

CHEXS Co-Design Workshop: Local Support – Co-Designing the Future

Date: 11th July 2025

Facilitator: Dr. Roger Green

Attendees

Joanne Aves, Sharon Barbour, Jack Smits, Michael Blake, Dr Roger Green, Mark Hanna, Mrs Alison Atkinson, Kirsty Maxwell, Karen Lawrence, Caroline (Goffs Oak), Sarah Baker (Flamstead), Jacqui White (Goffs Ch), Michael McKay, Tina Powell, Tony Gorton, Liz Allum, Simone KC, Kristy Thakur, Pete Maiden

Apologies: Christine Oker, Dr Alison Jackson, Alison Sawkins, Paul Seeby, Zoe Galea

Purpose of the Workshop

To explore how we can work more closely together to strengthen support for children, young people (YP), and families in our local community, building on the existing work of organisations like CHEXS.

CHEXS Overview

CHEXS supports children, young people and families in the community through mentoring, life skills development, and community-based projects.

Richard's Story (Impact Case Study)

- Faced instability and hardship growing up, including living in a hostel and struggling at school.
 - Joined CHEXS as a volunteer initially to escape lessons but quickly found a safe, supportive environment.
 - Gained confidence and life skills through community projects like gardening and mentoring younger pupils.
 - Took part in a life-changing outdoor adventure trip, building resilience, leadership, and lasting friendships.
 - CHEXS gave him purpose and direction, helping him believe in himself and plan for the future.
 - With support from CHEXS (Pete and Julie), his family received essentials during a difficult house move, easing pressure during GCSEs.
 - Used CHEXS experience to secure a job at Tesco, was promoted to Team Leader within 8 months.
 - Applied for a Software Engineering role on the Elizabeth Line, became the youngest successful applicant, and was promoted within a year.
 - Helped deliver major developments like the Auto Reverse feature, now works on the Piccadilly Line upgrade with TfL.
 - Credits CHEXS, Pete, and Julie for his success—career, homeownership, and family—and continues to reflect on their impact with deep gratitude.
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What Should Support Look Like? (Activity 1)

Short Term (1 Year):

- Provide access to coaching and mentoring in every school.
- Clear and simple referral routes for families.
- Offer immediate crisis support and food vouchers.
- Raise awareness of services to reduce stigma around asking for help.

Mid Term (3 Years):

- Strengthen inter-agency collaboration (schools, housing, health, VCS).
- Develop wraparound support, especially for neurodiverse YP, care leavers, and carers.
- Improve access to employment support (e.g., CV help, volunteering).
- Empower families to become self-supporting.
- Address stigma by sharing lived experiences and success stories.

Long Term (5 Years):

- Provide consistent, county-wide access to services.
 - Create long-term mentoring and coaching offers.
 - Develop a whole-system approach to support.
 - Focus on life readiness – preparing YP and parents with key life skills.
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Key Themes Identified

- **Hope & Purpose** – Young people need direction and belief in their future.
 - **Voice & Value** – children and young people must be heard and valued.
 - **Access & Responsiveness** – Services must be quicker, clearer, and better coordinated.
 - **Confidence Building** – Stories like Richard's show real change is possible.
 - **Collaboration** – Break down silos and work together across sectors.
 - **Financial Support** – Families need financial help and support to navigate rising costs.
 - **Practical Skills** – Young people need real-world skills: careers advice, budgeting, housing, etc.
 - **Localism & Consistency** – Build connected services with strong local relationships.
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What Needs to Change?

- **More people in the room** – Broaden collaboration across sectors.
 - **Action plans** – Concrete steps and clear ownership.
 - **Resources** – Better funding and sharing of existing capacity.
 - **Breaking barriers** – Tackle silo working and build trust.
 - **Prioritising need** – Time and data used to identify real local issues.
 - **Trust** – Build strong working relationships between partners.
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Trial Ideas to Pilot (Activity 3)

Proposed Pilot Projects (for trial or testing)

Each of these ideas was suggested during the workshop as a starting point for collaborative action. All are designed to be small-scale, achievable, and based on shared purpose. Leads for each project will be confirmed via follow-up communication.

