



FUNDING & JOINING UP SERVICES

Sandwell Council

Advice Providers Network

Delivering Better Outcomes by working together

Sandwell council has an active grants programme which includes spend of about £1 million each year on voluntary sector organisations that deliver free advice on issues such as benefits, debt, housing, immigration, employment. Six years ago, services were operating in isolation, with competition for funding, a lack of training, particularly for lone advice workers, and very low levels of referral. The [Sandwell Advice Providers Network](#) was set up with a focus on developing co-operation between providers, improving quality and providing free training and briefings. Any organisation that provides free advice in Sandwell is able to join the network. Over 15 independent advice providers are members including: Citizens Advice Sandwell, members of Sandwell Consortium, AgeUK, Cranstoun, EMCONET, Centrepont Christian Church and the council's welfare rights unit.

A group of managers from the Sandwell Advice Providers Network meet with the council lead on a regular basis to plan developments in service and respond to changes such as the introduction of Universal Credit. Our most recent achievements include a successful bid to the Controlling Migration Fund for the Settling Well project and a joined up approach to delivery of a specialised immigration advice service for residents by supporting advice workers across the network to gain their [OISC](#) level 1 / 2 accreditation.

The co-design approach has led to real improvements for residents: joined up services, better access, high quality advice and a real commitment to continuous improvement.

For further information contact:

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