



A SASH Consultation day was organised on 29 October 2012 to develop a work plan and strategy for South Asian Sexual Health (SASH) Voluntary Organisation. A number of participants who attended the meeting made significant and positive contributions to the consultation.

The initial part of the morning was spent introducing the group to SASH, including a brief history of its inception. The meeting entailed discussions around the potential role and mandate of SASH especially in the current climate of shrinking resources and ever-growing need. How SASH could potentially take grounded approach in understanding the needs and lived realities of South Asian Diasporic Communities in the UK. The major questions initiated were the role SASH could play in breaking the stereotypes (both positive and negative) of South Asians and how SASH could contribute at programme and policy levels for positive sexual health outcomes. The meeting unpacked several underlying determinants that affect South Asians sexual health in the UK. It was indicated that health is affected by many social reasons and these societal issues should be addressed by conducting research and making impacts at policy levels.

### **Major Outcomes:**

It was felt that SASH should concentrate on the South Asian Diaspora (around the world). The consensus over the South Asian term was gained. The group South Asian includes Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Nepali, Sri Lankan and Afghan. But these should be seen in heterogeneity.

SASH will target both men and women aged 15-45 years old.

SASH will focus on the following strands that relate to sexual health directly and indirectly:

- Gender, including the possibility of working with men, not just women
- Culture- its impact on structural and systemic violence, patriarchy and oppression
- Gender based Violence in all its forms
- Religion and the role of fundamentalist values
- Identity, including the importance of working with those who self-identify as South Asian
- Race and Ethnicity
- Migration
- Age
- Government policies in the UK and how they impact on the sexual health and choices of the South Asian diaspora and produce inequalities in terms of access and utilisation of sexual health services and resources
- Environment/Location

SASH will deal with issues such as:

- Teenage Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Sex Education
- Access to and Use of Contraception
- Health Inequalities – access, delivery and research
- Parental Domestic Violence
- Gender based violence
- Sexual Abuse

SASH will work towards creating:

- A Resource bank of successful interventions from South Asian countries, including media and advocacy-based projects.
- A Pool of organisations who work with South Asian communities on one or more of the strands mentioned above that determines individual's sexual health. A database of research based information to identify the gaps in the knowledge around South Asian's sexual health. What is missing and how we could bridge that gap with the help of information gathered. Partnership and Network with other organisation.
- Skill based training programmes for professionals working on sensitive issues with minority groups.

Towards the end of the day, the group felt it would be useful to divide the remit of this group into 3 wide areas of focus. These are Policy, Funding and Programmes. It was felt that some of our actions for the future could include:

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Programme</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Training activities</li><li>▪ Policy Watchdog</li><li>▪ Creating pool of organisations</li><li>▪ Learning from existing settings (Organisations and healthcare workers)</li><li>▪ Generating focus groups</li><li>▪ Checklist for the policy makers</li><li>▪ Producing and Generating Research/Data</li><li>▪ Sharing research/information</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Partnership with other organisations</li><li>▪ Mapping of other women/sexual health organisations</li><li>▪ By delivering and preparing training/workshops</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Creating a resource bank</li><li>▪ Training programmes</li><li>▪ Steer group management</li><li>▪ Re-engagement within South Asian community</li><li>▪ Preparing parents/young persons for decision making (to get rid of fear factor) in accessing health care services</li><li>▪ Dealing with issues of increasing influence of media</li></ul>

**Key potential organisations for partnership and funding:**

- The British Asian Trust ( <http://www.britishasiantrust.org/> )
- Asian Foundation for Philanthropy ( <http://www.affp.org.uk/> )
- NAZ Project London ( <http://www.naz.org.uk/> )
- Ashiana Network ( <http://www.ashiana.org.uk/> )
- Positive East ( <http://www.positiveeast.org.uk/> )
- TH-CASH ( <http://www.sho-me.nhs.uk/> )