

Know Your HIV Status Football Tournament LASS (Leicestershire AIDS Support Service)

Organised by LASS (Leicestershire AIDS Support Service), the Know Your HIV Status took place at the Emerald Centre, Leicester on 24 July 2011. The event aimed to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS, 'kick out' stigma and discrimination, and increase rapid HIV testing amongst African communities.

The event targeted African men, who statistics have shown are often reluctant to be involved in HIV and AIDS issues and are not forthcoming when it comes to HIV testing, by combining this with their love of football.

12 teams from across the Midlands, including Leicester and Nottingham, participated on the day, with players from

the African countries of Gambia, Somalia, Nigeria, Malawi, Cameroon and Zimbabwe. A further four teams were turned away, due to team available team spaces being exceeded.

The LASS rapid response HIV testing van was on site at the tournament, with 'I Know My HIV Status' bronze medals offered as an incentive to the first 20 African men tested. Boosting their newfound knowledge and singing and dancing in celebration, those tested encouraged their friends to also do so. In total 29 African men and three African women were tested for HIV on the day.

In addition, the LASS Sexual Health African Communities Outreach Worker offered team, group and individual HIV awareness interventions and emphasised the importance of HIV testing.



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The tournament itself was won by Coventry Warriors, who beat Luton in the final and received a winners trophy and 17 gold medals. Luton walked away with 17 silver awards, with the three match referees also receiving individual gold medals.

The highly successful event continued late into the evening with a barbeque, provided by LASS, Zimbabwe Association volunteers and Gochi Gochi Africa, and social networking.

LASS is an independent voluntary organisation set up in 1987 to provide a range of services for people in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland infected or affected by HIV. They work to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote positive sexual health through education, training and community initiatives. By working together with other agencies, they play a major role in developing a coordinated response to the challenges of HIV and AIDS.

“This is a record, the largest number of people tested in a single day since the inception of the community rapid HIV testing at LASS in June 2009”

Celia Fisher, Sexual Health Coordinator, LASS

The LASS rapid HIV testing service, launched in June 2009, offers confidential results within one minute. When launched, the free service was the first of its kind in the country.

For further information on LASS visit www.lass.org.uk, email reception@lass.org.uk or telephone 0116 255 9995.