Reading Students' Union

Challenges for Advice Managers: Advice Managers Networking Session

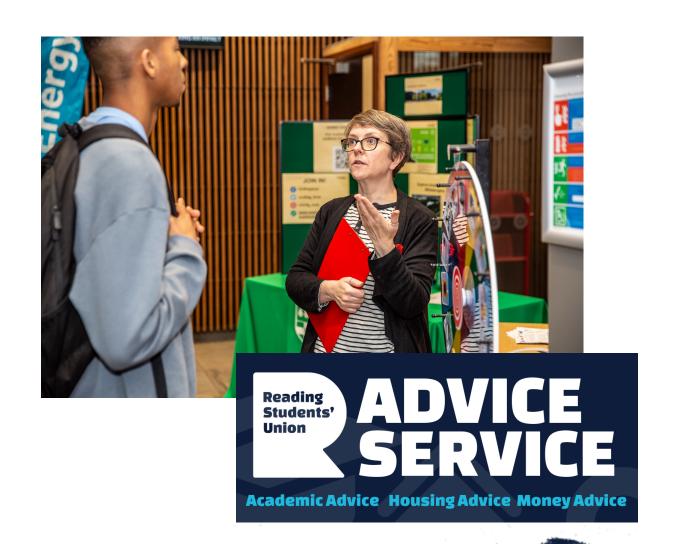
Clare Lowe
Reading Students' Union

Session Outline

- Reading SU context
- My experiences as an Advice Services Manager
- Discussion around challenges as an ASM
- Discussion around if an ASM group would be helpful, and what this might look like



- Worked for Reading SU since 2012
- Managed the Advice Service since 2014
- Prior to working at RSU, also worked for Oxford Brookes SU in a student voice role, and Thames Valley University in an advice role







- Team of 6 staff 4 full time, 2 part time
- Specialist Advice Service Academic, Housing and Money Advice
- Around 23k students at the University: just over 1k cases opened by the service in 2023/24
- Accredited by AQS and local advice network
- Registered with Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) for debt advice
- Members of AdviceUK, NASMA, Shelter
 & UKCISA



Clare's top 5 challenges she's had to deal with in the last 10 years....

- 1. Demand on the service / not having enough staff
- 2. Staff leaving / recruiting and training new staff
- 3. Organisational changes / changes in Senior Leadership
- 4. Keeping up to date with requirements
- 5. The University



Clare's top 5 frustrations as an Advice Service Manager



- 1. Staff turn-over
- 2. Not having the know-how to do something
- 3. Not having the time to do something
- 4. Having to leave things to the last minute
- 5. Not being told stuff



Some stuff that has gone really well....

- 1. Staff Wellbeing work
- 2. Seeing ideas come to fruition
- 3. Arguing for more staff and winning that battle
- 4. AQS
- 5. Being able to train and develop





Discussion:

- What challenges do you face as an Advice Service Manager?
- How have you dealt with these challenges?
- What collectively can we do to help support each other?
- What successes have you had?



Discussion

- Would a Network for Advice Managers be helpful?
- What sort of network would be helpful for Advice Managers?

