



**citizens
advice**

**Winchester
District**

Annual Review 2019/20

About us

We're a local charity that provides free, impartial advice to people in need. Our trained advice volunteers and specialist advisers provide high-quality advice on almost any subject, helping people of all ages and from all backgrounds who are facing challenging times.

Our service provides a lifeline for thousands of local people each year, supporting individuals with benefits issues, housing and employment queries, debt, consumer issues, understanding family rights and more. Whatever problem an individual is facing, our friendly advice team is there to support them, sometimes over many weeks or months. They do this with compassion, kindness and without judgment.



Our advice team supported 6,336 people with 14,066 issues

Our advice led to £1,036,366 of income gain for our clients

A review of our service in 2019/20

Our clients

Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020 our service delivered detailed advice to **5441 individuals**. We also supported another **895** people with a simple advice query.

Of the people that we helped, **38% had a physical disability or a long-term health issue**. Our clients ranged in age from 15 to over 100, though the majority were between 25 and 60.



Issues

Our advisers helped resolve **14,066 different issues** for our clients. This means that each of the individuals we helped had an average of 2.2 issues.

The most common issues that people needed our help with were around **benefits and tax credits, debt, and employment**. Housing and relationship / family queries were also popular.



Impact

Our advice meant that we were able to generate an estimated **£1,036,366 in unclaimed income** for our clients largely through benefits applications and appeals.

We also helped to write off £193,529 of debt for these individuals, enabling people in financial difficulty to make a fresh start.



Advice delivery

Approximately one third of our advice was delivered face-to-face at one of five locations across the District. The rest of our advice was delivered by phone, email and webchat.

In March 2020 the coronavirus pandemic meant that we had to suspend all face-to-face advice and move all advice delivery to phone, email and webchat delivered from the homes of staff and volunteers.

Service developments

In June 2019 the Winchester office moved into new premises on Colebrook Street. The new office space works much more effectively for both clients and advisers.

We also launched a new initial check service, where clients with simple queries could be dealt with much more quickly. This has enabled us to support around 900 more people than the previous year.

Staff and volunteers

In January 2020 we welcomed our new Chief Officer, Dr Sue Campbell. Sue has worked in the voluntary sector for 15 years and brings a wealth of experience with her to the role.

We also welcomed five new trustees to our board this year and trained 11 advice volunteers.



We provide an excellent service for the local community

Of the clients who gave us feedback, 97% rated our service as good or very good



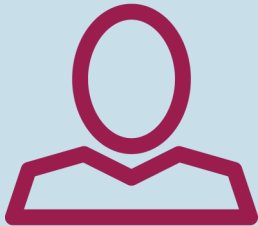
In total, our volunteers donated an estimated 15,000 hours of their time during the year



Once again we received a top score in our audit, gaining 5 out of 5 in all nine areas



We welcomed 11 new advice volunteers during the year to help deliver our service



Citizens Advice celebrated 80 years of service in 2019



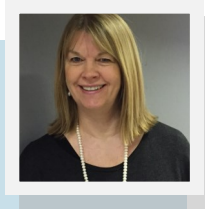
Five of our team were awarded a Mayor of Winchester Community Award for their services to Citizens Advice



Specialist projects

Money Advice Project

Our Money Advice Project supports Winchester City Council housing tenants who are in rent arrears. The aim of the programme is to help tenants avoid eviction and be better able to deal with their debts and financial situation.



“Meg has been a pivotal part of my mental health and financial issues recovery over the last few months.

The relief of knowing that I have someone on my side to help not only clear issues with creditors but also help to put a budgeting plan in place is indescribable. Being treated as a human being and an adult makes this service outstanding.”

Number of clients helped: **94**

Client income generated: **£118,505**

Debts written off: **£53,785**

Macmillan Cancer Support Service

A cancer diagnosis can have an enormous impact on the financial circumstances of an individual and their family. Our Macmillan Cancer Support Caseworker helps individuals secure the benefits they need to support them at this difficult time.



Number of clients supported: **245**

“Denise has given me so much time at a critical period when I’ve had to leave my job and face a very uncertain time.

