

Supporting Independence

A strategy for information, advice and guidance for Adult and Community Services, London Borough of Bromley

Information, advice and advocacy are essential for all adults and their relatives and carers, who need, or may need, services and support in order to lead their lives.

Improvement and Development Agency, 2009

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Foreword by the Director of Adult and Community Services, London Borough of Bromley

Information, advice and guidance is paramount in the provision of services for adults with social care needs. We have developed our strategy to ensure that those who meet eligibility criteria, those who don't meet eligibility criteria (under Fair Access to Care), and those who self-fund, are able to access timely and accurate information, advice and guidance that is provided in an appropriate format and setting. Ultimately, we want to ensure that people can make informed choices to support their lives.

To achieve this, we have adopted a 'universal' system to the provision of information, advice and guidance, which will support people who are traditionally excluded from the social care system, such as those who fund their own care, or who do not meet statutory eligibility criteria. Self funders, particularly older people, account for a significant proportion of service users; currently, this is estimated to be 35%, and this figure is expected to rise.

We want to ensure that we provide information, advice and guidance to help both those funded by the Council and self-funders to know what services are available, and what will most appropriately meet their needs. To this end, we have been working on the Bromley 'model' for the provision of these support services, contracting

with specialist organisations who we feel are best placed to support the needs of service users, and developing partnerships with other public organisations as well as voluntary and community sector groups. We are also developing and enhancing in-house provision of information, advice and guidance, through our call centre, Bromley Social Services Direct, and through our new website, *Bromley MyLife*. Through these systems, we will ensure that people are correctly signposted to organisations best suited to meet their needs, as and when they require support.

Through this approach, we will ensure that people have a range of support choices that facilitate decision-making and enable them to find their own solutions, so that they can remain independent within the community.

Terry Rich, Director

Introduction: an Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy

The development of the strategy is part of the three-year national personalisation programme, which is managed within the Supporting Independence in Bromley programme. This was formed to establish a more personalised system of support that is more responsive to the needs both of those who use services, and carers.

The programme is designed to promote the independence, health and wellbeing of service users and carers by focusing on prevention, early intervention, enablement and high-quality, personally tailored services. It was established that the programme's success depended on ensuring that people with social care needs were able to access information, advice and guidance to assess their needs, to secure and manage services, and to make the most of their own and public funds to meet their needs in the most effective manner.

This is in accordance with Department of Health (DoH) requirements, which state that:

- All citizens can easily find locally relevant, quality information and advice about care and support needs
- Information is available through a range of channels and formats
- Provision of information, advice and guidance moves from development for separate initiatives to a single, coherent service strategy.

Using ADASS definitions:

- **Information** is defined as “the open and accessible supply of material deemed to be of interest to a particular population. This can be either passively available or actively distributed”.

This is interpreted in Bromley as when **a person knows their needs, and is able to seek out and to extract relevant information for their needs. Organisations may specifically target individuals if their information is pertinent.**

- **Advice** “offers guidance and direction on a particular course of action which needs to be undertaken in order to realise a need, access a service or realise individual entitlements”.

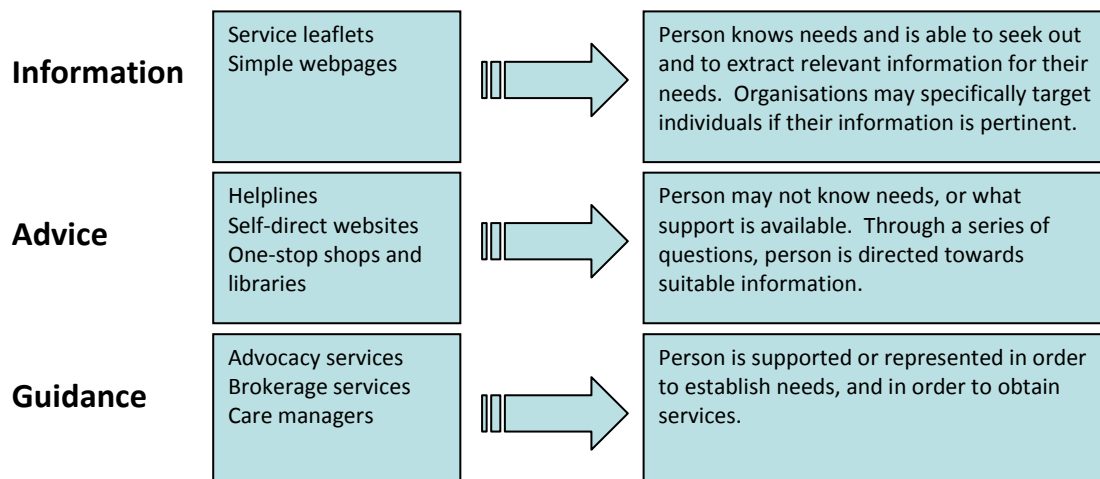
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This is interpreted as when a **person may not know their needs, or what support is available. Through a series of questions, they are directed towards suitable information.**

- **Guidance** is “the provision of support and encouragement, or representation of individuals’ views, needs or rights. It is fundamental that advocacy recognises the centrality of the service user”.

This is interpreted as when a **person is supported or represented in order to establish their needs, and in order to obtain services.**

In Bromley, this is viewed as a three-level approach to supporting people’s IAG needs, depicted below.



Provision of Information, Advice and Guidance: the Bromley model

The Council provides information about core services, and outsources for the provision of specialist information, advice and guidance. Tracing the 'user journey', and consulting with prospective and current care service users, we have tested and improved the IAG model.

Information: the universal approach

Information is available for all residents; however, it is static – that is, people need to know what they are looking for, and they need to understand their needs. At present, the Council and a range of specialist organisations, many part-funded by the Council, take responsibility for producing service information for the public.

The priority here is to ensure that there is a broad range of information available, which is tailored according to the appropriate audience. While this means there are overlaps in the information available, it promotes a level of choice for the public, who can go to a range of organisations and outlets and find the information that they need. Where organisations are reporting on services that are provided by others, protocols have been developed so that any service changes are communicated between organisations, to ensure accuracy.

Advice: the universal approach

The Council acts as a hub for all residents, directing them as appropriate to the organisation best suited to meet their needs. It does this through two main mechanisms:

- **Bromley Social Services Direct** – BSSD is a phone line, and is an initial point of contact to find out about care options. They are supported by care managers, who can carry out over-the-phone initial assessments to establish whether callers meet FACS criteria.

BSSD also provides information and advice to residents who do not meet the eligibility criteria, and can signpost to a wide range of resources for further support.

- **Bromley MyLife (currently under development)** – this is the Council's interactive social care website. It incorporates a searchable web-based directory of all social care services available to the community, including details on all services and organisations across the statutory, community and private sectors.

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There are user forms, frequently asked questions pages, and user journeys; residents also have the facility to provide feedback on their experience of services, which they can 'rate'. Residents can view other users' comments. By filling in simple on-line questionnaires, residents will receive instant advice on the kind of care they may need. If residents wish to provide contact details, this information will be sent to the relevant care team, who can then contact them to discuss care needs further.

Similarly, the organisations with whom the Council contracts to provide advice will signpost residents to the most relevant organisation to meet their needs.

In addition, the Council provides signposting to services and service providers at its libraries, which are located around the borough, and at its two community one-stop shops, located in Cotmandene and Mottingham. Similarly, the organisations that the Council contracts with for the provision of information, advice and guidance provide a range of locations for the delivery of services, dependent on perceived need and uptake.

Guidance: the universal offer

Where residents are not entitled to care through the Council, because they do not meet financial criteria or FACS criteria, but they still wish to receive care services, they can use either information provided by BSSD or information on the website to source the most suitable package.

If residents do not wish to source this care themselves, then they can use the brokerage services, funded by the Council. These are in place for older people through Age Concern and for people with learning disabilities through Mencap.

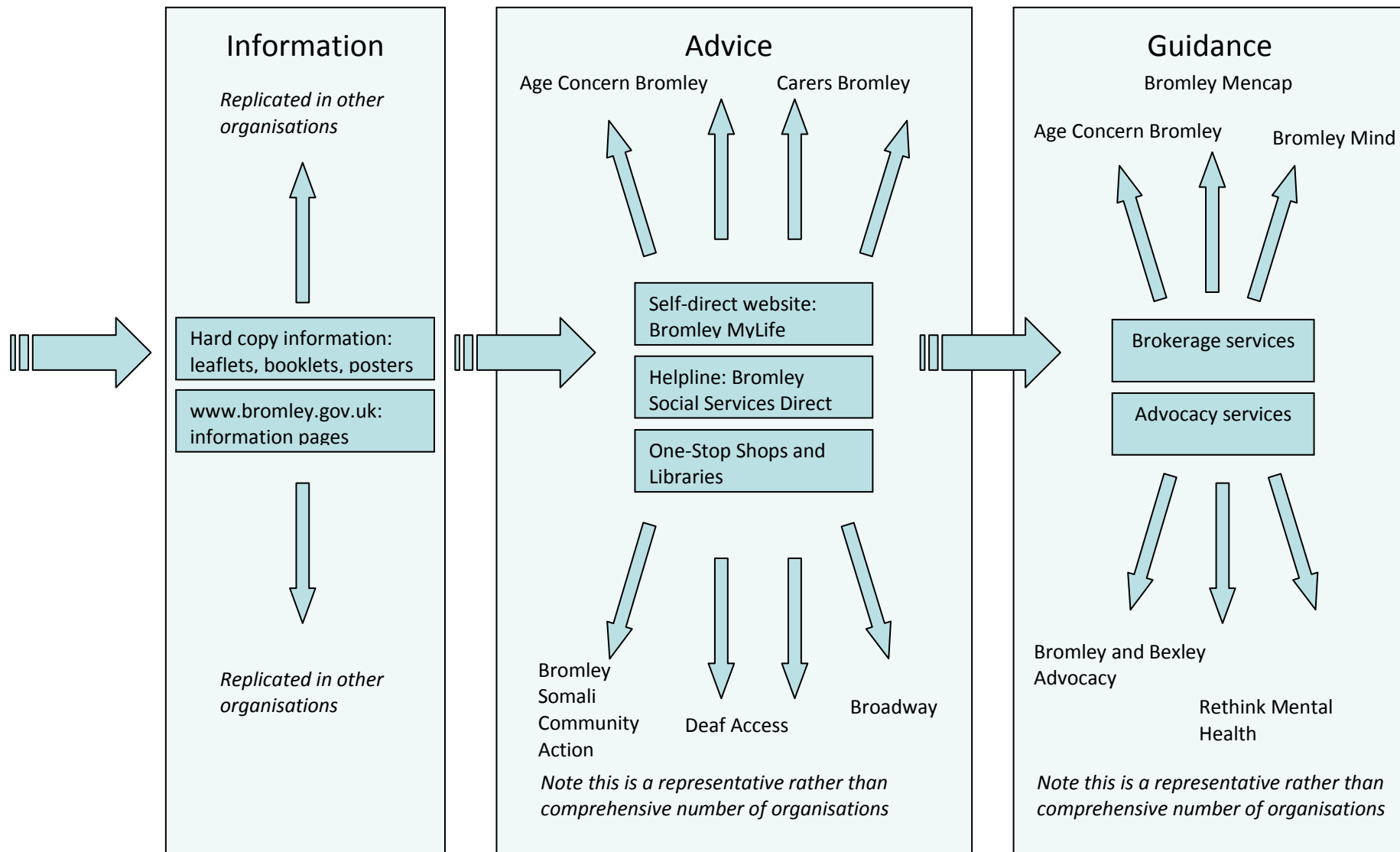
Additionally, the Council holds contracts with a number of organisations who provide advocacy support to those residents who do not meet eligibility criteria, for a number of support issues, including legal and consumer support, for example.

Guidance: the targeted offer

Where residents are entitled to care through the Council, after an initial contact assessment, they will be referred for reablement; throughout the time that a resident remains within the care of the Council, the Council's care management staff will provide information, advice and guidance.

All residents entitled to care through the Council are eligible for a personal budget, which can be used to buy care and support services. Where a resident opts for a personal budget, guidance is provided through an independent advocacy service, funded by the Council.

Information, Advice and Guidance: the Bromley model



Strategic objectives

The vision of the strategy is that **“Information, advice and guidance in Bromley is timely, accurate, and provided in an appropriate format and setting, so that people can make informed choices to support their lives”**.

The landmark Putting People First concordat outlined a shared vision to provide a personalised adult social care system. Local Authorities have the lead role in the delivery of personalised services, accompanied by a requirement for authentic partnership working with the local PCT, other statutory agencies, third and private sector providers, users and carers, and the wider local community.

Through shared contracts with both public organisations (including Oxleas and the PCT) as well as voluntary and community sector organisations, the Council has adopted a partnership approach to the provision of information, advice and guidance that maximises specialist knowledge of organisations to the benefit of the public. The Council contracts for a wide range of needs, including those not traditionally within the remit of council services, such as those services supporting stroke sufferers, and people with HIV or Aids, which again demonstrates the partnership approach to the provision of support to the public.

Through a series of consultations with the public and workshops with key information, advice and guidance providers, plans for future development have been drawn up.

Key to this is the newly formed **Bromley Advice and Information Network (BAIN)**, chaired and managed by Community Links, whose membership includes all those organisations who have a role in the provision of information, advice and guidance to the public (not just those currently commissioned by the Council).

1. People can access information, advice and guidance when they need it

- The Council signposts people, through BSSD, the web portal, libraries and community one-stop shops, to relevant organisations; similarly, organisations signpost between each other and the Council, if people come to them directly, as appropriate.

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- Organisations meet regularly, through BAIN, to ensure they are fully aware of the services provided by each other.

2. People can be assured that the information, advice and guidance they receive is accurate and up to date

- The Council and organisations funded by the Council to provide information, advice and guidance are accredited with a chosen quality standard for communications, as part of a joint approach to training.
- All organisations providing information, advice and guidance meet regularly, as part of BAIN, to ensure awareness of changes in services.
- There are protocols in place to ensure there is shared knowledge of changes in information and details for organisations: all organisations take responsibility for ensuring that they inform others of changes

3. People are able to access information, advice and guidance from a range of locations

- The Council uses libraries as a repository for information, advice and guidance. The libraries are located throughout the borough and are hubs for community access to social care information; they have supported access to a range of on-line information and advice. Residents are guided and supported by designated library staff, and, for a trial period, by Future Job Fund employees. Libraries also have the full range of leaflets and booklets on services, as well as details of voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Through contracts with voluntary and community sector organisations, the Council ensures that there is wide coverage of services across the borough, and actively supports branch development.

4. People are able to access information, advice and guidance in all appropriate formats

- The Council works with voluntary and community sector organisations through the Bromley Information and Advice Network to ensure that best practice regarding formats for service user groups is disseminated.
- Upon request, the Council will ensure that information, advice and guidance is available in a range of different formats, such as Braille, large print and audio, and has contracts with, for example, Kent Association for the Blind for the provision of audio information.

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- The Council is working within libraries to promote web access to services, and is offering a range of training programmes free of charge to the community to increase web understanding.
- The Council's contracts with voluntary and community sector organisations are for a wide variety of provision: from home visits, to phone-lines, and from drop-in centres to web-based information.

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Action Plan

Action	Detail	Strategic objectives	Costs	Progress to date
Purchase of an 'advice' website	As part of its commitment to a strategic approach to the provision of information, advice and guidance, the Council will purchase an 'advice' website that supports the work of BSSD, and is used by all organisations involved in the dissemination of information, advice and guidance in the borough as a means of effective signposting. Further, it will provide users with a means of self-assessing needs, and with managing personal budgets and other services.	Meets all strategic objectives	£60k annually, plus internal upkeep. Initial (two-year) funding will be met from SIB budgets. Website's impact will be measured in order to determine where savings are being made, and where future funding will therefore come from.	OLM product in process of procurement; product will be implemented in three phases. Planned implementation and launch for end of year.
Support for use of website	The Council provides support to public to encourage the use of Council websites, initially through libraries. Research indicates that, while use of the main Council website has greatly increased (Up 25% from 2005, to 52% in November 2009), users are not well aware of what it can be used to accomplish; similarly, while home access stands at 96% for those under 60, it drops to 49% for those over 60.	Meets all strategic objectives	Limited costs currently – the Council is using the Future Jobs Fund (a government- funded scheme to provide work and experience to those aged 18-25 who are out of work) to provide support in libraries. Budget has been used to provide a supplementary day's training specifically in Adult Social Care and facilitating decision-making to candidates, at a cost of £500 per day.	Tranche One (five candidates) of the Future Jobs Fund recruited and trained; currently working in Central Library, Bromley. Scheme's success to be reviewed (monitoring in place); consideration to be given to providing support in other libraries and in the one-stop shops at Cotmandene and Mottingham. Communications plan in place for promotion of scheme and website.

