

Insight

citizens
advice
bureau

WAKEFIELD DISTRICT CAB NEWS

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issue 45

CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2008-9

Our annual client satisfaction survey has again produced some fantastic results. Well done to all our volunteers, service managers and money advice unit caseworkers who are providing this excellent service.

Generalist Appointments & Assisted Information.

154 clients were surveyed over a period of 2 weeks – March 2009

97% were very or fairly happy with the service, 100% would use again and 100% would recommend to a friend.

Gateway Interviews.

15 clients were contacted by telephone by an independent surveyor

93% of clients were very or fairly happy with the service, would use it again and would recommend to a friend.

General observations

Some dissatisfaction with opening hours is evident from comments. Clients were requesting 9-5 opening hours, 5 days per week and 1 evening opening. We are constantly working towards increasing opening hours with resources available and hours will have to be addressed as we go in to the CLAS. Gateway opening times have been increased from 10.00-1.00pm to 10.00-5.00pm. However, the commonest complaint is still, *'We've tried phoning but can never get through.'*

Most clients were pleasantly surprised that they did not have to wait too long and thought the 1 hr length of interview about right. Comments include:

Better than expected appointment time (S Elmsall)

Only waited 5 minutes (Wakefield)

I was promised a call within 2 days (Wakefield)

Adequately able to discuss issues of concern in time (S Elmsall)

I think 1 hour is very good (Wakefield)

Client comments included:

- *A wonderful helpful service thank you !*
- *She was excellent*
- *Friendly*
- *Thank you, excellent service*
- *Staff member was very understanding*
- *I would like to thank you all*
- *The lady I saw was very helpful going and finding lots of information for me and she never rushed me*

Congratulations to Dave Sampson who was singled out by 2 clients for comment and described by one as a 'top man'!

'He told me what I didn't want to really hear, but he said it sympathetically and professionally. He seemed very knowledgeable in his field, almost put me right straight away, but rang back to confirm in 1 hour'

The Money Advice Unit also had great results for both the FIF project and the LSC contract:

Overall 1267 'client satisfaction questionnaires' were issued between 1st January – 31 December 2008 for clients who were advised and assisted under our two money advice projects. Of those clients 267 questionnaires were returned which equates to a 21.07% return overall.

84% of our clients are very satisfied with the overall service

75% of clients felt that the information/advice that they had received was easy to understand

88% of our clients state that Money Advice Unit caseworkers were very informative

82% felt they were kept up date on the progress of their case

89% of clients felt that they had been listened to

97% felt that they had been treated fairly at all times.

88% of clients would recommend us to someone else

96% of clients stated that the outcome of their case was either better or the same as advised

There is a small percentage of clients who felt dissatisfied with the service that they had received for the following reasons:

- clients not wanting us to close their case as they wanted long term support and assistance (we are not able to do this due to our funding criteria)
- not getting the advice that they 'wanted to hear', in particular having a pre-misconception of the options actually open to them
- cases are closed because the client has not provided information that is required to advise or assist them fully

Some of the positive feedback from Money Advice Unit clients:

'Thank you from the bottom of my heart; you really do deserve more praise'

'Just keep up the good work, your service is very friendly and non-judgemental, just so helpful'

'My case was dealt with very professionally and I was very satisfied with the outcome'

'Your service is very good; I could not believe how much you could help me'

'If it was not for your service some people could get no help at all. Thank you; you really do a good job'

'You should be top priority on any government list of those needing assistance, staff are a life line to those unfortunates in need of proper advice, a greatly needed lifeline, grateful thanks'

'Excellent service... thank you so much for your help'

WAKEFIELD DISTRICT COMMUNITY LEGAL ADVICE SERVICE

18 May a Consultation event was held to discuss the draft specification & comments were invited from all parties. Due to the large number of comments, the council and the Legal Services Commission have been unable to produce the final documentation at the beginning of July as planned. Whilst a new timetable has not been issued Mark Cranmer has indicated that the final specification will now be out in September. Comments from Wakefield District CAB were mainly concerned with the low level of generalist funding that is going in to the CLAS:

- In recent months there has been a sharp increase in demand for advice services and the level of resources in the specification should be reassessed in the light of the changed circumstances.
- The per capita spend is one of the lowest for generalist advice of all CLAC specifications published to date although there are high levels of deprivation in the District.
- The specification proposes to reduce the current generalist budget by 15%. This is against a background where the funding provided for generalist advice in Wakefield was cut by 10% last year.
- The original plan for the CLAS was to put the all advice funding from WMDC and the Legal Services Commission in to one pot. This will not now happen (i.e. just CAB funding going in) which dilutes the original aim of reducing the fragmentation of services.

Apart from these funding issues, the specification itself is good, taking lots of elements of our current service and making several improvements which we have also identified.

The Volunteer & staff meeting held on 16th July to discuss the CLAS was very well attended and produced some great suggestions from the group sessions. Please contact Liz for the full feedback paper.

Premises Issues

We are hoping to stay in our current King St premises due to the close proximity to Switalskis. We are talking to Age Concern about extending in to their rooms and will need to secure funding and help to improve the premises so that we are DDA compliant and have much better reception facilities. Liz will be meeting with property services to discuss a new lease shortly.

In the meantime WMDC is reviewing the rent at the Pontefract bureau and recommending an increase from £9,000 to £15,500, backdated to January 2008. Liz has written to senior members and officers at WMDC asking them to put the Rent Review on hold until the outcome of the CLAS is known. They insist that the council is obliged to obtain a fair market rent for all of its properties and the rent review will go ahead. Our solicitors are now handling this matter.

Other News

Gateway additional hours project.

This project started at the end of March. The two part time staff were recruited from our existing volunteers and work from 1-5pm Monday to Friday. There has been a significant increase in the number of gateway calls taken due to the additional hours project. The target for the additional hours staff is 50 calls each per week. This was exceeded last week.

CRT Income maximization project

This project, funded by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, started on the first of May. It is being delivered from two outreaches, one in Eastmoor and one in Castleford, as well as from our three offices. The aim of the project is to maximize people's income by carrying out benefit checks, better off in work calculations and redundancy calculations. Ellen and Carol have been inundated with clients. We have also received funding from **Lloyds TSB** to continue our specialist welfare rights post 2 days a week for two years. This will enable Carol to continue to specialize in disability benefits, representation at tribunals, appeals and mentoring volunteers.

Volunteer Exit Questionnaire 2008-9

38 volunteers left during the year. Of the 29 who gave reasons 17 went in to paid employment (4 with us) and 1 to undertake a college course.

Money Advice Unit

Due to careful management the waiting list for debt appointments is now down to 2.5 weeks.

CitA consultation

National consultations are currently being carried out towards a new membership relationship. CitA wanted to develop some key elements of the membership agreement and other issues for the service. Full details and downloadable documents are available on Cablink.

Sky Dive

Jonathan Livesey will now be doing the Sky Dive to celebrate our 70th birthday. Jonathan's mum Julie is a Gateway Interviewer. THANK YOU JONATHAN. Contact the Money Advice Unit for details of how to sponsor Jonathan.

This newsletter is produced by Wakefield District Citizens Advice Bureau. It comes out bi-monthly. Please tell us what you think of the newsletter and our service. All suggestions are welcome.

All comments to Liz Halliday, Chief Executive on 01924 378063 or email on lizhalliday@wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk