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| **North Locality Local Alliance Group Meeting**  **Minutes**  **20 September 2023**  **at 10am held as a Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting** |
| **Meeting attendees:** |
| **Chair**: Kath Saunders (KS), Head of Locality & Strategy, North Locality  **Attendees**: Amanda Conolly (AC), Service Manager, Education & Early Help, North Locality; Samantha Craig (SC), Inclusion Lead, North Locality; Liz Scott (LS), DFM Family Link Worker, Caring for Communities & People; Karen Johnson (KJ), YP Social Prescriber, Gillingham Medical Practice; Cllr Carole Jones (CJ), Elected Member; Rebecca Watson (RW), Project Lead, Family Hubs; Karen Perryman (KP), Regional Manager, Alcohol Education Trust; Melanie Costas (MC), CEO Rural Mental Health Matters, Karen Wrixon (KW), Headteacher, William Barnes Primary School, Natalia Steppa (NS), CEO, Mind, Brain Body CIC; Jamie Keast (JK), Home-Start Blackmore Vale, Kim Rickford (KR), Headteacher, The Forum Centre, Nikki Blair (NB), Business Manager, Libraries and Engagement; Becky Jacknelle-Rees (BJ-R), School Nurse Team Coordinator, Vicky Burrows (VB), Home-Start West Dorset, Zoe Monaghan (ZM), Service Manager, Social Care, North Locality; D Gordge.  **Minutes**: Ruth Disbrow, North Locality Business Support Team (from recorded transcript) |
| **Apologies:** |
| Paul Mattocks, Assistant Headteacher/DSL, Sturminster Newton High School; Cllr Pauline Batstone, Elected Member; Revd Mary Gubbins, Vicar, St Mary’s, Sturminster Newton, Cllr Jane Somper, Elected Member; Mary Rossant, Health Visitor Clinical Lead |

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| **No.** | **Actions** |  |
| 5.1 | Share links to Early Help online training course with members | **RD** |
| 5.2 | Presentation to be added to the Teams Site and Partnership Site | **RD** |
| 5.3 | Information about the Pathfinder Project to be shared with members | **RD** |
| 6.1 | Invitation to Mental Health working group to be sent to all members | **RD** |

| **No** | **Item Minutes** |
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| **1** | **Welcome, apologies and introductions** |
| **2** | **Minutes of last meeting, 7th June 2023 and actions** |
| **2.1** | 2.1 Send list of those attendees requiring access to the Teams site to KS (AE) |
| **2.2** | 2.2 Speak to Alice Deacon reference request for job/role description for Chair (KS) |
| **4.1** | 4.1 Email Amanda Conolly or northlocality@dorsetcouncil/gov.uk with updates or information if you can’t attend the next Mental Health Working Group (ALL) **completed** |
| **4.2** | Add ‘Priorities/Working Groups Stock Take’ to agenda for the next meeting **completed** |
| **5.1** | Make contact with the Digital Team and Holly Loxton ref attending next Poverty Working Group. (SC) |
| **5.2** | Make request for LS to be sent sign-on forms to access the Partnership Site (AE)  **completed** |
| **7.1** | Partnership Event summary document to be shared on LAG Hub (AE) **completed** |
| **7.2** | LAG to work up an action plan or feed into the current action plan reference items raised at the Partnership Event (ALL) |
| **7.3** | Future Partnership Event discussion to be added to the September agenda (AE) **completed** |
| **8.1** | Can LAG Funding be used cross border – question to be asked of other LAG Chairs and Alice Deacon (KS). Not at this time. **Completed** |
| **8.2** | Link to site/LAG funding form to be shared on LAG Hub (AE) **completed** |
| **10.1** | Circulate copy of new CYP and Families Plan when available (AE) **completed** |
| **10.2** | Link to Libraries Strategy to be shared in North LAG channel of the LAG Hub (AE) **completed** |
| **10.3** | Share SEND survey link on North LAG channel of LAG Hub (AE) **completed** |
| **10.4** | Rebecca Watson, Family Hubs Project Manager to be invited to September meeting (AE) **completed** |
| **10.5** | Family Hubs presentation to be shared on North LAG channel of the LAG Hub (AE) |
| **3** | **Chair and Vice Chair Updates**  KS is currently holding the role of Chair, but the LAG should be independently chaired. The North LAG is the only one in Dorset which isn’t independently chaired. KS hasn’t been able to give the LAG the time it needs to move forward as quickly as we would like. KS advised that she has approached some individuals. Cllr Batstone is vice chair, but other commitments mean she hasn’t been able to attend as much as she would like – and is keen for other members to volunteer!    A video is being produced which can be shared on social media to try and generate some interest.    The LAG is about turning words into actions.  Please let know KS or AE know of any new contacts for the LAG.  (During the meeting Cllr Carole Jones said that she is keen to have a further conversation with KS about possibly taking this role on). |
| **4** | **LAG Inclusion Fund update (Kath Saunders)**  At the last meeting we discussed the fund in detail – at that time there were no suitable bids. Following the last LAG meeting, KS wrote to partners to encourage bids, and a meeting was held in August to discuss the first few that had been received. Approximately £10,000 of funding was approved at this stage.    It’s great to report that a further round of bids have been received – if all are approved, this will take us to nearly £90,000 out of the £100,000 allocation, which is fabulous work by the partnership. The next meeting to discuss the bids is Friday 29th September so there is still time to get a bid in.    There will be a standing agenda item at future LAG meetings for these groups to report on progress of the projects being funded. |
| **5** | **Family Hubs update (Rebecca Watson)**  RW emphasised that she is not coming in to introduce something completely new, but wanting to harness and further the great work that is already going on in the Locality.  The initiative has to work for the North Locality and can be shaped and influenced as things move forward.  CJ asked a question about data sharing. GDPR can be a block to making good things happen.  RW said that there is a clear drive to make sure that GDPR does not adversely affect the work we are trying to do. Thinking is taking place about how to use systems already in existence to help with this.  KS for families with multiple needs and challenges there should be systems and mechanisms already in place. Family Hubs are trying to provide those multi-agency spaces for discussions to take place. Any partner can start a process and form a team around a family. Local authority intervention is not always necessary.  KS signposted members to Early Help training – an online course. ACTION share links RD  RW shared her presentation – ACTION presentation to be added to the Teams Site and Partnership Site. RD  KW – asked if the Family Hubs project is going to join up with the Pathfinder project.  RW – they are two separate programmes, with specific requirements, but the desire is for these to work together.  KS – for those that are not aware of the Pathfinder Project, KS gave a brief summary – ACTION information to be shared with members RD  KW – her hope for a Family Hub is that the school could direct families there.  KS – we want to respect the existing relationships that schools and other organisations have with families. There is room for a bit of both.  KW – Believes that it is not sustainable for small schools to manage all of the issues they are having to deal with and is hoping that some of the pressure will be relieved by the presence of hubs.  RW – would hope that the family hubs will meet some of the needs mentioned by making sure there is a comprehensive offer, so that schools and families know where they can get access to early help and support. Also aiming for a robust online offer, not just a service directory, but access to provision online. The idea is for all this to be known and understood and available without stigma for families.  RW shared a link to a [Padlet](https://padlet.com/rebeccawatson8/north-dorset-locations-q5u3l9tdh6v5e9a0) (online message board) asking members to think about the locations they would suggest for hubs to be and asking them to contribute ideas to the board.  RW would like to use the LAG as the forum to share information etc. and she will attend some of our future meetings. The padlet will remain open and colleagues are encouraged to continue to add comments/suggestions.  CJ – asked about the long-term funding for the hubs.  RW – Trying to develop a sustainable model. Work is being done with partners and locality teams to take on ownership and leadership of the FH. Looking at the potential for income generation, e.g. partners willing to pay for space, office spaces etc. There are examples in other localities where voluntary organisations are running the hubs and they have developed business plans in order to do so. In others, locality teams themselves are running the hubs.  KS – there isn’t money to build a new facility from the ground up, so we need to think about where families already go, so that we can link up with them. |
| **6** | **Mental Health Working Group Update (Amanda Conolly)**  AC – some more attendees are needed to move forward with some actions from this group. AC has booked the next meeting for 11 October. All LAG members will be sent a meeting invitation and it would be good to have more people involved. |
| **7** | **Poverty Working Group Update (Sam Craig, also representing Sam Wilton)**  SC met with Sam Wilton at the end of August. Representatives from Blandford and Sturminster had a meeting looking at the possibilities for a new model for the Blandford Food Bank. They have been looking at the Pantry model in Sturminster.  SC also covers Sherborne in her Inclusion role and goes to some separate meetings there. Sherborne Primary school host those meetings. SC will feed back to the LAG from these.  SC and SW are also keen to include organisations in Shaftesbury and Gillingham. They are coming up against the same issues in many places around transport issues. Some of the villages are really isolated.  In Sturminster, plans are already being made for Christmas and also the Warm Spaces scheme.  SW through her inclusion work also wants to establish better links with families who are choosing to home educate their children.  The next meeting is scheduled for 3 October. They are hoping to get libraries involved and also Help and Kindness.  Another concern is the isolation of many families who have children with SEND. With most of the families seen by inclusion workers, attendance is not the sole issue, there are very often other factors at play.  KR asked a question about the work with EHE families and whether examination centres were part of this.  