

# **Ealing Roots & Wings Programme**

## **Peer Research Project Showcase**

### **Key Learnings**

#### **Project Showcase Overview**

The Ealing Roots & Wings (ER&W) Peer Research Project Showcase took place on Thursday 23rd October 2025 at The Atrium, Perceval House, bringing together community leaders, peer researchers, community members, policymakers, and local organisations.

The event focused on sharing what has been learned through peer-led research into the impact of health inequalities on Black African and Caribbean communities in Ealing. It created space for lived experience and community insight to challenge existing approaches and highlight where systems continue to fall short. It provided a platform for community leaders to share lived experiences and key findings, and for decision-makers to reflect on how these insights can drive meaningful change.

Through exhibitions, presentations and open discussions led by ER&W community leaders, it highlighted the importance of community-led research in shaping fairer health systems. The showcase reinforced the need for services and local policies to be informed by the voices of those most impacted by inequality. A total of 67 participants attended the event, including representatives from Ealing Council, the NHS, the Race Equality Commission and several voluntary and community sector organisations, alongside the Ealing Roots & Wings community leaders and facilitators.

The day was a clear call to action. While the research has exposed deep-rooted inequities and systemic barriers, the message from communities was unequivocal: progress is too slow, and promises must now translate into tangible investment, accountability, and shared power. Real change will depend on whether institutions are willing to move beyond dialogue and redistribute resources, influence and decision-making to those who live the realities every day.

We thank all the community organisations involved in ER&W for their ongoing commitment and leadership. The insights shared throughout this process remind us that the real work lies in applying these learnings and ensuring communities are truly heard, and their experiences shape the next steps of this programme. We also acknowledge Angela McKenzie, Chair of the Citizen's Tribunal Sub-Committee for Health, for her inspiring opening speech, and Councillor Polly Knewstubb, Cabinet Member for Healthy Equal Lives, for her thoughtful closing reflections on the work ahead to turn insights into action.

## Key Learnings

Community leaders and organisations as part of the Ealing Roots & Wings Programme shared **three collective priority** areas that need urgent attention to address health disparities affecting Black African and Caribbean communities in Ealing. These priorities highlight the structural barriers, lack of resources and imbalances in decision-making that continue to limit wellbeing and emphasise the need for meaningful community ownership, influence and long-term investment in solutions that reflect lived experience.

### (1). Longevity: Accessible and Realistic Funding

- **Short-term, one-off grants are insufficient;** funding must be long-term, intentional, and responsive, reflecting the realities of running community-led work, including organisational capacity and ongoing costs.
- **Trust in the expertise of community organisations is essential.** Funding should not be extractive or overly bureaucratic but instead recognise the value of lived experience and peer-led knowledge. This includes making application processes accessible, exploring alternatives to traditional written bids (such as pitches or collaborative approaches) and providing robust support where needed.
- **Capacity-building programmes, mentoring and infrastructure support must be considered as integral components of funding,** not optional extras. Communities are calling for investment that demonstrates belief in their work, enables sustainable change and moves beyond consultation toward real, accountable action.
- It was also highlighted that **complex jargon and bureaucratic language in funding applications creates unnecessary barriers,** making it harder for community organisations to access resources and fully participate in the process.
- A key takeaway from what was shared by community leaders as part of the programme was that they feel over-researched and underfunded with insights repeatedly gathered but not matched by investment, resources or meaningful support.

### (2). Affordable & Accessible Community Spaces and Venues

- It was highlighted that **access to community spaces is about more than availability, it is about ownership, visibility and fair governance.** There should be an up-to-date directory of available spaces, including information on costs, size and existing resources to support use, paired with an accessible, simple booking system for community organisations.
- As shared by Zebra Sports, **over 75% of community-led organisations are unaware of the full range of venues available within the borough.** Many also raised concerns about informal and opaque booking practices, where long-term or semi-permanent hires are granted based on personal relationships with site

operators or staff. These arrangements are often undocumented and inconsistently applied, creating barriers for organisations seeking fair access.

- Community-led organisations also frequently lack the financial and staffing capacity to invest in fundraising infrastructure or absorb rising rental costs, limiting their ability to secure spaces and sustain programmes. **Many local spaces remain underused or overlooked**, and participants stressed that these should be better utilised and actively offered to community groups.
- Concerns were also raised about **the exploitation of privately-owned 'community spaces'** and emphasised the need to work with housing associations and other landlords to redistribute underused spaces for community-led use.
- Beyond access, **Black African and Caribbean community organisations need to be more involved in the governance of buildings**, ensuring decision-making is equitable, community-led, and accountable. The upkeep and maintenance of spaces was another major concern, with attendees questioning who is responsible for ensuring buildings are safe, functional, and well-maintained. Empowering communities to have both agency and oversight over these spaces is central to fostering ownership, belonging, and sustainable use.

### **(3). Decentralised Decision-Making**

- It was highlighted that traditional top-down approaches where leaders make decisions and communities are only consulted afterwards often fail to meet the real needs of those most affected. For decentralised decision-making to be effective, clear structures are essential: **communities need to know how decisions are made, who holds authority**, and how responsibilities are shared.
- **Transparency and accountability are critical.** Decisions should be open to review, allowing communities to track how resources are allocated, measure impact, and hold decision-makers accountable. Without these mechanisms, power risks being uneven, misused, or tokenistic.
- Applying a health equity lens makes the urgency clear. Top-down decisions frequently overlook the needs of those experiencing the worst health outcomes, leading to wasted investment and continued inequalities. In Ealing, health gaps remain particularly deep for Black African and Caribbean communities.
- Decentralisation ensures that resources flow to where they are needed most, and that **communities have genuine power to shape services, influence policy, and address systemic health disparities based on lived experience.**

#### 3a. Recommendations:

- Establish transparent governance structures that clearly outline decision-making processes, authority and accountability.

- Enable community-led oversight, allowing residents and organisations to monitor spending, measure impact, and hold decision-makers accountable.
- Ensure lived experience informs all stages of health and community investment decisions, moving beyond tokenistic consultation to genuine influence.
- Develop mechanisms to decentralise power, ensuring resources and service design are shaped collaboratively with the communities most affected.

## Summary

The discussions highlighted three interlinked priorities for addressing health inequalities affecting Black African and Caribbean communities in Ealing:

1. **Longevity: Accessible and Realistic Funding:** Communities need long-term, flexible, and dignified funding that supports operational costs, capacity building, and sustainable growth, rather than short-term, one-off grants.
2. **Access to Community Spaces and Venues:** Equitable access requires clear information, transparent booking systems, better use of underutilised spaces, and genuine community ownership and governance. Maintenance, oversight, and collaboration with landlords such as housing associations are critical.
3. **Decentralised Decision-Making:** Decision-making must shift from top-down approaches to structures that are transparent, accountable, and community-led. Resources and policies should be informed by lived experience, ensuring power and influence flow to the communities most affected.

## Next Steps

The next phase will focus on capturing and consolidating insights from this event alongside the broader Ealing Roots & Wings programme. We will be holding a session with community organisations that were part of the programme to define priorities and co-design what the next phase of the programme could look like, including how funding can best support the work communities have already begun. The aim is to ensure that the knowledge, experiences and solutions shared by communities directly inform the planning, design, and future direction of the programme.



## Programme Learnings & Insights Presentation

Longevity: Accessible and Realistic Funding

- This part of the presentation was led by Atlyn Forde (Communicate Inclusively CIC) and Christal Douglas (Descendants)

Affordable & Accessible Community Spaces and Venues

- This part of the presentation was led by Victoria Lynch (Zebra Sports), Dr Ahmed Herzi (The Voices for Autism Network) and Margaret Nyuydzewira (CAME WOMEN AND GIRLS DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION)

Decentralised Decision-Making

- This part of the presentation was led by Daha Elmi (Ealing Somali Welfare And Cultural Association), Rakiya Dahir and Kaisan Ikomi (HSENA) and Anne-Marie Waugh (RollaDome All Skate)

## Community Organisations Part of the Peer Research Programme

### (1). CAWOGIDO (Came Women and Girls Development Organisation)

- **Peer Research Focus:** The social, cultural and systemic factors that impact Black women's health in the London Borough of Ealing.
- Contact: cawogido@yahoo.co.uk

### (2). Communicate Inclusively CIC

- **Peer Research Focus:** The financial, social and wellbeing impacts of workplace exclusion for Black and minoritised residents in Ealing which identifies changes needed to promote inclusive employment practices.
- Contact: hello@communicateinclusively.com

### (3). Descendants

- **Peer Research Focus:** Explores whether Black African and Caribbean communities in the London Borough of Ealing feel their voices are heard or neglected within the healthcare system, examining how this affects the quality of care they receive.
- Contact: manager@descendants.org.uk

### (4). Ealing Somali Welfare and Cultural Association

- **Peer Research Focus:** Explores the social and health impacts of female genital mutilation (FGM) on Somali women in the London Borough of Ealing and seeks to inform and influence policy responses.
- Contact: eswca@hotmail.com

### (5). HSENA

- **Peer Research Focus:** Explores how cultural perceptions and stigma influence the likelihood of Black African and Caribbean communities in Ealing seeking mental health support.
- Contact: [info@hsena.uk](mailto:info@hsena.uk)

#### (6). RollaDome All Skate

- **Peer Research Focus:** Explores the experiences of Black women leaders and the health impacts of organisational harm encountered while navigating and leading within inequitable systems.
- Contact: [admin@rolladome.org.uk](mailto:admin@rolladome.org.uk)

#### (7). The Voices for Autism Network

- **Peer Research Focus:** Examines how culturally grounded, community- based approaches can support Somali fathers in Ealing to more effectively support the mental health and SEND needs of their children.
- Contact: [info@thevoicesforautismnetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@thevoicesforautismnetwork.org.uk)

#### (8). Westside Radio

- **Peer Research Focus:** How the media sector can ensure accountability from health service providers in addressing health disparities experienced by Black African and Caribbean communities in Ealing.
- Contact: [info@thisiswestside.com](mailto:info@thisiswestside.com)

#### (9). Zebra Sports

- **Peer Research Focus:** Explores whether the free provision of quality gymnastics activities enhances the physical health and wellbeing of young participants and families from Ealing's diverse Black African and Caribbean communities.
- Contact: [admin@zebrasports.co.uk](mailto:admin@zebrasports.co.uk)