

Targeted approach needed to help black people with mental health problems to get work

Mental health and employment services should ensure they offer Black and minority ethnic people the right support to overcome the discrimination many face in the labour market, according to a briefing paper published by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health.

[Evening the Odds](#), by Patience Seebohm, argues that Black people are disadvantaged in many spheres of life, particularly in the jobs market and mental health services. All people with mental health problems face barriers in getting and keeping work. But these barriers can be even greater for people from Black and minority ethnic communities.

Evening the Odds says mental health and employment services can help to overcome these barriers by offering targeted support for Black and minority ethnic people to achieve their hopes and fulfil their potential.

Evening the Odds calls on services to put a greater focus on helping all people with mental health problems to make their own recovery as they define it for themselves. It says employment workers need support to increase their skills and confidence in dealing with racism. And it calls for service users to be given a say in how services are developed and in monitoring how well they are doing.

Evening the Odds shows how two local schemes have helped to overcome the barriers by building up people's confidence and offering support tailored to their needs and wishes.

Dr Bob Grove, Sainsbury Centre director of employment, said: "Most people with mental health problems can work and want to work. But they face major barriers to getting and keeping jobs. For Black people these barriers can be especially hard to overcome. Mental health and employment services need to be able to respond positively to this challenge and offer targeted support where it is needed."

Patience Seebohm, an independent researcher, said: "Where mental health and employment services work closely with community groups and really understand and respect what people want to achieve, they can make a real difference. Evening the Odds offers practical advice about how this can be achieved on the ground."

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