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Ongoing contract review	The Council continues to review closely the effectiveness of current contracts for the provision of information, advice and guidance, maintaining the emphasis on the provision of choice of organisations for people to access, but streamlining contracts where overlap, following review, is not deemed productive.	Meets objectives 1, (mainly) 3 and 4	Potential savings, dependent on review outcomes	Contracts currently providing information, advice and guidance services reviewed; findings passed to commissioners for follow-up. Commissioners to review further, and to report changes. "Baseline" of current contract performance to be established (limited information available at present), so that the impact of the website and other developments can be tracked.
Community Links – relaunch of Bromley Advice and Information Network	The Council, through Community Links, organises and supports Bromley Advice and Information Network, as an avenue for sharing best practice, for developing signposting protocols, and for developing joint service promotion initiatives; that the network develops a 'brand' identity in order to promote services	Meets objective 2 (mainly)	No costs as this is already part of the remit of Community Links; potential non-cashable savings (efficiencies), dependent on impact	Meeting established with Community Links to plan future progress, following input from other organisations. Effect of network to be reviewed against impact on current information, advice and guidance contracts.
Joint training initiatives organised with public, voluntary and community sector organisations currently tasked with providing information, advice and guidance	Joint training initiatives are organised as part of the drive to promote quality standards in the provision of information, advice and guidance	Meets objective 2 (mainly)	Limited costs; training programme is being considered, in conjunction with ACS Communications Team	Work carried out with the ACS communications lead to investigate quality standards accreditations. Training schemes to be rolled out through the Bromley Information and Advice Network.

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Consultation is carried out regularly with the public	Consultation is carried out with the public to ascertain information, advice and guidance needs, and specifically the likely impact of a self-direct website on potential user groups	Meets all objectives	Costs can be contained by joining up with events and other consultation opportunities.	Questionnaires used at Adult Information Day; further questionnaires provided to libraries and to one-stop shops for dissemination. ACS to be kept up to date with detailed research carried out corporately into website usage.
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Annex 1: Current contractual arrangements

To an extent, all service providers will provide an element of information, advice and guidance to residents; the selection of contracts looks at either those organisations specifically contracted to provide information, advice and guidance, or those organisations whose key output is information, advice and guidance (such as Citizens Advice Bureau). While there are some contracts where this distinction is not clear, the majority included have an overall emphasis on information, advice and guidance.

Please note that these figures do not include:

- Core provision such as day services and domiciliary care (note, however, that the day care services provided by BME organisations were deemed to be focused on the provision of information, advice and guidance; as a result, these contracts have been included);
- Job support initiatives;
- User group funding (self advocacy);
- Tenancy (floating) support (except in the case where these services are 'universally' available; i.e. service users do not meet FACS criteria);
- Contracts procured solely on behalf of the PCT;
- Contracts where, although there is a strong emphasis on information, advice and guidance, the remit is significantly wider; examples include:

Kent Association for the Blind	16164	PDSI (SI)	Services for the blind	01/04/2006-31/03/2011
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Contracts with a focus on information, advice and guidance

Total: **£1,293,694.00**

Name	Ref no	Core group	Service details	Dates
Advocacy First	025218	Older people	Advocacy services	01/04/2010-31/03/2011

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Age Concern	016094	Older people, carers	Strategic partnership	01/04/2010-31/03/2017
Age Concern	016093	Older people, carers	Support planning and brokerage	01/04/2007-31/03/2011
Bexley and Bromley Advocacy	022351	Learning disabilities	Bromley Sparks (self advocacy group)	01/04/2010-31/03/2011
Bexley and Bromley Advocacy	022353	Learning disabilities	Bromley advocacy worker	01/04/2008-31/03/2011
Bexley and Bromley Advocacy	022352	Learning disabilities	Speaking up group	01/04/2010-31.03.2011
Body and Soul	18087	HIV/Aids: Health	People living with and affected by HIV/Aids	01/04/2008-31/03/2009
Broadway	025420	Mental Health	Welfare benefits service	01/04/2010-31/03/2013
Bromley Asian Cultural Association	016773	BME	Day care for Asian older people (Carers' Grant)	01/04/2008-31/03/2011
Bromley Somali Community Association	022345	BME	Information and support - drop-in centre	01/02/2010-31/01/2011
Bromley Mencap	018092	Learning disabilities	Core funding	01/04/2009-31/03/2012
Bromley Mencap	018084	Learning disabilities	Provision of a brokerage service	01/12/2008-31/01/2011
Bromley Mind	TBC	Mental Health	Core funding	TBC
Carers Bromley	025663	Carers	Provision of services for carers in Bromley	01/04/2010-31/03/2017
Citizens Advice Bureau	017680	Universal	For the provision of general advice	01/11/2008-31/10/211
Citizens Advice Bureau	016561	Universal	Independent housing advice forum	01/03/2009-31/10/2011
Deaf Access	018088	PDSI (SI)	Provision of services for people with hearing impairments	01/04/2009-31/03/2012
Inspire	016223	Service users	Provision of community-based direct payments support services	01/01/2008-31/01/2011
The Junction	018367	HIV/Aids: Health	Bromley positive family space	01/04/2009-31/03/2012

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Pineapple Club	016173	BME	Ethnic community project	01/06/2006-30/09/2010
Pineapple Club	016170	BME	Day care for Afro-Caribbean adults core funding – older people	01/04/2006-31/03/2011
Rethink Mental Health	025419	Mental Health	Advocacy services	01/04/2010-31/03/2013
Somali Well Women Project	016776	BME	Day care for Somali older women (Carers' Grant)	01/04/2008-31/03/2011
Stroke Association	018080	Stroke: Health	Support services for families and carers affected by stroke	
Terrence Higgins Trust	018086	HIV/Aids: Health	People living with and affected by HIV/Aids	01/04/2009-31/03/2012

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Information, Advice and Guidance by designation

Total spent on information, advice and guidance: £507,925.00

Total spent on advice: £419,473.00

Total spent on guidance: £366,296.00

Name	Ref no	Core group	Service details	Dates
Advocacy First	025218	GUIDANCE	Advocacy services for older people	01/04/2010-31/03/2011
Age Concern	016094	IAG	Strategic partnership	01/04/2010-31/03/2017
Age Concern	016093	GUIDANCE	Support planning and brokerage	01/04/2007-31/03/2011
Bexley and Bromley Advocacy	022351	GUIDANCE	Bromley Sparks (self advocacy group)	01/04/2010-31/03/2011
Bexley and Bromley Advocacy	022353	GUIDANCE	Bromley advocacy worker	01/04/2008-31/03/2011
Bexley and Bromley Advocacy	022352	GUIDANCE	Speaking up group	01/04/2010-31.03.2011
Body and Soul	18087	ADVICE	People living with and affected by HIV/Aids	01/04/2008-31/03/2009
Broadway	025420	ADVICE	Welfare benefits service	01/04/2010-31/03/2013
Bromley Asian Cultural Association	016773	ADVICE	Day care for Asian older people (Carers' Grant)	01/04/2008-31/03/2011
Bromley Mencap	018092	IAG	Core funding	01/04/2009-31/03/2012
Bromley Mencap	018084	GUIDANCE	Provision of a brokerage service	01/12/2008-31/01/2011
Bromley Mind	TBC	IAG	Core funding	TBC
Bromley Somali Community Association	022345	ADVICE	Information and support - drop-in centre	01/02/2010-31/01/2011
Carers Bromley	025663	IAG	Provision of services for carers in Bromley	01/04/2010-31/03/2017
Citizens Advice Bureau	017680	ADVICE	For the provision of general advice	01/11/2008-31/10/211

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Citizens Advice Bureau	016561	ADVICE	Independent housing advice forum	01/03/2009-31/10/2011
Deaf Access	018088	IAG	Provision of services for people with hearing impairments	01/04/2009-31/03/2012
Inspire	016223	GUIDANCE	Provision of community-based direct payments support services	01/01/2008-31/01/2011
The Junction	018367	ADVICE	Bromley positive family space	01/04/2009-31/03/2012
Pineapple Club	016173	IAG	Ethnic community project	01/06/2006-30/09/2010
Pineapple Club	016170	ADVICE	Day care for Afro-Caribbean adults core funding – older people	01/04/2006-31/03/2011
Rethink Mental Health	025419	GUIDANCE	Advocacy services	01/04/2010-31/03/2013
Somali Well Women Project	016776	ADVICE	Day care for Somali older women (Carers' Grant)	01/04/2008-31/03/2011
Stroke Association	018080	ADVICE	Support services for families and carers affected by stroke	
Terrence Higgins Trust	018086	ADVICE	People living with and affected by HIV/Aids	01/04/2009-31/03/2012

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Annex 2:

IAG workshop details

Summary of workshop outcomes

Overall, there were three main themes to the discussion, all dominated by emphasis on quality assurance and the promotion of choice; these were:

- Formats
- Points of access
- Joined- up approach (developing a joined-up approach to information management and provision)

It was agreed generally that, as people have rounded lives, we need information covering a wide range of subjects; however, groups also felt that there was a danger of 'information overload' – that therefore information needed to be targeted appropriately. This stressed the need for effective signposting between organisations, which was a recurring theme throughout the four discussions.

There was also consideration given to evaluating success of IAG:

- Use of mystery shopping should be explored
- We could use questions on websites, such as 'where did you hear about us?'

Formats

Issues	Solutions proposed
Choice of options is important (e.g. website, face-to-face, paper-based).	Maintain level of choice and different models for provision, in accordance with client group needs.
Easy-read options should be in place.	
We need to adopt a standard approach to quality assurance (develop universal 'good practice' standards). This must include committing to using no acronyms!	BAIN (Bromley Advice and Information Network) is working to drive up quality. Organisations use a range of standards, including Plain English, quality legal standards, Crystal Marks, etc – could we adopt a shared approach, where feasible?
Websites are frequently inappropriate for the visually impaired.	BrowseAloud access needs to be included in web requirements/standards.
Use of technology generally needs to be considered.	Tracking website usage is important, to understand who is accessing them.

Points of access

Issues	Solutions proposed
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Key 'gatekeepers' include GPs and the Council (BSSD and website) – health is a primary point of access. Note GPs suffer from 'information overload'.	One-stop shops could be shared, as the drive is to cut home visiting; can organisations get to outreach centres?
We need to link effectively between boroughs.	
Information tends to be focused on those already known to the statutory and/or third sector organisations .	We need to advertise and market our services, using free avenues, such as street furniture; we could also target cafes and supermarkets, as appropriate.
We need to avoid people asking for help when they are in crisis – i.e. preventative IAG.	
We need to have clear out-of-office protocols.	

A joined up approach

Issues	Solutions proposed
Strategic partners have a good relationship, but referrals between organisations are not being carried out appropriately; this is because of a lack of knowledge.	Joint training could be carried out between organisations.
Partner websites and outreach points often provide out-of-date information – people update their own data but do not pass the information on. There is no structured method to communicate changes. There is duplication (of lists, databases, etc) occurring.	Websites need to be linked – note, however, that skill sets in different organisations are not always adequate for web work. Should we have in place a six-monthly 'is your information up to date?' questionnaire (who would coordinate this?) Leaflets (and other information) should be kept generic where possible so that they do not go out of date – note that there was a query about why no direct contact details were provided on the Council's website: this is to ensure that information does not go out of date. National bodies – more appropriate to give up-to-date information.
There is a lack of information about key services, such as day centres.	Newsletters provide an opportunity to work together and to share information

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	– this should be used (suggestion of a central repository – extranet? – for newsletters).
Unwritten protocols exist between agencies for signposting.	