1. Work Experience Networking Event

- Host a local networking event aimed at engaging small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to offer work experience placements.
- Format: Businesses are given a 30-second pitch to explain what they do and what opportunities they can offer (e.g., work experience, apprenticeships).
- Purpose: Increase access to placements for Year 10–12 students, who currently struggle to find opportunities.
- Added value: Frame as a business-to-business event to attract SME interest.

2. “Get Life Ready” Programme

- A 6–12 month practical life skills course for young people and their parents/carers.
- Topics: Finances, budgeting, mortgages, careers, CV writing, accessing work experience.
- Structure: Workshops or evening sessions co-delivered by professionals and volunteers.
- Goal: Equip both YP and their families with tools to succeed in adult life.

3. Intergenerational Projects Toolkit

- Co-create a digital “how-to” toolkit (web-based led by Age UK) to help other communities replicate successful intergenerational models like those used by CHEXS.
- Partners: Google, Age UK, CHEXS + local youth and community organisations.
- Aim: Broaden the reach and sustainability of intergenerational projects.
- Potential use: Embed toolkit on a dedicated website hosted by Age UK with video stories, templates, and case studies.

4. Sponsored Mentoring Programme

- Local businesses or community groups sponsor mentoring for young people.
- Mentors can be drawn from business, education, or community sectors.
- Focus: Support YP with confidence, direction, and real-world experience.
- Goal: Build confidence and expand career awareness.

5. “School Food Matters” / Nourish Hertfordshire

- Trial healthy eating and food literacy initiatives in local schools.
- Link to existing programmes addressing food poverty and childhood obesity.
- Additional ideas: Breakfast provision, cooking workshops, family food budgeting.
- Food Action charity could be a potential delivery partner. More info needed.

6. Broxbourne Community Week

- A week-long programme of pop-up events and services delivered in schools, parks, and other venues.
- Activities: Careers advice, employer stands, interactive sessions, youth-led showcases.
- Partners: Schools, VCS groups, housing associations, businesses, and statutory services.
- Purpose: Connect families to services, build community connections, and raise awareness.

7. Local Directory & Content Hub

- Create a simplified, user-friendly directory of local services, agencies, and offers.

- Features: Searchable content, regularly updated listings, downloadable info packs.
 - Include a “local stories” library to capture lived experiences and showcase impact.
 - Goal: Improve access to information for professionals, families, and young people.
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Additional Opportunities discussed.

- Knife Angel and amnesty bus visiting Broxbourne this summer.
 - Launchpad (Peabody) careers event showcasing housing opportunities.
 - Opportunity to pilot projects addressing mental health, healthy lifestyles, and crime reduction.
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Workshop Summary and next steps

- **Agreed Priorities:** Work Experience and Get Life Ready programmes.
- **Core Values:** Lived experience, community collaboration, and sustainable support.
- **Pilot key ideas.**
- **Assign leads and working groups on each agreed project.**
- **Build** cross-functional ownership.
- **Share stories** to reduce stigma and build momentum.
- **CHEXS to:**
 - Add secondary schools to the Intergenerational Project for 2025–26.
 - Coordinate 6th October coffee/networking events (with youth attendance optional). Proposed time change: 10:00 AM start.
- **Link** with B3, SNG, Peabody and others for housing collaborations. Sharon to discuss at local housing forum.
- **Mark Hanna:** Lead Intergenerational Toolkit project.
- **Food Poverty:** ‘Food Action’ charity suggested lead.
- **Plan upcoming Networking Business Event** (for work experience / mentoring project):
 - Businesses deliver 1-minute pitches.
 - Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and Social Prescribers to be invited.