

The FORUM for HEALTH and WELLBEING:

Making a positive impact on the lives of socially disadvantaged people and communities experiencing health inequalities in Newham & across East London



An external review of achievement and success in 2013-14

March 2015



www.egconsulting.co.uk

What is the Forum for Health and Wellbeing?

Founded in 1991, the Forum for Health and Wellbeing provides a network for the benefit of community groups who are both service users and providers of health and social care services in Newham and across East London. Formerly it was known as the Black and Ethnic Minority Community Care Forum, focused primarily on meeting the health and social care needs of local Black and ethnic minority groups. Latterly the Forum has developed a national remit and trading arm to carry out its core mission and activities.

In over two decades The Forum has established a strategic role for itself in the context of health and social care issues working closely with communities facing significant social disadvantage, health inequalities and poverty. It continues to work on improving the health and wellbeing of 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. Simultaneously The Forum endeavours to shape and develop the capacity of key individuals within poorer communities so that they can improve their own particular community's health and social care needs.

www.fhwb.co.uk

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What is eg: consulting?

Founded in 2006 and based in Bury St. Edmunds **eg: consulting** is an advisory, development, evaluation and fundraising consultancy targeted at medium sized voluntary and community sector organisations; and public sector agencies. In nine years the consultancy (in combination with Community Interest Company Big Society Funding) has worked with 74 VCSE, local authority, public agency clients, including assessing their positive impact and thus helping them to meet their organisational aspirations for growth and development.

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Comments from Service Users

“The Forum has been hugely supportive to me personally. I got the training I needed and so did the members of the Management Committee. They provided us with help forming very important partnerships and now we are really doing well, even flourishing.”

“The Forum is a big boon for people like me and smaller voluntary groups.”

“This is nothing else like this in Newham to provide the help I need and the group we set up.”

“The Forum were there when we needed them. Helped us to set up. Now they help with accounts, payroll and training. It's invaluable to us. A real godsend.”

“I lack the skills need to run a charity. The Forum helped with fundraising, project planning and financial management. There has been a long-term engagement with them and we are truly thankful. No-one else is there to provide the help we need.”



Comments from Stakeholders

“The Forum for Health and Wellbeing has worked very closely with both Councillors like myself and Council Officers to ensure that health and social care commissioning processes effectively involve Newham residents; this has led to improved co-production, commissioning and evaluation of a range of Adult Social Care services.

Recent successful collaborations have contributed considerably to ensuring that the Council’s services are addressing the multiple needs of people in Newham many of whom face considerable social disadvantage and health inequalities.”

Councillor Clive Furness

Mayoral Advisor for Adults & Health



“The Forum is well known and well positioned in the borough. Its co-production and collaborative approach, which builds capacity, self-sufficiency and resilience for individuals and groups, must be the right way to work.

All the feedback I get is that it is doing a good job, challenging the statutory sector and commissioning agencies properly and championing the needs of communities well too.”

Strategic Commissioning & Community Adult Social Care

BACKGROUND, CONTEXT & SERVICE DELIVERY

1 The Forum for Health and Wellbeing is a registered charity and an established strategic voluntary sector agency working to improve the delivery of health and social care services in East London, primarily Newham. From the outset The Forum has focused particularly on how to improve the health and wellbeing of black and ethnic minority individuals and communities in what is the 3rd most socially deprived boroughs in England.

According to the latest census 308,000 people reside in Newham with 70% of the local population comprising black and ethnic minority communities - significant numbers are experiencing long-term and endemic health inequalities, ranging from obesity issues, poor levels of mental health (with consequent wellbeing and emotional resilience challenges), heart, cancer, diabetes and other long-term health conditions.

2 The key objective set out in The Forum's Business Plan, which clearly flows from its mission statement (as above), is working to engender action-focused partnerships to then lead to the development and enhancement of existing (or new) services and projects to meet the identified health and social care need of all Newham's communities. It has adopted an empowering co-production approach to its work activities, looking to ensure communities have the capacity to find their own solutions to their health and social care needs. In recent years, and in a creative and socially entrepreneurial, manner The Forum has extended its remit and area of benefit to other east London locations; for example, it currently operates Healthwatch in Waltham Forest as well as Healthwatch Newham. Its success with achieving

To improve the health and wellbeing of 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

Mission Statement - The Forum
for Health and Wellbeing

these service delivery contracts in a highly competitive commissioning environment is noteworthy.

