

Surrey Minority
Ethnic Forum
(SMEF)

Strategic and Business Plan

2022 - 25

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Preface

Minoritised ethnic communities represent 17% of Surrey total population of 1.19 million¹. This is approximately 202,300 residents across 80,000 households. Surrey has a range of unique features and qualities that can create different challenges and opportunities. Everyone in Surrey has a collective responsibility to contribute to sustainable social and economic development. Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF) strategic and business plan 2022-25 is a collective ambition of SMEF as an independent race equality charity and the forty eight member groups it serves across Surrey. SMEF aim is to champion the voices of minoritised ethnic communities and highlight their needs and aspirations. SMEF aims to make a meaningful difference and positive impact on the lives of BAME communities.

SMEF has made tremendous progress since registering as a charity and company in 2013. SMEF is financially stable and continuously improving ways in which to engage with and serve minoritised ethnic communities.

COVID 19 pandemic is arguably one of the most significant global challenge. Early research has indicated that the pandemic adversely effected minoritised ethnic communities disproportionately. As a race equality organisation, SMEF rose to the challenge and supported minoritised ethnic communities with speed, efficiency and cultural competence. George Floyd tragedy and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in the United States had a marked impact across the United Kingdom, as well. This led to charities and statutory sector embracing an anti-racist agenda with even a greater urgency.

This strategic and business plan reflects renewed ambition and priorities for SMEF to continue to make positive impact on the lives of minoritised ethnic communities.

¹ ONS Census 2011



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Executive Summary

Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum Limited (SMEF) is a **race equality** and **advocacy** organisation which prides itself in championing the voices of **minoritised ethnic communities**. Since starting in 2009, the organisation has grown significantly, currently delivering successfully on **11 projects** covering health, social care and community development interventions across Surrey. These projects are funded by public and private sector partners including local government.

This strategic and business plan 2022-25 is a **collective ambition of SMEF and its 48 member groups**. SMEF continues to highlight racial inequality and discrimination while working with system partners in an open, confident and transparent manner. SMEF has a unique role in Surrey; being the only organisation that **engages, educates and empowers** minoritised ethnic communities. COVID 19 has had a disproportionate negative effect on minoritised communities. SMEF has been supporting minoritised ethnic communities to lead healthier lives, by focusing on those health conditions that some of these communities are genetically predisposed to. The majority of SMEF work will continue to focus on **promoting racial equality, community safety, women empowerment, youth development, community cohesion and working with the faith sector**. SMEF is committed to building on its already well-developed community training programme.

This strategic and business plan 2022-25 is based on two key pillars i.e., capacity building and capability enhancement. SMEF will undergo a **re-alignment of resources** through the adoption of a new and more efficient organisation structure, re-engineered systems and procedures and greater investment in technology. Financial capabilities need to be enhanced through **securing long term funding with a higher level of unrestricted capital**. This will allow SMEF to meet its vision, mission and corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives in a robust manner. These changes will allow SMEF to enhance its capacity to work in collaboration with public, private and voluntary sector partners with the primary aim of improving access to and co-designing **health and social care services** that better address the needs and issues of minoritised communities. This plan will be reviewed continuously, assessed and readjusted in light of changing requirements and market trends.

SMEF has a dedicated and committed board of trustees with a diverse set of skills and experiences. SMEF received the award for the most diverse board by the Institute of Fund Raisers in 2018 and the prestigious **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service** in 2021. SMEF was acknowledged for its health related work in the report published by the Institute of Health Equity (Marmot Report) in 2020 and also received a commendation from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey (OPCC) for emerging good practice on violence against women and girls.

SMEF work is underpinned by the understanding that **together we can make a bigger impact**, have a powerful united voice and strengthen community cohesion between diverse groups of people and communities.





Message from the Chair

I am pleased to introduce the SMEF strategic and business plan 2022-25. This sets out SMEF vision, mission and priorities as a race equality organisation. The plan emphasizes a renewed focus on serving minoritised ethnic communities across Surrey.

This strategic and business plan 2022-25 is a collective ambition of SMEF and the various communities it serves. SMEF aims to champion the voices and highlight the needs and aspirations of minoritised ethnic people – with a view to making a meaningful positive impact on their lives.

