

# UNHEARD VOICES: BREAKING BARRIERS IN SOCIAL CARE

Perceptions of access to social care within the South  
Asian Communities in Barking & Dagenham





## Why did we do this project?

To address the underrepresentation of people of an Asian/Asian British ethnic background:

- for older people accessing adult social care
  - for working-aged people accessing social care
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**This project aimed to understand how the South Asian community in Barking and Dagenham views adult social care, gather insights from those who have used these services and identify cultural needs and challenges to improve support.**



# Why does this matter?

South Asian communities are missing out on vital social care

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham gathered and analysed information that revealed specific cultural, religious and dietary needs that are important to the South Asian Community.

The data helped to shed light on different reasons for the underrepresentation of the South Asian Community in social care in Barking and Dagenham.





# Key Findings

- Good awareness levels of the services provided by the social care department.
- Medical professionals were the main referral source.
- Some perceived unfair treatment (religion and language).
- Majority felt empowered to make decisions about their care.
- GP is a primary source of information.
- Having a social worker with a similar ethnic background is very important.
- Dietary restrictions and religious requirements are of high importance.
- Some levels of stigma attached to receiving social care.

# Real Stories, Real Struggles



'If people knew I was getting help, they'd think my family didn't care about me.'



'In our culture, we're supposed to look after our own – asking for help feels like failure.'



'We were judged when my mum moved into a care home – people whispered that we'd abandoned her.'



'My mother could not tell if her food was halal – she just ate whatever was given to her.'



'Our religion teaches us to care for our family first – asking for outside help feels wrong.'



'In our culture, eating with our hands is normal, but some carers treated it as a sign of poor hygiene.'

# Breaking down barriers



- Raised awareness
- Amplified voices
- Informed recommendations
- Shaping future services
- Driving change
- Strengthened community engagement
- Improved access to information
- Influencing service design
- Positive measurable impact

**For more information**  
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