



# TalkBack



Brent Citizen's Panel newsletter | Issue 2 July 2009

## Dear Panel Member

Welcome to issue two of Talkback, Brent Citizens' Panel newsletter. This issue is packed full of consultation updates and information on service improvement plans - but first, we would like to start by thanking you all for the overwhelming response to a range of recent consultation initiatives. We value your contribution and look forward to your continued support.

Please look out for more consultation initiatives in the future.

**Panel members,  
please update your  
contact details with the  
consultation team!**



A duty to  
inform, consult  
and involve:  
putting local  
people at  
the heart  
of service  
changes.



## A message from Cllr Gavin Sneddon Executive Member for Local Democracy and Consultation

I am delighted at the level of support that Brent Citizens' Panel members continue to show towards our various consultation exercises. Getting the views of residents is vital to Brent Council's commitment to the new duty to 'inform, consult and involve' local people.

In the current economic climate and beyond, your feedback will continue to contribute to the delivery of more efficient and customer focused services in Brent.

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# Your views

## Shaping your borough

### Tackling graffiti

*...your views are important to the council and will continue to help us work more closely with the community to tackle graffiti.*

#### What you told us

Just under, 800 Brent residents completed the graffiti survey towards the end of last year. One of the key messages was the need for more recreational and sporting facilities to help deter young people from doing graffiti in the first place. Sixty one per cent of those who responded said that young people should have more sporting activities on offer than are currently available.

In addition to the survey, we sought the views of young people by running a schools based consultation. This took the form of a big brother 'Diary Room' style video booth for young people to record their thoughts and opinions about graffiti. This initiative has given Brent's StreetCare Team more understanding of how young people perceive graffiti and what measures need to be in place to reduce levels in the borough.

The survey highlighted that the council is on the right path as over 80 per cent of those who responded were of the opinion that the proposed graffiti policy would help reduce graffiti in the borough. In addition to this, the survey suggested that more needs to be done to increase public awareness of the 'first time free' graffiti removal service the council offers.

#### What will happen next?

The StreetCare team are currently developing a communications strategy to improve customer knowledge of the services they provide.

Panel members have been involved in a wide range of consultations over the last year, helping to shape your borough and the services you receive. Below is an update on what you told us and what the council has done/is doing as a result of it.

Brent Council's customary approach to graffiti is to remove it as quickly as possible. The survey has highlighted that other deterrent and diversionary measures need to be in place to complement this effort.

A full report of the survey plus the 'Diary Room' style video recording is available on Brent's consultation website [www.brent.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.brent.gov.uk/consultations)

### Customer service standards

*...service excellence will continue to be the watch word of Brent Council for a long time to come.*

#### What you told us

The Service Excellence survey was launched in November 2008 to find out what customer care standards Brent residents expect from council staff.

Results from the survey suggest that Brent residents are generally happy with the level of service they receive from the council. While over 68 per cent of respondents agreed that council employees are polite, only 32

per cent agreed that staff go the extra mile to resolve their enquiry. The survey suggests the council still has a great deal to do to bring the majority of residents and service users into the 'satisfied customer' category.

Further work has also been undertaken to capture customer insight and explore residents' customer service experience with Brent Council. Brent staff and local residents were consulted through methods like mystery shopping, to illustrate how services and experiences can be improved.

#### What will happen next?

Brent Council is considering all the emerging customer service improvement recommendations. The information from this consultation will help to develop the Corporate Customer Care training programme for Brent staff. It will help us to understand what we can do to improve your customer service experience with Brent Council.

A detailed report is available on the consultation pages of the Brent website: [www.brent.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.brent.gov.uk/consultations)





## Aiming high for disabled children

...to enhance equality and opportunity for disabled children

### What you told us

Aiming High is part of the Government's national transformation programme for disabled children's services. Towards the end of 2008, over 300 parents and carers responded to the survey. The results will be used to establish how potential additional funding could be used in a more targeted way. For example, nearly 80 per cent of those who took part in the survey said a play scheme would be helpful to them in the holidays.

The key findings from the survey are being explored further through two focus groups: firstly, with parents and carers who have children with autism and secondly with those who have more complex health needs. While the first group expressed a strong demand for more group outings, breaks, play schemes and activities outside of the home, the second group identified a specific need for the provision of carer support and play schemes within the home.

### What will happen next?

The findings from both the survey and the focus groups are being fed into a Commissioning Strategy that will set the direction for additional funding of short break services for this group. The full results of the consultation will be published on the Brent website during July.

To find out more about this new government initiative, go to [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/ahdc](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/ahdc)

## Compulsory recycling in Brent

In just under two years recycling in Brent has increased by eight percentage points (from 20 per cent to 28 per cent). This positive trend is in line with other local authorities and is supported by continued efforts in the borough to raise awareness about the importance of recycling.

A Recycling and Waste Management survey was undertaken in October 2007. The survey also introduced proposals to implement compulsory recycling, in order to help meet future recycling targets.

Ninety Seven per cent of those who took part in the survey consider recycling of personal importance. This can be seen in various initiatives introduced by residents in the borough. For example, the Green Zones Community Project was the brain child of Lorraine Skinner a resident of Kensal Green. Through her efforts, Brent was recently chosen to become one of only six 'Zero Waste Places' across the country. The project continues to raise awareness of environmental issues and contributes towards a culture of putting the community first. Brent's StreetCare team now plans to add 20 new Green Zones to the current tally of five by September 2009.

Further information can be found at [www.brent.gov.uk/greenzones](http://www.brent.gov.uk/greenzones)

If you are interested in becoming a Green Zone leader, please contact Chantelle Tuitt, Green Zones Co-ordinator on **020 8937 5464** or email: [chantelle.tuitt@brent.gov.uk](mailto:chantelle.tuitt@brent.gov.uk)

A full report of the survey is available on Brent's consultation website [www.brent.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.brent.gov.uk/consultations)



## Climate Change

*Think global, act local!*

It is widely discussed that the average temperature and weather conditions experienced over a number of years is changing. Brent Council, in collaboration with energy and climate change consultancy, AEA Energy & Environment is developing a strategy, to find out your views on the risks of climate change. The council and other public sector organisations, local community groups and business organisations will play important roles in co-ordinating Brent's response to climate change.

Brent residents also have a vital part to play, to reduce the long term negative impact of climate change.

Brent Citizens' Panel members were recently invited to comment on Brent's proposed Climate Change Strategy. The strategy was approved by the Executive on 15 June 2009. It has now been sent to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), partners for Brent who will be adopting the strategy on behalf of the whole of Brent on 30 September 2009.

Formal launch of the strategy is scheduled for autumn 2009. To find out more about climate change visit the Brent website [www.brent.gov.uk/climatechange](http://www.brent.gov.uk/climatechange)

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Every Child Matters, whatever their background or circumstances.

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# Scrutiny on service provision

## Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

*Are health and social care issues important to you?*

LINKs was introduced by the government in 2008 to give citizens more say in how their health and social care services are planned and delivered. Registered charity Hestia, the host organisation for Brent LINK, is in the process of finding out what residents and service users want in relation to health and social care. It has now elected a management committee which will be responsible for prioritising the health and social care issues voiced by Brent residents.

Brent LINK will continue to monitor local services and use their powers – as directed by the government – to hold Brent Council to account. The Brent LINK website is under construction, we will update panel members on the web address once it is up and running. In the meantime, please visit the Department of Health website to find out more about LINKs: [www.dh.gov.uk/LINKs](http://www.dh.gov.uk/LINKs)

## New panel recruits

A warm welcome to residents who have recently joined the Brent Citizens' Panel, we look forward to hearing your views on forthcoming consultations.

We recruit to the panel all year round to keep it as representative of Brent's diverse population as possible. If you have any questions about the panel or know anyone who would like to join, please register online at [www.brent.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.brent.gov.uk/consultations) and click on the Citizens' Panel link. You can also contact the consultation team on 020 8937 1055 for details about joining.

### The Consultation Team

**Owen Thomson** Head of Consultation 020 8937 1055

**Katrina Waite** Deputy Head of Consultation 020 8937 1057

**Nisha Popat** Consultation Officer 020 8937 1102

**Brian Winterbottom** Consultation Officer 020 8937 1065

**Bola Olatunde** Consultation Officer 020 8937 1073

TalkBack is a publication produced by Brent Council's Consultation team. For further information please visit [www.brent.gov.uk](http://www.brent.gov.uk) or call 020 8937 1073



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# TalkBack

# News in brief

## Express your views 24/7

Brent council has joined the social media phenomenon that is Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. This new addition to Brent's communications tool will give you a round the clock opportunity to express your views to the council. To find out more, search for Brent on Facebook or access Brent's twitter account at [www.twitter.com/brent\\_council](http://www.twitter.com/brent_council)

## Get on your soapbox!

Brent Council is committed to ensuring that everyone has the same opportunity to participate irrespective of where they live, work or play! The soapbox slot is your chance to have your say on any issue that concerns you within your community.

The soapbox slot is one of the key features at Brent's five Area Consultative Fora (ACFs). It is a platform for discussing issues that directly affect local communities. The ACFs cover the Harlesden, Willesden, Kingsbury & Kenton, Kilburn & Kensal and Wembley areas.

This is an excellent opportunity to share your views and concerns with the audience, elected members and council officers present.

Please visit [www.brent.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.brent.gov.uk/consultations) for more information.

We would greatly appreciate ideas for future issues of TALKBACK, please contact any member of the consultation team to discuss your ideas.