

Developing Access to Advice

Part of “*Working Together for Advice*”

Rachel Harris – Citizens Advice
Workstream Manager

Supported by



**advice
services
alliance**

the charity for
your community



Working Together for Advice Workstreams:

- **Developing Access to Advice**
- User and Stakeholder Involvement
- Enhancing Frontline Advice
- Developing a Quality Mark
- Advice Outcomes
- Developing Discrimination Advice
- Workforce Development and Training
- Promoting Advice

Workstream Outcomes

- Clients empowered to take action
- Increased confidence and new skills for advisers engaged at initial contact
- Increased capacity to help those in greatest need
- Minimising the possibility that clients fall through the net
- Increase access to specialist
- 1,700 agencies empowered to ensure that 10% more people get the help they need.

Developing Access to Advice workstream:

- Three Pilots
 - Gateway Approach
 - Develop two additional approaches
 - Research to inform the development
- Different agencies
 - CABx
 - Law Centres Federation
 - Advice^{UK}
 - Age Concern England
 - Youth Access

The Gateway Assessment

- Short and focussed – 6 to 10 minutes
- Expert assessment of
 - Client's problem
 - Client's abilities
 - Risks present
- Decides next step

The Next Step(s)

- Assisted information
- Signposting and referral
- Generalist advice and assistance
- Specialist casework

Benefits already achieved

- 60 to 80% increase in individuals seen using the same resources
- Significant reduction in waiting times of between 50% - 70%
- Reduction in work place stress for paid and volunteer staff
- Improved levels of client satisfaction (surveys at the demo centres and word of mouth from managers)

Benefits already achieved

- Gateway Assessments can identify the 50% to 60% of clients who can manage their own issues with help from assisted information or signposting without reducing the clients' chance of a positive outcome to their issue

Pre-planning for a new approach

- Demand

- Known demand - personal, telephone etc
- Unknown demand - who is not using the service

- Resources

- Paid staff and volunteers
- Management capacity
- Trustee board skills
- Premises
- Funding
- Equipment
- Other

- Culture & Ethos

- Responsiveness to change
- Openness to new ideas
- Particular barriers
- Key people who will need convincing
- Trustee board
- Local Authority and other stakeholders

Planning the introduction of a new approach

- Major change needs proper planning and management
- Formal Project Management approach recommended

Support and resources needed by pilot agencies

- Detailed guidance at each stage
- In depth material on planning, staffing and resources
- Training materials - online?
- Monitoring and evaluation tools
- Project team ready to help

Developing Access to Advice

Part of “*Working Together for Advice*”