

Brighton & Hove

Fairness

Commission

Fairness
Commission:
The report

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The Commissioners

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Message from the Fairness Commission

Brighton & Hove is a vibrant and diverse city. It is also an economically and culturally thriving place to live. Today it has one of the fastest growing economies in the country, relatively low unemployment and attracts some eleven million visitors each year, including the highest number of day trippers anywhere in the country apart from London. Its success however, in common with all cities in the country, masks considerable and significant issues related to poverty, inequality and fairness for many of its residents.

For far too many residents the reality of life in Brighton & Hove is a struggle and they are not benefiting from its financial success. A struggle to afford to live, where housing and living costs are high, but jobs are predominantly low paid. Where new housing developments are for luxury apartments, marketed to foreign investors and unaffordable to residents who increasingly feel they are being pushed out of their own city or left homeless. Lack of skills and poor physical or mental health prevent people from entering the labour market or leaving them struggling to manage on low pay. Life expectancy for some people is worryingly low. The impending closure of GP surgeries in some of the most deprived areas is a sign of a primary care system struggling to remain sustainable. Residents have concerns about accessing the primary care services they need. In some areas of our city, over a third of children are growing up in poverty¹ and their chances of achieving at school, growing up to be healthy, and getting the skills to find a good job are not good. Rent on a one-bedroom flat requires an annual income of £48,000 to be affordable².

As the city's fortunes grow, more people will be attracted here. At the same time less money will be available for both public services, and to individuals in the form of welfare. From 2016 to 2020, the central government grant to Brighton & Hove City Council is forecast to reduce by £68m, while the demands and cost of adult social care and health services continues to rise. As public services shrink in size and funds, and services are reduced or cease altogether, a radical change in the way citizens relate to public services is both essential and urgent.

Although much good work is going on in the city to address these issues, including through a vibrant voluntary sector, inequalities are still growing. We consider much more needs to be done to prevent Brighton & Hove becoming an increasingly divided city.

If we do not respond collectively, the needs of our growing and changing population will not be met. The risk is that unmet need will rise, especially for vulnerable people, and if they are left further behind, the financial, social and personal costs are high.

¹ East Brighton 36%; Moulsecoomb and Bevendean 37%: <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/DofH%20Annual%20Report%202015%20chapt%201-2.pdf>

² Monthly Average Private Sector Rents & Housing Benefit (2015 Q4) Brighton & Hove City Council

This is the context in which the Fairness Commission was established. We are an independent commission of 12 individuals appointed to bring local and national expertise, insight and independent enquiry. As well as reviewing existing data, plans and strategies, our main task was to engage with local residents, groups, businesses and experts and make recommendations to the council and its partners on actions they could take to address poverty, inequality and issues of fairness in the city.³

The levels of deprivation and inequality across the city have been well researched and documented over many years and were recently summarised in the 2015 annual report of the Director of Public Health: Look Inequalities. It is not our intention to restate the exiting evidence within our report, or to repeat the issues highlighted in the numerous strategies developed to address them, but draw on this body of work to help us interpret and identify priority areas. We focused our work on areas raised as being important to residents as well as those that offered the greatest potential for the council, with partners, to influence the best and fairest outcomes for citizens:

- Strengthening communities
- Improving the life chances of children and young people
- Employment and skills
- Housing and the Greater Brighton region
- Ageing and living well.

Call for evidence

We started our work in September 2015 with a call for evidence. We promoted widely various means for people to contact us and tell us about their experiences, give their views on what was fair or unfair about living in this city, and to share their ideas and solutions on how to make the city a fairer place. We met with groups, workers and residents, reviewed hundreds of submissions sent to us and looked at the work of other Fairness Commissions that sought to address issues similar to those we face in our city.

We pay special attention to the actions that residents felt were needed to make the city a fairer place for everyone. Our time and resources were limited and we acknowledge that there are other areas of inequality and unfairness that we have been unable to consider. We hope that this is the start of a city-wide debate on fairness that can be built on, to ensure that fairness is considered by all agencies and partners, informing both commissioning and budget priorities within the city.

We thank every resident and group in the city who took the time to tell us their personal stories, offer their comments and suggestions, or gave up their time to attend open sessions, focus groups and workshops.

³ The full recommendations are set out in our final report available at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fairness-commission

Where we live

“A place where all people are able to take part, contribute, be supported, travel and live their lives to the fullest”

Housing, diversity and inclusion, community and travel were three of the four most frequently cited areas of living in our city life that residents said were ones where the council and its partners could take steps to improve fairness.⁴

Building Strong Communities

Recognising the pivotal role of the community and voluntary sector

Support for communities by the council and its partners could improve fairness in the city and the role of the community and voluntary sector (CVS) was frequently referred to as pivotal. The role that the sector plays, its capacity to reach groups and raise awareness of needs, combined with ability to support other residents to take part in this work made it a focal point of proposals as to how to improve fairness in the city. When residents talked of ‘budget priorities’ and ‘participation’, support for the CVS emerged as the most significant way in which the council and its partners and residents could work together to improve fairness in the city. Constructing budget priorities to reflect this was strongly associated with achieving fairness.⁵

Residents talked of the importance of creating more means of ‘coming together’ through shared spaces, groups and activities. There was a strong association between these activities and the empowerment of those who may feel the effects of unfairness more strongly than others. Volunteering and involvement in the CVS was identified as an important means of addressing these issues and supporting communities through engaging and ‘taking part’. The importance of supporting volunteering infrastructure was a clear message given to the Commission as well as the need to provide support to those with additional needs into volunteering, especially disabled and Black and Minority Ethnic people.

“More places/venues for people to get together, more funding for community centres”

Community centres, spaces and facilities were not only essential in enabling the means of ‘coming together’ but were also seen as a way to address fairness particularly in balancing out benefits to residents living in different areas of the city. For example:

“I live in a poorer, rather deprived part of the city – the Coombe Road Area. We have no community facilities, nowhere to meet and a very long hill

⁴ The Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission: an analysis of responses to the Fairness Questions, by the University of Brighton and the Community University Partnership Programme, 4th May 2016.

⁵ Ibid

to climb with just one bus an hour up Coombe Road, a bus which is very unreliable.”

Evidence was submitted of how numerous small, self-organised groups, with the help of very small grants, are improving health, building resilience and community connections across the city. The Moulseccomb Treasures and Sudan Club are just two of many examples.

Moulseccomb Treasures organise music, dance and singing groups for local residents in Moulseccomb. By organising dance classes and a choir in local venues, they enable residents to get involved in creative activities and performances. This enhances the mental and physical health of the people involved, and promotes a sense of community and connection between neighbours.

Sudan Club organises a weekly football game and social gathering for men in the Sudanese Community. Many of their members are unemployed and living alone. The gatherings enable them to support each other, reduce their loneliness and help boost their mental wellbeing.

The activities of all these groups are chosen and directed by the members of the group rather than driven by the needs of statutory services to meet targets or follow an overall strategy. Nevertheless, their work results in less demand on expensive public services and the cost benefits are considerable.

“The council should acknowledge and continue to support the excellent work being done by ordinary people in the city to make the city a fairer place to live. There are a large number of community groups and organisations providing on the ground support which is not coming from anywhere else. Some of these are run by and for people who are very marginalised. The council should continue to support this type of group by providing grants to them, and by supporting organisations that provide support to them.”

Small community groups such as these rely on the commitment, knowledge and voluntary labour of their core activists. But these activists themselves need support, and the groups need a minimal amount of flexible funding in order to continue. Their passion and connections within communities cannot be matched by external services. We suggest that funding for small groups and the support services they rely on is a cost-effective means of reducing unfairness in the city.

“To continue to develop BME community groups’ skills and capacity to run their own groups. A scheme similar to Healthy Neighbourhood Fund small grants for BME Communities across the City.”

“Support small, grassroots groups who put in energy and time into improve their neighbourhoods and communities...”

A small grants programme is crucial to enabling this work to continue although the council’s programme was judged to be unnecessarily bureaucratic. Research recently carried out by the University of Brighton, the Community University Partnership Programme and Community Works highlighted the bureaucratic burden that collecting large quantities of data imposed on community groups.⁶

“The role of community workers cannot be understated, but you need to lay off with the pointless form filling so they can actually get on with the jobs they are paid to do.”

The research suggests that “in the current climate of reduced public spending, funders and commissioners have a responsibility to proactively demonstrate their awareness of this data environment and seek ways to reduce the data burden experienced by community organisations by asking those organisations to indicate what level and form of data collection they think is proportionate and appropriate.”⁷ Funders and commissioners need also to listen to volunteers and volunteer managers who are trying to protect people seeking support from excessive and inappropriate demands for information. Our evidence supports this research and we ask funders and commissioners to take notice of the Call for Action set out in the report.⁸

Supporting Communities to implement their own solutions

Residents told us that better collaboration between them and the council and its partners is likely to have a powerful effect on improving fairness.

“Be a lot more supportive when residents come up with ideas and plans. There’s far too much of a computer-says-no attitude in the council. Stop making grand plans then asking for consultation. Turn that round the other way. People often know their own area best of all. Get residents in decision making process much earlier and do it all in plain English”

Residents outlined the changes they felt were needed to enable communities to take greater control over their lives in the context of shrinking public services and resources. These included the need to reduce almost unsurmountable barriers when they came up with solutions for self-identified needs.

⁶ Ref: Darking, M., Marino, A., Prosser, B. and Walker C. (2016) ‘Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact: a call for change, Position Statement’, January 2016 <http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/meicommunity/mei-position-statement/>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

“Listen to residents – we come up with ideas but no one listens because they think they know best”

As well as being too bureaucratic, residents felt that public bodies were too remote. Consultations and engagement were not considered meaningful and communities were too often presented with council-determined options; treated as passive recipients rather than potential assets able to identify their own needs and solutions. This resulted in their feeling both frustrated and powerless and did nothing to build the capacity and resilience of communities or foster community involvement.

“(The) council should be more transparent over how public consultations really affect decision-making. It is often felt that decisions are made and consultations are just held to select views that support the decisions” – resident’s response to the call for evidence

Residents wanted to see a change of culture from ‘doing to’ to ‘doing with’, with power being shared on an equal basis. The traditional ‘top-down’ delivery, treating people as ‘service users’, will neither deliver outcomes nor be financially sustainable. Public bodies must now remove the barriers to greater resident-led solutions and collaborate with residents and communities in the co-production of services.

The elements of co-production

- Provide opportunities for personal growth and development to people, so that they are treated as assets, not burdens on an overstretched system.
- Invest in strategies that develop the emotional intelligence and capacity of local communities.
- Use peer support networks instead of just professionals as the best means of transferring knowledge and capabilities.
- Reduce or blur the distinction between producers and consumers of services, by reconfiguring the ways in which services are developed and delivered. Services can be most effective when people get to act in both roles – as providers as well as recipients.
- Allow public service agencies to become catalysts and facilitators rather than simply providers.
- Devolve real responsibility, leadership and authority to ‘users’, and encourage self-organisation rather than direction from above
- Offer participants a range of incentives which help to embed the key elements of reciprocity and mutuality.

[‘Co-production - a manifesto for growing the core economy’ by Lucie Stephens, Josh Ryan-Collins and David Boyle. Published by NEF 2008]

The Bevy provides an example of what residents can achieve when they take action for themselves but they need appropriate support and advice.⁹

The Bevy – a case study

Opened in December 2014 The Bevy is the first community-owned estate pub in the UK. Funded by over 700 shareholders and re-built and decorated by an army of volunteers The Bevy is more than a pub. The Bevy is a community owned and run business with money coming from trusts, charities and grants as well as being funded by share holders.¹⁰

Sharing power equally

At a time of reductions in public services, the case for sharing power equally is reflected in actions being taken nationally. The vast majority of local authorities, health services, charities and residents say that their community could be improved through greater input from residents¹¹, and that behaviour change is needed within public sector partners to enable them to work collaboratively with residents, building on their enthusiasm and assets.

This willingness for greater involvement expressed by communities presents an opportunity to transform the relationship between state, communities and individuals. Public service agencies have to become the catalysts and facilitators, rather than simply providers.

“DueEast Neighbourhood Council worked on government initiatives, supported with small grants, to identify local services that could be run or managed locally to provide them in a better and more cost effective way – or indeed to re-design them to best meet local need.”

– Community Development worker for the estates of Whitehawk, Manor Farm and Bristol Estate

We were convinced by the evidence we heard from the Director of Health Improvement, at the Institute for Health & Human Development, that the ‘Well Communities’ model provides an excellent framework for enabling communities and local organisations to work together to improve health and wellbeing, build stronger communities and reduce inequalities.¹²

“Residents have varied talents that can be used” – resident’s response to the call for evidence.

⁹ <http://www.thebevy.co.uk/>

¹⁰ <http://www.thebevy.co.uk/about/4590437054>

¹¹ 2015 Local Trust and New Start survey (81% of local authorities, 89% of charities and more than 97% of residents)

¹² <https://www.uel.ac.uk/hsb/staff/gailfindlay/> The pilot achieved the Royal Society of Public Health Award at the highest level in 2011 and was endorsed by Professor Sir Michael Marmot

“The residents and communities in the city are more than ready and prepared to play a role alongside the council , in its every aspect , to make life fairer and more equitable” - resident’ s response to the call for evidence

“Ask every able resident to do at least one thing over the course of say 3 months to do something to help someone more vulnerable than themselves or their community. Maybe have a hashtag so people can report what ’good deed’ they have done - could be #myactoffairness. Gets schools involved - if every single secondary school got all staff, pupils and their parents signed up to just do one thing it could be amazing”

Recommendations

The evidence we have seen indicates that building community resilience is a critical issue in preventing widening health and economic gaps in the city. There are key concerns around addressing barriers to collaboration and accessing the resources that enable residents and groups to develop and lead stronger communities. In order to address these concerns we call on partners to prioritise the following.

