



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Asha-Deep Project
Bringing Hope and Light



DEFRA Evaluation Report (West of the County) - 2021

Introduction

Black (Asian, African-Caribbean and African) Community Organisations came together to develop a collaboration and deliver food provision for Black communities across the county. The collaboration was led by Support Northamptonshire.

Core Aims

- To provide a food provision service to those in the Black communities most affected during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Deliver hot meals and food parcels to those most in need
- Identify and respond to and new needs identified
- To respond to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black communities in Northamptonshire.

Organisations Involved

- Asha-Deep
- United African Association
- Power of the Mind
- Amalgamation
- New Life Church

The report for each organisation is offered below and as part of our evaluation each organisation has offered comments regarding their experience of being part of this important project.

Key learning

- We have been able to extend our reach into communities and identified new communities who were in desperate need.
- We been able to make a real and tangible impact in people's lives during such a difficult time
- Some people have managed to return to work as a direct result of the project
- We have learnt new skills in monitoring outcomes and seeking views from service users
- Sharing of resources, skills and experience has been helpful to meet community needs
- Organisations feeling more confident and able to take on new projects and tasks

United African Association (UAA)

Between January and May 2021 – with a target of **200 parcels** – UAA delivered a total of **699** food parcels to **177** individuals/families.

Breakdown of deliveries and recipients (by month)

Month	No. of parcels delivered	Individuals/families served
February	97	25
March	281	71
April	321	81

DEFRA Equality Monitoring (north and west)

***this table accounts for every single individual served, that is why numbers differ from that in the graph above that takes a number of families or an individual if they live alone.**

Equal Ops Monitoring	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Age Accessing Service					
Child (under 16)	12	190	339	330	871
25 & under		12	22	21	45
25 - 35	2	44	102	114	252
36 – 45	8	201	219	222	650
46 - 55	4	46	51	56	157
56 - 65		17	29	29	75
66+	8	11	17	18	54
Unknown					

Number accessing the service with disability	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
Child (under 16)	13	11	13	16	53
Adult	38	39	43	47	167

Gender	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	Total
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Male	6	232	338	351	927
Female	9	289	441	449	1188

Ethnicity	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr	Total
White					
British	2	15	32	32	81
Any other White background (please state) Romanian		12	23	26	61
Mixed					
White and Black Caribbean					
White and Black African		6	6	6	18
White and Asian					
Black or Black British					
Caribbean	2	28	42	42	114
African	11	460	676	676	1823
Any other Black background (please state)					
Ethnicity information declined					

Project Leader's feedback

What was your greatest achievement during the project?

Our greatest achievement has been supporting a previously unknown African Muslim community in Wellingborough who are quite destitute. They are long term unemployed and were really struggling to feed themselves properly before we started supplying food parcels to them. For Ramadan we were able to supply them with the food items they specifically requested as these items were out of their budget. We have also been able to provide them with clothing and non food essentials.

We have been collating case management with the individual families as part of the community champions project and we will be working on them to try and resolve their issues.

We are pleased that 2 ladies have now began working in healthcare as support workers. The food parcels tend to be delivered to one household and the other beneficiaries then collect food from her house. We have been working with the lady to encourage her to talk to the beneficiaries about keeping safe during the pandemic and thankfully 4

sets of parents and 6 elderly people have had the vaccination.

What have you learnt?

With the reduction of funding we have been trying to see how we can cut down the number of food recipients with the aim of directing those on benefits to social supermarkets and other schemes so that we can prioritise those with no recourse to public funds who are not working and have little or no income. However on speaking to some of the recipients especially the ones with young children in nappies and/or taking baby milk and foods the expense of buying these items is quite crippling. So the aim is to continue with individual assessments, working with partner agencies to assist where possible.

How was it working in collaboration?

