

Bristol Join-Up

Year 1, October 2019 – October 2020



Bristol Join-Up is 7 organisations working together to engage and support people within 6 different communities.

“Keeps me connected with my community. Gives members a sense of belonging and opens them up to great opportunities they might not have encountered if it weren’t for the group” - a Bangladeshi Bristol Women’s Group member.



the care forum



Our Bristol Join-Up Partnership



We have all got together for 4 partnership meetings this year where we have shared our successes, challenges, ideas and worked as a team to develop this project.

As part of these meetings, we evaluated our training needs. We have completed safeguarding and mental health awareness training. Bristol Older People's Forum delivered a workshop on challenging Ageism.

Our focus this year has been on starting the Bristol Join-Up services, adapting our services because of Covid, creating our initial branding and on collecting data for evaluating our impact. We were also fortunate in receiving additional funding for our Covid response from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Government

We discussed together, the learning from this year and reflected as a partnership the need to ensure we engage with those without access to technology or internet who are at a higher risk of isolation and we also want to focus in the new year on increasing publicity of the Bristol Join-Up partnership.

Our plans for next year are to keep adapting our projects to support our communities with the changing Covid restrictions and impacts. To have more training as a partnership, possibly focussing on active listening and First Aid. To look at a thank you event for volunteers and to explore how the services that we deliver can continue in the longer term.

Staff and volunteers involved in Bristol Join-Up projects: 58

People supported through Bristol Join-Up: 421

Research participants: 250



Local Friends

Local Friends has built the capacity of people in the local community to care for one another through volunteers from local churches and other trusted groups providing human contact, listening and basic practical support. They currently operate in the Sea Mills area.

They have adapted during Covid times and are offering a service called 'Good Neighbours' functioning as the Sea Mills and Coombe Dingle Community Hub for the Council's *Can Do Bristol* scheme and for their Covid-19 response work, in partnership with Sea Mills Community Initiatives. They have focussed on helping people who are self-isolating. Local Friends has supported people to navigate the process to become a volunteer for the council. They also offer support and guidance to volunteers and manage the logistics of matching volunteers to those in the community who are requesting support.

Over this year, Local Friends has sent out 3 newsletters to their supporters and 13 updates to the volunteers. Over the year they have provided 104 shopping trips, 151 contact events (phone calls or face to face meetings), 4 dog walks and have collected 102 prescriptions. Many of their volunteers are also providing other support, primarily social contact and shopping, for friends and neighbours: they don't consider this to be Local Friends activity as such, but the volunteers are being supported through Local Friends and they know they can call on them for support should the need arise.

The funding has enabled Local Friends to spend the time required to provide this service and paid for the website which has been an essential tool for communicating with stakeholders. The funding also paid for a professional designer to produce a suitable logo.

Number of volunteers/staff involved in the service: 24

People supported through the service: 30

Promotion and partnership working

The website has been well used by volunteers and those wanting to know more about the service. Local Friends have a leaflet about the service but because of Covid-19 this has not been shared as widely as expected.

Local Friends has established a partnership with Sea Mills Community Initiatives and the Council.

Local Friends is in regular contact with one of their local Councillors, whose role in supporting local people overlaps to a significant degree with their activity. They have promoted the service through local churches and with a wide range of professionals

working in social care, social prescribing and housing. They have build relationships with local community groups.

The Local Friends coordinator took part in several online meetings with people leading social action projects around Bristol. They have also been involved in community worker meetings in Sea Mills and with a national faith-based group to share news, resources and best practice for meeting the many inter-relating needs of isolated people at this time.

Quotes

“The service is regular and reliable and the people shopping for me have gone out of their way to make sure that they are buying the right items and have delivered them in a way that makes it easy for me to carry everything up the stairs, ie in lots of small bags. They leave their bags with me until the next shop, which makes me feel that they are happy to still be there for me in a fortnight’s time. They also take a personal interest and stop for a chat on the doorstep. They are kind and caring and have even brought me flowers! It has all made me feel cared about and that they are genuinely willing to help me, at whatever risk to themselves. Big thanks! The service has done a great deal to reduce the stress of the Pandemic for me.”

“Paul is a very interesting person, reliable, thoughtful and sincere. He has given up his time to spend in conversation with someone who has memory problems.”

