

Cumbria Advice Network



Autumn 2010

Issue 5

“COMING TOGETHER IS A BEGINNING, KEEPING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS, WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS.”
HENRY FORD

We now have **57 members** of the Cumbria Advice Network.

In this issue we focus on one of our members, The Royal British Legion and we find out about Tom Barlow and his role as Cumbria's Affordable Warmth Co-ordinator.

Our “Did you know” section highlights the Choice Advice Service and looks at DROs and DWP Deductions from ongoing benefits.

Join us for Advice Week

11th to 15th October

Events around the County

Full details on page 2

Meet our new Champions

We put the spotlight on 3 new members of the team on page 10

CAN Annual Conference

Thursday 20th January 2011

**Keynote Speaker: Andy Beeforth,
Director of the Cumbria Community
Foundation**

Sessions will cover:

Discrimination

Employment and Support Allowance

Referral and Working Together

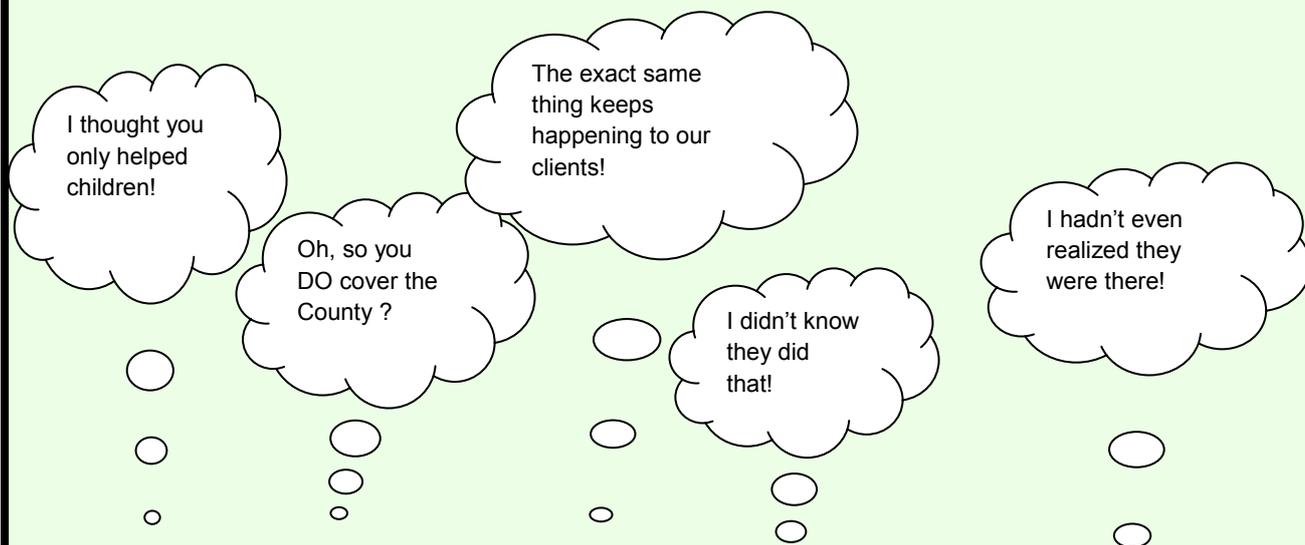
Campaigning for Change

**Email mandypfleger@hotmail.com
to register your place**

Calling all advice agencies!

Join us for an Advice Week get-together and free lunch!

11th—15th October



Events across the County

Enjoy a free lunch

Promote your service from your own stall

Meet other advice agencies who can help your clients

Learn about our free training events

Share good practice & social policy with other local agencies

Learn about the benefits of joining the Cumbria Advice Network

ADVICE WEEK VENUES

Workington	Monday 11 th October	Bridge Church Central Square	12.30 – 2.30pm
Kendal	Tuesday 12 th October	Bindloss Room Town Hall	12.00 – 2.00pm
Penrith	Wednesday 13 th October	McPherson Room Evergreen Community Centre	12.00- 2.00pm
Barrow	Thursday 14 th October	Ante Room The Forum	12.00-2.00pm
Whitehaven	Friday 15 th October	The Copeland Centre	12.00 – 2.00pm
Carlisle	Friday 15 th October	Carlisle Old Town Hall	12.00 – 2.00pm

Referral and Working Together: So what are we doing about it ?