The experience of collaboration has been great. Each partner has their strengths and specialities that we can tap into or make referrals to. Also, should urgent situations arise such as a last minute referral from social services to provide a food parcel to a family in Wellingborough we can ask WACA to provide food parcel saving us making a trip to Wellingborough. We have also been able to know each other and reassure the newer food banks that things will pick up and that initial takeup of food parcels and low volunteer numbers will increase. It is also good to share the successes of the projects with others and also the issues. We were able to assist WACA with how to set up food bank through an online training session we had with them.

UAA Case Studies

UAA case study 1

Profile

FN is a mother of 3 teenage boys. She is in her late thirties and lives in Northampton. She works part time in the healthcare industry. She is originally from Kenya.

Support provided by UAA

We have been providing food parcels to the family for a few months as FN and her husband have been struggling to save for the home office application fees for renewal of their visa. With 3 hungry teenage boys and their big appetites she was struggling to feed them. We also referred her for the Red Cross hardship fund and she was successful in getting that.

What difference did we make?

The provision of the African food parcels over the past few months means that FN was able to feed her family properly. She was also able to save up for the home office fees and thankfully her visa was extended so she can continue to work. The receipt of the hardship fund was the icing on the cake and recently FN advised that she no longer requires food parcels but will continue to volunteer with us on Saturdays at the community centre sorting and bagging the food parcels. She really enjoys volunteering and says it's the only form of social contact she has had outside of her family.

UAA case study 2

Profile

MR is in his mid fifties, he lives in Northampton with his wife and pre-teen son. MR does not work as he is not eligible to do so due to his immigration status. He also has a back problem which flares up occasionally.

Support provided by United African Association

MR was actually referred by the Red Cross for the provision of African food parcels. He is a very active volunteer and picks up surplus food items from 2 Coop stores on Friday evenings/Saturday mornings as we are their food share partner. He also collects food crates from us from bags of food in St James Northampton who provide heavily discounted food to us and other food banks. He attends the food bagging sessions most Saturdays.

We have written supporting letters to submit to the home office as part of his immigration application. We also referred him to the British Red Cross for a hardship fund which was successful.

What difference did we make?

MR has said he feels like he has a purpose and now can contribute towards the household. Previously he was feeling depressed and inadequate. In fact he had been on anti depressant last year.

We have got MR involved in the charity and in fact he is on the charity's steering group, contributing towards the running of the association. His opinions are highly regarded. He hopes his immigration application is successful so that he can help with running of counselling sessions for the association.

UAA case study 3

Profile

FM is in her late 60s and is married to a British man, they have been married since 2009. They live in a council flat in Northampton. She suffers from arthritis and other health conditions. She does not work and gets no income whatsoever due to her immigration status.

Support provided by United African Association

We have been supplying food parcels to FM since the beginning of the year. We had previously offered however she declined as she thought that other people were more deserving than her. However she did admit later that she was struggling as her husband had become less supportive and also with the food shopping no African foods were included.

We have also written letters in support of her immigration status and referred her to an immigration team of the Red Cross for assistance. She has an appointment on 20 May 2021. A friend is giving her a lift, we are paying the fuel expenses as she will be unable to pay these herself.

What difference did we make?

FM is one of our volunteers at the food parcel programme, she attends every Saturday and has become a great member of the team. Prior to becoming a volunteer she was at home for most days as she is unable to work and with restrictions has been unable to go to church or see her friends. She loves coming on Saturdays so that she is

not only helping but has been able to meet the other volunteers some of whom she is good friends with. Volunteering has been the only form of contact with a few of her friends.

FM says she finally feels supported after being falsely imprisoned for 3 months for what the Home Office deemed to be a sham marriage. They later admitted that they believed the marriage was genuine. Our letter of support confirms the community work she is doing.

She has told us repeatedly how much better she feels simply by talking about her issues.

Councillor Danielle Stone is one of our volunteers and has got to know Florence through chats on Saturdays and has also written a letter in support of her immigration application.

