

Winner of:

TNF Scottish Charity Awards 2009
The Scottish Asian Business Awards 2009
Scottish Empowerment Awards 2005
Contribution to Others Finalist 2005



Integration Partnership
of the Year Award
for 2017

Finalist in the Health and Social
Care Integration Award Category
for The Herald Society Awards
2017

NETWORKING KEY SERVICES NEWSLETTER

formerly known as Nari Kallyan Shangho

Health and Welfare project for women and families living in Edinburgh, providing them with a platform to act together and improve the quality of their lives. At NKS we firmly believe that a happy woman is a happy family

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Editorial - Naina Minhas, Manager

Networking Key Services (NKS) has emerged as an immensely valued community organisation in the true sense, over the last six months during the Covid-19 pandemic. The organisation responded with an amazing flexibility to the complexities of the external environment, when community morale and confidence was low. Although the NKS premises was shut, the staff was proactive more than any other time to reassure grass root communities of their full support throughout these difficult times. Delivering food and essentials to about 200 people every week to providing one to one advice and support to families, was at the core of the work carried out. Information about staying safe in challenging times and bringing grass root families online to connect to each other and to information providers was an uphill task, but was carried out successfully with the help of financial support mainly from the Scottish Government and National Lottery. Donations from the communities were received and most welcomed. The NKS management committee and many volunteers came forward to support the staff team in engaging with grass root communities to address the challenges faced during the public health crisis. They all joined hands to support and engage with families to combat isolation and address hardship issues for many families. From working one to one with individuals; supporting digital learning to connecting online; teaching women English conversation and keeping school children entertained online through various activities, were some of the tasks taken up by volunteers and committee members. The NKS management committee and staff team deserve a big applause for all the good work done in the last six months. The team work has ensured valuable contribution that still continues to address challenges faced by communities in Edinburgh. Without such exemplary teamwork, the mammoth uphill task during the pandemic was not possible. NKS would like to thank all who came forward to help the local communities during COVID19.

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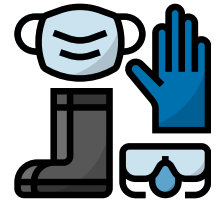
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For any further information, comments, or suggestions regarding any issues raised in this newsletter, or if you would like to contribute work to be included in future newsletters, please contact NKS at the address indicated. **Disclaimer:** The views expressed in any of the articles in this newsletter belong to the author, and are not necessarily the views of Networking Key Services.

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COVID-19 EMERGENCY COMMUNITY SUPPORT

BY NASEEM SULEMAN, FAMILY SUPPORT OFFICER



What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the name given to the disease caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus.

Source of the Virus

COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people. This occurred with MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV, and now with the virus that causes COVID-19. The SARS-CoV-2 virus is a betacoronavirus, like MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. All three of these viruses have their origins in bats. The exact source of this virus is unknown.

Wearing of the face masks and washing hands, using hand sanitisers came into force at the start of the lockdown and so did social distancing. With that came the rush to bulk buy essential items as businesses started closing down, stocks became reduced in shops and people were very anxious as they did not know what was going to happen. This led us at NKS to start a Covid-19 emergency community support programme.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY COMMUNITY SUPPORT

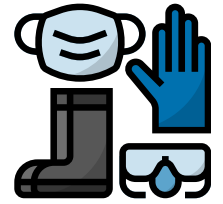
Benefits Support

At the beginning of the pandemic, the sudden lockdown at first caused lots of unemployment as businesses began to close down. This caused people to need to claim benefits to enable them to survive and support their families and to pay their bills. Most of the unemployed were waiters, restaurant chefs, shop workers, taxi drivers who now had to apply for benefits. Most of them do not own computers and also cannot read and write in English. This caused more problems as even the benefit offices were closed due to the lockdown and everybody had to work from home.

Universal Credit benefits were taking nearly four to five weeks to process and be paid out. Although the government did make the process fast-track it still took nearly three weeks before the payments came through.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY COMMUNITY SUPPORT

BY NASEEM SULEMAN, FAMILY SUPPORT OFFICER



Businesses which had been in operation for many years and had two or three years tax returns submitted, received funding from the government to furlough staff, but new businesses which hadn't submitted tax returns didn't get any funding, and these were the businesses that were unable to keep their staff. As this was all new to even the government and the rules were being made as the lockdown continued, a lot of people suffered even though they were being told they would be paid. There was a gap of nearly a month before they realised this and so we made benefit claims on their behalf. Universal Credit cannot be backdated and it starts from the day that you claim and this led to people not being able to afford to pay their bills, rent, and everyday essentials. Mostly people who are low earners were affected by this lockdown. There were no clear instructions given by the government at first so it led to a lot of confusion.

Mental Health Issues and Domestic Violence

We saw a rise in mental health issues, mainly depression, due to people being in lockdown and having to stay in 24/7.

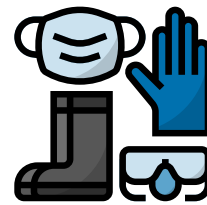
As housing benefit is included in universal credit, this led to a month or two of rents not being paid. Most of the landlords who had mortgage payments outstanding didn't realise at first that there was a provision from their lender called 'payment holidays' where by their monthly repayments could be deferred for a period of time agreed with their lenders. This led to landlords putting pressure on their tenants and told them that they would, and could be evicted due to non-payment of rent.

We had to intervene in such cases by getting in touch with landlords to inform them of these deferment rules and that there was also a rule from the Scottish government on eviction. The landlords had to give a six month notice to their tenants to evict them.

There was also a significant rise in domestic abuse cases. Two months into the lock-down period we began to see a rise in domestic violence cases. The women and children were put out onto the streets and organisations like us had to find emergency housing for them, plus most of these women and children didn't have anything apart from the clothes on their backs. We had to do fundraising to provide them with basic essentials before their benefits started and we were also on hand to provide emotional support.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY COMMUNITY SUPPORT

BY NASEEM SULEMAN, FAMILY SUPPORT OFFICER



Food and Essential Items

By the third week of lockdown, the government was to review whether social distancing measures could be changed, we at NKS began making more effort to make life a little easier for the elderly and people with long term health conditions. These groups were not only isolated by not been able to go to the shops but were also isolated from their loved ones. It was very difficult for the elderly groups, as before they used to attend NKS groups once or twice a week, for lunch clubs and to meet their long-time friends. This isolation had made people who lived on their own, extremely lonely. As supermarkets were open only limited hours, with restrictions and emphasis on social distancing, wearing of face masks and regular using of hand sanitisers, this caused a lot of challenges and hardships to the elderly, frail and people with long term health conditions.

Fundraising

NKS first began fundraising to enable us to supply freshly cooked food and essential items to people with long term health conditions, the elderly, domestic violence victims and low income families who were either unable to get out of their homes to go and shop or were unable to afford it.

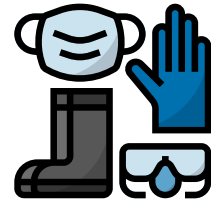
We began providing 25 families with food and essential items once a week. As we went into the second and third week of the lockdown we saw a rise in families needing more help and we also began to get referrals from social workers, GPs and other organisations.

