



Bristol Welfare Reform Conference.

Aims

- Gain a better understanding of the likely impact of various welfare reforms for Bristol Citizens
- Identify the challenges that welfare reform and Universal Credit may create for Citizens and find proactive ways to enable Citizens to meet those challenges.
- Bring together the advice/support, housing, and public sectors to enable and encourage them to work together effectively.
- Ensure that we are using our limited resources to provide coordinated services that target the most vulnerable members of our communities.

The Bristol Story- Some Key facts

Bristol is the 10th largest city in the country and is one of England's 10 Core Cities.

It is a prosperous and diverse city with an international reputation as a good place to live and work, winning the top spot in the new Quality of Living Index for the UK's largest cities in 2013.

With a rapidly and increasingly diverse population Bristol is a vibrant, exciting and creative city for its Citizens to live in. The Quality of life survey 2014 found that "82% of residents are happy with Bristol as a place to live.

Economically Bristol is equally diverse, comprised of a wide and varied industrial base including high-tech industries, business services, finance, retail and the creative industries which offers a wealth of opportunities for economic growth,
The city is also home to two very successful and popular universities in the city and Bristol's ability to retain graduates from these is reflected in the highly educated and skilled workforce it has.

However, Bristol's prosperity is not shared equally by all its Citizens, its relative prosperity is thrown into sharp relief by some of the most prosperous areas in the UK sitting side by side with some of the most deprived.

The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 confirms this pattern showing:

- 16% of Bristol's residents (69,000 people) live in the most deprived in England. This figure includes 17,800 children and 10,500 older people.
- In Bristol as a whole:
 - 17% of people are income deprived,
 - 24% of children live in income deprived families,
 - 20% of older people are income deprived
 - 13% of working age people are employment deprived.
- Bristol has over 40 small neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% in England for Multiple Deprivation. Of these 26 are in the most deprived 5% in England.
- Inequality is persistent; the Bristol neighbourhoods which suffer from high levels of deprivation are the same now as they were in 1999.

As we can see whilst there are many good news stories across the city, there also some key challenges to overcome in order for the city to be truly successful.

Key Challenges

Poverty

- Over a quarter of children are living in poverty in the city (higher than the national average)
- 16,900 children and young people live in families receiving either income support or job seekers allowance.
- One quarter of Bristol's children are growing up in households unable to afford or have access to food to make up a healthy diet
- In the 2014 Quality of Life survey 13% of respondents said they were finding it difficult to manage financially.

Unemployment and underemployment

- Long term unemployment is significantly higher than the national average.
- A quarter of young people are NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training)

Physical and emotional health

- Adult Obesity is rising. 60% people overweight in South Bristol City Council
- Bristol's community Mental Health Profile (MHP) reports that Bristol sits within the lowest 25% Percentile of adults experiencing mental distress.

Participation – community cohesion

- In 2014, only 25% of Bristol residents felt influential in their neighbourhood.
- In July 2014 the University and College Union (UCU) conducted a survey of young people aged 16-24 NEETS and found 40% feel they are not part of society, 36% believe they will never have a chance of getting a job.
- The percentage of people who felt that they belonged to their neighbourhood fell last year to 56%

Physical, Social and digital exclusion and isolation

- Many people and communities who already experience economic, social and health inequalities also face digital exclusion. In Bristol, older people, disabled people, economically less well-off families and social housing tenants are amongst the most likely to be digitally excluded.
- Social isolation is a growing issue which impacts on people's health and wellbeing. It is estimated that there could be 20,000 people (Between 18 and 64 years old) experiencing social isolation in the city as between 6,300 and 11,400 of the over 65s. (Social Isolation in Bristol 2013, Initial Report).

Discrimination

- Data from annual health checks for 1,400 people with learning difficulties in Bristol showed that they have poorer health outcomes (than people without learning difficulties) and that this is related to the (lack of) support to manage their health.
- 1 in 5 black men in Bristol between the ages of 16-24 are unemployed compared to 1 in 10 white young men between the same ages.

The challenge facing us is to find ways to stop Universal Credit and Welfare Reform exacerbating these inequalities and to work with the knowledge of these challenges to support Bristol to become a truly successful city for all its Citizens