

North Belfast Locality Ordinary Meeting Tuesday 20th April 2021 at 10am

Attendees:

Paul O'Neill	Chair/CSM Early Years Services, BHSCT
Sadie Reid	NB Housing
Margaret Higgins	Belfast City Council
Edith McManus	Lower North FSH/Ashton Centre
Julie Jamieson	New Lodge Community Health Partnership
Karen McLean	Upper North FSH/Vine Centre
Gabi Mornhinweg	Community Development and PPI, BHSCT
Bronagh O'Dwyer	NOW Group
Mary Murphy	Early Intervention Support Team, BHSCT
Christine McKeown	Ashton Centre
Justine Fricker	Education Authority
Jennifer Heverin	LPG Administration, BHSCT

Apologies:

Cara McCann	Here NI
Katrina Newell	Ashton Centre
Sinead Campbell	Advice NI
Caroline Milligan	BHSCT
Laura Forte	NIACRO
C Deery	Edmund Rice College
Michael Hogg	Education Authority
Robyn McNulty	NOW Group
Phil Lindsay	Barnardo's
Alix Jackson	Hazelwood Integrated College
Arthur Acheson	Ligoniel Village
Gareth Maguire	Sport Changes Life
Duncan Morrow	Ulster University
Peter Bryson	Save the Children
Sharon Quinn	Lighthouse Charity

1. Welcome and Introductions

Paul O'Neill opened the meeting by welcoming those present. He then proceeded to give an update on the role he will be playing in the Locality Planning Groups going forward. The former LPG Coordinator, Martin Sloane has not only been redeployed but has also been off ill from before Christmas. Paul is not taking over Martin's role but has stepped in to oversee the LPG meetings. Much has happened since the last North Belfast LPG meeting in November so Paul felt it was the right time to resume the ordinary meetings and look at a path forward for the LPG's and to discuss the absence of a Chair.

2. Previous Minutes

The last ordinary North Belfast LPG meeting took place on 24th November 2020 and a copy of these minutes were shared on screen.

Everyone agreed they are a true reflection of the meeting and no amendments are required.

3. Updates on Poverty Sub-Group/Education Sub Group

Much has happened in the last few months with regards to poverty. Extraordinary meetings were called in both January and March to arrange the distribution of programmes such as the baby packs and the cooking course. The Wi-Fi card distribution is almost ready for issue once a few details have been finalised.

Christine McKeown stepped in to give an update on some of the food poverty programmes that Ashton were overseeing for North Belfast LPG. To date £17,262 has been spent and the feedback has been very positive.

Ashton will also be administering the Wi-Fi distribution for North Belfast and The Vine Centre are playing a significant role within this. Some groups have already been in contact about the Wi-Fi cards.

Sadie Reid reported that NB Housing were one of the groups that were successful in receiving these programmes and just wanted to pass on her thanks and appreciation.

4. Appointment of Chair

Paul addressed the issue of the absence of a North Belfast LPG Chair and stated that the group need a leader to take them forward and opened the floor to any volunteers. No offers were received so the next step will be writing out to all members for nominations.

ACTION: Role of Chair and Expression of Interest to be issued

5. Members Updates

Christine McKeown – Ashton Centre

Daycares are all open and operational. Doorstep visits and anti-poverty initiatives such as the distribution of gas/electric/supermarket vouchers are still ongoing. Christine stated that everyone is eager to get back into the office as remote working and lack of social contact are taking their toll.

Edith McManus – Ashton Centre

Edith gave an overview of the Lower North FSH over the last year. See update below under agenda item 6. FSH Updates.

Sadie Reid – NB Housing

Sadie has been working in conjunction with the tenants of NB housing and SureStart in the distribution of the baby packs, which have been very gratefully received from parents.

Alongside the food poverty programme, Sadie has also overseen programmes based around socialising and mental health issues, for example they carried out an Easter wreath making programme over Zoom which was very well received.

Karen McLean – The Vine Centre

Karen gave an overview of the Upper North FSH over the last year. See update below under agenda item 6. FSH Updates.

Margaret Higgins – Belfast City Council

In respect of funding, the decision was taken to delay the delivery of all funding until September 2021 as groups were unable to spend their funding on planned projects over the last financial year. Normally there would be new funding available from April, but this has been paused until around June to support people for summer activities.

In terms of ongoing support, BCC provide for three strategic partners mostly in terms of the DFC Covid funding. They work with North Belfast Advice Partnership through the Vine Centre, Intercom and Loughview Community Action Project. Regular meetings take place between the three partners to minimise duplication of the provision of individual support for families. DFC are meeting next week to identify the top priorities as we transition into recovery.

Moving forward a holistic approach will be taken as opposed to providing a short term specific stop gap, such as food parcels. The goal will be to transition people away from dependency to independence. Any feedback around this would be very welcome.

With regards to council facilities, BCC have been working in line with government directives. Pitches now allowed to reopen and it is hoped community centres will

follow shortly. They are also examining how to provide a different approach to summer facilities, such as utilising parks and outdoor spaces.

Justine Fricker – Education Authority

Within Youth Services, units reopened within the last week. It has been great to get young people back through the doors. EA are looking at their summer plan and how this will work with utilising outdoor spaces, parks and the like.

Julie Jamieson – New Lodge Community Health Partnership

Ninety-eight food parcels were delivered throughout March. Much funding was received from DFC through the Well Woman Connected Programme. One of the most popular services of this programme was the flower essence and aromatherapy clinic with around 170 packs issued. It proved to be a very popular service as it also benefitted children with anxiety.

The main concern at present is the end of their Supporting Families in North Belfast project. It was slightly extended from June 2020 to June 2021.

With regards to digital exclusion, EA obtained 13 tablets, 11 of which have now been distributed.

Bronagh O'Dwyer – NOW Group

Bronagh has temporarily taken over Jenny Potter's post as Jenny now on maternity leave. At the last meeting Jenny has discussed funding for their Family Service. Unfortunately long term funding has still not been secured, however they are still accepting referrals.

Some community services are back in the office but they are also continuing to utilise parks, gardens and doorstep visits.

Mary Murphy – BHSCT

From an Early intervention Support Team perspective all contracts have been renewed for the family support services and all Hubs have had renewed contracts so there are services sitting against Hubs.

With moving forward with the LPG's, we need to pick out the salient points to feed up to BAOG. There are key points around poverty and this will only increase once furlough ends and unemployment increases.

Social isolation needs addressed and a great deal of emotional and behavioural support will be required as we move forward. Although Covid appears to be tapering off, the fall-out from it will be massive.

The topic of ASD never leaves the table and it is very important that these issues are feed back to the BAOG.

The importance of ensuring the sector continues to be funded also needs to be emphasised to BAOG as the sector is vital in providing support to the community and the ever increasing demands and pressures out there.

6. FSH Updates

FSH Area:	Lower North Belfast
Timeframe:	April 2020-March 2021
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	273
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	1240
Source of Service Requests:	Community, Self, GPs, CAMHS (main sources)
Key Gaps identified: The lack of direct face-face family interventions ether with parents or young people/children undoubtedly impacted on the support that organisations were able to give to facilitate change within family settings.	
Key Successes identified: The willingness of our Hub members to diversify and alter their normal service provision to adapt to family needs during a pandemic.	
AOB for Sharing: The impact of the pandemic on the financial situation within families was the biggest concern. The economic needs of families had to be met before any other support could be addressed but we were fortunate that we had funding to enable us to do this.	

FSH Area:	Upper North FSH
Timeframe:	April 2020-March 2021
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	200 The top 3 reasons for referral were- E&B support for parents, followed by requests for financial assistance and thirdly E&B support for primary school children.
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	1446
Source of Service Requests:	Self, school, GP, EWOs, Allied Health Professionals, community, voluntary, CAMHS, Gateway, H.V
Key Gaps identified:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism/ADHD assessments postponed due to lockdown-the impact on parents. • Concerning- The growing number of parents ringing the Hub, as advised by their GP for support with assessments. As a coordinator- constantly managing these expectations, while explaining the limitations of the Hub. • The need for 1-1 support for primary school aged children- issues with anxiety and returning to school- face to face mentoring or specialist 1-1 support e.g. art therapy requests. 	
Key Successes identified:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hub continued throughout the whole of the pandemic, with Hub meetings being delivered online. • Members played a pivotal role in adapting their services to online support and continued to accept referrals. • The amount of families who engaged in services even though they were online-parents were grateful for any support during such stressful times. • Families were provided financial support through the provision of Gas & Electric top ups/Tesco vouchers, sensory equipment and other goods- through the Covid Response Funding. • We provided online Autism Training to members in January-delivered by Elaine McGeevy. 	
AOB for Sharing:	

7. A.O.B

- Paul O'Neill & Israel Hontavilla (BCC) are currently drawing up a plan in relation to outdoor play. Training will be provided to all summer schemes, whether they are registered or not. More information to follow.

2021 Dates for North Belfast LPG Ordinary Meetings

DATES	VENUES
Tuesday 20 th April 2021	Virtual
Tuesday 22 nd June 2021	TBC
Tuesday 17 th August 2021	TBC
Tuesday 19 th October 2021	TBC
Tuesday 7 th December 2021	TBC