

REPORT – ONE VISION CARE FOR CARERS PROGRAMME (JANUARY – MARCH 2024)

**SUPPORTED AND FUNDED BY
HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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One Vision's comprehensive report on supporting unpaid carers in South Asian communities in Hertfordshire delves into the challenges, progress and recommendations for the well-being of this crucial demographic. Spanning from January to March 2024, the report presents valuable insights into the experiences and needs of unpaid carers within these communities, aiming to bridge existing gaps in support and resources.

During this period, One Vision engaged with a diverse group of 27 participants hailing from different parts of Hertfordshire. Through strategic outreach efforts, One Vision liaised with faith groups, community connectors and local networks to connect with these participants. This inclusive approach ensured representation from various South Asian communities, fostering a holistic understanding of the challenges faced by unpaid carers across the region.

The interactions with faith groups and community connectors facilitated a deeper engagement with unpaid carers, allowing for nuanced discussions and insights into the specific needs and experiences of this demographic. By leveraging existing community ties and partnerships, One Vision was able to establish a supportive environment where unpaid carers felt comfortable sharing their stories and articulating their challenges.

By actively involving community connectors and faith groups, One Vision demonstrated a commitment to inclusivity and cultural sensitivity in supporting unpaid carers. These collaborative efforts not only enhanced participation but also enriched the depth of the insights gathered, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the support requirements of unpaid carers within South Asian communities in Hertfordshire.



ASPECT	Outcomes
Physical health Physical Health: Participants experienced a positive impact on their physical well-being, including reduced weights, increased energy levels, and an overall improvement in health.	- Decreased weight for 25% participants. - High energy levels for 80% of the participants - Improved overall physical health Better mood and motivation for 80% of the participantan
Mental Health & Nutrition Attendees reported better moods, higher motivation for physical activity and adopted mindful eating habits, contributing to enhanced mental well-being. Encouraging brief meditative sessions and tranquil moments for reflection facilitated a sense of calm and improved mental clarity among participants.	- Decreased fatigue and isolation for 90% of the participants - Increased motivation to look after their physical and mental health - Increase in mindful eating habits in 60% of the participants - Open trying new mindfulness activities



ASPECT	Outcomes
Attendance & Engagement 18 participants consistently attended the sessions, with their advocacy attracting more potential attendees, indicating a high level of engagement and interest in the program.	- 18 – 20 participants attended face to face sessions. - Current participants have spread the word and we have more potential participants - Safe space created for sharing and support - 100% increase in knowledge about various resources with respect to unpaid carers. - Establishing a strong sense of community
Programme Feedback Community Support & Programme Feedback: By creating a safe space for sharing and support, participants engaged in knowledge and resource sharing, fostering a strong sense of community and support network. Participants provided positive feedback on the program, highlighting the value of community engagement, the positive impact of group sessions, and the crucial role of community connectors in maximizing the programme's benefits.	- Participants loved the group sessions and found them beneficial! - Recognized the power of community engagement - Commended the role of community connectors in enhancing the impact.

Background on unpaid careers in south Asian communities

Unpaid carers within South Asian communities play a vital yet often overlooked role in providing essential care and support to their family members, typically without financial compensation. In South Asian cultures, caregiving is deeply rooted in familial and communal values, with individuals assuming responsibility for the well-being of their loved ones as a fundamental duty. The intricate social fabric of South Asian communities often places a high emphasis on respect for elders, intergenerational bonds and maintaining family harmony, leading to an increased prevalence of caregiving within these familial structures.

Moreover, the cultural norms and values prevalent in South Asian communities influence the perception and practice of caregiving, shaping the experiences of unpaid carers. Traditionally, caregiving duties are undertaken out of a sense of duty, love and respect for family members, highlighting the interconnectedness and interdependence within these communities. However, the cultural expectations around caregiving roles can also contribute to the unequal distribution of care responsibilities, often placing a disproportionate burden on specific family members, such as women or younger generations. Balancing these cultural norms with the practical challenges of caregiving, such as financial constraints, language barriers and limited access to support services, creates a complex landscape for unpaid carers within South Asian communities.



OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT



The objectives of this report are centred on understanding and addressing the unique challenges experienced by unpaid carers within South Asian communities in Hertfordshire. Firstly, the report aims to identify the specific challenges and obstacles that these carers encounter in their caregiving roles, taking into account the cultural, language and social factors that influence their experiences. By assessing these challenges, the report seeks to shed light on the nuances of caregiving within South Asian communities and highlight the areas where targeted support and interventions are required.

In addition, the report sets out to evaluate the progress made in supporting unpaid carers over the reporting period. By assessing the effectiveness of existing support services, programs and initiatives, the report aims to gauge the impact of the One Vision Care for Carers Programme aimed at alleviating and supporting the challenges faced by unpaid carers. Furthermore, the report will examine the awareness and accessibility of services and resources available to unpaid carers within South Asian communities. By understanding the gaps in knowledge and access, the report can provide valuable insights into how these services can be better promoted and delivered to reach those in need, ultimately contributing to improved outcomes and well-being for unpaid carers in these communities.

