



St Pauls  
Advice Centre

# Annual Review 2014-15

Free, confidential advice for the people of St Pauls and East Bristol

# Review of the year

Facing increasing demand for our services, this year we looked inwards to improve our practices and procedures, with the aim of reaching more people, more effectively.

Starting in autumn 2014, we threw our doors open two days a week from 10am-4pm for drop-in advice. Receptionists and advisers are always on hand at those times to deal with whatever queries people bring. Alongside this, we worked with the Money Advice Service to launch a new telephone helpline for people wanting help with money or debt queries. These changes have made our services accessible to more people with less waiting.

Behind the scenes, we upgraded our software system for recording and managing case

information. It gives us better and more accessible information for monitoring and evaluating our work. We also began work on a more user friendly and informative website, and brightened up our building with new signage, making us more visible in the community.

We continue to work with other advice givers across Bristol to develop a new way of evaluating services, using the 'Theory of Change' framework. This will enable us to continue achieving better outcomes for our clients and our communities.

As a mark of our progress, we were called 'exemplary' when awarded the Advice Quality Standard.

# Achievements 2014-15

- > Introduced a **new debt advice line**
- > Successfully **attained the 'Advice Quality Mark'**
- > Managed **4% more** legal cases
- > **Lead an advice sector impact assessment** working group to develop a Bristol-wide 'Theory of Change'
- > Successfully introduced Advice Pro, our **new case management system**
- > Produced and installed **new signage at our main offices**
- > Worked with partners to secure a **new grant agreement** from the Money Advice Service
- > Introduced **two new trustees** to our management board
- > Contributed to delivery of a **new Roma support service** in partnership with Wellspring Healthy Living Centre
- > Developed a **fundraising plan**
- > Introduced **new 'open door' advice sessions** on two days each week

# Our year in numbers

**79%**

Percentage of our clients from local Black and ethnic minority communities

**379**

Number of outreach advice sessions delivered within the communities we serve

**3,311**

Enquiries handled this year by our experienced advisers and reception staff

**£1.2m**

Money we brought into the community by helping people maximise their income

**2,467**

Number of legal issues our advisers have dealt with through short and long term casework

**93%**

Percentage of clients who said they understood their rights better after using our service

**120**

Number of drop-in sessions held in clients' own language

**34%**

Percentage of our clients who describe themselves as disabled or long term sick

**£1.4m**

Amount of debt our specialist money advisers have helped people deal with

# Mr Gordon's story

The impact of government welfare reforms has been significant, and some issues require expert knowledge to resolve.

Our welfare benefits specialist spotted that Mr Gordon was not getting Employment Support Allowance (ESA) at the correct rate because he had not had a medical assessment and was being paid based on his National Insurance (NI) contributions.

Following ESA reforms, even though Mr Gordon had paid NI contributions his benefit was under threat unless he was assessed & put in the support group for ESA. If he wasn't

assessed before the end of 52 weeks, his ESA would stop, and might never be restarted.

Our adviser expedited his medical assessment. They also wrote such a powerful letter describing Mr Gordon's physical & mental health difficulties that the DWP put him in the support group without him having to attend the medical assessment. The decision was made a matter of 2 or 3 days before his award would have terminated.

Thanks to our intervention, as long as Mr Gordon continues to fit the criteria, he will continue to receive contributory ESA.

# Our vision

To be the advice centre that best understands and serves the needs of local people. What drives us is to improve lives and communities, and to provide high quality, independent advice services that are trusted, in an environment where people feel welcome.

## With thanks

To all our staff for their good cheer and dedication to their work in the face of constant uncertainty about the future; To all who give their time to being trustees, for their help in maintaining proper governance and their contribution towards shaping our future; To other advice providers in Bristol for their collaboration and finally, to our funders.



## Contact us

146 Grosvenor Road, St Pauls, Bristol BS2 8YA

T 0117 955 2981 E [enquiry@stpaulsAdvice.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@stpaulsAdvice.org.uk)

@stpaulsAdvice  /stpaulsAdvice

[www.stpaulsAdvice.org.uk](http://www.stpaulsAdvice.org.uk)

Reg. Charity No: 1083010 Ltd Co. 03920535  
OISC Reg. No. N20040032



### 1 St Pauls Advice Centre

- Appointments, drop-in sessions and home visits
- General, debt and benefits advice
- **NEW open drop-in every Tues and Thurs 10 till 4**



Contact us for more information.  
146 Grosvenor Road, St Pauls BS2 8YA

**Bus route 5**

### 2 Montpelier Health Centre

- Drop-in sessions
- General & welfare benefits advice



Arrive early as places limited – contact us for more information.

Bath Buildings, Montpelier BS6 5PT

**Bus routes** Gloucester Rd: 70, 73, 75, 76, 18

### 3 Wellspring Healthy Living Centre

Beam Street, Barton Hill BS5 9QY

- Appointments & drop-in sessions
- General & welfare benefits advice
- Somali spoken



Contact us for more information.

**Bus routes** 36 or Church Rd: 6, 7, 41, 43, 44, 45

### 4 The Silai Centre

176 Easton Road, Easton BS5 0ES

- Drop-in sessions
- General, benefits & debt advice
- Urdu, Punjabi and Somali spoken



Arrive early as places limited – contact us for more information.

**Bus routes** 506, or Whitehall Road: 6,7

### 5 Fishponds Customer Service Point

Robinson House, Hockeys Lane, Fishponds, BS16 3HL

- Drop-in sessions
- Debt advice only



Arrive early as places limited – contact us for more information.

**Bus routes** 5, 48, 49, 342, 507, 581, 689 and U3



## Help with money problems is just a phone call away

Call our confidential money advice line on 0117 9405406 or email [moneyadvice@stpaulsAdvice.org.uk](mailto:moneyadvice@stpaulsAdvice.org.uk)

Get more information and session times at [www.stpaulsAdvice.org.uk](http://www.stpaulsAdvice.org.uk), call 0117 9552981 or email [enquiry@stpaulsAdvice.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@stpaulsAdvice.org.uk)

## Khadra's story

Problems resulting from bureaucratic processes and delays can grow rapidly unless help is given to solve the underlying issue.

Khadra, an EEA national, had joined her husband to live in the UK. Initially, a SPAC adviser helped Khadra apply for a new residence card before hers expired – essential to prove her eligibility to work.

Khadra later returned for advice in a panic. Even though she had explained that she had made a new application, her employer would dismiss her unless she produced evidence of her eligibility to work. Khadra was very distressed as her husband was self-employed and struggling to make money. Her income was crucial to meet their living expenses and the risk of losing her job was affecting their relationship.

The adviser contacted the Home Office and arranged for a letter confirming Khadra's eligibility to work whilst her application was processed.

Our quick response enabled Khadra to continue working, relieving the financial burden on herself and her husband.