

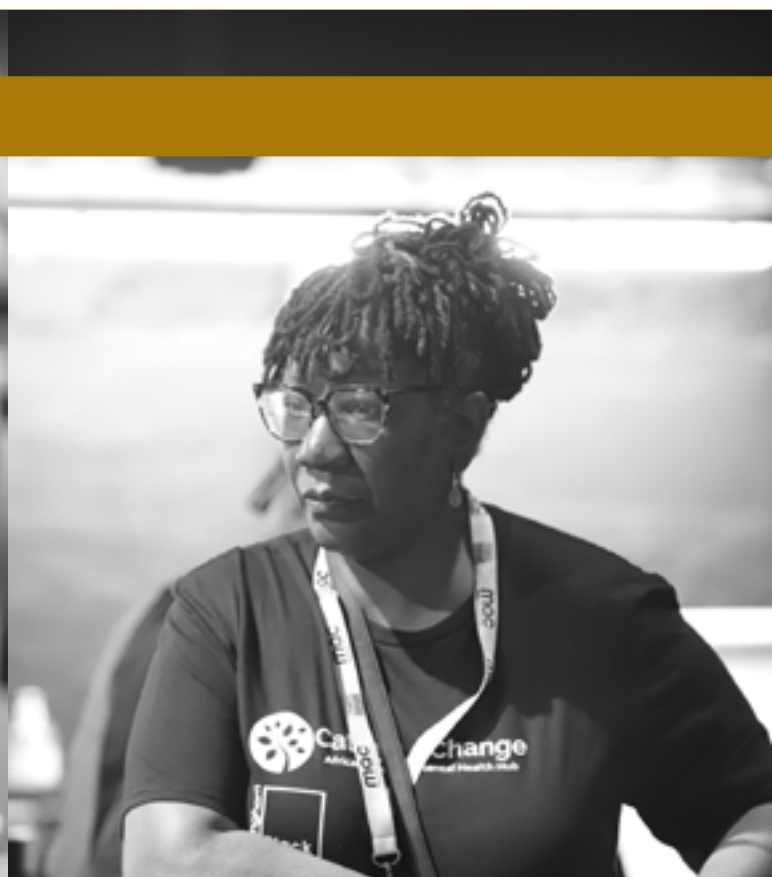


Black Thrive Birmingham

THRIVING FUTURES COLLECTIVE

YEAR 1 ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2021 TO AUGUST 2022



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"We know that a key route to change is in making better and more creative use of the African and Caribbean communities social capital; existing research, forging stronger productive partnerships between researchers/academics/theorists; community activists/experts and by experienced practitioners and mental health services in both the statutory and voluntary sector".

C4C 4 Change

Introduction

During the last 6 months of year one Catalyst 4 Change (C4C) have strengthened our understanding of Birmingham's **policy, political** and **commissioning landscape**. We have established relationships with key System players to help us identify and establish opportunities for African and Caribbean communities and its organisations to drive change and be more actively involved in system change activities.

Black Thrive Global Research Institute (RI) and Ratio have provided us with lots of support in helping understand what we know about the communities concerns and articulating our emerging approach in working with African and Caribbean communities and its organisations/businesses; faith communities; Statutory services and the wider Voluntary sector. They have analysed the findings of our **Patient Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF)** engagement sessions and enabled us to identify opportunities for community led data activities with community partners. Through our growing relationship with Statutory players particularly in Mental Health, ICS and Public Health and via **Maternity Engagement Action (MEA)** – Perinatal services we are closer to securing statutory data that we can repurpose.

We have established a training programme that will strengthen the governance and sustainability of Black led organisations.

We are starting to develop a training programme based upon the MEA Parent leaders training programme that will equip community members with the skills, tools and know how to participate in system change and service improvement discussions.

Through the LEx Leadership programme and our work with 25 Black led organisations we have an opportunity to support the development of community based services and foster greater collaboration between these organisations and Statutory services.

Our CommUNITY Assembly further raised C4C's profile as the 'go to' organisation in Birmingham to address the health and well being inequalities and concerns of the African and Caribbean communities.



Black communities driving change

Co-learning for Thriving Futures

C4C Directors have started to write our organisational and individual leadership story and journey.

Through meetings with the RI's Quantitative Researcher and Ratio we have been articulating and thinking through the challenges, opportunities and strategies for system change and community led data.

These will feed into the Leadership Academy and Black-led models of systems change.

Black Thrive Assemblies

After several months of planning meetings between C4C, the RI and Ratio we held our first CommUNITY Assembly on 14th May.

