

Creating high quality swimming provision for ethnically diverse communities

Brief summary of the topics discussed

Yasmin Kaduji (Banbury Mosque) and Jacqui Gitau (AFiUK) shared their experiences of running swimming projects in Banbury and Oxford respectively.

There is a large latent demand for swimming when the correct conditions are put in place, and both Jacqui and Yasmin were able to share stories of participants who had learnt to swim and the positive impact this had on those families.

There are challenges with the existing system where price, as an example, is prohibitive for learner or beginner swimmers, and pool hire can make provision unsustainable. This is against a backdrop of squeezed public leisure centres which doesn't make the answer immediately obvious. However, there is a growing partnership model where independent schools, pioneered by Radley College are enabling greater access to swimming by providing, in kind, facilities hire. This is a model that could be further developed in priority areas of the county.

Emerging themes

- Whilst there are green shoots with the projects mentioned, there is still a long way to go to break down the layers of barriers to swimming for ethnically diverse communities.
- Lack of swimming provision is a social justice and equality issue that disproportionately affects people from ethnically diverse communities.



- Workforce is a clear challenge but also an opportunity. Abbie, who has recently trained as a swim teacher and provides instruction with AFiUK, joined the session. Her provisions have transformed the level of opportunity for some families who can now feel represented in aquatic environments. However, this is only one person and more needs to be done to fund these opportunities.
- Practical considerations are very surmountable e.g., privacy blinds at pools and block bookings to prevent mixing in the changing villages at pools.

Next steps

- Celebrate and amplify the successes of projects such as Banbury Mosque and AFiUK.
- Look for those not in the conversation who have levers that only they can pull and approach them to support this movement.
- Continue to assess and publicise the inequality gap in swimming and try to get greater equality and access to swimming provisions embedded more into strategy, in the way it is with Thriving Communities in Oxford City.

To connect with people that you met in this workshop, please contact nicolekalinowska@activeoxfordshire.org or visit www.oxfordshireonthemove.org

Please do share any actions that you are taking towards this work here: www.oxfordshireonthemove.org/actions

