

## Summary of Stevenage Equalities Commission Recommendations

### Introduction

The Stevenage Equalities Commission was set up in April 2021 following a motion carried by the Council; to address the inequalities for Ethnically diverse communities in Stevenage. The purpose of the Commission was to assess the nature, extent and impact of racism and racial disparities in the town and to make recommendations for tackling them. This was prompted by the death of George Floyd and the disparities highlighted through the Black Lives Matters movement.

Following the successful recruitment of 18 commissioners, the Commission held its inaugural meeting in August 2021. The membership consists of 10 people from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities along with 8 members representing organisations providing county wide and local services.

The independently chaired commission has been supported by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) through initial funding and the provision of officer support. Since December 2021, the Commission has secured £40,000 of external funding to deliver on its recommendations, including making training available for SBC elected members and direct delivery officers in areas such as racial literacy and cultural competence as part of the legacy group work.

The objectives of the Commission as laid out in its terms of reference are as follows.

- To ensure that Stevenage Borough Council's HR and management policies fully meet the requirements for equalities, diversity and inclusion in the recruitment and career progression of all staff and to promote best practices to all employers in the town.
- To consider the nature, extent, and impact of racial disparities on BAME individuals and communities in Stevenage and the implications for the Town as a whole.
- To invite written and verbal evidence from a wide range of interested parties across the town (and beyond it) particularly those with lived experience.
- To consider evidence on what has worked with regard to reducing racism and race inequalities within the town and elsewhere.
- To establish a wider community dialogue with the town's BAME communities to make further clear recommendations to the council and other public bodies on further actions required to tackle discrimination and reduce inequalities across the town.
- To engage with Hertfordshire County Council to address systemic issues of racial inequality and disparities and their impact on BAME communities across Hertfordshire.

At the outset 5 major areas were identified for exploration:

- Health
- Criminal Justice
- Education
- Business and Employment (SBC & Town Wide)
- Sports, Arts, Leisure and Culture

Statutory representatives from each of the five areas were sought to sit on the commission, with positive responses from all. These representatives have engaged fully with the process, driving forward the conversation around inequality for ethnically diverse communities as well as in the case of Health representatives, providing extensive funding for ongoing initiatives.

The engagement of these organisations alongside the continuing dialogue with other service providers who the Commission wish to engage with in the future is essential in the delivery of the recommendations. The driving force behind this will be the SEC Legacy Group with continued support and associations provided by SBC. The ongoing work of the commission alongside the support of SBC has meant that much of the groundwork towards the delivery of the recommendations is already underway.

## Process for gathering evidence

The research and gathering of information conducted by the commissioners includes a range of personal and lived experience. This community led approach has resulted in observations and recommendations that are both specific to Stevenage as well as based on the perceptions and realities of the communities living and working in the town.

A range of methods have been adopted to gather qualitative and quantitative information relating to each theme:

- Participation in meetings, forums, and activities around racial inequalities in the Town, County and beyond
- Evidence provided by witnesses at the Commission's bi-monthly meetings
- Meetings, conversations with policy makers, practitioners, also individuals, and organisations from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities
- Scrutiny panels, strategic groups, national organisations, local authorities who have set up similar initiatives to the Stevenage Equalities Commission
- Census, ONS, JSNA data, and local intelligence
- Desk based research and literature reviews

Some of the statistical data gathered so far needs further interrogation to tease out the Stevenage specific information and the implications for the town. An ongoing issue is the gaps in data which prohibit concrete analysis. The Commission has held 5 bimonthly focus group meetings to date covering 5 major areas that were identified for exploration. The video recordings from those sessions are available for public viewing.

## Themes emerging from the Equality Commission's work:

Several themes emerging from the evidence gathered from service providers, people with lived experiences and the other processes outlined above have been identified

- Racial disparities evident in data across agencies
- Data collection, gaps, analysis, monitoring and acting on the evidence
- Mismatch between service providers narratives, data, outcomes and minoritised communities/Individual's experiences and analysis.
- Under representation in senior leadership roles, on boards, governors, the judiciary, and influential positions
- Belonging/not belonging- labelling, stigmatising stereotyping - i.e., Hard to reach
- Moving beyond denial, fear, and discomfort
- A sense of collective ambition and willingness to address issues of racism, racial disparities and make positive changes – Plethora of activities in motion locally and countywide, significant resources and finances invested
- Leadership models and organisational design- Integrated service provision- Whole systems approach
- Approaches to tackling racism and racial disparities - Unconscious Bias- Anti- Racist Practice- Building Racial Literacy, Cultural Competence and Confidence – Intersectionality – Equality and Diversity- Building Community Assets (groups)
- Move from fitting square pegs into round holes – to culturally appropriate services
- Funding, procurement, commissioning
- Independent scrutiny, transparency, accountability
- Identifying and sharing good practice
- Effective engagement
- The role of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic organisations and communities
- Trust and confidence.

These themes broadly outline some of the key issues for Stevenage, its leaders, statutory bodies, charities, voluntary sector organisations, and residents in addressing racism and racial disparities in outcomes.

They are also indicators of the nature and extent to which these issues manifest themselves in Stevenage and serve as an important signal of the gaps in trust and confidence between diverse communities and the organisations providing services to them.

### The Evidence:

Racism and racial disparities are paramount concerns for service providers, and communities with lived experiences.

The Commission heard evidence from witnesses from different organisations and disciplines who shared available data that demonstrated racial disparities continue to persist in the county and in Stevenage. Some of the data confirms that longstanding issues which are of concern for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities nationally are also present in Stevenage.

The data presented on mental health disparities, for example, clearly shows that Black Asian and Minority Ethnic children, adults, and older adults who live in Stevenage are highly overrepresented in restrictive inpatient settings having been sectioned under the mental health act, and highly overrepresented in community based mental health services. There are also ongoing concerns that many end up in the mental health system following detention by the police

The ongoing impact of Covid 19 placed a harsh spotlight on the vulnerability of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities who have been disproportionately affected and were at markedly higher risk of developing and dying from COVID-19 for a range of socio and economic reasons as well as longstanding health inequalities.

Data was presented outlining the current picture in Hertfordshire. There are social, structural, and clinical determinants that contribute to disparities amongst Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities locally and nationally.

Data on stop and search in Hertfordshire and Stevenage also reveals disproportionality in the numbers of people of colour and other minority ethnic backgrounds who are stopped and searched. The highly publicised 2022 case of Yvonne Farrell, who was detained in Stevenage police station, also added to existing concerns.

In Education there is further work to be done to hone in on data relating to disparities in school exclusions, managed moves, off rolling, recording, and reporting of racist incidents, bullying, educational attainment. The commission heard from witnesses of initiatives in the county to support schools in developing anti-racist approaches and a particular initiative taking place in a local school.

Diversifying the workforce and the lack of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic people in leadership roles is common thread across agencies.

The significant amount of investment in resources and finances currently devoted to addressing racial disparities across statutory, public, and voluntary sector organisations is further evidence of the attempts by public bodies to tackle racial disparities,.

### The testimonies of people with lived experience:

The testimonies of people with lived experience of racism and racial disparities in outcomes is also evidence that these issues are real. Examples of personal experiences have been shared at the Commission's bimonthly meetings and in other forums that could be categorised as: individual, institutional, direct, or indirect racism/ discrimination, stereotypes, conscious, and unconscious bias, micro and macro aggressions in the workplace, service provision and public life.

There are a range of views, experiences, and opinions about the issues within Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, as is the case within all communities, different groups have different and common concerns and experiences.

Some people say they have never experienced any form of discrimination or unequal outcomes, but they know others who have, some have experienced negative treatment and have decided to get on with their lives regardless. Some have had personal experiences within a range of settings that have been unsatisfactory, unfair, or even harmful and know of others with similar stories.

In many households locally and around the country conversations about racism are never far away, the intense media spotlight on these issues over the past 3 years has also kept it at the forefront of policy makers and private and public sector institutions. There is acknowledgement that improvements have been made over the years but some of the issues being dealt with today have not shifted.

In the workplace staff recount experiences of racism and racial disparities. Examples include the disproportionate levels of grievance and disciplinary cases, more severe sanctions for members of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic groups, who also face more cases of bullying and harassment.

The testimonials obtained through the work of the commissions indicate that there are ongoing concerns about the ways in which issues of racism and racial disparities are tackled, understood, and managed within organisations, the support for individuals in the processes and incorporating learning from the experiences.

### The evidence from service providers:

Workforce issues, recruitment, selection, retention, promotion, performance measures continue to be areas of concern and diversifying the workplace is a focus for all organisations. There is a pattern of boards and leaders of organisations and other influential spaces such as politics, school governors, the judiciary etc, historically being unrepresentative of the population, so they are unable to reflect the lived experiences of those absent from these influential spaces. This is further compounded by the fact that revolving doors operate between these influential spaces, therefore the potential to capitalise on diverse talent and experiences is regularly missed.

The Commission also heard evidence about how leadership models and organisational structures, institutional systems and processes are being redesigned and adapted to try and eliminate these disparities i.e., Integrated care systems, whole systems approaches and strategies for breaking through glass ceilings.

Currently there is a highly fragmented approach to addressing inequalities, different responsibilities between organisations, limited data, and information to support interventions and limited engagement with communities on inequalities.

A key theme that arose was the need to reframe the question of, 'How do we support people to engage with services?' to 'How do we adapt and design services to enable people to access them more easily?' the need for a shift in perspective across the system from seeing BAME communities as 'hard to reach groups' that need support to access the services as they are currently delivered, to considering whether it is 'hard to reach services' that need to adapt the way in which they deliver to meet the needs of all BAME communities to ensure genuine accessibility.

### The role and importance of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Organisations

Effective community engagement and the building of groups and individuals as community assets is an important element in moving forward on these issues. Black Asian and Minority Ethnic community organisations have historically been under resourced and trends in the funding and commissioning environment have put them at further disadvantage. This consistently emerged as an area requiring improvement, monitoring, and better consultation processes.

Many of the issues relate to equity and fairness of funding, recognition and co-production of solutions and sustainability. In a recent study of the impact of Covid 19 on the sector in Hertfordshire many community organisations reported that they feel as though they are living a hand-to-mouth existence, spending more time on bidding for funds than delivering in the community. At the same time, larger less well-connected organisations with superior infrastructures have then been seen to take advantage of this historical situation by winning funding and then subcontracting smaller portions of their grants to community organisations which are already struggling to become sustainable. For them to contribute in meaningful and equitable ways they believe that they should be adequately resourced and supported to do so.

### Introduction to the rationale for recommendations

In order to produce the recommendations, Commissioners spent the year participating in meetings, forums, and activities around racial inequalities in the Town, County and beyond. The evidence collected was obtained from testimonials and data provided at the Commission’s bi-monthly meetings, these meetings were held following a series of focus groups consisting of statutory representatives, conversations with policy makers, practitioners as well as individuals, and organisations from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and commissioners.

The focus groups engaged with scrutiny panels, strategic groups, national organisations, and local authorities who have set up similar initiatives to the Stevenage Equalities Commission. They conducted both desk-based research and literature reviews and devised a survey for the local community that was advertised online, through community groups and at events.

The following rationales link directly to the recommendations made by the Stevenage Equalities Commission. The table below provides details of the recommendations, partner organisations, and the rationale for the recommendation.

### Recommendations and rationales

<b>Stevenage Borough Council Specific Recommendations: Leadership – A Call to Action</b>		
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Legacy Group	<p>The Council with its partners are recommended to facilitate an independent Legacy Group that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Support the Council and its partners in sharing the Commission’s findings with Stevenage residents, key stakeholders, community groups, businesses, and wider audiences.</li> <li>•Keep the fire in the bellies of stakeholders burning to maintain the passion, energy, and momentum for change.</li> <li>•Provide external scrutiny, community accountability, and support to key stakeholders with the implementation of the recommendations</li> <li>•Facilitate the creation and constitution of a sustainable Legacy Body that will be able to attract its own funding and resources to build community assets and develop more effective mechanisms for community engagement so that they are empowered to play an equal part in co-producing culturally appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>The creation of a Legacy Group to share Commission findings and action its recommendations is key to the fulfilment of the Stevenage Equalities Commission’s ambition to advance racial equality across the community. Stevenage Borough Council has received external funding to facilitate a Legacy Group and will work with partners to progress Commission recommendations.</p>

	solutions to major issues that blight their lives.	
Political Representation	Political leaders in Stevenage are encouraged to explore opportunities to increase the numbers of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic people in political representation. The main parties to develop clear action plans with measurable targets and take proactive steps to achieve diversity in selection and election.	The commission members included local Borough/District Councillors, County Councillors and former Councillors who contributed to the focus groups and commission meetings. Their commitment to the Commission objectives, and their feedback provided as part of the discussions, indicated a clear desire to improve political representation for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic people, and this recommendation is in response to that.
Civic Leadership Programme	The Council and its partners are encouraged to develop a Civic Leadership Programme targeting underrepresented communities who are interested in standing for public roles. They can be assisted in this endeavour by tapping into established schemes run by Operation Black Vote to develop people's skills and interest in participation and standing for civic and public roles. This recommendation is relevant across the Commissions 5 priority areas where there is under representation on boards, governors, magistrates, and other leadership roles.	The commission members included local Borough/District Councillors, County Councillors and former Councillors who contributed to the focus groups and commission meetings. Their commitment to the Commission objectives, and their feedback provided as part of the discussions, indicated a clear desire to target underrepresented communities who are interested in standing for public roles, and this recommendation is in response to that.
Strengthening Community Development	Work in partnership with communities to develop strategies and plans to ensure that more grassroots minority-led and specialist, voluntary or community sector organisations are able to access the resources they need.	Representatives of SBC Community Development Team spoke about their work with partners to develop strategies and plans to ensure that more grassroots minority-led and specialist, voluntary or community sector organisations are able to access the resources they need to deliver restorative services.
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan 23/24	Integrate these recommendations Into SBC EDI Action Plans and ensure that they are reflected in the relevant portfolio holders' plans.	EDI Action Plan 23/24 includes relevant SBC recommendations, particularly the establishment of a Legacy Group which will oversee the work with partners
<b>Recommendations for Commissioners and Funders</b>		
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Review and monitor funding and distribution strategies	Commissioners/Funders are encouraged to review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The design of funding criteria – making sure it reflects the requirements of the communities they serve.</li> <li>•Consultation and co-production – making sure they are built in and helping to ensure partnership and ownership.</li> <li>•Long-term funding for community development, capacity building and innovation.</li> </ul>	A Survey conducted by Hertfordshire Equality Council during Covid into the infrastructure and support needs of BAME organisations in Stevenage indicated that statutory and VCFSE organisations continuously seek out BAME groups to be involved in consultations and engagement activities or to join forums. Unfortunately, these groups do not have the resources/capacity to respond. The Survey involved 44 organisations and 15 community activists.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Funding applications and procurement making sure processes are as accessible and inclusive as possible.</li> <li>•what support is in place to overcome barriers that may exist.</li> <li>•Bid writing and Fundraising support - providing support to community organisations.</li> </ul>	Funders and commissioners have acknowledged that capacity of groups to submit applications is an area they need to do address, some have taken proactive steps already to encourage more applications.
<b>Recommendations for the Criminal Justice System: Ensure Justice is fair for all</b>		
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
CJS partners to provide representation on the Commissions Legacy Group	The Criminal Justice System Partners are encouraged to provide representation on the Legacy Group to ensure that the recommendations identified in this report are explored.	The creation of a Legacy Group to share Commission findings and action its recommendations is key to the fulfilment of the Stevenage Equalities Commission's ambition to advance racial equality across the community. Stevenage Borough Council has received external funding to facilitate a Legacy Group and will work with partners to progress Commission recommendations.
Tackle Racial Inequalities in the Criminal Justice System	Agencies working within the Criminal Justice System, in the administration of their duties and powers, are encouraged to take action to eliminate differential treatment and processes, that result in continued discriminatory outcomes for individuals and communities of different ethnicities.	Through the focus groups commissioners gathered personal testimonies in addition to local and county wide data from - Probation, CPS, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Build Trust and Confidence with Communities	Make use of local advisory groups and ensure they are made up of diverse community groups/ individuals and representatives from all relevant organisations. In this way local issues can be discussed and data such as stop and search, sentencing trends, hate crime and implementation of the police race action plan can be scrutinised, and action plans created implemented and monitored.	Participation took place within in different forums on Hate crime, input into the Police race action plan. Trust and confidence proposed as an ongoing theme.
Training	Develop a training program for relevant organisations within the criminal justice sector encompassing racial literacy and cultural competence that is created and delivered in partnership with people from impacted communities that can be delivered throughout agencies and organisations working within the criminal justice system across the town.	Through the focus group process, a training program on racial literacy was welcomed and supported by the Chief Inspector.
Outreach work	Engage with communities to listen to concerns and develop joint solutions to address trust and confidence gaps.	Engagement from the local PCSO's & hate crime officers fed into the focus groups alongside joint participation in community events
Recruitment	Community campaigns to increase workforce diversity at different levels	Data gathered from joint community events as well as through the focus group and representation.

Recommendations for Education- Ensure that no child is left behind		
Recommendation	Details	Rationale
Education partners to provide representation on the Legacy Group:	Educations Partners are encouraged to provide representation on the Legacy Group to ensure that the recommendations identified in this report are explored.	The creation of a Legacy Group to share Commission findings and action its recommendations is key to the fulfilment of the Stevenage Equalities Commission's ambition to advance racial equality across the community. Stevenage Borough Council has received external funding to facilitate a Legacy Group and will work with partners to progress Commission recommendations.
Collect and forensically analyse data at a local level	<p>Relevant education organisations and services to collect and forensically analyse data at a local level that will give better insight into the nature of racial disparities in Stevenage schools and support the development of comprehensive strategies to address expressed areas of concern. The following areas should be given attention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How are racist incidents reported and handled in schools - numbers, and locations?</li> <li>•Emotional support for pupils and families affected by racial incidents?</li> <li>•What is the level and types of exclusions for different ethnic groups of pupils?</li> <li>•What are the patterns for managed moves and home schooling?</li> <li>•Make up of pupil referral units?</li> <li>•Who monitors trends, patterns, and facilitates sharing of good practice?</li> <li>•What is the make-up of staff and governors in our schools?</li> <li>•Inclusion and progression</li> <li>•Curriculum diversity - consider how the curriculum reflects and embeds Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities' histories.</li> <li>•The level of engagement of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic parents and carers in school forums?</li> </ul>	Through the focus groups, HCC representation at the meetings and consultations with Stevenage Education Trust (represented on the commission) there was a significant absence of local data to give further insights. Through discussion it was established that the data around BAME student's exclusion, expulsion and attendance was not captured in a way that could be easily represented as it is down to the individual schools in many cases to provide this and it is not a statutory requirement for them.
Event for Stevenage schools	Relevant education organisations and services are encouraged to create a workstream to give a longer-term focus to tackling racial disparities and be actively involved in the data collection, analysis, and strategy development.	Commissioners' experiences of their interactions with schools, other testimonies from people in the community, those in leadership roles and governors' experiences, indicated that an event would be welcomed.
Increase the diversity of staff in	Relevant education organisations and services are encouraged to explore	HFLS recruitment of specialist roles to address, curriculum and staffing issues and provide anti-racist training



leadership roles and as governors.	efforts to increase the diversity of staff in leadership roles and as governors.	
Leaders and teachers undertake training on race equality and racial literacy	Training: Relevant education organisations and services to explore the implementation of race equality and racial literacy training. To ensure that leaders and teachers are equipped with the understanding about the ways in which race and racism work in society, and to have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to implement that understanding in teaching practice.	This was identified by the chair of the Stevenage Education trust as an opportunity which would be welcomed.

### Recommendations for Sports Arts and Culture

Recommendation	Details	Rationale
Sports, Arts and Culture partners to provide representation on the Legacy Group	Continue engagement with relevant leisure, sport, culture, and arts organisations to develop action plans to increase the participation at all levels of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities in the Sporting, Artistic and Cultural life of the Town.	
Heritage project	A project that will document the contributions of the diverse communities of Stevenage since its inception. The work can be developed in partnership with local community organisations.	<p>Long history of community organisations contributing to this agenda, materials scattered in different places, knowledge and not easily accessible (people elderly or no longer with us) not showcased in prominent spaces that document the history of the Town.</p> <p>Time and resources did not allow for following up expressed needs of contributors in the Sports Arts and Leisure fields who shared their ambitions, acknowledged the gaps, and wanted input to help make their services more inclusive.</p>

### Recommendations for Business and Employment

#### Employment: SBC

Recommendation	Details	Rationale
SBC to collect race and ethnicity data about its workforce	SBC to continue drilling down into workforce data to identify BAME specific issues.	Through meetings with SBC HR, it was established that the council offers an excellent opportunity to provide guidance and support to other organisations around their equality, diversity and inclusion policies and strategies. Further work to drill down into data would enable the council to identify any underrepresentation and build on its commitment to advance equality, diversity, and inclusion across its workforce.
Independently Review Equality Impact Assessments	The council are encouraged to explore the introduction of an independent review of Equality impact Assessments on a regular basis.	Through meetings with SBC Corporate Policy & Performance Team, it was established that the council could look at offering provision for independent review as part of its continued commitment to provide transparency, which includes publication of the EqlAs publicly via its website

Undertake an audit of current race equalities data	SBC and the Legacy Group in conjunction with strategic public sector bodies and third sector organisations: Undertake an audit of current race equalities data, internal and external from partners to collect and share complete and robust data on ethnicity and other intersecting characteristics across social, health, economic and environmental factors.	SBC and Legacy Group will work with partners to identify relevant sources of data that improve our understanding of race equality issues and will seek to report against these and help shape services.
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### Business Recommendations

Recommendation	Details	Rationale
Business and Economic Partners to provide representation on the Legacy Group	Business and Economic Partners are encouraged to provide representation on the Legacy Group to ensure that the recommendations identified in this report are explored.	
Launch a Race Equality Charter for Businesses	SBC and partners are encouraged to launch a Race Equality Charter for Businesses and sign up to The Race at Work Charter or create a bespoke charter to utilise the calls for action within, to take practical steps to ensure workplaces are tackling barriers minoritised people face in, recruitment, progression, and workplace experiences. Leading by example and promote the charter to businesses, statutory and third sector organisations, contractors and suppliers of services could also provide a mechanism for bringing people together to report and share good practice.	The Charter- A call to action from SBC to others to join them and learn from one another in addressing disparities.
Build opportunities specifically designed to bolster Black Asian and Minority Ethnic businesses	SBC in conjunction with relevant business and economic support partners are encouraged to build opportunities specifically designed to bolster Black Asian and Minority Ethnic businesses who are under the local radar, including: creating spaces for local businesses and entrepreneurs to connect, networking and support groups, educational resources, mentorship programs, and financing — These activities will contribute to a supportive and healthy business ecosystem.	Focus group made up of 10 individuals running or in the process of setting up businesses in the Town. Discussions with stall holders at Stevenage International day, Stevenage day. Discussion in other forum also with past business owners.

### Recommendations for Health

Recommendation	Details	Comments
The Commissions Legacy Group:	The Commissions Legacy Group: should share the Commissions work with agencies working within the Health System, to build a level of expectation and challenge.	Funding obtained to support legacy group for 12 months

<p>Review and analysis of the local and countywide health inequalities outcomes data</p>	<p>SBC and Health partners are encouraged to carry out a thorough review and analysis of the local and countywide health inequalities outcomes data amassed since Covid and the death of George Floyd to gain a more accurate picture of the extent to which racial health disparities exist in Stevenage.</p>	<p>Specific health issues identified through the process and ongoing dialogue with service users and professionals. - Sickle Cell Anaemia, mental health, breast screening, prostate cancer, maternity services, Access issues, differential outcomes and experiences Promotional / educational /engagement activities required reach communities.</p> <p>The Commission has also been engaged in ongoing dialogue with Mental Health services to secure funding for a 1-year project to improve access treatment and outcomes in community mental health services, a wide range of professionals, service users and non-users of services have been consulted as part of this process.</p> <p>The Commission participated in the running of a six-month partnership project focusing on mental health to develop and pilot culturally appropriate services for BAME Communities in Stevenage The Commission has also been engaged in ongoing dialogue with Mental Health services to secure funding for a 1-year project to improve access treatment and outcomes in community mental health services, wide range of professionals and service users and non-users engage in yearlong process.</p>
<p>Develop strategies and action plans to address Health inequalities for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities</p>	<p>SBC and its Healthy Stevenage Partners: should continue to develop strategies and action plans to address Health inequalities for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities in partnership with those communities. The commission heard evidence that racism is a public health issue which requires a public health response, this dimension should be factored into the development of strategies.</p>	<p>SEC working with NHS Trusts and Mind around mental health aspects with funding obtained for this</p>
<p>Review of funding priorities</p>	<p>SBC and health agencies are encouraged to carry out a review of funding priorities for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities and obtain funding to develop innovative and sustainable projects to tackle inequalities.</p>	<p>SEC working with NHS Trusts and Mind around mental health aspects with funding obtained for this</p>