

Lambeth Equality Commission

A Lambeth for all Residents

Briefing Paper 1: Context and Challenges

The challenge

In May 2014 Lambeth's political administration was elected on a platform of 'Ambition and fairness for all' reaffirming that the values of opportunity and social justice must guide everything we do. In Lambeth we have made much progress in this regard. Our young people have seen steady improvements in school results and we are narrowing gaps in performance so that all young people have an equal chance to succeed. All of Lambeth's children's centres are judged as good or better by Ofsted, with nine in ten of our schools also judged as good or better¹. Local employment is growing, and we are focusing our efforts on making a difference to the groups that are furthest from the labour market through our Pathways to Employment programme (in partnership with Southwark and Lewisham). Burglary is down and our work to combat violence against women and girls is nationally recognised. We are working to deliver more affordable homes and we have brought more council-rented homes up to the Lambeth Housing Standard. We are also supporting more vulnerable people to live at home and outside of residential and nursing care.

But despite our recent successes the reality is stark - by 2016 Lambeth will have lost 50% of government funding which along with welfare reform, the capital's housing crisis and stagnant and below inflation wage increases will increase pressures around inequality. This means that though we may be able to offer children and young people a good start in life, there are real challenges in making sure that these translate into good outcomes for them in later life if they remain in the borough². The borough's profile is also changing and this brings with it different sorts of demands and pressures, both for us as a council and for local communities³.

The bottom line is - at a time of drastically reducing resources and a changing population profile - we believe a robust focus on equalities is not just something nice to have, but essential. Two critical questions frame our thinking. How do we use the resources that we have left to best effect? And, how do we treat the causes of problems rather than the consequences?

The Lambeth Context

Nearly a third of a million people live in the London borough of Lambeth – at least 318,000. It has one of the largest geographic areas of any inner London borough, with several distinctive neighbourhoods including Waterloo, Brixton, Clapham, Streatham and Norwood, and landmarks include Waterloo station, the London Eye, the South Bank arts complex, the Oval cricket ground and Lambeth Palace, the residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

¹ Lambeth Performance report – quarter 2 – Jul to Sep 2015

² Whilst Lambeth is in the top 10% of English authorities according to the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission's Social Mobility Index, our high performance against education indicators does not consistently translate into good adult outcomes (relating to income and housing).

³ See appendix one for a summary of the borough's demographics.

Lambeth is a hugely diverse borough, home to nearly a third of a million residents from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Lambeth residents speak 142 languages and just 40% of our residents are white British. Black residents make up 25% of our population. Lambeth is a destination for many migrants, especially young people (as opposed to families or older people), from around Britain and abroad, and has large Latin American and Portuguese speaking populations.

Lambeth overall has experienced good economic growth over the past few years, and this has brought a range of benefits including more local jobs, thriving local businesses and more leisure opportunities. However, like other inner-London boroughs our socio-economic profile is mixed, with areas of affluence and deprivation in close proximity, and we know that the benefits of growth have not been evenly distributed. We also know that some of the trends associated with this growth, particularly gentrification and increasing house prices, affect how some of our residents feel about the borough and, more importantly, make things more difficult for some.

Whilst some residents say their personal finances have improved compared to a year ago (20%), well over half (60%) of residents report that their personal financial circumstances are about the same compared to the previous year and 17% say that their financial circumstances have worsened⁴. Two in five feel that the changes happening locally benefit themselves and their families (38%). However, nearly one in ten (8%) see the changes as making things more difficult for them and their families (with the remaining quarter (27%) saying the changes do not affect them).

We know that there are particular groups for whom things have got worse, including unemployed people, people on low incomes, disabled people, carers, people with long term illnesses and living in the most deprived areas. These are some of the groups we know to have been worst affected by national and local changes. There are also local patterns by ethnicity with black and 'other' residents feeling financially worse off and Black Caribbean residents feeling they are worse off as a result of change. At the same time as things are getting worse for particular groups, we also know that there is a widening gap between our richest and poorest residents. So whilst Lambeth has improved overall over the last five years from being 14th most deprived local authority to the 22nd most deprived local authority area in England, more small areas in the borough are now in the 10% most deprived areas in the country than was the case five years ago⁵.

As a result of these recent and also as a result of sometimes more longstanding issues, there are a number of life domains in which there is significant inequality between different groups of residents. These are outlined below, along with some analysis on which groups experience greatest inequality⁶.