As we saw a rise in need, we were able to apply for funding to enable us to continue to provide this service to people three times a week. Over the last six months we have gradually provided over 200 freshly cooked meals per week and essential items to the elderly and people with long term health conditions.

Additional support and donations were received from NKS staff and their friends. When the neighbourhood of Gillespie Street found out about our emergency support services, they came forward to volunteer help and assistance. Covid-19 health and safety guidelines were implemented and followed i.e. social distancing, face masks, sanitising premises before and after each delivery for the duration of the lockdown support period.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY COMMUNITY SUPPORT

BY NASEEM SULEMAN, FAMILY SUPPORT OFFICER



Computer Zoom training

We had to find new ways of working and keeping in touch with our users as we knew the months ahead were going to be challenging and we had a variety of activities to take place. We had to train users in computer skills to enable them to join Zoom sessions which was a challenge in itself as most of our older clients had little skills in using digital devices or to participate in online group sessions. A training force team was collaborated to target those users who needed to become familiar with using digital devices. We managed to get reconditioned laptops through our partnership working with other agencies and NKS also loaned tablets for users.

A big thank you to all volunteers plus the following organisations for helping us make **NKS Covid-19 Emergency Community Support** possible:

- **Scottish Government**
- **The National Lottery**
- **Edinburgh Community Foods**
- **World Care Foundation**
- **St John's Curry Club**
- **Capital Wholesalers**



SELF MANAGEMENT PROJECT

BY NASIMA ZAMAN & NAZIA MAJID, LTHC SUPPORT WORKERS



The womens **Long Term Health Conditions** (LTHC) project staff have been working especially hard during the last five to six months of the pandemic lockdown. They have connected with and supported their service users via digital resources i.e. mobile phone, tablets, iPads, laptops, etc.

The project staff have trained users how to use online resources such as Zoom to deliver group sessions. This is a big stepping stone in itself as many users were not used to connecting and interacting with digital devices. However, more work needs to be done to continue to bring more people to take part in these online group sessions. As Covid-19 restrictions are still in place, home or face to face visits are not possible.

Users have been supported with lots of 1:1 support in the way of referrals; translating; care packages; benefit applications; making & amending appointments; ordering medical prescriptions; completing and submitting online applications for Occupational Therapy equipment and also attending three party appointments with doctors and users. Many have also been referred to the NKS food project for weekly deliveries of essential food items and hot meals.

Weekly sessions have also been held, over WhatsApp, to inform users about exercise, smoothie recipes and other relevant health advice to benefit the LTHC users health and wellbeing.

LTHC Group sessions delivered over the last few months include:

June - Yoga (including basic yoga, face yoga, breathing techniques and posture tips)

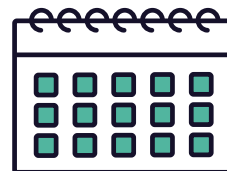
July - Open discussion sessions to support overall health and wellbeing of the users e.g. coping mechanisms, precautions taken, vitamins information, healthy diet, importance of outdoor exercise, etc



Open discussion session on Covid-19 with users

SELF MANAGEMENT PROJECT

BY NASIMA ZAMAN & NAZIA MAJID, LTHC SUPPORT WORKERS



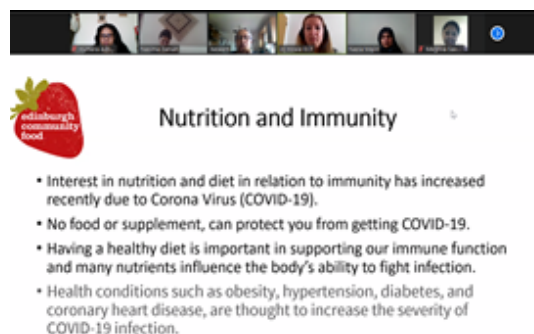
August – Nutrition & Immunity session with **Jo Howie, Food & Health Development Officer at Edinburgh Community Food** (specifically for diabetes and heart problems)

August – A Benefits of Wearing a Face Mask session was held by NKS in collaboration with the **Health and Social Inequalities Project**.

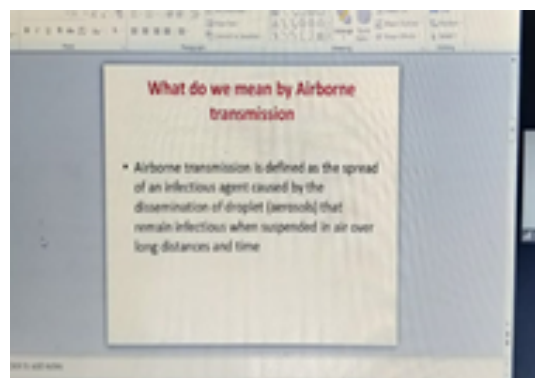
September – The LTHC women & Mens group participated in the **Health Photography Exhibition** which will be displayed in the **Market Street Gallery** in September. This project is being run to ask users to submit pictures of themselves to display what good health means to them e.g. doing yoga, at the gym, a healthy meal or any such activity which they identify with good health.

September – a discussion session was held on Mental Health with **Dr Rahila Khalid** from **Health In Mind**.

Overall, the LTHC project staff have provided significant advice and emotional support to the users where required and taken further steps to keep them safe in emergency situations e.g. domestic abuse. In addition, funding has also been raised to support individuals and families in extreme situations.



Nutrition & Immunity session with users

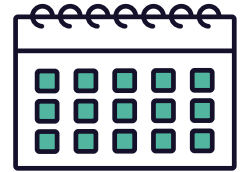


Benefits of Wearing a Face Mask

Please contact the NKS LTHC team on 0131 221 1915, if you have any worries or questions regarding your Long Term Health Care.

SELF MANAGEMENT PROJECT

BY NEENA AGARWAL, LTHC SUPPORT WORKER



Mens Long Term Health Conditions (LTHC).project

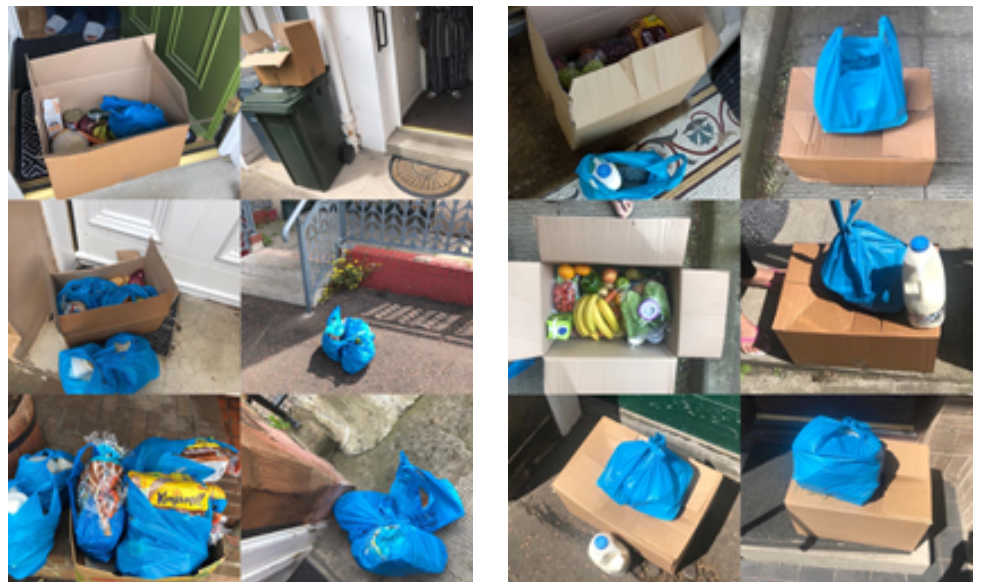
March to April 2020 has been a very challenging time for the staff and service users at NKS. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, everything changed so suddenly that we as staff were not sure how we were going to deal with our clients and ourselves as carers. However, we managed to deal with a very stressful situation. After discussions with my colleagues we made a plan and started working on it. We started the process by phoning older men to ask them about their state of health and if they needed any help and support -

particularly those who were living on their own and also were in shielding.

After speaking to them on a regular basis we discovered they had a few requests. They were having problems with their prescriptions and so I phoned their GP, contacted the pharmacy and sorted out their medicines.

Four referrals were made to NKS internal staff for Social Services and Benefits. One referral was made to a chiropodist. The client has a language issue so I spoke to the chiropodist and helped solve the issue.

By keeping in regular contact with the users I came to know that our users were feeling isolated and lonely, especially those who were living on their own without any family support. Our staff at NKS began to engage with them by providing weekly hot food and daily essentials appropriate to their cultural needs.



Food and essential items delivery to service users

As their isolation was very apparent, I began to engage with them through group Zoom sessions. It was not an easy task. They, including myself, knew nothing about using devices for online interactive sessions. I arranged some IT lessons for myself and then with the help of my colleague we downloaded the Zoom app for most of our users. This was very difficult mainly for those who lived on their own.

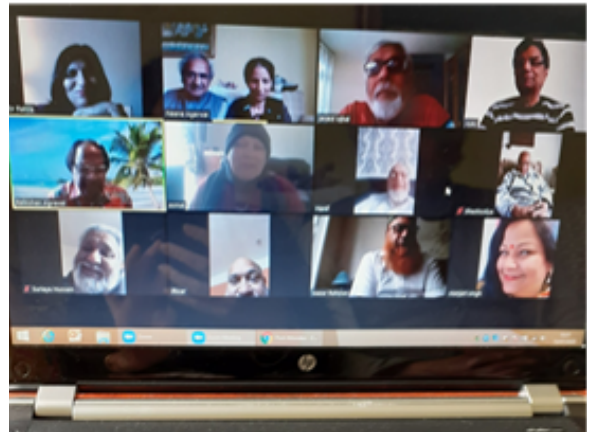
I soon discovered that some of the users did not have any devices. NKS and **Health in Mind** very kindly provided the users with Tablets and they were then able to connect with their group mates. They were very delighted which was good for their loneliness, mental health and wellbeing.

The following topics were covered in Zoom group sessions during lock down. Each session has a theme to help them learn some tips and coping skills to help improve their mental health and well being.

- Introduction session to establish how they were coping with the lockdown and any challenges faced
- Techniques for Better Sleep
- How to Stay Active during Lockdown
- Food, Mood and Improving Immunity
- Anger Management
- Coping Skills for Stress
- Self-care in Lockdown
- Mindfulness
- Breathing Exercises
- Healthy Cooking recipes



Project staff home visit with user



Anger Management session



Dr Mahendra Agarwal session on covid-19

- Anxiety
- Sharing tips for Hair Care, Meal recipes, Sports quizzes, singing competition e.g. Antakshari
- Talk with **Dr Agarwal** on the Covid-19 pandemic
- How Personal Boundaries Keep us Safe
- Oral Health
- Reflection and discussion on the Covid-19 situation

CARE FOR CARERS PROJECT

BY HUMERA ADNAN - NKS CARE FOR CARERS PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR



Over the last six months the **NKS Care for Carers** project, has continued to provide important carer support services to the NKS carers group but remotely. Our staff team kept regular contact with the carers and reassured them that we were available to support and advise them during this challenging and stressful pandemic period. We also understood that many of our carers had to follow strict shielding guidelines for themselves and their cared for person. In addition to this challenge there was a very high risk of feeling completely isolated and helpless. Project staff supported carers via phone, text messages, email and online Zoom sessions. We also made every effort to keep carers updated with new and relevant Covid-19 changes and information.

A significant amount of one to one support was also provided to carers where it was required. This included referrals to social services; mental health issues support at VOCAL; massage referrals; food and essential items delivery; listening and supporting to individual queries from carers; referring to NKS family support and benefits etc.

Our monthly forums continued to take place but now on a fortnightly basis. We were able to set up online Zoom sessions in conjunction with **Rahila Khalid** from the **Equal Access Project at Health In Mind** in Edinburgh. We delivered a variety of sessions to support and inform our carers. A good number of carers - approx 15 to 20 - regularly participated in these Zoom sessions. The following topics were covered:

- Techniques for Better Sleep
- How to Stay Active during Lockdown
- Food, Mood and Improving Immunity
- Anger Management
- Coping Skills for Stress
- Self-Care in Lockdown
- Mindfulness
- Breathing Exercises
- Healthy Cooking recipes
- Quizzes on topics of Better Sleep and Staying active
- Anxiety Management
- Fun activities like sharing tips for hair care, food recipes, etc.

We took the opportunity to apply for individual carer funding grants from **VOCAL Edinburgh** from their **Short Breaks Fund**. This Fund allowed carers to utilise grant money to purchase aids or equipment to support themselves during the pandemic lockdown period. We submitted approximately 21 funding applications and over half of the applications were approved. Grants were used to purchase or contribute to purchasing items such as exercise equipment; gardening equipment; garden sheds; laptops, mobile phones; tablets/iPads etc. This was very much needed by the carers who were very grateful for this financial support. Thank you very much **VOCAL Edinburgh!**

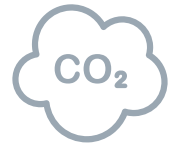


Carers Forum - Practicing Thankfulness and Having a Positive Attitude

The NKS Care for Carers project will continue to follow Covid-19 health and safety guidelines and run carer sessions online until it is safe to hold sessions at NKS.

LOW CARBON COMMUNITIES EMISSION

BY TATHEER FATIMA, NKS CLIMATE CHALLENGE PROJECT COORDINATOR



It is with immense pleasure we can announce that Networking Key Services (NKS) is successful in achieving a funding grant for the next two years for the **Low Carbon Communities Emission project** (also called the **Climate Change Fund (CCF)**). NKS has been working towards climate change issues and awareness among the South Asian community for almost one decade. Most of the time the work has been supported by **Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB)** in collaboration with the **Scottish Government**.

CCF and NKS activities are always leading the way to keep the community updated and informed about ways to keep their carbon footprints low. We know that it is impossible to keep the carbon footprint at zero all the time however we can always strive for the minimum.

The new project will be a continuation of the last project where the activities will be similar but will now have a more in-depth approach towards activities.

After the successful application and funding grant was awarded, the Covid-19 pandemic occurred. The CCF project team had to start the project in very unusual circumstances as we were going into lockdown. As the project is completely based on interaction with people on either an individual or collective basis, the project team had issues of encouraging and teaching participants to do activities in certain ways. This can ultimately lead to an increase in carbon footprints.

