**WORKERS MEETING MINUTES (Kalpna)**

**13/1/21**

**ATTENDEES:**

Salim, Catherine, Vikki, Rosie, Kalpna, Christine, Carmel, Roy, David, Gillian, Vanita, Malcolm, Judith K., Peter, Raminder, Rita, Robert, Shelly, Sue, Frank, Gladys, Heather, Ruth, Stephanie, Mahtab, Jackie, Ian

Messages & apologies:

Farrukh joined late due to previous commitment

Apologies from Solinda

**AGENDA:** Updates, Daniel from Softphones, Steph (R&C) & Malcom (IT & S&V home page)

**UPDATES:**

**Catherine – Service Manager update:**

Wished all a Happy New Year and thanked all for the support to date.

Welcome to all the new volunteers and Steph and Gladys.

Welcome back to Heather who will be re-joining on Wednesdays to work on emails received on info@.

-40 people working remotely now compared to 32 people working so last year. With the new volunteers joining this will increase the number to 45.

December Stats (taking into a/c the Christmas closure for 1.5 weeks)

- AL= 516 call demand; down from 669 in Nov and 703 in Oct. 260 calls answered by WCA, 324 Watford calls were answered by AL Hertfordshire.

- Advice app = 187

- Emails = 168 enq. Jonathan is currently doing excellent work keeping on top of emails; if anyone else is interested in working on email enq pls let us know.

- Case notes = 1010 case notes written on Casebook

- Simple Queries – 96

- Evidence Forms -see Steph’s presentation

- Softphones = many people are already using Softphones and consultation with ASS is now on a queuing system (please note the new contact numbers on briefing). We will all gradually move to softphone - if you have not received an email from Catherine with instructions but would like to start using this please give her a call on her direct no.

 To date, 147 calls have been answered by ASS on Softphone, max wait time on the que has been between 5-8 min

Feedback is welcome on the Softphone; please email ASM. We have already had feedback on the music which will be considered.

**Salim – Chief Officer`s update**

We have 2 new projects:

1. Funds available from the County Council (inc. money from the Rushford fund) to assist clients who are suffering fuel and water debt and struggling to afford food. Not clear yet, but may be able to assist with the need for white goods This Project has been slow to start. Each of the Herts CA will have £10,000 to distribute to clients in need. Prev. we were able to assist cl`s with a £50 top on their energy but this Project will allow for a higher amount to be provided. We would need to identify the cl`s that would benefit from this Project then refer them to Hatfield CA who then administers the funds The Project will run to 31/3/21 – more details to follow.
2. Remote Site Project – funding provided by the Police Commissioner Office in return for use of our interview rooms for remote hearings/meetings once fortnightly.

We are looking into adaptations necessary for when we reopen, maybe end of February 2021. The will be a survey circulated shortly to all for feedback and suggestions.

We have a strategy day at the end of this month for WCA. Please send any suggestions, ideas and feedback regarding how what we can do to make it easier to work at the office. For example, the new blinds make the office look better and a coffee machine was a welcomed!

**Rosie – learning and development update**

. Funding was obtained for the upcoming Welfare Benefits training which provides training from introducing welfare benefits to advance level.

-Please ensure that you regularly browse through Docebo, it is continuously being updated with new training

-If your GDPR training needs to be updated, you will be receiving an email so please keep a lookout for this

-There is training for Windrush – you will get an email if you need to do this

- The new Gateway Assessors are ready to go on the rota and have already started their supported sessions : Chatura, Jackie, Jim, Judeth, Laura, Mana, Solinda and Rob

- We have decided not to recruit any more volunteers for the time being but to use this time to consolidate and develop the training with the current assessors and provide all the support that is needed. We will review the situation in the Summer.

**Daniel – Softphones**

Explained how the Softphones work and assisted current users with their queries and non-users with information on questions asked.

**Steph – R&C update**

Introduced herself and Gladys. Started in early Nov. Provided following info:

1. **National Local Emerging**

**October** 19 3 10

**November** 11 9 10

**December** 12 2 11

1. **October November December**

**Green Home Grant**  0 0 0

**Evictions following ban**  0 1(plus 2\*) 0

**on Evictions**

**Rehoused with no furniture** 0 1(plus 1\*) 0

**WBC Housing not**  n/a 4 0

**Supporting vulnerable cl**

**Communications/support** n/a n/a 2

**From energy suppliers**

 (\* From AIC reports)

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1. **October November December** **Total**

**Benefits/DWP** 5 5 2 **12**

**Employment** 1 4 1  **6**

**Housing** 4 6 1 **11**

**Homelessness/Eviction** 4 2 1  **7**

 **Debt** 2 1 2  **5**

**Consumer**  1 - 4  **5**

**Legal** 2 - 1  **3**

**Other** 3 2 2 **7**

-R&C Actions:

\* Look for patterns across months

\*Create new calls for evidence

\*run reports using linked AICs to identify more cases

\*Identify powerful case studies for campaigning

\*Identify where local action needed

**Malcolm – S&V homepage**

Went through the new developments and changes on S&V home page and how to find relevant information

**Farrukh – Trustee update**

Will be discussing a budget with Trustees this month for IT as suggested by Malcolm.

 **NEXT WORKERS MEETING: Thursday 4/2/21**