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## **Government waste and red tape undermining advice provision**

**AdviceUK is today publishing its report *It's the System Stupid! Radically Rethinking Advice*, funded by the Baring foundation.**

The report explores the possibility of a bottom-up approach to improving advice services as an alternative to the Community Legal Advice Centres (CLACs) and Community Legal Advice Networks (CLANs) and focuses on advice organisations in Oxford and Powys.

The report main findings are:

The majority of advice organisations surveyed struggle to cope with public service administration systemic failures. Government procedures are the cause of XXX% of clients seeking independent advice. Chris Birch Chief Officer of Disability Powys, says: 'A large proportion of advisor time is spent working on behalf of clients to rectify decisions made by government agencies which are overturned on appeal. This has a negative impact on the capacity of our organisation to undertake other crucial work to improve the lives of our clients.'

Targets have a distorting effect on service monitoring. Example with stat?

A solution identified is the adoption of a *systems thinking* approach by redesigning advice services according to clients' needs rather than service specifications from central or local Government. Steve Johnson, Chief Executive at AdviceUK, says: '*We have to move on from the State shaping advice services with targets, contracts and marketisation. A better way to design advice services is to act on clients' needs.*'

AdviceUK is currently looking for more local authorities to pilot the systems thinking approach.

239 words

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**Ends**

14 advice organisations were surveyed for the report in Oxford and Powys

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**Notes to editors**

1. AdviceUK is a charity supporting community organisations that give free advice to members of the public. Established in 1979, AdviceUK is the largest network of independent advice agencies in the UK. Our members work in some of the poorest parts of the UK, helping people to solve legal and social welfare problems. Together, our members provide access to advice for over 2 million people a year.

[www.adviceuk.org.uk](http://www.adviceuk.org.uk)

2. The report, *It's the System Stupid! Radically Rethinking Advice*, is available to download at [www.adviceuk.org.uk/](http://www.adviceuk.org.uk/)

3. 14 advice organisations participated in the study, including independent advice centres, Citizens Advice Bureau and Legal Aid solicitors, between December 2007 and June 2008.