

## South and East Locality Virtual Meeting Minutes 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 10.30am

**Attendees:**

Natasha Brennan	Lorag/Chair
Martin Sloane	BHSCT/LPG Coordinator
Alan Wilson	Education Authority NI
Barbara Wallace	Eastside Partnership
Karolina Morgan	CASA/South Belfast II Family Support Hub
Claire Humphrey	Barnardos
Damian Brennan	Short Strand Community Centre
Joy Poots	South Belfast Sure Start
Kathy Watters	Belfast City Council
Kyle Duncan	Autism NI
Sinead Hanna	BHSCT
Denise Smith	Belfast City Council
Joan Henderson	Solas
Joe McGovern	Extern
Laura Feeney	Save the Children
Gabi Mornhinweg	BHSCT
Paul O'Neill	BHSCT
Tracey Wilson	East Belfast Sure Start
Jane Turnbull	Forward South Partnership
Stephen Cruise	Oasis
Jennifer Heverin	BHSCT/LPG Administration

**Apologies:**

Joan Devlin	Belfast Healthy Cities
Linda Armitage	East Belfast Community Development Agency
Natalie Killough	BHSCT
Natasha Moore	Lorag
Rosy McLean	Inner East Family Support Hub
Sinead Campbell	Advice NI
William Olphert	Chinese Welfare Association
Laura Forte	NIACRO
Sandra McCarry	BHSCT
Judith Searle	Barnardos
Bronagh Muldoon	NSPCC
Zara Monteith	Willowfield Parish Community Association
Garnet Busby	Belfast South Community Resource
Carriann Rainey	Cedar Foundation
Peter Bryson	Save the Children
Kelly Maxwell	Advice NI
Ann Marie Doyle	Princes Trust
Roisin O'Neill	Barnardos
Phil Lindsay	Barnardos
Martina Smith	BH DU

## **1. Welcome and Introduction**

Natasha Brennan opened the meeting by welcoming those present.

## **2. Previous Minutes**

Martin Sloane appraised the minutes of the previous meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020. These were felt to be a true and accurate record. No amendments were required.

## **3. Update on Poverty Sub-Group and Education Sub-Group**

### **Martin Sloane – BHSCT**

All the sub-groups have met and scoping exercises were completed to ascertain what is taking place in each locality. There has been a good return on this exercise and all the obtained information will be collated and sent within the next few weeks.

The Education Sub Group was due to meet on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 but unfortunately this had to be cancelled and has not yet been rearranged. At present there is not much more being done around education as schools are still open and the poverty issue has now taken priority. Regarding the creation of an education information flyer/leaflet - a draft has been completed but a meeting with Maggie Andrews and Barbara Wallace will be organised before this is finalised.

**ACTION:** Education sub-group meeting to be organised

Poverty sub-groups were formed in all localities and the feedback from these groups was collated and raised to the BAOG. See attached presentation.

After Martin Sloane finished the presentation, the floor was opened for discussion. Joan Henderson suggested that there wasn't sufficient flexibility within the themes outlined to include families with children with complex needs. Many families that have children with a disability are in a poverty trap and their voices need to be put forward. Joan will look at a costing for this and forward to Natasha Brennan.

Sinead Hanna advised that they utilise Baby Basics in East Belfast to access Moses baskets, nappies etc., and the team in the Arches can be collecting goods 1-2 times a week. Baby Basics rely on donations so it would be good if funding for this could be considered. Natasha Brennan advised that key partners in each area will be looked at and Baby Basics can be put forward as a key partner in East Belfast.

Other issues were raised around period poverty, fuel poverty and language barriers. Martin Sloane stated that the presentation wasn't a definitive list and realises that there are lots of other issues to be considered.

Tracey Wilson stated that all of these issues being discussed are not new issues, they have always been there but are now exacerbated by the Covid pandemic. We need a long-term strategy rather than just crisis management. Martin Sloane replied that BAOG are looking for an anti-poverty strategy to be developed within the next 18 months so perhaps LPG could tap into that.

Alan Wilson shared with the group some information that has been acquired from university research regarding the global impact of Covid on working mothers. It was found that mothers carry most of the childcare responsibility and as a result many have been unable to return to the workplace – this is an issue that will emerge as we come out of the pandemic. It is thought the workplace will look very different.

**ACTION** – Alan Wilson will share this research with Martin Sloane for wider circulation.

#### **4. Members Updates – Sharing of good practice during Covid**

##### **Joy Poots – Neonatal Care**

A meeting took place between the Association for Infant Mental Health and Siobhan O'Neill. However nothing has come to fruition yet and there have been no changes so far despite there being more anecdotal, and some reported evidence of the impact of Covid on new parents and babies.

In response to Natasha's enquiry as to how the group could help, Tracey suggested becoming members of the Association of Infant Mental Health. This group are frequently lobbying on these issues and the more members they have the more influence they could wield. It was also suggested that it would be useful to have a representative of the Association of Infant Mental Health to give a presentation at the next LPG meeting.

**ACTION:** Joy to forward instructions on how the LPG members can join the Association for Infant Mental Health.

**ACTION:** Joy to send report findings to Natasha Brennan for onward referral to Carol Diffin, BAOG Chair.

##### **Jane Turnbull – Forward South Partnership**

STEP perinatal project have been carrying out Zoom sessions with community midwives and prenatal mums. They have found, that with this new approach, mums are now more involved pre-birth. It is felt the reason for this is because this is one of the only ways mums can get information.

##### **Sinead Hanna – Health Visiting, BHSC**

Health visiting are still very much there, they are still doing core contacts with 0-4 month olds and still visiting homes in full PPE. There can sometimes be a misrepresentation that health visiting have scaled back services, they have not. There is a Health Visiting helpline available and this now stands at 1700 calls.

**ACTION:** Sinead Hanna to share Health Visiting Helpline with Martin Sloane for circulation.

## 5. FSH Updates

<b>FSH Area:</b>	South Belfast I
<b>Timeframe:</b>	October and November
<b>Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:</b>	October = 14 November = 23
<b>Number of Service Requests Received to date:</b>	122
<b>Source of Service Requests:</b>	Community Self Schools
<b>Key Gaps identified:</b> Practical support eg. Gas and electric Face to face emotional support for children Christmas support for toys and food	
<b>Key Successes identified:</b> - NBAP partnership with Belfast FSH Network has been a really helpful resource for us to provide toys and food for families. We have had 96 referrals for this project. We are going to SSE Arena on Friday to make up the parcels.  - CYPSP Covid funding has been a huge support to families facing financial difficulties as a result of Covid	
<b>AOB for Sharing:</b>	

<b>FSH Area:</b>	South Belfast II
<b>Timeframe:</b>	20.10.-08.12.2020
<b>Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:</b>	25
<b>Number of Service Requests Received to date:</b>	106
<b>Source of Service Requests:</b>	Self-10, School-4, Sure Start-5, Voluntary-1, Community-1, CAMHS-1, Gateway-1, RVH Social worker-1, EWO-1.
<b>Key Gaps identified:</b>	<p>ASD Home Support  Youth activities  Play therapy  Complementary Therapy  Emotional support for parents</p> <p>CASA FSH notice increase number of poverty related referrals and requests for Plat Therapy/ Counselling related to Covid-19 fear and anxiety.</p>
<b>Key Successes identified:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking part in North Belfast Advice Christmas Hampers Event</li> <li>• Frequent contact with partners to keep updated re: services provision to meet needs of families</li> </ul>
<b>AOB for Sharing:</b>	N/A

<b>FSH Area:</b>	Inner East Belfast
<b>Timeframe:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> Oct – 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec
<b>Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:</b>	65
<b>Number of Service Requests Received to date:</b>	1613
<b>Source of Service Requests:</b>	Self referrals, health visitors, GPs, EWOs, CAMHS, schools
<b>Key Gaps identified:</b> play therapy, support services with interpreters	
<b>Key Successes identified:</b> Christmas appeal with North Belfast Advice Partnership	
<b>AOB for Sharing:</b>	

<b>FSH Area:</b>	Outer South & East Belfast Family Support Hub
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Mid October – Mid December 2020
<b>Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:</b>	54
<b>Number of Service Requests Received to date:</b>	1260
<b>Source of Service Requests:</b>	Health Visitors, Gateway, Schools, EWO, Camhs, Self, Community organisations
<b>Key Gaps identified:</b>	
Increase in requests for ASD services, Counselling and behaviour support	
<b>Key Successes identified:</b>	
Hub members are continuing to provide and adapt their services to support families	
Link with North Belfast Advice Partnership & SSE for Christmas appeal which supported 100 families in accessing food and toys for their family this Christmas	
<b>AOB for Sharing:</b>	

## **6. BAOG Update**

Most of this update was already covered under the Poverty Sub Group topic. However, Martin Sloane did add that BAOG are currently looking at aligning resources in order to work collaboratively which ties in well with LPG as they are following the same strategy. It was added that we need to be mindful of the challenges there can be in the practicalities of sharing information, people are willing in principal but the reality can often prove difficult.

## **7. Matters Arising – meeting between chairpersons and representatives from each LPG.**

This topic was covered earlier in the meeting.

## **8. A.O.B**

- Barbara Wallace asked if there was an intention to revert to separate South and East LPG's as there is a lot happening in East at the moment that requires more in depth discussion. Martin Sloane stated the reason the two groups were initially amalgamated was due to poor attendance and it was felt more value could be gained from discussions if the groups merged. It has been successful but it may also be useful to separate the groups again. Natasha Brennan acknowledged that at present we only get an overview of each area and no detailed discussion as to what is taking place there. However, she also added that there has been a lot of learning shared and would not like to lose this positive aspect of the joint groups.
- Stephen Cruise went outside and showed the group the front of his home which had lots of Christmas decorations including a large Santa. Stephen explained how many people have visited his house to see Santa. On Sunday night they hosted a visit from children with autism through Helping Hands in East Belfast. The children had extra time with Santa and it was a very touching and special evening. Stephen offered an invite to the group advising them if anyone would like to book a slot then email him at [stephen.cruise@btinternet.com](mailto:stephen.cruise@btinternet.com). It is free to visit. Natasha Brennan told Stephen what a great idea this is and extended her thanks for the invitation expressing that he had given everyone some Christmas cheer this morning.
- Joan Henderson spoke about the meeting that had taken place with the Education Authority regarding SEN children, and in particular the 3-4 year old programme. Joan stated that she was quite disappointed with the meeting as she felt it was the wrong person from EA to speak to, she asked if this could be picked up again with the right EA representative. Joan explained the reason she is eager for this meeting to transpire; Solas have received funding from STEP to run a pilot programme for 3-4 year olds with additional needs who have not received a place in their preschool year. This programme will produce a significant piece of research and they would be keen to present the



findings to the right people in EA as a sustainable model going forward. Martin Sloane agreed with Joan that the person they met was not the right person they should have been speaking to and as a result Martin wrote to Alison Keys on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020. There has been no reply despite 2 follow up phone calls. Martin will chase again in writing and once the correct person has been established, another meeting will be arranged. Furthermore, Martin also said that the topic of SEN children and the effect lockdown has had on them and their families has been raised as a major concern, it is therefore a topic which will be followed up.

- Alan Wilson apologised for not attending the last meeting, however he was ill with Covid and unable to do so. He stated that the EA Youth Service never stopped working, they initially moved into the Stay Connected Programme then the Eat Well Live Well Programme. This latter programme saw 3000 weekly boxes of food delivered to young people in Belfast. Through Stay

Connected they stayed in touch with vulnerable young people via Zoom. From September they tried to step up services by delivering programmes in clubs and groups, albeit in small numbers. There is no generic provision in place yet but it is hoped this will increase after Christmas.

Throughout lockdown EA worked in partnership with the PSNI. The police would contact them about young people gathering in groups and EA would be directed to those areas and speak to the young people, encouraging them to return home.

All services will stop on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020 for 2 weeks. Everything is closing down. Some people have expressed concern about this however, youth service never stopped working throughout the pandemic and they now deserve a break.

- Kyle Duncan from Autism NI advised that they have continued to deliver services. In terms of the local area, the autism support officer is at full capacity and closed for any new referrals, however, they are still available online and via telephone. Autism NI are for pre- and post- diagnosis and the support groups have continued online and have been well received. There is also the continual uploading of training which is very popular. All information can be found on Autism NI's website.

Natasha Brennan closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation and expressing her hope that everyone has a lovely Christmas with some well-deserved rest and relaxation.