

## RICHMOND ADVICE FORUM

Tuesday 25 September 2018 – 2.30pm

The Exchange, 75 London Road, Twickenham TW1 1BE

### Meeting notes

#### 1. Introductions and apologies

Present: Simon Lawson (Citizens Advice Richmond, chair), Wendy Smith & Mike Haran (Citizens Advice Richmond), Cathy Maker (RUILS), Graham Russell (LBRuT Revenues & Benefits), Nichola Obande (LBRuT Policy, Training & Contracts), Mohammed Ashrafi (RAID), Graham Collins (INS), Kirsty Hogg (LBRuT Commissioning Support), Kat Moore (RB Mind), Laura Turner (Mencap), Alison & Kevin Sears (National Autistic Society), Sharon La Ronde (RPLC), Justine Hogg (PA Housing), Steve Shaffelburg (LBRuT Commissioning), Ravi Arora (EMAG), Eddie Thomas (Crosslight debt advice), Clare Dorning (LBRuT Housing), Toni Symonds (Age UK).

Apologies: Karen Lowry (AfC), Carers Centre couldn't attend but want to be involved.

#### 2. Aim and purpose of the forum

These were sent out in invite email, taken from our agreed council service spec:

- map and keep under review advice provision in the borough
- facilitate the development of referral systems between providers
- identify gaps in provision
- encourage new initiatives and partnerships to enhance advice provision
- identify common problems that lead to a need for advice and develop working partnerships with statutory authorities to reduce advice need

We envisage developing a work programme with actions under each of these headings

Members' comments:

Investigate opportunities to fill gaps in provision

Try to ensure there is no duplication and we can access specialist services

Work with statutory bodies

Avoid need for advice

People accessing different services

Access to support services for advice clients

Sharing research

Mapping advice provision could be a first step – CAR has started work on this for our own use, but can open this up to other agencies – can they update and add to the info we already have? Or does anyone else do similar?

Existing sources of advice mapping:

Jobcentre 'complex needs document'

[CarePlace](#) – used by CILS information navigators, but much wider than just advice

[Advice local](#) – covers the whole country, but not always up to date

Discussed whether we could share this info with residents, but agreed the priority is a resource for local organisations

We could host on Google docs or similar and share ownership, with each organisation keeping their entry up to date

CAR to send out request for info and collate responses

Discussed obvious gaps in provision:

Representation at tribunals

Free legal advice

Local Special Educational Needs advice

Peer navigation for mental health issues

### **3. Membership**

We have invited the main agencies that give advice, plus other organisations that do some advice, plus others interested in advice provision (e.g. RSLs, council depts.) i.e. there's quite a wide membership. Other organisations we should invite:

- Richmond Legal Advice Service
- Alzheimer's Society
- Me Too and Co
- Local LGBT forum

Agreed we don't want to get unwieldy but should be flexible. Agreed we won't extend to organisations just working with young people.

### **4. Citizens Advice Richmond update**

To summarise our work, we have the generalist advice for Richmond borough and offer advice to anyone who lives, works or studies in the borough; two main centres, Hampton Hill and Sheen, two smaller centres, Hampton and Barnes, outreaches at Ham library, Heathfield Children's Centre and the Vineyard Centre in Richmond

Prevention – research and campaign and financial capability. We have two new specific services commissioned by Richmond Council:

#### **a. Universal Credit support**

New service started in June when full service UC rolled out in borough

Commissioned by Richmond Council, funded by DWP

Assisted digital

Personal budgeting

Based at Twickenham Jobcentre, Tuesdays and Fridays

Not advice

Contractual targets – ADS going well, PBS not so well

Soon open up to external referrals via email – details at the next voluntary sector forum in October

- b. EU nationals
  - Offers public information events – we have held two already with almost 200 people attending
  - Talks/workshops for organisations working with numbers of EU nationals
  - Individual advice
  - Details on the [CAR website](#)
- c. Research and campaigns; current work includes:
  - Council Tax reduction – shortlisted for a national Citizens Advice award
  - Council Tax protocol
  - Collecting evidence re Universal Credit
  - Monitoring Homelessness Reduction Act
  - Mapping local mental health services to better understand support available

The number of Universal Credit issues we are likely to deal with this year will at least double from the previous year, as expected. We expect that there will be a large number of local people who are self-employed and claiming Universal Credit.

## **5. CILS commissioning**

Steve summarised the current contract. A report is going to the council cabinet meeting on 11 October, which will be similar to the scrutiny committee report. The timeframe has slipped again and new contracts are now expected to start on 1 August 2019. The Invitation to Tender will be released at the end of October or early November, with a market engagement event on 5 November.

The Barnes social prescribing pilot, funded by the CCG, has now finished and an evaluation report being finalised; initial findings don't support a full roll out across the borough and so there is no additional funding for social prescribing and the CCG won't part fund the new CILS contract.

## **6. Signposting and referrals between organisations**

The old Advice Richmond partnership, funded by the Advice Services Transition Fund, had an electronic referral system, but it was exclusive to members of the partnership and not very well used – partly because it was too complicated to use. We do signpost between organisations.

Discussed the value of developing a referral system between our organisations – this would have to be simple and to be active and there is a capacity issue with organisations being referred to.

CAR to research successful systems in other areas.

## **7. Future meetings**

### a) Frequency

Agreed we will hold these quarterly with the next meeting in early – mid December.

### b) Agenda items

Agreed we will have themes for future meetings, based on aims of the forum, possibly with guest speakers; next meeting will focus on mental health and we'll ask for case studies.

**8. Any other business**

- a) Homelessness forum – this Thursday 27/9/2018 at 2.30 in York House.
- b) Voluntary sector forum – 4 October at 2pm in York House.
- c) The EMAG AGM is tomorrow and there is free food available.
- d) Transport and mobility forum – 27 September at DACC at 2pm.