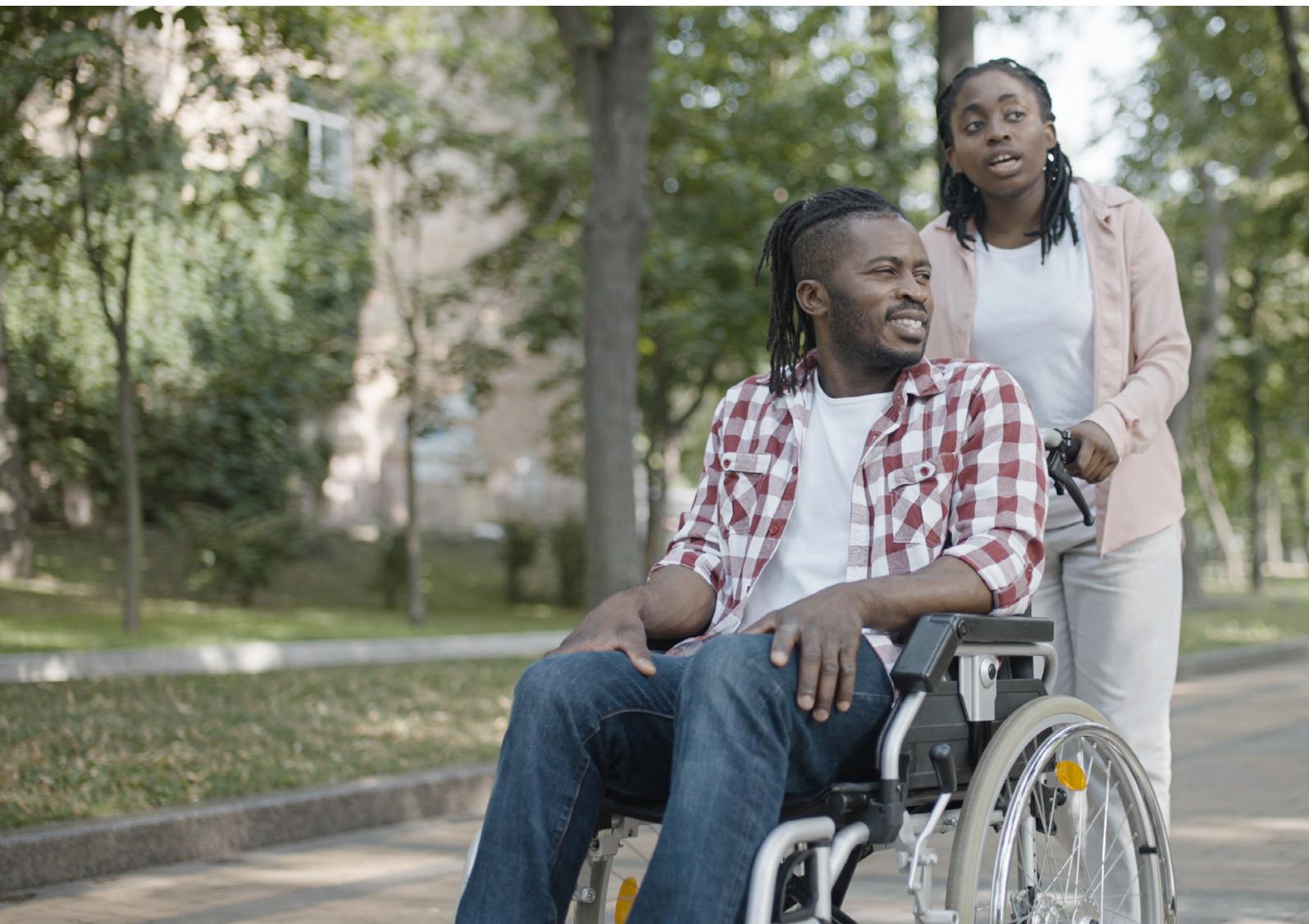


# Supporting Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers

A good practice briefing



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# Introduction



This briefing highlights **good practice** across the UK in supporting Black, Asian and minority ethnic unpaid carers. Unpaid carers are people who provide support for an ill, older or disabled family member or friend.

We suggest reading this briefing alongside the Carers UK research briefing [\*The experiences of Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers during and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic\*](#) which looks at the evidence on how Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers have been affected by the pandemic. When comparing the experiences of carers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to White carers, the research found that carers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds were:

- more **anxious about their current financial situation**
- more likely to be impacted by the **closure of local services**
- more likely to state that the services in their area **did not meet their needs**.

This good practice briefing highlights examples of projects and organisations, across the health, social care and charity sectors, which are working to support ethnic minority carers in a number of ways:

- **Providing information and advice**
- **Providing culturally sensitive services**
- **Improving health and wellbeing**
- **Improving staff awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion.**

This briefing also makes several **recommendations** to support organisations working with Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers. These include a number of practical suggestions designed to encourage organisations to take action to support Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers.

