

THE FORUM FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Forum for Health and Wellbeing (formally known as the Black and Ethnic Minority Community Care Forum) was originally established in 1991 to provide a network for the benefit of Black and ethnic minority groups who are both users and providers of health and social care services in Newham. For more than 17 years, it has worked to ensure that the implementation of health and social care in East London recognises and responds to the aspirations and needs of black and ethnic minority communities.

The Forum has established for itself an unrivalled reputation for the delivery of meaningful and effective services in a geographical area marked by high indices of poverty and a richness of opportunity and cultural diversity. The Forum's mission is:

To improve the health and well being of primarily black and ethnic minority individuals and communities through the delivery of effective challenge and solutions, thus enabling the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to create accessible, user defined services and ways of working.

The Forum's success is built on its exceptional ability to:

- Bring together black and ethnic minority groups, service users and carers to actively and mutually influence the development and provision of care in the borough.
- Develop a productive dialogue with statutory and voluntary providers through its unique challenge with solution approach, which both identifies what needs to change and how to change it.
- Work in action focused partnerships to deliver new services and projects and to enable the Forum to meet the needs of all Newham's communities.

The Forum has carved a unique market position as the strategic voluntary agency for health and care issues in Newham and as a black and ethnic minority agency that can deliver services for all communities. Given this reputation, the priority now placed on patient, service users and public involvement in service delivery and the aspirations of Newham's communities the Forum is faced with a range of opportunities.

The Forum has a skilled and committed management board and staff team and a robust infrastructure, externally accredited by Investors in People. Firm foundations on which to build its continued progress.

Mission Statement

To improve the health and well being of primarily black and ethnic minority individuals and communities through the delivery of effective challenge and solutions, thus enabling the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to create accessible, user defined services and ways of working.

The Forum's Aims

- To develop and improve services that effectively meet the health and social care needs of black and ethnic minority communities by ensuring supported representation at all levels of planning, delivery and evaluation and by campaigning, lobbying, researching and advocating for provision that meets the needs and aspirations of black and ethnic minority communities
- To develop a strong, collective and informed voice for black and ethnic minority groups, service users and carers, to raise issues and provide solutions to providers through the facilitation of effective networks, the provision of accessible and relevant information and brokering partnerships between voluntary/community groups and the statutory sector.
- To build the infrastructure of the black and ethnic minority voluntary, community and faith sector to deliver their own health and social care services through providing tailored capacity building and development support, access to funding and the identification of opportunities.

The Forum's Charitable Objectives

To relieve the suffering and distress of people in need of Community Care services in the London Borough of Newham and surrounding areas, and in particular for those from African, Caribbean, Asian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and other ethnic minority communities.

THE FORUM AND ITS SERVICES

The Forum was originally established in 1991 and in June 2007 it began operating under a newly formed company limited by guarantee and a newly registered charity. In May 2009 the Forum changed its name from the Black and Ethnic Minority Community Care Forum to the Forum for Health and Wellbeing. The original charity was established in 1991 to provide a network for the benefit of black and ethnic minority users and providers of health and social care services in Newham. In so doing it ensured that there could be a joint and representative voice and an umbrella agency from which to initiate and deliver responses to health and social care challenges and ambitions. The new company and registered charity continues to have the same aims and objectives as the original charity. The Forum has developed into an organisation with consists of complimentary services that assist it to meet its aims and to move towards its vision. The services provided by the Forum are best summarised under the following four corner stones.

The Four Cornerstones

1. Challenge with solution

The Forum is a key partner within health and social care decision-making structures in Newham. It sits on the most senior strategic and commissioning bodies providing a voice for black and ethnic minority organisations and communities and for voluntary sector health and social care agencies. In fulfilling this role the Forum relies on the information gathered from its three other cornerstones and uses this to purposefully challenge and contribute. The Forum's challenge with solution approach means that it will clearly identify gaps, inequity or poor delivery in service provision and also provide user defined responses to the challenges identified. These responses often support delivery of answers that involves services users further whether in consultation or in delivery or evaluation. Increasingly the Forum is being invited to provide this function regionally and nationally.

2. Meaningful Involvement

Statutory services can only achieve equity of access if service users and their representatives are engaged in their planning, delivery and evaluation. The Forum is critical to the achievement of this engagement in Newham. The Forum also recognises the importance of the need for it to be a truly representative voice and has developed a range of services to ensure that it can enable engagement and effective representation.

- Consultation events including large conferences, seminars and focus groups
- Support, training and succession planning for representatives on the health and social care planning structures in Newham
- Provision of briefings and jargon busting information

3. Resilient Communities

The Forum is committed to assisting black and ethnic minority communities to be able to fulfil their potential by ensuring that they have the resources, infrastructure, information and contacts to do so.

- Capacity building - enabling black and ethnic minority groups to build the systems and structures to develop sustainable solutions
- Information services - provision of newsletters and information sheets to a maintained mailing list of over 1,000 groups
- Fundraising support - one to one fundraising advice
- Forging networks - facilitating creative exchanges between and within communities and the brokerage of partnerships.

4. Building the Evidence

The Forum is committed to ensuring that its work is evidence based and this is particularly important because of its tendency to undertake ground-breaking work. The Forum builds evidence through

- The ensuring evaluation is factored in at the planning stages of its own projects and services
- Its readiness to pilot projects
- By undertaking its own research into the needs of the black and ethnic minority health and social care voluntary sector