



Equalities Board Research Projects Report

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Glossary / List of new terms

- AFA = Ambition for Ageing
= a new Greater Manchester programme that aims to make communities more age-friendly and improve older people's quality of life
- BAME = Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic
= anyone in the UK who does not identify as White British
- BSL = British Sign Language
= the primary language and sometimes the first language of many D/deaf people in the UK
- Deaf (with capital D)
= the identity of someone with partial or no hearing, who identifies as a member of a distinct linguistic culture
- EB = Equalities Board
- Henshaws Community Services
= part of Henshaws - the north of England charity supporting visually impaired people - that does outreach in the community and training
- MDC = Manchester Deaf Centre
- MPF = Manchester People First
- SP9 = Scaled Programme 9, a programme of research focusing on inequalities, and including the most marginalised older people
- UCLAN = University of Central Lancashire
- VI = Visually Impaired
- Wai Yin = Chinese community centre founded in Manchester in 1988, providing support, and employment, education and community services for Chinese men and women and for other ethnic minority groups, including Somali, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and many European nationalities

Section 1: Context

Introduction

This report summarises the project reports of the five Equalities Board research projects funded in 2017 and completed in Spring 2018. The report shares highlights of the methodology, actions and findings of the projects; it aims to show how the projects were successful, and to illustrate the value of community-based research to the AFA knowledge base. We hope this will contribute to planning and designing the larger round of equalities-focused research under SP9.

The report gives the context of the commissioning process for the research projects and a timeline, a summary of each project and highlight findings, and a short conclusion discussing the value of the EB research projects as a whole.

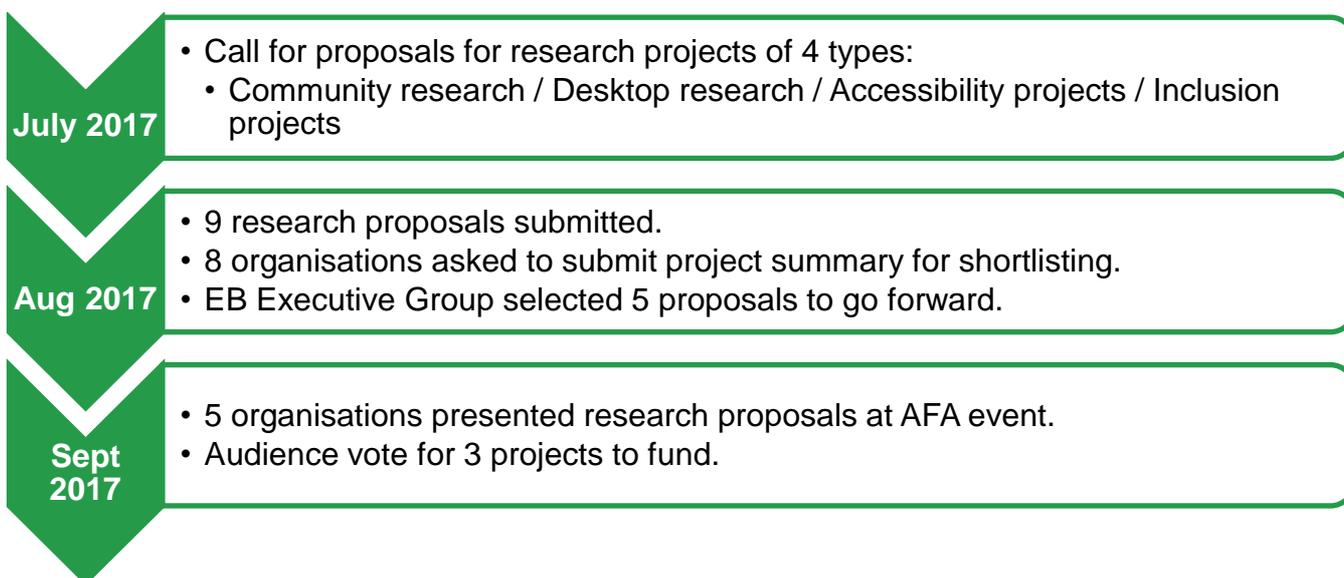
Background

The Equalities Team's 2017 review and visits to Local Delivery Leads (LDLs) identified that there were gaps in relation to particular Black and minority ethnic (BAME) and other marginalised communities reached by Ambition for Ageing (AFA), and 'unknown unknowns' in terms of the needs of these communities and some of the most marginalised older people.