METHODOLOGY



The methodology employed in this report encompasses a multifaceted approach to data collection, leveraging various tools such as surveys, interviews, focus groups and community engagement sessions. These methods were meticulously selected to capture a wide spectrum of insights and perspectives on the challenges faced by unpaid carers in South Asian communities within Hertfordshire. Additionally, the inclusion of activities like physical fitness, nutrition, art therapy, mental well-being sessions in the community engagement sessions not only provided a platform for information gathering but also fostered holistic well-being and empowerment among participants. The collaborative efforts extended to resource sharing signposting and referrals to other charitable organisations and statutory bodies aimed to create a network of support that is crucial for addressing the diverse needs of unpaid carers effectively.

Through these diverse data collection methods, the report ensured a rich tapestry of information was gathered from a broad range of participants, reflecting the diverse realities and experiences of unpaid carers within South Asian communities. By actively engaging with individuals from different backgrounds and circumstances, the report aimed to present a nuanced and holistic picture of the challenges faced by unpaid carers, incorporating their voices and perspectives into the analysis. This comprehensive and inclusive approach not only strengthens the validity and rigor of the report's findings but also underscores the commitment to understanding, advocating for and ultimately ensuring that awareness about these support systems are made available to unpaid carers in Hertfordshire.

Distribution of age

Distribution of 'Age'



■ 36-45 yrs ■ 26-35 yrs ■ 56-65 yrs ■ 46-55 yrs

Demographics

About participants

A total of 28 participants contributed to the study, representing a diverse range of age groups primarily falling within the maximum bracket of 36-45yrs. Furthermore, the age distribution was intentionally varied, encompassing participants from the age groups of 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, and 56-66

Geographical location

These participants hailed from different regions such as Watford, Hemel Hempstead, Radlett, Borehamwood, and Rickmansworth, offering a broad geographical scope to the study. Notably, the presence of 4 male participants within the cohort is noteworthy, given the cultural norms that often assign caregiving roles predominantly to women in South Asian households

Learning

The inclusion of male participants in the study not only provided a unique perspective on caregiving within South Asian communities but also challenged traditional gender roles within caregiving contexts. This rare occurrence illuminated the fact that men are also involved in caregiving responsibilities, highlighting the evolving dynamics within households and the shifting landscape of caregiving roles. By embracing a more inclusive approach to participant selection, the study was able to capture a more comprehensive and representative understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by unpaid carers in South Asian communities. The active involvement and contributions of male participants added depth and richness to the discussions, contributing valuable insights to the overall findings of the study.

Challenges Faced by Unpaid Carers & Progress Made through the Programme:

Problem at Hand	Life's impacted
1. LACK OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT AS UNPAID CARERS: - NOT REGISTERED WITH LOCAL GP'S AS UNPAID CARERS.	P - OV / SAHA TEAM AND VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED IN CONVERSATIONS TO RAISE AWARENESS. MADE 2 PARTICIPANTS REGISTER WITH GP
2. LACK OF AWARENESS ABOUT AVAILABLE RESOURCES: Participapnts were not aware of Carers in hearts, NHS talking therapies, alzeihmers society, hCC others services	P - In the weekly sessions, the OV / SAHA team inform about resources by councils, statutory bodies, and local CVS organisations. Made sure organisations like carers & NHS talking therapies, came to the engagement session. MAde 3 referrals to Carers and 3 to NHS talking therapies.
3. LANGUAGE BARRIERS:- Participants have not gone to other groups for the fear and shame associated with english noit being their first language. never found people like them so they thought they don't fit in.	P - OV/SaHA team Provided a supportive environment where sharing in the first language fostered comfort and a sense of belonging. this lead to them asking for help and information.

Challenges Faced by Unpaid Carers & Progress Made through the Programme:

Problem at Hand	Change created
4. ADDRESSING ISOLATION AND FATIGUE: - ALMOST ALL PARTICIPANTS WERE SUFFERING FROM ISOLATION AND FATIGUE	P – Through the Programme we emphasised on Fitness and nutrition sessions for promoting healthy living. ALSO SHARING STORIES FACILITATED A COMMUNITY ATMOSPHERE AND SENSE OF BELONGING. -ENCOURAGED OPEN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT PERSONAL JOURNEYS AND CHALLENGES WHILE RESPECTING CONFIDENTIALITY. -USED AN OXYGEN MASK ANALOGY.
5. ADDRESSING LACK OF TIME AND SENSE OF GUILT: Participants initially displayed hesitance to join the programme considering this as a waste of time associated with guilt	P – OV/ SAHA VOLUNTEERS & COMMUNITY CONNECTORS HAVE GOT PARTICIPANTS FOR THE FIRST FEW SESSIONS. THIS LEAD THEM TO SEE THE BENEFITS OF SESSIONS. -THESE PARTICIPANTS GOT MORE PARTICIPANTS AND THUS INCREASING THE NUMBERS. -INTRODUCED PARTICIPANTS TO A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY THROUGH THE "PROUD TO CARERS" WHATSAPP GROUP CREATED BY OV / SAHA TEAM.
6. PRACTICAL SUPPORT: - PARTICIPANTS WERE ALSO LOOKING FOR PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND FOUND ACCESSING AND UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL INFORMATION WAS A CHALLENGE. .	P - VOLUNTEERS PROVIDED INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE ON PRACTICAL MATTERS SUCH AS BLUE BADGES, BUS PASSES, AND RESPITE CARE IN THE PARTICIPANTS FIRST LANGUAGE.

Resource Creation



In response to the identified challenges faced by unpaid carers in South Asian communities in Hertfordshire, a holistic support program has been developed to address their diverse needs. This program incorporates various resources and initiatives aimed at promoting physical and mental well-being among carers while also addressing cultural and linguistic barriers to accessing support.

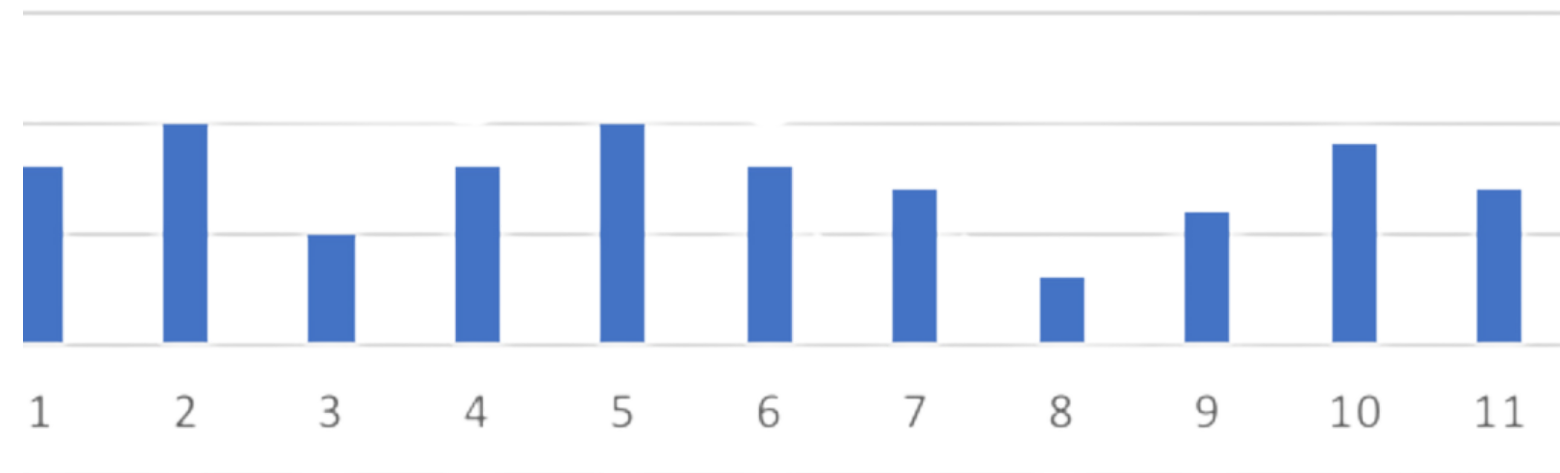
As part of this program, a series of fitness and nutrition videos have been created by south Asian fitness instructor and nutritionists who are also unpaid carers and through their lived experience have specifically tailored to the lifestyles and dietary preferences of South Asian carers. These videos provide practical tips and exercises to promote healthy living and manage stress effectively. Additionally, myth-busting videos on nutrition have been produced to dispel common misconceptions and empower carers to make informed dietary choices for themselves and their families.

To facilitate community engagement and peer support, a WhatsApp group has been established where carers can connect with one another, share experiences, and access relevant resources and information. Furthermore, a flow code has been implemented to streamline access to information and services, providing a convenient and user-friendly platform for carers to navigate available support options. Finally, to ensure ongoing support and monitoring, volunteers conduct weekly check-ins with participants to assess their needs, provide guidance and offer encouragement along their caregiving journey. Together, these resources and initiatives form a comprehensive support programme designed to empower and uplift the participants.

Qualitative data - Pre Survey



1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your current understanding of nutrition and its importance for yourself? (1 being low, 10 being high)

