

TAMESIDE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE PARTNERSHIP

PROVIDER GROUP MEETING

17th June 2008

Commenced: 2.30 pm **Terminated:** 3.40 pm

Present:

Alan Franco	CLS Co-ordinator (TMBC) (in the Chair)
Noleen Beswick	TMBC Community Mental Health Services
Stephanie Booth	Tameside Libraries Information Service
Eden Carruthers	TMBC Adult Services – Public Information
Jude Crabtree	TMBC Education Welfare
Lesley Hunter	GM Pay & Employment Rights Advice Service
Alistair Newton	Tameside Trading Standards
Karen Renshaw	TMBC & Pension Service Joint Team
Susan Riley	Tameside CAB
Ray Slamon	Tameside Carers Centre
Roger Thompson	TMBC Welfare Rights Service
Julie Vickers	NCHT
Linda Walker	Partnership Secretary

**Apologies for
Absence:**

David Burdis	MINT
Ilys Cookson	TMBC, Assistant Executive Director (Exchequer & Support Services)
Caroline Gregory	TMBC Neighbourhood Renewal
Karen Morgan-Hopwood	TMBC & Pension Service Joint Team

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting held on 18th March 2008, having been circulated, were approved as a correct record.

In respect of Minute 8 – Loan Shark Lending – Alan Franco advised on a workshop held recently in Stalybridge where representatives from the national campaign on loan sharks provided details on this initiative.

2. CONSUMER ADVICE AND TRADING STANDARDS

Alistair Newton gave a presentation detailing the work undertaken by the Consumer Advice and Trading Standards Service including information, advice and assistance for customers and businesses, policing the market place to ensure fair competition and consumer protection and enforcement action including prosecution of dishonest traders.

He also advised that from 26th May 2008 major changes to consumer law had given trading standards tough new powers. The new regulations specifically banned 31 types of unfair sales practices and made it against the law for aggressive practices to be used. They were designed to help people feel safer and more secure when making a purchase and made it much tougher for the small minority of rogue traders who operated dishonestly.

Susan Riley, Tameside Citizens Advice Bureau, added that consumer advice enquiries represented 2.5% of the total enquiries received in 2007/08.

AGREED

That the update report be noted.

3. EMPLOYMENT ADVICE

Greater Manchester Pay and Employment Rights Service

Lesley Hunter from the Greater Manchester Pay and Employment Rights Advice service stated that the organisation was committed to working to improve pay and conditions for low paid workers through the provision of employment rights advice, information, research and campaigning.

She outlined two projects currently ongoing relating to employment rights and support to women experiencing domestic violence in the home and who may also be experiencing problems at work and a further project providing advice and support to migrant workers. Future projects were being planned relating to supporting people on long term sick, helping them to move back into the workplace and also help to carers and their rights in the work place in order to balance carer/work responsibilities.

GMPERAS provided free, confidential employment advice, information and support to anyone in Greater Manchester who was experiencing problems at work and further information was available by contacting its advice line on 0161 839 3888. In the last year approximately 9% of total enquiries were from residents of Tameside. The Service also offered second tier advice and training to generalist agencies and around 45 people attended an advice session recently held in Tameside.

GMPERAS also produced approximately 35 leaflets and fact sheets dealing with a wide range of employment issues and further information and details could found on the website www.gmemploymentrights.org.uk.

Tameside Citizens Advice Bureau

Susan Riley, Tameside Citizens Advice Bureau, stated that 8% of their total enquiries in 2007/08 related to employment advice and in terms of generalist employment advice the top three issues concerned dismissal, pay and entitlements and dispute resolution.

The Bureau's employment post went from full time to part time in the last financial year following the end of the legal help contract. The Employment Worker continued to staff the weekly open door surgery, taking a mixture of one off cases and casework. A total number of 786 new issues were dealt with by the Bureau's employment specialist and 137 new clients were seen through the surgery during 2007/08.

AGREED

That the update report be noted.

4. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT – BENEFIT TAKE UP FOR OLDER PEOPLE

AGREED

That this item be deferred to the next meeting.

5. TACKLING INDEBTEDNESS IN TAMESIDE

(a) Tameside County Court Possession Summonses

The upward trend on the number of possession summonses issued for mortgage arrears was continuing and it was noted that 110 issued in April 2008 was the highest figure recorded over the last five years. Increased efforts would be made to ensure that those affected were aware of the advice services available in Tameside and the statistics would

continue to be closely monitored. Partners also noted that rent possession summonses issued remained fairly static.

(b) Council Tax Liability Orders

The number of liability orders issued remained fairly static at around 10,000 per year.

Alan Franco added that he had been involved in discussions with the County Court regarding the increase in the issue of charging orders placed on a debtor's property (house or land) for monies owed to a lender and how these could be monitored.

AGREED

That the report be noted.

6. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CARERS

Ray Slamon briefly reported on the Government's recently published National Strategy for Carers linked with the new deal for carers. It was hoped that the strategy would deliver improvements to the lives of carers however there had been no changes to benefits but a review would take place in the context of wider benefit reform.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

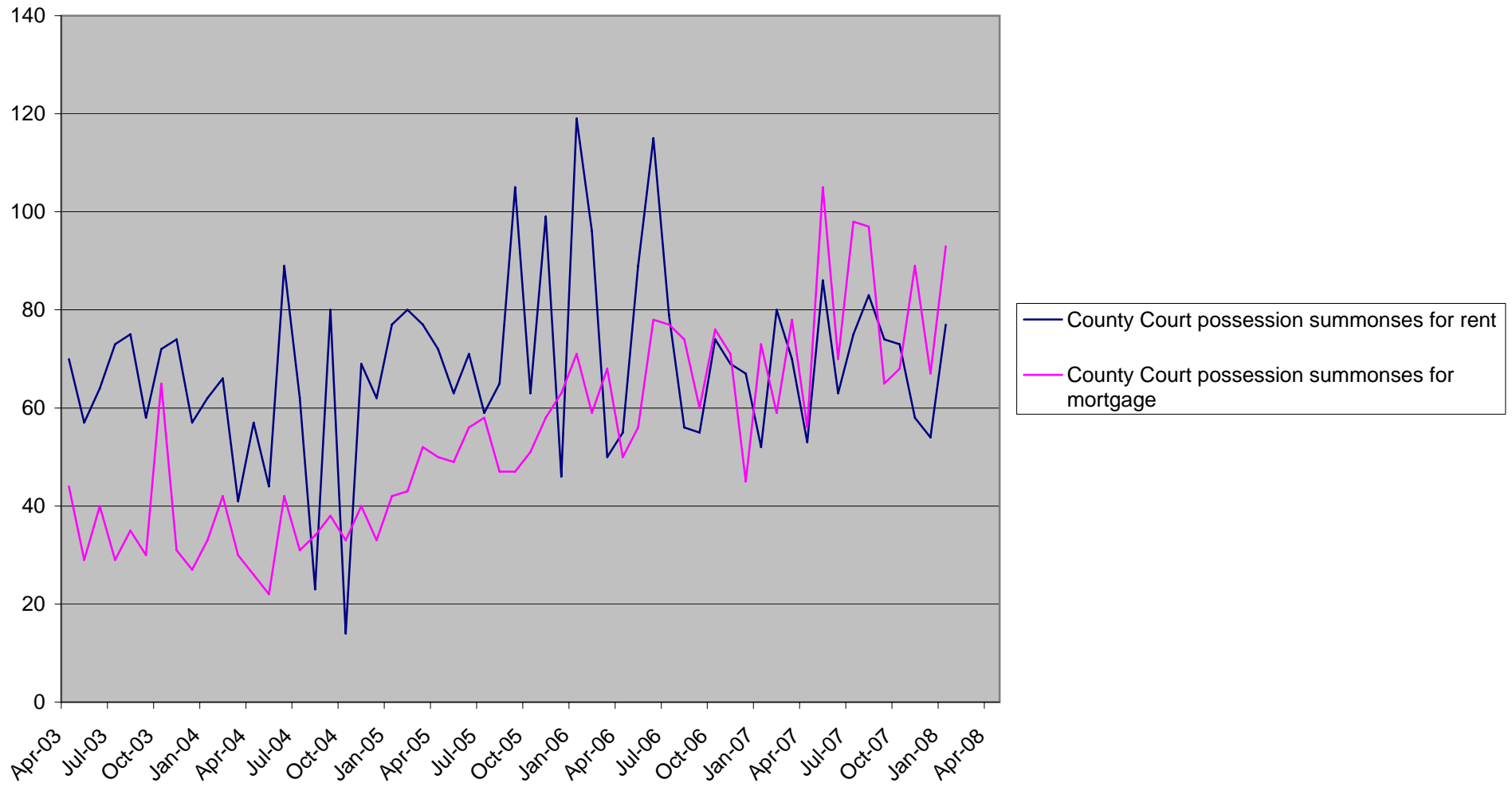
The dates and themes for the future meetings in 2008 was noted as follows:

Date	Theme (area of law)
16 th September 2008	(i) Immigration (ii) Discrimination
16 th December 2008	(i) Housing (ii) Debt

	County Court possession summonses for rent	County Court possession summonses for mortgage
Apr-03	70	44
May-03	57	29
Jun-03	64	40
Jul-03	73	29
Aug-03	75	35
Sep-03	58	30
Oct-03	72	65
Nov-03	74	31
Dec-03	57	27
Jan-04	62	33
Feb-04	66	42
Mar-04	41	30
Apr-04	57	26
May-04	44	22
Jun-04	89	42
Jul-04	62	31
Aug-04	23	34
Sep-04	80	38
Oct-04	14	33
Nov-04	69	40
Dec-04	62	33
Jan-05	77	42
Feb-05	80	43
Mar-05	77	52
Apr-05	72	50
May-05	63	49
Jun-05	71	56
Jul-05	59	58
Aug-05	65	47
Sep-05	105	47
Oct-05	63	51
Nov-05	99	58
Dec-05	46	63
Jan-06	119	71
Feb-06	96	59
Mar-06	50	68
Apr-06	55	50
May-06	89	56
Jun-06	115	78
Jul-06	79	77
Aug-06	56	74
Sep-06	55	60
Oct-06	74	76
Nov-06	69	71
Dec-06	67	45
Jan-07	52	73
Feb-07	80	59
Mar-07	70	78
Apr-07	53	56
May-07	86	105
Jun-07	63	70
Jul-07	75	98
Aug-07	83	97
Sep-07	74	65
Oct-07	73	68
Nov-07	58	89
Dec-07	54	67
Jan-08	77	93
Feb-08	70	94
Mar-08	75	77

2003/04 averages are	64 (rent)	36 (mortgage)
2004/05 averages are	61 (rent)	36 (mortgage)
2005/06 averages are	76 (rent)	56 (mortgage)
2006/07 averages are	72 (rent)	66 (mortgage)
2007/08 averages are	70 (rent)	82 (mortgage)

Tameside County Court Possession Summonses



**Tameside Council Tax
Debt Recovery**

	No. of CTAX liability orders issued	Annual Totals
Apr-03	470	
May-03	1238	
Jun-03	2378	
Jul-03	1154	
Aug-03	669	
Sep-03	975	
Oct-03	846	
Nov-03	790	
Dec-03	571	
Jan-04	712	
Feb-04	0	
Mar-04	989	10792
Apr-04	537	
May-04	619	
Jun-04	2700	
Jul-04	705	
Aug-04	736	
Sep-04	714	
Oct-04	784	
Nov-04	384	
Dec-04	247	
Jan-05	636	
Feb-05	174	
Mar-05	557	8793
Apr-05	443	
May-05	125	
Jun-05	2678	
Jul-05	761	
Aug-05	975	
Sep-05	526	
Oct-05	908	
Nov-05	553	
Dec-05	673	
Jan-06	1010	
Feb-06	495	
Mar-06	541	9688
Apr-06	461	
May-06	447	
Jun-06	2974	
Jul-06	714	
Aug-06	943	
Sep-06	1035	
Oct-06	806	
Nov-06	0	
Dec-06	0	
Jan-07	513	
Feb-07	0	
Mar-07	60	7953
Apr-07	155	
May-07	1408	
Jun-07	0	
Jul-07	0	
Aug-07	3035	
Sep-07	1641	
Oct-07	1105	
Nov-07	880	
Dec-07	531	
Jan-08	814	
Feb-08	890	
Mar-08	179	10638
Apr-08	79	
May-08	836	

Tameside Council Tax Debt Recovery

