

ADVISING, SUPPORTING, EMPOWERING ADVICE STRATEGY

ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2016

Objective 1: To empower and enable people to help themselves					
	Priority		Key Actions	Timeframe	Measurement options / Outcomes
1.1	Provide services in a way that empowers and enables people to better manage their own affairs	1.1a	Frontline advice staff training to include financial budgeting capability training	By 31 March 2016	Advice clients are supported to develop budget and money management skills
		1.1b	Campaign to ensure advisors provide financial capability and budgeting support where appropriate to clients	By 31 March 2016	
1.2	Increase self service provision and its use	1.2a	Maintain information and advice web presence	By 31 March 2016	Advice clients are aware of self-service provision Increase 5% unique on-line users

Objective 2: To have an aligned and complementary approach to the delivery of advice services

	Priority		Key Actions	Timeframe	Measurement options / Outcomes
2.1	Collaboration	2.1a	Develop collaborative processes for use by advice organisations Develop approach for advice providers to introduce collaboration and/or mergers	By 31 March 2016	Effective collaborative processes are developed on mergers, and new delivery models including Reform of Local Government and used by advice organisations
		2.1b	Examine the role of the Department for Social Development/Department for Communities and other Executive Departments in working more collaboratively to better support a modern, enterprising, efficient and sustainable generalist Advice Sector	By 31 March 2016	Recommendations for collaboration from strategic review of advice services
2.2	Signposting	2.2a	Develop and implement a referral and signposting guide	By 31 March 2016	Advice clients are signposted/referred to appropriate organisations/agencies
		2.2b	Examine and define boundaries between generalist and specialist advice services, mapping linkages with key specialist organisations and making recommendations for future Department for Communities commissioning and business delivery arrangements	By 31 March 2016	Recommendations from strategic review of advice services
2.3	Deliver efficient services	2.3a	Funders and advice providers should align, simplify and streamline the present mechanisms to work closer, more collaboratively and avoid duplication	Throughout the lifetime of the Strategy	Arrangements in place to minimise duplication of services

Objective 3: To have a sustainable Advice Sector which maximises the impact of resources

	Priority		Key Actions	Timeframe	Measurement options / Outcomes
3.1	Enhance the sustainability of the advice sector	3.1a	Explore the potential for the generalist advice sector to become more sustainable, through social economy enterprise or other means	By 31 March 2016	Recommendations for sustainability from strategic review of advice services
		3.1b	Unrestricted advice service funding generation research to be shared with councils and an agreed new approach for delivery developed	By 31 March 2016	Explore unrestricted advice service funding generation processes with funders
3.2	Develop new and innovative ways to deliver current service more effectively	3.2a	Make increased use of digital and telephony services	Throughout the lifetime of the Strategy	Increase in digital and telephony service usage
		3.2b	Examine the effectiveness of current arrangements for supporting the generalist advice network, identify key risks and make recommendations as regards future delivery arrangements, investment priorities and for reductions in duplication	By 31 March 2016	Recommendations from strategic review of advice services
3.3	Develop a new model for appeals representation	3.3a	Research delivery models and produce options paper for appeal representation services	By 30 September 2015	Options paper produced
		3.3b	Examine arrangements for supporting advocacy and appeal representation making recommendations as appropriate	By 31 March 2016	Recommendations from strategic review of advice services
3.4	Develop opportunities for diversification and income generation	3.4a	Raise awareness and promote uptake of diversification and income generation opportunities among advice organisations	By 31 March 2016	Advice agencies successfully develop opportunities for diversification and income generation
		3.4b	Explore the potential for the generalist advice sector to become more sustainable through social economy enterprise or other means making recommendations as appropriate	By 31 March 2016	Recommendations from strategic review of advice services

Objective 4: To maximise accessibility to quality generalist advice services

	Priority		Key Actions	Timeframe	Measurement options / Outcomes
4.1	Ensure good quality advice services are available to those who need them	4.1a	Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard assessment process developed	By 31 March 2016	Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard assessment processes agreed
		4.1b	Ensure advice providers have in place or are in the process of completing Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard	Ongoing	Advice providers meet or are working towards Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard
4.2	Implement a Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard across the Advice Sector	4.2a	Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard framework is adopted and Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard processes implemented	31 March 2016	6 pilot advice organisations meet Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard
4.3	Ensure services are readily available and easily accessed	4.3a	Market availability of information and advice tools online and web presence	Throughout the lifetime of the Strategy	The general public has increased awareness of existing information and advice services, including on-line advice tools
4.4	Increase and promote the use of high quality digital and telephony services	4.4a	Scoping exercise to determine levels of digital and telephony usage with options for business delivery arrangements	31 March 2016	Balance achieved between digital/telephony and face to face services - recommendations from strategic review of advice services

Objective 5: To encourage the role of the Advice Sector in contributing to the policy development cycle

	Priority		Key Actions	Timeframe	Measurement options / Outcomes
5.1	Policy makers should seek contribution of the Advice Sector when developing, reviewing or evaluating policies.	5.1a	Central Government Departments and Local Councils should seek input from the Advice Sector in relation to policy consultations / community planning processes.	Throughout the lifetime of the Strategy	Evidence based contribution to policies
5.2	Advice Sector contributes to the policy development cycle, particularly in terms of independent evidence based input.	5.2a	Coordinate policy responses from the Advice Sector, provide policy briefings for the Advice Sector and provide evidence submissions	Throughout the lifetime of the Strategy	Evidence based contribution to policies
		5.2b	Demonstrate changes to government policy/practice as a result of policy and legal work	Throughout the lifetime of the Strategy	Evidence based changes to policy/practice

Objective 6: Supporting the Delivery of the Strategy

	Priority		Key Actions	Timeframe	Measurement options / Outcomes
6.1	Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard developed and implemented across the Advice Sector	6.1a	Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard training materials, implementation guidance and assessor guidance developed.	By March 2016	Advice staff (paid and volunteers) in 6 pilot organisations are trained to meet Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard
6.2	Ensure consistency and accuracy in the processes and systems within the Advice Sector for management information statistics	6.2a	Develop and deliver integrated training for all aspects of case recording.	By 31 March 2016	Consistent and accurate management information statistics
		6.2b	Agree approach for recording management information statistics	By 31 March 2016	Agreed approach for recording management information statistics in place
6.3	Ensure appropriate training is part of the Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard and that training providers should not duplicate or overlap their services	6.3a	Deliver required training for frontline advice service staff (paid and volunteers)	By 31 March 2016	Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard adopted; advice staff/personnel are trained to meet Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard

	Priority		Key Actions	Timeframe	Measurement options / Outcomes
6.4	Integrated Communications Strategy developed and implemented	6.4a	Advice Sector Communications Strategy in place.	By 31 December 2015	Changing advice environment is communicated to advice organisations, local councils and departments.
6.5	Develop volunteering within the Advice Sector	6.5a	Retain, recognise and develop new volunteering opportunities including discussions with Department for Employment & Learning	By 31 March 2016	Ongoing involvement of volunteers in advice provision.

Objective 7: Delivering the Strategy

	Priority		Key Actions	Timeframe	Measurement options / Outcomes
7.1	To develop an Action Plan to implement the Strategy	7.1a	Develop and publish an Action Plan setting out priorities, actions, key performance indicators and measurement options.	By 30 September 2015	Action Plan published
		7.1b	Regularly review the Action Plan and amend as necessary to reflect relevant changes to needs, priorities and circumstances.	Throughout the lifetime of the Strategy	Action Plan reviewed at Steering Group meetings
7.2	To establish an Advice Strategy Steering Group to oversee the implementation of the Strategy.	7.2a	Establish a Steering Group to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan and review it as required	By 30 September 2015	Steering Group established
		7.2b	Hold Steering Group meetings	As required	Steering Group meetings held
7.3	To monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategy.	7.3a	The Steering Group should ensure the implementation of the Strategy is monitored and reported on.	Throughout the lifetime of the Strategy	Steering Group monitoring and reporting structures in place
7.4	To put in place effective engagement structures to support the implementation of the Strategy.	7.4a	Review the current Council Liaison Group, Departmental Advice & Information Group and Government Advice & Information Group structures to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose.	By 30 September 2015	Council Liaison Group, Departmental Advice & Information Group and Government Advice & Information Group structures reviewed and in place
		7.4b	Hold Council Liaison Group, Departmental Advice & Information Group and Government Advice & Information Group meetings	As required throughout the lifetime of the Strategy	Council Liaison Group, Departmental Advice & Information Group and Government Advice & Information Group meetings held