

South Gloucestershire Advice Services

Referral method for South Gloucestershire Council Officers and Members

Thank you for considering referring your service user to us for further help. We'll need some information from you to deal with your request.

Before you refer

1. Do have your service user's agreement to this referral either verbally or in writing?
Y/N (Without this, we cannot discuss with you or contact him/her)
2. What is the problem that s/he needs help with?
Please give as much information as you can, **particularly of any urgent matters.**
3. What's the best method of contacting the person? Please make sure you have the **correct phone numbers/email address**, and the best time for us to ring.
4. If you are enquiring about a home visit, please explore whether this is really necessary, for example, ask if their GP visits them at home or do they manage to get to the surgery? If there is no alternative to a home visit, **please find out and tell us about any known security or safety risks**, eg potentially violent client, partner, children or neighbours, household drug or alcohol use, dangerous dogs, etc.

How to refer

1. Choose the most appropriate agency using the information overleaf. This might be according to the type of problem or because of where your service user lives.
2. Phone the agency and ask for the person to be seen by an adviser. Please be aware that you are unlikely to be able to speak to an adviser then and there. You will probably be giving the information to an admin worker who will not be able to answer technical questions.
3. Give the information you have collected about your service user's needs, and any other available information you are asked for.
4. The agency will then tell you what will happen next. This may be the immediate offer of an appointment, or of a ring-back either to yourself or the service user to clarify details or obtain more information. If a call back is offered, please do not feel this is second-best. It's often the most efficient way of gathering information and the most effective way of helping people.
5. If it's felt that your service user would best be referred to another agency because of the subject matter, complexity or urgency of their problem, we will suggest which partner might be better placed to help you.
6. While all partners will do their utmost to help people with urgent problems as quickly as possible, they may not always be able to see people within the required time scales because of pressure of work.

South Gloucestershire Advice Services

Age UK South Gloucestershire

01454 411707

We provide welfare benefits advice to people 50 or over living in South Gloucestershire. Our advice sessions are offered as home visits for those unable to visit local offices or use a telephone to speak to alternative agencies. We also provide an Information & Advice service, helping people find other services or providing materials such as our nationally produced factsheets. More information is on our website www.ageuksouthglos.org.uk, or call the general Information & Advice helpline on 01454 411707. For internal SGC Staff only – You may also call 01454 423810 which is a direct line to our Benefits team.

Avon & Bristol Law Centre

0117 924 8662

We provide specialist legal advice and representation in housing, immigration, employment, community care (ie where clients have problems accessing health and/ or social care services), welfare benefits, discrimination, mental health and public law. More details can be found on our website www.ablc.org.uk or by telephoning us on 0117 924 8662. We can also provide training sessions in our specialist areas.

Citizens Advice South Gloucestershire

01454 313099

Our advisers can help with welfare benefits, particularly disability benefits; debt problems including Debt Relief Orders and bankruptcy; money management and energy efficiency; discrimination; education; employment; housing and neighbour issues; consumer rights; community care & health services; legal processes & procedures; immigration; family & relationship problems; tax; utilities. Our website – www.citizensadvice.org.uk provides access to a wide range of information and self-help materials designed for use by the public, and trained advisers can help on our telephone **Adviceline 03444 111 444** (local call rates or free included calls).

North Bristol Advice Centre

0117 9515751

We provide welfare benefits advice, debt advice, representation at appeal tribunals, money mentoring, training courses and advice and activities for older people. We are located in Patchway, Filton, Kingswood and Lockleaze. We also provide debt and welfare benefits via telephone 0117 9515751 and on line advice. www.northbristoladvice.org.uk

Talking Money

0117 954 3990

We provide specialist debt advice at weekly outreach sessions in Kingswood and Yate. From our office in Old Market, Bristol we also provide energy advice, welfare benefits advice, financial capability and digital inclusion support, training courses and workshops. Clients seen for debt advice will have direct access to these services, and they may be available more widely in South Gloucestershire when funding and capacity permits. While the majority of our advice is delivered face-to-face, we also provide advice via our freephone 0800 121 4511 and on line at www.talkingmoney.org.uk.