

Being Jewish in Scotland

www.scojec.org/JewishinScotland.html

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Project Findings, August 2013

"I do count myself incredibly lucky to be Scottish and Jewish. I wouldn't change either if I had to be born again."

"It's not easy to tell people you're Jewish, you worry about how people will receive that."

**The Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities**



Being Jewish in Scotland

*“Every Jew has a story to tell,
and every story is different”*

Fiona Frank, Ephraim Borowski, and Leah Granat



“Being Jewish in Scotland has not only prompted reflection on what it means to be Jewish in 21st-century Scotland. It has also highlighted common understanding and shared patterns of experience that will be recognised by, and have relevance to, wider Scottish society.”

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT, JUNE 2012

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Being
Jewish
in
Scotland



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Foreword

This was, as far as we can establish, the first comprehensive study of the things that matter to Jewish people throughout Scotland, and we are very grateful to the Community Safety Unit of the Scottish Government for enabling us to undertake it. “Community Safety” is a strange term – the very mention of it can make people feel less safe – but in fact it embodies the Government’s commitment to “helping communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life”, and that is an aspiration we share for our own community.

We believe that undertaking this study has contributed to that objective by enabling us to draw on our existing networks and make new links with Jewish people and with interested others the length and breadth of the country. As we had intended, the very act of investigating what Jewish people think is important has served to strengthen those networks and enhance relationships, thereby increasing people’s feeling of belonging and sense of security.

The findings we report below provide a comprehensive overview of what Jewish people in Scotland are thinking, feeling, and experiencing. It is based on responses from a significant cross-section of the Jewish population of Scotland, spread across the entire country from Galloway to the Shetlands, as well as a few former residents now living outwith Scotland. We therefore hope that Scottish national, regional and local public bodies, Jewish communal organisations, and other faith communities will all find much useful learning within its pages.

Our thanks are due to the Scottish Government for the funding and support that enabled us to do this work, to our Project Worker, Fiona Frank, who has been crisscrossing the country for eight months, and, of course, above all to the more than 300 people who shared their opinions, concerns, and aspirations with us. We have tried to let them speak for themselves in the pages that follow, but where we do comment, draw conclusions, or make recommendations, they are, of course, ours and not theirs.

We believe that this study provides a useful model for similar projects both with Jewish people in other parts of the UK, and of other minorities in Scotland and elsewhere, and we are already discussing this with partner organisations. But our work is also not complete with the publication of these findings. Rather, this is a beginning. We hope that the recommendations and action points in section nine will lead to new partnerships, new dialogues, and new activities, and to a greater understanding of the experience of a minority that has been relatively invisible within Scotland until now.

So if, twenty years from now, a future Scottish Government were to commission a future SCoJeC to conduct a similar study, we would hope to be able to report a drop in levels of intolerance, a greater sense of mutual understanding between Jewish and non-Jewish people, and as much joy in ‘Being Jewish in Scotland’ as was expressed by the great majority of the people we spoke to during this inquiry. As one focus group participant told us: “Scotland’s a darn fine place to be a Jew”.

EPHRAIM BOROWSKI, DIRECTOR, SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES

Acknowledgments

SCoJeC would like to thank the Community Safety Unit of the Scottish Government for providing the funding for this project, and Kathy Sharp of Research for Real for providing academic support. Thanks, too, to Eileen Crichton of the Statistical Information Services of the National Records of Scotland, for support with census information.

We would like to thank everyone who hosted and had an input into our events – especially Elizabeth Parker and Sue Skelton at Inverness Library, writers Annemarie Allan, J David Simons, and Rodge Glass, Dr Billy Kenefick and Kirk Hansen from the University of Dundee, Klezmer bands ‘Kasha-Malasha’ from Glasgow and ‘Beyond the Pale’ from Edinburgh, and artist Gordon Cockburn.

Thanks to those in Edinburgh, Fife, and Kirkcubright who opened their homes for dinners, concerts, and dancing. And thanks to Mark’s Deli, the Ben Uri Gallery, publishers McFarland & Co., and Scottish band Moishe’s Bagel, for donating prizes for the draw to encourage people to participate in the project.

Above all, thanks to those who took time to tell us their views, whether by completing the survey form, through an individual interview, or at an event or focus group.

***“I am a community of one;
SCoJeC is my community”***



Executive Summary

Being Jewish in Scotland was a small-scale inquiry carried out by the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC), with funding from the Scottish Government, to find out more about the variety of experience of Jewish people in Scotland, and encourage them to identify the issues that are important to them. It has helped SCoJeC to build a better understanding of what affects the sense of security of Jewish individuals and communities, and thus to establish what matters to the community, and improve our support for Jewish people in Scotland. The process of carrying out the inquiry has itself had the result of strengthening networks and social capital in the community, and has helped to provide support to Jewish people throughout Scotland.

It is intended that the findings should also prove useful in assisting statutory and voluntary organisations and agencies such as the Scottish Government, the NHS, local authorities, education authorities, employers, faith groups, and others to support and respond more effectively to the needs and concerns of the community.

More than 300 Jewish people, from Shetland to the Borders, participated in *Being Jewish in Scotland*, either by attending one of the 30 focus groups and events held as part of the project, or by completing a survey or participating in a one-to-one interview.

Taking the community to the unaffiliated

- ▲ Wherever events were held, new connections were made with Jewish people who had no previous involvement with the community.
- ▲ This was just as true in cities where there are large and active communities as in remote locations, although the smaller the community or cluster, the higher the percentage who participated in the focus groups and events.
- ▲ There is a hunger for Jewish contact, especially among people who live a significant distance from any settled Jewish community. Teenagers and young adults are particularly keen to meet other Jewish people of their own age, both locally and across Scotland.
- ▲ There is considerable interest in Jewish identity and Jewish concerns among people who are not affiliated to any synagogue or communal institution. Many Jewish people without any formal ties to the community also regard these as important, even key issues.
- ▲ Some organisations in the wider community are very willing to support local Jewish events and activities.

What's 'good' and 'not so good'?

- ▲ The experience of Jewish people living in Scotland is largely positive.
- ▲ There is, however, some antisemitism, which contributes to a sense of insecurity. Some derives from Christian theology (we heard several accounts

of children at school being told that "the Jews killed Jesus"), some uses historic symbols such as the Hitler salute, and some conflates Judaism with Israel.

- ▲ A significant number of participants began by saying either that they had never experienced any antisemitism in Scotland, or indeed that none exists, but then, without prompting, went on to describe some serious examples from their own experience.
- ▲ Four out of five of participants were concerned about increasingly acrimonious attacks on Israel, sometimes expressed by verbal, and occasionally physical, attacks on Jewish people.
- ▲ There is some concern that changes to national policies affecting the availability of kosher meat, circumcision, and the introduction of double summer time, would make Jewish life in Scotland very difficult.
- ▲ There is considerable ignorance in schools about Judaism, and in some cases people are met with incomprehension or indifference when this is drawn to the attention of even senior staff.
- ▲ Many Jewish people voluntarily visit schools and other organisations to talk about Judaism, but this is done in a very unstructured way, and sometimes, because no-one else is available, by people who readily admit to having little knowledge of Judaism or the Jewish community.

Other findings

People often conceal the information they actually intend to communicate. As we have already stated, many said initially that they had never experienced antisemitism, but went on to describe such experiences; others expressed deep disquiet but then went on to say that they generally feel comfortable in Scotland.

The project has highlighted areas of potential learning for the Scottish Government, the Health, Education, and Employment sectors, Local Authorities, faith communities, and others, in responding to the expressed concerns of the Jewish community. These include issues around:

- ▲ the provision of kosher food, particularly in hospitals and schools;
- ▲ the provision of education in the wider community, to improve understanding of the Jewish religion, and of the Scottish Jewish community;
- ▲ education and training to provide staff in, for example, schools, universities, and workplaces, with a better understanding of what constitutes antisemitism and racism;
- ▲ the development and implementation of policies stating that racist name-calling and incidents are never acceptable, and setting out clear and effective response procedures.

The project has also highlighted areas for the Jewish Community itself to address. These include concerns about:

- ▲ the decline of the Jewish communal infrastructure in Scotland;
- ▲ the need for greater cooperation amongst the various communal organisations;



- ▲ the provision of Jewish religious and cultural education for adults and children;
- ▲ arrangements for religious burial, especially in the smaller communities and for individuals living outwith any community.

As a direct result of the project, many more Jewish people in remote and rural areas now know:

- ▲ they are not alone as Jews;
- ▲ even outwith the settled communities, there is potential for getting together with other Jewish people. Some people who have met through our events have already begun to arrange events between themselves;
- ▲ it is possible to celebrate Jewish identity even in the most remote areas;
- ▲ there is potential for innovative use of new technology to facilitate contact, and web-based educational activities.

SCoJeC has begun to respond to issues raised by the project in the following ways:

- ▲ We are continuing to run events of Jewish cultural interest in areas outwith the central belt, to ensure that people living in remote areas are able to remain involved, and we are looking for more 'local ambassadors' to help us in this work;
- ▲ We have agreed to provide bursaries to enable people from throughout Scotland to attend a Festival of Jewish Learning in Glasgow;
- ▲ We are exploring the possibility of setting up regional and thematic e-mail groups to facilitate communications between the various Jewish communities and people living outwith any settled community, and we are helping to facilitate regular discussion groups about Jewish issues;
- ▲ In Glasgow, we have helped to build links between students living in the city centre and one of the local synagogues, enabling the students to benefit from the synagogue's facilities;
- ▲ We are discussing with relevant communal organisations the provision of culturally specific support for Jewish people outside the major cities, including Holocaust survivors and other Jewish refugees;
- ▲ We are following up offers to develop web-based Jewish educational programmes with a Scottish context.

We have begun a programme of follow-up events for Jewish communal organisations, and are working with the Scottish Government to plan how we can most effectively work in partnership with representatives of government, other faiths, and public bodies, to meet the needs that have been expressed to us, and to improve the security and well-being of Jewish people in Scotland.



KLEZMER BAND KASHA-MALASHA WITH PARTICIPANTS AT THE EVENT IN KIRKGUNZEON, DUMFRIESSHIRE

THREE OF THE SURVEY PRIZE-DRAW WINNERS: RACHEL MOORE WITH BEING JEWISH IN SCOTLAND PROJECT WORKER FIONA FRANK, LESLIE MUTCH, AND JOSE BARINOTTO AND OTHER STUDENTS FROM ABERDEEN



"A CELEBRATION OF JEWISH WRITING" AT INVERNESS LIBRARY





SECTION ONE:

Introduction and Background

1.1 Jewish People in Scotland

David Daiches once commented that many of his readers misunderstood the title of his stirring evocation of an Edinburgh Jewish Childhood. He pointed out that his book is entitled “Two Worlds”, and not “Between Two Worlds” – he never considered that there was any dichotomy between the Jewish and Scottish. Indeed he felt that his family, led by his father’s life-long search for a synthesis of the best of Jewish and Scottish thought and practice, inhabited both worlds simultaneously.

That synthesis was assisted by the fact that Jews and Scots share many of their attitudes to life: a strong belief in education, a reverence for the Hebrew Bible, and the struggle to maintain distinctiveness in a sometimes unfriendly world. As a result the Jewish contribution to the professional and cultural life of Scotland has been widely admired and appreciated.

Scotland has eschewed the American model of the melting pot in its approach to the assimilation of its minorities. In a melting pot all diversity is stirred away; pattern becomes sludge; everything becomes the same, as all difference is dissolved. Often the only alternative suggested is a society of segregated communities, isolated and ghettoised minorities each incommunicado in its own silo, as they are aptly termed, fermenting resentment. ... Scotland has adopted a different and more durable model of multiculturalism, and its diverse communities have joined with politicians of all parties in uniting behind the campaign for One Scotland – Many Cultures. That is what is increasingly recognised as the Scottish model – the tartan, with its intersecting pattern, each thread visible as itself against the background, but all holding together, not despite their intersections, but because of those intersections. A tartan is a design made with two or more alternating bands of colour that combine, vertically and horizontally, to form a chequered pattern. It is the very design of the tartan, with its divergence, difference, even disagreement, that holds it together, enabling the different colours and different directions to combine to form a single whole. A cloth of parallel threads, by contrast, is no cloth; it simply falls apart.¹

There has been a small Jewish population in Scotland since the 19th century, mainly originating from Germany and Holland. However, the majority of Scotland’s Jews come from Eastern Europe, arriving at the turn of the twentieth century, at a time when more than two million Jews left Eastern Europe on their way to the United States and other destinations in what has been called the ‘Great Migration’. Glasgow’s

¹ Kenneth E Collins, Ephraim Borowski, and Leah Granat: *Scotland’s Jews, A Guide to the History and Community of the Jews in Scotland*, 2nd edition. Glasgow: SCoJeC, 2008, p.7.
http://www.scojec.org/resources/files/scotlands_jews.pdf

Jewish population expanded from under 2000 in 1880, to around 6000 at the beginning of the 20th century, and reached its peak between the wars at over 13,000. Although the main Jewish populations were in Glasgow and Edinburgh, communities were also established in Dundee, Aberdeen, Dunfermline, Inverness, Ayr, Falkirk, and Greenock. The Jewish population of Scotland was augmented by refugees from Nazi persecution in the 1930s, and some European Jewish refugees who settled here after the war. Some Jewish people have arrived in Scotland more recently from England, Europe, North America, and Israel, drawn to Scottish universities and other workplaces.

According to the 2001 census (the last available), 8365 people in Scotland identified either as currently Jewish, or as having been brought up Jewish, or both, with 6448 people identifying as “currently belonging to the Jewish religion”. However, it is likely that these numbers significantly under-record the true figure, given that the questions were voluntary. Many older members of the community, especially Holocaust survivors, are reluctant to identify themselves as Jewish in any official documents, and Jewish Policy Research survey of the Jews of Leeds found that 18% of respondents did not answer the voluntary question on religion in the 2001 English census.² This figure is likely to be higher in Scotland, since the question was “What religion, religious denomination, or body do you belong to?” rather than “What is your religion, faith, or belief?” as in England and Wales. The Scottish question thus excludes many Jewish people in Scotland who do not “belong to” any Jewish organisation, perhaps because they live in areas where there is no community to belong to, or who regard themselves as ethnically but not religiously Jewish. Support for this hypothesis is provided by the fact that of the 334 people who stated that their place of birth was Israel in the 2001 census, for example, only 159 (47%) stated that their religion was Jewish, although it is likely that a much higher proportion of them were in fact Jewish.³

In 2001 there were Jewish people in every one of the 32 council areas of Scotland. The census data showed that about half of the entire Jewish population of Scotland lived in East Renfrewshire, a suburban area adjoining Glasgow, where they make up 3.5% of the local population. A further 1119 Jews were in Glasgow City (17% of the Scottish total), and 790 in the City of Edinburgh (12%). Outside Glasgow and Edinburgh, 106 were in Aberdeen and 210 were in the wider Grampian region, and 58 were in Dundee and 255 were in the Fife and Tayside region. Currently Glasgow has five Orthodox synagogues and one Reform synagogue; Edinburgh has one Orthodox synagogue and one Liberal community which does not have its own building. Both Aberdeen and the newly renamed Tayside and Fife Community in Dundee also have synagogues and small but flourishing communities.

The census showed that more than 20% of married Jews had non-Jewish partners. The Jewish community in Scotland was on average older than wider Scottish society, and some 2.5% lived in a medical or care establishment –

² Stanley Waterman. *The Jews of Leeds in 2001: Portrait of a Community*. London: JPR, p.32. http://www.jpr.org.uk/downloads/Jews_of_Leeds_in_2001.pdf

³ The data for religion in the 2011 census will not be published till 2013, but it is likely that the extent of under-recording will be greater than in 2001, as only the question about “belonging” was asked, and not the question about upbringing which brings at least some of the others into the count.



the highest proportion of all religious groups in Scotland. 30% of Jews were of pensionable age, compared to 19% of the general population. The difference is even more marked for those aged 75 and over, as 16% for Jews compared to 7% nationally, and the comparable figure of 12% in England confirms that younger Jews tend to emigrate. 27% of those working were self-employed, compared to a national proportion of 11%. Jewish people had higher educational qualifications, and more than twice the proportion of Jews were in higher managerial and professional occupations than in the wider community.

1.2 The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) was established in 1999 after the passage of the Scotland Act paved the way for Devolution, with the principal aim of providing the Jewish Community of Scotland with a single democratically accountable voice in dealings with the Scottish Parliament and Executive, other communities, and other statutory and official bodies. That remains a core element of its work, and the Council is now recognised in the Jewish and wider Scottish communities as the representative umbrella body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It is a democratic organisation consisting of representatives of each of the formally constituted Jewish communities in Scotland – Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Tayside and Fife – as well as two looser groups, the Jewish Network of Argyll and the Highlands, and Jewish students studying in Scottish Universities and Colleges. The Glasgow representatives are nominated by the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, which in turn has 46 affiliated communal organisations covering Jewish Education, Welfare, Youth, religious and social groups, and groups with connections with Israel. In addition, SCoJeC also maintains contact with a large number of unaffiliated individuals, both in rural locations from the Borders to the Outer Isles, and in urban areas.

The Council's remit has expanded considerably over the last decade and now also includes a strong commitment to supporting the smaller Scottish Jewish communities, and particularly individuals and families living outwith any Jewish community, often in isolated and rural locations, who nonetheless wish to retain and develop links with other Jewish people.

SCoJeC is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC029438) whose objects are:

- ▲ to advance the education of the general public about the Jewish religion and the Jewish Community of Scotland;
- ▲ to advance the welfare of the Jewish community of Scotland and to promote its participation in the civic life of Scotland;
- ▲ to promote racial harmony and good relations between the Jewish Community and other religious, ethnic, and racial groups.

In furtherance thereof, it may cooperate with other organisations which promote good relations and understanding between people of different religious, ethnic, and racial groups, and provide information, advice and assistance to educational, welfare and other organisations.

SCoJeC's democratic representative structure enables it to speak authoritatively in the name of the whole Community to government, parliament, churches, trades unions, the media, and other bodies. It consults as appropriate with the leadership of the orthodox, reform, and liberal communities, and with the management of relevant communal organisations before speaking on matters that affect them such as welfare, charity law, education, and youth work. As a result, the Council is now widely recognised as a key point of intersection between the Jewish and wider Scottish communities, and its remit includes a strong commitment to fostering integration, and promoting dialogue and understanding. The Council's work in this area has been extremely well received on all sides. Many organisations and individuals in the wider Scottish community have said how helpful they find it to have a single point of contact to the full spectrum of views of the Jewish community, and many organisations and individuals in the Scottish Jewish community have told us how much they value the channel that the Council provides for conveying the views and interests of the community to the wider world.

The Council also provides services to the entire Jewish Community, such as administering Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme applications for people working with children or protected adults in the Scottish Jewish community to ensure compliance with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act, sponsoring foreign visitors for UK Border Agency purposes, and confirming to National Records of Scotland the bona fides of rabbis not employed by Scottish congregations who have been invited to officiate at marriages in Scotland. It also provides services for the UK Jewish community including a daily digest of relevant parliamentary business, and for other minority communities, of which the most important is its joint publication with BEMIS, the national umbrella organisation for minority communities in Scotland, of MEMO, a weekly digest of material of relevance to ethnic and other minority communities.



FRANK MULHOLLAND,
LORD ADVOCATE,
IN HIS OFFICE, WITH
EPHRAIM BOROWSKI
AND LEAH GRANAT,
SCoJeC DIRECTOR
AND DEPUTY
DIRECTOR

SECTION TWO:

The Being Jewish in Scotland project

Being Jewish in Scotland was a small-scale project carried out by SCoJeC, with funding from the Scottish Government, to find out more about the variety of experience of Jewish people in Scotland, and encourage them to identify the issues that are important to them. It was designed to help SCoJeC to gain a better understanding of what matters to Jewish individuals and communities, and so to improve its support for Jewish people in Scotland. It was also designed to strengthen networks and social capital in the Jewish community and to provide support to Jewish people in Scotland as well as to assist statutory and voluntary organisations and agencies including the Scottish Government, the NHS, local authorities, education authorities, employers, faith groups, and others to support and respond more effectively to the needs and concerns of the community.

2.1 Methodology

A survey form (included at Appendix 2) was sent to everyone on our mailing list, information about the project was circulated to every public library in Scotland, and the project was widely advertised in the press and online. We also offered Jewish-themed prizes as an incentive to people to participate in the project.

We held focus group discussions in the main Jewish communities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, and organised a variety of Jewish-themed events in other parts of Scotland, including a Klezmer dance in Dunoon, a lecture on Jewish immigration in Dundee, a celebration of Jewish writing in Inverness, and a concert and talk about art in Dumfriesshire. Each event was followed by a discussion about *Being Jewish in Scotland*.

2.2 The Participants

By mid July 2012, 155 people had completed surveys or participated in individual interviews, and more than 180 people had participated in the 30 events and focus groups in 14 diverse locations. 42 of the focus group participants also completed surveys. Including the 60 people who took part in meetings to discuss the project before its formal start, over 300 people participated in the project, which is around 5% of the most recent available census figure for the Jewish population of Scotland (6448). The following maps and charts show the geographical location of people who returned surveys or took part in individual interviews, the locations of the events and focus groups, and the age and gender distribution of participants.

Locations of focus groups and other events

30

Number of focus groups and events (total 30, also includes a focus group with former Glasgow residents in Boston USA)



Place of residence of respondents to the survey and participants in individual interviews.

CLICK ON MAP TO ENLARGE

155

Number of survey responses and individual interviews (total 155). This includes place of last residence for 13 respondents no longer living in Scotland. There were also six respondents who did not disclose a location.

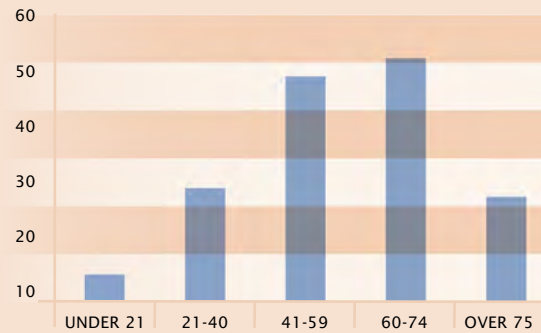


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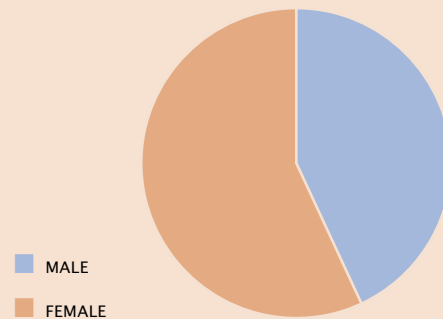
Age distribution, survey and individual interview respondents

(N=155:
2 RESPONDENTS DID NOT GIVE THEIR AGE)



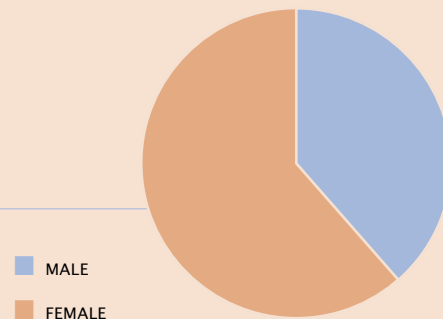
Gender distribution, survey and individual interview respondents.

N=155:
67 MEN (43%) AND
88 WOMEN (57%)



Gender distribution, focus group participants.

N=184:
71 MEN (39%) AND
113 WOMEN (61%)



2.3 Open Questions

“People don’t phone the police to report that they haven’t been robbed, and they don’t phone us to tell us they’ve not received hate mail, or to say they’ve had a really uplifting experience. They phone us when something bad happens and they want to complain, so it’s good to be able to put that experience into perspective.”

EPHRAIM BOROWSKI, DIRECTOR, SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES

In order to counteract the natural tendency to dwell on negative stories, we asked people to tell us stories that typified their own experiences, and asked “What’s good about being Jewish in Scotland?” before “What’s not so good about being Jewish in Scotland?” We also asked whether people reveal their Jewish identity to friends and colleagues, and whether they thought that being Jewish had ever made a difference to the way in which they had been treated. Finally we asked them to suggest how organisations in both the Jewish and wider communities could improve the experience of Jewish people in Scotland, and whether there were any ways in which they themselves could contribute to this.

We have included direct quotes to illustrate issues raised during the project, but have not disclosed any information that would reveal the identity of participants.

The project was designed not only as a fact-finding exercise, but also to facilitate engagement between individuals and communities. Several focus groups formed part of Jewish-themed events that were advertised in the local press as well as directly to people already on SCoJeC’s mailing list, and these all attracted Jewish people who were not previously known either to SCoJeC or to the local Jewish community, as well as a number of non-Jewish people who were interested either in Judaism or in the event itself. In every case this resulted in new connections and opportunities, and we have heard of many continuing discussions and plans for future meetings among our focus group participants.

My wife had seen the SCoJeC notice in our local library. When I looked at it, a warm feeling came over me – I thought: “there’s an organisation in Scotland looking after us.” (M, 50s, rural)

It was a wonderful experience, meeting other people, and the chance to talk about everything, talk about community. (M, 50s, North-East)

An Israeli woman who picked up one of our project leaflets in her local library had been living in the North-East of Scotland for many years, thinking she was the only Jewish person in the area, and was very happy to find out that there is a small Jewish community less than half an hour away from her home. After attending an event and focus group discussion at the local synagogue, she has started to offer Hebrew lessons to a small group of local people, both Jewish and Christian.





A Jewish novelist who picked up one of the project leaflets in her local library called us to offer her services, another heard about the survey through one of his students, and a third read about the project in the Glasgow Jewish newspaper. All three took part in a *Celebration of Jewish Writing in Scotland* that we ran in Inverness, and the subsequent focus group. A fourth novelist, who attended a focus group in Edinburgh, volunteered her services if we were to run another Jewish Writing event.



When a father commented during a focus group that he was finding it hard to find a Hebrew teacher to help his son prepare for *bar mitzvah*, an Israeli student came forward and offered to teach him.

2.4 “Every Jew Has a Story to Tell, and Every Story is Different”

I'm an artist, carer, gardener and singer. I first came to Scotland as a teenager from school, and I moved up permanently in my early forties. I can't imagine living in any other country now.

We grew up in a secular household, though my maternal grandparents kept the festivals and we would sometimes go there. My paternal great-grandparents were the first people to marry in Leeds Synagogue, I think, in the 1860s.

I feel Jew-ish, and get more so as I get older! I'm becoming aware of my difference from other cultures, and my identity within Jewish culture, and I'm less willing to ignore what I bring with me. The other Jews I've met here in Scotland have been 'familiar' and we 'recognise' each other on some very non-verbal level. (F, 50s, rural)

It was certainly true that everyone who participated in *Being Jewish in Scotland* had a different story to tell us, and we found many different ways of being Jewish in Scotland. As we have seen, the majority of Jewish people in Scotland live in Glasgow and Edinburgh, but others live many miles from their nearest synagogue or community. Some people had two Jewish parents, some only a Jewish mother or a Jewish father. More than one person told us that they had one Jewish grandparent and that they were beginning to explore their Jewish heritage. One non-Jewish woman who sent us a survey had been married to a Jewish man, who had since died, but she felt very connected to the Jewish community through her late husband. Some people who contacted us had converted to Judaism.

At one focus group, when a man told us that he had converted to Judaism, another participant commented: *It's not the easiest thing to be Jewish – why would anyone want to take that burden on?* He replied that he didn't feel it as a burden; the more he found out about Judaism, the more he felt it was *instinctively right* for him. (M, 50s Highlands) His questioner, a Jewish woman who had moved to the Highlands as an adult, responded *Maybe you feel the same way about being Jewish as I feel about being a Highlander*. (F, 70s, Highlands)

Some Jewish people lead secular lives; others, however far away from a synagogue or community, are still religiously observant, obtaining kosher food and other Jewish supplies by mail order, and refraining from travel on Shabbat, even when this causes difficulties for them.

My local buses are subsidised by the Council, and it is their policy to subsidise buses to run Mondays to Saturdays, but they will not pay subsidies for buses to run on Sundays. Since I prefer not to travel on Shabbat, it means I am virtually housebound from Friday afternoons until Monday mornings. (M, 60s, Argyll)

More than one person told us that, although they had not previously been particularly interested in religion, they had started attending synagogue services since they moved to Scotland in order to meet other Jewish people. One family told us they make a round trip of 160 miles to attend synagogue services, and we heard of a woman who, almost to the end of her life, had made a weekly three hour journey each way by foot, ferry, train and taxi, to attend services in Glasgow.

In London, my best friends were all secular Jews. Here, I'm away from a good number of Jewish people and all of a sudden you realise the absence. That happened to me when I moved here. I don't have family and look out all the time for Jewish people who might be my family! (F, 50s, North-East)

When I lived in the US, I wouldn't have to seek Jews out, because they're in the environment. You find them through work, through neighbours, through friends – I get invited to holiday dinners, the local gift shop will have a menorah in the window or gift cards, there's Jewish culture around me. When you come here, there's a mono-culture that's non Jewish – that made me kind of look harder for it. (M, 40s, Edinburgh, formerly USA)

2.5 Scotland: a Good Place to be Jewish?

In the main, people who took part in the project felt very positively about being Jewish in Scotland:

I feel strongly connected to Scotland, having grown up and gone to school here. (F, under 21)



As I travel to other places around the world for work, I often reminisce about the Edinburgh Jewish community and wish that other Jewish communities could be so open and welcoming as what I experienced in Scotland. (M, 20s)

I love living in Scotland – wouldn't want to live in any other part of the UK – this is to do with quality of life generally and access to remote and beautiful wilderness! (F, 50s, Glasgow)

In Scotland we are not restricted, we can be as Jewish or as non-observant as we wish. (F, over 75, Glasgow)

The place is uplifting and I feel at home. (F, 60s, rural)

There is a certain amount of freedom, and some respect/tolerance here. (F, 60s, rural)

For someone used to celebrating the Sabbath and holidays with my family, the warmth and hospitality of [our Rabbi] made Scotland feel like a home for me. (M, 20s, US, formerly Edinburgh)

I can be negative at times but Scotland's a darn good place to be a Jew. (F, 50s, North-East)

A significant minority, however, felt strongly that life was not so comfortable for Jewish people in Scotland:

Scotland offers a splendid living environment, but much as I like living here, it's not a good place to be Jewish. We're isolated, misunderstood, and there's an underlying hostility. (M, 50s, East Scotland)

There is strong hidden hatred and racism in Scotland, and I live in a place where being different or somehow other than local people is not acceptable. (F, 40s)



ESTHER HERMAN SPEAKING TO FIONA FRANK AT DUNDEE SYNAGOGUE

SECTION THREE:

Jewish Life in Scotland

3.1 Demographic Change

The Jewish population of Scotland has been in net decline since the 1980s. A typical Jewish family story would consist of the grandparents arriving at the turn of the twentieth century, the parents being born in Scotland and continuing to live here, and the children moving elsewhere. This extract from an interview with one of the winners in our prize draw is typical of many in the Glasgow Jewish community, and reflects, too, the opening and closing of synagogues and other facilities to reflect the needs of the changing population.

My grandparents settled in Glasgow from Turkey and London and opened a carpet shop. My grandfather founded Pollokshields Shul, where I got married, but it's not there any more. My children are in Israel and Pittsburgh, USA. (F, 60s, Glasgow)

Nostalgia for a Jewish past

Many people expressed concern about the future of the community and of Jewish life in Scotland.

At a focus group in a residential care home, older people looked back nostalgically to a past in which there was no shortage of Jewish activities, Jewish shops and institutions, or places to socialise; and no difficulty meeting a future husband or wife within the Jewish community:

There were all these places to go to, there was a girls club, we really had a very happy life. (F, over 75, Glasgow)

There was a Jewish Institute where the couples used to meet. (M, over 75)

It was a full Jewish life so many years ago, but, as someone said, they've pulled the plug. There's not many Jews now. Everything's changed. (F, over 75, Glasgow)

An awful lot of Jewish shops went. The Gorbals went. (M, over 75, Glasgow)

An 'exodus'

One Glasgow focus group participant told us that there had been:

A big exodus of young Jewish families in the early 1980s [which] has meant a generation lost to us now. (M, 60s)

A former Glasgow resident who left Scotland in his early twenties, and now lives in the US, told us: *I don't have any contemporary friends in Scotland apart from family. Everyone's somewhere else. (M, 60s)*

I probably know more Scottish Jews in London than I did in Scotland. (M, 40s, now in London)



Nearly every member of the gathering at the residential home, all over 80, told us about children who had moved away from Glasgow, and grandchildren and great-grandchildren who live in England or Israel. The reality of the exodus means that grandchildren grow up far from their grandparents, sometimes speaking a different language (in exactly the same way that those very grandparents, mostly children of immigrants themselves, grew up far away from their own grandparents).

My daughter and son-in-law are both out in Israel – two sets of great grandchildren. Two of my grandchildren are in Israel, married. (M, 80s)

My daughter and husband live in Giffnock, but also have a house in Israel, and the grandchildren, the young ones, are there. I got a call the other day to tell me that the wee one is refusing now to speak English! He wants to speak Hebrew. (F, 80s)

I have two sons. They had to go to England to work when they finished college. I have six grandchildren, one great grandchild. (F, 90s)

One response suggested that part of the reason for young Jewish people leaving Scotland is that they choose to study at English universities in order to be near the Jewish friends they have met at UK-wide Jewish youth events, the majority of whom live in London or Manchester. Indeed, a disproportionate number of Scots have held leadership positions in UK-wide Jewish youth movements. Many members of Israel-orientated youth groups spend at least part of a gap year in Israel, and then either do not return, or emigrate after graduation. Few students return to work in Scotland, and some, in particular those who have studied law, cannot return to practice in Scotland without requalifying. This is dramatically illustrated by the fact that there were four Jewish High Court judges in the 1980s and 90s, but so far as we can establish, there is now only one Jewish advocate in Scotland. Anecdotal evidence from the Northern Region Jewish Chaplaincy, however, suggests that, following the introduction of university tuition fees in England, this situation is changing, with more Scottish Jewish students choosing to stay in Scotland to study, although it is too early to judge whether they will remain thereafter. In addition, we have heard that increasing numbers of Scottish Jewish graduates who studied at English universities have returned to live with their parents in Scotland, because they have been unable to find work in England.

Finding a partner

Many people felt that they or their children would probably have to leave Scotland if they wanted to meet a Jewish partner:

In Glasgow the Jewish community is shrinking, and as a single person I've not found a partner – and specifically not found a Jewish partner. To address that we need to promote the fact that there is a Jewish community here. Scottish Jewish people will go to English cities and meet up with them, but that's all one way traffic. (F, 40s, Glasgow)

We were told by one respondent that in the past some people had looked down on those who stayed in Scotland, but that this situation was changing as an increasing number of young couples are moving back. (F, 50s, Glasgow)

There are very few Jewish teenagers for me to socialise with, meaning that the majority of my Jewish friends are from London or Manchester, and are people who I have met on various Jewish camps. When I was younger, there were far more other Jewish children and young people for me to be friends with. However, over the years, many of these have moved away to University or have become distanced from the Shul, meaning that there is less of an active teenage group for me to be part of. (F, under 21, Central Belt)

If my children want to marry someone who's Jewish, they can't stay here, because there's not enough critical mass amongst the Jewish population. Essentially young people tend to be drawn to Manchester, Israel sometimes of course, mainly London. Many communities in London would be pleased to have the numbers we have in social events, but the numbers are dwindling through a combination of death and non-replacement. (M, 60s, Edinburgh)

There's not enough for Jewish kids, the demography is declining, I don't want my children to stay here. There's no-one for my children to marry. At 10 they have met their entire age group. I spend a fortune on groups outside Scotland to meet people they don't know. (F, 40s, Glasgow)

3.2 “If Being Jewish Matters”: the Decline of Religious Facilities

If being Jewish matters, then Scotland is sadly no longer the place to be. (M, 60s, Glasgow)

Religiously observant people had particular concerns about the future of the community since the *kollel*, a full-time college for married orthodox Jewish men, closed in 2011, with the result that several religious families left Scotland.

I think because so many of the religious people have left, that includes people who can influence the young people, that there are fewer opportunities for our young people to experience Jewish life. I'd like to see more observant families come in, who could take on roles to work with young people, assemblies, things like that. (M, 30s, formerly Glasgow)

In recent years the decline in numbers and the loss of some key religious facilities, like the kollel, have made life more complicated. There is also a feeling of being relatively isolated from major Jewish cultural and religious centres such as London, Israel and America. As our children have left, Scottish Jewish family networks have become much weakened. (M, 60s, formerly Glasgow, now Israel)



Seeing the kollel moving out and a couple of shuls closing just within three years, that's meant that resources for the community in terms of orthodox rabbis has shrunk. Them being around as a communal resource in terms of educating and officiating and generally being a presence in the community has impacted on the community's confidence as being a strong independent community.

(M, 30s, Glasgow)

As I became more observant, I had a good circle of friends, there were quite a lot of observant people here, but what's hard is that they've all gone, I don't have a peer group. ... all the frum people have left, one after another, to Manchester, London, Israel. ... On a personal basis I find that hard and I'd like to leave, but I'm tied here because of filial responsibilities, so I'm in a bit of a trap. (F, 70s, Glasgow)

With the departure to Israel of the last *Mohel* (rabbi who carries out circumcisions) living in Scotland, the arrangement of circumcisions has become increasingly difficult.

As a parent of a Jewish boy born in Scotland, getting the circumcision arranged was a terrible problem. We went to Gateshead in terrible winter conditions. The hotel we stayed in had no heat, it was a nightmarish situation. There are no mohels in the area and no one in Scotland was available. There was a happy ending, everyone is fine, but it was quite dicey at the time. (M, 50s, North-East)

Obtaining Kosher Food

Although several people living outside the main cities commented on the fact that it is possible to obtain some kosher items in supermarkets, and that the internet provides easier access to many more items than previously, some people in the Highlands and Islands still had difficulties in obtaining supplies:

I have to go 250 miles to get kosher foods. Also online suppliers will not deliver meat or dairy because of distances, so we are reliant on delivery to our granddaughter in Edinburgh to bring to us when visiting. (F, 70s, rural)

It is hard to find Jewish food items, though it's getting easier. (F, 60s, Edinburgh)

It's also harder to get kosher food, which usually involves travelling through to Glasgow. (F, under 21, Central Belt)

It's difficult to get kosher meat outside the central belt. (F, 50s, North-East)

One of the most difficult parts of being Jewish in Scotland was observing the Jewish dietary laws. Obtaining kosher food in Scotland was more difficult than I was used to when I had previously lived in California. (M, 20s)

3.3 "If There's Only One Shul ..."

Several people mentioned differences between the various branches of Judaism, and suggested that there should be more mutual tolerance. While it was accepted that each branch of the community has the right to define its own membership criteria, several people said they would have liked to have been treated in a more welcoming manner when they tried to join an orthodox synagogue but could not immediately produce their parents' *Ketubah* [marriage certificate] in order to confirm their Jewish status.

I also think there should be more tolerance between different branches of Judaism, instead of sometimes hostility. (F, 60s, rural)

Individual synagogues should cater for standards of orthodoxy and apart from services on Shabbat or the Chagim [festivals], there should be more social interaction available for members, such as social and activity groups for all ages. After all, synagogues were designed not only to be Houses of Prayer but Houses of Assembly. (F, 60s, Glasgow)

Jewish organisations are often exclusive, particularly in relation to people in mixed households. That, however, is the norm, not the exception; our community depends heavily on people in mixed households. Our community representatives, and the rabbinate, have to learn to include people. Currently they are exclusive – often in a way that is deeply offensive to other Jews. (M, 50s, Tayside)

Make the communities more welcoming to newcomers. (F, 30s, Glasgow)

Make it easier to join a local synagogue. I tried for nearly one year to join one congregation. The rabbi in charge in London did not return my calls. The local membership person appeared not to care less. And worst of all, their Rabbi refused to help. They asked me for a ketubah and marriage certificate of my parents who have been dead for 20 years. This was a painful experience for a 59 year old man who has been Jewish all his life. (M, 50s)

I tried to join the local congregation soon after my mother died, but not having a Jewish marriage certificate for my parents I had to submit documents relating to my grandparents and my mother's birth. This all went to a court in London. After a long time and several letters I heard nothing more and eventually gave up. (F, 60s, Glasgow)

In the smaller communities of Aberdeen and of Tayside and Fife, several people felt that there was more tolerance than in larger communities. In Aberdeen, for example, one woman told us:

Because there's not a huge Jewish community, and there's only one synagogue, people aren't self-important like they are in bigger communities. It's fantastic – nobody asks questions in the way that bigger Jewish communities do; everyone is welcomed. (F, 50s, Aberdeen)

As another woman at the same focus group told us: *If there's only one shul, then that's the shul you'll go to.* (F, 40s, Aberdeen)

3.4 Suddenly Jewish

A number of people who participated in the project told us that they had only found out that they were Jewish as older children or adults, as their parents had kept their Jewish identity secret, often, but not always, for reasons related to the trauma of the Holocaust.

My mum and dad were holocaust survivors, they came over to England to escape Hitler and to escape from being Jewish to some extent. To them, being Jewish was a very traumatic thing, and to my mum at any rate her family had been killed for being Jewish, so they brought me up in what they thought was safety. The first I knew I was Jewish was when my cousin moved in over the road and said "Do you want to come to shul?" I said "What's that?" – and I went, and I liked it, it was nice! (M, 50s, rural)

Four of my dad's cousins, his grandfather and his step grandmother had died in Auschwitz, and my dad had a deep seated fear of any of that happening to his children. He changed his name, he became a devout Catholic, and pretended to people that he was Welsh rather than foreign. There were big family secrets that I didn't know anything about till my teens, when my dad's family decided I should know all this. So that's why I had no experience of being Jewish as a child, and certainly not a lot of being Jewish as an adult. (F, 50s, Central Belt)

I didn't find out I was Jewish till I was 16. I'd met plenty non-Jewish people with my surname as well as Jewish ones so I never thought about it. My parents had divorced when I was three, I had no contact with my father and my mum never mentioned it. Grandma told me and I rushed home to look at myself in the mirror to see if there was anything I had missed. (M, 50s, Northern Isles)



SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS
AT THE BEING JEWISH IN
SCOTLAND EVENT IN DUNOON

SECTION FOUR:

Relationships with the wider community

4.1 A Special Understanding

Some participants thought that some Scottish people had a special feeling for the Jews as the 'People of the Book', although several mentioned there is now less understanding and respect than in the past:

I find on the whole Scottish people are respectful and friendly towards all things Jewish, and very interested in Jewish holidays. (M, 30s, Glasgow)

I find people are very interested and very respectful of my Jewishness, much more so than in London. (F, North-East, 50s)

Most Scots respect us as people of the "Old Book" (except the political left in the Scottish Parliament and I think they get away with too much). (M, over 75, Edinburgh)

In the past ... people went to church, children to Sunday school, and there was respect for Jews as the people of the book. (F, over 75, Glasgow)

The Highland folk are just curious about Jews, they are genuinely interested in knowing about the culture, even if they don't understand the religion. (M, 50s, North-East)

There was [in the past] an affinity between the Jews and the Scots, the Scots have a greater appreciation of the Old Testament than the English, respect for the Jews who were learned in that book, and a long history of oppression by those people to the south [laughs]. I think that played into it, there was an identification with the Jew, the underdog. (F, 60s, formerly Glasgow, now USA)

One person felt that there was an affinity between the Sabbath-observing Scots for whom Sunday had been sacred, and the Sabbath-observing Jews for whom Saturday was the day of rest:

Another reason why the Scots could relate better to the Jews; in those days the cinemas weren't open on Sunday let alone the shops, Sunday was Sunday, it was dead. There were certain times where you couldn't drive on a Sunday, the ferry to Skye didn't go on a Sunday. ... When they decided to do it, [start running the ferry on Sunday] there was a big fuss, people were standing on the ramps. (M, 60s, formerly Glasgow, now USA)



4.2 Ignorance, Unfamiliarity, Incredulity

Although many older Scottish people were reported to have a good understanding of Judaism, some people reported that others had not encountered Jewish people before:

It's more common in Scotland to meet people who have not met a Jewish person before, whereas living in London most people are familiar with some aspect of Jewish life. (F, 40s, Edinburgh)

Many people have mentioned that I am the only Jew that they know. (M, 20s, formerly Glasgow, now living in London)

Others reported considerable levels of ignorance about Judaism and Jewish people:

There's a poor understanding of what Judaism is. People stereotyping Jews as mean or rich. (F, 60s, Edinburgh)

Having to explain to my lads' school teachers what being Jewish means, i.e. Jewish new year, Yom Kippur holidays. (F, 50s, North-East)

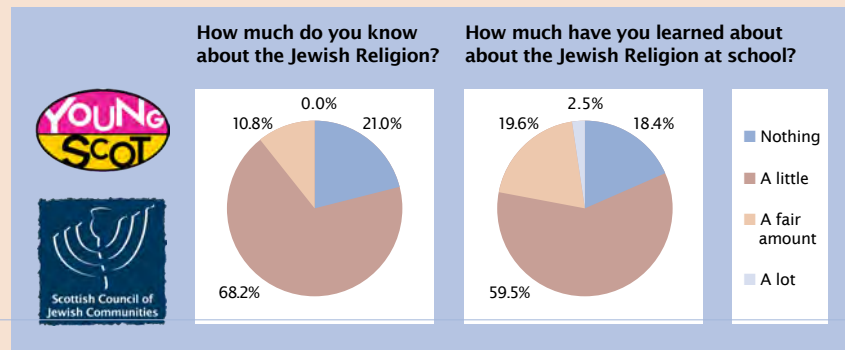
Outside the main Jewish areas, people haven't met Jews and have skewed ideas of what Jews are. I feel I wear it as a badge: you have a duty to show that you're like everyone else and that you don't have horns. (F, Glasgow, 40s)

Many Scots, it seems, can hardly believe that Jews don't observe Christmas.

Scottish people can assume everyone is Church of Scotland and that everyone is looking forward to Christmas, for example. So at these times, I may explain that I am Jewish and that, no, Christmas does not have the same importance to me as it does for them. (F, 40s, Edinburgh)

The only thing that annoys me about now, that non-Jewish people, Christians, I still get asked a lot, are you celebrating Christmas. What is this? they can't grasp that some people don't celebrate it. They find it completely unbelievable. They just don't grasp it. What, are you not getting presents? (F, 40s, Edinburgh)

These comments correlate with the findings of an inquiry undertaken as part of the Scottish Government funded 'Young Scot – Access All Areas' social inclusion project.⁴



A group of young Jewish people carried out a survey in 2010 to find out the extent of knowledge of Jews and Judaism among young Scottish people in the wider community. Of 167 respondents whose average age was 13, almost four fifths (78%) said they did not know any Jewish people, and that they knew little or nothing about the Jewish religion. When asked to describe what they thought made someone Jewish, 33% said they didn't know. Of those that did respond, the majority were ill-informed, giving responses such as "a hat and wavy dress", "believing that Jesus was a Jew", "worship in a synagogue reading the Quran", and "the hat makes someone Jewish". Other responses were stereotypical such as "the way they look" and "crazy", while some were overtly antisemitic such as "having a skullcap and a big nose", and "rich, large nose, stingy".

4.3 Talking with Friends about Being Jewish

While some people were happy to talk about being Jewish with friends, others were less open, saying that they sometimes felt uncomfortable in doing so:

I often speak to friends about my involvement in the community. (F, 40s, Glasgow)

For many of my friends, I am the only Jewish person they know. That comes with some pressures, but it means that they can discuss Jewish issues with me if they want to. If folks know someone Jewish well, they cease to be 'other'. (M, 30s, Glasgow)

I am very open with my friends at school about being Jewish, and many have been round to my house on Friday nights and seen my family celebrate Shabbat. I also tell them things about Judaism, and many have come to Shul services on special events. (F, under 21, Central Belt)

It's not easy to tell people you're Jewish, you worry about how people will receive that. Some people don't care, some people respect it, and other people – I think they feel there must be something wrong with you. (F, 20s, North-East)

I remember deciding which of my friends I could talk freely and openly with. Some were interested and accepting, but I generally kept pretty quiet about my Jewishness to non-Jews. (M, 50s, formerly Glasgow, now London)

4.4 Educating Others about Judaism

As well as rabbis and Jewish educators, many lay people are also asked to go into local schools and other groups to talk about Judaism, and still more volunteer to do so, getting children to act out bible stories, discussing Jewish food, showing Jewish artefacts, and facilitating trips to synagogues. One volunteer said that, after she had given a talk about Jewish food, a Muslim in the audience pointed out that we have many things in common. The speaker is still

⁴ <http://www.youngscot.net/what-we-do/project-directory/access-all-areas.aspx>
http://www.scojec.org/news/2010/10vi_ys/ys.pdf



in contact with this person and they have developed a strong bond (F, 50s, North East.) It is clear that there can be many benefits to this type of contact.

I've been called into school twice a year for the last few years to talk about Judaism – my kids say “Miss So and So wants you to go into school to talk about Chanukah” – so I go into school with bags of chocolate money and dreidels. (F, 40s, rural)

I go out to schools, interfaith, I do this constantly. (M, 40s, Religious leader, Glasgow)

I often spoke to non-Jewish groups and was involved in meetings, organisations which represented Jewish Scotland to the wider community. (M, 60s, formerly Glasgow)

People are curious to find out about Judaism so I speak to women's groups, go into schools. (F, under 21, formerly Glasgow, now USA)

When I am asked about our customs and traditions, I will speak about it and demonstrate my Jewishness to a small circle of people who love Israel and the Jewish people, at their request. (F, 60s, North-East)

In my younger days I spoke regularly to church groups, school pupils and youth groups. (F, 60s, Glasgow)

I feel that by talking publicly about my Jewishness and what it means to me, the way I engage with it, the historical and cultural elements, I am making a contribution. (M, 30s, Glasgow)

We also heard from a secondary school teacher, who had studied Judaism with so-called 'messianic Jews', a Christian sect who are not recognised as Jews by any of the main branches of Judaism, who was teaching about Judaism in schools in one area. This raises concerns as to whether all classes that purport to teach about Judaism, are, in fact, providing pupils with accurate information.

4.5 Being Visibly Jewish

Some people choose to demonstrate their Jewishness in public, for example by wearing a *kippah* or a *Magen David* (star of David).

I was in B&Q and a fairly well dressed non-Jewish lady walked past me and came back and said “Excuse me, are you Jewish?” I said “Yes”. “Can you explain to me why you're wearing that wee thing on your head? I think that's wonderful that you're prepared to display your faith like that”. At the same time there are certain neighbourhoods in Glasgow where I wouldn't dare to go without a hat on top of this [kippah]. (M, 60s, Glasgow)

I'm one of few visible Jews: I don't put on a cap or a hat [on top of my kippah] anywhere. Every now and again I will get comments. When it's cold or windy, I will put a hat on, but it's purely pragmatic, never out of fear. (M, 30s, Glasgow)

I wear a Magen David It takes some getting used to. Sometimes I'm a bit scared about what might happen. (F, 60s, rural)

4.6 Political Concerns

Although people we spoke to did not think that Jews would ever suffer Nazi-type persecution in Scotland, it was suggested that the Scottish Government might be more likely to be conciliatory to small but strident animal rights or anti-circumcision lobbies than were the UK government, and that this could, potentially, result in a threat to circumcision and *shechitah* (i.e. the availability of kosher meat). *Shechitah* and circumcision are already facing legal challenges in some other European countries.

Concern was also expressed about the possible introduction of double summer time, which would make observances that depend on sunrise and sunset become very difficult:

... it would make it impossible for observant Jews. Shabbat would go out at 1 or 2 in the morning, we couldn't start doing morning services till 8 a.m. – how are people going to get to work? (M, 40s Glasgow)

Other concerns included:

all the immigration laws are good if they stop terrorists, but if it stops communities from growing and being educated, it's not working so well. (M, 40s, Glasgow)

Council boycotts of Israeli products would prevent residents of council facilities obtaining kosher food and pursuing a Jewish lifestyle. (M, 50s, Glasgow)

A number of respondents raised their concern at the disproportionate number of Members Motions relating to Israel that were proposed in the Scottish Parliament. Between May 2011 and July 2012, 63 motions related to 32 different countries were tabled. With the exception of Cuba and Syria, which were each mentioned in four Motions, and India, which was mentioned in three, no country other than Israel was mentioned in more than two. 18 Motions related to Israel.

I am concerned about the extent and the nature of the anti-Israel rhetoric in Scotland, in civic and political Scotland. I think the rhetoric needs to be toned down. It impacts on the Jewish community and provides an unhealthy atmosphere. I'm concerned about the Scottish Parliament, it's ridiculous, half the motions they have on foreign affairs are about Israel. (M, 60s, Glasgow)

I look at the anti-zionist motions proposed almost weekly in the Scottish Parliament which tell us that Israel and its Jews have no rights, while all the nations surrounding Israel are peace loving victims of Israeli terror. They're not relevant as we don't have a foreign policy. But the moment that Scotland becomes independent, every one of these will be passed. (M, 70s, Glasgow)

In response to this issue, one man at a Glasgow focus group suggested:

There needs to be very strong representation to the Scottish Parliament from the Representative Council or anyone else, anyone that's involved, to promote Israel, and see the advantages of establishing good relationships with Israel, for the benefit of both countries. I see this as a primary thing. (M, 60s, Glasgow)

SECTION FIVE:

Experiences of Antisemitism

Most people spontaneously raised the subject of antisemitism. Several told us that they had never experienced any antisemitism in Scotland, and others even asserted that there is no antisemitism in Scotland, rather than merely that they themselves had not experienced any.

I have never ever encountered any antisemitism, my childrens' schools are fantastic about taking High Holy days off. There is a lot of tolerance and people (non Jewish) are genuinely interested in what we do. (F, 40s, North East)

Worryingly, however, many then went on to describe often quite extreme experiences. One man, for example, who participated in an early pilot study, told us that he had not experienced any antisemitism since primary school, but went on to say:

I wouldn't wear a kippah in the street because I've seen what happens to people who do, and that would be asking for it. (M, 50s, Glasgow)

Others were careful to qualify what they said. An American Jewish man living in Glasgow, for example, was very keen to state that he had experienced much worse attacks and situations in New York than he had in Scotland: *"in Scotland, at least people don't use guns as part of their argument with people from different backgrounds"*. (M, 40s, Glasgow)

It is clear that people do not experience antisemitic incidents in Scotland on a daily basis – several older people said, for example, that they recalled only one or two, instances throughout their life. A significant number of people have, however, been a victim of or witness to antisemitic incidents, and, given the small size of the community, this can result in significant levels of anxiety. As the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), has stated:

"Research has shown that any victim of crime can suffer symptoms of depression, anger, anxiety and post traumatic stress. One study has shown that whereas victims of non-biased crime can experience a decrease in these symptoms within two years, victims of bias, or hate crime, may need as long as five years to overcome their ordeal.

It has also been shown that any single hate crime can potentially have multiple victims. Whilst all crime can increase the fear of being targeted in people other than the victim, fear of hate crime escalates dramatically in those who share with an immediate victim, the same group identity that has made a victim a target."⁵

⁵ http://www.acpos.police.uk/Documents/Policies/ED_ACPOS_HateCrimeManual_Sept2010.pdf

5.1 Types of Antisemitism

The Community Security Trust (CST) divides reports of antisemitic incidents into the following categories:

	incidents reported in Scotland in 2011
Extreme Violence	0
Assault	1
Damage and Desecration to Jewish Property	9
Threats	0
Abusive Behaviour	10
Literature	0

These figures for Scotland include all incidents reported to SCoJeC or to the police, but there are likely to be more actual incidents than those reported, since for various reasons people do not report their experiences. One religious leader, for example, told us that he never reported name-calling incidents; he just regarded them as a *"fact of life"*. (M, 40s, Glasgow)

Rather than using the CST categories, we have grouped the accounts of antisemitic incidents reported to us according to the victim's relationship with the perpetrator (stranger, friend/acquaintance), the use of classical Jewish stereotypes, and the context (school or workplace).

More than four out of five people who responded to our survey also commented on how the relationship between Judaism and Israel impacted on their experience of being Jewish in Scotland. This is so significant a proportion that we have devoted a separate section to it. Many people saw the increasing anti-Zionism in Scotland as contributing to antisemitism, and, as Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, has stated, *"If people experience it, then we need to think how to fix it."* ('Tackling Sectarianism', Edinburgh, 31 May 2012).

5.2 Incidents Involving Strangers

Examples of this type of antisemitism include:

I have experienced only a small number of incidents, possibly 3-4 in 30 years. The worst was as I boarded a bus, two men were saying to every person, "No Jews on this bus." When I stared at them, they said, "Are you Jewish?" I said "Yes, and I don't like what you are saying." The thing that was difficult was that all the other passengers looked away. (F, 60s, Edinburgh)

Today my grandson was accosted by 3 skinheads who shouted "Jew" at him – which he regarded as a compliment! (M, 70s, North-East)



The synagogue was graffitied with fascist slogans, Nazi symbols and comments about Jews. I got out immediately and painted them over, I wasn't going to leave them up on the wall (M, 50s, Dundee)

On Passover my brother and married sister were in the living room where they heard shouting ... they looked out of the window... and saw a teenager in a blue hoody. He saw my brother and sister and did the Hitler salute. ... He then ran off. They told my father and my father called the police and they came to interview my brother and sister. (M, under 21)

[My brother] was in the pub one night and someone said to him that he was a "dirty circumcised pig". (F, 20s, Tayside)

A few years ago antisemitic stickers, reminiscent of the ones in 1930s Germany, appeared all over the city. I phoned the police, and they all disappeared within a few days (F, 70s, North-East)

Vandalism of cemetery where family are buried. (F, 40s, Glasgow)



In this case, the University offered to pay for alternative accommodation for the student until the end of that term, and the police and CST were also very helpful, but the culprit was never found.

One lady, a member of a public council, had someone say to her: *The Germans should have burned you, when she pointed out some misconduct.* (F, 60s, North-East)

5.4 Antisemitism at Work: Stereotyping

Some incidents of antisemitism are related to stereotyping. A financial adviser who attended one of our focus groups told us how he had tried unsuccessfully to explain to a colleague that the colleague was guilty of antisemitism when he advised that a particular business was worth investing in because the chairman was Jewish. (M, 60s, Edinburgh)

A woman at the same group had been asked by a colleague how much she had earned that month, and when she said she wasn't sure, was told: *but I thought all Jewish people knew exactly how much money they had.* (F, 60s, Edinburgh)

One man who makes greetings cards, including Christmas cards, as a hobby was told by his boss: *That's a typical Jew, making money out of the Christian religion.* (M, 60s, Northern Isles)

When I was doing my nurse training, it was the burns unit, I was talking about Judaism. People are interested and think you're knowledgeable about your religion - one of the nurses said "you're ok 'cos half of the government are Jews so you're ok." She didn't mean it as offensive, it was just an off-the-cuff remark. (F, 40s, Tayside)

5.5 Antisemitism in School

Many people told us that they and their children had heard antisemitic remarks at school from other pupils.

My daughter had a serious incident: it was a group of boys in the dinner hall and they just came out with all this racial stuff ... it was a way to get to her, it was shocking for her. She burst into tears. She was surrounded by friends who witnessed it. Her guidance teacher asked her what was wrong and she told her, and the teacher was absolutely shocked to the core, because they'd just been going over Judaism, and she just thought "What have I been doing here? I've been wasting my time, I'm absolutely shocked!" She took it from there, it was taken forward in a very quick and strong way. But they were trying to get at her, it was a nasty personal attack. That's her only experience. (F, 50s, North-East)

We've had "you effing Jew" and physical violence, we've had the police involved at school. (F, 50s, North-East)

5.3 Incidents Involving Acquaintances or Work Colleagues

One man living in a rural area told us: *"When we moved here, we met a woman in the village hall, and became very friendly with her and her husband and kids over the years. Then came the bitter moment. We were staying in their timeshare villa in Fife, having a glass or two of wine before dinner, when the words "Of course you know that the Jews asked for it during the war" came tumbling out of our host's mouth. In the course of the next morning before we left, I took him outside as I wanted him to know how deeply upset I was by what he had said, and I asked him directly whether he considered himself to be antisemitic, to which he replied, "But we don't think of you as Jewish - you're our friend!"* (M, 50s, rural)

Last year I was staying in halls. ... We weren't allowed candles, but for Chanukah I had cut pictures of flames out and put them on a paper chanukiah on the outside of my door. ... When I came back to Uni after the holidays, I found that the stems [of the chanukiah] had been taken down and torn up and replaced in the shape of a swastika. (F, 20s)



When my daughter was going to volunteer in Chile, we were raising funds. She was doing the fundraising with other girls, but they turned round and said you'll be fine, you'll get lots of money from the Jewish charities. (F, 40s, rural)

I had a pretty rough time years ago at school - being called a "stinking Jew". (F, 60s, Glasgow)

I only once had antisemitism and that was playing rugby for my school and being the only Jewish child in the school. One of the opposition called me a "dirty Jew" and my team mates took exception and forced an apology. (M, over 75, Glasgow)

Inadequate or inappropriate responses from teaching staff

I went to see the Head Teacher when my son was called a "dirty Jew". The Head said 'I don't think we should do anything about it, I don't want to make it worse'. We were glad he was about to leave the school. ... we went to the Head expecting some action! But what can you do? (F, 60s, Edinburgh)

Prior to the *Being Jewish in Scotland* inquiry, SCoJeC had been told about a child in a rural primary school who had been bullied in the school playground because "you killed Jesus". When her mother went into the school to discuss it, the teacher shrugged and said "well you did, didn't you". Because it was a small village school, the mother felt unable to complain further, fearing a backlash from other local residents.

5.6 Antisemitism on Campus

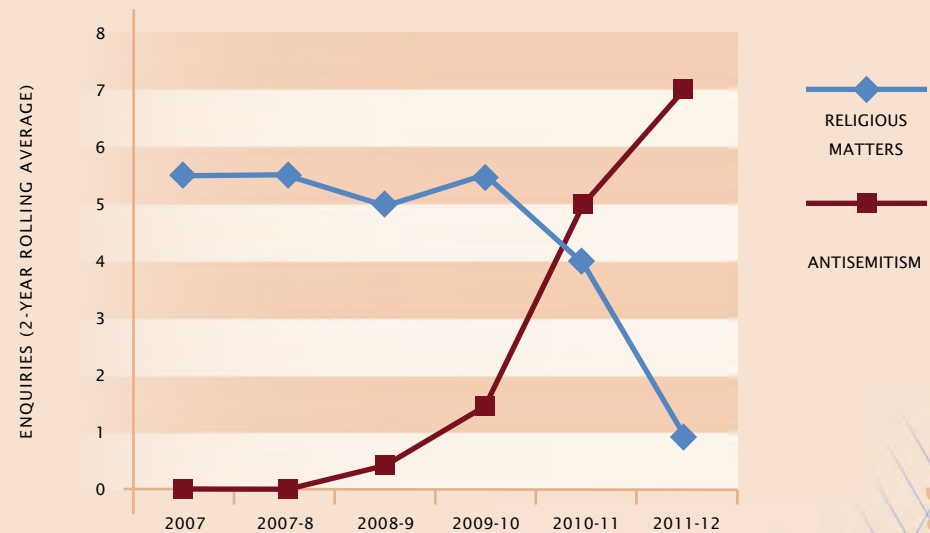
Although some students commended university authorities for accommodating their religious needs such as absence on festivals and early leaving on Friday afternoon in winter in order to observe the Sabbath, we have heard of a number of serious examples of discrimination. One senior academic told us about having to intervene to support a medical student who had been told in so many words by his professor to choose between his intended profession and his religion. The professor, who happened to be a vice-principal, then asked, "why should the university give a dispensation from our rules; why can't you give one from yours?," and when the academic explained that Judaism has no provision for dispensations, he was told, "Well you should."

Another student at a different medical school told us she was "being hounded for taking off Jewish holidays, refusing to sit exams on Friday evening, etc," and was "repeatedly summoned for dressing-down from professors, the dean, and the head of the school. Others who were off (including Muslims) were advised not to fill in absence form but just to 'be ill,' and were not subjected to the same harassment." In a caricature of equality legislation, she was told by the Dean that "because this is a secular university, we don't need to take any account of students' religion", and by another professor, whose class she missed on Friday afternoons, and who was also on the admissions committee, that she was "not doing your people any favours as we'll think twice about taking anyone with a Jewish name in future." (F, 20s)

A trivial incident but not unrepresentative: I was being given a gratuitous runaround by someone in the computer section, and the person concluded "I want you to understand that this has nothing to do with your race or religion". Up to then I hadn't thought for a moment that it did! (M, 50s, East Scotland)

Several university staff told us that they felt more vulnerable since their union, the UCU, had voted against using the generally accepted definition of antisemitism proposed by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia. Others also expressed concern that antisemitism is sometimes regarded differently from other racisms, and the Macpherson principle that "a racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person" is not merely overlooked, but deliberately set aside. One person commented that applying different rules to Jews from others is simply second-order antisemitism.

The pattern of enquiries to SCoJeC from students, parents, and academics considering study in Scotland has completely changed from being only about religious facilities such as availability of kosher food or proximity of synagogues in 2007 to almost entirely relating to antisemitism and security in 2012. This tallies with the finding of survey by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research report in 2011 which found that Scottish students were "more likely to report having experienced some form of antisemitism - over half have witnessed and/or been subjected to antisemitism. By contrast, a third of respondents studying in London has experienced antisemitism."⁶



⁶ David Graham and Jonathan Boyd. *Home and away: Jewish journeys towards independence. Key findings from the 2011 National Jewish Student Survey. London, JPR, 2011, p.53.* http://www.jpr.org.uk/downloads/NJSS_report%20final.pdf



5.7 People Can Change: Two Apologies.

Two stories we were told, which are worth citing in full, concern individuals who had been subjected to antisemitic abuse, but who in both cases received a full apology from the perpetrator. These incidents show the effect that discussion, education, and knowledge can have on people's attitudes, and give hope for the future. Both incidents took place in Glasgow, the first concerning a local rabbi:

I was at the supermarket a few months ago late at night, and was loading the car up. A guy dressed in traditional Muslim dress, coming from prayer, with the full robe, started approaching me. My initial reaction was fear. He came up to me – and he wanted to apologise! About a year earlier, there was a group of Asian kids at the supermarket who started harassing me and started shouting abuse. I could hear the word 'yehud,' so I knew they were talking about me. He was one of those guys; he's now grown up, he's more mature, he's going to mosque, he's married, he's learning about his religion, and he said he wanted to apologise. It was a good moment. And I have to say my initial reaction was fear. It shows something about the local mosque; he said to me that he changed his view from learning at the mosque, from speaking to the imam. It says something about Scotland, about the local mosque's view of the situation in the Middle East, of their local situation in Glasgow. His views were transformed because of going to the mosque. (M, 40s, Glasgow)

The other apology was related to us at a Glasgow focus group:

One of my very close non-Jewish friends married someone who was a school 'friend' of my husband's but not really a friend. This guy was part of a clique who were rather antisemitic. And because these two got married, and we wanted to keep our friendship, there was a point when I used to go at lunchtime, or she'd come to me. But it got to the point that we wanted to mix at night and we did things with the spouses. This guy turned to my husband and said "we were rather mean to you when we were at school; see I had never met a Jew when I came to this school, I learned over the years", and he apologized. And we're still very close friends. (F, 60s, Glasgow)

Both these incidents relate to the fear of the unknown on both sides – and it is this 'unknown', which can be changed by education, and by interfaith dialogue.

5.8 Religious Hatred, Sectarianism, and Antisemitism

The relationship between antisemitism and other forms of religious hatred is complex. The prevailing orthodoxy in the Jewish community used to be that there was relatively little explicit antisemitism in Scotland because the two main Christian communities were 'too busy hating each other'. As one man said in one of our Glasgow focus groups: "*The Protestants and Catholics fight each other and ignore us.*" (M, 60s, Glasgow)

The Scottish Jewish author, J David Simons, in his novel *The Credit Draper*, which deals with the lives of Jewish immigrants to Glasgow at the turn of the twentieth century, puts into the mouth of a leading member of the Jewish community who is also a city councillor and Bailie:

"Do you know why Scotland is such a fine place for us? ... There is so much hatred between the Protestants and the Catholics." His voice lowered to a conspiratorial whisper. "And when they are not hating each other, they combine to hate the English. Hah! What a wonderful city Glasgow is! No-one has any hatred left over for us Jews!"⁷

However, Jews do find themselves caught up in the traditional sectarian divide:

I did genuinely get asked at school if I was a Protestant Jew or a Catholic Jew. (F, 50s, Glasgow)

When I was due to start in 1986 in a life assurance company, one person that I became very good friends with told me that after I had my interview, the manager walked round to ask if anyone had any problem working with someone of the 'Hebrew Persuasion'. But then I'd been there for three years before a Catholic started working there – you have to take it in the context of Scotland. (F, 50s, Glasgow)

My husband is a football fan and it really surprised me to see that a sport divides people for political and religious reasons. He is a Rangers fan, and once I attended the local derby against Celtic. I noted that the divide was expressed in flags over the crowds, and very distinct: Celtic side: Irish, Basque and Palestinian flags, while in our side was the British, Dutch and Israeli flags. Gosh I was relieved to see I was in the 'right' side! (F, 40s, now Tayside, originally from outside the UK)

One informant told us that he had been awarded a very substantial and prestigious fellowship that was "restricted to Protestants of Protestant parentage". When he had queried his eligibility with the university authorities, he had been asked, "You're not Catholic, are you?" and when he said he wasn't, the response was, "Oh, that's all right then – that's all it means". (M, 60s, Glasgow)

Another informant told us about a bank that asked him to recommend a Jewish person to join the staff. They told him it was "to help attract Jewish business", but it eventually transpired that the real reason was to be able to claim to have a religiously diverse staff without employing a Catholic. (M, 70s, Glasgow)

Focusing on sectarianism, however, narrows the focus to inter-Christian tensions, when, as was a theme of the debates leading to the recent enactment of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Act, hatred is indivisible. There do not need to be Jews or Africans in a football team for them to be subjected to antisemitic or racist abuse, any more than someone wearing a green jersey needs to be Catholic to be subject to sectarian violence, and in fact there is evidence that the effect of abuse on the smaller communities is disproportionate.

In 2011 there were 16 prosecutions for religiously aggravated conduct that was derogatory to Judaism, 15 directed against Islam, 400 against Roman Catholicism, and 253 against Protestantism. However, taking account of the relative sizes of the communities, the likelihood of being a victim of a racially motivated hate crime was 1 in 465 for Jewish people compared with 1 in over 2000 for Muslims and Catholics, and 1 in almost 9500 for members of the Church of Scotland.

⁷ J David Simons. *The Credit Draper*. 2nd edition, Nottingham, Five Leaves Publishers, 2011, p.128.



The following table shows religious aggravations charges which were reported to COPFS in 2010-11 for conduct which was derogatory to each religious affiliation, and the number of charges per 1,000 members of each, as recorded in the 2001 census.

Religious aggravation charges derogatory to religion in Scotland in 2010-11 per 1,000 members:

RELIGION TARGETED	NUMBER OF CHARGES	NUMBER OF MEMBERS (000)	CHARGES PER 1000 MEMBERS
CHRISTIANITY - of which:	657	3 294.6	0.2
ROMAN CATHOLICISM	400	803.7	0.5
PROTESTANTISM	253	2 146.3	0.1
JUDAISM	16	6.4	2.5
ISLAM	15	42.6	0.3
UNKNOWN	8	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	696	-	-



The Scottish
Parliament
Pàrlamaid
na h-Alba

Scottish Parliament Written answer 1 December 2011⁸

5.9 The Wrong Type of Minority Community?

In the previous section we have seen how focusing on sectarianism can allow antisemitism and other forms of religious hatred to go unchallenged. A similar but more insidious effect is seen with regard to racism, where the application of generally accepted norms is denied to Jewish people.

One woman told us that members of an organisation purporting to represent minority communities had insisted that an attack on her teenage son, beaten up to an accompaniment of antisemitic jibes, could not be racist because “he isn’t black”. The same woman was told by a different organisation, set up to combat racism, that she could join their committee but not their executive because “she isn’t black enough”. (F, 40s, Glasgow)

SCoJeC has frequently had occasion to point out that colour is an unhelpful descriptor. When ‘black’ is used as if it were synonymous with ‘minority community’, non-black communities such as the Jewish community are excluded because most members of that community 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.

SECTION SIX:

Israel and the Jewish Community

Without any prompting, more than four fifths of survey responses mentioned Israel or Zionism, and the conversation turned to Israel in all of our focus group discussions, with many people mentioning that they had spent time in Israel or had family and friends living there:

There’s a thing you do after the fourth year [of school], you go to Israel for a month. It was the first time I’d ever been with more than three Jewish people in my life, I got massively into it and got involved with this youth group that I work for now. (M, 20s, Glasgow)

I went to Israel for six months at the age of 20, I’ve been to many kibbutzim. I’ve got family in Israel. (M, 50s, rural)

But it’s amazing the misconceptions that people have about Israel, ... I was saying I was going to Israel for a few weeks, for my brother’s bar mitzvah, one girl said “in Israel do they still wear the robes and sandals and have horses and carriages?” (F, 20s, Tayside)

I spent two years in Israel in 1968. (M, 60s, rural)

I’ve been to visit my parents who have retired to Israel. (F, 50s, North-East)

Whatever their views of the situation in the Middle East, the increasing level of anti-Zionist activity in Scotland left many people feeling insecure, worried, and not knowing how to react.

The vast majority of participants in the project had experienced discomfort with the undisputed increase of anti-Zionist activity in Scotland. Most felt that, although it is entirely legitimate to criticise the actions of another government, anti-Zionism is sometimes expressed as antisemitism:

There is growing intolerance regarding Israel, in Scotland, which I do believe is in danger of becoming antisemitism, that is my experience. (F, 60s, rural)

This is consistent with other research findings: an Institute for Jewish Policy Research report in 2010 found that “for 82% of the respondents, Israel plays an ‘important’ role in their Jewish identities,” and “almost a quarter (23%) of the sample had witnessed some form of antisemitic incident”. In the previous year ‘more than one in ten respondents (11%) said they had been subjected to a verbal antisemitic insult or attack in the 12 months leading up to the survey. Over half of both the previous groups (56%) believe that the incident was ‘probably’ or ‘definitely’ related to the abuser’s or assailant’s views on Israel.⁹

⁹ David Graham and Jonathan Boyd, 2010. Committed, Concerned and Conciliatory, the Attitudes of Jews in Britain towards Israel. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.9 <http://www.jpr.org.uk/downloads/JPR%20Israel%20survey%20report%2015.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4W-04247&ResultsPerPage=10>



We have grouped people's comments under four headings:

6.1 Conflating Israel with Judaism

There was a perception that many Scottish people conflated Judaism with Israel, failing to differentiate between "local Jewish people" and "the actions of the State of Israel".

People assume, they equate Judaism with Israel and Zionism too much, it is very tiresome. People assume. How they can mix up your religion with a nationality... I don't get it at all. (M, 40s, Edinburgh)

Sometimes people assume that if you're Jewish then you must be heavily pro-Israel. I don't see myself that way, and don't feel connected to or responsible for the actions of the Israeli state. So that sometimes gets debate going! I try to talk openly about my views when asked, but don't push them on people. (M, 30s, Glasgow)

When I say I live in a Jewish household I'm always told about crossing a border in Israel and how awful the Israeli guards are, or how unfair they are to the Palestinians ... You're immediately somehow responsible for every Israeli guard on the border – and I find that rather bemusing since I've never been there. (F, 50s, North East)

My wife was on the train once and some people walked past saying "free Palestine" because they saw my son with his kippah on. (M, 30s, Glasgow)

I was at a party, I took my hat off and had a kippah on. The flatmate of a friend was there, he saw the kippah and said 'so you like killing Palestinian children?' He tried later to make it a joke. (M, 20s, Glasgow)

We asked this focus group participant whether he had reported the incident, which had happened the previous year, to the police, CST, or the University authorities. He told us that he had not been sure whether to report it or not, and in the end had not done so.

6.2 "I See Increasing Hostility in my Surroundings"

Several people talked about their feelings of unease and fear in the current political climate. One Israeli woman felt uncomfortable walking with her young children past anti-Israel demonstrations in Edinburgh:

What was difficult, a few times, walking with the children, seeing the banners: ban Israel, boycott Israel, and the kids are asking me "what's that?" That's very disturbing, so I don't understand how this is acceptable. It's really not acceptable, it's really quite upsetting. (F, 40s, Edinburgh)

When I see Palestinian leaflets outside Waitrose saying that you shouldn't buy Israeli food, I just want to shrivel up. (F, 50s, Edinburgh)

You are always a bit wary about saying you're Israeli. (F, 40s, Edinburgh)

I am targeted by antisemitism particularly about Israel just like every other Jew. My husband isn't Jewish and that is hard too. His feelings about the Middle East are terribly hard to listen to, but there is nowhere to go to share this. (F, 50s, North-East)

I sometimes feel afraid of stating openly my background and beliefs. I see increasing hostility in my surroundings. In virtual media (facebook, youtube, etc) I am very actively supporting Israel and demonstrate my identity, but in the streets, I would be extra cautious to do so. I am more afraid at the University Campus. (F, 40s, North-East)

Until recently I felt very comfortable being Jewish, but today, with the level of anti-Israel activity in Scotland ... (F, 50s, Edinburgh)

I used to be proud to wear a kippah all the time, but when I lived in Edinburgh, was harassed several times by pro-Palestinians in Edinburgh city centre because of what is happening in Israel, and for refusing to take a leaflet from other protesters in Princes Street. Now, I do not feel safe to publicly wear a kippah. (M, 30s, North-East)

I note that over the years people's attitudes appear to have become more polarised all over Europe and this is particularly noticeable in Scotland where I am afraid to admit to my Jewish background nowadays unless I know the company very well. I recently attended a Union conference in Cardiff, where I was one of only four people in the hall who did not vote in the pro-Palestinian motion on the floor. Afterwards I was approached by one of the proposers of the motion and questioned as to my origins as I looked a bit 'Mediterranean'. I was so concerned, as usual, to avoid conflict that I simply mumbled something about Eastern European origins and left it at that. (M, 50s, North-East)

6.3 Inaccurate Reporting

Several people had challenged political protesters about the accuracy of what they were saying. There was a general feeling that much public information about the Middle East is inaccurate and one-sided, and several said that they were not comfortable with the focus of the BBC's reporting about Israel.

One person pointed out that: *the Scotsman often refers to Israel as "the Jewish State", while never referring to, for example, Pakistan as "a Muslim state", and suggested that that itself could result in Jewish people and institutions being held responsible for the actions of Israel. (M, 60s, Glasgow)*

I believe the BBC should be taken to task more about its biased reporting. (F, 50s, rural)

Careless use of language can exacerbate this problem. For example, in July 2012 the BBC reported on the verdict in a terrorism trial in Manchester under the headline "Oldham wife Shasta



Khan guilty of Jewish jihad plan”¹⁰, giving the impression that the plan, rather than its intended victims, was Jewish. In February 2012, they ran a headline “Who is behind Israel’s embassy attacks?”¹¹ on a story about attacks on Israeli embassies.

The media are pretty hostile towards Israel, it means that the Jewish community is being continuously bombarded with anti Israel stuff. For example, daily, rockets come into Israel from Gaza and are utterly unreported, they can be going over for weeks. Until Israel sends one back – suddenly, the headline is “Israel kills two Palestinian militants”. That’s not reporting, that’s distortion, that repetition is undermining the confidence of the community. The community is uneasy. (M, 60s, Glasgow)

6.4 Boycotts

One Israeli woman had gone into work to find stickers saying ‘boycott Israel’ on the water coolers at her workplace, and she felt very offended.

Another participant suggested that local authorities in Scotland have a pro-Palestinian agenda, and was concerned that some have instituted a policy of boycotting Israeli products. Since much of the kosher food available in the country is imported from Israel, this could potentially impact on religious observance, particularly for residents of a care home or other council facility. Especially since no Scottish local authority is boycotting any other country, he felt boycotts of Israel gave rise to an avenue for antisemitism. (M, 50s, Glasgow)

One young woman told us: *I feel strongly about the boycott that is being made by these professional associations. The government is failing, it looks like they couldn’t care less about it. (F, 20s, Tayside)*

One person commented that when boycott stickers appear on kosher food rather than other Israeli products it reminded him of “*Kauft nicht bei Juden*” [don’t buy from Jews] in the early days of the Nazi regime. (M, 60s, Glasgow)

6.5 Israel on the University Campus

One person, who had provided support to Jewish students on Scottish campuses, felt that most of the Jewish student societies are hesitant either to engage with pro-Palestinians groups on campus, or to do anything associated with Israel, because of the level of opposition they knew they would have to face:

If the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign put on a mock ‘checkpoint’ at a university campus, for example, or there’s a vote in the student union to ban or boycott Israel on campus, and the Jewish student society has two votes whereas the anti-Israel vote can muster 200, it’s hard to know what to do. (M, 30s, Glasgow)

Although one student reported some positive partnership activity on campus, others reported that campuses were uncomfortable places to be, and several referred to a recent incident at St Andrews University, which had led to a conviction

¹⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-18882619>

¹¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17017176>

and expulsion of a student for a racist attack on a Jewish student.¹²

Actually, for all the talk in the Jewish press of rising antisemitism and anti-Israel behaviour, Scottish universities are, in my experience, a fantastic place not only to do interfaith activities, but also interfaith that focuses on the subject of Israel-Palestine. At Aberdeen, in order to reaffirm links after Operation Cast Lead, we co-hosted a string of events with the Muslim Society, starting with a talk on peace, and culminating with a performance of The Arab, the Jew, and the Chicken. To my knowledge, Aberdeen J-Soc is the only Jewish Society in the UK to work with their Muslim counterparts on any Israel-Palestine related event, and the only drama was when the Christian Society brought a pepperoni pizza to the post-event buffet! (M, 20s, Aberdeen)

My friend is currently at Edinburgh University, a massive pro-Palestine place. I think it’s repulsive to be either pro-Palestine or pro-Israel – I think you can be both. But there there’s a massive pro-Palestine place, and a lot of Israel bashing, and she comes to me to talk about it. Obviously pro-Palestinian groups are going to show the worst of Israel. I’m not going to stand around and say ‘we’re perfect’ – everyone does bad things – but it’s a case of showing the good things and the bad things. (M, under 21, Glasgow)

Especially in Dundee, the academic community is influential and academic life is very badly polluted by anti Israeli feeling. It’s the same across the UK, but the proportion in Dundee dominates more than elsewhere. I’ve been described by a fellow academic as being “suspiciously knowledgeable about Judaism”. (F, 50s, East Scotland)

6.6 Israel in the Classroom

In school, one teacher had made a point of telling a Jewish pupil, the daughter of one of our focus group participants, that her husband boycotts Israeli goods. (F, 50s, rural). Another participant told us that her granddaughter’s school had invited a Church of Scotland minister in to talk about bullying at an assembly: the young girl had written down what the minister had said:

Guess what country she’d used as an example about bullying – the bad Jews had bad checkpoints – that’s like bullying. (F, 50s, rural)

One young woman told us: *My friends doing Geography have just started a topic on the Middle East. They come to me for debates: a friend came up to me two days ago and said “I wonder if you have pro Israeli or pro Zionist views because we haven’t been taught any”. I said “Surely you’ve had something” and my friend said “No, literally, it’s been all making Jewish people out to be really really bad, and I just wondered if there are any redeeming features”. They weren’t trying to be mean. They were just baffled. I think that’s the national A level syllabus, I don’t know what they*

¹² High Court Confirms that Anti-Israel Attack on Jewish Student is “Racist”
http://www.scojec.org/news/2012/12v_st_andrews/appeal.html



do at Jewish schools when they're teaching it. They were all curious, it seems weird when everything else seems to have two sides but this only seems to have one side – but you can't have a war with only one side, there must be two sides. I've seen their course notes, I've yet to find something from even a central point of view. (F, under 21, Central Belt)

Before we went to Israel, I was in maths and these boys said, "Do you know, if you go to Israel you'll turn into a terrorist, you'll come back as a terrorist". I burst into tears. I don't know if it was about Judaism or Israel or what, they kept going on about, "All your family's terrorists", "You're going to kill everyone", and "What are you doing here?" The teacher didn't do anything at first, but later on made them write a letter of apology. (F, under 21)



FOCUS GROUP IN ABERDEEN

FOCUS GROUP IN DUNOON

"BOYCOTT ISRAEL" STICKER
ON SUPERMARKET KOSHER
FOOD SHELF

SECTION 7: Issues for public bodies

Several issues were raised by participants in the focus groups and people who responded to the survey, which could usefully be addressed by statutory organisations.

The Scottish Government needs to understand that some of us are not Christian. When they chose a Saints Day for national celebration, they excluded people who care about what they attend. The schools may think that assemblies in church unite the school; they don't. (M, 50s, East Scotland)

7.1 Education Authorities

The largest area of concern about the wider community related to educational institutions, from primary through to university levels. One focus group participant, whose children were the only Jewish pupils in their school, talked about *"the need for help navigating schools."* (F, 50s, North-East).

Opinions varied about the cultural competence of staff. Many shared the view that *"there should be more education about Jewish people and customs. Explain that we have different types of Judaism."* (F, Glasgow), and it was suggested that every teacher, not only those involved in religious studies, should attend a two-hour session on Judaism.

There's a lack of knowledge – for example, the university put swipe cards on a room that had been used by the Jewish student society, preventing it being used on Shabbat by orthodox Jews. (M, 30s, Glasgow)

However, a number of people felt there is substantial good practice in schools in the study of comparative religion. One participant in an Edinburgh focus group told us:

My step-daughter did a whole project on Judaism, they did a whole project on Sikhism. I was amazed, I didn't know they did that. She came back so excited, she quizzed me on all that stuff, but I certainly didn't know that that was happening in the schools at such a young age, being exposed to different cultures. (F, 50s, Edinburgh)

Another person appreciated current good practice but was concerned that it might not continue:

It would be useful to have more education for schools about comparative religion, Holocaust education. I know it happens now, but I want to ensure it's not cut. (M, Glasgow, 60s)

Although some institutions were accepting and supportive of the needs of Jewish pupils and students, others were less accommodating:

When an exam conflicted with a Jewish holiday, professors would make special arrangements for me to take the exam on a different day so that I could still observe the holidays. (M, 20s, US, formerly Edinburgh)



I have found that non-Jewish colleagues were always more than happy to make changes to programmes or exempt me from activities which had to be held on Shabbat or Chaggim [festivals]. An example was a seminar at Glasgow University which held a special pre-Shabbat event so that I could attend.

(M, 60s, formerly Glasgow)

When I went back to university, I had to say that a class was over Shabbat and Yom Tov (which coincided with the start of term) so they accommodated that.

(F, 30s, Glasgow)

At one school, however, which had a large number of Jewish pupils, the parents of one child who was absent from school to observe Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) were told that they didn't value their children's education as much as the family of another child who did attend school on the festival. (F, 50s, Glasgow)

Staff, as well as pupils sometimes encounter difficulties:

In my professional career, when I first started teaching, I had absolutely no problem in taking the yomim tovim off. When I taught in Further Education, I had no problem, and I used to swap with someone and work her hours when I came back. And latterly, all the different heads of department all accepted that until the last one. And the last one said to me "We can't just give you special dispensation for you to come and go to suit you". And that was the first time in over 30 years that anything had changed. (F, 60s, Glasgow)

Two young women talked about the lack of awareness from their schools' music departments.

One told us: I always have a bit of a dilemma because I'm quite musical. Most of the year I'm in the choir and in the orchestra, and then it gets to Christmas and I have to think, do I sing and just miss out the key words, do I sing and say beforehand to myself "this doesn't count"? Our school is very big on diversity. Our motto is 'we value the diversity that exists', but the diversity doesn't seem to have quite reached the music department. It doesn't occur, when they're thinking of songs, to think of songs that everyone can sing happily. They don't even think about it. (F, under 21, Central Belt)

The other was part of the school orchestra, and was asked to play at the annual carol service: *I kind of saw the situation as "I'm not accepting Jesus as any important person in my life, I'm literally just playing along to some carols, I'm not singing it, it doesn't affect my beliefs in any way, I'll still have the same Jewish beliefs that I have always had, they won't be swayed by going along to a carol service."* (F, under 21, Central Belt)

[I had] tensions with my children's schools because I was not content for them to engage in Christian worship – the reaction combined incomprehension and annoyance at the inconvenience. "We all worship the same god really". No, we don't; that's part of the point.
(M, 50s, North-East)

Several parents mentioned incidents similar to that quoted at 5.5 above, in which a child was taunted that "you killed Jesus".

My daughter was told at Easter time that she killed Jesus. ... I sat in an Easter ceremony ... and one of the children read "The Jews wanted Jesus dead." ... She was upset. (F, 40s, rural)

Some people said that they or their children had been inappropriately singled out by teachers when the class was discussing Judaism, or the Holocaust:

If you have no religion or if you're not Christian, it is a very offputting experience. My son's experience was that the head teacher thought of herself as an outward looking Christian, so when it was the turn to find out what Jews did around Christmas, they asked my son who was seven. He was a complete non expert on the subject, he felt non expert and very set apart. (F, 60s, Edinburgh)

At school, I thought it was all focussed on me. Holocaust education is important, but I feel that it's done in a very wrong way. As the Jewish kid in the class, I was asked a lot of questions – not "Oh, you can speak from experience", but questions were directed to me. I wasn't victimised, but I was centred on. (M, 20s, Glasgow)

7.2 Health Authorities

Some people raised issues concerning lack of sensitivity and awareness by front-line staff in organisations such as the Health Service:

When I was pregnant, I was in hospital in Edinburgh. The first time I went in they said "What's your Christian name?" I said "I don't have one". They said "You must have a Christian name, I can see your name on your form". I said "I don't have a Christian name, I'm Jewish". She probably wrote "troublemaker" – and she went on to treat me very badly. (F, 50s, Edinburgh)

An older woman, who told us she had always kept kosher, was distressed that she had had to eat non-kosher food during a stay in hospital:

I was weeks in hospital, obviously I had to eat treif [non-kosher food] then; that didn't go down well, but I had to eat, hadn't I? I often wondered what was hiding under all those juices. (F, 90s, Tayside)

When nurses and doctors are being trained, surely they should think about special food – for Jews and for Muslims. It must be an education thing? (M, 60s, Glasgow)

One set of parents had opted not to have a religious ceremony for their son's circumcision, but instead had the operation carried out by an Edinburgh-based surgeon. The father told us:

We had my parents and my brother, the ceremony and the blessing and then there was a problem and we phoned the surgeon, who was of course in Edinburgh, so he said "go to your GP". And we went to the GP and she said "I've never seen anything like this, what do you expect me to do?" And I felt really vulnerable then. I felt as if the GP should have known what to do. I had this false expectation of her to do something about it – but why would she know what to do? (M, 50s, Tayside)

It is, however, important for staff to be aware of people's ethnic background in order to ensure that all relevant



information is taken into account. One woman told us: “My Jewish genetics were analysed and researched as part of DNA testing for BRCA1 and 2.” (F, 50s, Glasgow) The mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, which are associated with breast cancer, are found around five times more frequently in the Ashkenazi Jewish population than in the general population of the UK.¹³

7.3 Local Authorities

One issue about living far from a Jewish community, or not being part of a Jewish community, arises at the time of death, as many people who are not affiliated to a Jewish community are still very concerned to have a Jewish funeral. For example, SCoJeC received a call from a woman, who had moved to the far north of Scotland with her partner. They had lost all contact with any Jewish community, but when her partner became terminally ill, he told her that he wanted a Jewish burial, and she promised to ensure that this would happen. She told us she had walked out of the hospital in tears, wondering how on earth she was going to keep her promise, since she didn’t know where to begin looking for contact details of the community, but then, going into the local library, she saw a SCoJeC leaflet lying on the counter, and described it as “the answer to my prayer”.

Other people raised the same issue in surveys and focus groups:

When my mother died in 1992 my cousins had to bring their local rabbi with them to conduct the funeral service. I couldn’t get anyone locally [in the rural area where she was living], and I had promised my mother that she would have a Jewish funeral. I have made a point in my will that my funeral must be either Jewish or if that is not possible non-religious. (F, 60s, Glasgow)

I find being Jewish here a pleasant experience – we have met with positive and thoughtful attitudes from local people. I contacted Highland Council about burial in the local cemetery, and two days later a young man called back, having looked into Jewish burial requirements so that he could comply with them – and I had to reassure him that he wouldn’t have to find a minyan, nor would we insist on being buried on a Sunday. We now have permission to be buried with white bricks around our graves to demarcate the ‘Jewish section’. And local GPs have been very helpful, wanting to know what they should do if one of us dies, and what my requirements would be if my husband was ill or died. (F, 70s, rural)

I used to work in social work in the Maryhill area. In those days I used to do a lecture once a year about Judaism, and particularly in the West End there were a lot of families who had married out and didn’t want anything to do with it until something happened. When there was a bereavement or a crisis, social work staff needed to know how to contact the community, how to arrange a funeral. (F, 50s Glasgow)

I would like to have a rabbinical presence to raise awareness in hospices in local communities. I am concerned at how end of life spiritual needs and funeral services are met without such a presence. (F, 40s, rural)

¹³ <http://m.cancer.gov/topics/factsheets/BRCA>

SECTION EIGHT:

Issues for organisations in the Jewish Community

During the course of *Being Jewish in Scotland* we asked people to tell us what they felt Jewish organisations, and local, regional, and national organisations in the wider community, could do to improve the experience of Jewish people in Scotland.

8.1 Community Development

Many people discussed ways of encouraging young people to remain in or move back to Scotland. Amongst their proposals were the staging of more frequent social events, more effective social networking, and, especially for those living in remote areas, the development of a network of people in each of the settled communities, who would provide hospitality to out-of-town visitors during the Jewish festivals.

I have long term concerns about the community shrinking so much to such a small number that we won’t be able to sustain ourselves. And it’s such a lovely place to live, a nice community, I don’t know what we can do about those down in London to encourage them.” (F, 60s, Edinburgh)

To me there’s nothing for English Jews coming up to Scotland. Why doesn’t Glasgow Jewish community host a get-together, a Chanukah party, or something to bring people up. It’s not just about getting those in their teens and 20s, but people in their 30s, 40s, and 50s who have moved because of jobs, and don’t even know that there’s a Jewish community. It’s about arranging them contacts so when they do move to a new city there are people there to welcome them. (F, 40s, Glasgow)

Focus on the families and young generation so the community will stay in Glasgow. (F, 30s, Glasgow)

The educational organisations should be promoting Jewish education and Jewish culture as a way to reach out to the young, otherwise they’re going to leave Glasgow. (M, 40s, Glasgow)

Jewish organisations should rethink their approach and give more emphasis to the fact that young people communicate through social media. (F, 40s, Glasgow)

They could perhaps provide more opportunities for Jewish teenagers and young people from across Scotland to get together and meet each other. For instance, I would be interested in meeting Jewish people my own age, from around Scotland. (F, under 21, Central Belt)



One area of improvement would be to provide more events and opportunities for young people such as college students to feel welcome and part of the community. (M, 20s)

I always claim that if I find a wife (and she was willing) I would seriously consider moving back to Glasgow if another ten or so Jewish couples also moved back to Glasgow. When I tell my friends this, I am amazed by how many people say they would too. If you were to provide financial incentives for young professionals to move back, I think it could happen. An interest free loan for a deposit on a house in Glasgow would be a good start – many of my friends talk about how they can't afford a house in London at all." (M, 20s, formerly Glasgow, now London)

A computer linkup would enable people from remote communities to participate. (F, over 75, Glasgow)

Have more activities for Jewish people to meet each other and get to know others. It would be good if we could be put in touch with Jewish people in our own region, and perhaps have some study events that are not centralised in the cities. We do a lot of travelling to nearest community. (F, 60s, rural)

As someone living in a remote area, it would be very much appreciated if there was a system of host families who could accommodate people wishing to attend shul for special occasions. (F, 60s, rural)

Glasgow Jewish Community Futures project

The Glasgow Community Futures project, coordinated by the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, provides a model of planning in the Glasgow community that could be replicated elsewhere. The project was set up to address the issue of the reducing size of Glasgow's Jewish community, and to concentrate on opportunities for its future, "by planning and influencing that future rather than reacting in an unplanned fashion to changing circumstances." The purpose of the project is to "plan to meet the future religious, social care, external, educational, identification, social and youth needs of the community in a manner which is inclusive, sustainable and where members of the community feel part of, at ease with and able to contribute to the community". It has involved a comprehensive consultation process and is expected to publish its final report in early 2013.¹⁴

8.2 Maintenance of Communal Buildings

The difficulty of maintaining synagogues and other communal buildings, especially in the very small communities, was raised by a number of people. These buildings play a vital role in enabling communities to keep going, providing not only a place of worship, but venues for a wide range of activities from mother and toddler groups through to 'friendship clubs' for elderly people, enabling them to come together and feel that they are part of a community. However, many are now ageing, needing frequent, and often costly repairs to keep the rain out and the heat in, but small numbers mean that funds are scarcest in those communities that depend on the buildings most.

¹⁴ <http://www.glasgowjewishrepouncil.org/CommunityFutures/tabid/3440/language/en-US/Default.aspx>
http://www.scojec.org/4cs/4cs/12v_4c34.pdf

Our shul is falling down and we are working desperately to keep it going financially. There is very little help (i.e. none) available financially for us from either government or charity. (F, 40s, Aberdeen)

It would be wonderful if we could consider adopting the same sort of system for the upkeep of places of worship as they have in Germany, where not only churches but synagogues too are paid for from the general taxes. (F, 60s, rural)

8.3 Suggestions for the Community

Suggestions for possible activity by Jewish communal organisations included:

- ▲ More resources for people giving talks about Judaism in schools and to other groups;
- ▲ Jewish cultural-social events all round Scotland;
- ▲ Greater cooperation between Jewish communal organisations;
- ▲ Web-based Jewish educational programmes with a Scottish context;
- ▲ E-mail and online discussion groups;
- ▲ A 'welcome pack' for Jewish newcomers to Scotland;
- ▲ Joint events and activities between Scottish Jewish communities;
- ▲ Leadership training for local leaders;
- ▲ A network of Jewish people around Scotland willing to offer hospitality to visitors;
- ▲ More support for elderly Jewish people outwith Glasgow;
- ▲ A buddy scheme for Jewish students;
- ▲ A national Jewish trail around Scotland;
- ▲ A travelling exhibition of Jewish life;
- ▲ More support for bar and bat mitzvah children outwith the central belt;
- ▲ More effective support from relevant national organisations to provide accurate information about the Middle East, and encouragement to engage with people holding a wide range of opinions.

Whilst some of these suggestions are likely to lead to useful follow-up work, resources do not currently allow for all to be put into action. However, SCoJeC has already begun to address some of these issues (see Section 9.2), and will consult further with organisations and individuals to prioritise areas of most concern.



SECTION NINE:

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project has allowed SCoJeC to engage with Jewish people the length and breadth of Scotland, and to confirm that there are as many ways of being Jewish in Scotland as there are Jewish people in Scotland.

9.1 Overview

Each event we held attracted Jewish people who were not previously known either to SCoJeC or to the local Jewish community. This was just as true in cities where there are large and active communities as in remote locations, although the smaller the community or cluster, the higher the percentage of people who participated in the activities. The events also attracted non-Jewish people with an interest in Judaism, and some organisations in the wider community are very willing to support local Jewish events and activities:

“We are very pleased that SCoJeC chose to bring this event to our library. Inverness Library sits right at the heart of a vibrant community, and we were delighted to open our doors to be part of a Celebration of Jewish Writers in Scotland”. Those who were present spoke very highly of the event, and it has been one of my favourite events that the library has hosted.”

ELIZABETH PARKER, SENIOR LIBRARIAN, INVERNESS LIBRARY

In every case new connections were made, new links were forged, and new opportunities have arisen. There is no limit to the benefits that can be achieved when people come together, and we have heard of many continuing discussions and plans for future meetings among our focus group participants.

There is a hunger for Jewish contact, especially among people who live a significant distance from any settled Jewish community. Teenagers and young adults are particularly keen to meet other Jewish people of their own age, both locally and across Scotland, and there is considerable interest in Jewish identity and Jewish concerns among those who are not affiliated to any synagogue or communal institution. Many Jewish people without any formal ties to the community regard these as important, even key issues.

The project has highlighted areas of potential learning for the Scottish Government, the Health, Education, and Employment sectors, Local Authorities, faith groups, and others in responding to the expressed concerns of the Jewish community. These include issues around the provision of kosher food, particularly in hospitals and schools; the provision of education to improve understanding of the Jewish religion and the Scottish Jewish community in the wider community; education and training to provide staff in, for example, schools, universities, and workplaces, with a better understanding of what constitutes antisemitism and racism; the development and implementation by organisations of policies stating that racist name-calling and incidents are never acceptable; and setting out clear and effective response procedures.

The project has also highlighted areas for the Jewish Community itself to address. These include concerns about: the decline of the Jewish communal infrastructure in Scotland, the need for greater cooperation amongst the various communal organisations, the provision of Jewish religious and cultural education for adults and children, and arrangements for religious burial, especially in the smaller communities and for individuals living outwith any community.

As a direct result of the project, many more Jewish people in remote and rural areas know

- ▲ They are not alone as Jews;
- ▲ There is potential for getting together with other Jewish people, even outwith the settled communities – some people who have met through our events have already begun to arrange events between themselves;
- ▲ It is possible to celebrate Jewish identity even in the most remote areas;
- ▲ There is potential for innovative use of new technology to facilitate contact, and web-based educational activities.

9.2 Future Activity

We will consult further in order to prioritise the various suggestions made during the course of the project, and will seek new funding and new partnerships in order to implement as many of the suggestions as possible. We are already committed to continuing to hold events of Jewish cultural interest throughout Scotland, and to build local capacity by involving ‘local ambassadors’. We are helping to facilitate regular discussion groups about Jewish issues, have helped to build links between students living in Glasgow city centre and one of the local synagogues, thereby enabling the students to benefit from the synagogue’s facilities, and have agreed to provide bursaries to enable people from throughout Scotland to attend a Festival of Jewish Learning in Glasgow.

We recognise, however, that some people will never be able to attend events or activities, or will only be able to do so on a very occasional basis, so we plan to set up regional and thematic e-mail groups to facilitate links between the various Jewish communities and people living outwith any settled community, and are following up offers to develop web-based Jewish educational programmes with a Scottish context. We will also continue to produce a print edition of our quarterly newsletter *Four Corners*, for people who do not have access to the internet.

We will continue to follow up the *Being Jewish in Scotland* project with communal organisations, government, other faiths, and public bodies, and will discuss how we can most effectively work in partnership to meet the needs that have been expressed during the project, and thereby improve the sense of security and well-being of Jewish people in Scotland.



We are discussing with relevant communal organisations the provision of culturally specific support for Jewish people, including Holocaust survivors and other Jewish refugees, outside the major cities. We are, for example, aware that there has been an increase in demand for the services of Jewish Care from people living outwith Glasgow, following the inclusion of two articles about the organisation in SCoJeC's newsletter *Four Corners*¹⁵.

SCoJeC continues to work closely with the Scottish Government and with relevant public bodies and faith groups on a range of issues as outlined below, and the findings of the *Being Jewish in Scotland* project will continue to inform these partnerships.

Hate crime

SCoJeC meets regularly with the Police, the Lord Advocate, Solicitor General, and Procurators Fiscal, to ensure that they are aware of the views and concerns of the Jewish community, and, in partnership with Jewish Student Chaplaincy, recently arranged for the Lord Advocate to speak to the community at a public meeting about "Tackling Religious Hatred".

Sudden and unexplained deaths

SCoJeC works with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in order to avoid undue delay to burials in cases of sudden and unexplained deaths, and has also raised concerns about currently inconsistent procedures for the registration of deaths that occur on weekends or bank holidays.

Equalities issues

SCoJeC works with a wide range of organisations to improve their policy and practice in the area of equalities. This includes membership of police lay advisory groups, speaking at relevant seminars and conferences, and responding to relevant consultations.

Prison service

SCoJeC works with the Scottish Prison Service to raise awareness of Judaism and the Jewish community by giving talks to staff, facilitating chaplaincy services, and advising on issues affecting Jewish prisoners. A member of SCoJeC Council has been coopted to represent the Jewish community on the Joint Faiths Advisory Board on Criminal Justice.

Health service

As a member of the then NHS Spiritual Care Committee, SCoJeC was very involved in the development of spiritual care guidance to hospitals and chaplains working in the health service, and continues to provide assistance as required.

Education

SCoJeC has worked in partnership with Learning and Teaching Scotland (now Education Scotland) to make the *Jewish Way of Life* teaching resource¹⁶, originally developed by the Pears Foundation for the Board of Deputies of British Jews, available

¹⁵ <http://www.scojec.org/4cs/4cs.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.scojec.org/resources/jwol/jwol.html>

online. This is an interactive resource for use in upper primary and lower secondary schools that provides accurate information about Judaism and reflects the diversity of the Jewish community in the UK.

Interfaith activities

SCoJeC actively engages with other faith communities through its membership of Interfaith Scotland (formerly the Scottish Inter-Faith Council.) It also holds regular bilateral meetings with the Church of Scotland, and with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, and is an associate member of the Scottish Churches Committee and attends its Child Protection sub-group.

SCoJeC's Director was invited to represent the Jewish community on the Board of Faith in Community Scotland, an anti-poverty organisation with a commitment to reducing poverty in Scotland.

