



Kensington & Chelsea Advice Forum

Tuesday 27 March 2018, 10.00am – 12.30pm
Committee Room 2, Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, W8 7NX

Chair: Angela Spence, KCSC
Minutes taken by: Alice Lowry, KCSC

Item	Notes	Action
1	Forum meeting commences – minutes of the last meeting & matters arising	
	Minutes of the last meeting were approved and there were no matters arising.	
2	Update on the Housing Register/allocations; the Wider Grenfell Rehousing Policy and the Homelessness Reduction Act – Rob Shaw, Special Projects Lead, RBKC Housing & Claire Wise, RBKC	
	<p>Rob introduced himself to members and explained that he would be giving an update on the housing register, the Wider Grenfell Rehousing Police and the Homelessness Reduction Act. Rob explained that the Housing Register and Home Connection (a letting site) were suspended on the 14th June 2017 after the Grenfell fire as they had to commit resources to providing emergency provisions to Grenfell survivors. Home Connection is now running again with choice based lettings.</p> <p>Members were told that the Homelessness Reduction Act would come into effect on Tuesday 2nd April. The new law will extend the period a person is threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days. Local authorities will have a legal obligation to provide housing advice and information to rough sleepers and those at risk of becoming homeless. The Council have received funding for 3 years to put these practices into measure. The support available includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting residents whether they are local or not • Providing assessments and personalised housing plans • Analysis around households that approach Council • Floating Tenancy Support Services • Providing people with information on benefits, providing people with work skills, maximising income etc. or signposting to services who can also aid such as Citizens Advice. • Develop suite of courses to help people find work. <p>A discussion was then had about whether the Council has plans to build more affordable accommodation. Rob said that the Council were looking at a number of regeneration projects but post-Grenfell these projects have been suspended. He said that one project near Trellic Tower was going ahead. One of the group members asked Rob and Claire why there a lack of accessible housing for disabled people in the borough. They felt that a lot of properties should be wheelchair accessible rather than wheelchair adaptable. Rob and Claire both stated that they are trying to be more creative with the disabilities funding and negotiate with housing providers to ensure that there are more homes available to disabled residents which is approved by occupational therapists.</p> <p>Members were updated on the Wider Grenfell Rehousing Policy which was introduced as a housing policy for Council tenants who feel unable to remain in, or return to their</p>	

	home in Walkways, Treadgold House or Bramley House. It awards 900 points to those on the housing register.	
3	DWP Update to include Universal Credit – Syeda Juhie, Partnership Support Manager, Department for Works & Pensions	
	<p>Syeda introduced herself and explained that she would be updating the on Universal Credit. She told members that Universal Credit has been rolled out across the UK. However, due to the tragedy of Grenfell this was postponed so that the North Kensington Job Centre could focus on providing support to Grenfell survivors. Universal Credit is now due to go live in North Kensington in December 2018. She said that the full service has gone live in Hammersmith.</p> <p>Members asked Syeda specific questions regarding benefits. Key points/actions from discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syeda to find out whether universal credit will still cover housing costs • The group all agreed that GPs often didn't understand what was required from a PIP form. Syeda explained she would be going out to GPs locally and make sure they were more aware of 10 descriptions. Kensington Citizens Advice explained that they had created a leaflet to send out to aid GPs in writing letters of medical evidence for PIP forms. 	<p>SJ to find out about UC</p> <p>AL to circulate PIP leaflet</p>
4	The role of the Advice Community Sector in an emergency/disaster response – Lyndsey Poole & Will Chamberlain, Advice Services Alliance (ASA)	
	<p>Lyndsey and Will introduced themselves and explained that the Advice Service Alliance is an umbrella group for the advice sector, linking advice networks together. Their role is to get the advice sector to work at a networking level and on the ground as well. They told the group that after Grenfell happened they invited advice network to invite members to a meeting which would focus on how to respond as a sector to emergencies. They wanted to produce sets of guidance which could be used in the future. Lyndsey and Will told the group about what was discussed at the meeting and then invited feedback/open discussion from the groups. Key points discussed at this meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations need to have disaster recovery plans in place for worse case scenarios • Partnerships need to be developed and maintained between organisations including broader partnerships past the advice sector • Think about whether it's more important to have all hands on deck or delegate in disasters • More of a link with the ASA • Supporting colleagues and considering health and wellbeing of staff. <p>The advice forum then had a discussion about what could be put in place for the future. The key point that members of the group agreed on was that communications needed to be centralised and coordinated in an emergency situation. This could be helped by ASA giving regular advice and updates.</p>	
5	Updates from strategic meetings – BVOAG, Grenfell related meetings	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Borough Voluntary Organisations Group last met on February 1 and discussed how to make the meetings more effective. • Angela gave the group an update on the Grenfell Network Group and told the group that the next meeting would be in early to mid-May. 	
6	Updates from members on current services	
	Members of the group updated each other on current services they were providing	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens Advice circulated cards with group about financial guidance they are providing to residents affected by the Grenfell Fire. • RBKC explained that a new housing benefit online application form was being developed as well as a change of circumstances form. These would both need testing at some point soon. RBKC to liaise with KCSC 	RBKC
7	Discussion and agreement on proposed agenda items for future meetings	
	<p>A discussion was had regarding potential agenda items for future meetings. Suggestions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private rented sector update – RBKC Environmental Health Officer • Persuading RBKC to have ethical debt collection policy – who would be appropriate to speak to (Ray Brown from Customer Access) 	KCSC

ATTENDANCE LIST

	Organisation
1	Advice Services Alliance
2	Oliver Fisher Solicitors
3	The Clement James Centre
4	Al-Hasaniya
5	Healthwatch + Spanish Senior Citizens
6	World's End Neighbourhood Advice Centre
7	Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea
8	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
9	Notting Hill Housing Trust
10	World's End Neighbourhood Advice Centre
11	Department for Work and Pensions
12	Citizens Advice Kensington & Chelsea
13	Advice Services Alliance
14	The Clement James Centre
15	Action Disability for Kensington & Chelsea
16	Staying First Services

17	Royal Borough of Kensington& Chelsea
18	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
19	Kensington CAB
20	Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea