

**MINUTES OF THE
HEREFORDSHIRE SUPPORTED HOUSING PROVIDER FORUM
HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 1, TOWN HALL HEREFORD
ON WEDNESDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2005 AT 10.00AM**



PRESENT:

Andrew Strong	Herefordshire Mind (Chair)
Ian Gardner	Interim Supporting People Manager
Dawn Stradling	Supporting People
E. Clark	Herefordshire Housing
Jan Frances	Herefordshire Womens Aid
Sam Pratley	SHYPP
Emma Tobin	Marches Housing Association
Michael King	Kemble Care
Jill Farmer	Aspire Support
Sara Dallaway	Festival Housing Group
John Walker	Shelter
Sunita Hopkins	Shelter
Jenny Williams	Herefordshire Adult Placement Scheme
Richard Kelly	Herefordshire Lifestyles
Tony Lafford	Salter's Hill Charity
Catherine Scott	Salter's Hill Charity
Ruth Coates	Salter's Hill Charity (Minutes)

APOLOGIES:

Dave Hider (Chair)	SHYPP
Jane Thomas	Herefordshire Council
Denise Shuker	St. John Kemble Hereford
Sandra Lawrence	Family Placement Scheme
Sandra Evans	National Housing Federation (expected but absent)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Andrew Strong, Herefordshire Mind (Vice Chair of the Provider Forum) welcomed everyone and said in Dave's absence he would be chairing the meeting.

Everyone introduced themselves and apologies were made.

Particular welcome to John Walker and Sunita Hopkins from Shelter who would be doing a presentation later in the meeting.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes from the previous Meeting of the 8th December 2004 were read and agreed apart from one minor alteration on Page 1 which stated that Sandra Lawrence was present, which she wasn't. They were then signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising:

Page 1 – Agreed there was a need for a more planned approach to the Good Practice Workshop.

Page 3 - Charlotte from Women's Aid volunteered to chair the Accommodation Based Sub-Group. There should be a written report with these minutes.

Page 4 - No comment

Page 5 - 4th para – re: the leading of lobbying. Andrew said he attended the regional Chair's Forum (chairs of provider fora across the West Midlands) in December, a useful meeting. The main discussion was the distribution formula consensus being that it was probably too late to influence a decision. Indication was that another consultation document would be issued but this has not occurred. Andrew also felt it is good to keep an eye on the regional Supporting People because of the likelihood of cross-authority working and of SP being administered regionally.

The Distribution Formula – there is representation at the highest level to the ODPM. Nigel Rogers, SITRA, had said that authorities with cuts greater than 5% in 2005-2006 are likely to receive at least a cut of 5% in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, regardless of the Distribution Formula which he implied may currently be on hold

Page 6 – Reviews, this matter will be discussed later.

Page 7 – Flag up and re-visit the proposal that Stonham HA will support a local working group. Andrew will follow up with Dave. Jan, Jill Farmer and Richard Kelly expressed an interest.

Point 6 – Terms of Reference –discussion took place around voting of the Chair. The process set out was agreed.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising from Housing and Floating Support sub-groups

Richard Kelly reported on Floating Support sub-group: they had met on the 7th February, this being their 5th meeting. It is shaping up as an *information exchange* but there was not much contact in between meetings. 5/6 providers had attended. There are differences between small and large organisations, voluntary bodies etc. and because everyone has different contracts and clients it could be difficult to work together. But it is worth doing. The next meeting is **Monday 9th May at 10.00am at the offices of Kemble Care, 2 St. Nicholas Street, Hereford.**

No report from Charlotte Woodward, Womens Aid who is new Housing sub-group Chair. Agreed she should come to the meetings.

Ian suggested that "Terms of Reference" for the sub-group would be useful. Brief discussion followed on the purpose of sub-groups and agreed they were for practioners to share news,

information and good practice. This meeting is for discussions over policy, resources and strategy as well as SP/ODPM news.

4. Homeless to Home presentation by Shelter

Effect resettlement and tenancy support for homeless families with children.

This was given by John Walker, National Development Manager – Tel: 0113 2453761 and Sunita Hopkins, Service Manager (new manager for Herefordshire area) – Tel (m) 07917 392772

John Walker began by introducing himself and Sunita and filled the meeting in on Shelter. It began in 1997/8 with 3 pilot projects in Birmingham, Bristol and Sheffield for homeless families with children. They saw it as a way of addressing this problem. Looked at various models (almost a floating support idea) before it was invented. Put in a grant application with the Lottery which was successful. Their aim was as stated above in italics. Started about the time Supporting People and THB were mainstreamed. Herefordshire is their latest project. Aim to have community based service advisers for families with children essentially but others also.

Objectives:

- Practical and material support
- Prevent homelessness
- Assist community cohesion
- Promote evidence and good practice.

