

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Meetings:

11th March 2014 a representative of Sikh Council UK was invited to join the National Prevent Challenge Panel and attended an initial meeting in Manchester.

18th March 2014 Individuals from Sikh Council UK were invited to attend the Parliamentary launch of 'Sikhs for Labour' held at the House of Commons, Westminster.

Media:

Various appearances by representatives of Sikh Council UK on Sikh broadcast media.

Interfaith work:

9th March 2014 Southwark Cathedral Inter-Faith Group organised a forum about faithbased social action including a musical evening, where friends of different faiths performed short songs or instrumental pieces from their own religious traditions. Representative of Sikh Council UK arranged for a Kirtan jatha to attend the event and perform Kirtan.

Update - Future of Census:

Further to the consultation exercise in which Sikh Council UK actively participated, the recently published report recommends that the 200-year old census should not be scrapped but the current paper forms mailed to households should be replaced with an online questionnaire.

The Sikh Council UK with its affiliated member organisations will continue to campaign for the inclusion of Sikhs as a distinct ethnic minority category along with Sikhs as a faith group within the census – whatever form it takes.

Update - Same Sex Marriages:

The Sikh Council UK actively contributed to consultations carried out by Government and the Equalities & Human Rights Commission and are pleased to confirm the Regulations and guidance accept that Gurdwaras (and other faith organisations) will not be required to conduct same sex marriages.

The Sikh Council UK continues to encourage Gurdwaras to formally pass a resolution that no Granthi, Kirtaniay or other Sewadas (employed or visiting) would be permitted to carry out Anand Karaj ceremony for same sex couples on any site in line with the ruling of Sri Akal Takhat sahib Ji. Draft resolutions are available from Sikh Council UK.

Update - Inclusion of Caste in Equality Act 2010:

The Sikh Council UK is considering the recently published report commissioned by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and will be commenting shortly. The Sikh Council UK will also shortly be circulating anti-caste discrimination policies for

Gurdwaras and other Sikh institutions to adopt but meanwhile would urge Gurdwaras and institutions to be aware of behaviour that could be interpreted as caste-based discrimination. In particular caste-based derogatory language has no place in Sikhi and needs to be strongly challenged and discouraged.

Update – ‘Correcting the Anomaly’ – Safety Helmets in Workplaces:

The Sikh Council UK has actively worked to bring about changes in legislation to prevent discrimination against Sikhs in workplaces where the law currently allows employers to insist on them removing their dastar and to wear safety helmets.

The Government has listened and the wording of proposed legislative changes has now been published. Whilst the changes proposed a big step forward for dastar wearing Sikhs, the Sikh Council UK remains concerned about some exclusions being incorporated and is made strong representations to this effect. The Sikh Council UK remains of the view that any exclusion should be considered on a case by case basis and not given as blanket exclusions in the primary legislation.

A detailed update report has previously been circulated on this work and is available from the Sikh Council UK.

Update – Visit to India by Sikh Council UK Delegation:

A number of Sikh Council UK representatives including members of the Board of Jathedars, Executive Committee members and Delegates to the General Assembly of Sikh Council UK formed part of a delegation that attended and participated in meetings, events, presentations and a press conference in India.

Most of the delegates were already present in India on family and personal visits and were able to join the delegation at some meetings and events. Other members specifically organised their personal visit to India to coincide with the visit of the delegation.

A detailed update report regarding the Voluntary Returns Scheme is attached. This was the primary purpose behind the delegation visit and the update report contains details of the visit.