She has made a huge impact already in that I have received benefits I was due and have more control over what I can do to sort myself out. She has been clear and extremely practical with her advice. I cannot praise or thank her enough.”

Debt Relief

Individuals can end up in debt for a whole variety of reasons, but if you're on a low income, have no assets and little opportunities available to you then freeing yourself of these debts can be incredibly difficult. We help thousands of people every year with debt issues and in a small number of situations we can help a client apply for a Debt Relief Order, which can clear them of their debts and make a fresh start.

Number of debt issues seen: **651**

Number of DRO's completed: **9**

Total debts written off: **£117,414**



"So informative, helpful and non-judgemental.

I feel much better now that I have had a step by step guide to resolve my money worries. I would fully recommend Citizens Advice"

Benefits Casework

Our benefits caseworker helps clients with complex benefits claims including supporting individuals through a benefits appeal or tribunal. These clients often have a disability or long-term health condition and can be extremely vulnerable. Our caseworker helps these clients gather the right evidence, understand the process and prepare as best they can for their appeal.



"I got the extra point needed for the enhanced rate for the care component. It didn't even go to a hearing! They just looked at all the evidence we provided. Thank you so much Kate for all your help in this matter. It was well worth our perseverance!"

Clients supported with an appeal: **18**

Clients assisted through tribunal: **10**

Success rate of tribunals: **100%**

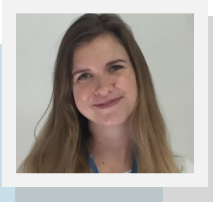
Help to Claim

Our Help to Claim project supports people to apply for, and successfully receive their first Universal Credit payment. The introduction of this new benefit has been highly complex, but by supporting people through the process we can gather evidence to challenge unfair processes and procedures. Of the 347 clients we helped with a claim this year over 30% had been signposted from the Job Centre or other agency.

“I've been declined by Universal Credit so many times that I wanted to give up. Citizens Advice showed me I shouldn't give up and everybody was so patient, kind and helpful. There are no words how thankful I am. Thank you so much!”

Number of clients helped: **347**

Number of issues dealt with: **503**



Hate Crime Reporting Centre

In the 12 months to April 2020, our volunteers helped clients with 129 issues linked to hate crime or discrimination.

Domestic abuse against a woman by a male partner/ex partner was the most commonly reported issue followed by discrimination linked to a disability.

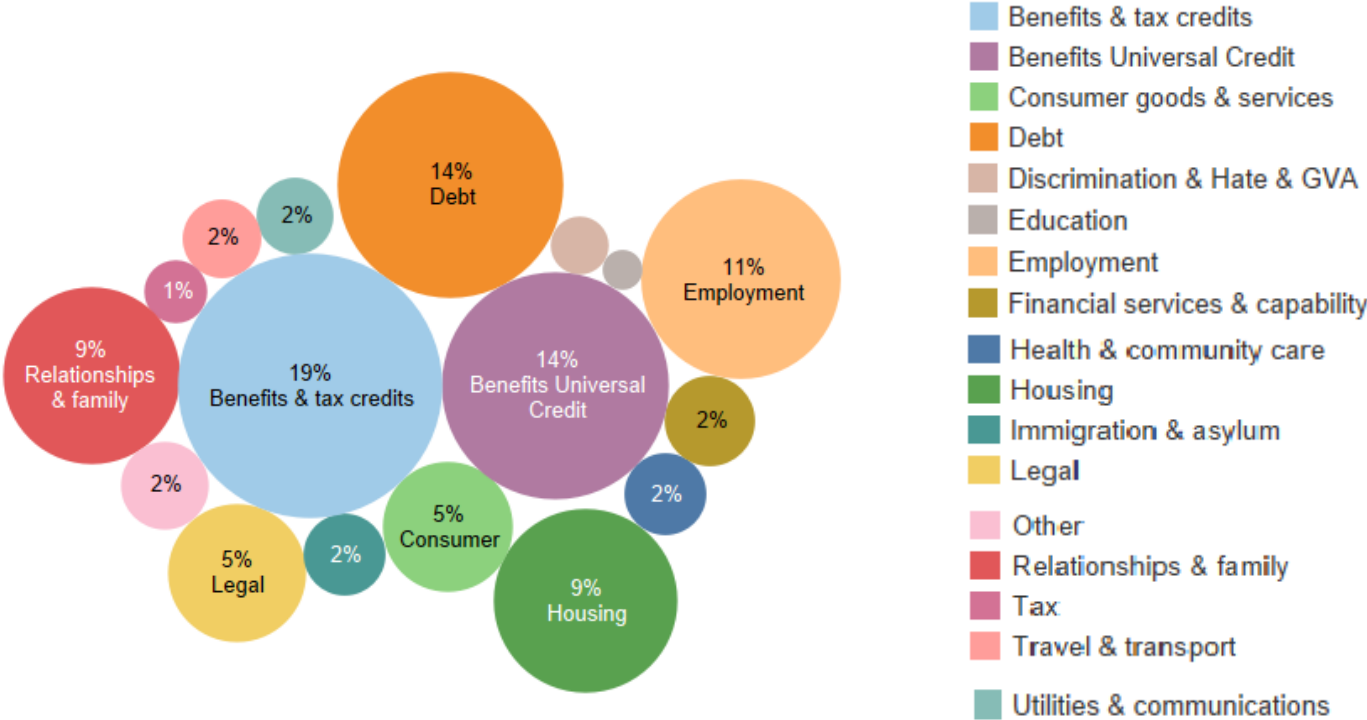
Research and Campaigns

We use our clients' experience to research and campaign for positive change locally and nationally.

This year we've collected evidence on claiming Personal Independence Payments and Universal Credit as well as problems with renting in the private sector.

Nationally Citizens Advice has helped make some positive changes to Universal Credit claimants and is pushing for fairer treatment for people who stay loyal to a provider (the loyalty penalty).

Issues we supported our clients with during 2019/20



Chair's report



Who would have thought last year when I was writing the Chair's report that we would now be in the middle of a global pandemic? Although the main impact came after the 2019/20 financial year, our new Chief Officer, Sue Campbell, had worked hard with staff in February and March (after only starting in January!) to prepare ourselves for serious disruption and closure. Her foresight and organisation meant we had an amazingly smooth conversion to home-working for all staff and volunteers.

We now offer a hugely efficient service via telephone, webchat and email, reserving face-to face contact - with suitable protection - for those who really need it. It has been an extraordinary achievement and I would like to take this opportunity formally to thank Sue and all our staff and volunteers (and clients) for adjusting so well to this change.

Earlier in the year, our former Chief Officer, Natalie Webb, announced she was leaving to take on the leadership of a larger local charity. It was very sad to see her go but we realised her career would lead her to take on even greater challenges. She achieved so much and we will be forever grateful for all she did for Citizens Advice Winchester District.

One of those achievements was to maintain the highest marks in the Citizens Advice major audit in autumn 2019. Our membership of national Citizens Advice demands a great deal and I know how much time and effort is put in to preparing for this audit every 3 years. To again be outstanding on every measure was a superb tribute to Natalie and all who work with us in Winchester District.

Last year we started a Help to Claim project funded through the Government to help people move on to Universal Credit, the new all-encompassing benefit which has been introduced nationally. This project, although demanding, helped us build up huge amounts of knowledge and expertise and are grateful that we can continue to support clients with this project, especially in the current climate.

A big event this financial year was the relocation of our Winchester office to the Winchester City Council estate on Colebrook St. This has been a tremendous success, and our thanks go to Peter Stokes, one of our trustees, whose hard work and commitment to sorting out both major and minor 'snags' was so much appreciated. Thanks too to the City Council for making the space available and all their support.

Mentioning Peter reminded me of the importance of the contribution of trustees. We were lucky to be joined by five new trustees towards the end of last year, and they have all been tremendous. Each has brought their particular skills to the role and they have managed that very delicate balance of support, and challenge, that, when done constructively and wisely, leads to even higher standards of service.

Lastly, there is a lot of planning at Citizens Advice nationally and locally for what we think will continue to be an enormously difficult time as we face the economic fall-out from Covid 19. We have experienced a major increase in demand for our services in the last six months and we think demand will rise even higher in the months and years to come. We will be ready for that but as ever we need financial support from the local community now more than ever before.

Rachel Aron

Chair of Trustees

Our finances in 2019/20

Winchester District Citizens Advice Bureau (a company limited by guarantee) Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended March 2020

	Unrestricted 2020	Restricted 2020	Total funds 2020	<i>Total funds 2019</i>
INCOME				
Core grant—Winchester City Council	202,000		202,000	168,000
Other income including grants, donations and fundraising	89,973	50,498	140,471	142,726
Investment income	778		778	1,174
TOTAL INCOME	292,751	50,498	343,249	311,900
EXPENDITURE				
Costs of income generation	22,600		22,600	22,500
Charitable activities	287,683	50,498	338,181	321,538
Governance	1,664		1664	1,297
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	308,283	50,489	358,781	345,335
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(15,532)		(15,532)	(33,435)
Net movement in funds	(15,532)		(15,532)	(33,435)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	194,016	8,138	202,154	235,589
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	178,484	8,138	186,622	202,154

All activities relate to the continuing operations. The statement of financial activities complies with the requirements for income and expenditure account as outlined in the Companies Act 2006. This statement includes all gains and losses in the year and all incoming resources and resources expended that derive from continuing activities. For a full copy of our financial accounts please contact us.

Thank you for your support

As a local, independent charity, our service couldn't exist without the support and generosity of the local community. From the organisations who have supported us with a grant, to the volunteers that give hundreds of hours of their time each year to supporting people in need. Thank you—we literally couldn't do it without you.

To make a donation visit our [Local Giving](#) page.

<https://localgiving.org/charity/citizens-advice-winchester-district/>



Special thanks to our donors this year

Winchester City Council	Councillor Porter	Curdridge PC	Swanmore PC
Citizens Advice	Councillor Huxstep	Denmead PC	Tichborne PC
Citizens Advice Hampshire	Councillor Hiscock	Durley PC	Twyford PC
Macmillan Cancer Support	Councillor Stallard	Hambledon PC	Upham PC
Hampshire High Sheriff	Councillor Warwick	Itchenstoke and Ovington PC	West Meon PC
London Legal Support Trust	Badger Farm PC	Itchen Valley PC	Whiteley TC
Simplyhealth	Bighton PC	Kilmeston PC	Wickham PC
Bishops Waltham Society	Bishop's Sutton PC	Kings Worthy PC	Wonston PC
Bishop's Waltham United Reform Church	Bishop's Waltham PC	Micheldever PC	
Police and Crime Commissioner	Boarhunt PC	Newlands PC	
Tim Gibbons Solicitors	Bramdean & Hinton	New Alresford PC	
Mrs G Walton	Ampner PC	Old Alresford PC	
Clive Thomsett	Cheriton PC	Oliver's Battery PC	
Lucy Grafen	Colden Common PC	Owslebury PC	
Councillor Tod	Corhampton & Meonstoke PC	Shedfield PC	
	Crawley PC	Sparsholt PC	

Citizens Advice Winchester District

Winchester City Office

City Offices, Colebrook Street,
Winchester SO23 9LJ

Monday 10:00 - 16:00

Tuesday 10:00 - 13:00

Wednesday 10:00 - 16:00

Thursday 10:00 - 16:00

Friday 10:00 - 13:00

Bishop's Waltham Office

Well House, 2 Brook Street, SO32 1AX

Monday 10:00 - 14:00

Wednesday 10:00 - 14:00

Friday 10.00 - 14.00

Outreach services

Alresford GP Surgery, Monday 13:00-15:00

Denmead Community Centre, Tuesday 09.30-11:30

The Wickham Centre, Tuesday 12:30-14:30

HMP Winchester, (prisoners only) Monday 14:00-16:00



0808 278 7861 (open Mon to Fri 10am-4pm)



advice@cawinchesterdistrict.org.uk



www.citizensadvicewinchester.org.uk



Please note our usual drop-in and outreach services are not currently available due to Covid. Please call or email us for advice.