Since SMEF became independent in 2013, tremendous progress has been made in transforming the organisation while working towards financial stability. Like other organisations in the UK and around the world, SMEF faced unprecedented challenges due to COVID 19 pandemic. However, this crisis also presented some unique opportunities to improve ways in which to operate and engage with target audience. SMEF is in an enviable position to take on a leadership role in championing the voices of minoritised ethnic communities and advocate their needs and aspirations across system partners and the voluntary sector.

I feel that now is the time, SMEF organisational strategy is updated in order to reflect renewed ambition and priorities with an emphasis on securing longer term funding and sustainable community development. There is still a lot more that needs to be done. SMEF will continue the pursuit of excellence in fulfilling the collective aspirations of minoritised ethnic communities.

Together we can make a bigger impact, be the voice for change and make a difference by improving the quality of life for minoritised ethnic communities living and working in Surrey.

Neelam Devesher (DL)



The background of the page is an abstract, futuristic design. It features several thick, flowing, ribbon-like shapes in shades of light blue and white, set against a dark blue background. These shapes appear to be in motion, curving and overlapping. In the upper right quadrant, there is a bright, glowing point of light that radiates outwards, creating a sense of energy and focus. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and high-tech.

Section I :
Strategic Plan



Macro trends suggest significant race inequalities across Surrey

Vision

To develop unity amongst the diverse communities with an active focus on improved wellbeing for all in Surrey.

Mission

To engage and empower minoritised ethnic communities to work together to actively find solutions to the social and economic challenges they face.

Values

- Honesty and integrity
- Equality, diversity & inclusion
- Empowerment & engagement
- Collaborative working
- Individual and collective responsibility with a “can-do” attitude

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Statement

Environment

SMEF is committed to ensuring that it continues to be a socially responsible organisation with a focus on environmentally friendly ways of working and encouraging communities to become more eco-friendly.

Social

SMEF aspires to be a catalyst for positive change by focusing on providing solutions to address race inequality and discrimination as well as empowering minoritised ethnic communities through its services.

Governance

SMEF will continue to strengthen its governance framework with accountability to internal and external partners.

AMBITION

To be the race equality and advocacy charity championing the voices of minoritised ethnic communities in Surrey.

STRATEGIC INTENT

SMEF will endeavour to highlight racial inequality and discrimination and work with system partners in an open, confident and transparent manner.

SMEF has a unique role in Surrey; being the only organisation that engages, educates and brings together minoritised ethnic communities. Working together to find solutions to the common economic and social challenges in today's Britain, SMEF connects, collaborates and builds long lasting relationships within and across communities and organisations. SMEF aim is to improve quality of life and well-being with a view to promote harmony and community cohesion across the county.

SMEF focuses on empowering minoritised ethnic communities to articulate their needs in order to better

influence system partners to address inequality, discrimination and racism.

COVID 19 has had a disproportionate negative effect on minoritised communities. SMEF has been supporting minoritised ethnic communities to lead healthier lives, by focusing on those health conditions that BAME communities are genetically predisposed to e.g., diabetes, cardiovascular disease and sickle cell anemia.

SMEF has successfully supported COVID 19 vaccine uptake through the provision of timely and relevant information. As a result, minoritised ethnic people have been able to make informed choices about protecting themselves and their families against the pandemic.

The challenge for SMEF is to be able to keep pace with a fast-moving social landscape in which minoritised ethnic communities will face greater hardships. SMEF needs to have a bold and ambitious plan to build the capacity of minoritised communities so that they are not digitally excluded.

It is imperative that SMEF builds its capacity to run projects which

address key social issues such as, the isolation of older people, empowerment of women and girls, mental health of young people and domestic abuse. Whilst these projects engage the most excluded and are successful, their impact is lost because of the short one-year time span they are run for. It is crucial that SMEF secures longer term sustained funding for these projects that are fundamental to SMEF's charitable objectives.

The SMEF staff team has tripled within the last 3 years in order to keep pace with COVID related emergency responses. One of the key challenges ahead is to maintain and increase this level of activity.

SMEF needs more sustainable sources of funding for its core services and costs to continue its work as a delivery and infrastructure organisation.

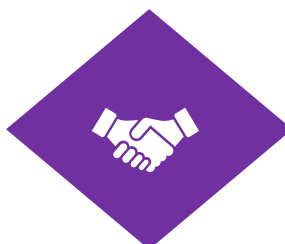
This plan will be continuously reviewed, assessed and adjusted in light of changing circumstances and current trends.

