



A study into the economic, social and health impact of COVID-19 and related circumstances on the BAME community in Oldham

Executive Summary

September 2020



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During times of economic decline and societal challenges the Black, Asian and Ethnic Minorities (BAME) community have always faced the blunt of the negative impacts. The last recession in 2008 is a case in point, where we saw existing disparities and inequalities further exacerbated with higher unemployment, lower wages, a widening skills gap and greater health inequalities.

Once again, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought out the stark reality of inequalities that disproportionately affect people from BAME backgrounds. All of the sources reviewed, unanimously agreed that there is clear evidence that COVID-19 does not affect all population groups equally. Sources indicate that due to a mix of various racial, sexual, economic and cultural factors the minority communities and BAME in particular are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and its fallout.

OAK CD decided to conduct a study into the economic, social and health impact that the COVID-19 and related circumstances have had on our service users and the BAME community of Oldham in general during the period of May 2020 to July 2020. This was done to gain a better understanding of the difficulties our clients are facing so that we and other service providers are able to better tailor the support and service delivery.

In order to allow for the largest reach in the target audience, an online questionnaire was chosen as the most effective, safe and feasible data collection tool during the lockdown. The questionnaire was created with the use of Microsoft Forms and included a number of open, closed, quantitative and qualitative questions.

When looking at the findings of the study it becomes clear that the findings paint a bleak picture of the current situation that the BAME and faith community of Oldham find themselves in. It can be evidenced as a result of this study that they have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in areas of economic, social, health and educational outcomes.

Some of the key finds of this study have revealed:

- A significantly higher rate of diagnosis was prevalent in households from deprived areas than the borough and national average. 68% of respondents could be considered within a high risk category.
- Covid-19 has had a considerable economic impact on the BAME community with 46% of respondents reporting a worsening of economic activity within their households.
- residents have been more anxious, lonely, isolated, angrier or depressed as a result of COVID-19.
- Most parents were of the view that the lockdown had a negative impact on their children's education and potentially academic achievement.
- Covid-19 had a worsening effect on children's mental wellbeing, self-esteem/confidence, resilience, social skills and diet.
- The majority of respondents turned to family/friends and local Mosques, charities, and community groups for help and support.

Based on the findings of the report we strongly recommend to local and national government to use the Covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity to take a fresh look and re-evaluate the strategies and programs in education, health, employment and social areas and make them better aligned to address the deep seated structural inequalities that exist within BAME communities.