| **Meeting Minutes** |
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| **Location:** | New City College, Poplar High Street, E14 0AF. |
| **Date:** | Tuesday 26 November 2019 |
| **Time:** | 6pm – 8pm  **Attendees:** Alan Green (Chair), Leon Silver, Eleanor Land, Fleur Holley-Moore, Jaber Khan, jasmine Kauriola, Jenny Hadgraft, Judith Blackburn, Joan Drummond, John Drummond, Leon Silver, Rich Poolman, Marie McLeod, Salah Uddin, Matt Endersby, Terry Street, Tom O’Connor, Verna Coke, Kellie Williams, Christine Hall.  **Apologies:** Jan McHarry, Daniel Range, Shirin Jisha & Wilma Bol |

## **Welcome – Alan Green, Chair**

Nothing from previous meeting to be brought forward.

Alison Arnaud, Principal of the College welcomed the forum and gave a brief explanation of the college and their students. The College is self-funded and has 1500 students aged 16-18 that are studying for vocational qualifications as well as adult learners that want to progress professionally.

## **Hate Crime Analysis and Regular Reporting (standing item) – PC Rich Poolman, Met Police**

Rich Poolman reported the latest Tower Hamlets (TH) Met Police faith hate crime data (for 1 June to 30 September):

* Hotspots: Whitechapel and Cambridge Heath Road area. Also ward of Spitalfields and Banglatown.
* Victim characteristics: Highest in black males (mainly) followed by Asian males.
* Suspect characteristics: Mostly white males.
* Most frequently targeted religion: Islam – for some reason the incidents peak on Wednesdays but unsure of reason.
* Majority of hate crimes are public order offences.
* Sanction detections. The figure is quite low – mainly due to instances being reported after suspect has left so officers have to rely on CCTV and witnesses sometimes so it is long drawn out process.
* Met wants every incident to be reported so that there is a better overall picture.

Q – *What if an incident happens on public transport?*

A – If an incident occurs on a bus then Met Police will deal with it but if it happens on a train or tube then the British Transport police - they have their own statistics.

*Q – Do you make sure there are extra officers around these hotspots?*

A – Yes for example they have a nighttime team to combat these crimes e.g. hotspot in Hackney.

*Q – As there has been an increase in number of rough sleepers – has there been any increase in attacks on rough sleepers?*

A – It would not be classified as a hate crime as these are typically crimes against race, faith, disability, LGBT.

*Q – Victims of hate crime can experience emotional issues – how many people are directed to support services?*

A - Every victim – we offer a CATCH Referral (Community Action to Combat Hate).

Alan, Chair of THIFF remarked that it is very useful to have the overview so we can reflect on why that might be happening, and the importance of reporting even if something doesn’t seem worth it. People should be committed to reporting the crimes and it is then down to the police to get sanction detection rate up and therefore build more confidence.

## **Tower Hamlets Council – Fleur Holly-Moore, Rough Sleeping Manager, Housing Options Team.**

Council very much recognises that there is a lot of work going on outside of the local authority

Fleur gave on overview of:

* Numbers and profile of who they know is out there
* Overview of what they fund as a local authority and some details on a few initiatives they commission as a local authority
* Look at what is commissioned pan-London by the Greater London Authority and Ministry of Housing & Communities and Local Government
* Looking into the future

Shared commitment – harm to mental, physical, and to community (anti-social behaviours)

Political focus – public are concerned.

Vison: Shared commitment with government to end rough sleeping. Growing public distress/concern

CHAIN – (Combined Homelessness and Information Network). Records every person that the team comes across – a shared system so partners can see the history of the person.

166 new rough sleepers – 113 didn’t spend more than one night on the streets. 8855 people seen sleeping rough once (whole of London boroughs)

Rough sleeping street count takes place during start of October and end of November, measures how many rough sleepers are outside on one specific night – controversy about figures due to misrepresentation of true number. Some backlash against the figures is fair, but some isn’t.

66% of rough sleepers are British – 19% EEA, 8% African and 6% Asian. 81% male. 40% aged 3-40. Concentrated in the West of the borough.

Many have high support needs. Some also have anti-social behaviour.

