



# Hammersmith and Fulham Advice Forum

## Minutes

24 November 2016, 2pm – 4pm

Copies and attachments to the minutes are held on the Advice Station website

<http://www.advicestation.org.uk/info/reports-resources/advice-forum/afm-24112016>

**Venue:** Hammersmith Town Hall, London W6 9JU

### **Attendees:**

Alan Connell	Hestia
Angela White	LBHF
Carla Sayer	London Plus Credit Union
Cllr Sue Fennimore	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion
Derec Craig	Age UK
Joseph Pascual	LBHF
Justina Smarszuc	H&F CAB
Katrina Hollis	PSU RCJ
Keith Mallinson	HF Mind
Liam Hennessy	HF Mind
Lucy Baker	LBHF
Malgosia Pakulska	EERC (East European Resource Centre)
Mandy Goodall	HF Law Centre
Margaret Magnusson	HF CAB
Naheed Malik	OnePlace
Penny Jerrum	Turn2Us
Pippa Brown	St Mungos
Rahela Begum	Hestia
Reshma Begum	Hestia Housing and Support
Richard Butlin	Staying First
Richard Goodman	HF CAB
Robert Sale	Healthier Homes Project
Sara Taylor	HF Law Centre
Shad Haibatan	SOBUS
Stephan Wiedmer	Crosslight Advice
Sue James	HF Law Centre
Tom Hopkins	LBHF
Velma Baptiste	LBHF Housing
Zahra Beg	LBHF Housing Options

### **1. Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising**

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

## 2. Stock transfer update

**Tom Hopkins, Lead Independent Tenants and Leaseholders Adviser**, gave an update on the proposed stock transfer.

There have been delays as central government has slowed down support:

- DCLG's Transfer Manual expired in March 2016, and no progress can be made until this is replaced.
- There has been no DCLG / HMT response to LBHF funding proposals.

Combined with unexpected economic challenges (Brexit & "High Value Void Sales"), the shadow board are reviewing their options and considering viability.

LBH&F remains committed to finding ways to protect and safeguard homes

Please see Tom's [presentation](#), which is held with these minutes, for a full update.

## 3. Overview of Turn2Us service

**Penny Jerrum, Head of Engagement, Turn2us**, gave an overview of the Turn2us service.

Please see Penny's [presentation](#) which is held with these minutes.

Turn2us are a national charity, based in Hammersmith and are keen to be involved and make an impact in their local community as well as nationally.

Turn2us will be running two of their workshops which teach front-line staff and volunteers how to use the Turn2us tools and services to support people in financial hardship.

These workshops will be run on 19 January 2017, 14.30-17.30 and 9 February 2017, 9.30 – 12.30, both at Turn2us premises in Hammersmith. Details are held on the [Advice Station](#) website.

## 4. Overview of PSU (Personal Support Unit) service

**Katrina Hollis, Regional Manager, PSU, Royal Courts of Justice**, explained the PSU service.

Please see Katrina's [presentation](#) which is held with these minutes.

There is a PSU service in Wandsworth County Court. PSU volunteers provide practical and emotional support to clients and help with any civil or family case. They help with form filling, collating information and signpost clients on to other agencies where necessary. Katrina is keen to improve the client journey and improve signposting / referrals. Referrals can be made to the PSU unit at Wandsworth by emailing [wandsworth@the PSU.org.uk](mailto:wandsworth@the PSU.org.uk)

## 5. Update on Homelessness / Rough Sleepers in LBHF

**Lucy Baker, Paths Manager, Housing Options, LBHF**, gave an update on rough sleepers in H&F.

Please see Lucy's [presentation](#) which is held with these minutes.

Lucy's presentation showed that 50% of rough sleepers had held a tenancy in the last year. Clearly there is an opportunity here to work on prevention.

LBHF are working to prevent rough sleeping by being pro-active, working in partnership, maintaining tenancies and providing early referrals to floating support / health services / debt advice etc.

The Advice Station website will be updated with details of agencies who can help with homelessness (Lucy to send Mandy the data and Mandy to update the website).

## 6. Universal Credit and Benefit Cap update

**Joseph Pascual, HB Assist Manager, Housing Options, LBHF**, gave an update and an overview of the H&F Link service which has been set up to help clients affected by the benefit cap. The benefit cap kicked in on 7 November and the number of households in the borough affected by the cap has tripled to more than 1k.

The main objective of the H&F Link service is homelessness prevention and is primarily aimed at anyone affected by the Benefit Cap and/or Universal Credit living in privately rented or temporary accommodation. The service helps with housing benefit issues, DHP and employment issues. The H&F Link team have sorted the issues for 70% of their clients; of those clients 55% have been helped by finding employment

Agencies can call up to book an appointment for clients or use the [referral form](#) (held with these minutes). Contact details are: t: 0208 753 1587, e: [h&f.link@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:h&f.link@lbhf.gov.uk)

## 7. Overview of Credit Union service

**Carla Sayer, Volunteer Co-ordinator, London Plus Credit Union**, gave an overview of the Credit Union service. Details of services are listed on the CU website - <http://www.londonpluscu.co.uk/>

Minimum ID requirement for services is a benefits letter dated from within the last three months. There is no minimum income requirements: the CU assess people on an individual basis.

Carla will produce an info sheet from the Credit Union detailing who can get bank accounts / loans etc.

The CU have a rent arrears service but it is not actively publicized as it's seen as too high-risk in terms of lending. It's for internal referral partners only and applications for loans to cover rent arrears are NOT accepted from individuals.

## 8. H&F Advice Strategy

**Cllr Caroline Needham, H&F Councillor**, gave an update on the Advice Strategy which is owned and shaped by the advice sector in Hammersmith and Fulham. Caroline chairs the Advice Planning Board which is currently working on the strategy with a projected publication date of March 2017.

The board are using the [Local advice strategy toolkit](#) (held with these minutes), developed by the Low Commission, in the production of the strategy.

## 9. Agenda items and AOB

Request for someone to attend from social services to explain how agencies can refer a client on to them for an assessment.

Request that a representative from DWP attends the next meeting.

## 10. Date of next meetings

### Future meetings dates:

January 12 2017  
February 28 2017  
April 12 2017  
June 7 2017  
July 19 2017

All meetings are between 2 and 4pm in H&F Town Hall