

# Shaheem Carty

## Rising Star Award

### Is there an organisation website address (in relation to the individual)?

[www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/news/lottery-boost-set-strengthen-mental-health-wellbeing-and-skills-birminghams-young-african-caribbean-men-0](http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/news/lottery-boost-set-strengthen-mental-health-wellbeing-and-skills-birminghams-young-african-caribbean-men-0)

### Describe the work of the individual being nominated

Shaheem is a shining example of a young person that doesn't always get the recognition he deserves, and he certainly does not demand thanks or attention for what he does. He is committed to supporting the work of the centre and has invested a lot of his time in our Shifting the Dial Project. Shaheem is 22 years old, yet displays the aptitude, skills and abilities of someone of more significant years. He is reliable, trustworthy and committed – skills not always recognised in young people in today's society. He has shown a unique skill for interviewing as part of the project, instantly putting people at ease and making them really feel listened to. He knows how to ask the right questions in the right way and this approach has achieved significant results. He is a clear thinker with a practical solution-focused approach and an unwavering *can do* attitude. He is an unsung hero for social injustice and campaigns tirelessly for change alongside the Centre for Mental Health, and within a variety of other projects. Ultimately though, he is modest and underestimates his own talents which is why we want to nominate him as a genuine example of a rising star. This boy is going places!

### Give examples of the projects or work the individual has done

Shaheem has committed a considerable amount of his time at the centre supporting our Shifting the Dial Project, an evaluation of youth projects in Birmingham which aim to boost young black men's resilience. Shaheem has conducted research interviews with young people and captured their experiences as authentically as possible. He also helped design a culturally relevant and exciting interactive training day for peer researchers. He recently co-facilitated this to our latest recruits, who gave the training an average of 8.8 out of 10. Shaheem adds value to the project by offering practical solutions to overcoming challenges, such as how to increase the completion of surveys, to enabling us to track participants' progress. Shaheem was instrumental in the creation of an experiential exhibition, which took the audience on a journey of a young person as they grew up. Young men used their lived experience to create and run an immersive art exhibition. This was designed to put adults in the shoes of young black people from disadvantaged backgrounds who are held back from opportunities and unable to pursue their ambitions. By walking the audience through their lives, it highlighted the impact of experiences of poverty, school exclusion, racism, life on the road and criminal justice. This was first exhibited in Soho and was viewed by over 200 people. One attendee was so impressed that she invited Shaheem and his colleagues to showcase their exhibition in Sweden, an opportunity they could not turn down. As a result, the exhibition was shown in Sweden at an international mental health conference, which was attended by 500 global mental health leaders. Shaheem made a direct personal contribution to ensure that health inequalities were a key focus of the conference.

### What has been the impact of the projects or work that the individual has contributed to?

In his role as a peer researcher at Centre for Mental Health, Shaheem has made significant contributions to improving the wellbeing of young men experiencing social exclusion and exposed to serious youth violence. He helped carry out the evaluation of a mental health and wellbeing project in Haringey by conducting interviews, analysing themes and helping to write the publication *Unlocking a different future* ([www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-09/CentreforMentalHealth\\_Unlocking\\_a\\_different\\_future.pdf](http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-09/CentreforMentalHealth_Unlocking_a_different_future.pdf))

This report highlighted the project's impact in improving wellbeing, increasing access to education, employment and training, access to services and reducing offending. This report was launched at the House of Lords, where Shaheem presented on issues affecting these young men and shared ideas on solutions. This was to an audience of policy makers, commissioners and practitioners across criminal justice, healthcare and the voluntary sector. Through his excellent analytical work and creativity, Shaheem's contributions have helped to sustain the wellbeing service, which has been able to support over 300 young men. He continues to support the project in a paid capacity, through doing research and engaging young people.