3 The Forum has set itself three main aims, from which four work areas then flow: Challenge with Solution; Meaningful Involvement; Resilient Communities; and Building the Evidence. The Forum refers to these as the 'Four Cornerstones' of complimentary services and activities that are provided and which contribute to the charity's mission. The three aims are clearly set out as:

- To develop and improve services that more effectively meet the health and social care needs of black and ethnic minority communities through ensuring supported representation at all levels of planning, delivery and evaluation and by campaigning, lobbying, researching and advocating for provision that meets their needs and aspirations.
- 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 or 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.



4 The Consultant in line with the review brief has concentrated on examining the Forum's service delivery in the context of Resilient Communities cornerstone activity, and how positive impacts for individuals are effectively achieved. Clearly, how this then synergises with The Forum's other key cornerstone activities – engagement of service users in co-designing, co-producing services and being able to act as a conduit into the local health and social care decision-making structures - is also appropriate for examination. In the absence of any generic voluntary sector infrastructure support agency in Newham The Forum, in focusing on the creation of Resilient Communities, wishes to engender capacity within local black and ethnic minority communities. Central to The Forum's ability to deliver on its mission is that these identified communities secure the resources, infrastructure, information and contacts to maximise co-production, engagement and their own abilities to deliver – albeit often on a small-scale – bespoke (and 'close to the ground') health and social care services and support.

Hence, The Forum looks to provide:

- Capacity building; enabling groups to build the internal systems and structures to develop sustainable solutions to meet their health and social care challenges
- Information services; provision of newsletters and information bulletins
- Fundraising support; including one-to-one advice
- Partnership and network building; by facilitating exchanges between and within communities and the development of partnerships.

5 Led by an experienced and dedicated 7 member Board of Trustees and staffed by a team of 25 skilled and determined staff (and over 60 volunteers, for example, there have been 40 volunteers recruited, trained and inducted by Healthwatch Newham alone). The Forum secures its recent £819,000 annual income from contracts and grants. Funders include LB Newham; LB Waltham Forest; Newham Clinical Commissioning Group; City Bridge Trust and Newham GP Cooperative. 95% of The Forum's income is from the statutory sector. Senior managers are constantly engaged in contract acquisition and income generation activities; it is interesting to note that income in the year under review increased by almost a third, from £616,000 to the current £819,00, and this is despite a Big Lottery annual grant of £90,000 coming to an end in 2013.

At this juncture it is vital to outline the significant challenges The Forum faces, and that this is especially relevant in light of nearly all its income coming from the statutory sector. Furthermore, this is especially pertinent in the context of the work it is doing with fragile, and highly financially vulnerable, black and ethnic minority groups. Severe retrenchment of public finances, leading to deep cuts, means the operating climate for the VCSE sector has become progressively more challenging. This has yet to become even more draconian at the local level with more cuts programmed. This puts huge pressures on service delivery and undermines staff morale and motivation with the sector. The delivery of partnership, network and capacity building activities are considerably hampered by this service reduction and diminishing architecture of support. The consultant is mindful of this context when examining The Forum's work activities in the last year.

THE FORUM

- 7 Trustees
- 17 Staff
- 60 Volunteers
- £819,000 annual turnover

REVIEW REMIT

7 In the context of ongoing fundraising, and a possible submission to the Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Communities grant programme, the consultancy was required:

- To review and evaluate the achievement and success of The Forum's work activities during 2013-14 to demonstrate its positive impact on the lives of socially disadvantaged people and communities experiencing profound health inequalities in Newham.

Definitive evaluation on a tight budget is not possible, and therefore, this brief review and evaluation seeks to establish progress and impact at the conclusion of yet another year's full operation by The Forum – and in the context of on-going organisational challenges and relentless public sector austerity. It is understood that this review will assist in the process of identifying the need and support for an enhanced service delivery going forward and help in the co-production of further initiatives to underpin organisational mission and future planning.

In undertaking the review of the Consultant has adopted the following methodology:

- Examining and analysing: the internally collated data and monitoring information and yearly reports to identify achievement of outcomes; several individual Case Studies following these up with telephone interviews; the views of external stakeholders; staff reports and other staff observations aimed at securing their views on achievements and success during 2013-14.



FINDINGS – ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT

8 In order to analyse, review and assess the impact of The Forum's core activities on individual beneficiaries in the last year, the Consultant has been provided with internally collated data, monitoring information, annual reports (both 2012/13 and 2013/14) and feedback survey summaries and externally commissioned reports on key project work activities – all designed to help identify benefits and consequently overall achievement of outputs and outcomes. In this context, the following sections (9 to 13) seek to provide a brief overview of services provided and observations alongside concomitant assessments as to how they contribute in an impactful way on the lives of socially disadvantaged people and communities in Newham; and empower them to take more control of their health and wellbeing. Feedback is also provided from external stakeholders and partners.

In sections 14 – 16 below the consultant as a core ingredient to this review has sought to capture the voices of individual beneficiaries themselves and their perceptions of benefits, which mainly emanate from a group perspective.

Provision of Healthwatch Services

9 To date, The Forum has secured two significant contracts to run Healthwatch organisations in both Waltham Forest and Newham boroughs; this is a stunning achievement. The contract for Healthwatch Waltham Forest was secured in December 2012 and in Newham in March 2013. The Forum has now established two new legal entities for both Healthwatches

registering them as charities and companies limited by guarantee. The aim of Healthwatch is to give people, who live in both localities, a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided within their respective boroughs. This work by The team also builds on the goal of giving local people, especially from diverse communities, more capacity in co-designing, shaping and ultimately co-producing local health and social care provision and service delivery. From reviewing reports we learn that The Forum has secured a Healthwatch place on the Health and Wellbeing Board and on the Governing Body of the local CCG in Waltham Forest and is engaged in crucial council scrutiny work and activities. Thus, both Healthwatch organisations have a CCG Board place and a Health and Wellbeing Board place.

Patient engagement and involvement is high on the agendas of both local commissioning teams and key part of the statutory sector apparatus. In Waltham Forest The Forum team have so far logged 200 activities designed to engage more than 4,500 residents. In team have managed patient experience panels, collating significant qualitative data from service users and other sources. In the first year it is reported that they have a database of over 5,000 items of intelligence.

Despite delivering Healthwatch services on a reduced budget of £140,000 (a third less than originally envisioned) progress has been equally swift and efficacious in Newham with nearly 3,000 service users and stakeholders registered on the database, and all are receiving targeted communications from the team on all issues related to social care, health and wellbeing. The new organisation has clearly adopted a focused and high profile outreach programme, reaching right into

THE FORUM

Healthwatch Waltham Forest

- 200 Engagement Activities
- 4,500 Residents & Stakeholders Reached
- 5,000 Items of Information on Database

the most disadvantaged communities in the borough. Effective partnerships have been formed with Newham CCG and Barts Health NHS Trust designed to bring clear and tangible benefits to Newham's residents. Healthwatch Newham participates actively in the scrutiny arrangements, including being represented on LB Newham's Scrutiny Committee, and it also has a place on the Health and Wellbeing Strategic Reference Group. Its participation and presence at commissioning related meetings is considered very important and in many cases 'essential' by statutory agencies. Alongside the 2,500 individuals involved in the work of Healthwatch Newham (and a further 600 health and social care professionals) it is reported that over 150 local community groups have become actively engaged. It is now reported that Healthwatch Newham's database contains almost 30,000 items of local intelligence relating to health and social issues.

A significant amount of local intelligence and service user feedback has been forwarded to Healthwatch England 'Information Bank'. Additionally, The Forum provides other mechanisms locally to ensure patient and resident input into the design and delivery of services, via a Patient Forum and the HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE NETWORK. These all ensure that the social care, health and wellbeing needs of people and communities are fed into commissioning processes; and the voices of diverse black, ethnic minority, migrant and refugee communities, particularly those that are multiply disadvantaged and experiencing sustained health inequalities are articulated and acted upon. There is much impactful work going on here whereby The Forum is the driving force for collaborative co-production

"The Forum is well known and well positioned in the borough.....it is doing a good job, challenging the statutory sector and commissioning agencies properly and championing the needs of communities well too."

THE FORUM

Healthwatch Newham

- 150 Local Groups Engaged
- 3,100 Residents & Stakeholders Reached
- 30,000 Items of Information on Database

activities at many levels and with a considerable number of different social care and health providers.

In discussions with commissioners, Newham CCG and GPs it is abundantly clear that The Forum is highly regarded, and the Consultant received very favourable and complimentary feedback. A leading Councillor spoke of the good work being done by The Forum and that this was very important to the Council. Commissioners singled out for praise The Forum's well-respected positive working across the borough and its demonstrable abilities to bring grassroots health and social care groups into wider, collaborative and focused networks. The collaborative and co-operative approach adopted by The Forum was remarked upon, and more saliently, how they believed that this was now bringing tangible social care and health benefits to socially deprived residents and communities in Newham.

User Engagement/Co-production Services

10 The Consultant has also reviewed the Forum's User Engagement/Co-production (UE/CP) Customer Satisfaction Survey and report, which was finalised in December 2014; but that examined a three-year period. This survey was targeted at Newham's growing local user-led disability, learning disabilities and older people groups. Despite austerity one learns of how remarkably stable many of these user-led organisations remain with their management teams, governance arrangements and funding broadly holding their own, and with reported uplifts in improved leadership with Chairpersons in place. Increased involvement is recorded and these organisations are predominantly female in composition. Reliance on small amounts

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'Recent successful collaborations have contributed considerably to ensuring that the Council's services are addressing the multiple needs of people in Newham many of whom face considerable social disadvantage and health inequalities.'

of core funding from UE/CP by these groups to retain viability is probably a key factor, and the survey identifies how funding sufficiency is a weak organisational area in need of development and further support.

The views of the user groups to the support and help being received from the Forum were highly positive, and a number of the findings are noteworthy. From selected highlights in answering the headings provided in the survey the respondents rated support as follows:

- **Availability on the telephone/email in person:** 55% said this was 'good' and a further 18% 'excellent'
- **General support for the group:** 72% rated it a combination of 'good' and/or 'satisfactory'
- **Overall support:** 63% rated it a combination of mostly 'good' and/or 'satisfactory'
- **Level of funding/funding sufficiency:** 45% rated this as mostly 'poor' and 27% as 'satisfactory'

Service users rated overall training provision, for example chairing of meetings, communication with health professionals and responding to consultations, as crucial support mechanisms. Input into various health and social care consultations – despite variable feedback – was very welcomed. Skills have been gained; capacity built and confidence (on an individual and group basis) has increased. These groups undoubtedly have benefited from the flow of key information and their awareness being raised about health, social care and wellbeing issues. Cumulatively, 92% of respondents to the latest Survey assessed that their user-led organisation had benefitted from UE/CP support services; and that it had correspondingly led to increased membership of their particular organisations. Respondents were less

enthusiastic or endorsing of the Newham Co-Production Forum (Adults) which is facilitated by the London Borough of Newham, with two-thirds describing it as either 'not relevant' or 'could be better', and half saying its impact is 'poor'. Actions to tackle this have been identified to improve performance going forward.

GP Surveys & Patient Participation Groups

11 The Forum conducts annual GP Surveys; in the most recent survey 25 GP practices in Newham participated. The Forum circulates self-completion surveys which aims to gauge and assess patient satisfaction especially regarding seeing a GP of choice and speaking to GP instead of attending at a surgery. In the last year, we saw 2,278 patients in Newham and they completed surveys (compared to 3,043 in the previous year, 2013). The Consultant reviewed the meetings of a sample of five Patient Participation Groups (PPG) whose focus is to discuss patient survey findings within each GP practice relating to qualitative service delivery issues. Following the discussion of survey results by these PPGs a co-produced Action Plan is devised. Some of the main issues to emerge and then appear in these PPG generated Action Plans include:

- Aiming for more efficient appointment systems including hospital referrals
- Improving patient telephone access to their GP
- Enhancing the patient experience with their GP focusing on adequate and quality time being provided to meet individual needs
- Better access to vaccination programmes, particularly flu, and specialised clinics

Similar surveys have been conducted by Healthwatch Waltham Forest into GP services in the borough with improvement plans also devised.

Demonstrably all of this engagement with local health providers, community-based (very local ‘grassroots’) organisations, residents and statutory agencies allows the Forum to play a dynamic centrifugal role – and this all ties in neatly with its stated objective of creating ‘Communities of Health’ and acting as a hub for sharing innovation, ideas and proposals to improve service delivery, information dissemination and spreading knowledge and good practice.

