

APB Meeting – 28th September - Economy & Education Sub Group Update

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The E&ESG last met in July at which it agreed the five priority subjects the group would focus its efforts towards, these are:

- Improving educational achievement
- Reducing NEET
- Reducing unemployment
- Rationalising benefit claims
- Raising Aspirations – Think Family

The sub group will now meet quarterly and separate working groups would be set-up to create action plans for each of the five sub group priorities. The leads for each priority would run the workgroups and each lead would sit on the sub group meetings, thus creating a steering group role for the sub groups generic plans.

Taking each of the priorities above the following actions are underway:

1. Improving educational achievement

Rudheath Community High School sponsored by Chester University has commenced its aims towards becoming academy status. The consultation phase commenced prior to the summer break and the school is on schedule for Academy Status from January 2012.

With the demise of the Northwich EIP, this work has now been incorporated into the Rudheath High school and its four feeder schools. The Head of Rudheath High School has taken over the lead role for this cluster.

There is positive support and co-operation across this cluster, an example of this is the Head of Witton & Church Walk Primary has provided Rudheath Primary School with additional teaching resources to help address the issues raised by Ofsted earlier in the year.

The Cluster have already identified teacher training initiatives to start to deploy a common approach to addressing and supporting children with a method of approach to improving literacy levels. The high school head has offered to co-ordinate the creation of a cluster plan on behalf of the sub group with the aim of raising KS2 and GCSE attainments levels.

Meetings have taken place with Gadbrook Business Park to raise awareness of the sub-group's aims and to encourage support for the development of the areas employment opportunities. The school will be looking at how it can best align its curriculum, where possible, to meet the educational and skills needs of businesses whilst the business park will look at creating better links with school pupils to highlight the different careers they can aspire to.

1.1 Key Activities underway

- Development of a School Cluster Plan for Rudheath & Witton Neighbourhood
- Rudheath High school migration towards Academy Status
- High School links with Gadbrook Business park progressing, Discussions underway with Chester University (Academy Sponsor) to seek business representation for Academy Governors roles x 2.
- Head of Rudheath High School invited to meet Gadbrook Business Park Executive and to visit key businesses on the park. John Fifield Glyn to host this.

1.2 Statistics

Rudheath Community High School GCSE Results

2009 - 37%

2010 - 34%

2011 – (Data not yet available)

2. Reducing NEET

The Northwich area Connexions manager has created a draft Connexions plan to assist with this area of work. This plan has been reviewed and following further discussion with management further actions are to be incorporated.

An initiative targeted at year 10 pupils has commenced and agreement reached with Rudheath High School. This work will be looking at intervention to prevent year 10 pupils from becoming future NEETs. Recent stats show the NEET figures for September 2011 to be the same as January which is encouraging as national NEET figures have increased due to high numbers of school leavers not going in to EET.

The health & Wellbeing subgroup is also looking at the subject of teenage pregnancies which will also have an impact upon the NEET outcomes and targets.

2.1 Key Activities underway

- Development of a Connexions NEET plan continues
- Transition Plus UK has signed of referral arrangements with Year 10 initiative. Discussions taking place with Weaverham High School to adopt the initiative.
- Breaking down area based stats to identify types of NEET with a view to targeting specific initiatives. Eg additional education to achieve GCSE subjects such as English and Maths.

2.2 Statistics

NEET breakdown of figures for January 2011

Ward	Female			Male			Total
	16	17	18	16	17	18	
Frodsham and Helsby	0	0	4	1	3	3	11
Marbury	2	1	3	2	6	5	19
Northwich East and Shakerley	2	7	10	2	4	9	34
Northwich West	4	3	6	0	5	3	21
Weaver	0	2	2	0	3	6	13
Northwich & Rural North	9	13	28	5	22	28	105

NEET breakdown of figures for September 2011

	16	17	18	Total
Northwich and Rural North	30	36	39	105

Note: These are the old ward boundaries, the figures do not add up to the total for the APB as some of the wards overlap into other APBs.

3. Reducing Unemployment

A number of actions are underway with a view to ensuring that the N&RN areas unemployment levels are improving to be on par with the other four areas of CWAC.

The North West Regional 'Work Programme' has commenced, this will result in those unemployed individuals who have been on jobseekers allowance (JSA) for more than 9 months will automatically be referred to the work programme. This will be a two year programme, and applicants will be assigned to those businesses who have offered opportunities of employment. Businesses will have the costs reimbursed if the candidate remains in employment for at least 12 months.

Children Centres in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus and CWAC Early Skills and Learning are developing a 'Ready To Work Strategy' (RTWS) which will be deploying a pathway to employment process in order to encourage individuals into work.

