

**Minutes of South Belfast Locality Planning Group  
Held on Thursday 30 August at 10am in Save the Children, 15  
Richmond Park, Belfast BT10 0HB**

**Present:**

Jenny Potter	NOW Group
Una Casey	CYPSP
Nan Hill	CAP
Judith Searle	Barnardo's
Nicola Hannigan	Outer South and East Family Support Hub
Gabi Mornhinweg	BHSCT
Mary-Frances McWade	Youth Justice Agency
Laura Feeney	Save the Children
Natalie Killough	BHSCT
Mary Murphy	BHSCT
Laura Fitzpatrick	Save the Children
James Scott	BDACT
Karolina Morgan	CASA Family Support Hub
Diane Hickey	Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid

**Apologies:**

Kelly Maxwell	Autism NI (Chair)
Natasha Brennan	South Belfast One Family Support Hub
Lauren Lilliman	Windsor Women's Centre
Kerry McIvor	South Belfast Partnership Board
Fiona O'Donnell	SENAC
Julie Burgess	Springboard

**Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Due to Kelly's apologies Jenny Potter chaired today's meeting. Jenny welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Save the Children for hosting the meeting. A round of introductions took place and apologies were noted as above.

**Presentation: Belfast Drug and Alcohol Coordination Team – James Scott**

James gave an in-depth and informative presentation (please see attached) he outlined that Belfast Connections was the responsive

service of the Belfast Drug and Alcohol Coordination Team (BDACT). He noted that there has been a massive growth in drug use since the ceasefires. BDACT supports local planning groups to address this. James discussed that there has been an increase of poly-drug misuse i.e. using 3 or more substances at the same time. He discussed how there is a lot of young people vulnerable to drug use such as looked after children, and that there is a lot of transient young people travelling around the city and using drugs on the street, including injecting drugs, and that there has been a lot of young people fast tracking from very minor drug taking to injecting drugs which is very concerning. The Belfast Connections Service offers family support including families bereaved by drug deaths, misadventure and poly and injecting.

James noted that the Hidden Harm agenda feels like it has slipped in priority in recent times but it is being re-highlighted and cemented across all areas of work. James talked about the strong links in recent years between people self-medicating and the developing mental health issues and suicide, a joint strategy is currently being worked on. Drug and alcohol services are under pressure ASCERT, Extern and Start 360 are the main drug and alcohol services in Belfast and there is regional work taking place as there is a lot of commonality, he noted that alcohol related issues really needs more awareness raising and support. James also highlighted DAMIS (Drug and Alcohol Monitoring and Information System) which is monitoring the rise of legal highs, growing trends and new drugs. He also discussed the need for a south Belfast needle exchange programme. He explained that NI has the lowest funding to address drug and alcohol addiction in all of UK. James talked about campaigns such as Dry January – feel good February, there are small grants opportunities with this campaign. This year there were health clinics held in local bars where general health and wellbeing, diabetes checks were carried out as well as harm reduction messages given out. He noted that there has been a rise in the use of cocaine, ecstasy and LSD and legal highs are at a very high level of use and how there has been a correlation with an increase again in the rave scene. There has been work going on to look at models across the region to protect young people at festivals etc. he noted that cocaine use has gone from 7% to 35%. He noted that these increase has been linked to chaotic behaviour, suicide, stabbings, self-harm and aggression.

James explained that there are now 18 rapid bins in Belfast and this has been replicated across NI and that there is also talks taking place with Tesco in Ireland and UK around getting them into their supermarkets. He noted that there is a massive increase in use of prescription drugs

such as tramadol, lyrica/pergabalin, MDMA and Zanax which is also being sold online on the black market. He also talked about the impact of over the counter drugs such as cocodamol and how this can impact at a family level.

There was a discussion about drug use and young people with ADHD. The group also discussed the issue of transient young people as young as 11 who are mixing with 30-40 year olds which seems to be resulting in young people progressing onto using hard drugs in a very short length of time.

James talked about the one street service and the concern about young people at risk of blood borne viruses and the need to education on harm reduction. He outlined youth treatment carried out with ASCERT and Start 360 11-25 year olds. He noted that Daisy also works with young people with dual diagnosis (drugs and mental health) and that the Extern Reach-out service and Falls Community Counselling work with Daisy. He noted that there were no residential. He talked about the need for referrals needing to appropriate to use and a tiered approach. There are often many needs to be addressed too, e.g. housing, food, debt that may need to be addressed before a person can feel ready to address their drug or alcohol misuse.

James noted that Hidden Harm is a key priority of the South Eastern HCT and will link with BHSCT area, Ed Sipler is keen to link across with Locality Planning Groups.

**Action: James to invite Una to the next Hidden Harm planning meeting**

### **Minutes from the Previous Meeting**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate recording of the meeting held in June.

### **Matters Arising**

BAOG Funded projects paper Mary to share this with Una for circulation to members.

### **Family Support Hub Update**

South Belfast One Family Support Hub: Natasha was unable to attend today's meeting but send through the following update:

In terms of hub and local issues what we are currently finding is

- Childcare opportunities for parents outside of SureStart area

- Mental health/ counselling/ support services for children – large waiting lists
- Services for children with disabilities – large waiting lists

Outer South and East Family Support Hub: Over July and August there were 35 referrals to the hub, 6 of these were from South Belfast, mainly from Gateway and CAMHS. The reasons for referrals were for counselling for young people, behaviour management, ASD mentoring support in the home, including socialisation, financial support for uniforms, bullying, self-esteem, transitioning (primary to post-primary) support.

CASA Family Support Hub: in July and August there was a total of 23 referrals, including referrals from CAMHS and GPs, reasons included counselling for young people with ASD/ADHD, childcare support for parents going into education and employment, afterschools in the Musgrave area. Karolina noted that core members of the hub were keen to organise a screening of the Resilience documentary. Una noted that she has a copy of the documentary and as this was also a priority of the Locality Planning Group it would be useful to discuss further.

**Action: Karolina to invite Una to the next Hub Meeting**

6: Action Plan:

- *Awareness of benefits and universal credits, advice services will be increased*

### **Presentation: Christians against Poverty – Nan Hill**

Nan provided a very comprehensive talk on the work of Christians against Poverty. She noted that the top 3 reasons for people accessing debt services are:

Low income, relationship breakdown and mental health are the main reasons why people contact debt organisations. CAP are regulated by FCA and have been working in the area of debt since 1996. The service is outcomes driven; 68% of parents have reported that CAP improved the ability to provide for children and have resilience in relation to debt. Northern Ireland is the most indebted area of the UK, averaging £8K more debt than any other region. This is due to higher rates of working

poor in low paid jobs and as well as people relying on benefits, which will be impacted by the introduction of Universal Credit. There is also issues faced by families of children who are reaching school leaving age, and the move from DLA to PIPs.

CAP offers life skills and budgeting courses to help people build resilience, to shop smarter and cook smarter, and coaching. Nan explained that 50% of users of CAP have mental ill-health and that in relation to suicide 35% have attempted suicide and 4% have attempted suicide multiple times. The service helps people to budget within the definition of a reasonable standard of living, use income for food, clothes, utilities and then set up a reasonable amount to pay the debt. They have supported people with insolvency options. Nan highlighted that there is on average a 3 year delay with people seeking help, mostly due to shame, emotions etc. The service includes a telephone service, home-visits and networking with other services such as Women's Aid, SureStart, foodbanks. Much of the service is delivered by volunteers. CAP also offers a job club with is an 8 week course including coaching, working on communication, confidence. The service works with the Jobs and Benefits office on Victoria Street, and is networked with Common Ground. A member asked about support for people who may have debt with drug dealers and work with community champions with regards to paramilitaries.

Nan highlighted the importance of prevention and the need to work with children from P6/P7 and young people especially as many are getting involved with online gambling and gaming.

- *Awareness of food and fuel poverty will be increased* – Una tabled a scoping paper that Kelly has started, and encouraged members to contact her with any further details they might have of other foodbanks not included on this paper. A discussion also took place about period poverty and the impact on young girls attending school.

**Action: Members to send details of foodbanks and fuel banks they know of**

- Uniform Recycling  
A discussion took place about the cost of uniforms and the impact this can have on family life, Una gave examples of work carried out by LPGs and other groups doing uniform recycling and enquired if this was something members were interested in. Members agreed that this some something that would be beneficial to do in South Belfast.

**Action: Una to invite members to a task group meeting to progress**

**Feedback from Belfast Area Outcomes Group**

there has been no Outcomes Group meetings since the June LPG meeting.

**10: Date, Time and Venue of future meetings:**

All meetings will start at 10am

<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Thursday 25 October	Lorag
Thursday 20 December	TBC