Referral and Working Together is one of our major Outcomes and we know that there is a lot of enthusiasm for introducing new ideas to make the process work effectively for our clients. We've already done a lot of work to identify the barriers and to develop our principles for making the referral process work. The launch of the website is a major step towards developing our diagnostic tools. The website is already being well used and we are adding information about new members all the time. We now need to look at how we might take forward other elements, such as mechanisms for making and receiving referrals and ways to monitor the numbers.

We know that there are lots of different ways of doing this and that many organisations have good systems in place. We are holding a consultation exercise with initial partners in November where we will look at what systems work well and what works not so well. The intention is to develop a toolkit that can be used by Network Members. We will be talking to our members about all of this at the next annual conference on 20th January 2011.

FOCUS ON



The Royal British Legion Working in Cumbria



Cumbria@britishlegion.org.uk

Charity Number 219279

The Royal British Legion is the UK's leading charity providing financial, social and emotional support to millions who have served or are currently serving in the Armed Forces, and their dependants. Nationally nearly 10.5 million people are eligible for our support, we make 15,000 Immediate Needs payments each year, and make around 300,000 welfare and friendship visits. We are the custodians of Remembrance; ensuring people remember those who have given their lives for the freedom we enjoy.

So why not become a member of the Legion?

We welcome men and women of all ages, whether they have served in the Armed Forces or not. You would be helping others and could benefit from being part of one of the country's largest membership organisations.

The Legion offers its members:

- Social activities at local branches and clubs
- Access to a wide range of services and discount schemes
- Free subscription to *Legion* magazine
- Involvement in helping the serving and ex-Service community
- Mutual support and friendship



The Royal British Legion is one of the UK's best known and highly respected charities. Its principal concern is the welfare of serving and ex-Service people and their dependants, with around 10.5 million people in the UK eligible for that support. That's one in six people in the UK.

We can offer financial aid in an urgent crisis, or help homeless ex-Service people back on their feet. We advise people on compensation, disablement and pension claims. We also offer careers advice and can help those looking to make a fresh start after leaving the forces. A few of the examples of the items provided by the Legion include:

- Essential household goods,
- Help with debt and access to debt counselling,
- Mobility aids including electrically-powered vehicles
- Training
- Assistance with the provision of stair lifts and level access showers

The Legion is about people and families of all ages; it's about caring for others and being part of something special. It's an organisation of members that both care and are cared for, giving and receiving support depending on their individual circumstances.

For more information about the Cumbria County Office and our work
call the County Welfare Officers Amanda Lean and Carole Knowles:

Kendal (01539) 734411

or

Email: Cumbria@britishlegion.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW ?

Choice Advice Service



Choice Advice is an independent service within the Local Authority, which aims to target and support those families in need of most help to understand the forms and processes relating to school admissions, as well as help with the appeals process for families in most need of support.

Choice Advisers will help parent/carers engage and make informed decisions about schools which best meet their child's needs, they can also help with form filling.

Support is provided in a way to best meet a family's needs, in most cases this is face to face, which can be by arranging a home visit, a meeting at school, or any other community venue.

If you would like to know more or to signpost any family for help please contact:

Carl Nixon [School Choice Adviser]

Children's Services,

5 Portland Square

CARLISLE CA1 1PU Tel: 01228 226826 / Mobile: 07554 439340

E-mail: carl.nixon@cumbriacc.gov.uk

DROs and DWP Deductions from ongoing benefits

On Monday the 26th July 2010 a judge in the Administrative Court ruled on Judicial Review that the Secretary of State does not have the right to recover overpayments of Social Security benefits and Social Fund loans by making deductions from an ongoing award of benefit when the debtor is subject to a Debt Relief Order (DRO).

The DWP are reviewing the implications of this decision and of course do have the right to appeal. However in a bulletin dated the 28th July 2010 issued to all Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit staff, the DWP have advised their staff that they must cease making deductions on cases where the overpayment was included in the DRO.

The intermediary guidance notes will be updated in due course and the issue will be raised as an item in the next DRO newsletter from the Insolvency Service.

Received from Jane Parkin, Cumbria Law Centre

Targeting Affordable Warmth

Cumbria now has its own Affordable Warmth Project Coordinator,

Tom Barlow took up the role in May and is based in Carlisle City Council's Housing team, but will deliver the affordable warmth project across all districts in Cumbria.

The project came about as part of the findings and recommendations of a Cumbria wide Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee report on Fuel Poverty.

The role leads a three-year project that has some very defined outcomes, these include forming partnerships with agencies; accessing funding for insulation measures; producing a fuel poverty strategy/action plan, as well as producing policies and procedures for the whole of Cumbria.

Tom joins the project after working as the Centre Manager for the Cumbria & Lancashire Energy Saving Trust advice centre (ESTac), where a principle project was around the NI 187 Fuel Poverty Survey on behalf of both many of the Cumbria and Lancashire Authorities.

He has already been in discussion with regional energy suppliers, to draw out what they see as being the potential for future energy schemes in Cumbria.

His background is in Private Sector Housing, where he worked across the board on private rented sector enforcement, disabled facilities grants, home improvement and full renovation schemes.

For over six years, part of his remit was the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) and he has delivered installation schemes across deprived areas in Lancashire, including the delivery of the Affordable Warmth Strategies.

He has been a member of the NW Carbon Action Network, since its days as the NW HECA Group, and has been a member of the Domestic Energy Alliance for several years.



Thomas says: "The role of Affordable Warmth Project Coordinator allows me to use my previous experience and knowledge to the best effect. I'm looking forward to working with partners to drive forward change and improvements in Cumbria."

Tom would welcome contact from any practitioner group in Cumbria who feel that they may benefit from the project or have a role to play in delivering warmer safer homes to the home owners of Cumbria. Contact him at ThomasB@carlisle.gov.uk and 01228 817239.

Quality Corner

We are in the middle of an excellent autumn season of training events. John Kruse, the leading national authority on bailiff law, gave a day's training to money and debt advisers at Rheged last month, and more recently, David Gilmore, a leading authority on legal services commission work, led a seminar on Legal Services Commission standards – how to run a file in order to impress the auditor, when and when not to open multiple matters, time recording and all those irksome but vital details of day-to-day casework admin.

In November, we have a training seminar on Housing law, led by two barristers from Garden Court North chambers in Manchester, although this event is now fully booked.

Looking ahead, make a note in your diary NOW for the Annual Conference at Rheged on Thursday 20th January. We will be running seminars on Discrimination and the new Equality Act, and also on Welfare Rights (Employment and Support Allowance).

A further session on welfare rights is pencilled in for March. We will circulate details soon.

We are planning our training sessions for the rest of 2011, with a likely focus on money advice, housing, welfare benefits and employment law. I am keen to ensure that we provide events that you will find useful and relevant, so please email me with your suggestions and comments, to paulimthurn@comlaw.co.uk

CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

We produced our first Campaigning for Change Bulletin back in June. The bulletin acts as a call for evidence to the wider network. If you have evidence of any of the issues raised you can let the Cumbria Advice Network know and we can pass the information on to the originating organisation.

In the last issue, Copeland CAB highlighted the issues of Bailiffs exaggerating their powers of enforcement. Cumbria Law Centre responded– they see approximately 150 similar cases each year.

Cumbria Rural CAB highlighted the issue of migrant workers not being registered by their employers. Cumbria Law Centre identified a further two cases. They then went on to do further research into worker registration regulations and discovered that the onus to make the application and ensure that a certificate is obtained lies with the employee and not the employer.

The next bulletin will be published in November. If you have any issues you would like to collect evidence about, email netchamp@whitehaven.cabnet.org.uk

Staff News– Meet our New Champions

Phil Carter

I have recently been appointed the Network Champion covering the Kendal and Windermere area, and I'm looking forward to carrying on the good work started by my predecessors Rebecca Colpus and Steve Troake.



It's great to be back in Cumbria, having spent the last 3 years 'down south' managing a Citizens Advice Bureau in Hampshire. Prior to that I worked at Carlisle Bureau for 7 years, both as a volunteer and paid member of staff covering a wide range of interesting roles. I prefer not to shout too loudly about my 20 previous years employment with one of the high street banks!

It's really exciting and challenging to be involved with the Cumbria Advice Network project as this presents a real opportunity to develop a joined up and efficient advice service for the people of Cumbria. I am particularly looking forward to meeting representatives from the wide range of advice agencies and being able to gain a better understanding of the great work they do.

My interests seem to be mainly influenced by food - I enjoy growing it, cooking it and eating it. As well as cultivating the usual varieties of fruit and veg on my allotment, I also have an expanding collection of chili plants and tropical herbs – needless to say I really like cooking and eating food from the Far East and India. I also enjoy live music, although having spent many wet summer days and nights camping in muddy fields I'm beginning to wonder if I'm growing a bit too old for that sort of enjoyment – we shall see!

Maria Hewitt

I am the Network Champion covering Allerdale, based at Allerdale Citizens Advice Bureau one day a week. I will be taking over the brilliant work in Allerdale started by our Development Champion, Mandy Pfleger.



I've lived in Cumbria for 3 years now - I'm originally from Ilkeston in Derbyshire, where I studied Human Services at Nottingham Trent University and also volunteered as a Generalist Adviser at Erewash CAB. I also volunteered at Oxfam Books & Music, Headway, Nottingham City Hospital School and gained my British Sign Language Level 1 qualification.

On the four days a week when I'm not a Network Champion, I work for Cumbria County Council as a Community Involvement Worker. This mainly involves encouraging people to 'have their say' via Neighbourhood Forums across Copeland, and advising groups on community grant applications to the Forums.

My spare time is spent with my husband and our dog, Bobbie. I enjoy festivals & live music, cooking, reading, step aerobics and seeing friends.

I look forward to seeing the Cumbria Advice Network develop and will hopefully meet you along the way!

Margie Cooper

I have recently been appointed as Network Champion for the Cumbria Advice Network, covering the Carlisle & Eden areas.

I was born and grew up in Newcastle and moved with my two daughters to Alston 21 years ago where I now live very happily on a small sheep farm. In this time I have worked in Cumbria as a self employed social researcher and trainer with my business, High Row Research and have been commissioned to complete a broad range of contracts for public, private and third sector organisations. I have also worked as a research methods lecturer for the University of Northumbria in Newcastle and Carlisle, ACTION for Rural Communities (formerly Voluntary Action Cumbria) and Cumbria CVS.

Over the past 10 years I have been involved with domestic violence initiatives within the County, both as a researcher for the Cumbria Domestic Violence Strategic Management board and trainer with the Let Go project.

I am delighted to be appointed as CAN network champion for Carlisle & Eden and trust my experience working with third sector organisations, the public sector and numerous service users will bring positive benefits to the project. I am also looking forward to working with other members of the CAN team who cover the other districts of Cumbria.

As I have never before held the position of “champion”, I was delighted to become one in the same week as our border collie, Poppy, became champion at Alston Sheep Show. You can probably tell I am the one on the right in the photograph!



A DECADE ON: Jez and Margie Cooper, from High Row, Kirkhaugh, with their remarkable smooth-haired collie, Poppy, which won the same class at Alston 10 years ago.

Our Champions

- Allerdale:** Maria Hewitt 01900 604735 maria.hewitt@hotmail.co.uk
- Barrow:** Helen Robinson 01229 830367 rumelon1@yahoo.co.uk
- Carlisle:** Hazel Bowmaker 01228 515129 hazelbowmaker@comlaw.co.uk
Margie Cooper 01228 633909 highrowresearch@aol.com
- Copeland:** Shelley Grace 01946 693321 netchamp@whitehaven.cabnet.org.uk
- Eden:** Margie Cooper 01228 633909 highrowresearch@aol.com
- South Lakes:** Phil Carter 01539 447189 philip.carter@cabsouthlakeland.org.uk
Carolyn Moffat 0344 5151947 Carolyn_Moffat@shetler.org.uk
- Windermere:** Phil Carter 01539 447189 philip.carter@cabsouthlakeland.org.uk

Are you on our map yet?



It's free to join the network and there are lots of benefits, including:

- becoming part of a 'common referral system'.
- being part of the Cumbria Advice Network website
- access to supplementary advice from other network organisations
- right to request support with Training Needs Analyses, referral processes and to attain a quality mark
- free or subsidised local training events (working towards CPD accreditation)
- receive the CAN E-newsletters
- invitation to the CAN Annual Conference and to be consulted on the delivery of the network
- opportunities to meet with other like minded people from other third sector advice agencies
- influencing campaigns for change

If you would like to join, please contact your nearest network champion

Together we CAN make a difference

www.cumbriaadvicenetwork.org.uk