

Impact Evaluation of CARAS

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Executive summary

CARAS is a London-based charity which works with young people, families and adults of refugee background to provide practical, educational and social help. CARAS commissioned this evaluation in order to better understand their current impact. Six areas of desired impact were identified, all of which are also key aims of their current National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities grant, which part-funded this evaluation. These areas of impact were:

1. Communication skills
2. Sense of community
3. Mental health and wellbeing
4. Physical activity
5. Beneficiary strategic influence
6. Partner collaboration and sector influence

Three strands of research were conducted: firstly, ten individuals who currently use the services at CARAS were interviewed, secondly, a focus group with youth programme attendees was conducted, and, thirdly, representatives from five stakeholder organisations were interviewed. Through these three strands, researchers wanted individuals and groups to be able to freely share their opinions, so most contributors were interviewed via a translator.

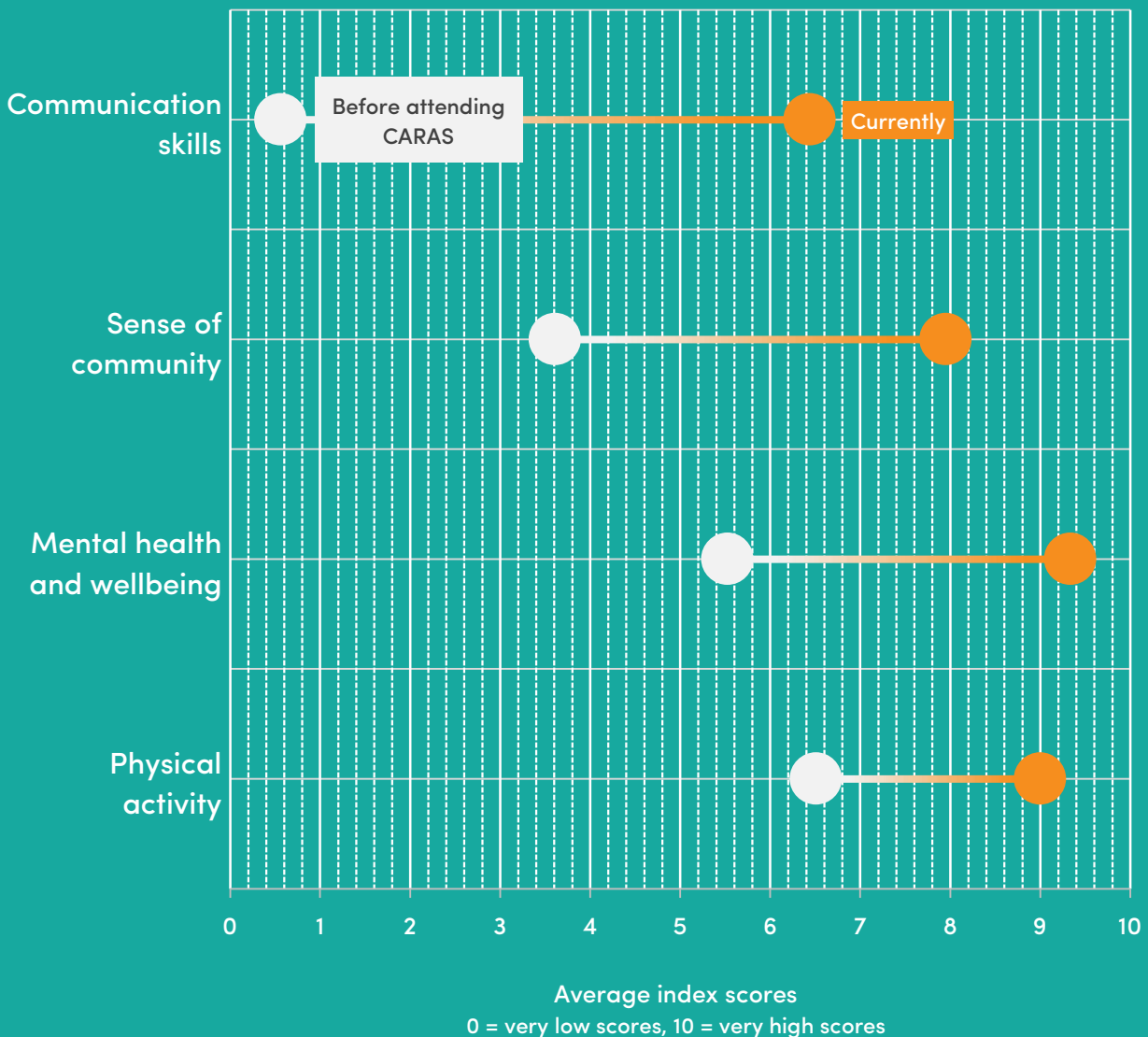
CARAS' effectiveness in the first four areas of impact was measured through a series of before and after questions with beneficiaries. The chart below shows a summary of the changes in the four areas. It is clear that the changes across all four are substantial. The qualitative interview data firmly attributed causality to CARAS' programmes:

"CARAS will help you. You feel like you can trust them, and it is better now when you listen to them. You say you have a problem: talk to them, and they will help you. I feel comfortable; I feel better. I told CARAS every problem."

Interview Participant 1

Overall change in participants' lives

The graph summarises the overall change in the different areas of participants' lives. Scores are calculated based on normalised scores of each section. The graphs compares questionnaire data between before attending CARAS and currently.



"Before starting CARAS, I couldn't leave the house because I couldn't speak English at all... My whole body used to shake, and I started sweating because I was scared, as I didn't know how to respond. Now, this doesn't happen, and I can comfortably respond. I feel more confident in social spaces, and I feel comfortable going out, and enjoy shopping or going to the park."

Interview Participant 2



Communication skills

Evidence indicates the importance of language skills for refugee integration, where language skills are intrinsically linked to facilitating access to education, employment and services. Through its ESOL classes and informal learning activities, CARAS is actively assisting refugees to become independent and self-sufficient.



Sense of community

At CARAS, participants feel part of a community, meeting other people, communicating with them and making friends. They also feel empowered and confident to speak up and gain independence in their lives.

The programmes at CARAS impacted beneficiaries' sense of belonging in the UK through workshops on UK culture, rights and entitlements, opportunities to meet welcoming and friendly people and by simply providing them with activities to do in the UK. As beneficiaries spent time at CARAS, they began to feel more at home in the UK. They felt "like they mattered" when they were asked questions by staff members.



Mental health and wellbeing

Refugees and asylum seekers are fleeing traumatic experiences, and are often more vulnerable to mental ill health. CARAS eases refugees' experiences of trauma and marginalisation by providing social and physical activities, advocacy and welcome through their multiple programmes. Since starting with CARAS, beneficiaries had more friends to laugh and joke with, they were more interested in everyday activities and they were more positive about the value of their lives.

"When I talk to people [at CARAS] I feel good inside; it gives an emotional release, so there is a big impact".

Focus Group Participant 1



Physical health

Through a series of local health provider partners, CARAS encourages their participants to stay physically active through activities including yoga and football. Participants not only spoke of increased physical activity but a deeper sense of purpose and meaning in their lives as a result.



Beneficiary strategic influence

Participants feel listened to and cared for at CARAS, and enjoy giving back to the organisation and promoting new ideas. Eight out of ten respondents endorsed CARAS' effectiveness in giving beneficiaries the opportunity to steer and direct the organisation:

"The very first time I went to college, I [needed to attend an]...IT class... I didn't know anything about IT, [but I asked at CARAS, and] we made a group, and they made a new programme."

Focus Group Participant 2

This area was also independently identified as a strength by several stakeholders in their interviews:

"The ideas [for activities] have come from the [beneficiaries] themselves...You can tell they [CARAS] are listening. It's not a service where it's top-down; the [beneficiaries] are very much part of building the activities, and... that really shines through."

Stakeholder 1



Partner collaboration and sector influence

Stakeholder interviews revealed strong, positive relationships between CARAS and their partners.

“Their level of energy and enthusiasm and the input, and that commitment, is just amazing for lack of a better word.”

Stakeholder 2

Partners identified nine strengths of CARAS, in addition to some recommendations for improvement. The strengths were:

- 1 **The effectiveness of the team**
- 2 **The agency and leadership offered to beneficiaries**
- 3 **The focus on building relationships**
- 4 **The energy and passion shown by the team**
- 5 **The prominent vision**
- 6 **The ease of communication**
- 7 **The transparency and opportunities for knowledge sharing**
- 8 **The wide network**
- 9 **The inclusivity and diversity**

Recommendations

A small number of recommendations were made by participants, including increasing the number, diversity and duration of the activities, offering longer English classes, and tailoring more services for families with children. In addition to this, stakeholders identified several potential opportunities for growth. Most prominently, stakeholders discussed a need for CARAS to increase its communication, including direct updates for stakeholders, celebration of beneficiaries' achievements and increased publicity, advocacy and influence.

Conclusion

Overall, it is clear that CARAS is having a defining impact in the lives of its beneficiaries, many of whom spend years engaging with the curriculum and inviting their families and friends to do the same. Beneficiaries often see CARAS as a second home where they can grow in a friendly and supportive environment. They feel like they can trust CARAS and feel comfortable because of the "friendly people" they find that are eager to help them.

Together, the improved mental and physical state, the understanding of the language and social norms and feeling part of a group made CARAS beneficiaries feel like they belong more in the UK.

There were no significant barriers to accessing CARAS, and both the women's groups and the option of online classes have provided even more opportunities for women and for families with childcare responsibilities.

This report was conducted and produced by Eido Research in partnership with CARAS. The research team is extremely grateful for this opportunity and for those who participated in this research, including CARAS beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and representatives of other stakeholder groups.

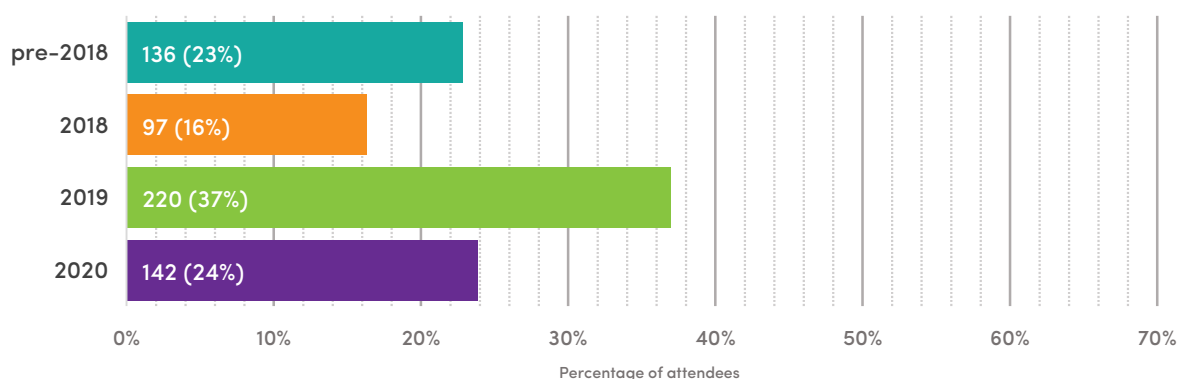
CARAS programmes

The following infographic section contains several graphs that illustrate CARAS' programme attendance and provide insights into demographic trends. These data include all CARAS participants who have been active in their programmes between January 2018 and December 2020.

CARAS saw a significant expansion in 2019, receiving more than double the number of new entrants than in 2018. It is assumed that 2020 had fewer entrants due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Attendees joining CARAS

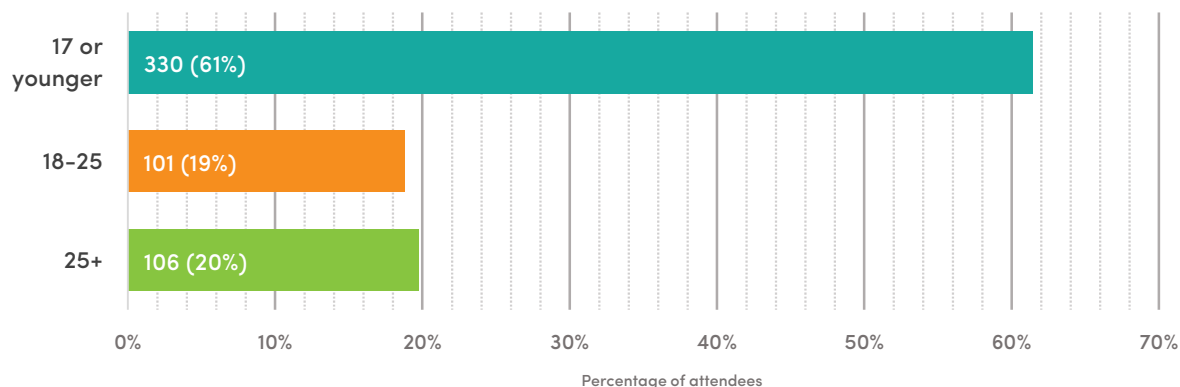
The graph shows when current attendees joined CARAS.



Almost two-thirds of CARAS entrants join below the age of 18.

Age distribution of attendees

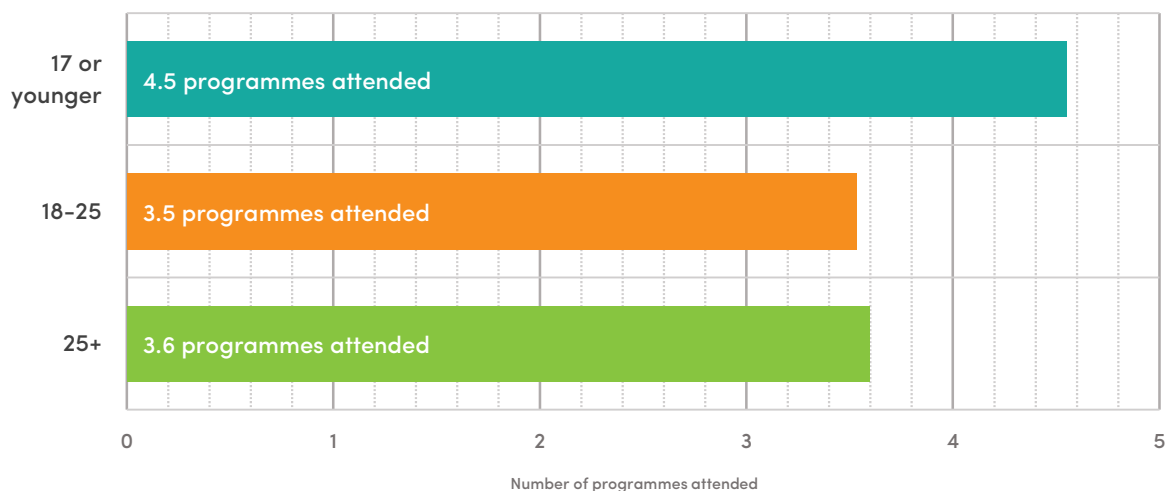
The graph shows attendees' age when they joined CARAS.



CARAS attendees below the age of 18 attend the greatest number of programmes, at 4.5 on average.

Number of programmes attended

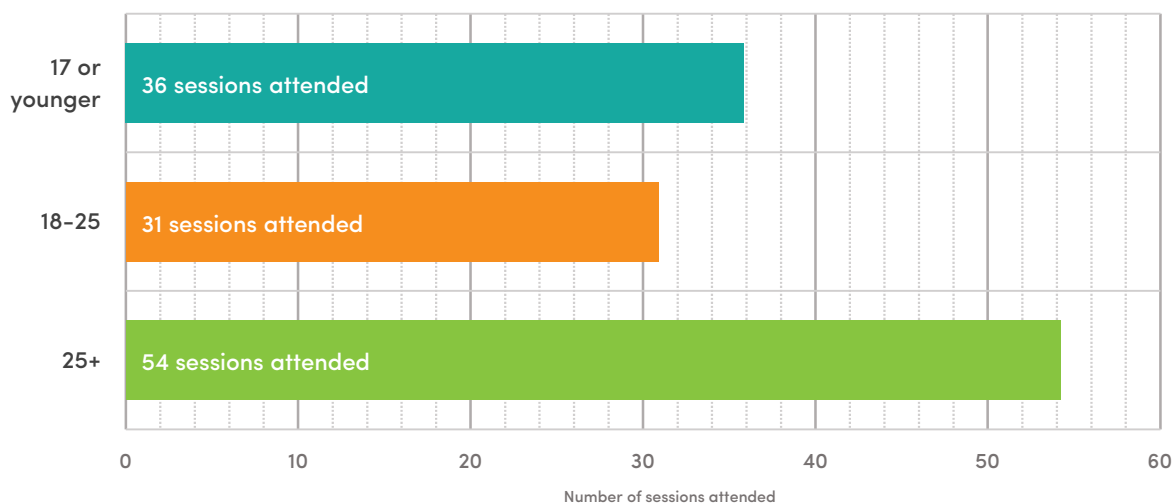
The graph shows the average number of programmes attended by each age group.



Attendees over 25 attend the highest number of sessions, averaging at 54 sessions each.

Number of sessions attended

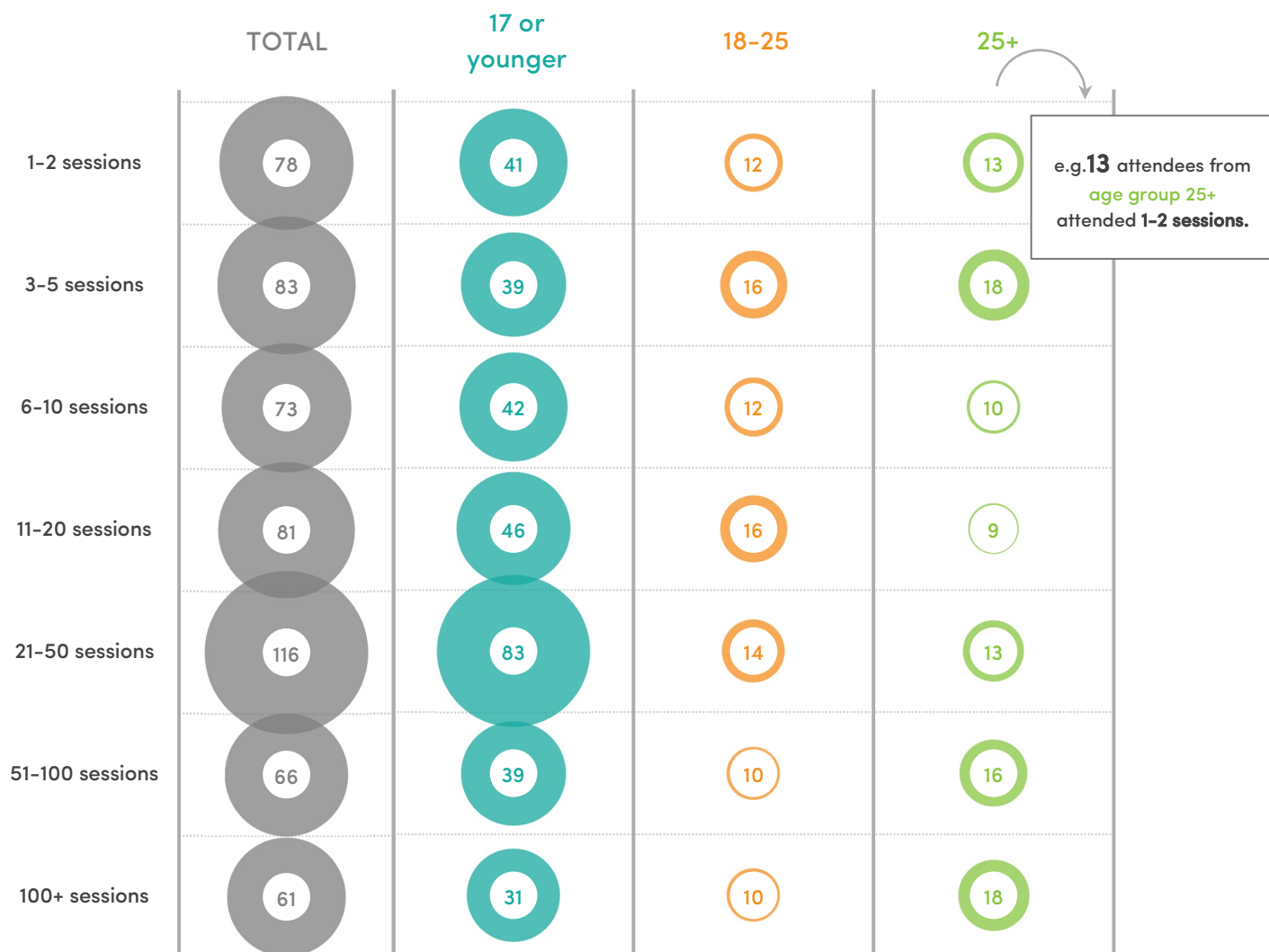
The graph shows the average number of sessions attended for each age group.



CARAS enjoys high levels of attendee commitment to the organisation and a low drop-out rate. This is demonstrated by the low numbers of attendees attending fewer than ten sessions, especially amongst older attendees.

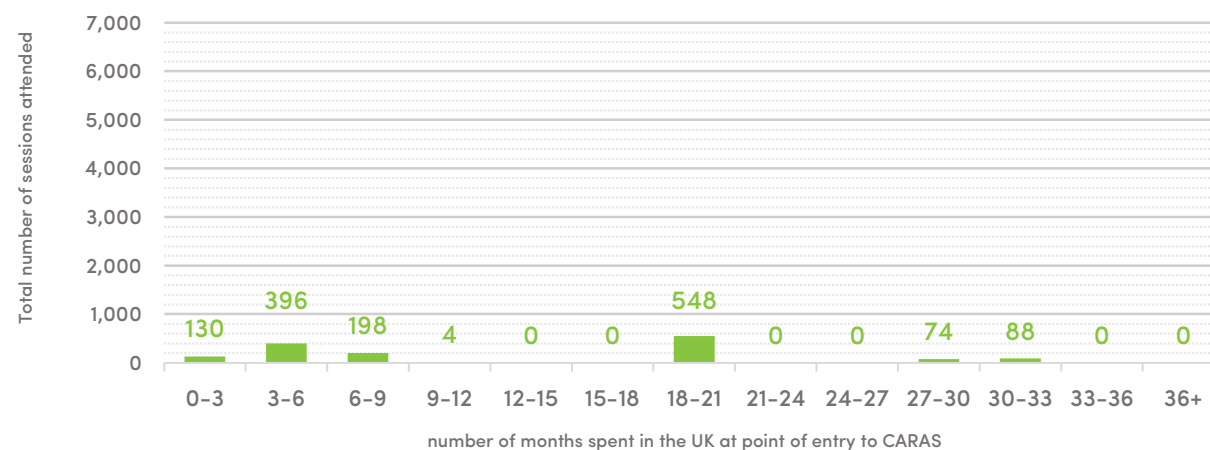
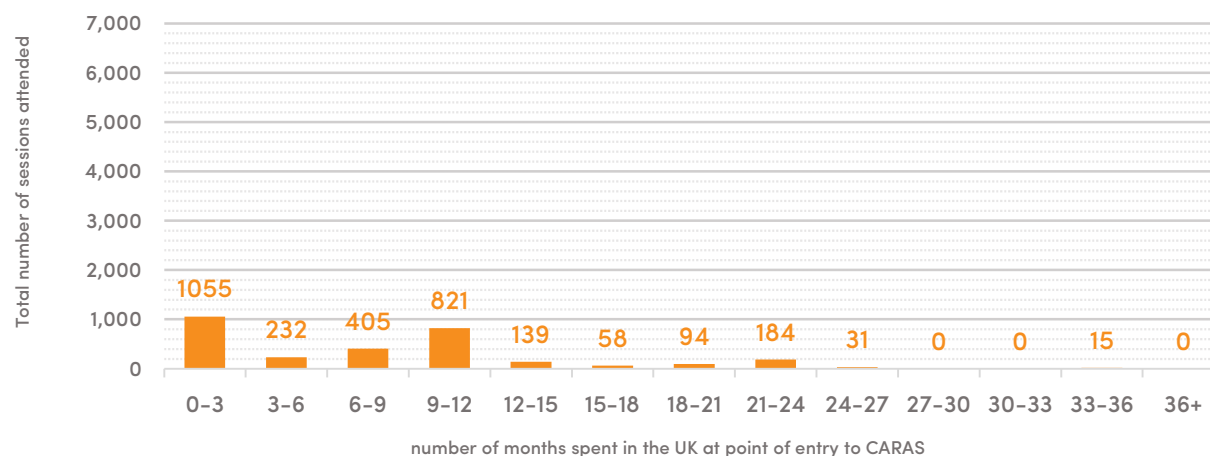
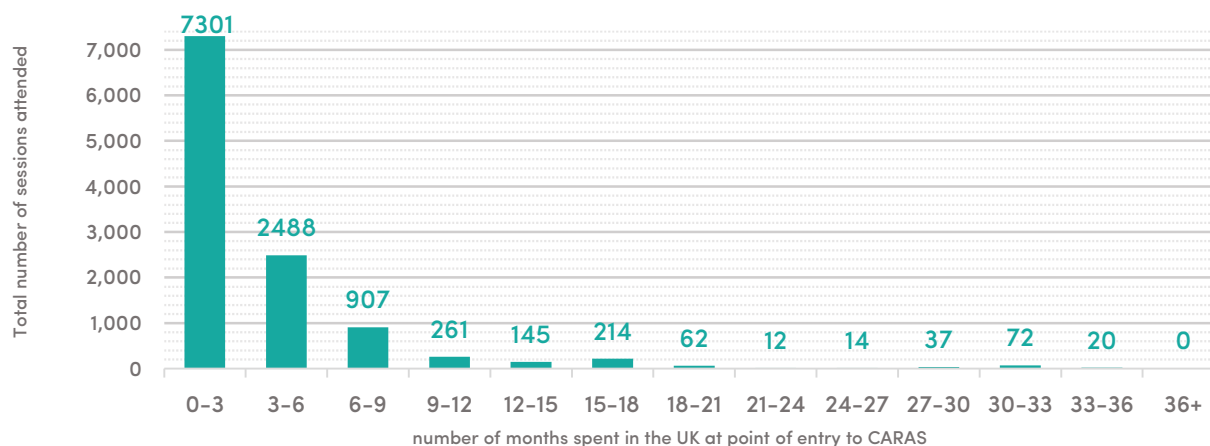
Number of sessions attended by age

The graph breaks down the number of attendees for each age group and each category of session attendance.



Number of sessions attended by the time spent in the UK

The graphs below show the number of sessions attended by the number of months spent in the UK when attendees aged **17 or younger**, **18-25** and **25+** joined CARAS. *

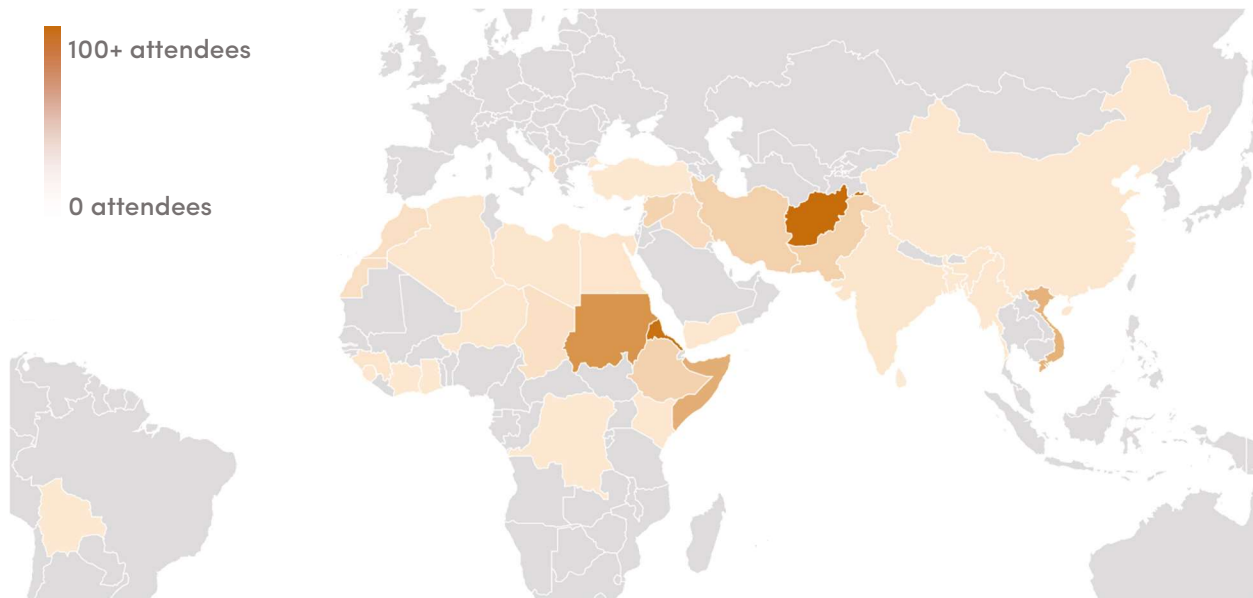


* Age recorded at the time of joining CARAS.

A large number of nations is represented by CARAS attendees. The most common countries of origin are Eritrea, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, and Vietnam.

Attendees' country of origin

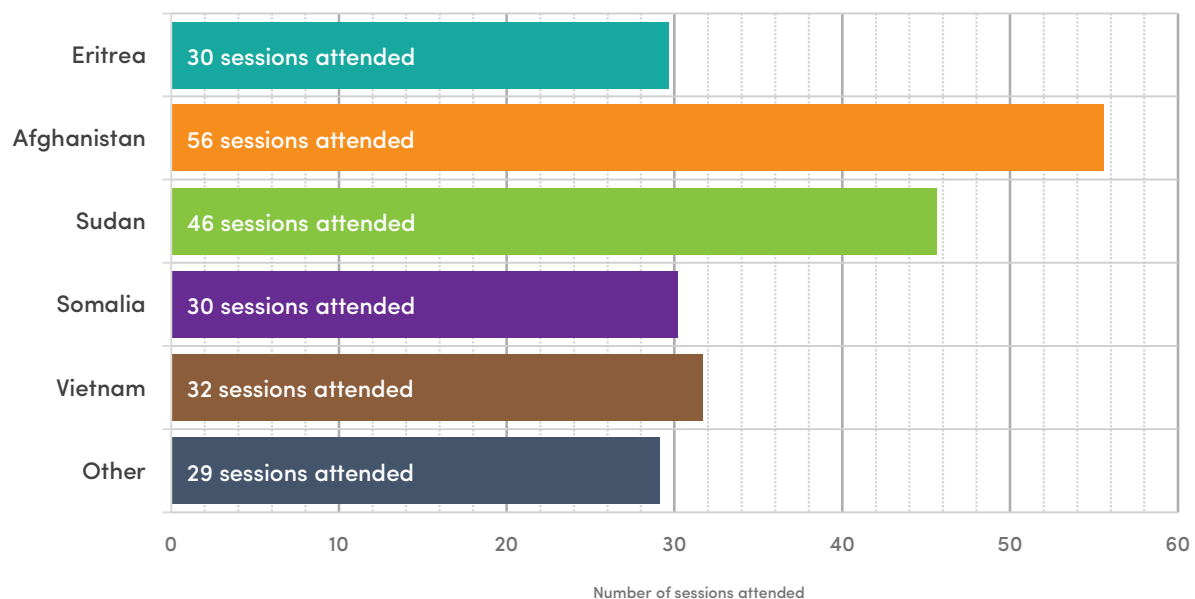
The map below shows attendees' country of origin.



Attendees from Afghanistan have attended the most sessions, averaging at 56 sessions per person.

Number of sessions attended

The graph shows the average number of sessions attended by country of origin.



Introduction

CARAS is a London-based charity which works together with young people, families and adults of refugee background to provide practical, educational and social help. CARAS creates supportive relationships, networks and well-informed services that enable people to access what they need in order to increase their wellbeing and safety. Their programmes include social activities, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), trips, sports, workshops, community volunteering, family days and a problem-solving clinic for legal, educational and welfare issues. Their largest beneficiary groups are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and women with young children. They aim to engage those who need it in wraparound support, prioritising medium-term relational working. CARAS has become an increasing presence in the sector, active beyond its local community, notably on the Mayor of London's Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel, the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium and, with the GLA, co-convenor of the Peer Support Network for informal ESOL providers.

CARAS commissioned this evaluation in order to better understand their current impact. From a series of consultation meetings with CARAS staff, six aims of their work were identified, all of which are also key aims of their current National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities grant, which part-funded this evaluation. These aims are:

- ① **Communication skills**
- ② **Sense of community**
- ③ **Mental health and wellbeing**
- ④ **Physical activity**
- ⑤ **Beneficiary strategic influence**
- ⑥ **Partner collaboration and sector influence**

Through this report, researchers have explored the impact of CARAS in each of these six areas. The research covers the work of the organisation as a whole and includes a specific case study exploring CARAS' English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme. Whilst the ESOL programme is only one of many CARAS activities, it has been analysed in additional depth so that learnings can be offered to the organisation as a whole.

Researchers conducted three strands of research: firstly, with those with lived experiences of seeking asylum, secondly, with stakeholder groups, and thirdly, an analysis of data already held by CARAS. By comparing these three strands, this report aimed to ensure each individual was represented by the findings.

The report will begin by detailing the methodology used for this research, before examining the key research findings and drawing conclusions and recommendations from the analysis. The aim of this report is to assist CARAS in advocating for systematic and institutional change, and to further understand where to improve participation and service delivery.

Methodology

Research design

To measure the impact of CARAS, a mixed methods research design was chosen. This approach allowed for depth, flexibility, and adaptability in the study design. The interview questions and focus group template were formulated through consultations with the senior leadership and project teams at CARAS. Researchers collected data using the following methods:

Semi-structured interviews with CARAS beneficiaries

The semi-structured interview asked beneficiaries how they rated their experiences before and after engagement with CARAS. Quantitative questions were included to capture numerical data. This data identified key trends and patterns, adding breadth to the in-depth interviews to produce a full and rich picture of the impact of the work.

Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders

Stakeholders' voices were included in this study to shed light on partner organisations' and funders' experiences of CARAS. These interviews added depth to the success stories by providing another perspective, and also gave CARAS vital feedback on how to improve their services and partnerships. As above, stakeholder interviews also included quantitative questions.

Focus group discussion

Finally, a focus group discussion was conducted with young people who use the services at CARAS. By conducting a focus group, the research team was able to reach multiple participants at one time and further generate opportunities to collect data from the group interaction.

Recruitment and sampling

To identify interviewees, CARAS suggested beneficiaries who would be willing to participate in this study. The project sample selection included six female and four male participants between the ages of 17 and 40, and with between one and five years of engagement with CARAS. Before conducting the interviews, the researcher called the interviewee to introduce herself so as to build rapport. The majority of project interviews were conducted with an interpreter.¹

For the focus group, the interviewer joined a weekly Zoom youth club, and the youth coordinators at CARAS identified participants who would be interested in taking part. The sample for the focus group consisted of six males between the ages of 14 and 18. Their length of engagement with CARAS ranged from several weeks to six months. The focus group was conducted in English: the usual language used by this group.

By conducting interviews and focus groups with participants of varying ages, immigration status and time spent in the UK, the researchers gathered a diverse range of perspectives.²

In both interviews and focus groups, researchers ensured that the aims, objectives and rationale behind the questions were explained to each participant at the start of the data collection. Ethics and confidentiality were also explained to all respondents, with an opportunity for questions. The interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded with permission, and later transcribed.

In their analysis, researchers adopted a grounded theory approach, where data is analysed without presupposed conclusions or response categories in order to preserve participants' personal voice and intended meaning.³ This approach involves coding (grouping and labelling) the qualitative responses. NVivo specialist coding software assisted with this process, alongside manual coding.

¹ Nine out of 10 of the project interviews used an interpreter; the additional interview was conducted in an Asian language in which the interviewer was also fluent. Interviews were conducted over Zoom, or via telephone.

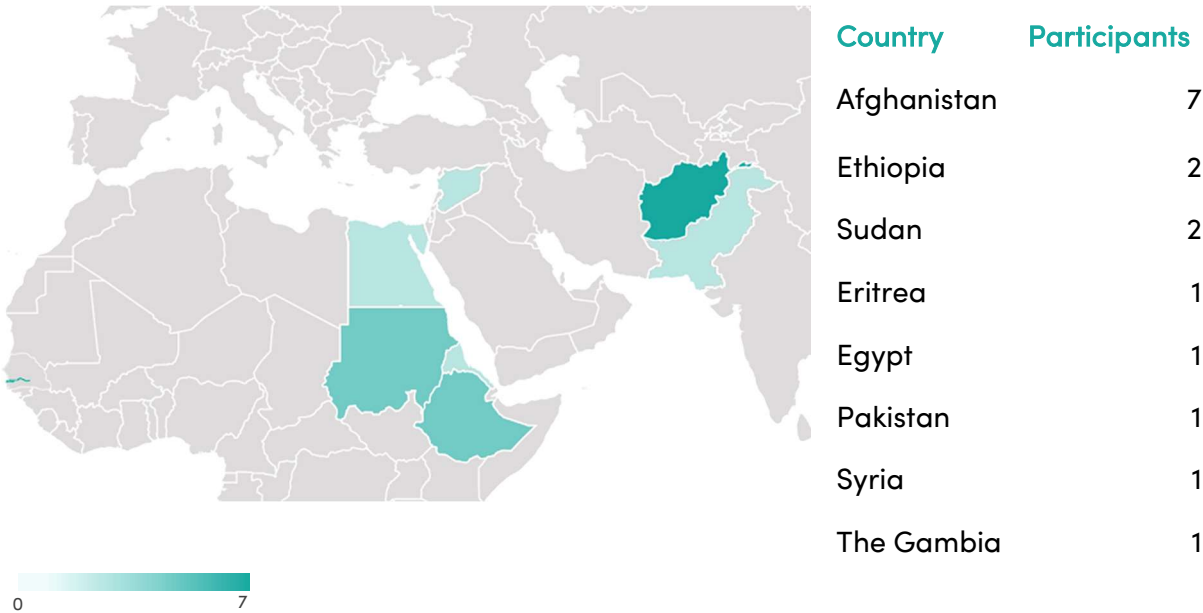
² A copy of our interview script and focus group template can be found in the Appendices.

³ Grounded theory sets out to discover or construct theory from data, systematically obtained and analysed using comparative analysis. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6318722/>

Five stakeholders were also identified by CARAS – they included project partners, youth organisations, funders and local authority referral partners. Each stakeholder offered their nuanced perspective from their position in the sector. The stakeholders had been working with CARAS for varying periods of time, ranging from five to nine years.

Participants’ country of origin

The map below illustrates the evaluation participants’ country of origin



Findings

The findings section explores each of the six of CARAS' aims individually.

Whilst sample sizes are too small to draw out statistical differences between participants based on age or gender, it should be noted that there were two distinct groups of interviewees: men below the age of 22 and women over the age of 30. Although both groups saw similar outcomes (further justifying the decision to not report statistics separately), there were some key differences in experiences that are highlighted, where relevant, in the report.



Communication skills

Communication skills are core to each of CARAS' activities, and yet are taught most directly through the provision of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes. As described above, these classes were analysed as a specific case study in this research, and findings are presented in detail.

Case study: ESOL classes

ESOL classes, both for adults and young people, are tailored to the needs of their beneficiaries and, accordingly, classes at different levels are offered. ESOL classes attract a diverse group of nationalities, which has been documented as being “particularly effective for the development of higher language skills as refugees meet people of different communities and cultures, allowing them to establish social networks and practice English outside of the classroom” (Coley et al., 2019: 5).

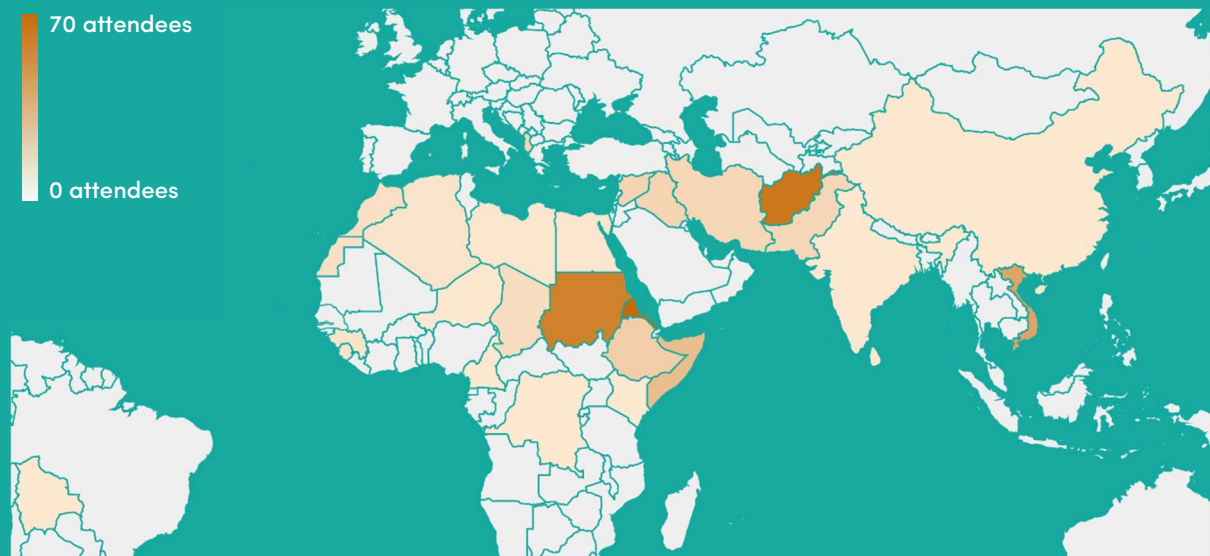
Overall, participants unanimously rated the ESOL programme as ten out of ten, with nine of the ten respondents saying they were “highly likely” to recommend the programme to friends and family.⁴

CARAS offers both accredited and non-accredited ESOL classes. Both are shown in the analysis below to be highly effective, although those who have experienced both seem to prefer the accredited programme, as it offers more face-to-face engagement.

⁴ Nine respondents gave scores of 10 out of 10, saying that they were highly likely to recommend CARAS. The remaining respondent would also recommend CARAS, scoring 8 out of 10.

ESOL class attendees

The map below illustrates ESOL class attendees' country of origin



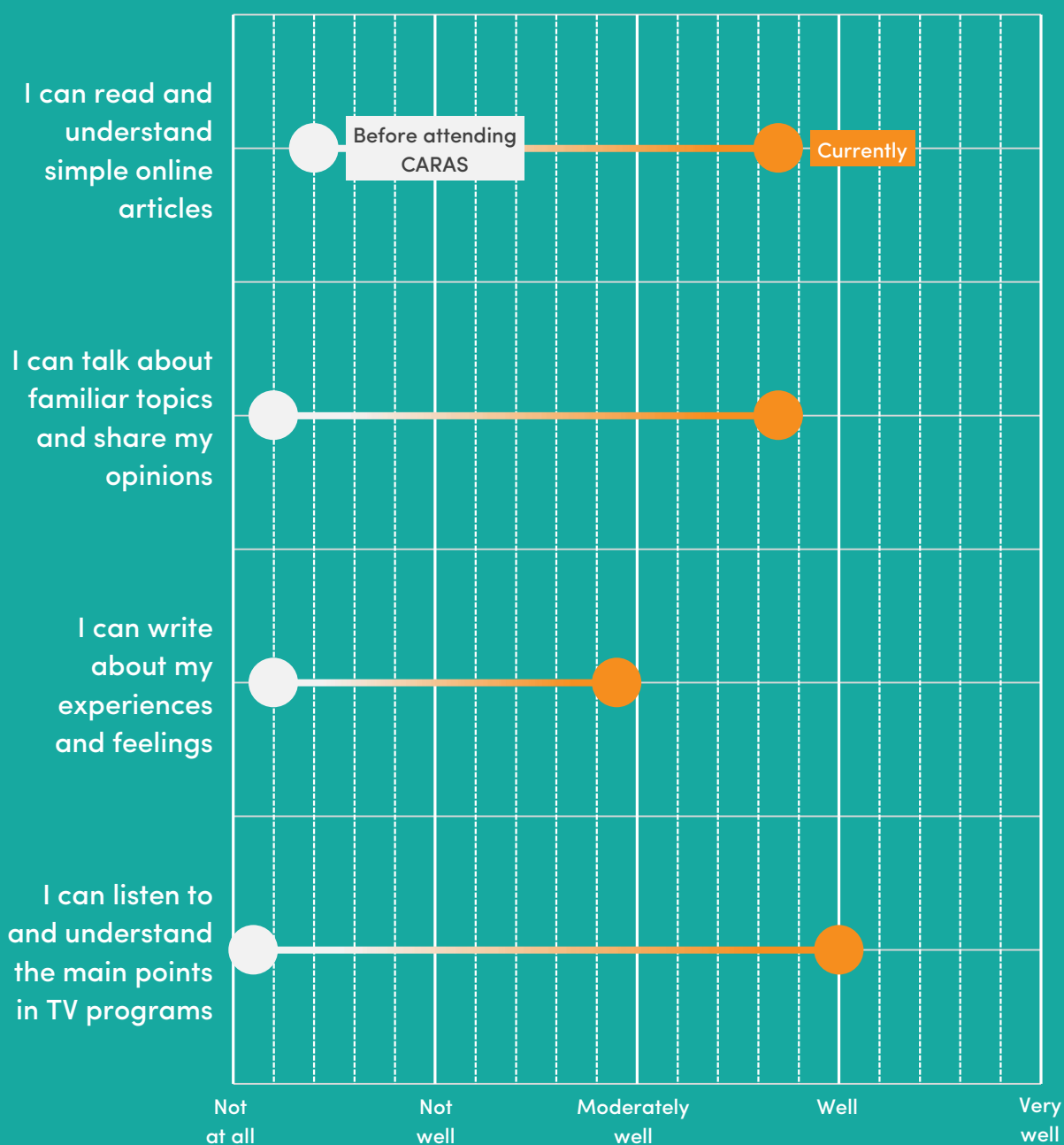
Improving communication skills through ESOL classes is usually a participant's first point of entry into CARAS – one of the reasons it has been selected as a particular focus. The top three reasons given by interviewees for joining CARAS were:

1. to speak English more confidently,
2. to communicate in English more in the community or with family, and
3. to find a job or place in college.

In this case study, interviewees were specifically asked about their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Communication skills

We asked participants to rate the extent to which they agreed with the following statements about reading, speaking, writing, and listening in English. This graph compares results before attending CARAS and currently.



It is immediately clear from this graph that participants are entering CARAS at a very low level of confidence and ability in English, with between seven and nine of the ten interviewees saying they were “not at all” capable in the four disciplines. It is equally clear that participants are learning a large amount, and, at the point of interview, are all at least “moderately” confident across all disciplines (except, perhaps, writing, where three of the ten still felt a lack of confidence. It should, however, be noted that literacy levels in participants’ expert languages are unknown to the researchers).

Respondents were also asked how CARAS had impacted their ability to communicate effectively, make friends and overcome language barriers. On average, participants gave CARAS a 7.9 out of 10 score, with three of the participants giving CARAS a ten out of ten rating. Only one participant rated CARAS below five, and, although they had dramatically improved in their abilities, they are the only interview respondent below 18 years old, and it is likely that they have also been learning English at school or college.

Some of the female participants were particularly impacted:

“In my country, for women, confidence is low. Especially because they don’t give women any rights to study, but here you can go to the classes and learn.”

Participants’ Recommendation

Two of the participants mentioned they would like more and longer English classes, so that they can learn more quickly. They would also like to have even more levels separated by English skill level so that everyone is at the same pace in the classes.

CARAS also give participants opportunities to consolidate their communication skills as they meet with each other socially.

“When you come, you meet a lot of people and volunteers; everyone is kind and you learn and meet someone new every day while improving your English by talking to people.”

During the stakeholder interviews, all five stakeholders mentioned that through both ESOL and other programmes at CARAS, beneficiaries are effectively building their communication skills.

“CARAS provides [participants] with the opportunity to develop their language skills; they have got good teachers... [The participants] get extra confidence from the conversation classes and the ESOL classes, where they get a chance to go over what they studied at college and [have it] explained it again but in a different way with a different learning style”.

“[Participants] that I've met have developed their language skills; they developed their confidence, their ability to relate to [others] more.”



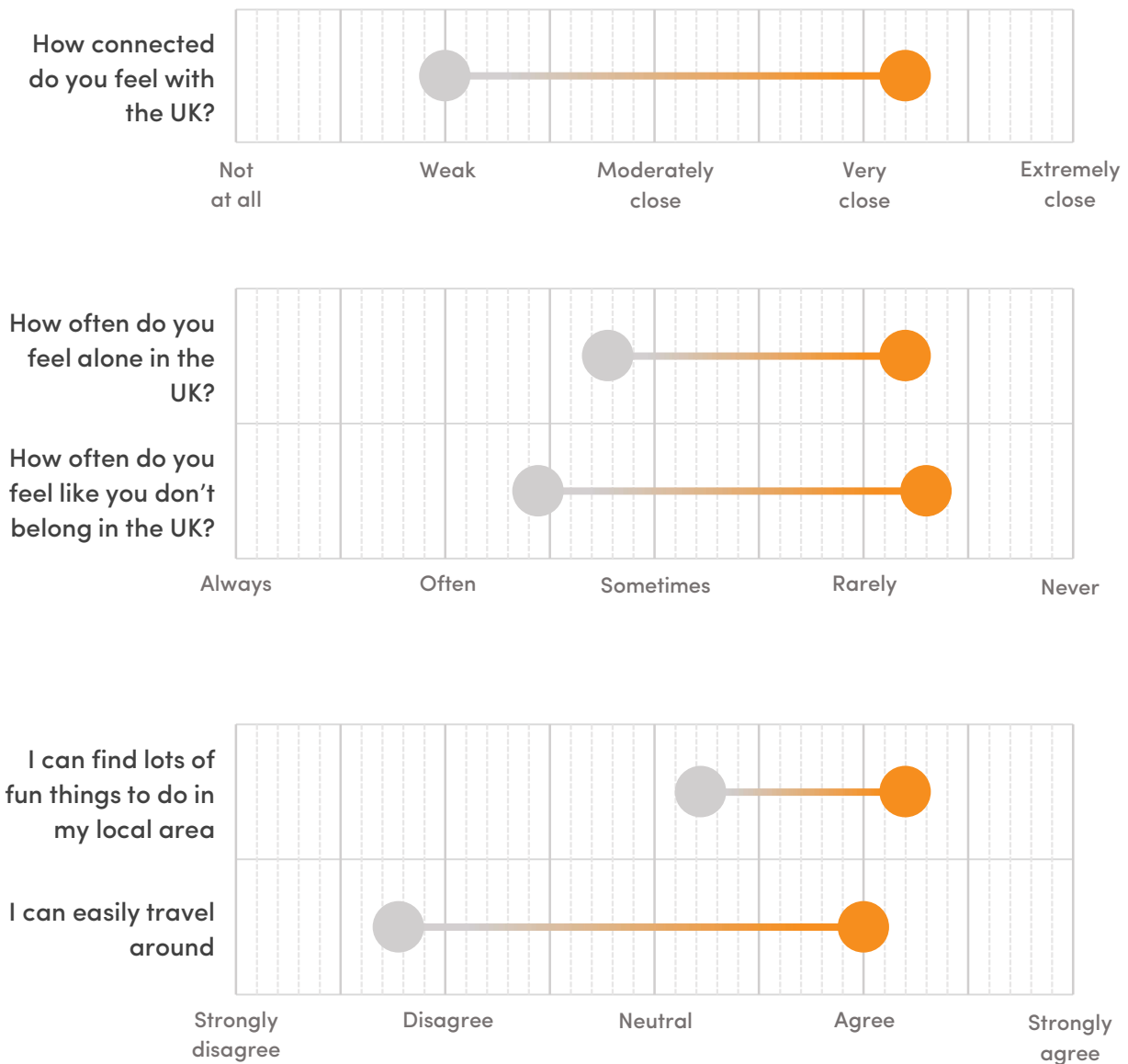


Sense of community

CARAS staff described the “sense of community”, and “feelings of belonging” that they desire for their participants. Five key areas were selected for quantitative questions, and, in all five, large improvements were reported.