“It was easy to sign up and I can fit it around work. It gave me contact with others and allows me to help people during lockdown”

Case studies

When the lockdown started, one local couple contacted the primary school near to them to ask if the lockdown was causing hardship to the family of any of their children. They ended up doing a weekly shop for one family with a child in the school, delivering the shopping each week to the school office who then passed it on, so there would be no personal contact or sense of obligation.

This worked for several months, but then one of the couple involved developed a serious medical condition, which significantly impacted their time availability and their capacity to focus on other details. But they did not want to let down the family they were supporting.

They had heard about *Local Friends* though their church, so they contacted me and asked if we could arrange for the shopping to continue; they were happy to pay for it if we could ensure it was bought and delivered. One of our ladies was happy to do the shopping: she gave me her bank details and took a picture of the shop receipt and delivered the shopping to the school office, I forwarded the picture to the couple, and they repaid her by bank transfer.

The shopping made a massive difference to the family involved, the school were very grateful, both for the good of the child and also for the expression of support from members of their community, and the couple were very relieved that their medical problem did not prevent the family from being helped in this way.

The shopping continued until the 'Holiday Hunger' scheme came into operation at the start of the school holidays.

An elderly gentleman whose partner died around ten years ago receives a weekly phone call and a face to face visit roughly every three weeks. He is educated and articulate; he is capable of making basic human contact – with the postman or a shop assistant, for example, but desperately misses the opportunity to talk in more depth, both about what is happening in the world and about personal matters. He is not the sort to open up to a complete stranger, needs time to build a relationship where he knows the other person well enough to talk about things that are significant to him and finds no opportunity to develop such relationships in the current circumstances. He has a brother, who visits occasionally, but the gaps between visits are too great to provide the contact he needs, and he frequently feels depressed.

The regular weekly phone call is slowly building a relationship with one volunteer, and the face to face visits by another volunteer is enabling him to talk about things at a level which he has not found to be possible with the casual contacts he has with people most of the time.

We are exploring with him various possibilities for creating the space in which the sort of relationship he needs can be developed. These include possible techniques for developing local contacts for more face to face conversation, ways he can use his telephone, and the possibility of getting a computer to enable him to start communicating by email and perhaps video conferencing. The possibilities are being presented, but there is no pressure being put on him to take up any of the ideas. Thinking about ways to improve his situation, and maybe even ways for him to care for others to some degree, is helping to improve his mood; we hope that at least one of the possibilities will turn out to work for him, with further resulting improvements to his wellbeing.

Next steps

Local Friends is increasingly using WhatsApp to communicate with volunteers quickly and is looking to increase this form of communication.

The additional funding from The National Lottery Community Fund will enable them to recruit another person to support and manage the volunteers.



Bangladeshi Bristol Women's Group

Bangladeshi Bristol Women's Group (BBWG) provides social activities and community support for Bangladeshi women. During Covid times they have increased the support for those in their community. Depending on restrictions this has been face to face (indoors and outdoors), over the phone, through WhatsApp and via online platforms.

The group has put on fitness sessions, art and craft activities and yoga classes. This funding has paid the instructors, hall hire, cleaning, admin costs and refreshments. They ran a small focus group so members could come up with their ideas about the group and activities.

BBWG has seen an increase in difficulties in the emotional health of their members because of Covid-19 and the women they support have said they appreciate the relaxation and respite the group provides.

BBWG has an active Facebook page where they share recipes also information on Covid-19. They have a very active WhatsApp group for members, where they support and provide information to members around mental and physical wellbeing, they also signpost to support services. For those not on social media, they have been doing weekly phone calls during restrictions.

BBWG have been approached by other organisations about how their community are coping and to understand how to better support Bangladeshi people, especially the older people in their community. The community are at higher risk from Covid-19 and this is alarming and concerning for them. BBWG have been addressing this in their community through awareness-raising, what measures people can take to stay safe and by communicating government guidelines. It has been difficult, only communicating virtually and on the phone with members but they have reached out and have made themselves available. In response to Covid-19 BBWG have used some of the funding to buy hygiene packs for their members.

Number of volunteers/staff involved in the service: 6

People supported through the service: 39

Promotion and partnership working

BBWG has promoted its service through WhatsApp, word of mouth, over the phone and through social media. They have also been sharing electronic posters. They have a range of partners throughout the city that they work with.

