



# Tailored HIV support services for African men living with HIV



## Jeff Ukiri

Project Coordinator:  
African Men's Engagement  
Project (Calabash)

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**George House Trust  
provides services to  
people living with and  
affected by HIV**



## **OUR VISION**

A world where HIV holds no one back



## **OUR PURPOSE**

Inspiring people living with HIV  
to live healthy and confident lives



## The African Men's Engagement Project at George House Trust



- A monthly informal peer support group – 'Calabash' – providing a supportive space for African men living with HIV to come together with the aim of improving wellbeing and self confidence and reducing feeling of social isolation. Information sessions to upskill and educate on various topics.
- Tailored one to one support from the Project Coordinator



**INFORMATIVE  
EDUCATIVE  
INTERACTIVE  
+ ENERGETIC**



The Calabash project provides support specifically for African men living with HIV through monthly group meetings and one to one sessions.

Monthly group meetings, where food is provided, are a safe space for African men living with HIV to meet each other and gain information on a variety of topics.

For more information about the Calabash, project contact Jeff Ukiri, Project Coordinator [jeff@ght.org.uk](mailto:jeff@ght.org.uk) or call 0161 274 4499.

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## Why a project specifically for African men living with HIV?



- In the United Kingdom, people of black African descent shoulder a disproportionate HIV burden
- Self stigma around HIV and fear of societal rejection impact on the ability to talk openly about HIV status
- Economic hardship and navigating a complex asylum system impact on overall health and wellbeing
- George House Trust identified the need for a space in which African men living with HIV could come together to address some of these issues

### Project outcomes

- ✓ Improved Wellbeing
- ✓ Reduced feelings of social isolation and increased social connectivity
- ✓ Increased confidence to manage HIV well
- ✓ Increased confidence and ability to talk about HIV
- ✓ Increased involvement in volunteer activities

## Key actions at the start of the project

- Recruitment of an African Men's Engagement worker
- Consultations with African men using George House Trust services to help shape the project content and direction
- Development of relationships with local HIV clinicians to encourage referrals to the project
- Development of a culturally relevant programme of project activities
- Appointment of external evaluator for the project
- Project launch





## Some project activities

- Information Session on Erectile Dysfunction
- Living Confidently with HIV
- Q&A Session on Benefits, Debts and Bills
- First Aid Course
- Improving wellbeing and mental health
- Wellbeing and Fitness Session
- Information Session on Financial Planning
- Unleashing your entrepreneurial potential
- HIV and Ageing
- Prostate Cancer
- Treatment and U=U



## Key project achievements



Increase of  
**53.47%**  
in the number of African  
men engaged with  
George House Trust

**12**  
men trained  
men to become  
First Aiders

**33**  
Calabash groups  
facilitated since  
project inception  
with  
**87**  
unique individuals  
attending

**300%**  
increase in group  
space attendance  
by African men

**370**  
one to one  
interventions  
involving  
**123**  
unique  
individuals

## Key project achievements

**500%**

increase in number  
of men actively volunteering  
with George House Trust

**34**

men have accessed  
counselling at  
George House Trust

**2**

African men  
trained as Positive  
Speakers, with

**5**

currently  
in training

**8**

men supported  
through the Peer  
Mentoring  
programme

**2**

men trained as  
Peer Mentors



## Key project outcomes and Key findings



- Projects impact assessed by an external evaluator – one to one and group interviews
- Engagement with the project resulted in positive impact and outcomes for participants

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**88%** of participants reported increased confidence to manage HIV day to day

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**85%** of participants reported feeling more confident about living with HIV

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**78%** of participants reported improved social engagement and connectivity

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**76%** of participants reported reduced feelings of social isolation

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**72%** of participants reported improved mental wellbeing



“When I came to the UK, it was with fear, fear of the unknown but the Calabash project has made the journey seamless. The programme for October ending was CV writing and developing interview skills and job search.

This was a game-changer for me, I was taught how to prepare my CV to meet UK recruiters' expectations and take charge of interviews.

It was an eye-opener for me, I got home, amended my CV based on the teaching and my one on one session with the facilitator. After this I was offered 2 jobs, one was a 12-month contract and one a permanent job with a 5-year work permit in the UK. This won't have been possible without the intervention programmes of the Calabash project.”





"I can honestly say that my life has never been the same after coming. I have found hope, belief, and a vision for a brighter future. Although I still hope that they will assist in finding my future wife, girlfriend. Jokes aside I really do feel positive about being positive. Thank you George House Trust."



"The Calabash has been hosting very exciting programmes and Jeff has been doing a great job. The people that Jeff brings to do presentations are very inspiring and knowledgeable in their fields"





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# Thank you

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