



THE AFIYA TRUST

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday 18 June 2012

PRESS RELEASE...PRESS RELEASE...PRESS RELEASE

Chief Executive of The Afiya Trust dedicates OBE honour to Windrush generation parents, awarded for his commitment to combating health inequalities

Patrick Vernon, CEO of The Afiya Trust and Hackney Councillor in Queensbridge, is to be awarded an OBE for his commitment to working to combat health inequalities for black and minority ethnic communities.

Mr Vernon plans to dedicate his OBE to his parents, Norris and Avis Vernon, who were part of the Windrush generation. His announcement follows the statement of the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

For more than 20 years Mr Vernon's career in health and social care has taken various paths, in particular it has been dedicated to campaigning to address health inequality for all minority groups.

Mr Vernon was the former Non Executive Director for East London and the City Health Authority and Chair of City and Hackney Drugs Action Team. He has held various roles such as Regional Director for London and South East England for Mind, NHS Director of Brent Health Action Zone) and a Non Executive Director for City and East London Health Authority, Trustee for Social Action for Health.

Patrick Vernon said: "I am dedicating this honour to my parents who were part of the Windrush Generation, they made a lot of personal sacrifices coming to Britain and raising my four sisters and I. It is also great to receive this award which also coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Independence of Jamaica."

"There is still more to do particularly around the new changing structure of the NHS and the role of local government in leading on public health. The work of The Afiya Trust and other organisations will be important to make the business case on how equalities and health inequalities should be combined around service development and commissioning. I hope that I will be in the position to use my OBE to further advance these issues and promote my experiences as a leader to support others wishing to develop their career in the health and social care sector," **continued Mr Vernon.**



THE AFIYA TRUST

Sola Afuape, Chair of The Afiya Trust, said: “It is with great pleasure we welcome the news of Patrick’s receipt of this honour. This is apt recognition of his tireless work advocating for the rights, health and well being of BME communities across the country. As CEO of The Afiya Trust he has been unstinting in pressing for major reforms to health and social care and challenging the barriers to equality of access and provision for all. As a close family at The Afiya Trust we would like to congratulate Patrick on receiving this honour and will support his continued efforts on behalf of BME communities.”

The OBE is expected to be awarded to Mr Vernon by the Queen at Buckingham Palace in December.

mf...

Cllr Sandra Samuels, Cabinet Member for Health and Well Being in Wolverhampton said: "This honour for Patrick is a long time coming. It is absolutely fantastic news. Patrick has worked tirelessly for The Afiya Trust and for communities across the country. The more Patricks we have in this world the better our communities will benefit from it. The work that The Afiya Trust is doing is benefiting communities up and down the country. Patrick's knowledge base in health is fantastic and it translates from the work Afiya is doing in London to how these experiences can be beneficial to communities in places like Wolverhampton."

In 2010 the Chalkhill Health Living Centre in Brent, a multimillion GP and community health centre near Wembley Stadium, named their main community hall 'The Vernon Hall' in recognition of his work with local residents.

-Ends-

NOTES TO EDITORS

Patrick Vernon and is Chief Executive of The Afiya Trust, a leading national BME health charity. In 2007 to 2009 Patrick was Chief Executive of North West London Community Foundation. Patrick was head hunted by the Department of Health to be part of the Health Inequality Unit which developed the first ever government strategy in tackling health inequalities called Programme for Action in 2003. Patrick also contributed to the The White Paper on Public health in 2004. He is also a former Non Executive Director for East London and The City Health Authority, and Independent Chair of Westminster Partnership for Race Equality where he played a key role with the Met Police and the Muslim community in the aftermath of 7/7 bombings in Westminster.

The Afiya Trust (www.afiyatrust.org.uk) is a national charity that works to reduce inequalities in health and social care provision for people from racialised communities. The Afiya Trust



THE AFIYA TRUST

generates, supports and maintains national and local networks concerned with the promotion of BME health and social care equality issues including the National BME Mental Health Network. The charity produces research and disseminates information to the health, social care and BME health sectors, and also liaises with central government departments to ensure that BME issues are addressed at policy level.

MEDIA CONTACT

To request interviews or additional information, contact Samantha Watson, Communications Officer:

T: 0207 582 0444 **Mb:** 07961 560 200 **E:** Samantha.watson@afiya-trust.org