

ADVICE SKILLS TRAINING

Background

BAF has been awarded some funds by the VoluntaryWorks Consortium (through its Transforming Local Infrastructure Project), to develop a programme of advice skills courses.

The aim of this project is to develop a sustainable programme of courses that can be used in future to train BAF members, and possibly other advisers in other areas. These training courses will not only help increase the skills of advisers but will hopefully also help generate some future income for BAF.

Courses

The overall aim of the training programme is:

“To provide core advice skills training for advisers and trainee advisers to help them increase their skills, gain confidence, and generally improve the quality of their advice”

The programme consists of four ½ day courses.

1. Introduction to advice work and advice skills
2. Interviewing skills
3. Signposting/referral skills
4. Advice recording skills

INTRODUCTION TO ADVICE WORK Course objectives

- To understand the role of advice work and advisers
- To understand the key principles and values in advice work – including confidentiality and independence
- To begin to develop good practice in advice work – including using relevant policies and procedures

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INTERVIEWING SKILLS Course objectives

- To understand the different skills needed:
 - for different types of client interview
 - in the different stages of client interviews
 - for working with different type of clients
- To develop good practice in client interviews
- To provide an opportunity for practising client interviews

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SIGNPOSTING & REFERRAL SKILLS Course objectives

- To clarify the differences between signposting and referring
- To develop an understanding of good practice in signposting and referring clients
- To provide information on where to signpost and refer clients in Bedfordshire

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ADVICE RECORDING SKILLS Course objectives

- To help develop an understanding of the reasons for recording advice and keeping good advice records
- To provide information on the different types of advice record
- To help develop skills in advice recording, and good advice record management

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The materials for the 4 courses have now been developed and include:

- Powerpoint presentations
- Course exercises and activities
- Handouts

The courses have been developed by a group of local advisers from 3 BAF members (from BAF's Steering Group) – Age UK Bedfordshire, Bedford Self-Help Group, and Carers in Bedfordshire. The project work has been managed on behalf of BAF by Infotrain.

Future plans

The next stage will be to develop some **tutor notes** for the courses. The plan will then be to **pilot the courses** with BAF members in early 2014.

Other plans include:

- Research into the feasibility of getting the courses **accredited** by NOCN
- Research into the feasibility of developing **online training modules** from the course material

Len Simkins
BAF Secretary
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