



Community Champions Programme

October 2021 – April 2022

Final Evaluation Report

Supporting People in Black communities to:

**‘Live Safe, Live Healthy and Live Happy
during Covid19’**

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Community Champions 1 (MHCLG Funding April 2021 - September 2021)	3
3. Community Champions 2 (COMF Funding October 2021 – April 2022)	4
3.1 Partners Involved.....	4
3.2 Quality of Management data.....	4
3.3 Community Champions 2: Targets Achieved.....	5
3.4 Geographical areas of support	6
3.5 Equalities monitoring.....	7
4. Explain how your organisation’s activities met the project priorities:	8
4.1 Recruit Community Champions from black communities.....	8
4.2 Increase vaccination take up	8
4.3 Increase in testing and health checks	9
4.4 Improve GP Registrations	10
4.5 Identify and support people with Long Covid	11
4.6 Supporting people self-isolating	11
4.7 Targeted Messaging and Communication	12
4.8 Community Conversations	12
4.9 Case study of the positive impact of the COMF	13
Barriers in supporting individuals in Black Communities..	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Barriers in supporting individuals in Black Communities accessing services.	Error!
Bookmark not defined.	
5.Total expenditure in providing the provision.	14

1. Introduction

Support Northamptonshire commenced the first Community Champions programme funded by MHCLG between April 2021 and September 2021. The 2nd Community Champions programme was funded through COMF funding between October 2021 and April 2022.

This report brings together the evaluation and findings from both the programmes with the aim of:

- Reporting on the outcomes of the Community Champions Programme
- Highlighting the specific impact of Covid and health inequalities faced by Black communities in Northamptonshire
- Looking at the evidence to see 'what works' and how we can redress health and other inequalities experienced by Black communities in Northamptonshire.

There is a large body of evidence gathered in this report at an unprecedented time of Covid. We believe that there has not previously been such extensive and comprehensive gathering of evidential information regarding engagement with black communities, health inequalities faced by black communities and their experiences of accessing health and other services.

This work should be of real value as it offers an insight into how to reach black communities, help redress health and other inequalities and how services can be provided for black communities.

We also believe that the ICS Transformation plans and the focus on health inequalities by the public sector can be informed by this work.

2. Community Champions 1 MHCLG (April 2021- Sept 2021)

Support Northamptonshire (SN) worked with United African Association, Teamwork Trust and Made with Many to develop and deliver the first Community Champions programme. The key aims were:

- Recruiting Community Champions
- Covid messaging and vaccination support
- Wellbeing support

	SN Asha-Deep	UAA	Teamwork
Community Champions	9	6	6
COVID Messaging Reach	20,894	45,165	50 (Forum)
Vaccinations	240	364	-
Wellbeing & Vaccination Calls	250	1195	98
1-1 Support	8	1412	20
Wellbeing Support (Sessions)	153	34	19
Wellbeing Support (Participations)	2,990	732	154

Appendix 1: 1st Community Champions programme – MHCLG - Targets Achieved

References:

May 2021: Support Northamptonshire “The Disproportionate Impact of Covid-19 on BAME Communities” *A report presenting the findings of Support Northamptonshire’s Asha Deep project and a summary of published research*

February 2021 – September 2021: Support Northamptonshire “MHCLG Community Champions Programme Final Progress Report”

3. Community Champions 2 COMF (Oct 2021– April 2022)

3.1 Partners Involved



The partners for the 2nd Community Champions Programme funded through COMF were:

- Support Northamptonshire (SN) – Lead Partner and reach into Asian communities
- United African Association (UAA) – delivery partner for African and African-Caribbean Communities
- CPPP – reach into Bangladeshi communities mainly in Northampton

Wide range of support was provided which included support with:

- Vaccination uptake
- Lateral Flow Tests
- Health checks
- Covid messaging
- Wellbeing Calls
- GP Registrations
- Long Covid
- 121 support as required

3.2 Quality of Management data

We supported people and communities and used action research methodology to reach people, test and trial approaches and continuously improve our approach to achieve outcomes from this programme. We have provided detailed quantitative and qualitative data in this report. We believe that this report provides an extensive and comprehensive data on the experience and impact of Covid, and health inequalities experienced by black communities in n

We urge local and health authorities to work with us to accept these findings and use this as a key reference for shaping future services for black communities within the ICS and beyond.

3.3 Community Champions 2: Targets Achieved

	AshaDeep Community Champions	United African Association Community Champions
Community Champions	10 (5 volunteers)	7 (4 volunteers)

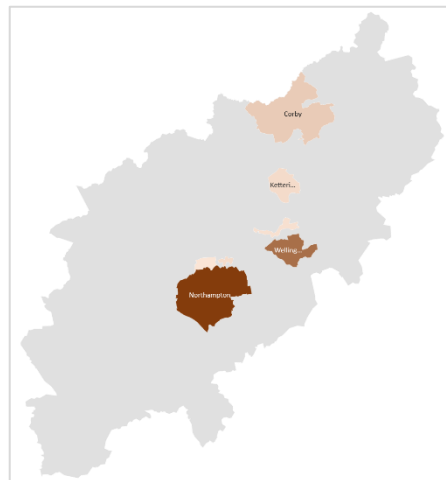
Community Champions Targets	Target Achieved	
Vaccination Clinic/ Covid Event/ Outreach	10	64
A huge amount of community outreach was carried out at community events, community shops and centres. Every opportunity was used where there were people from Asian, African & African-Caribbean communities attending to offer guidance and messaging on COVID safety.		
Number of People Vaccinated	5600	3914
Number of People Tested		
Number of People Supported to Observe Positive Behaviours		
Due to lack of community pharmacists, we have agreed that this target cannot be achieved. We have, in addition, supported people to observe positive behaviours which contributed towards this target. Huge efforts have been made by community champions to provide effective support and guidance.		
Covid Resources Distributed (LFTs, masks, sanitisers)	10000	59401
This target has been exceeded by 49,000. All opportunities were taken to distribute these resources effectively within communities and organisations. Communities really valued this practical support and enabled us to have community conversations.		
Door to Door Communications and wider promotions (Number)	13000	12818
This target was linked to vaccination clinics. We targeted specific areas and communities using the mapping tool from the UK government COVID stats website and this contributed towards wider promotions. We distributed 5,000 flyers across the county.		
Number of new GP registrations	50	51
The GP Registrations process demonstrated huge barriers to access, and the evaluation report provides details on this. However, the target was still achieved.		
Number of Health Checks Undertaken	100	154
This target has been exceeded and we identified significant community need to support people with health checks on a regular basis.		
Long COVID Referrals	20	85
We exceeded the target in providing information and messaging around long COVID within Black communities. However, this was very challenging given there are no clear pathways to Long COVID support.		
Supported People who are isolating	10	15
We have done a lot more than this target reflects around supporting people in isolation through all our wellbeing offers. Wellbeing sessions have been undertaken online throughout the whole COVID period.		
Conversations in targeted communities	1000	2173
We have exceeded the target for community conversations, and this has revealed community need, barriers to accessing services and peoples' experiences of COVID.		

3.4 Geographical areas of support

This county heat map shows where the activities took place, the darker the region, the more activities occurred in that region.

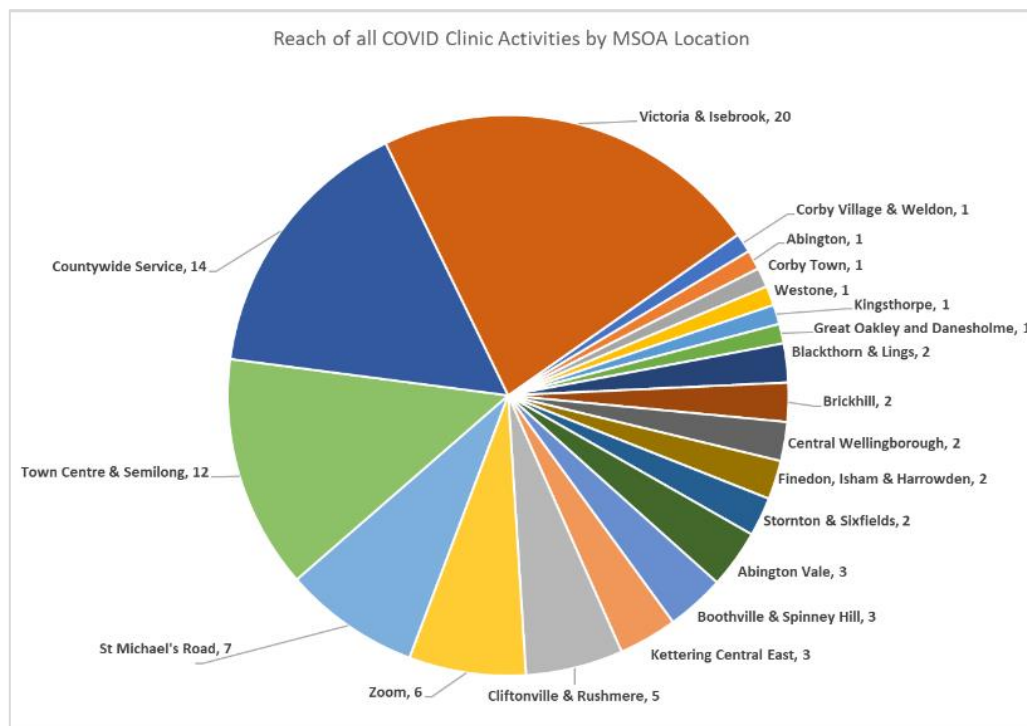
The regions targeted were:

1. Northampton
2. Wellingborough
3. Corby
4. Kettering



The following pie chart show the reach of the activities at MSOA level. Some information sessions were held over zoom. Some activities were country wide services such as:

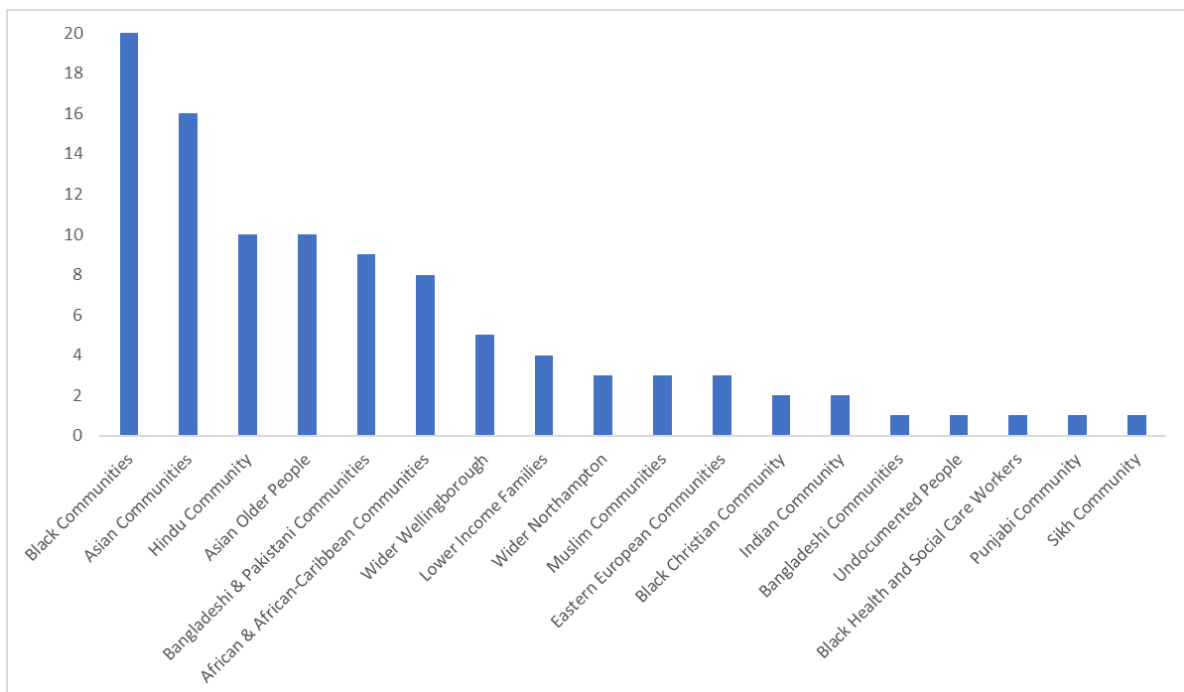
- Vaccination Shuttle Service
- GP Registration Support
- Long COVID Support
- Self-isolation Support
- 1-1 Community Conversations



3.5 Equalities monitoring

The following graph shows the communities in which our COVID clinics and activities had reach into. The height of the bar indicates the number of events and activities that were targeted to that community.

- Black Communities is defined as Asian, African and African-Caribbean Communities. All activities and events held by Community Champions were open to all but specifically targeted for black communities in specific locations.
- Asian Communities are defined as events that were targeted to predominantly Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Communities.
- Wider Communities are events that were held in public spaces and were open to all who passed although some of these events would be targeted for a particular community.
- Specific faith communities were targeted at events held by groups belonging to that certain group that the Community Champions attended.
- The events were targeted to men and women, predominantly adults aged 35 – 60 and 60+ (older people).



4. How we met the project priorities:

4.1 Recruitment of Community Champions from black communities

Asha-Deep 10 UAA 7 Total 17

The community champions recruited have had real reach in Asian, African, and African-Caribbean communities across Northamptonshire. They have managed to build high levels of trust and confidence amongst black communities because they are part of, and some were well known within communities. Community Champions have been extremely committed and gone out of their way to enable this programme to be delivered so successfully. We believe this approach of reaching out to communities through people known in communities and offering them training, mentoring and support is an important example of how to conduct community engagement and reach communities that would be otherwise not reached by public services.

There have been many lessons learnt through this approach and we would recommend building on this approach to support black communities.

4.2 Increase vaccination take up

People vaccinated, tested, and supported to observe safe behaviours Target: 5600 Achieved: 3914

We had made an excellent start to vaccination take up with the first Community Champions Programme. However, at the start of the 2nd programme after agreeing with a pharmacist to manage all our planned vaccination clinics, they were unable to support these events due to their capacity. We approached several other pharmacists within Northamptonshire and beyond, but they were either unable to support or wanted to charge for clinics which was not possible. Therefore, we had to adapt the way we supported vaccination take up. This included:

- High level of awareness building within Black communities
- Leading Covid safety events within black communities to raise awareness and post lock down ensure people could meet safely in groups.
- Taking people to appointments in groups
- Promoting existing clinics
- Supporting people with Lateral Flow Tests to encourage vaccination take-up
- One to one support to attend clinics especially where people were vulnerable.

Key issues and barriers to vaccination take-up

- If we had access to vaccination vans or pharmacists, we would have significantly increased take up of vaccinations amongst black communities. For example, our vaccination clinic in Northampton Market Square at the Diwali event attracted black communities and people from all communities as Community Champions were actively talking with people to reassure and persuade and we actively increased take up.
- Those people who were vaccine hesitant in black communities needed continued reassurance, personal support and easy to access clinics. Community Champions went out of their way to support people. The clinic at the Northampton Mosque was a good example of this and attracted some people who were vaccine hesitant or had not had their first vaccination.

- Some of those people in black communities who were vaccine hesitant needed to be reached and understood from within black communities. There were sensitive issues related to work, faith, mis-messaging, practical access, lack of targeted information or any information that affected take-up.
- The programme needed to be creative and adaptive in how to engage and communicate. We undertook an outreach campaign with Community Champions standing outside Asian, African and African-Caribbean shops which black communities visited regularly. This was very successful as we were able to offer PPE resources, offer Covid messages and conduct community conversations and assess community needs.
- We undertook 2173 community conversations, and this approach was very successful to gauge how communities were feeling, levels of anxiety and worries, level of access to support and services. For example, we met 2 people on Christmas Eve outside an Asian shop who were caring for vulnerable people, they were extremely anxious and were desperate for LFTs at a time when there was a real shortage of these. Through a video sent by the shop owner to his customers many people turned up for support. One of them called the support provided by Community Champions a 'God sent' and offered to become volunteer as the support she received from Community Champions had been 'life saving' for the person she was caring for.
- There are good lessons to learn regarding community engagement with black communities and the role of people from within these communities in facilitating this. This enables us to assess community needs and whether people are accessing support and services.

Appendix 2: Photos of Vaccination Take-Up

4.3 Increase in testing and health checks

The health check targets were linked to vaccination clinics as we had planned for health checks to be carried out by pharmacists. However, due to the lack of pharmacists for vaccination clinics we provided health checks at wellbeing events where possible.

