

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 4th JUNE 2020

Committee Members: Councillor Mrs Mockford (Chairman)
Cllr Bennett (Vice Chairman)*
Cllr Favor (Town Mayor)
Cllr Dabell (Deputy Town Mayor)*

Cllrs Amos, M Belsey*, Farren, Ody, Scott, Whittaker and
Woodgate

* = absent

Officers present: Town Clerk

Others present: Cllr Sweatman, Catherine Pardoe, Alice Morel, Inspector Darren Taylor and 2 members of the public.

16 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, being a virtual meeting she explained the protocol for voting and how to indicate to ask a question.

There were no questions from the public

17 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chairman called the register of councillors for the meeting for the benefit of the public and notes the following apologies:

Mrs Belsey (received post meeting)	unwell
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18 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Chairman will sign the minutes of the 12th March 2020 meeting as previously circulated, at a point in the future, as a true record of those meetings.

19 **CHAIRMANS UPDATE**

The Chairman advised that the misspelled sign on Hackendon Bridge has been reported to Network Rail to resolve as it is their sign and their property.

20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Mrs Bennett advised that regarding item 11 her Daughter has recently started work at Moatfield Surgery on reception.

21 HOMELESSNESS

Alice Morel from Mid Sussex DC gave her presentation (attached) highlighting the legislative requirements placed on the District Council, the timetables and the current effect that the pandemic has had.

She explained the process for referring homeless people is via streetlink and the staff will go out and see how they can help. The current numbers of homeless are approximately on par with this time of year and all persons have been engaged with and offered accommodation, not all want it and while these people are still engaged with housing is not provided for them.

Questions from the Council followed including:

Has the pandemic increased homelessness numbers at all due to the isolation that people were thrown together?

Possibly this has been a factor in some homes where the closeness resulted in family tensions.

How many people on MSDC books are homeless due to drugs or alcohol abuse and is there any evidence that by supporting people with habits (paying for housing) this is not a disincentive to ceasing the addictions?

It is difficult to say how many, however usually 30-50% of people who are homeless have addiction issues. No it is not thought that by supporting and helping homeless people that they are encouraged to continue with their addictions.

Do MSDC house outside the area?

They try not to, there has been a growth in new accommodation for temporary housing in MSDC so hopefully outside the area will reduce.

Questions on funding were redirected to the Cabinet member.

The Vice Chair gave a vote of thanks for the speaker. (Ms Morel left the meeting after this item).

22 BARNARDOS MAKES TRAX

Catherine Pardoe gave a presentation on the Barnardos scheme to help young people aged 15-29 to find work, employment or training and to make a success of this. (attached). She advised on success rates being so good that the project has been extended for two more years and the target (175) which was smashed in 2020 has been extended to 360. To date the service has placed 285 youngsters who have retained that placement for at least 26 weeks.

Questions followed from the Committee, including:

Has the service expanded to include youngsters who have been orphaned due to the pandemic? These groups would already be in the catchment if they were in the age group.

Is technology used to help match people to skills and careers? Yes there are a number of apps and other devices, often local knowledge and good support helps tease out skills too.

What % of youngsters stay in the placements, do they get support post placement?
The vast majority are staying in the placement and are supported for the first 26 weeks, so they are not dropped once in a job as they may struggle and need to be supported to settle in.

The Vice Chairman gave a vote of thanks for the speaker

23 POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Taylor had now been able to join the meeting and apologised that he had been called on duty which resulted in his delay in joining the meeting.

He had taken over the role a month ago and was interested in prioritising ASB and tackling the small number of people who caused problems in the area. He stated that actually the pandemic had resulted in communities becoming friendlier and more people talking to each other.

It was stated that the LAT in the town were growing neighbourhood watch and co-ordinated the speedwatch, Inspector Taylor said he was pleased to hear the LAT did this, speeding and neighbourhood watch were part of PREVENT work and he was pleased to maintain links.

It was asked how many police were in the town pre April and now they are recruited how many are there now. It was also asked whether the Inspector would commit to a target to reduce crime in the town. Inspector Taylor advised that the dedicated team were two PCSOs and a Sergeant, as always there was movement and even where dedicated there were times incidents in the rest of the area would result in their being pulled out. He also committed that the departed Steve Skerman would be replaced. He said he would come back with a target to reduce crime stats.

Inspector Taylor and the team were thanked for their work in the town with great presence during the lockdown and now the easing of restrictions as gatherings have increased. Particularly for attendance at East Court. This would be passed on the officers .

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24 Delegated Decisions

This was noted

25 Report from the Community Liaison Officer

This was noted with thanks

26 Effects on Public Services Due to Covid 19

The Chair thanked everyone who had been involved with the EGEAG service, the named and unnamed Councillors who have all done such a great job along with the volunteers. Staff were also thanked and the Clerk.

It was commented that everyone had done their bit in some way and this was greatly appreciated and showed what a great town and town council we had supporting the community.

Cllr Mrs Farren was asked to update on the school position, she advised that her own school was taking a phased return approach, learning lessons and making adjustments as needed to support the youngsters returning while instructing in the

need for social distancing, ensuring that the school was deep cleaned weekly. It will be a slow return over several weeks but hopefully will result in a process that can deliver effective teaching and support safely.

It was commented that other schools were taking similar approaches.

The Chairman thanked the committee and announced the next meeting would take place on Thursday 10th September and she closed the meeting at 8.45 pm.

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN



Making Homelessness Prevention

Everyone's Business

The Homeless Reduction Act

Alice Morel – Senior Housing Needs Officer

Who are we?



- Housing Needs Team Manager
- Senior Housing Needs Officer
- Four Housing Needs Officers
- Two Homeless Prevention Officers
- Temporary Accommodation Management Officer & Support Officer
- Private Sector Tenancy Negotiator
- Three Housing Assistants
- Co-Located Staff from Turning Tides & Citizens Advice

Reasons for the new Act



- The Act came into force in **April 2018**. It is the biggest change in homelessness legislation since the 1977 Act.
- Homelessness is increasing nationally as is the use of temporary accommodation.
- This Act profoundly alters the ways in which **LA's, partners and their clients work together** to try and resolve housing issues. The Act recognises that there is a **shortage of social housing** and that by working together there is a much better chance of a person or family avoiding homelessness.
- Prevention is better than cure.

What is impact of homelessness locally?



- In the 24 months since the act, Mid Sussex were approached by **1784 households. Almost all were known to other services.**
- **Over £1.2 million (£768k net)** was spent by Mid Sussex on temporary accommodation between April 2018 and March 2020.
- In Mid Sussex recently we have had an average of 80 to 100 households in TA **currently we have over 100. This has been increased by the pandemic.**
- **Homeless effects every part of a household:** Health, Education, Employment, Support Network and Relationships.

Reason for the new Act



- The HRA places duties on Local Housing Authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness & to take reasonable steps to **prevent & relieve** homelessness for all eligible applicants.
- These new duties apply to **all households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness**, not just those who are in priority need, are not intentionally homeless and have a local connection.

Personal Housing Plans



- LA's required to carry out **full assessment** to identify the cause of the homelessness/threat of homelessness & the support required to prevent/relieve it.
- The assessment forms the basis of the PHP which sets out the **reasonable steps the applicant & the LA need to take**. There is a duty on the applicant to co-operate. Steps may be identified for applicants to engage with external support agencies.

New Duties - Prevention



- Enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to **56 days**, meaning local authorities are required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage and for longer.
- Prevention means working with households to try and maintain their current home or secure alternative accommodation **before they become homeless.**

New Duties – Relief



- For those already homeless or become homeless despite activity during the prevention stage.
- Requires LA's to support households for **56 days** to relieve their homelessness, by empowering them to **secure alternative accommodation**.
- If they have a Priority Need the LA will also need to provide interim accommodation.

What do we do?



- Home Visits
- Advice on notices
- Applications to court
- Support with the private rented sector
- Applications for benefits
- Referrals to alternative housing
- Access to the Housing Register
- Referrals to other agencies e.g. debt advice
- **Managing expectations**

Who does the LA provide emergency accommodation to?



Only to those in priority need. You will usually only have a priority need if you are:

- Pregnant or have a dependent child who normally lives with you
- Are aged 16/17 (but social services will usually have the main duty to accommodate & support)
- Aged 18,19 or 20 & were “looked after” by social services when 16 or 17
- Have been made homeless by a fire, flood or similar emergency
- Are a “vulnerable person”

Vulnerability



Who is a “vulnerable person”?

To decide if person is a “vulnerable person” as a result of :

- Old age
- Having physical or mental health problems, or a learning disability
- Had to leave their home because of violence or harassment
- Have been in care, the armed forces, a young offenders’ institute or prison in the past

we will look at whether they would suffer more harm in a significant way from being homeless than an “ordinary person” would suffer. In other words are they “significantly more vulnerable”? This is because everyone is ‘vulnerable’ when they are rendered homeless. Under the legislation a person is not automatically in priority need because they are in one of these categories.

New Duty to refer



- From 1st October there was a **duty** on certain public authorities to refer service users (with their consent) who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days to a local authority.
- Included in this are Prisons, Probation (including Youth Offending Services), Job Centre Plus, Social Services (adult and children), Hospitals (inpatient and A&E).

Spot the issue!

Triggers

Missed appointment
New claim
Conflict
Overcrowding
Joblessness
Pay day loan
Bright house
Loan Sharks
Provident
Health issues
Disrepair
Unaffordable lifestyle
Drugs and alcohol
Smoking
Rent Increase
Change in circumstance
Special educational needs
Universal Credit
Changes in benefit
Benefit Cap
Request for
Emergency Payments
Housing Benefit
Suspension

Food Vouchers
TV packages
High tariff Mobile phone
Non dependents
Online expenses
Relationship difficulties
Relationship breakdown
High expenses on pets
Unmanageable utility bills
Rent increase
Mental Health
Gambling
No Fixed Abode (caravan, sofa surf)

Risk of homelessness

Domestic Abuse
Any rent arrears
Anti Social Behaviour
Noise nuisance
Disagreement with Landlord
Sudden change in situation
Notice of eviction from landlord
Any bailiffs attendance
Eviction threats
Unresolved disrepair
Unsuitable accommodation
Suspended benefit
Not claiming benefits
Sanctioned benefits
Tenancy breaches
Family breakdown
Criminal behaviour
Prison sentence
No Fixed Abode (caravan, sofa surf)

Homeless

Evicted
Rough Sleeping
Unreasonable / Unsafe to occupy
Inaccessible accommodation

TOO LATE

How can we work together?

- Look out for triggers and intervene
 - Look out for risks and lets intervene together
 - Manage expectation
 - Joint working on Housing Plans - those who are able into work = improved chances of securing / sustaining accommodation
 - Early intervention requires knowledge of services available and how to access them
- Let us share more knowledge - how?

Rough Sleepers



- Turning Tides provide Mid Sussex's Rough Sleepers outreach service. They provide assertive outreach, community inclusion and long term support to a small group of clients.
- Turning Tides also provide supported housing in West Hill to those with a history of rough sleeping.
- www.streetlink.org.uk should be used to notify the Council about a rough sleeper (UK wide).

COVID-19 – What have we done?



- Worked to get ‘everybody in’
- Worked to keep ‘everybody in’
- Successful partnership work – Turning Tides, Clarion Housing
- Extended placements following negative decisions
- Completed and working through recovery plans to try and prevent as many as we can from returning to the streets

COVID – 19 – What are the challenges?



- Chaotic client group
- Limited options for move on
- Domestic Violence – concern about victims
- Further limited the supply of housing coming through
- Delayed possession action will create a spike in homelessness later in the year
- Concern about residents effected by travel industry job cuts from Gatwick



Any questions?



make trax

Catherine Pardoe
June 2020

About

make trax

- Young people aged **15 - 29** years
- Not in education, employment or training (**NEET**) or who are at risk of becoming NEET
- Especially young people facing **complex barriers** – at risk from social exclusion and exclusion from the labour market e.g. lone young parents, BAME communities, in youth justice system, disabilities, poorly housed, trauma history, mental health issues
- Funded by the **National Lottery Community Fund** and **European Social Fund** until 2022

Localities

Coast To Capital LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership)

- Mid Sussex – Barnardo's
- Horsham – Barnardo's
- Brighton and Hove – Barnardo's
- Crawley – Barnardo's
- Croydon – Prince's Trust
- Worthing – Asphaleia
- Bognor Regis – Asphaleia

The aim of **make trax**

- To reduce the number of young people aged 15 - 29 who are NEET or who are at risk of becoming NEET
- By 2022 we will engage **360 young people** in activities to improve their work readiness
- This benefits young people, communities and economy

