



STRATEGY

2016 – 2019

DELIVERY PLAN



December 2017
(Edition 4)

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE ADVICE STRATEGY



INTRODUCTION

Background

This Delivery Plan will help to implement the new Central Bedfordshire Advice Strategy.

It is envisaged that the Advice Strategy will bring out the **BEST** in information and advice services in Central Bedfordshire.

A copy of the **Advice Strategy (2016-2019)**, which was launched in April 2016, can be found on the Advice Strategy's webpage:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/stronger-communities/advice.aspx>



The **Delivery Plan** has been developed by the key advice providers and other relevant stakeholders that cover the full range of information and advice needs in Central Bedfordshire. A development workshop was held for stakeholders in April 2016 and a working group worked on drafting the Delivery Plan over the summer/autumn, ready for its launch in November 2016.

A **Toolkit** with resources that can be used to support the Delivery Plan has also been produced and can be found on the Advice Strategy webpage (see link above).

Vision

The overall quality of life of local residents will be enhanced by people being able to get the **BEST quality information and advice that they want, when they want it, and how they want it**

Aims

The four **BEST Aims** of the Advice Strategy are to achieve:

- **Better access** to information and advice services
- **Excellent quality** of information and advice services
- **Stronger collaboration** in planning, funding and delivering information and advice services
- **Targeted prevention** of problems through increased use of early stage information and advice

Key Requirements

To turn the **BEST Aims** into **BEST Outcomes**, 12 **key requirements** have been identified in the Advice Strategy. These are given below.

AIM 1		Better access to information and advice services
Key Requirements		
1(a)	<p>Good publicity</p> <p>Making sure people know where and how to get advice</p>	  
1(b)	<p>Flexible access</p> <p>Making sure people are able to access information and advice services through a multi-channel approach</p>	
1(c)	<p>Easy access points</p> <p>Making sure people have alternative entry routes to information and advice services, if required</p>	

AIM 2		Excellent quality of information and advice
Key Requirements		
2(a)	<p>Commitment to helping people</p> <p>Making sure people receive the excellent quality information and advice services that they need</p>	  
2(b)	<p>Meeting quality standards</p> <p>Making sure that all information and advice services are provided at a recognised quality standard</p>	
2(c)	<p>Quality support services</p> <p>Making sure that information and advice providers are given effective infrastructure support services</p>	

AIM 3	Stronger collaboration in planning, funding, and delivering information and advice services	
Key Requirements		
3(a)	<p>Commitment to advice</p> <p>Making sure that all community frontline workers consider the wider advice needs of their clients</p>	
3(b)	<p>Professional partnerships</p> <p>Making sure that all information and advice providers, and other partners and stakeholders, work together effectively to provide a seamless service for users</p>	
3(c)	<p>Supportive funding</p> <p>Making sure that decisions made by local funders and commissioners help to deliver the Advice Strategy</p>	

AIM 4	Targeted prevention of problems through increased use of early stage information and advice	
Key Requirements		
4(a)	<p>Developing life skills</p> <p>Making sure that people have the skills and resilience to help them make informed life choices</p>	
4(b)	<p>Assisted early intervention</p> <p>Making sure that people get information and advice at an early stage</p>	
4(c)	<p>Preventative focus</p> <p>Making sure that adequate resources are provided to support preventative services</p>	

PRIORITY ACTION

To help meet the **key requirements** identified in the Advice Strategy, the following **priority action** was initially agreed.

1. Develop AdviceCentral into a “catch all” point of access
2. Provide easy access to up-to-date details about current advice and information providers
3. Promote the strategic themes of “Everybody’s got a role in advice” and “No wrong door for advice”
4. Encourage early intervention to make sure that people get information and advice at an early stage
5. Facilitate appropriate support and training to organisations covered by the Advice Strategy
6. Discuss the Advice Strategy with budget holders, decision makers and managers in Central Bedfordshire Council and other key stakeholders

The above priority action cuts across the different aims and key requirements in the Advice Strategy. Further details on each of the areas of **priority action** are given in **Appendix 1**.

Other relevant action may be added to the Delivery Plan when appropriate.

A summary of some **further possible action** in the future is given in **Appendix 2**.

A **Toolkit**, with resources that can be used to help take forward some of the priority action, is available at: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/stronger-communities/advice.aspx>

MONITORING THE DELIVERY PLAN

This Delivery Plan, including implementation of the priority action, is regularly monitored by the **Advice Strategy Management Group** (AMSG), which is the multi-agency group responsible for the Advice Strategy.

The Delivery Plan is updated quarterly to give show progress on the implementation of the priority action. The updated plan is uploaded onto the Advice Strategy webpage: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/stronger-communities/advice.aspx>

The AMSG also regularly reports on the success of the Delivery Plan to Central Bedfordshire Council’s Welfare Reform Board.

A **Stakeholder Workshop** to review the Delivery Plan and ensure it is fit to meet future advice and information needs has been arranged for 15th January 2018.



APPENDIX 1 – PRIORITY ACTION

Priority action	What we need to do
1	<p>Develop AdviceCentral into a “catch all” point of access</p> <p>This will ensure that people can always access help even if they are unsure which provider to approach. AdviceCentral will act as a single point of contact that provides access to the right information at the right time. It will be an independent “one stop shop” that provides information or access to the most relevant provider of detailed advice.</p>

How we are going to do it	Existing or new initiative	Who is going to do it	When is it going to be done	RAG Status
<p>(1) Obtain sustainable funding for the continuing delivery and expansion of the AdviceCentral service</p> <p>New funding should be applied for and a longer-term funding strategy should be developed for AdviceCentral</p>	New funding – for existing service	<p>CBC agreed funding for AdviceCentral for 2017/18 (AC Lead = Disability Resource Centre)</p>	April 2017	
<p>(2) Actively promote the AdviceCentral service across Central Bedfordshire using different channels and via a range of intermediaries such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational establishments – schools, colleges • Health services - GP surgeries, hospitals, district nurses • Community services – noticeboards, newsletters, village schemes • Places of worship • Shops – supermarkets, charity shops, foodbanks • Housing providers - sheltered accommodation, new housing developments <p>Promotional material should be easy to read, in different formats, with appropriate translations, and be fully accessible to the whole community.</p>	New publicity programme and promotional activity	<p>AdviceCentral and CBC have coordinated a new publicity programme. Marketing has been a priority for AC in 2017/18.</p> <p>AdviceCentral and CBC have been encouraging all partner agencies to commit and sign up to promoting and using AdviceCentral (AC Lead = Disability Resource Centre)</p>	<p>Summer 2017</p> <p>Summer 2017</p>	

Advice Strategy Reference Aim (Requirement)	1(a) 1(b) 1(c)				3(c)		4(b)	
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Priority action	What we need to do
2	<p>Provide easy access to up-to-date details about current advice and information providers</p> <p>These details will make residents, and professionals, aware of all available services, and provide greater awareness within different community groups. It will also help identify where generalist and specialist advice is available.</p>

How we are going to do it	Existing or new initiative	Who is going to do it	When is it going to be done	RAG Status
<p>(1) Update, refresh, promote and encourage the use of BAF's online Advice Directory</p> <p>The updating and expansion of the Advice Directory will encompass some mapping of local organisations to get up-to date information on services and contact details. This will also help identify any gaps in services. Promotional work will be done through a new publicity campaign.</p> <p>When all Central Bedfordshire entries have been updated, discussions could then take place to transfer the Advice Directory for Central Bedfordshire from BAF to AdviceCentral.</p>	Existing service – but new activity to update website, expand its coverage and develop promotional activity	<p>BAF has been encouraging its members to update their online Directory entries.</p> <p>BAF will now liaise with AdviceCentral to discuss transferring the directory information from BAF to AC. (BAF Lead = BAF Steering Group)</p>	<p>Summer 2017</p> <p>Early 2018</p>	
<p>(2) Encourage all partner agencies to update their websites</p> <p>Relevant partner websites should include up-to-date, consistent information on benefits, how to contact AdviceCentral and local advice agencies, and general promotion of the Advice Strategy.</p>	New initiative with existing services	<p>BAF will be encouraging its members to promote AdviceCentral on their websites (BAF Lead = BAF Steering Group)</p> <p>CBC will promote AdviceCentral and local advice agencies on the CBC website and in the new, online My Central Bedfordshire facility</p>	<p>Early 2018</p> <p>Early 2018</p>	

Advice Strategy Reference Aim (Key requirement)	1(a) 1(b) 1(c)	  	3(b)	
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Priority action	What we need to do
3	<p>Promote the strategic themes of “Everybody’s got a role in advice” and “No wrong door for advice”</p> <p>Frontline staff and volunteers need to be supported and equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to make effective referrals and promote information and advice services – within and outside the local advice sector in Central Bedfordshire. This will enable wider access to information and advice services.</p>

How we are going to do it	Existing or new initiative	Who is going to do it	When is it going to be done	RAG Status
<p>(1) Develop a model to promote and embed “Everybody’s got a role in advice” and “No wrong door for advice”</p> <p>The model needs to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice needs are picked up early • Advice services are promoted by Community Connectors using, for example, village agents, Town and Parish Councillors, Neighbourhood Watch groups, libraries, faith groups, informal health groups and Ward Councillors. Services can also be promoted in the new My Central Bedfordshire facility. • Referrals between CBC and AdviceCentral are handled effectively • Common pathways for referrals are identified e.g. collaboration / referral map / minimisation of silo working • Understanding of agency specialisms to aid referrals are improved • Duplication is reduced but a healthy overlap in provision is ensured • Customer CRM systems are better used • Effective engagement / partnership working between CBC (especially Children’s Services and SCHH) and the advice sector is enhanced • Selected agencies (e.g. Town and Parish Councils, and foodbanks) are encouraged to begin to take on an information / advice role <p>A toolkit will be developed to promote the model through induction, training and supervision with all frontline staff in Central Bedfordshire e.g. CBC, TPCs, foodbanks, VCS groups, etc. Guidance and support material will be produced e.g. a checklist for first points of contact / ‘10 top tips’. Useful apps. could also be developed eg. an app to enable client referrals to be made while out in the community, or an app that gives prompts for questions eg Have you?</p>	<p>New model / development plan</p>	<p>Advice Strategy Management Group is developing a toolkit to help implement the model</p> <p>BAF and CBC will put toolkit on their websites</p> <p>BAF and AdviceCentral will develop a “Top Tips” document for frontline staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Early 2018</p> <p>Early 2018</p>	

Advice Strategy Reference Aim (Key requirement)	3(a) 3(b) 3(c)	  	4(b) 4(c)	 
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Priority action	What we need to do
4	<p>Encourage early intervention to make sure that people get information and advice at an early stage</p> <p>Providing information and advice at an early stage of a problem can help prevent crisis situations arising at a later stage.</p>

How we are going to do it	Existing or new initiative	Who is going to do it	When is it going to be done	RAG Status
<p>(1) Develop and use IT technology to aid early intervention</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use data and intelligence (MOSAIC) to pre-empt issues – for example this has been used in the past by CBC to identify people who were likely to be affected by the recent benefit changes (eg Benefit Cap) before the changes happened 	Existing facility. Look for new ideas.	CBC (Customer and Community Insight Team) has undertaken some work to analyse which residents are likely to be in need of AdviceCentral services and how proposed changes to benefits are likely to affect this.	Winter 2017	
<p>(2) Encourage schemes to test early intervention</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social housing tenants - tenants who are benefit claimants could be asked questions related to other social welfare issues, to prevent problems growing • Residents in sheltered accommodation – frequent reviews could be undertaken with residents as their needs change over time, to prevent problems growing 	Some existing schemes. Consider new schemes.	<p>Aragon Housing Association has trialled a variety of early intervention schemes in different areas including producing Universal Credit fliers for tenants and providing a UC drop-in centre to correspond with UC roll-out. They have also had a Digital Inclusion Officer in place for several years now in direct response to the need for online support for tenants when dealing with Universal Credit.”</p> <p>(Aragon HA Lead = Welfare Team)</p> <p>All partners to consider introducing other schemes</p>	Ongoing	

Advice Strategy Reference Aim (Key requirement)	3(b) 3(c)		4(a) 4(b) 4(c)			
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Priority action	What we need to do
5	<p>Facilitate appropriate support and training to organisations covered by the Advice Strategy</p> <p>This support and training will advance quality and consistency across advice providers and help promote equalities and diversity.</p>

How we are going to do it	Existing or new initiative	Who is going to do it	When is it going to be done	RAG Status
<p>(1) Define and deliver appropriate training modules via multiple channels such as e-learning, webinars and classroom-based activities</p> <p>Training could cover things like interviewing skills, adviser skills, "Gateway" skills, and advice work principles (such as promoting equalities and diversity, confidentiality, impartiality etc), and relevant subject-based courses</p>	<p>Some services are existing - some new</p> <p>Some resources would be needed to help fund this training</p>	<p>BAF has delivered a 2017 training programme and will be planning a 2018 programme (BAF Lead = BAF Steering Group)</p> <p>AdviceCentral has organised training for its new advisers</p>	<p>2018 (for new programme)</p> <p>Autumn 2017</p>	
<p>(2) Promote useful, existing training material which is already in the "public domain" focussing on customer satisfaction</p> <p>Material could include things like best practice in collecting customer feedback, monitoring customer satisfaction, promoting equalities and diversity etc.</p>	<p>New training initiative</p>	<p>BAF will be developing an equalities and diversity checklist specifically aimed at advice agencies (BAF Lead = BAF Steering Group)</p>	<p>Early 2018</p>	
<p>(3) Deliver and promote network meetings and events for advice providers to share knowledge</p> <p>Advice sector networks (e.g. Bedfordshire Advice Forum, Bedfordshire Benefits Network) should be promoted and supported to share knowledge on things like: advice sector news; changes in the law relating to advice related subjects; access to advice services; equalities and diversity issues</p>	<p>Some networks already exist – others need to be developed</p> <p>Some resources are needed to help fund these networking activities</p>	<p>BAF has organised 2 BAF Forum meetings with another planned for February 2018.</p> <p>BAF has also arranged and a Bedfordshire Benefits Network meeting with another planned for March 2018. (BAF Lead = BAF Steering Group)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	

Advice Strategy Reference Aim (Key requirement)	1(a) 1(b) 1(c)	  	2(a) 2(b) 2(c)	  	3(c)	
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Priority action	<p style="text-align: center;">What we need to do</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">6</p>	<p>Discuss the Advice Strategy with budget holders, decision makers and managers in Central Bedfordshire Council and other key stakeholders</p> <p>This will raise awareness of the Advice Strategy amongst budget holders, decision makers and managers when planning and commissioning services.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">How we are going to do it</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Existing or new initiative</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Who is going to do it</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">When is it going to be done</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RAG Status</p>
<p>(1) Develop a plan to raise awareness amongst budget holders, decision makers and managers in Central Bedfordshire Council and other key stakeholders</p> <p>This will help explore ways in which local funders and managers can help support the Advice Strategy. Ideas could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using longer funding contracts eg 3 years • Exploring SCHH's new 'Resilience' commission to fund advice services • Collaboration when preparing specifications for commissioning services • Including a requirement for 'partnership' working within commissioning specifications • Measuring the return on investment of funding for advice services 	<p>New plan – and new ideas</p>	<p>Advice Strategy Management Group to develop a toolkit to help support the plan</p> <p>Members of the ASMG will regularly promote the Advice Strategy at relevant network meetings and events that they attend</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	

<p>Advice Strategy Reference Aim (Key requirement)</p>	<p>3(a) 3(b) 3(c)</p>		<p>4(a) 4(b) 4(c)</p>		
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APPENDIX 2 – POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Aim 1	What - we need to do	How - we are going to do it
	<p>Use innovative ideas to improve awareness and access to advice services</p>	<p>Incorporate additional ideas for innovative publicity in the general publicity programme to promote advice services. The innovative ideas could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting-up “remote” access points in existing community hubs - where Skype (or similar) could be used to facilitate face to face advice – to help improve access in rural areas • Creating “You Tube” videos - (like the housing videos on the CBC website) – to provide self-help resources • Developing web chat facilities – to allow advice to be obtained via the internet • Producing other “permanent” publicity reminders eg fridge magnets, calendars
	<p>Map organisations currently providing information and advice</p>	<p>Undertake a full mapping exercise to identify gaps in services. This would enable planning for accessible, consistent, interactive and up-to-date information and advice. The exercise would also enable local organisations to know what is available in order to help people. Different models could be used eg distance travelled model; single view of the customer.</p>

Aim 2	What - we need to do	How - we are going to do it
	<p>Agree minimum quality standards for organisations covered by the Advice Strategy</p> <p>This will ensure the quality and consistency of local information and advice services</p> <p>NB Different standards would need to apply to organisations giving simple information (informal level) as opposed to advice (more technical)</p> <p>There are also different quality requirements in different sub-sectors eg agencies working in NHS care or adult social care need to ensure that their information services comply with the Accessible Information Standard</p>	<p>Set-up a quality working group to develop quality standards for information and advice providers in Central Bedfordshire. The standards should be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of processes - eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Staff (including CBC teams) must know and understand routes to access advice (via AdviceCentral or Customer Services) – and keep referral handovers to a minimum but appropriate level ➢ Organisations must have adopted specified policies • Customer satisfaction – eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Organisations should use surveys / client interviews / focus groups to get feedback • Outcomes/delivery targets - eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Systems for measuring “happiness” and expectations V outcomes could be developed • Having a recognised Quality Mark eg with Q-cas as a minimum
	<p>Promote a quality branding for the Advice Strategy</p> <p>To show quality standards are being met and that quality advice services are being provided</p>	<p>Promote Q-cas as a local quality mark for agencies that do not have a quality mark. This will enable smaller organisations in Central Bedfordshire to obtain a locally developed quality mark at a low cost.</p> <p>Encourage organisations covered by the Advice Strategy that do not have a quality mark to obtain a relevant quality mark within the next 5 years.</p> <p>Encourage organisations that already have quality marks to maintain their quality mark status. Current quality marks include: AQS, Q-cas, Matrix, PQASSO, Call Handling, Advocacy, Accessible Information Standard</p> <p>Encourage local advisers to get advice qualifications eg NVQ in Advice and Guidance. This will help to improve skills and ensure the quality and consistency of advice given by local advisers</p>

Aim 3	What - we need to do	How - we are going to do it
	<p>Create stronger partnerships amongst advice providers and stakeholders to ensure more effective working.</p> <p>This will help make better use of local intelligence and help understand and predict changing advice needs (eg for migrants)</p> <p>It will also help improve links between different parts of the advice sector (eg between the IAG sector and the social welfare advice sector)</p>	<p>Map the existing partnership networks within the advice sector</p> <p>Analyse the existing partnership arrangements and make recommendations for improved partnership working</p>
	<p>Review the way advice and information is funded - to create a funding environment that supports the aims of the Advice Strategy</p>	<p>Undertake some basic mapping of funding to see how much CBC and other local funders / commissioners spend on Advice and Information</p>

Aim 4	What - we need to do	How - we are going to do it
	<p>Help people develop and improve life skills</p> <p>This will help people make more informed choices and prevent problems growing in the first place</p>	<p>Develop a programme of employment support and life skills training – using a holistic approach</p> <p>Undertake an early intervention pilot project by targeting the children of social housing tenants - this could encourage NEET children of tenants to take up apprenticeships and life skills training</p>
	<p>Use Health services in a more proactive way - to improve the identification of issues and to assist in the reducing future advice needs</p>	<p>Encourage the use of social prescribing to help prevent problems – eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities to reduce social isolation / emotional wellbeing eg walks • Informal intervention e.g. attendance at pubs, cafes, places of worship, children’s centres, emergency housing support <p>Use additional access points for advice sessions – e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP surgeries • Hospitals • Other health related locations <p>Investigate the feasibility of developing more information/advice in health settings</p> <p>Promote the links between advice and health / wellbeing</p>