

Hammersmith and Fulham Advice Forum Meeting Minutes

21 January 2015, 2pm – 4pm

Venue: Hammersmith Town Hall, London W6 9JU

Attendees:

Aaron Cahill	LBHF Housing
Cheryl Gale	London Plus Credit Union
Colin Morris	DWP
Colin Thomas	Pinnacle PSG
Councillor Sue Fennimore	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion
Dominika Michalik	H&F Mencap
Doreen Taggart	Action on Disability
Hasina Begum	LBHF Housing Unit
Jenny Stokes	HF Law Centre
Katherine Green	Crosslight
Kaveh Kalantari	Iranian Association
Keith Mallinson	HF Mind
Lorraine Thompson	HF Law Centre
Malgosia Pakulska	EEAC (Eastern Europe Advice Centre)
Mandy Goodall	Advice Station
Nia Bellot	UPG
Paul Rosenberg	LBHF
Reshma Begum	Hestia Housing and Support
Richard Goodman	HF CAB
Sara Taylor	HF Law Centre
Sarah Jane Taylor	London Irish Centre
Stephan Wiedmer	Cross Light Advice
Sue James	HF Law Centre
Sue Spiller	LBHF
Velma Baptiste	LBHF Housing
Wesley Harcourt	AdviceUK
Zahra Beg	LBHF Housing Options

1. Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising

Correction to the HFAF Minutes from 4 December 2014 (highlighted in red below):

Section 4, Rental Income and Resident Support update:

Some statistics:

- 16% of all tenancies in LBHF are council tenancies
- £70 million collected each year in rental income
- **Serving a Notice of Seeking Possession** (correction) triggered on £250 or more than four weeks rent in arrears
- In the last year there have been approximately 300 possession hearings with 26 evictions

Corrected Minutes attached with these Minutes.

No comments or other amendments to the minutes of the last meeting.

2. Draft Housing Strategy – Key points and Q&A

Aaron Cahill presented the key points of the Housing Strategy and explained the consultation process. The strategy is attached. Please note the consultation period for the Housing Strategy has been extended to Monday **9 March 2015**.

To take part in the consultation please go to <http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/housingstrategyconsultation> and complete the online survey.

We agreed that we would provide a collective response to the Housing Strategy from the Advice Forum. Can you please send me any comments / concerns / questions about the survey by **26 February** (this deadline has been extended). It can be anything from a sentence to a paragraph. We will then aim to pull all the feedback into a few paragraphs. It would be good to hear from as many of you as possible.

There was a query re whether the council intended to have some Tenancy Relation Offices. The council are considering this. They do currently fund a post, Tenancy Sustainment Officer, to support private tenancies. The postholder is Devorah Negusse. She can be contacted at devorah.negusse@lbhf.gov.uk. The council are also looking at an accreditation standard to ensure that Landlords are 'good'.

There were various other concerns. Please do feed these back to Mandy for inclusion in the Advice Forum response.

3. Care Act 2014 and Partnership Working

The Care Act 2014 comes in to force on 1 April 2015.

Two presentations. The first one gave an overview and key principles of the Act. The second one was a presentation of the People First website. Both presentations are attached with these Minutes.

When the Care Act comes in to force, Local authorities have a duty to provide clear and comprehensive information and advice to the public on all aspects of adult social care, on the availability and choice of local care and support services, and on related issues. They will need to promote the ideas of prevention and well-being, and encourage and enable people to lead healthier, more active, independent and inclusive lives

People First (<http://www.peoplefirstinfo.org.uk/>) is the main vehicle by which LBHF will look to fulfil its information and advice duty.

Advice Forum members should check they are on the site and that their details are correct. To add / correct entries contact peoplefirst@rbkc.gov.uk.

4. Round table update and discussion

We had limited time for this.

DWP update on start dates for Universal Credit:

- New family claims from 26 January
- New claims from single people are borough wide from 16 February

Training events are now up and running for Advice Forum members. Mandy will email round details of training as it happens. There is some upcoming DWP training and some advice skills training. If anyone has any specific training desires please let Mandy know.

5. Agenda suggestions and AOB

Andy Slaughter will be attending the next meeting on 26 March. It is likely that Andy will be the only speaker to ensure that there will be time to hear from participants and discuss some of the issues that are important to the sector.

Dates and venue for the next two meetings:

26 March (Thursday) Small Hall, Hammersmith Town Hall

20 May (Wednesday) Small Hall, Hammersmith Town Hall

All meetings will be from 2pm to 4pm.