

Breaking Through

Improving access to
short break and respite care
services for black and
minority ethnic communities

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Introduction

Being a carer in any circumstances is a difficult and challenging role, but we know that some of the strain can be ameliorated when there are services available that can provide advice, information, practical help and the occasional break.

The experience of many carers within black and minority ethnic communities is that these services remain frustratingly outside their reach, but they are just as necessary; despite the widely held, and often inaccurate, belief that 'they take care of their own'. There are many reasons for this, which can't be covered adequately in this introduction, though some of them will be raised in the body of this report.

The solution lies in finding a deeper level of knowledge and understanding of the communities we serve, and a greater appreciation of the rich diversity of cultural beliefs, traditions and values that enrich our society.

The 23 workshops delivered by Shared Care Scotland over the last two years, with funding from the Scottish Executive, were undertaken to stimulate discussion and debate about the design of culturally aware carer services - specifically short break and respite services. We worked with a range of service providers from the public, voluntary and private sectors and with carers and carer representatives from different minority ethnic communities. Not unexpectedly, we quickly established that we had as much to learn as those who joined us, and so we learned together.

While the focus of this report is short break services, much of the information, and recommendations, within this document are relevant to care services generally. This report should be considered a practical guide, reflecting the learning that we have accumulated during the past 18 months - not as a definitive statement on the creation of accessible and integrated short break services.

The true impact of this work will be measured not by the number of people attending or the average scores on a questionnaire, but by the changes that happen when people return to their place of work and their communities. We now have a clearer picture of what we have to do and we must take responsibility to integrate what we have learned, and therefore improve access to our services for this very under-represented group. The publication of this report doesn't, therefore, mark the end of a journey - it marks the beginning.

Don Williamson

Chief Executive
Shared Care Scotland

What do we know about the needs of black and minority ethnic carers?

Firstly, and foremost, we know that they are not particularly different from the needs of any carer; they need assistance from support services, many are adversely affected financially by their caring responsibilities, some are also dealing with their own health problems, many are unaware of their right to a carer's assessment or benefits - and they all need an occasional break.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, in their report 'Minority ethnic families caring for a severely disabled child' (1997 survey of 600 parents) found that:

- There is a higher level of unmet need amongst minority ethnic families with a disabled child than was found in a study of white families.
- Indian and Black African/Caribbean families reported least support from their extended family, with levels of support lower than that found among the survey of white families.
- Mothers from all ethnic groups represented, reported lower levels of support from their partners than white mothers had reported.
- Parents wanted more information about their child's disability and, in particular, services for their child and themselves. However, poor interpreting support and limited availability of translated materials could make access to appropriate information difficult, particularly for Bangladeshi families.
- Two-thirds of parents said they needed more breaks from care, yet only a quarter of families received short-term breaks. Many families were unaware of such schemes. Indian and Black African/Caribbean families were more likely to use short-term break services than other minority ethnic families.
- Overall, families from minority ethnic groups caring for a severely disabled child were even more disadvantaged than white families in similar situations.

While the Rowntree report looked exclusively at carers of disabled children, all of the points noted are likely to be equally relevant for those caring for adults who are elderly or disabled, as well as those with mental health problems.

Participants in the Shared Care Scotland Accessing Short Break Services events, developed specifically for black and minority ethnic communities and professionals who

support them (see Appendix), identified a range of barriers that their communities experience when needing to access short break services. These included a number of barriers they have in common with almost anyone requiring such a service: inadequate support through the social work system; lack of confidence and trust in services; no access to funding; stigma; family expectations; and lack of information.

They also identified a number of barriers which are more specific to people within their communities, including:

- Fear of discriminatory and racist attitudes, and possibly behaviour, amongst staff and/or other residents.
- Isolation - no one who speaks a common language.
- Lack of basic cultural understanding amongst staff.
- Special dietary and other cultural requirements.
- Lack of black and minority ethnic staff.
- Need for separate male and female provision.
- Professionals not perceiving a need.
- 'Knowing our rights, but not getting them'.

We also asked people what they believed service providers need to know in order to provide appropriate services for their communities. They told us:

- Make information available at places we commonly use (Post Office, GP, places of worship, community organisations and schools).
- Recruit more staff from minority ethnic communities.
- Train staff in anti-discriminatory practice, and how to work through an interpreter.
- Improve access to interpreting services.
- Hold open days, specifically targeting black and minority ethnic communities.
- Develop relationships with our communities and support organisations.
- Be open to learning from each individual.
- Have a basic understanding of cultures and traditions.

Recommendations for short break service providers

“A culturally competent service is defined as a service which recognises and meets the diverse needs of people of different cultural backgrounds. This applies to every individual with a healthcare need. It includes, but is not limited to, making provision for religious and cultural beliefs such as worship, diet and hygiene requirements, catering for communication and language diversity and ensuring that discrimination on the basis of culture, belief, race, nationality or colour has no role in the delivery of services.”

Fair for All: Working Together Towards Culturally Competent Services
Scottish Executive Health Department 2002

Strategic recommendations

Know the ethnic profile of your area.

Local Race Equality bodies and councils should be able to provide this information. Failing that, 2001 census data will give you a broad, if perhaps out of date, picture of your region.

Build relationships with local agencies working with black and minority ethnic communities in your area, including places of worship.

Some of the areas in which they may be able to support your efforts to create an accessible service include: training on cultural awareness; promoting your service to minority ethnic communities; assisting you to source appropriate food - such as halal meat - when required; and in your efforts to recruit staff from these communities. The value of such relationships can not be overemphasised.

Make an effort to recruit more employees from black and minority ethnic communities.

A diverse ethnic mix changes the ‘face’ of an organisation, giving a positive message to potential clients that the service is committed to inclusion. It also enables the organisation to be enriched by new perspectives, approaches and learning - as well as having staff members who bring an understanding of other cultures, and speak additional languages.

The Scottish Social Services Council can provide information to enable you to assess qualifications gained overseas, if you require such assistance.

Advertising in places and publications that are routinely accessed by minority ethnic communities will assist your efforts. Circulating job advertisements in community newspapers, places of worship, local colleges and through black and minority ethnic organisations will ensure that you are reaching people.

If minority ethnic staff, because of their cultural background or language abilities, will have particular responsibilities for minority ethnic clients, be clear about that during their induction. Most people will be happy to accommodate such a need within the service, but are likely to resent being treated as a 'token' member of staff who is called upon whenever there is a client from a minority ethnic community unless this is an explicit responsibility.

It is important, when seeking to recruit an ethnically diverse staff team, that the organisation is committed to inclusion, and equitable treatment. Effective policies, as opposed to those which exist in a folder, on equal opportunities, bullying and harassment - with special mention of sexual and racial harassment, create a safe work environment for all.

Extending a 'person centred service' to employees may also mean that you make access to an external consultant, who works with issues of culture and diversity, available to employees who wish such support.

Offering an opportunity to reflect on the experience of being a minority member of staff within a predominantly white organisation, and therefore deal with any issues - actual or imagined - which may arise before they become destructive, is best practice.

It is best for an organisation to have a consultant, or team, who they use regularly rather than leave it to employees to source external support. Such an arrangement will also ensure that a relationship exists in which the organisation can process, and seek advice, regarding any important issues that may arise for employees.

Ensure that staff working at all levels in the organisation receive anti-discriminatory practice training, and are continually supported to develop such ways of working.

This training may be available through your local Racial Equality Commission, or through the Equalities Unit of your local council. There are a number of freelance trainers in Scotland who specialise in this area; contact Shared Care Scotland for further details.

Include images of black and minority ethnic people in your promotional literature.

If your service is for them, don't miss this opportunity to show them.

Do not be put off by the cost of translating information about your service into minority ethnic languages.

The essential information to translate is simply '(name of organisation) welcomes people from all different backgrounds'.

Once you have identified the minority communities in your area, having this single sentence translated and incorporated into your literature will not be a costly adjustment to make.

There are many versions of a 'welcome' poster, which has the word translated into multiple languages. Having such a poster visible inside the main entrance of your facility is an inexpensive way to give a positive message about your commitment to inclusion. It is also worthwhile to have a multi-cultural calendar, reminding you of important festivals and celebrations for all faiths (see Useful links and resources).

