

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
<p>REPORT TITLE Building Equal Foundations and Tackling Race Inequality and Disproportionality – update further to themed debate on 4th July 2022</p>	
<p>REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Equalities and Cohesion</p>	
<p>FOR SUBMISSION TO Full Council</p>	<p>DATE 4th July 2022</p>
<p>STRATEGIC CONTEXT</p> <p>The Council is committed to making Camden a place for everyone, where no one is left behind. The Council’s Building Equal Foundations report was published in August 2020, setting out 140 actions to tackle racial inequality and disproportionality in Camden, and the Equalities and Disproportionality Service was created to deliver this work. The service has since expanded to cover wider equalities work, addressing other protected characteristics in the Equality Act. This has led to the service expanding and widening the focus, and redefining what a sustainable, long-term approach looks like to this agenda, and how we ensure equalities is woven through all that Camden does.</p> <p>Although this themed debate had an explicit focus on race equalities, the learning from the work undertaken has added real strength and depth to Camden’s wider equalities work, particularly when an intersectional lens is used.</p>	
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report provides an overview of the full Council debate on 6th April 2022.</p> <p>This report summarises the views of speakers and subsequent debate within the Chamber. The report provides further details on the issues raised and explains how the Council is continuing to tackle inequality and disproportionality.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report</p> <p>Contact Officer:</p> <p>Martha Daniels, Senior Policy and Projects Officer, Martha.daniels@camden.gov.uk</p>	

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to consider and note the report.

Signed:
Cllr Nadia Shah

Date: 22nd June 2022

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This report provides an update to Full Council further to the themed debate on Tackling Race Inequality and Disproportionality on 6th April 2022. The report summarises the debate and provides an update on how Camden, working with partners and communities, will respond and continue to work to tackle inequality and disproportionality in the borough following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.2. The Council was grateful to have six speakers join the debate, with a range of personal and professional experiences, talking about inequality and disproportionality in various spheres of life and how Camden has and should continue to tackle it:

Dr Frances Baawuah - Practicing GP Brondesbury medical centre - discussing Health Inequalities

Dr Fatumo Abdillahi - a Public Health Consultant leading the strategic Covid-19 acute response & strategy, Camden resident

Adejare Oyewole – Camden Black Worker Group convener – will discuss Camden ambitions to be an Anti-racist organisation

Dr Jak Buela - Nubian Jak is responsible for the commemorative plaque and sculpture scheme focused on memorialising the historic contributions of Black and other ethnic people in Britain and beyond.

Anisah Rahman - youth leader with Bite Back 2030, a group of teen activists who campaign for a healthier food system. Anisah is the founder of Eleos, a mental health app for young people that includes an AI Powered Assistant, which she is currently developing in partnership with a local NHS Trust.

Sarah Jafri - Richard Cobden School Governor, member of the Camden Parent Advisory Group. – discussing Child Q, and role of diverse leadership

2. SUMMARY OF THE FULL COUNCIL DEBATE

- 2.1. The debate was introduced by Cllr Abdul Hai, Cabinet Member for Young People, Equalities and Cohesion.
- 2.2. Cllr Abdul Hai introduced the Building Equal Foundations report, which was published to respond to the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian, and other Ethnic groups, and the structural inequalities protested against by the Black Lives Matter movement. Cllr Hai emphasised that tackling structural inequalities remains a priority for Camden, and it is important not to lose momentum, and to always recognise the lived experiences of Camden residents. Cllr Hai highlighted some key achievements, including the positive inspection of Youth Services in Camden, the Memorandum of Understanding for Zero Tolerance of Racist Abuse in Adult Social Care settings, the renaming of Cecil Rhodes House and Beckford School, and the development of the Strategy for Diversity in the Public Realm. Cllr Hai also highlighted that 111 of the 140 calls to action in Building Equal Foundations have been completed and Camden is working hard to complete the remaining actions and remains committed to becoming a truly anti-racist organisation.
- 2.3. Dr Frances Baawuah stated that health inequalities have always been an issue, but the Covid-19 pandemic has really highlighted them. Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair, and systematic, and we know that they are deep rooted in our society and widening. The pandemic has exposed disproportionate morbidity and mortality for Black, Asian, and other ethnic groups. There is evidence that structural racism leads to Black, Asian, and other ethnic people having poorer health outcomes. The impact of Covid on ethnic minority healthcare workers confirms this. The inverse care law tells us that those who need medical care the most are least likely to receive it, and conversely those who need it least tend to be able to access it the most. There is considerable evidence that many populations especially those living in areas of socioeconomic deprivation suffer on all three counts: poor quality services, difficulty of accessing, and external disadvantages. Dr Frances pointed out that the learning from the pandemic around the role of community in people's health must not be forgotten. Dr Frances has been part of the Camden vaccine bus project and the new Camden bus project for preventative medical care, which she emphasised is a fantastic example of the role of community in medical care and the power of collaborative care.
- 2.4. Dr Fatumo Abdillahi spoke about her involvement in the Building Equal Foundations work during the pandemic. She took part in a pan-London webinar and was one of the panel members speaking to different communities about the pandemic and vaccinations. Dr Abdillahi said there has been a cultural shift, partly due to the pandemic and partly due to the Black Lives Matter movement, and Camden has responded in a really positive way. She feels that Camden is a spearheading council in terms of its response to these global events. There were lessons learned in the Building Equal Foundations work, it involved the community, it was cross political, and it has been about building back society to be fairer and better than it was before. She noted that as a Black African mother, she has lived experience of the fact that racism exists in every strata of our society. She thinks that the honesty Camden has had has been really powerful in the past year. For Dr Abdillahi this work is about progress, doing things from grassroots up, communities being seen and heard, a system-wide change, investing resources, and it requires vision, commitment, and action. She

believes Building Equal Foundations is a great example of these principles, and although it is foundational it is a piece of work upon which much more work will be built. Dr Abdillahi hopes that she will see this work continue from strength to strength.

- 2.5. Adejare Oyewole stated that in the toughest of times, the Black Lives Matter movement has shone a light on racial violence, injustice, and inequality, and emphasised that racism can no longer be ignored or be allowed to continue. He said there is a wind of change in Camden Council, supported by a determined and exemplary leadership at the top, who are trying to provide an enabling environment to give people equal opportunity regardless of their physical traits. Over the past years, the leadership of Cllr Gould and Jenny Rowlands and their teams has enabled policies to be put in place to tackle racism and discrimination. With the appointment of Hanad Mohamed as Director of Equalities and Disproportionality, we have witnessed considerable progress in the Council's anti-racism, equality, and inclusion work. Camden Black Workers' Group (CBWG) want all staff to see inclusion and anti-racism as their responsibility. He hopes the anti-racism training staff have undergone has gone some way to achieving this. He noted that although this journey has not been without its challenges, the achievements of the organisation are commendable. Through the anti-racism training staff have been equipped to combat racism in the workplace and have difficult conversations about race. He noted that our leaders are committed to deliver change and are driven to achieve a fully embedded culture of respect in our communities. They have been open to listening to us and engaging with CBWG and allowing us to work collaboratively with them. Adejare acknowledged Cllr Hai's true commitment to the work. He said CBWG look forward to continuing to work with the Council to tackle racism and discrimination.
- 2.6. Dr Jak Beula noted that his organisation Nubian Jak Community Trust address diversity and social inclusion in the public realm by erecting plaques and statues. They have plaques in the UK, including eight plaques in Camden, and would like to install more. Their first plaque was in Camden, the plaque of Bob Marley. Camden should be very proud that they are the custodians of all of these plaques. There is much more they want to do, and more plaques they want to install. They also undertake educational initiatives and have a Nubian Jak board game. They would like to work with Camden Schools to include this board game in the learning of Key Stage 7-9 and roll out this educational programme which celebrates Britain's rich and diverse past. He said they would also like to roll it out to libraries in Camden.
- 2.7. Anisah Rahman gave praise for how much change Camden has gone through in terms of tackling structural inequality and disproportionality. She has been glad to see mental health provisions being more targeted, and school meals diversified, among other initiatives. Anisah believes all these changes have made a big difference to young people's lives, and noted she is glad to see more effort has been made to help young people from ethnic minority backgrounds into the workforce. She noted she is grateful that the Council has had roundtable discussions with young people and made an effort to speak to young people and give them a voice for their own lived experience. She noted that this is making a difference, as she is seeing young people who would never have expected to getting into top institutions, and feeling that Camden is a place

they can thrive and prosper. Now there is more of a conversation about mental health and other services available. Anisah noted it is great that the Council has acknowledged that there is still room for progress and will push for more of it, and these conversations about racial inequalities will continue.

