

Brighton & Hove

Fairness

Commission

Fairness Commission: Headlines

Contents

03 Message from the Fairness Commission

06 Where we live

06 Strong communities

07 Recommendations

08 Travel

08 Recommendations

09 Housing

09 Recommendations

10 How we Live

10 Early years and achieving at school

11 Recommendations

11 Living and ageing well in an accessible city

12 Recommendations

13 Living Life to the Full

13 A diverse and inclusive city

14 Recommendations

14 Fair Employment

14 Learning to Earn

15 Recommendations

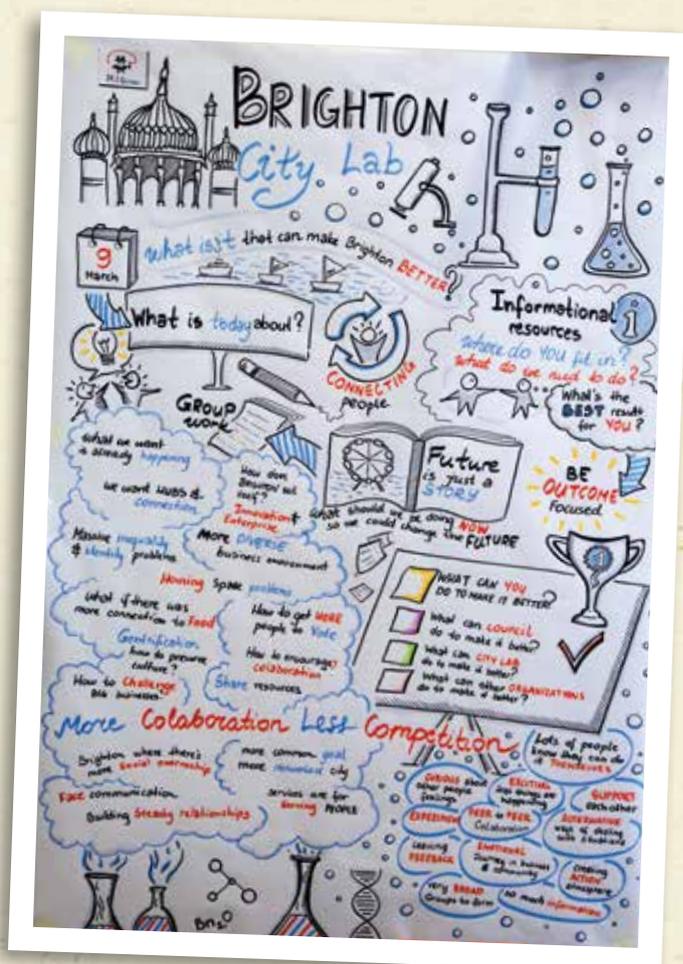
16 Fairer ways of working

16 Working with communities

18 Recommendations

18 Our commitment and recommendations

19 Taking it forward





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 benefitting 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. A lack of skills and poor physical or mental health prevent people from entering the labour market or leave them struggling to manage on low pay. Life expectancy for some people is worryingly low.

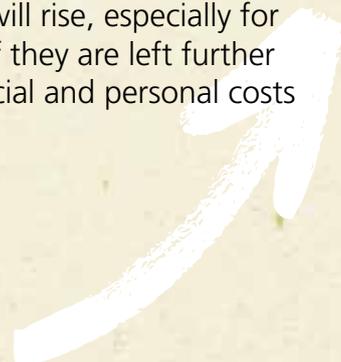
The impending closure of GP surgeries in some of the most deprived areas is a sign of a primary care system struggling to remain sustainable. Residents have concerns about accessing the primary care services they need.

In some areas of our city, over a third of children are growing up in poverty 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 income of £48,000 to be affordable.

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 estimated 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.



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.

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 existing 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

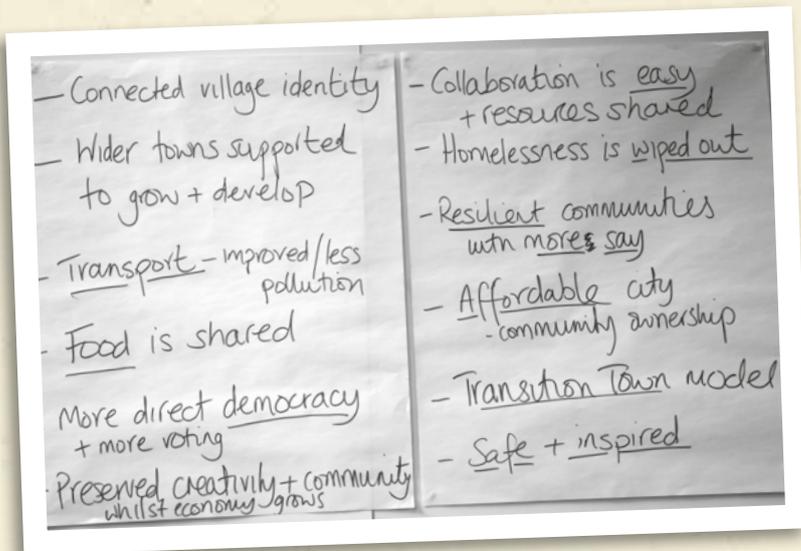
We started our work in September 2015 with a call for evidence. We promoted widely various means for people to contact us and tell us about their experiences, give their views on what was fair or unfair about living in this city, and to share their ideas and solutions on how to make the city a fairer 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.





Housing, diversity and inclusion, community and travel were the most frequently cited areas of city life that residents felt the council and its partners could take steps to improve fairness.² Residents wanted greater support for communities, fairer transport around and in and out of the city, better accessibility for those with additional needs, green spaces to meet in, and for the escalating cost of housing to be addressed.

Strong communities

WHERE WE LIVE

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

Recognising the pivotal role of the community and voluntary sector (CVS)

The role of the community and voluntary sector was frequently referred to as pivotal, and support for communities by the council and its partners could improve fairness in the city.³ The sector was seen as able to reach groups, raise awareness of needs and, crucially, find effective ways of meeting those needs whether through supporting people into volunteering or employment opportunities, or provide space for groups to come together to reduce isolation, offer support and friendship. Community centres, spaces and facilities were also seen as a way to address fairness particularly in balancing out benefits to residents living in different areas of the city:

²The Brighton and 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.

³Ibid



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



The importance of investing in numerous small, self-organised community groups was clear and demonstrated by their ability to improve and build resilience and community connections across the city – with very small grants – resulting in less demand on public services as well as improved health outcomes.

Supporting communities to implement their own solutions



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

We found considerable enthusiasm on the part of residents to see a change of culture from ‘doing to’ to ‘doing with’, sharing power on an equal basis. Enhanced collaboration between the council and its partners and residents is likely to have a powerful effect on improving fairness.⁴

Partners should build on the many assets in communities - people, skills, knowledge, networks and resources - and remove the barriers to greater resident-led solutions, collaborating with residents in the co-production of services. DueEast Neighbourhood Council, The Bevy Community Pub and The Hangleton & Knoll Project were cited as case studies of what could be achieved by residents when given the appropriate support to take more control over their lives.

Recommendations

All the evidence we have seen and heard indicates that building community resilience is a critical issue in preventing widening health, social and economic inequalities in the city. There is an urgent need to address barriers to accessing the resources and collaboration that enable residents and groups to build stronger communities.

We ask partners to implement the 13 recommendations set out in our full report, 4 of which are summarised here:

1. Investment in asset based community development needs to be strengthened and developed to respond to the desire for self-sufficiency by residents and community groups coupled with volunteering infrastructure and support so that people can participate. Assess each neighbourhood for adequacy of community spaces against a ‘minimum spec’ that includes an accessible meeting space that anyone can use and free access to wireless internet and invest in them so that they meet the requirements.
2. The council should develop and implement a proactive asset transfer policy and respond positively to residents’ applications to develop underused publicly-owned buildings.⁵
3. In a context of reduced resources, ensure every £1 spent returns the maximum social value. Embed social value in all public sector commissioning and procurement and support the CVS to be part of the market place in providing levers that incentivise a vibrant not-for-profit sector.
4. Maintain a small grants fund, transferring the management to an external body, such as Sussex Community Foundation, to achieve greater value for money and reduced bureaucracy.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Milton Keynes Council is a good example of this: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/leisure-tourism-and-culture/community-asset-transfer>

Getting out and about in an accessible and clean city

“Focusing support on, and empowering, the poorer and 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/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”

Travel

Residents told us that being able to travel around all parts of the city easily was an important fairness issue. For the city to be fair and inclusive, it was important that people with additional needs are able to access the city. A lack of accessibility was seen as contributing to the social isolation of specific groups, preventing those living in different areas of the city from sharing in the same benefits as other residents. Maintaining bus routes and lowering bus fares were the two most commonly cited means of improving fairness in relation to travel.⁶

Community transport was seen as essential by many people, particularly those whose health or disability prevented them from using buses or whose income was insufficient to pay for taxis.

An accessible city

“The City has some real issues with pavement obstructions, including cyclists, A-boards and pavement parking which are not being dealt with.”

Beyond means of transport, the accessibility and maintenance of pedestrian routes and cycle paths were referred to as a means of improving fairness. Communal amenities were also described as essential. 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.⁷ The city should aim to be a fully accessible one by 2020.

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. Residents felt that citizens themselves could improve fairness by keeping the environment clean by not littering and that the council should be held accountable for its performance with respect to rubbish collection and recycling.⁸

Recommendations

We have made four recommendations in our full report to city partners and these are summarised here:

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 and where need is identified, to extend arrangements to reflect specific needs.
2. The council and its partners should invite proposals from suitable social enterprises or appropriate organisations that can expand and deliver an improved community transport offer in the city.
3. The council should support Friends of the Parks and encourage a city-wide network to support sharing.
4. Partners, working with businesses, should take action to remove street clutter.

⁶The Brighton and 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.

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 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. 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.⁹

The high cost of housing is having a major impact on low-income households, with many facing the choice of “heat or eat”, and, or, finding that the struggle to heat often poorly insulated homes is having a negative effect on children’s educational attainment and emotional wellbeing. Addressing energy inefficient housing and bringing all homes up to a minimum standard of thermal efficiency would have a significant impact on these households.

The critical shortage of affordable and decent housing in Brighton & Hove is a major driver of inequality, seen at its most extreme in the visible and growing number of street homeless men and women. Buying and renting a home is beyond the means of many local people on low and modest incomes, not least the sons and daughters of the city seeking to set up home for the first time.

Recommendations¹⁰

Given the importance of this issue, we make a total of 22 recommendations for local action by the council, Housing Associations, private developers, the CCG and both Universities, alongside six separate ones for action by the national government. They could help local partnerships provide the homes needed and ensure good standards and affordability for homebuyers and renters in all forms of tenure. Here is a summary of our recommendations:

1. The council should offer council-owned and other publicly owned land, including sites on the city fringes and brown field sites, to mechanisms such as housing co-operatives, self-build groups and community land trusts to develop affordable social housing with the guarantee it will go to local people.
2. As part of the wider drive to tackle homelessness in the city, partners should create low-cost and “meanwhile” housing swiftly, on dormant development sites, like Preston Barracks, using converted sea containers, or similar, that can be moved to other sites when development starts.
3. 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.”
4. Develop and publish an action plan to ensure full implementation of the new housing strategy and report back regularly on progress.

⁷ Ibid ⁸ Ibid ⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Further recommendations are included in the full report available at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fairness-commission

HOW WE LIVE

“Think of investment in helping kids and vulnerable as a community investment. I mean it benefits all of us”

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.

Early years and achieving at school

Every child born in Brighton & Hove should have the very best start in life, especially those who are living in vulnerable circumstances or in poverty. The council needs to lead the city's efforts to prevent child poverty, and the city's schools and children's centres should be utilised as fully as possible, to enable them to be a key driver of opportunity for children, young people, and the wider community.

Tackling childhood poverty would make the most significant difference to fairness and equality in the city now and in the future. Prioritising early years, parental income and educational attainment of our children who are living in poverty must be addressed by partners.

All the evidence suggests that support for early years would save money on late interventions and give children more opportunities to achieve at school. Educational attainment is unacceptably low for some of the most disadvantaged children such as those on Free School Meals, Young Carers, Children in Care, some Minority Ethnic groups and Gypsy and Traveller children.



Recommendations

1. The council should implement the Child Poverty Commissioning Strategy 2012 prioritising the poverty proofing actions and establishing the Child Poverty Taskforce. They should report back on progress and, working with schools, bring to Brighton & Hove the 'Poverty-proofing the School Day'¹¹ initiative to ensure no child misses out on the opportunities and experiences at school because of low family income.
2. 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.
3. The city-wide Corporate Parenting Board should find new ways to genuinely include children and young people who are in care or have recently left care.
4. The council and the city's foodbanks and advice agencies should work closely with Job Centre Plus locally to reduce the number of families referred to foodbanks as a result of a problem in the benefits system.
5. The council should seek support from partners to offer free school meals in school holidays.
6. The council should prioritise support for children's centres and remove barriers to local communities wanting to use them outside of core hours.

We make nine further recommendations in our full report to tackle child poverty and support people at risk of falling into debt.

Living and ageing well in an accessible city

“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.”¹²

Professionals, individuals and groups presented strong evidence on the best and most cost-effective ways of addressing social isolation, primarily through simple neighbourhood and community connections. The arts, community networks, transport to activities, befriending schemes, lunch clubs and shared meals and social prescribing were highlighted as being particularly effective in addressing social isolation.

We recommend that greater focus be 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.



¹¹ <http://www.nechildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-proofing-school-day>

¹² Marmot (2010) Fair Society Healthy Lives Final Report

« Making the city more accessible »

The accessibility and maintenance of pedestrian routes were referred to frequently by residents as a means of improving fairness. Residents called for the council to do more to enforce or encourage the removal of street clutter - such as A-board advertising and tables and chairs. Awareness raising of how accessibility issues disproportionately affect the lives of certain groups - older people, those with disabilities and those caring for babies and young children - compared to others was seen as important.¹³

“Campaign to ensure that all facilities and services are adapted to the needs of disabled people and people who for any reason have mobility difficulties. Also increase the number of publicly available toilets, so as to ensure the city does not discriminate against older people.”

The city has made a commitment to become an ‘Age Friendly City’ but the evidence we heard suggests that many of the World Health Organisation’s Essential Criteria are not being met or implemented and are not reflected in the council’s budget priorities. Progress on meeting the criteria would address many of the issues raised to us.

Recommendations

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. We make 18 recommendations to the council, the CCG and the Health & Wellbeing Board in our full report and summarise 4 of them here:

1. That the CCG, the council and partners commit to developing a plan to implement place-based health commissioning focusing on the five enablers set out in the Place-Based Health Commission’s report.¹⁴
2. Consider the gaps identified by residents in relation to the Age Friendly City criteria and develop a revised action plan by April 2017. As part of a broader ambition, Brighton & Hove should aim to become a fully accessible city by 2020.
3. 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.
4. Partners should encourage more community buildings, spaces and businesses to sign up to the ‘Use Our Loo’ scheme and promote it more widely and the council should lead by example and promote the scheme in all its buildings across the city.



¹³ The Brighton and 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.

¹⁴ Get Well Soon – reimagining place-based health. The Place-Based Health Commission report March 2016. An approach of 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.



LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

“Where everybody gets a chance not just a lucky few and the people who are disadvantaged get help to bring them up”

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. Enabling all people to gain and develop their skills and take up employment opportunities would improve their chances. Supporting progression 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.

A diverse and inclusive city

“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.”

For residents, improving fairness in Brighton & Hove was predominantly associated with targeting support for people they recognised as having additional needs to prevent them from becoming further excluded. Many residents told us their personal stories and of particular issues that prevented them from living their lives to the full and achieving their potential.

Our evidence suggests that there is a pressing need for better equalities awareness training amongst all service providers and within institutions across the city (schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, GP surgeries and health centres and care homes) and all partners need to develop plans to improve awareness training.

Recommendations

We summarise here the 16 recommendations set out in our full report that aim to enable those living in vulnerable circumstances, or who are disadvantaged or discriminated against feel supported, valued and protected.

1. To improve fairness and save money, the council needs to change its approach to supporting learning-disabled parents to avoid their children being taken into care.
2. 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.
3. The council should develop the 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.
4. To address many of the issues faced by our Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the city, partners should now build on the evidence submitted to the Fairness Commission and, working with all the minority groups, develop and implement an action plan that will address the issues they have raised and implement the recommendations in our full report.
5. To reduce inequalities and improve the lives of our Traveller residents who have nowhere to live in the city, the council should develop a strategy of negotiated stopping places for Gypsies and Travellers.
6. The Housing Options service should be reviewed with the full participation of the LGB and Trans community.
7. A specialist advocacy position for survivors of domestic violent and sexual abuse should be funded to support recovery past the crisis stage and highlight any ongoing issues.
8. All partners should work together to ensure 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



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 low-skilled, disabled people 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 make the city a fairer place to live and work by paying the Brighton & Hove Living Wage, publishing their pay ratios and offering work trials, paid internships, apprenticeships and supported employment. Flexible working and quality part-time jobs are important ways of lifting people out of poverty and supporting them into the workplace and the real benefits to both society and to employers of offering such jobs should be highlighted and promoted with support from the council and the Brighton Chamber of Commerce.

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. Education provision must provide opportunities for people to develop leisure and learning 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 as these can deliver savings and added value. The reach and accessibility delivered through the community learning hubs based on our estates¹⁵ 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.

¹⁵ Voluntary organisation's such as The Bridge, The Whitehawk Inn, The Hangleton & Knoll Project but also the City Council's Hollingdean Depot Learning Centre

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.

1. The council should support the Brighton Chamber of Commerce to work with employers to create a Fair Employer Charter¹⁶ that recognises employers who:
 - Pay the Brighton & Hove Living Wage and publish their pay ratios
 - Promote flexible working¹⁷ and offer quality part-time jobs¹⁸
 - 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 grants
 - Supports adults with mental health needs to access meaningful work placements and employment in partnership with the new DWP Work and Health programme providers.
 2. Employers and specialist providers should work together to increase the number of paid supported internships to aid the transition between education and work for young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).
 3. Funded education providers should develop and deliver more English, Maths and ESOL provision to ensure there is sufficient training available to address these key barriers to employment, including provision in the evenings and at weekends.
 4. 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.
- We make a further 14 recommendations in our full report to a range of partners to support fair employment, opportunities to learn and ensure support for those furthest from the labour market.



¹⁶ http://www.vas.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Sheffield_Fair_City_Employer_Charter.pdf

¹⁷ <http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/campaigns/happy-to-talk-flexible-working/>

¹⁸ <http://timewisefoundation.org.uk>

FAIRER WAYS OF WORKING

“It has been clear from the start of this process that the residents of Brighton and Hove, communities and partners felt that the time was right to consider new ways of working”

Working with communities

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 with communities. Better and more meaningful partnership working is needed in which communities are equal partners.

This will 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, in the way that they want, will deliver better outcomes, help promote fairness and, in the longer term, be a better use of diminishing public resources. This will mean a move away from ‘control’ to ‘influence’ and taking a collaborative systems leadership approach.¹⁹

Image courtesy of Brighton City Lab



¹⁹ <http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/docs/Revolution%20will%20be%20improvised%20Part%2011.pdf>



Evidence of a lack of joined up working between and across sectors and council departments is having a negative impact on people receiving services; resulting in poor customer experiences, poor outcomes, duplication and wasted public resources. Adopting a systems leadership approach – affecting change for the social and common good – must be delivered in practice rather than remain an aspiration. This will require an investment in the training and development of public sector workers to ensure that these new ways of working are put into practice in a meaningful way and with commitment.

Working with the community and voluntary sector

It was clear from all the evidence submitted and presented to us that the strong and vibrant voluntary sector in the city was genuinely changing peoples' lives and helping to lift them 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. Furthermore there is clear evidence of the 'social value' created through the community and voluntary sector by keeping money local, growing the skills, confidence and knowledge of the workforce, strengthening and extending their work through the use of volunteers and bringing in considerable additional money from outside the city.

Working accountably

Brighton & Hove already has numerous strategies designed to tackle every aspect of social and economic life in the city. Many of these were created with a focus on addressing poverty including those informed by recommendations from leading consultancies. However, the evidence we heard suggests that much has not been implemented, individual strategies do not make sufficient connection with other work in the city and there appears to be an absence of monitoring progress or accounting for delivery. Better processes for the development and delivery of action plans needs to be put in place.

The case for early intervention

There is empirical evidence that early intervention delivers better outcomes, avoids people falling into crisis and costs less in the long term and a greater emphasis is needed in 'invest to save' in all areas. So much of what we heard came from people describing how support earlier could have made their lives not only fairer but would also avoid costly late interventions. It is often small levels of investment at the right time that can have a positive impact and budget priorities need to reflect this.

Recommendations

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

1. Identify the recommendations that relate to their work and develop a clear plan for implementing them.
2. 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.
3. Remove the barriers and reduce the bureaucracy that prevents residents and communities doing more for themselves and explore how residents and communities can be better supported to access their expertise and assets.
4. Recognise the value for money delivered by the third sector and sustain the support to it including working collaboratively with the sector.
5. Be clear about how strategies are to be implemented and put in place processes that will demonstrate openly progress against them.
6. Invest in early intervention to avoid crisis and prevent costly late interventions.

Our commitment and recommendations

1. To ensure that our recommendations are taken forward we, as a commission, offer to continue to meet and review progress in six and 12 months time.
2. We recommended that each organisation mentioned in our main report identifies a named, accountable lead person to help drive forward the relevant recommendations.
3. 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.
4. That an 'open to all network' is started for anyone who is interested in helping to implement the recommendations.





Taking it forward...

We call on all partners to accept our recommendations, commit to their implementation and communicate on the progress being made and how fairness is developing in Brighton & Hove.

Brighton & Hove

Fairness

Commission

Commissioners:

Vic Rayner (Chair)

Executive Director, National Care Forum

Wednesday Croft

Brighton & Hove Youth Mayor

Martin Harris

Managing Director, Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company

Ann Hickey

General Manager, East Sussex Credit Union

Dr Rhidian Hughes

Chief Executive, Voluntary Organisations Disability Group

Imran Hussain

Director of Policy, Rights & Advocacy, Child Poverty Action Group

Sally Polanski

Chief Executive, Brighton & Hove Community Works

Bill Randall (Deputy Chair)

Writer, Journalist and Housing Consultant

Dan Shelley

Vice Principal, Sussex Coast College Hastings

Dr Katie Stead

GP and Clinical Lead for Primary Care & Quality at Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group

Rachel Verdin

GMB Organiser

David Wolff

Director, Community University Partnership Programme, University of Brighton

Contact details

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fairness-commission

 @FairnessBH

Email: Policy@brighton-hove.gov.uk