Be aware of interpreting services available within your area, which languages are available, and how to access the service.

Enquire with your local social work department, which should also be able to inform you if there is any cost involved for accessing this service.

Make an effort to understand the terms of the Race Relations Act (2000) and the implications that it has for your organisation, both as an employer and as a service provider.

The Act exists to benefit everyone, not only people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Understanding the Race Relations Act makes it easier to challenge racism and discrimination, and will help staff feel confident in doing so. Ensure that your organisation has a robust Race Equality Strategy, and that all staff are aware of, and understand it. The Commission for Racial Equality website contains very clear information on the Act, and many other resources, including pro-forma policies and best practice guidance.

Ensure that all assessment procedures are culturally competent, so that additional, specialist procedures are not required.

“Assessment is very often a person’s first experience of the social care system...How assessments are carried out, how people are treated at this key stage undoubtedly sets the tone for how they feel they will be treated more generally within the...social care system.”

Tom McCabe, Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care 2004

Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project have developed a culturally competent assessment framework, and associated training pack. By incorporating cultural competence into the assessment process, MECOPP's training pack, 'Raising Standards for All', aims to:

- Reflect cultural diversity in assessments.
- Increase understanding and awareness of the needs of minority ethnic carers and those they care for.
- Enhance the quality of the assessment process as experienced by minority ethnic communities.
- Enhance the overall quality of the services offered.

The training pack is aimed at those responsible for training 'in house', including NHS boards and local authority training departments, to enable the training to cascade through the organisation. MECOPP staff are available, for a fee, to train those who wish to use the pack in doing so. Contact the organisation directly for further information.

Practical recommendations

These are some examples of steps short break and respite care providers can take to improve service access and delivery.

Acknowledge that racist behaviour is unacceptable, both amongst staff and clients.

Model appropriate language and behaviour, and consider means of communicating the organisation's commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment to clients.

Staff may wish to have training in order to develop confidence in challenging racist attitudes or behaviour amongst clients. We must remember that most people, regardless of age or intellectual ability, are able to change their attitudes and behaviour when given appropriate support to do so.

If your facility does not already have one, create a room for quiet reflection and prayer.

Know the locations of local places of worship, and, ideally, have a contact in each one.

While it is certainly not everyone's wish to participate in worship services, in the event that it is, your staff will know how best to assist a client to attend.

Be aware that some personal care needs will differ for people of different ethnic origins, and religions.

For example, black hair and skin are often cared for in different ways, including the use of oils or special moisturisers. Some religions have particular personal care practices, which must be followed.

Don't be afraid to ask.

People have a right to be called by their given name, so don't be shy about asking for it to be repeated until you have memorised it. Do not shorten or change names to make them easier for English speakers - our name is a key part of our identity, and being away from our familiar surroundings makes it even more important that we retain the dignity that being called by our given name allows.

Ask questions - it is how we gain understanding. Whether it is about food, clothing, religion, personal care or any other issue about which you are unsure.

Asking questions and learning from one another is an important way that we build community.

If you have a client who speaks little or no English, make an effort to relieve their isolation.

Learning simple phrases in their language, such as 'hello', 'good morning/night' may be a small thing, but it sends a strong positive message.

If there are staff in your organisation who are experienced in using alternative methods of communication, such as Boardmaker*, it will also enable communication with clients who speak little English. The use of alternative methods are not intended to be a primary mode of communicating, but may be used to ensure that non-English speaking clients are able to express needs and preferences.

Involve them in activities with other residents that do not rely on the spoken word - painting, crafts, card and board games, knitting or needlework.

If a bilingual family member is visiting use the opportunity to create 'conversation' between this individual and other residents. Allow them to get to know a bit about one another, and identify any common interests or experience.

A bilingual volunteer can help in the same way. It may be possible to find someone through minority ethnic organisations, particularly those working with settled refugees. The Scottish Refugee Council may be able to help you make such a link.

*Boardmaker is a software programme containing more than 3000 clip art 'picture communication symbols' that can provide an alternative means of communicating. Details of where to purchase this resource are found in the Useful links and resources section of this report.

Be sure not to make assumptions about what will be required by an individual, based on their ethnicity or religion.

