



NDUKAUBA

Life is greater



JOLLOF NIGHTS

**STRATEGIC NHS VALUE &
COST AVOIDANCE REPORT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From the moment we opened Headlinerz Barbershop in 2018, one of our core values was to create a truly community-centred space. Building on this vision, we began self-funding Jollof Nights (formerly Thursday Night Jollof) in 2021. Since then, the programme has grown and is now active in three additional barbershops across the borough of Greenwich. Jollof Nights is a culturally rooted, peer-led health engagement model that supports the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of African, Caribbean, and mixed-heritage men.

Following a successful pilot, we are now seeking £450,000 to scale the model over the next three years. This document outlines the programme's proven impact in tackling health inequalities, reducing downstream NHS costs, and delivering real-time community insights.

ABOUT THE MODEL

Jollof Nights combines peer-led group conversations, culturally tailored health education, and informal screening in trusted community spaces. Sessions are co-designed, food-centred, and delivered by Jollof Nights model-trained facilitators and barbers. These gatherings create safe, affirming environments where men can openly explore topics such as mental health, suicide prevention, fatherhood, perinatal mental health, sexual health and HIV prevention, emotional and physical wellbeing, stress, loneliness, finances, masculinity, grief, and general wellbeing.

The model includes:

- Routine and daily high blood pressure checks in trusted spaces
- Signposting and dual referral pathways with NHS and community systems
- Follow-up through the Jollof Nights Connects app and a gamified health education app that supports behavioural tracking and insight collection (currently under development)

During sessions, men gather like a family meeting, sharing meals, especially our signature Jollof rice, which serves as a culturally resonant anchor. The familiarity of this dish fosters a deep sense of belonging and brotherhood, creating the psychological safety needed for honest, vulnerable conversations to unfold.

The session is formally opened by the facilitator who is always a trusted, non-clinical community leader, who sets the tone by reminding participants of the ground rules:

“Nothing you say here today is considered right or wrong. Everyone has the right to speak, be heard, and have their opinion respected without judgement. Pushbacks must be done respectfully, and only when it's your turn to speak. What we say here stays here - video recording or sharing another man's story is strictly prohibited.”

We also invite system professionals to co-design and co-facilitate special Q&A segments. In line with our men's-only policy, these professionals must be male.

Toward the end of each session, we collect attendance and anonymous feedback to help inform and refine future sessions. Meetings are intentionally capped at 30 men to ensure deeper, more meaningful engagement and to provide equitable space for rotational participation.

Because of the organic and emotionally honest nature of Jollof Nights, discussions often go beyond pre-set themes. As emotions rise and buried wounds surface, we begin to witness what we call “the cracks”, these are those moments when masks come off, guards drop, and healing begins. These sessions become powerful mirrors where men feel seen, heard, and supported by others who genuinely care and are vulnerable too.

It is the revival of the African and Caribbean community spirit, rooted in culture and tradition, that helps restore the trust and healing our people have long needed. Community is the best therapy we have, especially when it feels like we’ve been displaced from our cultural habitat and placed into marginalised environments where trust in systems has broken down. That disconnection takes a toll mentally, emotionally, and physically, and is compounded by long-standing economic disadvantage.

At the end of the day, a successful Jollof Nights session is not defined by numbers, but by transformation. If just one man leaves feeling lighter, having heard someone articulate a struggle he thought he faced alone, or finds comfort in a new perspective and chooses to come back next time and bring a friend, then that night has fulfilled its purpose.

This is Jollof Nights, my friends

CURRENT ACTIVITY AND SCALE-UP PLAN

We have just concluded a successful pilot in Greenwich across four barbershops. Between February and June 2025, a total of 9 Jollof Nights sessions were delivered across 4 barbershops in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. We had 187 attendees, and collected feedback from over 100 men.

The proposed expansion will scale the programme across the five boroughs of South East London—Bexley, Southwark, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Greenwich—to reach 7,000 men over three years. Together, these boroughs have a combined population of approximately 1.8 million, with Black men comprising a significant and growing segment of the community ([Office for National Statistics, 2021](#)). In some areas within these boroughs, up to 20% of the male population identify as Black African or Black Caribbean, compared to around 3% nationally.

Black men in South East London face disproportionately high rates of chronic health conditions, including hypertension and type 2 diabetes, often developing these conditions earlier and with more severe complications than their White counterparts ([NHS Digital, 2023](#)). Mental health challenges are also more prevalent and frequently underdiagnosed in this group due to cultural stigma and barriers to accessing care.

These health disparities are compounded by socioeconomic factors - Black men are more likely to experience unemployment, housing insecurity, and poverty, all of which increase vulnerability to poor physical and mental health outcomes. This context highlights the urgent need for culturally grounded, peer-led interventions like Jollof Nights to expand its reach.

Currently, our work centres on adult men, but we're excited to grow the impact by introducing a youth programme for boys in schools, particularly those at risk of exclusion or presenting with early signs of mental health challenges. In the UK, Black Caribbean pupils are 3.5 times more likely to be permanently excluded than their White British peers, while Black pupils overall face disproportionately high suspension rates, especially in areas like South East London, which has the highest school exclusion rate in London (20 per 100,000 pupils compared to the London average of 18 per 100,000) (NW Londoner, 2025; Integrated, 2020). By targeting boys from Black and mixed heritage backgrounds, particularly those showing early signs of exclusion or mental health concerns, we aim to build resilience, keep them connected to school, and redirect their pathways toward positive futures through early intervention.

WHAT THE INVESTMENT COVERS

- Suicide prevention and mental health crisis aversion through early intervention
- Early, non-clinical mental health support with no waiting times or referrals needed
- Emotional health check-ins and peer-led safe spaces
- High blood pressure checks and physical wellbeing screening
- Health education on cardiovascular and other chronic disease risks for populations most at risk.
- Real-time data on behaviour and engagement via app
- Signposting to NHS services and community resources
- Health promotion in trusted spaces like barbershops, football clubs, universities, worship centres or other community spaces where trust already exists.
- Integrated peer-led sexual health and HIV prevention messaging and signposting
- Youth programme targeting young people most at risk of exclusion and mental health difficulties

NHS COST AVOIDANCE ESTIMATE

CONSERVATIVE SCENARIO (UP TO 10% DIVERSION RATE)

Scenario	No. Diverted	NHS Cost/Case (£)	Estimated Savings (£)
GP Mental Health Consultation	700	£45	£31,500
IAPT (6-session CBT course)	700	£1,500	£1,050,000
A&E Mental Health Crisis Visit	700	£450	£315,000
Emergency Psychiatric Admission	42	£4,500	£189,000
Avoided Undiagnosed HIV Infections	10 (fixed)	£360,000	£3,600,000
Suicide Prevention (Averted Case)	1 (fixed)	£1,700,000	£1,700,000
Hypertension Detection & Prevention	700	£1000	£700,000

Total Estimated NHS Savings (10% Diversion + HIV + Suicide Prevention): £7,585,500

PILOT-INFORMED SCENARIO (UP TO 50% DIVERSION RATE)

Based on pilot findings where over 50% of participants reported positive changes, including improved wellbeing and peer engagement.

Scenario	No. Diverted	NHS Cost/Case (£)	Estimated Savings (£)
GP Mental Health Consultation	3,500	£45	£157,500
IAPT (6-session CBT course)	3,500	£1,500	£5,250,000
A&E Mental Health Crisis Visit	3,500	£450	£1,575,000
Emergency Psychiatric Admission	210	£4,500	£945,000
Avoided Undiagnosed HIV Infections	10 (fixed)	£360,000	£3,600,000
Suicide Prevention (Averted Case)	1 (fixed)	£1,700,000	£1,700,000
Hypertension Detection & Prevention	3500	1000	£3,500,000

Total Estimated NHS Savings (50% Diversion + HIV + Suicide Prevention): £16,727,500

HUMAN IMPACT

“It changed the way i view mental health and how a community can come together and help combat challenging aspect in my life”

Dwane - regular attendee

“I find Thursday night Jollof as a great place to meet people and talk about a range of issues in a safe space. All opinions are welcome, healthy debate is encouraged. Thursday night Jollof encompasses a community environment for all shapes, sizes and colours to come and have a chat and to eat some delicious African food. I have had a doctors referral to Oxleas and engage with their medical practitioners who support me with a few personal issues. However, Thursday night Jollof makes me feel part of something. I no longer feel alone in Greenwich. I always feel I pop into Headlinerz barbershop and be met with a nice smile, something to drink and a chat. Even on days we don't have Thursday night Jollof. Jesse is doing a great thing for the community of Greenwich. He is a great help to many.”

Kofi - Regular attendee

“You Saved My Life” – Real-Time Hypertension Discovery Through Jollof Nights

Samson, a regular client of Headlinerz Barbershop, participated in one of our routine on-the-spot blood pressure screenings offered in the barbershop. This led to the detection of a critically high blood pressure reading:

Systolic: 223 mmHg | Diastolic: 124 mmHg | Pulse: 74 bpm
(Normal range: $\leq 140/90$ mmHg for adults)

This reading falls into the category of Hypertensive Crisis, posing immediate risk of stroke, heart failure, or kidney damage. Samson was urgently advised to seek medical attention.

The following morning, at 6:15 AM, the client messaged:

“Bro you saved my life. If not for you, I'd never have known about this. I'm at hospital now.” (Shared with permission).

Samson has now had treatment for his high blood pressure and is having ongoing monitoring via his GP practice.



This case is not an isolated story—it reflects what the data already shows: many African and Caribbean men remain unaware of silent killers like hypertension until it's too late. These conditions often go undetected until they lead to emergency admissions, strokes, or worse.

However, trust-based, culturally grounded interventions—especially in barbershops and community settings—break down clinical barriers and create safe spaces for life-saving conversations and screenings.

The impact is clear. A £30 digital blood pressure monitor, combined with the trusted relationships built through Jollof Nights, can prevent a stroke, avoid a £4,500 emergency admission, and ultimately save lives.

SUMMARY

Our approach aligns seamlessly with ICS priorities and neighbourhood-based health delivery models, responding directly to the NHS Confederation's recommendation to increase investment in prevention, a strategy estimated to yield £11 billion in returns across the UK health system (NHS Confederation, 2023). Jollof Nights is ready to be embedded as a scalable, trusted frontline component of this preventative NHS strategy across South East London.

With a total investment of £450,000 to reach 7,000 men, the cost per participant is just £64.29. Each £1 invested delivers an estimated £25.62 in NHS savings, amounting to a projected return on investment of 2,462%. These savings come from reduced demand on mental health services, avoided A&E and emergency psychiatric admissions, and prevention of undiagnosed HIV cases. More than economic value, this model builds public trust and enables earlier, culturally attuned interventions in communities.

Jollof Nights works. We have already engaged over 1000 men since its inception in 2021, identified life-threatening conditions early, and restored trust in care, right from the barbershop. With this proven solution, an investment of £450,000 can scale our reach to 7,000 men across South East London, generating up to £16.7 million in NHS savings.

Now is the time to back a programme that delivers real impact, strong economic value, and lasting community trust. Join us in transforming health outcomes for African, Caribbean, and mixed heritage men.

Let's not pause what's already saving lives.
Back Jollof Nights now - because prevention can't wait.

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