

# Bedfordshire Advice Forum

Promoting and supporting advice and information services in Bedfordshire

## Annual Report 2021-2022

Bedfordshire Advice Forum is the network of social welfare information and advice providers in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

All members of BAF are not-for-profit organisations from the voluntary and public sectors that provide advice or information on civil legal matters.

### BAF aims to:

- Promote and support the provision of social welfare advice and information services in Bedfordshire.
- Provide a forum for exchanging information on the provision, gaps and resource requirements of advice and information services in Bedfordshire.
- Deliver and support training, in collaboration with BAF member agencies.
- Seek funding for projects to develop advice services relevant to local needs.

### BAF is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022

### Our activities this year:

Bedfordshire Advice Forum has been involved in a number of initiatives over the past year, including:

- **Facilitating three online forum meetings** for BAF members to network and discuss the issues affecting their services. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic remained the dominant theme throughout the year, with organisations sharing how they have adapted services to keep staff, volunteers and service users safe.
- Leading the **Bedfordshire Benefit Network**, bringing together BAF members, the DWP and the Housing Benefit offices from Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council, to discuss the specific issues relating to benefits, such as Universal Credit and disability benefits. Two Benefit Network meetings were arranged in 2021/22. During the Covid pandemic BBN meetings were held online, and so the September BBN meeting was organised virtually. However, the second BBN meeting (in March 2022) was successfully held as a physical meeting – which was the first face-to-face meeting organised by BAF for over 2 years.
- Facilitating the **Central Bedfordshire Advice Strategy Management Group** and overseeing the Delivery Plan for the **Advice Strategy**, with financial support from Central Bedfordshire Council. After 12 years, this Advice Strategy support work ended in September 2021 when it was agreed to cease using the Advice Strategy structure in Central Bedfordshire.
- **Training** - with financial support from the **Harpur Trust**, BAF prepared and delivered an Overview of Universal Credit aimed at community staff and volunteers. An initial pilot online session was held with the HEART Academies Trust in Bedford (in May 2021), with a second online session for wider community staff in Bedford Borough arranged in July 2021. A total of 22 people from 13 local organisations benefited from the two courses, with very positive feedback received.

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## BAF Website

Documents from BAF's meetings, training courses and projects can all be found at:

[www.bedsadviceforum.org.uk](http://www.bedsadviceforum.org.uk)

Related Pages

- About BAF >
- BAF - Membership >
- BAF - Covid19 crisis - Local advice services >
- BAF - Forum Meetings >
- BAF - Training Courses >
- BAF - Benefits Network >
- BAF - Advice Bedfordshire >
- BAF - Contact Us >

Downloads

- BAF Annual Report 2017-18 >
- BAF Constitution >
- History of BAF >
- 20 years for BAF >

**Bedfordshire Advice Forum**  
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BAF was originally formed in 1997 as Bedford Advice Forum, initially only covering North Bedfordshire, but it expanded its geographical boundary in 2001 to include Mid Bedfordshire.

In 2007 BAF further expanded its membership criteria to encompass South Bedfordshire thus becoming **Bedfordshire Advice Forum**.

Following Local Government Re-organisation in Bedfordshire in 2009, BAF now covers the Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire areas.

Further details about BAF's development can be seen in a document outlining the **history of BAF**.

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## Financial Summary 2021-22

Opening Balance (01/04/21): £2,473

### Income

Grant Income	1,000
BAF Membership Fees	435
Project Management Fees	50
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£1,485</b>

### Expenditure

BAF Facilitation Fees	1,000
BBN Facilitation Fees	750
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£1,750</b>

**Profit/loss (for 21-22):** **£ -265**

**Closing Balance (31/03/22):** **£ 2,208**

**Bedfordshire Advice Forum is a network of over 25 organisations from across the voluntary and public sectors.**

## Advice Bedfordshire



Advice Bedfordshire is BAF's trading company. The company, which is a community interest company, oversees all of BAF's projects and trading activities.

## Contact BAF

For more information on the work of BAF, email:

[baf@cvsbeds.org.uk](mailto:baf@cvsbeds.org.uk)

In 2021/22 Bedfordshire Advice Forum was supported by:

