

CRAWLEY HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS FORUM (CHHF)

MINUTES

Thursday 14th June 2018

PRESENT:

Peter Mansfield Clark MBE, Chair

Anna Suswillo, Homeless Link
Anne Mathieson, Easter Team
Christine Vant, South East Water
Carly Jenkins, Southdown
Debbie Gregory, Easter Team
Dudley Edwards, Sussex Oakleaf
Edward Tetbury, CCVS
Gaynor Andrew, Easter Team
Ginny Grey, DWP
Joan Shepherd, Crawley BC
Joanne Dines, Giving Back Crawley

Kath Brooks, WSCC
Karin Webb, Capital Project Trust
Kelly Haynes, Richmond Fellowship
Lisa Featherstone, South East Water
Nikki Hardgrave, Crawley BC
Paula, RCSAS
Poppy Foster, Prescription+
Roger Baker, Easter Team
Sarah Giles, DWP
Sean Towers, Giving Back Crawley
Susan Brumpton, CCVS
Tracy Olckers, Prescription+

Apologies: Pat McGrath, CCG; Mark Mullins, WSCC; Nicki Patterson, Crawley Life House

Forum topic: Support Around Mental Health

1. Welcome and introductions
2. **Presentations: Accessing mental health support locally**
 - a. Sussex Oakleaf (see attached presentation)
 - b. Richmond Fellowship
3. **Discussion/Exercise: What are the mental health needs of your service users?**

To what extent are mental health issues having an impact on your clients? Would you say issues around mental health are decreasing, staying level or increasing in your area of work?

Mental Health has increased at the job centre. We have a lot of customers with complex needs coming through our door. Easter Team have also found MH increasing

Huge extent – high percentages of approaches to Crawley Borough Council. More complex issues spanning across many areas of housing, benefits, health & wellbeing. We have seen an increase.

There is more awareness of MH leading to increase in client referrals. MH interlinked with other needs of services.

MH issues have a serious impact on our clients. There are such complex needs of those dealing with homelessness, often with more than one diagnosis. MH seems more visible with our client group. The reasons are complex. It is often unclear **if the MH causes homelessness and vice versa.**

A lot do have MH issues finding it difficult to work. Probably increasing.

What are the reasons for your answers above?

- ESA to JSA transition customers
- Long Term unemployed
- Homelessness

- Welfare reforms
- Increased demands on all services
- Increased recognition & acceptance of MH & willingness to seek help
- Lack of affordable housing & gap between LHA & rents triggering issues
- Funding & cuts to services, leading to less prevention and more crisis management
- Working in silos

- More people are distressed having been sanctioned
- Many in debt
- Bedroom Tax a problem
- Clients come who may lose their homes
- Many on highest tariffs for electricity/gas

-This is what our clients tell us or what we observe from referrals/engagement

- Cut backs in services and resources
- Providing more services with less leads to a situation with rapid staff turnover that creates instability in care and a degree of feelings of desertion & worthlessness for clients.
- Stress from environmental/financial/benefit issues can add to an inability to engage.
- Street homeless clients find it very hard to stick with appointments and are difficult to contact.

What support for people struggling with both housing and homelessness and their mental health is missing and needed in Crawley?

- Access to money to cover the gap when sanctioned or going on to universal credit.
- Easter Team would like more information about the benefits system ourselves.

- Need for women only spaces and hostels and more awareness of the hidden nature of women's homelessness.
- Need support transitioning back on your feet.
- Need for specialist training for professional funding to pay for it.
- Support for professionals to provide the best support and prevent burnout.

- Improved communication: At the job centre we have created a complex needs plan. This is a working document. This is for people in crisis and the work coach can signpost accordingly. We are working as a community to build up joined up services with key partners. I think this is key to be able to deliver a seamless service for the customer, depending on their circumstances. There is still a lot of work to do but very positive and rewarding.

- Rapid responses and re-referrals routes as taking too long.
- Intense multi-agency support wrapping around the customer – TAP project can only support Six at any one time.
- Access to services, the right service at the right time.
- Being closed to teams for non-engagement.
- Lack of engagement from MH Services with other agencies in Crawley, need to be involved & communicate.

- The outreach Services are deeply lacking.
- People far more likely to engage if they are visited at home or in a familiar environment.
- Consistent regular care enables the building of trust.
- Community transport for people to attend appointments, may enable clients to engage more.
- Street outreach workers who can connect with the street homeless community and build a rapport

with people that would build trust in their services.

4. Information Sharing: Presentations

a. South East Water:

Social Tariff: If you have a low income or are in receipt of specific benefits, you may be eligible for our Social Tariff. If you're successful, your water bill will be capped at our fixed charge for the year. To qualify for the Social Tariff you must have a household income of less than the HMRC's low income threshold, which currently is £16,105, excluding the following benefits: Child Tax Credit Disability Living Allowance, Mortgage Interest Relief, Attendance Allowance Housing & Council Tax Benefit.

WaterSure: caps your charges to our average bill. You could be considered for WaterSure if you are a metered customer in receipt of certain qualifying benefits, have either three or more children under the age of 19, or have someone in your home with a medical condition which means you use a lot of water.

Helping Hand Scheme: offers financial assistance to clear water and sewerage debt owed. We make grants through the scheme to our customers who demonstrate they are taking steps to achieve financial stability but need help clearing water and sewerage debt which has built up over the years.

Water Direct: This is a third party scheme administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). If you claim certain benefits such as Income Support, Pension Credit, Income-based Jobseeker's or Employment Support Allowance, we may be able to take deductions straight from your benefits. The scheme is free and, if successful, you won't have to worry about any further debt recovery action. You'll pay your current year's charges plus a fixed amount to help clear your arrears.

b. Homeless Link:

Are a national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless in England. They aim to make services better and campaign for policy change that will help end homelessness.

Homeless Link can help with consultations, provide training for members, give examples of innovation and good practice at work, offer consultancy for dealing with certain specific issues, provide a Social Investment Bond to support new business ideas, as well as general information sharing and support for front line workers – through building Communities of Practice.

4.1. Information Sharing: Groups

Easter Team 01293 657 140

Numbers accessing services have doubled over the last two years, with more families affected. The Easter Team have plenty of provisions but are finding it difficult to deliver parcels.

Job Centre

Universal Credit is being rolled out and the team have worked hard to link with communities.

Crawley Borough Council: Joan.stephens@Crawley.gov.uk

Homelessness reduction duty coming into force, from 1st October 2018, job centres will have a duty to refer.

Crawley CVS: Susan Brumpton 01293 657156

Diane the former Membership officer has now moved to Young Crawley and we are recruiting for a new membership officer. *Post meeting note: Charis Easter is the new Membership Officer.*

Giving Back Crawley: Joe@givingbackcrawley.org

Registration to become a new charity has successfully gone through.

SouthDown: Carley.jenkins@southdown.org

There have been some changes to the supported housing offered to clients, with barriers being reduced, eg instead of signposting there is a dedicated point of contact to help people.

Rape Crisis Surrey and Sussex (RCSAS): Outreach2@RCSAS.org.uk

Are looking to increase networking and wants to partner with Crawley Pathfinder. Currently offering BAME group sessions 1/month providing peer support and covering various topics.

Capital Project Trust: Karin.webb@capitalproject.org

Are looking to network with other groups and would also like Job Centre to come and do a talk to groups about benefits.

Crawley CVS

Prescription Plus, which offers social prescribing, successfully completed the pilot and is now expanding the service to cover eight surgeries in Crawley until 2019, and 12 surgeries by 2020. The service is free for individuals.

DATE OF NEXT FORUM: 27th September 2018, 2pm-4pm