

Better Start Bradford Partnership Board Minutes
Thursday 22 February 2024
Via Zoom

Meeting Started: 09:30

Meeting Ended: 10:50

Present:

Vipin Joshi	Community Board member (Chair)
Sarah Hinton	Board Member, Bradford Trident
Ruth Shaw	Senior Head of Integration and Change (Health and Care) for Women and Children, Bradford District and Craven Health & Care Partnership (item 5 onwards)
Gill Thornton	Programme Director, Better Start Bradford
Sarah Exall	Consultant in Public Health, CBMDC (items 1 to 9 only)
Ashraf Miah	Development Officer, Community Action Bradford and District
Sara Ahern	Programme Manager, Innovation Hub (in place of Josie Dickerson)
Gwen Balson	Community Board member (Vice Chair)
Samina Begum	Community Board member (Vice Chair)
Humera Mahmood	Community Board member
Ishaq Shafiq	Community Board member
Karen Tetley	Community Board member

In Attendance

Gill Hart	Funding Manager, National Lottery Community Fund
Kerry Bennett	Assistant Programme Director, Better Start Bradford
Sola Onifade	Contract & Implementation Manager, Better Start Bradford
Sophie Eveleigh	Contract & Implementation Officer, Better Start Bradford
Shummel Uddin	Community Engagement Manager, Better Start Bradford (items 1 to 5 & 9 only)
Arian Minhas	Family and Community Engagement Worker, Better Start Bradford
Sofia Dauraz	Family and Community Engagement Worker, Better Start Bradford
Guy Dove	Senior Programme Administrator, Better Start Bradford

Apologies for Absence:

Salma Nawaz	Lisa Brett	Marium Haque	Rizwana Jamil
Richard Padwell			

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Vipin welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies.

Everyone introduced themselves to each other.

Vipin said that Alex has now left BSB and he wished to congratulate Gill Thornton on being appointed Programme Director and Kerry as Assistant Programme Director. Gill Thornton shared that she has yet to receive her new contract and Vipin shall chase Carlton for this.

Vipin thanked Gill Hart for authorising the business case for the internal move – the Strategic Reference Group thought there should be no external recruitment of the new Programme Director. Vipin confirmed that he would be happy to support or mentor Gill Thornton or Kerry and said so at the community prep meeting two nights ago.

Gill and Kerry thanked everyone for their good wishes.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 18 January 2024

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising actions table

Gill Thornton confirmed that an email was sent to the whole Partnership Board detailing the recommendation from our January meeting asking for ratification within a given time, because the meeting was inquorate. She thanked the people who responded and confirmed that the recommendation was ratified – the Cooking for A Better Start project will finish as scheduled on 31 March 2024.

There was an action about sharing the learning from the Personalised Midwifery project. Sophie is the Contract and Implementation Officer at Better Start Bradford who works on that project and Gill Thornton has discussed the matter with her. The Reducing Inequalities in Communities programme has now finished and Gill Thornton advised that they are ready to publish their evaluation, showing that personalisation of midwifery does benefit the women and improves their access to services. This is work in progress and there is also a conversation with Abbie Wild about sharing the learning for 1,001 Days.

BSB will present the 10-year (now 11-year) budget to the March 2024 Partnership Board.

There are still three updated register of interest forms outstanding and Vipin asked for them to be emailed to Guy.

Michelle's presentation about the Communications update from our last meeting was emailed out to the Partnership Board.

4. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. 'Getting to know you' session – Ishaq Shafiq

Ishaq said he is Bradford born and bred and has worked for Bradford Council for over 20 years. He is married, has three children and four cats and lives locally.

His role at the local authority now involves neighbourhood service work, project management, community development, governance and supporting local groups to take some perhaps great opportunities. His role is now in Bradford South but Ishaq has worked in many parts of the district.

Ishaq also does voluntary work for Bradford Trident, the West Bowling Advice Centre and he is a governor of a multi-academy trust.

