



The King's Fund

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PRESS RELEASE

South London charity wins top UK Health Award

South London charity **Croydon BME Forum** (CBMEF) has won a major award for its work to tackle health inequalities and improve the physical and mental health of ethnic minority communities in Croydon.

Following a rigorous selection and assessment process, CBMEF was chosen from more than 400 charities across the UK as one of the 10 winners of the **2023 GSK IMPACT Awards** which are delivered in partnership with leading health and care charity **The King's Fund**. Now in their 26th year, the awards are a mark of excellence in the charity sector, designed to recognise the outstanding work of small and medium-sized charities working to improve people's health and wellbeing in the UK. This year winners will receive £40,000 in unrestricted funding as well as expert support and leadership development provided by The King's Fund.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, CBMEF is the umbrella organisation for Croydon's Black and minority ethnic (BME) voluntary and community sector. It works to ensure local health and other public services meet the needs of this diverse community, which accounts for half of Croydon's population. The Award judges were particularly struck by the key role CBMEF has played over the past three years in developing services to address racial inequalities in access and experience of mental health care. This includes setting up mental health and wellbeing 'hubs' in a shopping centre in response to local people saying they had 'nowhere to go' when they had mental health and wellbeing needs.

The award win comes at a time when many local charities find themselves working in a uniquely challenging environment. The long-term consequences of Covid and the current cost-of-living crisis are having a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of many local communities, public services are under additional pressure, and charity finances have been hit hard. Despite this, through strong partnerships with local NHS services and commissioners, CBMEF has continued to innovate and rapidly expand its core services to play an even greater role in supporting its community.

Working with the local commissioner of health and care services – South West London Integrated Care Board – and the South London and the Maudsley Mental Health Trust, the charity responded to local people saying there was a lack of accessible services. In January 2022, CBMEF set up the Croydon Health and Wellbeing Space (CHWS) in The Whitgift shopping centre in the centre of Croydon. Intended to reduce the stigma that may prevent people from seeking mental health support, and designed to not look like an NHS facility, this mental health hub offers psychological support to prevent deterioration in people's mental health and alleviate crises. In the first year since opening, the CHWS received 475 self-referrals and 300 referrals from health care providers including GPs, with feedback showing 100 per cent of those felt the advice they received was helpful and that they had improved their health.

Two further Croydon hub spaces are planned to open in 2024 and 2025 and CBMEF runs a Wellness Centre in the same shopping centre, offering a range of drop in health, wellbeing, and advocacy services to keep local people well. These include everything from employment advice and fuel poverty support to physical health checks or chess and afternoon tea sessions to tackle loneliness.

The charity also works in partnership with the local Croydon Mind charity, offering mental health support across 58 GP surgeries, and used its main office as a Covid vaccination centre to increase take up of vaccines, which were lower in its community.

Its partnerships and reach impressed the Award judges, including working with Croydon's Asian Resource Centre to provide education and support for managing long term conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and respiratory disease, which are more prevalent in BME communities. It also leads a national partnership delivering online sessions with Black GPs and Senior Consultants on issues such as diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure.

Lisa Weaks, Senior Associate at The King's Fund, said: "Croydon BME Forum demonstrates a strong commitment to improving the mental and physical health of ethnic minority communities in Croydon, working to improve access to services, challenge stigma and reduce stark health inequalities. The judges were particularly impressed with CBMEF's determination to find innovative ways to target services in the heart of the community, for example by opening a mental health and wellbeing hub in a local shopping centre. We were also impressed by the strength of the charity's local partnerships and integrated approach to designing support services, which has contributed to their rapid growth over the past two years."

Commenting on the award, **Andrew Brown, CEO of Croydon BME Forum**, said: "It's a great pleasure to accept this award on behalf of Croydon BME Forum. Over the past three years our staff, partners and funders have come together to form an initiative that has supported our communities during a time of their greatest need."

The 2023 GSK IMPACT Award recognises Croydon BME's significant impact on improving the health and wellbeing of the local BME community, its commitment to tackling inequalities in the prevalence of mental and physical ill health in that community. Developing leaders in the charity sector is a key aim of the GSK IMPACT Awards programme and all winners are invited to build on their success and take part in a tailored leadership development programme run by The King's Fund.

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Notes to editors

Photos, interviews and case studies are available upon request. For further information please contact Gemma Umali, Senior Press and Public Affairs Manager at The King's Fund on 07584 146035 or g.umali@kingsfund.org.uk

For more information about Croydon BME Forum, visit: www.cbmeforum.org

GSK IMPACT Awards

- The GSK IMPACT Awards, run in partnership with The King's Fund, are designed to recognise the outstanding work of community-based health care charities. For more information visit www.gsk.com/en-gb/responsibility/charitable-partnerships/#UKpartnerships

- The awards are open to small and medium-sized charities working in health and wellbeing with an annual income between £120,000 and £3 million that are at least three years old. The 2024 GSK IMPACT Awards will open for applications on Monday 3 July 2023. For more information and to apply visit www.kingsfund.org.uk/gskimpactawards.
- This year £430,000 in unrestricted prize money will be awarded to UK charities through the GSK IMPACT Awards. Five runners up will receive £4,000 each. Ten winners will each receive £40,000 in unrestricted funding, film assets, a set of promotional photographs of their services, as well as access to training and development activities estimated to be worth £9,500. At the award ceremony at The King's Fund in London on 18 May, an overall winner will be announced, and they will receive an extra £10,000, making a total of £50,000. The ten winning charities are also invited to join the GSK IMPACT Awards Network, a UK-wide network of more than 110 previous award winners who work together to develop leaders, find new ways of working and provide mutual support.
- The 2023 winners went through a rigorous assessment, including a half-day in-depth discussion with an independent assessor, and were selected by a judging panel of health and charity experts.
- Since its inception in 1997, over 530 health and wellbeing charities have received a GSK IMPACT Award and funding totalling more than £8.1 million.

GSK is a global biopharma company with a purpose to unite science, technology, and talent to get ahead of disease together. Find out more at gsk.com/company

The King's Fund is an independent charity working to improve health and care in England. It helps to shape policy and practice through research and analysis; developing individuals, teams, and organisations; promoting understanding of the health and social care system; and bringing people together to learn, share knowledge and debate. Its vision is that the best possible health and care is available to all. For further information visit www.kingsfund.org.uk

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