

# COVID 19 BAME Disproportionality Project

## Education in Camden



# Introduction

- With Primary schools welcoming more children back this week, we recognize that there is an immediate requirement to provide confidence and reassurance that our schools are able to operate safely for all; we will explore the measures in place to enable this and support our BAME families during this time
- We will explore how the lives and education of BAME children have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and the government measures, and begin to shape the framework for our medium and longer term action plan
- We will hear from a young person living in Camden
- Camden Learning, Camden Council and Schools will develop a **framework** for medium and long term action plans on the disproportional effects of C19 on BAME children. The framework will be shared with the working group on 15 June which will form part of:
  - Schools, Education and Families report to the Covid19 Oversight Cross-Party Panel on 29 June
  - BAME disproportionality action plan
- The detailed action plans will be developed collaboratively with key stakeholders once the framework has agreed. We will draw on work that begun before the pandemic with our Somali communities, and we will ensure that our approaches are tailored to the differing experiences and strengths of different BAME communities.

# Context

- In the UK from 23 March 2020, schools were open only to children of key workers and vulnerable children, until further notice.
- Government also announced that both primary and secondary school assessments will not be taking place this summer meaning predicted grades would be used
- The changes to schools has resulted in children being significantly affected and has highlighted structural inequalities that exist and affect the education and lifestyle of BAME children
- Whilst we have responded to these issues immediately, further work needs to take place to think about challenging structural inequalities
- More recently, concerns have shifted following the Prime Ministers announcement that schools are opening more widely to children in nursery, year 1 and year 6 from 1 June 2020; immediate anxieties have been raised about staff and pupil safety.

# Initial Government Response

At the time of reducing the number of children physically attending schools in the UK, Government also announced a number of initial measures to support families and local authorities:

- Schools will be able to provide meals or vouchers to support children eligible for free school meals
- Schools will be able to order vouchers via Edenred to be emailed or printed and posted to families, with costs covered by DfE
- Nurseries eligible for a business rates holiday for 1 year.

# Emerging Issues

We have heard about a number of emerging issues arising from our schools relating to disadvantaged children and families, which can often be attributed to the experiences of our BAME communities:

1. Returning to School – fear of contracting COVID-19
2. Attainment – closing the learning gap/biases in grading
3. Home Education – overcrowding and language barriers
4. Digital Divide - lack of access to wifi and devices
5. Free School Meals / Pupil Premium – food poverty
6. Mental Health in Young People

We would like to use this opportunity to work with the working group to develop a framework for addressing the emerging issues.

# Emerging Issues

We anticipate that the following issues will require **immediate action**

Emerging Issues	What actions are we proposing?
<p><b>Returning to School</b> With the easing of lockdown and more children returning to school this week, we anticipate that some BAME families may choose not to send their children to schools due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Fear of contracting COVID-19</li><li>- Multigenerational living</li></ul> <p>There is general anxiety about staff and pupil anxiety and we anticipate that BAME staff will be anxious.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>We have shared guidance for parents from public health on returning to school</b></li><li>- <b>Schools have undertaken risk assessments</b></li><li>- We will target the guidance to BAME communities e.g. share with VCS partners, provide bitesize guidance</li><li>- We will encourage schools to monitor attendance and support parents</li><li>- We will explore how we can continue to support families digitally where appropriate</li></ul>
<p><b>Conscious and Unconscious Bias</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assessments for young people who were due to take GCSEs/ A levels/Vocational and Year 6 SATs however these will be based on teachers <b>predicted grades</b> this year</li><li>- Evidence shows that black students receive lower A-level predictions than their peers and often <b>perform better than predicted grades.</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raised as part our submission to the Ofqual consultation; we have recommended that each judgment should be accompanied by an equalities declaration signed by the examiner</li><li>• We could begin to challenge this nationally and lobby the government/campaign widely</li><li>• We will develop longer term plans for tackling biases in our schools locally</li></ul>

# Emerging Issues- key lines of inquiry

We anticipate that we will need to prioritise action plans for the following issues, which will be developed in the **medium term**

Emerging Issues- closing the learning gap	What actions could we start to explore?
<p><b>Home Education – overcrowding and language barriers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Cramped living conditions / overcrowding means that space for <b>home learning is limited and shared</b> – particular issue flagged by Somali communities</li><li>- Phonics progress / access to books</li><li>- Language – parents unable to speak good levels of English or have <b>English as a second language</b>; impact on learning/supporting children</li><li>-Digital Divide - <b>lack of access to wifi</b> and devices</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Work has progressed to support children and young people in Camden who do not have access to equipment and wifi; this includes a digital campaign for device donations</li><li>- The next step will be to explore a targeted approach for the digital divide work and how we can ensure BAME children have access to equipment</li><li>- To support home learning we will share links and information to good educational resources</li></ul>
<p><b>Transition periods</b></p> <p>-<b>Transitions into new key stages</b> and schools could be particularly detrimental to BAME children given the number of disadvantages that they face.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Potentially explore funding tuition</li><li>-Explore targeted summer programmes</li><li>- Prioritise careers advice for Year 11 and Year 12 students</li></ul>

# Emerging Issues- key lines of inquiry

We anticipate that we will need to prioritise action plans for the following issues, which will be developed in the **medium term**

Emerging Issue	What actions could we start to explore?
<p><b>Opportunities for BAME graduates</b> <a href="#">A Carnegie UK Trust report</a> found that millennials from BAME backgrounds were “<b>58 per cent more likely to be unemployed</b> than their White counterparts; 47 per cent more likely to be on a zero-hours contract; 10 per cent more likely to be working a second job; 5 per cent more likely to be doing shift work; and 4 per cent less likely to have a permanent contract”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Work closely with economic development to develop approaches to supporting graduates</li><li>- Could we encourage BAME graduates to tutor young people therefore supporting them with employment and potentially attracting more BAME teachers and providing the experience?</li></ul>
<p><b>Stress and Anxiety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Compounded by the loss of structure in daily lives and the challenges within the family to provide basic necessities, such as food and keeping safe.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- We have launched Kooth a digital mental health support service for children and young people.</li><li>- Could we explore buddy systems with older and younger children</li></ul>

# The Voice of Young People

- Whilst we have started to engage with schools and our VCS to hear about the lived experience of BAME parents and their children, we acknowledge that it is paramount the voice of young people are heard and that they help to shape our action plans
- We held our first virtual roundtable with Cllr Georgia Gould and Sir Keir Starmer MP, joined by a group of young people, including Camden's Youth MPs, to share first-hand experiences of the last two months.
- We have invited Athian, Camden's youth MP to share some of his experiences and those of young people around him during the pandemic
- We will continue to develop our medium and long term approaches with young people.

# Next Steps

- Develop a framework for medium and longer term action plans and report back to working group on 15 June
- Working with Camden Learning and Camden Council, develop an approach to co-producing action plans with parents, young people, schools.
- Embed early learning and approaches into education strategy, and develop approaches for early intervention.