



**BCB**

Better Communities  
Bradford



# 5<sup>TH</sup> YEAR ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

“Celebrating five years of resilience, growth,  
and impact in Bradford’s communities.”

# Table of Contents

Content	Page No.

 Click on the content or page number to go to the selected page

# A Message from our CEO

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the past year, I am overwhelmed with gratitude and pride in what we have achieved together. At Better Communities Bradford (BCB), our mission to empower individuals and strengthen our community has never felt more meaningful. This year has been a testament to the resilience of our community and the incredible impact we can achieve when we work together. One of our proudest accomplishments has been the growth of the Empowered Minds Project. This initiative brings together sewing classes, employment empowerment, education, and mental health counselling to provide women with the tools they need to thrive. By combining practical skills with therapeutic support, the project has helped participants gain confidence, build employability, and improve their overall wellbeing. It is a shining example of how holistic, person-centred approaches can create lasting change.



Another highlight has been the Young Women in Society Project, which engaged young women in conversations about societal and cultural expectations, self-esteem, and career aspirations. These workshops fostered resilience and empowerment, setting the stage for future initiatives that will continue to support young women in reaching their full potential.

Our new Anti-Muslim Hate Workshops have also played a critical role in our work this year. By raising awareness, challenging stereotypes, and equipping participants with practical tools, these workshops have inspired action against Islamophobia and laid the groundwork for the ambitious Project FAITH – Fighting Against Islamophobia – Together for Hope. This initiative will expand our reach across Yorkshire, fostering interfaith understanding and social cohesion.

Additionally, our English Classes have continued to provide vital support for members of our community, helping women gain confidence in their communication skills and unlocking opportunities for employment and further education. These classes not only enhance language skills but also serve as a gateway for participants to connect with wider society and build meaningful relationships.

Another high impact project has been the Women's Nutrition and Fitness Project. Combining walking and exercise classes with nutritional education, this initiative has seen remarkable success in providing the knowledge to improve physical health, promoting mental wellbeing, and fostering social connections. By integrating fitness with practical knowledge, we've empowered women to take control of their health and lead more active lives.

While we have celebrated many successes, the growing demand for our services highlights the ongoing need for organisations like ours. We remain committed to rising to this challenge, expanding our reach, and finding new ways to support those who need us most.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our funders, including the Albert Hunt Trust, The Brelm's Trust, National Lottery Community Fund, Henry Smith Foundation, Morrisons Foundation, Sports England, and Garfield Weston, whose support enables us to deliver these life-changing projects.

To the people we serve, members of the community, our local schools, partner community organisations and our funders, your collaboration and support has been invaluable. And to our dedicated staff, project leaders trustees, and volunteers – you are the heart and soul of BCB.

As we look to the future, I am filled with hope and determination. Together, we will continue to create opportunities, inspire change, and build a community where everyone can flourish. Thank you for your unwavering support and for being part of this journey.

Warm regards,

**Abbas Najib**

CEO, Better Communities Bradford



# A Message from the Chair of Trustees

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the past year, I am overwhelmed with gratitude and pride in what we have achieved together. At Better Communities Bradford (BCB), our mission to empower individuals and strengthen our community has never felt more meaningful. This year has been a testament to the resilience of our community and the incredible impact we can achieve when we work together. One of our proudest accomplishments has been the growth of the Empowered Minds Project. This initiative brings together sewing classes, employment empowerment, education, and mental health counselling to provide women with the tools they need to thrive. By combining practical skills with therapeutic support, the project has helped participants gain confidence, build employability, and improve their overall wellbeing. It is a shining example of how holistic, person-centred approaches can create lasting change.



What stands out to me is how well BCB balances delivery with reflection. The projects captured in this report – from trauma-informed mental health support to interfaith dialogue and women’s empowerment – are grounded in real evidence, designed through active listening, and implemented by people with lived experience of the issues they’re tackling. This is not just good community work – it is sector-leading practice.

As a board, we are particularly proud of the way our team has responded to emerging needs. Whether it’s addressing anti-Muslim hate, bridging the digital divide, or enabling women from diaspora communities to build independent livelihoods, BCB has remained agile and principled. These are not short-term fixes. They are long-term commitments to justice, dignity, and inclusion.

