

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR FAIRNESS

The Plymouth Fairness Commission Final Report



March 2014

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

You are born in one of Plymouth's most deprived areas; Devonport, St Peters and the Waterfront or Hami. That deprivation will influence your life chances from the moment you are conceived. You have a one in three chance of being born into a 'vulnerable' family, while 43% of families in your area are on a low income and depend on benefits. Unsurprisingly, you'll have between a 48% – 60% chance of being among Plymouth's over 11,500 children living in poverty. Nearly a quarter of your friends' parents are depressed or mentally ill, and over 14% suffer from violence in their family.

You start school. 64% of your classmates won't achieve the basic Early Years assessment level. It's harder to study when your home's cold and damp, and a third of Plymouth's private sector stock is classed as 'non-decent'. There's a less than 35% chance you'll get 5 or more GCSE's. Statistically, you probably won't make it to further education.

You meet someone. If you're a teenage girl you're 40% more likely to get pregnant than the English and Welsh average. You need a job, but public sector employment in Plymouth has shrunk since the recession. The good news is there are 1,500 more jobs in the private sector. The bad news is they're nearly all part time. With over a fifth of households earning less than £16,000, and half earning less than £20,000, the chances of your being able to buy a house are slim. Home ownership rates in Plymouth's most deprived wards are between 22% and 38%ⁱ.

As you get older, you're more likely to be obese or overweight, and to die early of cancer or circulatory disease. Your life expectancy is just 72.2 years, less than that of Vietnam or Lebanonⁱⁱⁱ.

You are born into in one of Plymouth's least deprived areas; Widewell, Peverell or Compton. You have a less than 5% chance of being born into a vulnerable family and less than 1 in ten children in your neighbourhood live in poverty. Only 5 – 10% of families are on low incomes, and only 2% claim Job Seekers Allowance. There's a less than 5% chance you will experience violence in the family and only a 1 in ten chance of experiencing mental illness.

You have a between 50% - 60% chance of achieving your Early Years assessment and at least a 70% chance of getting 5 or more GCSE's. 35% of your classmates will go on to get a degree. You have between a 67% and 76% chance of owning your own home.

As you get older, your chances of being obese or overweight, or of dying early of cancer or circulatory respiratory disease are comparatively lower. Your life expectancy is nearly 85, higher than Japan or Switzerland^{iv}.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PLYMOUTH FAIRNESS COMMISSION

“We are the voice of the people who spoke to us. We need to pay attention to the regeneration of human beings rather than just the regeneration of buildings and places. Unless we journey on that road, we will simply have lots of agencies continue to tickle the surface of inequality – what will make the city a fairer place is the individual members of our city.”

- Father Sam Philpott, Fairness Commissioner

We know Plymouth has many things going for it. An inspiring history, a gateway location and vibrant and diverse communities among them. People have told us how much they value residential and commercial redevelopment happening, the quality of, and access to, adult education and the high standards in schools. Most of us live here and we see the great things happening in our city every day. Our work is here, our children go to school here and we spend most of our leisure time with friends and family right here. We are also all experts in our individual fields who have been happy to give our time to the Commission for free.

But we know Plymouth also has deep-seated problems. Far too many people here experience profound unfairness in many areas of their lives. We spent a lot of last summer listening to the people of Plymouth tell us about how they experience this unfairness.

In housing, where children are ill because of damp and don't have enough room to do their homework. In transport, where rail links to other business centres are indirect and expensive and bus journeys are too often circuitous and costly, especially for young people and apprentices. In income, where low wages and benefit delays are forcing more and more people to choose between paying the bills and buying decent food. In healthcare, where life expectancy in some areas is shockingly low and people have to travel for hard-to-get GP appointments. And in jobs, where the opportunities for workers and their children are often all too limited.

Everyone makes different choices in their lives but some people have many more choices than others. The differences in the opportunities available to people in Plymouth depend far too much on their post code. People in this city don't want a 'Them and Us' Plymouth – they want a fairer city for everyone.

There is a huge range of programmes already planned for Plymouth, from the City Deal^v to the wide-ranging Dementia^{vi} and Child Poverty^{vii} Strategies. These are encouraging developments which our recommendations build on. We were brought together to find out what people in Plymouth think is fair and unfair about life in the city and then make recommendations for action to make things fairer for Plymouth as a whole. We have tried not to make assumptions. That's why we have spent over a year listening to what Plymouth's residents have told us make the most difference to them. They told us of the many things in Plymouth which they felt were fair, and of the unfairnesses they experienced in different aspects of their lives. Our recommendations have been shaped by their responses.

We welcome the work that other Fairness Commissions across the country have undertaken so far. We've learned a lot from them. They've revealed a lot of issues that cities have in common, like the growth in poverty among people both in and out of work, the growing housing crisis and the need to invest in opportunities for young people. They've also highlighted problems that are far more specific to their individual cities. In that respect, the report of the Plymouth Fairness Commission is no different. Where our report is different, however, is in two ways.

The first is about encouraging a profound change in the way agencies and communities work together. To move from a situation where communities are 'done to' to one where they work collaboratively to 'do with' agencies to prioritise and deliver solutions themselves. We have highlighted one approach to working this way throughout this report. It is a new approach to devolving local power called 'Systems Leadership', which fosters a sense of aspiration and community involvement in decision-making.

The second is in recognising that an important aspect of Plymouth's unfairness involves the way we live together and relate to each other. The incidence of domestic violence in the city is very high and we heard evidence of attacks on asylum seekers, disabled people and others perceived as 'different'. Our society as a whole has become more unequal, and evidence indicates social inequality is a driver of social breakdown. Where possible, we have tried to address unfairness from this perspective as well.

Rebalancing fairness in our city will not happen overnight, but it is a process that many organisations and individuals in Plymouth have already started. We hope that our recommendations will add a new emphasis to the need to work more collaboratively and constructively to create the conditions needed for a fairer city.

We have been angered, moved and inspired by what so many of the people of Plymouth have told us. This is their report.

Dame Suzi Leather, Chair of the Plymouth Fairness Commission

Steve Baker, Principal, Lipson Co-operative Academy

Mark Bignall, Chief Executive, Hamoaze House

Andy Boulting, Chief Superintendent, Plymouth Commander, Devon and Cornwall Police

Professor Kevin Elliston, Public Health Consultant in Health Improvement, Public Health England

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Mike Jarman, Chief Executive, Plymouth Zone

Joanne Kaye, SW Regional Secretary, UNISON

Ann Kinahan, Chief Executive, Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau

Paul Lacey, Music Leader, Plymouth Music Zone

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Robert Nelder, Consultant in Public Health, Plymouth City Council

Councillor Chris Penberthy (St Peter and the Waterfront), Cabinet Member for Co-operatives and Community Development, Plymouth City Council

Father Sam Philpott

Ann Pointon, Chair, Plymouth Area Disability Action Network

Ian Potts, Managing Director, Architects Design Group

Councillor Dr David Salter (Plympton Chaddlewood), Plymouth City Council

Sue Shaw, Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods, Plymouth Community Homes

Lesley Shorrocks, Chair, Plymouth Federation of Small Businesses

Sheila Snellgrove, Director, Barbican Theatre

Professor Richard Stephenson, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Plymouth University



PLYMOUTH: A CITY IN TRANSIT

Historically, Plymouth's location has proved both a blessing and a curse. Its natural harbours ensured it became the South West's biggest port and shipbuilder, while its coastline and position as the gateway to Cornwall and Dartmoor attracts five and a half million tourists a year. Yet it was Plymouth's major port status which made it a target for sustained air attack in the Second World War and destroyed the old city layout. Post war rebuilding created a new urban plan which now creates obstacles for many people travelling to the areas of high employment of Belliver, Estover and Langage. In the most deprived areas, getting to work often involves at least two different bus journeys. These areas also have low levels of vehicle ownership, which further reduces travel options.

The boom times have left Plymouth. Its maritime heritage and expertise made it a natural choice for the defence, manufacturing and construction industries. Yet the city's reliance on these industries meant Plymouth suffered a deeper recession than most after 2008. Yet, as the south coast's second largest city, Plymouth has also attracted a high number of public sector employers, including health, education, administration and universities. Plymouth's universities contribute hundreds of millions of pounds to the region's economy and its naval dockyard at Devonport remains the largest and most advanced in Western Europe. Inevitably, because public sector employee numbers in the city are larger than the national average, cuts to public services have impacted disproportionately on employment.

As the public sector has shrunk during austerity, so too have its employment opportunities; between 2008 and 2010, Plymouth lost 6,400 jobs^{viii}. Today, Plymouth's business start-up rates are among the lowest in the country and yet their survival rate after five years is better than the national average. The city's GVA (Gross Value Added) has been only around 84% of the UK average for many years.

Plymouth's infrastructure has been disproportionately shaped by its seafaring history. Poor rail links make travel between the city and other business centres time consuming and expensive. As the February 2014 storms showed, Plymouth and its neighbours are extremely vulnerable to railway failure.

Even in comparison to the growing national levels of private renting, more people in Plymouth live in privately rented homes than average. A third of these homes, around 30,000 in all, are classed as 'non-decent' according to the decent homes standard, with consequences for residents' health. The city isn't short of good examples of social housing, such as the Devonport regeneration scheme. However, most social housing is predominantly found in the West of the city, exacerbating the East/West divide.

The escalating cost of living, affecting growing numbers across the country, is hitting Plymouth particularly hard. The city remains a relatively low wage economy. Over 20% of the city's households earn less than £16,000 and over half earn less than £20,000. Over 29% of adults in Plymouth are over indebted, one of the highest percentages in the country and the highest in the South West.

Disadvantage is growing yet funding is shrinking. Contraction in central Government funding means that Plymouth City Council must make a further £64.5 million^x in cuts in the next three years. In many cities, these levels of cuts will require local government to work with communities in new ways to co-produce the services they need.

Deciding who gets what requires incredibly difficult choices in the face of so much need. These decisions must not be made solely by the public sector. Nor must they perpetuate the way in which the disadvantaged of Plymouth have been 'done to' in the past.

Post-maritime boom town, post-engineering hotspot and post-recession, Plymouth is again a city in socio-economic transit. The next stage of its development must be shaped by all of its communities. The Plymouth Fairness Commission was set up to help the people of Plymouth become genuinely involved in deciding and implementing the changes needed to help all its residents live in a fairer city.

OUR APPROACH TO FAIRNESS

'Fairness' is probably one of the most subjective words in any language. What's 'fair' to one group can seem like special pleading to another, and there will always be different views about priorities. However, we do have many statistics and indices which show that life chances in Plymouth, as in most cities, are not fair. The location and circumstances into which you are born are likely to influence the rest of your life, for good or bad. Great news if you're born into affluence, but potentially damning if you're born into deprivation. Our role is to provide recommendations to limit the impact these conditions have on reducing the life chances of people in Plymouth.

We also know that societies with large income gaps and greater inequality have poorer outcomes for health, education and social cohesion overall. If we help create the conditions where everyone is included, everyone in the city will benefit.

We think a city should find ways to challenge exclusion and the obstacles to social connection and opportunity, especially in education, living and working conditions. These are statistically the most significant areas which help, or hinder, people in living productive and satisfying lives.

Everyone in Plymouth deserves an equal chance at opportunity. This can mean providing more for those who have less - to give everyone the same chance to learn, to travel to shops and services, to live in decent housing and to have a say about decisions which affect them.

Rather than engage in philosophical or political debates, we decided to find out what fairness and unfairness issues people in Plymouth were experiencing in their daily lives.



A CALL FOR EVIDENCE

“Unemployment is tough for the young and the elderly, as it seems like there is a lack of opportunities for them in the city. No one seems to be creating new jobs and because of the government cuts jobs that existed before are merged or lost. It means it’s just harder for people to get employed.”

- Participant from the Summer of Listening

The Plymouth Fairness Commission was launched in April 2013. We immediately began a statistical review to give us a socio-economic profile of Plymouth against key areas of fairness. These included health, education, housing and employment. In May, we launched A Call for Evidence, asking people and organisations in the city to give us their evidence and views on a broad range of questions. Their evidence, the expert knowledge

of the Commissioners and a review of the findings of other Fairness Commission helped us develop our recommendations.

All the documents and findings from the Plymouth Fairness Commission are available at:

www.plymouthfairnesscommission.co.uk



2013 – THE SUMMER OF LISTENING

“The unemployed suffer because they are on a low amount of money. There are jobs out there but it takes time to get them. My partner has had to take a cut in wages since he moved to Plymouth.”

“Homeless people have a lot of problems. They find it really hard to get housing and it’s really dangerous on the streets.”

- Participants from the Summer of Listening

Throughout the summer of 2013, we went out to meet Plymouth’s residents, businesses, professionals, academics and community groups. We wanted to hear their views of what was fair and unfair in the city, and their suggestions for tackling unfairness.

Through walkabouts, drop-in events, meetings, street surveys, panels and online questionnaires we heard from over 1,000 people and organisations, many of them representing larger groups.



WHAT MATTERS MOST — PLYMOUTH'S PRIORITIES

"The cost of living is too high for the type of industry and area. Housing costs are also too high. People have no money and there are too many second homeowners in the area."

"Those whose income is under £25,000 struggle substantially."

"Disabled people don't get as much help as others."

- Participants from the Summer of Listening

From the findings of the Summer of Listening, and using the Principles of Fairness we used what Plymouth's residents told us to identify eight key areas with the highest impact on fairness in the city. These are the issues where Plymouth residents think change will make the most difference:

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

We know these issues don't exist in isolation from each other. In terms of cause and effect, many of them overlap and many people experience some or all of them every day. Disadvantage in one area is cumulative and compounded by disadvantage in others. Our approach is to look at ways of tackling unfairness in key areas across the city overall.

Our detailed position statement is available here:
www.plymouthfairnesscommission.co.uk



TACKLING A LOW ASPIRATION CULTURE

During the Summer of Listening, it became clear that as well as the economic, health and infrastructure barriers facing Plymouth, there is something restrictive about the wider culture of the city. Many young people we spoke to didn't aspire to further or higher education and many feel pretty hopeless about their future employment prospects. The outlook of Plymouth's young carers was particularly bleak.

Despite doing much great work in incredibly tough circumstances, Plymouth's voluntary and community sector is comparatively disjointed and insular, and too reliant on silo-thinking. Schools, too, can be passive about implementing

cutting edge and innovative initiatives to raise aspiration and break down artificial barriers between children from different groups. There was a sense from many respondents that leadership by example was lacking across many organisations in 'authority', and that private, public and voluntary sectors are too insulated from each other.

Although culture, by its very nature, is intangible, the Commission believes that tackling this insular culture of low aspiration must be an intrinsic part of its recommendations.



REDUCING ISOLATION

“There are a lot of lonely people in Plymouth. Some people don't see anyone all day.”

- Participant from the Summer of Listening

Loneliness, being connected to others and feeling included in wider society are all issues which are difficult to quantify but vital to address. During the Summer of Listening, we received a powerful impression of a lack of ‘connectedness’ in the city. Partly because of transport links, partly because of the severity of cuts to public services and partly because of the far-flung layout of the city itself, Plymouth seems to be a place where it can be hard to ‘plug- in’.

This lack of connection to, and between, individuals and groups must be tackled. Social interaction, feeling connected to others,

knowing you that you are supporting them and they you, have powerful impacts on health and premature death. Social relationships need to move up the city’s agenda. We strongly encourage public bodies to pro-actively find ways of fostering connectivity in their planning, decisions and ways of working.

We hope this issue is one where debate will slowly start to make Plymouth a city where it is much easier to connect, and much harder to fall between the social cracks.



COMMUNITIES – DOING WITH, NOT DOING TO

“They should listen more to people within the community and get their opinions, because they have first-hand experience of what’s going on in the community. When they do get their advice they should actually use the information and put it to use, not ignore it.”

- Participant from the Summer of Listening

A lot of people who gave evidence during the Summer of Listening told us they were tired of so-called consultations which were anything but. Many said that decisions affecting their communities were imposed from outside, while their concerns

about important aspects of their communities, such as primary healthcare provision and anti-social behaviour, were ignored. The Fairness Commission agrees they have a point, and it’s time to try a new way of putting communities back in the driving seat.



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES (C2)

Developed by the University of Exeter, the Connecting Communities (C2)^x programme is working to transform a number of deprived communities across the country, including parts of the South West.

With very small amounts of money – and sometimes with none at all – C2 works with local communities and local agencies to identify the people with drive, motivation and the respect of their community. It then creates a genuine partnership between these key local residents, local service providers such as GPs, the police and other key individuals and local organisations with a stake in creating change. This group learns about supporting fellow-residents in managing and leading projects, with regular community events to let everyone in the neighbourhood know what's happening and find out their priorities for change.

The partnership group acts on what it's heard, analysing what needs doing and how, and keeping their communities informed. Partnership meetings are held to review progress, check or start funding applications and encourage more involvement from the wider community, including volunteering. By this point, experience shows that statutory agencies are working much more closely with communities, funding is easier to attract and issues further down the original 'urgent' priority list can now be tackled too.

Eventually, sufficient funding is secured to employ one or more of the original group to make sure change continues. And, with the benefits now reaching growing numbers of local residents, they are also committed to stay involved to keep the change happening. It's such a simple concept, but time after time it has been shown to create profound and lasting change, owned and delivered by communities themselves.

Using this type of approach, the Fairness Commission is working with Plymouth City Council to look at transforming the way decisions that affect communities are made. This is the type of thinking that we want to see adopted by those who currently have the power to decide - giving that power back to those who live with the consequences of these decisions. Not only is it an approach with a proven track-record but, in the longer term, it's one which is likely to reduce the need for already-stretched public services and public sector budgets. The C2 programme has been implemented in Barne Barton since July 2013, and the learning from this has fed into the development of the Commission's recommendations.

Whether the current C2 programme is used in the long term, or another community-led system is put in place, the end goal is the devolution of decision making to communities themselves.

More information about the C2 programme can be found at www.plymouthfairnesscommission.co.uk

C2 – A BEACON IN FALMOUTH

The Beacon Estate in Cornwall ranks among the 10% most deprived wards in the country. In 1995 a third of its households lived in poverty and it had the highest percentage of children living in families with no wage earner. With over half its homes lacking central heating, the estate also had high numbers of children suffering from asthma and other respiratory diseases.

In a climate of mistrust between the police and the community, the police only ventured in to the Beacon when they had to. Violent crime, drug dealing and intimidation were rife. Four-year olds were stoning each other, while their mothers were violently fighting each other even on school premises. The Council, too, had all but given up. 'There was no sense it could be improved', the Council's housing officer said at the time. Beacon was essentially a community in despair.

In 1995, two health visitors to the Estate, overwhelmed by the 'bottomless pit of need' of their caseloads, decided enough was enough. They decided to tackle the underlying factors causing the Beacon's residents' 'hopelessness'. They created a twin-track approach. On one hand, they developed leadership amongst residents and, on the other, they set about re-engaging the public agencies. The police, Carrick District Council housing (CDC) and a local headmaster agreed to support and listen to residents' concerns.

Using their relationships with local families, these two health visitors brought together a core group of residents with the motivation and commitment to engage fellow residents. Soon, the first tenants' and residents' association was born. At a public meeting, police, local authority and education, listened first hand to 120 Beacon residents. And that's when everything changed. That evening, by consensus, it was decided to form the resident-led Beacon Community Regeneration Partnership (BCRP) to apply for Government funding to improve the housing stock.

BCRP were soon awarded £1.2 million to which CDC added another £1 million and handed over decision-making powers to spend £2.2million to BCRP. After decades of neglect, over 1000 properties were improved which transformed the look of the estate.

The mood in the Beacon altered and community, self-organised activities sprung up; a skateboard park, luncheon clubs, a parent and toddler group amongst many others. In 1999 BCRP won an NHS monetary award for health improvement and refurbished two empty shops – which became the new community resource centre and Beacon Care Centre offering a whole range of nurse-led care, including sexual health.

Just four years after the new approach began, levels of post-natal depression were down by 70%, the number of children on the Child Protection Register had dropped by 60%, and childhood asthma rates were cut in half. Unemployment fell by 71% and crime rates were halved. The SATS scores for 10 and 11 year old boys saw a 100% improvement. The teenage pregnancy rate dropped to zero.

Fifteen years later, BCRP is still resident led, crime is zero and new businesses continue to spring up, employing more local residents. Costs were, and are, incredibly low, given that most of the work is provided by existing frontline staff and residents giving their time for free.

The Beacon was a community that was given the chance to transform itself. The residents grabbed the opportunity with both hands and they've never looked back.

PROGRESS SINCE THE SUMMER OF LISTENING

“At least we live in a society that tries to help others who need it.”

- Participant from the Summer of Listening

Since the Summer of Listening, we have visited other Fairness Commissions and met with many specialists, community groups and charities. We've learned from experts and people delivering services across a wide range of issues; from investment to alcohol abuse, apprenticeships to entrepreneurs, from housing to homelessness and many, many more. Learning from councils as far apart as Sheffield and Islington, we've investigated why some initiatives work and others don't, and built a detailed understanding of which of these can make the biggest differences to Plymouth.

In this report, we have deliberately offered both high-level (usually national) and local recommendations for each of the eight themes. Plymouth has its own problems and its own potential. People in this city need to know about both the specific recommendations to solve challenges and, importantly, who has responsibility for implementing them. But there are some recommendations we think would make a difference to Plymouth which can only be delivered by central Government.

Other Fairness Commissions have come to the same conclusion. Our national recommendations are included in this report which we will send to the Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for Work and Pensions, other relevant Government Departments and the Local Government Association, asking for their response.

But achieving fundamental and sustainable change in Plymouth cannot be delivered solely by government, whether local or central. Making these recommendations a reality will need the combined effort and commitment of the city's private and public sectors and, not least, the people of Plymouth themselves. Having seen the real and lasting difference these recommendations have made to the economic and personal lives of people in other cities, we urge everyone in Plymouth to make them their own.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Principles of fairness

Local recommendation

1. That the Plymouth Fairness Commission's Principles of Fairness are agreed by all public bodies in Plymouth, with consideration of how they are included in decision making.

A new approach to leadership

Local Recommendations

2. That all public bodies in Plymouth learn about the Systems Leadership approach.
3. That a similar approach is part of the induction and training process for all staff in Plymouth's public sector.
4. That measurable objectives on implementing this type of approach are included in the performance objectives of senior staff in all Plymouth's public sector bodies.
5. That all bodies cited against recommendations in the Plymouth Fairness Commission's report agree a Systems Leadership approach to the way they implement them.

Strengthening Local Communities

Local Recommendations

6. That all public sector agencies in Plymouth review the way they currently engage with communities and agree an approach which ensures benefits are shared across communities.
7. That public sector agencies fully explore ways of engaging with communities of interest and identity in a way that works for the individual members of those communities.
8. That local councillors review their current ways of working as elected representatives of local communities.

9. That an external, independent civil society expert undertakes a critical review of Plymouth's voluntary and community sector and provides recommendations to strengthen it.
10. The urgent resolution of issues preventing the provision of professional indemnity insurance is needed to widen the availability of free specialist legal advice.

Individual and Family Wellbeing

National Recommendations

11. That a fair, needs based and long-term funding settlement for local government and other sectors should be urgently developed by central Government.
12. That Plymouth City Council's current grant allocation for public health is urgently reviewed by the Department for Health.
13. That the National Institute for Clinical Excellence's recommendation of a national minimum price per unit of alcohol is implemented.
14. That the Local Government Associations proposals for reforming the current licensing system for alcohol is implemented to limit 24-hour licensing in areas where alcohol causes harm.
15. That the current provision of universal free school meals to Year 1 and 2 pupils in infant schools due to come into effect in September 2014, be extended to all primary school children.
16. That the Department for Work and Pensions urgently addresses the delays in benefit payments when individual circumstances change, and the inappropriate use of benefit sanctions.

Local Recommendations

17. That all parts of the public sector jointly quantify Plymouth's 'Missing Millions' to make the case to Government for fairer funding for the city.

18. That a review of primary care provision across Plymouth is undertaken to ensure equitable access to primary care based on identified local needs.
19. The development of an agreed comprehensive response to Plymouth's mental health needs, and the publication of resourced commissioning plans.
20. That a joint review is completed to agree appropriate crisis responses for those presenting with a mental health need.
21. The development, resourcing and implementation of an evidence-based and coordinated approach to reduce the sale of cheap vodka and 'super strength' beer and cider, as per Plymouth's Strategic Alcohol Plan.
22. That confirmation is given that systems and funding to deliver the Commissioning Plan for the Plymouth Domestic Abuse Partnership 2012-2019 will be adequate and sufficiently resourced to meet the scale of the problem.
23. That cross-sector funding for Domestic Abuse services is protected and, where appropriate, increased to ensure sufficient services and support to meet rising demand.
24. That all primary school children in Plymouth are offered a free school meal.
25. That a pilot is undertaken to assess the potential take-up, costs and benefits of providing a free daily meal to disadvantaged pupils outside term-time.
26. That all schools providing meals in Plymouth should meet the National School Food Standards.
27. That Plymouth City Council's Public Health remit on healthy weight be expanded to include food poverty, with responsibility for co-ordinating food poverty initiatives across the city.
28. That Plymouth City Council amend its spatial planning policy to enable the restriction of fast food outlets within 400 metres or less from a school, youth facility or park.
29. That Plymouth City Council work with the organisers of Plymouth's main events, such as the Fireworks Championships, to reduce the provision of low nutritional value food and improve the food offer.
30. That current food initiatives are better coordinated to ensure they reach Plymouth's food deserts.

Young People and Young Adults

National recommendation

31. That the Department for Education takes active steps to ensure collaboration and sharing best practice is demonstrated by new types of schools, e.g. academies through formal policy and practice.

Local Recommendations

32. That extending the implementation of the Plymouth Primary Teaching School Alliance's collaborative model to Plymouth's secondary schools is made a priority.
33. That a specific review is held to understand and address the factors that prevent young people taking up apprenticeships, and concrete steps agreed to address them.
34. That a 'Virtual Sixth Form' is developed, providing city-wide timetable of courses available from Plymouth's education institutions is made available online to support 16 – 18 year olds.
35. That a consistent set of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) protocols, covering all providers is developed for young people choosing their post-16 options.
36. That all primary and secondary schools develop an alumni programme.
37. That all Plymouth's secondary schools and other learning institutions develop relationships with local and regional employers to encourage presentations, workshops and placements and help pupils become 'work ready'.
38. That a formal system is brokered linking schools and businesses so all young people have fair access to internships, work placements and youth enterprise schemes.
39. That a 'Positive Youth' approach to the commissioning of services for young people in the city is developed.
40. That every young person in the city should be able to access free recreational and cultural activities within one bus ride.
41. That the touchpoints of contact for Plymouth's young carers are identified and actively targeted to ensure more young carers contact and benefit from Youth Services.

Discrimination

Local Recommendation

- 42. That organisations from all sectors in the city generate leadership on tackling discrimination in all its forms, against specific actions.

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Escalating Cost of Living

National Recommendations

- 43. That the Government leads in encouraging employers to pay the recommended Living Wage and requires all Government Departments to pay their employees at this level, as a minimum.
- 44. That the Local Government Association's demands for changes to the existing planning and licensing laws in relation to new betting premises are actioned.

Local Recommendations

- 45. That all public sector bodies in Plymouth should commit to pay their staff, and those of the employees of agencies that work for them, the Living Wage.
- 46. That Plymouth City Council and other public sector agencies engage with subcontractors to ensure that they in turn pay 100% of their workers a Living Wage within two years.
- 47. That all private sector employers in Plymouth aim to implement the Living Wage for all their employees to ensure Plymouth becomes a Living Wage City across all sectors.
- 48. That an annual 'Fair Pay in Plymouth' report is published in the Plymouth Herald, including an explanation of executive pay, with top to median pay ratios and all taxable earnings.
- 49. That the use of zero hours contracts across the city should be monitored annually.
- 50. That exclusive zero hours contracts are not advertised by job centres or recruitment agencies in Plymouth.

- 51. That all public sector agencies review their current use of subcontractors and commissioned services that use exclusive zero hours contracts and pledge to commission only from services that do not restrict their employees to exclusive zero hours contracts.
- 52. That Plymouth City Council demonstrates it is maximising its planning restrictions, within the current legal framework, to control the number of betting shops, fixed odds betting terminals and payday lenders in the city.
- 53. That the Plymouth universities partner with schools and youth organisations to provide peer mentoring to train young people to become confident in budgeting and managing money.
- 54. That Plymouth City Council works with partners to develop robust visible campaigns against the use of payday loans and illegal loan sharks.
- 55. That Plymouth City Council, housing associations and other agencies work together to consolidate customers' debts, offer payment plans and signpost to expert sources of help and advice.
- 56. That every point of access with public agencies should provide clear and accessible links to specialist debt advice, benefit maximisation and sources of affordable credit, readily and prominently on their websites.
- 57. That Plymouth credit unions and their partners take greater responsibility for ensuring that they offer a broad range of services that benefit the city, against a number of specific steps. If this is unachievable, Plymouth City Council should step in to take action.
- 58. That a baseline of current need for, and availability of, affordable credit is developed to ensure city-wide access and availability to individuals and enterprises.
- 59. That an annual pre-Christmas campaign is held which brings together debt and money advice services, banks, trade unions, credit unions and relevant Council departments to raise awareness of their services and provide opportunities for action.
- 60. The development of an annual, city-wide 'Fair Money' awards dinner, sponsored by the large high-street banks, with award categories against which the people of Plymouth can vote.

Strengthening the Local Economy

National Recommendations

61. That the Department for Transport and the Treasury review funding allocations in the UK with a view to creating more equitable funding in the South West.
62. That the Department of Transport and the Treasury urgently address Plymouth's need for a fast and resilient rail line to connecting the South West to the rest of the UK.
70. That a thorough review of the current Sell2Plymouth portal and associated procurement systems of public sector agencies is completed, and recommendations made for changes to ensure there is an efficient link-up of public sector commissioners with private sector suppliers.
71. That the Growth Board reviews the way in which Micro businesses and SMEs contribute to governance, consultations and decisions, and makes recommendations to deliver greater transparency in their involvement and engagement.

Local Recommendations

63. That a 'Buy Local, Give Local' trademark scheme is developed for local traders, producers, public bodies and the voluntary sector to help customers and producers identify local providers.
64. That Plymouth City Council should review all the charitable trusts for which it is a corporate trustee and explore methods of amalgamating them and transferring the management of their assets to a Plymouth community-based charity.
65. That all public sector and all large private organisations in Plymouth develop a social value/sustainability statement with clear social value outcomes and measures.
66. That all public sector agencies fully explore the steps they could take towards meeting best practice, beyond the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, to ensure the inclusion of social value in all contracts for goods and services.
67. That the City Deal clarifies both how it will deliver social value and how this delivery will be measured and evaluated.
68. That baseline data on current public spending with local businesses is established, to enable public bodies in Plymouth to create clear targets for their spending with local businesses, and report on them as part of their annual reporting mechanisms.
69. That work is undertaken with the South West Investors Group and other community finance organisations to increase the amount of capital available for microfinance and small business lending in Plymouth.

Housing

National Recommendations

72. That a National Register of Landlords is established.
73. That local Councils are given the ability to issue fixed penalty notices both to reduce enforcement costs and allow prompt action for breaches of legislation.
74. That new standards for housing are developed to make it easier for both landlords and tenants to know if standards are being met.
75. That the currently expensive, complex and bureaucratic Compulsory Purchase legislation available to councils should be simplified, as recommended by the Local Government Association.

Local Recommendations

76. That Plymouth City Council develops a comprehensive, and resourced, response to raising standards in the private rented housing sector.
77. That Plymouth undertakes a pilot to investigate the viability of a voluntary licensing and accreditation scheme for private sector landlords.
78. That the possibility of property-specific penalties for non-compliant Private Rented Sector homes is investigated, including whether non-compliant PRS homes could be earmarked as “not Housing Benefit eligible”.
79. That a comprehensive, measured and monitored Empty Homes Strategy for Plymouth is consulted upon, recommendations provided and action taken.
80. That a virtual Plymouth Private Tenants Forum is created, advising private tenants of their rights, offering an online space to exchange experiences, publicise consultations and offer contact details on further public sources of support.
81. That a full examination is carried out into the coverage of specialist housing provision in Plymouth, comparing what is available against known demographics of groups in need and including a full gap analysis.

The Implications of an Ageing Population

Local Recommendations

82. That an ‘All Ages City’ Taskforce is created to co-ordinate both the social and non-social care aspects of Plymouth living for older people, as part of the Plymouth Plan process.
83. That the Plymouth Joint Dementia Strategy is given the highest priority to ensure its recommendations are actively delivered across the city.
84. As part of this strategy, that additional consideration be given to ensure that people with dementia who require, and can demonstrate they meet the eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply for the blue badge scheme using the discretionary powers of the Local Authority.
85. That a pack signposting sources of dementia support, information and advice is made freely available in all primary care settings and provided for dementia patients and their carers.

*Dame Suzi Leather
Chair, Plymouth Fairness Commission*



THE PRINCIPLES OF FAIRNESS

“We should encourage people to look at minority groups as people who are vulnerable. It is difficult to get people to sympathise with them and this does need to be encouraged.”

- Participant from the Summer of Listening

These are the principles agreed by the Fairness Commission. They are based on the underlying principles that Plymouth should commit to fairness in what it does, how it does it and who gets what:

- People should be able to access opportunity whatever their circumstances.
- The city should give priority to those in greatest need when it allocates resources.
- Things that make the biggest difference to people's lives should get priority when deciding where resources go.
- The way things are done in the city matters just as much as what is done.
- Unfairness which takes time to remove needs policies for the long term.
- Preventing inequalities is more effective than trying to eliminate them.
- Services should be provided 'with' people, not 'for' them.
- The needs of future and current generations should be balanced when making decisions.

Local Recommendation

1. We recommend that these principles are agreed by all public bodies in Plymouth and that they consider formal ways to include them as part of their decision making process and practice.



A NEW APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

While 'fairness' can mean many things to different people, there is generally a clearer consensus about what 'leadership' involves. The ability of an individual or organisation to take the tough, unpopular decisions and implement them, for example, is commonly cited by politicians keen to show they can get things done.

Yet this type of 'doing to' decision making is neither inclusive nor collaborative. It inevitably involves a partial perspective, silo working structures and the lack of involvement of those affected.

In Plymouth, we know that traditional ways of managing change haven't always delivered better, more sustainable, results for residents. Because decisions are generally taken by a specific body, they actively inhibit collaborative ways of working, the ability to pool resources and build relationships. Risks are less likely to be taken, the views of those affected are not always heard and a culture of innovation isn't supported. The status quo – including its unfairness – is perpetuated.

We believe there needs to be a fundamental change in the way that decisions are made by Plymouth's leaders to ensure fairness is an integral part of that process.

Most of our recommendations will need a joined-up approach between agencies, with many partners working together in new ways, building trust and working relationships around a common goal. One such approach is called 'Systems Leadership'^{xi}.

Local Recommendations

1. We recommend that the leaders of all public sector bodies in Plymouth learn about and act as internal champions of the Systems Leadership approach to address key cross cutting issues of inequality and unfairness across Plymouth.
2. That this approach is embedded within public sector bodies as part of their induction and ongoing training.
3. We recommend that, as a minimum, the objectives of Directors, Chief Executives and Senior Management Teams of Plymouth public sector bodies should include measurable objectives sympathetic to the Systems Leadership approach

Supporting leadership in communities

It's relatively straightforward for staff to manage change in a predictable environment – to 'do things' to help a group of people. What's harder is helping the community itself to organise and mobilise to deliver lasting change itself, particularly in a changing, uncertain environment.

Harnessing the lessons from decades of social activism, 'Systems Leadership' uses the power of a community of interest to work together to get results. The strategy starts with a few identified 'leaders' in a community, trained to mobilise others with the same values, be accountable to each other and all work to a common goal. Time after time, this model shows that as the human resources involved in delivering this change go up, the financial costs involved in change go down.

Systems Leadership works because it taps into people's values and beliefs – it's an approach, not a process. When people share a sense of purpose and goals they hold themselves and each other to account and manage disagreements themselves. They understand the challenges and are more likely to actively participate in the system. Because they're in control, they can take the initiative when things change and challenges occur – they are better able to act on situations, rather than just being passive observers.

against any performance indicators relating to inequalities and unfairness. These should include how effectively Systems Leadership is working across agencies.

Key agencies in delivery: All public sector bodies

Proposed timeline: For performance indicators and objectives used from 2015 onwards

4. We recommend that agencies actively consider and apply a Systems Leadership approach to the way they agree and deliver the recommendations in the Plymouth Fairness Commission's report.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

“Change is forced and not community led. Because they feel ‘it’s going to happen anyway’, people are less likely to take ownership of change and participate.”

- A participant from the Summer of Listening



Over the Summer of Listening, a general theme emerged of residents feeling 'done to' and ignored. A survey held in 2012 showed that on average, only 19% of the city's population felt they could influence decisions^{xii}.

Again, these levels varied significantly between the least and most affluent neighbourhoods; the lowest score, 9%, was found in Ham. There was a sense of cynicism from many that, while frequent consultations were held, the end results didn't reflect what people wanted.

Helping communities shape their future

The Fairness Commission recognises that a 'done to' approach inhibits growth in communities, makes people feel that they have little real say and no power. It also prevents innovative solutions to many of the problems facing our most vulnerable communities. While driven by the best motivation, agencies in Plymouth need to recognise that this approach is itself a problem which needs to be solved.

At the moment, work is undertaken on a 'hierarchical' basis. The chain starts with people at the top of public sector organisations and moves down through different parts of these organisations, with communities themselves tending to be at the bottom of the chain. Instead of this top-down hierarchical model, we recommend an approach which puts communities and community-led initiatives at the centre of development, with public agencies acting in support, rather than controlling.

Although it takes time and commitment to create a fundamental culture change, both for those who currently have power and those who do not, little will be achieved until the city changes its approach to how it works with communities. The C2 programme, covered earlier in this report, has already provided learning that has shaped our recommendations.

Handing back power

While there is some good work being undertaken in Plymouth in support of community development, approaches to it are inconsistent, particularly within and across agencies apparently working for the same outcome. They often show too limited or too little genuine community involvement, are short term and can stop communities from developing themselves. Current work can also be limited by official geographical boundaries such as electoral wards or housing estates. We believe that little will alter until we change the city's approach to working with and within communities.

Communities exist outside and between these formal, often artificial, boundaries and limiting them risks failing to galvanize wider communities for greater impact and scale. The type of approaches offered by C2 and Systems Leadership provide a significant opportunity for learning new ways to deliver community-led services.

Local Recommendations

1. We recommend that all public sector agencies undertake a review of their current approach and processes for engaging with, and listening to, communities and agree a shared approach and individual responsibilities to ensure all communities benefit.
2. We recommend that agencies fully explore different ways of engaging with communities of geography to include communities of interest and identity in a way that works for the individual members of those communities.
3. We recommend that local councillors review their roles, against recommendations 1 and 2, as elected local leaders within local communities.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth City Council, New Devon and Cornwall Clinical Commissioning Group, Devon and Cornwall Police, Plymouth Community Healthcare, housing associations, voluntary and community sector with input from the C2 programme

Proposed timeline: August 2015

A vibrant voluntary sector

There is a great deal of powerful work being done by the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the city, but it is operating in the face of some unusual challenges.

Historically, Plymouth's VCS is much younger than that of most other cities. While Plymouth Guild and a number of small local organisations have a relatively long history, the numbers of organisations receiving statutory funding appears to have been significantly lower than many other parts of England. While the regeneration funding of the 1990s provided a spur for VCS growth, this wasn't accompanied by growth in the infrastructure needed for a thriving and joined up Third Sector. Since the Plymouth Community Partnership of the 1990s collapsed in 2008, this infrastructure gap has been addressed in a piecemeal way.

Today, Plymouth's VCS remains fragmented and lacks co-ordination. The same mistakes continue to be made because the same, unsuccessful way of resolving problems is continually attempted, despite its proven inefficacy. Standards of governance are inconsistent and many public sector procurers do not use Plymouth's VCS as much as they could due to a perceived lack of expertise in providing the kinds of services they need to commission. In turn, many in the city's VCS are frustrated by the unfairness in the current servant/master relationship between themselves and public sector bodies. Relationships between many organisations in the sector, and between the sector and public commissioners, are fundamentally weak and damaged by a 'Them and Us' perspective.

Without strong overarching support, these organisations lack the ability to resolve these relationships, make economies of scale, prevent duplication or grow in a way that meets the increasing need of Plymouth's residents. The issues affecting both Plymouth's VCS, the relationship between the city's Third Sector and its public sector and the lack of supporting infrastructure are long standing. They must be tackled urgently or Plymouth's VCS will continue punching below its weight in terms of both impact and volume of commissioned services.

Given the critical role that civil society has in addressing issues of unfairness and inequality across the city, the Fairness Commission believes this is an issue that must be tackled urgently.

Local Recommendation

1. We recommend that an external, independent civil society expert is commissioned to undertake a critical review of Plymouth's VCS and provide recommendations to strengthen it, including:
 - ▶ Analyse the present and potential scope for collaborative relationships and shared responsibility within and across Plymouth's VCS and public sector bodies.
 - ▶ Identify the factors which have created problems in relationships in and between Plymouth's VCS and make recommendations on how to avoid these in the future, including arbitration where necessary.
 - ▶ Provide recommendations for how Plymouth's VCS can more effectively co-ordinate and expand opportunities for volunteering in the city.

Key agencies in delivery: Public sector agencies and voluntary and community sector agencies

Proposed timeline: Recommendations delivered by July 2015



Helping communities know their rights

Even taking into account the severe reduction in free legal advice available to people since cuts in Legal Aid and public legal services, Plymouth's population is under-served for a city of its size and level of need. Charities such as Shelter, Citizen's Advice and Plymouth Access to Housing (P.A.T.H) along with Plymouth City Council's Housing and Tenancy services are already overwhelmed by demand.

Local Recommendation

1. The Fairness Commission recommends that steps be taken, as a matter of urgency, to resolve the issue of professional indemnity insurance which currently limits the availability of specialist legal advice on offer via the existing collaboration between Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau, Advice Plymouth and Plymouth University Law School, aimed at developing the capacity for legal advice in Plymouth.

Key agencies in delivery: University of Plymouth Law School, Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau and Advice Plymouth

Proposed timeline: May 2015

Legal advice for local people

During term-time, London Southbank University's Law Department runs a Legal Advice Clinic for its local community. The University provides professional indemnity insurance for the Clinic, which offers:

- ▶ A drop-in clinic, staffed by 2nd and 3rd year law student volunteers, working in pairs and supervised by university-employed practicing solicitors
- ▶ An evening clinic, run by local solicitors and shadowed by volunteer law students, providing specialist legal advice in family, housing and employment
- ▶ Basic information on any legal topic, generalist advice on social welfare law including housing, family, employment, welfare benefits and debt
- ▶ Signposting and referral to local advice agencies and specialist sources of help where they exist
- ▶ Referral to Legal Advice Clinic evening clinic if appropriate.



INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY WELLBEING

The fundamental unfairness of Plymouth’s central funding

The Barnett Formula^{xiii}, designed as a short term measure to agree local funding in the late 1970’s, is widely recognised by local authorities across England as unfair. Councils in areas that are least disadvantaged consistently receive higher allocations than those that are most disadvantaged. The Local Government Association and many MPs have repeatedly called for this formula to be scrapped and replaced with fairer funding allocation. The Plymouth Fairness Commission agrees that the current formula is complex, difficult to understand and produces unfair allocations, and that Plymouth does not receive its fair share.

National Recommendation

1. The Plymouth Fairness Commission agrees with the Local Government Association that there is an urgent need to develop and deliver a fair, needs-based and long-term funding settlement for local government and other sectors including education, health and police, fire and rescue services.

Local Recommendation

1. We believe that the city should know the total amount of funding it is failing to receive because of unfair funding formulas from central Government. We recommend that all parts of the public sector jointly quantify Plymouth’s ‘Missing Millions’ to make the case to Government for fairer funding for the city.

Key agencies for delivery: All public sector bodies in Plymouth and local MPs

Proposed timeline: By September 2014

Public health funding – Plymouth’s case for change

Despite poorer-than-average public health indicators, Plymouth’s public health grant from central Government is nearly 25% below the target figure set by the Department of Health (DH) funding formula.

Plymouth’s baseline funding for public health in 2013/14 was £10.145 million; just £43 per head of the population. Had the DH formula been fully implemented, this would have been £55 per head. This is an underfunding of over £3 million.

The funding settlement for 2014/15 perpetuates this underfunding. The DH formula shows Plymouth’s allocation should now be £58 per head. Yet the DH caps any increases in funding at a maximum of 10%, meaning Plymouth’s 2014/15 funding will be only £12.276 million – £3 million short of our target figure. Furthermore, at just £47 per head, Plymouth’s funding gap from target will still be 19.6%.^{xiv}

When contrasted with our comparators from the Office of National Statistics, the extent of this funding gap becomes even starker.

Of the ten other comparator areas, only one will receive a settlement lower than Plymouth’s. Against Plymouth’s £47 per head, for example, Portsmouth will receive £77, Brighton and Hove £67, Bristol £66 and Southampton £62, and yet many of their public health indicators are much better than Plymouth’s. According to PHE’s health profile for Plymouth, only four of the 32 health outcome measures are significantly better than the national average; 18 are significantly worse^{xv}.

Outside our immediate comparators, funding decisions appear even more baffling. Kensington and Chelsea, for example, receives a settlement almost three times than of Plymouth and yet the majority of their health indicators are better than the English average and the scale of their public health challenges are significantly less than Plymouth’s.

The Commission believes this fundamental unfairness must be addressed now.

National Recommendation

1. The Plymouth Fairness Commission recommends that the grant allocation received by the Council to fund its public health work is reviewed as a matter of urgency by the Department of Health, and fully supports the ‘motion on notice’ unanimously agreed by Plymouth City Council in January 2014.



Primary healthcare – equity and access

“Although the doctors are good, the waiting list to get an appointment at my surgery is 3 weeks”

- A participant from The Summer of Listening

Health in Plymouth shows huge inequalities throughout the life course depending on where in the city you live. The difference between life expectancy in the most and least deprived areas of Plymouth, for example, is a staggering 12.6 years. Emergency hospital admissions in Plymouth are higher than the English average. Mortality rates from circulatory disease and cancers in the under-75's, while improving, are still significantly higher in more deprived wards.

These problems are compounded by the difficulties some communities have in getting access to primary healthcare services such as a GP. The NHS announcement of a freeze in investment for GP premises, made in February 2014, will create a further drag on investment in out-of-hospital provision^{xvi}.

The town with fewer resources than a village

Barne Barton isn't a great model of primary healthcare provision. It's home to over 5,000 people, yet it doesn't have a single GP or primary healthcare clinic. The nearest GP's surgery is a 45 minute uphill walk. Residents often call the out-of-hours service, rather than wait for a hard to get GP appointment. This situation hasn't developed overnight. The lack of primary healthcare in the area has been known about for over 20 years.

Local Recommendation

1. The Fairness Commission recommends a review of primary care provision across Plymouth to ensure equity of access to primary care based on identified local needs.

Key agencies in delivery: Local Area Team – NHS Commissioning, Plymouth City Council

Proposed timeline: November 2015



Mental health in Plymouth

“There is no proper infrastructure to address adult mental health. This unfairness is rife”

- A participant from the Summer of Listening

Poor levels of mental health are also taking their toll in the city. Figures in the Mental Health Needs Assessment 2012 estimate that around 30,000 residents suffer from a mental health disorder at any one time, but these levels are not consistent throughout the city^{xvii}. Levels of depression and mental illness in Plymouth's most deprived areas are very high at 23%, compared to just 1.8% in the least deprived. Levels of hospital admissions for self-harm in Plymouth are significantly above the English average, and the recovery rate for residents taking part in state-provided psychological therapies is significantly worse than both the South West and England average.

Mental health has historically been the preserve of the health service, yet it often exists as part of another crisis, such as homelessness, alcoholism, debt, job loss or relationship breakdown. Given the lack of primary health care provision in wards such as Barne Barton, it's clear that by the time people suffering poor mental health come to the attention of the health service, their condition is more likely to have become acute. Provision at this stage is an issue. One worrying sign of this is the way police cells are inappropriately used as a place of safety for people that have been identified as having a mental health need. Both Devon and Cornwall Police and mental health agencies tell us this is inappropriate and puts further stress on already vulnerable people.

We have heard about thresholds for diagnosis that are severely limiting many people's ability to access mental health support, especially children or those with multiple and complex needs.

The Commission believes that the ratio of funds currently spent in Plymouth on acute mental health needs, as opposed to promotion, prevention and early intervention, is disproportionate and so relatively ineffective in addressing Plymouth's mental health need. There are many examples of how targeted interventions in schools and in other community settings can address early signs of mental distress, such as anxiety and eating disorders.

Local Recommendations

1. The Fairness Commission recommends that a comprehensive and holistic response to Plymouth's mental health needs, including those of children and young people, is developed and agreed by all agencies, and that resourced commissioning plans are published to show how services and support will be delivered.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth Health and Wellbeing Board.

Proposed timeline: September 2015

2. We recommend that Plymouth's comprehensive response to mental health ensures a significant redirection of cross-sector resources for evidence-based early intervention, prevention and promotion programmes for mental health. This should specifically include children, young people and those with multiple and complex needs, with targets set for how redirected resources will be used. If insufficient expertise and/ or modelling tools exist locally to support this shift towards prevention then external support should be used.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth Health and Wellbeing Board

Proposed timeline: Annual year-on-year progress towards target to be reported by the Health and Wellbeing Board from 2015 onwards

3. We recommend that a joint review be completed to agree what crisis response is appropriate for anyone presenting with a mental health need. This should include those who may require a place of safety while a mental health assessment is undertaken and, where appropriate, follow up or after care is provided.

Key agencies in delivery: NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, Devon and Cornwall Police, Plymouth Community Healthcare and Plymouth City Council

Proposed timeline: Review to be completed by October 2014. Recommendations to be agreed by Health and Wellbeing Board by December 2014 and implemented by April 2015

Minimising the harm of alcohol

Many port cities with poor employment prospects have a particularly destructive relationship with alcohol, but the impact of alcohol abuse in Plymouth is exceptional even by these standards. Alcohol plays a significant role in public order offences and Plymouth has the highest rate of such offences in the entire country.

There is also a clear link between alcohol abuse and levels of violent crime, and in Devon and Cornwall last year there were over 20,000 recorded violence offences – the highest level from comparable police forces including Greater Manchester, Merseyside and the West Midlands. Plymouth also has one of the highest rates of Night Time Economy Violence in the South West.^{xxix}

Figures from the Devon and Cornwall Police Commissioner show that the total cost for dealing with alcohol related crime in the region is over £366 million a year. To put this in context, that is £500 for every household in Devon and Cornwall, every year.

Research shows there are over 2,500 crimes in the city linked to alcohol annually – and these are just those that are recorded. Alcohol is also responsible for nearly 7,000 hospital admissions and is a factor in over 40% of domestic violence incidents. Overall, the cost of alcohol related harm in the city every year is estimated at £80 million^{xx}.

People in the most deprived parts of Plymouth are twice as likely to be admitted to hospital because of alcohol as those in the least. Most significant, perhaps, is the impact of alcohol drinking by parents on Plymouth's children; it's estimated up to 6,500 children are affected by parental drinking every year and the effects can be extremely damaging. These children often develop coping mechanisms but, as a report by The Children's Commissioner points out, coping is not the same as resilience^{xxi}. The extent of this damage is difficult to cost or quantify. These children's coping strategies can include emotional withdrawal, anger and aggression or feeling it is their responsibility to safeguard their parents. Parental drinking profoundly disadvantages these young people in their relationships with teachers and other authority figures, impairs their interaction with others and damages their development.

National Recommendations

1. The Plymouth Fairness Commission supports the National Institute for Clinical Excellence's^{xxii} guidance that raising the unit price of alcohol is the most effective way of reducing its damaging impact. Accordingly, we recommend a national minimum price per unit of alcohol.

2. The Commission believes that 24 hour licensing should be banned and regrets that Plymouth does not have the power to do this unilaterally. We therefore support the Local Government Association's proposals for full reform of the licensing system ('Open for Business: Rewiring Licensing') which sets out the need for a system which is relevant, simple, cost neutral, risk-based and can address the issues of concern to local residents and businesses^{xxiii}. The Commission fully supports any change in licensing law that provides greater powers to enable local areas to limit the opening of late-night pubs, clubs and off licences in areas where alcohol-related health problems are rife.

Local Recommendation

Alcohol abuse harms families across Plymouth.

The sale of cheap vodka and 'super strength' beer and cider exacerbates the significant impact of alcohol abuse in Plymouth, from young adults 'pre-loading' before going into pubs and clubs in the evening to links with more extreme violence and anti-social behaviour in the city. Police forces in areas such as Ipswich have had success working with the Council, local retailers and supermarkets in a voluntary scheme to reduce the prevalence and ease with which this kind of alcohol can be bought.

1. The Commission recommends that an evidence-based and coordinated approach to reducing the retailing of cheap vodka and 'super strength' beer and cider as stated in the Strategic Alcohol Plan for Plymouth 2013-18 and being implemented in Ipswich, is developed and resourced (Action 5.8 of the Plan)^{xxv}.

Key agencies in delivery: Health and Wellbeing Board

Proposed timeline: December 2014





Domestic abuse and violence

40% of all women, and 5% of men murdered in the UK are killed by current or ex-partners. Nearly four fifths of incidents of domestic violence happen in front of children and a third begin when a woman is pregnant^{xxvi}. These figures are bad enough, but findings from the British Crime Survey and domestic violence charities suggest that only 40% of incidents are ever actually reported. Domestic violence is also a crime with a very long tail and the mental, as well as the physical, damage it inflicts can be long term. Women who have experienced domestic violence are five times more likely to kill themselves and 30% more likely to be admitted to hospital for self-harming.

Plymouth has a big problem with domestic abuse. It accounts for 27% of all violent crime in the city, compared to a national average of 16%^{xxvii}. In Plymouth, the highest levels of violence in the family also happen in the poorest parts of the city. According to Public Health, Plymouth, in 2012 these reached nearly 25% in the most disadvantaged areas, against less than 2% for the least. The Home Office estimates the cost of domestic violence and abuse in Plymouth is £49 million every year^{xxviii}.

Local Recommendations

1. The Plymouth Fairness Commission seeks confirmation that arrangements to deliver the Commissioning Plan for the Plymouth Domestic Abuse Partnership 2012-2019 will be able to meet the scale of the problem in the city. As such we recommend an urgent review of the following:
 - Joint commissioning arrangements and resource allocation.
 - Agreement and ownership of shared outcomes.
 - Effectiveness of current partnership arrangements.

Key agencies in delivery: Health and Wellbeing Board

Proposed timeline: December 2014

2. We recommend that steps are taken to ensure cross-sector funding for Domestic Abuse services continue to be protected and, where appropriate, increased to ensure sufficient services and support are in place to meet rising demand.

Key agencies in delivery: Health and Wellbeing Board

Proposed timeline: From June 2014 and ongoing, responding to further reductions in local authority budget made by national government

Proposed timeline: From October 2014 and ongoing

Better nutrition across the city

With growing levels of obesity, proven damage to human health caused by high levels of fat, transfats, salt and sugar in cheap fast food and ready-meals, and low levels of fruit and vegetable consumption, there is increasing evidence that those on the lowest incomes are suffering disproportionately from poor nutrition.

Free school meals

Evidence shows that providing children with a free, nutritious meal during the school day gives pupils clear health and educational advantages^{xxx}. There can, however, be peer stigma attached if these are only given to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Both encouraging economies of scale through greater take-up and maximising the pupil premium will help offset this cost.

Providing universal free school meals would also help tackle the problem of getting take up from families entitled to them. Low take-up of free meals reduces the pupil premium funds available to schools, as this additional money, to be spent on children from poorer backgrounds, is determined by how many pupils are claiming free meals^{xxx}. A 2013 Department for Education report estimated that 200,000 pupils are entitled to a free meal but fail to claim it, while a further 200,000 register but don't actually eat the meals. While most schools now use a cashless system, where money is paid in advance by parents (or by the local authority), a stigma still exists for some families around "free school dinners". One way to avoid this has been the approach adopted by Islington, which provides free meals for all. The fact that every family has to apply, regardless of their financial status, has proved a great social leveler in take up.

National Recommendation

1. The Fairness Commission recommends that, in line with the School Food Plan report for the Department of Education, the current provision of universal free school meals to Year 1 and 2 pupils in infant schools due to come into effect in September 2014, be extended to all primary school children.

Local Recommendations

1. The Commission recommends that, using the learning from other areas who have implemented this such as Islington, all primary school children in the city are offered a daily free school meal.
2. We recommend that a pilot to provide a free daily meal to disadvantaged pupils outside of term-time is trialled to assess potential take-up, costs and benefits.

3. We also recommend that all schools providing meals in Plymouth must meet the National School Food Standards^{xxxi}.

Key agencies in delivery: Health and Wellbeing Board, all Primary and Secondary Schools

Proposed timeline: September 2015

Many organisations, such as Food Plymouth and Sustainable Food Cities are already leading promising food initiatives in the city. However, there are still food deserts in parts of Plymouth and the Commission believes the benefits of these different initiatives could be extended if they were better co-ordinated.

Local Recommendations

4. We recommend that the role of the Office of the Director of Public Health within Plymouth City Council be expanded to include food poverty with responsibility for co-ordinating food poverty initiatives, including those providing healthy and affordable food in communities, across the city. We suggest the following activities are undertaken to support this:
 - ▶ 'Struggling to Eat Well' Surveys, aimed at identifying nutritionally vulnerable infants, and primary school age children and older people.
 - ▶ Extending the provision of meals cooked in schools to older people in the community.
 - ▶ Mapping food outlets to identify food retail deserts and encouraging the provision of food vans and local box schemes in these areas.
 - ▶ Development of Social Co-ops in disadvantaged areas which incorporate access to reduced cost food, advice on debt, food skills and eating well, such as the Community Shop Barnsley model.
 - ▶ Provision of Food Poverty Awareness Training (as Brighton and Hove Food Partnership does).
 - ▶ Coordinating and assisting in the set-up of food growing and buying co-operatives around schools and social housing providers.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth City Council and partners, including voluntary and community sector agencies

Proposed timeline: April 2015



There is a growing body of evidence that the proximity and prevalence of fast food outlets near to schools are a contributory factor in childhood obesity. They also undermine schools' efforts to encourage take up of school meals.

This can also perpetuate wider inequalities. In Plymouth, there are 1.5 more fast food outlets within 800 metres of schools in the most deprived areas, compared to the least^{xxxii}. Many councils are now actively seeking ways to halt the proliferation of fast food outlets in their high streets.

As a means of reducing health inequalities and responding to residents' concerns, Waltham Forest Council, for example, is consulting on banning fast food outlets within 400 metres of any of its schools and limiting those allowed to open in the town centre and shopping parades. Among the benefits they cite are increases in take up of nutritious schools meals and a reduction in litter and vermin on the area's high streets.



5. Following the example of Waltham Forest Council, the Fairness Commission recommends that Plymouth City Council amend its spatial planning policy to enable the restriction of fast food outlets within 400 metres or less from a school, youth facility or park.

Key agency in delivery: Plymouth City Council

Proposed timeline: April 2015

6. We recommend that Plymouth City Council work with the organisers of Plymouth's main events, such as the Fireworks Championships, to reduce the number of fast food outlets offering food of low nutritional value at public events and improve the food offer available.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth City Council, with public and private event organisers

Proposed timeline: July 2015



The food poverty epidemic

“We urge the Government to find creative, fair ways to enable all in this rich country to have enough money to be able to eat healthily. This work is urgent.”

- Professor Dowler, University of Warwick

Oxfam and Church Action on Poverty estimate that over half a million people in the UK are now reliant on food hand-outs^{xxxiii}. The recent published report by Warwick University for Defra, Food Aid Research Report, concludes that low incomes, unemployment and benefit delays have combined to triple the number of families relying on charities for basic food supplies. People are being forced to choose between paying bills and eating. Oxfam estimates that over 2 million people in the UK are already malnourished, with a further 3 million at risk of becoming so. In the sixth richest country in the world, GPs are reporting an alarming increase in child malnutrition^{xxxiv}.

Evidence from the Plymouth Foodbank shows the number of people affected by food poverty in the city is growing. In 2012, 5,900 people visited the Foodbank, in 2013 that grew to 7,400 and their estimate for 2014 is that 9,000 people will come to them for help. And these are just the figures from one local Foodbank.

Filling the growing food gap

It's not just the growing numbers that Maria Mills, Plymouth Foodbank's project manager, has noticed, but the types of people being referred and where those referrals are coming from. "Benefit delays when people's circumstances change are causing real problems", she reports, "the amount of time it takes to make the changes and give people their money is just too long. We're also seeing a rise in the number of people getting in-work benefits affected by food poverty. They're working, but their wages are too low to make ends meet."

And, since the abolition of Social Fund Crisis Loans by central government in April 2013, she's seen an increase in referrals from the Job Centre and the Emergency Welfare Centre.

"With no crisis loans available, it seems Foodbanks are increasingly regarded as a third arm of the state. Without the funding of course."

National Recommendation

1. That the Department for Work and Pensions urgently addresses the delays in benefit payments when notified of changes in individual circumstances and the inappropriate use of benefit sanctions.

Much more than just affordable food

When you're struggling to find money for the weekly shop, as growing numbers of people are, finding affordable food may just be one of the challenges facing you. In an ideal world, you could buy cheap, nutritious food, join a cookery class, enjoy a coffee, get expert debt advice and even help to hone your job skills, all under one roof. Since the opening of Community Shop in December 2013, that option is now a reality for low income families in Goldthorpe, Barnsley.

Billed as the first 'social supermarket', Community Shop buys surplus food from supermarkets – and every supermarket has surpluses – and sells it at discounted rates to its members.

500 low income families have been issued with membership cards which, as well as cheap and healthy food, give them access to all the advice and support services from Community Shop's 'Community Hub.' Supported by local supermarkets, it's currently the first pilot of a development with huge potential to help communities across the UK.

Local Recommendation

1. Many organisations, such as Food Plymouth and Sustainable Food Cities are already leading promising food initiatives in the city. However, the Commission believes the benefits of these different initiatives could be extended if they were better co-ordinated.

Key agencies in delivery: Health and Wellbeing Board with voluntary and community sector partners

Proposed timeline: August 2015



YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG ADULTS

It's a difficult time to be young in the UK. Escalating rents and transport costs, benefit changes and the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance create serious barriers to opportunity against a backdrop of high youth unemployment and the growth of insecure employment and zero-hours contracts. Young people in Plymouth's most deprived areas face even greater challenges from birth. 22% of children in the city overall live in poverty, against 16% of children in the South West as a whole, but this figure rises to over half of all children living in some areas of the North Prospect, Weston Mill, City Centre and Stonehouse areas^{xxxv}.

However, some of Plymouth's residents told us during the Summer of Listening, that standards of teaching in schools is high and evidence shows that much progress has already been made in the past decade to reduce the gap in attainment. In the face of other impacts of deprivation in many areas, Early Years attainment levels in Plymouth are improving and pupils exceeded the South West and English averages for expected levels of progress in maths. This is an encouraging trend, but we need to do more.

Closing the aspiration and achievement gap

The gap in educational achievement between different parts of the city is particularly marked; it starts from Early Years foundation and widens with each following year of education. In 2011, only 21.5% of Plymouth's over 16s were qualified to degree level or equivalent, significantly lower than the England average of 27.4%. Again, patterns of low educational achievement are highest in the city's most deprived wards. In Devonport, for example, the percentage of over 16s with no qualifications is around 27%, in Ham it is 34% and in Honicknowle it reaches 35%^{xxxvi}. However, the city's schools have been tackling educational under-achievement, particularly at primary level, with considerable effect.

The work of the Plymouth School Teaching Alliance has raised standards in professional development for teachers and school-to-school support. Levels of educational achievement, even in the most deprived areas, have improved in recent years. Our recommendations aim to encourage all parts of Plymouth's education sector to build on progress so far to further increase ownership, encourage ideas and commitment to deliver.

The city also has persistently higher levels of young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) than both the national and regional averages, with the highest levels found in the most deprived North West areas of the city. There can be few starker indicators of the combination of deprivation and a low aspiration culture, particularly given the many positive comments we heard from parents about the quality of education provision itself.

Young people over 16 may receive only partial advice about further education and careers from their places of learning, reducing their

subject choices and increasing the risk these choices will fail to meet the needs of local and regional businesses. We know many local business leaders are concerned about the general employability of young people entering the Plymouth jobs market.

National Recommendation

1. With the growing number of academies and other types of 'unique catchment' schools such as faith schools, we are concerned that collaboration which puts the common good of pupils at the centre may be diminishing. We recommend that the Department for Education takes active steps to ensure collaboration and sharing best practice is demonstrated by these new types of schools through formal policy and practice.

Local Recommendations

1. The Commission welcomes the move of Plymouth's secondary schools to work more closely together through the model already established by the Plymouth Teaching School Alliance. We recommend that this collaborative approach is made a priority. It also requires additional momentum to achieve consistent standards across secondary school teacher training, professional development and school-to-school support to tangibly improve standards of educational achievement for all Plymouth's pupils.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth Teaching School Alliance, with support from Plymouth City Council

Proposed timeline: Draft resourced plans and targets to be produced by December 2014

The Commission notes that the city continues to have vacant apprenticeships. We believe that schools, youth services and employers need to understand why.

2. As part of the Plymouth Skills Plan, we recommend that a specific review be undertaken with young people in the city to understand and address the factors that prevent young people taking up apprenticeships, and agree concrete steps to address them.

Key agencies for delivery: Plymouth City Council and Learning and Skills Partners

Proposed timeline: Review to be completed by October 2014, with plans to address the identified unfairness issues published by December 2014 for implementation to be completed by end of 2015.

3. The Commission recommends that the city-wide timetable of courses available from Plymouth's education institutions be completed and made available online to support 16 – 18 year olds, particularly addressing minority needs and skills shortages. This wider curriculum should complement the existing online tool which details the qualifications needed for a range of different careers.
4. Concurrently, a consistent set of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) protocols which covers all providers should be developed as a priority by the expanded Teaching School Alliance and be in place for young people choosing their post 16 options in 2015. These two recommendations should be used to ensure the creation of a 'Virtual Sixth Form' whereby young people can choose to attend courses at more than one education institution.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth Children and Young People's Partnership and education institutions in the city

Proposed timeline: September 2015

5. We recommend that all primary and secondary schools develop an alumni programme, identifying local pupils who have subsequently achieved in a variety of fields, and invite them to contribute to raising awareness of potential careers and aspirations among current pupils, such as FutureFirst^{xxxvii}.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth Teaching Schools Alliance

Proposed timeline: April 2015

6. We recommend that all Plymouth's secondary schools and other organisations working with young people and young adults be encouraged to form relationships with local and regional employers, in particular members of the Plymouth 1000 Club and other local micro and SMEs, to encourage presentations, workshops and placements to demonstrate the range of potential careers available to pupils, as well as the qualifications and softer skills they should aspire to in order to be 'work ready'.
7. That a formal system is brokered linking schools and businesses so all young people have fair access to internships, work placements and youth enterprise schemes. These should particularly involve micro businesses and SMEs and cover different sectors (cultural, care sector, engineering etc.). Students should be encouraged to set up their own enterprises.

Key agency in delivery: Employment Skills Board

Proposed timeline: Memorandums of Understanding to be created and signed by early 2015 and implemented from 2015



Improving access to activities for the young

Services and support for young people are under increasing pressure across the UK, while poor employment prospects for the young in many towns and cities remain entrenched. Low levels of participation in local and national elections are just one symptom of the way young people may feel they have no say or real power in influencing decisions which affect them.

During the Summer of Listening, every community we visited highlighted a lack of activities for young people and the lack of dedicated places for them to go. Interestingly however, many other respondents cited the amount of activities and events for families and young people in the city. We conclude that the issue here is not one of the provision of events and spaces for young people, but of their ability to access them.

Local Recommendations

1. We recommend that a 'Positive Youth'^{xxxxviii} approach to the commissioning of services for young people in the city is developed. This should encompass a range of settings to provide all young people, 'targeted' or not, with the support and opportunities they need to empower themselves, form relationships, build skills, exercise leadership, and help their communities.

The underlying approach of this should be assets based and include the following elements:

- ▶ Young people are viewed as a valued and respected asset to society;
- ▶ Policies and programs focus on the evolving developmental needs and responsibilities of young people, and involve them as partners rather than clients;
- ▶ Young people are provided with the opportunity to experiment in a safe environment and to develop positive social values and norms; and
- ▶ Young people are engaged in activities that promote self-understanding, self-worth, and a sense of belonging and resiliency.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth City Council, voluntary and community sector agencies, Plymouth universities and other partners

Proposed timeline: By December 2015

2. The Fairness Commission believes that every young person in the city should be able to access free recreational and cultural activities within one bus ride.

Key agencies for delivery: Plymouth City Council, bus companies, Devon & Cornwall Police, voluntary and community sector agencies, Plymouth Community Healthcare

Proposed timeline: December 2015

Lambeth – putting young people in the driving seat

Like most councils, Lambeth has been forced to make tough decisions about public funding for youth services. Unlike many of them, it decided it didn't know best. A year ago, they asked the young people who used these services, local partners and community members what they thought were the best ways to run many of the services previously provided by the council. The consensus was that these groups wanted a bigger say in how money was spent and services run.

So the idea of the Young Lambeth Cooperative was born. The YLC is a genuine alternative to how youth services are planned, commissioned and managed, because young people and their communities have a say in all these areas. Its members will commission the Council's youth service spend of £9 million, setting up and maintaining everything from youth clubs to activities in community centres.

Not only will these funds be spent on the priorities of service users themselves, but a core group of young members have been instrumental in developing everything from marketing materials to working with lawyers to develop YLC's constitution. 40% of YLC's members are between 11-19yrs and, although only just launched, membership so far is over 2,000.

The LYC is a refreshing model of how handing over decision-making can meet actual need, extend reach and save money.

Caring for Plymouth’s young carers

There are many forms of social exclusion. People can be socially excluded because of poverty, illness, disability and many other factors. Children and young people taking on demanding carer roles in their families are likely to experience particular and additional disadvantage, on top of other causes of exclusion. According to the charity Young Carers, for example, they are particularly vulnerable to isolation, poor health and reduced life chances, especially in being able to take up paid employment. According to the children’s charity Barnardo’s the average age of a young carer in the UK is 12. Plymouth City Council estimates there are around 840 carers under 16 in the city but, because they are a largely hidden population, actual figures are probably higher^{xxxix}. Only 200 of the city’s young carers are actually in contact with the relevant agencies.

“It’s selfish to go on to higher education when you’re looking after your Mum. That’s just thinking about yourself. Who would look after her if I went to college?”

- A young carer from the Summer of Listening

It’s widely recognised that, because most of their extra-curricular time is spent caring, these children do not generally benefit from after-class programmes which give pupils skills such as interview or CV preparation. Because so much of their ‘free’ time is taken up caring, they are also less likely to spend time with fellow-pupils or join clubs and access other services to help develop skills or work experience. They are also less likely to know what their further education options are, even if they might be in a position to take these up. The Young Carers service delivered in Plymouth provides high quality services to young carers in the city; it’s important that all children that need them are able to access these services.

Local Recommendation

There are a limited number of ‘touchpoints’ where young carers come into contact with those able to introduce them to Youth Services and, from there, to specialist provision given to young carers in the city. These touchpoints will include GPs, Adult Social Care services, schools and colleges. The Fairness Commission welcomes the work already undertaken to raise awareness among teachers to identify young carers in their classrooms but believes a more integrated programme across all touchpoints is both more likely to identify young carers not currently reached, and provide those soon to leave school with extra help to help them make the most of future opportunities.

1. Building on the work already being undertaken by the Learning and Skills Group, we recommend that the touchpoints of contact for young carers are identified and actively targeted to ensure more young carers contact Youth Services and benefit from their referrals and services, including:
 - ▶ Youth Services and Plymouth universities to co-ordinate a system of mentoring to provide one-to-one and group support to young carers, supporting them in developing CVs and identifying future career options.
 - ▶ Youth Services to contact local and regional employers to propose and develop a ‘career mentoring’ system to encourage short term and part-time work experience placements with those employers.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth Community Healthcare, Plymouth City Council and Plymouth universities, all education providers, Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust and NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group

Proposed timeline: February 2015



DISCRIMINATION

“Many individuals are the victim of hate crime, yet don’t report the incidences that occur for fear of not being believed, not taken seriously, and repeat victimisation.”

“I don’t feel it’s a very inclusive place sometimes for people who aren’t white or local basically. It seems like there is a lot of prejudice, compared to somewhere like London, towards minorities. I think it is anti-social behaviour because people can be a bit abusive or at least rude. It also means there’s less culture and diversity.”

“I’m disabled and have been discriminated against in getting employment. At school I was ostracised by my teachers and treated differently.”

- Participants from the Summer of Listening



During the Summer of Listening, the Fairness Commission heard just how wide discrimination is in Plymouth. We heard of young asylum seekers being shouted at by neighbours two or three times a day, discrimination of those living with HIV, and systematic discrimination on the basis of age, religion, gender, people with disabilities and sexual orientation.

The Fairness Commission heard first-hand how discrimination is practised on the streets and in all types of institutions and organisations in Plymouth. However, it also appears to be a serious problem that the city as a whole has yet to face up to, prioritise and resolve to tackle.

We believe that the culture of denial must change before action can be taken to eradicate exclusion, violence and discrimination in this city. Discrimination cuts across all the themes in this report, as it is experienced on top of other disadvantages and exacerbates the unfairness experienced in each.

Discrimination in all its forms (institutional, social, individual-level) across the 9 protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 and beyond (notably socio-economic) continues to have a significant impact on residents' lives. In order to make the city a fairer place to live and work, there needs to be a significant response.

Local Recommendation

- I. The Commission recommends that the city engage in a consolidated effort to generate leadership on tackling discrimination in all its forms in the city, with the following actions:
 - ▶ A city leadership workshop to develop a collective understanding of discrimination, its causes, and how to tackle it.
 - ▶ A high profile public event at which city leaders sign an agreement to commit actively to tackling all forms of discrimination. This should be accompanied by specific actions to which leaders are committing, and agreement to how and by whom they shall be measured. A high profile campaign should be developed to bring this initiative to the consciousness of the people of Plymouth.
 - ▶ Roll out of evidence based, age appropriate school based programmes to address discrimination across all early years, primary and secondary schools and further/higher education, such as the Roots of Empathy programme^{xi} and the Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes tool.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth universities, all education providers, Plymouth City Council, Plymouth NHS Hospitals Trust, NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, housing associations, Plymouth Community Healthcare, Devon and Cornwall Police, key partners and relevant voluntary and community sector support

Proposed timeline: By September 2015

Racism and abuse in Plymouth is hugely prevalent and massively under-reported. This is the undercurrent above which more frightening and life-changing physical attacks have occurred. Plymouth could definitely do more about this.”

Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support response to the Call for Evidence

ESCALATING COST OF LIVING

“The wages are very low down here so people often can’t afford the rent.”

- Participant from the Summer of Listening

As the recent interventions by 40 church leaders and a number of leading poverty charities show^{xii}, the impact of increases in the cost of living is getting worse. Energy bills have more than doubled since 2004 and food prices have risen by 44% since 2005. Yet the Office for Budget Responsibility warned last year that wages will not increase for several years to come. Add to this the impact of unemployment, underemployment, frozen public sector wages and the rise in zero hours contracts and it becomes clear why, according to the Public Accounts Committee, over 2 million people have been driven into the arms of payday lenders^{xiii}. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the South West is one of two regions in the country with the biggest increase in the number of households with below Minimum Income Standards (MIS). Not only is there a greater proportion of households falling below MIS, but the proportion of households with very low incomes has also increased dramatically.

Since 2011, the number of long-term benefit claimants in the city has risen dramatically^{xiii}. The city also has high rates of those unable to work due to long term sickness and disability. In Devonport, St Peter and the Waterfront and Ham and Honicknowle, for example, these figures are 27%, 23% and 22% respectively, against a national average of 13%.

A Living Wage for Plymouth

“Hard work is not working. We have a labour market that lacks pay and protection, with jobs offering precious little security and paltry wages that are insufficient to make ends meet.”

- Julia Unwin, Chief Executive, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Plymouth City Council’s ‘Child Poverty Matters’, published in 2013, highlighted the growth of in-work poverty in the city; in particular, the impact of welfare reforms on low income working families. While people on low incomes are used to being told that work is the route out of poverty, it’s a mantra which is not, unfortunately, borne out by the facts. Last year’s report by the New Policy Institute for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation showed that, for the first time, more working families are living in poverty in the UK than non-working ones^{xiv}.

Average incomes have fallen by 8% since 2008 and 6.7 million working families now live below the poverty line, an increase of half a million since 2011. Half of these families have an adult paid below the living wage, and their number grew from 4.6 million in 2011 to 5 million in 2012.

In work poverty among many groups in the UK is reaching alarming proportions. As well as cutting back on food and heating, people are having to make choices about the amount of time they can spend with their families, rather than working longer shifts or taking on another job. The Living Wage Commission’s 2014 interim report showed, for example, that employees on the Living Wage spent nearly twice as much time with their families than those on the National Minimum Wage.^{xiv}

Plymouth has been a relatively low wage economy for many years. Since 2008 it has lost 1,000 full time public sector jobs and gained 1,500 part time private sector jobs.

The Fairness Commission believes the city must tackle in-work poverty, caused by low wages and the imposition of exclusive zero hours contracts as a matter of urgency.

National Recommendation

1. That the Government takes the lead in encouraging employers to pay the recommended Living Wage (£7.65 an hour nationally / £8.80 an hour in London) and requires all Government Departments to pay their employees at this level, as a minimum, by October 2016.

Local Recommendations

We welcome and support the 'Child Poverty Matters' recommendation to promote the adoption of the Living Wage across both public and private sector employers.

1. We recommend that all public sector bodies in Plymouth should, like Plymouth City Council, commit to pay their staff the Living Wage, seek accreditation by the Living Wage Foundation and commit to provide a Living Wage for all employees of agencies that work for them.

Key agency in delivery: All public sector employers in Plymouth

Proposed timeline: Accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation by April 2015. A Living Wage for all employees of any agencies that it contracts with by April 2017

"As a values-based organisation, we believe in the Living Wage and know the difference it makes to people's lives. We have already implemented it for all our permanent staff. Now we're working with suppliers and the Students' Union to explore how we can extend the Living Wage to subcontractors and staff on temporary contracts.

Professor Cara Aitchison, Vice Chancellor, University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth

2. We recommend that Plymouth City Council and other public sector agencies engage with subcontractors to ensure that they in turn pay 100% of their workers a Living Wage within two years.

Key agencies in delivery: All public sector employers in Plymouth

Proposed timeline: By April 2016

3. We recommend that all private sector employers in Plymouth aim to implement the Living Wage for all their employees to ensure Plymouth becomes a Living Wage City across all sectors.

Key agencies in delivery: All private sector employers in Plymouth, assisted by the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and Plymouth Federation of Small Businesses

Proposed timeline: By 2018, but early adoption is to be welcomed and encouraged

We know that very large multiples of pay within an organisation are often perceived as unfair unless they are explained. This is particularly the case where some employees are paid less than the amount needed to meet the basic cost of living. We believe workers and customers in Plymouth should have information about the salaries paid by large public, private and charitable sector employees, and be able to identify organisations unwilling to provide this information.

4. We believe that information on the salary divide in the public, private and charitable sectors should be in the public domain. As such we recommend an annual 'Fair Pay in Plymouth' report be published in the Plymouth Herald to achieve transparency, including an explanation of executive pay, with top to median pay ratios and including all taxable earnings. Organisations unwilling to supply this data should be identified.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth Herald

Proposed timeline: September 2015



Zero hours contracts

“I know people who had to go to a food bank due to zero hours work.”

- Participant from The Summer of Listening

In August 2013, a report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development revealed that over a million people in the UK are employed on zero hours contracts^{xvi}. This sparked some soul searching in Plymouth, with a number of local employers, including Plymouth University, listed by The Herald as using these contracts.

While students at the University are reported as welcoming the flexibility of zero hours contracts, for many workers they can make an insecure employment situation much worse. The Commission was particularly concerned about the imposition of zero hours contracts which, as well as refusing to guarantee a set number of hours of work, are often used to bar staff from working for other employers, known as ‘exclusive’ contracts.

There is growing evidence that zero hours contracts contribute to in-work poverty^{xvii}, and the Commission awaits the publication of the review into their use by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills later this year.

The Commission believes that the city should be intolerant of the imposition of zero hours’ contracts for employees. We believe becoming a Living Wage City is incompatible with the use of such contracts for working adults.

Local Recommendations

1. We recommend that the use of zero hours contracts across the city should be monitored annually.
2. We recommend that exclusive zero hours contracts are not advertised by job centres or recruitment agencies in Plymouth.
3. We recommend that all public sector agencies review their current use of subcontractors and commissioned services that use exclusive zero hours contracts and pledge to commission only from services that do not restrict their employees to exclusive zero hours contracts.

Key agencies in delivery: All public sector employers, recruitment agencies, Department Of Work and Pensions (Job Centre)

Proposed timeline: December 2015

Debt - Halting the tide of payday lenders

Since 2008, austerity has provided payday lenders with fertile ground in which to grow. Falling incomes, benefit cuts and delays and rising food and energy prices have tipped growing numbers of people from credit to debit. The Office of Fair Trading reports that between 2008 and 2012, the value of the payday lending market grew from £900 million to £2.2 billion.^{xlviii}

Despite numerous promises by the payday lending industry, and regulation from the Financial Conduct Authority from April 2014, there is still no cap on the interest fees these companies can charge, or the fees defaulting customers have to pay. In 2013, the debt charity StepChange calculated the average amount owed to payday lenders was £1,657, far higher than the average client’s net monthly income.^{xlix}

Plymouth has a serious debt problem. According to Money Advice Devon and Cornwall, over 29% of adults in the city are over indebted – much higher than any other local authority area in the South West. The most vulnerable in our city are more likely to become indebted, be refused bank loans and be forced to seek funds from high cost payday lenders to make ends meet.

Reducing the reliance on payday lenders for the most financially vulnerable can only happen if there is greater provision of alternative sources of low cost lending. Our recommendations around debt can only be delivered in conjunction with our recommendations to develop these alternative forms of credit in the city.

National Recommendation

1. The Fairness Commission supports the Local Government Association’s demands for changes to the existing planning and licensing laws to take into account the views of residents and democratically elected councillors when considering applications for new betting premises.

Local Recommendations

We applaud the work of Plymouth City Council in banning payday loan adverts on billboards and bus shelters across the city and preventing access to their websites on Council-owned computers. We would like to see a marked reduction in the numbers of betting outlets and payday lenders and stricter controls on their geographic location across the city in relation to socio-economic demography.

We recommend that:

1. Plymouth City Council should demonstrate that it is maximising its planning restrictions, within the current legal framework, to control the number of betting shops, fixed odds betting terminals and payday lenders in the city.

Key agencies to deliver: Plymouth City Council

Proposed timeline: December 2014

The Commission recognises there are two sides to tackling the problems caused by high interest lenders. The first is the need to stop problems arising in the first place, through both better money management skill training in young people and the use of robust visible campaigns against payday loan companies.

2. We recommend that Plymouth universities and education providers partner with schools and youth organisations to provide student led peer mentoring, similar to CitizensUK Money Mentors Programme¹, to train young people to become confident in budgeting and managing money.

Key agency in delivery: Plymouth universities and education providers, Plymouth City Council, voluntary and community sector partners, schools.

Proposed timeline: July 2015

3. We recommend that Plymouth City Council work with partners to develop robust visible campaigns against the use of payday loans and illegal loan sharks.

Key agency in delivery: Plymouth City Council, with selected partners, including from the voluntary and charitable sectors

Proposed timeline: October 2014

People forced to use high cost payday lenders are more likely to be vulnerable to debt in other areas of their lives, including rent and debts to the council such as council tax.

4. The Fairness Commission recommends that Plymouth City Council, housing associations and other relevant agencies work together to consolidate customers debts and offer payment plans to help customers manage repayments as well as direct them to expert sources of help and advice.

Key agencies for delivery: Plymouth City Council, housing associations and other partners

Proposed timeline: September 2015

Debt is both a cause and effect of other vulnerabilities, such as poor nutrition, alcohol abuse, insecure housing and mental illness. We are pleased that, in recognition of the strong link between debt and mental illness, both mental health services and debt advisers undertake significant levels of joint working and signposting. The Commission believes that every public sector body should ensure information about where to seek help and access alternative provision should be much more widely available.

5. Every point of access that the public have with public agencies should provide clear and accessible links to specialist debt advice, benefit maximisation and sources of affordable credit such as Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau, Money Advice Plymouth and Christians Against Poverty more readily and prominently available on their websites.

Key agencies in delivery: All public sector agencies, housing associations and other partners

Proposed timeline: September 2014



Affordable credit

Another key factor in reducing the reliance on high cost lenders is the provision of alternative sources of credit. As the 2014 Church Urban Fund's report, 'Money Speaks Louder than Words' shows, the function of Credit Unions are often misunderstood by people who would otherwise support them with deposits. When congregations were made aware of the 'socially useful' function of Credit Unions, for example, the proportion of those willing to make deposits rose significantly. The run-down appearance of many credit unions and a perception of their lack of professionalism can also be barriers to attracting deposits.

Developing a vibrant Credit Union is partly dependent upon having a critical volume and a diverse socio-economic mix of savers to generate revenue. Deposits up to £10,000 are fully protected by the government's deposit protection scheme and represent a high social value return.

The Commission therefore supports the development of a robust, efficient, well marketed, accessible and effective Credit Union or Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in Plymouth, with outlets within easy reach of disadvantaged communities and credit deserts. We see a role for churches and other faith centres in providing venues for credit union outlets, particularly in areas of deprivation.

Local Recommendations

1. It is essential that alternative and affordable forms of credit are accessible to residents across Plymouth. The Fairness Commission believes that Plymouth credit unions and their partners must take greater responsibility for ensuring that they offer a broad range of services that benefit the city, including, but not limited to, the list below. If they do not wish to do this or are unable to prove they can by December 2014, Plymouth City Council should step in to take action.

- ▶ The Commission recommends that the following groups be actively encouraged to hold membership:
 - Employees of all large private and public organisations in Plymouth, providing payroll deductions to support this.
 - Tenants of Social Landlords.
 - Congregations of all churches in the city and other faiths.
 - In addition Plymouth City Council and other major

employers should hold non-member deposits in the credit union.

- ▶ Undertake a review of current services to identify areas where input from other sources, e.g. marketing support from students from further and higher education institutions, process inputs from Credit Unions, could help raise the profile of credit unions and maximise their effectiveness.
- ▶ Implement a high profile campaign in partnership with the Plymouth Herald and other media outlets to explain the function of credit unions, and to attract additional depositors.
- ▶ Create a Plymouth-wide Christmas Club as an alternative to current high cost online providers. The Plymouth Christmas Club could work with local banks to accept deposits and seek discounts/vouchers from local retailers if savers spend with them.
- ▶ Ensure widespread availability of products such as jam jar accounts, white goods and furnishing schemes, contents and income protection insurance and new savings accounts.
- ▶ In areas identified as having high levels of financial exclusion, credit unions must work with local partners to enable credit unions to operate.
- ▶ We recommend that all schools should invite credit unions to run Junior Savers Club.
- ▶ We recommend a drive to encourage members of business groups such as the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, Lions, Federation of Small Businesses and others to volunteer as board members of credit unions.

Key agencies to deliver: All public, private and voluntary and community sectors

Proposed timeline: By 2016

2. To maximise the availability of affordable credit to individuals and enterprises across the city, the Commission recommends development of a baseline to include:
 - ▶ Use the industry-wide data jointly compiled by the British Bankers' Association and the Council for Mortgage Lenders to map the personal loan data for all Plymouth city post codes.

- ▶ Publish a Personal Loan Data report for Plymouth (as Birmingham City Council has done) to help identify the areas of credit deserts.
- ▶ The Council should use its own banking contracts to lever an assurance from providers that they will improve the provision of affordable credit in credit deserts.

Key agencies to deliver: Credit Unions, Plymouth City Council, Local Banks

Proposed timeline: March 2015

‘Fair Money’ Campaigning

The Commission believes Plymouth should aspire to achieve a ‘Fair Money’ culture. It is vital to make Plymouth’s residents, used to the same – too often high cost - high street lending and savings options aware of the alternatives. Campaigning is an intrinsic part of encouraging both the take up and further generation of alternative, low cost provision.

Local Recommendations

1. We recommend an annual, centrally-located pre-Christmas campaign, bringing together debt and money advice services, banks, trade unions, credit unions and relevant Council departments to raise awareness of their services and provide the opportunity to open bank and credit union accounts, as savers and depositors, get advice on housing, debt arrears etc.

Key agency in delivery: Led by high street banks, with debt and money advice services, trade unions and Plymouth City Council

Proposed timeline: November / December 2015

2. We recommend the development of an annual, city-wide ‘Fair Money’ awards dinner, sponsored by the large high –street banks and publicised by the Plymouth Herald, with a range of award categories which the people of Plymouth can vote for. Examples of award categories include: school savers, tackling debt, biggest contribution to local economy, volunteering etc.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth City Council, current credit union providers, local banks and the Plymouth Herald



STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Efficient transport links

“Investment in our travel infrastructure is vital for the success of the Peninsula economy – to achieve this we need to demonstrate clearly to government the difficulties being faced by businesses through the lack of a modern transport infrastructure.”

- David Parlby, Chief Executive, Plymouth Chamber of Commerce

Plymouth is the fifteenth largest city in England. With a current population of 261,024ⁱ, it also has an ambitious growth agenda for over 300,000 residents by 2031.

Regionally, the Far South West covers 1,396 square miles with a population of 2.2 million. The Peninsula contributes over £36bn a year to the national economy, hosts 98,000 businesses and supports 1.1 million jobsⁱⁱ. Despite this, Plymouth and the Peninsula have the lowest rates of Gross Value Added productivity per head at just £16,130 – around only 75% of the UK averageⁱⁱⁱ.

Improving GVA depends on a number of factors, but transport is a key issue. There is already a significant gap in transport spend between the South West and other regions, in particular London. With current spend way behind the UK average, this gap continues to widen:

- Between 2006/07 and 2010/11 Department for Transport spend in the area fell by £32 to £212 per capita while the UK average rose by £16 to £382.
- In 2011/12 transport spend in the South West fell by 13% year on year to £184 per head. During the same period investment in London remained constant at £644 per head.

Plymouth’s economy needs to accelerate. In the past it has been a major port, a hub for defence and engineering and a magnet for public sector services like health and administration. One by one, these specialisms have been diluted by alternative provision in the UK and abroad, recent economic events and Plymouth’s poor rail and road links with major business centres including London. Plymouth Chamber of Commerce estimated the cost of lost business from the February 2014 storms to the city at £600,000 per day.

Plymouth needs fast and resilient rail services that put the city and the region on an equal footing with the rest of the UK.

National Recommendations

1. The Plymouth Fairness Commission recommends that the Department for Transport and the Treasury review funding allocations in the UK with a view to creating more equitable funding in the South West.
2. That the Department of Transport and the Treasury urgently address Plymouth’s need for a fast and resilient rail line connecting the South West to the rest of the UK. Finances for this should be ringfenced as a matter of urgency.

Keeping money in the local economy

“The dominance of the supermarkets means lots of closures of little shops on the smaller high streets and the West End. I think councils could encourage local shops to be more successful”

- Participant from the Summer of Listening

Due to the domination of Plymouth’s historically large employers, both the culture and infrastructure for entrepreneurs lags behind many other cities. Plymouth’s Gross Added Value (the value of goods and services produced in an area or sector) has been only 84% of the national average for many years. The rate of business start-ups is low: 32 per 10,000 residents in 2011 compared to 54 per 10,000 for England overall. Yet 2012 saw an increase of 5% in start-ups to a record 1,049^{iv}.

Plymouth City Council and its partners across the region are tackling many of these issues through the City Deal, signed in January this year. These include addressing economic under-productivity, exploiting Plymouth’s marine heritage and assets through the ‘Britain’s Ocean City’ brand, developing infrastructure and creating jobs, particularly for the young. However, the city is currently failing to fully capture the value of the Plymouth pound.

More needs to be done to help the people of Plymouth support local businesses, public commissioners buy from them and keep local money circulating in the city's economy.

Local Recommendations

1. The Fairness Commission recommends the development of a 'Buy Local, Give Local' trademark scheme which local traders, producers, public bodies and the voluntary sector can use to help customers and producers identify local providers, spend money with them and, in the case of charities, donate to them. This should include:
 - ▶ A local media campaign, led by the Plymouth Herald, to launch the scheme, encouraging residents to support their local shops, services and producers, including Small Business Saturday.
 - ▶ The campaign should consider using pro-bono experience and help from local design and branding students to design the trademark logo.
 - ▶ The campaign should include public pledges by large public and private sector employers to support local suppliers, and develop a 'Buy Local' statement with clear outcomes and measures through which they buy and commission local goods and services.

Key agencies for delivery: Growth Board, Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, Plymouth Federation of Small Businesses, Plymouth Herald and Plymouth City Council

Proposed timeline: December 2016

2. Plymouth City Council should review all the charitable trusts, including dormant trusts, for which it is a corporate trustee and explore methods of amalgamating them (where their charitable objects are compatible), and transferring the management of their assets to a Plymouth community-based charity.

Key agencies for delivery: Plymouth City Council as corporate trustee

Proposed timeline: September 2014



Thinking social value

Last year there was a significant rise in levels of local procurement by the public sector, as urged by the Plymouth Procurement Forum. In 2013 the Plymouth Herald reported that a huge additional sum of £53 million had been spent locally by Plymouth City Council and Plymouth Community Homes. The Fairness Commission believes that every pound spent by the public sector in Plymouth should add 'social value' back into the city.

Social value is achieved when organisations source their goods, services and utilities in a way that achieves value for money and generates benefits to society and the economy, while at the same time minimising damage to the environment. 'Thinking social value' prioritises the overall value of outcomes, rather than focusing purely on the bottom-line cost. How a service is delivered, and its wider beneficial or harmful impact, is taken into account as well as simply 'what' is delivered. This means that the purchasing power of larger organisations is not exercised at the expense of the wider community.

Local Recommendations

1. We recommend that all public, charitable and private sector organisations in Plymouth should develop a social value/ sustainability statement with clear social value outcomes

and measures through which they buy and commission goods and services.

Key agencies for delivery: All public sector and large private sector organisations

Proposed timeline: June 2015

2. All public sector agencies to fully explore the steps they could take towards meeting best practice, beyond the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, to ensure the inclusion of social value in all contracts for goods and services, regardless of the EU threshold.

Key agencies for delivery: All public sector agencies

Proposed timeline: December 2015

3. The City Deal to clarify both how it will deliver social value and how this delivery will be measured and evaluated.

Key agencies for delivery: City Deal

Proposed timeline: September 2014



Access for small businesses

Local authorities spend around £88 billion every year. Research shows that 58% more of the money they spend with small local businesses is spent again in the local economy, compared to that spent with large local businesses. The Commission believes that Micro businesses and small and medium sized businesses should have a fairer opportunity to provide goods and services for Plymouth's public sector.

Local Recommendations

1. We recommend that baseline data on current public spending with local businesses is established, to enable public bodies in Plymouth to create clear targets for the levels of public spending they will spend with local businesses, including Micro/SME's, and report on them as part of their annual reporting mechanisms.

Key agencies for delivery: All public sector agencies in Plymouth

Proposed timeline: March 2015

2. We recommend that work is undertaken with the South West Investors Group and other community finance organisations to increase the amount of capital available for microfinance and small business lending in Plymouth. This should be supported by mentoring, training and support from the local business community.

Key agencies for delivery: Growth Board, Plymouth Federation of Small Businesses, Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and the South West Investors Group

Proposed timeline: March 2015



3. Public sector commissioning and the processes that supports it need to be much more efficient to provide better access to public spend for local, small suppliers. We recommend a thorough review of the current Sell2Plymouth portal and associated procurement systems of public sector agencies with recommendations for what changes are required to ensure there is an efficient way to link up public sector commissioners with private sector suppliers. Conversely, work must continue with local business to ensure they are positioned to take advantage of public sector procurement opportunities. Areas to address include:

- ▶ Improving technical efficiency.
- ▶ Monitoring how consistently and transparently the portal is used by different bodies
- ▶ Identifying why and appropriate responses to why local businesses are not maximising opportunities via the portal.
- ▶ Reducing unnecessary red tape and bureaucracy.
- ▶ Increasing opportunities for Meet the Buyer events.

Key agencies for delivery: Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, Plymouth Federation of Small Businesses, Plymouth universities, Plymouth City Council, Plymouth Community Homes, Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust and City College Plymouth

Proposed timeline: September 2015

During the Summer of Listening, many small businesses told us that they are not consulted about decisions which have an impact on their businesses, such as changes to bus routes, parking, charges and business rates. Both they, and their customers, have to live with the commercial consequences of decisions they felt they could have improved, if they had the opportunity to contribute their knowledge, experience and suggestions.

4. We recommend that the Growth Board reviews the way in which Micro businesses and SME's contribute to governance, consultations and decisions and makes recommendations to deliver greater transparency in their involvement and engagement.

Key agencies for delivery: Growth Board, Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and Plymouth Federation of Small Businesses

Proposed timeline: July 2015

HOUSING

“There is insufficient housing of various types to meet those in need. Private sector housing is shocking, especially that on offer to the under 35’s.”

- Participant from the Summer of Listening

While people in Plymouth were incredibly positive about the city’s social housing and recent social house building, at every event held in the Summer of Listening they told us that the overall housing situation in Plymouth is dire.

The lack of affordable homes, the prevalence of sub-standard housing, insufficient social housing and the costs of the bedroom tax and council tax subsidy changes are all causing real hardship and affecting the health and life chances of many in the city. Levels of homelessness and numbers living in temporary accommodation are higher than both the regional and national averages.

Plymouth’s private sector housing stock is significantly older than the national average, with around 50% built before 1919 compared to 40% nationally. Nearly 21% of these properties have Category I health and safety hazards, including ‘excess cold and ‘poor thermal comfort’^{vi}.

The government’s own figures estimate that at least 440,000 disabled households will lose out under the bedroom tax cuts to housing benefit. Housing charities such as Shelter estimate much higher numbers. The £30 million discretionary fund available to councils to help alleviate the worst impacts of the bedroom tax is, as many councils are pointing out, grossly insufficient for the level of need. The situation facing these vulnerable tenants is compounded by the lack of alternative properties available for them to move in to in order to avoid further reductions in their housing benefit.



The private rented sector

Those on the lowest incomes are living in the worst quality housing and paying a comparatively high rent for the privilege. The private rented sector in Plymouth includes a wide variety of properties that cater for the different needs of residents in the city i.e. houses, flats, bedsits, student houses. There are around 22,000 dwellings in the private rented sector in Plymouth, which represents nearly 20% of the city's total housing stock.

We know that private landlords provide an important resource for the city, and our aim is to attract new investment in private housing stock as well as well as eliminating that which is substandard.

There is currently no comprehensive database of private landlords in Plymouth, and creating one would be extremely difficult without a compulsory registration scheme. However, a 2010 national survey of landlords by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) showed that 78% of landlords had only one property and these landlords owned 40% of the stock.

If we apply these averages to Plymouth, this would indicate there are nearly 9,000 landlords owning one property in the City. Inevitably, ascertaining how many landlords own the remaining 13,000 properties is an estimate, but it is likely to be at least 2,600, assuming 5 properties each. In reality, the DCLG profile indicates they will own between 2 and 100 dwellings each.

Only 8% of landlords in the survey described themselves as 'professional' full time landlords, with 63% of private landlords reporting they had no relevant experience or qualifications for the role. Under these circumstances, it's hardly surprising that many landlords are not fully aware of their obligations.

National Recommendations

The Plymouth Fairness Commission makes the following recommendations for the private rented housing sector:

1. The creation of a National Register of Landlords. This would provide easy entry to the market for landlords, but allow their swift removal from the Register for poor practice. It would also stop them continuing to provide poor service and ensure better targeting of landlords to keep them informed of their responsibilities.
2. Issuing fixed penalty notices would both reduce the costs of enforcement and allow prompt action for breaches of legislation.
3. Developing new standards for housing would make it easier for

both landlords and tenants to know if standards were being met. It would also reduce the level of enforcement action needed as landlords would be better able to assess their own properties.

4. The Fairness Commission also echoes the Local Government Association's recommendation that the current Compulsory Purchase legislation available to councils is overly costly, complex and bureaucratic and should be simplified to allow councils to bring back long term empty residential properties into public use.

Local Recommendations

Given that Plymouth has a higher than average level of private housing stock and that a third of it – around 30,000 homes – is classed as non-decent, the Commission believes the city must tackle problems in the private housing sector robustly.

1. Plymouth City Council to develop a comprehensive and resourced response to raising standards in the private rented housing sector.
2. We recommend that Plymouth undertake a pilot to investigate the viability of a voluntary licensing and accreditation scheme for private sector landlords (PSL). This pilot should:
 - ▶ Examine the costs, benefits and potential barriers of such a scheme.
 - ▶ Look at the process of include clear standards to reach legal minimum requirements for properties.
 - ▶ Benchmark how this scheme would measure up against other PSL accredited schemes.
3. Examine the possibility of property-specific penalties for non-compliant Private Rented Sector homes, to include looking at whether non-compliant PRS homes could be earmarked as "not Housing Benefit eligible" until fully compliant with statutory standards and requirements, in a way that penalises the landlord – not the tenant.
4. Consult on and implement a comprehensive; measured and monitored Empty Homes Strategy for Plymouth to consider why the property is empty and uncovering systemic issues and working positively to address them.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth City Council, private landlords and other partners

Proposed timeline: December 2015

5. As part of the Fairness Commission's support of the 'doing with' rather than 'doing to' approach, we recognise the importance of helping private tenants have a local voice. This will help tenant-to-tenant communication, provide useful 'on the ground' advice about poor tenancy experiences and give tenants information about their legal rights. We support the creation of a virtual Plymouth Private Tenants Forum, advising private tenants of their rights, offering an online space to exchange experiences, publicise consultations and offer contact details on further public sources of support.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth City Council, private landlords, voluntary and community sector and other partners

Proposed timeline: December 2015

Specialist Housing

There are also a number of specialist housing needs throughout the city (e.g. older people, follow-on housing, parent and child units). Not all of these needs are "visible" to planners and commissioners. This can prevent particular individuals and groups accessing appropriate accommodation.

Key agencies for delivery: Plymouth City Council, NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, Private sector providers, Plymouth University and other partners

Proposed timeline: Review to be completed by end of 2014. Recommendations for action should be developed by the end of 2015 and fed into the Plymouth Plan

Local Recommendation

1. We recommend a full examination of the coverage of specialist housing provision in Plymouth is carried out, comparing what is available against known demographics of groups in need and including a full gap analysis of unmet need.



THE IMPLICATIONS OF AN AGEING POPULATION

“Older people have problems with housing and finance. Pensions seem to have gone down, or at least prices of basic groceries and utilities have gone up so it’s harder for them to live.”

- Participant from the Summer of Listening

The UK as a whole is failing to address the problems and opportunities that an ageing population presents. By 2030, there will be 51% more people aged over 65 compared to 2010, 101% more aged 85 or over, and an increase of 80% in those over 65 with dementia^{lvii}. The yo-yoing over future pension provision, retirement age and personal care of the past ten years are just some of the symptoms of balancing short term political popularity with long term planning.

As well as the need to plan for the future, many residents told us that older people don’t appear to be a priority for the city and can often be neglected. Yet older residents are an economic and social asset to a city, and the Commission believes it’s important to recognise them as such.

The Commission welcomes the existing initiatives for older people in Plymouth, but notes that, so far, they exist largely to address aspects of adult social care, such as dementia and those caring for older people. We believe that joining up social, cultural, health and economic initiatives more effectively will maximise both the benefits to Plymouth’s older population, and their contribution to the life of the city.

Joining up services for older people

Planning for an ageing population requires more than simply finding ways to help Plymouth’s current older residents. It also involves ensuring we create systems and joined-up ways of working to ensure we anticipate, and are ready for, the changing demographic of the city’s population in 10 or 20 years’ time. We also believe that this work fits perfectly within the remit of the Plymouth Plan, which is currently being developed and aims to integrate all city strategies into one Plan for Plymouth up to 2031.

Local Recommendations:

1. We recommend the creation of an ‘All Ages City’ Taskforce to co-ordinate both the social and non-social care aspects of Plymouth living for older people, as part of the Plymouth Plan process. These include, but are not limited to:
 - ▶ Working with Plymouth’s voluntary and community sectors to join up initiatives such as befriending schemes, lunch clubs, pooled transport, shared backroom services and access to facilities, including how technology can assist such co-ordination.
 - ▶ Work with Plymouth universities and other tertiary education providers to encourage investment in technology to encourage connection to the wider community and address digital exclusion, remote healthcare provision by local and regional providers, virtual communities and domestic adaptations, e.g. Skype TV.
 - ▶ Support commissioning of personal health, public health and social services which focus on prevention and early intervention through primary health care.
 - ▶ Working with urban planners and housing associations to shape future housing provision and, where possible, adapt existing provision, to provide better community specific development, encourage land asset release and incentive schemes for suitable private investment.
 - ▶ Co-ordinate existing and potential activities that promote intergenerational and cultural activity such as skills cafes, using school kitchens for mixed-age lunches and increasing opportunities for older people to volunteer.

Key agencies in delivery: Plymouth universities and other tertiary education providers, local voluntary and community sector, Plymouth City Council, housing associations, NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group and Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust

Proposed timeline: Informal plans and Memorandum of Understanding to be drawn up by October 2014 for delivery during 2015 and onwards

Becoming a Dementia Friendly City

Plymouth's demographic profile shows an ageing population living longer. By age 80 one in five people will suffer from dementia. The Mental Health Observatory estimated that by 2025, Plymouth will have over 4,200 people with dementia against around 3,000 today. The Fairness Commission's welcomes the work undertaken so far to make Plymouth a Dementia Friendly City, but suggests implementing specific recommendations requires far greater urgency.

Local Recommendations:

1. We recommend that the Plymouth Joint Dementia Strategy is given the highest priority to ensure its recommendations on professional awareness, early diagnosis, carer support and recognised standards of care are actively delivered across the city.
2. As part of this strategy, the Commission also recommends that additional consideration be given to ensure that people with dementia who require, and can demonstrate that they meet the eligibility criteria (e.g. unsteady walking, confusion and agitation and the risk of their actions harming themselves or others) are encouraged to apply for the blue badge scheme using the discretionary powers of the Local Authority.
3. We recommend that an information pack containing details of sources of advice, information and support is made freely available to patients, families and carers in all primary care settings, and provided for dementia patients and their carers.

Key agencies for delivery: Plymouth City Council and other partners

Proposed timeline: December 2014



NEXT STEPS, EVALUATION AND MONITORING

1. The Fairness Commission asks all organisations named in this report to provide their response and commitment to delivery of attributed recommendations and initial estimates of timetables by the end of June 2014.
2. The Fairness Commissioners will remain actively involved in analysing actions against key themes, acting as critical friends and advisors if required.
3. The Fairness Commission Secretariat within Plymouth City Council will work with key partners to develop a performance framework to allow both the Commission and the City as a whole to determine whether Plymouth is becoming a fairer city.
4. Plymouth universities are invited to set up a Plymouth bank of excellence and best practice across public, private and VCS sectors that demonstrates the ways in which Plymouth is becoming fairer, and which can be also be used as a resource to illustrate ideas and fair practice locally, regionally and nationally.
5. The Fairness Commission recommends that an Annual Report is produced over each of the next five years to monitor progress against all its recommendations. In order to create the report, we recommend that all key organisations named in this report submit an annual progress report to the Plymouth Fairness Commission Secretariat.
6. The Fairness Commission proposes to reconvene in July 2015 to assess progress made against recommended actions.
7. The Fairness Commission's website will continue to be maintained and updated to reflect progress against these recommendations and ensure public accountability.
8. The Fairness Commission welcomes the fact that, in the interests of even greater public accountability, the Editor of the Plymouth Herald will join us as a Commissioner to review progress in 2015.

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