

Community Voices Group April to October 2024 Report



Bridging Change



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The Hangleton & Knoll Project
Working for a better community



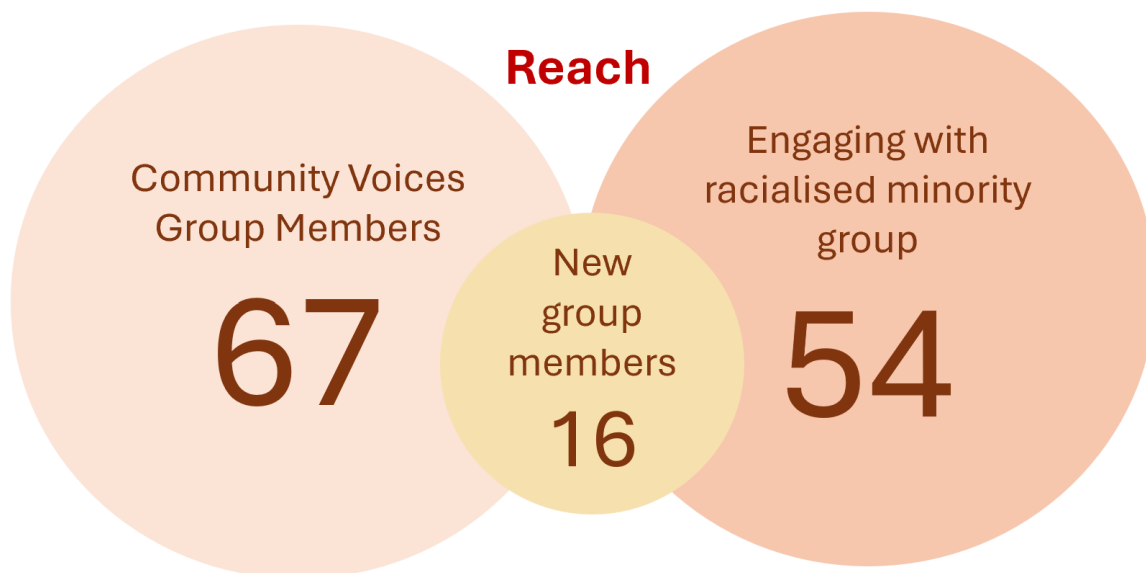
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Background to work

The Community Voices Group takes an innovative approach to ensure that the voices of racialised minorities communities can have a direct impact on challenging health inequalities. We work to bring commissioners and decision makers together to talk directly with members of communities impacted by issues, providing new insight for commissioners and empowering community members. The Community Voices Group is delivered by a partnership between Bridging Change, Hangleton and Knoll Project and Sussex Interpreting Services.

Together, Bridging Change, Hangleton and Knoll Project and Sussex Interpreting Services work together to produce joint monitoring and evaluation of engagement activity for statutory commissioners. Partners work with diverse communities across the city including some of the most economically deprived neighbourhoods. 19.5% of the city's population is from Black racialised minority (BRM) communities, 15.1% of household have multiple ethnicities and 4.9% of households have no member who speaks English as their first language. The 2021 Census 26% who did not identify as White British, 27% multi-ethnic households, 9.1% English not their first language (13% of which cannot speak English well).



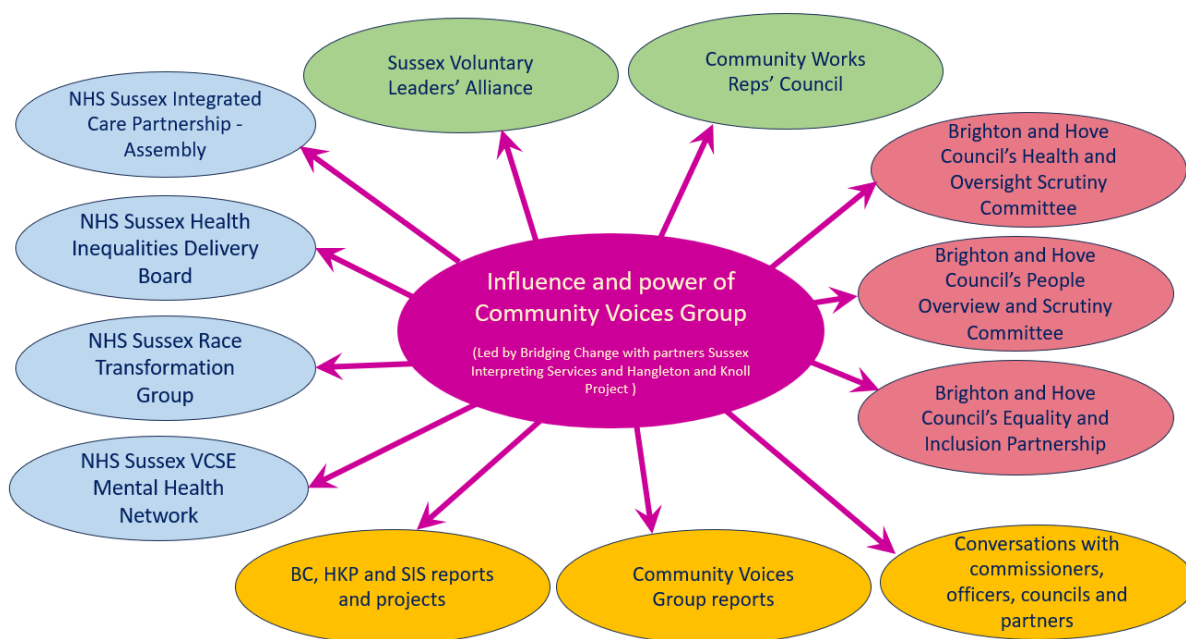
CVG is promoted through WhatsApp, LinkedIn, X and Facebook by partner organisations

CVG is promoted in the following forums:

- B&H Refugee and Migrant Forum,
- SoS Migrant Support Group,
- VCSE Ethnically Diverse,
- Engagement Forum,
- ESOL Providers Forum,
- B&H Social Prescribers Providers Forum
- Migrant Caseworkers Forum,
- B&H Refugee,
- Asylum Seeker and Migrant Mental Health Working Group,
- B&H City Volunteering Partnership,
- Brighton and Hove Educators of Colour Collective

Influence and power of Community Voices Group

The diagram below illustrates how CVG feeds into the wider system in Brighton and Hove. Issues that are raised in the meeting also have a platform in relevant Council, NHS, and Sussex Police Boards and Steering groups. This ensures that the issues raised inform discussions and decision making.



Anusree Biswas Sasidharan, September 2024

Feedback from members

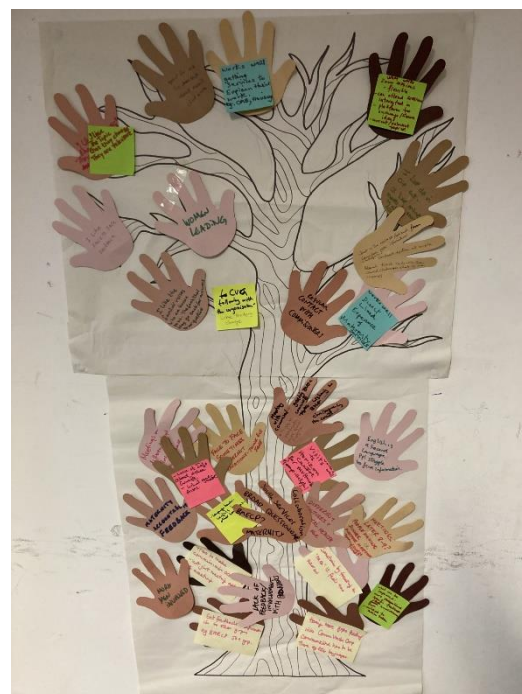
In July 2024 Community Voices Group held an in-person celebration and feedback meeting at BMECP. The meeting was attended by 20 members and included sharing a meal. It was positive coming together and we gave a thank you present to those who attended. We collected feedback using the analogy of a tree for things that are working in CVG and things that need improving (see image).

