



Annual Report

2021-2022

Ahmed Elmi

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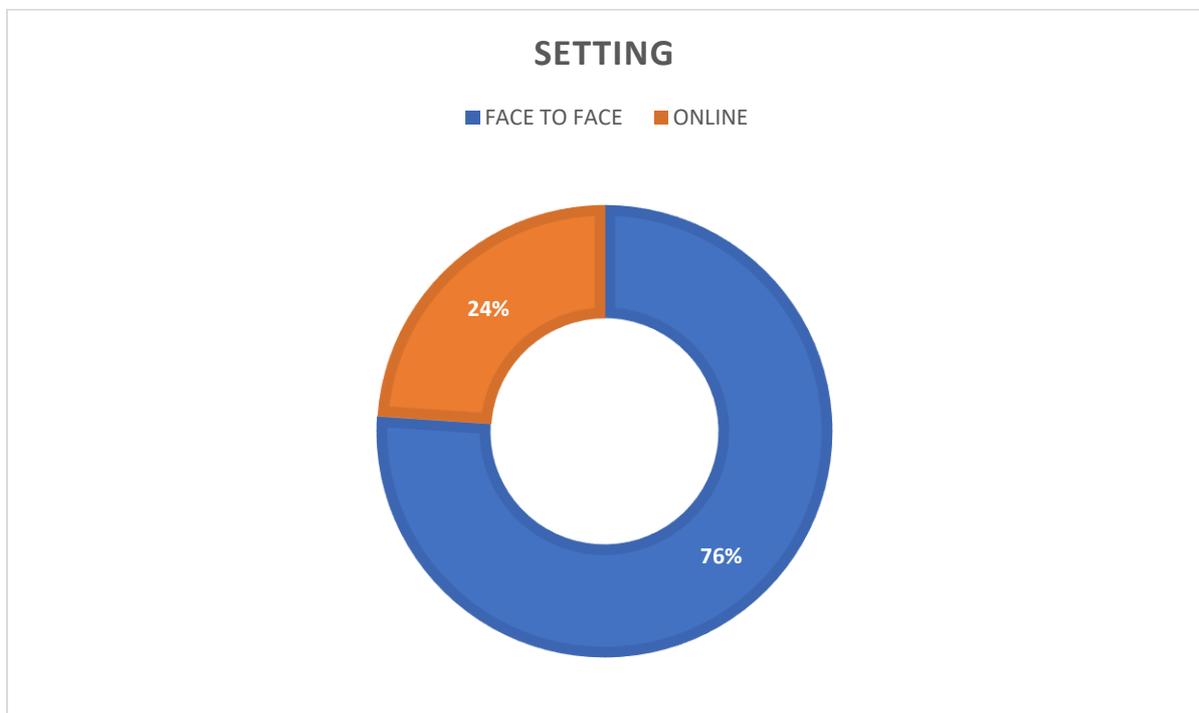
Introduction

This report provides an overview of the projects Somali Development Services (SDS) has run between 2021-2022, as well as highlight the service usage of its clients. These services have ranged from employment and benefits advice to guidance on education and housing. Using the data collected from our wide-ranging clientele, this report will showcase the advice, information, and guidance (AIG) that our staff provide to the community, while also highlighting how such services have impacted their lives.

In the last year, SDS has seen some great changes in the way we provide services to our users. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, like many organisations, we have had to adapt to new ways of working. This has included blending our AIG services to include phone and online, as well as our regular face-to-face meetings with clients. As a result, we have seen a slight rise in the clients we have been able to provide services to.

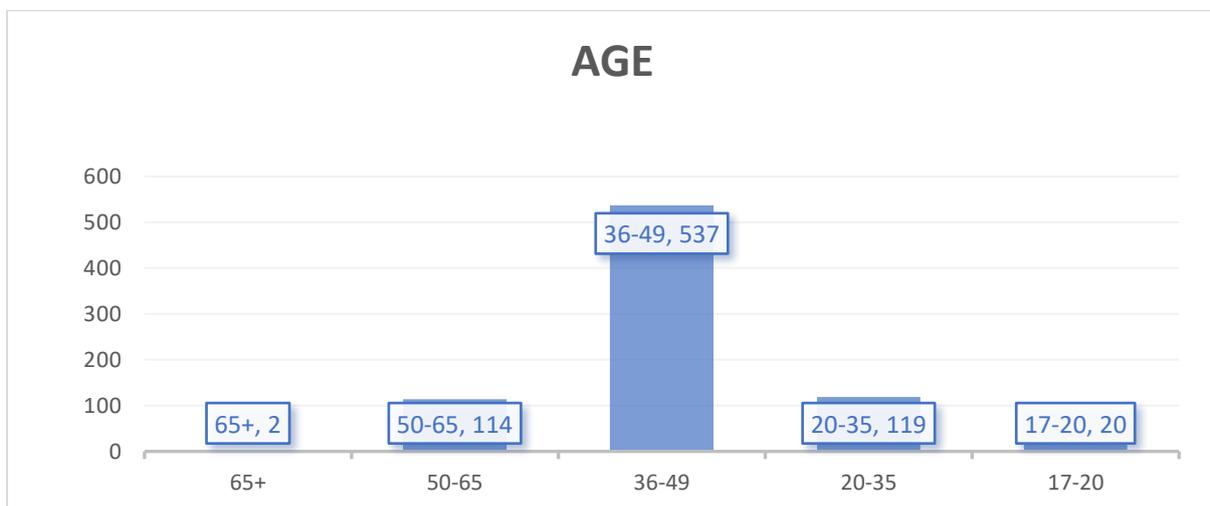
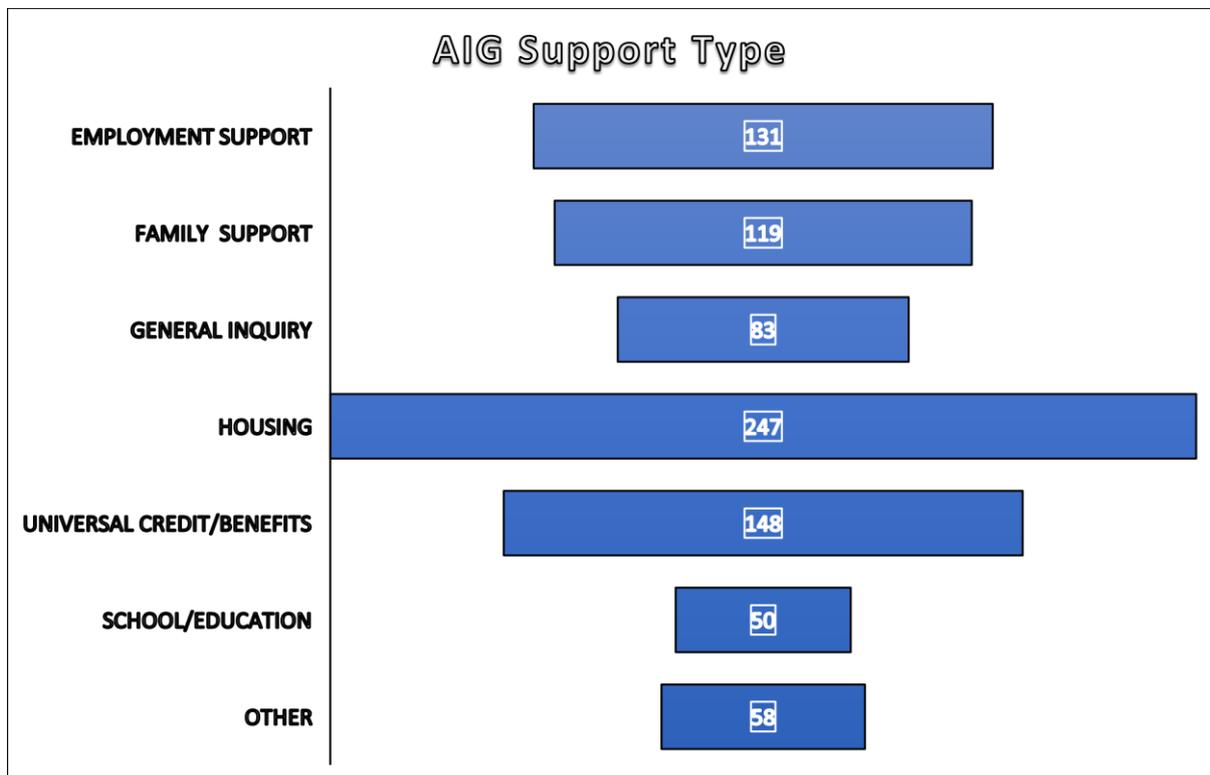
Yearly overview of our AIG services

This year, our AIG team provided services to 836 individuals in the Leicester and surrounding areas with concerns around benefits, housing, finance, education and many others. Some of our services were run remotely, as the chart below indicates.



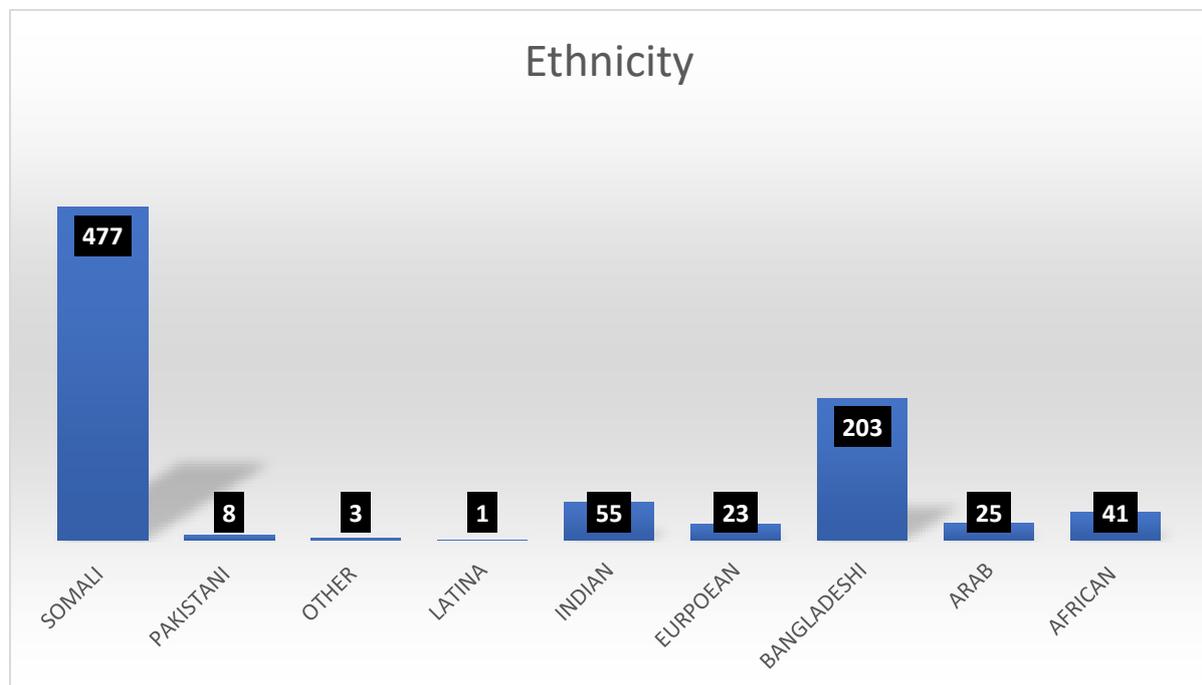
Overview of AIG users

In the past year, one of the main concerns that our clients came to speak to us about was housing. More than a quarter of the AIG services users had come to seek advice, information and guidance regarding their housing. This was followed by benefits and Universal Credit, while employment and family support round up the services. However, much of the advice that is sought by our clients is financial, as the problems with finances tend to fall into each category. The chart below indicates the data on our AIG users and the types of support they often seek.



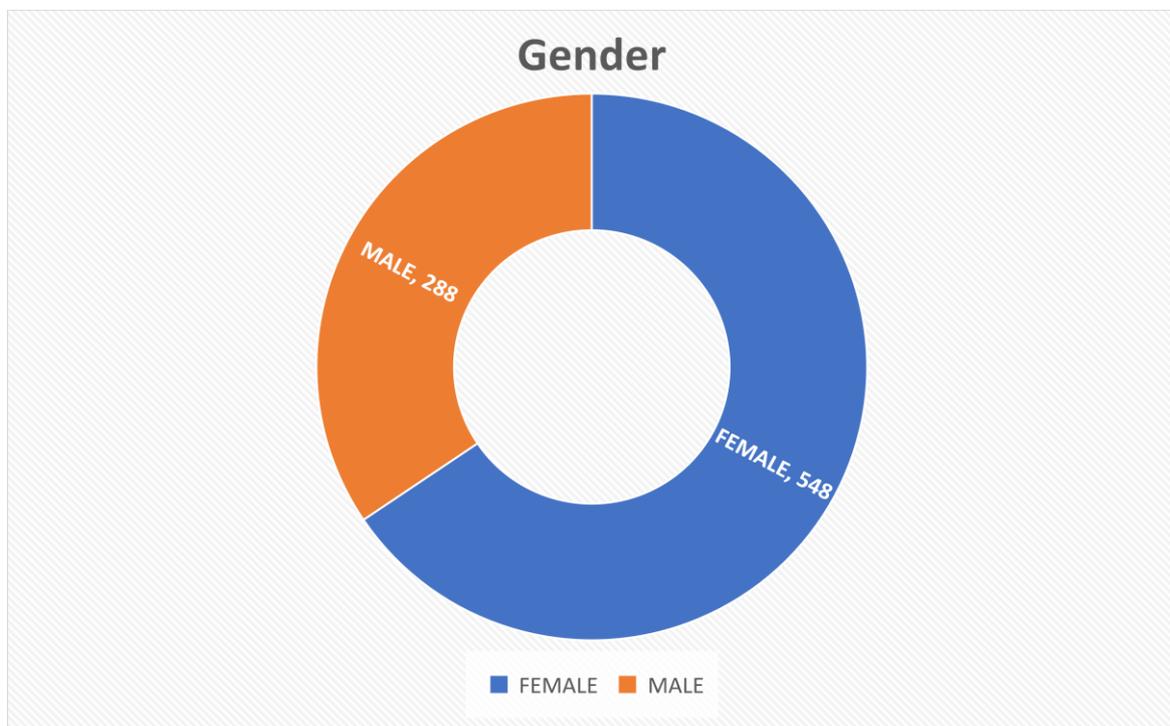
Ethnicity of our AIG users

The data show that a large portion of our service using clients come from the local Somali community in the Leicester area, with 57%. The Bangladeshi community trails behind with almost 25%. This is mainly to do with the fact that our organisation was initially set up to support new arrival from the Somali community in Leicester, even though we have since progressed to be inclusive of all other backgrounds. The second largest share is also down to our proximity to the Bangladeshi community, as the area we're currently located in is home to many people from this community. We also have staff in our facility that can duly cater to this community. This year, we're up 10 percentage points from the previous year when it comes to clients of Somali origin, as last year this number was 47%, conversely in the same year the Bangladeshi-origin service users were at 20%. This could also be explained by the fact that we were able to do more this year due to the flexibility of both online and offline support systems. Other notable ethnic groups covered in this period include Indian, European, Arab, African, and Pakistani – who were each under 7% of our service users.



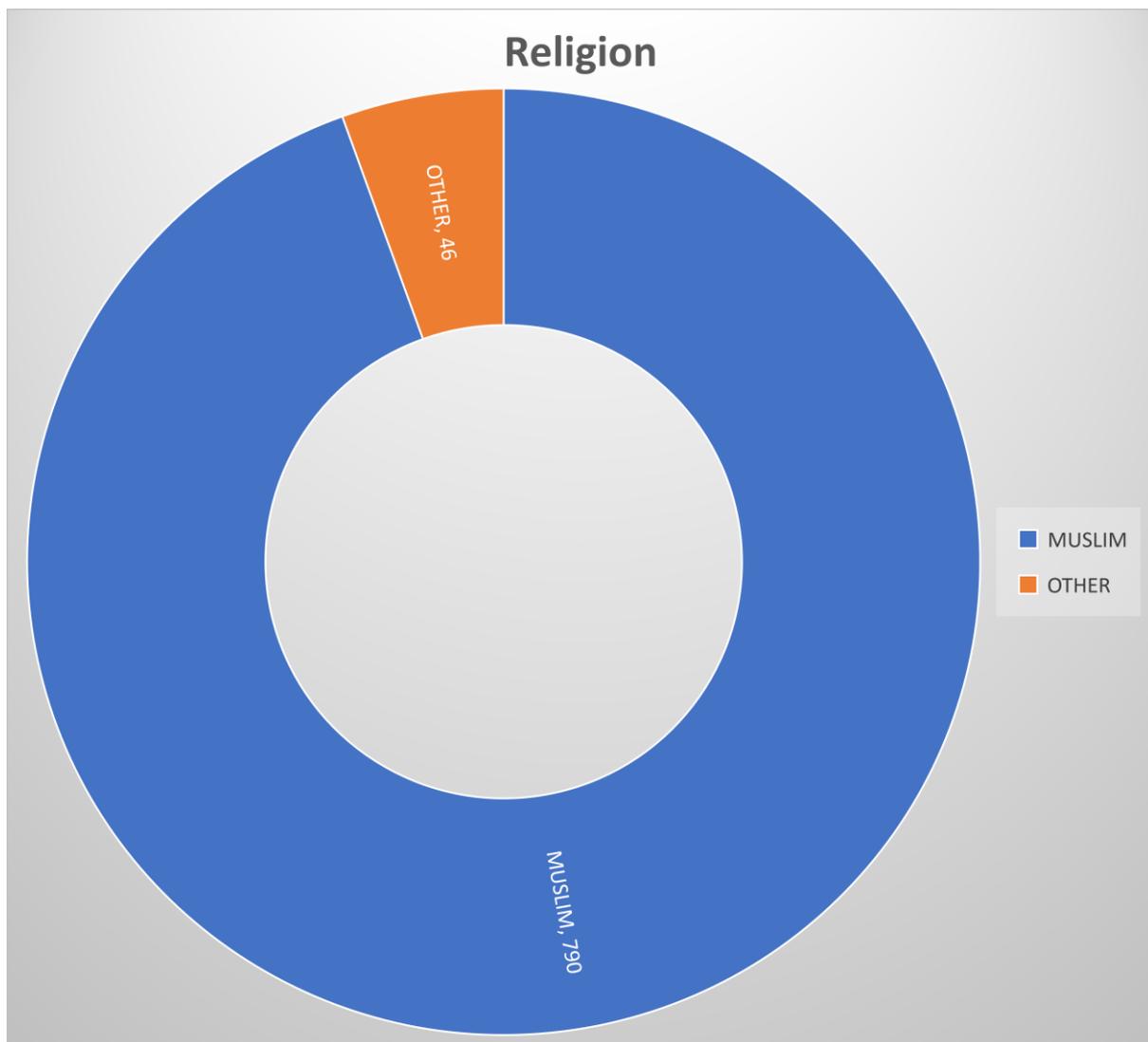
Gender of AIG service users

Throughout the year, there is a significant difference in the gender of IAG service users. Most of SDS clients tend to be female (65%), as the chart below indicates. This largely corresponds with data from previous years, as our AIG team has mostly served female clients. This is also evident throughout the years, as each quarter the results tend to be the same. We have a mostly female staff at SDS, as such we can provide the female clients with the correct advice, information and guidance. Just over a third (35%) of our service users are male, which is a slight increase from last year.



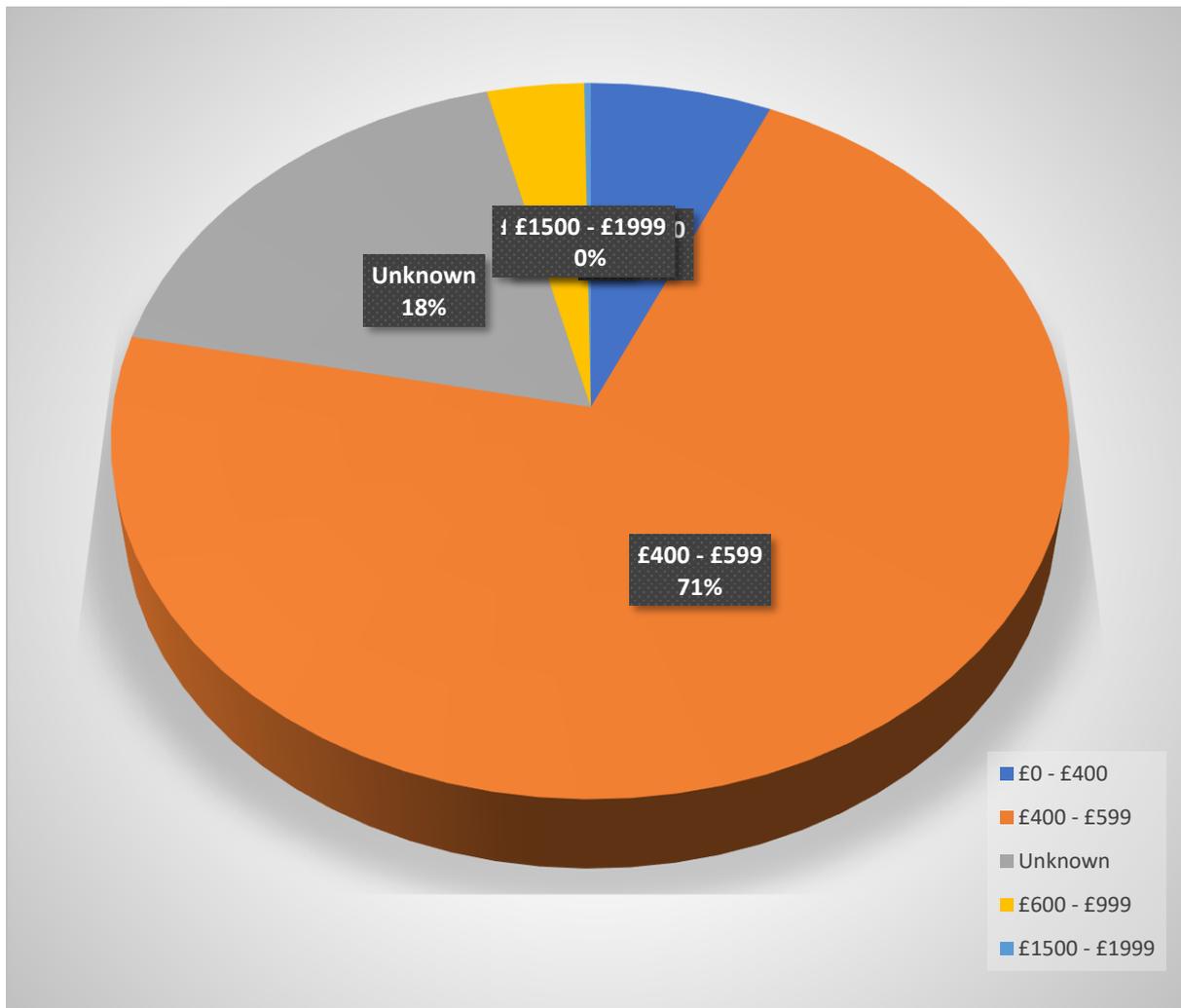
Religion of AIG Service Users

Most of the AIG users at SDS belong to the Islamic faith and are therefore Muslims, with almost 95% of our users being of this particular religion. It is by far the religion that the most of our clients across SDS subscribe to. This goes hand-in-hand with the results mentioned previously from our ethnic demography, as both the Somali and Bangladeshi communities tend to be of the Muslim faith. The combined number of people who belong to other faiths is evidently small with about 5% of our year-round users claiming to be from a religion other than Islam. In looking at the previous years, the breakdown of the religions tends to be the same throughout the history of SDS.

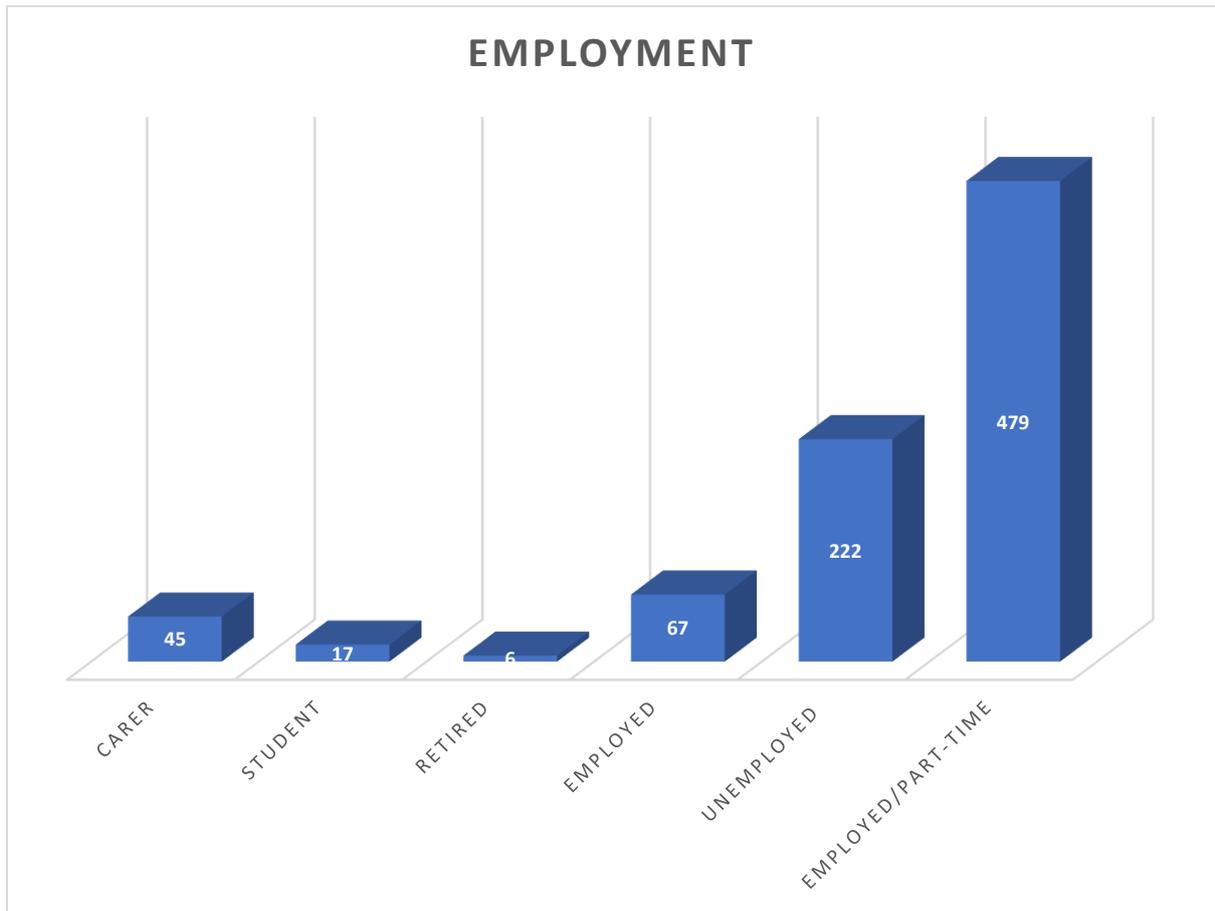


Income and Employment of AIG Users

To get a better understanding of this data, we've placed the employment data and the income data together, as they are always linked. Roughly 71% of our service users earn between £400 and £599. This number is higher than the results of the previous year, which saw the same number of earners at 61%. This can also be related to the data presented in the type of support people seek, as mentioned earlier in this report. Many of our clients are often coming in to seek advice, information and guidance on both housing and benefits. The employment data shown in the next page also clearly corresponds with these results as only 8% of AIG users are in full-time employment, while 57% are in some kind of part-time employment. This data is relatively similar with the results of the last year as well.

