

Citizens Advice Wandsworth Propel Project



Wandsworth

25/06/2025

Our Approach to 'Grow Your Own' Advice Model

**To help to unlock the hidden potential within our communities
— not only to grow, but to lead, inspire, and create lasting
change from the inside out.**

- Recruit from/within local communities
- Deliver flexible, accessible training
- Build capacity of small grassroots organisations
- Foster long-term career pathways in the advice sector



Context & Project Aim

To build a more inclusive, community-rooted advice workforce

- Create inclusive recruitment and training pathways by opening up advisory roles to underrepresented groups
- Embed community-led partnerships by partnering with community organisations
- Shift to person-centered advisory training by embedding lived experience in service delivery



Partnerships in Action

- Led-by-and-for organisations Mushkil Aasaan & Elays Network
- Local Citizens Advice partners (LCAs) in Brent, Redbridge, Enfield, Sutton, Hammersmith&Fulham
- Community groups including foodbanks, carers centres, homelessness organisations, faith communities



Building Community-Based Advice Services

A case study of Mushkil Aasaan & Citizens Advice Wandsworth (CAW)



Who is Mushkil Aasaan?

- A Wandsworth-based, led-by-and-for charity supporting vulnerable and underserved communities.
- To provide culturally sensitive care, advice, and advocacy that empowers individuals and strengthens local resilience.
- Rooted in trust, proximity, and cultural understanding — ensuring services are accessible, respectful, and genuinely helpful.



The Partnership in Action

- Joint recruitment of local trainees (recruited 2 trainee advisors)
- CAW delivered structured, face-to-face training
- Trainees returned to Mushkil Aasaan to provide advice and drop-in support
- CAW offered mentoring and capacity-building and organization advisory structure



What We Achieved Together

„Thanks to the Propel training and the brilliant support from Wandsworth Citizens Advice, we now feel confident in delivering a professional, multi-lingual service to our community.

Our walk-in sessions and appointments have broken down stigma and helped people understand and access their entitlements — no longer suffering in silence.

The training has empowered us to offer trusted, person-centered support, tackling complex issues such as PIP, housing, debt, and legal referrals — all through advocacy that is culturally aware and rooted in the community's language and lived experience.

This collaboration has helped us reach the root of people's problems, one form at a time — building confidence, trust, and real impact."

— *Naseem Aboobaker, CEO, Mushkil Aasaan*



Empowering Community Voices Through Person-Centered Training

Reshma & Enrico's Journeys

Citizens Advice Wandsworth & Local Citizens Advice in Brent and Redbridge



Reshma – From Full-Time Carer to Advisor

- I never thought I could go back to work due to lack of experience and caring for over 10 years for two SEN children. The project helped me learn, grow, and build my confidence. I truly enjoyed being part of Citizens Advice Redbridge and giving back to the community. I'm now working a part-time job that allows me to care for my children while building a career I thought I couldn't have. This project has been incredibly beneficial, and I'm deeply grateful for that."

— Reshma, former trainee and now part-time advisor at CA Redbridge



The Power of Opportunity: Enrico's Story of Career Reinvention

"Propel gave me a unique opportunity to pursue a career change and finally step into the role I've been striving towards since completing my law degree in 2016. After years in hospitality, this marked a real turning point — allowing me to align my work with long-standing aspirations.

The training I received was exceptional and truly invaluable. What made the experience even more powerful was being surrounded by like-minded colleagues who brought encouragement, diverse perspectives, and shared motivation.

I'll always be grateful for the opportunity — and for the trust placed in me."

— *Enrico, former trainee and now full time advisor at Citizens Advice Brent*



Lasting Impact of Propel

- Built collaborative infrastructure
- Scaled good practice
- Supported marginalized communities
- Made person-centered recruitment and training the standard



What We Learned

True inclusion begins at the design stage — when communities shape the work, power is shared, and support is flexible. Sustainable change happens when local delivery is rooted in trust and connected to the wider sector.”



Thank you

Kasia Kuczynska
Training & Project manager
Citizens Advice Wandsworth