Health Checks	
Target: 100	Achieved: 154

Key issues and barriers to health checks

- The health checks were really valued by people especially at wellbeing events. People appreciated being offered health checks or being referred onto other services. This is a service that should be made available as part of health prevention planning and at community events.
- The health checks also enabled us to have key conversations with people regarding their health concerns, offer support or suggest they contact health professionals for further support.
- We found that people from black communities will not ask for health checks from GPs and this method of offering health checks at wellbeing or community events enables ease of access and can raise awareness of health services and support available.
- There are health professionals from black communities, and many offered their services free of charge and wanted to support communities. This needs to be encouraged.

Appendix 3: Photos of Health Checks

4.4 Improve GP Registrations

GP Registrations Target:50 Achieved: 51

From the first Community Champions programme we realised that there was a real need for people who were undocumented to register with GPs. This was to support people to access information on vaccinations, health checks, receive primary and secondary care support. The target was to ensure that there was no disproportionate impact on people in black communities receiving Covid related and other health support who were undocumented.

There were significant barriers to this, and we raised concerns with Public health, CCG.

Key Aims of the GP Registration

- To enable people in the black communities to gain access to appropriate healthcare
- To ensure people have access to primary healthcare through GPs
- To identify barriers to GP registrations
- To document/case study individual experiences of GP registrations
- To provide a report for commissioners outlining what works and barriers to GP registrations

Key issues and barriers

- GP registration and Long Covid were the most challenging pieces of work in the Community Champions programme.
- We knew that undocumented people would like to register. Some were fearful as they think they will be reported to the Home Office, detained and deported. Others were using other people's IDs to register with GPs creating false medical records.
- We found that GP receptionists appeared to be one of the main barriers to undocumented people registering. They were insisting that they want ID, proof of address, something undocumented people are fearful of providing. As people were undocumented, they could not insist they have the right to register without the ID information as they were fearful of any immigration implications.
- Undocumented people who had the vaccine could not get the covid pass easily. Although they were now in the system (NHS registered) their previous covid jabs prior to being GP registered were not in the NHS system. GP were directing them to 119 and 119 were sending letters asking them to get vaccinated.
- Word of mouth is very strong within the African community. Once we registered a few people without facing too many obstacles the number of GP registrations would have increase rapidly.
- We raised the obstacles and barriers to GP registrations with the Steering Group and tried to get the CCG to write a letter of support so undocumented people could take this with them. This still did not generate the right response as there continued to be an insistence on ID. Health professionals were unable to resolve the issues.
- The Community Champion Co-ordinator leading this work thought outside the box and approached Doctors of the World – a group of black professionals who can facilitated, free of charge, GP registrations. With their help we managed to register 51 people.
- We believe that it should not have taken an outside agency to support GP registrations in Northamptonshire and that the barriers still remain.

Appendix 4: GP Registration flyers and case studies

4.5 Identify and support people with Long Covid

Long Covid	
Target 20	Achieved 85

Long Covid was a key target to ensure that black communities received support post Covid. We led online events with Asian doctors outlining the issues with Long Covid. We were contacted by the new Care Co-ordinator from NFHT's Long Covid Team to see how we can work together. We also approached Northamptonshire Carers who were lead Long-Covid online sessions to see if we could collaborate in people from black communities attending these sessions.

There were several key barriers to this, and concerns were raised with Public Health regarding this support. The Steering Group acknowledged that Long Covid support was not fully established or accessible for many people across the county.

Key issues and barriers

- The Community Champions programme held Long Covid awareness sessions which was attended by over **87** people.
- We tried to meet with those providing Long Covid support and held 4-5 meetings with various services. However, there were barriers to access due, for example, to the lack of GP capacity, a service needing a GP referral before being able to be accessed, the NFHT service were still recruiting staff and were relying on agency staff.
- This work was an example of how difficult it is to both identify services that exist and how to access these. This led to the Community Champions developing a separate awareness campaign regarding Long Covid and inviting black health professionals to support this.

Appendix 5: Long Covid flyers

4.6 Supporting people self-isolating

People self-isolating	
Target 10	Achieved 15

We supported people who were self-isolating due to Covid, we also supported people with wellbeing calls who were living alone or needed support.

Key issues and barriers

- We found people self-isolating and were cut off from the normal contacts of faith groups, family and friends in their communities. Community Champions visited people, offered resources and undertook wellbeing calls. This was an important part of the support so that we could pick up any escalation on need.
- People self-isolating were extremely grateful for support and required access to shopping or LFTs. For example, we received an urgent call over Christmas from Asian family (they knew about the Community Champions project from our awareness sessions) where the whole family had contracted Covid. They urgently needed LFTs and food shopping. One of the Community Champions was able to respond within an hour and supported the family until they came out of isolation. This support could be provided because the family knew about the project and had easy access to our contact details. We were then able to respond quickly and effectively.
- There was real anxiety regarding Covid and people required personal contact to be reassured or enabled to access other support.

- It was important to promote the project and the details of Community Champions so that those were isolating knew where to seek support.

4.7 Targeted Messaging and Communication

Communications with Black Communities Targets Reached		Total Reach for Project	
Social Media Reach Total	28000	30911	57282
Media Reach Total		16557	
Targeted Communications Total		9814	
Door to Door Communications and wider promotions (Number)	13000	12818	
This target was linked to vaccination clinics. We targeted specific areas and communities using the mapping tool from the UK government COVID stats website and this contributed towards wider promotions. We distributed 5,000 flyers across the county.			

We managed a targeted communications campaign for black communities and reached **57,282** against a target of 28000. Key methods which work for black communities are WhatsApp groups, communications at wellbeing events (online or in person), targeted leaflets and messaging and regular public announcements e.g. in Churches, Mosques, Temples. We also undertook door to door communications and leafletting.

Key Issues and barriers

- Between the partners we managed extensive reach into black communities through various communications means. We continuously built on these contacts and extended reach throughout the programme. This was an important aspect of the programme and we managed to increase and sustain reach black communities across Northamptonshire.
- A combination of personal contact and extensive use of mediums most used by black communities helped to reinforce Covid messaging and provide support.
- We also combined this approach with attending shops, community events, faith centre and showed direct visibility.
- There is a lot to learn from this work regarding engagement with black communities and how to communicate effectively with them and this needs to include a combination of personal contact with trusted staff and reinforcement of messaging and information.

Appendix 6: Targeted Communications with Black Communities

4.8 Community Conversations

We facilitated **2173 community conversations** through **64 outreach events** with black communities against a target of 1000 and 10 respectively. We also undertook **50 questionnaires** with members of Asian, African and African Caribbean Communities. The community conversations, outreach events and questionnaires were probably one of the biggest exercises in engaging with black communities across Northamptonshire that may have taken place. They reveal key issues and offers insight into the experiences of black communities in respect of Covid, access to services and but generally their experience of health inequalities.

Key issues and barriers

- This exercise was one of the most successful in engaging with black communities.
- We accessed people through attendance at shops, community events and other known places e.g. black community Churches, Temples and Mosques.

- We achieved real insight into the experiences of people during Covid and based on what people said were able to gauge community needs and concerns and respond to these quickly.
- The analysis of the community conversations and the questionnaires can inform future response to health and other inequalities.

4.9 Case study of the positive impact of the COMF

Through the Community Champions programme we have gathered extensive intelligence and information regarding the experiences of black communities during Covid but also their experiences of accessing support.

Key issues:

- There is a reliance on family and community networks for support. While this suggests levels of resilience, our experience was also that people are not aware of support available for them from formal services. This was evident from the online information sessions, one to one community conversations and the networks built up through the programme for Asian, African, and African-Caribbean communities.
- The experience of the Community Champions programme suggests that people in black communities will not access support independently – this is because they are unaware of support available, would need to know someone who they know and trust to enable access and services and support would need to meet their specific needs.

The Community Champions programme demonstrates the need for specific services for black communities but also the need for enabling access to existing services which people often did not know existed.

Key issues and barriers

- People in black communities are not accessing the range of services available.
- People are often unaware of services available
- Services need to be developed that can enable equal access i.e., need to be culturally and linguistically appropriate and in some instance provided by people from within black communities. E.g. people self-isolating, needing access to Covid resources/PPE, GP registrations, Long Covid support.
- People who have extensive reach in communities and understand these communities are often in the best place to enable equal access.
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Appendix 7: shows case studies of 20 out of 64 outreach activities

Appendix 8: Detailed analysis of the community conversations and outcomes from the questionnaires and focus groups.

5.Total expenditure in providing the provision.

Staff and management costs	77,726
Access, messaging and communications	7453
Vaccination clinics	1800
Final report and presentations	500
SN overheads	8748
Total costs	96227