

Benefits Advice Shop

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Mark Isherwood AM
The Welsh Assembly
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
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20th December 2007.

Dear Mr Isherwood,

As you are aware the Benefit Advice Shop offers advice and assistance with benefits to clients throughout the North Wales area. We have our main office based in Rhyl, where we assist clients from across North Wales, an outreach office in Wellington Road in Rhyl and four outreaches in the Flintshire area, one of which is providing advice and assistance to the Polish Community.

We are finding it particularly difficult to cope with the consequences of EU integration; we are presently dealing with an increasing number of EU citizens coming from the A2 and A8 countries. Whilst we welcome these new clients, as they are hard-working people who contribute to the economy, EU Nationals need specialist advice with benefits such as Tax Credits, Child Benefit and appeals. We are running an outreach to the Polish Community in Flint; however the cost of this is unfunded and as a result can only be offered on an extremely limited basis once a month. Due to the amount of time it takes for translation and to identify the individual needs of the client there is a clear need to expand the time given to this project and to assist the EU Nationals coming into the main office. Our staff have had specialist training in advice-giving to EU Nationals as we identified the need in this area of work.

I would be grateful if you could provide us with help on the following matters:

- Is there funding on a national or EU basis which assists in relation to advice projects aimed at promoting social cohesion and integration. If so what is it and where can we identify the criteria to apply for this funding?
- Is there any other funding that you may be aware of which may assist us?
- Is there any funding available for training in order to deal with complex cross border benefit issues?



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