

Social Services Committee
Wednesday, 27th February, 1980

SS. 164/79-80

Community Affairs Committee
Tuesday, 4th April, 1980

CA. /79-80

PROGRESS REPORT - RACE RELATIONS PROGRAMME

This report is submitted by the Director of Social Services. The original draft was prepared by Ms. Mary Wells (Race Relations Adviser (Social Services)) on 8.1.80.

SUMMARY

This is the first report of the Race Relations Adviser (Social Services), who has been in post since October 1979. The report outlines progress to date and indicates priorities for review and action for the next six months.

FOR DECISION

RECOMMENDATIONS

Social Services Committee

Community Affairs Committee

That the priorities for review and action in the Race Relations Programme within the Directorate of Social Services be approved as follows ;

- a) Employment of black staff in DSS
- b) Training of DSS staff
- c) Race Record keeping and monitoring of clients
- d) The Elderly
- e) Children in Care

For decision

1. Policy Considerations

DSS is committed to ensuring that equal opportunities exist in employment, training and service provision for disadvantaged groups, in line with the Equal Opportunities Policy (October 1978). The policy document "Race Relations - The Council's Role" (October 1979), and the work of the Race Relations Unit highlights the particular needs of the black community in Lambeth resulting from racial disadvantage and discrimination, and the Council's response to this situation.

A fundamental objective in DSS must be to develop a comprehensive race policy in terms of employing and training black staff and ensuring that appropriate services are being offered to meet the needs of the black community. The implementation of race policies in terms of practice must also be seen as a priority. In order to achieve this objective, existing services for all client groups are being reviewed to establish how the needs of black clients are currently being met and to identify areas for the development of appropriate Positive Action Programmes.

2. Financial Considerations

This report contains no direct financial implications.

3. Staffing Considerations

This report contains no direct staffing implications.

4. Detailed Considerations

4.1 Employment of black staff in DSS

Ways of improving the entry, training and career prospects offered to the black community by DSS are being examined in line with Equal Opportunity Policy with a view to establishing a Positive Action Programme to achieve these objectives.

4.2 Manpower is one of the most important resources of DSS, as it is one of the Directorates with the most human face, dealing with a large number of black clients within all client groups. DSS, therefore, has a responsibility as an employer to ensure that direct and indirect discrimination is eliminated and that the racial composition of the staff in the Directorate more accurately reflects the composition of the community in Lambeth. It is also essential that in terms of service provision, the role of black staff is fully recognised, in determining and administering policy and practice to meet the needs of black clients.

4.3 Some suggestions for a Positive Action Programme to improve the employment and training opportunities of black people in DSS are as follows:-

a) Social Services trainee posts

Placements to be spread across the range of Personal Services and Homes and Day Care.

b) Pool System

To be established for entry to selected occupations taken across all Divisions within DSS.

c) Review of professional entry requirements to DSS.

d) Black entry to professional training courses - secondment practices reflecting special efforts to satisfy the demand of suitably qualified black applicants.

5. Training Staff in DSS

5.1 The race dimension must form an integral part of the training programme in every Directorate (Council policy - EOP). There is a responsibility in DSS to ensure that the training of all staff is adequate to meet the needs of black clients, both in terms of practice and policy formulation.

5.2 It is also essential to ensure that appropriate training opportunities are offered to black staff employed in DSS, both in terms of secondment opportunities and in-service training.

- 5.3 Race training is an undeveloped area in the relevant professional training courses. DSS in-service training, therefore, has a particularly important role to play in this respect.
- 5.4 Training should meet the needs of practitioners, managers, supervisors, and policy-makers. The following areas should be covered:-
- a) information about different cultures,
 - b) social work techniques and practice with black clients,
 - c) attitudinal training on race.
- 5.5 Proposals for action include the need to ensure that the race dimension forms an integral and overt part of every training course; specialist courses where necessary and training at the workplace where appropriate.

6. Monitoring and Race Record Keeping

See report "Race Record Keeping in Social Services"

7 Children in Care

- 7.1 A detailed review of services for children in care will be available by mid-1980. This section indicates some of the key areas to which consideration will be given.
- 7.2. This group has been selected as a priority in terms of service provision because:-
- a) Accurate figures are not available, but impressionistic evidence suggests that a disproportionate number of black children are in care.
 - b) There is some concern within the black community about appropriate standards of care for black children in local authority care.
 - c) It is a key area in DSS in terms of service provision.
- 7.3 There are a number of issues which require examination when considering this client group, bearing in mind the concept of the different and special needs of black clients. Reception into care and being in care involves a whole range of possible services. In the main, consideration must be given to:-
- a) Assessment
 - b) Type of provision
 - c) Type and duration of placement
 - d) Quality of care received
 - e) Provision after discharge from care.

It is essential that an understanding of the race dimension forms an integral part of all these aspects of service provision. A number of specific factors also need to be borne in mind when considering services for black children: e.g. assessment - family structures, child rearing practices, etc., quality of care received - skin care and hair care, diets, religion, language and dialect, recreation, relating to black adults, relating to black peer groups, relating to the black community, identity needs, etc.

- 7.4 Employment and training of staff are particularly important areas. It is essential that within staff groups, there are black members of staff with whom the children can relate. These staff may well provide additional appropriate skills to meet some of the particular needs of black children. Training about different and special needs, e.g. skin care and hair care is also essential if appropriate provision is to be made.
- 7.5 The needs of black adolescents, who may have been through the courts, or be in care as a result of family conflict will also be examined in detail, as an area of particular concern.

8. The Elderly

- 8.1 A detailed review of services for the black elderly will also be available in mid-1980. This section is designed to indicate some of the key areas to which consideration will be given.
- 8.2 This group has been selected as a priority in terms of service provision because:-
- a) Although accurate figures are not available, background information contained in the report "Deprived Racial Groups in Old People's Homes" (SS.71/79-80, 19 September 1979) shows that the numbers of black elderly as a proportion of the total elderly population is increasing. Planning to meet the needs of this group should be currently taking place.
 - b) The report "Deprived Racial Groups in Old People's Homes" has provided an interesting basis from which to follow up the needs of the black elderly in Old People's Homes.
- 8.3 Detailed follow up on the report is being undertaken by interviewing the black elderly residents in Lambeth's Old People's Homes, as part of an exercise to examine current service provision.
- 8.4 There are a number of policy options also arising from the report, including the issue of whether the black elderly should be given the choice of being admitted to a Home where there are other members of their own racial group.
- 8.5 The general question of whether the black elderly are aware of and using services provided by DSS also needs examination. Community based services such as luncheon clubs will also have to be reviewed in order to ensure that the special and different needs of the black elderly are being met.