

# InSight



**WAKEFIELD DISTRICT CAB NEWS**  
[www.wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk](http://www.wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk)

issue 43

## WAKEFIELD DISTRICT COMMUNITY LEGAL ADVICE CENTRE (CLAC)

Liz has attended a course called Winning Tenders – Adding Value to your Bid. The trainer, Matthew Holgate, formerly of LSC summarised Top Tips for a successful tender as follows:

- Current local providers are always in the best position to win tenders
- Stress added value (volunteers, other funding, national organisation, information system, local presence, branding etc.)
- Supervisor ratios and Peer Review scores will be important to the LSC.
- Must be able to demonstrate outcomes
- Must have competitive unit cost
- Need partners, especially solicitors, if we are to meet all categories

### **MOST IMPORTANT WERE.....**

- A positive attitude to the CLAC
- Good working relationships between partners

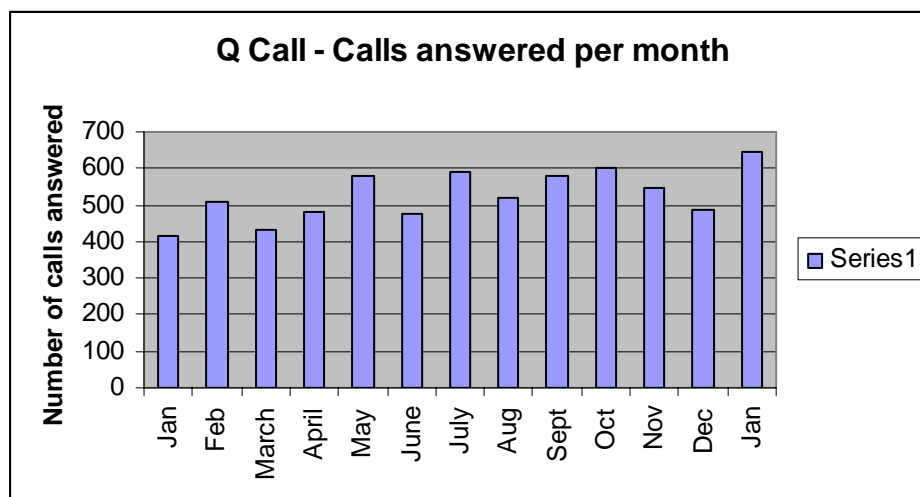
We expect the draft specification to be released at the start of April.

Switalskis Solicitors are now running a specialist welfare rights outreach at our South Elmsall office.

## GATEWAY ASSESSMENTS

The telephone advice line is based in the Wakefield office and is currently open Monday – Friday, 10am – 1pm. In January we answered 648 calls, the highest number of calls since we started gateway advice. Numbers of calls to the line are increasing every week.

Pete recently ran another training session – Adapting skills for Gateway Assessment which means 4 more volunteers are able to staff the gateway line. Another one will be due in a couple of months.



### **Additional Hours of Advice Project**

We have recently received £34,000 from Government Office (part of a £10,000,000 package to Citizens Advice nationally) to increase our telephone advice opening hours from the current 10.00am-1.00pm to 10.00am-5.00pm for 1 year. We have recruited 2 workers from our current volunteer team and they are starting on 16 March. **Welcome to Julie and Yim.**

# MONEY ADVICE UNIT

- We have now recruited 2 trainee caseworkers from our volunteer workforce. Wayne & Sarah started with the team on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February. Overall we had a good response to the two posts, 13 applications in all – thanks to everyone who applied.
- We have recruited a volunteer administrator to join the team – Stacey started with us on the 15<sup>th</sup> January. She will be volunteering 2 days per week.
- Sasha has now been approved by the Legal Services Commission to be a named supervisor on our debt contract.

## INCREASE IN DEMAND

Our waiting list for a money advice appointment is currently around 4 weeks; demand is currently very high and there are fewer appointments available due to the 2 trainee posts.

For the 10 months period between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009 caseworkers advised and assisted in dealing with:

- £12,197,537.00 worth of non-priority debt
- £2,812,838.00 worth of priority debt

In comparison to the previous 12 months when the average debt was £8,811.00 per client, the average debt per client is now £11,772.84 an increase per client of £2,961.84.

The previous 12 months saw an average monthly debt figure of £870,827.33 being dealt with; this has increased by a staggering £630,210.20 per month, equating to an average now of £1,501,037.50 of debt being dealt with each month.

The average client count in the last 12 months was 99 clients. This has now increased to an average of 128 per month.

The previous 12 months we advised on £10,449,928.00; this has already increased quite dramatically by almost 50% in the first 10 months of this financial year alone as the total debt already advised on amounts to £15,010,375.00.

WDCAB is dealing with a significant increase in demand for our services across all areas of advice. We are estimating that by the end of the year (31 March) we will have seen an increase in demand of 20-25%. Debt and employment issues are understandably increasing more than other areas.

# VOLUNTEERS

There will be 2 more recruitment presentations on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of March. 37 prospective volunteers have so far been invited and that is without running an advertisement. The next intake of volunteers to train as advisers and information assistants is due at the beginning of May.

*16 of our volunteers who left last year did so to take up paid employment or to study.*

**Sheena's first Volunteer Report at DTB produced some interesting suggestions and the trustees really welcomed the opportunity to hear more from volunteers.**

All volunteers agreed that a VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK would be a good idea and Judith will be taking the lead on this development. Volunteers asked if they could have a personal copy of the handbook to keep at home, rather than just one copy to consult in the bureau.

There is a general feeling that WORKERS' MEETINGS should be re-instated (with a new name?) but they had been poorly attended in the past so some changes could be made:

1. Hold a couple of events only per year.
2. Hire a venue between Wakefield and Pontefract for all volunteers to attend rather than separate meetings.
3. Combine meeting, training, social lunch.
4. Invite all staff and volunteers

Sheena said she would continue to consult with volunteers and staff.

Volunteers now have their own email address.

[volunteers@wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk](mailto:volunteers@wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk)

All volunteers can use this in bureau or from home.

Sheena reports,

'Using this system I sent a brief message to everyone, introducing myself as the volunteer rep, and asking if there was anything volunteers wished to raise or comment upon. I have so far received two replies via email, so the system definitely works!'

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

*Anne is currently putting together 2 rotas. One is for Information Assistants who would be interested in working in pairs to run information centres at our Normanton and (new) Featherstone outreaches.*

*We are also looking for volunteers who might be interested in joining a PR rota; we get lots of requests to attend events and man stalls explaining the work of the CAB and how people can access our services.*

*Please contact Anne if you would be interested in either of these roles.*

*and finally.....*

## **70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

On 4 September 2009 the Citizens Advice service (and Wakefield District Citizens Advice) will turn 70. To mark the occasion, Citizens Advice will launch a year long programme of activities, running right through to September 2010. We need to start thinking now about how we can make our own personal contribution to the national activity.

The first event will be a day of sponsored skydives and we have one brave volunteer who has been given a place. Well done Sasha! I know everyone will want to support and sponsor her!

### **Contact Liz if you can help with the following.**

- Do you have any CAB pictures or memorabilia that we could use?
- Do you have memories of the bureau as it was in a different era?
- Are you going to turn 70 during the year?
- Can you remember any successful campaigns we have had in Wakefield?
- Would any of your clients be willing to share their remarkable stories, in order to illustrate the difference that the service makes to people's lives?
- Would you enjoy being interviewed about why they you volunteer and what you get out of it?

**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](mailto:lizhalliday@wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk)**