Over 150 people attended the launch of C4C Black Thrive Birmingham programme. This was our first CommUNITY Assembly.

Attendees included:

- Black people with living and lived experience of mental ill health, and their carers
- Black leaders from all faith communities
- Black led civil society organisations
- Race equality agencies
- Health and social care researchers
- Leaders and practitioners from public systems in the West Midlands
- Councilors
- Local media



There was a bustling marketplace of 17 local, Black-led initiatives, enterprises, Voluntary sector and Statutory organisations showcasing their work and services against a backdrop of mellow and classic tunes from a local DJ.

The event began with a powerful short film called "Black-Anxiety", written and produced by Birmingham based spoken word artist, Dan Man. Reminding us of all the emotional impact of Covid and racism on Black communities.

The day included presentations from:

- C4C's 3 Directors shared their approach as 'positive deviants' to create better mental health services and support for African and Caribbean communities in the West Midlands.
- Amanda Smith, CEO at MEA shared her organisation's journey to support Black women to use their voices and experiences to achieve perinatal racial justice for Black women.
- Lela Kogbara, a Black Thrive Global Director, provided an overview of Black Thrive's history and mission to facilitate systems change to transform the Black communities experience from surviving into thriving.
- Black Thrive Global RI team: Dr Celestin Okoroji, Tamanda Walker and Dr Jolyon Miles-Wilson, described their commitment to produce high quality data that can be used by the Black communities to help them thrive and change how public systems go about their work.
- Dr Justine Varney presented the Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review (BLACHIR). This is a partnership between Birmingham and Lewisham to explore and better understand the inequalities affecting African and Caribbean communities in our areas and co-produce with communities opportunities for action to break structural inequalities.

The day also involved a series of conversations about working together for effective change. Many themes emerged. Here are a few that stood out.

Spaces to Connect

To speak frankly about the challenges faced by our community and stand in collective solidarity as we navigate the necessary system change.



Better Mental Health Services

Remove the barriers that prevent Black people from getting the help they need and services where staff can offer compassion, humility and respond to what we are saying.

Tackle the Root Causes of Ill-Health

Public systems need to focus more on prevention and healing.

Community owned data

To shape, lead and get involved with collecting, owning and using data to achieve our collective goal. Numbers are important; but the interpretation from those who have lived the experience of the numbers brings deep understanding.

Some key takeaways from the CommUNITY Assembly attendees were:

- Don't just focus on problems and deficits in Black communities, let's focus on our assets
- Don't leave sub-communities behind, and keep in mind the diversity of Black communities
- Let's learn from Black communities around the world, and especially places where data, and system change and community power has improved Black health and well-being
- Let's be accountable for the quality and interpretation of the data we own.

C4C presented a number of Call 4 Action opportunities at the CommUNITY Assembly for community members to get involved in our work:

- **LEx Leadership Programme** -To support people with lived experience of mental ill health and racism to develop, lead and manage their organisation or enterprise
- **Incubation Support** - C4C acting as the accountable body for developing organisations until they have the confidence and infrastructure to be fully independent.
- **Mentoring & Advocacy Support Hub (MASH)** - Black service users accessing social drop in's, meals, and signposting through a single-source referral consortium.
- **Join Our Professional Services Directory** - Our directory of professional services will include approved and vetted providers of catering, print, marketing, financial and other professionals.
- **Breakfast Networking Sessions** - Regular breakfast sessions encouraging engagement, partnerships, collaboration, and sharing of sector issues and concerns with C4C
- **Become a PCREF activist** - Help to achieve better outcomes for Black people with mental ill health and their careers
- **Faith in Action** - Working with Faith communities to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination
- **Become a Community Board Member** - Help us set priorities and influence systems change

44 people who attended the event registered to become C4C Members. We have photos and a short film in development.



Black Thrive Leadership Academy

LEx Leadership Programme

C4C designed and launched its LEx Leadership training programme in September 2022 which will run until March 2023. This is the link to the training programmes that will be delivered in the first cluster - [LEx Leaders Training 2022-23 \(Cluster 1\) | Eventbrite](#)

This is a 2-year project (2021- 2023) funded by The National Lottery's Leaders with Lived Experience Programme. The LEx programme aims to provide capacity building support to Black leaders with lived experience. The leaders will then be invited to be part of C4C's Birmingham based Mentoring Advocacy Support Hub (MASH) consortium that will provide a wide range of diverse, complimentary services for African and Caribbean people with mental health problems.



Maternity Engagement Action (MEA)

C4C has contributed to the design and delivery of Maternity Engagement Action's (MEA) Perinatal Parent Leaders Training Programme commissioned by the national charity Best Beginnings. The training programme aims to equip Black women to undertake the following activities:

- To represent the perinatal mental health concerns and experiences of Black women from Birmingham.
- To present to national and local maternity committees and forums the perinatal concerns and experiences of Black women to feedback information from the committees and forums.
- To organise and take part in consultations or events to gather perinatal mental health stories and experiences of Black women.
- To bring personal expertise or local knowledge to support their role in engaging parents and perinatal services and commissioners.
- To be accountable to the community they represent.



The Business and Partnership Development Manager, who is also a non-Executive Director at MEA, worked with MEA's CEO to design the training programme for the Parent Leaders

Impact of the training

Best Beginnings who commissioned the programme produced an evaluation of the training programme. Below is an extract from the evaluation:

- 11 women registered for the course with a waiting list of 3 women.
- 10 women attended the sessions and completed the programme.
- The women who attended the course were all African and Caribbean mothers living in Birmingham, from a range of professional backgrounds, faith and spiritual communities and age range between early 20's and early 40's.
- The participants have a wide range of occupations such as counsellor, primary care provider, business director, graphic designer, yoga instructor, marketing head, parent, and doula.

- The training sessions had a massive influence on the champions to become more confident and empowered to be a voice of the community:
- 52% increase in the empowerment of champions to represent their community to local and national government health bodies.
- 73% increase in confidence in talking about their own maternal mental health or these issues in their community.
- 55% increase in skills to support their peers to access baby buddy resources about parenting and pregnancy.
- 63% of participants reported that they feel the baby buddy app is either likely or very likely to help to have a better conversation with other parents.

Qualitative feedback from Champions training workshops

Key themes that came from qualitative analysis of the feedback were that the workshop was useful, informative and that the facilitation was excellent:

"The parent leader course is indeed a good initiative and hopes that it fulfils and surpasses its goals. The practice support in downloading the app was appreciated."

"Very easy to understand and delivered at a good pace."

"Making a safe space to discuss sensitive topics, not easy but very well done."

"The selfcare bit at the end was great to, to reflect and make a pledge."

"The information within the app is very important and the families will benefit from the app."

"It was good to know the app has 24/7 text helpline, this will be good for some families we support."

"The women who 'graduated' from this training programme are now called MEA Ambassadors."

In Year 2 C4C will share its insights from its LEx leadership programme and MEA Parent leadership programmes with the Black Thrive partnership to help further shape the Black Thrive Leadership Academy.

The Black Connections Book

The Black Connections book aligns with C4C objective to produce a directory of professional services for its members and other stakeholders.

C4C have produced a spreadsheet of organisations, faith communities, social enterprises, businesses and consultants that we are working with across our programmes, community engagement sessions, conferences and training sessions that the C4C attends. This document is constantly being updated.



Learning about thriving - knowledge construction, dissemination, and acquisition as a communal process

Black Thrive Dashboard and Knowledge Hub (incorporating community metrics)

At our Birmingham CommUNITY Assembly in May attendees expressed a strong desire to be involved in shaping, leading and getting involved with collecting, owning and using data to achieve our collective goals.

And raised the following questions:

- Where is data stored, how is it used and who benefits.
- What data already exists?, 'Who sets the agenda and determines how research is designed and formulated?
- What do we know about using data to effect change?

Attendees told us that data needs 'heads and hearts' along with a commitment and passion to change. Numbers are important; but the interpretation from those who have lived the experience of the numbers brings deep understanding.

It was really encouraging to witness the level of interest and response to the presentations on research and data.

The data on Stop and Search enabled attendees to see the possibility of producing data that is relevant to the African and Caribbean communities and how we can use it to create change.

Following the CommUNITY Assembly MEA approached the RI team to explore how they could support their efforts to produce perinatal community led data.

Conversations with RI, Ratio and MEA leading up to and post the CommUNITY Assembly have led to an emerging framework of 2 tracks for community owned data.

Track 1: involves community members collecting their own data on issues that interest them and using the data to make proposals for systems change in public service areas. This could take the shape of data clubs based on work Ratio have done in Rotterdam and India. There are two projects that are currently underway in Birmingham.

Patient Carers Race Equality Framework (PCREF)

The BTG Quantitative Researcher analysed the data collected by C4C as part of its PCREF Community Engagement sessions in 2021 and produced a report that set out emerging findings/themes and reflections on the process. Key findings were presented as part of RI's presentation at May's CommUNITY Assembly.

This analysis will now be used to inform Phase 2 of C4C's PCREF work which has now received funds from Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT) for £57K. More details about this work will be provided later in this report.

Maternity Engagement Action

Working with MEA Ambassadors to explore the possibility of a data club and support their efforts to analyse and use the data that the Ambassadors collected during their survey over the summer of Black women's perinatal experiences in Birmingham.

Track 2: Is about repurposing data already collected by the system. There are 2 activities being pursued here:

Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review (BLACHIR)

We have been working with the BLACHIR team to explore how we might repurpose the data they have collected - a very challenging and slow process! In order to acquire the data we have had to further develop our relationship with BLACHIR so that they have a greater understanding of our role and purpose; and we have a greater understanding of their intent and commitment to African and Caribbean communities' and driving change. This allows us to determine how we might work together to address the health inequalities experienced by African and Caribbean communities.

Stop and Search

Following the CommUNITY Assembly there has been significant interest from some attendees about the stop and search work undertaken by BTG and BTL. RI and C4C have explored how we can engage community organisations and members with BTG Stop and Search data and BTL Stop and Search programme.

Building a movement to decolonise the evidence landscape

C4C continues to be research partners on the following Studies:

- Co Pact - reducing use of mental health act
- Black Women and Depression
- Culturally Adapted Family Intervention - family counselling service for Black people diagnosed with psychosis

Our role on each of the research programmes has been to advocate for community involvement in shaping the research, ensuring that it has relevance for the community; to raise awareness of the research studies to the African and Caribbean communities and encourage their engagement in focus groups/activities

We would like to explore with Black Thrive partners how our involvement as Research Partners reflects our aspiration to decolonise the evidence base and provide better services/support for Black communities.

Community-led systems change

A Black-led model of systems change

All Systems Go

All Systems Go is the overall name that C4C has given its Systems change work. We are now building and facilitating a network of Black Led community organisations and leaders so that they have the data and skills to articulate the changes in system conditions that will enable Black people to thrive and will have developed sufficient tools and know how to lead the constructive challenge of systemic racism'

We are working with the following systems in Birmingham.

Mental Health Trust System

We are using the PCREF NHS programme to support and enable Black communities (service users, carers and wider community):

- To articulate changes in mental health services and in the community that would improve the mental health experiences and outcomes of Black communities.
- To co-produce service improvements and community involvement that will address these changes.

C4C has secured funding from BSMHFT (received in September 2022) to deliver a PCREF activist programme that will recruit and train a team of PCREF advisors and collaborators from the African and Caribbean communities to work together with the Trust staff to respond to the issues and themes that emerged from the PCREF engagement programme facilitated by C4C 4 in 2021.

The themes that emerged from our 2021 PCREF engagement sessions were presented to May's CommUNITY Assembly.

Since the CommUNITY Assembly C4C has reviewed these themes and developed an emerging framework for action addressing:

- Access
- Pathways
- Advocacy
- Complaints

We are developing a narrative for each theme so that it is clear what we are seeking to address and how we will achieve outcomes. Once the PCREF Advisors come on board – likely to be January 2023 - we will do some further work with them on prioritising the themes/service areas we will address.

We have produced a PCREF role description and are developing an implementation plan for this work

Our PCREF work will feed into BSMHFT's Strategy and Transformation Board which in turn reports to the Trust Board.

C4C will commission independent consultant Rudi Page to support the implementation of the PCREF Advisors programme.

We will make connection with SLAM's PCREF programme to share, learn and exchange ideas and solutions

Public Health/ICS

The BLACHIR programme is being led by public health and is working with stakeholders across the Integrated Care System (ICS), to develop a plan of action to reduce inequalities for the Black, African and Caribbean community as highlighted by the recommendations within the BLACHIR.

C4C is in discussion with BLACHIR to ensure that African and Caribbean communities are driving and shaping the implementation of BLACHIR- we have adopted the critical friend role.

In addition as mentioned elsewhere in this report we seek to gain access to their data so that we can repurpose this data to drive system change from the communities perspective.

Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review (BLACHIR)

We were invited to attend Birmingham and Solihull's Health Inequalities ICS Committee to contribute to the development of their equity plan. We are in discussions again with the Chair of the Health Inequalities committee to establish how we can have an ongoing involvement with this committee and the wider ICS.

Criminal Justice system

One of C4C's Directors as part of his work at 4WardEver.UK met with the Police and Crime Office in January 2022 to address the following areas of community concerns:

1. The current format of the Street Triage Scheme - the positive gains from this scheme have been lost as BSMHFT are no longer able to provide mental health practitioners to accompany the police on call outs.
2. Firearm Operations and people with known mental ill health.
3. The applications and implications of the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018- C4C want to raise awareness of this Act and work with the Trust to ensure its implementation. C4C delivered a workshop on Seni's law in Coventry and want to run similar workshops in Birmingham and Wolverhampton and build upon our work with BSMHFT's restrictive practice collaborative.

