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**HINDU**

MANIFESTO (UK)

**2024**





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# The Hindu Manifesto (UK) 2024



1. Recognising anti-Hindu hate as a religious hate crime, and proscribing organisations and individuals engaged in it.

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2. Protecting places of Hindu worship.

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3. Access to fairer education.

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4. Equal representation and opportunities for Hindus.

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# Introduction

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## Endorsement of the Hindu Manifesto 2024



With the UK General Election 2024 approaching, the UK Hindu community has created this vision document to reflect its aspirations and expectations from politicians seeking support from this sizeable community. We urge the candidates contesting this parliamentary election to champion the issues of Hindus in the UK by committing to these pledges. This manifesto, through the aforementioned expectations, forges a path toward a more vibrant, inclusive, and harmonious Britain; thus, votes of the UK Hindu community are conditional upon candidates' commitment to these expectations.

Candidates are encouraged to pledge their support to this manifesto by endorsing it through their social media with the hashtag **#HinduManifesto2024** and tagging our account on:

- **Instagram:** @hindus4democracy
- **Facebook:** @hindus4democracy
- **X (Twitter):** @hindus4dmocracy

After the election, the newly elected candidates would be encouraged to join All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) that are relevant to UK Hindus.

Candidates can also consult the organisations presenting this Hindu Manifesto 2024 for any further information on the aspirations highlighted in this manifesto.

# The Hindu Community in the UK

**>1 MILLION HINDUS IN THE UK**

The Hindu community has a population of over one million in the United Kingdom. Remarkably, this community consistently pays significantly higher taxes than its proportional share, with most taxpayers falling into the highest tax brackets. The community plays a vital role in health services and also serves as the country's essential pillars in filling critical skills gaps in technology and innovation. The community impacts all the additional major sectors of society including social care, education, finance and security, among others, which collectively drive economic growth, innovation, and societal impact in the UK.

## Organisations presenting the Hindu Manifesto 2024

The Hindu Manifesto 2024 belongs to the whole of the Hindu community in the UK. This document has been jointly drafted and presented by organisations representing Hindus, including:

- BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, London
- Chinmaya Mission UK
- Hindu Council UK
- Hindu Forum of Britain
- Hindu Forum of Europe
- Hindu Mandir Network UK
- Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK)
- INSIGHT UK
- ISKCON UK
- National Council of Hindu Priests
- National Council of Hindu Temples
- National Hindu Students' Forum UK
- World Council of Hindus UK (VHP UK)
- And many other Hindu organisations

For the full list visit <https://hindusfordemocracy.org.uk>



# Recognise anti-Hindu hate as a religious hate crime, and proscribe organisations and individuals engaged in it

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## Recognising anti-Hindu hate and combating religious hate crime

The Hindu community has faced many cases of Anti-Hindu hate (also referred to as anti-Hinduism or Hindumisia or Hinduphobia) in the UK, including but not limited to workplaces, public spaces and schools. However, unfortunately, there has been no recognition of these injustices as religious hate crimes.

Several think tanks and social research forums have advocated defining 'Anti-Hindu hate' (or similar terms) and categorising this as a hate crime.

## Working Definition<sup>1</sup>

[Anti-Hindu hate] Hinduphobia is a set of antagonistic, destructive, and derogatory attitudes and behaviours towards Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism) and Hindus that may manifest as prejudice, fear, or hatred.

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[Anti-Hindu hate] Hinduphobic rhetoric reduces the entirety of Sanatana Dharma to a rigid, oppressive, and regressive tradition. Prosocial and reflexive aspects of Hindu traditions are ignored or attributed to outside, non-Hindu influences.

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This discourse actively erases and denies the persecution of Hindus while disproportionately painting Hindus as violent. These stereotypes are used to justify the dissolution, external reformation, and demonisation of the range of indigenous Indic knowledge traditions known as Sanatana Dharma.

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The complete range of [Anti-Hindu hate] Hindu phobic acts extends from microaggressions to genocide. Hinduphobic projects include the destruction and desecration of Hindu sacred spaces; aggressive and forced proselytisation of Hindu populations; targeted violence towards Hindu people, community institutions, and organisations; and ethnic cleansing and genocide.

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1. <https://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/HJS-Anti-Hindu-Hate-in-Schools-Briefing-final.pdf>



## Examples of anti-Hindu hate, prevalent in the UK, as collated by some think tanks are as follows:

Calling for, abetting, or normalising the harming or killing of Hindus as a result of an extremist and illiberal view of religion and history.

Accusing those who organise around or speak about anti-Hindu hate (or similar definitions, including the persecution of Hindus) of being agents or pawns of violent, political agendas.

Making unsubstantiated claims about the political agendas of people who are simply practising Hinduism.

Claiming that Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma does not exist as a valid, cohesive category of spiritual traditions.

Outright denying or accusing Hindus or any people of inventing or exaggerating the persecution of Hindus, including genocide.

Maintaining that all inequity in Indian society – including but not limited to sati, caste, misogyny, communal violence, and destruction of places of worship – stem from and are “inextricably bound up with” Hinduism.

Conflating diasporic Hindu identity with Indian citizenship, ethnicity, and patriotism.

Erasure of colonisation, including, but not limited to, calling Hindus “the white people of South Asia.”

Therefore, this manifesto calls to recognise anti-Hindu hate as a religious hate crime and combat them accordingly. This manifesto also calls for comprehensive strategies to tackle hate crimes targeting religious and ethnic groups. The combating techniques may include enhancing law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute hate crimes, providing support services for victims, and implementing educational programs to promote acceptance, tolerance and diversity. By raising awareness and fostering a culture of inclusivity, this manifesto aims to create a safer and more inclusive social milieu for all.

# Monitoring and proscribing organisations in the UK engaged in violence against UK Hindus

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Recent reports from government agencies and independent watchdogs highlight that the threat from extremism has been steadily growing for many years in the UK. For instance, the UK Home Office Counter-Extremism Strategy 2020 identified several extremist organisations advocating for separatism, terrorism, and religious intolerance. Further, the sentiment of UK Hindus towards India is deeply rooted in their cultural, religious, and emotional ties to the land of their ancestors. India holds immense spiritual significance for Hindus worldwide, serving as the birthplace of Hinduism and home to numerous sacred sites and traditions. Any attack on India not only undermines its sovereignty but also deeply affects the emotional well-being of UK Hindus.

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Organisations such as the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and International Sikh Youth Federation have been involved in various acts of violence against UK Hindus and Indians or have committed acts of terrorism aimed at destabilising India and promoting separatist agendas. JKLF, for instance, was responsible for the heinous kidnapping and murder of Indian High Commission official Ravindra Mhatre in Birmingham, UK in 1984. LeT has been responsible for several high-profile terrorist attacks in India, including the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which claimed the lives of over 160 people.

Organisations like Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) have been accused of attack on the High Commission of India (HCI) in London, physically assaulting and intimidating Hindus and Indians in the UK, funding and supporting extremist activities aimed at destabilising India and promoting secessionist sentiments among the Sikh community; they have also been accused of vandalising Hindu temples.

Monitoring and proscribing such organisations in the UK is crucial to safeguarding the interests of the UK and upholding the principles of peace, stability, and sovereignty of the UK. This manifesto seeks to protect the rights and security of Hindus in the UK and maintain strong diplomatic relations with India, a country that holds profound cultural and spiritual significance for the million+ UK Hindus.

## Candidate Expectations

This manifesto calls for the candidates contesting the UK General Elections 2024 to:

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- 1 Recognise anti-Hindu hate as a religious hate crime**
- 2 Supporting and initiating actions against all forms of racism and hate crimes including hate speech against faith and ethnic groups.**
- 3 Monitoring and proscribing the organisations in the UK that are engaged in violence against Hindus and attacking the sovereignty and integrity of India, including but not limited to 'Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front', 'LeT', 'Sikhs for Justice'.**

# Protecting Mandirs– the Hindu places of worship

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Over the past few years, there has been an increase in incidents of vandalism, arson, and threats against religious institutions. This highlights the need for enhanced security measures to protect places of worship. Data from the Community Security Trust (CST) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) indicate a rise in hate-motivated attacks targeting religious sites, including temples, gurdwaras, synagogues, and churches.

In September 2022, Hindu mandirs in Leicester were vandalised by Islamists and a sacred religious flag was desecrated and burnt. After that, a Hindu temple in Smethwick, Birmingham was attacked. <sup>2, 3</sup>

Hindu temples across the country, including in Swindon and Birmingham, have been subject to burglary, vandalism and threatening behaviour towards congregations. <sup>4</sup>

Recently, in January 2024, a Hindu temple in Wembley was vandalised and deities in the temple were damaged.

In response to these threats, the manifesto advocates for the allocation of dedicated funds to enhance security at all places of worship fairly.

2. <https://www.firstpost.com/world/hindus-under-attack-in-uk-with-chants-of-allahu-akbartakbir-muslim-mob-attacks-temple-in-smethwick-as-cops-look-on-11297671.html>

3. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/19881419/birmingham-hindu-temple-riots-mob>

4. <https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2022-01-28/hindu-community-deeply-upset-by-sixth-temple-break-in>

5. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/uk/man-arrested-after-trying-to-smash-deity-and-breaking-diya-inside-hindu-temple-in-wembley/articleshow/106711446.cms>

The UK government has framed exclusive schemes for the protection of Islamic Mosques and places of worship for the Jewish community. In 2024, the government has committed to providing UK Muslims with more than £117 million of protective security funding over the next 4 years.<sup>6,7</sup>

## OVER £117 MILLION

Provided to UK Muslims for protective security funding over the next 4 years

## OVER £70 MILLION

Granted as part of the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant

This amount was £28 million in 2023 and increased more than four times in one year.

Similarly, a sum of over £70 million has been granted as part of the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant. However, despite repeated attacks on Hindu places of worship, no special grant or scheme of protection of Hindu mandirs has been framed by the government.

This fund should be allocated for the security and protection of temples, which may include installing surveillance cameras, hiring security personnel, and implementing access control measures to prevent unauthorised entry. By investing in proactive security measures, the manifesto aims to safeguard the freedom of worship and ensure that Hindu communities can practise their faith without fear of intimidation or violence.

## Candidate Expectations

This manifesto calls for the candidates contesting the UK General Elections 2024 to:

- 1 Support exclusive security schemes and fundings for Hindu Mandirs (Hindu temples) akin to the exclusive security schemes and fundings for other religious places of worship.**

6. [https://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/powapply23\\_4cKGUxi](https://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/powapply23_4cKGUxi)

7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-commits-more-funding-to-protect-uk-muslims>

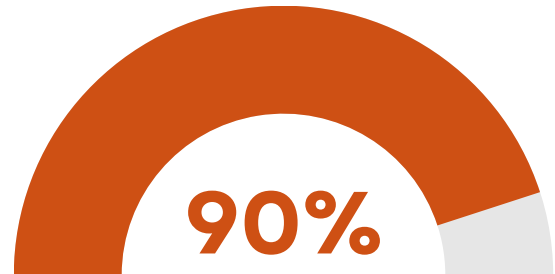
8. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-funding-will-protect-jewish-communities-from-harm>

# Access to fairer education

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## Hinduism in Religious Education (RE)

The Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) reports a decline in the quality of RE in schools since 2013, citing inadequate teacher training and support. This deficiency often leads to oversimplified portrayals and misconceptions of Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism. This is resonated by a research report titled Hinduism in Religious Education 2021 published by INSIGHT UK. The report highlights deficiencies and grave issues in the teaching of Hinduism in RE. There is growing evidence of inaccurate resources used by teachers for the subject. Almost 90% of the respondents from the UK Hindu community were dissatisfied with the teaching of Hinduism in UK schools.<sup>9</sup>



**of respondents from the UK Hindu community were dissatisfied with the teaching of Hinduism in UK schools**

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INSIGHT UK's survey finds that 93% of Hindu parents and pupils in the UK reported that they do not have a choice to study Hinduism at the GCSE level. This not only is a disservice to the purpose of helping students understand differing world views in RE, but also it disentitles non-Hindu students from understanding the third largest faith in the UK and the World. Similar issues were published in the previous reports on this topic by VHP UK and HFB. The findings also highlight that the current approach leads to misconceptions of Hinduism.<sup>10</sup>

The CoRE report recommends moving away from locally informed delivery via the local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). The UK Hindu community has since launched the Hindu Education Board (HEB) UK, a registered charity to support Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to define Hinduism in the RE syllabus. This organisation facilitates volunteer support and training for religious education (RE) teachers in schools.<sup>11</sup>

This manifesto highlights the need to include Hinduism in religious education (RE) across all schools in the United Kingdom, particularly at the GCSE level. It also mandates that the curriculum and resources of Hinduism in RE to be approved by Hindu scholars at the Hindu Education Board UK.<sup>11</sup>

9. <https://insightuk.org/hinduism-in-re>

10. <https://religioueducationcouncil.org.uk/our-work/worldviews>

11. <https://hindueducationboarduk.org>

# Access to learning Indic languages

The number of schools teaching Indic languages, including Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati, Punjabi, Bangla, Sindhi, Kannada, Telugu, and Marathi, are scarce in number.

UK Hindus and Indian immigrants constitute one of the largest ethnic groups in the UK, actively filling skills gaps within the labour force. With India being the world's fifth largest economy and second largest foreign investment source to the UK, it is important to have access to Indic languages. This is both an investment for our economy and for UK Hindus and Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) in the UK.



Furthermore, Indic texts carry the message of Dharma i.e. sustainability, and subjects like Yoga, Pranayam and meditation, which advocate universality and peace. Therefore, it is essential that the original languages of these texts are taught, to enable citizens to imbibe the spirit and values of these texts. There is a lack of books and resources available in schools or local libraries in these Indic languages, with resources often being non-existent, across the country.

Therefore, this manifesto calls for the candidates contesting the UK Parliamentary Elections 2024 to champion the cause of opening language schools for Indic languages and funding for books in these languages to be placed in libraries.

## Grammar Schools

There is a combination of different types of public/ government schooling systems in the UK, depending upon the historical circumstances and the policy adopted by the local authority. Grammar Schools and Comprehensive Schools are two broad government schooling systems, particularly in England. Both these systems have their own advantages and unique features. There are several comprehensive schools; however, In England, there are currently 163 Grammar Schools spread across 36 local authorities, educating approximately 167,000 pupils.

Unlike other state schools, Grammar Schools are academically selective, admitting students based on their performance in entrance exams, commonly known as the 11+ (in Northern Ireland it is called the transfer test). This system inherently supports high academic achievers, and UK Hindu and UK Indian students excel in these exams.<sup>12</sup>

12. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/7-to-11-years-old/reading-writing-and-maths-attainments-for-children-aged-7-to-11-key-stage-2/latest/#by-ethnicity>

These students, being ‘academically high performers’, end up getting admission to grammar schools. However, the number of grammar schools is limited and despite securing all the eligibility criteria and having academic prowess, several of these students are unable to study in a grammar school or have to spend inordinate travelling time to and from their schools. Often, the young Hindu families have to relocate their residence nearer to the Grammar Schools.

In 1998 the government put a restriction on new grammar schools being created, but many of the existing ones are now being funded to increase their intake, and several are bidding to open new 'satellite' schools many miles away. There are several areas in the UK, particularly in England, where there are no grammars or satellites of grammar schools (e.g. Norfolk and Bristol). Students from these areas have to travel for about 1.5 hours in each direction to attend grammar schools.

This manifesto calls for the candidates contesting UK Parliamentary Elections 2024 to champion the cause of these students in accessing education and advocate expanding/ opening of satellites of the grammar schools to address the educational needs of the students, ensure equitable access to quality education to all, and make the grammar school education more accessible everywhere in the country, particularly in areas with a significant demand and no or scarce presence of grammar schools.

## Faith Schools

Apart from Christian Faith schools, which form a majority in over 7000 faith schools, there are also a small number of schools with other faith designations – including 37 Jewish schools and other schools belonging to Muslim, Sikh, Greek Orthodox and Seventh Day Adventist faiths.

Until 2010, despite the nearly million-plus UK Hindu population, there were no Hindu faith schools in the UK. Presently, there are only around 12 Hindu faith schools in England. These schools are sponsored by the Avanti Schools Trust which is affiliated with the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), the religious governing body for the Avanti Schools. <sup>13</sup>

13. <https://avanti.org.uk/our-schools>





However, the number of Hindu faith schools is still disproportionately lower than the Hindu population in the UK. Given the proportion of the Hindu population to the number of faith schools, there should be around 140 Hindu faith schools in the UK. However, the number of Hindu faith schools in the UK is less than 10% of the proportional amount. The number of Hindu faith schools is also significantly lower than the number of faith schools of other faiths, even though they have populations lesser than Hindus in the UK.

Therefore, this manifesto calls for the candidates contesting UK Parliamentary Elections 2024 to champion the cause of Hindu students and support the opening of more state-funded Hindu faith schools in the UK

## Candidate Expectations

This manifesto calls for the candidates contesting the UK General Elections 2024 to:

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- 1** **Advocating the teaching of Hinduism in Religious Education (RE) across all schools in the United Kingdom, particularly at the GCSE level, and advocating that the curriculum and resources of Hinduism in RE be approved by Hindu scholars at the Hindu Education Board UK.**
- 2** **Addressing the need for more Hindu faith schools in the UK.**
- 3** **Supporting the opening of satellite sites of existing Grammar Schools to ensure that Grammar schools are accessible everywhere in the country, particularly in areas with significant demands and no or scarce presence of grammar schools.**
- 4** **Championing the opening of language schools and libraries for Indic languages including but not limited to Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati, Punjabi, Bangla, Sindhi, Kannada, Telugu, and Marathi along with other foreign languages.**

# Equal representation and opportunities for Hindus

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## **Better representations of Hindu candidates in public institutions and political parties**

Hindus are under-represented in most public institutions and political parties. We request a pledge from candidates to provide equal opportunities for aspiring Hindu leaders within the party to be coached and encouraged to stand for their party at all levels.

This means actively identifying and nurturing talent from the Hindu community. It includes actively scouting and encouraging talented Hindu individuals to join public institutions and political parties. In appointing members of these institutions and candidates of parties, merit should always be the primary criterion. Community outreach is something that is also required, as well as the encouragement of Hindu candidates to contest in local elections. Representation matters at every level of governance.

The equal representation of Hindus in Public institutions and political parties strengthens the country's social fabric and enriches our democracy. Therefore, this manifesto calls for better representations of Hindu candidates in public institutions and political parties.

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## **Essential Hindu resources in the prayer rooms and Hindu Chaplains in educational institutions, hospitals, prisons and other relevant places**

It is imperative that prayer rooms, full-time and paid expert members with training in faith (Chaplains) are available in relevant places like educational institutions, hospitals, and prisons.

Prayer room facilities are often overlooked when it comes to requirements from the Hindu faith. As noted above, despite their high performance in academics, Hindu students in the UK are already deprived of attending Hindu faith schools and learning Hinduism in RE. Appointment of Hindu Chaplains and availability of essential resources and instruments of the Hindu faith (e.g. Murti/Vigraha, Scriptures/Holy texts like Gita, Srimad Bhagavatam and Ramayana) in the prayer rooms in every school with Hindu students would help them connect to their faith in their educational institutions.

In reference to prisons, out of c. 81,000 prisoners in Britain, Hindus constitute the lowest (0.4%) religious group with just c. 380 prisoners. Nevertheless, it is important for these minor groups of prisoners to access their faith in prisons, which may help them to reform and connect to their faith which teaches them to become responsible citizens. Therefore, it is imperative that there are Hindu Chaplains and essential resources and instruments of the Hindu faith are also available in prayer rooms in prisons.

Access to Hindu scriptures and spiritual literature, apart from access to Hindu prayer rooms and Hindu Chaplains, is also essential for those seeking deeper understanding and connection while being at these institutions like educational institutes, prisons, and hospitals. We recommend placing copies of revered texts like the Gita and Ramayana in prayer rooms. These texts provide guidance, wisdom, and solace to our community members during their moments of reflection.

This manifesto calls for the inclusion of Hindu deities (Murtis/ Vighras) and instruments of Hindu worship in Prayer rooms, and the availability of full-time paid Hindu Chaplains. By doing so, these public places of worship would create a more meaningful and inclusive environment for Hindus.

## Candidate Expectations

This manifesto calls for the candidates contesting the UK General Elections 2024 to:

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- 1 Better representations of Hindu candidates in public institutions and political parties.**
- 2 Advocating appointment of Hindu Chaplains and availability of essential resources and instruments of Hindu faith (e.g. Murti/Vigraha, Scriptures/Holy texts like Gita, Srimad Bhagvatam and Ramayana) at prayer rooms in educational institutions, hospitals, prisons and other relevant places.**

# Streamlining immigration policy

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## Addressing visa issues of Hindu Priests

Priests play an important role in performing religious rituals for Hindus, particularly at Mandirs (Hindu temples). Mandirs in the UK are facing difficulty in obtaining visas for Hindu Priests under the Tier-5 Religious Worker (RW) scheme. This section of the Hindu Manifesto 2024 highlights this concern of the Hindu community and seeks a redressal to it.

Mandir management(s) apply for the visa for Hindu priests (religious workers) under the Tier-5 scheme. The following concerns have been highlighted by the mandirs regarding obtaining visas for priests:

**Delays in visa processing of several months, despite paying priority fees**

**Poor to non-existent communication from UKVI**

**No single point of contact for UKVI**

**Cumbersome visa process and exorbitant costs**

The Tier-5 Religious Worker (RW) visa is a temporary 2-year visa with no option to extend. Therefore, a Tier 5 RW must return to their home country and cannot reapply for a Tier 5 visa until 12 months have elapsed in their home country. This rule implies that the Mandir managements have to go through the visa process for new priests every two years. The visa application takes over 8 months to process, even when fast-track priority-service channels are opted for by paying more fees. Due to these inordinate delays in the process, Mandirs are left without a religious worker and struggle to serve the community.

Priests play a pivotal role in Hindu temples. Therefore, it is called upon to address the visa issues of Hindu priests by:

- Processing visa applications within an SLA time frame.
- Appointing a dedicated desk at UKVI to deal with issues pertaining to Tier-5 RW visas, and communicate with the applicants; or UKVI to set up service level agreements (SLAs) to answer queries.
- Simplify the sponsor management system under the process of Tier-5 applications.
- Remove the requirement for the RLMT, as there is no Priest training centre in the UK, and hence no locally available Hindu priest.
- Issuing Tier-5 RW visas for 3 years, with an option to extend to 5 years.

## Visa issues for dependents and elderly parents

According to recent data from the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), there has been a significant increase in the number of Indian immigrants to the UK over the past decade.

**920,000 PEOPLE**<sup>14</sup>

As per Census 2021, India remained the most common country of birth outside the UK

A notable portion of these UK residents seek to reunite with their families or care for elderly parents. In Hindu families, three generations often live together, fostering close-knit relationships and a sense of intergenerational support without the reliance on social care. This traditional arrangement also reinforces cultural values, ensures continuity of family customs, and provides care for elders while allowing for the transmission of wisdom and heritage to younger members.

However, the current visa and immigration policies often present challenges for Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) individuals in navigating the complex application processes and restrictions of the visa time period, leading to delays, denials, and family separations.

14. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/internationalmigrationenglandandwales/census2021>

It is to be noted that dependents are allowed to visit the UK for six months per visit and undergo a complex visa application process and immigration compliances. Most of these dependents of UK Hindus are their elderly parents. The UK immigration policy on the dependents causes undue hardship to the UK Hindus. Many of these UK Hindus, who are contributing significantly to the UK exchequer, decide to leave the UK and stay with their elderly parents in India and perform their familial and cultural duties of taking care of their dependents.

This manifesto calls for streamlining visa application procedures, reducing processing times, and increasing the time limit of stay by the dependents—particularly elderly parents—of UK Hindus.

## Monitor and curb illegal migration

Data from the UK Home Office indicates that despite efforts to control illegal immigration, there remains a significant number of undocumented and/or illegal migrants in the country, with implications for law enforcement and immigration enforcement agencies.<sup>15</sup>

In line with these concerns, this manifesto calls for increased resources and measures to strengthen border controls, enhance surveillance mechanisms, and improve collaboration between law enforcement agencies to detect and deter illegal immigration activities.

Additionally, the manifesto advocates for comprehensive immigration reform that balances the need for border security with compassion and humanity towards individuals seeking asylum or refuge from persecution. It calls for fair and efficient asylum procedures, humane treatment of migrants, and support for integration programs to help newcomers contribute positively to UK society.

## Candidate Expectations

This manifesto calls for the candidates contesting the UK General Elections 2024 to:

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- 1 Addressing visa issues related to Hindu Priests.**
- 2 Support addressing visa and immigration issues faced by UK Hindus with regard to bringing their dependents and elderly parents to the UK**
- 3 Supporting stringent legal mechanisms against illegal immigration in the UK.**

15. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-relating-to-the-illegal-migration-bill/additional-statistics-relating-to-illegal-migration-december-2023>

# Healthcare and Social Care

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## Elderly and disabled care

In the UK, our ageing population poses significant challenges for elderly and disabled care. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the proportion of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase from 18% in 2016 to 24% by 2046. This demographic shift necessitates robust support systems to cater to the needs of older individuals. However, data from Age UK reveals that approximately 1.6 million older people struggle to access necessary support and services, highlighting gaps in the current care infrastructure.



To address this challenge, this manifesto calls for comprehensive support measures to ensure that elderly and disabled individuals have access to education, healthcare, public utilities, and public schemes. By advocating for enhanced funding and resources directed towards elderly care programs, the manifesto aims to improve the quality of life and well-being of ageing populations in the UK in general, and also within Hindu communities in the UK.

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## Representation of Hindus in social care and foster care

Despite the growing Hindu population in the UK, there remains a lack of proportional representation in social services and foster care systems. According to the UK government's Ethnicity Facts and Figures report, Hindus represent a significant religious group of the UK population. However, this community is underrepresented in public services, including social services and foster care.

**There remains a lack of proportional representation in social services and foster care systems**

This means when a Hindu individual or family needs care, there is a lack of availability of people who understand the religious and cultural sensitivities of those they are helping, including dietary requirements. Hindu communities may have to travel outside their community for therapy and accept services from providers who may not share their lived experiences.

This manifesto calls for a review of social care so that there is more Hindu representation. By advocating for policies that promote diversity and inclusivity within social service agencies, this manifesto aims to create more equitable access to support services for all communities, regardless of religious or cultural background.

## Addressing loneliness issues

Since the launch of the tackling loneliness strategy in 2018, the UK Government invested over £80 million towards addressing loneliness. The 2023 annual report introduced 60 new cross-government commitments. However severe cuts amounting to a £600 million gap in adult social care funding, leading to over 1 million lonely and isolated elderly individuals.

**OVER ONE MILLION LONELY AND ISOLATED ELDERLY INDIVIDUALS**

To address this challenge, this Manifesto calls for more focus on addressing the loneliness issue across the UK, focusing on improving these aspects within Hindu communities in the country.

## Candidate Expectations

This manifesto calls for the candidates contesting the UK General Elections 2024 to:

- 1 Support elderly and disabled care, and ensure that the elderly have access to education, healthcare, public utilities and public schemes.**
- 2 Ensuring the representation of Hindus in Social services and foster care.**
- 3 Advocating the introduction of resources and essential ceremonial instruments Hindu prayer rooms and paid Hindu Chaplains at Healthcare centres (including Hospitals), elderly care centres, and foster care.**
- 4 Addressing the issue of loneliness in the country, particularly for newly immigrated UK Hindus.**



# Acknowledging and protecting Dharmic values

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## **Promoting a culture of respect for diversity, including reasonable accommodation of individuals' rights to wear religious symbols including tilak, bindi, saree, kalawa (mouli), kada, turban etc.**

Promoting a culture of respect for diversity involves embracing the rich diversity of religious expression in the UK. It necessitates upholding individuals' rights to freely manifest their religious beliefs, including the wearing of culturally significant symbols such as tilak, bindi, saree, dhoti, shikha, kalawa (mouli), kada, and turban; some of which form part of essential practices in religion. Respect for diversity entails creating an inclusive environment where individuals feel empowered to express their religious identities without fear of discrimination or prejudice.

Therefore, this manifesto calls for understanding the cultural and religious sensitivities; and respect and promotion of cultural diversity and the symbols and practices therein.

## **Consulting the community while legislating upon intra-community issues**

When legislating on topics related to the UK Hindu community, consulting the community representatives, leaders and organisations is essential for ensuring that policies and regulations accurately reflect the needs and values of the UK Hindu community. Community representatives, leaders, and organisations possess invaluable insights into the intricacies of Hindu customs, traditions, and concerns, way of life, making their input crucial for crafting legislation that is sensitive to the community's interests and welfare.

Therefore, this manifesto asserts that the elected representatives must consult the community organisations including those presenting this manifesto, before legislating upon issues concerning UK Hindus.

# Commissioning a memorial for Hindu soldiers who served the UK

Hindus have served the British Army for over two centuries. The contribution of Hindu soldiers to the security of Britain has been exemplary. During both world wars, the British Army had a large number of soldiers from the Hindu faith, and the Indian Army—the largest force in the war (more than 2,500,000 soldiers – fought for the UK). Large numbers of these soldiers even laid their lives for discharging their duties to serve the UK. However, no memorial has ever been commissioned in the UK to honour these Hindu soldiers.

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Several memorials have been constructed to honour the soldiers of different faiths who fought and died for the UK. A memorial for Muslim soldiers was also recently commissioned.<sup>17</sup>

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Hindus still constitute a sizable portion of the British Army greater than some other faiths, Hindus are one of the largest minority groups in the force. The British Army's recruitment of soldiers from overseas, particularly from Nepal, also witnesses the commissioning of even overseas Hindus in the British Army. Therefore, to honour the Hindu soldiers who served and died for the UK in different wars, particularly in the World Wars, a Hindu memorial should be commissioned.