SC said that last year the Inclusion team trialled a system whereby she took responsibility for Year 11 students and contacting their parents about exams. Some of the private schools seem to be considering taking in external candidates for exams. There will not be an expectation for local schools to pick this up because of the impact it has and the issues with logistics etc, but the idea is to try to find other places.  KR said she would like to be involved in any discussions on this subject. KS welcomed this.  KS is aware of some children with additional needs who are also EHE and who have exams coming up next year. Believes this will be a county-wide need, so it will be important to include Kerry Smith, Inclusion Service Manager in these discussions.  SC – Exam boards will need to be consulted as it is not a straightforward issue as some children may be entitled to special provision and need extra time, scribes, access to digital technology etc. |
| **8** | **Teenagers at risk of Exploitation Working Group Update (Zoe Monaghan)**  The next working group meeting has been arranged for Monday 25th September. The group will be reviewing the previously set targets. A CE networking meeting across all 5 towns has now been arranged. Sam Lawrence (Targeted Youth Worker) is pulling this together. There will be a meeting at the end of October to plan the agenda and decide how best to run it. It is a big piece of work looking at how to support most vulnerable children and to manage risks. The meeting itself will be on 15th November. Learning Centres have been invited. Not just schools, but also social prescribers and REACH. |
| **9** | **Priorities and Working Groups stock-take**  KS the working groups above have focused on our 3 priorities so far. It feels as though we are starting to pick up more about the rural transport issues in North and also issues around attendance/inclusion. None of these issues are in isolation, but it is important that we keep these conversations joined up.  CJ – since children have gone back to school this term, the Sturminster pantry has seen a huge rise in need. There are problems with availability of transport. The pantry van delivers all around the locality. However, poverty levels have increased. Alongside this, the suicide risk is increasing and there is a need for training in prevention work.  CJ asked if KW has noticed an increase of problems this term at her school.  KW agreed that they are seeing a combination of issues. Parents go to the school and school tries to coordinate the support. There are more social and emotional difficulties among the children. Research indicates that this is due to lockdown. Staff are concerned because things seem to be getting worse.  KS – this is why the Local Alliance is so important. We need to be hopeful for families. It is not about any one service holding all the responsibility, but we need to work together to support these children and families. This is what is positive about family hubs in that they will offer a seamless level of support. All services are seeing the same increase in concerns.  BJ-R – said she is seeing a lot of school avoidance and social anxiety and has picked up on the lack of transport for the young people in Sturminster in particular. They cannot even go shopping. Another issue is youngsters not having access to a computer at home, so they must do all their work in school, giving up breaks etc. She asked if there could there be a loan scheme set up.  MC –reinforced comments already made. Over 75% of people feel there is rural inequality. Community transport has to be booked in advance and is not available at weekends. The main problem for those in need is stigma, shame and isolation. We need to help people feel less alone by providing peer and lived experience support. We have the resources in Dorset and these need to be more joined up.  KS – agreed and said that we need to turn these concerns into action. Consider having a symposium to move some of these issues forward.  SC – with a lack of transport comes a lack of freedom of choice about education. There is parental choice, but there needs to be money behind it to back that choice. |
| **10** | **Future Partnership Event**  KS – said she welcomed the continuation of conversations through email. The next partnership event could be used to move forward the discussion about the rural transport issues. |
| **11** | **Dates of Future Meetings**  Wed 29th Nov 23 - 1.30 - 3pm  Wed 20th March 24 – 10am – 11.30am  Wed 12th June 24 – 10am – 11.30am |
| **12** | **AOB**  JK – sees a lot of families coming to them that do not need intensive planned home visits etc, but some people are a bit lost and don’t know where to go for help or what is on etc. This demonstrates a growing need for the family hubs. There is still nothing in Sturminster Newton although it is in the middle of the locality and this feels like a gap. Homestart is busy and growing.  CJ – what would be really useful for parents is to have something that helps them to become more resilient. She would like to see parenting classes as part of the offer, including things like budgeting.  CJ – suggested approaching charities like the William Williams Trust and Rotary to help with provision of devices for young people.  KS – would hope to have a more universal parenting course offer to reduce stigma. |