

**Children's Services Equality, Equity & Empowerment Group
Themed Staff Feedback and Strategic Plan - December 2020 - DRAFT**

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(1) Protected Characteristics Focus: Ethnicity

[NB: It was agreed by the group that the term 'race' would not be used]

(2) Duration: 12 months in the first instance (Jan 2021-Dec 2021)

[NB: Nov/Dec 2020 was focused on the formation of the Children's Service Equality, Equity and Empowerment Group]

(3) Staff Feedback: Emergent Themes

Emergent themes derived from staff feedback from the Children's Services Equality, Equity and Empowerment Group (11-12-2020).

[NB: All previously submitted written feedback from the group has been included verbatim]:

Racial Inequalities in Ealing

- *Ethnic Composition of Senior Leadership*
- *Racism in Ealing Experienced and / or Observed (re: our clients and / or staff)*
- *Managers' Lack of, or Inconsistent Responses to, the Overt and Covert Racism that Exists in Ealing*
- *Recruitment, Retention & Progression*
- *Staff Feeling Unsafe / Uncomfortable to Speak Up*

Examples of Positive Practice

- *Leadership and Management*
- *Ealing's Previous Commitment*
- *HR, Retention and Progression*
- *Staff's Efforts*

Proposals for Change

- *Leadership and Management*
- *Recruitment, Retention and Progression*
- *Staff Appraisals / Performance Reviews*
- *Education / Training*
- *Research*
- *Ethnicity Equality Audits*
- *Enabling Staff to Feel Safe / Comfortable to Speak Up*
- *Recognition and Empowerment*

Other Comments

- *Terminology*
- *Definition of Racism*
- *Sustainability / Longevity*
- *Strategic Approach (of Children's Services Equality, Equity & Empowerment Group)*

(4) Staff Feedback: Detailed Responses

Detailed staff feedback from the Children's Services Equality, Equity and Empowerment Group (11-12-2020):

I. Racial Inequalities in Ealing: 'Do you feel racial inequality exists within Ealing? If so, can you share any examples (do not need to identify specific people)'
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Ethnic Composition of Senior Leadership

- Senior management inequality SLT/ corporate as predominantly white people
- Have experienced barriers in the recruitment process - personal experience in Ealing.

Racism in Ealing Experienced and / or Observed (re: our clients and / or staff)

- Overt and covert racism - often covert and perpetuating things that have gone on for a long time
- Lack of compassion and respect; stigmas
- Punitive responses
- Subtle biases
- Smaller margins for error
- Policies inconsistently applied in practice (e.g. Housing)
- Lower degrees of support
- Slower speeds of intervention
- Intersectionality between race and gender – for Black men within the workforce; and stereotypical views that social workers are women
- HR have not always responded positively when racial inequalities have been brought to their attention
- Career progression prevention in some teams / departments

Managers' Lack of, or Inconsistent Responses to, the Overt and Covert Racism that Exists in Ealing

- Some have experienced both and managers have dismissed it. How is it managed? The problem is the person hasn't moved on, who has been overtly or covertly racist.
- Leadership can have an impact (top-down)

Recruitment, Retention & Progression

- Preference and unconscious bias in recruitment from student to DTM to TMs and up. people prepped for progress.
- There have been discussions with colleagues and it has been highlighted that while some had an independent HR person present, others have not. There appears to be inconsistent experiences in this regard, alongside the interview process. There are some measures in place but I think it is helpful to measure how effective those measure have been.
- I have been made aware of instances where there have been some concerning recruitment practice.

Staff Feeling Unsafe / Uncomfortable to Speak Up

- We heard about a colleague's experience of feeling discriminated against in Ealing owing to her ethnicity including when she has applied for and has been turned down for jobs/promotions albeit the discrimination has never been explicitly referenced in feedback –
 - it's just her feeling/sense that this has happened.
 - Speaking up about these feelings does not feel safe or ok.
 - People may 'test' how people will respond before speaking out more comprehensively.
 - This person has "butterflies in her tummy" (anxiety/fear) before speaking up every single time

II. Examples of Positive Practice: 'Have you ever observed any positive or good practice in relation to promoting race equality within Ealing? Please discuss and provide examples'

Leadership and Management

- Leadership can have an impact (top-down)

Ealing's Previous Commitment

- There was discussion about how this agenda has had some momentum before and just stopped. Was it perhaps too hard so people gave up?

HR, Retention and Progression

- HR and management were extremely supportive during a personal issue pertaining to race
- Received support and encouragement re: career progression in a different team

Staff's Efforts

- Social workers tried to respond as best they could to each situation

III. Proposals for Change: 'List three things you would change about Ealing in regard to Equality and/or race? (I.e. training, recruitment, staff support, salaries, etc)'

Leadership and Management

- Ensure the ethnic composition of senior leadership is diverse
- Ensure all managers adopt an agreed and consistent response to the overt and covert racism that exists in Ealing, that is experienced by clients and staff alike
- Leadership to be aware of their top-down impact
- Appoint Senior Diversity Champions who are fully involved in these meetings and processes
- Standing agenda items on staff meetings at all levels re: anti-racism
- Service-specific strategic planning regarding eradicating ethnic disparities - with monitoring, evaluation and accountability, and not just viewed as a paper exercise
- Each service to have vertical teams of 'Ethnicity Equality Champions' (who, among other things, monitor and evaluate their own services, and perhaps other services too) comprising of:
 - The Head of Service
 - Team leaders
 - Team members

Recruitment, Retention and Progression

- Thinking about what changes can we put in place re recruitment. interviews not in service. HR in the interviews
- I feel it would be helpful to review this process and ensure that there is consistency in the recruitment process across the LA.
- Suggestions from colleagues: Fully anonymise full names during the application process to remove unconscious bias in relation to ethnicity and to ensure selection on merit and achievement.
- HR representative should be present at every interview to ensure a fair process and to have a neutral person present.
- Clear, transparent and a unified approach to assessing interview outcomes and filling posts (such as the points based system we mostly seem to use already).
- Creating a genuinely equal opportunity interview and recruitment process- explore the value of equity and not just equality in this regard.

- Interview all Black workers who left Ealing in the past year with focus on factors linked to ethnicity (linked to research point).
- Compulsory training for interview panel members re giving consideration to ethnicity (and any other protected characteristics)?
- Systematic / formalised progression pathways and opportunities for existing employees to receive coaching, mentoring and CPD to enable their progression into senior roles within the Council
- For there to be a LA-wide commitment for all current and new employees (as part of their induction) in Ealing to receive the following training, in the same way in which we all received training regarding Ealing's values and behaviours:
 - (a) awareness-raising of unconscious biases
 - (b) begin to address those racial biases.

Staff Appraisals / Performance Reviews

- In addition to safeguarding maybe staff could be asked to demonstrate in their role how they have supported Ethnicity, Equity, Equality within children services.

Education / Training

- We need to push education re micro aggressions- can feel/ impact like overt racism
- Training (awareness raising; and addressing racial unconscious bias)
- Review all cultural training to ensure it is fit for purpose and maintains a value.
- Develop new training on different cultural histories and how this links to service user's engagement, mistrust of services and authorities.
- Training that covers privilege across the board (including white privilege).
- Training should provide understanding of cultural differences and how this can impact assessment and front line social work if misunderstood/ misinterpreted.
- Training to also include unconscious bias and provide an understanding of what micro-aggressions are, and how these can be underpinned and supported by legal, social and environmental factors.
- Every team within Children's Services to receive a two-pronged approach to training as a standard re:
 - (a) awareness-raising of unconscious biases
 - (b) begin to address those racial biases.
- Ensure training connects with people's hearts and minds for sustainability

Research

- Research into understanding inequality within Ealing in relation to ethnicity to gain holistic understanding. That is:
 - explore the link between race and pay scales, promotions and positions
 - explore lived experiences and/or the barriers for Black and Asian foster carers/adopters (stats on Black and Asian children adopted in Ealing).
 - explore why there are a disproportionate number of Black children in the care system or on CP plans.
 - measure how effective recruitment measures put in place have been. For example, independent HR persons present during the interview process
- Suggested survey questions for staff and/or service user (possible mixture of Likert scale style and qualitative aspects so it can be easily weighted, and results analysed with some contextual understanding):
 - *What does Equality, Equity and Empowerment mean to you personally and professionally?*
 - *Do you feel racial inequality exists within Ealing?*

- *Have you personally experienced or witnessed inequality in relation to ethnicity during your time in Ealing?*
- *If yes, were management aware of the issue?*
- *If no, would you feel comfortable or confident to approach management in relation to inequality and ethnicity?*
- *If yes, did you feel they helped to resolve this issue?*
- *If no, could you explain why you would not inform management?*
- *What factors would aid you in being able to discuss or disclose to management?*
- *What barriers has there been for you in relation to ethnicity, equality and equity?*
- *Have you ever observed any positive or good practice in relation to promoting equality in relation to ethnicity within Ealing?*
- *List three things you would change about Ealing in regard to Equality and/or race? (I.e. training, recruitment, staff support, salaries, etc)*
- *What would positive change in these identified areas look and feel like?*
- *Any suggestions for affirmative change in relation to race, equality, equity or empowerment?*

OR

- *I believe that Ealing strives for Equality in relation to ethnicity? Y/N*
- *I believe that there is equality for all ethnicities within Ealing? Y/N*
- *I identify as Black, Asian or an 'ethnic minority' Y/N*
- *I had an HR representative at my Ealing interview Y/N*
- *I am aware of why I was recruited/ why someone else was recruited above me Y/N*
- *I believe that Ealing recognise and celebrate all ethnicities Y/N*
- *I believe that Ealing could do more to promote Equality, Equity and Empowerment for non- white staff Y/N*
- *Ealing responded well to the Black Lives Matter Movement Y/N*
- *I have been discriminated against or disadvantaged in Ealing due to my ethnicity Y/N*
- *Do you feel that Ealing Equality group can drive positive change Y/N*
- *I agree with the use of the term 'BAME' Y/N*
- *I agree with the use of the term 'race' Y/N*
- *I feel management on all levels are diverse and reflective of the community we serve Y/N*
- *Racism (either covert or overt) still exists within Ealing in the 21st century Y/N*
- *I trust my management to fairly and effectively handle issues of discrimination, racism or inequities in relation to ethnicity Y/N*

Ethnicity Equality Audits

- Teams to conduct race equality audits e.g.
 - Speed of intervention
 - Degree of support
- Ethnicity equality audit for service area
- Ethnicity equality audit for service areas could be carried out via the staff performance review e.g. All staff in connexions have to complete safeguarding training.

Enabling Staff to Feel Safe / Comfortable to Speak Up

- Devise and disseminate across the Council some stock phrases that people can use if they:
 - Experience racism (unconscious or conscious)
 - Witness racism (unconscious or conscious)
- Gain agreement and assurances from senior leadership team and HR that there will be no repercussions for individuals if/when they speak up to their managers.

Recognition and Empowerment

- Key theme for service users also - Empowerment
- Celebrate all cultures, in particular to push an agenda for Black history events or Black Lives Matters both internally for staff and externally for service users.
- Fundraising and awareness; i.e. to create lanyards that mark the occasion, funds can go to charity, activity, event or Black Lives Matters movement. It would be nice to do more community events aimed at the Black community to help drive access to information and opportunities to apply our value of equity.

IV. Other comments

Terminology

- 'Race' perpetuates inequalities
- Anti racism - is this a negative term?
- agree that anti racism and the term racism is an acceptable term. we agree ethnicity is the better term to race.
- 'Culture' as an alternative second option was put forward
- We spent some time thinking about the word 'race' and how it is part of the terms 'racism' and 'anti-racist' which we all agreed are ok terms. As such, we wondered if use of the term 'race' as a descriptor is unhelpful for all the reasons suggested but that 'racism' and 'anti-racist' are ok? They are key terminology in the #blacklivesmatter literature and material after all
- Ealing to steer away from using the term / acronym 'BAME'

Definitions of Racism

- There was some discussion about whether or not a white person can ever experience 'racism' with one group member feeling strongly that they can (because there's a precedent in law). We didn't explore this in-depth but it was pointed out that although there are situations where white people can experience oppression/persecution/discrimination (such as the situation for white people in South Africa, Travellers, Eastern Europeans and the experience of Jewish people throughout history), it could be contested that the experience of white people isn't ever be truly 'racist' owing to systemic structures that typically favour white people heavily (and that are fundamentally rooted in imperialism and slavery).

Sustainability / Longevity

- Since #blacklivesmatter, people from a diversity of ethnicities are being reflected in the media more generally. Will this change be sustained? Also, is there a risk of tokenism? Are people already moving on?

Strategic Approach (of Children's Services Equality, Equity & Empowerment Group)

- Suggestion: Once key themes selected by group:
 - Set 2-5 Smart Goal actions under each key theme which can then be measured in terms of progress.
 - Subgroups can take lead on specific tasks or themes.

(5) Strategic Plan

Action	Lead Person (who?)	Deadline (when?)	Success Criteria (How will we know when the action has been met?)	Monitoring (who?)	Evaluation (who?)	Evaluation & Impact (How effectively the action was met. Impact on clients and staff)
Leadership and Management						
	Name Name	xx-xx-21		Name Name	Name Name	
Recruitment, Retention and Progression						
	Name Name	xx-xx-21		Name	Name	
Staff Appraisals / Performance Reviews						
	Name Name	xx-xx-21		Name	Name	
Education / Training						
	Name Name	xx-xx-21		Name	Name	
Research						
	Name Name	xx-xx-21		Name	Name	
Ethnicity Equality Audits						
	Name Name	xx-xx-21		Name	Name	:
Enabling Staff to Feel Safe / Comfortable to Speak Up						
	Name Name	xx-xx-21		Name	Name	

Recognition and Empowerment						
	Name Name	xx-xx-21		Name	Name	