History

BAF was founded in July 1997 as Bedford Advice Forum. In 2001 BAF expanded to also cover the old Mid Bedfordshire area to tie in with BAF’s membership of the new Mid and North Bedfordshire Community Legal Service Partnership.

In 2007 BAF changed its name to Bedfordshire Advice Forum and expanded its remit to also cover the old South Bedfordshire area.

Since 2009 Bedfordshire Advice Forum has covered the new unitary local authority areas of Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

BAF projects (2000-2009)

- 2 year BAF-STEP training and staff development project funded by the ESF (2002-2004).
- NVQ training and support programme (2004-2006)
- 3 year BAF Strategy launched (2006)
- Advice Bedfordshire CIC, BAF’s trading company, set-up (2007)
- BAF joined Voluntaryworks, Bedfordshire’s VCS infrastructure consortium (2008) – and has since worked on its Improving Reach, Transforming Local Infrastructure, and Building Better Opportunities (Financial Inclusion) projects
- Research project into links between advice agencies and children’s centres (2009)


- Leading on the development of an Advice Strategy for Bedford Borough (2010) and management of the Advice Management Group to oversee the strategy (2011-2013)
- Leading on the development of an Advice Strategy for Central Bedfordshire (2011) and management of the Advice Planning Board to oversee the strategy (2012-2016)
- Launch of Bedfordshire Benefits Network (2011) – with 13 Network meetings held (since 2011)
- Campaign to encourage volunteering in the advice sector and to build links with the local volunteer centres (2015)
- Advice Skills project (2013-2014) – developing a programme of training courses and offering a NOCN qualification
- Solicitors project (2012-2014) to develop links between advice agencies and solicitors – with a webinar meeting
- Leading on refresh of the Central Bedfordshire Advice Strategy (2016) and management of a new Advice Strategy Management Group to oversee the Delivery Plan for the new Advice Strategy (since 2016)
- Various Welfare Reform training and support projects and initiatives (since 2011)

Highlights

- Over 70 Forum meetings held for BAF members to discuss advice sector issues
- Over 100 training courses and workshops held for local advice staff and volunteers
- Over 15 major projects managed for the local advice sector (since 2000)
- 13 Benefit Network meetings held for local benefits advisers (since 2011)

Thanks

Thanks go to members of BAF’s Training Sub-Group (1999-2004) and Steering Group (2004-2017) and especially to BAF’s Officers:

