



Ethnic Minorities
& Youth Support
Team Wales

Tim Cymorth
Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig
& Ieuenctid Cymru

All Wales BAME Engagement Programme

All Wales ZOOM Forum – 1st April 2020

Topic: Impact of COVID 19 Crisis on Muslim Communities

Present: **Jalal Goni** – EYST (Chair), **Rocio Cifuentes** – EYST (Host), **Rahila Hamid** – EYST (Notes), **Lee Tiratira** – EYST (Notes), **Shahinoor Alam** - Maths Teacher at Fitzalan High; **Robiu Shamsu** – University Lecturer, **Burhan Uddin**, **Ana Miah** - Secretary of Shah Jalal Mosque, **Nazrul Islam** - South Wales Police, **Aminul Islam** – South Wales Police, **Jorna Ali** - Neath Community, **Mohsin Malik** - Muslim Council Wales, **Nabeel** - A & E Doctor Cardiff, **Abdul-Azim Ahmed** - Muslim Council Wales, **Mohamed Dahir** – Teacher at Fitzalan high, **Bethan Morris** - North West Wales Community Cohesion, **Gareth Hall** - North East Wales Community Cohesion, **Lesley Wood** - Gwent Police Diversity and Inclusion Officer, **Daron Owens** - Community Cohesion North Wales, **Fateha Ahmed** - Community Activist, **Riaz Hassan** - South Wales Community Cohesion Coordinator, **Momena Ali** - EYST Founder, **Sheikh Moshen** - Swansea, **Rajma Begum** -WCVA, **Gary Robertshaw** - North Wales Police Diversity Officer, **Selina Moyo** - South Wales Police, Diversity Officer, **Martin Clements** – DUI mosque, **Mizan Rahman** – FAW BAME Lead, **Robert Muza** – Newport County Council Community Connectors, **Laura** – Gwent Police, **M Ali**, **Izzy**

Meeting Minutes -

Jalal Goni: Welcomed all & introduced topic of the impact of Covid19 on Muslim communities. Chair mentioned the impact on Muslim burials, food/supply provision and mental health concerns. Encouraged group introductions.

Robiu Shamsu: Mentioned mental health concerns for people isolating and especially those in supported housing.

Ana Miah: Highlighted Covid-19 effect on elders – not being able to socialise and go to mosques are focal points for Muslim community and play a vital role in people's

lives. She asks can we 'keep eye out for elder members' with Ramadan approaching.

Mizan Rahman: Interested to find out more ideas/solutions.

Riaz Hassan: Mentioned the following key issues due to COVID19: funeral arrangements, Ramadan approaching, closure of faith facilities and the impact on taxi companies.

Nazrul Islam: It is great to see people talking about issues and solutions.

Jorna Ali: Asked what help is available for elderly people

Rajma Begum: Mentioned the financial impact on self-employed people as well as the impact on elderly people who are self-isolating and unable to use mobile phones etc. Mainstream volunteer groups can't meet the needs of communities, for example because of language barriers.

Mohsin Malik: Notes that charities are working towards supporting people struggling financially. Burial support equipment and procedures in hospitals for Muslim burials are in progress.

Nabeel: Provides facts on CV19. It is from a family of viruses named Corona because of the crown shape the virus takes. Believed to originate from Wuhan, China. 80% of people infected normally recover; however 1 in 6 get seriously ill. Droplets landing on surfaces is common route for transmission. According to W.H.O. there is no current treatment available. CV19 is very infectious and needs to be taken seriously by all people.

Azim Ahmed: Working on burial situation; update to follow.

Mohamed Dahir: Challenge facing people is access to educational resources. Large families in single households often share a single device. Muslim households have higher number of members living close to one another.

Bethan Morris: Working with Bangor Mosque in N W Wales and would like to hear about issues/solutions.

Gareth Hall: Mentioned work towards an online strategy to connect with people via Glyndwr University and its chaplaincy there. Interested to hear opinions from Muslims who usually socialise about future online capacities or initiatives

Lesley Wood: Mentioned the need to ensure we are all connected.

Rahila Hamid: Has been comforting people and making sure people have food/supplies. She is also connecting to people and sharing information.

Selina Moyo: Interested to hear about what support we can all share.

Daron Owens: Aim is listening and learning for Muslim communities in N W Wales area.

Fateha Ahmed: Mentioned financial issues as a common issue, especially for those on zero hours contracts. Work must be done around council tax reduction

applications – ensuring people access all benefits to which they are entitled. She also mentioned carers of vulnerable people being replaced and potential issues around this for quality of care. Could EYST coordinate a volunteer befriending service?

Azim Ahmed: Update on Muslim burials. Normally a quick process involving bodies being washed and a ritual performed, normally with many attendees from the community. With CV-19 deaths, there are complications for those that wash bodies. PPE is needed for a safe wash and for those to take precautions. Availability of PPE equipment dictates what can be done to a body. Symbolic wiping of body bags has been adopted by some with no PPE. There may be issues with families not being comfortable with this. Mosques in key locations are being supported for smooth burial processes in their regions. Some mosques have the right facilities. Also work with others to ensure burial slots are available. Working with councils and PPE access availability reliant on supply and demand and the NHS. In North Wales, Bangor, Wrexham, Llandudno Junction and Rhyl mosques have wash facilities with large numbers of health care facilities and support. Currently, there is a healthy amount of space and there is ongoing work with health boards and hospitals towards digitalising death certificates via local councils. Mid Wales and Powys have less institutional facilities and midland regions are looking at supporting mid-Wales deaths.

Robiu Shamsu: Impact on vulnerable people must recognise refugees and asylum-seeking Muslims and also students who depend on mosques daily for food provision, especially for Iftar during Ramadan.

Azim Ahmed: Some mosques are collecting food parcels; there could be more joint work on this.

Riaz Hassan: In Swansea, provision needs to be in place with Ramadan approaching.

Rajma Begum: There is unrest due to scaremongering in the community – e.g. linking causes of CV-19 to 5G towers, new world orders, and widely circulating lots of worry.

Azim Ahmed: There are many stories going into overdrive and lots of misinformation spread, which is uninformed by science. People in positions of trust must be clear on sober guidance. There is helpful guidance available in multiple languages. This ensures accurate messages are shared.

Ana Miah: Another rumour is people fearing accessing hospitals for fear of contracting CV-19 and passing away.

Jalal Goni: Maybe we could work together to map out need for food support/delivery service.

Gary Robertshaw: Do we know if support is going to happen?

Azim Ahmed: In process. Rhyl is coordinating approach (Halima). Some mosques are wiping body bags due to no PPE and PPE availability for volunteers is currently being worked on.

Gary Robertshaw: Guidance on gatherings of people attending funerals.

Mohsin Malik: There are different guidelines from different local councils. For example, max 5 people in Newport and 10 in Swansea. Currently 4/5 people present including funeral directors at prayers.

Rahila Hamid: Concerned especially about isolated elders. She is in touch with GAVO and Community Connectors and Robert Muza. Anybody in Newport, please let Rahila know of people who need to be connected with support options.

Ana Miah: What is the selected mosque for washing in Cardiff?

Mohsin Malik: One mosque that has been selected is Jalia mosque. More PPE is being gathered. Prayers are being performed at cemeteries, not mosques. Hoping to get processes in hospitals across Wales via Health Minister.

MM: No wiping done until PPE available.

Shahinoor Alom: Big impact on Bangladesh community is that uncles from older generation especially are not used to staying in and sometimes not taking advice to stay in, which adversely affects other family members in households. There are also some dysfunctional relationships with younger members of the family going out and so putting their families at risk. Is there anything out there that can allow elders to socialise and talk to each other – something like this Zoom call would be good. Also concerns about impacts on those who have social workers.

Ana Miah: Encourage mosques to reach out to communities and younger members talking online.

Mohamed Dahir: Could mosques speak more with each other? There is stuff out there for people.

Azim Ahmed: With a colleague there is work to develop online tool kits called “My Digital Mosque” coming soon with things like group chat facility which can join people up.

Laura: Showing support - encouraging people to stay at home and stay off streets and understand issues within families and households.

Jalal Goni: With Ramadan approaching, is there some way that police can help with getting food to people safely?

Laura: Will ask the question on Monday to chief officers.

Jalal Goni: Thanked everybody. These issues will be passed to Welsh government. Suggested monthly meeting to catch up on topic.