

## Association of ex-Service Drop-In Centres - ASDIC

### FRAMEWORK

#### Concept

1. There are a number of Drop-In centres around the UK which support ex-Service and merchant marine veterans and their families ('Service Users' SUs). Between them they offer social interaction, general welfare (eg financial and employment advice) and wellbeing, including mental health support. This takes place routinely under one roof, all at the same time and in an informal, relaxed environment. The Association of ex-Service Drop-In Centres (ASDIC) network aims to link these Drop-Ins together for their mutual benefit and make them more accessible to SUs.

2. ASDIC is strongly supported by the Confederation of Service Charities (Cobseo). Managed by Veterans Outreach Support (VOS), it has been established as a Cobseo Action Group within the Welfare, Health and Wellbeing Arena and endorsed by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund as part of the *Strengthening Local Government Delivery of the Covenant* programme. All members of ASDIC are expected to follow a common ethos as described in the code of conduct (para 8) and sign the ASDIC Membership Agreement (at Appendix 1). However, ASDIC does not seek to take away the independence of Drop-In but rather to empower it.

#### Objectives

3. The principle objective of ASDIC is to help Drop-Ins work together and thereby become more accessible to SUs. A secondary objective is to make it easier for state, charity and third sector organisations participating in Drop-Ins (partner Agencies) to work together, extending their reach and giving them more opportunity to offer their services. Drop-Ins complement hubs like TRBL Pop-Ins and Help for Heroes Recovery Centres, making their services more available, especially to those with restricted ability to travel. At the same time each Drop-In can retain its individual identity within the context in which it was set up, whether as a charity or subordinate to a parent organisation (eg NHS, County Council).

#### Steering Committee

4. ASDIC is overseen by a Steering Committee comprising representatives from Drop-Ins, partner Agencies and key stakeholders under a Chairman. Day to day management is provided by a General Secretary who is responsible to the Steering Committee through the Chairman.

#### Membership

5. To be eligible for membership, Drop-Ins should comply with the following:

- Open regularly, at least once per month.
- Offer support to SUs without charge.
- Have volunteer and/or pro bono component of staff.
- Have at least two Agencies in attendance (eg The Royal British Legion, Citizens Advice Bureau).
- Be a member of Cobseo themselves or be recommended by a member of Cobseo on the Steering Committee.
- Have been in operation for at least one year.

6. Interim Membership is being offered to all Drop-Ins for the first year (2018) as the Association develops, whether they comply with or just aspire to the membership qualification. It is then intended that Drop-Ins may apply to become full members and that partner Agencies may apply for Associate Membership. Applications for interim membership by Drop-Ins or Agencies should be made to the General Secretary, who will confirm eligibility before seeking approval of the Steering Committee. There may be a small subscription in due course depending on status.

#### Benefits

7. The benefits of ASDIC membership include:

- a. Use of the ASDIC membership brand, giving national credibility and status within Cobseo.
- b. Access to the membership list with contact information and details about the support offered by

ASDIC Drop-Ins UK-wide.

- c. Contact information and details about the Agencies attending Drop-Ins and the specific services they provide.
- d. Use of social media links with fellow members.
- e. A dedicated presence on the ASDIC website to promote the member's Drop-In.
- f. A similar presence via the Cobseo website and Veterans Gateway.
- g. Mutual support from other Drop-Ins to offer advice and stimulate best practice.
- h. Cross-referral when a Drop-In is unable to address the particular needs of an SU or when another Drop-In may be more convenient for an SU to attend.
- i. Conferences, workshops and/or regional meetings to share ideas with other members for mutual benefit.
- j. Facility to share relevant codes of practice, governance, conduct, outcome measurement and performance standards.

### **Code of Conduct**

8. Whatever their size or type (public sector, charity sector or private organisation), all ASDIC members will remain independent and responsible for their own conduct and governance. All members will be expected either to be a member of Cobseo, or to meet the general conditions which Cobseo would require for their overall ethos, culture and conduct. There will be wide variations in the way Drop-Ins are organised and one size definitely does not fit all. Agencies attending a Drop-in will be expected to work harmoniously together and it may be desirable to agree a similar code with them.

Drop-Ins wishing to join ASDIC will therefore agree to:

- a. Act with kindness and consideration to SUs.
- b. Work together harmoniously to deliver the best possible service to SUs.
- c. Signpost to other organisations when the support required is beyond their capability.
- d. Be covered by appropriate professional indemnity insurance (evidence required).
- e. Be committed to monitoring standards and improving performance.
- f. Where relevant, conform to statutory regulations for provision of clinical services (evidence required).
- g. Open at least once per month and publish opening hours.
- h. Conform to the highest standards of behaviour, conduct, language and dress in a relaxed and informal setting.
- i. Follow appropriate legislation for data protection, safe-guarding, equality and confidentiality.
- j. Never compete with other members or Agencies and in the event of an unresolved dispute enter Alternative Dispute Resolution (see Note).
- k. Share developments and experiences that may be of interest to other members.
- l. Maintain contact with the ASDIC General Secretary as appropriate.
- m. Display the ASDIC certificate provided and use ASDIC branding on promotional material.
- n. Produce a short (one page) annual report in the format requested.
- o. Provide appropriate training to volunteers (evidence required).
- p. Attend periodic ASDIC meetings and conferences as appropriate.

9. Should it become known that a member falls short of this code of conduct, the Steering Committee will reserve the right to revoke membership.

### **Note**

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Should a dispute arise, members agree that it will be resolved initially through ADR mediation rather than litigation, and that a mediator will be appointed within 28 days of notifying the General Secretary of the dispute. Failing this, the matter will be referred under the Arbitration Act.

### **Appendix**

1. ASDIC Membership Agreement – to be signed by all members.