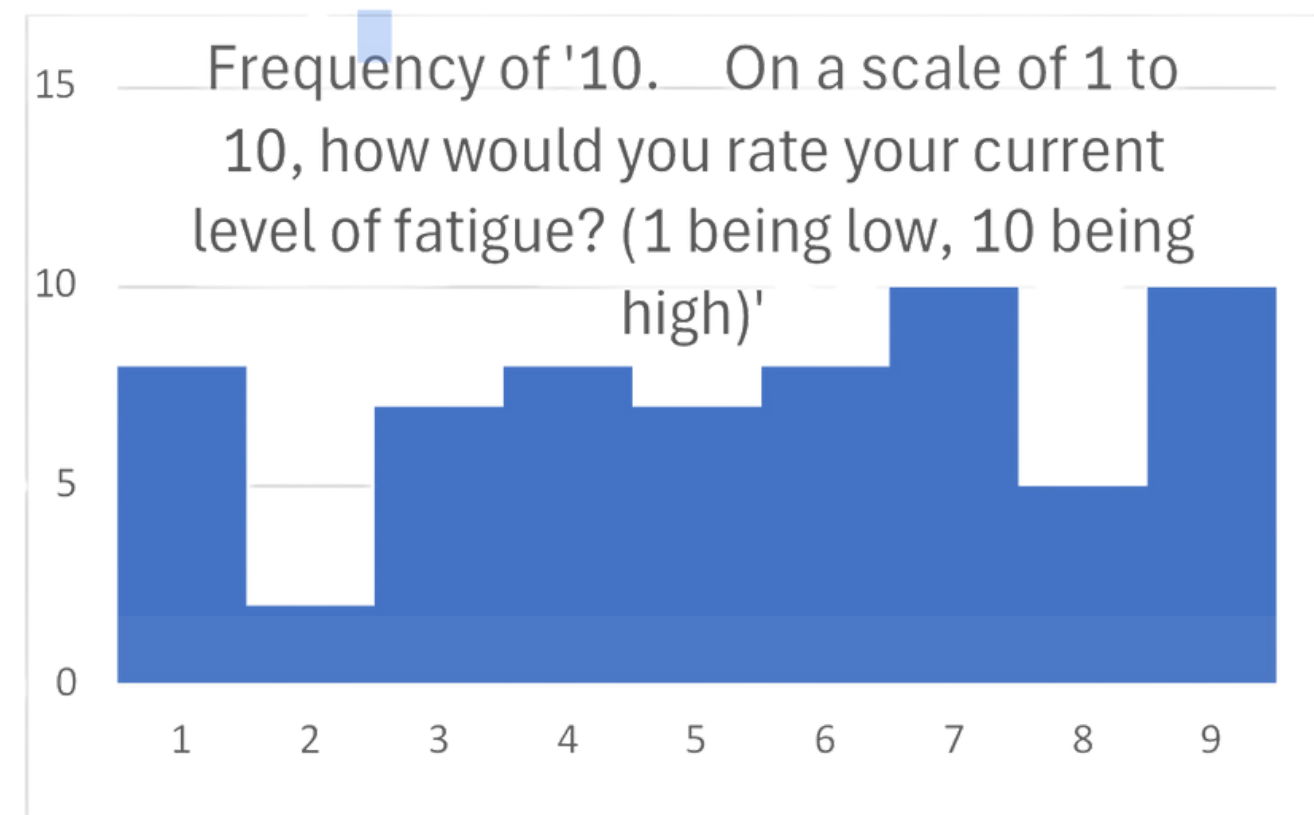


Distribution of '2. How often do you prepare balanced meals for yourself?'



■ Always ■ Occasionally ■ Often ■ Rarely

Qualitative data – Pre Survey



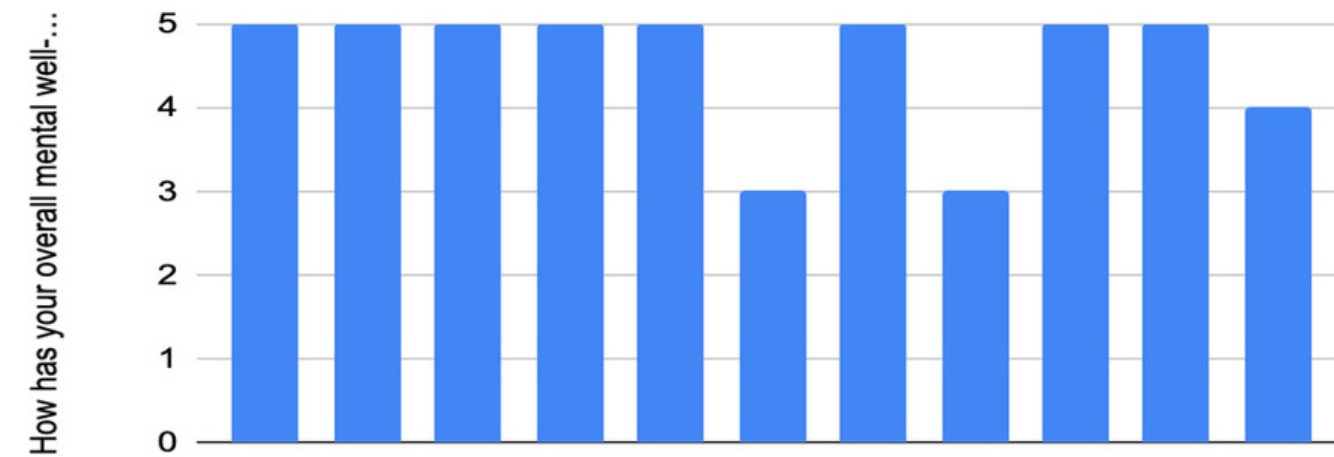
Distribution of '7. Have you discussed your mental wellbeing with anyone either personal(friends, family etc) or professional support in the...



