

**citizens
advice**

Shropshire

Impact report 2016/17



Fletcher House, 15 College Hill, Shrewsbury SY1 1LY

Charity registration number 1085220. Vat number 752 7807 10.
Company limited by guarantee. Registered number 4099352 England,

75+ years of Citizens Advice Shropshire

We provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

Anyone can have a problem



Nearly 3 in 4

of our clients said their problem affected their lives, including causing anxiety and financial difficulty



1 in 2

of our face-to-face clients have low confidence about taking action on their money matters

Who we helped



7,481 people

helped face to face, by phone, or by letter



22,499

issues

people sought our help with

How we do this



12 locations

where we provide free and independent support



104

dedicated local staff and volunteers



£420,372

estimated worth of donated hours by our 69 volunteers

The difference this makes



2 in every 3

clients had their problem solved



4 in 5

clients said advice improved their lives, including reducing stress and improving finances



90%

of our clients reported satisfaction with the overall service

Our principal activities are:

to provide the advice people need for the problems they face



to improve the policies that affect people's lives



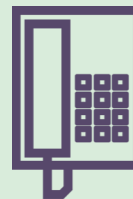
'You listened to what I said at a time when I couldn't think straight'

- client

All of this benefits individuals and society

Why people come to us - the difference we make

Everyone experiences problems - sometimes they can be quickly resolved, other times it's not that simple. More complex problems are rarely neatly packaged up as a single problem - often the effect of one problem can be the cause of another. We know for our 1,197 clients with benefit issues 18% also have debt issues, 10% have employment issues and 10% have housing issues.



Adviceline: **03444 99 11 00**

Text relay: **03444 11 14 44**

www.cabshropshire.org.uk

Sharon's story (names and some details have been changed to maintain anonymity)

Sharon and her two sons live in Local Authority housing. Sharon's sons Carl and Josh have autism and epilepsy respectively, as well as other health problems. Sharon told us her family had been subject to disability hate crime and incidents in the form of harassment and anti-social behaviour for the past five years, and despite moving around the county they experience regular incidents from a group of young people living in their area.

The continuing harassment and threatening behaviour has had a devastating effect on the family. Josh has twice had epileptic seizures as a result of being chased, and is currently unable to work because of stress. Carl finds the taunting unbearable, and struggles to stop himself rushing outside and confronting his harassers. The strain is making him very upset and on edge and this is affecting his behaviour and relationship with his family. Sharon told us she is keeping a diary and has reported incidents to the police and local authority using various channels but with no effect.

How we helped

The volunteer adviser recorded this all in an evidence form/case study and made an appointment with Sharon to report the latest incident to the police. This evidence form was read by our Research and Campaigns Officer, who attends the Shropshire Together Hate Crime Reporting group (which includes public and voluntary organisations) where we regularly meet with a contact from West Mercia police who monitors all the Hate Crime reports from the county. Hate Crime reporting is a big priority countywide in Shropshire so it was surprising to encounter a client telling us they had reported incidents to the police but hadn't had any contact or resolution from them.

We obtained a form of authority from Sharon, allowing us to speak to the police on her behalf and find out what action they had taken and to understand why Sharon had remained feeling unsupported. We had concerns that something was not functioning in the Hate Crime reporting process which could be a very big problem for our clients and the wider community.

The police checked their databases for any records of Hate Crime reports Sharon had made over the last year, but couldn't find any. They looked for any other contact they'd had with Sharon and could see a log of a phone call from the client reporting Hate Crime/harassment directly to the police earlier in the year, but this had not been marked with a Hate Crime tag. This meant it was not flagged on the system the way it should have been for the appropriate processes could be carried out.



How we helped

The police were also surprised there was no record of the report made through Truevision because that is regarded as a very reliable system. The report may not have been sent through to West Mercia police, because anyone reporting using this method must tick a box to say it is ok to forward the information to the police. If this box isn't ticked, the police do not receive an anonymous summary, they receive no information at all, it will just be logged as a statistic on a national database. This means that the local police can't do anything to help - no investigation, and no resolution for the victim. Sharon may have misunderstood what this meant and have ticked the wrong box as she was clear she did want the police involved.

- As a result of the evidence form being completed and a good relationship existing through partnership work on Hate Crime countywide, the following actions happened to help Sharon and her family
- The police contacted Sharon and provided her with direct contact information in case of future incidents or if further support was needed
- The Safer Neighbourhoods' team were involved
- The police investigated the possibility of getting a risk management assessment done for Sharon and her family
- The police will make sure any other instances (Sharon had been keeping a diary) that should have been recorded previously are now properly recorded with the police
- The police made sure Sharon is placed on their Hate Crime victim personal 'watch list' so any future reports are made available to the right department, regardless of how they are tagged
- Through this intervention and putting the processes right for the victim, there will be more help in place for the client and these actions could lead to the perpetrators being prosecuted and ultimately ending the harassment.

Supporting victims and stamping out hate

As a third party Hate Crime reporting centre we know that hate incidents leave a devastating impact on individuals, families and the wider community. We help people to report directly to the police or anonymously, and provide generalist advice about hate, helping people explore their options and support them to take action. Most people simply want the incidents to stop. We can help people take up further action with a service provider such as the council, housing association, health or care organisation, an employer or education provider or the police.

We work with other local organisations to make sure people get all the help they need, and to help stamp out hate incidents, by encouraging reporting, sharing appropriate information and identifying areas of concern or good practice.

Why people volunteer with us

4 in 5

believe that volunteering has had a positive effect on their health

9 in 10

feel more engaged with their community

9 in 10

would recommend volunteering at Citizens Advice

9 in 10

have an increased sense of purpose or self-esteem

All

retired volunteers believe volunteering keeps them mentally active

4 in 5

believe that they have increased their employability

"It's a fantastic service that helps so many people in many different ways"

Helen, Volunteer Receptionist





"I work with a great team. I know the work helps people"

Sue, Adviser

Research and campaigns

In 2016/17 CAS helped Citizens Advice conduct financial capability research. Financial capability means having the right money skills to deal with the everyday as well as manage big changes. This can be complex and people need the right knowledge, skills and mindset to make good financial decisions and take action at the right time.

Citizens Advice used our data (along with that of 37 other Local Citizens Advice) and created the 'Understanding Money Skills' research report which found that clients said they need help with:

| | |
|--|---|
|  | Managing money - calculating income, spending and surplus, managing bill payments, and planning for the future |
|  | Getting enough money to live - to make ends meet |
|  | Paperwork - for example, letters, form-filling or understanding legal language |
|  | Money related issues - debt, benefits, mental and physical health |

Citizens Advice write 'Now we know the full mechanics of our clients' baseline money skills needs, we can refine current services and test new ones to make them more holistic, targeted and appropriate for our clients.' The evidence is also available to the wider financial sector to improve and develop services to better meet people's needs.

How you can help support our work

Life is complicated. Sometimes people encounter challenges and problems that they don't know how to deal with and that they need help to overcome.

You can support our work by volunteering with us in a number of different roles, or by making a donation.

You can make a donation in one of our collection boxes at our receptions, by writing a cheque to Citizens Advice Shropshire, or online via www.mydonate.bt.com/charities/citizensadviceshropshire

In 2016/17, for every £1 invested in Citizens Advice Shropshire we generated at least:

£1.31
in fiscal benefits
Savings to government
Reduction in health service demand, local authority homelessness services, and out-of-work benefits for our clients and volunteers.
Total: £1,247,432

£7.92
in public value
Wider economic and social benefits
Improvements in participation and productivity for clients and volunteers.
Total: £7,563,567

£11.44
in benefits to individuals
Value to our clients
Income gained through benefits gained, debts written off and consumer problems resolved.
Total: £10,933,468



Partnership working

Citizens Advice Shropshire is proud to work in partnership with a number of statutory and voluntary sector agencies. For adult services this includes our CAAN partners (Community Advice & Advocacy Network) MAYSI, PCAS, Taking Part, A4U, Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin. For children and young people there is our IASS/IS partnership (Information Advice Support Service/Independent support) 0 to 25 years service including the Council for Disabled Children, A4U, and Taking Part. This provides support around special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including health and social care.



Thank you. We couldn't do it without you.