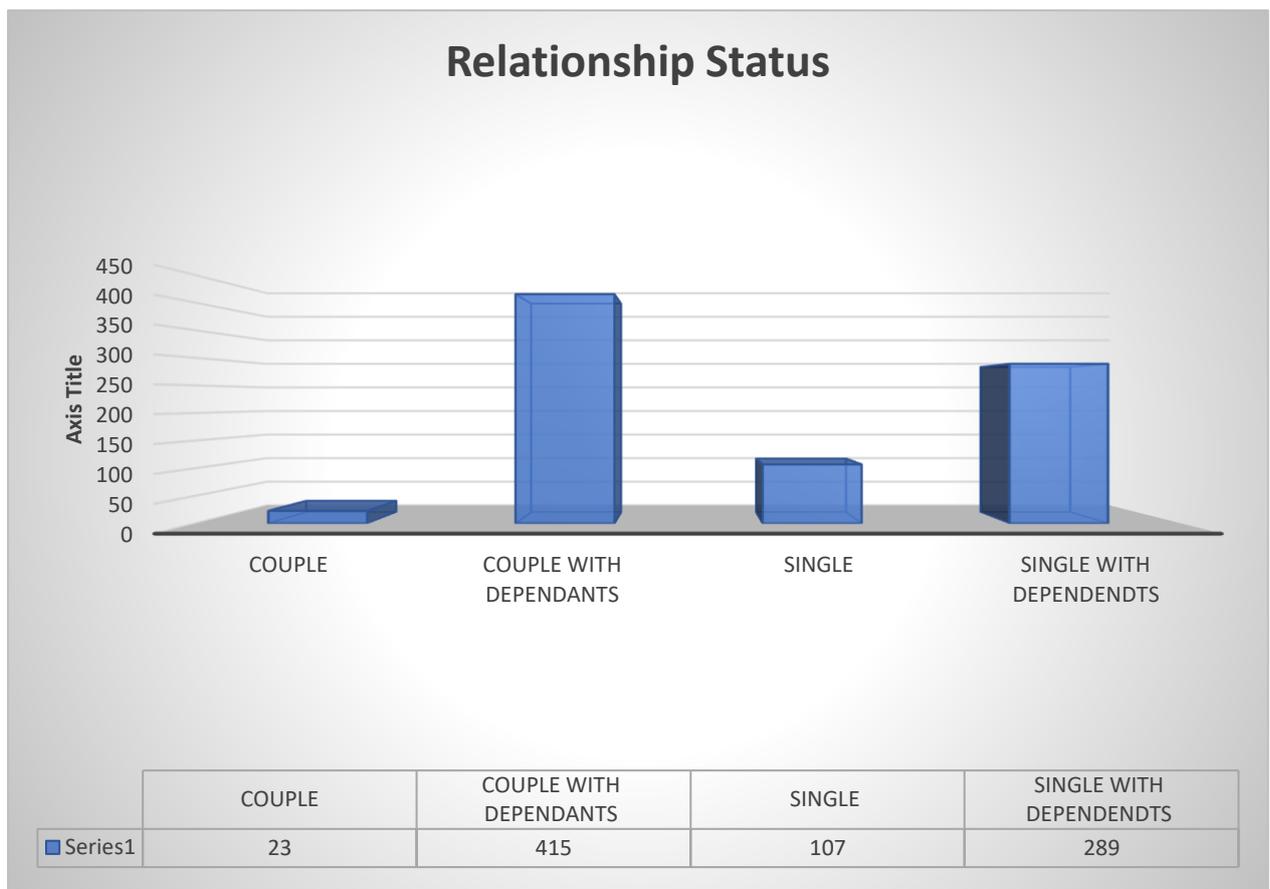


Employment data continued:



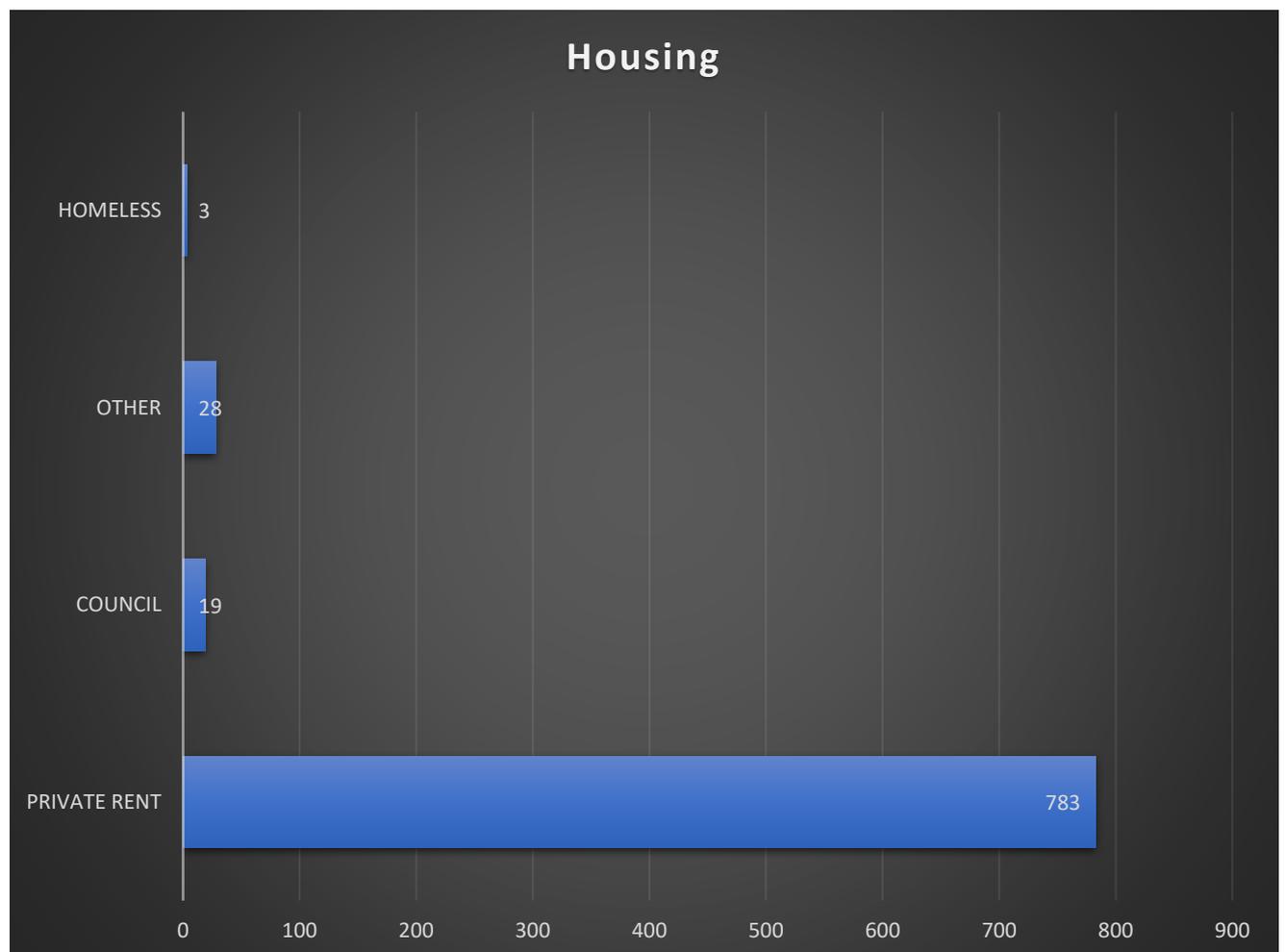
Relationship status of AIG users

A large number of our AIG users are coupled with children, with nearly 50% of clients having been identified as such by the data. The second most prominent group who use our services are often single parents who make up around 35% of our client base. Single persons (12%) and couples without children (3%) round up the numbers. These numbers were consistent throughout the year and have reached the same levels in previous years.



Housing status of our AIG users

As most of the clients we serve tend to be new arrivals to the Leicester area, or the United Kingdom in general, the majority of our AIG users say that they are renting privately, with 93% of clients belonging to this group. This is another 10 percentage points more than the previous year. This correlates well with the income of our clients, as most are currently earning between £400-£599, which would make it difficult to buy a property. This also implies that much of the guidance we give to clients is often related to ways in which we can help them find safe and secure housing once they've arrived in the area.

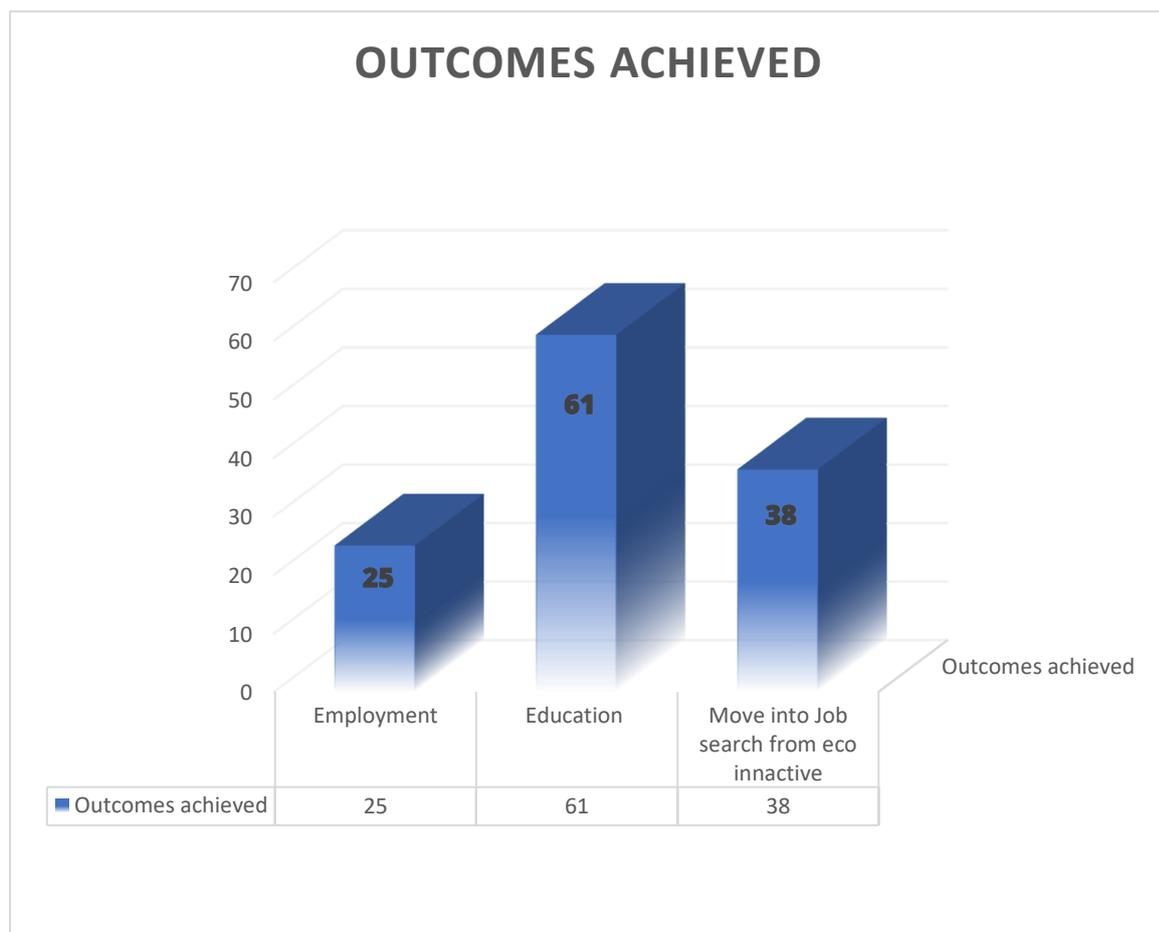


Employment and Education Support Projects

We have supported 161 people throughout the year with our holistic employment/education support projects. The clients who were supported were from a range of different ethnicities, nationalities, age, and gender, with the plurality of the people supported were economically inactive women of Bangladeshi origin who had either never worked or had never achieved any qualifications.

We were able to successfully support 25 people to move into employment, 61 to enroll into education and supported 38 people into actively looking for work.

These projects also additionally helped our service users with financial and social wellbeing services improving their broader situation beyond purely employment and education.



Digital Project

At the end of 2021, SDS undertook a digital transformation project, funded by the Ministry of Justice, managed by Comic Relief and supervised by the Dot Project. The funding amount was £47,560, which was to be used by the end of March 2022. The funding and the supervision were there to help us become more technologically savvy, especially when it comes to our everyday operations, internal and external communications and for our offices to be secure with CCTV.

The aims of the project were as follows:

- Increase website reach and ways to contact
- Save administrative time / costs - improve efficiency and reduce waste in our systems
- Develop a CRM and case management system to track, analyse and respond to service users
- Develop a digital outcomes measurement system to capture outcomes and outputs data to inform planning
- Improve communications between staff, partners and agencies (devices/hardware: phones and tablets; software: book appointments and take to meetings and establishing a common standard around this)
- Improve the technology used for service user group activities to engage with users and capture learning outcomes
- Improve the technology used and for in-community case work e.g. iPad, mobiles and awareness e.g. drop-in centre Digital TV - Announcements service for appointments, advice e.g. signposting
- Staff training
- Training room setup equipment e.g. projector, digital whiteboard
- Implement CCTV

The Project was successfully completed, with all touchpoints covered. We purchased hand-held devices for our staff to communicate, we now have a large monitor in the Front-of-House for service users, we have a cloud-based HR system for our record-keeping, state-of-the-art CCTV system and a new and improved website for external communication.



Website (somdev-services.com)

As part of the digital transformation project mentioned in the previous page, SDS commissioned the making of a brand-new website. The prior website hadn't been improved in over a decade, and much of the information was becoming increasingly out of date. The New website showcases all our previous work, while also highlighting the history of Somali Development Services, as well as our aims, vision, mission and values. There is also a place to highlight our team and funders.

Above all, the website acts as a place where prospective clients can look at the services available to them, especially our ongoing projects and events throughout the year. Relevant contact details and any training, employment and education opportunities are also highlighted.



[Our story](#) [Our services](#) [Education](#) [Our projects](#) [Our history](#)



[Contact Us](#)

Somali Development Services (SDS) CIC

A short documentary about SDS



Our funders



Ministry of Justice

Youth Heritage – ‘Projecting Identities’

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, we worked with The Media Archive for Central England (MACE) to produce an archival-based film showcasing the Somali experience in the UK. The innovative project, entitled ‘Projecting Identities’, brought together young people to talk about their Somali heritage and how it fits into their lives in Leicester. The film was made with the use of smartphones and hopes to create archive resources supporting the long-term preservation of born-digital material.

The project allows the British Somali community to explore and preserve on film their heritage and convergence of British Somali culture and traditions in the context of their lived experiences, while questioning the role of identity in the diverse city of Leicester.



PROJECTINGIDENTITIES

Prevent Project

The Prevent Project, which is funded by the Home Office, addresses specific risks to radicalisation in our local area. We work to challenge persistent ideologies that promote extremism and violence by offering advice and information to the community about Islam and women, while also providing support on these same issues. The project seeks to empower women through training programs, skill-building and support with employment and education.

The program also aims to raise awareness about the imminent danger of recruitment and radicalization through the internet. We offer one-to-one counselling, as well as group sessions to those that have been affected by violent extremism. The project has engaged 200 individuals in its activities throughout the course of its run so far.

The project ran with activities include:

- One-to-one/group sessions
- Trainings/workshops
- Outreach visits to the affected families
- Advice and support service
- Language/job search lessons

The expected outcomes for the project are:

- Increased women/girls' awareness of radicalization
- Protected/safeguarded the vulnerable persons
- Augmented their knowledge about their rights
- Trust built between statutory bodies and communities
- Increased women job search skills



Rahma Nursery

Rahma Childcare is our in-house nursery and has a 'Good' rating from Ofsted. The nursery is open between 8.30-5.30 and accepts children from the ages of 2-4 and offers free 15-30 hours of entitled childcare for eligible parents and children. Currently, there are 16 children enrolled at the nursery from a large variety of backgrounds.

Since COVID-19, Rahma Childcare has regained its ground and has, once again, been able to provide a local multi-cultural community-based childcare provision for families who live within the Highfields area. It provides excellent educational support for the local community.



Events and Raising Awareness

This year, we've been lucky enough to go back to hosting events in person at our offices. We've had many of our service users take part in an array of awareness-raising events and activities throughout the four quarters. Some of our on-going projects require that we engage with the public about certain issues that are pertinent and persistent in the community, and having these events allows them the space to come and share their experiences with others, while also listening and participating in discussions.

We have covered events, activities and awareness-raising on the following issues:

- **Islamophobia**
- **Violent Extremism**
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Family Support Issues**
- **Education and Training**
- **Youth Challenges**



HIMILO Learning ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES **TUTORING AND EDUCATION SERVICE**

Inclusive Welcoming Accessible Supportive

ABOUT THE SERVICE HIMILO LEARNING WILL PROVIDE
Himilo Learning helps children from ethnic minority groups not to fall behind their peers, catch up and achieve their educational goals. With our holistic approach at the core, our team provides one-to-one and small group tutoring with a focus on addressing language & communication barriers. We want to ensure children reach their full potential and receive the support they need to do so.

ABOUT US
Somali Development Services was set up in 2001 to support the Somali community, new arrivals and black, minority, and ethnic (BAME) people in the local Leicester community.

OUR VALUES
What our team values most when delivering our services is to be honest, responsive, open, collaborative and achievement-oriented.

OUR IMPACT

- Improved language & communication skills
- Improved behaviour & attainment
- Reduced need for statutory support
- Improved mental and emotional wellbeing

SERVICE BENEFITS
Himilo Learning will help children feel included, empowered and supported as our team assists them with any language and communication barriers they might be facing.

Contact Us! 39 Abingdon Rd, Leicester LE2 1HA Tel.: 0116 2855 888
www.somdev-services.com E.: admin@somdev-services.co.uk

Performance from SDS' AIG Service, Projects and Events

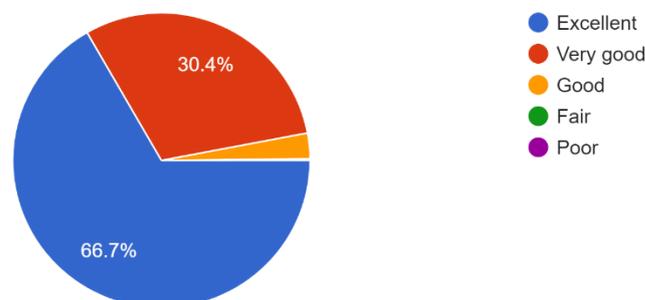
This year SDS has been able to expand the ways in which it supports its service users, as well as the community. As usual, the AIG services are as popular as ever, and after coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have been able to blend our service provisions with both online and offline options. Through our project we have tackled many important issues and cases, including raising awareness and provided safe space for discussions to take place, on matters including knife crime, racism, islamophobia, women's health and hate speech, to name a few.

Many of our users have also taken advantage of our projects, including Prevent Project, Youth Heritage and our ever-present support with employment and education. We have seen members of our community who have been transformed by these projects, as individual reporting on project-by-project indicates. They have not only gone on to employment and further education, but they have also improved their professional and social skills, including improving their English language skills.

As an organisation, we have also transformed the way we provide services, with a new and improved high-tech office space and internal communications system. As an organisation, we are very well equipped with means to truly provide the support, advice, information and guidance in the digital age. This means that we will continue to help our communities integrate into society, whether it's through supporting them with benefit issues, housing, healthcare, and GP advice, applying for school places, job search, and signposting them on issues such as immigration.

The below charts indicate the feedback we've received from our clients.

