

Debt Advice

What we did

We awarded a three year contract to the Citizens Advice Bureau to deliver a Debt Advice Drop-In Service at the Gateways in Ashford and Tenterden, with a specific focus on those who are threatened with homelessness.

The service provides a dedicated referrals service to Housing Services at Ashford Borough Council.

How we did it

We met with the Citizens Advice Bureau manager and scoped out our needs in terms of the proposed services we wished to offer and discussed the project outputs we were looking to achieve.

A service level agreement was drafted and agreed.

Who was involved?

The Housing Operations Manager, Housing Plus Project Manager, Homeless Prevention and Strategy Development Officer, Senior Housing Options Officer, Ashford Gateway Manager and Citizens Advice Bureau.

Resources

The Gateway provides a dedicated space for the delivery of the new advice service at Gateways in Ashford and Tenterden.



Time taken

Once the commissioning process identified who would be offered the three year contract, a meeting was held to agree a start date. From scoping out the service to launch of the new service was approximately three months.

Lessons learned

Staff briefings were held for the Housing Options Officers and wider Gateway partners to help embed the new service. This helped raise awareness of the new service and get staff making referrals from the outset.

Cost

£45,000 over three years.

Additional Information

Staff providing debt advice have undertaken a Gateway induction, so they are briefed on the full range of services offered within the Gateway and can refer customers internally where necessary. They will eventually go on to use our Whole Needs Assessment tool.

For more information email: Housingplus@ashford.gov.uk