'Work Clubs' are being deployed into Northwich, with one in The Zone at Northwich Station. Work clubs will be used as part of the RTWS approach. Further work clubs will be considered for other areas of N&RN.

Two apprentices have been recently placed with local businesses as a result of referrals from Team Northwich.

CWAC have commissioned and delivered a Business Needs Survey 2011 on top of the Economic Assessment. From this there will be a need to identify local skills gaps and training needs with a view to influencing a change in current provision, where necessary, and introducing new training. The aim of this approach is to ensure local people have the right skills and knowledge to secure local jobs rather than businesses looking further a field for employees. Meetings are to be arranged to agree the next steps in developing this data and supporting actions.

3.1 Key Activities underway

- Setting up of employment charters with companies in areas such as Gadbrook Park.
- Implementation of Labour Market Agreements for new business developments, using Section 106 arrangements.
- The development of an unemployment Skills register mapped against current and future business needs.
- Identification of target families and individuals to refer them to current and planned programmes (EG Work clubs, EFS complex families, Work Programme)
- Working with local business in areas of Rudheath to generate potential employment opportunities. EG Gadbrook Park and Rudheath High initiative, Blakemere Arts & Crafts Centre initiative.
- Establishing apprenticeship opportunities and the APB members are encouraged to put forward any possible apprentice placements.

3.2 Statistics

<u>JSA Claimants for N&RN</u>	<u>Rate</u>	
August 2011	1397	3.37 %
July 2011	1305	3.15 %
August 2010	1291	3.11 %

4. Rationalising Benefits Claims

The CWAC benefits team, following success in areas of Ellesmere Port have commenced their 'Helping Hands' initiative which involves visiting properties in targeted areas of unemployment and high benefit claims with a view to discussing the needs of the individuals and families in those areas.

The Helping Hands initiative has now commenced in the Rudheath & Witton areas, having previously identified the priority locations to the Benefits team for the work to commence.

This work will identify opportunities for families and individuals to get back into work and to provide guidance and advice to those families and individuals.

4.1 Key Activities

- Helping hands, commenced Monday 12th September.
- Analyse the findings and feedback from Helping Hands.
- Refer individuals to supporting agencies

4.2 Statistics

Benefits claimants as percentage of working age population, August 2009

Leftwich, Rudheath & Witton LSOA	<u>L3</u>	<u>L4</u>	<u>L5</u>	<u>L6</u>	<u>CWAC</u>
Any Key Working Age Benefit	31%	16%	17%	19%	15%
Incapacity Benefit	16%	6%	8%	8%	7%

5. Raising Aspirations – Think Family

A Think Family concept is being developed (see Appendix 1) as this underpins all of the sub group priority areas. This work is vital in order to start to have a sustainable impact upon issues of unemployment, benefits, education, health, crime etc.

Such is the nature and significance of this priority that much of the effort of this subgroup to date has been to developing the concept, raising awareness and seeking buy-in from key partners. This work is gaining momentum, with a number of partner agencies now endorsing the need for this approach. Children services are already deploying a team around the family concept particularly through the Children's Centres and we strongly believe a more holistic approach needs to be implemented which will include additional services such as Adults (Appendix 2). The sub-group are also exploring options on how the current CAF process could be improved to become a 'household' CAF.

A key issue we are encountering in this work is the need for arrangements to be put in place to allow agencies and partners to share information. A number of agencies work with families who have needs, some of these families will be common across the agencies; but we cannot share this information for fear of breach of the Data Protection Act. We need to create sharing protocols across the partners and we need to create common information database(s). Before we commence this work we must obtain senior management recognition of this issue and seek their endorsement to address it.

5.1 Key Activities

- Key operational partners briefed on a think family approach.
- Key senior managers briefed on a think family approach.
- Key Directors briefed.
- Development of a think family concept and supporting process.
- Discussions with other Councils and contacts to develop concept
- Creation of a supporting paper.
- CWAC to become pilot for Governments Community Budget programme Phase 2.
- Discussions to take place with CWAC Policy & Planning to input to Community Budget bid.

5.2 Statistics

There are no existing statistics on this subject at a CWAC level. However, the following data was recently presented to a North West conference held 13th September in Blackpool.

- Estimated 450-530 families with multiple complex needs – potential costs £100 million+
- Over 300 LAC and rising – potential cost £30 million +
- 52% families with child behaviour problems accept our interventions (highest in country)
- Pilot with 30 families – 3 very different areas
- Potential savings between £2m and £7m

Within CWAC Children services are embracing a 'Team Around The Family' principle as part of the deployment of a modified Common Assessment Framework to support Every Child Matters.

