces in the Gurdwara help uplift the Sangat towards mental wellbeing and positivity.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Gurdwaras should encourage taking up support from professional organisations.
2. Talk about mental health in the Sangat so that the stigma attached to mental health can be overcome as per the teachings of Sikhi.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

3. Avoid the use of traditional Panjabi terms when referring to mental health. These terms are derogatory, negative and detrimental to how Sikhs address mental health in the community.
4. Nam Simran and listening to kirtan promote wellbeing in the Sangat. But also acknowledge that professional intervention may be necessary, so talk about professional services with the Sangat as a whole. This ensures that no one is made to stand out as a victim.
5. Sikhi emphasises sarbat da bhalla, which means a Sikh should be ready to defend others, both physically and well as by providing moral support through listening and provided 'safe' and 'brave' spaces either in the Gurdwara or elsewhere.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਗਾਵੀਐ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਭਾਉ ॥

Sing and listen, and let your mind be filled with love.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 2.

ਸਭੁ ਸਫਲਿਓ ਜਨਮੁ ਤਿਨਾ ਦਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਿਨਾ ਮਨੁ ਜਿਣਿ ਪਾਸਾ ਢਾਲਿਆ ॥

Fruitful are the lives of those who, as Gurmukh, have conquered their minds, they have won the game of life.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 78.

ਮਨੁ ਕੁੰਚਰੁ ਪੀਲਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਕੁੰਡਾ ਜਹ ਖਿੰਚੇ ਤਹ ਜਾਇ ॥

The mind is the elephant, the Guru is the elephant-driver, and knowledge is the whip. Wherever the Guru drives the mind, it goes. Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 516.

RESOURCES

- Sikh your Mind, Love Brum: Sikh Your Mind - LoveBrum.
- Taraki organisation for addressing mental health in Sikhs: Taraki - Mental Health in Panjabi Communities.

- Mind: Home - Mind.
- NHS: Mental health - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
- Improved Access to psychological therapies and service (IAPT)- Birmingham Healthy Minds for people seeing to improve symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Text 85238 for free 24/7 mental health text support at Shout.

CASE STUDIES

- **Sikh Your Mind** – addressing mental health in Sikhs
Sikh Your Mind operates on a national level in supporting individuals with mental health. They have a helpline on their website which offers confidential support. Their mission is to “improve the community’s understanding of a variety of mental health difficulties from depression to anxiety and dementia. Alongside this we hope to provide a better understanding of NHS, private and voluntary sector services (in your area) to better equip you should you require support currently or in the future.”
Sikh Your Mind – Sarbat Da Bhala – For The Good of Everyone
- **Gurdwaras offering support for mental health and wellbeing**
A number of Gurdwaras across Birmingham (and nationally) have been successful in accessing funding to provide services for addressing and supporting with mental health. Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Smethwick has regular classes and seminars addressing mental health in the community.

PROMOTING AWARENESS FOR PREVENTION OF ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Domestic abuse describes “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional”⁷⁰. Although domestic abuse occurs amongst all communities, research has shown there are acts of abuse that are prevalent in the South Asian community, such as honour killings, forced marriages, and normalisation of patriarchal violence. There is emerging evidence that Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) has the potential to pose a real threat to the Sikh community as it seeks to ensure that gender equality is embraced within its religious practice. Nonetheless, the interface of domestic abuse and the distress it causes to Sikh female victims in terms of their mental health is hardly talked about in the community or in the Gurdwaras⁷¹. From the current literature on DVA and South Asian women, we know that there might be a denial of the issue within communities due to shame and family exposure.

Cultural pressures in the Sikh community can often put a burden on women to have to manage alone or to deal with emotional problems within the family, rather than seeking outside help which could be seen as bringing dishonour into the family.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In order for DVA within Sikh communities to be eradicated, it is crucial that that community acknowledge that abuse does take

place in their midst. It is important that victims of DVA do not feel judged based on their circumstances.

- Although Sikh masculinity may make it difficult, women need to be encouraged to set boundaries in a relationship, as it can help promote mutual respect and consideration.
- There is currently a lack of research and understanding about the scale of intrafamilial violence, including child-on-parent violence. There needs to be better data collection locally which could support future decisions around interventions in these groups.
- Educational materials and leaflets to be printed out in multiple languages such as Panjabi and Hindi to reach a wide audience.
- Clearer guidance should be provided on accessing information about housing and where local Asian women resource centres and local charities are based to assist with social housing or refuge.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Individuals, and the community as a whole, need to take a stand against abuse and take action when it is disclosed.
2. Providing women and girls with a safe space to talk about abuse such as in the Gurdwara or other religious buildings.
3. Deliver educational programmes via primary care and schools such as public campaigns and outreach programmes.
4. The local healthcare and education infrastructure could be involved by providing specialist training to nurses, doctors, pharmacists, teachers, and others to recognise and address DVA in the Sikh community.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

5. Gurdwaras should provide women with support for learning about financial issues such as welfare benefits and assistance with form filling. Experts from the Sangat could deliver these sessions at the Gurdwara⁷².

SIKH REFERENCES

ਨਾਰੀ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸਭ ਨਾਰੀ ਸਭੁ ਏਕੇ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਮੁਰਾਰੇ ॥

Women and men, all the men and women, all came from the One Primal Lord God. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 983

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੇਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ ॥

ਸੇ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥

From woman, man is born; within woman, man is conceived; to woman he is engaged and married.

Woman becomes his friend; through woman, the future generations come.

When his woman dies, he seeks another woman; to woman he is bound.

So why call her bad? From her, kings are born.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 473

RESOURCES

- Sikh Women's Action Network: <https://www.sikhwomensaid.org.uk/>
- Sikh Helpline: <https://www.sikhhelpline.com/>

- Sikh Your Mind: <https://sikhyourmind.com>
- Karma Nirvana: <https://karmanirvana.org.uk>

CASE STUDIES

- **Sikh Helpline**

The Sikh Helpline was established 25 years ago and is a point of contact for members of the community in dealing with a number of issues that may be related to cultural and social taboos. Between April and November 2019 there were a total of 187 cases created by the Sikh Helpline, with 67% of victims of abuse being female. Secondary categories have been recorded for each case to help identify the types of abuse. The top three categories, which accounted for almost half of all cases related to abuse, were family (20.41%), alcohol (18.37%) and sexual abuse (10.20%).

- **Sikh Women's Action Network (SWAN)**

The Sikh Women's Action Network (SWAN), based in the West Midlands, was formed in 2014. It states that calls by women during lock down seeking help from abusive relationships were up by 244%, with almost 60 families helped over the past year. This organisation was created by a group of Sikh women who felt various subjects such as domestic violence, child sexual exploitation and forced marriages were being unnoticed within the community. The charity had previously helped 24 families around the UK, but, during the same period in 2020, it helped 58 families, highlighting a real need for further support and help especially with the effect of the pandemic.

ENCOURAGING AVOIDANCE OF RISKY BEHAVIOUR: ALCOHOL, SMOKING, GAMBLING AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Alcohol and smoking misuse are both associated with negative acute health effects but also detrimental long-term outcomes that include but are not limited to liver cirrhosis; stroke; breast, bowel, throat and lung cancers and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)⁷³. There is limited data available on the consumption levels of alcohol in the British Sikh community. According to a survey commissioned by the BBC, 61% of a sample of 1,000 British Sikhs stated that they drink alcohol at least on occasion⁷⁴. In the same survey, 1 in 4 Sikhs also reported that there was someone in their family who had an 'alcohol problem'⁷⁵. If this sample were to be taken as representative of the British Sikh population, this is a concerning statistic for healthcare providers. There is also limited evidence available about smoking in the British Sikh community, but it appears that the uptake of smoking is much less than alcohol consumption.

The impact of alcohol misuse extends beyond the drinker to include the family and the community around them⁷⁶. The harm to children of living with an alcohol abuser can be lifelong. Shame and stigma are major cultural barriers in the British Sikh community that deter individuals from seeking help for alcohol use and Sikh families are more likely to try and keep alcohol related issues hidden within the immediate family unit than to seek professional support⁷⁷. There are gender differences as men are more likely to drink and more often than women⁷⁸. Traditionally women have been expected to abstain from drinking but many young women

growing up in Western society no longer conform to cultural pressures. As a result, drinking in subsequent generations is increasing in frequency and amount, with women also facing issues of stigma forming a barrier to seeking help⁷⁹.

Although smoking and drug abuse does occur in the community and need addressing, it seems that the uptake of these substances remains significantly lower than alcohol which is the primary substance consumed and abused. Most second-hand smoke is odourless, meaning people can unknowingly breathe in harmful poisons, no matter how cautious the smoker is being. For those who have not yet decided to stop smoking, it is important to not smoke indoors to protect others from second-hand smoke. Passive smoking is particularly dangerous to children, pregnant women and people with chronic respiratory conditions⁸⁰.

Another form of addiction, gambling, has seen a rise in recent years as online gambling has become more common. The accessibility of gambling has resulted in an estimated 1.4 million people within the UK being harmed by their own gambling, while a further 1.5 million are at risk⁸¹. In 2019, the Gambling Commission launched a three-year strategy seeking to improve prevention, education, treatment and support for problem gamblers. Gambling and alcohol misuse often are associated with one another, so it can be assumed that gambling may be another form of addiction that is an issue within the Sikh community.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

For some Sikhs, a lack of understanding of the nature of alcohol consumption and addiction also exists and families can be unaware of the detrimental physical, mental and social effects of alcohol consumption⁸².

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Issues of shame and stigma need to be addressed in the community through Gurdwara events.
- In addition to supporting people who abuse alcohol, the needs of the family also need to be considered and support offered for their wellbeing.
- More support is needed especially for women for substance abuse.
- Awareness needs to be raised by Gurdwaras around the link between substance misuse and domestic violence.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. The Gurdwaras can function as support networks where issues around alcohol and substance misuse can be openly discussed.
2. Leaflets should be provided by Gurdwaras in Panjabi as well as English to raise awareness of the effects of substance misuse.
3. Gurdwaras should fund projects on alcohol abuse for experienced researchers to undertake with the Sangat and in the community.
4. Detailed statistics are lacking around Sikh specific needs for addressing and combating substance misuse and the effects of smoking.
5. It would be useful to explore the roles that Sikh Gurdwaras can have in helping to address these problems as places of worship

and local community hubs for Sikhs. For example, by forming partnerships with local services.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਮਤਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਰਤਨ ਜਵਾਹਰ ਮਾਣਿਕ ਜੇ ਇਕ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਣੀ ॥

Within the mind are gems, jewels and rubies, if you listen to the Guru's Teachings, even once.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 2

ਆਈ ਪੰਥੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਮਾਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ ॥

See the Sangat as the highest order of Yogis; conquer your own mind, and conquer the world. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 6

ਮਨੁ ਮਾਣਕੁ ਨਿਰਮੇਲੁ ਹੈ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮਿ ਪਤਿ ਪਾਇ ॥

The jewel of the mind is priceless; through the Name of the Lord, honour is obtained. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 22

RESOURCES

- Sikh Recovery Network: <https://sikhrecoverynetwork.org>
- Alcohol Change UK: Working together to support Panjabi and Sikh children affected by their parent's drinking | Alcohol Change UK.
- Alcoholics Anonymous: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>

CASE STUDY

- **The Sikh Recovery Network**

Jaz Rai is founder and chairperson of the Sikh Recovery Network. He regularly talks about addiction and other issues of importance to the Sikh community. The programme of support is offered to all individuals irrespective of race, religion, gender or socio-economic backgrounds.

PREVENTING AGAINST INFECTION AND PROMOTING HEALTH PROTECTION

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Many, if not all health professionals, aim to protect the public against diseases, and this aligns with the belief that 'prevention is better than the cure' which is one that many Sikh people adopt. There are many diseases that we can protect ourselves from. Communicable diseases are those diseases that are transferred from one person to another usually through contact with blood and bodily fluids, ingesting contaminated food, breathing in a virus that is airborne, or by being bitten by an insect, include HIV, hepatitis B, measles, salmonella and illnesses like flu or COVID-19⁸³. Health workers tackle these through disease prevention and control programmes, and through methods to detect and investigate outbreaks to help prevent the spread of the disease⁸⁴.

Health promotion initiatives aimed at the Sikh community address public health issues, by seeking to change behaviour through education relating to the choices people have to decrease their risk of illness, disease or how they can improve their overall health⁸⁵. Health promotion tends to focus on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – i.e. those diseases that are not transferred between people. According to the World Health Organisation⁸⁶, NCDs - which primarily include heart and lung diseases, cancers and diabetes – are now the world's largest killers, with an estimated 41 million deaths annually, and account for an equivalent of 71% of all deaths globally.

Whilst there are some genetic and environmental factors that affect Sikh people's likelihood to develop most non-communicable disease, such as diabetes, the Sikh community are not unique in their susceptibility to many common infectious diseases: we can all be at risk, or put ourselves at risk, through our behaviours⁸⁷. However, as COVID-19 has highlighted, individuals with behavioural risk factors commonly associated with NCDs, such as smoking, alcohol use, obesity, and physical inactivity, are more likely to experience severe symptoms from COVID-19⁸⁸. As a result, there are specific issues that health workers consider when working with the Sikh community to prevent disease and protect health.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Amend or change unhealthy behaviours to ensure you are doing things that will maintain your health and wellbeing – eating healthily, engaging in physical activity, resting and maintaining contact with others at your Gurdwara and in the local community can all help with your physical and mental health.
- Make sure you attend any hospital and GP appointments for check ups.
- Take vaccinations to ensure you are protected against illnesses such as COVID-19 and the flu.
- If you are travelling abroad, ensure you have your vaccinations and take extra precautions when drinking and eating foods when you are out and when travelling.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

- Ensure you adopt good personal hygiene practices to maintain your health and to help reduce the spread of infections and viruses – such as bathing or showering, washing your hands after going to the toilet, regularly washing your hands whilst preparing food, covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Gurdwaras can deliver training courses, workshops, conferences and seminars to educate the Sangat around health protecting behaviours such as good personal hygiene, safe food preparation and safety when travelling abroad. Work with health workers who are already working with the Sikh community so they can better understand Sikh people's needs.
2. Organise outreach work and targeted work with particularly vulnerable groups in the Sangat – if there are individuals who are housebound or isolated from others, of particular benefit to them will be initiatives that aim to engage them and support them in their homes. Volunteers can be trained to help with this work.
3. Gurdwaras could provide additional community services and activities – religious discussion groups, healthy cooking classes, physical activity classes and arts and crafts are all examples of group work that can help people engage with health messages.
4. Engage other organisations who may already be working to address these issues. By collaborating with other organisations who already provide services and identifying specific ways that work can be targeted to the Sikh community you can utilise initiatives that have been used with other communities and apply them to the Sikh community.

5. Media campaigns can be developed to help raise awareness of diseases that are of increased risk in the Sikh community; this can be done through images of Sikh people and messages in Panjabi language.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਪਣਾ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਰਾਇਦਾ ॥੧੫॥

Creating the creation, You gaze upon what You have created; You cause all to do their deeds. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 1035

ਸਚਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਣਿਆ ॥

ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਇ ਸਚੁ ਪਛਾਣਿਆ ॥

True is the Hukam of Your Command. To the Gurmukh, it is known.

Through the Guru's Teachings, selfishness and conceit are eradicated, and the Truth is realized. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 144.

ਅਕਲੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਹ ਕੈ ਬੁਝੀਐ ਅਕਲੀ ਕੀਚੈ ਦਾਨੁ ॥

Wisdom does not come by reading textbooks; wisdom inspires us to give in charity. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 1245.

RESOURCES

- Covid vaccination for Sikhs: <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/empowering-the-community/covid-19-vaccination-information/>

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

- World Health Organisation advice: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/covid-19-vaccines/advice>
- UK government foreign travel advice - about travelling abroad, including the latest information on coronavirus, safety and security, entry requirements and travel warnings: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

CASE STUDIES

- **Glenwood Sahib Gurdwara Sikh Gurdwara** (Sydney, Australia) This gurdwara worked with the local vaccination outreach team to help vaccinate their Sangat. They created a video of the event and shared it on YouTube so the messages could be accessed by others after the event. (See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xo7oWysNS9Q>)
- **Three-day mental health and wellbeing event, Gurdwara Sahib**
The event included a range of talks on subjects from experts, professionals and counsellors and an exhibition about the work of charities in and around the town. The event had a focus on protecting against disease and preventing ill health. (See <https://www.warwickshireworld.com/news/people/three-day-mental-health-and-wellbeing-event-for-all-to-be-held-at-sikh-temple-in-leamington-2073840>)



The Sikh Helpline distributing food to the vulnerable and isolated during the Covid-19 pandemic in England.



PROMOTING VACCINATION UPTAKE

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Vaccinations can be given to protect against harmful diseases before people get into contact with them. Vaccinations are usually given by an injection, but some cases can be through the mouth or sprayed into the nose. They use the body's natural defences to build resistance to specific infections and makes your immune system stronger.

NHS vaccines are safe and strongly recommended, but the decision to take a vaccine is down to personal choice. The COVID-19 pandemic led to widespread discussion around testing, the use of vaccines and their safety and it uncovered some of the myths surrounding vaccination programmes in communities. As in other cases, the specific issues for the Sikh population have not been widely researched and evidenced, but vaccination and the Sikh community's uptake of vaccination programmes can be improved. This is highlighted by the Birmingham Sikh community profile⁸⁹ which identified lower COVID-19 vaccination rates in the Sikh community compared to the general population.

There are already many initiatives in place to promote vaccination; whilst these are targeted at all populations, some materials are provided in Panjabi, which are specifically aimed at the Sikh community. Those following the Sikh faith are encouraged to take up vaccinations and some of this targeted information aims to challenge myths; for example, whilst Sikhs who have taken Amrit are largely vegetarians, they are permitted to take animal-derived medications such as Pfizer's SARS-CoV-2 vaccine, which is derived

from components from chicken egg as this is considered a life-saving circumstance or where no alternates are available⁹⁰.

Vaccinations not only protect the individual but also prevent transmission of diseases, benefitting their families and communities also. Since vaccines were introduced in the UK, diseases like smallpox, polio and tetanus that used to kill or disable millions of people are either gone or seen very rarely. The annual flu vaccine also helps to protect the most vulnerable groups from serious or fatal illness⁹¹.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Vaccination can help protect you from potentially life-threatening illnesses. Vaccines are safe and effective, but if you have any doubts, learn about the benefits of vaccines by speaking to your GP or take a look at reliable sources on the internet, like NHS Choices.
- Speak to family, friends and other members of the Sangat who have had vaccines so that you can appreciate and be aware of what to expect.
- As a Sikh you are not prohibited from taking any vaccines, you are encouraged to take them to maintain a healthy life so you can go on to continue to help others.
- If you are travelling to visit family in India or other parts of the world, ensure you speak to your GP and have the relevant vaccinations for the country you are visiting before you travel.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Promote the value of vaccinations to your Sangat and help people to overcome any anxieties around the benefits and side effects. Written and video materials are available and can be produced in Panjabi that can be easily shared with the community.
2. Work with health providers so relevant vaccination services can be offered within the Gurdwara and where necessary, people can be advised and supported in Panjabi language.
3. Deliver training courses, workshops, conferences and seminars around vaccinations to educate the Sangat and to help those working with the Sikh community to better understand Sikh people's needs.
4. Understand how individual beliefs in the Sangat may affect a Sikh's willingness to take up vaccinations and identify the myths so these can be addressed. By identifying the specific reasons which affect the uptake of vaccinations in the Sikh community, tailored services can be provided to this community.
5. Engage other organisations who may already be working to address these issues. By collaborating with other organisations who already provide services and identifying specific ways that work can be targeted to the Sikh community you can utilise initiatives that have been used with other communities and apply them to the Sikh community.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਜੋਬਨਿ ਸਾਸੁ ਹੈ ਤਬ ਲਗੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇ ॥

