

# Health Issues *in the Community*

**“Changing lives – Changing  
Communities”**

## **Health Issues in the Community Conference Report 2013**



**The annual Health Issues in the Community” was held in Glasgow on the 20<sup>th</sup> June this year. This year’s conference welcomed both tutors and students to a day which both celebrated their achievements and looked forward to how we can take HIIC forward over the next few years.**

We were particularly pleased to have Jane Jones as the Chair for the day as it was Jane who initially wrote and developed the HIIC course and she ensured that the day was both fun as well as thought provoking.

As the title for the day suggests our emphasis was on highlighting the positive impact HIIC can have on the lives of individuals and, as a consequence, how that translates into change within communities. The day also provided an opportunity for tutors and students to have an input into the future development of HIIC.

## **Presentations**

### **Morning**



In the first morning session, “Changing Lives”, we had a Q and A session, facilitated by Dave Allan: SCDC, with four course participants who spoke about what difference participating in the HIIC had made to them. Although each had

participated in different courses in different parts of the country there was a commonality in their experience of HIIC.

Alan, one of the first school pupils to obtain accreditation for HIIC, spoke of the confidence and insights HIIC had given him and how it had promoted his interest in politics to such an extent that he is now an active member of the Scottish Youth Parliament. Alan recently made a speech at the Youth Parliament promoting HIIC as a course for all young people.

Patricia reflected on HIIC as a means through which she had been able to become more integrated into her community; to understand the issues within that community and to take an active part in helping to resolve those issues.

Linda Jane was very clear that HIIC had brought out her confidence and an ability to speak out and challenge issues and authority when she felt “things” were wrong and required change.

Andrew, a young carer, spoke of the challenges faced by young carers and how through his work with HIIC he had helped devise a method through which service providers would have a more rounded awareness of the needs of the whole family rather than just the person who required the care.



Each, in their own way, had found that the course had given them more self-confidence, an ability critically appraise their situation (both as individuals and as part of a community) and perhaps most importantly the self-belief to take action to change their life circumstances.

## **Afternoon**

Runima Kakati, a HIIC core tutor, facilitated the afternoon session, “Changing Communities, where 3 course participants from North Glasgow explained how, after having completing HIIC, they had gone on to become actively involved in community issues.

Sandra spoke about how she and a friend, Louise, who did the course with her, used the skills they had learned in the course to bring together children from two local gangs who had caused considerable problems in the community through their fighting. Their intervention of listening to and working with the children has led to the end of the violence between the two groups and has created a much more peaceful community.



In addition Sandra spoke of the confidence HIIC had given her to join the Board of her local Housing Association and actively participate in their decision making activities. She has also just started a course in

Housing Finance and attributes HIIC as the impetus to take on this challenge.

She finished off by saying that Louise, who had agreed to speak at the conference, could not attend because she had just started a job and Louise had asked her to make her apologies and also say how much HIIC had helped her to get to the point where she had the confidence to get back into employment.

Meg related how her HIIC research had fuelled an interest in the issue of Elderly Addictions and the fact that health services were not addressing this serious issue. She not only contacted and spoke to providers about this issue but went on to arrange a large conference to explore the issue in more depth and subsequently influenced the developing addictions policy in North Glasgow ensuring that the problem of addiction among the elderly were addressed.

Johnny spoke of his own addiction issues and how HIIC had helped him on his road to recovery. A skilled photographer Johnny has developed a photographic exhibition showing the “dark side of addiction” which is touring a number of public buildings and raising public awareness of the problems of addiction.

In addition Jonny has become actively involved in a wide range of community activities to such an extent that he has won an award for his contribution to the community.

Bringing the lessons of both morning and afternoon presentations together Runima highlighted how the individual learning from HIIC led people to get more concerned about community issues and to get actively involved in seeking to change things for the better. Runima used examples from the individual contributions made throughout the day to reinforce the concept of “ripples spreading across a pond” where increased confidence, self-esteem and critical thinking had led course participants to positively reappraise their own situation and that of their community leading them to action to change things for the better.

She also pointed out that the great experiences related in both sets of presentations during the day were being replicated by course participants across the country.

## **Workshops**

There were two sets of workshops during the day with one set in the morning and then repeated in the afternoon in order to give as many people the chance to attend the ones they were interested in. The workshops were:



## **Workshop 1: “HIIC to infinity and beyond: Where now what now for HIIC”**



Facilitated by Charlotte Macintosh, a HIIC tutor, this workshop looked to reflect on the changes to HIIC over the last few years and more importantly gain input from tutors and students as to how we can promote and

grow HIIC over the coming few years.

This was a very participative workshop with those taking part initially asked to come up with words to describe HIIC. Here are some of their words:

**Enlightening, Inspiration, Thought provoking, Innovative, Empowering, Cohesive, Informative, Challenging, Fun, Connecting, Developmental, Practical, Influencing, Adaptable**

In terms of the future development of HIIC workshop participants made an extensive number of suggestions including:

Targeting schools, colleges and other groups

Relax reliance on literacy

More promotion of the fun interesting aspects of the course

Make tutor training available on – line

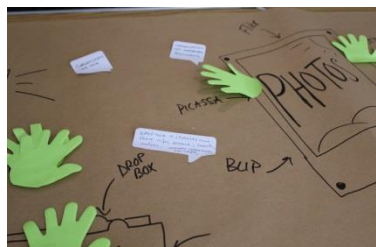
Create incentives to get friends and family involved

Have a lower accreditation level available

Get HIIC part of continuing professional development within the statutory sector

These are only a few of the many suggestions made and we will, of course, go through all of them to see what we can practicably take forward.

## **Workshop 2: “Techno HIIC”**



Facilitated by Olivia Hanley, SCDC, this workshop took a very practical approach to how both tutors and course participants could use social media to either promote HIIC or as an aid to completing their course work.

During the course of the workshop Olivia took participants through a range of different types of social media identifying how they could be used effectively to support HIIC.

Those participating in the workshop said they found it both interesting and a useful addition to their knowledge.

Olivia had a number of requests for details on the various social media formats she introduced at the workshop and is compiling a fact sheet which will be sent out to conference attendees shortly. This will also help to inform CHEX’s forthcoming briefing paper on social media.

## **Workshop 3: The Future is HIIC: HIIC for young people**

Kathleen Walker and Elaine Crosbie, tutors from North/South Lanarkshire led this workshop based on their experience of working with young people both in and out of the school setting. The workshop was particularly timely as it came just a few months after the successful launch of a revised HIIC pack specifically developed for use with young people.

Workshop participants were invited to discuss the relevance of HIIC to young people



in Scotland. Inevitably discussion focused on the continuing social and economic challenges families, and by definition, young people face and how HIIC can help young people understand themselves and wider society better.

## **Conference Overview**

HIIC conferences are always fun, enlightening and reaffirming. They allow tutors a chance to get together both informally and formally to chat about the work they are doing and swap ideas and thoughts. It is very much the same for students – it's a chance to hear about the work carried out during the course and what difference the course has made to them, their families and their communities. For all it is a chance to share thoughts and ideas as to how we keep HIIC fresh and continually developing. We will use the contributions made during the day to shape the future development of HIIC.

## **Special thanks to:**

The course participants for sharing their stories thoughts and views in the presentations

Facilitators for presentations and workshops

Dennis for the song

NHS Health Scotland – CHEX funders

Jane Jones for keeping the day on track and pulling the many strands of the day together with a comprehensive overview at the end.