

Northampton Borough Council - Northampton Disabled People's Forum

**The Holding Room, The Guildhall, NN1 1DE.
Friday, 19 January 2018**

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

ATTENDANCE: Martin De Rosario (MDR, Chair), Anna King (AK, Co-Chair), Michael Macleod (MM, NBC), Debbie MacColl (DM, NBC), Barbara Barber (BB, Individual), Larry Barber (LB, Individual), Kamila Poole (KP, Northants Police), Maz Stretton (MS, Northants Police), Jen Jennings (JJ, Northants Police), Martin Page (MP, DWP), Richard Draper (RD, DWP), Mark Flaxman (MF, Sport4Fitness CIC), Liz Fitzgerald (LF, NCC), Alice Morgan (AM, Museums).

APOLOGIES: Cllr Phil Larratt, Beverley Mennell, Jaqueline Forrest-Smith.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

AK talked through the Code of Conduct to the Forum.

3. HATE CRIME REPORTING

DM went through PowerPoint slides about what hate crime is and how the forum can report it.

ACTION: MM to send out hate crime reporting information via e-mail.

4. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Minutes recorded as true for last meeting.

ACTION: MM to contact Cllr Larratt to check about the Blue Badge holders in the St Peters Car Park.

5. ALICE MORGAN - NMAG ACTIVITY PLAN CO-ORDINATOR

AM explained the aims of the next two years whilst the central museum is closed.

AM wants the community to be a focal point of the exhibition and explained how the project is going to be user lead.

Key themes for the project are Places, Community Activities, Living Together and Standing out.

AM handed out the questionnaire/survey to each member of the forum and talked through the PowerPoint relating to each key theme.

AM explained how the forum members can fill out the survey once it is approved.

Q: When is the dementia café at Abington park museum?

A: The next one will be in late February. Individuals will need to come with their carer. Details will be circulated.

6. MARTIN PAGE & RICHARD DRAPER - UNIVERSAL CREDIT

MP: Universal Credit is a new benefit that is being rolled out. Going to replace 6 other benefits - Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Working Tax Credit.

MP: If an individual moves from benefits to work, this will make it much easier.

MP: It reacts in real time to earnings, if you go over 16 hours, you will no longer be kicked off benefits. Good for people on 0 hours contracts.

MP: The full service in Northampton has now been postponed until November, this is today's knowledge, may change again.

MP: Full service means a new claimant will receive universal credit, not any of the previous 6 benefit names

MP: Full service is managed digitally. Anything that can help people with their IT literacy will be necessary because of this. Very important to get basic training.

MP: JCP has been putting on computer courses for the last 5 years, people will need to be upskilled to be able enough to use the user friendly site.

RD: People who are claiming may have to reregister.

MP: Any new claims to benefits will sign up to the full service site. Existing users will stay the same at the beginning.

RD: Northampton and Wellingborough are the last Jobcentres in the county to change to full service.

Q: Does it affect the retired?

A: No.

Q: There are people who cannot use the computer, about those?

A: There are people who will help at the job centre, library etc. Footfall in the job centre much higher because of this.

Q: Do you have specially trained people to help people with learning disabilities?

A: No but we do have training which helps people take everything into account. We have experience so we are helping people understand the needs of people with different conditions. Getting the staff to tailor the experience to the individual.

Q: Are Community Law or Citizens Advice helping additionally?

A: No, extra help coming from the borough council.

RD: First claim to benefit – there is a 7 day waiting period. They also have an assessment period, to calculate income of the individual and things have to be worked out manually. So can take longer.

MP: 6 weeks is now being reduced to 5 for the first payment. People shouldn't be in financial trouble as there is now access to a bridging loan. We know there will be groups that are struggling so we are there to help.

RD: Universal credit includes standard allowance plus housing benefit. Important that anyone claiming benefit gets housing to talk to their landlord.

MP: Someone going onto universal credit needs to let the relevant people know.

Q: Has the forum had digital eagles come in?

A: No.

ACTION: Add to action plan.

MP/RD: Job Centre would come to that.

If you can operate Facebook, you can operate universal credit account, it is very simple.

7. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

DM: Talked about the event attended in Leicester which was a Disability at Work training course. Very eye opening event which helped think of ideas for International Day for Persons with Disabilities 2018.

AK: 29th January from 3:30pm to 5:30pm Partnership Showcase Event.

LF: Consultation on fair charging is closed. Going to cabinet in Feb.

MS: Opening up a keep safe. Help to make the conditions of individuals more obvious. Also looking to have key safe numbers.

Message in a bottle – a bottle that holds health information and contact details. Not always a member of the family. Will go in the fridge as people mostly have one fridge compared to keeping in a draw/cupboard.

Working on looking at a best way for people to communicate with the police, some people may find it easier to text for example.

AM: What's on guides have dates for the activities at the museums.

Forms for distribution list are handed out.

8. ITEMS FOR NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

MM: Informed the forum about who will be speaking at the next meeting. Richard Bailey - Nene CCG, Lynn Hinch – Favell Day Services and Olympus Care will be chased up.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

16th March 2018, The Guildhall.