

30th June 2020

Sikh Assembly Welcomes Easing of Lockdown Restrictions for Gurdwaras

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh

Restrictions on people visiting Sikh Gurdwaras and the services and functions available for them to take part in, will become more relaxed from July 4th 2020. Sikh Assembly remains grateful for the opportunity to feed into the Government thought process through our place at the round table discussions hosted by Lord Greenhalgh. It is pertinent to acknowledge the efforts made to create guidelines for the safe easing of lockdown by the Government.

Sikh Assembly appreciates that the Government has facilitated a full and frank dialogue, accommodating the concerns, views and advice of Sikh Assembly within the guidance presented publicly for places of worship hosting congregations and limited opening for weddings and life events. The provisions within the guidance for responsible self-assessment and pragmatic decisions on capacity per building and not blanket restricted to 30 people, cleaning schedules and Langar in Pangat form all reflect the input of Sikh Assembly among the faith communities involved.

Of particular concern for the Sikh community and addressed positively by the Government, has been the clarification of whether Kirtan can take place and being confused by some with guidance related to singing. The Government has confirmed that a Jatha may perform Kirtan, with a restriction to one Ragi singing, and no limit for those accompanying the recital using instruments. It is still expected that Kirtania and Kathavachik should maintain a 1m social distance.

We encourage this broader guidance to be understood and implemented carefully and implore all Gurdwara management committees to remain vigilant of the potential return or localised spikes in cases of the Covid-19 virus. An example of such vigilance is the bold and commendable steps taken by Gurdwara Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib in Leicester to maintain the restriction to their Gurdwara for the public amid concern of a local spike in recorded infections.

It is essential that all Gurdwaras fully understand the relationship between the guidance, the size of their Sangat and the capacity of their particular building, including size and shape. This is critical for the safety of the Sangat in the Guru's Darbar and the Langar. Sikh Assembly urges all members of the Sikh community to ensure that social interactions remain sensible and socially responsible at all times.

Sikh Assembly remains committed to the continuing dialogue with Government. We will continue to represent the Sikh interest in the forthcoming roundtable meetings with vigour and is eternally thankful for the Guru's grace in being blessed with such Seva.

Sdni Paramjit Kaur Matharu said,

“Sikh Assembly has contributed positively to these guidelines. Our input into the guidance has been an exercise in genuine two-way dialogue and mutual respect. We thank Lord Greenhalgh and his team for their initial invite. The work done so far encourages us that the Sikh community has established itself into a viable partner for a continued conversation that will benefit British society as a whole in the coming months and hopefully years.”

Sdr Jagtar Singh Gill added,

“Sikh Assembly was established to represent the Sikh interest and are pleased with how this consultative process has developed. The Government guidance and our input into it have been a positive beginning, and we aim to continue to build on this dialogue so that the Sikh community is included in a perpetual conversation. The plurality of those involved is most welcome, and no one should feel ignored or unrepresented.

Community Resource Team
Sikh Assembly