Our Model

➤ ***Engage***

➤ ***Assess***

➤ ***Support***

➤ ***Progress***

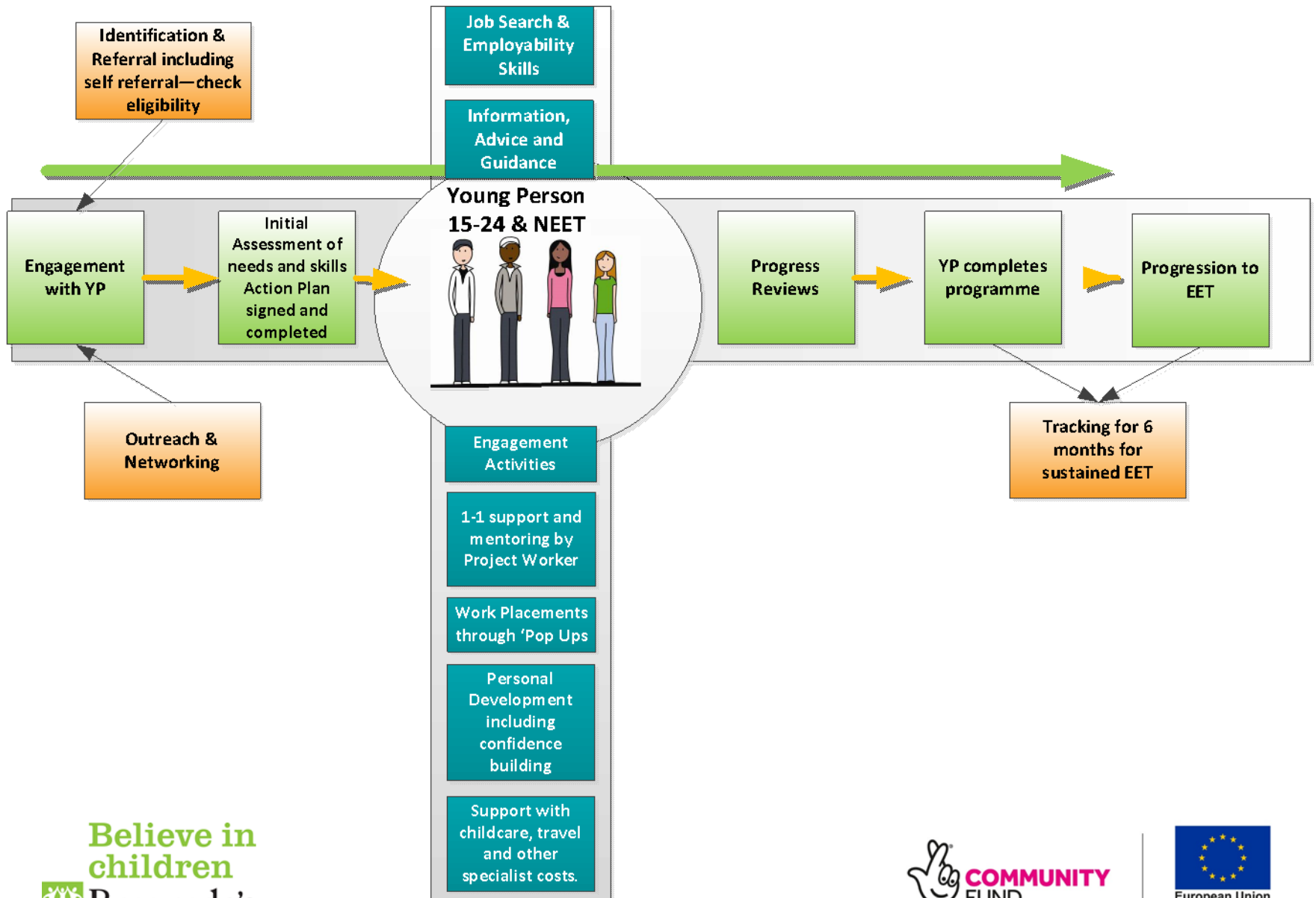
Referral agencies

- Mental health charities
- Schools/colleges
- Jobcentre Plus
- Youth justice agencies
- Housing
- Youth services
- Self-referral

and more...

Eligibility

- 15-29 years
- Unemployed or economically inactive (not able to work) – evidence required, e.g. from DWP
- if 15-18 years – need to be at risk of becoming NEET – evidence required, e.g. letter from school, careers advisers
- National insurance number
- Right to Work in UK – evidence required, e.g. passport, birth certificate, Home Office docs
- Not already being supported by a Building Better Opportunities project



Business involvement

- Workplace experience
- Apprenticeships
- Bespoke training courses
- Positive attitude to young people
- Mentoring support
- Flexible, creative approach
- Make Trax can support young person and employer with transition to work

Worth noting...

- Free at point of service
- Under 18s parent/carer authorisation
- They don't need maths or English GCSE to be eligible
- No time limit in the duration of time we work with each young person – aim is approx. 6-12 months
- Expenses for travel to interviews and clothes for interviews
- Weekly/fortnightly sessions

Covid-19

- Virtual contact – phone, email, online e.g. Google Hangouts Meet
- Confidence building, setting goals, developing a CV, interview skills, developing an action plan/exploring options for when lockdown is lifted, online learning, managing wellbeing and staying motivated
- Secured additional funding for tablets, laptops, wi-fi dongles and mobile phones
- Food vouchers
- Electricity and gas top ups
- Mental health and well-being items

What do we measure?

- **Project Targets** – relating to the situation of the participants on the date that they joined the project
- **Project Outcomes** – those relating to results/achievements of the participants by the time they leave the project

Success

- 285 young people recruited (target 188)
- 44% moved into employment, education or training (target 40%)
- 78% sustain progression for 26 weeks
- Recent cost benefit analysis: for every £1 spent the saving to government was £2.43

Success

What young people say

I've gained confidence and realised it's normal to have anxieties about employment and that I'm not alone

This process has helped me breakdown big decisions and tasks into manageable steps

Feel I am more confident about making choices regarding employment as I have discussed things I like and dislike, what I want from employment, and also what I might want on a bigger scale

Contact

Catherine Pardoe

catherine.pardoe@barnardos.org.uk

07783 847 655

Mon Tues Wed Fri