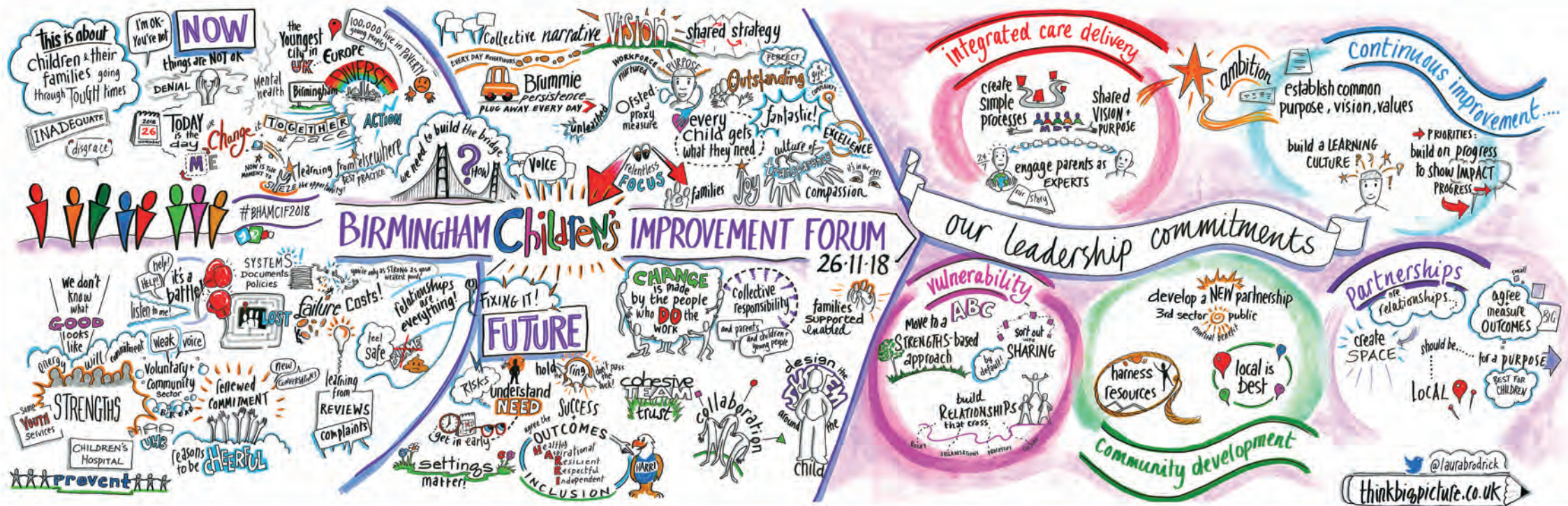


# Birmingham Children's Improvement Forum





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# Executive summary

On Monday 26 November 2018, 83 senior delegates from across Birmingham attended the Birmingham Children's Improvement Forum. There were representatives from health, social care, education, police, third sector, and parents and carers of children who use the services. The aim was to create a new narrative on how the leadership would improve children's services in Birmingham.

A number of recent inspections by CQC and Ofsted had identified shortcomings in the current system, including the absence of a single multi-party vision and a supporting strategy for children's services in Birmingham, which clearly explained how we would improve outcomes for children in the city. The Birmingham Children's Improvement Forum was a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to come together to discuss the challenges in our current way of working, develop a shared vision and share learning and ideas for how we improve.

This report summarises the key discussions from the Birmingham Children's Improvement Forum, showing the views, actions and ideas for improvement suggested by delegates during the day.

## In summary

- There needs to be a shared commitment to action a common purpose across all organisations
- We need to be greater than the sum of all the parts
- Integrated care delivery is essential
- Need clarity about what a change for the better would look like and the metrics to enable us to determine that point accurately

We will develop the views, actions and ideas into a vision for children in Birmingham and a joint strategy to deliver that vision. This will be supported by an action plan to deliver improved quality and outcomes. We will also develop a values and behaviours concordat which will protect the principles underlying the vision.



# 1. Outline of the day

## The day was split into two sessions.

The morning session saw presentations from key leaders in the system, including chief executives from NHS Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust and Birmingham Children's Trust. In addition to this there was a presentation from Washwood Heath Academy and a video with parents and carers of children with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) who currently use services.

The afternoon session took the form of a world café, where delegates took part in five themed facilitated discussions. The outputs from the discussions are contained in section two of this report. These principles, immediate and long term actions, will form an essential part of how we develop the vision, values concordat and strategy which will ultimately deliver a meaningful improvement in children's lives in Birmingham.

Throughout the day delegates we invited to make pledges and place them on the pledge wall. These pledges can be found in Appendix 1.

The event was opened by Sir Tony Hawkhead, Independent Vice Chair of Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Sir Tony highlighted the scale of the challenges the opportunities that the day could bring. He noted that the right people were in the room to collectively lead and bring about that change for the children, young people and their families in the city.

Dawn Baxendale, Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council, raised a call to action, outlining how this was "the day for change". It was clear that there was both the need and appetite for a joined up effort where all parties genuinely worked together. The aim:



**"That every child in Birmingham gets the help they need to enable them to achieve their full potential and lead fulfilling lives through a collective focus and energy to improve health, education and wellbeing outcomes for children in the city."**

There was acknowledgement that things need to be done differently this time, that a minor change to the existing system was not enough and that a real cultural change needed to take place. A team approach would be needed to achieve this with a shared purpose and strategy as a starting point.

The scene for the day was set by Paul Jennings, Chief Executive of NHS Birmingham and Solihull CCG, with an assessment of the scale of the challenges facing children in Birmingham in 2018.

There are **100,000** children living in poverty in the city. **30%** of wards in the city were classed as deprived, not helped by unemployment and poor levels of integration with wider society.

The level of school exclusions in primary schools, which were now on a par with those in secondary, suggested a system which wasn't working for children and where the problems encountered in one area, such as health and social care, were impacting in education. More than ever, a joined-up response is called for, where the distinctions and boundaries between health, education and social care become less important and more integrated.

Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe, which is both a pressure and an opportunity for us to make a significant difference. If we get the support and service right for our children, so they are born well and grow well, we can enable them to go on to lead fulfilling and enriched lives.

The keynote speakers highlighted the scale of the challenges faced by children and the services supporting them. The discussions brought a range of perspectives from the local authority, healthcare, children's services and education. They shared examples of the learning, innovation and quality improvement taking place in each organisation and across the Birmingham Safeguarding Partnership. The importance of leadership, learning and reflection was emphasised, developing a positive culture and workforce support. Development being fundamental to making the journey from a local offer that "requires improvement" to being "outstanding".

There was a strong emphasis on:

- Learning from what works
- Building resilience in the staff delivering services
- Focusing on results and what makes the biggest difference to children's lives and the need to build bridges between health, social care and education



It was noted that partners and services need to listen to parents and carers more, treat them as the experts and involve them in decision making and continuous improvement.

A short video from a group of parents of children with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) made a huge impression in showing how we simply have not got this right to date. The video illustrated the impact of us not involving families and the impact of the poor quality of our services through our lack of interagency working and variable standards in communication to parents.

# 1.1 World Café

The afternoon was spent looking at the actions and commitment needed to make change happen using the World Café format. Delegates discussed a number of themes through facilitated groups:

- Continuous improvement
- Integrated care delivery
- Vulnerability
- Partnerships
- Community development

Each of the groups was asked to choose three statements or crucial areas which needed to be tackled.

## The continuous improvement group proposed:

- 1) Establishing a common purpose and vision was essential in order to understand how each of the partners in the system linked together to achieve that purpose/vision
- 2) Identifying a small number of priorities which would have a noticeable impact
- 3) Each organisation signing up to a learning culture which focused on providing assurance that children were safe as a minimum requirement

## The integrated care delivery group proposed:

- 1) The inclusion of an expert parent in multi-disciplinary teams to make co-production a reality
- 2) Patient stories forming a more integral part of 'business as usual' and care
- 3) Simplified processes for referrals/assessments which would make it more easier to navigate unfamiliar systems

## The vulnerability group proposed:

- 1) Sharing information between organisations should be normal process and there needs to be a very good reason for NOT sharing (whilst working within data protection laws)
- 2) Organisations needed to be much more open. Colleagues need to be able to move seamlessly from one organisation to another in order to deliver better outcomes for children
- 3) We need to move to an approach where we actively identify and focus on helping children and young people to achieve their aspirations with a targeted integrated service offer



### The partnerships group proposed:

- 1) Having the time and space to create effective relationships with partner organisations and parents and carers was essential
- 2) Having a clear purpose and the ability to hold each other to account so that all partners understand the challenges of other organisations and that there is a culture of respect
- 3) A local focus which enables a meaningful connection to communities as well as having a city-wide view that maintains a strategic approach

### The community development group proposed:

- 1) The development of long-term partnerships with the third sector, moving away from the culture of short term contractual arrangements
- 2) Resources being made available to third sector partners could support statutory services in a more 'embedded' and resilient way
- 3) Having a clear focus on the local community, building resilience at neighbourhood level and using local knowledge much more effectively

To implement these actions and to make a lasting change it was felt there would need to be a strong focus on listening to and learning from children, young people and their family and carers. In addition to this there needs to be continuous improvement, effective multi-disciplinary teams, much more partnership working and effective use of our community and voluntary assets.

### Sir Tony Hawkhead closed the session with a summary of the feedback.

The overall view from delegates was that:

- There needs to be a shared commitment to action and common purpose across all organisations
- We need to be greater than the sum of all the parts and that integrated care delivery was essential
- We need clarity about what a change for the better would look like and we need the measurements in place for us to determine that accurately.





## 1.2 Communication on the day

### 1.2.1 Social media

During the day, there were 72 tweets using the hashtag #BhamCIF2018. These came from a range of attendees from chief executives, parents and carers and colleagues representing the different organisations. Throughout the event Birmingham and Solihull CCG's Twitter account was viewed by nearly 14,000 people, 505 people commented, re-tweeted, liked or otherwise interacted with the messages about the day.

### 1.2.2 Graphic facilitation

The event was supported by Think Big Picture and the 'artist in residence' created a picture representation of the discussions throughout the day. In the centre of the picture was a bridge representing the journey all partners were starting on - moving from 'where we are now' to 'where we want to get to'.

Copies of the finished work will be made available to all delegates and will be a vibrant reminder of how everyone had contributed to a challenging and successful Improvement Forum.

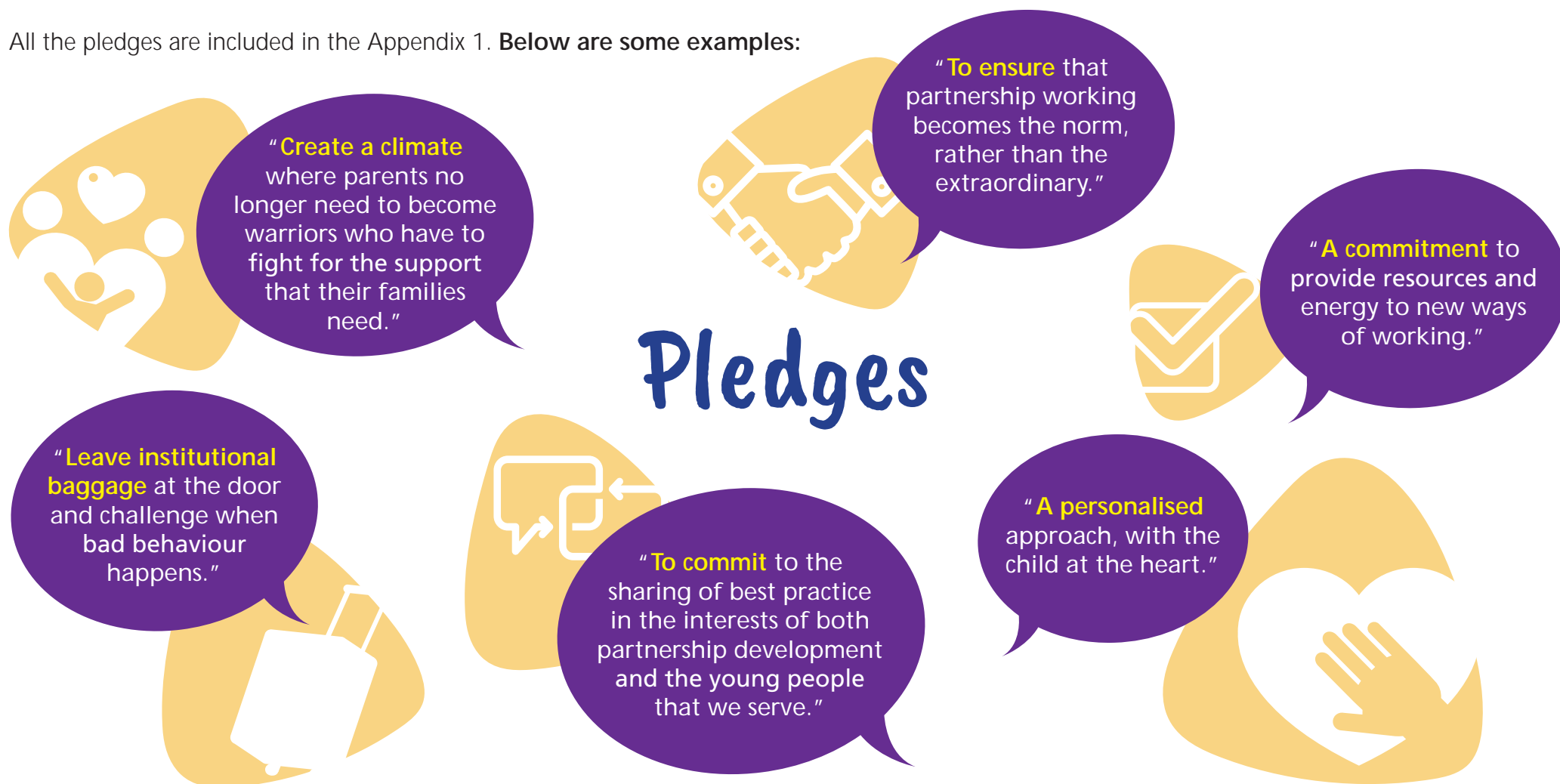
**Figure 1.** The finished illustration which encapsulated the day.



### 1.2.3 Pledge wall

During the day everyone was asked to make a 'pledge' and to post it on a 'pledge wall'. The pledges were to help people to focus on a commitment to do things differently. They could be something very specific or something much more general. Delegates were asked to leave the pledges on the wall but take away the commitment to make the change.

All the pledges are included in the Appendix 1. **Below are some examples:**



## 2. Outputs of the day

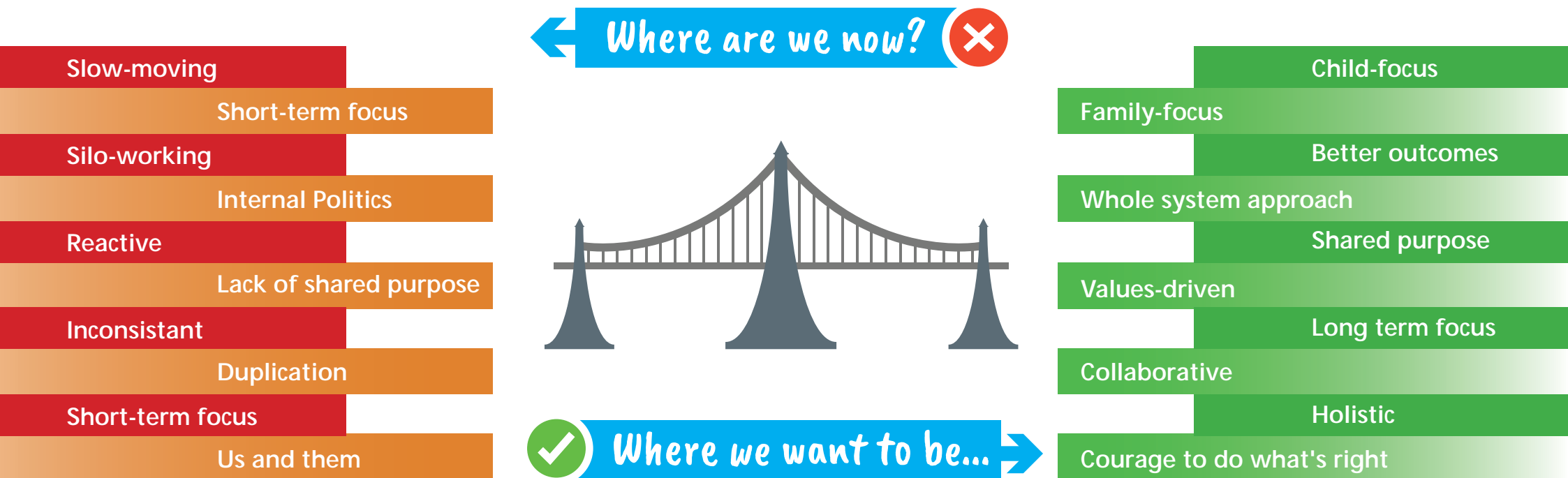
### 2.1 Values

Before the day of the event, delegates were invited to complete a survey to seek their views of what they believed were the current values in our approach to commissioning and delivering children's services and what values would they want to see us demonstrating in the future.

A key finding of the survey was none of the values were on the bridge. This means that there were no values in the way we deliver now which had been identified as how we would like to deliver in the future.

In summary, we have a way to go, and a significant cultural shift to make between our current behaviours and values to our desired future. Describing where we want to be is an important and necessary start. Figure 2 (below) summaries the findings of the survey.

Figure 2. Values Survey Results





It was clear from discussions throughout the day that values play a key part in how the system should operate and the motivation for all partners. There was a shared commitment to do the right thing and to base this on a set of common values.



*We need to move to a culture that places the child at the heart and puts organisational silos to one side.*



*We need to develop a culture which is shared and understood by all organisations, supported by a set of shared values which puts the interest of the child and their parents and carers first, values openness and honest communication and is not afraid to acknowledge and learn from failings.*

These values also describe how we will nurture and support our staff responsible for delivering excellent children's services.

To build upon this solid foundation, we will develop a values concordat which all partners will support. This will be developed in partnership with parents, carers, children and young people as well as the frontline staff working with children and families.



## 2.2 World Café sessions

During the World Café session, all delegates had the opportunity to participate in table discussions based on the five key themes which had been identified as either barriers or opportunities to support more effective working.

Table	Theme	Chair
1	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	Penny Thompson CBE, Independent Chair of Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Board
2	VULNERABILITY	Superintendent Sean Russell, Director of Implementation for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Radical Prevention - West Midlands Combined Authority
3	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	Rob Willoughby, Area Director, Midlands – The Children's Society
4	PARTNERSHIPS	Richard Kirby, Chief Executive - Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
5	INTEGRATED CARE DELIVERY	Jeanette Young, Interim Director of Commissioning and Innovation – Birmingham Children's Trust

During the discussions several themes emerged. The three top items in each group were fed back. (See section 1.1)

The feedback from each group has been broken down into three categories:

- Principles, the fundamental beliefs we need to have at the core of all our decision making
- Immediate actions, what we can do to change right now
- Longer term actions, what we need to build into our strategic planning and principles

The table on the next pages shows all the feedback listed against each of the categories.



Challenge	Principles	Immediate actions	Long term actions
<b>CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</b>			
<p>How do we break out of the vicious circle of failing services and create a learning and developing culture?</p> <p>What do we need to do to keep staff with us on the journey and to get people to believe in themselves and the vision for improving services for children?</p> <p>What does 'continuous improvement' actually mean and how do we know when we are doing it?</p> <p>Where does self-regulation and quality assurance fit in?</p>	<p>We need a learning culture across organisations, so we don't reinvent the wheel</p> <p>We should learn from best practice elsewhere and other services who are addressing the same challenges</p> <p>We need shared principles across all ages to aid transitions</p> <p>Staff should have permission to act where they feel it is appropriate</p> <p>Children should be front and center of all our decision making</p> <p>We need assurance that what is being put in plans is actually happening, that we talk to other organisations to confirm this and that we can share information for the good of the child</p> <p>We're on a collective learning journey and need to put aside organisational boundaries</p>	<p>Co-production with all our partners, including front line teams as well as parents and carers will underpin our actions and decision making at every stage</p> <p>We need to make small improvements and have short term goals, to deliver real and sustainable change." Raise the bar incrementally together a little at a time"</p> <p>Analysis of the current system failing and what are the small improvements we can make, learn from the UK Cycling model of marginal gains</p> <p>We should take a personalised, strengths-based approach where we start from trusting the family to know best</p> <p>Team building trust across organisations is crucial for allowing supportive challenge and needs to be embedded in organisations now</p>	<p>Share our stories across organisations and team. We must build on best practice through peer to peer learning.</p> <p>Creating a forum and mechanism for us to share stories, learning and best practice</p> <p>We need a no wrong door concept, we are "we" not "them and us". This relies on us dropping organisational boundaries</p> <p>We may need to give up organisational power to achieve the end destination/goal.</p> <p>We should scope the benefits, case for reestablishing the lead professional role</p>



Challenge	Principles	Immediate actions	Long term actions
	<p>We need to strike the right balance between safety and being too risk averse</p> <p>We need to be honest about what we can and can't do</p> <p>We need to do much more to empower parents and carers</p> <p>We need consistent quality standards across organisations with respect to basics, supervision and serious case reviews. What does quality and safety look like? Good doesn't look the same across every organisation. We need to agree what this looks like</p>	<p>Talk with people, not about them. We need to have open and honest communication across teams and organisations where staff are given the support to have the difficult conversations</p> <p>We need shared language across organisations to make progress</p> <p>We must incentivise collaboration and sharing learning</p> <p>Look to embed a coaching culture and make that work across organisations so people can learn from teams outside their own</p>	
<b>VULNERABILITY</b>			
<p>How do we identify children who are vulnerable in a whole range of areas?</p> <p>How do we ensure not just their safety but that we actively mitigate the effects of adverse childhood experiences?</p>	<p>Staff should not be asked to hold levels of risk which are too high</p> <p>We should be anticipating problems evolving rather than waiting for threshold events</p>	<p>We need to agree a collective understanding of what vulnerability means across organisations, the current definitions are too wide and diffuse</p> <p>Listen to parents and carers more, starting from now</p>	<p>Develop ways we can challenge the culture of low aspiration and low achievement as this tends to become self-fulfilling. We need innovative approaches to support ambition</p>

Challenge	Principles	Immediate actions	Long term actions
	<p>The default position needs to be to share information, so we know what other organisations know, it's an opportunity not a barrier but this does not mean passing on responsibility or accountability</p>	<p>Need to baseline vulnerability and track through school and wider life experience, this includes sharing data</p> <p>Work across agencies to agree a definition of what a resilient child looks like and share this with partner agencies, for example schools, so that everyone has the complete picture</p> <p>Transitions from children's to adult services are important; we need to rewrite the story from adversity to positivity so that children and young people have a legacy of aspiration rather than just focusing on need</p> <p>Look at opportunities for greater multi agency team working to broaden the range of available experience</p> <p>Take stock of workforce issues including skills availability, time and capacity and organisational development, training</p> <p>Treat partner agencies as trusted colleagues, every voice is valid in this scenario and helps to develop permeable organisational boundaries</p> <p>Look at ways we can help children and young people to support each other</p>	<p>Embed active engagement as there are a significant number of children and young people with ACE's (adverse childhood experiences)</p> <p>Help create 'positive' childhood experiences, we need to work with parents and carers as well as children and young people in exploring this</p> <p>We should be building resilience skills, this is not a one size fits all solution and needs to be built around the individual and must address different layers of vulnerability, social, physical as well as family issues without over professionalising the solutions</p> <p>We should be working with children and young people to define vulnerability, do we know enough about the threats to children and young people, this could include homelessness, mental health, knife crime and many other things</p> <p>Services are dependent on the people working in them, we need to ensure we are doing everything we can to support the health and wellbeing, resilience, skills and confidence of the people delivering them in difficult circumstances</p> <p>Join the strategies up, break the cycle of moving from one crisis response to another and stick at something that works!</p>





Challenge	Principles	Immediate actions	Long term actions
<b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>			
How do we better engage with communities, particularly the most vulnerable, most economically challenged and most at risk?	The commitment of volunteers is vital, and this should be supported, particularly as some organisations struggle as volunteers retire. This means showing greater appreciation and reducing insecurity of roles where possible	People want to access direct payments, we should roll out personal (health) budgets more quickly	We need to build in greater appreciation of the expertise, potential and longevity in the community of third sector organisations
What can be done to improve resilience and develop assets in local communities that will enhance and support service delivery?	The third sector is not always as risk averse as statutory services and is able to manage risk safely, this needs to be recognised. Greater appreciation of the complementary and added value of the community sector	Being made to compete for resource is time consuming, expensive and counter-productive; we need to foster co-production and partnership working which makes better use of the time available to all organisations	The faith sector is not funded but very community sighted and future planning needs to appreciate that, particularly with regard to black and minority ethnic communities which experience disproportionate levels of deprivation
How do we use the range of third sector and voluntary organisations to increase their impact, and that of statutory services?	We need to move away from the view that voluntary organisations will 'step-up' to fill the gap when funding is cut for public services and start to treat the third sector as integral to service provision	We can make better use of available resource e.g. rooms, open space, IT etc. while at the same time building better relationships through co-locating. Everyone will benefit from having a better idea of what services and support is available currently, this could mean having a directory or advice resource which would require maintenance and co-ordination	Third sector and community organisations should not need to wait to be asked, service commissioner and providers should be reaching out pro-actively to encourage their involvement
How do we engage with, listen to and empower service users to help to shape the services they need?	We need to embed and encourage greater respect for the knowledge held by community organisations. This means better communication and understanding of each other's skills and expertise		We need to get away from solutions which address the whole of Birmingham. Smaller scale and localised responses may be appropriate and actually be an advantage




Challenge	Principles	Immediate actions	Long term actions
	<p>Multi-agency forum to bring statutory and third sector organisations together more effectively where it doesn't already exist</p> <p>Need to understand and agree what we collectively want to achieve across organisational boundaries with clear outcomes and evaluation</p> <p>It is beneficial to let previous negative experiences and unhelpful baggage go when building strong working relationships across organisational boundaries where cultures may be different</p>		<p>We need to ensure that as the STP takes a wider strategic view that we do not reduce the interaction with the voluntary sector</p> <p>The community sector can join-up multiple agencies (including public services) to support conversations and be an advocate. We need to encourage this</p> <p>The involvement of statutory services might not be welcomed by some families and the community and third sector can provide an excellent alternative. It is vital to have good quality local knowledge so that when developing services, we are aware of what resources are already out there</p> <p>Third sector and voluntary organisations have great experience in accessing sources of funding which statutory bodies have less experience in, with the potential of unlocking previously untapped resources</p> <p>Personalisation needs to be delivered through multi-agency working where clear roles are agreed, enabling organisations to complement each other's work</p> <p>Grass roots support</p> <p>We need to work better with local communities around a defined place e.g. school or community Centre including supporting sports and leisure activities</p>



Challenge	Principles	Immediate actions	Long term actions
<b>PARTNERSHIPS</b>			
<p>How do we improve partnership working?</p> <p>How do organisations put aside their individual concerns and work together for the common good?</p> <p>What are the structural barriers we need to address to develop a culture where working together is just business as usual?</p>	<p>It is essential to consider not just the processes through which organisations work but the people working in them and what makes them function like they do. Partnership working is a cultural shift which requires sincere commitment to make it work and is dependent on long term buy in</p> <p>It is important to identify what we hope to gain from greater partnership working but retain a focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and clearly define how partnerships contribute to that. Be clear what our shared values are and ensure that all parties are signed up, and that behaviors are consistent with these values</p> <p>Building good relationships is vital, on an organisational as well as individual basis, without it, there is no collaborative working</p>	<p>We will all sign up and identify mechanisms for allowing the time and space for us and our teams to create good working relationships</p> <p>We will identify where as a system we need to collaborate to deliver the improvements and will develop an approach that maintains accountability across the system and with all partners</p> <p>We will take the time and space to understand our partners and stakeholders, learn from what works and has not worked and share best practice across organisations</p> <p>We will look at how we can build more stable teams to ensure continuity and stability and so we don't lose hard earned knowledge. Look at moving meetings around so they are in the heart of local communities</p>	<p>We need to take collective responsibility for improving services rather than merely focusing on one piece of the puzzle. That means looking at the collective offer and how each individual service contributes to the whole. We need to develop a view of the whole picture when planning services, this includes working with agencies that are not always traditional partners, this can include housing, education, employment and the police</p> <p>We must empower the frontline workforce and teams with the necessary delegated authority to make decisions, that means communicating from the top down but also listening from the bottom up. This means commitment today – action tomorrow.</p> <p>Communication and information sharing across agencies is essential</p>





Challenge	Principles	Immediate actions	Long term actions
			<p>Key workers have an important role to play in bridging the gaps from one organisation to another, this role needs to be developed</p>
			<p>Children and young people are essential stakeholders in collaborative working and we need to keep this at the heart of all we do. Co-production and advocacy for the child is an essential requirement for partnership working to be meaningful. It is essential to be person centered, there is no 'wrong door' and leaving behind organisational identities can be a beneficial approach</p>
			<p>The importance of the school setting is fully acknowledged and all partner organisations are committed to developing much more effective partnerships with schools</p>





Challenge	Principles	Immediate actions	Long term actions
<b>INTEGRATED CARE DELIVERY</b>			
<p>How do we integrate our services so that the barriers from one organisation to another are unnoticeable by service users?</p> <p>What do we need to do to create the conditions for front line workers to feel part of the same team, whether their name-badge says health, education or social care?</p>	<p>It is essential to have a deliverable plan, based on shared values and that all partners are fully up to speed with their role in delivering that plan and the outcomes associated with it</p> <p>Having a single process or at least a process which is easily understandable by both service users and partner organisations is crucially important. The simpler the process the easier it is to understand, especially for people unfamiliar with a particular organisational culture</p> <p>Front line staff are the ones who will make integrated service delivery work and it is important that their voices are heard</p> <p>Front line staff should feel safe to be able to develop and deliver a partnership approach and be trusted to do so. Organisational considerations should be secondary to this approach</p>	<p>There are excellent best practice models and we can learn from these, for example using the King's Fund</p> <p>In developing integrated ways of working it will be helpful to map the various pathways taken by children through the system. Development of a children's online local offer and directory of services for children, family and professionals in one place</p> <p>We should replicate the 'Ready, steady, go' model for transitions from children's to adult services, review outcomes with families to see if they agree that they are important</p> <p>We urgently need to review the Special Educational Need Coordinating Officer (SENCO) role to ensure it is fit for purpose and truly independent</p>	<p>We will make clarity about needs and outcomes and about the services available and integral part of how we deliver services</p> <p>Listening to parents and carers will be key to helping organisations work better together which is why co-production is such an important part of how we will deliver services in the future</p> <p>We will aim to have a 'one team' approach with collective responsibility and a shared vocabulary and set of definitions but we do not underestimate the time it will take to develop an integrated team</p> <p>We will develop a much more effective place-based approach, integrated at locality level which is better connected to local communities and schools</p>



Challenge	Principles	Immediate actions	Long term actions
		We need to look at ways of using information systems to capture families' stories (one version of the truth) which will enable a consistent understanding across organisations	
		Multi-disciplinary team working is a key requirement; shared working practices will need consistent and ongoing organisational development	
		Access to records held in other organisations is a key requirement, one shared care information system needs to be developed. Notwithstanding the challenges of the general data protection regulations (GDPR)	
		Case workers provide independent support to families to help them navigate the system. There could be scope to expand this kind of role, one that was jointly commissioned	
		Implement a mechanism for the child and families to tell their story and this be used in the care record and care plans	

The feedback from parent and carer delegates was they welcomed the opportunity to take part and felt they had played an important and valuable role during the day. It was acknowledged that some of the trust in the system had been lost but also delegates recognised that genuine steps were being taken by agencies to put that right. There was a genuine willingness to maintain that level of engagement.

### 3. Next steps

There was commitment not to let the achievements of the day rest there, but to take forward the knowledge gained, opportunities identified, commitments made, and priorities for action identified, to ensure that there was a lasting impact on how services for children are delivered.

The outputs of the day and this report will be used to develop a values and behaviours concordat which will describe how organisations will work together and how those behaviours are shaped by the common values we all sign up to. This will include having respect for others, openness, honesty and transparency about how we make decisions and a commitment to effective and open communication. The concordat will be developed with the parent and carer forum and through engagement with staff across all organisations.

There is a clear need for an overarching children's strategy for Birmingham which describes our vision for the future, sets out some clear and ambitious targets and identifies how all partners will work together. The strategy will show how we move from where we are now to where we want to be - where every child in Birmingham is not only safe but gets the help they need to live fulfilling and enriched lives.

The strategy will be supported by a multi-agency action plan with a clear set of outcomes and indicators of success and will describe how the system will work together, provide the necessary assurance and have the appropriate governance to bring about change.

In the short term, we will take on board the feedback from parents and carers, about listening to their experience, the need for agencies to work more closely together, improve the way we communicate and take steps to improve access to services. We will take immediate measures to address these concerns.

The Children's Partnership Executive will ensure that leadership remains in place to drive forward the outcomes from the day and to ensure that, as a community, we continue to make progress in improving the lives of children in Birmingham.





## 4. Conclusion

The Improvement Forum identified a range of strengths, achievements and progress being made. It also emphasised the need to establish some firm foundations in culture, behaviours and values which are shared collectively across a range of partner organisations. It is not enough simply to have a number of different organisations each with their own set of values.

We identified that for a system wide response to the needs of children it required a system wide set of shared values which are easily understood and widely acknowledged. The values concordat will progress this vital piece of work and ensure it is used across the system.

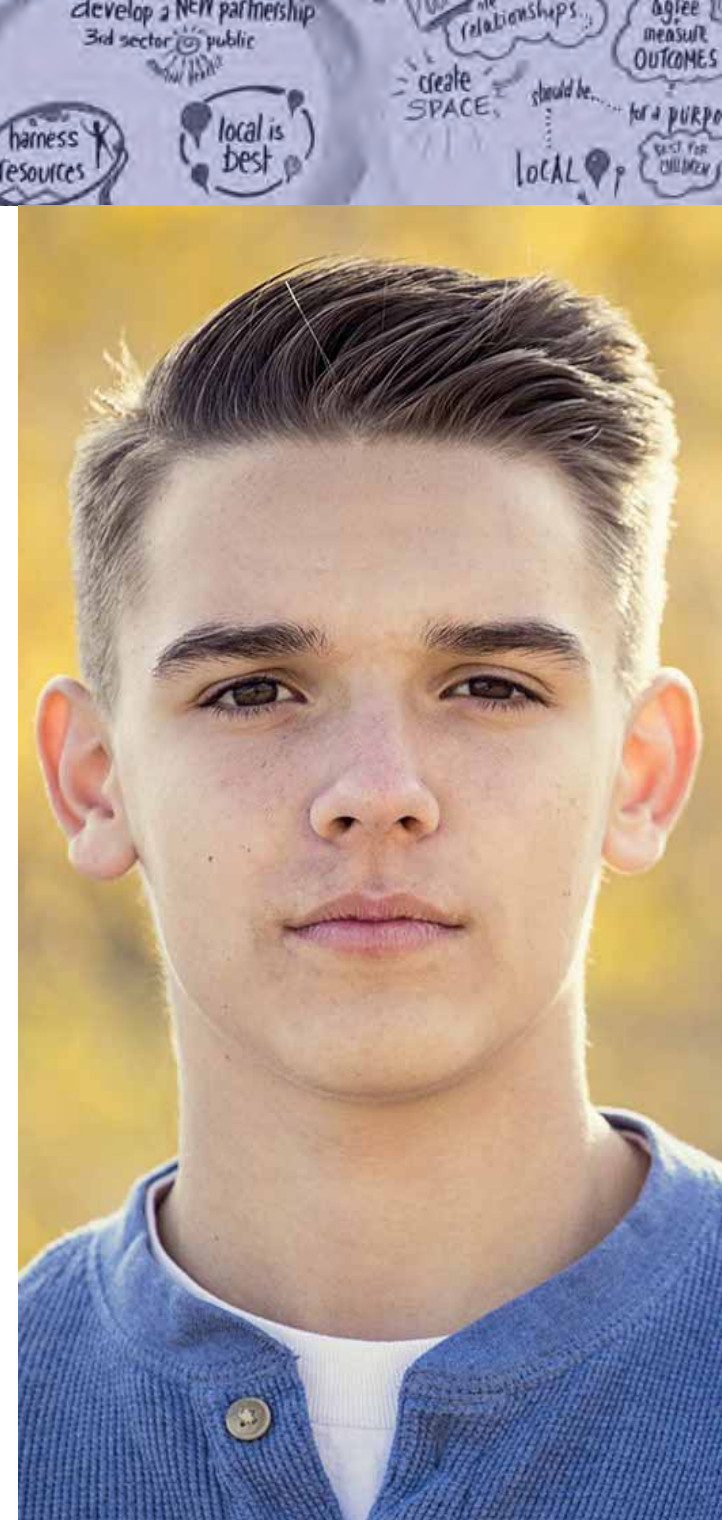
The education sector plays a key role in the life of the child and there needs to be much greater work integrating health and social care into what happens in schools. In developing our vision for children in Birmingham we will ensure that services are wrapped round the child, their family and the community rather than developed in isolation from their experience.

Another key message from the day was a reminder that work needs to be done to restore confidence in services with parents and carers. A great deal of trust has been lost and we must concentrate our efforts on winning that trust back. We can only do this by communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers, actively seeking their views through established and new routes.

Much greater work will need to go in to supporting parents to understand and use the current system and to contribute meaningfully to the development of new pathways. Communication and engagement is key to this and the starting point will be the availability of a directory of services as well as a clearly understood service offer.

Many of the themes discussed during the event will form part of existing improvement programmes, like special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The Children and Young People's Partnership Executive will lead on exploring opportunities with partners.

