



Executive
12 April 2010

**Report from the Director of
Children and Families**

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Summary results of the BYP campaign survey
'Break the Stereotype, Fix the Impression'**

Forward Plan Ref: C&F-09/10-023

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the results from a survey conducted by Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) between October and November 2009. The aim of the survey was to gather data from all ages about how young people are perceived and to gauge the way society views young people today.
- 1.2 The survey forms part of BYP's ongoing campaign, aimed at challenging the negative stereotypes associated with young people, which was launched at the group's inaugural youth conference at Brent Town Hall on 13 November 2009.
- 1.3 The survey was undertaken using a questionnaire which enabled respondents to give their views on a range of topics as they relate to young people. Questions addressed matters such as discipline and behaviour, respect and support from parents and cultural differences as well as whether young people are aware of their rights and if they take their social responsibilities seriously.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 This summary report was presented to the Brent Children's Partnership, the local Children's Trust, which is a thematic subgroup of the Local Strategic Partnership. The recommendations to Executive have been endorsed by the Children's Partnership.
- 2.2 The Executive is requested to:

- Note and acknowledge the survey findings, using them to influence policy decisions affecting children and young people.
- Approve communication and sharing of the findings with a broader audience in Brent and nationally through the UK Youth Parliament.
- Following the success of a 'media summit' in North Somerset, BYP proposes to work with multi agencies and partners such as the Executive, representatives of BYP, the local media, the community safety board, the police, voluntary groups and officers of the council to tackle the issue raised in the report concerning the negative portrayal of young people in the media.

3.0 Detail

Overview

- 3.1 The BYP questionnaire was available online for the general public to complete on Brent Council's Consultation Tracker (<http://www.brent.gov.uk/consultation>) and also on Brent's Community Network website, BRAIN (<http://brentbrain.org.uk/byp>) between 12 October and 16 November 2009. Paper copies were also distributed by members of BYP at local venues such libraries, tube stations, area consultative forums and schools within Brent. The survey closed on 16 November 2009.
- 3.2 The survey methodology was designed to gauge the perceptions of society towards young people and young people's views about society in line with the Brent Youth Parliament campaign which challenges the negative stereotypes associated with young people. The survey was considered a tool that would assist in establishing a baseline of perceptions surrounding young people in Brent and nationally
- 3.3 In total 2,242 surveys were completed by members of the public, with 62% of respondents stating that they either live, work or study in Brent. The highest number of respondents were young people aged ten to 19 years old, who accounted for over 71% of the respondents.
- 3.4 Due to the profile of respondents completing the survey instrument, which is shown below, the results provide an illustration of how young people perceive themselves rather than how society perceives young people.
- Aged 10 to 19 completed 1,560 of the 2,193 questionnaires (71%)
 - Aged 20 to 40 completed 352 of the 2,193 questionnaires (16%)
 - Aged 41 to 60 plus completed 281 of the 2,193 questionnaires (13%)
- 3.5 The survey results have been disaggregated into respondents who live, work and study in Brent and those who are non Brent. The results have been broken down further to distinguish between adult and young people responses in order to highlight any specific issues arising in these client groups.

Emerging Themes

3.6 The table below provides an overview of the survey findings and compares the findings for those who live, work and study in Brent with those who do not. It should be noted that the majority of respondents (62%) either live, work or study in Brent.

| Question | Total Brent respondents % (1323 respondents) | | | Total No of respondents % (2242 respondents) | | |
|--|---|------------------|------------------------|---|------------------|------------------------|
| | Total respondents who AGREE | Adults who agree | Young People who agree | Total respondents who AGREE | Adults who agree | Young People who agree |
| Most young people today are aware of their rights | 21% | 9% | 12% | 19% | 7% | 12% |
| Most young people take their social responsibilities seriously | 11% | 6% | 5% | 11% | 5% | 6% |
| Should society (in general) intervene in socially disturbing situations occurring in public? | 80% | 33% | 47% | 80% | 25% | 55% |
| Do you feel uncomfortable walking by a group of young people hanging around? | 41% | 13% | 28% | 40% | 10% | 30% |
| Have you been bullied in the last 12 months? | 16% | 4% | 12% | 18% | 3% | 15% |
| Do you believe gang culture is on the increase? | 66% | 25% | 41% | 65% | 18% | 47% |
| The impact of rising unemployment on young people will lead to increased involvement in crime | 72% | 27% | 45% | 74% | 20% | 54% |
| Do you believe that the impact of rising unemployment on young people will lead to increased levels of antisocial behaviour? | 62% | 26% | 36% | 63% | 19% | 44% |
| Do you feel that young people today receive sufficient support from parents/carers? | 46% | 11% | 35% | 51% | 8% | 43% |
| The media doesn't portray young people in a fair light | 50% | 23% | 27% | 54% | 16% | 38% |
| Do you believe that the majority of friendships are cultivated within the same culture? | 59% | 23% | 36% | 61% | 17% | 44% |
| Do you feel that more should be done to bring people from different cultures together? | 83% | 35% | 48% | 81% | 26% | 55% |

Conclusions

- 3.7 The survey is an initial assessment of perceptions but the majority of participants were young people. To fully assess the extent of negative perceptions towards young people by society in general, more adult respondents would need to participate in the survey.
- 3.8 There is very little difference between the views of respondents who live work and study in Brent and those who do not. It is apparent from the findings that young people in Brent feel that the media do not portray young people in a fair light. Youth Parliaments in other parts of the country have recorded the same sort of findings and the example of North Somerset, where the Youth Parliament and the Council held a successful 'media summit' to tackle the issue, gives an indication of ways in which this problem might be addressed.
- 3.9 The outcomes achieved by North Somerset's media summit include;
- Young people questioned why direct quotes and comments from young people were rarely included in stories about young people
 - It highlighted the fact that there are few articles in the press intended for young people, in response to this the editor of the local newspaper offered the youth parliament a regular space for young people to speak on matters of interest
 - Youth parliament members had the opportunity to learn about writing press releases and liaising with the media. The councils marketing and communications team also helped the youth parliament develop a media communications strategy
 - Improved links with young people and the media whereby young people write a regular monthly page for a local newspaper
 - It has also helped raise the profile of young people in the community

The general consensus amongst young people also following a debate in the House of Lords on 10 July 2010 was that the media tend to only print negative articles of young people and not enough positive ones.

- 3.10 Brent is a very diverse borough and we are proud of the mix of people that live here, but over 80% of respondents in Brent feel more should be done to integrate different cultures together, including fostering positive images of young people in the borough.
- 3.11 The low responses attributed to young people understanding their rights and taking their social responsibilities seriously, indicates that we need to work in partnership with schools more to educate young people about these and what they mean in practice.
- 3.12 On a positive note, the low scores attributed to Brent respondents who had been bullied in the past 12 months indicates that effective strategies are being implemented to tackle bullying.

4.0 Financial/ Resource Implications

4.1 There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report to the Executive.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report to the Executive.

6.0 Equalities Implications

6.1 The survey was targeted at ages ten and upwards. The purpose of this survey was to gauge the perceptions of young people; therefore no other equality data was captured.

6.2 The initial equality impact assessment screening identified that the project was not relevant to any equality and diversity implications as respondents to the survey were self selecting. The survey does not have a negative impact on the community either as a whole or sections of it as it was aimed to gather views from the general public.

6.3 BYP members conducted some face-to-face surveys at Willesden Library and outside Wembley Park station aiming to target all young people and passers by from all walks of life.

7.0 Background Papers

1. Full survey report (includes survey instrument)
2. Brent specific survey report

Copies can be obtained from the contact officer.

Contact Officers

1. Sarah Mansuralli
Head of Strategy & Commissioning Service
Children and Families Department
Email: sarah.mansuralli@brent.gov.uk
2. Petergaye Palmer
Co-Chair of Brent Youth Parliament
Email: byp@brent.gov.uk

John Christie
Director of Children and Families