

East Lindsey Citizens Advice Bureau

Operational Report

EAST LINDSEY C.A.B. NEWS

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July-Sept 2009

Welcome to East Lindsey Citizens Advice Bureau's Operational Report for Quarter 2.

Inside you will find reports, updates and news relating to the bureau. Please tell us what you think of the report and of our service - all suggestions welcome.

Any comments to Jill Scott, District Manager, on email jill.scott@eastlindseycab.org.uk

Unit 2; Meridian House, Eastgate, Louth, LN11 9PL

Welcome to our latest members of staff. Russell Crane is the new employee for the 'Rural WellBeing' pilot funded by LCC concentrating on financial inclusion.

Russell started on 17th August and has been developing the pilot with the help of Clare and Kristine.

Bureau and outreach opening times

Day	Venue / times	details
Monday	Mablethorpe 9:30 – 12:30	General surgery - open door
	Louth 9:30-12:30	Gateway & appointments
	Spilsby outreach - VAEL	Appointment only: phone 01754 765608 for an appointment
	Skegness bureau	Appointments ~ specialist advisors
Tuesday	Skegness 9:30 – 2:30pm	Gateway & appointments
	Mablethorpe 9:30 – 12:30	General surgery - open door
	Louth bureau	Appointments ~ specialist advisors
Wednesday	Skegness 9:00 – 12:30pm	Gateway & appointments
	Alford outreach at the Library	Appointment only: phone 01754 765608 for an appointment
	Louth 9:30 - 12:30	Gateway & appointments
	Mablethorpe bureau	Appointments ~ specialist advisors
Thursday	Skegness 4:30 – 6:30pm	General surgery
	Horncastle outreach – micro-advice centre	Appointment only: phone 01754 765608 for an appointment
	Skegness 9:30 – 1:00 pm	Appointment only
	Shelter - Skegness	
	Louth bureau	Appointments ~ specialist advisors
Friday	Louth 9:30 - 12:30	Gateway & appointments
	Alford outreach at the Community Church	Appointment only: phone 01754 765608 for an appointment
telephone	Lincolnshire Telephone Advice Service	throughout week – gateway & telephone appointments

FINANCIAL INCLUSION PILOT INITIATIVE – LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The initiative started in June '09 and Russell Crane was recruited from our volunteers and started on 17th August as outreach advisor and trainer. The aim of the initiative is to reach people who need help with financial capability – the biggest difficulty being to persuade them to engage and take up the help offered. LCC are keen that we find innovative ways to engage with the rural community in particular.

Our response is to open micro-advice centres in the market towns where currently there is no bureau. Our aim is to offer information (provided by trained volunteer Information Assistants) and advice in the micro-advice centre (by appointment with our advisor). The first micro-advice centre is due to open in Horncastle shortly; it is being heavily marketed to increase people's awareness of the service and partnerships are being developed with Sure Start Children's Centres, the Credit Union and other agencies. An outreach service at Spilsby has also commenced, with an appointment-based service taking place every Monday at the VAEL offices.

WHAT IS FINANCIAL CAPABILITY?

Financial capability is about ensuring everyone has the opportunity to access the financial services products needed to participate fully in modern day society.

This includes: -

- access to affordable and responsible credit
- access to an appropriate bank account
- access to face-to-face debt advice
- access to basic home contents insurance
- access to savings facilities

East Lindsey Citizens Advice Bureau is actively engaging with the national financial capability agenda through the above LCC-funded initiative, we will be engaging with the local communities and offering training packages covering personal budgeting, banking, saving etc.

We are also developing a joint-working partnership with the recently amalgamated Lincolnshire Credit Union to enable more members of the community to access the benefits of saving and borrowing with the credit union.

PREMISES UPDATE

SKEGNESS BUREAU & OFFICES

The big news here is that, having been given the go ahead from the trustee board on 23rd July, work commenced on the premises on 5th September. A reception area has been formed in the extended entrance lobby, interview rooms and waiting room improved, project staff accommodated and a new training room created.

