**Thurrock Emotional Wellbeing Forum**

**For Individuals, Families and Carers**



**Monday 20th November 2017, 2.00 – 4.00 pm**

**Thurrock Mind Crown House, Crown Road, Grays**

**Attendees:**

Ian Evans - Facilitator Karen Haltham (minutes)

Ian White – Thurrock Council Jen Lambert

David Eyres Julia Wright

Ann Kerin Christine Ellisdon

Melanie Ryan Kathy Bourlet

**Apologies:** Andrea Valentine, Leanne

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Ian welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

**2. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Previous Forum Meeting**

The minutes were read and agreed as a correct record.

It was suggested that the Suicide Prevention Action Plan should include the creation of an Accident and Emergency Department (A&E) for people with Mental Health issues.

Facebook page – it was agreed to have an information board and not a full Facebook page – Julia said that Thurrock Adult Community College would like and share any information on the board to widen the area the Forum is advertised.

**3. Presentation by Ian White, Welfare Reform Co-Ordinator**

Welfare Reform, Financial Inclusion and Universal Credit

The Welfare Reform Act was introduced in 2012.

£220 billion spent on Welfare Reform, £95 Billion of which is on Pensions. Saving £18 billion with introduction of the Welfare Reform agenda.

It’s a complicated system

A New Benefit – Universal Credit was introduced in 2014 – it won’t be fully implemented in Thurrock until 25.10.17 and is trickling through It relates to.

Income based:

* JSA
* ESA
* Income Support
* Child Tax Credit
* Working Tax Credit
* Housing Benefit

There is no Welfare Reform to Pensions as yet.

Housing benefit now paid to claimant directly, not to landlords

First 7 days don’t get anything (was 3) and one calendar month before receive money.

Everyone will migrate across by 2022

The use of foodbanks has increased 5 fold.

|  |
| --- |
| Question: Are assessors trained to assess someone with Mental Health issues?  Answer: If advised no – appeal and ask for a ‘mandatory reconsideration’ – 78% are turned down – get to tribunal and increases likelihood of a successful appeal. |

Those present shared some of their experiences of claiming benefits and the assessment process.

Thurrock Centre for Independent Living are able to assist with completion of PIP forms, based in the Beehive, West Street, Grays RM17 6XP – 01375 389864.

Courts are independent of DWP.

Universal Credit exceptions:

* Hostels
* Women’s Refuges
* More than two children

It is possible to have an advanced payment of up to half, within 2 hours

APA – Alternative Payment Arrangement (See details in presentation)

Thurrock Council are working alongside 16 work coaches.

DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) do not want any evictions.

Westminster and Barking and Dagenham are giving incentives to Private Landlords in Thurrock to house people from their areas, this has an effect on the amount of privately rented housing in Thurrock.

Apply for Universal Credit online – can also go to the hubs and Civic offices as there are people trained to help those who do not have access to a computer at home. It takes about 20 minutes, will then receive a text or email with a date of an appointment at the job centre, will need to take ID, ie tenancy agreement, bank details etc. – the claim starts as soon as the button is pressed at the end of the application.

Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance and Council Tax are not covered by Universal Credit.

4. **Presentation Questions and Answers**

Several scenarios were shared.

Universal Credit for 18-63 year olds

Council Housing 18+ (exceptions for 16 and 17 year olds especially for those leaving care)

5. **Refreshments**

6. **Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – Ian Evans**

See Ian’s presentation

Those present divided into two groups to look at two case studies and carrying out assessments in mock PIP assessments, taking the role of assessors and awarding points.

Feedback:

Case Study 6 (Denise) both groups discussed – group one gave 22 points and group two 21 points

Case Study 7 (Robert) Karen looked at this case study and awarded 17 points.

**7. Any Other Business**

Topics for future meetings:

Market Position Statement.

Monday 12th February 2018 at 1:30pm

**The next meeting will take place on**:

Monday 12th February 2018, 1.30 for 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm

at Thurrock Mind, Crown House, Crown Road, Grays

**Future Meetings**:

Monday 14th May 2018, Monday 13th August 2018 and

Monday 12th November 2018