

Carer Support Groups

The Chinese carers support group has continued to meet regularly during the year with attendance peaking at 40 participants for some meetings. The group has enjoyed a wide range of activities including outings, social events, information sessions on health and social work services, and participating in consultation exercises, conferences and community events.

The Chinese carers group has also played an important role in helping MECOPP to develop its services by providing a regular means of consultation and communication.

In 2002–03 MECOPP will

- continue to support the Chinese carers group; and
- review the need for an Asian carers support group.

Education and Training for Carers

Between April 2001 and March 2002 MECOPP organised 3 six week courses aimed at increasing carers knowledge of health services and housing options respectively.

14 Chinese carers and 11 Asian carers participated on the 'Coping and Caring' courses which aimed to increase their knowledge of primary healthcare services and how they can assist carers. As well as reporting increased levels of knowledge and confidence about approaching health services, a number of carers went onto request and receive additional support.

9 Asian carers and older people also participated in the 'Housing Options for Older People' course funded by the Lintel Trust. Visits were paid to five housing providers to view the accommodation and to learn more about the various forms of housing support available.

On a more recreational level a three day photography workshop was organised jointly with the Worker's Educational Association.

In 2002–03 MECOPP will:

- organise two further 'Coping and Caring' courses;
- organise two courses on 'Developing Evaluation Skills' for our users; and,
- organise 2 recreational workshops/courses for carers.

Policy and Service Development

In 2001–02 MECOPP continued to play a significant role in the development of policy and practice both at a local and a national level.

As a member of the National Care Standards Committee MECOPP chaired the Working Group on Short Breaks and Respite and also contributed to the development of standards for other service areas.

MECOPP is currently developing guidance on implementing culturally sensitive assessment and hospital discharge procedures. Funded by the Scottish Executive and Lothian Primary Care NHS Trust, the guidance and supplementary training pack will be piloted in Edinburgh and rolled out across Scotland at a later date.

At a more local level MECOPP continues to be represented on a number of joint planning groups ensuring that the needs of Minority Ethnic carers are recognised.

Funding has also been sought during the year to develop a number of initiatives including the Carers Wellbeing Service and the Access Initiative.

In 2002–03 MECOPP will:

- finalise the Diverse Assessments Training Pack and provide training to health and social work practitioners in Edinburgh;
- negotiate and deliver training on culturally sensitive assessment and hospital discharge procedures to other local authority areas in Scotland;
- seek further opportunities to share and develop good practice with partner organisations;
- continue to seek development funding for a range of initiatives; and
- provide a two day per week Carers Wellbeing Service.

MECOPP gratefully acknowledges additional financial support during the year from: Age Concern Scotland; Barclays Community Programme; City of Edinburgh Council North and Leith Local Development Committee, EVOT, Help the Aged Edinburgh, Help the Aged Scotland, Lintel Trust, Lothian Primary Care NHS Trust, Scottish Community Foundation the Scottish Executive and UVAF.

Scottish Charity No: SCO 29700

mecopp

minority ethnic carers of older people project



report of work 2001–2002

Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project

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Working with Minority Ethnic carers ...

Manager's Report

Suzanne Munday

It has been an immensely rewarding and challenging year for MECOPP. In June 2001 the doors were finally opened to our new Carers Centre on Leith Walk. Speaking at the official launch, Malcolm Chisholm – Minister for Community Care – paid tribute to the hard work and dedication that enabled MECOPP's vision to become a reality.

The Carers Centre is now well established and is regularly used by Minority Ethnic carers and those they provide care for. The Centre is also developing as a community resource from which a number of smaller organisations regularly run activities and events.

MECOPP staff have also been working hard to raise awareness amongst our health, social work and voluntary sector colleagues about the Carers Centre and what support we can provide. This has been very successful with a growing number of referrals from these agencies.

In addition to the ongoing work of the organisation, MECOPP secured funding from the Scottish Executive and Lothian Primary Care NHS Trust to develop guidance and training materials on culturally sensitive assessment and hospital discharge procedures. I am pleased to report that this work is near completion and interest has been expressed on a Scottish wide basis. Our next challenge is to translate this interest into concrete action.

MECOPP's has also played an increasingly prominent role in national developments. As a member of the National Care Standards Committee, MECOPP chaired the Working Group on Short Breaks and Respite. This has been an invaluable experience and one we hope to build on in the future.

As to the future, in 2002–2003 we will continue to consolidate our existing services with a focus on quality. We are particularly keen to involve more carers in the

management and development of the organisation and shall be exploring a number of ways to achieve this.

In addition, MECOPP will establish a Carers Wellbeing Service providing a range of therapeutic and health orientated activities. The service will initially run for 2 days per week.

Increased funding will also be sought to develop new services where a need has been identified. We will also continue to work with our local partners to ensure their services are accessible and appropriate to the needs of Minority Ethnic carers and those they care for.

Further afield, MECOPP will seek to establish a partnership with one other local authority in Scotland. Our aim is to increase the range of services and supports available to Minority Ethnic carers outwith Edinburgh and the Lothians.

In closing I would like to extend my personal thanks to the staff, volunteers and Management Committee who have continued to work with boundless enthusiasm and dedication this past year. But most of all, I would like to thank the carers who continue to support us – without them there would be no MECOPP.

Carers Development Officers' Report

This year the Asian and Chinese carers' work has experienced a wide spectrum of activity encompassing outreach work amongst community groups and professionals, an increased number of referrals from a variety of sources, increased group activity and the development of new initiatives. Highlights include courses on 'Primary Health Care Services', 'Housing Options for older People and their Carers' and participation at the Scottish users Conference. In addition, the organisation has continued to provide high levels of support to both existing and new users. A number of carers also attended a 'Carers Reception' with the First Minister as part of National Carers Week.

There were also many opportunities for the Asian and Chinese carers to meet together including a joint outing to Blair Drummond Safari Park, a three day photography workshop organised with the Worker's Educational Association and a day of healthy activities held during Older People's Week.

Shampa Bhattacharya and Eliza Ma
(Carers Development Officers)

Advice and Information

Throughout 2001–02 MECOPP provided specialist advice and information to Minority Ethnic carers, older people, health, social work and voluntary sector staff and students on a wide range of issues. Enquiries ranged from benefits advice and accessing services to how to work effectively with Minority Ethnic carers and users.

Many of the carer enquiries resulted in intensive casework and advocacy support being provided (see below).

In May 2001 MECOPP launched a Directory of Resources aimed at workers wishing to access materials available in community languages. 500 directories were produced and distributed to health and social work staff in Edinburgh.

In 2002–03 MECOPP will:

- update its Directory of Resources available in Community languages;
- produce a Carers Information Pack in community languages; and
- produce six monthly 'trends' bulletins to inform service planners

Advocacy and Casework Support

Between April 2001 and March 2002 MECOPP identified and supported a further 40 Minority Ethnic carers of older people. In addition to providing intensive levels of advocacy and casework support for this new group, work with a large number of our existing users also continued throughout the year. Older people in receipt of care also benefited from MECOPP's support with either new or increased levels of service being allocated.

Whilst word of mouth and assertive outreach remained the primary means of identifying carers, there was an increasing number of referrals from social work and health staff.

As a result of the support provided by MECOPP a large number of families have received practical and emotional support for the very first time.