

Better Start Bradford Partnership Board Minutes
Thursday 17 March 2022
Via Zoom

Meeting Started: 17:30

Meeting Ended: 19:35

Present:

Vipin Joshi	Community Board member (Chair)
Ruth Shaw	Senior Head of Integration and Change (Health and Care) for Women and Children, Bradford District and Craven CCG
Alex Spragg	Programme Director, Better Start Bradford
Josie Dickerson	Programme Director, Innovation Hub
Gwen Balson	Community Board member (Vice Chair) (items 1 to 7 only)
Samina Begum	Community Board member (Vice Chair)
Ludmila Novosjolova	Community Board member (item 6b onwards)
Salma Nawaz	Community Board member

In Attendance

Gill Hart	Funding Manager, The National Lottery Community Fund
Gill Thornton	Head of Programme, Better Start Bradford
Sarah Worstead	Senior Manager of Integration and Change (Health and Care) for Women and Children, Bradford District and Craven CCG
Jill Duffy	Implementation Manager, Better Start Bradford
Shaista Ahmed	Finance Manager, Better Start Bradford
Fiona Saville	Community Engagement Manager, Better Start Bradford
Ally Crawley	Storyteller, Better Start Bradford
Guy Dove	Senior Programme Administrator, Better Start Bradford
Gareth Greenwood	Detective Inspector, West Yorkshire Police (items 1 to 6a only)
Ruth Davison	Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Manager, CBMDC (items 1 to 6a only)

Apologies for Absence:

Peter Horner Sarah Hinton Tracey Hogan Karen Tetley

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 – 20 January 2022

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising actions table

Alex confirmed that the action about re-establishment of the District Reference Group is still pending due to pressures at our partners and changes going on there. We will be seeking to progress this action later this year.

4. Declarations of interest

For item 7, it was noted that Salma successfully applied for a group to receive Parents in the Lead funding.

5. 'Getting to know you' session

This was not covered this month. Vipin asked for volunteers to do so and suggested we could nominate someone.

6. Innovation Fund update including domestic abuse project application

Domestic abuse project application (item 6a)

Gill Thornton explained that this follows the Partnership Board's decision about the future of the Innovation Fund when it was agreed to explore working with the police to develop a response to high domestic abuse rates within the Better Start Bradford population.

Fiona explained that the proposed project will be a partnership approach and will aim to help expectant parents and very young children living in the Better Start Bradford area. The rationale for the project includes findings that domestic abuse in pregnancy causes toxic stress in the womb and adverse childhood experiences later. This can cause developmental delay including for communication and language, impact on school readiness, poor outcomes and damage the nurturing bond with parents.

There are very high cases of domestic abuse in the BSB area, the highest in the district, with 2,177 instances reported to the police during 2021. 18% of these were from households with a child under age 4. Many were repeat offences.

Fiona said the proposed project has the potential to be scaled up and cascaded as part of BSB's legacy. The project will build on an existing pilot of a unique post, a HIDVA (Health Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) based at Bradford Royal Infirmary, providing advice and support, and meeting complex needs to victims of domestic abuse including male victims. It aims to identify victims at an earlier stage, offer training for staff and 1:1 support and increase staff's confidence.

The proposal is to fund a HIDVA post for 18 months based within Midwifery's safeguarding team to focus on women during their maternity journey, the partnership includes Staying Put (a local domestic abuse charity) and there would be joint team meetings and training opportunities via their organisation.

The project would work with parents, providing advice and support, upskill those working with parents and make links with other services. There would also be a group intervention and a targeted approach. The new advocate would attend multi-agency meetings and have a strong partnership approach. They would try to get an evidence base, make Staying Put referrals and increase awareness of BSB among midwives. The project would aim to give effective implementation evidence and evidence of impact to help secure long-term funding. It also fits with Public Health's Adversity, Trauma and Resilience Strategy.

Fiona explained that there is no project like this in the country and there is a plan to build a business case for the Health based HIDVAs to be provided as part of mainstream provision. This domestic abuse pilot has been presented to the Integrated Care System (ICS). There is an intention to inform an offer across other hospitals, regional and national partners.

Fiona explained there are three options to consider at this meeting. Option A is for 18 months of delivery which would include 6 months of evaluation, and the learning from it would be cascaded externally. The cost of Option A would be £80k. Option B is for 12 months of delivery with no evaluation and Option C is to reject the project.

