



Children's Services

Exclusions

1. Executive Summary

Tower Hamlets has made reducing the rates of exclusion and pupil disaffection a key target in its strategic plan and had worked successfully since 1999 to reduce the numbers of permanent exclusions, in line with central government targets. This trend has changed and exclusions are now increasing.

It is recognised that, should we fail to provide pupils with an adequate education within the school system, there is an increased risk of them obtaining no qualifications, becoming unemployed, involved in crime and/or homeless; becoming teenage parents or developing mental health problems. Apart from the personal costs to the individuals concerned, there are long term costs to the public because of these risk factors

The LEA has a statutory role to provide guidance to schools and governing bodies in the appropriate use of exclusions to ensure that all decisions are applied fairly and equitably and they are able to withstand scrutiny. The LEA does not have the power to overturn exclusions, however it will advise schools and governing bodies, and raise concerns when local or statutory guidance is not being followed.

Parents receive impartial information about their rights with regard to their child's exclusion. Information is provided to assist parents in contributing to their child's education. Parents' lack of knowledge and information about exclusion may lead to inequalities.

The Commission for Racial Equality has published research on the public cost of permanent exclusion. Apart from the costs incurred during the exclusion process itself, and the cost of replacement education, they identified costs incurred by social services, police and mental health services. In summary, the research confirmed that exclusion represents very bad value for money.

Central government guidance and Union debate around approaches to managing challenging behaviour have become less tolerant.

The closure of schools in Hackney has led to a very sudden change in groups at risk in some of our schools.

Changes in Head Teacher appear, in most cases, to have an adverse affect on the number of pupils excluded.

Tower Hamlets has three areas of activity which are concerned with exclusions and which are examined in this Equalities Impact assessment.

Exclusion Guidance 2004

The LEA provides regular guidance and training for schools and governing bodies on exclusion.

Behaviour Support Plan 2006

To improve pupils' life chances by raising achievement, reducing exclusion and raising attendance.

To implement the Local Preventative Strategy, building on multi-agency working to ensure inclusive services, joint assessment, and accurate identification, tracking and referral protects all children at risk of social exclusion.

To improve monitoring processes to ensure groups are not disadvantaged.

Parents' Advice Centre (PAC)

Providing an information and advisory service for parents and carers in order to promote inclusion

Increasing the involvement of parents, particularly those at risk of social exclusion, in the education of their children in order to raise levels of achievement

Empowering parents and encouraging active parental participation in the review and planning of LEA services.

2. Data Collection & Consultation

Data Collection

- 1) Audit report
- 2) Overall Exclusion Data
- 3) Telephone Data
- 4) Information from the pupil attitude survey.

In addition detailed analysis of secondary school exclusions are collated. They consider gender, race, reasons, the age and the length of the exclusions (such details are not provided for primary schools as the exclusions are minimally in this phase). The data we have informs the Borough wide level of practice and detailed data is developed for each secondary school.

Consultation

Recent consultation exercise on new admission criteria resulted in priority admission for permanently excluded pupils and pupils in Public Care.

Behaviour Support Plan – Multi-Agency Consultation – included parental support survey, pupil attitudinal survey and pupil information.

Service Evaluation Survey – enables schools to comment on Behaviour Support Team

Pupil Attitude Survey – annual survey of pupils' views on education and behaviour, including bullying.

Social Services annual children in Public Care on their needs of the services provided for them.

Inclusion (SEN) Strategy Review meetings held throughout Jan/Feb

Meeting with Hackney Authority

The PAC has weekly team meetings where the issues of exclusions are discussed, recorded and reported.

Annual transition – meetings are arranged for children and their parents/carers with special educational needs which includes the head of Service and the Head of Special Educational Needs.

The Parents' Consultative Group – parents can raise areas of concern

3. Key Findings

ETHNICITY

The ethnic distribution of permanently excluded pupils does not match the ethnic distribution of the whole school population.

Bangladeshi pupils are over-represented: The proportion of exclusions from this group has been increasing over the last few years: four years ago, Bangladeshi pupils were under-represented, two years ago they were over-represented. The numbers are small and may not be statistically significant but the overall trends are concerning.

The number of permanent exclusions of Black pupils (including African, Caribbean, Black British and Other Black) has increased. This is also a concern, although again the numbers involved are very small. The picture in Tower Hamlets is significantly better than the national picture where Black Pupils are three times more likely to be excluded than other groups.

The proportion of White pupils has decreased from 24.3% to 7.1% last year, and they were under-represented in the permanent exclusion figure: more than one third lower than their representation in the school population.

Permanent exclusions of out of borough pupils 2004/2005 = 5 - 12%

Permanent exclusions of out of borough pupils 2005/2006 = 16 - 25% (increase of 11)

The number of out of borough pupils has increased but the number of OoB (Out of Borough) pupils who have been permanently excluded has significantly increased and they are significantly over-represented in permanent exclusions.

GENDER

Boys are far more likely to be excluded, making up 85.7% of permanent exclusions and 85% of fixed term exclusions in 2002/2003. The ratio of permanent exclusions for boys and girls is in line with those in previous years.

Overall there has been a steady rise in the proportion of girls excluded from school over the last three years and they now account for 31% of all exclusions, twice the rate in 2003

DISABILITY

The LEA's policies and practices are aimed at inclusion and how they influence the policies and practices within all schools. There is no evidence of direct negative impact of the policy on disabled children.

There is work to be done with school staff to support them in understanding that BESD can be a disability, and that reasonable adjustments are required as part of the DDA. Training for schools and governing bodies on the DES schemes has highlighted this. There is evidence that young people with statements of ASD and BESD are being excluded from school.

Although there is evidence of children with statements being excluded, which we will tackle, this is minimal compared to the National picture which shows those with statements being 4 times more likely to be excluded

The requirements of the DES will help address any tendency for exclusions policies to be applied unfairly to disabled children

AGE

Nationally the most common point for children to be excluded is at ages 13 and 14 (year groups 9 & 10). Fixed term and permanent exclusions in Tower Hamlets were highest in year 9 in 2002/3.

The national and local reviews of 14-19 provision will encourage greater curriculum flexibility and more vocational provision. This should help engage more young people effectively in school. It is clear that disaffection peaks in Year 9/10.

Although the figures are very small there is a need to focus on fixed term exclusions in primary schools and carry out a review and analysis of these figures, to support the early identification of pupils at risk.

The transition programme (part of BIP) is design to particularly protect young people at risk of exclusion early in their secondary school career. This has been very effective for the individuals supported. The impact of this programme in later school careers has yet to be monitored (first supported group now in Year 8)

The exclusion policy does not discriminate by age. It may be that the curriculum provided in schools is less suitable for some age groups

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The Exclusions Guidance 2004 now advises schools and governing bodies to have regard to homophobic bullying when investigating incidents that could lead to exclusion.

We have not included this information in our data. Schools do not currently collect this data.

Although we have no data, anecdotal evidence suggests that more work needs to be done to highlight to schools their duties and responsibilities in this area, for example to address the issue of homophobic bullying.

A conference was held this year to highlight the issues for schools

FAITH AND BELIEFS

We recognise that we need to monitor this information because currently we monitor by ethnicity, gender and age.

The exclusions guidance advises schools and governing bodies to have regard to a pupil's religious beliefs when considering exclusion.

The statutory requirements for collating data on exclusions do not require data on religion/beliefs.

Schools and the local authority work closely with local religious groups to avoid exclusions caused by faith issues – for example the Tower Hamlets guidance on dress code for schools ensures that all religions are considered and supportive of school uniform arrangements, reducing the risk of exclusion for incorrect wearing of school uniform (which is discouraged in any case)

Others

We are unable to monitor the unofficial exclusions because unofficial exclusions, by their nature, are unreported and the LEA and other support agencies are not formally notified.

However, these are occasionally brought to our attention and we identified a need for a procedure.

The target agreed with the DfES to maintain permanent exclusions at a rate of 1.2 per thousand over three years has been achieved by the LEA.

The pattern of permanent exclusion has fluctuated but after several years downward trend this position has changed and we are seeing a steady increase in exclusions from some schools

The new exclusions database now provides the facility to monitor exclusions more frequently.

New database at the PAC will provide tighter monitoring of parents, age of child, SEN, ethnicity, disability.

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

Summary of recommendations for improvement:

Data	Parental take up information to be monitored to ensure all groups of parents accessing available support
Exclusions Guidance	Publish revised guidance which will cover all equalities issues and strengthen CAF, Lead professional roles; as well as addressing 6 th day provision
Bullying	Continue to monitor the implementation of Bullying Guidance. Publish leaflet for young people (parents' leaflet already published)
Parents and Pupils Rights	Publish revised leaflet for parents and publish a leaflet for pupils on rights issues re: exclusion, including 6 th day provision and where to access support on parenting
Behaviour Support	Continue activities outlined in BSP to reduce overall exclusion and improve behaviour
Vulnerable Groups	Maintain targeted support for Children in Care, Black Ethnic Minority pupils, those with SEN, Travellers, Teenage Parents, children who live in Hackney. Consider strategies for support for children of parents with mental health issues
Voluntary & Community Organisations	Dissemination and training for voluntary groups who work with excluded pupils. Increase information to schools about voluntary groups able to support children at risk of exclusion
Information Sharing	Ensure Contact Point, CAF and Lead professional developments improve information share, including with young people and parents.
Under 5's issues	Particularly support all early years settings to meet the needs of children showing BESD and ASD. Support parents to access early intervention programmes on managing tantrums.

Action Plan

Recommendation	Key activity	Progress Milestones
Data Analysis	Parental take up information to be monitored to ensure all groups of parents accessing available support	Quarterly reporting from April 2007 Identification of Hackney issues December 2007
Exclusions Guidance	Publish revised guidance which will cover all equalities issues and strengthen CAF, Lead professional roles; as well as addressing 6 th day provision	Draft guidance Sept 2007 Final guidance January 2008
Bullying	Continue to monitor the implementation of Bullying Guidance. Publish leaflet for young people (parents' leaflet already published)	Update report on school's progress July 2007 Draft young people's leaflet September 2007 Final leaflet January 2008
Parents Guidance on exclusions	Publish revised leaflet for parents and publish a leaflet for pupils on rights issues re: exclusion, including 6 th day provision and where to access support on parenting	Draft leaflet January 2008 Final leaflet March 2008
Behaviour Support	Continue activities outlined in BSP to reduce overall exclusion and improve behaviour	Termly Reporting from April 2007
Vulnerable Groups	Maintain targeted support for Children in Care, Black Ethnic Minority pupils, those with SEN, Travellers, Teenage Parents, children who live in Hackney. Consider strategies for support for children of parents with mental health issues	Initial discussion paper for BSG – December 2007 Strategies included in CYPP 2008
Voluntary Sector	Dissemination and training for voluntary groups who work with excluded pupils. Increase information to schools about voluntary groups able to support children at risk of exclusion	Behaviour Conference held March 2008 Updated guide to voluntary sector support issued march 2008
Information Share	Ensure Contact Point, CAF and Lead professional developments improve information share, including with young people and parents.	CAF training cover 800 staff July 2007 CAF implemented for SIP referral April 2007 CAF implemented for SEN referral July 2007
Early Years	Particularly support all early years settings to meet the needs of children showing BESD and ASD. Support parents to access early intervention programmes on managing tantrums.	Family Support embedded in Children's Centres December 2007