

WMO's *story* during the pandemic

Steps to Recovery

Support for Community Champions

How we supported local communities in The Wirral

2020 - 2021

"WMO has been at the forefront of providing us support and information on how to stay safe through the pandemic. They have helped me understand the importance and urgency of having the COVID -19 vaccination; and I am thankful to them – I have received both vaccines in comfort at the centre"

"There is no support available here like there was with WMO and I often turn back to them for advice and support. There is a need for more independent organisations like WMO as they are inclusive and hold no religious or ethnic identity"

Comments from recent WMO beneficiaries

Charity Registration No. 1019964 | Company Registration No 2807273

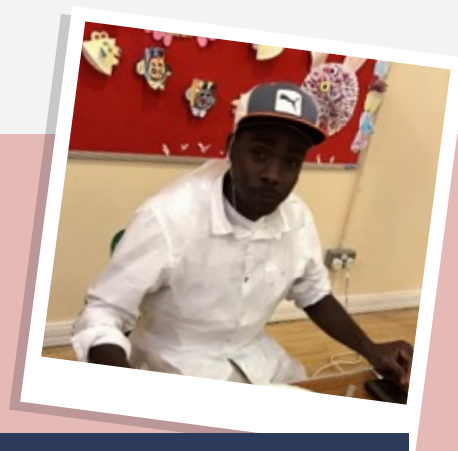


Wirral Multicultural Organisation

"a significant influence on community life and a centre of excellence". – Lord Chan of Oxton

The Covid-19 pandemic and various lockdowns forced the Health Link Team to work from home and adapting the ways they deliver their services. The team worked hard to provide the support our local communities required by holding Virtual Coffee Mornings - **119** in total, sending messages and providing one-to-one help and contact to tackle social isolation – the team made **7,409** health and well-being calls.

The team translated COVID-19 information and other public health materials to keep our communities up-to-date, safer and much more.



We supported **98** Asylum Seekers – helping them register with a Doctor and ensuring that their health needs were more effectively met.

When small groups were permitted, we invited asylum seekers to our centre and provided healthy cooking activities, giving them some valuable time and learning outside of the confines of their hotel, and allowing opportunities for them to socialise and encourage their English conversation learning.

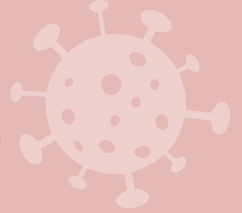
Vaccination Clinics at WMO:

WMO, in partnership with Dr Abhi Mantgani from Miriam Primary Care Group and Arno & North Coast Alliance, facilitated over 1000 (1st and 2nd vaccinations for people from the BAME communities



Mobile COVID-19 Testing

Our Health Link Team supported the testing and Health Watch Take-5 by interpreting for clients and demonstrating how to administer the home testing



