

Better support for black, Asian and minority ethnic people living with dementia during the Covid-19 pandemic



August 2020: *Welcome to the first update introducing this programme of work*

Dementia and Covid-19

People with dementia are amongst the groups at higher-risk of severe illness from coronavirus and experiencing severe symptoms with [Covid-19](#). Evidence has shown that dementia was the most common pre-existing condition found amongst deaths involving COVID-19, and particularly in [care homes](#). But many people with dementia are living and being supported by family within their local community.



There are about 25,000 people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds living with the condition across the UK and the social restrictions imposed during lockdown have made an already challenging time even more difficult. Being at high risk from coronavirus due to age and underlying health conditions, people with dementia are likely to have been advised to shield by their GP. The condition also means that the ability to follow social distancing guidelines is a challenge.

During lockdown, many BAME organisations have struggled due to financial strain, a loss of volunteers, and staffing crises because of employees shielding. Whilst such issues have raised concerns about the long-term effects of the [crisis on black and minority ethnic communities and their health](#), the pandemic has seen black, Asian, and minority ethnic-led organisations adapt to best meet the needs of the individuals they support. Nevertheless, the lockdown has led to a stop or reduction in primarily face to face support and activities. This includes memory services, music and therapeutic services, social interaction, and offering cultural meals. Such activities and services not only provide a source of enjoyment for BAME people with dementia, but also support informal carers with respite, advice, and advocacy. The impact of lockdown on services has left many BAME families less supported.

Covid 19 - Supporting Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and families affected by dementia.

The Race Equality Foundation is leading this [programme](#) of work together with Black South West Network, Caribbean African Health Network and Friends Families and Travellers. There are 22 projects funded through the Department for Health and Social Care Covid-19 fund providing short term means to enable BAME organisations to continue to support BAME families affected by dementia in England.



The projects will provide a range of individual support, befriending and advocacy services, creative and social activities, memory retention and reminiscence activities, translated materials, language support, digital information and resources, and raise awareness of dementia within the wider BAME communities.

The organisations providing these services are:

Asian People's Disability Alliance (APDA) - London
African Caribbean Care Group – Greater Manchester
Ambacare Solutions – West Midlands
Bedford Caribbean Senior Citizens
Black Health Initiative - Leeds
BME Health Forum - London
Brent Youth Radio - London
Bristol & Avon Chinese Women's Group
Bristol Black Carers
Bristol Somali Resource Centre
Centre of Wellbeing, Training and Culture – Greater Manchester
Council for Asian People - London
Culture Dementia UK
Europa – Greater Manchester
Irish in Britain
Malcom X Centre - Bristol
Nubian Life Resource Centre - London
Nyabingi Charity – Luton and Bedford
SubCo Trust - London
Together Dementia Support – Greater Manchester
Wai Yin Society – Greater Manchester

In addition, *Race Equality Foundation* will be compiling a national resource of written, spoken and video translations of the latest Covid-19 guidance and communication for people with dementia.

For further information about the dementia programme and projects, please contact Tracey Bignall via tracey@racefound.org.uk.

End of shielding

Some people with dementia may have been advised to shield over the lockdown period. Shielding means reducing contact with other people and for many this meant staying indoors continually. The National Shielding Service provided resources such as free food parcels, medicine deliveries and basic care for those shielding during this time. However, from 1 August, this guidance has changed, and the government has paused shielding for the time being. Whilst those who were shielding will no longer receive these services, support can be provided through their local authority and [NHS Volunteer Responders](#).

People coming out of shielding will need follow the [hygiene and social](#) distancing precautions as the wider population, and can now:

- go to work as long as the workplace is [Covid-secure](#), but should carry on working from home wherever possible
- go outside as much as you like but you should still try to keep your contact with others low
- visit supermarkets, pubs and shops, while keeping two metres (about the length of a double bed) away from others wherever possible
- keep thoroughly cleaning areas that are often touched in your home and/or workspace

If the situation changes with an increase in the transmission of COVID-19, the government could advise people to shield again.

More detailed information about this change is on the government [guidance](#) pages

DACE



The Dementia Alliance for Culture and Ethnicity (DACE) is a networking alliance created to advise individuals and groups providing information and support to people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in the UK living with dementia and their carers. Amongst other things, DACE promotes awareness raising of dementia, and co-production and partnership working in research and service development for those living with dementia and carers.

David Truswell, Executive Director of DACE has written a blog on the impact of COVID on those living with dementia in BAME communities

<https://www.demace.com/post/covid19-dementia-and-bame-communities>

Information needed

Race Equality Foundation is seeking examples of translated materials about Covid-19 to support people with dementia. Please forward any good examples to tracey@racefound.org.uk

Research into Covid-19 risk in BAME communities

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) recently announced that it is funding six new research projects to investigate the higher Covid-19 risk among certain ethnic groups. You can find out more about these [here](#).