Sense of community

We asked participants to rate their sense of community and belonging. The graphs compare results between **before attending CARAS** and **currently**.



In particular, before joining CARAS, participants tended to feel only a weak connection to the UK and disagreed with the statement “I can easily travel around”. By the time of the interview, these areas had both increased to average of four or above (out of five) on our scale.

At the interview, in particular, the female participants gave further detail on the confidence and abilities they had acquired. Through attending CARAS, they had grown in independence and could now access services like the GP and travel unaccompanied on public transport. Some mentioned that they had also improved their IT skills.

“I can see a massive difference now. Before, going to the surgery required an interpreter. Now I can go by myself and don’t need assistance, so I am independent now.”

“Before the program, I did not want to go out alone without my husband, neither shopping nor to the GP. He would give directions, but I would be scared if I [could not] find my house. The English course gave me the ability to do it myself. Four months ago, my daughter was born, and I was able to go to the hospital myself. Now I know how to get the bus routes, and it has given me a lot of confidence to do that by myself.”

Participants’ improved English language abilities, discussed above, also contributed greatly to their feelings of belonging. Their increased fluency made them feel more comfortable communicating and making friends.

“It gives you confidence to help other people. They make you feel not ashamed when you talk to other people. Because I am not so shy, I can talk to more people and make more friends. You are new to the country, so talking to other people, you can make more friends.”

Of course, CARAS alone does not give participants the confidence to go out and make friends, but encourages and enables friendships to form as part of its programmes. All participants have made some friends at CARAS, and the overwhelming majority, eight out of ten, mentioned that they have made a significant number of them.

“All my friends are from CARAS. We are all like a family. When we come here [to the UK], we don’t know anyone – and when you go to CARAS there are people from all different backgrounds. We all love each other. We are all going through the same thing.”

"It has a positive impact. There are more people from my country, and I have made friends. We laugh and joke about this, so it is like a family."

The programmes at CARAS also impacted participants' sense of belonging in the UK through teaching on human rights, giving them opportunities to meet welcoming and friendly people and by simply providing them with activities to do in the UK.

Participants even felt more at home in the UK as they learned about CARAS as an organisation and the ways it helps people. They felt that they mattered when they were asked questions by staff members.

"[One CARAS staff member] asked me a lot of very important questions for me. Before, nobody asked me those questions... CARAS will help you: you feel like you can trust them, and it is better now when you listen to them. You say you have a problem: talk to them and they will help you. I feel comfortable; I feel better. I told CARAS every problem."

This led to some participants comparing CARAS to a motherly figure:

"CARAS is the same as mama."

Stakeholders also felt that CARAS was very effective at giving its beneficiaries, both young people and adults, a sense of community.

"These workshops and events [that] CARAS organise just made [beneficiaries] feel part of a community and... very supported... I think that the overall feedback was that people felt engaged, and were more aware of things going on in their community, and [that they were] feeling part of it."

"When we came to visit, we could see that they actually set up a little peer review group that was supporting the speaker and was able to then give feedback to that speaker. You get that sense that they're building a community, a real community."

"[CARAS are] giving and providing those young people with a sense of belonging, and the confidence that they belong as well... All those young people that have arrived in South London with different stories and different challenges that they've had to overcome. And that's what the team is there

for, to support and unravel that, and unpackage it and build those young people back up.... That's the real impact of what they do. It's the confidence, the self-esteem that they provide the young people, that sense of unity, teamwork."

"They make [their participants] feel a part of something... You need to have the support structure around you to be able to deal with it. And that's where they [CARAS] provide those young people a safety net... I think the resilience that they provide is really strong."

Reaching their goals

Participants were asked to share some of their goals and ambitions with the interviewers, shown in the visual:

- 1 **Work** (6)
- 2 **Improve English** (5)
- 3 **Help others / children** (3)
- 4 **Uncertain** (1)

For six of the participants, their main goal was to work in the UK. CARAS had given them confidence, encouragement and practical help with CVs and applications. It is not known how many have found employment or were currently eligible to do so.

Five of the participants' main goal was to improve their English, often so they could help others:

"I want to improve my English to help other people. I am at a college, and I would like to finish college and improve my English very well to help people around me."

Participants were then asked whether CARAS has helped them to reach their goals. Six of the ten interviewees felt that achieving their goals through CARAS was extremely likely. Three of the other four felt it was at least quite likely, and one felt neutrally. None of the respondents felt negatively about accessing opportunities.

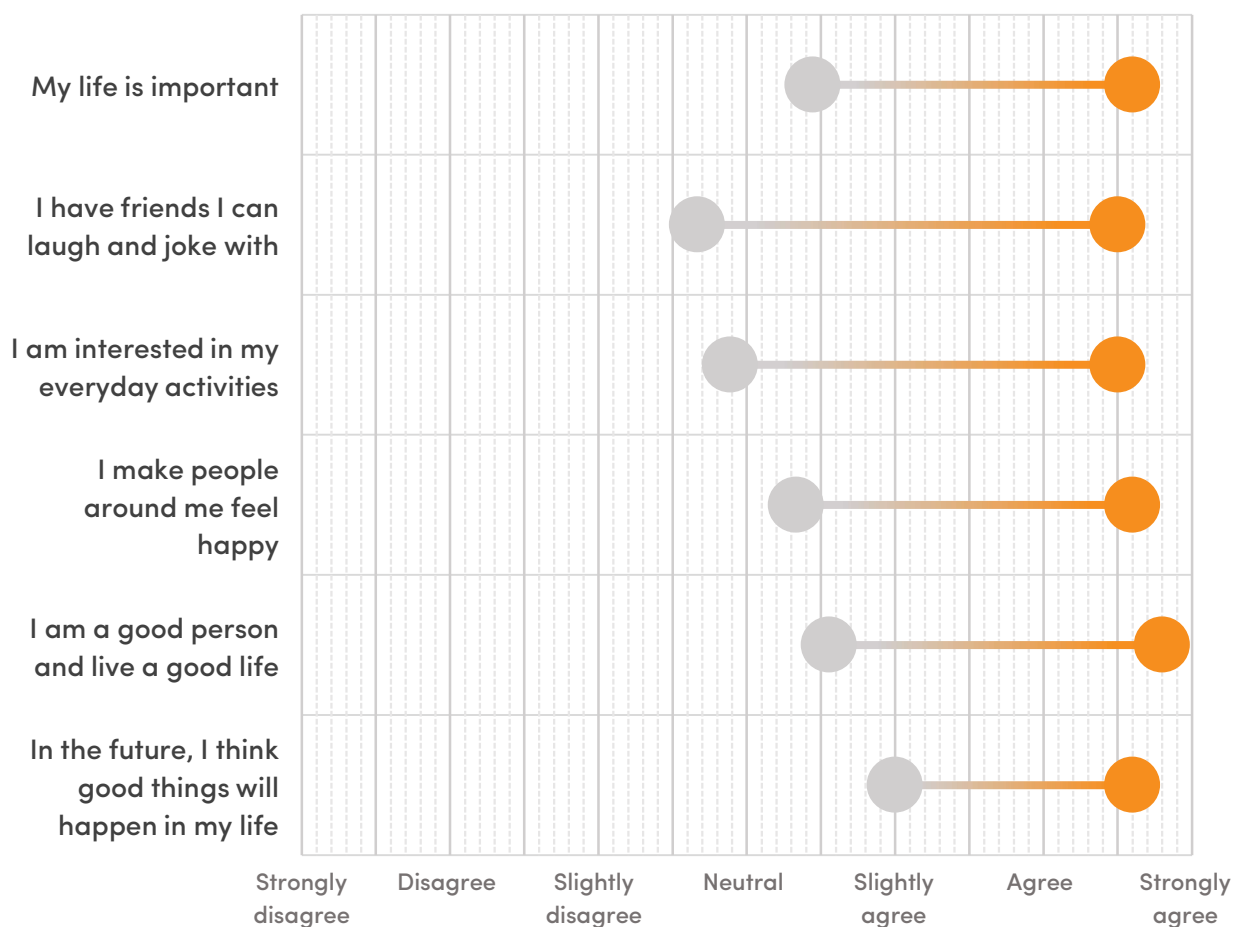


Mental health and wellbeing

The third aim of CARAS' programmes, identified by the staff, was to improve the mental health and wellbeing of their participants. This is particularly important because many CARAS members have lived through traumatic circumstances before entering the UK. One participant shared harrowing experiences of family members being killed by a terrorist organisation. These experiences add significant context to the increases in wellbeing observed in the section below.

Mental health and wellbeing

We asked participants to rate the extent to which they agreed with the following statements about their health and wellbeing. The graphs compares results between **before attending CARAS** and **currently**.



Note: the "before" statistics are the average of only nine out of the ten participants, as one opted out of this section.

At the point of interview, five of ten participants felt that their mental health and emotional wellbeing was “good” or “excellent”, with four feeling that theirs was “average”, and one choosing not to respond.

Eight of ten participants felt that their wellbeing had improved since joining CARAS, and two respondents in particular reported extraordinary differences – changing from “strongly disagreeing” to “strongly agreeing” in several of the areas in the chart below.

The chart shows that across all six areas of wellbeing, CARAS participants saw large and positive improvements. CARAS participants had more friends to laugh and joke with, were more interested in everyday activities and were more positive about the impact of their lives.

This was further backed up in the interviews, where five of ten participants reported (in an open question) that since joining CARAS, they socialised more with friends; three out of ten also went out more. Participants spoke of the programme enabling them to meet new people and making them feel happier and more included. All this benefited their mental and emotional health.

Participants mentioned the positive effect of ‘encouraging’ relationships built with CARAS staff and volunteers. Participants also found both the activities at CARAS and ‘the feeling that they are learning and progressing’ to be helpful to their emotional health and wellbeing.

“When I talk to people [at CARAS] I feel good inside; it gives an emotional release, so there is a big impact”.

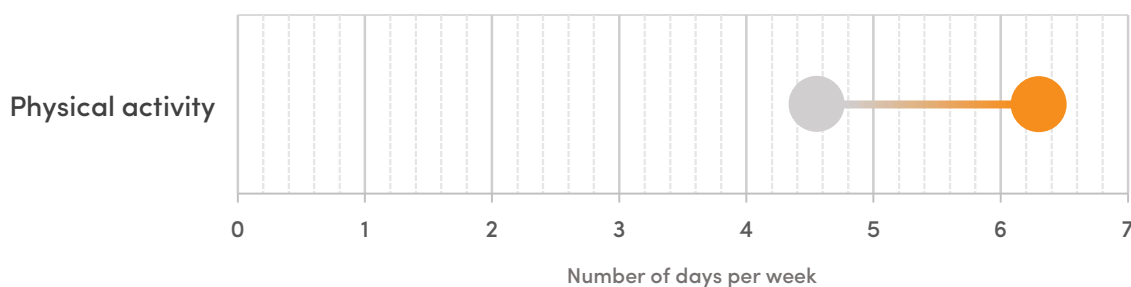
“CARAS help[s you to be] comfortable in everything you do there and gives you hope for your future.”

Physical activity

Physical activity has strong causal links with improved mental health. It also builds community and helps friendships to form, which is why CARAS partners with local sports practitioners to offer an impressive programme of physical activities alongside their educational classes. This also enables participants to engage with a wider selection of community organisations. Before attending CARAS, participants were engaging in some form of physical activity on average four to five times per week; however, by the interview, this had increased to over six times a week.

Exercise on an average week

We asked participants how frequently they do physical activity. The graphs compares average responses between **before attending CARAS** and **currently**.



It is important to note that for some participants, the biggest barrier to physical activity was simply building the confidence to leave the house:

"Before starting CARAS, I couldn't leave the house because I couldn't speak English at all... My whole body used to shake, and I started sweating because I was scared, as I didn't know how to respond. Now this doesn't happen, and I can comfortably respond. I feel more confident in social spaces, and I feel comfortable going out and enjoy shopping or going to the park."

A minority of the participants, two out of ten, mentioned that they are not fully independent yet and still need assistance with activities such as travel. However, due to CARAS directly providing participants with numerous physical activities like exercise classes, yoga and football, other participants have become highly physically active, with four of the ten participants starting to engage in sport of some kind because of CARAS' influence (the other six were already engaging in sport).



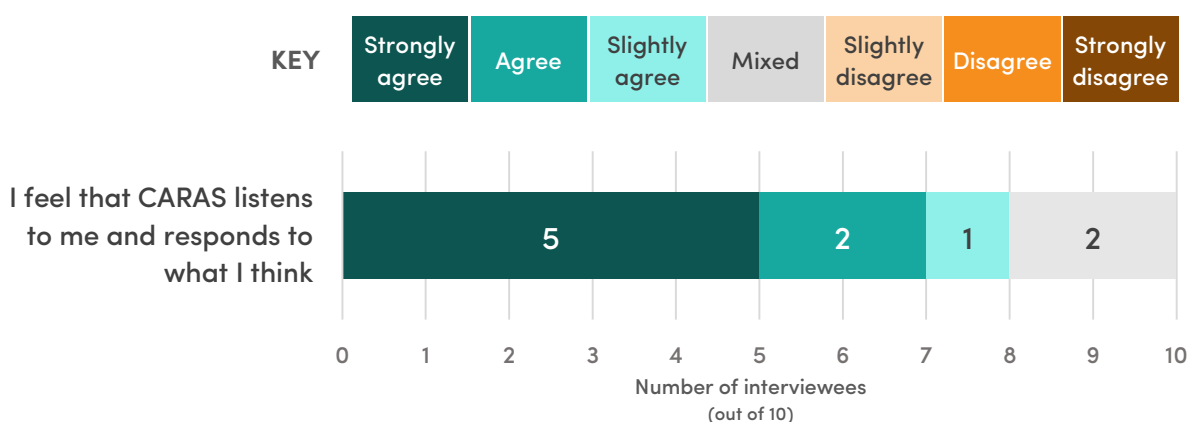
Beneficiary strategic influence

CARAS is committed to learning from people with lived experience, giving them a platform to create change and have their voice heard within the organisation. This is well matched with participants as seven out of the ten agree or strongly agree that CARAS already listens and responds to their input and nine out of the ten interviewees would like more opportunities to help at CARAS.

The three participants who did not agree or strongly agree that CARAS listens to them were all women over 30 years old. However, other parts of the interview revealed that these women all had a strong desire to volunteer at CARAS, so it is unlikely that these women felt less ownership or connection to CARAS.

Feeling listened to

We asked participants to rate whether they feel that CARAS listens to them and responds to what they think. The graph shows the breakdown of responses.



In the interviews, most participants (eight out of ten) felt that they have an influence on what CARAS does through being given the opportunity to communicate their needs. The other two participants did not answer this question sufficiently, but there were no negative experiences.

Through being able to share with CARAS staff what is important to them, participants have even helped in creating new programs within CARAS.

"The very first time I went to college, I [needed to attend an]...IT class... I didn't know anything about IT, [but I asked at CARAS, and] we made a group, and they made a new programme."

This was also an area identified by stakeholders in their interviews:

"The ideas have come from the young people themselves...You can tell they [CARAS] are listening. It's not a service where it's top-down; the young people are very much part of building the activities, and...that really shines through."





Partner collaboration and sector influence

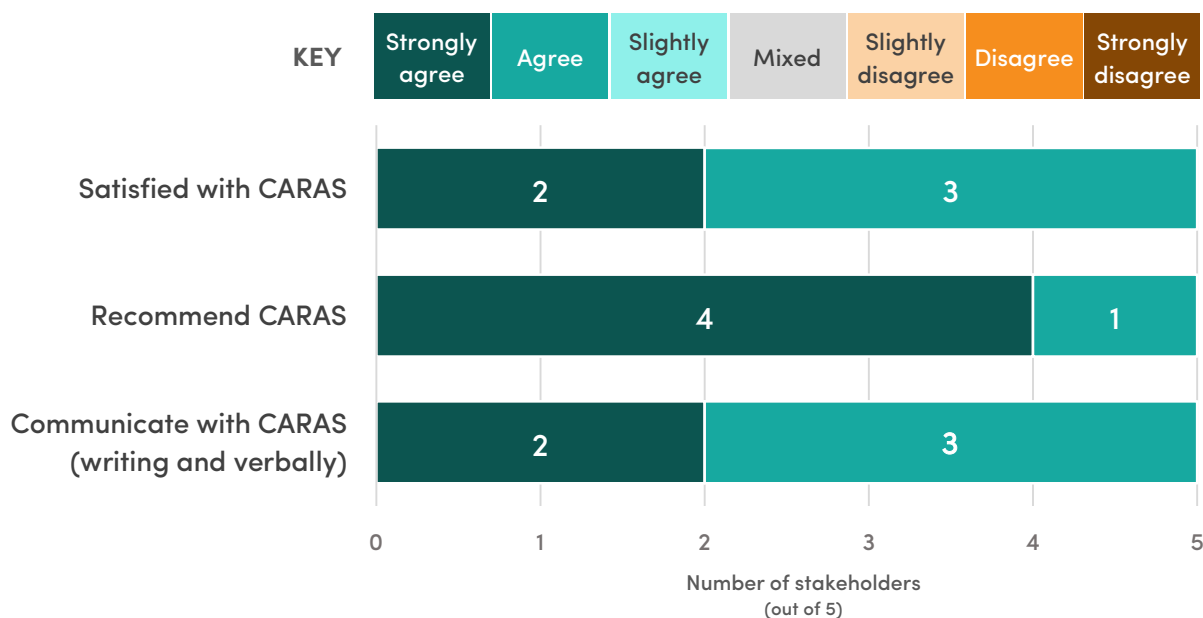
CARAS's sixth aim is for partner collaboration and to be influential in the refugee support sector.

To examine CARAS' performance in this domain, five stakeholders were interviewed. These were identified by CARAS, and included two youth project partners, one youth organisation, one funder and one local authority referral partner. Stakeholders had been working with CARAS for varying periods of time, ranging from six to nine years, and were able to offer a diverse and highly nuanced perspective on their experiences.⁵ However, it should be noted that four of the five respondents are involved only in CARAS' work with young people.

Firstly, each partner completed a short survey of five questions; their answers are displayed below:

Working with CARAS

We asked stakeholders to rate how satisfied they are with CARAS, how likely they are to recommend CARAS and how easy communication is with CARAS.



⁵ Respondents were asked whether there were any other community members or organisations that should be included in this research (or as potential CARAS collaborators), and no further suggestions were made.

Working with CARAS

We asked stakeholders to what extent they agree (or disagree) with the following statements regarding CARAS.



These results show that stakeholders find working with CARAS to be a very positive experience. There are areas for improvement, particularly in ease of communication (which is explored in more detail below), but, on the whole, stakeholders were extremely positive about their experience.

"I have loved, and I do love, working with CARAS. I always find it a very positive experience, for lots of reasons."

Through the interviews, the stakeholders identified nine key strengths of working with CARAS:

The effectiveness of the team

Mentioned by five stakeholders

Stakeholders find CARAS proactive, flexible and responsive.

"They have been really flexible... What is a real strength for this is how adaptable they are."

"It's just how proactive they are... they organize interviews very quickly. If those interviews don't take place... they'll be back in; they won't give up."

"We really appreciated how responsive they are and how they've updated us with how their project has to change and be flexible."

The agency and leadership offered to beneficiaries

Mentioned by three stakeholders

As mentioned above in the beneficiary strategic influence section, CARAS allow beneficiaries to make choices that impact both their own individual journeys and the organisation as a whole:

"One of the things that they do really well is that they give permission to young people to make choices and experience their own agency."

"They bring young people through as young leaders from our local community, with lived experience... That's a real strength of theirs because the staff, volunteers, young leaders are the vehicles to make any project happen."

The focus on building relationships

Mentioned by three stakeholders

CARAS is seen to build strong relationships with participants, referral partners and funders.

"Their strengths lie in the relationships that they're able to build with young people."

"The fact that they work with 12 specialist organisations in the delivery year... [is] quite impressive."

The energy and passion shown by the team

Mentioned by 3 stakeholders

CARAS bring energy, zest and enthusiasm to their work.

"Their level of energy and enthusiasm, and the input, and that commitment, is just amazing for lack of a better word."

The prominent vision

Mentioned by three stakeholders

CARAS has a strong vision and ensures that the work they do reflects their vision.

"They're very clear: 'this is what we're here to do: it is the young people that we're here to serve, and if it doesn't fit in with that, then it's not right for us.'"

The ease of communication

Mentioned by two stakeholders

CARAS staff are good communicators. They are easy to communicate with and are very responsive to emails and calls. In addition to this, they are in frequent contact with their beneficiaries, even after the beneficiaries have left CARAS.

"[CARAS] keep in touch. They will continue to contact the young people months after they've started and remind them of the provision they've got."

"They respond quickly... they submit stuff on time... it just makes the relationship nice and simple."

The transparency and opportunities for knowledge sharing

Mentioned by two stakeholders

CARAS are transparent in their approach and ensure their programmes are co-produced and co-led, offering integrity to their clients and offering their learning to other organisations.

"They are open to ideas; they want to take [them] on board and will happily share their experiences and their knowledge within their sphere."

The wide network

Mentioned by two stakeholders

Partner organisations valued CARAS' ability to attract clients and underserved groups.

"The name CARAS is really well known in and around that area, so they reach beyond just their immediate local communities. [It's] really strong."

"One of the great things about working with CARAS is that they have links with people we often need to engage with."

The inclusivity and diversity

Mentioned by one stakeholder

One particular stakeholder commented that CARAS was an inclusive organisation, attracting a diverse group of people to their programmes and offering a welcoming environment to all.

"It's been a very inclusive space for young people from different gender identities to come together as well... They are very welcoming and inclusive. It's creative, colorful, fun."

Stakeholders also identified several points for improvement which have been incorporated into the Recommendations section below.



Recommendations

Participants' recommendations

As already mentioned in the ESOL case study, two participants mentioned they would like more and longer English classes so that they could learn more quickly. They would also like to have classes further segregated by skill level so that everyone is at the same pace in the classes.

Two other participants mentioned that they really enjoy field trips and would like more of them, as well as more activities in general like yoga classes. Also, some parents mentioned that it would be valuable to go out more with children.

Participants further suggested that CARAS would be improved by offering additional programmes covering subjects such as housing issues, work-related skills, speaking and writing groups. Four out of the ten participants mentioned that the women's only groups made them feel more comfortable at CARAS, as well as the many activities like sewing, drama and yoga.

"Before lockdown, the only women classes really helped me, especially the yoga classes as well as sewing. Also, some extra activities like drama really helped me and encouraged me to speak."

Younger participants also suggested increasing the number of classes, and would value additional maths groups, computer classes and increasing the duration of English classes to one-and-a-half or two hours.

"I would like to see a computer class; it is my favorite class. Also, English and maths, having three classes is important for me as I want to get into college."

A few had found the transition to online classes (because of the COVID-19 pandemic) more difficult, but some parents commented that the online format helps them take care of children at home while not missing out on classes.

Partner organisations' recommendations

There were a number of useful suggestions and areas of improvement for CARAS which the stakeholders explored in detail. These recommendations are split into three sections:

- a) Challenges faced by CARAS and the sector as a whole
- b) Improvements to the services provided and stakeholder relationships
- c) Ideas for future expansion

Challenges faced by CARAS and by the sector

This section focuses on a series of comments made by the stakeholder interviews that address challenges that they see for CARAS or in the sector as a whole. These were mostly not shared as things that could be improved by CARAS, but acknowledged as barriers to wider success. None of the challenges were mentioned by more than one stakeholder.

Scarcity of specific funding in the sector

As CARAS' activities are often broad and holistic, they sometimes do not fit into a traditional model of what funders may expect

"Certain funding is not designed in a way that necessarily has the additional support and capacity [that] the young people...CARAS [need]."

Lack of time and strategic planning in sector

Equally, the sector can sometimes be focused on delivery at the expense of strategic planning:

"We're all forced to work on such a quick, tight turnaround that there's never any real time for meetings or long conversations, or to dream together or plan projects together more comprehensively."

Lack of venues

One stakeholder felt that finding suitable venues was a challenge to the sector as a whole:

“Although the church hall was a fantastic venue, it wasn't always available. So a couple of times we had to go elsewhere to find a venue.”

Communication of outcomes

One stakeholder mentioned the difficulty of clearly communicating CARAS' outcomes due to their holistic approach and broad range of outcomes.

Volunteer attendance

One stakeholder felt that, across the sector, it was difficult to get committed volunteers:

“I think we were probably expecting a bit too much from the CARAS volunteers. So in terms of training and then delivering workshops, our attendance wasn't huge... I think that just isn't CARAS specific.”

Improvements to the services provided and stakeholder relationships

The eight ideas below are intended to give CARAS tangible and constructive suggestions for improvement. Some of these suggestions may already be implemented, or be in the process of implementation, and this should encourage CARAS – especially when they are already heading in the same direction as their stakeholders.

Strengthen communications/increased frequency of media and stakeholder updates

Mentioned by three stakeholders.

Stakeholders would like to feel more connected with what is happening at CARAS.

“It would be good if the teachers themselves could provide us with more of an update on their progress... I accept and understand the reasons [why this is difficult,] but... when some of our UASCs are not engaging, to be told, to keep up to date. If they haven't been for a month, maybe a more regular update about which of the ones I've referred are engaged and which ones are not.”

One stakeholder further stressed the potential of broadening the use of communication channels.

“If young people can see their work celebrated through CARAS' platforms, that means that we can also see it too, so you're putting user-led creative content out there. That means others can pick up on it too... I think that might benefit them because it is another channel for their young people to have their voice heard and how they are also kind to other people, what they give back to communities. It then also highlights what CARAS does to other external organisations.”

“On your website, if you utilise that really well, having updates can really help tell the organisation's story... Having outreach stories, or some charities have been creating videos... Whether it's sharing artwork or giving that voice to the young people themselves so they are represented, [it] is a good opportunity.”

Educate other organisations

Mentioned by two stakeholders

Tying into point (1), stakeholders would encourage CARAS to share their knowledge and build their profile:

“Furthering the profile of CARAS. I mean, it's an incredible organisation; it should be known everywhere.”

“There is a real power to their voice and their knowledge. And I would just encourage them to [continue]. Don't just hold that within their circles; reach out and have confidence that they know what they're talking about because they really do, and people want them.”

“CARAS is excellent at outlining the individual strands of work within the whole project, but a little more information on how they join together as a whole would be welcome.”

Broaden opportunities offered to beneficiaries

Mentioned by two stakeholders

Stakeholders invited CARAS to continue expanding their range of activities as much as practically possible:

“The more opportunities they can put in front of their young people to try out stuff... Continuing to broaden and expand their horizons. They may not have tried something before, but what they do well is give it a go, so I'd say continuing to be open to new initiatives and new approaches.”

“If they actually organised a CARAS [football] team, that would go down amazingly well, and then they could actually play matches against other teams so that would be a real, real bonus...And in terms of support, emotional support, I think they're limited as well, in terms of what they can offer. As I'm sure you understand, sometimes the waiting list for... other organisations that provide counselling for the young people [is long]; they have to wait a long time. So if CARAS were able to start providing them with that, that would also be a good thing.”

Develop deeper strategic alliances through co-bid writing

Mentioned by two stakeholders

Stakeholders suggested that CARAS could partner even more closely with others and write more joint bids for funding:

"There is that cross-fertilisation of ideas and the bringing of people together... It's really more about the creation of alliances, of working groups, of those networks and those support networks... One thing would be about writing each other into our bids, which we're doing more and more. But those two are related: I can't write CARAS into my bid unless I know strategically where they want to go."

Incorporating the trauma-informed approach

Mentioned by one stakeholder

Increase the use and communication of their trauma-informed approach as a significant piece of innovation.

"I think that there's something that's innovative within intercultural contexts of trauma, that CARAS could probably be innovative and a leading voice within."

Clarify mission statement

Mentioned by one stakeholder

CARAS could strengthen their mission statement by tying it into Theory of Change messaging:

"They work in so many elements... What are overarching messages they want to communicate? Understanding that they are so holistic goes back to that Theory of Change messaging"

Volunteer recruitment and development

Mentioned by one stakeholder

A lot of the volunteers are women, and this can lead to men being seen in more gender-based roles.

"Within refugee community workers... we do need more representation and leadership from specific groups of people, people with lived experience, particularly men."

Perhaps volunteers could also be trained and developed further:

"I think one area for improvement would be so that the volunteers can really know what their roles and responsibilities are within the room, and can... be proactive... I think there is something to be done about supporting the professional development of those volunteers."

A need for more ESOL levels

Mentioned by one stakeholder

"It would be even better if they were able to cater for more levels. Sometimes, you have beginners and you have entry two, and then you have an advanced conversation class. In a perfect world, it would be nice to have them at all [entries]."

Ideas for future expansion

Finally, the stakeholders were each asked if there were additional situations, opportunities or problems that they would imagine CARAS could successfully address through their work. A range of suggestions were given, highlighting stakeholders' varying perspectives.

Advocacy and campaigning

Advocacy and campaigning were the only areas mentioned by more than one stakeholder.

There is a perceived opportunity for CARAS in this space as a:

"stronger, more prominent voice when it comes to influencing more strategic decisions that affect the young people that they support."

In addition, the following areas were mentioned once each:

Addressing knife crime

"Just having advice and guidance that is specifically created for those groups of young people that may be translated into a number of different languages so that people can read issues in their own language. Maybe partnering with organisations that are specifically working on that agenda around anti-knife, anti-gun crime."

Family learning training

"Although the workshops and the events were a great success [and] the families were very enthusiastic and gave good feedback, I think it was noted that some families, for whatever reason, still struggled in engaging with their children... I know CARAS were very keen to provide their parents with additional training, so that was something we were looking into."

Provisions for young people in Y11

"When you get a child [arriving in the UK] who is 15 years old, they are sent to a secondary school, and it's an absolute waste of time... If all of us were aware of just how big an issue this is, and how much of a setback it is for a young person arriving at 15 to experience that... we could work towards finding alternative education or provision."

Pursuing diverse leadership for their beneficiaries

"The young people they've supported have got such strong voices, they're exceptionally intelligent, and if there is a pathway to find those young people, ways of becoming the future of the sector... helping them find that next step [would be beneficial]. This momentum is building, and finding that link to opportunities for those young people to become the next leaders of their own charities or their own businesses [is important]."

Targeted work around child sexual exploitation

"I don't know whether CARAS do any specifically targeted work around child sexual exploitation: for example, criminal exploitation, drug and alcohol abuse. Whether they go there with the young people, because those are our specific concerns that I know are impacting the refugee communities that we're working with."

CARAS response

CARAS staff wanted to respond directly to the recommendations suggested at the interviews:

These beneficiary and stakeholder recommendations are a valuable part of the feedback we continually seek from our stakeholders, and especially from our beneficiaries. They will play a key role in shaping our new Strategic Plan for 2021-2024.

Of particular note in the recommendations given is the desire for more and longer activities. We have a very full schedule of activities on offer to young people that encompasses ESOL, computer skills, homework and study support, social groups, advice work and access to sports and leisure. Our ambition is to achieve parity of offer for our adult group members, and we are working towards this with the extra capacity we have recently put into our Adults Team.

We have already extended some ESOL classes from 60 minutes to 90 as learners get more comfortable and less fatigued with using Zoom. ESOL learners have a choice between classes of different levels : Pre-Entry, Entry 1, Entry 2, and Entry 3+. We aim for this offer to provide a good foundation for all emergent learners and to support with building a bridge to the next opportunities somebody might take up outside of CARAS.

We are very conscious of our role as a charitable organisation. We in no way wish to replicate statutory offers or be an alternative to mainstream services. As such, where there are pathways available to people to access education, training, employment and support for their children under the remit of a Local Authority, we will always strive for that. We know that access to ESOL and other learning experiences are a vital component in the building blocks needed to be able to settle well and go on to thrive; however, we also recognise that college places are available for people who are granted leave to remain. We will work with people to bridge the gap whilst education or training is unavailable to them, and will continue to support those whose immigration precludes access to education. Our efforts in ESOL will be focused on supporting asylum seekers and new arrivals to achieve a level of confidence and fluency that helps them thrive in college when they are able to take up a place. Within that focus, we will strive to provide appropriate levels and duration of classes that reach as many people as possible.

For young people, we are embarking on building an offer that includes ESOL, maths and computer skills, recognising that many have not had prior learning experiences in these areas or are hindered by their level of English. We will focus our efforts on those who are

most disadvantaged, targeting this work to those who are awaiting their place in formal education.

We are also acutely aware of the additional challenges of accessing services online. We have included additional staff time to support people to build their skills online and can offer limited help with data and digital devices. Alongside this, we are part of a growing number of organisations who are advocating for improvements in Wi-Fi for everyone, and for digital access to become a right.

We are keenly aware of the desire to return to face-to-face activities and to offer a wide range of field trips and other learning experiences. Our aim is to return to this provision as soon a lockdown lifts and Covid-safe practices allow. We know how highly valued these activities are and have seen first-hand what a vital contribution they make to learning and to overall wellbeing.

The recommendations from stakeholders also give plenty of pause for thought and inspiration. We will be placing a much greater focus on our external communications, building a strong voice that is beneficiary driven. We want to give opportunities for beneficiaries to share the things that are important to them.

Conclusion

Overall, it is clear that CARAS is having a defining impact in the lives of its beneficiaries, many of whom spend years engaging with the programme and inviting their families and friends to do the same. Beneficiaries often talk about CARAS as a second home where they can grow in a friendly and supportive environment.

People are often first attracted to CARAS because of their need for language classes. As beneficiaries receive these classes, they also receive the opportunity to become part of a community, meet other people, communicate with them and make friends. They subsequently feel empowered and confident to speak up and gain independence in their lives, help their children and build a better life for them by getting a job or going to college.

Evidence indicates the importance of language skills for refugee integration, where language skills are intrinsically linked to facilitating access to education, employment and services. Higher language skills further lead to more contact with other communities, in turn facilitating community cohesion (Tip et al., 2018). Refugees with poor language skills are most at risk of exclusion and long-term dependency (Collyer et al., 2018), so CARAS is actively assisting refugees to become independent and self-sufficient. In addition to assisting with language development, ESOL activities also encourage social network formation within these communities. Social networks are said to positively relate to the overall wellbeing of refugees (Collyer et al., 2018) and a reduction in feelings of isolation and anxiety (Cheung and Phillimore, 2016; Spicer, 2008).

With regard to mental and physical health, CARAS enhanced participants' sense of purpose and wellbeing, as they felt they were advancing and learning, meeting friends, providing more for their children and gaining confidence. They were also encouraged to stay physically active through activities like yoga and football.

Refugees and asylum seekers are often more vulnerable to mental ill health. The determinants of mental health are linked to pre-migration experiences (such as loss of family members, war and violence) and post migration conditions (such as difficulties with the asylum process, destitution and detention) (Hynie, 2018). Research has shown how critical work conducted by refugee-focused service providers such as CARAS ease refugees' experiences of trauma and marginalisation by providing advocacy and welcome through their programmes. How service providers welcome refugees shapes the extent to which refugees feel belonging.

Together, improved mental and physical wellbeing, deepened understanding of the language and social norms and feeling part of a group helped increase CARAS beneficiaries' sense of belonging in the UK.

Equally, younger participants benefit from, and enjoy, both the academic and social sides of CARAS. CARAS provides them with the opportunity to communicate in English, make friends and gain essential life skills. The most effective way of learning for participants tends to be when the classroom lessons are combined with activities, trips and friendship building.

"I like CARAS; they teach you anything. You have any problem in your life; you have anything, and they teach you."

Participants feel listened to and cared for at CARAS, and enjoy giving back to the organisation and promoting new ideas. They trust CARAS and feel comfortable because of the "friendly people" they find that are eager to help them. There were not any significant barriers to accessing CARAS, and both the women's groups and the option of online classes have provided even more opportunities for women and families with childcare responsibilities. Some recommendations were made by participants, including increasing the number, diversity and duration of the activities, and tailoring more services for families with children.

CARAS partners effectively with many other groups in society. Five stakeholders were interviewed in this research, and were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences of working with CARAS and the quality of service that CARAS provide. Many helpful recommendations were made for future growth and improvement, but none of these in any way detract from the impact CARAS is currently having and the success that it enjoys for and with its beneficiaries.

This evaluation has aimed to measure and communicate some of that impact in order for CARAS to celebrate its achievements and grow in the months and years to come. This report was conducted and produced by Eido Research in partnership with CARAS. The research team is extremely grateful for this opportunity and for those who participated in this research, including CARAS beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and representatives of other stakeholder groups.

Eido Research is a research organisation that helps charities and faith-based groups measure and grow their impact in society through conducting research, facilitating training and advising leaders. For more information, please go to www.eidoresearch.com.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Project interview

Interviewer to explain the aims of the study, outlining what is involved and themes for the interview. The consent form to be sent by email or mail prior the interview, and questions are read out loud over the phone to obtain verbal consent. Before commencing the interview, the interviewer will ask consent for audio recording to enable interviewer transcription and analysis. The interviewer will also highlight the importance of learning from those with lived experience, and so honesty is paramount.

- Stress that we are interested in what is important to them (not about what is important to quality of life more generally); there are no right or wrong answers, it is their perspective that we are interested in
- They are not obliged to answer; if they don't want to talk about a subject, to please say so, and will move on
- They can stop the recording of the interview at any time
- They can stop the interview at any time if they do not wish to continue
- Recap confidentiality, anonymity, right to withdraw

Section 1: General

This section will ask general questions, with the aim of building rapport to ask more personal questions later.

1. Which programme are you involved with at CARAS? Length of attendance?
2. How did you hear about CARAS's services?
3. How likely is it that you would recommend the programme to a friend? *1 being highly unlikely and 10 being highly likely*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. Overall how would you rate the programme? *1 being extremely poor and 10 being excellent*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 2: Communication

This section aims to understand the role the programmes have played in the participant's ability to communicate effectively.

1. What are your main goals for joining the [ESOL programme]? Please mention all that apply:
 - To help me get a place in college
 - To help me to get a job
 - To meet new people at CARAS and make friends
 - To make it easier to access services in my area (e.g. GP, Job Centre)
 - To communicate in English more with my family
 - To communicate in English more outside in the community (e.g. in shops, on the street)
 - To speak English more confidently
 - To help my children with their education
 - To better understand English media (e.g. TV, radio, films)
 - Other [please expand]

2. Communicating in English has many components, like reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. Please evaluate your own skills in English. How well can you do the following when reading, speaking, writing, or listening to English? Please mark one answer for each row.

	Before engaging with the programme					Currently				
I can read and understand simple online articles	5 very well	4	3	2	1 not well at all	5 very well	4	3	2	1 not well at all
I can talk about familiar topics and share my opinions	5 very well	4	3	2	1 not well at all	5 very well	4	3	2	1 not well at all
I can write about my experiences and feelings	5 very well	4	3	2	1 not well at all	5 very well	4	3	2	1 not well at all
I can listen to and understand the main points in TV programs	5 very well	4	3	2	1 not well at all	5 very well	4	3	2	1 not well at all

Source: PNAS (A Pragmatic Measure of Immigrant Integration)

https://www.tlu.ee/sites/default/files/Instituudid/%C3%9CTI/Teadus/pragmatic_measure_merge-1.pdf

3. [If interviewee attended both accredited and non-accredited ESOL classes ask following question]:

Was there any difference in the accredited and non-accredited classes? [explain the difference between the classes]

Prompt: Did the classes have an effect on your language development; confidence; progression into formal education or employment? If so, what did you prefer in each class?

4. On a scale of 1-10 (where 1 is not at all and 10 is extremely) how has the ESOL/ Reaching Communities programme [explain this programme] impacted your ability to communicate effectively/ make friends/ overcome language barriers?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Follow up question: Does your ability to communicate in English affect how you feel when you are in social spaces? If so, how?

5. [Has the ESOL/ Reaching Communities impacted your confidence in any way? If so, how?]
6. [Does the ESOL/ Reaching Communities offer you any independence? If so, how?]

Prompt: Since going to this programme have you learnt any skills which have allowed you to become more independent?

7. If at all, how has the ESOL/ Reaching Communities programme enabled you to find a place in formal education and employment?
8. Have you managed to build friendships at the ESOL/ Reaching Communities programme? If not, what would help with this?

Section 3: Mental and emotional health & Physical Activity

This section is to understand the impact the programmes can have on mental health and wellbeing. In addition, it aims to understand the extent to which the programmes have had an impact on participants' level of physical activity. Specific questions around physical activity may not be relevant to ESOL participants.

1. On a scale from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 7 "Strongly agree", indicate your agreement with each statement.

	Before engaging with the programme	Currently
My life is important	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I have friends I can laugh and joke with	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I am interested in my everyday activities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I make people around me feel happy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I am a good person and live a good life	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
In the future, I think good things will happen in my life	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Source: Human Flourishing Scale. The Flourishing Scale is a brief 8-item summary measure of the respondent's self-perceived success in important areas such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism.

2. How good is your mental health and emotional wellbeing?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor

Prompt: A very subjective answer, ask participant why they choose their particular answer

3. If at all, has the programme (Reaching Communities/ ESOL) had an impact on your mental and emotional health? (both directly/ indirectly) If so, how?

Explain: directly i.e. speaking and interacting with other people, indirectly i.e. being at the programme itself makes one feel a certain way

Prompt: i.e., Has it been helpful to speak to other people at the programmes? How do you feel about yourself when you attend the programme?

4. Is there anything the programme can do to further help you in improving your health and wellbeing?

Prompt: Offer specific services, activities

5. [Has the programme had any impact on your level of physical activity? If so, how?] *Only ask for relevant interviewees, i.e., non ESOL learners*

6. On an average week, how many times do you do physical activity? (i.e., walking, running, football etc). *Please circle which number applies. 0 = never, 1 = once a week, 2 = twice a week, 3= thrice a week, 4=four times a week, 5=five times a week, 6= six times a week or 7 = seven or more times a week*

Before engaging with the programme							Currently						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Prompt: Does attending the programme allow you to be more physically active in any way?

Section 4: Sense of belonging and next steps

This section aims to understand what impact CARAS plays in participants' sense of belonging, connection and purpose. It also addresses the impact and value the programmes have on arranging next steps in participant's lives.

	Before engaging with the programme					Currently				
How connected do you feel with the UK?	5 extremely close connection	4	3	2	1 I do not feel a connection at all.	5 extremely close connection	4	3	2	1 I do not feel a connection at all.
How often do you feel alone in the UK?	5 Never	4	3	2	1 Always	5 Never	4	3	2	1 Always
How often do you feel like you don't belong in the UK?	5 Never	4	3	2	1 Always	5 Never	4	3	2	1 Always
I can find lots of fun things to do in my local area	5 Strongly agree	4	3	2	1 Strongly disagree	5 Strongly agree	4	3	2	1 Strongly disagree
I can easily travel around	5 Strongly agree	4	3	2	1 Strongly disagree	5 Strongly agree	4	3	2	1 Strongly disagree

Source: PNAS (A Pragmatic Measure of Immigrant Integration)

https://www.tlu.ee/sites/default/files/Instituudid/%C3%9CTI/Teadus/pragmatic_measure_merge-1.pdf

2. Do the programmes at CARAS have an impact on your sense of belonging in the UK?
3. Can you share with me what are your goals and ambitions? (i.e. specific job, education)
4. To what extent (if at all), have CARAS programmes helped you work towards or realise these goals? Why?

Follow up: Through attending the programmes at CARAS, how likely is it that you can get the education/ training/ job that you want? 1 being highly unlikely and 10 being highly likely

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 5: Agency

In this section we would like to understand how much (if at all) you feel that your voice is heard by CARAS.

1. Do you feel like you have an influence on what CARAS does? If so, how? (i.e. new projects; days out; social activities)
2. [Do you have opportunities to *lead* at CARAS and to make your voice heard?]
3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

<i>I feel that CARAS listens to me and responds to what I think</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Mixed	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<i>I would like to have more opportunities to help CARAS (i.e. help with project development; make suggestions for new activities; changes to current projects)</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Mixed	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Section 6: Suggestions/ closing questions

1. What would you add or change to make the programme better [if anything]?
2. Has anything hindered/enabled your ability to attend these programmes?

Prompt: Timing, online, other attendees of the programme

3. When you are at the programme do you feel comfortable/ welcome? If so, how come? If not, what can be done to encourage a more inviting environment?
4. Do you know people who don't attend and would like to attend? If so, what is stopping them from attending?

Prompt: We are trying to reach "hard to reach groups" and would value some ideas

5. Are there any other community members or other community organisations that we should reach out to and include in our work and collaborate with?
6. Do you have any comments or questions for me?

Demographics (optional)

Age	
Gender	
Length of time in UK	

Thank you for your valuable time and opinion on all of this. It is really insightful and I appreciate your honest and open feedback.

Appendix 2: Focus group discussion

Welcome

Hello and welcome to our session. Thanks for taking the time to join me to talk about CARAS today. My name is _____, and I am helping CARAS try and understand the impact of their programmes to see what people find valuable and what can be improved (etc.).

I am very grateful for your help with this study. Please remember, there are no wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. Keep in mind that we're just as interested in negative comments as positive comments, so do be open and honest.

We're tape recording the session because we don't want to miss any of your comments (check this is okay with everyone). People often say very helpful things in these discussions, and we can't write fast enough to get them all down. We will be on a first-name basis tonight, and we won't use any names in our reports. You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The reports will go back to CARAS staff to help them plan future programs.

Introductions

Let's begin. Let's find out some more about each other by going around the Zoom room. Please share your first name and one thing you like doing in your spare time.

Topic areas:

What do you like about the CARAS programme?

What can be improved?

Has CARAS's helped you with your communication/ overcoming barriers?

Has CARAS had any impact on your confidence and independence? If so, how?

Does being a part of CARAS affect your mental health/ state of mind - how?

Does being a part of CARAS affect your physical health - how?

How does CARAS impact your "sense of belonging"/ identity/ network building?

When you are at in the programme do you feel comfortable/ welcome? How to make it a more inviting environment?

Have you made any friends at CARAS?

Do you feel like you have an influence on what CARAS does/that CARAS listens to you and responds to what you think?

Do you have opportunities to lead at CARAS and to make your voice heard outside CARAS through its actions?

Would you like to see any more programmes at CARAS? [i.e. partner collaborations]

Close

Moderator reviews the purpose of the study and then asks the participants: "Have we missed anything?". Thank participants for their time.

Appendix 3: Stakeholder interviews

Introduction

Interviewer to explain the aims of the study, outlining what is involved and themes for the interview. The consent form to be sent by email or mail prior the interview, and questions are read out loud over the phone to obtain verbal consent. Before commencing the interview, the interviewer will ask consent for audio recording to enable interviewer transcription and analysis. The interviewer will also highlight the importance of learning from those with lived experience, and so honesty is paramount.

Stress that we are interested in what is important to them (not about what is important to quality of life more generally); there are no right or wrong answers, it is their perspective that we are interested in

They are not obliged to answer; if they don't want to talk about a subject, to please say so, and will move on

They can stop the recording of the interview at any time

They can stop the interview at any time if they do not wish to continue

Recap confidentiality, anonymity, right to withdraw

CARAS wants to continuously work towards a joined-up approach with cross sector partners to ensure that no matter where people find themselves in south London, they can access high quality local provision which works collaboratively to increase safety nets and prevent crisis. Today we will be exploring ideas of how we can move towards a place that enables that to happen through collaboration and partnership working.

Questions

What is your job role and where do you work?

Can you share in what capacity you are working with CARAS?

Prompt: for how long have you been working together?

What has been your experience in working with CARAS?

What effect, if any, do you feel the project [name specific project that interviewee has worked on] has had on the community in which you work?

Prompt: Increased use of services by youth; increase in confidence; breakdown of barriers

What were some challenges, if any, that you encountered when working with CARAS?

Prompt: Staff turnover? Lack of key support? Lack of technical assistance

Do you have any suggestions of areas of improvement when working together?

Prompt: If you had full control over the project, what would you have done differently?

Where do you see CARAS's strength as an organisation?

Prompt: communication, skills, delivery, practice

Is there any way CARAS can be more supportive when working with you in this ever-changing climate?

Prompt: Any innovative ideas of how best to support the client group?

Can you identify any further problems that CARAS should be trying to address in their work?

Is there anything more you would like to add?

Close

We will be analysing the information you and others have shared and will be submitting a draft report to CARAS in February 2021. Thank you for your time and your open and honest feedback.

Questionnaire to be shared post interview:

On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you in working with CARAS? 1 being extremely unsatisfied and 10 being extremely satisfied

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Share any further comments:

--

How likely is it that you would recommend CARAS as partners? 1 being extremely unlikely and 10 being extremely likely

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Share any further comments:

--

How easy was it to communicate with CARAS staff, both in writing and verbally? 1 being extremely easy and 10 being extremely difficult

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Share any further comments:

In working with CARAS I was able to meet my desired outcomes:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Mixed	Slightly agree	Agree	Slightly agree

Share the desired outcomes in a few words:

CARAS staff were able to entirely understand our requirements as an organisation:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Mixed	Slightly agree	Agree	Slightly agree

Share any further comments:

Demographics (optional)

Age	
Gender	
Organisation name	

This report was conducted and produced by Eido Research in partnership with the CARAS. The research team and CARAS are extremely grateful for those participating in this research, including: people attending CARAS programmes and stakeholders.

Eido Research is a research partnership that helps faith-based groups and charities measure and grow their impact in society. We do this through conducting research, training sessions, and advising leaders.

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