



A NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN RESPONSE TO A NATIONAL EMERGENCY

Members of the African and Caribbean communities across the UK took part in a historical virtual meeting via video conferencing; a collective response to the Coronavirus pandemic (also known as COVID-19). The meeting was hosted by the Manchester-based Caribbean African Health Network (CAHN).

This event was held on Friday, 17th April 2020, to mutually support each other in such challenging times and prepare for a post-COVID-19 world.

Despite making up just 13 per cent of the UK population, a third of patients who have fallen critically ill with COVID-19 are from African, Caribbean, and other minority groups.

As a small business adviser and a community activist, I was pleased to be a part of this virtual meeting with health professionals, youth workers, social workers, community workers, religious ministers, academics, community radio station operators, business owners and others.

There was a call for community radio station operators to work collaboratively to share the Government and local health authorities' guidance on the COVID-19 lockdown measures, reinforcing the message to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives. The sharing of information from other reliable sources such as local African and Caribbean health and social care providers was also suggested.

The Caribbean African Health Network (CAHN) has pledged to continue to host similar virtual meetings around health and social care matters. There was also a call for a WhatsApp group as part of the collective response to COVID-19, facilitating the sharing of information and good practices as well as allowing for mutual support.

Under the banner of the "African Caribbean Communities UK Collective Response to COVID-19", there will be promotions of other virtual meetings/webinars from around the UK which will be raising awareness and providing "Calls-to-Action" on matters pertaining to social distancing, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), at-risk groups, shielding, self-isolation, homeworking, support for business owners, employees, Windrush Generations Dialogues, new graduates and more.