

**South East Leadership Team: Welfare Reform meeting  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2013 at 1pm  
Dewsbury Road One Stop Centre, Conference Room**

**Present:** Councillor Kim Groves (Chair) Tom O'Donovan (LCC - Area Support Team), Sally Dodgson (West Yorkshire Joint Services), Ian Kenning (Area Support Team), Neil Diamond (Housing Leeds), Jason Kirk (Housing Leeds), Richard Jones (Housing Leeds), Simon Betts (DWP), Joy Wetherill (Welfare Rights Unit LCC), Julie Manning (Early Start (LCC), Norah Gibson (West Leeds Debt Forum), Mel Fox (Chapelton CAB), Shaun Kelly (LCC Welfare Reform Team)

**Apologies:** Joanne Davis (LCC -Public Health), Gerry Shevlin (Area Community Safety Co-ordinator) Marilyn Banister, Amanda Ashe, Lee Welsh

Item	Description	Action
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome and introduction</b>	
1.1	Councillor Kim Groves introduced herself and invited colleagues to introduce themselves.	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Notes from the 10<sup>th</sup> September Meeting</b>	
2.1	The notes were agreed as an accurate record.	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Matters Arising:</b>	
3.1	<p><b>High Cost Lenders Action Plan</b> – Tom explained that he had received no updates from partners following circulation of the plan. Suggested that best way forward would be to rationalise the plan and combine it with the debt forum action plan.</p> <p><b>High Cost Lending Conference</b> – High profile event taking place on 25<sup>th</sup> October. Some members of the group will be attending.</p> <p><b>Foodbanks:</b> South Leeds Foodbank opened on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October at Belle Isle Family Centre. Initially only one day a week and taking referrals from two agencies. Group plan to open up list of referrers and a second opening day within a month. A discussion took place about how partners can best support foodbanks</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contact South Leeds Foodbank and Holbeck Foodbank to see what further support they require.</b></li> <li>• <b>Contact Leeds ahead to see how Leeds companies can support foodbanks through their CSR schemes.</b></li> <li>• <b>Develop links with Childrens Centre as referrers and distribution sites for foodbanks</b></li> <li>• <b>Develop links with One Stop Centres as above</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Financial Fitness Programme</b> – Sally Dodgson gave an update of the</p>	<p><b>For information</b></p> <p>IK</p> <p>TPO</p> <p>JM</p> <p>TPO</p>

	<p>programme so far. Front line workers sessions have been delivered and have received positive feedback from participants. Approximately 40 agencies with around 170 staff have attended so far. A further date will be arranged for January 2014.</p> <p>The dates and venues have been set for the community sessions in South Leeds. Contact Sally for a list.</p> <p>Info sent by Sally following meeting and added here.</p> <p><b>Frontline workers estimated that they would work with/ speak to an average of 19 clients per week which would equate to info being cascaded to 6324 clients.</b></p> <p>Discussion took place about need for more financial literacy / awareness raising and engagement within the community. Suggestion was made to make more of the links with schools and children centres.</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Norah Gibson – To share details of leaflets that were distributed through schools in West Leeds.</b></li> <li>• <b>Sally Dodgson to find out what resources are available from Trading Standards to support awareness raising work.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>CAB –</b> Mel Fox an advice worker with CAB reported that, from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October she will be working in South Leeds providing an outreach advice service targeting schools and low paid workers. A typical outreach session could be delivered in a school offering one hour appointments to up to six clients in a day.</p> <p>This role is initially funded until end of March 2014.</p> <p>Mel asked for help from partners to get the project going quickly. She is new to South Leeds and so needs local contacts, venues and a steer on where this service is most needed.</p> <p>Cllr Kim Groves suggested that Job shops would be a good place to start.</p> <p><b>Impact on Crime</b></p> <p>Tom O'Donovan explained that this item will tackled on a future agenda and invited thoughts from colleagues. In response food theft, burglary and thefts from clothes lines were mentioned as possible indicators.</p>	<p><b>All/SD</b></p> <p><b>NG</b></p> <p><b>SD</b></p> <p><b>All</b></p> <p><b>All</b></p> <p><b>GS</b></p>
4.0	<p><b>South Leeds Debt Forum</b></p> <p>Ian Kenning distributed copies of the draft action plan which had emerged following the inaugural debt forum meeting which had taken at the end of July.</p> <p>IK suggested that there were some significant overlaps with the High Cost Lending Action plan and it made sense to try and combine the two</p>	

	<p>documents and refine this down to a manageable number of practical activities.</p> <p>The main themes from debt forum event were around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping of provision and need</li> <li>• Information sharing</li> <li>• Debt prevention work / financial literacy</li> <li>• Debt support work</li> </ul> <p>Ian suggested that a small number of key partners should meet to develop this plan. Carla Yeomans had agreed to join this group. Richard Jones from Housing Leeds also agreed to join</p> <p><b>Action</b>  Ian Kenning to get partners together to develop Debt Forum action plan  Carla Yeomans - BITMO  Richard Jones – Housing Leeds  Mel Fox – CAB  Ian Kenning – SEAST  Joanne Rogers – LCCU / Housing Leeds</p>	<b>IK</b>
5.0	<p><b>Benefit Take Up</b></p> <p><b>Jason Kirk</b> (Housing Leeds) circulated a paper showing total under occupancy arrears by wards for Aire Valley Homes and BITMO. The data showed the change in arrears from end of March to end of August 2013. There were some distinct difference between Wards, for example Beeston and Holbeck had shown a relatively small increase whereas Middleton Park Ward arrears had nearly doubled. A discussion took place as to why this is the case, suggested that there was a relationship between DHP awards and rent arrears.</p> <p>Jason asked that consideration is given to how this group could make better use of this data in terms of developing strategies that lead to real outcomes on the ground.</p> <p><b>Shaun Kelly</b> (LCC Welfare Reform team) gave an update of the impact of welfare reform in Leeds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less households than predicted were affected by the Benefit cap.</li> <li>• Rent arrears levels were rising as a result of the under occupancy reduction to housing benefit</li> <li>• Latest figures for the Local Welfare Support scheme showed that 86% of all applications had been granted. The scheme is still evolving and being refined, demand is less compared to the Social Fund, this is probably to the fact that the scheme makes no cash</li> </ul>	<b>All</b>

	<p>awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be more promotion of the Local Welfare Support Scheme to ensure that people know about it.</li> </ul> <p><b>Simon Betts</b> (DWP) Gave an update on the tightening up of the conditions linked to JSA and work related ESA. From October 2013 the Claimant Commitment would be more vigorously enforced. The DWP were attempting to change the culture of both the claimant and Job Centre Plus staff. Basically if the claimant doesn't follow all the conditions outlined in their claimant commitment to find work they would be sanctioned.</p> <p>Concerns were raised by Shaun Kelly and Cllr Kim Groves that Leeds City Council would be faced with the bill of dealing with the impact of this increase in sanctions.</p> <p>A further discussion then took place about the initial experience of supporting clients to access PIP. Joy Wetherill expressed concern at the long time it was taking to process claims.</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cllr Kim Groves suggested that partners develop local take up campaigns around some of the schemes that are in place to support people. For example Wrap up Leeds and Food Banks</b></li> </ul>	All
6.0	<p><b>Updates – Housing Leeds</b></p> <p><b>Neil Diamond</b> (Housing Leeds formerly Aire Valley Homes) gave an update on some of the positive partnership initiatives they have been supporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The secondees from Leeds City Credit Union and Job Centre plus have had a high impact in terms of supporting AVH tenants around employment and financial inclusion.</li> <li>• The Job Club at St Georges Centre is busy.</li> <li>• AVH are supporting a project at Soccer City offering job search support on the back of football sessions</li> <li>• Ministry of Food is working well.</li> </ul> <p><b>Jason Kirk</b> stressed the need to sustain this provision and that it was uncertain at this stage as to what impact if any the transition to Housing Leeds would have.</p> <p><b>Richard Jones</b> said the house exchange event they had run had worked well but future events would benefit from wider promotion. People could swap houses with other tenants from, regardless of the area, housing association and even out of the local authority area.</p>	
7.0	<b>Date of Next Meeting – 10<sup>th</sup> December 1pm Dewsbury Road One Stop</b>	All

	<b>Centre</b>	
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