

West Belfast LPG Meeting
Wednesday 19th November 2025
Spectrum Centre, 331 Shankill Road, Belfast, BT13 3AB

Name	Organisation	Present	Apology
Deirdre Walsh	Chair	✓	
Charlene Mitchell	LPG Coordinator	✓	
Penny Ambrose	Beechmount Sure Start	✓	
Sharon Courtney	Ark Housing	✓	
Meliosa Sturgeon	MACS NI	✓	
Christine Doyle	Toybox, Early Years	✓	
Emma Lewis	Whiterock Children's Centre	✓	
Clair Smart	RISE NI	✓	
Lucy Baxter	Cedar Foundation	✓	
Kathy Jan	Greater Shankill FSH	✓	
Matthew Toner	Youth Empowerment Network	✓	
Emily Howe	Youth Empowerment Network	✓	
Majd Almasalkhi	King's Trust	✓	
Jenni Wilson	Education Authority	✓	
Charlene Harris	Forthspring	✓	
Dympna Johnston	Greater Shankill Partnership	✓	
Deborah Burnett	Greater Falls FSH	✓	
Megan Martin	Kids Together Belfast	✓	
Bridget Tiernan	BHSCT		✓
Carol Scullion	Toybox, Early Years		✓
Chloe McCann	Toybox, Early Years		✓
Emma Duncan	Bryson Pathways		✓
Joe McGovern	Extern		✓
Michael Doherty	Glen Community Parent Youth Group		✓
Nicola Masterson	Outer West FSH		✓
Phil Lindsay	Barnardo's		✓
Rachelle McCurry	Active Communities Network		✓
Sinead Campbell	Advice NI		✓
Tinya R Parkes	Libraries NI		✓
In Attendance			
Jennifer Heverin	LPG Administration, BHSCT	✓	

Summary of Actions:

	Topic	Action	Responsibility

Action
by:

1. Welcome and Introduction

Chair, Deidre Walsh opened the meeting by welcoming those present and facilitating a round of introductions.

2. Previous Minutes of 17th September 2025

The previous minutes were read through and agreed to be an accurate reflection of the meeting. No amendments were required.

3. RISE Presentation – Clair Smart

Clair Smart presented an overview on Regional Integrated Support for Education NI (RISE NI).

RISE is funded via the BHSCT who receive funding from the PHA. They cover 122 educational settings managed by 22 staff.

RISE is a multi-disciplinary service that works within mainstream preschool and primary schools. The 2 key aims of the service is to:

1. Reduce underachievement by optimising children’s access to learning within the educational environment.
2. To foster health, well-being and school inclusion and improve the life chances of children.

This is achieved through a 3-tiered model of support; Universal, Targeted and Specialist.

Universal

There are lots of training modules available on the RISE website for both staff and parents, e.g. Solihull approach, Sound Sleep, Build a Block etc. Accredited courses for Classroom Assistants are also available. The easiest way to navigate the website is to search via the target age group and go to courses from there.

Targeted

This makes up the majority of RISE’s work. RISE will work with schools at the beginning of the school year to see what support is needed and small group or whole class programmes can be delivered by RISE staff on specific topics. Parent workshops and staff training is also conducted.

Specialist

This is currently only available to preschool to P4, KS2 funding hasn’t been made available. Under specialist support consultations take place to provide advice and signposting. Assessment of individual children can also be carried out; however, work is still mainly done in small groups.

In the 2024/2025 year, there were 383 programmes completed with 4123 children being reached. 687 specialist referrals were received.

4. FSH Updates

FSH Area:	Outer West Belfast
Timeframe:	September - November
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	September – 23 October – 30 November – 35 @ 18/11/2025
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	YTD – 213 (from April 2025)
Source of Service Requests:	Self MDT Community School Health Visitor GP CAMHS EWO Gateway
Key Gaps identified:	
Some unmet need due to shortage in counselling services.	
Key Successes identified:	
Continuing to support families – use of Vasco Device has been successful, (members have been making use to support community)	
BCM Christmas Toy Application sent in as well as South West Foodbank Christmas Hampers – these will both be used to support families over the Christmas period.	
AOB for Sharing:	
VASCO translator device is available for use if members are requiring support / help overcoming communication barriers for families.	
Families continuing to contact Hub re Financial support and vouchers have now all been allocated.	

FSH Area:	Greater Falls	
Timeframe:	Sept – Nov 2025	
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	Sept - 26 Oct - 8 Nov - 39	
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	236 (3996)	
Source of Service Requests:	School Community CAMHS Self GP MDT Social Worker Gateway	Health Visitor Voluntary Organisation EWO
Key Gaps identified:		
<p>Limited supports for disability, limited access to emotional regulations support for children including child therapy supports.</p> <p>Lengthy waiting lists for supports, Bus fares for asylum seekers, housing shortages. Requests for elec/gas/oil</p>		
Key Successes identified:		
AOB for Sharing:		

FSH Area:	Greater Shankill			
Timeframe:	Apr to Oct 2025			
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	Qtr 1 Apr - 42 May - 7 June -12	Qtr 2 July – 5 August – 5 Sept - 12	Qtr 3 Oct - 13	
Number of Service Requests Received to date: 25-26	96			
Source of Service Requests: (Apr-Aug)	Self, Health Visitor, SW Assistant - GP Surgery Self via Upper North FS Hub, Surestart Primary School, Children's Disability Team, EWO ISCYP, Nursery School, Life NI, Autism NI Gateway, NOW Group, CAMHS, CAAS, Ark Housing, EISS			
(Sept-Oct)	Community, self, CAMHS, Health Visitor, School, GP			
Key Gaps identified:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art/Play Therapy for primary school age children • ASD supports for parents awaiting assessment for children. • Counselling for primary age children 				
Key Successes identified:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families matched with a Family Support Service 				
AOB for Sharing:				

FSH Area:	Upperspringfield whiterock FSH
Timeframe:	October to November
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	October 17 November 75 Total 92 Most of these are for Christmas support
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	2,845
Source of Service Requests:	Self Community School MDT Sure start
Key Gaps identified:	
Ongoing lack of services and support for children with complex needs Childcare places, play therapy, children's counselling (Holy Trinity closed) ASD family support	
Key Successes identified:	
Hub families supported through children in need for large white goods. . Hub families support for Christmas through WCFC Christmas appeal.	
AOB	

Following the FSH updates a short discussion took place regarding fuel vouchers. Meliosa informed the group of the Fuel Bank Foundation. This is a charity that helps people in need who are running out of fuel within the next 24hrs or are borrowing money to top up their gas or electricity. It can be used up to 3 times per month and fuel money is supplied via a QR code allowing users to remain anonymous. Meliosa is an authorised user so she can log in, input details and if entered early enough in the day then the money can be made available that same day.

5. Members Updates

Emily Howe – Youth Empowerment Network

Formerly known as Youthstart, the Youth Empowerment Network run a number of courses for 16-24 year olds. Courses are accredited and usually last around 20 weeks. Cyberquest is a cyber security course for over 18's and they get a qualification at the end. Likewise, their Construction Academy and HSC Academy are also accredited and there is a guaranteed interview at the end.

Charlene Harris – Forthspring Intercommunity

On 5th December Forthspring are holding an ASD information event for parents and carers. Also, on the same day they are holding a Christmas Budgeting Workshop. A community Christmas lunch is being organised for 17th December and everyone is welcome.

Megan Martin – Kids Together

Kids Together are hoping to get more funding in the new year for therapeutic services.

Majd Almasalkhi – King's Trust

Targeted groups are 16-30 year olds who are economically inactive. King's Trust run many courses, often accredited, and provide lots of employment opportunities in retail, security, IT etc. Anyone undertaking courses with them can avail of childcare costs and also have access to a wellbeing adviser.

6. LPG Updates

Action Plan

The draft copy of the Action Plan was circulated on 18th September with a request for feedback, but nothing has been received to date. The group were therefore urged to have a quick read through the document now to ensure it is applicable to the current work that is being done.

The Action Plan is a working document subject to amendments and change. It follows 4 main priorities that apply citywide and then it is funnelled down into each of the 4 localities with actions that are specific to that area:

1. Early Intervention Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

The West Belfast part of this is to 'Promote the value of programmes / initiatives for emotional wellbeing and mental health'.

2. Early Intervention / Early Help Family Support

The West Belfast action under this objective is 'Connecting local services and provision.'

3. School Disruption

Again, West Belfast's role is 'Connecting local services and provision.'

	<p><i>4. Poverty / Cost of Living</i> As before, we are looking at ‘Connecting local services and provision’ in West Belfast.</p> <p>As the plan states, it is all about linking in with organisations who are carrying out the work and sharing information and ideas.</p>
	<p>7. A.O.B</p> <p>No other business was discussed and the meeting drew to a close with Deirdre thanking all those in attendance.</p>

2025/26 Dates for West Belfast LPG Ordinary Meetings

DATES (Wednesday)	TIME	VENUES
22 nd January	10am	Whiterock Children’s Centre
5 th March	10am	Forthspring Inter-Community Group
21 st May – Planning Meeting	10am	Forthspring Inter-Community Group
16 th July	10am	Cancelled
17 th September	10am	Forthspring Inter-Community Group
19 th November	10am	Spectrum Centre
21 st January	10am	TBA
18 th March	10am	TBA