

Cumbria Advice Network



November 2009

Issue 2

Together we really can (and did)

The recent events across Cumbria clearly demonstrated the need for us all to work together to provide information and advice in a co-ordinated way, delivered to people when they need it, where they need it .

Support Centres were set up in Cockermouth, Keswick and Workington. These brought together a wide range of agencies and organisations to provide immediate advice, information and support to individuals, families and businesses .

Our Development Champion, Mandy Pflieger had first hand experience working in the centre in Cockermouth.

"I have been so impressed with the dedication of the teams of people who have been in Christ Church and the

way in which we have all worked together to help as many people as possible affected by these devastating floods"

"Having specialists in place meant that clients could be referred to the people they needed to see straight away - exactly what was needed in such a stressful situation."

Jane Hunter from the Cumbria Law Centre agrees " we have been humbled by the stoicism of the flood victims and delighted by the way that every organisation has pulled together as one team to help those most in need"

There were representatives from the Cumbria Law Centre, Citizens Advice, Cumbria County Council Allerdale Borough Council,

Job Centre Plus, Age Concern, Business Link, Derwent and Solway Housing, Home Housing, British Red Cross, Churches Together, WRVS, Cumbria Police, Environment Agency, National Flood Forum, Adult Social Services, Children's Services, West Cumberland Development Agency, Library Service, United Utilities and Trading Standards

The whole experience has proved how, in an emergency, we can come together as advice agencies to work together for the benefit of our clients in Cumbria.

The Big Lottery has provided funding through the Cumbria Advice Network project to enable us to work together in partnership in day to day advice provision. Together we CAN make this happen.



Jane Hunter, Cumbria Law Centre and Mandy Pflieger, Citizens Advice Allerdale at the Support Centre in Cockermouth, talking to Bob Stroulger, a volunteer from Workington CAB.

**Copeland CAB is offering a telephone advice service to people unable to access the flood information centres. The dedicated phone number is 01946 55 00 77 It will be available for people affected by the floods anywhere in Cumbria until 23 December at the following times:
Monday 10am - 6pm
Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri 10am - 4pm**

Come and join us at our first annual conference!

We are holding our first annual conference on **Wednesday 20th January 2010.**

This free event is an ideal opportunity for you to meet the CAN team, find out more about the project and how to get involved, share ideas and influence how we should move forward and meet staff and

volunteers from other advice agencies.

You will also be able to share information about the help and services your organisation provides.

We will be holding caseworker forums covering Money Advice and Housing

and more general sessions looking at the referral process and ways of working together.

Our keynote speaker is Stewart Young, Deputy Leader of Cumbria County Council.

The conference will be held at Rheged, Penrith, between 10.00am and 3.00pm.

If you would like to come along to the conference please email network@can.cabnet.org.uk

Or phone Mandy Pflieger on 01900 604735 to find out more.

Network Event

We are committed to working together in an open and honest way

We held our first Network Event on Thursday 12th November at the Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency.

23 representatives from all the initial partners attended. (Citizens Advice Bureaux, Cumbria Law Centre and Shelter).

Our focus was to look at the referral process, specifically to identify the current barriers to referral, opportunities for improvement and areas of good practice.

We identified that there is currently a lack of knowledge about services provided by different organisations and the information they need when making a referral.

To move forward, we need to build up our knowledge, develop strong links and awareness and learn from our existing relationships. We also need to look at developing a common referral protocol.

The Development and Network Champions will be

taking these points forward over the coming months

The event was very positive. The final session looked at how we move forward and the message was clear—all initial partners are committed to working together to deliver the CAN project. The final session also included an impromptu charades session, led by Martin Telford, our project manager. We are trying to persuade him to repeat this at the January conference!

Our new Network Champions

We are delighted to welcome the Network Champions to the project. All Champions are now in post. The Network Champions will take the project forward in their own organisations, and importantly, will work with and promote the network to other advice agencies in their local area. The Network Champions are:

Hazel Bowmaker—Cumbria Law Centre

Shelley Grace—Copeland CAB

Simon Pollitt—Carlisle CAB

Rebecca Colpus—Eden CAB and Cumbria Rural CAB

Carolyn Moffatt—Shelter
Helen Robinson—Barrow CAB

In this issue we turn the spotlight on Hazel who has recently taken up post as Community Relations Officer at the Cumbria Law Centre. She has worked within the voluntary sector for the past 7 years, most recently as the Housing Coordinator at Action for Blind People in Cumbria and currently as a non-executive board member of Impact Housing

Association. She is a qualified dance teacher and has taught dance to children with learning difficulties and various physical disabilities for the past 11 years.



She is an active environmental campaigner, involved with the local Green Party and is currently studying for an MSc in Environmental Sustainability

“I truly believe that the Cumbria Advice Network has huge potential to dramatically improve the quality and accessibility of advice provision within the county.”

Hazel Bowmaker

Social Policy issues

A strong and consistent voice of issues in Cumbria

One of the aims of the CAN project is to develop a social policy process that collects data from Network members to enable us to identify common issues that affect our clients and our communities.

We are currently talking with volunteers and staff who take forward social policies in the initial partners, to work out how best we can do this. The process will be extended to include input and evidence from the wider network of organisations who become involved with CAN.

Quality Corner

Now that all the Network Champions are in place, they will be gathering information about the expertise we have within the initial partner organisations so that we can start to pool the information and gain an understanding about the capabilities we have across the county. In time we will also be gathering details from wider network organisations. This information will help us promote our services collectively to funders as well as help us to notice any gaps in provision that there might be.

Some of you will know that we intended to hold our first training event last month: a two-day Debt Strategy course in Workington. Unfortunately this had to be cancelled due to the floods. We are hoping to rearrange it for the end of January.

Next up are two caseworker forums – for Debt/Money Advisers, and for Housing Caseworkers – at our launch conference on 20 January. If you are a housing or debt worker, please do come to those sessions, share your experience, and gain insights from your colleagues in other offices. There is so much local know-how between us, and sharing it helps ensure that all our clients get the very best service from us.

The conference also includes sessions on referral and working together which will be relevant to all organisations.

Keep in touch

For further information on any aspect of the CAN project or a chat about how to become involved you can contact Mandy Pflieger, Development Champion for North Cumbria on 01900 604735 email mandypflieger@hotmail.com or Steve Troake, Development Champion for South Cumbria on 01539 728892 email steve.troake@cabsouthlakeland.org.uk

The next newsletter will be sent out in 3 months time.

If you would like a copy of our first newsletter please let us know.

If you know of anyone who would be interested in this newsletter, please pass it on to them.

If you have received the newsletter from someone else and would like to be added to the mailing list, please email network@can.cabnet.org.uk