

Steps to Recovery

Support for Community Champions

Caring and Sharing [Rochdale] Community Feedback Survey and Impact Findings

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All photographs kindly provided by Caring & Sharing



Report Remit

The Civil Society Consulting (CIC) team was asked:

- To collect, assess and review the positive impact on beneficiaries – women, men and families accessing the support services offered by Rochdale-based charity Caring & Sharing, including conducting a feedback survey and securing the views of key local partner organisations
- Make observations and recommendations based upon the evidence collated and analysed to support the development of the charity's work activities supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable people and communities from ethnically diverse backgrounds
- To produce a simple review report designed to support Caring & Sharing in strategically developing its service offer and secure additional funding to enhance provision.

Civil Society Consulting Community Interest Company

Civil Society Consulting is an independent not-for-profit social enterprise based in Southwark, Suffolk and Manchester, working alongside and providing support to faith, voluntary and community sector organisations throughout civil society.

Founded at the height of the then Government 'austerity' agenda over 10 years ago, the CIC is committed to supporting smaller 'grassroots' community-based organisations and their social action projects. As a co-production social enterprise it works to enable them to **flourish** and to tackle the problems that exist in the **local communities they know and love**, and maximise their leverage of social impact.

Recently, the team have worked extensively with faith and civil society organisations in: throughout London Barking & Dagenham, Bromley, Southwark, Tower Hamlets & Waltham Forest; Bury, Blackpool, Coventry, Derby, Ipswich, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Peterborough, Redcar, Rochdale and across the West Midlands and East Anglia.

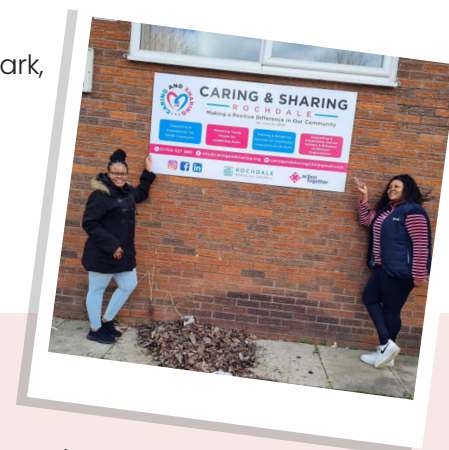
T @CivilSocietyCIC
W www.civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk

Caring & Sharing (Rochdale)

Caring and Sharing is a BAME-led mutual aid charity (CIO UK Charity No: 1185733) focused on providing support to those from ethnically diverse communities, including refugees and asylum-seekers, living in Rochdale. As a result of their emerging organisational strength and developing capacity the charity continues to bring the community together in a vibrant celebration of cultural differences. Caring and Sharing's main activities centre on addressing poverty, social isolation and poor mental health, it offers befriending support, community events, information sessions and workshops.

Caring and Sharing have a diverse and capable team – with volunteers coming from 19 different countries, each bringing their own wealth of knowledge and expertise to the organisation so that it can then reach out to as many people as possible in the local community. It also works closely with a number of local partners to bring about change together, including with Rochdale Council and other voluntary, community and faith organisations.

T @CAS_rochdale
W www.caringandsharingrochdale.org



"Caring and Sharing has really given me a sense of belonging..."

"...it builds my confidence"

"Increases my confidence, self esteem, feel less stress"

"It helps in my mental well-being and during my asylum case - Caring and Sharing help a lot"

"Mental health lessons improve the way I looked at things, I was a little bit depressed with the pandemic and asylum process that really help me a lot..."

"Caring and Sharing are a unique organisation in that they ask for nothing and offer guidance, support and joy to communities and partner organisations"

"Over the last few years Rochdale has witnessed a rapid demographic change with increased African heritage population. Caring Sharing is an invaluable community organisation which helps address the emerging need to recognise and respond to this population change. Most recently this was demonstrated through its essential engagement in the Covid 19 response work providing specialised support to African families."

Comments received from survey respondents and local partner organisations, May 2021



In Spring 2021, Caring and Sharing Rochdale conducted a Community Feedback Survey, co-produced with Civil Society Consulting CIC. The survey was designed to collect straightforward feedback for Caring and Sharing's existing services, as well as to inform about how it could improve and expand services and its overall charitable offer. Over a period of several weeks, we collected over 20 responses, capturing a diverse range of community views and experiences.

The majority of survey respondents identified as African (63%), while people of Mixed ethnic backgrounds were the second largest group (14%). We also collected responses from people who identified as Black British, White British and people of Asian background.

Current projects – survey analysis – survey analysis

Caring and Sharing (C&S) currently offers a significant number of services and projects, and this range was reflected in the survey responses. Around one-third of respondents have received financial help for utility bills and food, particularly during time of the pandemic. Other respondents have participated in or used various other services, including mentoring, family support and guidance, mental health support, skills training, and social and cultural activities. Caring and Sharing's Black Heritage Week programme in particular was received with enthusiasm– respondents who participated found it very memorable.

In our survey, when asked to rate the impact that Caring and Sharing has had on their lives, **73%** gave 10 out of 10 as their mark; 23% gave 9 out of 10, and the remaining respondents gave 8 out of 10. Evidently, being a part of Caring and Sharing is considered to be very positive and beneficial to the lives of service-users with all scoring it very highly indeed.

In the qualitative section of the survey, respondents noted down some specific ways that Caring and Sharing has made a difference to their lives:

- The supportive, empathic, and compassionate environment, free from judgement
- The way that Caring and Sharing always goes beyond their means to assist their service-users
- A sense of community and belonging and being able to connect with others
- Building confidence and self-esteem
- The celebration of differences and bringing people together
- The relief from stress and anxiety when help is received for mental health and funding for basic needs
- The practical support and advice for employment and the asylum process.



"Caring and Sharing has really given me a sense of belonging and the capability of dealing with any situation that comes"

"The best thing about Caring and Sharing is how they are able to draw together a mix of cultures and ethnicities of people together. Gives you that sense of community belonging"

"It helped me through a difficult time...I don't really have family I can turn to, it's nice knowing that someone can help, and it builds my confidence"

The impact of Caring and Sharing in numbers

Mental and physical health

- 96% of respondents feel that Caring and Sharing has helped them feel happier
- 86% said that C&S has helped them feel less stressed or depressed
- 87% feel that their self-esteem and confidence improved through C&S
- 78% felt that their resilience had grown through C&S
- 78% said that C&S had helped them become physically healthier and/or fitter

Daily life

- 87% of respondents gained cultural awareness and greater understanding of life in the UK through Caring and Sharing
- 56% felt that their English skills had improved with Caring and Sharing's help
- 43% improved their work and employability skills, and the same proportion of respondents were able to access volunteer and work experience opportunities through C&S
- 52% of respondents feel that C&S has helped them better integrate into their local community and become less socially isolated
- 65% said that their relationship with their family improved through C&S
- 61% of respondents felt that C&S has helped them become more capable of tackling abusive relationships

Covid-19

- 91% of respondents have received help from Caring and Sharing to deal with adversities caused by Covid-19
- 78% have received help getting hold of food and supplies when shielding from Covid-19

"Increase my confidence , self esteem, feel less stress"

" Their projects embrace everyone in the community despite their backgrounds and status"

" They're always there to support and give us what we need that the government don't give us"

" By way of connecting me with other women to network. Providing regular training. By connecting me to a platform where I can share with thoughts and opinions without judgement"

" Mental health lessons improve the way I looked at things, I was a little bit depressed with the pandemic and asylum process that really help me a lot..."

The survey results reveal that Caring and Sharing has enriched and improved the lives of service-users in a wide variety of ways, often holistically, through addressing basic needs, supporting mental and physical wellbeing, as well as through facilitating social connection, increasing confidence and resilience. The work of helping people to cope with their everyday struggles and stresses has continued apace, and the charity continues to deliver on key aspects of its community cohesion agenda; and ensuring social integration.

Many respondents expressed gratitude that Caring and Sharing was able to relieve some of their most pressing concerns, whilst several others commented on the positivity and joy that came with being a part of the Caring and Sharing community. This has, of course, been doubly important for people as they have struggled with the lockdown and the adverse impact of the pandemic.

Four out of five respondents also said that they would use Caring and Sharing's services in the next 12 months, while the remainder said that they may use its services. Therefore, the charity should be very much encouraged to continue and expand its services in response to their demand. It is recommended that the charity continue to run regular feedback and consultation exercises to ensure that the voices of people with lived experience and beneficiaries are centre-stage, and empowered to contribute to the development of future activities, community cohesion and social integration in Rochdale.

Suggestions for new projects, services and activities

Through our community survey, we also wanted to reflect on and understand how C&S services can be improved and expanded to better suit the needs of service-users.

Some of the feedback that received were in response to the severe limitations imposed as a result of COVID, such as in-person activities that were put on hold, and the lack of a space to meet other people – these will (we all hope!) resume as COVID-restrictions ease, although we acknowledge that it has been difficult and isolating period for some of our service-users. Social isolation remains a real challenge and one that respondents are keen to overcome.

" CARING AND SHARING ACTIVITIES CAN BE IMPROVE THROUGH MORE ACCESS TO FUNDING"

A few survey respondents commented that they would like to get to know the Caring and Sharing team, and access them more easily. For example, one respondent mentioned that they had not met anyone from the Caring and Sharing team, having only used their services through their church. They would like more information about the organisation and meet the people who are providing the services. Respondents want to see C&S better resourced and with more funding so that it can both continue to deliver and develop what it offered locally. Some respondents noted that they would like to see a more regular programming of activities. There is also a demand for more physical activities such as exercise or aerobic classes, team sports (including netball, football, and baseball), and walking or exercise groups.

Respondents were enthusiastic about more volunteering opportunities, including hosting community evenings for older people in care homes. Others wanted to have more work skills training and job vacancies signposted to them. In general, respondents were eager to get to know and spend time with other members of their local community, so there were also suggestions for sharing meals together (social eating), organising group trips and excursions, and reaching out to more people to be a part of Caring and Sharing. Clearly, there is huge potential for C&S in enhancing its provision, and by securing more core funding and capacity providing additional impact and benefits. This community feedback survey comes at a pivotal stage for the charity as it emerges stronger from the pandemic and continues to generate local enthusiasm and support (please refer to the endorsements of two major local partners as below).

Endorsements for Caring and Sharing

"Since its establishment in 2017 Caring Sharing has rapidly evolved into a valuable community organisation working with and alongside Rochdale Council. It has demonstrated great professionalism paired with a willingness to adapt and develop to meet emerging needs, helping to address issues on cohesion, equality, hate crime, racism and poverty by supporting refugees, women, young people and their families from diverse backgrounds.

Over the last few years Rochdale has witnessed a rapid demographic change with increased African heritage population. Caring Sharing is an invaluable community organisation which helps address the emerging need to recognise and respond to this population change. Most recently this was demonstrated through its essential engagement in the Covid 19 response work providing specialised support to African families.

We are delighted to be working on the above spheres of engagement with Caring Sharing and hope that the organisation will continue to go from strength to strength, and that it will continue to sustain its work for the good of the community."

John Rooney
Assistant Director – Information, Customers & Communities
Rochdale Council

"We have worked with Caring and Sharing for the past 4 years at Touchstones gallery and museum. Nicky has been one of our main community connectors and collaborators, working on co creation and development, she has connected the gallery with community participants supported the work we do and championed the arts and culture across the borough. She has run community events and conferences in our link4life venues and is an advocate for diversity and equality.

Caring and Sharing are a unique organisation in that they ask for nothing and offer guidance, support and joy to communities and partner organisations – we have benefited immensely working with them and they have enriched our programme and enabled us to work with communities in a much deeper and authentic way.

Nicky says yes to everything and isn't afraid of a new challenge, she isn't afraid of taking some risks and is tenacious and creative in her approach to community development and an inspiring leader in our community. She is wonderful role model for young people and a true connector of people."

Lisa Allen
Co-head of Culture
Touchstones gallery and museum
Link4life



About us

Civil Society Consulting (CSC) is an independent, not-for-profit social enterprise – a Community Interest Company (CIC). We aim to enhance community cohesion by enabling and empowering VCSE groups to leverage social impact in the communities they know and love. This includes nurturing individual skills and talents, as much of our support is delivered through expert training and mentoring to members of community groups and charities. We have a particular focus on working in the most socially deprived and diverse neighbourhoods. Properly understanding the needs people have, and then working alongside them to plan, develop and run services and projects has always been at the heart of our people-led approach to consulting.

The team have worked extensively with communities – a wide range of groups, ethnicities, and ages. Our recent work includes working with BAME-led organisations up-and-down the country to secure funding for emergency Covid-19 frontline work, producing an report on the impact of Covid-19 on the social sector in Barking & Dagenham, and engaging with new mums in South East London to provide NHS England and Mind UK with insights into perinatal mental health in Bromley and Southwark.

We are academically-inclined, and keep a focus on the bigger picture: the strive for socio-economic rights and equality; but at the same time, our track record of working 'hands-on' with local grassroots organisations means we're not afraid to get stuck in.