As long as there is youth and health, meditate on the Naam.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 82

ਆਸ ਅਨਿਤ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮਿਟੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਅਰੋਗ ॥੧॥

Hopes and desires for transitory things are erased for the Gurmukh; O Nanak, the Name alone brings true health. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 254

ਸਰੀਰ ਸ੍ਰਸਥ ਖੀਣ ਸਮਏ ਸਿਮਰੰਤਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਮ ਦਾਮੋਦਰ ਮਾਧਵਰ ॥੫੦॥

Whether his body is healthy or sick, let Nanak meditate in remembrance on You, Lord.
Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 1358

RESOURCES

- Covid vaccination for Sikhs: <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/empowering-the-community/covid-19-vaccination-information/>
- World Health Organisation advice: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/covid-19-vaccines/advice>
- UK government foreign travel advice - about travelling abroad, including the latest information on coronavirus, safety and security, entry requirements and travel warnings: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

CASE STUDIES

- **Covid vaccination Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Bedford**

Fully trained vaccinators administered the jab at the gurdwara. Setting up Covid vaccination centres inside places of worship helped build community trust in the vaccine and increased awareness.

(See <https://healthcareleadernews.com/covid-19/mosque-and-gurdwara-vaccination-centres-will-help-build-trust-and-dispel-vaccine-myths-say-faith-leaders>)

- **Gurdwaras working with the NHS around Flu and Covid vaccine update**

An initiative that included consultations with Sikh gurdwaras and their Sangat in Birmingham to overcome the challenges of vaccination. The findings have been used to help target specific work with these communities.

(See <https://www.scwcsu.nhs.uk/news-and-views/blog/improving-flu-vaccination-uptake-learnings-from-our-experience-of-covid-19>)



PROMOTING HEALTH SCREENING

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Screening is a way of finding out if people have a health problem so that early treatment can be offered or information given to help them make informed decision about treatment and to prevent the health problem from developing or worsening. Screening is often targeted at healthy people who have an increased risk to a particular condition so they can most benefit from a treatment. For example, in the Sikh community, diabetes is often higher than in other communities, so regular checks to see if you have diabetes can help you to change your behaviour to prevent your risks from developing it, or from becoming seriously ill from diabetes.

As in other cases, the specific issues for the Sikh population have not been widely researched and evidenced, but there is some evidence that will assist and guide work in this area. However, improving the Sikh community's uptake of screening programmes can be improved. Screening for health issues is offered to people at various times in their lives.

The Birmingham Sikh community profile identified that the uptake of different cancer screening programmes is lower in ethnic communities, especially South Asian communities, but again there are very few studies that explore this through the prism of faith and religion. In the few studies that do explore this issue within the Sikh community, bowel cancer screening was lower when compared to the general population. Research has highlighted that 34.6% of Sikhs take up screening compared to 61% of the general population.

The reasons for this have also been identified in other studies and include low awareness of the disease and understanding around the screening process, which is also attributed to the lack of information in languages other than English and a reliance on younger family members to assist with translation during consultation with a GP or other medical professional.

There are already many initiatives in place to promote screening; whilst these are targeted at all populations, some materials are provided in Panjabi, which are specifically aimed at the Sikh community. Those following the Sikh faith are encouraged to take up screening and some of this targeted information aims to challenge myths and stigma – such as, having a diabetes test may lead to diabetes or that Sikhs do not need to have a HIV test as it does exist in our community.

Cervical Cancer Screening

Sikh women also face barriers in getting cervical cancer screening; for instance, Sikh women strongly preferred to have female health practitioners for sexual and reproductive health services⁴⁵. Many Sikh patients and their families had limited understanding of sexually transmitted diseases and infections (such as HIV/AIDS). Not speaking English is an additional barrier for some in understanding the disease/infections and seeking treatment⁴⁶.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Screening is provided to help identify issues earlier so you can benefit from treatment. If you have any doubts, learn about the benefits of a screening test by asking your GP for information or take a look at reliable sources on the internet.
- Speak to family, friends and other members of the Sangat who have undergone health screening tests so that you can appreciate and be aware of what to expect.
- As a Sikh you are not prohibited from undertaking any screening tests, you are encouraged to take them to maintain a healthy life so you can go on to continue to help others
- Tailored sexual health resources: Sexual health (including cervical and prostate screening) and sexually transmitted diseases/ infections resources need to be developed which are in English and Panjabi languages and culturally relevant. Religious leaders need to lead and encourage open and honest conversations about sexual health in their communities.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Promote the value of screening to your Sangat and help people to overcome any anxieties around the process and what support is available if screening identifies that they have a health issue. Written and video materials are available and can be produced in Panjabi that can be easily shared with the community.
2. Work with health providers so relevant screening and testing services can be offered within the Gurdwara and where necessary, people can be advised and supported in Panjabi language.
3. Deliver training courses, workshops, conferences and seminars

around screening to educate the Sangat and to help those working with the Sikh community to better understand Sikh people's needs.

4. Understand how Sikh people's beliefs may affect their willingness to take up screening and identify the myths so these can be addressed. By identifying the specific reasons which affect the uptake of screening in the Sikh community, tailored services can be provided to this community.
5. Engage other organisations who may already be working to address these issues. By collaborating with other organisations who already provide services and identifying specific ways that work can be targeted to the Sikh community you can utilise initiatives that have been used with other communities and apply them to the Sikh community.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥

By the karma of past actions, the robe of this physical body is obtained. Through Grace, the Gate of Liberation is found.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 2

ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ ॥

This human body has been given to you through Divine Grace. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 12

ਸਚੁ ਕਰਣੀ ਦੇ ਪਾਈਐ ਦਰੁ ਘਰੁ ਮਹਲੁ ਪਿਆਰਿ ॥

By true actions, this human body is obtained, and the door within ourselves which leads to the Mansion of the Beloved, is found.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ang/page 18

RESOURCES

- NHS – The NHS The NHS Health Check is a health check-up for adults in England aged 40 to 74. It's designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check/#:~:text=The%20NHS%20Health%20Check%20is,ways%20to%20lower%20this%20risk>

CASE STUDIES

- **Cancer Awareness Event - Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick.**

Initiative between the Sikh Doctors Association and the Gurdwara. The key aim of the event is to raise awareness of cancer (red flags), reduce fear and stigma, improve uptake of national screening programmes and signpost to support available for those living with and beyond cancer.