While we recognise that carers will have their own unique experiences, some Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers may have experienced the following:

- **Not identifying themselves as a carer**, particularly when in some languages there are no words that translate as ‘carer’. This means that some Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers may see themselves primarily as a family member or friend rather than a carer, and are therefore not accessing the carer support services that are available to them.<sup>1</sup>
- **Feeling like their caring role is not appreciated or recognised by family and friends**, particularly when caring for a parent is an expected part of life in some cultures, viewed as a duty and something that should be done without question. This may result in some carers feeling embarrassment or even shame about using support services, taking a break from caring, or seeking employment.
- **Feeling uncomfortable about seeking help** when the person being cared for has a mental health issue. In some cultures, mental health problems are not identified and spoken about, and there can be a stigma around asking for help.
- **Experiencing mental health issues** which may make the caring role even more challenging. Rates of mental health problems can be higher within some Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups,<sup>2</sup> as a result of racism and discrimination, and social and economic inequalities.<sup>3</sup>
- **Experiencing prejudice, discrimination or harassment** when accessing services, and feeling distrustful of support services as a result.
- **Struggling to obtain information and advice** due to language barriers. Some carers from ethnic minority backgrounds may have limited English language skills and require additional support. Young carers may need to provide translation for family members which can be difficult, and this may become an additional responsibility within their caring role.
- **Not having the opportunity to shape and influence health and social care services.** Some carers may feel that they have no ‘voice’ in the system, and feel unable to complain or raise concerns about services.

1 [raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/REF-Better-Health-484.pdf](https://www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/REF-Better-Health-484.pdf)

2 [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-communities](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-communities)

2 [www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review-full-report.pdf](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review-full-report.pdf)

# Recommendations for practice



## Providing information and advice

- **Providing translated materials.** This might involve consulting with Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers and local organisations supporting ethnic minority people about which languages would be most helpful, whether translated materials would be valuable, who might benefit from them, and how these translated materials could be shared with different communities. Seeking feedback from carers is also helpful in understanding whether these resources have been beneficial.
- **Using interpreters at events or training,** or when providing information through a helpline telephone service. You may want to brief interpreters beforehand about the needs of unpaid carers, to ensure they have an understanding of topics that might come up.
- **Signposting carers to digital technologies and apps that can translate information** and developing a knowledge of which tools may be appropriate for carers who struggle to understand English.
- **Improving the accessibility of online content** by using tools such as [ReachDeck](#) which can provide translation support, or by avoiding jargon and terminology that may be unfamiliar to some people.

- **Including diverse language and imagery** on websites and in publications, ensuring that Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers feel included.
- **Using appropriate terminology** when talking about race and ethnicity. The Law Society offers [guidance](#) on race and ethnicity terminology and language. Some organisations prefer to use terms such as Global Ethnic Majority rather than Ethnic Minority.
- **Considering how information can be communicated** to carers who may not be in contact with services. For example, using the expertise of local community and voluntary groups or faith-based organisations can be helpful in communicating key messages to diverse groups. This might include joining local meetings to provide information directly, advertising services in local community newsletters or radio stations, or attending local events to raise awareness of support services. **Identifying local groups which offer targeted support to people from ethnic minority backgrounds** is necessary in order to build these links.
- **Avoiding terms such as ‘hard to reach’** which suggest that some people simply do not want to be contacted. Being proactive and persistent in engaging with people can help to build trust.
- **Recruiting volunteers from ethnic minority backgrounds who can build trust with local communities.** This might include recruiting volunteers with lived experience of caring or volunteers with additional language skills, who can offer 1:1 targeted support, help raise awareness of services through social media, or deliver leaflets to local community groups.
- **Recruiting staff from ethnic minority backgrounds.** Including the ability to speak another language as a desirable or essential criteria in a job description might be beneficial, particularly for a role which involves speaking to carers.
- **Holding information and advice sessions, or peer support groups, in trusted local spaces,** such as mosques, temples and synagogues, or co-hosting events with local cultural forums and groups may help to boost attendance and engagement.
- Being aware that not everyone from a particular ethnic or cultural group will share the same attitudes, beliefs and concerns. **Avoiding stereotypes and treating carers as unique individuals** can help build trust. Some carers may not feel comfortable being labelled as ‘BAME’. It is also helpful to consider that ethnicity is just one aspect of that person’s identity, and additional factors such as age, disability, socio-economic background and sexual orientation may also impact the experiences that person has, and the issues they may face.

## Providing culturally sensitive services

- **Posting about cultural events on social media**, and celebrating religious festivals such as Eid and Diwali, as well as key equalities events such as Race Equality Week.
- **Considering ways of marking Black History Month**, such as running events and activities featuring guest speakers and providing opportunities for shared learning. This might involve inviting staff and carers to suggest activities or events, and promoting opportunities to get involved across different communications channels.
- Making sure that services and activities are inclusive by **considering the timing and location of these**. Some carers may attend prayer sessions at certain times and be unable to attend events during these times. In some cultures, women-only sessions may be preferable. Thinking about different dietary requirements is also important.
- Considering whether information and advice is **culturally sensitive**: for example, making sure that there are no images or text which have the potential to cause offence.
- Understanding more about the needs of Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers by **speaking to organisations who have expertise in working with diverse groups**, as well as Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers themselves. Providing a clear explanation of why organisations and carers are being consulted and how their feedback will be used is important.
- **Monitoring participation amongst Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers** in services to help provide more evidence about carers' needs and demonstrate progress towards equalities goals. This might include asking questions about ethnicity on registration forms.
- **Introducing phonetic spelling** (eg on carer registration forms, or contact forms) so that staff can pronounce carers' names correctly.
- **Taking the time to learn about other cultures** and how different cultural norms might influence people's behaviour. For example, some cultures rely on indirect forms of communication, in which meaning is conveyed through body language and tone of voice, yet the meaning of non-verbal communication, such as eye contact, touch, and gestures can vary across different groups.
- Recognising that cultural norms may influence how people feel about their caring role and the condition of the person being cared for. For example, there is no word for 'dementia' in most South Asian languages, and research has found lower levels of awareness of dementia in some communities, with the symptoms of dementia seen as 'normal ageing'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/13501330/SCIE\\_briefing.pdf](https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/13501330/SCIE_briefing.pdf)

**Understanding different attitudes and values** can be helpful in providing inclusive and culturally sensitive services.

