

Brighton & Hove

Fairness

Commission

## Message from The Fairness Commission

Brighton & Hove

Fairness

Commission

The Fairness Commission was set up in Brighton and Hove in September 2015. It was made up of 12 people and our job was to ask residents and organisations what they think is fair or unfair about living in the city.



The information that people told us has been used to make suggestions about how Brighton and Hove can be a fairer place to live in. We hope these suggestions are used by the council and other public organisations when they make plans for the city.



Brighton and Hove is an exciting place to live. Many people are well off and have jobs. Lots of visitors come to Brighton as there are plenty of things to do here.

However, many people who live here are poor and do not have the same opportunities as others. Reasons for this include



- high rents for houses
- low pay
- lack of work skills
- poor physical or mental health.

In some parts of the city, one third of children growing up come from poor families and do not have enough money to live on.



More and more people want to live in Brighton. At the same time, the council has less money to spend on services. It is important that people who need extra support or help are not left behind.

## Where we live



People said the three most important things to make life better in Brighton are supporting community life, travelling around the city and housing.

## Supporting our communities

People who live in Brighton and Hove said that our communities need more support. The council and the organisations it works with should offer support to make the city a fairer place. They said that community and voluntary organisations are important because they



- Understand what people need
- Help people to volunteer
- Help people to learn new skills



Small groups and activities are good because they stop people being lonely. They are also cheaper than council services so help to save money.

People also want more opportunities to meet people at community centres.



Residents want to work with each other to make their own problems better. They say that they understand their issues best and know how to solve them. They want to work with the council but do not think that the council listens to them.



Lots of people think we are not using public buildings, mini buses and community spaces in the best way. Organisations should think about how these can be shared so more people benefit from them



### What the next steps should be

The council and other organisations it works with should

- Help people in communities gain skills, knowledge and get stronger together.
- Make sure that communities are included in decision making and have an equal say.
- We should make sure that each local area has a space where people can get together and go to activities
- The council should let communities use public buildings that are not used very much
- The council should continue giving money to small community groups so they can carry on their work



### **Travelling and being in Brighton**

People said easy travel around the city is very important. This is especially so for people with disabilities and older people who need to get out and about so they do not get lonely. People told us that

- Some bus routes were not good
- Bus fares are high





Some people need community transport. This is when you can book a minibus to pick you up at home and take you where you want to go. Some people said that this is not as good as it could be.

People said they want parks to be well kept. They think parks should have toilets and benches so everyone can use them.



They also said that residents should do more to keep parks and the pavements clean and not throw litter. They think that the council should still collect rubbish and recycling.



Lots of people, especially older and disabled people and mothers with children said pavements are difficult to use. This is because there are too many things in the way such as tables, chairs and advertising boards.

### What the next steps should be



- The Quality Bus Partnership works in Brighton and Hove to make sure we have good bus services. They need to make sure that people know how to get cheaper fares
- We are asking the council to find ways to make community transport better

## Housing

Housing is the most important thing for the council to improve. People living in Brighton told us that



- Rents are very high which is difficult for people who do not have much money. People often get into debt and sometimes are made homeless if they cannot pay their rent.

- Houses and flats are often in poor condition with damp.

- Some people who do not have enough money have to choose whether they will heat their houses or eat food. This is especially bad for children as it can stop them doing well at school.



- People who were brought up in Brighton cannot have their own home as there are not enough houses to go round.



### What the next steps should be

#### **We are asking the council to:**

- Offer council owned land to homebuilders and make sure these houses go to local people
- Create cheap, temporary housing for homeless people.
- Let everyone know how they are going to make the Housing Strategy happen. The Housing Strategy is a plan to make Brighton's housing issues better.

#### **We are asking the National Government to**

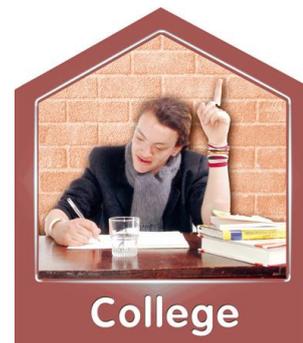
- Let the council borrow more money so they can build more council houses
- Make new laws about how much landlords can charge people rent



## How we live

### Growing up

Children in Brighton and Hove should have a good start in life. The city must do more to make sure that children from poorer families can develop and learn.