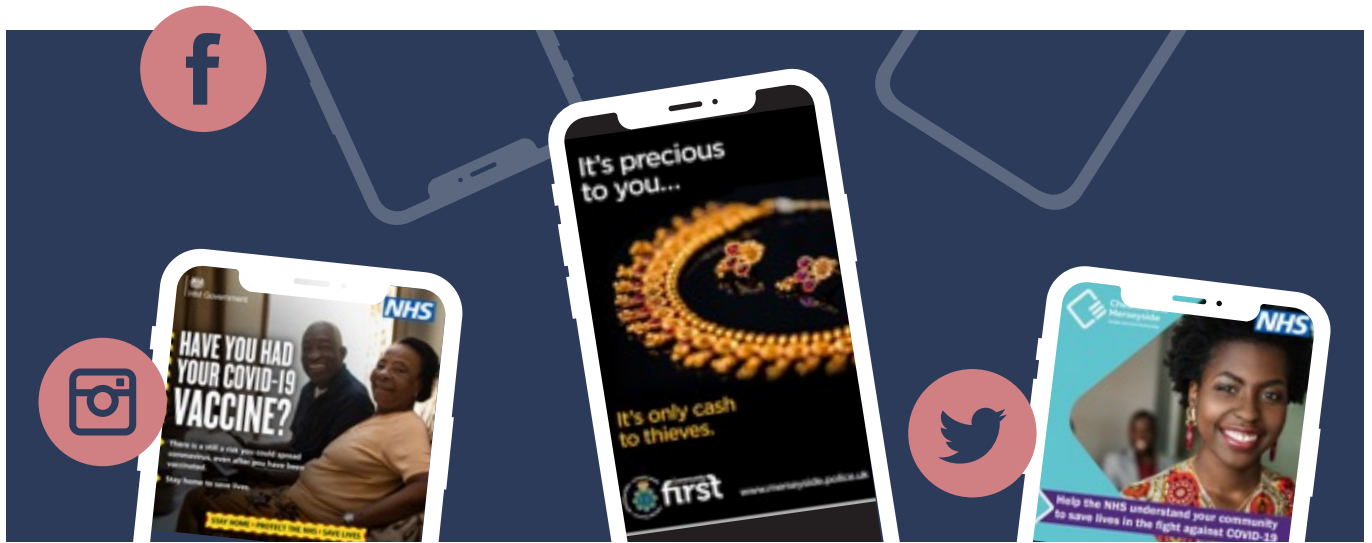
Our vision

For all people from Black Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities to be free from discrimination and racial injustice and to have equal and fair access to universal services, to feel safe in their neighbourhoods and be able to fulfil their aspirations.

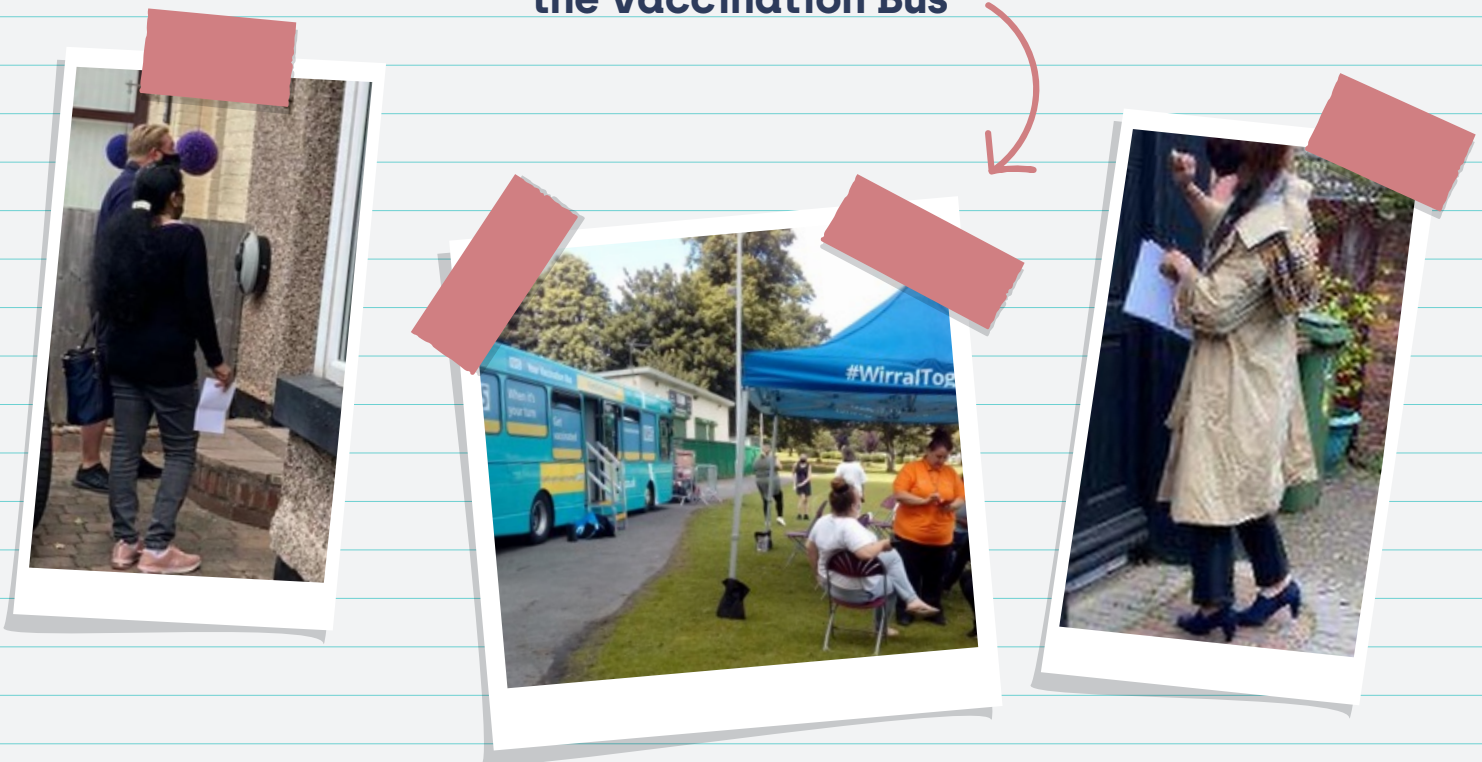
Our Mission

- To promote multiculturalism through understanding, inclusion and celebration of the diverse communities residing in Wirral.
- To embrace and support the different cultures, beliefs and religions and to encourage communities to coexist harmoniously for the good of the wider community and to actively challenge and address racism and oppression that exists.
- To offer a range of professional and culturally sensitive services to improve the overall health and wellbeing of the local BAME communities.
- To actively support more vulnerable members of the local BAME communities by providing language support, advocacy, social support and activities, assistance to access health and social care services, including advice and education services.

Using social media to inform our communities, working in partnership with Merseyside Police, NHS, Wirral Council



The BAME COVID-19 Community Support team working with the Connectors Team to support the Vaccination Bus



Case Studies

During June 2021, Sadia Akram, Civil Society Consulting CIC's 'Steps to Recovery' Advisor for Northern England, using a Case Studies template, spoke to several WMO beneficiaries who had accessed support services to learn more about the impact and accrued benefits from their personal perspectives. Here are two case studies: Suraya and Shayan (not their real names).

We also asked the WMO team to provide case studies showing the difference that WMO makes to lives of local people (see towards the back of the Storybook for several Pen Pictures).

Case Study – SURAYA

Suraya moved to Wirral about 8 years ago from Pakistan, to join her husband who has been living in the UK for almost 50 years.

Although Shahnaz can speak, read and write in English, and despite the pandemic she has wanted to improve her language skills by taking the opportunity to learn in the UK, through WMO she has been able to do this. This, she believes has allowed her to connect with the local community better, build links and make friends, fostering greater understanding and cohesion between her, and others living in Wirral. It has also contributed to her feeling less isolated and lonely. The English course has increased her confidence to communicate with others, making it easier to access health practitioners, speak to shop keepers, access public services and other leisure facilities – this has been possible through the opportunity to study, learn, engage with others and flourish through WMO.

She has built a strong relationship with WMO and trusts the staff and services provided through the centre. ***“WMO has been at the forefront of providing us support and information on how to stay safe through the pandemic. They have helped me understand the importance and urgency of having the COVID -19 vaccination; and I am thankful to them – I have received both vaccines in comfort at the centre”***

“The centre, the staff and the friends I have made here through events, classes and coffee mornings make me feel fresh and happy, it feels like home as I have no family other than my husband here”

“We are a diverse community, WMO celebrates and interacts with all of us, no matter what background or faith, which also allows us to learn about one another and form friendships, I feel relaxed and part of the community in Wirral”

Case Study 2 – SHAYAN

A large number of people seeking asylum were placed in a hotel in Wirral by the Home Office. Centre manager, Aline Macready and her team from WMO ran weekly surgeries to help them access health services amongst other essentials. From completing forms to register with doctors to making appointments and attending to physical and mental health needs. Thirty year old Shayan, originally from Iran was amongst this group of people and although he spoke English fluently and had no problems with communicating, still required support with understanding the UK system. He suffered from PDST and depression and had no support available to him. Shayan struggled to contact organisations through details he found on the internet, with no response to emails he sent. Having Aline refer and introduce him to these organisations, allowed Shayan to access the support he needed as they responded to her. Without her help he would have remained isolated and in poor mental and physical health.

Shayan comes from a community which is hostile to being homosexual and this increased his depression and poor state of mind. Being able to access organisations and groups who support and welcome people who are from the LGBTQ community reduced his isolation and contributed to a healthier mind and feeling of belonging. Shayan has now moved to another part of the country but is still able to stay connected to the organisations Aline put him in touch with, resulting in a greater sense of happiness, being more resilient and much happier. Shayan volunteers with this organisation and has enabled him to reach out and connect to others, where he volunteers as an interpreter to support others like him. He is also a mentor for other asylum seekers; advising them on sexual health, legal advice and other issues.

“There was a disagreement or misunderstanding with the Home Office and the hotel we were staying in, all 50 of us were given no notice and thrown out of the hotel, we didn’t know what to do. I called Aline and she came quickly, arranged with the local Church a place for us to stay have some food and stay warm whilst she sorted the problem out, I know if I am stuck – Aline will do what she can to help”

“If Aline and WMO wasn’t there to help us, there would be 50 people without any medical support- we didn’t know anyone. I was having suicidal thoughts and she was a human face who really wanted to help us – she explained everything including how to stay safe through COVID-19”

“There is no support available here like there was with WMO and often turn back to them for advice and support. There is a need for more independent organisations like WMO as they are inclusive and hold no religious or ethnic identity”

Chinese Moon Festival

This time we celebrated this festival by delivering traditional fruit, a lantern and small light.

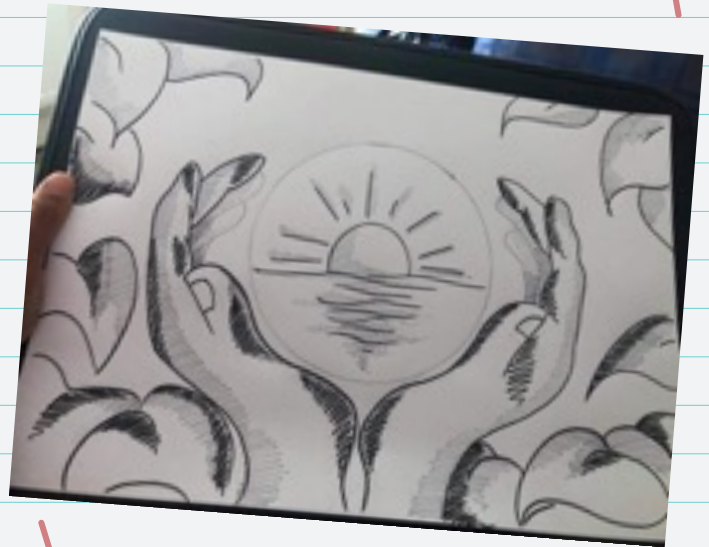


Holiday Provision over the 2020 summer holidays



*Tim, our handyman, worked hard to prepare for the Holiday project
The garden before and after*

Activities offered: Cooking, gardening, arts and crafts, JAS Award and physical games



Children and young people drew designs for our garden wall, and artists from Blackfest combined the design into this wonderful mural, depicting parts of our diverse community in Wirral.



Art and craft sessions



Team games



Family cooking activities were enjoyed by all

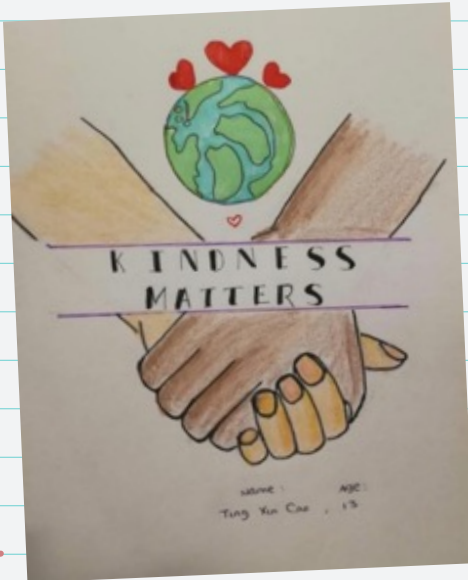


Over the four weeks, we held 8 family cooking sessions with 20 families benefitting. We provided 16 cooking sessions for children and young people aged 8-15 years old (some further 40 individual children benefitted).

Over 100 children for 16 days received a lunchbox. We were very grateful for the volunteers who delivered the lunchboxes, which was organised by CAN

Refuge Week on the theme of 'Kindness'

30 children aged 3-14 years old sent in their art work pictures, with Nadia Parsons and Errol Morris who run the Tate Aisle Gallery then judging all their wonderful entries



Team Cohesion Day

When most of our staff returned from Furlough we had a team day



Team Building After Long Lockdown



And team lunch

Donation from Heaton's

For much needed PPE!



International Womens Day: Challenge

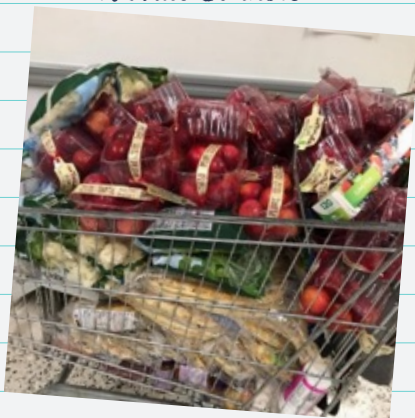


Finalists for the LVCR Culture and Creativity Awards: Community Cohesion



Providing food hampers

WMO received funding from Wirral Council



Mental Health day



inside out

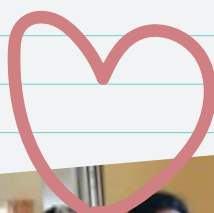
National Census Day

Award in recognition of WMO's support in encouraging and assisting members of the BAME community to complete their Census



Our Healthy Heart Project –

Funded by Heart Research UK and Subway



Cooking with Deb from It's Taste that Matters, clients learnt about nutrition, salt, sugar and fat intake, eating and learning together, English vocabulary, and were supported by interpreters when explaining about health and well-being



Pen-pictures

Julia

Julia has been living in the UK for around twenty years with her husband and three children. Her family runs a Chinese takeaway restaurant in Birkenhead. Julia and her husband face language barriers in the UK, and they have been using WMO's services for more than a decade since they came to Wirral. WMO has been supporting Julia and her family with a range of issues, including education, business, medical help, and home utilities. Julia and her family have also always been updated on new activities and information to support them throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Most recently, Julia's GP had referred her to have a gastroscopy test, but due to the language barrier, a WMO worker was contacted to offer interpretation on the phone. Sensing that Julia was still worried after the call, the WMO worker made sure to call her back afterwards to reassure her and explain everything in more detail, which helped her feel much better and relieved. The family has been able to access public health services with WMO's support, and her and her husband have both had their Covid vaccines this year at WMO. Julia is always appreciative and calls back to say 'thank you' to WMO's staff. She says that she feels more confident in her life, knowing that WMO is always there to give support to her and her family.

Amina

Amina came to the UK as a refugee from Syria. She was first referred to WMO after her daughter suffered from kidney failure. When WMO's health link worker met Amina and her family online for the first time, he found that in addition to the health issue, the family needed more support financially and emotionally. Since then, WMO has supported Amina not only with health issues, but also through providing wellbeing telephone calls, vouchers, and a financial parcel.

Amina has been facing a lot of difficulties and does not have a lot of free time, but she feels less isolated after accessing WMO's support: *"It is great to feel supported. Now, I am not alone, I know that I have someone to talk to if I face any issues"*.

Mr and Mrs Wen

Mr and Mrs Wen are an elderly couple who moved from Chester to Birkenhead 15 years ago when they retired, and they are originally from China. Their children were brought up in the UK, but they've moved away from home now. The couple no longer had anyone to interpret English to Chinese for them day-to-day to help with accessing health services and prescriptions, so WMO stepped in. When they first moved to Birkenhead, WMO also supported them with their housing and pension to help them settle down.

More recently, WMO has been supporting Mr and Mrs Wen with their health issues. The couple are diabetic, and Mr Wen is partial-sighted. When Mrs Wen had a fall at home, WMO helped them call an ambulance and provide interpretation all the way to the hospital. After being discharged, health link staff worked with the community nurse and the Mediquip service to support the couple adapt their life and promote a healthier lifestyle.

During the pandemic, WMO staff delivered prescription medicine to them to reduce their worries and called them regularly to ensure that the couple are staying safe and that they understand the latest information about Covid. Mr Wen was initially hesitant about receiving the vaccine, being concerned about its health effects, but a health link worker convinced him to receive both doses. After encouragement from WMO staff, the couple are also keen to participate in community activities at WMO such as the coffee morning to keep in contact with others.

Sabina

Sabina is a Bangladeshi housewife living in Birkenhead with her husband and son. She first heard about WMO from a friend, and the organisation has been helping her family for over a decade with health-related issues. She and her family were initially reluctant to get the Covid vaccine after hearing some rumours about its effects. WMO provided education and information over the phone to talk about the importance and benefits of the vaccine and gave her some leaflets to read. Sabina said she was going to think about it, and two weeks later she asked a health link worker to book Covid vaccine appointments for her family.

Now all three of them have been fully vaccinated. With WMO's guidance, Sabina's general attitude to life seems to have changed – she now knows to see professional help if she has any concerns, and to fact-check rumours. Sabina is also attending some coffee mornings and festive activities with children hosted by WMO.

Kelly

Kelly recently moved from Hong Kong to Wirral to start a new life. She needed some help to get settled in, so WMO stepped in and helped her register with the GP, get her NHS number and access NHS services. To make sure that Kelly can look after herself, WMO also advised her to join ESOL classes and classes on understanding life in the UK. Kelly was also supported to receive Covid-19 vaccinations when they became available to her. She now feels well supported, safe, and settled in the UK.

Filip

Filip has been employed on and off throughout his life, and initially registered with WMO when he suffered from skin problems and required interpretation. He had lost his job during the pandemic and relied on food and money vouchers day-to-day. WMO was able to help Filip with all aspects of public services, including finances, housing, and health. He also received extra support at his Jobcentre Plus interview, and to book and attend his follow up appointment.

Adam

Adam lives with his partner and friend, and he has been facing some difficulties in his life. He first registered with WMO to access interpretation support from Polish to English during medical appointments. His health has been worsening over time, which seems to be related to his alcohol dependency. Recently, Adam suspected that he was experiencing allergies from the Covid-19 vaccine, and he called the WMO for help. The WMO staff member stayed on the line and called an ambulance, and Adam was able to receive medical attention and prescriptions for his condition.

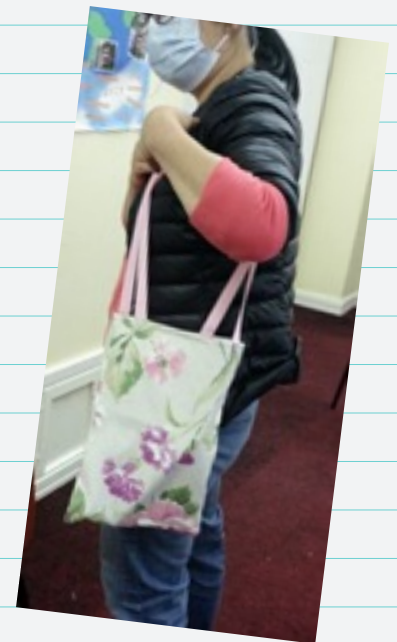
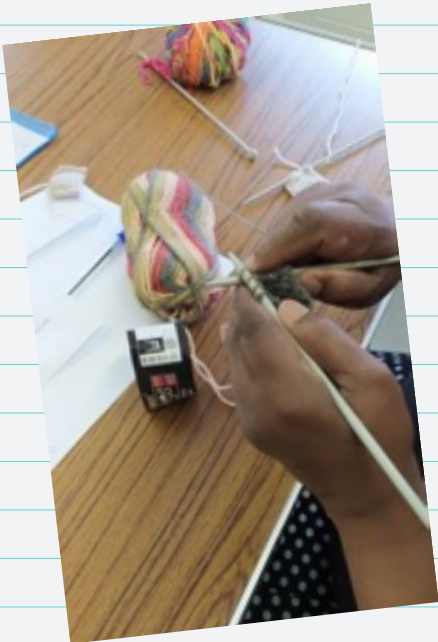
Health awareness raising:

Our Health Link Team provides accessible information about a number of health conditions



'Fun with Textile' Course

delivered by the skilful Suzie Goligher and in partnership with Long Live Learning



Steps to Recovery

Support for Community Champions

Wirral Multicultural Organisation
is participating in the Steps to Recovery
support programme.

