

EngageGM

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What's on >>>

July: Ethnic Minority Cancer Awareness Month

According to Cancer Research UK, someone in the UK is diagnosed with cancer every two minutes. Although the prevalence of cancer in Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups is generally low, the risk of getting certain types of cancers or being diagnosed late is disproportionately higher. For example:

- The risk of prostate cancer is twice as high for black men than white men.
- Black and Asian women aged 65 years and over are more likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer than any other groups of women.
- Black women in England are twice as likely to be diagnosed with advanced breast cancer as their white counterparts.
- Mouth cancers are more common in South Asian populations.
- Liver cancer is higher in Chinese communities.

Cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment in the UK has improved immensely over the past 50 years. However, the use of cancer services is low in BAME communities. There are social, cultural, religious and language barriers that prevent individuals of these communities from accessing cancer services. The accessibility gap is thought to have increased with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Answer Cancer believes that encouraging communities to talk more about cancer will:

- Dispel the myths and stigma around cancer and cancer services.
- Improve knowledge about risk, signs and symptoms of cancer.
- Help people understand why it is important to make time for cancer screening.
- Help people know where to get support and information.

The Answer Cancer Engagement team and the BME Cancer partnership invite all to join in the awareness campaign this year.

[Click here](#) to get some resources and training information.

We are in this together, so let us do it together!

Talking trends >>>

Cancer support for diverse communities

Finding the right support and care when diagnosed with cancer is crucial. For many of a BAME background, this can be challenging especially if support services do not meet their linguistic, cultural and religious needs.



Apart from the [NHS](#), charitable organisations like the [Macmillan Cancer Support](#), [Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust](#), [Breast Cancer Now](#), [Prostate Cancer UK](#), [Bowel Cancer UK](#), and [Cancer Research UK](#) provide resources and information around physical, emotional and financial support for cancer patients and their carers.

However there are BAME-led charities across Greater Manchester who provide services tailored to the needs of BAME communities. These have come together to form what is known as the Greater Manchester BME Cancer Partnership. [Can Survive UK](#), the [Wai Yin Society](#) and [Cancer Care Diaspora](#) are a few of the organisations within the BME Cancer Partnership.

Members of the Partnership are worried about the significant drop in people from BAME communities contacting their GP since the COVID-19 pandemic started. This is what the Vice Chair, Marcella Turner (also CEO of [Can Survive UK](#)) has to say:

"For me, going to cancer screening appointments is the same as before. If anything is wrong, I want it diagnosed and treated quickly. We really cannot afford to put the appointment letters aside and 'deal with it later' or think 'I'm feeling okay so there is no need for me to go this time'."

Our healthcare settings are safe, screening should not be postponed and there is support when you need it.

The good advice >>>

Stop the blame game!

[Female Genital Mutilation](#) (FGM) is common amongst a minority of the BAME migrant population. It is illegal, a violation of a woman's right, and a significant barrier to cervical cancer screening.

Most women subjected to FGM are stigmatised. They are usually afraid to speak up or seek help. Creating awareness about FGM within communities, schools and among health workers can stop the prejudice.

[Support & Action Women's Network \(SAWN\)](#) is one of the many organisations in Manchester that support women who have been subjected to FGM. They believe that FGM should not stop anybody from having the "smear test" since help is now available.

To get a better understanding of why the blame game needs to stop, watch the [video here](#) by Cancer Equality.



Video credit: Cancer Equality

Celebrating a hero >>>

Dr. Minaxi Desai, CBE - A lifetime cancer champion

Heroes come in many forms. There are those who go beyond the call of duty to sacrifice their time and energy to make an impact. One such person is Dr. Minaxi Desai.

Dr. Desai worked at the Manchester Royal Infirmary and at the Christie's Hospital as a consultant. During her working life, she was at the forefront of research into cervical cancer screening and diagnosis and has many [publications](#) to her credit.

In an era that very little was known about cancer screening within minority ethnic populations, Dr. Desai devoted her time to create awareness and support many through their cancer journey in the UK and beyond. Her hardwork was recognised in 2011, when she was awarded with a CBE for her services to women's healthcare. BBC captured her story when she was nominated by the Jain community to carry the Olympic torch in 2012. [You can read more from the BBC here.](#)

Long into her retirement, one would have thought she would have taken a break by now. Not Dr. Desai. She continues to champion the cause of cancer awareness within the BAME community. She is currently a trustee of Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust, Healthwatch Manchester and a lead Answer Cancer Champion. Her dedication to cancer awareness and women's health is a phenomenon.

[Listen to Dr. Desai by clicking on this link.](#)



Funding news >>>

Applications for the second round of Answer Cancer Fund to support community groups was closed on the 18th of May 2020.

Out of the 31 eligible applications received from across Greater Manchester, 28 were successful. These organisations and community groups will be running local level awareness raising and recruitment events between the 1st July and 31st October 2020.

The aim is to increase the awareness of breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening as well as recruit Answer Cancer Champions in communities that have low screening uptake.

Answer Cancer would like to thank you all for your support.

Congratulations to successful applicants.

We look forward to working with you.

Final Thoughts...

If we detect cancer early it can be treated. You can find signs and symptoms of common cancers in community languages [here](#).

Eat well, live well, and get checked!

About us >>>

Answer Cancer is a partnership of four VCSE organisations: Unique Improvements, Voluntary Sector North West, BHA for Equality, and Salford CVS. Our work is funded by the Greater Manchester Health and Social care partnership.

Our aim is to address the cultural, social and systemic barriers that prevent people from taking up cancer screening.

How do we do it?

1. We work with community and faith groups across Greater Manchester, so they know what causes cancer & why screening is important.
2. We offer free information sessions on breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening.
3. We train individuals as Answer Cancer Champions.
4. We support community groups with grants so they can increase awareness about cancer screening.

For more information please contact:

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