National Sikh Chaplaincy Day 20-26 April Update Report

Our sincere thanks to all for making this a very special and successful event

The UK Sikh Healthcare chaplaincy group organised a day of prayer during the week 20th-26th April in UK hospitals aimed at promoting community links between the NHS and the Sikh community with the help of the Sikh Chaplains and members of the Sikh community from various Gurudwaras. The prayers in hospitals across the country were held for the well-being, recovery of those who are currently in hospital regardless of faith, race or gender.

Hospitals in Scotland: Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, Chair of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Spiritual Care Committee and Chair of Association of Indian Organisation Health Advisory Board planned and took forward the initiative in Scotland. Attached is an excellent report by Ravinder Kaur Nijjar for Scotland which we all should acknowledge with standing ovation.

Tickhill Road Hospital, Doncaster: Nirmal Singh Duhre, General Secretary, Giani Harbhajan Singh and Giani Sagar Singh Shah of Sri Teg Bahadar Sahib Ji Gurdwara, 163 Bentley Road, Bentley, Doncaster, South Yorkshire visited the hospital and conducted the prayers. Reverend June Rutherford, Chaplain of Tickhill Road Hospital, was very happy the way the prayers were held hence took few pictures to mark the occasion and said “I enjoyed the visit very much, they were quite happy to answer my questions. It has given us a good link with our local Sikh Community, we have exchanged contact numbers and the Priest is happy for me to ring him if we have a patient request, so it was a very worthwhile day.”
Queen Elizabeth, Women’s, Selly Oak, City, Sandwell, Children’s Hospitals and John Taylor Hospice: Mrs Parkash Kaur Sohal, Sikh Chaplain, organised the visits to these hospitals in Birmingham and Bhai Harbhajan Singh Lall, Bhai Jagjeet Singh of Ramgharia Sikh Temple at Graham Street accompanied her and recited two shabads, Chopyee and then did the ardas for the well-being of all in the hospitals.

At Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Selly Oak Hospital, a video has been taken by the chaplaincy team.

Reverend Nigel Schibild of John Taylor Hospice has given his consent to circulate the press release and the photo that went to the local media in Birmingham the Sutton News and Sutton Observer as below:

![Photo of Harbhajan Singh Lall, Parkash Kaur Sohal and Nigel Schibild.](image)

27 April 2009

**John Taylor Hospice welcomes Birmingham Sikh Chaplain**

Birmingham Sikh Chaplain Mrs Parkash Kaur Sohal visited staff and patients at John Taylor Hospice in Erdington last week (22nd April) as part of her tour of hospitals for National Sikh Chaplaincy Week (20-26 April).

Mrs Sohal was accompanied by Birmingham Sikh priest, Mr Harbhajan Singh Lall, who performed a special prayer and hymn for staff, patients and their families. They also enjoyed a tour of the hospice and met staff and patients.

Mrs Sohal said: “We are very pleased to come to John Taylor Hospice. I want staff, patients and their families to know that I am always there to help them in any way they need me. I look forward to working closely with the hospice in the future.”

Nigel Schibild, Chaplain at the hospice said: “We are delighted to welcome Mrs Sohal and Mr Lall to John Taylor, as we are very keen to raise awareness and promote our services to the Sikh community across Birmingham.

“Mrs Sohal will help us to ensure that Sikh patients, along with their families, receive appropriate religious, emotional and psychological support while in the care of the hospice.”

Mrs Sohal works voluntarily as a Sikh Chaplain, providing services to all hospitals and hospices across Birmingham. Mr Lall is based at the Ramgarhia Sikh Temple in Hockley.

The hospice has a multi-faith room and aims to cater for people of all faiths and none.

John Taylor Hospice is run by NHS Birmingham East and North* and provides in patient hospice care, a day unit and care at home to people across Birmingham with life limiting conditions and those coming to towards the end of life. The hospice aims to respond to the needs of the community and wherever possible cares for patients in their own homes. For more information call 0121 465 2000.
The Royal Orthopaedic: Mrs Parkash Kaur Sohal and also Bhai Mohinder Singh Hamdard of Singh Sabha Gurdwara at Somerset Road accompanied her and recited two shabads, Chopyee and then did the ardas for the well-being of all in the hospital.

At all the above hospitals in Birmingham, sweets and books about “Sikhism” were distributed to patients and staff who were present when the prayers were read.

Walsall Manor Hospital: Prayers were successfully conducted by Mrs Parkash Kaur Sohal, Ramratan Singh and Narinder Kaur and Reverend Alison Coles said: “We have just appointed a new Sikh Chaplain and when they have begun their duties we would like to have another ceremony in the prayer room to raise the profile of Sikh chaplaincy and the importance of prayer for our patients.”

Alexandra Hospital in Redditch, Kidderminster Hospital, Kidderminster and Worcestershire Royal Hospital in Worcester, Good Hope, Russells Hall, Moseley Hall: Prayers were successfully organised by Ramratan Singh and Narinder Kaur of Guru Nanak Nishkam Centre and Ramratan Singh said “This has been a good exercise and has enabled us to make some new contacts.”

Norwich and King's Lynn hospitals: Ujjal Singh Kular, Sikh Chaplain, and the Sikh families who reside in Norwich invited the Reverends from Norwich and King's Lynn hospitals to late Vasakhi celebrations and the kirtan was done by jatha who came from Leeds. Reverend Andrew Haig liked the kirtan so much that he has asked Ujjal Singh to bring the kirtan jatha to the hospital and do kirtan.

Leicester and Nottingham hospitals: Ajmer Singh Matharu, Sikh Chaplain, Leicester said:

“With reference to the National Sikh Chaplaincy Day I'm pleased to inform you that this was celebrated and prayers read for the patients in the hospitals at Nottingham, on 22 April and Leicester on the 24 April respectively although the gathering was not very healthy in spite of the fact that letters were sent to the temples and announcements made on radio however we took a start with reciting the Chopyee and doing the prayers (Ardas) for the start of the Sikh Sewak Chaplaincy Group in the above mentioned cities. This was all due to your initiative and help. Now we are waiting for further instructions. What we need now is the necessary forms to be completed by each volunteer joining our sections in Nottingham and Leicester together with further instructions as to the qualifying person who would have authority to give a start to the newly recruited volunteers. Surely they would need a short training session by an experienced or qualified instructor in the chaplaincy service. I'm awaiting your instructions to receive the above mentioned documents and to give a start to the newly recruited volunteers.”

Ealing Hospital: It has come to light that Atma & Harjeet Sohal has been doing simran on a set date every month. Reverend Maggie Davidige-Smith reported that Atma and Harjeet Sohal led Simran prayer on Monday as part of our regular worship and we had 10 people attending for the full hour and many stayed for tea and coffee and biscuits in the kitchen after wards. I know that Atma and Harjeet would like to hear from you as a supportive gesture to their wonderful work here. We have three Sikh volunteers who all go on specific wards each week as well as alternating Sikh worship usually monthly.
Chopyee and Ardas were successfully conducted at:

**West Middlesex Hospital** by Kernail Singh of Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Hounslow, Middlesex. Reverend Jonathan Osborne said “All went well thank you. It's always good to see Kernail Singh - he is a respected friend and colleague.”

**North Middlesex Hospital, North London** by Mrs Balwant Kaur Rehal who is the Sikh Chaplain from Nanak Darbar North London Gurdwara, Hardial Kaur, Manjeet Kaur, Nirmal Kaur, Dr Devinder Kaur and Surinder Kaur. Mrs Balwant Kaur said: “Our thanks should go to Reverend Dominic Fenton who had widely publicised this day by emailing the hospital staff and also to Dr Devinder Kaur who joined us in the prayers.”

**Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield** by Surinder Singh Dhillon who is the Sikh Chaplain with 3 Amritdhari Sikhs and Giani Ji Sikh Temple. Rev Martin Kerry said: “It went very well, thank you. In particular it was good to meet with Mr Dhillon and discuss matters of mutual concern.”

**Homerton Hospital, Hackney, East London** by Jas Kaur Singh. Reverend Phaedra. Pamphilon-Green said: “It was lovely to have a member of the Sikh community come and pray in the Sanctuary. There is no problem with this, all are welcome to come and pray. It would be good to meet with you with regards to Sikh Chaplaincy cover in the hospital.”

**Queen Elizabeth Hospital, South London** by Sharan Kaur Sandhu, Sikh Chaplain, and few sikh colleagues.

**Nottingham University Hospitals** by Parmjit Singh Thiara, Sikh Chaplain.

**Edgware Hospital** by Dr Amrit Singh Brah and Mr & Mrs Garawal.

**General Hospitals in Leeds** by Harbans Singh Sagoo of Gurudwara GNNS Jatha (Leeds) UK.

**Spiritual Centre at Ysbyty Gwynedd Bangor, North West Wales** by Reverend Wynne Roberts (Pastoral Care and Partnership Manager) who volunteered to do the prayers on our behalf as we were not able to locate anyone from the sikh community in that area.

**Prayers still to be completed:**

Bhupinder Singh will be doing the prayers week commencing 4th May at **Derby General Hospital** and **Gloucestershire General Hospital** even though he lives in Derby as we were not able to locate anyone in Gloucester.

**Darent Valley Hospital, Dartford Kent:** As soon as Reverend Martin Kelly and his chaplaincy team has agreed a mutually convenient day to visit the Gurdwara in Gravesend, he will contact Dr Kartar Surindar Singh and Tarsaim Singh, Secretary of Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara.
There are some hospitals around the country that showed interest but we had difficulty in creating the hospital/gurdwara link:

Kings College Hospital, Camberwell
Whittington Hospital, North London
Ashford Hospital, Middlesex and St. Peter’s Hospital in Chertsey, Surrey
Great Ormond Street Hospital
Lister Hospital in Stevenage
Hinchingbrooke Hospital in Huntingdon
Mental Health & Specialist Learning Disability, Herts Partnership NHS Foundation Trust at St Albans
Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton and Yeovil District Hospital, Yeovil in Somerset
Airedale NHS Trust, Steeton, Keighley
City Hospitals, Sunderland (Sunderland Royal Hospital/Eye Infirmary)
Greater Manchester West Mental Health, Rochdale Infirmary, Royal Oldham Hospital in Manchester
Southampton General Hospital in Southampton
Freeman Hospital, Newcastle General Hospital, Royal Victoria Infirmary, Walkergate and The Centre for Life in Newcastle

We have had such a positive response from chaplains that a link has been created between hospital and Gurdwara and hope this is maintained. We plan to work this year at ensuring those hospitals that did not get done are done next year.

This has been a challenging exercise and we now have new recruits to chaplaincy and have planned a training day later this year. Next year’s event planning for Vaisakhi is already under way.

UK Sikh Healthcare Chaplaincy Team: 14th May 2009