The final conversions should be complete by mid-October; we propose having a small open morning to celebrate the improvements and raise awareness of the service. The opening hours of the bureau have extended on Tuesday to 2:30pm and we are recruiting volunteers to act as receptionists so that the office can be open on a regular, daily basis.

Staff, volunteers, clients and contractors have shown fantastic patience and understanding during the refurbishment, managing to keep the bureau open throughout. Ironically we had some of the busy weeks on record but managed to see everybody. *Thank you to you all.*

LOUTH BUREAU & DISTRICT OFFICE

At the same trustee board meeting the go-ahead was given for Louth Bureau to move to Meridian House from its current location in Queen Street. At the time of writing, Heads of Terms have been approved with ELDC for Units 1 and 2, Meridian House and the leases prepared for signature.

Louth Bureau will move into Unit 1 and the District Office located in Unit 2. Unit 1 is ideally placed on the ground floor with excellent access from the public entrance lobby. It comprises of 106 square metres currently divided into 4 areas; architect's plans have been drawn up following consultation with the current bureau personnel, utilising the existing divisions and creating five interview rooms, a very large advisor's room (30 sqm) and a waiting room and reception area which should be large enough to include an Information Access Point.

As with Skegness, the aim will be to recruit volunteers as receptionists so that the unit can be open as much as possible during the week for the public to access information as well as the advertised advice sessions.

This will be a flagship bureau and we aim to celebrate it as such. Substantial local funding has already been raised towards the alterations which will help offset the costs significantly.

An application for change of use has been made for Unit 1 and work will commence once this has been agreed. The work required is much more straightforward than at Skegness and should be completed in a relatively short time.

Mablethorpe Bureau

The Mablethorpe Bureau is now open on Tuesdays as well as Mondays with a drop-in advice service.

Plans are in place to move to new rooms within the InterAgency Centre which will facilitate the introduction of gateway interviewing there.

Volunteer Recruitment and Training

Volunteer Introduction Day

An Introduction Day was held at North Shore Hotel on 14th September attended by potential volunteers, trustees, staff and current volunteers as well as representatives from other organisations such as VAEL.

This was a new style of recruitment/open day and it proved very successful. Feedback from the new volunteers has indicated that they found the 5-minute slots given by staff and volunteers, as well as the opportunity to network, particularly beneficial – it 'told it as it is' and gave them a good insight into the work of the bureau.

Following two weeks of interviewing, the new volunteers are ready to join the next training course starting in the week commencing 5th October.

Recruitment

New volunteers come through many different routes; recently a poster campaign in Louth Bureau waiting room and throughout the town centre was very successful and attracted a number of potential volunteers.

Three potential volunteers came forward as a result of a CAB stand in Mablethorpe celebrating the National Older People's Day.

Information Assistants

Information Assistants (I.A.) undergo an 8-week training programme to help them guide members of the public around AdviceGuide and through the myriad information leaflets in the public domain. They do not offer advice, but can refer people to specific advisors and organise appointments for clients.

Six volunteers have recently been trained as I.A.'s for the new Micro-Advice Centre in Horncastle; more volunteers are on the waiting list.

Citizens Advice: new training programme

Citizens Advice is developing a new modular learning and development training framework to replacement the current Certificate programme to respond to changes in bureaux service delivery and need to be responsive to any future development.

The framework will support all advice and information roles and will be referenced to external qualifications. The aims of the modular framework are:

- to create flexible training programmes for everyone who deals with clients in the bureau
- to enable individual bureaux to adapt and develop roles for volunteers to suit their own needs.
- To ensure as far as possible that Citizens Advice competences and learning programmes are compatible with the forthcoming legal advice NVQ so that bureaux are ready for any funding opportunities that arise.

The new framework will be ready for bureau use by April 2010.

Expansion of services

INCREASE IN DEMAND

Skegness Bureau has been running a surgery on Thursday evenings for some months, and it has become increasingly popular especially for the migrant community. Consequently, the bureau has recruited two more interpreters who provide support for that session and also attend case worker appointments as needed for interpreting.

SKEGNESS BUREAU – EXTENSION OF TUESDAY OPENING

An additional six trainee advisers in Skegness completed their certificate course in July and this has enabled the bureau to extend Tuesday opening times until 2.30 pm.

In addition, Skegness-based volunteer advisers travel to Mablethorpe to help out on Monday mornings.

MABLETHORPE BUREAU – OPEN ON TUESDAYS TOO

Mablethorpe Bureau is open on both Monday and Tuesday mornings following additional funding through the Additional Hours of Advice Fund.

OVERVIEW OF THE NEW OUTREACH SERVICES:

East Lindsey CAB is now able to offer outreach advice services at various locations throughout the district, following receipt of various different strands of funding. Negotiations are on-going to ensure continuation of the funding streams beyond the financial year end.

ALFORD OUTREACH

A twice-weekly outreach service is now available in Alford town centre. Appointments are available through the Appointment Line (01754 765608) for the Library (Wednesdays) and the Community Church (Fridays). *Funded through the Additional Hours of Advice Fund; agreed to 31.03.2010*

CHAPEL-ST-LEONARDS OUTREACH

Since the beginning of the year Skegness bureau has been running a monthly outreach at the Chapel-St-Leonards Access Centre. This arrangement has been formalised and the outreach is held every second Thursday of the month from 9.30am -11.30am. *Funded (from next quarter) by Lloyds TSB Foundation Trust; agreed to 31.03.2012*

SUTTON-ON-SEA & INGOLDMELLS OUTREACHES

Outreaches will shortly open in Sutton-on-Sea and Ingoldmells; *Funded by Lloyds TSB Foundation Trust; agreed to 31.03.2012*

HORNCastle & SPILSBY OUTREACHES

Micro-Advice Centres and outreach services will shortly be available in Horncastle and Spilsby. *Funded by LCC Financial Inclusion; agreed to 31.03.2010*

advice in the bureau

Clients' issues dealt with between July-Sept; compared to the previous quarter.

The main issues continue to increase with substantial increases in the number of clients bringing benefits, financial and legal issues to the bureaux.

The table below gives the analysis between individual bureau, the telephone advice service and some of the projects.

Quarter 2: July – Sept 09	Louth	Mablethorpe	Skegness	Telephony	LSC	PCT Income Maximisation	TOTAL Q2 July-Sept 09	TOTAL Q1 April-Jun 09	Increase (decrease)
Benefits	282	235	501	7	93	85	1,203	946	27%
Debt	285	176	439	8	2	1	911	853	7%
Employment	82	46	84	17			229	210	9%
Housing	85	39	79	7	1	4	215	201	7%
Legal	52	65	50	4			171	121	41%
Relationships	61	38	34	5	2	1	141	120	18%
Finance	44	36	39				119	87	37%
Signposting	72	23	3	15			113	66	71%
Consumer	40	26	40	5			111	100	11%
Tax	12	6	22				40	37	8%
Utilities	16	10	13				39	44	-11%
Travel	12	11	9		1		33	35	-6%
Health	10	5	11	1		1	28	34	-18%
Immigration	5	4	12				21	21	0%
Other	14	0	2	1			17	10	70%
Education	3	2	9				14	7	100%
	1,075	722	1,347	70	99	92	3,405	2,892	

Clients starting a new enquiry in the period: Quarter 2

Outlet	2009-10						2008-09		
	Total New Clients	% New	Existing Clients	% Existing	TOTAL	increase	Total New Clients	Existing Clients	TOTAL
Louth	300	79%	82	21%	382	(9%)	333	86	419
Mablethorpe	148	81%	34	19%	182	42%	94	34	128
Skegness	378	72%	150	28%	528	21%	323	113	436
PCT Income Max	35	69%	16	31%	51	2%	50	0	50
Telephony	64	98%	1	2%	65	-			
	925	77%	283	23%	1,208		749	180	929
Increase on prev yr	16%		21%		17%				

WELFARE BENEFITS AWARDS & £ INCOME GENERATED

Beneficiaries recorded:	2009-10		2008-09			
	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	No of claimants		No of claimants			
DLA Care – High	2	7	4	5	6	6
DLA Care – Middle	4	10	7	5	7	6
DLA Care – Low	10	16	5	10	10	14
DLA Mobility – High	6	21	10	14	13	14
DLA Mobility – Low	5	12	4	9	7	8
AA – High	2	4	2	11	16	14
AA – Low	1	3	2	9	13	7
	30	73	34	63	72	69

Welfare benefits income generated for clients following advice: -

	2009-10		2008-09				Annualised total
	Q1 + Q2 Estimated	Annualised total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
			Estimated total of quarterly income generated				
DLA Care - High	7,316	32,924	2,149	4,355	2,902	4,064	72,644
DLA Care - Middle	9,797	34,289	2,516	2,915	3,303	2,332	57,686
DLA Care - Low	9,698	25,215	712	2,308	1,230	1,999	35,828
DLA Mobility High	15,319	68,936	3,749	8,509	4,656	6,278	123,071
DLA Mobility Low	4,849	16,487	570	2,077	692	1,461	25,709
AA - High	7,316	21,949	1,075	9,581	6,673	9,580	149,552
AA - Low	2,449	9,797	719	5,247	4,273	2,914	72,121
Total other benefits: (CP, CA, WTC, IB, CTB, HB, SDP, PC DHP etc)							
	35,368	64,772	9,260	17,286	15,135	13,300	302,602
Sub-total:	84,080	274,369	20,750	52,277	38,864	41,928	839,213
Total backdated monies paid over quarter							
	91,943	152,230	75,450	22,074	73,102	75,508	246,134
Estimated Income from all Benefit Claims inc backdating:							
TOTAL ESTIMATED	176,024	426,599	96,199	74,351	111,966	117,436	1,085,347

Other News in brief

Additional Hours of Advice (AHA) Initiative

The bureau received substantial funding for this initiative which has enabled Mablethorpe bureau to be open for a second day (Tuesdays) and for a weekly outreach advice session in Alford, operating from the Library in the market square.

Uptake of the service has been surprisingly slow in Alford, despite the recognised need in the town. We are pleased to have been able to arrange an extra venue for Fridays at Alford Community Church at 47, West Street.

Substantial extra marketing has been undertaken throughout the town and house-to-house, with flyers designed and printed with the assistance of ELDC. As a result, uptake of the service is steadily increasing.

PCT Income Maximisation Initiative

The Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust-funded 'Income Maximisation Initiative' included funding for 1.5 caseworker posts. Donna Gaughan, in the full-time position has reduced her hours to 30 per week to enable her to engage in further post-graduate training.

The remaining caseworker half-post has been re-advertised and we anticipate a new caseworker being in post by the end of October.

Through this initiative we are able to offer welfare benefits advice to older people and vulnerable adults throughout the district.

County Court helpdesk

The court has changed its day for Skegness to Fridays. Julie Barton continues to attend and is working closely with Chris Swallow (ELDC Floating Support Worker) to assist people facing repossession proceedings.

Local Businesses - Closures

Skegness bureau was invited to address the employees of **Minibea**, the largest employer in Skegness, before the factory closed and the staff made redundant. Two meetings were held on 24 and 25 March, and several employees followed up by attending the bureau.

The impact on employees caused by the imminent closure of **Finnveden** in Alford is being addressed by Peter Golob and Hilary Barnes. The company recently announced that it was likely to close early next year due to the current national economic climate.

Annette Dobson's fantastic sky dive raising funds for East Lindsey Citizens Advice Bureau and celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Citizens Advice service in Britain.

As a result, she has raised £821.50 for the Bureau, which is absolutely fantastic!!

**If you haven't already pledged any money and would like to, you can still do so by going to the link:
www.bmycharity.com/louthcab**

