

Older People Services Project

Scottish Ethnic Minority Older People Forum

To provide a collective voice to influence
change in policy and service planning

Key Objectives:

1. To establish an open and inclusive forum that respects all equality protected characteristics and proactively encourages participation from people from different ethnic groups, diverse cultures and beliefs and with diverse needs and concerns.
2. To equip forum members with knowledge and training to enable them to develop leadership skills and to gain experience, which will help them develop confidence and influence change.
3. To engage with, encourage and support ethnic minority older people to become effective leaders and advocates for themselves, their families and communities.
4. To create an agenda for debate and action that highlights inequality and identifies gaps in current service provision in relation to ethnic minority older people.
5. To highlight and address specific needs, concerns and rights of ethnic minority older people in respect of future service design and delivery, including addressing distinct gender-specific issues and the needs of people with disabilities.
6. To develop links and strengthen understanding between ethnic minority older people service users and policy-makers, planners and service providers at a local, regional and national level.
7. To engage with other policy groups, advisory bodies and government representatives in order to ensure the views of ethnic minority older people are heard and that they can exert influence on political debate and legislation.
8. To achieve greater public recognition of the capabilities, achievements and valuable contribution made by ethnic minority older people in Scotland.
9. To engage in new research in order to produce authoritative data and insight on the complex and changing needs of ethnic minority older people in Scotland.
10. To encourage more ethnic minority older people to play a prominent role in civic life in Scotland, to support the emergence of more role models in volunteering and advocacy from diverse communities.

Why is the ethnic minority older people forum needed?

The needs of ethnic minority older people are usually represented on their behalf by community and voluntary organisations, families or support workers. The purpose of setting up the forum is to empower ethnic minority older people to directly engage with policy makers and service providers.

Studies show that inequality and discrimination over a person's lifetime may result in more pronounced and severe inequality in later life. Minority ethnic people are comparatively likely to live in poverty and are more likely to have limited access to formal social care and social housing. There is also evidence of under-representation in public appointments.

The Scottish Government's Equality Evidence Finder and Race Equality Framework show that despite progress in some areas, much still needs to be done to address inequality. This forum is an important development in ensuring that ethnic minority older people can play an active role in addressing inequality issues, that their voices will be heard and that they can shape the future in a way that addresses their needs and rights.

What can the forum offer service providers?

Older people are the right advocates to ensure that their needs are met through cost-effective and high-quality services. Service providers would benefit from engaging directly with older people in the planning of services. Policies can help to 'future-proof' services so that they take into account future needs. The forum will provide a platform for a two-way discussion with service providers to increase their understanding of ethnic minority older people's needs. The forum will consist of a **Main Group** and two sub-groups – **Women's Sub-Group** and **Disability Sub-Group**.

What can the forum offer policy-makers?

The ageing population is one of the biggest challenges facing policy-makers as people are living longer, requiring different levels of care and support as they become older and frailer. The older people demographic encompasses people with radically different life experiences, expectations and financial resources and a wide age span of 40 years or more. The forum offers a unique and important opportunity to adopt an inclusive approach through direct consultation and positive engagement in meeting the needs of small but unique groups of older people with complex needs.

For further information please contact the Older People Services Project Team

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