

Did You Know:

- ShARP began to deliver its services in 1982.
- Over the past two years ShARP has helped nearly 6000 people with advice on benefits, housing and finance.
- ShARP has 5 Members of staff but relies also on its wonderful group of volunteers.
- ShARP is a member of Locality and Advice UK ensuring we have our finger on the pulse for new opportunities in the regeneration of our area.
- **Would you like to be involved with ShARP?** We are always looking for new recruits! If so, contact Emma or drop into the ShARP offices.

What's Inside:

[Page 2](#)

Advice Update

Volunteer Story

[Page 3](#)

Feasibility Report

Board Story

[Page 4](#)

Outreach Update

Special Thanks

[Page 5](#)

Other Activities

[Page 6](#)

Advice Statistics

[Page 7](#)

Current Update

Financial Review

[Page 8](#)

Thanks to Supporters

Contact Details

How to Get Involved



Shiney
Advice &
Resource
Project

ANNUAL REPORT 2010—2011

A message from the Chair : Jessica Borley



The last few years have been difficult for all VCS projects less funding is available due to the economic downturn, just as people need our services the most. We expected the next few years to also be challenging. It was therefore a great relief that ShARP was awarded (July 2010), for a second consecutive period, one of the five Sunderland City Council contracts for 1st Tier Welfare Rights Advice in the coalfields region. Thus enabling this very valuable service to continue in the Shiney Row/Houghton Le Spring Coalfields area.

ShARP provides the only drop-in service in the city and although funded for 1st tier advice, our advice workers continue to provide specialist finance advice, largely on a voluntary basis. I would like to thank Co-Op Community Fund for their recent donation of £1,960 which has helped this specialist work to continue to such a high standard.

We have recently secured funding for 2 year period from the Tudor Trust for a Project Manager. I am happy to welcome Emma Frew who started with ShARP in August 2011. Her work will help to strengthen ShARP as a community anchor.

I would like to take this opportunity to also thank the staff, volunteers, and Trustees for all their hard work over the past year, without whom ShARP would not be here to help its community. Next year will be our 30th anniversary and we aim to continue a first class service to the community for many more years to come. Why not come and be part of it too.....

J Borley, Sept 2011

Jessica has been a Trustee with ShARP since 2007 and has presided as Chair for the last year.

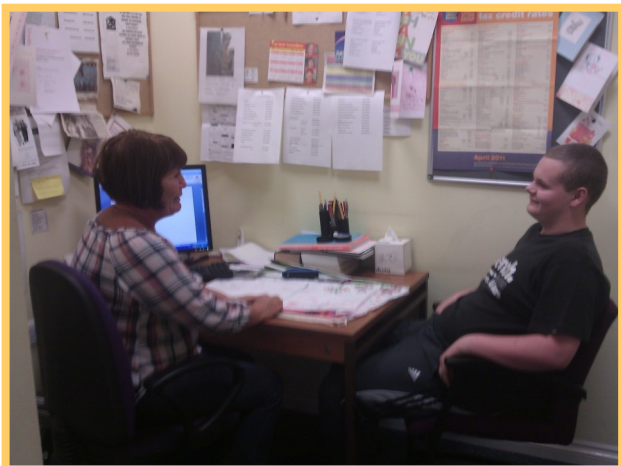
CLS Quality Mark

ShARP is proud to announce that it retained the Community Legal Services Quality Mark for Advice and Guidance in June 2010.

This was achieved after a rigorous inspection by the CLS, in particular a full audit of the way ShARP manages their caseload work. This will allow us to further develop our services to meet the needs of our clients.



We are very proud of this achievement and thanks is given for all of the hard work undertaken by the Board, the Staff, Volunteers and also from Lesley Hunter who was enlisted to support us in gaining the quality mark.... but ended up doing so much more!



Advice and Guidance: First Tier Welfare Rights

We deliver First Tier Welfare Rights, Information Advice and Guidance on behalf of Sunderland City Council, as well as specialist financial advice on a voluntary basis.

We hold 3 drop in sessions per week and provide 2 telephone advice sessions from the ShARP offices on Beatrice Terrace. In addition we hold outreach sessions in the Coalfields area.

