

BLACK CARIBBEAN MAPPING REPORT IN TOWER HAMLETS

1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 The Newham African Caribbean Resource Centre is carrying out this mapping exercise on behalf of Tower Hamlets Council's Public Health.
- 1.2 The London Borough of Tower Hamlets commissioned The Newham African Caribbean Resource Centre, an experienced community organisation, working in collaboration with Rights & Equalities in Newham and African Youth Organisation, to deliver a programme of community outreach, engagement and support that ensures Black Caribbean community members living, learning and working in Tower Hamlets are fully engaged in the prevention of Covid-19, including but not exclusively its NHS vaccination programme, NHS Test and Trace and Covid-19 prevention and protection messages and future national campaigns.
- 1.21 The commission is needed to ensure that the Black Caribbean community in Tower Hamlets are actively communicated to clearly, and are enabled to fully engage in Covid-19 prevention and protection programmes, receive accurate and timely information and are supported to access services to enable them to live safe and healthy lives in Tower Hamlets.

2.0 Aim & Objectives:

- 2.1 The overarching aim of the mapping exercise is to enable a more targeted approach to identify and locate the areas where the Black Caribbean population resides, work or study.
- 2.2 In view of this exercise, the mapping will be instrumental to identify where the Black Caribbean population live, have their businesses, worship, do their shopping and socialise, etc., both within and outside the Borough.
- 2.3 The mapping will be a pointer that will direct the Engagement workers to specific locations that enables culturally appropriate targeted engagement, thereby saving time, resources thus enhancing efficiency and effectiveness.
- 2.4 In an attempt to fully understand the importance of the mapping, the context is to help locate and identify the areas of potential engagement that this mapping exercise seeks to serve with a view to meeting our overall objectives. The mapping has also taken into cognisance the history of the development of the Black Caribbean Community in Tower Hamlets as well as the gaining of some insights during the targeted engagement to assist LBTH in their future policy direction.

3.0 Context: The mapping exercise is based on 2 distinctive factors, which are historical and geographical:

3.1 Historical Perspective:

- 3.11 Before World War Two, there was a relatively small Afro-Caribbean Community in the Metropolitan Borough of Stepney (created in 1900) as part of the County of London in 1965. It became part of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, mostly occupying the area around Golden Street, Greenfield Street and Cable Street. The majority of this Community were men who had come to England aboard trading Ships.

- 3.12 When huge swathes of the population were mobilised for the Army and hundreds of civilians were evacuated, the population of Stepney fell from 200,000 to 60,000 (Afro-Caribbean Community in post war Stepney, The Coloured Quarter , M. P. Banton, 1955). The availability of unoccupied housing coincided with revival of the shipping industry and a gradually increasing influx of Afro-Caribbean Seamen.
- 3.13 Many Seamen only stayed for the duration of their shore leave but an increasing number stayed to seek employment.
- 3.14 As WW2 came to an end and hostility ceased, many were left jobless in their own Countries. As British subjects, West Indians and West African thought they would be welcomed in Britain.
- 3.15 In July 1942, the Colonial Office had opened a hostel in Leman Street that provided recreational facilities for the Afro-Caribbean Community and sleeping accommodation for 13 Seamen. Officially, this was a seamen hostel, but in reality the residents were often Shore Workers.
- 3.16 The Afro-Caribbeans who opted to stay in England, mostly Seamen, are stowaways by all account were chiefly males. Naturally, they chose to settle in the Cable Street district where others had before them. This part of war-torn Stepney was an impoverished and working class neighbourhood, the houses, mainly afflicted by bomb damage were neither comfortable nor clean.

3.20 Geographical:

- 3.21 Historically, residents from black ethnic groups make up 7% of the population in Tower Hamlets, comprising 4% from Black African groups and 2% from Black Caribbean group.
- 3.22 Population by ethnic group, 2001 and 2011 compared, Tower Hamlets, put the Black Caribbean population at 5,341. Change between 2001 and 2011 put the Black Caribbean population at 116, which represents 2% (ethnicity in Tower Hamlets, 2011 Census data).
- 3.23 Over the years, the Black Caribbean population in Tower Hamlets has significantly reduced due to urban migration or relocation to neighbouring Boroughs.
- 3.24 From the data analysis carried out, the Black Caribbean Community can be found mainly around Bow, Poplar, and the borders of Newham and Hackney. There are also a good number of Black Caribbean people living around Roman Road, Bow Common Lane & Poplar.
- 3.25 Similarly, our research shows that areas around Commercial Road, Limehouse, Spitafields, Brick Lane, Whitechapel High Street and Aldgate East do not have many Black Caribbean residing there but there are a few businesses owned by Black Caribbean people and others patronised by them.

4.0 Conclusion:

In conclusion, the mapping exercise will be a live working document that will evolve with time as we navigate the identified targeted areas of engagement in Tower Hamlets.