



**Children and Families
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
13 July 2010**

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

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

Overview of the work of Brent Youth Parliament (BYP)

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report gives members an overview of the work of Brent Youth Parliament (BYP).
- 1.2 This report includes progress made by BYP with the 'Break the Stereotype, Fix the Impression' campaign aimed at challenging the negative stereotypes associated with young people.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to note the achievements made by the BYP in its third year.

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 The BYP was established in 2007 with the aim of creating a robust youth participation structure that would encourage young people in Brent to have a voice and influence policy and decision making. The BYP provides ten to 19 year olds with a safe space to discuss issues that are important to them and have a say in decisions about services that have an impact on them.
- 3.2 Following a review of its work last year, it was agreed that the BYP would be extended to a two year term. It was felt that a one year term was not sufficient to improve outcomes and make changes that would benefit young people in the long term. BYP also increased its seat allocation from 63 to 72 seats, in line with guidance from the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP). This was to reflect the ratio of one BYP member per 1000 young people in the borough. Please refer to Appendix 1a for BYP structure/seat allocation, Appendix 1b for BYP representation and Appendix 2 for profile of BYP members.

Terms of Reference (TOR)

3.3 At the induction in November 2008, the elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) agreed the Terms of Reference for their term in office:

- A) To be the voice of young people in Brent**
- B) To have a say in decisions that are usually made by adults and to influence policy**
- C) To promote the work of BYP and celebrate the achievements of young people**
- D) To work with UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) and influence national policy**

These are outlined below along with progress made to date against each area:

A) To be the voice of young people in Brent

3.4 BYP ensures that it is the voice of young people in Brent by coming together at monthly parliament sessions to talk about issues that matter to young people and by attending meetings outside of the sessions to ensure that views of young people are always represented.

3.5 Attendance at the monthly parliament sessions has remained over 75% per session. The sessions are planned and facilitated by the BYP executive – chair, vice chair, secretary and UKYP representatives, to provide a space where young people can talk about issues that are important to them. The sessions also act as a consultative forum for policy makers.

Some of the items discussed at BYP parliament sessions so far have included:

- consultation on the establishment of the new youth website, BMyVoice
- debates on whether BYP should move to a two-year term
- the direct input of MYPs in the review of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), ensuring that the views of young people are taken on board right from the beginning and that the issues raised have been addressed
- highlighting local issues that are of importance to young people in Brent and presenting these to local councillors and senior officers across different organisations
- presenting the BYP campaign summary survey report to the Brent Children Partnership and subsequently to the Council Executive for the approval of a 'media summit' in Brent
- progressing the BYP campaign, 'Break the Stereotype, Fix the Impression' to break the negative stereotypes of young people especially in the media by holding a 'media summit'
- creating a young, friendly comic version of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)
- consultation on the NHS 'Better Services for Local Children' to gauge views on the potential changes and improvements being made locally to services

3.6 In addition to attending the monthly parliament sessions, BYP members have taken part in meetings outside of the sessions that require young people's input. They regularly attend the monthly Brent Youth Matters 2 forum to listen to the views of other young people.

Some of the work that MYPs have done outside of the parliament sessions includes:

- meeting regularly with the team of professionals responsible for the design of the Ark Academy in Wembley to ensure that the designs take into consideration the needs and desires of young people
- regularly consulted on the design of the state-of-the-art youth centre in Roundwood following the successful submission of the MyPLace Bid
- administering the BYP account on Facebook to communicate with non members
- BYP executive members attending fortnightly meetings to plan and set the agenda for monthly parliament sessions and provide strategic direction for the youth parliament
- planning and organising the 'media summit'
- attending and observing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings to ensure that BYP members are actively involved in building better communication links with local councillors
- taking part in the consultation about the merger of Hay Lane and Grove Park school

Portfolios

- 3.7 To promote consistency and continuation, last term (November 2008 – October 2009) BYP selected five from the list of member portfolios that Councillors work to and identified one issue from each which they feel is a priority for young people in Brent.

Last term, letters from the chair of BYP were sent to the respective lead members and directors of departments requesting responses to the issues highlighted by BYP. Significant progress has been made following these letters, full details of which are listed in Appendix 3.

