

Caring Conversations

Half a Million Voices: Improving support for BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) Carers – One Year on

Caring Conversations is a new series of resource papers by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) in support of the Coalition Government's refreshed national strategy for carers published in November 2010. This is the first time that, as organisations, we have come together to say something about improving recognition, responsiveness and outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic [BAME] Carers. This **Caring Conversations** paper brings together some of the issues and has been prepared to link with the first anniversary of the publication of **Half a Million Voices**.

BAME Carers face the same issues as all carers but may also encounter additional barriers. These can include cultural barriers, use of stereotypes, language or literacy barriers which can increase poverty and social exclusion.

BAME Carers – Some Facts - *Half a Million Voices* [1] [2]

<p>BAME Carers and Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% BAME carers provide 20-50 hrs support • 12% of the 60,000 BAME carers in poor health in London • BAME carers more likely to provide 20-49 hours of support <p>BAME Carers and Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of BAME carers are of working age • Around half of BAME carers juggle work and care • 35% BAME carers in London are in employment 	<p>Demography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just over half a million BAME carers • Indian carers are the largest BAME group, as 2.2% of carers • 35% live in Greater London which has the highest concentration • 44,402 black Caribbean carers • 180,000 new BAME Carers every year • Number of BAME carers will rise <p>Personalisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quarter receive direct payments • Over half feel services through direct payments are "better" • Administration and management of direct payments is an issue for some. • Offers real opportunities to grow choice
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Local authorities and their partners should offer services that are accessible and appropriate to all communities. There is evidence of good work from local authorities working on how to improve outcomes for BAME carers and close the gap of health inequality for many BAME carers.

We hope the material in this paper will support local progress. Also, do celebrate what works well, talk about what matters and what you can do to improve individual outcomes for BAME carers. Tell us about them too [See: page 4].

Twelve Conversation Points

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Carers [BAME] are not an homogenous group. They have diverse support needs. They face unique challenges and often stereotypical assumptions around how care and support needs are or might be met. So:

- How do we promote information, advocacy and self-identification amongst BAME carers?
- How do we raise awareness amongst BAME carers about what exists to support them?
- What are the institutional challenges BAME carers face in accessing and using support?
- Do we understand the reasons for low uptake of services by BAME carers?
- Are our assessment arrangements culturally appropriate and language matched?
- Are needs of carers and BAME carers mapped in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment?
- Are BAME carers partners in caring and partners in strategic and service development?
- How sensitive is service delivery to dietary needs, faith and same-gender support?
- What are BAME communities telling us about what helps and would make a difference?
- How do we guard against assumptions and ensure we design and deliver support in line with distinct and diverse needs?
- How confident are we that personalisation is accessible for BAME carers?
- Do we understand how ethnicity and disability intersect with other areas of carer identity?

A valuable resource for these conversation points will be local experience and feedback by BAME family carers, health and social care professionals, providers and third sector partners. Finding and using inclusive discussion arrangements that bridge barriers to communication may be a challenge. The BAME toolkit can help you. **Having talked about these issues, what will you do to support BAME carers in your local authority?**

BAME Carers Speaking

“Because my mother tongue is Urdu I had lots of difficulties – I couldn’t really learn/say much because we couldn’t communicate with each other.” [Supporting Life after stroke, 2011]

“My husband calls to make appointments for me... I have never tried to make appointments myself”. [DH, No Patient Left Behind, 2008]

“I think all the Asian areas have poorly functioning services”. [No patient left behind, 2008]

“They think the Asian community can look after their own [Challenging the Myth, 2003]

“You are helpless when you are caring for someone” [Equally Connected, Report 12, 2011]

“You have no choice when you are caring for someone, you have to do it” [as above]

“We have carers support service at local level. Asian language speaking staff have enabled us to access benefits, housing and community care support service.” [Beyond We Care 2008]

“As a BME Carer, I am delighted an opportunity like this has been created for BME groups. This project provides a major opportunity to help people like me who may have in the past felt excluded, to join in and have their voice heard about what kind of services are needed”. Here is a real opportunity to improve participation and understanding between BME groups and service providers.” [Caring Matters, Gloucestershire, 2011].

BAME Carers – Some Common Challenges

Research from Carers UK highlights the challenges that BAME carers encounter. Below is a list of the key institutional barriers and community challenges we need to focus on if improved responsiveness and outcomes are to be taken forward:

- **Language and literacy barriers.** Elderly and new immigrant communities continue to overcome language barriers. Furthermore, a poor level of literacy amongst some BAME communities hinders understanding of rights and entitlements.
- **Cultural barriers** such as 'duty to care', unwillingness to take outside help and fear of disclosing personal information.
- **Lack of culturally appropriate services** means that accessibility to the preferred type of services is limited.
- **Misconceptions** about extended family support and caring for relatives
- **A lack of awareness of faith issues** that may affect take up of support by some groups
- **Voices not heard** or not always incorporated into commissioning or provision
- **Poor visibility** where BAME carers are small in number or widely dispersed in an area
- **Status** of some groups such as refugees and legal issues hindering access to services
- **Stigma** of caring, attached particularly to the medical condition of the cared for person.

