

ABOUT



OVERVIEW

Race Equality North Somerset (RENS) is an award-winning, volunteer-run, community-focused charity advocating social, racial and cultural justice.

We work with local government, the VCSFE sector and other strategic partners to promote and support the rights, interests, welfare and wellbeing of racially minoritised ethnic communities in North Somerset.

Across the UK, approximately 15% of the population is born outside the UK. In North Somerset, where over 80 languages are spoken, our charity serves the growing demand for the identification, co-ordination and delivery of appropriate policies, strategies and services for our increasingly ethnically diverse communities.

History

Since 2007 our small organisation, run entirely by volunteers, has worked to support minority ethnic communities in North Somerset. In 2015, as [North Somerset BME Network](#), our Community Interest Organisation became a Registered Charity and in 2022 we began the process of rebranding with our working name, officially approved by the Charity Commission, of [Race Equality North Somerset \(RENS\)](#).

From providing advice to individuals to promoting community educational, social and cultural events, we have – despite limited resources – been able to punch above our weight in the delivery of our help and services. (The hard work of our volunteers, over the years, was recently recognised by our charity being presented with the honour of the [Queen's Award](#)



for Voluntary Service, the highest award given to voluntary organisations and equivalent to an MBE.)

In line with the good practice of many organisations, we ensure that we take the time to reflect on our work and see how we can be more beneficial and effective for the communities we serve. As a result we have embarked on a radical shift to reflect not only the changing needs and demographics of North Somerset, but also to position ourselves to be able to initiate and support the need for more relevant and urgent programmes and partnerships that address issues related to race equality, diversity and inclusion in our local population.



Strategic Focus

We are redoubling our efforts to ensure that, even as small volunteer-run charity and despite the wider challenges facing us all (e.g. general reductions in public, voluntary and charity sector funding amidst the wider economic cost of living crisis), we would endeavour to increase our impact and deliver tangible benefits for as many ethnic communities as possible, across the whole of North Somerset.

Consequently, although, in the past, we have supported a wide range of activities from individual casework to community social events, our priority is to now focus on strategies, interventions, activities and services that deliver impactful, long-lasting benefits for as many people as possible.

Our plan, whilst ambitious, is also rooted in pragmatism. If we have less resources, we will need to be more resourceful. We care deeply about the communities we serve and the issues that need to be addressed. We are therefore even more careful and nuanced about how we work; more mindful, more agile, more strategic.

To those ends, our activities reflect a range of carefully selected initiatives, projects, programmes, collaborations and partnerships

that are being developed and refined to help us deliver positive changes to enhance the quality of life for all ethnic communities and, consequently, for everyone living or working in the wider community of North Somerset.



GOVERNANCE

Patron: Denis Burn, MBE D.L.

Trustees: Sayd Ahmed, Yvonne Clark, Karen Lee, Ian Noah

We are grateful for the support of all past and present Trustees and supporters, including:-

The Deputy Lieutenants and the High Sheriffs of Somerset; the Town Mayors of Weston-super-Mare, our local MP and Councillors; and all our volunteers and friends.

PARTNERS

We have helped develop projects and mutual collaborations with different statutory and non-statutory organisations and funders, and work with many partners including :-

North Somerset Council, Weston-super-Mare Town Council, NHS, Voluntary Action North Somerset, Citizens Advice North Somerset, Weston College and many others.

FUNDING

Over the years, we have been fortunate in receiving financial support from a variety of organisations, and are a very grateful to all of them, especially:-

Black South West Network
Community Renewal Fund
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Lions International
National Grid
National Lottery
North Somerset Council
Pappadoms of Weston-super-Mare
Rotary Club of Weston-Super-Mare
South West Foundation
Weston-super-Mare Town Council
Quartet Community Foundation



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Race Equality North Somerset (RENS) is the official working name of North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network. Registered UK Charity Number 1162483.