



Overview:

- **Staff News**
- **Contract Update**
- **Advice Service**
- **I'M IN! Project**
- **Prison Advice Service**
- **Tenure Sustainment**
- **COVID-19**
- **Receptionist/Admin**
- **Future Plans**



Staff News

We welcomed several new members of staff:



Allison Cairns, Housing Adviser
started 09/12/21



David Anderson, Early Intervention Officer
started 09/12/21



Elsbeth Lloyd, Tenure Sustainment Officer
started 09/12/21, 15 hrs/wk Jobshare



Janet McAlister, Tenure Sustainment Officer
started 13/01/22, 20 hrs/wk Jobshare



Hilary Denholm, Office & Compliance Manager
started 17/01/22



Dianne Cairns, Reception/Admin Officer
started 16/02/22

Contract Update

Historically the Centre has received grant funding from the Local Authority until 2012 when we had to tender for our Contract. We were successful in 2012, 2017 & 2021 in securing the South Ayrshire Council Contracts. Our current Contract (Homelessness Prevention, Advice & Advocacy Service) commenced on 01.09.21 and is for 2yrs +1 +1 years. Unfortunately, due to Contract changes our First Home Service transferred to another provider on 31.08.21. We fundraise and raise income by providing training courses on housing and homeless law and associated topics to Local Authorities, the Third Sector and interested parties.

Advice Service



I'm Gerry Tierney, Advice Team Leader and Tribunal Officer. We have had a busy few months with a noticeable increase in advice calls. My team are dealing with many issues including tenants threatened with homelessness due to large rent arrears, food and fuel poverty, notices of eviction, private rented repairs, anti social behaviour and many seeking new accommodation.

We have made applications for Crisis and Community Care Grants, charitable donations, fuel top ups and food bank vouchers to help our service users. We continue to make referrals to partner Agencies such as Pass It On to obtain urgent furniture and white goods.

In our Tribunal caseload we are currently helping a number of private tenants who are being asked to leave because their homes are being put up for sale and 2 cases involving bank repossessions. We are seeing an increase in evictions due to rent arrears and are helping where we can by sourcing grant funding to ease the situation. With the cost of living crisis pushing everyone into further poverty we expect those who are already struggling to need our help all the more. Many have been struggling with food and fuel prior to the increases and so we expect demand on our services to increase further.

We are here to help and provide a friendly, approachable service to anyone in need. David, Allison and I are always on the end of the phone and are working hard to make a real difference.

David Anderson, Early Intervention Officer for the **I'M IN Project** (along with Leica at SeAscape) to provide advice, advocacy and short-term support to private rented tenants facing homelessness.

David explained



"I am looking forward to working on this new project. I have 17 years experience working in advisory roles and I know exactly what a difference to people's lives these services offer. Early intervention is the key and I'm looking forward to helping as many people as I can over the coming years"

If you or someone you know is struggling in their tenancy or needs free, accredited, independent housing information, advice or advocacy please contact Ayr Housing Aid Centre on **01292 288111**

COVID-19

The Centre has responded to the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID 19) taking into guidance and advice issued by the Scottish Government and NHS and have adapted services so we can still provide help to those in need.

All our workers are now starting to hybrid work and we hope to be welcoming service users back to our office soon.

Future Plans:

Community Groups—please let us know when we can come along and tell you more about our services

HEY —we are looking forward to getting back to providing Housing Education for Youths (HEY) in schools

SIMS—Vodafone Sims available for service users with connectivity issues, covers 5 months data & calls to relieve poverty and increase connectivity.

Fundraising — this year we hope to resume our events & activities.

Contact us:

Phone: 01292 288111

text/WhatsApp: 07549 603895

Email: info@ayrhousingaidcentre.com

send a PM using our Facebook page



Prison Service



As we work further towards hybrid working Emma, Senior Prison Housing Adviser has been working from HMP Kilmarnock 3 days per week and Shirleyann has been back working in the Prison 1 day per week.

With the current rise in Covid cases within the Prison face to face appointments have reduced and is well monitored to ensure staff safety. We hope to increase face to face appointments over the coming months as it brings a better interaction with our service users and response times are increased.



We would like to thank our Partner Agencies within the Prison whom we work well with to ensure a complete and holistic service is provided for all.

Tenure Sustainment

Elsbeth and Janet returned to work with the Centre as our job share Tenure Sustainment Officers. We are pleased to have their wealth of experience and knowledge within the team again.

Due to our tenure sustainment service users' needs we have resumed face to face appointments and will continue to increase this over the coming months to encourage engagement, interaction and empowerment.

Dianne Cairns, Receptionist/Admin Officer



Since starting in February, I have been learning about how we receive and process new referrals and service users. It has been great to hear about how we help our local community with a wide range of issues making a vital difference to people's lives. I enjoy dealing with enquiries over the phone but look forward to our office being fully open soon to meet you all face to face. Part of our reopening preparation has included ensuring that our York Street premises are suitable for people with visual impairments:

