

## Summary of recommendations: The unequal impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the Women and Equalities Committee launched an inquiry to better understand the unequal impacts that the Coronavirus pandemic was having on communities across the UK. Here is a summary of the recommendations we gave to the Women and Equalities Select Committee to tackle the unequal impacts the Coronavirus pandemic was having on Black communities.

### What did Black Thrive recommend?

After reviewing 321 survey responses, Black Thrive was able to share community generated solutions and recommendations to the Government.

1. **Confront and address structural racism and discrimination** – By saying the unequal impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic are down only to biological reasons, there is a danger that we will enter a space of scientific racism ([find out more about scientific racism – video](#)) and not pay attention to [how discrimination and racism affect both physical and mental health](#) (video)

If the issue was purely biological, we would see the same mortality rates in Black dominant countries, but this is not happening. This is not a biological issue, Covid-19 has increased and magnified existing inequalities. The pandemic did not create the inequalities we see right now.

2. **We need to gather data in order to better understand the needs of individuals and communities and make sure to ACT upon this information** – We here at Black Thrive know that there are unequal impacts, the Government however, has not been good at capturing information about who is being impacted and how. Even when this data is captured, the actions taken to address the issues tend not to be effective. We urged the Government to collect, monitor and respond to the evident racial inequalities in:
  - a. Health and mental health outcomes.
  - b. Education and employment outcomes.
  - c. Access to housing.
  - d. Impacts the Coronavirus is having on bereavement.
  - e. Conditions for refugees, asylum seekers and people with No Recourse to Public Funds
  - f. Information sharing and access to information.
  - g. Access to preventative health advice, culturally significant foods and personal care.

3. **The Government must work collaboratively with Black communities and Black-led organisations** -There is a lack of Black representation at senior levels of decision making. It is necessary for Government to work with people affected to ensure the lens by which the data is analysed and interpreted reflects the actual needs and will of Black communities and does not reinforce racist stereotypes and structural inequality.
4. **Produce targeted communication for Black communities across all areas of the Government's work** - The materials will need to be tailored to respond to the different experiences and perspectives within Black communities (e.g. age, gender, religion, sexuality, disability etc.) and where possible, materials must be produced with Black-led organisations and communities to ensure that the materials resonate with and reach their intended audiences.
5. **Address racial bias in law enforcement.** Ensure that law enforcement officers are aware of their role in facilitating Black communities to participate in exercise outside of the home without fear of harassment.
6. **Increase access to telemedicine** to increase options for people to access advice and treatment from home; provide health services from non-medical venues where people with Coronavirus are not being treated.
7. **Increase the provision of mental health services and funding.** The government must begin to support chronically underfunded local mental health trusts and voluntary organisation with resources and funding, and equip services to anticipate and respond to the rising mental health support needs both now and in the future.
8. **Provide culturally appropriate therapeutic support** for communities who are bereaved and support for frontline workers who have cared for people affected by Covid-19. Decisions on how and where this work can be best done must be made in collaboration with communities, Black-led organisations, including partnerships with faith groups.
9. **Financial support for families affected by bereavement.** The Government should create a bereavement fund that provides the necessary financial assistance for people affected by bereavement.
10. **Investment in peer support groups.** Much like support groups exist for people who may have been affected by suicide, the Government must provide resources for the establishment of quality and culturally appropriate peer support services for people who have been affected by the Coronavirus
11. **Provide people who have had their exams cancelled with the option to either have their grade predicted, or to sit the exams in the next year when schools and**

**colleges reopen.** Students who opt to have their grades predicted should also be provided with a clear, fair and accessible route to appeal their result.

- 12. Work with the Black-led and other voluntary organisations to provide adequate resources and support for parents** home schooling children during this time, to ensure children do not fall behind; education authorities need to provide clarity about how children who have missed education will be supported once the current lockdown is over.
- 13. Provide rent and council tax relief for people in rented accommodation.**
- 14. Increase support for people who may not be able to safely self isolate in their homes.**
- 15. Increase support for those recently made homeless or are at risk of homelessness.**
- 16. Provide credit emergency programmes** to which undocumented migrants would be eligible, without sharing their data with other services that might cause subsequent persecution/intimidation.
- 17. We believe that the UK Government and local authorities should urgently implement the measures called for by [Project 17 and other organisations](#),** including improving communication, reducing the risk of homelessness and ensuring that people do not go hungry.
- 18. Promote ways in which healthy eating can help people maintain good health.** Government messaging needs to go beyond the physical advice of washing hands and exercising. Guidance and information should be provided to people on how they too can stay healthy and address any vitamin or nutritional deficiencies they may have through a balanced and healthy diet.
- 19. Provide access to good quality, healthy and culturally sensitive food and personal care products.**
- 20. A review of essential businesses needs to be conducted with a diverse population in mind as essential services are sometimes not universal across communities.**

This is only some of the information we learned from listening to our communities, we have a lot more information and we will be using this to make sure local and national services are hearing the needs of these communities and acting upon them.