



WHAT'S CHANGED ABOUT  
*Being*  
**Jewish**  
*in*  
**Scotland**

[www.scojec.org/jewish-in-scotland-2015.html](http://www.scojec.org/jewish-in-scotland-2015.html)

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**2015 Project Findings**

*"I would never before have considered it risky to show my Jewish identity in public. However that is changing."*

*"I used to be comfortable as a Jew in Scotland, but not any more."*

**The Scottish Council of  
Jewish Communities**





# *What's changed about Being Jewish in Scotland*

## **Project Findings**

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*“Keeping my Jewish identity in a  
sealed box, hidden from view”*

*As a child and teenager growing up in Edinburgh, I was proud to say I was Jewish, and it was viewed positively by Edinburgh people who often had memories themselves of growing up alongside Jewish people and spoke enthusiastically of that. I am very wary now to be upfront about being Jewish in certain circles, and especially after the events this summer [2014]. (F, 60s, Edinburgh)*



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# Introduction



Three years ago, we concluded the Foreword to the first ever study of people's experience of *Being Jewish in Scotland*:

***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".***

Unfortunately it was not to be. Barely a year later, in the single month of August 2014, SCoJeC received almost as many reports of antisemitic incidents in as in the whole of the previous year. So many Jewish people told us that they were feeling uncomfortable and anxious and even afraid to go about their day-to-day activities, that the Scottish Government was concerned enough to fund a further study of how the experience of *Being Jewish in Scotland* had changed.

Around 300 Jewish people completed questionnaires or came to our events, and our findings were extremely sobering: no fewer than 10% of respondents to the survey told us they could think of nothing at all good about being Jewish in Scotland. Others told us that they now "*considered it risky to show my Jewish identity in public*", or that they have changed their conduct to avoid Jewish gatherings including synagogue services, or that for the first time ever they had "*seriously talked about an exit strategy for leaving Scotland*."

Overall our findings echo what we have previously reported about Scotland's university and college campuses: until 2008, every enquiry SCoJeC received from students, parents, and academics considering conditions for students in Scotland was about religious facilities; by 2012 every one was about "*whether it's safe to be a Jewish student in Scotland*". Similarly, attitudes to 'being Jewish in Scotland' have changed radically. People spoke to our 2012 inquiry about aspects of Jewish and Scottish identity, changes in communal priorities, lack of culturally appropriate public services, education about Judaism, attitudes to

Israel, the importance of interfaith work, as well as antisemitism and feelings of safety and security. Sadly, this second inquiry was entirely dominated by expressions of insecurity and alienation. Most tellingly, the person who said in 2012 that Scotland is a '*darn good place to be a Jew*' told us less than two years later that "*I feel alienated, and no longer Scottish first then Jewish. I feel Jewish only*."

Nonetheless, it is reassuring that the Scottish Government has listened to these findings, and is taking the concerns of our respondents seriously. It has increased support for SCoJeC's work to address the concerns of the Jewish Community and to ensure that Jewish people in Scotland feel safe, secure, and supported. The First Minister has made good her promise of "*greater engagement with members of the Jewish community as we work together to eradicate antisemitism and intolerance in this country*", and has attended a number of recent communal events, and she has said on more than one occasion that "*I don't want to be the First Minister, or even live in, a country where Jewish people want to leave or hide their identity*"

So while we can only be seriously concerned by the negativity and level of discomfort expressed by many respondents and the extent to which Jewish people's experience in Scotland has deteriorated, it remains the case that the vast majority of Scottish Jews are here to stay, and we welcome the Scottish Government's willingness to listen to their concerns and to ensure their safety and well-being. It can't now wait twenty years, but let's hope that our next study of the experience of Jewish people in Scotland will indeed report less intolerance, less anxiety, and better understanding between Jewish and non-Jewish people, and that once again the consensus will be that "*Scotland's a darn fine place to be a Jew*".

EPHRAIM BOROWSKI,  
DIRECTOR,  
SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES



# Executive Summary



Following the unprecedented number of antisemitic incidents in the summer of 2014<sup>1</sup>, the Scottish Government funded the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) to carry out a small-scale inquiry into 'What's changed about being Jewish in Scotland' since our 2012 inquiry into the experience of 'Being Jewish in Scotland'.

Our principal findings were:

- ▲ **38 respondents to our survey (32%) explicitly talked about a heightened level of anxiety, discomfort, or vulnerability, despite not having been directly asked.**
- ▲ **20 respondents (17%) – many more than in 2012 – told us that they now keep their Jewish identity secret.**
- ▲ **As a result there is less opportunity for Jewish people to develop resilient and supportive networks and communities.**
- ▲ **76% of respondents said that events in the Middle East have a significant impact on the way they are treated as Jews in Scotland.**
- ▲ **80% of respondents said that the events in the Middle East during summer 2014 had negatively affected their experience of being Jewish in Scotland.**
- ▲ **21 respondents (18%) mentioned the raising of Palestinian flags by some Local Authorities as having contributed to their general sense of unease.**

- ▲ **16 respondents (13%) told us that they no longer have confidence in the impartiality of public authorities, including the police.**
- ▲ **Several respondents said that, for the first time, they were considering leaving Scotland.**
- ▲ **Antisemitism in social media was a much greater concern than in our 2012 inquiry.**
- ▲ **12 respondents (11%) told us they found it difficult to find anything good to say about being Jewish in Scotland.**

Commenting on the preliminary findings of our inquiry into *What's Changed About Being Jewish in Scotland*, Neil Hastie, head of the Scottish Government Community Safety Unit, said: *"The emerging themes from this report are particularly valuable; as is the data on how the international context can impact very palpably on the experience of being Jewish in Scotland. There is much in this for us (and Ministers) to consider."*

We are disturbed by the extent to which this inquiry shows that Jewish people's experience in Scotland has deteriorated as a result of the wider community's attitudes towards events in the Middle East. But despite the negativity and level of discomfort expressed by many respondents, and the fact that some are, for the first time, wondering whether they should leave Scotland, the vast majority of Scottish Jews are here to stay, and we therefore welcome the Scottish Government's willingness to listen to the concerns of Jewish people in Scotland to ensure their safety and well-being.

<sup>1</sup> See footnote 4 below.



## SECTION 1: BACKGROUND:

# The first *Being Jewish in Scotland* inquiry

Since the publication of our first *Being Jewish in Scotland* report in 2012, SCoJeC has addressed many of the issues that respondents told us about, with grant funding from the Scottish Government. We have provided support for Jewish people throughout Scotland who are isolated, remote, or not engaged with the Community, and we have raised awareness and developed and presented educational programmes and activities about Jews, Judaism, and the Jewish Community. In addition, we have undertaken several special projects, funded by the National Lottery and others, that have linked older people and students, engaged with Israelis living in Scotland, enabled Jewish people across the country to keep in touch via an online forum, and trained Jewish volunteers to work in a variety of educational settings. (See Appendix 1 for more information about these projects.)

Commenting on our report of our activities, one of our funders wrote: “*it is interesting to read ... how through your publications and events you are increasing knowledge and awareness. It is also clear that the recent increase in antisemitic incidents has enhanced your role in terms of supporting the community and working with professional bodies to address these challenges*”.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Neil Bird, Voluntary Action Fund, e-mail 24 Nov 2014.

## SECTION 2:

# Three years on: *What's Changed?*

The large increase in the number of antisemitic incidents in Scotland during the third quarter of 2014 following the war in Gaza came as an unwelcome shock, not only to the Jewish Community, but to civil society at large<sup>3</sup>. During August 2014 alone, SCoJeC received more than 25 reports relating to at least 12 separate antisemitic incidents, almost as many as in the whole of 2013<sup>4</sup>, and Police Scotland advised us that they had received reports of threatening phone calls and e-mails, graffiti on synagogues, and two cases of incitement to break the criminal law. In addition, many people told us that they now felt uncomfortable, anxious, and in some cases even afraid, going about their day-to-day activities as Jewish people in Scotland. Although these absolute numbers may not seem high, the most recent Scottish Government figures reveal that, when the size of the different faith communities is taken into account, Judaism is almost 8 times, and Islam 3 times as likely as Christianity to be the victim of religious hatred.<sup>5</sup>

In order to gauge how typical were the expressions of anxiety, insecurity, and alienation that we had reported, the Community Safety Unit of the Scottish Government provided SCoJeC with funding to carry out a follow-up inquiry into how the experience of Jewish people in Scotland had changed during the three years since our original study. The decline in people’s confidence and increase in their feelings of insecurity that we found were striking and extremely concerning.

One man told us:

- ▶ *For the first time in 62 years I did not attend high holiday services this year due to my security concerns.* (M, 60s, Edinburgh)

and others expressed similar sentiments.

<sup>3</sup> *Religiously Aggravated Offending in Scotland in 2014-15*, [www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00479075.pdf](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00479075.pdf)  
See also *Antisemitism Rises as Hate Crime Falls*, [www.scojec.org/news/2015/15vi\\_hate\\_crime.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2015/15vi_hate_crime.html)

<sup>4</sup> The CST *Antisemitic Incidents Reports* for 2012 to 2015 show 11 incidents in Scotland in 2011, 7 in 2012, 14 in 2013, 31 in 2014: and 4 in 2015  
<https://cst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%20Report%202012%20Web.pdf>  
<https://cst.org.uk/data/file/5/c/Incidents-Report-2013.1425053045.pdf>  
<https://cst.org.uk/data/file/5/5/Incidents-Report-2014.1425053165.pdf>  
[https://cst.org.uk/data/file/1/9/Incidents\\_Report\\_2015.1454417905.pdf](https://cst.org.uk/data/file/1/9/Incidents_Report_2015.1454417905.pdf)  
See also: *Large Spike in Antisemitic Incidents in Scotland*, [www.scojec.org/news/2014/14viii\\_antisemitism/antisemitism.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14viii_antisemitism/antisemitism.html)

<sup>5</sup> Religious Hate Crime Statistics, [www.scojec.org/news/2014/14vi\\_hate\\_crime.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14vi_hate_crime.html)



We were disturbed to hear from a health worker with a long involvement in both Jewish communal activities and wider public life at a senior level:

- ▶ *I'm scared to tell people at work that I'm Jewish – I talk about going to church instead of synagogue.* (F, 60s, Edinburgh)

And an Israeli man told us:

- ▶ *My wife and I have completely stopped going to services.* (M, 30, Edinburgh)

The terrorist incidents in Paris and in Copenhagen that deliberately targeted Jewish people going about their ordinary activities within the community occurred during the course of the inquiry, and these also had a marked effect on Jewish people's feelings about their safety.<sup>6</sup>

- ▶ *When people are murdered just because they shop in a kosher deli in Paris or attend a bat mitzvah in Copenhagen, it's natural for everyone who goes to the equivalent venues in Scotland to think that it could just as easily have been a Glasgow deli or an Edinburgh bat mitzvah, and to change their behaviour. It's not paranoid to be fearful when the threat is real.* (M, 60s, Glasgow)

The Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) published a report in May 2015 summarising current, mostly quantitative, research about contemporary antisemitism in the UK<sup>7</sup>, including about the attitudes of non-Jews towards Jewish people, and Jewish views and experiences of antisemitism. The present study, by contrast, is a small-scale qualitative, rather than quantitative, inquiry, looking in depth at the thoughts and feelings of Jewish people in Scotland. Those who participated in a focus group or completed the survey (in some cases both) did so because they felt that the issues covered were important to them. The data that we present in this report is a reflection of what our survey and focus group participants felt was important enough to tell us, and what they wanted us to represent to the Scottish Government and to the public.

We found that once people started talking, or writing, about the issues that were important to them, their responses were often different from their initial answer to a yes/no survey question, the answers to which can be represented graphically. For example, when we asked people to tick a box to say how much they talked about being Jewish, or demonstrated their Jewishness in other ways, to non-Jewish people in Scotland (with the options of 'often', 'occasionally', or 'never', only one person who answered the question in the survey responded 'never'. However, no fewer than 20 people (17% of respondents) told us in other parts of the survey that they had stopped wearing visible identifiers of Jewish identity, that they no longer told people that they were Jewish, or that they didn't feel comfortable talking about expressing their Jewishness in public (see section 4.1). Others wrote

<sup>6</sup> Note that the proportion of respondents who referred to these attacks is not significant, as most survey responses were received before they took place.

<sup>7</sup> Boyd, J & Staetsky, JD. Could it happen here? What existing data tells us about contemporary antisemitism in the UK. London, Institute for Jewish Policy Research, May 2015.  
[www.jpr.org.uk/documents/JPR.2015.Policy\\_Debate\\_-\\_Contemporary\\_Antisemitism.pdf](http://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/JPR.2015.Policy_Debate_-_Contemporary_Antisemitism.pdf)

several pages of text in response to our open-ended questions about 'what's good for you about being Jewish in Scotland' and 'what's not so good about it' – perhaps the first time that such people have had a chance to think, and write, about these issues.

As well as providing us with new information about what matters to Jewish people in Scotland, this study confirmed what we found during the initial 2012 inquiry, namely that when we provide opportunities for people to discuss their experience of being Jewish, these events and activities themselves serve to provide support and reassurance, and build a sense of community and engagement, especially among people living outwith the larger Jewish communities.

One example of this was a focus group participant who had lived in a small town in the Highlands for 26 years, never telling anyone she was Jewish, and who had never previously attended any Jewish activity in Scotland. She happened to have seen an article about the focus group in the local paper, during the week that a terrorist attack had taken place on a synagogue in Copenhagen, and told us that she had asked her husband:

- ▶ *Is it safe to advertise a Jewish event in our local newspaper?* (F, 50s, West Highlands)

This respondent's anxiety was typical of many in the Scottish Jewish Community, and we therefore welcome the Scottish Government's unqualified commitment to tackling Hate Crime, and note recent comments by then Minister for Local Government and Community Empowerment Marco Biagi, who said:

*"Undoubtedly international events have had an impact in our communities in Scotland and whilst we cannot be held responsible for the actions of overseas Governments and other groups, it is concerning to see rises in relation to hate crime that impacts on both our Jewish and Muslim communities in Scotland. All such crimes must be investigated thoroughly and we will continue to work closely with Muslim and Jewish organisations to improve the lives of people within our communities."*<sup>8</sup>

Although, in common with many other Jewish people, this participant had felt unsafe after the terrorist attack in Copenhagen, SCoJeC's event enabled her to feel more connected to other Jewish people, and she was reassured by the knowledge that there is a national organisation that to help assure the security and safety of Jewish people throughout Scotland. She wrote afterwards: "I would love to get involved in a community where I could learn and help in any way", and that she would like to become part of "a network in the Highlands, where someone like myself, who knows very little about Judaism due to my upbringing, could learn and explore more".

<sup>8</sup> <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Tackling-hate-crime-in-Scotland-1a33.aspx>



SCoJeC is committed to continue running activities and events around Scotland, to enable Jewish people all over the country to feel connected, safe, and supported. This also contributes to the Scottish Government's objective of creating strong, resilient and supportive communities, by helping *"communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life, [by] fighting crime, and reducing the fear of crime"*<sup>9</sup>.

## 2.1 Themes arising from the report

People talked about:

- ▲ the Scottish Jewish community being a 'warm, close and supportive community'.
- ▲ there being advantages to bringing up children in a small community where people can express their Judaism in whatever way feels comfortable to them:
  - ▶ *If you're brought up to feel you're part of the story, you don't have to follow the script.* (F, 50s, Edinburgh)
- ▲ the importance of interfaith activity, and of raising awareness about Judaism and Jewish people in the wider community.
- ▲ ways in which many aspects of life could be improved for Jewish people in Scotland. Many of the suggestions are included in this report.

However, nearly half our respondents told us that they no longer felt so comfortable about being Jewish in Scotland, telling us, for example, that:

- ▲ changing attitudes to Israel, often influenced by the style of media reporting about the Middle East, impact on their day-to-day lives.
- ▲ unbalanced political comment about the Middle East, such as the very large and disproportionate number of Scottish Parliamentary Motions critical only of Israel, and local councils taking sides in the conflict by flying the Palestinian flag, also impacts on their day-to-day lives.

- ▲ experiences of antisemitism and hate crime, often masquerading as political criticism of Israel, have increased since our first *Being Jewish in Scotland* Inquiry. This is particularly the case for antisemitism across the social media spectrum, which is very much more prominent than it was two years ago.
- ▲ they find the derogatory use of the word 'Zionism' offensive because Zionism is no more or less than support for a Jewish national homeland, and should be regarded no differently from other nationalist movements:
  - ▶ *There has been a definite change and that is largely due to the increasing level of anti-Israel activity and the derogatory description of being a Zionist. ... being Zionist means believing in the right of the Jewish people to have a safe homeland of their own.* (F, 60s, Glasgow)
- ▲ they feel personally alarmed and distressed by attempts to delegitimise the State of Israel and support for its destruction because they have family and friends there.
- ▲ they no longer feel safe to talk publicly about being Jewish or to wear clothes or jewellery that might identify them as Jewish.

We also heard of many more negative experiences from Israelis living in Scotland than we did during the 2012 Inquiry. Every one of the Israelis living in Scotland who answered our survey or took part in our focus groups told us about feeling anxious, threatened, uncomfortable, or having little confidence in the police. One respondent who had lived for a time in Israel and had Israeli citizenship started off writing that she was very comfortable with her identity, saying *"there isn't one person who knows me who doesn't know I am Jewish and Israeli"*, but then went on to say:

- ▶ *I suppose in the last summer I probably kept my profile a little lower than usual. I was incredibly angry at the council buildings in Scotland taking sides (flying a Palestinian flag). I did try to advocate, explain, and debate points with people, but it was then that I was met with some prejudice, and suddenly people's true colours came through.* (F, 30s, Borders)

## SECTION 3:

# Methodology

This study enabled us to go back to many of the people who contributed to our 2012 *Being Jewish in Scotland* inquiry<sup>10</sup>, to ask whether, and if so, how and why, their experiences and opinions have changed. It also included the views of a significant number of people who did not participate in the original Inquiry.

We gathered data through a combination of online and paper surveys<sup>11</sup>, interviews, focus groups, and discussions at events throughout Scotland. As in the original Inquiry, in both our survey questionnaire and focus group discussions, we asked people open questions that enabled them to raise the issues that concerned them, rather than prompting them by mentioning specific issues. We asked people to tell us “*what’s good?*” and “*what’s not so good?*”, about being Jewish in Scotland, and we asked them for stories and experiences that sum up being Jewish in Scotland for them. We asked them to tell us whether they talk about being Jewish to their friends, colleagues, and neighbours, or demonstrate their Jewishness in other ways, and whether they thought that being Jewish had ever made a difference to the way in which they had been treated in any aspects of their everyday life. We also asked whether people’s experience of being Jewish had changed during the three years since our first inquiry, and if so, what they thought was the reason.

Because of the particular context that had led us to conduct this survey, we also asked some additional questions that were not asked in 2012: whether respondents felt that events in the Middle East have a significant impact on the way in which they are treated as Jews in Scotland, and particularly whether the events of summer 2014 had made any difference to their experience of being Jewish in Scotland. We also asked whether participants had ever been the victim of, or been affected by, a hate crime or incident; if so, whether they felt that the incident had been motivated by antisemitism; and whether they had reported it to the police, the Community Security Trust (CST), or SCoJeC.

As in our first inquiry, we also asked what local, regional, national, and Jewish community organisations should do differently, and whether there was anything that they themselves could do, in order to improve the situation of Jewish people in Scotland. And finally we asked people if they would like to take any further part in the inquiry, and if they had any other comments.

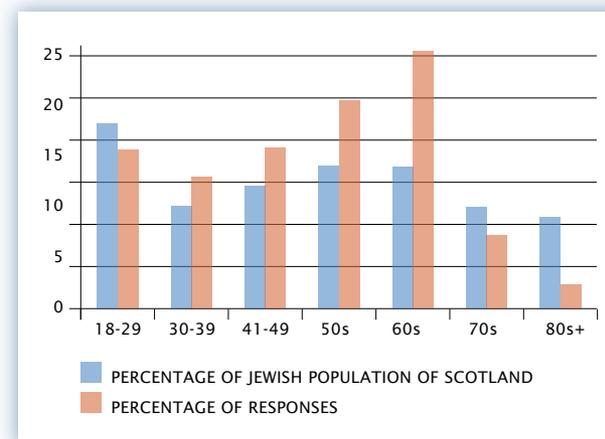
To ensure the widest possible participation from Jewish people all around Scotland, we sent the online survey link to all of our own e-mail contacts and to all the Scottish Jewish social media groups, and we publicised it through the

mainstream regional Jewish media and social media channels. As an incentive, we also offered a prize draw with four Jewish-themed prizes.

**We received 119 responses to our survey, mainly from our online ‘surveymonkey’ questionnaire<sup>12</sup>. 46 of these (39%), had also responded to our 2012 *Being Jewish in Scotland* Inquiry (so 30% of the respondents to the previous survey responded to our invitation to complete this new survey), and 73 were new respondents.**

The age distribution of the respondents is shown in Figure 1, compared with the age distribution of Jewish people in Scotland according to the 2011 census<sup>13</sup>. This shows that there was a disproportionately high response rate from people aged in their 50s and 60s, but also a strong response from those in their 30s and 40s.

FIGURE 1: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONSES.



Two thirds of survey respondents gave their gender, of whom 49 (60%) were female, and 32 (40%) were male.

67 survey respondents (56%) gave their postcode. Of these 30 (40%) were from the Greater Glasgow area, 18 (24%) from the Edinburgh area, 6 (8%) from the Aberdeen area, 6 (8%) from the Inverness area, 8 (11%) from Fife, and 7 (9%) from other areas around Scotland. Figure 2 shows the geographic distribution of survey respondents as compared with the national distribution of Jewish people in Scotland.

<sup>10</sup> Frank, F, Borowski, E, and Granat, L: “*Every Jew has a story to tell, and every story is different*”: the report of the *Being Jewish in Scotland* inquiry’. SCoJeC, Glasgow, 2012. [www.scojec.org/resources/files/bjis.pdf](http://www.scojec.org/resources/files/bjis.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> The survey form is included as Appendix 2 to this report.

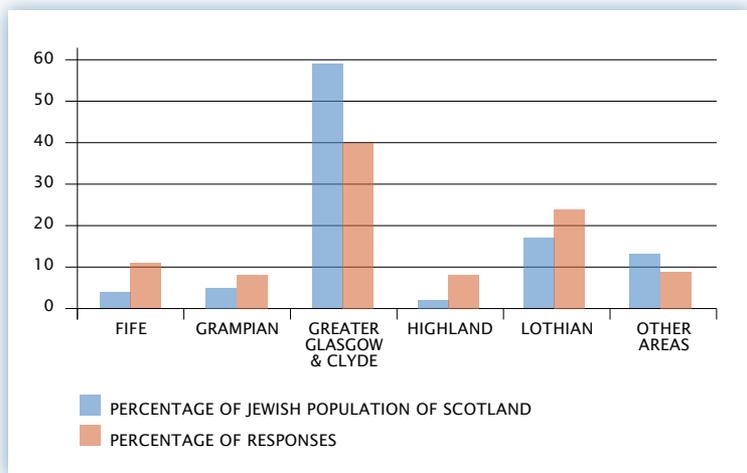
<sup>12</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/bjis2-survey>

<sup>13</sup> Scotland’s Census 2011 – National Records of Scotland, Table DC2107SC – Religion by sex by age. Accessible from: [www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)



It is interesting to note that the proportion of responses to population was relatively low in Glasgow, and to speculate on why this should be. Possible explanations are that there are more facilities and more support and so less vulnerability in a larger community; that there is more apathy in a larger community; or that it may actually be more difficult to contact unaffiliated people within than outwith the area of a larger community.

FIGURE 2: GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS



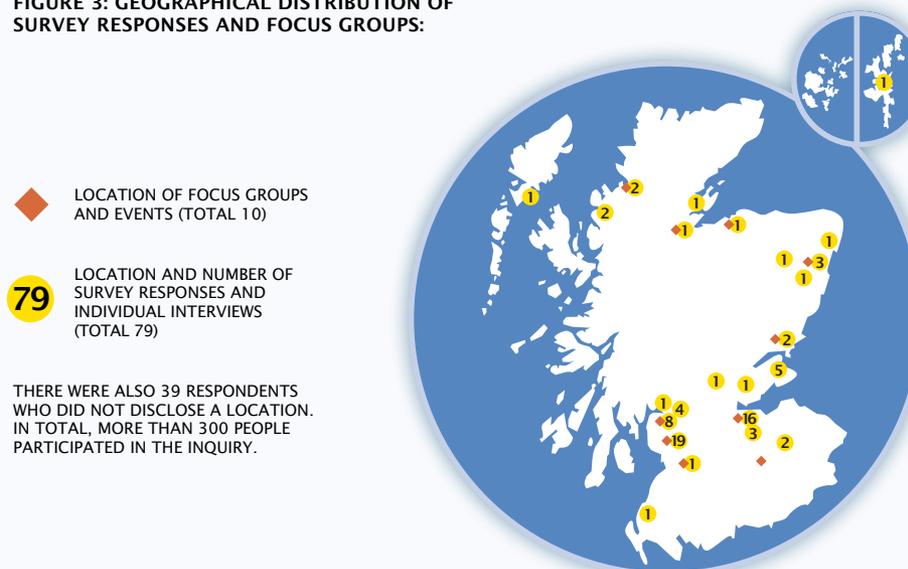
Focus groups that attracted around 195 people (60% female and 40% male) were held in Aberdeen, Ullapool, Inverness, Findhorn, Giffnock, Edinburgh, Peebles, Dundee and North Fife. To attract participants and to provide opportunities for people throughout Scotland to engage with Jewish culture, several of the sessions also included cultural activities; three events included 'meet the author' sessions with Glasgow Jewish writer J David Simons, who spoke about his *Glasgow to Galilee* trilogy, and five events featured live klezmer music and dancing. In addition, delegates at a Glasgow Jewish Representative Council meeting took part in a short discussion about the issues raised in the inquiry, and we also held a discussion session at *Scotland Limmud*, the largest Jewish cultural event in Scotland.<sup>14</sup>

There are a significant number of Israelis among Scotland's Jewish population: the 2011 census reported that 400 people living in Scotland responded that they were born in Israel, of whom at least 177 identified as Jewish, although the number

is likely to be much larger if Israeli citizens who were not born there, and their families, are included. We therefore held two Hebrew language focus groups in Edinburgh and Glasgow that were facilitated by a native speaker.

In total more than 300 Jewish people contributed to the Inquiry (5% of the 5887 people who identified themselves as Jewish in the 2011 census). In addition, around 180 non-Jewish people attended the author talks and the klezmer sessions. This contributed to the sense of integration of the Jewish participants as well as enabling people from the wider community to hear the concerns of Jewish people in Scotland. In total, therefore, nearly 500 people around Scotland participated in either or both of the inquiry and associated events.

FIGURE 3: GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONSES AND FOCUS GROUPS:



Throughout this report, we have used direct quotes from our respondents in order to bring our findings to life. For the most part we have included their gender, age, and geographical location, but we have withheld this information where it could allow individuals to be identified.

<sup>14</sup> See online reports at [www.scojec.org/news/2015/15ii\\_bjis2/highlands.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2015/15ii_bjis2/highlands.html), [www.scojec.org/news/2015/15iii\\_bjis2/around\\_scotland.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2015/15iii_bjis2/around_scotland.html), [www.scojec.org/news/2015/15iii\\_limmud/limmud.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2015/15iii_limmud/limmud.html)



## SECTION 4:

# What's changed about being Jewish in Scotland

Although we were interested in all experiences of being Jewish in Scotland, we particularly wanted to find out whether, and if so how, experiences had *changed* since our 2012 inquiry. **We have therefore highlighted expressions that express these changes in bold type.**

- ▲ Many people – at least 20 (16%) of survey respondents<sup>15</sup>, and more people in the focus groups – told us that **they now keep their Jewish identity secret**, and we also heard that some non-Jewish parents of children with Jewish heritage are concerned about their children being visibly Jewish in public. **This exacerbates their isolation, since hiding their Jewish identity also diminishes their opportunities to connect with other Jewish people and thus to develop strong, resilient, and supportive communities.**
- ▲ In marked contrast to our 2012 inquiry, five respondents told us that **they were thinking for the first time about leaving Scotland.**
- ▲ 76% of respondents who answered the question agreed, or strongly agreed, that **events in the Middle East have a significant impact on the way they are treated as Jews in Scotland**, with no fewer than 80% of respondents stating that the events in the Middle East during summer 2014 had substantially, or somewhat, affected their experience of being Jewish in Scotland. As discussed below (section 4.3), these percentages are remarkably consistent with the findings of two recent academic studies.
- ▲ **Many people told us that they no longer have confidence in public authorities**, relating this to, amongst other things, the disproportionately high number of one-sided Scottish Parliament Motions criticising or condemning the State of Israel.
- ▲ **Particular concern was expressed by almost one in five survey respondents about the raising of the Palestinian flag by a number of Local Authorities.** In the context of the war in Gaza, these respondents said that this contributed to their general sense of unease because they interpreted it as support for Hamas, and many of them pointed out both

that it was the indiscriminate rocket fire directed by Hamas at southern Israel that had triggered the conflict, and that the Hamas Charter contains standard antisemitic themes such as denial of the Holocaust and denying any historical Jewish presence in Israel, and calls not only for the eradication of Israel, but for world-wide genocide: *“The Day of Judgement will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews)”*<sup>16</sup>. The high level of awareness of such matters amongst members of the Jewish Community who are in no way specialists must also be regarded as significant.

- ▲ **Concern was also expressed about Local Authorities passing resolutions that called for a boycott of Israel.** Many people pointed out that these were potentially in breach of the Equality Act, were also hypocritical when so much medical and IT equipment uses Israeli technology, and threatened Council services to Jewish citizens, since, for example, much kosher food is sourced from Israel.
- ▲ **Worryingly, a significant number of respondents told us that they did not feel that the police had acted to protect their freedom to go about their business.**
- ▲ **Concerns about antisemitism in social media were much more prominent than in our 2012 inquiry**, with one particular incident, a call by a former candidate for George Galloway’s ‘Respect’ Party to *“make Scotland a Zionist-free zone”* attracting unprecedented numbers of complaints. Since a large majority of Jewish people regard themselves as Zionists<sup>17</sup>, in practice, this was widely seen as a call to make Scotland a ‘Jew-free zone’.
- ▲ Some respondents spoke about **the shrinking Scottish Jewish community as being a significant change in recent years** (something that was also mentioned in our previous inquiry). **A new theme in the current Inquiry was personal commitment to Judaism**, with a number of respondents telling us that this had changed significantly in recent years, with some people becoming more religiously committed and some talking about becoming less committed.



<sup>15</sup> This information was taken from open-ended narrative responses to the survey questions and reflects those people who felt it was important to state that this had changed in their lives.

<sup>16</sup> [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/hamas.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp) Article 7.

<sup>17</sup> See discussion in Section 4.3.



## 4.1 “Keeping my identity in a sealed box”: Being Jewish in public – or not

Several respondents told us that they had stopped talking about being Jewish with non-Jewish friends, colleagues, and neighbours, or had done their best to hide any visible signs of being Jewish, usually linking this new behaviour to the impact of increased focus on events in the Middle East:

- ▶ *I would never before have considered it risky to show my Jewish identity in public. However that is changing.* (F, 20s, Glasgow)

▶ *As a child and teenager growing up in Edinburgh, I was proud to say I was Jewish and it was viewed positively by Edinburgh people who often had memories themselves of growing up alongside Jewish people and spoke enthusiastically of that. I am very wary now to be upfront about being Jewish in certain circles, and especially after the events this summer [2014].* (F, 60s, Edinburgh)

- ▶ *As far as the children are concerned we are telling them to be less open about being Israelis. Two years ago it wasn't like this. It is a question of safety now.* (M, 40s, Edinburgh)
- ▶ *Jewish people in Scotland no longer feel safe to be publicly and openly Jewish to some extent.* (Aberdeen focus group)
- ▶ *I am less likely to publicly admit to being Jewish, especially when Israel gets such a bad press.* (F, 60s, central belt)
- ▶ *I am much more careful about who I disclose my religion to. This is in part because of the rise in anti Israel feeling and the assumption that all Jews are Israeli or support unreservedly Israeli policy.* (F, 50s, Glasgow)

One disturbing response came from this man living in the Highlands, for whom the change in his experience seems to have had a particularly harrowing effect:

▶ *I have dual nationality and have served in the Israeli Defence Forces as a reservist. I was originally unafraid to mention this fact and ex British military friends would actually respect my short military involvement ... [but recently] I have been less welcome in many conversations and have even been looked on as being personally responsible for the deaths of civilians ... to the point that I now keep my mouth shut and keep my Jewish and Israeli identity in a sealed box and hidden from view.* (M, 50s, Highlands)

Other respondents told us that they had stopped talking with work colleagues and others about their Jewish identity:

- ▶ *I'm a lot more careful now about who I discuss religion and politics with, for example.* (F, 50s, north east)

One young woman said, almost as an afterthought, that one significant change in her life was that she had “stopped volunteering to people that I’m Jewish”:

- ▶ *I used to be much more open about telling people that I'm Jewish, until the onset of ... antisemitic comments and jokes, which only got worse as they started being aimed at me. I now only tell people that I'm Jewish when I've known them for quite a while and it comes up unavoidably in conversation.* (F, under 21, Fife)

- ▶ *The general consensus is that we are less open. I've been a bit more wary, over the past year or so.* (F 50s, North East.)

Even more concerning was a strong message from many of the Israelis who told us that they did not feel safe showing that they were Israeli, for example by speaking Hebrew outside the home, and we have therefore devoted a separate section to this below (section 4.8).

**A few respondents, however, said that the events in the Middle East had made them more likely to talk about or demonstrate being Jewish with others,** although the way they express this appears unnaturally self-conscious:

- ▶ *As more and more of my friends have moved away, I increasingly feel like a minority. I am not aware of any other Jews in my workplace (it is a large organisation). I think this has made it even more important to me to represent my race in Scotland. It has also changed in the last year due to the Scottish reaction to Operation Protective Edge, in particular the raising of the Palestinian flag. I am using social media much more regularly to try and educate friends about the situation in the Middle East.* (F, 30s, Glasgow)

- ▶ *I now make a point of raising my heritage immediately in conversations where I think my Jewish identity might have an impact on the debate. In the past, I might have kept quiet – if I thought my feelings might lead to confrontation.* (Anon)

### 4.1.1 Hiding Jewish Heritage

One focus group discussion related to the *mezuzah* that most Jewish people put on their doorposts, especially on the front door, and that therefore publicly identifies a Jewish home. One woman, originally from North America, told us:

- ▶ *The whole time that I've lived here I've never had a mezuzah on my door. I remember when my father came here, I stuck it on with sticky tape, but part of it is because of not wanting to be identified somehow. It's bad – I wouldn't have been like that in New York. I somehow feel uncomfortable about having something on my door that says I'm a Jew.* (F, 60s, Edinburgh focus group)



Another participant had had a *mezuzah* on her front door, but took it down for painting, and “forgot” to put it back, while a third told us of her concerns about putting a *mezuzah* that her father had sent her on the door in her student flat. Interestingly, her non-Jewish flatmate could not understand her concerns, and she had eventually put it back up:

- ▶ *When I first moved here, my dad sent me a large mezuzah with a big Star of David, and I thought “OK, shall I put it up?” I talked to my roommate, she said “why don’t you put it up!” She didn’t even understand what I was worried about, so maybe I was overreacting. I put it up: the longer I live here the more comfortable I feel.* (F, Edinburgh, under 21)

These stories highlight a serious issue, namely that once fear prevents people making public or visible statements about their Jewish identity, their opportunity for making connections with other Jewish people, and so accessing support, diminishes. The value of visible symbols was emphasised by another participant who told us that once a neighbour had come round to ask about a parked car, and when she saw the *mezuzah*, they ended up having a conversation about their shared Jewishness. As she said:

- ▶ *there was a connection – if you have a mezuzah, it’s not just the baddies; the goodies see it too.* (F, Edinburgh, 60s)

The same point was also made by a student who said:

- ▶ *When I first came I never wore a Star of David, except at Shabbat dinner, I heard that it was so bad here, but the longer I live here the more comfortable I am with telling people that I’m Jewish. Though I never wear it to class, I never tell my professors, or even in the library or where other students would see me. ... I only found out two weeks ago that one of my classmates was Jewish – I never had a reason to talk to him, now I do.* (F, under 21, Edinburgh)

As well as adults feeling that they now have to hide their Jewish identity, which we had also heard during our previous inquiry, albeit to a lesser extent, this time we were also told that **some non-Jewish parents of children with partly Jewish heritage are now afraid of the consequences of their children acknowledging their Jewish background.**

In one focus group, a Jewish man whose partner was not Jewish told us:

- ▶ *There was a ‘Jewish topic’ at assembly, where [my son] was dying to speak. The Head was talking about Judaism and other religions, and he wanted to say “My Dad’s Jewish!” He had no concerns about saying it; he had no reaction in primary school. But my partner was a bit worried – ‘do you think that’s ok?’ She was slightly concerned that just putting his hand up....* (M, 40s, Highlands)

And in another focus group, a grandmother told us about her two grandchildren, who had a non-Jewish mother. The children were being brought up with no religion, but had originally been known by a double-barrelled surname, one half of which was distinctively Jewish. One child now attends a primary school where there are no other Jewish children, and is known only by the non-Jewish surname:

- ▶ *since the Gaza thing happened, as [his mother] didn’t want him to have a Jewish name and be singled out as the only Jewish child. I was upset in the beginning, but now I think, “what’s in a name?”* (F, 60s, Glasgow)

Hearing this story, another respondent recalled that, when he saw Schindler’s List some years earlier, her non-Jewish husband had asked:

- ▶ *Does our daughter **have** to be Jewish?* (F, 60s, Glasgow)

When one of a member of SCoJeC’s Council was giving a talk about Judaism in a rural primary school, she was told by the Deputy Head that one of the Polish families at the school is Jewish, but the children don’t talk about it, and the parents have asked that this be kept confidential so that even the class teachers are not aware. It has been suggested by a teacher who works within the Polish community that this is a common phenomenon amongst immigrants from Eastern Europe:

- ▶ *There are a few [Eastern European] Jewish families here ... never mentioned except in private. None of the children whom I’ve taught would admit to being Jewish... We don’t mention it. Among the Polish community it’s never mentioned as it would be a major divisive factor.* (Anon)

It is hard to tell whether this phenomenon, of some parents’ desire to hide their children’s Jewish heritage, relates to a new climate of “*generalised fear and uncertainty*” or to the increase in anti-Israel feeling across Scotland. In either case, it has the potential both to pass on their fear to the child, and to cause a rift between the Jewish and non-Jewish parent and their wider families.



## 4.2 “Generalised fear and new uncertainty”

The nature of the perceived threat to Jewish people changed after the Paris and Copenhagen terrorist attacks, which occurred early in 2015 while we were collecting the data for this inquiry. One participant at a focus group which took place the day after the Copenhagen attack, asked the group:

- ▶ *How many of you hesitated before coming here today?* (F, 50s, North East)

As mentioned above, a participant in another focus group questioned whether it was safe to advertise a Jewish event in the local paper, as they feared it might make the event a target for extremists.

Participants who had never felt personally threatened, distinguished between “personalised antisemitism” and “generalised feelings of insecurity”, raising issues of the Holocaust and wider political issues, while others made comparisons between being Jewish in Scotland and being Catholic in Northern Ireland. Some expressed concerns about the rise of Scottish Nationalism, one respondent even suggesting that

- ▶ *the ... IndyRef [was] encouraging nationalists feeling it was acceptable to be anti-semitic.* (M, Glasgow, 50s)

As the recent JPR report on antisemitism states<sup>18</sup>, the current “strikingly high levels of anxiety and concern” are informed by internal as well as external factors and “the history of antisemitism as well as people’s personal politics will “shape and inform their views”.

When asked what answer he had given to the Census question “What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?”, one focus group participant replied:

- ▶ *usually I won’t answer this type of question on surveys of any kind as I don’t trust the motives behind asking it. If I did answer the question it is unlikely that I would have put Jewish, since I try to hide the fact from the public records.* (M, 60s, Highlands)

and another, talking about how her experience of being Jewish in Scotland had changed, told us:

- ▶ *I did not fear the threat of violence, it is something much more subtle but equally frightening.* (F, 30s, Glasgow)

These responses, as well as the following exchange amongst four participants at one of the Glasgow focus groups, illustrate the anxieties of many of the Scottish Jewish community, a large number of whom are second or third generation Holocaust survivors:

- ▶ **PARTICIPANT A (F, 60s):** *... it’s a warm, close, and supportive community, I’ve never found any antisemitism in my whole life. I’ve never felt threatened at all. I’m feeling a bit unsafe now, but never experienced antisemitism.*

**PARTICIPANT B (F, 60s):** *What did you mean by feeling ‘unsafe’ rather than ‘threatened?’*

**PARTICIPANT A:** *I’m not feeling personally threatened, I’m not coming across people who make antisemitic comments, but I feel slightly unsafe, maybe should we be thinking ‘should we go to Israel in the end’? It’s never crossed my mind before. Should we be thinking that way? I’ve been thinking a lot about what happened in Germany, and those who didn’t think about it, that’s coming into my mind more.*

**PARTICIPANT C (M, 60s):** *This has only started since the problem in Gaza, I’ve always felt very safe in Glasgow. When the stuff in Gaza started, you started hearing a bit about Israel killing young kids, and all the rest of it, for the first time in my life, I was thinking, if I was to leave Scotland, where would I go to? I’ve never ever had this feeling before. It’s maybe come to my mind. I’ve never had antisemitism levelled at me, I feel that there might just come a time that we might have to consider leaving.*

**PARTICIPANT D (M, 60s):** *I think the sense of being unsafe is because most of us grew up in the aftermath of the Holocaust, so any anti-Jewish comments are almost unheard of, it’s only in the last number of years that there have been critical comments, it’s uncomfortable being critically challenged, conversationally or otherwise, but it can never be as bad as those living in Northern Ireland when the challenges were to your life – when being Catholic was a matter of life or death: anything in the Jewish community is mainly verbal and political.*

<sup>18</sup> Boyd, J & Staetsky, JD, *op cit* (footnote 5)



### 4.3. “Any incident in Israel raises the risk for the Jewish community”

- ▶ *I used to be comfortable as a Jew in Scotland, but not any more. The reason is quite simply the antipathy of many Scots towards Israel, fuelled by the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, that has been growing over the years and has now tipped into antisemitism.* (F, 60s, Edinburgh)

Although SCoJeC does not normally comment on international affairs, we are bound to reflect the fact that the Jewish Community is affected by events in Israel, because Scottish Jews predominantly have friends or family living in Israel<sup>19</sup>. As we noted above, 80% of respondents agreed that **events in the Middle East in 2014 had affected their experience of being Jewish in Scotland**.

These figures accord with the findings of our own 2012 inquiry that more than four fifths of participants spontaneously mentioned Israel or Zionism as having an effect on their experiences, and the conversation turned to Israel in all of our focus groups. Whatever their views of the situation in the Middle East, most said it had affected them, and many (28 people) expressed discomfort with the undisputed increase in the volume and virulence of anti-Zionist activity in Scotland.

These figures are remarkably consistent with the findings of two recent academic studies:

*“The vast majority of our respondents support [Israel’s] right to exist as a Jewish state (90%), express pride in its cultural and scientific achievements (84%), see it as a vibrant and open democracy (78%) and say that it forms some part of their identity as Jews (93%).”*<sup>20</sup>

*“for 82% of the respondents, Israel plays an ‘important’ role in their Jewish identities, 76% feel that Israel is relevant to their day-to-day lives in Britain, and 72% categorise themselves as Zionists.”*<sup>21</sup>

Because of the context of the 2014 war in Gaza, in the current inquiry we asked two direct questions about whether events in the Middle East had had an effect on Jewish people’s lives in Scotland:

<sup>19</sup> This is difficult to quantify accurately especially as regards friends, but 27 respondents to our survey (23%) talked about their connections to Israel without having been asked. In addition for example, 15 of the 21 members of SCoJeC’s Council have parents, in-laws, siblings, or children who live in Israel, as do 15 of the 25 members of the Council of the largest synagogue. Many more holiday in Israel regularly, especially for the Passover or New Year holidays, and amongst adult former pupils of the Jewish primary school (and therefore their parents) it is the exception not to have a former classmate who lives or has lived in Israel.

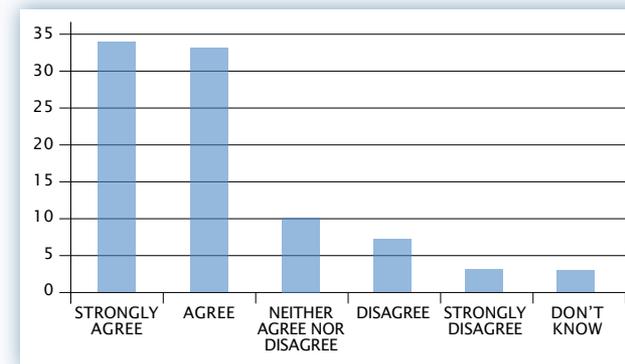
<sup>20</sup> *The Attitudes of British Jews towards Israel*, Stephen Miller, Margaret Harris, and Colin Shindler, City University London, November 2015  
[http://www.city.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/295361/Israel-Report-FINAL.PDF](http://www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/295361/Israel-Report-FINAL.PDF)

<sup>21</sup> *Committed, concerned and conciliatory: The attitudes of Jews in Britain towards Israel*, David Graham and Jonathan Boyd, Institute for Jewish Policy Research, July 2010  
[www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=94](http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=94)  
<http://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=1509>

Q10	During our original Being Jewish in Scotland inquiry, many people told us that events in the Middle East have a significant impact on the way they are treated as Jews in Scotland. Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with this statement.
Q11	To what extent do you feel that events in the Middle East during Summer 2014 have affected your experience of being Jewish in Scotland?

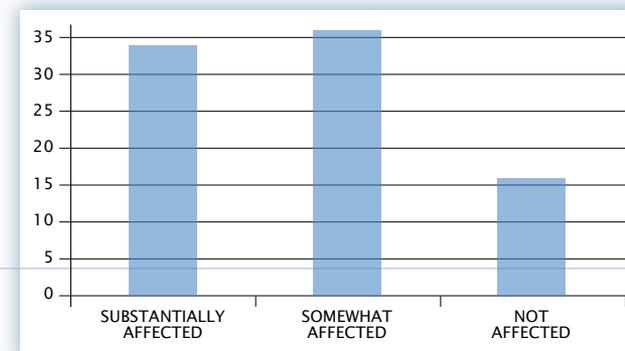
- ▲ A total of 74% of those who responded to the first question (67 people) said that they **agreed or strongly agreed that events in the Middle East have a significant impact on the way they are treated as Jews in Scotland**. Only 11% of the respondents (10 people) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

FIGURE 4: RESPONSES TO SURVEY Q10



- ▲ 39% of those who answered the second question (34 people) agreed that events in the Middle East during summer 2014 had *substantially affected* their experience of being Jewish in Scotland, and a further 41% (36 people) told us that those events had *somewhat affected* their experience. Only 16 people (18%) told us that those events had *not affected* their experience.

FIGURE 5: RESPONSES TO SURVEY Q11



One person who felt that the events in the Middle East had ‘substantially’ affected his experience, explained:

- ▶ *The conflation of the Israeli and Jewish identities within mainstream Scottish society has created a sense that the Scottish Jewish community is somehow accountable for Israeli responses in the Middle East. (Anon)*

Consequently, attacks on Zionism or Zionists can be interpreted as attacks on the right of Jewish people to have a safe homeland, or more generally to be denying to Jews the rights other people take for granted, and thus could be seen to be as antisemitic. One very clear example was a telephone call to the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities during the conflict in Gaza that used the terms ‘Jewish’, and ‘Israeli’ interchangeably, each time described as ‘evil’, ‘vile’, ‘wicked’, or ‘despicable’; the caller said “I used to have friends who are Jewish, but no more – I want nothing more to do with people like you.”

Several respondents expressed feelings of insecurity as a result of these experiences, and some said **they had for the first time been thinking about leaving Scotland**. Issues contributing to their insecurity included demonstrations at the Edinburgh Fringe during which some demonstrators had abused local Jewish people, and which had led to shows being disrupted or cancelled, the flying of Palestinian flags by some local authorities, motions passed by local councils calling for a boycott of Israel, and intimidating demonstrations that had occurred in some shopping centres, leading to some Israeli-owned enterprises closing down or moving away.

Typical responses included:

- ▶ *Witnessing the ranting of anti-Israel SPSC supporters in town in Edinburgh on many occasions, but the final straw was seeing ordinary Scottish families with their children carrying flags and placards at the pro-Gaza demonstrations this summer. The whole tenor of this year’s Edinburgh Festival and Fringe, which I normally love, was destroyed for me this summer by the boycott of the Israeli show – and the flying of the Palestinian flag from the city chambers. ... I grew up in Scotland, I have spent most of my life here, but I know now I am not welcome and feel totally alienated. **We seriously talked about an exit strategy for leaving Scotland, and so did some other of our friends and family.** I feel sure that day will come and probably very soon. (F, 60s, Edinburgh)*

And others, also talking about their initial thoughts of leaving:

- ▶ *Although I have calmed down a bit now, I genuinely thought I was going to have to sell up and go to either Israel or America. (Anon)*

- ▶ *... negativity towards Israel in Scotland has had a significant impact on me and has caused me sleepless nights. I can honestly say that **for the first time in my life I am considering moving from Scotland!** (F, 30s, Glasgow)*

Commenting on what had changed since the previous inquiry, one respondent said:

- ▶ *more BDS [boycott divestment and sanctions] campaigns are launched, more demonstrations in the streets, escalation of the rhetoric used in demonstrations and yearly ‘Israel apartheid’ week in the campuses that are now not only based on lies but borderline violent and clearly antisemitic. (F, 40s, East Coast)*

Some respondents made a point of saying that they were either not Zionists, or that they did not agree with the actions of the Israeli government. These included people who had not felt affected by the events in the Middle East:

- ▶ *I have not found that this affects me personally in any way. However, I am not a Zionist, nor am I vocally very political in general. Any friend who asked me my opinions about events in the Middle East would be a person I’d be happy to engage in discussion. However, I have not had any problems. Even when I see pro-Palestinian or anti-Israeli political demonstrators or activists, I don’t feel personally unsafe in any way. (F, 30s, Edinburgh)*

Others who, whatever their views of the situation in the Middle East, reported discomfort with the undisputed increase in the volume and virulence of anti-Zionist activity and other extremism in Scotland:

- ▶ *I rather dread finding that it makes a difference, but have never yet seen one. Israel’s behaviour does make a difference to my ease with my own identity as Jewish; I feel increasingly uncomfortable with Israel and more inclined to separate my identity as Jewish from any automatic connection to Israel. The increase in generalised hate and Islamist extremism worries me very much, not particularly because of my Jewishness, just because it’s awful, for everyone. (F, 40s, Highlands)*
- ▶ *Being Jewish (and by implication in the eyes of the world, Zionist) even though I am not a Zionist, I have felt increasing dislike and mistrust and downright anger from colleagues or discomfort within social circles, whenever Israel or the Palestinian situation blows up. As I have distanced myself more and more and more from giving any semblance of defence for actions taken in the Middle East, so my spiritual and traditional roots have taken a beating and been reduced to faint echoes of what they once were. (M, 50s, Highlands)*

The role of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities is to support all Jewish people in Scotland. When the vast majority of the Jewish community support Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state, say it forms a central part of their identity as Jews, and describe themselves as Zionists<sup>22</sup>, then seeking to prevent them expressing these views is antisemitism. Whenever Jews are subjected to abuse and harassment or denied the same rights as others, whether as individuals or as a collective, whether a Jewish youth club or the Jewish state, that is antisemitism. When Jewish people in Scotland are attacked because of their views – or presumed views – on Israel, it is our place to represent and support them and their right to express their views without intimidation.

22 Miller et al, op. cit. (footnote 16); Graham & Boyd, op. cit. (footnote 17)



## 4.4 “The Scottish Government needs to address its obsession with Israel”

A significant number of respondents both in the survey and the focus groups expressed concern about a “disproportionate obsession” with Israel on the part of public authorities including the Scottish Government, Parliament, and local authorities.

### 4.4.1 Parliamentary motions and the Scottish Government

Several respondents expressed concern about the disproportionately high number of motions concerning Israel in the Scottish Parliament. Consistently around 20% of the Members Motions about foreign countries tabled by MSPs related to Israel. As at the 2015 summer recess, 57 of the 322 Motions about foreign countries since the last Scottish Parliament elections had been about Israel, 34 of them unambiguously condemnatory; second highest was Malawi, with only 17, uniformly positive, and only 4 of the other 69 countries mentioned even reached double figures. There were only 14 and 13 respectively expressing any concern about the situation in Iraq and Syria.)

The Scottish Government has shown the same disproportionate interest: in the single month of July 2014, the Scottish Government issued 8 statements about the conflict in Gaza, compared with only 4 statements about Syria in the whole of 2013 and 2014. Similarly, the Scottish Human Rights Commission issued 3 statements about Gaza in July 2014 alone, bringing the total number relating to Israel to 6 out of only 7 statements it has ever made about countries outwith the UK since the SHRC was established in 2008.

▶ *The Scottish Government needs to address its obsession with Israel – it is an obsession! The Scottish Parliament passes more motions on Israel, doesn’t condemn by comparison what’s happening in Syria, Libya, Nigeria. I could go on, going round the world, all the things it’s not exercised about. That is a serious distortion of perspective, it has no effect on Israel but it certainly has an effect on Jewish people here.* (M, 60s, East Coast)

▶ *Those in government (and local government) fail to fully appreciate the impact and meaning and impact of their actions, e.g. anti-Israel motions in the Scottish Parliament. They need to recognise the need for treating all countries equally (or not at all, as they have no official locus in international affairs).* (M, 60s, Glasgow)

In order to raise awareness among MSPs of the impact of this disproportion, one respondent called for Israelis to engage more closely with the Scottish Parliament:

▶ *to talk about the vilification and demonisation of Israel and its effect on public antisemitic attitudes.* (M, 30s, Edinburgh)

and another said that she had been disturbed by a letter she had received from her MP:

▶ *the aggressively worded e-mail I received from my MP in response to my challenging him over Gaza last summer, upset me and unnerved me. I began to fear that antisemitism was being legitimised by such attitudes within Government. It is incredible that the police had to attend our synagogue to reassure us of their support at that time.* (F, 30s, Edinburgh)

Two Israelis living in Scotland told us:

- ▶ *I asked members of parliament who wrote that they are against persecution on religious grounds if they think that it is ok to persecute people on national grounds because I feel that as an Israeli Jew I feel my life might end if I raise an Israeli flag here. I think that members of parliament have to accept that Israelis are being persecuted here and do something about it.* (M, 30s, Edinburgh)
- ▶ *With members of the parliament supporting BDS [Boycott Divestment and Sanctions] and other bodies that support embargo on Israel, one day Jewish blood will be spilled here in Scotland, and the Scottish Parliament will be directly responsible for not stopping the spread of antisemitism.* (M, 30s, Edinburgh)

### 4.4.2 Palestinian flags flown by city councils

Many respondents both in the survey and the focus groups talked about their dismay after Glasgow, Edinburgh, Fife, and West Dumbartonshire Councils flew the Palestinian flag from Council buildings during the summer of 2014.

Typical comments included:

▶ *What concerns me is the flying of the Palestinian flags – I’m not unsympathetic to the Palestinian cause, but the fact that they were flying a flag that represents a government that is dedicated to getting rid of Jews not only from Israel but elsewhere, I found offensive and an abandonment of a community that they represent.* (M, 60s, focus group participant)

- ▶ *Raising the Palestinian flag at my place of work deeply affected me. ... it was a horrible feeling that ... 90% of my colleagues thought that that was OK.* (F, 60s, who told us that she was the only Jew at her place of work)
- ▶ *For the first time I am considering moving from Scotland. I am most disappointed with the politicians who I feel have failed me as a Scottish Jew by raising the Palestinian flag – without a vote!* (F, 30s, Glasgow)
- ▶ *The decision by GCC to fly the Palestinian flag over the City Chambers seriously affected my view of and relationship with the Council and councillors.* (M, 60s, Glasgow)

An Israeli focus group participant told us:

▶ *They are talking about coexistence between the two people but raise the Palestinian flag only. They should either raise both flags or none. ... The main difference between before and after the summer of 2014 is how the local council responds. The authorities here should not take sides. I expect this at least.* (M, 40s, Edinburgh)

In contrast to these comments, however, one respondent expressed confidence in local authorities and the Scottish Government:

▶ *It’s a fairly tight-knit and active community and the Government and local authority are keen to fight intolerance of any kind.* (F, 60s, Glasgow)



## 4.5 “People do not understand the difference between being Jewish and supporting the Israeli Government”

Even more than in our 2012 Inquiry, people told us that they find that there is often conflation of Judaism and Israel, and that anti-Zionism is sometimes viewed as an acceptable pretext for antisemitic attitudes. This is not speculative. There was an unprecedented spike<sup>23</sup> in reported antisemitic incidents in Scotland during after the war in Gaza in summer 2014. In the ten weeks from the beginning of July 2014, more than 50 incidents were reported to the police, of which some 60% were classed as crimes, compared with only 12 and 13 in the whole of the previous two years. Despite strong statements of reassurance from the then First Minister, the Lord Advocate, and the Chief Constable, the scale of these incidents inevitably had a detrimental effect on the sense of security and well-being of the Jewish Community in Scotland, and the level of fear and anxiety being expressed by many people has been far beyond anything we have previous experienced in Scotland:

▶ *There has been a definite change and that is largely due to the increasing level of anti-Israel activity and the derogatory description of being a Zionist. I don't approve of some of the actions of the Israeli government, but I have family and friends in Israel. And being Zionist means believing in the right of the Jewish people to have a safe homeland of their own.* (F, 60s, Glasgow)

- ▶ *As an Israeli who is very familiar with the history and the reality of the Middle East, I see how people confuse Israel, Judaism, and Zionism. This is why any incident in Israel raises the risk for the Jewish community.* (M, 30s, Edinburgh)
- ▶ *People who are not Jewish aren't aware of what it means and usually blame me as a Jew for whatever political issues that happen in Israel. People do not understand the difference between being Jewish and supporting Israeli government and most have wrong history facts obviously lack of knowledge about Jews & Israel.* (F, 20s, Edinburgh)
- ▶ *It seems that anything negative that Israel does is then reflected back on Jewish people who may or may not agree with the actions of Israel. This is deeply unfair.* (M, 30s, Edinburgh)

- ▶ *Some people tend to conflate Israel with Judaism, which I find disturbing as discussions around this topic often reveal an apparently acceptable and deep-rooted vein of antisemitic feeling, thinly veiled as 'political debate'.* (F, 60s, Edinburgh)
  - ▶ *By virtue of the growing rise of anti-Israel rhetoric and conflation of Jewish and Israeli identities, being Jewish seems to have become as much a statement of my perceived political views and affiliation as it is the culture of my birth.* (Anon)
  - ▶ *In recent years, the conflation of Israeli and Jewish identities has become not only commonplace, but almost to be expected.* (Anon)
  - ▶ *Some people think you are personally responsible for the Israeli military actions: Jewish = Israel.* (F, 50s, Glasgow)
  - ▶ *I felt that when Jewish organisations got involved in discussions about the flying of the Palestinian flag it reinforced the false link people make between being Jewish and being pro-Israeli. It made me reluctant to reach out to the Jewish community here.* (F, 40s, Glasgow)
- ▶ *If you're Jewish the assumption is that you must be x y or z, religiously, politically: these things are extremely constricting ... on reflection, I often find it's a lot harder these days to come out as Jewish than to come out as a lesbian! Part of the reason for that is that you are immediately assumed to be held responsible for what happens in Israel. I mean I can't even control what happens in the middle of Edinburgh; your access to the levers of power over Israel is quite limited.* (F, 60s, focus group participant)

However, one participant felt that the Scottish Government *did* distinguish between Scottish Jews and Israeli politics:

- ▶ *the Scottish government's foreign policy towards Israel and domestic policy towards Jewish people IS different; I feel the Scottish Government has a civil nationalism that is inclusive to the Jewish population. If you want the Jews to be separate to Israel, you have to recognise that the Scottish Government can have different policies.* (F, 60s, North East)

23 [www.scojec.org/news/2014/14viii\\_antisemitism/antisemitism.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14viii_antisemitism/antisemitism.html)



## 4.6 Being a Jewish Student in Scotland

In addition to home students, there are young Jewish people from other parts of the UK, Israel, North America, and across Europe, studying at Higher Education Institutions in Scotland. Some are keen to become involved in local Jewish communal, religious, cultural, and educational events, and some are not; some have a connection with and an interest in Israel, and some do not.

As in our previous inquiry, respondents told us about Higher Education Institutions that continue to hold examinations on Shabbat and festivals, and refuse to make alternative arrangements for religiously observant students, and that fail (or even refuse) to make provision for students living in student residences who wish to eat only kosher food, or observe Passover (when dietary restrictions are more stringent). But **during this inquiry we also heard that assumptions are being made about Jewish students' political views, and were given worrying accounts of students having been awarded lower grades by academic staff who were critical of the students' views on Israel, or even just for choosing Israel as a topic for their dissertation. Even more worryingly, we were told about unambiguously antisemitic attacks on students in their student residences, on campus, and in the street, and about the failure of the university authorities to take adequate action.**

In addition to the evidence we received from Jewish students, we have also observed a change in the pattern of enquiries that we and Jewish Student Chaplaincy Scotland receive from prospective students and their mentors. Whereas ten years ago these were all about the availability of Jewish facilities, now almost every enquiry is about *"whether Scotland is a safe place to be a Jewish student."* The overriding worry is that these incidents may affect students' grades and their overall campus experience. Particularly in the age of social media, this affects the reputation and attractiveness of Scottish universities and colleges, and indeed that of Scotland itself.

Many of the incidents reported to us by students take place in a social context:

▶ *[I] was at a party which had gone fairly normally with somebody I hadn't met before. I then mentioned I was Jewish which prompted him to react "You're Jewish? Fuck Israel."* (M, 20s, Edinburgh)

- ▶ *Although many people I interact with in Scotland don't have issues with Judaism or Jews, they have a problem with Israel, and have difficulty separating that from Judaism as a whole. Especially as a student of International Relations, I do my best to avoid these conversations because they make me really uncomfortable and create what I think is unnecessary attention.* (F, under 21, Fife)
- ▶ *I met a group of people in a bar, and after around 30 minutes of talking they finally asked me where I'm from. When I said I was from Israel, they started shouting at me loudly, and other people joined. They yelled that they feel disgusted by my country, and things like that.* (M, 20s, Edinburgh)
- ▶ *In [my] Halls, a swastika was etched into my (Catholic) boyfriend's door. Never figured out who it was.* (Anon, Edinburgh)

▶ *There was a group of students (friends of a friend) who'd use 'Jew' as a sort of general insult. I told them to stop multiple times and explained why it's wrong and offensive, but when they didn't stop I eventually just disassociated myself from that group. ... My friend in third year tried to justify the stereotype that Jews are stingy. 'Stereotypes come from somewhere' was her general argument. I actually don't think she ever admitted that what she said was offensive.* (Anon)

- ▶ *And ... there was an off-campus incident where some Polish Neo-Nazis tried to punch my boyfriend because they could tell that I'm Jewish. They spat on his feet. They weren't students, or I definitely would have reported the incident to the university.* (Anon, 20s, Edinburgh)
- ▶ *I stopped wearing my Magen David and Hamsa necklaces as I felt uncomfortable wearing them.* (F, under 21, Fife)

Also, and more worryingly, some of the incidents reported relate to the academic functions of the university. A survey of Jewish students in Scottish universities included the following account of a situation in which a tutor was clearly out of her depth:

- ▶ *The grading is absolutely not objective when I'm writing about the state of Israel or anything Jewish related. ... I have given a presentation about my research and a person wrote comments that Israel should not be called Israel but Palestine.... there is a MAJOR lack of knowledge on an academic level about Jewish people/current events impacting Jews that is sugar-coated or ignored in the graduate departments of anthropology and sociology. Further, I heard students on campus state that the attack at the Copenhagen synagogue and at the Jewish supermarket in Paris were not antisemitic acts.* (Anon, Edinburgh)

▶ *A student made an offhand comment: "Personally, I'm not rich; I mean, I could have been a Jew, but nope." The tutor laughed. Literally laughed, and then said, "Ah, well", I was so horrified. I spoke to the tutor after class, and she apologised immediately. She actually started crying. She took it seriously; she knew that she had screwed up. I don't know how much guidance in classroom management tutors get, if they speak about how to deal with racism and sexism and whatnot, but she certainly hadn't gotten any training about how to deal with antisemitism specifically. She even said that she'd never met a Jewish person before, and clearly, she had never thought about antisemitism. That is an enormous mistake on the University's part. The University needs to very clearly teach tutors and lecturers that some students might say bigoted things about Jews and here is how you should handle it.* (F, under 21, Edinburgh)



- ▶ *One of the American evangelical Christians in my department said at the start of term that antisemitism happened because Jews were greedy with money. And one of my tutors used me as a representative example – whenever he got to talking about a Jewish ritual of some kind, he would turn to me and ask what my specific feelings were, like ‘let’s ask our token Jew’.* (Anon, Edinburgh)

The following exchange illustrates both conflation between Judaism and Israel, and stereotypical assumptions about the lifestyle of Jewish people:

- ▶ *“What did you think of the recent Israeli elections?”*  
*– I’m not Israeli, I don’t keep up with that stuff*  
*“But surely you read or heard about it in the Jewish Chronicle?”*  
*– I don’t read the Jewish Chronicle.*  
*“But don’t they read it in your part of London?”*  
*– What do you mean ‘your part of London’?*  
*“The Finchley and Golders Green area”*  
*– I’ve never lived anywhere near there in my life.*  
*“But you’re Jewish?”*  
 (M, 20s, Edinburgh)

Despite such experiences, some Jewish students do find studying in Scotland a positive experience:

- ▶ *I have a lot of fun and really enjoy being involved with the Jewish society. For a lot of my non-Jewish (largely non-American friends), I am one of the first Jewish people that they have met. I’m glad that I’m able to answer any questions that they may have and dispel any confusion or stereotypes.* (F, under 21, Fife).

## 4.7 Antisemitism and hate crime

Again, because of the specific context of this inquiry, we asked people directly whether they had been victims of, or had been affected by, a hate crime or incident, which we defined as a crime or incident motivated by the victim’s perceived membership of a particular group.

Q12	Do you consider that you have ever been the victim of, or been affected by, a hate crime or incident? (A ‘hate crime’ is defined as crime motivated by the victim’s perceived membership of a particular group).
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A quarter of those who answered this question said that they had had been either the victim of or affected by a hate crime – and, interestingly, a further 12% were ‘not sure’ whether they had been, in that they felt unsure about the motivation behind the attack or incident. Several of our respondents said that in hindsight they felt the incidents had been antisemitic, and should have been reported to the police as hate crimes.

FIGURE 6: RESPONSES TO SURVEY Q12

RESPONSE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES (N=92)	%
YES	23	25%
NOT SURE/DON’T KNOW	11	12%
NO	58	63%

Many participants in the inquiry had themselves been victims of antisemitic attacks. One respondent, for example, told us about:

- ▶ *waking up to find antisemitic symbols and writing drawn on the front door in chalk, and nearly being assaulted during a Scottish referendum rally for being a “Jew fucker”.* (F, under 21, North East)
- ▶ *I had to throw a student out of my class for antisemitic remarks directed at me personally. **This is the first time this has happened in 17 years of teaching.** (My employers backed me up 100%.)* (F, 50s, North East)
- ▶ *Have been the victim of vile anti Israeli/Jewish abuse* (M, 40s, Aberdeen)
- ▶ *A bag of pork was placed in the entrance of the Dundee synagogue. This was reported to the police.* (M, 20s, formerly Fife)



#### 4.7.1 “I feel antisemitism in the air through the internet”: Antisemitism in social media

**Much more than in our previous inquiry, the issue of antisemitism in social media was raised both by survey respondents and in the focus groups.** Experiences ranged from personal threats to generalised attacks, negative comments, assumptions, or, as one person put it, “antisemitism in the air through the internet”:

- ▶ *There was ... a Facebook message. My boyfriend’s (former) friend had told someone else that my boyfriend had better use protection so we don’t have ‘Jewish filth’ children, or something to that effect. (F, 20s, Edinburgh)*

Another said that she had come up against antisemitism ...