SMEF has a unique role in Surrey; being the only organisation that engages, educates and brings together minoritised ethnic communities

PROJECT THEMES

Community development,
health and social care

Health and well being



Educational, economic and
employment

Crime and community
safety

SOCIAL IMPACT PRIORITIES

- Children and young people are encouraged to have high aspirations and reach their full potential
- Women are supported to develop their skills and be confident to play an active role in society
- Older people are encouraged to be healthy, active and involved in their neighbourhoods.
- Support and advise women and men facing disadvantage and inequality (mental health, disability, access barriers etc.) and new refugee arrivals.
- All communities become more aware about how to enjoy better health and be more informed of the lifestyle choices needed to prevent health issues.
- Communities are empowered to look after their localities and environment and feel safe and secure at home and at work.
- Communities better engage with each other and feel part of the wider society.
- Build and maintain relationships between faith communities.
- Communities are well trained as a work force and feel confident to grow and develop in their professions.
- Promote racial equality and community cohesion to help address inequalities, racism issues and discrimination.
- Support minoritised ethnic communities with information on their democratic rights and citizenship.

SMEF is a race equality and advocacy organisation working to promote community cohesion and helping address all forms of racism and discrimination

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Clear, concise and sharper profile with a renewed focus on marketing, including online and print media.
- Sustainable future funding by targeting private and public sector organisations, trusts and foundations as well as better collaborations with voluntary sector partners.
- Be the “go-to” organisation in Surrey for advice, work and training on race inequality, discrimination, faith, cultural awareness and all issues impacting minoritised ethnic communities.
- Increased emphasis on highlighting and publicizing inequalities, and working with all Surrey residents to reduce these issues.
- Recognised as a key partner and influencer in Surrey.
- Refocus on membership by engaging with new and existing members to address community, faith and geographical membership gaps. Supporting members to be more robust through capacity building project framework.
- Focus on delivering projects to address the needs and priorities of minoritised ethnic communities with a clear evidence-based analysis.
- Organisational infrastructure with focus on refreshing policies, procedures, systems, financial management systems and organisation structure better suited to SMEF vision and future aspirations.
- Strong leadership from a broad skills-based trustee board, dedicated and committed to SMEF vision, mission and values.
- Trustee and staff work within responsive problem-solving and supportive culture with clear accountability and responsibility.
- Work with all faiths to promote and develop inter faith projects.
- Increase understanding between communities by celebrating cultural and faith diversity.



Work in collaboration with public, private and voluntary sector partners to help improve access as well as develop and design health and public services in ways that better address minoritised communities needs

SERVICE OFFER

- Established and trusted mechanisms to work with hard-to-reach communities and groups living in the deprived areas and communities in Surrey.
- Framework to engage and empower minoritised ethnic communities to find common solutions to economic, educational and social challenges they face living in Britain.
- Host workshops, seminars, training and collect data for the benefit of the diverse range of minoritised ethnic and faith communities to help raise their awareness and understanding of relevant issues and services.
- Training for all partners in the county to help increase their knowledge and awareness of the diverse range of minority communities and their challenges and issues.
- Training modules on increasing cultural and faith awareness, race inequality, discrimination and racism issues.
- Ability to disseminate information in the most accessible formats to enable minority ethnic communities fully participate in all aspects of citizenship.
- Ability to disseminate knowledge and data on the diverse range of communities and their issues and needs for the benefit of public, private and voluntary sector partners.
- Work in collaboration with public, private and voluntary sector partners to help improve access as well as develop and design health and public services that better address needs and issues in minority communities.
- Work in collaboration with partners to tackle and resolve issues facing minority ethnic communities living and working in Surrey.

GOVERNANCE

SMEF has a dedicated and committed board of trustees with a diverse set of skills and experiences. SMEF received the award for the most diverse board by the Institute of Fund Raisers in 2018.

The trustee board meets monthly with a three-month rolling programme of meetings with a focus on strategic, finance and audit and operational agendas.

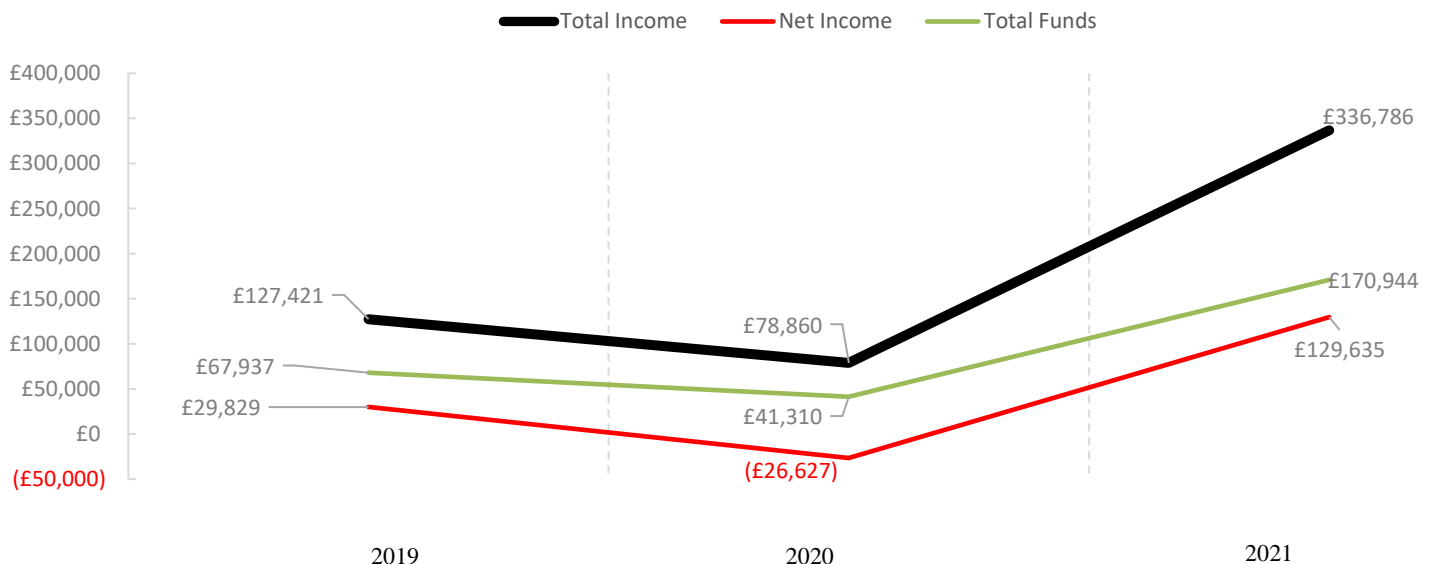
The trustee group adds capacity and social value to the work of SMEF by taking leadership and responsibility of issues and agendas that need to be progressed.

The chairman of SMEF is a member of the Surrey Forum, the strategic overarching partnership body bringing together leaders from partners in the county and is chaired by Leader of Surrey County Council. This places SMEF in a more influential position to raise issues important to SMEF members and communities. This enables SMEF to work with Surrey Forum members in order to develop their understanding of issues effecting minoritised ethnic communities and solutions to help address these issues.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

SMEF total income, total funds and net income for the period 2019-21 is presented in figure 1. SMEF total income stood at £ 337,000/-, total funds at £171,000/- and net income at £130,000/- for the financial year ended 31 March 2021. This represents a net income compounded annual growth rate of 39% over 2019-21, with an 88% restricted and 12% unrestricted funding mix. The total income comprised of 42% short term funding (one year or less), 58% medium term funding (more than 1 year but less than 3 years) and there was no long term funding (3 years and above) as at the date of publication of this document.

Figure 1
Growth in Total Funds, Total Income and Net Income



SMEF financial projections are covered in detail in the Section II : Business Plan of this document. A brief overview of key forecasts and budgets is presented in figure 2. Primary focus of the financial plan is to increase the share of unrestricted funding in total funds raised, while maintain a modest annual growth rate of between 20-25% during the next four years. The rise in level of unrestricted funding will inter-alia help achieve the goal of long term sustainable funding.

One of the primary focus of SMEF financial plan is to raise long term funding and increase share of unrestricted capital in overall funding mix

Figure 2

Key Financial Forecasts

Financials	2022		2023		2024		2025	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Total Income	404,143	20	484,972	20	606,215	25	757,769	25
Operating Expenses	238,224	15	273,958	18	328,750	20	401,075	22
Net Income	165,919	28	211,014	27	277,465	31	356,694	29

REVIEW 2019-22

The period of this report was a time of great adversity where the most vulnerable including the old, the infirm, frontline workers, doctors and nurses bore the brunt of a global pandemic. Yet, it was an exceptional year of growth for a community organisation like SMEF. Members were once again at the heart of it all. SMEF grew from being a micro charity with 5 employees to one employing the equivalent of 12 Full time staff running 11 projects all targeted at supporting people and building community resilience.

As SMEF grappled with changed circumstances, the loss of jobs and livelihoods alongside feeling of being trapped in homes, SMEF found new ways to stay connected with communities and support them through the difficult times. SMEF continued to operate business as usual with staff and volunteers reconfiguring service delivery. The team seamlessly adapted to home working and new ways with increased use of technology. SMEF was able to galvanise the power of its 48 member groups to create a network of support via telephone, social media and zoom. Communities met through Zoom-exercised, prayed, shared ideas alongside some serious discussions on vaccine resistance and efficacy.

SMEF delivered several Covid emergency projects; a telephone befriending service for elderly Nepali people, one for women and girls at the

risk of domestic abuse, regular health and race e-bulletin, SMEF newsletter and a capacity building service which supported members to deliver their own Covid emergency projects.

SMEF collaborated with the Independent Mental Health Network and ran a survey on the impact of Covid on mental health needs of minoritised communities. The recommendations from this survey enabled SMEF to develop a three years minoritised ethnic communities mental health project that is working with people with lived experience to shape services. SMEF established partnerships with Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Service, Public Health and Active Surrey on a Health & Race project. SMEF continued to work with Surrey County Council and colleagues in the public and charitable sector disseminating timely information on resources and services that people could access. SMEF 'Many Hands' project delivered on its women's integration theme with drop ins and community engagement conducted online.

SMEF work with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in its fourth year met all its engagement targets, with 153 people attending events and awareness raising sessions on domestic abuse, harmful traditional practices and drug and alcohol abuse. A Hate Crime event was attended by 236 young people. Ideas on how to call out, seek help and reject hate were endorsed. Ten individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds formed the

Hate Crime panel set up by Surrey Police and chaired by SMEF, four panel meetings were held, where cases were reviewed and recommendations made.

SMEF Trustees add a significant amount of social value by playing a key role, putting in many added volunteer hours to voice the needs of minoritised communities at strategic tables. This helped widen SMEF circle of influence thus ensuring that the voice, needs and aspirations of Surrey 17% ethnic minority population were integrated with that of other communities in Surrey.

SMEF will continue to deliver on Active Communities - community safety project and the Many Hands Integration project. Health & Race project tackling health inequalities will focus on those health conditions that minoritised communities are predisposed to. SMEF will continue to build the capacity of member groups and strengthen SMEF's internal infrastructure. SMEF will continue to work closely with Surrey County Council to ensure that BAME communities play an active role in the civic life of the county. 'Surrey Faith Links' was included into SMEF portfolio of projects. Surrey Faith Links is a well-established Surrey wide body which facilitates multi faith working and its outcomes of community cohesion resonate with SMEF charitable objectives.

PROJECTS

01.04.2019 – 31.08.2023

Many Hands

3 years integration project funded by the National Lottery. The project addresses integration at three levels – women empowerment, civic engagement and identity and belonging in schools. Delivered by four part time workers working directly with communities. Activities take place in Woking, Surrey Heath and Reigate & Banstead

01.12.2021 – 1.11.2023

Health and Race

2 years project funded by Public Health, Surrey Heartlands and Active Surrey. The project supports minoritised communities to lead healthier lives. In 2020/21 SMEF ran 23 health related conversations and ran 36 exercise classes reaching 631 minoritised people

01.12.2021 – 31.03.2022

Community Participatory Research

1 year project funded by Public Health. The project trained three community development workers on research methodologies in conducting participatory approach to social engagement

SMEF is continuing to deliver successfully on 11 projects across the whole of Surrey tackling a range of social and healthcare issues



03.09.2021 – 02.09.2024

Mental Health Stakeholder Engagement

3 years project funded by the Independent Mental Health Network. The project aims to engage minoritised communities in the co-design of more accessible mental health services

08.11.2021 – 07.05.2023

BAME Stakeholder Reference Group

18 months project funded by the Surrey County Council. This project engages with minoritised ethnic communities to influence all systems across Surrey (police, health, employment, education, environment.)

