

**Response to Healthwatch Report: Feb 2025**

**Rethinking Mental Health Services for Black African & Caribbean communities:**

**Introduction:**

We would like to thank Healthwatch Southwark for the report and the insights that it includes. Whilst the recommendations mainly relate to the local system rather than specific offer from our Trust, we would like to confirm our committment to:

* continuous work to improve access, experience & outcomes for our black communities [Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF) at South London and Maudsley](https://slam.nhs.uk/pcref)
* ongoing work towards becoming an anti-racist provider. [Anti-Racism Action Plan - South London and Maudsley](https://slam.nhs.uk/anti-racism)

The Trust has is working to an organisational strategy [Our strategy. South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust's operational strategy.](https://slam.nhs.uk/strategy) which includes the following 5 priorities:

* Deliver outstanding mental health care
* Be a partner in prevention
* Be a catalyst for change
* Build a culture of trust together
* Become effective and sustainable

As set out in this strategy, we will continue to work in partnership with local organisations to develop trust and improve our offer. We have specific workstreams to support this aim some of which are outlined below.

The specific feedback provided in the Healthwatch report that relates to our services will be considered alongside other sources of feedback to help us improve and develop our services.

**Response to Recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1:**

**Establish long-term funding for community-based mental health services.**

The Trust has no power to establish long term funding streams. It is a provider of commissioned services to the local community.

**Recommendation 2:**

**Utilise the current Creative Health programme hosted by South East London Integrated Care Board to implement targeted projects for Black men.**

The Trust has no power to allocate funding outside the services it is directly commissioned to provide.

As outlined in the recommendation and through the SELICB, the Trust has just entered into a partnership with Southbank Centre to offer creative activities to support mental wellbeing of children & young people [South London and Maudsley, South East London ICB and Southbank Centre Unite for Health and Arts Partnership](https://slamonline.sharepoint.com/SitePages/South-London-and-Maudsley,-South-East-London-ICB-and-Southbank-Centre-Unite-for-Health-and-Arts-Partnership.aspx?csf=1&web=1&share=EbmWCgN4OElCkZbqgyg_U50BWi9wkhk6T67a9bzEb5NkaA&e=SX6t3r&CID=8b7e1f6a-449f-46e7-a431-e72b558fba86)

As with most NHS providers, the current difficult financial situation means that there is less flexibility within our funding to develop new initiatives. However there are currently some specific workstreams and projects to support better access, experience & outcomes for black communities:

1. Work to improve uptake of psychological therapies by black men <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DEXDOIjuyfO/?igsh=ZXptc3BpeDZ1aWxs>
2. Talking Therapies Southwark – workshop – “race, identity & me” [Initial Treatment Options – Talking Therapies Southwark](https://talkingtherapiessouthwark.nhs.uk/about-us/treatment-options/)
3. The Grounding Project at Roots & Shoots – a project for refugees & asylum seekers experiencing trauma related difficulties and PTSD. It offers horticultural therapy and yoga. For more information: [A Kaleidoscope of Butterflies Sculpture Unveiling | Roots and Shoots](https://www.rootsandshoots.org.uk/blog/a-kaleidoscope-of-butterflies-sculpture-unveiling)
4. Peckham Befrienders – black drop-in support with food/complementary therapies, informal activities [Service Detail - South London and Maudsley](https://slam.nhs.uk/service-detail/service/peckham-befrienders-238/)
5. Massaada – black volunteering initiative [Msaada - South London and Maudsley](https://slam.nhs.uk/msaada)

The Trust and the Southwark Directorate continue to work in partnership with local organisations: for example:

* Tree of Life Workshops (presentation available) for faith members in Southwark at the Copleston Centre in 2023 which aimed to promote & understand barriers to accessing psychological therapies
* October 2024 Southwark Black History Month event in Collaboration with Africa Centre.

**Recommendation 3:**

**Provide training and support for VCS groups and community leaders, and evaluate the effectiveness of these courses for all service providers.**

The Trust is a key partner in South London Listens. [Services 1 — South London Listens](https://www.southlondonlistens.org/introduction) Part of the work of South London Listens is the development of Be Well Hubs and Champions [Be Well Champions — South London Listens](https://www.southlondonlistens.org/champions) which includes significant activity in Southwark. For information about impact & evaluation see: [Services 1 — South London Listens](https://www.southlondonlistens.org/introduction)

The Trust provides a comprehensive set of workshops and courses through the Recovery College. [Latest Timetable](https://www.slamrecoverycollege.co.uk/latest-timetable.html) In person courses are for people who have a connection with the trust as a service user, carer, staff member etc. Online courses are open to all at no cost. A number of in person workshops are held at venues in the borough.

The Trust has a Mental Health Promotion department which can offer training, however these initiatives need to be commissioned. [Information about the Mental Health Promotion team at South London and Maudsley](https://slam.nhs.uk/mental-health-promotion)

To provide a comprehensive and co-produced borough-wide training & support programme for VCS groups and community leaders would need significant investment and co-ordination. This is a system wide commissioning issue. The Trust would be very interested to be part of future discussions about how this recommendation could be implemented.

**Recommendation 4:**

**Facilitate cross-sector collaboration.**

The Trust is very happy to participate in collaborative work to improve access to the right support for our communities

**Recommendation 5:**

**Embed the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF) across all mental health services.**

The Trust has initiated the PCREF approach [Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF) at South London and Maudsley](https://slam.nhs.uk/pcref) The 3 stakeholder groups for this include services users & carers, the community (facilitated through Black Thrive) & staff. In Southwark work focusses on the following priorities:

* Change ideas for black male service users;
  + Reducing seclusion
  + Reducing restrictive practice
  + Reducing violence and aggression
  + Reducing the number of complaints.
* We will aim to do this by:
  + Having trained PCREF inpatient champions
  + Holding quarterly roadshows for staff, service users, carers and the local community
  + A monthly co-learning group with inpatient ward managers, senior managers and PCREF triple leadership members
  + 6 monthly PCREF network meetings

**Recommendation 6:**

**Commission a ‘Taster Day’ event for community-based mental health services and use learnings to support the implementation of Recommendation 2.**

The Trust would be very happy to be involved in the planning and delivery of an event such as this if it is commissioned.

**Recommendation 7:**

**Consult with non-clinical and community-based mental health services to identify needs and establish good practice models.**

The Trust is happy to share learning from the pilot community mental health model in Lewisham and equally to learn from models of good practice in local non NHS organisations developing new partnerships where appropriate.

**Recommendation 8:**

**Implement a targeted mental health awareness campaign for Black men.**

The Trust will continue to work on developing information that clearly and effectively describes what is on offer to local communities, including support & information provided by local voluntary sector groups and organisations.