Newham Community Prescription

12 This has been initially a six month pilot project to develop a new way of preventing or delaying the onset of diabetes by equipping primary care clinicians’ with ‘social prescribing solutions’ whereby patients are effectively referred – connected - to – a wide range of community based services designed to encourage them to pursue a healthier life style, improve their personal choices and adopt health promoting behaviours. The pilot was extended.

Significant numbers of new diabetes cases are identified each year locally – some 3,000. In Newham there are upwards of 30,000 residents either diagnosed with diabetes or recorded as ‘pre-diabetes’- the prevalence is higher in Newham than elsewhere in London and across England. The pilot included three Navigators employed by the Forum being based at Manor Park GP surgeries referring diabetic patients to healthier activities – primarily through VCSE

THE FORUM

Newham Community Prescription

- 1,250 Patients Engaged & Reviewed
- 700 Patients Referred into Physical Activities
- 325 Patients Completing

organisations which have already received Communities of Health accreditation. 1,250 patients were reviewed and selected for 'inactive' pre-diabetic and diabetic patients who met the inclusion criteria, with 700 of referred onto a physical activity programme by the community navigators. Almost half - 325 - of the patients completed between one and 11 weeks of interventions, with 125 patients completing 12 weeks or more. The average number of completed sessions during the pilot was five. This work has now been reviewed by the Newham CCG following a recent independent evaluation by the University of East London. The CCG have decided to continue with funding the Newham Community Prescription.

Capacity Building & Resilient Communities

13 With increasing austerity and squeeze on public funding fewer localities have bespoke infrastructure support agencies that can help assist and develop the growth of the entire VCSE sector, and Newham lacks such a dedicated agency. In recent years, the Forum has stepped up to the mark and sought to ensure that the VCSE, which has a health and social care dimension, is supported and nurtured. Key components offered centre around governance, fundraising and sustainability, all linked to partnership building. This is a crucial dimension of the Forum's day-to-day operational energies: delivering comprehensive capacity building and partnership development support including as part of its Ready to Deliver Project, funded by the City Bridge Trust. Focused on primarily meeting the capacity building needs of the black and ethnic minority VCSE sector, with a social care, health and wellbeing

When people are given the chance and treated as if they are capable, they tend to find they know what is best for them, and can work out how to fix any problems they have and realise their dreams. Bringing local knowledge based on everyday experience to bear on planning and decision-making usually leads to better results. Evidence shows that, when people feel they have control over what happens to them and can take action on their own behalf, their physical and mental well-being improves. When individuals and groups get together in their neighbourhoods, get to know each other, work together and help each other, there are usually lasting benefits for everyone involved: networks and groups grow stronger, so that people who belong to them tend to feel less isolated, more secure, more powerful and happier.

From: Ten Big questions about the Big Society, New Economics Foundation

remit, the Forum has in the last year worked intensively with 30 organisations.

This work activity builds considerably on the strong foundations of previously the Big Lottery Fund grant funded project: Making it Happen. This project has been evaluated and its many successes and achievements captured. Making it Happen latter operated for five years (from 2008 to 2013), with 239 individuals benefitting and some 180 organisations received one-to-one capacity building support. Others received organisational development support to get their organisations contract compliant and ready to bid, and make tenders. The majority secured support in developing their collaborative approach to their work and building networks. Again, much of this fits with its 'Communities of Health' agenda and is linked to accreditation for local groups. The consultant spoke with a large number of these groups to evidence impact of the Forum's service delivery on individuals. These are highlighted in sections 14 - 16 below.

14 Consultant findings demonstrate that significant achievements have been secured in individual's perceptions of positive outcomes for themselves and subsequently the organisations that they lead work or volunteer for, and this is illustrated in the following three case studies.

Set up in 2007 **Skills Enterprise** is based in East Ham with a clear focus on meeting the needs of socially disadvantaged adults and families. They offer a wide range of services – job club, employment and career guidance, welfare and debt advice, money management, ESOL classes and digital inclusion

THE FORUM

Making It Happen 2008-13

- Personal Development & Capacity-building Delivered
- 180 Local Groups Engaged
- 239 Individuals Trained

training. With seven trustees they are entirely volunteer led and managed. They contract sessional staff to deliver courses and training. Its mission statement corresponds closely to the ethos set out by The Forum whereby they wish to 'help create a cohesive, healthy, successful and vibrant community', and most interestingly contribute to the removal of 'the label 'deprived' from Newham.'

The Skills Enterprise objectives are:

- To improve education and welfare opportunities
- To improve the quality of life by reducing levels of poverty and providing support to those who need it most
- To facilitate change by encouraging local people to engage with their community and to play an active role in issues relevant to their lives.

Skills Enterprise has also been careful to assess local needs in relation to what people lack: affordable childcare provision, IT and communication skills, confidence, qualifications and financial resources. About 30 – 40 people benefit weekly.

The organisation collate information about their beneficiaries:

- 90 % come from BAME communities
- 21% receive Food Bank vouchers
- 62 % lack basic English Conversational skills and ICT skills
- 91% do not have laptop or personal computers at home
- 18 % reported having mental health issues
- 57 % claim Job seekers allowance or ESA
- 71 % have no formal qualifications

In conversation with volunteer co-ordinator Malathy Muthu:

“Here at Skills Enterprise we now help 221 people each year in our community, and the last two years have been ones of real growth. We try here to deliver projects that address poverty; the big disadvantages people face, to break barriers by ourselves and also in partnership with others. We want to improve and strengthen the local people’s capacity.”

Malathy is effusive in her appreciation of the support she has secured from The Forum, and mentions how Newham lacks a CVS (infrastructure support agency) and that there is ‘nothing else available apart from The Forum to help develop the capacity of local groups.

“The Forum has been hugely supportive to me personally. I got the training I needed and so did the members of the Management Committee. They provided us with help forming very important partnerships and now we are really doing well, even flourishing.”

Malathy received training, as did the rest of the management committee with policies and procedures - and help with what she describes as ‘hands on’ help with partnership development. Until recently the organisation managed on a shoestring budget of just a few thousand pounds a year. In the last full accounting year Skills Enterprise had an income of just over £37,000. It had managed to attract funding from the Tinder Foundation, Lloyds Foundation and most proudly the People’s Health Trust.

As Malathy explains:

“The grant from the Peoples Health Trust is a major breakthrough for us, and everything that The Forum has done for us has led to this successful point. They are a boon for smaller organisations like us.”

15 In contrast to the more recently set up Skills Enterprise is a long-established ethnic minority voluntary organisation called the **London Tamil Sangam**, which as a charity has been in operation since 1960. Their Centre is based in Manor Park.

London Tamil Sangam provides a whole host of social, health, recreational and cultural activities and events for the local Tamil community. This includes a luncheon club for older people, supplementary school, a library facility, English classes and gentle exercise classes: yoga, chair based exercise and the provision of health advice. According to Srilekha Sethurajan, the Centre Manager and Project Co-ordinator, they have 50 beneficiaries each week.

She is clear about the benefits she and her organisation have obtained from The Forum:

“The Forum helped with fundraising, project planning and financial management. There has been a long-term engagement with them and we are truly thankful. No-one else is there to provide the help we need.”

Again, in discussions with Srilekha it become abundantly clear that The Forum was a very valued partner for which many of her organisation's beneficiaries were 'thankful'. She commended its responsiveness and for all the help

in the last year in project planning and training, especially in The Forum's ability to help them connect successfully with local health providers. No other support agency has helped them. London Tamil Sangam has also recently participated in the pilot community prescribing work funded by the Newham CCG, with a particular focus in obesity and diabetes. The Forum has assisted with fundraising endeavours too, which have been successful. The organisation relies upon small grants from private grant making trusts such as Lloyds Foundation. It has received a small sum from the Newham CCG.

16 **The Drop in Bereavement Centre** is based in Plaistow. It received accreditation two years ago from The Forum. The Centre provides ongoing help and support for bereaved individuals and families designed to assist them in reconciling themselves with their bereavement. Residents access services by GP referrals or via local community organisations. Self-referrals are also possible. The Centre has in recent times offered Health And Well Being Therapy Workshops with Lottery funding. In fact, the Centre has done remarkably well in securing a wide range of grants, for examples:

- Awards for All grant the above Staying Well Activities Workshops comprising Yoga For Grief, Tai Chi, Complementary Therapies, Music Therapy and Zumba
- Comic Relief to facilitate Late Afternoon/Evening Counselling sessions.

The service is run on a 'shoestring' according volunteers, including Olive Brade, and when talking to them it is apparent how passionate they are about the support they offer to bereaved local residents. There are a reported 250 beneficiaries annually. Volunteers are full of praise for

The Forum and cite countless examples of how individual and group support; and capacity-building interventions including fundraising have made a real difference to how they have not just survived but thrived. Clearly, their commitment is second to none and they report having considerable evidence to support their contention of how the health and wellbeing of individuals in Newham is improved and how services have grown and developed to meet identified needs.

“The Forum were there when we needed them. Helped us to set up. Now they help with accounts, pay roll and training. It’s invaluable to us. A real godsend.”

17 We learn from case studies that the work of The Forum is securing real impact for individuals leading VCSE organisations that specialise in social care, health and wellbeing, and this is particularly in the context of:

- Their acquisition of relevant and useful practical skills
- Their improved abilities to manage and lead their organisation’s activities and remain resilient, self-reliant and – in the current financial climate – remarkably upbeat and motivated. They feel supported or know where to go to get the support they need
- Better social networks and mutual (peer) support
- Increased levels of confidence, and reported higher levels of wellbeing.

The approach from the outset taken by The Forum staff in their capacity building work has been highly personalised and focused on individual personal development that is best suited to each individual.

The individual beneficiaries spoken to by the Consultant were very forthright about the vital importance they attached to securing the training, support and capacity-building they had wanted, how it had then contributed to their confidence and sense of wellbeing, and enable them to ensure their particular organisation then profited from their enhanced skills. This would appear to be especially praiseworthy in a poor London borough like Newham, which in the face of cut backs case study findings correspond closely with other feedback and surveys reviewed above, and contribute to a strong sense of achievement and impact.

18 It is clear that the work undertaken by The Forum by drilling down into communities and helping particular community activists and ‘leaders’ is helping to foster real individual and community capacity, so that community organizers (having received a concerted series of capacity-building interventions to help them ‘bubble up’) can then manage and deliver niche and tailored social care, health and wellbeing services to their communities. Interestingly, this corresponds to the model of engagement favoured by the Carnegie Trust, which seeks to develop ‘Fiery Spirits’ – energised and committed individuals dedicated to ‘building vibrant and resilient communities’, and this point is highly pertinent to more disadvantaged localities. The ‘Big Society’ premise that people and their communities have assets, not just problems, is an excellent jumping off point. However, we know that not everyone has the same capacity to help themselves as others. The Forum has considerable scope on which to continue to upscale its capacity building work to further health and wellbeing outcomes in East London.

The Forum is remarkably well-positioned based on the findings of this review to build on the strong foundations of delivery both as an individual capacity-builder and infrastructure support organisations in direct contact with hundreds of health and social care community groups and literally thousands of residents; all of these would be traditionally deemed 'hard to reach' by the statutory sector, and absolutely key to securing significant positive medium-term health and wellbeing outcomes. The Forum is uniquely placed and emboldened by its highly efficacious management of Healthwatch services in two East London boroughs. Local stakeholders are universally positive about the positive impacts they think the Forum is contributing to delivering, and that only by the active involvement of The Forum can the most socially disadvantaged members of local communities be accessed, engaged, trained and developed. This is demonstrably backed up by the views of individuals from these communities contacted by the Consultant. The high esteem The Forum is held at both levels: local community and stakeholder/commissioning, means that the organisation can seek to co-produce and develop further health and wellbeing initiatives designed to tackle engrained health inequalities with struggling communities and their key activists.

19 Over the next period of time driving forward measures to develop community and individual resilience appears to remain the only 'game in town', although the funding to underpin this are in perilously short supply. The Forum have in recent times continued to refer, and champion, 'co-production' or 'co-designing' whereby the people who are currently 'service providers' and 'service users' come together and pool their resources, knowledge and skills to provide services. It is clear from

this review that much can be achieved with the right level of investment. The projects reviewed demonstrate what can be achieved, and can act as exemplar providing concrete examples of what is possible. The Forum has previously outlined potentialities in a discussion paper it produced as part of Newham's resilience strategy development. Undoubtedly, Newham has a large and diverse VCSE sector with over 1,000 groups identified by the Forum all seeking to deliver a wide range of services, projects and initiatives. They just need the right mix of encouragement and support – with The Forum playing a pivotal role - so that they can all aspire to achieve their collective health and wellbeing goals, and realise the potential they all so clearly have.