**This manifesto calls for the candidates contesting the UK General Elections 2024 to support the commissioning of a memorial in honour of Hindu soldiers who served and even died for the British Army.**

16. <https://www.britishmilitaryhistory.co.uk/documents-india-1930-1947>

17. <https://news.sky.com/story/memorial-to-be-built-for-muslim-soldiers-who-fought-and-died-alongside-uk-troops-in-world-wars-13123405>

## **Facilitating appropriate infrastructure for religious ceremonies including marriage and cremation process**

Several religious ceremonies like marriage and cremation arrangements are deeply rooted in religious and cultural traditions, and timely access to infrastructure is essential for honouring these customs. In the UK, Hindus are not able to access the infrastructure and support for these culturally and religiously sensitive events in a timely manner. For instance, delays in the coroners' process and cremation arrangements can pose significant challenges for grieving families, particularly those from UK Hindu communities. As per the Hindu custom, the last rites (cremation and rituals following that) are to be completed within three days of death, however due to delay in coroners' process and inadequate crematoriums, the UK Hindus are unable to follow their religious customs.

**Due to delays in coroners' process and inadequate crematoriums, Hindus in the UK are unable to follow their religious customs.**

Additionally, increasing the number of crematoriums can help alleviate congestion and streamline the process, ensuring dignified and prompt cremation arrangements following religious customs. By supporting the expedition of the coroners' process and advocating for adequate availability of crematoriums, this manifesto seeks to uphold religious rights and traditions, providing comfort and closure for bereaved families.

Similarly, providing appropriate infrastructure and resources for marriage and other religious ceremonies is essential to accommodate the diverse cultural practices inherent in these significant life events, ensuring they are conducted with dignity, reverence, and adherence to religious protocols.

Therefore, this manifesto calls for access to infrastructure and policy support for culturally and religiously sensitive events including marriage, religious ceremonies and the cremation process.

# Recognising that the connection of UK Hindus to India (Bharat) is spiritual and not political

It is imperative to understand and recognise that the connection of UK Hindus to India (Bharat) is primarily spiritual rather than political.

This underscores the deep-seated cultural and religious ties that bind the diaspora to their ancestral homeland. This spiritual bond transcends geopolitical boundaries and serves as a source of inspiration, identity, and heritage for UK Hindus. Understanding and respecting this spiritual connection is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and cultural continuity within the community.



## Candidate Expectations

This manifesto calls for the candidates contesting the UK General Elections 2024 to:

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- 1 Understand the Dharmic way of life and unity within diversity in the Dharmic way of life.**
- 2 Promote a culture of respect for diversity, including reasonable accommodation of individuals' rights to wear religious symbols including tilak, bindi, saree, dhoti, kalawa (mouli), shikha, kada, turban etc.**
- 3 Consult the community while legislating upon issues concerning UK Hindus.**
- 4 Commission a memorial for Hindu soldiers who served and even died for the UK.**
- 5 Facilitate infrastructure for culturally sensitive events including marriage, religious ceremonies, and cremation process.**
- 6 Understand that the connection of UK Hindus to India (Bharat) is spiritual and not political.**

# What can we do?


	Hindu Community	Hindu Mandirs
1. <b>Register to Vote:</b> Encourage every Hindu living in the UK to register to vote. The Deadline to register to vote is Tuesday 18th June for the General Election on Thursday 4th July 2024.		
2. <b>Voting Turnout:</b> If people are going to be away on Thursday 4th July, encourage them to apply for the Postal Vote or Proxy Vote. The Deadline for the Postal Vote application is Wednesday 19th June 5pm and for the Proxy Vote application is Wednesday 26th June 5pm.		
3. Read, and become familiar with the Hindu Manifesto 2024 and share it with other Hindus.		
4. Request the local candidates to endorse the Hindu Manifesto and commit to the pledges. Request them to make public statements via video or social media to their commitments.		
5. Track the manifesto endorsement of your local candidates and ensure it is recorded on the website <a href="http://www.hindusfordemocracy.org.uk">www.hindusfordemocracy.org.uk</a>		
6. Organise or participate in non-selective hustings or community engagements with the local candidates to discuss the Hindu manifesto and local issues.		
7. On the voting day, encourage every Hindu to vote and participate in the democratic process.		











# #hindumanifesto2024

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