

Advice Leeds

Terms of Reference – September 2009

Advice Leeds

Advice Leeds is a partnership of not for profit advice providers, advocacy groups and funding bodies in Leeds.

Purpose

The main purpose of Advice Leeds is to improve access to free and independent advice in the Leeds area and to influence social policy development at local and national levels. We will achieve this by co-ordinating communication, planning, external liaison, joint funding applications and social policy work among Advice Leeds members.

Objectives

- Design and implement an advice strategy for Leeds.
- Improve access to advice by expanding generalist capacity, developing public telephone advice and providing support for information and support workers.
- Secure additional resources for advice provision.
- Monitor and share local data on needs, services and gaps in provision.
- Ensure and improve quality standards by providing training for advocacy/support workers, new volunteer advisers and experienced advisers.
- Submit evidence to influence local/national policies.

Advice Leeds intends to become the first point of contact for funders of advice services, advising on priorities for funding, co-ordinating joint funding applications and ensuring advice is only delivered by quality assured agencies.

Membership

Membership is open to not for profit advice providers, advocacy groups and funding bodies which support the Advice Leeds purpose, objectives and values as described in this document. There will be three tiers of membership:

Full members: Not for profit advice providers that meet nationally recognised quality standards for Legal Advice (Community Legal Service Quality Mark or its equivalent).

Associate members: Not for profit advice providers who currently do not hold nationally recognised quality standards for Legal Advice (Community Legal Service Quality Mark or its equivalent).

Not for profit advocacy/support groups.

Affiliate members: Funding bodies or other organisations that support the purpose, objectives and values of Advice Leeds.

Structure

Every organisation that is a full member of Advice Leeds will be entitled to send a representative to Advice Leeds Partnership Meetings. Attendance of Associate and Other members will be by invitation.

Values

Advice Leeds will establish ways of working that ensure it meets good practice on Access, Diversity and Equality Principles. It will specifically target resources towards the most excluded groups and individuals because they are most likely to have social welfare problems and face the greatest barriers to advice.

Membership of the Advice Leeds partnership will be on the basis of equal rights and responsibilities, mutual respect and recognition of difference as well as similarity of purpose

All members of the Advice Leeds are accountable for their own actions and share the need for integrity, objectivity, openness, honesty and leadership

Membership at 20.7.2009**Full Members**

Leeds CAB
Age Concern Leeds
Burley Lodge Centre Advice Service
Chapelton CAB
Ebor Gardens Advice Centre
Harehills and Chapelton Law Centre
Leeds City Council Welfare Rights Unit
St Vincent's Support Centre
Shelter West Yorkshire

Associate members

DIAL Leeds
GIPSIL
Advocacy Network Leeds
Archway
Racial Equality Commission Leeds