

**North Belfast Locality Virtual Meeting Minutes
24th November 2020 at 10.30am**

Attendees:

Jenny Potter	NOW Group/Acting Chair
Martin Sloane	BHSCT/LPG Coordinator
Edith McManus	Ashton Centre/Lower North Family Support Hub
Katrina Newell	Ashton Centre
Michelle McGlade-Buick	Parenting NI
Caroline Milligan	BHSCT
Gabi Mornhinweg	BHSCT
Sadie Reid	NB Housing
Laura Forte	NIACRO
Margaret Higgins	Belfast City Council
Julie Jamieson	New Lodge Community Health Partnership
Karen McLean	The Vine Centre/Upper North Family Support Hub
Claire Allen	New Lodge/Duncairn Community Health Partnership
Laura Feeney	Save the Children
Ashleigh Galway	Currie Primary School
Conor Murphy	Education Authority
Kyle Duncan	Autism NI
Martina McIlkenny	PIPS Charity
Paul O'Neill	BHSCT
Jennifer Heverin	BHSCT/LPG Administration

Apologies:

Michael Hogg	Education Authority
Jim Morgan	Belfast Health Development Unit
Sinead Campbell	Advice NI
Colette Deery	Edmund Rice College
Kelly Maxwell	Autism NI
Robyn McNulty	NOW Group
Debbie Sterrit	BHSCT
Billy Hutchinson	Mount Vernon Community Group
Jo Myles	Summerhill Foundation
Phil Lindsay	Barnardos
Nuala McCallum	NB Housing

1. Minutes of previous meeting

Jenny Potter opened the meeting by introducing herself as Acting Chair.

The previous North Belfast LPG meeting minutes of 1st October 2020 were referred to and Jenny asked if there were any changes to be made. There were no issues noted and the minutes were agreed to be true and accurate record of the meeting.

2. Presentation – Michelle McGlade-Buick (Parenting NI)

See attached presentation

After the presentation Michelle asked if everyone could give feedback on how Parenting NI can approach Stage 3.

Said Reid enquired as to whether any parents have requested support for transgender children. It was confirmed that they had and this area will be examined in Stage 3.

Caroline Milligan stated that she found the report reassuring in that it covers topics that are frequently raised. She stated that concerns around child development often originate through professional observation rather than parental, so it is very interesting and encouraging that parents are looking at child development now also.

Karen McLean said she was not surprised to hear about the lack of autism services, as this is reflected in the amount of referrals the hub receives. Often whilst waiting on a diagnosis, parents are referred to the hub as an interim measure.

Edith McManus agreed with Karen's observations and stated that parental concern for young people's mental health is very high. Edith also applauded how CAMHS really stepped up to the challenge.

Paul O'Neill expressed an interest in the role of ongoing childcare provision and its impact on rural areas and enquired where he can access the Parenting NI report. Michelle advised she will forward to Martin Sloane.

ACTION – Michelle McGlade-Buick to forward full Parenting NI report to Martin Sloane for LPG circulation.

3. Members Updates (including update from Poverty Sub-Group)

Martin Sloan – BHSCT

In October the Queens University of Belfast worked with 9 post-primary autistic children, examining the impact of COVID had on them and how they coped. The main conclusions from this were twofold:

- a) Homework should be focused on quality over quantity as children with autism felt bombarded with work, leaving both children and parents stressed.
- b) Services for children with autism and other disabilities needs to be prioritised.

Jenny Potter added that 50% of families registered with the NOW Group have both children and parents with autism or learning disabilities. During lockdown new families were engaged via phone but it was found to be very difficult to build a relationship in this way. However, once things opened up again, these families were made a priority.

Margaret Higgins – Belfast City Council

Belfast City Council have given an additional £300,000 for the provision of festive food hampers and some toys. Sinead McKinley (North Belfast Advice Partnership) has been linking in with the various FSH's throughout the city. £150,000 has been given to St Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army to deliver a citywide programme. Another £150,000 was allocated to 9 strategic partners to reallocate and within North Belfast that would include North Belfast Advice Partnership, Intercom and Loughview community Action Project. There will be a discussion as to how to best allocate this funding, however, best to make initial contact via Sinead McKinley at NBAP.

Laura Forte – NIACRO

NIACRO had to close for a while as there was an influx of referrals after the schools reopened. However, they are open again and accepting referrals. Home visits for a children can now take place in a schools and for parents they can meet outdoors for a walk etc.

Caroline Milligan – BHSCT/SureStart

SureStart is still open and carrying out one-to-one support via doorstep visits and telephone calls. Some groups are resuming this week. SureStart have also been working with Sinead McKinley (NBAP) regarding food and nutrition support for families.

