

TAMESIDE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE PARTNERSHIP

PROVIDER GROUP MEETING

4th September 2007

Commenced: 2.30 pm **Terminated:** 4.15 pm

Present:

Alan Franco	CLS Co-ordinator (TMBC) (in the Chair)
Ahmed Ali	Equality & Diversity Centre of Excellence
Annette Goodfellow	Tameside CAB
Richard Helmn	GM Immigration Aid Unit
Karen Morgan-Hopwood	The Pension Service
Alistair Newton	TMBC Trading Standards
Carol Renshaw	The Pension Service Joint Team
Helen Stonehouse	Tameside Carers Centre
Julie Vickers	NCHT
Linda Walker	Partnership Secretary

**Apologies for
Absence:**

Sarah Bartram	Parker Bird Solicitors
Eden Carruthers	TMBC Social Care & Health
Caroline Gregory	TMBC Neighbourhood Renewal
John Hughes	TMBC Housing Strategy
Anne Okwei	Sure Start
Andrew Shanahan	Beevers Solicitors
Roger Thompson	TMBC Welfare Rights Service
Gill Williams	Tameside County Court
Janine Yates	TMBC Money Advice Project

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting held on 19th June 2007, having been circulated, were approved as a correct record.

2. "HEALTH IMPROVEMENT IN TAMESIDE (EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS)"

Erika Wenzel, Executive Director, Neighbourhood and Community Services, gave a presentation which focused on a model for health improvement in the Borough, which reflected the current strategic approach to health improvement together with the need to adopt a more holistic, partnership based, approach to implementation and delivery.

She stated that within Tameside there were significant variations in health, with certain wards displaying some of the worst health characteristics in England (Health Inequalities). The production of the updated Health Improvement/Health Inequalities Strategy had resulted from a detailed health needs analysis and clear local priorities had emerged with associated performance measures linked to the Local Area Agreement:

Priority 1	Reducing the numbers of people in our local population who were smokers.
Priority 2	Diet, nutrition and oral health
Priority 3	Physical activity
Priority 4	Alcohol and substance misuse
Priority 5	Teenage pregnancy and sexual health
Priority 6	Mental health production

A joint Health Improvement Team was being created which would provide infrastructure and capacity to support and co-ordinate this agenda and the engagement/support for thematic partnerships was part of the Team's work plan.

Members discussed ways in which to support the delivery of the six key priorities which could be used to augment the existing business plan. Reference was made to clients accessing information and advice services and the link between health and mental wellbeing and people being unable to manage their personal affairs. Further details would also be obtained regarding initiatives already in place to improve health in disadvantaged communities and how these could be linked with education and information and advice services.

Julie Vickers reported on the Dream Scheme initiative run by NCHT where people were encouraged to collect points which could be exchanged for activities.

AGREED

- (1) That the Partnership noted the approach suggested in the report and endorsed the concept that health improvement in Tameside was "Everybody's Business".**
- (2) That this issue be a standing item on future agendas for future meetings.**

3. IMMIGRATION AND DISCRIMINATION

Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit

Richard Helmn, GM Immigration Aid Unit, reported on changes to Legal Services Commission contracts from 1st October 2007 which introduced a standard fee for each new case opened. The main consequence of this for the GMIAU would be that the LSC would not be funding "drop in" advice sessions and a decision would have to be made about whether or not to provide this service using other resources.

He also advised that a new model for dealing with asylum seekers had been introduced by the Government. The aim of the new model would be that when a person or a family presents themselves seeking asylum they would have their application processed and receive a decision within one month. In reality this system did not seem to be working and concerns were being expressed regarding the advice being received at appointments and hearings due to the speed at which applications needed to be processed. However, one of the advantages of the new system was that as soon as a person enters the system they are allocated a Home Office case worker who remains with them from initial contact through to the decision and is also responsible for their removal should be application not be successful.

As consequence of the introduction of this new model there would be significant delays for those people already in the system, estimated at 450,000 who may not have their cases dealt with until 2011.

In conclusion, he advised that the outreach sessions provided in Tameside would continue and he would provide an up to date list of opening hours/advice sessions and a copy of the Unit's annual report for the information of members.

Equality and Diversity Centre of Excellence

Ahmed Ali, Chief Executive of the Equality and Diversity Centre of Excellence, reported on the work of the Centre which was financially assisted by the Commission for Racial Equality and Tameside MBC. The organisation also delivers under contact with the CRE, a comprehensive free racial discrimination service to residents of all ten Greater Manchester local authorities.

He distributed facts and figures relating to the 1000 enquiries which had been received relating to the type of enquiry, ethnicity of clients, age and sex of clients. As a result of the Centre's interventions, many clients were now able to carry on achieving in the workplace on the basis of

their own merit. The Equality and Diversity Centre of Excellence had become a leading service provider for victims of race discrimination in Greater Manchester providing a seamless casework service. It had come a long way developmentally, integrating and embracing equality and diversity fully into all its workings and aspired to be an exemplar of good practice.

He concluded that as the CRE integrates itself fully into the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) in October 2007, the Equality and Diversity Centre of Excellence hoped to continue to deliver on the current services and would also be looking to further expand.

4. RACE RELATIONS ACT – PROVISIONS

Ahmed Ali, Chief Executive, Equality and Diversity Centre of Excellence, gave a presentation on the main provisions of the Race Relations (Amended) Act 2000. It amended the Race Relations Act 1976, which made it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origin. The new duty was more enforceable and included a positive duty for authorities to promote racial equality and a requirement not only to address unlawful discrimination but also to be pro-active in preventing it from occurring.

The new duty comprised three components:

- (i) to eliminate unlawful discrimination
- (ii) to promote equality of opportunity
- (iii) to promote good race relations

The presentation also referred to the main provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976 as follows:

- Direct Discrimination
- Indirect Discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Positive Action

Further information could be obtained by contacting the Equality and Diversity Centre of Excellence on 0161 343 3399, or emailing trec@btopenworld.com.

5. PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The latest information from Tameside County Court and Council Tax were circulated.

6. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

In terms of forthcoming events, a Financial Inclusion Seminar had been organised by MINT would be taking place on 30th November 2007. The Tameside CAB had arranged a Bankruptcy Information session which would be held in the Council Offices, Ashton-under-Lyne, on 30th October 2007.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Provider Group would be held on Tuesday 4th December 2007, commencing at 2.30 pm at the Council Offices, Ashton-under-Lyne. The themes for the meeting would be Housing and Debt.