

WELLBEING MATTERS PROJECT

Project summary

This 3 year project is aimed at reducing isolation and improving physical and mental health, primarily through increasing the availability of free local activities and providing the co-ordination needed to ensure new people can be reached and engaged. Although this is primarily for people of South Asian heritage aged 50+, it will be inclusive to adults and young people of any culture because it may support greater cohesion and many have needs that this project can meet.

Wellbeing Matters is a partnership project led by Apna Virsa working with three trusted community organisations:- Slough Senior Citizens Group, Asian Carers Group, Mens Matters, all of whom share common objectives and complement each other, facilitating a robust inter-group referral system. This project enables each provider to continue reaching current beneficiaries but also reach those people that they have been unable to connect with because of resources, insufficient/fragmented network or distance.

The project duration will allow sufficient time to reach new participants from wider communities and engage them to try the variety of activities, overcome their barriers and facilitate promotion of greater cohesion.

Activities will take place across Slough and Maidenhead. Over the past 6 months, Apna Virsa has strengthened its network in both areas, establishing an understanding of the needs of people not yet reached by us or other local groups. While the LA areas are different, there are many synergies, especially with NHS commissioning and Wellbeing Advisors, plus the cross-boundary Community Voluntary Service. There is a keenness to work closely with us by advising, listening, referring and connecting people.

Main activities of the project:

1. Creating, maintaining and growing a group of stakeholders who influence services, deliver activities or benefit from the activities. This group will ensure the project has the capability and can produce greater community capacity.
2. Establishing a web resource and communication process for stakeholders and beneficiaries - enabling the wider community to know about activities/opportunities - particularly helpful for those that have not yet been reached (plus service providers will develop confidence in our activities and be happy to make referrals).
3. Responding to barriers which can cause dependency, using a simple framework known locally as the 'Ladder of Change' to identify where people feel they are, and for the project to help them become resilient (e.g. some free transport and a volunteer buddy system)
4. Delivering free, tried and tested sessions regularly which have ceased due to lack of funds, don't run often enough or haven't happened yet:
 - Health workshops (on issues relevant to older people);
 - Exercise sessions (e.g Bhangra, Gidha, Yoga and Walking);
 - Social activities (Mens Talk Club, craft activities, learning IT);
 - Healthy eating and cooking workshops;
 - Skill sessions where older adults share skills (eg. sewing, woodworking, music);

Key Project Outcomes:

- Physical health improvements – greater likelihood that people remain and/or become active and able to care for themselves and their families;
- Mental health – people will become happier, more engaged and able to participate in community life;
- Greater cohesion – between cultures, ages and backgrounds;
- More volunteering – volunteers better linked with service providers and more likely to be sustained.