

**West Belfast Locality Virtual Meeting Minutes  
17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 10.30am**

**Attendees:**

Deirdre Walsh	Whiterock Children's Centre/Chair
Penny Ambrose	Blackie River Sure Start
Joanne Menabney	Greater Shankill FSH
Nicola Verner	Greater Shankill Partnership
Kyle Duncan	Autism NI
Martin Sloane	BHSCT/LPG Coordinator
Sharon Nelson	Upper Springfield/Whiterock FSH
Michael Doherty	Glen Community Parent & Youth Group
Bronagh O'Dwyer	NOW Group
Pastor Tony Meehan	Falls Community Fellowship/Trussell Trust
Paul O'Neill	BHSCT
Pastor Stephen Reynolds	Church of God/School Uniform Project
Jennifer Heverin	BHSCT/LPG Administration

**Apologies:**

Danielle Roberts	HERE NI
Michael Hogg	EANI
Sinead Campbell	Advice NI
Laura Feeney	Save the Children
Phil Lindsay	Barnardos
Paula McMurrin	Upper Springfield Development Trust
Johnathan Cockroft	EANI
Leonita McKenna	CRJ Ireland
Heather Floyd	MUMO at Forthspring
Deborah Burnett	Greater Falls FSH
Liz Dugdale	Upper Springfield Development Trust

## **1. Minutes of previous meeting**

The meeting was opened with apologies noted and the group being informed that the meeting was being recorded for administration purposes. There were no objections. Deirdre Walsh briefly went through the minutes of the last West Belfast LPG meeting from 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020. It was agreed that this was a true and accurate record and no amendments were required.

## **2. Presentation of their work in West Belfast**

### **Pastor Stephen Reynolds – Church of God**

Pastor Stephen Reynolds introduced himself as a Minister in the Church of God Shankill, Conway Street where he has served for 15 years. Four years ago a partnership was formed with local schools to recycle uniforms. The programme has been very effective and around 2000 families have been helped to date. A recycling programme for general, everyday clothing also began and people can just turn up and take what they need.

As part of their Covid response, food parcels were delivered to those who were vulnerable or in need within the community.

For younger people, an AQE/GL study group was set up a few years ago. This helps children prepare for their transfer test. Additional funding has been received for this.

With regards to Christmas they normally work with Cash for Kids and are continuing as normal with this. Any donations will be left for 72 hours to ensure there is no trace of Covid.

If anyone wishes to contact Stephen, he has provided the following details:

*Pastor Stephen Reynolds  
Church of God Shankill  
225 Conway Street  
Belfast  
BT13 2DE*

*Tel: 07791568218*

*Email: [stephenrbelfast@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stephenrbelfast@yahoo.co.uk)*

### **Pastor Tony Meehan – Falls Community Fellowship**

After seeing the success of Pastor Stephen Reynolds' uniform project, Pastor Tony Meehan decided to start a similar scheme. This year a website was set up where people could enter their details and have uniforms picked up or delivered. In order to comply with GDPR, the website was set so that each referral generated a code, this meant the person's details were kept confidential – the only people who knew the details were those who were delivering and they all signed confidentiality agreements. Uniforms were collected in June and distributed in July and August. In total there were 485 uniforms issued in West Belfast.

Pastor Tony's organisation also run the Trussell Trust Food Bank which incorporates the areas from Kennedy Way to the City Centre and over into the Lower Shankill. The food bank works on a referral system meaning that clients will have already been working with an organisation dealing with the issues that have put the individual or family into food poverty. Trussell Trust have calculated that this year the demand for food banks has increased by 300%. Since April, Tony's team have fed 427 families. They have also partnered with Advice NI so any clients with benefits or debt issues can be referred on for help and assistance. It is not just families who receive food help, 1.4 tonnes of food has been donated to hostels in West Belfast. Tesco, FareShare and Asda donated £15,000,000 worth of food to Trussell Trust as a direct response to Covid. Although this is a large amount, it was spread over 400 food banks across the UK. Tony's division received 2 pallets of food every 2 weeks.

The Winter Coat Appeal was scheduled for October, but due to local lockdown this had to be postponed. It is hoped it can now take place on 4<sup>th</sup> December from 1-5pm in the courtyard of Conway Mill. Items will include adults and children coats, scarves and gloves. No referral is required, anyone can turn up and take what they need. [schooluniformproject.com](http://schooluniformproject.com) will give updates on this event.

*Q) Bronagh O'Dwyer: If a family was referred to the Trussell Trust, what is the turnaround?*

A) Tony Meehan: It is usually the following day but can sometimes be the same day depending on what volunteer drivers are available. In order to make a referral to Trussell Trust, you need to sign up and register with each Trussell Trust food bank - just send an email to Tony expressing your interest in registering. Pastor Tony Meehan's email is [info@westbelfast.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@westbelfast.foodbank.org.uk)

### **3. Presentation – Liz Dugdale (Upper Springfield Development Trust)**

Liz Dugdale unable to attend.

#### 4. FSH Updates

<b>FSH Area:</b>	Greater Falls Family Support Hub	
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Sept/Oct 2020	
<b>Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:</b>	Sept - 32 (1 out of area) Oct – 41 (1 out of area)	
<b>Number of Service Requests Received to date:</b>	GF1189 (up to 27 <sup>th</sup> Oct)	
<b>Source of Service Requests:</b>	Community 28	Self - 28
	Health visitor 1	Gateway - 3
	GP - 4	PSNI 1
	Voluntary - 2	CAMHS - 1
	MDT/GP Fed - 3	School - 1
	EWO - 1	
<b>Key Gaps identified:</b>	<p><b>Child care</b>  <b>Social activities for children (especially those identified with additional need)</b>  <b>Housing</b></p>	
<b>Key Successes identified:</b>	<p><b>Continued use of Covid 19 response fund</b>  <b>Continued use of BCC/Bytes devices for families in community</b>  <b>Links made with MDT – West Belfast Federation staff</b></p>	
<b>AOB for Sharing:</b>		

<b>FSH Area:</b>	Greater Shankill Family Support Hub
<b>Timeframe:</b>	October 2020
<b>Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:</b>	27 Total
<b>Number of Service Requests Received to date:</b>	1100
<b>Source of Service Requests:</b>	19 Self                      2 Community Org 3 CAMHS                    1 Health Visitor 1 School Nurse          1 Nursery School
<b>Key Gaps identified:</b>	<p>Support services for Parents of children awaiting ASD assessment</p>
<b>Key Successes identified:</b>	<p>Distribution of Electronic devices completed 29 families supported through this initiative in total 35 children across the 5 wards Highfield, Glencairn, Woodvale, Shankill &amp; Crumlin.</p>
<b>AOB for Sharing:</b>	<p>Links made with NBAP re: Christmas support for 100 families across Greater Shankill.</p> <p>Continue to support families using the Covid Discretionary Fund allocated to GS Hub.</p>

<b>FSH Area:</b>	Upper Springfield/Whiterock Family Support hub
<b>Timeframe:</b>	October 2020
<b>Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:</b>	21 referrals- October
<b>Number of Service Requests Received to date:</b>	160 (April-Oct)
<b>Source of Service Requests:</b>	Voluntary, self, education, community, Camhs, GP federation ,Health visitor
<b>Key Gaps identified:</b>	
<p>Same as last month Services with face to face contact have been limited however some services have gradually being returning to face to face at moment due to covid restrictions, many are still working from home etc- some having noted young people are struggling to engage on phone etc - for counselling, mentoring etc. also, some services for family support/ counselling etc are full/almost full to capacity due to demand for such services during covid, also some services noting need for access to places for young people and families</p>	
<b>Key Successes identified</b>	
<p>Through continued discussion with hubs/local community groups etc it was recognized the need the pressures families were under especially those who have been furloughed/lost jobs etc as a result of covid 19 - financially etc with a small amount of money being allocated for covid 19 support for food support, practical help, transport costs, child centred activities to families referred through the hub.- it has enabled our hub to continue provide a little support to those families who we have been able to identify through local knowledge, highlighting issues on social media etc which has enabled families to self-refer to the hub for such practical support as electric gas, food – including meat parcels, oil</p> <p>Such contact with those in need has also enabled me to see if these families have needed any further services due to the pressures faced by families at this time.</p> <p>Services in locality being creative with online zoom classes and activities, resource packs for children and families etc during this period</p> <p>Good networking and liaising with services in locality -schools, community etc - in delivery of food parcels, it technology, identifying those who may need other hub services etc</p>	
<b>AOB for Sharing:</b>	
<p><b>In partnership with local reps and organisations- with the help of loaf and the now project 225 lunches were distributed to families in the locality over the Halloween break</b></p>	

<b>FSH Area:</b>	Outer West Belfast Family Support Hub
<b>Timeframe:</b>	October
<b>Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:</b>	18 (12 referrals, 6 OOA)
<b>Number of Service Requests Received to date:</b>	86 (processed)
<b>Source of Service Requests:</b>	Health Visitor – 1, Self – 5, GP – 1, Community – 5 (OOA GP -2, Self – 4)
<b>Key Gaps identified:</b>	
Referrals for financial support not covid related	
<b>Key Successes identified:</b>	
Planning for xmas with hampers (food bank) and toy donation (help with key gap above)	
Having Covid ad-hoc fund to support families	
<b>AOB for Sharing:</b>	

## 5. Members Updates

### **Paul O'Neill - BHSCT**

£8,500,000 has been secured for the sector. £2,800,000 is a short term closure support fund. Paid groups are not included within this – this funding will need to come from the Education Authority, however crèches will now be included. It is currently unknown when the money will be released but as it came through quickly the last time it is hoped this time will follow suit.

There have been some easements in inspections in terms of ratios. However, everyone will be required to complete and return a risk assessment. It is a legal requirement for childcare facilities to be inspected in order for them to maintain their registration.

One issue that hasn't been eased by the department is the requirement of staff getting a medical completed by a GP.

Early Years Team are to be informed of all notifications of Covid-19.

### **Martin Sloane - BHSCT**

As one-to-one work has been curtailed due to Covid restrictions, Belfast City Council have offered the use of community centres. The LPG have carried out a scoping exercise enquiring which groups or organisations would be interested in using council community centres for face to face meetings. This information is currently being collated and will be forwarded to Belfast City Council.

With reference to NBAP and Odyssey FSH letter, a meeting took place between Martin Sloane and Sinead McKinley who in turn had met with staff from the Odyssey about the logistics of preparing food and toy hampers whilst adhering to social distancing guidelines.

A meeting took place with Belfast City Council regarding monies and funding. Any need is identified Locality Planning Groups and passed up to the Belfast Area Outcomes Group. Belfast City Council have recognised this and will continue to develop further.

Each locality in Belfast has formed a poverty sub-group and it has been proposed that West Belfast LPG does the same, as all 4 localities can be collated and the resounding issues brought to the Belfast Area Outcomes Group. The BOAG are due to meet early December so it would be useful to have an LPG plan and agenda, regarding poverty, to bring to the meeting.

**ACTION:** Martin to send invites re Poverty Sub Group



### **Michael Doherty – Glen Community Parent & Youth Group**

Michael wanted to give an update about a potential youth crisis in West Belfast. The Education Authority have divided West Belfast up into geographical areas and for the first time youth services have been put out to tender and commission based on areas devised by the Education Authority.

Organisations completed the Stage 1 applications and from this seven groups in West Belfast have been turned down, many on minor technicalities. Some have unsuccessfully appealed the decision and have asked when Stage 1 will be reopened as Stage 2 applications open and close on the 30<sup>th</sup> October. It was hoped that Stage 1 would be reopened by now, but the Education Authority have advised that it may be January or February before it is reopened. The issue is that current funding for those areas ends in March 2021, so even if an organisation was successful in Stage 1 in January/February, they still have to put Stage 2 to tender meaning it could be May 2021 before a decision on further funding is made.

Michael is meeting with the unsuccessful groups with the aim to try to persuade the Education Authority to reopen Stage 1 at the end of November/start of December, then Stage 2 could take place in January allowing decisions to be made by the end of March. As it stands under the current timescales, all 7 of those areas will have no youth services at the end of March.

### **Kyle Duncan – Autism NI**

Autism NI have continued to provide services throughout the pandemic as there was significant impact on the autism community. Support is offered pre- and post-diagnosis. The helpline and online support is still very much active. Free training is also offered regularly during the month.

### **6. A.O.B**

No other business noted.

Everyone was thanked for their attendance and the meeting was brought to a close.