

Learning Snapshot: Working and Engaging with BAME Communities

Ageing Better is a test and learn programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

We collect information and insights from across 14 partnerships and use this learning to support service deliverers, funders and policy makers working to reduce social isolation in people aged 50+.

This learning snapshot details key findings and recommendations relevant to those working and engaging with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

You can use it as a summary of the full [learning report](#), to share practical tools with colleagues and in teams, or include in your own presentations and briefings.

<p>1. Why focus on BAME communities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 in 4 Ageing Better participants are BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic). • Research from Ambition for Ageing, British Red Cross and Ageing Better suggests the risk factors for loneliness and social isolation (deprivation, inequality, personal circumstance, mental or physical health and becoming a carer) increase in some BAME communities. • Existing research highlights the extent to which services do not meet the needs of BAME communities currently. The Ageing Better programme wants to address this. 	<p>2. What are the challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAME people aged 50+ are not part of one homogenous group. They represent many diverse communities. • BAME people aged 50+ may be less likely to access services they need because of specific barriers to engagement including: discrimination, lack of cultural sensitivity, unconscious bias and structural racism. • Mistrust can exist between public and third sector services and communities. • ‘Cultural stigma’ within some communities (around physical and mental illness) prevents people seeking support.
<p>4. So what can we do with this learning? Successfully breaking down barriers and delivering person-centred support to BAME communities requires trust and understanding between commissioners, funders, deliverers and participants.</p> <p>Test and learn from services in your area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with funders to consider flexible ‘success criteria’ rather than ‘hard outputs’ when funding small groups. • Undertake community research to identify gaps and build awareness of needs. • Draw on the lived experience, relationships and safe spaces within BAME communities to design support. • Explore cross-generational connectors when growing community networks. 	<p>3. How can we improve BAME connections and community infrastructure?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-production and co-research are fundamental in helping understand the particular challenges faced by each community; especially when designing and promoting services using the language and activities that will appeal and connect. • Form a wider partnership (and infrastructure) of organisations that can identify and refer people to support. • Use smaller groups formed around shared interests (e.g. food) to connect people. • A combination of targeted micro funding and community development will help connect and organise these groups; enabling grassroot ‘programme partners’.