

Scrutiny Review of Fixed-term Exclusions Report 6: The Pupil and Family Mediation Service

Background

1. The Pupil and Family Mediation Service offers to support Haringey pupils and their families, schools, the local authority and community groups on mediation matters in education including cases where pupils are at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded from school.
2. The service was originally established as a joint funded post between the Local Authority and community organisations because of concerns that pupils from the Black ethnic community groups were over-represented in exclusions data.
3. The service has developed so that it is now a generic mediation service available to all ethnic groups and is funded solely by the LA through the Ethnic Minority Achievement grant.

What Service provides

4. The Service works closely with secondary schools in particular, to support identified pupils who are at risk of exclusion. Referrals to the service by schools are made through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) system, providing a mediation service on matters of education where early intervention or conflict resolution is appropriate, working with young people to help them identify and address issues that might lead to exclusion.
5. The service supports parents/carers and external agencies during periods of fixed-term and permanent exclusion, including support in the preparation for making representations to School Discipline Committee and supports children, young people and their families and schools on reintegration or in the arrangements for a managed move to another school to enable the pupil to have a fresh start.
6. Additionally, the service is able to support restorative justice in cases where the offender is enabled to redress the harm that has been done to a 'victim', and enables all parties with a stake in the outcome to participate fully in the process.
7. Many parents/carers work during the day and therefore the service provides evening surgeries in community settings either to take case referrals, answer questions or help support schools the normal day and away from the school setting to work with young people and their parents on a regular basis.

8. Where a child or young person is excluded from school for a fixed period or permanently the letter of exclusion suggests that they should contact the Mediation Officer for support in understanding the exclusion process.
9. The Service can be accessed by letter, fax, telephone, email or in person and meetings can be scheduled to take place in school, at a surgery, at the Haringey Professional Development Centre where the service is located or at a safe neutral venue. Parents/carers can make an appointment at anytime and they will be seen as soon as possible during the day or in the evening where this is convenient for both parties
10. The Mediation Service need to know what the family or school would like to be done, a detailed explanation of the matter they wish to resolve and what they wish the outcome to be.

How the Service differs from other services

11. Mediation in Education is not the same as counselling, giving support or general advice, but rather seeks to resolve any conflict on education matters with which pupils and their families are involved. It normally requires that all parties are willing to solve the problem and take responsibility for making a lasting change.

Referrals

12. As previously stated, referrals to the service can come through the CAF process, through surgeries or through self-referrals. Most surgery and self-referrals relate to exclusions. Most CAF referrals come from schools where the support of an independent view is felt to be needed and in particular where all other strategies used by a school or other behaviour support teams have been exhausted or, most frequently, where mediation is felt to be more appropriate. In these cases, the service will work towards – more recently - the development of and support for Parenting Contracts or previously, informal behaviour contracts.
13. The service's role in working with a school is integrated into the Single Plan for school development and good practice or areas for development are shared in this way.
14. Referrals are particularly appropriate where the Pupil and Family Mediation Officer has already established a relationship with the client in a current matter, and work has already been undertaken on behalf of the pupil and family and/or school/LA service and information or documents need to be passed on to a new provider.

15. Where cases relate to exclusion, pupils and families are asked to bring with them to their appointment all the relevant papers relating to their case. In most cases the headteacher's letters of exclusion is the only documentation parents have in their possession at that time. Where parents believe that their child or young person is at risk of exclusion or there is some other education matter they wish to discuss other documents such as school reports are produced. Interviews are normally held face to face with the pupil and family. The Service provides information to both parent and child about the exclusion process. Support will be given to help parents prepare their case if they wish to make representations against the exclusion.
16. The Service will take practical steps to identify any suitable alternative service provider, and explain to the client what service(s) they should expect from the new service provider. Any feedback that is later given by the client on the service provided by the new service provider will be recorded and reviewed. In these cases, information about any mediation or matter already undertaken and any relevant documentation will be forwarded to the new service provider, should the client wish it.
17. After an exclusion hearing a pupil can be reinstated in their existing school, transferred to another school or college or have educational provision made through the local authority in which they reside. The Service attempts to remain in contact with pupils and families once the hearing has been concluded.
18. The Service's role at a reintegration meeting is to mediate between the school, teachers, parents and pupils. Support and information is given to all parties, whilst ensuring that the pupil and parents have a voice at these meetings. Where it is appropriate pupils and families are offered support for the Mediation Officer to mentor and monitor pupils weekly, especially in circumstances where it appears that the pupil needs this additional support and or where the pupil is likely to be at further risk of exclusion. The service will also assist with any behaviour of parenting contracts where appropriate.

Work with pupils, families and schools

19. The service provides support such as:
 - monitoring, mentoring and tracking pupil progress, and report regularly to the Head of Year, headteacher and or the appropriate reporting body within the school on the social, personal and behavioural development of target pupils;
 - weekly meetings with target pupils either one-to-one, in class or collectively in groups;
 - helping families to support the school in the development of their child by making regular contact with the home by phone or home visits or inviting the parents to make a personal appointment at the school or other mutually agreed venue;

- supporting the school in its communication between home by reporting regularly to parents about their child's progress;
- involving parents/carers, teachers, learning mentors, the community and others working with the pupil in the development of the pupil's progress;
- encouraging parents/carers to develop learning in the home that can be co-ordinated with the pupil's learning at the school;
- attend reviews, behaviour planning sessions, and target setting meetings for targeted pupils.

Working with the community

20. The Service is rooted in the community forging links particularly, but not exclusively, with black and minority ethnic communities.
21. Currently the Pupil and Family Mediation Officer is working as part of a twelve-week pilot Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities programme. The training is carried out in co-ordination with the Parental and Community Involvement Team, the Youth Service and the Family Support Workers Team. The training is delivered by the Pupil and Family Mediation Officer and a Family Support Worker to African parents whose children attend primary and secondary schools in Haringey, particularly those who come from the Ugandan community. Other officers from the above services are working with different community groups.
22. This training is vital in promoting some of the protective factors associated with good parenting, such as:
 - developing close and warm relationships between parents and children;
 - using methods of discipline that support self-discipline in children;
 - fostering self-esteem of children;
 - developing strategies to deal with risky situations;
 - managing anger.
23. At the same time, the training help parents to deal with the factors in parenting that are associated with increased risk:
 - inconsistent parenting;
 - harsh discipline in an overly critical environment;
 - limited supervision;
 - isolation and a lack of knowledge of community resources.
24. More importantly, the programme emphasises that parenting is impacted by the local environment, and that parents/carers should play an active role in shaping this environment by engaging with community resources.
25. At least fifteen parents have been consistent in attending this training programme every week since the 22nd September 2007.

Data

26. The figures below show the client groups who make most use of the Pupil and Family Mediation Service and where schools refer pupils who are at risk of exclusion or where there is a need for parental involvement.

27. All pupils identified are Black Caribbean or Black African.

Surgery contacts

28. The attendance at the education surgery is, on average, one to three parents per session. In the main, take up is from the Black community because of the location of the surgery. The aim of the Service is to involve other ethnic minority communities in the use of the Service by running surgeries at different times and in different locations.

Telephone contacts

29. In the academic year 2004 – 05 there were approximately 235 telephone contacts with the service. The table below shows a decline in the number of telephone contacts since that date.

Year	Number	Reason
2005-2006	135	Indecent assault and violence
2006-2007	99	Intimidation of member of staff

Support in schools

30. The focus of this work is to support young people identified by the schools as being at risk of exclusion. This usually takes the form of group work and is equivalent to half a day per week in each school requesting support.

2004-05	John Loughborough; St Thomas More; Park View Academy; Northumberland Park; Alexandra Park
2005-06	John Loughborough; St Thomas More; Park View Academy; Alexandra Park
2006-07	John Loughborough; St Thomas More; Alexandra Park

Breakdown of young people supported in schools

31. The following table summarises the numbers supported in schools – a breakdown by ethnicity, gender, postcode and reason for referral are given at Appendix 1.

	Total	M	F
2004-05	30	26	4
2005-06	25	20	5
2006-07	25	21	4

Conclusion

32. The change in legislation and guidance has resulted in the way the exclusion process operates and is reflected in the number of enquiries. Clearly there is a need for the Service to focus on an extension of its activities into other communities and to continue to use the Childrens and Young Persons Plan and the Community Participation Strategy to forge a new way forward in enhancing pupil achievement and reducing the number of exclusions.

33. One of the effective ways in which schools and parents benefit from the Service is through modeling and positive mediation sessions to empower our children and young people to enjoy, and stay safe in our community. Links with attendance and welfare service would be beneficial in terms of improvement in behaviour. Monitoring compliance for all parties on an agreed code of conduct is a mark of effective school where schools build a relationship between the home and the school.

2004-2005
WORK IN SCHOOLS
MEDIATION SERVICE IN EDUCATION

ETHNICITY	T	G	REASONS
Black Caribbean	1	F	Difficulties with school between pupil.
White British	1	M	Complex needs
Black Caribbean	1	M	Able pupil at risk of exclusion.
Black Caribbean	1	M	Pupil at risk of permanent exclusion.
Black African	1	M	At serious risk of permanent exclusion.
Black Caribbean	1	M	Persistent defiant misbehaviour
Black Caribbean	1	M	Aggressive and defiant behaviour.
Black Caribbean	1	M	Complex needs.
Mixed Race – White and	1	M	Attitude, behaviour and standard of work
Black Caribbean	1	M	Behaviour and standard of work
Black Caribbean	1	M	Attitude and behaviour
Black Caribbean	1	M	Attitude and behaviour.
Black African	1	M	Pupil at risk of exclusion..
Black Caribbean	1	M	Disturbed pupil with complex needs.
Mixed Race –White and Black	1	M	At risk of serious exclusion..
Black Caribbean	1	M	Merely an attendance/behaviour
Black Caribbean	1	M	At risk of exclusion
Black African	1	M	Extremely violent and volatile pupil
Black African	1	M	Behaviour and attitude
Black Caribbean	1	M	Behaviour variable..
Black African	1	M	Attitude and behaviour
Black African	1	M	Complex education and social needs
Black Caribbean	1	M	Complex emotional and behavioural
Black Caribbean	1	F	Clashes with teachers.
Turkish Cypriot	1	M	. Behaviour unpredictable violent
Black Caribbean	1	F	Attitude and behaviour
Black African	1	M	Bullying
Black African.	1	M	Poor behaviour
Black Caribbean	1	F	At risk of exclusion
Turkish Cypriot	1	M	Attitude and behaviour
Grad Total	30		

2005-2006
WORK IN SCHOOLS
MEDIATION SERVICE IN EDUCATION

ETHNICITY	T	G	POST CODE	REASONS
Mixed Race – White/Black	1	M	N22 8JQ	Aggressive and defiant misbehaviour
Black Caribbean	1	F	N11 2JW	Difficulties with school between pupil.
White British	1	M	N22 6JG	Complex needs
White British	1	F	N8 7HA	Complex family/behavioural problems
Black Caribbean	1	M	N22 8EH	Pupil at risk of permanent exclusion.
Black Caribbean	1	M	N22 7AU	Behavioural difficulties
Black Caribbean	1	M	N11 2JW	Persistent defiant misbehaviour
Black Caribbean	1	M	N22 4TE4	Complex needs.
Black Caribbean	1	M	N3 2AX	Attitude, behaviour
Black Caribbean	1	M	N22 6QD	Attitude and behaviour.
White British	1	M	N22 7BW	Attendance and behaviour
Black African	1	M	N16 5BX	Pupil at risk of exclusion..
Black Caribbean	1	M	N17 NQU	Disturbed pupil with complex needs.
Black Caribbean	1	M	N15 5JA	At risk of exclusion
Black African	1	M	N17 OBQ	Behaviour and attitude
Black Caribbean	1	M	N17 OYA	Complex emotional and behavioural
Black Caribbean	1	F	N8 9NA	Clashes with teachers.
Turkish Cypriot	1	M	N4 1UA	. Behaviour unpredictable violent
Black Caribbean	1	F	N17 9PN	Attitude and behaviour
Black African	1	M	N17 OJJ	Bullying
Black African.	1	M	N15 6UL	Poor behaviour
Black Caribbean	1	F	N15 5PX	At risk of exclusion
Turkish Cypriot	1	M	N5 2DN	Attitude and behaviour
Black Caribbean	1	M	N22 6HX	Aggressive attitude and behaviour
Black Caribbean	1	M	N22 5JN	Poor work and behaviour
Grad Total	25			

2006-2007
WORK IN SCHOOLS
MEDIATION SERVICE IN EDUCATION

ETHNICITY	T	G	POST CODE	REASONS
Mixed Race – White/Black	1	M	N22 8JQ	Aggressive and defiant misbehaviour
Black Caribbean	1	F	N11 2JW	Difficulties with school between pupil.
White British	1	M	N22 6JG	Complex needs
Black Caribbean	1	M	N22 8EH	Pupil at risk of permanent exclusion.
Black Caribbean	1	M	N22 7AU	Behavioural difficulties
Black Caribbean	1	M	N11 2JW	Persistent defiant misbehaviour
Black Caribbean	1	M	N22 4TE4	Complex needs.
Black Caribbean	1	M	N3 2AX	Attitude, behaviour
Black Caribbean	1	M	N22 6QD	Attitude and behaviour.
White British	1	M	N22 7BW	Attendance and behaviour
Black African	1	M	N16 5BX	Pupil at risk of exclusion..
Black Caribbean	1	M	N17 NQU	Disturbed pupil with complex needs.
Black Caribbean	1	M	N15 5JA	At risk of exclusion
Black African	1	M	N17 OBQ	Behaviour and attitude
Black Caribbean	1	M	N17 OYA	Complex emotional and behavioural
Black Caribbean	1	F	N8 9NA	Clashes with teachers.
Black Caribbean	1	F	N17 9PN	Attitude and behaviour
Black African	1	M	N17 OJJ	Bullying
Black African.	1	M	N15 6UL	Poor behaviour
Black Caribbean	1	F	N15 5PX	At risk of exclusion
Grad Total	25			