

PRESS RELEASE

Community Theatre Production ‘Barbershop Uncut’ Stories Set to Inspire Conversations on Cancer in Croydon

Croydon, London – Autumn 2026

A powerful new community theatre production, *Barbershop Uncut Stories 2026*, will take to the stage in Croydon this October, using storytelling rooted in real-life experiences to spark vital conversations about cancer awareness, early diagnosis, and health inequalities.

Delivered in the London Borough of Croydon, the production brings together local voices and lived experiences of cancer survivors to create an authentic and culturally relevant performance. By drawing on familiar community settings and narratives, *Barbershop Uncut Stories* aims to break down stigma and encourage more open discussion around sensitive health topics, such as prostate cancer and breast cancer.

Cancer awareness is crucial because it promotes early detection, which can significantly improve survival rates. There are significant inequalities in cancer outcomes, survival rates, and diagnoses between different population groups. These differences are driven by factors such as deprivation and ethnicity. People from ethnically diverse communities and minority groups frequently experience later-stage diagnoses and face structural barriers, including language and lower health literacy.

The initiative has been supported by RM Partners NHS Cancer Alliance and the Croydon Council’s Creative Health Programme demonstrating a shared commitment to improving cancer outcomes and strengthening engagement with communities.

Empowering communities through storytelling

At its core, *Barbershop Uncut Stories 2026* seeks to:

- Raise awareness of cancer signs, symptoms, and screening
- Promote earlier diagnosis through increased public understanding
- Encourage open and honest conversations about cancer
- Strengthen connections between communities and healthcare services

The production will directly engage local residents, particularly those from communities experiencing health inequalities, ensuring that the stories told are both relatable and impactful. This collaborative, community-led model reflects a growing emphasis on culturally responsive approaches to public health communication.

Susan Sinclair, Managing Director, RM Partners NHS Cancer Alliance says

“Barbershop Uncut Stories demonstrates the power of local communities to change lives. Trusted spaces and familiar voices play a vital role in destigmatising cancer, helping people feel more comfortable talking about cancer, recognising symptoms, and seeking help earlier.

At the heart of this production are true stories that spotlight issues which can be difficult to discuss while encouraging greater awareness of cancers such as prostate and breast cancer.

RM Partners is delighted to support this innovative partnership with the London Borough of Croydon and C & Hair CIC. Together, we are working to make sure every community has the opportunity to benefit from earlier diagnosis, better cancer outcomes, and a stronger connection to neighbourhood care services.”

Driving lasting impact

Beyond the performances, *Barbershop Uncut Stories 2026* will generate valuable insight into community attitudes and behaviours around cancer. Audience and participant feedback will be captured and analysed to better understand:

- Changes in awareness and confidence to seek support
- Barriers to engagement with health services
- Opportunities to expand and improve future programmes

The findings will contribute to ongoing efforts to reduce inequalities in cancer experiences and outcomes across the region.

Looking ahead

Set for delivery on **Friday 2 October 2026 at the Brit School**, *Barbershop Uncut Stories 2026* represents an important step toward building stronger, more informed communities, where conversations about cancer are normalised and early action is encouraged.

Free tickets are available now - reserve your place today and join us for this powerful and thought-provoking production: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/barbershop-uncut-stories-tickets-1992449512126?aff=oddtcreator>

For media enquiries, interviews, or further information, please contact: C & Hair CIC on info@barbershopuncutstories.com

Notes to editors

Barbershop Uncut Stories

An innovative theatre production that uses the trusted space of the barbershop to tackle health inequalities, challenge stigma and amplify unheard voices.

Barbershop Uncut Stories is a groundbreaking theatre production created by Lorna Jones, Director of C & Hair CIC, a pioneering community organisation working across health, culture and education. Produced under New Duke Films, the independent production company co-founded by BAFTA-winning director, writer and producer Rochelle Newman, the production combines powerful drama with lived experience to create an unforgettable theatrical event.

An acclaimed storyteller with an exceptional career spanning television, film and documentary, Rochelle is renowned for creating compelling factual programmes that elevate underrepresented voices and explore complex social issues with honesty, warmth and authenticity.

Set within one of the most trusted spaces in Black communities, the production explores issues including cancer awareness, men's mental health, masculinity, fatherhood, grief and relationships.

Performed by professional actors, the production brings to life authentic stories about cancer gathered through C & Hair's work alongside diverse communities. Each performance is followed by facilitated discussions with healthcare professionals giving audiences the opportunity to continue the conversation, ask questions and access trusted information and support.

Drawing on years of community-led engagement and health education by C & Hair CIC, *Barbershop Uncut Stories* demonstrates how the creative arts can become a powerful vehicle for public health education by combining theatre, storytelling and meaningful dialogue.

Together, Lorna Jones' vision for community health and Rochelle Newman's award-winning storytelling have created a unique production where the barbershop becomes the stage, lived experiences become the script, and meaningful conversations become a catalyst for change.

To learn more about **Barbershop Uncut Stories**, visit www.barbershopuncutstories.com.

RM Partners NHS Cancer Alliance

RM Partners is one of 20 Cancer Alliances originally established by NHS England to lead on the delivery of the cancer care recommendations in the NHS Long Term Plan. By working collaboratively with our stakeholders, including our partner NHS hospital trusts

and primary care, our aim is to save more lives from cancer by enhancing prevention and early diagnosis, and improving access to timely and personalised treatment.

With the launch of the National Cancer Plan and the 10 Year Health Plan, we are uniquely positioned to lead on the fulfilment of the national cancer priorities, and we will continue our work to eliminate variation and reduce inequality.

Croydon Council's Creative Health Programme

A partnership between Croydon Council's Public Health and Culture, Leisure, Library teams, Croydon's Creative Health Programme provides dedicated support for creative activities that improve physical and mental health, reduce social isolation and improve access to services for Croydon residents at risk of health inequalities. Through community grant schemes, a Creative Health Network, free training, targeted interventions and advocating for work with health and social care partners, the Programme supports local community, arts and health providers to develop and deliver high quality creative initiatives meeting the needs of Croydon residents in ways that traditional health services often cannot.

Please visit <https://www.culturecroydon.com/home/creative-health-croydon/> or email creativehealth@croydon.gov.uk for more information.