



Advice Link Network News

Making a Difference Together

Issue 30 December 2013



Important Strategic Review Day 12th February 2014, Blackpool CLC

for the Advice Link Network,
Welfare Benefit, Housing and Debt Advice Practitioner Groups,
Financial Literacy / Capability group and the
Community Advice Strategy Group

At a time of pressures on services, the meeting will include review of

- member and service user priorities for the next 12 months
- future activities and structures

This is your opportunity to have your say in the future of the Network, the practitioner groups, the Strategy Group and the Advice Link team.

Details & booking on Eventbrite: <http://strategic-review-day.eventbrite.co.uk>

Dates for your diaries, venues tbc

24/01/2014	Welfare Benefits Practitioner Group
28/01/2014	Housing and Debt Practitioner Group
12/02/2014	Joint Review Day, Blackpool CLC
For more information on the various network groups please contact Pam.	



**Seasons greetings
from the Advice Link team!**



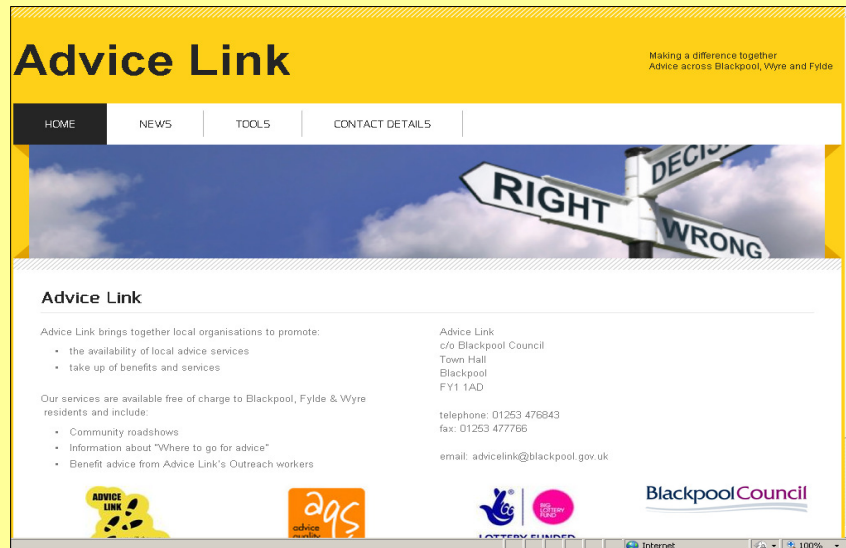
The Advice Link Network – bringing advice services together across
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde

New Year - New Look Website!

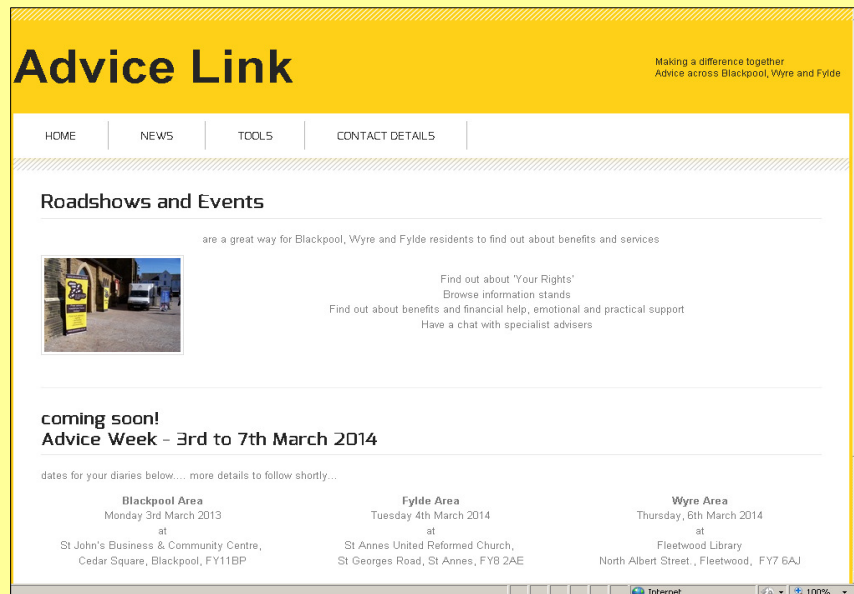
Following the changes to Blackpool4me, the Advice Link website has moved.
Add us to your favourites

<http://adviceLink.weebly.com>

About the Network



What's on



New Look Website Templates and Toolkits

Advice Link Making a difference together
Advice across Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde

HOME | NEWS | TOOLS | CONTACT DETAILS

Advice Link Network Benefit Templates

Template letters and DWP forms

These are examples to amend as needed. Please read the relevant tool kits and ask for expert advice if you are not sure how to use them.

Although every effort has been made to ensure the information on this website is accurate, it should not be seen as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. Benefits and rates are subject to change. The user is advised to have access to a current welfare benefits handbook.

Reconsideration template MUST USE FROM 28/10/13	A1	Appeal form GL24 use until 28/10/13	A2
Appeal form SSCS1 MUST USE FROM 28/10/13 pdf	A3	JSA Sanction reconsideration letter	J1
JSA sanction appeal form WORDING	J2	JSA sanction hardship form pdf	J3
ESA Points/descriptors check list	E1	ESA example ESA 50 form pdf	E2
ESA Letter re failure to return ESA 50	E3	ESA Letter re failure to attend	E4
ESA refusal after medical reconsideration letter	E5	ESA refusal after medical appeal form WORDING	E6
ESA Letter of support	E7	ESA medical questionnaire -see ESA APPEAL toolkit before using	E8

Done Internet 100%

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HOME | NEWS | TOOLS | CONTACT DETAILS

Check before it Changes (Welfare Reform)

You will have heard about Welfare Reform but what does it mean for the average person? Who could lose out?

Check that you / your customer / your client / your family are receiving everything they are entitled to by law under the current and future Social Security systems.

Check before it Changes - *Advice Link Extra* [Desk Aid](#), reviewed September 2013

Welfare Reform Briefing [Quick update](#) - November 2013

[The Benefit Cap update](#) - August 2013

[Personal Independence Payment update](#) - November 2013

Create a free website with [weebly](#)

Internet 100%

Advisers' Conference Blackpool, Wyre & Fylde 2013

Over 60 delegates from Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde attended the 11th Advice Link Network Advisers' Conference on 21st November 2013 at the Blackpool City Learning Centre.

Pam Cochrane, Advice Link Project Coordinator, opened the conference.

Morning Speaker topics included:

- ◆ Jobcentre Plus Update: including Universal Credit, Conditionality / Claimant Commitment
- ◆ Appeals focus groups
- ◆ Local Discretionary Scheme: Blackpool
- ◆ Recent changes to welfare benefit appeals
- ◆ Remaining Legal Aid routes
- ◆ Blackpool Council Blackpool4me
- ◆ Advocacy and Empowerment in the current climate



The workshops held after lunch included:

- ◆ Employment Support Allowance
- ◆ Money Advice Service
- ◆ Legal Aid Routes Still Available
- ◆ Financial literacy

A big thank you to the speakers and workshop presenters for their contribution and to all the delegates attending for their input.



Advice Week 2014

Monday 3rd March to Friday 7th March

Blackpool area

03/03/14: St John's Business & Community Centre

Fylde area

04/03/14: St Annes United Reformed Church, St Georges Rd.

Wyre area

06/03/14: Fleetwood Library, North Albert Street

More information and Partner booking forms will be circulated shortly

We appreciate help and input from you with advertising the event and spreading the word to the residents of Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde. Poster available soon. If you could help on the day this would be very much appreciated. Please contact Advice Link

Forthcoming training

Contact Advice Link for more information and booking forms

Courses for Network Partners	Provider	Date
ESA Basic Overview & ESA50 completion	Advice Link	31/01/14
Warm Homes for Older People	NEA	04/02/14
JSA & ESA Sanctions	Advice Link	06/02/14
New Appeal Process for most DWP Benefits	Advice Link	25/02/14
Turn2Us Maximising Income	Turn2us	27/02/14

Specialist Courses for Big Lottery Key Project Partners only	Provider	Date
Delays, Complaints & Admin issues	NACAB	21/01/14
Financial capability coaching skills for money advisers - specialist	IMA	29/01/14
Money Advice in Practice for intermediaries/generalistic	IMA	13/03/14 & 14/03/14
Disability, Mental health & Debt – specialist	IMA	25/04/14

Capacity Survey Results 2013 updated to correct error

As part the Big Lottery Project, during July & August 2013 Advice Link undertook a survey of organisations identified as providing specialist debt, welfare benefit or housing advice in the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre area.

Data provided indicates that:

- **over 38,000 enquiries were made in 2012/13** across Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde,
- **more than £14 million was generated for the community** on average a customer seeking benefit advice gained **£649**
- **on average a welfare benefit adviser generated over £903,000 a year for the community**

Thanks to the following organisations for their time and contributions to the compiling of this report.

- Advice Link
- Age UK Blackpool
- Age Uk Lancashire
- Blackpool Citizens Advice Bureau
- Blackpool Council Housing Options
- Care & Repair Blackpool
- Care & Repair Wyre & Fylde
- Disability First
- Fylde Citizens Advice Bureau
- Fylde Law
- Lancashire County Council Welfare Rights
- Lancashire West Citizens Advice Bureaux
- New Fylde Housing
- Wyre Council Debt Advice

The tables below show the number of full time equivalent **funded** advisers currently and expected from April 2014.

Blackpool	Aug-12 (Actual)	Aug-13 (Actual)	April 2014 (Expected)	Change from 2012
Debt	9.3	5.3	4.5	- 4.8
Benefits	13.4	7.19	7.89	- 5.51
Housing	1.4	1.56	1.56	0.16

Fylde & Wyre	Aug-12 (Actual)	Aug-13 (Actual)	April 2014 (Expected)	Change from 2012
Debt	2.6	4.2	4.2	1.6
Benefits	4.4	7.85	6.45	2.05
Housing	1.6	2.45	1.95	0.35

For several organisations provision in 2014 is yet to be confirmed as it is dependent on continuation funding from LA's and external bodies.

Across Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde 58 trained volunteers also provide hours of advice work equivalent to 17 full time workers.

The full report with details of participants and funding is available from Advice Link.

Volunteering in advice work

A seasonal round of applause! for the dedicated band of volunteers without whom the Network could not make the difference it does!

These are no ordinary people. Could you be as loyal and determined as they are? Could do what they do to support the advice agencies in Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde?

Is this you?

Time	Can you give a minimum commitment of 6 hours a week? For at least a year?
Attention to detail and eagerness to learn	Are you willing to undergo training, research, absorb and communicate information on rights and entitlements?
High standards	Can you follow policies and standards, in particular on confidentiality, anti-discrimination and health & safety?
An open-minded approach	Can you be patient and flexible with individuals - avoiding judgment and stereotyping?
Good communication skills	Can you listen to others, identify problems and communicate choices or solutions
Utter integrity	Are you willing to have a police check and provide 2 references?



LOTTERY FUNDED



If this sounds like it could be for you, let us know and please in the first instance contact: Pam at Advice Link
01253 476843.

***Don't take their advice for granted,
- you don't know when you might need it!***

