

InSight

citizens
advice
bureau

WAKEFIELD DISTRICT CAB NEWS

www.wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk

issue 47

PREMISES

Trustees are in the process of appointing an architect to lead on alterations to the old Age Concern rooms at King Street. The intention is to make much needed improvements to reception areas and in particular to disabled access. We have some draft plans going on display soon and we welcome comments from all staff and volunteers. We are also looking for people with expertise in this area to sit on a Project Steering Group.

However, we have got a long way to go before the project can start; we need to agree the lease and seek permission from the council to make the changes and, crucially, we need to identify funding. We will, however, be improving the current telephone gateway room to make this a more pleasant and user friendly environment.

Hand in hand with this, we are also reviewing the telephone system in Wakefield and also IT requirements across the district, in the light of the £10,000 we have received from Awards for All for the purpose of upgrading IT.

Projects & Partnerships News 2010-11

CRT Income Maximisation Project – extension

The CRT has agreed to offer further funding which will enable us to extend the project to run for another year from 1st April 10 to 31st March 2011. We are awaiting confirmation regarding the exact figure we will receive. The income maximization project has already exceeded its targets for the year.

Lloyds TSB Welfare Rights Project – continuation

The Lloyds TSB funding which pays for 2 days of Welfare Rights specialist time will continue for another year. Our caseworker, Carol Adams, has had a lot of success recently at tribunal.

GP Pilot Project - extension

We have received some funding from the PCT which will enable the pilot to continue for a few more months. Hopefully this will allow us time to negotiate continuation/extension funding. The new outreach worker, Sarah Kirkham, started at the end of August and has managed a seamless handover from Kardine.

Additional hours Project - extension

This project was due to end March 2010. However, at the recent BIS/CitA Meeting it was agreed that the AHA Service project will now be funded to run until around October 2010 with a ramp down through to December 2010. We assume funding will remain the same but are awaiting further information.

Congratulations to Sasha on the safe arrival of baby Milo!!

Generalist Service

The South Elmsall Bureau closed on 28th January. Anne is working with South Elmsall Town Council to find suitable premises, closer to the centre of town, from which we can run an outreach on similar lines to those in Featherstone and Normanton which are fully funded by the Town Councils and very well attended.

Bryn will be moving over to the Wakefield Bureau on Tuesdays and Thursdays and we hope to increase our information centre opening hours.

The Hemsworth outreach, based at the Town Hall, started on 20th January. We will be offering a generalist service, specialist money advice and Switalskis will also be offering specialist welfare rights advice.

Chart 1: Client contacts across the district

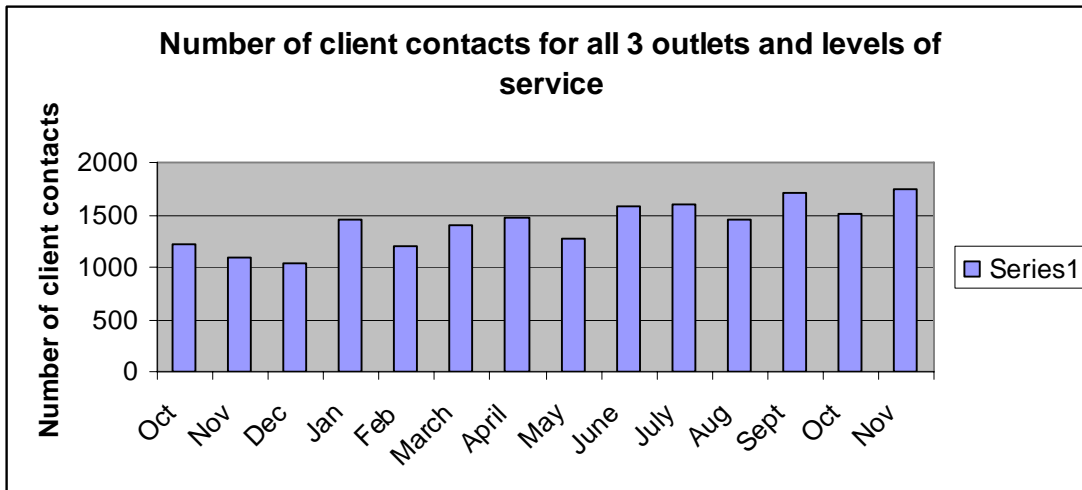


Chart 2: Client contacts according to outlet

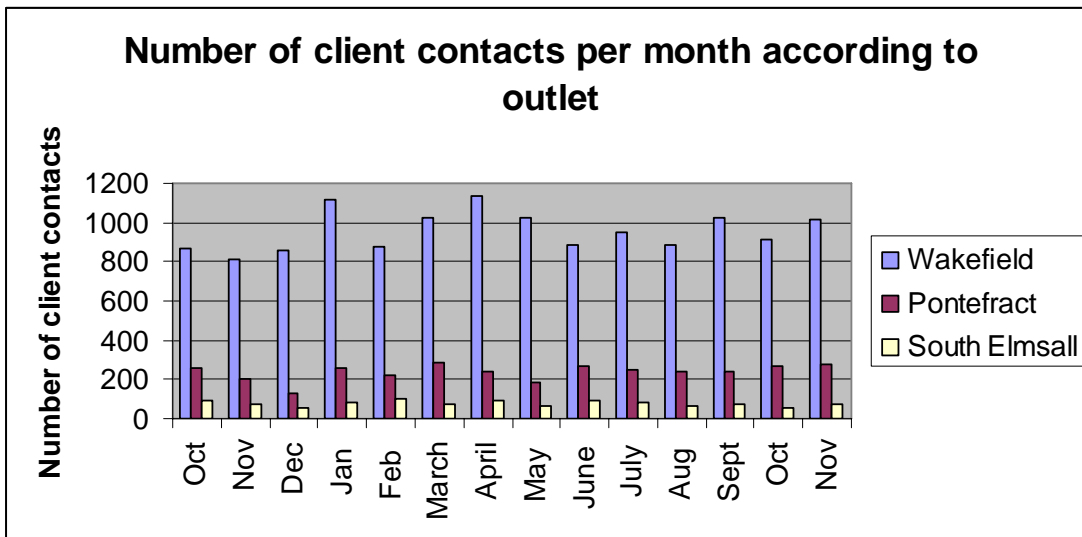


Chart 3: Assisted information across the district

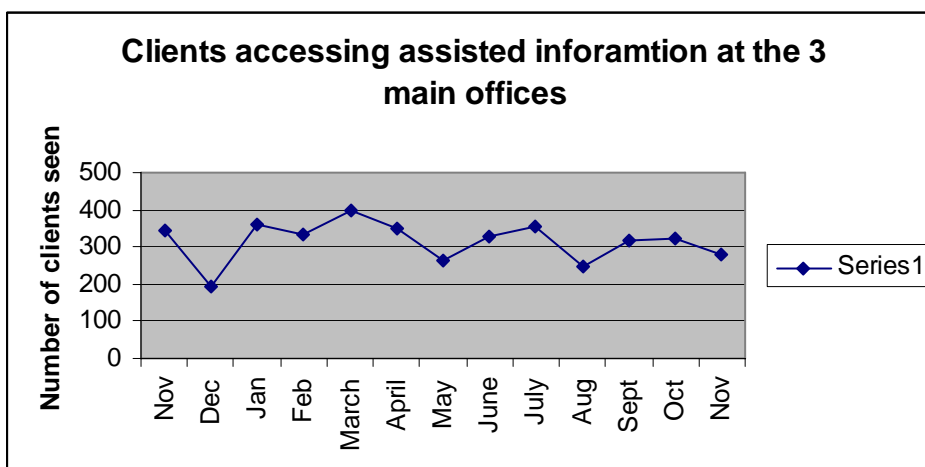
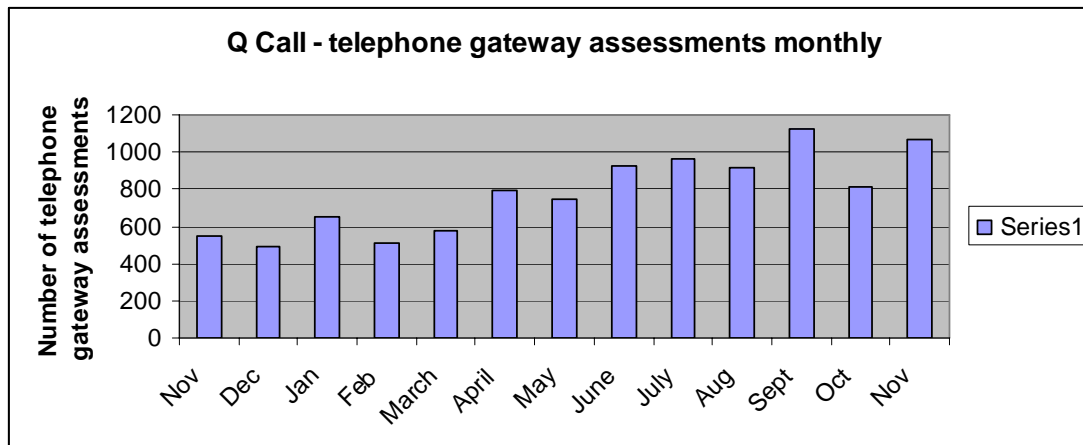


Chart 4: Telephone Advice



Client Attendance

Generalist Service Non-attendance

October 2.7% Wakefield, 4.6% Pontefract
 November 5.5% Wakefield, 2.2% Pontefract

Money Advice Unit Non-attendance

October 7.2%
 November 2.1%

Overall we are seeing a reduced level of missed appointments: this is partly because we are continuing to only book appointments 1-2 weeks in advance and also because we are contacting all clients prior to their appointments. The nature of our work, and client groups, means that we are never going to have a 100% attendance but we are constantly looking at ways of keeping figures as low as possible.

MONEY ADVICE UNIT

Our appointment availability still remains at approximately a 2 week waiting time. We have now slightly changed our debt service so that we are able to offer emergency appointments from January 2010.

The Financial Inclusion Fund is performing well. Our target for quarter 3 of 09/10 was 245 clients and we have actually achieved above this target at 276.

External Referrals

Between 1st April 2009 – 31st December 2009 in addition to clients accessing our debt service via our Gateway we have received the following direct debt referrals from external agencies.

Wakefield District Housing (Access Points/Debt Team)	58
Open Door Project	7

Community Mental Health Team	1
The Springs	12
Social/family Services	4
Direct from outreaches	1
Children's Centres	4
Web Site	8

Volunteer Training & Recruitment

32 people attended recruitment presentations in November and December and there is another one planned for January. So far we have selected people 6 to train as Generalist Advisers and 2 to be Gateway Assessors on the March training programme.

On 13th of January 6-8 new volunteers will start the full Generalist Adviser training programme. As previously mentioned this is the last group of volunteers to undergo the current Citizens Advice certificate programme as it is going to be replaced with a shorter 'modular' programme from April 2010.

On 22nd of January the first ever group of volunteers will undergo the new 'Straight to Gateway' training programme. This first group of 8 will be existing volunteers who are currently working as Information Providers. This programme is currently in its pilot stages and has been restricted to a few bureaux in the country. We were not part of the original pilot but we have been able to get the training materials ahead of the April 2010 national rollout so we can prepare for service developments which require more gateway assessors, particularly face to face.

The Management Team is currently looking at ways of streamlining the Gateway service delivery by using Q&A scripts, available on every desktop and by using the comprehensive 'next steps' guidance to help volunteers with decision making.

NVQ PILOT

Also mentioned in previous reports is our involvement, along with Leeds and Chapeltown CAB in the new NVQ in Legal Advice qualification. In February Judith and Pete will train to be NVQ assessors with other tutors in Leeds. Some of our volunteers on the January Gateway Assessor training programme will work to gain this qualification at Level 2.

Other News

Welcome to Mike Wityszyn who attended one of Pete's presentations and has decided to join the District Trustee Board.

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