01.04.2021 – 31.12.2022

Surrey Faith Links

Ongoing project funded by the Surrey County Council. This project brings faith communities together to promote common understanding. It is a conduit between faith communities, voluntary and the public sector.

14.01.2022 – 13.12.2022 Active Communities

Community safety work is funded by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC). This project delivers on four areas :

- Domestic Abuse : promoting awareness in communities, harmful traditional practices, FGM, honour based violence and forced marriage awareness sessions
- Representation at Black & Minoritised Violence Against Women and Girls Improvement Group
- Hate Crime : Chairing Surrey Police Hate Crime scrutiny panel, offering and delivering youth workshops at schools
- Internet Safety : cyber crime, scams and child sexual exploitation, drugs and alcohol awareness delivered with Catalyst

01.04.2021 – 30.06.2022 The Trust Project

1 year project funded by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) supporting survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) and their families. Through multi-agency collaboration, this project empowers vulnerable women and their families through an enhanced understanding and awareness of boundaries within English Law; including cultural issues surrounding honour and shame and mental health.

01.04.2021 – 31.03.2022 Muslim Women and Girls

1 year project funded by the Community Foundation for Surrey. This project is aimed at empowering vulnerable Muslim women and girls through regular sessions with varied programmes suited to the group needs. The project helps encourage engagement with wider community.

01.07.2021 – 30.04.2022 Capacity Building Project

Ongoing project funded by the Surrey County Council. The project aims at supporting minoritised community organisations. Over the past year it has worked with 18 SMEF members, nine of whom succeeded in securing funds from the Community Foundation for Surrey. Two of the groups are now on their second grant from the latter.

01.12.2021 – 31.03.2022 Household Support Grant

A one-off 4 months project funded by the Surrey County Council. The project aimed at poverty alleviation across marginalised BAME communities of Surrey through direct cash dispensation.

SMEF is positioned as a strategic race equality charity in Surrey because of its grass roots engagement capability and deep understanding of the needs of minoritised ethnic communities. Despite county wide economic and social challenges, SMEF infrastructure is robust to ensure long term success across a range of intervention



SOCIAL IMPACT

SMEF **health projects** focused on conditions which minoritised ethnic communities are predisposed to e.g., sickle cell anemia, diabetes, cardiovascular and COVID-19. SMEF assisted with 971 COVID vaccinations, while undertaking 15 conversations with over 1,000 people who were vaccine hesitant. SMEF organised 5 health events which were attended by over 180 people. Independent Mental Health Network (IMHN) and SMEF jointly organised a survey of 200 respondents in order to identify mental health issues arising due to COVID amongst minoritised ethnic population of Surrey.

Focus on **community safety** remains a priority for SMEF. 150 people attended domestic abuse awareness sessions, 160 people came to drug and alcohol misuse awareness workshops, 130 people attended

internet safety classes, while over 400 people came to hate crime youth sessions. SMEF chaired 6 hate crime panel meetings and provided direct support to 45 women and 77 children who were survivors of domestic abuse.

One of the objectives of SMEF is to improve **social integration and mobility** for minoritised ethnic communities. SMEF organised 4 events attended by 125 people on the topic of democratic participation. Women empowerment sessions were attended by 50 participants across Surrey. A total of 6 sessions attended by 761 pupils were conducted around identity and belonging theme across various schools in Surrey.

SMEF is well-positioned and well-respected as a **race equality and minority rights advocacy champion** across Surrey. A 16 member volunteer group from a cross-section of

minoritised ethnic demographics is engaging with system partners through SMEF. Through engagement, education and empowerment this group is helping design the delivery of various social services. Similarly a group of 7 volunteers is focusing on addressing **mental health** issues.

In order to address **fuel poverty** during the COVID crisis, SMEF recently distributed 85 grants to needy households.

SMEF continues to play an active role in promoting **interfaith harmony**. A total of 21 events with an average attendance of 50 people per event were hosted by SMEF. These events focused on identifying common grounds and bridging the gap where inter-faith differences exist.

SMEF has continued to make a significant difference to the quality of lives of minoritised ethnic communities through member groups and direct project delivery

Case Study 1

A front line health worker from the Black African community was unfairly dismissed from employment during peak COVID crisis. The person was acting well within their rights however, the employer took an unfair and biased view of the circumstances leading up to the dismissal. SMEF is working closely to address the issue by helping the person navigate through employment legislation, assist with arranging legal support, counselling and confidence building, while at the same time ensuring mental health issues do not arise.

Case Study 2

A widowed elderly person from south east Asian community with no prior experience of living in the UK was in a situation of being responsible for looking after 3 grand children whose parents were front line workers and extremely busy during COVID. SMEF helped the grand parent organise and plan daily routine activities around supporting and looking after the three children. This included help with shopping, library support and children homework tasks. The grand parent became a role model for the entire community and developed self-confidence.



BACKGROUND

SMEF is a community organisation with charitable and company status. It represents 48 multi-ethnic community groups in Surrey and its surrounding areas.

SMEF helps to empower the voice and increase the visibility of its diverse membership by raising the profile and awareness of the challenges and issues faced by these communities.

SMEF is a race equality organisation with a strong focus on highlighting racism, discrimination and race inequality and working proactively with partners to find solutions to help address race inequality and discrimination.

SMEF works with an inclusive approach to provide diverse communities opportunities to share their views. It engages and empowers minoritised communities to work together to find solutions to the social and economic challenges they face and provides the platform to influence key partners with a strong unified voice.

The added value of SMEF is that it has facilitated connections and builds strong long-lasting relationships within and across diverse communities as well as with key partners in the county. This has resulted in a strong culture of community cohesion between diverse communities enhanced with a shared understanding of the issues that need to be addressed to help improve well-being of all Surrey residents.

SMEF works in collaboration with minority ethnic communities and partners to develop an increased understanding of the challenges faced by these communities.

SMEF uses its platform to work with and influence partners to develop solutions that help to address the issues and challenges faced by minority ethnic communities and make positive impact on their lives and well-being.

SMEF work is underpinned by the understanding that together we can make a bigger impact, have a powerful united voice and strengthen community cohesion between diverse groups of people and communities.

The added value of SMEF is that it has facilitated connections and builds strong long-lasting relationships within and across diverse communities as well as with key partners in the county

JOURNEY TO DATE

SMEF has come a long way since it was first established in 2009 and the journey to date has not been an easy one. The past years have been difficult, when just surviving month to month was an achievement. It has taken resilience, tenacity, team work and strength to develop and maintain a presence in Surrey over the last 12 years.

SMEF has developed a strong platform to empower and raise the profile of minoritised ethnic communities in Surrey. More important, it has highlighted the issues and challenges faced by these communities, as well as ensuring there is a focus on inequality, racism and discrimination.

SMEF is now a firmly established partner helping to seek, develop and design solutions to the issues faced by the minoritised ethnic communities in Surrey.

SMEF has secured funding from a range of partners – Surrey Community Foundation, The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Surrey County Council and Surrey Heartlands. SMEF delivers a range of services to its group Members and their communities.

In 2019 SMEF secured a three-year grant from the National Lottery to support the integration of ethnic minoritised communities into the civic life of the county.

SMEF is delivering a wide range of much needed projects for minoritised ethnic communities, funded and supported, by a number of partners and organisations.

With the disproportional impact of COVID-19 upon minoritised communities, SMEF is working in partnership with Surrey Heartlands, Surrey Public Health and Active Surrey delivering projects to help raise awareness of health issues in minoritised ethnic communities.

The Community Foundation for Surrey supports the Muslim Befriending Programme run by SMEF since April 2021. The Ministry of Justice has funded the Domestic Violence project. Surrey County Council started to fund the SMEF capacity building project in 2020, and is now supporting structural development.

The SMEF partnership with the Independent Mental Health Network has yielded funds for three years to enable minoritised

communities to engage and co-design more accessible services. SMEF is partnering with the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People in this project delivery.

SMEF continues to seek funding and to embrace opportunities to work with a range of partners for the benefit of its member groups and minoritised ethnic communities.

SMEF members come from a wide range of minoritised communities within which the challenges of engagement and access to services are severe. These include already marginalised families living with multiple deprivation (housing, unemployment, education) where for the majority English is a second language. Added to this are usually marked cultural differences, a lack of understanding of UK public services, and amongst refugees a high degree of fear and lack of confidence; additionally, for a variety of reasons, certain types of disability are more prevalent amongst minoritised ethnic families.



