

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday 29th November 2023

New hybrid exhibition amplifying community and lived experience narratives to inspire racial justice in Leeds mental health services announced today

A new 12-month hybrid programme and exhibition championing community and lived experience narratives to tackle the overrepresentation of black and South Asian men detained under the Mental Health Act in Leeds, is announced today (**Wednesday 29th November 2023**).

Remembering What's Forgotten, co-founded by Synergi-Leeds and Words of Colour, will draw on 50 years of unsung community initiatives, allyship and knowledge to reimagine a more inclusive and equitable mental health system, guided by racial justice.

Using creative and heritage methods, from film, audio, and poetry to archive, co-production and photovoice techniques, the digital and in-person exhibition will feature the narratives of 60 contributors supported by a curated timeline.

Funded by Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, and supported by Leeds City Council and Forum Central, the aim is for the co-produced programme to act as a catalyst for better mental health experiences and outcomes for black and minority ethnic communities amid enduring statistics which show that:

- Black people are four times more likely than white people to be detained under the Mental Health Act.
- Black and minority ethnic people are 40% more likely to access mental health care via the criminal justice system than white people.
- Black and minority ethnic people are less likely to access primary care support, through their GP, and more likely to end up in crisis care.

Sara Munro, CEO, Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Racial injustice, especially when you look at the overrepresentation of black people detained under the Mental Health Act, isn't new. We also know that for the diverse communities we serve it can often feel like 'here we go again' when statutory agencies announce another 'initiative' to tackle racial injustice. Our communities have walked the talk so many times and it is for this reason *Remembering What's Forgotten* has a crucial role to play."

Sharon Prince, Deputy Director Psychological Professions, Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Co-Lead of Synergi-Leeds, said: "The Synergi-Leeds network believes that knowledge which resides in the community isn't often privileged in regional and national initiatives, leading the learning to be lost and sometimes repackaged by mainstream services as 'new knowledge'. *Remembering What's Forgotten* will put the spotlight on the histories, people, communities and organisations instrumental in championing mental health equity in Leeds."

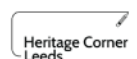
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Victoria Eaton, Director of Public Health, Leeds City Council, said: “It is essential to listen to and amplify the voices of lived experience, understand in more depth what contributes to differences in mental health outcomes but also recognise the assets already present in our communities through individuals, community groups and grassroots organisations. *Remembering What’s Forgotten* will serve as a catalyst for further change and advocacy efforts aimed at addressing ethnic inequalities in mental health.”

Working with co-producing partners Touchstone, Heritage Corner and **Artistic Director Khadijah Ibrahiim** (Leeds Young Authors), the programme will host focus groups for carers and service users, appoint a lived experience poet in residence and provide two lived experience curator internships. **Former Leeds United footballer, BBC broadcaster and mental health advocate Sanchez Payne** has signed up as a project ally.

Joe Williams, Founder/Director, Heritage Corner, added: “*Remembering What’s Forgotten* is a helpful title. I develop history walks, including for the David Oluwale Memorial Association, and having the Yinka Shonibare Hibiscus Rising sculpture honouring David, is all about remembering. We have no wish to retraumatise ourselves by remembering, but we have to remember to not repeat mistakes and learn from challenges. We have to remember how to stay healthy, perhaps to recall those times when we once knew, and build on it.”

Joy Francis, Words of Colour’s Executive Director and *Remembering What’s Forgotten* Project Manager, said: “It’s time to centre the undervalued legacy of community organisations, carers and lived experience activists. Oral history and creative outlets have long served as tools of resilience amid generational trauma, institutional gaslighting, racism and the absence of culturally relevant and co-produced mental health services. *Remembering What’s Forgotten* is a step in the right direction as one option for change and accountability.”

Remembering What’s Forgotten will be launched as a hybrid exhibition, online and in person, in Leeds from October 2024, and will be dedicated to the late Heather Nelson (1965 – 2023), CEO and Founder of the Black Health Initiative.

Ends

Notes to Editors

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Official hashtag: [#RWF2024](https://twitter.com/RWF2024) | **Press Pack:** You can download the press assets [here](#).

The *Remembering What’s Forgotten* website *is embargoed and will not go live until 12pm on Thursday 30th November 2023:*

Full link: rememberingwhatsforgotten.co.uk

Bitly link: <https://bit.ly/RWF2024>

About Remembering What's Forgotten

Remembering What's Forgotten is a 12-month co-produced programme and hybrid exhibition established to amplify the unheard community-based and lived experience narratives challenging mental health inequality and the racial injustice facing black and minority ethnic communities in Leeds.

