

Community Works Representative Feedback and Communication Form

Advice Partnership Meeting / Advice Services Transition Project team

Wednesday 20th July 2015

Alison Marino, Community Works

1. Advice Services Network feedback

- Vicky Cadbury updated ASN on 'My life' website – to replace Info Rx website. Currently under a lot of testing.
- ASN discussed how 'Impact of welfare reform' report could be revised to include latest emergency budget announcements.
- ASN raised question as to what other IAG reports might contribute to Fairness Commission and how to contribute.
Action: IAG reports can be sent to Emma Daniel Councillor or Julia Reddaway, part-time co-ordinator of Fairness Commission activity.
- Toynbee Hall audit still of BHCC policy and process on debt still ongoing.
- Flexible Support fund has to date supported partnership activities but this is being frozen. Wayne Edmonds suggesting ESF funds (Building Better Opportunities) will need to pick this up. DWP will also be administering some of these funds.

2. Brighton & Hove Connected

- Tony Mernagh and Bill Randall have stood down and Penny Thompson no longer in post so substantial change.
- Members reviewed format, structure and agenda and discussed potential overlaps with the Fairness Commission.
- BHC felt to have important role (mostly retained in Unitary authorities). Police said it was important forum to hear impact of any changes in activities.
- Lots of VCS representation there although agreed power imbalance remains as sharing space with commissioners limits conversations.
- Agreed membership needed strengthening and links with Health and Wellbeing board.
- 'Meet the Councillors' event took place. Paul Sweeting attended – helpful conversation with Councillor Hill member of Housing and New Homes Committee.
- Seetec representative presented. Wanted comment on supply chains brochure – they are looking for spot purchase of money advice in probation services.
- Felt that CYP partnership forum event on IAG hosted by BHC was a missed opportunity as focused on careers advice only – didn't capture holistic support of youth work.

3. Food Poverty Strategy

- Citywide action plan has been developed, led by BHFP.
- Round table event was held with cross-partner attendees inc. health, housing, Councillor Mitchell and expert speakers.
- Headline figures are 1 in 5 in poverty. 3 new food banks opening each week. Increasing access by working 'poor'. Relates to those on low income not managing – takes 40% of their income to eat healthily (11% of high earners).
- Advice and financial inclusion needs to be a top priority within the strategy. Emily O'Brien from BHFP keen to maintain dialogue/information exchange with ASP.
- BHFP report on Lunch Clubs also recently released.
- An annual snapshot of the City food banks is being produced this month. Agreed there is an ongoing task to gather data from the food banks.
- BUFCP have started monitoring use of their lunch activities with simple approach.
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact symposium on 23rd Sept – workshop is on measuring one-off/short interventions.

4. Data Dive

Dr Peter Passaro was working with Brighton University and interested in doing a Data dive. He had led on work with CAB and Centrepoint and extrapolated large amounts of data from written case notes. Potential for IAG sector locally to engage in this in Autumn.

5. CESI (Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion) report on cumulative impact of welfare reform

- Report will form the starting point for the Fairness Commission.
- Welfare reforms have reduced benefit spending within the City by around £59million per year.
- Will impact on many more households than anticipated.
- However report doesn't talk about how the support around this issue is changing (or needs to change), for example, the shift to payment by results contracts.

6. Emergency Budget Welfare Reform

- YMCA concerned about impact on 18-25yr olds.
- Tax credits were being used to top up shortfall on Housing benefit – that will go.
- Noted that advice providers might succeed in getting all they can for people but that it won't be enough.
- Observed that YP presenting less around IAG issues and more with mental health + anxiety.

7. Help through crisis – Moneyworks

- Big Lottery have launched crisis funding of up to ½ million over 5 years.
- The Fed and BHFP exploring a bid around disabled people accessing food services. MACs also speaking with BHFP.
- Funding over 5 years would just about cover 2 full-time posts and would not resource a large partnership project. Noted that multiple bids from Brighton & Hove may not be best approach. Activity needs to look for where the gaps are. Needs local authority support. Noted that sign-up in principle to joined up working would strengthen bid irrespective of whether organisations get money.
- Short turn around on deadline. Agreed for Moneyworks to scope proposal and circulate for partner sign-up/comment.
- Fund allows for £15k development funding and that partners might want to consider whether that is used to sustain the ASP and ASN activity.

8. British Gas Energy Trust proposal

Paul Sweeting worked with BHCC officers to draw together proposal around fuel poverty. Will know outcome mid-September. If successful will inform City's 'Affordable Warmth Strategy'.

9. Advice Services Transition Project

- Cross-agency supervision framework – Vicky Ling and Rona Parsons are to facilitate cross-agency supervision workshop.
- Webcam Advice evaluation update – Vicky Ling doing evaluation and will report back in September.