Everyone is an individual, and therefore will have different habits and preferences. You are not expected to know what will be required by any individual until they have told you - that is why you have intake and assessment procedures.

Most importantly, be willing to take risks - only in doing so will we truly 'get it right'.

Recommendations for Shared Care Scotland

Explore the possibility of making anti-discriminatory practice training available for short break providers.

This need was identified very strongly by participants in the training days, both by providers and those from black and minority ethnic communities.

Consider organising, and hosting, a diversity forum for short break providers that could support people to develop and maintain good practice.

It was clear from the post course feedback that organisations found it difficult to keep inclusion on the agenda, amidst all of the other competing issues. Such a forum would provide a focus, motivation and opportunities for peer support and learning.

Explore the potential to develop a quality standard for 'cultural competence' in short break services.

This would be an obvious opportunity to work in partnership with organisations such as MECOPP, and would be the first such standard available in the UK.

Produce a basic information leaflet, translated into the main minority ethnic languages, about accessing short break services.

Such a leaflet should also highlight the right to a carer's assessment, and the benefits that one may be entitled to.

Create a filter for your national short break database that will enable people to identify centres able to provide a quality break for people from minority ethnic communities.

A quality standard would assist this effort, though interim indicators could include:

- Staff who speak minority languages, or are experienced in using alternative methods of communication (i.e. Boardmaker, etc.).

- Staff trained in anti-discriminatory practice and committed to inclusive service delivery.
- Ability to accommodate special dietary needs.
- Appropriate room for prayer.

Shared Care Scotland should scope the range and appropriateness of the support available to carers from black and minority ethnic communities with regard to accessing short break and respite care, and assess opportunities for joint working.

Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project, Barnardo's Glasgow based 'Apna' project, and the Action Group in Edinburgh are some examples of organisations providing such services and support.

Recommendations for those who plan or commission services at the local and national level

Consider commissioning small, specialist centres offering short break services exclusively for black and minority ethnic clients, while working toward developing more appropriate services in the mainstream.

For many older, first generation black and minority ethnic people, such a specialist service is likely to be the only type they will consider attending.

Such centres should also have a remit to host opportunities for staff secondments, to enable mainstream providers to develop their experience and understanding of how best to offer short breaks to black and minority ethnic individuals.

Consider the establishment of 'centres of excellence' within larger local authorities, which may include day centres.

These should be mainstream centres in which staff are sufficiently trained and supported to provide quality services for black and minority ethnic clients; while ensuring that these clients will be represented in sufficient numbers so as to avoid isolation and enable full integration within the service.

Ideally, there will be staff working in these centres who speak minority ethnic languages. Whether or not minority ethnic staff are available, there should be a designated link worker to support the integration of black and minority ethnic clients.

While this link worker is not expected to be the sole member of staff supporting these clients, he or she is to be a key point of contact, and advocate for them, within the centre.

Such an arrangement provides reassurance, and fosters the development of trust in the service and its staff.

Such services should have a number of protected places available for black and minority ethnic clients.

It is acknowledged that establishing such centres, and recruiting staff who speak minority languages, may be particularly difficult in smaller areas. Arrangements for purchasing such a specialist service outside of the local authority boundary would need to be agreed (there is no requirement for short break provision to be taken within the same geographical area covered by the local authority concerned), and procedures for doing so made clear to staff.

For further information on the creation of such centres of excellence in day centre services, request information about The Access Initiative from MECOPP.

Target the training and recruitment of black and minority ethnic staff for 'care at home' and family based respite services.

Having homecare staff, and families offering respite breaks, who have cultural understanding and speak minority languages will immediately improve access to these services by minority ethnic communities, and therefore offer them more choice.

Consider making a programme of grants available for the translation of printed information relating to carer's rights and short break services, or produce such information centrally.

Ensure that this important information is distributed widely through social work departments, GP surgeries and minority ethnic community and voluntary sector organisations.

Consider making advocacy support available for people from black and minority ethnic communities who wish to access short break services.

Potential routes for delivering such a service include; existing advocacy services, minority ethnic support organisations, or the projects within the Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

Embark on a local programme of consultation with short break providers and service users for the purpose of understanding, and aiming to reduce, the barriers they experience in relation to providing quality services for black and minority ethnic communities.

Glasgow City Council, for example, arranged a consultation workshop in October 2004 involving carers from black and minority ethnic communities to help them identify the strengths and weaknesses of their carer support services. The outcomes of this event are now helping to inform the design of their services to these communities.

Useful links and resources

2001 Census statistics

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/06/22110457/05107

You will also find 'Fair for All', a government document on meeting the health needs of Scotland's minority ethnic communities, on this site.

Also on the Scottish Executive's website you can find the 2005 'Review of Race Equality Work in Scotland'. There is a new national strategy and action plan for race equality work due to be published in June 2006.

Commission for Racial Equality

www.cre.gov.uk

Barnardo's Apna Project

Support for Asian families with a disabled child in the southside of Glasgow.

www.barnardos.org.uk/apna.htm

Boardmaker software programme

This can be purchased from several sources, including www.inclusive.co.uk

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Reports relating to the needs of black and minority ethnic communities freely available at www.jrf.org.uk

Minority Ethnic Carer's of Older People Project

www.mecopp.org.uk

Multi Kulti

Part of the London Advice Service Alliance, which operates a website with a range of welfare law information translated into a large number of minority ethnic languages.

There is a section on information specifically for carers.

www.multikulti.org.uk

Positive Action in Housing

Large Glasgow based housing support project for black and minority ethnic communities. PAIH produce a weekly email bulletin that goes out to black and minority ethnic, and many other organisations throughout Scotland, in which jobs can be advertised for a small fee.

www.paih.org

Queensland Health Authority

Has a range of guides and policies to support the provision of culturally sensitive health care on their website.

www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/default.asp

R&C Publications

'Religions and Cultures: A Guide to Beliefs, Customs and Diversity for Health and Social Care Services' by Dr. Moussa Jogee OBE, published by (and available from) R&C Publications, PO Box 14330, Burntisland, KY3 9WU.

enquiries@religionsandcultures.co.uk

Shared Care Network

National organisation representing family-based respite short break services for children and young people, based in England. New resources specific to the needs of black and minority ethnic families, including training, are available.

www.sharedcarenetwork.org.uk

Scottish Refugee Council (Glasgow)

www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Scottish Social Services Council

www.sssc.uk.com

The Festival Shop

A very good source of multi-cultural posters and calendars.

www.festivalshop.co.uk

Appendix: Training programme design, evaluation and statistics

Providing short break services to minority ethnic communities

With our awareness that many short break providers perceive limits in their ability to meet the needs of people from black and minority ethnic communities who may wish to access their service, our primary aim was to create confidence in offering a service to these potential clients.

We wanted to enable providers to understand that clients from minority ethnic communities have, predominantly, similar needs to any other clients - and possibly, for each individual, some which are additional. Providing services for people from black and minority ethnic communities is more often about thinking differently than about doing differently. If you are offering a person centred service, and have supportive contacts and basic knowledge to draw upon, then providing a quality experience for people from minority ethnic communities should be no more challenging than providing a service for any other new client.

In order to enable people to engage with the course material in a relaxed and open-minded way, thus maximising the benefit derived from the day, we aimed to keep both the tone and content of the events as positive and non-threatening as possible. We also wanted to make the events participatory, to ensure that there was ample opportunity to share practice, concerns, questions, prior learning and experience.

The programme broadly covered the following topics:

- Important terms and concepts within multi-cultural service delivery.
- Individualist and Collectivist models of society.
- What is 'culture'?
- Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) - our rights and responsibilities.
- Barriers faced by black and minority ethnic communities wishing to access short break services.
- Challenges faced by organisations wishing to extend their services to these communities.

In the final section of the programme we offered an opportunity for participants to work on an SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of their organisation in relation to offering appropriate services for black and minority ethnic communities, and develop a brief action plan for improving access for this client group.

Encouraging minority ethnic communities to access short break services

Aware that very few people from black and minority ethnic communities access short break services, Shared Care Scotland included a programme aimed at improving the understanding amongst community members, and those who work with them, of short break services and routes to accessing them, including:

- Community care assessment, with service being identified and offered through the Social Work Department.
- Community care assessment resulting in the award of direct payments, enabling client to identify and purchase own respite.
- Individual/family identify and privately purchase service.

These sessions also presented an opportunity to hear from communities themselves about a range of relevant issues, including:

- Barriers that they experienced in relation to care services.
- The perception of 'respite' in their communities, and how people looked after family members who required care.
- What they believe service providers need to know in order to provide appropriate services, and how they would like to receive information about short break services.

Evaluation of the programmes

Evaluations of the events were overwhelmingly positive, with the vast majority of participants reporting an increase in their knowledge. Most providers reported an increase in knowledge, and increased confidence in providing services to minority ethnic communities. All of those who attended the Accessing Short Break Services event reported that the day had 'greatly' increased their knowledge.

Additional comments from service providers who attended the Creating Access seminars included:

“This seminar made me focus on what my organisation needs to do to reach out to minority ethnic communities. It was well presented and covered all the relevant bases.”

“I found the course very interesting and informative also most thought provoking.”

“Thought provoking, issues around racism delivered in a way that did not make people feel uncomfortable or defensive.”

“This was a course that I was nervous about attending, but I thoroughly enjoyed the day and learned a lot.”

Very few additional comments were made by participants attending the seminars targeting black and minority ethnic communities. Those that were made included:

“Well done - would be interested in the conclusion of this programme, any written reports.”

“Very enjoyable and informative.”

In February 2006, Shared Care Scotland sent out post course surveys to short break providers who had attended seminars in 2004/05, to assess whether they had made an impact on services. From the 33 returned, only twelve replied that the issue of access for black and minority ethnic communities had remained on their agenda, with three reporting an increase in enquiries from members of these communities.

For those who indicated that the issue of access had continued to develop since their attendance, examples of development included:

- Diversity work with service users.
- Formation of a corporate equalities group.
- Application for funding for development staff to work with black and minority ethnic communities.

- Implementing staff training programmes.
- Liaising more closely with social work referrers.

Seven organisations reported increased efforts to recruit staff from minority ethnic communities, though none had yet been successful in doing so.

Barriers to making progress identified by respondents included; lack of resources, staff time, language barrier, lack of referrals, and attitudes of staff and management.

Asked about the further training or support that is required by their organisations, replies included:

- Anti-discriminatory practice training for staff.
- Greater promotion of short break services to minority ethnic communities.
- More partnership with black and minority ethnic organisations.
- More black and minority ethnic referrals from social work departments.

Programme of black and minority ethnic training events

Location	Date	Provider	Accessing
Aberdeen	10 May 2005	11	
	12 May 2005	10	
Dumfries	8 Feb 2004	10	
Dundee	8 Nov 2005	12	
	9 Nov 2005	8	
	10 Nov 2005		13
	6 March 2006	12	
Edinburgh	12 Oct 2004	4	
	13 Oct 2004		5
	14 Oct 2004	4	
	9 June 2005	7	
Falkirk	20 Sept 2005	6	
	21 Sept 2005		10
	22 Sept 2005	12	
Dunfermline	9 Feb 2005	6	
	22 March 2005	6	
	23 March 2005		8
Glasgow	16 Nov 2004	13	
	18 Nov 2004	5	
	17 Nov 2004		7
	8 March 2006	18	
Inverness	7 June 2005	4	
	8 June 2005	6	
Number of provider events held	18	Number of provider delegates	154
Number of accessing events held	5	Number of accessing delegates	43
Total number of seminars held	23	Total number of delegates	197

The vast majority of delegates worked within local and national voluntary sector organisations, followed by those working for local authorities and private sector care providers.

Author's acknowledgements

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I would like to acknowledge the important contribution made by my colleague Rachel Milne, who co-wrote the session outlines with me, facilitated some of the early events, and lent her wisdom and experience to the recommendations contained within this report.

Finally, and very importantly, I would like to thank those who participated in the sessions. We learned a great deal from one another, and it is in this spirit of working together to make Scotland a more inclusive society that this report has been written.

Joette Thomas

Joette Thomas Coaching and Consulting
www.joettethomas.co.uk

Shared Care Scotland
Unit 7 Dunfermline Business Centre
Izatt Avenue
Dunfermline
Fife
KY11 3BZ

T. 01383 622462

F. 01383 622813