We are grateful to our funders and partners whose trust allows us to take this ambitious and responsive approach. Your support makes it possible to offer services that are free at the point of need, high in quality, and culturally sensitive. You've backed not only programmes, but also infrastructure – governance, safeguarding, evaluation, and professional development – which are essential for any organisation aiming to create sustainable change.

To all of you reading this – our funders, stakeholders, and community partners – thank you for standing with us. Your investment is not just appreciated; it is respected. We remain committed to delivering value, transparency, and social impact in everything we do.

**Ahminah Momoniat**

Chair of Trustees

Better Communities Bradford



# About us: Our Mission & Vision



Our Mission is to uplift the Bradford community, particularly in socially, economically, and educationally disadvantaged areas, by enhancing the availability of essential services, facilities, and knowledge for residents. As a grassroots, women-led charity, we are dedicated to empowering BAME women by expanding their access to vital resources and opportunities.

Our Vision is a thriving Bradford community where everyone, regardless of their background, has access to opportunities, is free from prejudice, and can lead fulfilling lives.



# About us: Our Structure

Better Communities Bradford (BCB) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), providing a legal foundation that allows us to operate as an independent entity with confidence and accountability. This structure enables effective resource management, staff employment, and impactful project delivery, ensuring we can meet the community's needs sustainably and focus on fostering positive change in Bradford.

BCB is led by five trustees, four women and one man, whose backgrounds reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. Recently, new trustees joined the board, bringing fresh ideas and energy while maintaining continuity. This balance allows us to adapt to emerging challenges while staying committed to our mission.

Our trustees meet quarterly to oversee strategy and progress. Additionally, our Community Leadership Council, comprising former trustees, community leaders, and stakeholders, enhances governance by offering valuable insights and strengthening our connection to the community. Together, these structures ensure BCB remains dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to evolving needs.

## About us: Our Values

**Inclusivity:** We embrace diversity and create spaces where everyone feels valued.

**Empowerment:** We equip individuals with the tools and confidence to transform their lives.

**Collaboration:** We believe in the power of partnerships to amplify impact.

**Integrity:** We are transparent, accountable, and dedicated to our mission.

**Compassion:** We approach our work with empathy and understanding





# About us: Our History

Better Communities Bradford (BCB) was established in 2019 as a grassroots, women-led charity dedicated to uplifting communities in socially and economically disadvantaged areas of Bradford. Over the years, BCB has grown into a trusted organisation, delivering innovative projects that address the unique challenges faced by residents, especially those from BAME backgrounds.

From tackling Social Isolation to providing Mental Health Therapy, our journey has been driven by the needs of the community, ensuring that our programs evolve to meet emerging challenges and opportunities.





# About us: Key Focus Areas

## **Empowering Women, particularly from the South Asian Diaspora and Immigrant communities:**

Providing access to skills development, employment empowerment, and mental health services. Creating safe spaces for women to grow, connect, and thrive.

## **Tackling Anti-Muslim Hate:**

Delivering workshops and campaigns to raise awareness and challenge systemic discrimination. Supporting those affected through trauma-informed care and advocacy.

## **Promoting Community Cohesion:**

Organising interfaith dialogues, cultural exchanges, and inclusive events. Building bridges between diverse groups to foster understanding and solidarity.

## **Advancing Education and Skills:**

Offering English and Digital Literacy classes, vocational training, and mentoring programs to unlock opportunities for individuals.

## **Improving Health and Wellbeing:**

Delivering nutrition and fitness programs that combine physical activity with education. Providing mental health counselling tailored to the unique needs of the community.



ILLUSTRATION BY DONGYUN LEE

# Year in Numbers

300+

Over 300 women empowered through tailored programs including sewing classes, discussion panels, English language courses, and fitness workshops.

188

188 participants engaged in group therapy sessions, fostering resilience and community support.

2000+

Over 2000 therapy hours delivered providing critical mental health support to individuals and families.

Of all participants in the mental health elements, 84% have reported an improvement in their mental health, 92% feel less isolated, 94% report increased awareness of the services available to them.

750

750 hours of sewing classes provided, equipping women with practical skills for employment and creativity.

50+

50 plus young women empowered through the Young Women in Society project, helping them navigate societal challenges and build confidence.

100+

Over 100 participants educated in Anti-Muslim Hate Workshops, fostering awareness and challenging systemic Islamophobia.

