**Consultation on proposed changes to Child Protection Registrations in the
Annual Child Protection Survey 2010/11**

Response from the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

Click here to read the Scottish Government draft Child Protection Registrations Guidance

We welcome the opportunity to comment on proposed changes to the ethnicity classification and religion question in the Annual Child Protection Survey.

Classifying Ethnicity

We welcome the acknowledgment that "*Ethnicity is a complex issue*" since there is no single factor identifiable as "ethnicity", but rather a variety of factors that contribute to an individual's sense of "identity", including the respondent's nationality, descent, race, religion, culture, and language, among others. All of these must be taken into consideration if the data are to provide useful information in this complex and often sensitive area.

Although we agree that consistency is important, it is not, as stated in the guidance, "*fundamental*". It is more far more important that the classifications should be meaningful, unambiguous, and intelligible than that they should be unduly constrained by either longitudinal or geographic comparability. The recommended ethnicity classification does not meet this standard, and we do not, therefore, support its use in the Annual Survey.

The 2001 census question, which offered an irrational mix of colour, nationality and geography as answers to a question about "cultural background" resulted in classifications that were '*confusing, inconsistent and inaccurate*' ('Ethnic Identity and the Census', Scottish Executive, 2005)[1] both as regards the question itself and the range and structure of the possible responses. Furthermore, many of the same problems are perpetuated in "Scotland's New Ethnicity Classification for Scottish Official Statistics and Recommended for Scotland's 2011 Census" (Scottish Government, July 2008)[2] to which the guidance refers. These include:

- Top-level headings of "White" and "Black" that alienate large sections of the population. Support for the term "Black" is diminishing, and in any event "ethnicity" is defined not by skin colour, but by culture and descent. The use of colour as an identifier of ethnicity should therefore be discontinued in both the census and other surveys.

- The creation of an offensive apartheid-style hierarchy, by listing categories in order of "White", "Mixed", "Asian", "Black". This is particularly apparent from the position of "Mixed" (analogous to the South African "coloured"), which should logically appear last since one must first be aware of all single categories before knowing whether a "mixed" category will apply.

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[1] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/54357/0013571.pdf

[2] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/233640/0063967.pdf

- The use of misleading categories such as "Asian Scottish". Research has shown that these have frequently been misunderstood as indicating multiple ethnicity, when what was intended was to capture data relating to people of Asian origin who feel Scottish.

Referring to "Scotland's New Ethnicity Classification …" the guidance states that "*The new ethnic group question was produced using evidence collected from wide consultation with users and extensive question testing. …The ethnic group question has been developed to be acceptable to both respondents and users.*" However, many of the consultation findings in "Scotland's New Ethnicity Classification …" have been ignored in the development of the recommended question. For example, the report states (5.13-5.14) that people said that ticking more than one box

> "*would enable them to describe their ethnicity more accurately* [and that] *the point was reinforced by the results of the 2006 census test, because, although they were instructed to tick only one box, about 7% ticked more than one.*"

It is also reported (52-53) that:

> "*A majority …agreed that it is inappropriate to mix colour terms and national identity* [and] *preferred the ethnicity question on the 2006 census test (excluding colour and national identity and based on geography) over the question used on the 2001 census. …Reasons for 2006 preferences included more detailed breakdown of categories and more acceptable terminology i.e removal of colour labels.*"

Terminology: "Black" and "White"

Partly as a result of the 2001 census classifications, "Black" and "White" have come to be used as if they were synonymous with "minority" and "majority" communities. This has had the effect that some minority communities are excluded both from the majority and from the officially recognised minority, a particularly significant failing at a time when the largest communities of new immigrants are from Eastern Europe.

When "black" is used as if it were synonymous with "minority community", non-black communities such as the Jewish community are excluded because they are not in any sense black. When "white" is used as if it were synonymous with "the majority community" these same communities are excluded once again because they are not part of the majority community. This double exclusion is particularly divisive and alienating.

It is evident that there is no single, clearly understood meaning of "Black". In fact, the term is so ambiguous as not to be useful for identifying which group or groups are intended, and recent publications have used it variously to refer to:

  i)   all minority communities regardless of skin colour

  ii) all visible minority communities (based solely on skin colour)

  iii) visible minority communities excluding Asians

  iv) minority communities that are neither "white", "Asian" nor "Hispanic".

It does not matter which, if any, of these uses[3] is correct. All that matters is that the term "black" is clearly multiply ambiguous, and that is sufficient to vitiate its use in categorising ethnicity. Since respondents can interpret the term differently, their ticks on a monitoring form may mean different things, so their responses cannot be aggregated to produce reliable data. There is no point in collecting unintelligible data, so acceptable classifications must be agreed before commencing the proposed scheme of monitoring.

Ethnicity Monitoring and Community Relations

Although the work and recommendations of the Commission on Integration & Cohesion[4] relate only to England and Wales, similar initiatives are currently being undertaken in Scotland to improve community relations, and the Commission's recommendations about the collection of data relating to migration are, therefore, also relevant in Scotland.

The Commission states (2.50):

"*increasingly, people are moving away from single identities to multiple identities not just based on race or ethnicity, but differences in values, differences in life-style, consumption, social class, differences across generations, gender etc. People now have multiple identities and adjust these to the situation they are in – and this seems particularly true for the children or grandchildren of migrants …*"

Furthermore, the Commission's report goes on to report that recognising individuals' multiple identities can have a beneficial effect on community relations:

"*… multiple identification can be positive in that it can prevent any one part of a person's identity becoming prioritised as a source of conflict.*"

We particularly note the Commission's view that progress will only be made "*once national data is updated and trusted*" (7.34) and we do not believe it will be trusted until all ethnic and faith communities believe that monitoring is designed to include rather than exclude, so as to produce accurate and meaningful data.

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[3] For example:

   i) Ethnic Minority Achievement Programme newsletter (Department for Children, Schools, and Families) refers separately to "Black pupils" and to "Gypsy, Roma and Traveller …Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and Turkish heritage pupils" http://www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/downloader/cf56560ac89f0cd96ac7c0595e617df9.pdf

   ii) Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Women in Political and Public Life in the United Kingdom (Government Equalities Office). "Black" is a separate category from "Asian" and "Minority Ethnic". http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/8134-tso-bame-factsheet.pdf

   iii) The Black Community Development Project defines "black" as referring to people from "diverse groups and communities who are targeted and discriminated against, and who suffer inequality because of their race, colour, nationality, culture, religion or status. It therefore refers to people of African, Afro-Caribbean, Asian, Chinese, South American origins, and any other person who is treated less favourably due to the above reasons. http://www.bcdp.org.uk/node/11

[4] "Our Shared Future": final report of the Commission on Integration & Cohesion http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20080726153624/http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/~/media/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/our_shared_future%20pdf.ashx

Single and Multiple ticking

We strongly disagree with the advice in the guidance to limit answers to the ethnicity question to a single response, and with the instructions for dealing with multiple responses. In the light of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion report, the requirement for a fine-brushed approach that enables people to self-define their identity either by means of a write-in answer or else by ticking as many boxes as apply to them, becomes increasingly urgent.

The advice to discard all except the "*smaller group*" in cases in which more than one response has been given will prevent data from being genuinely useful. For instance, in the area of health it is particularly relevant to obtain as much information about ethnicity as possible, rather than to force people to choose just one ethnic identity. For example, the incidence of diabetes is higher among Asians in Scotland than in the rest of the population, and it is also known that there is a higher than average incidence of BRCA2 mutation amongst Ashkenazi Jewish women, causing a greater risk of breast and ovarian cancers. It is, therefore, evidently more useful to collect data that reveal the dual ethnic heritage of a girl with an Asian father and Ashkenazi Jewish mother, than to oblige her to identify as only one.
(Note that information about Jewish ethnicity will not necessarily be obtained from the religion question – see below for more details.)

What is being monitored must be relevant and meaningful to those from whom data is obtained, as well as to those who require to use it. Therefore, in place of the proposed ethnicity classification, we suggest the use of a single level list (i.e. not grouped into categories) headed by the instruction to "tick as many as apply". (The list could include both "white" and "black" since we recognise that some people do choose to identify by these terms – indeed, their inclusion would provide valuable information about those groups that do so identify.)

Judaism and Ethnicity

It is evident from the 2001 census that more people regard themselves as being of any particular religion than attend a place of worship. This is particularly true of the Jewish religion since many people consider themselves ethnically Jewish despite the fact that they do not affilate to a synagogue. This view of Judaism is supported by the fact that Jewish people benefit from the protection of the Race Relations Act.

There is also empirical evidence for the importance of this from the last Canadian census, in which respondents were able to identify themselves as 'Jewish' in response to both the religion and the ethnicity questions. The data showed that the number identifying in **either** of these ways was 27.6% more than those identifying themselves Jewish by religion alone.

As many of these individuals continue to require culturally specific services, full and accurate data are required to enable effective planning of service provision and these will not be available unless all respondents are explicitly given the option of identifying themselves as Jewish by either religion or ethnicity, or both.

Collecting information about religion

We strongly recommend that the recommended question should be changed to that used in the 2001 England and Wales census, namely "What is your religion or faith?" The proposal to ask "What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?" is likely to depress numbers, as many people interpret "belonging" as requiring an active commitment, such as for example, paying formal membership dues. It would, moreover, be valuable also to pose the question asked in the 2001 census in Scotland regarding the religion in which people have been brought up. As already stated, many people who do not identify with a faith in religious terms still wish to access culturally specific services, so this would support planning for appropriate service provision.

Reviewing ethnicity classification

The rubrics "*The ethnicity classification of children should be regularly reviewed!*", and "*The religion classification of children should be regularly reviewed!*" should be amended to clarify whether they refer to the development of more acceptable methods of obtaining the most accurate information possible in these areas, or whether it is the classification of individual children that should be subject to regular review.

Summary and conclusion

We strongly support the collection of accurate, and meaningful data about ethnicity and religion, but are concerned that the proposed questions will not achieve this. On the contrary, they are such as to exclude some individuals and communities, and it is likely that these may be the very groups about whom it is most important for service providers to be aware, since, being excluded, they may be particularly prone to become victims of both direct and indirect discrimination.

Note: The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland comprising Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee as well as the more loosely linked groups of the Jewish Network of Argyll and the Highlands, and of students studying in Scottish Universities and Colleges. SCoJeC is Scottish Charity SC029438, and its aims are to advance public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community. It works with others to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality, and represents the Jewish community in Scotland to government and other statutory and official bodies on matters affecting the Jewish community.