- ▶ *... online, many times. You cannot discuss being Jewish without being attacked in some shape or form. You certainly cannot mention any affiliation or support for Israel. (F, 50s, Glasgow)*

- ▶ *I became a Facebook friend with many members of a Pakistani neighbour’s family after I attended a wedding in her family. When the Gaza war started, I started getting hate posts from them because I responded to some of the things they posted and tried to present a more balanced picture. One of them wrote to me that it is only a question of time before they finish us. (M, 40s, Edinburgh)*
- ▶ *One facebook ‘friend’ made assumptions about my thoughts about Middle East politics because I was Jewish. She didn’t ask, just assumed – it infuriated me. (F, 60s, Glasgow)*
- ▶ *When Israel is at war with Palestine, I often receive negative comments through Facebook about my bipartisan support for a peace solution. (M, 60s, Edinburgh)*
- ▶ *Only in debates on web forums, etc, the assumption that my name proves Jewishness and often insults to follow. (Anon)*

When Yvonne Ridley tweeted that all Zionists should be thrown out of Scotland<sup>24</sup>, several people reported it to the police as a hate crime. One of them explained:

- ▶ *As the majority of mainstream Jews would define themselves as Zionists, even if they don’t agree with everything the Israeli government does, calling on people to make Scotland a ‘Zionist free zone’ is calling for the removal of Jewish people from Scotland and clearly crosses the line. (F, 50s, North East)*

#### 4.7.2 Lack of confidence in the police

Whilst Police Scotland has been very supportive, urging people to report all incidents, and assuring the community that all reports will be followed up to their fullest extent, and the then Chief Constable, Sir Stephen House, said *I am of course concerned about the recent rise in hate incidents targeted at our Jewish*

*communities. ... The current situation is completely unacceptable to any decent person.”<sup>25</sup>, nonetheless many people told us that they felt that their security is not a priority for the police. Furthermore, leaders of the communities in all four cities in which there are synagogues (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee), have independently told us that they feel that since the formation of Police Scotland they have lost the reassurance of ...*

- ▶ *... named Police officers that specifically liaised with the ethnic minority communities and if there was trouble in the middle east they phoned you to check that all was OK, to see if there had been incidents etc. Nothing like that now as far as I know. (F, 50s, North East)*
- ▶ *Before Police Scotland came into being we always had extra visits from our ‘local bobby’ to ask how things were in times of such heightened tensions, and to say they were doing extra patrols, being extra vigilant etc. ... There is much less of a sense of local community since Police Scotland came into being. (F, 60s, Edinburgh)*

During the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, anti-Israel protests very publicly prevented two non-political, cultural shows from being staged, and the level of intimidation, the number of demonstrators, and the discriminatory nature of the protests were identified and felt by many to be antisemitic. There were similar incidents on university campuses and in shopping centres, and there was disappointment both within and outwith the Jewish community at how these were dealt with, with obvious reluctance to call in the police, and in some cases reluctance by the police to intervene to permit traders to go about their lawful business.

The following comments, sent to us during August 2014, were, in part, the catalyst for this inquiry:

- ▶ *I personally witnessed the police stand aside and just refrain from confronting any of the protesters. Slogans such as “your money is covered with Palestinian blood”, or someone shouting at my wife “how many babies did you slaughter today?” (right next to a police officer), are just the things that bring us to the brink of physical violence. (M, 30s, Edinburgh)*

- ▶ *Sadly, it seems like we all have to wait patiently for a major incident to happen, for the police to change its passive approach to the ongoing threat. I personally am going to avoid any Jewish gatherings in the near future. It feels to me that whatever is going to happen, it will happen soon. Sorry I couldn’t convey this feeling to the police. (Anon)*

- ▶ *Protesters were able to come close to us and shout to my face. I’m concerned with what seems to have been poor ‘policing’ at the scene, and felt that the police allowed for a clear breach of public peace by not being proactive enough. (Anon)*
- ▶ *To me the message is that the police cannot deal with a small group of loud bullies. (Anon)*

<sup>24</sup> See screen shot on p11.

<sup>25</sup> [www.scojec.org/news/2014/14ix\\_antisemitism/antisemitism.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14ix_antisemitism/antisemitism.html)



## 4.8 Being Israeli in Scotland

As mentioned above, there are significant numbers of Israelis among Scotland's Jewish population. Since the 2011 census only asked about country of birth, not citizenship or other affiliation, the published figure of 400 people in Scotland who said they were born in Israel must be an underestimate, even before taking account of deliberate falsification for the reasons expressed below. The interrelationship of the different ways in which people might identify as Israeli has been explored in a recent study by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research<sup>26</sup>, and based on their findings about the proportion who are married to Scottish people, family size, etc, we estimate the total number of people with some Israeli affiliation to be around 1000.

As already stated above, many Scottish Jewish people report that they have been subjected to abusive comments from people critical of the actions of the Israeli government, and the experiences of Israelis living in Scotland have led many to be even more anxious and afraid. Some Israelis were concerned, for example, that speaking Hebrew in public or identifying themselves as Israeli might make them a target for attack:

▶ *I feel scared to speak in my language or tell people I'm Jewish or from Israel. I don't go to any Jewish gathering unless it's at somebody's home, and I try to hide anything about being Jewish when I'm outside my house. (F, 20s, Edinburgh)*

▶ *I do not speak Hebrew on the phone in public for fear that I would be attacked... I don't feel that it's good to be Jewish in Scotland. ... People here do not understand that in Israel there are people with various views, and they see each one of us as the same as the others. Nobody asks me what I think about the situation. Because I am an Israeli, I am a murderer of children and women in Gaza. (F, 20s, Edinburgh)*

▶ *In light of the recent terror attacks across Europe and also the shutting down of an Israeli show in the last Fringe festival, I have come to realise that identifying myself as a Jewish Israeli, or just identifying my wife as Jewish or our house as one where Jewish people live, might pose a risk to our lives and our property. (M, 30s, Edinburgh)*

One respondent, who moved to Edinburgh four years ago, said that she had noticed a perceptible change:

▶ *When I arrived I had no reason not to talk about being Jewish and Israeli and now it is so different. ... I had a few experiences when I felt really uncomfortable. For example last summer I went into a café and the place had a display of Palestinian leaflets and pictures of tanks and Palestinian flags. I felt that I was the last person to fit into that place. (F, 30s, Edinburgh)*

▶ *To be an Israeli is more dangerous today. If I was to wear a shirt with a pro-Israeli logo I would have been most likely attacked because it is OK to attack Israelis. They have greater respect to the local Jews. (M, 30s, Edinburgh)*

▶ *I have become a lot more selective on who I let know that we are a Jewish and Israeli family. (Anon)*

▶ *When I arrived here 30 something years ago I was not aware of antisemitism and Israelis were held in high esteem. Years later when my son attended secondary school he was bullied by some boys for being Jewish. However I feel that now being Israeli and Jewish is less favourable than ever before. I do not feel as safe as I used to feel here. Consequently I moved to live in among the Jewish community – the illusion of safety in numbers maybe. (F, 60s, Glasgow)*

▶ *Antisemitism is not necessarily physical or verbal but can also be in the form of barriers to professional advancement on the ground of nationality and religion ... I stood in the Israeli side [in support of an Israeli dance company attempting to perform at the Edinburgh Festival] and on the other side stood my direct line manageress. Of course we now view each other differently and consequently my promotion can suffer. (F, 30s, Edinburgh)*

▶ *I read expressions of hatred in Facebook, I see stickers on lampposts that I have not seen for a long time, I hear anti Israel speech, particularly in the fields of academia, in local authorities and within professional unions. (M, 40s, Glasgow)*

One Israeli wrote about his neighbours sending him hate posts:

▶ *It is such an unpleasant feeling but this is our reality here. The ignorance of Scottish people against Israelis and Jews is making me very angry. (M, 30s, Edinburgh)*

▶ *It is of course important to note that Israelis living in Scotland cannot make a separation between being Jewish and being Israeli in the same way that other Jewish people can. One participant had been at a meeting where people claimed that "criticism of Israeli and demonisation of Israel" was not antisemitism, and thus she felt very unsupported. (F, 60s, Glasgow)*

One Israeli respondent told us that she felt that SCoJeC should not make a separation between the "vilification of the state of Israel, and antisemitism", saying that:

▶ *the separation that SCoJeC is trying to make between [those two things] is directly responsible for the rise in antisemitism. (M, Israeli, 30s, Edinburgh)*

26 [www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=4252](http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=4252)



## SECTION 5:

# What's good about being Jewish in Scotland

In both this and our 2012 inquiry we asked the same introductory question: "What's good about being Jewish in Scotland?" Despite the increasingly negative tone in many of the responses in the 2015 survey, there were still positive responses to this question from people across Scotland, both from those living in the established communities and from those who lived more isolated Jewish lives, and we cite many of these responses below.

▲ **Nonetheless, in contrast to our previous inquiry, when nearly all respondents told us something good about being Jewish in Scotland, no fewer than 13 survey respondents (11%) felt unable to give any positive response:**

▶ *nothing.* (Anon)

▶ *I don't find anything that is good about being Jewish in Scotland.* (F, 60s, Glasgow)

▶ *nothing really.* (F, 60s, Glasgow)

▶ *I'm struggling to answer this.* (F, 40s, Glasgow)

Of particular relevance to how attitudes have changed since our previous study in 2012, were responses that:

▶ *I had always felt comfortable but not so good now* (F, 50s, Glasgow)

▶ *Not much now compared with years ago* (M, 70s, Glasgow)

And in the focus group discussions, particularly in Glasgow, we found that people had mixed feelings about their experiences, often qualifying their positive statements with a comment that they now felt more negative or insecure:

▶ *I haven't experienced a lot of antisemitism, probably more at school than now, but I certainly **feel more vulnerable and sensitive in the last couple of years, and probably less likely to publicise who I am and what I'm doing than I possibly would have before.*** (M, 60s, Glasgow)

▶ *it's a warm, close, and supportive community. I've never found any antisemitism in my whole life. I've never felt threatened at all. **I'm feeling a bit unsafe now, but never experienced antisemitism.*** (F, 60s, Glasgow)

▶ *I'm very comfortable being here in Scotland, but I have to say that in last year with rallies and sometimes mixing with people who were supporting the Palestinian cause, feeling quite uneasy and not comfortable about speaking up for myself.* (M, 60s, Glasgow)

▶ *I know there's an undercurrent of antizionism and little bits of antisemitism peeking through but apart from that, it's an easy place to live compared with other parts of Great Britain.* (F, 60s, focus group participant)

One survey respondent told us:

▶ *I have lived in Scotland all my life and I am very proud to be Scottish and British. ... In addition to the landscape and scenery in Scotland, I love the people; from the witty Glasgae banter to the warm welcomes received in smaller northern towns. Whist many of my friends have chosen to move to England or abroad, I chose to remain in Scotland as I genuinely couldn't see how the grass could be any greener! ...*

but qualified her statement:

▶ *I love Scotland and I really hope that 2014 is just a blip in what has been a wonderful relationship with Scots and the Scottish Jewish community. I hope that 2015 will be a fresh start, if not I will start applying for jobs elsewhere!* (F, 30s, Glasgow)



## 5.1 What is good: “Living in Scotland is special and being Jewish is something to be proud of”

Respondents told us of their love of the Scottish countryside, their enjoyment of the special relationship between Scots and Jews, and other immigrant groups and Jews, their sense of Jewish community and the strength of Jewish communal organisations and institutions, and about their pride in the history of the Jewish community in Scotland:

- ▶ *living in Scotland is special and being Jewish is something to be proud of. I think the Scottish people on the whole respect and value the Jewish community. I love the sense of community within the Shul and the support of family.* (F, 60s, Glasgow)
- ▶ *There's a strong sense of community identity. There's also a fantastic Jewish primary school* (M, 40s, Glasgow)
- ▶ *There will always be antisemitism but there are still those who do not use religion as a barrier, with boycotts, and hate, and accept us for what we are.* (F, 80s, Glasgow)
- ▶ *At the height of the Israel and Gaza hostilities I was invited to a neighbour's garden party, a Pakistani family included. Being the only Jew, I was a bit apprehensive, but I need not have worried. Tea was served and someone had ordered a platter of cakes and sandwiches from our local kosher deli for me. How thoughtful was that!* (F, 80s, Glasgow)

## 5.2 “The Lit<sup>27</sup> is my Shul”: Different ways of being Jewish in Scotland

The Scottish Jewish community is very varied, including religious and secular Jews, people who enjoy living in the hub of a large community, and others who live very happily many miles from any Jewish facilities. Several respondents mentioned their delight in being Jewish in a small community, and talked to us about linking their Scottish and Jewish identities: others stressed the fact that it is possible to be Jewish without being religious; still others told us about how they maintained a Jewish identity almost in a vacuum, such as one participant living in Glasgow who said “I’d like to meet more Jewish people in Scotland” but who was not keen on getting involved in religious activities:

- ▶ *I meet up with my remaining Jewish friend and her family for High Holy Days, and go to synagogue with her for Yom Kippur. I found the synagogue hard to break in to – the congregation is elderly, on the whole, there are no Sunday school classes or children's services during festivals. I'd love to be able to teach my children more about their cultural background but I find it hard to access that without heavy religion.* (F, 40s, Glasgow)

We heard from north Americans who were happy to be in Scotland despite the difficulties in accessing kosher food and other religious items they needed; from people who commented on differences between Jews who arrived as refugees from Hitler's Germany and those who had been established in the UK for 100 years; and from people who were strongly secular and very comfortable with their Jewish secular identity.

One respondent told us how she and her husband had absorbed the best parts of both Scottishness and Jewishness into their marriage:

- ▶ *I think my wedding day is the best example: it was a perfect mix of Scottish and Jewish tradition... My husband proudly wore his kilt on our wedding day, we were piped in to the ceremony, and we chose to honeymoon in the stunning north of Scotland rather than travel abroad* (F, 30s, Glasgow)

This North American woman told us how she and her family benefited from the novelty of being part of a small community:

- ▶ *We lived in Houston where there were five synagogues – and no one knew who you are. But here the community immediately took us in! There was ONE shul, and only one place to go. It felt very welcoming, they said “Yay, we're so glad you're here – now we have more Jews!” My son and my husband were suddenly necessary for a minyan [the minimum quorum for public prayer] – they wouldn't have counted in Houston. On the other hand, there is only one shul, so there is no choice, there are less options.* (F, 50s, North East)
- ▶ *Outside of Scotland, many people (including many fellow Jews) seem to consider being Scottish and Jewish a contradiction in terms, as though Scottish were an ethnic tag and those of us identifying with it are somehow ‘pretendy’ Scots desperately seeking an identity to which we don't really belong. This has always infuriated me.* (Anon)

Other respondents spoke about their cultural and secular Judaism, stressing that there were other ways of being Jewish than purely a religious one:

- ▶ *I am not a particularly religious Jew. My lifestyle is more secular in nature and my connection to Judaism is cultural rather than religious; it is my race and something of which I am very proud. I still enjoy Shabbat dinners, Seder nights, lighting candles at Chanukah etc. We I hope to have children in the near future and I hope to be able to give them the same experiences that I had as a Jewish Scot growing up in Glasgow.* (F, 30s, Glasgow)
- ▶ *In terms of musical stuff, cultural stuff, the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society, a wonderful cultural place – I used to say for years ‘the Lit was my shul’, that was the synagogue I went to.* (F, 60, Edinburgh)
- ▶ *Even though I was born here, due to both parents being German and refugees from Berlin ... both sides of the family were not religious, there wasn't a lot of reference to being Jewish as I grew up. German was the key thing. ... With Jews long established in Britain for the last 100 years, I have less connection with them than say with a very elderly person from Berlin, I instantly ... feel a shared connection.* (F, 50s, Edinburgh)

27 ‘The Lit’ is the Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society, the oldest such organisation in the UK, founded in 1888.