Above all else was an acknowledgement that the solutions can only be found in working together, that leadership and support to all staff, especially front-line teams, will be vital if we are to have effective partnership working at all levels across the system





# Appendix



## Pledges

During the day delegates were asked to make pledges, either anonymously or representing their own organisation, stating what they would change to help achieve the common aim of working better together to improve the lives of children in Birmingham.

Like the World Café outcomes, these pledges have been categorised as principles, immediate and longer-term actions. The pledges will be used to inform a living record to chart progress and to measure how far organisations have embraced the commitment to change. The pledges below are just as they were written and have not been edited.

## Principles

- "Pledge to share more openly with other organisations."
- "Barnado's in Birmingham – we will continue to play our part as strategic leaders, and to work collaboratively from Birmingham's children and families."
- "To communicate more effectively with front line staff and to listen and learn."
- "Police - Be optimistic; adversity to positivity, vulnerability to resilient."
- "Be a better service. Be a better partner."
- "Personalised approach with child at heart."
- "To work on a shared view of one set of children's resources."
- "To continue to work with integrity to benefit Birmingham's CYP."
- "Share knowledge and not shunt responsibility."
- "Within the CCG, I am going to champion and help drive the changes we agree today because our children deserve better."
- "To keep asking 'what matters to children, young people and parents/carers' and make sure these are our priorities."
- "#MakeltHappen – Commit time, energy and resource to ensure this happens."
- "Keep child, young person and family central to all decisions."
- "Make sure that the emerging purpose and principles underpin the work that I do."

## Immediate actions

- “Make relationships great”.
- “I pledge to provide the educational solution to ensure we improve the life chances and allow young people working in collaboration.”
- “University Hospitals Birmingham will put the child first through working in partnership.”
- To look at what the voluntary sector can do to add value to our work.”
- “Leave the institutional baggage at the door and challenge when bad behaviour happens”
- “As a regulator, I pledge to give the system time and space to make change.”
- “I pledge to make personalisation the key to making a difference.”
- “I will work with representatives of the CVS to look at how we collaborate with children.”
- “Communication and Autism Team (CAT) – Education support team – member of the team will come and talk to your teams about our service, come and shadow us.”
- “Promote ways for staff to feel safe and empowered, knowing that making this happen will help children and families feel safe. Work to clarify system not siloed ambitions.”
- “School of King Edward VI – pledge to proactively contribute to the creation and achievement of a shared/common purpose and ambition for children’s improvement.”
- “Barnado’s in Birmingham – we will strive to deliver excellent services to children, young people and families at all times, and to be a collaborative learning organisation.”

- “West Midlands Combined Authority - develop ways to ensure that career ambitions of children and young people aren’t limited by lack of knowledge, opportunity or networks.”
- “I pledge to create an environment/culture which fosters ‘permission to act’ to impact positively on outcomes.”
- “Pledge to create a directory of service for children that is easy to find and use for families.
- “My pledge is to look at citizen involvement in complaints.”
- “Find out more about the range of third sector organisations and what they offer.
- “To keep outcomes for children at the top of RCHC’s agenda.”
- Need to share the good news stories – show impact and believe it can change.”
- “I pledge the Birmingham Children’s Trust to contributing to the three example projects if the strategic partnership agrees to sponsor their set up.”
- “I pledge to enable the right conversations with children and families.”





## Longer term actions

- “To ensure that partnership working becomes the normal rather than the extraordinary.”
- Birmingham Community Healthcare Trust (BCHC) to flag which Children and Young People have Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) so we can proactively ask to participate in their completion and review.”
- “Commitment to apply resource and energy to new models or collaborative service delivery. Learn. Invest in success.”
- “West Midlands Police – positively encourage feedback of what is working well vs what we could do to improve within Birmingham
- multi-agency safeguarding hub.”
- “Department of Work and Pensions Birmingham & Solihull District – we will engage with partners across the piece to support children and families. We also have funding you can apply to.”
- “To work with Birmingham partners in support of the top 3 priorities for action emerging from today.”
- “Follow up on the conversation on primary education.”
- “Communication and Autism Team (CAT) – I pledge to try and deliver the best service I can and to remember to keep the voice of the YP at the heart.”
- “Patient Carer Forum - To collaboratively work with service partners to connect with parental / carer voice.”







- "Communication and Autism Team (CAT) – I pledge to continue to do my very best when I go out and work with my children, families and school every day as a frontline worker. "
- "I pledge to ensure my teams more rigorously 'chase up' / explore / seek to find ways of working with others to deliver the needs of students (other than educational) identified in the EHCPs plans."
- "To focus on opportunities for joint commissioning – commissioning that is bold and brave, focused on outcomes / success."
- "I pledge to lead the development of joint commissioning."
- "BCHC children's services to participate in prototype locality-based partnership dialogue, challenge and mutual support and test out a more inclusive way of working with statutory and UCS partners to achieve shared purpose and mission."
- "To lead and establish a multi-agency and multi professional leadership and improvement team to take forward our improvements."
- "Challenge the leadership in my organisation to engage in collaboration beyond ego, statutory boundary and self-interest."
- "Midland Mencap – widen the conversation with all (child/family/prof.) listen and co-produce, learning from parent/child experiences."
- "Create a climate where parents no longer need to become warriors who have to fight for the support their families."
- "To actively knock on doors to ensure effective partnership working – to prioritise SEND strategy across the team by upskilling staff."
- "Communication and Autism Team (CAT) – Will deliver (free) Autism Educations Trust Level 1 – Autism Awareness to health and social care"







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