Children's Services Partnership Forum

Report following the first meeting on 12th June 2014

Following the refresh of the city's Sustainable Community Strategy, Brighton & Hove: The Connected City, it was decided to create a new overarching partnership forum to focus on all elements of children's services across the city.

This new partnership is not a new governance structure and holds no direct budget accountability. It's a discursive group whose purpose is to allow the key stakeholders opportunities to network, problem solve and to jointly provide strategic leadership on our outcomes for children, young people and their families by working to a shared vision It will connect organisations and services together to deliver real differences within the city.

This new forum will operate within the context of existing partnership arrangements. The forum can take a role in challenging those partnerships and recommending new arrangements when needed.

The inaugural meeting was held on 12th June 2014, agenda given below. It was well attended with officers attending from various departments within the city council, LSCB, health partner, Sussex Police, representatives from the business community and many community and voluntary sector leads.

The agenda included:

- Welcome from Tony Mernagh, Chair of Brighton & Hove Connected
- Keynote Speakers:
    - Pinaki Ghoshal, Executive Director of Children's Services, Brighton & Hove City Council
    - Graham Bartlett, Chair, Local Safeguarding Children's Board
    - Xavier Nalletamby, Chairman, Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group/Kathy Felton, Commissioning Manager, Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group
    - Lynn Thackway from City College was due to attend but unable to on the day
- Table discussions on partnership approaches, key messages given below.

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Facilitated table discussions

Attendees were asked to sit at one of five themed tables and participate in facilitated conversations around challenges and then solutions, in the context of our current partnership arrangements for that theme. A wide range of comments and suggestions were made, a summary of which is given below with fuller notes given in appendix 1. Attendees could then move to a different themed table and continue the conversation there.

Being Healthy

Domestic violence and neglect were highlighted as two of the biggest barriers to a healthy life. There were also worries expressed about the rise in mental health issues amongst our children and young people. Schools were becoming increasingly aware of these issues at a younger age now – issues have appeared more in primary phase. There were concerns about a lack of coordinated support, particularly between age phases – the quality and availably can vary a lot. Solutions included better education for parents and carers around nutrition, exploring more links between benefits of music and mental health and looking at creative ways to better promote and use our range of outdoor spaces.

Keeping Safe

It was acknowledged that keeping safe can mean different things to different people, there may be a particular difference in opinion on this between adults and children. This is why professionals need clear thresholds and definitions to work to. One key to unlocking this problem is good data understanding and sharing across agencies. There is evidence of some great peer to peer work happening in our schools and non-school services could tap in to that more. The experience of children within the care system is inevitably different to those outside and the importance of the role of a trusted (and consistent) keyworker was acknowledged in terms of supporting them.

Social / Personal Relationships – getting on well

The groups spent time establishing what this meant. It was felt this topic included volunteering and participation, tackling anti-social behaviour and cross generational relationships amongst other things. It was felt there was some good signposting work within the city – letting children, young people and their families know what social opportunities there were but this could be improved on. Could there be a dedicated website around our local offer for all young people – listing all clubs, sports groups, outdoor spaces etc. Attendees wanted to set an ambition of zero tolerance of bullying. There were also ambitions about making the city's cultural offer fully inclusive so all children and young people could participate.

Schools as part of their community

Some felt that local school offers were currently working in silos with a focus around the individual schools rather than community clusters. Could funding be pooled more

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in community areas? It was acknowledged that schools are under a lot of pressure both in terms of 'holding' a lot of our troubled children but also the expectations around attainment and bridging inequality gaps. It was felt that the formation of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Early Help Hub would support a better flow of information about children that need support, particularly from schools to other agencies. Schools can feel overwhelmed by the range of support available to them – anything that can be done to streamline pathways in to services is helpful. Attendees wanted to hear more celebrations about the good work that schools are already doing in their communities – this can then be built on. It was agreed that more schools should be invited to this forum.

<u>Skills for work</u>

Apprenticeships were discussed and it was acknowledged that the prevalence of SME business in Brighton & Hove created a challenge in finding suitable places plus the number of opportunities was reduced due to lack of large employers. Universities and colleges need to be better at understanding the labour market and providing the right courses and career guidance accordingly. Schools are still driven by academic results so could there be more creative thinking around alternative provision. There were opportunities provided by the rise in participation age and we need to capitalise on these. There were concerns about vulnerable groups such SEN children and young people where options like apprenticeships might not be entirely suitable. It was felt a lot of solutions could be found by greater partnership working.

Key emerging themes

It was clear from the discussions that there were some common themes or areas of concern coming through the varied discussions. The main themes are listed below. The partnership forum can take this work forward in a variety of ways, including
- Focussed discussions / activities at future meetings
- Facilitated workshops at other times
- Encouraging networking and officers working together on shared work areas
- Encouraging existing partnerships to take forward specific areas of work
- Escalating ongoing concerns to relevant management teams

Key themes and areas of concern currently within the city's children's services

Adolescents – the cost and poor outcomes for our vulnerable groups
Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
Children's Partnership's review – more detail is needed to share with the forum on this
Joined up services – how to do this better with less
Links with adult services – both for transition for young people 18+ but also the need to support how parents, families and carers are supported due to the impact on their children.
A child friendly city – exploring what this means and how we set our ambitions
Date sharing – are we sharing enough <u>and</u> acting legally?
Domestic violence and neglect – both major areas of concern for our children and young people with a significant impact on outcomes

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The voice of children & young people – how can we ensure this is consistent and genuine

Safeguarding – how to further promote, alongside the LSCB, the understanding that this is everyone's responsibility

This is not an exclusive list of the themes coming out of discussions but provides a more focussed list of areas for further exploration.

It is important to note that these are emerging themes that need exploring in the context of our challenges, the main one being increasing need set against decreasing budgets.

Members of the forum should take opportunities to share and take forward concerns raised and ideas created back within their 'home' organisations regardless of whether a future partnership forum meeting discusses that particular topic or not.

Existing partnerships relating to children and young people and their families

It became apparent from the conversations that more information was needed around the range of partnerships already in existence before an informed assessment of gaps or potential overlap could be completed.

Forum members wanted more information on who sat on the various partnerships and what their remits were. This data will be compiled and shared.

Event feedback

The event was successful, being well attended with good feedback received. Participants found it a good use of time, helpful networking event and many great ideas were recorded.

It was hoped that future meetings could feature increased diversity on the panel including by gender and sector representation, eg would like to have heard from a Head teacher.

It was also commented that future meetings must be an equally good use of participants time and set the agenda appropriately to ensure the energy is maintained.

It was hoped that more adult services representatives could attend future events.

Brighton & Hove Connected (Previously known as LSP) and the agreed next steps

The new forum and its success was discussed at the June Brighton & Hove Connected meeting. Ideas were shared on the next steps. It was agreed that

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- The new forum would continue to have no set chair but use a diverse panel to lead the sessions
- Pinaki Ghoshal as the Director of Children's Services will remain the key link back to Brighton & Hove Connected
- The forum would conduct a small yet focussed partnership review ensuring there is no duplication going forward
- Future forum meetings will be focussed on partnership working, key barriers and shared outcomes in light of increasing budget pressures.
- The partnership as a whole would meet bi-annually but members are encouraged to make links and work together more throughout the year.

Contacts

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Appendix 1: Full notes from the table top discussions

Being Healthy

- Domestic violence is one of the biggest issues / barriers with concerns over impact on children including mental health
- Neglect being another large issue to tackle
- There is under participation of girls in sport generally
- Children are becoming less active – more time spent on IT
- There is a negative link with mental health / obesity
- There is a challenge of knowing what services are available to support children when they are discharged from hospital
- Increasing rates of children with self-harm with questions on how to spot and intervene earlier for both girls and boys. We need a good pathway for this work.
- Recognising more of youth workers and developing a pathway at an earlier stage
- Link with children into justice system
- Lack of support across ages – can be a lack of clear pathways
- Children being diagnosed with ADHD as a result of the impact of domestic violence
- Schools more aware of issues, at least from year 6
- Rising population in schools and changing population – eg BME – are services realigned appropriately?
- Pressure on young people – peer pressure, exams, how to make it manageable?
- Is there a systemic culture of bullying – GPs giving sick notes for children – parents being bullied by the benefit system? Children under pressure because parents are themselves.
- Recognise additional barriers in deprived areas / families – early help should be focussed here
- Time management – work / life balance for individuals – prioritising good behaviour
- Issue of children being less active, less open spaces, importance to access the outside spaces
- Importance of parents modelling good behaviour
- Importance of joined up services – problem of services not being joined up, wasting time and resources because of lack of communication
- Some very good individuals but not joined up systems. Due to demands and accountability – importance of supervision.
- DV – issue of women's guilt as they become aware of impact on children. Will get messages reinforced by Health Visitors / GPs who don't understand whole situation. Need to be able to work on own needs plus children's. Peer support valuable – can be less judgemental.
- Support for children living with DV – can be in early years setting. Rise do some of this. Family groups – parents and children groups. Nurturing environment in pre-school and therapeutic types of play and buddy systems

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- Schools eg circle time to support children. Children at risk need to be highlighted to school staff. Balance: system v reality
- DV – recognise impact on children / YPS – resources tend to be focussed on the mother
  DV – there is some good joint work with Police / Rise
- DV – Police trial in W Sussex – flag to GP every time attend when child presented at school with suspected DV at home. School needs to be aware that change in behaviour may be due to DV. Police need 1 email → Health and 1 to schools
- Importance of professional curiosity
- Data protection - Issue of parents having access to their children's information as well as barriers between agencies
- Info not shared because not deemed to be safeguarding. Is the definition right? How is safeguarding interpreted? Should be wide as info is relevant.
- Need to be better shared understanding - protocol for sharing across agencies. Citywide agreement.
- Neglect is biggest area child abuse – mostly due to DV
- Case in Norfolk – arrested parents of obese child – again, linked to neglect. Can be seen to be a lack of enforcement in B&H on this issue. It can be hard when we (agencies) do not always have a shared definition.
- When is lack of health neglect →need to get standards agreed
- Young people centre – have to mop up demand from statutory service eg 2 years wait for counselling – too long. Having to hold cases until interventions are available. Are our mental health services in the city fit for the changing need?
- Issue – what caused need for psychotherapy – how could this be prevented?

What can we do?
- Need for better education for parents – we abdicate responsibility to parents some of whom don't know basics of nutrition
- Lack of coordination across adults and children's services – need to work closer.
- Parents getting support for mental health problems but impact on children not considered
- Music Board link with Public Health – different conversations – looking at the impact on mental health
- Need to look at joint children / adults commissioning
- Should map priorities of different partnerships
- Who is in charge? Delivery model keeps changing – don't know who to go to
- What access people have to city's offer of outdoor space and what can promote being healthy – significant inequalities across the city as a whole
- Have one website with lots of signposting – a Local Offer for Young People?

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Keeping Safe

Challenges

- Keeping safe can mean different things to different people. How a CYP feels they are keeping safe can be different from our perceptions as professionals / adults. Defining what is safe is important.
- What does better communication / collaboration actually mean in practice?
- Children and young people our focus but also how parents / family are doing – role modelling and whole family wellbeing.
- Experience of Break4Change shows incidences where YP's relationships to adults and other YP have very blurred boundaries
- Police experience working with young women involved in sexual exploitation
- Challenge - The time it takes to build trust in order to surface problem and open dialogue. Solution can be to have 1 point of contact.
- SafetyNet experiencing YP in very difficult and sometimes serious situations – requires help for YP to make good decisions and stay safe
- Effective supervision for staff is key in ensuring staff are effective in their practice
- We don't always understand how the YP sits in the system (YP operate in groups – peer norms). We need to be better understand using the intelligence held collectively by a range of agencies [Links to concept of professional curiosity]
- We need enough skilled people in the right place to respond. There is a large group of YP 'in the middle'
- Concept of the 'city child' is interesting– how do you coordinate individual services to have a better overarching sense to City Wellbeing. Partnerships each hold a piece of this – but they are not connected – not enough 'flow' between them.
- How do we take the good experiences and role models where CYP are thriving and apply it to those doing less well?
- Fantastic peer-to-peer work in schools that we need to tap in to more
- The influence and world of social media within which CYP engage are sites of potential risk. We need to understand and keep up as professionals.
- CYP's sense of space is much wider than their immediate neighbourhood / locality / city.
- LAC Children's experience very different to other children. The key trusted worker with whom the CYP attaches may be in a variety of places (family, different agencies) we need to ensure all those people know what is safe and when to act
- 2 universities have a wealth of YP – could they be encouraged to support this message perhaps via secondary schools- a more relevant role model? Universities have participation teams and student ambassadors (LAC teams use them) can we extend this?
- Housing and homelessness issues impact - temporary accommodation stock can be very poor and less than safe for YP in this situation.

Ambitions

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- Ask on schools in increasing – school staff not always feeling safe
  - § Important to have alternatives to school staff for CYP
- Outcomes required between school and other agencies may be different
  - § Interagency discussion to develop a multi-agency team around sexual exploitation both girls and boys. Linking to action on truancy
  - § A clear pathway with workers to highlight the key indicators around keeping safe . Bullying → Truancy → sexual exploitation etc.
  - § Ensure the participation of all agencies in the Early Help Hub and the MASH
  - § Important we help parents / families to understand what keeping safe means
- SafetyNet – child protection training, you see parents recognising the issues
- How many of these partnership boards have YP on them? Representation is there but issue is where YP have wide representation that it is meaningful and they have influence. Work is ongoing to improve this.
- Good example Blatch Mill School with elected pupil commissioners having genuine influence on school decision making we can learn more from that
- Possible to use the Break4Change video would it work on a wider scale?
- Early intervention – reducing safeguarding issues further down the line
- Clear messages to all communities in the City – what is safe (experience of smoking campaigns – children educating the parents). But education has to come from more places than schools.
- The importance of communities in addressing the issue, harnessing community networks

Using Partnerships to achieve our ambitions? Other forms of collaboration?
- There is lots of informal meetings where good work is done
- LSCB has focus on CP needs and is moving towards issues earlier on in a keeping safe pathway
- EHH and MASH should be a key tool for moving forward in this issue
- No-one really knows what all the current Boards etc do so it is difficult to have an overview
- School cluster system may need looking at – make sure there are good external non-school partners., working together is key.
- Feels too many partnerships, too varied to have any overarching engagement with
- Importance of one trusted individual for families that cuts through the service complexities and strategic complexities above
- The strategic work needs to be transparent but not so complex that it can't be understood. It needs to be able to connect to life at a community level
- Process has to be bespoke to the need – joined up strategic - local personalised delivery
- Clarity around what a child in need of help can expect to get from the 'city'.

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Social / Personal relationships – getting on well

Clarified what we meant – looking at:
- Families / social capital
- Volunteering / participation
- Young carers
- Wellbeing in a child friendly city
- Anti-social behaviour
- Cross generational relationships
- Children's wellbeing → whole community wellbeing)

Challenges
- Recognising / celebrating what goes on and what goes well and building on this: clubs, teams, organisations etc: participation / volunteering
- Making these inclusive eg cost issues, access issues eg fees, subs, bus fares
- Making sure people know about these opportunities
- Variety and diversity
- Recognising that most children are doing well, do behave , do participate and volunteer
- Identify key areas of focus for use of reducing resources – know the profile of the city well
- Early help – building resilience
- Difficulty in providing services eg CAMHS in child-centric settings, which are accessible as appropriate. Limited resources do not help this challenge. Ideally services would be offered in a range of ways that meet the needs of all children.
- Bullying – may be reducing with some very good practice but still exists (evidence from SAWS survey)
- Some suggested areas of focus: children with mental health issues; children who do not readily build relationships eg young carers
- Ensuring that interventions are evidenced based: this takes time, requires strong relationships between agencies and must be given priority
- Developing emotional literacy: starting early – family support, pre school settings

Ambitions
- Zero tolerance of bullying
- Strong youth work / play services in local communities, as universal as we can make it, not just targeted: somewhere to go / someone to speak to / something to do – for young people, young children, young families
- Define or signpost CAMHS more effectively: consider exploring the wellbeing service model for adult mental health services
- Be clear about the shared strategic intention for achieving a 'child friendly city' and how our various resources can be used to do this
- Arts / Music / Cultural offer which is inclusive and which attracts and moves forward those who would not naturally see this as something for them
- Front end coherence: what does it all look like to children, young people, families

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Using partnerships to move this work forward
- LA should not try to do everything! Identify key areas of focus and who can do the other things; don't try to be expert in all things – use expertise from around the city
- A local offer 'for young people / children's opportunities' drawing on existing directories
- Ensure there is a good understanding of the various community organisations and what they offer → guiding young people into local centres (more accessible) rather than bringing them into central provision
- Professionals know each other and work together well – respect rather than irritation
- Shared commissioning of youth work : ensuring that there is available in a non-institutional / non-threatening way

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Schools as part of their communities

Challenges
- Pooling of funding? How can schools best spend money?
- Pressure of attainment targets on schools
- What do schools hope to be in their community?
- Can be a lack of joined up approach – each school is individual and depends on Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team
- Forums and partnerships not often connected to one another (eg Sports)
- Communication challenge – how to have greater awareness of what is going on?
- Not sure how the different partnerships can support schools as main hub in the community? Needs clarifying.
- Expectation on school as being the hub in the community from parents
- Current pressure on schools – impacts on services – attainment – pressures – difficult to reach schools
- Particularly secondary schools – people travel more widely – what does community mean?
- Child abuse (neglect) and Domestic Violence big issues where Police can find it difficult to contact school quickly enough. What and who to contact? Ensuring relevant information gets to all involved can be difficult
- How do schools feed their concerns into the system?
- Info sharing between GPs and schools – hope MASH and EHH will help this to be better
- Engagement between schools and businesses could improve – more contact and more understanding
- Could there be central points of contact in to schools?
- Can the Learning Partnership help support school clusters and ensure a multi-agency approach?
- Large numbers of services on offer to schools – difficult to sift through options, they can feel overwhelmed
- Schools purchase what they know / familiar – how do we encourage use of other services?
- Are different sectors invited to Initial teacher training – NQT events?
- How can we build on good relationships with schools and businesses and employers?

Ambitions
- Schools to be the Hub of the community – but define what that means
- All schools are good and outstanding regardless of where they are – work with a range of partners to do this
- Key engagement with families – how is Headteacher able to be visible when so busy?
- Creative approaches needed to engage families
- Parents have good clear info how to access support
- More celebration of what is happening
- Capture the enthusiasm that is there →build on what is happening already
- Voice children and young people is heard

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- Targets – collected on CME (attendance / truancy at schools)
- More integration of schools with the services
- More cross phase success in communication – secondary as well as primary
- Clear who in school you need to speak to – someone responsible
- Everyone knows what data / information can be shared – everyone sees safeguarding as other responsibility
- IT systems support all the above – information sharing is easy
- Parents see school as their community
- Early help really working
- Practical, obvious and evident engagement eg as seen at Moulsecoomb
- See more parental engagement at secondary
- Better understanding both ways between schools and parents
- Outward facing and partnership focus for schools

Using partnerships?
- Recognise the diversity of our city more
- Could parents / carers be more involved in the partnerships?
- Education conference for parents?
- Better more creative use of school buildings
- BACA sports facilities – are they being used widely?
- All partnerships to have child at centre of strategies eg transport partnership
- More school representatives should be here today
- Support all headteachers on their understanding of various areas – joint training
- Partnerships to share knowledge more widely → need better systems to do this
- Training not to be in half term – such as Female Genital Mutilation forum
- Integrated approaches with schools → sharing information through Learning Partnership
- What does the voice of education look like in MASH and EH Hub?
- Vulnerability index more widely communicated
- Use school partnerships already in existence
- Explain how things work to a broader audience – starting with Council
- Hear from children / young people – schools councils → their voice in our partnerships – how to engagement them on their terms
- Communications from chairs of clusters would be helpful
- Leadership role of council
- CVS to know who to approach in schools

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Skills for Work

CHALLENGES
1) Apprenticeships
   a) Funding for training element previously given directly to training providers. Will now be given to businesses who will then seek out the training they require for their Apprentices.
      i) Majority of SMEs in B&H. This will be a big disincentive for them.
      ii) Businesses will be asked to pay towards the training for 16-18 year olds where previously it was free
      iii) Difficult for training providers to forward plan as they won't be able to predict demand
      iv) Will impact on LA duty to offer learning opportunities to all 16 and 17 year olds

2) Readiness for work
   a) Feedback from businesses locally and nationally is that young people are lacking the key employability skills that they need to move into employment
   b) Are employers asking too much? Don't they have a responsibility to develop at least some of these skills in young people?
   c) Where should young people be developing these skills? School, college, volunteering, home etc?

3) Generations of worklessness and subsequently hopelessness in families.

4) We have two Universities
   a) University students studying in the city and those choosing to remain after graduation are filling many of the low skilled jobs
   b) Current partnerships do not have sufficient links with the Universities
   c) Do we know our local Universities well enough?

5) Labour market information
   a) Schools, colleges and perhaps even Universities are not taking enough heed of labour market information when curriculum planning and delivering Careers Guidance IAG

6) Too many low wage, part-time and zero hours contract jobs in the city

7) School systems are driven by academic results
   a) Introduction of Progress 8 to replace previous 5 GCSEs A*-C as a measure of school and LA success
   b) GCSE and A level reform
   c) English baccalaureate
   d) etc

8) Raising of the Participation Age (but more an opportunity)

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9) Vulnerable groups such as young people with SEN
   a) Lack of links with adult services for transition purposes but also where similar issues might occur – opportunity for sharing of good practice
   b) Apprenticeships are not really an option – employers are not confident in employing a young person with physical or learning difficulties and the qualification framework is not often suitable
   c) SMEs in particular often lack the capacity, knowledge or experience to take on a young person with SEN. E&D policies may be lacking.

AMBITION
   1) Greater partnerships
   2) Valid and meaningful work experience pre-16
   3) Aspirational families with routeways out of worklessness
   4) Young people, parents and professionals using LMI to better understand the local employment opportunities
   5) A future proof city where we are teaching the young people the skills for tomorrow's jobs that may not even exist yet
   6) Entrepreneurship taught as part of the curriculum
   7) All young people value remaining in learning regardless of RPA
   8) SMEs are supported to take on Apprentices and to forward plan (to address challenge number 1)
   9) Our ambitions are Greater Brighton ambitions
   10) We value the impact that culture and the arts can have on young people's resilience and emotional well-being
   11) We work with businesses to challenge the misconceptions that all young people lack the skills for work
   12) We see, value and promote the positives of our young people. They have skills and talents that we don't have and a confidence around modern technology that is second to none.
   13) Commissioning meaningfully involves young people where appropriate
   14) Large businesses in B&H working in partnership with SMEs to develop E&D policies and disability awareness
   15) Businesses are supported to understand the needs and particular talents of young people with disabilities
   16) We invest in the importance of volunteering

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