



Subject:	Advice Provision Outreach
Date:	3 rd December 2024
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan , Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager, CNS Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer, CNS

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on generalist advice service provision, the location of providers' offices and outreach venues.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are asked to note the contents of the report and appendices.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	At the People and Communities meeting in November 24 elected members asked for further detail in relation to the provision of advice services, particularly the outreach that is available in locations across the city.
3.2	Council provides funding for generalist advice to 14 Advice Providers based in 20 offices across the city. Advice services are co-ordinated at area level by a lead partner within each of the 5 Advice Consortia which cover north, south, east, west and central Belfast. Advice Providers within each consortia must be members of Advice NI, be independent and have offices within the geographic areas. Membership of Advice NI is a condition of the funding from DfC. This limits the number of organisations to which we can provide funding.
3.3	Members will recall that Council commissioned Williamson Consulting to conduct an independent review of the generalist advice services funded by Council which was presented to committee in December 2023. Officers continue to work with Advice Providers to progress the review recommendations. The review noted that in relation to direct service provision, providers differ in terms of how they deliver advice. In general, providers tend to have a 'triage' process of some kind which allows them to make best use of advisor time while ensuring that the client gets access to the best source of advice.
3.4	There is outreach provision within the geographic area depending on advice officer availability and demand. The Independent Review of Belfast City Council Advice services noted that; 'locations including primary office locations and secondary outreach locations, suggests that Belfast is well covered'. Appendix 1 provides a list of the providers, their office and outreach location.
3.5	Most funded organisations provide advice during normal working hours in both face to face and telephone format. A small number of enquiries are also dealt with using other media such as emails, SMS and occasionally social media. Some providers also offer 'drop in' advice, although the majority now seek to organise advice appointments where possible. The latter is much more cost effective as it does not involve missed appointments and wasted advisor time.
3.6	Since Covid the providers have increased their ability to work via apps such as MS Teams and Zoom in addition to face to face work, thus providing opportunities to deal directly with more people.
3.7	Members may recall that the review highlighted a number of key challenges which have necessitated changes to the ways that advice is delivered, primarily a reduction in the level of 'drop in' services available. The key elements driving this changed approach are;

- Difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitable staff and paying them adequately to undertake the role.
- Increase in the complexity of cases which means that each client needs advice for a longer period than previously and reduces the number of clients that can be supported. This complexity is mainly driven by increasing levels of poverty, mental health and addiction issues.
- Increasing demand for services, in particular the current phase of migration from existing benefits to Universal Credit and support for people to claim Pension Credit, a gateway benefit to a range of other benefits and payments such as the Winter Fuel Allowance.
- Increase in the number of clients requiring translation services.

One of the key recommendations in the Advice Review was to raise awareness of service provision. A number of actions have been undertaken in relation to this;

- Information about advice services is available in the Cost of Living guide which has recently been produced. A PDF copy of the guide is provided in Appendix II. The latest edition of City Matters also included information on Advice Providers.
- Many advice providers are active partners in the delivery of Social Supermarkets and they promote access to services through quarterly social supermarket meetings.
- Advice organisations attended the Anti-Poverty Networking Event held in City Hall on 29th October which provided an opportunity for service delivery organisations to share information about available support.
- Council is working with funded advice organisations to develop a recognisable brand that will allow easier promotion of and access to services.

Financial and Resource Implications

All activity outlined in this report is delivered through existing budgets.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The provision of free, independent, good quality advice ensures that people have access to support which helps them to access services and in many cases address barriers that have been created as a result of inequality.

4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
4.1	1. Advice Providers- Location and Outreach 2. Cost of Living Guide PDF

Appendix 1 Advice Provision- Location and Outreach

Central

Organisation	Location	Days of operation	Hours of operation	Type of service
Advice Space	58 Howard Street Belfast	Monday-Friday	9:00– 5:00	Generalist Advice Face-to-face, Telephony, Emails,
Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre	4-6 Donegall Street, Belfast	Monday-Friday	9.30-12.30 1.00-4.30	General Advice Face-to-face, Telephony, Emails, WhatsApp Messaging,
Advice Space Outreach- Extern Criminal Floating Support	Extern, Belfast	Daily Referrals	As required based on number of referrals	Generalist Advice Face-to-face, Telephony, Emails, WhatsApp Messaging, Interpreter Service
Advice Space ESOL English Classes + access to Advice	58 Howard Street Belfast	Tuesday	9.30– 1.00	Those attending classes can access advice.

East

Organisation	Location	Days of operation	Hours of operation	Type of service
Advice Space	Arches Centre Holywood Road, Belfast	Monday -Friday	9.00-4.30	Telephone Advice. Telephone appointments for forms. F2F for completion of Forms. Email Advice Drop in
East Belfast Independent Advice Centre (EBIAC)	55 Templemore Avenue, Belfast.	Monday - Friday	09.00-1.00 2.00-5.00	Generalist Advice Face to face and telephone or virtual if required
Outreach EBIAC	Storehouse and the Larder, Mersey Street, Belfast	Weekly Basis- Tuesday	9.30-12.00	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Outreach- EBIAC	Short Strand Community Centre, Beechfield Street Belfast	Weekly Basis-Tuesday	10.00-12.00	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Outreach-EBIAC	St Christophers Church , Mersey Street, Belfast	Weekly Basis Friday	10.00-12.00	Generalist Advice Face to Face

North

Organisation	Location	Days of operation	Hours of operation	Type of service
Ardoyne Association	111 Etna Drive, Belfast	Monday-Friday	9.00-5.00	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Outreach	The People's Kitchen, Antrim Road, Belfast	Referrals Daily & Outreach Monthly	9.00 – 5.00	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Outreach	Springboard Donegall Street, Belfast	Referrals Daily & Monthly Clinic	9.00 – 5.00 Monthly Clinic 9.00– 5.00	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Outreach	Flax Foyer Flax Street Belfast	Daily Referrals & Benefit Info Session	9.00– 5.00 2 sessions annually	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Outreach	Newington Housing Association Limestone Road, Belfast	Weekly Outreach Clinic- Wednesday	9.00– 1.00	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Outreach	Flax Day Centre, Ardoyne Avenue Belfast	Referrals & 4 x Benefit Info Session annually	9.00– 5.00 4 x sessions annually	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Ballysillan Community Forum	925 Crumlin Road, Belfast	Monday – Friday	8:30 – 4:30 (Mon-Thurs) 8:30 – 2:00 (Fri)	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Ligoniel Improvement Association	148 Ligoniel Road, Belfast	Monday – Thursday Friday	9.00-5.00 9.00-2.30	Face to face /phone appointments / drop in
Outreach	Marrowbone Community Association Oldpark Road, Belfast	Tuesday and Thursday	9.00-1.00	Generalist Face to Face
Vine Centre	193 Crumlin Road, Belfast	Monday to Friday	9.00 – 5.00	UC Clinic (Mondays) Generalist Advice Face to Face Telephone
Outreach Vine Centre	Greater Shankill Community Council Spectrum Centre, Shankill Road Belfast	Tuesday	9.00 to 2.00	Face to Face Appointments
Outreach Vine Centre	Grove Housing Association York Road, Belfast	Tuesday to Thursday	10.00 -4.00	Drop In (Tuesday am) Face to Face Appointment
Outreach Vine Centre	Whitecity Community Centre Navarra Place, Belfast	Monday	2.00-4.00	Face to Face Appointment
Outreach Vine Centre	Ashton Community Trust Family Support Service Henry Place, Belfast	Friday	9.00-1.00	Face to Face Appointment
Tar Isteach	244 Antrim Road, Belfast	Mon-Friday	9.00-5.00	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Advice Space	40-44 Duncairn Gardens Belfast	Mon-Fri	9:00 – 5:00	Generalist Advice Face-to-face, Telephony, Emails,

South

Organisation	Location	Days of operation	Hours of operation	Type of service
Ballynaveigh Community Development Association (BCDA)	BCDA 283 Ormeau Road, Belfast	Monday-Friday	9.00 -5.00 Mon-Wed 9.00- 8.00 Thursday 9.00 – 2.00 Friday	Generalist Advice
Outreach BCDA	Markets Development Association, Markets Community Centre, Market Street Belfast	Monday	10.00 – 12.30	Generalist Advice
Outreach BCDA	Donegall Pass Community Forum Donegall Pass Belfast	Tuesday	10.00 – 12.30	Generalist Advice
Outreach BCDA	Belvoir & Milltown Sure Start 8 Drumart Square BELFAST BT8 7EY	Tuesday	2.00– 4.30	Generalist Advice
Outreach BCDA	Taughmonagh Community Forum Finwood Park, Belfast	Wednesday	10.00– 12.30	Generalist Advice
Outreach BCDA	Cregagh Community Centre Mount Merrion Ave, Belfast	Wednesday	2.00– 4.30	Generalist Advice
BCDA	BCDA, Ormeau Road	Wednesday	1.00– 2.00	Free Legal Advice Rota
Outreach BCDA	LORAG Balfour Street Belfast	Thursday	10.00– 12.30	Generalist Advice
Outreach BCDA	Sandy Row Community Centre, Sandy Row Belfast	Thursday	2.00 – 4.30	Generalist Advice
Outreach BCDA	Morton Community Centre Lorne Street Belfast	Thursday	10.00- 12.30	Generalist Advice
Outreach BCDA	Women's Aid Adelaide Park Belfast	Friday	10.00– 12.30	Generalist Advice
Southcity Resource and Development Centre (SRDC)	2 Maldon Street. Belfast	Monday - Thursday Friday	9.00-5.00 9.00-4.00	Face to face and Telephone calls Generalist advice, UC, PIPs, housing
Outreach SRDC	No 5 Credit Union 206 Sandy Row Belfast	Friday	6.30-8.00	Generalist advice, UC, PIPs, housing
Outreach SRDC	No 5 Credit Union 206 Sandy Row belfast	Saturday	10.30-12.00	Generalist advice, UC, PIPs, housing
Outreach SRDC	St Simon's Community Hub, Nubia Street, Belfast	Wednesday	10.00-11.00	Specific advice for older people. Pensions-pension credit
Outreach SRDC	Foodstock 150F Andersonstown Road. Belfast	Wednesday	1.00-4.00	Generalist advice, UC, PIPs, housing
Advice Space	208 Andersonstown Road, Belfast	Friday	9.00-12.30 1.00-4.30	Generalist Advice Face to Face

West

Organisation	Location	Days of operation	Hours of operation	Type of service
Falls Community Council (FCC)	St Comgalls, Divis Street belfast	Monday-Thursday Friday	9.30-5.00 9.30-4.00	Generalist Advice Face to face and telephone or virtual if required
Outreach FCC	Sally Gardens Community Centre, Glenwood Close, Poleglass Belfast	Wednesday (Other days according to events in the area eg health open days)	12.30-3.30	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Outreach FCC	Woodbrook Medical Centre- Stewartstown Road Belfast	Thursday Friday	12.30-3.30 10.00-3.00	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Neighbourhood Development Association (NDA)	Curran House Twin Spires, Northumberland Street Belfast	Monday- Friday	9.00-5.00	Generalist Advice Face to face and telephone or virtual if required
NDA Outreach	Divis Community Centre Ardmoulin Place, Belfast	Wednesdays once a month (1 st Wed)	1.30-4.30	Generalist Advice Face to Face
NDA Outreach	Welcome Organisation Townsend Street Belfast – now paused	Once a month as requested (Varies)	1.30 – 4.30	Generalist Advice Face to Face
SCA- Springfield Charitable Association	27 Clonard Cres. Belfast	Mon-Fri	9.30-4.30	Generalist Advice Face to Face
Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT)	2b Springhill Drive, Belfast	Mon-Fri	9.00-5.00	Generalist Advice and triage, multi-channel to include face to face, telephone and email advice.
USDT	36a Norglen Drive, Belfast	Tues-Fri	9.00-5.00	Generalist Advice and triage, multi-channel to include face to face, telephone and email advice.
Advice Space (Suffolk Andersonstown)	208 Andersonstown Road Belfast	Monday-Friday	9.00-5.00	Generalist Advice Face-to-face, Telephony, Emails,
Advice Space (Falls)	77a Springfield Road Belfast	Monday-Friday	9.00-5.00	Generalist Advice Face-to-face, Telephony, Emails,
Advice Space (Shankill)	Spectrum Centre, Shankill Road Belfast	Monday-Friday	9.00-5.00	Generalist Advice Face-to-face, Telephony, Emails,