Campaign of the year 'Breaking the Stereotype, Fix the Impression'

- 3.8 MYPs voted for breaking the negative stereotypes of young people as their campaign for 2008-2010. The main focus of the campaign is to combat negative perceptions of young people in society by:
- publicising the good work that young people get involved in locally and nationally
 - planning and hosting the youth conference in November 2009 bringing together young people from across the borough, local and national decision makers and media representatives, to find ways of breaking down the negative stereotypes of young people and promoting positive images of young people.
 - conducting a nationwide survey between October and November 2009 with the aim of gathering data from all ages about how young people are perceived to gauge the way society as a whole views young people today:
 - the survey was done using a questionnaire in which respondents gave their views on a range of topics as they relate to young people; 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.
 - 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.

- one of the survey's main findings showed that over 50 per cent of people thought the media did not show young people in a fair light. This has prompted BYP to plan and organise a media summit that will take place mid August with the council, police, youth organisations, local media and others, to tackle the issues surrounding the negative portrayal of young people in the press.

B) To have a say in decisions that are usually made by adults and to influence policy

3.9 BYP ensures that it has a say in decisions that are usually made by adults by having young people present at meetings attended by adults, by ensuring that policies for children and young people are brought to the attention of BYP for consultation and by getting involved in the recruitment of staff that work with young people.

Examples of this work include:

- BYP were invited to a focus group with the Civic Centre staff to ensure that views of young people were taken into consideration with the design as well as the usability aspect of the building
- Some professionally trained BYP members take part in interview panels to recruit staff working with young people (recent examples include; key workers for the Family Intervention Team in Social Care and Personal Advisors for Connexions).
- BYP members have attended meetings of the Brent Children's Partnership as well as Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- Following the BYP's Annual report to Overview and Scrutiny in October 2009 it was recommended and has since been implemented that the chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee should have quarterly meetings with the BYP executive to discuss BYP as well as those that come to the attention of the Committee to ensure that young people are at the heart of discussions and decisions that are pertinent to services in Brent and also to strengthen youth participation.
- BYP were consulted on the borough's Sports and Physical strategy as well as on the development of a website for young people.
- One of the major pieces of work that BYP has influenced is the development of the Brent's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for 2009-2011. MYPs were asked at the beginning to identify key issues facing young people in Brent so these could form the basis of the plan and make it current, relevant and directly responsive to the needs of young people.

C) To promote the work of BYP and celebrate the achievements of young people

3.10 BYP ensures that it promotes the work of MYPs by regularly featuring in The Brent Magazine, updating the Brent Council's Youth website BMyVoice that has pages dedicated to BYP and articles on BYP have also featured regularly in the local press, radio and television. MYPs attend the monthly Brent Youth Matters 2 forum, with young people from across the borough, to give an update on BYP's work and to listen to any issues raised by other young people.

3.11 BYP members have regular communication with their constituents to update them on the work of BYP and feedback on any issues that may arise in the respective groups/areas they represent.

3.12 BYP members have progressed well with their campaign 'break the stereotype, fix the impression', which is aimed at tackling the negative stereotypes of young people that are often portrayed in the media. Last year BYP members produced stickers and a short film to publicise their campaign. They launched a survey that gathered views from across the age ranges about how young people are viewed in society today, and they planned and delivered their first youth conference to raise awareness of their campaign across a wide student audience who are non members, which also encouraged youth participation at a wider level.

3.13 In February 2009 last year BYP joined forces with Brent Youth Matters 2 and Brent Youth Volunteers to organise two celebration events:

Brent Youth Oscars: This was an Oscars-style event where the achievements of young people were recognised in 14 public award categories. The red carpet event was attended by 400 guests including the Mayor of Brent, the Leader of the Council, parents, carers, school staff and young people from across the borough.

Generation X- Factor: This event recognised Brent's musical talents across the generations. Trophies were handed out to the winner and the runner up. The event was also used to carry out a short survey gathering young people's views on service provision.

Both events attracted extensive positive publicity and were very well attended, with 700 guests across both events, including young people, parents and carers, council staff and local councillors. The events were made possible due to a successful bid to the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), to pilot local celebration events that fostered positive perceptions of young people. BYP will be hosting a similar Oscars-style event in the early part of 2011.

D) To work with UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) and influence national policy

3.14 BYP currently has four seats on UKYP. Brent MYPs are active members of UKYP and attend regular meetings and events. Brent representatives have attended every annual sitting of the UKYP since BYP was established. The chair of BYP is currently a member of the national UKYP youth advisory board that was successful in winning the debate about UKYP having access to the House of Commons for their annual debate

The televised debate, which was a huge success, was the first time that any other body of people, young or old, would have sat on the green benches in the House of Commons, apart from MPs. Four MYPs from BYP were part of this historical event debating the five issues suggested and voted for by thousands of young people across the UK.

4.0 Monitoring the impact of BYP and supporting its members

4.1 Feedback is sought from MYPs at the end of each parliament session on the quality and content of the session. To date the overwhelming majority of the feedback has consistently been positive. The monthly evaluations are further supported by an in-depth end of year survey gathering BYP members' views about their satisfaction levels of the support provided to them by the council.

4.2 In order for young members to fulfil their duties as MYPs, robust structures are put in place to support them to develop their skills and knowledge. For example:

- all newly elected MYPs attend an all-day induction where they take part in team building activities, learn about the role of the youth parliament and decision-making in the council
- at every parliament session there is an ice breaker that helps MYPs develop skills e.g. taking part in a debate to improve public speaking skills
- MYPs are given opportunities to train as grant makers to support the distribution of Brent Council's Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF)
- MYPs are kept informed of local and national opportunities to further develop their skills.
- Each member has a Personal Development Plan (PDP) outlining the skills they wish to gain during their term time with BYP. The Strategic Youth Engagement Officer along with a member of the BYP executive monitors these plans and ensures opportunities are provided to BYP members to enhance their skills

5.0 Future plans

- 5.1 BYP is approaching the end of its two year term in office and the main focus for the remainder of the term is for a positive definitive outcome from the BYP campaign to actively break the negative stereotypes of young people in the media. The aim of the BYP media summit in August is to create a long term strategy that starts building positive relationships between young people and the media. This will begin the process of creating a positive attitude towards young people that will help create a better environment for everyone.
- 5.2 The BYP election process will start in shortly to recruit a new cohort of members for the next term. Elections for new BYP members will be held during local democracy week with publicity for prospective candidates and representative groups commencing in July 2010. New BYP members will formally commence their term in November 2010.
- 5.3 The Children and Families department will continue to support and build on BYP's achievements. The longer term objective is to further increase the proportion of children and young people in Brent given opportunities to influence local decisions whilst ensuring young people have a voice to influence policy and decision making.

Background Papers

Brent Youth Parliament, mid year progress report, October 2009-April 2010

Summary results of the BYP campaign survey 'Break the Stereotype, Fix the Impression' report, presented to the Executive on 12 April 2010

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Appendix 1a

Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) Structure and Seat Allocation

Brent Children's Partnership (BCP)

Chaired by the director of Children and Families, BCP is responsible for setting the strategic direction for services for children and young people in Brent and for working with other agencies to champion the interests of young people. The chair of BYP is a member of this group.

Brent Youth Parliament (BYP)

BYP was established in 2007 to give young people the opportunity to express their views and to have a say in decision-making that affects them. Members are aged between ten and 19 years and come from all walks of life.

(72 seats)

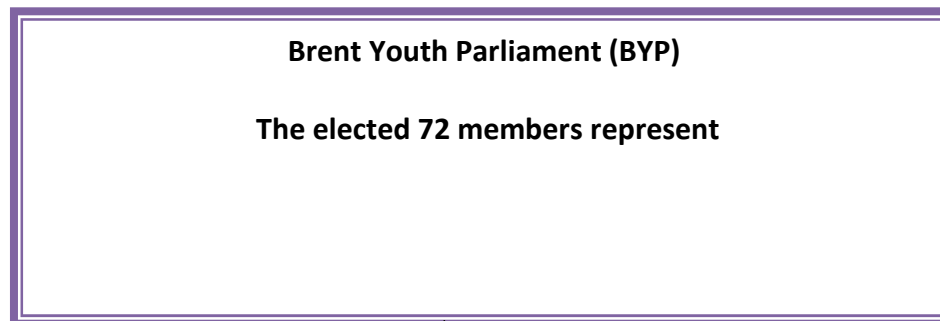
BYP Executive

The executive is made up of the chair, vice chair, secretary, UKYP/deputy UKYP representative. The executive is responsible for leading BYP and facilitating the monthly sessions.

Secondary schools	Primary schools	Targeted groups <i>(Seats for young people (YP) with disabilities, YP in care, YP not in education or employment, YP with refugee status or seeking asylum, YP from special schools and PRUs)</i>	College of North West London (CNWL)	Local groups/sports clubs	Brent Youth Matters 2 (BYM2)	Returning MYPs <i>(Reinstated for their excellent contribution in the previous year)</i>
(14 seats)	(10 seats)	(10 seats)	(2 seats)	(16 seats)	(5 seats)	(15 seats)

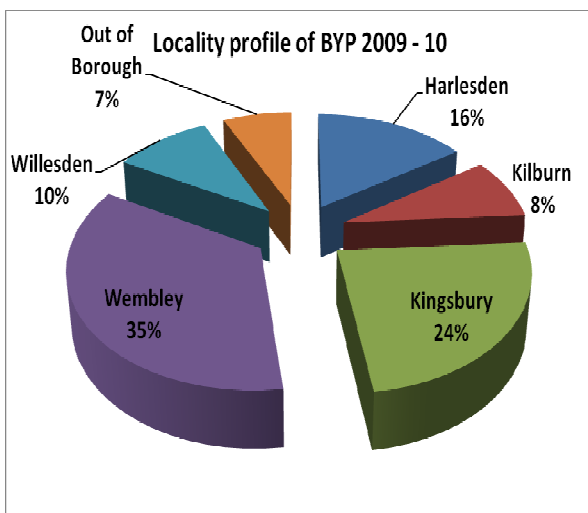
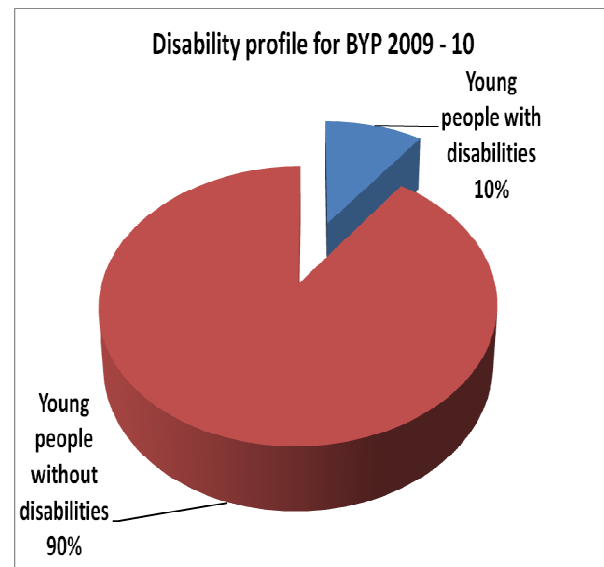
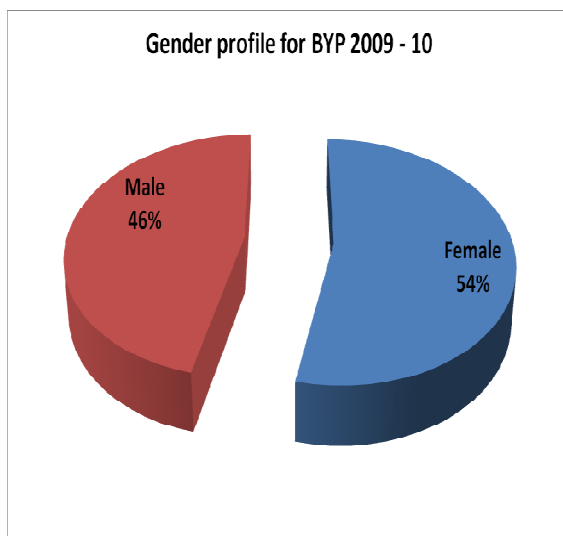
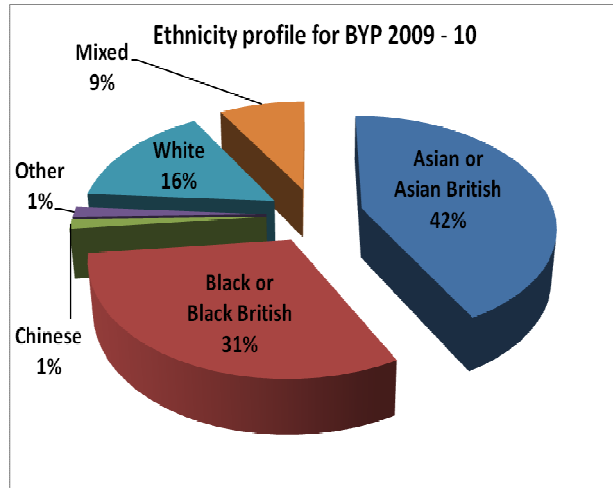
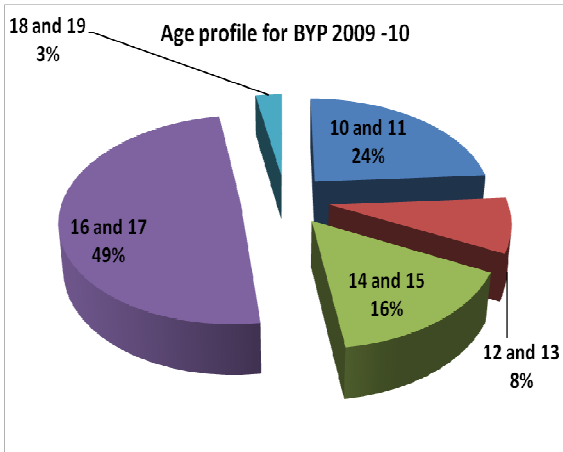
Appendix 1b

BYP representation for 2009-2010



Secondary schools	Primary schools	Targeted Groups	College of North West London (CNWL)	Local groups/sports clubs	Brent Youth Matters 2 (BYM2)	Returning MYPs
(14 seats)	Two members from each Locality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability/Grove park school ▪ St Michaels ▪ Care in Action (3) ▪ MENCAP ▪ MOSAIC ▪ YP in care ▪ YP with disabilities ▪ YP with refugee status 	(2 seats)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) ▪ Anti Bullying Council (ABC) ▪ Strength in Numbers ▪ Swaminarayan Youth group (BAPS girls, BAPS boys) ▪ Granville Youth Club ▪ Kenton Cricket club ▪ Senior Citizens panel ▪ Paiwand Afghan Association ▪ Green Team ▪ Brent River Park ▪ The Orchard group ▪ Harrow Sea Cadets ▪ Wembley Sea Cadets ▪ Brent Youth Volunteers 	(5 seats)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copland High ▪ Kingsbury High ▪ St Gregorys RC (2) ▪ Wembley High (3) ▪ Out of Borough (6) ▪ Northwick park youth club ▪ South Kilburn Youth Board (SKYB)
	(10 seats)	(10 seats)		(16 seats)		(15 seats)

Appendix 2
Profile of BYP members elected for 2009 – 2010



Note: In order to be a member of BYP, young people have to either be a resident in Brent or go to school in the borough. The locality profile is based on where young people live, regardless of the groups/areas they represent. Therefore, the 7% out of borough members, as shown above, are the ones that live out of borough but go to school in Brent.

Appendix 3
BYP portfolios

Portfolio	Issue raised by BYP
Crime prevention and public safety	BYP raised lack of street lighting in certain areas as a concern. Details of these areas were provided to the street care team who have subsequently resolved the issues where possible. Regular contact is maintained with the street care teams.
Health and social care	<p>BYP raised concerns with the quality of health education and health provision within schools. In addition to a detailed letter received by BYP from the Chief Executive of NHS Brent outlining details of the health provision for young people in Brent and focus group that was set up to discuss preventative and treatment aspects of Chlamydia, BYP also responded to the national consultation on PSHE reforms proposed by central government. The response was shared with colleagues at the School Improvement Service. BYP were also consulted on the borough's Sports and Physical Activity strategy.</p> <p>To address the concerns raised relating to lack and cost of fitness facilities available for young people BYP joined forces with Vale Farm Sports centre to offer a Free 'Taster day' at their centre on 2 June 2010 for up to 100 children and young people (aged 8 and above) to be given the opportunities to try out various activities such as dance, badminton, basketball and football for free. This included a free pass to visit the sports centre again. A Healthy Eating workshop was also delivered by a Brent Council Officer jointly. A similar event will take place at Willesden Sports Centre in the coming months.</p>
Environment and culture	<p>BYP highlighted litter dropping and the need for more educational initiatives as a concern. The assistant director for Environment and Culture attended one of the parliament sessions and informed BYP members of local initiatives in place to educate young people about environmental issues as well as services available to encourage local residents to recycle. BYP is in contact with his team to inform them about areas where they felt litter dropping was a problem.</p> <p>In addition, BYP will be consulted on the Waste Collection Strategy in the coming months.</p>
Regeneration and Economic Development	BYP highlighted the lack of open spaces and buildings that could be used by teenagers and requested to be involved in the consultation on new developments in the borough. As a result of a letter from BYP, a group of young people were consulted on the design of the Civic Centre and further plans are in place for future regular consultation with BYP members on the project, especially now that the plans have now been approved.
Children and Families	<p>BYP raised concerns about the lack of careers advice given to young people in schools.</p> <p>Several members of BYP have been professionally trained to deliver CV writing skills to other young people in Brent and on Wednesday, 28 April they held a free session at Brent Town Hall which gave students from every secondary school an opportunity to learn top tips on effective CV writing from other young people. BYP hosted this pilot training with a view to it becoming a regular training programme for young people.</p>