

Challenges for Advice Managers: Advice Managers Networking Session

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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



Reading Students' Union

ADVICE SERVICE

Academic Advice Housing Advice Money Advice



- 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?**