

ELREC Newsletter



Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council

Promoting Racial Equality and Fighting Racial Discrimination

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year !

Happy Chinese New Year too !

Professor Braj P Sinha, Chair

Issue 6

December 2005

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Editorial

Welcome to the sixth issue of ELREC Community Newsletter which aims to bring our readers news and information about our work as well as the latest development in the race equality field.

Membership Lecture

ELREC had its first session of Membership Lectures on 15 November 2005. Unfortunately due to personal circumstances, Roy Jobson, Director of Children and Families Services, was unable to join us on the evening. However Diana Dodds, Equalities Officer, kindly stepped in.

Around 30 people attended the lecture, mainly ELREC members, users and partners. It was a highly engaged audience with wide range of interests and concerns.

Some of the issues discussed included the following:

- Better publicity for the services available from the new Department
- Staff training

- Recruitment of BME staff
- Multi-ethnic staff consultation group
- Better resourced social services
- Lack of BME representation on Children's Panel
- Expectations of BME pupils attainment from early years
- Standardise good practice throughout the department
- Multi-lingual welcoming signs for all public places
- Progress on cultural and religious awareness

At the end of the Q&A, Diana agreed to share the issues with her department and possibly act on some of the suggestions made.

Multi-Agency Framework for Tackling Racial Harassment

City of Edinburgh Council Equalities Unit has recently prepared a consultation document on Multi-Agency Framework for People Experiencing

Racism. As part of the consultation process, ELREC has facilitated two discussion groups involving partners from the voluntary sector. Those participated welcomed the ethos of the framework however they were concerned about the practicalities of the framework. In particular how the framework will be resourced and the impact it would have on their work. Comments gathered in our meetings have been shared with Nick Croft, Senior Equalities Officer, who is co-ordinating the comments. If anyone is interested in receiving a copy of the consultation document, please contact Nick directly on 0131 469 3726.

Reflection

Like everyone else, we reflect on our achievements and shortcomings in 2005. With that thought, the staff team would like to thank all parties who have contributed to our success. We wish you all a fantastic 2006.

By **Nina Giles**
Director

Complainant Aid

In recent weeks the complainant aid service has received several requests from individuals seeking assistance with work place grievance procedures as they try to resolve their racial harassment and discrimination complaints. Many persons from the BME community are unaware of their employment rights on this matter and lack the confidence required to fully complete the procedures. It is hoped that this article will shed some light on this hot issue.

What on earth is the statutory grievance procedure ?

The purpose of a grievance procedure is to give employees a way to raise concerns about their working relationships or working environment with management.

Statutory Minimum Grievance Procedures have been around since 1 Oct 2004 when the Employment Act 2002 (Dispute Resolution) Regulations came into force. Under law, in most cases, these minimum procedures need to be followed by employees and employers in resolving grievances. It is important to note that these procedures do not apply to non-employees for example workers who supply services to employers.

When you start work with a new employer you must be given, within two months of your start date, a written statement of your employment particulars which must include a note of your employer's grievance procedures.

How do I raise a grievance?

Before using the grievance procedures it is recommended that you try to sort things out informally if possible. You can raise the matter with your line manager or if this is not possible to the next senior manager. If the situation is not resolved you can commence the formal grievance procedure. The following 3 steps detail the standard minimum statutory grievance procedure.

Step 1. You must state your grievance in writing with sufficient detail and send a copy to your employer. If you have difficulty expressing yourself in writing, ELREC can assist you.

Step 2. Your employer must then arrange a meeting to discuss your complaint and inform you of the decision and your right to appeal

Step 3. If you are not happy with your employer's decision you have the right to appeal against the decision at a further meeting. You must appeal in order to complete the procedure. If your appeal is still unsuccessful following this meeting then you can try to resolve your complaint by making a claim to an Employment Tribunal. If you choose to do this, you must normally wait for 28 days after putting your written grievance to your employer before you will be allowed to make a claim to an Employment Tribunal.

What should I put in my grievance letter?

There is no guidance in the Regulations as to how much information needs to be put into a grievance letter. As a guide your letter should contain enough detail for your employer to understand and investigate your complaint. Try to set out the key facts and basis for your complaint. It would be wise to itemise every area of concern. If your complaint includes unlawful discrimination then you should make this clear and state what kind e.g. racial discrimination.

The grievance meeting - Do I have to go?

You have a right to be accompanied to all grievance meetings by a fellow employee or a trade union representative. You have no automatic right to be accompanied to such meetings by anyone else such as representative from ELREC. You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meetings. If for unforeseen reasons you or the person accompanying you cannot make it to the meeting you must inform your employer. The employer should arrange another meeting and you should attend. Meetings must be conducted in such a manner that enables both employer and employee to explain their cases and must be held at a time and place that is reasonable for you.

What happens if the grievance procedures are not followed?

If your case goes to tribunal, the tribunal will decide whether the fact that the procedures were not followed was your fault or your employers. If the tribunal decides it is your fault any compensation awarded to you could be decreased by between 10% to 50%. On the other hand if the fault lies with your employer then the tribunal can increase any money awarded to you by between 10% to 50%.

*By Christine Maitland-Francis
Complainant Aid Officer*

New Developments in the Complainant Aid Service Race Discrimination and Harassment Practitioner's Forum

On 22nd November 2005, ELREC launched a new practitioners' forum for caseworkers dealing with race harassment and discrimination cases. The purpose of this forum is to share information developments, agree referral protocols and exchange best practice on handling racial discrimination and harassment casework. We felt it would be very beneficial for advisors to network, build working relationships and learn from each other in a supportive environment. Our goal is to help widen expertise on RRA casework and in so doing facilitate increased sources of information, advice and representation to victims from

Voluntary Organisations, Council Services and Trade Unions.

The inaugural meeting was attended by 8 persons which included representatives from the Citizens Advice Bureau, Amicus, Scottish Employment Rights Network, Victim Support and ELREC. Jill Sutherland, Head of Legal Affairs at the CRE provided a very informative presentation on recent legislative changes. We also had a healthy discussion on the role of trade unions in tackling racial discrimination and harassment.

The forum will meet quarterly. If you wish to attend, please e-mail me on cmaitland-francis@elrec.org.uk

Community Development

As Community Development Officer, one of the main aspects of my job is being out and about meeting with the different communities that stay in and around Edinburgh. In order to listen and act upon the concerns and issues that minority groups face, I have visited many different BME organisations and groups e.g. MECOPP, Edinburgh Chinese Elderly group, Skillnet, Pakistani Society and have yet to meet many more. Recently I have held an information drop in session at Edinburgh Refugee Centre along with our Complainant and Aid officer to provide information and support on any racial discrimination and harassment issues and have also held an information and discussion group on racism and mental health at Men in Mind. In order to widen who classifies as a 'minority ethnic group', I have recently visited the gypsy and traveller sites in Edinburgh and met with the communities to make them aware of ELREC and its services. At ELREC we are keen to work with every minority ethnic group who face inequalities.

One thing that I have realised and

this has been throughout all communities whether it be Chinese, Bengali, Pakistani, Polish, Spanish and many others is that speaking about racism is still as much of a challenge for some people as all those many years ago. So where do we stand now nearing the end of 2005? Some people have outright asked me why I am 'wasting my time....racism is as bad as it was all those years ago?' I get told all the time that 'it's not going to make a difference – racism is never going to go away.' So why do people feel that way then? People who have suffered years of racist abuse and violence have turned around and said to me that under no circumstances 'would they go and report it to the police....what difference is it going to make??!' If people are feeling this then how much racist abuse and violence is actually getting reported? Does Scotland actually show a true representation of how much racism is actually happening?

A recent survey carried out by the Scottish Executive found out that that over a third of Scots (38%) did

not believe that it was racist to use terms such as 'Paki' or 'Chinky' while 14% also believed that it was not racist to physically assault people from ethnic backgrounds. How can we celebrate multiculturalism and embrace diversity in Scotland when 71% of people believe that people from ethnic backgrounds should do more to fit in with the Scottish way of life?

So what does that mean? Does it lead us back to the politically correct argument? Are people actually more aware of what they can and can't say rather than a change of attitudes? What can justify the fact that 18% of Scots think that being verbally offensive to minority ethnic people was not racist, up 5% from similar survey last year. There are certainly more positive initiatives e.g. the One Scotland Many Cultures campaign, anti-racism adverts on TV and radio and Fresh Talent Initiative BUT do people really see racism as a serious problem in Scotland? Instead of raising awareness of diversity and the many cultures in Scotland, has it instead created a false sense of

Community Development Cont.

security that racism is slowly becoming eradicated due to all the positive initiatives and the promotion of multiculturalism? Why is it that Scots now perceive racism as less of a problem? There has been **19%** of a decrease from the previous year of people perceiving racism as 'very serious problem'. When the reality of the situation is actually that racist attacks reported have risen by **70%** in Scotland since 1999.

Although the study does highlight serious racist attitudes still lurking, it also shows that there has been some notable improvements in peoples attitudes compared to previous years.....but probably not fast enough for the people that I meet.

Lets do something about it.....Speak out against Racism.....

Lothian and Borders Police are carrying out ongoing Diversity awareness training for their staff on a weekly basis and as part of this training they have a lay interface section where they want to hear your experiences of racism in Scotland. This is a chance to work with the Police and have your voice heard!!!!

ELREC is looking for people from black and minority ethnic communities to come along and speak for 15 minutes. The participants will be expected to speak about their personal experiences of racial harassment and discrimination in Scotland e.g. How did it make you feel? How did you deal with it? Did you contact anyone for help?

We are encouraging people from all age groups and cultural backgrounds to participate. Participants will receive £10 each to assist with their traveling costs.

If you can commit yourself from 11.15-13.00 (free lunch included) on any Wednesdays please contact Shasta on 0131 556 0441 for further information. This could be one off or

on a more regular basis.

A few comments from those who have spoken at the training.....

"The Wednesday session made me feel good, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak out my anger and grievances. I take the speaking-out my dreadful experiences as inseparable part of my healing sessions. I have no friends in Scotland. It made me stronger to come out of the isolation I was subjected to after the unfair dismissal. It made me stronger to meet other people who had similar experiences like myself, so we can comfort and encourage each other, because we know exactly the pain. I want to be together with other victims like myself. We have to unite together and be stronger against racism." (Lay interface participant 1).

"As an asylum seeker, we are generally frightened of the police anyway....I cross the road when I see a police officer. I am glad I am doing this because I am less scared of the police now and I know this is making a difference." (Lay interface participant 2).

Recent festival events.....

ELREC have attended the Civic Receptions for the Diwali festival and the EID festival. Both festivals were well attended from the local communities and by the Lord Provost. Food, music and good company all round.

As for the Diwali festival, it was the first occasion where a Civic Reception has been organised by the City of Edinburgh Council to celebrate the event. Professor Braj Sinha, who organised the event said, *"In Edinburgh, a start has been made today and I urge the representatives of Sikh Gurudwara, Hindu Temple and the Indian*

associations to join hands with the City Council to celebrate this event year after years."

Cultural Pastimes.....

Hanukkah, the "Festival of Lights," starts on the 25th day of the Jewish calendar month of Kislev and lasts for eight days and nights. In 2005 Hanukkah begins at sundown on December 25.

The final day of the year, December 31, is called Omisoka in Japan. New Year's Eve, is an important day in Japanese tradition, occurring on the last day of the year. It is the day before the new year's day, the most important holiday throughout the year.

The 29th of January marks the first day of the Chinese new year!!! The Chinese community will be celebrating the year of the Dog for 2006. The Festival Theatre is providing a programme of events including Chinese folk dances, lion dance, acrobatic acts, Chinese music, Martial arts, songs and more on the 29th.

January also marks Eid-ul-Adha for the Muslims across the world. It is celebrated on the 10th day of the month of Dhul Hijja of the lunar Islamic calendar after Hajj. Hajj is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. This happens approximately 70 days after the end of the month of Ramadan.

I would just like to wish everyone happy holidays...whatever religion or faith you follow and may next year bring everyone health and happiness!!!

*By Shasta Hanif
Community Development Officer*

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights

By Tim Hopkins, Equalities Network
tim@equality-network.org

I have been representing the Equalities Coordinating Group (which consists of CRE Scotland, DRC Scotland, EOC Scotland, Age Concern Scotland, Equality Network, Scottish Human Rights Centre and Scottish Inter Faith Council) on the UK Government's Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) Steering Group over the past 12 months. The Steering Group is a group of stakeholders who are consulted by the Government on the development of the CEHR proposals.

There is still much that is undecided about the way that the CEHR will operate once it starts up in October 2007. A team of officials at the Women and Equality Unit in the Department of Trade and Industry in London is working on developing options for the CEHR's structure and work. The incoming CEHR Commissioners (to be appointed during 2006) will consult on this and take decisions around the end of 2006.

Some decisions have already been made however, and these are set out in the Equality Bill, which establishes the CEHR. The Bill is likely to be passed by Westminster in January 2006, and will probably not change much before then.

The CEHR is expected to replace the Disability Rights Commission and Equal Opportunities Commission in October 2007, and the CRE would be incorporated into the CEHR by March 2009. The

CEHR's remit will be wider than race, gender and disability, and includes age, religion/belief, and sexual orientation, and for the CEHR's promotional work the remit is wider still, covering equality for all.

The CEHR's three core duties as set out in the Equality Bill are:

- 1 the promotion of equality (for all) and diversity, and the enforcement of all the anti-discrimination legislation and the public sector equality duties
- 2 the promotion and protection of human rights (but only in reserved matters in Scotland, because the new Scottish Commissioner for Human Rights will deal with devolved human rights matters)
- 3 the 'groups' duty – this is the promotion of good relations, and there is a requirement in the bill to pay special attention here to race and religion/belief issues.

The Government say that the Equality Bill gives the CEHR all the powers of the existing three equality Commissions, including all the enforcement powers, and including the CRE's grant-giving powers that support the RECs.

However, there is a dispute about whether the CEHR will have sufficient resources: the Government have allocated £70 million a year. The CRE, DRC and EOC together receive £45 million, and some of the CEHR Steering Group members have estimated that £125 million a year would be needed for the

CEHR to do the job properly.

A lot of my input to the Steering Group has been in trying to ensure that the CEHR will be able to operate appropriately in Scotland. The Equality Bill gives the CEHR a Scotland Commissioner, who will chair a Scotland Committee which will have delegated authority over the promotional work of the CEHR in Scotland.

So decisions on research, advice and guidance, publications, and training provision in Scotland will be taken by that Committee, which will have a delegated budget for the work. Decisions on enforcement work will be taken by the Commission at GB level, but the Equality Bill says that the Commission must consult the Scotland Committee on those decisions.

These governance arrangements for Scotland represent a step forward from the statutory arrangements for the CRE, DRC and EOC in Scotland, but will obviously not ensure effectiveness. There are still big questions about resources and the equality law framework, and in particular about how the CEHR will organise its work, and there will need to be considerable work in Scotland over the next year to consider this. The Equalities Coordinating Group plans to organise a conference to focus on this, around March, which will be advertised in the new year.



Being an Asian and Living In Scotland in the 21st Century

I want to introduce myself as being an Asian girl living in Scotland, being raised to live in Edinburgh and fitting into this lifestyle is ideal - having independence, freedom of speech, good education and a range of different jobs but it is not all how it seems. I forgot to mention my religion and my cultural background, which plays a big part as how I am labelled. My family's culture heritage, traces back to Pakistan, although my family moved to Britain in the 1960s and my grandfather fought in the World War II, it is still not the same. My ethnic origin is Pakistani and I am perceived this way wherever I go

Reaching Out Programme By Aisha Sohail

Minority Ethnic Exchange 4 Youth (MEX4Y) is the official title for what was known as the Practitioners Exchange Forum.

During the previous meeting it was decided that it would be useful to have a hard copy of a resource detailing youth services specific to BME young people across Edinburgh. I am working on developing this as a handy pocket size booklet that will be young person friendly and worker relevant.

It was also discussed at length the development of a micro site that be

and wherever I will go. I am truly British or should I say 'Scottish' because I was born and bred here, I am like any other teenager, studying in education, having part-time job, going out and proudly having a Scottish accent, but because I am also Pakistani, I live two separate lives and most of the time it conflicts.

In some ways you can say, it is like having a spilt personality, the one person having different lifestyles. When I go out, wherever for example, work places I get asked the stereotyped questions over and over again. Are you getting married? Do you have to wear the Hijab? People need to understand the differences between culture and religion and now I have realised being an individual is a separate category. I think people's beliefs should be sacred, not be to be discussed. At the end of the day, it is your interpretation and your own opinion. I often get judged by my appearance and personal beliefs about religions, the world etc but this does not change me as being an individual although it may influence the way I live. It is good to know about your culture, your background as long it is not taken the wrong way.

multi functional in providing information about youth services, along with being interactive for workers to upload their current youth work programme.

The next meeting will consider the content of the micro site, what relevant information should be displayed, use of languages and accessibility. We also hope to explore other web site designs and begin to shape the MEX4Y micro site.

The next MEX4Y is happening on 22 February 2006, at 10 Wellington Court, from 11am to 1.00pm. A vegetarian lunch will be provided.

Being an Asian I have experienced racial abuse about my skin colour and it is often lead from stereotypes and discrimination, decades to come this problem may never be solved unless everybody works together, it take two to tango and obviously the two parties are sending the wrong messages to each other. We can never change unless we work together. I do feel it is time to make changes.

Many Asians I have met feel threatened living in Britain and feel there is not enough out there for them but in actual fact if you look around you would not know where to begin. Asians, girls or boys, need to be self-motivated and work hard to achieve their goal whether it is to succeed in University or to be successful in a career. We are all the same because we are all human; give other's the chance and vice-versa. It does not matter what colour of skin you are.

A-Naz 88

Youth Zone Members met with Malcolm Chisholm, the Minister for Communities on Monday 5th December at St Andrews House, Edinburgh. The meeting was a series of meetings hosted by YCSA in partnership with BE-MIS and the Scottish Executive, considering the backlash of 7/7 on Muslim youth in Edinburgh.



Young People in Edinburgh

Show Racism the Red Card

Edinburgh and the Lothian's future footballing talent took to the turf on 22 October 2005 to show racism the red card at Hailes Quarry Park.

A typically Scottish wet Saturday morning of football saw Under 13's teams from across Edinburgh and the Lothians compete for the ELREC Show Racism the Red Card Trophies.

The event was organised by Edinburgh & Lothian Racial Equality Council, as part of Show Racism the Red Card Fortnight of Action. Wester Hailes Youth Agency whose state of the art youth centre became club house, changing room and canteen for the day. The event was also supported by Currie Star and Lothian Borders Police, and funded by Show Racism the Red Card and City of Edinburgh Community Safety Unit.

The Group games were closely fought affairs,



but after much team effort and determination, AC Oxfangs, Haddington Boys, Tranent Colts Blue FC and Musselburgh Windsor Colts progressed to the Semi Finals. For the players of Currie Star, Lochend YFC and the Pyramid Youth Centre it was a chance to relax after the

competitive group stages, enjoy a sandwich and a warming cup of tea and join the growing crowds for the Semi Finals and Final of the tournament.



AC Oxfangs saw off hot favourites from the group stages Haddington Boys, while the second semi final was a tightly fought treat for the crowd as Tranent out battled Musselburgh for a place in the final.

The deciding game of the tournament saw Tranent Colts Blue FC face off against Musselburgh Windsor Colts. Tranent eventually came out on top of this competitive tussle to take the 2005 ELREC Show Racism the Red Card

trophy.

The Organisers, Coaches, Referees (Thanks Sas & Steven from WHYA) and last but not least the Young People involved worked tirelessly to make the event a success and to raise the profile of the Show Racism the Red Card campaign in Edinburgh.

Cllr Ricky Henderson and ELREC Board Member Naren Sood presented medals and T-Shirts to all the participants and trophies were awarded to Runners Up - Musselburgh Windsor Colts and Winners - Tranent Colts Blue FC.



*By Tommy George
Youth Zone Support Worker*

BME Youth Zone meet with Tom Halpin Assistant Chief Constable A Life Perspective

On Thursday 9th December 2005, the Youth Zone at ELREC invited Tom Halpin, Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) of Lothian & Borders Police to come to the Youth Zone and meet with local BME young people. There was a shared

feeling between the young people and the ACC to explore some of the issues that were relevant to the lives of the young people.

The meeting was well attended by BME young people. The participants were from South Asian backgrounds and in total there were nine young people with two late arrivals, 10 of which were male and 1 female.

The approach that Tom Halpin used in raising some key points was very hands on and suited to the setting. The young people were engaged and found it particularly interesting that Tom spoke on a ground level detailing aspects of his life that the young people may never get an insight in to.

Tom spoke about his experiences of growing up in the West of Scotland, how he joined the Police force, the difficulties he faced and how he maintained his drive and focus

based on his determination towards his career. He also spoke about his real experiences in the police force and the diverse roles he has played throughout.

The setting was very informal, jokes were cracked and the young people were clearly comfortable and confident in asking questions throughout the discussion.

Towards the end of the meeting Tom opened up the session and invited the young people to raise any points they felt they wanted to discuss relating to community issues, policing, racism and how the police force is seen by the wider communities.

It is hoped that Tom Halpin will come back to the Youth Zone after 3 months. This time focusing on BME young people and their needs and perceptions of being young and living in Edinburgh.





New dental complaints service sees return of common sense

We all pride ourselves on our common sense. In this *Year of the Volunteer*, why not use yours a good cause?

Currently, if you complain about NHS dental work, then – if you fail to resolve the matter with the dentist or dental professional concerned – you can go to an NHS complaints scheme.

However, if you have an unresolved complaint about private dental treatment, you have very limited options. That's clearly unfair, and why the new Dental Complaints Service is being launched.

Set up by the General Dental Council, which regulates and is itself funded by dentists, the independent service will aim to resolve complaints about private dental work informally – as fairly, efficiently, transparently and quickly as possible.

First, patients will be encouraged to complain directly through a dental practice's own complaints scheme. If that hasn't worked, advisers will try to sort out the complaint informally between the patient and dental professional concerned.

If the advisers can't help, then the complaint will go to one of a series of regional panels being set up around the UK. That is where you come in. The panels will consist of volunteers – typically, two members of the public (lay volunteers) and a dental professional – with a brief to resolve complaints using common sense.

For both lay volunteers and professionals we will provide training. When actually

considering complaints, dental professional will explain any clinical issues. You won't be paid, but you will receive reasonable travelling and other expenses.

Nationwide, we are preparing for up to 2,000 complaints each year, resulting in perhaps 200 panels a year, completed in a morning or afternoon. We will hold complaints panels near to where complaints are made, during the day or perhaps in the evening or at the weekend, if that's what the parties concerned want. The aim is to be as user-friendly as possible.

Such an approach benefits not only members of the public, but dental professionals, too.

The vast majority of dental professionals are competent and conscientious, and patients have complete confidence in them. Only a small number find themselves the subject of a complaint. Generally, complaints arise when people don't get the service they expect. Lack of communication is often a factor, and sometimes the only real problem.