As there was no follow up from the Police and Crime commission after that meeting, a further meeting involving C4C is being arranged in the Autumn .

Given the Stop and Search data presented at May's CommUNITY Assembly we will include issues related to Stop and Search as part of the Autumn meeting with the Police and Crime Commission.

Investing in community-led change

We have actively been looking at funding for C4C's Mentoring & Advocacy Support Hub (MASH) targeting African and Caribbean people with mental ill health that aims to break isolation, build confidence and avoid participants ending up in a revolving door to:

1. Resume the social drop-in sessions that were so popular prior to MASH losing its core funding in March 2017.
2. Act as a service single gateway consortium lead to assist in simplify accessing services for BME people with mental health support needs.
3. Continue ongoing funding for the delivery of C4C's LEx Leaders Development Programme to strengthen the governance, operational arrangements and enable sustainability of existing and emerging African and Caribbean led organisations.

Development of a Consortium

In 2017 feedback from Birmingham based African and Caribbean services users indicated that long-term stays in secure & complex care hospitals leads to

- a. feelings of disempowerment;
- b. vulnerability;
- c. perceived lack of support in the community;
- d. low self-esteem; and
- e. discharge related anxiety.

C4C's PCREF engagement session at a Secure Care service with African and Caribbean service users indicates that this is still the case.

In early 2022 the Community Engagement team at BSMHFT organised a series of workshops attended by 25 African and Caribbean community organisations and social enterprise groups; service users; Secure Care staff and BSMHFT Board members. The workshops explored how best to support service users in secure

services from the point of admission to post discharge, to address feelings of disempowerment so that they can re-integrate into the community successfully.

From the interactions with patients, staff identified that the 4 key areas that require urgent intervention: housing/accommodation, employment, vocational activities and music & arts.

C4C and BSMHFT are working together to bring the 25 African and Caribbean community organisations together as a consortium to develop and build the capacity of the consortium members so that they can provide a range of complementary projects and services that will support secure care service users transition into the community.

C4C will in the first instance be the accountable and co-ordinating body that will act as an executive interface between funders and the organisations. The aim is for the consortium to be managed as an independent entity.

Conversations are underway with local funders to meet the set up and running costs of the consortium.

Secure care services are developing a business case to identify funds for the delivery of services by consortium members.

Members of the 'emerging' consortium who are newly established organisations were invited to attend C4C's LEx leadership programme.

Strong and Agile Backbones

Defining the shape of our backbones

C4C continues to attend monthly Thriving Futures meetings to learn and share, with partners.

Developing our backbones

In June we appointed an Operational and Finance Administrator – 4 days a week providing administrative support.

In August we appointed a Community Engagement and Network Co-ordinator – 3 days a week to support community involvement in our system change work.

Over the last 6 months our workload has grown significantly –we are members of several statutory service improvement and transformation committees and research bodies; we are managing a growing portfolio of programmes and initiatives and receive regular requests for partnership working and presentations. We are reviewing how we work so that it is more paced and strategic.

Communications

Blogs and articles have been published in C4C's Newsletter and social media sites

We continue to host monthly Live Radio series on the Different Anglez show on New Style Radio, Birmingham's Black Community radio station. The series started March 2022 and will run until December. The programme promotes our Black Thrive Birmingham work and provides a platform for discussions between invited guests and the audience. During this period we have held 5 monthly sessions covering topics that include Black Thrive ; Black women and depression; PCREF; BLACHIR; Culturally Adapted Family Intervention service.

Recordings for each show are available.

CommUNITY Assembly

The presenter for Different Anglez show conducted some interviews of people who attended our May assembly.

We have produced a film about the CommUNITY Assembly – it needs some editing.

We have a gallery of photos taken of CommUNITY Assembly attendees.

Funding

We secured £56,200 from BSMHFT for our PCREF activist programme that is mentioned earlier in this report.

We have been invited to be part of the BSOL Community Trust 3rd sector network. We submitted an expression of interest setting out some investment areas.

Governance

Community Panel

The community panel to provide a mechanism for African and Caribbean community members to offer constructive challenge, advice, and feedback to all C4C projects.

The panel will play an active role in supporting C4C's efforts to engage the African and Caribbean community members to drive change and challenge systemic racism.



