Cheetham Hill Advice Centre
Service Standards and Expectations

General Principles

We will treat everyone with courtesy and respect and expect everyone who uses our services to treat us in the same way.

All our services are provided for free by suitably trained and experienced advisers, as well as by trained volunteers who work under the supervision of an experienced adviser.

We hold the national Advice Quality Standard and are independently audited every 2 years to check the quality of our work. We also hold IAA registration for Level one immigration advice.

We aim to make our services accessible to all sections of the community so if you have any particular needs in order to use our services please let us know.

Drop-in Services

Our reception opens Thursday from 10am. Here we can take documents from clients, book appointments, signpost to suitable services or help with their issues, resource dependent.

Appointments

In general, we only offer appointments to people we have seen in our drop-in service. However, we acknowledge this may not be suitable for those with significant illness or disability, and in these circumstances we may be able to offer an appointment after discussing your case with you over the telephone.

Our appointments are often booked up in advance. If we are not able to offer you an appointment within a reasonable timeframe or within the required deadline we will always try to find you another provider who may be able to take your case on. In some cases it may be possible to request an extension to the deadline.

Casework

If we have agreed to take on your case, your adviser will keep you regularly updated about any progress made with your case either by telephone or in writing.

Your adviser will not take any action on your case without your prior agreement. You will be asked to sign a Form of Authority giving permission for your adviser to act on your behalf regarding your case.

Comments or Complaints

If you have any comments or complaints about our service please ask to speak to the Charity Manager. Alternatively, you can write to them at the Centre. If you would like a copy of our Complaints Policy and Procedure please ask any member of staff or write to the Centre Manager to request one.

Telephone and electronic systems
We have secure ITC systems. These are protected via passwords and firewalls. We have an ITC company who advise us on secure systems and who are able to resolve any problems quickly and efficiently.

Languages
Within our staff team there are eleven languages spoken. We are able to provide advice in Urdu, Punjabi, Pushto, German, Malay, Cantonese, Mandarin, Bahasa, Hakka and English. We cannot guarantee that the person who answers the phone will speak these languages – we may need to take your basic details and then the specific member of staff will phone you back and advise you in one of the ten listed languages.

We are also able to provide an interpreter over the phone for you in other languages. There is no cost to you for this. We use a translation service which can provide advice over the phone. BSL interpretation is available. It may take a day or two to arrange an interpreter in the first instance. If you query is very urgent then please let us know as we will do everything we can do to arrange an appointment the same day.

Impact of telephone advice
During normal times we would usually offer you a face-to-face appointment. We know there are times when this is especially important – e.g. when the information you need to share is distressing or when the information is long or complicated. We apologise that we are not able to always guarantee a face-to-face service.

Please let us know if there is anything that would help you. This might be:

- Splitting a long appointment into shorter sessions
- Using a translator
- Sending you the questions ahead of time so you can see what we are going to be talking about
- Arranging a phone appointment at a time when you would find it easier to concentrate
- Provide advice via Zoom if you would prefer to see our faces and to show us documents and letters

Pease do let us know if there is anything else that would help you access phone advice or our main service provision.