



KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA ADVICE FORUM

Tuesday 22 September 2021, 10:00am – 11:30am
Virtual meeting via Teams

Chair: Angela Spence (AS), KCSC
Minutes taken by: Zina Serageldin (ZS), KCSC

Item	Notes	Action
1	<p>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies – Angela Spence, CEO, KCSC</p> <p>Agenda</p> <p>AS welcomed everyone to the forum and went through the meeting ground rules.</p>	
2	<p>Update from the advice conference including the referral process – Baljit Badesha, Director, Nucleus Legal Advice Centre</p> <p>Link to Spreadsheet</p> <p>Baljit Badesha (BB) provided an update on the Advice Conference that was held in February 2021. It was well attended by about 45 people from the voluntary and statutory sector and was an opportunity to come together and look at concerns after months of lockdown.</p> <p>People’s thoughts and concerns on the following topics were gathered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging needs of clients and local residents and how best to address those needs? • The experience people had of referring to the advice service especially in lockdown? • The experience of referring to Council services especially in lockdown? <p>Main themes that came out of from these discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital divide. • Those with complex needs missing out on vital services. • Anxiety and isolation being experienced. • Lack of face-to-face services. • Lack of information and communication of new initiatives. • Conviction that many problems like rent arrears and evictions are being stored up. • Trying to prevent issues becoming long term issues. <p>Goals set at the conference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intention to relaunch of the advice forum providing regular opportunities to meet and share information. 	

	<p>2. Tackle the difficulty that agencies have in referring into the advice sector. This resulted in the creation of a simple spreadsheet listing what each of the advice agencies' main services were.</p> <p>All advice agencies have signed up to this spreadsheet and update their information regularly. The spreadsheet contains main contact details and provides space to include new initiatives. It uses a traffic light system to enable advice agencies to update when they have reached capacity for referrals.</p> <p>Key discussion points following on from the presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration for service users be able to attend appointments when referrals are made. The spreadsheet allows details to be added as required. • Where gaps/issues are identified these can be noted on the spreadsheet. This is an information sharing opportunity. • How information is shared needs to be considered and will be part of oncoming conversations for the sector. <p>Link to Spreadsheet</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Emerging work for the Advice in Community Settings Programme – Alex Talbot, Partnership Co-ordinator, Housing Department, RBKC</p>	
	<p>Advice in Community Settings Grants programme website page</p> <p>Alex Talbot (AT) shared details for the Greater London Authority (GLA) website page. He explained that grant programme seeks to fund advice partnerships in London. These partnerships enable voluntary and community sector organisation and local authority and housing associations to be part of partnerships.</p> <p>RBKC council came together with advice agencies to form a partnership securing initial funding in July 2021. Stage 2 funding is expected late October 2021.</p> <p>They partnership has facilitated an increase in the amount of advice happening in community settings where populations facing disproportional amounts of advice exclusion are then able to access these services. Setting includes food banks, soup kitchens, school settings particularly primary schools. Also being considered are faith settings and The Venture Centre playground services.</p> <p>The idea is to use funding and divert it into the advice sector and offer an enhanced drop-in service at strategically located drop ins.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking at GDPR to make sure that routes of information sharing to make sure it is as effective as possible and complies with data security. Standardising approach around inter agency referral routes. Create infrastructure around coordinated response to know what is happening with referrals and levels of capacity. Essentially this will be 	

	<p>developing the spreadsheet developed following The Advice Conference as discussed by BB earlier at this forum.</p> <p>AT is also working on focus groups being organised for populations that have been identified as advice excluded particularly young families, refugees or new migrants and isolated older groups. Support in sourcing individuals for the focus groups would be appreciated.</p> <p>Key discussion points following on from the presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are five advice partners North Kensington Law Centre, Citizens Advice Kensington and Chelsea, Worlds End Advice Centre and Age UK Kensington and Chelsea. • Future Locations are still undetermined, the existing drop-in centres that advice agencies are running will continue. <p>AT provided his contact details: alex.talbot@rbkc.gov.uk</p>	
4	Breakout Groups – Discussion on VCS services and capacity from September onwards?	
	<p>We want to better understand your position as advice agencies in terms of service provision and capacity.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From this month onwards what does demand for your services look like? 2. What are some of the main issues facing clients / your organisation? 3. What suggestions/ideas should be considered to help the advice sector? <p>Feedback 3 main points to the whole group</p>	
5	Feedback	
	<p>The following topics were raised during the breakout sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about what is coming around the corner e.g. universal credit uplift supplement ending, end of furlough, utility prices rising and end of moratorium on evictions all at the same time. • There is a need for face to face for certain client groups. Going forward a hybrid model would be good. • An advice forum meeting on a regular basis would be helpful. • Afghan refugees will create demand for advice. • Volunteers - including help for those with language barriers. • How does advice sector link in with the wider health and wellbeing services in the borough? • Digital exclusion and resulting isolation and loneliness. • Lack of accessibility (not sure what this is so deleted). • Lack of effective signposting for statutory services. • The voluntary sector has been flexible in creating face to face opportunitiesopportunities this has been found less in the statutory sector. 	

	<p>A digital inclusion partnership has been set up by the Council. Any organisations interested can join this group. If interested please contact Tim Ellis, the Council lead by emailing the K&C Digital Inclusion Partnership at digitalinclusion@rbkc.gov.uk.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Discussion on what can be done to support co-ordination of advice provision in the borough?</p>	
	<p>AS asked the group what the advice sector to continue to improve coordination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around digital exclusion the question of what can be done in the interim about the challenges for people who cannot access information or appointments online was raised? Within the statutory sector appointments have to be done online while some clients do not even have an android phone. • Dalgarno has changed IT provider and has free Wi-Fi in the café area. It is not an expensive thing to do. Many organisations are now doing the same. It is not always clear how to get that information out to local residents. AS reminded, everyone that KCSC would be able to circulate this type of information to the group. • Workers Education Association offer basic courses on how to use computers and how to get online. Funding has been received from RBKC to work with local organisations and residents in the borough. WEA Development and Outreach: lmalaolu@wea.org.uk • It was noted that the question of people that do not want to access digital and want face to face appointments is not being addressed. • Hodan Somali Community have found many service users only have older style mobile phones. They have created volunteer roles for digital supporters and digital trainers help remotely or visit face to face. • The promotion of free Wi-Fi provision around the borough is being explored by the Digital Inclusion Partnership. Wi-Fi hotspots are available at libraries in the borough. Volunteers at libraries are able to assist people get online and navigate the net. <p>AS ask the group to discuss ways in which the sector can link into health and wellbeing services and asked if this was an area that people felt should be explored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ann Goodger (AG) felt it was an area that needed discussion. Housing is something of concern especially housing associations. They are trying to engage more but it is a complex area and more needs to be done to understand it. Zara Ghods (ZG) agreed that this was an essential area to focus on. • BB observed that there has always been a link between advice and food support. The hard part is the resourcing required and capacity. How do you get the right people to the right place? It is getting harder to get positive outcomes for people. It has been great working with partners that alleviate other issues. One example is mental health issues, collaboration is the way to go and multiplies the effect which is in the client's interest. The wellbeing of 	

	<p>advisors needs to be considered as well. Working holistically and having warm handovers can help to achieve better outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS highlighted that although funding from RBKC Council has been awarded for 18 months the decision for future funding will start before then. This is an opportunity to shape the conversation about funding for the advice sector. Laurence Wilson (LW) highlighted that mental health is a big issue for the borough. Advice agencies can make referrals but have limited qualification to make assessments. They have seen that there is high correlation between debt and mental health issues. The main challenge faced is how to access people struggling with mental health as they are not engaged with advice services. There is a presence at St Charles Centre and Chelsea and Westminster hospitals but there must be other areas where advice services can and go and engage with people not currently accessing the support available. Angela Fox (AF) highlighted that link workers are based in GP services making referrals. Referrals via the link workers are going to Age UK although it is not known if there are any gaps. Michelle Lindson (ML) observed that Community Living Well have details of organisations they can make referrals to but feel that are not fully aware of the services that can be accessed. This would be invaluable and save so much time as it is a challenge to keep up to date with changes that are made. Victoria Borwick (VB) suggested that link workers might appreciate the information available in the KCSC publications and website. <p>AS asked everyone to consider how to pick up the ongoing conversation to help develop advice support linking into wellbeing. Further discussion to take place on this matter within and outside of the Forum.</p>	<p>AS to pick this up</p> <p>All</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Member updates</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk in services are taking place at Nucleus. Kensington and Chelsea Forum for 50s will be running an eight-session mindfulness session in October. Funding has enabled Dalgarno to run a digital champions programme which will encourage them to access digital services online. Two new members of the community have been appointed. Citizen Advice Kensington and Chelsea have been running appointments by arrangement in the north and south of the borough but will be operating a walk-in service at Chelsea Old Town Hall 5 days a week from 1 OctoberOctober. Age UK Kensington and Chelsea are in the final stages of Debt Advice Funding. There is a spare meeting room available at St. John's Church Kensal Triangle. The space is available for voluntary and community organisations on 	

	Thursdays and at weekends. St John's church is located on Harrow Road at the top end of Ladbrooke Grove. Click here to view map. If interested please contact vicarstjohnskg@gmail.com .	
--	--	--

ATTENDANCE LIST

	Name	Organisation
1	Aida Morales	WENAC (World's End Neighbourhood Advice Centre)
2	Alex Talbot	RBKC
3	Angela Fox	Age UK Kensington & Chelsea
4	Angela Spence	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
5	Ann Goodger	Dalgarno Trust
6	Baljit Badesha	Nucleus Legal Advice Centre
7	Camilla Satow	RBKC
8	Carla Camilleri	ADKC
9	Farid Mall	Groundwork London
10	Jenny Greenfield	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
11	Laurence Wilson	Citizens Advice K&C
12	Lola Malaolu	WEA (Workers' Educational Association)
13	Lourdes Colclough	Rethink Mental Illness
14	Michael Mitas	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
15	Michelle Lindson	Community Living Well
16	Millie Satow	West London Clinical Commissioning Group
17	Mohamed Farah	Hodan Somali Community
18	Rebecca Austin	The ClementJames Centre
19	Shelina Thawer	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council

20	Tom Richards	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council
21	Victoria Borwick MP	Dad's House
22	Zara Ghods	Kensington and Chelsea Over 50s Forum
23	Zina Serageldin	Kensington & Chelsea Social Council

The information above will appear in minutes for this meeting which will be made available to all the attendees and published on KCSC's website.