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**SPRING TRAINING PROGRAMME REPORT**

**FOR BAF STEERING GROUP**

**Background**

BAF decided to arrange a self-funding training programme in the spring for BAF members, after two failed attempts to get any grant funding for a programme in 2023/24.

The programme consisted of 3 full-day courses presented by 3 different trainers in May, June and July. The trainers, who all work for local agencies, provided their services on a freelance basis.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Date** | **Tutor** | **Venue** |
| Introduction to Benefits | 16/5/23 | Dean Crofts | Bunyan Meeting |
| Universal Credit | 7/6/23 | Elliott Stephenson | CVS |
| Personal Independence Payment | 13/7/23 | Karen Banfield | CVS |

The training programme was planned by BAF’s Training Sub-Group, organised through Advice Bedfordshire, and managed by Infotrain.

**Bookings and attendance**

All 3 courses were well booked, and attendances were generally good – although there were a number of late cancellations for the PIP course (which had been fully booked).

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Bookings** | **Attendance** |
| Introduction to Benefits | 11 | 11 |
| Universal Credit | 16 | 15 |
| Personal Independence Payment | 18 | 12 |
| **TOTAL** | **45** | **38** |

**Finances**

After keeping our training fees at the same level for a number of years, it was agreed, due to inflationary pressures, to increase the fees this year for BAF courses. The new rate for full-time courses was £75 standard rate (for BAF members), and £40 for volunteers. Fortunately, this did not have a detrimental effect on the number of bookings.

The break-even number for each course was estimated to be 8 attendees. Any bookings above that would bring in a surplus. As all 3 courses were well booked, the programme brought in a good surplus (£1,099.36) that can be used by Advice Bedfordshire and BAF. See separate **Financial Report** on the programme finances.

The **general feedback** from the programme was extremely positive.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation**  | **Courses** | **Average for programme** |
| **Question** | **Answer** | **Introduction to Benefits** | **Universal Credit** | **PIP** |
| Did the course fulfil your expectations? | Yes - fully | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Was the course at the right level for your needs | Yes - fully | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Will the knowledge/skills you have gained on this course help you in your work? | Yes - fully | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

In terms of more **specific opinions on the courses**, the overall average feedback from the evaluation forms across the 3 courses was also very positive.

**Course structure and content** – 97% stated this was very good

**Training materials** – 91% stated these were very good

**Trainers and course delivery** – 100% stated these were very good

**Venues** – 82% stated these were very good

The only minor negative comments on the evaluation forms were:

* Very good overall – but more details could be added as examples (Introduction. to Benefits course)
* Good overall but needed more time to practice (UC course)
* Good – but could have done with individual copies of PIP1 and PIP2 forms (PIP course)
* Good venue – but warm and needs more toilets (CVS)
* Parking is the only issue (CVS)
* Lunch would be nice!

From the participant (and trainer) feedback the only things suggested for review are:

**Universal Credit course** – Should this be lengthened slightly and provided over 2 x half days (approximately 5.5 hours of learning) rather than 1 full day (approximately 4.5 hours of learning)?

**Choice of venue** – Which venue is better (Bunyan Meeting or CVS?). Or are there any other alternatives?

**Recommendations**

1. BAF should **run another training programme**. Possibly in early 2024?
2. BAF members should be asked what their **current training needs** are before planning the next programme, and their **preference for the training venue**.
3. BAF should develop a **Cancellation Policy** to clarify how cancellations and potential refunds are dealt with.

Len Simkins (Infotrain) - BAF Training Facilitator

14/9/23