

Heart felt tribute to Pauline - We thank you for your Service

As many of you are aware, after 30 years of dedicated service to both the community and BEMSCA, Pauline is stepping down from her role as BEMSCA Service Manager and focussing her efforts on strengthening BEMSCA's relationship with health agencies & service providers to elders in our community.

Over the past three decades, Pauline has led the service with strength, vision, and compassion. Under her guidance, BEMSCA has navigated periods of growth as well as times of great uncertainty. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when demand for our services was at its highest, but funding and support were scarce, Pauline's leadership enabled us to adapt quickly.



Thanks to her determination, we were able to expand and deliver a vital "Meals on Wheels" service to our most vulnerable and at-risk members.

BEMSCA also played a leading role in documenting the experiences of ethnic minority communities during the pandemic, ensuring that their voices and challenges were heard and acknowledged. Today, we continue to recover from the lasting impact of that time. Many of our members remain housebound or are still adjusting to re-engaging fully with activities and wider services.

Throughout the pandemic, staffing levels were reduced to the bare minimum, yet our team went above and beyond, often dedicating personal time and unpaid hours, to ensure that no one was left behind. Pauline's unwavering commitment and the devotion of our staff carried us through those difficult days, and for that, we owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

As we say thank you for your service, to Pauline, we also recognise and extend our thanks to those in our community the forerunners who are still with us for their

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vision, knowledge, and determination, those who built the foundation on which BEMSCA stands. Their fight for equal access to education and healthcare has left a legacy that continues to shape and strengthen our community.

A welcome to Norma Jaggon

Norma Jaggon brings a wealth of experience to her new role as our service manager. Her expertise contract and partnership management as well as business development working across higher and further education, public, private, and third-sector organisations. She also has extensive experience of working in health and social care, including for one of the country's top 100 charities supporting people with learning disabilities. Norma is excited to get to know all of our members and work closely with our strategic and partner organisations on representing and sharing the voice of our members building on foundations that have been laid over the years.

We need to talk Support men in our community community

Ethnic Men's Talking Group, based at BEMSCA, is inviting new members to join our monthly meetings, held at Fairfield House, a place of deep significance to the elders of Bath. The group was created to provide a safe and welcoming space for men of Black and ethnic backgrounds, particularly those from African Caribbean backgrounds, to meet, talk freely and support one another.

Built on respect, trust and confidentiality, the group allows members to open up about personal and often sensitive issues, knowing that what is shared stays within the group. Discussions are wide-ranging and usually grow from real lived experiences, covering topics such as men's health and wellbeing, family, community, ancestry and beliefs, social challenges, personal finance and bereavement.

Over time, the group has become more than just a meeting. A WhatsApp group now helps members stay connected throughout the month, offering support, advice and fellowship whenever it is needed. Younger men have also begun attending, which has brought fresh perspectives and created valuable opportunities for different generations to share stories and learn from each other. Holding meetings at Fairfield House gives the group a special sense of pride and belonging, as the historic building is a

landmark of collective heritage in Bath. Members see this setting as a powerful reminder of shared history and legacy.

The next meeting will be on the 26th November 2026

Anyone interested in joining can contact admin@bemsca.org.uk or telephone BEMSCA on 01225 464165 for further details. New members will find a warm welcome waiting.

Black & Asian Women's Health in the UK

Women of colour make up the global majority — and yet too often our experiences of the UK health system are treated as niche, invisible, or incidental.

From pregnancy and menopause to long-term conditions and gynaecology, evidence shows that Black, South Asian and other ethnically minoritised women in the UK face different risks, different patterns of illness, and crucially, different outcomes.

That matters. It matters for lives, for families, and for a health service that promises care for everyone. So, let's look at what some of the current, but limited research tells us about black women experiences and why a collective, culturally informed response (including the BEMSCA women's online support group) is urgently needed.

A large 2023–24 survey and recent press coverage highlighted that **Black women are substantially more likely** than White women to report serious reproductive health problems and that many women report delayed diagnosis or dismissal of symptoms.

In addition, evidential research

tells us that:

Ethnic minority women in the UK are less likely to access menopause care and treatments such as HRT.

Black women are more likely to develop fibroids, often at younger ages, with more severe symptoms.

Why we need to come together

Health inequalities are not about biology alone — they are about systems, bias, and neglect.

By joining forces, women of colour can push for inclusive research, equitable policies, and services that *truly* serve all women.

What you can do today

1. **JOIN BEMSCA's Women's Talk Forum** an online discussion, information sharing Forum on women's health and much more contact admin@bemsca.org.uk for further information
2. **Know your rights** — ask questions, seek second opinions, escalate concerns in maternity and gynaecology care.
3. **Join the conversation** — share your story in BEMSCA and help shape collective advocacy.
4. **Stay informed** — follow updates on new research and service changes we'll share here.

Take action — support campaigns calling for better maternal safety, menopause research, and reproductive health equity.

Health disparities among Black, Ethnic Minority and Subcontinental Asian communities.

Why BEMSCA's Work Is Essential in Tackling Health Inequalities

Health disparities among Black, Ethnic Minority and Subcontinental Asian communities in the UK remain stark, particularly for those over 65. Structural factors such as socioeconomic disadvantage, discrimination, language barriers, and unequal access to healthcare continue to shape poorer health outcomes. National research shows us how many older people from ethnic minority backgrounds face higher rates of long-term conditions, earlier onset of ill health, and reduced healthy life expectancy compared to their White British peers.

Our work is crucial in confronting these systemic inequities. By providing culturally sensitive outreach, advocacy, and wellbeing programmes, Pauline's new role as a Community Connector for BEMSCA helps elders across the city navigate healthcare systems her community-based approach builds trust, empowers self-management of health, and reduces isolation, all vital steps in breaking the cycle of disadvantage.

Pauline is working with the Community Wellbeing Hub at the Royal United Hospital with a team of connectors from AgeUK and many partner organisations. BEMSCA's Chinese, Caribbean and Asian community workers are all contactable at BEMSCA to support Pauline in this role, by way of referrals & advocacy support to its members. You can the office for more information.

Over the last 30+ years BEMSCA has continued to play an essential role in amplifying the voices of the ethnic minority elders in the community, ensuring that local health and social care services reflect the realities of living

in diverse communities.

Through partnerships, education, and active representation, BEMSCA is not just filling service gaps, we are driving long-term structural change towards fairness, dignity, and health equity for all.

Together, we can ensure that ageing well is a right — not a privilege.

Members Feature



Featuring Beth

"Beth is a member of BEMSCA.

She is an Independent Textile Artist/Designer and Teacher with some roots in Africa/Egypt/Ethiopia/Senegal and also has a long-standing relationship with Fairfield House.

Some of her work, a triptych entitled 'Reasons to Re-member those Dismembered' was recently exhibited at the Bath Artist's Studios Open Studios Show 26th-28th September 2025".



BEMSCA invites you....
To Come and Celebrate Diwali with us
All Welcome

Monday 20th October
11:30- 15:30

Sparklers
Indian arts and crafts
Henna hand painting
Music and dancing
Traditional Indian 3 course Meal

Tickets:
BEMSCA members: £10 for meal
Non-members : £15 for Meal

Please book, tickets in advance and contact the office
Telephone: 01225 464165
admin@bemsca.org.uk

Celebrating 20 Years of Friendship and Creativity: The Needlers at Fairfield House

For the past 20 years, the Needlers, all members of the Weston Village Towns-women's Guild, have met every Wednesday morning in the welcoming craft room at Fairfield House, home of BEMSCA. Formed in 2005 by a group of ladies who loved sewing and knitting, the Needlers set out to use their skills to create beautiful handmade items to sell in support of local charities.

With the warm support all the BEMSCA staff, the group turned



the room into a hive of creativity and laughter, setting up nine sewing machines each week. Over the years, they've crafted countless handbags — now easily recognisable around Weston — and knitted clothing for local causes, including hats for babies in the RUH NICU.

Through their work, the Needlers have raised many thousands of pounds for local charities, building not only a legacy of generosity but also lifelong friendships.

As the group now takes a well-earned retirement, they extend heartfelt thanks to everyone at Fairfield House for two decades of kindness, encouragement, and partnership — and wish BEMSCA every success for the future.

With gratitude,
Jan Clements and all the Needlers

Click Café Session

What is the Click Café?

The Click Café is run once a month at BEMSCA for anyone who would like assistance with their digital device or would like processes on how to use their electronic device.



Who can attend:

Anyone who would like to enhance their digital skills and become more confident using their own device.

Next session:

- 22nd October 2025
- 26th November 2025
- 17th December 2025
- More sessions TBA in 2026

Who provides the session:

In partnership with AgeUK

Location:

Fairfield House, 2 Kelston Road, Bath, BA1 3QJ (Via Partis Way).

Calander Dates:

October:

BEMSCA Windrush—15th Oct

Bristol Trip—16th Oct

Diwali Celebration—20th Oct

Click Café—22nd Oct

November:

Whitehall Garden—6th Nov
(Sold Out)

Click Café—26th Nov

December:

Xmas shopping trip—4th Dec

AGM—13th Dec

Christmas Lunch—15th Dec

Click Café—17th Dec

Christmas Closure—22nd Dec

2026:

BEMSCA Re-opens—5th Jan

Past Service: CARICOM



We held our annual Caricom Service on Saturday the 4th of October, at the Southdown Methodist Church Centre in Bath. Bishop Bernard Morris hosted a lovely service celebrating the culture all of the country's in the Caribbean and their achievements through out the years.

We would like to send a massive thank you to the people who attended. A honourable thank you to the BEMSCA Planning & Catering team for providing the food & hospitality, Bishop Bernard Morris, Minster Lois Francis, The Mayor of Bath, Professor Bharat Pankhania, Cllr Karen Walker, Cllr Dine Romeo, Rev. Heather Smith, Pauline Swaby-Wallace, Rainbow Steelband (celebrating 70 years), Rob Mitchell, Rebecca Alexander.

BEMSCA: We are more than a service, we are a family:

There is an old saying that families truly come together at weddings, christenings, and funerals. We know this to be true across many cultures, and here at BEMSCA, we see it reflected in our own community.

This year, we have gathered not only in joy but also in remembrance, as we celebrated the lives of some of our cherished former members who are no longer with us. Their memory remains a part of the fabric of BEMSCA, and we hold them close in our hearts.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the families who, even in their time of loss, chose to name BEMSCA as their preferred charity. Your generosity during such difficult moments is both humbling and inspiring.

Please know that your kind donations directly support our work—helping us reach out to those who are isolated, preparing nourishing home-cooked meals at Fairfield House, and continuing to care for members who are no longer able to join us in person for activities.

At BEMSCA, we are not just a service. We are a family. And together, we honour the past while carrying forward the spirit of community, care, and love. Our condolences go out to the families of BEMSCA members who have recently passed away.

Tribute to past BEMSCA Members

2025:

- Sue Johnson
- Zarina Sakaria
- Milton Griffith