A needs assessment exercise was done in 2017 and then a further series of meetings were held in 2021 with representatives from minoritised ethnic communities and Deputy Lieutenants

Following key themes emerged from these meetings

- African member groups work with people with HIV and Aids. They report that due to severe public health cuts these vulnerable groups no longer have the support they had in the past. As a result, there is a great deal of distress amongst this group. Covid 19 has exacerbated their isolation and desperation.
- Surrey educational statistics indicate that Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Gypsy and Traveler children are not performing as well as their peers. Covid 19 and home schooling have left children lacking in education as parents often do not have the resources, language or the skills to keep children gainfully occupied.
- Nepali and African young people lack scope for progressing in their jobs, especially those working in the hospitality industry and in hospitals and care homes. COVID 19 has affected people badly as many of them have lost employment or have reduced hours and their families are feeling the strain.
- Pakistani women groups in Woking indicate that more work is needed to empower women so that they have the confidence to seek employment and broaden their horizons.
- Domestic violence data shows that women are suffering; the lockdown has aggravated relationships already under strain.
- Surrey has an aging population. South Asian members report on the isolation and loneliness of elders which was made worse during the pandemic.
- Covid 19 has disproportionately affected minoritised ethnic communities who work in frontline positions in the care industry, in hospitals, community transport, the post office and supermarkets. Many on zero-hour contracts have lost their livelihood.
- Small business owners and the self-employed; Taxi drivers, restaurant owners and workers all are under strain due to reduced working hours.
- Minoritised ethnic communities living in multi-generational families have increased risk factors.
- The Gypsy and Traveler community highlight the need for more approved sites. There is an acute shortage of sites and obtaining planning permission is very difficult. This community faces issues relating to lack of access to health, education and housing which is further exacerbated by negative perceptions and prejudice.
- There is a lack of physical space for all minoritised ethnic communities to hold community events which would increase the visibility and promote social cohesion.
- Minoritised ethnic communities often lack knowledge and awareness of support services available to help improve their quality of life.
- Lack of cultural and general awareness of issues faced by minoritised ethnic communities amongst service providers in all sectors making access to services more difficult.

- There is a need for improved service design and delivery to make these more appropriate to meet the needs of minoritised ethnic communities.
- Lack of trust between minoritised ethnic communities and service providers. There appears to be reluctance to invest in the minoritised ethnic voluntary sector so that meaningful and sustained engagement can take place.



Summary of support needed by minoritised ethnic communities

- Training and mentoring support to help improve employment prospects especially for minoritised ethnic young people and women entering the job market.
- Learning activities to help parents support their children's learning.
- Parental education - some parents are not educated, yet still have to home school. This can hinder children's progress.
- Work with children in schools on identity and belonging.
- Regular drop-in sessions for women, with ESOL support.
- Health inequalities and lack of access to appropriate health provisions.
- Hate crime by members of the public and being targeted unfairly by the police e.g., stop and search.
- Lack of engagement and understanding by public and charity sectors making access to services more difficult and thus increasing inequality.
- Support with raising awareness on minoritised ethnic issues with all public and charity sectors.
- Need to reduce isolation of older people in minoritised ethnic communities.
- Advocacy – support for SMEF so it can raise issues of inequalities facing minoritised ethnic communities more effectively.
- Support to raise the profile of minoritised ethnic community organisations, the issues they face and their contributions in Surrey.
- Raise the profile of minoritised ethnic communities to help increase their confidence, sense of belonging and identity.
- Increase opportunities to work together, celebrate together, discuss together, address issues together etc.
- Develop productive partnerships engaging minoritised ethnic communities, thereby helping to increase understanding of different cultures and promote better community relations between all living in Surrey.

List of ethnicities reached by SMEF through membership groups

African & Afro Caribbean

Sub-Sahara
Jamaica
South Africa

Asian

Afghanistan
Arab / Middle East
Bangladesh
China
Hong Kong
India
Nepal
Pakistan
Sri Lanka
Syria

Europe

Albania
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community
Hungary
Italy
Poland
Romania
Ukraine

To join SMEF as a member, please visit website www.smef.org.uk or email admin@smef.org.uk

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**Strategic &
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2022-25**

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