

Appendix A - Oadby and Wigston Advisory Services Report from Helping Hands and Citizens Advice Leicestershire

Nine months on....

On 8th February 2017 Les Gill, the Chair of Helping Hands Community Trust and Richard Evans CEO of Citizens Advice Leicestershire met with Stephen Glazebrook of O&WBC to review the Oadby & Wigston Advice Service.

The findings are that:

- both organisations are working well in partnership;
- the service provision is free, independent, available Monday to Friday at easily accessible surgery locations in Oadby, Wigston Magna and South Wigston.

Service Delivery

Service managers from both organisations meet at 6 weekly intervals to evaluate service provision, ensure quality of delivery, the client experience is seamless, ease of access across the Borough and to avoid duplication of effort. Client satisfaction is evaluated and is currently running at 95%. Effective marketing and communication ensures that clients can easily access the service.

Feedback on Integration with Borough Council Services

There is a close working relationship with Customer Services officers who are able to refer clients directly to our advisers at the Customer services or to the most appropriate surgery in Oadby and South Wigston. Both organisations have received positive feedback from Customer Services as they are able to refer clients seamlessly to the attending organisation. Trish Hatton, from the Customer Services Team, recently wrote:

‘Feedback is very positive, officers are friendly and good with customers. Customer seem to go away happy after appointments and feel as if they were helped. There are no issues from our point of view, Trish Hatton

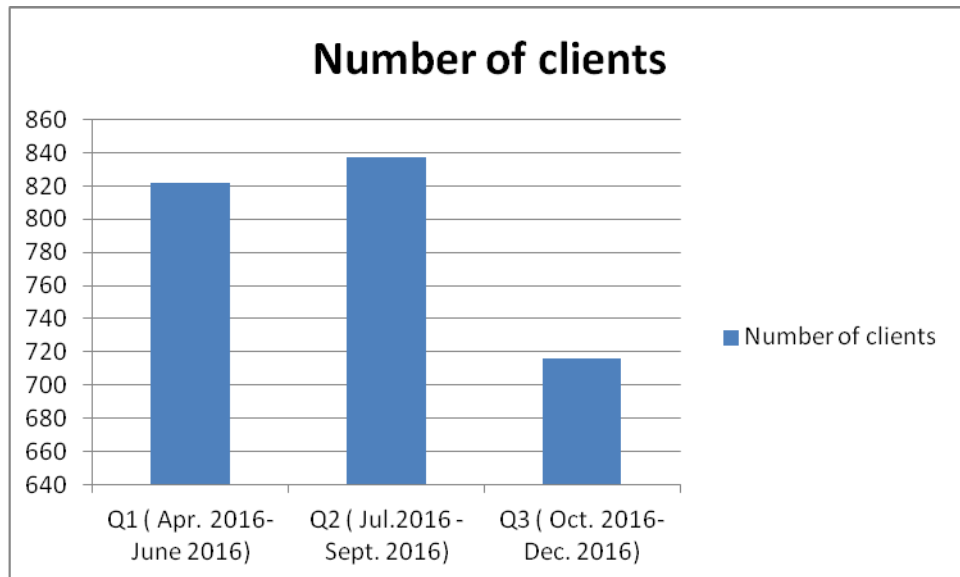
Joint working arrangements:

- Clients are referred between the two organisations so as to ensure that they can access pro-bono legal, money and debt management services.
- Kennedy House – both organisations have representatives attending meetings for MAVF. Asylum seekers are able to access welfare benefits and housing advice once they are granted ‘Refugee’ status.

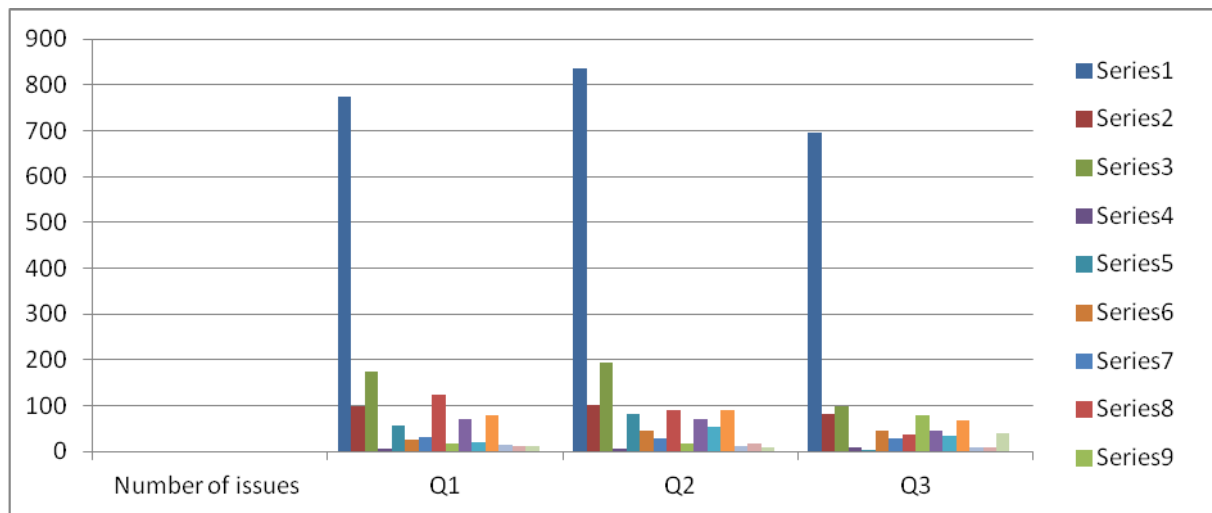
Statistics & Case Studies

Set out below are the client and issue numbers for the first 3 quarters of operation, showing an increase across quarters 1 & 2. There was a decrease in Quarter 3 due to Christmas and New Year but we are expecting the figures for Qtr 4 to show a continuing increase. We have also included a break down of the issues dealt with and two client case studies.

Quarter	Number of clients
Q1 (Apr. 2016-June 2016)	822
Q2 (Jul.2016 - Sept. 2016)	837
Q3 (Oct. 2016-Dec. 2016)	716



Number of issues	Q1	Q2	Q3
Benefits & tax credits	773	837	697
Consumer goods & services	100	102	83
Debt / Money Mgmt .	173	194	98
Discrimination	6	6	9
Employment	57	82	3
Financial Services	27	46	45
Health & Community Care	30	28	29
Housing	123	91	37
Immigration	16	17	78
Legal	70	70	45
Other	19	55	33
Relationship & Family	80	91	68
Tax	15	11	9
Travel & Transport	11	16	9
Utilities & Communication.	12	10	40
Totals	1512	1656	1283



Key:

1. Benefits and tax credits
2. Consumer
3. Debt
4. Discrimination
5. Education
6. Employment
7. Financial Services
8. Health and Community Care
9. Housing
10. Immigration
11. Legal
12. Other
13. Relationship
14. Tax
15. Travel & Transport
16. Utilities

Case Study No: 1

1. Profile of Client:

The client is 61 years old and suffers from severe arthritis, mental health issues, dental problems and poor eyesight (she needs a magnifying glass to read). She lives with her 85 year old father who she describes as 'very controlling and short tempered'.

2. Summary of issues:

The client has lost her national insurance number and has no formal identification document or bank account. She has no transport available to her and walks everywhere, which is a struggle because of her severe arthritis.

The client informed us that she has no access to money and has been completely dependent on her father throughout her life. She receives no benefits and initially attended the advice session as she wanted a food voucher.

3. Options Discussed and Action taken :

The following options were discussed and action taken:

- **Making a claim for benefits in her own right:-**

An online application was made for ESA and an application form was completed for Personal Independence payments. The clients GP surgery was contacted to arrange an appointment to obtain medical evidence to support her benefits claim. We also contacted the National Insurance Office to sort out her NI number

- **Opening a bank account for benefit payments:-**

Our adviser accompanied the client to the Post Office and assisted her to open a bank account

- **Obtaining a food voucher:-**

The client was given a food voucher and taken to the Food bank to collect a food parcel

- **Safeguarding issues:-**

See below in outcomes.

4. Outcomes :

- The client now has her own bank account into which benefits can be paid.
- We have arranged with the client and her GP surgery for fit for work notes to be forwarded to us so that we can ensure they are forwarded to the DWP. She will then receive benefits and control her own finances, thus no longer being dependent on her father for her needs.
- Client has agreed to return for a further appointment to discuss the safeguarding issues arising from her statements regarding her father, including the possibility of finding her own accommodation. At this stage the client did not want to consider this but agreed to a further appointment to discuss safeguarding in general.

5. Any unusual factors or difficulties for client:

Client completely dependent on her father

Case Study No: 2

1. Profile of Client:

Client referred by one of our partners is 63 years old, and divorced called in on 27/04/16 very distraught as her ESA appeal was turned down and placed on JSA. A decision client found it very difficult to understand and in her very confused state of mind withdrew her claim as her condition prevents her from any form of employment.

2. Summary of issues:

Sadly born with defective feet now compounded by osteoarthritis and as years have progressed musculoskeletal problems have set in. She has also suffered life threatening anaphylactic shock on two separate occasions. Further treatments for anxiety and depression are also on going.

3. Options Discussed and Action taken :

Client was very disillusioned by the way she had been sanctioned by the DWP and our adviser was able to reassure her that with support and our advocacy she should appeal to the Court of Tribunal. She was assisted in making a phone call when her case was reviewed live. Our client was also assisted in completing ESA 50

4. Outcome :

After two months her ESA was reinstated. Her application for Personal Independence Payments was also initially turned down, but again with our encouragement and help including obtaining medical reports an appeal was successfully lodged. Client is now in receipt of Standard Rate Care and Higher Rate Mobility Component.

5. Any unusual factors or difficulties for client:

Our client suffers from severe physical disability that impacts upon her confidence but has every confidence in the Advice Service as a result of the assistance she has received.