It is expensive to send children to school. They need bus fares, school uniforms, school meals, computers and money for school trips. Some children from poorer families cannot afford these things. Missing out like this can affect their education.



Other children do less well at school because other things get in the way. They might have disabilities, be young carers, have mental health issues or come from other countries and cultures amongst other things.



People told us that youth workers based in neighbourhoods are a good way of helping young people in the city.

### What the next steps should be

We think the city council should

- Make sure that no child misses out on experiences and opportunities at school because they cannot afford them.
- Work with other organisations to make sure that every child who needs one, gets a free school dinner, even during the holidays



- Keep supporting children's centres in the city but let communities use the buildings when they are closed.
- Work with partners in the city to help people stay out of debt

## Living in and getting older in Brighton

We know that being lonely and isolated is not good for us and can make us unwell. Therefore it is important that we support people to see friends and take part in activities.



People told us that there are lots of good ways to stay connected with others in the city. These include lunch clubs, befriending schemes, good neighbour schemes, art groups and having good transport amongst other things.

### What the next steps should be



- We need to make sure that people do not become isolated. We could do this by having more leisure and employment opportunities.
- We would like the council to make good plans for making the city more accessible for older people.
- We should ask the council and its partners to sign up to the 'Use our Loo' scheme. This would mean there are more toilets for the public to use.

## Living a full life



Residents told us they want it to be a place where everyone has equal chances in life.



They want people to be able to get the support they need to make their own life choices.



They want people to get the skills they need so they are able to work.

## A city where everyone is welcome and included



We were told that there are some groups that need extra support. This is so they do not get more excluded from society than they already are. This includes parents with learning disabilities, people with autism and those from the deaf community.

## What the next steps should be



At the moment many children who have learning disabled parents are taken into care. The council needs to change how they work with learning disabled parents so that less children get taken into care.



The Deaf Community find it difficult to get the information they need about the city. The council should sign up to and follow the British Deaf Association Charter to improve this.



People with autism said that their disability is not understood and life is very difficult for them. The council and partners should work with people with autism to create a plan to make things better.



LGBT people face discrimination and abuse, especially when they need housing support. The Housing Options service should find ways of making this better.



People from other cultures and countries said it is difficult to get work and many people are racist. A citywide plan needs to be made by showing how this will improve.

## Working



We want to make sure that people get the support they need to work and get a fair wage.



There should be different ways for people to get into work including work trials, apprenticeships and part time work. The city also needs to encourage people to learn and develop work skills.



## What the next steps should be

- The council should help to set up the Fair Employer Charter with businesses. This will make sure that people are treated fairly at work.
- Disabled young people, including those with a learning disability should get more help moving from college to work

## Working with Communities

The council and other organisations in the city need to work with communities as equals. They need to help communities work out the best solutions to their issues.

Staff will need training to make this work well which will cost extra money.



Residents said that the community and voluntary organisations in Brighton and Hove made their lives better in many ways. They also think that these organisations help the city as they use volunteers, employ good staff and bring in money.



## Getting help early

It is important for vulnerable people to get support when they first need it. If they have to wait too long their problems get bigger and cost the council and others extra money.

## What the next steps should be

The public sector should

- Give communities the power to make their own decisions and make sure that staff are trained to support this work
- Support and work with community and voluntary organisations
- Make sure there are good plans for making the city better and people are told how the work is progressing
- Make sure that people get support when they first need it



## Making the Fairness Commission work

We would like people and organisations in the city who can help to accept these recommendations and try to make them happen.

### What we will do

1. **The Fairness Commission will meet each year to check our progress**
2. **We think that an unpaid 'Fairness Champion' should lead this work**
3. **We will set up a network for anyone who is interested in helping carry on this work**



Brighton & Hove

