

Impact report

2021/22



Fletcher House, 15 College Hill, Shrewsbury SY1 1LY

Charity registration number 1085220. 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 2021/22

We give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem.



In 2021/22 we helped **7,109** clients
with **26,620** unique queries

80% were
aged 15 to 64
years old *

We helped individuals
increase their income
by over **£2.9m**

47% were managing a
disability or long term
health condition *

36% needed
Benefits
advice

10% needed help with
Debt issues

58% were female

We are made up of **20**
volunteers and **36** paid
staff

Since March 2020 we have provided free
and independent support by phone

* of known values



**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

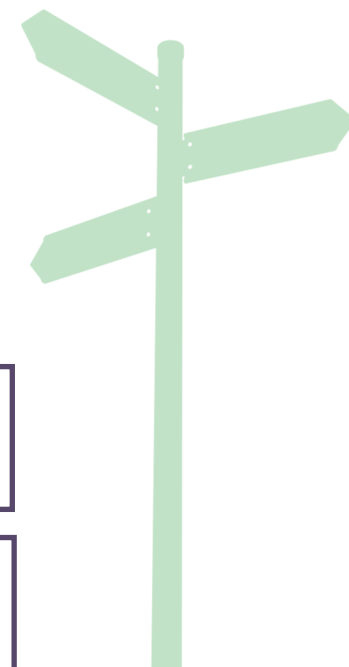


**Make society
fairer**

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 Jane*

She is an example of one of the people we helped in 2021/22

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

Jane is 65, and lives alone. She has bipolar disorder and is currently unemployed.

Jane receives Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Housing Benefit (HB), Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Jane came to Citizens Advice Shropshire for a benefit check to understand the impact of potentially returning to work.

We explained to Jane that she can work and retain entitlement to ESA, HB and CTR through permitted work.

We discussed the difference between permitted and supported permitted work.

We explained that only one type can be carried out at a time and work must be authorised by Job Centre Plus.

We also told Jane that she should keep the Council Benefits Team informed about any change in circumstances.

We explained the risk of a new Work Capability Assessment occurring if she starts permitted work, but that it isn't guaranteed to happen.

We made Jane aware that if she works above the permitted work threshold her ESA entitlement will end. She may still be entitled to HB and CTR depending on earnings, or Universal Credit could be considered.

As Jane reaches retirement age later in the year we explained ESA will end as it is a working age benefit. However, once her state pension entitlement is known we can check her full retirement benefit entitlement.

During the call Jane mentioned she has multiple debts totalling around £15,000.

We referred Jane to our Specialist Debt Team who helped her go through options available.

We helped Jane apply for Severn Trent Big Difference Scheme to save her money on water bills.

Jane decided to proceed with a Debt Relief Order which we assisted her with.

Jane said she now has the right information to make best decision for herself.

She was also very relieved that her debts have been dealt with. She felt like it was a new beginning for her.

She was grateful for all support and advice she received from Citizens Advice Shropshire.

47% of people we saw in 2021/22 were disabled or had a long term health condition

* name changed.

Pension Wise

Citizens Advice Shropshire is one of 38 local Citizens Advice who have been delivering the government's Pension Wise service for the last six years. Launched in April 2015, Pension Wise was a new guidance service set up to help people understand their options under the pension freedoms.

In partnership with Coventry Citizens Advice, Citizens Advice Dudley and Wolverhampton and Citizens Advice Worcester, Citizens Advice Shropshire delivers Pension Wise appointments to people aged 50 and over with a defined contribution pension.

For 2021/22, Pension Wise has delivered 106,487 appointments across the service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

People visiting Pension Wise have remained highly satisfied with the guidance they are receiving, with satisfaction ratings remaining consistently high. For 2021/22, Citizens Advice achieved a satisfaction score of 96%.



Source: Client satisfaction survey 2021/22

Our unique insight & evidence

With advice we help people solve a particular problem, whereas with research and campaigns work we tackle the cause of the problem and stop it from happening to others.

We use our clients' experience and stories 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 use our evidence to tackle the root cause of problems and improve services for us all.

The Board of CAS has recognised the importance of good research by agreeing to underwrite the funding of a research post that enables us to enhance our understanding of who needs our help, how we can best support them and what services make the most difference to them. We will continue to fill any gaps in our evidence base and give a voice to people's concerns.

Increasing our understanding of people's needs means we will be well placed to act with our partners as an 'intelligent provider' for commissioners, not just delivering services but also well-equipped to advise on and influence the shape of provision.

This year there were lots of different activities that happened as part of research and campaigns.

We continued campaigning on the existing Council Tax Support scheme. Additional Covid-19 support from government has meant that many of those on low incomes have not had to pay their 20% contribution for 2 years and now the Council have also agreed to review the Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2022/23.

We have also been a part of the "Keep the lifeline" campaign on the loss of the £20 Universal Credit uplift government introduced at the beginning of the pandemic. This effort had an impact on the targeted support package introduced in May 2022.

In 2021/22 we also worked with Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance, Public Health and Health Watch Shropshire on research into food insecurity in South West Shropshire. This has been an important piece of research which has led to a number of recommendations to help reduce the impact of food insecurity in Shropshire and the barriers that people face.

Our Policy work during 2021/22 also included working with partners and Shropshire Council on the Social Task Force to minimise the impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable. Jackie Jeffrey, CEO, also chairs the Hardship & Poverty Subcommittee that feeds into the Social Task Force, this work has continued with the rising cost of living crisis, and support for households during the winter of 2021/22 and beyond.

Our Impact



8 in 10
people said their
problem was
resolved following
our advice



9 in 10
people said we
helped them find a
way forward



9 in 10
people said they
would recommend
the service

Source: Client satisfaction survey 2021/22

Volunteering with us

Volunteers of citizens Advice Shropshire contribute 277 hours each week giving essential advice and crisis support to help people find a way forward. But volunteering benefits our volunteers too.

Chas, volunteer adviser at Citizens Advice Shropshire has volunteered for 12 years. They said:



"Volunteering for Citizens Advice Shropshire helps to keep me in contact with what is going on in our society and with a need to keep up to date with various advice and information areas fulfils my need to 'never stop learning'"

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 value to society



For every £1 invested in our service in 2021/22, we generated:

£1.43

in savings to
government and
public services
(fiscal benefits)

Total: £2.7m

£10.35

In wider economic
and social benefits
(public value)

Total: £19.7m

£4.80

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

Total: £9.1m

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 by writing a cheque to Citizens Advice Shropshire, or online via: cabshropshire.org.uk/get-involved/donating/

Contact us



Adviceline: **0808 278 7894**

Text relay: **18001 0800 144 8884**



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

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

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