

Year 2 Evaluation of Advice in Community Settings

Recommendations: Designing Future Advice Programmes.

1 Funders should encourage partnerships between advice services and a diverse range of community settings.

This should:



include community settings that are led by, or have strong relationships with minority and vulnerable communities.



allocate adequate time and resources to community relationship development involving specialist outreach staff where relevant

“ Embedding specialist advice provision within community setting is the way to go, because we wouldn't want to go: "this is our office, you need to come to us." because people might not get to us because of cost or trust or not knowing where we are.”

Advice manager

2 Ensure partnerships have a fully-funded implementation phase

This enables the development and/or strengthening of existing partnerships. It would enable partnerships to:



recruit staff and volunteers.



establish agreements and data sharing protocols.



develop referral pathways.

“ We get walk-ins coming into the library, they want help from in-law centre. Quite a few times these clients, when you call them [with] this referral ... they're absolutely delighted...The fact that they're being helped, is such as positive. Especially for those extremely vulnerable, those with mental health or mobility issues.”

Service manager

“

The project brought us closer together. We [now] work much closer with a specialist provider, which is really good because we don't provide immigration advice and we can now signpost to them. It's [also] important to work with food banks and become more known.”

Advice manager

3 Services should ensure staff and volunteers are representative of the communities being served.

Within community-support settings, broadening out links to different communities in addition to those already receiving support. By ensuring:



that appropriate staff and resourcing is available to support staff/volunteer recruitment and development.



adequate provisions for interpreting and translating services.

4 Build in flexibility to cope with rapidly changing social, economic and political contexts.

As contexts change, different areas of advice or groups of advice seekers may become more predominant. Therefore:



where eligibility and entitlements can rapidly change, provide training on benefits and social policy.



ensure multi-year funding accommodates rising costs from inflation.

5 Future programmes should build in opportunities for cross-partnership support to share best practice

This should be throughout delivery but especially during implementation phases. This is through:



partnerships sharing challenges and barriers to learn how others have tackled similar issues.



structured workshops and/or more informal drop-in sessions.