

# Hammersmith and Fulham Advice Forum Meeting Minutes

## 23 October 2014, 2pm – 4pm

**Venue:** Grove Neighbourhood Centre, London W6 0DT (sourced and funded by LBHF)

### Attendees:

Abiola Igene	Hestia
Amanda Roles	Mencap
Amy Nyemecz	Shelter
Caroline Wallis	Shepherds Bush Families Project
Cathy Parry	Age UK
Colin Morris	DWP Partner Support Manager-West London (Speaker)
Councillor Sue Fennimore	Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion (Speaker)
Doreen Taggart	Action on Disability
Elaine Allaby	Cross Light Advice / Student
Eric Brown	Advice Station
Ian Lawry	SOBUS
Jabbar Hussan	Iraqi Community Association
Jay Shah	Maggies Cancer Centres
Kathryn Dombrowicz	River House UK
Keith Mallinson	HF Mind
Lorraine Thompson	HF Law Centre
Malika Hamiddou	CITAS
Mandy Goodall	Advice Station (Minutes)
Naheed Malik	OnePlace (Speaker)
Phil Cooper	Hammersmith and Fulham Refugee Forum
Pippa Brown	St Mungos Broadway
Robert Pusch	Tendis
Sally Teasdale	Urban Partnership Group
Sara Taylor	HF Law Centre
Sarah Jane Taylor	London Irish Centre
Simi Ryatt	HF CAB
Sonia Karikova	Eastern Europe Advice Centre
Stephan Wiedmer	Crosslight Debt Advice
Stephen Reid	CASS
Sue James	HF Law Centre (Chair)
Sue Spiller	Community Investment, LBHF
Zahra Beg	LBHF Housing Options
Zahra Dehghani	Iranian Association

### 1. Welcome and introductions - Advice Forum and round table

Sue James introduced the Advice Forum, outlining the aims and objectives. Sample Terms of Reference were distributed. These are attached with the minutes. [If anyone wishes to suggest any amendments please send them through to Mandy by 30 November.](#) If no comments received the sample Terms of Reference will be used for the Hammersmith and Fulham Advice Forum (HFAF).

Advice Forum is supported by the council, who are also providing free venue hire, and Hammersmith United Charities who have provided part funding for the Advice Forum.

Future meetings will be held in the Town Hall in central Hammersmith.

## 2. Vision for the advice sector

Councillor Sue Fennimore outlined her vision for the sector, identifying social exclusion as a major issue for H&F residents. She is setting up a social inclusion sector within the council and is keen to work in partnership with the advice sector to improve outcomes for residents.

Actions / activities:

- TSIF funding has been increased (was set to be cut by 9.6%)
- Identified that housing benefit is a big issue and are delivering a piece of work around revenue and benefits
- Dedicated housing benefit officers in place for advice organisations. (Positive feedback from the meeting on this action)
- Meetings arranged with some key organisations – HF Law Centre, HF CAB, Shelter – and queries and concern have been taken on board
- Housing allocations seen as being a top priority. Categories / allocations will be changing
- More resources and training will be provided, including training round EU nationals and DWP issues. Aim is to stop cases going to tribunal. Also looking at trusted partners for data exchange so expect improvements in the long term

## 3. Update from OnePlace

Naheed Malik gave an overview of OnePlace. It is paired with Job Centre Plus and aims to give a holistic approach to people looking for work by co-locating services and helping people to solve other issues as well as look for work. Located in OnePlace are debt and welfare advisors; job advisors, project advisors (gaps in CVs etc); housing benefit and council tax advisors.

Currently carrying out extensive work with 20 families that have the most significant and complex needs in the borough.

OnePlace accepts referrals for clients seeking help for bedroom tax, benefit cap, universal credit. Possible that advice organisations could refer clients to OnePlace. [Mandy to find out more about the referral system and feedback to meeting.](#)

## 4. Advice Station

Mandy Goodall gave an overview of Advice Station. Presentation attached with the minutes.

The aim of this project is to bring all principal advice providers in the Hammersmith and Fulham area together to create a single point of contact 'Advice Station'.

It also aims to improve the sustainability of free social welfare law services and to improve outcomes for clients by increasing collaboration between existing advice and support services.

The key elements of the project are to:

- provide a single point of contact for advice services staffed by trained volunteers - telephone line and website for email queries.
- establish an agreed quality standard for local advice organisations, enabling improvements in service quality through specialist training & support
- establish a structured referral protocol across H&F advice agencies
- set up outreach services in W6, W12 and W14

Business cards promoting Advice Station distributed. [Please contact Mandy if you would like more cards.](#)  
The Advice Station telephone number is 020 7385 1322. Opening hours are Monday – Friday, 10.00 – 13.00.

Advice Station website – there will be a directory of advice organisations on the website. [Mandy to send listing form \(to capture organisations' details for website entry\) to all for completion.](#)

Training – a training programme will be developed for staff in advice organisations: for this to be worthwhile we need to be clear on training needs. [Mandy to send training needs questionnaire to all for completion.](#)

## **5. Welfare reform update**

Colin Morris gave an update on welfare reform. Presentation attached with the minutes.

Colin produces a monthly newsletter which he will send to all HFAF participants with immediate effect. Mandy has provided Colin with participants' contact details. The current (September) newsletter is attached with the minutes.

Issues raised:

- Is it possible for an individual (or an organisation on their behalf) to ask for a recording of their PIP assessment – either in advance of the assessment or when they attend? [Colin will check and report back.](#)
- There are no longer telephones in job centres and the concern is that clients are disadvantaged. Colin explained that this is a planned digital rollout and staff in job centres should help clients who are struggling. Meeting participants reported that this has not been the case for their clients. Digital exclusion is an ongoing concern. The Masbro Centre (open 9.00 – 21.00) has a suite of PCs for public use. Please note, this is a self-help service. [Sue Fennimore will take concerns back to the council.](#)

Communication with DWP:

Colin provided the following contact numbers:

Attendance Allowance	0845 605 6055 (use 0345 dialling code from a mobile number)
Disability Living Allowance	0845 712 3456 (use 0345 dialling code from a mobile number)
Personal Independence Payment	0845 850 3322 (use 0345 dialling code from a mobile number)

There are also escalation telephone numbers that advice organisations can use to raise issues, discuss solutions and share good practices. Escalation details for the Glasgow Benefit Centre are attached. Please note these numbers are for advice organisation only and not for issue to the public.

## **6. Round table update and discussion**

Time was short. [Mandy will collate summary organisational information from completed directory forms and send on to participants in mid/end November.](#)

## **7. Summary, next steps and date of next meeting**

Suggested speakers for next meeting:

Housing benefit officer  
Paul Rosenberg  
Zahra Beg

[Please advise Mandy if you have any more suggestions on speakers.](#)

Evaluation forms distributed and completed. Your feedback will help set the agenda for the next meeting

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 4 December 2pm – 4pm. Venue to be advised.**