- 2.8. Sarah Jaffrey spoke about the importance of diversity in positions of power and influence. She said that in a diverse community like Camden, you assume a safety net where the diverse community you live in is celebrated because the Council and people who work for it have you in mind. When an incident like Child Q in Hackney occurs, it is clear that systemic failure has occurred. Sarah noted there are so many questions that this raises. It suggests that if a school's governing body doesn't have people who look like you, then you are not provided with a safety net, and governing bodies are affected by unconscious bias.
- 2.9. Councillors made a range of contributions to the debate, and thanked officers and Council colleagues for their hard work and collective effort to address inequality and disproportionality in Camden.
- 2.10. On the topic of community empowerment, it was suggested that it is important to empower those who have lived experience to do the work and design solutions for their own communities because they best understand them. Cllr Khatoon emphasised the work done collectively during the pandemic to address digital poverty, food poverty, housing issues, and mental health.
- 2.11. On the topic of education, Cllr Jarira suggest we need to research why children from certain ethnic groups have special needs more frequently than others. Cllr Cooper noted that although little data is available in terms of ethnic minority attainment in education, for GCSE Maths and English, we know that Asian pupils in Camden perform 6 percentage points worse than pupils overall. Among Black pupils, there is a pass rate that is again 6 percentage point lower than pupils overall. Our pass rate overall in Camden is twelfth lowest in London. He argued that education needs to be priority, because otherwise we are only treating the symptoms not the cause. Cllr Gould responded that education is indeed incredibly important and noted that the inequalities we see in education are reflected in the inequalities in other parts of society such as housing. Cllr Francis noted how shocking the Child Q case was and how much it emphasised the different treatment children get at school because of the colour of their skin.
- 2.12. On the topic of health, Cllr Madlani asked how the health service is addressing health inequalities going forward. Cllr Wright asked Dr Frances how the inverse care law is being addressed, and what support she needs for this.
- 2.13. On the topic of employment, Cllr Simpson noted that the Roundhouse are doing great work to address inaccessible and unpaid internships, but asked Anisah if there is more that other employers could be doing. Anisah responded that a lot of the time young people do not hear about internship opportunities that are available. It would be better if employers did more targeted outreach programmes for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Young people are often put off by the application process. Some companies are asking for a

video application rather than written form which is very helpful for adapting the process to different skills and needs.

- 2.14. On the topic of intersectionality, Cllr Madlani asked what more we can do about intersectionality, and how we can ensure that we do not forget our LGBTQ+ and disabled residents. Cllr Rahman noted that we need to encourage more Black, Asian and other ethnic women to become school governors and be in other positions of power.

NEXT STEPS

3.1 Camden Council is committed to continuing and accelerating the work to tackle inequality and disproportionality. The Council will continue to deliver and develop projects as part of the Diversity in the Public Realm work, which works towards increasing equality, diversity and inclusion in the arts, high streets, parks and open spaces, planning, community projects and statues and building names.

3.2 The Council will continue to develop programmes of work that come under the Diversity mission, working towards diversity in positions of power in Camden, and ensuring that our young people have opportunities to further progress and develop.

3.2 The Council will continue to invest in the Equalities agenda, continuing to look both inward and outward in the way Camden responds to this important remit. The Council will also continue to listen to our communities to ensure equality is at the heart of decision making and service delivery.

3.3 The Council is working in numerous ways to address issues around intersectionality and focus further on the protected characteristics. The Council will continue to work with our community partners, the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Businesses to ensure this work flourishes within the Borough.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to add to the report.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Director of Finance has been consulted and has no comments to add to the report.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Research from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights that people who are already most vulnerable and marginalised will also experience the greatest impacts of climate change.

6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Building Equal Foundations One Year On report

REPORT ENDS