

Forest Fields Advice and Neighbourhood Centre

Annual Report 2022-23



Reaching out to the Community

Introduction

In shaping our objectives and strategy for the year 2022-2023 Forest Fields Neighbourhood Advice Centre management and trustees have paid attention to the following:

1. Its own **governing documents** (Articles and Memoranda of Association) and to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit including the guidance on public benefit and fee charging.

The Advice Centre seeks to raise money from its own activities in order to reduce its dependence on public grants. To this end it makes office and training room space available at competitive rates to like-minded community organisations and providers of complementary services. This ensures not only that the Centre is well used by all sections of the local community, but that it also generates sufficient rental income to cover a large part of its fixed operating costs.

2. **Local views and needs** expressed through the resident members of the Board of Directors (Trustees), customer feedback, organised consultation, and available data.

The Advice Centre board is made up of local trustees bringing their experience and ideas alongside specific expertise from the commercial, public and political worlds. This combination informs and oversees the performance of the Advice Centre's management and staff, and agrees the position of the organisation in relation to opportunities and risks. The consistency from year to year in the number of services we are able to offer, and the continuing growth in the

c) Specialist Advice Service targeted at New and Emerging Communities, covering Financial Advice and Information, Advice Guidance. 3 sessions per week with a total of 820 enquiries dealt with.

d) Ordinary Advice Service covering Benefits, Debt and Housing which is open to all local residents and people from all areas of the City. A total of 550 clients were assisted during 2022/23

e) During 2022/23, we represented 10 clients at Appeal Tribunals for Personal Independence Payment, Employment and Support Allowance and Tax Credits. We were successful in all of these appeals which resulted in backdated benefit being paid totalling approximately £24,000. Also each client received additional weekly benefit.

This totals over 2220 individual clients assisted directly by our advice and welfare services over the period.

Staffing and Volunteers

None of this would have been possible without the dedication and skills of our volunteers and staff. The Forest Fields Advice Centre has always been at the bottom end of the voluntary sector food chain in Nottingham. It has no impressive offices, no branded vehicles (or any vehicles at all), no media profile, and no paid management. Our only salaried member of staff is the Asmara Qureshi who works as our part-time receptionist and general assistant. Alongside her, Mr Ron Bell delivers all of our in-house and outreach advice services on a voluntary basis. He also composes our funding applications and maintains a relationship with outside funders which have been so helpful to us over recent years. Ron is assisted by Arifa Hassan, Nahema Farooq and Nassim Iqbal who all work in a voluntary capacity.

Our Trustees wish to thank Asmara and all of our volunteers for their dedication and hard work throughout 2022/23.