Power of the Mind Network (PMN)

Between January and May 2021 – with a target of **200 parcels** – PMN delivered a total of **200** food parcels to **74** individuals/families.

Breakdown of deliveries and recipients (by month)

Month	No. of parcels delivered	Individuals/Families served
January	32	29
February	71	20
March	97	25

Power of the Mind Equality Information

Equal Ops Monitoring	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	May 21	Total
Age Accessing Service					
Child (under 16)					
25 & under	1	1	1	1	4
25 - 35	4	9	11	11	35
36 – 45	9	17	17	14	47
46 - 55	0	1	3	3	7
56 - 65	6	11	10	11	38
66+	7	9	13	11	40
Unknown	2				2

Number accessing the service with disability	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	May 21	Total
Child (under 16)	4	4	4	4	16
Adult					

Gender	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	May 21	Total
Male	8	12	12	12	44
Female	21	35	45	42	143

Ethnicity	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	May 21	Total
Asian or Asian British					
Indian					
Pakistani	4	4	4	4	16
Bangladeshi					
Chinese					
Any other Asian group (please state)					

Black or Black British					
Caribbean	2	2	2	2	8
African	17	41	51	48	157
Any other Black background (please state)					
Ethnicity information declined					

What was your greatest achievement during the project?

Our greatest achievement was being able to expand our food parcels services. We had 40 recipients at the start of our project and this increased to 59 individuals and families all this was enabled by the funding that we received. We managed to reach a wider number of families in our effort to tackle poverty during covid-19 pandemic.

What did you learn?

We have learned new skills of monitoring our projects. The use of spreadsheets and capturing demographic information of our service users as opposed to just monitoring receipts and how much money we are spending. Collection of testimonials and case studies. We hope to be able to use this information for our future applications as a way of demonstrating the needs of our community.

How did you find working in collaboration?

Working in collaboration enabled us share ideas with like minded people. We also got some of our service users from the group thereby ensuring we covered as many people as possible

PMN case studies

Power of the Mind – Case Study

Profile

GS is a 63-year-old lady who lives on her own in a council flat, she was diagnosed with arthritis and diabetes and finds it hard to move around when she is experiencing her bad days. She lives in Northampton town. She is an asylum seeker waiting for a decision to be made on her case.

Support provided by PMN

Since January 2021, we have provided GS with weekly food parcels. She is Zimbabwean and has requested for foodstuffs that remind her of where she comes from. She likes brown rice, white maize meal, dried mushroom and hard chicken. Through the food parcels GS has been able to access means tested vouchers from the council.

What difference did we make?

GS said the food parcels have made a great improvement in her diet. Her health conditions especially diabetes, require that she eats unprocessed foods such as brown rice. On her own she cannot buy the unprocessed foods as they are expensive but with the help of Power of the mind networks she has been able to maintain a healthy diet. GS used to work as a cleaner but cannot do it any more because of Covid-19 pandemic and government regulations. This has greatly affected her disposable income and the food parcels have helped a long way in alleviating her poverty. GS seems happier and has been able to join in exercise activities that we are providing

for the beneficiaries. She used to be quiet and withdrawn but now she is happy to chat about herself.

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Amalgamation Community Group

January and May 2021 – with a target of **400 parcels** – Amalgamation delivered a total of **491** food parcels to **115** individuals/families.

Breakdown of deliveries and recipients (by month)

Month	No. of parcels delivered	Individuals/families served
February	114	-
March	199	56
April	178	59

Project Leader's feedback

What was your greatest achievement during the project?

Our greatest achievements during this project has been helping several families in Northampton who were struggling to feed their children during the lockdown and school holidays. From the feedback we received, the food parcels made up for the loss of free school meals and delays in benefit payment. We met some parents who said they had to skip meals to ensure their children had something to eat before they started collecting food parcels.

What did you learn?

I learnt about the needs of my community and how a little bit of assistance can go such a long way.

How was it working in collaboration?

We worked in collaboration with other charities, some churches and some local authorities to ensure that families that need extra help and counselling support got the help needed. The collaboration was so useful and wouldn't have been as meaningful without it.

Amalgamation case study

Amalgamation – CASE STUDY

Profile

Mrs K is a 28 year old woman. She and her family (a family of 4 – she lives with her husband and 2 children) were struggling to feed their kids because she was on a zero hour contract and since the pandemic has not worked much. She comes regularly on a Wednesday to collect food for her family and says the food parcels have been a life saver.

Support provided by Amalgamation

Since March 2021 – now

She regularly collects food parcels for her and her family. She also receives all the Covid19 information and guidance.

What difference did we make?

Mrs K visits the food collection centre weekly and says the food parcels have made a huge difference to her family as she is on a zero hour contract and hasn't worked much during the pandemic.

NLC

Northampton Life Chapel delivered food parcels to recipients in the west of the county. Between January and May 2021 – with a target of **400 parcels** – NLC delivered a total of **344** food parcels to **198** individuals/families.

Month	No. of parcels delivered	Individuals/families served
January	58	56
February	87	44
March	101	50
April	98	48

NLC Equality Information

Equal Ops Monitoring	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Total
Age Accessing Service				
Child (under 16)		0	0	0
25 & under	3	2	1	6
25 - 35	6	5	7	18
36 – 45	4	6	6	16
46 - 55	13	9	17	39
56 - 65	19	13	5	37
66+	10	8	12	30
Unknown				

Number accessing the service with disability	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Total
Child (under 16)	0	0	0	
Adult	0	0	0	

Gender	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Total
Male			20	17	18	55
Female			35	26	30	91

Ethnicity	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Total
White			1	1	1	3
British						
Any other White background (please state)						

Mixed						
Black or Black British			54	42	47	143
Caribbean						
African						
Any other Black background (please state)						
Ethnicity information declined						

Project Leader's feedback

What was your greatest achievement during the project?

Our greatest achievement is seeing the progress people make throughout the project- for example one recipient used the food bank service whilst they had been made redundant and were experiencing poor mental health, and by the end of the project they were employed and so much more positive about life.

What did you learn?

We have learnt the importance of communication within the team as well as the necessity for funding like the DEFRA grant which really met a need in the community during the pandemic.

How did you find working in collaboration?

Working in collaboration really broadened the outreach of the programme and we learnt so much from each other and the way each group carried out their operations. We also shared so many ideas!

Northampton Life Chapel – Case Study

Profile

Mrs D is 33 years old, and lives alone with four children in Northampton, she is unfortunately recently widowed.

Support provided by NLC

Since January 2021 – now

We provided food parcels once a week and volunteers supported her with welfare calls and emotional wellbeing checks and benefits guidance. She also receives all the Covid19 information and guidance.

What difference did we make?

Mrs D says: The food parcels from NLC have been really helpful as I don't work and since my husband's heart attack I have found it hard to afford groceries or even have the energy to go shopping, but the emotional support has been invaluable. Every Wednesday when I come to collect the food, the volunteers always make me feel so welcome and it reminds me that people still care which has helped to improve my emotional and social well being.

Northampton Life Chapel – Case Study

Profile

Mr K is 52 years old, and lives alone. He was recently made redundant when his workplace had budget cuts due to COVID-19.

Support provided by Northampton Life Chapel

Since February 2021 – now

We provided food parcels once a week and volunteers supported him with welfare calls and emotional wellbeing checks and benefits guidance. He also receives all the Covid19 information and guidance.

What difference did we make?

Mr K says: The food parcels from NLC have helped me whilst I am applying for jobs and trying to get back on my feet. They pointed me in the right direction for universal credit and the food parcels allow me to prioritise paying my bills. It definitely has improved my mental health as my cupboards are no longer empty and I'm not worrying about how I'm going to feed myself; I can just concentrate on improving my financial wellbeing by applying for relevant jobs.

Asha Deep

Between January and May 2021 – we delivered **568** meals against a target of **150** we over exceeded by 418 to **43** individuals/families.

Asha Deep meals delivered

Pravasi 30 Nov to 31 Dec	40
Pravasi 4 Jan to 22 Jan	24
Pravasi 25 Jan to 26 Feb	41
Pravasi 1 Mar to 31 Mar	45
Pravasi 5 Apr to 30 Apr	151
Pravasi 3 May to 28 May	267

DEFRA Equality Monitoring – Asha Deep

Meal Clients

	<u>No. of Clients</u>			
	Defra 2	Other	Total	
Male	21	40	61	40%
Female	22	68	90	60%
	43	108	151	

Aged < 40 Years	0	3	3	2%
Aged 40 + < 50 Years	0	3	3	2%
Aged 50 + < 60 Years	7	6	13	9%
Aged 60 + < 70 Years	10	13	23	15%
Aged 70 + < 80 Years	8	43	51	34%
Aged 80 + < 90 Years	8	22	30	20%
Aged 90 +	2	6	8	5%
TBA	8	12	20	13%
	43	108	151	

Barton Seagrave	0	1	1	1%
Corby	0	18	18	12%

Desborough	0	1	1	1%
Finedon	0	0	0	0%
Kettering	0	19	19	13%
Northampton	43	5	48	32%
Rushden	0	0	0	0%
Wellingborough	0	64	64	42%
TBA	0	0	0	0%
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	<u>43</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>151</u>	

African	0	0	0	0%
Bangladeshi	1	1	2	1%
English	2	1	3	2%
Gujarati	39	97	136	90%
Pakistani	1	2	3	2%
Punjabi	0	5	5	3%
Sri Lankan	0	1	1	1%
West Indian	0	1	1	1%
TBA	0	0	0	0%
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	<u>43</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>151</u>	

Disabled Physically	13	51	64	42%
Disabled Mental Health	2	12	14	9%
Not Disabled	3	10	13	9%
Not Disclosed	17	23	40	26%
TBA	8	12	20	13%
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	<u>43</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>151</u>	

Arthritis	2	7	9	6%
Diabetes	0	37	37	25%
BP - High or Low	5	16	21	14%
Covid	0	4	4	3%
Mental Health	5	2	7	5%
No Illness	0	7	7	5%
Other	13	7	20	13%
Not Disclosed	10	16	26	17%
TBA	8	12	20	13%
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	<u>43</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>151</u>	

Asha-Deep Case Study 1

Physical & Emotional Support & Social

Mrs A was referred to Asha Deep Project by a concerned friend. Mrs A's family (all 3 members) had contracted Covid 19 and were all very poorly to the point they were not managing to cook or eat. After speaking to Mrs A we agreed to provide meals until when they were fit and well.

Support provided by Asha-Deep

After speaking to Mrs A we agreed to provide meals until when they were fit and well. After initial reservations of accepting the help, Mrs A was extremely relieved and a coordinator from the project was in touch with her daily to ensure the family were on the road to recovery and that no intervention was needed from the health services. Happy to say all 3 members recovered fully from the virus.

The family have also regular attendees at the social zoom sessions arranged by Asha Deep and are regular contributors.

What difference did we make?

The family really appreciated the meals and the daily calls. At one point Mrs A was extremely distressed and feeling extremely isolated and was very grateful for the contact.

'Hello Jagrutiben Namaste. Thank you so much for the yummy food we had. Thank you for the wishes. Me and my husband are getting better. We still have minor issues. My daughter is doing good. We really appreciate the support given during our hard time. Thank you so much once again.'

Asha-Deep Case Study 2

Physical & Emotional Support

Mr B and Mrs B had an adult disabled son that they have been caring for. Since Christmas the son's health had been failing but never really addressed. In January the situation got very serious and the son was admitted into hospital as an urgent case.

