

2023 SURVEY REPORT

What it means to be Caribbean or of Caribbean heritage in the UK.

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100 Caribbean Voices

FOREWORD: A Personal Note

What Does it Mean to Be Caribbean in Britain Today?

This is more than a question it is a reckoning.

As a British-born woman of Grenadian heritage, I have often felt mislabelled, unseen, or oversimplified. Being Caribbean in the UK is too often reduced to a singular identity, usually Jamaican, while the rich diversity of our islands is erased. This report is a response to that erasure.

*The 100 Caribbean Voices Survey was created to centre our stories, from Grenada to St. Lucia, Barbados to Jamaica - and to spark a national conversation about culture, belonging, and legacy. At a time of demographic change, political turbulence, and generational drift, it asks: **How do we hold on to who we are?***

The voices captured here are not just data points, they are testimonies of strength, struggle, and love for a culture that deserves more recognition than it currently receives.

To the 55 respondents: thank you. Your words are powerful. They will shape how we remember and how we move forward.

Warm regards,

Elizabeth Flanders

Founder, 100 Caribbean Voices Survey

Event Director, Event Connoisseurs Ltd

(Celebrating Caribbean Excellence, Culture, and Community)

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: 100 Caribbean Voices Survey Report: March 2025

Reclaiming Identity. Celebrating Heritage. Shaping the Future.

The *100 Caribbean Voices Survey* offers a timely and necessary insight into what it means to be of Caribbean heritage in Britain today. With 55 respondents from across the UK, this national snapshot captures a tapestry of experiences that reflect both the pride and the pressures of navigating dual identities in a multicultural society.

What also emerges is the emotional cost of cultural invisibility. For some, the absence of meaningful representation led to diminished self-worth, disconnection from their roots, and a sense of cultural erasure. These are not just reflections, they are reminders of the urgent need for cultural affirmation, structural change, and intergenerational continuity.

Through three core themes: **Culture, Identity & Heritage; Navigating Caribbean Heritage in the UK; and Cultural Awareness & Recognition** the survey surfaces deep concerns about cultural continuity, community cohesion, and visibility, alongside a powerful sense of pride, resilience, and belonging. It is both a celebration and a reckoning.

1.1 KEY FINDINGS IN BRIEF

Culture and Identity Remain Strong, But Vulnerable

- 61.8% actively maintain ties to Caribbean roots.
- Family and food are the primary vehicles of cultural transmission.
- Younger generations report surface-level connections and seek deeper access to heritage.

Dual Identity: A Strength and a Strain

- *Code-switching* is common but emotionally taxing.
- Caribbean identity is often diluted in areas with limited cultural infrastructure.
- Intercultural relationships and island-specific distinctions shape identity experiences.

Recognition is Limited and Often Superficial

- Fewer than 10% feel Caribbean contributions are fully appreciated in UK institutions.
- Stereotypes (e.g. laziness, aggression) continue to influence public perception.
- Caribbean culture is celebrated through food and festivals but often misunderstood or commodified in deeper societal contexts.

1.2 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Preserve Culture

- Integrate Caribbean heritage into UK education systems.
- Fund storytelling, language, and culinary heritage initiatives.

- Develop digital cultural archives for wider access.

Enhance Representation

- Recognise Caribbean contributions beyond Black History Month.
- Establish Emancipation Remembrance Day.
- Amplify diverse Caribbean excellence in media, leadership, and the arts.
- Create national awards and public campaigns to highlight contributions in education, politics, medicine, and the arts.

Invest in Infrastructure

- Sustain key institutions like Black Cultural Archives and Windrush Foundation.
- Empower Caribbean High Commissions to lead cultural diplomacy.
- Create a UK Caribbean Think Tank to shape policy and public discourse.

Empower Youth

- Revive Saturday schools and mentorship programmes.
- Support mixed-heritage identity exploration.
- Centre young voices in community development.

Unify the Community

- Build a national coalition of Caribbean-led organisations.
- Promote cross-island and intergenerational dialogue.
- Encourage collaboration across arts, education, business, and faith sectors.

1.3 A CALL TO ACTION: Reconnect. Reclaim. Reimagine.

This is more than a report. It is a cultural manifesto built from lived experience and layered identity.

- **To policymakers:** Cultural equity is not optional - invest in education, mental health, representation, and cultural infrastructure.
- **To educators and cultural institutions:** Teach the full Caribbean story: past, present, and future. Make it visible beyond Black History Month.
- **To Caribbean communities:** Honour your heritage. Mentor the next generation. Speak your truth. Unite across islands, ages, and outlooks. Reclaim what was lost and imagine what is next.
- **To wider UK society:** Understand that British history is incomplete without Caribbean voices.

This is a moment to listen deeply, act decisively, and commit to cultural legacy as both inheritance and responsibility.

2. INTRODUCTION

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2.1. PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

What does it mean to be Caribbean in the UK today? How do individuals of Caribbean heritage connect with their roots while navigating British society? The 100 Caribbean Voices Survey set out to answer these pressing questions, shedding light on the diverse experiences, evolving identities, and cultural expressions within the British Caribbean community. Through this study, we aim to amplify voices that are often overlooked and explore both the opportunities and challenges of maintaining Caribbean identity across generations.

Culture and heritage play a crucial role in shaping identity, well-being, and a sense of belonging. For the British Caribbean community, these cultural ties are deeply rooted in shared history, traditions, and collective experiences that continue to evolve in the UK. **However, concerns are growing that the distinct Caribbean voice within the wider Black UK community is diminishing.**

According to the **2021 Census**, the **Black Caribbean population of England and Wales has declined to 1% of the total population** (623,115 people), a decrease from previous census data. In contrast, the **Mixed White/Black Caribbean population has steadily increased to 0.9%** (513,040 people). This suggests a shift in identity formation, with younger generations increasingly identifying with multiple heritages. Such trends raise important questions: How do these individuals experience and express their Caribbean heritage? **What does this mean for the future of Caribbean identity in the UK?**

The 100 Caribbean Voices survey was developed to explore these themes, examining how different generations define and connect with their heritage, the challenges they face in maintaining cultural identity, and opportunities for strengthening community ties. **A deliberate effort was made to focus solely on the UK Caribbean community, ensuring that their voices are distinctly heard.** While challenges such as representation in the media, cultural stereotypes, and the ongoing impact of events like the Windrush scandal persist, there are also significant, yet often unrecognised, contributions of the British Caribbean community that deserve greater visibility.

This survey seeks to highlight the achievements, resilience, and cultural richness of the British Caribbean community while addressing

the realities of identity in an evolving UK landscape. Through our findings, we aim to build a clearer picture of the British Caribbean experience today and contribute to meaningful conversations on heritage and belonging. The results will be shared via our website, social media platforms, and with our subscribers, with the goal of preserving and celebrating Caribbean heritage for future generations.

2.2. BACKGROUND

Various research studies have been conducted in distinct parts of the UK, though none have attempted to cover the entire country or gauge the views on how the UK Caribbean community has evolved, seeking their feedback and perspectives. (This statement was correct in 2023).

Studies found that focused solely on the Caribbean community were:

- The Educational Attainment of Black Caribbean Pupils in Lambeth (Nov 2022)
- Caribbean Commonwealth Community Health Profile 2020. Commissioned by Birmingham City Council
- Black Caribbean Community: Sheffield Community Knowledge Profiles (updated Aug 2015; Checked Nov 2017)
- Black Caribbean Research in Lambeth: An insight into the Black Caribbean Community in Lambeth (Nov 2013)

All were focused on their local area and did not expand beyond. The Lambeth educational report focused on underachieving Black Caribbean pupils, citing the need for government intervention to develop education policy to provide targeted support for the Black Caribbean population in English schools.

The Birmingham study only focused on health and well-being; the Sheffield report was based on 2001 census data, and the Lambeth Black Caribbean Research was only focused on Lambeth residents.

To the best of our knowledge, no other surveys, including those listed here have looked at Caribbean culture and heritage on a national level.

2.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

This survey was designed to provide a national perspective on the UK Caribbean community's connection to culture and heritage - an area that has not been extensively researched beyond local studies. The key objectives were to:

- **Connect Lived Experiences** – Capture personal perspectives on what it means to be of Caribbean heritage in the UK today.

- **Measure Cultural Engagement** – Assess how actively individuals participate in and maintain Caribbean traditions, customs, and values.
- **Safeguard and Preserve Voices** – Document and protect the evolving cultural identity of the UK Caribbean community for future generations.
- **Re-engage the Disengaged** – Start a dialogue with those who may feel disconnected from their heritage, fostering a renewed sense of identity.
- **Provide a Reliable Evidence Base** – Strengthen and safeguard the community's cultural heritage by creating a central resource that amplifies their voices.

Unlike previous studies, which focused on specific locations (e.g., Lambeth, Birmingham, or Sheffield) and narrow topics such as education or health, this survey takes a broader, national approach, making it a unique and valuable contribution to understanding the Caribbean experience in the UK.

Questions covered in this survey included:

- How would you define Caribbean Culture?
- Is your culture and heritage important to you?
- Do you feel connected to your Caribbean roots in the UK?
- How do you express your cultural identity? Is there specific traditions, customs, or values from the Caribbean.
- How do you navigate between your Caribbean identity and the British culture in your daily life and have you experienced any challenges or obstacles
- Do you feel a sense of community or belonging among other individuals of Caribbean heritage in the UK?
- Do you feel that the wider UK society recognises and appreciates the contributions and cultural richness of the Caribbean community?

The findings from will not only help us understand how individuals within the UK Caribbean community feel but will also inform future discussions, articles, and engagement initiatives, ensuring that these voices remain at the heart of conversations about identity and heritage.

2.4. TARGET AUDIENCE

The 100 Caribbean Voices survey was open to individuals across the UK who identify as Caribbean or of Caribbean heritage. This includes those who:

- Were born in the Caribbean and later migrated to the UK.

- Were born in the UK to Caribbean parents or grandparents.

The survey aimed to gather perspectives from a diverse range of experiences, spanning different generations, backgrounds, and regions across the UK. By capturing these voices, we sought to create a meaningful and representative picture of what it means to be of Caribbean heritage in the UK today.

2.5. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted over a three-week period and gathered responses from individuals of Caribbean heritage across the UK. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions, the survey explored themes of cultural identity, heritage, and belonging. A detailed breakdown of the survey design, sampling method, and data collection process can be found in the Survey Methodology section.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

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3.1. SURVEY DESIGN

The 100 Caribbean Voices survey was designed to capture the lived experiences, cultural connections, and evolving identity of individuals of Caribbean heritage in the UK. It combined both quantitative and qualitative questions to ensure a well-rounded understanding of participants' perspectives.

- **Quantitative Questions:** Collected demographic data such as age, gender, ethnic background, and place of birth to understand generational and regional variations.
- **Qualitative Questions:** Explored cultural identity, community belonging, heritage preservation, and experiences navigating British and Caribbean identities.

The survey was structured to allow respondents freedom of expression, particularly in open-ended responses, where they could share personal insights, traditions, and challenges.

3.2. SAMPLING METHOD

The survey used a non-probability, self-selection sampling method, meaning participation was voluntary and open to individuals who self-identified as being of Caribbean heritage and living in the UK. While this method does not guarantee full representativeness of the entire UK Caribbean population, it effectively captures the views of engaged community members who felt compelled to share their experiences.

3.3. RESPONSE RATE & PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of **55 individuals** from across the UK completed the survey, providing a **valuable snapshot** of sentiments within the Caribbean community.



Respondents were from various locations, including London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Kent, Shropshire, and Edinburgh, among others.

The survey aimed to capture a diverse range of voices, spanning different generations, backgrounds, and levels of cultural engagement.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The survey was open for a three-week period, from Monday, 10 July to Sunday, 30 July 2023.

Participants were recruited through multiple outreach channels, including:

- Direct email invitations to a mailing list, with follow-up reminders sent on July 10, 17, 24, 29, and 30.
- Social media promotion via LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook.
- Text message invitations to encourage participation.

No incentives were offered for participation, ensuring that responses were voluntary and genuine.

3.5. LIMITATIONS

As with any research study, there are certain limitations that should be acknowledged:

- **Sample Size:** While 55 responses provide meaningful insights, the findings are not intended to be fully representative of the entire UK Caribbean population. Instead, they offer a valuable snapshot of experiences, challenges, and cultural connections.
- **Self-Selection Bias:** The survey was completed by individuals who chose to participate, meaning responses may reflect the perspectives of those more actively engaged with their Caribbean heritage. However, it is important to note that some participants indicated they did not highly value their Caribbean heritage yet still took the time to complete the survey. This suggests an underlying level of interest and engagement that may not have been immediately apparent to those individuals.
- **Geographic Distribution:** While respondents came from various parts of the UK, certain regions may be over- or under-represented.
- **Subjective Nature of Responses:** As the survey focused on firsthand experiences and cultural identity, responses are qualitative and interpretive, rather than statistical measures.

Despite these limitations, this survey provides valuable insights into the evolving Caribbean identity in the UK.

Unlike previous research, which has primarily focused on localised Caribbean communities and specific issues such as education, health, and social challenges, this survey provides a broader, national insight into cultural heritage and identity across the UK Caribbean community.

The insights gathered will serve as a foundation for further discussions, articles, and community engagement, ensuring that Caribbean voices remain heard, celebrated, and preserved for generations to come.

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS

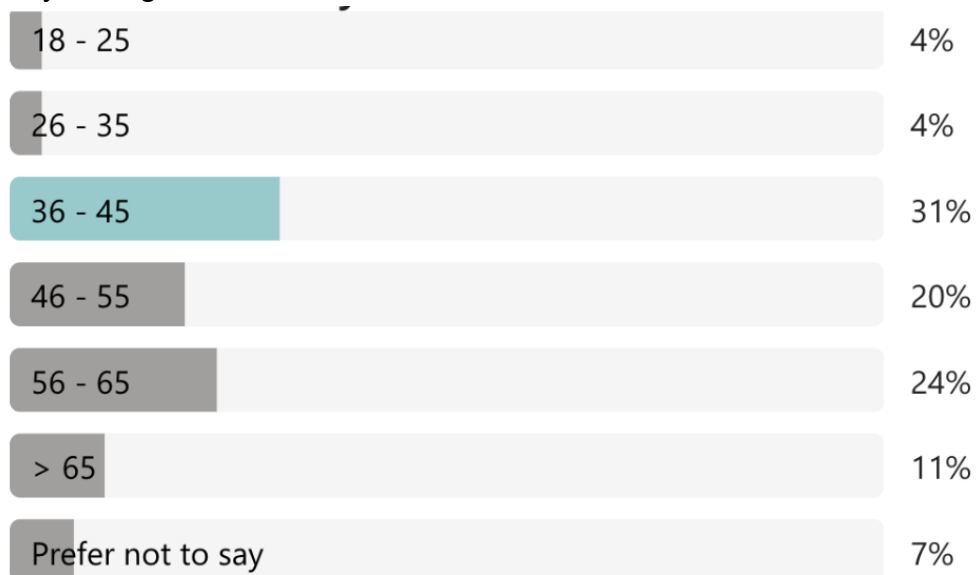
4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS

4.1 Demographic Insights

Understanding the demographic composition of respondents provides valuable context for interpreting the findings of the 100 Caribbean Voices survey. This section highlights key socio-demographic trends, including age distribution, place of birth, ethnic identity, geographic location, and patterns of cultural engagement.

4.2 Age Distribution

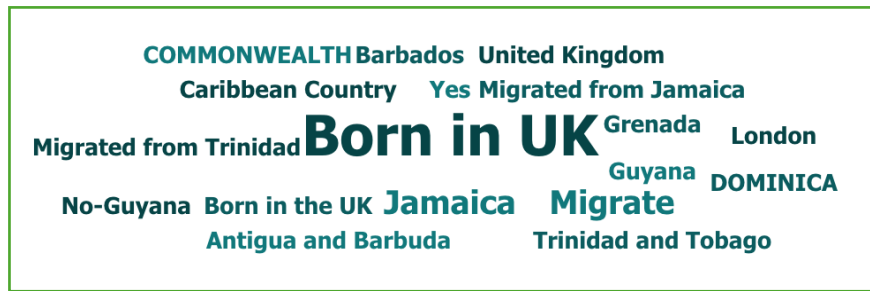
The survey successfully captured perspectives from all targeted age groups. The largest proportion of respondents (31%) fell within the 36-45 age range, while younger participants had the lowest response rates, with only 4% aged 18–25 and 26–35.



4.3. Country of Birth

The survey revealed a distinct migration pattern, providing an intergenerational perspective on cultural identity:

- 81% of respondents were born in a Caribbean country and later migrated to the UK.
- 19% were born in the UK.

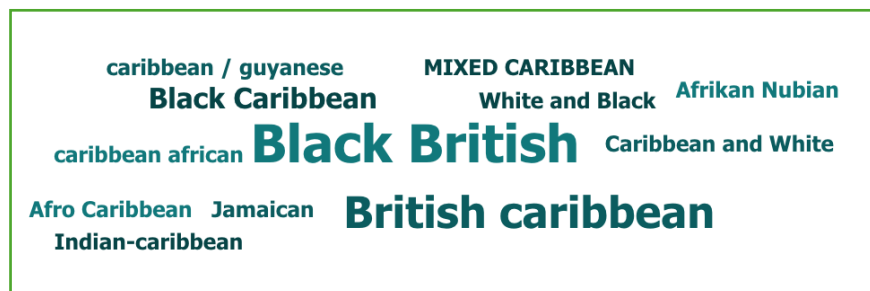


This distribution offers insights into how migration and lived experiences shape cultural heritage and identity.

4.4. Ethnic Identity: How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Respondents identified with a range of ethnic backgrounds, reflecting both Caribbean and British influences:

- 49% (27 respondents) identified as Black British.
- Others identified with Caribbean heritage in varying ways, including mixed ethnic backgrounds.



This diversity underscores the dynamic interplay between Caribbean and British identities and highlights the importance of cultural heritage and belonging in the UK.

4.5. Geographic Distribution: Where do you live?

Participants were based in various locations across the UK, with a strong representation from urban centres:

- 55% (30 respondents) reside in London.
- Other major cities included Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and Edinburgh.



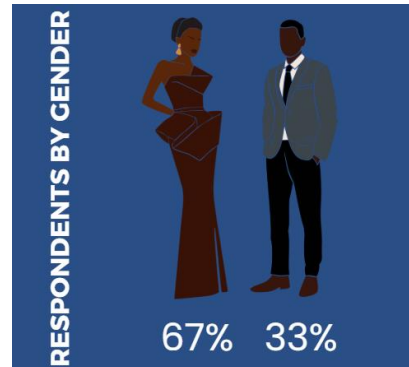
Some respondents were from semi-rural areas, including parts of Kent and Shropshire.

This geographic diversity provides insights into regional variations in cultural engagement and access to Caribbean communities.

4.6. Gender Representation

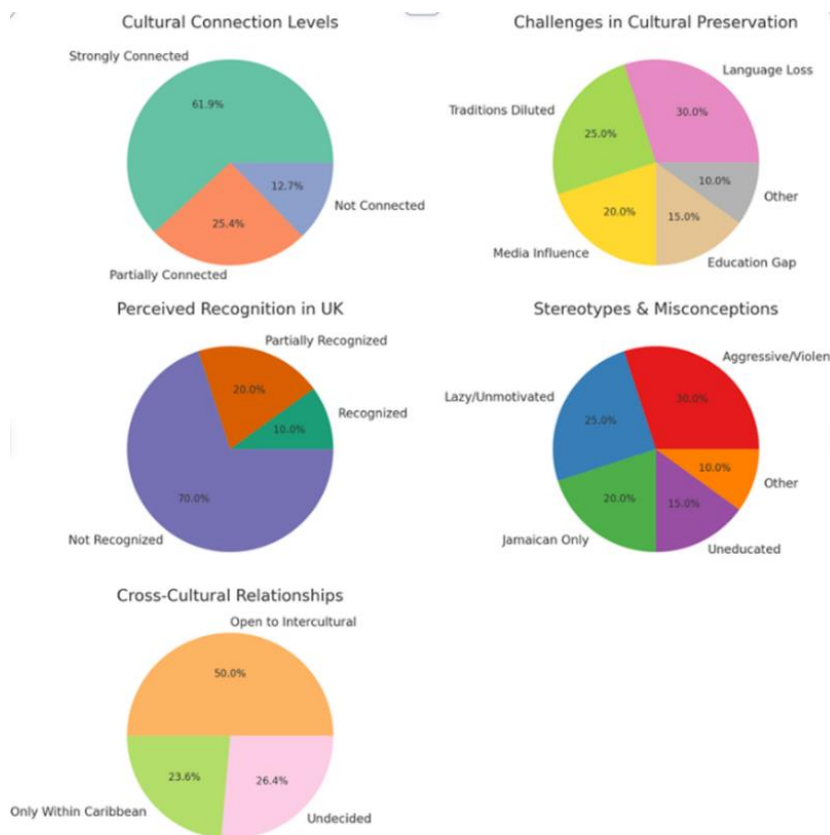
Two-thirds of respondents were women, indicating strong female engagement in cultural discussions and heritage preservation.

Men and non-binary individuals also participated, offering diverse perspectives on Caribbean identity, cultural practices, and lived experiences.



4.7. General Observations

The survey successfully reached a wide range of individuals across different age groups, with a substantial portion of respondents (31%) falling within the 36-45 age range.



The survey provides valuable insights into the demographic diversity of respondents and their engagement with cultural heritage. The findings emphasise the significance of migration history on shaping perceptions of Caribbean identity and heritage in the UK.

5. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: THE FINDINGS

5. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: THE FINDINGS

The 100 Caribbean Voices survey aimed to explore the lived experiences and cultural identity of Caribbean individuals in the UK, capturing perspectives on heritage, belonging, and the challenges of navigating life in a multicultural society.

The responses were analysed thematically, revealing **three major themes: Culture, Identity, and Heritage, Navigating Caribbean Heritage in the UK, and Cultural Awareness and Recognition**. The qualitative data was complemented by sentiment analysis (Sentiment Scale: +1 = very positive; 0 = neutral and -1 = very negative), providing a nuanced understanding of the emotional connections and challenges participants face. Below, we present both positive and contrasting views to give a comprehensive view of the Caribbean experience in the UK.

5.1 CULTURE, IDENTITY, AND HERITAGE

This theme delves into how respondents define and maintain their Caribbean identity, offering deep insights into their personal connections to heritage and how these shape their sense of self. By taking a closer look at the core of Caribbean culture and heritage, we explore how individuals define and maintain their cultural identity in the context of their heritage and history. While each island has its own historical influences resulting in different traditions, cuisine, and festivals, several common cultural and heritage traits bind us together, including the legacy of slavery, shared ideologies, family values, and the importance of education.

5.1.1 Fundamentals of Caribbean Culture (how would you define Caribbean culture?)

Understanding the diverse components that make up Caribbean culture requires an exploration of its rich historical influences and enduring traditions. The Fundamentals of Caribbean Culture encompass various characteristics that form the essence of our cultural identity.

Participants in the survey unanimously associated Caribbean culture with **strong, family-focused, principled individuals who uphold tightly held values and a robust moral code**. Our culture is characterised by resilience, cosmopolitan inclusiveness, and the warmth of vibrant, proud, and disciplined people. This profound sense of "*family first*" deeply permeates multiple facets of Caribbean culture, shaping how individuals interact, express themselves, and navigate their daily lives.

Positive View:

Many participants described Caribbean culture as a "*rich and diverse tapestry*" shaped by historical influences such as colonialism and slavery, but also by the resilience and strength of the Caribbean people.

" Caribbean culture is a rich and diverse tapestry formed by the blending of various ethnic, historical, and cultural influences across the Caribbean islands and their diaspora."

"Vibrant, friendly, family orientated, community-spirited, spiritually orientated, mannered, aware of keeping high-standards, and socially active."

This depicts a culture that is alive, focused on the community, spiritually anchored, values-driven, and socially engaged. These qualities collectively provide insights into the fundamental beliefs and traits that influence its people and present a vivid picture of Caribbean cultural identity.

Contrasting View:

Some respondents feel that Caribbean culture has been commodified or misrepresented, particularly in how events like Carnival are portrayed in mainstream media. There is a concern that the complexities of Caribbean heritage are lost in favour of more superficial representations.

" ...manipulated in media more than just carnival and scantily dressed women."

"Caribbean Culture is a fusion or amalgamation of other cultures, and due to that fact, our culture has evolved over time and no efforts were made to keep it original. Instead, we adopted anything that seemed convenient. We lost our original languages because we were taught to believe that they were bad, we lost our original culinary practices because of modernity, we lost our fashion and we adopted others with the advent of media and technology, we lost our way of life because we did not understand it, therefore, we did not want to associate with it, we lost our religion because we were taught that it was bad. Now I understand why Nationalism is not emphasized because what are we going to be patriotic to? When we travel, we even try to change our accent and speak like others because we have no sense of pride in where we belong."

Sentiment: (0.13), This suggests a slightly positive overall sentiment, with strong cultural pride tempered by genuine concerns about loss of heritage and media misrepresentation.

5.1.2 Heritage, Self, and Identity (Is your culture and heritage important to you?)

This section examines the emotional and personal ties individuals have to their Caribbean heritage and how it shapes their sense of self. Our ancestry is portrayed as a vital piece of individual identity, a source of

resilience, and a set of moral principles. The strong emotional and cultural ties that Caribbean people have to their ancestors influence how they see themselves and interact with the outside world.

Positive View

"It is important to preserve history and stories and pass these on. So many of us are becoming rootless as the Windrush generation die."

"Knowing my roots, where my people are from and being proud of how they lived and survived is important to me. It sets me free to fulfil my hopes and dreams and leave a legacy for my children and my children's children."

"100%. Being of Caribbean descent is something I'm extremely proud of. As a second/third generation person of Caribbean descent, I have felt disconnected from the culture at times and felt like I was missing out. But then I look at my family, my wider community at home and I see elements of that culture that won't just disappear. Even though I can't speak patois or don't know every reggae song, I feel a deep sense of connection, especially when I visit the Caribbean."

Contrasting View

"Now that I am an adult, I realise that I cannot know who I truly am until I know my origin and where I came from. I travelled to several different places, and I was able to see something unique to them but when I travelled to Africa, I saw our ancestors in them. If we truly know or have an idea of our history, we will see the vast similarities. Something else I had to come to grips with is that we are willing to associate ourselves with the British, Scottish, Spanish, French and even the Indians but not the Africans. The slave masters developed such a strong shame within us of who we truly are that we do not see the value in it therefore we are willing to do away with it. Have we asked ourselves what have we done with the big drum dances and the patois? Have we taken some time to visit our museums and understand that we don't even carry our original names, they were taken from our fore parents, and we were given other names so that they were easily identified by their slave masters."

"Not that important, growing up in the UK it is multicultural, so I have had exposure to multiple cultures. I feel like I only know my own culture and heritage on a surface level."

Sentiment: (+0.25), moderately positive emotional tone overall — grounded in pride, reflection, and a desire for reconnection with roots, even amid acknowledged feelings of loss or distance.

5.1.3 Maintaining Connections in the UK (Do you feel connected to your Caribbean roots in the UK?)

This section explores how Caribbean individuals living in the UK stay connected to their cultural roots. Findings show that **61.8%** of participants make initiative-taking efforts to maintain their Caribbean ancestry, nurturing cultural bonds despite residing in a diverse cultural setting. This dedication is reflected in the following comments:

Positive View

"My grandparents and parents always made sure I knew where I came from and my family in the Caribbean."

"Yes, as although thousands of miles away from the Caribbean it is in the DNA or the genes and therefore part of our very being. My wife and I have also made sure to in still that upbringing and purpose in our daughter and she has truly embraced it."

25.4% felt partially connected with a sense of loss expressed in not being more involved outside of immediate family.

Contrasting View

"Not really, much of my upbringing has been predominantly rooted in my white UK heritage. However, I do have connections with my Jamaican grandparent and feel connected that way. I would like to be much more connected though as I do worry that this will be lost over time."

"My mother, brothers, and sisters live in the UK. They are more British than they are Caribbean. I am not sure about the recent generations, but I pray that we stop and truly examine who we are. There was a recent law passed to issue visas/ETA to Caribbean nationals visiting the UK and that truly hurts."

"Not always ...Lack of reference outside of the home and parents' stories."

12.7% did not feel connected, citing:

"Not important for me to feel connected as I like to feel Universal instead..."

"Not really, I identify more with British culture than Caribbean culture."

"No. All my immediate family is here."

Sentiment: (+0.18) indicates a slightly positive sentiment overall, reflecting a strong effort among many to maintain ties, but also

acknowledging cultural drift, identity challenges, and the emotional toll of distance.

5.1.4 **Identity and Belonging** (How has your Caribbean heritage influenced your identity and sense of belonging in the UK?)

This section examines the complex intricacies of how people of Caribbean descent negotiate their cultural identity in the UK as a home/host country. Participants offer distinctive viewpoints on how they cope, accept, and connect with both cultures.

Positive View

"My Caribbean heritage has given me a strong sense of pride and resilience. It has taught me the importance of family, community, and cultural traditions, which I carry with me in the UK."

"Being of Caribbean descent has positively impacted my identity in the UK. It allows me to bring a unique perspective to conversations, and I feel a deep connection to both my heritage and my life in the UK."

"I have pride in my heritage and will openly talk about it amongst people who are not from the same background. I think this has helped me to have interesting discussions with lots of people and feel more connected. Caribbean culture is embedded in so many aspects of life in the UK anyway from food to music, so I already feel like we belong here and have made our mark."

Contrasting View

"While I appreciate my Caribbean heritage, I sometimes feel like an outsider in the UK. It's challenging to balance both identities without feeling like I'm losing a part of myself."

"Growing up in North Wales meant that people didn't know much about Caribbean culture, so it was hard to feel connected with my peers."

"The media often portrays Caribbean culture in a stereotypical way, which can be frustrating. It impacts how I am perceived and makes it harder to fully embrace my identity."

"There are times when I feel disconnected from both cultures. It's a constant struggle to find where I truly belong."

Sentiment: (+0.15) a slightly positive sentiment overall, with an undertone of internal cultural tension. Participants show pride and a sense of rootedness but also wrestle with feelings of misrepresentation and not fully belonging.

5.2 NAVIGATING CARIBBEAN HERITAGE IN THE UK

We examined the dynamic between Caribbean and British identities, focusing on how individuals express themselves culturally, and how traditions and heritage are passed on to the next generation. By exploring cross-cultural relationships while living in the UK, we gained insights into how these relationships influence an individual's perspective.

5.2.1 Balancing Caribbean and British Identities

This section addresses the challenges and experiences of managing dual identities and finding a balance between Caribbean and British influences in a multicultural setting. Participants shared their insights, with most agreeing that they "code switch" between the two with ease, some with practice.

Positive View

"Like most Black women I code switch."

"As I live in a multi-cultural area, I am able to get the Caribbean foods that I want, I am able to get the hair products I want and attend events locally and see people around like myself."

"I used to, but not so much now, WE are a household of Bajan Jamaican and British, so we navigate between all 3. It was important for my children when they were young to go to Saturday school to learn about their Caribbean roots that we existed before slavery and there are men and women of colour who did and are still doing great things. It's not taught in school and so we must educate our children and not leave it up to a school system that hasn't changed over the decades."

"I maintain it by fusing it together. I have experienced challenges in that I understand both British and Caribbean Culture, so I have more rounded perspectives than most people living in the UK."

Communication and language are crucial for maintaining a balance between identities. The requirement for audience-specific language and communication techniques is brought up by participants. When engaging with people from different origins, maintaining their dual identities becomes a subtle but crucial side of how they express themselves. This is also a form of "code switch" as evidenced by the following:

Contrasting View

"Depends on who I'm speaking to, I have to navigate my language and how comfortable they are around Black people to how I express myself."

"I do not really try to maintain my Caribbean identity as I do not feel like I really have one since I have never lived there. Only visited."

"...more so since moving to Liverpool which is a predominantly white city. Things that I grew up with can be seen as exotic or impractical here, things like shopping for certain food or hair products, moisturizers etc. Things that are essential to us aren't always easily accessible here."

"I face no challenges in being myself; that comes naturally. The challenges are in people not accepting who you are and where you're from. They expect subservience and a sellout mentality. Dat nah guh happen!"

Participants stressed the importance of their environment in preserving their Caribbean identity. Access to recognisable components of their background, such as Caribbean delicacies and hair products, is crucial in multicultural neighbourhoods. This access helps individuals feel connected to their cultural heritage and provides a sense of community and stability.

Sentiment: (+0.13) slightly positive sentiment, with a clear acknowledgment of difficulty. People are successfully navigating dual identities but still face challenges, especially around acceptance, access, and external judgment.

5.2.2 Expressions of Cultural Identity

Participants shared their viewpoints, which were divided between those who actively honour their heritage and those who felt less connected or uncomfortable with cultural events. We examine how individuals express their cultural identity, negotiating the complexities of co-existing with both British and Caribbean cultures.

Positive View

"I actively participated in Black history walks, studies, leadership training, lectures, concerts, and dances etc."

"Theatre, Comedy, Films, Black Writers Conferences, Carnival, Black Workers Support Groups, Community Support Groups, Seminars."

Many participants also said they are actively embracing their Caribbean ancestry. Within the community, they engage in cultural learning and celebration. This active involvement promotes a powerful sense of connection and belonging.

Contrasting View

"I try to as much as I can but am often faced with opinions that one person is more 'black or into their culture than others,' which for me is a form of discrimination."

"I do not participate in Caribbean cultural events in the UK, feel they are not representative of what I grew up with and I feel uncomfortable with what they are portraying. Most events are overshadowed by other influences and so I reject them as unreliable."

"No, I don't think I am aware of any other than the carnival, which I feel to some extent has been over commercialised."

Sentiment: (+0.08) mildly positive sentiment, grounded in active cultural engagement but tempered by concerns about authenticity, representation, and inclusivity within UK-based Caribbean cultural events.

5.2.3 Preserving Traditions and Customs

This looks at how we express and maintain our cultural traditions and values for the benefit of self, community, and future generations. Participants shared several ways they preserve and pass on these traditions and values, identifying core aspects that must be maintained and preserved.

Community Building

Participants highlighted the importance of community-building activities to preserve cultural heritage. Some examples include:

- Belonging to groups like Ageless Teenagers, which focuses on keeping seniors engaged and active while involving inter-generational projects to ensure children learn about Caribbean culture.
- Capturing and preserving proverbs and sayings to pass on to future generations, ensuring these cultural practices are not lost.
- Actively participating in Caribbean food, music, storytelling, and cultural events, as well as supporting Black businesses and maintaining natural hairstyles.

Food & Music

Food and music play a significant role in maintaining Caribbean culture. Participants shared:

- Using traditional cooking methods and preparing specific dishes like Rice & Peas and Chicken on Sundays.
- Engaging with music genres like Lovers Rock and reggae and incorporating semi-patois language in everyday conversations.
- Maintaining cultural traditions through family meals and dishes, such as the tradition of Saturday soup.

Family Values

Family values are essential in preserving cultural heritage. Participants emphasised:

- *"Please thank you and good morning are still required in our house. teaching the children to cook Caribbean dishes. Telling them stories of our childhood. Windrush has opened a door for us to educate our children on the journey made by the Caribbean people in the UK and why it's important to keep our stories alive. Having a sense of where you are from and the legacy we have needs to be celebrated and continued."*
- *"I have carried on the tradition of baking cakes at Christmas time. Visiting Barbados as frequently as possible. Exploring the uniqueness of every Caribbean Island. Exposing my children to Barbadian love of cricket, music and Bajan history and national heroes"*

Language

Language is a crucial component of cultural identity. Participants noted:

- Expressing cultural identity through national wear and speaking the native language, such as Creole/French Patois.
- Passing on the language, history, and culinary traditions to children, despite challenges in maintaining the language.

Celebrations

Cultural celebrations are vital for preserving traditions. Participants shared:

"I grew up with playing mass with my mother, going to Carnival every year, eating Trini foods, and learnt to cook many Trini foods as a child. My older children grew up in Trinidad and my younger ones I did not make much of an effort with, which I regret. I wish I had taken them to spend a few years in Trinidad as children, it would have been good for them. I have made very little effort to pass things on to them which I now regret as I see how it has affected them."

Positive View

Participants expressed a strong dedication to preserving their cultural traditions and values, highlighting the importance of community, food, music, family values, language, and celebrations in maintaining their heritage.

Contrasting View

Some participants felt less connected or faced challenges in preserving their traditions, particularly when cultural events were overshadowed by other influences or when living in areas with limited access to cultural resources.

Sentiment: (+0.30) This is the highest positive sentiment so far. It reflects a deep emotional commitment to preserving culture, driven by love for family, community, and legacy. The few contrasting perspectives highlight challenges, but they do not outweigh the sense of pride and purpose.

5.2.4 The Importance of Inter-Island Relationships

We examine the feeling of community and belonging that individuals experience from members of different Caribbean islands, building inter-island relationships. Reflecting on your voices with an emphasis on our shared culture, values, and experiences, participants shared varying perspectives.

Positive View

"Yes, Caribbean individuals have very similar values regarding life in general. That gives the opportunity to have valuable conversations."

"Yes, we come together. Embrace differences between islands e.g. dumplings v bakes. The accents, music, flags but together we're descendants of the diaspora which unifies us too."

"Yes, I do. It is nice to be in the company of people who understand you without you having to explain."

"Yes, but I have had to search for these or build them myself. I think it's harder because we are a minority and often you can be the only Caribbean Black person in a room, particularly in professional settings. With family and friends, I feel a sense of community though."

Contrasting View

"No, my interests do not necessarily align with most individuals of Caribbean heritage in the UK."

"I unfortunately haven't been exposed to any such communities or groups during my upbringing."

"No, not always. Times have changed and people are not so welcoming of each other these days."

"Yes, and I cannot stand the island rivalry that is so prevalent. I am more for oneness, unity, and togetherness as unity is strength. I despise, loathe, hate, detest the 'crab in the barrel' syndrome which affects our community or put another way the pulling up of the drawbridge some Black people adopt or as Shakespeare wrote 'scorn the base degree by which they did ascend.'"

Sentiment: (+0.20) moderately positive sentiment, highlighting staunch support for inter-island unity, cultural familiarity, and belonging, even while acknowledging ongoing social and communal challenges.

5.2.5 Dating and Marrying Across Cultures

Explores the impact of cross-cultural relationships on an individual's identity. Through participants' responses we look at the dynamics, assumptions, and moral principles that surround intercultural interactions.

Participants share a variety of cross-cultural relationship experiences.

Over 50% of respondents stated that they would date and/or marry outside of their culture; **23.64%** of respondents would not marry outside of their culture with the remainder undecided.

Positive View:

"I have, and it was important to see, before we became too serious, how he fitted into my family and our culture. It was also important to discuss potential children and styles of upbringing."

"Yes, I have, there are parts of yourself you have to hide and adjust, I don't think in an interracial relationship you can fully be yourself, there are things about your behaviour and attitudes that you have to adjust."

One participant who is married to a New Zealander emphasises the positive benefits of such connections. They stressed that having a companion from a different culture has given them the chance to understand and respect one another's origins. Their connection has become more interesting and distinctive because of this.

It was surprising to find that those who date and married companions from other Caribbean countries also considered this dating or marrying outside their culture expressing the following views:

"Yes. From another Caribbean Island. Impact positive"

"My husband is Bajan when we got married it was still seen as marrying outside."

Contrasting view

Other participants offer a variety of opinions on cross-cultural dating and marriage. Some participants are willing to date and wed people from other cultures because they understand that it is their right to love whoever they choose. Others say they are open to dating but would rather be married in their own culture.

Participants noted that:

“No, I would marry or date another Black person from another culture, but I would unlikely marry someone who is not black.”

“Yes, I would consider dating someone from another culture., but I always wanted to marry someone from the Caribbean because we would have the same culture, and hopefully ideology. Most of my “dates” were with Caribbean men.”

“Our gene pool has already suffered from Europe's programmes to whiten countries.”

“Although I am of mixed parentage Black dad white mum I have never been attracted to white men, except James Dean! I love dark skinned men and Wesley Snipes would be my partner of choice. A girl can always dream.”

“You cannot help who you fall in love with or who you are attracted to. Don't know...need to see if it happens!”

Sentiment: (+0.20) a moderately positive sentiment. There is thoughtful engagement with cultural boundaries, but also a clear openness to love across those lines as long as mutual understanding and respect are in place.

5.2.6 Positive Aspects of Living in the UK

Discussing the advantages and opportunities that individuals appreciate about living in the UK. Participants celebrate the UK's vibrant diversity. The presence of people from different origins and cultures provides a multicultural environment that encourages communication, acceptance, and engagement across cultural boundaries.

Participants most valued the legislative structures that addresses equality and diversity; NHS / Healthcare; Freedom and tolerance; Strong economy; education and job opportunities, social mobility, opportunities to grow and living in a diverse country were frequently mentioned as advantages. citing that:

Positive View:

“I mostly enjoy living here. I've worked hard for my education and feel that I contribute through work with charities and in diversity and inclusion, and other work in the community.”

“UK legislation around Equality and Diversity.

“Multiculturalism is the most valuable asset living in the UK.”

“Free schooling, healthcare, access to support if needed, standard of living etc”.

“It's one of the better countries to live in (as a Black person).”

“Being able to live with others of different nationalities, and to be able to practice my Christian Faith. Being able to find events of all kinds if necessary to self-entertain. And the National Health System where many of our Caribbean people worked so hard.”

Contrasting View:

There was no contrasting views provided for this section.

Sentiment: (+1.00) - strongest positive sentiment.

5.3 CULTURAL AWARENESS AND RECOGNITION

This theme explores the recognition of the **Caribbean community's**



contributions to the UK and the ongoing efforts to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions. Less than **10%** of respondents felt that the UK truly recognised their contributions.

5.3.1 Recognition of Caribbean Community Contributions to UK Society

While aspects of Caribbean culture, such as food, music, and festivals, are often celebrated, many participants felt that these contributions are only superficially acknowledged. The deeper, historical, and societal contributions of the Caribbean community, particularly those linked to the Windrush generation, remain unrecognised. The lingering impact of the Windrush scandal has further shaped participants' sense of how their community is valued, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive acknowledgment of their enduring contributions to British society.

Positive Views

"Yes, I believe they do. It has been a hard slog but with travel to the Caribbean, the UK society has learned more about the Caribbean and is more appreciative of the Caribbean contributions and cultural richness. Also, more Caribbean restaurants and the Notting Hill Carnival have helped immensely."

"I think we are living in a time we're the Caribbean contribution is recognised and appreciated by the general population, unfortunately not by the government or other institutions. But this is due to the lack of economic power of the Caribbean population, Caribbean countries, and Black peoples. This has impacted me in terms of reduced opportunities, not having connections in important networks, not knowing of important networks, and being excluded from many opportunities."

"I think they do and particularly considering the Windrush scandal - many are more aware. This new wave of public awareness makes me feel proud to be a member of the Caribbean community and happy to help to speak of the contribution both myself and my ancestors have made. Whether people appreciate it or not - I hold this sense of pride that we are not takers only, but we are contributors also."

"I think they are starting to recognise our contributions. Since BLM (Black Lives Matter), it has become a lot easier to have frank and open discussions about Black culture and Black experiences which have led to important conversations. I think on a surface level, UK society accepts the easy-to-swallow culture like music, dance, sport, food, and more so media

now too. But I think our history and the role they played in it; we still have a way to go."

Contrasting Views

"No, the UK believes that we have been here for 75 years. They fail to understand that it was our blood, sweat, and tears that built Britain."

"No. For years growing up I thought Black people didn't do anything worthwhile in the world which added to my low sense of self-worth."

"On the surface partly, but at its core not at all, the Windrush Scandal is a prime example of the lack of respect for what that generation did. The treatment of Ukrainian refugees compared to refugees of colour is another example of how bad treatment can be. Its impact on me is just knowing how little we are valued and understanding that lack of value."

"Without us and other immigrants this country would be nothing, yet they still never fully recognise that. Any way it's time for us to celebrate our own and stop waiting for someone else to throw us a party."

"No, my grandparents were part of the Windrush and contributed to society for years without appreciation. It's made me research and understand more about what Caribbean people have done for the UK."

Sentiment: (0.00) This section is perfectly balanced, reflecting equal parts pride and pain. Participants feel an intense sense of cultural worth but also carry the burden of being overlooked, particularly by institutions. It is a neutral sentiment overall, but only because opposing emotional forces are equally strong.

5.3.2 Challenge Stereotypes and Misconceptions Associated with Caribbean Identity

Challenging Stereotypes and Misconceptions examines how the UK Caribbean community deals with false preconceptions and preconceived notions about them. Only 5 participants reported not experiencing any stereotyping or misconceptions, while all other respondents faced a variety of issues. Let us take a closer look at their responses and how they manage these challenges:

Positive Views

"Yes. Exceeding expectations, being the best I can."

"Yes, people presume all Black people can rap or run fast. I was at university when a fellow student told me I can rap because I am Black. I challenged her, and her response was that she had a Black friend who could rap! I put her straight."

“Yes, not everyone is Jamaican; there are so many other islands with rich heritage.”

“Yes, I have encountered stereotypes and misconceptions about being Caribbean or of Caribbean heritage in the UK. When faced with these stereotypes, I address or challenge them by sharing accurate information and personal experiences. I try to educate others about the diverse cultures and traditions within the Caribbean community, emphasising that each individual is unique and should not be judged based on preconceived notions. Open communication and promoting cultural understanding are essential in breaking down these stereotypes and fostering a more inclusive society.”

Contrasting Views

Some participants felt exhausted by constantly having to challenge stereotypes, especially when they were faced with them in everyday life. They noted that, despite efforts, these stereotypes persist in mainstream media and society.

“I most definitely have. I give examples or scenarios and try to better explain a situation or that of a Caribbean stereotype or myth. This often works, but sometimes people cannot see differently, or so it seems.”

“That we are all uneducated and are aggressive and violent people.”

“Yes. Lazy, weed-smoking, and relaxed, have plenty of pickneys... I remind people not to stereotype anyone, regardless of where they come from.”

“Yes, that Caribbean people are lazy, unmotivated, and dangerous. Or that they don't abide by the law. Or that they avoid responsibilities or come from broken homes. I see this reinforced in media. I challenge them by proving people wrong and aiming to be successful.”

Sentiment: (-0.03) slightly negative sentiment, primarily due to the ongoing frustration and emotional labour many participants experience when constantly confronting harmful stereotypes. Still, it's not heavily negative the positive responses reflect resilience and pride, just weighed down by the persistence of societal bias.

5.3.3 Environmental Impact

Investigating the ways Caribbean individuals engage with and adopt elements from other cultures and how this impacts their identity. Environmental Impact focuses on the effects of these cultural influences

as well as the ways that people of Caribbean origin adapt and incorporate components of other cultures into their own lives.

Positive Views

“The opportunities that arise and how to grasp them. It’s made me appreciate the things you can achieve.”

“Adapting how other cultures deal with their finances in regards to generational wealth has impacted myself and my family in a positive way.”

“I appreciate positives of all cultures. I am a human being and will appropriate whatever I see is doing well and spreading good vibes! Born and raised in UK, it is inevitable I am closer culturally to many white people than village Guyanese.”

“The value of a name, I’ve learnt from my West African friends the importance of the name we give our children.”

Contrasting Views

“No, because I am so proud of my individuality. I also embrace the fact that my culture was diluted through the exchange of hands and time because even that makes me and my people unique. We are not pure anything. We are the result of amalgamated cultures.”

“Weird question. Being born in this country means I have adopted a multitude of things from birth... accent, food, music, style, etc. It means I am literally a Black British (Caribbean) person.”

“A lot from British culture, making me a hybrid of two cultures which can be difficult sometimes as the two cultures can clash. The Caribbean side has high values, high regard for personal presentation and education, and that can jar sometimes with the English way of doing things.”

Sentiment: (+0.33) moderately positive sentiment, emphasising the benefits of cultural adaptation and openness, while also acknowledging the challenges of hybrid identity. Participants show pride in their flexibility, individuality, and cross-cultural learning.

5.3.4 Valuing Cultural Uniqueness

Emphasising the importance of preserving and valuing the unique aspects of Caribbean culture, participants shared what they value the most and what they find challenging. This section highlights the diverse perspectives on the strengths and areas for improvement within the Caribbean community.

Positive View

“There were native people in the Caribbean before slavery.”

“We have been integral in the invention of many world-changing items.”

“Family morals and traditions of which there are many. I value how it keeps families together, despite the separatism of the UK life and culture.”

“I really love the folk songs which tell such lovely stories in their lyrics and have been handed down over the years from slavery days. I really wish they were given more prominence in schools and on the education syllabus/curriculum as the Caribbean is not only about calypso, reggae, dance hall and hip-hop music.”

“There are certain, unspoken things that we all just understand. It only takes one sound or one facial expression and everyone will know what you mean. I think it's unique and I only notice it when someone who isn't part of the culture points it out.”

Contrasting view

“Sometimes we as a community don't believe in ourselves. I find it challenging to see many talents and opportunities haven't been utilised through limiting beliefs and lack of support.”

“We don't support our people as we should and don't invest in our community.”

“I don't like a lot of things, and the key is in having those conversations at the right time with the right people. Too many of our people air our dirty laundry where others can see it. That holds us back.”

“Sexism, homophobia, some religious bigotry and hypocrisy and prejudice amongst each other subcultures.”

“I don't like that we must have a visa for family to visit us from Jamaica. I don't like the way people of colour are treated differently and wish we could do something about it. I get frustrated when I see Black people being treated unfairly and nothing is done to make it right.”

“Blacks killing blacks.”

“The older generation has not shared knowledge and a second language with the young ones, so Patois has phased out due to the lack of sharing.”

“I find the Caribbean culture can be dismissive or unsupportive towards people suffering from mental health and there can sometimes be a harshness that is not always needed.”

“That it is not celebrated more in the UK, and when celebrated the headlines can be negative.”

"That mi have fi send a likkle change!"

"We need to be more focused on educating our Black and brown men and women."

Sentiment: (+0.05) slightly positive sentiment overall, powered by cultural pride and emotional connection, yet balanced by real concerns about internal challenges and a call for community growth and deeper support structures.

5.3.5 Global Impact of Caribbean Culture

This section explores the enduring impact of Caribbean culture on the world, emphasising the positive contributions across various fields and the influence of Caribbean people and practices globally. Below is an breakdown of views:

Positive View:

The positive view emphasises the immense global impact of Caribbean culture and its contributions to society. Participants expressed pride in the cultural and societal achievements of Caribbean individuals, particularly in medicine, entertainment, and global leadership.

"The wealth they generated from trans-Atlantic slavery over 400 years can't be measured. We built European society. It's only this wealthy and developed because of us."

"There's so much!! It's hard to pick one. I'll go for the people: creativity, warmth, hardworking."

"We are everywhere contributing to society. We have singers, scientists, racing drivers, teachers, doctors, government ministers - showing our young people things to aspire to and to elders' things to be proud of."

"Caribbean culture shows the world how diverse cultures can live and thrive together."

"As a community we have transformed the world wherever we go through our creativity, music, food, leadership, trendsetting, and many more."

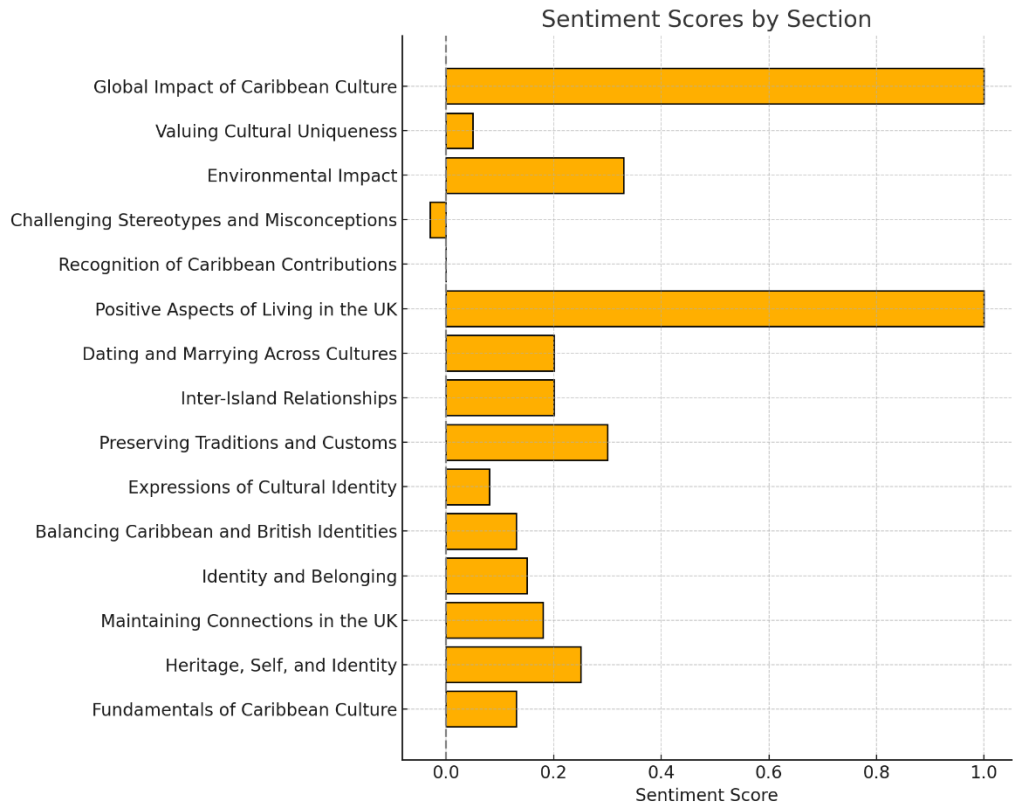
The sentiment here is overwhelmingly positive, with an emphasis on pride, accomplishment, and the transformational impact Caribbean culture has had globally. These responses reflect a powerful sense of pride and celebration of the Caribbean community's influence across multiple fields.

Contrasting View:

There was no contrasting views provided for this section given the positive tone throughout.

Sentiment: (+1.00) fully positive sentiment, and alongside “Positive Aspects of Living in the UK,” it is the highest-scoring section. It reflects deep cultural pride, global influence, and a powerful sense of identity and contribution.

At a glance SENTIMENT SCORES BY SECTION HEADINGS



5.4 YOUR COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This section of the report reflects the importance respondents place on cultural heritage - not only for themselves, but also for their communities, regions, the UK, and Europe as a whole. It also highlights the level of interest in staying engaged and learning more about cultural heritage.

Respondents were invited to share what matters most to them, how they would like to stay involved, and what they feel is needed to strengthen cultural identity and heritage within the UK Caribbean community.

Your comments, suggestions and questions will be explored further in the next section. In the meantime, here is what you told us...

Key Comments

- *“I’m unsure why the word ‘Black’ was omitted from this survey.”*
- *“Thank you for this survey. I hope that it brings into focus the role of the people of the Caribbean here in the UK.”*
- *“Thought-provoking and interesting survey.”*
- *“Would like to know more following the results. Why this survey, and what happens now?”*

Suggestions and Reflections

- *“Shorter survey please.”*
- *“I would love to see a movement that can acquire and maintain our own local community centres, where we can celebrate our culture without being governed by councils who can remove access at will.”*
- *“We need to be politically and economically stronger.”*
- *“Let us encourage our people to know their roots.”*
- *“Education, political debates, mentoring youth programmes – these are essential.”*
- *“Both informal and formal events that bring together people from different Caribbean cultures would help. Panel discussions, cultural events, and topical forums are valuable.”*
- *“Encouraging children to speak with elders and hear their migration stories is so important.”*
- *“It is important to recognise the impact and achievements of the individual islands, as well as the collective Caribbean.”*

5.5 INTERPRETATION: PATTERNS, TRENDS, AND INSIGHTS

The 100 Caribbean Voices Survey offers a rare glimpse into how people of Caribbean heritage in the UK experience and express their cultural identity. While each story is unique, together they reveal common values, concerns, and evolving perspectives within the British Caribbean community.

This section highlights key trends and themes uncovered through qualitative analysis from strong expressions of pride and resilience to concerns about cultural misrepresentation and dilution. These insights reflect a community navigating identity in a multicultural UK, balancing heritage with modern realities.

What emerges is a portrait of a community proud of its roots, aware of its contributions, and committed to preserving its legacy. These findings lay a foundation for future engagement and advocacy, ensuring Caribbean voices in the UK are heard, understood, and celebrated.

- **Patterns of Cultural Connection and Identity**

Trend:

A strong emotional attachment to Caribbean heritage persists across generations, with many participants, especially those born in the Caribbean expressing deep pride in their ancestry, values, and cultural traditions.

Pattern:

UK-born participants, particularly younger respondents, often reported a sense of partial or surface-level connection to their heritage. Many acknowledged gaps in cultural knowledge, language, and traditional practices, highlighting generational differences in cultural immersion.

Insight:

Caribbean identity remains a powerful force for self-definition, but the strength of that identity often correlates with lived experiences, familial transmission, and access to cultural touchpoints in the UK. The further removed individuals are from first-generation migrant experiences, the more intentional efforts are required to sustain cultural continuity.

- **Navigating Dual Identities: British and Caribbean**

Trend:

Many participants described “*code-switching*” between Caribbean and British identities depending on context: at work, in social spaces, or within

family life. This adaptability is seen as both a survival strategy and a source of cultural richness.

Pattern:

There is a consistent tension between celebrating Caribbean heritage and feeling pressured to conform to British societal norms, particularly in white or non-Caribbean spaces.

Insight:

Dual identity is an ongoing negotiation, not a fixed state. While it can foster greater cultural empathy and resilience, it also places a psychological burden on individuals to navigate multiple expectations, often without institutional recognition or support.

- **Preservation of Culture: Family, Food, and Traditions**

Trend:

Participants rely heavily on family practices - like cooking traditional meals, storytelling, language use, and community gatherings to preserve cultural heritage. Food, music, and family values were the most consistently cited anchors of identity.

Pattern:

Many respondents, particularly those over 35, are actively preserving and passing down traditions to children. Others expressed regret about missed opportunities to do so, particularly those raising children in more culturally distant environments. Older generations are actively preserving and passing down traditions to children. Churches were also mentioned as key spaces where cultural and moral teachings are reinforced. Food, music, and family values were the most consistently cited anchors of identity.

Insight:

The home remains the primary site of cultural transmission, but institutions like churches play a supporting role, especially in maintaining language, values, and intergenerational bonds. Cultural preservation efforts need to be supported not only in families, but also through schools, media, community organisations, and faith spaces.

- **Community and Belonging: A Fragmented Unity**

Trend:

There is an ardent desire for community and inter-island unity among people of Caribbean heritage in the UK. Many respondents reported a

sense of shared values and kinship with other islanders, even if national or cultural nuances exist.

Pattern:

While there are concerns about internal divisions and lack of cultural infrastructure - especially outside of major cities, churches were identified by several respondents as consistent, reliable spaces for social support and cultural affirmation.

Insight:

The Caribbean community in the UK has the potential for collective cultural strength, but cohesion needs to be actively cultivated. Faith institutions, particularly churches, have long provided a unifying presence and can serve as central hubs for both spiritual and cultural community-building. Strengthening their role alongside other pan-community initiatives, spaces and events can help reduce isolation and foster belonging.

- **Representation and Stereotyping in UK Society**

Trend:

Participants consistently expressed frustration over limited and superficial representation of Caribbean culture in British media and institutions. While Caribbean music, food, and carnival are celebrated, the community's deeper contributions, especially historical and intellectual are often overlooked.

Pattern:

Negative stereotypes (e.g., aggression, laziness, lack of ambition) continue to affect how Caribbean individuals are perceived and treated. Most participants reported having to actively challenge these misconceptions.

Insight:

There is a disconnect between the cultural influence of the Caribbean community and the recognition it receives. Addressing this gap requires systemic change, not just cultural celebration but educational reform, inclusive policy, and narrative ownership.

- **Intercultural Relationships and Identity Formation**

Trend:

Over half of respondents expressed openness to or engagement in cross-cultural and interracial relationships. However, many also emphasised the

importance of shared values and cultural understanding within partnerships, particularly regarding child-rearing and tradition.

Pattern:

Interestingly, even relationships between individuals from different Caribbean islands were sometimes perceived as "*marrying outside*" one's culture, reflecting the complexity and specificity of island identities.

Insight:

Cultural alignment and mutual respect are key concerns in romantic relationships. These dynamics highlight the importance of education, dialogue, and exposure within and across communities to support healthy cultural integration and identity retention.

- **Opportunities and Limitations of Life in the UK**

Trend:

Many respondents cited positive aspects of life in the UK such as access to education, healthcare, legal protections, and multicultural exposure as reasons for appreciation and growth.

Pattern:

However, these opportunities are often tempered by structural inequalities, racism, and cultural misunderstandings that undermine feelings of true belonging.

Insight:

While the UK offers significant opportunities, Caribbean people often experience conditional belonging. Systemic change, representation, and equity are necessary to match the community's contributions with a genuine sense of inclusion.

- **A Desire for Greater Cultural Awareness and Recognition**

Trend:

Participants overwhelmingly felt that Caribbean contributions especially those of the Windrush generation have not been sufficiently recognised by UK institutions. Many tied this lack of recognition to broader issues of exclusion, policy failure, and racial injustice.

Pattern:

There is a growing call for initiative-taking cultural education, political empowerment, and community-led recognition efforts, such as heritage centres, storytelling initiatives, and curriculum reforms.

Insight:

The desire for recognition goes beyond acknowledgment - it is a call for fairness, empowerment, and long-term investment in Caribbean cultural sustainability and representation.

- **External Cultural Influences and Adaptation**

Trend:

Many participants have adopted values, practices, and philosophies from other cultures, especially in areas like finance, education, and naming traditions. This openness often coexists with pride in Caribbean uniqueness.

Pattern:

Others expressed concern about the loss or dilution of Caribbean identity due to assimilation, especially in younger generations.

Insight:

Cultural exchange is inevitable and can be enriching, but it must be balanced with active preservation efforts to ensure Caribbean heritage is not eroded over time.

- **Pride in Global Caribbean Impact**

Trend:

There is widespread pride in the global contributions of the Caribbean community across medicine, politics, sports, arts, and beyond. This sense of impact reinforces identity and offers a counter-narrative to deficit-based portrayals.

Pattern:

This pride is expressed across generations, is seen as a unifying, and motivational force.

Insight:

Highlighting and celebrating Caribbean achievements globally can strengthen internal community confidence and combat negative stereotypes. It is also an important educational tool for the broader UK society.

- **Faith, Churches, and Spiritual Anchors**

Trend:

Churches and places of worship continue to serve as vital spaces for community connection, cultural transmission, and emotional support; especially among older generations.

Pattern:

Beyond their spiritual function, churches often function as cultural hubs hosting events, supporting families, and offering intergenerational contact points. Many participants referenced the church as a key part of their upbringing and moral foundation.

Insight:

The church plays a dual role as both a spiritual and social institution within the Caribbean diaspora. As younger generations move away from formal religion, there is an opportunity to reimagine faith spaces as broader cultural anchors supporting identity, tradition, and community wellbeing.

Overarching Insights & Takeaways

1. **Cultural Pride and Resilience:** Despite challenges, Caribbean identity is rooted in family, values, and shared history. Pride endures, even when connection weakens across generations.
2. **Dual Identity and Code-Switching:** Balancing British and Caribbean identities is complex, often requiring psychological flexibility and strength.
3. **Cultural Dilution vs. Preservation:** Without support from schools, institutions, and media, younger generations risk losing connection to heritage.
4. **Stereotypes and Representation:** Misrepresentation remains a barrier to progress; participants call for more nuanced, empowering portrayals of Caribbean life.
5. **Generational Gaps:** Bridging these divides is crucial; intergenerational storytelling and cultural education are key.
6. **Recognition Beyond Celebration:** The Caribbean community seeks recognition not just of its culture, but also for its historical and societal impact.
7. **Building Unity and Infrastructure:** Strengthening intra-Caribbean solidarity and increasing access to affirming cultural spaces can foster belonging and cohesion.
8. **Harnessing Global Caribbean Influence:** Emphasising the Caribbean's global achievements can inspire pride and reframe public narratives.

6. THE DISCUSSION

6. DISCUSSION

This section reflects on the voices and perspectives gathered through the Survey. It explores both shared experiences and divergent views within the UK Caribbean community, highlighting the cultural pride, systemic challenges, and generational shifts shaping Caribbean identity today. The findings call for coordinated action across education, cultural policy, representation, and intergenerational engagement to preserve, evolve, and elevate Caribbean heritage in Britain.

One of the most striking and heartbreaking findings from this survey emerged in a single quote:

“No. For years growing up I thought Black people didn’t do anything worthwhile in the world which added to my low sense of self-worth.”

This statement encapsulates a profound and painful reality - the long-term psychological toll of erasure, misrepresentation, and underrepresentation in global narratives. The participant’s experience reflects not only the external impact of global media in shaping self-perception but also an internal void: a lack of visible role models, stories, and achievements that affirm the worth and dignity of Caribbean people.

What is especially troubling is the idea that such a sentiment could be normalised in childhood. It speaks to a failure on multiple levels: in global media, in education systems, and even within Caribbean communities themselves; to affirm and celebrate Black excellence, Caribbean heritage, and cultural legacy. The quote highlights a broader pattern in the survey: Caribbean people are often flattened into stereotypes, either exoticized or made to disappear entirely from mainstream narratives. This invisibility is not benign; it has real, lasting consequences on identity, self-esteem, and mental health.

The data gathered shows a clear need for cultural reclamation. The Caribbean must not only resist harmful portrayals but actively invest in storytelling, education, and cultural programming that reflect the truth of our people’s value and contributions. The fight for narrative sovereignty is not simply a matter of pride - it is a matter of psychological survival.

6.1 Cultural Continuity and Generational Gaps

The survey findings reveal a strong emotional attachment to Caribbean culture, particularly among those who migrated to the UK. Respondents expressed pride in values such as resilience, family, and cultural expression through food, music, and storytelling.

However, a generational gap is evident. Younger, UK-born participants often feel disconnected or only partially connected to their heritage. While they express pride, their engagement tends to be surface level, lacking deeper knowledge of history, language, or customs. This gap is

exacerbated by limited cultural education and reduced access to community-led initiatives.

Without sustained efforts to pass on traditions, the risk of cultural dilution increases. Participants expressed a desire for more structured intergenerational learning and community spaces to help reconnect younger generations with their Caribbean identity.

Recommendations:

- Intergenerational storytelling programmes
- Inclusion of Caribbean studies in the UK curriculum
- Youth-led heritage initiatives
- Cultural mentorship from elders to younger generations

6.2 Navigating Dual Identities

Participants described the challenge of navigating dual Caribbean and British identities. “Code-switching” was a recurring theme, with individuals adapting their language, behaviour, and cultural expression depending on context.

While many see dual identity as a strength, allowing for adaptability and wider perspective, others described it as emotionally taxing. Particularly in white or culturally distant environments, individuals reported feeling pressure to conform or suppress aspects of their identity.

These experiences reinforce the importance of cultural affirmation and systemic support to ensure Caribbean people can fully express their identity without the burden of navigating bias, invisibility, or internalised doubt.

Recommendations:

- Cultural literacy training in schools and workplaces
- Support for culturally competent mental health services
- Digital engagement initiatives to promote cultural connection.
- Expand Caribbean community hubs across the UK.

6.3 Representation and Misrepresentation

Although Caribbean culture is widely visible through food, music, and events like carnival, participants noted that this visibility is often superficial. Less than 10% felt that UK society fully recognises the historical, economic, and cultural contributions of the Caribbean community, particularly the Windrush generation.

Participants consistently pointed to a lack of meaningful representation in media, politics, and education. Most public engagement with Caribbean culture remains limited to entertainment, while intellectual, historical, and civic contributions are rarely acknowledged. Stereotypes persist, portraying Caribbean people as lazy, aggressive, or lacking ambition.

These distortions fuel unconscious bias, limit opportunities, and perpetuate systemic exclusion.

This misrepresentation not only distorts public perception but also has lasting impacts on individual and collective identity, as captured in the emotional quote shared at the beginning of this section. It serves as a reminder that erasure has deep psychological costs, particularly for younger generations.

Recommendations:

- Integrate Caribbean contributions into national education.
- Advocate for more diverse media representation
- Fund public campaigns to challenge stereotypes.
- Establish leadership pipelines for Caribbean professionals.

Learning from Other Communities:

- Jewish Community: Hebrew schools and national Holocaust Memorial Day
- Chinese Community: High-profile New Year celebrations and language support
- Irish Community: St. Patrick's Day recognition
- African Communities: Events like Africa Oyé and Africa on the Square

Despite commemorations for other communities, Caribbean emancipation remains unrecognised.

Recommendation: Establish an official Emancipation Remembrance Day UK to honour this historical milestone and celebrate the Caribbean community's resilience.

6.3A Caribbean Institutions and Cultural Infrastructure

Beyond grassroots efforts, several key institutions and organisations across the UK play a vital role in preserving, promoting, and advocating for Caribbean heritage and visibility:

- National Windrush Museum – Dedicated to the Windrush generation's contributions and the broader Caribbean legacy in Britain.
- Black Cultural Archives (BCA), Brixton – The UK's only national heritage centre focusing on African and Caribbean history in Britain through exhibitions, education, and outreach.
- The Windrush Foundation – Honours the achievements of the Windrush generation and promotes awareness of their impact on British life.
- Caribbean Social Forum (CSF) – Engages older Caribbean adults in cultural and wellbeing activities, while fostering community.
- Museumand: The National Caribbean Heritage Museum – A museum "without walls" that celebrates Caribbean heritage via exhibitions, events, and educational content.

- UK Centre for Carnival Arts (UKCCA) – Champions Caribbean carnival traditions across the UK, promoting artistic excellence and cultural education.

These institutions offer critical platforms for identity, education, celebration, and community-building. However, many rely on limited funding and operate in isolation.

Recommendation: Provide consistent funding and institutional support to scale the reach and sustainability of Caribbean cultural institutions across the UK.

6.3B Contemporary Caribbean Role Models in the UK

In addition to institutions and grassroots initiatives, notable Caribbean individuals are amplifying Caribbean voices, shaping public narratives, and influencing change:

- David Lammy MP (Guyanese heritage): Shadow Foreign Secretary and a leading voice on social justice and Windrush reparations.
- Baroness Floella Benjamin (Trinidadian): Media pioneer, House of Lords member, and children’s rights advocate.
- Dr. Juanita Cox (Dominican heritage): Literary scholar and Windrush historian.
- Levi Roots (Jamaican British): Entrepreneur and cultural ambassador for Caribbean cuisine.
- Dr. Velma McClymont: Jamaican author and community educator.
- Kandace Chimbiri (Barbadian heritage): Children’s author and historian.
- Prof. Gus John (Grenadian): Academic and civil rights activist.
- Vanessa Kingori OBE (British, Kenyan and Kittitian): Senior publishing executive and media diversity advocate.
- Akala (Scottish, Jamaican): Author and artist blending Caribbean history with Black British identity.
- Malorie Blackman OBE (Barbadian): Renowned author of Jamaican descent, former Children's Laureate, and creator of the "*Noughts & Crosses*" series.

Recommendations:

- Celebrate Caribbean changemakers in national campaigns, school curricula, and community awards.
- Create platforms to highlight excellence across sectors: literature, politics, education, business, and activism.

6.3C The Role of Caribbean High Commissions in Cultural Unity

The Caribbean High Commissions across the UK play a pivotal role in unifying the diaspora, promoting cultural continuity, and advancing community interests. Beyond representing individual nations, they function as bridges connecting Caribbean and British societies, fostering intergenerational engagement, and encouraging unity across the diverse islands within the diaspora.

Key Roles and Opportunities:

- **Cultural Representation and Celebration:** By hosting or endorsing pan-Caribbean events, High Commissions can strengthen inter-island unity and ensure inclusive representation of the region's diversity.
- **Community Cohesion:** As neutral and unifying bodies, High Commissions are well-placed to convene dialogue, foster partnerships, and mediate across fragmented or underrepresented voices within the diaspora.
- **Diplomatic Advocacy:** High Commissions can advocate for fair immigration policy, travel equity, reparations, youth programmes, and the institutional recognition of Caribbean contributions.
- **Educational Outreach and Legacy:** Through schools, universities, and public institutions, they can support cultural education, historical exhibitions, and initiatives that promote the Caribbean's global significance.

Recommendation: Empower and invest in Caribbean High Commissions to serve as key cultural diplomats facilitating unity, visibility, and strategic collaboration across the UK Caribbean community.

6.3D Unifying the Community for Greater Impact

The survey also revealed that while many Caribbean-led organisations, businesses, and initiatives are active across the UK, they often operate in silos. Respondents noted the duplication of efforts, fragmentation of networks, and missed opportunities to collaborate on shared goals.

Participants called for a more joined-up approach to community development bringing together creatives, educators, business leaders, and grassroots organisers to maximise impact, visibility, and sustainability.

A noteworthy example of collaboration and visibility is the annual UK Black Business Show in London and Birmingham which showcases and celebrates Black entrepreneurship, including many Caribbean-owned businesses. Events like this demonstrate the potential for unified platforms that uplift the wider community, connect networks, and create economic opportunity.

Opportunities for Collaboration:

- **Sector-Based Networks:** Encourage cooperation among Caribbean entrepreneurs, educators, artists, and youth leaders to exchange knowledge and pool resources.
- **Shared Cultural Platforms:** Develop national digital directories or hubs highlighting Caribbean-led initiatives to foster visibility and partnerships.
- **Collaborative Events and Campaigns:** Coordinate pan-Caribbean events that amplify community voices while addressing common issues such as heritage preservation, health, or youth mentorship.

Recommendation: Establish a national Caribbean community coalition or forum to coordinate efforts, share best practices, and promote unity within the diaspora.

6.3E **Building Caribbean Think Tanks and Intellectual Infrastructure**

One notable gap in the UK Caribbean ecosystem is the limited visibility and resourcing of Caribbean-led think tanks or policy research institutions. While several organisations exist with advocacy and heritage-focused missions, few operate as resolute, interdisciplinary think tanks producing data-driven insights, influencing policy, or guiding long-term community strategy.

Why Think Tanks Matter: Think tanks are essential for thought leadership, policy influence, academic collaboration, and strategic development. For the Caribbean community, this means driving public discourse on issues like education, justice reform, economic inequality, health disparities, and climate resilience through a culturally grounded lens.

Current Gaps and Challenges:

- Limited funding and institutional support
- Underrepresentation in academic research networks
- Lack of consolidated Caribbean data and community insights
- Minimal public awareness of Caribbean-led policy voices

Existing Platforms and Potential Catalysts: While the UK does not currently have a well-established Caribbean think tank with national reach, some organisations and individuals demonstrate strong potential:

- **The Windrush Foundation** and **Black Cultural Archives** produce important research and educational materials, though not formally structured as think tanks.
- **Academics like Dr. Juanita Cox and Prof. Gus John** have contributed research and analysis across key Caribbean policy areas.
- **Race equality and diaspora-focused initiatives** within institutions like Runnymede Trust and British Future often intersect with Caribbean issues, providing partnership potential.

Recommendations:

- **A dedicated UK Caribbean Think Tank:** Develop an independent, community-rooted organisation to lead in policy research, data analysis, and strategic advocacy on Caribbean-related issues.
- **Create partnerships with universities and policy institutions:** Leverage academic networks to foster research collaboration, fellowships, and internships.
- **Develop a Caribbean Knowledge Exchange Network:** Connect scholars, students, cultural experts, and practitioners to share knowledge and influence the national conversation.

- **Seek long-term funding through philanthropy and government schemes:** Secure resources to support sustainable operations and attract Caribbean researchers and policy experts.

Next Steps:

- Convene a working group of academics, community leaders, and cultural institutions to explore the structure, priorities, and governance model of a UK Caribbean Think Tank.
- Conduct a feasibility study and community consultation to ensure relevance and inclusivity.
- Develop a digital platform to begin collating Caribbean policy thought leadership in one accessible space.

Impact Potential: An active Caribbean think tank would not only inform national policy and elevate Caribbean perspectives in public discourse, it would also strengthen community strategy, unify fragmented efforts, and affirm the intellectual and civic power of the Caribbean diaspora in the UK.

6.4 **Belonging, Community, and Fragmentation**

While many participants described an intense sense of cultural pride and solidarity with others of Caribbean heritage, some also voiced feelings of disconnection or isolation especially in regions with fewer Caribbean communities.

Inter-island unity was valued, but rivalry, fragmentation, and a lack of inclusive spaces occasionally weakened this bond. Participants emphasised the importance of community groups, cultural centres, and events that bring together people from across the Caribbean diaspora to share, learn, and celebrate.

The Role of Caribbean High Commissions:

- Cultural representation at national events
- Political advocacy for Caribbean interests
- Hosting heritage and mentorship programmes

Recommendation: Empower Caribbean High Commissions to unify the diaspora and lead cultural preservation strategies.

6.5 **Intercultural Relationships and Identity Shifts**

Intercultural relationships were widely accepted among respondents, with over 50% stating that they are open to partnerships across cultural lines. However, cultural compatibility remained important, especially regarding child-rearing and the preservation of traditions.

Interestingly, even intra-Caribbean relationships were sometimes viewed as “intercultural,” reflecting how island-specific identities remain distinct. This complexity illustrates the need for a more expansive and inclusive definition of what it means to be Caribbean in a UK context - one that acknowledges diversity within unity.

Recommendations:

- Expand the narrative of Caribbean identity to reflect inclusivity.
- Develop family-based heritage learning resources.
- Promote cross-cultural understanding in community programming.

6.6 The UK as a Place of Opportunity – With Caveats

Respondents recognised the UK's positive attributes: healthcare, education, multiculturalism but these were tempered by feelings of exclusion stemming from racism, the Windrush scandal, and systemic inequities.

While the UK is seen as a place of opportunity, participants emphasised that true inclusion must go beyond surface-level representation. Structural reform is needed to make Caribbean voices, histories, and contributions visible and valued.

Recommendations:

- Policy reform for equity and inclusion
- Community monitoring of local government and institutional practices
- Better visibility of Caribbean excellence beyond arts and culture

6.7 Embracing External Influences While Valuing Uniqueness

Participants acknowledged the influence of other cultures on their lives, reflecting a fluid and adaptive identity. However, they also voiced the need to protect distinct Caribbean practices from language and food to moral codes and storytelling.

Recommendations:

- Preserve cultural practices through workshops and education.
- Support for cultural archiving and digital storytelling
- Develop local and online resources to promote Caribbean proverbs, languages, and moral codes.

6.8 Global Caribbean Impact: A Source of Collective Pride

The global influence of Caribbean people is a major source of pride. From music and sport to medicine and activism, participants expressed strong confidence in the community's global contributions.

However, less than 10% felt that UK institutions do not adequately recognise this. Participants called for these achievements to be embedded into national culture, not just highlighted during Black History Month.

Recommendations:

- National campaigns celebrating Caribbean excellence.
- Permanent museum exhibits and cultural education materials
- Recognition awards and honours for Caribbean professionals and changemakers

6.9 Implications and The Way Forward

Our Survey underscores the urgency of preserving, investing in, and evolving Caribbean identity in the UK. While the community is resilient and proud, it also faces clear threats, generational disconnect, underrepresentation, cultural misinterpretation, and institutional exclusion.

Cross-Cutting Challenges:

- Cultural dilution and generational disconnect.
- Fragmented community infrastructure
- Underrepresentation in media and policy
- Mental health pressures due to cultural erasure and racism

Key Strategies:

- Intergenerational dialogue and cultural education
- Representation in leadership, media, and schools
- Investment in cultural infrastructure
- Inclusive curricula and mental health programming
- Digital platforms for cultural preservation and youth engagement

Caribbean identity in the UK is not static it is dynamic, adaptive, and rooted in both legacy and innovation. The challenge is not only to preserve this identity but to ensure it thrives.

6.10 Outliers: Divergent Voices and Emerging Tensions

While most respondents expressed cultural pride, a small group shared more critical or alternative views. These included:

- **Detachment from Caribbean Identity:** younger or mixed-heritage individuals, expressed no strong connection to their roots.
- **Cultural Cynicism:** Others questioned the authenticity of modern cultural expressions or felt cultural elements had been diluted or commodified.
- **Intra-Community Division:** Frustration over island rivalries, lack of unity, or community gatekeeping was noted.
- **Pan-Africanism and Colonial Critique:** A few participants advocated reframing Caribbean identity within a broader African diaspora context. A view that I strongly disagree with.
- **Universalist or Non-Cultural Identity:** Some preferred to identify as global citizens, resisting fixed cultural labels.

Notably, even those who claimed disconnection or disinterest still took the time to engage with this survey. This suggests that, consciously or not, Caribbean heritage continues to hold a place in their personal or cultural landscapes whether as a source of pride, critique, or curiosity.

These voices reflect the complexity of diasporic identity and the need for engagement strategies that are inclusive, adaptable, and responsive to evolving realities and understandings of what it means to be Caribbean.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The insights from the 100 Caribbean Voices Survey provide a compelling mandate for action. While the Caribbean community in the UK is rich in culture, history, and resilience, it also faces systemic challenges that threaten the continuity of its identity across generations. The following recommendations reflect the voices of participants and are rooted in their lived experiences, concerns, and aspirations.

7.1. Cultural Preservation and Education

- **Integrate Caribbean History into UK Curricula:** Ensure schools teach Caribbean contributions to British society, with emphasis on Windrush, colonialism, and independence.
- **Support Intergenerational Learning:** Fund initiatives that connect elders and youth through storytelling, cooking, music, and language exchange.
- **Create Digital Heritage Archives:** Develop accessible online resources highlighting Caribbean traditions, dialects, music, recipes, and proverbs.
- **Provide Family-Based Cultural Resources:** Develop materials that help parents and caregivers pass on heritage in intercultural or mixed-heritage households.

7.2. Representation and Visibility

- **Celebrate Year-Round, Not Just in October:** Highlight Caribbean achievements throughout the year, not only during Black History Month or Carnival season.
- **Diversify Media and Publishing:** Invest in Caribbean writers, artists, filmmakers, and journalists to tell *authentic* stories and challenge stereotypes, although this is happening more.
- **Establish National Awards and Honours:** Recognise Caribbean professionals, creatives, educators, and changemakers for their contributions. E.g. The Spirit of the Caribbean Annual Ball and Caribbean Honour Awards.
- **Introduce Emancipation Remembrance Day UK:** Establish a national day to reflect on Caribbean history, resilience, and cultural legacy.

7.3. Institutional Investment and Infrastructure

- **Sustain and Scale Cultural Hubs:** Provide stable funding for organisations like the Black Cultural Archives, Museumand, and Windrush Foundation.
- **Empower High Commissions as Cultural Leaders:** Equip Caribbean High Commissions with resources to foster unity and promote cultural programming.
- **Build a UK Caribbean Think Tank:** Create a dedicated institution to produce research, influence policy, and advocate for the community's interests.
- **Develop a Caribbean Knowledge Exchange Network:** Link scholars, students, elders, and practitioners to share insight and influence national conversations.

7.4. Community Engagement and Collaboration

- **Foster Pan-Caribbean Unity:** Promote initiatives that bridge island differences, support regional cooperation, and celebrate shared culture.
- **Develop National Cultural Platforms:** Launch a shared online directory of Caribbean-led events, organisations, and services.
- **Host Cross-Island Cultural Forums:** Encourage inclusive cultural events, panels, and festivals that bring together diverse voices within the diaspora.
- **Address Intra-Community Tensions:** Facilitate community dialogues that confront rivalry, gatekeeping, and foster inclusion across generations and identities.

7.5. Youth Empowerment and Future Leadership

- **Mentorship Programmes:** Pair young people with Caribbean professionals and elders to strengthen cultural identity and build confidence.
- **Support Youth-Led Initiatives:** Fund grassroots youth projects that explore identity, mental health, digital storytelling, and leadership.
- **Revive Saturday Schools and Community Classes:** Offer culturally informed education in language, music, history, and life skills.
- **Support Mixed Heritage Identity Development:** Provide platforms and materials that validate and empower individuals with blended cultural roots.

7.6. Policy, Equity, and Justice

- **Institutional Reform and Accountability:** Monitor government and public sector policies to ensure equitable treatment of Caribbean communities.
- **Fund Public Awareness Campaigns:** Challenge harmful stereotypes and promote accurate representations of Caribbean identity and history.
- **Advocate for Inclusive Cultural Policies:** Ensure that Caribbean culture is visible in national museums, media, and public life.
- **Expand Culturally Competent Mental Health Services:** Ensure mental health providers are trained to understand and support the unique challenges Caribbean individuals face navigating identity, racism, and exclusion.

7.7. Cultural Access in All Regions

- **Expand Cultural Access Beyond Major Cities:** Invest in regional events, digital content, and mobile initiatives to connect Caribbean communities in underrepresented areas.
- **Establish Regional Outreach Hubs:** Support cultural programmes in rural or semi-rural areas where isolation and underexposure to heritage are more common.

7.8. Embracing Global Caribbean Impact

- **Celebrate Global Contributions:** Create exhibitions, campaigns, and educational content showcasing Caribbean excellence in politics, medicine, arts, and innovation.
- **Inspire the Next Generation:** Use Caribbean success stories to empower young people and build pride across the diaspora.

7.9. Supporting Churches and Faith-Based Cultural Spaces

- **Recognise Churches as Cultural Anchors:** Acknowledge the historic and ongoing role of churches in preserving Caribbean values, traditions, and moral frameworks.
- **Strengthen Church-Based Programmes:** Fund initiatives within faith spaces that provide cultural education, intergenerational exchange, and community support.
- **Encourage Faith-Cultural Partnerships:** Support collaboration between churches, schools, cultural organisations, and policymakers to extend the impact of religious institutions beyond spiritual life.
- **Engage Younger Generations through Evolving Faith Spaces:** Explore how faith spaces can be reimagined to appeal to younger people fostering belonging, resilience, and cultural pride in a contemporary context.

Together, these recommendations form a roadmap for preserving, protecting, and evolving Caribbean identity in the UK. They are not just suggestions, they are invitations for collaboration, investment, and long-term cultural sustainability.

8. FINAL CALL TO ACTION & NEXT STEPS

8. FINAL CALL TO ACTION AND NEXT STEPS

Let This Be a Turning Point

The Caribbean community in the UK stands at a critical crossroads. Proud, rooted, and culturally rich yet still under-recognised and fragmented.

This report issues a collective call to: **Remember our legacy. Reconnect across generations. Reimagine our future.**

For Policymakers:

- Establish Emancipation Remembrance Day.
- Reform curricula to include Caribbean history and contributions.
- Fund long-term cultural infrastructure and mental health support.

For Educators & Cultural Institutions:

- Develop national Caribbean heritage archives.
- Celebrate Caribbean excellence in science, sport, the arts, and education.
- Integrate Caribbean culture across the school year, not just in October.

For Community Organisations & Faith Spaces:

- Create intergenerational programmes rooted in language, music, and memory.
- Unify efforts through national coalitions and shared platforms.
- Recognise churches as both spiritual and cultural anchors.

For the Media & Private Sector:

- Spotlight Caribbean achievements beyond carnival and cuisine.
- Fund and platform authentic storytellers and cultural leaders.

For Caribbean People:

- Share your story. Mentor. Build. Protect what matters.
- Reclaim and honour the names, traditions, and histories that define us.

Next Steps

1. **Disseminate the Findings**
Share this report widely with policymakers, schools, media outlets, cultural institutions, and Caribbean communities across the UK.
2. **Form Working Groups**
Convene cross-sector teams (education, youth, faith, community, media) to prioritise and pilot the recommended actions.
3. **Launch Pilot Initiatives**
Fund scalable community-led projects that address cultural education, youth empowerment, heritage preservation and intergenerational transmission.
4. **Build and Resource Long-Term Infrastructure**
Support the establishment of institutions like a UK Caribbean Think Tank, regional cultural outreach hubs, and digital heritage archives.

5. **Track Progress and Revisit**

Develop an accountability framework and commit to revisiting these insights regularly ensuring they remain relevant, inclusive, and grounded in lived experience.

The Caribbean story in Britain is one of courage, creativity, and cultural brilliance. But it is also a story still being written. **The future of Caribbean identity in the UK will be shaped by what we choose to honour, protect, and invest in today.**

Let us ensure that the next *100 Caribbean Voices* and the thousands that follow are heard, understood, supported, and celebrated.

9. CONCLUSION

9. CONCLUSIONS

The *100 Caribbean Voices Survey* captures a **vital truth: being of Caribbean heritage in the UK is a powerful, layered experience rooted in legacy, shaped by struggle, and driven by pride.**

These voices reflect a community proud of its ancestry, yet aware of the growing risk of cultural dilution, generational drift, and institutional erasure. While the Caribbean presence is visible in music, food, and celebration, it remains marginalised in education, media, and national memory. This imbalance is not only unjust - but it also has consequences. As one respondent painfully shared, ***“For years growing up I thought Black people didn’t do anything worthwhile in the world.”*** That is the human cost of invisibility.

Yet there is also hope. Across every island, age group, and life experience, a shared desire rises to the surface: to preserve, protect, and project Caribbean identity into the future: not as a static memory, but as a living, evolving force.

Key Takeaways:

- **Pride and Resilience Remain Strong:** Cultural identity continues to serve as a source of strength, especially among those raised in culturally connected homes or with direct Caribbean ties.
- **Generational Gaps Are Widening:** Without intentional investment in cultural education, mentorship, and storytelling, younger generations risk losing connection to their roots. These gaps could lead to long-term cultural erosion.
- **Representation Is Uneven:** Caribbean contributions are celebrated in selected cultural moments but remain underrepresented in national narratives, policy, and leadership.
- **Cultural Identity Is Evolving:** While some embrace hybridity and Pan-Africanism, others yearn for authenticity, preservation and renewed unity across islands.
- **Community Infrastructure Needs Strengthening:** Fragmentation and underfunding of Caribbean-led initiatives have limited the collective impact of the community. The passion is there, what’s missing is the funding, coordination, and visibility to scale its impact.

This report is not a conclusion, it’s an invitation. To amplify what is working. To heal what has been harmed. To reconnect what has been lost.

We urge policymakers, educators, community leaders, cultural institutions, and individuals of Caribbean heritage to see this report not just as a mirror, but as a mandate. One that asks us all to listen more deeply, invest more boldly, and act more collectively.

- Let us not simply preserve the past: we will shape the future.
- Let us not fear what is changing: we will lead what comes next.

This is our time to remember, reconnect, and reimagine what it means to be Caribbean in Britain today and for generations to come.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

This report was produced by **Event Connoisseurs Ltd**, a UK-based cultural platform committed to celebrating and preserving Caribbean identity through storytelling, research, and premium events. Our work is rooted in a mission to uplift the Caribbean community, amplify its contributions, and ensure its legacy thrives across generations.

EVENT CONNOISSEURS

Event Connoisseurs is a UK-based platform dedicated to celebrating and preserving Caribbean culture through premium events and compelling storytelling. We curate immersive, high-quality experiences that honour heritage, spotlight excellence, and foster deeper connections within the Caribbean diaspora and beyond.

From the prestigious *Spirit of the Caribbean Annual Ball & Caribbean Honour Awards* to the soon-to-be-launched *Emancipation Remembrance Day UK* and our dynamic *One Caribbean Magazine*, our mission is clear: to inspire, educate, and uplift ensuring the strength of Caribbean culture continues to thrive for generations to come.

We are more than event organisers - we are cultural custodians.
We are not just hosting moments - we are building legacy.

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We welcome partnerships, feedback, and collaboration opportunities.
Please get in touch to be part of what's next.

10. **GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS**

This glossary provides definitions for key terms used throughout the 100 Caribbean Voices Survey Report. These terms help frame the language, identity, and context of the UK Caribbean experience as shared by participants.

Term	Definition
Caribbean Diaspora	People of Caribbean heritage living outside the Caribbean, often in countries like the UK, US, and Canada.
Code-Switching	The act of switching between languages, dialects, or cultural expressions depending on context. Common among individuals who navigate multiple cultural identities.
Cultural Erasure	The gradual loss or suppression of cultural identity due to assimilation, systemic bias, or lack of institutional recognition.
Emancipation Remembrance Day	A proposed UK national day to honour the abolition of slavery and recognise the enduring resilience and contributions of Caribbean communities.
Inter-Island Relationships	Social, familial, or romantic connections between individuals from different Caribbean islands, sometimes complicated by cultural distinctions or rivalries.
Pan-Africanism	A political and cultural movement that promotes solidarity among people of African descent worldwide. Some respondents advocate for framing Caribbean identity within this wider lens.
Patois (or Patwa)	A creole language or dialect spoken in several Caribbean countries. Often blends English with Spanish, French, and Indigenous languages. It carries rich cultural value and history, though sometimes undervalued or stigmatised.
Stereotypes	Oversimplified and often negative assumptions about a group of people. Caribbean communities in the UK frequently face stereotypes around laziness, aggression, or over-sexualisation.
Think Tank	An organisation or group that develops ideas and strategies on public policy, often providing research and recommendations to inform decision-making. A proposed Caribbean think tank would elevate Caribbean voices in UK policy and research.
Windrush Generation	Caribbean migrants who came to the UK between 1948 and the early 1970s to help rebuild post-war Britain. Their legacy is foundational to British-Caribbean history, but was marred by the Windrush scandal, where many were wrongfully detained or deported.

11. APPENDIX

11. Appendix 1: LIST OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What is your cultural background or heritage? Are you of Caribbean descent?
2. Were you born in the UK or did you migrate here from a Caribbean country?
3. How do you personally define or understand being Caribbean or of Caribbean heritage in the UK?
4. In what ways do you feel connected to your Caribbean roots while living in the UK?
5. Do you actively participate in Caribbean cultural events or celebrations in the UK? If so, which ones and why?
6. How has your Caribbean heritage influenced your identity and sense of belonging in the UK?
7. Have you experienced any challenges or obstacles in maintaining your Caribbean identity in the UK? If so, what were they?
8. How do you navigate between your Caribbean identity and the British culture in your daily life?
9. Do you feel a sense of community or belonging among other individuals of Caribbean heritage in the UK? Why or why not?
10. Are there specific traditions, customs, or values from the Caribbean that you try to preserve or pass on to future generations in the UK?
11. Have you encountered stereotypes or misconceptions about being Caribbean or of Caribbean heritage in the UK? If so, how do you address or challenge them?
12. Are there any particular experiences, stories, or memories that you associate with your Caribbean heritage while living in the UK?
13. How important is it for you to maintain connections with your Caribbean heritage in the UK? Why?
14. Have you noticed any differences in how being Caribbean or of Caribbean heritage is perceived in different regions of the UK?
15. Do you feel that the wider UK society recognises and appreciates the contributions and cultural richness of the Caribbean community? Why or why not?
16. Have you personally experienced cultural exchange or influence between your Caribbean heritage and the British culture in the UK? If so, how has it manifested?