Empowering and connecting communities

SCoJeC works closely with BEMIS, the ethnic minority umbrella organisation, of which its Director, Ephraim Borowski, is Convenor. We produce *MEMO*, a weekly overview of information of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland, which is circulated to more than 2500 people each week, many of whom subsequently cascade it to their colleagues; and it also receives around 3000 hits each month on the SCoJeC website. This work helps both to raise awareness of the Jewish community in Scotland, and to strengthen links between minority communities.

Local Authority Services

Further to our discussions with communal organisations about the provision of culturally specific services for people living outwith the Glasgow area, SCoJeC is seeking to raise awareness of this need with organisations in the wider community. This raises a major policy and funding issue for Government: when the members of a community are too dispersed, they are invisible to local institutions, and can only be supported through national networks. However worthy the reasons for devolving policy-making to the local level, such as responsiveness to local democracy, there are some policy areas where that is not possible. In many parts of the country, principally rural, the total minority population is a fraction of one per cent, and diverse distinct minorities are barely detectable. In fact, because census processes are designed to prevent the disclosure of sensitive information about individuals, many minorities may be literally invisible. Consequently, the localisation of budgetary decision-making would impact disproportionately on minority communities, and in particular isolated individuals from those communities, especially those living in rural areas, and, in consequence, may contribute to, rather than address, much less prevent, negative social outcomes.

Jewish Care Scotland provides a case in point: it is mainly funded by contracted services to East Renfrewshire and the City of Glasgow Councils, where most of the Scottish Jewish community live, and even though they recognise their responsibility to Jewish people throughout Scotland, they cannot simply divert those resources to other local authority areas. But it is unreasonable to expect each of the other authorities



to enter into separate contracts even if they were willing to do so. So either these doubly vulnerable people in remote areas are deprived of the culturally sensitive support to which they are entitled (and which they would receive in Glasgow), or else they must be provided for by a centrally funded provision.

Other areas of concern

SCoJeC will continue to provide information to all relevant organisations about other issues of concern to the community, including the new certification of death regulations, shechitah (the humane religious method of preparing meat), circumcision, and the proposal to introduce double summer time, and to press for policies that take account of the needs of the community.

Additional Outcomes

Being Jewish in Scotland has attracted considerable attention in the Jewish press, and has also received coverage in, for example, the Church of Scotland's magazine *Life and Work*; the Catholic Media Office has also expressed interest. The Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs invited SCoJeC Director Ephraim Borowski to deliver a talk about the project and its findings, and both the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and BEMIS, the Scottish ethnic minority umbrella organisation, are considering whether they should emulate *Being Jewish in Scotland* their own constituencies.

9.3 Recommendations

Education

- ▲ Staff should receive adequate training about all the main faiths in Scotland to enable them to respond appropriately to the needs of pupils, parents, and colleagues.
- ▲ Schools should ensure that curricular and extra-curricular activities are inclusive, and do not cause pupils to feel excluded, or pressurised to participate in religious or cultural activities that are contrary to their own beliefs.
- ▲ Educational materials for teaching about religions must be referred to the relevant community for checking. When this does not take place errors may frequently be incorporated which may result in an inaccurate, and possibly even a negative, impression of the community concerned.
- ▲ Where possible, examinations and other key events should not take place on Shabbat or on the festival days of any religion. If this is unavoidable, alternative arrangements must be made to prevent students or staff from being placed at a disadvantage.
- ▲ Schools should ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated as 'experts' to teach their contemporaries about their religion, and that Jewish pupils are not singled out during teaching on the Holocaust.
- ▲ Schools should ensure that Jewish pupils are never singled out when the

Middle East is being discussed, and that staff are supported to present a balanced view on the Middle East.

- ▲ University authorities and Higher Education institutions should take steps to ensure that Jewish staff and students are able to study and work on campus without feeling discomfort and fear.

Health Service

- ▲ Male circumcision is a religious requirement, and medical and nursing staff should provide appropriate medical support. Families should not be made to feel uncomfortable or worse for having chosen to exercise their religious beliefs.
- ▲ Health authorities should clarify to patients why they request information about religion and ethnic background: as well as relating to food and religious practice, this may also relate to medical issues, for example conditions like Tay Sachs disease and certain types of breast cancer that are more prevalent in Ashkenazi Jews.

Jewish Community

- ▲ Communal organisations should work more closely together in order to provide a more effective and joined-up service to Jewish people throughout Scotland.
- ▲ Communal leaders and organisations should plan for the changing demographic of the community.
- ▲ In order to promote community cohesion and confidence among their members, communal organisations should facilitate continuing discussions on a wide range of issues related to Jewish identity and experience.

Wider community

- ▲ Organisations, including councils, the health and social services, and education providers, should be aware that there are Jewish people living in every council area in Scotland, and culturally appropriate services should be included in their local plans. In some cases, it may be both more efficient and more effective to subcontract certain services to a specialist provider, such as Jewish Care.
- ▲ Since levels of religious observance differ, hospitals, schools, conference venues, and residential institutions should routinely ask about dietary requirements. When kosher food is requested, this should always be sourced from a provider with an appropriate rabbinic certification.
- ▲ Workplaces and educational establishments should ensure that they have clear and effective policies for responding to racist incidents, including name-calling, and that staff receive adequate training to ensure that these are always fully implemented.



APPENDIX 1: Glossary

- Chag:** Jewish festival. The autumn festivals of Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot are sometimes collectively called the Chaggim.
- Chanukah:** Festival of lights in December, commemorating the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Maccabees following its desecration by the Greeks. It is marked by some by the exchange of gifts.
- Dreidel:** Spinning top used for a Chanukah game.
- Frum:** Strictly observant of the religious laws.
- Halachic/Halachah:** Jewish religious law in general, or a legal ruling.
- Ketubah:** A Jewish religious marriage contract.
- Kippah:** A head-covering worn by men and boys.
- Kosher:** Prepared in accordance with Jewish religious laws, especially of shechitah and the separation of milk and meat products. Kosher products often have a certificate from a *kashrut* authority on the packaging.
- Mohel:** Specially trained religious official, often a rabbi, who carries out circumcisions.
- Omer:** The seven week period counted from the second night of Pesach till Shavuot.
- Pesach:** The festival, known in English as “Passover”, that commemorates the Exodus from Egypt. The calendar is adjusted to ensure that it falls in spring (March – April), and it lasts eight days (seven in Israel and for non-Orthodox groups). The ceremonial Seder meal eaten in the home on the first two nights includes many elements symbolising the escape from slavery and the foundation of the Jewish nation. *Matzah* replaces bread for the entire week, and many Jews are more than usually meticulous about avoiding prohibited foods.
- Purim:** Festival in early spring marking the deliverance of the Jews in ancient Persia following the intervention of Queen Esther; celebrations include fancy dress, charitable giving, and exchange of gifts.
- Rosh Hashanah:** The Jewish New Year is a two-day festival (usually in September). This begins a ten-day period of contemplation and repentance culminating in Yom Kippur. The centerpiece of the synagogue service is the blowing of the ram’s horn (*shofar*).
- Shabbat:** The weekly day of rest, beginning at dusk on Friday and lasting until it is completely dark on Saturday night. It commemorates the fact that God rested on the seventh day of creation, which Judaism regards as part of creation itself, and is observed with varying degrees of strictness by the different Jewish denominations.

- Shavuot:** The “Festival of Weeks” or “Pentecost” lasts two days in June (one in Israel and for non-Orthodox groups). It commemorates the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, and observances include studying throughout the night.
- Shechitah:** Jewish method for the rapid and painless killing of animals for food, carried out by a *shochet*, a specially trained religious official, often a rabbi.
- Shul:** Synagogue.
- Sukkot:** Known in English as “Tabernacles”, Sukkot is an autumn festival, five days after Yom Kippur, that, together with *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*, lasts eight days (seven in Israel and for non-Orthodox groups). Orthodox Jews build a sukkah or tabernacle, a temporary hut roofed with vegetation, and eat in it during the festival, to commemorate the nomadic lives of the Israelites after leaving Egypt.
- Treif:** Not kosher, usually said of food.
- Yom Kippur:** The Day of Atonement, which is marked by an entire day spent in worship, contemplation, and fasting.
- Yom Tov:** A Jewish festival (Yomim tovim, plural).

DANCING AT A
BEING JEWISH IN SCOTLAND
EVENT IN DUNOON

FOCUS GROUP IN
ROSEHEARTY



APPENDIX 2: The Survey



“Being Jewish in Scotland” is a project being carried out by the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities(SCoJeC), with funding from the Scottish Government, to hear the experiences of Jewish People throughout Scotland. This survey forms one part of the project.

We very much appreciate your time in completing this survey. When you have completed it you can either save the questionnaire on your computer and email it to jewishinScotland@scojec.org as an attachment, or print the form and send it to us by post. If you prefer, we will be happy to send you a paper copy of the questionnaire.

Please write as much or as little as you like in answer to the questions. The boxes will expand to fit your answers. If you have any questions about this survey please get in touch with the *Being Jewish in Scotland* Project Worker (contact details at the end of the form).

You can respond anonymously if you wish, but all personal details will be kept confidential and nothing we publish will identify respondents individually.

We are happy to receive forms until the end of March 2012 but those received by the END OF FEBRUARY 2012 will be included in a prize draw.

First we'd like to hear a bit about your Jewish and Scottish connections.

1. Please tell us about your Jewish background, or your connection to Judaism:

2. Tell us about your Scottish background, or your connection to Scotland:

Now we'd like to hear about your experience of being Jewish in Scotland.

3. What's good for you about being Jewish in Scotland?

4. What's not so good about being Jewish in Scotland?

5. Please describe some stories or experiences that sum up being Jewish in Scotland for you.

**6. How has your experience of being Jewish in Scotland changed over the years?
Why do you think this is?**

This section asks more specific questions about your experiences.

7. Do you talk about being Jewish, or demonstrate your Jewishness in other ways, to non-Jewish people in Scotland?

a) Often b) Occasionally c) Never Please tell us more.

APPENDIX 2:

The Survey (contd)

Being
Jewish
in
Scotland



The Scottish
Council of
Jewish
Communities

8. Do you think being Jewish in Scotland has ever made a difference to how you've been treated when you've been going about your everyday life?

a) Often b) Occasionally c) Never Please tell us more.

Now please tell us about any changes you would like to see.

9. What do you think Jewish organisations or agencies could do to improve the experience of Jewish people in Scotland?

10. What do you think other local or national organisations could do to improve the experience of Jewish people in Scotland?

11. Is there anything that you could do personally to improve the experience of Jewish people in Scotland? (You may be doing lots already – please tell us about this and whether there is any support you would find useful.)

12. Is there is anything else you would like to tell us?

Personal Information

We hope to hear from a wide range of Jewish people from all over Scotland. Completing this section will help us find out whether, for example, people in the same age group or living in the same area have similar experiences, and also show us whether some areas or groups are under-represented in the enquiry.

13. Are you: a) Male b) Female

14. Age: a) over 75 b) 60-74 c) 41-59 d) 21-40 e) under 21

15. Please give the first part of your postcode (e.g. PA30, IV4, EH9)
(If you are living outside Scotland, please give the postcode of your last Scottish address, and the year that you last lived there.)

16. May we contact you for more information about your answers? Yes No

17. Would you be interested in taking further part in this project? Yes No

Your contact details (optional) – please complete this section if you answered yes to questions 16 or 17 or if you would like to be entered in the prize draw (see below).

Name:

Tel:

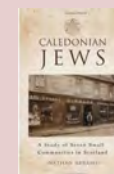
Address:

e-mail:

Please save this form as an attachment on your computer and email it to [jewishinScotland@scojec.org](mailto: jewishinScotland@scojec.org) or print it out and post it to SCoJeC, 222 Fenwick Rd, Glasgow, G46 6UE

If you would like to discuss this survey or any of the issues raised in it, please contact the "Being Jewish in Scotland" Project Worker, Fiona Frank: fiona@scojec.org 07779 206 522 0141 638 6411 or write to her at SCoJeC

Forms can be returned until the end of March 2012, but those received by the END OF FEBRUARY 2012 will be included in a draw for one of the following prizes (please indicate which prize you'd prefer by ticking one of the boxes below).



A beautiful hard backed catalogue of the works of Josef Herman, whose Glasgow period was one of his most prolific. (Donated by the Ben Uri Gallery)

Nathan Abrams' book *Caledonian Jews* about the history of the smaller Jewish communities of Scotland. (Donated by the publishers McFarland & Co.)

The CD *Uncle Roland's Flying Machine* 'jazz-inflected Klezmer and Balkan music'. (Donated by Scottish band Moishe's Bagel)

Two hot salt beef sandwiches. (Donated by Mark's Deli Glasgow). Unfortunately this prize cannot be posted!



APPENDIX 3:

Calendar of Events and Focus Groups

November 2011	<i>Glasgow University</i> : Pilot focus group <i>Boston, USA</i> : Pilot focus group
December 2011	<i>Edinburgh Synagogue</i> : Focus group
January 2012	<i>Care Home, Glasgow</i> : Focus group <i>Fife</i> : Dinner and focus group <i>Aberdeen Synagogue</i> : Film, <i>Growing Up in Scotland</i> ; focus group <i>Aberdeen University</i> : Film, <i>Growing Up in Scotland</i> ; focus group <i>Rosehearty, Aberdeenshire</i> : Focus group
February 2012	<i>SCoJeC Council</i> : Presentation of preliminary findings and discussion <i>Giffnock</i> : Presentation of preliminary findings and discussion <i>Giffnock Synagogue</i> : Focus group <i>Newton Mearns Synagogue</i> : Presentation of preliminary findings and discussion <i>Giffnock, Youth leaders</i> : Discussion <i>Glasgow, Association of Jewish Refugees</i> : Discussion
March 2012	<i>Livingston, Young people</i> : Focus group and prize draw <i>Edinburgh</i> : Dinner and focus group <i>Kirkgunzeon, Dumfriesshire</i> : Klezmer concert, art talk, focus group <i>Glasgow University</i> : Focus group <i>Royal Glasgow Institute</i> : Talk on <i>Hannah Frank's Glasgow Jewish Life</i> ; focus group <i>Aberdeen Synagogue</i> : Film, <i>Lies My Father Told Me</i> ; presentation of preliminary findings; focus group <i>Garnethill Synagogue</i> : Film, <i>Growing Up in Scotland</i> ; presentation of preliminary findings; focus group <i>Dundee Synagogue</i> : Lecture on Jewish Immigration; presentation of preliminary findings; focus groups
April 2012	<i>Jura, Storytelling Festival</i> : Introduction to the project and to the festival of Passover <i>Glasgow Reform Synagogue</i> : Introduction to the project and discussion <i>Inverness</i> : <i>A Celebration of Jewish Writing</i> with Rodge Glass, J David Simons, and Annemarie Allan <i>Dunoon</i> : Klezmer music and dance with band Kasha-Malasha; discussion
May 2012	<i>Edinburgh</i> : Dinner, music with band Beyond the Pale; focus group
July 2012	<i>Skye</i> : Film, <i>Lies My Father Told Me</i> ; discussion on project findings <i>Orkney</i> : Film, <i>Lies My Father Told Me</i> ; discussion on project findings <i>Shetland</i> : Film, <i>Lies My Father Told Me</i> ; and discussion on project findings