

# Executive Report to Scrutiny

Scrutiny Commission:

Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement

Date of scrutiny committee: 13th March 2014

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**Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau  
(Community Legal Advice Service)**

Lead director: Director of Care Services & Commissioning

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All wards
- Report author: Akbar Sameja
- Author contact details: 37 2356
- Report version number: 1.0

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 The report attached as Appendix 1 from Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) provides an update on the progress and development of the community legal advice service.

### 2. Main report:

- 2.1 The contract for the provision of Community Legal Advice Services was awarded to CAB as their tender was the most economically advantageous.
- 2.2 The service commenced on 1st April 2013 for an initial period of three years (to 31st March 2016), with the provision to extend for a further two years.
- 2.3 The contract value is £370,700 per annum.
- 2.4 The contract requires CAB to provide 12,000 tier 1 (Assisted Information and Signposting) cases per year, 6,600 tier 2 (General Advice and General Advice with Casework) cases per year, 600 tier 3 (Specialist Advice) cases per year, and 10 Outreach sessions per week.
- 2.5 CAB is required to submit quarterly performance monitoring data to the Council. Additionally, the Council's Contracts & Assurance Manager meets with CAB monthly, to monitor progress with the implementation and continued development of the service. CAB's Operations Director produces a qualitative report for these meetings.
- 2.6 Performance data for the first three quarters (April-December 2013) showed that the provider had supported 8,906 cases for Tier 1, 3,284 cases for Tier 2, and 497 cases for Tier 3.
- 2.7 There has been some under-performance for Tier 2, but the level of service has improved significantly, and in quarter 3 the service achieved 88.5% of its quarterly target. CAB has a clear plan for increasing access to this level of the service, and it is anticipated that the move to new offices will further increase capacity through an increase in the number of the contact centre and interview rooms.
- 2.8 The service is being used across the city covering a range of enquiry types, with a prevalence of welfare benefits, debt, employment, housing and family issues.

- 2.9 Over the first three quarters, CAB has assisted clients from every ward in Leicester. The top five wards from which clients come are were: Spinney Hill, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields, New Parks, Stoneygate, and Abbey.
- 2.10 The Outreach service commenced in September 2013, providing one half-day session per week in ten of the priority wards of Leicester, delivered by Age UK. Numbers using the outreach service thus far have been disappointing, and this is an area where further development is required.
- 2.11 The attached report (Appendix 1) from CAB sets out the current provision of community legal advice service, with particular reference to the following:
- Update on the current figures of cases
  - Needs analysis
  - Update on progress of the outreach services
  - How are the areas for outreach services identified?
  - Progress on identifying and training 'problem noticers'
  - Update on the move to new premises
  - General communications update

### **3. Details of Scrutiny**

3.1 This report has not been scrutinised

### **4. Financial, legal and other implications**

#### 4.1 Financial implications

4.1.1 There are no financial implications.

Rohit Rughani  
Principal Accountant  
Ext 37 – 4003

#### 4.2 Legal implications

4.2.1 There are no legal implications associated with this Report

Greg Surtees,  
Legal Services,  
37 1421

### 4.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

4.3.1 No Climate Change implications

### 4.4 Equality Impact Assessment

4.4.1 N/A – the service is delivered to people from all communities and equality strands.

### 4.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

4.5.1 No other implications

## **5. Background information and other papers:**

## **6. Summary of appendices:**

Appendix 1 – briefing report from Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau

## Appendix 1

### Leicester Community Legal Advice Service

#### Briefing for Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission Report, March 2014 Meeting

Following our report to the Scrutiny Commission in September 2013, we have been asked to provide an update on the service.

#### Current Figures

Our statistics for the first three quarters (April to December 2013) are below.

Tier	Target	Number of Clients Seen
<b>1 – assisted information</b>		2,791 – Q1
		3,208 – Q2
		2,907 – Q3
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,000 (12,000 pa)</b>	<b>8,906</b>
<b>2 – generalist advice</b>		804 – Q1
		1,019 – Q2
		1,461 – Q3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,950 (6,600 pa)</b>	<b>3,284</b>
<b>3 – specialist advice</b>		115 – Q1
		174 – Q2
		208 – Q3
<b>Total</b>	<b>450 (600 pa)</b>	<b>497</b>

The number of clients seen at Tier 1 is very near to the target we set (the tender did not set a target for the number of clients to be seen at Tier 1). The number of clients given Tier 3 casework and representation has exceeded the targets set. We have not achieved the required numbers at Tier 2, but this has been an upward trend. We have not achieved the number required for a several reasons; the short lead time from award to commencement left us with no time to train the additional volunteers needed. This is now on course, and numbers will increase now we have on-site training facilities (see Premises below). In addition, our previous office had 5 interview rooms and limited back office space. This proved insufficient to deal with the demand. We have now moved and anticipate the extra space will enable an increase in performance. Further, a delay in identifying the outreach locations meant that service was not provided until September.

We have implemented a clear plan to increase numbers of clients seen: volunteers and staff from other LeicesterShire CAB offices have been asked to give us additional time in the city, project workers have increased their targets, increased numbers of volunteers have been recruited and trained, the contact centre is to expand, email advice has expanded, and new premises were identified.

## Outcomes

As an example of achievements so far, in quarter 3, £68,158 of outcomes (annualised amount) have been recorded in the bureau (not including SHARP/Age UK) for Leicester clients against the following descriptors:

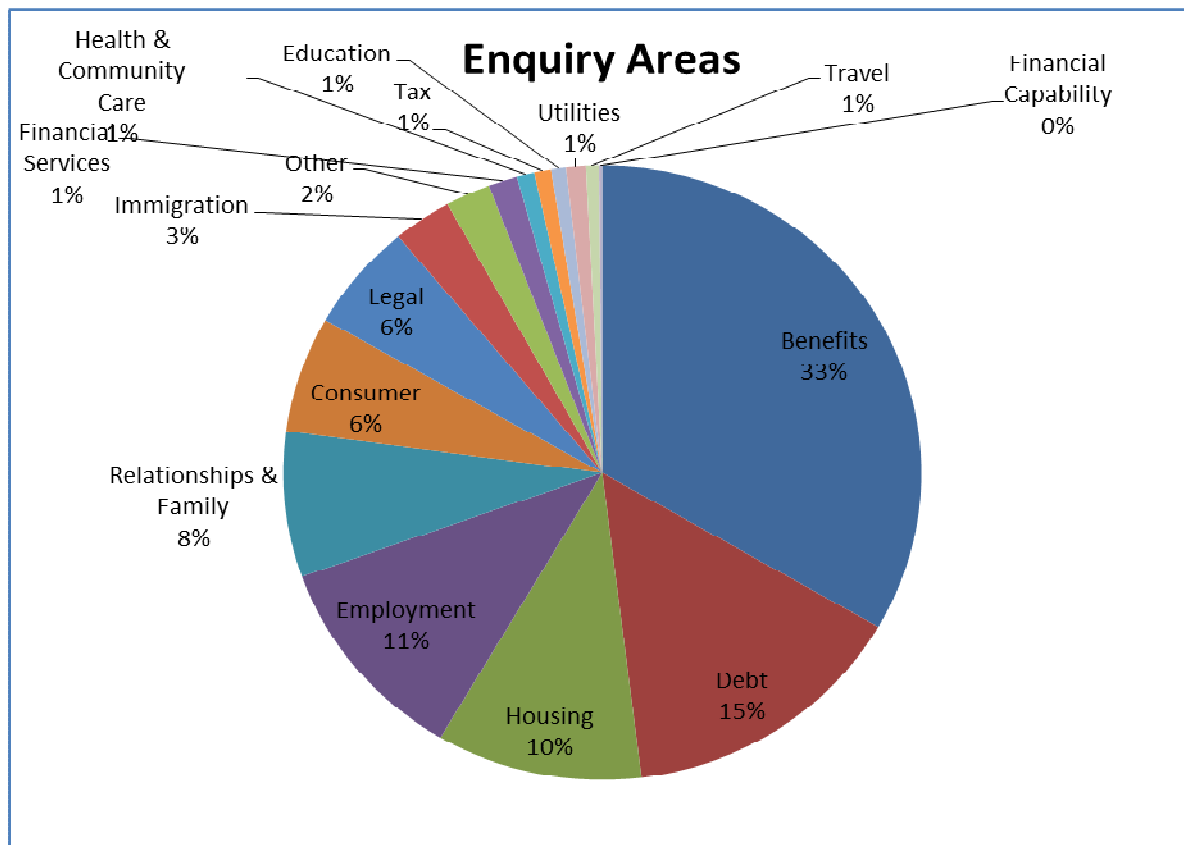
Benefit overpayment reduced/not recovered	£1,027
Benefit gain - council tax/welfare support	£2,987
Benefit gain - new award/increase	£36,093
Benefit gain – money back into payment	£6,511
Benefit gain – social fund	£300
Debt – write off	£721
Debt - repayment negotiated	£345
Charitable payment	£7,770
Debt - DRO	£1,806
Blue Badge	£350
Other gain	£12,054

Our employment specialist has also reported awards totalling £14,569.00 plus a client reinstated to their job with a salary of £16,000 per annum.

## Needs Analysis

### By Advice Area

The following graph gives a breakdown of the enquiry areas with which we have been presented.



Welfare benefits continue to be our largest area of work, probably reflecting the extent and impact of current benefit changes. Debt is lower than anticipated, but might be masked by our recording system whereby enquiries are categorised by the initial presenting problem (i.e. a person who seeks help for a benefit problem which has caused a debt problem would only be recorded as benefit or debt, although advice would be provided for both issues).

Within the category of welfare benefits advice we are seeing increasing numbers of clients needing help with forms and applications (including on-line applications), handling the new appeal process (reconsiderations are now mandatory prior to appeal), and coping with the impacts of sanctions or disputing the decision to apply a sanction.

One of the most troubling areas of growth is the increase in the number of clients we are referring for food parcels and hot meals. However we are pleased to be one of the pilot organisations chosen by the Council's Community Support Team to be able to distribute Co-op vouchers for food or fuel under the terms of the Community Support Grant scheme. We have been doing this since December and have made 9 awards so far. All 9 families have been in hardship as a result of a delay in benefit decisions; none have been awarded a Short Term Benefit Advance by the DWP – the fund that is supposed to be used in these cases.

We have also secured a small hardship fund from a Church and a Rotary Club. This has been used to support people in severe hardship who are ineligible for the Community Support Grant.

There has been an increase in the proportion of clients seeking help with family law since the changes to civil legal aid in April 2013. We are seeing more people unable to receive legal aid help for court action in relation to divorce or child custody/access issues. Unfortunately this is not one of the areas in which we are able to provide Tier 3 help.

#### *By Demographic - Disability*

Our demographic data shows that 26% of clients identify as having a disability or long term health problem (52% identify as having no health problems and 22% do not disclose anything about their health). Nationally about 17% of UK residents describe themselves as disabled, which suggests people with disabilities have a disproportionate need for our service. This is to be expected given the ongoing changes to sickness and disability benefits.

#### *By Demographic - Age*

The majority of our clients are of working age (around 70%), with around 20% being over 65. Given that Leicester is a young city, we need to do more to market the service to young adults. Only 10% of our clients are under 24. We

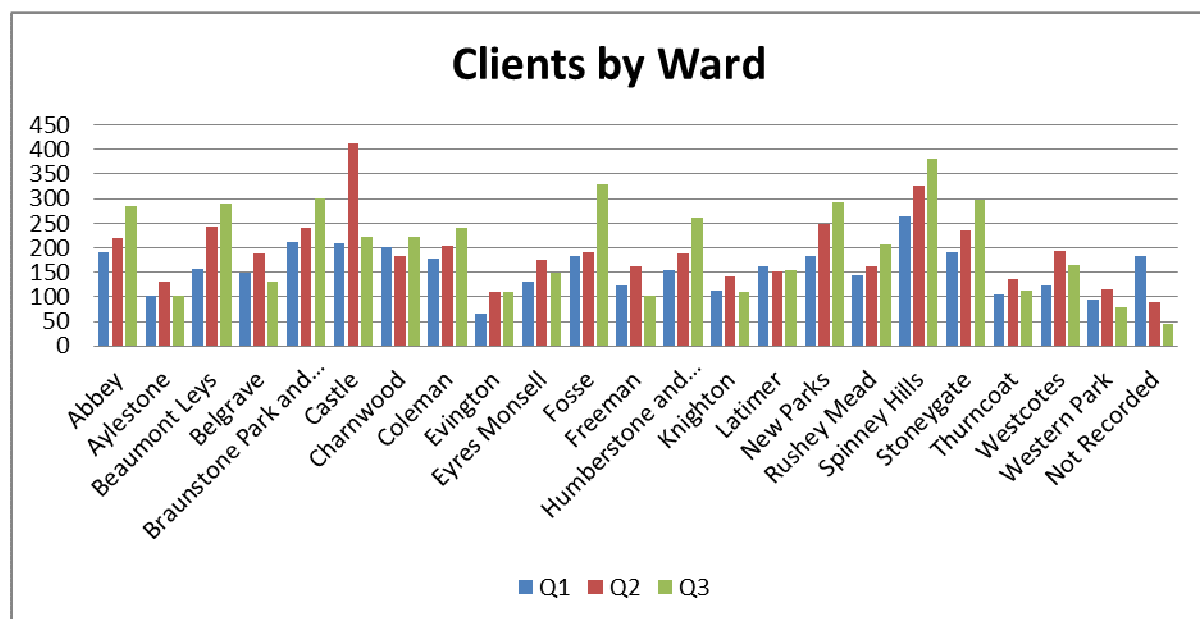
are expanding our social media presence and online offering to do more to appeal to this age group.

### By Demographic - Ethnicity

Our biggest single group of clients identify as White – British. The next largest groups identify as Asian or British Asian – Indian and Black – African. Around 10% of clients do not disclose their ethnicity.

### By Location

The graph below shows demand across the city:



### Outreach Delivery

The outreach sessions in the 10 priority wards commenced in September 2013. This comprises 10 half day sessions per week, one in each ward. In Braunstone & Rowley Fields, Humberstone & Hamilton and Spinney Hills the outreach takes place at alternating venues.

The outreach is delivered by Age UK on a sub-contract basis. Their workers are able to see anyone of any age.

258 people have been seen at outreach. We are currently encouraging people to book appointments for outreach by contacting the city centre office, through councillor referral or by using our contact centre phone or email, but there is some facility for drop-in. We hope to expand that by providing volunteers to increase the number of people who can be seen.

This is the current list of locations, times and venues:



Braunstone/Rowley Fields	Brite Centre	Alt. Mon 9.30 - 12.30
	Oak Centre	Alt. Mon 9.30 - 12.30
Spinney Hills	Wesley Hall	Alt. Tues 9.30 - 12.30
	St Matthews TARA	Alt. Tues 9.30 - 12.30
New parks	New Parks Library	Wed 2pm - 5pm
Beaumont Leys	Beaumont Leys library	Tues 2 - 5pm
Abbey	Tudor Centre	Tues 9.30 - 12.30
Stoneygate	Open Hands	Thurs 9.30 - 12.30
Humberstone and Hamilton	Netherhall Community Centre	Alt. Fri 10am - 1pm
	Hamilton Library	Alt. Fri 10am - 1pm
Charnwood and Coleman	St Barnabas Library	Tues 2 - 5pm
Eyres Monsell	Southfields Library	Wed 2 - 5pm
Rushey Mead	Woodbridge Sure Start Centre	Thurs 2 - 5pm

### **How Outreach Locations Were Identified**

Please see attached Appendix A for a briefing note from Nicola Hobbs (Head of Contracts and Assurance) on the needs information for ward locations. Wards were ranked in relation to family cluster, homelessness, health and welfare, and economic activity. From this ranking, the priority wards were identified.

As only ten areas had been agreed in the contract with CAB for outreach, the top ten wards were selected. However, it was agreed that Charnwood

and Coleman could be met by one location which bordered across both wards, and the Castle ward could be met by the main city centre base, therefore, the next ward was selected which was Rushey Mead.

The venues for the outreach sessions were selected following consultation with the Council's Head of Community Services and Head of Libraries and Information Services.

### **Problem Noticer Training**

A flier advertising the problem noticer training (attached at Appendix B to this report) was distributed to councillors in February with a view to running two half day courses on 26<sup>th</sup> of February or 5<sup>th</sup> March.

Social workers have also expressed an interest in the training and will be offered places on the next courses to run.

Other proposed groups to offer the training to include: library staff, the Think Families network, faith leaders, Children Centre staff, and other VCS groups.

### **Premises**

We moved from Apex House to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of 60 Charles Street during the week of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014. The face to face service was closed between Monday-Thursday inclusive but reopened on the Friday. The contact centre was closed between the Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons.

Having moved, we now have 3 additional interview rooms which will increase the number of clients we can see, and extra back office space. This will enable us to increase the size of our contact centre from 12 seats to 20 seats by the end of April 2014, thereby providing an additional 280 hours of telephone assistance per week.

Our new premises also has a dedicated training room, meaning we can increase our volunteer training, offer more training to external organisations, and deliver financial capability workshops to clients.

We are planning an official opening of the new premises for the end of March, and will be inviting council members to lead and attend.

### **Communications**

Following the office move we are now able to order a print run of promotional material. We intend to print leaflets for partners, the council, and other community locations like libraries, police stations, medical facilities, schools and Children's Centres. An electronic copy of our promotional material has been sent to all adult social care providers who have contracts with Leicester City Council, with an offer to meet to discuss our service and

referral pathways. We are currently looking into advertising the service through the Leicester Link magazine.

Following client feedback we have invested in a telephone queue for the contact centre. This means clients can choose to wait if an assessor is not immediately available.

When our outreach sessions began in September, an offer was made to Members for us to visit ward meetings or surgeries to explain the provision. We have so far been invited to speak to ward meetings at Spinney Hills, Rushey Mead, Abbey, Coleman, Thurncourt, and Knighton, and will be attending the Beaumont Leys meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

We attend a range of events with the aim of promoting our service, including Carer's Week, a Think Families event, presentations to service users at Action Deafness and Rethink. We attend the Children and Young People's Forum at VAL and continue to actively participate in the Social Welfare Advice Partnership. We are members of the Advice Leicester Partnership and the City Council's First Contact scheme.

Following the recruitment of a media assistant we have done more media work in the last few months, with the intention of raising the profile of our service with Leicester residents and to highlight the campaigning work we undertake. Recent press coverage has included pieces on payday loans and the increase in rent arrears since the introduction of the under-occupancy penalty. We are also attempting to increase our social media presence through Facebook and Twitter; we were keen participants in the last #CABlive week and tweeted pictures of our office move.

### **Added Value**

We have brought the following additional funding into the city, providing additional services to clients, employment for CAB staff, and volunteering opportunities, for example:

- Macmillan – providing advice and specialist help to people with cancer and their families
- Severn Trent Trust Fund and Big Difference Fund – additional debt advice and access to charitable grants
- Ingeus – provision of benefit, debt and housing advice for people on the Work Programme where these issues are a barrier to them finding work
- Discretionary fund – we have received £800 from a Church and Rotary Club to assist people in hardship

In addition, we provide over 100 people with training and volunteering opportunities. At least 24 of these volunteers have found employment in the last year.

Helen Child  
City Operations Director, LeicesterShire Citizens Advice Bureau  
14 February 2014

## **Model for advice need mapping**

The former Legal Services Commission (LSC) had a national model for mapping advice welfare law needs. Their research demonstrated that certain types of people who would require welfare law advice would experience 'clusters' of different kinds of legal problems. The LSC model identified a number of proxy measures that indicated a need for advice within the cluster. We used the model from the LSC and repopulated it with City data; this enabled the ranking of the advice needs for each cluster in each ward. This modelling was first done for the advice review 11/12 and updated in 2013 for the new service outreach.

In the 2011 advice review, to sense check the model findings we mapped the ward ranks where the model showed welfare advice services need to be delivered, against maps showing wards of high deprivation and maps showing the wards customers were presenting from to the three main city centres based advice providers. This exercise showed a near exact correlation between all three maps. The latter two mapping exercises were used purely for sense checking the data, as the LSC model was based on extensive research and identified advice need indicators are wider than indices of deprivation and also if a ward already had a locally based advice service, they might not present at city centre based one and so not show up as a need in a city based service.

From the model each advice cluster was given a ward rank (this rank was based on the ward ranks of each of the measures within that cluster). The ward ranks of the four clusters were then added together to produce a total score for each ward. The wards were then ranked again according to their total scores to produce an overall ranking for each ward based on the four clusters.

It must be noted whilst some wards are ranked higher in need, all wards across the city have some level of need and their rank is solely in relation to other wards in the city.

It is possible to breakdown the individual cluster rankings for each wards for example if a service wanted to target a specific advice area such as debt/ money advice, you could look at the highest ranking solely in the cluster for Economic Activity. However as the new advice service commissioned covers all areas of advice we took an overall picture of cluster ranking.

## **Clusters and measure**

**Family cluster** – problems with domestic violence, relationship breakdown, children.

*Who's in this cluster?* Lone parents, people living in rented or high density accommodation, long-term sick and disabled people.

*What measures?* *Single persons with dependent children (2011 census), Households with no adult in employment and with dependent children (2011 census) Renting tenures (2011 census), Disability/illness (2011 census), Disability Living Allowance (August 2012)*

**Homelessness** – problems with rented housing, homelessness, unfair treatment by police.

*Who's in this cluster?* Unemployed people, people too ill to work, carers and benefit claimants, people living in rented or high density accommodation, long-term sick and disabled people, young people.

*What measures?* Disability/illness (2011 census), JSA claimants (August 2012), Incapacity benefit claimants (August 2012), Carers (2011 census) DWP claimants (2012) Renting tenures (2011 census), Young persons aged 18-24 (2011 census), Disability Living Allowance Claimants (August 2012)

**Health and Welfare:** problems with benefits, immigration, community care, clinical negligence, mental health.

*Who's in this cluster?* Long-term sick and disabled people, BME communities, people living in rented or high density accommodation.

*What measures?* BME population (2011 census), DLA claimants (August 2012), Renting tenures (2011 census)

**Economic Activity –** problems with money/debt, employment, consumer issues.

*Who's in this cluster?* People living in rented or high density accommodation, lone parents, long-term sick and disabled people.

*What measures?* Long-term unemployed (2011 census), Disability/Illness (2011 census), Renting tenures (2011 census), single persons with dependent children (2011 census), DLA claimants (August, 2012)

## Appendix B

### **Free training for Council Members!**

#### **Problem Identification Training**

LeicesterShire Citizens Advice Bureau are offering you the opportunity to learn more about how you can help your constituents identify and manage some of the problems they face, and how and when to refer them for more specialist help.

The training will

- Give elected members the skills to look further than the client's presenting problem to reveal any underlying issues.
- This approach saves time and resources by getting to the root cause of a problem after one contact
- The client receives a holistic service that really identifies their needs

Content will include

- Possible impacts of benefit changes
- Understanding debt – causes, impact, options
- The hand on the door question – recognising the signs of hidden problems
- How to ask – interviewing skills to uncover them
- What help is available
- How and when to refer

**When:**

**26<sup>th</sup> February – 10am-2pm or 5<sup>th</sup> March – 10am-2pm**

**Where:**

**LeicesterShire CAB's city office - 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 60 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FB**

**Cost: Free to City Council members**

To book a place, contact [Claire.Taylor@leicscab.org.uk](mailto:Claire.Taylor@leicscab.org.uk) or call 01455 818 443

**Places are limited so please book as soon as possible.**