In 2010/2011 we helped 2582 people with advice and support. The service includes providing advice on Welfare Benefits, benefit checks, and advising on debt and other finance issues. We also work with clients to help them better understand their income and expenditure and help them to manage their finances. We additionally support people with employment issues such as redundancy and also helped people with housing issues and homelessness.

Volunteering is a way of me keeping up my skills, improving upon them, and meeting new people.

Volunteer Story—Eileen Bewick Advice Volunteer

I have been a volunteer at ShARP for a year now and enjoy being part of the project.

I had been an adviser previously, but I still feel I have a lot to give, especially assisting with housing issues.

Upon coming to ShARP I found the whole ethos of the place to be friendly and welcoming and the staff have been so supportive, making me feel part

of the project from day one.

Volunteering is very different to being a paid member of staff. I feel that it is a very 'selfish' (although others will say altruistic) thing to do, as you can get so much out of offering your time, meeting new people, and being of assistance, there is no better feeling than being useful to your community.

I get so much satisfaction in helping people and its great when a client returns to tell us that they have been successful in sorting out their problems.

Volunteering is a way of me keeping up my skills, improving upon them, meeting new people, continuing to be in a 'work environment,' being useful and being part of the community.

I have always advocated that everyone should volunteer at some point in their lives, to give something back is indeed one way to take your life forwards in a positive manner. **Eileen Bewick**



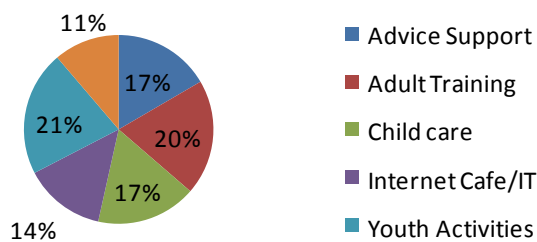
ShARP Feasibility Study

In April 2010 ShARP received funding through Community Builders to undertake a feasibility study. This looked at the potential usage of the building which we own. It also included a survey of local residents and business owners to find out what services they thought were needed in Shiney Row and the surrounding area to help the community.

We had plans drawn up by Mosedale and Gillatt Architects to redevelop the lay out of the building. The proposal included moving the café to the front of the building and 'zoning' areas, thus allowing ShARP to re-develop services so that it could realise its full potential as a community anchor.

The feasibility showed that ShARP is well known as the 'place to come for advice and guidance' but has the potential to become so much more.

Services the Community would like to see in ShARP



Suggestions from the public included:

- Adult training classes
- Child care provision
- Internet Café/IT access
- Youth Activities

(‘Other’ suggestion, 10% want evening opening times for activities).

We are currently exploring these as part of ShARP’s on-going business development.

A big thank you goes to Lesley Hunter for her support in leading on this consultation for ShARP.

A few words from a new Board Member: Shaun Hudson

My first year at Sharp, where do I start... From my initial plan to do some volunteering on a Friday morning, my involvement has certainly grown!

Alongside my current university degree in Law, Sharp has given me the opportunity to obtain experience within the voluntary sector working at a strategic level on the Board of Directors.

My executive position as Treasurer has allowed me to work with the finances looking at cost savings, funding and generally trying to improve the financial position of the organisation with the help of staff and the other Directors.

Sharp is now in a good position to develop our services, under the careful guidance of Emma and the Board, this will be a thriving period for Sharp allowing us to more greatly respond to the community that we serve.



Our Special Thanks goes to:

Michael Rooney

We would like to give Michael Rooney a special mention as he worked with ShARP as a staff member, and latterly as a volunteer, for many years. Unfortunately due to ill health he has had to retire.

Micheal has been a great inspiration to everyone who worked with him. He was always very knowledgeable, a great all rounder, very helpful and supportive in everything he did. He is a great work colleague, a good friend, and someone who the staff and volunteers always looked up to, he is greatly missed and we wish him all our best wishes. Thank you Michael.



Eric Reveley

Our thanks to Eric Reveley who after many years supporting ShARP as a Trustee is now retiring from this post. Eric joined the board over 6 years ago having retired and been persuaded by another board member (Clinton Leeks) to get involved.

Eric stuck with us through some very difficult times, staff redundancies, financial crisis and we really appreciate his commitment which included taking on the role of company secretary during the period that we had no staff. Eric was particularly good at ensuring we spent money wisely and we will miss his ability to ask pertinent questions. Thank you Eric.

Obituary

ShARP lost 2 of its long-standing friends this year, both played a supportive role in the development of ShARP from its beginnings in 1981 to the present day.

Elizabeth Porter was one of the founders of ShARP, she died in June this year at the age of 101. Mrs Porter was a key person in the founding of ShARP in 1981 both in terms of securing funding from the local authority and chairing the Steering Committee which established the project. At that time the organisation was known as Houghton and District Advice and Support Centre – a name which was chosen to stress that we were to be more than an advice service and that we would serve all of the former Houghton Urban Districts. Many of Mrs Porter's values influenced the development of ShARP – she believed passionately in democracy and political education, she valued local community organisations and she believed that women should play an active role in civic life. We are pleased that Mrs Porter continued to be associated with ShARP for many years after serving on the committee – in particular she formally opened our current building on the 27th of March 2003.

Stephen Shenton who died in January this year. Steve had volunteered in ShARP since the mid 80's when he moved to Herrington and set up home with Chris Parkin. His main role was maintaining our IT systems and was always on call to support staff in using computers. Steve was never a member of ShARP's management committee but his background role in supporting Chris and latterly Alex in their board roles was very important to our organisation.

Connect Course: Bridge Education & Training for Women

The Connect Course worked with 12 young mums and young women expecting children by giving them a range of taster sessions throughout the year. This included personal development skills, parenting skills, cooking, interpersonal skills, sex and relationship education, team-working and planning for the future. The course also provided crèche facilities which are located in ShARP and care was provided by Bridges Creche Workers.

When I first joined the course I was very nervous about meeting new people and learning new things. I have made friends on the course and feel more confident I can look after my baby—Connect Participant

1st 4 Kidz

1st 4 Kidz specialise in the provision of sports coaching and childcare to educational establishments in the North East of England.

1st 4 Kidz CIC worked with nurseries, schools, community groups, children centres, church and parish groups throughout the coalfields area.



Having a base in ShARP means that we get to know whats going on in the area and can link in with other groups, we hope to work more with ShARP in the future to develop new programmes for young people in the area—Daryl Smith



Shiney Row Credit Union

Shiney Row Credit Union continue to provide drop in sessions for local people to save and deposit. They provide loans and continue to help people in managing their money well.

Outreach Services in the Community: Eileen Bewick

Stepping into Michael Rooney's place seemed a daunting task. Michael had built such a good reputation with his advice work. However it has proven to be a good experience.

Many of the clients struggle with forms, which are complicated. Most do not have transport to travel and need services on their doorstep.

We dealt with 92 Clients in outreach sessions in the Coalfields areas. Sessions ran at Houghton Access Point, Easington Lane Community Access Point and the Hetton Centre.

The venue for outreach services is now held within the Doctors surgery and this has been ideal in bringing more people into the service.

ShARP facilities include a range of rooms that can be hired by the hour, day or year:

The large training room, seats 15-20 people, with interactive white board and internet access.

The small training, seats up to 8 people, flip chart and internet access.

We have office space for 1 or 2 people, telephone and internet facilities. Rooms can be hired on sessional or long term lease.

Our creche facility is for hire to community groups.

Our creative training room is a large room for up to 20 people for arts and crafts purposes (storage facility for equipment also available on site).

We offer affordable rates and offer discounted rates to local community groups.

Call Emma for more details on 0191 3856687

A word from our Advice Workers: Julie Lynn and Barbara Haswell

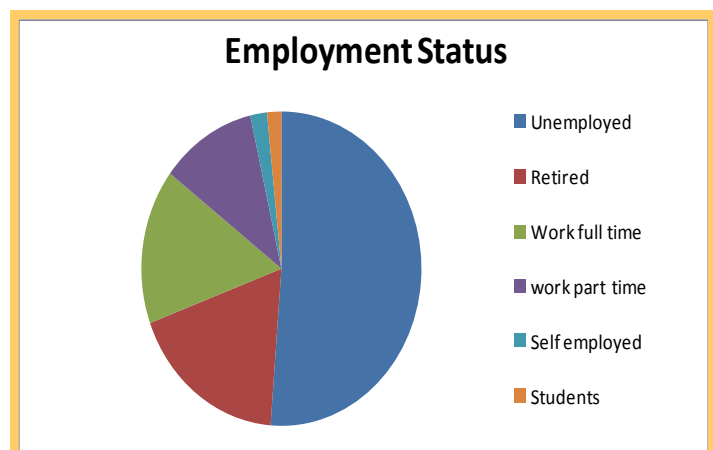
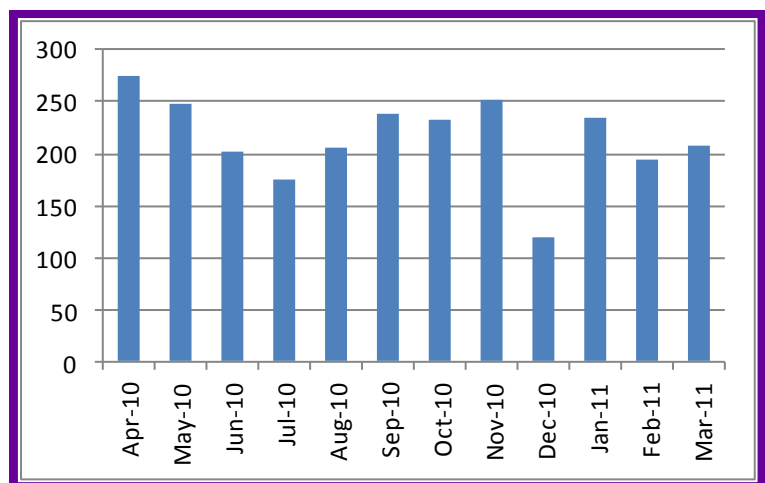
Its been another busy year at ShARP. We have been working hard to make our services as efficient and effective as possible, despite running on reduced hours from those in the past.

In 2009/10 we gave 600 hours of advice, and dealt with 3355 Clients. In 2010/11 our contract funding provided 300 hours of advice time. With the help from experienced voluntary advice workers Michael Rooney and Eileen Bewick, we were able to help 2582 clients, equating to a 54% increase in productivity.

Trends show debt advice has increased due to the hardening economic climate, and we expect further increases in demand in the coming months and years.

In the year April 2010 to March 2011. ShARP helped 2582 people with advice and guidance. Of the people supported:

- 225 young people under the age of 25 received support.
- 348 people over the age of retirement came to us for assistance. 38 of those were aged 80+. Our oldest client was 92.
- 278 clients needed support because of long term unemployment.
- Health issues feature frequently, 582 clients declared they had mental health, learning disabilities, physical disabilities or a limiting long-term illness.
- 51 clients were NEET, young people not in employment, education or training.
- 53 Ex-service personnel required support from ShARP.
- 1305 people were unemployed
- 407 were employed full-time
- 282 were employed part-time
- 42 full-time students
- 32 were carers
- 101 are lone parents
- 462 were retired (this includes those below retirement age)



ShARP The Current Picture

This Annual Report covers the period from April 2010 to March 2011. It has been written in September 2011 to be published at our Annual General Meeting on 22nd September 2011.

The last 6 months (April to September 2011) has seen the realization of the first stage our strategic development plan to grow ShARP into a Community Anchor Organisation.

This has come with the support of the Tudor Trust who, in June 2011, agreed to fund the salary of a Project Manager.

We are now in a position to expand the range of services that we offer.

In September 2011 we commenced a consultation exercise with current users to build upon the evidence collected as part of the feasibility study undertaken in 2010.

Our aim is to gain a more detailed insight of the types of activities/services needed in the area, for example 20% of those consulted during the feasibility study said they would like to see 'Adult Training' in ShARP, this consultation hopes to define what types of Adult Training courses people would want to access. This information will help to shape ShARP's future activity.

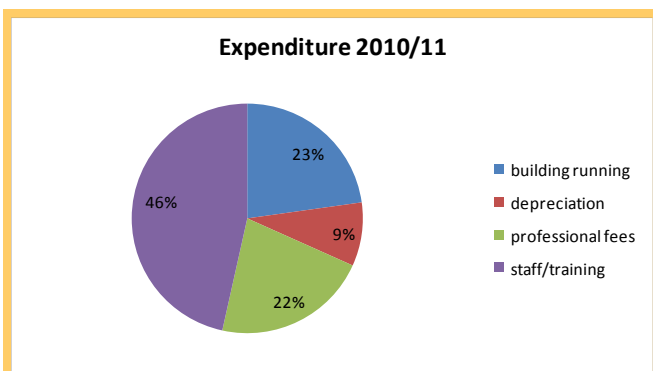
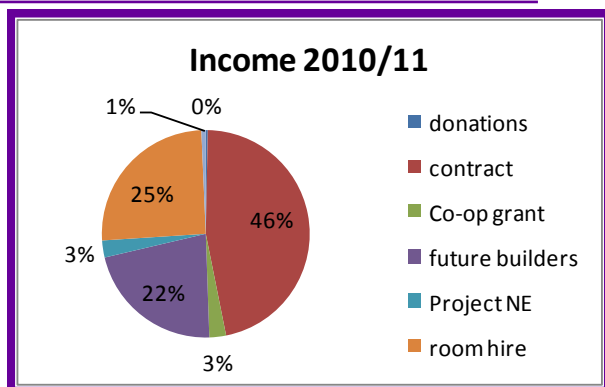
The next phase of our development includes

- having the building open full time (weekdays and evenings)
- Increasing the range of services
- Developing current resources—community café, crèche and room hire
- Developing sustainable income streams
- Staff development
- Strengthening the Board and attracting new members
- Raising the profile of ShARP
- Ensuring the building is fit for purpose (re-development) and is fully maintained

Financial Information

The cost of running ShARP in 2010/11 was £102,000 which included the costs of consultancy, feasibility study and the drawing of plans to redevelop the building.

Our income was £76,000 which mean that ShARP traded at a deficit in 2010/11. However this was an



anticipated and approved deficit as the Board agreed to use some of the reserves to enable ShARP to continue to maintain its level of staffing and services it provided throughout the year.

The Board is committed to developing reserves of 3-6 months of running costs.

ShARP would like to thank the following people and organisations for their continued support:

- Michelle Carrahar—Locality (formerly known as BASSAC)
- Lesley Hunter—Consultant
- Sunderland City Council including Susan Brown for her support as role of Coalfields Area Co-ordinator
- Bridge Project Tudor Trust (June 2011)
- Co-operative Fund, Future Builders
- Project North East Torgersens (Accountants)
- Hedley and Co (Solicitors)
- 1st 4 Kidz Shiney Row Credit Union

ShARP
Shiney Row Advice &
Resource Project
17 Beatrice Terrace
Shiney Row
Sunderland
DH4 4QW

Company number
4769232
Charity Number
1065786

Phone: 0191 3856687

E-mail:

general@shineyadvice.org.uk

Follow us on facebook
SHARP Shiney Row

Staff
Project Manager
Emma Frew

Advice Workers
Julie Lynn
Barbara Haswell

Administration
Balbinder Kaur
Micaela Hall

Volunteers
Eileen Bewick(Advice)
Micaela Hall (Advice)
Ray Henderson
(Administration)

Support Us to Support Our community.

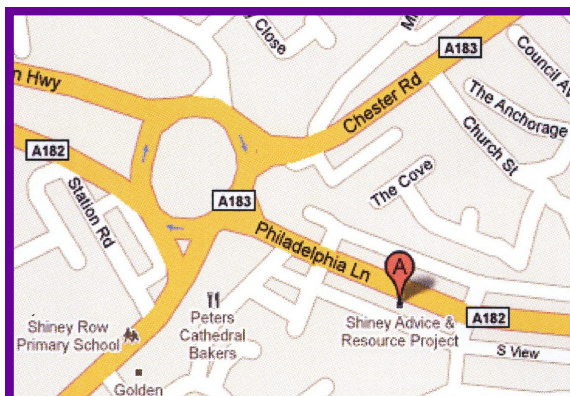
ShARP is an independent charity which relies on your support.

You can do this by:

- Donations,
- Events,
- Fundraising,
- Volunteering, etc

Please contact Emma Frew for more information or drop into the offices at Beatrice Terrace.

Every little helps!



Our Trustees Serving this year were:

- Jess Borley—Chairperson
- Chris Parkin—vice Chair
- Shaun Hudson—Treasurer
- Lisa Watson—Secretary
- Ray Henderson—Volunteer Rep
- Tia Patterson
- Alex Shenton Parkin
- Eileen Bewick
- Eric Reveley
- Liz Watt
- Steve McLuckie
- John Armstrong