



synergi

LEEDS

PART OF THE SYNERGI
COLLABORATIVE NETWORK

annual report '22

This is the first Annual Report of the Synergi-Leeds Network. Published in 2022, it sets out: the progress made since 2017; the focus of the network and how the programme of work is situated within wider strategic frameworks in the city.



Winner
Leeds Legacy Awards 2022
(Health and Wellbeing)



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Introduction

We are incredibly pleased to share with you the first Synergi - Leeds annual report. This document is the result of many years of collaboration between various stakeholders across the city including: service users and carers; the Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (LYPFT); the local authority; third sector partners; the Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group - now known as the Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB) - and the national Synergi Collaborative Centre.

This report provides a summary of our journey and approach to tackling the persistent problem of mental health inequalities for Minority Ethnic groups. This occurs against a background of work by many in the city and nationally to address this inequity. We have had the privilege of learning from those who have gone before and who continue to inspire us. We also acknowledge those who have suffered as a consequence of the institutional racism within our systems and it is this suffering which drives us to do better, challenge power imbalances, find allies and to radically reimagine the delivery of mental health services for minoritised groups.

If having read this report, you are keen on supporting our work and getting involved then please contact us and join our network. 'Be the change you want to see.'

Language is important, so throughout this document we will use the term BME - Black Minority Ethnic - to inclusively describe people who are not 'White British' and who have a shared history of racism and discrimination. However, people will have a preference for different terminology such as 'BAME', 'culturally and ethnically diverse groups' or 'racialised groups' and we respect that. When terms other than BME are used in this document, this will reflect the language of the source.

Background and Approach

In 2017, analysis carried out by Touchstone and LYPFT, indicated there was an over- representation of people from Black, Asian and Mixed Ethnic backgrounds detained to mental health wards (appendix/ figure 1). This figure is consistent with the trend in many UK cities. However, members of the Leeds Health and Care Partnership decided that something needed to be done to address this stark inequality. Despite this commitment for change, early discussions with partners from LYPFT, Leeds City Council and the third sector indicated that practitioners and strategic leaders alike felt unconvinced that action would result in change given multiple, previous failed attempts. Third sector organisations and local communities were clear that statutory services needed to do more to understand the current perspectives of people from minority ethnic groups in the city. In response to this, public health and Leeds GATE co-facilitated a session, to explore in more detail 'where' people from minority ethnic backgrounds sought mental health support and 'how' individuals and communities navigated systems.

A cross-sectoral steering group was formed to build on the priorities identified in the workshop, but the group struggled to develop a coherent approach; decide on key actions; or agree a shared, common language to discuss issues of risk, racism, and discrimination. It was at this point,

