

citizens
advice

Shropshire

Impact report

2018/19



For everyone, for 80 years

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,
Authorised and regulated by The Financial Conduct Authority – FRN: 617564.

The difference we make

Our impact in 2018/19

We provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities.

For
everyone,
for 80
years

We helped **7,445** clients
with **26,054** unique queries



82% were of
working age

53% had a household
income of <£1000
a month

39% were managing a
disability or long term health
condition

46% needed
Benefits advice

17% needed
help with
Debt issues

Through our advice, we helped
individuals increase their income by
over **£2.6m**

We are made up of
74 volunteers
and **34 paid staff**

We provide free
and independent support in
16 locations



Advice and
support



Research and
campaigns



How we
work



Find a way
forward

2 in every 3
clients have their
problem solved



Change lives

4 in 5 clients
said advice
improved their
lives, including
reducing stress
and improving
finances



Make society
fairer

We value
diversity,
champion
equality, and
challenge
discrimination
and harassment

At Citizens Advice,
we believe no one
should have to face
problems without
good quality,
independent
advice.

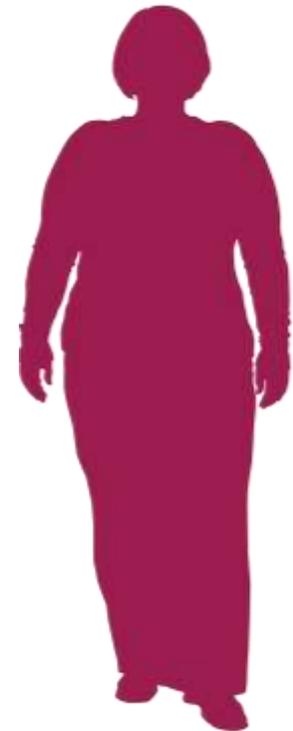
We give people the
knowledge and the
confidence they need
to overcome their
problems. We help
people find their way
through complicated
processes and
difficult situations
they may never have
faced before. With
the right information
and support, people
can make the best
choices for
themselves.

How we help

This is Pam*

She is an example of one of the people we helped in 2018/19

Her story shows how we help people solve their problems and the impact this has on their lives.



Pam is 63, and lives alone. She has anxiety and depression. Pam receives Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) at a rate of £102 per week.

She also receives Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Pam came to Citizens Advice Shropshire for a benefit check so she understood the impact of potentially returning to work and to check if she should claim Universal Credit.

We explained to Pam that as she was in receipt of Income-related ESA and enhanced rate daily living PIP, no-one was claiming Carers Allowance for her and no non-dependents lived with her, she should actually be receiving the severe disability premium and the enhanced disability premium.

As we could see no reason as to why she should not be receiving these premiums we called ESA together to find out more.

Following this phone call ESA awarded Pam the enhanced disability and severe disability premium within her ESA. This has increased Pam's ESA to £185.85 per week. Pam will also receive a backdated payment of disability premiums worth £6,653.51.

Pam said she would use this money to clear a debt and also to pay vet's bills. Her pet is essential to her wellbeing so this back payment made a big difference to her.

Pam had brought her ESA and PIP award letters. It showed that she was in receipt of income-related ESA, but was not receiving any disability premiums.

Pam stated that she lived alone and no-one was receiving carers allowance for her. Pam could not recall whether she had informed ESA she was receiving PIP or when she was first awarded it.

Pam then completed a form on the telephone with the ESA team that day and they informed us that the form would be passed to a decision maker and Pam would have a decision within 6 working days.

We also discussed that she would be able to return to work under 'permitted work rules' and her ESA will remain in place.

Now that she has her correct disability premiums in place Pam will not currently be moved on to Universal Credit, and the Enable team are able to work with Pam in a more informed way to support her back into work, which would not penalise her.

* name changed.

Advice makes the critical difference. 78% of people we helped said they couldn't do it without us.

Volunteering with us



Our volunteers contribute their time and energy to make a huge difference to people's lives and help keep our vital service running. If you'd like to help people in your community, and can spare a few hours a week, we'd love to hear from you.



Our unique insight & evidence

We use our clients' anonymous data to campaign for positive change, speaking up about the policies and services that cause people problems. As a local Citizens Advice we can spot emerging issues early and tackle the root cause of problems.

In 2018/19 we used our evidence and welfare benefit expertise to influence Shropshire Council to make changes to their Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 so that there is parity between legacy benefit Council Tax exemptions and those for Universal Credit.

Under the Shropshire Council 2018/19 scheme, those in the Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) Support Group were eligible for 100% Council Tax Support and didn't have to pay any Council Tax. Somebody with exactly the same circumstances, but who was claiming Universal Credit (which replaces ESA) and in the Limited Capability for Work / Work Related Activity Group (LCWWRG), was only eligible for 80% Council Tax Support and had to pay around £20 a month towards this bill, despite being just as vulnerable as their ESA counterparts.

Case study

In 2018/19 Brian (name changed) was charged 20% Council Tax although he received the LCWWRG element of Universal Credit. If he had received ESA and was in the Support Group he would be exempt from 20% Council Tax charge.

Brian has a serious heart condition and is unable to work. He was experiencing considerable hardship by paying 20% Council Tax and was struggling to afford travelling to hospital appointments and to see his children. Brian felt he was being discriminated against because he was not in receipt of the legacy ESA benefit. This made him feel depressed and anxious.

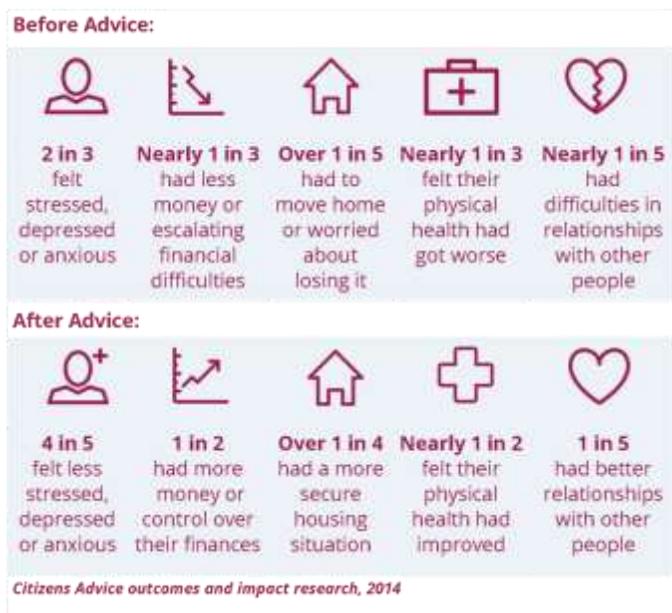
Brian told us that the week before he receives his Universal Credit he doesn't have any money left and expected that he'd have to use a food bank.

Evidence like this influenced Shropshire Council to make the changes required so more sick or disabled people are protected from paying Council Tax in 2019/20 by giving parity between different benefits.

Over 6,000* people will now save on average £183.75 each a year (based on 2019/20 band A with the single person discount).

*570 already on UC in the LCWWRG and 5,672 people on ESA - Support Group who will migrate over to Universal Credit from 2020.

For everyone, for 80 years



Since the very beginning, Citizens Advice has been at the forefront of providing free, confidential, independent advice. Nationally we started giving advice in 200 locations on 4 September 1939, the day after World War Two started. But these services didn't wait for people to find them - instead they ventured out into some of the areas worst affected by the Blitz to find those in need. They gave advice to whoever needed it on a range of issues including evacuation, what to do if they'd lost their home and how to get a new ration book.

And while thankfully the nation isn't experiencing the same immediate physical danger as it was in wartime Britain, we're still reaching those in need of help 80 years on. We're still offering face to face advice for anyone who needs it but today we're increasingly reaching people in new ways too, whether that's through our website or over the phone.

Now more than ever we are working together with other local Citizens Advice across thousands of locations and using our unique insight into the issues people are facing today to show big organisations and the government how they can make things better for people. We challenge prejudices and assumptions in order to solve problems and make people's lives easier. Our campaigns have contributed to real improvements in millions of people's lives - from changes to Universal Credit and a price cap on rent-to-own products, to more rights for renters and a better deal for energy consumers.

Our value to society



For every £1 invested in our service in 2018/19, we generated:

£1.93

in savings to government and public services (fiscal benefits)

Total: £2,046,188

£10.03

in wider economic and social benefits (public value)

Total: £10,647,364

£11.57

in financial value to the people we help (specific outcomes to individuals)

Total: £12,289,797

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: <https://tinyurl.com/CASvdonate>

Contact us



Adviceline: **03444 99 11 00**

Text relay: **03444 11 14 44**



For general enquires (not advice): contact@shcab.cabnet.org.uk

For more detailed information about Citizens Advice Shropshire go to www.cabshropshire.org.uk

Follow us on social media for news, information and campaign updates:



@CABshropshire

