

**North Belfast LPG Virtual Meeting**  
**17<sup>th</sup> August 2020**  
**10.30am**

**Attendees:**

Katrina Newell	Ashton Community Trust (Chair)
Gabi Mornhinweg	BHSCT
Julie Jamieson	New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership
Claire Allen	New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership
Nuala McCallum	Flax Foyer
Laura Forte	NICRO
Martin Sloane	BHSCT (LPG Coordinator)
Paul O'Neill	BHSCT
Joe McGovern	Extern
Christine McKeown	Ashton Community Trust
Edith McManus	Lower North Family Support Hub

**Apologies:**

Debbie Sterritt	Health Visiting - BHSCT
Conor Murphy	Education Authority
Danielle Roberts	Here NI
Robyn McNulty	NOW Group
Carriann Rainey	Cedar Foundation
Sinead Campbell	Advice NI
Laura Feeney	Save the Children
Jan Wright	Family Fund
Jenny Potter	NOW Group
Laura Forte	NIACRO
Emma Ross	BHSCT
Sharon Quinn	Lighthouse Ireland
Karen McLean	The Vine Centre
Phil Lindsay	Barnardos
Micheal Hogg	EANI
Sharon Quinn	Lighthouse Charity
Stephen Reid	The Vine Centre
Joan Davis	Family Mediation NI
Sinead Campbell	Advice NI
Danielle Roberts	Here NI
Laura Fennell	Ascert
Fionnuala Black	Ashton
Robyn McNulty	NOW Group
Rachel Power	Apex
Glen Thomas	Belfast City Council

## **1) Introduction**

Katrina Newell (Chair) opened the meeting by welcoming all participants.

## **2) Members Feedback – Emerging issues**

### ***Christine McKeown – Ashton Community Trust***

Initially, Kinderkids closed, however two of the three day-care's are now open again but with decreased numbers. They closed with 256 in attendance but are open again with 140 and it is unlikely the third centre will reopen. Most staff are paid via parent's fees - only five staff are funded. The childcare sector is facing major financial stress.

### ***Laura Forte – NICRO***

Laura looks after the early intervention support services. Referrals are still being accepted; however, these meetings with parents and children are still being held virtually. It is hoped the next step will be social distanced visits to client's homes or perhaps meeting at a third-party venue. Families prefer face to face meetings.

### ***Claire Allen – New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership***

All targets are still being met, but everything continues to be done virtually. Ardoyne and Shankill Healthy Living Centre are still carrying out daily therapies via Zoom. New Life are continuing with virtual one to one counselling but hoping to make this face to face in the next few weeks.

With furlough ending and redundancies increasing, people will really start to face financial difficulties over the next few weeks.

Claire advised that they are not yet back in the office as waiting on risk assessments being signed off and she also noted that these meetings are beneficial to keep abreast of what other organisations are doing.

### ***Edith McManus – Lower North Family Support Hub***

As an organisation very much used to working in collaboration with others it has been found that this new, remote way of working can be quite challenging. The North FSH are still as busy – just a different type of busy. It is observed that poverty continues to underlie most issues.

Over the next few weeks, a different type of challenge will be faced; that of trying to get young people back to school. Some children, heading into 5<sup>th</sup> Year, have told their parents that they will not be returning to school at all.

Face to face meetings is where effective change happens and the sooner we can return to this the better.

Edith thanked the other member of the LPG for their support during this time.

Family Support Hub Update:

<b>FSH Area:</b>	Lower North Belfast
<b>Timeframe:</b>	July 2020-August 2020
<b>Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:</b>	37
<b>Number of Service Requests Received to date:</b>	1056
<b>Source of Service Requests:</b>	CAMHS, Self, GP, Community, Health Visitor, Social Workers.
<b>Key Gaps identified:</b>	
<p>The only gap identified at this time is that service whilst operational are unable to deliver face-face interventions.</p>	
<b>Key Successes identified:</b>	
<p>The number of referrals is still high so although the Hub during this time was not in our usual office services were still being requested. Hub members were very supportive in adapting their services to meet the needs of families.</p>	
<b>AOB for Sharing:</b>	
<p>The Lower North Belfast Family support Hub is now back to the office and reachable on 02890 749986</p>	

***Gabi Mornhinweg – BHSCT***

The BHSCT do not provide a service but a resource, so they work very differently to other members of the LPG. Presently they are trying to keep people updated and deliver training online. Yvonne Cowen has now retired so any help that the BHSCT can provide, please contact Gabi.

***Katrina Newell – Ashton Community Trust***

Within the youth centre, some face to face engagement has been resumed with young people who would be considered at risk. An invite has also been extended for younger children from the age of 9, so age groups are now 9-13 years old and 14-18 years old. The work carried out has been specifically targeted. The Education Authority has stated that targeted delivery will continue through September, reverting to generic delivery in October.

The Breakthrough Programme is continuing. Recruitment is currently taking place online and so far, there has been an uptake of 124 out of a potential 144 places. This is going well.

New Lodge Arts carried out a Bake-Off challenge with youths. The response was fantastic with people showing pride in their work and offering positive feedback. It was also a good way to bring families together.

***Martin Sloane – LPG Coordinator (BHSCT)***

These meetings are to enable everyone to stay in contact, share information and discuss their plans for moving forward. It can also be a reassurance to know that everyone is having similar experiences and issues and that you are not alone.

Regarding education – so much alters daily and we therefore try to keep everyone updated of any changes. Education and childcare affects every Locality Planning Group in Belfast. East & South LPG have formed a working group to look at the topics of childcare and education - this may be something North LPG could also consider establishing in the future

**3) Information on Childcare**

***Paul O'Neill – BHSCT***

Some of the wider issues impacting the community still on hold due to the slow processing of Business Service Organisation (BSO) payments. The second tranche of payments by the Early Years Organisation is a simpler and therefore, hopefully, a faster process. There is nothing beyond August. Christine McKeown stated that the Covid-19 Advisory Group are lobbying to have it extended until December but with a lower rate or even as a contingency, e.g., if a bubble must self-isolate. However, more information is needed around this.

Paul advised that the permitted numbers in pods moved from twelve to sixteen to twenty-four, however, it could always revert to smaller numbers again.

Basic risk assessments have been sent out, still there will always be ongoing issues that no one is quite clear on; for example, differing information from Track and Trace to that of the Public Health Authority.

At the moment, childcare guidelines state that if a child has a temperature, they will be sent home immediately. However, if by the following day they no longer have a temperature and are displaying no other symptoms, they can return to their placement.

In terms of Education, Ministers want all children back in school at the one time. If this does not transpire, then any provider of an out of school service can have this extended through September, October and November.

In term of inspections, the BHSCT will be flexible, but they are still bound by certain regulations and standards. Physical inspections are planned for September/October but everyone will be notified beforehand. Although there to regulate, the BHSCT will be coming from a supportive rather than a regulatory angle.

*Q) If children are not in school, will the Education Authority pay childcare providers? In some areas, some children are not returning to school full time right away, the childcare sector wants to support these children, but the question comes down to resource.*

A) No information has been received regarding this.

*Q) We understand there are conflicts around schools opening full time/concerns of Unions etc, but how as an LPG can we support the vulnerable children in our communities? We need resources to facilitate remote learning if schools not going to open full-time. Our focus needs to be on supporting children and families and we need explore how North LPG can provide support.*

A) Agree that the issue is not just about providing childcare but providing remote learning also.

*Q) What will inspections look like now? Will it be a desktop exercise? More information would be very welcome.*

A) Inspectors will not be entering pods and as much work as possible will be carried out remotely. It will be a learning exercise as we go along.

*Q) Have any providers closed?*

A) Yes. A small number have closed. We will see the full impact a few weeks down the line.

Regarding the home-approved childcare scheme - its function is that, if childcare provider is closed then the staff could be redeployed to a child's home to provide childcare. This scenario would be more costly, however the Department would pay the difference. The scheme did not really take off, but it could have been utilised better.

Katrina Newell advised that we were joined by Nuala McCallum, the manager of the Flax Foyer. However, due to technical difficulties, Nuala could not be heard, therefore she will send an update to Martin Sloane for Jennifer Heverin to circulate.

**ACTION:** Nuala McCallum to send information to Martin Sloane for North LPG circulation.

#### **4) Education**

Members discussed education and how it may look in the coming weeks and months. If children are not returning to full-time education, then we need to look across the community and voluntary sectors so see if anyone can offer to support children's remote learning, and if so, how this would look like financially. Children have a right to education, and if this is not taking place in school, then how is this being resourced in any other sector? £40,000,000 is being granted to support children going back to school and if they are not in school full-time, then this could be used to support remote learning.

If this is a discussion that will be taking place then we, as an LPG, need to look at how we can carry out some scoping across North Belfast regarding availability. What can we offer as a community? The difficulty is that the situation keeps changing. At present, children will be returning to school full-time, but this is not for everyone so we need to look at what we can do to support these children. Members were advised that some schools have stated they will not be opening full-time, regardless of the guidelines, and we need to look to support those children effected. North LPG could look at a scoping exercise around phoning North Belfast Primary schools and asking what the situation is for them for September. Martin advised that he could see what the school's capacities are and their plans for reopening.

**ACTION** – Martin to carry out a scoping exercise for North Belfast.

#### **4) A.O.B**

Katrina Newell advised that there is an information session being carried out for anyone working with young people across Ardoyne and New Lodge. The Communities in Transition, Health and Wellbeing Programme is currently recruiting champions and befrienders for this. It does not have to only organisations in these areas, but local people also. They are aiming at 16+ years old, so looking for young leaders, youth workers and the like. There are some great opportunities to be had there and Katrina will send more information via Martin.

**ACTION:** Katrina to send information to Martin on the Communities in Transition, Health and Wellbeing Programme recruitment exercise.

There was no other business to discuss so the meeting was closed with Katrina expressing her thanks to all who attended.