

# Brighton & Hove City Council

**Council**

**Agenda Item 53**

**Subject: Deputations from members of the public.**

**Date of meeting: 15 December 2022**

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the council, nominated by the mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the mayor and voted on without discussion that the spokesperson for the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification of one Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

- (1) Deputation concerning Mental Health Emergency**  
Spokesperson - Matilda Barrowman & Konstantinos Mytafidis

Supported by:

|                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Matilda Barrowman  | Konstantinos Mytafidis |
| Shelly Baker       | William Baldwin        |
| Donna-Marie Janson | Grainne Byrd           |
| Claire Jarman      | Olivia Chapman         |
| Becca Finney       | Sam Corry              |
| Michael Austin     |                        |

**Councillor Shanks, Chair of Health & Wellbeing Board will reply.**

Thank you, Members of Council. Our names are Konstantinos and Matilda, and we love our city. We think it is one of the best places on earth; but only for some. We are here to ask you, how are our young people? As simple as this question may seem, the answers that come to mind are uncomfortable. I'm here because societal pressures make it difficult for me as a young man to speak about my emotions. My friends and I are at a critical stage in life as we transition into adulthood. The quality of our mental health in these few years will have a significant impact on our future. I believe that if we don't put the work in now, my whole generation will feel the negative effects.

I'm here because at school, I suffered from depression, anorexia, catatonia, anxiety and suicidal ideation as a consequence of bullying and internalised ableism. I didn't receive adequate support at school, and the support I did get came from unqualified teaching assistants who mostly made my situation worse. For example, the teaching assistants treated me as if I had a cognitive disability rather than a physical one, which led to an identity crisis and crushed my self-esteem. This is why we need trained professionals in schools.

We bring our Deputation before you today on behalf of young people at schools and colleges across our city who are suffering with poor mental health and are struggling to get the help they need. Our college, Varndean College, is part of Brighton & Hove Citizens, an alliance of schools, colleges, universities, faith institutions, and community organisations representing over 50,000 people across our city. Our Alliance has been working constructively with the Council and our local NHS Trust on issues of mental health for over a year now. The existence of a local and national mental health

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emergency is undeniable. The data is clear. In fact, the data is heart-breaking. A few weeks ago, we learnt that 1 in 4 17 to 19-year-olds nationally, face Mental Health difficulties. In 2020, it was 1 in 6. Things have gotten much worse. Can I please ask you to raise a hand if you know someone who faces mental health difficulties? Can I ask you to raise a hand if, like me, you want to see a better world for them? The NHS data published recently, highlights that inequalities have been deepened, again! It is young women who are suffering the most, it is LGBTQ+ people who are suffering the most, it is people with disabilities who are suffering the most, it is people of colour who are suffering the most, and it is the poorest who are suffering the most.

Mental Health is undeniably an issue of social justice. Unless we can confidently answer this question - How are our young people? - then we cannot rest. We must rise to the challenge and do all we can to make things better. If we hope to address what is going on locally, here in Brighton and Hove, it will take courage. If we do not meet this crisis with the courage it requires, my generation is at risk of becoming a lost generation. I do not want to be part of a lost generation.

It will be easy to look at what is going on beyond our city and suggest that it is the responsibility of others. Too easy. Whilst it is clear that the current crisis is rooted in many of the mistakes made in Whitehall, we also know that solutions can be found locally. Local leadership and local solutions should be celebrated as beacons of hope in such dark times. You will be aware that we are looking forward to working with you to see a roll-out of school- and college-based counselling across the city. We know that for every £1 invested in school and college-based counselling, an estimated £8 can be saved on the system as a whole. That is, reduced waiting lists for CAMHS, reduced pressure on emergency services, better attendance in schools and colleges, less pressure on SEND departments and less pressure on behaviour teams. The evidence from other places where such early interventions have happened is clear: it works. It helps.

So, tonight, it is encouraging to see a joint motion presented on the mental health emergency. We recognise and applaud the work the council has done so far to support the mental health of young people. We know there is energy in this Hall to get things done. We know there is energy for courageous action. Thank you.

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## (2) Deputation concerning Bright Start Nursery Proposed Closure Spokesperson - Caroline Jany

Supported by:

*As per supporting information*

**Councillor Allbrooke, Chair of Children Young People & Skills will reply.**

Thank you for inviting us to speak on a topic that is very close to our hearts.

Earlier this month we discovered that Bright Start Nursery was being considered for closure. This was devastating news to all parents, staff and surrounding communities. Therefore the following petition was made which has now reached above 1300 signatures.

Let me explain a few reasons why Bright Start is so special to our city.

**\*Staff specialist knowledge and training in dealing with children with complex disability, medical and educational needs\***. It is very difficult to find this training in any other nursery in Brighton.

Currently the nursery caters for children with the following needs:

- o Children with Type 1 Diabetes - one parent said she tried 8 nurseries before finding this one which is perfect. The closure of this nursery will have a huge negative impact to her son and therefore to her family.
- o Children suffering with Autism
- o Children suffering with Seizures
- o Children with other special educational needs (SEND)

Bright start staff are long term members – other nurseries have a high turnover of staff. This is not the case for Bright Start which has a huge positive impact to our children.

**\*Supporting families of low income households.\***

- o A quarter of the children come from low income households and
- o Further children are from refugee families

**\*Diverse and multi lingual\***

- o The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) have stated that Bright Start is the most diverse nursery in Brighton, with families and staff speaking multiple languages.
- o The nursery had a recent council run 'stickman' specialist event, where the story was read in English, French and Arabic - to cater for the Arabic community lead by Christine Boothe and translator Eman.

**\*Community\***

There is a large community attached to the nursery of present attending families, past attending families, local businesses and the North Laine Community Association (NLCA). For example the following local businesses have/had their children attend the nursery.

- the owner of the local pub the king and queen
- Infinity foods employees

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- Nearby GPs and NHS staff
- American Express employees
- Kimberly Clark employees
- University of Brighton (grand parade) staff
- Pronta Print and other local print and graphic design agencies.
- and many more.

## **\*Location, facilities, timings and cost\***

- The only North Laine City Centre childcare available
- A great outdoor space which is often not available in other nurseries
- Baby room contains a quiet sleep area, other rooms have great space availability
- Care available from 8am-6pm for both term time and holiday periods
- Affordable pricing
- Acceptance of childcare vouchers and schemes

## **\*Our Ask:\***

Before making such a large decision of closure hastily, please kindly consider looking into other options for the nursery.

## **\*Building costs\***

Some letter responses from counselors have stated that the building renovation costs are equivalent to £50k. Are you able to provide us with the detail on this? Quotes from relevant contractors? If you are unable to provide us with this can we send in our own specialists to provide us with quotes?

Would the council be willing to receive a grant or donations for the building costs? And if so would the nursery still have enough funding to keep running?

Could another central venue be used?

## **\*42 nurseries\***

It has also been stated there are 42 other childcare options. Can you please provide us with a list of those nurseries? From our own personal research, none are so central, have the same facilities or even have any available spaces, waiting lists can be very long.

## **\*Date of closure\***

If closure of the nursery is required, please can you kindly consider the impact to the children. Particularly those who will be starting school in September. Rather than having a closure date of April 2022, please consider extending it to August/September 2022, to avoid children having alternative care just for a few months.

Thank you for listening, for those of you that are parents, you will understand the detailed effort you would undertake for your own children's care, safety and education. To make sure they feel loved and cared for. Children with good childcare has an exponential effect to their development as an adult. Our Brighton children are the future of our city, if we prioritize their care we can ensure a greater future for our very much loved city.

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Supporting information:



