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# Moving on Up Collective Impact Partnerships

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## FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

ClearView Research  
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Sally Cupitt with  
Shehnaaz Latif  
and Rozia Hussain



CLEARVIEW  
RESEARCH

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 About Moving on Up

Started in 2014, Moving on Up (MoU) is an innovative programme involving testing different ways to improve employment outcomes for young Black men aged 16–24 in London;<sup>1</sup> this target group experiences very high levels of unemployment and underemployment.<sup>2</sup>

In Phase 1 of MoU, 2014–2016, six London organisations were funded to test innovative approaches to supporting young Black men into employment. Phase 2 of MoU initially ran from 2017 to 2021, but was extended to the end of 2023 following delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Phase 2 was set up with three distinct strands:

1. Testing a collective impact (CI) approach to improving employment outcomes for young Black men in the London boroughs of Brent and Newham
2. Engaging employers London-wide in three sectors
3. Strategic communications.

MoU is funded by Trust for London and City Bridge Foundation, with strategic support from Action for Race Equality (ARE); the CI aspect also received public funding via the Neighbourhood Community Impact Levy and the Flexible Support Fund.

This evaluation focuses on the CI aspect of the MoU initiative (Strand 1 above), covering its direct delivery work from December 2021 to December 2023. This period is referred to as Years 3 and 4 in this report. Years 1 and 2 were evaluated separately by Makerble.<sup>3</sup>

### The collective impact partnerships

Two CI partnerships (CIPs) were set up, one in each of Brent and Newham, to test whether groups of organisations working together would be more effective in achieving two linked goals:

1. Improving employment outcomes for young Black men in Brent and Newham
2. System change in the two boroughs, defined by MoU as changes in three areas: within partner organisations; between partners; in wider organisations and systems (see Ch4).

The adoption of the CI approach was in part a response to learning from the first phase of MoU. The first phase showed that, while additional provision could support young Black men into jobs, a lack of local coordination and other systemic issues needed addressing.

A developmental phase in both boroughs through 2018–2019 involved employers, employment support organisations and young Black men. Delivery started in 2020.

The CIPs' offer to young men was fairly bespoke, within and across the two boroughs, depending on clients' needs. However, in both boroughs the core offer included: 1:1 employment support and mentoring; training and workshops; access to job opportunities; events involving employers and industry professionals, and peer networking.

<sup>1</sup> Black is defined as Black Caribbean, Black African, Black British, Black Other, Mixed Black and White, Mixed Black and Asian.

<sup>2</sup> 'Underemployment' refers to having insufficient work, or having work that doesn't use all a person's skills.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.actionforraceequality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Moving-On-Up-Interim-Evaluation-Report-Nov-2021.pdf>

## 1.2 The evaluation

This evaluation report focuses on three evaluation questions:

1. How effective was the CI approach developed by the CIPs?
2. Is the CI approach more effective in achieving direct outcomes (in terms of both quality and number of jobs) for young Black men than 'business as usual' (BAU) delivery?
3. What changes in wider systems has the programme contributed to?

Data for this report is based on: interviews with all CIP-funded partners, individually and in groups; observation of CIP meetings; interviews with unfunded partners; CIP monitoring data; document review; desk research.

### Language and acronyms

We use the following in this report:

AND	A New Direction, one of the core funded partners
AUK	Access UK, one of the core funded partners
AWL	Action West London, one of the core funded partners
Backbone organisation	An organisation that coordinates the CIPs
BAU	Business as usual
NCIL	Neighbourhood Community Impact Levy
CI	The collective impact approach
CIP (BCIP and NCIP)	Collective Impact Partnership (Brent Collective Impact Partnership and Newham Collective Impact Partnership)
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ELBA	East London Business Alliance, one of the core funded partners
FSF	Flexible Support Fund
Funded partners	The organisations receiving direct funding for work on MoU
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
LLW (LLW+)	London Living Wage (a salary at or above LLW)
MoU	Moving on Up
MTL	Making The Leap, one of the core funded partners
PLIAS	PLIAS Resettlement, one of the core funded partners
Strategic partners	Action for Race Equality, Trust for London and City Bridge Foundation
Unfunded partners	The wider network of organisations involved in MoU
WHUF	West Ham United Foundation, one of the core funded partners

## 2. Collective impact in MoU

This chapter explores the first evaluation question: How effective was the CI approach developed by the MoU CIPs? We look at this question through the lens of each of the five principles of CI within MoU, as developed by the CIPs at the start of the programme (see Appendix 3 for more details).

### Key findings

#### Who was involved

1. Each CIP had a strong core group of partners. It was difficult to sustain engagement from other organisations.
2. Young Black men took on Ambassador roles within the wider MoU programme. Users were also involved in both CIPs, but not as strongly as partners would have liked.

#### Backbones and leadership

3. CIPs benefited from having their local councils as backbone organisations. There was some confusion about the backbone role, in part due to several organisations taking on aspects of the work. Backbones found the role hard without full funding for it.
4. New funding brought in by the councils was very welcome, but created some conflict of interest for the backbones, and tensions between the needs of the different funding types.
5. The focus on process and learning as well as outcome targets, combined with collective reporting against targets, was welcome. Some partners were concerned that the non-hierarchical nature of the CIPs meant that underperformance was not well dealt with.
6. Strategic partners were more involved in programme management than originally anticipated.

#### Relationships

7. Core partners met regularly and shared learning; communication was good. Most relationships were strong, but some partners did not feel as equal or included in the CIPs.

#### Shared understanding

8. The CIPs had a strong shared understanding of the goal of improving employment outcomes for young Black men. There was an ongoing debate about the target men for the programme in terms of their proximity to the jobs market.
9. There was less clarity on how system change was to be achieved and by whom.
10. Lack of detailed terms of reference led to some confusion, and occasionally tension, as to roles and responsibilities within the CIPs.

#### Shared systems and processes

11. Shared measurement systems did not work well for the CIPs, and partners struggled to produce accurate, timely data. There was limited shared planning.
12. Shared systems to register young Black men were initially problematic, but the CIPs improved these over time.

## 2.1 Who was involved in the CIPs

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### Principle of Collective Impact: Mutually Reinforcing Activities

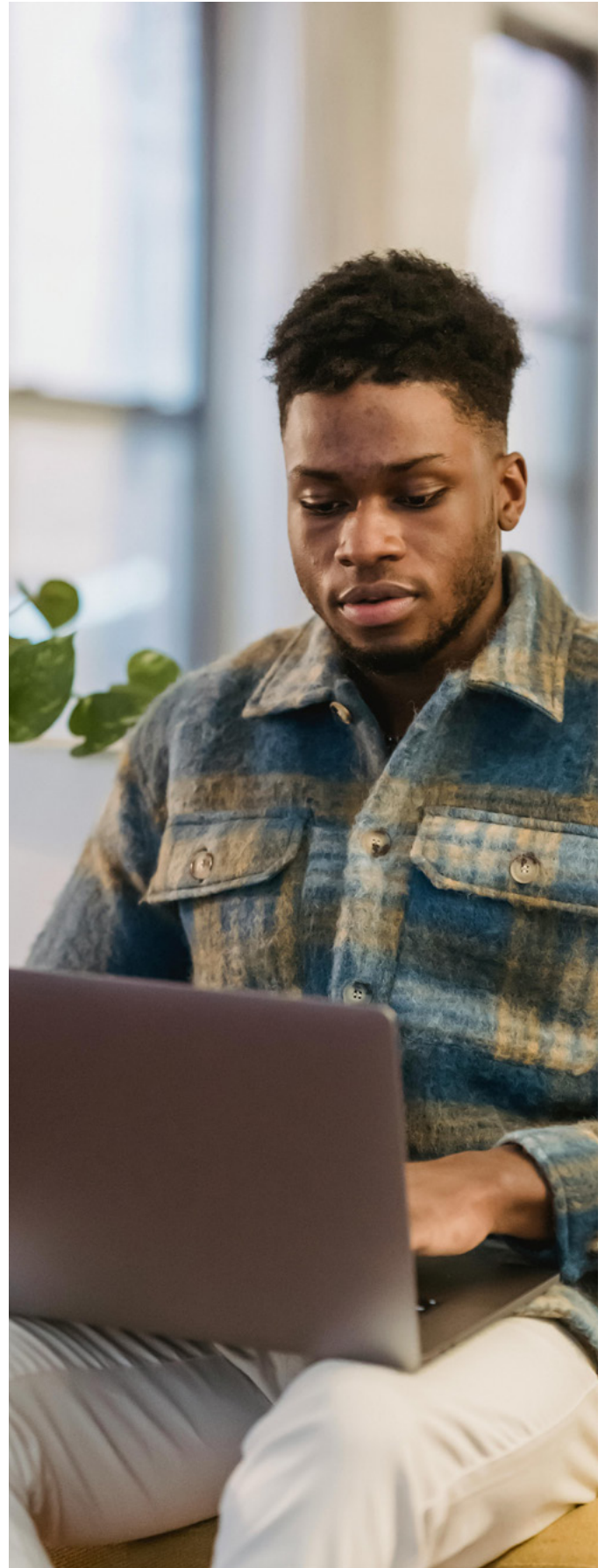
‘Engagement of a diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinating a set of differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.’

### Key partners in Phase 2

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Each CIP comprised about five funded partners, although not all were equally actively engaged. Each CIP also had a ‘backbone’ organisation, defined by the CIPs as: **Independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative, including guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilising funding.**

CIPs had the support of their local councils as backbone organisations (although this changed over time, see 2.2 below); backbones were given some financial support towards their roles. Across the four years, funding to the CIPs totalled roughly £885K. During this time, sixteen organisations received some funding, with partners receiving different amounts.



	<b>Brent</b>	<b>Newham</b>
Funding	In addition to £245K MoU funding, Brent Council brought in £326K via the Neighbourhood Community Impact Levy (NCIL), Jan 21–Dec 22	In addition to £245K MoU funding, Newham Council brought in extra funding from the DWP Flexible Support Fund (FSF) of £69K
Backbone	Brent Council	Newham Council
Core funded partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Access UK</a> (AUK), a charity focused on improving education, employment and enterprise outcomes for young people</li> <li>- <a href="#">Action West London</a> (AWL), a charity supporting disadvantaged people to find employment or set up businesses</li> <li>- <a href="#">Connect Stars</a>, a charity that supports Somali young people (NCIL funding, plus an extension to end 2023)</li> <li>- <a href="#">Making The Leap</a> (MTL), an employment and social mobility charity, often working with people closer to the jobs market</li> <li>- <a href="#">PLIAS Resettlement</a> (PLIAS), a charity supporting people with criminal convictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">A New Direction</a> (AND), a creative charity working with young people</li> <li>- <a href="#">Badu Sports</a>, a PLC using sports and mentoring for social impact</li> <li>- <a href="#">East London Business Alliance</a> (ELBA), a charity that connects local businesses and communities</li> <li>- <a href="#">Exit Foundation</a>, a charity supporting people to move on from crime, and with mental wellbeing (FSF funding)</li> <li>- <a href="#">West Ham United Foundation</a> (WHUF), a charity that uses football to improve life chances</li> </ul>
Unfunded partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jobcentre Plus</li> <li>- HS2</li> <li>- Middlesex University</li> <li>- College of Northwest London</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jobcentre Plus</li> <li>- Newham College</li> </ul>

## Unfunded partners

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It was intended that the CIPs would extend beyond funded partners, working with a diverse, cross-sectoral range of organisations.

In both boroughs, the local Councils and the DWP were engaged as partners from the start (part-funded and unfunded, respectively). The addition of the NCIL and FSF funding gave DWP further interest in the achievements of the programme. The continued engagement of these partners brought ideas, capacity and resources to the programme.

However, CIPs struggled to engage other partners despite significant amounts of work reported by ARE and the backbone organisations. A lack of sustained engagement from employers and further and higher education institutions was a particular disappointment to partners.

Some partners reflected that MoU was, perhaps, simply too ambitious in its hope that unfunded partners would want to engage deeply on the specific issue of young Black men's employment. Some CIP funded partners reported difficulties getting external organisations to accept MoU's rationale for focusing on one target group over another; the focus on young Black men specifically, and not on young Black people or ethnic minority young people more broadly, was a sticking point for some. Employers, in particular, reportedly wanted 'a diverse workforce', rather than to focus on one group. One partner noted that they had wrestled with the issue within their own organisation, from an inclusivity point of view.

Other possible barriers to the engagement of unfunded partners included:

- Involvement of some unfunded partners too early in the MoU set-up phase, which some considered to be lengthy.
- A lack of funding. One unfunded partner explained: 'Whenever we were referred young Black men from MoU, we did it outside of any funded capacity. We essentially had to volunteer our time to support them.'
- Staff turnover in unfunded organisations. This meant that engagement 'ebbed and flowed' and relationships needed to be built and rebuilt.
- In some cases, limited engagement opportunities. Two unfunded partners reported not always feeling fully welcomed in the CIPs, and would have valued closer involvement.

## User involvement

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User involvement was always part of the MoU model. Since 2019, some young Black men have taken roles as MoU Ambassadors. However, there were some difficulties recruiting and maintaining a group of Ambassadors, particularly programme alumni, combined with a lack of capacity within ARE initially to support them. However, a third round of recruitment of Ambassadors in 2023 saw an invigorated group more involved in shaping aspects of MoU going forward.

It had been hoped that the Ambassadors would also have some involvement in the CIPs' work, primarily in an advisory capacity at CIP meetings. This did not come about, for various reasons: meetings provided limited opportunity for Ambassador input; some Ambassadors lacked confidence to attend and contribute; most were working or studying and couldn't attend meetings during the usual working week.

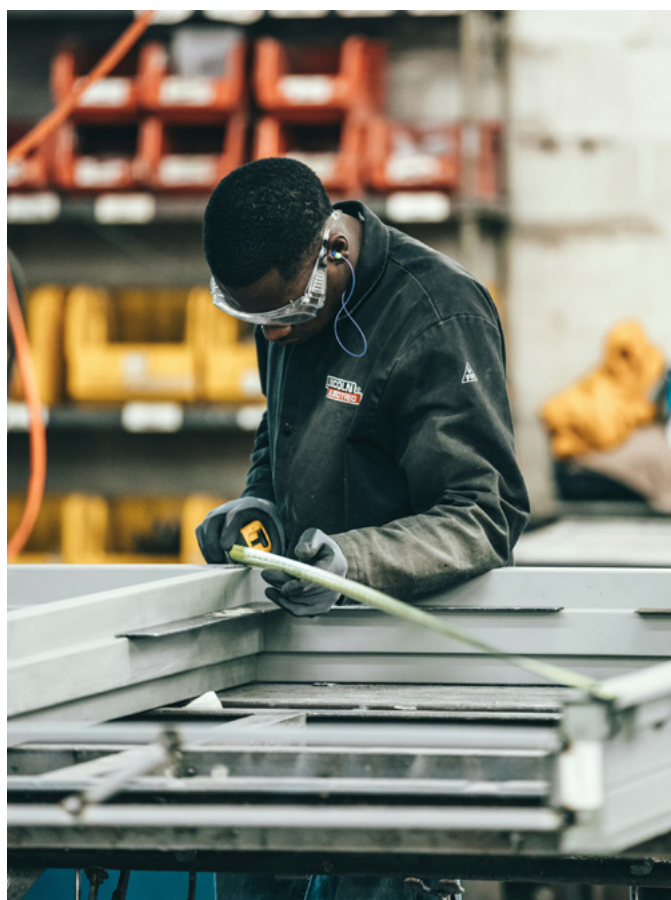
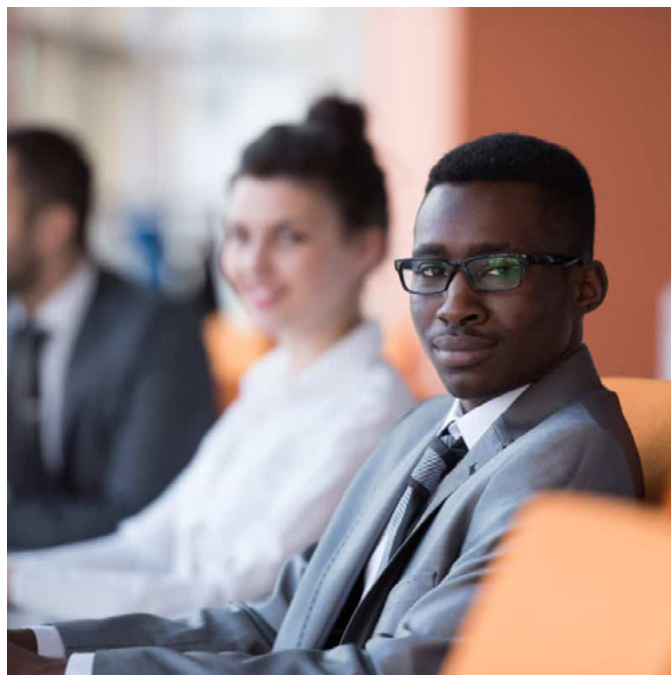


CIP funded partners in both boroughs would have liked more contact with the Ambassadors. There seems to have been some lack of agreement as to how the Ambassadors might best be used, with strategic partners seeing them as pan London and strategic, but funded partners hoping they might be more operational, supporting outreach in the boroughs.

Outside the Ambassador group, funded partners regularly sought feedback from their own users, usually on an informal basis, and sometimes involving MoU clients. There was little evidence of young Black men who were not Ambassadors being involved in CIP work beyond consultation, for example in planning, design, delivery or evaluation of services. However, some CIP funded partners felt that there had been no clear expectations on them to involve users in this way; the presence of the Ambassador programme may also have meant some partners felt additional user involvement was not needed.

## The role of individuals

Some partners reflected that the development phase of MoU engaged very senior staff from many organisations, and some CIP funded partners maintained senior engagement through the programme. However, in some partners, especially in the larger organisations, senior staff were less involved as delivery got underway. This may have been inevitable, given the relatively small size of MoU funding, relative to their overall organisational budgets. However, relative lack of engagement at senior levels may have reduced the ability of the CIPs to engage unfunded partners or effect system change.



## 2.2 Backbones and leadership

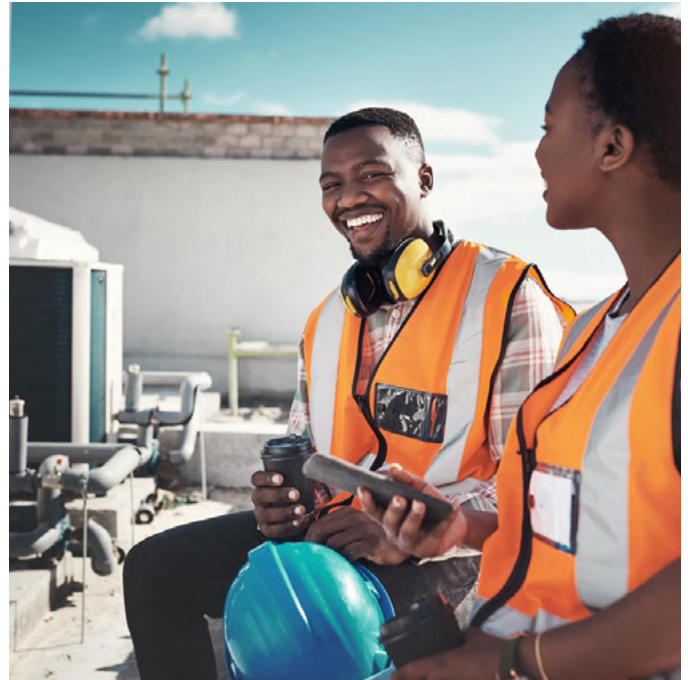
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### Principle of Collective Impact: Backbone Support

‘Ongoing support by independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative, including guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilising funding.’

Brent and Newham Councils initially took the backbone roles (also called ‘local coordinators’ within MoU) in their CIPs. Following capacity issues within Newham Council, the backbone role was shared between the Council and ARE.

The backbone arrangement in both boroughs had some real strengths. The close involvement of the councils, as key local players in the employment sector, was thought to be important and valuable. Some partners experienced the backbones as supportive.



### The nature of the backbone role

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The backbone role was initially conceived as quite extensive (see Appendix 3), and some other CI initiatives have defined it as even more so.<sup>4</sup> However, it seems that the role as taken on by the councils became somewhat narrower, focused more on working with external partners and providing chair and secretariat for the CIP meetings, and less on strategic overview, data collection or system change.

### Backbone funding

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This relative narrowing of the role in the CIPs may, at least in part, reflect it taking more time than initially expected, and the limited funding for it. Both councils received a grant from MoU to contribute towards their role in the CIPs for the first two years to December 2021 – this was unusual as neither Trust for London or City Bridge Foundation normally funds statutory bodies. After December 2021, the councils were unfunded. This was a point of tension in the programme, with the two councils reporting significant unfunded time on the programme.

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<sup>4</sup> CIF and FSG (2017) Backbone Starter Guide: A Summary of Major Resources about the Backbone

## Role clarity

In interview, not all delivery partner staff knew who their backbone organisation was. Lack of role clarity may have been exacerbated by the number of actors involved:

- In Newham the formal backbone was split between two organisations.
- In addition to the backbone role, in both boroughs one of the delivery partners was also asked to take a lead role in helping coordinate the partnerships, primarily managing the data and reporting and helping with some aspects of CIP organisation.
- The external evaluators – initially Makerble, then ClearView – helped shape data collection.
- Trust for London and ARE were both quite heavily involved.

## The effect of additional MoU funding

It had always been hoped that new resources – funding or otherwise – would come into the partnerships. In both boroughs, the councils helpfully brought new money into MoU. This new funding brought considerable benefits and some difficulties.

In addition to the £245K MoU funding, Newham Council brought in extra funding from the DWP Flexible Support Fund (FSF) of £69K from October 21–December 22. The funding was primarily spent on bringing Exit Foundation into Newham CIP (NCIP), to focus on outreach and generating new referrals.

Brent Council also brought in £326K via the Neighbourhood Community Impact Levy (NCIL), covering roughly 2.5 years to December 2022. This was a very significant income stream – indeed greater than the original funding from Trust for London and City Bridge Foundation. The income was used to commission two new partners to fill gaps

identified through the development phase of Brent CIP (BCIP). It also provided additional equal grants to each of the four core funded partners totalling £200k. This contributed to a significant change to the backbone role in Brent; the backbone organisation was now also a key funder.

Some delivery partners in Brent felt that the new NCIL money – while very welcome – was awarded with a greater focus on volume and job outcomes, at odds with the focus of the Trust for London/City Bridge Foundation grant and its greater interest in process and learning. As a result, some felt this shifted the focus of the MoU project in Brent back towards business as usual (BAU). Some felt that, in hindsight, the NCIL money might have been better treated as a separate grant.

By contrast, Brent Council felt they had given considerable ground – in their view perhaps too much – on the nature of the NCIL funding, asking for less than normal in terms of outcomes and accountability, to try to align with the ethos of the Trust for London/City Bridge Foundation funding. They reflected that greater transparency about funding amounts and requirements, combined with closer working relationships between the three funders, would have been helpful.

As far as we are aware, the decision as to how to spend the additional funding in Brent was taken by the Council. Indeed, it may only have been possible to do it in this way as a condition of that extra funding. However, earmarking the money as being for MoU might have brought with it expectations about shared decision-making. Some partners reported not understanding the rationale for the spending priorities, including why new organisations had been brought into the partnership.

## Accountability and leadership

### Targets

MoU kept CIPs' targets against employment outcomes intentionally fairly low, in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of MoU becoming like a BAU-style payment-by-results programme, and to facilitate a focus on system change. There were few agreed outcomes or indicators on the latter until late in the programme (see Ch4).

The CIPs did well on reaching employment targets. For example, according to their annual reports to funders, both CIPs exceeded their targets for job starts and job outcomes for the year Jan–Dec 2022. NCIP had an additional target for young Black men registered, which they just missed. This may well, at least in part, reflect a move away from requiring registration before engagement (see 2.5 below).

The CIPs reported as a collective, although there was some tracking of referrals and job outcomes back to individual partners. Some stakeholders valued collective reporting. One noted that as the different partners often worked with slightly different young Black men – some further or closer to the jobs market – they could not be expected to achieve the same outcomes.

Other partners worried that the relatively non-hierarchical approach meant a loss of accountability. One felt poor performance had not been challenged.

**[In collective impact], no one organisation is solely responsible for the outputs and the outcomes. And that is something I still struggle with a wee bit. Ultimately, who do you point the finger at and say, 'Well, look, we want you to achieve X, we've achieved Y, what are you going to do about it?'**

(Anon)

One felt that more performance monitoring would have meant the CIPs would have achieved more, arguing that 'you get what you measure'.

### Ownership and oversight

It appears that both CIPs remained a least partly dependent on the strategic partners for support and oversight. ARE and Trust for London were heavily involved in MoU, and both reported having spent more time managing the programme than anticipated.

It may have been unrealistic for CIPs to become independent within the timescale of MoU; it may also be that the conditions to create such independence were not in place. That the initial impetus behind the CIPs came from the funders, and that they remained closely involved, may also have led to a reduced sense of collective ownership within the CIPs themselves:

**One of the challenges was around the sense of ownership. I do wonder whether it was a little bit too much funder driven. And as a result of that, all of the things that you hope collective impact brings across those partners in terms of shared ownership around a collective mission, I'm not entirely sure whether we achieved that, because [the funders] played such an enhanced role.**

(Strategic partner)

The level of MoU funding may have contributed to this. Partners were pleased to be involved in MoU, but felt the funding to individual partners was insufficient for what was required. One described feeling 'almost resentful' of the high demands placed on them by involvement in the CIP.

## 2.3 Relationships through the programme

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### Principle of Collective Impact: Continuous Communication

**‘Frequent and structured open communication across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.’**

### Continuous communication

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Each CIP met every two months as a partnership. These meetings were well attended by roughly 13–15 people, primarily from delivery and strategic partners, backbones and DWP. Few unfunded partners attended; their attendance was irregular and with very little continuity in representation from those that did attend. Fortnightly casework meetings, started in the last year of the CIPs and attended by small groups of delivery staff, proved very useful for meeting client needs. In both boroughs, WhatsApp groups helped connect partners, and allowed the efficient sharing of cases, job opportunities and ideas. Around eight cross-CIP learning events were held during the programme’s four-year lifetime.

### The quality of relationships

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In both boroughs, some staff – particularly frontline ones – described very strong working relationships and mutual trust that had grown through MoU, including through the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic:

**Each organisation within the consortium has the ability to function independently. Going into the pandemic encouraged this, because everyone was adjusting their respective service to navigate towards virtual support. That being said, once we weathered the belly of the storm (Pandemic), you started to see everyone pulling together in an organic way which was really encouraging, as it demonstrated the authenticity of the partnership.**

*(Brent partner)*

Staff turnover within the CIPs meant new staff needed to learn about the programme and build inter-organisational relationships. And good relationships took time to build:

**We just expect these kind of relationships to happen naturally, because we’re all in the same field. But it makes a big difference in how we collaborate with each other, and ... just building that trust between each other and having that collegiate working environment [and] working relationship.**

*(Newham partner)*

However, the arrival of new staff in some of the delivery partners part way through the programme also brought real benefits to the CIPs in terms of renewed energy.



### Sharing learning, mutual support

In Newham, some partners described how longer-serving staff had been ‘instrumental’ in skilling up new staff. Partners in both boroughs reported benefitting from sharing resources and opportunities, and through regular casework meetings.

**Whilst we may not pass candidates directly between us at times, we continuously raise our current caseload in our meetings. ... I might bring a client to the group: ‘Okay, I’m working with this guy, do you guys know of anywhere else I can look, or any guidance on the best way to support this young man and to get him into work?’ Someone might say ‘I know of this employer, or this training provider who can take the candidate this step further’.**

*(Brent partner)*

### Difficulties in relationships

These strong relationships were not consistent across the partnership. Some members of the CIPs only worked with one or two other partners. In our 2022 interim evaluation, some reported not feeling equal or fully included.

Tensions would be expected within most partnerships, and one partner noted that ‘some dialogue and frustration is normal and healthy’. In Brent there were more significant tensions, focused primarily on lack of agreement about roles and responsibilities, although these eased over time. Lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities was, to some extent, an issue in Newham too.

Testing CI in two sites simultaneously gave opportunities for greater learning. However, an unfortunate consequence of sharing data on the achievements of the two sites was that some partners felt that they were being unhelpfully compared – although we understand that formal comparisons were not made – around targets achieved and quality of work.

### The nature of collective decision making

In 2022, a few partners in both boroughs expressed occasional frustration at their CIP’s decision-making processes, which they felt were slow-moving. On occasion the CIPs struggled to agree on definitions of core concepts like what constituted a ‘quality job’ (see 3.2 for more on this) or what ‘counted’ as mentoring.

## 2.4 Shared understanding

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### Principle of Collective Impact: Common Agenda

**‘All participants have a shared vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions.’**

### Shared goals

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The MoU CIPs had twin goals: outcomes for young Black men and system change. CIP partners had a strong sense of shared vision around achieving better outcomes for young Black men, and a strong commitment to this goal. This was apparent to evaluators too, in observation. There was less shared understanding of the goals around system change, or who should lead on this and how (see 4.5 for more on this).

### Distance from the jobs market

There was an ongoing lack of agreement within MoU as to who the programme was targeting in terms of needs.

Initially, strategic partners envisaged MoU as being primarily for young Black men close to the job market, particularly graduates, for whom the disparity in job outcomes is particularly stark. However, some partners felt strongly that MoU should be open to all, including those further from the job market, with greater support needs. This was particularly the case in Brent, perhaps in part reflecting the nature of the

NCIL funding. Anecdotal feedback from frontline staff suggested the young men whom the programme eventually worked with were very mixed, with some having very high support needs and others needing minimal help to secure employment.

It may be the case that different tactics would be required to most effectively meet the needs of a very diverse set of young men. Some partners noted extremely high levels of need in some of their clients – for example, chronic mental health problems – and were concerned that their CIP was unable to fully support them.

### Agreeing the nature of the jobs sought

After much discussion, it was agreed that the programme would focus on placing young Black men into ‘quality jobs’, defined as those paying over London Living Wage (LLW+).

Despite this formal agreement, some partners were concerned that LLW+ was not always attainable, at least in the short term, for all young men. Others made the point that ‘quality’ was subjective and sometimes not relevant to a young man needing a job immediately. They hoped that, if a client needed to get a sub-LLW+ job for now, they might be progressed later. However, caseworkers reported that it was hard to keep in touch with young men after they had got a job.

### Shared understanding of roles and responsibilities

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The CIPs did not have written terms of reference describing their work, rationale, purpose and roles and responsibilities, including those of strategic partners. The funder-led initiation of MoU may have, at least in part, contributed to this. A strategic partner explained that the funders were conscious of having initiated the partnerships, and as a result didn’t want to be too prescriptive on the detail.



At a learning event in late 2023, partners reflected that not having terms of reference in place at the start had left partners trying to ‘get the basics in place while the ship was moving’. Detailed terms would have been very helpful, increasing transparency and reducing role confusion, and would have been useful for inducting new staff. They may also have increased understanding of, and focus on, system change (see 4.5 for more on this) and would have aided evaluation.

## Charters

Following our 2022 interim evaluation, which suggested the development of terms of reference, the CIPs created charters to explain their work. These were short documents describing the high-level activities and principles of the partnerships, aimed at potential new partners. Some existing partners found the charters quite helpful, although not all had heard of them. Some in Newham reported that the process of creating a charter had helped to focus their work, and one said that it had been a useful document to share with new external partners. However, beyond this, it is unclear how much the charters were used. Many partners felt they had come too late in the lifetime of MoU, and some that it was not appropriate to promote them to staff when the programme was closing. The charters also didn’t quite meet the internal need for a clearer understanding of the CIPs, their detailed goals and activities and who did what.

## 2.5 Shared systems, resources and processes

### Principle of Collective Impact: Shared Measurement

‘Agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported, with a short list of common indicators identified and used across all participating organisations for learning and improvement.’

### Shared measurement

Partners across both boroughs shared programme data on a quarterly basis, and worked hard on doing so. While some of this data was useful, stakeholders were in agreement that the shared measurement system had not worked well. The evaluators of the CIPs in Years 1 and 2 put a lot of work into training partners on the first system, and on customising it to partners’ needs. In part due to this high degree of customisation it became complicated, which contributed to it needing to be abandoned part way through. This change of system part way though brought challenges.

A simpler Excel system was put in place but took time to embed and was not without difficulties. Some of the delivery partners struggled to provide accurate data, complete data or data on time. Written guidance, online training and proactive support were provided, but partners reported that more training would have been helpful. The second system had to be implemented quickly; in an ideal world it would have had piloting time to iron out difficulties.



That MoU was, for some partners, a relatively small amount of their funding meant that the monitoring requirements sometimes felt disproportionate, particularly for smaller organisations.

Data management as a whole was insufficiently funded through the programme, and it was not always clear who was responsible for what, between funded partners, strategic partners and external evaluators. That a funded partner in each CIP took responsibility for much of the work was helpful, but this wasn't fully in place from the start. A single point of contact for data collection in each partnership would have been helpful from programme initiation, combined with a programme-wide data lead to support partners and to ensure quality and consistency. Grounding the system in partners' existing systems, taking into account their monitoring capacity, and finding a system that might also have utility for day-to-day casework, may also have been helpful.

### **Shared planning and review**

As intended, both CIPs had MoU action plans. However, these were seldom used and were not useful, living documents. As far as we are aware, the plans focused only on MoU-funded activities, rather than – as had been hoped – all partners' activities, MoU funded and not, that contributed to the goal of improved outcomes for young Black men. The CIPs found it hard to get unfunded organisations to actively engage with the documents.

It is possible that the lack of shared planning may have encouraged silo working and contributed to some of the issues in relationships across the partnerships.

## **Working together to find and register young Black men**

### **Shared marketing**

In both boroughs, marketing was done primarily by the individual organisations, using MoU logos and branding guidelines. Later in the programme some shared marketing material was created, for example MoU banners.

Many delivery partners felt that the programme would have benefitted from a stronger, more visible brand, and felt that this was an unusual omission in such a programme. They argued that shared marketing materials would have reduced cost, made messaging more consistent and better supported outreach. However, strategic partners felt that a focus on marketing would overemphasise the service to young Black men – which was intentionally time-limited – and neglect the focus on sustained system change. This debate was not resolved during the programme lifetime.

### **Registrations in Newham CIP**

NCIP attempted to create a shared registration system but this created rather than reduced bureaucracy for participants and was felt to be a barrier to engagement for some.

Partners went on to work hard on improving the registration processes, streamlining and digitising them. These changes to registration processes were helpful, and the kind of thing MoU was aiming to achieve. However, the changes were – as far as we are aware – programme specific and will have limited or no effects beyond the MoU lifetime.

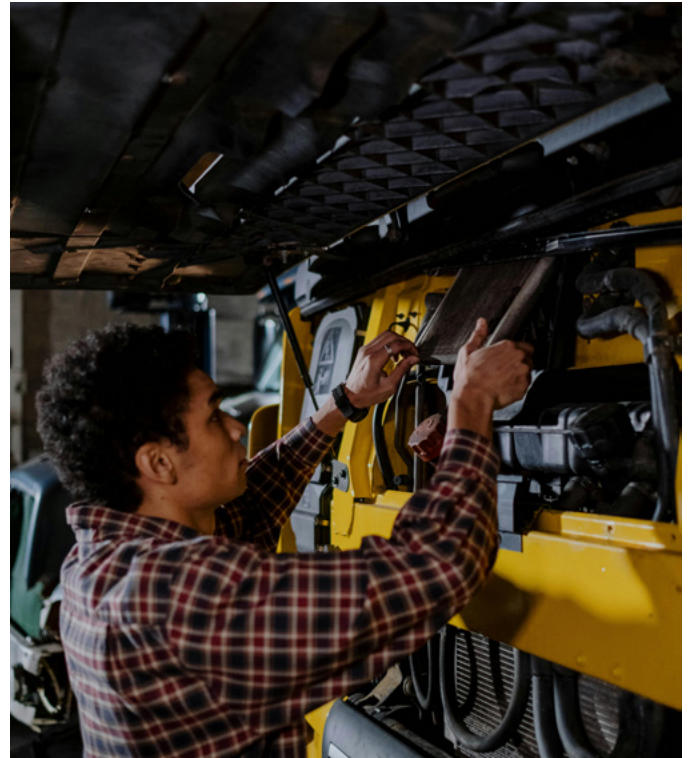
### Joint working

Through joint working, it was hoped that partners would identify any improvements that could be made to systems and processes. It was also hoped that appropriate cross referrals between organisations would mean that young men got the best possible service. Some effective joint working took place, but it was more limited than anticipated.

In some cases, multiple MoU partners worked with clients, and very joined up working was described. However, in many cases, partners worked alone with clients. An organisation that joined MoU late as a funded partner appears to have been involved in limited or no cross-referring with other partners. One partner noted the importance of being able to share referrals:

**It is important each partner sticks to their specialism when working with our beneficiaries. This will ensure that each beneficiary on the project receives high-quality, bespoke support. It can be tempting to try and work with every young person referred to the project but if their needs do not match a partner's specialist services then the young person is better served with another partner.**

As the programme progressed, partners worked together more on events. Each borough began to offer monthly events to young Black men. These were considered effective ways to introduce young men to a range of employment options, and to enable them to meet and hear from inspiring Black men and employers. Partners took turns to lead on the events and several partners would attend. For example, both boroughs successfully ran job fairs. One partner explained that having all the partners present meant progress could be made very quickly for young men attending: 'we could do three referrals in one go at these events. That's great. That's what it should be like all the time'.



### Pooling resources

It had been hoped that CIP partners would direct existing resources, beyond just the direct MoU funding, to achieve the common goal of improving outcomes for young Black men.

To this end, the events run by the CIPs successfully drew on the pooled resources and networks of multiple organisations. Beyond this, it is not clear how realistic such pooling of resources would have been with the funding available.

The achievements of the CIPs have perhaps also been hindered at times by a lack of 'joining the dots', in terms of available resources for the programme. For example, outside MoU, some partners had relationships with high-profile corporate employers, or engaged in work on system change or ran other programmes focused on young Black men. Some of this work might usefully have been linked more strongly to MoU.

## 3. Outcomes for young Black men

This chapter addresses the second evaluation question: Is the CI approach more effective in achieving direct outcomes (in terms of both quality and number of jobs) for young Black men than business as usual (BAU)? The findings in this chapter are drawn from an analysis of the CIPs' internal monitoring data, which as discussed in 2.5 above, has some limitations.

### Key findings

#### Job outcomes for young Black men

1. The CIPs engaged 479 young Black men during the final two years of the programme, helping them get 177 jobs. This gives a job entry rate of between 37% and 76% (range due to gaps in the data).
2. Over the four years of the MoU CIPs, they engaged 902 young Black men, and gained 302 jobs. This gives a conservative job entry rate of 34% (based on data available).
3. Just over 80% of the jobs secured were 'quality jobs' (paying LLW+).

#### Comparing MoU to business as usual

4. The job entry rate of the MoU CIPs is roughly in line with other employment support programmes. However, comparing programme outcomes is difficult due to differences in the target group, job seeker needs, and nature of support offered.
5. The unit cost of the jobs gained by the CIPs was relatively high, although the nature of MoU makes this comparison limited.
6. The CIPs didn't implement CI to the full extent intended when they were set up, and some partners felt the differences between BAU and MoU were subtle.

#### Additionality and attribution

7. That at least some of the MoU CIPs' young Black men were drawn from partners' existing client bases means it is hard to know how many new young Black men were brought into the programme, and how many would have been worked with anyway. But it is reasonable to assume that, given the increased capacity brought by MoU, and the outreach efforts of partners, at least some young men were new.
8. It is not possible to directly attribute job outcomes to the work of the CIPs, as there are likely to have been many influences on the young men. At the same time, there may have been significant outcomes for young men for whom a job was not found.

### 3.1 Job outcomes

Over the final two years of MoU, at least 177 of the 479 young Black men worked with got jobs; data is only available for 233 of the 479 men worked with.<sup>5</sup> We can say that the rate is between 37% and 76%.<sup>6</sup> We would assume the real figure is likely to be nearer the lower end of the scale as positive job outcomes are likely to have been disproportionately reported on.

MoU CIPs: Dec 21–Dec 23	Brent	Newham	Overall
Young Black men engaged with the CIPs	286	193	479
Jobs	136	41	177
Lowest borough job entry rate, based on all who engaged	48%	21%	
Lowest overall job entry rate, based on all those engaged			37%
Highest overall job entry rate, based on those known about			76%

Newham had proportionately less funding than Brent (35% of total funding) and the lower numbers engaged there are roughly in line with this (40% of all engaged). Reasons for the lower proportion of young Black men subsequently getting jobs in Newham are not known.

### Data over the whole programme

We have some data on CIPs' achievements in Years 1 and 2, just before the period covered by this evaluation. Over the four years, the programme worked with, on average, around 226 young men per year. The number worked with was not reduced greatly by the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns (2020–2021), which is impressive. Surprisingly, the level of funding also appears not to have had a significant effect, although there was an uplift in 2022, when all three funding sources (MoU, NCIL and FSF) were on stream. Job entry rate increased slightly in the second two years of the MoU CIPs, perhaps in part reflecting changes in the wider economy, and across the programme an average of 34% of men who engaged with MoU got jobs (based on those men we know about).

Job entry rate	2020 <sup>7</sup>	2021 <sup>8</sup>	2022 <sup>9</sup>	2023	Total
Engaged with MoU CIPs	214	209	266	213	902
Jobs (entry rate)	68 (32%)	61 (29%)	96 (36%)	85 (40%)	306 (34%)

5 We have data on 49% of cases, 54% of those in Newham and 45% of those in Brent.

6 The lowest job entry rate of 37% applies if only 177 of the 479 young Black men worked with got jobs. The highest rate of 76% applies if we calculate the percentage only on the basis of the 233 men we know about.

7 2020 and 2021 figures are aggregated totals reported by CIP funded partner leads, while the 2022 and 2023 figures are the totals of data reported by all partners through the MoU reporting system.

8 2021 data does not include Connect Stars, so is slightly undercounted.

9 December 2021 is included in this figure – a small double counting that we cannot amend.

## The nature of the jobs

The CIPs defined ‘quality jobs’ as those paying above London Living Wage (for a discussion of this, see 2.4, above). The numbers of men getting above London Living Wage (LLW+) increased significantly throughout the programme, which is an achievement. Availability of such jobs may also have been affected by external factors, including Trust for London’s [London Living Wage Campaign](#).

	<b>Years 1 and 2</b> (Jan 20–Dec 21)	<b>Years 3 and 4</b> (Dec 21–Dec 23)	<b>Total</b>
Jobs at LLW+	55 (43%, n=129)	132 (81%, n=163)	187 (61%)

In Years 3 and 4 of MoU, NCIP and BCIP got roughly the same numbers of men into LLW+ jobs (78% and 82% respectively).<sup>10</sup> For context, Our Newham Work reported that 51% of their young Black men got LLW+ jobs in April 2022–September 2023, and Brent Works that 74% of jobs secured for young Black men in the period December 2021 to December 2023 were LLW+. There are, however, limitations to making direct comparisons, as discussed in 4.2, below.

Many of the jobs were permanent: 73% overall, although the figure was much higher in Brent (86% of all Brent jobs) compared to Newham (32%). The most common sectors were construction (21%) and information and communication (18%), and 12% were apprenticeships.



<sup>10</sup> Based on small numbers in Newham.



## 3.2 Comparing MoU to BAU

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There are significant difficulties in comparing MoU to BAU.

- We lack an agreed definition of BAU. Some partners noted that potentially lots of different types of BAU exist, in different contexts, and the comparison may not be meaningful; BAU might include both grant funding and payment-by-results contracts, for example.
- MoU had a very narrow target group and geographical remit, and we are not aware of any very similar programmes to compare it with.
- Clear details about service models, target group needs and outcomes that would aid robust comparison are limited or not fully available either for MoU or other programmes.

However, a rough comparison shows that MoU achieved similar job entry rates to other employment programmes with some similarity in client groups.

## The achievements of other programmes

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The table below presents achievements of other employment support programmes, for illustration. Due to differences in target group and/or ways of working, and limited data availability, strong comparisons cannot be made. However, they show that the achievements of the CIPs are roughly in line with other programmes.

Phase 1 of MoU, 2014–2016, in which six organisations were funded to work with young Black men in London is perhaps the best comparator available. These organisations achieved a 40% job entry rate, compared to the CIPs’ 34% overall; however, the MoU CIPs achieved 40% in their last year of the programme. The CIPs also helped more young Black men to find work at higher salaries than in Phase 1.<sup>11</sup> Finally, Phase 1 MoU was not a collective impact model, and therefore had no systemic aims attached or associated work to be delivered.

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<sup>11</sup> We do not have directly comparable data, but, based on a 37.5hr week, LLW in 2015–2016 was about £18K (<https://www.livingwage.org.uk/>). According to the Phase 1 evaluation (TSIP 2017, *Moving on Up Evaluation Report*), 81% of the jobs obtained through Phase 1 had salaries of between £10,000 and £19,999 (<https://www.tsip.co.uk/reports>). As the jobs obtained were reported to be ‘spread quite evenly within that range’, it is reasonable to assume that less than 80% of Phase 1 were above £18K.

Employment programme	Job entry rate	About the programme/data	Considerations
<a href="#">Transform and Achieve</a>	48%	Unemployed residents in East London. In 2020 an evaluation <sup>12</sup> found that of the 498 registered learners, 48% got jobs.	Learners attended a coaching programme (around 12 days) and received employment support, so overall support was more intensive than MoU. 30% of learners were graduates.
Our Newham Work	46%	ONW registers on average 195 young Black men (16–25) per year. From April 2022–September 2023 (1.5 years), men from this group got 135 jobs.	ONW is primarily a brokerage scheme, whereas MoU involves additional employment support. Also, ONW funded MoU to take some of the men from this group, so any figures may have been affected by this. Unclear if ‘job’ includes apprenticeships.
MoU Phase 1	40% <sup>13</sup>	2014–2016, in which six organisations were funded to work with young Black men in London.	This was not a collective impact model, and had no systemic aims.
The Work Programme	37% <sup>14</sup>	UK government welfare to work programme. Data available on a very granular basis.	Attendance at TWP is mandatory which may affect outcomes.
<a href="#">Young and Successful</a>	33%	The programme ran 2014–2018, targeting young people furthest from the jobs market. An evaluation in 2018 <sup>15</sup> appears to show that 33% of 1325 people found work.	Data complicated and hard to extract.
<a href="#">Youth Employment Initiative</a>	29%	NEET young people (15–29). For an impact evaluation 2017–2019, data was available for almost 53,000 young people. <sup>16</sup>	Like MoU, offers employment support.

12 Sharpe et al. (2020) [Transform and Achieve Programme Evaluation Report](#). University of East London.

13 TSIP (2017) *Moving on Up: Evaluation Report*.

14 Data kindly shared by Brent Works; reference unavailable.

15 Groundwork Greater Nottingham (2018) [Tackling youth unemployment: The need to employ a new approach? An evaluation of the Young & Successful project](#).

16 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-employment-initiative-impact-evaluation/youth-employment-initiative-impact-evaluation>



## Comparing outcomes across programmes: Issues to consider

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### Dual goals and unit cost

In terms of unit cost, the 177 jobs generated through the CIPs cost about £5K each, which we understand would be considered high in a payment-by-results contract. However, costs may have been lower, given that we only have job outcomes data on 49% of the men worked with. Also, MoU didn't intend only to get young Black men into jobs; it also intended to create system change. So a comparison of unit costs is limited.

### Target group

We know that young Black men are up to three times more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts.<sup>17</sup> CIP staff worked hard to showcase Black talent, to raise the confidence and aspirations of young Black men, to bring them and employers together. However, we might expect any programme working only with this client group to struggle to achieve the same success rate as programmes working with more mixed groups.

### Levels of need

A comparison of job outcomes across programmes needs to be considered in relation to the needs of those young Black men worked with. For example, if the CIPs worked with men with high support needs, further away from the labour market, we might expect a lower job entry rate and lower rates of LLW+ than achieved by other programmes.

Unfortunately, we do not have an accurate assessment of how close the MoU young men were to the labour market (indeed, few programmes report this), which makes comparison with other programmes difficult.

We do know that MoU young men were not long-term unemployed. When they came to MoU, 86% of the men worked with were unemployed (n=478), although a small number were also studying. Where known, almost all (91%) had been unemployed for less than a year: 75% had been unemployed for six months or less (n=339).

## How different was MoU?

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MoU's focus on young Black men was groundbreaking. In interviews, funded partners explained that this niche focus, combined with the narrow geographical remit, was not something they had encountered in their previous work. They also noted that the programme's flexible, learning-focused funding relationship and lack of lead contractor were unusual.

However, in terms of collective ways of working, the difference between MoU and BAU was perhaps not as significant as originally anticipated, making a comparison between the two less meaningful: in general, partners reported that differences between BAU and MoU felt subtle. Most partners already worked in close partnership with other organisations; some on programmes that were similar in approach to CI. The CIPs made a good attempt but were not able to implement CI to the full extent imagined.

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17 <https://www.actionforraceequality.org.uk/are-at-work/employment/>





### 3.3 Additionality and attribution

#### Would this have happened anyway?

All but one of the delivery partners were providing employment support before MoU, and all worked with some young men from the target demographic. For at least some, young men coming through their organisations who fitted the eligibility criteria were reported on as part of MoU. Some reported that the same services were available to MoU and non-MoU clients.

It is therefore not known how many of these young men would have been worked with anyway – although it is clear that the MoU funding brought some increased capacity and more outreach, so it is reasonable to assume some new young men have been served.

Some partners expressed concern that less MoU-specific outreach was undertaken by the programme than was initially planned. They felt that partners were, at least in some cases, just offering some additional support to a subset of their existing clients. This, combined with outreach to job centres that focused on the unemployed, may have meant that the programme reached less underemployed or graduate young men than initially envisaged.

#### Can we attribute the results to MoU?

Some men worked with through MoU were receiving support from the partners' mainstream services. We assume many were also – inevitably – receiving support from other organisations. (Of course, linking young Black men into the wider support they were entitled to was also one of the roles of MoU.) As such, we cannot directly attribute the job outcomes achieved to MoU.

Conversely, lack of a job outcome does not mean the CIPs' work with a young man was not useful. Other outcomes – for example improved knowledge, confidence, skills – are likely to have been achieved, although we do not have data on this. These outcomes may lead, or have led, to later job outcomes that the CIPs were not aware of.

## 4. System change

This chapter addresses the third and final evaluation question: What changes in wider systems has the programme contributed to?

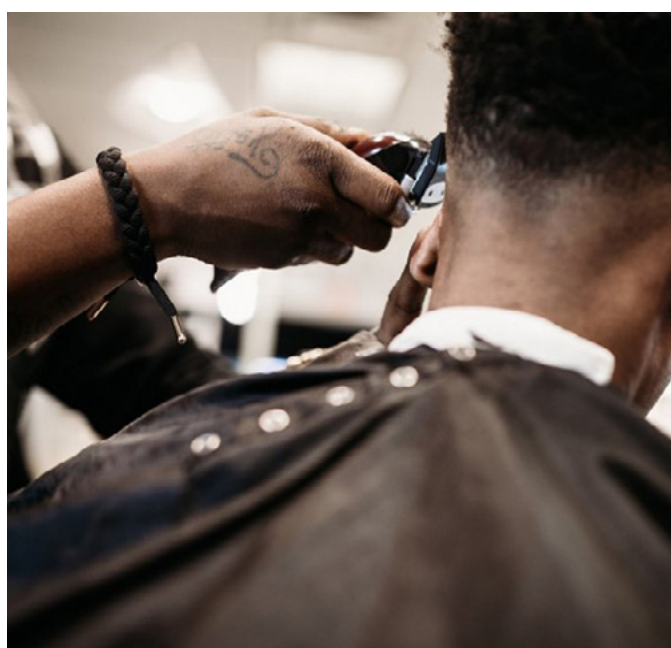
### Key findings

#### Changes between partner organisations

1. As a result of MoU, most funded partners reported much stronger, more 'collegiate' working relationships. The sharing of job opportunities between partners was particularly helpful.
2. Limited changes to inter-organisational working practices were identified.
3. Partners were enthusiastic about possible future work together, although many regarded this as funding dependent. It's not yet clear how much of the CI approach will sustain.

#### Changes within funded partner organisations

4. Some partners explained that they had adopted the MoU idea of 'quality jobs', and/or had started recruiting more Black men into staff, mentor or freelancer roles. One partner reported moving into a new area of work – employment support – as a result of MoU.
5. Partners reported few other changes to the way they worked with young Black men, although for some this was because they had been working with the target group for a long time.
6. No partners were planning to seek future funding just for Black men aged 16–24; rather they intended to widen the target to encompass women, other minoritised groups and/or older age groups.



#### Changes beyond the partnerships

7. There was little evidence that the work of the CIPs had, yet, impacted on wider organisations, systems or processes. With time, further impact of MoU may be seen.
8. The ability to affect system change may have been limited by: programme design; issues within the CIPs; external factors.

## 4.1 The CIPs' theory of change

A high-level theory of change for the CIPs was developed in 2020 by programme partners (see Appendix 1). Alongside changes for young Black men, it identifies wider changes – between partner organisations, within partner organisations, and in the wider employment support system. Following a recommendation in the interim evaluation in late 2022, the CIPs set some additional indicators (see Appendix 2), further clarifying what such organisational and system change might look like. These are listed at the start of each section, below.

## 4.2 Changes between CIP partners

**Intended outcome:** Competitive organisations are working together collaboratively.

### Indicators of this change, identified by the CIPs:

- Key stakeholder agencies are signed up to a MoU Collective Impact charter.
- The MoU client-focused caseload management approach is continuing, and additional agencies are involved in this.
- MoU partners are collaborating outside of MoU.

## Changed relationships

Most partners reported stronger, more 'collegiate' relationships between CIP funded partners as a result of collaborating on MoU:

**We come across candidates that are wanting to do something in sport, ... or something in the creative industry. And it's been really helpful for me to know that I've got these two partners who I can just pick up the phone to and say, 'Hey, listen, I've got this great young man here who wants to get into the creative arts, or this young man who wants to get into the sports industry, can you help? Here's their details, get in touch with them'.**

*(Newham partner)*

**The trust has really, really increased and grown between us as partners. ... I've shared more information with these partners, and I've heard them share more with me, than on any other project we've delivered.**

*(Brent partner)*

Partners from both boroughs reported that the sharing of job opportunities between partners was often generous and fluid. One stakeholder described their CIP as 'almost the opposite to competitive'. Several also talked about being able to 'refer with trust' that their client would be well served.

**It's very different to, let's say, a third-party organisation. I've referred customers to third-party organisations. And we don't necessarily have that personal link, where usually I would send an email to someone, I hope they pick it up and hope they give this customer a call. Whereas with the way the [CIP] works, I can pick up the phone to [my MoU colleague] and say, 'I'm seeing to this guy now. Can I put him through to you? Or can you give this guy a call?' And I know nine times out of 10, it will be done within 24 to 48 hours. Whereas with other organisations, they may not get back to them in a week.**

*(Brent partner)*

In 2021, MoU won the Employment Related Services Association's Community Partnership of the Year.<sup>18</sup>

In both boroughs, improved relationships were reported by the core partners who worked together most often. However, not all partners reported such changed relationships. Of three partners for whom funding had stopped by 2023 (either as subcontracting had finished, or the ending of FSF or NCIL funding), two were no longer attending meetings or part of joint work. The third was occasionally involved.

It seems clear that these improved relationships will sustain beyond MoU. However, if changed working relationships are dependent on individuals, this may limit the impact of these changes – as people move on, those inter-organisational relationships may not last. Also, it is unclear whether the improved relationships are different from the legacy that might be expected from 'normal' partnership working.



## Changed ways of working

Towards the end of the programme, the MoU CIPs developed some helpful new ways of working, for example casework meetings, regular joint events, improvements to registration. This has built strong working relationships that we expect to sustain for some time beyond the funding period.

A WhatsApp group, started for partners in Brent to share job opportunities for young Black men, has continued beyond the funding period. It appears that other changes to inter-organisational systems and processes were temporary and are not likely to sustain beyond MoU. Systems put in place for MoU tended to be either makeshift (e.g. an Excel spreadsheet for sharing case details) and/or temporary (shared reporting just for the MoU grant). When discussing possible collaboration beyond MoU, one partner noted that an absence of data sharing agreements might hinder this with some organisations; these had not changed as a result of MoU.

<sup>18</sup> <https://ersa.org.uk/ersaawards22/community-partnership-of-the-year/>

## The future of the two collectives

At a learning event in late 2023, partners reflected that a three- to four-year timeframe may be insufficient for introducing a CI approach. There is no prescribed timeframe for CI, although commentators talk about CI approaches being 'long term'.<sup>19</sup>

A 2018 report noted that of the eight CI initiatives they studied, four years was the minimum for creating lasting social change.<sup>20</sup> It is also possible that the CIPs may have achieved more within the timeframe with greater shared understanding and stronger focus on goals.

It is perhaps too early to know the future for the CI approach within the two boroughs. However, in both CIPs, most partners said they would be keen to work with other CIP partners again. Some already had tentative plans to do so, for example by continuing the mentoring offer or collaborative work on employment-related events. Some were discussing possible joint funding bids; one noted that being able to reference having worked together previously on MoU was a positive selling point in new joint bids. Several partners talked about trying to maintain the MoU casework management approach, albeit in a lighter-touch way, and planned to continue to refer clients to partners with relevant specialisms.

At a learning event in November 2023 most partners caveated future plans as being funding dependent – which suggests that they may be less convinced of the benefits of CI in itself.

## 4.3 Inside individual partner organisations

**Intended outcome:** Partners are modelling the change we want to see.

### Indicators of this change, identified by the CIPs:

- Collecting data and reporting on outcomes for young Black men
- Training for all staff on why we are focusing on young Black men
- Young Black men have a voice at every level, including on governance boards
- Senior leaders are actively championing the MoU aim and approach
- Organisations are applying for/securing further funding to continue focused support for young Black men

MoU has left a legacy inside many of the organisations involved in the CIPs, although arguably to a lesser extent than had been hoped.

Some partners pointed to significant changes that had happened for them:

- One small community organisation reported notable changes to their work in part as a result of MoU. They had got into a new field – employment support – that they were hoping to continue in. They also developed a new website and a database.
- Two partners had recruited more young Black men as staff, mentors and freelancers as a result of MoU.
- One now has a project manager dedicated to attracting young Black men, although this organisation has a number of programmes for this target group outside of MoU.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Schmitz, P. (2019) Funding the Long Game in Collective Impact. <https://collectiveimpactforum.org/resource/funding-the-long-game-in-collective-impact/>

<sup>20</sup> [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/does\\_collective\\_impact\\_really\\_make\\_an\\_impact](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/does_collective_impact_really_make_an_impact)

- Two partners had adopted MOU's idea of quality jobs, primarily defined by LLW+. One said they now only work with employers offering LLW+. One had developed good relationships with local job centres through MoU, and planned to use these as outreach locations beyond the programme.

Two partners, one in each borough, reported having improved their monitoring of client demographics over the MoU period. One reported that as a result of MoU they had:

**Started gathering data to reflect more social value which enables us to dissect data on young Black men, exposing trends and therefore enabling us to reflect on learning and consider appropriate action**

*(Newham partner)*

In terms of other planned indicators of internal system change, we are not aware of senior leaders in partner organisations championing a CI approach or of staff receiving training on why MoU was focusing on young Black men – although a few partners did report presenting to staff on MoU and related issues. Two explained that, while the programme was welcome, they had always worked with young Black men, so MoU did not provide a ‘wow moment’. One of these reported that work they were doing internally on diversity and racism would have happened anyway.

### **Partners’ future work with young Black men**

All partners already worked with young Black men prior to MoU and planned to continue to do so. However, several noted that they would not be seeking further funding for such a narrow target group; rather they intended to widen their work to include women and/or expand the age criteria.



## **4.4 Changes beyond the partnerships**

**Intended outcome:** A focus on improving employment outcomes for young black men is embedded in borough strategies and within key stakeholder organisations.

### **Indicators of this change, identified by the CIPs:**

- Key stakeholder agencies have adopted the inclusive employer toolkit
- Senior leaders from key stakeholder agencies are actively engaged with the MoU CIPs (e.g. hosting events, attending CIP meetings, committing to CIP actions)
- MoU aim (improving employment outcomes for young Black men) and/or approach (CIP) are embedded in relevant borough strategies (e.g. Brent Black Community Action Plan)
- The good practice actions modelled by the funded MoU partner organisations (above) are adopted by non-funded partners

There is, as yet, limited evidence of wider system change due to the CIPs. In terms of intended indicators, we are not aware of any organisations outside the partnerships signing up to the charters, and uptake of the employer toolkit is reported to be low. We do not have any evidence of changes in the practice of external organisations as a result of MoU.



MoU leads from both borough councils reported a limited impact of MoU on their wider council agenda. In both boroughs, largely as a response to the George Floyd murder and an increased interest in the Black Lives Matter movement, new work has been undertaken in this area. Newham Council introduced the TRID (Tackling Racism, Injustice and Disparity)<sup>21</sup> programme; there was no evidence that MoU had affected TRID. Brent Council produced the Brent Black Community Action Plan (BBCAP),<sup>22</sup> and a BCIP representative sat on an early BBCAP employment steering group. BBCAP mentions MoU, and its employment section contains a plan to 'Establish a local commission to review and develop the opportunities and routes to success available for young people aged 16–25 years'.<sup>23</sup> A Brent Council respondent speculated that the focus on this age group may have emerged more clearly in part because of MOU.

An unfunded DWP partner explained that presentations from an MoU partner had been 'inspiring' and had increased their team's understanding of and focus on the needs of this group. The partner said they intended to keep on using a recording of one of the presentations with new staff. There may be other changes in organisations that we are not aware of.

With time, further impact of MoU may be seen. Partners shared two early examples of changes. In Brent, AWL was asked to look at the feasibility of replicating an MoU-style project in Ealing. The results of this will be known after publication of this report. Exit Foundation was funded through FSF to generate referrals for NCIP, which they did successfully. The Newham Council MoU lead reported that the DWP had promoted it as an 'exemplar of good practice' in a collaborative, local approach to supporting young Black men.

Partners were clear on the importance of wider system change, to reduce long-term inequity and improve employment outcomes. However, several stakeholders expressed disappointment that the CIPs had not had a greater impact on wider organisations and systems in Brent and Newham. They felt that the CIPs had failed to make the most of the opportunities presented by changes in the wider context during this time, for example the resurgence of Black Lives Matter.

21 <https://www.newham.gov.uk/homepage/225/trid---tackling-racism-inequality-and-disproportionality>

22 <https://www.brent.gov.uk/neighbourhoods-and-communities/community-priorities/brent-black-community-action-plan#bbcaph>

23 Streamlined version, p.4.



## 4.5 Difficulties with system change

Changes in organisations and systems take time to come about, and changes may be seen beyond the lifetime of this evaluation. There are also clear limits to the level of change that a relatively small programme like MoU could be expected to make. However, there are a number of possible factors that may have limited what the CIPs have – so far – been able to achieve in this area.

### Programme design

1. **Lack of clarity on strategy for system change.** The theory of change for the CIPs is helpfully clear and succinct, but little detail existed about system change until quite late in the programme. Some partners described the programme as lacking a 'blueprint' for what such change might look like and how it might be achieved.
2. **Targets and monitoring focused primarily on outcomes for young men,** with little emphasis on system change.
3. **Insufficient funding and time may have been available for system change.**

### Issues within the CIPs

1. **Lack of understanding of the dual goals of MoU.** Strategic partners hoped that, by working together, organisations involved in supporting young Black men into employment would proactively identify and remedy aspects of systems and process that were not working well, and that this would create change lasting beyond the CIPs. It's not clear the extent to which CIP staff – especially on the frontline – were fully aware of this.
2. **Lack of agreement on responsibility for system change.** Most delivery partners felt that wider system change was not their remit, usually seeing it as the responsibility of the strategic partners. That there were two CIPs, and they were part of a wider MoU programme, led by ARE, that had clear responsibility for London-wide system change, may have added to the impression that ARE was responsible for system change generally.
3. **Lack of focus on changing internal practices.** The indicators for system change developed by ARE and the CIPs in early 2023 were helpful, but it's not clear how much work was done to achieve these. Not all CIP funded partners had very senior staff involved in MoU, and it is these people who might be expected to drive internal change.

### External factors

1. **Difficulties engaging external partners, in whom change might have been seen.** Many of the partners – strategic, delivery and backbone – put a lot of effort into trying to engage employers and other unfunded partners, but few were closely involved.
2. **Few organisations specifically monitor outcomes for young Black men.** That many organisations, including unfunded partners like DWP, do not monitor young Black men as a separate group, makes it tricky to get evidence of changes in numbers of men reached, or their outcomes.



## 5. Summary and recommendations

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**MoU has been a ground-breaking programme, targeting resources towards a very specific group of people – young Black men – who are particularly disadvantaged in the jobs market.**

As part of a significant strand of the wider MoU programme, the two CIPs worked hard at implementing CI. Strong core groups of funded partners generally worked well together, usefully sharing their learning. New funding was brought into the partnerships. Good working relationships were forged that are likely to sustain beyond MoU, although changes to inter-organisational working practices were limited. Some working practices in partners' own organisations have changed as a result of involvement in the programme. As yet there is limited evidence of significant changes in organisations and wider systems as a result of MoU, although it is still too early to properly judge the success of this aspect of the programme.

The MoU CIPs did quite well in achieving job outcomes for young Black men, with achievements roughly in line with other, similar programmes. They did very well in terms of getting quality jobs for young men; 81% were at salaries on or above London Living Wage.

Defining 'business as usual' delivery is hard, but it does not appear that the MoU CIPs achieved more than BAU. While MoU's focus on young Black men in Newham and Brent was unique, partners did not report very significant differences in day-to-day working relationships through the programme; perhaps MoU was not significantly different from BAU. Relatively limited funding may also have affected implementation, and there may have been limited focus within the CIPs on full implementation of CI. It is possible that with more time the model may have developed further.

Recommendations arising from this pilot of collective impact are summarised below, based on the MoU experience of what worked and what did not.



## 5.1 Developing effective collective impact partnerships

### Developing a shared understanding

- Create shared terms of reference early on to ensure shared understanding, including on:
  - › The nature of the programme and the CI approach;
  - › Expectations of partners regarding autonomy and ownership;
  - › Detailed roles and responsibilities.
- Regularly review these terms of reference, and update as necessary.
- Ensure that staff at all levels are clear on the nature of the work. Senior staff may be more involved in the early, planning stages and then delegate to more junior staff. In this case it's vital that these delivery staff also understand the approach and their responsibilities within it.
- Manage staff turnover by ensuring a full induction of new staff into the nature of the programme and their and others' roles and responsibilities.

### Management and relationships

- Backbones:
  - › Backbones should be fully funded for their backbone work. If the backbone is a statutory organisation, this may bring issues in terms of eligibility for grant funding.
  - › Backbones should ideally not be funders of the CI programme or of the partners' other work.
  - › One backbone may be more effective than diffusing the role across many organisations.
- CI programmes are likely to need to fundraise and bring in more funding. This needs careful management to ensure it doesn't distort power dynamics.
- To keep all partners fully engaged and playing an equal role needs regular, intentional work, with a focus on transparency. This could include support from backbone organisations, or a neutral party outside the partnership, to ascertain what is working well, and what might be improved, from each partner's perspective.
- To foster self direction and accountability and to maximise impact, partnerships need to develop ownership. What this looks like, and how it might be achieved, should be discussed from the start. Funder-initiated CI may need to make particular efforts to facilitate this.

### Working together

- Find ways to work together, regularly. This fosters strong working relationships and enables the sharing of learning. It can improve outcomes for users and can support system change.
- Promote shared planning to facilitate focus on goals, transparency and joined-up and joint working.



## Shared measurement

- Develop a detailed theory of change and from this identify activities and outcomes to measure. Prioritise these to keep measurement simple and proportionate. Strike a balance between making a system bespoke and useful, while not making it too complicated.
- Be careful that measurement systems and targets do not distort delivery by encouraging a focus on one aspect of delivery over another. Pilot all new systems.
- Shared measurement must take into account the capacity of partners. Have open discussions at the start about what is appropriate for the level and timescale of funding.
- Create detailed and clear guidance, from the outset, about responsibilities and expectations around all stages of data processing: collection, input, cleaning and reporting.
- Support must be provided for data collection, and the purpose and importance of data must be reiterated. Regular sharing of aggregated data and use of findings would support this.

## Time and funding for collective impact

- Allow sufficient time for collective impact to develop. In the case of MoU, partners felt four years' delivery time was insufficient – although the programme was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Allow time for an initial development phase where the approach is developed by a small group of partners, providing a clearer basis on which to bring in wider partners.
- Consider the proportion of funding for collective impact relative to partners 'business as usual' funding. It may be harder to change internal practice if the larger proportion of funding incentivises people to work in ways that are competitive rather than collaborative.
- Ensure that tasks like data management, programme management and backbone support are sufficiently funded.



## 5.2 Improving employment outcomes for young Black men

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- Be clear on the target group in terms of their proximity to the labour market. This affects the interventions required and the outcomes that can be achieved.
- Develop a succinct, clear rationale for the need to focus on young Black men as a specific group, because some organisations may not wish to prioritise one group over another. Where organisations are not able to develop specific targeted programmes, it may still be possible to find ways to improve their work with young Black men within a wider equality agenda.
- Consider new ways to help organisations understand that demographic monitoring is inextricably linked with any attempt to better meet the needs of specific groups. This is important within the partnership itself, and also in organisations the partnership is trying to engage in systemic change.

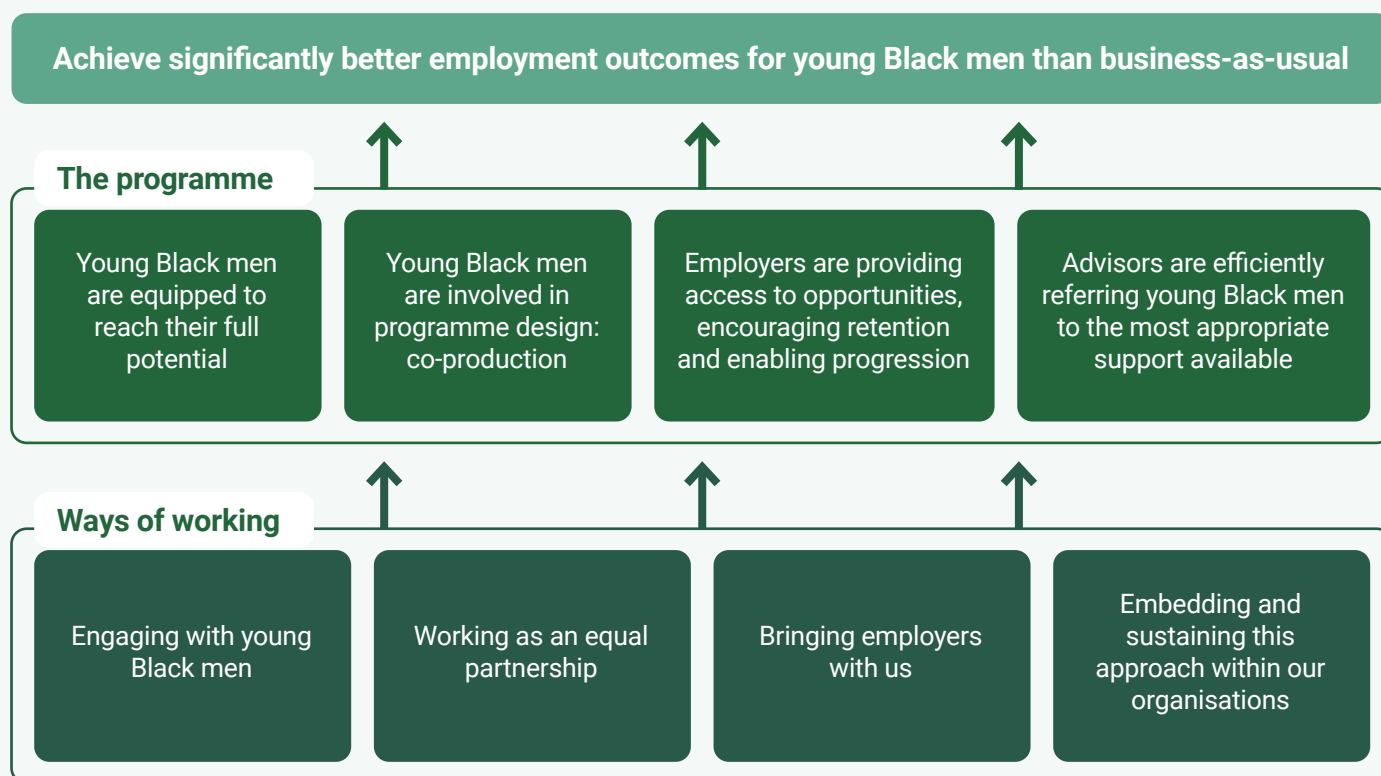
## 5.3 Achieving system change

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- Agree, from the outset, what systemic change looks like, how it will be achieved and measured. Clear roles and responsibilities for achieving these changes are vital.
- Consider the importance of diversity within a new partnership. A diverse partnership with clear, differentiated roles, is more likely to involve very regular and interdependent joint working. This in turn may help them identify – and then work to remedy – aspects of inter-organisational working that need improvement.
- Plan for user involvement from the start, with clear processes, goals, timescales, expectations and evaluation. Iterative development – itself involving users and their feedback – will help keep it focused on meeting the needs of the organisation and users.

## Appendix 1: MoU CIPs' theory of change

### January 2020 Theory of Change



## Appendix 2: MoU’s indicators of system change

Level of change	Change ambition	Indicators of system change
Within our organisation	MoU partners are modelling the change we want to see.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collecting data and reporting on outcomes for young Black men</li> <li>- Training for all staff on why we are focusing on young Black men</li> <li>- Young Black men have a voice at every level, including on governance boards</li> <li>- Senior leaders are actively championing the MoU aim and approach</li> <li>- Organisations are applying for/securing further funding to continue focused support for young Black men</li> </ul>
Across our Collective Impact Partnership	Competitive organisations are working together collaboratively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key stakeholder agencies are signed up to a MoU Collective Impact charter</li> <li>- The MoU client-focused caseload management approach is continuing, and additional agencies are involved in this</li> <li>- MoU partners are collaborating outside of MoU</li> </ul>
Across the wider system	A focus on improving employment outcomes for young Black men is embedded in borough strategies and within key stakeholder organisations.*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key stakeholder agencies have adopted the inclusive employer toolkit</li> <li>- Senior leaders from key stakeholder agencies are actively engaged with the MoU Collective Impact Partnership (e.g. hosting events, attending CIP meetings, committing to CIP actions)</li> <li>- MoU aim (improving employment outcomes for young Black men) and/or approach (collective impact partnership) are embedded in relevant borough strategies (e.g. Brent Black Community Action Plan)</li> <li>- The good practice actions modelled by the funded MoU partner organisations (above) are adopted by non-funded partners</li> </ul>

\*Key stakeholder agencies will vary between boroughs. They include: JobCentre Plus, FE and HE institutions, housing associations, major local employers.

## Appendix 3: MoU CIPs' Principles of collective impact

These principles were based on the work of [www.collectiveimpactforum.org](http://www.collectiveimpactforum.org), and the conditions of collective impact originally described by Kania and Kramer in 2011.<sup>24</sup>

### Desired approach for the MoU CIP

### Risks to the CI principles

1. Common agenda: All participants have a shared vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon actions.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A shared vision for improving employment outcomes for young Black men</li> <li>- Commitment to challenge usual ways of working – acknowledging that these have not ended employment disparities for young Black men</li> <li>- Directing existing resources to achieve the common goal of improving employment outcomes for young Black men</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some agencies continue to operate business as usual</li> <li>- MoU is seen as a short-term initiative – not as an opportunity to fundamentally change ways of working</li> <li>- Additional funding is seen as the main solution</li> </ul> |
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2. Shared measurement: There is agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported, with a short list of common indicators identified and used across all participating organisations for learning and improvement.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agreeing a short list of common outcomes and indicators to measure these</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Each agency working to its own outcome targets – MoU CIP outcomes seen as separate to these</li> </ul> |
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3. Mutually reinforcing activities: Engagement of a diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinating a set of differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Producing an Action Plan which includes all activities which contribute to the common goal (not just those which are additionally funded through MoU)</li> <li>- Setting measurable targets for all activities in the Action Plan</li> <li>- Collectively reviewing all activities and progress towards targets</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Action Plan only includes MoU-funded activities</li> <li>- Target setting only applied to MoU-funded activities</li> <li>- Performance monitoring MoU-funded activities</li> </ul> |
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<sup>24</sup> [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)



**Desired approach for the MoU CIP**

**Risks to the CI principles**

4. Continuous communication: Frequent and structured open communication across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

- CIP is a partnership of equals
- All partners are engaged in all decision making and in reviewing Action Plan and agreeing future actions
- Lack of trust between partners
- Some partners not engaged in decision making

5. Backbone support: Ongoing support by independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative, including guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilising funding.

- MoU support is viewed as independent of any single partner interests
- Perception that council support for MoU is not independent





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**Authors:** Sally Cupitt with Shehnaaz Latif and Rozia Hussain

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