

Better Start Bradford Partnership Board Minutes
Thursday 20 June 2019
Mayfield Centre

Meeting Started: 17.30

Meeting Ended: 19.05

Present:

Vipin Joshi	Community Board member (Chair)
Talat Sajawal	Ward Councillor, CBMDC
Ruth Hayward	Head of Commissioning (Women and Children), Bradford & Craven CCGs
Sarah Hinton	Board Member, Bradford Trident
Alex Spragg	Programme Director, Better Start Bradford
Gwen Balson	Community Board member
Ludmila Novosjolova	Community Board member
Shaheen Khan	Community Board member
Yaqoob Ayoob	Community Board member

In Attendance

Gill Thornton	Head of Programme, Better Start Bradford
Jill Duffy	Implementation Manager, Better Start Bradford
Guy Dove	Programme Administrator, Better Start Bradford
Frances Lyons	Assistant Director, National Children's Bureau (items 1 & 2 only)
Claire Dorris	Senior Researcher, National Children's Bureau (items 1 & 2 only)
Zebunnisa Ahmed	Programme Co-ordinator, Better Start Bradford (item 3 only)

Apologies for Absence:

Kev Taylor	Jenny Cryer	Marium Haque	Sarah Muckle
Rosie McEachan	Sara Hollins	Satnam Singh	Julia Elliot
Carlton Smith	Phillipa Hubbard	Vicki Smith	Amanda Braithwaite
Duncan Cooper			

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Vipin welcomed everyone to the meeting, asked everyone to introduce themselves to each other and noted the apologies.

2. National Children's Bureau

Frances thanked the Partnership Board for giving them the opportunity to join the meeting. In January National Children's Bureau (Northern Ireland) were appointed by the National Lottery Community Fund as the learning partner for A Better Start. Their role is to spread learning from ABS externally e.g. via conferences, publications and communities of practice so that these are used to spread influence beyond the five ABS sites.

NCB are spending three days in Bradford to learn more about the progress made to date and identify strengths, areas of good practices and challenges so that an effective programme of information sharing, training and development can be developed. Members of the Board were asked a series of questions which were also being asked to groups of staff, partners, and volunteers across all five sites and will inform the development of the shared learning offer.

3. Risk appetite

Zeb delivered a presentation explaining risk appetite. The Partnership Board approved an 'Open' risk appetite level two years ago and agreed to review this in two years' time.

An example was used to facilitate the discussion, ensuring that board members understood how the different levels of risk appetite (Averse, Cautious, Open and Hungry) impact on the approach the programme takes. The more cautious we are the more quickly we would be required to take mitigating action. It was also pointed out that the Parents in the Lead and Innovation Fund would not be possible if we were to have an "Averse" risk appetite and that the test and learn approach requires a level of risk to be tolerated.

Vipin felt that to accommodate the approach of the programme our risk appetite still needs to be Open and Ruth observed that she would not support Hungry as we are dealing with public money and have a level of accountability.

Decision: It was agreed to retain an 'Open' risk appetite level and to review this again in two years' time.

Vipin noted we still have monthly monitoring of risks. Gill confirmed there are some Amber and Green rated risks and we will still try to do better with them but they should not interfere with the delivery of our programme. We do have to take action on Red rated risks and Alex said the action is tempered by our risk appetite. An Open risk appetite level fits innovation and Ruth observed that Averse would have shut down the programme before now.

Finally Shaheen asked about some BSB projects that are Red rated and Gill said we are giving them support.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 16 May 2019

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

5. Matters Arising actions table

It was explained that Julia Elliot is not in work at the moment and one of her senior colleagues is off sick so we do not have an update from her about sharing Better Start Bradford learning with integrated teams in the district. Alex said that involving VCS partners is a Year 2 piece of work for health visiting and they have only just started their new contract.

Jill confirmed that two Innovation Fund bids come from organisations already delivering Parents in the Lead projects (Childside and Womenzone). Also, Athletico are in partnership with one of the other bids but their Parents in the Lead funding is for different activities.

The independent performance review of BSB is on the agenda for this meeting.

6. Declarations of interest

Talat confirmed that he will soon begin a new job working for Bradford Trident, managing the Parkside sports and community centre. Vipin, on behalf of the Partnership Board, congratulated Talat and wished him well in his new role.

Gwen reported that she is no longer on the Board of Womenzone.

Sarah confirmed she is on the Board of Home-Start.

7. 'Getting to know you session'

This was not covered this month.

8. Better Start Imagine end of contract review

Jill confirmed that the Better Start Imagine project's current contract, delivered by BHT Early Education and Training, ends on 30 September 2019. This is our book gifting project for children up to age 4 with its wraparound activities. The project has performed well and we have worked with health visiting about boosting recruitment and after a slow start there has been an improvement but there is still work to do.

Books have been gifted to 2,602 BSB children against a changing context of the restructuring of children's services and the recommissioning of the age 0-19 Public Health contract.

The Commissioning Advisory Group met on 13 June and considered the Innovation Hub evaluation and information from the end of contract review meeting with BHT. They presented 3 potential options to the Board; Option A which is continuing with the existing project, refining recruitment processes and reviewing the engagement activities. Option B is continuing the project but dropping the wraparound activities as it is difficult to engage people in them, although it is these that deliver the outcomes we want. Option C is to decommission the project.

The Innovation Hub recommend continuing the project and working on improving recruitment, amending the progression criteria and adding to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library's choice of books. They also recommend looking at improving the wraparound activities.

The recommendation to continue with Option A comes with some caveats. We need to ask the National Lottery Community Fund's permission to purchase nine months' worth of books in advance, because the project is funded to run until 31 December 2025 but our programme ends on 31 March 2025. This means we will stop registering children born after 31 December 2021 and not 31 March 2021. We should also feed back to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library concerns about the cultural appropriateness of some of the books. We will need to discuss with the Innovation Hub further evaluation about school readiness, and embed in

BHT's new contract sustainability and sourcing new funding, and broaden the wraparound sessions to include other books.

Shaheen asked if we had received any feedback or complaints from parents about the books and Jill said we have received none directly. Shaheen asked about the wraparound activities and Jill replied that these include storytelling, reading the DPIL books and others, baby massage and key messages. BHT have been involved in the Bradford Literacy Festival.

Talat suggested linking the project in with Parents in the Lead activities and increasing engagement and collaboration and this should be put into the new contract. Sarah said the wraparound activities are essential and are the only ones that are sustainable and we should train parents to deliver them themselves. Ruth recalled that the Commissioning Advisory Group are concerned that we do not know what the parents are doing with the books and it is the wraparound sessions that give us the evidence. Talat recalled that Imran Hafeez covered the sessions at Talat's dads' group, and gave an insight to them about what they could do.

Gwen mentioned that the Commissioning Advisory Group had also suggested parents review the books which would lead to empowering the parents. Ruth said the UK selection panel for the books is made up of three White British academics, none of whom are based in diverse areas. Shaheen remarked that there is a parents' panel at her workplace, the Literacy Trust. Alex suggested that BHT liaise with the other A Better Start sites as some of them have also taken up Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Talat said that by involving Parents in the Lead we would already have the audience, they are engaged and we should tap into that. Shaheen suggested trialling the training of parents.

Vipin noted that the Innovation Hub have highlighted incomplete data from the wraparound activities and recommend better data capture. Jill confirmed that this will be a key focus for us.

Talat noted a trend of improvement in later years and Alex said we would continue this improvement. Jill noted that BHT have worked really hard with us and Alex added that this is evident from the figures.

Decision: The Partnership Board agree to continue with the existing project (Option A), noting the comments above about refining recruitment, reviewing the engagement activities and the other suggestions.

9. Neighbourhood project commissioning

(confidential item)

10. Programme monthly report

Gill clarified that under the ninth objective of item 1.0 of the report, it should refer to the Integrated Care Pathway which we are trying to reintroduce. In item 3.1.2, the buildings consultation is going to the Executive Committee in July which is Bradford Council's portfolio holders.

Vipin raised Bradford Doulas which has been rated as 'Red' in the report. Jill confirmed that their end of contract options paper will be going to the Partnership Board for decision in December 2019. We are working hard with them to rectify data issues and she is feeling more confident about this situation and the Doulas do understand the importance of data. They have struggled with capacity issues in terms of staff and volunteer recruitment and they have looked at the offer, training, recruitment and engagement which is what we would expect. Gill said there is a problem but she would not want to terminate the contract and Vipin agreed this is a good project.

Gwen noted that doulas have been successful in other areas and Gill said their location (Manningham) is possibly a problem for BSB. We will be visiting Tower Hamlets whose doulas have performed better. Ruth noted that different data has been asked for by Bradford City CCG and for them Bradford Doulas have done better and they see the benefit to the community. Vipin said our project has an underspend and suggested them moving into the BSB area and advertising here. Ruth pointed out there is no direct bus route from the BSB area to their location in Manningham and Gwen observed that some of the BSB community is very localised. Vipin said we are looking for Bradford Doulas to work and should help as much as possible.

Bradford City CCGs are looking at funding an expansion of the project and Talat asked if Bradford Doulas have the skills to upscale. Ruth said the CCGs are putting in these challenges and have been clear about building in management support. Jill confirmed that there is a meeting to discuss this next week.

Sarah remarked that it is hard to recruit volunteers with VCS organisations reducing paid staff and Gwen said there is a benefit when volunteers progress to becoming health professionals. Talat said refugees and asylum seekers would be happy to volunteer and he mentioned a local group with many vulnerable women in it who have never heard of doulas. Shaheen noted that volunteers need mentoring as well and Gill confirmed they have good supervision and support. Talat suggested linking them in with Parents in the Lead and said the audience is there and Gwen said this link should be part of the engagement strategy. Gill noted that all Parents in the Lead groups have a member of BSB staff attached to them and it is a good suggestion to add key messages. Alex observed that referrals do come from Parents in the Lead groups. The volume of referrals is less than they were from children's centres and we are working with the new Family Hubs about referrals and lots of their workforce with experience of BSB have left.

Talat asked if there is any reporting about links between PITL and projects and Gill will speak to Fiona about this. She confirmed that we are getting communications out to groups and project leads are working to improve engagement and referrals between projects. Also, Emma Stafford has ideas about improving contacts with Parents in the Lead. Jill said a lot of work has been done about the design of community engagement and we will collect data to illustrate pathways.

Shaheen enquired about Pre-Schoolers in the Playground and Jill advised it is going for review at the October 2019 Partnership Board. We have not had their final report yet which is due in July. The project has gone well with the best feature being learning and engagement from schools. We may need to change the model to improve it, with some issues over the repetition of activities. Talat suggested working with nurseries to deliver Pre-Schoolers in the Playground and Gill said it targets parents dropping older siblings off at schools and this is a pilot to see if it works.

Gwen raised ESOL for Pregnancy and Gill said a referral route was from the perinatal coordinators as well as midwives. This lifted recruitment for a bit but it has now declined and we are looking at addressing that.

11. Any other business

Alex presented a paper on an independent review of BSB's performance which covered what is already happening, the scope of such a review and a suggested approach and timeline.

This would be the first independent review. Talat said the Partnership Board should be asked what is to be reviewed and Alex explained that the paper had been developed following the discussion at the previous board meeting but she would welcome further suggestions if what was proposed did not fully cover what was required. Shaheen asked about the wellbeing survey and it was confirmed this is a community survey, being done mostly for Better Place.

Vipin said we could not make a decision today as the board was no longer quorate, and this should be brought back to the July Partnership Board.

There will be an online satisfaction survey for Partnership Board members to complete which is something we said we would do. It will be sent out electronically and is anonymous and is an opportunity to give feedback. We can adapt it slightly so any suggestions are welcome and it will be issued before July Partnership Board.

Vipin wished good luck to the BSB team competing in the Dragonboat Festival on Saturday and BSB will be at the Eid Mela at Horton Park on Sunday. Alex noted there are quite a lot of community engagement events this summer and the diary has been emailed out to the Partnership Board.

Ruth gave her apologies in advance for the July meeting but will see if Tabia can attend.

Finally Vipin asked if everyone had felt they had an opportunity to contribute to this meeting and all agreed that they had. He thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is on Thursday 18 July 2019 at Muff Field Wesleyan Reform Chapel, Tichborne Road West, BD5 8AN, starting at 9.30 am.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm.