

London Children’s Innovation and Improvement Board 13/04/21

Item 4

**ALDCS Anti-Racism and Disproportionality Initiatives**

*“We recognise that the Black Lives Matter Movement presents a challenge to do better which applies to all of us”* ALDCS, June 2020

The quote above is drawn from an ALDCS statement made in the wake of George Floyd’s 2020 murder and the subsequent growth of the Black Lives Matter movement. The statement describes the impact these events had on London’s Children’s Services leaders and their determination to ‘do better’ for children, families, communities, and workforces. Whilst strategies to tackle racism and disproportionality are not new, the events of 2020 resulted in the blunt acknowledgement they have not been successful (enough) and Local Authorities have gone on to urgently review and grow their approaches. There has been further impetus from the COVID 19 pandemic, which raises the spectre of race and inequality as factors in infection and mortality rates.

With its remit to share practice and foster collaborative working, the LIIA programme is a vehicle that London’s DCSs can use to support anti-racist and disproportionality work. LIIA’s disproportionality input runs across all of the four thematic workstreams of Workforce, SEN, Adolescent Safeguarding and Finance (including placements), in all of which there are longstanding trends of worse outcomes for black and other minority individuals.

**LIIA Disproportionality Dataset**

At ALDCS request, LIIA complied a cross-section of publicly available data to measure the impact of race across a snapshot of children’s social care, education, SEN, and youth justice outcomes. These were more limited measures than those available in individual local authorities, however the value lay in the ability to compare outcomes across different authorities and sub-regions. Whilst general trends were largely as anticipated (for example an over-representation of black children in care, exclusions, and the youth justice system), specific differences have enabled questions to be asked and best practice to be identified. There has been additional value in undertaking a comparative exercise across social care, education, and justice fields; further such work will add health and a greater depth of outcome measures. The ability to undertake comparative work of this nature will be greatly enhanced by the child level data project.

**Sub-regional Activity**

Each sub-region has anti-racist and disproportionality work as a standing item on their work plan. This has led to a range of regional collaborations, for example the formation of YOS sub-regional groups in the North-Central and West regions to drive change in an area that has seen gross disproportionality over many years. Another example would be the South sub-region’s development of a regional forum to address disproportionality in education. Both North-Central and East regions are currently in the process of cross-referencing their practice to identify areas for collaboration.

**Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Leadership Programme**

At ALDCS request, LIIA has earmarked £50,000 of funding to develop a pilot 2021/22 leadership programme to address the under-representation of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff in senior positions. This will complement the existing BALI and Leaders for London programmes, but also reach beyond staff development with initiatives to drive organisational and cultural change within LA’s. Underpinning the programme design has been the creation of a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Reference Group, which has brought together over 60 minority leaders from across the capital to help understand the problem and design responses. The Reference Group has led programme design with Staff College, who will deliver the programme, and will also continue to advise ALDCS on wider disproportionality and anti-racist practice.

A Chief Executive sponsor is being sought for the Leadership Programme, who will help ensure it sits effectively alongside wider organisational change strategy. Both ALDCS and wider leaders should also look at wider opportunities for engagement with the Reference Group – the emergence of this talented, pan-London, network of Children’s Services managers gives an opportunity for workforce engagement on all areas of children’s services anti-racist and disproportionality practice.

The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Leadership Programme has three elements:

1) Staff Development: A leadership programme covering similar themes to the existing BALI programme, but aimed at a wider tier of aspiring managers. 40 places will be available across London in the first year. A sponsorship/mentoring offer is needed to embed and sustain the programme’s impact in the workplace.

2) Organisational Change: This will be supported by 2 pan-London Cultural Competence workshops made available to London’s DCS, Practice Leads, Chief Executives, Lead Members and HR Leads. The workshops will be facilitated by Staff College with Reference Group/BALI members so Leaders can engage directly with affected staff. They will cover topics of cultural competence, multi-dimensional racism and intersectionality and include both practical tools and opportunities to work together on solutions.

The workshops do not sit in isolation. Their success in promoting organisational change rely on the leaders attending integrating workshop outcomes with wider initiatives. These include the CELC Tackling Racial Inequalities programme (mainly the Large Employers workstream), existing sub-regional collaboration, and individual LA corporate and directorate strategy.

3) Children’s Services Staff Conference

A Pan-London Staff Conference will be held for Children’s Services Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff with keynote speakers, including those who have trodden the path to senior leadership. It will offer opportunities to empower attendees, build support networks, share impactful practice and capture key messages for leaders.

**Reducing disproportionality in the Youth Justice System**

Following an extensive mapping exercise of existing disproportionality strategies and aspirations (undertaken by MOPAC with the support of London Councils and partners), the London Crime Reduction Board launched London’s Tackling Ethnic Disproportionality in Youth Justice Action Plan in March 2021. The plan has three strategic goals:

1. To understand the extent of disproportionality in the CJS, including experiences at the key life milestones, in order to inform decisions and interventions.

2. To develop and establish action to tackle disproportionality – addressing disparities, inequality and unfairness within the system.

3. To deliver the actions recorded to help establish and embed change within the CJS, this includes supporting or unblocking aspiring activity.

An important aspect of the plan is the wish to identify and co-ordinate the substantial body of existing work that is undertaken by the LA, Youth Justice Strategic Leaders Network, sub-regional networks, individual Youth Offending Services, and the Metropolitan Police around disproportionality in youth justice.

The LIIA programme has initiatives to address disproportionality in youth justice through support of the sub-regional YOS disproportionality networks, close co-working with the Youth Justice Strategic Leaders (YJSL) forum and the development of the London Accommodation Pathfinder, which offers a residential alternative for London children facing custody, of whom 78% are currently Black or minority ethnic.

The drivers for disproportionality in youth justice are complex and wide-reaching. There is other closely related LIIA activity, particularly evident in the London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board’s workstreams addressing disproportionality through the newly launched Child Exploitation Protocol, and Reducing Criminalisation of Looked After Children and Care Leavers Protocol, and actions stemming from the London Crime Reduction Board on serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.

**Compiling and sharing best practice**

LIIA is undertaking an exercise to capture and share the best anti-racist practice that Local Authorities consider to be making an impact locally. Snapshots of individual LA’s strategy are uploaded and made accessible on LIIA’s website, as well as being reported back through the sub-regional DCS forums. The strategies presented often focus on one or more of; children (service users), wider communities, workforce, corporate policy/culture, and work with partners. As the richness of each local picture emerges, LIIA will work with ALDCS and the sub-regions to identify areas for collaboration or shared approaches.

**Education**

Inequality in the education system has been a key theme of most LA’s disproportionality responses. These cover topics such as exclusions, attainment, EHCP’s and SEN support, workforce (especially leadership) and governor disproportionality, and curriculum. Education through COVID has been a key area of focus for ALDCS and the sub-regions, with a particular lens on vulnerable children.

London Councils recently shared good practice case studies, highlighting the Black Caribbean Achievement group of education and schooling partners from Lambeth, Lewisham, Haringey, Hackney, Brent and Croydon. Amongst the examples of embedded, effective, programmes were:

* Raising the Game (Lambeth)
* Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men (Hackney)
* Haringey Education Partnership: The BAME achievement strategy (Haringey)
* Raising the achievement of boys of Black Caribbean heritage (Brent)

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**09/04/21**