6 Statistics and Reporting

Much of the area stats are strategic, however the level of detail to monitor operational progress is not readily available through obvious sources such as Job centre+. EG:

- how many people on JSA are there for areas such as Winnington?
- how many of those people have applied for jobs over the last 12 months?
- How many people would retrain to learn new skills to become employed?

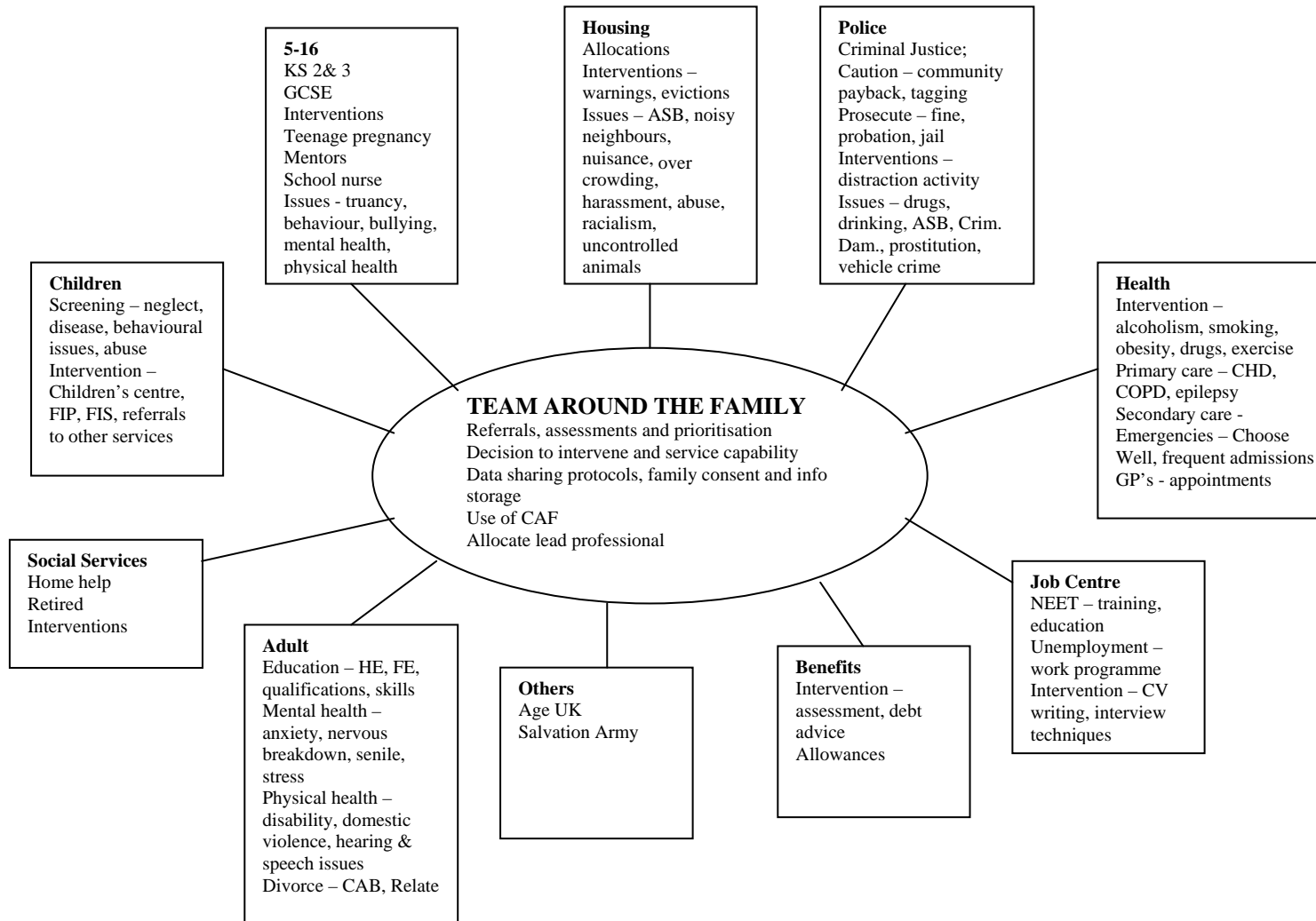
We need to look at ways to create this data, preferably from a central source, rather than duplicating effort across the APB's.

Short-term quick wins

There is a need for the sub group and its partners to identify potential quick wins. The Think Family concept will eventually create a platform that will see radical changes, in the meantime we can still have a positive impact upon our four other priorities. EG:

- What initiatives can support families with needs, where existing agencies do not have the funds to deliver?
- What ways can we engage with young people to help them get into employment?
- What ways can we engage with businesses to get young people into employment?
- Should we be tougher on certain types of benefit claimants?

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

