

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

FAIRNESS COMMISSION

6.00pm 10 DECEMBER 2015

SUSSEX COUNTY CRICKET GROUND - HOVE

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Rayner (Chair), Wednesday Croft (Youth Mayor), Martin Harris (Managing Director, Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company), Ann Hickey (General Manager, East Sussex Credit Union), Dr. Rhidian Hughes (CEO, Voluntary Organisations Disability Group), Imran Hussain (Director of Policy, Rights & Advocacy, Child Poverty Action Group), Sally Polanski (Chief Executive, Brighton & Hove Community Works), Dr. Katie Stead (P and Clinical Lead for Public Health and for Locally Commissioned Services and Quality for Primary Care), Dan Shelley (Vice Principal, Sussex Coast College Hastings) and David Wolff (Director, Community University Partnership Programme)

1 INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

1.1 The Commission received an introduction from the Chair and apologies were received for Bill Randall and Rachel Verden.

2 THE BRIGHTON & HOVE YOUTH COLLECTIVE

2.1 The Commission heard a presentation by Ben Glazebrook in relation to youth work in Brighton & Hove.

2.2 The areas Mr Glazebrook explored were:

- Priorities in youth work, including relationships, trust and being youth led.
- Barriers that were faced within youth work and why these services are needed.
- Funding should maximise chances/opportunities/services and the Council should “spend to save”.

2.3 In response to questions and in general discussion the following points were made:

- Mr Glazebrook believed there is a need for more programs for young people to learn about money management.
- The strategies outlined by Brighton & Hove City Council were not seen to be as dynamic as they could be, and had not been fully successful in achieving their aims. Mr Glazebrook stated that the strategies were not a one size fits all for young people’s needs.

3 TRANSFORMING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

3.1 The Commission received a presentation from Gill Brooks. The following points were made:

- A local plan had been produced and had been supported by the Health & Wellbeing Board.
- Brighton & Hove CCG had invested in therapeutic health for children that had been the victims of sexual abuse.
- The service was focussing on being able to respond to crisis in out of office hours and working to ensure a smooth transition between children and adult services.
- The service wished to invest and improve in the following areas: eating disorders; information access through social media; an online counselling service and ensuring more support for vulnerable groups of children (e.g. children in care).

3.2 In response to questions and in general discussion the following point was made:

- The workforce was the most important factor in ensuring the service continued to be sustainable in future years. Ms Brooks also explained that the service had had difficulty recruiting; therefore they had sought to use and develop the skills already within the service.

4 OPEN SESSION

4.1 The Chair invited comments and questions from the public gallery and the following points were made:

- It would be helpful to have a chart or diagram produced to show how funding was being spent in Children's Services.
- A culture change was needed in the service; as well as improved use of social media and technology.
- More children/young people should be made aware of events and meetings similar to the Fairness Commission and their input sought for such meetings and discussions.

5 EARLY YEAR'S SUPPORT

5.1 The Commission received a presentation from Clair Barnard and Alex Peterson. The following points were made:

- Working in a nursery was not regarded as a high paying profession and the staff were often paid little in comparison to the nursery fees.
- Nurseries were an essential service for children; however, they were facing severe cuts and there was an important role for the Commission to ensure this issue was brought to the forefront through its work.
- Concerns were raised in relation to the consultation process and some nurseries believe there should be more discussion with services users as well as the staff.

- The presenters highlighted five items they believed should always be on the agenda, these being: to review the school admission form; have more support for voluntary workers; investment into adult literacy; attendance issues to be noticed before starting school and introducing a Home Start scheme in Brighton & Hove.
- A high quality of 'free play' for children should be promoted in Brighton & Hove and a review of families that were harder to engage or reach was needed to encourage as many families as possible to take advantage of the opportunities for children in the city.

5.2 In response to questions and in general discussion, the following points were made:

- In the context of the budget pressures, nurseries would be relying on more voluntary staff or parents helping.
- A Home Start scheme could be successful in Brighton & Hove. Similar schemes in other local authorities had been positive.

6 POVERTY PROOFING THE SCHOOL DAY

6.1 The Commission received a presentation from Sara Bryson and the following points were made:

- The media, especially TV programs, were sometimes seen to shame those in poverty; therefore, individuals did not always want to admit money problems and ask for help.
- Poverty in children and young people's lives needed to be focussed on how to prevent future poverty. Research had been conducted to explore what children thought about poverty and asked them for ideas and solutions for preventing it.
- Children in the lower classes in schools were more likely to come from a family in poverty. Not having the same access to the equipment could have a significant impact on their education.
- Potentially exploring the idea of opening the school throughout the school holidays to ensure children that received free school meals during term time still had access to a meal during the holidays.

6.2 In response to questions and in general discussion the following points were made:

- Head teachers often contact the speaker when the school received funding and they needed assistance with children that were affected by poverty.
- Sara Bryson explained that she would be happy to help train an Officer at Brighton & Hove to ensure schools understood how to improve the lives of children affected by poverty.

7 IMPROVING LIFE CHANCES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

7.1 The Commission received a presentation from Adrian Carver. The following points were made:

- Securing a longer education for young people with a disability could help the individual have an independent lifestyle in later years; however, there was currently no additional funding for this.
- Apprenticeships were often not available due to the lack of qualifications gained at school.
- There was a reduction in the provision of children centres and clubs due to reduced funding, and the costs for parents to travel to children centres.
- It was important that children with a disability had the opportunity to feel included and gain the support of a friendship group.
- NEET data showed that 42% of 20+ year olds with learning difficulties were unemployed.

8 OPEN SESSION

8.1 The Chair invited comments and questions from the public gallery and the following points were made:

- There are resources and assets in Brighton & Hove that should be utilized more to make an impact for the lives of children and young people.
- A different range of clubs and activities should be available to children, rather than just sport.

9 CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

9.1 The Chair suggested to the Commission that they hold an informal meeting in 2016 for children and young people to attend and give their views and experiences to feed into the work.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of