Laura Feeney – Save the Children

Emergency Support Programme is still active for parents of children up to 6 years old. Save the Children have inked in with SureStart and the North Belfast Principals Group for 21 schools. In North Belfast there have been 141 applications to the programme and from schools there have been 85 referrals since September. Laura will circulate the full evaluation report.

ACTION – Save the Children evaluation report to be circulated.

Martin Sloane (BHSCT) – Poverty Sub-Group Update

There was an oversight regarding issuing the scoping exercise about available services for young people in poverty. It will be sent after this meeting.

Sinead McKinley is unable to attend today as she is at the Odyssey Arena. NBAP secured the Odyssey for the month of December to enable them to make up food hampers and all LPG's and Hubs have been invited to use this service. 100 food hampers have been donated for each FSH in Belfast.

Regarding the poverty issue, Jenny Potter stated that the LPG chairs are meeting tomorrow, 25th November 2020, to discuss poverty and bring their findings to the Belfast Area Outcomes Group.

Jenny Potter – NOW Group

The Family Service was a 5 year funded programme from the National Lottery. This funding ended last month but fortunately NOW managed to secure some alternative funding via a COVID response fund, for a further 6 months, however they are still looking for more long term funding going forward.

Michelle McGlade-Buick – Parenting NI

Workshops are available for parents and practitioners regarding emotional wellbeing, with the focus on teenagers. The workshops are free and extra places have now been added. Michelle advised she will forward the details.

ACTION: Michelle McGlade-Buick to send details of Emotional Wellbeing Workshop to Martin Sloane.

4. FSH Updates

FSH Area:	Lower North Belfast Family Support Hub
Timeframe:	October-November 2020
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	40
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	1115
Source of Service Requests:	Schools, Self, Gateway, CAMHS, Community, GP
Key Gaps identified:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic devices for children/young people • As much as 1-1 Family Support services are being delivered families are missing out on the personal interaction although circumstances dictate that at moment 	
Key Successes identified:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of 38 devices between North Belfast Hubs to local schools • Family Law training provided by UU to Lower North Belfast Hub members • Attended Mental Health First Aid training through Communities in Transition • Family Support Hub still fully operational and continuing to support families 	
AOB for Sharing:	

FSH Area:	Upper North Family Support Hub
Timeframe:	Oct-November 2020
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	October- 18 November- 15 Total: 33
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	1333
Source of Service Requests:	Camhs, School health Nurse, GP, self, school, Voluntary/community org, Gateway,
Key Gaps identified:	
<p>Mentoring face- to face continues to be a gap for primary school aged, some telephone based available but not always appropriate Demand for devices from a local post primary school- offered other services to families and raised the issue with the school to approach EA for devices for the families in question.</p>	
Key Successes identified:	
<p>The Upper North Hub has been able to offer every referral a service unless above Tier 2 which would then result in signposting to services, or if the family no longer required support. It does become apparent during conversations with parents that poverty is a big factor for families- Covid adding to the stress of this. The Covid Response funding is assisting in the short term to provide vouchers to purchase items- e.g. clothes, bedding or food or activities for families to have fun. We also continue to rely greatly on NBAP for the provision of food hampers. I participated in the Law Centre Training online, as organised by Edith in the Lower North Hub. This was provided by UJJ over two sessions. This gave me an insight into different Laws- Non mol, contact orders, divorce etc. I found this to be extremely interesting and although via Zoom, still interactive and great content and knowledge by the facilitators.</p>	
AOB for Sharing:	
<p>We are currently planning for our follow up session with Elaine McGreevy to deliver the autism training, which previously took place in January in The Vine Centre and we were due the follow up session in April. This training was in response to the referrals coming through the Upper North Hub with ASD as an issue to support our members with further knowledge in this area.</p>	

We are now prepping for the Christmas family appeal. The Vine Centre distributes to families and I will also be volunteering with Sinead at NBAP to prep hampers.

5. A.O.B.

- Jenny Potter informed that group that Katrina Newell has now stood down as Chair. Jenny is happy to act as Chair in the interim but going on maternity leave in 4 months. Anyone who is interested taking over the role as acting Chair can speak with Jenny Potter or Martin Sloane. Jenny stated that this is not a permanent position, but just a temporary placement until a permanent solution is found. Katrina stated that she would also be happy to discuss with anyone what is involved as the role of chair.
- Martin Sloane informed the group that a scoping exercise has been carried out regarding utilising space in Belfast City Council community centres. The results have been sent to the Council and we are awaiting their response.

Jenny Potter pointed out that the meeting was being recorded. No one had any objections. She then thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting was brought to a close.