

New guidance launched to help people from Punjabi community with alcohol problems

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New guidance on setting up a specialist project for people from the Punjabi community with alcohol problems has been published. The authors' recommendations also provide a framework for supporting

people from other communities with alcohol problems who are not engaging with existing services.

The guide, developed by alcohol, drugs and gambling charity Aquarius, and researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Birmingham, is based on the evaluation of an alcohol [service](#) initiative for a Punjabi community in the West Midlands—the first of its kind in the UK.

Offering advice on setting up a [project](#), developing a project model, [project management](#), project delivery, as well as useful resources, the guidance has been developed from work led by substance use researcher Professor Sarah Galvani from Manchester Metropolitan.

The research team has drafted new guidance for managers and commissioners considering setting up a project of this kind, providing best practice on how to work productively with [local communities](#) when providing services addressing alcohol use within South Asian communities in general, and the Punjabi community in particular.

Professor Galvani, Professor of Social Research and Substance Use at Manchester Metropolitan University, said: "There is dearth of research into the specific needs of people in minority ethnic communities who may be using alcohol and other drugs problematically. Far more attention is needed to support our diverse communities and to determine the most effective ways of supporting people, and their families. As one community member told me, there is a habit of 'parachuting in white services' and expecting that to work."

Report co-author, Dr. Surinder Guru, Senior Lecturer at the University of Birmingham, said: "Drinking within the Punjabi community is very gendered. Heavy drinking by men is common practice but women's drinking is frowned upon. This creates tensions in families and women

can suffer rejection and shame within the community and family. The original research underpinning Shanti showed that young Punjabi people notice this unequal treatment of men and women and see it as unfair. We need to give attention to women's drinking and the impact of men's drinking on women and children with the Punjabi community."

Richard McVey, Aquarius' Head of Service, said: "It is really important that all alcohol and drug services listen to the particular needs of our diverse communities. We must avoid a 'one size fits all' approach. To do this, partnership with the community from the outset is vital."

The guidance includes resources for planning and delivering any project with people and key agencies from the Punjabi community from the outset; understanding cultural and religious norms, committing time for building relationships of trust with community partners, involving people with lived experience, being prepared to develop new models and partnerships where needed, and understanding the key role of multi-agency and partnership working underpinned by trust, integrity, honesty and transparency from the service.

Aquarius ran the alcohol service initiative, called The Shanti Project within the Punjabi community from 2016-19. The project was developed out of the organization's concern for the number of middle-aged Punjabi men presenting to Accident and Emergency departments with serious alcohol-related liver conditions that needed earlier detection.

Shanti aimed to increase recognition and understanding of [alcohol problems](#) and alcohol services within this Punjabi community, leading to an increase in alcohol service access by those with an alcohol problem. Sikh TV and radio channels and other social media outlets were particularly effective in disseminating information to the community. It also was designed so that frontline alcohol professionals and community

facilitators would have improved awareness of [alcohol](#) and the Shanti service and the knowledge to refer people to specialist services.

More information: Supporting Punjabi People with Alcohol Problems: www.mmu.ac.uk/media/mmuacuk/colleagues/2020/06/Supporting-Punjabi-People-with-Alcohol-Problems-June-2020.pdf

Provided by University of Birmingham

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