Support provided by Asha-Deep

Mrs B was referred to Asha Deep Project by Asha Deep volunteers who had connection with the family already. Mr B had had to leave Mrs B urgently as their disabled son was admitted into hospital as an emergency case. Mr B contacted Asha Deep volunteers to see if they could visit Mrs B whilst Mr B and son were taken to Oxford hospital.

On arriving they found an extremely distressed and disorientated Mrs B. She had not eaten, bathed and looked very confused and lost. The volunteers did their best to help and decided that she could not be left on her own. Along with provision of meals, Asha Deep project took immediate action and sought help from Adult Social services. Mrs B stayed overnight with the volunteer (who also happens to be a family friend).

The son has had 3 spinal operations and is in recovery.

Mr & Mrs B are now working Adult care to understand Mrs B's needs.


What difference did we make?

Mr B has extremely grateful – firstly for the meals and regular contact. He continues to send us videos of his son's recovery. Secondly the project has helped Mr B realise there Mrs B has the onset of mental health and that they need to address it so that they can get appropriate help and support.

'Its a amazing projects run by Asha Deep, and supported by many many volunteers, its really wonderful job done by whole group, great benefits to people who are really in need , specifically in a tough time like covid.

I REALLY HATS OFF, PROJECT, GROUP, AND ALL VOLUNTEERS TEAM,
JUST KEEP IT UP, MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL DEAR.

UNDER YOUR FOOD PROJECT, IT'S FANTASTIC MEAL AND SERVICES. WHICH WAS REALLY REALLY HELPFUL AT THE MOMENT FOR ME AS I AM UNDER UNEXPECTED CIRCUMSTANCES.

ONCE AGAIN THANKS 
STAY BLESSED.'

Project Leader's feedback

What was your greatest achievement from the project?

The project has enabled Asha-Deep to extend its meals provision many people in Northampton. We had not appreciated the extent of need in the county. We have identified excellent volunteers in the community who has shown such dedication and commitment and were prepared throughout the whole period to deliver the meals. We have received excellent feedback from service users about volunteers.

Communities have come together and are helping themselves in a way that might not have been possible otherwise.

What have you learnt?

That it is important to provide culturally appropriate services. If we had not done this then a section of the population would not have been equally served.

That it is important to continue to focus on community needs and respond to this – people often need good practical support to turn their lives around.

There are good people in communities who can volunteer and go out of their way to support people. They also strongly advocated for people's needs so we could respond.

How was it working in collaboration?

Working in collaboration and especially in Black Community collaboration, enables everyone to learn from each other, help each other overcome barriers and support each other.

We know that it is only through collaboration that we can have a stronger voice and ensure that the needs of Black communities are addressed.

Had it not been for this collaboration we could not have delivered at the scale we were able and identify the extend of need in all Asian, African-Caribbean and African communities.

Appendix:

Testimonials:

“ I just want to use this opportunity to thank you and the team for the food parcel that I have been receiving throughout this difficult time with the Covid out there but you all didn't stop but continue to show care and love to a brother in need. For this amazing effort you did to me and others I just want to say thank you and with all the members involves for everything. ”

- **Recipient of PMN food parcel service**

“ The Defra funds enabled us to support them with food parcels as well as assist them with other items they are lacking such as clothing and nappies, non food essentials. We are continuing to work with the beneficiaries on a one to one basis.

Doing individual case management has also made me aware of the need to continue supporting those who would otherwise struggle without our help.

Our volunteer numbers have gone up and although not all if them are available every Saturday we have a volunteer pool of 48 volunteers. ”

- **Anne Wankiiri, Project Lead for UAA service**

“ I was too worried to go outside during the lockdown period but was also short of food. The delivery service provided by UAA allowed me to make less trips to the shops and eat better. ”

- **Recipient of UAA food parcel service**