Poverty

In London, 16% of people have an income below 60% of the median income before housing costs; 28% of people after housing costs⁷. The comparable figures for UK are 16% and 21%. Assuming the percentages for Lambeth are the same as in London, there are an estimated 49,000 people in poverty in Lambeth before housing costs, and which rises to 87,000 people in poverty after housing costs. Whilst the rate of

⁴ Lambeth Residents' Survey 2016

⁵ Deprivation is measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2010 and 2015).

⁶ Depending on what datasets we have drawn on, some characteristics, such as ethnicity, are captured at different group or sub-group levels and we need to be conscious of this in our interpretation of the analysis and subsequent discussions.

⁷ Trust for London (2016) London Poverty Profile

poverty in London has remained relatively stable since the mid-1990s, patterns of poverty have changed dramatically, with a growth in in-work poverty, poverty amongst those living in the private rented sector and living in outer London⁸.

There are some groups particularly likely to live in poverty⁹. Working age people living in poverty are more likely to: be living in workless households; be a lone parent in part time work; have a disability; be from a Black Caribbean /African or Asian apart from Indian background; and, have no qualifications. Retirement age people in poverty more likely to: have no occupational or personal pension; live in social housing; receive pension credit or housing benefit; and, receive Disability Living Allowance.

Education and learning

Whilst we are narrowing gaps in performance so that all young people have an equal chance to succeed, there are still some inequalities that we need to tackle. At GCSE level, 51% of pupils receiving Free School Meals (FSM) did not attain the required standard of 5 GCSE passes A*-C, 19% lower than attainment for pupils not receiving FSM. Whilst this figure is in line with the average attainment gap for London and well below the English average of 29%, this gap is almost twice that of the best performers (Islington and Westminster, both at 9%)¹⁰.

Similarly, whilst we have seen significant improvements in Lambeth's schools for all ethnic groups, improvement has been greater for White British pupils than for ethnic minority groups overall, and there are some groups for who there are significant gaps in attainment. For example:

- Portuguese pupils (previously identified as one of the lowest attaining groups) have made good improvement over time at each key stage by, narrowing the gap in attainment, but still perform below the national average and significantly below the Lambeth average.
- The gap between Black Caribbean pupils and the Lambeth average has narrowed at KS1, but a gap persists at KS2. In 2015, 50% of Portuguese pupils and 45% of Caribbean pupils got 5+A*-C at GCSE including English and maths, well below the borough average of 57%.
- At higher qualification levels, more gaps emerge. For example, just over half as many Black African, Caribbean and Black British residents are qualified at NVQ 4+ compared to white residents (29.5 % vs. 58.6%).

Employment

Whilst local growth has brought more jobs to the borough and has resulted in higher employment rates, there are some groups of residents who appear to be disadvantaged. For example:

- Whilst local employment rates for Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents have improved over the past five years (and at a slightly greater rate than for White British residents (6.9% compared to 5.9%)), significant inequalities still remain with 65.8% of ethnic minority groups being in employment compared to 84.6% of 'white' Lambeth residents¹¹.
- Young residents aged 16-24 are significantly more likely to be unemployed, with an unemployment ratio of 10.7 (compared to an inner London ratio of 5.6). Unemployment is

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Households Below Average Income 2013

¹⁰ Trust for London (2016) London Poverty Profile

¹¹ Based on people aged 16-64 in employment in the 12 months to July 2015, ONS APS data

particularly pronounced for young people from Black or mixed ethnic backgrounds, who are twice as likely to be unemployed than their White counterparts. Older people aged 50-64 also more likely to be unemployed (with an employment rate of 66%, though this is below the London average of 68.1% for this age group)¹².

- Disabled working age people in London are more than are twice more likely not to be in paid work than their non-disabled counterparts (51% versus 24%). Of this 51%, 7% are unemployed (44% are economically inactive)¹³.

There are also differences in the types of employment available to different groups of residents. Perhaps reflecting differences in skills attainment amongst different groups, there are significant differences in the numbers of black residents in higher skills occupations compared to White residents (33% versus 65%).

In terms of low pay, BAME, disabled, female and young residents who responded to our Residents' Survey are also more likely to report being in paid below the London Living Wage (LLW). More than half (51%) of Black African residents who are in work say they are paid below the LLW as do 45% of Portuguese residents in contrast to 10% of White British residents in work. Four out of ten (39%) residents whose main language is not English say they earn less than the LLW compared to 16% of those where English is the main language. Women are more likely to say they are paid below the LLW (25%) compared to males (18%) as do younger residents (aged 18 to 24) who are in work (37%).

Crime and justice

Lambeth suffers high levels of violent crime¹⁴ compared to the rest of London and the country more widely. The costs of violence to individuals, families, communities and the local economy are high, and treating the effects of violence draws heavily on local resources, including the police, social care and the NHS.

There are particular groups of residents who are more likely to be victims of certain crimes in Lambeth, as elsewhere. Women are more likely to be victims of harassment, sexual violence or violence at the hands a partner, whilst men are more likely to be victims of serious wounding, knife and gun crime and robbery. Older children and young people are more likely to be victims of knife crime, gang violence and some sexual offences. Deprivation is also a strong risk factor for being a victim of violent crime, with residents of deprived communities being five times more likely to be admitted for emergency hospital treatment following a violent crime. Victims of crime are disproportionately likely to be African, Caribbean, Black or Mixed Race.

Black African, Black Caribbean, Black or Mixed Race residents are also more likely to be suspected of many types of crime and for many crimes are more likely to be charged. For example, they make up 73% of suspects for gun offences and 87% of those charged. This pattern is reflected in the overrepresentation of children and young people who are Black, Asian or from an ethnic minority (BAME) in custody, an issue that is subject to an investigation by David Lammy MP as part of his government-commissioned review into discrimination in the criminal justice system.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Trust for London (2016) London Poverty Profile

¹⁴ There are three types of violence prevalent in Lambeth that are of particular concern: domestic violence, group or gang violence and violence between strangers (including hate crime).

Participation, decision making and leadership

Resident participation in local organisations, including decision making forums, has been shown to result in greater engagement in politics and democratic processes; more and stronger 'social capital'; and, better and more responsive services¹⁵. There is also evidence to suggest participation is a social determinant of health. People who are already well connected (either in their local communities or more widely) are more likely to participate, creating 'barriers to entry' to others¹⁶.

We know that there are some groups of residents who for a range of possible reasons, are less likely to participate. These include: unemployed residents, council tenants, digitally excluded residents¹⁷, BME residents from the Black and Portuguese communities and Muslim residents. Newer residents to the borough are also less likely to participate but once they have been settled in the area for two years they become more likely to be involved in an activity.

Participation is an important indicator as whether someone agrees that they can influence decisions in the local area, with people who participate in a local group or organisation being more likely to agree they can influence decisions. Muslim residents, those with a long-term illness, and younger residents are more likely to disagree they can shape local decision-making¹⁸.

The case of under representation and participation of certain equalities groups may be further compounded by the funding pressures that local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) are currently under, where these result in a reduction in activities that might otherwise encourage participation and involvement decision making by different equalities groups. In Lambeth, a perceived wilting of community spirit, loss of identity and community leadership amongst the Black Caribbean community has been attributed to the reduction in the number and strength of Black community organisations¹⁹.

Health and housing

Two final, and related areas where we know there to be unequal outcomes for residents are health and housing. In Lambeth, health inequalities (as measured limiting long term illness) have reduced over the last 15 years but we still rank as the fifth most unequal borough for health outcomes in London with a - 2.1% differential in the rate of ill health between White British and BAME groups. Mental health inequalities are a source of particular concern. Lambeth has the highest rate of psychosis in the country, and we know that our Black residents are more likely to be affected by mental health issues. These concerns have contributed to the establishment of both the Black Mental Health Commission and Black Well Being Partnership.

We also know that there are inequalities in housing outcomes for some resident groups. For example, residents from BAME backgrounds are much more likely to be in temporary accommodation, accounting for 73% of households in this housing situation. BAME residents are also more likely to live in overcrowded households.

¹⁵ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, (2006) Community participation: Who benefits?

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¹⁷ Fewer than one in five (18%) of those who do not have access to the internet are part of a group, club or organisation.

¹⁸ Lambeth Residents' Survey, 2015

¹⁹ Equinox Consulting Lambeth Black Caribbean Insight Research, 2013.

Questions for consideration/discussion:

1. Are there any key areas missing from this overview?
2. Where could we have most influence?
3. What are local people most concerned about?
4. What are the relevant questions we can most helpfully ask our residents about the nature and impact of inequality in Lambeth?

NOTE ENDS