

# Minutes



**Meeting:** Family Carer Forum  
**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018  
**Present:** Su Bartlett, Clare Teale, Roma Mills  
23 Carers attended  
**In attendance:** Gemma and Zareena from Supporting Herts  
**Apologies:** 2 Carers gave their apologies  
**Date/Venue for next meeting:**

10am – 1pm Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Oxlease House, Travellers Lane, Hatfield, AL10 8TJ

ITEM		ASSIGNED TO	TARGET DATE
1	<p><b>Welcome and introductions</b></p> <p>SB welcomed everyone to the forum and thanked them for coming</p> <p>SK (Resolve Carers Group Lead) gave a brief talk about the Carers Group held at Resolve on Tuesdays from 5pm – 6.30pm</p> <p>Should you wish to attend the group please call Sandra on 01707 690739</p>		
2	<p><b>Supporting Herts</b></p> <p>Supporting Herts offers housing-related support to drug and/or alcohol users within Hertfordshire.</p> <p>Supporting Herts works in partnership with Druglink to support service users to prevent homelessness by helping to achieve stable housing and aid recovery from drug and/or alcohol dependency. The service covers the whole of Hertfordshire and the team works from two hubs:</p> <p>East Hertfordshire: East Herts, Welwyn Hatfield, Broxbourne, North Herts and Stevenage</p> <p>West Hertfordshire: St Albans, Dacorum, Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere</p>		

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Supporting Herts supports people at different stages of their recovery and at different stages of housing need. The aim of the service is to support recovery and independence, prevent homelessness, help people achieve stable housing, as well as develop or sustain an individual's capacity to live independently in accommodation.

Supporting Herts provides a range of housing facilities and services across Hertfordshire:

## **Floating support**

Floating support provides one-to-one outreach support to people who are experiencing substance misuse and housing problems. 'Floating' as the name suggests means that an allocated outreach worker visits service users at their homes or at a convenient place in the community to provide housing-related support and help with recovering from drug and/or alcohol use. Supporting Herts Floating Support service offers benefit advice, self-care and living skills. As well as rights on tenancy issues such as repairs and maintenance

## **Short stay accommodation – recovery beds**

Supporting Herts provides seven recovery beds with shared facilities, in one houses based in Hertford for those in stable recovery who are leaving prison, detox or rehab or who are homeless. The aim of this service is to provide a short stay in a stable and structured environment.

## **Private Rented Sector scheme**

The PRS scheme finds private landlords who are able to let their properties to Supporting Herts

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service users who would otherwise be homeless. In this scheme, support is provided to both to the landlord and tenant. Service users in this scheme also receive regular support from our floating support workers.

## **How to access the service**

Supporting Herts is for people aged 18 years and over in the Hertfordshire area who are experiencing drug and/or alcohol problems in conjunction with housing difficulties.

Referrals can be made by both the person experiencing housing issues with drug and/or alcohol problems, or by a professional working with them. The referrer must complete a Supporting Herts referral form, which can be downloaded here or we can arrange for this to be sent via email or post.

The referral process varies depending on the type of support needed:

For the floating support and Private Rented Sector scheme, anyone can refer for these services, including the person requiring the support and any professional or agency

For the short term accommodation, the referral must be made by a professional within the criminal justice or drug and alcohol treatment system

For the medium term accommodation, the referrals will be made by Supporting Herts staff in consultation with other professionals as these beds are for service users who have stayed in the recovery beds

You can send the referral form to Supporting Herts:

By post to Supporting Herts, Devonshire Business Centres (UK) Ltd., Orion House, Bessemer Road, Welwyn Garden City,

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<p>Hertfordshire AL7 1HH</p> <p>By email at: <a href="mailto:referrals@supportingherts.org">referrals@supportingherts.org</a> - please ensure that the referral is password protected and contact the referrals team by phone to inform them of your password</p> <p>Supporting Herts Devonshire Business Centres (UK) Ltd. Orion House Bessemer Road Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL7 1HH T: 0300 303 31472 Hubs – Supporting Herts</p> <p>Supporting Herts also runs drop-in Housing Clinics at the CGL Spectrum Hubs (Gemma to provide details of days/times) and will support their service users to access community recovery services such as CGL Spectrum as well as working with service users with housing issues who are involved with probation or the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs)</p> <p>Supporting Herts service users have to clean and will be drug tested. Each positive test is assessed/reviewed on a case by case basis but if an individual continues to give positive tests, they will be asked to leave the service. This does not exclude them from future support though, provided they are clean.</p> <p>If a client needing housing support isn't clean, Supporting Herts will refer to hostels such as, the YMCA and Haven. Please note that the YMCA is quite strict on using/drinking on their premises but the other hostels are less strict and will 'allow' using/drinking providing there are no untoward incidents. If an individual is asked to leave a hostel they can be re-referred to Supporting Herts.</p>		
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Can Family Members/Carers speak to supporting herts staff?

Floating supporting is focussed on client not family unless children and safeguarding issues, then the family members/Carers in the home can access Floating Support

And Supporting Herts can help people on verge of eviction where they have a substance misuse problem

Carers made raised the following issues

- It is very difficult, if not impossible, for some Carers to ask their substance misusing loved-one to leave the family home – it is a very real fear for Carers that their loved one could die on the streets
- Substance users don't want to leave.
- Carers can fear for their own safety but are unable to cope with the potential consequences of involving outside agencies
- Some Carers feel unable to go out to work, or for days out or a holiday because of what they could potentially come home to
- Detox/rehab opportunities for service users raise Carers hopes, only for them to be dashed when the service users declines detox/rehab or if they don't get funding approved despite having progressed in treatment
- Have staff outside of CGL Spectrum such as HPfT (who provides mental health services) been trained in the Dual Diagnosis Protocol?

Roma Mills spoke briefly about the Involvement Project and how Carers In Hertfordshire can support Carers to lobby their local MPs about the issues they face

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3	<p><b>A.O.B</b></p> <p>Carers would like to hear about the detox/rehab pathways – SB to arrange a speaker from CGL Spectrum who hold the detox/rehab budget</p> <p>SB to draft letter to local MPs drawing their attention to the issues faced around housing for Carers of people who misuse drugs/alcohol</p> <p>SB to contact local MPs about their availability to hear from a small group of Carer representatives from the Forum on housing issues and to speak to Carers about the Homelessness Reduction Bill</p>		
4	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p><b>The Carers In Hertfordshire annual Family Matters Event will be held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March from 10am – 2.30pm – speakers TBC</b></p>		