“I like the familiar voices who are known to us. The fact that they go back for answers to our questions”

“I like the topic that they choose. They are relevant. Statutory service providers come to hear the concerns, and the last one was brilliant, said what she could change straightaway and what issues would take longer to change”

“Brings together and gives voice to people from Black and racially minoritised communities particularly in terms of identifying local issues and being heard by e.g. commissioners at local level”

“It is generally online which works well in the main, but we need to find a way to bring in voices from the margins who are e.g. not online or don't speak English comfortably enough to follow what is going on”



Achievements

- CVG has provided a safe space for Black and racialised minority people to speak about the issues that are important to them.
- We have discussed maternity services, housing and racism in education, bringing relevant commissioners and council leads into direct contact with CVG members to respond to the CVG members' questions.
- Members feel empowered that they are recognised by commissioners and that their voices are heard.
- Peer support has developed across the meeting and CVG topics are discussed and referred to in the wider community.
- Bridging Change has offered support to CVG members outside of the group.
- Partner organisations have invited and involved CVG members in other events, for example bringing members in to contact with funders, academics and other community organisations.
- The CVG meetings are well attended, on average we have 15 attendees. These are community members and representatives of community organisations.
- The in-person feedback event, when 20 members attended.
- The topics discussed at CVG run in parallel to the work of the partner organisations and therefore have a greater reach.
- CVG brings NHS Sussex commissioners and Brighton and Hove City Council leads into direct contact with the people they serve, allowing them to network and build relationships and importantly, trust, with marginalised communities.





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Learning and Next steps

- CVG can be even more accessible to those who cannot attend an evening meeting, are not able to join the meeting online or who speak English as a second language.
- We have developed a number of ways that community members can feed into CVG, they include:
 - Attending the meeting
 - Speaking directly to a partner organisation who then feeds into the meeting
 - Completing an anonymous, online survey on the topic we are covering
- SIS are now organising focus groups with linguists who work with a number of language communities and present findings at the meeting. This means we hear the issues specific to those who speak English as a second language.
- We have developed a clearer pathway to accountability for issues that are raised in the meetings so that they can turn into actionable change that the members can see.
- We must continue to build relationships with commissioners and leads in spite of the challenge we face in navigating internal changes within the NHS and Brighton and Hove City Council e.g. regular re-structures and change of staff.
- We allow time for the extensive behind-the-scenes engagement work that is required to ensure good attendance.
- At CVG we ask people to share their lived experience and that of their community. This is not an easy thing to do and requires courage and trust. It illustrates the need for CVG. It is important that we ensure people's emotional safety in discussing topics.
- We must continue to work in a reflective way, learning from our mistakes and celebrating our achievements.





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Appendices

CVG general flyer

Community Voices Group

- Do you identify as Black, brown, Asian or from another language, ethnic or migrant community?
- Do you want to improve how public services are delivered locally?
- Do you want the chance to speak directly to representatives from the Council and NHS and get your voice heard?

Join our community voices group!
Members of the group talk to people in their community about what's important to them and bring this information to meetings. We discuss issues that matter to us and talk to representatives from the Council and NHS about how they can be solved.

How to join
Contact Bridging Change,
email: hellobridgingchange@outlook.com.
If you do not speak English and would like to be involved,
email laura@sussexinterpreting.org.uk or call 01273 234016 and leave a message in your language

CVG monthly meeting flyer

Community Voices Group Meeting

**Wednesday 23rd October 2024
6.00pm - 7.30pm on Zoom
Topic: Anti-racism in Education**

Come and discuss with other community members

How to join the meeting
Contact Bridging Change, email: hellobridgingchange@outlook.com,
Hangleton & Knoll Project, email: aleya.khatun@hkproject.org.uk

If you do not speak English and would like to be involved, contact Sussex Interpreting Service, email: laura@sussexinterpreting.org.uk or call 01273 234016 and leave a message in your language