

TACKLING RACIAL INEQUALITY

Good Practice Case Studies

LB Newham
Community Time to Talk

The London Borough of Newham hosted three community Time to Talk events, to identify where residents, borough staff, and partner agency members, experienced racism, disproportionality and racial inequality, and to identify ways of reducing or preventing them.



The problem

Our problem statement was a simple one “how do the people of Newham experience racism, inequality and/or disproportionality and what can a place-based approach do to help reduce or prevent those experiences?”

When we asked attendees to sum up in one word how they are feeling the responses varied and included feelings, such as being disappointed, hopeful, emotional, impatient, tired, sceptical, sad, confused, shocked, doubtful, excited and expectant.

A survey that was circulated before the first two sessions enabled us to understand more about the ‘hyper-local’ issues being faced as they often vary considerably across the boroughs. Over 150 residents responded to this survey.

The solution

In June 2021 Newham hosted its first Community Time to Talk event inviting residents, partner agencies and council staff. This session covered the north of the borough including Stratford, Manor Park, Green Street and Forest Gate. Discussions focused on the involvement of agencies, young people, trust, access to healthcare, the recovery following Covid-19 and heritage. A local art company, Brolly Productions, were also in attendance to capture the voices of residents who discussed experiences of living in such a culturally diverse borough as well as any experience of discrimination because of their cultural background – this has been produced as a [short film](#), accompanied by an artwork exhibition.

The second Community Time to Talk session was held in October 2021 and focused on the south of the borough, including Custom House, Canning Town, Beckton, Royal Docks, Plaistow and East Ham. This session was also co-facilitated by members of the Royal Docks Community Engagement team and concluded with a live performance from

Partners involved

London Borough of
Newham –Tackling
Racism, Inequality
and Disproportionality
(TRID) programme

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spoken word artist Casey Bailey, who is the current Birmingham Poet Laureate.

The third Community Time to Talk session was held in February 2022 during Race Equality Week and focused on #ActionNotJustWords. Council representatives and partners from across the borough including police, East London Foundation Trust and Education 4 Change, provided an update on the action being taken. Questions in previous sessions from attendees included 'How are staff supported' and as a council we were able to provide an update on the action taken, which includes the launch of Reciprocal Mentors as well as the launch of Race Equality Champions as part of our wellbeing offer. We also had a keynote speech delivered by Dr Joy White who is a lecturer, author and Forest Gate resident. She is the author of Urban Music and Entrepreneurship: Beats, Rhymes and Young People's Enterprise, one of the first books to foreground the socio-economic significance of the UK urban music economy, with particular reference to Grime music. Joy's latest book is Terraformed: Young Black Lives in the Inner City. Terraformed uses the history of Newham as an example of how young Black lives in the inner cities of the world are affected by racism, capitalism and austerity.

A big thank you also has to go partners that were involved in facilitating the session, or sat on Q&A panels. These include: Education 4 Change (E4C), Newham Metropolitan Police, University of East London, Rights and Equalities in Newham (REIN), Queer Newham, Royal Docks Team, Faithful Friends, Fight for peace, Caramel Rock, East London Foundation Trust (ELFT), Newham Public Health and Newham Community Safety.

The disproportionate impact of Covid-19 as well as the unfortunate high profile incidents of police brutality against African-Americans acted as a catalyst to exploring the racial inequality that affects Newham as a workforce and a borough.

Background

Newham has one of the most diverse populations in London with over 73 per cent of residents from a Black, Asian or ethnically diverse background. The disproportionate impact of Covid-19 as well as the unfortunate high profile incidents of police brutality against African-Americans acted as a catalyst to exploring the racial inequality that affects Newham as a workforce and a borough. This programme has been created to address and tackle issues of racism, inequality and disproportionality in Newham.

The four projects under the programme are:

- Newham as an employer
- Newham as a beacon of social change
- Newham is the best place for children and young people
- Newham as a deliverer and commissioner of public services

Desired outcomes/delivered outcomes

Over 170 people were in attendance across the 3 sessions and the 'virtual room' was filled with members of the community and partner organisations who contributed to breakout room discussions and a question and answer session

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When we asked attendees what they were hoping to get out of the sessions, responses included:

- Representation is what we need within services. Services are not culturally appropriate
- Lack of integration – communities do not speak with each other. This is also linked to isolation and loneliness
- How are staff supported in organisations?
- How do we look at safety and reporting abuse
- Understanding the impact of Covid-19
- Intersectionality and imbalance in opportunities based on gender and age
- Historical problems and systemic deep-rooted issues
- How to reach out to communities that are “voiceless” and “forgotten”
- Communication and language barriers
- Lack of access to the digital world
- Different forms of discrimination and the experiences through different demographics (eg Chinese communities and hate crimes following Covid-19)
- Developing and celebrating local heritage – so people feel proud to live here – is a way to find solutions proactively.

Learning/evaluation

We asked attendees the question ‘What do you need to see or hear happen to feel like we are making progress? How could you also contribute to this?’ and received the following responses:

- Cultural representation in the room where decisions are made and ALL voices are heard
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are more than just crime and the relationship of young people with the police. Can we talk about how we improve diversity and inclusion from a solution-based and systematic change culture in the borough?
- Reduction in youth crime and race crime, also a clear reduction in ethnically diverse individuals being stopped by police
- More integration
- More diverse businesses supported on the high street
- Real education to dispel the miseducation some may have learnt from their parents. Learning the history of other cultures encourages unity. This learning should be applied to ALL institutions.
- Less apathy from residents.
- Much more focus on these issues in schools from an early age
- Representation includes all age groups. Most meetings tend not to have young participants. It is essential young voices contribute.
- Much more needs to be done and tackled locally
- Would be great to have more of these discussions in our neighbourhoods
- More cultural events that would encourage integration between all age groups

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and backgrounds to educate and start conversations

As shown above, various points raised by attendees demonstrate progress would largely be dependent on working collaboratively across the place of Newham – no single organisation or group can do this alone. However, there is a desire for partners and the local authority to work in a coordinated way, with shared learning and creating more spaces for discussion on these issues that can appeal to the widest possible demographic.

Our biggest learning point, however, is how important it is to create the space to have these conversations in a safe, restorative way. It should not be underestimated how valuable the discussions are and, even where we may not have the agency to fix the problems locally, understanding and supporting the trauma that has been caused is vital.

Three top tips for holding a good session:

- Create enough time for people to discuss and share – facilitators, breakout rooms and discussion prompts can help!
- Have a range of experts on hand to answer questions from residents through a Q&A panel and in the breakout rooms – a chat moderator also helps
- Be open to challenges and transparent about what can be achieved.

Contact



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TRID Programme
Manager

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How comfortable or uncomfortable do you feel discussing racism, inequality and disproportionality?

	Very uncomfortable	Fairly uncomfortable	Neither comfortable or uncomfortable	Fairly comfortable	Very comfortable
Racism	23.8%	16.7%	19%	28.6%	11.9%
Inequality	19%	19%	14.3%	26.2%	21.4%
Disproportionality	21.4%	16.7%	16.7%	28.6%	16.7%

- An equal amount of respondents (40.5%) felt comfortable discussing racism
- 47.6% of respondents felt comfortable discussing inequality
- 45.3% of respondents felt comfortable discussing disproportionality

"People often play 'lip service' to tackling racism, but not sure much would be done if ever brought to the attention of the police, the Council etc"

Thinking about the last time you witnessed racism in Newham, how did you respond after witnessing this event?

64.5% of respondents took some form of action after witnessing racism



"I haven't lived in Newham too long - between 2-3 years now. Quite a mix of people and cultures which is great, but definitely still some racism against minority communities and stereotyping (eg in community Facebook groups, or against young people outside in public spaces)"

Thinking about the last time you witnessed racism in Newham, how did you respond after witnessing this event?

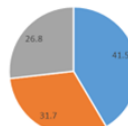
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Do you feel able to tackle racism if you saw it happening or were made aware of it?

Less than half of respondents (41.5%) felt they would be able to tackle racism if they saw it or were made aware of it



"We need less of the tick box exercises and more qualitative action - i.e. results-driven campaigns"

If you have personally experienced or been a victim of any kind of racism, inequality or disproportionality while in Newham, please say how often:

	Constantly	Regularly	Occasionally	Rarely	Prefer not to say	I have not personally experienced this
Racism	7.3%	9.8%	14.6%	29.3%	2.4%	36.6%
Inequality	9.8%	9.8%	43.9%	12.2%	4.9%	19.5%
Disproportionality	12.2%	12.2%	36.6%	14.6%	2.4%	22%

- 60% of respondents had experienced some form of racism
- 75.5% of respondents had experienced some form of inequality
- 75.5% of respondents had experienced some form of disproportionality

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the statements below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel a sense of belonging and community where I live	17.1%	39%	19.5%	12.2%	12.2%
Diverse communities get on well with each other where I live	12.2%	39%	17.1%	22%	9.8%
Living in a diverse community is important to me	51.2%	19.5%	24.4%	4.9%	0%
Newham welcomes and appreciates people from diverse cultures	17.1%	48.8%	14.6%	12.2%	7.3%

- More than half of respondents (56.1%) felt a sense of belonging and community where they live
- 51.2% of respondents felt diverse communities get on well with each other where they live
- 70.5% felt living in a diverse community is important to them
- 65.9% felt Newham welcomes and appreciates people from diverse cultures

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the statements below:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My heritage is reflected in Newham's celebrations of heritage and history	7.3%	24.4%	31.7%	24.4%	12.2%
My culture and heritage impact on how people treat me	29.3%	39%	17.1%	9.8%	4.9%
Young people feel that they can reach their full potential in Newham	2.4%	17.1%	39%	17.1%	24.4%

- Responses varied on whether respondents felt their heritage was reflected in Newham's celebration of heritage and history, 36.6% disagreed, 31.7% agreed and 31.7% were neutral
- The majority of respondents (68.3%) agreed that their culture and heritage impacts how people treat them
- 41.5% of respondents did not believe young people feel they can reach their full potential in Newham