Due to lockdown and social distancing guidelines imposed by the UK Government, the CCF project activities were limited to online sessions only.

After the easing of lockdown, NKS arranged walking and cycling activities (under the travel activities section) on a weekly basis, which took place in a very restricted manner. As people were waiting for the lockdown to end they were looking forward to joining activities related to the outdoors and this attracted a good number of attendees. This led to the CCF project team having to create multiple groups per activity to keep within the health and safety guidelines. The project team intends to deliver information and activities on fuel efficiency in October.

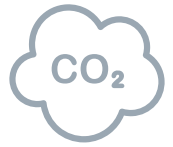


The **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE)** has provided tremendous support in delivering online weekly sessions on indoor/outdoor home gardening and tips and tricks to grow vegetables during the lockdown. NKS greatly appreciated their help and support in this regard.

Online stitching/alteration classes have been taking place on a fortnightly basis, since the start of the project. Mask making sessions was one of its initial activities.

LOW CARBON COMMUNITIES EMISSION

BY TATHEER FATIMA, NKS CLIMATE CHALLENGE PROJECT COORDINATOR



The CCF team would also like to thank **Grove Community Garden Edinburgh** for their involvement in supporting the community during this challenging time. As **RBGE** was strictly restricted for public attendance, **Grove Community Garden** was a place where a restricted number of people could go to assigned slots to look after their gardening plots. It was a huge source of encouragement and therapeutic way to reduce stress during the lockdown for the local community.

We are now assessing further activities to undertake, to engage the community in a safe manner and also keeping to Covid-19 safety guidelines.

The following activities are being delivered now:

- Online Zoom sessions on Cycling and Bike maintenance for intermediate and beginner level
- Cycling challenges on 11th October and 24th October 2020
- Fuel Efficiency Driving Trainings (FEDT) on 20th October and 9th November 2020 (for taxi drivers, where a certified trainer will provide one to one 45-55 min free of cost training on how to save fuel and look after the environment during long hours of driving)

The CCF team is also arranging different online sessions on gardening, waste management tips and tricks, energy, travel, and cookery sessions.

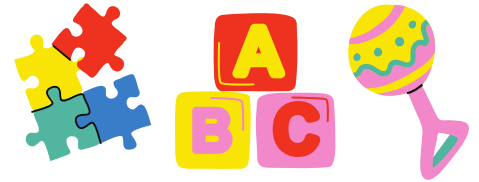


We are also trying to engage people in our online swap shop. We hope to encourage people to free their clutter while they are at home and share swapping information online so that people can swap things easily. The idea may seem a bit complicated but we will attempt to persuade users in the community.

Home energy visits are in process where the CCF team is providing one to one advice on energy efficiency and helping the community for their energy-related issues. Live sessions with **Home Energy Scotland (HES)** and the CCF team also arranged informative and educational sessions to deliver to the community users. This included information on energy issues and available support from HES and the government during the months of July and August 2020. Online carbon literacy training is in the planning phase now and we are looking forward to supporting our community as much as we can.

CHILDCARE FACILITY

BY RUKHSANA HUSSAIN, NKS NURSERY MANAGER



During lockdown the **NKS Nursery** staff began to deliver weekly Friday online sessions with nursery children and their parents. The sessions would include activities such as:

- Arts & crafts
- Play dough making
- Cookery sessions
- Oral health with Samina from the NKS Oral Health team
- Storytime
- Action songs
- Children's yoga and so on.

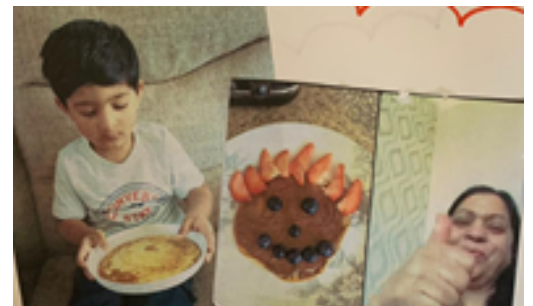
The children and their parents greatly enjoyed these sessions with the parents also taking part in singing songs and teaching these activities to their own children. Star of the Week was awarded to one child at the end of every session which motivated and encouraged every child to behave well and be proud of their efforts.



Working on her laptop



Excited to see all his friends!



Making pancakes in live cookery sessions



June online session with all children, parents and nursery staff





NKS NURSERY IS NOW OPEN



**NKS runs a multi-cultural childcare facility
for children aged between
3 months to 5 years.**

There are two sessions per day:

8.30 am to 1.00 pm

1.00 pm to 5.30 pm

Please contact NKS for more details.

**Networking Key Services Ltd (NKS), Darroch Annexe,
7 Gillespie Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9NH**

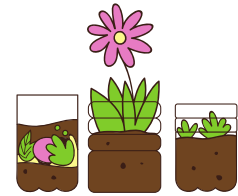
Tel: 0131 221 1915

Email: nks@nkshealth.co.uk

Website: www.nkshealth.co.uk

EDINBURGH GARDEN PARTNERS

BY MEGHNA SAXENA, PROJECT WORKER



This year, NKS has collaborated with **Edinburgh Garden Partners (EGP)** a community organisation active across Edinburgh. The major focus of this collaboration is to create garden partnerships between people who have space to share (garden owners) and garden volunteers who want a space to grow vegetables, flowers etc. In addition to this, the partnership also helps in establishing inter-cultural relationships among people of the South Asian community and individuals of different ethnic backgrounds. So far, we have successfully established four garden partnerships and are working towards more. This collaboration is also helping people of different ages and abilities to come together and enjoy green space.

In the present situation with the Covid-19 pandemic, many people have been deprived of any sort of social interaction. As interaction between garden owners and volunteers usually takes place outdoors, they can continue to share their skills, knowledge, and life experiences.

We hope that our partnership work and support will create new friendships which will be helpful in decreasing various mental health problems that have arisen because of the pandemic. The link to the website is <https://www.edinburghgardenpartners.org.uk>.



CULTURAL BRIDGING PROJECT

BY MEGHNA SAXENA, CBP COORDINATOR

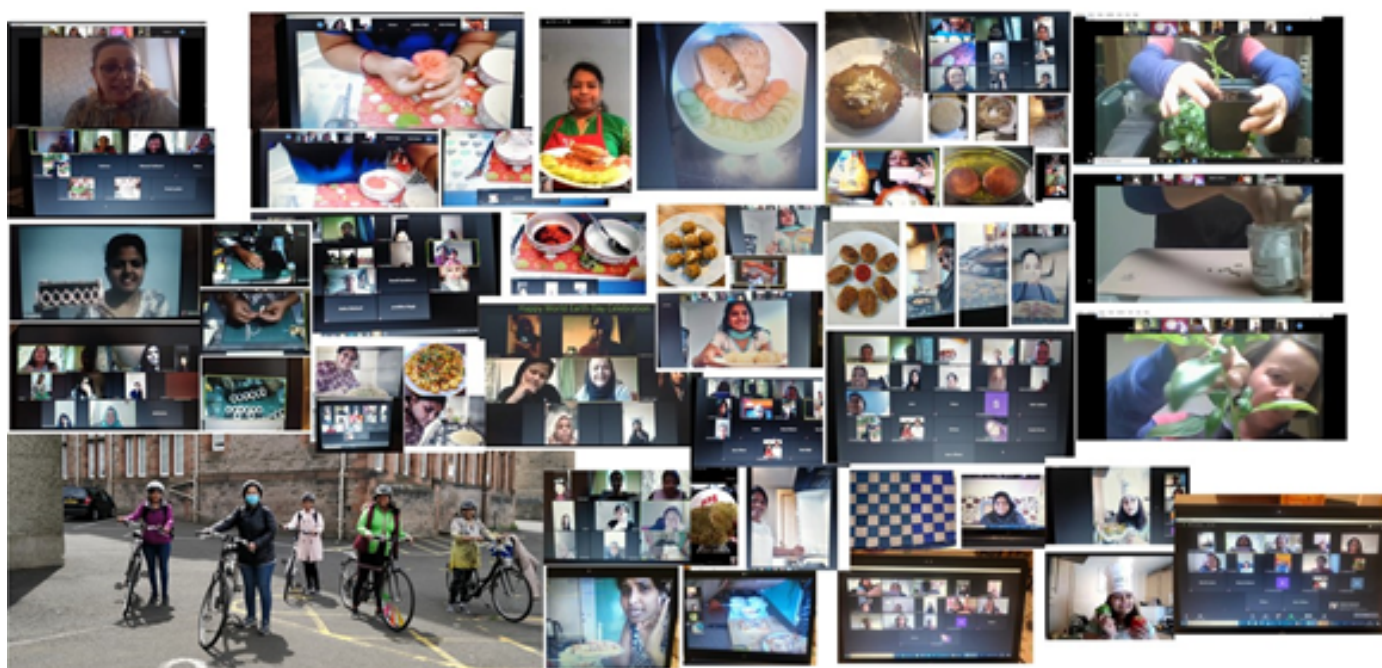


Our **Cultural Bridging** project at NKS helps in empowering women to participate in the integration and community cohesion process and to encourage interaction with the local mainstream communities. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown situation, the activities were primarily conducted online or in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines. We arranged different activities like cooking, sewing, craft work, gardening and virtual tours with the group members. In a situation of extreme social deprivation, participants really enjoyed the online interaction with each other.

In addition to this, our volunteers participated in cooking and craft work sessions with other groups. The **Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh (RBGE)** provided live sessions on gardening at home; composting; checking old seeds; The Shoreline project; companion planting; propagation and cutting and a virtual tour. The participants enjoyed the informative sessions and learned skills to cope with during this challenging pandemic situation. A few of them even started growing vegetables at home. We also celebrated **World Earth Day** online with our NKS users.

As the lockdown eased, we began cycling sessions with our volunteers (following strict Covid-19 guidelines). Furthermore, we had the opportunity to receive a live craft work session with **Prajakta (Arty-Crafty** YouTube channel) a YouTuber and an entrepreneur. She gave us a live session of basket making from old wool and used paper towel rolls.

As our Cultural Bridging project finished in June 2020, NKS would like to thank all the volunteers, participants, One City Trust and staff members for their amazing support and encouragement given to this project.



DIGITAL LITERACY PROJECT

BY TATHEER FATIMA, DIGITAL LITERACY PROJECT COORDINATOR

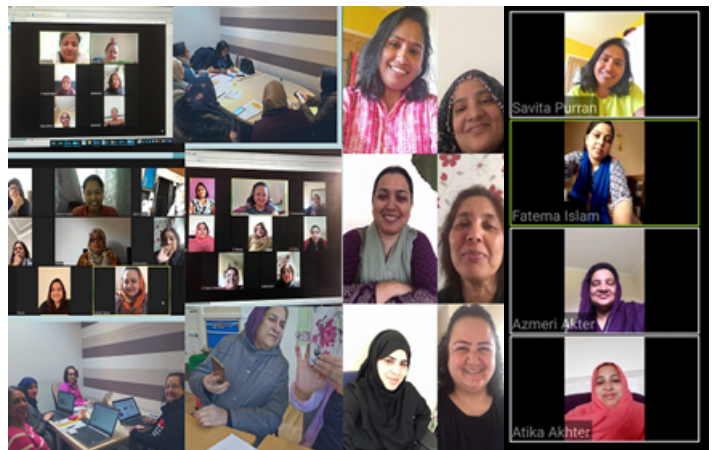


Enhancing Digital Skills and Addressing Learning Needs of South Asian Women in Edinburgh

The Aspiring Communities Fund Digital Literacy project finished during the month of October 2020. The project achievements during year 2019-2020 are highlighted below.

NKS has been supporting women through the “**Enhancing Digital Skills and Addressing Learning Needs of South Asian Women in Edinburgh**” project to build their digital skills and empower themselves with knowledge and information regarding the digital world.

In this project a paperless method of learning was introduced which became popular and effective in terms of quick learning.



Video tutorials were prepared by the project team, usually one week before commencement of the class. The project coordinator and project co-worker would ensure that the videos prepared were easy to understand and that the information was accurate to share.

Video content was discussed with tutors and suggestions for improvement would take place after the preparation of each every video. Video content review and dissemination among participants was part of the process.

These videos have tremendously helped NKS staff members and service users, whether they were part of the project or not, to utilise when and where needed. The whole project team's skills and knowledge have been available for class participants, NKS users and NKS staff for the duration of the project. To clarify:

- Seventy-five women in total benefited from the project.
- During the months of March 2020 to September 2020, thirty-six women enrolled for online learning.
- A total of six sessions were held and each session consisted of eight classes. This means a total of 144 classes were undertaken.
- Sixteen candidates joined these classes so that they could develop more skills in their daily life (especially for job searching, conducting own businesses and better performance in current jobs).
- Twenty participants required support to be able to conduct basic daily activities by themselves without help.

NKS is providing completion certificates to nineteen distinct candidates due to their extraordinary performance, dedication, punctuality and support provided to other classmates.

DIGITAL LITERACY PROJECT

BY TATHEER FATIMA, DIGITAL LITERACY PROJECT COORDINATOR

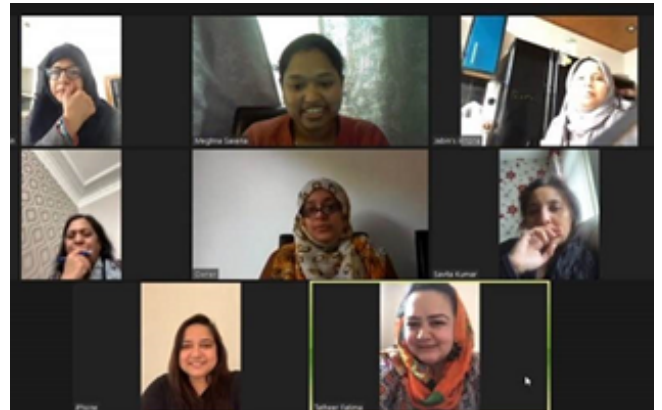


Challenges during Covid-19 lockdown and Online Classes

The project faced an unusual working situation due to the pandemic lockdown. The project team had just began the second classes session after the Christmas holidays. We decided to continue the digital literacy classes online and the Zoom application was selected to use, due to its easy interface. Virtual tutorials on "Using Zoom App" were prepared and the Project Coordinator delivered Zoom training to the Project Co-worker and teachers/tutors.

The high-level learning group was provided with remote installation/updates service on laptops or other available devices via Zoom. Other groups were provided with bilingual tutorials according to the training outlines provided to the groups.

It is a reflection of the project team's huge success, that from beginning of and until the end of lockdown, none of the classes reported problems in digital literacy training. NKS wants to congratulate all of the participants of the project for taking part in this learning opportunity and congratulate especially those participants who will be receiving certificates on their best performances.



NKS Efforts towards Sustainability and Long Lasting Skills from Digital Learning in the South Asian community

The project team has made a tremendous effort in supporting and delivering intensive training which will be long lasting and enhance the users prospects for future opportunities.

NKS had also applied for funding from a Scottish Government initiative - **"Connecting Scotland"** during the month of July 2020. Our application was successful and ten chromebooks and twenty iPads were provided to community users. Unfortunately, the project did not offer any financial support to the team, to work on further introductory classes and support towards the use of provided equipment.

NKS realises this is a halfway effort towards the cause. With no help towards understanding equipment and its use, community users will not be able to benefit fully from the project. NKS completely understands availability and accessing of equipment is important but the knowledge and skills of using equipment is also vital. Some of the project team are voluntarily working for the project and NKS will not be able to provide long term support to the community in this regard.

NKS knows that South Asian community members already face barriers in this regard, but nothing can be done without financial support. Ultimately, in a nutshell, South Asian women will suffer and will be alienated from availing a larger pool of opportunities in this digital world.

HERITAGE PROJECT

BY NAZIA MAJID, HERITAGE PROJECT WORKER



The NKS **Heritage project** has been running very successfully and we are now in the second year of our project. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have had to take a new approach to working life. The aim of our project is to educate and connect South Asian communities with the history and heritage of buildings in Edinburgh which date back to the last 100 years. Due to the pandemic lockdown it has not been possible to visit the buildings, therefore presentations and video tours have taken place over online Zoom sessions. Once the lockdown was eased we were able to take one group of people to a tour of the **Scottish National War Memorial Shrine**. An advisory group was created with our support organisations e.g. **The National Museum of Scotland (NMS)**, **The National Library of Scotland (NLS)** to bring all our networking organisations under one banner, keeping everyone updated and to receive their input to the project.

April-Sept sessions/activities for the Heritage Project

Banners for NMS, Information on Early history/building visit

We created two banners for our **Photography Exhibition** which will be the end product of the Heritage project. The first banner is an introduction and information on Early History dating back to the last 100 years and the second banner is information and photographs of participants visits to the NMS building.

Libraries Research/Live chat

Training was given to our volunteers and participants that took part in the NLS library visit to learn how to use and research on the main NLS database and how to archive information. Further research for the project is ongoing and the methods used to do this are internet searches, NLS library search and live chat.

Feedback from NLS/NMS collected from participants.

Feedback was collected from our participants visits to NMS and NLS to give us a better understanding of likes/dislikes, learning experiences and how to plan and implement future visits.

Greyfriars Bobby Zoom session

As it was not possible to visit buildings, we decided to make presentations and recorded video tours of the buildings over Zoom. **Greyfriars Bobby** was our first Zoom tour and the aim was to interest the viewers to get them to join Zoom sessions and want to learn more about the history of the buildings. We wanted to make the Zoom tours exciting and engaging and give users the experience of an actual physical tour. Greyfriars Bobby is very popular with the tourist industry and we were surprised to learn our users had no prior knowledge of its history but they were very keen to learn. They listened intently and were amazed with the story of Bobby and his master. They are all keen to visit the building now and see Bobby's burial place.



Greyfriars Bobby.

HERITAGE PROJECT

BY NAZIA MAJID, HERITAGE PROJECT WORKER



Iqra Academy Zoom session

Iqra Academy is known for its beautiful medieval architecture and has so much history as a former church, school and now a mosque. This session really resonated with our group as a couple of the user's children attended St Margret's school and they were able to share their stories within the group which made the whole session really interesting and engaging. One user's family had been part of securing and purchasing the mosque and she felt happy and proud that the building had gone to the Muslim community and now her grandchildren were benefitting by learning there.

Presentation on Iqra

We took the opportunity as the lockdown had eased to bring our users into a small group setting following government Covid-19 guidelines, as they were all keen to meet. The presentation showed how historically the building was a former church; then St Margaret's school and then finally a mosque. This was followed up with a short virtual tour video and then a Q & A session. A hot lunch was also provided. It was nice to see the users again and interacting appropriately in a socially distanced setting.



Iqra Academy slideshow

National War Memorial and Shrine

We had two sessions on this topic - one over an online Zoom session and the other was a physical tour that took place at **Edinburgh Castle**. Both sessions were kindly led by **Lieutenant Colin McCrory** from Edinburgh Castle. These sessions gave a great insight to the contributions made by South Asian communities in both world wars. It resonated really well with the group to feel part of British history and learn more about the sacrifices made by their ancestors.

The talk also highlighted the important contributions made by women and the roles they fulfilled during the world wars, i.e. joined the military, worked as nurses, repaired aeroplanes etc.

It was really interesting to learn about a Muslim war hero by the name of **Noor Inayat Khan** who was a secret radio operator for the British army in WWII, and has been honoured by a blue plaque outside her London home.



Edinburgh Castle tour

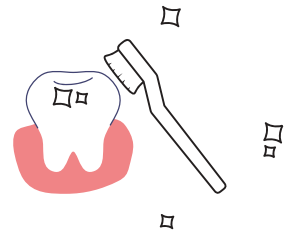


Monuments
honouring the
names of South
Asian
communities
that died in the
First World War.



ORAL HEALTH PROJECT

BY SAMINA FAYYAZ, ORAL HEALTH PROJECT WORKER



Hello everyone, I hope you all have been safe and well? What can I say? For once I am lost for words. Who would have known, that we will be living through a pandemic. How everyone's lives have been turned upside down. How difficult and strange everything had become. Trying to keep sane, safe and follow rules and regulations that have been set in place to help to protect us.

The **Oral Health Team** at NKS had to make changes too. When the government announced the lockdown, the NKS Management and Oral Health Team raced to make changes, in order to help us protect our clients and everyone else around us. For instance:

- As it was not possible to see our clients face to face anymore, we had to make virtual changes, in order to keep supporting our clients.
- For clients who were in emergency need of managing their oral hygiene care, we continued to stay in touch with them via telephone, internet and social media. We assured them that they were not alone and that the NKS Oral Health Team was with them throughout their journey.
- The Oral Health Team continued to support clients that were due to or were receiving emergency treatment from their dentist and/or at the dental hospital during lockdown. The team ensured that they received the best medical attention.
- The NKS Nursery children were supported in managing their oral hygiene, in teeth brushing sessions and fun activities. They were also supported in learning about healthy eating. This was achieved through Zoom sessions with a lot of help from the Nursery staff to make this happen.



Zoom Nursery sessions

We had a positive and great result in the **Nutrition and Healthy Eating** course by **Jo Howie** from **Edinburgh Community Food**. Jo provided the course through Zoom sessions. The course lasted three weeks with an exam at the end of course. A total of eighteen parents and staff had participated and benefited from the course. They passed with flying colours. Well done everyone! What an achievement!



Healthy Eating with Jo Howie

The Oral Health Team did not stop there. They continued to deliver their message by making videos and presentations based on Covid-19 with Oral Health, dangers of Paan chewing etc. Special videos were made for children to remind them on the importance of looking after their teeth. You can access those videos through NKS social media.



Paan Chewing Information presentation

As we discover how difficult life has become, we hope to reassure you that NKS Management and Oral Health Team will continue to support you in these difficult times and beyond. Please get in touch with the Oral Health Team, if you have any oral hygiene issues.

Please get in touch with the NKS management team if your need is something else. Please do not sit at home and suffer in silence as we are here to support you. Thank you for taking the time to read my article.

EXPLORATION OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES WITH NKS AND ALLEVIATION OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

BY FARIHA MOSADDEQUE



My name is Fariha Mosaddeque and I am a postgraduate student at the University of Edinburgh, pursuing my Masters in Public Health. I am currently conducting research with Networking Key Services (NKS) to determine the impact of minority ethnicity based NGOs and the role they play in alleviating social isolation and deprivation.



Background: Social isolation is a growing problem in the area of public health, research indicates that social isolation can be linked to premature death, poor mental and physical health. There is evidence that community based programmes play an integral role in bringing together people to provide a platform to foster meaningful connections. However, there is limited research in the Scottish context regarding how these groups are serving the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population, who are often underrepresented or overlooked while conducting research. Hence, this study has been conducted in collaboration with Networking Key Services (NKS), to explore the views of South Asian women using these services to learn more about the importance of them in relation to alleviating social isolation.

Design and method: Five women using the NKS services participated in semi-structured interviews conducted over phone and video calls. Interviews were transcribed by the interviewer and thematic analysis was conducted to identify themes.

Aims: The primary aims of this study were to:

- 1) Identify main reasons that lead to social isolation/use of services
- 2) Explore the views of South Asian women who use NKS services in relation to social isolation and wellbeing
- 3) Suggest ways in which services can be improved for South Asian women who are experiencing social isolation.

Results: The results were focused around three themes 1) Migration 2) Family Dynamics and Gender Roles, and 3) Religion. Participants felt like their migration to Scotland and the initial years of settling down was the most difficult period of time as they were adjusting to a new culture and way of life. This often led to feelings of isolation and loneliness as they did not have the resources to connect with and be part of a community. However, the common narrative was that they were able to establish a circle of friends later in life, when they had less familial responsibilities and their children grew older.

EXPLORATION OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES WITH NKS AND ALLEVIATION OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

BY FARIHA MOSADDEQUE



IMPACT OF NKS

There were four main ways in which the NKS programmes had a positive influence on user wellbeing that were identified through the interviews:

1. Increase in self-confidence: Participants reported feeling a sense of agency and control over their own lives when they started attending workshops and programmes regularly. It provided them with a structure and routine in their lives, and they reported feeling more empowered because their time was being utilised in a way which they perceived to be productive and meaningful. Interacting with other people at the centre enabled women to overcome their social anxiety and apprehension of going into new spaces.

2. Better knowledge of health: Attending workshops that were hosted in collaboration with other charities such as SAMH (Scottish Association of Mental Health), or NHS led sessions focused on different issues such as mental health, diabetes, and oral health enabled them to access culturally specific content. Women report that they are better informed about how to take care of their own health, and family health as well because the sessions that were organised catered to needs that are relevant to a South Asian background. In addition, the English language classes were deemed to be very beneficial for some women as they reported being able to better communicate their health needs with their physicians. Staff members often accompanied service users to checkups as well to ensure they had some form of support during the appointments.

3. Platform for socialisation: Having a physical space dedicated to organised community events benefitted the women because they were able to get together in large numbers at once, which made them feel like they were truly a part of a community that they could rely on. Social connections were also reported to be beneficial in improving their mood and general morale as they found more people similar to themselves. Furthermore, they learned more about Scottish culture through trips to places such as museums, historical sites, and galleries. This made them appreciate the heritage of Scotland and connect with people outside of their ethnicity as well.

4. Facilitating developing new hobbies and skills: Activities such as sewing, gardening, and cooking were some of the programmes that were most enjoyed because they found the resources at NKS helped them further their interest in the respective domains. In addition, physical activities such as swimming, yoga, cycling, and walking groups were deemed to be very beneficial to the women because they felt more comfortable partaking in exercise in a group setting rather than alone.

HEALTH & SOCIAL INEQUALITIES PROJECT

BY NEERU BHATNAGAR, HEALTH AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES PROJECT COORDINATOR

The **Health and Social Inequalities Project** is well established and running sessions/activities. It is now nearing one year of our project. With the Covid-19 pandemic hitting the worldwide community, we had to remodel our work and offer activities online using Zoom, to maintain contact.

The aim of our project is:

- To improve health and well-being
- To better socio-economic circumstances of our women
- To enhance skills using asset-based methods to tackle inequalities and poverty
- To increased employability chances for South Asian women

April-Sept Sessions/activities

To enable women to engage, connect and readjust to the new family routine, yet maintain health, we prepared a PowerPoint presentation on **'Healthy Eating Nutrition and Hydration'** in English but also explained it in Urdu/Hindi in the background. This was shared with families on WhatsApp and NKS Facebook to reach maximum people.



During this period, we continued to engage and make referrals to the NKS Family Support Officer or other outside agencies to assist families with their day to day issues.

Before the groups could start we helped families with digital equipment and how to use it. This was offered in our own language to those who needed this help. In addition, we also sent videos on 'How to Download Zoom' and 'How to Use and Troubleshoot' to feel confident. We also had a member of our team on standby to regularly assist and encourage women to use Zoom before starting two groups.

From June we formed two Zoom groups: **'Wednesday Women's Group'** and **'Thursday Women's Group'** running every fortnight in consultation with the community. The following activities took place:

Wednesday Women's group

- English conversation sessions
- Food and Health education workshops/courses
- Confidence and capacity building
- Job search
- Physical and Mental well-being - talks/discussions
- Encouraging Volunteering
- CV writing help - one to one support
- Job search

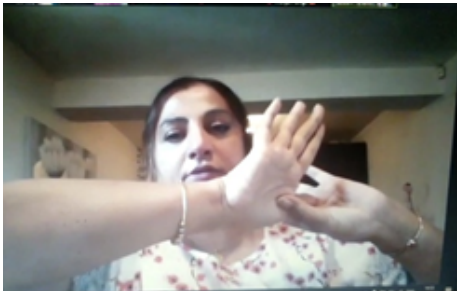
Topics covered fortnightly :

- Three weeks workshop on **Reflexology** - 'Benefits and How it Works' by volunteer Naseem Akhtar
- Information sessions on **Benefits and How to Apply** by Naseem Suleman, NKS Family Support Officer
- **Tour of the Hindu Temple** in collaboration with the **Heritage Project** by Nazia Majid & Neeru Bhatnagar facilitated by Suman Vohra
- **Oral Health 'Love your teeth'** information session - by Samina Fayyaz, NKS **Oral Health Team**

HEALTH & SOCIAL INEQUALITIES PROJECT

BY NEERU BHATNAGAR, HEALTH AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES PROJECT COORDINATOR

- Talk and Presentation on **Iqra Academy** in collaboration with the **Heritage Project** by Nazia Mazid and Naz Rathor
- **Walking Groups** for NKS users



Reflexology with Naseem Akhtar



Hindu Temple Tour

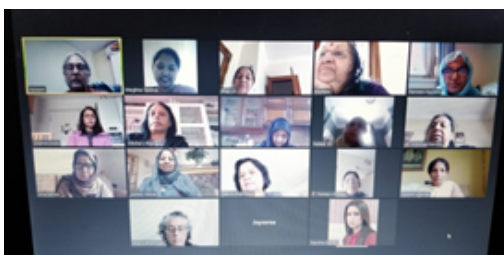
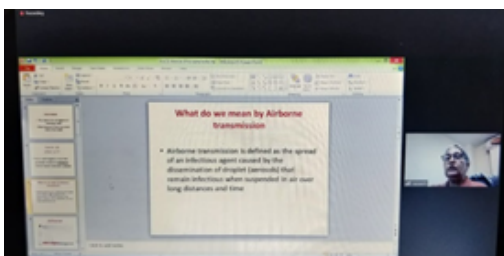


Wednesday Walking Group

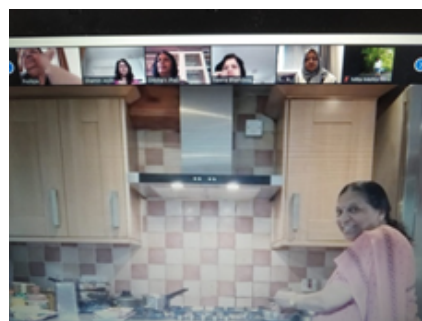


Thursday Women's group

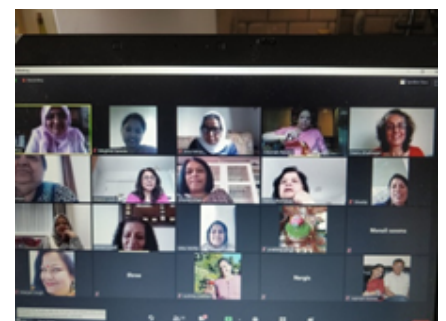
- Talk on **Greyfriars Kirk and Bobby** – in collaboration with the **Heritage Project**
- **COVID19 – Talk and Q & A** from **Professor Raj Bhopal – Edinburgh Migration, Ethnicity & Health Research Group** who was the speaker on: The nature, prevention and control of COVID19 (coronavirus). What is a virus? How it causes disease? This was followed by questions and answers.
- Talk and Tour – **Scottish National War Memorial Shrine** delivered by **Lieutenant Colonel Colin McGroary** from the Scottish National War Memorial
- **Yoga** session by **Neena Agarwal** (NKS) and 'Gup/shup' (informal chat) session
- **Appropriate Masks for Older people** – information session
- **Making Muthia** a snack by **Mrs Indu Pandya** – online cooking session
- Information sharing on **Picturing Health** and **Making '4 different types of pickles'**
- Women took part in the **Picturing Health Exhibition** by sending their pictures relating to health and lockdown



Session on wearing masks



Making 'Muthia' with Mrs Indu Pandya



We are currently running on a weekly basis, two 'English Conversation' groups. They are led by our volunteers, Honor and Rachel who work with up to six people in each group. Feedback from both tutors and attendees has been excellent.

LOOKING FORWARD WITH NKS

(in line with current Covid-19 guidelines, activities have been adjusted)

Groups at NKS

English as a Second Language (ESOL) Classes

- Women only ESOL classes run at NKS, thanks to Edinburgh College on Mondays and Tuesdays from 1.00pm till 3.00pm. Please note that the classes run with the college/school terms.

Bangladeshi Women's Support Group

- This group is for both younger and older Bangladeshi women and runs at NKS on Mondays from 11.00 am till 1.00pm.

NKS Men's Support Group

- This group runs fortnightly at NKS on Tuesdays from 11.00am to 1.00pm

NKS Carers Support Group

- This group runs once a month on Tuesdays from 11.00am till 1.00pm at NKS

NKS Women's Long Term Health Conditions Support Group

- This group runs once a month on Tuesdays from 11.00am till 1.00pm at NKS

Wednesday Women's Group

- This group runs on Wednesdays between 11.00am and 1.00pm at NKS

Mother and Toddler Group

- This group usually runs on Thursdays from 11.00am until 1.00pm at NKS

Thursday Older Women's Group

- This group runs on Thursdays from 11.00am till 1.00pm at NKS

Saturday Women's Group

- This group runs once a month, on Saturdays, between 1.00pm and 5.00pm at NKS.

Please note that the group activities are organised in consultation with the group members and include activities such as: health/discussion sessions; cookery; gentle exercise; yoga; lunch club; music and art appreciation; sewing; complementary therapies; outings; social functions; etc.

Please contact NKS on 0131 221 1915 for more details. Please pass on your contact details to your group leader in case any sessions may be cancelled or venues changed. Thank you.

NKS Services

- Outreach/Befriending
- Family Support services offering one to one support, advice and information
- Health education/promotion
- Group work
- Training/courses
- Research
- Seminars/conferences/information days
- Advocacy work
- Volunteering opportunities
- After School/Homework Club - for children from 5 to 14 years of age. Activities include: help with homework; maths tuition; English tuition; outings and games; etc. Please contact NKS for more details.

NKS Nursery

NKS Nursery is for children from 3 months to 5 years old. The NKS Nursery runs five days a week from Monday to Friday from 8.30am till 5.30pm.

NKS Board of Directors

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Sugantha Ravindran - Director (Vice Chair)
Jack Marshall - Director (Treasurer)
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Shaheen Ahmed - Director
Allison Conroy - Director
Honor Loudon - Director
Lesley Hinds - Director
Kiren Zubairi - Director

NKS Resource Library & Drop In Facility

NKS holds books, CDs, videos and DVDs as part of our resource library. We encourage women to use these resources. You are welcome to come and browse through and borrow these from NKS. We have a drop-in facility for South Asian women and their children. You can drop in and watch some TV or read a book.

Your Contacts at NKS

Naina Minhas - NKS Manager
Khalda Y Jamil - Administrator
Naseem Suleman - Family Support Officer & Long Term Health Conditions (LTHCs) Worker
Neena Agarwal - LTHCs Worker
Nasima Zaman - LTHCs Worker
Nazia Majid - LTHCs Worker & Heritage Project Worker
Samra Ahmed - Care for Carers' Project (CCP) Coordinator
Humera Adnan - CCP Administrator
Samina Fayyaz - Oral Health Project Worker
Tatheer Fatima - Climate Challenge Project (CCP) Coordinator & Digital Literacy Project (DLP) Coordinator
Savita Kumar - Digital Literacy Project Support Worker
Manjari Singh - CCP Worker
Nazma Rahman - CCP Worker & Oral Health Project Sessional Worker
Neeru Bhatnagar - Heritage Project & Health and Social Inequalities Project Coordinator
Rohina Hussain - Health and Social Inequalities Project Worker
Rukhsana Hussain - Nursery Manager
Amina Rahman - Senior Childcare Practitioner
Sobia Shazad - Childcare Practitioner
Fauzia Ahmed - Childcare Practitioner
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