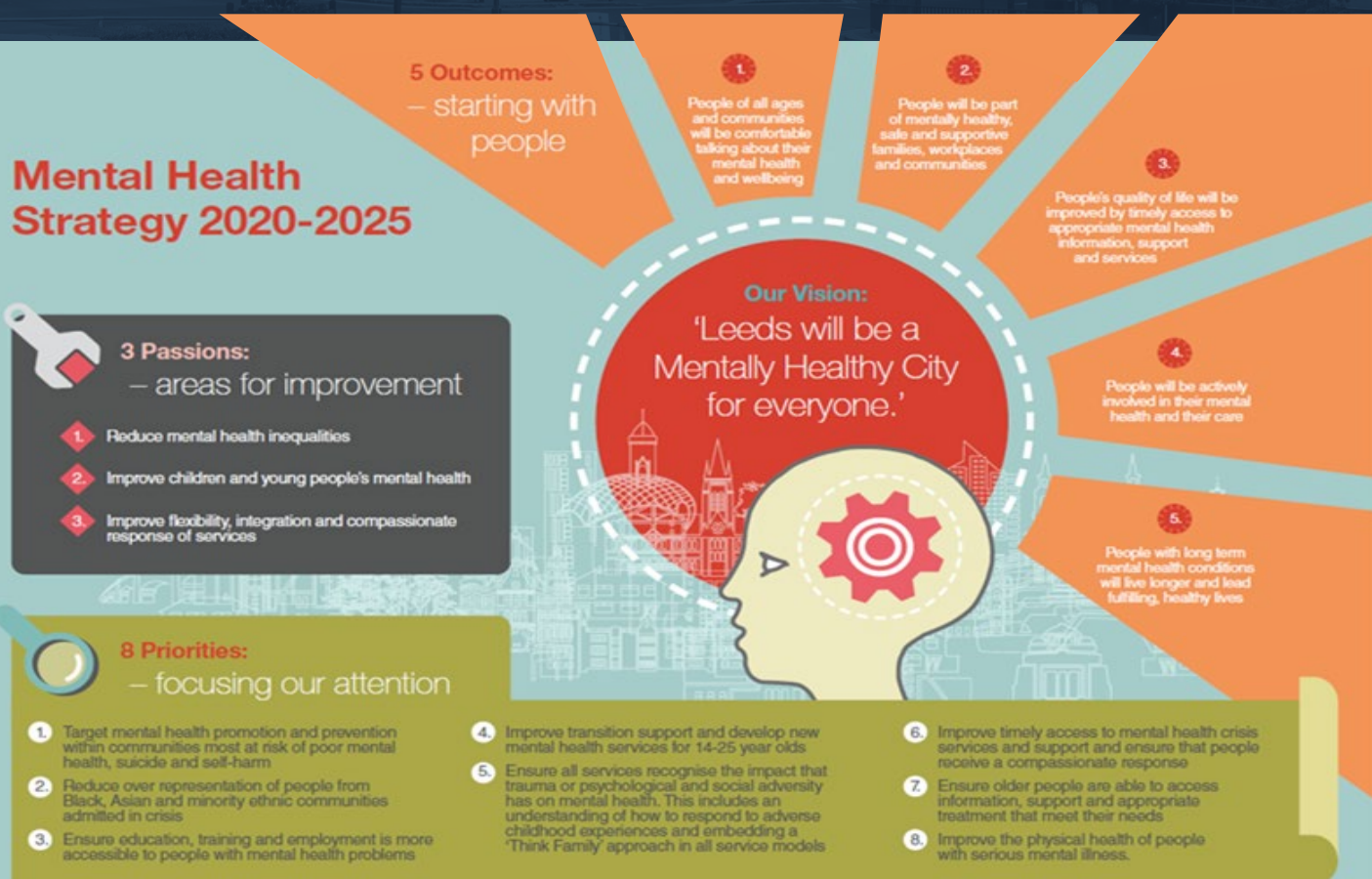


that contact was made with the Synergi Collaborative Centre, a programme of work funded by Lankelly Chase to reframe, rethink, and transform the realities of ethnic inequalities in severe mental illness and multiple disadvantages.

Conversations with the national Synergi team were vital and enabled the steering group to frame 'the problem' in a different way. Namely, that there have been failures to affect real change in the past because: service user voices are marginalised; difficult views or opinions are silenced, and people in positions of power – particularly those who are White - fear addressing the issue and fear 'getting it wrong.' An important aspect that we discussed was that priorities were indeed to be found across the whole system – and that failure to grasp this complexity in the past and work both inside services and outside in civic spaces, had been part of the problem.

The Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy provides a framework for improving health and for making Leeds the best city in the UK for health and wellbeing.

In response, the Leeds Mental Health Strategy sets out how we will achieve this vision for mental health, so that 'Leeds will be a Mentally Healthy City for everyone'.



Data and Risk Ratio

As part of understanding what is happening within acute mental health services, LYPFT regularly review their data on emergency admissions.

The following analysis defines 'top level ethnic groups'. It then uses the number of all acute adult admissions to LYPFT (in each financial year) and GP registered population figures. This gives a rate of admission per 1,000 population for each ethnic group.

This rate is then used to calculate a 'risk ratio' relative to the White ethnic group (where the baseline risk = 1 for the White ethnic group).

The data is in part, incomplete, as admissions where the ethnicity is 'not known' or 'not stated' have been excluded. The data also does not include out of area adult acute admissions.

Risk Ratio of White group	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22 ytd
Asian or Asian British	1.7	1.4	1.1	1.4	1.3	0.9	1.3
Black or Black British	2.2	2.5	3.4	3.3	3.8	3.0	3.4
Mixed	2.5	2.0	2.1	2.5	1.7	2.0	1.5
Other Ethnic Groups	0.8	1.2	0.9	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.9
White	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

We can see that, over time, people in Black or Black British groups have an increased risk of being detained via an emergency admission. Over the time period shown this has risen from 2.2 in 2015/16 to 3.4 in 2021/22.

People from Asian or Asian British groups and people of mixed cultural heritage also have an increased risk compared to White groups. People from other ethnic groups over the time period have predominately remained at a lower risk of being detained via an emergency admission.

This data shows clearly that there is still much to be done across the system to reduce the risk of severe mental illness in some culturally diverse communities and provide more equitable and appropriate mental health services.

The Synergi - Leeds Partnership Steering Group

The steering group working with the Synergi Collaborative Centre is now officially known as Synergi - Leeds. It is a growing network of health and social care, statutory and voluntary sector organisations committed to reducing ethnic inequalities in mental health, with a focus on reducing Mental Health Act detentions. The membership reflects the approach which is focussed on developing action across the whole system and the life course.

The network acts as a context within which connections and collaborations are made and which 'holds' the approach. It is a forum to question how we do things and to promote antiracist practice. The ambition is to have representation from a broad range of sectors, including housing, leisure, employment, and criminal justice which we know have an impact upon mental health and wellbeing.

The Synergi - Leeds Network aims to energise and enable people to make changes within their own services and systems. The network has grown and is starting to develop into a community of practice, which is supported by a small core team. The core team is comprised of an adult focused worker, hosted within public health, and recurrently funded by the Leeds ICB who appreciated that dedicated funding was required to progress this agenda. Other members of the team include the head of mental health from public health, a consultant clinical psychologist from LYPFT, and more recently the clinical inclusion lead from LYPFT and an involvement worker, from Leeds Involving People. There has also been representation from the local authority and Forum Central.

The core project team meets fortnightly and focuses on:



Developing and supporting the network.



Supporting the development of the Synergi grants programme, which focuses on capacity - building with grassroots organisations.



Engaging and influencing outwards to inform wider programmes in the city including the Community Mental Health Transformation programme.



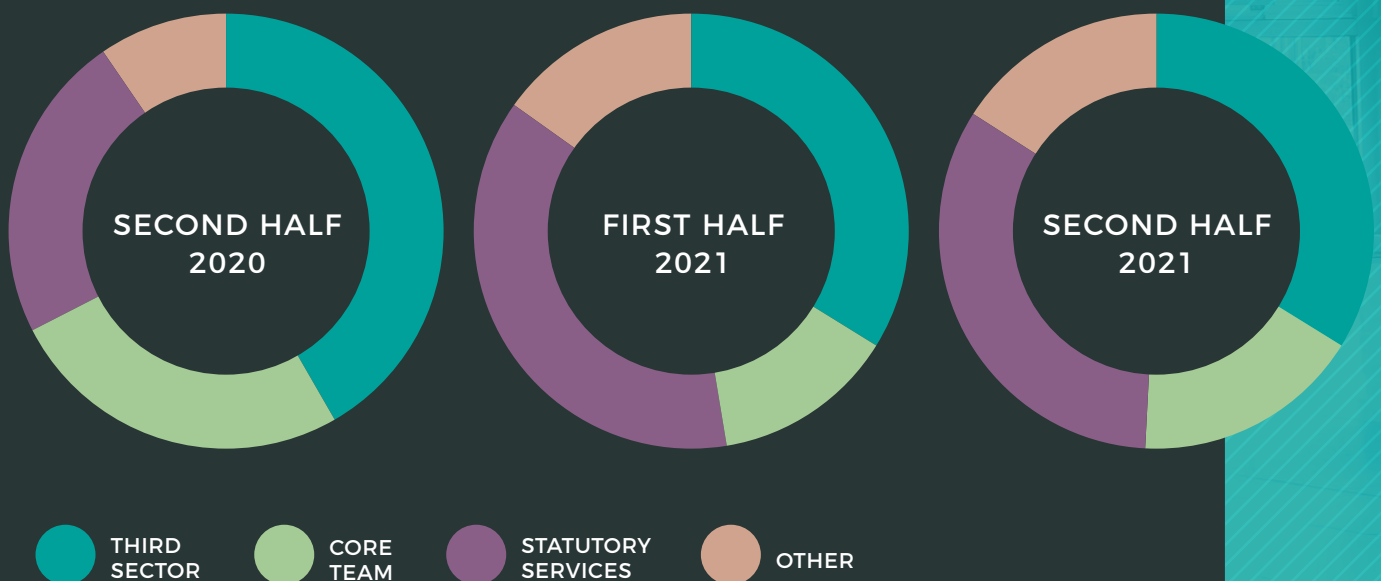
Co-designing Creative Spaces events with experts by experience.



The Leeds - Synergi Network is chaired by the deputy director psychological professions at LYPFT. The network meets alternate months, including throughout the pandemic and has a growing membership.

Synergi Network Membership Growth

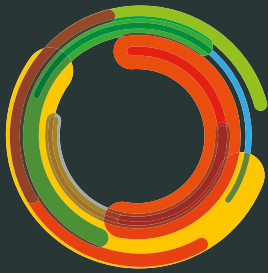
Since the Synergi - Leeds Network started in early 2020, the membership has grown consistently with every bi-monthly meeting. This chart shows the growth and interest over the last 18 months





The Synergi - Leeds network continues to grow every month, with new members, fresh ideas and more opportunities to learn, collaborate and share. Our Synergi Skills Library and the quarterly E-Bulletin are some of the first successful collaborations created within the partnership, bringing together mentorship, creativity and influence.

Key Achievements and Deliverables



Creative Spaces

Improving health systems through collaborative design

Creative Spaces

Service user and carer involvement is at the centre of what we do, and Synergi - Leeds has committed to working with people with lived experience to progress this agenda.

All our Creative Spaces events have been co-curated, and we are currently developing a model/ framework for involvement which is creative, flexible, and sustainable.

Two online Creative Spaces events were held during the pandemic in June and October 2021. They provided an update of the work completed so far, showcasing some of the grassroots funded projects and bringing together services users, system leaders, practitioners, and experts by experience to reflect on issues of intersectionality, the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement and the impact of Covid- 19 on mental health.

Creative Spaces Events



We co-collaborated with service users, community representatives and carers on the context and facilitation of the Creative Spaces events.



The two online Creative Spaces events combined had an audience of over 160 people in attendance.



The feedback from these events have helped us to create new key contacts, encourage the conversation within communities and organisations and promote some of the fantastic work taking place across the city.



Synergi-Leeds Grants Programme

The all-age Synergi - Leeds grants programme has been designed to support very local activity that addresses the wider determinants of serious mental illness (including racism and discrimination); increases trust; improves access to services and bolsters existing community mental health support. The programme is funded recurrently by the Leeds ICB and delivered via Leeds Community Foundation (LCF).

Synergi - Leeds network and LCF co-designed key aspects of the grants programme, the application process and the approach to monitoring and evaluation - balancing a need to be flexible and community led with a desire to be able to express demand and impact. The first round of this grant has funded 15 community organisations to run a two-year programme to address psychological wellbeing and mental health needs within children, young people, adults and families across the city, with a further opportunity to receive funding for a third year.

Successful applicants are being supported by LCF and the core Synergi team. They have also had opportunities to be mentored by larger third sector organisations. This mentoring is an innovation which has been widely welcomed by the grassroots projects and has widened to enable any member of the network to offer mentoring, if appropriate. We are also developing a skills library where members of the network can offer to support/exchange learning and skills.

The ambition is that those projects which demonstrate impact will be supported to survive and thrive through continuation of funding or supported to seek relevant / alternative funding streams. The grant holders are also offered quarterly networking opportunities to support each other and develop strong peer networks.



Programme flyers from grant holders shared with the community, statutory services and education providers

Leeds Areas covered by the fund

The fund for: Addressing Mental Health Inequalities within Minority Ethnic Communities delivered city-wide but most beneficiaries come from multiple areas of Leeds which fall amongst the 20% and 10% most deprived areas in the country (The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019).



The National Synergi - Leeds Pledge

In August 2021, Leeds City Council, LYPFT, the Leeds GP Confederation, Leeds CCG (now ICB) and Forum Central signed up to the National Synergi pledge along with partners in Birmingham, Manchester and Hackney London. The pledge lists seven commitments which enable individual

organisations and partnerships to develop action in key areas. As part of this process, we are required to submit a biannual report which is uploaded onto the Synergi Collaborative website and be part of the national 'Pledge Alliance.'

