

Service Development Plan

Progress and next steps

April 2018



Sheffield Citizens Advice Sheffield is Sheffield's leading provider of advice and advocacy services. Our advice services help over 23,000 people a year, and our advocacy services help over 3,000 people a year. We are here for all citizens, and make sure that our services are available to the people and communities that need them most.

We want to be one of the best.

We want everyone who asks for our help to feel welcome and at ease. We want our services to be available to everyone who needs them, and to make sure our services are targeted as those in greatest need. We want to reach out to vulnerable and excluded communities.

We want our services to be easy to access, and our staff and volunteers to be very approachable and responsive. We want to reduce waiting times, for the help we give to be correct, and to get the right balance between providing information and brief interventions and providing in-depth advice and support. We want to help people to overcome underlying problems. We want to integrate our services with the other services people use.

We want our staff and volunteers to be knowledgeable and skilled, and to be happy and feel appreciated and valued.

We want to be known for providing great service and exceeding expectations, and for providing value for money. We want to be innovative and adaptive, courageous and imaginative. We want to bring about change for the better. We want to convey the passion we feel about what we do – helping people, tackling poverty and improving social justice.

The need for our services is growing. The impact of austerity and welfare reform, of growing poverty and inequality, and the growth of precarious low paid work for many all mean that more people need our help.

We are focusing on six priorities:

- Ensure our advice services meet changing needs
- Strengthen the Sheffield Advocacy Hub
- Support and develop our paid staff and volunteers
- Ensure our staff and volunteers have the resources they need
- Develop new services and secure new funding
- Campaign for better public policy

We also have seven supporting priorities:

- Performance improvement
- Good governance
- Effective quality assurance
- Robust financial management
- Better communication and engagement
- Effective communication and information systems
- Strengthen public support for our work

Our Service Development and Delivery Plan for 2016-2019 was agreed in 2016.

Our “plan on a page” (overleaf) summarises our purpose, ambition and priorities. We have made some changes to our priorities, to reflect the progress we have made and the new challenges we face, for example the full implementation of Universal Credit in Sheffield later this year.

We have made good progress in the past year. We need to maintain the pace of improvement and change in the year ahead. In this short document we summarise the progress we have made, and the next steps that we plan to take during 2018/19. This plan is complemented by three companion documents – our Service Delivery Plan, our Workforce Training and Development Plan, and our Income and Fundraising Plan.

Citizens Sheffield Advice

Service development plan

Our purpose and ambition

We tackle poverty and campaign for social justice

We help people, families and communities by:

- providing advice and advocacy to help people solve the problems they face
- campaigning to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives

We aim to be one of the best advice and advocacy services in the country, and one of the leading voluntary and community sector organisations in Sheffield.

Our strategy is to do six big things:

Ensure our advice services meet changing needs

Strengthen the Sheffield Advocacy Hub

Support and develop our paid staff and volunteers

Ensure our staff and volunteers have the resources they need

Develop new services and secure new funding

Campaign for better public policy

Our strategy will be supported by:

Performance improvement

Good governance

Effective quality assurance

Robust financial management

Better communication and engagement

Effective communication and information systems

Strengthen public support for our work

Strategic priorities

	What progress have we made?	What are our next steps?
Ensure our advice services meet changing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped over 23,000 people with almost 60,000 issues • Answered 8,500 Adviceline calls • Made 1,320 “call backs” service to respond to requests for help and respnded to over 1,050 email requests for help • Improved our web chat service • Opened our Skype service for Deaf people who use BSL • Streamlined our opening hours for drop in access to advice • Introduced new advice policies and procedures • Implemented Casebook • Introduced new services with St Luke’s, Disability Sheffield / MS Society and St Wilfrid’s Centre • Transferred our advice service for refugees and asylum seekers to the new Sanctuary premises • Begun providing advice as part of the new Work and Health programme • Developed accessible online material, for example Deaf Advice BSL video, links to relevant existing content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek new ways to meet the unmet demand for Advice Line • Improve our appointments service and system • Strengthen welfare benefits advice by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preparing for the roll out of Universal Credit ○ Improving our support for ill and disabled claimants ○ Improving how we support people with appeals • Continuing to work with partners to provide advice for priority groups of people • Expand our contribution to Pension Wise • Ensure that our debt service is of a very high standard • Ensure we meet Consumer Service targets
Strengthen the Sheffield Advocacy Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened the Sheffield Advocacy Hub • Transferred staff and services from VoiceAbility • Supported 13 staff to work towards gaining full Diplomas in Independent Advocacy • Developed a new website for the Sheffield Advocacy Hub • Sustained the delivery of all other advocacy services • Consulted services users about the generic mental health advocacy service • Introduced new arrangements for the generic service • Developed Easy Read materials in advocacy services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide the Sheffield Advocacy Hub in accordance with contractual requirements • Improve the Sheffield Advocacy Hub website • Introduce a new portal for advocacy referrals • Strengthen the supervision for all advocates • Introduce the improvements we have agreed to make to our generic advocacy service • Consider introducing a group advocacy service

<p>Support and develop our paid staff and volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented pension auto-enrolment • Encouraged staff to make pension contributions • Relocated our training and development team to Furnival House • Implemented our new learning and assessment arrangements for volunteers • Offered professional development, for example about safeguarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree and implement our workforce training and development plan • Restore, from 1 October 2018, the 5% pay cut • Review and improve our volunteering offer and arrangements • Continue to encourage staff to join the pension scheme • Review and improve our health and welfare provision for paid staff
<p>Ensure our staff and volunteers have the resources they need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transferred our advice service in Parson Cross to the Learning Zone • Transferred our advice service in Darnall to the Darnall Health Centre • Improved staff facilities at our London Road office • Closed our office at Proctor Place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure we make optimum use of our new premises at Furnival House • Review and improve premises for the Sheffield Advocacy Hub • Ensure that we make best use of our other premises • Seek better premises where possible • Ensure that we maintain and where possible improve our premises • Continue to improve our ICT
<p>Develop new services and secure new funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured new funding for advice services with St Luke's, Disability Sheffield / MS Society and St Wilfrid's Centre • Secured funding to provide advice as part of the new Work and Health programme • Secured Big Lottery funding for an improved service for Deaf people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement our income generation strategy
<p>Campaign for better public policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published our report about Personal Independence Payment and the re-assessment of Disability Living Allowance claimants • Published our report on Insecure Employment • Contributed to our national campaign for changes to Universal Credit • Played a key role in securing Personal Independence Payment for up to 220,000 people • Worked with Healthwatch Sheffield to publish Not Equal, a report about the experiences of Deaf people accessing health and care services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to press for improvements to Universal Credit • Continue to press for improvements to benefits for disabled people • Strengthen our partnership with Healthwatch Sheffield • Research the extent to which "work always pays" • Undertake strategic casework as the opportunity arises • Press for public bodies to meet their Equality Act obligations

Supporting priorities

	What progress have we made?	What are our next steps?
Performance improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensured all advice performance requirements and targets are met • Implemented a turnaround plan to improve performance of the consumer service • Strengthened performance improvement arrangements for key services • Published a mid-year impact briefing • Published a mid-year briefing about the main issues people ask for advice about • Developed a plan to ensure we make best use of Casebook reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all performance requirements and targets are met • Complete the turnaround plan for consumer services • Publish an annual impact report
Good governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured a good outcome to our annual leadership self-assessment • Continued to improve Board and committee meetings • Introduced the role of “trustee champions” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain good governance • Secure a good outcome to our annual leadership self assessment • Appoint a new trustee to lead on finance
Effective quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained our effective use of all current quality assurance processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the new national client survey • Undertake a further local client survey, focused on key outcome and impact issues
Robust financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained very close oversight of our in-year financial position • Implemented all the measures included in our budget • Implemented further measures to improve our financial position • Secured our grant aid from Sheffield City Council for 2018/19 • Secured other key funding for 2018/19 • Met our “earned income” targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain very close oversight of our in-year financial position • Implement all the measures included in our budget

<p>Better communication and engagement</p>	<p>Internal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued monthly staff briefings • Undertaken in depth consultation with staff about measures to manage our finances • Maintained liaison with Unite the Union • Undertaken trustees and management team visits to numerous services <p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued briefings about how we help people, the issues about which people ask for our help • Attended all the local area partnership councilors meetings • Contributed to numerous other events and forums 	<p>Internal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue monthly staff briefings • Maintain liaison with Unite the Union • Introduce a Joint Consultative Committee for all employees • Undertaken trustees and management team visits to numerous services <p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issued a comprehensive impact report for 2017/18 • Continue to contribute to the Sheffield Partnership Board, Sheffield Fair City campaign and other city wide strategies
<p>Effective communication and information systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued our rolling replacement programme for IT hardware • Implemented Casebook • Improved our use of Lamplight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement our ICT action plan for 2018/19
<p>Strengthen public support for our work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained public support for our services • Secured a small number of donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new “narrative” to describe our contribution to the city • Secure the opportunity to speak at a wide range of events and forums • Invite people and organisations to support our work, including financially