

Race Equality Commission

Zest Evidence Submission

21st June 2021

Hearing Date: 29th June 2021

Key Points summary:

IN terms of addressing racism and racial inequality. based on experience from 21 years of Zest supporting and enabling local community development, indicates that in Sheffield:

1. There are good examples of enabling approaches and partnerships that build capacity in black led organisations.
2. There are good examples in the city of community led projects that respond to, involve and reach black communities.
3. Stark racial inequalities remain and there is a 'map echo' across a series of deprivation indicators where black communities are most prevalent.
4. There have been missed opportunities to address racial inequality through the effective resourcing and empowerment of black led organisations.
5. Not enough action has been taken to ensure effective representation of black communities at a city strategic leadership. local area leadership and organisational leadership level i.e. in positions of power and influence.
6. Not enough has been done to empower and 'build capacity' within black led organisations to enable them to play a more active role in leading and supporting change on their own communities, including addressing racism and racial inequality.

That to make a change will not only require good will, but:

- a. An effectively resourced SMART framework of commitments at different levels (and settings) from front line service delivery up to city leadership level
- b. Redistribution of resources to the areas (and institutions) demonstrating the greatest need and best placed to meet the needs of the black community.
- c. Specific race awareness raising training for employees and wider community to help develop a shared understanding of racial injustice.
- d. Training and mentoring support for potential black leaders and community representatives.
- e. Capacity building support for black-led organisations to improve their ability to develop, deliver and manage resources and services.
- f. Developing social (race) impact, partnership based 'design with' commissioning for community-based service delivery, rather than 'best dressed wins'.
- g. That the burden of change and action does not sit with black people. Ambassadors and agents for change need to reflect all walks of life in our city.
- h. Related to this, key anchor institutions and employers both public and private need to demonstrate leadership in talking racism and racial inequality.

Introduction

This submission aims to provide a perspective on race inequality and racism through the organisational lens of Zest, in terms of its formation and development over the last 20 years. Including reflections on good practice and areas for focus and improvement, including missed opportunities. This can be seen in terms of Zest's role as a:

- Local advocate and service provider
- City wide funding partner/ partnership lead
- Community sector leader

Finally, brief reflections on current steps we are taking as an organisation to ensure effective commitment and action from bottom to top.

Zest Evolution and Area based Regeneration Legacy

Zest is a local charity providing a range of responsive local community services with a mission to enable everyone in our communities to lead successful and healthy lives. www.zestcommunity.co.uk

Zest has a local membership base made up of local residents and service users. The Board of Trustees is made up of 50% local member Trustees. 27% of the current membership are from an ethnic minority background and 25% of the current Board are from an ethnic minority background.

In the decade up to 2017, the organisation was chaired by local Yemeni leader and, at the time YAFA chair, Abdul Abdulrub, reflecting the large Yemeni community residing in the Netherthorpe and Uppertorpe area, and helping to oversee a key period of change and development for the organisation and community.

Netherthorpe & Uppertorpe Community Alliance (NUCA) (now trading as Zest) is a local was formed in 1998 by local residents to provide a voice for local people, frustrated by the paternalistic, top down, housing led regeneration that was taking place in an inner-city area, experiencing significant social change and challenge

URBAN European funding allowed the community to create a structure to ensure effective community participation, and hence NUCA was born and with it, a drive to create a community centred regeneration programme to drive economic and social change.

NUCA undertook extensive community consultation which culminated in 2000, in a successful bid to Government and EU for a 5 year £15m regeneration programme focussed on improving the economic and social prospects of the area. NUCA was appointed as one of the first community-led accountable bodies in the country. The neighbourhoods of focus were in namely Netherthorpe, Uppertorpe & Langsett.

Atkins SRB6 & Objective 1 Final Evaluation Report February 2006 conclusions and recommendations:

- NUCA effectively managed two different funding pots. This was a complex undertaking, however, NUCA managed the process in an accountable and effective manner by presenting it in a straightforward way to encourage and enable local community organisations to access grant funding.
- NUCA had strong leadership and appointed motivated and technically competent development staff. NUCA should be praised for the performance achieved against stated expenditure and output targets.

- The involvement of local people from beginning to end was the fundamental ingredient to the success of the Programme.
- The study of local demographics helped to identify local priorities from the outset. The board members and key stakeholders were unanimous in the opinion that the focus for neighbourhood renewal was correct. Local people consulted were overwhelmingly positive about the changes brought about. This early study helped to accurately pin point areas to target investment.
- NUCA negotiated mainstream services to be delivered in a way to best suit the needs of local people rather than accepting a standardised approach used elsewhere in the city.

Reflections:

Zest were able to provide an independent voice that united different sections of the community.

There were some important lessons centred on investing in local community infrastructure in order to both develop skills and expertise, but also to develop an asset base and with it potential to generate alternative forms of income to support sustainability and ensure a lasting shift of power and resource to the community.

There was effective reach to ensure the ethnic minority community benefited from improved access to training, employment, and improved access to services and support, in particular for young people.

In terms of investment, there was a small scale, 'community chest' type investment to support smaller, black led organisations. This did help with some capacity building and in providing more tailored provision, but it was not concerted investment and did not create a lasting legacy for local black led organisations such as YAFA.

It was recognised, as part of the evaluation stakeholder feedback, that a more targeted and coordinated approach to 'regeneration' was required for the ethnic minority community.

Whilst there were good examples of services to address local race inequalities, such as the flagship healthy living centre with tailored physical activity services (for example, sessions developed with and for Muslim women) there wasn't a clear plan or strategy to improve representation, or to develop the capacity and leadership potential of black people and organisations.

At the time, it was close to impossible to imagine the scale of central Government disinvestment that would follow. On that basis, this 'one off' large scale investment in this area and in others across the city, could be viewed collectively as a missed opportunity to address issues of race inequality. That this was the beginning of the end for centrally (well) funded, targeted, area-based regeneration programmes.

Area Based Regeneration: A Missed Opportunity

Although a neighbouring area, it would be remiss not to touch on Burngreave New Deal Programme, providing a baseline investment of £52m over ten years, to the end of 2010.

On the Uppertorpe patch a clear, consensus based, community legacy and leadership model emerged in the form of Zest. There will be many who know more, but what I can say is that Burngreave New Deal has to be seen as a significant missed opportunity for addressing race inequality.

There was investment in many strong and well established black led organisations, in new organisations and projects to support and enable the most diverse community in the city. Some of these organisations have gone on and evolved into key local anchor organisations, **but** New Deal did not focus enough on developing a community owned asset base in local community infrastructure and enabling black leadership. The reasons may be many, but it is important to acknowledge that more could have been done to create the conditions for longer term local system change, given the scale and timeline of investment.

Community Anchor and provider of local services

The legacy of the initial investment in the Uppertorpe & Netherthorpe patch, was the evolution of Zest into a local service provider. Zest were able to retain staff skills and knowledge and utilise this both locally and to enable city wide partnerships to develop (see next section)

Today Zest provides a core set of local neighbourhood services, hosts a leisure offer and provides specialist city wide health services.

There has been effective engagement and reach to reflect the specific needs of the local ethnic minority population. Some examples from recent delivery include:

During 2019/20,20,

- signing up 527 new leisure members, 39% of whom were from the ethnic minority community, reflecting our tailored women only offer, which includes a women only gym and women only swim sessions, attracting people from across the city.
- Engaging parents through our Empowering Parents Programme, supporting 25 parent volunteers, 72% of whom were from ethnic minority backgrounds and engaging with 139 parents, 60% of whom were from EM backgrounds.
- Of our 298 local adult learners, 32% were from an ethnic minority background.
- Of the 120 young people accessing our youth club provision, 80% were from an EM background

During 2020/21

- Of the 1000 people accessing our holiday, term time and online community support activity, 68% were from an ethnic minority background.

Reflections

Zest still has strides to make to improve representation and progression for the black community, which requires further consultation, commitment and resource. This is referred to in the last section of the submission.

Zest has been successful at diversifying its offer in order to aid sustainability, for example, growing its employment support offer when investment was available and latterly its local health offer, as investment shifted accordingly.

This can come at a price as focus turns to delivering outputs and hitting targets to meet payment by results quotas. A decade of disinvestment by central and local government has seen a complete decimation of local community development support both locally and city wide. An 80% reduction in subsidy for our Centre, which led to our reserves being reduced to the bone.

This in turn, limits our ability to target our efforts to address emerging and more complex need.

It is only recent success with the National Lottery and Children in Need that has seen some resurgence in our ability to reach out and engage with the local community, outside the narrower confines of direct service engagement. The benefits of being able to get back out on our estates and enable new activities and connections are significant

This, in turn, means more fire-fighting and limited ability to step back and invest in development, including strengthening governance and investing in the workforce, for example, in training and allowing time to build bridges in the community.

We have retained a strong relationship with YAFA, but would like to do more to enable them to develop more independence. We provide rent free premises, support funding applications and adapt provision to meet specific needs, and have a healthy Yemeni membership, which is welcome, but more focused resource and effort could strengthen ties and help develop skills and capacity within the local Yemeni community.

City Wide Service Funding Partnerships

A key area of focus is the city-wide funding partnership picture.

The first point of note, is to recognise the legacy from the areas based regeneration investment, which allowed Zest to utilise its programme management skills and track record to play a led role in collaboration and developing new ways of working for the sector.

Examples of note:

a. Zest Local Employment Partnership

In spite of restrictions in scale of funding, Zest built a long-standing, equitable partnership with a group of smaller community sector organisations, who were all best placed to serve the needs of their community. In this case the diverse communities of Burngreave, Darnall and Sharrow. We stood alone in taking this enabling approach. We worked with Darnall Forum., Tinsley Forum, Burngreave Works and Sharrow Community Forum to support the long term unemployed, with Zest leading the management and monitoring of the contract, and the local partners leading on local delivery, supporting a majority ethnic minority community base. This worked well and resource available allowed full cost recovery for all partners and allowed the said organisations to develop and grow.

SCC recognised the value of the partnership and did work to support whilst resources were available. This learning needs to be captured.

b. Youth Consortium Sheffield (YCS) circa 2010

The YCS was set up by a number of voluntary sector partners to provide a single, coherent vehicle for securing funding for youth related activities. A Memorandum of Understanding set out the role of an elected strategic group (100% VCS sector), and the lead body (Zest) to manage the funding, utilising our skills and track record in managing funding programmes, including sub-contracting.

Sheffield City Council endorsed the YCS and we were able to secure Positive Activities for Young People funding of circa £500k-£1m per annum for a handful of years. A simple application process was put in place and a wide range of VCS sector organisations were able to apply and receive funding, with light touch monitoring of numbers and activities. This included black led organisation and organisations serving ethnic minority communities.

The YCS had a good reputation for advocating on behalf of smaller organisations and helping organisations to build capacity with direct financial support. Unfortunately, once local funding cuts were made to youth services, the YCS was no longer viable, impacting on the viability and reach of all organisations involved

The strategic group would have benefited from better representation from black led organisations and did not do enough to enable this.

c. Sheffield Youth: Neighbourhoods & Communities

This newly formed partnership is centred on talking youth exploitation from the ground up and has secured its first tranche of funding. Zest was a founding partner alongside VAS, MCDT, Sharrow Community Forum, Men Up North, Yorkshire Sport. Pitsmoor Adventure Playground and Unity Gym, driven by the vision of Lloyd Samuels and endorsed by SCC, the VRU and Lord Lieutenant name a few.

The partnership will be a “hub and spoke” model, consisting of a central hub team providing support to community-based area teams that work directly with young people and members of the community, building capacity, skills and expertise through SY-NC programmes and by bringing in relevant providers to fill gaps in provision.

It is early days, but in learning lessons from the prior consortia arrangements the following points are worthy of note:

- Black leadership, insight and perspective have been key in developing a model that will enable system change.
- SYNC has been co-produced with communities and organisations most impacted by exploitation, which includes the most diverse areas and communities in the city.
- The steering group appointment process will help ensure openness, integrity, transparency and effective representation.
- The programme itself sets out the aim to develop future workforce and leaders FROM within our communities.
- Multi sector leadership, involvement and buy-in has been key factor in ensuring the model gained traction

It is worth noting the impact of Covid-19 captured in the SYNC funding submission to the National Lottery which I have included at Schedule 1. The points made are very much issues that are having an uneven impact on young people and families in black communities.

Community Sector Leadership, Voice & Influence

There are a lot of potential aspects to focus on, but in summary, until recently not enough resource has been committed or action taken to ensure effective race representation within VCS leadership structures and therefore crucial voices and perspectives have not been heard or valued.

Recent work, catalysed by Black Lives Matter and the emerging Covid support networks, have made some welcome in-roads, but we are at the start of a long journey.

For example, Zest worked with the 'BAMER 5' Partnership and existing members of the former VCS Leadership Group to effectively 'rip it up and start again'. A new, more representative VCS Leaders Group, co-founded and co-designed with black-led organisations, has emerged and is starting to work effectively to drive change.

At a more informal level, 'generous partnership' remains a fundamental approach for Zest and in my role as Chief Executive, I am working to engage directly with black leaders to explore new way of working, new opportunities, peer support, insight and to ensure mutual learning. This includes direct dialogue with community leaders at ACT, ISRAAC and Firvale Community Hub.

Current Organisational Action on Race

In partnership with staff, trustees and members Zest are in the process of developing a Equalities Framework with Commitments at the following levels: Trustees. Staff. Community. Service. Sector.

This will include:

- reference to emerging Codes of Practice;
- agreeing baselines – where are we now?
- agreeing objectives/ goals/ commitments – where do we want to be?
- agreeing how we get there: Providing a sense of 'Now, Soon and Later' actions and commitments as shaped by staff, trustees and our wider stakeholders/ membership and backed by resource.

Areas of focus and commitment are likely to include (to be shaped by further consultation)

Staff Engagement & Voice/ Development of a Staff Forum

Training

Representation

Recruitment systems

Reporting systems

Events

Role of Race Ambassadors

Role of Young people in organisation and community

Schedule 1 SY-NC Funding Submission extract/ Covid-19 impact

SY-NC partners initially came together in October 2018 to take a collective problem-solving approach to young people we saw being exploited in our neighbourhoods. Over the course of the last 2 years and with the support of a National Lottery development grant, we have formed a diverse steering group which currently includes the following:

Lead organisation:

Voluntary Action Sheffield

Community anchor organisations:

Manor and Castle Development Trust
Sharrow Community Forum
Tinsley Forum
Zest

Invitations to join the steering group are being extended to ethnic minority led VCF organisations in Sheffield.

Statutory organisations/services:

Abtissam Mohamed, Sheffield City Council (SCC) Cabinet Lead for Education and Skills
Angela Greenwood, Violence Reduction Unit
Amy Cooper, Lord Lieutenant's Office
Simon Mitchell, Operation Fortify/Sheffield City Council SCC
Scott Burnside, headteacher, Chaucer School
Ema Peebles, Sheffield City Council SCC Multi-Agency Support Team

Specialist expertise:

Angga Kara, Men Up North
Shelly MacDonald, formerly of Together Women

Project staff:

Lloyd Samuels, Zest (Project Lead and founder)
Fran Belbin, Pitsmoor Adventure Playground (Project Co-ordinator)

The partnership is thus community-led, with excellent connections with statutory agencies to ensure a ~~joined up~~ joined-up approach which is ~~be~~ responsive to community needs. The roles of the partners will be:

Lead organisation: accountable body, fund holder, partnership management.

Community anchor organisations: provision of expertise and knowledge of working with local communities; host organisations for area teams will also be invited to join the steering group through a selection process. The community anchors bring a wealth of intelligence about local needs, as well as long lasting and trusted relationships with their communities.

Statutory organisations: provision of expertise and knowledge of systemwide approaches to working with children, young people and families. Statutory organisations are keen to take a more joined up approach to problem solving, using all the assets in communities.

Specialist expertise: around, for example, gender, mental health, entrepreneurship.

The impact of Covid-19

Our partnership ~~first came together~~ application was originally written prior to the Covid-19 crisis. The pandemic has obviously had a huge impact socially and economically which is being felt by ~~on the lives of~~ children and young people, ~~for by~~ the organisations involved with the application, and ~~for by~~ the city as a whole. Having reflected on ~~this~~ these impact and the significant changes to the environment in which we are working ~~impacts~~, the steering group ~~partnership~~ considers the SY-NC project to be more important than ever. ~~and that~~ The overall shape of the proposed model still fits

well with the changing circumstances, and the strong community-based response to Covid-19 we have seen in the city. We recognise that Covid-19 brings particular and additional challenges for the people and groups we aim to work with – it has exacerbated and deepened the social, health, economic and educational inequalities across our city; it makes the life chances for young people in our communities worse rather than better. But it also offers additional opportunities for system change, to be a positive disrupter in the “reset” of the city’s economic and social recovery activity, if we choose to take that option. To do so requires generous leadership, and the opportunity to showcase “another way” such as that offered through SY-NC.

Key changes and their impact challenges for children, young people and families arising from the pandemic, and how SY-NC can support them to face those challenges, are summarised. These are summarised in the following tables below:-

Impact of Covid-19 on children, young people and families (CYP)

What’s changed	Impact on of SY-NC project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact <u>Negative impact</u> on physical and mental health of decreased physical activity • <u>Negative</u> h impact on mental health – reduced time with friends/family – lack of social interaction, <u>increased fear for the future</u> • Impact on mental health – quarantine anxiety/depression – related to fear of Covid-19 • Increasing numbers affected by loss and bereavement • Criminalisation of socialising – <u>CYP/adults</u> who aren’t following Covid-19 guidance • Impact of increasing poverty in families – <u>rise in unemployment</u>, food insecurity, families going without essentials • Loss of structure and routine • Increasing <u>and more visible</u> domestic violence • Increasing substance misuse • Increasing self-harm • Digital <u>divide</u> <u>inequality/lack of access</u> • Some CYP spending more time on screens / devices – impact on health & wellbeing • Some families who don’t have devices/can’t afford data – difficulty accessing services • <u>Greater</u> h impact of school closures <u>without access to digital technology or support at home</u> - gap in their education that is difficult to fill • Impact of school closures – absence of gateway to safeguarding/other services 	<p>Safeguarding/trauma informed training for youth and community workers that covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health – anxiety/depression • Bereavement/loss • Trauma responses – domestic violence/substance misuse/self-harm • Criminal/sexual exploitation • Covid-19 awareness • Protocols for responding to incidents / ongoing situations – links to other services, safeguarding <p>Partnership with schools, supporting the recovery curriculum to develop children’s “mental wealth” built on 5 levers¹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships • Community • Transparent curriculum • Metacognition • Space <p>Community development focusing on emerging needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food / clothes / essentials projects • Opportunities to socialise/work in a safe environment - community spaces • Addressing digital divide • Income maximisation • Community leadership <p>Skills development for CYP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship/micro-enterprise • Creative industries

¹ <https://barrycarpentereducation.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/loss-and-recovery-think-piece-1.pdf>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impending recession: employment opportunities for YP will not keep up with demand – adults going for entry level jobs (Kickstart not enough) Increasing exploitation – existing poverty and lack of opportunity to learn/earn makes CYP more vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to emerging SCCC/Sheffield City Region (SCR) skills agenda
--	---

Formatted: Normal, Bulleted + Level: 1 + Aligned at: 0 cm + Indent at: 0.63 cm

Impact of Covid-19 on community-based workers and organisations

<i>What's changed</i>	<i>Impact on of SY-NC project</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing demand Increasingly complex needs Financial insecurity Changed operating environment – small groups, remote provision Covid fatigue 	<p>Increased resource for community sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More resource to meet demand – boots on the ground Resource focused on capacity building within communities – community empowerment and support for local organisations Training to address complex needs

Formatted: Normal, Bulleted + Level: 1 + Aligned at: 0.63 cm + Indent at: 1.27 cm, Tab stops: Not at 1.27

Opportunities for joined-up working and system change within Sheffield's economic and social recovery

<i>What's changed</i>	<i>Impact en/for of SY-NC project</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased recognition of value/reach of VCF sector Increased representation at citywide strategic level Better partnership-collaborative relationship with SCC – cross-sector working group CIRV², SCYFC³, citizen hubs⁴ initiatives SCC initiatives around local area partnership working 	<p>Increased influence for community sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More opportunities to influence / join up citywide strategy More opportunities to deliver focused activities (e.g. SCYFC for physical activity) Additional support for CYP subject to criminal/sexual exploitation (CIRV) More ways for CYP to engage with citizenship activities (citizens hubs local area partnerships)

Formatted: Normal, Bulleted + Level: 1 + Aligned at: 0.63 cm + Indent at: 1.27 cm, Tab stops: Not at 1.27

The VCF sector has played a central role in Sheffield's response to Covid-19 – a summary of our [initial response activity](#) as at June 2020 can be found at <https://www.vas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID19-VCS-report.pdf>. The sector is ~~now~~ acknowledged as having considerably more reach into communities – particularly amongst young people and [Black and Ethnic Minority communities](#) ~~communities of colour~~ [ethnic minorities](#) – than the Council's community response teams. ~~As a result~~ ~~Representatives of the sector~~ ~~are now contribute to~~ ~~involved in a range~~

Commented [MD1]: check with Lloyd - he is very clear we shouldn't use BAME

² Community Initiative to Reduce Violence – Violence Reduction Unit project proposal

³ Sheffield Children, Youth and Families Consortium proposal

⁴ [Citizen Hubs local democracy project](#)

number of strategic boards (e.g. including the [Outbreak Control Board](#), [Accountable Care Partnership](#), [Sheffield Partnership Board](#)) that are not only responding to the immediate crisis but beginning to plan for recovery. [The VCS drove strategic decisions on a number of issues through the pandemic, for example support for vulnerable people.](#)