## SECTION 6:

# A small and shrinking community

Some respondents regretted their distance from Jewish shops and other facilities, and 10 people said they felt disconnected from other Jewish people or would like to have more connection with other Jewish people. A number told us they feel isolated because of distance, or because of ignorance of Jewish concerns:

- ▶ *It's ok up here but sometimes you can't really be orthodox Jewish. You can't do some of the stuff that we could do if we were in Glasgow, the cost of shipping ... Why can't I get voorsht [salami]?! In Inverness there used to be a deli, but it closed down. In Glasgow and London you can get smoked salmon, you can't get that stuff here. Little bits and pieces you miss, it would give me lots of pleasure. (M, 50s, Highlands)*
- ▶ *I grew up in New York City in the midst of many ethnic groups. When I lived in the Central Belt there were enough Jewish people around so that being Jewish was not a complete oddity. This is not the case in the Highlands. (Anon, Highlands)*

▶ *There's no way to be casually Jewish in Scotland; it's not like my home where you can assume everyone knows what Passover is, what kosher food is, even if they're not Jewishly observant themselves. If you want to be engaged with Judaism here, you need to actively seek it out. Which isn't necessarily a bad thing for Judaism, for people to feel forced to engage with Judaism – but it's lonely. It's more isolating here. (F, under 21, Edinburgh)*

As in our 2012 inquiry, people throughout Scotland were concerned that the Jewish community is shrinking, that many of their children and friends are moving away, and that there are ever fewer people to run the community and provide welfare and other services. Members of the Glasgow Jewish community, which is well served by communal institutions, were as concerned by falling numbers as were members of the smaller East Coast communities.

The 2011 Scottish census reported a decrease of 8.7% in the overall number of people who identified themselves as Jewish from 6448 to 5887. In Glasgow and East Renfrewshire, which still constitute the largest Jewish community in Scotland, numbers are down by 20% from 4222 to 3396. The number of Jewish people in the rest of Scotland has, however, increased by 16%, from 2235 to 2591, with increases in Aberdeen and Fife of 46% and 77% respectively. Although there is evidence that the census figures underestimate the size of the community by as much as 50%<sup>28</sup>, the reasons for this apply equally in both the 2001 and 2011

censuses and in all parts of the country, so there is no reason to doubt the relative proportions.<sup>29</sup>

The following comments are typical:

▶ *I like living in Glasgow, it's a community I grew up in, I have a lot of relatives here, I'm very comfortable, the sad thing for me is the shrinking of the community, and many children are leaving, and their parents, I think there's a sense of Jewishness that's diminishing. (F, 60s, Giffnock focus group)*

- ▶ *The only change that I see, the shrinking size makes things more difficult – one example is, there's no Kosher butcher in Glasgow any more – you can get kosher meat in supermarkets, it's almost a substitute. Obviously, a lot of things we have to do as a community, the overheads, the fixed costs, are borne by fewer and fewer people. That's just 'our own fault' for shrinking numbers: that would be true in any community. There's nothing much you can do (M, 50s, Glasgow)*
- ▶ *We do live in a dying Jewish community, we have responsibly for the older members of the community, it's just, it's a hassle, that's the main focus of the activity, looking at one lady, she's moving to care, what's the next stage, is she lonely? The pastoral responsibilities of the very small Jewish community, it's taxing, it's just hard work. (M, 50s, East Coast)*

In rural areas the effect of very small numbers is already felt, and several respondents told us that they did not think that public authorities give adequate thought to the effect of their actions on minority communities. For example, two people in rural areas told us that their local health centre was only prepared to offer flu vaccination on Saturdays, the Jewish Sabbath, when observant Jews will not travel; another was told that a hospital appointment could not be changed from Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year when travel and secular activities are forbidden; and yet another complained that neither the local authority nor the police had given advance notice of road closures and bus cancellations on a Friday, so that he was unable to shop for food in order to prepare for Shabbat, when cooking is forbidden so that all food has to be cooked in advance.

<sup>28</sup> "Amongst Jews, about a third say they have no religion" Westminster Faith Debates (Linda Woodhead, Jewish Chronicle, October 2013)

[www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/112220/new-surveys-shed-light-who-we-are](http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/112220/new-surveys-shed-light-who-we-are)

"Jews should exhibit the same propensity to report 'No Religion' or to refuse to answer the question, as the whole population. ... in Scotland the figure was 33%" (Jewish Policy Research Institute, JPR News, Spring 2003)

<sup>29</sup> See [www.scojec.org/news/2013/13ix\\_census.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2013/13ix_census.html) for more discussion of the census figures.



## SECTION 7:

# So what has changed about being Jewish in Scotland?

IN 2012 ...	IN 2015 ...
The experience of Jewish people in Scotland was largely positive.	The overall experience of Jewish people in Scotland was much more negative, and some people said that, for the first time in their lives, they were considering leaving.
However, experiences of antisemitism contributed to a sense of insecurity. Some, such as taunts that <i>"the Jews killed Jesus"</i> , derived from Christian theology, some used Holocaust-related symbols such as the Nazi salute and swastikas, and others held Jews in general responsible for the actions of the state of Israel and attempt to excuse antisemitism as anti-Zionism.	The sense of insecurity resulting from increased levels of antisemitism caused many people to feel isolated and very vulnerable.
There was concern among Jewish people of Israeli origin, several of whom told us that they felt particularly insecure, and that they had learned to be wary about telling people that they were Israeli.	This concern had increased to the extent that we heard many reports about people of Israeli origin hiding their identity in order to avoid abuse, and even instructing their children not to speak Hebrew outside the home.
There was felt to be a lack of education about what constitutes antisemitism, and poor awareness that antisemitism is a form of racism.	There was concern that antisemitism was not considered to be racism, and that, especially when disguised by quasi-political pretexts, it was, to some extent, regarded as acceptable in some quarters.
There was concern that potential changes to national policies affecting the availability of kosher meat, circumcision, and double summer time, might make Jewish life in Scotland very difficult.	These issues were still of concern but they were mentioned by fewer people, and anxiety about them appeared not to have increased.
There was considerable concern at the level of ignorance about Judaism in schools, and the lack of awareness of the needs of Jewish pupils and staff.	These issues continued to give concern.

IN 2012 ...	IN 2015 ...
There were isolated reports of universities and colleges failing (or refusing) to make proper provision to enable Jewish students to observe religious requirements such as Shabbat and Kashrut.	These issues continued to give concern, and we also heard for the first time about significant numbers of Jewish students being subject to antisemitic abuse, and then not being adequately supported by their tutors or the university.
The need for education about Judaism and the Jewish community was emphasised, so that staff in hospitals, schools, universities, and other workplaces, would have a better understanding of the needs of Jewish people, including, for example, the provision of kosher food to hospital patients.	These issues continued to give concern.
Concerns were expressed about the decline of Jewish communal infrastructure in Scotland, and the need for greater cooperation between Jewish communal organisations.	These issues continued to give concern.
Access to Jewish religious facilities, and to religious and cultural education for adults and children was a concern, especially outwith the larger communities.	These issues continued to give concern.
We repeatedly heard reports of isolation among some Jewish people who live outwith the organised Jewish communities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Tayside and Fife, and Aberdeen, and of the need to develop more ways for Jewish people and communities to interact, particularly outside a formal religious framework.	Although the projects listed in Appendix 1 were effective in addressing issues of isolation, increasing perceived hostility resulted in more people feeling more vulnerable, and lack of funding meant that these could not be rolled out across Scotland, or even continued on a small scale after the end of a pilot project. As a result, many people still feel isolated and out of touch with the wider Jewish community.



## SECTION 8:

# Points for Action

At the end of the survey and at the end of each of the focus groups we asked respondents to tell us what they thought that the Scottish Government, other local or national organisations, and Jewish communal organisations, including SCoJeC ourselves, could do differently to improve the experience of Jewish people in Scotland. Recognising that many individuals contribute vastly to the wellbeing of the community, we asked whether they would find any additional support useful, and whether there was anything more that we or they might be able to do.

A wide range of domestic issues were raised by respondents, and many of these have been included at section 8.2 below. The topic that gave rise to the largest number of suggestions was, however, the Middle East, with some people urging that all Jewish organisations should demonstrate support for Israel, while others felt that there should be a clear separation between organisations concerned with the local Jewish community, and those concerned in one way or another with Israel.

## 8.1 Israel and the Middle East

Many respondents felt that there were too few opportunities for discussion about the situation in the Middle East, and called for communal organisations to facilitate meetings to enable views to be expressed in a safe environment.

The majority of respondents felt strongly that neither the Scottish Government nor local Councils should take sides in international conflicts.

The following comments are typical of the majority of respondents:

- ▶ *I think they could speak up loudly to counteract the negative publicity Israel gets in the press and media: ... I think a positive PR campaign on exposing negative myths about Israel is crucial* (F, 60s, Edinburgh)
- ▶ *More eloquent speakers need to be sourced for media interviews* (F, 50s, Glasgow)
- ▶ *Mobilise the various bodies to have a concerted reaction to all things anti-Israel* (M, 50s, Glasgow)
- ▶ *I think more organisations should clearly state that they are pro-Israel. They should stress that they may disagree with [the Israeli Government's] policies, but nevertheless support the principles of Zionism and the freedom of Israelis and Jews in their own state.* (M, 40s, Glasgow)

However, several respondents suggested the reverse, namely that it was important for Jewish communal organisations to distinguish between Jewish people in Scotland and matters relating to Israel, and to raise awareness in the wider community that 'Jews' and 'Israel' are not synonymous, and that being Jewish in Scotland should not automatically be related to having an involvement, a view or a particular opinion about the Middle East situation.

The following comments are typical of this group:

- ▶ *Both local and national organisations need to explain consistently that what Israel does has nothing to do with Jewish individuals. By making a sharp distinction between Israel and Jews living in our community, this can shield Jews from any bad press Israel brings.* (M, 30s, Edinburgh)
- ▶ *Reinforce that being Jewish has nothing to do with politics* (F, 40s, Glasgow)
- ▶ *Raise awareness of the presence of the Jewish community, be more vocal about their support of us and vocally talk about the fact that we are not directly involved with anything to do with the Israel/Palestine conflict.* (F, under 21, North East)
- ▶ *I think that awareness/education/communication about the distinction between being/identifying as Jewish and believing in Zionism should be enhanced and developed.* (F, 60s, Glasgow)

None of the respondents who said SCoJeC should make a clear distinction between the Jewish people and Israel were saying that Israel is irrelevant to the lives of Jewish people in Scotland. But, in contrast to those who felt that SCoJeC and other Jewish organisations should get engaged in speaking out for Israel, these respondents made the point that being Jewish in Scotland should not automatically be related to having an involvement, a view or a particular opinion about the Middle East situation.

- ▶ *I think SCoJeC does an excellent job but always welcome more reference to Jews who are not Zionists and who work for peace in the Middle East even if it means criticising the current government and army of Israel.* (F, 60s, Glasgow)

SCoJeC is clear that its role is to represent and support all Jewish people in Scotland, including those who feel that they are being attacked because of their views – or their presumed views – on Israel. In particular, people of Israeli origin are a significant subset of the Jewish Community and the evidence summarised in section 4.8 above shows that they are particularly affected by this. SCoJeC has therefore invited a representative of the Israelis in Scotland to join its Council, in order better to understand their experiences and needs and to include them in the support networks we maintain.



## 8.2 Other Issues

Suggestions of ways in which public and communal organisations could improve the lives of Jewish communities in Scotland included:

### For public bodies:

- ▲ Ensuring that public bodies make reasonable accommodation for religious observance, and in particular do not hold interfaith events or important civic ceremonies on religious festivals;
- ▲ More and better education about Judaism and other religions in schools and for the general public;
- ▲ Better local authority provision for elderly Jewish people throughout Scotland, particularly outwith the East Renfrewshire and Glasgow areas;
- ▲ Additional funding for the security of communal buildings and activities;
- ▲ Improved support for Jewish students in higher education institutions (for example, making reasonable accommodation for religious observance, such as not holding exams on Shabbat and festivals, training staff in recognising and dealing with antisemitism);
- ▲ Facilitating more interfaith dialogue.

### For the Jewish community and Jewish communal organisations:

- ▲ **More central support for smaller Jewish communities and isolated individuals and families, including:**
  - ▲ support for older people;
  - ▲ support to assist people who wish to do so, to have Jewish burials near their home;
  - ▲ support to improve the accessibility of kosher food outwith the central belt;
  - ▲ improved communication between the large and small communities, and individuals living outwith any community;
- ▲ Improved co-operation between different communal organisations;
- ▲ Training younger volunteers to speak about Judaism in schools and to community groups;
- ▲ The provision of Hebrew language classes in a non religious environment;
- ▲ More examples of 'public Judaism' (for example, putting up *sukkot* [outdoor temporary huts] during the festival of Sukkot, and *menorahs* [candelabra] at Chanukah (as already happens in Edinburgh, and in the Scottish Parliament));
- ▲ Attracting more young Jewish people to come to and stay in Scotland;
- ▲ More educational and social programmes for young adult Jews;
- ▲ Providing a wide range of information to the Jewish community, including about events and activities, the security situation, and matters relating to Israel.



## SECTION 9:

# Next Steps

The findings of this inquiry clearly demonstrate that, in the words of a senior civil servant, *“the international context can impact very palpably on the experience of being Jewish in Scotland”*. The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities therefore calls on the Scottish Government and Scottish local authorities to respond to the issues raised by respondents, in particular, to the finding that some of their actions have caused concern and anxiety to Jewish people in Scotland.

Many of the suggestions for local action are already the focus of attention among Scottish and Jewish organisations, such as improved education about all faiths, including Judaism, in schools and other organisations, support for interfaith dialogue, and additional funding for security.

SCoJeC advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, by providing information and assistance to educational, health, and welfare organisations, and law enforcement bodies. We respond to legislative and policy proposals on behalf of the whole range of the Jewish community, bringing to the Scottish Government’s attention any points that could cause difficulty for the Jewish community. We also provide a support network for the smaller communities and individuals and families. We provide a great deal of information on our website about the availability of Jewish facilities such as synagogues and kosher food, and how to go about dealing with life events such as arranging a Jewish marriage in Scotland, hospitalisation, and death and burial. We run a telephone helpline service that responds to around 50 enquiries per week from public bodies, the media, visitors to Scotland, and others, on a very wide variety of topics. Our website also includes advice on how to respond to hate crime and a direct link to the third party reporting system. These are the core functions of SCoJeC and we are grateful to the Scottish Government for its contribution to these activities. However we will need to pursue additional fund-raising opportunities to stabilise SCoJeC’s ability to continue this work.

In response to the need expressed to us in both our 2012 inquiry and this one, SCoJeC appointed an Education and Community Development Worker to raise awareness about Judaism and the Jewish community among the wider community, including presenting sessions about Judaism in schools. In the first six months of this project alone, more than 2750 pupils in 31 schools have benefited from learning about Judaism. We have also presented a box of authentic Jewish artefacts to every local education authority in Scotland to be used in religious education programmes in schools. The Scottish Government continues to provide a limited contribution to this work for which we are grateful, but more fund-raising will be needed for its continuation. Not only would we wish to maintain the present level of

activity but if possible expand it, as the success of this project has created a demand, for example from religious studies teachers for an experienced Jewish educator to run interactive sessions supporting the Curriculum for Excellence, which we will not be able to fulfil without additional funding.

SCoJeC continues to work with Jewish communities throughout Scotland, particularly outwith the settled Jewish communities, but without more resources, we are unable to extend our proven community development activities to more parts of Scotland. We also continue to work with Jewish Student Chaplaincy Scotland to support Jewish students and to ensure that higher education institutions in Scotland are aware of and responsive to Jewish student concerns, including dealing promptly and effectively with all antisemitic incidents on campus or involving students. In the words of the Scottish Government objectives, we are striving to develop *“strong, resilient and supportive”* Jewish communities throughout Scotland.

The Glasgow Jewish Representative Council’s ‘Glasgow Jewish Community Futures’ consultation in 2013<sup>30</sup> made several recommendations of ways to encourage young Jewish people to stay in or move to Scotland, and also proposed better support for facilitating discussions about Israel. In partnership with SCoJeC, the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council is also recruiting and training volunteers to support education about Judaism in schools (supporting the Curriculum for Excellence faith requirements) and for other groups.

Unfortunately, however, all these needs are not merely constant, but sadly are growing in the face of the alienation that we have heard about from the respondents to our Inquiry, while the funding we receive is at best short-term and unreliable. This makes it very difficult to plan even a year ahead, and overcoming this is therefore a major challenge that SCoJeC will have to address in the immediate future.

As a by-product of this project, the organised Jewish communities of Scotland, and the many Jewish people living all over the country who are not affiliated to any organised community, have shown their confidence in SCoJeC’s work. Given adequate sustainable funding, we are in an excellent position to deliver the support needed for Jewish people throughout Scotland to feel safe, secure, and connected, and thereby to contribute to the Scottish Government’s objective of helping *“communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life, [by] fighting crime, and reducing the fear of crime”*.

<sup>30</sup> [www.jewishglasgow.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/1-GlasgowCF-Research-FullReport2.pdf](http://www.jewishglasgow.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/1-GlasgowCF-Research-FullReport2.pdf)



## APPENDIX 1:

# SCoJeC projects arising from the 2012 Being Jewish in Scotland inquiry.

### Jewish Inter-Links (2012-2013)

[www.scojec.org/inter-links.html](http://www.scojec.org/inter-links.html)

This project, funded by the Voluntary Action Fund, addressed some of the challenges faced by older Jewish people trying to keep in touch with friends and family outwith Scotland, and at the same time helped out-of-town students to integrate with the local Jewish community.

This project trained students to teach older people how to use the internet, enabling them to keep in touch with family living elsewhere in the UK or overseas, and access a wide range of on-line resources and services. It had excellent results: our volunteers found ways in which the internet could help people with dementia or with poor memory to learn a new skill, and the students and young people were enabled to establish links with local Jewish communities.

### SCoJeC CoNNeCT, (2013-2014)

[www.scojec.org/connect.html](http://www.scojec.org/connect.html)

This Lottery funded project has provided Jewish communities and individuals throughout Scotland to keep in touch by means of a web-based discussion site.

The discussion forum combats feelings of isolation by enabling people to 'meet' other Jewish people throughout Scotland. It also publicises activities relevant to the Scottish Jewish community, and hosts discussions of books, films, and other topics of interest. We have also started to run monthly live discussion 'webinars' with live video linkups to discuss the month's film, book, or topic of interest. Towards the end of the pilot stage we were awarded a Voluntary Action Fund cluster partnership project which enabled us to spend an additional twelve months actively recruiting volunteer facilitators and moderators to ensure that this pilot project continues to develop.

### YaCHaS (2013-2014)

[www.scojec.org/yachas.html](http://www.scojec.org/yachas.html)

The name means 'LinkUp' in Hebrew, and is the acronym of 'Israelis together in Scotland'. This project, also funded by a grant from the National Lottery, gave us an opportunity to pilot a range of activities for Israelis and people of Israeli heritage living in Scotland in order to combat the feelings of alienation and isolation expressed by Israeli respondents to our 2012 Being Jewish in Scotland inquiry. Israelis continue to meet both online and in person.

### Expanding Jewish Volunteering in Scotland (2014-2015)

[www.scojec.org/news/2014/14ii\\_volunteering.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2014/14ii_volunteering.html)

This project, funded as a Voluntary Action Fund Cluster Partnership, enabled us to work with four partner organisations to support the successful recruitment and training of Jewish volunteers for a variety of different projects throughout Scotland. These have included the development of a course to train volunteers to represent the Jewish community by visiting schools and participating in interfaith activities<sup>31</sup> training volunteers in web development, leadership skills, oral history interviewing, and mentoring, and supporting refugees and asylum seekers; the expansion of the SCoJeC CoNNeCT online discussion forum (see above). It also enabled experienced volunteers further to develop their skills by helping to plan training for new recruits. This project has left a legacy of trained volunteers, several of whom are now mentoring existing and new volunteers, and the creation of a new post of Education and Community Development officer, funded from SCoJeC's core funding, to take this project forward in 2015-16 in partnership with the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council.

<sup>31</sup> [www.scojec.org/news/2015/15vii\\_volunteering/volunteering.html](http://www.scojec.org/news/2015/15vii_volunteering/volunteering.html)



## APPENDIX 2:

# Survey

This survey is part of “*What’s changed about being Jewish in Scotland*”, a project by the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC), funded by the Scottish Government, to hear about how the experiences of Jewish people throughout Scotland

have changed since our previous study in 2012.

We very much appreciate your time in completing this survey. If you participated in the original Being Jewish in Scotland project, you will recognise some of the questions, but we are particularly interested to find out whether there has been any change in people’s experiences, and would therefore be grateful for your assistance.

There is an online copy of this survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/jewishinscotland2015](http://www.surveymonkey.com/jewishinscotland2015) as an alternative to this paper version. We can also carry out telephone interviews – please email [jewishinscotland@scojec.org](mailto:jewishinscotland@scojec.org) or call 07779 206522 for an appointment. Please use the space at the end or use a separate sheet if you’d like to write more than will fit in the boxes.

If you would like to find out more about our inquiry or to support us in getting responses from the Jewish community of Scotland please get in touch with the Being Jewish in Scotland Project Manager, Fiona Frank (contact details above).

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

Forms received by the end of March 2015 will be entered in a prize draw (see last page for details).

**1. Did you take part in the original ‘Being Jewish in Scotland’ inquiry by completing a survey form, or taking part in a focus group in 2011–12?**

Yes	If you have ticked ‘yes’, please go to question 9 unless there is anything you would like to add to your original answers
No	
Can’t remember/not sure	

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

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

**4. What’s good for you about being Jewish in Scotland?**

**5. What’s not so good about being Jewish in Scotland?**

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

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

Often		Occasionally		Never		Not applicable	
-------	--	--------------	--	-------	--	----------------	--

Please tell us more

**8. Do you think that being Jewish has ever made a difference to the way in which you have been treated in any aspects of your everyday life?**

Often		Occasionally		Never		Not applicable	
-------	--	--------------	--	-------	--	----------------	--

Please tell us more, and in particular whether this has changed at all, and if so why you think that is.

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



## APPENDIX 2:

# Survey (contd)

**10. During our original Being Jewish in Scotland inquiry, many people told us that events in the Middle East have a significant impact on the way they are treated as Jews in Scotland. Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with this statement.**

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Don't know	

Please tell us more

**11. To what extent do you feel that events in the Middle East during Summer 2014 have affected your experience of being Jewish in Scotland.**

these events have substantially affected my experience	
these events have somewhat affected my experience	
these events have not affected my experience	
not applicable/don't know	

Please tell us more

**12. Do you consider that you have ever been the victim of, or been affected by, a hate crime or incident? (A 'hate crime' is defined as crime motivated by the victim's perceived membership of a particular group).**

Yes	
Not sure/don't know	
No (please go to question 15)	

Please tell us more

**13. If you answered yes to the previous question, did you report the incident?**

Yes		No		Can't remember/not applicable/don't know	
-----	--	----	--	--	--

If you did report it, please tell us how, and to whom. If you did not report it, please tell us why not.

**14. If you answered yes to question 12, do you consider that the incident was motivated by antisemitism?**

Yes		No		Don't know/can't remember/not sure	
-----	--	----	--	------------------------------------	--

Please tell us more.

**15. Tell us about anything you think that local or national organisations could do differently to improve the experience of Jewish people in Scotland**

**16. Tell us about anything you think that Jewish organisations including SCoJeC could do differently to improve the situation of Jewish people in Scotland**

**17. 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.)**

**18. We are currently organising training for Jewish people who would be interested in representing the Jewish community in interfaith activities, and/or talking about Judaism to schools and other groups in various parts of Scotland. The training is free and all expenses are covered. Please let us know if you would like to find out more about this.**

Yes, please contact me to discuss this further	
Maybe, please contact me to discuss further	
Not at the moment	
No	



## APPENDIX 2:

# Survey (contd)

19. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about any of the issues raised in this inquiry? (Please write it below or use a separate sheet)

20. Would you be interested in taking further part in this inquiry? For example, would you like to take part in a follow up phone interview, or help to publicise the survey for us, or host a 'parlour conversation' with a small number of local Jewish people to discuss these issues further?

Yes, please contact me to discuss this further	
Not sure, please contact me to discuss this	
No	

Any further comments

Forms can be returned until the end of March 2015 and will be included in a prize draw for one of the following prizes.

21. Please indicate which prize you'd prefer by ticking one or more of the boxes below). You can respond anonymously, but please ensure you enter your contact details below if you wish to be entered into the draw

'Scots Jews: identity, belonging and the future' a book of photographs of Scottish Jewish Life in the 21st Century by Judah Passow	
'Hens' Khasene': a brand new Klezmer CD by the Celter Schmelter Klezmer Trio	
£15 voucher from Mark's Deli, Giffnock, Glasgow	
'Mackerel at Midnight: Growing up Jewish on the Shetland Isles', a book of memories and recipes by Ethel Hofman	
No preference	
I don't wish to enter the prize draw	

### PERSONAL DETAILS

22. Are you:

Male		Female		Prefer not to say	
------	--	--------	--	-------------------	--

23. Your age

80 and over		70-79		60-69		50-59		40-49		30-39		21-29		Under 21	
-------------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	----------	--

24. Please give the first part of your postcode, eg G46, IV6.

If you have moved away from Scotland and are living elsewhere, please give your CURRENT postcode and also the postcode of your last Scottish address, and the year that you last lived there.

As mentioned above, all personal details will be kept confidential and nothing we publish will identify respondents individually. You can, if you prefer, respond anonymously, but don't forget if you wish to be entered in the prize draw, we will need your contact details!

25. your email address

26. Your name

27. Your tel no (mobile and/or landline)

28. Your postal address

Now please post your response to SCoJeC at the address below.

If you would like to discuss this survey or any of the issues raised in it, please contact the "Being Jewish in Scotland" Project Manager, Fiona Frank:

fiona@scojec.org      07779 206 522      0141 638 6411

or write to her at:      SCoJeC, 222 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow G46 6UE

Please let us know if you would prefer not to be added to our mailing list to receive copies of our quarterly newsletter 'Four Corners' and our quarterly e-newsletter.

SCoJeC (Scottish Council of Jewish Communities), 222 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow G46 6UE

SCoJeC is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438



WHAT'S CHANGED ABOUT

Being  
**Jewish**  
in  
**Scotland**



*"We seriously talked about an exit strategy for leaving Scotland."*

*"I now only tell people that I'm Jewish when I've known them for quite a while."*

*"I love Scotland and I really hope that 2014 is just a blip ... I hope that 2015 will be a fresh start."*

*"For the first time in 62 years I did not attend high holiday services this year due to my security concerns."*



**SCOJEC**

**The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities**

THE REPRESENTATIVE  
UMBRELLA BODY OF  
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY  
IN SCOTLAND

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[www.scojec.org/  
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2015.html](http://www.scojec.org/jewish-in-scotland-2015.html)

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