

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

HOMELESSNESS FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held at York House on
Monday 19 March 2007 at 2 p.m.

Present:

Bob Bailey	Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness
Andrea Baker	Richmond Housing Partnership
Louise Brice	Resettlement, LBRUT
Dan Butler	LBRUT
Liz Dewson	Victim Support
Ranjit Dhillon	Addiction Support
Rachel Dickson	Vineyard/Furniture Scheme
Annemarie Freude-Lagevardi	Centre 32/RB Mind
Joana Gregory	Furniture Scheme/RB Mind
Simon Gunn	CSP
Matt Hatton	Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness
Beryl Hawkins	Clerk (LBRUT)
Bridget Jones	Richmond College
Linda Lauris	Richmond Housing Needs
Kate Pasfield	Kingston and Richmond Law Centre
Joy Pocock	Vineyard/RB Mind
Tricia Roe	Richmond and Twickenham Primary Care Trust
Ed Tytherleigh	Spear
Penny Wade (Chair)	Homelessness Forum
Eleni Walia	Housing Services, LBRUT

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Keith Waters, Stonham Housing Association, Richmond Advocacy, Richmond Council for Voluntary Service, Refugee Action Kingston, Karen Green, Supported Rent Deposit Scheme, Tracey Norman, Life Housing, David Sidonios, RCVS.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2006 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Nurse (Ref: Minute 3) Penny Wade reported that she had received no further information about the recruitment of a nurse specifically for people using The Vineyard Project. It was noted that a room was ready for use by the nurse. Ed Tytherleigh agreed to make enquiries. It was noted that arrangements for the assessment of temporary patients by G.P's had improved. Had a nurse been appointed, these assessments would have been carried out by the nurse.

Tricia Roe arrived after discussion of this item and updated the Forum on the position of the Primary Care Trust (PCT) with regard to the provision of a nurse:

- The PCT was aware of the gap, but had had its funding top sliced to support priorities of PCTs across London that were in deficit.
- These financial constraints meant that no new posts could be funded.
- Since the previous worker had left the PCT had tried to extend provision.

Tricia agreed to check on what had happened to the funding.

4. PRESENTATION BY SIMON GUNN, JCM SUBSTANCE MISUSE, RICHMOND & TWICKENHAM PRIMARY CARE TRUST (PCT)

Simon Gunn addressed the Forum on proposals for a new day centre for people with drug and alcohol problems in the borough and answered questions:

- Simon was appointed by the PCT in December 2006 to provide a community service for people with drug and alcohol problems.
- Provision within the borough is disjointed. There are a few providers doing similar work, with little discussion between them.
- Richmond Community Drug and Alcohol Team (CDAT) is not a referral service, but has been the place to which referrals are usually made. Many clients do not need assessments and referrals are overloading CDAF specialists unnecessarily.
- Rehabilitation is no longer seen as a solution. Clients who go to rehabilitation have to go back into the community and tend to find themselves back in rehabilitation.
- The purpose of the new day centre will be to provide a hub for those affected by drug and alcohol misuse. Clients will be given a brief assessment and will be signposted to services appropriate to their needs. The information provided by clients will be kept while they are in treatment so that they do not need to give the same information more than once.
- Training will be offered to referrers and to partner agencies. An education centre will offer use of computers, access to training, after-care groups, one-to-one counselling and provision to bid for money for clients.
- The service will be funded by CDAT and available to the public sector.
- A new drug service is being provided by the Action Support and Care Agency (ASCA) in part of the premises at 233 Mortlake Road. New day programmes will be locally funded. A two-tier service will offer advice and a criminal justice service. Previously, there had been four managers, managing five organisations at four locations. This has been replaced with a single organisation which, from April, will operate from a single location.

- ASCA and SPEAR clients will be Borough clients.
- Training will be open to members of the Forum and to CDAT staff. Staff will be supported in accessing specialist support. CDAT will not itself employ specialist workers.
- Recruitment will begin after 22 March 2007.
- New directories will be published and open days held to publicise the new service.
- From the launch date 95% of services will be running from one centre, accessible by bus to all borough residents. The service will be further developed over time.
- Spear clients who are residents of the borough will be seen within 28 days. About 60% of Spear's clients are not Richmond residents. Many are from neighbouring boroughs and have links through attendance at schools in the borough. The intention will be to negotiate with other boroughs. Eighty per cent of Spear's clients have local connections. The other 20% will be encouraged to take advantage of local services. Exceptionally Spear will support them.
- More community 'detoxes' are being encouraged. All that have been asked for have been funded. Community detoxes are cheaper than rehabilitation and better for the client as it keeps them in their local environment. There are difficulties for clients who have to move out of the borough for any length of time. For example, they may have no GP when they return.

Simon asked Forum members to get in touch with him if they knew of any forums that would benefit from a presentation on the new service – sgunn65@yahoo.co.uk.

Simon offered to prepare and email handouts of his presentation. Penny Wade thanked Simon for his presentation. It was agreed that Simon should be invited back to a future meeting to report on development of the Centre.

5. PRESENTATION BY JOY POCOCK, MANAGER OF THE VINEYARD PROJECT

Joy Pocock, who had recently been appointed manager at The Vineyard, gave a brief account of her work history and of developments at The Vineyard:

- Joy had worked with homeless people for 35 years, having been raised in a men's Salvation Army hostel managed by her parents. She later became homeless herself and became the receptionist and then manager of a Salvation Army hostel for homeless people in Westminster. About five years after being homeless, Joy set up the first Salvation Army in-house day centre for homeless people and ran a resettlement programme on running a tenancy, teaching the occupants to be trainers themselves.
- The Vineyard Project is 30 years old this year. The idea for the Project came from the minister of the church, who was also a Probation Officer, who wanted a place that vulnerable people could

come to.

- Its uniqueness derives from the fact that it caters for all comers. A lot of clients have mental health, personality or learning difficulties. They may be just out of prison or suffering from drug or alcohol abuse. This wide range of needs makes the job interesting but difficult. Joy is learning to live with it.
- The Project is run by Richmond borough MIND. The Project does not deal with 'labels'. Everyone is there in their own right.
- The Project may have had a bad reputation at times in the past, but this is changing. It will be more welcoming, offering complementary therapies, such as aromatherapy and reflexology, drama and craft. There is a women's group and clients are referred to Spear and Richmond Advocacy.
- Services are provided as needed. This includes hot meals, showers, clothing, and there is a charity shop, furniture, bedding and kitchen equipment, as well as clothes, bric a brac and books.
- The Project is open Monday to Friday, from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., and 11am to 8pm on a Wednesday. A meal is provided for homeless people on Wednesday evening. This is part of a programme provided by local churches. Duke Street Baptist Church provides meals on Tuesdays and St Stephen's Church on Thursdays.
- Spear visit twice a week.
- The Project is also part of the Sunday lunch scheme operated by Richmond churches, which offers meals for £1. Members of the congregation are there to talk to. This is a lifeline for many people who need somewhere to go at the weekend. St John's Church in Church Road provides coffee on Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. Centre 32 provides meals at a cost of £1.50.
- A new washing machine is on order.
- The Project caters for all ages. Children may visit if accompanied by a parent.
- Access is unrestricted and the Police seldom have to be called.

Joy was thanked for her presentation and it was agreed that she should be invited back to a future meeting to report on developments. Joy can be contacted on joyvymind@yahoo.co.uk.

6. UPDATE ON THE HOUSING STRATEGY GROUP

Dan Butler, who had recently replaced Colin Waters, updated Forum members on Housing Strategy issues:

- The Housing Strategy Group was to be reconvened and would be chaired by Brian Castle.
- The Housing and Homeless Strategy for 2007/08 was being revised, using other data sources.
- Dan had experience of providing advice to homeless people through his employment with the Housing Corporation.
- Dan would be on the Housing Strategy Steering Group and would be happy to answer queries from Forum members by email –

d.butler@richmond.gov.uk.

- There was a need for more Council Members at the meeting and the Group would be requesting speakers.
- The Group would be trying to get all sections of Housing represented.

7. UPDATE ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF SPEAR'S 2007-10 STRATEGY

Ed Tytherleigh stated that Spear's 2007-10 strategy would be published in about a week's time. It was agreed that the strategy should be emailed to all Forum members. Ed invited members to submit contributions and reported that a lot was already being done. One development was the introduction of a single telephone number for all enquiries – 020 8404 1481. This would be advertised in a new leaflet.

8. RICHMOND FURNITURE SCHEME

Leaflets advertising the Richmond upon Thames Furniture Scheme were made available to Forum members. It was noted that further copies were available on request.

(Tel: 020 8755 4665, Email: furniture.scheme@ukgateway.net,
Website: www.furniture.scheme.ukgateway.net)

9. VICTIM SUPPORT

Liz Dewson from Victim Support informed Forum members that a one-stop shop for domestic violence victims had just been started. It would be open on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St John the Divine Church, Richmond. Representatives from Legal Services, the Police and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) would be available to give free and confidential advice.

10. NEWSLETTER

Elenia Walia stated that the Homelessness Forum newsletter would be circulated with the minutes in two to three weeks' time. Members were invited to submit contributions for inclusion in the newsletter.

11. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of would be held in the Salon at York House on Monday 24 September 2007 from 2 to 3.30 p.m.

The meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.