

Conference Breakout Session Notes



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These notes contain a brief summary of the discussions which took place during the conference Breakout Sessions. Each session ran twice (Round 1 and Round 2) and hosted 15 - 20 people in each. Delegates chose two out of the six choices.

Breakout 1: Being a Young Person in Cheshire & Warrington

At the beginning of the session delegates were handed ballot papers on which to vote for the issues they thought were most important to young people, based on the national survey, “Make Your Mark”. The “Make Your Mark” website is for 11 – 18 year olds; they can vote in issues which are important to them and receive reports online every year.

A ball of wool was passed around to the group; the person holding the ball of wool picked a number from 1-10 and then answered a question about themselves from a prepared list. As the ball of wool was passed on, delegates were asked to keep hold of the string before throwing to the next person. This continued until everyone in the group was holding a piece of the wool. Delegates were asked to raise the wool to visualise how the networks and connections with colleagues had been built in Cheshire & Warrington.

The ballot results were announced and the issues which most effect young people were revealed:

- Knife Crime
- Mental Health
- Equal pay/Equal Work.

Delegates were asked to discuss these issues in pairs.

Round One

Knife Crime

- Fear on social media
- Where they hang out
- Gangs
- Connections and everyone can relate to or know something about knife crime

Mental Health

- Is more talked about now and have the ability to talk about it
- Support with friends
- How would you discuss with your friends/young people
- Show support

Equal Pay

- Equality, Age, gender, unfair as the cost of living is the same no matter what age

Round Two

People in the group were surprised knife crime was on the top of this list.

Knife Crime

- Serious – on the news everyday it is real, although it may not be happening on our streets
- Youths are in fear
- Adults don't understand what fears and effects young people are experiencing

- The more fear about people carry knives the more they will carry them
- We need to find a solutions and raise more raise awareness

Some solutions discussed

- Surrender bins, these bins are used for people to surrender any weapons they have without it effecting them in anyway. These have been proven to be very effective in areas when they have been used.
- Campaigns
- Mental Health first aiders

What can the Councils do?

- Support
- Funding

Mental Health

- Pressure on young people
- Fear of failure
- Being engaged good/bad adding pressure
- If mental health isn't dealt with it does become part of life
- People become quite ill before it is recognised and treatment is issued
- You shouldn't have to be at crises point
- Schools need to be educating more
- Early intervention is needed
- Curriculum for life
- Standard of school/comparison of school

- Pressure on achieving at school
- Half of young people are afraid to discuss
- Still a lot of stigma
- Not want to come across as being attention seeking

Some of the mental health problems young people face, were discussed:

- Eating disorders
- Education – stress, peer pressure
- Don't know who to go to, to discuss issues they are experiences
- Drug misuse

Equal Pay

- Minimum wage is discriminatory

Some statistics the young people mentioned

- Suicide – is on the increase 15 people a day
- Cheshire is the 9th worse for knife crime



Breakout 2: Rebuilding Community Cohesion and Places

Round One

- Perception of sector?
- Three authorities - voluntary sector - C&W
- Fairly small sub-region - why are there 3 teams?
 - There is active joint working/collaboration to respond to same issues across the patch.
- Locality - line on map doesn't matter to people's lives
- Described as a sector?
 - Challenge as a local authority to recognise as a sector and not just be seen as a connector
- Stats are showing voluntary sector is a significant employer with a significant number of volunteers - where would funding come from if these were paid positions?
- Fills both roles - service provider
- Don't want to disadvantage small niche voluntary organisations
- Fill smaller gaps the public sector can't fill
- One commissioning framework won't fit all
- Trying to work closer with local authorities
- Voluntary sector framework - ESF projects - access funding with support
- Nature of what we want society to do
 - Burden of what people want to do - volunteering
 - Once labels are added it takes away from enjoyment
 - Support function for smaller volunteer groups - lose other benefit
- Smaller groups are not working to business models
- How do we procure as a public sector?
 - Need to create a system that allows to support community/voluntary sector
- Quantifying risk
- People appreciate more what small groups are doing
- CWaC & CE planning for next 4 years how best to develop - with scarce resources how to get knowledge?
- How is data managed - grass roots organisations etc.
 - Stories of positive impacts should be shared
- All collect data and run place based events
- Do we have a shared understanding of what the main priorities are? Including commissioners, voluntary organisations and communities?
- Have groups doing the same things - but they meet local needs
- Young people in the sector are often the missing voice
- Project currently in Warrington engaging with young people - mental health/culture
- Authorities often make decisions for young people and assume views
- How strategically can we have a young person's voice? - it is a gap to be identified

Round Two

- Relationships with volunteers/young people - heart to success
- Need to be bolder in saying what we can achieve - promoting the difference we are making
- Attitude that big business gets more of a voice - only because they shout louder - need to be bolder and get up the queue
- Involvement of voluntary sector needs to be more meaningful - not just 5 mins of consultation at the end of the process
- Perception and understanding of what is meant by voluntary sector
 - Example of CCTV volunteering role - wouldn't want to attract the wrong type in this position
- Making sure seen as credible sector to invest in - need to be part of conversations
- Need more opportunities to get to know each other in different sectors
- Challenges are not knowing what is out there - communications/networking is vital
- Strength of sector is it's so diverse - also makes it difficult to engage and make contact
- Ideally networks should be happening at a range of levels, from top level to grass roots organisations
- Still measured on numbers and not on outcomes
- How formal do these networks have to be?
 - Trying to move more towards informal networks and forums

- Voluntary functions impact on statutory functions
- Need funding to come up with measurement of outcomes - which can demonstrate where money is being saved
- There is a demand for savings now
- Intervention now would have savings in 5 years' time
- PROCUREMENT IS A BARRIER
- How can we change what we are asking you?
- Funding dropped but still expected to deliver same level of service - subsidising - procurement rules force into this
- Voluntary sector should be proud of what they can do
 - Not about being business like
 - More entitled - deserve to be here



Breakout 3: Developing an Approach to Long Term Unemployment in Place

General introduction

Whilst the total working age population is contracting, if the Sub-region is to fulfil its growth ambitions, the existing workforce is estimated to need to increase by 25%.

The employment market is buoyant and unemployment rates are low but this masks a cohort of people who remain detached from the job market.

This cohort of people may have complex issues which provide barriers to getting in to and sustaining work plus the entry opportunities on offer are likely to be low paid and/or lack security.

Barriers to work can be multiple and inter-connected and support systems can be complicated, disconnected and are often short/fixed-term with no continuity of provision.

A quarter of workers still earn below the living wage.

There is a disconnect between the support provided to employees by growth sectors and the support they get from skills providers.

The Into Work Board has been established to bring together organisations that provide support for unemployed people – in Cheshire and Warrington this includes 16 organisations operating within the Sub-region.

Question 1: What can we do to join it up and what else is missing?

The aim is to build up resilience, social capital, communication skills as well as skills for particular jobs/sectors.

The nature of commissioning means that commissioned services may use different provider models, varying contract periods and varying funding criteria.

Output related, single point, short term programmes therefore do not work.

The customer journey is not linear and barriers are much wider than work – in finding solutions it is important to look further than individuals but wider to include family, environment and local community.

Support provision needs to be holistic, offered flexibly and reflect the needs of the local community, which will vary according to place.

Participants in the discussion would like to see multi-agency solutions built up to address barriers to work in a community context e.g. connected to/integrated with housing services, children's services.

This would require a slick governance process and coordination of funding mechanisms/sources to align services and contracts and provide more certainty/longer term funding.

Question 2 – How do you think skills’ providers can link in?

Participants in the discussion would like to see employers generally more engaged and taking more responsibility for supporting new employees as people step back into the labour market, particularly for people who have been unemployed for a long time.

There is an opportunity for providers to offer more support for employers in understanding each employee’s specific needs i.e. person centred support.

Also more work to do in maximising the number of people benefiting from the services provided by flexibility in accessibility e.g. through new technologies, out of hours services.

Question 3 – What particular employment sectors do you think we should engage to support growth and productivity through the Work Board?

Growth sectors with recruitment opportunities suggested were: Logistics, Retail, Hospitality and Health and Social Care.

Participants in the discussion suggested that employers with difficulties in recruiting to their vacancies could do more to support new employees in making the transition from unemployment.

This could be by providing employment packages not only focussed on pay but on flexible hours, school hours, term time etc. and also provide more work trials and work experience opportunities available.

Breakout 4: Local Industrial Strategy and how it can Connect People in the Place

There’s a need to be aspirational.

Access to Work

- Issues regarding access to local work and transport to work. What’s a reasonable work travel time? Shouldn’t have to travel more than 30 minutes to go to work.
- Cost of transport increases a lot outside town areas. Work needs to be accessible. Must think creatively about the use of tech. It’s Cheaper to use the car than public transport. Carbon neutral will help in so many levels.
- In deprived areas/where complex health issues are a factor, not everyone can “get a bike”. Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) offices in Winsford, near most deprived area in Cheshire & Warrington. LEP creating new jobs in the area - need to connect people & work but people often have more complex needs. Skills and transport are not the only barriers. Health interventions may be required. Support needed to overcome mental and physical barriers to work before work and return to work.
- Got to make entry level jobs worth people’s while to travel. People move to work at Omega.
- Access to Sure Start schemes and children’s centres.



Sustainability

- Building blocks are needed to create sustainable jobs that are tangible.
- Define a good quality job in C&W which supports people's health & wellbeing also.
- Living wage – Lambeth offers low business rates to organisations which offer a living wage.
- Impact on contracts and contractors.
- We measure productivity but do we measure equality in the same way? In-work poverty think tank exploring different ways of measuring GDP.
- Still big disconnect between schools/education and businesses.

Investment/Skills

- Are we investing in the right things? Issues regarding funding silos – health funding and social care funding.
- Some frustration around repeating old public sector funding structures – don't reinvent the wheel. Learn from the past and move forwards.
- Wrong skills taught (e.g. hairdressing) – need other types of training and employment and further discussion is required.
- Universities could do more to support post-graduate business start-ups; and help young people to be ready for the workplace. Lots of young people have no idea what to do after university.
- Does everyone need to go to Uni? Astra Zenica prefer to recruit from A Level rather than graduate level. Use of vocational qualifications.

Apprenticeships? Need practical skills – don't always need qualifications.

- Lower paid jobs in care sector. Care market is failing/struggling to attract and retain staff. Upskill and improve knowledge etc – we need people who want to be good care people.
- Should we be engaging with young people to understand where they want to be in 10 years' time and what they see their role as?
- Cross reference skills with sectors most in need – upskills people in digital tech. Job design is changing – more digital – do we have the right skills for this. Old style jobs don't exist.
- Need to value mix of vocation and career.

Local Communities & Economies

- Work around Super Output Areas. There's a disconnect with local people moving out of local areas so they can progress. Deprivation spirals – people leave and things get worse. Need to reverse this trend in Crewe. Boarded up shops – this will get worse before it gets better due to development work being done, which will be good in the end.
- Need to encourage investment in more deprived areas. Liverpool – Manchester example, seen as thriving more than L'pool. Manchester is now seen as a powerhouse.
- Work at scale – develop careers centres.
- Assumption that low pay is acceptable in voluntary sector, but there are a lot of trained, skilled people doing very important roles.

- Mental health still a massive issue after years – voluntary sector not to be under rated – public sector needs to support them to support others.
- Warrington creating green spaces in town centre, where people live – public transport ensuring access to services is massively important.
- Crewe lifestyle centre – more young people go swimming in Crewe than the national average.

Devolution

- In Merseyside, the electoral mayor system has led to financial & political investment. C&W needs forward plan, involving communities & businesses.

Boundaries

- C&W never likely to have co-terminus boundaries with NHS. Need to tackle fundamental issues across all areas in spite of this. If too complex, the system will be set up to fail.



Breakout 5: NHS Five year Plan and Place

Round One

- NHS has different terminology on Place
- Place matrix positively helping identify the baseline and achieving excellence.
- Success factors for Place agreement with these
- Proposal of Partnership ‘going at’ the wider determinants of health
- Local government and NHS integration DAY TO DAY GETS N THE WAY CQC review
- Integrating data across organisation sharing data needs to be improved
- C&M strategy: Young people’s parliament need representation and input to strategy.

Round Two

- How to link wider issues e.g. inward investment which can increase standards of health
- Each of the 9 place areas in Cheshire & Merseyside will develop their own vision.
- Funding not following some recent programmes – funding lag time
- Primary care network not connected to care communities
- Use to raise policy shifts e.g. minimum alcohol pricing
- Shared signs and symbols reducing reactive resources



Breakout 6: Economic and Social Benefits of an Effective Social Care Market

Key messages from the sessions:

- **Strong argument for distorting the market in order to make change and build a better market, challenging the domination of the big 4 providers & creating strong local market**
- **Care sector is a key area of the economy**
- **Skills are vital & require investment**
- **Also about growing businesses**
- **Need to look at making care a career and generating an economy around this**
- **Getting best value from the Cheshire & Warrington pound**
- **Care and the local economy are symbiotic**

Round One

- How do we get private sector organisations to pay for training (i.e. if the LEP signed up and agreed to set up training and skills provision for the sector)
 - Why does business buy into skills training? Because they want a successful business.
 - Reputation management for care home businesses. They lose people quickly if reputation for care goes down. Quality keeps

the clients coming. BUT local authorities do need to pay businesses enough that they can invest

- Whole sector on the brink of total system failure – regionally we need to spend some time looking at this collectively as a region.
- Years ago we knew there was a risk of a cartel system, we are now seeing this happening.
- Not got all the foot soldiers we need. Need to devise a career path but also need to have people who are happy being on-the-ground staff and stay delivering the role over many years.
- Age profile of workforce is challenging – ageing workforce in social care.
- What other mechanisms are there to disrupt the market?

Round Two

- Opportunities for meeting the need where there is low frequency of presentations for cases with high complexity
- Dom care has shifted hugely in skills over the years. Carers now being asked to pick up much more complex tasks. Skills provision needs to reflect this.
 - Need to value the workforce. There are fabulous people working in the sector in very difficult conditions for low pay. Need to start to value them more & look at opportunities around things like apprenticeships, career paths etc.
- Is the answer for the local estate to take over, or do we need a mixed economy
- 2 possible opportunities:

- technology sector and assistive technology. Are we supporting this sector enough in order to better support social care? We need to have more conversations via the LEP on this. Technology is part of the solution and can add a lot of value but also still need the actual care.
- How do we maximise the possible benefits of direct payments system to support new entrants to the market? This could work but there is a cost (DPs are not cheaper) so need to see it as an investment rather than a cost.
- Use of commissioning role of LAs to improve quality?
 - Commissioning can be powerful, but not the whole answer.
 - Providers working together is potentially more powerful in terms of driving improvement. Hospital, primary care networks and social care working together.
 - Opportunities to encourage employers to pay proper living wage & have good conditions in order to retain quality staff and therefore provide better quality care.
- Given the Halton has bought care homes, would they consider building a new one?
 - Possibly! Not without risks but can also bring some benefits in terms of reduced costs if a care home falls over and need to relocate residents, social benefits for families etc. But likely to be enough to take over that don't need to build.

Additional Notes

- Set out key challenges, the need to reframe the discussion, the need to make social care a career to attract good staff, challenges

brought by domination of big 4 providers. A quarter of what is spent on social care goes back in returns to big investors, not spent on care. This needs to change.

- There are fewer providers but more care. Sector is consolidating into bigger providers who are potentially more risky. Big proportion of costs go on returns to investors. Low cost economy but most of the cost picked up by local authorities
- Quality – should be paramount.
- Acc CQC, small and medium care homes often provide better care, but they need more support. How do we ensure the market is more open to them?
- **More staff in social care sector than there is in the NHS**
- Need to disrupt this sector as we cannot move forward until there is major change in how sector operates.
- GVA added in the North West – Adult social care sits above some big sectors, including arts/culture, gas, electric & water, yet is often overlooked.
- Not all of the costs are residential/nursing care – significant amounts go to Dom care, other services and direct payments. Likewise large proportion of the jobs or in domiciliary care. Also there are a substantial amount of self-funders, depending on location.
- Social care is 6% of total employment in the North West. £2.6 billion spent in the sector which equal 2% GVA in NW.
- Lots of money spent in the NW region, but quality ratings and outcomes not great.
- Concerned about large providers but logistically difficult to commission and manage small organisations.

- Recruitment very challenging.
- North West has particular challenges due to cuts as there are fewer people who self-fund. Therefore the local authorities need to pick up the costs. In affluent areas this is not the case as more people fund themselves. Means that funding for care homes here is lower and they start to struggle.
- 2019 survey not validated. Key points:
 - Spend over £3million per week in C&W Sub-region
 - 6741 clients
 - 398 providers
 - 82 known different brands
 - Total weekly spend £600,000 per week – a third of which goes into profits.
- Major opportunities and scope for joint approaches. Maybe don't need devolution to be able to do more together on a whole range of issues. Already having meetings of lead commissioning officers. Opportunity costs on dom care.
- In Halton, 4 care homes have gone bust in last 4 years. Members decided to buy them, council run them, meaning that although they spend more, that money actually goes on care, not investors (i.e. the 29% goes to care not shareholders). Doing this has distorted the market, which is a good thing, given the market is broken anyway. Also enabled HBC to create careers around the sector. This is an example of what we can do as local authorities.
- Need to talk more about the care sector as a key economic sector.



For further information on any of these Breakout Sessions, please contact the Cheshire & Warrington Sub-regional Programme Office, via the Cheshire & Warrington Website.

<https://cheshireandwarringtonsubregion.org.uk/contact-us/>