

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL
SALISBURY AREA BOARD
24th JANUARY 2019**

CHILD WELLBEING GROUP – UPDATE REPORT

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. To report on the work of the Child Wellbeing Group.

2. Background

2.1. In January 2016, targeted invitations to a debate on child poverty were sent to members of the public, child care professionals, teachers, health visitors, public health consultants, young people and local charities supporting families living in poverty.

2.2. As evidence base, current statistics for child poverty in Salisbury were presented: circa 1,000 families. 13% of Salisbury's population live in areas of high deprivation: Bemerton Heath, the Friary, and Bishopdown. Updated statistics were presented in November 2017 at a Child Poverty event. Nationally and locally, numbers of children living in poverty are rising.

2.3. The 90 people present asked the Area Board to setup a subgroup to focus on the following areas:

- (a) Improve communication and coordination of information, advice and services
- (b) Strengthen support for parents
- (c) Strengthen support for children's mental and emotional health

2.4 Councillor Mary Douglas has been leading on this work on behalf of the board, and with the Community Engagement Manager, drew together a group during the middle of 2016, which has decided to focus on the 3 areas above in paragraph 2.3 for 0-5 year olds ([see attached action plan in appendix 1](#))

2.5 Drawing on the work of this group, and following a number of related discussions with key partners, the Wiltshire & Swindon Community Foundation has committed to secure £200k funding for a 5-year programme of work on the Friary to address some of the causes of child poverty. The aim is to improve the mental health of parents, and the resilience of families. £40k of funding is available each year, allocated by a panel of local people. The Community Foundation is also funding a Community Development Worker to engage families with both the panel and with the activities which it funds. This work is being managed through an arrangement with the city council's community development team. Both the Child Wellbeing Group and the Friary

Inter Agency Group will follow the progress of this programme and offer their support throughout.

2.6 In particular, the group aims to strengthen online, paper and face-to-face forms of communication for Friary families to ensure they have access to all the support, services, projects, activities and events available for them, as follows:

- enhance the Friary Facebook page,
- enhance the Salisbury Our Community Matters web page,
- ensure use of local noticeboards/leaflet dispensers is working,
- enhance existing material produced by Wiltshire Council's resident engagement service for new residents to ensure information packs include clear information for parents of 0-5 year olds, and
- programme regular 'welcome days' to take place on the estate to ensure support is clearly on offer and followed up with further support where required

3. Update

3.1 At the most recent meeting of the Child Wellbeing Group in November 2018, the group agreed to transfer its main focus onto children and families living in poverty in Bishopdown South and North wards, whilst retaining some overview of the Friary work. The hope is to set up a small focused action group for Bishopdown families, drawing on church outreach workers, school parent support advisers, midwives and health visitors during the first quarter of 2019. The main reasons for this is that many services and initiatives are already embedded on other deprived neighbourhoods in the city, in particular the Friary and Bemerton Heath, whereas there seems relatively less provided for Bishopdown. Please see attached updated statistics regarding children living in low income families in wards across the city.

- The group also considered a presentation from Sally Johnson, Wiltshire Council's Head of Maternal Service for 0-5 year olds regarding the Families and Children Transformation (FACT) partnership project in Wiltshire and its Best Start in Life workstream (see attached slides). FACT aims to streamline and improve the way professionals work with families, children and young people, intervening early, and building on the family's strengths to equip them to care for themselves independently of the council's ongoing support where possible.

3.2 Specific objectives are:

- disseminate the new Top Tips leaflet and Best Start in Life Toolkit
- ensure early years partners in Salisbury are aware and attend the Make Every Conversation Count training programmes in 2018/19
- improve take up of funded streams: early years pupil premium, healthy start vitamins, free school meals
- ensure the 95 children living in poverty on the Bishopdown south and north wards were connected to a health visitor

- investigate and work with early years settings to ensure meaningful conversations were being had at the regular health screenings all 0-5s are required to have
- work on speech, language and communication outcomes e.g. working up a simple project to ensure families have access to free books and print some fun prompt stickers to help encourage conversation amongst parents and children
- promote - <https://easypeasyapp.com/>

Members of the group expressed enthusiasm to help make this happen in their various areas of responsibility.

- 3.3 A smaller sub group is due to meet on the 7th February, 5.30pm to agree a plan of action for 2019 to help tackle issues relating to child poverty on the Bishopdown north and south wards, focussing on children age 0-5.
- 3.4 We will be moving to one meeting a year for the full membership of the Child Wellbeing Group, at which we will invite updates on the Friary's Stronger Families project and on the targeted work proposed for Bishopdown.

4. Recommendations

4.1 To note the update; and

4.2 To reaffirm support for the Child Wellbeing Group's work.

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