



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **CAHN set to relaunch co-designed domestic abuse panel after securing further funding from Manchester City Council**

This autumn, the Caribbean & African Health Network (CAHN) is pleased to announce that its groundbreaking project centred on improving domestic abuse services in Manchester, will continue until 2026. Formerly operating under the name 'Victim's Voice', the project will now be known as the 'Empowered Voices Panel'.

Commissioned by Manchester City Council (MCC), the Empowered Voices Panel began in 2023 as a co-designed response to the urgent yet stigmatised crisis which indiscriminately affects 1 in 5 adults across the UK. Last year alone, Greater Manchester Police handled over 67,500 reports of domestic abuse in the region.

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) considers 'domestic abuse' to cover:

*Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.*

The terms 'domestic violence' and 'domestic abuse' are used interchangeably to refer not only to physical abuse, but also psychological, emotional, sexual and financial abuse. Faith communities may add another category: spiritual abuse.

Domestic violence is a grave issue with far-reaching impacts on families, children and society at large. A multi-disciplinary approach, cross-cultural thinking and the input of those with lived experience are required to truly address the heart of the issue. In continuing their strategic partnership, CAHN and Manchester City Council intend to draw upon the community-centred model of the Caribbean & African Health Network together with the collective resources of MCC in an effort to apply these principles to the sobering matter at hand.

The Empowered Voices Panel aims to bring together survivors of various backgrounds to discuss domestic abuse and sexual violence in a safe and supportive space, where key figures involved in their care are also present – such as police officers and social workers. Panel members are encouraged to air their concerns and suggestions, with the data gathered consequently used to inform decision-making. The project's overall objective remains to foster a more inclusive and user-friendly service for victims in crisis as well as those in recovery.

The Chief Executive of the Caribbean & African Health Network, Charles Kwaku-Odoi DL, states: **"We are privileged to have been commissioned by Manchester City Council to continue our collaborative work on the Empowered Voices Panel for an additional two years. By bringing together domestic abuse survivors and local authority representatives, we are creating a space for authentic and impactful conversations that will drive meaningful change in the delivery of support services for victims of domestic abuse.**

**"We are grateful to the panel members who have answered our call to be part of these dialogues: with their brave honesty, they are helping us transform domestic abuse services in Manchester, one conversation at a time."**

Councillor Joanna Midgley, Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council says: "**Domestic violence can be a life-changing ordeal for its victims, leaving lasting scars that remain well after the abuse has ended. As a Council it is vital we use our voice and resources to provide support and understanding for people who experience it.**

"**I am proud that CAHN will continue this important work in partnership with the Council, providing their much-needed experience and valued insight as we work together to end domestic abuse.**"

The newly recommissioned Empowered Voices Panel recommenced monthly engagements on 17<sup>th</sup> October. In addition to collaborating on panel meetings, CAHN and Manchester City Council look forward to organising events designed to better sensitise the public to domestic violence and sexual abuse.

To find out more about the Empowered Voices Panel, please email: [dvsa@cahn.org.uk](mailto:dvsa@cahn.org.uk).

**-ENDS-**

For further information or collaboration opportunities, please contact: [mediaenquiries@cahn.org.uk](mailto:mediaenquiries@cahn.org.uk)

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### **About CAHN**

CAHN is a Black-led organisation set up to address health inequalities affecting people of Caribbean and African descent in the UK. Working with community groups, faith networks and cross-sector organisations, CAHN leads on strategic engagement to ensure that the voices and experiences of Black people are placed at the heart of public policy and practice.

CAHN's **vision** is to eradicate health inequalities within a generation by building community resilience and a social movement.

Our **mission** is to ensure that strategic and operational actions of service providers across health and cross-sector agencies and commissioners, lead to racial and social justice for Black people.

### **CAHN Website and Social Handles**

**Website:** [www.cahn.org.uk](http://www.cahn.org.uk)

**X:** @cahn\_uk

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