

Advice Strategy Development Framework

Introduction

This is a suggested non-prescriptive framework for developing an advice strategy that is based on learning from ADP Consultancy's work with a range of advice partnerships.

It is based on six broad stages and provides a number of templates.

1	Develop rationale & aims	STEEPLE analysis template
2	Carry out supply mapping	Mapping template
3	Conduct needs assessment	
4	Identify priorities & opportunities	
5	Devise strategy	Strategy content template
6	Monitor & evaluate	

A case study through the stages

Stage 1 Develop rationale & aims

One of the common issues ADP identified when working with groups to devise a strategy was the importance of clarifying and agreeing a clear rationale for why the strategy is necessary and what it needs to address.

The steps that have been used to arrive at a rationale have included:

- Conducting a detailed STEEPLE analysis (a template is included in this briefing)
- Holding a one-day policy day with a wide range of stakeholders who can contribute details on their own priorities
- Working together to agree a mission statement and the key gaps and factors the strategy needs to address

For example, the mission statement for Advice Nottingham is:

Advice Nottingham aims to plan and ensure delivery of a co-ordinated citywide quality advice service in order to:

- Enhance social inclusion
- Ensure individuals are aware of and able to exercise their rights and responsibilities
- Identify and respond to social policy issues affecting the communities within the City

Free

Confidential

Independent

Impartial

Stage 2 Carry out supply mapping

Every partnership we have worked with has fed back that there is value in mapping existing services:

- Organisations learn what other providers are doing
- Mapping information can help to enhance signposting and referrals
- Areas of duplication can be identified
- Gaps in geographical, language, gender etc start to emerge.

A sample mapping tool is included with this briefing.

Mapping can range in the depth of information that is collected. As a starting point it will be useful to collect opening hours etc. Other mapping has included more detail on funding, case costs etc.

Stage 3 Conduct needs assessment

Needs assessment can be a challenging stage when developing a strategy. A range of methods can be used to assess need:

- Refer to previous reviews of need conducted by local authorities or other funders
- Devise surveys to circulate to a wide range of stakeholders
- Draw on indicative data such as deprivation figures
- Consultation with users or potential users can contribute valuable points of view.

One partnership conducted needs assessment via collecting a range of documents and reference points and consulting key stakeholders. They concluded that there was:

- A lack of advice provision in a number of areas of the City including areas of significant need
- Unmet need in responding to needs of specific client groups
- A lack of workforce development that has led to recruitment and staffing difficulties in organisations
- Barriers to accessing early advice as the current system is predominantly appointment based
- A lack of effective referral between providers
- An absence of co-ordination and planning mechanisms between statutory, NfP and private practice providers
- Inconsistent and incomplete collection of output and outcome data
- A lack of co-ordination of social policy issues to enable advice providers to influence strategic objectives or contribute to the development of effective public services.

This provided the basis for what factors the partnership wished to address in their strategy.

Stage 4 Identify priorities & opportunities

The data and information from stages 1,2 & 3 should provide the basis for the priorities that the strategy wants to address and the opportunities it wants to respond to.

The work that has been undertaken in the previous stages could identify a number of concrete deliverables that add value to service delivery, without having to identify additional resources. Immediate service revisions and developments such as enhancing referrals help demonstrate the commitment and passion to further develop advice services.

For example, over the course of weekly meetings, one consortium reviewed its information from the first 3 stages and identified that they wanted to reconfigure existing provision to deliver:

- Increased access to early intervention, preventative and quality advice that ensures disadvantaged individuals and communities are empowered to achieve their rights and responsibilities
- Enhancing co-ordination of advice across the City to create a seamless service accessed through comprehensive outreach and open door coverage delivered via face to face and telephone information and advice
- Consistent quality advice across all providers of social welfare law and ensuring paid and volunteer development needs are supported to achieve an effective workforce.

They also identified a number of opportunities to bring in new funding streams for advice and to work in partnership with key stakeholders.

At this stage, having collected needs assessment and supply mapping, it is useful to consult stakeholders and enhance the emerging stakeholder engagement.

Consultation can be undertaken through:

- Sharing documentation with stakeholders and seeking comment
- Holding focus groups
- Meeting one-to-one with stakeholders
- Holding a conference.

Stage 5 Devise strategy

The information gathered during previous stages needs to be brought together in a written document.

This briefing includes a sample contents sheet for a strategy.

Stage 6 Monitoring & evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation should be conducted throughout the stages to review that the process and resulting service delivery is effective. Monitoring and evaluation also needs to be conducted on specific developments. Systematic monitoring and evaluation is needed to assess whether the strategy is working.

STEEPLE TEMPLATE

Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor levels of physical health – 20% of borough population has a limited long-term illness
Technical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased access to services via ICT for individuals wanting to access information and advice via internet access in libraries
Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Higher than national average % of unemployment on Keats and Spenser estates ▪ High levels of rent arrears and evictions
Educational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High level of expulsions/exclusions from school locally ▪ Local report highlighting financial literacy and debt management skills as a priority
Political
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Strategic Partnership not fully operational and lack of engagement of local individuals in civil and political processes
Legal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential CLAC ▪ Increased court cases/evictions ▪ Contracting regime impacting on local solicitors
Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rumours of plans for shopping/leisure centre to be built on local housing area and fears that residents will be relocated

ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION MAPPING TEMPLATE

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS AND EMAIL TO BY

Organisation:

Named contact:

Address:

**Office opening times:
(not advice session times)**

Telephone No:

Fax:

Email:

Website:

SERVICES DELIVERED
(please cut & paste to add to if needed)



Service:

Location:

Day	Times		Additional information (e.g. drop-in/appointment only/specialist advice only, advice by volunteers and/or paid staff, geographical area covered, any restrictions, e.g. tenants/employees only)
	a.m.	p.m.	
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Other - please specify			

FUNDING INFORMATION
 (For April 2007-March 2008)

Please include any funding which has commenced during the year - use 'additional information' column to explain

Please cut & paste to add to if needed

Funder	Amount	Core/project	Period of funding (if project)	Restrictions (if any)	Additional information

STAFFING - paid
 (please cut & paste to add to if needed)

N.B. Include vacant posts
Show salary range in monetary terms AND pay scales

Post	Salary range	Hours per week	For adviser posts, give level, i.e. general help, SQM specialist, self-supervisor for SQM (specify category), etc.

FURTHER INFORMATION: -

1. Please state FTE advice hours per week for your organisation (paid/voluntary/both):
2. Do your staff who are approved staff under an SQM (at either supervised caseworker or self-supervisor level) also do work for non-eligible clients? If not, who does the specialist work for non-eligible clients and how is it quality assured? Is specialist work for non-eligible clients done to peer review guidance standards?
3. In each area of social welfare law in which you do not have an SQM: -
 - a. How many enquiries do you receive each year?
 - b. How many of those enquiries do you refer to providers with an SQM
 - c. How many of those enquiries do you deal with yourself and why (e.g. no SQM holder to refer to, work claimed as done at another type of specialist level as set out in paid staffing answers above)?
 - d. Of the enquiries you deal with yourselves, how many are given one-off advice and how many are taken on as cases? Are they dealt with in accordance with LSC standards, i.e. peer review guidance, and how do you ensure this?
 - e. Of the cases which are taken on, how many involve some sort of tribunal/court proceedings?
 - f. Of those cases, in how many do you assist with negotiation and preparation, and/or provide representation?

STRATEGY CONTENT PAGE TEMPLATE

- 1. Background to the Advice strategy**
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Summary of the strategy
- 1.3 The rationale for the strategy
- 1.4 Environmental analysis
 - 1.4.1 Role and impact of the sector's work
 - 1.4.2 Early Intervention
 - 1.4.3 Legislative, economic and political environment
 - 1.4.3.1 Demand drivers
 - 1.4.3.2. Procurement and structural changes, CLS strategy
 - 1.4.3.3. National, regional and local policy objectives
 - 1.4.3.4. Workforce development
- 2. The Strategy**
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Current provision
- 2.3 Drivers for change
- 2.4 The proposed service delivery model
- 2.5 Service delivery elements
- 2.6 Reconfiguration outputs
- 2.7 Implementation issues
- 2.8 Funding the reconfiguration
- 2.9 Infrastructure
- 2.10 Infrastructure Service Delivery support functions
- 3 Implementation plan**
- 3.1 Overview
- 3.2 Action plan
- Annexes**
- Annex A Advice members
- Annex B Advice statistics
- Annex C Sample terms of reference for strategic body
- Annex D Sample terms of reference for Advice Forum