

The Caribbean and African Community Health Support Forum

Annual Report April 2012 March 2013



Photograph from the CACHSF Launch Event Held on Sunday 14th October 2012

Caribbean and African Community Health Support Forum Committee Representation

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“Let’s Talk About Health”

Forum Committee Representatives

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Lara Uzokwe	CACHSF Vice Chair
Jennie James	CACHSF Member Publicity/Press Officer
Martha Grace	CACHSF Forum Member Finance
Veronica Akrofi	CACHSF Forum Member Interim Secretary/Publicity Officer
Karen Millwood	CACHSF Member Volunteers Coordinator
Felicia Robinson	Suffolk County Council
Russell Clarke	Voiceability
Shemmie Nicholas	CACHSF Young People's Project Lead
Paul Davis	CACHSF Member Fund Raiser
Diahaura Castro	CACHSF Forum Member
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Introduction

The Caribbean and African Community Health Support Forum (CACHSF), works with people from Caribbean and African backgrounds on issues relating to health and wellbeing. The work of the forum is supported by a grant from NHS Suffolk as part of their Healthy Living Project initiative. Historically, this community has felt marginalised in terms of accessing health improving education and information. The aim of the Forum is, therefore, to raise the profile of health and wellbeing within the Caribbean and African community living in Suffolk. The purpose of CACHSF is to specifically address the health issues of the community by engaging and enabling them to access/receive culturally appropriate health improvement information via targeted initiatives such as seminars, projects and events.

It is well known that the target community is predisposed to certain health conditions such as sickle cell and diabetes, so the task of the Forum is first and foremost about ensuring equity of access to health improvement information, empowering individuals to identify their health care needs as far as possible and to seek the support that will enable them to maintain their general health and wellbeing.

This report documents the prioritised projects delivered by the Forum in 2012-2013, the second year of the Healthy Living Project grant.

Summary

NHS Suffolk awarded £15,000 to CACHSF in 2012/13 to help them deliver their work programme (previous years funding was £20,000) and this report gives details of the outcomes achieved:

1. Hypertension Seminar
2. Health checks & Screening Initiative One
3. Men's Health Awareness Day
4. Dementia Course
5. Exercise Class
6. Men's Healthy Cooking Course
7. Launch Event
8. Health checks & Screening Initiative Two

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9. Expert Patient's Programme

CACHSF Priorities in 2012 -2013

1. Hypertension Seminar - delivered in April 2012

This one day event was facilitated by Dr Mark Lim, with presentation from Dr Victoria Matthews, Key note speaker Dr Tarek F Antonios

AIM

To develop and facilitate a seminar on hypertension to:

- Raise awareness of hypertension
- Highlight the issues on the prevention and better management of hypertension
- Offer advice and support to people with hypertension and their carers

OUTCOMES:

- The promotion and marketing undertaken enabled a cross section of people from the Caribbean and African community to have the opportunity to take part in the Seminar
- 39 individuals, (16 males and 23 females) attended the seminar, with full advise and support available on the day and in the follow-up workshops
- The two workshops focused on preventative measures, self-medication and prescribed medication.

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- The general feedback from the participants was that the seminar was very informative, and that they had been encouraged to take their prescribed medication more seriously.

Participant’s feedback included the following:

“This event will help me to change my lifestyle; also it will help me to tell others that I am in contact with”.

“Dr Antonios talk was very informative the message was loud and clear and I will take my BP medicine every day from now on”.

“I found the whole session very interesting and helpful because as well as myself I have family members who have some of the symptoms talked about today”.

“I now understand the importance of taking my medication”.



A full report is available on request from the CACHSF office.

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2. Health checks & Screening Initiative One

This project was delivered in May 2012, in partnership with the health section of the Seven Day Adventist Church. The focus was based around helping people in the community to identify unhealthy lifestyle practices.

AIM

Targeting the Caribbean and African community to:

- identify unhealthy lifestyle practices and its negative impact on their health
- Empower individuals to achieve optimal health through prevention, education and promotion of health.
- Helping people to become more aware of their own health statistics such as their BMI, blood sugar and cholesterol, fat analysis etc. and compare these with the normal healthy range.
- To enable people to increase control over their health.
- Signpost people to health and social care services according to need.

OUTCOMES

37 people from the African and Caribbean community were screened,

- Screenings was conducted for the following tests BMI, blood sugar, cholesterol, fat analysis, and blood pressure. Their results were compared with the standard normal healthy range, according to NHS guidelines.
- 45% were found to be overweight, 35% obese and 5% clinically obese. 15% was found to be healthy. 8 people were found to have raised blood pressure
- The general feedback from participants was that the programme enable them to reflect on the importance of practicing healthier habits, which will prevent deterioration of their health

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- Another participant stated their intention to share the information gained with family and friends, and encourage them to attend the next health screening programme

A full report is available on request from the CACHSF office.

