

**LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES  
HOMELESSNESS FORUM**

**Minutes of the meeting held in The Salon, York House, Twickenham, on  
Monday 21 September 2009 at 2 p.m.**

**Present:**

Ed Tytherleigh (Chair)	SPEAR
Neil Anderson	Out-of-Hours Social Work Team, LBRUT
Elizabeth Bamber	Twickenham Citizens Advice Bureau
Annette Blake	SPEAR
Roger Brett-Freeman	Vice-chair, Richmond LGBT Forum
Louise Brice	Resettlement Team, LBRUT
Councillor Denise Carr	LBRUT
Diana Coleman	NHS Richmond
Liz Dewson	Victim Support
Stephen Ely	SPEAR
Richard Eason	Chair, Richmond LGBT Forum
Ken Emerson	Housing Operations, LBRUT
Jacqueline Frances	Stonham, Richmond Ex-offender Services
Clare Granger	SPEAR
Katie Gray	Thames Valley Housing Association
Beryl Hawkins	Clerk, LBRUT
Catherine Howard	Kingston & Richmond Law Centre
Christina Isis	NHS Richmond
Penny Lee	The Vineyard Project
Krystal McDonald	SPEAR
Jane McNerney	Housing & Wellbeing Team, LBRUT
Laura Nicholls	Life Housing
Tracy Stanley	Housing & Wellbeing Team, LBRUT
Surinder Kaur	EMAG
Barbara Thorn	CfBT (Connexions)
Linda Toulmin	Richmond Housing Partnership
Edyta Van der Put	SPEAR
Eleni Walia	Housing & Wellbeing Team, LBRUT
Cass Williams	St Christopher's Fellowship

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Alison Barrington, Richmond Citizens Advice Bureau; Amy Cheswick, Richmond upon Thames Churches Housing Trust; Emma King, RB Mind; Rebecca Mear, Refugee Action Kingston; Debi Provenzale, MiD Mediation & Counselling; and Nicky Younge, Richmond Welcare.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2009 were agreed as an accurate record, subject to 'Richmond CVS' being deleted from the entry for Richard Eason in the list of those present and 'Consultation on the actions plans ...' to be changed to 'Monitoring of the action plans ...' in Minute 8.

### **3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**Terms of Reference of the Homelessness Forum (Ref: Minute 6, 6 April 2009)** Richard Eason stated that he had not heard from Dan Butler or Jane McInerney about how the LGBT Forum could feed into consultations on the Homelessness Strategy. Jane McInerney has now spoken to Richard Eason and agreed that the LGBT Forum will continue to be consulted on all relevant current and future strategies and that we will take on board his comments.

### **4. FEEDBACK FROM THE STEERING GROUP**

Ed Tytherleigh stated that:

- As a step towards making reports to the Forum more relevant the steering group for the forum would meet and follow-up on any ideas that came out of the Forum.
- An example of this is the flowchart on what to do with a homeless person in Richmond that had been drawn up and was the subject of a separate agenda item (see Minute 9).
- Once the Steering Group had met, a report from the Group would be a regular item on the agenda for meetings of the Forum.

### **5. SPEAR'S APPROACH TO HOMELESSNESS**

Clare Granger, Annette Blake, Edyta Van der Put and Stephen Ely gave a presentation on SPEAR's approach to homelessness. Forum members received an information pack and noted that:

- SPEAR's work began in 1986 when there were a number of people sleeping rough in the borough and two people died.
- SPEAR obtained charitable status in 1989.
- SPEAR's full title – Single Persons' Accommodation in Richmond – is no longer used as SPEAR is also involved in providing accommodation for homeless people in Kingston and provides other services.
- SPEAR's services include outreach work, separate hostels for young people and rough sleepers, a tenancy support team, a special support team offering daily support and counselling for people with drug or alcohol dependencies, the Rent Deposit Scheme and the services of a skills development worker.
- Referrals to the outreach service come from many different sources. They need to be verified and needs assessed. Clients might need help to access benefits or services such as the Mental Health Team or the Drug and Alcohol Team, they might be referred to the temporary YMCA accommodation at Surbiton, or they might need support and advice, or advocacy from a solicitor.
- The main hostel has 12 beds – 10 male and 2 female. The accommodation in Richmond is shared. The accommodation in Kingston, being used during refurbishment, is in single rooms.

- SPEAR has received a £1 million capital improvement grant to refurbish the hostel in Richmond.
- The staff team of six includes a co-ordinator, a resettlement officer and trainee support workers.
- A key worker is allocated to each resident.
- SPEAR uses an 'outcomes star' with 10 points, or issues. The star is used in discussions with clients and to assess where they are on the scale in terms of need and to show improvements.
- The resettlement team helps clients to move on to second stage hostels or longer-term accommodation and has a 98% success rate.
- The Tenancy Support Team helps clients into successful tenancies.
- In some cases, signposting is all that is needed.
- The service is a support service, not a care service.
- A support plan is drawn up and a risk assessment carried out. Clients might need support to change their address details and obtain access to benefits.
- A holistic approach is used – clients are involved in decisions about their future and helped to make choices about how they want to live.
- Typically, clients will move from a hostel to a tenancy or a HMO (house in multiple occupation) and then on to a flat, either in the private rented sector or social housing. Life skills, such as how to live in a flat, are taught.
- There are four Tenancy Support Workers plus a Team Leader. The team includes experts in immigration, asylum, drugs and emergency intervention.
- Currently, 71 people are supported by the Tenancy Support Team.
- Key workers will talk to clients during the day in their own homes if they do not want to leave home.
- The Skills Development Worker is paid to bring in meaningful activity.
- Clients are consulted about what they want to be involved in and appropriate skills training is organised. IT skills are on offer twice a week for clients who do not want to attend an adult college.
- A job club offers support to clients on how to write a CV, researching jobs and making connections.
- Monthly social activities include fishing at Hampton Court and bowling.
- The job club works with the Tenancy Support Team.

Forum members asked questions and it was noted that:

- Services are only offered to Richmond residents.
- Of the 325 people helped in the past year, only 76 were rough sleepers with a local connection to Richmond, the remainder being single homeless and families.
- Of the 71 people being supported by Tenancy Support, 95-97% came through referral to the hostel.
- A number of people who had visited The Vineyard Project would not be eligible for SPEAR's services.
- People who are not eligible to support from SPEAR might be able to get help from night shelters or church groups. Sometimes it is necessary to call every day to find out whether a place is available and

- the homeless person might not be capable of doing this. SPEAR is working on a project to signpost such people to suitable organisations.
- An equal opportunities form is completed as part of the assessment of need. Clients are asked about sexual orientation, but answers are not always given. Clients are asked a lot of questions that they can find intimidating and it is necessary to build up relationships over time.
  - SPEAR works with any eligible groups that have access to the public purse and have a local connection to Richmond. More minority groups have been coming through the hostel recently and six languages are spoken in the team. A leaflet about the work of the outreach team is included in the pack.
  - SPEAR is able to help with the challenges of moving on and issues in finding access to accommodation. It has pan-London links with relevant organisations.
  - Low support is being provided for 71 tenancies.
  - The monitoring system is currently in paper form. The cost of transferring to an electronic system would be £14,000. Any offers to fund such a move would be welcome.
  - Dual diagnosis can create difficulties. The needs of a homeless person might be too high to be met by SPEAR and not high enough for Housing Options. There are often mental health issues resulting in clients struggling to maintain good relationships with the services. Some of these people will be helped by The Vineyard Project, where only about 60% of callers are homeless.

It was agreed that Richard Eason should contact Ed Tytherleigh about his concerns relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.

**ACTION BY: RE**

## **6. WHAT TO DO WITH A HOMELESS PERSON IN RICHMOND**

Forum members received a flowchart showing the routes that can be taken by a homeless person who has been self-referred or found by Outreach. Ed Tytherleigh referred also to the Outreach leaflet in the SPEAR information pack. Ed stated that:

- Those not eligible for Housing Options or other support from Richmond Council would be referred through SPEAR to a hostel with a view to tenancy support and Council nomination; the Rent Deposit Scheme; or, if neither of these was appropriate, to a winter night shelter.
- The answerphone is checked every day.

It was noted that a key bottleneck is the capacity of the hostel.

The number for the Rough Sleeper Helpline is 020 8404 1481.

## 7. JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT (JSNA)

Eleni Walia gave a presentation on progress made since the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was published in 2008. Forum members received a copy of the presentation notes and noted that:

- A full report is available on the website – [www.richmond.gov.uk/home/council\\_government\\_and\\_democracy/council/civic-offices/departments/adult\\_and\\_community\\_services\\_directorate/joint\\_strategic\\_needs\\_assessment .htm](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/council_government_and_democracy/council/civic-offices/departments/adult_and_community_services_directorate/joint_strategic_needs_assessment.htm). A paper copy can be sent to members who cannot download a copy, please contact Karen Hopkins (tel: 020 8487 5414 or email: [Karen.Hopkins@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.Hopkins@richmond.gov.uk)).
- The JSNA is a new statutory requirement.
- This is the first time that Richmond Council and NHS Richmond have collaborated to produce a JSNA.
- The JSNA is linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement, the Primary Care Trust Commissioning Strategy Plan, the Ageing Strategy, the Children and Young People's Plan, the PCT/LBRUT Joint Commissioning Plans and the Housing, Homelessness and Supporting People Strategies.
- A third of the borough's population is aged over 50.
- The older population is becoming more ethnically diverse.
- Housing need in Richmond is lower than in other boroughs.
- The JSNA will be refreshed every year and rewritten every three years.
- The next revision is due in 2011.
- Currently, there has been a decrease in homelessness acceptances and repossessions, but an increase in Job Seekers Allowance applications.

In answer to questioning, Eleni confirmed that:

- The JSNA is not a strategy and will not be subject to consultation before being refreshed.
- Migration information in the document is nine years old and the revised JSNA will include data from the 2010 census.
- The JSNA is not totally comprehensive. Health and equality and sexual health are covered. The needs of the LGBT population are addressed more fully in the Homelessness Strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan.
- The Homelessness Strategy is available on the website – [www.richmond.gov.uk/home/housing/housing\\_strategy\\_service\\_development\\_and\\_performance/housing\\_strategy/homelessness\\_strategy.htm](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/housing/housing_strategy_service_development_and_performance/housing_strategy/homelessness_strategy.htm).

Eleni agreed to speak to her colleagues at NHS Richmond about how they addressed LGBT issues in health strategies.

**ACTION BY: EW**

It was agreed that Richard Eason should contact Eleni if he wished to discuss further how the needs of the LGBT population were being addressed.

**ACTION BY: RE**

Councillor Carr stated that:

- The LGBT population is not invisible and has been discussed at the Health, Housing and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The JSNA is only a building block and cannot show the whole picture.
- Richmond is not a replica of the national data and there is a need to look at local data on LGBT.
- If any organisation carries out research into the housing needs of the local population it would be helpful if they could send the results to the Council to be added to local data.
- There is a need for commissioning to be more borough-specific.
- All strategies are subject to an equality impact needs assessment.
- Services need to reflect differences and there is positive evidence showing that this need is being addressed.

#### **8. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT AND HOMELESSNESS FIGURES FROM THE LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES**

Ken Emerson reported that:

- A traffic light system is used to monitor the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.
- Green actions are on track for completion within timescale, amber actions are at risk of not being completed within timescale, and red actions are at significant risk of failure. The majority of live actions at the end of 2008/09 were green (77%).
- There is a small scheme for former drug and alcohol users and it is hoped to be able to expand this. Expansion is behind schedule pending a new appointment.
- The BME Homelessness Strategy Evidence Base is under development.
- We hope to develop a programme of homelessness education and advice for young people as a preventative before they need to approach the Council.
- Links are being established with the Youth Forum with a view to finding out more about the concerns of young people.

It was noted that figures on homelessness were not available for the meeting.

## 9. PROGRESS UPDATE AND HOMELESSNESS FIGURES FROM SPEAR

Edyta Van der Put reported that:

- Over the year SPEAR identified 125 homeless people on the streets, 75 of whom were helped off the street.
- One effect of the recession was that two clients had come from the City who had lost jobs and homes and another atypical client was an au pair who was no longer needed and was therefore homeless.
- There were more single homeless than previously but rough sleeper numbers did not seem to have jumped markedly.
- Some claimed to be squatting, but SPEAR cannot verify these individuals as a rough sleeper.

Penny Lee reported that about 14 people were currently using The Vineyard Project. It was noted that not all of these would be eligible to use the SPEAR hostel.

It was noted that there had been no research in the borough into what sort of people squat and suggested and that if people knew of squatters they should report this to the Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

## 10. FUTURE MEETINGS

Ed asked Forum members to contact Sarah Filby ([sarah.filby@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.filby@richmond.gov.uk)) if they had any issues around homelessness that they would like the group to address.

It was noted that the next meeting would be held in the Salon, York House, Richmond Road, Twickenham, on Monday 8 March 2010 from 2 to 3.30 p.m. **Please note the date of the next Homelessness Forum has changed; we will now meet in the Council Chamber, York House, Richmond Road, Twickenham on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2010 from 2 to 3.30 p.m.**

---

The meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.