

Skills4Life

Hear Hear Women

People's Health Trust

**End of Year Evaluation Report
March 2014 – March 2015**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of a two year funding programme from the People's Health to work in the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Hear Hear women aimed to address the issues of health, and wellbeing, unemployment, debt, managing money, setting up small businesses and reducing isolation. In order to achieve this the project held the following sessions:

- Zumba Classes
- Debt and managing money workshops
- Coffee morning sessions
- Setting up a business session.
- A steering group to oversee the project
- Volunteers to support the project.

A total number of 91 sessions have been delivered with 2724 women attending. The session enabled the women to increase their confidence and self-esteem as well as learning new skills. The steering has enabled women to come together and get involved in the project as well as decision making processes in the local area.

The second year of the project will continue with the sessions, the recruitment of new volunteers and the support for the steering group. As well as this Hear Hear women will continue to develop their fundraising strategy and diversify their funding streams.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Kensington and Chelsea is a small, but densely populated and vibrant Central London borough. The borough has high levels on international migration and cultural diversity. Rich and poor live side by side particular the north of the borough. Over half of the borough's population were born abroad. Nearly a third (29%) of the population is from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME). The borough has the second largest Arab population after Westminster. Over a quarter of the borough's resident's state their main language is not English. 1 in 10 state they are not able to speak to English; this is around 2% of the borough's population. French, Arabic, Spanish and Italian are the most common languages other than English.

Social factors

Despite the highest house prices in the country, parts of the borough are still deprived, with the borough being the 103th most deprived in the country in 2010 according to the index of multiple deprivation, which is based on a range of economic, social and housing indicators. Pockets of deprivation are particularly focused in the north of the borough.

Mental health is the most common reason for long term illness absence and several of the wards in the deprived parts of the borough fall into the 20% highest in London for incapacity benefit/ESA claimant rates for mental health reasons. As well as this those living on high density social housing are 2-3 times as likely to report bad/very bad health compared to those in areas with low density, depending on age. The borough does have an increasing older people's population; it is vital that older people are not socially isolated or lonely.

Around 1 in 5 people in the borough (21%) are physically inactive, doing less than 30 minutes activity per week. Rates of inactivity for BAME groups are typically around one quarter higher than average, and people over 55 are around twice as inactive. Inactivity is one of the major causes of disease such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and musculoskeletal problems and the cause of obesity. (JSNA Annual Report, 2013)

Hear Hear Women

As a result of the key statistics Hear Hear Women (a local grassroots community organisation) were successful in obtaining two year funding from The People's Health Trust to work in the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea and address the issues of health, and wellbeing, unemployment, debt, managing money, setting up small businesses and reducing isolation. In

order to achieve this the project was also going to set up a steering group consisting of local women and recruit volunteers to assist with the project.

Outcomes of the project

Outcome 1

The women: Improved self confidence and self-esteem through participating in the sessions provided by Hear Hear Women. As well as improved knowledge of how to manage their debts, which in return will enable to set up their own income generation activities that will improve the local economy.

Outcome 2

The Steering group will increase their knowledge of running a project and decision-making processes.

Outcome 3

Volunteers and participants will increase participation and sense of belonging in their local community and will make new friends and contacts in their neighbourhoods.



METHODOLOGY

In order to gather the views and perceptions of the women for this project qualitative methods such as questionnaires, case studies, and focus group discussions will be used.

Outcome	Activity	Methodology
<p>The women: Improved self confidence and self-esteem through participating in the sessions provided by Hear Hear Women. As well as improved knowledge of how to manage their debts, which in return will enable to set up their own income generation activities that will improve the local economy.</p>	<p>Debt Advice sessions Managing money Starting your own business sessions Coffee Mornings Zumba Classes</p>	<p>Evaluation forms will be used to measure the increased in self-confidence and knowledge of how to set up their own business.</p> <p>Evaluation forms and attendance sheet got the exercise classes before and after the sessions to measure the improvement women have made.</p> <p>Evaluation forms after each of the sessions to determine how useful the session was.</p> <p>The case studies will give us more in-depth information about the impact the project has made on an individual.</p> <p>The focus group is a chance for the women discuss further about the project and future activities.</p>
<p>The Steering group will increase their knowledge of running a project and decision-making processes.</p>	<p>Steering group meetings</p>	<p>Evaluation forms to measure increased confidence, self-esteem and knowledge.</p> <p>Focus groups at the end of year to establish what the women have leaned over the year.</p>

		Case studies to get more in-depth learning from the women.
Volunteers and participants will increase participation and sense of belonging in their local community and will make new friends and contacts in their neighbourhoods.	Recruiting and supporting volunteers	Evaluation forms before and after the project to measure whether they have an increased self-confidence, self-esteem and knowledge.

Considerations

It is important to take into consideration that the women participating in the project are bilingual and English is not their first language. Therefore Hear Hear Women had to ensure the methods designed were adapted to meet the needs of these women. For example the evaluation forms were designed in a simple way with many closed questions opposed to lots of open ended. Volunteers ranged from different backgrounds to help the participants with their evaluation forms and focus group discussions. Hear Hear Women decided to capture feedback from the workshops by asking participants questions during the sessions. This was more interactive and also enabled women to express themselves in their own language if they needed to.

A social media application 'Audio Boom' was also used as a way of capturing the views of the women. This is conducted as a audio so the women felt comfortable talking and expressing their feelings.

FINDINGS

During the course of the year the following sessions have been provided:

- Zumba Classes
- Coffee mornings
- Debt Advice sessions
- Managing money sessions
- Setting up a business

- Setting up and running a steering group
- Recruiting volunteers.

All the session took place at the Al Mannar Cultural Centre, Westbourne Park. This building is familiar and accessible to the women.

Activity	No of session	Total number of participants
Zumba	47	564
Coffee mornings	30	360
Debt Advice	5	75
Managing Money	5	75
Setting up a business	4	30

- 5 Steering group meetings have taken place.
- 20 volunteers have volunteered in the project.

Zumba Classes

The Zumba classes were requested from the women as a way of getting healthy, keeping fit and being able to socialize. The women attending the session face many barriers to accessing mainstream health services; such as low self-esteem, not fully being able to speak English, affordability (of private exercise classes and local gyms) and relying on husbands and extended family to assist them to classes outside the area.

A total of 47 sessions of Zumba were held with 564 women participating in the sessions. 80% percent of the women felt their self-esteem increased as a result of attending the session. The remaining 20% did not see an increase or decrease in self-confidence. 90% of the women felt that they feel healthier and would like to continue with the classes. As well as these the 90% of women indicated they are going to continue to exercise after the classes had ended and would recommend the classes to others.

75% of the women indicated they were better informed of other services as a result of coming to the Zumba classes.

One of the participants who attended the sessions previously is know running the Zumba classes.

“I have been attending the sessions since they first started, as a mother I find it difficult to exercise. The sessions are well suited for me as they are in a ideal location and a ideal venue. By coming to the exercise classes I have learned a lot about health options for me. I think most definitely I have increased my confidence and I have also met a lot of new women. I also attend the other workshops like the coffee morning as they have interesting speakers who are from the different agencies.” (Khadija)



Coffee Morning

The aim of the coffee mornings is to bring the women together to address issues that are affecting them. Part of the session is for the women to interact with each and the other part of the session is key partner agencies have presented to the women. The steering group in consultation with the women has set the topics. That have been discussed in the sessions have been:

- Cook and taste sessions
- Access to GP services
- Breast cancer awareness
- Housing benefits and allocation
- Women's mental health
- Density
- Benefits advice
- Health talks
- Dementia

- Some of the coffee mornings had no speakers but it enabled the women to come together have a chat, share experiences and network.

30 sessions have taken place and a total of 360 have women attended the sessions. Prior to the sessions 82% of the women felt they had little knowledge about the topic areas. After the session 95% of the women were fully knowledgeable of the topic areas.

The women rated the facilitators as excellent and felt the materials handed out was really informative. Some of the key themes that came out from the women were:

- They would like more coffee mornings.
- They felt the health workshops were really useful.
- 80% of the women felt that the housing benefits discussions were really informative and they learned a lot.
- The women felt they were able to ask questions and get clarification.
- The coffee morning allowed the women to learn form each other and get to know each other.

Debt Advice

The aim of the debt advice sessions was to enable women to come together to address issues of debt, budgeting and managing their women. A total of 5 sessions were held and 75 women attended the sessions. 92% of women felt as a result of attending the sessions they were more confident about issues of debt. A further 8% said they were somewhat confident and would like more in-depth sessions for them. All the women felt that they had more knowledge about managing their debts whereas prior to the session 85% felt they had no knowledge on debt management.

“I have never actually understood debt, my husband always deals with the bills. I normally have to go through him to understand our credit card bills. After coming to the class I feel I am much more confident in knowing about the different types of debt. I can know somewhat understand my husband’s finances and bills” (Amina).

Managing Money

Some of the managing money sessions were linked in with the debt sessions. The main reason to deliver these sessions was so that the women were better able to manage the money they get, whether this is through their benefits or part time work. 5 sessions were delivered and a total of 75 women attended the session. Prior to the session 78% of the women had little or no confidence in managing their money after the session 97% felt very confident in managing money. As a result of this increased confidence the women felt that an increase self-esteem.

“I attended the debt management classes and the managing money sessions they were both really helpful to me. I learned how to set a budget when managing money and how allocate my spending. It really helps when you can talk this through with someone. It was really to hear other women speak about their experiences as well. As I am not working I have to manage my money and also my children’s whist my husband pays the bills. He has not really explained to me how to manage money. So I am glad that I came to these classes. In our culture especially if you are not working you do end up relying on your husband. I hop there are more sessions like this so that I can tell other women to attend.” (Zahra).



Setting up a business

The aim of the session was to give women the opportunity to learn skills in how to set up their own business. The session was based on theory as well as practical. The women had the chance to explore ideas such as flower making through to packaging gifts. food hygiene All practical ways to support women who are thinking about starting a business from home. 4 sessions were delivered and a total of 30 women attended the session. None of the women that attended the session had knowledge of how to set up a business. During the end of the session 100% of the women had an increased knowledge. All of the women felt their confidence and self-esteem as a result of attending the session. All the women felt they had learnt new skills. The women valued the practical element of the session as well as the theory.

Some of the reasons as to what interested the women are:

- To learn about business
- How to set up a business

“I am a mother of three children and by dropping the children off to and from school. I would not have time for a job; it just would not work for me. When I heard about the business classes from coming along to the exercise classes I was really interested. This is something that I could do at home. I really liked the idea of the basic steps to setting up my own business that I can do from home. So we had practical session on decorating candles through to packing gifts. These are simple methods that you can fit in around your children. I will be taking these ideas forward and hope to set my own business and give something back to the economy. “ Fatima.

Steering Group

The aim of the steering group was to have local women run the project and be become the voice for women who attended the sessions. It took a few months to recruit the women and then induct them. All the women attending the steering group are users of the activities. By having the steering group they are able to make changes to the programme, work with the volunteers and also monitor and evaluate the project. 5 meetings of the steering group have taken place so far.

The women wanted to take part in the steering group for the following reasons:

- To transfer the information from the group to the steering group.
- Be more confident in decision-making.
- To have a voice
- To be heard
- To take the opinions of the wider group and make a positive change.
- To find out about other people ideas.
- To pass the message and knowledge about the steering group to other people.
- Incase my understanding.

Before attending the steering group meetings all the women no confidence as a result of participating in the steering group 99% was very confident and 1% was confident.

The women felt they had gained the following skills form attending the steering group:

- How to make decisions.
- Able to work with other people with confidence.
- Increased confidence.
- Presentation skills
- Teamwork.
- Time management.

All the women felt they know more about local decision-making in there are.



The following extract from the audio boo conducted with the steering group:

Interviewed three of the steering group members can you tell me your role, the work that you have been involved in and the impact on the women.

Member 1 – I have assisted in coordinating of the activities. The women are happy with the sessions; it has helped the women to reduce isolation.

Member 2 – I joined with the other members last year, which was very successful. The ladies have enjoyed the exercise classes and the health talks. As well as the starting up their own business which has been very successful.

Member 3 – I joined the exercise classes, star up business. I like meeting new people. Many of the activities have been successful to the women have enjoyed. Everyone was joining in together.

Razia: what would have happen if the project were not here today?

Steering group: Women would be depressed, at home, doing nothing, over eating and being overweight. After I joined the exercise classes my joint pains has gone this is same for the other ladies as well as its cold in this country.

Razia: Can you say a bit more about setting up a business and some of the other workshops like the coffee morning session, cook and taste sessions and how you found different people coming in and talking to you in the sessions?

Steering group: The business sessions were very nice course this was for 6 weeks we want to talk about the lady who presented she brings new things the women really enjoyed it and wanted more courses. She teaches us something different each time. She brings her own materials. All of us are working together. We start to do our own thing at home and then bring it back to the teacher. We hope to present all our work soon.

Razia: Do you think any of the women are going to peruse their own business and their skills?

Steering group: Yes I think so they really enjoyed it they are keen to learn. The courses are short especially for skills you need more time to learn and try. We hope that we have more in depth sessions.

Razia: Would you want a more follow up course like the financial side to help you set up set up your own business i.e. business plan

Steering group: Yes they would be interested. Need another course for it.

This is the first time I attended the sessions, something different and new.

Razia: What about the other workshops?

Steering group: We did the cook and taste programme which was very good it was about how to cook healthy foods part of the coffee morning session. 6 weeks women were taught how to cook food with less oil (healthy food), made different kinds of salads. We know how to cook we use a lot of oil and salt and she teaches us how to reduce with the food still tasting good.

We invited specialists for example mental health, the ladies had lots of questions and they got lots of information and help. The coffee mornings were very useful. More speakers are need and specialists i.e. the laws and rights for example the NHS a lot of people don't know about the changes. It's been very useful. Benefit advice as well the changes and so many people don't know what's happening.

Volunteers

Volunteers are key to any organisation, especially to a small community organisation like Hear Hear Women. Volunteers were recruited through word of mouth and the local volunteer centre. Throughout the duration of the project 20 volunteers were recruited with 15 of them gaining employment as a result of volunteering with Hear Hear women.

The volunteers came to Hear Hear women because:

- Interested in the field of women of women rights and advocacy and then found the role as a volunteer admin via the volunteer centre.

- Wanted to gain further experience as a fundraiser and help the charity reach its aims.

The skills that the volunteers have gained are:

- Research skills
- Information and knowledge about a small charity operates in the UK.
- Fundraising skills
- Marketing skills
- Organizational skills.

The volunteers they had increased in participation in their local community as a result of volunteering for the project.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

During the first year of the project a total of 91 sessions have been delivered with 2724 women participating. The sessions were delivered as a result of consultation with local women who were very passionate about health and well-being, learning new skills and meeting other women. The project also allowed the formation of a steering group which enabled the women to lead the project and learn more about the decision making processes in their local area. As a small organisation Hear Hear women successfully managed to recruit volunteers from the local community to support the project.

The findings highlighted that through the Zumba sessions women felt more active and empowered to carry on with the exercises at home. The coffee mornings enabled the women to learn and share experiences from each other, network and hear about key topics such as housing benefits, benefits, mental health, up to date information on health services in the local area. The coffee mornings have increased the women's knowledge and understanding of some of these issues. They have also enabled the key agencies to come and talk to the women and gather their views.

The debt and managing money workshops is a topic that is a current and important to all families, in particular to those residing in many of the inner London boroughs. Many of the women participating in the sessions had little or no knowledge about managing their own money and issues on how to deal with debt. By attending the session the women were able to better manage their finances and have contact details for the key agencies for further support.

The setting up a business sessions were very popular with the women, they were all keen to learn new skills and contribute to the local economy. The women valued the practical and the theory aspect of the sessions. The women wanted more training on how to develop a business plan, costings and further support. The sessions enabled the women to think about key elements they need to start their own business.

One of the outcomes identified in the project was to set up a steering group of local women. Hear Hear women recruited women who attended the sessions. Thus far five steering group meetings have been held. This steering group is driven by local women who also manage the project. The steering group is a mechanism to collate the views of women and volunteers. The steering group members felt empowered and engaged in local decision making structures. As well as this the women were able to learn and network with each other. This demonstrated the grass roots involvement from local people.

Volunteering is key to the project, over the duration over the year the project has recruited twenty volunteers with fifteen volunteers who have known gained employment as a result of volunteering with Hear Hear Women. Volunteers were recruited from word of mouth and also from the local volunteer centre. Tasks varied from admin, fundraising through to interpreting.

The volunteers supported the women and the steering group throughout the duration of the project. It is evident that the volunteers have played a crucial part in developing the project.

Overall the first year of the project has been successful Hear Hear Women have fulfilled the outcomes for the first year of the project.

From April 2015-March 2016 the project:

- Will continue with sessions
- Increase the business sessions as this has been requested by the women.
- Seek alternative funding post 2016.
- Continue to support and empower the women on the steering group.
- Recruit more volunteers to the project.
- Continue to build partnerships and work with local voluntary sector and statutory partners.