3. Men's Health Awareness Day

The event was held on the 16th June 2013 in Ipswich, in partnership with Suffolk County Council/ Suffolk Mind and CSV MEDIA (smoothy bike project). This event was also featured in the Talkabout Suffolk Magazine - July 2012 Addition.

AIM

The event was aimed at targeting men from the Caribbean and African community, as well as others to:

- Provide information on Health issues that affect men disproportionately
- Engage with, and encourage men to come and share any views or concerns they may have about health or the health services
- Promote the CACHSF men's group as well as recruiting new members
- Signposting and helping anyone who may be having difficulty in accessing health or social care services.

OUTCOMES

The event was attended by several other voluntary organisations, such as Age UK Suffolk, Fit Fans from Ipswich town football Club, Cancer campaign Suffolk and Suffolk Refugee Council.

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- 54 people attended the event during the course of the day. Also, the smoothy bike attracted a great deal of interest from the general public outside.
- Expert advice on identifying early signs and symptoms of cancer was provided by the specialist from Cancer Campaign Suffolk.
- Three new members was also signed up to the men's group
- Men from the group were encouraged to visit their GPS for check ups



A full report of this event can be obtained on request from the CACHSF Office.

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4. Dementia Course

This six week Dementia course was delivered between May & June 2012. 12 people registered on the course comprising of 3 African, 7 African Caribbean, 1 Asian and 1 White. Ten people regularly attended. The evaluations at the end of each session were very positive and encouraging.

Aim

The aim of this project was based on the key dimensions of the dementia strategy which consists of:-

- Raising awareness and understanding of dementia within the African and African Caribbean Community
- Identifying the particular needs of the African and African Caribbean Community
- Promoting knowledge of current service availability and support networks.
- Addressing issues of stigma and fear,
- Encouraging people from the target group to attend future courses, with an aim forming a focus group.

Participants Feedback included the following:

“I was feeling unsure of what I would learn at the start. Now I am feeling so empowered I have a lot of information. The course was well put together”.

“I feel people from my community do not want to accept dementia, they should come along. I learnt so much from the course”.

“Very informative, I enjoyed all the speakers. I will be looking at ways forward and seeing what more we can do in our community”.

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Outcome

Participants found this six week programme very beneficial. The Forum has now been able to secure funding for a project involving carers within the community.



Please find attached the full dementia course report.

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5. Exercise Class

The exercise classes are on-going at present and take place at **Live-well Suffolk, Adelphi House Turret Lane Ipswich**, every Monday Morning 10 AM. (Come and join us).

We would like to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to Live-Well Suffolk for providing us with the venue to carry out this project for the last two years.

AIM

The purpose of the weekly exercise classes is to:

- Increase access levels to provisions such as local exercise classes
- Highlight the importance of regular exercise for people living with long term health conditions
- Give participants a place to meet and socialise on a regular basis
- Reach and encourage members of the community who may otherwise be isolated to get active, meet new and old friends.

OUTCOMES

The CACHSF exercise classes have been in operation since September 2011, this was the outcome of our very successful diabetes course. There are 18 members of this group, although the numbers fluctuates from week to week, depending on the weather. The ages of participants vary from 32 to over 80 years and the sessions have started to attract a few more men.

- The participants has found that their level of fitness has increased ten folds over the last 14 months
- Others report being able to walk some distances now, which is something they had not been able to do in a long time.
- We were able to measure the success of this project by monitoring the general improvement in the participants overall physical fitness

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and wellbeing levels, as well as the lifestyle changes that they have made since the beginning of these classes.



The exercise class is held every Monday 10am to 11:30am. At live-well Suffolk, Turret Lane Ipswich.

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6. Men's Healthy Cooking Course

This six week men's healthy cooking course was delivered between August and September 2012. **15** men signed up for this course, age ranges were from 16 to 82 years and in terms of ethnicity, **8 were** Caribbean, **3 were** African, **3** were English and **1** was from a dual heritage background. The sessions were delivered by Mrs Gloria Simon and MR Alvin McQueen.

AIM

The aim of this project was to:

- Give men from the Caribbean and African community that didn't usually cook the tools to help them change their lifestyle through the preparation and consumption of healthier food
- Enable participants to develop their knowledge and skill around the importance of a healthy balance diet
- Give them confidence in managing and preparing a variety of healthy and exciting meals
- To enhance the participants practical cooking skills

OUTCOMES

The specific outcomes of this project were to enable participants to:

- Understand the links between calories consumed and energy supplied to the body
- Acquire the skills to buying healthier ingredients which will enable them to cook healthier meals

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- Understand what constitutes portion size and how to identify hidden fats, sugar and salt in convenience ready prepared meals

The general feedback from all who participated in this project was very positive. Some of the men stated that they would like to undertake an advanced food hygiene course.

Participants Comments:

- “I was always too busy to cook so I bought junk food. Now I cook because I have a family. My dad never cooked”.
- “I cooked at school and enjoyed it. But you were called a pansy if you cooked”.
- “In some parts of the world men are not encouraged to cook, but if a man does not learn how to cook, what does he do when the woman or wife is not well”.

Please find attached to this report the booklet that accompany this project. Hard copies can be obtained from the CACHSF Office on request.



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7. Launch Event

The launch of the Caribbean and African Community Health Support Forum took place on the 14th October 2012, at the Ipswich Town Hall. The event was officially opened by the Mayor of Ipswich, Mary Blake. We would like to thank the Mayor and her staff for the time that they spent with us, (very much appreciated by all).

In terms of numbers, 163 people from all different communities signed our register during the course of the day. However, we were not able to capture the full numbers of attendees because quite a few people did not sign the register.

AIMS

The aim of the event was to:

- Showcase the work of the CACHSF to date
- Bring the different generations from the community together
- Work with partners to enable them to introduce their services to the community

OUTCOMES

This event was a great success because we were able to engage with a much larger section of the community.

The invited organisations in attendance provided information regarding how people could access their services across Suffolk. The launch of the Forum has enables us to form stronger links with other similar organisations such as BME Cancer research (Nottingham) The Barking and Dagenham West Indian Cultural Group (East London). As a result of our collaborative way of working, the East London group are now

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planning to run health awareness programmes based on the Forum's work in Suffolk.

Since the launch event, we have seen a significant increase in the number of people (not just from the African and Caribbean Community) coming through our doors seeking information on a range of major health concerns.

The event also gave an opportunity to some local entertainers by giving them a platform to show case their individual talents.

8. Health checks & Screening Initiative Two

October 2012

AIMS

Targeting the Caribbean and African community to:

- Assist them in identifying unhealthy lifestyle practices and its negative impact on their health
- Empower individuals to achieve optimal health through prevention, education and promotion of health.
- Helping people to become more aware of their own health statistics such as their BMI, blood sugar and cholesterol, fat analysis etc., and compare these with the normal healthy range.
- Introduce mental health awareness
- To enable people to increase control over their health.

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OUTCOMES

- Although people from a range of ethnic groups attended, 56 of those were from the Caribbean and African community. They were screened for the following tests - BMI, blood sugar, cholesterol, fat analysis, and blood pressure. Their results were compared with the standard normal healthy range, according to NHS guidelines.
- 40% were found to be overweight, 42% obese and 5% clinically obese. 13% was found to be healthy. 10 people were found to have raised blood pressure
- Participants were made aware of the risks of diabetes, heart disease and hypertension and given professional advice to take responsibility to make simple lifestyle changes which include adopting a healthier diet (particularly including fruits and vegetables), more physical activity and increase water intake to their diet.
- During feedback, participants stated their satisfaction for the screening, which they believe will help them to change unhealthy practices.
- Participants from the first screenings returned for another screening to compare their results and monitor improvements.

9. Expert Patient's Programme

The Expert Patients Programme (EPP) is designed for adults living with long term health conditions. This six week course started on the 26th February 2013 and will conclude at the end of March 2013. 10 participants signed up for the six sessions.

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AIM

The topics that the course covers include:

- Managing tiredness and pain
- Coping with feeling of depression
- Relaxation techniques and exercise
- Healthy diet
- Action planning and problem solving techniques

OUTCOMES

- Increased awareness of availability of local service provision
- Increased individual self-confidence to speak up for themselves
- Increased confidence in being able to access information they can relate to
- Be able to set their own long and short term goals for managing their health conditions

Please note: this program is still in process at the moment, and will not be completed until the end of March 2013. Full report will follow after completion.

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Chairman's comments:

We are about to enter into our third year, and the previous two years has seen the Caribbean and African Community Health Support forum taken on some very big and very successful projects in an attempt to galvanise the community into living a healthier lifestyle. The work that the forum has done to date would not have been possible without some very hardworking and dedicated members of the committee given up their time.

Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your efforts and commitments and continued support to the CACHSF.

It would be a great achievement if our projects for this year are as successful as they were last year.



Report

By

**Clem Turner
(CACHSF CHAIRMAN)**

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