



**Community of Practice**

26.05.21 14:00-16:00

Over Zoom

*Minutes*

**Theme-** *Housing support*

Item
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>The new Brent partnerships webpages, that were inspired by an idea from one of our colleagues in the room have been launched in today's CoP. These pages will host all documents presented in meetings, meeting minutes, details on upcoming events and information shared but not presented [for instance flyers shared post meetings. To access these pages please use this link and do share it with colleagues.</p> <p><a href="https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/brent-homelessness-partnership/">https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/brent-homelessness-partnership/</a></p> <p>Nick then presented a short introduction to the day, highlighting what it means to be housing led and stressing the importance of prevention and sustainment. This presentation will be share with these minutes and all documents will be uploaded to the new webpages</p>
<p><b>London Renters Union</b></p> <p>LRU presented their work; the presentation will be shared on our website and with these minutes.</p> <p>The LRU are a union who support renters through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Building a community</li><li>- Empowering its members</li><li>- Member solidarity</li><li>- Mass campaigning</li></ul> <p>Details on each of these elements can be found in the presentation as well as details on events and how to join.</p> <p>Colleagues at the LRU ask that you and those who you work with join the ever-growing membership of Brent residents who come together for change.</p>
<p><b>Brent Reach</b></p> <p>Colleagues from Brent Reach presented the work that they do; the presentation will be included with these minutes and uploaded to the webpages.</p> <p>Brent Reach Floating Support service is provided in partnership with Thames Reach and EACH. They provide support to vulnerable people in their accommodation who may be experiencing challenges</p>



in managing their tenancy. They also work in partnership with Brent HUB and provide drop-in service in benefit/housing and other general advice and support needs.

The team works to provide assistance to people who need support to achieve and sustain stable and independent lives. The service aims to be accessible, flexible and responsive to individual needs of the client.

#### **Advice 4 Renters**

Colleagues from A4R presented the work of their team that focusses on homelessness prevention. This team have a legal aid contract in Housing and Debt which (subject to means and merits) enables us to carry out work which falls within the scope of legal aid which includes:

- Defending Possession and Eviction cases
- Unlawful Eviction and/or Harassment by Landlord
- Homelessness issues
- Disrepair where there is a risk to the health and safety of the tenant or other household members due to the conditions in their home.

Details on how to refer or how those who need their support can self-refer are on the presentation. Please ensure that those who need support are referred in as early as possible as the need arises so that they can get the most effective support.

#### **Local Authority**

Head of housing need at Brent council spoke to us today about housing pathways for those who need support and used a diagram that illustrates the rout through this.

Please see included and uploaded presentation [Brent council housing pathway].

With reference to the pathway diagram please note that the bottom row of the diagram indicates an individual's housing status, and the first column indicates an individual's assessed level of need. This level is not fixed and there is appreciation that this will change for many individuals based on multiple external and internal factors.

There are three main arms of housing options service:

- The single homeless pathway that works with those without dependent children- SHPS falls under this area
- The housing options team that supports those with dependent children and pregnant women
- The accommodation service that deals a lot with the properties [management of the Temporary accommodation/allocation of social housing, the procurement of PRS to use for homelessness prevention and ending homelessness duty]

**Some of the housing options mentioned include:**

SHPS



Sheltered housing over 60  
Social housing  
Private rented  
Social housing most often 1 bed in Brent and so longer wait for families.  
Housing first  
SMART Team

**Questions:**

- We have an experience of a person has completed a homelessness application and allocated as a family allocation. They were offered 1 or 2 properties that they didn't accept them and the case was closed due to their refusal; they are vulnerable and have now been served evictions. What is the best thing to do?

Because of the pressure of demand and supply of London borough- we are only able to make 1 suitable option keeping with the law. We will always recommend that families accept the offer and then put in a review. If this review is successful and the offer will be overturned. If the review is not accepted this can go to county court who are independent of the LA. This way they will have a roof over their head whilst this investigation is ongoing.

In this scenario where the duty has been ended [with a review where it was upheld] they cannot reapply. They may be able to apply under the children's act due to having dependent children.

-Currently working with a vulnerable woman who is squatting- is it appropriate for us to come to the civic centre and make an application?

At the moment, all applications are online, but if the person is vulnerable bring them to the civic centre and we can help them to make the application online.

**Next meeting ideas**

Our next meeting will take place at the end of July and the theme for this meeting will be around cost of living. The presenters and dates are yet to be confirmed, but the aim is 28<sup>th</sup> July.

Also, please look out for the Brent place-based newsletter that will be circulated in Mid-June and this will bring you up to date information for upcoming events and we hope to try to circulate this every 2 month.

**AOB**