

DIARY DATE – All of June
Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month



Britain’s 300,000 Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have lived worked and travelled throughout Britain for over 500 years, yet they have been almost entirely written out of British History. Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month aims to change that.

www.natt.org.uk/what-grthm

DIARY DATE – Friday 20th June
World Refugee Day



The 20th June has marked World Refugee Day since 2001. A ‘Refugee’ is a person who is recognised as having a fear of being persecuted in their country for reasons of Race, Religion, Nationality, Membership of a particular group or political opinion.

An ‘Asylum Seeker’ is someone who is waiting for the government to decide if they are regarded as a refugee.

<http://www.unhcr.org.uk/>

DIARY DATE – Sunday 22nd June
Interfaith Day

Interfaith Day is an opportunity for all who value spirituality in their lives to connect and unite in a wish for a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS – myth or truth

Myth

All Gypsies live in caravans

Travellers commit more crime

Gypsies are dirty

Gypsies and Travellers are work shy

Truth

Not all Gypsies live in caravans. The majority of the 300,000 are settled rather than travelling. They live in permanent housing, authorised public sites or private sites. A small minority live in temporary unauthorised sites

There is no evidence to suggest that crime rates go up when Travellers move into an area. However one in 20 prisoners in England and Wales - or 5% - are Gypsy, Romany Gypsy or Irish Travellers which means they are significantly over represented in the prison system

Gypsy culture is built upon strict codes of cleanliness learnt over centuries of life on the road

Gypsy and Traveller labour formed the bed rock of the agricultural economy until mechanisation. Many Gypsies also sacrificed their lives for this country in the 1st and 2nd world wars

Gypsies and Travellers may experience unfair treatment or discrimination, from site owners, landlords, councils, other service providers and members of the public and are often the targets of verbal and physical abuse.

Below is Lincolnshire County Council’s dedicated web page:

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/gypsy-and-travellers/>

Religion and Belief – Equality Legislation

It is against the law for an employer to discriminate against employees because of their religion or certain beliefs.

Employment law defines religion or belief as any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief. A belief need not include faith or worship of a god or gods, but must affect how a person lives their life or perceives the world. Humanism, pacifism and atheism could be examples of philosophical beliefs. A political belief is an example of what would **not** be covered.

Below are issues relating to religion and belief that employers may have to consider dependent on the people they employ. These extracts are taken from the ACAS guidance on Religion or Belief;

http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/d/n/Religion-or-Belief-and-the_workplace-guide.pdf

Prayer - Some religions require their followers to pray at specific times during the day so employees may request to take breaks at these times. Employers should sympathetically consider whether it is practical and reasonable for employees to schedule their breaks to coincide with prayer times.

Workplace behaviours - Comments and jokes and the use of inappropriate language which may simply have been intended as ‘banter’ but can have the effect of being degrading or distressing. If employees preach to other staff or to customers, this could cause offence to those who hold different beliefs or no beliefs and may in some circumstances constitute harassment.

Time off for religious observance or festivals - Many religions or beliefs have special festival or spiritual observance days. An employee may request holiday in order to celebrate festivals or attend ceremonies.

Dietary requirements - Some religions or beliefs have specific dietary requirements. If staff bring food into the workplace they may need to store and heat food separately from other food, for example Muslims will wish to ensure their food is not in contact with pork (or anything that may have been in contact with pork, such as cloths or sponges). If alcohol is served at any work-related occasion, including social gatherings related to work, employers should ensure that non-alcoholic drinks are also available.

Modesty - Some religions or beliefs require individuals to behave with modesty. Different religious groups and individuals interpret this requirement in different ways but some activities which may be considered immodest include:

- shaking hands with a member of the opposite sex
- being alone in a room with a member of the opposite sex
- having their photograph taken
- dressing in a particular way

Dress - Some employees may wish to dress in a particular way for reasons related to religion or belief. Policies on dress or appearance should try to be flexible and reasonable concerning clothing, items of jewellery and markings which are traditional within some religions or beliefs.

According to the 2011 Census, the religious demographic of Lincolnshire is as follows:

Christian	68.5%
No religion	23%
Nothing stated	7.10%
Muslim	0.40%
Other religions	0.40%
Hindu	0.20%
Buddhism	0.20%
Judaism	0.10%
Sikhism	0.10%

Diary dates July 2014

Pride Events Summer 2014
11th July World Population Day

