

## Bangla Covid 19 Advice Project



**Bangla Housing Association**, working in partnership with Spitalfields Housing Association and supported by the BME London Landlords group, secured a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, supported by the Government for the Covid19 advice project for the Bangladeshi Communities in Hackney and Tower Hamlets.

Bangla Housing Association is member a of BME London Landlords group of 14 BME led Registered Social Landlords including **Spitalfields Housing Association (SHA)** which is based in Tower Hamlets.

The Bangladeshi community in Hackney and Tower Hamlets - the largest Bangladeshi community in the country. As it is well documented, Bangladeshis suffer twice the Covid related death rate compared to people of white British ethnicity (Public Health England Report). Research from NHS England, Public Health England, the Runnymede Trust and a number of health think tanks give a number of reasons for this phenomenon including greater poverty, intergenerational living, being in higher risk occupations and significantly, poorer uptake of information. All point out that these factors combine to impact this community disproportionately in terms of infection, hospital admissions and death rates.

Working with Spitalfields Housing, Bangla Housing Association has launched this project from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020, embarking on the following three practical steps.

- **Community Advisors:** Employing two Bengali speaking community health advisors who will directly contact vulnerable Bangladeshi residents of our housing associations as well as in the community. They will also network and liaise with community organisations as well as NHS Trusts, medical centres and local authority teams in Hackney and Tower Hamlets. Their role will be to provide culturally sensitive practical advice particularly in advance of any second spike in cases.
- **Translated Covid 19 information leaflets.** Produce and widely distribute an in easy-to-understand information and guide in Bengali language about how to keep safe from Covid 19 and what to do in case you show any symptoms. This leaflet will be distributed to homes and via community organisations, schools, youth associations, medical centres, mosques and NHS and council offices.
- **Short Video in Sylheti:** Produce a short video film in Sylheti dialect. This is the dialect spoken by most of the people in the Bangladeshi community of Hackney and Tower Hamlets. The video will give graphic information about the impact of Covid-19 in the community and give clear advice about how to keep safe and emphasise the importance of abiding with the government's health advice and rules.

This video will be mounted on the Bangla and Spitalfields Housing Associations websites, partners organisations websites and shared with community groups, youth and mosque centres, elderly clubs, NHS, medical centres, and council offices etc. To get the message across as widely as possible, the video will be shared with all contacts via Facebook, twitter, and Instagram.

## **The project aims and scope:**

Our aim is to reach most of the 10,000 households and 40,000 strong Bangladeshi community across both boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets and lend to the efforts of others by raising awareness. Emphasis will be given to the most vulnerable including the elderly and those with underlying health conditions. The project will also recruit volunteer ambassadors who will support the Project health advisors to impart information through social media campaigns and undertake awareness raising campaigns in local schools, community centres, Mosques, NHS, medical centres, and council offices. These ambassadors will, mainly be, young people and local community leaders.

We will also actively engage with Bangladeshi print and electronic media – newspapers, internet, and sky TV community channels to get our message across. This effort along with the use of social media, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter etc will get our campaign and message across to the Bangladeshi community beyond Hackney and Tower Hamlets to the whole of East and greater London as well as in the UK and in Europe and all over the world.

## **Acknowledgement:**

This partnership project is led by Bangla Housing Association, supported by Spitalfields Housing Association and the BME London Landlords

This important and lifesaving project is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. We are grateful to the government and the National Lottery Community Fund of this.