Quotes

"I'm full of energy usually I'm tired by this time. Thank you I can't wait till next week"

"The service is very welcoming and helpful. Involves me in my community. Helps me socialise"

"I feel comfortable within this ladies group. The group of ladies are very friendly and supportive. Keeps me connected with my community, the people and the issues/stories that involve them. The fitness class helps me get fit. I think the admin team/staff in this group work really hard to create opportunities and reach out to it's members. I think it gives members a sense of belonging and opens them up to great opportunities they might not have encountered if it weren't for the group. It is also giving women a voice and confidence to encounter new skills!"

"I like this service because this is safe way to do exercise online on zoom also love meeting live. Because of lockdown have not seen many friends. This is one way can stay connected."

"Keeps me healthy and fit, with friends in a comfortable space"

"It's online on Zoom so can get involved from home at the moment. Makes me involved and part of a group"

"The service has helped me with my self-esteem and allowed me to feel more motivated to be more active and participate in further activities such as going for walks and letting others know about how much it makes a positive difference it makes to your mindset"

"Cheers me up something to look forward to"

"I can meet lots of people and the social aspect is very fun. Also, I feel am giving back to my community and helping out."

"Helps me keep fit and connect with others"

"It's an escape from stress and uplifts my mood"

"Helps me physically and mentally"

"I like that it is local and ladies only"

Case study

One of our group member J was extremely stressed because she needed to apply for her husband's passport renewal. He needed his passport urgently to sort out a matter in his Bank, where he needed to provide a photo ID. Due to Covid-19, the advice and information service where Jubi normally used to go to was closed. Jubi's main problem was she can't speak English.

She called me as I am the Bangladeshi Bristol Women's Group Secretary so I can help her. She was panicking and got scared. I advised her that she can give her husband's driving licence as a photo ID, but his driving licence was expired too. I checked the Gov.Uk website. They are only taking emergency passport applications, this application does not count as an emergency. Then I called the passport office, called about 4 times, after staying on line over an hour phone line just cuts off. At last got hold of an adviser, the adviser said Jubi can apply for a passport online only. They were not taking any application through the post office due to Covid-19.

I informed J, but she doesn't know how to use a laptop and she can not apply for her husband's passport. I can not invite her to my house or go to her because of lockdown. I asked for her children's ages. I asked if her 16 years old son can do the application online if I give him instructions. She spoke to him, he said he does not know how to do it. Then I said if she did not mind can I talk to him. Then I spoke to him and explained to him that I am going to give step by step instructions. I said I will be on the phone all the time while he is doing the application.

After taking he agreed to do the application. When J's Son filled the form halfway it did not go to the next page. Looked into a few different options, it still did not go to the next stage. I called passport office again the next day, after 2 hours waiting on the phone I managed to talk to another adviser. He told me what the next step we needed to do. I made a video call to J and did the full application with her Son. At last, the application was submitted.

The application was successful, the new Passport came in two weeks. 2 months later J's Son applied for his own driving licence on his own. J and her Son were so happy and proud. Their bank matter was also solved. Now her Son helps her more with things. He also made an application for Jubi to have a job at a school.

Next steps

BBWG would like to organise an intergenerational group where they can share experiences and skills. Other ideas include cooking classes and pamper sessions. In the future, they would like to organise a swimming group and be able to offer transport the women to take part.



Bristol Older People's Forum

Bristol Older People's Forum was initially going to train three volunteer researchers (over 55) to carry out a series of one to one and focus group discussions with an emphasis on loneliness and isolation in later life. They were hoping to do some of this research in care homes. However, Covid-19 meant that working in care homes was not suitable and nor was training volunteer researchers. Instead, they used Bristol Join-Up funding to complete research on Bristol older people's experiences of Covid restrictions through a survey called 'Life Under Lockdown'.

The survey was distributed online but also a hard copy was available for those that do not have online access. There was an excellent response to the survey and BOPF did a detailed analysis and produced their [research findings](#).

A Life Under Lockdown Article was published in the September 2020 BCC (Bristol City Council)/BOPF Covid newsletter, which is produced to ensure older people without online access have information about covid-19 and support in the city.

This research project is now a key element of BOPF's work as they look to meet the challenges of Covid and beyond. It enables them to focus on the challenges ahead, in terms of shaping policy, influencing those who make the decisions and challenging ageism.

This project is already making a difference. It has enabled BOPF to kickstart a range of policy discussions and shed light on the challenges of Covid for older people.

It has also promoted several discussions with their members on the report themes and issues, which they will be taking forward.

Staff and volunteers involved in the project: 2 staff, 10 trustees and one volunteer

Participants: 250 people completed the survey

Quote from Bristol Older People Forum:

The initial analysis of the survey was challenging. The number of respondents and the amount of detail in the qualitative questionnaire was labour intensive but ultimately extremely useful in terms of new knowledge.

It has provided a rich vein of themes and issues to take forward into phase two.

The high level of respondents, in what is a relatively small-scale project, bodes well as we further develop the project and look at how the challenges are changing.

Initially, I thought that the pandemic would by now be under control but it now looks, as we enter a potential second spike and further lockdown that the impact on our communities and especially older people are going to be far-reaching.

Promotion and partnership working

Bristol Older People's forum did an academic overview of Loneliness and Isolation across the UK in the last five years. They have developed many partnerships, including Link Age, UWE, Bristol Ageing Better, Brunel Care, BCC Adult and Social Care, and the Clinical Commissioning Group (Expert by Experience Inspector).

They have promoted the project in their BOPF magazine, through emails to members, press releases, on their website and Facebook page. Their magazine goes to 3000 members with a further 1000 copies to community organisations and other third sector networks. They also gave an update of the project at a BOPF Open Forum meeting.

Quotes

The quotes are many and striking. They come from the research itself and reflects some of the feelings of older people living through the challenges of the lock-down.

"Just like the last war, you are on your own"

"The Government need to make sure that the workers in our health service are properly rewarded financially."

"I think, on the whole, people are much kinder and more friendly towards each other. There is just a few who are selfish and do not keep to the rules."

"I'm hopeful the spirit of helping and supporting each other will become part of our culture."

"A different attitude to old people would help, we get blamed for BREXIT, we are accused of bed blocking, our concessions such as free bus passes, heating allowance are constantly under threat and from now we have to pay the TV licence again. I hope this research can help challenge some of these things."

"I am lonely"

Next steps

This project has the potential to develop and contribute to a much sharper understanding of the next phase of this crisis as we move forward. BOPF plan to establish a learning group to explore in-depth the key themes from the research. BOPF are also in discussions with several community groups to get insight into their experiences of covid restrictions.



Chinese Community Wellbeing Society (CCWS)

Also known as Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group (BACWG)

CCWS have used Bristol Join-Up funding to engage more Chinese students in their services, this includes volunteering opportunities, access to their helpline and support workshops.

They appointed a member of staff to lead on this project, and have recruited two student volunteers (from UWE and Bristol University). They recruited participants through the student volunteers who were aware of Chinese students who were experiencing difficulties associated with loneliness and being so far from home and their families.

It has been a challenging time for the Chinese community in Bristol. Initially, there was the Covid outbreak in China, there were incidents of harassment because of this towards Chinese people in Bristol, then the Covid pandemic in the UK and also the strained relationship between the UK and China. CCWS cancelled their events and face to face services and are remote working.

They designed a questionnaire for international Chinese students on well-being and support. This questionnaire was to see what areas of support Chinese students feel they need and how they would feel most comfortable when seeking support. They utilised their volunteer's strengths by assigning them the task of helping to translate the questionnaire into Chinese and they have helped distribute the survey. The survey showed the majority of student respondents would prefer a more culturally sensitive support group or service.

Following on from the survey, they gathered further feedback from 7 international Chinese students through a series of virtual Skype meetings in August. From their feedback, many of the students expressed that they would be unlikely to return to the UK to study due to the covid-19 pandemic which does, unfortunately, reflect the decrease in international Chinese students attending UK universities this academic year. Some of the students also said that they felt uncomfortable expressing their 'true' thoughts on certain topics like their wellbeing or issues such as dissatisfaction with services as they felt bad 'complaining' or expressing 'negative feelings'. CCWG feel this could be due to the Chinese culture of 'not wanting to cause trouble'.

CCWG feel getting this initial contact with Chinese students was a real 'breakthrough' moment as many Chinese students are in general quite reclusive and tend to stay very much in their own groups. Their student volunteers have distributed some leaflets via email which give guidance on anxiety and wellbeing during this current time of Covid-19.

This funding has helped CCWG pursue and advocate for student wellbeing amongst university societies and contacts.

Number of volunteers/staff involved in the service: 3

People supported through the service: 10

Promotion and partnership

CCWG is working with Carmen Wong from UWE Global Café and are establishing connections with university student societies, like the Association of British and Chinese University Students (ABACUS) and UWE Chinese Society. They have planned an initial workshop with ABACUS scheduled for November which will welcome students as well as discuss lockdown experiences and wellbeing.

These societies have also agreed to help promote the project, CCWG services and any upcoming workshops on their respective social media pages and amongst their members. CCWG has designed and sent out a promotional poster for the Join-Up project targeted towards Chinese speaking international students

CCWG linked up with Angela Loveridge, who is an Online Safety Consultant at Better Together, who is looking to work with students to stay safe on social media and protect themselves from fraud.

Quotes

The secretary and wellbeing officer of ABACUS society: "The workshop themes and ideas (how to cope during lockdown, improve mental wellbeing) would benefit our students greatly...It is good to let our students know that there is a confidential safe space for those Chinese students who feel isolated during university especially with the difficulties of COVID".

One of the Chinese students "I do think it would be beneficial to have an external group geared more towards the needs of Chinese students. It would be useful if I could be provided more information on timely notifications of VISAs and other important policy changes. An academic exchange group may also be good".

Case study

CCWG has been working with an international student from Malaysia (AK) who through the Join-Up project was at first a participant but has later become a volunteer of the project as well. AK was drawn to the project as she has seen many friends around her who had come to study abroad and then suffered from mental health issues, they were also often too shy and reluctant to reach out due to various reasons.

Through the project, AK has gained more confidence by volunteering to help with admin tasks and also contacting clubs and societies to bring more people to participate in the project. AK says she has also found happiness from this project as it keeps her busy during the pandemic and participating has also made her feel more involved and connected with the Chinese community here in Bristol. AK believes that this platform will grow with international students coming to study here in the UK who will find this project very helpful to them during these uncertain times.

Next steps

In terms of the next steps of the project, they will begin to set up more workshops for international students after their initial workshop scheduled for November. They have also had initial meetings with other organisations such as the immigration office in Bristol, they would like to cooperate with these new contacts and arrange informative workshops to be offered to students.

One of CCWG aims has always been to eventually develop the project to become a 'project for students led by students'. Through their upcoming workshops, they hope that students will find them greatly beneficial which will, in turn, motivate them to continue these groups eventually on their own accord. They wish to develop the project to reach the stage that they no longer always have to be at the forefront of the project but rather helping assist the students to achieve their objectives.

Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

Initially, Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People (CfD) was going to use the Bristol Join-Up funding to deliver workshops for those in Bristol who had recently experienced hearing loss as an opportunity for peer support, to have access to equipment and information. CfD arranged venues and speakers for these workshops.

Due to the Covid-19 virus, the original concept to provide a 4-week workshop for people who are new to hearing loss could not go ahead. So, CfD had to adapt. At CfD, they originally had a Coffee Morning every two weeks in a Bristol coffee shop, but since lockdown, CfD moved this venture onto Zoom once a week, sending out invitations to the Bristol Deaf community. The numbers attending have steadily grown.

Another venture they developed was to make contact with their most vulnerable clients who have used their equipment service in the past. Most of these clients were relatively new to hearing loss and so the equipment they provide add another layer of security and connection to the outside world. They developed a script to begin discussions with their most vulnerable clients and if any issues arose, they would seek to alleviate the issues.

CfD also created a page on their website (www.cfd.org.uk) regarding the Covid-19 virus and made a list of available services that are accessible for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. They also supported several other organisations and Bristol City Council to ensure that the services they are offering (e.g. Hotlines, etc) are made accessible for those who struggle with phones.

CfD has been working from home since April 2020. They have been successful in retaining their current services and developing new ones. They will continue to work from home til 2021.

Number of volunteers/staff involved in the service: 3

People supported through the service: 292 calls to vulnerable clients, up to 10 people at each Zoom coffee morning.

Promotion and partnership working

All promotions for the amended services have been advertised on their website and social media pages. They have also announced them at meetings and in press releases.

Quotes

“The Coffee Morning on Zoom has improved my day every Tuesday. During lockdown, I had no access to friends and I was missing them. CfD helped me to download and use Zoom and now I am able to enjoy a social life.”

“I always look forward to Tuesday’s Coffee Morning with CfD! Sometimes it’s the only time I get to communicate with others in BSL.”

“Thank you for contacting me and asking about my welfare. Not even my family has bothered to do this! Your advice was useful and I have made contact to have some support with shopping. Without you making that call, I don’t know what I would have done.”

Case studies

Mrs A, a widow who is classed as vulnerable due to health issues, was contacted by our officer. Mrs A is in her 80’s and hard of hearing. With family who live abroad, she lives alone, losing her husband a decade earlier. Mrs A was grateful for the call, as she been having issues with her doorbell, not hearing it when her carer comes in the morning and evening. This left her very stressed and worried. CfD were able to replace the doorbell with a new one to ensure that she does not miss another call.

Mr P, a 90 years old gentleman, who lives alone was contacted by our officer. Mr P is Deaf and classed as vulnerable. Mr P was confused by the TV announcements made by the national government that the country was in lockdown, and had not been shopping for weeks. He has been rationing his food and was close to running out. Our officer was able to get him in touch with a local charity that supports older people to ensure he could get his shopping done.

Miss I, joined the CfD coffee morning on Zoom one morning. She has been isolated and lost touch with her friends who she used to meet regularly. A BSL user, she misses the connection and communication she had with her friends. However, the coffee morning put her in touch with new people who could communicate with her and also she encouraged her friends, whom she not spoken to for weeks, to also join. They are now regular attendance.

Next steps

CfD has been successful in getting some additional funding to purchase some digital tablets. These tablets will be offered to anyone who wants to partake in a 2 days workshop on ‘Managing hearing loss during the Covid pandemic’. This is similar to the original workshop originally set up before Covid but reduced from 4 weeks to 2 days due to it being online. The sessions will be adapted for those with hearing loss by having subtitles, with a script available after and it will be in small groups. If successful CfD will run more workshops like this.

CfD is also looking at creating cards for deaf or hard of hearing people so they can show people that they need to lip read. CfD would like to research the impact of covid on their community, for example, the impact on mental health because of face masks, limiting the ability to read facial expressions and communicate.



Pakistani Welfare Organisation

The Pakistani Welfare Organisation (PWO) have offered group activities and one to one support for people in Bristol. An example of this is their yoga classes, with time to play games (Ludo/Carum) and socialise together. They also do cookery sessions where those who attend can share recipes, there is a focus on healthy eating. The grant has been incredibly helpful in covering the venue hire, paying for their yoga instructor, to source ingredients for the cooking, to buy games, to buy PPE equipment and meet additional overhead expenses for volunteers and operations. PWO were also able to use this funding to buy a phone and credit to keep in contact with members when they have been unable to do this face to face. The phone is currently held by trustees so they can be a point of contact for the community while their office is closed. They offer support to women and those who are most vulnerable within the community, who don't necessarily attend the groups but are known through the group. This work is new to the organisation. PWO appreciate the stability for the members and organisation this funding has given them.

PWO was initially focussing their support for women who are over 50 years old with this funding as they recognised that this group are at risk of being isolated in the Pakistani community. However, they have found that ethnicities, religion and age of those wanting to access their services as been more varied than anticipated. Ethnicities of this group include Pakistani, Indian, South African, White British, Danish and Somali. There are 7 different first languages. The PWO see this as a positive and strive to be inclusive of anyone who wants to access their services and they find that the range of ages allows for an intergenerational group who can offer different support and insight to each other.

The Pakistani community in Bristol have been especially concerned about Covid-19 due to the higher number of rates in their community. Therefore they have translated information and updates regarding Covid-19 in the Urdu language so members can receive information and updates from a trusted source and familiar face. This has been shared with the wider community via social messaging groups. They have also needed to offer practical and emotional bereavement support. They shared ideas online about yoga and breathing exercise to help reduce anxiety. During Ramadam which was different this year, they shared healthy recipes online for members. The group has met online and outdoors or indoors depending the restrictions at the time.

Number of volunteers/staff involved in the service: 9

People supported through the service: Up to 40 women at one time



Promotion and partnership working

PWO has promoted the project by having leaflets at the local Mosques, local shops, doctors' surgeries and the local leisure centre. They have been promoting via Facebook and their community WhatsApp groups. The promotion has been online since the first lockdown.

They have been working in collaboration with the Bristol Muslim Strategic Leadership group, Bristol4help group as well as a range of other local community groups. They are connecting and working with a much larger number of groups/organisations, to meet the current need for vulnerable women in the city. All of the above groups are aware that they are a point of contact in supporting vulnerable women, particularly from the South Asian and diasporic communities.

Quotes

"The service gives me the opportunity to meet new people and that is very important for me as I live alone"

"I think service can be improved with more people joining it to volunteer and helping out. Some form of counselling service could be helpful"

"Friendly, accessible, affordable, enjoyable"

"Makes me believe in humanity, talking to likeminded women makes me confident"

"Very friendly and welcoming. Great yoga instructor"

Case Study

Zara is over 50, lives alone for most of the year (unless family visit) and wanted to do more for her health and wellbeing and meet other women. She has long term health conditions which have affected her in the last 15 years. As a Muslim, she wanted a safe space where she could exercise which considered religious needs.

Zara first heard of the Yoga sessions from advertising via community networks, in a WhatsApp group and by word of mouth. She had previously heard of the organisation but was unaware of what they did. She attended her first session after the first lockdown because she was suffering mentally and just needed to get out. It was a little daunting at first because she didn't think she has the flexibility to attend the yoga groups.

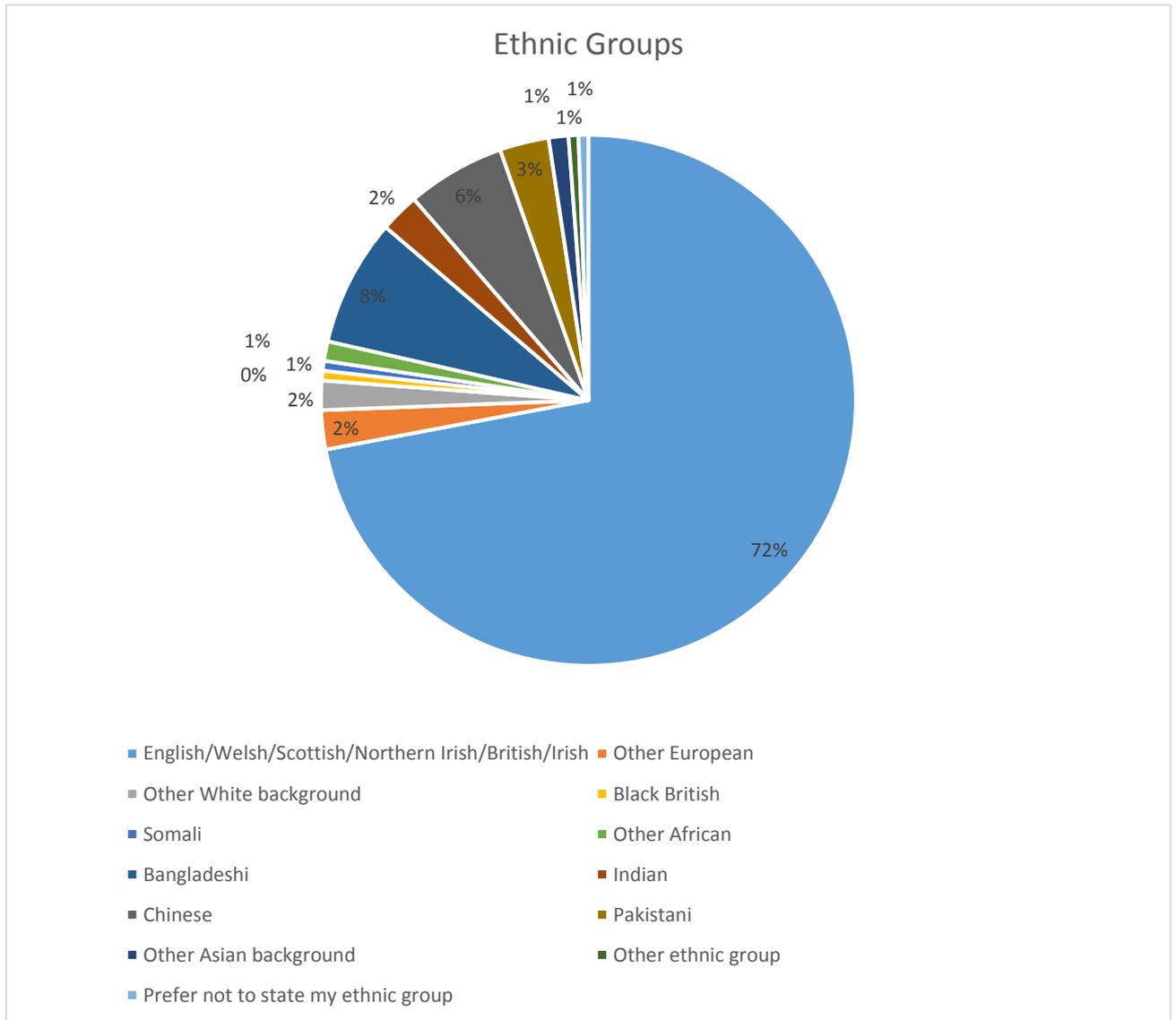
Her ideas about the groups were completely different from what she expected and after being with the group for 10 minutes she immediately felt at home. The yoga teacher was incredibly supportive of all abilities and she found the social and mental support she received was really empowering. She has only missed one outdoor Yoga session and is telling all her friends about how wonderful it is. She is very supportive of the organisation and the space/connection PWO provide for older residents who live alone.

Next steps

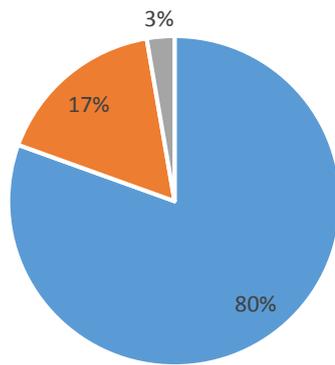
We look forward to speaking with members and the community in responding to the long term effects of Covid 19. PWO is also looking to set up a men's group, as older men have raised that they would benefit from a space to socialise and support each other to reduce isolation.

Who has been involved

We have worked with people from over 12 different ethnic groups and with 12 different first languages. Over 6 different faiths/religions. A lot of people we have supported have considered themselves disabled and come from older age groups.

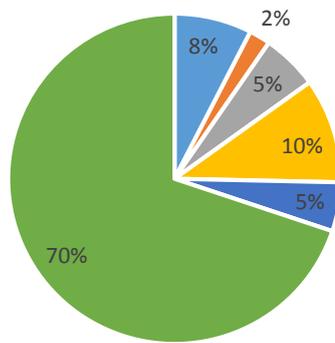


Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person



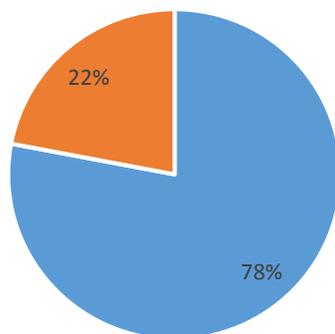
■ Yes ■ No ■ Prefer not to say

Age



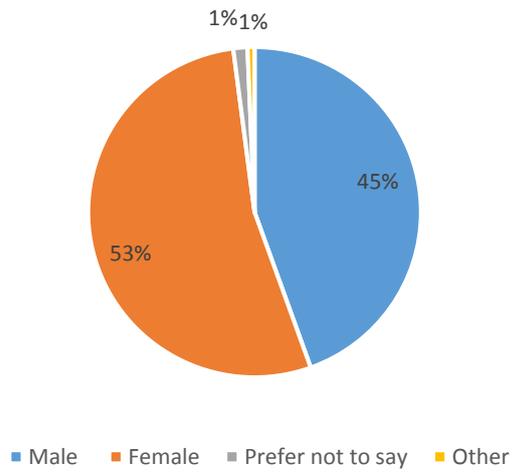
■ 16-25 ■ 26-35 ■ 36-45 ■ 46-55 ■ 56-65 ■ 65 and over

First Language



■ English ■ Other

Gender



Religion/faith