Some Practical Examples – Helping to build on what works

The BAME Toolkit contained practical examples from local councils and carers groups. They are available on http://www.carersuk.org/media/k2/attachments/BAME_Toolkit_2011.pdf. The BME Carers & Equality Project prepared by Lina Patel for the North West Joint Improvement Partnership in 2010 also contains a range of practical examples for that region. www.northwestjip.co.uk/reablement-home/resources-downloads/.../5. In preparing this *Caring Conversations* paper we sought further examples. Summary information appears below.

CORNWALL – BAME ENGAGEMENT – HIDDEN CARERS

Cornwall has a small BAME community but this is changing. As part of newly commissioned Cornwall Carers Services, a BAME Carer Support Worker was appointed to link with equality and diversity leads and support workers from organisations. Issues around Cornish cultural capital and access to services are being given emphasis. The project is concentrating on how best to make services accessible for BAME groups. The aim is to have an action plan in April 2012. **Contact:** kelvin.yates@cornwallrcc.org.uk

RICHMOND – IMPROVING BAME ACCESSIBILITY

Under a council funded programme, Richmond Carers Centre employs a 2/3rd time support worker whose objective is to support and reach out to adult BAME carers who have difficulty accessing appropriate mainstream services. The programme promotes equality and diversity through marketing and promotional activities, awareness raising events and identification of BAME carers. There is also a specific support group for BAME carers. **Contact:** teamleader@richmondcarers.org

SWINDON – DIVERSITY IN CARE RESOURCES

As a demonstrator site and in partnership with the AFIYA trust, a range of resources have been developed for carers and community groups including a *Diversity in Care Toolkit*, a DVD training resource for Care Professionals and a DVD resource for carers and community groups to tackle issues of isolation and lack of awareness around carers issues and understanding of the support available within communities. Contact: jridley@swindon.gov.uk

HEREFORDSHIRE – INCLUSION IN DEVELOPMENT

Herefordshire's small BAME community is predominantly younger and is estimated to have nearly a third were from Poland and other Eastern European Communities. Herefordshire Carers Support [HCS] offers routes into communities through faith groups; specialist workers to enhance engagement; and working towards developing a BAME carers advisory group on service policy and training. A Carers Strategy in development will concentrate on personalisation for BAME carers and their inclusion at all stages. **Contact:** apitt@herefordshire.gov.uk

WIGAN - SUPPORT WORKER AND SIGNPOSTING

Wigan Council has a dedicated BME carer support worker whose job is to work with carers from any ethnic minority background aged 50 or over or BME people caring for someone who is over 50. The council website also signposts people to the Lancashire Asian Carers Forum. The forum is open to all BAME carers through Preston Carers Centre which also has its own local forum. For more information contact: sholdsworth@wigan.gov.uk. For the Asian Carers Forums in Preston contact: info@prestoncarers.org.uk

WORCESTERSHIRE – BUILDING CAPACITY & REACHING OUT

The County Council's BME community development worker has linked with the University of Worcester to develop an E-learning package on "**Faith and Belief**". This introductory package enables staff to find information which would be helpful to them when visiting service users and carrying out assessments. In addition a carers champion has set up a carers group for Asian Male carers to have a better understanding about what is available and to have an opportunity to talk about some of their caring issues in a safe environment.

We need more to evidence local progress. If you would like to share your own local practical examples please send them to: dalveer.kaur@carersuk.org

USE THE BAME TOOLKIT

- To see what other local authorities are doing to improve outcomes for BAME carers.
- Build on your own good practice
- As a guide to how better outcomes can be achieved
- To learn what the challenges other local authorities faced.
- Use the prompt questions to as guidance for your local authority

References:

[1] Carers UK, *Half a Million Voices – Improving Support for BAME Carers*, 2011

[2] Carers UK, *BAME Families and Personalisation*, Policy Briefing, 2011

[3] Carers UK, *BAME Toolkit*, 2011

[4] Department of Health, *Recognised, Valued and Supported: next steps for the Carers Strategy*, 2010

[5] AFIYA Trust, National Black Carers and Care Workers Network, *Beyond We Care, Putting Black Carers in the Picture*, 2008

More Information - Contacts:

Carers UK, Carers UK is a charity registered in England and Wales (246329) and in Scotland (SCO39307) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (864097). Registered office: 20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LX. Tel: 020 7378 4999, Fax: 020 7378 9781, Email: info@carersuk.org

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services: Registered Charity No: 299154 – [England] Principal Office: Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ. E-Mail for this paper: adasscarers@warwickshire.gov.uk