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Dear Khalsa ji

Waheguru ji Ka Khalsa
Waheguru ji Ki Fateh

The Prison Sikh Chaplaincy Service UK, in partnership with The Welcome Directory, is reaching out to you to tell you about our respective work. The Prison Sikh Chaplaincy Service, looks after the religious and pastoral needs of all Sikh Prisoners and staff. The Welcome Directory is an organisation which works across faiths and beliefs in England and Wales to help faith communities to welcome people leaving prison. We both recognise the benefits of being part of a faith community whether inside or outside the prison gates. The Welcome Directory is a tool, both online and in hardcopy, that enables Sikhs who have been in prison to locate a Gurdwara who will support and enable them in the practice of their faith on release. The directory currently includes nearly 190 faith communities registered and are keen to register more. We are also sending you two leaflets, accompanying this letter, summarising both the work of The Welcome Directory as well as the free online Prisons Awareness Course that they run.

We are grateful for your ongoing support to your local Sikh Chaplain with providing Karah Parshad and other Sikh artefacts for the members of your community in prison. Now we request you to take a step further and welcome the fellow members back into your faith community via your Gurdwara Sahib. For Sikh prison leavers, finding a supportive Gurdwara to welcome them can be challenging, due to fear of rejection and stigmas. When prison leavers successfully join a faith community, it can make a significant difference to their chances of re-offending and settling well into the community.

We would love for The Welcome Directory to better serve Sikh prison leavers across England and Wales. Of all religions represented within prisons, we understand that there are 588 Sikhs, but upon release only approximately 20% go on to join a Gurdwara. Only 3% of our registered faith communities are Sikh communities and we would love for Sikhism to be better represented in the work of The Welcome Directory, so that Sikh people on leaving prison, wherever they live in the UK, might find welcome.

For a Gurdwara to be named and listed as a 'Welcoming Community' for those who have been in prison there are four criteria that they are required to fulfil: -

1. To have an active safeguarding policy in place (with a named safeguarding lead)
2. To have the consent of the Gurdwara Management.
3. A named 'champion'(s) within the community who will act as the point of contact between the community and The Welcome Directory
4. To have some awareness of the issues people leaving prison face



- Either through having someone who works / volunteers in a prison, or
- Through active experience of supporting people who have left prison, or
- Through training completed (such as the Prisons Awareness Course)

The Welcome Directory has recently launched an online version of the Prisons Awareness Course, to help faith communities to gain better insights into issues surrounding prison, imprisonment and release. The course runs quarterly, so do get in touch if you are interested in attending.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding The Welcome Directory, please feel free to contact Emily at emily@welcomedirectory.org.uk

Kind regards,

Gagandeep Singh/Ajmer Singh

Deputy Directors Sikh Prison Chaplaincy Service

Amrik Singh

Sikh Chaplain & Trustee

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The Welcome Directory