

Northampton Borough Council

Northampton Women's Forum

Tuesday, 13 November 2018

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

ATTENDANCE: Cllr Anna King (AK, Co-Chair), Pauline Woodhouse (PW, Co-Chair), Michael Macleod (MM, NBC), Debbie MacColl (DM, NBC), Alison Hodson (AH, VIN), Paula Whitworth (PWh, WI), Ann Bodsworth (AB, NDAS), Kate Villers (KV, NDAS/UoN), Danielle Edkins (DE, NDAS/UoN), Sheila Baker (SB, Northampton Townswomen's Guild), Morcea Walker (MW, Individual), Irene Bianchi (IB, Aquarius), Kate Scott (KS, NABPFA), Rachel Packman (RP, Northants Police), Pindy Chahal, (PC, SCCYC), Geraldine Mahney (GM, NBC One Stop Shop), Elaine O'Neill (EON, DWP), Gill Greaves (GC, Womens Pension Injustice).

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3. GERALDINE MAHNEY - CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM LEADER

Geraldine Mahney and Elaine O'Neill

One Stop Shop – Partnership hub.

Police Mon-Fri

Also CLS and CAB – Monday-Friday, work closely with NPH, NBC, Police and LGSS.

Different drop in at the one stop shop, will see anybody and help people who want general advice.

CLS have specialist clinics, these are often referred to by CAB.

Universal credit has been in the works for the last 3 years, Northampton is one of the last to do this but this should be seen as a positive as all the kinks have been worked out.

Universal Credit – replaces child tax, housing benefits, income support, income based JSA, ESA and working tax credit. This starts tomorrow, 6 different incomes that could have been claimed have now been merged into one.

PIP and pension credit will not be claiming universal credit.

This is a fully digital claim, this may bring challenges because of resources, because of this there are plans in place to help those claiming. There will be help in the one stop shop one day a week. There will also be printing facilities for those claiming universal credit. There are the OSS kiosks and there will be a dashboard for Universal Credit. The Floorwalkers in the OSS have been with those at the DWP to help them understand the process, this will enable staff to help those coming into the OSS.

The contact centre will have a direct line to those who needs help with Universal Credit. There will be some help with funds if there is long wait for the income. NPH are also offering IT training and some extensions if the wait to claim universal credit is long.

AB – it would be good for agencies to have people from the DWP come in to do some training with staff who can help those coming to agencies in need.

MW – Some people are not well prepared to receive a larger amount of money at once, instead of the smaller amounts at intervals with different benefits as they previously did. This may be harder for the percentage who's money does not go straight to rent first, but to the individual first to then pay rent.

PW – This has always been an issue since universal credit has been launched, especially to those with addictions etc. It may be beneficial for linked working to help those with these issues.

AB – we do a lot of work around budgeting.

GM and AK – There will be a review in a week or so, NPH will also be analysing what is going on with their service users.

GM – Aim is to support those one benefits and for them to get paid as quickly as possible.

AK – Look to review in around 6 months.

ACTION: MM to attach information from Geraldine onto the next minutes.

4. ALISON HODSON - VIN DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Working in a role similar to what Matthew Toreson used to do.

Worked in the voluntary sector for the last 16 years.

VIN help other voluntary organisations run themselves, also act as a recruitment agency for volunteers and look at getting them placed across Northamptonshire.

May be worth having Sarah Passam at a future forum, there is also a voluntary sector forum which will take place on the 15th January, can register on the events tap of the VIN Northamptonshire website.

Many discussions take place about the Unitary council, how voluntary sector organisations can work greater together etc.

Blackthorn Good Neighbours, Tools for Self-Reliance are all organisations where VIN were involved in heavily at the start of their development.

There is also the car scheme which is still running, also the happy at home project.

Development officer, work with things from one person with a new idea, to more established groups who are looking to achieve the best results possible.

Help support start-ups, trustee's boards about roles, policies and procedures, legal structures, funding and managing volunteers.

Legal structures have moved on in recent times, there are CIC's etc.

Also help organisations with how to fill out funding applications and what not to put in there.

AH talked the forum through a few previous real life cases and how their ideas or issues can be acted on to make the most of the situation.

27th November there is an advice surgery but Alison also goes out to the organisations to see them in their own facilities, this helps to understand the organisation more.

5. 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

16 days of activism – focus is on the workplace.

Agencies are getting a roadshow together and are going out to a few large businesses in Northampton.

There will be a flyer produced with contact details for all the agencies that women can contact.

AB – many HR departments do not know what to do when it comes to DV victims etc. There is so much abuse that is hidden or not noticed so we are trying to raise as much awareness as possible.

6. WOMEN'S PENSION INJUSTICE

Gill Greaves from Women's Pension Injustice.

Legislation changed in 1995 and the age keeps on being extended without people being notified.

Women were told previously that they would be retiring at 60. There wasn't equal pay which resulted in less money in the pension etc.

When there is equality work, an impact assessment would need to be carried out which hasn't been the case here.

An example of reason for the change is that women live longer etc.

There will be a judicial review in November, this has been brought about through pressure groups.

This is a broader issue that has never been looked at in government.

AK – up to the forum as a whole to see how we can support this cause.

AB and Townswomen's Guild would all like to support the cause.

AK – General consensus to write a letter to MP's about the issues.

PW – If any legislation or news comes in about Women's pensions this should be something we could share with the group.

GG – DWP have so many complaints about this that they have said it would take 20+ years to get back.

PW – Could you speak more about the judicial review.

GG – Michael Mansfield backing this – 2 hour hearing, they are usually 30 mins, women will be there to support.

22nd November – House of Commons Debate – this is not attended very well and always ended with the conclusion of a no.

GG – would love to be involved in International Women's Day 2019.

7. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

PWh – Still interested in the disco – would be nice to do it on international women's day.

AK – We would look to see what the engagement would be like and then we can make a decision on that.

PWh – One in Yorkshire has a certain entrance fee and then the money raised goes to a good cause in their local area.

AB – Suggest approaching the Richardson group about hiring out the picturedrome cheaper and holding an event.

PC – Could do a disco after the event and promote it at women's day.

AK – Maybe we could promote that we are going for a drink after and see how that is taken up.

DM – International Day for People with Disabilities – December 3rd in the Guildhall – will be put on as a Facebook event.

PC – Launched the youth club – there is also a youth committee so it may be good to link in with the Youth Forum. The Youth Committee are meeting at the football.

KS – March visit of the Palestinian women, cost of this was £3400, still need to raise funds so there will be a fundraising meal and an auction – if there are any items that people would like to donate for auction. 19th Jan 7 o'clock at St Crispins. **ACTION:** MM/DM to send out to forums once received.

IB – Aquarius moved to St Giles Street – still offering free gambling advice service. Free drug and alcohol awareness training is still available too.

AB – final stats 1548 clients approach – 72 families in refuge - 274 child protection

interventions.

AK – UK parliament week – Youth forum doing speed dating event happening this Friday – Forum members go from table to table to talk/debate with different Cllrs.
Also Friday 23rd Tour of the Guildhall for the Women’s Forum from the Mayor – 1:30pm, starting at the Mayor’s Parlour.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ITEMS FOR NEXT FORUM

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified