



Capacity Building and Funding

Bollyfit Active

Bollyfit Active helps to keep South Asian women fit for free in and around Levenshulme, running 4 weekly sessions including cardio and body weight exercises. We are made up of 3 female Pakistani directors and have been running for 6 years. Our aim is to help Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who don't feel comfortable using public gyms for various cultural reasons e.g., due to a lack of female only fitness classes. Bollyfit was set up to include culturally appropriate needs with positivity by building friendships within the community and keeping fit in a positive, safe place for women.



We use social media and WhatsApp to promote the group's activities and reach the wider community, as we have also started to help overcome further cultural issues in the South Asian community, such as low attendance for health and medical appointments. We network with (and have started receiving referrals from) Be-Well, local GPs, and focus care workers to engage South Asian women in health and exercise.

As the group expanded, we decided to formalise our group, increase members and directors, and seek funding to meet these needs for the South Asian community.

Through the NESTA 100-day challenge, I met Danielle from the Policy and Influence team at Macc. She recommended her colleagues in the Capacity Building team to get advice and support in registering as a CIC as well as how to find relevant funding and grants.

Paperwork gives me headaches and Millie really helped: she explained the guidance on choosing a structure, articles of association, recommended becoming a CIC and explained how to register and complete a template statement. When I had finished, she reviewed it and provided feedback on how to improve.



She also informed me on policies for insurance, safeguarding, equal opportunities, and health and safety training plus recommended similar organisations to network with and discuss best practice for training session leaders.

The pandemic meant our Bollyfit sessions stopped between March and November, although our members did keep in touch on WhatsApp. Millie and I then discussed Covid-19 operational barriers and potential future areas for development. She then sent us some resources, including: understanding director's roles and legal responsibilities, funding strategies e.g. wellbeing grants, and how to identify suitable sources of fund.

After this, our group decided to move online to Zoom to help overcome social isolation and improve health and wellbeing, increasing our numbers and diversity to 72 members from South Asian, English, Arabic and African backgrounds.

I was also directed to the Macc Volunteer Centre for additional support in how to find volunteers for culturally appropriate foodbank we wanted to set up, and combined with the advice and guidance from Millie on applying to Emergency Grants for Greater Manchester BAME Communities, we successfully secured a grant of £3,000.

Our first day of foodbank was on the 1 February 2021, where we provided a food package (including meat, fresh fruit and vegetables, and ghee) to 19 families.

As a result of Macc's guidance, we are better informed about where to access guidance and resources to develop capacity, as well as finding relevant funding to cover the costs of the different types of activities we do.

Our next steps now are to set up Bollyfit events to aid confidence building, personal development, and resilience training for our female community, as well as launching holiday and half term activities for schoolgirls.

"It was really helpful just knowing that there's someone there to offer guidance and reach out for questions".



“Thanks to Macc we are now able to expand even further and are widening our board to increase funding bids, marketing and build more relationships within the community. We are also looking for a Treasurer, or someone with more financial and accounting expertise.”.

February 2021