(See <https://www.scvo.info/event/cancer-awareness-event-sunday-8th-march-smethwick>)

- **Tuberculosis (TB) screening events in Birmingham Gurdwaras** People aged 16-35, were born in India (or have spent more than six months in India) and have entered the UK within the last five years, could be carrying TB. Known as latent, or 'sleeping', TB, it can be detected by a simple blood test. Birmingham NHS teams worked with local gurdwaras to screen eligible people, who may be carrying tuberculosis (TB) without realising it.



MANAGING DIABETES

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Diabetes is a serious and life-threatening condition where your blood glucose levels are too high because your body is not producing enough insulin or the insulin it is producing is not effective (Type 2), or it cannot produce any at all (Type 1). Over a long period of time, high glucose levels in your blood can seriously damage your heart, your eyes, your feet and your kidneys. These are known as the complications of diabetes.

Diabetes is perhaps one of the most widely known diseases in Sikh community. This is probably because if you are from a South Asian community you are at a higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes; a point noted by Diabetes UK⁹⁵, one of the leading charities in this area. Some studies have even found that Indian people are between 2 and 6 times more likely to develop diabetes compared to the White population due to a genetic predisposition⁹⁶. Whilst much is being done to raise awareness, the rates of diabetes remain high in the South Asian population, but there are no studies that explore the prevalence of diabetes exclusively in the Sikh community. However, one study showed that high levels of education were found to be associated with lower incidence of Type 2 diabetes⁹⁷, suggesting that education and awareness can help reduce rates of this disease⁹⁸. Despite this they also found that young Sikhs who are well educated compared to other South Asian sub-groups, had higher rates of type 2 diabetes. This and another study by Sindhu⁹⁹ also identified that the uptake of preventative services is also low within Sikhs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recognise that you are at risk because you are from the South Asian community. Those with a history of Type 2 diabetes in their family are also at more at risk of developing the condition, so need to be extra careful. This is particularly a concern for people from the South Asian community.
- Be physically active and exercise regularly. One of the biggest risk factors for diabetes is diet and physical activity. Regular physical activity – e.g. housework, walking or attending the gym – can help you to lose weight and lower your blood sugar. Avoiding sedentary behaviours, such as sitting for long periods, has also been shown to prevent diabetes.
- Eat healthily. Eating foods that are high in sugar and foods that are high in carbohydrates can increase your risk of developing diabetes; choosing foods that are low in sugar and high in fibre can help reduce this risk.
- Lose excess weight. Eating healthily and being more physically active can help you to lose excess weight. Risks can be reduced by ensuring you maintain a healthy weight. Diabetes UK suggests that adults maintain a healthy BMI (Body Mass Index) range between 18.5 and 24.9; and as 'central obesity' (obesity around the waist) can increase the risk of diabetes in South Asian communities: waist size should be less than 80cm (31.5in) for women and 90cm (35in) for men¹⁰⁰.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

- Drink water. Replace fruit juice and sugary fizzy drinks with water, this will reduce your risk of developing diabetes and if you already have diabetes, it will help to better manage your condition.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Gurdwaras should discuss diabetes with their Sangat with the aim of helping them to understand how they can protect themselves and encourage people to seek help early from health services. People may have knowledge already, but some of this may be based on myths and misconceptions, so work with them on how to address these issues.
2. Gurdwaras can help their community to access health services, such as testing and health advice in Panjabi. By working with local health providers testing can easily be offered to people within the gurdwara and education can be provided around the risks.
3. You may find those with diabetes, or those caring for someone with diabetes, may be able and willing to assist in your strategies. They can share their experiences and help others understand how this issue affects them as a Sikh patient, and how they have managed to deal with it as a Sikh person.
4. Media campaigns can be developed raising awareness of diabetes and the increased risk in the Sikh community through images of Sikh people and messages in Panjabi language. This could be particularly effective during national diabetes awareness weeks and months (these dates vary but details will be available on sites such as www.diabetes.org.uk).
5. Gurdwaras with community halls and spaces could organise physical activity classes for their Sangat or healthy cooking workshops for the langar¹⁰¹.

SIKH REFERENCES

ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਸੀਤਲੁ ਸਾਚ ਸਿਉ ਸਾਸੁ ਨ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਕੋਇ ॥੧॥

One whose mind and body are cooled and soothed by the True Lord-no breath of his is wasted. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 35

ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਪਪੇਲੀਐ ਵਿਣੁ ਬੁਝੇ ਮੁਗਧ ਅਜਾਣਿ ॥

ਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਇਓ ਛੁਟੈਗੀ ਬੇਬਾਣਿ ॥

Arising each day, you cherish your body, but you are idiotic, ignorant and without understanding. You are not conscious of God, and your body shall be cast into the wilderness. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 43

ਕਰਮ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਰੀਰੁ ਜੁਗ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਜੇ ਬੇਵੈ ਸੇ ਖਾਤਿ ॥

The body is the field of karma in this age; whatever you plant, you shall harvest. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib** Ang/page 78

RESOURCES

- Diabetes UK provides a range of free advice and guidance for individuals and organisations. This is generally a good place to start to find overviews, examples of useful initiatives, and up to date research. <https://www.diabetes.org.uk>
- Diabetes and Endocrinology Centre at the Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust. This service provides a number of structured educational sessions for patients with diabetes, some are provided in local ethnic languages to patients from ethnic minorities who cannot speak English. <https://diabetesandendocrinology.heartofengland.nhs.uk>
- The diabetes service offers a comprehensive service for adults with diabetes. The range of care provided includes group education sessions delivered in English and a number of commonly-spoken South-Asian languages. <https://www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/patients-public/adults/diabetes/>

CASE STUDIES

- **Ramgharia Gurdwara (Coventry) Diabetes Awareness Event – 2019**
A large-scale community event was held on world diabetes day to raise awareness and share the prevention message about Diabetes. Working with Coventry NHS and the Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group, the gurdwara brought together a range of health workers to share information through talks and information stalls and Sikh community members to share their own experiences. (See <https://www.warwickshirenorthccg.nhs.uk/mf.ashx?ID=5e216cc2-75c2-4c6c-8161-75de3925e30a>)

- **Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara (Gravesend) - National Diabetes Awareness month, November 2020**
A media campaign run through their website to share details about diabetes. Members of the Sangat who have diabetes or care for someone with diabetes shared their personal experiences and the website also provided pictures of foods and how much sugar is contained in each. The resource remains available long after the event so it can continue to help keep all Sikhs informed. (See <https://www.gurunanakdarbar.org/post/national-diabetes-awareness>)



AN OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN EXPLORING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE SANGAT THROUGH GURDWARA INITIATIVES

Within the Sikh community, the Gurdwaras continue to be both social hubs as well as religious institutions. There are many initiatives taking place in Gurdwaras in Birmingham around developing well-being hubs in which Sikhs can access support. However, because of the stigma associated with seeking support for mental health, not many Sikhs will be willing to openly attend such sessions. Therefore, this needs to be a discreet approach. We suggest having emails and phone numbers openly marketed for Gurdwara attendees to access such support in a confidential manner.

Working closely with professional bodies and organisations is very important in addressing health in the Sikh community. A first point of contact would be Birmingham City Council who would have details of what is happening locally. A number of ways in developing new initiatives could include, but are not restricted, to the following:

- Media campaigns,
- Community development,
- Screening and testing,
- Education and training,
- Group work and one-to-one work,
- Peer education programmes
- Outreach work,
- Promoting self-care,

- Targeted work with particularly vulnerable groups,
- Arts work,
- Production and dissemination of materials,
- Training courses and workshops,
- Conferences and seminars,
- Information dissemination,
- Needs assessments and research,
- The development of policies and strategies,
- Promotion of strong inter-agency working,
- Work with commissioners,
- Work with the voluntary/community sector,
- Media work.

Engagement is very important and in terms of Leadership, this should be done through Sikh Gurdwaras since there is no one overall body or individual who represents Sikhs in Birmingham, or in the UK nationally. The very fact that there is a stigma attached to seeking support for mental health needs approaching with sensitivity and cultural awareness. Therefore, it is essential that Gurdwara management committees are made aware of the services being offered and how these workshops/seminars can be offered in the Gurdwaras.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

The following steps are recommended in implementing findings:

- When considering the context of Panjabi Sikhs and their relationship with food, the social context of food and identity needs to be given close attention alongside the dietary patterns of food choices.
- For educators and local councils, to work effectively with Sikh Panjabi communities, it is important to consider positive aspects of Indian foods and food preparation methods that are both healthy by western standards, alongside being acceptable within the Sikh Panjabi community.
- Therefore, with regards to health promotion and nutrition practices, it is crucial to acknowledge the diversity within the community as not all Sikh Panjabi individuals necessarily define 'healthy eating' in the same way.
- In order to teach collective generations about health care education, informed learning strategies that are collaborative are needed.
- Co-creation is crucial in developing health care interventions and speaking to younger family members in trying to reach the older generations is crucial as this can help to deliver important messages where language barriers and cultural sensitivities might be at play.
- Media campaigns and the production and dissemination of materials – to raise awareness of the needs of the elderly and the support available to them.
- Outreach work and targeted work with particularly vulnerable groups – if there are individuals who are housebound or isolated from others, of particular benefit to them will be initiatives that aim to engage them and support them in their homes.
- Respect the differences within the community and use a range of strategies to address health issues.
- Engage members of the community and other organisations who may already be working to address health issues.
- Evaluate your initiatives to see if they are successful – speak to those who are receiving the service and make changes based on this feedback.
- Appreciate that not all elderly family members will be living with their extended families: work and travel have meant that elderly people are increasingly living on their own, and may feel isolated or have a number of health and social care needs. Respect that individual social situations may be different and that families may need the support of external social care providers and they should not be judged negatively for this.
- Engage elderly members of the community and other organisations who may already be working to address these issues. Utilise initiatives that have been used with other communities and apply them to the Sikh community.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

This toolkit highlights recommendations for how Gurdwaras, and community centres, can support their Sangat with a variety of health-related topics to improve overall health and well-being of the community.

However, it is recognised that financial constraints may restrict how much support can be provided to the Sangat. Therefore, this section of the toolkit can be utilised to signpost to relevant funding portals.

BIRMINGHAM VOLUNTARY SERVICE COUNCIL

Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) is the leading voluntary sector support body in Birmingham, committed to ensuring that voluntary action can thrive and make a positive difference for everyone in Birmingham.

BVSC provides support for organisations looking to identify new income streams and business development approaches that will help organisations grow and thrive.

- **Business Development and Funding Network**

Any individual working in the voluntary, community, faith or social enterprise sector in Birmingham can join the network for weekly webinars to hear the latest funding opportunities and get tips for successful applications. Join the network (www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WKVG3YL).

- **Engage for Funding Portal**

Funding search portal available to BVSC members whose annual turnover is less than £1m. Registration will provide immediate, free access to a comprehensive database of funding opportunities. Access the Engage for funding portal here (<https://funding.idoxopen4community.co.uk/engageforfunding>).

- **Business Development Webinars & Resource**

In 2020 BVSC successfully secured funding from the National Lottery Community Fund Covid-19 Relief, to support the sector with accessing funding opportunities. Business Development Webinars & Resources (<https://www.bvsc.org/business-development-webinars-1>).

FINDITINBIRMINGHAM

FinditinBirmingham promotes local opportunities to local organisations via the 'opportunities' section of their website from a variety of funding sources, including Birmingham City Council. Funding opportunities on FinditinBirmingham (<https://www.finditinbirmingham.com/opportunities>).

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If your Gurdwara or community centre requires any additional support in locating available funding opportunities, please contact the Communities Team at Birmingham Public Health at CommunitiesTeam@birmingham.gov.uk

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY CHECKLIST

CONTENTS

Table 1: Vision

Table 2: Gurdwara Committee and the Sangat

Table 3: Planning

Table 4: Training

Table 5: Resources and Collaborations

Table 6: Communication

Table 7: Evaluation and Sharing Good Practice

Table 8: Topic Specific Summary of Tips

ABOUT THE CHECKLIST

The development opportunity checklist was developed for faith settings to reflect on the services that they provide for their faith settings and their users. The checklist is split into eight sections, including the themes discussed throughout the Healthy Faith Setting toolkit. The checklist is design to help gather information on:

- The current levels of health promotion activities;
- Solutions to develop new initiatives;
- Leadership, implementation and planning on findings of key sections: for example, decreasing isolation, raising awareness of diseases and screening, signposting to specialist services;

- Reflecting on how inclusive services are, covering all ages and gender expressions
- Training and development opportunities for staff and volunteers

The development opportunity checklist can help faith settings to demonstrate their impact and evaluate their work for development opportunities to better the health needs of the faith settings users.

If you require support in completing this checklist, then please contact the Communities Team at Birmingham City Council:

CommunitiesTeam@birmingham.gov.uk

USING THE CHECKLIST

Things to Consider

When completing the different sections of the development opportunity checklist, consider using a 'SWOT' framework to help with strategic planning of health and well-being projects.

Strengths: consider what you do well as a Gurdwara or Sikh organisation currently, your strongest assets, what resources there currently are to help support any health and well-being projects.

Weaknesses: consider what areas of health and well-being can be improved within the Gurdwara or Sikh organisation, what resources aren't currently available that could support any projects, what skills need developing among the Committee, which areas may external support be needed.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Opportunities: this refers to any external factors which could support your Gurdwara or Sikh organisation, this might include considerations on how you will reach more people or connections with key professionals who can support in the delivery of health and well-being topics.

Threats: this refers to any factors which have the potential to harm the Gurdwara or Sikh organisation. This may include topic areas which are not appropriate to cover in a Gurdwara or with certain Sikh groups.

Current Progress

This area of the checklist provides an opportunity to review what is currently being done at the Gurdwara or Sikh organisation to address health and well-being topics. Information in this section should cover what projects are currently ongoing, what resources and support is available or what future plans include if currently there is no progress against the checklist question. This section can also be utilised to reflect on what can be added to the current progress.

e.g., Are projects delivered in the appropriate language(s) for the group? Currently, any projects relating to health and wellbeing are delivered in appropriate languages for members of the Sangat, mainly Panjabi and English.

Action Points and Action Owners

This section of the checklist should be used to identify the next steps in working towards the specific health and wellbeing goal, as well as identifying who is responsible for specific actions.

e.g., to support in sharing information about local health and well-being services we will continue identifying and developing contact with local services that may be used for members of the community to engage with. Our volunteer lead will be responsible for building relationships with contacts from these services.

Comments

This section of the checklist can be used to cover any specific points to your Gurdwara or Sikh organisation that have not been addressed in the current progress or action points columns. This may include specific considerations needed for certain congregations, inclusion of any relevant SWOT analysis, or general feedback and comments. This section may also be used for general comments relating to this toolkit.

e.g., Have you considered the various forms of media to communicate health and well-being messages and promoting events with the Sangat? When creating resources for older adults, the Gurdwara should consider focussing on print media with larger font due to digital exclusion and accessibility.

Ideas for Health and Wellbeing

At the end of the toolkit there are some ideas for the Sikh community on activities that could be completed at the Gurdwara to address the health topics identified throughout the toolkit. Please use the ideas written and share any additional ideas with us at CommunitiesTeam@birmingham.gov.uk

We would love to be able to share your great ideas with other Gurdwaras within Birmingham.

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Checklist 1 (Vision)

Section	Checklist Question	Current Progress	Action Points and Action Owners	Comments
1a	What is the overall vision for health and well-being in the Sangat?			
1b	Are you aware of the important problems faced by the Sangat?			
1c	What key areas do you want to address?			
1d	How confident are you as a Gurdwara in being able to address these key areas?			
1e	What are the timelines to achieve this?			

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Checklist 2 (Gurdwara Committee and the Sangat)

Section	Checklist Question	Current Progress	Action Points and Action Owners	Comments
2a	Does the Gurdwara or Sikh organisation have a lead for health and well-being, as well as a wider health committee or members of the Sangat with relevant skills?			
2b	Are the management committee and other key members of the Gurdwara involved in discussions about health and well-being projects?			
2c	How will you bring members of the Sangat and other volunteers on board with the delivery of the key areas and aims?			
2d	Are healthcare professionals from the Sangat involved in bringing their skills to the health and wellbeing team?			
2e	Is the Gurdwara management committee and other key members aware of ethical considerations around the project?			

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Checklist 3 (Planning)

Section	Checklist Question	Current Progress	Action Points and Action Owners	Comments
3a	Do you have a plan for improving the health and well-being of the Sangat using this toolkit?			
3b	Have you identified key areas for development in health and wellbeing for the Sangat? Have you considered what training you will need to develop in health and wellbeing?			
3c	Are the planned activities and approaches inclusive in their offering to different groups in the Sangat? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children • Adults • Older adults • Women • People with disabilities 			
3d	Have you considered safeguarding through DBS checks?			
3e	Do the plans factor in religious and cultural sensitivities?			

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Section	Checklist Question	Current Progress	Action Points and Action Owners	Comments
3f	Are projects delivered in the appropriate language(s) for the group?			
3g	Are you confident in underpinning Sikhi when highlighting the key areas to be delivered?			
3h	Have you considered any limitations of delivering the project, for example, what is achievable and what requires additional support? Consider where you can try to get additional support.			
3i	Do you know where to find the latest advice on health and wellbeing issues?			
3j	Is faith, reference to scriptures and religious teaching included in the health and well-being projects?			

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Checklist 4 (Training)

Section	Checklist Question	Current Progress	Action Points and Action Owners	Comments
4a	<p>What specific training needs are required for the team to deliver the project or projects?</p> <p>What organisations can support/deliver the training to improve confidence and skills for the Gurdwara?</p>			
4b	Does the team know where to signpost the Sangat to specific services, for example stop smoking services, weight management, health screening?			
4c	How will opportunities be provided for the team to develop their skills?			
4d	How will you measure success of the project? For example, will you collect a questionnaire, will you look at improving rates of a certain health behaviour?			
4e	How will you ensure that learnings from things that didn't work so well are taken forwards into future projects?			

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Checklist 5 (Resources and Collaborations)

Section	Checklist Question	Current Progress	Action Points and Action Owners	Comments
5a	Have you made a list of resources required to deliver the project? If there are further resources required, how do you plan on filling these gaps?			
5b	Could you collaborate with other Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations to run projects locally?			
5c	Do you have any collaborations with other Gurdwaras nationally who can provide ideas and support for projects?			
5d	How will you link into services already being offered?			
5e	Are you already working with local services to deliver similar projects? Could these be shared with other Gurdwara across Birmingham to promote local services and share success?			
5f	Does the Gurdwara or Sikh organisation encourage its Sangat to engage with local health service patient groups and forums?			

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Checklist 6 (Communication)

Section	Checklist Question	Current Progress	Action Points and Action Owners	Comments
6a	To what extent, if any, are services at the Gurdwara marketed in the Sangat? How are they currently marketed and where are there gaps?			
6b	Is there a communications lead at the Gurdwara? If there is not, is this something that you can ask for support from other Gurdwaras, Birmingham City Council, or other local services?			
6c	How much stage time is devoted to communicating health and well-being messages and services for the Sangat?			
6d	<p>Have you considered the various forms of media to communicate health and well-being messages and promoting events with the Sangat?</p> <p>For example, Gurdwara website, newsletters in print, face-to-face, print media such as posters and booklets, social media platforms such as Facebook, twitter and Instagram.</p>			
6e	Do you use a variety of media such as images, videos, stories, educational resources and links to further information and organisations?			
6f	Is literature and communication accessible and printed or verbally delivered in both Panjabi and English?			

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Checklist 7 (Evaluation and Sharing Good Practice)

Section	Checklist Question	Current Progress	Action Points and Action Owners	Comments
7a	Are the projects making any difference to the overall health and wellbeing of the Sangat? (see 4d for how to measure success). How do you know this?			
7b	How will you gather open feedback on projects from the Sangat?			
7c	How will you ensure that learnings from the feedback are taken forwards for the next project?			
7d	Will you share the feedback with other Sikh organisations, external service providers and professionals? How will you try and do this?			
7e	Will the Sangat be offered an opportunity to give their views on the feedback gathered? If so, how will you offer the opportunity?			

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Checklist 8 (Topic Specific: Summary of Tips)

This section of the checklist provides some ideas for health and well-being projects that can be run for specific topics.

This list is not exhaustive and can be tailored to be specific to a particular Gurdwara or Sikh organisation.

Toolkit Section	Suggested Project Focus Areas	Comments (What Projects have been Implemented, Current Progress, Action Points and Action Owners)
Understanding the Wider Determinants of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local health providers. • Provide training and classes for the Sangat. • Provide additional community services and activities. • Work with local authorities and health providers. • Develop media campaigns. 	
Promoting Healthy Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address Sikh eating habits. • Food banks/Langar (in context of Sikh) • Produce culturally aware resources. • Develop targeted set of interventions. • Target different groups and generations. • Discuss changing life time dietary habits. 	
Promoting Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review what the Sangat wants. • Involve active members of the Sangat to be ambassadors of the project. • Regular sessions to be displayed on social media and community networks. • Display posters for physical activity in the Gurdwara which are tailored at different age groups. • Do you have practices in place to ensure cultural is addressed, such as women being able to participate comfortably in settings where men are present? • Encourage group visits to the local leisure centres by providing transport from the Gurdwara. 	
Promoting Healthy Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate younger people about healthy relationships. • Work with existing service providers. • Arrange talks or workshops by trusted healthcare professionals and professionals in Sangat. • Respect the many different relationships that people may enter into and do not negatively judge or discriminate against them. • Encourage family time. 	

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Toolkit Section	Suggested Project Focus Areas	Comments (What Projects have been Implemented, Current Progress, Action Points and Action Owners)
Promoting Healthy Choices: Conception and Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openly condemn those who abort their pregnancy in preference for a son. • Sexual and reproductive health resources to be developed and distributed in English and Panjabi. • Organise open and honest conversations about sexual and reproductive health. • Tackle anti-women biases within the Sangat through awareness events. • Develop sexual and reproductive health educational resources and community led interventions for the Sangat. • Promoting where family planning services are available for people in Birmingham outside of the Gurdwara. 	
Promoting Childhood Health for Sikh Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling programme with key themes of discussion. • Flexibility to gather ideas. • Small groups running at different times to involve more parents and grandparents. • Regularly maintained display board at the Gurdwara sharing local information specific to parents and children. • Organise Cultural Arts and Crafts workshops. • Making learning fun and engaging for children. 	
Promoting Ageing and Dying Well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise outreach work and targeted work with particularly vulnerable and socially isolated elders in the Sangat to enable elderly people to interact with each other. • Work with local health providers. • Address health and social care needs of the elderly. • Collaborate with other organisations who already provide services required for project. 	
Promoting Good Mental Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from professional organisations. • Talk about mental health in the Sangat. • Use of terms that are inclusive and promote positive mental health and wellbeing. Talk about professional services with the Sangat as a whole. • Provide 'safe' and 'brave' spaces either in the Gurdwara or elsewhere. 	

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Toolkit Section	Suggested Project Focus Areas	Comments (What Projects have been Implemented, Current Progress, Action Points and Action Owners)
Promoting Awareness for Prevention of Abuse and Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a stand against abuse. • Providing women and girls with a safe space. • Deliver educational programmes via primary care and public campaigns and outreach programmes. • Involve local healthcare and education infrastructure. • Provide women with financial insights and form filling. 	
Encouraging Avoidance of Risk Behaviour: Alcohol, Smoking, Gambling and Substance Misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function as support networks where issues around alcohol and substance misuse can be openly discussed. • Provide leaflets in Panjabi and English. • Fund projects on alcohol abuse. • Gather statistics on substance abuse and the effects of smoking. • Form partnerships with local services. 	
Preventing Against Infection and Promoting Health Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver training courses, workshops, seminars to educate the Sangat. • Organise outreach work and targeted work with vulnerable groups in the Sangat. • Provide additional community services and activities. . • Engage other organisations who may already be working to address these issues. • Develop media campaigns to raise awareness of diseases in the Sikh community. • Ensure the Gurdwara is setting an example for health protection by ensuring a clean and sterile environment with appropriate handwashing facilities. 	

SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

Toolkit Section	Suggested Project Focus Areas	Comments (What Projects have been Implemented, Current Progress, Action Points and Action Owners)
Promoting Vaccine Uptake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the value of vaccinations in the Sangat. • Work with health providers so Sangat can be advised and supported in Panjabi language. • Deliver training courses, workshops, conferences and seminars around vaccinations to educate the Sangat. • Understand individual beliefs around vaccinations in the Sangat. Understand the role community leaders can play in protecting against 'misinformation.' • Engage other organisations who may already be working to address these issues. 	
Promoting Health Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the value of screening to Sangat and help people to overcome any anxieties. • Understand the role community leaders can play in protecting against 'misinformation.' Work with health providers. • Deliver training courses, workshops, conferences and seminars. • Understand how Sikh people's beliefs may affect their willingness to take up screening and identify the myths. • Engage other organisations who may already be working to address these issues. 	
Managing Diabetes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss diabetes with Sangat. • Assist Sangat in accessing health services. • Encourage those with diabetes to share their experiences with Sangat. • Develop media campaigns to raise awareness of diabetes. • Organise physical activity classes and healthy cooking workshops. • Encourage stopping smoking and reduction of alcohol intake. 	

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SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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SIKH FAITH SETTINGS TOOLKIT

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