

## Volunteering Advice

### What we did

The Ashford Volunteer Centre has provided a Volunteering Coordinator/Advisor who provides advice on all aspects of volunteering at the Ashford and Tenterden Gateway Centres for customers considering volunteering or for businesses looking to take on volunteers.

### How we did it

We took forward discussions with the manager of the Ashford Volunteer Centre to see how we might work more closely together, as we had made a commitment to develop volunteering opportunities within the project.

We were successfully able to negotiate with them, to provide an advisor for three days per week.

### Who was involved?

Housing Plus Project Manager, Ashford Gateway Manager and the Ashford Volunteer Centre.

[www.volunteering-ashford.org](http://www.volunteering-ashford.org)

### Resources

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

Information regarding the service is made available on the Ashford Borough Council website and the Ashford Gateway website.



## Time taken

Following initial meetings with the Ashford Volunteer Centre, a follow up meeting with the Ashford Gateway to agree space, the service was launched within six weeks.

## 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.

## Cost

The service is provided at no cost to the project.

## Additional information

We produced a specific leaflet to promote the Benefit Advice Service and used our own Housing newsletter to advertise the service.

Kent Benefit Partnership also attends our monthly tenant meetings offering benefit advice as part of the service level agreement.

The staff providing the benefit 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 of Whole Needs Assessment Tool.

For more information email: [Housingplus@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:Housingplus@ashford.gov.uk)