

Strengthening Cohesion and Partnership with Hindu Communities

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The Role of Mandirs, Community Organisations, and Government Collaboration

Executive Summary

British Hindu communities are deeply embedded contributors to national life through enterprise, education, philanthropy, volunteering, public service, and faith-rooted civic responsibility.

Across the United Kingdom, Hindu Mandirs function not only as places of worship, but as:

- Youth mentoring hubs
- Informal safeguarding triage points
- Community reassurance anchors
- Volunteer mobilisation centres
- Social cohesion infrastructure

Despite this, engagement between Government and Hindu institutions has historically been:

- Episodic
- Personality-driven
- Crisis-led
- Structurally inconsistent

This paper makes a clear parliamentary case:

Hindu communities are not disengaged — they are under-connected.

The absence of structured, predictable engagement frameworks reduces Government's effectiveness in:

- Cohesion strategy
- Youth resilience
- Safeguarding confidence
- Hate crime prevention
- Local authority partnership

The purpose of this paper is to:

1. Clarify the lived governance reality of Hindu communities;
2. Define what representative engagement should look like;
3. Propose operational partnership models that shift from consultation to delivery.

Hindu communities are not seeking preferential treatment. They are seeking:

- Equity in recognition
 - Structured engagement
 - Safeguarding capability support
 - Transparent accountability pathways
 - Partnership based on measurable outcomes
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Introduction

Hindu communities in Britain are rooted in:

- Faith and service (seva)
- Family responsibility
- Enterprise and education
- Civic duty

Mandirs across the UK already perform quasi-civic functions. They:

- Deliver youth engagement programmes
- Provide pastoral support
- Act as first contact points for safeguarding concerns
- Support food insecurity initiatives
- Offer informal mental wellbeing signposting
- Facilitate interfaith and cross-community dialogue

However, these contributions remain largely unintegrated into formal governance architecture.

Recent national initiatives — including the Harmony Conference 2025 and parliamentary engagement forums — demonstrate both willingness and organisational maturity within Hindu civil society.

The gap is not community readiness.

The gap is structural integration.

1. Current State of Play in Hindu Communities

1.1 Identity and Recognition in Policy and Data

British Hindus consistently report concern over inaccurate or imprecise categorisation in public discourse and administrative datasets.

The continued use of “Asian” as a blanket descriptor:

- Obscures distinct community identities
- Distorts policy targeting
- Reduces data precision
- Creates reputational spillover effects

Accurate identity recognition is not symbolic politics.
It is a governance requirement.

Precision improves:

- Safeguarding response
 - Hate crime monitoring
 - Education policy design
 - Resource allocation
 - Equality impact assessments
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1.2 Youth Pressures – Specific, Not Abstract

The phrase “generational pressures” must be understood concretely.

Young British Hindus report:

- Religious bullying in schools
- Online hostility and misinformation
- Exposure to overseas geopolitical narratives
- Identity conflict between peer groups and family environments
- Limited curriculum representation of Hindu history and philosophy
- Peer pressure relating to drugs and social conformity

Older generations face:

- Loneliness and isolation
- Language barriers
- Limited engagement confidence with statutory services
- Reduced awareness of safeguarding pathways

These pressures are not uniform.

Hindu lived experience differs significantly between:

- Outer London boroughs
- The Midlands
- North West towns
- Newer diaspora communities
- Socioeconomic brackets

A metropolitan narrative does not capture national reality.

1.3 Mandirs as Civic Infrastructure

Mandirs should be understood as:

Volunteer-led civic infrastructure embedded within communities.

They already perform:

- Safeguarding triage
- Youth mentoring
- Crisis reassurance
- Cultural education
- Food distribution
- Informal elder care

Much of this work is:

- Unfunded
- Volunteer-dependent
- Governance-stretched

Women's unpaid pastoral and safeguarding leadership remains a critical but under-recognised pillar of this ecosystem.

1.4 Safeguarding – From Compliance to Capability

Mandirs face practical safeguarding constraints:

- Uncertainty around DBS thresholds
- Limited clarity on referral escalation routes
- Lack of funded safeguarding leads
- No supervision structures for volunteers handling disclosures
- Limited training budgets
- Trustee compliance overload

Safeguarding capability — not simply compliance — must be strengthened.

If Government expects Mandirs to act as cohesion partners, safeguarding investment is a prerequisite.

1.5 Security and Community Safety

Hindu Mandirs face:

- Vandalism
- Hate incidents
- Online hostility
- Spillover tensions linked to overseas conflicts

Incidents such as the Leicester unrest illustrate how unmanaged geopolitical narratives can materialise in British streets.

This is not foreign policy commentary.

It is a domestic cohesion and security issue.

Preventative engagement is more cost-effective than reactive policing.

1.6 Fragmentation and Representation

Government engagement has often relied on:

- Proximity
- Visibility
- Informal networks

This risks defaulting to whoever is loudest or most accessible.

Representative engagement should be based on:

- Demonstrable reach
- Governance accountability
- Service delivery record
- Cross-regional representation
- Transparent consultation mechanisms

Legitimacy must be structured — not assumed.

2. The Role of Mandirs and Community Leaders

Mandirs and leaders act as:

- Trust intermediaries
- Cultural translators
- Youth role models
- Early warning systems during tensions
- Civic mobilisation points

They are uniquely positioned to:

- De-escalate community anxiety
- Encourage democratic participation
- Promote shared British civic values

However, without predictable engagement channels, their effectiveness is constrained.

3. Strengthening Government Partnership – From Engagement to Delivery

3.1 Establish Structured Engagement Mechanisms

Parliamentary recommendation:

- Named faith engagement leads within departments
- Standing national Hindu engagement forum with defined remit
- Local authority liaison models in areas of significant Hindu population
- Clear escalation and follow-up mechanisms

Engagement must move beyond symbolic roundtables.

3.2 Move from Consultation to Commissioning

Government responds most effectively where engagement links to measurable delivery.

Proposed pilot models:

- Mandir-linked youth mentoring programmes
- Elder isolation reduction schemes
- Safeguarding awareness campaigns
- Food insecurity initiatives

Time-limited pilots with KPIs create accountability and scalability.

3.3 Invest in People, Not Just Projects

Volunteer burnout is an under-acknowledged governance risk.

Practical support should include:

- Shared safeguarding officers across Mandir clusters
 - Regional trustee governance training pools
 - Core-cost micro-grants
 - Security funding access clarity
 - Template policy toolkits
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3.4 Youth Leadership Pathways into Civic Structures

Youth engagement must connect to:

- SACRE representation
- Local authority advisory boards

- Public appointments
- National civic programmes

Otherwise engagement risks becoming performative rather than transformational.

4. Hindu Community Expectations from Government

Hindu communities approach engagement on the basis of:

- Equity
- Shared responsibility
- Public duty

They seek:

- Accurate representation in data and policy language
- Protection from religious bullying
- Fair safeguarding access
- Culturally appropriate after-death care
- Transparent hate crime follow-up
- Prevention of extremist mobilisation within the UK
- Structured engagement, not episodic outreach

This is a request for equitable governance — not exceptional treatment.

5. Why This Matters for Parliament

Failure to structurally integrate Hindu civic infrastructure results in:

- Missed safeguarding opportunities
- Weakened youth resilience
- Reduced community trust
- Reactive crisis management
- Underutilised volunteer capacity

By contrast, structured partnership would:

- Strengthen cohesion
- Improve early intervention
- Enhance community safety

- Expand civic participation
 - Reinforce trust in public institutions
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Conclusion

Hindu Mandirs and community organisations are foundational civic institutions operating at scale across the UK.

They already contribute significantly to:

- Social cohesion
- Youth stability
- Volunteer mobilisation
- Public service

They are not seeking preference.

They are seeking:

- Predictability
- Equity
- Partnership
- Accountability

The infrastructure exists.

The leadership exists.

The willingness exists.

What is required now is structural integration.

With modest capability investment and clear engagement architecture, Hindu communities can play a measurable role in strengthening Britain's civic resilience.

Hindu Mandirs and community organisations are **foundational institutions within British society**, delivering far more than religious services alone. They provide cohesion, care, leadership, and service at scale, often with limited resources, but deep trust.

Hindu communities are not seeking preferential treatment, but **effective partnership**: engagement that is structured, representative, and focused on outcomes. As demonstrated through recent national initiatives, the infrastructure, leadership, and willingness to collaborate already exist.

With the right framework, Government and Hindu communities can work together to strengthen cohesion, empower young people, and enhance social resilience for the benefit of all.



Consulted over 50 Hindu communities across the UK and their views have been incorporated into the paper.

Yours sincerely,

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