



**Children and Families
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
1st March 2007

**Report from the Director of
Policy and Regeneration**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Update from the Improving Outcomes Task Group

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the current activity within the Improving Outcomes task group. It has been agreed that an update of this work will be brought to every meeting of this committee. A full programme on the work of the task group is attached at **Appendix A**. The task group is aiming to submit its draft report by April 2007.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to make any comments and suggestions around the key areas of the task groups work programme.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Statistics in Brent highlight that some young people from African Caribbean and some Black African heritage groups, particularly Somali, show below average outcomes across a range of measures including educational attainment, youth offending, school exclusions and teenage pregnancies. The Children and Families Department have a project in place to address this issue. The aim of the task group is to take a strategic overview of this project by focussing on three main areas;
- 3.2 Reviewing gaps in the existing improving outcomes action plan
- 3.3 Identifying and disseminating Good Practice
- 3.4 Look at how this work can be embedded within existing council policies.

- 4.0 The task group is currently within the consultation phase and has most recently been to meet with young people at the Press Road Youth Club. The event proved extremely useful, task group members were able to hear first hand about the young people's aspirations and the barriers to achieving them.
- 4.1 The discussion demonstrated that while there was an understanding of the purpose of Black History Month, it was largely seen as an isolated programme that focussed on music and dance. This negates the purpose of the initiative which aims to give young people a much broader understanding of the contribution of minority ethnic communities to the modern world.
- 4.2 Young people also felt that schools did not provide adequate teaching on sex and drugs; many said that their understanding of the issues had come from older friends or peers.
- 4.3 During discussions about school exclusions, the young people, some of whom had faced this measure, felt that the decision making process was unfair. They felt they were not adequately listened to. For example if there had been a fight, the person who sustained the most injuries were less likely to be excluded even if they had started it.
- 4.4 Members also wanted to ascertain the extent to which the young people engaged with the school curriculum. Responses highlighted that this largely depended on individual teaching styles. Lessons where the teachers sought to involve the class and listen to their views were thought to be most interesting.
- 4.5 Pending further investigation, these issues are likely to form part of the recommendations to be incorporated within the final task group report.

Background Papers

Improving Outcomes for Black African and Black Caribbean Children and Young People in Brent.

Copies of this report can be found on the children and Families page of the Brent Council website at: http://www.brent.gov.uk/C_and_F.nsf

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