

InSight



WAKEFIELD DISTRICT CAB NEWS

www.wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk

issue 49

WAKEFIELD DISTRICT CLAS

The CLAS tender documentation came out on 30 March and is more or less in line with the service specification released last year. The **recently revised** timetable is as follows:

Activity	Deadline
Close Tender	Noon 9 July 2010
Contract Award	W/C 19 August 2010
Service Start Date	1 October 2010

WMDC has agreed to roll out our funding at the current level until the CLAS is in operation.

Liz is currently working with George Lockley from Switalskis and Lisa Johnston from CitA on writing the bid.

The Management Team has started to have regular meetings to plan any required changes to service delivery. Some changes have already been introduced, for example, all our clients now receive a Gateway Interview when they present to the service, whether by telephone or drop-in.

A meeting for volunteers was held at King Street on Wednesday 12 May. Pete Woods from Switalski's Solicitors came over to talk about their practice. Volunteers divided in to groups to discuss some of the challenges we will face in developing the CLAS and came up with some very constructive suggestions which will be used in our planning.

PREMISES

The bid can include funding to cover start-up costs, the bulk of which will go on improvements to King Street including upgrading the Age Concern rooms to provide better reception facilities and disabled access.

Sheena reported at DTB that 'The Gateway telephone room has recently been repainted and re-organised, including new flat-screen computer monitors. And the rampant vegetation in the yard, which was blocking the window, has been removed, all of which makes it a more congenial working place for volunteers.'

PROJECTS & FUNDING 2010-11

Thank you to the Masons who have donated £1,000 to Wakefield District CAB towards IT equipment.

CRT Income maximization project

The income maximization project has exceeded its targets for the year and we have received the good news that we will receive the full amount of extension funding requested. From 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010:

- 478 clients have been seen under this project
- £744,768 has been identified in potential extra annual benefits for clients

Lloyds TSB Welfare Rights Casework Project

Carol has seen 44 new clients during the year. These are complex cases; in addition to the clients' appointments Carol has represented them at tribunal when necessary or prepared the submissions if they prefer to attend on their own. She has also liaised with the benefit agencies to progress the clients' cases. The project assists clients who have either had their benefits stopped, applications turned down or who do not know what benefits they are entitled to or how to claim them.

The caseworker has gained an extra £123,000 annual income for these clients, with the average gain per client of £3,075 per annum. These amounts are confirmed gains to the clients' annual income.

Carol recently participated in a regional Citizens Advice workshop to look into client experience of the new benefit ESA (Employment support allowance) which replaced

Incapacity benefit. She has had three case studies included in the report which will be used to lobby for changes in how the benefit is administered.

GP Pilot Project 2010-11

NHS Wakefield District is funding us for another year under this project and to roll it out to 2 more areas – we are looking at Ash Grove at Knottingley and Portobello as potential areas. ***We are currently recruiting to this project – please see advert attached.***

**CitA audit dates 2010 will be as follows:
Quality of Advice audit will be on 1-2 July
Organisational audit will be on 21-24
September – note change**

Generalist Outreaches

Normanton Town Hall - Monday 10am – 1pm

Featherstone Town Hall – Tuesday 10am -1pm

Hemsworth Town council office 10am-1pm

South Elmsall Westfield Resource Centre Tuesday 10am-1pm

MONEY ADVICE UNIT

1. For the period between 1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010 caseworkers successfully got
 - **£33,653.91** of client debts written off and
 - obtained charitable support for clients valuing **£5,598.58**.
2. April 2009 saw the introduction of the Debt Relief Order as another option for clients to deal with their debts. Between 1st April – 31st March 2010 the approved intermediaries that we have in bureau dealt with **59** applications.
3. The Money Advice Team has been offering emergency debt appointments since 1 January 2010.
4. Our appointment waiting time for our casework service is now 10 working days
5. The Money Advice Unit has an **average** cancellation/no show rate of 11.5 %.

Financial Inclusion Fund Performance 1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010

Annual contract targets = 968 clients. Actually saw 1168 clients. This a fantastic achievement for the project and the caseworkers who now offer appointments across the district including:

- Wakefield Bureau
- Pontefract Bureau
- Outreaches in: Lupset (x 2); Airedale; Castleford; Featherstone; Normanton; Hemsworth and South Elmsall.

Training and Recruitment Report

The emphasis continues to be on recruiting and training more new gateway assessors and also for the first time, more people for the newly designed receptionist role. The last group of trainees to go through the full generalist adviser training programme have started to see clients under supervision. All future generalist advisers will have started as gateway assessors before undertaking additional training to be advice workers.

For the first time we have started to give short listed applicants a short exercise to do after the interview. The purpose of the exercise will be to assess literacy, numeracy and comprehension. The aim of this is to improve CASE recording and QAA scores.

Wakefield CAB now has 4 candidates registered with the Open University for their NVQ (Level 2) in Supporting Legal Advice Provision. Five Trainees from our next group of 'Straight to Gateway' Trainees have expressed an interest in the undertaking of the NVQ qualification.

Staff Rep

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING THE STAFF REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE DISTRICT, PLEASE LET LIZ KNOW. At the AGM in October, the Chair will announce the person elected or nominated. Paid staff should elect one of their number to represent them at Trustee Board meetings. We currently have 2 candidates – this is your last chance to stand.

Other News

Many thanks to Stephen Flicker who until recently acted as our Treasurer. He has now left us but did a lot of good work on our behalf as a trustee. Best wishes to Stephen.

WAKEFIELD DISTRICT CITIZENS ADVICE



We need two enthusiastic and capable people to join us at Wakefield District Citizens Advice; for both posts you will have an understanding of and commitment to the aims and principles of the CAB service.

GENERALIST ADVISER HEALTH PROJECT

- Salary scale:** Local Authority Scale point 23 (£20,198 pro rata)
- Leave:** 28 days per year plus 8 bank holidays (pro rata)
- Hours of work:** Negotiable. Possibly 1 x 30 hour post and 1 x 18 hour post or 2 x 24 hours per week posts.
- Funding:** This post is funded by NHS Wakefield District for 1 year initially with potential for 3 year funding.
- Locations:** Based at the bureau in Wakefield with travel to outreach locations across the district including Hemsworth, Airedale and Knottingley.

Wakefield District Citizens' Advice is working with NHS Wakefield District towards delivering advice services within GP and other settings throughout the district. The aim is to address some of the underlying determinants of ill health by offering generalist advice on issues such as benefits, debt, housing and employment.

We are looking for an experienced adviser with a comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of generalist advice work who will develop and promote the project as well as delivering the service. Own transport essential.

In order to deliver this project you will be required to work to targets and a high level of reliability is essential.

For an application pack, please contact District Office on 01924 378063 or email districtoffice@wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk

Closing date for both posts noon, 18th June 2010.

We are committed to working to achieve equal opportunities for all groups subject to discrimination



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