Challenges: Inflexibility of mainstream services e.g. GP appts, rough sleepers moving from borough to borough, the use of tents – outreach staff cannot enter them as too dangerous,

LBTH provision: Outreach team (TH Sort), Providence Row have psychotherapist, drug and alcohol recovery service, supported accommodation, all year-round emergency bed spaces, housing first pilot, no first night out initiative (early rapid intervention)

* Streetlink: online and app to report rough sleepers so that they can access help.
* Trauma informed outreach psychotherapist (fund Providence Row for this) – move people away from street-based lifestyle – very flexible, on the client’s terms, very good outcomes, evictions stopped.
* SWEP – swep provision happens at 0 degrees. Pan London – 31 additional bed spaces – no eligibility or local connections needed. Camp beds on floor type of provision. Can also book b&b.
* Ten-day crash pad (also Providence Row)
* Clearing house – St Mungo’s – for people ready to leave hostels, network of 45 registered providers g housing Assoc and additional support to sustain tenancy.
* Safe connections – different borough – work to reconnect them to where they are from.
* Routes Home – People who want to eb reconnected outside London
* No 2nd Night out – 3 in London – rapid intervention for first time sleepers. 72-hour target turnaround time. Stats – in 17/18 – 86 percent were not seen rough sleeping again in the same year. If outreach team find they can take there and then,
* SIB workers: enhance outreach for entrenched rough sleepers, follows the person

Looking to Future: Bidding for next round to continue to sustain the services. Rapid response outreach – that self-referrals are responded to in three hours. Better accommodation pathways for women involved in prostitution. Improve links with the faith-based sector.

How can faith-based organisations help? Volunteering – for example at St Mungo’s, Providence Row etc. Having an awareness of the services to point people in the right direction. The Council has excellent guidance for starting night shelters – there is funding to do so.

*Q – How do you work with night shelters? How do you interact with people going in and out?*

A – The Outreach team will assess them – if they can direct them into a hostel then that is good. The local authority links through Providence Row. Outreach team does not have the remit to go into night shelters, if they are seen on the streets then they can assist. Night shelters are there for specific role – the Council does not want to encroach on their job – they are doing good job. They cannot additionally offer any more than they are offering. Outreach are working at night too on the streets.

*Comment (night shelter worker): Their night shelter, based in West London has open door policy so no local connection needed. Also has a dedicated case worker for people in her shelter and then caseworker feeds back to the local authority.*

*Comment: When someone is seen rough sleeping, they become chain verified – given a unique number and this allows access to services that other rough sleepers are not.*

*Q – So if you haven’t engaged with an outreach worker – this creates barriers to services?*

A – This is a big challenge – we look at case by case as this cohort is growing.

*Q – Are the independent night shelters are hindering people getting help? Are they a bandage over a wound? It’s all just volunteers who provide a meal, there is no outreach worker or chain verification – so it is not helping them get into the process of formalized process for long term support…*

A – (Providence Row*)* Providence Row are looking how we expand – how to link with church-based night shelters – these night shelters are keeping people alive – but it is about capacity – both the charity and the local authority. This kind of forum is good for opening early discussion about how we can link up.

A – (GrowTH) – GrowTH aims to compliment the council’s work, people that come to the night shelter do not have chain verification, so access through day centers like Providence Row, once they have met, they then refer them to the Council. Not always local authority, but private landlord, housing associations, aim to get 1/3 into permanent accommodation and 1/3 into temporary through local authority, housing association or private landlord.

*Q – I run a women only session but there are problems if they are from EU and have no paperwork. A few women that had experienced domestic violence in Hackney (DV) – Tower Hamlets was telling them to go back but they did not want to return. Also, several severely disabled ladies: No help offered to them, no follow up help for them.*

A – It is important for night shelters to have a support worker to be successful. Unfortunate for domestic violence cases, the threshold for someone to accept referral from different borough is very high.

*Comment (Providence Row): People that have no access to public funds i.e. have no rights to benefits – so how do we raise awareness of this? Its complex problem and the local authority must abide by the law.*

*Q – Why don’t the outreach people to come to places like night shelters to work with people and enter them into the chain*

A - We do not set the chain guidelines. Someone must be bedded down either asleep or about to go to sleep –for outreach team to be allowed to approach, this recently expanded to include people that sleep on the Tube – the Council wants this to be expanded further. Reentering night shelters - demand on street is too high to extend the remit but would still like to build outreach links with places like GrowTH.

*Q – The head count of homeless – is this purposefully done at same time as night shelters open to make the figures look better?*

A - The Council have raised this point – there has been lots of media discussion around round that figure and often misquoted.

*Q – The are problems with rough sleepers at St John on Bethnal Green*

A – This area is on our radar – it’s a hotspot but outreach cannot force people to move – enforcement teams can but even then, they cannot actually stop people from coming back in. The cohort at the church are difficult to engage and not ready for support so unfortunately, they have to go down the safety neighbourhood team route.

*Q – What is the amount of ‘homeless’ in the borough, not just rough sleepers?*

A - Unsure as legislation has changed two stats are recorded. This can be looked into and forwarded to the forum.

## **Spitalfields Crypt Trust – Verna Coke**

A faith-based charity started 54 years ago by a vicar. They also Refer to GrowTH and signpost to mental health etc., contact Streetlink.

The drop in Centre offers food, clothing, someone to talk to, toiletries and a way of engaging more with service users – the person may come once or twice then gradually engage.

People with complex issues, mental health, drug issues. SCT are a first port of call. For drug issues: 16 beds for a recovery center where they offer therapy and counselling. They also have a restoration hub, a woodwork room that the service users can repair people’s furniture.

Sometimes a fear of authority makes people unsure of going to authorities. Verna encountered a Polish lady, who barely spoke but was very angry. Gradually she opened up – had a good business but turned to drugs after domestic violence. She wouldn’t engage with the group but would engage by showing people how to do things e.g. make an earring – she began to engage more – due to a safe warm environment with people that listened. She is now a volunteer.

Another success story: A drug user – went into rehab section and stumbled again, came back and is now working in one of their coffee shops (run by people that recovered from substance abuse).

Verna finds the job humbling – someone came back and said thank you for listening and making us feel like we are worth something. Makes job worthwhile but not always a good outcome – if at the time the person is not ready to be rehabilitated - doors are open and they can come back.

SCT is a charity, so have fund raising team and are always on the lookout for volunteers.

*Q – How can someone access the recovery center?*

A – There is a referral sheet, there certain criteria, person should be dry for 2 weeks. A panel then decides if the person meets the needs. People can use the service more than once – people still work with them after the treatment. No local connection as such is needed, they must want help and be prepared to ‘tough it’.

*Q – Is the center open every day?*

A – Tuesday (1-3pm), Wednesday (10-12 lunchtime) and Friday (1-3pm)– Tues from 1pm to 3pm.

## **Information Sharing – An opportunity to share updates, followed by refreshments**

Judith Blackburn, St Saviour’s Priory – St Matthew’s is preparing to become a satellite food bank for Bow Food Bank and will operate a couple of times a month at first. Judith is a member of St Saviour’s Priory on Queenbridge Road which also gives out food, toiletries and clothes. Aon Sunday they provide tea, a jumble sale and chat as Sunday is an isolating day for some.

Rich Poolman, Met Police – Annual Christmas Tree project – donate presents or drop into BG police station (see below).

Jaber Khan, Tower Hamlets Council\_ – Council are consulting on a cohesion plan, would like feedback – this is online (see links below) – this will shape Tower Hamlet’s strategy on cohesion for the next 5 years.

Tom O’Connor, Providence Row – Offer a wide range of services, one priority is to work more with faith communities, as they were set up by priest years ago, so part of their heritage, there are many opportunities to join up more – how can we make links, to start that conversation. Happy to talk (see contact details below).

Jasmiina Kauriola, Glass Door Homeless Charity - their night shelters are open, no connection to area needed, so people can be sent their way. No recourse to public funds necessary. See link below.

Kellie Williams, Arch 76 – A project based behind St Matthews church helping vulnerable ladies with mental health issues, look at bible together but simply offer friendship.

Eleanor Land, Tower Hamlets CCG – There is a GP surgery that offers services to homeless people– E1 health center, off Brick Lane – see link below.

Matt Endersby, GrowTH – Their night shelter works with churches – there is a growing number involved but always looking to partner with more or any individuals – see link below. Also have a fledgling housing project with Poplar HARCA.

Salah Uddin, Tower Hamlets Council: Provides data analysis for the community safety team – all on the Council website.

Leon Silver, THIFF – Annual Tower Hamlets Holocaust commemoration, Sunday 26 January, 3pm Nelson Street Synagogue – many interesting speakers.

Alan Green, THIFF – THIFF’s inter faith week event Together Against Faith Hate was a success. There will be feedback coming around from that. Also, very positive discussion sessions.

Verna Coke, Spitalfields Crypt Trust – They have just started a women’s group Tuesday 10-12.

Terry Street, Tower Hamlets Methodist Circuit – At Whitechapel Mission two days week, as chaplain to guests and staff, the day center is open 7 days a week from 6am, and the resource center runs Mon – Fri for help with computer, job searches etc.

**GrowTH:** <http://thisisgrowth.org/>

**Streetlink:** <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>

**Providence Row:** <https://www.providencerow.org.uk>

**E1 medical Centre:** <http://www.healthe1practice.nhs.uk/>

**Glass Door:** <https://www.glassdoor.org.uk/>

**Met Police Christmas Tree Appeal:** <https://www.met.police.uk/christmastree/> (or drop into Bethnal Green police station)

**Tower Hamlets Council Cohesion:** Give your views [here.](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/council_and_democracy/consultations/Community_cohesion_plan_consultation.aspx)

**The next forum meeting is on Monday 20 January 2020 at Fern Street Family Centre and will focus on education in Tower Hamlets. Please visit** [www.faithintowerhamlets.org/](https://www.faithintowerhamlets.org/) **for further information**