

Better Start Bradford Partnership Board Minutes
Thursday 10 December 2020
Via Zoom

Meeting Started: 17:35

Meeting Ended: 19:30

Present:

Vipin Joshi	Community Board member (Chair)
Ruth Shaw	Senior Head of Strategy, Change and Delivery, Bradford District and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group
Sarah Hinton	Board Member, Bradford Trident
Alex Spragg	Programme Director, Better Start Bradford
Tracey Hogan	Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Fareeda Mir	Ward Councillor, CBMDC
Gwen Balson	Community Board member
Ishaq Shafiq	Community Board member
Karen Tetley	Community Board member
Ludmila Novosjolova	Community Board member
Salma Nawaz	Community Board member
Samina Begum	Community Board member

In Attendance

Sara Ahern	Programme Manager, Innovation Hub (in place of Josie Dickerson)
Gill Thornton	Head of Programme, Better Start Bradford
Gill Hart	Funding Manager, The National Lottery Community Fund
Jill Duffy	Implementation Manager, Better Start Bradford
Shaista Ahmed	Finance Manager, Better Start Bradford
Heather Fawcett-Jones	Programme Facilitator, Better Start Bradford
Guy Dove	Programme Administrator, Better Start Bradford

Apologies for Absence:

Adal Qureshi	Satnam Singh	Jo Howes	Josie Dickerson
Shaheen Khan			

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Vipin welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies.

Everyone introduced themselves to each other.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 19 November 2020

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising actions table

Sara said she would send the recording of the Innovation Hub presentation with added voiceover previously given to the Partnership Board to Alex.

Action: The Innovation Hub presentation is to be distributed to the Partnership Board.

The Innovation Hub are also exploring how to present the Partnership Board with regular updates on the data dashboard.

The service design of the Personalised Midwifery Project is on track to finish by the end of 2020 and the Reducing Inequalities in the City funded part of it is due to start in January. Gill Thornton noted that the hospital are getting ready to sign off the business case and start recruiting. There will be a duplicate team of midwives to the Clover team called the Heather team. Both teams will cover the Better Start Bradford area and the former City CCG area. They will not be assigned pregnant women according to GP practice and will instead look at vulnerability.

Guy confirmed there is a volunteer to cover the 'getting to know you session' at our February meeting, and further volunteers for future meetings would be appreciated.

Gill Thornton asked if Phil Hayden had let Alex know about supplying IT equipment to vulnerable families via schools. Alex confirmed she had an email from Phil about this and needs to link with the people organising this.

Action: Alex to provide an update regarding the IT distribution to vulnerable families

4. Declarations of interest

Ludmila declared that she is on the waiting list to receive Level 3 Forest School training (item 6).

5. 'Getting to know you' session

There was no session this month.

6. Forest Schools contract review

Jill gave a Powerpoint presentation. The Forest Schools project is delivered by Get Out More CIC, their contract is for £219k and is due to end on 31 March 2021. She went through the aims of the project which include increasing children's access to the natural environment and parental involvement. They are commissioned to deliver a programme of 10 sessions to 10 children and to run 12 programmes a year, and to deliver Level 1 and Level 3 Forest School training to parents and practitioners.

The project has performed very well in terms of participation and completion. Satisfaction is high and it has worked well with other BSB projects. Examples of this include work with Better Place and Horton Community Farm. There is good engagement in the Forest Schools training. These matters were also discussed by the Commissioning Advisory Group last week.

Challenges included low parental engagement initially but this was boosted by offering taster sessions and information videos. Other issues were litter and antisocial behaviour in the outdoor venues but Get Out More has good links with the police and council wardens and has made more use of parks and woodland. Additional Family Sessions have been put on.

The Commissioning Advisory Group considered three options last week and Jill went through them. Option A is to recommission the project for three years largely as it is and Option C is to decommission. The Commissioning Advisory Group recommend Option B, which is to recommission for three years while boosting the training, offering 9 more Level 1 courses and 1 more Level 3 course. They thought this option would help sustainability and capacity building with parents and practitioners.

The Commissioning Advisory Group's conclusions were that Forest Schools is recognised as a valued service with good completion rates. They queried that there would be enough demand for the proposed increased training and it was confirmed that there is. Forest Schools is a good and needed project and Option B is best for sustainability.

Sara said that Jill's presentation has already mentioned the highlights from the Innovation Hub evaluation report.

Karen remarked that Forest Schools is a fantastic project but queried its training and asked if the people who have had the training are now running any programmes. Heather said that Get Out More would like to support that in a new contract and it is part of their plan to involve parents in delivery. Karen observed that they would need to use their skills in the BSB area and Jill confirmed Option B includes additional capacity for engagement and to support parents delivering programmes. Heather added that this would help sustainability and the training would also be provided to nursery staff. Get Out More and Better Place will also support settings to identify how they can improve their outdoor spaces and explore additional funding opportunities.

Gill Thornton asked about costs and Jill confirmed Option A would be £274k and Option B would be £316k.

Sarah remarked that this is a great project and she loves seeing children outside. She said that more dads' engagement is needed and asked what Get Out More's ideas were. Heather confirmed this is part of their engagement plans and they are intending to run Family Sessions at different times of the day. Running them on Saturdays would increase opportunities to dads and the project is being flexible. Gwen asked if dads do the training and Heather replied that the training is open to dads if they want to do it, and Forest Schools can be flexible about the timing.

Parents and practitioners are to be Forest School trained, with the aim that practitioners set up their own sessions in early years settings, and this would make the project more sustainable with the plans to improve their outdoor spaces. Newly trained practitioners could build up their confidence in their own settings before travelling to external Forest Schools venues. Sara observed that it is important for the evaluation to know where the practitioners are from and where is setting up their own Forest School. Data from early years settings will be needed for an enhanced evaluation.

Ludmila mentioned she is on the waiting list for the Level 3 training (which was put on hold due to Covid) and is due to start in February. She noted there are strict requirements to get

on to the training and future sessions must be delivered in the BSB area. Gwen suggested encouraging dads via the training and Heather confirmed Forest Schools do a taster session to which a family member is invited to sign-up and attend. This would be whoever in the family has an interest and it will be made clear that this is open to dads. The project will put on weekend options.

Gwen asked if more than one family member could attend and Heather replied that they could, depending on there being interest. Gwen noted that families sometimes do things in groups and Heather confirmed that the Family Sessions include whole families, including grandparents and older siblings (which would avoid childcare issues).

Decision: The Partnership Board decided to recommission Forest Schools and Get Out More for a further 3 years but with adaptations building on the learning already gained to provide a further level of support to nursery staff and parents (Option B). This would equip parents with resources, advice, training and equipment and create some sustainability to continue to facilitate outdoor play and learning for young children in the Better Start Bradford area.

7. April to September 2020 accounts and Forecast to 31 March 2021

Shaista talked through the financial report and analysis papers. The first spreadsheet in the meeting pack shows actual spend from April to September 2020 compared to the budget and any variances.

There has been an underspend of £1.1 million against the budget for the first six months of the financial year, which amounts to 29 per cent of the budget. The main reason for the variances is the pandemic and resulting lockdown. Operational costs have been lower due to remote working, and there have been fewer events, with those that have taken place being delivered remotely. There have been no travel expenses or overnight stays during conferences. Salaries spend is less partly because a staff member on secondment to us was redeployed back to the NHS Care Trust due to Covid and due to some vacancies being carried for longer than anticipated.

Expenditure on Learning Together has been more than forecast as we have made some adaptations in response to the current circumstances. £12k has been spent on a series of five podcasts that have been purchased and will be delivered over the year. There are increased costs of £1.6k higher than budget on staff welfare.

Shaista moved on to projects and said that their costs have also been lower. They have adapted to different ways of working and remote delivery, which has lower costs than face-to-face delivery.

Shaista explained that an additional column on the spreadsheet shows balances brought forward for projects so we can see the overall spend. Home Start and Baby Steps previously had business cases approved to use their underspend from previous years (to buy a management information system and to increase staff hours respectively) so they have not overspent as it may appear on the balance sheet. We are arranging meetings with the projects about their underspends and their plans for moving forward.

Other reasons for project underspend are that we did not do a new round of Parents in the Lead applications, and five Innovation Fund projects were meant to start delivery from 1 April, but these have been delayed due to lockdown.

Shaista turned to the forecast which is on the second spreadsheet. She explained that we used actual spend for the first six months of this financial year, then forecast from October 2020 to March 2021 based on the original budget. The budget for 2020/21 was £8 million but is now forecast to be £6.6 million due to the pandemic and lower costs for the projects.

At the October Partnership Board it was agreed that the Groundwork contract for Better Place be extended. The original budget was for ten months in 2020/21 as the contract end date was due to be 31 January 2021, but Shaista has now added the additional two months' costs for the year which is £27k.

Shaista noted that the Finance & Audit sub-committee have already scrutinised these accounts.

Ishaq commented that some partners have said they need more time to deliver due to Covid, but expenditure is down and we should not invest more money in other projects. Gill Thornton replied that we would have to look at the return to work and noted that virtual delivery does suit some people and we may have a combination of face-to-face and online delivery which would lead to higher costs. She noted that the Innovation Fund projects took a while to get going but they did incur costs so that they could deliver. Proposals will be brought to the Partnership Board and although Gill Thornton said that she cannot predict things, we will not be cutting project's budgets. It has, for example, been hard for them to induct new staff but we will keep an eye on the situation.

Ishaq raised digitalisation and asked what would happen if people are not comfortable with it, though we need to test and learn. Tracey suggested using underspend on the digitally excluded e.g. providing tablets. Alex confirmed we are working with the wider system about the support offered to people and this is linked with the work we are doing with Phil Hayden and other projects are also looking at this. We have asked our projects to flag digitally excluded families to us but they are not coming back to us regularly saying it is a barrier to participation, though we would have looked at the matter if they had. Sarah remarked that is not just the IT kit which is the issue for some families – there is also a lack of data and wi-fi. There is a pilot of free wi-fi in some areas.

Decision: The Partnership Board notes and accepts:

- **The accounts for the six month period ending 30 September 2020**
- **The forecast for the year ending 31 March 2021**
- **The revision to the 2020-21 budget**

8. Impact of Covid on project evaluation and contracts

Sara observed that there has been a massive shift in project delivery due to the pandemic. There is a need to understand how projects' plans for delivery differ from their service design documents. There are implications for contracts, indicators and the evaluation and a decision is needed on how contracts are taken forward.

Sara gave a presentation that was also shared with the Commissioning Advisory Group last week. Projects were asked to review their logic model and tell us the impact of Covid on inputs, activities and outputs. They were also asked how they propose to take their projects forward. Some projects have had lower costs due to the pandemic but others have had more e.g. for interpretation services. There has been a change from face-to-face to virtual delivery but some projects have not changed and have been unable to do their activities. Some projects report fewer referrals or uptake but others have seen increases.

Sara moved on to plans for the future and confirmed that she and BSB have done a prioritisation and RAG-rating exercise for the projects, based on both the impact Covid has had on delivery and how close they are to their contract reviews. Projects which are close to contract reviews are high priority as are those where Covid has had a significant impact. Each project has been prioritised from BSB's point of view and the Innovation Hub's and then both teams have put forward recommendations.

Incredible Years and Breastfeeding Support are high priority and Red-rated. Incredible Years have already proposed another six months' contract extension. Other projects such as Better Place which has just had a contract review and where Covid has not had such an impact are low priority for this purpose.

Sara presented two options. Option 1 is to review the projects using the existing contract review timeline. This would have the advantage of not having an effect on staff capacity but would risk using inappropriate indicators, the wrong data being collected, and asking the wrong evaluation questions which would be a risk for those projects which could have an enhanced evaluation.

Option 2 is to use the prioritisation exercise to review the programme project by project. This would reduce the above risks but would put a strain on BSB and Innovation Hub staff and maybe project delivery organisations.

It was confirmed that the Commissioning Advisory Group had discussed this and recommended Option 2.

Decision: We will adopt Option 2 and use the priority basis and conduct the contract reviews project-by-project, rather than using the existing timeline.

9. National Lottery Community Fund Annual Review

Alex reported that the review meeting took place three weeks ago with the NLCF. The BSB timeline and Innovation Hub data from our workshop in October was shared with NLCF and members of the Strategic Reference Group. This showed that in our first five years we reached just over one-third of BSB pregnant women and just over a half of age 0-5 BSB children. This is encouraging, especially as the majority of our projects have not been delivering for all of our first five years.

A financial review was also provided and whilst there was an unexpected underspend this year at the end of Year 5 we were not significantly far off our overall anticipated budget.

The independent performance review by St Edmunds (which has also been delayed) was discussed at the NLCF annual review. We will be bringing the results of this to the January Partnership Board. The review has been completed but St Edmunds could not engage with

as many people as they had planned, particularly BSB parents, due to the pandemic. However, there will be indicators of where the programme is and areas we can improve.

The Legacy and Sustainability paper which was discussed previously with the Partnership Board, our Covid response and priorities for the next 12 months and beyond were also discussed.

Feedback from the National Lottery Community Fund acknowledged progress made on what was discussed at the previous annual review, including reach. Adaptions made due to Covid was one of many challenges in our first five years. Ruth offered for the CCG to support BSB with the impact of the pandemic on contracts which was gratefully received.

The NLCF review took place the week after Baby Week which we also adapted due to Covid and was a success. We also reported on the Better Place capital works and shared photos of the improvements that have been completed.

There was a discussion about data and how it is used and how it informs commissioning. We mentioned the RIC funding for Little Minds Matter, Personalised Midwifery and Doulas which is the start of sustainability and legacy intentions.

Alex said the NLCF are commissioning a new evaluation partner for the national programme early in the new year, and they will be working with us and the Innovation Hub. BSB are influencing wider work in the district and national level, an example of which has been our participation in the review of early years by Andrea Leadsom MP.

The NLCF were very positive and so were BSB partners who were able to share how there is linkage into the wider district work but we all recognise that there is significant work still to do. More sharing of data is a target.

Gill Hart agreed it was a positive review. The timeline was a useful way to see progress over the first five years and it was good to see the plans for sustainability and legacy. She observed that the remaining four-and-a-bit years of the programme will pass very quickly. BSB responded well to Covid and the webinars etc were good. The next 12 months are likely to be about Covid recovery. Gill Hart also said she is looking forward to seeing the results of the performance review by St Edmunds.

Ishaq asked if Community Board members could speak directly to the National Lottery Community Fund, perhaps at an annual meeting, as the Partnership Board is community-led. He suggested that this could discuss changing scope, use of underspend and he acknowledged different things are done in other A Better Start sites. Vipin observed that Community Board members do speak to the NLCF, and the NLCF do visit Bradford to speak to BSB parents. A member of the NLCF team regularly attend the Partnership Board, they receive all the meeting papers and are aware of the discussions taking place.

Vipin suggested discussing with Ishaq outside of this meeting concerns raised about Community Board members needing to be BSB area resident parents of young children and how they could meet the NLCF. He noted that the NLCF do spend whole days in Bradford and there is contact. Alex added that the annual review meeting discussed BSB performance and Vipin is the Community representative on the Strategic Reference Group (who attend the annual review) so there is a formal route for Community Board member views to be fed into the process.

Gill Hart remarked that this has been a very unusual year and normally she would have had opportunities to meet all the Community Board members by now, particularly the new ones. She and her colleagues are eager to meet the Community Board members as soon as they can do and admitted that they have been less visible than in previous years. Community Board members are welcome to speak directly to the NLCF and hopefully Gill Hart and her colleagues will be much more visible in the future.

Ishaq shared the view that some projects are very clinical and professionals-led and felt that there needs to be more community-led ones with there being a gap in engagement of parents and there should be less jargon. It would be good to see the learning from the last five years in plain English.

Samina said she has been part of BSB for a while and she recalled participating directly in two NLCF visits, one as a HENRY volunteer and another to a Parents in the Lead group and feels that there are opportunities to meet them and she does feel included. As a BD5 parent she can see the difference caused by BSB. Fareeda suggested that the newer members have not seen what has gone on before. She noted that there is a need to be more productive about what has and has not worked in the evaluation and that the BSB programme will soon be over. She wants to see something that is here and can be sustained and we would need to showcase that.

10. Annual Review of Partnership and Governance

Alex explained that as part of the annual review of partnership and governance we are expected to reflect on progress made which is why this has been delayed to coincide with the annual review. The Partnership Agreement was circulated with the meeting papers so people could refresh their knowledge and raise any questions. However, any changes to the Agreement would need to be approved by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Gill Thornton suggested everyone does look at the Partnership Agreement and it contains the context in which the partnership sits and all of its responsibilities. It references Bradford Trident all the way through as they are our accountable body and the organisation with whom NLCF contract. The NLCF's terms and conditions are a significant part of the Agreement and all projects need to abide by them. The Agreement makes things clearer about Partnership Board membership.

11. Programme Monthly Report

Gill Thornton drew attention to a number of highlights included within the report. She noted that Shahid Islam of Born in Bradford (who used to be a BSB employee) had won an award for a paper about addressing obesity in Roma communities which was co-authored by a BSB member of staff. Sara put a link to the paper in the Chat.

BSB were invited to facilitate a group of parents to take part in Andrea Leadsom's early years review. This came about following the Baby Week webinar on maternal inequalities and provided an opportunity for mums from across the BSB contribute their views and experiences of maternity and early childhood services. The mums' input was very valuable. Aliya Fazil from the Doula project jointly facilitated one of the sessions and Andrea Leadsom heard things she would not have done if the groups had not taken place and we hope they make a difference. We helped to make the case for the importance of prevention and early intervention.

Baby Week was a great success despite the constraints of the pandemic. We are hoping that useful work will flow from the webinar which discussed inequalities in maternity care (which have been exacerbated by Covid) and the impact on BAME communities and how services treat people differently. Gill Thornton also mentioned the innovative advertising we did during Baby Week and we will be getting the statistics about this soon.

Gwen asked about black women and maternity services and asked if anything specific had been done for specific ethnicities. Gill Thornton said different ethnic groups had different experiences and Alex added that the webinar had a panellist from Five Times More which described the increased prevalence of poor birth outcomes. The evaluation will show if our reach is representative and we cannot yet say what is working for ethnic groups but we can say where they are. Gwen commented that if a specific group has more inequality, reach should not just be numerical but needs to also look at other items. Alex confirmed that the qualitative research will draw some of that out. We are feeding into wider work across the system, as are others. Particular vulnerabilities have been identified for women.

Sara mentioned the qualitative work and hoped that the BiBBS cohort data will give an understanding of the population and risks and she is hoping to give a profile of BiBBS in the new year. Sara will take Gwen's points to the Innovation Hub and ask more questions and look at more diverse reporting on ethnicity.

Ishaq asked if the data could be broken down more into wards and neighbourhoods so we could see gaps and Gwen said we should find missing communities. Sara confirmed her team will see what the community are interested in regarding data and they are trying to reduce jargon and are planning workshops for the Community Board members in the new year.

Ishaq mentioned a perception that BD3 is missing out to BD5 and there needs to be more data about minorities. Sara confirmed her team do have data but it is not reported in that way and Ishaq should raise these concerns in the discussion regarding the data dashboard.

Ruth noted that BSB are influencing broader communities and the Maternity Voices Partnership breaks down what was in the BAME conversations sparked by Baby Week.

12. Quarterly Strategic update

Alex gave a verbal update of strategic meetings and events that BSB have contributed to.

Children's System Board meets every two months, the focus of the November meeting was on older children and specialist support. Education reported that Bradford had received recognition from the DfE for their effective approach to keeping children in school, having fewer bubble closures proportionately to the number of Covid cases reported. However, there are concerns about the substantial increase in elective home education, anxiety about the school environment is a significant factor.

Children's Services Improvement - Early Childhood Services

Members of the Better Start team are feeding into the development of an integrated age 0-5 core offer. The working group of secondees have worked with our Integration and Change Manager and others across the system to identify gaps and agree core elements. A data dashboard for the district and an outcomes framework for early childhood have been developed and are currently being refined and populated.

Health and Social Care Careers and Technical Education (formerly known as Industrial Centres of Excellence)

This is a system wide initiative to encourage and support young people who are interested in a career in health and social care. These should have lots of delivery working in schools and face-to-face which has not happened due to Covid so they have focussed on background work and supporting schools to undertake elements of the delivery themselves. The CTE's are doing videos with toolkits that have been circulated to schools and have provided information about career skills to contribute to careers. They are linking with SkillsHouse who are supporting young people to get into the job market.

Act as One - Better Births

BSB were invited to present at the initial network event which provided an overview of the work on Better Births and reflected on the wider system work contributing to this. Personalised care is a significant strand of this work and the development of our Personalised Midwifery Project was shared.

Living Well

Work on health messaging to the population has been under development demonstrating ways in which people can "Live Well". The website has now gone live and will be widely promoted in the new year. This will have Public Health messaging and will include maternity and young children with links to many aspects of our programme including Forest Schools and Better Place.

13. Any other business

Vipin thanked all for their hard work and time in a difficult year. He asked for his thanks to be passed on to the BSB staff team for keeping the programme going and finding new ways of working.

He wished everyone a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah and a Happy New Year. Vipin said it is a pleasure to chair this Board and he is inspired by everyone.

Finally Vipin asked if everyone had felt they had an opportunity to contribute to this meeting and all agreed that they had.

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is provisionally on Thursday 21 January 2021, starting at 9.30 am.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.