



**ASK US**  
Advice toolkit

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## **ASK US SESSION OUTLINE – GOOD PRACTICE IN DELIVERING INFORMATION - SESSION NOTES**

This resource is part of the Ask Us Advice Toolkit. For more information or queries on any of the topics covered in this toolkit, or to find out about training and consultancy the Ask Us partners can offer please contact [enquiries@1625ip.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@1625ip.co.uk)



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# ASK US SESSION OUTLINE – GOOD PRACTICE IN DELIVERING INFORMATION - SESSION NOTES

### Slide 1

Welcome, introduction and Session Aims

### Slide 2

Session Aims

- To make support workers aware of good practice in delivering information
- To improve information giving skills amongst support workers
- To make support workers aware of publicly available information resources

### Slide 3

Session aims

- Be familiar with Ask Us recognised websites and list 5 that a young person presenting in crisis could use
- Can identify 3 emergency/crisis situations
- Accurately identify information areas and list 5.
- Know when and how to refer, signpost and provide information to young people in crisis.

### What is a key issue?

When a young person comes in for an appointment, there may be a wealth of information that they give you, which you need to know and need to break down in order to co-produce an action plan to help them move forward in their life.

When we are supporting a young person to access information this process is more important than ever.

We need to breakdown this information and identify the Key Issues.

### Exploration

This is where we will look at the young person's issue fully.

Key Issues can look like this;

“I lost my job a month ago and I don't know what to do, I've got no money for food or rent and it's making me feel really rubbish about myself to the point where I don't get up until midday”

That one sentence tells us that there is a lot going on for the young person. Let's break it down to the key issues.



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Employment - Is there an employment issue here? You might need to check whether or not this was legal.

Benefits - Is this person entitled to benefits?

Mental Health - This person disclosed they are experiencing mental health challenges

Money/Debt - Does this person have rent arrears or any other debts because they have no money?

## Slide 4

What are the Key Issues?

- Benefits
- Employment/Work
- Debt and Money
- Consumer (Shopping including utilities)
- Housing
- Family
- Law and Courts
- Immigration
- Health

## Slide 5

Case study 1 Emily Activity.

Handout Case study 1.

In pairs/alone depending on group size. Look at Case study 1.

Read through and pick out the Key Issues they are facing.

## Slide 6

Answers to case study 1.

Now we know what the key issues are, what do we do with them?

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Is there an emergency? What is an emergency?

Finding out the important information doesn't have to be formal when trying to understand what is urgent.

When someone is in crisis, their whole situation might feel urgent to them, but you need to know where to get the information to check if someone is at risk of an emergency and how best to signpost, offer them information or refer them to the appropriate service.

You will need to check;

- What has happened?
- When?
- Is there a deadline?
- Is there a risk of losing their home/ liberty – This one is extremely important

Has a process commenced, or is the young people in a situation which, if it is not dealt with immediately, or within a short time frame, will have a detrimental effect on them?



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We've found that an important part of deciding next steps with young people is assessing risk. This means deciding if there are:

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- **Emergencies:** such as bailiffs; an eviction notice; court summons; any immediate threat to the person's home; disclosure of ongoing domestic violence and abuse. Time limited emergencies. Those which need action within a specific time frame. Benefit sanctions/removal of benefits, no access to money.
- **Consequences:** whether the young person's problem, if left unsolved, could lead to major consequences such as any other emergencies above.
- **Capacity:** is the young person in a strong enough emotional state to manage their issue themselves? are they someone who faces a whole number of problems; for example, debts or caring for a relative? It can be too much for a person to deal with without support; someone with a stress or mental illness may need extra help to address their problems.

Capacity might also be about you and your team's capacity to take on a case and how you decide next steps if you can't.

How capable is this person (of) in sorting this out for themselves if they have the right information? It's more empowering for the individual to have the information and tools to act for themselves.

Having identified the key issues and any Emergencies, the consequences and checked capacity you can move on to the next step of using the Key Issues to research for information online, within your organisation (s projects) and any printed leaflets in your office.

Remember; it's best not to try to remember information as it is changing all of the time. Always double check your sources.

## Slide 9

### Amelia case study 2.1

Handout Case study 2.1.

In pairs/alone depending on group size. Look at Case study 2.1.

Read through and pick out the Key Issues they are facing.

## Slide

Answers to case study 2.1.

### Summarising

During the appointment it can be useful for both you and the young person if you are able to reflect back to them their issue or summarise their issue.

This shows you have understood what they have told you about their situation. It can help disentangle a complex or confusing story and can link parts together so the young person can see their situation more clearly.

It can also help;



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- 
- Giving a fresh view of the situation to the young person
  - Concluding a discussion on a particular aspect of the problem.
  - Focusing an interview that seems to be getting nowhere, giving both you and the young person the chance to decide, “What do I do now?”
  - If the client is going into too much detail, you can use a summary to interrupt gently. “OK, before you go any further, can I just check that I’ve got this right?”
  - Helping you and the client move on to consider next steps.

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### Summary

Summarising, reflecting and paraphrasing back to the client to ensure understanding

### Don't Advise

Give the client all options relating to their enquiry. Information resources, websites, print outs, leaflets and referrals.

### Next Step

Prepare client for the next step, this could be a referral, signposting or Coproduced action plan. This available to download from the toolkit.

Slides for next steps:

## Slide 11

### Information

- The young person understands why they need the information
- The young person is able to use the information
- The young person understands how the information relates to them
- The information is up to date, accurate and relevant

By looking for information online with the young person you can also support them to develop a range of skills including:

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- Helping them to understand their rights and responsibilities
- Helping them to understand procedures involved in tackling their key issues
- Helping them to express their wishes and needs in the process
- Help to relieve their anxiety about the process

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### Signposting

- The client has everything they need to access the service you've signposted to. This involves:
  - The address for the service (If a physical location)
  - Map detailing how to get there
  - Contact details (if appropriate)
  - Online access (If signposting to online services)
- Details of where to access online services (library, drop in centre eg.)



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- or online access as well as information on how to get there.
- You've used the most up to date information about the service you've signposted to.
- The client meets the criteria for the service you've signposted to.
- The client knows what to ask for when they access the service you've signposted them to

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### Referral

- The organisation you are referring the young person to has all the information they need to work with the individual
- The young person understands why they are being referred and what to expect from the process (managing expectations)
- The young person feels happy to work with the organisation and/or professional they've been referred to
- There is an open channel of communication between you as the support worker and the organisation/professional. This helps the young person to feel supported from all sides

### Support Needs

There are a number of factors that may make it harder for clients to make use of the information that you give them about their situation and next steps.

These include:

- It is a new situation for the client and there is new jargon to understand.
- The information you are giving is not what the client expected
- What the information tells them about their situation doesn't seem fair
- The client might have difficulty with English language.

### Ways to help

- Avoid any jargon – terms like case record or financial statement and acronyms.
- When you are reading out or explaining information, be aware of your pace, not too fast.
- Break information down into smaller chunks, explain one thing at a time.
- Check confirmation of learning at more than one point, you could say "With this information how do you feel it will change your situation" This will show that they have understood the information and how it might positively impact their situation.
- Give written information from public websites and print these to take away. Highlight passages that are relevant to the young person, make them tailored for their information issue.
- Check for factsheets in other languages if needed.
- If they don't know how to use the internet, support person to help access
- You are showing the client the info source, not saying what they need to do Consider literacy issues, visual impairment etc

### Information Resources

Template letters on websites. Lots of the websites that are included in the Ask Us recognised websites have template letters to help you and the young person directly deal with organisations.



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Only use your name on the letter if you have consent from the young person and will need to state this in the letter you are ‘acting on behalf of the young person’ and include the consent form when sending the letter.

Otherwise the letter should be from the young person and can be completed with your support.

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Ask Us recognised websites.

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**Ask Us recognised websites** - Give an overview of each one and brief summary of what they do.

- [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- [www.bristolawcentre.org.uk](http://www.bristolawcentre.org.uk)
- [www.1625ip.co.uk](http://www.1625ip.co.uk)
- [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)
- [www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk)
- [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)
- [england.shelter.org.uk](http://england.shelter.org.uk)
- [www.gingerbread.org.uk](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk)
- [www.nextlinkhousing.co.uk](http://www.nextlinkhousing.co.uk)
- [www.lawstuff.org.uk](http://www.lawstuff.org.uk)
- [www.childlawadvice.org.uk](http://www.childlawadvice.org.uk)
- [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)
- [www.nationaldebtline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldebtline.org.uk)
- [www.otrbristol.org.uk](http://www.otrbristol.org.uk)

List of websites. Using your tablets/mobile phones/laptops Look at the questions on the next slide and using the case study for Amelia we previously looked at use your mobile phone to familiarise yourselves with which online information sources would be appropriate to signpost/information/referral for Amelia.

Handout action plan template – talk through the template.

10 mins

- What are 5 websites that you could give to Amelia to help with her situation?
- What are the most urgent key issues for Amelia?
- What could an action plan look like for Amelia?
- What local services could you signpost Amelia to?

Case study 2.1 Answers

5 websites: Citizens Advice, national debtline, next link housing, turn2us, OTR

- What is the most urgent key issues for Amelia?
- Council Tax, Rent Arrears
- What could an action plan look like?

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Template Action plan example



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Citizens advice, otr

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### Case recording

Recording information.

- What was discussed - exploration
- What was suggested - options
- Information sources – signposting, information, referral
- GDPR – make sure client was explained about consent to share
- Do not record opinions, describe facts, observations. Non-judgemental.

### Standards/best practice

- All casework is checked by a manager afterwards and any mistakes/ omission picked up
- Case checking at beginning of role – then peer review – e.g., 2 out of 10
- Monthly supervision
- Casework meetings Reflective practice