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SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL AND COPELAND CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU 2005/06 – 2007/08

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is an Agreement between Copeland Borough Council (hereinafter called “the Council”) and the Board of Directors of Copeland Citizens Advice Bureau (hereinafter called “the Bureau”).
- 1.2 The Council wishes to support the services of the Bureau for the purpose of providing an information and advice service operated within the aims, principles and policies of Citizens Advice subject to an agreed grant.
- 1.3 The Agreement is made by the Council in accordance with its powers under section 142 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. LENGTH OF THE AGREEMENT

- 2.1 This Agreement covers the three year period from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2008. It may be reviewed at any time at the request of either party but can be varied only by the agreement of both parties.

3. GRANT FROM COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

- 3.1 The Council will pay the Bureau £34,000 as a grant for the financial year 2004/2005 and £32,000 per year for each of the years 2006/07 and 2007/08. The grant for the first year has already been paid to the Bureau as an interim measure. The grant for 2006/07 shall be paid on the signing of this Agreement. The grant for 2007/08 shall be paid on 1st April 2007, or within seven days of that date.
- 3.2 The grant will be used solely to defray expenditure necessarily incurred by the Copeland CAB in providing the services detailed in this Agreement.

4. SERVICES PROVIDED BY COPELAND CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

- 4.1 The Bureau catchment area covers the whole of the area of the Borough of Copeland.
- 4.2 The Bureau will cover a core service of free, confidential and impartial advice to everybody on request regardless of race, gender, sexuality or disability.

Core Service: The Bureau offers drop-in sessions for personal callers and telephone advice at the following times:-

MAIN BUREAU

Monday 10.00am – 1.00pm (1.00pm – 4.00pm telephone advice only)
Tuesday 10.00am – 4.00pm
Thursday 10.00am – 4.00pm
Friday 10.00am – 4.00pm

CLEATOR MOOR

Friday 10.00am – 12.00noon

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EGREMONT

Monday 10.00am – 12.00noon

MILLOM

Monday 10.00am – 3.00pm

Tuesday 10am – 3pm

Wednesday – CLOSED

Thursday 10am – 3pm

Friday 10am – 1pm (Money advice and Welfare appointments only)

The Bureau will also provide home visits and out of hours appointments if necessary on request providing staffing levels permits this.

- 4.3 To ensure a consistent, high standard of service, all casework undertaken by voluntary advisers is supervised by suitably trained and experienced staff.
- 4.4 Additional services funded by other organisations but which are dependant on core funding include the following:-
- The Money Advice Service provides comprehensive advice to clients with debts (excepted business debts unless the business has ceased trading), including representing clients in Court in debt and repossession matters.
 - The Welfare Benefits project provides a caseworker who is available to visit clients who cannot access the Bureau for any reason (eg disability, caring responsibilities, ruralisation) at home. He can also provide specialist advice to clients in-bureau including representing them at tribunals.
 - The Disability Outreach Project provides a Caseworker who is able to visit clients who cannot access the Bureau for any reason (e.g. disability, or caring responsibilities) at home. This service includes representation at appeal tribunals where required.
 - The Legal Services Commission provides specialist caseworkers to advise eligible clients on welfare benefits, debt and housing. Specialist casework is undertaken with representation in the County Court and before appeal tribunals.
 - The Primary Care Project provides three weekly sessions in primary care settings, with referrals from Local GP's and other health professionals.
 - The South Whitehaven Outreach Project provides three weekly sessions in the Mirehouse and Woodhouse areas (Seathwaite). Note: SRB Funding ceases 2007
 - A County Court duty scheme is provided for possession cases in conjunction with Citizens Advice, Allerdale and the Community Law Centre
- 4.5 The Bureau is committed to providing a quality service to its clients. It has the Legal Services Commission Specialist Quality Mark in debt, welfare benefits and housing and the General Help Quality Mark in other subject areas. It has signed as a

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member of the Cumbria Legal Services Partnership (CLSP) and works within their agreed referral protocols.

5. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED JOINTLY

- 5.1 The Bureau agrees that it will, in conjunction with the Community Law Centre, consider the feasibility of providing a single telephone number for their services with clearly advertised times of availability and standards of response subject to a solution satisfactory to all parties to this SLA being agreed and will also consider other options as to whether joint working might see efficiency savings by way of improved service delivery.

6. CONDITIONS OF GRANT

- 6.1 The Bureau shall make any relevant management information available to the Council to enable the Council to satisfy itself that the Bureau's performance of the described core services are to a satisfactory standard, such standard being decided conclusively by the Council.
- 6.2 In particular the Bureau will:-
- Provide an annual report in January of each year to the Council including:-
 - The number of advice sessions held.
 - The number of clients who are resident on work in the Council's area
 - The number of new cases (including one-off advice) taken on for the Council's residents and workers during the statistical period, broken down by type (for example, Landlord and tenant, welfare benefits).
 - How the Bureau has continued to look for efficiency savings and improved services and an indication of unit cost.
 - Hold an annual general meeting and quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors. The Bureau undertakes to inform the Council of these meetings, to provide the Council with agenda and minutes and allow the Council to be represented if the Council so asks.
 - Publish an Annual Report within six months of the end of the financial year, and to copy that report to the Council as soon as it is published.
 - Maintain proper audited accounts and to ensure that funds are used only for the purposes for which they are given. The Bureau shall make any additional financial records available to the Council to enable the Council to audit this requirement.
 - Keep proper performance monitoring records (volume of cases), quarterly, which are common to Community Law Centre.

The Bureau shall remain a member of Citizens Advice and provide advice up to its standards. As a condition of membership, all aspects of the work of the Bureau will be reviewed by Citizens Advice every three years.

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6.3 Copeland Borough Council will work together with the Bureau, and the Community Law Centre to maximize their income from grants, donations and other sources.

7. DEFAULT

7.1 In the event of the Bureau defaulting on the terms of this Agreement the Council reserves the right to withdraw grant aid without further notice.

SIGNED.....DATE.....

On behalf of Copeland Citizens Advice Bureau

SIGNED.....DATE.....

On behalf of Copeland Borough Council