



## **Independent report finds institutional racism exists at North Kensington charity ‘The Westway Trust’**

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The Westway Trust has today published its independent review into “whether institutional racism has existed, (exists) within the Westway Trust and, if so, how it has manifested and its impact on the communities served by the Trust.” The report was written by Dr Habashi, FRSA, on behalf of the Tutu Foundation UK and is the culmination of an eighteen-month review into the charity situated in the heart of North Kensington, established in 1971 as a result of the building of the A40 (M) Westway. The review team included Christine Okiya, Secretary to the Review; Bevan Powell, Strategic Director; and independent advisors Dr Bankole Cole and Charles Crichlow QPM.

The review was commissioned by the leadership of the Trust in response to concerns about discrimination raised by the community of North Kensington. This followed years of campaigning by local community members who insist that the report is just the beginning of the task of enacting change at Westway Trust. More work will follow, to build upon the findings and recommendations of this critical independent review. The area is one of the most densely populated and multi-cultural in central London and is home to roughly 38,000 residents from over 120 countries.

The report is based on a review of 19,000 documents, 94 interviews and the creation of a Community Advisory Group to the review. The main findings of the review are that there is:

- Racism - direct, indirect, and institutional racism.
- Historical lack of effective leadership, which values diversity, equality, and inclusion.
- Historical dysfunctionality between the Board of Trustees and the executive management team which was reported to have resulted in a lack of cohesion and a failure to deal with and ‘grip’ key issues which strike at the heart of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- A culture of bullying, indifference, and arrogance.
- Tension in the use of the land in terms of community benefit and commercial interest.
- Structural issues – representation in the Board of Trustees and executive management team.
- A deficit of cultural literacy and understanding.
- Discriminatory practices and behaviours which have impacted BAME heritage staff (including women) and the Black community and which were reported to have enabled a range of behaviours and attitudes to go unchecked.



- A lack of corporate memory and failure to understand and recognise the significance of the area in terms of race, race relations, civil rights, and community activism.
- Certain failures to engage and consult in a meaningful manner with the African Caribbean community in the area.
- The creation and embedding of a narrative about certain sections of the community (Black, working class, women) (this includes staff) based on negative stereotypes which has had a detrimental impact on treatment and interaction with the Trust.
- Unfair and discriminatory decision making around a number of contested 'sites', which are significant to the diverse community of North Kensington.
- The belief that the Trust has not been using the land as intended and that heritage has been undermined.
- Whilst there are indicators of the Trust's programme of transformation, re-establishing trust, and confidence with certain sections of the community, in particular the African Caribbean community will take time.

The recommendations made in the report are part of a reparatory justice approach, which includes the following: formal public apology, guarantees of non-repetition, restitution (individual and institutional), compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction. It also recommends the creation of a centre for civil rights and culture.

**Reverend. Canon Nontombi Naomi Tutu, Tutu Foundation UK Ambassador and daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Mungi Ngomane, Tutu Foundation UK Patron and granddaughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu said:**

"2020 has been a year in which people all over the world have been challenged to look at existing structures and organizations. We have been made to see clearly the ways in which we have failed to build institutions and communities that recognize and celebrate the amazing diversity of the human family. The Westway Report is a document that offers not just a report of where this particular organization is and how it got here. It also offers an opportunity for us to use it as a model for the work of racial healing that is so needed in many institutions, communities and countries. The Tutu Foundation UK is to be commended for the work that it has facilitated in researching and publishing this powerful report.

"Thank you, often feels like such an inadequate word, yet it is the only word we have to express the gratitude we have for the courage and commitment it has taken to undertake this work by the TFUK and the Westway Trust. Thank you. Siyabulela."

**The Rt. Hon Lord Paul Boateng, Tutu Foundation UK Ambassador, said:**

"The Tutu Foundation is to be commended for its role in producing a report rooted in insightful and objective analysis which has taken an unflinching look at a long running scandal in this part of North West London and come up with a series of recommendations that must be



implemented without delay. My early years as a community lawyer at the Paddington Law Centre on the Harrow Road bring back memories of the hope and expectation of the local community that was subsequently cruelly betrayed.

“Archbishop Tutu’s life work reminds us that reconciliation and healing demand justice and practical reparation. This report calls urgently for a long continuing injustice inflicted upon the black community to at last be recognised and for early action to redress a deep rooted wrong.”

**Toby Laurent Belson, Chair of Westway Trust, said:**

“The Westway Trust apologises unreservedly for all the harm it has done through the kind of practices described in this report. This report is the culmination of years of sacrifice from our community and it is very much the beginning of a process of change. I think it speaks volumes that myself and other trustees who have come in this year are amongst those owed that apology and it is now our responsibility to turn this vital organisation around.

“There is much still to be done and it must be acknowledged that a traumatised community must be central to its own healing. We believe Westway Trust is now, finally, in a position to undertake that work with community leadership in place and the intention to continue to centre our community in all we do.”

**Mark Lister, Interim Chief Executive (CE) of the Westway Trust, said:**

“The findings of this review are indeed alarming. Shining a light on these systemic problems as well as practices and behaviours is hugely important and a new programme that tackles fundamental systemic change will follow from this review. I joined at the end of July as Interim CE and feel privileged to work alongside the community at this challenging time to bridge the gap to a citizen centred recruitment of a permanent CE.

“Institutional racism is shamefully still a feature of many British institutions from the top down and I hope other organisations whether at community or national level will draw from the commitment of local citizens in North Kensington and the new WT leadership to open themselves up to their racism and pursue the systemic change that is so badly needed. Ultimately society can only be enriched by tackling deep seated issues like this for a fairer society.”

**Niles Hailstones, Co-Chair of the Community Action Group, said:**

“There is a clear case and need for reparations to develop neglected areas of the Trust’s responsibility. This is a large-scale undertaking that will take many years to fulfil but must be undertaken to regain faith in the community and faith in itself and its mission. Let this work be used as a road map to lead us forward into a new era of real community leadership and regeneration in its truest and realest context.



“The work must not be delayed; we must start the work now. People, families, and communities have been damaged and delay further damages them and the relationships between the Trust and the community. We must start bridging the gap. It will not be an easy task and there will be many more challenges ahead. However uncertain the future may be, we the Community Advisory Group to the review remain resolute and committed to the realization and fruition of the reparation and restoration of our local community by all means necessary and look forward to developing a new model and paradigm that truly works for the beneficiaries the land was originally intended for.”

**Angela Spence, Vice Chair of Westway Trust said:**

As a board member who was at the Trust at the time the Trust was publicly accused of institutional racism by members of the community and calls for an investigation to take place were made it was a shameful place to be.

No black person wants to be a part of such an organisation where unchecked discriminatory racist behaviour takes place and so it was vital that these calls were answered. The report now shows that those members of the community namely Westway 23 were right and just to demand an investigation, which from the report shows that it was long overdue.

It is both a sad day that we live in a time when charities are able to behave in this way, but it is also a good day for shining a spotlight on what can be achieved when power and privilege is challenged.

**ENDS**

**Notes to Editors:**

The report will be available on

<https://www.tutufoundationuk.org/westway-trust-review-launch>

[www.westwayreview.com](http://www.westwayreview.com) and [www.ircommunityadvisorygroup.co.uk](http://www.ircommunityadvisorygroup.co.uk)

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