

# Advice Leeds

*Building excellent advice services through partnership*

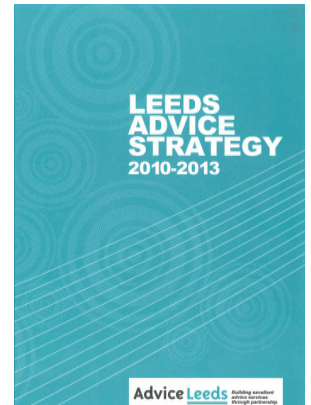
## Newsletter – autumn 2010

Advice Leeds is the partnership of advice providers, advocacy groups & funding bodies in Leeds

### Leeds Advice Strategy Launched

Advice Leeds held its first event on the 14 October to launch the Leeds Advice Strategy. The partnership, which now has 19 members, has produced the strategy setting out the aims for advice services in Leeds from 2010- 2013.

The strategy points the way forward for advice services to work together to maintain services during difficult financial times; develop coordinated advice services targeted to those in most need and improve the quality of advice-giving.



### Volunteers celebrated

Advice Leeds teamed up with Leeds Year of Volunteering to celebrate the amazing contribution volunteers make to advice services in Leeds.

Currently over 200 volunteers work in advice services in Leeds, helping deal with enquiries from over 42,000 people a year. Without the commitment and skills of this vast team advice services would not be able to deliver the level and range of advice currently available and many people would not be able to get help with the issues they face.

Cllr Lucinda Yeadon made presentations to 14 from volunteers DIAL Leeds, Leeds CAB and Chapeltown CAB at the launch event recognising their achievements

**Working together for more quality advice and fair policies**

## The impact of public spending cuts

The advice sector is facing a huge reduction in provision as funding is restrained and reviewed. The long-term future of a number of projects across Leeds is uncertain as current funding for many key advice services in the city is due to end in March 2011. These include projects providing face to face advice, jointly delivered by 3 advice services. More than 5,000 people a year in Leeds could be denied access to crucial help on these issues if all the anticipated cuts come in.

- The Children's Centres Advice Service funded by the Early Years Service that provides advice in 32 of the city's Children's Centres has helped over 1,000 families a year and increased their incomes by over £1.5 million a year and handled over £4m debt.
- Debt Advice funded by the national Financial Inclusion Fund that provides specialist debt advice at venues across the city has helped 2,200 people per year to deal with debt problems amounting to over £20 million in value.

In addition other grants from Leeds City Council are also likely to be reduced as a result of funding reductions to local authorities announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review.

However, there are some successes and a consortium of Advice Leeds partners, Leeds CAB, Leeds Law Centre and Henry Hyams solicitors have been awarded a 3-year contract to provide debt, housing and welfare benefits advice.

Advice Leeds partners are working together to secure funding to maintain advice services and are looking at ways to offer advice to as many people as possible with reduced resources.

### Spearheading NVQ adviser training

Advice Leeds is one of the first NVQ assessment centres in England training advice workers for NVQ's in Legal Advice.

Since January 2010 over 50 new volunteer advice workers have begun the NVQ training programme. The training programme will provide more than 150 additional volunteer advice workers over the next 3 years.

As well as increasing the capacity of local advice services, the aim of the accredited training project is to secure new funding for training volunteers.

### Joint telephone advice service on way

Advice Leeds partners are developing joint telephone services and referral systems.

From January Leeds CAB and Chapeltown CAB will be working together to increase telephone advice. Clients will be able to access Citizens Advice Bureau in the city via a single telephone number.

As part of these improvements the Bureaux are working with other Advice Leeds partners to create electronic systems to book appointments between agencies, making access to advice easier and agencies more efficient.

For further information, please contact

[www.adviceleeds.org.uk](http://www.adviceleeds.org.uk)

0113 2021830

**Working together for more quality advice and fair policies**