**Anti-Racist Work and Tackling Disproportionality: Sharing Practice**

Please use this template to tell us about the work your authority is doing that you think is worth sharing more widely. This might be (please indicate which category(ies) you are sharing) :

* Within your organisation
* With children and families
* With communities
* With partners
* Through research

Please give a short description of the work being undertaken and its impact. Also provide relevant resources / documents and a contact name should others wish to find out more about the work.

**LA Name: Tower Hamlets**

**Name of project or approach: Various**

As with many Local Authorities, the 2020 murder of George Floyd and the subsequent growth of the Black Lives Matters movement resulted in a major reappraisal of disproportionality and anti-racist practice within Tower Hamlets. A whole council approach has coalesced around the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Commission, chaired by the Deputy Mayor. There have been three thematic areas of focus; Leadership, Education and Health, around which a series of evidence-gathering sessions have been undertaken. The Commission’s report is yet to be published, but the approach is notable for its direct conversations and considered use of language. Previous references to ‘inequalities’ and relatively safe, white-designed, action plans may be part of the reason outcomes remain disproportionate. There is now a blunter recognition of ‘systemic racism’ and ‘discrimination’ as factors and a willingness to take strong, often difficult, action to address them.

Tower Hamlets has a Corporate Equalities Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, that formally engages with staff networks. This covers areas such as recruitment, development, progression, and the workforce experience. Staff feedback has been that there has been some good thinking, but they would like faster movement and change in this area. The CS directorate has also set up its own Equalities Group. This has enabled a focus on the topics specific to Children’s Services and covers wider equalities as well as race.

 Children’s Services have run a series of listening circles that are run in line with the Service’s restorative approach. These have been run across all staff teams and service areas, including within the social work academy. All teams have done at least two. They have given a space for feelings and difficult discussions, for example a challenge from BAME staff that racism and disproportionality is a white problem and that their white colleagues need to understand and own it.

The training and induction offer to staff was redesigned in Summer 2020, following a review of existing anti-racist training. TH now has a specific training offer around Black Lives Matters. There is an underpinning theme around how workforce and service user experiences interact and what this means for service delivery. There is also a join up of approaches with Adult Services, which included the holding of a joint conference. Children’s Services are able to learn from their Adult counterparts in some areas.

There is a strong desire for better data in terms of children and families. Where data is available, such as in Youth Justice, it is easier to act and a clear and specific action plan exists. The methodology for gathering and evaluating data is therefore being reconsidered so as to more clearly understand outcomes against race across all stages of statutory and early help services. The data also needs to have the necessary local nuance; for example, TH has a significant Somali population, whose experience does not automatically equate with those of a wider ‘black’ category.

Work that crosses outside LA services includes a strategy to address the significant underrepresentation of BAME Leaders and Governors within Tower Hamlets schools. A BAME middle leaders programme for Schools has been developed, and this work cascades through into children’s experiences in exclusions, attainment, and curriculum.

The events of 2020 helped focus minds on the depth and extent of change needed to reverse deeply embedded disproportionality and racism. We are clear, however, that intentions must translate into outcomes and lived experiences for our families and workforce.