

SUMMARY REPORT

20

**TRUSTED VOICES: SMILE**  
**A YOUTH EMPOWERMENT**  
**PROJECT**

23

*Project Collaborators: Edmontion Community Partnership (ECP) & Wellbeing Connect Services (WCS)*

*Funders: North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB)*

*Report by: Shae Eccleston | CYG Academy & Consultancy / Curate Your Genius*

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# Project Intro

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This report details the Trusted Voices: SMILE project. Focused on the impact a lack of access to resources and facilities can have on young people from Black communities in Edmonton. Its primary aim is to detail the result of a range of workshops, focus groups and event planning for a targeted community conversation. It aims to kickstart relevant support so that young people can thrive in the future.

The project team included specialists in research with young people from Black communities, whether in a personal or professional capacity, as well as a small team of specially recruited young people from the Non-executive Youth Board at Wellbeing Connect Services (WCS).

# Project Team



**Trevor Blackman**  
CEO of Edmonton  
Community  
Partnership

Overall project director and collaborator, Trevor commissioned media work from Walk With..., enabled research, oversaw initial workshop development and project management, as well as offered vital resources to aid success, inc. a venue



**Patricia Obichukwu**  
CEO of Wellbeing  
Connect Services  
(WCS)

The young people involved, aged 11 - 17, are members of the Non-Executive Youth Board, a WCS initiative. 10 members were involved at various stages, from conception to completion



**Ada Nwolisa**  
Project  
Coordinator and  
liaison with Youth  
Board

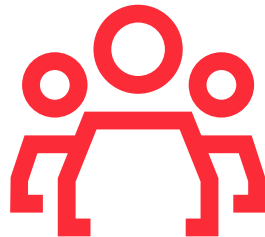
Worked closely with the event producer and researcher to ensure messaging was shared with the young people. Was also responsible for communication and liaison



**Shae Eccleston**  
Founder of Curate  
Your Genius

Project lead and event producer, worked with the rest of the team and the young people, to co-design, co-produce and co-deliver a successful community conversation event

# Young Peoples' Profile & Contributions



10 members of the WCS Youth Advisory & Non-Executive Board were involved in the production and contributed throughout in the following areas: script writing, creative performances, spoken word lyric writing, music selection, stage management, interviews, event organisation, question conception, hosting live and more.

The youth, who all live or study in Edmonton, engaged in 12 sessions between April and July and were in regular contact with the workshop facilitators, researchers and event producers, who encouraged them to share their experiences, opinions and needs.

Over the course of the whole project, 10 young people contributed in various ways. All were of Black Caribbean or African descent and were between the ages of 11 and 17. The gender mix was 7 females and 3 males.

# Project Priorities

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- To find ways to support communities typically excluded from accessing healthcare support for mental health needs
- To support young people (YP) from Black African/Caribbean backgrounds to look after their own mental health and understand/access local support available
- To enable YP to share their lived experience of being Black in Edmonton
- To identify gaps in access and highlight those to key professionals
- To work with the YP to write, produce and deliver a creative event showcasing their talents and findings from the sessions
- To empower the YP to 'have a voice' and to effectively communicate their message
- To garner support from the community

# Main Objective & Strategy

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Overall, the objective was to co-develop and creatively execute a gap analysis to gather detailed insight into the barriers to access for youth in the area, identify their needs and to document the outcomes they desire (with a specific focus on health and mental health as related to Black youth). This culminated in a final event to showcase the findings, their talent and to engage relevant connected communities, enabling them to have a say on the findings too.

In April 2023, a 12-session outline was created that mapped the pathway to success. The outcome of the sessions and consultations formed the basis for developing the community conversation (targeting 50 people) co-produced with young people and staff from ECP/WCS. The youth opted to invite members from key agencies including local health and education professionals, as well as community members, to the final event, held at the Pymmes Park Visitors Centre (PPVC). ECP was responsible for inviting key people and managing venue needs.

Early on, an alternative focus group was held with existing community members to align thinking across generations.

Consideration was given for young people involved who had mock exams in May. As a result, an end date of mid-July was decided

# Key Elements

One of the requests young people had was that those who hold the power to make change be invited, not only attend but, to take part in the event.

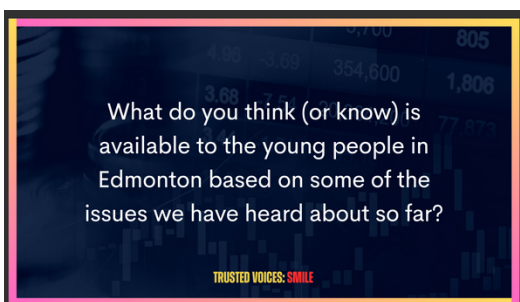
As a result, a panel element was designed and 3 professionals were asked to sit on it as young people asked and fielded questions and comments from the audience.

Panel members were:

- Ruth Donaldson - Director of Communities, NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board
- Christiana Fadipe - Inequalities Programme Lead, NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board
- Patricia Obichukwu - CEO, Wellbeing Connect Services

Additionally, it was important to ensure the audience were part of sharing their own perspectives on what is needed - as an extension of hearing from the young people.

Community questions devised by the youth included:





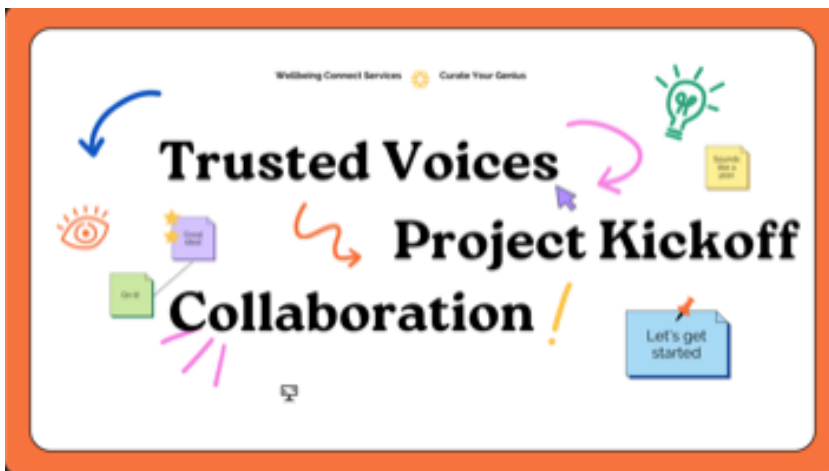
# Project Outputs

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- Interviews/short film of YPs' experiences
- A community discussion event
- Project materials inc. goody bag items and note paper
- Increased awareness of ECP, WCS and the Youth Board
- Increased awareness of funding
- Three workshop session guides for engagement
- Creation of spoken word
- Project presentation



# Project Outputs



**Trusted Voices: Smile**

**PROGRAMME TIMES & ROLES**

5:30 PM	Welcome Zone [ECP Staff]
5:45 PM	Intro & Community Discussion 1 [Trevor/Shae/YP]
6:15 PM	Brown Girl, Brown Man - Cheri V (song with quotes from the project)
6:25 PM	CD 2 [Shae/YP]
6:35 PM	Break
6:45 PM	CD 3 [Shae/YP]
6:55 PM	Q & A [Shae/YP]
7:25 PM	Smile Instrumental and Spoken Word (performance) [YP: Ryleh, Chloe]
7:40 PM	Wrap Up & Final Thoughts [Shae/Trevor]

Scripts: Jeholady, Chika  
Hosts: Chloe, Fabiana, Elijah, Malachi, Clara  
Spoken Word (writing): Ryleh (performing): Ryleh, Chloe, Clara

**EVENT: WEDNESDAY 19TH JULY 2023**

In-person run-through: Friday 30th June 2023  
Dress rehearsal: Friday 14th July 2023



# Continued Success

Some of the key thoughts to come out of the community conversations included:

- The need for 360 provisions. This would incorporate support for young Black people, in addition to their parents and the extended community
- A youth club and a business that could be places of safety for young people in the community as well as providing jobs for those who are best placed to understand the unique issues Black people face
- Suggestions surrounding physical health and its impact on mental wealth
- 'Safe spaces' for communities to get to know one another
- Expansion of specific mental health support for parents who have children in the locality, enabling them to better support their children
- Regular community conversations that allow for more voices to be heard

# Envisioning Tomorrow & Gratitude

It was acknowledged that there is funding available to support some positive initial steps. Attendees were invited to get in touch in order to find out more, and to be in the room where the conversations are happening in order to ensure this work has not been done in vain.

Professionals reflected on the event and what they would take away, sharing their intent to consider how they can adapt existing support to meet the needs that specific communities may have.

Next steps include:

- Sourcing and sharing funding information that may support the initiatives mentioned
- Connecting those with an interest to WCS and ECP
- Maintaining progressive conversations between the NCL ICB, WCS, ECP and communities of interest
- Considering the next stage of development to support the vision for the future

*A huge thank you to all who attended the live event, the community members who were invited to join the focus group, and to the young people who we graciously supported with their vulnerability in order to progress the movement.*

**TRUSTED  
VOICES:  
SMILE**

ECP & WBC thank you for continuously supporting their efforts to give young Black people in Edmonton a voice



Edmonton Community Partnership: [www.edmontoncommunitypartnership.org](http://www.edmontoncommunitypartnership.org)  
Wellbeing Connect Services: [www.wellbeingconnectservices.org](http://www.wellbeingconnectservices.org)