



**POSITION
STATEMENT**

DECEMBER 2013

Plymouth
Fairness
Commission

FOREWORD



What could a group of independent people do over the course of a single year to make Plymouth a fairer city? How could we get under the skin of the city to find out what is really happening? How could we ask the people of Plymouth about what they think and feel about fairness, when many believe that consultation has simply become a tick box exercise?

These were some of the first questions I asked when the Plymouth Fairness Commission was created earlier this year.

There is good reason for these questions, along with scepticism of our task. When people are asked for a view and not really listened to, when opinions are sought but nothing changes as a result, when authorities claim to want to hear but have really already made up their minds, then consultation is brought into disrepute.

There is a deeply entrenched sense of disempowerment and passivity in Plymouth, particularly in the communities which are most disadvantaged. This is no coincidence. It is born of decades of communities feeling done to rather than doing. Decades of public authorities, often unwittingly, exacerbating that sense of exclusion by relating in ways which serve their own purposes but ignore the real needs and desires of the people they purport to serve. By decades of those people waiting with decreasing hope for 'them' to do something to help.

So we, the Plymouth Fairness Commission, started differently. We started by truly listening, blank sheet of paper, sitting down with people and being open to whatever we heard.

What are we learning through the Plymouth Fairness Commission? We have already seen how private pain has public causes: the cost of living crisis is biting hard and the fabric of the city's private housing stock needs to radically improve - poor housing is inflating the NHS bill. The physical and social links between people (crucial for maintaining a sense of wellbeing) are getting more difficult to maintain, people often feel there is nowhere affordable to go just to be with others. When families are struggling to feed their kids is it surprising that there are city children who rarely visit the beach, let alone walk on the moors?

Making Plymouth a fairer city has already started - there is more talk now about fairness, more discussion about what needs to change. This report is the summation of what the people of Plymouth have told us about fairness and unfairness, and what we believe we must focus on to really start addressing some of the unfairness being felt and lived across the city. We now begin our consideration of what should be done about our key areas of concern so we can make recommendations that will make a difference. We want fairness to become part of our city's vocabulary, and addressing unfairness to be a joint commitment of all, whatever age, origin, place of residence, education or work, whatever religious or political persuasion. This transformation must become part of our everyday lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzi Leather". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dame Suzi Leather
Chair, Plymouth Fairness Commission

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INTRODUCING US – PLYMOUTH’S FAIRNESS COMMISSION

“The Fairness Commission, designed to provoke change, was born of a commitment from the city to address unfairness and inequality”

Dame Suzi Leather, Chair, Plymouth Fairness Commission

The Plymouth Fairness Commission, which launched in April 2013, was set up independently to help make the city a fairer place to live and work.

The Commission aims to collect information, ideas and evidence, and provide recommendations for how the Council, other public bodies, businesses, citizens and civil society should use their roles and influences, individually and collectively, to reduce inequalities and increase the perception and experience of fairness within the local economy and local communities in ways which are both effective and sustainable. These recommendations will be published and presented to city leaders in March 2014. However, since they are for all of Plymouth: citizens, civil society, businesses as well as public organisations, implementing them will require the determination of all.

Dame Suzi Leather is the independent chair of the Plymouth Fairness Commission. The 22 Fairness Commissioners were selected for their professional expertise and skills, and their personal commitment to fairness in Plymouth. They include individuals from the police, health, private companies, charities, social enterprises and community groups, and all are giving their time voluntarily.

WHAT IMPACT CAN A FAIRNESS COMMISSION REALLY HAVE?

Other Fairness Commissions have been set up in the past two years - Liverpool, Islington, York, Blackpool, Sheffield and Newcastle – and more continue to be set up across England and Wales. Although they vary according to local circumstances, there are some shared characteristics and areas of focus. Of those Commissions that have reported so far, common issues include income and the Living Wage, employment and the local economy, cost of living / benefit cuts, access to services and housing. All have commented on the wider social, political and economic context and the challenges presented in addressing inequality at a time of severe and unprecedented public cuts.

Whilst it is too early to assess the impact of these Fairness Commissions on a national level, what is becoming clear is that they have great potential to act as a local catalyst for change and provide an opportunity to highlight the scale and depth of poverty and inequality in an area and link it to knowledge and understanding on a range of different issues. Islington Fairness Commission, one of the first to be established, has reported good progress on implementing a number of its initial recommendations such as becoming the joint first Local Authority to gain accreditation as a London Living Wage employer in 2012.

WHAT IS THIS REPORT FOR?

Over the past six months, the Plymouth Fairness Commission has undertaken a wide range of activities to find out more about the fairness and unfairness issues affecting people that live or work in Plymouth.

Our understanding of what fairness is can be found in the next section followed by details of what we have been doing, along with a summary of what we have found out.

We will not be able to address universally all fairness issues. We have therefore selected those areas which we consider specially warrant our focus because of the gravity of the issue, our ability to have an impact, or to strengthen work already done. The primary aim of this report is to present these issues of unfairness that the Commission will now focus on in order to develop its final recommendations. We have called these our key areas of concern. Whilst we don't yet know what our final recommendations will be, we want to give our city leaders advance notice as to the direction in which we are going and what they can expect when we publish our call to action around fairness.

The final section of this report explains what will happen between now, March 2014 and beyond.



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY FAIRNESS?

At its first meeting, the Plymouth Fairness Commission acknowledged that there isn't a simple, catch all definition of fairness. There are many different opinions. This initially proved problematic - if you can't agree what fairness is, can you agree how you are going to address unfairness?

Commissioners felt very strongly that while a collective understanding of fairness and unfairness was useful to guide the work of the Commission, it was ultimately more powerful to see fairness and unfairness through the lens of those who experience it on a day to day basis. This approach enabled Commissioners to agree a draft set of fairness principles, which have guided all subsequent activities.

These draft principles of fairness are a work in progress – however a final set are expected to play a key role in the presentation of the Commission's final recommendations next March.



OUR DRAFT PRINCIPLES OF FAIRNESS

Fairness is a perception, a relative not absolute idea. However, we can measure various indices which demonstrate that life chances in this city are not fair and that where you are born and the circumstances into which you are born are very likely to influence the rest of your life. In as much as a city can, we seek to limit the role that unequal opportunities and exclusion play in diminishing the life chances and well-being of our inhabitants.

A city should help shape the living, working and leisure environment in ways which promote well-being and the common good. This means it should positively address aspects of opportunity, inclusion and aspiration through targeted engagement and resources. It should deliberately seek to counter exclusion and the barriers to opportunity, especially to education, leisure and decent living and working conditions for these provide chances for individuals to live fulfilling and productive lives and to help themselves and others to thrive.

This is not about imposing a radical levelling out of outcomes, although it may sometimes involve an asymmetry in weighting of provision. It might sometimes be about greater provision for those who have less, but only to give everyone similar chances, wherever they live and whatever their income level or place of birth. The kind of chances we have in mind include chances to learn, access to good housing, transport and services, chances to feel happy and to be safe and to take part in decisions or policies which affect them.

Whether these opportunities are used or not, fairness demands that the more disadvantaged are given what they need so they are included. Moreover this is not just fairness; it enables everyone to contribute to the common good. Research has shown that bigger income gaps in society can lead to deterioration in trust between people, poorer overall health and poorer learning.

The city must also reflect, represent and value diversity in the community. We need to understand and value different backgrounds and identities so we can connect better with each other, attend to and learn from each other, support and celebrate with each other. This all helps to create an environment of fairness.

We believe that Plymouth as a city should commit to fairness in what it does, how it does it and in who gets what. In doing so we will work to promote these guiding principles:

- The city has a duty to allocate resources and those in greatest need should take priority.
- Distributing things which make most difference to peoples' lives matters most.
- People should be able to access opportunity regardless of circumstance.
- Those with the greatest resource should make the biggest contribution.
- The way things are done matters just as much as what is done.
- Unfairness which takes time to eradicate requires policies which endure for the long term.
- Preventing inequalities is better than trying to cure them.
- The needs of future generations and the current one should be balanced.
- Civic responsibility should be promoted and practised by all.
- Services should be provided with people not for them.

These principles apply within and between cities and regions.

HOW DID WE FIND OUT WHAT IS FAIR AND UNFAIR?

“We wanted to do something simple but important - to listen. Listen to what people found to be fair and unfair in Plymouth. Of all the Fairness Commissions in the country none to date has, I believe, taken so much trouble to listen to the people themselves or heard so much from them.”

Dame Suzi Leather, Chair, Plymouth Fairness Commission

The work of the Plymouth Fairness Commission so far has had two distinct phases, with the first informing the second.

PHASE 1: SCOPING STAGE

Following the launch of the Commission in April 2013, a statistical review was undertaken to provide a socio-economic profile of Plymouth relating to broad themes of fairness such as health inequalities, education, housing and employment. The purpose of this Initial Presentation of Evidence was to generate some initial thoughts about fairness and ensure that subsequent stages of Fairness Commission activity were underpinned by robust and defensible assumptions.

A Call for Evidence, informed by the statistical review, was also launched in May 2013. The aim of the Call for Evidence was to identify any initial themes of fairness and unfairness based on the views and experiences of those that live and work in Plymouth. The Call invited organisations and individuals to submit written responses against a set of broad questions ranging from what is fair and unfair about life in Plymouth to what the people of Plymouth could do to help each other live fairer lives.

In total, 50 submissions, encompassing 25 individual and 25 local organisational responses were received from the Call for Evidence. This highlighted direct experiences of inequality and unfairness issues. This evidence, along with expert knowledge provided by the Commissioners themselves and a review of the reports produced by other Fairness Commissions, was used to help inform the planning of our Phase 2 – Summer of Listening under the following themes:

- **Helping individuals and families;**
- **Creating stronger communities;**
- **Growing the local economy.**

PHASE 2: SUMMER OF LISTENING

A critical success factor for the Plymouth Fairness Commission is to ensure that local residents and community members have had the opportunity to share their perceptions and experiences of inequality in the city, and to recommend practical ideas for tackling them.

To do this, the Commission engaged with local residents, businesses, professional organisations, academics and community groups through a range of ‘Summer of Listening’ events and activities.

The aim of the Summer of Listening was to ensure that Plymouth residents and communities had a chance to share their views and ideas. We listened to over 1000 people (many of whom represented many more) over the summer through a series of events, each designed to reflect the Commission’s underlying principles of engagement and openness, as follows;

- **Walkabouts** across the city were undertaken by Commissioners to hear directly residents’ views and experiences of fairness and inequality.
- **Satellite Meetings:** Commissioners attended a range of meetings and events held by various groups in the city to help raise awareness of the Fairness Commission and to gather evidence and views around the three broad themes. Over 30 meetings were held with a range of groups and organisations including the Cultural Kitchen, Shekinah Mission, Age UK, MIND Plymouth, Royal Marine/ Navy Youth Forum, Plymouth Fawcett Society, Young Carers and Access Plymouth.
- **Listening Events:** A series of Listening Events across the city were arranged, which engaged with 70 people. During these events, members of the public could ‘drop-in’ to meet some of the Commissioners, share the issues that affect them, and put forward suggestions to make Plymouth a fairer place.

- **Street Survey:** SERIO, a research unit based at Plymouth University, collected views on behalf of the Fairness Commission from 151 Plymouth residents through face-to-face street surveys. The Street Surveys gathered views on issues of fairness and unfairness in Plymouth and recommendations for improvement or change.
- **E-Survey:** An E-Survey was emailed by SERIO, on behalf of the Plymouth Fairness Commission, to organisations in the city inviting them to share their perceptions and experiences of fairness and unfairness in Plymouth. In total, 64 detailed responses were received.
- **Select Committee Events:** The Commissioners facilitated seven panel-led discussions between professionals, academics and the public. These presented an opportunity to question experts on the themes of; financial inclusion, food, mental health, skills and business, housing, dementia and isolation and local procurement.

A full list of the events and organisations involved can be found at www.plymouthfairnesscommission.co.uk.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES CASE STUDY

In addition to the broad range of activities already listed, the Plymouth Fairness Commission proposed to complement its evidence gathering by overseeing the implementation of a case study aimed at strengthening communities in order to promote fairness and reduce inequality.

Connecting Communities (C2) offers a practical and transferable case-study of how it is possible for service providers and local authorities to work differently with local communities to create the conditions that enable sustainable and transformational change within these communities as well as in the way services are provided for these communities. These conditions act to empower both local residents and service providers to improve health, well-being and local conditions in areas that are typically labelled as being “disadvantaged”.

The C2 approach seeks to connect communities in three ways:

- Within themselves – creating networks and co-operation amongst local residents
- With local service providers and public agencies – building a parallel community of interest amongst front-line workers
- With other communities – gaining and giving learning and inspiration directly from one community to another.

The key aim of this long term case study is to develop a rich evidence basis that can determine how change that impacts on unfairness within communities can take place. It is also hoped that it will show how the learning from change in one community can be adopted in other communities within the city.

The C2 case study is taking place in one neighbourhood in Plymouth, and the learning from this will help shape the Plymouth Fairness Commission’s final recommendations due in March 2014 and updated in mid-2015. However, the testing of an evidence-based, community led model aimed at addressing inequality and improving outcomes is expected to demonstrate real outcomes and benefits to the community at a much earlier stage.

WHAT HAVE WE FOUND OUT ABOUT FAIRNESS IN PLYMOUTH?

A summary of the key findings from the initial Presentation of Evidence, Call for Evidence and Summer of Listening can be seen below¹. For a full account of the evidence collected and more detail on the findings, please see our Summer of Listening report.

THEME 1: HELPING INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

<p>Top Unfairness Issues</p>	<p>Financial issues were identified as the most common area of unfairness under this theme. More specifically, the low wages in Plymouth compared to the high cost of living with particular cost areas including council tax, water, energy and housing. The personal impact of unemployment and benefit cuts were frequently mentioned across all of the Summer of Listening events.</p> <p>Housing was the second most commonly identified area of unfairness under this theme, and was raised across all Summer of Listening events. Issues included a lack of affordable homes to buy, high rents and a lack of suitable social housing. The severe impact of the 'bedroom tax' was highlighted as was difficulty in finding private rented housing and the social housing allocation system.</p> <p>Education was the third most frequently mentioned issue of unfairness under this theme, but did not receive comments on the scale of Finance and Housing. Areas of perceived unfairness included the differences in the quality of provision across neighbourhoods, the allocation system, the 11+ system and a difference in attainment by area.</p> <p>There was also concern regarding the lack of support for those with a mental health condition, echoing feedback received under Theme 2. The vulnerability of older people was also raised as an issue of unfairness, particularly with regard to digital exclusion and feelings of isolation.</p>
<p>Top Fairness Issues</p>	<p>Education issues were cited most often in this theme including the positive approaches to anti-bullying, equality of access and the good standard of teaching in Plymouth schools.</p> <p>The opportunity to access adult learning was the second most commonly identified area of fairness. Feedback through the Summer of Listening events indicated that some people find opportunities are plentiful and improving, with good support for individuals.</p> <p>Whilst housing was mentioned less frequently than Education and Adult Learning, it was the third most commonly cited area of fairness. More specifically, comments related to the social housing allocation system and the investment in new build properties to tackle the problems of poor quality housing.</p>

¹ As part of the Summer of Listening activities, issues of unfairness received significantly more mentions than issues of fairness.

THEME 2: CREATING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Top Unfairness Issues

Access to goods and services was identified as the most common area of unfairness under Theme 2. Respondents were particularly passionate about the high cost of public transport in the city; access to healthcare and dentistry; and affordable healthy food. The Satellite Meetings also revealed particular concern around access to mental health and rehabilitation services.

The second most commonly identified area of unfairness under this theme was abusive and antisocial behaviour. Feedback was commonly focused on the negative impact on residents of alcohol and drug-related abusive and anti-social behaviour. Discrimination was also identified as an issue for the city, ranging from verbal abuse towards asylum seekers, to discrimination against those living with HIV.

Barriers to involvement in community activities was the third most frequently mentioned area of unfairness. Although community activities were identified as being positive in supporting interaction, residents felt that there were limited opportunities for community engagement, and that they lacked clear routes for participation in local matters and decision making.

Health inequalities and obesity also emerged as an issue of unfairness, and this was reflected in responses from several organisations.

Top Fairness Issues

Access to goods and services was also identified as the fairest area of focus under Theme 2, indicating how divided responses were to this issue. Some respondents placed emphasis on good healthcare provision, and the availability and affordability of public transport schemes. The Walkabouts also found examples of communities working together to enhance access to goods and services such as basic food supplies.

The breadth of volunteering and citizen engagement opportunities across Plymouth was the second most commonly identified area of fairness. Feedback also indicated support for schemes that give local people the power to influence community improvement programmes, which also help to build confidence.

Whilst acknowledging the existence of abusive and anti-social behaviour, a number of respondents felt that issues are dealt with promptly by either the Police or Police Community Support Officers. The positive response to abusive and anti-social behaviour was the third most commonly mentioned fairness example.



THEME 3: GROWING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Top Unfairness Issues

The most commonly mentioned area of unfairness under this theme was parking. In particular this related to the high cost and availability of parking in the city centre which was seen as a deterrent to shoppers and residents with a negative impact on businesses.

Following feedback from across all Summer of Listening events, employment was the second most commonly identified area of unfairness under this theme. More specifically, this related to a lack of employment opportunities for young people aged under 25, barriers to successful engagement in apprenticeship schemes, and concern regarding the absence of major employers in Plymouth.

Concern around the existing shopping facilities was the third most frequently mentioned area of unfairness under this theme. For some, this related to the number of shops in the city centre that have closed, impacting on its lack of visual appeal; whilst others highlighted the lack of investment in the West End of the City Centre; and the large number of national chains at the expense of local shops.

In addition to the most commonly identified areas of unfairness listed above, feedback from the Select Committee on Local Procurement indicated some concern regarding local procurement, and the potential for small businesses to have a more visible role in influencing city policy.

Top Fairness Issues

Whilst nominated as a theme of unfairness, shopping facilities in Plymouth were also perceived by some to be positive, and were most commonly identified as a focus under Theme 3. More specifically, this related to the current mix of shops meeting local need, both in the city centre and selected city neighbourhoods.

Parking was the second most commonly identified area of fairness. A number of respondents felt that the parking charges are set at an acceptable level with an appropriate number of spaces. The Park and Ride facilities were also nominated as a positive provision.

Opportunities for employment and skills development was the third most commonly mentioned area of fairness. Feedback from the E-Survey indicated the development of a range of schemes and initiatives to encourage Plymouth residents into employment as being positive; whilst the Skills and Business Select Committee underlined the support to ensure equal access to skills development.



OUR KEY AREAS OF CONCERN

“This report is the summation of what the people of Plymouth have told us about fairness and unfairness, and what we believe we must focus on to really start addressing some of the unfairness being felt and lived across the city”.

Dame Suzi Leather, Chair, Plymouth Fairness Commission

As previous sections have illustrated, much time and energy has been invested by Commissioners, members of the public, community groups and organisations to find out the key issues of fairness and unfairness faced by people who live and work in Plymouth.

Using the findings from the Summer of Listening report, Commissioners selected their key areas of concern using the draft fairness principles (outlined on page 7), alongside the following questions;

- Does the nominated issue have the weight of community opinion behind it?
- Could change be affected locally for the nominated issue (or is this an issue that requires national policy change/resources)?
- Are significant resources already being invested to address the nominated issue and/or potential for significant duplication of work?

Through consensus, the Commission identified eight key areas that it should develop recommendations on. These are listed below.

- Strengthening Communities
- Individual and Family Wellbeing
- Young People and Young Adults
- Housing
- Cost of Living Crisis
- Discrimination and Social Exclusion
- Strengthening the Local Economy
- Implications of an Ageing Population

It is important to note that each area of concern cannot, and should not, be seen in isolation. The following observations were made:

- The key areas of concern often overlap with each other in terms of cause and effect;
- Many people living in Plymouth experience several or even all of our areas of concern regarding unfairness;
- Our key areas of concern address the social determinants of health, the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and which can lead to health inequalities².

² Marmot Review report - 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives - See more at: http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/health/-/journal_content/56/10180/3510094/ARTICLE#sthash.673orzLE.dpuf

CROSS CUTTING THEMES

It was also acknowledged that there were important cross cutting themes relating to fairness that needed to be applied across each key area of concern, as follows:

Cross Cutting Theme 1: A city that has pride, aspiration and can celebrate itself

We believe that recognising the strengths and achievements of Plymouth at an individual, group, community and city level can help to address some of the unfairness issues being experienced across Plymouth. We want to ensure that the wealth of assets that Plymouth has to offer is recognised and celebrated.

Cross Cutting Theme 2: Joining people and communities - connections

We consider that much of the unfairness we have heard about is relational, to do with how we live together and regard each other. This reflects the increasing body of evidence which connects economic inequality and social breakdown.

Cross Cutting Theme 3: Governance and inclusion

We believe that, in order to address issues of fairness and inequality, there is an urgent need to rebuild or refine the relationships that exist between public authorities and the communities they serve, and how decisions are made. This would also extend to the role of citywide partnerships.

Cross Cutting Theme 4: Innovative approaches to funding and sustainability

We aim to add value to existing activity across Plymouth to address our key areas of concern by exploring new, innovative and co-operative models of organisation and funding, including social enterprise, to address fairness and inequality, while also ensuring the long term sustainability of our final recommendations.

Cross Cutting Theme 5: Measures of success

We believe that what an organisation measures determines its values. We will be looking at new ways to measure success that incentivise co-production, strengthen communities and the connections between people, and reduce inequalities.

This section will present each area of concern in more detail, including a summary of the available data³, relevant evidence collected by the Fairness Commission, predominantly during the Summer of Listening period, and the specific issues that Commissioners are looking to explore over the coming months.

³ All data has been taken from the Fairness Commission's Initial Presentation of Evidence - http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/plymouth_fairness_commission_introductory_analysis.pdf

KEY AREA OF CONCERN I STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Information we already had

- There is a low percentage of residents in Plymouth who feel they can influence decisions. Surveys highlight a degree of public 'political apathy' with people feeling disenfranchised and ignored.
- There is however a high percentage of residents who are satisfied with the area in which they live.
- People from more deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to experience social isolation than others.
- Lack of access to open spaces for recreational activities appears to be a common issue for a number of neighbourhoods.

What we found out

- The existence of barriers to involvement in community activity and volunteering was a common theme in the Summer of Listening.
- Residents felt they were constantly removed from the decision making processes and lacked clear routes to get engaged.
- The isolation of older people was a common theme across the Summer of Listening strands, particularly the low-level of interaction with other generations and digital exclusion.
- The community and voluntary sector are under constant pressure to survive on ever smaller levels of funding and cope with the sharply increasing demands from people.
- Residents were supportive of community engagement activities and there was a willingness to participate, however practicalities or bureaucracy often got in the way.

What we are concerned about

We have heard from many individuals and groups across Plymouth about the perceived lack of control over their own lives, and we are concerned about such feelings of isolation and helplessness.

We are concerned about the existence of a deeply entrenched sense of disempowerment and disengagement in Plymouth, particularly in the communities which are most disadvantaged. We are concerned about a culture of being done to rather than doing, and of residents, groups and local businesses feeling isolated and excluded.

We know that while there are many pockets of energy and activities working to address this, it will take a consolidated effort if individuals, families and the different communities and neighbourhoods across Plymouth are to feel that they have a real say, and can influence the decisions that affect them.



What we will explore

We will explore opportunities to create the conditions that promote stronger relationships and connections between people, a better sense of wellbeing and empowering people to engage in decision making.

We will look at different models that enable greater investment in and social return from Plymouth's own assets and communities. In particular we will consider volunteering, digital inclusion and greater access to shared community spaces where people can meet.

We will also explore whether greater use of community assets mapping could help to achieve this.

We will be exploring how to strengthen the role of civil society, including more volunteering opportunities to build social capital, cohesion and enterprise, and break down barriers between individuals and communities.



KEY AREA OF CONCERN 2 INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Information we already had

- There is a 12.6 year gap in average life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas of the city.
- The most deprived neighbourhoods in Plymouth are far more likely to experience violence in the family and/or poor mental health.
- There is a high prevalence of domestic abuse in Plymouth (27% of all violent crime compared to a national figure of 16%). Four of the five neighbourhoods with highest rates of domestic abuse are among the ten most deprived in Plymouth. The estimated cost to Plymouth of domestic abuse is £49 million per annum (Commissioning Plan for the Plymouth Domestic Abuse Partnership 2012 – 2019).
- We know that alcohol negatively affects the lives of too many of our residents and visitors. It contributes to anti-social behaviour, violence, harm to children and young people and a range of health problems.
- During 2011/12 there were 2,513 recorded crimes attributable to alcohol – and nearly 7,000 hospital admissions. Every year a significant number of children experience poor care and neglect due to parental alcohol misuse.

What we found out

- Some areas of Plymouth have a lack of access to healthcare services such as GPs and dentists.
- The lack of support for people with mental health issues was highlighted, particularly the lower than average spend on Mental Health services and long waiting lists for services despite higher than average levels of mental ill health. There is a particularly high number of women with mental health issues in the city.
- Evidence collected suggests that Plymouth has around 89,000 people per year requiring support, treatment or therapy for some form of mental health distress and there is no proper infrastructure to address needs or to provide services to all of these people.
- There is a pressing need for better access to Mental

Health services in Plymouth for children, with long waiting times to use Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for those with severe mental health issues, including severe depression and threats of suicide.

- Devon and Cornwall has one of the highest number of people detained under the Mental Health Act. Vulnerable people are ending up in police cells (even children as young as 12) because there is nowhere else for them to go. This also has an impact on police time.
- Debt is a common problem for people living with mental health problems but the link is rarely discussed. When debt mounts up, so does stress and anxiety.
- Plymouth has one of the highest levels in the country of self-harm (hospital stays for self-harm have more than doubled since 2008/09).
- 25% of the entire mental health budget is spent on out of area placements.
- There is currently no comprehensive mental health policy or plan in Plymouth.

What we are concerned about

The profound differences in average life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas; that some residents face difficulties accessing basic general and mental health care. We are very concerned to hear that when people need help, they may be finding it difficult to see a doctor, dentist or other health practitioner, particularly with regards to mental health. We are also concerned about the high level of family violence and the broader impact, including the intergenerational effect, this is having on families, children and on local communities as a whole.

While we identify that the misuse of alcohol is a concern for many of our residents, we also acknowledge the significant amount of work being undertaken under the guise of the five year



strategic alcohol plan and upcoming Plymouth Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Whilst we would not want to duplicate existing efforts where real progress is being made, we will be seeking reassurance from the Health and Wellbeing Board that options to address harmful use of alcohol are being explored, such as minimum pricing for alcohol.

What we will explore

We will look at the quality of and access to basic health care services across the city to better understand why some neighbourhoods feel they are underserved and how this can be addressed. We will explore innovative ways to improve people's mental health through early intervention and prevention approaches, better community based support capacity, holistic intervention models and better primary care provision. In particular, we will explore the adequacy of attempts to address the unmet mental health needs and domestic violence. This will link closely with other areas of concern including housing and strengthening communities.



KEY AREA OF CONCERN 3 YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG ADULTS

Information we already had

- There is a clear attainment gap at all levels, from Early Years Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 4 (secondary school) and post 16 education, between those from lower and higher income households.
- In 2011, 21.5% of the city's residents aged 16+ held a qualification above level 4 (degree or equivalent) – significantly lower than the England average of 27.4%.
- The 18-24 age group in Plymouth makes up a comparatively high proportion of the total benefit claimant count and experienced the sharpest recessionary rise in unemployment.
- The proportion of out of work benefit claimants that are aged 18-24 is higher than the national average (33% as opposed to 27% - in some wards as high as 40%). The numbers of 18-24 year old out of work claimants is highest in more deprived neighbourhoods, as at October 2013 the highest number was in Stonehouse (120), which compares to none in Woodford. Other neighbourhoods with high numbers of claimants include; Devonport (85), Stoke (80) and Honicknowle (70).
- At the end of October 2013 there were 521 children classed as Not in Education, Employment or Training this equates to 6.9% of those children in academic years 12-14 Source: Careers South West.
- The percentage of Plymouth's pupils going into Higher Education Institutions (HEI) at 47% is lower than the England average of 52%. There are stark differences in the percentage of pupils going into HEI when schools across Plymouth are compared (2009/10) - Devonport High School for Girls and Devonport High School for Boys have the highest percentage of pupils going into HEI (both 66%). This compares to over 55% at Lipson Co-operative Academy, and 36% at All Saints Academy and Marine Academy.
- In 2009/10 5% of Plymouth pupils went on to study at a Russell Group university (excluding Oxford and Cambridge) which is below the England average for local authorities (8%). Pupils in Plymouth who attend schools that serve more deprived areas are less likely to go on to attend Russell group universities. 17% and 16% of

pupils go on to these universities from Devonport High School for girls and boys respectively. This compares to 0% of pupils from John Kitto (now All Saints Academy), Lipson Community College, St Boniface College and Tamarside (now Marine Academy Plymouth).

What we found out

- Education was an important issue of unfairness raised under the Summer of Listening, particularly the allocation system and the differing quality of education provision between areas.
- We heard about the attainment gap between children eligible for free school meals and their peers.
- Child poverty and the poor health of some children were cited as a growing concern for our schools. Delivering high quality education was considered to be more challenging as poverty increases. The need for additional wrap around support for children, young people and families was cited as essential to enable a more effective learning environment.
- Some young people feel that their voices are not heard and they have little say in their communities. When they express a view they are ignored. They lack appropriate spaces to come together and meet within their own neighbourhoods.
- The lack of collaboration is perceived to damage children's opportunities to access excellent teaching. We also found out that while there is excellent and innovative practice happening across the city, particularly within the Primary sector, this is not always replicated in the secondary and further education sectors.
- There is a fragmented system of sixth form education in the city, and most schools maintain a sixth form.
- Some young people discussed how they felt disappointed with the quality of their education and that they had left school with insufficient knowledge and skills. A reduction in independent accredited career advice was noted as a significant issue.
- Many employers claim that young people are not ready for work when they leave education so a focus on civil, health and financial literacy is required.

- There is a lack of employment opportunities for young people, as well as opportunities with training and prospects for career enhancement, with an absence of major employers and existing employers offering a limited number of opportunities to those aged under 25.
- Apprenticeships are often suggested as a potential route into employment, however there appear to be significant barriers to this. There are currently apprenticeship vacancies across the city and Plymouth is one of the few areas where the number of apprenticeships filled has fallen. A number of difficulties in filling these vacancies were reported.

What we are concerned about

We are concerned about the reasons why not all children across the city are being given the opportunity or resources to achieve their full potential on the journey to adulthood. We are also concerned about perceived differences of opinion of what it means to ensure a young person is and feels work ready, along with the availability of suitable employment ready to take them on.

What we will explore

We will look at how we can make education fairer for children and young people, particularly those communities and schools that may need extra support and vulnerable groups facing additional challenges, for example young carers. We will focus on skills and standards, and a collaborative approach to building excellence within schools, while also acknowledging the importance of parental involvement in children's learning.

We will also explore how schools and businesses can work together better to enable work ready young people. This will include reviewing how career advice is currently being provided, what additional opportunities are being created to ensure that jobs are available for young people, and the mechanisms to enable businesses including micro and small and medium enterprises to invest in the future workforce.



KEY AREA OF CONCERN 4 COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Information we already had

- Plymouth has a higher rate of child poverty than the national average with 21.9 per cent (11,560) of children living in poverty, of which 10,190 are under 16.
- Plymouth has a high level of economic inactivity, particularly due to long-term sickness or disability. Since mid-2011, the number of long-term out of work benefit claimants has risen dramatically, reaching a peak of 1,785 (28% of all claimants) in September 2012 – the highest since 1998.
- The median gross weekly wage for full-time workers in Plymouth in 2012 was £454 compared to South West and UK averages of £477 and £506 respectively.
- Analysis of the impact of Welfare Reform suggests that changes will impact on 20% of the city's population, and will disproportionately affect some of Plymouth's most vulnerable families. The loss of income to the city for 2012/13 was estimated to be £20 million.
- In 2012, the Plymouth Foodbank based in Stonehouse reported a 40% increase in those receiving food to over 4,000 people.
- During 2010/11, Plymouth Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) dealt with over £43 million of debt. It is known that the highest levels of debt in Plymouth are in areas identified as being among the most deprived.
- It is estimated that nearly 14,000 Plymouth households are living in fuel poverty, with significant challenges in treating the number of homes that can be made energy efficient.

What we found out

- Financial issues were a common area of concern across all events. People living in Plymouth are particularly concerned about low wages compared to the high cost of living, benefit cuts, suitable employment and the high cost of public transport.

- The rising cost of energy, water and housing were all raised by residents.
- The most vulnerable groups such as older people, lone parents, younger people and families of disabled children are disproportionately impacted by financial issues.
- The use of the Foodbank is on the rise and access to meals for children during school holidays is of particular concern. Access to affordable, healthy food appears to be a problem issue varying across different life stages.
- According to recent figures obtained from Money Advice Devon and Cornwall, 29.3% (62,182) of Plymouth's adult population is overindebted - at least three months behind with their bills in the last three months or state that they feel their debts are a heavy burden. This number is much higher than in any other of the local authority in the south west. Nationally, Plymouth's population is the 48th most indebted out of 406 local authority areas - Bristol sits at 110th and Torbay 137th and South Hams 310th.
- People on low income have limited access to financial services, which can lead to the use of high interest credit sources and spiralling debt and stress. According to the Royal College of Psychiatrists, 1 in 2 adults with debt may have a mental health problem.

What we are concerned about

We have heard the message loud and clear that, like in many other cities, Plymouth residents are struggling to cope with the rising cost of living. Businesses are also struggling to survive in the current economic climate. Plymouth is being hit hard – with nearly 1 in 4 children living in poverty, high levels of economic activity, changes to benefits and lower than average wages – this struggle is affecting working households alongside those not able to work.

What we will explore

We are concerned about and will be exploring how the city can respond to this crisis. This will include a living wage economy, accessible, affordable credit and financial services such as budgeting advice, a more inclusive school meals service, a sustainable food economy, community cafes, growing and eating projects and other co-operative ways for individuals, families, communities and organisations to purchase or act together to pay less for household basics and



KEY AREA OF CONCERN 5 HOUSING

Information we already had

- Poor housing impacts on the physical health and well-being of people and those most vulnerable bear the biggest impact.
- Around a third of Plymouth's private sector stock across the city is old and considered non-decent – this equates to around 30,000 private sector homes of which 9,500 are occupied by 'vulnerable' residents in receipt of qualifying benefits.
- Social housing, located predominantly in the West of the city, is often well maintained and more energy efficient than older private sector housing.
- The age, condition and tenure of private sector housing stock in Plymouth is of concern and impacts on the health of the most vulnerable families.
- Plymouth has high levels of families with children living in overcrowded housing.
- The waiting list for social housing currently stands at over 12,000. Over 3000 households are in priority need, on average there are only 23 lets available every week.
- The number of homeless families requiring temporary accommodation is rising.
- Over 20% of households earn less than £16,000 whilst 50% earn less than £20,000 and have insufficient income to buy a home.

What we found out

- Issues highlighted during the Summer of Listening include a shortage of affordable homes, substandard accommodation in the private rented sector and lack of suitable social housing.
- The new centralised allocation system has led some families to feel that they would never be able to access social housing but found that the private rented market did not want people who were in receipt of benefits.
- Young people report finding it difficult to access temporary accommodation and housing issues are often left unresolved for long periods of time.
- Some tenants feel fearful of raising concerns with private

landlords or the authorities about the quality of the accommodation. Conversely, some landlords also suffer severe damage to property caused by tenants.

- Some of our military families reported poor housing and a lack of clarity about where responsibility lies and how to access advice.
- While Plymouth was reported as having a good hostel system which allows access to health services, there is an unmet need for follow on accommodation.
- Many former 'council' homes have recently been brought up to standard which will have a positive immediate and long term effect on health outcomes.

What we are concerned about

We consider good quality housing to be a basic right for people living in Plymouth. We have heard about the poor state of some of our private sector housing and how many people are scared of reporting irresponsible landlords for fear of being evicted. We have heard about the long waiting lists for social housing and the difficulty that many families then have in finding suitable and affordable homes in the private rented sector. We are concerned that the basic housing needs of many households across Plymouth are not being met, and that many are stuck in a vicious cycle of not being able to secure decent, affordable homes. We are also concerned about the financial and health impact that poor housing is having on our most vulnerable households.



What we will explore

We will explore different approaches for how the city could improve standards in the private rented market. We will also look at models of reasonable rent so that people are not disadvantaged by market demands when there is a shortage of rental properties. We will consider the adequacy of independent housing advice and legal representation. We will also assess the impact of the bedroom tax.

We will explore how the city can provide better access to suitable and affordable housing for some of our most vulnerable individuals and households (including people subject to harassment). As such we are keen to look at alternative models of housing for specific groups such as older people, to ensure that Plymouth is able to meet the holistic needs of an aging population including isolation.



KEY AREA OF CONCERN 6 STRENGTHENING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

Information we already had

- Plymouth's economy is characterised by low rates of productivity – Gross Value Added (GVA) per job is around 84% of the UK average and this 'gap' has persisted for many years.
- Plymouth has a relatively low business density (205 per 10,000 residents vs. 334 for UK), partly reflecting a relative abundance of large employers associated with its defence and manufacturing heritage. The low business density masks the fact that it has a comparatively large number of bigger businesses.
- Business birth rates are among the lowest in the country, although at the very micro level there are some indications of positive entrepreneurial activity. Plymouth has recently become one of the first social enterprise cities in the country.
- Plymouth has a larger than average proportion of employees working in the public sector – around 35% compared with 27% nationally (2007 figures).

What we found out

- The suitability and visual appeal of local shops was an issue of concern as was the number of closed or empty shops. The dominance of national chains over local bespoke shops was cited as a concern as was the disproportionate level of funding to some retail areas.
- The cost of parking was a concern to many people and, along with expensive public transport, may be deterring people from visiting the city centre or preventing them from accessing jobs or leisure activities.
- While desirable by local residents, buying local services is perceived as less convenient and more costly.

What we are concerned about

We are concerned about the future for local business, in particular micro, small and medium enterprises.

We have heard that opportunities for suitable, well-paid employment are perceived as poor across the city, with

many of our young workforce seemingly unprepared for the world of work. We have heard that while there is a desire to support local businesses, this can often be difficult due to a lack of flexible and affordable public transport links, and a lack of parking incentives.

We know there is concern about the greater presence of major retailers, seen as being to the detriment of the independent West End retail sector. For some, it is simply a lack of choice within their neighbourhoods.

What we will explore

We will explore a fairer system for local procurement where local businesses and local communities benefit most. As part of this we will explore how to reduce barriers whilst enhancing the ability and will of local businesses to engage and benefit from such systems. We will also look at how we can strengthen the sustainability of the local economy, keeping more money generated within the economy circulating locally.

Finally, we will be looking at how the city can address perceptions of unfairness with the availability and cost of public transport and parking charges when accessing key services and amenities across the city, particularly getting people from more deprived residential areas to the major employment areas in the city centre.



Come In

WE'RE

OPEN

KEY AREA OF CONCERN 7 DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Information we already had

- As is common in other cities, issues of discrimination are under reported and are often not raised in general research and consultation.
- Our Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population is small but growing rapidly. The latest census information shows that just under 4% of Plymouth's population were not of White British or White Irish descent (2011) compared with just under 15% nationally.
- 161 racist incidents were reported within schools in 2009-10. In 120 of these incidents, it was deemed necessary for the school to take follow up action with both the victim and the perpetrator
- 11,655 (6.7%) of people in Plymouth consider themselves permanently sick or disabled (the national figure is 5.5%).
- 22% of disabled people in Plymouth had experienced harassment in public because of their impairment.
- There is no local data on the numbers of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) people in Plymouth, but it is nationally estimated at between 5 to 7 %. This would mean that approximately 12,500 people aged over 16 in Plymouth are LGBT. Local surveys have found that fear of abuse and bullying is common.

What we found out

- Evidence suggests racism and abuse in Plymouth is prevalent and massively under-reported.
- Views from resident and community groups suggest that racism and discrimination are common catalysts for abusive and antisocial behaviour. Fear of abusive behaviour impacts across the wider community and can make people feel unsafe in their neighbourhoods and even in their own homes.
- Issues raised by people with disabilities related to the difficulties of access leading to isolation, these included unsuitable parking facilities, restricted bus passes, problems with pavements and street furniture and difficulties with access in public spaces.

- There are problems with accessing leisure services for people with Physical and Learning Disabilities.
- Digital exclusion is a growing problem and makes people feel isolated as well as preventing them from accessing key information.

What we are concerned about

We are concerned about what we have heard from many individuals, groups and organisations across Plymouth about their experiences of attitudinal and structural discrimination across the city. We are also concerned at the feelings of exclusion that prevails across many of our most 'disadvantaged' communities. We are concerned about the personal impact this is having on those affected, as well as the impact this is no doubt having on the city – on how we treat our residents and how welcoming we are perceived to be by others. This is really important when one of the city's aspirations is to attract more international visitors and students.



What we will explore

The Commission aims to investigate what action can be taken to reduce different types of attitudinal and structural discrimination and to promote the incorporation of a genuinely pro-diversity approach within the city. In recognition of the need to promote greater social cohesion and social inclusion, we will extend our review beyond the nine protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation), to also include discrimination based on socioeconomic status. We will examine the extent to which policy makers incorporate diversity thinking into their long as well as short term plans.

We will look at ways of developing a stronger culture of kindness, respect and empathy, with the development of a city culture where people are encouraged and enabled to give their time, skills and support to help meet the needs of others across the city.



KEY AREA OF CONCERN 8 IMPLICATIONS OF AN AGEING POPULATION

Information we already had

- Between 2010-2031 the total population of Devon is expected to grow by 13% but with marked differences by age group. The number of Devon residents aged 65-84 will grow by 40% and 85+ by 78%.
- There are an estimated 43,400 people over the age of 65 in Plymouth and this is projected to rise to 49,200 by 2020.
- 7.7% of Plymouth's population are over 75 – with over 75's predicted to rise faster than any other group (19,000 in 2008 to 31,000 in 2028).
- Older people requiring social care will double by 2025.
- Currently just over 10,000 older people are estimated to live alone and this is projected to rise to 11,800 by 2020.
- In 2014 it is predicted that in Plymouth, 3,166 people over the age of 65 will have a dementia and by 2020 this will be 3,667.

What we found out

- There are growing numbers of older people in the city which will increasingly challenge the ability of service providers to support the delivery of quality services to older people and other vulnerable people living in Plymouth.
- There is a lack of opportunity for older people to come together both with people of their own age and with other generations.
- As more information and services become available only online, some older people will be increasingly excluded and disadvantaged.
- Some older people are fearful of leaving the house or cannot afford to go out and this impacts upon their mental and physical health.
- A key finding from the Dementia Select Committee was that the city should develop a shared 'Strategy for Ageing'

What we are concerned about

We have heard that Plymouth's ageing population will grow very significantly in numbers and proportionally over the coming decades and this brings with it challenges to ensure our older people are included and supported, as well as challenges to ensure the care they require is available. We have heard from people experiencing dementia as well as from their carers about issues such as accessing support, appropriate housing, isolation and difficulties in mobility and transport to access basic services such as local shops and GPs.

We also heard that older people were particularly vulnerable to rising costs of living, alongside cuts in pensions and benefits. Residents reported a lack of intergenerational contact and a lack of drop in groups and support for older carers. Plymouth's pioneering work to become a dementia friendly city demonstrates the impact of joint working but much more needs to be done to help support our older people.

What we will explore

We will explore the adequacy of plans being put in place to address our concerns, and investigate the broader implications and opportunities for Plymouth of the ageing population. In particular, we will explore ways in which older people are being excluded from the socio-economic life of the city, and how we can work together to combat isolation. This will link closely with other areas of concern we will be exploring including housing, strengthening communities, discrimination, access to transport and cost of living.



WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

This report has briefly outlined some of the key concerns that the residents and organisations of Plymouth have fed back as part of the Summer of Listening. More detailed information is available in the Initial Presentation of Evidence and The Summer of Listening report.

Over the next three months, the Commission will be focusing on its eight key areas of concern and will investigate each area in order to provide informed, realistic recommendations for action.

Each key area of concern will be reviewed by Commissioners using the following:

- Critical friend partnering (e.g. national organisations or other Fairness Commissions)
- Select Committee Panels with expert witnesses
- Best practice reviews
- Additional research / data (including national comparisons)
- Visits to other areas / projects
- Expert presenters
- Review of other Fairness Commissions findings/recommendations
- Local discussions/networking with key stakeholders, groups and elected members
- Recommendations collected as part of the Summer of Listening
- Emergent learning from the C2 case study

It is expected that while the majority of recommendations will have a local focus, some will be more appropriately addressed at national government. Where possible, we will engage with other Fairness Commissions on common issues of local importance that require a national response, in order to maximise our influence.

The final report of the Plymouth Fairness Commission, with recommendations for action, will be published in March 2014. The Commission will reconvene in 2015 to review progress.

COMMISSIONERS

Steve Baker

Principal, Lipson Co-operative Academy

Since 1995 Steve has been Principal of Lipson Co-operative Academy. He has specialised in linking the co-operative learning pedagogy to the values of the international Co-operative Alliance, and sits on the national executive of the Schools Co-operative Society. During his tenure as Principal, Steve has led national and regional conferences; trained as an 'Education Action Zone' consultant; undertaken the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) consultant leader programme; sat on the national executive group for the Schools Network (SSAT) 'Future Schools' group and on the Department for Education Innovations Unit 'Expert' Headteacher group for personalising learning. He is a 'National Leader of Education', the Branch Secretary of Association for School and College Leaders (ASCL), and chaired Plymouth Schools Forum from 2010 to 2012.

Mark Bignell

Chief Executive, Hamoaze House

Mark is the Chief Executive of Hamoaze House, working in this field for over 20 years and is responsible for the day to day management of the programmes that it offers. Hamoaze House was incorporated on the 30th June 1998 and attained registered charity status on the 7th July 1998. The charity's principle activity is the operation of day support rehabilitation facilities for people in the community affected by the misuse of drugs and or alcohol, and for their families and associated persons. The secondary activity based at Seymour House is to provide an education service as an alternative to pupil referral units.

Andy Boulting

**Chief Superintendent, Plymouth Commander,
Devon and Cornwall Police**

Chief Superintendent Andy Boulting began his policing career in 1987 as a Police Constable in Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, and has spent much of it working in Exeter and Plymouth.

His first posting was to Ilfracombe before a move to Exeter as a detective and then on to Plymouth. He was stationed at Crownhill as a sergeant before making Detective Sergeant working for Charles Cross CID. A stint at the Force Crime Squad, working surveillance and major investigations was followed by a return as Detective Inspector in Plymouth and then East Cornwall.

Currently the Plymouth Commander, Chief Superintendent Andy Boulting is responsible for the overall policing for Plymouth including crime and performance. He sets local priorities in consultation with partners, the local community and police personnel, which meet local needs and support organisational goals. He works with partners to address community and agency needs and contributes to the reduction of crime and disorder.

Prof Kevin Elliston

Public Health Consultant in Health Improvement, Public Health England

Kevin recently took up a post with Public Health England following a short term as Acting Director of Public Health for Plymouth City Council. Prior to that, Kevin worked in the NHS for 31 years. He studied Human Geography at Plymouth Polytechnic and a career path change saw him train as a Registered Nurse and later specialising as a cancer nurse. For the past 23 years, Kevin has further trained in public health and research and has worked in public health related practice in Plymouth and the surrounding areas. He is also a Visiting Professor in Public Health with Plymouth University and a Fellow of the UK Faculty of Public Health.

Marc Gardiner

Director, Zebra Collective

Marc has worked all his life in his home town, Plymouth, in multifarious community work and social care settings: with people with learning disabilities, people using mental health services, young people in care and in youth work settings, people with alcohol or drug issues, and with inner-city communities facing big challenges. From 2002 until its conclusion in 2011, he was chair of Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership, a £48.7m New Deal for Communities programme in his local community designed to spearhead regeneration initiatives in the UK through an action research approach.

In 2002 to 2003 he drove the foundation of Zebra Collective, an equal-pay worker cooperative which exists to promote equality and tackle social exclusion through its activities of: training in (a) equality and diversity, (b) communications skills for people who work with people facing extra challenges, and (c) community development, community development and facilitation, mediation and conflict resolution

Jo Higson

Life and Business Coach, Blue Parakeet Coaching CIC

Jo is currently running a small community interest company in Plymouth having previously been the Equalities Lead for the Government Office for the South West followed by three years working for a local charity. She has been working in the equality and diversity field for the last twenty years in both the public and voluntary sector and is personally and professionally passionate about the issues of equality and justice. Jo's family settled in Plymouth in the 1970's and she chose to return with her own children six years ago.

Mike Jarman

Chief Executive, Plymouth Zone

Mike is currently the Chief Executive Officer of The Zone (Youth Enquiry Service Plymouth Ltd) the city's largest non-statutory provider of youth services. The Zone works with in excess of 6,500 different young people a year, and services delivered span early intervention in mental health, homelessness prevention, sexual health and personal development programmes. Previous to this he worked locally in the NHS for 17 years, originally employed as the HIV Prevention worker across South & West Devon, but developing skills to become a service commissioner and Public Health Specialist. His background is in youth and community work and community arts. In this capacity he managed a not-for-profit Theatre Arts Company in Greece for 7 years, overseeing a European Funded Programme for working with long term unemployed youth.

Joanne Kaye

SW Regional Secretary, UNISON

Currently Regional Secretary for the South West region of UNISON, Joanne has worked for UNISON for 22 years, having started in Northern Ireland and worked in Yorkshire and East Anglia before moving to the South West in 2001. She initially graduated in Law and her first job was working for an unemployed workers centre in Barnsley, run by the Trades Council, which sought to get unemployed people back into work in the late eighties/early 90s.

Ann Kinahan

Chief Executive, Plymouth Citizen's Advice Bureau

A non-practising barrister; Ann started her working life with the law publishers, Sweet and Maxwell, but has had a long career within the Citizens Advice Service, in which she believes as the best possible tool for enabling the population at large to implement their rights. Over the last ten years, Ann has worked with Citizens Advice to improve efficiencies across the Service. Much of this has related to increasing public access, making use of improved technology which allows groups of Bureaux to work together. As Director of Plymouth CAB, Ann has also been privileged to oversee the development of Bureau partnerships with significant private partners, South West Water, EDF Energy and Working Links, for instance, in order to bring real financial gains and better financial management skills to local, regional and national CAB clients.

Paul Lacey

Music Leader, Plymouth Music Zone

Paul is a music leader who specialises in rap and beatboxing at the Plymouth Music Zone, a local charity that works to educate young people across a wide spectrum of musical genres.

Dame Suzi Leather

Chair of the Commission

Suzi has a wide professional background having been Chair of the Charity Commission, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, the School Food Trust, the School Meals Review Panel and the Council of Food Policy Advisers. She was the founder Deputy Chair of the UK Food Standards Agency.

In the health services field she chaired the Exeter and District Community NHS Trust; the Health Forum, an inter-agency partnership body formed to promote the public health agenda in North and East Devon; was the first chair of St Sidwell's Healthy Living Centre, then the UK's only combined healthy living centre and UK online centre and chair of a research project on low income teenage pregnancy, funded by Tommy's; the baby charity.

She has been a member of Consumer Focus, the Human Tissue Authority, an observer member of the Human Genetics Commission and sat on the steering group of the UK Stem Cell Bank.

She is Vice President of Hospiscare, sits on the Prime Minister's Rural Dementia Task and Finish Group and serves on the boards of the General Medical Council and the United Kingdom Accreditation Service; she chairs the Ethics Committee of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and also the Lankellychase Foundation, a charity which works to bring about change that will transform the quality of life of people who face severe and multiple disadvantage. She is a Deputy Lieutenant of Devon and went to primary school in Plymouth.

Glynis Lidster

Centre Manager, Welcome Hall

Glynis is Centre Manager for Welcome Hall Limited which opened in 1995 as a Community Resource Centre to promote the benefit of those people residing or working in the Devonport area. She supports volunteers from within the local community and around the world, via various language schools, helping develop their social and language skills. A resident board member on the Devonport Neighbourhood Board, Glynis has a wide range of both work and life experience and believes in equality for everybody.

Robert Nelder

Consultant in Public Health

Robert worked in the NHS for 22 years before joining Plymouth City Council in April 2013. As well as being an experienced public health professional, he has particular expertise in public health intelligence and has recently been admitted to the UK Public Health Register through Defined Specialist Portfolio assessment and has become a Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health. Robert is also a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Plymouth.

Councillor Chris Penberthy

(Labour, St Peter and the Waterfront) is Plymouth City Council's Cabinet Member for Co-operatives and Community Development.

His portfolio includes lead responsibility for community safety, homelessness, social and private rented housing, social inclusion, the voluntary and community sector, child poverty, neighbourhood working, and social enterprise development.

Chris has spent most of his working life in charities and has been awarded a fellowship of the Royal Society of Arts in recognition of his contribution to the sector and volunteering.

Chris is on the Board of Plymouth Municipal Charities, Millfields Community Economic Development Trust CIC and Plymouth Energy Community, he is also Chair of Safer Plymouth and the newly-formed Millfields Inspired.

Father Sam Philpott

Father Sam is a member of the Society of the Holy Cross and in 1978, he became the Vicar of St Peter's Church, Stonehouse, Plymouth. He was made a Prebendary of Exeter Cathedral in 1991 and was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List for 2012, at the age of 71, for service to the community of Plymouth. He has been at the forefront of pioneering projects including the Ship homeless hostel, Plymouth Mediation and The Millfields Economic Development Trust, which he chairs.

Ann Pointon

Chair, PADAN (Plymouth Area Disability Action Network)

Ann moved to Plymouth from Milton Keynes 12 years ago and worked as a disability consultant and trainer until her retirement in 2007. She was co-chair of the Board of Trustees of Equata UK/Kaleido the disability arts agency for the South West from 2005 to 2010, and became a trustee and Chair of PADAN (Plymouth Area Disability Action Network) in 2011. Ann has a background in broadcasting, working at the BBC from 1965 and producing BBC Open University social science television and radio programmes from 1978 until she left the BBC to go freelance in 1989. From 1991 to 1995 she was Channel Four's part-time disability consultant, and was involved as a panellist and committee member in a number of British Film Institute and Arts Council England disability and diversity employment and education initiatives from 1991 to 2002.

Ian Potts

Managing Director, Architects Design Group

Ian is an architect and graduate of the Plymouth School of Architecture and Corporate Member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Elected to the board of the Chamber of Commerce 11 years ago, Ian is a member of the Operations and Central Policy groups and is the Chair's spokesperson for regeneration and the built environment. These positions offer the opportunity to work with the private sector in partnership with the public and community sector leaders for the good of the City of Plymouth.

Founding Partner/Director of The Architects Design Group – now based at the new Studio 5-11 Building in the centre of Plymouth and working predominantly across the South of England. Buildings and the spaces around them are the physical expression of our towns and cities. Ian's particular focus is on the development of architectural and urban design and their role in the regeneration of Plymouth and the towns and cities of Devon and Cornwall.

Cllr Dr David Salter

A fourth-generation Plymothian, David qualified as a medical research scientist at St. Bartholomew's Hospital and the University of Oxford. Besides working in the NHS and in several countries overseas, he has been a Professor at three UK Universities, an expert witness in US Federal Court, a business developer for Ernst & Young in London and Chief Scientist of a multinational manufacturing PLC. He has also been a carer for his father with dementia and a daughter with a chronic sleep disorder. Since 2003 he has been a City Councillor and from 2007 to 2010 was Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care.

Sue Shaw

Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods, Plymouth Community Homes

Sue has worked in the sphere of social housing for around 25 years, joining Plymouth Community Homes – Plymouth's largest housing association – at its inception in 2009. Immediately prior to this, Sue ran her own small company working with housing providers and other charitable bodies to improve organisational governance and accountability; this included mentoring and coaching social housing tenants to develop an effective voice, expanding their capacity to influence the Boards on which they served, or aspired to join. Sue has also worked regionally as a specialist in the regulation and turnaround of failing housing associations.

Lesley Shorrocks

Chair, Plymouth Federation of Small Businesses

Lesley is managing director of Sigma, a marketing and advertising agency based in Plymouth. Prior to establishing Sigma in 1992, Lesley studied for an English degree in York and then embarked on an 11 year career in public and private sector leisure, arts and entertainment marketing. Lesley is Chair of the Plymouth Branch Federation of Small Businesses, which has over 1,000 members in the city, is on the Plymouth Area Business Council Executive and a member of the Chamber of Commerce. Lesley is also an active Rotarian and is a past President of Plymouth Mayflower Rotary Club, undertaking local and international service projects.

Sheila Snellgrove

Director, Barbican Theatre

Sheila is the company director of the Barbican Theatre, Plymouth. She has worked in the city for over 30 years as a teacher, theatre practitioner and community facilitator. She was trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama and quickly realised that her passion was in using the arts as a vehicle to bring people together – to celebrate, challenge and change things – hopefully for the better. The Barbican Theatre is proud of its history of inclusion work making its auditorium home to some of the most diverse audiences in the city.

Prof Richard Stephenson

**Plymouth University, Dean of the Faculty of Health/PVC/
Prof of Rehabilitation, Faculty of Health, Education and Society**

Following a successful clinical career as a chartered physiotherapist in which he specialised in neurological rehabilitation and mental health, Richard entered higher education in 1989. During the past 24 years, Richard has established a national reputation in the development and implementation of innovative education programmes at all levels, with a particular focus on the development of interprofessional and interdisciplinary learning and working.

Since 2003 Richard has held significant leadership roles in academia, holding Dean of Faculty roles in two universities. He is currently Pro-Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health, Education and Society at Plymouth University and Professor of Rehabilitation. Through his national profile on the Council of Deans of Health Executive body, Richard has worked extensively with numerous governmental, regulatory and professional bodies. He is a member of the Plymouth Health and Wellbeing Board.



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