

**Minutes of the East Belfast Locality Planning Group meeting
held on Wednesday 18 January 2017
at 10am in EastSide Partnership, Avalon House, 278 Newtownards
Road, Belfast. BT4 1HE**

Present:

Maggie Andrews	EastSide Partnership (Chair)
Karen Purdy	Bloomfield Community Association
Alison Templeton	New Life Counselling
Jamie Compton-Rea	Ascertainment
Mary McManus	East Belfast Independent Advice Centre
Amy Gillen	Inner East Family Support Hub
Nicola Hannigan	Outer South and East Family Support Hub
Jillian Montgomery	Women's Aid
Roberta Richmond	East Belfast Community Counselling
Tracey Wilson	East Belfast SureStart
Gerry Largey	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Annette McCann	Save the Children
Una Casey	CYPSP

Apologies:

Linda Armitage	EBCDA
Gillian Hughes	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Claire Humphrey	Barnardo's
Kelly Maxwell	Autism NI
Paul McCombe	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Laura Rankin	CYPSP

Welcome and Introductions

Maggie welcomed everyone to the meeting and a round of introductions took place. Early Years is the second theme to be discussed as part of LPG Action Planning for 2017.

Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 16th December 2016 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

There was a discussion about the priority themes had been agreed. Maggie circulated notes of a subgroup meeting held in September 16, clarifying the process and highlighting that cross cutting issues such as poverty, disability etc. would form part of all discussions. It was also noted that the LPG were attempting to confine themselves to identifying priorities for Action that the LPG can collectively address – not issues that require individual partners to address directly or in collaboration with other relevant partners.

Early Years Theme

The main discussion points were as follows:-

1. Mothers and Toddlers Groups

- The difficulties of referring parents as little is known about how they work and how receptive they are to new members
- They are not obliged to adhere to any structure, safeguarding requirements, inspections, confidentiality etc.
- As many are located in church buildings this could conflict with cultural backgrounds and beliefs
- How do they approach disability, BME families, and dads etc.
- Ensuring updated P&T Information is part of the information provided in the early years section on the EastSide Learning (ESL) website
- Using Social Media more effectively to keep parents up to date.

Tracey reported that SureStart is collating a list of Parent and Toddler Groups and their Family Support Worker is planning to meet as many groups as possible to inform some of the questions being raised. This information would be provided to the LPG although she commented that there are areas not covered by Sure Start and this would be a gap in information

Action: Tracey to give feedback on the scoping exercise to the LPG

2. *Early Years Network: Current work*

- A speech and language project: WELLCOMM training packs are available through Surestart and 7 organisations have recently been trained in their use. The SureStart Speech and Language Therapist is supporting the groups and it is hoped the training can be extended to include other settings.
- Infant dental health: BHSCT funded a resource toolkit developed in collaboration with EB Surestart – this is due to be rolled out to local settings over the coming months
- Transitions: links particularly in relation to information sharing is often poor between Early Years providers and Nursery schools THE EYN is looking at how this could be standardised and opportunities emerging via the ESL/SIF Education Programme

3. *Issues evident in Hub referrals*

- The need to connect new families particularly those moving in to new housing developments
- The problems associated with families living outside project boundaries – many unable to access services
- Hubs can respond without making post code exceptions
- The highest levels of Hub referrals are for practical support to carry out basic parenting routines and for behaviour.
- The impact of poverty on routines was highlighted - the impact of quality of housing, damp and warmth.
- Poor accommodation, particularly in the private rental sector impacts on both mental and physical health.
- Mental health is a high area of need for the Hubs.
- The new landlord registration scheme may help but we need more information on this
- Increasing dependence on food banks – need to track numbers
- The lack of information on services in Outer South and East area – we need updated info. on Surestart services, what could be available through ESL, what services exist, where the gaps are, where needs are not being met generally including financial advice.
- Mary reported that EBIAC offer a Made of Money course, which involves practical feedback for those who are struggling to budget
- St. Vincent de Paul appears to be the only organisation addressing fuel poverty.

- Can the Locality Planning Group help address the poverty issue in their Action Plan? Maggie indicated that this issue is currently part of the NR Action Plan. Small sub group to meet with Neighbourhood Renewal.
- Save the Children provide grants through their 'Eat, Sleep, Learn, Play!' scheme, which aims to prevent poverty – it may be able to include fuel poverty as part of the agenda to help families. Annette agreed to explore this and report back to the group.

Action: Ask a representative from Housing Rights service to attend meeting and give a presentation

Action: Mary, Tracey and Madeleine Hutchens– the Inner East NR Co-ordinator to meet to make recommendations to LPG on how they might progress the poverty agenda.

Action: Annette to feedback information about Save the Children grants scheme.

Any Other Business

(i) New Life Counselling

Family therapy is available to families by referring through the New Life Counselling website, they have new offices above Wyse Byes on the Newtownards road. They are also providing Play and Art Therapy for different age ranges including 4-11 year olds, youth (11-17) and adults.

(ii) Ascort

Strengthening Families are undertaking an audit and will be speaking to groups of families for feedback. Half of all referrals to the Strengthening Families programme have been from North Belfast.

(iii) EastSide Learning

Better Reading Partnership Training for Classroom Assistants and parents is commencing at the end of January in Skainos a further course is planned for April.

Una highlighted that the Belfast Agenda is currently out for consultation.

Dates of 2017 meetings:

Wednesday 15 th March 2017 at 10am	East Belfast Sure Start
Wednesday 10 th May 2017 at 10am	Barnardos- Tullycarnet Primary School
Wednesday 5 th July 2017 at 10am	New Life Counselling
Wednesday 20 th September 2017 at 10am	TBC
Wednesday 22 nd November 2017 at 10am	TBC