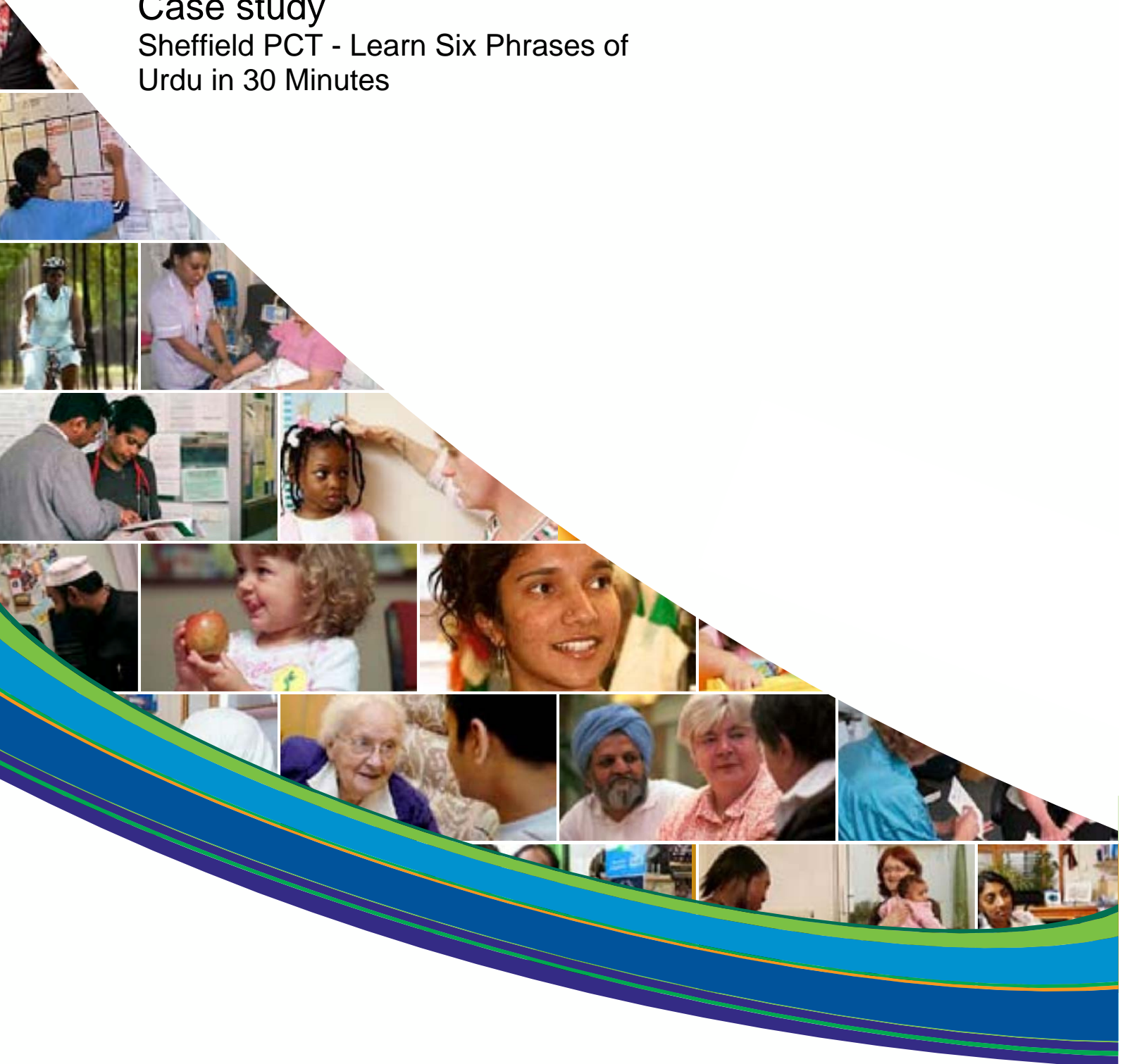


## Equality and Human Rights

### Case study

Sheffield PCT - Learn Six Phrases of Urdu in 30 Minutes



## **Sheffield PCT - Learn Six Phrases of Urdu in 30 Minutes**

Don Buxton, currently Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) and Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Manager, Sheffield PCT, has developed a 6 phrase Urdu language package to share with PCT and fellow NHS colleagues to secure effective introductions to communities and individuals and develop relationships with BME communities.

### **Background**

In 2002, Don worked as an Emergency Life Support (ELS) Trainer for South Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust (SYAS) in Rotherham. He became aware that if an emergency were to occur in some of the classes he was running with BME communities, he might struggle to communicate effectively, through not having knowledge of Urdu.

“I decided I wanted to be South Yorkshire’s first white, middle aged, middle class, Christian, Urdu-speaking ambulance man. I found a Community Health Educator (Baserah Khan) who was running a one-hour-a-week class in Urdu locally. My boss was very supportive. I was aware that diversity was a developing theme for all statutory agencies and I thought I can make a positive contribution to my organisation’s objectives.

“The Chief Executive was entirely supportive. His approach was: ‘If any of you can come up with an idea that will benefit the patient then go for it.’ I knew from my previous business career that if you don’t understand your client group or your customer base, are you being effective in what you are doing? The goodwill gained is hugely beneficial.

” There were six of us in the class and we learnt phrases appropriate to our different jobs as well as hello, my name is etc. As I was an ambulance man, I learnt to ask questions such as: ‘Where is the pain?’ ‘Is it in the chest?’ etc. Although I never had to use the emergency questions, there was such a positive response to me using phrases such as ‘Asalaam Alaikum’ (hello) and ‘Mera naam Don hai’ (my name is Don).

“My boss asked how I was getting on and I said we ought to be promoting this. He put me in touch with the communications manager, who could see it was a good news story. We could promote ‘Learn 6 phrases of Urdu’ and at the same time this would promote the Emergency Life Support (ELS) courses.

When Don heard the job of PALS Manager for SE Sheffield PCT was being advertised, he could see that it covered areas of Sheffield with a large Urdu speaking community and was excited by the potential for reaching out to that community. He applied for and got the job. He used some of his previously developed links, such as with the Pakistan Muslim Centre and this led on to

making contact with Asian colleagues within Sheffield's three other PCTs as well as his own. The area covered is hugely diverse and there were further spin offs as he developed a link with a Women's Health Group and this led to a local Asian woman wanting to be an Expert Patient tutor.

"I have been invited to a number of local events in the Asian community and a local Asian councillor has encouraged me with my Urdu. At one event I was asked to speak about our work and I spoke for about five minutes in Urdu. I said: 'I am a PALS manager – that means friend. Please consider me your friend'. One of the NHS strategic leaders came up to me afterwards and said: 'You made a rather strong point there - we should all be doing some of this'. I was also invited to an Asian ladies sewing group and felt very honoured. I spoke about what PALS is and what it can do to help them. I also spoke at an 'Introduction to community health development facilitators' course. This course empowers local people to take control of their lives, including diet and exercise. Many women discover a sense of identity and think: 'I will apply for that job' after attending."

The Chief Executive, Jan Sobieraj, is very focused on patient involvement and in engaging and listening to the patient. Don started at the top by teaching Jan 'Learn 6 phrases of Urdu' and it has also hoped to incorporate it into an induction training session for new starters at the trust. "I have now been asked to deliver it at a staff awayday. It helps that I have already delivered it to my Chief Executive. My presentation at a DoH Pacesetters International Faculty conference has recently been put in my PCT magazine. When people see this, it sends a clear message throughout the organisation 'let's be innovative and creative'."

In the re-organised Sheffield PCT, Don is based in Standards and Engagement. Penny Brooks-Cordon is his Executive Director and would like to role his approach out across the PCT. "Don has taken simple steps to learn the Urdu language and used that effectively to engage with the Asian community who didn't easily interface with our services and staff."

Just like GP's have Special Interests (GPSI), Don considers himself to be a PALS Manager with a Special Interest. "I'm a PALS manager with a special interest in diverse communities who are seldom heard, and who are described by some as being 'hard to reach' but I don't think they are. What I have been doing is such a simple and effective way to engage people. There are so many instances when your gender, culture or age can work against you, but here I have used these as positives to benefit the communities that I serve. The feedback I have had is that people really warm towards a person who is trying to learn someone else's language and culture."

## **Aims**

- To establish positive and meaningful relationships with the Asian community.

- To promote the PCT and the PALS service and patient involvement.
- To act as an ambassador for the NHS.
- To try and explain some of the complexities of the NHS to service users and to patients who, when they are ill, are not in a strong position to advocate for themselves.

### **Outcomes**

- Generated PALS enquiries from people who hadn't accessed the PALS service before.
- Broke down barriers to enable people to access the NHS more easily.
- Created sincere friendships.
- Enabled me to act as a link between the Pakistani community and the PCT.
- Enabled me to introduce colleagues from within the PCT to members of the Pakistani community.

“The person within my team who is the Expert Patient Programme (EPP) and Volunteer Co-ordinator is wanting to run out the EPP programme to the Pakistani community. She asked me if I could get some introductions for her. I facilitated an introduction for her to my contact at the Pakistan Muslim Centre and as result a group has been identified.”

### **Tips**

- Dare to be different.
- Be prepared to take a risk. Just because no one else is doing it, that's the best reason for doing it. Be a pioneer. Who says it will fail – you haven't tried it.
- Be persistent.
- Ask your manager to fund a language course as part of your personal development.
- Ask your local college if they have a course or buy a phrase book. Just try some of the phrases next time you meet an Asian person - it will put a smile on their faces.
- Why not ask an Asian colleague to help you? That would itself break down barriers.

### **Learning Points**

- Don't underestimate the huge amount of goodwill that a project like this can develop and create within a community.
- The simple ideas work best and often they may cost very little.
- My personal development as a human being. This has enabled me to make the sincerest of friendships and to develop knowledge and understanding of a fascinating and wonderful group of people and the journey continues. It is not a short-term project - it's a lifetime's learning. I have embarked on a wonderful journey.

- It can easily be changed to incorporate any community language.

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