Report from CEO of KCSC for BVOAG



May 2017

This report is written with the support of BVOAG representatives on behalf of the local voluntary and community sector which covers matters since the last BVOAG meeting.

**Youth Foundation**

Having spent a considerable amount of time looking into the possible development of a Youth Foundation in the borough with investment from the John Lyons Foundation. Discussions with our local commissioners have informed KCSC that the development of a youth foundation could be part of a broader discussion as part of the consultation process on a future youth strategy for Kensington and Chelsea. We have been told that consultation is likely to begin towards the end of this calendar year. John Lyons has told the Social Council that the investment into Youth Foundations will still exist for a considerable length of time, therefore delaying any decision on developing a foundation should not have any negative impact in relation to obtaining funding from John Lyons if and when then the time comes.

**Mental Health**

Following the review of mental health day services and the way in which this was handled in Westminster. We would like to know if there are any lessons that can be learnt when it comes to implementing a review within RBKC. There were concerns heard in particular around communication, lack of co-production and the way all day services were due to close before anything else had been put in place. This led to significant distress for the users of the service and workers.

Our understanding is that the plan will be for people with personal budgets to pay for services they want and so there will be a need for a vibrant marketplace for this to happen. We welcome the use of personal budget payment cards to make things easier in terms of use and to cover any perceived risk of misspent funds. Work is already underway such as the Self Care pilot and the new Mental Health Navigator Service which will help to positively influence a vibrant marketplace.

**Adult Social Care Hub**

It is good to hear the plans moving forward for the new Adult social Care Hub in the north of the borough and that there is potential space for complementary organisations which may include the voluntary and community sector. It says on the RBKC website that consultation with users will begin soon. When will this begin and is there likely to be any involvement of the voluntary sector in terms of helping to determine the use of available space/services within the hub?

**Response to RBKC External Housing Advice – 6 month review report**

In response to RBKC’s short paper on the impact of decommissioning of the Staying First Housing Advice contract in which it concluded that closure has resulted in very little increase in demand for housing advice in agencies. BVOAG advice representatives would like to express that whilst this matter has been concluded they believe that their organisations could have simply absorbed housing queries into their current workload. This could be because over time they have noticed that the nature of housing advice has changed, moving from dealing with cases helping people keep their homes to providing advice on affordability. Some cases may also have gone underground as people live in more overcrowded homes.

**Moving on**

The BVOAG representatives would like to express gratitude and best wishes to Jan Halliday, CEO of AGE UK and Naami Padi, Director of Venture Community Association as they move on from their current posts. Jan was nominated as BVOAG representative in December 2014 and Naami in December 2016. Both will be moving on to pastures new and we wish them all the best for the future.

**Angela Spence**

**KCSC**