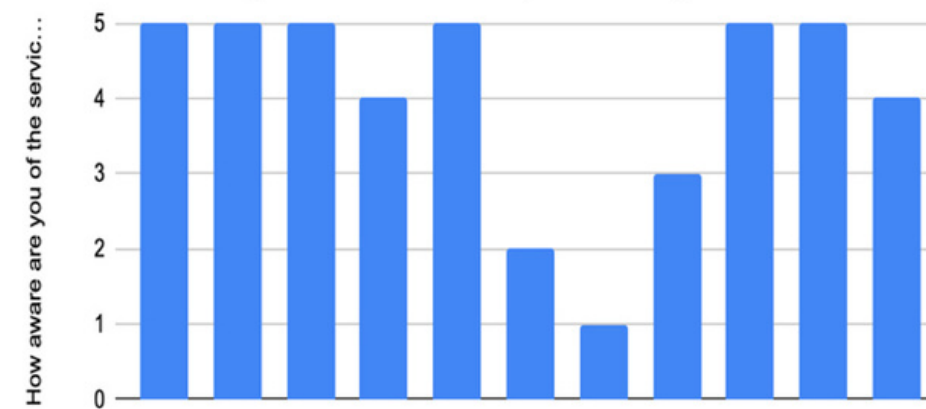
■ No ■ Yes ■ A Few times

Qualitative feedback

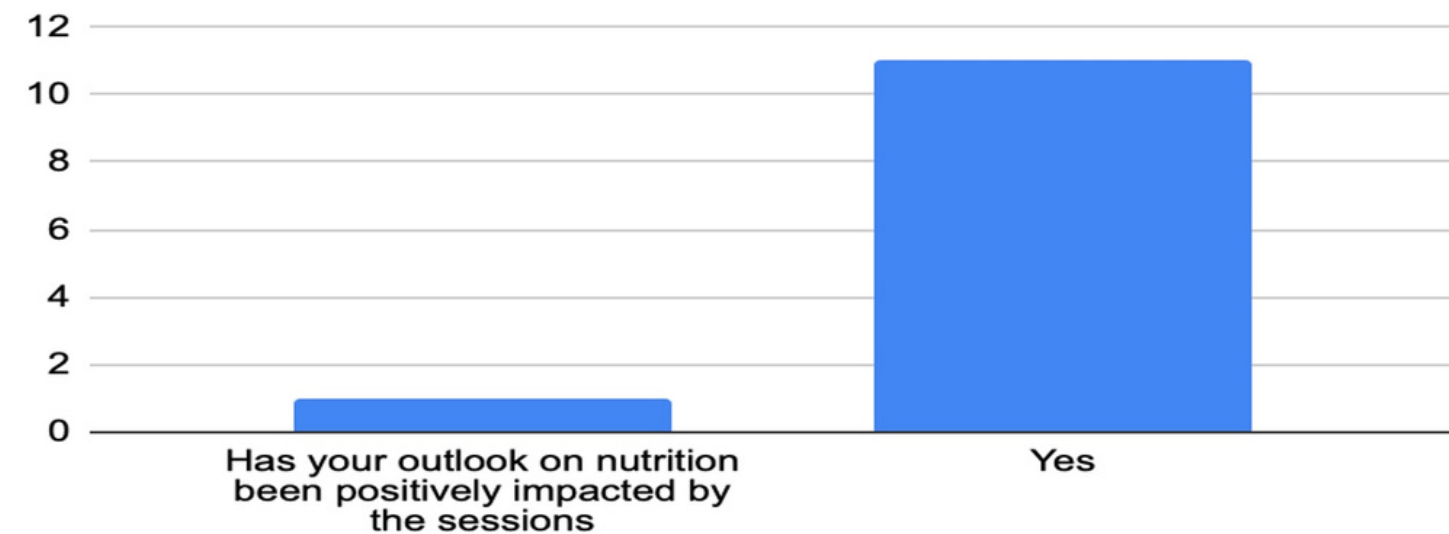
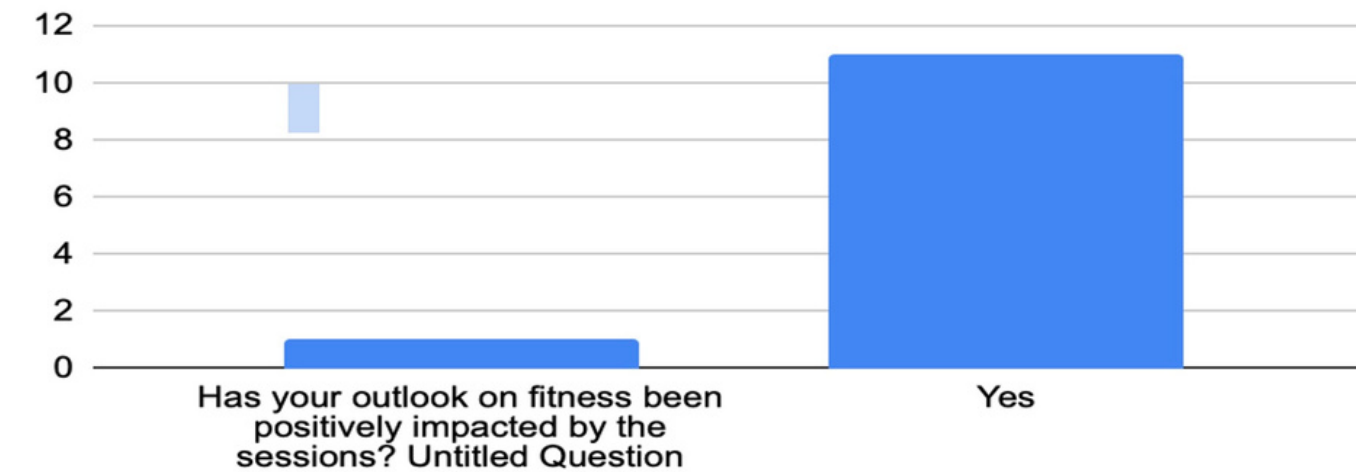
How has your overall mental well-being been impacted by the sessions?



How aware are you of the services provided by the council or...



8. Qualitative Feedback – January 2024 to March 2024



Learning & Feedback

Through ongoing observations and feedback from participants, it's evident that the implemented initiatives are effectively empowering participants to recognise and embrace their roles as unpaid carers. By providing tailored resources such as fitness and nutrition videos and myth-busting content, carers are gaining a deeper understanding of their responsibilities and the importance of self-care in their caregiving journey. This awareness not only validates their contributions but also instills a sense of pride and purpose in their role within the community.



Moreover, the establishment of a supportive community through platforms like the WhatsApp group has fostered a sense of belonging and solidarity among carers. This community serves as a space for mutual understanding, empathy and peer support, where individuals can share their experiences, seek advice, and offer encouragement to one another. By facilitating connections and collaboration, the community of support strengthens resilience and enhances the overall well-being of carers.



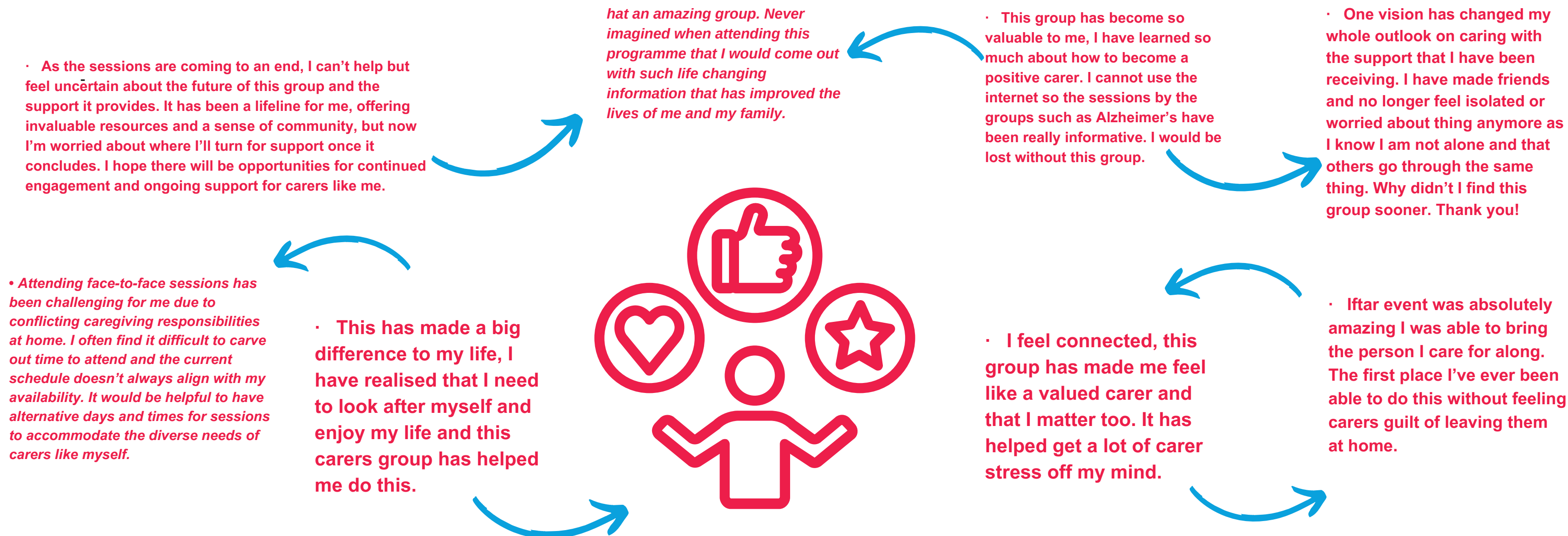
Learning & Feedback

In addition to fostering a sense of community, the programme has been successful in creating a space for understanding and signposting available resources. By addressing cultural and language barriers, carers feel more empowered to seek help and access the support they need. The implementation of the flow code has been particularly instrumental in increasing accessibility to resources, providing a centralised platform for carers to navigate available services with ease.

Furthermore, the emphasis on encouraging better care for themselves, both physically and mentally, has been well-received by participants. Through weekly check-ins by volunteers, carers are reminded of the importance of prioritising their own well-being and are provided with personalised support and guidance to help them achieve this. By nurturing a culture of self-care and empowerment, the programme is not only improving the health and happiness of individual carers but also strengthening the resilience and vitality of the community at large.

Testimonials and feedback from participants regarding the impact of the support provided

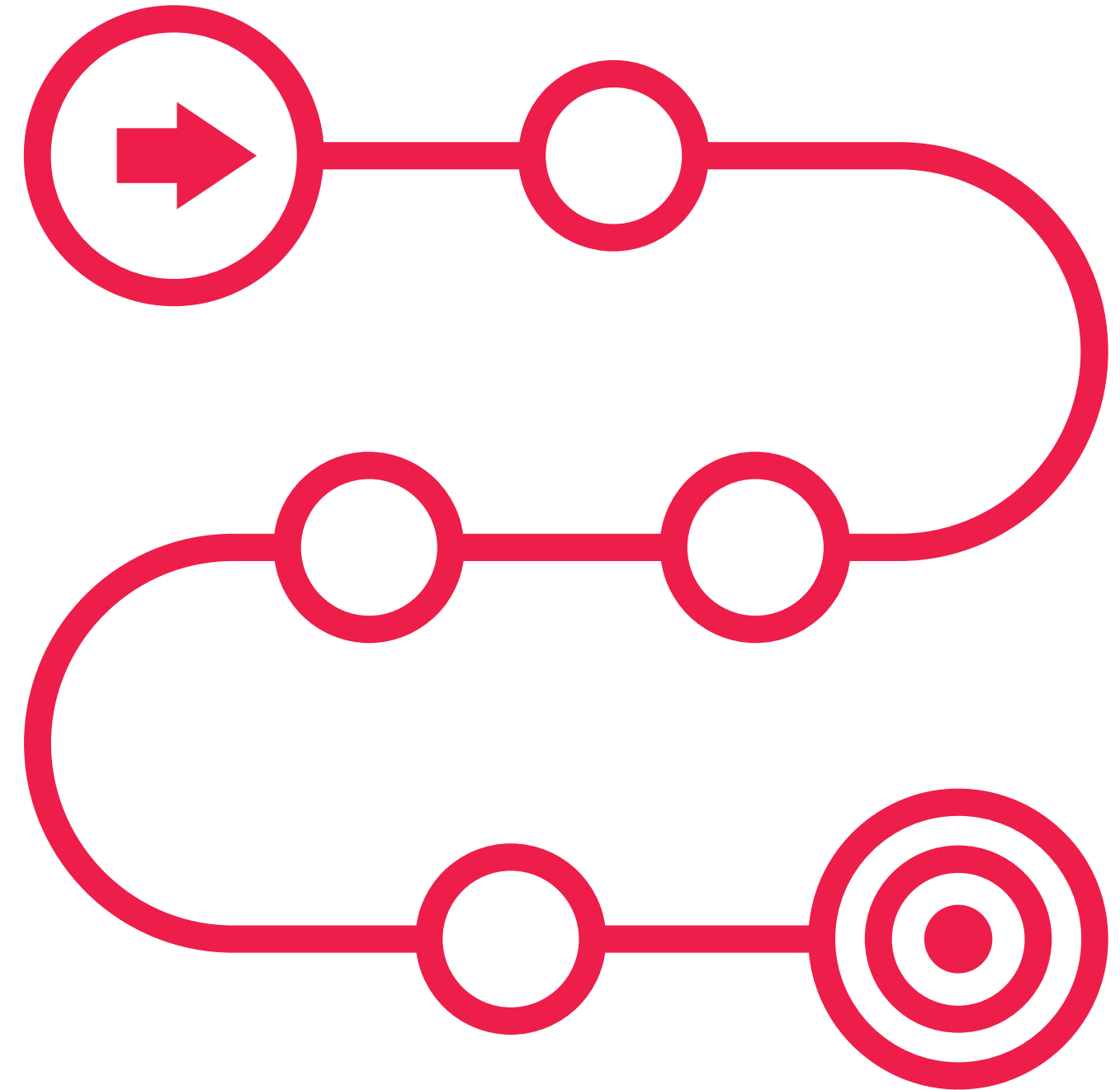
We are happy to share testimonials from participants who have been impacted by this programme. These testimonials reflect the changes and support experienced by the participants.



ROAD MAP FOR THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, the roadmap for the future of the program is promising, with 38 potential participants expressing interest in joining. To further enhance engagement, the plan includes conducting two weekly physical engagement sessions, catering to a wider audience and covering additional areas. By expanding the programme's reach to include physical sessions in Hemel Hempstead, St Albans, Three rivers, Watford and Borehmwood accessibility will be increased, allowing more individuals to benefit from the holistic approach to well-being offered by the programme. Moreover, fostering collaboration with other charitable organizations will be a key focus, enabling the sharing of resources and knowledge to create a more comprehensive support network for participants. By strengthening these partnerships and enhancing signposting of resources, the program aims to maximize its impact and create a ripple effect of positive change across Hertfordshire.

In line with the roadmap for future development, the programme also intends to establish similar supportive groups in different regions of Hertfordshire. By replicating the successful model of the current program and creating community-focused groups in various areas, a wider network of individuals will have access to the benefits of the programme. This expansion will not only increase outreach but also facilitate the exchange of best practices and experiences among different groups, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose across Hertfordshire. By building on the existing momentum and leveraging the interest from potential participants, the programme is poised to create a lasting impact on the well-being and health of individuals throughout



Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this report underscore the critical importance of continued support and advocacy for unpaid carers within South Asian communities in Hertfordshire. While significant progress has been made in raising awareness of the challenges faced by carers and providing resources to support their well-being, there remains a pressing need for ongoing assistance and empowerment.

The challenges identified, including cultural stigma, language barriers and limited accessibility to support services, highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of caregiving within South Asian communities. While strides have been made in addressing these challenges, there is still much work to be done to ensure that all carers have access to the resources and support they need.

Moving forward, there is an opportunity to make further progress by deepening our engagement with communities and delivering more targeted and culturally sensitive support. By going deeper into communities and understanding the unique needs and experiences of carers, we can tailor our efforts to better meet their needs and enhance their well-being.

Additionally, there is potential to deliver better and more viable support by strengthening collaboration and signposting with various charity and statutory bodies. By working together, we can leverage existing resources and expertise to provide comprehensive and coordinated support to carers, ensuring that no one falls through the cracks.

In conclusion, while there are challenges ahead, there is also immense potential to make a positive impact on the lives of unpaid carers within South Asian communities. By continuing to advocate for their needs, deepen our engagement with communities and collaborate effectively with stakeholders, we can create a more supportive and inclusive environment for carers to thrive.

This comprehensive report by One Vision aims to provide valuable insights into the experiences and needs of unpaid carers within South Asian communities in Hertfordshire, reflecting a commitment to enhancing support and well-being for this vital demographic.



MEET THE TEAM



Case study



Background	Challenges	Approach	Outcome
Aliyah, a resilient South Asian woman in her early 40's residing in Watford, embodies the challenges faced by many within her community. From a young age, she assumed the role of primary caregiver for her mother, who battled mental illness, until her passing when Aliyah was in her early 20s. Transitioning into marriage, she embraced caring for her in-laws while raising her five children and working full-time. Despite her immense responsibilities, Aliyah, like many South Asian carers, struggled silently due to cultural stigmas and societal pressures. However, her participation in the carers program and exposure to various support services prompted her to prioritise her physical and mental well-being.	1. Cultural Stigmas and Barriers: Aliyah grapples with the cultural taboos surrounding mental health, hindering her from seeking support and exacerbating feelings of isolation and anxiety. 2. Multifaceted Responsibilities: Balancing caregiving duties, work commitments, and familial obligations leaves Aliyah with little time for self-care, leading to exhaustion and high blood pressure. 3. Fear of Social Stigma: The fear of judgment and ostracization within her community prevents Aliyah from openly discussing her struggles and seeking assistance.	1.Culturally Sensitive Support Services: Connecting Aliyah with mental health professionals who understand the nuances of South Asian culture and can provide tailored support and therapy. 2. South Asian Heritage Association: Encouraging Aliyah to join SAHA or online SAHA Community groups where she can network with others who share similar experiences can provide her with a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation. 3.HPFT Engagement sessions: Providing and sharing services and resources within Aliyah's community to raise awareness about mental health, reduce stigma and promote acceptance can help create a more supportive environment for individuals like Aliyah struggling with mental health issues. 4.Education and Awareness: Collaborating with local health organisations to raise awareness about mental health issues within the South Asian community and challenge cultural stigmas through workshops and outreach programs. 5.Flexible Work Arrangements: Advocating for flexible work arrangements or carers support services for Aliyah to alleviate some of her carers responsibilities and create more time for self-care and rest. 6.Family Education: Educating Aliyah's family members and her community about mental health and its importance in overall well-being can help foster a supportive and understanding environment within her household	By implementing targeted interventions tailored to address the unique challenges faced by Aliyah, including cultural stigmas, barriers to seeking help and the emergence of high blood pressure, Aliyah can gradually embark on a journey towards improved well-being and mental health management. Through fostering a supportive network and providing access to culturally sensitive support services, Aliyah can navigate through her feelings of isolation, fatigue, and anxiety, ultimately leading to a healthier and more fulfilling life. As she learns to prioritise her physical and mental health, Aliyah can effectively reduce stress and manage her high blood pressure, contributing not only to her personal well-being but also alleviating the burden on healthcare services. This holistic approach not only empowers Aliyah but also underscores the importance of addressing cultural barriers and stigma within the community to promote overall health and resilience. Aliyah's journey highlights the importance of culturally competent support and community engagement in empowering South Asian carers to prioritise their well-being while reducing the burden on healthcare services

A photograph of two hands, one in a light blue sweater and one in a pink sweater, exchanging a red raspberry. The hand in the blue sweater is holding the raspberry, and the hand in the pink sweater is reaching up to take it. The background is a plain, light grey.

THANK YOU