

Gender and Sexuality Diversity Forum: Sub-Group Meeting

Social Care Support for non-British Spouses with no recourse to public funds

Monday, 6 April 2009, 2pm at Derby City Council, Council House

Present:

Tracey Arnold, Evelyn Clay, Joginder Bains, Margaret Tomkinson, Pam Thompson

Apologies:

Jotinder Atwal

Purpose: to address the needs of those non-British spouses with no recourse to public funds by visiting the policy of Derby City Council. Evelyn advised the meeting that it would have been beneficial to have a representative from the CYPD present, as Evelyn will only be able to discuss adult issues.

Joginder informed the meeting that both Margaret and herself will be meeting with Andrew Hambleton, Derbyshire County Council to discuss further how they will be addressing the needs of adult non-British spouses with no recourse to public funds. This meeting is scheduled for 22 April 2009.

Evelyn went through the current Policy page by page, and agreed to take Joginders requests to Senior Managers for a decision.

Joginder queried how Derby City Council is addressing the needs of 'over-stayers'. Evelyn informed the meeting of the current assessment process, and explained that there will be occasions when the department would be acting unlawfully if they were to provide support to certain individuals.

Joginder suggested that the Council's current policy could become more useful with the inclusion of appropriate Council contact details. It would also be more beneficial if all appropriate departments signed up to one policy.

An explanation of what is a Destitution Test was requested by Joginder. Evelyn stated that the C.A.S Legal Section is always consulted with regards to the L.A duty's re-destitution cases.

The meeting was informed by Joginder, of the 'brick wall' that is being faced when potential service users approach the Screening and Assessment Team/Reception Team. Evelyn was very surprised to hear this, but said that this could have been due to changes in reception staff. Evelyn agreed that all reception staff need to be made aware.

With regards to the eligibility criteria, Joginder would like a copy of our eligibility criteria; she also stated that she felt people with N.R.P funds didn't fit neatly with the current criteria. Joginder wanted a different set of criteria to be written for this particular group of people. Evelyn did not think this would be done as it would be almost impossible to have a special set of criteria just for this group of people. Evelyn said that each case is assessed and any decisions are made on individual circumstances. Also, Joginder stated that the decisions should be made available in writing as previously agreed in a meeting with Cllr Husain, particularly where there is a refusal of support.

Tracy informed the meeting that anyone who had experienced D.V and had met the requirements on the referral form would be able to access support through her service. Tracy said that her service does not work to a set eligibility criteria as that may stop people making referrals or indirectly hinder someone who may actually be eligible.

Joginder stated that she would like to see all financial support to be in line with the Income Support levels. At this point Joginder discussed Derbyshire's funding levels. Evelyn once again stated that any financial support provided by Derby City would be agreed on an individual basis, she also stated that she could not discuss Derbyshire's arrangements as they were around support for families.

Joginder also stated that since Nina Akhtar left, she's received no information regarding domestic violence and it would be nice to have regular updates. Tracey stated that she would invite Joginder to the Domestic and Sexual Violence Diversity forum meetings.

Joginders requests:

- Can all decisions be presented in writing as was agreed in a previous meeting with Cllr Husain.
- Can any financial support be in line with I.S levels?
- Joginder would like to see different Policies for each service area; I suggested that a way forward may be to request that the C.M.H T sign up to our Policy.

Another meeting to be arranged to include representatives from C.A.S & CYPD after the decision making process.