As senior leaders within the health and care system we committed to:

1. Initiate fundamental service level changes to reduce ethnic inequalities in access, experiences, and outcomes.
2. Measure, monitor and report the nature and extent of ethnic inequalities and progress made.
3. Work in partnership with local Minority Ethnic communities, service users and relevant community agencies.
4. Provide national leadership on this critical issue.
5. Ensure inclusive and sustainable change in our localities and communities.
6. Support timely and progressive research and policy development.
7. Contribute to a biannual progress update as part of this pledge.



In 2022 partners in Leeds - via the professional executive group, re-committed to the national Synergi pledge and requested further scoping work be carried out to explore how and where to embed the different pledge commitments across the system.

Presentations and Key Interfaces



Local

The core team have tried to increase the profile of the work within the system by delivering many presentations, including at key local meetings and forums, among these were:

- Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board Workshop
- Leeds City Council Adult Social Care Senior Leadership Team
- Better Lives Board
- FRESH, Forum for Race Equality in Social Care and Health
- Public Health Conference
- ADPH SLI Conference
- Culture of Mental Health Event



National

Our work also has a national profile with presentations at a Public Health England webinar on addressing ethnic inequalities in health care and at the Psychological Professions Network on the role that psychology has played in supporting and developing the work. Synergi - Leeds is also highlighted as an example of good practice by the Public Health England PHE Prevention Concordat.



Synergi have been building a catalogue of presentations, reports and media content to document the impact and the growth of the partnership.

Future plans include a collection of podcasts and interviews that will be available to access via the Health Partnerships website under priority 2 of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.



Children and Young People (CYP)

Children from minority ethnic groups are underrepresented in mental health support services, but overrepresented in other areas (e.g., exclusions, youth justice system) “Profound inequalities” exist for adults from Ethnic Minority communities in accessing mental health treatment, their experience of care and their mental health outcomes. However, there is less clear evidence or local research into the needs and support for children and young people from BME groups.

The 2018 Annual Refresh of Future in Mind: Leeds Local Transformation Plan, included a commitment to better understand the needs of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and identify gaps in local provision.

Background and CYP work

Children and Young People's Minority Ethnic (CYP) work Progress

Appointed in April 2021, the CYP ME (Minority Ethnic) worker has defined the role and focus of this work (which includes Gypsy and Traveller, Chinese and South Asian communities in addition the Black African Caribbean focus of the Adult Synergi Work)

We have established a range of connections and increased awareness of children and young people's issues. The key purpose of this work is to engage, support and energise system leaders and advocate for a different approach to address the increased risk of mental illness and poorer outcomes in minority ethnic populations, with a focus on children and young people's access to services, experiences, and prevention.

Supporting Grant holders/applicants

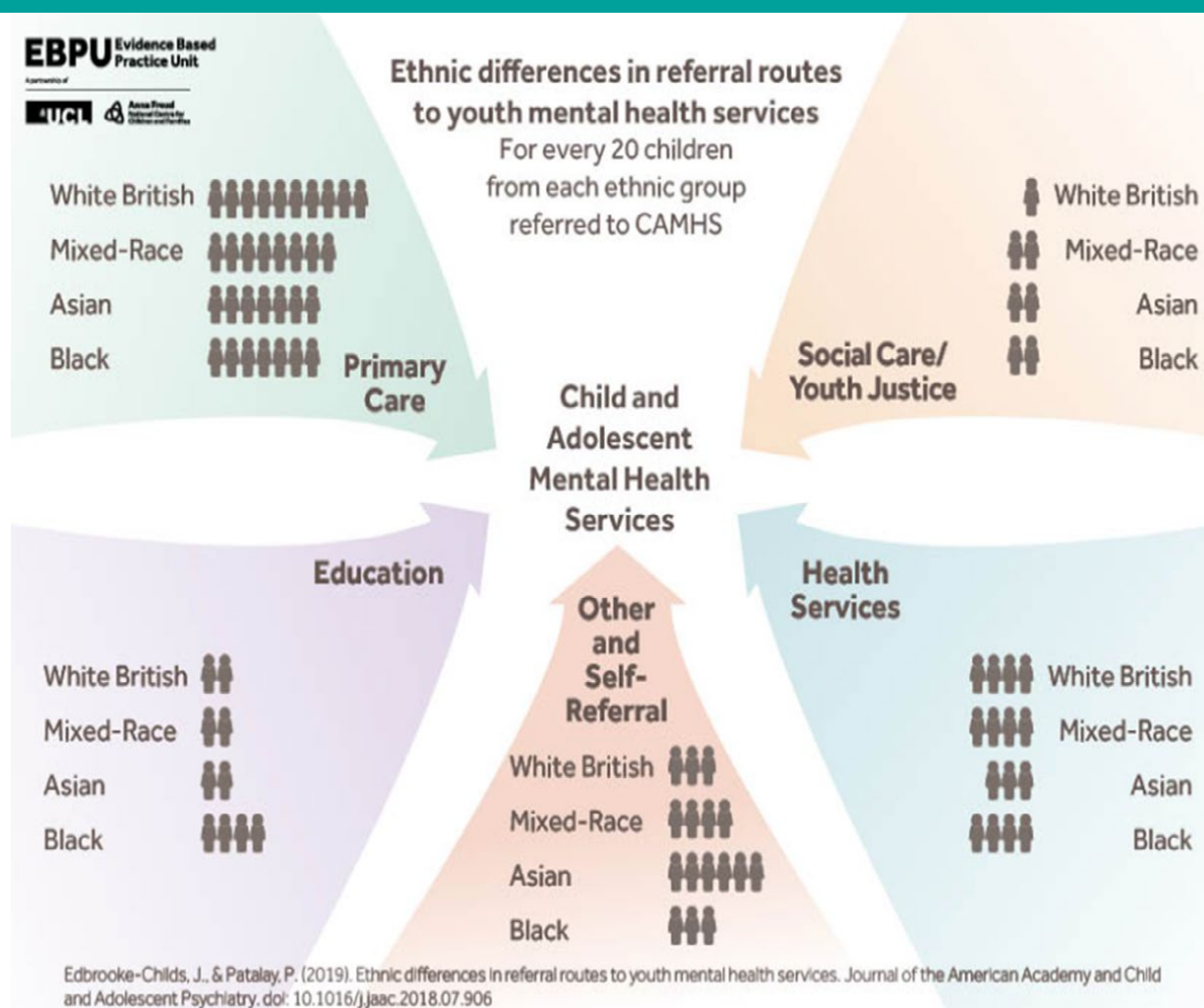
- Providing information to our grant holders about the variety of mental health services available in the city and support to build connections and relationships
- Working with unsuccessful grant holders, LCF and our members to offer additional support and mentoring

Developing new work and materials:

- Developing presentation and communication to increase the reach and understanding of the CYP needs assessment which highlighted inequalities in ME groups
- Supporting development of a bespoke Mental Health First Aid course, delivered with ME community needs in mind
- Working with Magpie Studio to co-design a campaign with and for black boys
- Developing and promoting powerful video content including the Healthwatch/BLM and Public Health campaign: Being Black and Being Me [video](#).

Leeds Health Needs Assessment diagram

Leeds Health Needs Assessment included this diagram to show factors that contribute to inequalities across the life course.





What are the factors that contribute?



Adults have increased risk of experiencing severe mental illness and are over-represented admissions to mental health wards in crisis.

INCREASED
EXPOSURE TO RISK
FACTORS FOR
MENTAL HEALTH
PROBLEMS

CULTURALLY
INAPPROPRIATE
SERVICES

LACK OF
KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT
SERVICES

STIGMA ABOUT
ACCESSING
HELP

LACK OF TRUST
IN SERVICES

INSTITUTIONAL
RACISM

EMOTIONAL
DISTRESS MAY BE
INTERPRETED AS
BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES
IN SOME GROUPS

INTERFACE WITH
PRIMARY CARE AND
REFERRAL ROUTES
INTO MENTAL
HEALTH SERVICES

Influencing and building links

- Working with leads of Future in Mind Strategy to address the needs of minority ethnic (ME) groups
- Contribution to the Forum Central Inclusivity Working Group - established in 2020, this group has been sharing good practice, supporting Black workers, and supporting third sector organisations to address racism.
- Delivered powerful training sessions including:
 - Leeds City Council chief officers and directors leadership session about improving young people's mental health
 - Regional Advancing Health Equalities masterclass by NHS England and NHS Improvement to share work in Leeds
 - Workshop as part of the Leeds Trauma Conference
 - Young Black Minds session run by Leeds Mind
- Developed links with involvement and engagement leads; Youth for Climate Mental Health; interfaith leaders; Children & Young People's Social Prescribing; Community Mental Health Transformation in Leeds and West Yorkshire.
- Involvement in recruitment to key NHS posts that will support change.
- Establishing links with [Mindmate](#), [Kooth](#) and [Mindwell](#), which has seen more representative infographics and materials for Mindwell.
- Energizing the LGBTQ+ communities with Angels of Freedom, Leeds City Council, Trans Leeds, and many more to reflect and build on CYP Minority ethnic role.
- Contribution to the Forum Central Inclusivity Working Group - established in 2020, this group has been sharing good practice, supporting Black workers, and supporting third sector organisations to address racism.
- Supporting the establishment of cultural humility approaches.

Learning and Evaluation

Learning

The clinical psychologist chairing the steering group has facilitated a psychologically informed process, enabling, and supporting difficult conversations. Focusing on the importance of attending to relationships, group culture and process has ensured ongoing commitment to a shared purpose and 'buy-in' from diverse partners.

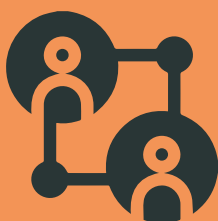
The group has embraced the concept that the how we do things is equally, if not more important than the what we do always asking the question 'Will this make a difference?.' There is a commitment to being as inclusive as possible, 'whose voice is not in the room?' as it is this inclusivity and diversity which will lead to a different outcome. The work is built upon a shared value base and principles which enable a sustained focus and fosters relationships all of which will drive this work forward.

This work needs to be appropriately resourced and focused on engagement and action. Senior leadership engagement and support at board, operational and clinical levels is a pre-requisite. Synergi - Leeds has the support of chief executives and councillors across the city and engagement of other senior leaders is an ongoing process.

Evaluation

Thinking about how we evaluate this project has been a real challenge, given the complexity of the system and focus of study. However there have been continuing conversations with colleagues at the national Synergi Collaborative Centre and other academic partners. We have been part of the national team's evaluation and recently we partnered with Professor Stephen Coleman, Leeds University, to study the impact / learning from the Synergi - Leeds approach. Professor Coleman has secured some initial funding and we are in the early stages of project development. Being able to explain the ways in which the approach is bringing about change for individuals, processes, systems, and organisations will enable the partnership to reflect and continue to adapt in order to address inequalities in mental health.

Next Steps



To continue to develop innovative and meaningful relationships with service users and carers.



To continue using the Creative Spaces approach to engage wider stakeholders.



To continue to influence outwards towards existing programmes of work and support the wider system to have open conversation about identity, racism, and discrimination.



To strengthen the infrastructure and reach of Synergi - Leeds through the development of a website and podcasts.



To respond to the expanding network and profile of Synergi with dedicated leadership.



Identification of academic partners to support evaluation.

Synergi Collaborative

Phase 2 work focus

The first national Synergi team focussed on developing a clear evidence base about ethnic inequalities in mental health and on communicating this. It also developed a 'new' way of thinking about how to address ethnic inequalities in mental health.

The next phase of the national project builds on this strong legacy.

Synergi Phase 2 is an ambitious and exciting programme of work which focuses on the intersection of racial justice and mental health. Hosted by [NSUN](#), and held by a governance board including [Catalyst 4 Change](#), the second phase of Synergi will centre on people with lived experience and community action.

Key themes or work areas for Phase Two are:

Remembrance as Resistance

Developing a multimedia and digital exhibition and festival programme that will act as a window to community action tackling mental health and racial injustices over the last 40 years in the UK, to reimagine mental health services and support for racialised communities.

Building as Abolition

Working with and influencing funders to better understand abolitionist work in this space so that it is resourced and elevated.

Creating Spaces

Building on the place - based creative and collaborative system change work which was developed in the first phase of Synergi.

Democratising Policy

Managing an annual small grants programme to distribute to grassroots campaigning groups working on the intersection of racial justice and mental health.

Transformational Governance

Embedding ethical and collaborative ways of working within Synergi and beyond it [Synergi Collaborative Centre](#).



PART OF THE SYNERGI
COLLABORATIVE NETWORK

For more information on Synergi-Leeds and Mental Health Inequalities within Ethnic Minority Communities please use one of the following contacts.



Mental Health Strategy Priorities and Workstreams -
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