



A Fairer Place – Connecting with Information and Advice services in Kensington and Chelsea, held on Wednesday 27 November 2024

EVENT SUMMARY AND ACTIONS

The Kensington and Chelsea Advice Partnership (KCAP) consists of Citizens Advice Kensington and Chelsea (CAKC), Nucleus Advice Centre (NAC) and North Kensington Law Centre (NKLC) and will be working together in the coming years to provide a dedicated Information and Advice service for local residents.

On Thursday 28 November 2024 we held a VCS Assembly which focussed on how we can improve meeting the need of residents through connecting better together across Information, advice and guidance services and wider voluntary and community sector services.

During the event we ran training workshops in areas that aimed to strengthen collaboration and gather insights to help shape future service development. Finally, there was a formal introduction to the Advice Partnership and the opportunity to hear how the three partners will be working together to deliver the IAG service.

Below is a summary of the key actions from the event to take forward

- The Advice Partnership (KCAP) to develop a stronger relationship with small/grassroots organisations that are giving some form of advice to their clients to better understand the role they play within IAG. This can be done through setting up initial meetings.
- KCAP to build stronger relationships with youth organisations to improve advice provision for young people. This can be addressed through a collaborative approach with K&C Youth Foundation/Job Centres
- CAKC to widen training to small/grassroots organisations
- KCAP to improve collaboration with adult social care, health services and the VCS to ensure advice provision is part of the health and care pathway
- KCAP Steering Group to review advice line/Plinth and chat GPT as part of service development areas
- KCAP to consider fresh approaches to increase take up of advice through new partnerships, digital developments and overall improve general communication of advice services for residents

Workshops summary and actions

Workshop 1 - Where should advice service provision be? Facilitated by KCSC

This workshop gave the opportunity for participants to discuss the best ways and places to reach residents

Spaces where some advice services are currently being held include:

- Kensington Town Hall Customer Access Services
- Nott Hill Methodist Church
- Wormwood Scrubs prison
- St Charles hospital
- World's End Food Banks

Working with small/grassroot organisations in the borough

There are other small, local VCOs that give advice to their clients and prefer to do so than refer to a large agency. However, when they do, they expect their clients' needs to be met.

There should be shared learning and understanding between KCAP and these organisations to understand the advice being provided and to address issues faced when referring to specialist advice providers.

Actions for KCAP Steering Group

- Develop the relationship with small organisations via meetings/events etc.
- CAKC deliver Advice First Aid Training and can offer this to smaller organisations.

Reaching young people

There is a gap in advice provision for young people and this need is only going to increase given the Government's recent announcement on capping/stopping employment benefits for young people linked to employment and training.

Actions

- KCAP to have a better connection with youth agencies, providing advice services in youth centres
- KCAP could seek to develop greater relationship with Job Centres to reach young people

Older People

There is an opportunity for advice to have a better connection with the NHS. Advice services can also reach older people via supermarkets and hospitals.

Actions

- KCAP SG to feed into VCS longer term planning for NHS funded self care services via KCSC
- KCAP to further explore reaching people via supermarkets

Giving advice to people with mental health needs

Encouraging take up of advice needs to be tailored for communities where stigma might be attached to seeking advice and with clients suffering from trauma. Giving advice to people may not always work because of mental health needs and so more mental health support is required.

Actions

- Consider developing advice champions or working with community champions to encourage take up of advice services.
- Training be made available for advice providers working with people suffering from trauma
- KCAP improve collaboration with adult social care, health services and the VCS to ensure advice provision is part of the health and care pathway

Faith based organisations

Many people turn to their faith organisations for debt advice and other forms of information and guidance.

Actions

- KCAP to consider how to increase collaboration with faith based organisations

Communications

The question was considered if there is there enough advice provision in North Kensington and therefore too much choice why take up of advice is lower than in the south of the borough? Some participants felt that there was a perception that there is not enough provision because services are not being promoted as well as they could be.

Actions

- CAKC to look at the advice line and how many calls are being dealt with.
- Chatbot is also being used extensively via Citizens Advice K&C website, a review on how effective is it needs to take place
- KCAP to look at how many referrals are being picked up via Plinth and how to improve this if needed
- KCAP Steering Group to review advice line/Plinth and chat GPT as part of service development areas activity

Suggested fresh approaches

- Workshops and training for VCOs on first aid advice/other relevant training
- Improving digital 24-hour access
- Advice line at times suitable for working people/people unable to access during the day
- Improving comms on advice services available – where and when
- Help and support hubs – access to other services available alongside advice
- Work collaboratively with housing associations – might funding be available?

Workshop 2 - Did you know the deadline for migration to Universal Credit is fast approaching and what this will mean? Delivered by Citizens Advice Kensington and Chelsea (CAKC)

The workshop explained what the changes mean for clients who are currently claiming 'legacy benefits' that will be replaced by Universal Credit. Focus was also on what action those clients need to take and in what timeframes, as well as the potential hurdles to receiving their first Universal Credit payment.

- Everyone moving to Universal Credit means all other funds received will stop
- Residents in receipt of a migration letter will state the deadline date for migration
- There will be transitional protection for one year

Actions

- People in receipt of universal credit can be referred to CAKC for advice
- CAKC can come to organisations and give a similar presentation to their clients

Workshop 3 - How will using Plinth support my organisation making a referral into the Kensington and Chelsea Advice Partnership? Delivered by Plinth and Nucleus

The workshop provided voluntary and community organisations with the knowledge of how to use Plinth as a referral tool for referring residents to advice agencies.

Actions/key points

- People don't want to tell their stories twice, uploading a document with all the relevant information to Plinth helps to overcome this
- Some organisations using Plinth cannot see all of their referrals e.g. referrals going to foodbanks
- Add reminder/action for Plinth users so clients are not forgotten
- There is some confusion on whether a referral has been accepted therefore needing to contact the client to check. It would be helpful for Plinth to update the referrer if the agency has contacted the client - is there or can there be an automatic update sent to referrers?
- Can universal credit and migration cases be added to Plinth?
- There is no drop down for housing issues
- There are some concerns with GDPR and amount of information we share on the client when we refer
- If Nucleus has a backlog of more than a week they don't take up more referrals because clients don't turn up

Want to know more about E-Visas? Delivered by North Kensington Law Centre

The workshop provided a 'How to' on E-Visas, giving an insight for organisations who will potentially field queries and requests about E -Visas from their clients to assist in setting up digital accounts and accessing documentation.

No physical form will be available to apply

From 31 December 2024, almost all non-UK citizens will need an E Visa

People must have smart phones to download the app, although advisors can use their own phones but this has lots of data/privacy issues

VCOs can refer clients via plinth for advanced advice/representation from NKLC

Action

KCSC to circulate the E Visa guide to attendees