Gill Thornton said Ishaq is very active and present in our community and across the district and a valuable member of the Partnership Board.

Vipin, on behalf of the Partnership Board, thanked Ishaq for his presentation.

6. Community Board Member recruitment

Gill Thornton presented a paper and explained it was not ready to go out with the meeting papers and she will email it out. We already have one vacancy for a Community Board member, also the two Vice Chairs' terms of office end in May 2024 and two other Community Board members terms of office end in July 2024.

Currently all terms of office will end when the BSB programme does, on 31 March 2025, as per the Partnership Agreement. However, we have applied for an extension to the programme to 31 December 2025, though the National Lottery Community Fund have not yet confirmed their agreement of this to us.

If the programme extension is agreed, Gill Thornton proposes amending the Partnership Agreement to run until 31 December 2025. We would contact all Community Board members to ask if they want to continue from 1 April to 31 December 2025 and our statutory partners would be asked the same.

Our Chair and Vice-Chairs will be asked if they wish to continue and their terms to be extended to 31 December 2025. However as both Vice-Chair terms end in May 2024 the circulation to Community Board Members will include an invitation to put themselves forward for these positions if they are interested.

Any outstanding Community Board member vacancies are to be advertised and recruited to in April/May 2024 for terms from June 2024 to December 2025.

Gill Thornton proposed ratifying all the above at our March 2024 Partnership Board meeting, by when we will have heard if the NLCF have approved our programme extension request.

Ishaq said the paper covered all the relevant points and what is proposed includes business as usual and continuity, which he thought makes sense. Sarah Hinton agreed that continuity is important and commented that it takes a long time for new people to understand BSB work.

Vipin also said that continuity is important. He confirmed that all Community Board members will be asked if they want to continue. He suggested that any nominations for the two Vice

Chair roles should be submitted by the April 2024 Partnership Board, at which we will see if there are more than two.

Vipin and Gill Thornton will also contact those Community Board members approaching the end of their terms to see if they want to continue.

Vipin noted that we may close before December 2025 and a business case and costs are needed for the programme extension and the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee have asked for these.

Action: Gill Thornton to email out the paper about Community Board member recruitment.

Decision: The Partnership Board agreed the following to be ratified at the March 2024 meeting, noting all the comments above:

To amend the Partnership Agreement to extend to 31 December 2025 (subject to receiving approval from the NLCF for the programme extension)

All Board members are contacted to ask if they wish to continue:

- **Community Board members to have their terms extended to December 2025**
- **Partners to be asked if they wish to continue to be part of the Partnership from 1 April to 31 December 2025**
- **Chair and Vice-Chairs to be asked if they wish to continue and their terms to be extended to 31 December 2025 subject to their response to the point below**
- **As both Vice-Chair terms end in May 2024 the circulation to Community Board members will include an invitation to put themselves forward for these positions if they are interested.**

Any outstanding Community Board member vacancies to be advertised and recruited to in April/May 2024 for terms from June 2024 to December 2025.

7. Innovation Hub update

Gill Thornton advised that Alex and Josie had agreed last month that the Innovation Hub would give this update later in 2024, not at today's meeting, but this had not been communicated fully.

Action: The Innovation Hub to give their annual update later this year.

8. Doula project update – feedback from training in BSB area

Sophie gave a Powerpoint presentation. At the December 2022 Partnership Board, the project was given a condition of their contract extension to improve their data and to hold a Doula's training session in the BSB area.

The Project Lead left in early 2023 and one of the Lead Locality Officers was appointed Project Lead in May 2023 following a recruitment process. She was a driving force for better data input in the team and her appointment allowed for some continuity in the team.

A search took place for a suitable Doula training venue in the BSB area, including community settings and Family Hub buildings. Shine in West Bowling (BD5) was selected as being welcoming and nurturing, and it was felt a 'safe space' is important due to the course content.

Sophie showed some photos of the training course held at Shine. All felt that it was good to be in a community venue and to have Shine's garden area there. Nine volunteers attended the Doula training and one of them shared that she could not have done the training elsewhere, due to childcare reasons for example.

The 'Shine Doula' training ran from October to December 2023, for nine weeks, two days a week (Sophie added that these were nearly full days). Examples of what the training covered include active birth, breastfeeding, Public Health messaging, a hospital tour, refugee and asylum seekers, working with interpreters and domestic abuse training (given by Staying Put).

The 'Shine Doula' have now supported four cases and these were complex cases as shown on the Powerpoint slide. Sophie explained that we have not yet received feedback from the mums and hopefully this will be in the next quarterly report – the births are very recent and the post-natal process has not been gone through yet.

Sophie did have some feedback to share from the training cohort, which was positive about the course and the venue, one of them describing it as a 'sanctuary.'

The next steps include formally thanking Shine for hosting the Doula training. Some of the new volunteer Doula's donated long-life milk to Shine's food pantry.

Bradford Doula applied for the Maternity Stream of Sanctuary Award. Sophie explained that this is an award that evidence is submitted for, not one that an organisation is nominated for. Lots of hard work went into the application which was successful, and Bradford Doula will be presented with the award at an event in Leeds tomorrow.

The project is looking at sustainability options. They have been thrilled to support Bradford families and Sophie said it is a shame that BSB funding of Bradford Doula ends on 30 April 2024.

Ruth spoke to Shelley (Doula Project Lead) at the Doula Open Day yesterday who was very complimentary about the Shine setting. (One challenge mentioned was transporting resources from their Carlisle Business Centre base). Sarah Hinton from Shine recalled that BSB renovated their building at the very beginning of the programme and she is delighted that this community improvement is still going on.

Vipin said the Doula training at Shine should be added to a list of 'what BSB did in BD5.' At the community prep meeting on 20 February, it was felt that it was point proven that the training was successfully held in our area and it is a shame it was not done years ago. Hopefully sustainability options for Bradford Doula involve moving the training around. 15 or 16 people expressed initial interest in the training and that 9 of those completed is good.

Sophie wished to thank Sarah Hinton for loaning one of Shine's laptops to a trainee and Vipin will ask Bradford Trident about loaning out some of their laptops.

Vipin remarked that it is good that the project is ending on a positive note after complaints, being RAG-rated Red consistently in years past and a concern to Community Board members.

The new Project Lead has made a difference. Sophie said Shelley started as a volunteer, then has been a Locality Officer, a Lead Locality Officer and now service manager and it is good to see the career progression within the project. Vipin observed that this is something we should 'shout about' and community development is not just about money and investment in local communities does work.

Ruth commented that community development has been challenge. It was good to see people so keen to engage with the community and this was clear at the Doula Open Day yesterday. There has been a positive outcome and evidence of the value of working with locals to develop local services.

Vipin asked Gill Thornton and Kerry to help Bradford Doulas with their sustainability and to pass on our thanks to the project. Samina also expressed thanks to the project in the Chat.

Gill Thornton recalled that complaints about the project were never about the service the pregnant women received.

Action: Gill Thornton and Kerry to arrange for support for Bradford Doulas with their sustainability work.

9. Community Engagement update

Shummel shared a Powerpoint presentation and introduced himself and his team, Sofia and Arian. Shummel said he has worked in community engagement for a long time, previously at the Neighbourhood Resource Centre and he was also a BSB Community Board member for a time. He likes helping people to fulfil their potential, upskilling and making an impact and change.

Shummel has a degree in sports journalism, runs his own grassroots football team in BD3 and is head coach of Bradford City Development Centre. He is involved in community groups like Friends of Seymour Park and Grains of Hope Foundation Charity and has done homeless outreach.

Sofia was previously a Neighbourhood Engagement Support Worker, supporting families in the Canterbury area of BD5. She commented that there was not much of this support in the area when she started there and she tried to make an impact. Sofia spent 18 years working in Bradford schools and communities and she said that it is good to be helping with school readiness now.

Arian was also a Neighbourhood Engagement Support Worker based at the West Bowling Centre, supporting New Communities, refugees and asylum seekers and he said it was a challenge to engage these groups with BSB projects. Arian has over 20 years' experience of working in local government and the voluntary sector.

Shummel outlined what the Family and Community Engagement team do. They develop relationships with local organisations and work alongside local families to develop and influence promoting the wellbeing of our 0-3s.

They go out into the community and work with different 'hard to reach' or underrepresented groups, to inform and educate, helping them to access services so their children can have the best start in life.

The Family and Community Engagement team also work with Neighbourhood Workers, Family Hubs, helping local families to get access to services. They also attend events and run their own events, in parks, museums and community centres, promoting what BSB and our projects do.

Shummel moved on to a slide listing all the many events over the last six months. He pointed out that the FACE team are new in post – he joined BSB in May 2023 and his two colleagues only started a few months ago. He mentioned some of the events – Autumn Fun, Play on a Shoestring and Better Together events in local parks. Sofia commented that all the events were well attended due to good Comms and use of social media platforms. Over 400 people attended the two Festive Fun events in December. The team worked with partner organisations and good feedback was received from families.

The Play on a Shoestring event promoted the importance of play and demonstrated low-cost play and activities which was timely given the cost-of-living crisis. Resources came from Scruptastic and parents made up their own bags with resources and provided very good feedback. Shummel then showed a slide with the posters advertising some of the events.

Arian mentioned the International Men’s Day Event held in November. People were not aware there was a specific day but over 80 men attended, including the Lord Mayor. There were 15 stallholders, free blood pressure checks and a presentation from the police. This was a very positive event and the attendees took lots of information away with them.

HENRY visited our Dad’s Army HEY! Fund group to deliver the Understanding Children’s Behaviour workshop for dads at Dixons Marchbank Primary School. The school were so impressed they have offered a venue for free on Saturdays to the HEY! Fund group. 15 dads attended the workshop with children and the workshops are still carrying on and they are planning further sessions.

Following an article about Dads’ Cook and Eat sessions, the FACE team were invited to speak at the NAFIS (National Association of Family Information Services) Conference. They shared good practice about dads’ engagement, overcoming barriers and reaching ‘underrepresented’ dads. Over 40 professionals attended and provided good feedback.

Shummel then showed some photos from various events and feedback. One dad was not aware there were dads-only sessions and mentioned quality time with kids and meeting other great fathers. Attending the sessions with children provided some respite for mums. Shummel said there are over 100 dads on a BSB WhatsApp group.

Shummel moved on to sustainability and the focus for the next year. Dixons Marchbank are opening for dads’ sessions free of charge on a Saturday – usually dads are only available for the sessions on a weekend. He mentioned work with partner organisations such as other schools, community centres and faith organisations. The FACE team shall be doing empowerment work, upskilling parents and helping groups to become constituted and apply for alternative funding. They will also be supporting families with transition to use other services in the wider district.

Shummel proceeded to a slide entitled ‘What’s Next.’ There will be a thank you event for Neighbourhood Workers next week, as the two Neighbourhood projects finish next month. There will be an Easter Fun event, an Eid Celebration event and dads’ woodwork events in March and April. The deadline for applications for new HEY! Fund projects is 29 February –

this is the last round BSB will be funding and the FACE team will be supporting local parents with applications. There will be summer events across Bradford parks.

Shummel also mentioned continuing work with museums and libraries for events.

Ashraf thanked Shummel and the team and said they have really gone out into the community and engaged with families and this has been really appreciated. Ishaq commented that it is fantastic work and much needed and very valuable in the community. He noted it would be good to know of events and HEY! Fund projects.

Sarah Exall said there has been brilliant work and it would be good to have any feedback to share in her team's work with lesser-known communities. Humera confirmed she had seen all three FACE team members out and about; they have really engaged and there is the dads' work – they should be really proud and it makes parents more likely to access services.

Shummel said that information about HEY! Fund groups will be shared, with a link to a calendar of events. Feedback can be verbal or by social media – there is also BSB's Comms team, storytelling, blogs and success stories from parents. Samina added some words of praise in the Chat.

Gill Thornton hoped that Partnership Board members would remember that we had to stop using the BSB app. Instead, we use a WhatsApp group and encouraged local people to join. Our dads' work is a model for how you work with dads, linking it to benefits to their children and the dads do value that. Our team are also supporting the development of dads work in the district.

Vipin advised that he would let the Bradford Trident board members know of the WhatsApp group and becoming aware of the work we are doing. It is good to see the dads' engagement and there was a lack of that before – he said well done and that the report should be sent to Bradford Trident.

10. Programme monthly report

Gill Thornton said that Reducing Inequalities in Communities have co-funded some of our projects for five years but is coming to an end. Their final meeting has taken place though some projects are funded up to September. There has been much valuable learning from the projects and there will be some learning events starting from next week about what happened, including our projects to some extent. The events are listed in the report, anyone can attend and Gill Thornton said it would be worth it. An event on 4 March is about how community engagement can improve health literacy.

The final year of A Better Start will be about shared learning, which will be a key focus of the Programme Team, who will share information about it with the Partnership Board.

The Data, Research and Evidence Community of Practice took place recently in Lambeth and provided updates about all the ABS sites, and there were lots of 'common threads,' but different approaches. Gwen wrote in the Chat that she would like to see the presentation slides. The national data dashboard is complete and can be shared from April.

Action: Gill Thornton to share the presentations from the Data Community of Practice.

Bradford Council are proposing cuts to the VCS infrastructure support funding and we have been supporting Here4BDCC in the discussions. This is important as the support for groups becoming constituted is part of that infrastructure support we are seeking for HEY! Fund groups' sustainability.

Gill Thornton moved on to Project Monitoring and Evaluation and noted that for Talking Together, the funding bid to the Education Endowment Foundation fund opens this month. For the HIDVA (domestic abuse) project, they are looking at how its evaluation could support the project becoming part of the wider HIDVA offer in the district.

BSB ran an early years training workshop for the National Media Museum which went well and created a template for training about play and early years for other organisations. Gill Thornton remarked that this would be important for the City of Culture year.

Gill Thornton then showed some publicity posters designed for various events. We are supporting the promotion of the Talking Bradford pathway (district-wide speech and language campaign) via all our channels. The Play on a Shoestring event which Shummel mentioned was well received, covering low-cost play in hard times.

Gwen commented via the Chat that there have been lots of positive things going on.

Ruth remarked that all the work BSB does which is not covered by projects will be missed when the programme finishes next year. The work has 'filled a hole' and we need to think about how to capture it. Gill Thornton said this is a legacy question and will be considered by the consultant we will be using to help inform the Partnership's thinking and decision-making. Board members will be consulted and Ruth's views will be very welcome.

Vipin commented that we should think about what partners can help with going forward and he said the voluntary sector is likely to be 'hammered' over the next 12 – 24 months. Ashraf agreed that there will be a big impact on VCS support and the sector has done a final response to the consultation to Bradford Council – a 15 page report with a proposal has been sent in. A final response from the council is due in early March.

11. Any other business

Ruth shared that today is likely to be her last Partnership Board meeting as she is moving to a new role at the NHS Health & Care Partnership. All thanked Ruth for her service and wished her well in the future. Vipin said that Ruth was someone he looked up to for her experience and she covered the role of Chair when necessary. She was willing to listen and had made a big difference and all will miss her guidance and support and we appreciate her efforts and time.

Gill Thornton added that Ruth and Gwen are the longest-serving Partnership Board members. Ruth has added massive value and contributions and will be missed, and she hopes we can work with Ruth in the future.

Ruth thanked everybody and shared that this is one of the few board meetings in Bradford she looks forward to.

Finally, Vipin asked everyone if they had felt able to participate in this meeting and all agreed that they did.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is on Thursday 21 March 2024, via Zoom, starting at 5.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 10.50 am.