The 3 projects were evaluated with the University of York and ODPM. There is a DIY skill sharing service. It is integrated nationally, managed regionally. The services have a 90% sustainability rate for 1 year after with support. They have developed the model to excellence and published an evaluation good practice guide. There is a national family resettlement programme. They are flexible and broker between agencies. They are an independent advocate for service users. There is a national Kite Mark for excellence with an overall assessment for provisional agencies and reviews for Floating Support and Accommodation based services. There is a national Equality team. When asked how they were funded John said by the administrative authorities with a levy on existing contracts. They are helped to organise and attain certain levels. They have published a *good practice* manual for Floating Support providers to give them a toolkit which is available on the Internet or as a paper version and is based on the QAF. They look at how their service users are. 90% are happy and maintain their tenancies. In Sheffield the service users are older and in Rochdale they have brought in the inclusion of the bracket of people who are *alleged perpetrators of anti-social behaviour*. This has been successful and they are in their 3rd year of no evictions which shows that their model of Floating Support can work with this. They are working with a housing association in London launching 17 units of accommodation based services in the Notting Hill area with neighbours such as Claudia Schieffer!

They have good feedback from service users and there are 4 evaluation reports available which he can e-mail to interested parties. "Firm Foundations" – an independent evaluation report and good practice guide and "Settling Down".

John gave his contact details and Sunita's (as above in this minute). He then handed over to Sunita.

Sunita introduced herself as the new manager for this latest project in Herefordshire. She is new to the area so is keen to learn from participating agencies. Feels there is a rural need and challenge and they aim to support 65 (families mainly) or maybe single people. They want to support them in temporary accommodation, moving to accommodation and then on to them moving on. Feels there is a gap in the support to the tenancy period and that this is an important time for people.

She has 4 support staff including a DIY skills adviser (which is an enabling role to help people with practical matters such as hanging wallpaper.) There is also a Team Leader and admin person. They are looking at premises, seek about 1500 sq ft of ground floor accommodation to operate from so if anyone has any contacts please do get in touch. Need transport links so needs to be in or close to Hereford. The next stage is to go out to Leominster and they will be recruiting a team leader and admin people soon to be operational in 3 months. She is keen to meet people with reference to referral arrangements and aims to reach a diverse client group.

Womens Aid showed an interest – where sometimes they can't take referrals and need to refer them elsewhere perhaps to Shelter. Shelter have worked with Womens Aid elsewhere and Jan and Sunita expressed a hope that they could work together in the future. Shelter are doing some leaflets.

Ian said that The Supporting People Partnership were delighted to have Shelter coming to the area. Sunita asked how she could make an approach to join the sub-groups and Andrew welcomed her to Herefordshire and this Forum.

5. National and Regional SP update by Sandra Evans

In the absence of Sandra there was no report. Andrew undertook to contact Dave in case she had left a note with him to convey her apology.

6. Local SP update by Ian Gardner - Interim SP Manager

Ian reported on the preparation of the 5-year strategy. The SP Team had commissioned the services of a consultant to assist in the preparation of the SP Strategy. The finished draft must be submitted to the ODPM by the 31st March. Andrew commented that a group from the Forum (Dave, Richard and Jan) had met with Steve Griffiths (the consultant) and had shared views on the strategy. Most people have seen or have in their possession a draft version. Further comments to Steve or SP please.

Ian raised Wendy Jarvis' (ODPM) letter and invited feedback. Only the 6 core objectives of the SP QAF will continue to be mandatory. Consensus was that consistency is key and that the 17 were valuable. Some providers were being audited under current method, was it fair to audit others differently. Continuous improvement is the aim of SP. Further discussion deferred to item nine.

Ian provided a summary of scheme developments – The commissioning of Homeless to Home, a Shelter development is considered successful. The proposal to develop Supported Housing in Leominster for homeless people will be submitted for Planning Consent in the near future.

The recruitment of a SP Lead Officer: closing date for applications was last Thursday. The meeting thought it may be some time before the appointed person would start.

Dawn Stradling had recently resumed her role as Senior Review Officer.

Richard Gabb is inviting members of the Forum to attend the Housing Strategy Consultation event on **Wednesday 30th March at the Three Counties Hotel, from 9.30am to 3.00pm**, lunch would be provided and this was not a closed event. There would be a consultation workshop.

Ian notified that the possibility of an inflationary payment for 2005-2006 to all providers was deferred by the Commissioning Body pending discussions with the Treasurer. Providers will be notified as soon as a decision is agreed. This was welcomed but urgency was stressed for the sake of budgets.

At this point Ian and Dawn left.

9. Discussion around local SP issues – Providers only – separate notes available & Update

10. AOB

There was no other business.

11. Date of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 8th June 2005

Time: 10.00am – 12.30pm

Venue: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Hereford

Future Meetings 2005:

Wednesday 28th September

Wednesday 7th December

Chair: Dave Hider

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