

Photovoice Research Report

Enfield Asian Welfare Association (EAWA) is a registered charity that has been providing services in the Health and Social Care field to the community of Enfield and the surrounding areas for more than 20 years. One of the key services provided by EAWA is the Social Hub at Edmonton Green Library. The goal of the Social Hub is to provide a welcoming and inclusive space where older people are able to socialise, engage in activities, and receive support from others in their community. EAWA's aim is to empower older people with well-being activities.

EAWA are achieving positive outcomes that are not being fully documented. This collaboration between the charity and Brunel University students will help to unearth these outcomes and report on the impact, direct and indirect, that EAWA has on the community it serves. Gathering and sharing feedback with the wider community will help EAWA to attract additional clients and funding. Our goal with this research is to help EAWA in their mission to enhance the lives of 50+ people within Enfield and surrounding areas.

The purpose of this report is to share the findings of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Social Hub and its impacts on the lives of its participant.

Method:

In order to collect data, we decided to use a participatory research method called Photovoice. This approach allows participants to use photography to represent their experiences and perspectives. This approach was selected as we believe it to be the most powerful tool to share the lived experience of EAWA's clients and to share the work of EAWA with the wider community.

- Photographs can be understood without language or cultural barriers
- It is a low-cost option which utilises the knowledge of Brunel University students
- Participation is centred around the attendance of existing sessions; therefore, no additional significant time is required from the participants.
- Photovoice gives unheard people a voice
- Photovoice promotes dialogue, and reflection on community needs.

The participants were asked to take photographs that represented their experiences with the Social Hub. These photographs were used as a basis for discussion with the participants.

These photographs can be found in the Appendix below.

Findings: The photographs taken by the participants and the subsequent discussion revealed several common themes relating to the impact of the Social Hub on their lives:

- **Social Connection:** Many participants highlighted the importance of the Social Hub in helping them connect with others and combat loneliness. Photographs

showed participants engaging with each other through group activities, as well as having fun celebrating birthdays and eating cake.

- Health and Wellbeing: Several participants highlighted the positive impact of the social hub on their health and wellbeing. Throughout our discussion, participants talked about taking part in exercise classes, cooking healthy meals, and participating in mindfulness workshops. All of the participants mentioned feeling happier, more energized, and more motivated as a result of attending the social hub.
- Many photographs contained images of flowers and other plants. This was an important finding as they explained that nature massively improves their wellbeing and mood. Participants highlighted their interest in plants and flowers and the importance of having a hub of similar minded people where they are able to share and explore this with other people. The group's daytrip to the Sky Gardens in London was a very loved activity by all the participants.
- Cultural preservation: During our discussion, the participants talked about the importance of the events held by EAWA, in particular, the Diwali Celebration event. Participants were very happy and excited to be taking part in cultural events and activities, such as music and dance performances, and preparing traditional meals. Many participants mentioned feeling proud of their cultural heritage and appreciated the opportunity to share it with others.

These findings evidence the importance attending the social hub with many participants describing the social hub as a lifeline that has helped them to stay connected, healthy, and engaged. Many participants mentioned feeling more confident and less isolated as a result of attending the Social Hub.

Some participants mentioned living alone, and attending the Social Hub was their only way of socialising. They reported that it raises their mood on the day, as well as throughout the week as they look forward to it. Without the Social Hub, they felt that the risk of experiencing loneliness would increase as they would be much less likely to seek out socialising on their own.

The discussion with the participants revealed some of the things they liked and enjoyed about the Social Hub:

- It helps improve their mood
- It is an opportunity for them to socialise more
- Makes them feel less lonely and less isolated from their community
- A great place to make and maintain friendships
- Day trips: All participants loved the excursions that the Social Hub offers. They said they wouldn't have gone to explore those places, especially alone, whereas now, they are able to spend the day out with other people they know whilst doing something they're interested in.

The findings of this study suggest that the social hub provided by EAWA is an effective way of connecting people to their community, especially following

bereavement. The social hub has helped to address issues of social isolation and loneliness, promote health and wellbeing, and preserve cultural heritage. These findings are consistent with previous research that has highlighted the benefits of social support for older adults. The social hub has provided a valuable resource for the local community and has helped to strengthen social ties and promote community cohesion.

In conclusion, the social hub provided by EAWA is an effective way to connect people in the 50+ age group with their community, addressing social isolation and loneliness. The findings show the positive impact it has on the health and wellbeing of the people who attend it.

The social hub has provided a valuable resource for the local community and has helped to strengthen social ties and promote community cohesion. The importance of the Social Hub in the lives of the people who attend it is evidenced in the photos that were submitted and the discussion that followed. This fully supports EAWA's desire to expand this service to the wider community to bring the benefits to more members of Enfield's 50+ community.

Appendix: The photographs



A meeting place to meet friends and meet new acquaintances



My beautiful house plant flowers once a year. Always something to look forward to



Lovely Bouquet- joy to the eye and peace to the mind



Bright sun rays this morning bringing life to all living things and nature



An outing to Cotswold with EAWA group. Had a wonderful and memorable day! ☺



Having coffee with Friends after yoga classes



Enjoy being out in nature.



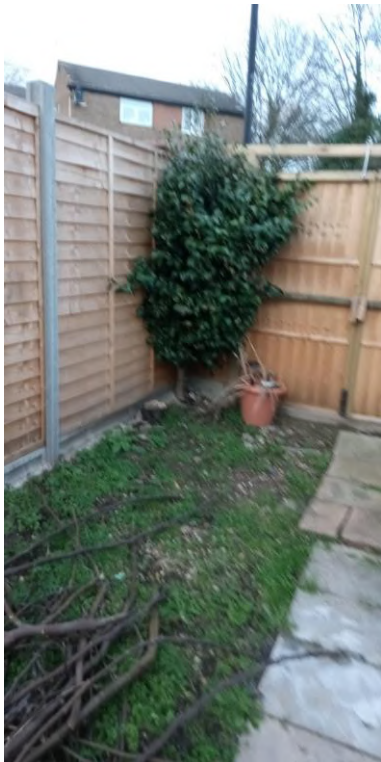


Celebrating Thomas 80th Birthday after yoga class





My Aloe Vera growing very nicely!



It's a big benefit doing yoga for me because it helps a lot with my health.





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