Ongoing research with the local community involving hundreds of community members and stakeholders

# Key Projects

## Free Sewing Classes: Unlocking Creativity & Economic Potential Supported by National Lottery Community Fund and Henry Smith Foundation

At Better Communities Bradford (BCB), we take immense pride in offering free sewing classes for BAME women, with 90% of our participants identifying as from and Immigrant, Diaspora, and/or Religious Minority. These are more than classes—they are a life-changing journey of empowerment, creativity, and self-expression. Women don't just learn to sew; they gain the tools to reshape their lives and futures.

Through hands-on learning, participants craft their own clothing, unleash their creative potential, and celebrate their rich cultural heritage by incorporating diverse textile traditions. Every stitch is a step towards self-confidence and a brighter tomorrow.



The ripple effect of these classes is extraordinary. They are a gateway to economic independence, helping women pave the way to meaningful careers. To date, 11 of our participants have already secured employment in tailoring or established themselves as self-employed business owners. These success stories stand as a testament to the transformative power of this program.

To elevate employability even further, we proudly offer the opportunity to gain a Level 3 Award in Education and Training (PTLLS). This formal qualification not only enhances their skills but also opens doors to new career pathways, making these women leaders in their own right.

Together, with the support of the National Lottery Community Fund and the Henry Smith Foundation, we are building a future where women are empowered to stitch their way to success – one thread at a time.



# Key Projects

## Free Mental Health Therapy: Breaking Barriers and Supporting Well-Being

**Supported by National Lottery Community Fund, Henry Smith Foundation, Morrisons Foundation and Albert Hunt Trust for Men**

BCB is unwavering in its dedication to supporting the mental health of our community. Our free mental health therapy sessions provide a lifeline to those navigating societal pressures and the stigma often associated with mental health issues. These sessions not only promote emotional well-being but also contribute to destigmatising mental health discussions within our communities.

Therapy sessions are 50 minutes long, with clients typically attending 6, 9, or 12 sessions based on their individual needs, usually on a weekly basis. Referrals are flexible—clients can self-refer, be introduced through acquaintances, or be referred by partner organisations, including GP clinics and local schools.

We actively promote this service through our projects, marketing efforts, and collaborations with stakeholders, ensuring accessible mental health support for those who need it most.



# Key Projects

## Young Women in Society: Safe Spaces for Growth and Empowerment

### Supported by Brelm's Trust

The Young Women in Society Project empowered over 50 young BAME women in Bradford through interactive workshops and discussion panels. Led by qualified therapists, the sessions addressed vital topics such as family expectations, career aspirations, self-esteem, reproductive rights, and balancing cultural and religious values.

This 3 year project creates a safe space for participants to challenge societal norms, build confidence, and develop practical strategies to navigate social and familial pressures. Its success sparked strong community demand, paving the way for initiatives like Project FAITH – Fighting Against Islamophobia Together for Hope, which tackles anti-Muslim hate in the UK.

Funded by the Brelms Trust, this transformative project showcases BCB's commitment to driving meaningful change through community research, engagement, and empowerment.





# Key Projects

## Free Nutrition and Fitness Sessions: Energising Lives and Building Healthier Communities

### Supported by Sport England

At Better Communities Bradford (BCB), we believe that physical fitness and nutritional knowledge are cornerstones of a vibrant, healthy life. Our Nutrition and Fitness Sessions are designed to empower participants with the tools, knowledge, and motivation to make lasting changes for their well-being.

These sessions are transformative, combining expert-led fitness activities such as walking and dance with practical lessons in nutrition.

Each two-hour session blends movement with mindfulness, fostering a holistic approach to health. This unique project supports the building of habits that promote both physical and mental well-being.

The impact of these sessions is profound. Beyond the health benefits, they create a space for community connection and mutual support, breaking down barriers and empowering participants to prioritise their health in a supportive, judgment-free environment.

With the generous support of Sport England, we are not just running a program; we are inspiring a movement towards healthier, happier communities.



# Key Projects

## Free English Classes for BAME Women: Building Confidence Through Language

**Delivered in Partnership with Spencer Park Association for Residents.  
Supported by National Lottery Community Fund**

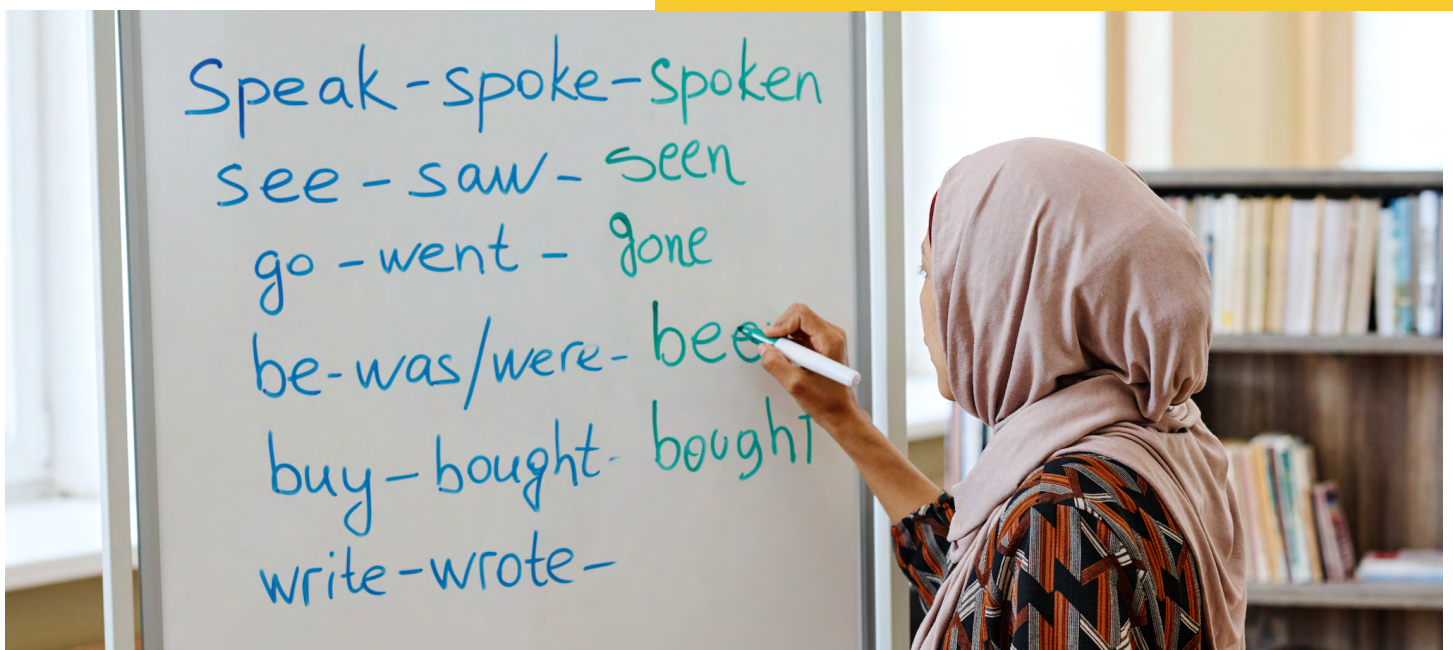
At BCB, we understand the transformative power of language. Our English classes are tailored to meet the unique needs of BAME women, enabling them to improve their communication skills, access better job opportunities, and engage more actively in their communities.

Proficiency in English empowers women to advocate for their rights, navigate daily challenges, and embrace opportunities for personal and professional growth.

## IT Learning Classes for BAME Women: Navigating the Digital World

In today's digital age, IT skills are essential for success. Our IT learning classes equip BAME women with the tools they need to thrive in a technology-driven world.

By gaining digital literacy, participants can confidently access information, utilise educational resources, and pursue opportunities in the ever-evolving digital landscape. This initiative empowers women to bridge the digital divide and enhance their participation in a rapidly advancing society.





# Key Projects

## Anti-Muslim Hate Workshops

The Anti-Muslim Hate Workshops are a proactive initiative tackling the growing issue of anti-Muslim hate in the UK through education, awareness, and cross-community engagement. Designed to foster understanding and challenge biases, these workshops create space for long-term dialogue among diverse groups while addressing the root causes of discrimination. Delivered by a skilled team, including qualified psychotherapists, the sessions incorporate trauma-informed mental health support for those impacted by anti-Muslim hate.