Overall how well do you think SDS has supported you
537 responses



did you enjoy your time at SDS

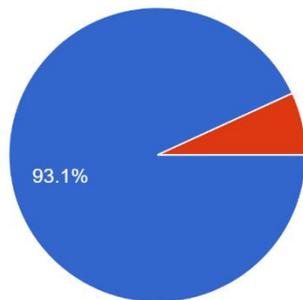
553 responses



- Yes 👍
- No 👎

Please rate the facilities at SDS

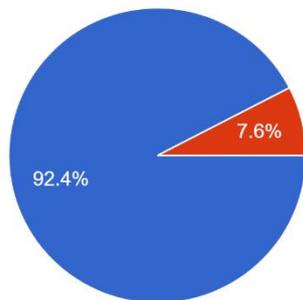
553 responses



- Very Good 😊
- Good 😊
- Average 😐
- Bad 😞
- Very Bad 😡

Please Rate the Quality of Service you Received

553 responses



- Very Good 😊
- Good 😊
- Average 😐
- Bad 😞
- Very Bad 😡

Conclusions

The data collected and presented in this report shows that Somali Development Services continues to go strength-to-strength, despite having gone through the pandemic of last year. In last year's report we outlined how well we did during those difficult times, and this past year we have increased the number of service users and helped better the lives of those most in-need and vulnerable in our communities. We have delivered support on some of the most pressing issues, including tackling poverty, the increase in the cost-of-living crisis, education, health concerns, and domestic and family problems. As a result, SDS remains to be an important part of the life of many people who live in the Leicester area, as evidenced in this report.

SDS' users often give us feedback on their progress, as well how they felt about the advice, information and guidance they were given, and the majority tell us how crucial their experience at SDS in helping them tackle some of the most precarious parts of their lives. Since some of them are new arrivals, they've now got a good grounding on how to navigate the UK society - through language learning, getting into education and navigating employment.

As ever, we cater mostly to the BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) community at SDS, and it's only fitting that we have address some of the issues most important to this community. Through our outreach with projects like Prevent and Projecting Identities, we have managed to get a better understanding of these communities, and we have the insight to support them further based on the evidence gathered through the projects.

We hope to continue in the same path in the coming year.

Comments from Our Service Users

"The adviser helped with Council House Online application. I am happy and grateful for the support given to me."

"The support I got from the adviser was very good. I am happy."

"The adviser helped me with Online job application. I am very happy. The service is very good for the community."

"The adviser explained to me very clearly and helped me understand Tax Credit form. He helped me complete the form and I am very happy."

"The advisor helped me complete PIP form. The service I received was very good and I am happy."

"I can to SDS for help with my Tax credit form. The adviser was very helpful and completed the form. I am very happy."

"The adviser supported me with Universal Credit update. I am happy with the service."

"The advisors at SDS are very supportive and helpful. I needed help with my Universal Credit problems and my advisor Suleman helped me sort out the problem. SDS organisation is very good and helpful. I am very happy."

"SDS adviser helped update Universal Credit account. He explained my payment section and showed me how to update future information on Journal. I am very happy with the support. I came to SDS to get help with Council tax problems and the adviser helped me sort out the issue. I am very happy."

"My adviser helped me my benefit issues. It is now sorted, and I am very happy."

"My adviser Suleman helped me sort out Tax Credit issue. I am very happy and SDS give excellent service. I do not know what I would do if SDS were not here to help."

"I came to see an adviser at SDS to get help with Disability form application. My advisor gave advice and helped with the form. I am very happy and grateful for the support received from SDS."

"I came to SDS for help with my consumer - Electric Bill and debt problem. My adviser Suleman helped me sort out the problem. I am very happy with the service."

"The adviser was very helpful with my problem with Leicester City Council. He helped me write a letter and he also advocated on my behalf to sort out the problem. I am very grateful to SDS and the service they provided was very helpful."

"I came to SDS for help with looking for jobs. The adviser helped me with Job search activities and I am now working. I am very happy."

"I came to SDS for help with Council House application. He helped me complete Online application. SDS give very good support in the community, and I am very grateful for the help."

"My advisor helped me with NI application and College Online Admission for enrolment for the courses. We successfully completed both applications. I am very happy."

"I am new to UK and came to SDS for help with employment and NI application. The adviser was very helpful, and he supported me with the applications. I am grateful for the support received from the adviser."

"I was depressed and looking for support as I was struggling to manage during Covid - 19. My adviser helped with food parcel and helped me with welfare benefit application. I am happy. SDS is doing a good job in the community."

"I came to SDS to help with looking for work and courses. I am long term unemployed. My adviser enrolled me onto a work-related project, and he also supported me with

employability skills and to update my current CV. I am happy with the support I received from my adviser Suleman."

"I was new to Leicester and came to SDS for help with completing GP registration and also looking for work. My adviser completed the form and enrolled me onto a project to support with my employability skills and CV. I am very happy."

"I came to SDS for help with Pension Credit form and Blue Badge application. My adviser Suleman helped me complete both applications. I am grateful to SDS and are here in the community to support people like me. I am very happy."

"My adviser Suleman is very helpful and supportive. He helped me update Online Universal Credit account. I am not computer literate and I have to rely on community service like SDS. I regularly use the services of SDS, and I am very grateful to SDS for the support they give to me. I am very happy."

"SDS staff are very helpful and supportive."

"Very good support and services."

"The staff were very supportive and helpful."

"The advice was very helpful and very informative."

"Very good services and the staff are very helpful."

"The service I received was very good and I am grateful for their help."

"The support I received from the advice was excellent and completed my online application."

"SDS staff are very helpful and supportive. I am very happy with the services I received. I will recommend SDS to my family and relatives in my Punjabi community."

"The advisers are very helpful and are experienced in their jobs. Very best advice service in Leicester."

"The support I received today from my community coach/adviser was excellent."

"The adviser was very experienced and helpful. I am very happy with the services and the support I received from SDS advisor."

"The adviser at SDS was very helpful and I am happy with the support given today."

"The support and support are excellent, and the adviser was very good. I am grateful for the help and support I received. Thank you."

Remarks from the CEO



It has been another successful year for Somali Development Services. SDS has continued to secure more funding despite the impact of the epidemic and lockdown; this allowed SDS to expend and improve its website and to build up its digital capacity.

SDS has continued to support its clients to gain new skills and to find jobs. Many of those most in-need and vulnerable in our communities benefited from that support.

It is above all satisfying to see the improvement that SDS has made in diverse areas, like securing more funding, despite the epidemic and lockdown, working with other partnerships and engaging communities.

SDS is committed to carry on serving for the community in general and particularly for disadvantaged people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each person who supported SDS directly or indirectly to assist its clients and to meet its targets, particularly SDS staff, volunteers, funders and partnerships.

Maryan Anshur

CEO

Funders



Ministry
of Justice



POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER
for Leicestershire



NHS
Leicester City
Clinical Commissioning Group



Leicester
City Council



Fu+ures



Good Things
Foundation

Improving lives through digital



In partnership with
THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND



Social Enterprise
Support Fund