



Lanarkshire
Carers

BAME Carers & Equality Service update

April 2021

Overview of Service

Lanarkshire Carers - BAME Carer Service is a well-established service supporting carers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups including Pakistani, Polish, Chinese, Indian, African and Arab communities. This is one of very few BAME dedicated services in Scotland and are recognised for best practice amongst Carers Trust network partners, National Carers organisations and wider stakeholder.

Service delivery include:

- Provision of information, advice and support in multilingual formats (the current BAME staff team offer support in 5 languages)
- Dedicated, volunteer led, peer support groups such as International Women's Group, Polish Carer Group and Arab Carer Group
- Carer Training provision offered in different languages
- Carers Well Being Call service delivered by volunteers in three languages
- Dedicated BAME phone line for direct contact route
- On demand language access in more than **240 languages** through spoken interpretation and written translation
- Engagement, involvement and representation for BAME carers in local and national forums
- Partnership and collaboration in Lanarkshire, nationally and internationally
- Awareness raising, information and cultural events
- Empowering, enabling and tackling inequalities

Secured contracts for the delivery of Direct Carer Support in both North and South Lanarkshire has enabled the much needed further resourcing and development of this work. A new member of staff joined as a BAME Carer Support Worker in January 2021. Our staff team member is multilingual and will be working across Lanarkshire to identify, engage, inform, advise and support carers. As part of the Caring through COVID fund support team this staff member ensured BAME carers were supported to access individual grants to support a short break from caring. BAME carers uptake of these grants equated to 6.4% of the total funds available, with 78 9of the total 12110 successful application from BAME carers.

Lanarkshire Carers BAME and Equalities staff are part of the Coalition of Carers in Scotland (COCiS) BAME Network and regularly attend and contribute to the meetings. This is a national network of carer organisations across Scotland, to share and develop good practice for BAME carer support through information sharing and development. Lanarkshire Carers is regularly asked to participate, contribute and share our best practice with the other carer organisations. It is evident from working with organisations throughout Scotland and the feedback we receive, how established our service is and individual members often come to us for support and advice.

Our BAME Carer and Equalities Service team are also active members and contributors at the NHS Rehabilitation Strategy NHSL-COVID Sub-Group, Mental Health Commission Forum, Lanarkshire Discharge Policy Forum and the NHS BAME Staff Network for input regarding Equality issues and barriers.

Service Development and Covid Response

Lanarkshire Carers is extremely busy, particularly throughout the pandemic, providing vital and reliable much needed information and advice service with practical and emotional

support to relieving isolation and other issues affecting BAME carers. We have been working with partners and organisations such as the NHS, Carers Trust, Coalition of Carers in Scotland, MECOPP, Scottish Refugee Council, West of Scotland Racial Equality Council, local organisations and social work teams to raise awareness of BAME carers, to identify, engage and support seldom heard carers. Lanarkshire Carers close links within the communities have been extremely valuable in disseminating vital public health information regarding Covid 19 response, restrictions and government guidelines.

Lanarkshire Carers has reached communities via phone, email, online platforms and social media to stay connected and provide support during this period.

Carers struggling to access services through technology have been fully supported to overcome IT issues through training, support, advice, grants for equipment and more.

Some of the main issues the team have supported carers with during the pandemic and quotes from carers are as under:

- relieving isolation
Nobody else seems to be listening to me
- supporting carers to manage their caring roles
Your service is a godsend for people like us
- maintaining carers own health and wellbeing
My family now realise that I am a carer and my health is important too
- access training
Thank you for guiding us. We have never been taught to say no. It is something we have to learn.
- relaxation opportunities
I could just fall asleep right here, I have nearly forgotten to take care of myself.
- short breaks and grant opportunities
This is the first time in my life I can think about spending money on my hobby
- signposting and direct referrals to relevant community based services.
I did not know where to turn

Highlights- A Lanarkshire Wide Approach

BAME Carers- Lanarkshire Wide	Total
Total BAME registered with Lanarkshire Carers	302
Total BAME accessing services Q4- January – March 2021	175
Total New BAME – January to March 2021	33

Carers Ethnicity - New Carers January to March 2021	Total
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Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	10
White Polish	6
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group	6
Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British	2
Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British	2
Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	2
Other Ethnic Group	2
Black, Black Scottish, or Black British	1
Other Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	1
Other African	1

Lanarkshire Carers' Lanarkshire wide remit to identify, engage with and support carers has given the organisation more strength, approachability, a wider platform and more opportunities to work in partnership. The specialist nature of our BAME service is a source of knowledge and learning which our partners rely on and regularly tap into. Carers already facing barriers and challenges in accessing support due to cultural and linguistic reasons, can access support via a single doorway, not having to deal with geographical boundaries. BAME communities are intertwined across Lanarkshire and benefit from this approach and so do our partners, as it is easier, reassuring and hassle free. This is also in tune with NHS Lanarkshire being the health board for the geographical area and residents having across board access to all three hospitals.

NHS Covid vaccination videos

In February 2021, Lanarkshire Carers worked with NHS Lanarkshire Public Health, community leaders and members of the local BAME community to support better understanding of the COVID-19 vaccination and to address concerns about the misinformation targeted at and spreading within BAME communities. Lanarkshire Carers hosted a number of online evening collaborative working and development sessions chaired by Hina Sheikh; NHS Lanarkshire Equality and Diversity Manager. From these sessions and information and awareness raising campaign via social media and specifically chat platforms was planned and five videos were produced in English and Urdu / Punjabi. These answered questions about the vaccine and looked at the barriers in accessing vaccination and aim to support the uptake of the vaccination within the BAME community. Community representatives such as a teacher, community pharmacist, A&E consultant, consultant psychiatrist and our BAME Carers Services & Equalities Coordinator participated in this project.

The videos were launched via WhatsApp and are available on NHS YouTube channel and have been shared on our social media platforms.

Videos are available via the following link:

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmgTOJmBpGB7TIX4reN3KC0eMgS7fey1P

The response has been tremendous and the goal of 1500 viewing has been far surpassed.

Digital Friends

Working with BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities during COVID-19 and national and local lockdowns, Lanarkshire Carers realised the digital exclusion of BAME communities. This highlighted the impact on accessing online services receiving vital information, relieving isolation and purchasing goods online. With this in view, different organisations and partners were approached to explore the options of supporting these communities in order to improve digital accessibility and develop digital skills.

This resulted in Lanarkshire Carers involvement with two different projects. Our BAME Carer Service and Equalities Coordinator was invited to join Cumbernauld Community Digital Inclusion Project. A working group has been set up to establish community needs and delivery plans. This working group comprises of NHS Health Promotion, North Locality Social Work; Adult Services, VANL and CACE.

The project plans to engage with vulnerable groups such as older groups, people with disabilities (learning/ physical/ mental), faith groups, young people and BAME communities. It plans to train Digital Champions from community groups to provide one to one support, online training and digital support. It is to acquire tablets, sim cards and broadband to loan out to communities to overcome their barriers in accessing technology and increase confidence in practically using the gadgets.

The working group has charted out the needs to the communities and is planning the roll out of the project at the end of the lockdown. Potential volunteers as Digital Champions are being identified. BAME Coordinator is going to be involved in the piloting of the project and identifying Cumbernauld based BAME carers who can benefit from this.

BAME Bellshill Befriending

Due to linguistic and digital barriers BAME communities are experiencing unprecedented isolation and are struggling to get practical help during lockdown. Help with form fillings, letter writing, online forms and applications. Drop in services, family and friends became limited or no longer available throughout lockdown. Recognising this need, Lanarkshire Carers is working in partnership with NHS Health Promotion, VANL, Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre, Fresh Start NL and the Well Project, which is associated with Lanarkshire Central Mosque to support BAME Bellshill Befriending.

BAME Bellshill Befriending Project will be providing practical digital support to carers, elderly and isolated members of community via doorstep and garden visits by BAME volunteers. Funding is being accessed to purchase tablets which will be loaned out and support will be provided to set up and use the devices. The Project is shaping up with ground work such as applying for funding, identifying and training volunteers and other associated tasks and plans. It will commence from April 2021 onwards to coincide with the easing of lockdown restrictions.