Could you be a member of a complaints panel? You would have to be fair and open minded; able to question and weigh up the different sides of an issue; and be able to express yourself clearly and confidently. In other words, you must have common sense. No special skills are needed. Anyone can apply. This is an opportunity to put something back into the community, to help people and to develop your own skills.

The Dental Complaints Service is due to launch next spring. To find out more about joining a complaints panel, call 08456 120 540 (local rate) or visit the General Dental Council's website www.gdc-uk.org and follow the links.

Take Control - Remote Reporting



The mission of Lothian and Borders Police is to serve the needs of all our communities and to ensure that we maintain a safe and vibrant society. I believe that we are stronger as a country through the diversity we find in our new Scotland. However we recognise that there are some people who would seek to destroy that cohesion and set communities against each other. Racism is a corrosive acid that could attack the bonds that hold our communities together as one Scotland. For that reason the Scottish Police regards the fight against racism as the highest priority.

It's clear that the terrible events, which took place in London this summer, have been used by racists as some way of excusing their behaviour. In speaking to our Muslim citizens I am told of the increase in casual verbal abuse and of the Islamic slant that is coming to the fore. A worrying trend has been peoples concerns that this abuse is "Islamophobic" and not racist. Some have said they do not report such abuse as they feel that the police cannot act on issues that are not racist. I know there are many reasons why people may not report such matters to the police and its true that the legal protection in

Do you enjoy reading, writing or working with numbers?
 Would you like to help other adults to develop their skills?



Get involved in adult literacy and numeracy volunteer tutoring!

We are looking for volunteer assistant tutors for our adult literacy and numeracy groups.

We need people who

- Have good listening skills, sensitivity, empathy and a sense of humour
- Have respect for different cultures, backgrounds and abilities
- Feel confident about their own English and number skills
- Are available to attend all sessions of the intro training
- Are available to volunteer during the day (usually 2 hours a week) for at least 6 months after training

We offer

- Scottish Qualifications Authority accredited training course (free)
- The opportunity to gain experience in an exciting and challenging field of work
- The opportunity to meet new people and make new friends
- Ongoing support and training
- Further training for people interested in gaining paid employment

Interested? Get in touch with Claudia Esslinger, Community Education Worker, phone: 0131 469 3000 X 4009, email: claudia.esslinger@educ.edin.gov.uk or gillian@clanedinburgh.org phone: 0131 270 6070



dealing with various kinds of bigotry and hatred changes depending on the circumstances. However its very important that everyone knows that we will record and investigate any issue that you as a victim feel is racist. Let us then have the opportunity to decide what laws we can use to protect you. If we allow issues to go unreported we allow that abuse to continue and we condone the racists action.

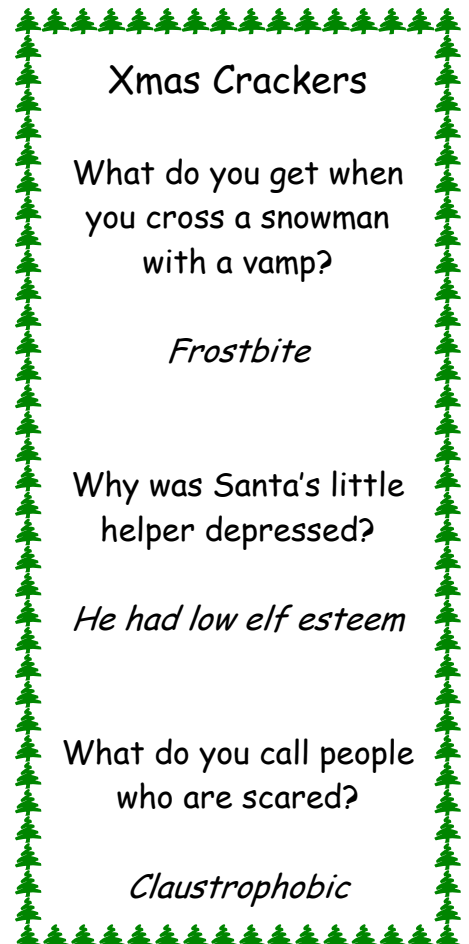
After 7/7, recognising the difficulty people face in making reports, we agreed to expand our remote reporting scheme, which allows the report of any crime or incident to be made through a neutral third party. The police will receive the report and act upon it but you need not have direct contact. Our hope would always be that people have the trust and confidence in their police service to make a full report directly to us but where there are problems we

would urge everyone to make the effort to tell us what is happening to them. The expansion of this scheme will see remote reporting facilities being available in NHS and Council Premises throughout the Lothian and Borders area. Look out for our posters.

For a list of current remote reporting sites please refer to the telephone number or website listed below.

We are committed to defeating the racists but we can only do it with the help of the people we serve. Lets work together and put racism into the dustbin of history where it belongs

Phone 0131 311 3909
 WEB www.lbp.police.uk/takecontrol



Xmas Crackers

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vamp?

Frostbite

Why was Santa's little helper depressed?

He had low elf esteem

What do you call people who are scared?

Claustrophobic

Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469-1539)*

by Dr Navraj

Born on 15th April 1469, Guru Nanak is widely revered as the founder of the Sikh faith and arguably one of the great synthesisers in world religion. Living in an Indian sub-continent dominated by the competing claims of Hinduism and Islam, it was the great achievement of Guru Nanak to generate a dialogue with and between both faiths – a dialogue that was to continue through the successive nine Gurus of the Sikhs and culminate with the creation of the distinct Sikh religion in seventeenth century. The subsequent development of Sikhism into a global faith of 23 million adherents with a commitment to gender equality and monotheism and a firm rejection of the caste system and proselytisation, can be laid squarely at the door of its iconoclastic founder.

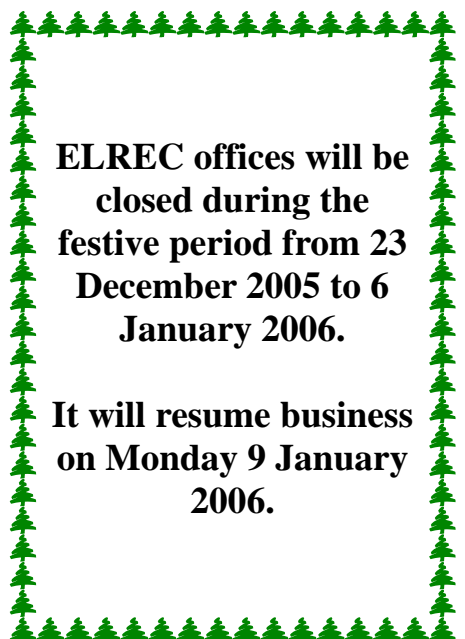
Known to Sikhs as Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the young Nanak grew up in what is today Pakistan (his birthplace, Nankana Sahib, is today impeccably managed by the Pakistani government). As a child he quickly developed a reputation for both a scholarly frame of mind (mastering Sanskrit and Persian with an almost Millian facility), and an usual sensitivity to religious and moral thought. He obtained a position as an administrator in the service of the local nawab, Muslim nobleman, as a young man but it was at the age of 28 that his spiritual awakening came. One dawn, whilst performing his daily meditation by the river, he is said to have heard the voice of God, after which encounter his first words were, "There is no Hindu, there

is no Muslim." These words formed the basis of the ecumenical creed that characterised his own thought and all Sikh thought that followed him.

This moment of epiphany was the catalyst for years of peripatetic journeying, known as the four Udasis of Guru Nanak. After extensive tours of India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and China, there followed travels to Arabia (including Mecca), Persia and Baghdad. The purpose of these wanderings was to pay homage at holy sites, to speak at mosques and temples and to debate with scholars. What marks out this life is the relentless engagement with a wide variety of faiths and positions. Nanak sought out the company of Muslims, Hindus and Jains in equal measure yet never attempted to convert nor accumulate followers. His core message rather was that Muslims live as true Muslims, Hindus as true Hindus. In a similar vein he was critical of conduct that he believed to be inconsistent with the best interpretations of these faiths, thus criticising empty ritualism, such as the caste system and the practice of widows joining their husbands on funeral pyres.

After decades of journeying Nanak settled in Kartapur in 1522, where he stayed until his death. This period is marked by a great poetic production (of the 947 hymns composed by Nanak, almost all were written at Kartapur, including Japji Sahib, the foundational prayer of Sikhism) but also the

establishment of many of the key institutions of Sikhism, including the strong commitment to labour, family life and one's community. Foremost amongst these institutions is 'Langar' – a free kitchen – which established the right of people of all castes and religions to eat at a Sikh temple, the Gurdwara. Taken together, what this formative period of Sikhism establishes is the social reforming instinct that is at the heart of Sikhism. Social inequality epitomised by the caste system, gender inequality in its myriad forms, poverty and religious bigotry were all attacked by the vision of Guru Nanak. To have taken such stances even a generation ago would have been radical almost everywhere in the world, to have done so nearly five hundred years ago is remarkable. On 15th November Sikhs celebrated the birthday not only of their first mover, but of a man whose message of tolerance and justice has never been more urgent.



ELREC offices will be closed during the festive period from 23 December 2005 to 6 January 2006.

It will resume business on Monday 9 January 2006.

Weaving Islam into Education

Drummond Community High School is a multicultural school in the centre of Edinburgh where for many years the diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds of its students and staff have added to the adventurous and tolerant nature of the school and its community.

For the past 10 years the school has run a Ramadan Club to support students and to celebrate the holy month. The club gives support both physically and socially to all its Muslim students and staff who are fasting and praying during the holy month. By encouraging non-Muslim students to attend the lunchtime club we offer education about Islamic beliefs and break down the barriers and myths which are unfortunately so rife in society and the media today.

The school makes provision for Muslim students to pray twice a day, offering washing and praying facilities in school and the chance to read the Koran. The prayers are supervised by volunteer staff. Students wishing to pray take a letter home to parents explaining to them how the system works and requesting permission for their child to miss approximately 15 minutes of lessons during the morning and afternoon. If parental permission is given then the student is issued with a 'green' card which they show to their teacher when prayer times occur. This system works well, the students are asked to sign a contract promising good behaviour and the staff are always very supportive.

Fasting from food and drink for the daylight hours is a huge challenge, particularly for the younger students and other students and staff are

encouraged to support their Muslim friends at this time. It is particularly important that staff are aware of some of the problems that students may suffer while fasting. Tiredness, lack of concentration, shortness of temper and lack of physical energy. The school tries wherever possible not to timetable exams or tests during this period and students are encouraged to let staff know as soon as possible if they feel unwell. The School Welfare Assistant can give students support and a brief period of rest if they need it. The whole of the school is kept informed about what is going on through regular features in the daily bulletin and Ramadan prayers at Drummond have now become the norm.

Lunchtime is particularly trying if you are fasting and the Librarian and a team of volunteer staff provide a haven for the Muslim students and their friends. The Ramadan Club is open every lunchtime to any student who does not eat and drink and it encouraging to see Muslim and non Muslim students getting together for a variety of fun activities. Using the computer, making displays and craft work, organising the Eid party, listening to music, watching videos, reading the Koran, praying, resting or just chatting.

This year we were lucky enough to secure an enterprise grant to employ Scottish tapestry artist Fiona Hutchison to help students design and weave a 'Drummond Prayer Mat'. The mat was designed by several classes in S2 who looked at the long and beautiful history of the

prayer mat from the time when the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) took off his coat and used it as the first prayer mat, to the beautiful examples from the middle and far east. In our research we discovered that prayer mats reflected the colours and the environment of the communities in which they were made and we wanted to make a 'Scottish' urban prayer mat to reflect the community in which Drummond's Muslim students live. The design included the path that a good Muslim should follow in life leading to paradise in the next life (Drummond students images of paradise included parks, Portobello Beach and the Scottish landscape).

The prayer mat was woven by Muslim and non Muslims, adult students, staff and the local community. The weaving was very popular, revealing lots of hidden talents and it is hoped to carry on the project with tapestries for other festivals celebrated in the school and the wider community. The prayer mat was 'cut-off' the loom at the Eid Party followed by a wonderful feast provided by students and their families. It will now hang in the school's main concourse.

As I said at the beginning, celebrating Ramadan at Drummond has now become the norm. It is important for Muslim students and their families to feel that the school honours and supports their religion and for the other school and community users to see Islam as part of modern Edinburgh life.

Annie Scanlon
Librarian
Drummond Community High
School

Back Page Information



ADVERTISING

We welcome organisations to advertise in ELREC Community Newsletter, for example:

- Promoting services
- Disseminating flyers
- Advertising
- Vacancies
- Consultations
- General marketing

This service is available for a contribution of £100.

To find out more, please contact Nina Giles on 0131 556 0441 or admin@elrec.org.uk

The newsletter is available on a quarterly basis.

CONFERENCE ROOM BOOKINGS

You can book our 20-seat meeting room on an hourly basis for £10 per hour

Tea & Coffee £1 per head

Please contact the office for any bookings

DONATIONS

ELREC is a registered charity in Scotland. We welcome donations however small, from individuals or organisations to help us to pursue our goal - *racial equality and justice for all.*

If you would like to share any interesting fundraising ideas with us, please give the office a ring.

SERVICES

Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council (ELREC), founded in 1971, is a voluntary body and charitable company made up of individual members and representatives from a wide range of organisations. ELREC has a remit to work across the areas of City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Councils.

We aim to:

- Work towards the elimination of racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups
- Promote and organise co-operation of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations

We pursue our aims through:

- Individual Complainant Aid Service
- Education and Training
- Campaigning
- Publications
- Consultancy and Signposting

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(W) www.elrec.org.uk

Charity Number: SC007896
Company Number: 183419

OUR TEAM

Nina Giles - Director

Christine Maitland-Francis - Complainant Aid Officer

Shasta Hanif - Community Development Officer

Aisha Sohail - Youth Development Officer

Tommy George - Youth Zone Support Worker

Elizabeth Obiegbu - Administrator

Wendy Huang - Cleaner