

# WORKERS MEETING - Kalpna

07/10/20

**Present:** Guest Speaker: Steve Tullock (ACAS)

Ruth; Jan, Catherine, Roy, Frank, Gillian, Vanita, Ian L., Ian K., Jim B., Judith Neville, Laura Alcione, Lawrence Blake (trustee), Malcolm, Peter, Penny, Raminder, Chris, Rita, Rob Liddell, Rosy, Salim, Jackie Simmons, Sue, Farrukh (trustee), Mahtab, Rosie, Jonathan, David, Patsy, Judith K., Mo, Afshan, Kalpna

**Apologies:** Katie (Watford Hub - was in error given the incorrect date for meeting), Rosie (had to leave for another meeting), Vicky, Farrukh (left early), Maggie, Vicky F., Mike C.,

1. **Guest speaker STEVE TULLOCK** (ACAS 32 yrs in a variety of roles) - Spoke about the new Job Support Scheme, Variations of Contract and Redundancy

2. **Bureau updates:**

1. **CO: SALIM:**

-New doorstoppers have been put on all fire doors for safety and to reduce the need to use door handles in current climate. We had fund raised for these. Now we are focusing on raising funds for new blinds in the office.

-Level of C-19 in Watford is currently low compared to rest of Herts. Nevertheless we have to be careful and are taking all necc precautions in the Bx.

-It is Black History Month this month. There are lots of talks on Workplace and groups eg BAME. If you haven't joined Workplace pls speak with ASS/Rosie

- WCA has been the most productive it has ever been on AL- well done to all

-Bx heating is on. (CM - for H&S reasons during the current circumstances, if in the Bx please keep windows open for ventilation. The heating can be adjusted as required and to continue to maintain social distance)

-We have received funding from several sources and are now focused on recruiting staff with this thereby expanding our service to the community.

2. Rosie had to leave to attend another meeting so **ASM: CATHERINE** providing update:

-We have 9 new trainees that have started their training with Rosie; some of whom are present here...welcome and thank you for joining this workers meeting

-We have recruited additional paid staff:

\*Mo -welfare benefits advisor

\*Jonathan - generalist advisor and part/time caseworker

\*Christine - who was a volunteer advisor is now a benefits caseworker

\*Penny - has increased her hours to work as a generalist advisor to add to her work on Help To Claim

-A big “thank you” to all who are working from home

-The statistics for September are very good - Congratulations to all!:

\*F2F GW 28 clients - demand has not been very high.

Rita feedback: those clients that attended F2F GW (vulnerable/ isolated) have left very grateful that they were able to see

someone. Working within the Bx [I] feel safe and comfortable that all necc precautions are being taken

-Big "thank you" to all seeing clients F2F in the Bx.

-Clients are able to use the reception room to make phone calls/ use the computer

-Reception staff are doing a fantastic job as front face dealing with clients; thank you.

\*Advice appointments 210 (some were F2F to assist with form filling or dealing with complicated cases and helping those that needed to be seen F2F due to vulnerabilities).

\*Adviceline 398 calls compared to 360 in August. Demand is definitely up. In August the AL call demand was at 700, in September the call demand was 816. AL works with other Bx in Herts whereby a total of 435 watford clients were assisted.

\*Case notes 1255 registered. Thank you to ASS for their work in case checking and consultations.

-It is noted that on Tuesday we have a lot of assessors and advisors on the rota (over 16+) If anyone is able and willing to change their day from a Tuesday please speak with Catherine or an ASS.

-We are advertising for an additional ASS; the advert is on the WCA website

-Sue is a trainee ASS and works on Tuesday morning. GW assessors please do call on her for consultation.

-AGM save the date: 19/11/20. This will be a virtual AGM. A link will be sent to all in due course.

-There have been some changes on the Funder code list which is now on the S&V page. Please do check this list each time you do a write up to ensure the correct funder code is used.

-EAP : we have funding for this. Clients booked for disability form filling may also be eligible for a seperate EAP appointment if you

feel they would benefit from energy efficiency/energy advice/grants eg Warm Home discounts etc. EAP appointments can be made for clients needing benefit checks, debts etc. The write ups for these are different and a new case/enq has to be opened for an EAP appointment (see info on EAP on S&V page). If we do well with this funding, we could get repeat funding for EAP.

-Christmas shutdown: 24/12/20 - 1/1/21 incv. (23/12/20 will be the last day in the office and 4/1/21 will be the first day back in the office). It is for a shorter period than last year as we believe there will be a greater demand for our services during this time.

3. **MALCOLM IT update** - presented guidance on layout of S&V page

3. No other business. **Next meeting: 5/11/20**