1. Supporting communities to implement their own solutions

- a) Make a firm commitment to work in collaboration with communities in the co-design and co-production of services.
- b) Strengthen the investment in asset based community development to respond to the desire for self-sufficiency by residents and community groups coupled with volunteering infrastructure so that people can participate.
- c) In assessing neighbourhood assets, identify, with residents, each neighbourhood for adequacy of community spaces against a ‘minimum spec’ that includes an accessible meeting space, open to all, and free access to wireless internet and invest in them so that they meet the requirements.

2. Sharing power equally.

- a) The council should develop an asset transfer policy by April 2017 and be proactive in implementing it.¹³
- b) Public sector procurement should give greater weight to social value and be explicit in how this influences decisions.

3. Recognising the pivotal role of the community and voluntary sector

¹³ See the Milton Keynes Council example <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/leisure-tourism-and-culture/community-right-to-bid>.

- a) The council's small grants fund should be ring-fenced and invested in Sussex Community Foundation, or a similar external grant giving body, to achieve greater value for money for Brighton & Hove's small community groups.
- b) Brighton & Hove Connected¹⁴ should publish an annual statement on actions taken by partners to deliver the Power of Volunteering.
- c) Brighton & Hove Connected should work with Sussex Community Foundation to establish a city endowment fund to support projects that help alleviate poverty in the city.

4. Helping communities to access their rights

- a) The Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equality Committee should take responsibility for proactive delivery on the rights enshrined in legislation including the Localism Act 2011, the Equalities Act 2010, the Care Act 2014 and Human Rights.
- b) Small community groups and social enterprises have the right to enter the market place and help find solutions. The council should seek to ensure it removes any barriers to preventing smaller organisations from bidding for contracts and that it commissions support for the community and voluntary sector.

¹⁴ The City's Local Strategic Partnership

Getting out and about in an accessible and clean city

Travel

“Make sure that communities remain connected with the city. There are too many suburbs (eg Meadowview, Bristol Estate, Goldstone Valley) where bus services have been cut recently, especially evenings and Sundays. People need a regular bus service at all times of the day if they are to participate in the life of the city – as workers, students, carers, volunteers or even as customers of the leisure economy.”

Residents told us that being able to travel around all parts of the city easily was the third most important issue to address to improve fairness in Brighton & Hove. Many residents associated travel with diversity and inclusion: ensuring that people with additional needs were able to access the city was seen as essential to ensuring the city remains fair. A lack of accessibility was seen as contributing to the social isolation of specific groups and preventing those living in different areas of the city from sharing in the same benefits as other residents.

“Focusing support on and empowering the poorer, more deprived communities of Brighton & Hove, including those who have limited access to those resources that come as given or are taken for granted by communities or individuals who are more privileged. Improving transport to those not living in central Brighton, putting a cap on cost of public transport to make travel more affordable”

The two most commonly cited means of improving fairness in relation to travel were to maintain bus routes and to lower bus fares.

“Improve access to cheap public transport on the estates – make it easier and cheaper for residents to access the seafront, the parks, the town centre so they can truly belong”

Alternatives to lower bus fares such as giving free bus passes to certain groups and extending the hours older people can use free bus passes were also suggested. Brighton & Hove Bus Company already offers a number of discounted fares to a range of groups in the city – such as disabled people, students and apprentices – as well as working in partnership with Home Base, to support homeless people, and East Sussex Credit Union. The evidence we received suggests that more could be done to increase awareness of the work already being implemented to improve fairness in relation to bus travel in the city.

In addition to buses, parking and lowering the cost of parking in the city for residents was also seen as an important way to improve fairness.¹⁵

¹⁵ The Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission: an analysis of responses to the Fairness Questions, by the University of Brighton and the Community University Partnership Programme, 4th May 2016.

Transport links in and out of the city was an issue for people who travel to work in Brighton & Hove. With a growing number of people having moved to other areas in the region due to escalating housing costs, the Brighton Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of businesses, stressed the need for better transport links to enable workers to travel into the city.

Community Transport

“They have stopped the community bus to the day centre. The taxi is now too expensive.”

Access to transport for those unable to take public transport was a theme that often arose during consultation events for the Fairness Commission including those organised by the Older People’s Council. The need for community transport was one of the main messages in discussions on social isolation. The case for community transport and its positive impact on health, wellbeing and communities is well set out in the report ‘Why Community Transport Matters’¹⁶. The report includes substantial quantified evidence relating to the costs of loneliness and isolation and the savings that are achievable if a high quality community transport service is available.

Case study - Social Enterprise delivering Community Transport

HCT Group is a social enterprise in the transport industry. Established in 1982 with the formation of Hackney Community Transport, they provided low cost minibuses for local community groups – a service still provided today.

The group is now a large scale social enterprise with 800 employees, ten depots spread across London, Yorkshire, Humberside, the Southwest and the Channel Islands, a fleet of 500 vehicles and a 2014/15 turnover of £45.4m.

They operate to create community value in three key ways:

1. Profits from their commercial contracts are reinvested back into further transport services or projects in the communities, helping the most marginalised individuals in communities to get out and about.
2. They deliver training services for people who are long term unemployed that specifically focus on employment and skills
3. They aim to create employment opportunities for people in deprived communities, contribute to local economies and actively seek new ways to make communities better places to live and work through the way they operate.

Bristol Community Transport (BCT) is delivered in partnership with the HCT Group.¹⁷

¹⁶ Research published by ECT Charity in January 2016

¹⁷ <http://www.bristolcommunitytransport.org.uk/>; <http://www.hctgroup.org/>

“Older people are particularly vulnerable to the effects of isolation and the inability to socialise, especially if they are unable to get out without the provision of accessible transport that will conveniently serve their home. The availability of an excellent network of accessible public bus services is of no value to someone who cannot walk to the bus stop. Community Transport can (and does) remove that barrier to mobility. Without it, life would be very unfair.”

An accessible city

“Make it a walking & cycling & wheelchair accessible city”

Beyond means of transport, the accessibility and maintenance of pedestrian routes and cycle paths was referred to as a means of improving fairness and was seen as something that the council could do more to enforce or encourage. Residents felt it was important to raise awareness of how accessibility issues affect the lives of certain groups disproportionately compared to others (such as older people, those with disabilities and those caring for babies and young children).¹⁸

“Make our city more accessible to navigate for older and disabled residents. The city has some real issues with pavement obstructions, including cyclists, A-boards and pavement parking which are not being dealt with. Brighton is laid out to be a lovely city to walk around in theory but in practice in the last few years this is no longer the case; with health issues for the elderly being of increasing concern, I think it’s vital to reclaim our city as a great place to walk and maintain our health.”

Older people who submitted evidence to the Older People’s Council highlighted a range of specific issues that were important to them:

“A range of themes emerged from our discussions with older people which they felt disadvantaged them and just made daily life more difficult. Those with walking difficulties are challenged by uneven pavements, poor lighting, cyclists on pavements and short-term pedestrian crossings. This included wheel-chair users who felt vulnerable when faced with cyclists on pavements. The need for more seating in both public and private spaces was

¹⁸ The Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission: an analysis of responses to the Fairness Questions, by the University of Brighton and the Community University Partnership Programme, 4th May 2016.

important. Transport and access to transport for those unable to take public transport was a theme that often arose”

More communal amenities were described as essential to ensuring that people for whom accessing the city is a challenge have places to meet their essential needs. Having benches to rest on, accessible toilets, water fountains and accessible social spaces – such as libraries - were described as significant to older people, carers, those living with disabilities or chronic illness and pregnant mothers, babies and young children. Without these, the city becomes inaccessible to groups of people.

The city should aspire to becoming the first fully accessible city by 2020. We heard evidence from Possibility People¹⁹ on the importance of the social model and how this can be woven into the business and policy case for Brighton & Hove to becoming an accessible city. If we can get it right for people with additional needs, whatever they may be, we will get the city right for everyone.

We heard evidence on an ‘access audit’, delivered by the third sector and local citizens. Through this we could draw evidence in around the business dividend. Older people, disabled people and others have discussed their spending power which is not fully appreciated or utilised within the city. Businesses and services that are highly geared towards being accessible and inclusive will see a financial return through greater use.

Green, clean spaces

“Cleaner streets and parks that all can enjoy.”

Accessibility went beyond essential amenities and included protecting green spaces so that they not only remained accessible and available to be enjoyed by all but were also protected from housing or commercial development and well maintained. Looking after the city and natural environment was described as a matter of individual and shared responsibility that residents should actively observe for fairness to be improved. Residents felt that citizens themselves could improve fairness by keeping the environment clean by not littering but that the council should be held accountable for its performance with respect to rubbish collection and recycling.

Residents also wanted to see a fairer and more equal investment in the maintenance of residential areas across the city.²⁰

¹⁹ The new name for The Fed Centre for Independent Living

²⁰ The Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission: an analysis of responses to the Fairness Questions, by the University of Brighton and the Community University Partnership Programme, 4th May 2016.

“Treat all public parks equally – budgets – local parks get less money than ‘destination parks’, eg Hove Lawns & Hove Park vs Hangleton Park. NOT FAIR!”

Recommendations

To contribute to fairness and support the city in enabling those on low incomes to access what the city has to offer, we make the following recommendations.

1. The council, the Brighton & Hove Bus Company and other bus operators in the city, should work through the city's Quality Bus Partnership to ensure that there is transparency and awareness of existing discount arrangements among the public and all partner organisations, and where need is identified, to extend arrangements to reflect specific needs.
2. The council and The Transport Partnership should invite proposals from suitable social enterprises or appropriate organisations that can expand and deliver an improved community transport offer in the city, that better utilises the existing fleets, vehicles and volunteer drivers available.
3. The council should facilitate partnership working between transport providers and developers to expand the potential locations for accessible development across the city that would address both transport and housing issues.
4. The council should work with City in Bloom, Community Works and the Trust for Developing Communities to support Friends of Parks groups in the city and help them to come together in a city-wide network to strengthen collaboration across groups and with the council around the future of the city's parks.
5. The council should work with businesses and the Transport Partnership to raise awareness of the impact of street clutter on disabled people, older people and mothers with young children and ensure regulations are enforced.

Housing

“One of the city’s top priorities is housing. I live in a privately rented one bed flat. It’s small, it’s mouse infested, there’s damp, and yet I accept it as one of best flats I’ve lived in, and don’t want to consider complaining because the risk of being thrown out, because some other poor desperate person would take it.”

Housing was by far the most significant aspect of city life that residents saw the council as responsible for addressing in order to improve fairness. The word most frequently used in relation to housing was ‘rent’ and a clear concern that rents in the city are too high making it extremely hard for those on average or low incomes to save, stay out of debt and manage their finances on a daily basis.

A fifth of all residents who mentioned rents called on the council to control or ‘cap’ rents in the city. The need to regulate landlords and letting agents were the next two most pressing issue for residents. Examples were given of unfair charges and fees on the part of letting agents and of landlords not maintaining properties whilst raising rents without notice. Another commonly cited means of addressing the situation was to provide more affordable and social housing targeted towards city residents. Buy-to-let was an important area of concern to residents particularly with regard to family housing being bought by landlords intending to let it as student accommodation.²¹

The key messages that residents wanted to convey with regard to fairness and housing were:

- rent (control/caps)
- regulate letting agents (fees, charges)
- regulate landlords
- more affordable housing (affordable to residents)
- improve availability (resident access to) housing
- create more and protect existing social housing
- address homelessness (build hostels)
- address cramped and poor quality rented housing
- regulate buy-to-let (loss of family accommodation)
- bring empty properties into use

Residents identified high rents as particularly problematic for young people, families and those on low incomes although a growing number of key workers and professionals are also struggling to afford to live in the city.

²¹ The Brighton & Hove Fairness Commission: an analysis of responses to the Fairness Questions, by the University of Brighton and the Community University Partnership Programme, 4th May 2016.

“Please do what is possible regarding housing in the city. As a young person living here for the past 7 years I have heard and lived through so many horror stories about very poor quality housing impacting people’s health, very high rents dragging young people into debt or living in overcrowded properties. My partner is a recent graduate Doctor, I am a professional myself, and yet at the age of 27 we have to share a damp crowded house with 4 other people just so that we can all live in the city. We cannot afford the price of moving in terms of admin fees and deposits, even if this was a possibility for any of us. On the small street next to mine 5 of the 8 potential shop fronts are estate agents with expensive cars blocking entry to our street – something which is illustrative of the huge income inequality reaped by the estate agents.”

It was people experiencing homelessness that residents saw as having the most pressing and not having a strategy to address homelessness made people see Brighton & Hove as a city that did not have its priorities in order and therefore could not be experienced as fair. Residents proposed practical solutions to addressing homelessness such as building hostels and providing facilities, but emphasising that these solutions require investment and commitment on the part of the council and its partners. There was a strong association between unfair rents and its potential to create conditions for homelessness as well as homelessness being a measure of how fair a society is.²²

Below are some examples of resident views on homelessness:

“We also need to do more to tackle homelessness, obviously regulating rents would be a start but pulling together all the agencies/voluntary groups trying to address the increasing need would make a huge difference.”

“Help tackle the housing problem – do more for homeless communities, do something about unfair landlords (many of whom say no DSS), cap rents and agency fees.”

“Homelessness is a real problem, especially for those who cannot prove a local connection (they may have been sleeping rough or on someone’s couch) or are refugees (internal and external). Where minority groups are disproportionately represented (for example, a disproportionate amount of homeless are LGBT) then resources should be allocated accordingly.”

“Demand housing for homeless people, a society is judged by how well it treats its poorest.”

²² Ibid

Evidence presented to us by the Royal Borough of Greenwich demonstrates how effective partnership working can have considerable impact on preventing homelessness.

Case study - Royal Borough of Greenwich

Royal Borough of Greenwich is the only local authority that has achieved all ten of the Gold Standard challenges in recognition of the fact that last year the council prevented 1,800 households from becoming homeless through their casework and support.

The council's Welfare Reform Team prevented 225 families from becoming homeless last year, and has supported 229 into work. Action was taken against rogue landlords and as a result improved property conditions, alongside providing support and assistance to those landlords wanting to provide good quality housing to homeless people.

During 2014-15 the council prevented 45 home owners from losing their homes, and provided advice to many more through the duty scheme which supports people at risk of repossession and other difficulties.

The Royal Borough has reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation by almost 60 per cent between 2008 and 2013, ended the use of temporary accommodation for 16 to 17 year olds, and limited the length of time families spend in shared accommodation to below six weeks.

Fuel and food poverty

The high cost of housing is having a major impact on other areas of poverty. Expert witnesses at a public meeting on housing gave evidence of the impact of fuel and food poverty caused by the high cost of housing. Low income households face the choice of “heat or eat” – and for parents this choice extended to providing food for their children rather than themselves.

Indirect impacts of cold housing and fuel poverty are having a negative effect on children’s educational attainment, emotional wellbeing and resilience, and adult and children’s dietary choices and life opportunities. Addressing energy inefficient housing and bringing all homes up to a minimum standard of thermal efficiency would have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable households.

Recommendations

One central theme that emerged is the need for local organisations to sustain and strengthen the partnerships they have developed to provide new homes. Another is that Brighton & Hove’s housing needs cannot be solved within the city’s boundaries. Joint

strategies must be established with neighbouring local authorities to provide solutions across the city region.

The Fairness Commission makes recommendations for local action by the council, other public bodies, housing associations, housing co-operatives, community organisations, the universities, the city's colleges and developers.

Separate recommendations are made for action by the national government to help local partnerships provide the homes needed and to ensure good standards and affordability for homebuyers and for renters in all forms of tenure.

1. To address the affordability of housing, and an integrated supply, Brighton & Hove Council should:

- a) Strengthen and expand its council housing building and estate regeneration programme.
- b) Use a supportive approach to identifying modern construction methods to reduce building costs and make rents more affordable.
- c) Consistently identify total housing costs, including energy efficiency, in planning new homes to reduce energy bills and contribute to greater affordability and the health and wellbeing of tenants.
- d) Pursue a planning policy of mixed development to ensure that all new developments, including office and commercial schemes, include an affordable housing element.
- e) Work with public bodies in the city to identify publicly owned land that can be used for housing, and accelerate its progress into available land. Produce a report detailing available land and a timetable for access.
- f) Offer council-owned and other publicly owned land, including sites on the city fringes, brown field sites, to housing co-operatives, self-build groups and community land trusts to develop affordable social housing with the guarantee it will go to local people. Set up a revolving fund by 2018 and an advice hub to support the work of housing co-operatives, self-build groups, community land trusts and energy co-ops.
- g) Strengthen its nationally recognised approach to bringing empty homes and properties back into use.

2. Housing associations and private housing developers should:

- a) Work in partnership with the housing associations and other organisations to expand the development of affordable housing for rent, shared ownership and sale in mixed tenure schemes.

- b) Offer development expertise to housing co-operatives, community land trusts and self-build groups.
- c) Contribute to increasing affordability in the city by embracing modern methods of construction to bring down building costs and make home-ownership more affordable to those on modest incomes.
- d) Look at total housing costs, including energy efficiency, in planning new homes to reduce energy bills and contribute to greater affordability and the health and wellbeing of residents.

3. To support existing actions to address and prevent homelessness, all partners should:

- a) As part of a wider drive to tackle homelessness in the city, create low-cost and “meanwhile” housing swiftly for homeless people on dormant development sites, like Preston Barracks, using converted sea containers that can be moved to other sites when development starts.²³
- b) Support training, skills and education programmes for homeless people.
- c) Protect investment in supporting people with mental health issues, drug and alcohol problems and dual diagnosis to live independently within their own homes.
- d) Strengthen work on rent deposit guarantee schemes that help people on lower incomes into private rented accommodation.

4. To improve standards in private rented accommodation, the council should:

- a) Extend the successful licensing of smaller HMOs to the remaining wards in the city.
- b) Establish a self-funding kite-mark scheme for landlords and letting agents.
- c) Establish a private sector forum for landlords, letting agents, tenants and the city’s housing services.
- d) Establish an ethical lettings agency for private rented housing similar to [Let to Birmingham](#) which offers “a range of services for landlords including Let Only or Full Property Management, and matching with suitable tenants.”²⁴
- e) Work with housing associations, City College and others to develop training and skills programmes and apprenticeships in housing and renewable energy programmes.

5. The NHS and the Clinical Commissioning Group should:

²³ Such as temporary emergency housing being developed by Reading Borough Council:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-36389202>

²⁴ <http://www.lettobirmingham.com>

- a) Develop a business case for housing initiatives that contribute to the improved health and wellbeing of residents and take pressure off health services, such as heating and insulation improvements in the homes of older and disabled people.

6. Brighton and Sussex Universities should:

- a) Work in partnership with the council to develop an integrated accommodation and transport strategy that will allow 100% of purpose built accommodation for all first year students in the city. Consideration of opportunities within the whole Greater Brighton region to be key to this.

7. Recommendations for National Government

Because the high cost of housing is having such a significant impact on poverty, fairness and inequality for so many people and families across the city, and tackling the issue will require measures and actions that are outside the council's control, we are making specific recommendations to Central Government. Unless these issues are tackled, unfairness for many in our community will continue. We call on the council and partners to lobby government to bring about the following changes.

1. Raise the cap on council borrowing for council house building. The Chartered Institute of Housing estimates that raising the cap by £7bn could enable the construction of 60,000 homes over a five-year period, creating 23,500 jobs and adding £5.6bn to the economy.
2. Introduce rent controls in the private rented sector through three-year standard tenancies with rent increases in that period pegged to inflation. Rents would be reset after the three-year period. This would give tenants more security of tenure and protect them from spiralling rent increases.
3. Introduce a national register of landlords and letting agents. Entry to the register would be available only to those landlords who maintain good standards of accommodation and management to be set under a national scheme.
4. Ban letting agents from charging fees to tenants, which is already the case in Scotland.
5. Set up a Living Rent Commission, along the lines of the Living Wage Commission, to establish what a Living Rent should be in different regions of the country.
6. End the Right to Buy and make long-term loans available to help council tenants and others buy new homes, giving a boost to house building and retaining the social housing stock.

The impact of housing costs on debt

The rising cost of living in the city, coupled with the impact of welfare reform, which has reduced benefit spending within the City by around £59 million per year²⁵, is resulting in people falling into debt and having a negative effect on people's life chances, educational attainment, wellbeing and life expectancy.

Evidence from Citizens Advice Bureau shows a growing demand for debt advice –778 clients in 2014/15. The most common reasons for requiring advice were credit card debt (16%), overdraft (12%) and unsecured loans (9%). However, the proportion with rent arrears has doubled between in the last two years, while the proportion seeking help due to debt to friends and family has risen tenfold in the same period.

Often people seek advice when their situation is at an advanced stage which can mean that they have not only suffered an intolerable situation for considerable time, but also that their options are more limited than if they had sought help sooner. Early interventions to support people who are in danger of falling into debt, or falling further into debt is vital. We heard evidence from the Advice Partnership, Moneyworks, Citizens Advice Bureau and East Sussex Credit Union on actions that could be taken by the council and its partners to address financial exclusion and ensure early intervention.

“When I was first diagnosed with a mental health condition I had to give up work, that was shocking enough for me but I then found myself in a situation I never thought I would be financially - I spent all my savings and got into loads of debt, I also started behaving in a really risky way as a result of this - I just wish I had found out about what I was entitled to at the beginning”

With timely advice and support with managing money the risk of becoming in debt, subject to enforcement action or losing their home can be prevented, along with the resulting health issues for them and their families. Advice can not only help people manage and improve their financial situation but also help them to understand their rights and responsibilities.

Case study – the importance of financial and debt advice

- Mr G had to leave his job due to a back injury. He had a mortgage and outstanding loans. He was able to claim Job Seekers Allowance but was only entitled to 6 months of payments at £73.10 a week because his partner was working.
- Mr G's mental health deteriorated due to stress. He was seen by an adviser while a patient at Millview Hospital. By this time his mortgage was in arrears and his home was

²⁵ The impacts of welfare reform on residents in Brighton & Hove
A report to Brighton & Hove Council from the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion and Rocket Science UK, June 2015

at risk, he had used all of the family's savings to pay bills and his credit cards were over their limits.

- An adviser helped him claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) with Support for Mortgage Interest and arranged a mortgage holiday with the lender for 39 weeks. He was also helped to claim Personal Independence Payments (PIP). The adviser negotiated with the credit cards on his behalf and arranged affordable repayments with a freeze on interest and charges.
- Once his financial situation was stabilised and he understood how to manage his benefit claims, he felt more under control and he was able to focus on improving his health.

We know from national and local research that fair and equal access to essential financial products and services is vital in helping alleviate poverty. This includes advice to manage financial problems and money management; access to bank accounts and cash points; the ability to enter into agreements with financial implications such as tenancy, mobile phone, utility agreements; credit in the shape of affordable loans and savings and Insurance. The Credit Union has a key part to play in this regard and should be better promoted by all partners across the city.

Recommendations

Closer partnership working within the council and between partners could help prevent people falling further into debt, resulting in costly later interventions.

1. To support people in debt or prevent people falling further into debt, the council should:

- a) Develop a new corporate debt collection strategy.²⁶ This should bring together council tax collection with other local authority debt collection such as rent arrears, Housing Benefit overpayments, and the Discretionary Payments teams into a single 'Income Management Team'.
- b) Develop a more consistent approach to assessing affordability by, for example, creating a unified income and expenditure form with guideline amounts for outgoings.
- c) Review its internal data sharing policies in order to identify vulnerable residents at an early stage of debt collection.
- d) Explore the potential for Digital Logbooks²⁷ for those tenants who are online.
- e) Adopt the council tax collections protocol, as endorsed by the Local Government Association.

2. To raise awareness of available support services to those on low income or struggling with debt, all partners across all sectors should:

²⁶ This was an action in the Financial Inclusion Strategy and Toynbee Hall undertook an independent review, making recommendations for improvement, some of which have yet to be implemented

²⁷ <http://www.ukauthority.com/news/4727/online-logbook-puts-birmingham-tenants-in-control-of-digital-future>

- a) Actively promote The Advice Partnership, Citizens Advice Bureau, East Sussex Credit Union and Moneyworks, signposting or referring people to these services.
- b) The council's Welfare Rights team should be co-located in the new Advice Hub at Hove Town Hall to maximise value and joint working.
- c) Cuts to benefits and tax credits for working and out of work families, and the roll-out of the Universal Credit benefit, mean there needs to be a significant investment in welfare benefits and money advice to help protect the local economy and ensure low income families receive the help they need.

How we live

“Think of investment in helping kids and vulnerable as a community investment. I mean it benefits all of us” a resident’s response to the call for evidence

Brighton & Hove needs to be the best place to be born, grow up, be educated and grow old if it is to reduce the widening health and poverty gap and be a fair city. Too many people are being left behind and doing more to tackle the inequalities they face should be a priority for all partners and agencies across the city.

Growing up

The best start in life

“Children in lower-income families have worse cognitive, social-behavioural and health outcomes in part because they are poorer, not just because low income is correlated with other household and parental characteristics. Money in early childhood make the most difference to cognitive outcomes, while in later childhood and adolescence it makes more difference to social and behavioural outcomes.”²⁸

Every child born in Brighton & Hove should have the very best and fairest start in life, especially those who are living in vulnerable circumstances or in poverty, and ensuring the opportunity to realise their potential is the best investment Brighton & Hove can make, for its children and young people, as well as for the city’s future prosperity. This means protecting children from the steep rise in poverty expected in the next few years²⁹; ensuring our schools are a key driver of opportunity; and supporting and enabling particularly vulnerable children. Early intervention has been a recurring message from residents, communities and expert witnesses: it not only delivers better outcomes in the long term but also reduces costly late interventions.

While children in poverty live in all areas across the city, there are concentrations of families coping with poverty in the most financially deprived neighbourhoods. We heard evidence from a range of community and local and national expert witnesses on the impact of poverty on future life chances.

The main factor for future poverty - what makes a poor child today becoming a poor adult in the future - is poor child educational outcomes, primarily through the influence on

²⁸ Kerris Cooper and Kitty Stewart, *Does Money Affect Children's Outcomes? A Systematic Review*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

²⁹ The Institute for Fiscal Studies has published projections which warn that child poverty may rise by 50 per cent by 2020-21. *Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK: 2015–16 to 2020–21* – Institute for Fiscal Studies, February 2016 <http://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/comms/R114.pdf>

future employment outcomes and earnings. Childhood poverty itself also appears to have an effect on future poverty largely through its impact on educational attainment.³⁰

A lack of support during the first few years of a child's life can limit their life chances. By age 5, the gap in educational attainment is already apparent within the city and we have heard evidence of the need to consider early years support from birth. Children who are not 'school ready' at five continue to fall behind. In turn, their educational attainment is affected along with their employment prospects. The crucial part that play has on a child's development was highlighted by expert witnesses: current opportunities and facilities need to be protected and expanded, particularly in deprived areas so that a child's life chances are not limited. Investment and support in early childhood makes the most difference to cognitive outcomes and educational attainment, and the council and its partners should prioritise investment in early years in order to give children, especially those growing up in poverty, a fair start in life.

The arts and culture sector has an important role to play in our public services and many projects are delivering positive outcomes for children and young people across the city as well as contributing to fairness. There is a considerably body of evidence that arts and cultural activities are particularly valuable when compared with other interventions, as they are more likely to engage participants and ensure continuing participation, reaching people without stigmatising them.³¹ Arts organisations bring new things to do, new skills to young people and the chance to refresh the practice of service organisations. Inclusive practice brings new opportunities for Deaf and disabled young people, and others with mental health issues and learning difficulties.

Open Sesame –example of how the arts can support early year's development

A project partnering cultural organisations including galleries, museums and libraries, with children's centres is producing an ambitious two year programme of arts and culture for very young children (0-2) and children with special needs, and a creative programme of professional development for cultural organisations, early years practitioners, and families.

The benefits of the work are in cognitive development i.e. development of neural pathways, in improved communication between parents and children and in promoting social cohesion – mixing with other families from different geographic, cultural or socio-economic groups.

³⁰ An evidence review of the drivers of child poverty for families in poverty now and for poor children growing up to be poor adults – HM Government 2014

³¹ Sally Bagwell, David Bull, Iona Joy and Marina Svistak, (2014, June), Opportunities for Alignment: Arts and cultural organisations and public sector commissioning, New Philanthropy Capital p. 26

The Child Poverty Commissioning Strategy, developed and approved in 2012, set out some key actions for partners to address this issue. However, the strategy has still to be implemented. A key component of the strategy was poverty proofing all commissioning activity and establishing a city-wide task force. These actions should be implemented as a matter of urgency.

A healthy start in life

The best start in life also requires a good diet. Poor diet is linked to nearly a third of life years lost and disability. It has been estimated that malnutrition costs UK health services up to £7.4 billion a year and is associated with conditions such as obesity, coronary heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancers³².

The cost of not addressing food and fairness issues is substantially higher than the cost of people eating well in the first place. Food is often the first area where people cut back – the ‘heat or eat’ choice - and the resulting damage in terms of health may not be immediately apparent.

“17% of parent carers reported having skipped meals themselves, or reduced the size of them, as there wasn’t enough money to feed the whole family” results of a survey of parent carers undertaken by Amaze - December 2015

We recommend that all partners commit to implementing in full the Food Poverty Action Plan 2015-2020.

A safe start in life

Children who experience, or are exposed to violence and abuse, can be disadvantaged – meaning that their start in life can be unfair. Very often children in these families need greater levels of support. Failing to provide effective support at the earliest opportunity is likely to mean that demand for services increases, is more expensive in later years and the outcomes for these families less good. This is unfair on non-abusive parents and their children. It also has a significant impact on the city. For example, around 51% of Child Protection Plans have Domestic Violence and Abuse as a contributory factor.³³

Achieving at school

The Fairness Commission focused on identifying possible solutions to addressing the inequalities of educational attainment and training opportunities for children and young people. Children and young people with a low level of educational attainment are almost

³² Brighton & Hove JSNA 2015 : 6.4.6 Good nutrition and food poverty

³³ Children's Services (2015) *Social Work: Our Story*, Hove: Brighton & Hove Council. Available at <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/childrens-services/childrens-services-our-story-and-briefings> [Accessed: 05 February 2016].

five times as likely to be in poverty now and eleven times as likely to be severely materially deprived as those with a high level of education³⁴.

With income the single biggest predictor of educational attainment, addressing the cost of sending a child to school, estimated to cost £1,614 per year in 2013, is key³⁵. A report by the Children's Commission on Poverty carried out by the Children's Society then, later, a project in Glasgow schools run by Child Poverty Action Group, explored the impact that the rising costs of school place on families. .^{36 37}

Costs to families include:

- travel to and from school
- computing facilities for completing homework
- stationery
- materials for classes
- books for school
- after school clubs
- school trips (holidays)
- school trips (term time)
- school meals
- school sports kit
- school clothing
- summer clubs or activities

“There is no doubt that (families) are facing increasing costs on supporting their children's education. The NASUWT has been warning that for many children access to critical educational opportunities, which are key entitlements, are increasingly becoming based on parents' ability to pay”

Pupils' behaviour, attendance and attainment are negatively impacted upon by their inability to participate as fully as others with more financial resources. The evidence we heard on Poverty Proofing the School Day from the Policy & Research Manager at Children North East leads us to make a specific recommendation. Their Poverty Proofing the School Day Audit supports schools to identify and overcome the barriers to learning that children and young people from families with less financial resources face. The audit enables schools to develop an action plan to reduce the stigma and discrimination that pupils experience.

³⁴ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/household-income/intergenerational-transmission-of-poverty-in-the-uk--eu/2014/sty-causes-of-poverty-uk.html>

³⁵ <http://www.aviva.com/media/news/item/uk-uk-school-bill-soars-by-6000-per-child-over-last-five-years-17170/>

³⁶ <http://www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Costs%20of%20Going%20to%20School%20FINAL.pdf>

³⁷ <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/cost-school-day-report-and-executive-summary>

Supporting the most disadvantaged

We specifically called for evidence from groups of children and young people whom we know face particular barriers and difficulties to achieving at school:

- Young people in care (or leaving care)
- Young carers
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Children and young people with mental health issues
- The children of Gypsies and Travellers

Children in Care

“Growing up in care, you get a label and that label stigmatises you throughout your life. When I was in school, I was the geeky kid in care who wore glasses, I was bullied because I didn’t have a family and also because I didn’t have any friends – who wants to be friends with a kid in care?”

Brighton & Hove has the nineteenth highest number of children in care out of 252 local authorities in England³⁸. Relative to their peers, children in care have some of the poorest outcomes and young people leaving care tend to; have lower levels of educational attainment; be unemployed; live in unstable and poor quality housing or be homeless; be young parents; have mental health problems; have relatively high levels of drug use and be over-represented in prison.³⁹

Evidence submitted on behalf of care-leavers suggests they have had to fight for priority housing and have felt discriminated against by their own corporate parent. The city needs to take collective responsibility for children in care. Partners have yet to come together to embrace this, and the business community has never been galvanised to offer something to these children.

“Children in care and care-leavers are routinely discriminated against. They have the poorest life chances of all residents. They do not have access to the same opportunities as other young people. They are not able to exercise their rights properly in the city due to a lack of joined up work on corporate parenting.”

“We need BME mentors and a leadership programme for young BME men who are in the care system”

³⁸ 465 in 2014, South East Coast Child Health profile, 2013

³⁹ Supporting care leavers successful transition to independent living”, Rebecca Fauth, Di Hart and Lisa Payne, National Children’s Bureau 2012

Young Carers

Research by the Audit Commission in 2010 found that young adult carers between the ages of 16 and 18 had a much greater chance of being not in education, employment and training (NEET).⁴⁰ Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level – the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers⁴¹. There are 294 assessed and recorded young carers in Brighton & Hove but it is well known that this is likely to fall very short of the actual figure. The Carers Centre in Brighton & Hove estimate the figure to exceed 500.

Young carers gave us their personal stories and spoke of the challenges they face: a culture of stigma at school and bullying, missing school to help at home, having difficulty concentrating at school or completing homework, missing out on social or leisure activities resulting in a feeling of isolation. All these increased responsibilities can lead to higher stress levels and a feeling of being unable to cope.

Schools should consider including caring in the PSHE curriculum and do more to raise awareness of the needs of young carers, ensuring that the impact of their caring role does not limit their life chances and ambitions. The work currently being undertaken in schools to support young carers must be expanded and alongside this, adult social care support must also be prioritised to the parents.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We heard evidence that children and young people with SEND experience significant social, financial and educational disadvantage and their families are more likely to experience poverty, relationship breakdown and poor health and wellbeing. Professionals working with SEND children stressed the need for better internship programmes and job coaching for non-level 2 learners and we refer to this later.

Despite empirical evidence that early diagnosis and early intervention improves outcomes and saves money in a range of contexts including mental health and SEND, this is not currently represented in how resources are allocated. Putting this at the forefront of budget planning will save resources further down the line. Early identification in nurseries, for example for SEND, enables support to be put in place as soon as possible and reduces the work needed later by schools. We know that the world of SEND is a costly one and we call on partners to recognise the value of support services from the voluntary sector that can attract charitable funding and draw funds in. Good information, advice and guidance to families to ensure benefit take-up should be included in the advice provision within the city.

⁴⁰ http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/report_hidden-from-view_young-carers_final.pdf

⁴¹ http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/report_hidden-from-view_young-carers_final.pdf

Partners should ensure that SEND is always on the agenda in future rather than an afterthought and this should include transition planning as children grow older and take up education and employment opportunities.

Gypsy and Traveller children

Gypsies and Travellers are the most disadvantaged ethnic group in the country experiencing significant inequalities in almost every indicator⁴². One core theme which arises is the impact of experiencing racism and discrimination throughout an entire lifespan and in employment, social and public contexts. Gypsy and Traveller children face higher poverty risks and particularly low educational attainment.

In terms of support for young travellers, 40 children are estimated to be coming with their families to the new Horsdean Traveller site and the city should be proactive in ensuring that they do not fall through the education net. This means that partners need to be proactively planning to engage with these groups and to signpost to appropriate services and support.

Children and young people with mental health issues

Young people in Brighton & Hove said that mental health was in their top five priority issues to address. The need for timely support and accessible and appropriate mental health services was a priority for a number of very specific groups of young people including people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions; people with a learning disability; BME young people; LGBTQ people and young carers.

Early intervention avoids young people falling into crisis and avoids expensive and longer term interventions in adulthood. An estimated £900 million is being spent nationally helping young people suffering from mental health issues or battling drug and alcohol problems as a result of late intervention.⁴³

Given that over half of all mental ill health starts before the age of fourteen years, and seventy-five per cent has developed by the age of eighteen,⁴⁴ failure to diagnose and support children and young people with mental health needs costs lives and money. The life chances of these individuals are significantly reduced in terms of their physical health, their educational and work prospects, their chances of committing a crime and even the length of

⁴² Parry G, Van Cleemput P, Peters J, Walters S, Thomas K, Cooper C. Health status of Gypsies and Travellers in England. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 61(3), 198-204, 2007.

⁴³ The estimated fiscal cost of late intervention in the UK in one year, February 2015 Haroon Chowdrey and Carey Oppenheim. Early Intervention Foundation

⁴⁴ Murphy M and Fonagy P (2012). *Mental health problems in children and young people*. In: Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2012. London: Department of Health.

their life. As well as the personal cost to each and every individual affected, their families and carers this results in a very high cost to our economy.⁴⁵

We welcome the Transformation Plan for Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services presented to the Fairness Commission by the Commissioning Manager for Brighton & Hove CCG: particularly the objectives to provide holistic care through the integration of mental health care with physical health care; for organisations to work better together to provide a more flexible and person-centred approach; early intervention and collaborative and joint commissioning with Children’s Services and Public Health as well as with schools and colleges.

The importance of youth work

“We were really working with young people who weren’t engaging elsewhere. You see the benefit to the young person who gains their own skills and experience and you see the benefit to the community. You kind of work on multiple levels and that idea is what is so critical and what’s so unique about youth work from a community perspective.” Knoll Project Youth Worker

We heard evidence that effective youth-led, neighbourhood-based youth work is vitally important not only to outcomes for young people but also to the communities in which they live, increasing understanding and improving relationships between the generations. Given the community & voluntary sector’s ability to leverage in additional funding, and augment its capacity through supported volunteering, youth work delivered by third sector providers offers good value for money and clear relationships to community.

There are gaps however that need addressing. While some young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are well integrated into mainstream provision the city needs to address the gap in both inclusive and specialist youth work for children who have higher levels of additional support needs.

Some groups of Minority Ethnic young people are not currently being attracted to youth work provision in great numbers and, in the interests of community cohesion and integration, partners should identify the reasons for this to ensure that these groups are specifically targeted and included in future youth work arrangements.

Jack – A case study on the benefits of voluntary sector-led Youth Work

‘I started getting involved with the project when I was aged 11 – I’m 21 now, so I’ve been involved with the project for a long time. I guess I

⁴⁵ Extract from the Report of the *Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce: Future in Mind*, Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing. Department of Health & NHS England November 2015

instantly enjoyed the project, I started off as a participant in various activities. It basically allowed me to do things I wouldn't have been able to without the project; swimming and all the activities that as a young person I wanted to get involved with.

As I had a positive experience almost straight away I stayed on. I eventually got too old to participate so I ended up carry on volunteering. That was really good but also activities in return for our opinion and our involvement. I also think it has a lot to do with having really good youth workers and building really good relationships, without our youth workers the project wouldn't be half as good.

I am now the youngest trustee on the Hangleton and Knoll board, which obviously fills me with joy and is quite a big deal for me. It's given me more life skills and more confidence and it's been lovely to give something back to the community. I think it's important for all communities to have a youth service as good as ours. I think it's really important because it gives young people an opportunity. I've got lots of friends who didn't have the money or the time or support of parents to do such positive things but the project gives young people the opportunity to do that.'

Recommendations

- 1. Brighton & Hove City Council needs to drive the city's efforts to prevent child poverty:**
 - a) The council should implement the actions set out in the Child Poverty Commissioning Strategy 2012.
 - b) The council and the city's foodbanks and advice agencies should work closely with Job Centre Plus locally to reduce the numbers of families referred to foodbanks because of a problem with the benefit system, such as delays in processing or a flawed decision sanction a benefit.
 - c) Cuts to benefits and tax credits for working and out of work families, and the roll-out of the Universal Credit benefit, mean there needs to be a significant investment in welfare benefits and financial advice to help protect the local economy and ensure low income families receive the help they need.

- 2. Brighton & Hove schools and children's centres should be utilised as fully as possible, to enable them to be a key driver of opportunity for children and young people and for the wider community**

- a) The council, working with city schools, should bring to Brighton & Hove the 'Poverty-proofing the School Day' initiative to ensure no child misses out on the opportunities and experiences at school because of low family income. This would also help to close the gap between the attainment results of children eligible for free school meals and others.
- b) The council should seek support from partners to offer free school meals in school holidays, focusing on the most deprived communities first, to make sure that no child goes without at least one proper and healthy meal a day.
- c) The council should inform parents about the new right to request wraparound or holiday childcare and work within them to establish appropriate provision.
- d) Brighton & Hove schools should work with children and young people to incorporate a 'curriculum for life' to equip school-leavers with valuable life skills, including, for example, personal finance skills and relationship education.

3. Brighton should aim to be the best place for children to grow up in, most especially those who are living in vulnerable circumstances

- a) The council should prioritise support for children's centres and remove barriers to communities using them outside of core hours so they can be used as community hubs.
- b) The city wide Corporate Parenting Board should find new ways to genuinely include children and young people; especially those in or recently leaving care.
- c) All schools should be required to engage with the national Young Carers in School Programme to enable them to identify and better support young carers and to report on actions taken to address young carer needs.
- d) The council should continue to work with local support projects to ensure policies are inclusive and that all children receive the support they need.

Living and ageing well

“Reduce isolation amongst older people. Improve life expectancy in East Brighton.”

The health and well-being of older people living in the city needs a step change by addressing issues of social isolation including digital exclusion, poverty, support for carers and access to transport, leisure and employment opportunities. Targeted efforts to address issues for older and disabled people with the most complex needs are needed if Brighton & Hove is become a fairer place for all.

Healthy communities

The significant gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived individuals in the city has seen little change over the past ten years⁴⁶. This suggests to us that the strategies and plans developed over the years to address this gap have had little or no impact⁴⁷. The links between health and inequality are already well documented but recently published research shows that, nationally, this gap is widening.⁴⁸ Radical change is needed in how primary health care is commissioned and delivered in Brighton & Hove to reduce health inequalities.

Reducing health inequalities

“There is widespread consensus that our health and social care services are not sustainable in their current form. Demand pressures are growing and funding has failed to keep pace. The gap between need and resources could rise to £25 billion by 2020. More money may be necessary, but it is far from sufficient. Health spending must shift away from treatment and towards prevention. The focus must be on keeping people well for longer and, when they do become ill, supporting them to manage their conditions in the community, avoiding expensive institutional settings. This is not a new analysis: those involved in health and social care reform have recognised this for some time but to date transformation on the scale required has proved elusive.

If we are to take Sir Michael Marmot’s call for a focus on the broader determinants of health seriously, people must be put at the heart of reform. This means reimagining a new health and wellbeing system which

⁴⁶ Public Health England: This compares with a gap of 9.1 years for males and 6.9 years for females across England and is based upon the slope index of inequality. In terms of progress against national equivalents there has been no significant change in the last 10 years.

⁴⁷ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/disability-and-health-measurement/healthy-life-expectancy-at-birth-for-upper-tier-local-authorities--england/index.html>

⁴⁸ An Investigation into Inequalities in Adult Lifespan, Cass Business School and the International Longevity Centre-UK May 2016

promotes personalisation, supports healthy decisions, enables physical activity and encourages responsibility.”⁴⁹

We recommend that greater focus is given to preventative work in the city, acknowledging that the assets within families, neighbourhoods, community and voluntary groups are essential to supporting older people, and others who are isolated. A wider and more progressive view of preventative work and how to genuinely join this up across agencies would be a real step forward. This requires greater vision, leadership and better partnership working than exists at the moment.

Supporting older people

“Individuals who are socially isolated are between two and five times more likely than those who have strong social ties to die prematurely. Social networks have a larger impact on the risk of mortality than on the risk of developing disease, that is, it is not so much that social networks stop you from getting ill, but that they help you to recover when you do get ill.”⁵⁰

Older people have considerable strengths and assets that can be built on to improve the health and wellbeing not only of themselves but also the lives of others in the community. Many older people actively support younger people and children. Grandparents who undertake childcare, may also be looking after their own parents, and bring benefits to the city in savings made by voluntary work, caring and have shown to be net contributors in monetary terms.⁵¹ However, there are those that are vulnerable, have long term health problems, lack mobility and need our support. With the backdrop of growing pressures on the adult social care budget it is important to ensure that those who are socially isolated and financially limited, often with health and care needs, are well supported. A higher proportion of people over 65 spend more than 50 hours on unpaid care per week than all other ages at.⁵² Older carers are at particularly risk of social isolation, impacting on their health and wellbeing. Over half the 24,000 carers in Brighton & Hove are aged 50 or over⁵³.

We heard evidence from expert witnesses, professionals, individuals and groups on many effective, and cost-effective, ways of addressing social isolation, primarily through simple neighbourhood and community connections.

⁴⁹ Get Well Soon – reimagining place-based health. The Place-Based Health Commission report March 2016

⁵⁰ Marmot (2010) Fair Society Healthy Lives Final Report

⁵¹ https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/2010%20BH_Directorofpublichealthannualreport.pdf

⁵² Local insight report for Brighton & Hove Oct 2015 Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI)

⁵³ 2011 census

Addressing isolation and developing stronger social networks

Residents told us that the arts, community networks, transport to activities, befriending schemes, lunch clubs and social prescribing were particularly important to them in addressing isolation and keeping them healthier and happier. We heard evidence of effective work being delivered in the city that needs to be built on and extended across the whole city.

The role of the arts

Good work in the city being delivered by the arts and creative industries is helping to address social isolation and build community networks. They already have an offer of cultural activity suitable for older people that promotes health and wellbeing. Much of it is self-funded - U3A, Engage and Create! for example - other activity is provided by funded arts and cultural organisations such as Fabrica and Creative Connections.

Going to see culture together - a monthly arts-focussed club of older people who are quite isolated because of health related issues, going to an exhibition, film and/or performance once per month

The extended role of libraries as essential community hubs is effectively supporting access to social networks, information and the arts, contributing to reducing the isolation of older people and we support the council's commitment to retaining the city's neighbourhood libraries and further extending the services they offer.

The role of lunch clubs and shared meals

We evidenced first-hand the positive impact that lunch clubs have on communities and the important role that shared meals play in bringing people together and reducing isolation. We were lucky enough to have shared meals with older people at the Hop 50+ Café, learning-disabled young people at Grace Eyre and people living with HIV at Lunch Positive. Lunch clubs not only play a role in improving health – including mental health - and nutrition but they can also act as a gateway to advice and support.

“I don’ t get depression now that I come here. I used to just sit at home, between the four walls in front of the telly - same in, same out... Now I come and see my friends every week”⁵⁴

The Brighton & Hove Food Partnership estimate that over 1,200 meals are shared every day across the city, primarily organised and delivered by volunteers, offering very cost effective support to isolated individuals or communities of interest.

⁵⁴ Somerset Day Centre attendee from “Eating Together: Exploring the role of lunch clubs and shared meals in Brighton & Hove” research by the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership 2015

Befriending

We heard evidence on how the various befriending schemes being delivered in parts of the city by voluntary organisations are offering a cost effective solution to addressing social isolation.

“Befriending is so cost-effective that better promotion and funding of schemes across the country is a really affordable way of preventing isolation and loneliness for older people.”⁵⁵

Greater investment in this effective work could be made by partners to ensure they are available in all areas of the city and more could be done by the schemes themselves to include the BME community and residents for whom English is a second language.

“[My volunteer] visits, takes me out, takes me to hospital appointments. I’m able to get out sometimes and she’s a friend now who comes for a cuppa and chat. We have a laugh and girlie afternoons.”⁵⁶

Social prescribing

We heard evidence of the benefits of social prescribing from the Lead Volunteer of the Community Navigation pilot where volunteer Community Navigators work in GP surgeries to assess patients’ non-medical support needs and help them access groups, services and activities, such as those set out above, that can broadly improve their health and wellbeing. The pilot was based on similar successful social prescribing models work in other cities in the country and delivered in partnership by the Brighton & Hove Integrated Care Service, Age UK Brighton & Hove and Brighton & Hove Impetus. The evaluation of the pilot found that the majority of GPs suggested the service had decreased the amount of times patients came in to the surgery for non-medical issues.⁵⁷

“I really think the service is a good one to offer help to patients and point them in the right direction with non-medical problems therefore ‘freeing’ GP appointments to be used for the unwell and those that need them.” A GP

We welcome the recent decision by the Clinical Commissioning Group to roll the programme out to all GP clusters across the city.

Working more collaboratively with older people

⁵⁵ Stephen Burke, chief executive of the charity Counsel and Care, a national charity getting the best care and support for older people, their families and carers

⁵⁶ One of the people benefitting from the Neighbourhood Care scheme that operates in ten neighbourhoods across the city

⁵⁷ Community Navigation in Brighton & Hove; Evaluation of a social prescribing pilot, November 2015 by Clair Farenden, Catherine Mitchell, Seb Feast and Serena Verdenicci

We heard evidence from the Senior Housing Scheme Manager at the council of the positive impact on the health of older people of supporting community-led services rather than top-down services. Asset-based community development coupled with collaborative working results in improved health, reduced hospital admissions and increased activity.

Case study of Maureen, Manor Paddock – redesigning seniors’ housing

Maureen says she felt that before she came to Manor Paddock she had been invisible and had no voice within the social care system as she was considered too young for the services for older people and too old for the services for young people so she simply slipped through the net and had no support at all. Maureen said “they didn’t listen to me. I felt like everyone put the wrong label on me”

Apart from her limited mobility Maureen has been quite isolated socially over the last 15 years and appreciates the interaction with the scheme manager and also with her new neighbours. The service worked in partnership with Fabrica and The Food Partnership on a healthy weight service (Shape Up).

Maureen has had a very positive experience with the Shape Up team and is now enjoying weekly visits and a new exercise regime. This is an example of the type of benefits to living in sheltered housing that Maureen has said she finds so empowering. “The environment, people around and now exercise too must do your mental health good, it’s a holistic approach, it’s learning a new path.”

Maureen used to rely quite heavily on her daughter before she moved here but the support and peace of mind that sheltered housing has provided has meant a new freedom for her daughter too. “Life is brighter for me than in the past. I’m happy with what I’ve got. My daughter can have her life back as well as me starting a new life and a new chapter.”

By using collaborative partnership the service had taken steps to address a healthy weight issue.

Promoting digital inclusion

The move towards digital-only access is excluding many older residents and this was an issue frequently cited by older people in response to the call for evidence. It is clear that many people felt unable to carry out a range of transactions when their only option was to do so online or with a smartphone and this was perceived as being very unfair.

“Bring back the scratch cards as a method of payment for parking in the city to run alongside the pay by phone facility – many older residents find paying by phone either impossible or extremely difficult – quite frequently even if there is a parking meter nearby it is out of action and Paypoint shops are few and far between so if you do not use a mobile phone you are

unable to pay for parking and either have to drive elsewhere/go home or risk a parking fine.”

“Stop forcing everyone to use the internet/computers/smart phones to communicate or carry out transactions. This is unfair to those who are blind or mentally unable to cope (or even just poor)”

“In respect of council services, no service should require the user to have a mobile smart phone or expect a user to set a mobile account to pay for a service. Paybyphone and similar arrangements discriminate against older users”

We heard evidence from the council’s Head of Libraries on the work that the library service is doing pro-actively to promote digital skills and this is welcomed. Free access and training in ICT basics to residents through its libraries network is being delivered alongside support for job seekers. Overall it is clear that the council has a vision for digital service delivery and we ask for this to be promoted as widely as possible to the city’s older residents. However, improving the IT skills of older people will not address the issue of parking by Smartphone which is discriminating against a range of people in the city and excluding them from parking in central areas of the city.

Living in an age friendly city

The council is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible city for the whole population, including implementing the age-friendly cities principles developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Together with a range of partners, the council has assessed the city against the WHO checklist of essential features of age-friendly cities. The checklist covers a range of features from outdoor spaces and buildings, transport, housing, social participation and inclusion to civic participation, employment and health services.

“An age-friendly city is a city that encourages active ageing by optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.” – World Health Organisation

The responses to our call for evidence from individual residents, voluntary organisations and the Older People’s Council suggests that many essential features are not being met and more work needs to be done to make progress against the city’s stated ambition.

Issues affecting accessibility including community transport and sufficient public amenities have already been referred to and need to be addressed and reflected in budget priorities. The following issues were also commonly cited by older or disabled people as being unfair and conflicting with the aspirations of an age-friendly city:

“Increase the number of publicly available toilets, so as to ensure the city does not discriminate against older people.”

“I have prostate cancer and need access to public toilets when I am out. I cannot wait because of my condition.”

“Don’ t build residential areas without any infrastructure i.e. cafes, shops etc. in walking distance. Portslade and Mile Oak are terrible for this. A post box and cash point would help!”

The Older People’s Council, along with public and voluntary sector partners and the business community could work better together to achieve Age Friendly City status and could learn much from the work that has been underway in Manchester for many years.⁵⁸ In line with the ambitions of many towns and cities, Brighton & Hove should also aim to become dementia friendly. This should be extended to be inclusive to all older people and involve businesses, public services and residents working together to ensure older people feel understood and are able to contribute to the local community.

Recommendations

With relationships identified as one of the most important aspects in the lives for older people in the city, social isolation should be addressed by commissioning voluntary services to build community capacity. In particular an assets-based approach should be maximised to focus on inter-generational inclusion. We make recommendations to the council, the Clinical Commissioning Group and The Health & Wellbeing Board.

- 1. To help prevent social isolation and support the development of community networks, the council and partners should:**
 - a) Recognise and support the effective work being done by the community and voluntary sector to address social isolation.
 - b) Work to together to implement all the recommendations set out in the city’s Food Poverty Action Plan 2015 - 2020.
- 2. To ensure that the city makes better progress in its aim to be an age-friendly one, all partners should:**
 - a) Consider the gaps identified by residents in relation to the World Health Organisation’s criteria for an Age Friendly City and develop a revised action plan by April 2017. As part of a broader aim, Brighton & Hove should aim to become a fully accessible city by 2020.
 - b) Work together to ensure greater enforcement of restrictions on street clutter such as A-board advertising, tables and chairs outside, as well as the council’s own

⁵⁸ http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200091/older_people/7116/our_age-friendly_work

communal bins when positioned on the pavement, and the council should work with local businesses and other partners to ensure meaningful enforcement of restrictions on street clutter.

- c) The council and its partners should adopt the Crawley model. A Town Access Group to take action on accessibility issues out and about in the city, including checking planning applications and commenting on access issues.⁵⁹
- d) The council's 'Use Our Loo' scheme has had little impact and our evidence suggests little is known about it. The council should lead by example by displaying the 'Use Our Loo' sign on public buildings, promote the scheme more widely and do more to influence businesses to join up to the scheme.⁶⁰

Recommendations for the Clinical Commissioning Group and partners

Our evidence suggested that partners consider Place-Based Health Commissioning as the only solution to addressing widening health inequalities. This means commissioners focusing on defining and measuring outcomes, putting in place budgets covering the whole of a population's care, and using long-term contracts with providers linked to the delivery of these outcomes. We therefore make the following recommendations to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and its partners.

1. That the CCG and partners commit to developing a plan to implement place-based health commissioning based on the following five enablers set out in the Place-Based Health Commission's report⁶¹:

- a) Embed long-term planning – develop a fifteen year forward view for place-based health which would be designed to overcome the short term operational and political pressures that prevent a focus on transformation
- b) An explicit focus on breaking through the evidence paradox – building credibility in the investment case for prevention
- c) A renewed push towards integrated local commissioning
- d) A route map towards place-based health – working towards 2030, informed by the outline a route map set out in the get well soon report to achieve population-level planning and commissioning
- e) A systematic approach to building readiness for change - invest in a transformation process that will take partners to joint workforce planning, place-based outcome

⁵⁹ <http://www.crawleytag.co.uk>

⁶⁰ In West Sussex they are trialling all GP surgeries joining such schemes too.

⁶¹ Get Well Soon – reimagining place-based health. The Place-Based Health Commission report March 2016. An approach to integrating health, local government, housing and other services across a geographic area (which could be a city region, town or neighbourhood), the system can be engineered to secure better outcomes and become sustainable for the future.

agreements and collaborative accountability frameworks and hold the key partners to account for outcomes in a place.

2. Expand the Health Champions networks, particularly in those neighbourhoods where the need is greatest but the take up of services is generally lowest, including for mental health services.
3. Make the best use of estates of all partners to provide health services in neighbourhood hubs.
4. GPs should be informed if their patients are receiving services from the Troubled Families Programme so that work is better joined up.
5. Health services should work with Age UK and other third sector groups to provide dementia friendly services across the city.

Recommendation to the Health & Wellbeing Board:

1. That the Health & Wellbeing Board review and strengthen its membership.

Living life to the full

“A fair city is one where all parts of the community have equal access to the range of services they wish to use and, where obstacles to access impact upon sections of the community, arrangements are put in place to overcome those obstacles”

“A place where all people are able to take part, contribute, be supported, travel and live their lives to the fullest”

Residents felt that supporting all our citizens to live fulfilling lives, to reach their potential and have control over their lives would make the city a fairer place. Within this, enabling all people to gain and develop their skills and take up employment opportunities would improve their life chances. Support to enable people to progress from low-skilled, low-paid work into better paid work would have a major impact on lifting people out of poverty, as would supporting those furthest from the jobs market into employment.

An inclusive city

“Increase resources for disabled people – better signage, improved pavements, more images of people with disability using city services. Include more BME people, older age groups and LGBT images of using city services. For fairness to be applicable there needs to be a level playing

field for diverse populations – some groups are more likely to be targets of hate crime.”

For residents, improving fairness in Brighton & Hove was predominantly associated with targeting support for groups of people who needed additional support if they are not to become vulnerable. Considerable change is needed if the city is to enable some of its most excluded residents to feel they can partake in everything the city has to offer and to promote fairness.

“Brighton’s reputation of being made up of diverse communities is at risk if it becomes reserved as a place where only the rich and elite can reside.”

A range of groups – or their advocates - spoke to us about particular issues that they felt was very unfair to them and prevented them from living their lives to the full and achieving their potential. They were:

- Adults with learning disabilities
- People with Autistic Spectrum Conditions
- The Deaf Community
- Black and Minority Ethnic people
- Women and girls who had been the victims of sexual violence or abuse
- LGBT people

Learning disabled parents

We heard evidence on the particular issues facing parents with learning disabilities and compelling arguments of the need for radical change to how People with Learning Disabilities (PLD) are both treated and supported.

Nationally, the children of parents with learning disabilities are significantly more likely to be involved in care proceedings and studies show that as many as 40% of these children are no longer living with their birth parents. Case law highlights the importance of treating PLD fairly through proper and reasonably adjusted involvement in decision making, assessing them appropriately and in a timely manner, providing the extra support they require to parent safely, and allowing for participation in court proceedings to take proper account of their vulnerabilities.

Assessment should identify what support is needed for a parent to meet the needs of their child in order for that support to then be provided, rather than to highlight shortcomings and justify removal of the child. Removal should only be considered when parents demonstrate they are still unable to meet the ‘good enough’ standard of parenting with support. We therefore make a number of recommendations to city partners that are intended to replace the current situation and make savings.

Recommendations

1. The council needs to change its approach to working with parents with learning disabilities to support the safety and security of the family and avoid children being taken into care by:
 - a) Establishing a joint protocol between Adult Services and Children’s Services for referrals, assessment and support for parents with learning disabilities (as set out in DH Good Practice Guidance on working with parents with a learning disability, 2007).
 - b) Work with experts from the University of Bristol Norah Fry Centre for Disability Studies to conduct an independent evaluation of current practice in supporting parents with learning disabilities in Brighton & Hove, and to develop specialist support for parents with learning disabilities.
 - c) Providing parents with learning disabilities with a choice of how they wish to live and be supported. This could involve extending Shared Lives, to parents with learning disabilities (currently available in Brighton & Hove to adults with learning disabilities), as well as specialist support as outlined above.
 - d) Ensuring all staff are fully aware of how the Care Act 2014 applies to parents with learning disabilities, at all relevant stages.

Including the Deaf Community

Many members of the Deaf Community gave evidence to us on the issues faced by British Sign Language (BSL) users: how excluded they felt from society generally and completely excluded from public sector consultation events when BSL interpreters are not provided.

“If we look at the situation today, we know that BSL was being recognised in 2003 by the Department for Work and Pensions, we imagine everything is accessible in BSL but actually it is still not true because council services and information are not accessible in BSL. There are certain parts of the council that are not really accessible.”

Deaf people face barriers to accessing services as well as a lack of information on where to get services. In order to ensure that the Deaf community is, and feels, fully included in society and able to contribute as active citizens, we make the following recommendations.

Recommendations

1. To improve access and rights for Deaf people who use British Sign Language, the council should sign up to the British Deaf Association’s Charter for British Sign Language and implement the five pledges set out within it:
 - a) Ensure access for Deaf people to information and services and for health care services this should follow the principles of the Accessible Information Standard
 - b) Promote learning and high quality teaching of British Sign Language

- c) Support Deaf children and families
- d) Ensure staff working with Deaf people can communicate effectively in British Sign Language
- e) Consult with our local Deaf community on a regular basis.

People with Autistic Spectrum Conditions

“Making services for children and young people more inclusive for children with complex needs. Make the city autism friendly.”

People with Autistic Spectrum Disorders face particular barriers to fulfilling their potential. Evidence came both from individuals responding to the call for evidence as well as from voluntary sector organisations that provide support services to this group.

Wider issues linked to access to housing, education and employment and safety in the community can also present barriers that impact negatively on adults with autism and prevent them from leading full and rewarding lives and being socially included. Adults with Asperger Syndrome or High Functioning Autism in particular struggle to receive the support they need to lead fulfilling lives and this, in itself, can lead to the development of mental health problems.

Case study - Autism

I think more needs to be done to help autistics. e.g I was in town meeting friends on Saturday morning. On the way back I nearly got trapped in town because of a demonstration of which there was NO warning, which was holding up the buses. Due to being autistic, I'm terrified of other people and don't like them and also cannot cope with noise or unpredictability. Had I been warned, I would have got a taxi home to get myself out of the situation ASAP or have simply not gone into town that morning. However, this choice was taken away from me as I wasn't warned that there'd be a disruptive demonstration. I was so distressed by this that I needed medical intervention. I feel that I was set up to fail and really let down by a lack of basic information and consideration for my needs as an autistic.

Issues around diagnosis and the lack of post-diagnosis support were highlighted in recent local research funded by Brighton & Hove Healthwatch.

“I felt confused afterwards as no one explained my diagnosis to me. However, the doctor at the hospital I saw seemed to know what he was talking about and really listened to me. I think the whole diagnosis procedure needs to be more black and white. I had nothing after my diagnosis, no support, no follow-up, I was just left – anything would have been nice.”

These concerns were echoed to the Fairness Commission by residents responding to the call for evidence.

“Get the NHS to provide post-diagnostic services for autistics with IQ above 70 and also for people with suicidal thoughts. I’ve been denied services for my autism because I don’t fit either social services or NHS criteria. I’m not eligible for any support or NHS service apart from my GP who has already said there is nothing further they can do for me. How is it “fairness” that I should struggle with being constantly suicidal and miserable and no-one cares or intervenes? What is wrong with the NHS that they would abandon me like this? I also think more needs to be done to help autistics.”

The evidence we heard suggests that people with Asperger Syndrome or High-Functioning Autism are unsupported until they develop mental health conditions. We consider it unfair that people who could be well, working, learning or volunteering are denied any kind of support until they find themselves in a crisis. It is also unfair that employment support is not available for this group, in spite of how effective - and cost effective for the state - it can be.

Autism case study

Businesses around the UK are working to make themselves more accessible to people with autism, for example:

- Cinema chains in the city make provision for autism friendly film screenings specifically for people on the autism spectrum or with other special needs and their families, friends and carers.
- An ASDA store in Manchester has introduced a ‘quite hour’. The store stops the escalators and turns off the in-store music and display TVs to make the shop peaceful for customers with autism and they are given a map of the store featuring pictures instead of words.

Recommendations

1. To ensure that people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions are provided with the support they need to live fulfilling lives in a timely manner to prevent them finding themselves in crisis:
 - a) The council and partners should develop the new city-wide Autism Strategy, with the full involvement of people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (or their families/carers) and ensure suitable resources are allocated for full implementation, recognising that funding for early intervention can prevent greater spend later on.
 - b) Health and social care professionals should receive training in Asperger’s and Autism Spectrum Conditions, including in ensuring the range of reasonable adjustments

available is properly understood by staff and that those with a condition are asked if any adjustments would be helpful.

LGBT people

“Where minority groups are disproportionately represented (for example, a disproportionate amount of homeless are LGBT) then resources should be allocated accordingly.”

The evidence we received from residents and groups suggests that there are some very good community-based services for LGBT people in the city. The Trans Needs Assessment, (published in 2015), led by the council in partnership with the local Trans community was a ground breaking piece of work which gave Trans people in the city the opportunity to share their views and experiences. The partnership working of community members, council, NHS, LGBT Switchboard and the University of Brighton during the process was widely recognised as a successful example of community collaboration and should continue to be promoted and applauded as such.

However, evidence submitted by Trans people to the Fairness Commission referred to the continuing problem of Transphobia being faced on a daily basis - abuse, harassment, mis-gendering and exclusion – and they called for more Trans awareness training across all services to help address this. The need for safe housing was particularly important in this regard and the Commission notes that this was a high priority in both the Trans Scrutiny in 2013 and the Needs Assessment in 2015 – indicating that there are still entrenched problems that need to be addressed. Specifically the recommendation that the LGBT Housing Options service in the council needed review with the full participation of Trans people to ensure that it was appropriately designed to their needs.

Service providers across all sectors need to recognise that LGBT people are a heterogeneous group with many intersections such as older people, disabled people (including Learning-Disabled People), wheelchair users and all other sections of society. Currently there are many incidences of ‘not being seen as a whole person’ by services.

Recommendation:

The Housing Options service should be reviewed with the full participation of the LGB and Trans community. As part of this the council should action its commitment to produce suitable guidance for Trans people seeking housing and related support services in the city.

Black and Minority Ethnic people

Several events and workshops with the Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the city were held to discuss issues of fairness and equalities. Feedback was wide ranging but one issue provoked comments from almost everyone - the term BME. The term was considered unhelpful; it assumed that people of colour, different Ethnic groups, white Europeans,

migrants, or people born and brought up in the city had the same needs, faced the same issues and needed the same solutions. This is clearly not the case when differences between our minority groups are growing. For many, the term masked the disadvantages experienced by specific ethnic or cultural groups. This is particularly marked when considering educational attainment, where some ethnic groups are among the highest performing groups, while others are amongst the lowest at every Key Stage.

Residents spoke of the racism, stereotyping, discrimination and a lack of integration that continues to affect the lives of many people, particularly in terms of academic attainment and access to employment opportunities. We make a recommendation to employers to adopt 'blind' recruitment practices to give people from Minority Ethnic groups a fairer chance of securing employment.

More apprenticeships and internships for young BME people were key issues that the city and partners need to address. Residents felt that the city lacked high profile role models or positive images and partners should do more to address this. More representation or recognition of the achievements of Black people in the national curriculum was also suggested. Evidence was also presented on the number of highly educated migrants who were forced to accept low-paid and low-skilled jobs as a result of a system that makes it difficult for qualifications from foreign universities to be recognised in England. Employment support and other advice agencies could make people better aware of the work of UK NARIC.⁶²

Residents discussed other key issues that had been raised on numerous occasions but, they felt, had never been addressed. That there had been so much engagement with the BME communities, but that there had been no action taken as a result and no feedback given – people asked for swift feedback and more meaningful engagement. Many people talked about perceived inequalities in terms of funding and support from partners for BME organisations, an issue that has been raised before and not addressed. The work of the BMECP⁶³, BMEYPP⁶⁴ and Mosaic was seen as essential for BME communities and concerns that funding to them was dwindling. People wanted a more transparent system and openness around levels of funding awarded to specific BME groups so they could see it was fair in practice.

Recommendations

1. To ensure meaningful future engagement, demonstrate greater transparency, reduce inequalities and promote fairness for the Black and Minority Ethnic communities, the council and all partners should:

⁶² <https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/Default.aspx> UK NARIC is the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. It performs this official function on behalf of the UK Government.

⁶³ Black and Minority Ethnic Community Partnership

⁶⁴ Black and Minority Ethnic Young People's Project

- a) Provide timely feedback on all engagement or consultation work that has taken place and explain what actions are being taken to address concerns raised by BME communities.
- b) Ensure that information on grants to BME Groups is accessible and readily available and people should be signposted to it.
- c) Ensure that the City Employment & Skills Plan contains specific actions to address the issue of insufficient and unsuitable apprenticeships and support services so that BME people can secure employment.
- d) Build on all the evidence submitted to the Fairness Commission and, working with all the Minority Ethnic groups, develop and implement a clear plan that will address the issues they have raised.
- e) To improve the lives of our Traveller residents who have nowhere to live in the city, reduce inequalities and save money, the council should develop a strategy of negotiated stopping places for Gypsies and Travellers.

Women and girls who had been the victims of sexual violence or abuse

“There are two groups of people who have experienced the most extensive violence and abuse. One group is made up of those who have been sexually and physically abused both as children and as adults, the other is those who have suffered extensive physical violence and coercive control by a partner. At least 80% of both of these groups are women”⁶⁵

The Commission attended a half-day consultation session run by the Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG) Forum. We were privileged to hear powerful personal testimonies and from professionals highlighting some of the key issues and barriers to fairness for them in the city.

Recently there has been a focus on encouraging people experiencing violence and abuse to make a disclosure (usually by reporting), while services have worked hard to make it easier to seek help and support. This has helped make the city fairer. But at the same time, this means that services that exist to support women and girls are under growing pressure because reporting is increasing.

In Brighton & Hove 22.6% of Violence against the Person (VAP) offences were flagged as Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) in 2014/15⁶⁶.

There is concern about the level of support available for victims, both in terms of their immediate safety and well-being, but also their longer term recovery. In this context, the provision of specialist support is vital.

⁶⁵ Scott, S. and McManus, S. (2016) *Hidden Hurt: Violence, abuse and disadvantage in the lives of women*, First Revision edn., London: DMSS Research.

⁶⁶ Data from the CADDIE crime download from Sussex Police

Many organisations that provide vital DVA and Rape, Sexual Violence and Abuse (RSVA) and trafficking services currently face grave uncertainties about their funding – both because of central government funding cuts and because of the reduction in independent grant giving combined with increased competitiveness for these funds. In Brighton & Hove the council has a good track record of sustaining investment for specialist services working with women and girls in response to these crime types, working with other commissioners including the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner. However the level of funding has not increased in line with the increases in reporting. Of particular concern is the impact of earlier intervention and longer term recovery when the pressure on services means that there are not sufficient resources. Commissioners will have to prioritise victims at the greatest risk or with the highest needs, meaning that the threshold for services are raised and / or any reductions in investment being made in preventative services, which principally support children and non-abusive parents. This means that victim/survivors will increasingly find it hard to access support, particularly in relation to longer term recovery.

Recommendations

In light of the evidence we have received we recommend the council and its partners refresh their responsibilities in relation to violence and abuse. Proactively responding to DVA, RSVA and other forms of VAWG, and ensuring this core business for the city is essential to tackling inequalities and increasing fairness in the city.

1. Review funding for specialist services, so that provision is protected and, where appropriate, increased to ensure help and support are in place to meet rising demand in terms of immediate safety and wellbeing, as well as longer term recovery
2. Refresh the commitment of the city's leaders to a strategic response to DVA, RSVA and VAWG and ensure that it is core business for the city.
3. Provide a specialist advocacy position for survivors to support recovery past the crisis stage and highlight any ongoing issues (A similar role to the Mind/Mindout advocacy service but specialised in domestic abuse).

Developing a better understanding of Equalities

Worryingly, our evidence suggests that there is a pressing need for a better understanding and awareness of all equalities issues among and between service providers, health care professionals and within institutions across the city (schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, GP surgeries, Health Centres, care homes and charities) and all partners need to develop plans to improve awareness training. A particular focus should be given to improving an understanding of the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic groups, LGBT people – especially Trans people, Learning Disabled people (including LGBT Learning Disabled people), young carers and the survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

Recommendation:

In response to the significant volume of calls for better understanding and awareness across all equality groups, there should be a city wide, cross sector training offer that is designed to meet the needs of all groups reflecting the fact that people often identify with more than one community.

Fair employment

“Campaign for employers to introduce the living wage among the worst-offending sectors of our local economy; naming and shaming pay-day and high cost loans which are contributing to family debt”

The City Employment & Skills Plan for 2016 to 2020 is soon to be published and its action plan, if implemented, will address many of the issues we heard through our call for evidence. We hope our recommendations add value to the work of the new plan and strengthen its ambition of ‘no-one left behind’ so that those who face particular barriers to employment, notably the low-skilled, people with disabilities and some members of the Black and Minority Ethnic community, are properly supported.

Businesses and social enterprises can play a significant part in helping to address poverty and inequality in the city and in making it a fairer place to live and work. They can support the need locally for work trials, internships, apprenticeships and supported employment, all of which are needed to support those furthest from the labour market to improve their skills and employment prospects.

They can help lift people out of poverty by signing up to the Living Wage Campaign, spearheaded by the Brighton Chamber of Commerce and supported by the council and Unison. The campaign has been successful in highlighting the benefits to local employers and encouraging over 275 of them to sign the pledge resulting in more than 3,000 salaries being elevated. For families in poverty now, the main factor is lack of sufficient income from parental employment, which limits household income. An exclusive focus on worklessness would be inadequate given two thirds of poor children come from working families. Tackling poverty is about tackling insufficient hours and low pay, as well as moving into work.⁶⁷

Many residents considered the wide pay gaps within the city to be a fairness issue. Employment opportunities within Brighton & Hove show much polarisation with well-paid positions in its financial and business services and creative industries sectors in contrast to positions in its extensive retail and hospitality sectors which attract rates of pay at the National Minimum Wage or thereabouts. Tackling this low wage issue was the driver behind the Brighton & Hove Living Wage Campaign when it launched in 2012. Action to reduce the pay gap between the highest paid and the lowest paid, and the harm this is causing to our residents, could be accelerated if consumers, investors, employees and citizens were more aware of the facts.

The evidence on the benefits of promoting part-time work has been a strong message to the Fairness Commission. The greatest opportunity for change is to grow a quality, flexible, part

⁶⁷ An evidence review of the drivers of child poverty for families in poverty now and for poor children growing up to be poor adults – HM Government 2014

time jobs market, so that parents - especially lone parents - can earn more, making it financially viable to work, while also caring for their families. This solution has the potential to significantly improve family living standards and, crucially, does not require additional public spending, by driving social change through a sustainable commercial market.⁶⁸ The lack of quality part-time jobs locks thousands of people - notably women - out of the job market.

This creates social and economic problems: it wastes talent (a clear message we heard from parents at the Parent Carers Council Focus Group), it results in maternal worklessness, adds to child poverty, increases the welfare bill and impacts on gender equality. The fiscal cost to society and the loss to the economy of highly educated, skilled and experienced workers kept out of the workplace due to a lack of quality part-time and flexible jobs needs to be addressed.

“31% of parent carers report that their caring role has stopped them from being able to work and a further 32% do paid work but have had to take less senior roles or reduce work hours due to their caring role. In 2013 38% of parent carers reported that their caring role stopped them from working altogether and 22% had had to reduce their work hours because of it.” - from a survey of parent carers conducted by Amaze for the Fairness Commission - December 2015

The significant benefits to both society and to employers (in terms of benefits to the ‘bottom line’) need to be highlighted and promoted and the Brighton Chamber of Commerce, with support from partners, could spearhead this campaign in the same way as it did so successfully for the Living Wage campaign. The council has a role in leading by example here.

Flexible working

Both flexible working and flexible hiring are now essential tools for employers to use, in achieving a competitive advantage in attracting the best and brightest talent. And making flexibility work within the workplace can also ensure that existing talent is used in the right way, at the right time, to maximise performance and organisational value.

And no-where is this more important than within local government, where unprecedented pressure on budgets and services require innovative approaches to job design through both recruitment, workforce planning and commissioning.

Many councils are already undertaking agile programmes and investing in technology and hot-desking to drive a more flexible approach managing people and services.

⁶⁸ Building a Quality Part Time Jobs Market – A transformative approach for families - nef consulting and the Timewise Foundation

But, this is only part of the story.

While 82 per cent of managers believe flexible working benefits their business, driving a culture where people are empowered to make their own decisions about where, when and how they work, is much harder.

Timewise have developed the Timewise Council programme to help local authorities develop and implement real culture change around flexible working and hiring.

Councils who undertake the programme are supported to re-think how to position flexible working in order to maximise performance for their organisation, managers and people; to change their recruitment processes in order to unlock more roles to be open to flexibility; and build a more engaged workforce.

The programme also helps councils shape the market for services that they commission, rather than provide directly, in order to ensure best value, be it exploring how to reduce agency costs or look at job design within social care.

Councils who lead on flexible hiring have a real opportunity to share their learning with local employers, to address structural social inequalities in the local labour market, by unlocking more quality flexible jobs for residents who need them, as well as helping local families to raise their living standards, while fitting work with their caring commitments.⁶⁹

Learning to earn

The city needs to embrace a culture of ‘learning to earn’ and demand more, high quality apprenticeships and on-going learning for older people to ensure that this methodology is reflected throughout career paths. The city’s education provision must provide opportunities for people to develop leisure and learning for life in addition to commissioning a local skills offer that better links to current and future skills needs in the city.

The importance of informal learning opportunities in providing accessible routes to developing skills for those who are disengaged from more formal learning must be recognised and supported. Informal learning opportunities can deliver savings and added value through harnessing peer-to-peer approaches. The reach and accessibility delivered through the Community Learning Hubs based on our estates⁷⁰ have a significant and unique role to play in helping to build progression routes into more formal learning, volunteering and, ultimately, qualifications and paid work.

The cultural and creative sector is also contributing effectively to the city’s employment and the development of skills particularly for those furthest from the labour market. Creative organisations have a key role in developing softer skills of communication and developing

⁶⁹ LGiU report on Timewise Councils

⁷⁰ E.g. The Bridge, The Whitehawk Inn, The Hangleton & Knoll Project and the Council’s Hollingdean Depot Learning Centre

self-confidence- two areas that employers have told us are barriers to employment.

Case study - Bridges

A partnership project with Brighton & Hove Youth Offending Service, Bridges is a Young Music Leaders training project for talented 18 – 25 year olds at risk of exclusion from education and employment opportunities. Cohorts of 3 - 4 young people attend a comprehensive, level 2 accredited training programme once a week for 4 months. In parallel to their training, trainees each assist the delivery of one workshop per week for younger teenagers attending sessions at the Youth Offending Service studio. On completion of their training, trainees enter a period of paid employment on the project. Those that excel become regular practitioners on our other projects.

In the last 3 years, 11 out of 12 trainees progressed onto paid employment. 6 of these 10 became regularly paid practitioners within wider projects. 5 of these 6 are also working as music leaders beyond the organisation.

Evidence presented by the Skills Development Manager at the Local Enterprise Partnership showed that, despite the fact that we're living longer, on average men and women still leave the labour market earlier now than they did in the 1950s. Leaving the market early has a significant impact on the economy, on business and individuals: employers lose valuable skills and experience and new entrants to the workplace miss out on the valuable training and skills sharing that would otherwise take place. Retaining and, where relevant retraining, older workers is a key message for employers.

Recommendations

The city needs to do more to create fair employment and good work for all, embracing a culture of 'learning to earn' throughout life and providing targeted support to particularly disadvantaged people. We make the following recommendations and ask for them to be included in the new CESP action plan.

1. To develop a range of routes into work and ensure that no-one is left behind:

- a) All employers should recognise and utilise the experience that older workers and disabled people can bring to workplaces and they should adopt recruitment and training offers in a way to upskill and side skill existing or new older and disabled staff and utilise their skills to train others.
- b) City employers should recognise the potential inequality and impact on young people receiving a lower rate of pay from the National Living Wage (NLW) and should seek to pay all staff, regardless of their age, the NLW of £7.20 per hour as a minimum.

- c) The council should continue to support the Chamber of Commerce’s Brighton & Hove Living Wage Campaign and Public sector providers should only contract with organisations that pay the Brighton & Hove Living Wage.
- d) Commissioning strategies for adult social care should ensure the price paid for care packages will fully allow local providers to meet the living wage obligations when delivering state-funded care. These new obligations need to be made explicit in the council’s market position statement, and the council should be encouraging all organisations within the local social care market to become living wage employers.
- e) With support from the council, the Brighton Chamber of Commerce should spearhead the ‘Happy to Talk Flexible Working’ campaign and the council should become an accredited Timewise Council and lead by example within the city.
- f) Employers in Brighton & Hove should lead the way nationally by publically listing pay ratios through the free public website www.paycompare.org.uk for everyone to see and compare.
- g) The Department for Work and Pensions (Jobcentre Plus) should improve the employment support it gives to disabled people, particularly Deaf people and those with Autistic Spectrum Conditions.
- h) Support young people with the development of soft skills and mentoring support, via the emerging Enterprise Advisor network, in partnership with the city’s schools, colleges and universities.
- i) Recognise and endorse the work of Our Future City initiative in creating and delivering a long term vision for children and young people's skills and employment.
- j) The council should support the Brighton Chamber of Commerce to work with employers to create a Fair Employer Charter that recognises employers that:
 - pay the Brighton & Hove Living Wage
 - publish their pay ratios
 - promote flexible working
 - offer quality part-time jobs
 - use and promote the sharing of parental leave
 - offer work trials, work experience or apprenticeships
 - support measures to promote employment of those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: such as anonymised recruitment practices, making reasonable adjustments, promoting support available through Access to Work grants⁷¹
 - support adults with mental health issues to access meaningful work placements and employment in partnership with the new DWP Work and Health programme providers.

2. Learn to earn recommendations:

⁷¹ <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview>

- a) The Council, partners and the wider business community should actively engage with and achieve the 1000 apprenticeships in 1000 days apprenticeship pledge campaign ensuring that the pledges convert into new apprenticeship jobs.
- b) Employers from the key sectors in the city (financial services and contact centres, creative and digital, tourism, public sector) radically increase the number of apprenticeships that they offer.
- c) Cultural and creative industries should be recognised as a priority sector as a focus for developing apprenticeships, with a call to the Arts and Creative Industries Commission to sign up to the Greater Brighton Employers' pledge.
- d) Employers and specialist providers work together to increase the number of paid Supported Internships to aid the transition between education and work for residents with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).
- e) Funded Education providers develop and deliver more English, Maths and ESOL provision to ensure there is sufficient training available to address these key barriers to employment.

3. Learning for life and work:

- a) The Council, Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Schools and Education and Training providers should develop a city specific Brighton Ambition Careers Offer to transform the landscape of careers and employment support for young people.⁷²
- b) Encourage all funded learning providers to review the provision they offer to specifically address skills shortages in the city, including pre-employment and upskilling training co-developed with local employers and the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- c) Ensure that all funded learning providers increase the availability of computer classes, paid and volunteer trainers and support staff to enable people to access computers in communities to tackle digital exclusion.
- d) Learning providers should work more closely together to develop a broader range of accessible accredited, non-accredited and informal learning opportunities that support a wider set of outcomes than just employment, including health and well-being, volunteering and cultural awareness and tolerance.

⁷² This could be built from the London Ambition Careers Offer that has 7 universal offers for any young person regardless of which school/college they attend. <https://lep.london/publication/London-ambitions-careers-offer>

Fairer Ways of Working

Working together

Underpinning the evidence we received from residents and all the community and expert witnesses was the need for a fundamental change in the way public sector bodies work both together and with communities. The evidence identified a lack of joined up working and the protection of ‘territories’ between and across sectors and council departments resulting in a negative impact on people, poor outcomes, duplication and wasted precious public resources.

At a time of increasing financial and service pressures coupled with growing demand and constrained resources, collective action by partners is more essential now than ever. The issues and challenges facing many citizens in the city cannot be addressed by individuals or organisations working alone. All partners, commissioners and providers need to work differently together, in teams, across systems, with pooled resources, capitalising on their collective skills and knowledge if the city is to address the wider social, economic and environmental health and wellbeing determinants.

In places where populations are facing deep-seated challenges, partners in all sectors need to deliver integrated services more strategically, focusing on the whole population. Adopting this ‘systems leadership’ approach – affecting change for the social and common good – must meaningfully be delivered in practice rather than remain an aspiration. Integrated services must start with the person – seeing them as a whole person rather than expecting them to engage with different services in different ways and times.

This approach is also essential if the Clinical Commissioning Group is to succeed in developing and implementing Place-Based Health Commissioning that it sees as the best solution to addressing health inequalities within the city with reduced resources. Although place-based systems focus largely on health and care, they need to involve the council, the community and voluntary sector and other partners, working together with shared vision and objectives and a long-term plan. Public Health England, along with NHS England, also calls for place-based approaches that develop local solutions, drawing on all the assets and resources of an area; integrating public services and also building resilience of communities in order to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. They hope it will stimulate partnership working and, above all, put communities at the heart of this approach.⁷³

This way of working remains a challenge in real delivery terms and requires strong leadership, mutual trust and respect and a willingness to work together collaboratively. It is

⁷³ A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing, Public Health England & NHS England 2015

an approach that could provide the foundation for better collaboration with different organisations across the sectors including the community and voluntary sector.

Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS)

It was clear from all the evidence submitted and presented to us that the strong and vibrant community and voluntary sector in the city was genuinely changing peoples' lives. They have helped to lift people out of poverty, grow confidence and self-esteem, improve health and support people into work – often at a fraction of the cost of statutory services. We heard moving personal stories from residents who felt listened to and supported as a 'whole' person or family. Many people sought support from these groups after feeling that statutory services had let them down or not been able to respond to 'all our problems'. This demonstrates well how the CVS is trusted and close to communities, meeting needs at the times and places the service is required.

Furthermore there is clear evidence of the 'social value' created through the community and voluntary sector: keeping money local, growing the skills, confidence and knowledge of the workforce, strengthening and extending their work through the use of volunteers and leveraging in considerable additional money from outside the city. With skills and expertise to share, along with close connections to communities, it will be vital to include the community and voluntary sector in any collaborative partnership.

Working with communities

It is not only between different organisations across the sectors where collaborative working is needed if the issues highlighted in our report are to be addressed. Better and more meaningful collaboration between agencies and residents themselves is needed, with communities as equal partners. We heard evidence and many stories of community groups, residents, businesses and social entrepreneurs who wanted to take forward activities to benefit their local communities but had faced barriers. This desire to do more to improve their communities needs to be supported and built on.

Communities that are involved in decision-making about their area and the services within it, that are well networked and supportive and where neighbours look out for each other, all have a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing.⁷⁴

Collaboration will also require considerable culture change and new ways of working and behaving; moving from a 'can't do' to a 'can do' attitude that will enable communities to identify their own needs and deliver their own solutions. Investing in communities to enable them to do this will deliver better outcomes, help promote fairness and, in the

⁷⁴ A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing, Public Health England & NHS England 2015

longer term, be a better use of diminishing public resources. Public agencies will need to remove barriers, reduce bureaucracy and relinquish control, commissioning asset-based community development services across the city. This approach will need to involve communities and local services working together at every stage of the planning cycle, from identifying needs through to implementation and evaluation.

One way of delivering such support would be through a pro-active and explicit commitment to community asset transfer; shifting the management and/or ownership of buildings or land to communities. This would give local people and community groups greater control in the future of their area and their community as well as assets that can be grown and protected. When local groups own or manage community buildings it can help promote a sense of belonging in the community and bring people from different backgrounds together to work towards a shared goal, creating lasting change in local neighbourhoods.

Other local authorities have found that community ownership can play a part in raising people's aspirations, improving the skills of the people involved and encourage a stronger community spirit by enhancing the local environment and helping to alleviate poverty.

Local leaders, commissioners and service providers need to consider how community-centred approaches that build on individual and community assets can become an essential part of local plans. All partners will also need to involve those at risk of social exclusion in designing and delivering solutions that address inequalities in health and use the family of community-centred approaches as a tool to consider potential options for commissioning health improvement and preventive services.

We have made reference to many of the community-centred approaches that need to be put in place as well as those that already working well throughout our report: the need for asset based community development, building on the strong social networks across the city, co-producing projects, developing community hubs and supporting volunteering - the bedrock of community action - and these are the very approaches that will be essential in implementing place-based and community-centred approaches to reducing health inequalities. If the work already happening in the city is better supported and strengthened and coupled with collaborative and more effective partnership working, then progress is not only possible but is likely to deliver better, more sustainable outcomes and result in reduced demand on services.

All this will require an investment in the training and development of public sector workers so that these new ways of working are put into practice in a meaningful way and with commitment. To date most work has focussed on 'capacity building' in communities with little attention given to increasing the skills and knowledge of professionals working with them.

The Well Communities pilot provides a useful framework for integrating work with disadvantaged communities at neighbourhood level to build community capacity and improve health and well-being. Partnership working is an essential feature of the Well London pilot which is currently being developed, commissioned and implemented by a unique alliance of national, regional and local organisations. National and regional organisations include, for example, the Royal Society of Public Health, Greater London Authority and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundations Trust. At the local level the alliance includes Local Authorities, Housing Associations, local GP Practices, a wide range of local voluntary sector organisations and community groups and members. Well London's innovative approach has been recognised by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and was cited in Parliament as a good example of how effective community engagement can impact health and wellbeing.⁷⁵

This, however, requires investment to realise and develop community assets - especially people themselves - and a long-term, system change approach.

The case for early intervention

The case for early intervention and prevention being better than cure was a strong message from a range of agencies. There is empirical evidence that early intervention delivers better outcomes, avoids people falling into crisis and costs less in the long term. Early intervention offers significant opportunities to respond to budgetary constraints by unlocking not only social assets in the community but also by working more closely with CVS organisations, and by applying the principles of co-production, as we set out earlier in our report. The results achieved by Surrey County Council's response to cuts provide an excellent example of how local public agencies can take a creative approach to confronting austerity and improve outcomes in the process.⁷⁶

Partners need to see early intervention as 'investment to save' in all areas. Much of the evidence we heard was from residents describing how support earlier could have made their lives not only fairer but, importantly, less dependent on expensive statutory services and costly late interventions. Evidence was particularly compelling in relation to early years intervention and how effective this could be in tackling child poverty. Residents were concerned about the loss of key services and investment in 0-4 year olds; particularly children's centres. Small levels of investment made at the right time can have a positive impact and budget priorities need to reflect this. This is particularly important given an overall trend of reducing early intervention and prevention budgets in public services in the city.

⁷⁵ <https://www.uel.ac.uk/ihhd/projects/welllondon/>

⁷⁶ <http://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s57260/Appendix%201%20Southwark%20and%20Lambeth%20Early%20Action%20Commission%20Final%20Report.pdf>

Working accountably

Having reviewed a range of strategies, we believe that partners need to change their approach to developing and delivering their plans and accounting for progress being made in terms of implementation. The city has numerous strategies designed to tackle every aspect of social and economic life in the city. Many were developed with the aim of addressing poverty, sometimes informed by recommendations from leading consultancies including Toynbee Hall and Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion. However, the evidence we heard suggests that many of these strategies or recommendations have not been implemented and there appears to be an absence of monitoring delivery or accounting for progress. Demonstrating in an open and accountable way that action has been taken and reporting its impact is patchy. It was not always possible to see how plans were reflected in budgets or whether sufficient resources had been allocated to implementation. Better processes for the development and delivery of action plans needs to be put in place and strategies need to take account of, and reflect, the proposed ways of working we set out here.

Recommendations

1. To promote a more person-centred approach, improve joint working and deliver better outcomes, all public sector agencies should:

- a) Identify the recommendations for them and develop a clear plan for implementing them.
- b) Devolve power to communities through a Systems Leadership approach and ensure that all staff are trained and coached so that they understand and commit to a new way of working.
- c) Remove the barriers and reduce the bureaucracy that prevents residents and communities doing more for themselves.
- d) Recognise the value for money delivered by the Third Sector and sustain the support to it including working collaboratively with the sector.
- e) Be clear about how strategies are to be implemented and put in place processes that will demonstrate openly progress against the.
- f) Invest in early intervention to avoid crisis and prevent costly late interventions.

Taking it forward

We call on residents to support the recommendations and get involved where they can, whether in volunteering or supporting work in their communities, and on all partners to accept our recommendations and commit to their implementation.

Our commitment

1. To ensure that our recommendations are taken forward we, as a commission, offer to continue to meet and have two formal reviews of progress in 6 and 12 months' time.
2. We ask the Local Strategic Partnership, Brighton & Hove Connected, to take on the role

of calling partners to report to them on the progress they are making to implement the recommendations. We also recommended that each organization mentioned in our main report identifies a named, accountable lead person to help drive forward the relevant recommendations.

3. That an 'open to all network' is started for anyone who is interested in helping to implement the recommendations.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – The Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 - The Brighton & Hove Fairness consultation: an analysis of responses to the Fairness Questions, by the University of Brighton and the Community University Partnership Programme, 4th May 2016.

Appendix 3 – Presenters - acknowledgements

Appendix 4 – Organisations that submitted evidence