# Black Thrive
## Impact Report 2023-2024

blackthrive.org

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# Black Thrive Global

## Introduction to Black Thrive

Black Thrive envisions a society where Black communities flourish, free from the systemic racism and barriers that limit their opportunities. Our mission is to drive impactful change and empower Black communities to lead solutions that address mental health inequalities. We strive to address systemic inequalities that negatively impact the mental health and well-being of Black people of African and Caribbean descent – communities which experience significant disparities in mental health services access, quality of care, and outcomes, largely due to racism, stigma, and institutional failures.

Our organisation-wide aims include achieving racial equity in mental health by dismantling structural barriers and advocating for equitable policies and practices through culturally appropriate frameworks. We are committed to implementing the Patient and Carer Race Equity Framework (PCREF), NHS England's first anti-racism framework, mandatory for all NHS mental health trusts and mental health service providers across England. We empower communities through collaboration by fostering partnerships and ensuring Black voices are central to decision-making. We promote transparency and accountability by creating tools to enhance data accessibility and advocate for improved transparency in policing and community outcomes. Additionally, we create sustainable opportunities by supporting the economic well-being of Black communities through skill-building and employment-focused initiatives.

Our organisation-wide goals include establishing a national hub for data, research, and thought leadership on racial equity and mental health. We strive to embed racial equity within systems change through collaborative efforts with public institutions and initiatives promoting equitable and tailored mental health support. We amplify community voices by creating platforms that empower Black communities to lead change. We drive accountability across institutions by developing tools to track institutional performance on racial equity while advocating for policy changes.

We are working in specific locations such as Lambeth, Haringey, and Birmingham to improve mental health outcomes and tackle systemic challenges by focusing on community engagement, youth empowerment, education, and culturally sensitive mental health services.

**At the core of our work is a commitment to equity, collaboration, empowerment, and accountability.**

# A Letter From our CEO

As we reflect on the past year, I am proud of what we have accomplished together in advancing racial equity through systemic change. It has been a year of both achievement and learning, underscoring our unwavering commitment to the communities we serve.

## Strengthening Our Foundations

We have continued to enhance our organisational capacity, embedding research as a cornerstone of our work. By integrating strategic guidance and rigorous evaluation processes, our research team has streamlined workflows, improved outcomes, and deepened our understanding of effective community engagement.

## Driving Systemic Change

Black Thrive Global (BTG) is committed to implementing the Patient and Carer Race Equity Framework (PCREF).

Additionally, our participation in NHS England's Culture of Care Programme—part of its Quality Transformation Programme—marks a significant step forward. This initiative aims to transform inpatient care environments across England into safe, therapeutic, and equitable spaces. BTG's role focuses on eliminating racism in care by integrating anti-racist frameworks, providing leadership coaching, and promoting personalised, trauma-informed approaches.

## Centring Community and Accountability

We remain steadfast in bringing community knowledge into systems, driving solutions that are innovative, tested, and community sourced. These efforts ensure that our work remains rooted in accountability and aligned with the needs of those we serve.

## Fostering a Culture of Learning

This year, we have prioritised reflection and learning across the organisation. Monthly reflection sessions, quarterly learning weeks, and locality-specific workshops have become integral to our practice. These initiatives capture key insights, support adaptation, and enhance both internal and external impact.

## Navigating Challenges

The unexpected withdrawal of National Lottery funding posed a significant challenge, stretching our small but resolute team. However, we have recalibrated our priorities and are actively pursuing funding opportunities to grow initiatives such as Community Assemblies, research and evaluation, Leadership Academy and Knowledge hub.

## Looking Forward

Despite the challenges, we have achieved remarkable progress this year. As we step into the future, we are committed to expanding our capacity, leveraging innovative tools, and deepening our partnerships to reach new heights.

## With Gratitude

I want to extend my deepest thanks to everyone who has contributed to Black Thrive's mission: the community members in Lambeth, Haringey, and Birmingham, our funders and partners, and our dedicated team. Your support inspires us as we honour the legacy of those who laid the foundation for this work.

**Together, we will continue to build a future rooted in equity and justice.**

Dr. Souci Frissa
CEO, Black Thrive

# Thriving Futures

Thriving Futures (TF), a strategic branch of Black Thrive Global (BTG), provides essential support to Black Thrive's localities and workstreams. TF is currently fulfilling the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) Milestones as outlined in the extension year agreement and is also seeking further funding.

With additional funding, TF plans to further develop in the following areas; Community Assemblies, Research, Evaluation and Learning, and a Leadership Academy.

## Community Assemblies (CA)

The CA model aims to foster open engagement and create welcoming spaces for diverse attendees. Across Black Thrive Haringey (BTH) and Black Thrive Birmingham (BTB), five assemblies were hosted, drawing between 100-120 participants per event. Factors such as venue, catering, timing, and topics influenced attendance, with three events in Haringey and two in Birmingham.

BTH and BTB used networks, mailing lists, social media, and local events to promote attendance, with BTB additionally leveraging local radio. To ensure content resonated, the community shaped the planning, contributing ideas that kept events relevant and meaningful. Post-event engagement was maintained through newsletters, screenings, and community gatherings, sustaining momentum and reinforcing community ties.

## Impact

The Community Assemblies (CAs) fostered significant impacts through addressing community-specific themes and facilitating collaboration between Black-led organisations and statutory workers:

- **Safe and supportive environments:** The CAs provided safe spaces for open expression and genuine dialogue, free from the pressures often experienced in predominantly White spaces.
- **Trust and accountability:** Storytelling and open discussions cultivated trust and understanding among participants, while BT's commitment to non-performative, accountable spaces further strengthened relationships.
- **Influencing decisions and shifting perceptions:** The CAs, through storytelling and film screenings, directly influenced decision-makers and challenged negative stereotypes, fostering a more informed narrative and inspiring action.
- **Local and cross-organisational collaboration:** The CAs effectively demonstrated the impact of BT's work and fostered collaboration with local partners, integrating the assemblies into the portfolios of lead local organisations.

## Evidence of Impact

BT is tracking the systems-level change inspired by CAs by mapping connections, opportunities, and outcomes. Key evidence for this includes:

- Feedback and ongoing dialogue in the form of feedback forms and conversations which show attendee satisfaction and sustain engagement.
- Opportunities and networks which have resulted in partnerships, advisory board invitations, and new groups focused on systemic change.
- Strong attendance and testimonials which reflect the personal and professional impact of the assemblies.
- Data mapping initiatives, such as visual data maps from events like BTH's City Hall assembly, which display the network and relationships cultivated, showcasing the broader community and stakeholder impact.

## Internal Leadership Academy

The Internal Leadership Academy (LA) served as a project within the Thriving Futures programme, designed to foster multi-skilled leadership grounded in the lived experiences of Black individuals in Lambeth, Birmingham, and Haringey. This curriculum aimed to address the underrepresentation of Black people in leadership roles by building a sustainable talent pipeline. The goal was to test and refine this curriculum by 2024, adapting it to participant feedback and needs as they emerged.

### Implementation

- **Leadership Academy (LA) Delivery:** Piloted at Black Thrive Lambeth (BTL), the LA delivered 12 sessions using online, hybrid, and in-person formats.
- **Processes to Support Delivery:** The LA curriculum was developed by Directors with support from the Thriving Futures Team. Initially envisioned as a structured leadership pathway, the LA's focus shifted to address immediate staff skill gaps, particularly in management practices. This shift demonstrated responsiveness to participant needs.

## Impact and Outcomes

The Leadership Academy made significant strides towards developing a leadership pipeline, achieving substantial progress. While it aimed to equip participants for leadership roles, feedback showed a preference for practical skill development over formal leadership training. This misalignment highlighted a gap between the programme's goals and participants' interests.

BT's unique approach, which incorporated the lived experiences of Black staff, proved invaluable. It allowed internal expertise to add significant context to sessions.

## Evaluation

- Evaluation Summary Report and survey data: Existing reports provide feedback on session effectiveness and the data in the survey highlights the personal value added to individuals.
- Session Feedback: Collected feedback offers qualitative insights which can inform programme improvements and guide strategies for enhancing session provision.
- Systematic Impact Measurement: Tracking participants' career advancement and contributions after completing the Leadership Academy could amplify the programme's success in leadership development.

Overall, the Leadership Academy shows promise. Pilot findings suggest opportunities to refine the curriculum by focusing on skill-building and utilising internal expertise. These adjustments would better align the programme with participant interests and support the academy's goals.

## Internal Leadership Academy Survey

To assess the success of the pilot programme, a survey was administered to Black Thrive Lambeth staff to gather feedback on session usefulness, impact, personal experiences, and facilitator performance. The insights gained will inform future improvements to the programme.

The academy's curriculum comprised twelve workshops, delivered both online and in person by internal and external experts. These workshops were organised into three modules: Leadership of Self, Leadership of What, and Leadership of Where.

We employed a three-pronged approach to leadership development, focusing on Self, Systems Change, and Contextual Awareness. The blended learning model incorporated both online and in-person sessions; however, in-person engagement at the Black Thrive office in Brixton was significantly higher. The action learning model encouraged reflective practice and skill development through targeted questioning, enabling participants to apply their learnings directly to their leadership roles.

Overall, the academy received positive feedback, with participants appreciating the relevance and applicability of the content to their roles. The opportunity for reflection and actionable insights was particularly valued. Black Thrive facilitators were praised for their contextual understanding and tailored approach. Feedback on external experts was mixed, with participant experience influenced by the alignment of content with their specific work.



Internal Leadership Academy

## Qualitative Findings

The questions in the survey were designed to uncover insights into the sessions' overall effectiveness, the content's applicability to participants' work, and the quality of the facilitation. The feedback generated demonstrates how participants valued the opportunity to explore their personal leadership styles and understand how their values influence their leadership approach. In addition, the Place Matters sessions were praised for providing participants with reflective listening and action-learning skills that they could immediately apply in their work. However, participants found it more challenging to engage in online sessions compared to in-person workshops, suggesting that in-person formats facilitate better understanding and interaction. Overall, they recommended longer sessions and more time for in-depth discussions, particularly for complex topics, to allow for more thorough engagement with the material.

## Key insights

The feedback from the survey highlighted several key insights, which will help us to develop more supportive and empowering projects going forward. Participants highlighted the importance of understanding the historical context and policy discussions around race equity and legal frameworks, and the value and benefits of self-reflection, identifying team dynamics and understanding leadership approaches.

## Recommendations

Participant feedback and survey analysis indicates that future Leadership Academy sessions should be extended to allow for deeper exploration of topics and more discussion. The curriculum should be flexible enough to accommodate varying levels of expertise, either by offering tiered content or allowing facilitators to adjust session depth. Facilitator training should also be enhanced to encourage dynamic and inclusive teaching methods, with more interactive elements and real-life examples. While in-person sessions were found to be more engaging, future iterations should also consider providing additional support, such as interactive tools, to enhance online participation.

## Conclusion

The Internal Leadership Academy has proven to be successful in cultivating leadership skills grounded in the principles of equity and systemic change. Participants expressed appreciation for the actionable insights and practical tools that were shared throughout the programme. Feedback highlighted areas for potential improvement, including session pacing, content flexibility, and facilitator engagement. By addressing these areas and tailoring the programme to accommodate diverse levels of experience, the academy can effectively build robust leadership pipelines and drive meaningful systemic change. The lessons gleaned from this pilot programme will not only inform future leadership development initiatives within Black Thrive but also shape external leadership programmes to better meet the evolving needs of participants and communities.

# Research Institute and Observatory

The Research Institute and Observatory (RIO) aims to conduct, develop and implement antiracism research and policy co-produced with members of the Black community to address racial health inequalities, with a particular focus on mental health within the Black community in the UK and globally. RIO collaborates with local communities in Lambeth, Haringey, and Birmingham, as well as with various policy and academic institutions. However, the impact of RIO's research and publications extends beyond the UK.

Going forward, RIO's goals are to create a more structured and systematic approach to work, research management, funding and collaboration within and without BTG. To do this, RIO will work with the community assemblies to provide support and training to enhance research abilities as well as co-produce research through community based participatory research and methods of co-production and mutual learning. Another part of RIO's vision entails networking and collaborating with academic institutes as well as other research and policy making institutes to ensure funding, research opportunities that would develop and maintain antiracism among the Black community focusing on mental health.

## Focus and Aims

Despite evidence-based policy, claims of neutrality and rationality, and a focus on equality as a core ethical value in healthcare, racial equality in the UK healthcare system, particularly mental healthcare, has seen little progress with deterioration for Black people across some mental health indicators. This lack of progress is due to a range of factors, but racism and its embeddedness in healthcare research are major contributors to these inequalities.

To address these issues, RIO's work focuses on three key problem areas:

### Research on racism;

Existing research on racism and 'race' in healthcare lacks a robust structural definition of racism, if any definition is included, and often focuses on individualised and psychological notions of 'race' and racism. Research often uses racial categories as fixed and essentialist categories risking racialising minoritised groups further. This attributes to a lack of conceptualisation of racism which makes racism difficult to study. Moreover, research lacks a robust evaluation of antiracist interventions such that evidence based policy and interventions are not clearly understood.

RIO will aim to conduct research that develops a robust and clear structured definition of racism through uncovering racialisation processes as embedded in contemporary nation states as well as implement these findings to develop antiracism policies in healthcare.

## Diversity in general research;

In the UK, as is elsewhere in Western settings, there is a lack of diversity and inclusion of Black people in research and in academia resulting in negative consequences for equity, ethics, choice of research topics, and scientific rigour. While calls are made for inclusion of minoritised groups in research and in academia, existing barriers pertaining to financial constraints and racism have resulted in the continuation of the problem of diversity particularly for Black researchers.

Through contributing to antiracism research, collaboration with academic and research institutions as well as through conducting training in research, RIO aims to contribute to minimising these inequalities and ensuring the inclusion of Black researchers in health inequality research.

## Policymaking and Antiracism Interventions.

Policymaking in healthcare and in general (as supported by research) lacks a robust evidence-based evaluation, making it difficult to assess progress either because data is not collected, not published, or not shared publicly to allow secondary analysis (especially by laypeople, in particular, the communities most affected). Further, there is lack of studies that evaluate antiracism interventions in healthcare which are often conducted as individualised educational interventions focusing on individualised notions of racism rather than understanding racism as a structural historical and dynamic ideology. This entails that evaluation and hence implementation of antiracism interventions becomes difficult or does not result in intended progress. Additionally, policymaking and antiracism interventions do not often include Black people's experiences and views.

## Achievements

Within the past year, RIO has achieved the following:

- **Developed our strategic plan:** RIO has enhanced its research strategy by revising its strategic plan to incorporate clearer objectives and strategies, promoting a more robust, rigorous, and structured research approach. Additionally, RIO has designed an activity plan and tracker to monitor and evaluate activities, including progress towards increased academic publications and reports. RIO has also proactively addressed its goal of becoming a more independent, Black-led research institute by identifying potential funding bodies and designing a funding planner.

- **Scheduled General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for Black Thrive:** RIO has generated a template to guide the research team and other workstreams in BTG to ensure that the general data protection guidelines are followed and that there are no breaches to data security and confidentiality of sensitive research data. This will ensure that all research within the organisation follows consistent data protection practices, saving time and reducing the risk of non-compliance.

- **Increased focus on generating publications:** Rio has emphasised the importance of visibility in the research world through focusing on publishing scholarly articles as well as grey literature. Two academic publications have been added to RIO's publication list: a published scientific article on racialised migrant women's experiences on discrimination in maternal care and a book chapter (accepted) on the obfuscation of racism in healthcare. RIO is also currently discussing with BTG communication team organising a structured way to publish blogs every three months, that would focus on antiracism including research notes, theoretical contributions as well as commentary on current events pertaining to Black communities and their health and wellbeing.

- **Conducted Stop and Search research**

  » Began qualitative analysis of the Stop and Search interviews as part of the Stop and Search project (S&S): A previous collaboration existed between RIO and King's College London (KCL) regarding a project on the impact of Stop and Search on young Black people in Lambeth. The collaboration included qualitative interviews with young Black people, both individual interviews and focus group discussions. The interviews were transcribed but were not analysed. RIO have initiated a discussion with the KCL team and started analysing the interviews. All interviews have been coded and preliminary findings developed. Two articles will be submitted for publication, namely an article on the mental health impact of Stop and Search on young Black people and an article on how young Black people reason around Stop and Search and potential solutions.

  » Initiated the integration of additional datasets to the S&S data: Rio is in the process of integrating additional socio-economic indicators like (Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Social Inequity, etc.) and mental health datasets into the Stop and Search (S&S) data. This ongoing effort aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying patterns behind the disproportionate stop and search activities in black communities. RIO is also extending the dataset coverage to include records from years beyond 2022, thereby enriching our analysis and supporting the development of evidence-based interventions and policies as we move forward.

  » Launched a scoping review: This scoping review would scope scientific data on stop and search and its impact on minoritised people's mental health globally. This work is ongoing, and an academic publication will be submitted.

- **Increased collaboration with workstreams and localities:** RIO has fostered a more integrated approach to research and intervention strategies by increasing collaborative efforts and sharing insights and resources through bi-monthly support drop-in sessions with various workstreams and localities. This ensures that all teams have the necessary tools and information to effectively progress in their specific areas. Additionally, RIO has enhanced the efficiency of research

projects across different teams, such as the Barbershop and Basketball projects, by providing strategic guidance and support. This has streamlined processes, ensured robust evaluation mechanisms, and led to more effective outcomes and valuable insights into community engagement strategies. In addition to these collaborative efforts, RIO has continued to identify potential funding sources and designed tailored funding plans.

- **Scheduled General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for Black Thrive:** RIO has generated a template to guide the research team and other workstreams in BTG to ensure that the general data protection guidelines are followed and that there are no breaches to data security and confidentiality of sensitive research data. This will ensure that all research within the organisation follows consistent data protection practices, saving time and reducing the risk of non-compliance.

- **Helped to facilitate the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) for the Young Researchers Project:** RIO has provided research support to the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) workstream in their Children in Need Project. RIO has generated a research plan, created the data collection questionnaires using a trauma-informed approach. RIO then assisted with data collection and documentation, analysed, coded the data and generated a set of general recommendations and insights regarding the wellbeing of Black children in Lambeth. RIO assisted the CYPF team in writing the final report.

- **Began funding brainstorming and planning:** To ensure that funding is acquired, RIO has organised a funding tracker to include various funding grants as well as research ideas.

- **Co-led the design and formulation of the PCREF developmental evaluation framework:** As a host organisation for PCREF, Black Thrive has a hand in designing and shaping the evaluation framework for the PCREF in SLaM. The evaluation framework has been further developed and refined by RIO. The PCREF developmental evaluation framework is now a methodology that centres learning as it operates on a cyclical basis with metrics being collected quarterly, which allows for quicker reflection and more responsive action when tackling racism within the Trust. Alongside the input of a PCREF Staff Lead and a PCREF Service-user Lead, the approach has now been finalised and is being enacted for the PCREF in SLaM.

- **Supported the Culture of Care programme:** As part of Black Thrive's involvement in the delivery of the Culture of Care (CoC) programme, RIO is also part of the Black Thrive CoC working group. In this role, RIO has continued to provide methodological rigour in the collection and analysis of data for the impact evaluation and reporting of Black Thrive's Race Equity training sessions. RIO designed and delivered the evaluation questions, as well as analysed the evaluation data alongside qualitative notes written on the day of delivery. RIO also provided a thorough theoretical and socio-historical foundation for the CoC Race Equity training, by utilising an extensive catalogue of academic literature extracted through prior literature searches and reviews.



**Barber Shop Project Graduates, Black Thrive Haringey**



PCREF Launch
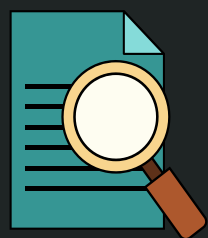
# RIO Case Study: Children in Need Project collaboration with CYPF

In 2021, Black Thrive was commissioned by BBC Children in Need to conduct community research in Lambeth that explored the mental health and wellbeing of young Black children. The research, led by Black Thrive's Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) workstream, with support from the Research Institute and Observatory (RIO), involved engaging children, young people, and their families.

RIO devloped a research plan and a set of questions using a trauma-informed approach and the Tree of Life framework. The project aimed to empower children, young people, and their families to conduct research within their communities and use the evidence to inform priorities for a participatory fund (managed by Black Thrive) and influence local policy and commissioning decisions.

Young researchers were selected and trained in qualitative research methodology to ensure their engagement and participation throughout the research process.

RIO and CYPF collaborated to conduct workshops with young researchers and participants, collecting data on topics such as safety, identity, bullying, and poverty. The young researchers transcribed and coded the data after receiving training in qualitative analysis. RIO then used the analysis to generate insights and recommendations, which were then reviewed and ranked by the young researchers.

Structured collaborative meetings between CYPF and RIO facilitated knowledge sharing and mutual learning. The collaboration strengthened communication and co-production with the young researchers. Training the young researchers in qualitative methodology not only developed their research skills but also provided valuable insights for RIO on co-production.

The project will produce a final report and recommendations, as well as a scientific methodological article developed by RIO.

## Conclusion

The establishment of a Black-led research institute is essential for combating racial inequalities. This institute operates on the fundamental principle that racism is deeply entrenched within nation-states and their institutional frameworks. Its core mission is to elevate the voices and experiences of Black communities by conducting and disseminating high-quality, evidence-based research.

This research would then be utilised to inform the development of antiracist policies and interventions specifically designed to benefit the Black community, with a particular emphasis on health and healthcare. By undertaking this crucial work, the institute would be positioned to influence policy decisions and shape public discourse on issues that disproportionately affect the Black community.

# Culture of Care

The Culture of Care programme, launched in April 2024 as part of NHS England's Quality Transformation Programme, is a transformative initiative focused on revolutionising the culture within inpatient mental health, learning disability, and autism wards across England. The programme's central goal is to cultivate care environments that are safe, therapeutic, and equitable for patients while also fostering fulfilling workplaces for staff.

A key focus of the programme lies in addressing and eliminating racism within care settings, particularly the racism experienced by the Black community. By integrating the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF) into practice, the programme aims to ensure that care is delivered without the presence of racism.

The Culture of Care programme is extensive, involving 61 organisations, 216 wards, and 105 executives. It takes a holistic approach by incorporating trauma-informed, autism-informed, and racial equity perspectives into its interventions, which include executive leadership coaching, cross-organisational quality improvement training, and a shift from risk stratification to more personalised, patient-centred care.

The programme is co-produced with input from various organisations, including the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (NCCMH), Neurodiverse Connection, Black Thrive Global, and the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide (NCISH). The leadership group overseeing the programme includes representatives from these partner organisations, as well as experts in QI leadership, trauma-informed care, and compassionate and relational care.

Guiding principles of the programme emphasise a personalised approach to risk, trauma-informed care, autism-informed care, and anti-racism. Co-production is a fundamental aspect, with lived experience embedded throughout the programme. Ward project teams are required to include at least one member with lived/living, learnt experience of inpatient settings.

## Conclusion

Overall, the Culture of Care programme represents a comprehensive effort to transform the culture of care in mental health services across England, with a particular focus on equity and the elimination of racism in care. It's a forward-thinking initiative that aims to set new standards for inpatient care, guided by the principles of personalised, trauma-informed, and autism-informed care, and anti-racism. Furthermore, the programme's commitment to co-production and the inclusion of lived experience in its leadership and delivery teams ensures that the voices of those who have been directly affected by the system are heard and valued. This approach not only enriches the programme's perspective but also enhances its effectiveness in bringing about meaningful change.

As the programme continues to unfold, it holds the promise of transforming the landscape of mental health services, setting a new benchmark for care that is compassionate, personalised, and just. The Culture of Care programme is more than an initiative; it's a movement towards a healthcare system that truly cares for all its patients and staff, embodying the values of equity and humanity at its core.

# Digital Communications and Audience Development Audit

Between July and September 2024, Black Thrive Global's Communications Team conducted a comprehensive review of our digital presence. This audit examined data from November 2022 to September 2024, focusing on social media, website engagement, and campaign performance to identify our successes and opportunities for further development.

## Key Achievements

- Social Media Success:
  » LinkedIn delivered outstanding results, with an 83.5% increase in followers and a 309% boost in engagement. This platform effectively connects us with professionals aligned with our mission, particularly in community and social services.

  » Instagram also performed strongly, achieving a 24% rise in followers and a 106.8% increase in engagement. Video content was especially popular, driving a remarkable 602% increase in views.

  » Posts addressing important social topics, such as mental health awareness and remembrance events, resonated deeply with audiences on both Instagram and LinkedIn.

- Engaging Campaigns:
  » The PCREF Launch and LGBTQIA+ campaigns during LGBTQ+ History Month were highly successful, demonstrating the value of careful planning and collaboration.

  » Posts on current affairs, including World Mental Health Day, consistently generated high engagement, showcasing our ability to connect with audiences on key issues.

- Website Highlights:
  » Since the launch of our new website in May 2024, we have attracted a significant number of new visitors. The most popular pages – "About Black Thrive" and "Job Opportunities" – reflect strong interest in our mission and opportunities to collaborate.

  » The Black Thrive Lambeth site saw visitors spending more time exploring content, particularly the "About Us" and "Our Management Team" pages, which highlights public interest in the individuals behind our work.

## Further developments

We are excited to build on these successes and take our communications to the next level:

- Enhancing Engagement: We will continue to focus on LinkedIn and Instagram, increasing our use of video and storytelling to strengthen connections with diverse audiences.
- Tailored Content: By developing region-specific communication strategies and optimising our website for mobile users, we aim to deepen engagement and reach even more communities.
- Strategic Growth: Expanding our team will enable us to better support localities such as Haringey and Birmingham and ensure every campaign is thoughtfully planned and impactful.

## Conclusion

This review reaffirms the strength of our digital strategy while highlighting exciting opportunities for further growth. By amplifying what works well and addressing new opportunities with intention, we are well-positioned to expand our reach, deepen our community connections, and continue driving meaningful change.

# Development and Operations

The Development and Operations team has played a vital role in supporting Black Thrive Global's mission by providing robust organisational support across all aspects of the organisation's work. Through effective financial management, including securing significant funding from various sources, and by streamlining operational processes, the team has ensured the sustainability and efficiency of Black Thrive's activities. Key achievements include securing significant funding partnerships, implementing robust financial controls, and enhancing HR and operational processes. These efforts have directly enabled our other workstreams to successfully carry out their vital work in supporting Black communities and achieving racial equity in mental health.

Key achievements from last year are outlined below.

## Operations

The Operations team provides HR & recruitment services, office management, payroll services, statutory governance and ensures adherence to relevant legal requirements and laws. We provide these services in partnership with experts in the areas of employment law, policies and procedures, GDPR and data protection, IT security and support and health & safety regulations and training. These services are provided across the whole organisation including permanent staff, part-time staff, and workers on short-term contracts with the organisation.

This year, we have focused on aligning our policies, procedures and contracts to ensure they are in line with recent changes in employment laws.

We improved operational processes by implementing internal systems for recruitment, payroll, annual leave, and sickness management. This streamlined operations and enhanced staff information, documentation, and reporting.

Training needs were identified throughout the organisation. Some training has been provided, and resources are being identified to address the remaining needs. We introduced dedicated training and learning weeks to give teams time to focus on development, which will continue to increase effectiveness and efficiency. We have begun to develop training resources, including induction and management packs, that staff can access.

Next year, we will continue to develop materials, upskill staff, and make further process improvements. Thought is being given to staff retention and career progression, and this will continue next year. We will also investigate the use of AI and other tools and identify and introduce these where appropriate and useful.

# Finance

## Funding

Black Thrive has actively been working to secure more funding for the various workstreams to enable teams to carry out the activities that make Black Thrive Global what it is to the black community. This includes the following:

- Black Thrive secured a working partnership with the Royal College of Psychiatrists for £600,000 for a two-year project associated with the culture of care in March 2024. This funding is split across two intakes: £350,000 for the first year, and £250,000 for the second.

- To continue the work of the Thriving future workstream, Black Thrive secured an extension with the National Lottery Community Fund for £372,500 for an additional year to June 2025.

- Black Thrive has a one year rolling contract with SLaM for £276,049 for the CAPSA team that actively works within the hospitals to support mental health patients.

As a going concern organisation, Black Thrive still has access to core funding of £2 Million from Impact on Urban Health available to support the organisation's operations.

To ensure that we continue to support the community that our vision is focused on, we are actively applying for long term funding with the hope of securing this within the next year.

## Operational & Financial Controls

As an organisation, we strive very much to ensure adequate financial controls and financial efficiency. We implemented the use of Telleroo that enables the company to process supplier/contractor payments with on-the-spot checks with the banks to ensure that payments are paid to those they are intended for. This requires various approval processes between a third-party contractor and BTG finance staff.

To enhance this process, we introduced the use of a jot form that helps us acquire new supplier information directly from the supplier including their bank details and automatically embeds this into the accounting system following approval. This requires little manual intervention.

We set up budget tracking templates to help relevant work streams to be able to keep track of their funding and expenditure in real time. These new systems have helped the organisation to ensure operational efficiency and performance by the finance team and as an organisation.

## External Audit

Following our recent external audit, the organisation was deemed to be financially viable as a going concern with no significant deficiencies in internal controls. The audit also confirms compliance with laws and regulations which provide a legal framework within which the company conducts its operations.

# Financial Summary

| Income | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Jun-21 | Jun-22 | Jun-23 | Jun-24 |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Restricted Income | 89,983 | 1,147,086 | 1,623,697 | 1,662,409 |
| Unrestricted Income | 120,776 | 315,715 | 629,398 | 577,640 |
| **Total Income** | **210,759** | **1,462,801** | **2,253,095** | **2,240,049** |
| **Expenditure** | | | | |
| Staff salaries | 55,656 | 571,349 | 931,417 | 1,038,520 |
| Programme direct costs | 107,386 | 629,801 | 851,152 | 759,985 |
| Support costs | 39,226 | 170,667 | 285,133 | 160,261 |
| **Total Expenditure** | **202,268** | **1,371,817** | **2,067,702** | **1,958,766** |
| | | | | |
| Surplus | 8,491 | 90,984 | 185,393 | 281,283 |
| | | | | |
| Funds at the Start of the year | £0.00 | 6,878 | 80,575 | 228,209 |
| | | | | |
| Funds at the End of the Year | 6,878 | 80,575 | 228,209 | 439,171 |

# Glossary of Terms

| Acroynm | Expansion |
|---------|-----------|
| BTB | Black Thrive Birmingham |
| BTH | Black Thrive Haringey |
| BTG | Black Thrive Global |
| CA | Community Assemblies |
| CoC | Culture of Care |
| CYPF | Children, Young People and Families |
| GDPR | General Data Protection Regulation |
| KCL | King's College London |
| LA | Leadership Academy |
| LGBTQ+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (plus other gender identities and sexual orientations) |
| NCCMH | National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health |
| LA | Leadership Academy |
| LGBTQ+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (plus other gender identities and sexual orientations) |
| NCCMH | National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health |
| NCISH | National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide |
| NLCF | National Lottery Community Fund |
| PCREF | Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework |
| QI | Quality Improvement |
| RIO | Research Institute and Observatory |
| S&S | Stop and Search |
| SLaM | South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust |
| TF | Thriving Futures |

Internal Leadership Academy

# Black Thrive Lambeth

## Introduction to Black Thrive Lambeth

Black Thrive Lambeth was established in 2016, primarily in response to the recommendations of the Lambeth Black Health and Wellbeing Commission following the death in police custody of Sean Rigg, a Black musician who was experiencing mental health challenges at the time and died because of excessive force.

Lambeth has been home to the UK's largest Black community since the 1950s. People of African and Caribbean origin, both past and present, have made significant and lasting contributions to the borough's cultural and economic life. Despite these successes, Lambeth still faces growing socio-economic inequality that disproportionately affects its Black African and Caribbean residents. Evidence suggests that exposure to the stressors linked to these inequalities negatively impacts both physical and mental well-being.

Our mission is to address the inequalities that negatively affect the mental health and well-being of Black people in Lambeth. We are a partnership between communities, statutory organisations, voluntary groups, and the private sector, working together to reduce the inequalities that lead to poorer socioeconomic outcomes for Black communities in the borough and initiate the systemic change required to see Black residents thrive.

The various systems and the people who work within them consistently create environments that prevent Black people from thriving. We work with individuals and organisations to challenge the mindsets and power imbalances that underpin policy development, resource allocation, and practices. Many Black people thrive despite the odds that are stacked against them. We change the odds by embedding race equity at every level of the system and building upon these experiences so that thriving is not the exception but becomes the rule.

Due to structural inequalities, the experiences and outcomes for Black people in Lambeth are, on average, significantly worse than those of their white counterparts in every area of life – education, employment, income, social care, housing, policing, criminal justice, well-being, and health. We believe that the only way forward is to centre the voices, experiences, and expertise of the full spectrum of Black communities in creating the change that is needed – of the people, by the people, with the people, for the people!

# Children, Young People and Families

The CYPF (Children, Young People and Families) workstream is committed to driving systems change that positively impacts children, young people, and families. Our primary objectives are to gain a deeper understanding of the mental health needs of young people in Lambeth and coproduce practical solutions to challenges while ensuring that community voice is central to creating and developing services. To achieve this, we work with various statutory and community partners to develop and deliver projects championing youth voice and participation and addressing racial inequalities.

Our community work includes engaging with parents and young people, advocating for their needs, and empowering them to navigate systems such as schools and mental health services. We view each programme and project as an opportunity to engage the community to address the challenges Black children and parents face. This approach fosters a sense of ownership for participants, builds trust between Black Thrive and communities and creates opportunities for community upskilling.

Alongside our main programmes of work, Black Thrive are proudly supporting the Fund the Hubs campaign, in partnership with Centre for Mental Health, Mind, The Children's Society, and BACP, Young Minds, Youth Access and . The campaign is calling for a national network of early support hubs in every local area so that all young people can access timely support and advice for issues affecting their mental health. We believe that safe spaces are crucial ground for impactful youth work, so that we can meet young people where they are.

We are incredibly excited about the year ahead and look forward to developing our existing programmes and partnerships and creating new ones. Our short-term goals include:

- Launching the Roots to Wings Toolkit, a whole-school community resource supporting mental health and wellbeing.
- Sharing the final Children in Need study results and methodological reflections on the programme.
- Supporting the Young Researchers in curating a range of activities, spotlighting Children's Mental Health Week 2025.
- Supporting the Fund the Hubs Campaign and expanding our work in policy and campaigns
- Building research capacity in our young people, providing opportunities for their growth and development.

The CYPF team has diligently worked to deliver impactful community engagement and upskilling around emotional wellbeing throughout the year. Specifically, our South East London Integrated Care Board (SEL ICB) and Children in Need programmes have facilitated the co-production of insightful workshops, creative interventions and resources in schools, youth services, community spaces, and with various system partners.



Hayward Gallery Visit

# The Children in Need Young Researchers Project

In the last year, the primary focus of this project was a peer research study investigating the factors impacting the wellbeing of Black/mixed heritage children living, studying, or playing in Lambeth. By collaborating with the Research Institute, we designed training workshops that upskilled the group in the key research areas: study design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of our study findings.

Whilst running a peer research programme with such a young cohort of children can be challenging, we are proud of what they have achieved. We have seen incredibly positive changes in our young people, from their social interactions with one another to their skills as researchers.

Throughout the research process, we thought carefully about how we upskill young researchers to take part meaningfully. They have acted as critical friends, providing insight at each stage of the research process. They refined our documents and processes by telling us what works and what does not, what makes sense to them, and what does not. Once we collected the data, we taught them how to code the transcribed data, and they successfully identified the key themes and insights. We have seen their critical thinking skills improve, and their ability to bring concepts together and come to their conclusions. They do not always agree, but we have seen an improvement in their ability to defend their positions. The activities have improved their teamwork and critical thinking skills, teaching them the value of supporting each other with their work, and this has had a positive effect on their confidence and participation.

Moreover, we have seen an increased awareness of the different factors that can affect mental health and wellbeing. Throughout the process of the research study, we have been aware that our young researchers are not representative of all young people in Lambeth. There are protected characteristics that we know affect mental health and wellbeing, e.g. care experienced, refugee/asylum seekers and LGBTQ+. These voices are not represented in our group. However, we have been intentional about expanding our young researchers' worldviews and teaching them how to consider other young people's lived experiences. We have done this by crafting activities that encourage them to think outside of their experiences and expose them to literature that shares other people's experiences.

As we wrap up the study and programme in 2025, the young researchers will be curating a range of activities and workshops designed to engage and educate other young people on mental health and wellbeing. This wellbeing programme will not only provide a meaningful way to give back to the community but also offer valuable opportunities for the young researchers to develop skills in event and project management. We are excited to share the final outputs of the programme in the coming months.

# Case Study: Young Researchers Project

As we begin to wrap up the Children in Need Programme, we wanted to highlight some key outcomes that have emerged from this work.

## Working with Child Friendly Lambeth

Our Young Researchers successfully engaged with Child Friendly Lambeth on a TFL consultation and wrote a letter, sharing their views. They successfully engaged with UNICEF UK, providing their thoughts on the theory of change for the Child Friendly Lambeth strategy. We are considering how to support a few young researchers to become Child Friendly Champions (young people who work with Lambeth Council on actioning the CFL strategy)

## Working with communities

Young researchers engaged with their local community – they attended the McDonalds x Spiral Campaign Launch at Brixton Mcdonalds, facilitated a workshop with other young people at the Baytree, and attended and exhibition at the Hayward Gallery (Southbank Centre). All these experiences have provided opportunities to expand their worldview and interact with other young people in the sector. During the data collection phase of the project, one young researcher showed great initiative by promoting the study to her

Headteacher. She gave him our contact details and we were able to join their school assembly, explaining the project and how to take part.

We maintained and strengthened relationships with community stakeholders, such as Partnership for Young London and The Lynk Up Crew. These organisations provided valuable insights and alternative approaches to youth engagement, which challenged our assumptions and broadened our perspective.

## Supported wellbeing in our young researchers

In early 2024, CYPF observed that many young researchers on the course frequently expressed negative views on friendships, self, and identity during discussions with staff. Concerned about the potential impact of these views on the co-production process and the young researchers' wellbeing, CYPF organised 6 sessions with child psychologist Jacque Cranston. These wellbeing sessions gave the children the opportunity to explore more of who they are, what motivates them and how they can use their new transferrable skills to shape their experiences.

## Building research capacity in young people

We successfully upskilled the children in thematic analysis – we spent four sessions teaching them how to code information from a text. When they began coding the data with the support of our research team, the process was smooth. They were showing signs of more critical thinking and reflective practice.

## Reflections from a Young Researcher

One of our young researchers is a 13-year-old girl, of Black Nigerian heritage, who lives, plays and goes to school in Lambeth. We are extremely proud of how she has grown since joining the project. In May, Partnership for Young London approached us looking for researchers to join their project called Authoring Our Own Stories. We spoke to the YRs, and she volunteered to take part. The project lead for PFYL updated us on her progress, saying that she is the youngest researcher but is confident and contributes to the discussions, drawing a lot on her experiences with Black Thrive to support the project.

When we asked our young researcher if she would be willing to share her thoughts on the programme with us, she responded with the following:

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"During the A Million & Me Project, I have been learning about how mental health impacts black children between the ages of 8 - 13 who live and study in Lambeth. I have gained more knowledge about racism and bullying and how they affect children's mental health and wellness through this study project. I have also learnt possible ways of dealing with these issues.

The project has allowed me to explore how mental health can be good or bad and how it's alright to not be ok. You can always talk about it as there are many services and people that can help you.

Being a part of the research project has given me the opportunity to take my mental health seriously and to discuss with my friends the value of having excellent mental health and strategies for overcoming poor mental health especially when it might have been caused by external factors such as bullying for example.

The project has allowed me to focus more on the issues and stigma in the black community that [surround] mental health and how facilities such as green spaces and youth centres affect the mental health of young people who live and study in Lambeth."

This programme is further proof that with the right care and investment, children have the capacity and are interested in shaping the world around them. We look forward to using our skills and resources to equip children and young people to shape the services designed for them.

# South East London Integrated Care Board

The South East London Integrated Care Board (SEL ICB) commissioned Black Thrive to conduct listening exercises with children, parents, and staff in primary schools across five South East London Boroughs (Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Bromley & Greenwich) to identify the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of Black and Mixed Black heritage children. The intention was that this information would then be fed back to SEL ICB and place-based commissioners to support local commissioning decisions, ensuring that provision meets the identified needs and supports improved outcomes for Black and Mixed Black heritage children. This project is part of the NHS Core20Plus5 Programme, designed to tackle health inequalities through the Community Connector Model.

In year one, we engaged 260+ children, over 70 parents, and 112 staff members in focus groups. This was in 8 schools across 5 boroughs (Bromley, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark). During the sessions, parents and teachers were asked to consider any mental health and emotional wellbeing challenges they were witnessing, what the solutions might be, and barriers to these solutions being actualised. The children's sessions were run differently, focusing on using creativity and teamwork to explore and express different themes on mental health. These storyboards formed the basis of a discussion about what safe and good mental health looks like and how to get support.

Each school raised a range of challenges, but key themes included undiagnosed and unmet neurodiverse needs, low parental engagement, transition to secondary school, racialised bullying, challenges with emotional expression, impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and wider systemic issues such as housing and the cost-of-living crisis. A summary of the emerging themes in each school was presented to SEL ICB, commissioners, and the school, alongside recommended interventions to address some of the needs.

Some of the interventions commissioned in Year One included:

- **Happy in Schools** – provided workshops for parents and teachers on neurodiversity to address the mental health/SEND stigma that prevents Black children from receiving support.

- **Poetic Unity** – providing a creative intervention for Black boys who struggle with emotional expression. The programme is called 'Mandem, let's talk' and uses poetry to promote self-expression. They also ran a 'Get started in poetry' 10-week programme, which aimed to develop confidence and self-expression in boys and girls.

- **The Black Curriculum** – provided a curriculum audit for a school who recognised they could improve representation in this area.

One of the interventions recommended was an embedded Community Connector within the school setting. The aim was to bridge the gap between the school and the local community, ensuring families had access to broader support systems. This role had varying degrees of success, one example being a collaboration with Southwark Council Temporary Housing.

In May 2024, our Community Connector designed a housing workshop for families in a Southwark school affected by challenges with temporary accommodation. Around 30 parents attended the workshop and received information on what was happening with the local estates, the following steps, and what they could do to prepare or access more support. Five housing officers were present, and they were able to run a Q&A at the end of the session. Whilst this was not a commissioned intervention, it was an example of how joined-up working can play a vital role in connecting schools and families to the appropriate support. A challenge we experienced in developing the role was that there was limited time in the school year to embed the Community Connector—building relationships within a school setting takes time and resources that go beyond the scope of the programme.

Despite the challenges, Black Thrive and SEL ICB are committed to tackling mental health inequalities for Black/Mixed Black Heritage children and young people. In light of this, we have decided to pursue an expansion of this programme in 2025. The next few months will be used to finalise the redesign of the programme, utilising the insights gathered from year one.

### Roots to Wings Toolkit

In February 2024, Black Thrive commissioned Comuzi, a London-based innovation lab, to co-develop a mental health toolkit. The Roots to Wings toolkit was developed in response to the key themes arising in the Core20Plus5 Programme with SEL ICB. It takes a trauma-informed, anti-racist, and whole-school approach to mental health and emotional well-being. It provides a range of activities designed for Black/Mixed Black heritage parents, school staff, and young people, to advance and advocate for better mental health in their school communities. The co-creation process engaged 61 community members: 10 young people, 8 parents and/or carers, 10 teachers/support workers, and 33 mental health advocates via online groups. Discussions centred around the mental health and wellbeing of young people in South London and what effective, appropriate support looks like.

The toolkit's goals include improving pre-teen mental health through community and holistic wellbeing support, encouraging effective communication across all stakeholders, and championing trauma-informed interventions that recognise and address intergenerational trauma.

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# Black Queer & Thriving

Black Queer & Thriving (BQT) is an exploratory pilot that seeks to explore the health and well-being experiences of Black LGBTQ+ residents across the BTG Locality areas, working with them to develop and advocate for interventions that improve access, experiences and outcomes in mental health services and/or divert them to other more appropriate interventions/services.

The Black Queer & Thriving Project has been designed to:

- Improve access, outcomes and experiences of Black LGBTQ+ people in Lambeth's mental health services;
- Ensure that Black Thrive's work is inclusive of sexual orientation and gender;
- Explore the causes behind social isolation and loneliness within the community and trial
- events that address them; and
- Deliver Black-owned and Black-led community research that details the health and wellbeing experiences of Black LGBTQ+ People.

As a seldom-heard community, this workstream is guided by community-driven systems change; the belief that the communities are not 'at the bottom' of any system. The foundation of this work centres on their local knowledge/intelligence, emphasis of leadership from within the community and Black Thrive's backbone support to use their voices to shape health and wellbeing experiences.

In the past year, the workstream has shifted focus from community engagement to knowledge sharing, partnership development, and supporting strategic programme areas. This shift aims to empower Black Queer voices to influence systemic change. While Lambeth and Southwark have large Black LGBTQ+ communities, perceived homophobia and religious hostility often silence them. Recognising this, the project prioritises collaboration with and support for these communities to drive systemic change.

Recent efforts have centred on building relationships with system stakeholders, gathering information, and developing capacity. This involves outlining health and wellbeing priorities for Black LGBTQ+ in Lambeth and Southwark and improving the BQT Working Group's effectiveness.

Community engagement remains strong, with over 500 members reached through six community events and direct engagement with system organisations, including the first external LGBTQ+ Staff Network event.

## Working Group

The Lambeth Working Group has grown to 15 members last year. Through collaborative community research, we have engaged the wider community, identified local project partners, and provided them with capacity building support. Learnings from the past year are being shared with the newly formed Black Thrive Haringey LGBTQ+ Working Group and used for the development of Birmingham and Southwark based Working Groups. Analysis of data from the community research project is currently underway and will inform future program priorities.

## Community Research

The Working Group collaborated with the BQT Programme & Partnership Manager to develop a community survey exploring the health and wellbeing experiences of Black LGBTQ+ people in Lambeth and Southwark. The survey addresses mental health experiences, safety, social prescribing and relationship to their local communities. Following recommendations in previous community research reports , this will be one of the few community research reports exploring Black LGBTQ+ health and wellbeing experiences within local authority areas. We have completed the consultation phase; the report is scheduled for release in January 2025.

## Capacity Building

The Working Group has identified the need for greater resource flows to upcoming Black LGBTQ+ community leaders and health and wellbeing practitioners to improve access to culturally sensitive support mechanisms. Over the past year, we've worked with Lambeth-based Black LGBTQ+ activists to co-host events, highlighted by A Queeribean Dominos Night and Black Queer Actors' Playground, that promote the BQT Community Survey, provide brave spaces that alleviate social isolation and loneliness and a space for the activist to improve their craft. We have supported their progress through support with feedback, fundraising and signposting to specialist capacity building organisations such as Community Southwark. The Working Group are excited to identify further activists and creatives to support in 2025 with activities that support the programme priorities.

## Locality Expansion

BQT has partnered with Black Thrive Haringey and Black Thrive Birmingham to explore how their work can incorporate the experiences of Black LGBTQ+ people. Two introductory Working Group meetings have been held with BTH and planning with BTB and a partner organisation, Fruit Punch, has started, with the aim of starting a Working Group there in early 2025. BQT is exploring potential partners to start a Southwark Working Group in Jan 2025.

## Queer Networks Connect

Queer Networks Connect, a pilot initiative developed and led by Black Thrive Lambeth and Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation, aims to strengthen relationships and collaboration between LGBTQ+ Networks and staff working primarily across Lambeth and Southwark. By fostering networking and minimising power dynamics that can hinder information and resource sharing, the initiative strives to create a supportive environment that addresses the unique challenges faced by Lambeth and Southwark's LGBTQ+ communities, which represent the highest LGBTQ+ populations in the UK.

The inaugural Queer Networks Connect event brought together over 60 staff members across 10 networks to share community intelligence and explore ways of better supporting local LGBTQ+ health and wellbeing for both staff and residents. The event highlighted the expertise of locally based Black well-being practitioners and emphasised the critical role of social prescribing and networking in community health. Planning for a follow-up event, focused on the intersection of Blackness, Queerness and Disability, is currently underway.

## Plans for 2025

Leading into 2025, we're mindful of the work that has been done with systems and communities and will focus more on developing Black Queer voices in Patient and Public Involvement spaces. This includes:

- Outlining mental health care pathway frameworks for LGBTQ+ people currently are currently in existence and exploring whether they are culturally appropriate for Black LGBTQ+ people.

- Further development of the research base on Black LGBTQ+ health and wellbeing experiences.

- Identify the appropriate community engagement mechanisms that can influence PCREF.

# Case Study: Kelsea Sellars from Bare Radicals

What were the lessons learned from the experience, the successes and the voices of community members/partner organisations involved. We want to include engaging images & graphics, vibrant im88ages and less text (500 words max per case study) the tone will be conversational

Black Thrive's role as a backbone to the community was explored in a collaborative Black History Month event with Kelsea Sellars from Bare Radicals, a Black-led LGBTQ+ organisation based in Lambeth.

Working Group Members suggested opportunities to connect with local stakeholders to increase accessibility to the community survey and build trust with Lambeth's Black Queer communities. This culminated in an event aiming to create a brave space for local Black LGBTQ+ people to connect with Caribbean culture, learn about local community assets and improve intergenerational connections within Lambeth's Black LGBTQ+ community.

This event was driven by Working Group feedback that social isolation and loneliness were key factors for poor mental health in Black Queer communities. They also noted that there are few spaces for Black LGBTQ+ people that were sober, and community based.

It was attended by over 80 people and resulted in:

- A 100% increase in newsletter sign-ups for BQT and BR.
- A starting mailing list for Bare Radicals
- Two new members joining the Working Group
- Increased trust in Black Thrive as an organisation that supports Black LGBTQ+ peopl

We are happy to share feedback from some attendees:

**"I learned how to play dominoes! I felt safe in an environment where dominoes was being played!!"**

**"Spend time with older generations of queer people is a luxury. Thank you"**

Due to the success of this event, BQT has developed an informal partnership with Bare Radicals, which has resulted in an equally successful follow-up event in April 2024 and opportunities to collaborate on the QNC II event and Lambeth-based Pride Festivals.

> Really enjoyed the diversity of the crowd and the community feel of the event, so I'm taking away with me great memories and experience.
>
> **Event attendee**

# Employment Project Strategy

The Black Thrive employment project, funded by Guys and St Thomas' Charity (GSTC), aims to pilot innovative approaches to improve employment prospects for Black residents in Lambeth with long-term health conditions. This strategy outlines the goals and activities to achieve this. Societies have interconnected systems that can create adverse outcomes for certain groups due to structural discrimination, marginalisation, or lack of institutional power. Focusing on systems change can improve outcomes for these groups, offering long-term solutions that promote equity and justice. After six months of work, necessary system changes have been identified to enhance employment prospects for Black residents in Lambeth with long-term health conditions.

The project aims to direct public sector resources to address employment inequalities, make data from statutory partners and key system actors available to incorporate Black community insights, ensure high-quality and accessible employment support tailored to Black individuals with long-term health conditions, and utilise employer resources to ensure positive workplace experiences and prevent unemployment for staff with long-term health conditions.

## Project Overview

The Employment Project aims to enhance employment outcomes for Black Lambeth residents with long-term health conditions. Key actions include empowering grantees with lived experience to develop skills and sustainability, establishing a collaborative group for employment and social inclusion focused on Black individuals with long-term conditions (LTCs), creating engaging, publicly available information about project outcomes and learnings, increasing qualitative data from communities and front-line workers about Black individuals with LTCs.

This project contributes to the BTG vision and objectives by decolonising the evidence landscape through conducting and collaborating on research, embedding lived experience in research methodologies, supporting partner organisations with data collection and analysis, and publishing papers, blogs, and sharing learnings through various media. It also focuses on embedding race equity in systems change by improving policies and practices related to employment and health, influencing decisions by commissioners and senior stakeholders, supporting a lived experience working group for grant funding distribution, and piloting new ways of working with a focus on Black/Disabled leadership.

## Guiding Principles

- **Solve the Problem Permanently:** Systems changes should provide long-term solutions, avoiding short-term, one-off activities that depend on the ongoing existence of Black Thrive. The goal is to establish standard practices within partner organisations and key system actors that create equitable outcomes for Black individuals with long-term conditions.

- **Focus on Sustainable Impact:** Only engage in activities with a realistic potential to improve outcomes for Black individuals with long-term conditions. In the context of heightened awareness around racism and anti-racism, it is crucial to avoid activities that do not offer long-term benefits. The Black Thrive Employment project will prioritise sustainable outcomes, saying 'no' to work that distracts from this focus. Activities will be regularly evaluated to ensure they contribute to the overall ambition, with the flexibility to change, stop, or increase efforts as needed.

The system change strategy for the Employment Project aims to create a real-time understanding of the employment landscape for Black individuals with long-term conditions (LTCs) in Lambeth. This involves systematically collecting and making equalities data openly available by all organisations involved in employment and health. By co-producing data with partners and using modern data analysis techniques, the project will develop insights and strategic learning, focusing on shared measurement systems and employment support provider activities.

To embed equitable employment outcomes in key organisations' policies and practices, the project will integrate employment into care planning as a recovery pathway, increase employer awareness and use of Access to Work funding, and promote a vocational rehabilitation approach. Additionally, it will influence public sector procurement to enhance employment opportunities for Black individuals with LTCs, develop effective recruitment systems, and ensure high-quality, coherent employment support that meets residents' needs. These changes will be achieved by influencing care planning delivery, raising awareness of Access to Work, promoting vocational rehabilitation, and working with partners to use data and evidence for funding decisions.

Creating a coherent, connected, and collaborative system of employment support providers is another key outcome. The project aims to ensure that a referral to any employment service leads to a service that meets the individual's needs, embodying a "no wrong door" approach. This will be achieved by influencing new commissioning practices and system coordination.

Over the last year, our employment workstream has taken some time to scale back and reflect on how we interact and provide the most effective way to have greater impact on the community. We still value the community members and partners who have come with us along the journey.

## No Wrong Door

The employment team is dedicated to improving employment outcomes for Black Lambeth residents with long-term health conditions. Our focus this year has been to build relationships with the No Wrong Door (NWD) partnership.

NWD operates on the principle that employment support should be individualised, considering both strengths and weaknesses. This has led us to adopt a person-centred, trauma-informed approach.

The NWD partnership is made up of employment support providers and healthcare practitioners, working together to pilot new ways of supporting Black Lambeth residents with long-term health conditions. The initial members of the partnership were Mosaic Clubhouse, First Steps Trust, High Trees, Disability Advice Service, Renaisi, Vocation Matters and SlaM Occupational Therapists. The partnership's current members are Renaisi, DASL, Vocation Matters and SLaM. A key area of systems change work carried out through NWD is on how to strategically build relationships from various sectors to challenge the fragmentation and create a more holistic support system that benefits Black Disabled Lambeth residents. One of the successes achieved from this pursuit is the great trust that is now within the partnership shared between stakeholders. Additionally, we will be working towards ensuring greater awareness of our work in 2025, keeping all informed with the important developments taking place in our team.

Going forward, the employment team will prioritise dedicating resources to explore and examine the ways in which self-employment for Black disabled Lambeth residents can take place in a more seamless way. Some of the exciting work we are doing involves the development of educational resources about the reality of Black disabled experiences in seeking employment, and providing recommendations on increasing accessibility within service provision, amongst other things.

## Partnership and engagement

The No Wrong Door (NWD) partnership is a collaborative effort based on shared values, trust, and mutual respect, aiming to enhance employment support for Black disabled people by pooling resources and expertise. Each partner's unique contributions are valued, with inclusive participation guiding decision-making. Success is measured by the collective impact on race and disability justice. Partners commit to creating accessible learning frameworks informed by race and disability justice, incorporating the lived experiences of Black and Disabled community members. These systems drive organisational change, with documented practices, goals, and insights shared within the partnership.

A positive learning culture involves co-producing knowledge with Lived Experience Leads (LELs), ensuring their input leads to tangible changes in policies and culture, fostering a safe and empowering environment. Collective practice within the partnership includes collaborative decision-making, solidarity, continuous learning,

and accountability. Partners work to dismantle systemic oppression and promote race and disability justice through inclusivity, intersectional analysis, and effective collaboration. This approach acknowledges each partner's contributions, fosters accountability, and appreciates diversity, ensuring the partnership remains adaptable and responsive through continuous reflection and improvement.

Collective care fosters an empathetic, supportive community that prioritises individual well-being, challenges oppressive systems, and promotes compassion and empowerment. This ensures partners feel valued and heard, resolving conflicts through restorative dialogue and equitable distribution of resources. Compassionate conflict resolution focuses on restorative justice and intersectional understanding, rejecting punitive measures and promoting deeper connections and collective liberation.

Creating safe environments is essential, involving ongoing efforts to practice care in words, actions, and attitudes, respecting and recognising each participant, and being mindful of power imbalances. A safe environment allows for addressing, rectifying, and healing from harm, particularly attuned to ableism, racism, and elitism, empowering those with direct experiences to share their insights. Marginalisation refers to the denial of equitable access to resources, opportunities, and power due to intersecting oppressions. The partnership continuously examines interactions to recognise and address marginalisation, encouraging partners to reflect on their understanding and experiences of marginalisation and their own privileges. Intersectionality, introduced by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, highlights how intersecting identities create unique experiences of oppression. It emphasises addressing both the challenges and joys of intersecting identities, prompting partners to consider their community memberships and support for intersectional concerns, particularly for Black and Disabled residents.

## Lived Experience Leads

The NWD initiative is driven by the goal of creating a better world for Black Disabled people. It emphasises the importance of a culture where Black Disabled individuals can collaborate with able-bodied people to address and minimise barriers. The initiative aims to create spaces where the voices of Black Disabled people are not only heard but truly listened to, weaving their stories into narratives of resilience and hope. This involves promoting awareness, challenging biases, fostering inclusivity, advocating for equal opportunities, and dismantling systemic barriers.

The stories shared by Black Disabled people are essential in shaping policies and practices. Their active involvement in decision-making spaces is crucial for their liberation. Empowering individuals to advocate for their rights ensures their voices are heard and acted upon. The Lived Experience Leads (LELs) play a significant role in this process, sharing their personal experiences and challenging ableist assumptions. They highlight the importance of acknowledging and respecting diverse perceptions and abilities.

One LEL shared that they feel whole and do not see their voice as disabled, emphasising that their abilities strengthen their character and compassion. Another LEL discussed the personal challenges of disability, noting that it affects their self-perception and relationship with the world. Despite these challenges, they have developed resilience and perseverance, which boosts their self-confidence.

Self-care is also a priority, with a personalised approach being necessary due to the unique experiences of everyone. The LELs emphasise the importance of managing stress and anxiety, given the lack of accessible support in society. Their perseverance is driven by the need to move through the world purposefully, facing fears and stepping outside comfort zones to achieve change.

The essence of the NWD project lies in the voices and experiences it centres. Society must listen, learn, and act to create meaningful change. While Black Disabled people may feel powerless against structural barriers, the initiative underscores the importance of starting somewhere. The LELs aspire to help future generations contribute to society, manage their health effectively, and live full, valued lives without financial struggles. This constant care for others is expected to lead to significant changes, and the NWD team looks forward to sharing their achievements and continuing their collaborative work.

## Partnership and Collaboration

The NWD Collective includes five specialist employment support providers in Lambeth. These partners work together by sharing data, resources, referrals, and best practices to enhance their collective impact. The goal is to create a seamless support network where Black and Disabled individuals can access necessary support without facing barriers.

## Partners and Their Roles

Renaisi works with individuals facing economic exclusion and supports social organisations and place-based systems. Mosaic Clubhouse helps individuals displaced by mental illness regain confidence and skills through the Clubhouse model, which involves co-production between service users and staff. Status Employment offers the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model to help individuals with serious mental health issues find employment, along with education, training, and volunteering opportunities. Disability Advice Service Lambeth (DASL) provides information, advice, and advocacy to support individuals with various impairments into employment. Vocation Matters, a user-led project within South London and Maudsley (SLaM) NHS Foundation Trust, offers vocational support for people using mental health services.

## Impact and Testimonials

The impact of these organisations is evident through the success stories of individuals they have supported. For example, Mosaic Clubhouse and Status Employment have

helped individuals secure employment and education opportunities, while DASL has assisted service users in regaining confidence and navigating the job application process. Vocation Matters provides ongoing vocational support and training through projects like Clean and Care, which helps participants gain the skills and confidence needed for employment.

## Challenges of Isolation

Working in isolation can lead to duplicated efforts, poor communication, and missed opportunities, creating obstacles for those in need. The NWD partnership aims to overcome these challenges by fostering collaboration. By working together, the partners can provide more comprehensive and effective support to Black and Disabled residents.

The partnership seeks to expand by encouraging other organisations and community-led services in Lambeth to join. Interested parties are invited to complete a survey to express their interest. This expansion aims to build a larger, more inclusive network that can better serve the community.

## Vision for Systems Change

The NWD aims to shift from a competitive to a collaborative network of providers, building new relationships and connections. The goal is to create a human-centred system where any referral leads to appropriate support, ensuring no wrong door for Black and Disabled individuals seeking help. This vision includes changing policies, practices, and resource flows to better serve the community and promote equity.

## Conclusion

The project demonstrates systems change by enabling continuous learning, bringing fresh perspectives, and changing assumptions and narratives through published research and events. It builds confidence and agency among individuals with lived experience, facilitates decision-making power within communities, changes policies and practices, and establishes new connections and improves relationships between system actors and residents. This comprehensive approach aims to create long-term benefits for Black communities by fostering systemic change and promoting equity in employment and health outcomes.

By empowering Black Disabled voices, forming inclusive groups, and providing accessible information, these initiatives promote systemic change and equity. They focus on decolonising the evidence landscape, embedding race equity, and ensuring continuous learning and policy improvements. Striving to create a seamless, human-centred support system where everyone can access the help they need, ultimately fostering a more equitable future for Black communities in Lambeth.

# Culturally Appropriate Peer Support and Advocacy

Culturally Appropriate Peer Support and Advocacy (CAPSA) is funded by the Living Well Network Alliance (including SLaM), the Department for Health and Social Care, and supported by Lambeth Together. Building on the outstanding work accomplished by the team last year, we are now progressing to phase two of the project. This phase will focus on strengthening our statutory connections and ensuring more substantial outcomes, incorporating a more solid model based on the recommendations from the evaluation completed this year.

## Bridging the Gap

Over the past year, the CAPSA team has made substantial strides in improving mental health outcomes by addressing the cultural needs of service users and the practices of professionals at various levels within Lambeth.

CAPSA has collaborated with Lambeth's secondary mental health service users to foster a sense of empowerment through co-production in care planning and advocacy. Our work has focused on building trust through representation and creating a sense of cultural safety to improve overall wellbeing and inspire hope in service users about the possibility of recovery.

A key aspect of our advocacy approach has been the representation of service users' perspectives in clinical settings. We have consistently raised awareness of cultural barriers by attending interagency formulation meetings within community mental health teams to advocate for service user needs. We have used our intersectional lens to highlight the importance of cultural competence and lived experience, while ensuring that individual rights are upheld in accordance with the Mental Health Act (1983).

Across the borough, we have delivered training to both inpatient and community-based statutory partners to ensure the continuity of culturally competent care in line with the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF). Through this workstream, we have been able to amplify the voices of service users with lived experience and increase awareness of the cultural barriers that hinder the development of secure, trusting relationships between individuals and their clinical teams.

Working to support individuals to have their needs met within mental health services has focused our advocacy on reduction in crisis and empowering individuals. An example of this was, receiving a referral and meeting with the individual to build rapport and co-produce a care plan. We were able to provide a safe space for her to discuss navigating Mental Health care as a Black woman, something often deemed taboo and stigmatised in her family leading to feelings of isolation. Working

with her to meet people with similar experiences, we also helped equip her with the right language, so she was able to express her desire to come off medication with her community mental health team whilst having an advocate be present with her in medical reviews. By building a bridge of clear communication with her, the care coordinator, consultant psychiatrist, there became an agreed timeline in which she can safely come off medication that paid close attention to her needs outlined in her care plan.

## Theory of Change Workshop with King's College London

CAPSA's ongoing efforts to implement the PCREF with our community partners have led to our contribution to Maudsley Charity's report on developing best practices for statutory organisations in the locality.

## Social Inclusion Workshop

We have placed a strong emphasis on allowing the collective community voice to guide our work. In partnership with King's College London, we conducted a Social Inclusion workshop that highlighted the community's views on social inclusion. By identifying unmet social care needs within the community, the study aimed to pinpoint areas requiring further support. This workshop resulted in a paper authored by CAPSA team members, advocating for the voices of Black individuals with Serious Mental Illness (SMI), a group often overlooked in mental health research.

## Service Evaluation

To build on the invaluable work the team has accomplished since its inception, CAPSA has completed a comprehensive evaluation with the support of Sheffield Hallam University. By gathering insights from team members, service users, and statutory partners, we have assessed how well the service has met the community's needs, in line with the original business case. This evaluation process has been crucial in ensuring that the service's core goals remain central to daily operations.

## Culture of Care

The team's involvement in NHS England's Culture of Care programme has been vital in raising standards of practice in mental health wards across the nation. Working with the wider Black Thrive team, we have applied our experiential knowledge to understand the areas that need improvement.

Two members of the CAPSA team have participated in the Culture of Care working group, supporting Black Thrive's focus on racial equity in inpatient care. The insights gained from CAPSA's work on inpatient wards in Lambeth have been instrumental in supporting Lived Experience advisors and the research team.

## Staffing

While staffing changes were a challenge in the previous year, this year has seen more consistency, allowing for adjustments in the team's deployment. Rather than expanding the team, we have focused on ensuring that all members receive specialised training. Independent Mental Health Advocacy Training has been a key area of development, ensuring that team members are equipped to address the needs presented by service users. All team members are now qualified with at least a Level 2 award, ensuring the team can provide appropriate support. Additionally, the team has benefited from Seni Lewis Training, further enhancing professional development.

## Recommendations

Looking ahead to 2025, CAPSA aims to evolve in line with the findings of our evaluation, ensuring that our service objectives are aligned with the community's needs, as outlined in future engagement opportunities. We plan to expand our community portfolio to provide more preventative support and broaden our reach through further collaboration.


Thriving Futures Docufilm screening

# Communities

The purpose of the Communities Workstream at Black Thrive Lambeth is to empower Black communities in Lambeth by addressing systemic inequalities that affect their health, wellbeing, and opportunities. This workstream focuses on ensuring that the lived experiences, needs, and voices of Black residents are at the centre of decision-making processes related to health, employment, education, and other social determinants of wellbeing.

Key goals include:

- **Community-led decision making:** Encouraging Black communities to actively participate in shaping services and policies that impact their lives.

- **Advocacy and systemic change:** Working to dismantle structural barriers, particularly within health and social care, that disproportionately disadvantage Black people.

- **Co-production and collaboration:** Building partnerships with community organisations, residents, and stakeholders to create co-produced solutions that are culturally relevant and effective.

- **Building resilience and leadership:** Supporting community capacity-building, fostering leadership within Black communities, and creating opportunities for people to influence change.

## Partnerships

In 2024, the Communities Workstream prioritised partnerships as a core strategy. Black Thrive Lambeth recognised the need to reconnect with the Lambeth community. The most effective approach was to collaborate with existing projects that are already serving our community.

The Communities Workstream also focused on the Angell Town area within Lambeth. It was acknowledged that the number of Black residents within Lambeth who can participate in our services and workshops is finite. Therefore, Black Thrive Lambeth chose not to compete for this audience but to enhance and support other organisations in their ongoing work.

Supporting our partner organisations

Black Thrive Lambeth remained adaptable in the support it offered to organisations. In some cases, we provided venues for community events addressing critical issues. On other occasions, we supplied meals, ensuring attendees could benefit from a free meal during their gatherings.

At Marcus Lipton, we arranged for a professional basketball coach to engage with young people, providing training and enhancing their basketball skills.

## Project Heal

While supporting others, the Communities Workstream also promoted its own initiative, Project Heal. This project aims to address a significant issue impacting our community: trauma. Recognising the lack of understanding around trauma within both the community and the services that work with it, Black Thrive Lambeth directed focused efforts toward addressing this concern.

Project Heal was established to raise awareness about the various traumas affecting individuals in the community. Our goal was to demonstrate that we see and acknowledge their experiences, encouraging services and practitioners to do the same.

The concept of "soil and seeds" underpins Project Heal. Just as various factors must be considered for seeds to grow—such as age, temperature, and soil type—similar considerations apply to trauma in Lambeth:

- **Age:** How long the trauma has remained unaddressed.

- **Temperature:** The relevance of the trauma to current well-being.

- **Soil Type:** The availability of services and understanding accessible to the people.

Project Heal aims to enhance the quality of "seeds" being planted in the soil, ultimately fostering growth and healing.

## Collaboration and Implementation

Project Heal is a co-produced initiative developed through extensive discussions. It involved collaboration across Lambeth, Birmingham, and Haringey to deliver the programme to the Lambeth community. We engaged with our audience to gather narratives that highlight the objectives of Project Heal. Lambeth contributed three narratives, Birmingham one, and Haringey none.

Due to their expertise in filming Haringey asked that they be commissioned to carry out the "story telling" of the narratives.

# Case Study: The Karibu Centre and Black Thrive Lambeth

The Karibu Centre, situated in Brixton, stands as one of the few remaining Black-owned spaces in Lambeth. Originally established to serve the African and Caribbean communities, the Centre has a rich history as a cultural, educational, and social hub. While it is now primarily used for wakes and other significant public events, it was once a place of broader community engagement, offering educational classes and housing a school. Despite these changes, the Karibu Centre remains an essential space for bringing the community together, preserving its cultural heritage, and fostering a sense of belonging.

## Accessibility and Inclusivity at the Karibu Centre

One of the Centre's key strengths is its accessibility. Located on the ground floor, it is wheelchair accessible, ensuring that events held at the Karibu Centre are open and inclusive for all members of the community. This accessibility makes it an ideal location for community gatherings and events, reflecting its commitment to inclusivity and supporting diverse needs within Lambeth.

## Black Thrive Lambeth's Engagement with the Karibu Centre

Black Thrive Lambeth has actively supported and utilised the Karibu Centre as part of its mission to strengthen community ties. One significant example is the Mother's Day celebration hosted at the Centre. This event was designed to honour the women in our community, creating an environment where attendees could connect, share their stories, and foster a sense of solidarity. The Centre's accessible, welcoming atmosphere made it the perfect venue for such a celebration.

Another successful event hosted by Black Thrive Lambeth was the Reggae and Motown quiz night. This event brought together community members for a lively evening of music, entertainment, and cultural exchange, showcasing the Karibu Centre as a versatile space for community enjoyment. Events like these highlight the Centre's ability to host a variety of activities that attract diverse audiences, helping to revitalise the space and reinforce its role as a social hub.

## Supporting Community Organisations

In addition to hosting its own events, Black Thrive Lambeth has also facilitated access to the Karibu Centre for other community organisations. For example, Black Thrive supported the Angell Town organisation CHIPS by covering the costs for the use of the space, enabling CHIPS to host their own event. This partnership not only strengthens community ties but also ensures that vital programs and services have the necessary resources and venues to reach those they serve. By providing this support, Black Thrive Lambeth demonstrates a commitment to uplifting other local initiatives and organisations.

## Conclusion

The Karibu Centre's historical and cultural importance in Lambeth cannot be overstated. As a Black-owned space, it remains a critical resource for the community, providing a safe and accessible venue for significant public events, celebrations, and gatherings. Black Thrive Lambeth's collaboration with the Karibu Centre can be seen as an act of planting seeds in fertile soil. By paying for the use of the space—whether for our own events like the Mother's Day celebration and the Reggae and Motown quiz night, or by supporting organisations such as CHIPS—Black Thrive is planting the seeds of opportunity.

These seeds, nurtured in the supportive and inclusive environment that the Karibu Centre represents, help communities flourish. The Centre itself is the soil, rich with history and accessibility, that allows these initiatives to grow and develop. In this way, Black Thrive Lambeth contributes to ensuring that the Karibu Centre continues to be a vital space where the community can gather, connect, and thrive, thus preserving its legacy for future generations.

# Glossary of Terms

| Acroynm | Expansion |
| --- | --- |
| BACP | British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy |
| BQT | Black Queer & Thriving |
| BTL | Black Thrive Lambeth |
| BTG | Black Thrive Global |
| CFL | Child Friendly Lambeth |
| CHIPS | Community Hub for Intergenerational Play and Support |
| CYPF | Children, Young People, and Families |
| DASL | Disability Advice Service Lambeth |
| GSTC | Guys and St Thomas' Charity |
| ICB | Integrated Care Board |
| IPS | Individual Placement and Support |
| KCL | King's College London |
| LEL | Lived Experience Leads |
| LGBTQ+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (plus other gender identities and sexual orientations) |
| LTC | Long-Term Conditions |
| NHS | National Health Service |
| NWD | No Wrong Door |
| PCREF | Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework |
| PFYL | Partnership for Young London |
| Q&A | Question and Answer |
| QNC | Queer Networks Connect |
| SEL | South East London |
| SEND | Special Educational Needs and Disability |
| SLaM | South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust |
| SMI | Serious Mental Illness |
| TFL | Transport for London |



Folkets Husby visit

# Black Thrive Haringey

## Introduction to Black Thrive Haringey

Black Thrive Haringey (BTH) works to address the entrenched disparities faced by Black communities in education, employment, health, mental health, housing, and policing. The purpose of this workstream is to embed race equity into systemic change, dismantling structural barriers and creating opportunities for Black communities to thrive. Through storytelling, research, advocacy, and community engagement, we aim to destigmatise key issues, empower individuals, and create lasting change. This work not only raises awareness of the issues but also delivers tangible resources and tools to support the mental health, resilience, and well-being of Black people.

Our work spans a broad spectrum of audiences and sectors, engaging young people, professionals, healthcare providers, policymakers, educators, and grassroots organisations. Partnering with organisations such as North London Mental Health Trust, Diverse Cymru, Father2Father, Open Minds Alliance (OMA), NLPC and Haringey Council, we deliver impactful initiatives that span storytelling, research, training, community events, and the development of innovative tools. **This year alone, we reached over 2,500 people through screenings, discussions, and community events.**

**In the last year, we have achieved the following:**

- Expanded our film screening programme, sparking dialogue on key issues like mental health and systemic disparities.

- Cocreated Project Heal by producing four powerful docufilms and launching the Time2Heal app, tailored to the healing and resilience of Black communities.

- Created a Black LGBTQ+ working group with our BTL Black Queer & Thriving partners.

- Finalised our community research report on mental health and policing disparities in Haringey.

- Strengthened collaborations with key stakeholders to co-design solutions addressing systemic inequities, such as our work under the PCREF working group with North London Mental Health Trust (NLMHT).

# Delivery of Workstreams

Despite being a small team of three, BTH has accomplished a significant workload:

- **Film screenings:** Continued sharing the docu-film Me, My Music, and Mental Health. a story by Shocka, reaching diverse audiences and generating conversations about destigmatising mental health.

- **Innovative solutions:** Launched the Time2Heal app in September 2024, a groundbreaking resource for healing, mental health and resilience tailored to Black communities.

- **Collaborative storytelling:** Produced a docufilm on sickle cell disorder in collaboration with the NHS Red Cell Network, which highlights systemic gaps in healthcare and raises awareness about this overlooked condition.

- **Community engagement:** Conducted events with the Met Police and North London Mental Health Trust foundation to ensure community voices shape systemic change.

# Looking Forward

From 2025 onwards, we are delivering several projects. These include nationwide promotion of the Time2Heal app, designed to support healing and empowerment in the Black community; premiere screenings for four new Project Heal docufilms, highlighting inspiring stories of resilience and triumph; and the Cultural Competency training and scheme now available across England.

## Short-term goals

- Sustain and scale ongoing projects, such as training, the app and docufilm screenings.

- Phase 2 and 3 developments of the Time2Heal app, expanding its offerings and impact.

- Secure additional funding to ensure continuity of our initiatives, which can implement community solutions.

## Long-term vision

- Achieve measurable changes in policy and practices to address systemic disparities.

- See greater accountability within institutions serving Black communities.

- Empower Black communities through co-designed projects and resources that address their specific needs.

- Foster systemic change to ensure that thriving becomes the norm for Black individuals. individuals.

# Project Updates

Our work addresses systemic inequities through storytelling, research, training, and advocacy. We create spaces for honest dialogue, develop tools like the Time2Heal app, and produce films that amplify Black voices. These efforts not only highlight disparities but also provide solutions that empower the community to thrive.

## Events

The Black-Led Systems Change Event at City Hall was a flagship event which brought together Black professionals, community leaders, and organisations to celebrate Black excellence, share insights, and foster collaboration. Hosted by Deputy Mayor Joanne McCartney, it featured speakers like Patrick Vernon OBE and Jacqueline Dyer. Attendee feedback emphasised the event's inspiration and impact.

This year, we have hosted a multitude of impactful screening events for our docufilms Me, My Music, and Mental Health and SICKLE. These screenings have reached diverse audiences, including young people, educators, healthcare professionals, and community leaders; encouraging impactful conversations about mental health stigma.  These events have not only fostered dialogue but have also served as a catalyst for awareness, advocacy, and action.



The Black-Led Systems Change Event

## Docufilms

Me, My Music, and Mental Health tells the story of Shocka and his mental health journey. It has been screened to over eight hundred people, including young people, community members, carers, educators, professionals, and council leaders. The film continues to spark deep discussions about mental health stigma and resilience.

SICKLE, the docufilm, was commissioned by the NHS Red Cell Network and educates audiences about the lived experiences of sickle cell patients and systemic failings in their care. Premiered at Everyman Cinema, Cambridge University and the Ritzy Cinema, it has received invitations for additional screenings nationwide.



Me, My Music, and Mental Health screening

Sickle Cell screening event

## Project Heal

Our Project Heal initiative, in partnership with BTL and BTG, produced four impactful docufilms, each telling unique and powerful stories of trauma, resilience, and triumph within Black communities. These films include Sisters Three, which delves into the complexities of family tragedies and the strength found in overcoming them; Young Abdoul, a compelling narrative about a young man's journey from war-torn Congo to the streets of London, where he chooses a positive path forward despite immense challenges; Sean Rigg through Marcia Rigg, a moving account of a family's fight for justice following Sean Rigg's tragic death in police custody; and Mikey Powell through Tippa Naphtali, which sheds light on the systemic failures that led to Mikey Powell's tragic death and the enduring fight for accountability and change. These docufilms amplify voices often unheard, fostering awareness and sparking dialogue around healing, systemic change, and community resilience.

The Time2Heal App is a first-of-its-kind resource tailored to the Black community, the app provides curated content addressing challenges such as mental health, racism, substance misuse, and trauma. Launched in September 2024, the app includes videos, guided audios, book recommendations, and links to professional services for support. Initial feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and plans for its expansion are underway.

## Training

This year, we launched an exciting new initiative, training our first cohort of North London Mental Health Trust employees in cultural competency. Partnering with Diverse Cymru, we brought their renowned cultural competency training scheme—highly respected in Wales—to England for the first time. This comprehensive training equips professionals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to deliver culturally appropriate and equitable services and care, addressing systemic biases and disparities. By embedding this programme within the North London Mental Health Trust, we are fostering a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and laying the groundwork for meaningful changes in how Black communities are supported within mental health services. This initiative marks a significant step towards creating inclusive and responsive healthcare systems in England.

## Research

New for 2023-4, Black Thrive Haringey collaborated with Professor Stafford Scott and Forensic Architecture to design a crucial research project examining deaths in police custody, with a focus on the use of the prone position, the controversial justification of "excited delirium," and the role of Acute Behavioural Disturbance (ABD). This work explores the intersections of systemic racism and mental health, as these practices disproportionately target Black individuals, particularly those experiencing mental health crises. The project aims to expose the flawed and discriminatory application of "excited delirium" and ABD as justifications, alongside the significant

dangers associated with the prone position, which is often used during interactions between law enforcement and vulnerable Black individuals. By leveraging Forensic Architecture's investigative expertise and centring the lived experiences of Black communities, this research seeks to challenge harmful practices, address racial and mental health disparities, and push for systemic reforms. Black Thrive Haringey is actively working with Forensic Architecture to secure funding in 2025 to advance this vital initiative, ensuring accountability and driving meaningful change.

## Mission and objectives

We have laid the groundwork through extensive community engagement, fostering partnerships, trust, and collaboration. Initiatives like Project Heal and our app promote systemic change by equipping the community with resources to heal and platforms to amplify their voices.

Our work is a direct reflection of Black Thrive's mission to embed race equity into systemic change. By addressing the root causes of disparities and amplifying Black voices, we aim to transform the systems that perpetuate inequality. Each initiative – whether a docufilm, an app, or an event – is designed to challenge inequities, raise awareness, and create opportunities for Black communities to thrive. For example, our docufilms shed light on systemic issues and personal stories of resilience, sparking important conversations that drive change. The Time2Heal app provides tangible tools for mental health and healing, offering direct support to individuals navigating systemic and personal challenges. Through our events, we create platforms for Black professionals, community leaders, and grassroots organisations to collaborate and share solutions, ensuring that the voices and experiences of Black people are at the forefront of decision-making and systemic transformation.

## Community ties and partnerships

Community members were central to every stage of our initiatives, from shaping the rollout of PCREF to participating in our community peer research, reporting their findings in a comprehensive report with recommendations that would improve the experiences and outcomes of the black community in Haringey. Our community are asked for their feedback during events and screenings which is acknowledged and used to direct our work on systems change keeping that at the heart of the work we do. Our annual community assemblies ensure accountability to our community, we report to them everything we have done in that year to work towards our vision and goals of Black people thriving in Haringey. We also showcase the work of other organisations in both the statutory and voluntary sector that are working to address inequalities and systematic racism with us at BTH.

Partnerships have been integral to our success. Key collaborators include the NHS Red Cell Network, Diverse Cymru, North London Mental Health Trust, Father2Father, OMA, Ubele initiative, Mind, Black mental health collective, Tottenham rights group, Haringey learning partnership, Haringey sixth form college, Haringey Council senior leadership team, Haringey Police, Metropolitan university, and Forensic Architecture.

## Challenges

The main challenges we have faced are limited team capacity and funding uncertainty. The heavy workload and small team have hindered our ability to expand, while the impending end of our National Lottery funding in September 2025 has highlighted the need for securing sustainable financial resources.



Black Thrive Haringey and The Metropolitan Police event

# Case Study: Diverse Cymru


Diverse Cymru Awards 2023

This year, Black Thrive Haringey partnered with Diverse Cymru to deliver cultural competency training in England, with our first training session with the employees of the North London Mental Health Trust. This initiative emerged from our ongoing work with the community around the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF), where Black communities emphasised that staff training was crucial for creating a culturally competent and equitable mental health service. The training aims to address systemic inequities and equip professionals with the knowledge and tools to provide services that respect and meet the needs of diverse populations.

## The Partnership and Agreed Goals

Our collaboration with Diverse Cymru brought their established cultural competency programme, previously successful in Wales, to England for the first time. The shared goal was to address the inequities in services by empowering professionals to understand and navigate cultural diversity. By focusing on real-world challenges faced by Black communities, the training aimed to create systemic change within organisations across the country.

## Challenges and Obstacles

Adapting the training programme for England posed logistical and cultural challenges. The healthcare systems and demographics differ significantly between Wales and London, requiring customisation to reflect the local context.

Securing stakeholder buy-in and ensuring participation presented additional hurdles. Through joint planning sessions, open dialogue, and a shared commitment to the goal, BTH and Diverse Cymru worked closely to overcome these obstacles and ensure the training's relevance and impact.

## Strengthening Relationships Across Sectors

This initiative strengthened relationships between Black Thrive Haringey, Diverse Cymru, and the North London Mental Health Trust. Regular meetings fostered collaboration, while shared insights and expertise bridged gaps between community needs and institutional goals. This cross-sector partnership created a model for embedding cultural competency into public services by combining grassroots advocacy with professional training frameworks.

Community Engagement and Impact

Community input was pivotal in shaping this initiative. During PCREF engagement sessions, (that we were commissioned to deliver for NLMHT) participants voiced the need for healthcare professionals to better understand cultural nuances and systemic racism's impact on Black patients. These voices underscored the necessity for cultural competency training and provided real-life examples that solidified the information within its contents.

## Lessons Learned

The insights we have gathered throughout this year have highlighted two crucial aspects. Primarily, we've recognised the significance of adapting our programmes to align with the specific needs and nuances of local communities in order to achieve the most meaningful and effective outcomes. Furthermore, we've underscored the essential role of cultivating robust partnerships and fostering transparent communication among collaborating organisations. This collaborative approach is pivotal in navigating the complexities and obstacles that inevitably arise, and ultimately, in realising our collective objectives.

# Conclusion

Black Thrive Haringey has achieved remarkable milestones, from launching the innovative Time2Heal app to hosting impactful events like our Black led systems change event at City Hall showcasing the work of the Black thrive partners but also sharing that platform with those that share our vision for systematic change which dismantles racism and address inequalities in the black community across the UK . Also collaborating with our partners in Lambeth, Birmingham and the Black thrive global team to produce four compelling storytelling docufilms that are to be launched in 2025.

Despite the challenges, our work has empowered Black communities, raised awareness, and driven systemic change. Moving forward, we will continue to promote healing, amplify voices, and push for the policies and practices needed to create a future where Black people thrive.



Harringey Sixth Form College

# Glossary of Terms

| Acroynm | Expansion |
| --- | --- |
| ABD | Acute Behavioural Disturbance |
| BTH | Black Thrive Haringey |
| BTL | Black Thrive Lambeth |
| BTG | Black Thrive Global |
| LGBTQ+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (plus other gender identities and sexual orientations) |
| Met Police | Metropolitan Police Service |
| NHS | National Health Service |
| NLMHT | North London Mental Health Trust |
| NLPC | North London Partnership Consortium |
| OBE | Order of the British Empire |
| OMA | Open Minds Alliance |
| PCREF | Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework |

# Black Thrive Birmingham



## Introduction to Black Thrive Birmingham

Black Thrive Birmingham is hosted and managed by Catalyst 4 Change, West Midlands African and Caribbean Mental Hub. Catalyst mission is to improve Black mental health outcomes in Birmingham and the West Midlands by enabling individuals to receive the right support at the right time and by creating a networked ecosystem of strong social sector Black-focussed organisations that can influence the system, hold it to account and ensure continuous improvement in access, experience and outcomes.

During 2023-24 Black Thrive Birmingham's work has involved the following key programmes and activities:

1. Patient and Carers Race Equality Framework (PCREF) Advisors
1. A Culturally Appropriate Mental Health Advocacy Pilot - Advocates for Change
1. Pathway to Independence
1. Community Engagement in Research 6



Black Thrive Birmingham Catalyst teams members

# PCREF Advisors programme

Our team of 5 PCREF Advisors, hailing from Birmingham's Black communities and including individuals with lived experience of mental health challenges and unpaid carers, is led by a PCREF Lead at Catalyst. This team facilitates community and mental health service workshops and meetings, gathering stories and data to evaluate the effectiveness of mental health services for Black communities.

Collaborating with the PCREF Advisors, we analyse the collected data alongside the engaged community members and groups to:

- Identify prevalent themes regarding the strengths and weaknesses of current services
- Pinpoint actionable steps for service enhancement
- Identify specific areas where targeted changes could yield significant improvements
- Recognise systemic opportunities for innovative approaches
- Promote and facilitate greater community involvement in driving system and service change.

During 2023-24, the PCREF Team played a role in the DHSC-funded "Advocates for Change" pilot programme, which aims to inform the future commissioning of culturally appropriate mental health advocacy. This programme began in October 2023 and will conclude in March 2025.
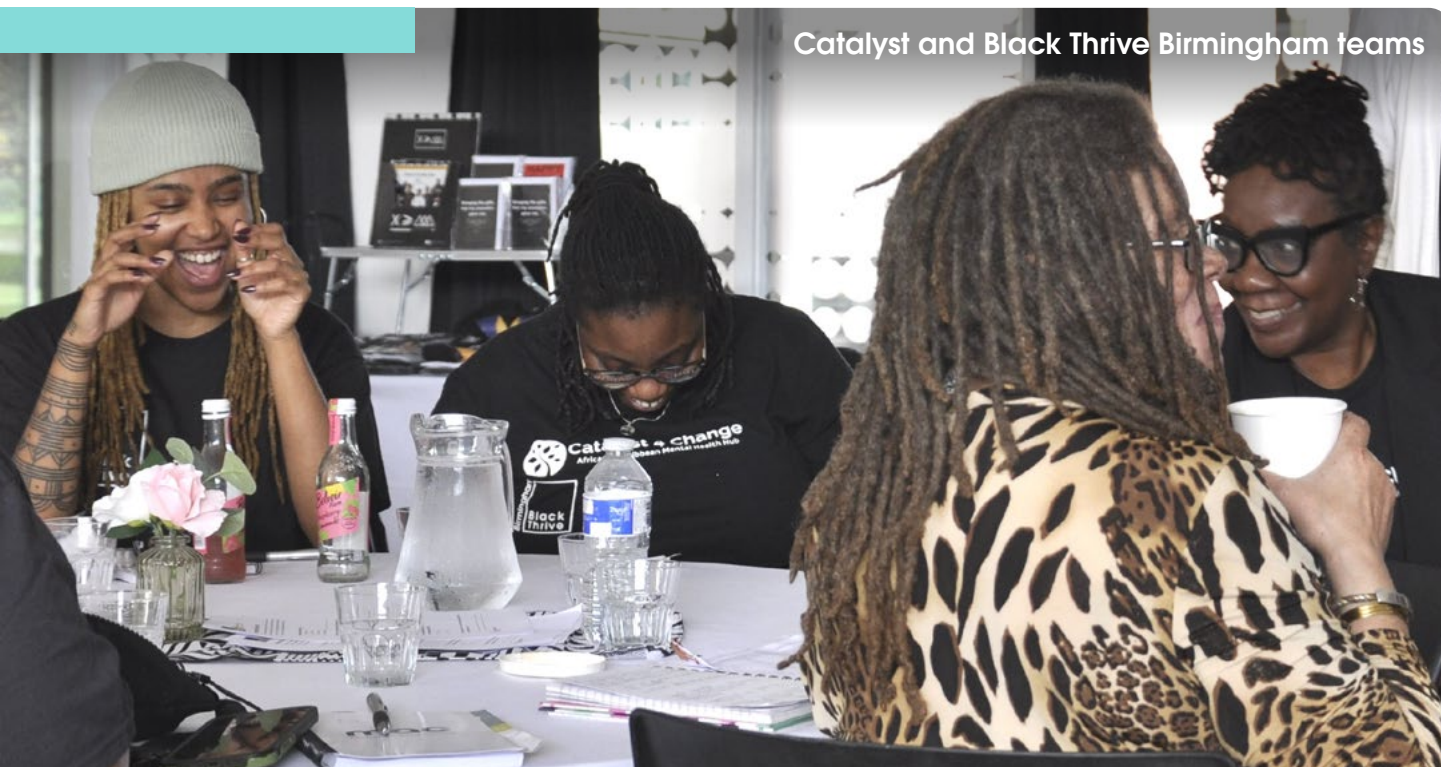


Catalyst and Black Thrive Birmingham teams

# Advocates for Change

Advocates for Change is a mental health advocacy partnership designed to meet the cultural needs of African, Caribbean, and other racialised communities in Birmingham and Solihull

The partnership comprises the following organisations, which provide the services listed below:

- **POhWER:** Provides inpatient advocacy, in both one-on-one and group sessions, to help individuals express their cultural and faith needs and challenge discrimination.

- **Sandwell African and Caribbean Mental Health Foundation (SACMHF):** Focuses on community-based support, helping individuals reintegrate after hospital discharge by connecting them with local services. SACMHF also works with carers to provide resources and information for ongoing support.

- **Catalyst 4 Change:** Raises awareness of the Patient Carers Race Equality Framework among service users and carers; co-runs carer groups with SACMHF; delivers community-based group advocacy sessions for unpaid carers; and collates service user and carer concerns, highlighting these collective concerns to the Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust (BSMHFT) and seeking redress to promote more equitable and responsive services.

The need for greater advocacy to centre service users in decision-making about their care and involve their carers was a key theme that emerged from the Patient Carer RACE Equality Framework engagement session in 2021/22 (Catalyst and PCREF - CATALYST 4 Change.)

# Outcomes and Impact

In the last year, we have achieved the following outcomes and impact of Advocates for Change programme:

## Service User Support

- Feeling listened to
- Support with raising cultural and spiritual needs to clinical staff and exploring how these can be addressed
- Addressing digital poverty: support to access a mobile phone immediately upon discharge
- Understanding how to access a GP surgery and prescriptions
- Better understanding benefit services and how to navigate the system
- How to make complaints to the client to consider completion of evaluation of their hospital treatment experience and where necessary to challenge via the complaint process
- Access to support and services in the community
- Support with addressing long standing issues with family

## Carers

- Carers attending Advocates for Change meetings reported that have found them useful, and that they created an opportunity to share their concerns about advocating for their family member/friends in mental health services
- Increased awareness of different advocacy services available (through POHWER) to Carers and their family member who have mental health problems
- Increased awareness of their rights as carers

## Service user and carers feedback

- Advocates for Change has provided one to one and peer Advocacy support to Service Users and delivered Carers groups and meetings.
- Feedback forms, testimonials and ongoing conversations highlight satisfaction with the service. Individual service users and carers have viewed advocates for Change as an important resource.

# Key Emerging Themes

Catalyst for Change commissioned Ratio Consultancy to run two Data analysis training workshops attended by the PCREF team at Catalyst to support the team to analyse the data collected from Advocates for Change activities delivered partner between January 2024- July 2024

The aim of this analysis was to:

- Identify concerns and complaints
- Understand service user and carer experiences
- Including impact and outcomes of treatment

The key themes from the analysis were as follows:

## Insights: Service users

- Need for more inclusive service that consider service user's religious, spiritual and/or cultural needs
- Religious and cultural misunderstanding leading to misdiagnosis
- Racial discrimination on ward
- Overmedication or unsuitable medication
- Lengthy time on ward

**In terms of transitioning out of the system and discharge, there is a strong need for support around the following:**

- Addressing stigma & lack of understanding of mental health in the community
- Housing support
- Access to finance and benefits, education, employment and positive activities

## Insights: Carers

- Carers lack of voice, influence & agency when engaging with clinical staff
- Poor communication between carers and clinical staff
- Carers feeling dismissed or ignored

**In terms of relationships between carers and their family member in mental health service:**

- Strong desire for connection with family member to foster family bonds and celebrate milestones e.g. birthdays
- More involvement in their family member's inpatient care
- Request for more than 2 family members during inpatient visits

**In terms of carers own needs and experiences:**

- Strong need and wish for support
- Negative emotional Impact of caring on wellbeing
- Feel neglected and invisible by mental health services
- Need to understand their rights to support their family member who are inental health services
- More support for their family member when they are discharged in the community


Sandwell ACCI Stall holders

# Wider System Change Activities

Catalyst's PCREF Team led on the development of the Advocates for Change Advisory Group whose aims are to:

- • support the activities of Advocates for Change in accordance with the service specification
- improve the service and its engagement with its stakeholders
- co-produce service and system change identified through the Project's service user and carer's engagement
- contribute to the services understanding of a Culturally appropriate advocacy service that will support the Projects independent evaluation activities
- contribute to the Project's sustainability plans

## The membership comprises:

- Mental health service users and carers from racialised communities.
- Staff from Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust (BSMHFT)
- Voluntary and community sector leaders from Global Majority or marginalised communities who are providing mental health services, support and representing people racialised from communities in the West Midlands..

The Advisory group has sought to address system-wide changes to tackle the inequalities that have emerged from the work undertaken by the Advocates for Change team. These themes have been raised and addressed at BSMHFT's Secure Care Clinical Inequalities committee and the Trust-wide Health Inequalities Board, due to the ongoing relationship between the project and the Associate Director for Equalities, Inclusion and Diversity and the Clinical Inequalities team for Secure Care. Additionally, the PCREF team is collaborating with the Psychology team at a Secure Care unit at BSMHFT to co-develop a standards charter with carers to guide staff's engagement with Carers. The Advocates for Change programme is currently undergoing an independent evaluation commissioned by DHSC; the evaluation will be released in 2025. Finally, a number of themes and issues that have emerged from Advocates for Change align with an initiative called Pathways to Independence, which will be managed by Catalyst for Change and commence in January 2025.

# Pathways to Independence

Pathways to Independence will deliver bespoke, co-designed activities to reduce patient boredom, reduce patient length of stay, supporting patients in transition and discharge from Secure Care Services.

The service is also designed to support BSMHFT in the delivery of its objectives relating to the health inequalities review, priorities and action plan and the introduction and delivery of the mandatory patient and carer race equality framework. Feedback from Secure Care Service User and Staff Consultation undertaken in 2022/23 and more recently from the Advocates for Change activities in secure care has helped shape this development.

Pathways to Independence will be delivered by a network of Community based organisations primarily Black led called Sustainable Community Initiative (SCI). SCI has a membership of 22 Health, Social Care, Housing, Sport, Creative and Well Being services. The Community Engagement Team at BSMHFT initiated SCI. Catalyst assumed management of SCI between 2023- 2024.

Funding was secured from REACH the West Midlands Provider Collaborative (PC) for adult secure mental health services and learning disability and autism service for the delivery of SCI first programme Pathways to Independence.

During 2023-24 Catalyst has led on the implementation of the Pathways to Independence programme which has involved commissioning, contract management; evaluation and monitoring arrangements and timetabling of delivery across 4 Secure Care units.

# Community Engagement in Research

Catalyst is a member of a collaborative network called Birmingham Research & Community Engagement Hub (BIRCH), led by Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC). BIRCH brings together healthcare, local government, the voluntary and Community sector (VCS) and academia to enhance research engagement and participation.

BIRCH identifies gaps in community engagement in research; develop and coordinate networks to prevent duplication, and work with communities to address power imbalances. We will empower communities, foster trust, and create long-lasting relationships ensuring sustainability. Birch participated in the NHS Research Engagement Network (REN) development programme funding from NHS England (November 2023- April 2024) to:

- Grow local research engagement networks within underserved communities and
- Embed consideration of diversity in research within the Integrated Care System

As part of this programme Catalyst and two other Community Led networks (Community Connexions and Flourish) held focus groups with community organisations and community members to explore strategies to remove barriers to engagement, involvement, and participation and empowering communities to become active partners in research.

Catalyst's focus group was attended by 5 Black led Voluntary sector organisations.

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## Top-level findings from the focus groups

### Funding

- Fair and transparent application processes for all.
- Funding for community assets: training and education in research.
- Funding for community events where research can happen, and data can be gathered informally

### Collaboration

- A single 'research hub' for research information, support, guidelines and templates.
- Bring together completed research and implement findings before starting anything new.
- Research literacy campaigns for the community

### Engagement and Accessibility

- Community engagement/cultural competency training required.
- Ensure representation on teams who engage with the community.
- Resources in community languages, funding for interpreters.

**In addition, Catalyst's focus group recommended:**

- Development of research mentors
- Matching research partners with community organisations to share skills and knowledge
- Community organisations to secure funding for researchers or consider secondment to strengthen and build research literacy.

Further to these findings, the BIRCH network has secured additional funding to increase opportunities and access to take part in research for diverse communities and to the sustainability of approaches.

Catalyst continues to be a Birch partner developing opportunities for Black communities and their organisations to ensure that they are more actively involved in shaping and delivering research that is meaningful to their community and make a difference to their health and wellbeing

Through Catalyst's engagement with BIRCH, it has secured funding for a part – time Research & Evaluation Lead post to:

- Deliver ongoing Birch funded initiatives
- Work alongside the BTG Research Observatory to evaluate BTB services, analyse data, and review frameworks.

## Community-led research – Black Mothers in Birmingham

Catalyst is proud to continue its partnership with Maternity Engagement Action (MEA), supporting MEA's provision of safe spaces and leadership opportunities for Black women throughout pregnancy, birth, and early motherhood. Through this collaboration, MEA has been introduced to Black Thrive Global's Research Observatory, Ratio, and Breezee Lab to support their work, which includes:

- Co-create research with a 'for us and by us' process for Black maternal women.
- Gather intersectional data that integrates not just race and gender, but other areas of life impacted by inequality.
- Curate grassroots solutions through the lived and living experiences of Black women.

This work has led to the MEA See Me Hear Me Campaign, which aims to highlight and address the lack of Black perinatal voices in the research and data space.

In 2024 MEA launched their See Me Hear report that shared their findings from participants' insights and described the process of how they worked alongside members of the Black maternal community to analyse and interpret the data using their lived experiences.

> "
> Our partnerships with Catalyst4Change, Black Thrive Global, and Ratio have given us a better understanding of Systems Change and how we, as an organisation, can work alongside system players to create new and innovative pathways for better maternal experiences and outcomes for Black families.
>
> As a result of our partnerships with Black Thrive Global, Breeze Lab and Ratio, our understanding of how community-led research can influence systems change is growing, and we aim to continue to develop our skills in this space.
>
> **Amanda Smith, Founder and CEO at MEA**

# Conclusion

During our third year of delivering the Black Thrive programme in Birmingham, we have achieved the following:

1. **PCREF Advisors Programme:** Our PCREF Advisors programme has enabled us to continue developing a 'backbone' role, facilitating collaboration between communities and (mainly health) systems. This work supports the addressing of the mental health needs of Black people by providing support, facilitating discussions about data, coordination, and leadership to ensure collective efforts are aligned.

2. **Sustainable Community Initiative:** We built the capacity and leadership capabilities of Black-led civil society organisations through the Sustainable Community Initiative. This empowerment enables them to make a positive impact on the emotional and mental wellbeing of African and Caribbean communities (and other communities) in Birmingham.

3. **Advocates for Change programme:** Through the Advocates for Change programme, we facilitated individual and group advocacy so that the voices of over 150 Black people facing poor mental health and their carers are heard and contribute to service change.

4. **Community engagement:** We engaged with Black community members and Black-led civil society to encourage their participation in the movement to drive the change that is required to ensure that they thrive.

5. **Community-centred research:** We created more opportunities for Black communities to be more meaningfully engaged in research that is important to them and centred in the evidence which informs mental health policy, practice and resource allocation.

6. **Anti-Racist System Change:** We further developed our understanding of an Anti-Racist System Change model and approach through our PCREF programme in collaboration with our Black Thrive partners and BTG's Learning Partner.

# Glossary of Terms

| Acroynm | Expansion |
| --- | --- |
| BIRCH | Birmingham Research & Community Engagement Hub |
| BSMHFT | Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust |
| BTG | Black Thrive Global |
| BVSC | Birmingham Voluntary Service Council |
| CATALYST | Catalyst 4 Change |
| DHSC | Department of Health and Social Care |
| ICS | Integrated Care System |
| MEA | Maternity Engagement Action |
| NHS | National Health Service |
| PC | Provider Collaborative |
| PCREF | Patient and Carers Race Equality Framework |
| REN | Research Engagement Network |
| SACMHF | Sandwell African and Caribbean Mental Health Foundation |
| SCI | Sustainable Community Initiative |
| VCS | Voluntary and Community Sector |

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