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Community
leadership and
a new role for
councillors

Brent Council

Black Community Action Plan (BCAP)

As one of the UK's most diverse boroughs, Brent has the seventh highest black community in London by numbers. The Black community continue to be affected by inequalities and systemic racism, brought into sharp focus by the tragic killing of George Floyd in the US. The Covid-19 pandemic also shone a light on the deep inequalities that exist, with Black communities being disproportionately impacted in terms of the number of cases of the virus and mortality rates.

To address the inequalities our Black community continue to face, we agreed the Black Community Action Plan (BCAP) in July 2020.

The Action Plan

In June 2020 the Council's Leader, Cllr Muhammed Butt, Deputy Leader, Cllr Margaret McLennan and Chief Executive, Carolyn Downs, met with 72 black community leaders and young people from Black communities across the borough to listen to their concerns and ideas about what could be done to make black lives better; how the Black community could be supported to determine local solutions to improve outcomes, and how the Council could work with local communities to reduce inequalities in Brent. This conversation led to the development of the BCAP, which sets out the Council's 10-year commitment to tackling inequalities experienced by our Black community.

There are **nine priority areas** listed in the BCAP:

1. Early intervention: children, young people and families
2. Enabling and strengthening community leadership through capacity building
3. Developing community spaces – run and managed by local communities



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4. Supporting the black community and voluntary sector - grant funding to voluntary sector organisations and procurement
5. Support for employment and enterprise
6. Accountability
7. Homes and homelessness
8. Tackling health inequalities
9. Embedding equality and diversity within the Council workforce

Our Cabinet agreed for annual delivery plans to be produced in collaboration with our black community (via thematic steering groups) over the 10-year period of the action plan to ensure the nine priority areas are successfully met. As part of monitoring progress, we developed a Community Reference Group (CRG) to have oversight of all the priority delivery plans. This group consists of community leaders who attended the initial scoping meeting back in June 2020, along with more recent members who have joined the BCAP movement. The group's membership will continue to be reviewed to ensure it remains inclusive and reflective of Brent's Black communities.

Year One – achievements

The 2021/22 delivery plan focused on three priorities:

- Early intervention: children, young people and families
- Building sustainable community capacity
- Supporting Black-led organisations

Key activity in 2021/22 included:

- Working with young residents to develop the Youth Advisory Group (YAG). This enabled the direct voice of young people to be brought in to the heart of the work of the BCAP. Also, this ensured that there are long-term mechanisms to engage with young black people in the borough in settings and ways that are convenient for them.
- Co-producing a 'Pro-Vaccine - No Vaccine' livestream event with the YAG, attended by the NHS, vaccine experts, and 300 young people. This allowed the younger Brent demographic to have an open and honest conversation about the vaccine e.g. break down myths; ask about facts and the science, and pose questions relating to government, trust and leadership.
- Supporting the YAG in creating their first Insight Day at Brent Civic Centre, which had attendance from over 50 employers, including Google, HS2, Wates, Ultra Education, AECOM, and Quintain. It was attended by 300 young residents. This event raised aspirations and motivation within the Black community, and also created career pathways for many black residents.
- Working with the YAG to co-produce a leadership development programme for black young people.
- Launching the Black Business Network, which provides our black businesses with tailored support and training to thrive.
- Developing a Black Business Excellence Quality Mark to recognise Black businesses and their commitment to providing excellent services.



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- Developing and delivering a pilot mutual mentoring scheme, connecting senior managers and Black staff members to increase the organisational awareness on the nature and impacts of inequality.



Year Two, and beyond

We will continue to co-produce and co-design initiatives with our Black community; this will be central to the delivery of the BCAP priorities for year two (2022/23) and the remaining years of the plan.

The Council has invested £3m to purchase and renovate the former Picture Palace on Manor Park Road in Harlesden, and transform it into a space for the African and Caribbean community with the input of black residents. This remains an ongoing key priority for the BCAP to help address the inequalities faced by the Black Community.

For further information contact:

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