The Commissioning Advisory Group recommended Option A at their meeting last week. However, they were inquorate, so their other members were asked by email to approve Option A or raise objections or queries. Enough members voted for Option A for it to be their recommendation.

Gwen said this was a really exciting project and interesting. She asked how victims would be identified and Ruth Davison confirmed that Maternity Services would identify women from the BSB area who would be screened and referred. The project would build a community response and pathways and tell other agencies that the offer is available. There would be links with community midwives and families with a known history of domestic abuse would be screened.

Gareth confirmed that West Yorkshire Police share information with other agencies such as the local authority and Staying Put. Cases affecting expectant mothers and young children will be fed through and referrals picked up and BSB cases would be identified. Fiona added that there are two safeguarding midwives at the BRI with links with Staying Put. Ruth Davison noted that midwives do screen for domestic abuse.

Josie remarked that from an evaluation viewpoint, what is most important is implementation, referrals and access. Her team's studies of women in maternity have shown that almost zero cases of domestic abuse are reported. Feedback to the BiBBS study was that questions about domestic abuse were inappropriate. There are massive cultural influences about how the matter should be approached and cases found. Josie said the police involvement in the proposed project is a great idea but they would only get severe cases. She queried how we would facilitate disclosure and get successful access in 18 months and although the learning is important there are challenges.

Gwen agreed that disclosure is very sensitive and there are cultural and generational issues to consider with how it is handled, remembering sensitivities and vulnerabilities, but it is a great project.

Vipin agreed with this but noted he had been involved with funding domestic abuse projects via other agencies over many years and there were challenges to sharing learning or

evaluation due to confidentiality. We need to ensure there is learning available and domestic abuse may not be visible but it is there and there is a need to do the project. As there was no shared evaluation data from the other projects it was very hard for a funder. We will need to help the people who need it and the proposed project should not be a tick-box exercise.

Salma asked when domestic abuse would be discussed with pregnant women. When she was pregnant she would often see a different midwife each time. There are less clinics once women have had more than one child and midwives do not have much time in the appointments. Fiona replied that there would be an initial conversation at 20 weeks gestation. This is a Health HIDVA and we could involve other health provision such as GPs practices and build on safety in health settings.

Fiona agreed that learning is important and there would be an anonymised data dashboard which would be shared as part of a business case for long term funding. There will also be case studies and the police supplied domestic abuse figures and have been supportive. The existing HIDVA pilot has already been running for 12 months and has just been extended for a further 12 months and there is learning already.

Alex commented that this is an innovative approach and an opportunity to test and learn. It is also a way to influence services and how they are focused. The model of working with the local authority and the police has the potential to be carried forward. This is a good example of partnership working leading to innovation.

Josie observed that the evaluation could have multiple layers involving people and case studies. Its critical elements would be getting the right people, reach, the system allowing referrals and the project has great potential. Vipin agreed it is much needed and we need its evaluation.

Decision: The Partnership Board approved Option A, to fund the project for 18 months allowing for delivery and including 6 months to evaluate the project, cascade the learning and embed the model in the wider system.

Gareth and Ruth Davison thanked the Partnership Board for their time and left the meeting.

Update on existing Innovation Fund projects (item 6b)

Gill Thornton recalled that the Partnership Board approved these Innovation Fund projects three years ago. They started delivery in 2020 but were hit by Covid restrictions. They adapted and did delivery to an extent.

Horton Community Farm delivered a 'Grow to School' project, jointly funded by the Innovation Fund and the Better Place project. It was always envisaged to be part of Better Place and linking them avoided duplication and could lead to a better evaluation. The project was funded via Better Place underspend.

Lots of outreach was done during the pandemic, growing plants with children and their families. The project's logic model could not be applied as delivery was different to what was originally designed, but what was delivered was good.

The contract ends on 31 March 2022, but BSB propose that it is extended by three months to allow a proper wind-up. We are also about to recommission the Better Place project, within this we cannot dictate who the new provider will work with, however, the contract stipulates

working with the community and this may be a relationship that is extended, although we should not pre-empt what they will do. We have kept Horton Community Farm fully informed and there are opportunities to deliver Grow to School via other relationships they have developed.

BSB ask that the Partnership Board agree the three month contract extension but no further Innovation Fund funding. There will be a more detailed report about the project at a future meeting.

ChildsSide run the Older Yet Wiser Innovation Fund project, delivering a course to grandparents who care for their grandchildren. This was piloted three years ago and ChildsSide were one of the projects introduced to the royal couple when they visited Bradford two years ago.

No delivery was possible during lockdown as online delivery was felt to be unrealistic. Face to face delivery started this year and the courses should be completed by September 2022. Despite being offered a two or three year project, ChildsSide do not want to continue with Older Yet Wiser as it is not part of their future priorities and they want to work on different things. There will be some qualitative, small-scale evaluation to do with grandparent relationships and better supporting their children as parents.

HABIT is an oral health Innovation Fund project run by Leeds Dental School. Gill Thornton shared its objectives and noted that HABIT training has been embedded in our MECSH (Maternal and Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting) enhanced health visiting offer. Leeds University are conducting their own detailed evaluation. Delivery is progressing but has been slowed by Covid, and the project has been extended a couple of times. The contract is now due to end in December 2022 but may run to March 2023 to allow the evaluation to be completed, which will be a feasibility study.

Gill Thornton said that HABIT is showing a positive impact on practitioners and has drawn interest from elsewhere such as the Institute of Health Visiting. It may become a wider training opportunity and hopefully will be mainstreamed and we are working with Public Health in relation to this. BSB are requesting the extension to March 2023 which is likely to be needed and it would be at no additional cost.

BSB fund two other Innovation Fund projects (Womenzone and Resilient Dads). These have already been extended to September 2022 and a report will be brought to the April Partnership Board to consider the future of these projects.

Decision: The Partnership Board approved the actions outlined in the report.

7. Review of Parents in the Lead

Gill Thornton noted that the Partnership Board asked for a review of Parents in the Lead to be completed. A task and finish group was set up and BSB looked for a consultant to support this work, Ally Crawley agreed to coordinate the review. Gill Thornton thanked the task and finish group for their work.

The review of PITL is now complete. Ally had detailed discussions with groups and the people involved. The feedback was very positive and Ally took the review's recommendations to the

task and finish group, and discussed staffing, the application process and support offered to PITL projects. They also supported appointing a PITL co-ordinator.

Gill Thornton said the purpose of the review is to see how PITL can bring about lasting sustainable change. When PITL started, not as much support was offered as now with applications and set-up.

Ally gave a Powerpoint presentation. She outlined her brief which was to review the Parents in the Lead Activities Fund, with a particular focus looking at sustainability and capacity building of existing and future PITL groups.

The review journey included Ally having over 30 conversations with a variety of people and she also surveyed 21 contacts who had never heard of PITL. She visited 16 projects to observe them and talk to the parents. Ally also reviewed 87 PITL application forms, recorded data from 56 forms and 26 end of award forms. She reviewed other similar programmes such as from the A Better Start Lambeth site and looked at PITL case studies.

Ally proceeded to her key findings, all who participated were supportive of PITL and its aims. They also fed back that its application form is relatively easy to complete. The amount of the award is seen as appropriate and most ask for less than £2,000. 38 per cent of the projects funded have a Stay and Play infrastructure, though the latest round of projects are not included in the review. Other projects are 'Active Funs' or a mixture of things. Common themes identified are the need for handholding or support, building relations and help with the applications. This is particularly the case when the bidders do not have English as their main language.

Ally moved on to challenges. Delivery is fragmented and groups could share resources, avoid duplication and PITL could have a joined-up approach. The requirement for a group to have a designated bank account has caused much difficulty and lead organisations complained that it affected their accounts or charged the PITL projects management fees.

From 2017 to 2019, 75 per cent of PITL applications were successful (63 out of 84) but over 2020-21 all 45 applications were successful. Ally said this might be because BSB had a bigger engagement team, more support was given and eligibility was relaxed due to Covid. Some awards have duplicated other provision and Ally noted that this shows that refresher training for the decision panel is needed. Ally reported a lack of consistency in data recording, and the form for this was changed after learning from 2017-19.

45 per cent of the projects were from Bowling and Barkerend according to the 2017-19 data, and 75 per cent of the participants were female. Ally noted that the gender of adults was not always recorded and ethnicity data was inaccurate and recorded in different ways. The monitoring forms do not cover development and next steps. Ally reiterated that refresher training is needed for the panel, and the workforce supporting those applying for the funding.

Ally turned to the 21 contacts she surveyed who had never heard of PITL. Four of them guessed correctly what it is, and its name was misinterpreted with many thinking it was sport related and competitive.

The review found that training opportunities need to be easily accessible. It can take years to build up a relationship and she mentioned a case where someone needed four years of

support to have the confidence to make a PITL application, and then needed help with the set-up.

Ally mentioned another case study where a PITL project vastly improved a garden attached to Karmand Nursery, which now grows its own produce, runs Plant and Learn sessions, Better Place community sessions and meets two BSB aims as well as publicising other BSB projects. Key messages are also given out. The parent who applied became a volunteer at Communityworks and now has a full-time job there as an engagement worker and has also started as a freelance Hungarian interpreter. The skills she learned via PITL all helped with her development.

The task and finish group met on 21 February and agreed the review's recommendations. There will be one full time equivalent PITL co-ordinator. This person will have many responsibilities, including events, training, evaluation, data logging and case studies. There is also a need for part time admin support e.g. for panel meetings, which will come from current BSB staff. Engagement staff's job descriptions should be reviewed and there should be dedicated marketing support and resources and a joined-up team structure – PITL should be part of every BSB staff member's job role.

Other recommendations include a new name for PITL and new identity, reviewing all its forms, and having three application rounds a year with a clear timeline, fitting around school terms. Key dates need planning in advance, including panel meetings, training and launch dates. We should implement face to face support sessions and have enhanced online help around applying, a video guide and hints and tips from previous applicants.

There should be PITL briefings for support workers and regular refresher training for the panel, who should observe play sessions and be given access to other training. We need a clear assessment scoring system including sustainable development. There should be pre-panel screening of applications, for example to check for overlaps, but this should be relatively light-touch.

Panel meetings should discuss a gaps analysis and use knowledge of their members' communities. We could potentially allocate mentor support at panel meetings. A simpler process is needed for continuation funding and BSB should investigate wider support and training. The Early Years Alliance Play and Learn offer and framework should be integrated with PITL projects at an appropriate level. We should develop a 'pick and mix' of resources.

Ally suggested having an annual celebration event for PITL. This would reward successful applications and organisations such as CABAD could attend to help progress projects to the next level. There should also be a discussion about resources and equipment after a project has finished to help with sustainability.

The review recommends using online form software for the application form. To resolve the bank account issue, BSB should consider a pre-paid card system to upload funds, which would give a clear trail of spend. We should explore membership of support organisations such as BUFA and the Early Years Alliance.

Finally Ally turned to legacy and said we should futureproof, have collaboration, pool resources, learn together, record important data and be a village growing PITL.

Ludmila asked if PITL would keep its name and Ally replied that it would be something different and there will be consultation about its name. Gill Thornton said it should refer to a parent delivered fund and PITL will still be part of its information and strapline.

Ludmila suggested that the proposed pre-paid card could make things much easier and Vipin said there will still be checks on spend. Alex noted that the new co-ordinator is a dedicated role so there will be more support for parents. Ally added that there is an app behind the card so we can see a tally of spend and transfer funds according to an invoice. Other similar funders use them and we will investigate using the pre-paid card and these can be branded up. Gill Thornton confirmed that BSB will do a risk assessment of the pre-paid card first.

Vipin referred to the community prep meeting two evenings ago and said Ally had done a very comprehensive review. He challenged the proposed change of name as after six years people have got used to Parents in the Lead and its name was thought up by the community. Vipin agreed there should be a consultation about the name. He also commented that the application form is much easier and shorter than before, and we should not go back to how it was.

Salma thought of the PITL group she set up and commented that all the evaluation requirements BSB need should have been clearly stated at the application stage, including all the data and feedback requirements. Ally had said in the review that not all the monitoring data had been received from the PITL projects.

Decision: The Partnership Board accepted the recommendations made by the review of Parents in the Lead, noting all of the comments above.

8. Accounts to 31 December 2021 and Year 8 budget

Shaista went through the written report in the meeting pack, starting with the nine months of accounts to 31 December 2021. Conference and Events are underspent and there are still the ongoing effects of the pandemic, with remote working for BSB and projects. There has been very little travelling to conferences and training etc.

Salaries also have an underspend due to BSB staff leaving, recruitment delays and carrying a number of vacancies. We also budgeted for a 3 per cent pay rise in April 2021 but the actual award was 1.6 per cent.

