

# Bulletin



## PROJECT UPDATE: February 2015

### UNIVERSAL CREDIT

We now know that Universal Credit is likely to be 'live' for single first time claimants living in the New Forest District Council Area in Dec 2015.

Following on from a successful workshop in January NFAN has been working with NFDC to prepare an Action Plan to help residents with the move onto Universal Credit.

**'Preparing for Universal Credit'** is a fact sheet and survey aimed at people who will be affected by this change. It will be posted to over 5,000 households across the District in March, as well as being available on line and at our advice centres across the Forest. The survey will run for 6 weeks and provide valuable insight as to what support future claimants need.

We are also looking forward to a meeting with the new forest Job Centre Managers in February. One of the actions to come out of the workshop was to forge closer links....we will keep you posted.

### ASTF SPRING CONFERENCE

The Advice Services Alliance organised an event on 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015 to bring together all the Advice Services Transition Fund projects across the Country (there's 228 of them in all). Speakers included; Rob Wilson Minister for Civil society and Dawn Austwick Chief Executive of the Big Lottery Fund.

There was a lot of round table discussions focusing on 'how healthy is your partnership' and 'what will be the legacy of the ASTF project in your area'

Key topics included:

1. Diversifying income sources
2. Developing more efficient practices
3. New ways of giving advice
4. Catching people early

Lots of food for thought as we head towards our Minstead event on 23<sup>rd</sup> April when Trustees, CEOs and invited staff members will be looking at how these issues affect the New Forest Advice Network.

## Network Training

We are learning a lot with our training program. It is a great opportunity for staff and volunteers from our different organisations to meet and get to know each other as well as improve their knowledge.

The Mental Health Awareness course in January facilitated by MIND was extremely popular...to quote one participant:

*"Great trainer with clear manageable information in planned, structured sessions"*

*'Really informative and thought provoking, gained a much better understanding'*

*'It will make me more mindful in my work with young people who are experiencing mental health issues'*



### Forthcoming Training Events

**March** - Marketing and Media with Margaret Coles  
20.3.15

**April** - Equality and Diversity with Anna Strowger  
27.4.15

**May** - Support & Supervision of Staff with the  
Directory of Social Change 20.5.15

**June** - Mental Health Part 2 with MIND

To book please contact Debbie Grace at Community First New Forest  
Tel: 01425 482773 Email: [Debbie.grace@cfnf.org.uk](mailto:Debbie.grace@cfnf.org.uk)



## MEET OUR ADVISERS

As part of our Rural Outreach project we are developing some joint promotional materials to take on tour.

In our new brochure we will be highlighting some of the fantastic work our advisers carry out. Meet just one of them:

**Dennis. He works for the New Forest Disability Information Service, as their Tribunal Adviser.** Dennis' job is to help clients who have had their applications for Welfare Benefits refused and wish to challenge this decision. He explains; "People often come to us after having had a bad experience and feel that they are not being listened to."

Dennis understands the complex appeal system and offers a client centered approach to help people navigate their way through the paperwork that is required to make an appeal.

Dennis is one of five advisers, one from each NFAN organisation, featured in our new brochure.



**If you would like to know more about the Network and its plans, please email Alison Talbot at [newforestadvicenetwork@gmail.com](mailto:newforestadvicenetwork@gmail.com)**

\*The **New Forest Advice Network** is made up of Age Concern New Forest, Community First New Forest, It's Your Choice, New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau and New Forest Disability Information Service. Our project is to work together to see how we can improve access to high quality advice services for the people of the New Forest.

## Community First New Forest