Equality and Diversity

Lanarkshire Carers has developed a comprehensive BAME Service work plan involving all aspects of carer support, awareness raising, information/advice, equality and diversity, partnership working, scoping and delivering services and information resources in different formats and languages.

BAME Carer Training

Bilingual training opportunities are identified through carer consultation and research. Staff identify organisations across Lanarkshire and beyond that provide development opportunities in different languages. These will often be piloted with BAME Carers and if successful, full courses will then be provided. Throughout Carers Week and Refugee Week this June there will be a full and comprehensive BAME carer training programme available in 4 different languages. BAME carers can access specialised training held in their own language or access the Lanarkshire Carers Training Programme with an interpreters provided.

Online volunteer led peer support groups

BAME carers are experiencing unprecedented isolation during the pandemic due to linguistic and digital barriers. We often hear from carers that being able to speak with fellow carers going through similar situations in their own language is of huge benefit. We will support the establishment of volunteer led peer support groups for BAME Carers. These meetings will be available monthly in bilingual formats via our zoom platform.

Partnership working with Carers Trust

Carers Trust approached Lanarkshire Carers with regards to recruitment of two Programme Lead roles, to manage the 'Making Carers Count' programme. This programme will see significant investment in the Network to develop new services for young carers and adult carers who are underrepresented in receiving support (e.g. carers from minority ethnic communities or BAME, LGBTQI carers, carers affected by 'stigmatised' conditions etc.)

As one of the aims of the overall programme will be to develop skills, knowledge and information sharing across the Network, Carers Trust wished to involve support staff ideally support workers/frontline staff) already working in these areas from Network Partners to form the 'beneficiary' panel for the Programme Lead interviews.

On back of a presentation on Lanarkshire Carers BAME Carers Service on Carers Trust UK-wide Annual Network Partner 2020 conference, Isbah Khan was invited to be a panel member for the recruitment panel; the panel met eight candidates on 23/24 March who demonstrated the best fit to the person specification in their applications through 10 minute presentations and subsequent question and answer session.

This was an opportunity for Lanarkshire Carers' specialist BAME Service to be recognised across partners in UK for expertise and good practice. It was also an opportunity to share knowledge, learning and experience and to create networking channels between network partners in different geographical regions.

Lanarkshire Carers support to and engagement for the Making Carers Count Programme Lead roles was appreciated by Carers Trust and we are told that the 'insight and comments shared on the day and in written notes have been helpful in supporting the selection of the shortlist and the two offers that have now been made'.

Carers Trust received unanimous positive feedback from each of the candidates regarding 'the professionalism, welcome and knowledge of the presentation panel, which they feel were in essence many of the candidates first glance into Carers Trust and the Network'.

Future Focus

Lanarkshire Carers has developed a comprehensive BAME Service work plan involving all aspects of carer support, awareness raising, equality and diversity, partnership working, scoping and delivering services and information and resources in different formats and languages.

Work is currently underway on the website to incorporate microsites offering information in community languages. Resources are also re designed in different formats to ensure inclusion. Arab Carers Peer Group is being transitioned into separate male and female groups as per the wishes of the carers participating. All four BAME peer groups will be transitioning on to online platform May 2021 onwards.

The BAME service is strengthening its links within communities and forming new partnerships to raise awareness of the services available. It is identifying new networks within and out with Lanarkshire to identify new carers. Planning is underway to work closely with schools, community centres, food banks, pharmacies and BAME specific hospitality and retail sector. Social media will be more effectively utilised as well.

Working with a Scottish African radio station Djambo Radio to work closely with African community is underway.

Our BAME service has been involved with the development of the Lanarkshire Hospital Discharge Policy, focusing on the specific needs of BAME carers. Our insight into this matter, developed by supporting carers when their family members of relatives hospitalised and with carers sharing their experiences with us, has contributed to the policy development. Our BAME staff have had meetings with the Hospital Liaison Team in this regard and ongoing work is going on to make this service more accessible to all community groups by providing information in numerous community languages. We will continue to support this and other collaborative activity that ensures BAME carers are identified, engaged, well informed, supported and empowered.

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