

Bedfordshire Advice Forum

Promoting and supporting advice and information services in Bedfordshire

Annual Report 2020-2021

Bedfordshire Advice Forum is the network of social welfare information and advice providers in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

All members of BAF are not-for-profit organisations from the voluntary and public sectors that provide advice or information on civil legal matters.

BAF aims to:

- Promote and support the provision of social welfare advice and information services in Bedfordshire.
- Provide a forum for exchanging information on the provision, gaps and resource requirements of advice and information services in Bedfordshire.
- Deliver and support training, in collaboration with BAF member agencies.

Bedfordshire Advice Forum currently has 24 member organisations from across the voluntary and public sectors.

Our activities this year:

Bedfordshire Advice Forum has been involved in a number of initiatives over the past year, including:

- **Facilitating four online forum meetings** for BAF members to network and discuss the issues affecting their service users. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has remained the dominant theme throughout the year, with organisations sharing how they have adapted services to keep staff, volunteers and service users safe.
- Leading the **Bedfordshire Benefit Network**, bringing together BAF members, the DWP and the Housing Benefit offices from Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council, to discuss the specific issues relating to benefits, such as Universal Credit and disability benefits. Four online Benefit Network meetings were arranged in 2020/21
- Facilitating the **Central Bedfordshire Advice Strategy Management Group** and overseeing the Delivery Plan for the **Advice Strategy**, with financial support from Central Bedfordshire Council.
- Arranging two **online training programmes** on Universal Credit for local advisors, thanks to funding from the Harpur Trust.

The screenshot shows a presentation slide for a Universal Credit training session. The slide is divided into three main sections:

- WELCOME:** Welcome to BAF's first online training programme – which has been funded by the Harpur Trust. Programme Facilitator: Len Simkins. Programme Tutor: Elliott Stephenson.
- PROGRAMME CONTENT:** Universal Credit - split into 4 sessions.
 - Session 1 – Background and overview - Today
 - Session 2 – Calculations
 - Session 3 – Claims, awards and payments
 - Session 4 – Issues and disputes
- BAF TRAINING:** Winter 2021 Programme. Universal Credit Online training.
 - Session 1 (12/1/21)
 - Session 2 (14/1/21)
 - Session 3 (18/1/21)
 - Session 4 (21/1/21)

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BAF Website

Documents from BAF's meetings, training courses and projects can all be found at:

www.bedsadviceforum.org.uk



Advice Bedfordshire

Advice Bedfordshire is BAF's trading company. The company, which is a community interest company, oversees all of BAF's projects and trading activities.



Financial Summary 2020-21

Opening Balance: £2,003

Income

Grant Income	1,000
BAF Membership Fees	865
Project Management Fees	300
Other Income - Donation	755
Total Income	£2,920

Expenditure

BAF Facilitation Fees	1,700
BBN Facilitation Fees	750
Total Expenditure	£2,450

Profit/loss £470

Closing Balance: £ 2,473

Contact BAF

For more information on the work of BAF, email:

baf@cvsbeds.org.uk

Bedfordshire Advice Forum is supported by:



Community
Voluntary Service
Strengthening local social action