



**Stroud
& Cotswold
Districts**

Advice First Aid

Advice First Aid (AFA) has been developed by local Citizens Advice offices as a service that provides signposting support to people within community settings, in locations away from an local Citizens Advice office.

Those office have reported that it has:

- Improved the access to and experience of Citizens Advice services for some isolated and marginalised communities
- Developed excellent two way relationships with a network of local support organisations and community leaders
- Built a model of community empowerment
- Provided a more flexible volunteering opportunity

Our internal research has shown that people with advice needs often reach out to a trusted local leader first, rather than contact Citizens Advice directly. When someone needs help, if the person they first reach out to in the community is an Advice First Aider, it can reduce the time it takes to access trustworthy information or make contact with an advice provider, and help take early action stop problems snowballing into crisis.

Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswold Districts are currently working with Feeding Gloucestershire and North and West Gloucestershire Citizens Advice to develop and deliver a one-year Advice First Aid pilot project.

We are working on a county wide approach that is tailored to suit the needs of our very different districts. The project would have two tiers as follows:

Level 1: an initial overview for frontline workers

Deliver initial first aid training to staff and volunteers in key community organisations. Advice First Aiders learn to identify the advice need eg help with money problems and to then identify the best way for that person to get help. The Advice First Aider will also learn how to support people to access the excellent national Citizens Advice website.

Level 2: higher level training with a direct referral relationship to a dedicated adviser

This would give Advice First Aiders more in depth training and these volunteers would have access to a dedicated adviser who would manage referrals and support the First Aider.

We look forward to being able to update you as to progress!