**IEDP Seminar on Religion and Belief on 28 November 2013**

**Notes from the Roundtable Discussions**

**RELIGION AND BELIEF**

**Good Practice**

* Strong dialogue and communication between different religions, which has led to greater knowledge and understanding
* Attitudes displayed are based on neutrality and respect
* Expertise is shared e.g. school visits to places of worship

**Barriers**

* Hierarchy within the protected characteristics in particular special privileges for faith groups.
* Potential conflict between demands made by different groups for resources and treatment.
* Hierarchy of certain religions over others

**Role of IEDP and/or other organisations**

* Depository of information and resources (with disclaimers)
* Forum for non-judgemental dialogue
* Lobby the Department for Education and Ofsted
* Factual Information on progressive views of faiths and beliefs, including legal definitions
* Work towards accepted etiquette being practiced that addresses the needs of the largest number of people without involving many separate provisions e.g. distribution of easy-read advance copies of scripts benefits people with a range of sensory impairments
* Routine requests for information about dietary requirements already makes provision for vegetarians, those with faith based dietary requirements and other dietary needs.

**DISABILITY AND RELIGION AND BELIEF**

**Good Practice:**

* the EHRC’s raised the issue on seating in temples and took a common sense approach to this, to respect those who may not be able to sit on the floor to worship
* the Christian Trust providing buddies for young people with complex needs

**Barriers:**

* Lack of leadership/activists in this area
* Fear of raising issues, even though reasonable adjustments should be easy to discuss
* Reputational damage of challenging issues

**Role of IEDP and/or other organisations:**

* Identify best practice e.g. case studies
* Share research e.g. from universities e.g. Middlesex
* Provide up-to-date information
* Provide a forum for discussion
* Provide practical tools in how to raise/challenge issues
* Be proactive
* Share links with other organisations e.g. Equality Forum, ACAS, EHRC