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LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HEALTH



Community Research Report

Horton Housing

August 2022

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Introduction

Horton Housing works with Bradford Council and the Home Office to provide resettlement services for refugees coming to the UK on managed migration schemes.

They are very proud to be assisting families who fled Afghanistan under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

Leeds Beckett University provided funding for a community research project. The Volunteer Manager at Horton Housing in Bradford invited residents and volunteers to take part.

About the Community Research

The Community Research was led by community members who received training and support from a university researcher. The Community Researchers bring a lot of community knowledge and an understanding of what their community needs.

Four people chose to become Community Researchers on this project: 3 Afghan men living in temporary hotel accommodation in Bradford and one British woman who volunteers with Horton Housing. They attended 3 training sessions on research, survey design, and research ethics.

The Community Researchers created a survey with the Leeds Beckett researcher and then used the survey independently. The male Community Researchers spoke to other Afghan men and the female Community Researcher spoke to Afghan women. The women felt more comfortable answering as a group.

The group had 5 weeks to collect information using the surveys. The Community and University Researchers analysed the information from the survey together and the findings are summarised in this report.



Research Aims and Questions

The Community Researchers wanted to find out how to support people's mental health during long periods in hotel accommodation. They wanted to know what activities people enjoyed doing, what else they would like to do and what prevents them from doing other things they would enjoy.

Survey Questions

1. What organised activities do you do through the week?
2. Apart from those activities, what do you do?
3. What do you love doing?
4. Is there anything that stops you doing this?
5. What helps you to be healthy? (Select all that apply)

Walking; Eating healthy food; Going to the gym; Socialising; Listening to music; Playing football; Other (please specify).

6. How do you feel about going out on your own?
7. Do you use public transport?
8. Have you had the opportunity to make friends with people from Bradford?
9. How much do you enjoy learning English in class? (Scale 1-5, 5 is the most positive)



Findings

The Community Researchers spoke to 14 men individually and 15 women in a group. The women were aged 16 to 65. The men's ages are shown in the table.

Age Group	Number of male respondents
16-24	4
25-34	5
35-44	3
45-54	1
55-64	0
65 and over	1

Activities: Men's Survey Responses

The survey asked people what activities they did. The most popular activities for men who completed the survey were walking, going to the gym and playing football. Other activities included: cycling, jogging, swimming, gardening, watching films, listening to music. Playing video games were also popular ways to spend time and one respondent enjoys using social media. One of the men loves playing cricket and another goes to museums.





Findings - Activities

Activities: Men's Survey Responses

Walking	Gym	Playing football	Cycling	Jogging
Swimming	Gardening	Watching films	Listening to music	Playing video games
	Using social media	Playing cricket	Visiting museums	

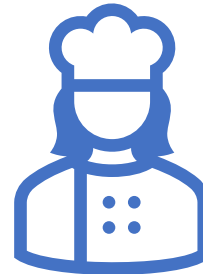




Findings - Activities

Activities: Women's Group Response

Knitting and sewing	Cooking sessions	English classes	Studying
Watching TV (which helps them learn English)	Arts and crafts	Shopping	Meeting other people
Walking (with other families)	Swimming	Driving	Sleeping





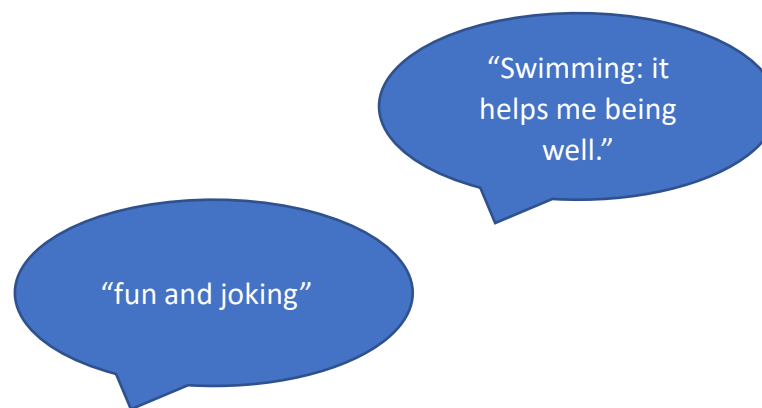
Findings - Health

The men were asked what they did specifically to stay healthy; the chart below shows their responses. Walking and going to the gym were the most common answers. One man follows doctor's orders to walk more because he has high blood pressure.

Apart from the list of suggested activities (see figure 1), respondents added that watching TV, boxing, swimming, and "fun and joking" help them to maintain their health.



Figure 1 Summary of responses from the male respondents





Findings - Health

The women's group said they keep healthy by eating healthy food, walking, doing activities, and by staying hopeful for the future.

What helps you to keep healthy?
"Being happy to look forward to moving into new homes."





Findings - Socialising

Spending time with friends and family was important to everyone who took part in the survey. Regular social interaction increases mental wellbeing. In general, they did not have many opportunities to make friends with people outside of the hotel. Playing football and going to classes gave men the chance to meet people from Bradford and make friends. Some respondents hadn't met anyone from the local area because they usually go out with their Afghan friends or because language was a barrier to speaking to local people. One person felt that the people in Bradford were closed minded and not open to becoming friends.

The women spoke about spending time with their own families and other families in the hotel. They connect through English classes and other organised activities. They would like to meet more people, for example, by attending college.

The Community Researchers explained that some of the women spoke Urdu, so they were able to overcome the language barrier by speaking to local Urdu speakers.



"We have all made friends with the other families in the hotel. We have made friends with some of the mothers in the parks."





Findings - Skills

The male respondents have opportunities to volunteer with charities, attend college, take ESOL and IT classes and do driving courses.

The women attend ESOL classes. Many wanted to go to college to learn more and to have opportunities to meet people outside of the hotel.

The men would like to have more opportunities to earn money, get qualifications in the UK and get jobs but they faced a number of challenges.

Many of the activities people are doing are focused on developing skills.



Driving - 6 of the men were taking driving courses and two had their own cars.



IT - 7 of the male respondents take IT classes.



ESOL - ESOL classes are an important part of many of the respondents' week.



Using public transport - Half of the male respondents (n=7) to the survey had used public transport and the other half(n=7) did not use public transport.



Going out independently – learning to find their way around the area.





Findings - Skills

Using public transport and increasing independence

Half of the male respondents (n=7) to the survey had used public transport. Half of the men (n=7) did not use public transport. This was because they didn't know how or because they used their own bikes or cars. Some travelled regularly by taxi. The women use taxis but would prefer to be able to use public transport to save money. They don't know how to use buses and communication with the drivers is also difficult.

The respondents were asked how they felt about going out of the hotel. In general, the men were happy to go out of the hotel, but one man didn't feel confident because of his level of English, and another was worried about encountering problems if he went out.

The women said some of them go out alone, but it is difficult because of the language barrier. They go out in groups and make sure one of them speaks English.

"We find it difficult to use public transport as we don't understand how to buy tickets and the driver don't understand what we want or where we want to go."

"I feel stressed to face hard situation."

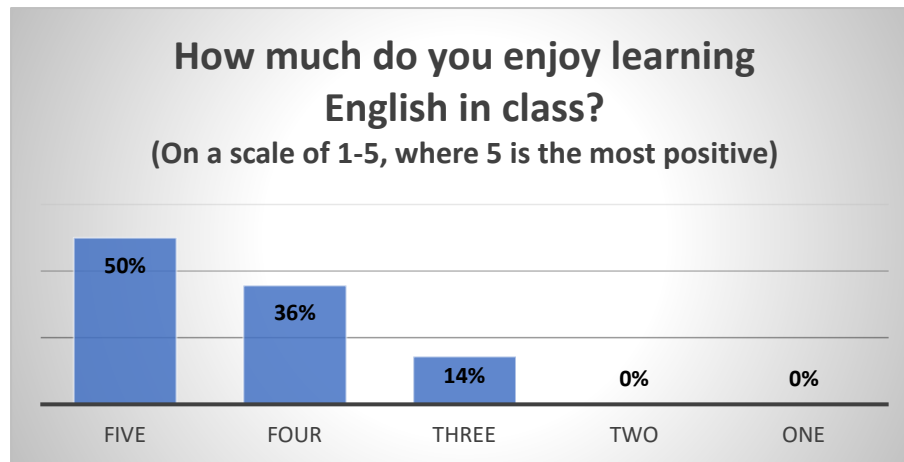




Findings - Skills

ESOL

Most of the male respondents (n=10) said that they regularly attended ESOL classes. They were asked to rate how much they enjoyed ESOL classes out of 5: half (50%) of respondents enjoyed the classes very much (they chose the highest number) and over a third (36%) selected 4 out of 5. No one disliked learning English.



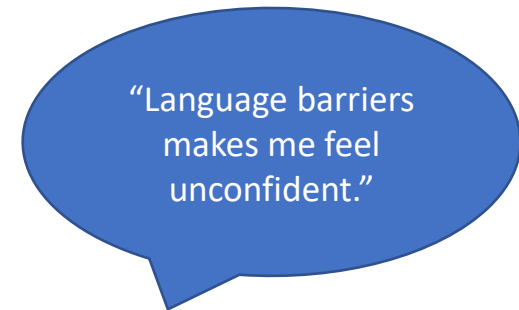


Findings - Barriers

Language is the main thing that stops the male survey participants from doing what they want to do.

Male respondents enjoyed learning English and outside of classes were keen to improve their language skills by watching films and videos, but language was still the biggest obstacle to working, socialising and feeling at home in Bradford.

Similarly, learning to communicate in English was very important to the women. They want to learn about other people, make new friends and grow in confidence. They are finding it difficult but enjoy learning and want to use English more.






Findings – Barriers

Other key barriers:

- Caring responsibilities mean some people don't have the time and resources to take part in activities or do things they enjoy. Some of the male respondents cared for siblings, parents and disabled children. Apart from day-to-day care, they also had to attend appointments regularly with them.
- Lack of money is a challenge for some people. The Community Researchers reflected that this is particularly a problem for single men, whereas families usually have enough money for their needs.
- Lack of qualifications in the UK makes it hard for people to get a job.
- Being new in the UK and not familiar with the culture or having a fixed address.
- One man felt his age stopped him doing the things he wanted to do (he was over 65).



“He has disabled children that stops him always because three or four appointments has a week.”



Recommendations for Horton Housing



Teach people how to use buses and trains. This will increase confidence and independence.



Provide as much support as possible with learning English. This can be through enjoyable activities (e.g. football, cooking etc.) in addition to formal classes.



Support people to connect with others outside the hotel. This will help people develop language skills as well as social networks.



Partner with other established groups and universities to increase options for people to do things they are interested in.



Provide help for carers to do activities and hobbies.



Qualifications – partner with universities and colleges to help to recognise previous qualifications and they can support with new training opportunities.





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