

# PRESS RELEASE

30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

For immediate release



## Black History Month UK 2020

October 1st marks the start of Black History Month UK, observed since 1987, it is a time to celebrate the achievements and contributions of African and Caribbean heritage peoples to UK culture and history.

### What is Black History Month UK?

Black History Month UK was the brainchild of Akyaaba Addai-Sebo, a special projects officer at the Greater London Council. He wanted to boost the self-esteem of Black British children and young adults by educating them on the achievements of Black people living in the UK.

Taking inspiration from Black History Month (also known as African-American History Month) in the United States. The first official event took place on 1st October 1987 at County Hall.

It has since evolved into a national movement that is observed throughout the UK. It is also recognised in other parts of the world during October in Ireland and the Netherlands. In the US, where Black History Month originated, the awareness month is held in February. It is also celebrated in Canada during the month of February, where it was officially recognised in 1995.

### Why do we celebrate Black History Month UK 2020?

Did you know that there has been a Black presence in the UK since Roman Times? Or that there were Black Tudors, Stuarts and Georgians? Black History Month is our chance to celebrate these unsung heroes of Black British history whose contributions have for too long been ignored and forgotten.

Black History Month provides you with the chance to find out more about Black Britain's rich and varied long history dating back to antiquity times. It's a time to celebrate the achievements and contributions of Black Britons who helped to shape the country amongst the Black British community and the wider UK population.

It also provides us with a space to tackle racism heads-on by encouraging government, institutions and corporations to embrace and adopt equality and diversity policies.

### What is the theme of Black History Month UK 2020?

2020 is the year the world finally started talking about race and anti-black racism. The brutal murder of George Floyd in the United States by police generated shock waves across the globe and lead to thousands of people taking to the streets to demand an end to racism.

Here in the UK, young activists took to the streets to demand an end to racial inequality in education, health and employment. Sparking important conversations over Britain's colonial past and its role in the Atlantic Slave Trade within government, business and the media.

This October we're going to take a look back at the Black British activists of the 1960s and 1980s who used 'Non-Violent Civil Disobedience' to help achieve racial equality in the UK. Shining a light on the Civil Rights activists behind the [\*\*Bristol Bus Boycott\*\*](#) and the [\*\*Lewisham Mums against SUS laws\*\*](#) who paved the way for today's young Black British activists.

### **How will it be commemorated in 2020?**

Black History Month is a great opportunity for people from all backgrounds to educate themselves on Black British history and the often-overlooked people who have made a difference to the country.

Please check your local authority website for news on any exhibitions or events they're holding in commemoration of Black History Month UK. Or the websites of your local museum or other local cultural institutions for any special events they may be running to mark the occasion.

Alternatively, visit the [www.ibhm-uk.org](http://www.ibhm-uk.org) website for ideas on how to celebrate UK's Black History month at home with your friends and family.

Brands supporting Black History Month this year include [\*\*The Black Farmer\*\*](#), [\*\*Bumble\*\*](#), Gap UK, [\*\*Instagram\*\*](#), Royal Mail and [\*\*Sainsburys plc\*\*](#).

TV and satellite channels supporting Black History Month this year include BBC, Sky, Channel Four, ITV, Britbox, BT Sport, NHS and Together TV.

To mark Black History Month and its continued commitment to giving diverse voices a platform in the UK, Spotify is shining a spotlight on the Black artists and talent who have made a difference in a very challenging 2020.

[Ends]

1. Black History Month UK website: [www.ibhm-uk.org](http://www.ibhm-uk.org)

2. Black History Month UK Youtube channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJktyhU48P\\_mWHuoqoU1GIw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJktyhU48P_mWHuoqoU1GIw)

3. [\*\*Bristol Bus Boycott\*\*](#)

In 1963, Roy Hackett, Paul Stephenson, Audley Evans and Guy Bailey joined together to organise a boycott to force the Bristol Omnibus Company to change its racist policies that stopped Black and Asian people from working on the buses. The protest attracted national attention and ultimately lead to the passing of the Race Relations Act in 1965 that banned all discrimination in the workplace

4. [\*\*Lewisham Mums against SUS laws\*\*](#)

A group of Lewisham mums led by Mavis Best, campaigned to stop the SUS laws in the UK with support of Paul Boateng (future Home Secretary and Labour Peer). The law was abolished on 27 August 1981 but three years later the government introduced the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which reintroduced stop and search.