**SOAN Networking day, 6 June 2018**

**Workshop note – cultural barriers and behaviour change**

Pete Mills, Cycling Scotland and Rashid Khaliq, Soulriders Scotland

Cycling Scotland is funded by the government to support behaviour change and modal shift with regard to getting more people cycling. They also support community projects which have broader aims, often related to employability, social inclusion, mental health, etc, but which are addressed through the medium of cycling.

One such project is [Soulriders](https://soulriders.org.uk/), based in the south side of Glasgow. It became a constituted charity in 2015 and has a large mechanical workshop space, a lounge and meeting room. It’s a social enterprise which repairs and sells second hand bikes, and through this the organisation carries out various community outreach projects. These include taking families out on bikes for a picnic, creating paths for elite riders, Soulkids for children, Soulsisters for women and Pathways, which is aimed at asylum seekers and refugees, plus people in poverty or the criminal justice system. Pathways helps to build confidence and skills for life through cycling and by learning how to repair bikes.

They are a BME charity and work with a wide range of ethnic minorities as well as white Scottish people. They believe their own diversity leads to a more diverse approach to everything, which embeds equalities in everything they do and leads to innovative ideas and projects.

They have identified cultural barriers which deter BME people from cycling, such as the attitude in some cultures that you are only cycling because you can’t afford a car. There is a lack of data from any research into BME communities but existing health data does show far higher risks of heart disease and diabetes in South Asian groups, and social prescribing of physical activity is starting to happen which is where their organisation can help. They act as a bridge between the NHS and harder-to-reach people. They have hosted an event on public service reform for academics.

Suggestions on how to reduce cultural arising from discussion:

* Engage with people directly to discover their barriers so that you can address them
* Don’t be afraid about offending people as this might lead to you not approaching them in the first place – people are people and respond to humour, good intentions.
* Look at any materials you’re producing to make sure photos aren’t all male, white cyclists – Soulriders have photos which they can provide, to help BME people realise that these activities are available for them too.
* Don’t make judgements on behalf of others about what they can and can’t do – Soulriders have taken Muslim women in traditional dress out to Glentress mountain biking centre, with great success.
* If you’re a land manager or public body, work with other groups to bring BME/ disadvantaged groups out to your area, and learn what barriers need to be addressed so this can happen, eg, could be childcare issues or the need for some women to only socialise with other women.
* Cycling Scotland can act as a network, putting organisations and people in touch with each other.

Helen Todd, SOAN