£1,500 was allocated to community-based research in support of the Equalities Board objective C: "To increase understanding of how marginalisation and inequality shape social isolation among older people in the context of place-based work." The research aimed to:

- Identify what is already known and what work is already being done with more marginalised older people
- Identify gaps in knowledge and groups not being reached by the programme
- Fill these gaps in knowledge and involve those not yet included.

Timeline



Section 2: The research projects and findings

This section consists of summaries of all five research projects, including highlight findings and, where available, plans for follow up or further action. The final reports are available to read on this temporary webpage and we will add the others as they become available.

<https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/resources>

Reaching the 'hard to reach'

Two kinds of projects were undertaken: accessibility projects and community research; with Henshaws and Manchester Deaf Centre projects effectively fulfilling both of these. Apart from Henshaws' research, all projects engaged so-called 'hard to reach' participants, but only Manchester Deaf Centre and Europia reflected on the difficulty of accessing their target participant groups. Both organisations observed that:

- The difficulty in reaching, respectively, older Deaf people and Polish migrants over 50, is both a product (effect) and a function (cause) of their isolation.
- Accessing and engaging with these individuals requires cultivating their trust – and that this takes time and comes through consistency.

Although not explicitly stated, these conclusions can also be drawn from Wai Yin's and Manchester People First's research approach and findings. In other words, 'hard to reach' individuals are not hard to reach from within their own communities. This underscores the value of community-based organisations and community-based infrastructure, and the importance of resourcing this appropriately.

Henshaws: Out of Sight

Henshaws Community Services undertook a community research and accessibility project to:

- Find out how aware organisations are of the needs of VI staff, volunteers and service users.
- Explore whether VI awareness training would improve these organisations' capacity to support VI staff, volunteers and service users, and whether this would make a difference to VI people.
- Deliver and evaluate VI awareness training to organisations with staff, volunteers and service users who have sight loss.

Context, methodology, findings

Research has shown that many older people with visual impairment could experience improvements in sight with simple corrections. Therefore, there is a need to improve awareness of correctable sight loss amongst older people, and the organisations that work with them. The numbers of older people and VI people are increasing, while austerity has delivered cuts to support services. This support gap is expected to grow, especially in GM because of a number of risk factors:

- A larger population of non-white BAME people at a higher risk of particular sight conditions;
- Poverty
- Diabetes increasing
- Associated lifestyle factors
- Low sight testing rates

Methodology and findings

A survey conducted with 17 respondents from 15 organisations showed a high awareness of sight loss and practical measures to support people with visual impairment (VI). Even so, 83% of participants said they would benefit from more VI awareness training.

Two half-day training workshops were held with 21 attendees from 10+ organisations. By the end of the workshops:

- 96% of participants more aware of sight loss and how to identify it
- 93% understand how to address hidden sight loss
- 96% understand how to make changes to improve quality of life of older people with sight loss

Participants reported:

- “I am much more aware of how to recognise signs of sight loss and how to guide those with sight loss and point them towards help. Much more confident.”
- “I learnt how it can feel to have a variety of types of sight loss. Ways to identify sight issues which may present as a different issue and how to guide someone.”
- “I learned to have patience and curiosity when someone is taking times or does things unusually – it may be due to sight loss.”
- “I will suggest eye tests to older people, I know how to recognise signs of sight loss conditions and not [assume they are] mental wellbeing related”
- “I will be more aware of those with VI and less afraid of helping them”

One month later follow up with participants reported:

- Awareness of sight loss in service users = 100%
- 15% stated older service users and families reported a difference in support
- 15% stated had directed more people for an eye test
- 43% had directed more people to organisations that can help with sight loss
- 14% improved accessibility of organisation to people with sight loss

The authors of the report recommend further mapping of organisations that support older people and their reach into the VI community; and sharing the positive evaluation of training and the findings of research to encourage other organisations to take up VIAT.

Further action

Henshaws say: “The findings show that the provision of a short training course can make a significant difference in raising awareness around sight loss,” which makes a great difference to older people’s lives and supports their greater independence, social inclusion, and personal health. Since completing the report Henshaws have begun to refine the training to offer it to local companies.

Manchester People First: Join Us, Join In

Manchester People First (MPF) were funded to run an accessibility project to develop training and resources in making meetings accessible to people with learning difficulties, and training to help people with learning difficulties to participate effectively in meetings.

Context, methodology, outputs

Over the last 25 years it has become increasingly common and often a requirement that people with learning difficulties are consulted on their views about services. Service providers now regularly invite people with learning difficulties to attend meetings, but those meetings are not always accessible to them, so they are not able to play a full part in them.

Methodology and outputs

Six staff from the MPF accessibility audit team, four of whom have learning difficulties, attended 3 meetings to observe how they were run, and how information was provided. The team identified a number of barriers to participation in the ways that information was presented, both at and before the meetings, and the ways that the meetings were conducted.

Following the research, MPF:

- Held a workshop for members to try out ways to avoid issues that had made observed meetings less accessible & develop skills for effectively participating in meetings.
- Produced Making Information Easier For Everyone, covering issues such as:
 - Keeping language short and simple
 - Making layout clean and simple
 - Using images
 - Link to guide online here <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/resources>
- Produced Ideas for Better Meetings, covering:
 - How to publicise meetings
 - How to choose a venue
 - How to conduct meetings, write agendas, schedule agenda items
 - How to produce minutes
 - Link to online guide <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/resources>
- Gave a presentation to the Equalities Board on how to make meetings accessible.

Next steps

In May 2018, MPF held a second members' workshop to build their members' meeting skills. During the summer they will hold a third members' meeting to develop a set of Manchester People First 'house rules' for meetings.

Wai Yin: 'Sat Cung' 失聰 – Hearing Loss

Wai Yin was funded for a community research project to find out more about awareness of hearing loss, and availability and access to support for hearing loss among elderly Cantonese-speaking Chinese people, and to raise awareness of hearing loss and support services.

Context, methodology, actions

The older Cantonese-speaking Chinese population in Manchester is small and its needs are poorly understood. The majority of the population arrived between 1960 and 1980 and worked long hours in restaurants and takeaways. According to research undertaken by Wai Yin with UCLAN in 2007, the language barrier is the major difficulty faced by the community in daily life and accessing health and social care services. Low census participation has also contributed to low recognition of the community. The Chinese tradition of the younger generation supporting the older generation can help with the language barrier, but those without family can be more isolated.

Methodology and actions

A Cantonese-speaking researcher with hearing loss conducted two focus groups:

- i. With 10 Chinese elders to find out about levels of awareness of hearing loss in older Chinese people.
- ii. With 5 Chinese elders with hearing loss to find out what difficulties they face.

Reporters from community radio station Radio Sheung Lok recorded the focus group interviews for an awareness-raising programme.

The focus group interviews revealed:

- Low awareness of hearing loss and varied conceptions of meaning of the term 'Sat Cung'
- Some misconceptions that Sat Cung involved intellectual impairment
- Fortunately there is widespread understanding of GP support for hearing loss – but:
- Zero knowledge of other support organisations
- Very high dependence on family to access medical services for hearing loss support
- Difficulties using hearing aids
- Zero awareness of other equipment to help with hearing loss
- Some understanding of psychological problems arising from isolation

Recommendations and further action

The report makes a number of recommendations focusing on:

- increasing social support,
- improving access to hearing tests, and hearing loss support
- a counselling service,
- training service providers in cultural awareness.

The report authors recognise the need for further awareness raising within the community. Wai Yin says: "(A)s [the] Radio Sheung Lok slogan states: 'together we send our kindness through the air to connect with our community members', we hope this research can challenge decades of Chinese older people who have hearing loss problems and a traditional attitude of 'sit still and remain quiet' to attain a better quality of life."

You can listen to the awareness-raising programme broadcast by Radio Sheung Lok at: https://www.mixcloud.com/radio_sheunglok/.

Manchester Deaf Centre: Ageing Deaf Access

Manchester Deaf Centre (MDC) chose to reveal Deaf people's experiences of ageing, social isolation and loneliness, and aspirations for the future, and to find out what they need "to feel independent, fulfilled and more included in society".

Context, methodology, findings

Many deaf people have low levels of English language ability, including many of those who identify as Deaf and members of a cultural and linguistic minority, many who use British Sign Language (BSL) as a primary or first language, and many others with varying levels of clinical deafness. The report authors explain: "Negotiating a world built for hearing people, is not easy if you have reduced hearing. Moreover if you culturally identify with a minority community there are intrinsic, overt and discreet barriers that have to be overcome in order to engage" with the dominant (hearing) community. The co-design and delivery of the project therefore involved BSL users advising on the wording of survey questions, and 1 to 1 support for BSL users completing the questionnaire.

Methodology and findings

A focus group was held with deaf people to co-design the questionnaire and ensure it was accessible to BSL users. The survey was delivered to 96 people: 72 supported to fill out a hard copy, 24 accessed it online.

Results show a high level of separation, and risk of isolation for vulnerable Deaf older people:

- **74%** do not "involve themselves with their local hearing community" – when people do, it is via family or only if other Deaf people are involved
- **30%** are afraid of going out, especially at night – for a variety of reasons, including feeling unsafe, fear harassment and abuse
- **16%** do not travel around GM
- **60%** know other d/Deaf people who are lonely
- **45%** know about Deaf history – but **33%** don't.

Also an urgent need for care and support services to become Deaf aware and Deaf-friendly:

- **56%** know of Deaf people living in residential homes where no staff have BSL training
- **96%** feel there should be Deaf awareness training in residential homes
- **85%** want dedicated residential home availability "tailored for specific cultural, linguistic and social needs of Deaf community"
- **52%** don't see Age Concern / Age UK as places to get support; 56% said there was not enough BSL provision there; 36% don't feel they would be Deaf aware
- **62%** are confident they know where to get support – 48% get it from Deaf Club, 42% from friends or family - but **32%** don't know where to get support
- **74%** don't know where to get Dementia support
- **64%** don't know where to go for MH support

Next steps

MDC hope these research findings raise awareness of the needs of older Deaf people for accessible and specific support among the wider voluntary sector and service providers.

Europaia: The life experiences and challenges of Polish 50+ migrants

Europaia worked with an academic researcher to investigate the life experiences, challenges and vulnerabilities of Polish migrants in Greater Manchester who were born before 1968, and migrated after 2004.

Context, methodology, findings

Older Polish people who migrated to the UK after Poland joined the EU have experienced a lot of social upheaval and historical change. Many have come to the UK to live with and provide unpaid care for family, or having been recruited into low-paid employment in the UK. They face a variety of specific challenges that interact with the experience of ageing to give rise to a complex mix of resourcefulness and vulnerability.

Methodology and findings

Researchers held conversations by telephone and at community venues with 7 individuals, wrote up ethnographic visits to community sites, and held three discussions at social events with older Polish community members on “Living and working in the UK”, “Transnational pensioners and the welfare state”, and other general experiences.

Research findings:

- Family is of primary importance, and for this group was often the reason for coming to the UK – this means that it is “particularly challenging for single individuals without a local kin-support network”
- This group of people have strong personal resilience and a strong sense of equality and social justice, arising from their life experiences in the Polish People’s Republic and its subsequent transition to current-day Poland
- Central challenges:
 - Communication in English – many did not learn English at school; others experience loss of their second language due to illness, dementia, or loss of speech
 - Economic situation – low paid work; difficulty with housing costs, many fear and some have experienced homelessness; a particular cultural relationship to money that relates to their historical experiences
 - Physical and mental health issues – give rise to financial struggles and increase social isolation; made worse by low English ability and therefore so difficulty accessing patient support groups; a need for native language support and cultural awareness by health providers
- Challenges are amplified by:
 - Complex transnational legal, welfare, pension legislation issues, and residency issues, including Brexit
 - Workers’ rights protection regarding employment agencies, anti-discrimination / hate crime measures
 - Difficulties navigating public transport – mainly due to language but also cost
 - Difficulty achieving a healthy work-life balance, due to the type of work available, having been recruited before arriving in the UK

Recommendations and dissemination

The report's authors make a series of recommendations in 6 areas:

- Legal, welfare and housing – e.g. running Polish language legal and welfare advice sessions.
- Learning, language and urban mobility – e.g. promoting life long learning to improve later life language skills.
- Health community – e.g. creating Polish language support groups.
- Social engagement, recreation, activity – e.g. creating a directory of cultural associations.
- Political campaigning and storytelling – giving this community a voice with regard to Brexit, hate crime, and other issues.
- Urban infrastructures and networks – mapping and enabling collaboration of community centres and institutions working with Polish migrants over 50.

Europa are currently seeking funding to translate this research findings summary into Polish, and to expand the findings of the research into a larger paper, in collaboration with an academic partner.

Section 3: What next?

Dissemination and SP 9

The Equalities Board is in the process of drawing up a dissemination plan to share the research reports widely and accessibly with different audiences. Our aims with the plan are to:

- Create accessible summaries of the reports to increase the number of people who can access their findings
- Bring the findings of the different research reports to the attention of people who can use them in their own areas or communities of interest as they feel relevant
- Bring the findings to the attention of service providers or organisations who can implement the recommendations made in the reports

SP 9: Inequalities Programme 10x10

The Equalities Board Research Projects have demonstrated the important role of community based organisations in producing knowledge about the needs of particularly marginalised older people. Although these individuals are known as ‘hard to reach’ – by mainstream organisations - they are far from hard to reach for the support organisations which are corporate members of these communities. The decision to create a Scaled Programme on Inequalities will build on this discovery and hopefully will enable further community based research into the needs and infrastructure to support the most marginalised older people.