- Considering, in consultation with Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers, whether mainstream services could be adapted to become more inclusive, or whether separate, targeted and culturally tailored services, might be more valuable. Rather than making assumptions, it can be helpful to **ask people what they need**.
- **Evaluating the impact of projects supporting Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers** to understand whether these were effective. This might include conducting a process evaluation looking at how the project was run and what worked well, or carrying out an impact evaluation looking at whether the project was effective in supporting Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers. The NCVO offer [monitoring and evaluation resources](#) to help charities, voluntary organisations and community groups to evaluate their work, including examples of Theory of Change and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- Being aware that concerns around racism and discrimination can affect the likelihood of people from ethnic minority communities seeking support with their caring role. **Providing a safe space for staff and carers to have open conversations about race, ethnicity and inequality** is important in building trust, particularly when some Black, Asian and ethnic minority carers may have had negative experiences in the past.

## Improving health and wellbeing

- **Taking a holistic approach** to supporting carers, recognising there are many different factors that can impact on someone's caring role. For example, some issues, such as poor mental and physical health, can be more common amongst Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups and carers may be struggling with their own physical and mental health.
- **Considering forming Black, Asian and ethnic minority support networks** for carers who may find peer support helpful. These networks could include discussions about different issues, in which people share their lived experiences. In addition to face-to-face or online meetings, WhatsApp groups or Facebook groups could be set up, enabling people to support one another outside of these sessions. **Inviting local charities or support services to these sessions** may help to raise awareness of local support services, and ensure that local services are aware of what support people may need.

- **Recognising that mental health issues** such as anxiety, which are common amongst Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups, might impact on how confident or comfortable carers feel in accessing support with their caring role. Some carers, particularly asylum seeker and refugee carers, may face additional barriers of isolation and loneliness.

## Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace

- **Building a diverse workforce.** This might include thinking about ways of making the recruitment process more inclusive, such as reviewing the language and content of job descriptions, and promoting vacancies through a range of different channels
- **Obtaining support from senior staff** can be helpful in ensuring there is widespread cultural change across the whole organisation.
- **Providing staff training** on issues such as discrimination, unconscious bias and the Equality Act and considering whether this could be incorporated into new staff induction training. Empowering staff and giving them the confidence to ask questions and have open discussions can help create a safe space.
- **Asking staff to consider adding phonetic spelling to their names.** Some Black, Asian and minority ethnic people may find that their names are often mispronounced, causing them to feel excluded. Adding phonetic options to name badges or email signatures can help acknowledge the importance of correct pronunciation. The Race Equalities Matters website has further information and [resources](#) on phonetic spelling.
- **Updating the organisation's policies on equality and inclusion** to ensure that the needs of Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff and carers are considered.
- **Creating an advisory group of Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff**, or any other staff who want to improve practice, and asking this group to review organisational policies, to ensure Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff are supported.
- **Applying for a quality standard or accreditation** to recognise and celebrate inclusive practice, such as the Race Equality Matters [Trailblazers](#) programme.
- **Asking staff to publicly state a commitment to equality**, using the Race Equality Matters [Big Promise framework](#). Considering whether diversity and inclusion goals or objectives could be introduced, with progress towards these measured as part of the staff appraisal process.

## Involving Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers in policy and practice

- **Establishing a working group of Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers** to discuss the design and development of services or inviting ethnic minority carers to sit on existing strategic or advisory groups.
- **Co-designing projects or services with ethnic minority carers** to ensure that these meet carers' needs. This might include using carers' expertise to create specific resources or activities. When co-designing with carers it is important that support and training is provided, to enable carers to take on responsibilities and ensure there is a genuine balance in power. Free resources on how to effectively co-design projects include the [NPC's toolkit](#), the [Kings Fund toolkit](#) and NESTA's [guide on co-design](#).
- **Involving Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers in research** by working with carers to design survey questions and analyse responses, or translating surveys into different languages.
- **Sharing any learning on developing inclusive practice** with other carer support organisations and services, to encourage others to become more inclusive.



# Good practice in...

## Providing translated information and advice

### Lanarkshire Carers

Lanarkshire Carers supports over 11,000 carers across Lanarkshire to access information, advice and support services. Its Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Equalities Service is a well-established dedicated service supporting carers from a diverse range of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. This service aims to address the needs of carers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic and other disadvantaged groups and reduce barriers around accessing services.

Following some initial work aiming to raise awareness of blood borne viruses such as Hepatitis C amongst ethnic minority communities, Lanarkshire Carers identified that cultural and language barriers prevent many carers from accessing support. As a result, it now offers specialised support to carers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and other disadvantaged groups. Information resources are provided in 6 different languages and interpreters provide support both in person, in video calls, and online. Its BAME staff team and volunteers are able to speak a number of community languages. It has access to Language Line which can provide translation in over 190 languages, allowing staff to support anyone who comes to the centre. Lanarkshire Carers has also incorporated the ReachDeck accessibility tool into its website which offers instant text-speech translation of online content into 80 different languages. This is also beneficial for carers with disabilities: as well as changing text into audio, the tool can increase the text size, change the colour of the text, and simplify the text. It also has a dedicated phone line for BAME carers to access direct and prompt support.

All carers training provided by Lanarkshire Carers is offered in 3 different languages. For example, a forthcoming session on legal help for parent carers will be offered in Polish, Urdu and Arabic as well as English, with interpreters joining the online

session to translate. As a result of the interpretation service, attendance at the training sessions has improved significantly. Lanarkshire Carers also runs events, many of which have been targeted to specific groups, including a BAME carers fun day and a mental health awareness day, as well as dedicated activities around Carers week, Refugee Week, Black History month and cultural and religious celebrations. It provides live interpretation at face to face events. Its last two online AGMs were translated into Polish, Urdu and Arabic, with breakout groups for specific groups where live interpretation was available. Feedback from carers about these events has been positive, with carers feeling included and valued.

Lanarkshire Carers runs monthly support groups for carers, which combine peer support with information and advice provided by guest speakers. Lanarkshire Carers also works with Black, Asian and ethnic minority volunteers who deliver a wellbeing telephone service, offering listening ear and emotional support to carers in 3 different languages.

Outreach services have also been organised. Rather than waiting for carers to contact them, Lanarkshire Carers mapped out the places that are popular with ethnic minority communities and its staff and volunteers go along to community halls and places of worship to offer information about services in different languages. As well as helping to identify carers, these outreach events are also beneficial in understanding more about what different communities need. Lanarkshire Carers has also developed relationships with organisations supporting ethnic minority people, including voluntary groups, community radio stations and places of worship, not only locally but in nearby cities like Glasgow. It has also shared translation and interpretation resources with other organisations, reaching more carers as a result. During the pandemic, Lanarkshire Carers worked with the NHS to create videos about the vaccine, to address misinformation which was leading to low uptake.

Finally, carers from ethnic minority groups are included in policy and research work. For example, consultations and surveys for carers are translated into different languages. Recently, Lanarkshire Carers helped carers to complete a survey by the Care Inspectorate, to increase participation in the research amongst ethnic minority carers. Currently Lanarkshire Carers is also delivering an LGBTQ+ Project to reach out and support carers from these communities and to enhance the organisation's ability to provide an inclusive service.

## Carers in Bedfordshire

Carers in Bedfordshire is a charity providing information, support and advice to unpaid carers across Bedfordshire.

To extend its services to carers from diverse communities, Carers in Bedfordshire received funding from Carers Trust to produce information leaflets and videos in three languages which were commonly used in the local community (Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali). The leaflets and videos, available on the charity's website, explain what help is available and how to access it. The resources were co-produced by carers and were developed in line with what carers wanted. Carers in Bedfordshire has been promoting the translated resources, for example through posting in Facebook groups and sharing with local faith groups and places of worship. Since the resources were produced there has been an increase in phone calls and registrations. The funding from Carers Trust also enabled Carers in Bedfordshire to take new photos of carers and make sure the images in its publications and on its website were reflective of the local community.

Carers in Bedfordshire has also found that having a support worker who speaks additional languages can be really helpful and this is something it continues to seek funding for. Currently an adult support worker who speaks additional languages provides support to families, with the support of a young carer support worker. These families often rely on their children to help them translate and communicate with professionals, and sometimes they may not be honest in explaining their difficulties as they don't want to be seen as failure in front of their children. As a result, some services never really find out the real difficulties these families face. When carers need support in another language, they can contact the support worker directly. Carers in Bedfordshire also has a volunteer who can speak an additional language and provide cover for the support worker where needed.

The support worker ran a family day in the Queens Park area, also in partnership with the young carer team, attended by over 200 people. The support worker had identified that in some communities, support within the whole family is needed in order to reduce the stigma around caring and asking for help. The family day was therefore open to anyone to attend, and although it didn't have a focus on caring, it aimed to encourage people to discuss their caring role and identify themselves or a family member as a carer. Carers in Bedfordshire also run a women's group, Khush Haal, which is open to all women, not just those who identify themselves as a carer. By allowing women to share their experiences, the group aims to help others identify themselves as carers and seek support.

Carers in Bedfordshire advocates on behalf of carers who speak English as an additional language, making sure that other professionals know what support these carers need. It also raises awareness of digital technologies and apps that carers can use to translate information.

# Good practice in...

## Providing culturally sensitive services

### Irish in Britain Cuimhne Carers Project

Irish in Britain is a registered charity and membership organisation that supports a network of Irish organisations across Britain, and the wider Irish community in Britain.

The Cuimhne (Irish word for memory) Campaign has been running since 2012 and has raised awareness of dementia, supported the development of culturally sensitive community services for Irish people and equipped volunteers and staff to address the needs of Irish people with dementia.

It is estimated that because of the older age profile of the Irish community there are around 10,000 Irish people with dementia in Britain, and a large proportion of carers are spending more than 50 hours a week on their caring role. Family carers can include older people who may be unwell, isolated and struggling to care for loved ones with little support.

There are distinct and additional challenges for the Irish Traveller community. Despite working with partners in the health and social care sector in Britain, Irish in Britain feels that sometimes the cultural needs of the community may be neglected because of the assumption that they are the same as those of the local community. The charity therefore creates and promotes culturally relevant resources, including those from the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, because “the personal stories, different Irish accents, ways of speaking and humour are likely to be familiar and comforting to anxious carers.”

The Cuimhne Carers Project, initially funded by the Department of Health and Social Care and Race Equality Foundation aims to help family carers to understand dementia and support them in their role. The project provides information about dementia, with resources that carers can use to stimulate or calm their loved one, for reminiscence purposes or to provide enjoyment. These are tailored as much as possible to the needs of Irish people.

The project has also provided a series of live webinars aimed at equipping carers with practical and communication skills, ways of avoiding behavioural problems, diffusing and dealing with anger and minimising distress, along with sensitive issues such as legal and financial planning, and end of life care. Irish in Britain estimates that around 50 people watched each session live, sometimes in groups from care homes, hospitals and community centres. The webinars have been recorded and made accessible to carers who are not able to participate in live events.

Feedback from carers has been positive. They felt they had gained a better insight into the experiences of people they care for and that this in turn helped support them in their caring. The webinars have also helped stimulate discussion around difficult topics, such as how to protect older people from fraud and financial abuse. A session on the Herbert Protocol (a form to note down crucial information in case a person with dementia goes missing) was widely covered in community newspapers and Irish in Britain is following up with local groups to raise awareness of the scheme.

## Chinese Community Wellbeing Society (CCWS)

CCWS (formerly Bristol & Avon Chinese Women's Group) has operated in Bristol and throughout the south west for over 30 years. CCWS runs a Carers' Support Group, with a dedicated Carers Support Manager, which offers information and advice on carers' rights, practical support such as first aid courses, and a social network for carers to meet others.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, CCWS shifted its model of carers' support to offer online and telephone support rather than in-person workshops. Other services that supported carers and the wider community during this time included distributing culturally sensitive food parcels to shielding families, and helping set up a pop-up vaccine clinic in a Chinese supermarket. CCWS provided a volunteer to translate, and the clinic was advertised through community social media channels.

CCWS demonstrates how investing in research and partnerships can be beneficial to service delivery. The charity's Chief Executive Rosa Hui represents the community on many policy-making and strategic bodies, has spoken at events in the Houses of Parliament, and is recognised as a leading figure representing the Chinese community in Britain, having been awarded an MBE in 2009.

CCWS initiated a research study on *The Dementia Experience of People from Caribbean, Chinese and South Asian Communities* in 2017, which was funded by Bristol City Council and involved a range of partners including the University of the West of England and The Alzheimer's Society. This led to CCWS being asked by Bristol City Council public health team to co-design strategic plans for Chinese carers and people living with dementia. It also worked with Bristol City Council to co-design a training programme for the Chinese community to meet their special cultural needs, and with Bristol Dementia Wellbeing Society to co-produce a video for GPs and clinical staff for training purpose. Further work has resulted from this, including a current project with GP surgeries to provide cultural guidance in the design of assessments, to help with early diagnosis of dementia, and thereby provide access to earlier support for carers.

CCWS's work promoting dementia awareness (which can be a taboo subject in the Chinese community), demonstrates their reach. Nearly 250 people attended a series of six dementia awareness workshops, including carers and people living with dementia. A further 48 family members benefited, with both older and younger participants given the confidence to talk about the condition and ask for help. Another project, related to this, has been updating the translation of information leaflets for Alzheimer's Research UK, removing language that was insensitive to the Chinese community and could have caused offence.

More recently, CCWS was awarded funding from the NHS Healthier Together – Ageing Well Programme to run two pilot projects. One is building on its dementia research, with a dedicated coordinator working with the Caribbean, Chinese and South Asian communities to improve outcomes for people living with dementia and their carers. The other involves the development of a Dementia Support Hub (DaSH) for East and South East Asian Carers, providing training, wellbeing support and an information library to ensure that they have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the person they care for. CCWS has also worked in collaboration with the University of Wolverhampton and four other community partners around the UK on a project (funded by Alzheimer's Research UK) promoting and maintaining brain health.

Looking ahead, CCWS intends to ensure its services adapt to the changing nature of the Chinese community in the south west, as the established population gets older and is joined by newer, younger migrants, such as recent arrivals from Hong Kong. It will be hosting a stall at a forthcoming Carers UK local roadshow.

# Good practice in...

## Supporting carers with health and wellbeing

### Making Space

Making Space is a national charity and a leading provider of adult health and care services. It runs the Doncaster Carers Wellbeing Service and provides a range of services to carers, such as 1:1 and group support, short breaks and a 'Carers Time for You' grant.

A Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic support group meets weekly and is attended by male and female carers from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds including Polish, Filipino, Pakistani, Kurdish, Chinese, Jamaican, Indian and Nepali carers. Around 150 carers are actively involved in the project, which has been running since 2019. A dedicated Asian women's group also meets monthly for carers who prefer a single sex environment. Carers are encouraged to mix, meet people from different backgrounds and to learn from each other.

Carers Support Officer Rosemary Stephen, who has worked in the sector for 28 years, feels that carers often gain a lot from meeting people from different communities, as they often face the same issues, and it helps to 'bring people out of their shell' and gain confidence. Feedback from carers suggests that they value the opportunity to learn from others and to meet other carers, which reduces their isolation and loneliness.

The groups offer a range of services, including emotional support and counselling, support to access carers' benefits (with assistance from volunteer translators), support to access home care, aids and adaptations, speakers and training sessions (including Covid testing teams during the pandemic), and celebration of cultural events and religious festivals.

Carers can self-refer or be referred to the project from a range of services such as primary care or mental health services. Making Space has strong links with Doncaster Council, and receives council funding, and the two organisations work closely together to ensure that carers are signposted to the most appropriate services. In a newly developed partnership, the charity will be conducting Carer's Assessments on behalf of the

local authority. It is hoped that this will increase take-up, as well as encouraging carers to express their feelings more openly, and be able to use community languages as part of the assessment process.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the service made use of video conference platforms, holding regular sessions on Zoom. With low levels of digital literacy, the team held individual calls with carers to support them to access the platform. A Whatsapp group was also established so that carers could support each other. A wide range of sessions were held using Zoom, such as exercise classes, dancing, cooking, songwriting, a Valentine's Day meal, and events to mark Carers Week and Halloween.

## MECOPP

MECOPP (Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project) is a Scottish charity which provides support to Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority carers, inclusive of carers within the Gypsy/Traveller community.

The organisation provides dedicated support to Gypsy/Traveller carers recognising that this community of carers have unique and additional challenges including daily experiences of racism and discrimination, inadequate and poorer accommodation, lower levels of access to public services and poorer health outcomes. In addition to direct service provision, MECOPP work with the community to make their views known to policy makers at both national and local government level. It currently holds the Secretariat for the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group for Scottish Gypsy/Travellers.

With the onset of COVID-19, a 'high-level' stakeholder group was rapidly convened involving Scottish Government, health bodies, third sector partners and a community representative. Through this group, funding was made available to enable new support services to be quickly set up to specifically support the community.

In the early stages of the pandemic, income maximisation was a significant focus, along with supporting the mental health, wellbeing and resilience of the community. A dedicated telephone based financial assistance service was established, which supported benefit applications, foodbank referrals and charitable grants. In excess of ninety successful applications were made during the course of this service. A telephone support line staffed by trained counsellors was also established, and 'health boxes' containing face masks and hand sanitiser, were distributed. As the pandemic progressed, a COVID-19 advice and information service was also established to provide

a single contact point for the community. A dedicated Facebook page was also set up, which was jointly moderated at the beginning by stakeholders involved in the high-level group and which was subsequently moderated by Article 12 (another Gypsy/Traveller support organisation).

“Due to the longstanding relationships the team have built up with the community we were able to continue to support carers and those they care for and to provide additional services. The support of the Scottish Government and other funders was crucial to this, enabling us to realign services to meet both increased demand and immediate priorities”, said Suzanne Munday, who manages the service.

Prior to the pandemic, MECOPP worked with funding from Shared Care Scotland to deliver a bespoke range of short breaks for carers from the Gypsy/Traveller community, in the form of overnight residential stays, along with family fun days that could be accessed by the wider community. While these had to be paused during the pandemic, alternatives were sought which included afternoon teas, ‘pamper packs’ and arts and crafts materials. Acknowledging that these cannot replace a break away from the home, MECOPP felt that they were nonetheless appreciated as a gesture that the carers hadn’t been forgotten during the periods of lockdown.

MECOPP also secured additional COVID-19 emergency funding from the Scottish Government to purchase and distribute 40 Chromebooks, wifi routers and one year’s worth of data to reduce social isolation and maintain community connectedness. This grant also included funding for a dedicated digital support worker to build digital capacity within the community.



# Good practice in...

## Improving staff awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion

### Newcastle Carers

Newcastle Carers is an independent charity supporting adults, children and young people who care for someone living in Newcastle upon Tyne.

As part of the Making Carers Count project, Newcastle Carers received funding from Carers Trust to provide dedicated support to asylum seekers and refugees who have caring responsibilities. Newcastle is recognised as a City of Sanctuary, committed to welcoming refugees and helping them to rebuild their lives. Given the number of asylum seekers and refugees in the city, the charity decided to target support to carers in these communities.

With the support of an Asylum Seekers and Refugees development worker, Newcastle Carers has taken a three-pronged approach to supporting asylum seekers and refugees with caring responsibilities. Firstly, this has involved building capacity within the charity by training staff on supporting people from an ethnic minority background, as well as supporting asylum seekers and refugees. Training has covered topics such as immigration and asylum law, funding and support that refugees and asylum seekers can access, and building staff confidence around accessing interpretation services. Practical changes have also been made to the charity's website, including adding in the Recite Me translation service.

Understanding the issues faced by asylum seeker and refugee carers has been important. Many asylum seeker and refugee carers are reluctant to draw attention to themselves and ask for support, due to fears that any issues may prevent them from remaining in the UK. The charity has found that many asylum seeker and refugee carers have more immediate needs around accommodation and are not able to focus on their caring responsibilities until these needs have been taken care of.

Secondly, the Asylum Seekers and Refugees worker has been developing new links with asylum seeker and refugee organisations, building trust and raising awareness of what caring involves and the specific issues facing carers. Many people with caring responsibilities do not recognise themselves as carers, so helping organisations to understand more about caring may help refugee and asylum seeker carers to get the support they need. Some of the support staff working in organisations supporting refugee and asylum seeker carers have recognised themselves as carers following conversations with Newcastle Carers. Many of these conversations with local organisations and groups have been informal, with the Asylum Seekers and Refugees worker going along to drop-in events and speaking to volunteers. However, more formal training has also been given.

Thirdly, the project has involved influencing policy on behalf of asylum seeker and refugee carers. Newcastle Carers has worked with the City of Sanctuary network, and is also part of the Haref network, a group of organisations supporting people from ethnic minority backgrounds in Newcastle. Going forwards, the focus of the project will be on developing carer voice and involving carers in the development of services, as well as policy influencing work.

## Northamptonshire Carers

Northamptonshire Carers supports carers across Northamptonshire, working with other local organisations to improve carers' health, wellbeing and quality of life. It received funding from Carers Trust to support 'global ethnic majority carers' – i.e. Black and Asian carers – in the local area. One of the main areas of focus to date has been looking at recruitment and staffing, to ensure that the organisation is an inclusive place to work and that staff have a better understanding of the needs of Black and Asian carers.

Following a seven-month roll out of training sessions on diversity and inclusion, all staff and Trustees have been asked to sign up to the Big Promise – a Race Equality Matters campaign in which organisations and individuals make a commitment to race equality. The Big Promise will be embedded in the staff appraisal system, to ensure that all staff at Northamptonshire Carers are taking meaningful actions to make services more inclusive. Northamptonshire Carers has also reviewed its recruitment policies, to address potential barriers. This has included reviewing the language used in job adverts, as well taking steps to be more visibly inclusive through, for example, acknowledging key events such as Inclusivity Week and Race Equality Week. This year, for the first time, Northamptonshire

Carers celebrated Black History Month through a range of events and activities including film screenings, a performance from a children's choir singing songs from around the world, a book club focusing on Black authors, and a tour of a local Sikh temple museum.

Northamptonshire Carers has also implemented the Race Equality Matters phonetic spelling campaign, My Name Is, by asking staff to use phonetic spelling in their email signatures and on name badges, and including phonetic spelling in their carer registration database, as well as recruitment application forms. The My Name Is campaign aims to raise awareness of the fact that 73% of people have had their name mispronounced, and to introduce phonetic spelling as standard practice. Although the work to address staffing and recruitment is at an early stage, the organisation has had an increase in enquiries about jobs from people from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background. It is also working to improve the diversity of its Board of Trustees.

To support other organisations to be more inclusive, Northamptonshire Carers has been sharing its work to date with professionals from education, social care, police, NHS and other charities. Through these 'Lunch, Learn and Laugh' sessions, it aims to encourage others to review their work with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Northamptonshire Carers has also been identifying carers it would like to support by allocating carers into three categories: those who are currently accessing services, those who have received some support previously, and those who haven't received any support. Currently the focus is on carers who have accessed some support previously but are not using services at the moment. To understand more about this group, events have been held in which carers can talk about their needs and experiences.

Separately, Northamptonshire Carers has also received Lottery funding for a three-year project to improve outcomes for carers from underrepresented groups, including the gypsy, Roma and traveller communities. This project has focused on building connections with local organisations including schools, children's trusts and GP practices, to identify carers and raise awareness of caring within these communities. The project also aims to improve the inclusivity of services by addressing common misconceptions. This has included, for example, reviewing resources for health professionals to help them recognise the needs of carers from these communities.

## MECOPP, Edinburgh

MECOPP (Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project) became an independent charity in 2000 and works with carers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in Edinburgh, The Lothians and across Scotland.

The organisation offers advice, information, advocacy and casework support in a range of languages, from its Carers Centre in Edinburgh and recruits its staff members from within the communities served. Languages available include Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Hindi, Cantonese and Mandarin. In addition to the above services, the organisation also provides a range of educational, social, therapeutic and recreational activities.

A key function of the organisation, through the advocacy and casework service, is to support carers to access rights and entitlements including an Adult Carer Support Plan, welfare benefit applications and self-directed support (SDS). The SDS service also includes support on community brokerage.

MECOPP also provides training on 'achieving cultural competence' for the health and social care workforce, to ensure that as many professionals as possible understand the needs of carers from minority ethnic communities. This training is also available to mainstream carer centres and support organisations. During the pandemic, this training was adapted to be delivered online.

It also jointly supports a network of workers from within mainstream carers' organisations to build their knowledge and capacity to support carers from minority communities. Through these activities, MECOPP has wider influence in creating a sustainable environment within health and care services to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic carers in the future.

The pandemic also saw a major increase in its work on accessible information and it played a key role in working with Scottish Government and NHS Scotland to provide accessible public health messaging. These resources included information on the COVID-19 vaccination, the booster campaign, 'walk-in' vaccination centres, testing protocols and the availability of Government support and assistance.

# About the project

Carers UK, in partnership with Carers Trust, has received funding from the Covid 19 Support Fund to support the “Making Carers Count” project. This part of the three-year project seeks to understand the experiences of four traditionally under-represented groups of carers both during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. These are LGBTQ+ carers, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic carers, older carers without access to the internet and carers of faith. This project is pulling together existing knowledge and engaging in new research to more fully understand the experiences of these carers and the unique challenges they may experience in their caring role as well as collating examples of best practice. This knowledge gained will be applied to Carers UK services and shared with other service delivery organisations and commissioners to improve access to and outcomes from support, information and advice for marginalised carers.

Projects funded through the ‘[Making Carers Count](#)’ project to support Black, Asian and minority ethnic carers are:

## Camden Carers

Camden Carers has been delivering services to unpaid carers 18 and above for over 25 years. It offers information, support, respite and advice to all unpaid carers living or working in Camden. Through the Making Carers Count project it will be working with carers from ethnic minority backgrounds. The project will be delivered by a Community Engagement Project Manager and a Community Engagement Support worker, who together will aim to ‘Engage and empower under-represented communities by developing and delivering services in a way that is relevant to them. Camden Carers will work with various under-represented organisations and unpaid carers to maximise the effectiveness of communications in the borough by listening to communities, gathering feedback to inform service delivery and demonstrate how this work will contribute and influence decision making.

## Carers First

Carers First works directly with and for unpaid carers to provide personalised information and support; making it easier for those caring for someone else to live their lives to the fullest. It currently serves carers across eight areas in the south east, London, East Midlands and east of England. It reaches over

100,000 carers through community work, online and social media and provides one-to-one and group support to 15,000 carers.

Making Carers Count funding will increase its organisational capacity and resources to identify and support Turkish and Kurdish carers living in Haringey and Hackney. This under-represented community of carers will have timely access to a dedicated worker who understands their evolving needs and can provide ongoing, trusting, person-centred support before they reach crisis. Working in partnership they will help deliver positive, wellbeing interventions including day trips, wellbeing activities, drop-in surgeries, outreach sessions and access to dedicated benefits advice.

## Carers Support West Sussex

The Sussex Carers Partnership, a collective of three Network Partners, have worked together for many years on a number of pan-Sussex activities. Collectively it has over 40,000 carers registered and provides a range of services and support for carers. It recently delivered a successful engagement project looking at carers experiences of healthcare during the pandemic. Three part time Carer Engagement Workers will deliver the project, overseen by Carers Support West Sussex as lead partner. Its activities aim to overcome the identified barriers for under-represented carer groups focussing on carers from ethnic minorities. Its activities are based on what carers have told them will work for them, such as:

- Creating a new Sussex Carers Reference group
- Training carers and other carers organisations
- Resource identification and increased engagement with current services
- Adapting resources
- Translation and interpretation
- Casework
- Extend our pilot counselling service.

## Carers Trust Heart of England

Carers Trust Heart of England's aim is to support carers and those they care for by providing the highest possible quality, individually tailored care support service that improves the lives of carers, the people they care for and their families. It provides integrated services across Coventry and Warwickshire

that place the needs of the carer and the people they care for at the heart of everything we do. Through the lockdowns it saw carers struggling with loneliness and isolation. It also identified a need to support those carers unable to access technology and devised a blended approach of online and face-to-face activities and support. It supports carer resilience, reduced social isolation and increased awareness of the support available. Through Making Carers Count, it will work to learn from, reach and support more ethnic minority carers by building direct links with local community leaders and establishing dedicated carer groups.

## Carers Trust Mid Yorkshire

Carers Trust Mid Yorkshire is a local charity working to support unpaid family carers in Kirklees, Calderdale, Wakefield and Leeds with over 35 years' experience working in the local community. Its Making Carers Count project aims to increase the number of unpaid carers who identify as being of Pakistani heritage who are supported by Carers Trust Mid Yorkshire in Kirklees. New collaborations with Pakistani communities will develop its understanding of the barriers faced by this under-represented group of unpaid carers. It will extend our engagement methods and aim to reduce barriers to accessing information, advice, support and services; including drop in information events and carer support groups in the community, and specifically designed information materials.

A Pakistani community-based steering group will aim to enhance how carer support is delivered by Carers Trust Mid Yorkshire and this will be shared with stakeholders at an end of project Conference.

## Crossroads for Caring

Crossroads Caring for Carers provides a wide range of community care services across The West Midlands. It offers flexible and tailored personal care at home packages, as well as helping informal carers to care for longer by providing practical support, training, respite, palliative care and specialist dementia services – improving the health and wellbeing of carers and those they care for. Through the Making Carers Count project, it aims to break down a range of barriers and challenges faced by informal carers from under-represented ethnic minority groups from Birmingham and the Black Country. It will provide an opportunity to access a targeted and specialist service which will offer culturally appropriate information, advice, guidance and support to address complex and interconnected needs.

## Newcastle Carers

Newcastle Carers provides information, advice and support to carers of all ages in Newcastle upon Tyne. It has over 6,000 carers registered with us, and a track record of working in collaboration with a range of organisations and services to identify and support carers in communities of most need. Newcastle is a City of Sanctuary, with increasing numbers of asylum seekers and refugees from a range of countries. Dedicated resources and a development worker will enable it to build trusted relationships with asylum seeker and refugee communities, identify barriers and co-design carer support in their communities. It will then develop and evaluate tailored provision that not only benefits individual carers, but provides us with increased understanding and valuable learning. It aims to share this with other services and therefore improve the accessibility and quality of support for carers in asylum seeker and refugee communities in the future.

## Northamptonshire Carers

Northamptonshire Carers provide services and support to carers and cared-for people in Northamptonshire including a Carers Support Line, Young Carers and Young Adult Carers Service, Statutory Carers Assessment, Support Groups, activities, training and peer support, specialist dementia services and Social Prescribing. Its Project aims to deliver the following to reach and support ethnic minority carers

- Link with ethnic minority organisations and communities to raise awareness of carers and create referral pathways
- Involve ethnic minority carers in focus groups and Carers Partnership meetings
- Organise events to hear ethnic minority carers voices
- Plan and work in partnership to source funding for future services and support
- Workforce development within Northamptonshire Carers, increasing diversity by reviewing recruitment processes and implementing Safe Space groups
- Provide training to Northamptonshire Carers staff team and other organisations

## Swindon Carers Centre

Swindon Carers Centre aims to improve the well-being of unpaid carers in Swindon, creating a community where carers are recognised, valued and supported. It does this through one-to-

one tailored support, running activities and groups, and giving benefits advice. It also works with schools and companies to raise awareness. Through the Making Carers Count project it aims to broaden our reach to carers in ethnic minority communities – especially those in the Asian community. It has focused on the Asian community because there is a large Asian community in Swindon but they are under-represented in the carers we currently reach. It plans to achieve this through local level community engagement and building its organisational capacity to be more inclusive of ethnic minority groups.



## Contact

We would like to thank our Black, Asian and ethnic minority Carers Advisory group for its support. For further information about this briefing, please contact the policy team at [policy@carersuk.org](mailto:policy@carersuk.org)  
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