

PRESS RELEASE

Free theatre performances in Reading to start conversations about prostate cancer

Free performances of Barbershop Uncut Stories are coming to Reading this October, using theatre and storytelling to open up conversations about prostate cancer, family, identity and men's health.

Taking place at Reading Rep Theatre during Black History Month, the community theatre project aims to raise awareness of prostate cancer and encourage more people to understand their risk and talk openly about their health.

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the UK, and Black men face a particularly high risk. One in four Black men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime.

Barbershop Uncut Stories brings these important conversations to the stage through stories exploring the connections between health, family and identity, creating an accessible way for communities to talk about a subject that can sometimes be difficult to raise.

The free performances will take place at Reading Rep Theatre, Kings Road, Reading, RG1 4LY, on Friday 16 October and Friday 23 October 2026 at 7pm.

The events are open to everyone, whether they want to understand more about their own risk, support a friend or family member, or simply learn more about prostate cancer and men's health.

Abimbola Odubayo, Head of programmes and Health Inequalities Lead at Thames Valley Cancer Alliance said:

"We know that conversations about cancer and personal health aren't always easy to start. Barbershop Uncut Stories offers a different way to get people talking, bringing important health messages into a familiar, engaging and entertaining setting.

"This is particularly important for Black communities, as one in four Black men will develop prostate cancer in their lifetime. We want more men and their families to understand that risk, feel able to talk about prostate cancer and know where to find reliable information and support."

Admission is free, but advance booking is essential.

Book tickets: Barbershop Uncut Stories: Reading -

<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/barbershop-uncut-stories-national-tour-reading-4859212>

More information about prostate cancer, including risk factors and symptoms, is available on the Thames Valley Cancer Alliance website and from Prostate Cancer UK: [Prostate cancer - thamesvalleycanceralliance.nhs.uk](https://prostatecancer.thamesvalleycanceralliance.nhs.uk)

ENDS

Notes to editors

Barbershop Uncut Stories

It is an innovative theatre production that uses the trusted space of the barbershop to tackle health inequalities, challenge stigma and amplify unheard voices. It explores issues including men's mental health, masculinity, prostate cancer awareness, fatherhood, grief and relationships.

Barbershop Uncut Stories is a groundbreaking theatre production created by Lorna Jones, qualified Trichologist and founder 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, Barbershop Uncut Stories 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.

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

As part of C & Hair CIC's Creative Health programme, Barbershop Uncut Stories demonstrates how the creative arts can become a powerful vehicle for public health education by combining theatre, storytelling and meaningful dialogue to reach communities that may not always engage with traditional health campaigns.

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

Event details

Barbershop Uncut Stories

Reading Rep Theatre, Kings Road, Reading, RG1 4LY

Friday 16 October 2026, 7pm

Friday 23 October 2026, 7pm

Admission is free; advance booking is required.

About prostate cancer

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the UK.

Around one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. For Black men, the lifetime risk is around one in four.

Risk also increases with age and for men with a family history of prostate cancer. Black men are more likely to develop prostate cancer at a younger age, and Black men aged 45 and over are encouraged to speak to their GP about their individual risk.

About Thames Valley Cancer Alliance

Thames Valley Cancer Alliance works with NHS organisations, primary care, local authorities, voluntary and community organisations and other partners across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and parts of Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire to improve cancer prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care.

Visit: [Home - thamesvalleycanceralliance.nhs.uk](https://home-thamesvalleycanceralliance.nhs.uk)