

## 2. Overview of the Community

### The Leeds Jewish Community Resilience Profile

The goal of the community resilience profile is to understand the unique characteristics and challenges of the community and identify its strengths and vulnerabilities in regard to each of the program's eight core resilience capacities.

The community resilience profile and its recommendations will be the basis for dialogue with the community steering committee to determine priorities for capacity development.

The Leeds Jewish community resilience profile was written based on a mapping process conducted together with community representatives including:

- ▲ Over 20 interviews with lay leaders, professional directors, and community members conducted between August 30 – September 1, 2016 (see Appendix 1)
- ▲ A study of materials including community documents, websites, Facebook pages, and newsletters
- ▲ A study of documents and articles about the community published by external sources (see Appendix 2)

It is important to note that the community resilience profile is based on a qualitative mapping process which leans heavily on the perceptions of those who took part in the process.

### Overview of the Leeds Jewish Community

Jews have lived in Leeds since at least the middle of the 18th century. Throughout the 19th century, the Jewish population in the city grew as Jews fled from Eastern Europe. The community reached its peak in the 1950s when the Jewish population numbered around 20,000 members.

Many of the first Jewish immigrants to the city were employed in the cheap labor force, and later led the labor strikes which are an important part of the community's narrative. As time passed, the community prospered and relocated to the wealthier northern neighborhoods. Today, over 85% of Leeds' Jews are concentrated in a small geographical area.

The decline in the size of the Jewish community began in the decades after the Second World War and has intensified in the last decade, which saw a 20% decrease (per UK census data). This is as a result of younger people leaving the community for London and other places that are perceived as offering better opportunities.

Over the last decade, the community has proactively attracted newcomers, resulting in close to 50 new families from across the UK and other countries (Israel, USA, and others) joining the community. Today, there are an estimated 8,000 -10,000 Jews in Leeds.

Despite the decline in population, Leeds' Jewish community is England's third largest – after London and Manchester. The community is vibrant, and offers a wide array of organizations and services, including:

- ▲ Community Board (LJRC)
- ▲ 8 synagogues – 6 Orthodox (3 large and 3 small), 1 Reform, and 1 Chabad, in addition the masorti community meets every 4-6 weeks. The community also has a Beit Din
- ▲ Welfare Board
- ▲ Housing Association
- ▲ Homes for assisted living for the elderly and a privately run old age home
- ▲ MAZCC Community center
- ▲ Educational campus - nursery, primary school, and a newly-founded high school
- ▲ Youth centers, the Zone, and other youth movements (LJOY and others)
- ▲ Several kosher cafés/restaurants and food venues - some of which are owned or partly owned by the community or one of the synagogues
- ▲ Dozens of organizations promoting activities in the fields of welfare, culture, Zionism, education, youth, and sports
- ▲ Jewish burial services and cemetery