

Community Engagement Partners awarded for addressing Black Health Inequalities in the City

Community Awards at the BRIG Summit 2024

Three Community Engagement Partners have been acknowledged for their innovative work in addressing health inequalities faced by Black African & Black Caribbean communities residing in Birmingham.

MindsEye Development CIC, Allies Network CIC and Black Heritage Support Services were all presented with awards by Patrick Vernon, Chair of the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (ICB), Salma Yaqoob, Associate Director of Health Inequalities at the ICB, and Tonye Sikabofori, Chair of the Birmingham and Lewisham African & Caribbean Health Inequalities Review Integrated Care System Taskforce, at the annual Birmingham Race Impact Group summit held on 10th December, 2024.



The three organisations were commissioned by Birmingham City Council in 2022, in response to the Birmingham and Lewisham African & Caribbean Health Inequalities Review (BLACHIR), which set out to explore and take urgent action on health inequalities experienced by our Black African and Black Caribbean communities, commissioned by the two local authorities.

Since the publication of the Review, in Birmingham both the Council and the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS) have been taking action to improve the health of Black African and Black Caribbean people, with the Community Engagement Partners being the conduit between the communities and the local health and care system. By listening to community needs, recognising their priorities, discussing, and reflecting on findings and coproducing solutions, the Partners engaged with almost 8000 adults and young people across the city, playing a crucial role in giving the Black community a voice into decision making structures, and remaining firm on their commitment to continue to do more.

Just some of the many outcomes of the work of the Community Engagement Partners include:

- A 'Brothers Helping Brothers' walking football event for Black men with health checks and advice on a range of health issues, held at the Aston Villa Academy
- Influencing the addition of Female Genital Mutilation in NHS pre-conception documents for the first time
- Engaging with over 750 people through Caribbean community events over 18 months, addressing infant mortality, prostate cancer amongst other issues, enabling communities to self-advocate

As a result of the outstanding work delivered by the Community Engagement Partners, Birmingham City Council has made a commitment to fund this model of engagement for a further three years, to continue to address health inequalities, through establishing a 'Deep Engagement Partner'

Programme for all communities of identity across the city. The partners selected for collaboration with African and Caribbean communities will continue to be a part of the BLACHIR ICS Taskforce alongside system-wide NHS providers.

Nura Ali, Fellow of Birmingham Society & Executive Director of Allies Network CIC "We are proud of the impact we made through the BLACHIR project working with BSol system partners. We're also thrilled to announce our success in securing The Deep Engagement Partner Contract for the Somali community which will be crucial in addressing health inequalities faced by those with language barriers & limited access to services."

Salma Yaqoob, Associate Director of Health Inequalities at the ICB said "I am delighted that funding for a further 3 years has been secured for our valued community partners who are playing a vital role. We cannot shift entrenched inequalities without learning from, and partnering with, our communities who have the knowledge, trust and confidence of those who currently have least access to services and the worst outcomes"

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