

## Working with Faith Groups – Feedback from Sikh Charities

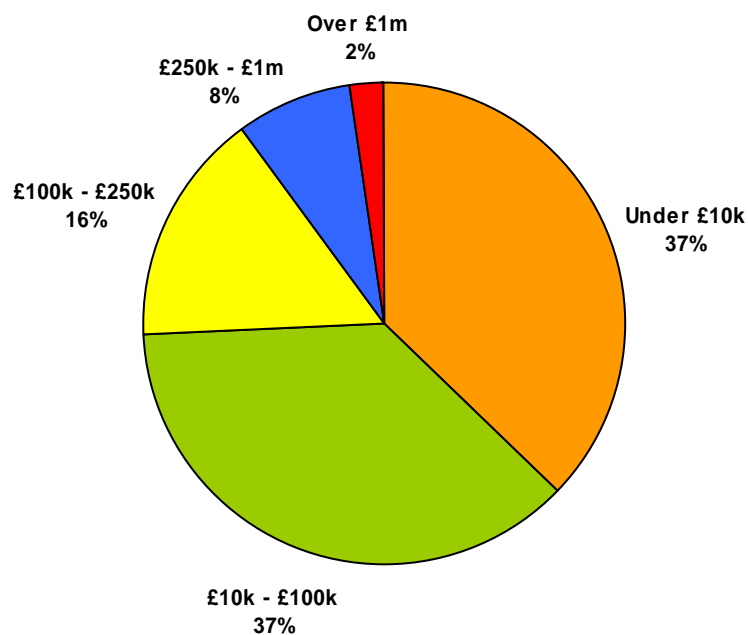


### A picture of Sikh charities in England and Wales:

There are approximately 233 Sikh charities on the Central Register of Charities, with a combined income of around £30 million.<sup>1</sup>

### Breakdown of Sikh charities by income band:

Almost half of Sikh charities have an income of less than £10,000, and just 2% of Sikh charities have an income over £1 million.



### The rate at which Sikh charities have been registering:

- 46 Sikh charities have registered with the Charity Commission in the last five years, with an average of nine charities registering every year.

#### Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jaltha (Birmingham) UK

The Charity registered with the Charity Commission in 1978, and has an annual income of almost £2 million. Locally the charity provides prayer services, teaching of scriptures and educational visits for students and teachers. Overseas the charity assists in the restoration and construction of sacred Sikh shrines, and has also purchased land in Kenya for the development of hostels, workshops and sports facilities for local indigenous youth.

<sup>1</sup> The statistics are based on information taken from the Register of Charities in England and Wales October 2007.

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### The Charity Commission's consultation with Sikh charities:

#### The consultation event:

The Commission held an event at the Nishkam Civic Centre in Birmingham on 29 March 2007. In total 77 delegates attended from 44 organisations. Delegates represented a huge variety of organisations from Education based charities like the Slough Sikh School Trust to smaller local organisations such as the H K Ahluwalia Charitable Trust.

#### Key issues raised at the events:

The issues that delegates raised with us broadly fell within four common themes:

##### On communication:

- delegates believed that the Commission should do more to educate the public about charity and the Charity Commission;
- delegates expressed a strong desire for more face - to - face meetings and events with the Commission;
- delegates felt that language could be a barrier for many and called for more publications to be available in Punjabi.

##### On fundraising:

- delegates said that Sikh charities experience difficulty in accessing grants due to their faith-based nature, and thought the Commission should assist them in demonstrating the value of their work to grant makers;
- delegates held the view that the Commission, in co-operation with HM Revenue & Customs need to develop a better understanding of the conflict between the requirements of Gift Aid and the Sikh requirement of anonymous giving.

##### On trusteeship:

- delegates called upon the Commission to provide capacity building sessions for trustees in order to give them the necessary knowledge of, and confidence in their responsibilities as trustees.

##### On Commission staff:

- delegates asked for a single point of contact within the Commission for Sikh charities.

#### Feedback from delegates at the event:

"It enabled me to approach you in the future without fear."

"It helps to meet different people and listen to different views."

"[It was important] to learn that you want to get to know faith organisations better and are trying to develop lines with the faith communities."

"It is better to organise such gatherings more often."