

Working with Faith Groups – Feedback from Hindu Charities

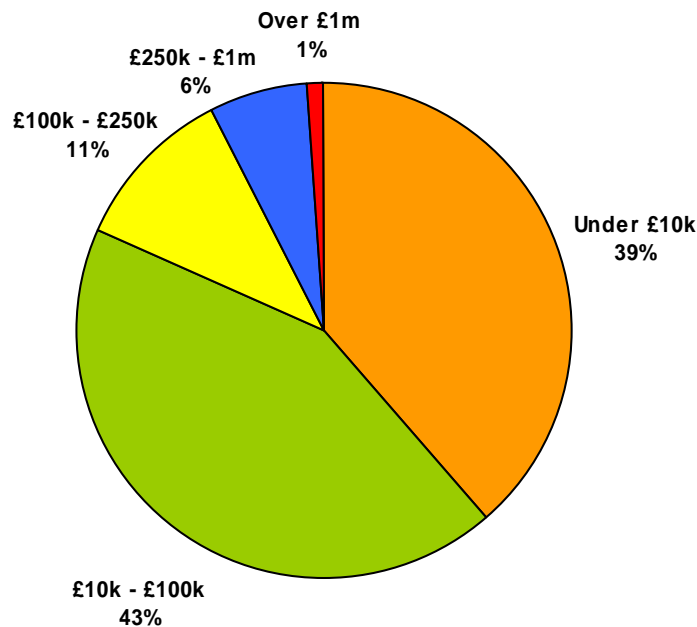


A picture of Hindu charities in England and Wales:

There are approximately 347 Hindu charities on the Central Register of Charities, with a combined income of around £35 million.¹

Breakdown of Hindu charities by income band:

Almost half of Hindu charities have an income of less than £10,000, and just 1% of Hindu charities have an income of over £1 million.



The rate at which Hindu charities have been registering:

- 72 Hindu charities have registered with the Charity Commission in the last five years, with an average of 14 Hindu charities registrations a year.

The largest registered Hindu Charity

Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha

The charity registered with the Charity Commission in 1977 and has an annual income of over £12 million. As well as providing facilities for worship, the charity undertakes a wide variety of activities ranging from environmental to educational care. Over the years the charity has provided humanitarian aid following natural disasters, this has included the provision of food packs following the 2006 floods in Gujarat, India. For further information about the charity's work, please see:

www.mandir.org

¹ The statistics are based on information taken from the Register of Charities in England and Wales October 2007.

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The Charity Commission's consultation with Hindu charities:

The consultation events:

3 events were held in Leicester, Bolton and London between February and June 2006. In total 130 delegates attended these events, representing 76 Hindu charities. Delegates represented a huge variety of organisations from national bodies like the Hindu Forum of Britain to local groups such as the Leicester Mahajan Trust.

Key issues raised at the events:

The issues that delegates raised with us broadly fell within four common themes:

On communication:

- delegates expressed a real desire for more face - to - face meetings and events with the Commission;
- delegates felt that language could be a barrier for some, and called for more publications to be available in Hindi and leaflets to be available in plain English.

On fundraising:

- delegates felt that a lack of suitably skilled trustees/staff makes it difficult for Hindu charities to undertake effective fundraising, and said that appropriate training for trustees in this area would be welcome.
- Hindu charities experience difficulty in accessing grants due to their faith-based nature, and delegates thought the Commission could help raise awareness about the value the work they do brings to the wider community.

On trusteeship:

- delegates believed the Commission should establish a programme of trustee training, which would include events where trustees could share best practice and network.

On commission staff:

- delegates believed an advisory group with Hindu and other faiths should be set up with the Commission.

Feedback from delegates at the event:

"Transition of the Charity Commission to a cooperative, facilitating body."

"By attending the consultation I have learned a lot more. In future more of this type of consultation should be organised."

"A good chance to talk person to person."

"It was very educative. Such meetings should be held once a year."