

NLCF Monitoring Form¹: End of Project Year 3 Report

Organisation	Diversity Matters North West Ltd
Project name:	BAMER Women's Basic Skills, Training and Employment Readiness Programme
Completed By:	Rehana Begum, CEO

The story of your project this year

Our project has gone strength to strength since its inception in April 2020 where it coincided with the COVID19 pandemic and government lockdown. Our local neighbourhood ranks within the bottom thousand for multiple deprivation. Our target group of women from minority ethnic communities in Tameside face triple disadvantage arising from gender, ethnicity, and locality. Despite the delayed start, the exacerbated existing and the introduction of new challenges, we saw the engagement levels from minority ethnic women increase year on year as we worked hard to reach, listen, and engage with women hard hit by the recent pandemic. The intensive engagement has given confidence, reassurance and built back trust, post pandemic. Through our project, many women have been able to secure employment - far exceeding our expectations. It is important for us to ensure our services are accessible and so through our yearly consultations, feedback and focus groups, we listened and transformed our services and engagement strategy where we delivered a blended offer of services ensuring that we were able to cater for the diverse needs.

We have over exceeded our outcomes and continue to see partners approaching us for support with engagement into this community. We are continuously seeing our own waiting lists grow and demand for our work exceed capacity. Women from minority communities are often a target in the plans of generalist job creation schemes, only to be discarded by the successful bidders in favour of easier targets. We have referred many women to external opportunities and services to help meet the need, however due multiple barriers to accessing these services, including lack of cultural sensitivity and understanding, accessibility of opportunities, and poor communication methods, women are once again left behind.

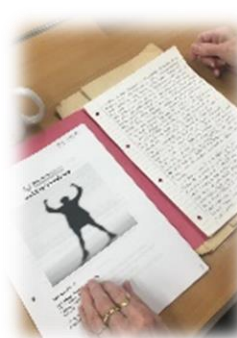
This year alone,

- ✚ In quarter 1 we had 582 women engage, 744 in quarter 2, 733 in quarter 3 and 638 in quarter 4. Some of these women would have attended across multiple quarters and years to access different opportunities as they progressed on their learning journey. This is 2697 women that have accessed the project.
- ✚ We recruited further paid casual workers, drawn from our beneficiaries offering a first step into employment - to aid with meeting the demand of the programme.
- ✚ We delivered 6 accredited learning opportunities (including health and safety, community Interpreting, food hygiene, safeguarding and first aid, e-learning), totalling 17 sessions, where we had 146 attendees and 466 attendances!
- ✚ We delivered 403 non accredited sessions including workshops, training, focus groups and one to one support (conversational ESOL, Talk English cafes, confidence building, pre volunteering, computer course, learning hubs, 1-2-1 employment support, access support, enterprise training, focus groups, service information workshops). "Learning English is important to me, and my confidence level is getting better so I feel more able to tackle everyday things by myself." Where 306 women attended and where we had 1560 attendances!
- ✚ In addition, we held 2 community events, 1 community consultation and 12 outreach events. Through these interventions, our extended total attendees to 2675 people in Tameside this year alone.
- ✚ Total attendances on the project this year equated to 4271.

¹ <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/managing-your-grant/over-10k/progress-updates>

NON-ACCREDITED COMMUNITY LEARNING

-  **ESOL:** We consistently saw a high demand for ESOL in Tameside so we worked alongside key partners to bring opportunities for local learning, removing barriers together “thank you for the childcare, because of this I was able to join the course”. We worked with TACE and community Revival and coordinated the 3 ESOL provisions in Hyde to ensure many women as possible could access them. Pre ESOL / conversational ESOL were held in person whereas the accredited learning was held online. Learners that accessed this and needed additional help to get online and sought this through our learning hub. We ensured women followed the pathway from pre ESOL to accredited ESOL to then progressing on to higher levels, signing up with TACE / Tameside College to continue their learning journey. One of the registration days we had 23 women registered for pre ESOL. We delivered sessions on travel training and pre arranged the women to go in pairs to meet tutors at an external venue to visit. At the end of the pre ESOL course, saw all learners sign up for further learning with TACE. “I am happy to start college now to continue to progress my learning” RB
-  **Talk English Cafes:** This has been popular for many women to dip in and out each week to learn basic English-speaking skills and practicing everyday conversation to boost self-confidence and connect with their peers. “It works for me as I have caring responsibilities, so I find it difficult to attend every week. I particularly enjoy meeting other ladies and helping each other to learn.” We delivered 7 sessions this year with 42 attendances.
-  **Confidence Building:** We worked with women from diverse backgrounds to identify their strengths, celebrating and sharing it with others as well as identifying their weaknesses and looking for ways to overcome those. The sessions helped to increase aspirations and motivation to move forward and access opportunities for further training, support for employment readiness, taking up volunteering or simply develop confidence to ask for help. Women supported each other to bring out their hidden skills. “I feel more confident after attending this course. I feel no less than anyone else”. We delivered one cohort of this training this year, where 13 women attended and completed the 2-week course. “I will try and do things I was scared to do by myself.”
-  **Pre-Volunteering Training:** For many of our service users, securing employment is a long way away and something they are unfamiliar with. Via our training programme we introduce volunteering as a pathway to building skills, knowledge, and confidence for future employment. 13 women completed our 2-day course, helping them to prepare for volunteering roles, with 100% completion rate. It is through this that we have successfully engaged in recruiting 18 volunteers / peer learning mentors to help deliver the programme outcomes as well as supporting 50% of our volunteers to move on to external volunteering.
-  **Basic Computer Course:** We identified a need for basic computer course for the local women from the ethnic minority communities via our own community consultations and waiting lists. Due to the challenges and barriers, they faced they have been finding difficult to progress in life, in their learning journeys. These barriers included, not limited to, the lack of education, language barrier, limited knowledge about technology, no access to resources / equipment, childcare barriers, time and cost. we listened and worked with local women from minority ethnic backgrounds living in Hyde to remove barriers to education and engage in our project. We held a registration day for our basic computer course and received a huge response for women wanting to register. We worked with our local authority and sourced in additional funds to help deliver 2 cohorts of training, with 16 women registered and completed. 2 women were supported to access free laptop from PCREFURB and all 16 registered for further learning with DMNW and or external organisations. “I learnt how to join zoom, I can attend other online training now!”



ACCREDITED LEARNING

✚ **E-learning Opportunity:** Working in collaboration with Skills for Care via First Response, we agreed free access to the e-learning platform for any of our service users, staff or volunteers of the project to access at any time to develop the skills and knowledge and gain additional accredited qualifications from health and safety, first aid, food safety and other care qualifications. 22 women accessed this to date via support from the project.

✚ **Food hygiene L2:** We have been supporting women to establish their business part of our pilot work. Some of the women are doing a food business and required to have food hygiene certification to trade. To support them, we arranged and delivered online Food Hygiene training, to allow more women to join across Tameside. The training helped the women to get one-step ahead for their catering business and open doors for future employment opportunities in the catering industry. 24 women completed and passed the training. Additional women that were interested were added to our waiting list.

✚ **Emergency First Aid at work L3:** we noticed a demand for emergency first aid from women for both future work purposes and for their own personal lives. We worked with First Response to source in localised training, where the training was fully booked and all 12 learners passed the course (a direct contrast to last year where on the day, attendance dropped to 6 learners due to COVID19). Further women were placed on our waiting list despite trying to refer to external providers. This was due to external training being inaccessible for the women we work with due to barriers including, travel, costs, time and extended family responsibilities. *"I never attended First Aid training before. It was very useful skills to have as I can utilise this for my family, friend and work".*



"my daughter was choking and I had to perform first aid quickly, I was so glad I just did the training, it saved my daughter's life".

✚ **Community Interpreting L2:** This year, we continued to bring opportunities locally for women, so working with WEA, we organised local delivery of our second 10-week level 2 community interpreting course. However, despite having nearly 30 women interested in the training, only a few passed the assessment, therefore, local delivery was not possible. With our support, 10 ladies managed to engage online, completed their course, and passed! We further supported women by offering space at our centre, cover childcare costs and access to laptop and support to get online for those who did not have this at home. *"DMNW covered my childcare costs so I can join the training – without it I don't know what I would have done".* For the women that did not pass, we ensured they accessed other elements of our programme to help them to improve their written skills and pass the assessment next time round. This course remains highly popular due to its future flexible employment prospects and that it plays to the strength of many of the multilingual women in the community who are already interpreting for family and friends without any income. Without the support of the project, many of these women would have struggled to achieve this. *"It has been a while since I did a course, I was scared and doubted myself. I got encouragement from DMNW staff and other women. I am so proud that I have managed to complete the course."* (AB).

WORKSHOPS & 1-2-1 SUPPORT

✚ **Employment Support: 1-2-1:** Across all 3 community consultations, there was always an appetite for women from marginalised communities wanting to start their learning journeys. Sessions offered 1-2-1 bilingual, culturally sensitive local support via telephone, zoom and face to face with a sole aim to identify their skills, gaps, and set realistic goals on route to future employment, developing a personal learning plan. We helped with creating and updating CVs, covering letters, job search, completing application forms, practiced interview skills, setting up their own business, advice on how to market services and products and reach customers, we also signposted and referred women to external services to tap in to accredited training. Since starting the sessions in 2021, we have delivered 171 appointments, equating to over 256 hours of support. This year alone we conducted 60 appointments

(105hrs of support). This has been highly successful where 55 women reported securing employment and or starting their own business so they can bring a small income to help with the rising cost of living – passing our own expectations of the project. “DMNW employment support was flexible for me, staff supported me, guided me where and how to start built up my CV and start volunteering which helped me to get into part time job” (JK). These women have not been in employment before due lack of confidence, belief, aspiration that they can work and have something to offer or have had a long break since last in employment due to health reasons and some with regards to cultural inhibitions. Further 128 women have moved on to further learning and or accredited qualifications moving them further towards the labour market. (Please refer to outcomes section of this report).

- ✚ **Employment Support: Workshop:** This year we delivered 2 employment workshops in partnership with Jigsaw Homes, where 13 women attended. These workshops covered in depth topics on essential employment skills such as how to create a CV, interview techniques and how to complete an application form. Once again, we had to cancel 2 workshops due to staffing difficulties from our partners and delayed response / lack of communication when planning in sessions.
- ✚ **Zoom for Beginners one to one Support:** During and post pandemic we introduced support to get women online. This was done via one-to-one support and took a lot of staff time as it was offered remotely. Despite having successfully supporting 27 women, and partners refer women to us for help and support, this quickly became a huge drain on staff time. As we started more and more of our activities face to face, we built this support into our community learning hub where peer learning mentors were hand to support women when they needed.
- ✚ **Community Learning Hub:** Set up in October 2021, our volunteer led weekly one stop learning drop-in session helps women access digital support in a safe and local environment, including accessing the internet, using laptop, creating cv, online job search, creating Instagram page, Facebook post for businesses as well as other employment support, some simply came in and practiced using the laptop. We continue to see women on job seekers or universal credit who are often penalised if they do not prove to be job searching sufficiently and meeting quotas. We have 7 community laptops which is accessed by 7 women at any one time. In the last 12 months, we delivered 42 sessions, where 34 individual women attended, an increase of 143% from last years reported figures, indicating a growing need and effectiveness of supporting women. Many of these women tend to access more than once. “My life has changed for good after joining DMNW, I will tell everyone to come”. “Hub is very friendly environment to come to learn and improve my digital skills.”

PILOT PROJECTS

- ✚ **Women’s Digital Entrepreneur (WDE):** Towards the end of year 2, we worked in collaboration with Pathfinder in Oldham to support 16 women from the local minority ethnic community to help set up or grow their small businesses using digital platforms, so women could bring in extra income for their households, “this is a dream come true for me”. To date we have delivered:

- 3 sessions where we supported women to get online and ensure they have an access support worker helping them to understand and communicate.
- 3 monthly catch ups to discuss how the learning went and what other support was required including further training.
- 3 workshops were organised online to discuss key aspects of developing a business, speakers included successful business owners and NatWest delivering workshops on: goal setting and the power of mindset, starting a new business, marketing, access to finance and grants.



- From feedback we organised 2 group mentoring sessions and 12 one to one mentoring to support to help them in their business including using social media, leaflets, pricing, insurance and tax. Together we worked through cultural challenges many women faced and negative comments from other people about opening their businesses.

The pilot project was launched in March 2022 during international women's day at our local Markets in Hyde. As support, Hyde markets agreed free use of the stalls. Key dignitaries attended the event to support the businesses including the Mayor of Tameside, local councillors and the deputy lieutenant of Greater Manchester. We negotiated with our local market stall officer and secured stalls once a month for the women to launch their business. 3 months free and then 3 months at 50% off. This was life changing for the women! A WhatsApp group was set up for communication and peer support which is still running successfully. We secured funding to design and develop business banners for each of the women. These were used at the women's first ever Business Expo that they attended and received certification, presented by Nighat Awan, OBE and CEO of Shere Khan Group, on fully completing the pilot project. Since the end of the pilot, women have continued to access the employment support sessions to access additional help as and when they need it.

 **Access Support Pilot Project:** Our service users have little or no English-speaking skills which is a barrier for them to resolve issues, resulting in many women suffering in silence with stress and anxiety, resulting in poor mental and physical health. Our 2021 consultation told us that there was a need for localised support, so we renegotiated with NLCF and developed an in-house service which met the service gap. The session has been supported by 5 trained casual workers, rotating each week. Initially we offered appointments through out the week, this soon became labour intensive for the lead staff to coordinate, so we reviewed the service with the casual workers and trialled weekly drop in, which has proved to be successful as women know when they can come and drop in when they need help.

Our aim is to enable women to access key services independently and confidently as and when they require it. The service is designed by women for women so they can access support where language is not an issue. [“We are grateful for the service you are providing. Being able to communicate effectively in my language and understood every time clear consistent message feedback to us”](#). Women have come to the sessions with letters/ emails they need help understanding and could be related to housing, utility bills, benefits, medical, education and various other reasons. Women told us that they can express themselves to us in their own language so they can be understood and get the right support, which is a huge barrier they have overcome. Our workers make phone calls on behalf of them, search online for information, and refer them onto another organisation. We continue to women access the services multiple times for multiple reasons, help and support.

Since the pilot started in 2022, we have supported 30 women who have accessed over 138 appointments for support and supported to access 29 organisations (Including GP's, opticians, dentists, HMRC, immigration, housing providers, schools, CAB, and helped with claiming range of benefits and opening bank accounts). This is equal to over 220 hours of support. The support is not limited, so women can come as often as they need to and access the help they need when they need it until they are fully confident in continuing independently. [“I was so lost and stressing until my friend's daughter's told me you provide help here. I am grateful to her for recommending me this place. You are really a life saver.”](#)

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

Volunteer Celebration: We held our annual volunteer celebration and diversity matters in Tameside event in November, face to face since the pandemic, to celebrate and acknowledge our volunteer's contribution towards DMNW and our projects, showing our appreciation for all their hard work. Volunteers were presented with certificates and special awards by our trustee, Mayor, Vice Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester and local councillors. We brought services locally for women to engage with and access. The vice lord lieutenant was very impressed with our event and all the work DMNW has been doing and recommended us to apply for queen's award. 90 women and additional guests attended the event.



Celebrating Women's Skills event 2023: As it was drawing near to the end of the project, it was important for us to showcase and celebrate the achievements of the project and the women it has supported and to connect women with other services and vice versa. This event was combined with international women's day, where we worked with the project beneficiaries and planned a varieties of family fun activities for all. This event was a great opportunity to recognise the achievements of our highly successful 3-year project. Women involved in the project, have been empowered, gaining skills for future employment by attending courses, and gaining experience by taking various volunteering roles within the organisation. Women held stalls with all their banners on display to showcase and promote their business. We invited our partners and service providers to promote services locally, so the women are better informed about what is on offer in Tameside. We had over 300 attendees and held 27 stalls (businesses and agency with information). **"DMNW supported me to come this stage and hold a stall for my business in a such big event. Without DM I wouldn't be in the place I am today."** (Women Digital Entrepreneur project participant).

"Great achievement, great to see all the women holding business stall, well organised the event well done to DMNW. Lovely presentation and welcoming environment" (partners/agency)

REFERRALS/SIGNPOSTING/OUTREACH:

We continued to outreach door to door where we:

- +** Dropped flyers off at local primary schools, businesses, newsagents, GPs, pharmacies in Hyde, Newton Ashton Dukinfield areas.
- +** Circulated information via email to partners.
- +** Held stalls in Hyde and Ashton open market.
- +** Attended community events and network meetings.
- +** Contacted women via text message, WhatsApp, phone call, voice record message and put the message in our WhatsApp status.
- +** Using social media.
- +** We asked volunteer, casual works and staff team to share the info with their contact and the group they are link in with to promote our activity.
- +** One of our volunteers has a parents' group from Endeavour Academy School which she shares the activity information, and we get really good response.

This year we have signposted and referred 164 additional women to services. Signposting over 184 times and conducted 9 actual referrals into services via referral forms or handholding. Over 50% were signposted to internal services including volunteering, domestic abuse and mental health, and social groups. Over 31% were to external training, employment support opportunities. Food bank (22%), CAB (22%), and learning opportunities (44%) were the main ones we referred people to.

How you've involved people from your community in the work you do

Year on year we ensure we implement and create opportunities for our services to input into work of the Charity and its project. As such, we built in feedback and consultation activities within our programme so women can be part of the design, delivery and review of our work. This includes getting women involved in the:

- ✚ planning stages whilst the project is active,
- ✚ post activity / project feedback captured via session evaluations,
- ✚ quarterly focus groups,
- ✚ 6 monthly volunteer forums, and
- ✚ yearly community consultation to help identify future activities and re shaping existing ones.

As a result, we have made several adaptations and changes in our programme where we continued to offer some online training but focused this year more on face-to-face activities. We had a high demand for beginners IT course, so we put on 2 cohorts to meet the need.

ANNUAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION: We conducted our community consultation for 22/23.



NLCF Community
Consultation Report

FOCUS GROUPS: This year we delivered 3 focus groups delivered online and one face to face as requested in our previous focus groups and feedback. Using the KISS evaluation model, we reviewed our services providing bilingual support. We saw that with the support of covering childcare costs or ensuring child friendly environment for these sessions, it attracted more women to come and engage. Across the 3 sessions we had 34 attendances by women. In addition, women were introduced to new venues, where they were able to continue accessing beyond the sessions.



Our first session this year we saw an astonishing 95% of the ladies that attended that day told us more was need to support women with mental wellbeing as women were not coping very well pandemic and 75% said they needed more opportunities to learning how to use IT. 80% mentioned there is no service available locally for people who struggle to read or write letters to go somewhere where someone available to help them with this matter. By the second and third session, women wanted more face-to-face activities to help with re-integration back into their local communities and to socialise with others as they became more confident. Demand for ESOL learning opportunities continued to remain high whilst concerns relating to the cost-of-living crisis grew. We took this and

1. planned in face-to-face recruitment day for our beginners IT and saw that we needed to run 2 sessions to meet the needs. We were able to secure some funds to help with the delivery of the sessions from our local authority.
2. We also opened our face-to-face learning hubs for anyone who wanted additional support or wanted a space where they were able to practice their IT skills to drop in access our community training laptops.
3. Opened our bilingual access support sessions to support more women with what they needed help with – making it a one stop shop for help and support.
4. Developed our employment one to one sessions as a hybrid offer.
5. Worked with partners to bring in localised ESOL offers both non accredited and accredited learning including our own Talk English cafes.
6. Signposted and referred women to local food banks and the bread-and-butter thing and other support services to aid with the cost-of-living crisis.

The feedback continued to be positive as women were happy with what was being offered by the project and how DMNW were responding to the needs of the local ethnic minority community. "All projects offered by DMNW are great and should continue for our local community".

VOLUNTEERS:

-  **General Volunteers:** We have successfully engaged with and supported 18 volunteers throughout the life of the project. They have actively been promoting the project to their family and friends via emails, telephone calls, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Our volunteers are a key resource for the community as they can effectively communicate and share their experience of engaging with DMNW, motivating, and encouraging others to take up opportunities. DMNW volunteering opportunities works with the volunteers, working with their strengths to build confidence, aspirations and then encouraged and supported to try different roles. We have seen first-hand how our volunteers develop and move on to external opportunities, helping to build capacity of external organisations, enabling them to diversify their teams and be able to ensure their own services are inclusive of the communities they serve. This has also helped us to develop our grow our own workforce, where many of our volunteers have gained employment with DMNW both on a part time and casual basis, enabling us to effectively build our capacity to engage members of the local community.
-  **Peer Learning Mentors:** We recruited a further 5 learning mentors this year. These Learning Mentors are volunteers recruited from the local communities and provide support for our beneficiaries for various initiatives. We found many of these volunteers move on to secure employment of further studies which is a fantastic achievement for the women, ultimately meeting the outcomes of the project!



CASUAL WORKERS: We have advertised and recruited 7 casual workers for the project throughout the life of the programme. All workers have been drawn from the project beneficiaries as part of their employment journey. We have an active recruitment advert where we shortlist each quarter. Some casual workers have multiple roles and are actively involved in the planning, designing and delivery of the roles and activities.

-  2 in admin role to support the project
-  3 session facilitators
-  5 access support / interpreter

These roles provided a much-needed boost to the women we worked with, ultimately increasing future work aspirations. We found our casual workers become more involved with the Charity and actively promoted the work to their networks more effectively. This was also a pathway for DMNW to re-invest in our 'grow our own' model, where we supported, trained and develop our future workforce from our service users, therefore, building stronger and skilled community.

SHARING LEARNING: We have continued to work alongside both public and private sector partners, working to ensure key messages are disseminated and made accessible to ethnic minority communities. We attended:

-  **Work and skills integration board:** This is attended to connect with other providers in Tameside, and we are well informed and can effectively signpost and referral our learners on. This also provided an opportunity to share our learning and the work we are doing with minority ethnic women across Tameside, the only one of its kind. As a result, we have been approached by TMBC, Igneous and Standguide as a partner of choice to deliver key interventions in the community.
-  **Diversity Network meeting:** This a voluntary sector led network which was formed as a result of DMNW research conducted in Tameside during the COVID pandemic. This network was set up in partnership with our local infrastructure organisation to address the findings and

recommendations. We continue to co-host and attend these meetings, advocating for changes for greater equity of access to services.

- ✚ Inequalities reference group: This is a local authority led network. Our attendance is to ensure services are inclusive of its community and recommendations of our community consultation on 'barriers to accessing information' are taken forward via the local authorities strategic Health and wellbeing Board's future strategy.

Our consultation reports have been shared with our local infrastructure organisation and networks we attend as above. We are also created a video as part of the legacy of our current NLCF funded programme so this can be shared with our networks.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING: We continue to deliver strong partnerships across the sectors in Tameside to reach out and support as many residents as possible. This helped us to use our local knowledge, connections, and links to connect people to key services. "You are doing fantastic work in Tameside with BAMER residents, and we want to be doing collaborative work with you" (Being There).

"You are doing the most amazing work with such a small team, credit to the Charity for supporting the local people during such difficult times for everyone" (Tameside & Glossop local Constituency Meeting: Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust, Non-Executive Director).

The differences you're making (both big and small)

The difference and impact the project has made on women from minority communities have been life changing for some where one person described the support as a ladder "I feel like I needed a ladder to step on to reach my goal. DMNW was the ladder for me, and I did my first step, and they are helping me to carry on climbing" (Service User).

- ✚ Our employment support had massive impact on service users. We offered employment support one to one also this support offered in learning hub. Women have easy access to come to our centre every week and receive the support they needed.
- ✚ 55 women managed to secure a job! This has been life changing for the women and it is providing some much-needed income during the cost-of-living crisis for many of the families of the women we have been working with. "I have managed to secure job in very short time which I am very proud of myself. Thank you" (Service User)
- ✚ One lady applied for casual position at DMNW however she didn't get shortlisted. After we gave feedback, she took it and updated her cv including all qualifications she had gained. She also started to volunteer with us to build her confidence and gain work experience. From accessing the project, she managed to secure a job with the NHS as a casual worker!
- ✚ One of our participants of the Talk English café, often wore a niqab (face veil) and previously encountered a lot of racial abuse, which took her self-confidence away in speaking to people outside her own culture and community. She started on our sessions and participated in the role play activity set up in Asda. She was able to ask for help confidently using her English language skills that she had been practising. It was great to see that confidence in her to speak up and engage despite her previous negative experience and that her wearing her niqab was not going to stop her from learning.
- ✚ One the lady joined our programme, she mentioned she spent most of her life looking after her family in London, she was isolated by the family and now, since she has been engaging with DMNW, she is at a point in her life that she is determined to create her own identity, the world is for her to conquer!
- ✚ One of our pre ESOL learners won an award at the TMBC Adult learners award week as a result of our collaborative work with TACE! "I am so happy; I feel more confident to do more courses at the college and continue my learning" RB.

CASE STUDY: SERVICE USERS



Good News Case
Study SN.docx



Good news Case
Study SB.docx



Good News Case
Study AK.docx

GOOD NEWS CASE STUDY: AC: OUR HIDDEN GEM

AC came to UK in 2000, after completing her secondary school qualification in Bangladesh, she got married and immediately moved here in Hyde. She was responsible for running the whole house including her ill elderly mother-in-law and a sister-in-law who had down syndrome. She struggled a lot as she was very young, married and then had so many responsibilities. Her focus was her family. AC found about the course from her friend and decided to register for the computer course. After attending, AC felt more comfortable and started to think about doing other courses delivered by DMNW. AC is always willing to learn, and she is a very hard working. She has now completed her food hygiene & first aid. AC was then referred to WEA and has started her teaching assistant course. "I now feel confident enough to go out, meet new people and support the local community". AC is now a registered volunteer for DMNW, supporting with community events and is one of the lead volunteers supporting to run the weekly community learning hub. "If I didn't know about DMNW I would not be doing all these trainings and volunteering, I feel happier and grateful for DMNW staff and volunteers encouraging me to take the next step". AC is a hidden gem in our community, and through these localised, bespoke and targeted interventions, we were able to find her, support her and now she has started her journey to developing herself, the world is her oyster!

FEEDBACK FROM SERVICE USERS & VOLUNTEERS

- ✚ "All the support given to women; it was life changing for us. We cannot get support like this anywhere else." (Access Support Client)
- ✚ "Diversity Matters is easy to get in touch. Staff is very friendly and support us according to our needs."
- ✚ "I am very pleased that I have managed to secure job by DMNW staff support who guided me what to do and how to apply the jobs" (Volunteer)
- ✚ "I have shared my achievement at Women's skills event which made me feel very special." (Women's Digital Entrepreneur participant)
- ✚ "I have been volunteering with DMNW now I got offer job as a casual worker which I really appreciate to offer me the job." (Volunteer)
- ✚ "I can get help and advice with looking for work." (Community Learning Hub Service User)



PROJECT OUTCOMES:

Despite facing multiple exacerbated challenges and new challenges brought on by the COVID19 pandemic in 2020, at the beginning of the project we have successfully managed to achieve and over exceed outcomes. We have engaged 260 individual women within the project, exceeding our 250 target, despite the challenges and delayed start of the programme by nearly 16 months. Both existing and new women accessed the project multiple times, to help with developing basic skills, confidence, employment readiness skills, knowledge, and experience.

We conducted our project questionnaires with a sample of 229 existing service users from minority communities to understand the impact of the project on their lives. In year 1, 29 women completed this questionnaire, a further 97 in year 2, and 103 in year 3. The following results are the accumulative results of the full 3 years of the project:

- ✚ **O1: by the end of the project 200 women will report an increase in confidence through active involvement with the project:** All 229 women reported increase in confidence, over exceeding this outcome by nearly 15%. We have had consistent 100% achievement of this outcome throughout the years indicating that our co-produced, person-centred approach works and is meeting the needs of minority ethnic women in Tameside.

- ✚ **O2: by the end of the project 200 women will report an increase in self-awareness and overall wellbeing:** 100% of women reported in an increase in self – awareness and overall wellbeing (n=229), indicating our interventions that we established during, and post pandemic had been effective in overachieving on this outcome, where levels of wellbeing had improved for women.
- ✚ **O3: 120 women will report an increase in skills and knowledge required for readiness for employment:** a 100% of the women we interviewed (n=229) told us that as a result from accessing the project activities, their skills and knowledge required for future employment had increased. Overachieving this outcome by nearly 91%.
- ✚ **O4: 70% of the women will report progressing into further learning opportunities by the end of the project:** 100% of the women we survey reported a positive progress here. This is 88% of the total women that engaged on the whole project (n=229/260). Once again over exceeding our outcome, highlighting the effectiveness of our interventions and approach. This is also indicating the increased appetite for learning and progression.
- ✚ **O5: 25% of the women will report they have gained employment by the end of the project (25% of overall project beneficiaries):** a total of 21% of women secured employment since the start of the project (n=55). This more than double our last reported figures (10%). Although we fell slightly short here, we knew from the start that this would be a huge challenge for the group of women we targeted engagement with on this programme. Many of whom faced multiple challenges only exacerbated by the COVID19 pandemic. Nevertheless, despite the impact of COVID19 and the delayed start of the project activities, achieving this is a huge achievement for the women and the project, we can only speculate what this outcome would have looked like if the pandemic did not hit.

Our data indicates consistent and significant increases and improvements both in reach and engagement of women from minority ethnic communities. It is important to note that no numbers in relation to the outcomes decreased.

The analysis from these questionnaires shows that this project is highly effective in its delivery, facilitation and partnership when it comes to ensuring women from minority communities can access the same opportunities for learning and development as their white counterparts. We always knew that the journey to employment is a long one for our women, especially when you consider the disparities in employment rates for ethnic minority communities.

In addition, our partnership working has enabled us to create a gateway for further opportunities for women from minority ethnic communities. Subsequently, through the upskilling of women via our programme activities and one to one support, we have seen many of our learners, volunteers and staff move on to external opportunities. This has built capacity of other organisations, strengthening their cultural diversity and multilingual teams to better meet the demands of their service users.

What you've learned

What's gone well? Despite challenges brought on by pre and post pandemic, we worked hard, and our doors remained open for the minority ethnic communities of Tameside to tap into vital support services where no one else was able to offer. We developed closer relations with our local authority as one of the largest organisations still actively supporting this client group. We are recognised as the go to organisation working with ethnic minority residents in Tameside with extensive experience, knowledge, and local connections.

- ✚ Over exceeding outcomes! We reached over 260 individual women across the programme, where just this year we have had 4271 attendances!
- ✚ Women in jobs! Although the pandemic impacted on the project start, we were still able to remain in contact with our client group, engage and consult, ultimately, over exceeding our outcomes – a testament to the staff, the relationships and trust built by them with women from minority ethnic communities of Tameside. To our surprise, 55 women secured employment!

- ✚ Access Support: The demand for our access support service increased month by month where we have seen 30 women across 138 appointments!
- ✚ Partner and Community Recognition! Successfully supported local South Asian women set up their own business. This collaborative work with Pathfinder and Asian Business Lead in Oldham got our CEO, Rehana Begum recognised and nominated to attend a prestigious Royal event in Edinburgh at the Palace of Holyrood House on 03.10.22 to celebrate the contributions to the UK society from British South- East Asian communities and to meet The King and The Queen Consort.
<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=575426081296262&set=pcb.575426124629591>
- ✚ Digital support: The impact of providing Digital support to women made a huge difference and change in their life. They are now independently accessing Facebook and Instagram to promote their business and finding out information about other companies. They are also engaging with other services and their family and friends.
- ✚ Community learning hub: offering support has enabled many women to develop their IT skills and confidence and apply for jobs and training opportunities, many of whom have now moved on to external training, volunteering and gained employment.

What's not gone well or been challenging? During and post covid-19 pandemic, we still encountered challenges that impacted on service delivery, including:

- ✚ Waiting time: external services: Our access support services experienced long waiting times where some appointments can take only 20-30 minutes, and some can take over an hour due to IT challenges or service provider not picking up the phone or the waiting time if there's a queue. When these situations occur, we use the time constructively to see other clients whilst we wait for call backs.
- ✚ Demand exceeding capacity: Despite our efforts increasing capacity to deliver on the project via our casual worker and volunteer recruitment, we still fell short. We worked tirelessly with partners to bring services locally, so they are accessible by women. We found that despite aiding organisations, without our support and connections, they are unable to maintain local delivery!
- ✚ IT issues: We purchased our community training laptops nearly 10 years ago and now they require much attention and support to ensure they are still fit for use. Despite re-building the laptops to enable more effective running, they soon slowed down again which meant applications took longer to load, therefore, support sessions took longer.
- ✚ This year we found our employment support workshops in partnership with external partners, to be ineffective in comparison to pre-COVID. We found that women engaged more with the 1-2-1 sessions and progressed further with this coupled with attending the learning hub. This could be potentially due to the 2 cancelled sessions by partners.
- ✚ Partnership working: We have encountered several occasions where partners are failing to deliver as agreed and have poor communication. As a result, our service users are receiving a negative experience and reluctant to engage again.
- ✚ Childcare places: at the start of this year, we found that many women struggled to get a placement for their children, especially when they were engaging in training and learning opportunities with DMNW. For some, this prevented them from engaging despite our efforts trying to find places. We tried bringing in mobile creche, unfortunately due to staffing capacity of the providers, these had to be cancelled. Women were not confident in accessing independent childminders either. With sessions we were able to, we ensured child friendly spaces, where mums could bring their child along with them. However, for the training sessions this was not practical and often was a distraction to their learning.

What's been unexpected or interesting?

- ✚ Despite delayed start of the project due to the pandemic; we have managed to engage 260 individual women into our programme and 55 women successfully secured a job which include self-employment from our successful pilot women's digital enterprise project. There seems to be an increased appetite for this now, as more and more women are enquiring about support to start their own business as this is more flexible for them and they are in

control of when they can and cannot work, therefore maintained their household responsibilities.

- ✚ Our outreach and engagement methods yielded a high response rate from staff posting opportunities on the WhatsApp status and having a stall at the open markets, more so than leaflet dropping door to door. As a result, we are looking at reducing leaflet printing and selecting where it will be most effective to conduct outreach moving forwards.
- ✚ We are also seeing increase in diversity of our service users where they are from Polish, Arab and African backgrounds. As we do not record immigration status, we cannot comment on whether refugees or asylum seekers have been accessing our services, however from staff interaction, we know they have been engaging.
- ✚ We observed ongoing challenges faced by women from minority community when accessing accredited learning. We see many women who have been out of education or work for a long period of time due to childcare or extended family responsibilities fail written skills assessments when accessing level 2 accredited course. This often comes as a surprise to these women where we sit with discuss with the learner and our partners and identify how they can improve and pass next time.

What have you learned?

- ✚ Demand for English learning provisions are high in Tameside, especially with a growing refugee community. Local provisions for English learning are not very well advertised or coordinated. Where we externally advertise and promote in the community, we find many services don't, therefore, the local community can lose out on the opportunities or end up having only those that know about the opportunities take up more spaces. There needs to be a consistent offer available locally to minority communities where they can easily access provisions without compromising their family life, responsibilities and relationships.
- ✚ We also found that for many women, part time, casual work or self-employment was highly popular as it suited the lifestyle of many women with having much of the family responsibilities, caring of children and extended family members resting on their shoulders. Simultaneously we found that local jobs were more important for the women we spoke to due to the reasons above. (Refer to Community Consultation Report 22/23).
- ✚ There remains a clear demand for this project whether that is from our session evaluations, focus groups, forums or community consultations. This is evident from the high number of engagements for the project. We reached over 260 women – this also means that all 260 women would be engaging across the years, in multiple activities and opportunities. The impact of the project has been life changing, where we have seen more women take control over their lives and invest in themselves and their aspirations for the future via role models and support from staff.

How you're changing what you do

Throughout the project we took on board key learning and changed and adapted the way we worked and delivered services to women from minority ethnic communities experiencing racial inequalities in Tameside. This year has not been any different. Our learning has informed us of:

- ✚ The effectiveness of appropriate blended offer of delivering services to ensure those that cannot attend face to face sessions can still engage and access opportunities, therefore, removing further barriers to engagement and participation such as travel time, childcare / extended family responsibilities. This worked well with our focus group sessions.
- ✚ The importance of ensuring child friendly activities where appropriate such as in our focus groups and continuing to seek funds to cover childcare costs.
- ✚ Listening and reviewing services from multiple points of view to ensure we deliver effective services that benefit all such as changing access support from appointment basis to one day drop to manage service and provide clarity and consistency to service users.
- ✚ Re-investing in our grow our own approach, providing pathways and experience to future employment.
- ✚ Conscious of cascading our reports and learning to partners to help them to review their engagement strategy and reach to minority communities of Tameside.

- ✚ Insist on written partnership agreement to ensure accountability and monitoring of effective partnership working.
- ✚ Our outreach and engagement methods yielded a high response rate from staff posting opportunities on the WhatsApp status and having a stall at the open markets, more so than leaflet dropping door to door. As a result, we are looking at reducing leaflet printing and selecting where it will be most effective to conduct outreach moving forwards.