A creative and heritage-inspired response to the overrepresentation of black and South Asian men in in-patient wards and their disproportionate detention under the Mental Health Act, the programme's narratives and legacy will be used to influence policy, how mental health services are commissioned and delivered, determine what research is conducted and privilege lived experience and community knowledge.

Co-founded by Synergi-Leeds and Words of Colour, the programme partners include Leeds City Council and Public Health, Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Forum Central. Touchstone, Heritage Corner and Leeds Young Authors are co-producing partners while former Leeds United footballer and BBC broadcaster Sanchez Payne is the first project ally to sign up to the programme.

The co-produced programme and hybrid exhibition, which will launch in October 2024, is funded by Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

More details about *Remembering What's Forgotten* can be found on the official website rememberingwhatsforgotten.co.uk – which is **under embargo until 12pm on Thursday 30th November 2023.**

Remembering What's Forgotten Co-Founders

Synergi-Leeds

Established in 2018, **Synergi-Leeds** seeks to redress racial injustice and ethnic inequalities in mental health in Leeds. Led by Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Leeds City Council, the partnership includes membership from the third sector and statutory services and is instrumental in supporting the delivery of Priority 2 within the Leeds All-Age Mental Health Strategy, to reduce the overrepresentation of people from ethnically diverse communities admitted to mental health services in crisis. Synergi-Leeds won the Legacy Awards 2022 and the HSJ Award for Mental Health Innovation of the Year 2023.

Words of Colour – The Immersive Change Agency | wordsofcolour.co.uk

Words of Colour creates alternative pathways and sustainable opportunities for writers, creatives, entrepreneurs and communities of colour to thrive - and for unheard stories to be told. Launched in 2006, it originates, curates, produces and collaborates on projects that straddle literature, creative industries, academia, research, digital entrepreneurship and creative wellbeing to generate meaningful change. Among its awards is the NESTA/Observer 'New Radicals' Award 2018 for the [Synergi Collaborative Centre](https://www.synergi.co.uk), a national initiative it co-founded, and the Legacy Awards 2022 and HSJ Award for Mental Health Innovation of the Year 2023 for its co-produced work with Synergi-Leeds.

Project Funder and Partner

A collaboration between



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Partners



Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust | leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk

Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust provides specialist mental health and learning disability services to the people of Leeds and across Yorkshire, the Humber and the North of England.

Project Partners

Leeds City Council | leeds.gov.uk

Leeds City Council is the second largest local authority in the country, with around 14,000 employees. The council is committed to making Leeds a vibrant, environmentally-friendly and compassionate place to live, work and visit, with a people-first ethos that fully embraces values such as equality and diversity. This approach is helping to deliver real and transformative change for the city through major ongoing investment in areas like housing, infrastructure and public transport.

Forum Central | forumcentral.org.uk

Forum Central is the network of health and social care third sector organisations in Leeds providing voice, advocacy and representation for a membership of 300 voluntary, social enterprise and faith organisations, and committed to ensuring the least heard voices of the sector are fed into decision making. Forum central works to ensure sustainability and equity for the sector with a wide range of statutory and third sector partners across Leeds and West Yorkshire and is a partner on the West Yorkshire NHS Integrated Care Board.

Co-Producing Partners

Touchstone | touchstonesupport.org.uk

Touchstone began as a weekend club in 1982, born out of an identified need for friendship and community in South Leeds. More than 40 years later, it provides health and wellbeing services to over 10,000 people living in diverse Yorkshire communities every year. Touchstone also works with communities to grow their confidence and capacity to demand the services and positive experiences they are entitled to.

Heritage Corner | heritagecornerleeds.com

Heritage Corner delivers the award-winning Leeds Black History Walk, designed to assist navigation around a complex history often hidden in plain sight. It promotes reclaiming narratives as part of a strategy toward positive mental health as imposed narratives can have a negative impact. In 2024, Heritage Corner will celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Leeds Black History Walk, and continue its legacy with Heritage Crew CIC, generating arts projects with young people.

Leeds Young Authors | facebook.com/LeedsYoungAuthors/

Leeds Young Authors (LYA) was founded in 2003 by poet and playwright Khadijah Ibrahiim as an approach to creative education to promote positive social dialogue through the written and spoken word among young people of High School age (ages 13-19), primarily in the City of Leeds. Leeds Young Authors runs creative writing projects, out-of-school and in schools, to nurture and develop youth talent and encourage socially inclusive engagement.