Participants have responded positively, noting significant growth in their awareness and confidence. Many reported gaining a deeper understanding of Islamophobia's impact on mental health and community cohesion, as well as the urgent need for collective action.

Personal testimonies and case studies have proven especially effective in breaking down stereotypes and fostering empathy. Attendees have developed practical skills to identify and challenge Islamophobia within their organizations and communities, with 90% stating they feel more confident addressing discriminatory practices.

These workshops have also become a catalyst for collaboration, bringing together stakeholders to work on joint initiatives to combat anti-Muslim hate at communal levels. The success of these sessions has directly influenced the development of Project FAITH – Fighting Against Islamophobia Together for Hope, a broader initiative aimed at expanding these efforts across Yorkshire. By integrating interfaith dialogue, mental health support, and advocacy, this ambitious program seeks to create lasting change in tackling systemic Islamophobia.



# Case Studies

## Participant Stories

### Aliyah: From Isolation to Empowerment

Aliyah, a single mother of two, struggled with social isolation and low confidence after moving to Bradford. She joined the Empowered Minds Project seeking a safe space to learn and grow.

Through the sewing classes, Aliya not only gained practical skills but also found a supportive community of women who understood her challenges. With the help of our employment empowerment sessions, she learned how to market her creations and has since started a small home based business selling handmade clothing.

Aliyah also benefited from the mental health counselling offered as part of the project, which helped her process her struggles and regain confidence.

“This project didn’t just teach me skills; it gave me a new sense of purpose. I feel stronger and ready to face whatever comes next.”

– Aliyah





# Case Studies

## Participant Stories

### Sara: Redefining Her Future

Sara, a 21-year-old participant in the Young Women in Society Project, was forced to give up her aspirations for higher education. The project's workshops helped Sara explore topics like cultural expectations, self-esteem, and career aspirations in a safe and supportive environment.

Guided by a therapist, Sara found the courage to discuss her ambitions with her family. She is now pursuing a degree as a Nurse and remains an advocate for young women balancing cultural and personal goals.

“The workshops helped me find my voice. I realised it’s okay to want more for myself while still respecting my culture and faith values.”

– Sara



# Case Studies

## Participant Stories

### The Ahmed Family and the Local Church: Standing Against Islamophobia

The Ahmed family experienced an Islamophobic incident in their neighbourhood, which left them feeling vulnerable and disconnected from their community. BCB held an Islamophobia workshop with the family, residents and local church goers.

Through the workshops, participants learned how to report hate incidents and received emotional support to process the incidents, and the workshops had a huge impact on the multi- cultural community to increase their cross-cultural understanding which led to increased tolerance and appreciation. Inspired by their experience, the Ahmeds and their non-Muslim neighbours joined a local advocacy group and have since helped other families navigate similar challenges.

“We felt heard and supported. The workshops provided a voice for us and a genuine learning opportunity for our non-Muslim neighbours.

– The Ahmed Family





# Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to our journey this year. Your unwavering support, dedication, and trust have been the foundation of our success.

## To Our Staff and Volunteers

Your commitment and passion have been instrumental in delivering our projects and creating meaningful change in the community. From working tirelessly on the ground to ensuring smooth operations behind the scenes, your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

## To Our Mentors and Guides

A heartfelt thank you to Mazhar Ellahi, who has provided an invaluable mentoring role, offering guidance and support that have been pivotal in shaping our path forward.

We also extend our gratitude to Chris and Bryony from Up for Yorkshire for their strategic guidance and support in driving our growth. Your insights, guidance and encouragement have been truly transformative.

## To Our Trustees and Community Leaders

We want to acknowledge Waheed, Shieraz and Yasmin, who have recently stepped down as trustees. Their leadership and dedication have left a lasting impact on our work, and we are thrilled that they continue to lead the Community Leadership Panel, ensuring that the voices of our residents remain central to our mission.

## To Our Project Leaders

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated project leaders, whose vision, expertise, and leadership have driven the success of our initiatives. Your ability to inspire teams, navigate challenges, and deliver impactful results has been nothing short of remarkable. Through your hard work and unwavering commitment, you have not only brought our projects to life but also created meaningful change in the lives of those we serve. Your passion and determination continue to be the cornerstone of our mission, and we are proud to have you leading the way. Thank you for your invaluable contributions.

# Acknowledgements

## To Our Funders and Donors

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our generous funders, donors, and partners. Your financial support and trust in our mission empower us to make a lasting impact. We are proud to work with organizations and individuals who share our vision for a brighter future.

## To Our Stakeholders and Partners

A special thank you to the local schools, mosques, community groups, and healthcare providers who collaborated with us this year. Together, we have been able to expand our reach and enhance the quality of our services.

## To Our Community and Beneficiaries

We are humbled by the trust you place in us to support your journey. Your resilience and active participation inspire us to work harder every day. This report is a testament to your stories, achievements, and courage.

## In Gratitude

We look forward to continuing this journey together and invite everyone, old friends and new to join us as we build an even stronger, more inclusive community.

Thank you for being an essential part of our story.



# Financial Summary

## Financial Summary for 2023/24

In the financial year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Better Communities Bradford (BCB) demonstrated strong financial stewardship, leveraging funding from a range of generous supporters to expand its reach and deliver impactful services. The charity received total income of £153,173, primarily from grants and donations.

This income represents a 27% increase compared to the previous year (£120,459), enabling BCB to scale its activities and deepen its impact on the communities it serves.

BCB's total expenditure for the year was £141,606.

At year-end, BCB held cash reserves of £53,698, of which £43,746 were restricted for specific projects. The trustees have implemented a reserves policy to build unrestricted funds to cover six months of operating costs, ensuring financial sustainability. Current unrestricted reserves stand at £9,952, and efforts are underway to increase this balance.

BCB's robust financial position reflects its ability to effectively manage resources while continuing to deliver transformative initiatives, including mental health support, skills development, and anti-Islamophobia workshops, in partnership with its diverse funders.

# Looking Ahead

## Fundraising and Financial Sustainability

Our fundraising strategy will prioritise delivering high-quality work that demonstrates measurable impact, ensuring our projects remain credible and valuable to the communities we serve. We are committed to building and maintaining trusting relationships with our funders by fostering transparency, accountability, and open communication.

By showcasing the effectiveness of our programs through clear reporting and regular updates, we aim to strengthen funders' confidence in our ability to drive meaningful change. Additionally, we will focus on diversifying our longer-term funding sources, applying for grants that align with our mission, and cultivating long-term partnerships with donors who share our vision.

Our goal is not only to secure financial support but also to create lasting connections with funders, positioning Better Communities Bradford as a trusted, high-impact organisation that delivers sustainable results.

## Strategic Growth and Infrastructure

**Capacity Building:** Enhancing the skills of our team and volunteers through professional development opportunities, ensuring we continue to deliver high-quality services.

**Partnerships:** Deepening collaborations with local schools, regional community groups, healthcare providers, and other organisations to amplify our impact.

**Infrastructure Development:** Exploring ways to expand our physical and digital infrastructure, making our services more accessible to all.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to listening to the voices of our community, responding to their needs, and striving to create a future where everyone can flourish.



# Governance and Team

## Names and roles of board members, trustees, and leadership.

Name	Role	Date of Appointment
Ahminah Momoniat	Chair of Trustees	01/02/2023
Shabina Kausar	Trustee	26/09/2024
Muhammad Touseef	Trustee	01/07/2024
Simra Akmal	Trustee	19/04/2024
Nour El Houda Doudai	Trustee	01/02/2024

## BCB's organisational governance structure.

At the heart of Better Communities Bradford (BCB) is the Board of Trustees, who provide strategic oversight and governance, working in close partnership with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to steer the organisation towards its mission. The trustees ensure accountability, financial sustainability, and alignment with BCB's long-term goals while empowering the CEO to oversee day-to-day operations and implement strategic initiatives effectively.

A cornerstone of BCB's structure is the Community Leadership Council (CLC), which brings together Project Leaders, former Trustees, and local community representatives to provide critical insights and guidance. The CLC ensures that BCB's work remains deeply rooted in the needs and priorities of the communities it serves. Their input informs project planning, delivery, and evaluation, creating a direct connection between grassroots voices and organisational decisions.

Supporting this leadership is a dedicated core team of project leads, administrative staff, and specialists, who manage and deliver programs in collaboration with a vibrant network of volunteers. Together, this cohesive structure enables BCB to deliver impactful, community-driven change across Bradford.



# BCB

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Better Communities  
Bradford

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