Covid has caused there to be fewer events and Learning Together sessions have moved online which are considerably cheaper than face-to-face ones. Some costs have increased such as equipment which was required for when staff returned to the office. For Marketing and Comms, the new BSB website's development costs have resulted in this going over budget.

Shaista moved on to projects. Some of these have historic underspends and staffing vacancies which they are trying to resolve. There were two Parents in the Lead rounds in the period under review which caused an overspend. For the Sustainability projects, there was a delay to the Perinatal Mental Health co-ordinator recruitment (though someone has recently been appointed). Shaista said she did not know if the Breastfeeding Support post we are jointly funding has been recruited to. BSB have had discussions with projects about their use of underspend throughout.

With the forecast from January to March 2022, the Year 7 budget is reduced from £8 million to £7.4 million, with the effects of the previous 9 months of underspend.

Shaista has budgeted £7.8 million for Year 8 based on assumptions, projects' contract values and balances brought forward. On the budget spreadsheet in the meeting pack, National Lottery Community Funding is split out from leverage from partners. Shaista has increased Year 7 costs by inflation of 2 to 3 per cent and assumed a 4 per cent increase in salaries. We have not been advised of Bradford Trident's management charge for 2022/23, so Shaista has assumed a 3 per cent rise. The projects' budgets are what is reflected in their service level agreements.

Finally, Shaista showed us a table which gives a breakdown of expenditure from the start of the BSB programme to date.

Vipin noted that the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee do thoroughly review the accounts and ask questions in a two hour meeting prior to Partnership Board and he wished to thank Robert, Raj and Shaista.

Decision: The Partnership Board notes and accepts:

- **The accounts for the nine-month period ending 31 December 2021**
- **The forecast for the year ending 31 March 2022**
- **The year 8 budget for 2022-23**

9. Community Board Member Recruitment

Alex advised that we will be recruiting for new Community Board members over the coming weeks and months. We have one vacancy and two Community Board members' terms end in July 2022, and one of these has said they will not be continuing in the role. Alex and Vipin shall be asking all Community Board members if they can continue in the role and all of them shall have a review.

Fiona and Emma will discuss plans for recruitment which shall be started after Easter, liaising with Vipin and the two Vice Chairs. Interviews are scheduled for early June with inductions over the summer, so they can start their roles from September. Help shall be requested from current Partnership Board members for case studies and help with interviews and recruitment events. Alex said we can expect to see some new faces later this year.

10. Programme Monthly Report

Gill Thornton reminded everyone about the A Better Start annual event which is next week (via Zoom) and asked them to register for the event. BSB shall be participating in each of the three discussion areas and she thanked Josie for her input.

Josie recently presented to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and BSB were featured and it was well received.

Gill Thornton noted that five jobs are being advertised for the BSB staff team and once they are filled we shall be at full capacity. Some job titles have been renamed following feedback. Also, our new Workforce Development Manager (Abrar Hussain) started this week.

The deadline for expressions of interest for the Better Place project is tomorrow and the panel is due to meet in two weeks. For Personalised Midwifery Project, Gill Thornton advised that we are still waiting for a budget. We are in dialogue with the Finance people at the BRI and there is a lot of pressure there at the current time.

Gill Thornton mentioned the weekly Virtual Live Learning sessions for students and new starters which are really popular and there will be a report on them at a later meeting. Earlier today she attended the opening of Beech Grove Greenway, a Better Place project, which used to be really neglected and now is much improved. This is an example of good partnership working including the local authority, In Communities, and other parties.

Gill Thornton turned to Risks and there is a new one for the Perinatal Peer Support project delivered by Family Action. Regional funding has been awarded to Touchstone who run a similar project (though their peer support is paid) which competes with our project, so there is liaison going on to minimise the impact. This shows that BSB need to be in forums where decisions like bringing in Touchstone are made. Ruth Shaw remarked that the CCG were not aware of Touchstone's appointment either which is concerning and the CCG will feed our concerns back in addition to their own. Some families will be getting two offers when other families get nothing. Gill Thornton noted that relations with the Integrated Care System need to be really strong.

11. Any other business

Vipin asked everyone if they had felt able to participate in this meeting and all agreed that they did. He thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked everyone to stay safe.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is on Thursday 21 April 2022, provisionally via Zoom, starting at 9.30 am.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm.