

**citizens
advice**

**Doncaster
Borough**

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23



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



Citizens Advice
Proud to support the
LGBTQ+ community



**Fairness & Wellbeing
Commission**



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Foreword from Mayor Ros Jones

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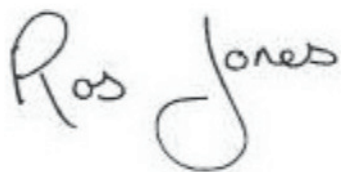
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I am pleased to introduce the annual report for Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough. This fantastic charity dedicates itself to the well-being of millions of people across the country every year. We all have times in our lives where we need a little bit of help and advice. Citizens Advice services are there for anyone who requests it, free of judgement and discrimination. Their goal is to give people the knowledge and the confidence needed to find their way forward, which is certainly admirable.

This past year has been a particularly challenging environment for care service providers, the cost of living crisis has led to a record level in demand for Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough. I know how tirelessly all the incredible staff and volunteers are working to support residents here in Doncaster.

Despite the pressure they are under, Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough have implemented a new 'community centred approach', which has increased levels of access for communities and widened the scope of their support. This is in addition to partnership working with various organisations such as, Voluntary Action Doncaster, the Trussell Trust and Mind.

I'd like to thank all the staff and volunteers at Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough for the invaluable work that they do. The data in this report shows the huge impact that they have on Doncaster's residents and communities, but the full impact of what they do cannot be easily measured. By giving people the support and confidence needed to go forward, they are helping to improve lives.



Ros Jones
Mayor of Doncaster

INTRODUCTION

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We are Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough

We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. At Citizens Advice, we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice.

The Citizens Advice service offers free, confidential advice online, over the phone and in person. When we say we're for everyone, we mean it. People rely on us because we're independent and totally impartial. No one else sees so many people with so many different kinds of problems, and that gives us a unique insight into the challenges people are facing today. With the right evidence, we can show big organisations—from companies right up to the government—how they can make things better for people.

In a world fraught with uncertainty and change, our mission to serve our community steadfastly remains our guiding star. Over the past 12 months, our unwavering dedication has yielded astonishing results. We stood strong for **12,467 clients**, addressing an astonishing **37,784 issues** that our community faced. More significantly, our efforts translated into **£3,334,913** in income gains for our clients, reaffirming our commitment to their well-being and financial stability.

Our pursuit of excellence was further validated as we proudly announce our successful outcome in the Annual Quality and Governance audit, marked by an improved score. This achievement underscores our relentless commitment to ensuring the highest standards in all that we do, and our unyielding dedication to transparency and accountability.

But it doesn't end there. We believe in the power of collaboration, and this year, we have forged partnerships with five other community organizations. Together, we have become a beacon of support, illuminating the path toward a brighter, more resilient future for all those we serve.

At the heart of our achievements lies a profound sense of community. Our commitment to the principle of "whoever you are, whatever the problems" has defined our work, uniting us in purpose and driving us toward our goals. It is this spirit that infuses our organization with vitality and makes it an exciting place to work for, and indeed, to work with.

As we navigate the dynamic landscape of the coming year, our annual report is a testament to our resolve, our achievements, and our vision. Together, we embark on another year of unwavering dedication to our community, fueled by the optimism that springs from the belief that our greatest achievements are yet to come.

Message from our Chair

Colin Smith

"In 2022/2023, CADB tackled rising challenges with a united team effort. Together, we expanded our impact and made a meaningful difference in our community"



The year 2022/2023 proved to be both challenging and immensely successful for Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough (CADB). Our commitment to helping our community has never wavered, even in the face of mounting demand and increasingly complex issues. Our dedicated team, led by our newly appointed CEO, James Woods, rose to the occasion, delivering exceptional advice services. We owe our success to our incredible staff and the generous support of numerous organizations, notably Doncaster Council.

One of the cornerstones of our success has been the remarkable growth we've witnessed under the leadership of our CEO, James Woods. Our services extended into more local communities, making our assistance even more accessible. We also strengthened our collaborative efforts, forming vital partnerships that expanded our outreach locations.

As the demand for our services continued to rise, our team faced greater challenges. However, they remained steadfast, offering high-quality advice to everyone who sought it. This unwavering commitment is a testament to the expertise and dedication of our staff. We are profoundly grateful for their contributions.

We understand that our achievements would not have been possible without the generous financial support of numerous organisations. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Doncaster Council for their unwavering commitment to our cause. Their continued support has been instrumental in enabling us to provide free and impartial advice to those in need. It is through such partnerships that we can make a meaningful impact on our community.

In this report, we highlight the significant accomplishments of CADB during the past year. We take immense pride in our efforts, and I strongly recommend that you delve into this report to discover the depth of our impact. We invite you to join us in celebrating a year of resilience, growth, and unwavering commitment to the people of Doncaster.

Colin Smith

Chair of Trustees

Message from our CEO

James Woods

"As the driving force behind an extraordinary team, our work improves lives across Doncaster through the power of advice, shaping stories of empowerment and change."



In my first year as CEO, reflecting on the journey we've undertaken fills me with immense pride and gratitude. Our remarkable achievements stand as a testament to the unwavering dedication of our staff, volunteers, and trustees. They've not only adapted to but embraced the changes I wanted to implement, meeting record demands for our services in the face of a challenging cost-of-living climate.

Your unwavering commitment to our clients and your drive to achieve the best outcomes are truly exceptional. I hope each of you takes a moment to reflect on the lives you've positively impacted through your work. On behalf of our clients and myself, thank you for representing Citizens Advice Doncaster borough so admirably.

At our core, we're committed to uplifting and empowering Doncaster's residents, a mission that faces seemingly insurmountable challenges. This report showcases the profound achievements stemming from essential advice provision within our communities.

Here are some of our organization's key achievements in the past 12 months:

- Secured **£494,000** in new or extended funded projects.
- Launched a more accessible website, translated into over **158 languages**.
- Introduced a **partner referral tool**, now receiving over 100 referrals monthly.
- Launched a **Benefits and Budgeting tool for clients**.
- Formed **partnerships** with five other community organizations.
- Our **Debt team won Team of the Year at the 2022** National Citizens Advice awards.
- They were also **shortlisted** for an Institute of Money Advisers National Award.
- Implemented a community approach with **20 advice locations** across the city.
- Recruited a **Volunteer Coordinator** and added 12 new volunteers since May 2023.

However, we've also faced unprecedented challenges, with a **30% surge** in demand for our services and significant cost-of-living impacts. Despite these hurdles, our determination remains unwavering. As we celebrate our achievements, we're keenly aware of the challenges ahead.

Together, we'll fortify our advisory service within the fabric of our community, shaping confident paths. Thank you for your belief in us and our impact. Together, we'll continue to pen a story of hope, resilience, and transformation that leaves an indelible mark.

With gratitude and determination,

James Woods

CEO



Our local Setting

City of Doncaster in 2022/23

- Doncaster has a population of around 312,800,
- 148,291 households of 2023
- 191,880 working age population - 60,324 aged 65+

The indices of multiple deprivation place Doncaster as an area experiences significant overall levels of deprivation, with over **126,000** Doncaster residents living in the 20% most deprived areas in England (IMD 1&2)

In the wider region of South Yorkshire Doncaster performs worse than the national average. The Sheffield City Region is the **4th** most deprived region in the country.



35.2%

children living in poverty in Doncaster (higher national average)



65,535

people living with disabilities (higher national average)

22%

Have a life limiting illnesses (higher national average)



22%

suffer high anxiety (higher than national average)



33,150

people provide regular unpaid care.



41%

of households are in arrears with at least one household bill or lending repayment (higher national average)



10.4%

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants

11.9%

Attendance Allowance Claimants



29,000

Doncaster residents age 16+ have never worked or are long term unemployed



18%

households living in fuel poverty

140,001

People living in health deprivation 'hotspots' (IMD2015) (higher national average)

10%

of adults across Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham had either never used the internet or had not used the internet within the last 3 months

In the period covered by this plan (2024-27), we aim to do six big things.



To strengthen and expand our one-on-one advice services organization-wide. This will enable a wider clientele to access the vital support they need. Concurrently, we are dedicated to infusing our services with a heightened sense of fairness and justice. Through these efforts, we aspire to empower individuals and promote equity, fostering positive change within our community.



We're focused on expanding Research and Campaigns across our organization. Collaborating with strategic partners, we aim to boost campaign impact on local and national levels. Leveraging our digital progress, we'll maximize social media and PR to elevate our brand and mission. This approach cements our commitment to driving impactful change and broader outreach.



Our strategic objective revolves around combating health inequalities with precision. We acknowledge that the issues we advise on—debt, welfare, housing, and discrimination—significantly influence health determinants. Our aim is to provide a targeted and responsive service, empowering individuals to navigate these challenges. Through this, we not only improve health outcomes but also alleviate strain on healthcare resources. By enhancing quality of life, we contribute to individual well-being while also generating public savings.



Our focus in this strategic goal is to amplify the efficacy and efficiency of our Advice services. By embracing novel technologies and refining processes, we seek to optimize our availability and productivity without compromising on the caliber of our service. Our commitment lies in striking the right balance—enabling us to deliver a service of exceptional quality while enhancing our impact through modern approaches.



We are dedicated to enhancing our support for colleagues and volunteers to elevate attraction, satisfaction, and retention. Our strategy involves broadening the spectrum of engaging and innovative volunteer opportunities across the city. By providing comprehensive training, unwavering support, and chances to immerse themselves in different work environments, we empower volunteers to actively contribute to their local communities and our organization at large. This approach embodies our commitment to nurturing a thriving and motivated team.



Our unwavering dedication to diversity and inclusion is embodied in our strong commitment to Equity, Equality, and Diversity. We are resolute in our pursuit of improving accessibility for marginalized clients, giving them a prominent voice in shaping our endeavors. By fostering this inclusivity, we not only amplify our ability to meet their unique needs but also create a platform where their perspectives contribute to our ongoing progress.

HOW OUR ADVICE HELPED KELLY *

"Losing my job and my home was horrible. I was shaking and crying because I thought I might end up sleeping rough"

Kelly, 33, lost her job as a hairdresser in March and applied for Universal Credit. She was a lodger in a shared house and, with no savings to fall back on, she quickly fell into rent arrears and was evicted.

Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough supported her to access an emergency grant while she waited for her Universal Credit application to be approved. She found a new flat and received an advance to tide her over until she received the first full payment, but the experience left her shaken.

Our Impact

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Last year saw record demands for advice across all areas of our service and all areas of the city. Improving accessibility, increasing the channel options for clients and offering new services with a greater emphasis on our presence in local communities remains a key priority for our service.



12,467

Client contacts in 2022/23

Increase of
30%
on 21/22



25,511

Separate issues dealt with
in 2021/22



£10.7 MILLION

In debt handled in 2022/23
Up from £5.1 Million in 21/22

Almost £3.5 million financial gains

Financial gains for clients in 2022/23



10

Volunteers joined us in
2022/23

Increase of
150%
on 21/22



62

Community Advice Workshops
on a variety of subjects (debt,
budgeting, energy)



643

Emergency fuel
vouchers issued

191

DEBT RELIEF ORDERS

higher than the National Average

428

BREATHING SPACE APPLICATIONS

higher than the National Average

Demand over the last 12 months

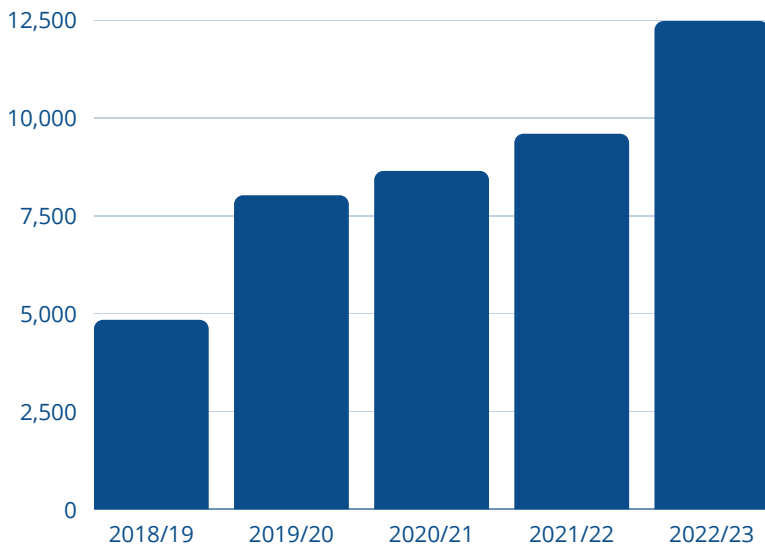
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Over the last 12 months there has been a change in the demographics of clients contacting us for Advice, with significant increases across the board but more worryingly the rise of in work clients has highlighted a worrying trend, we acknowledge this is due to increased pressure on working households in the cost of living crisis and its impacts on more households.

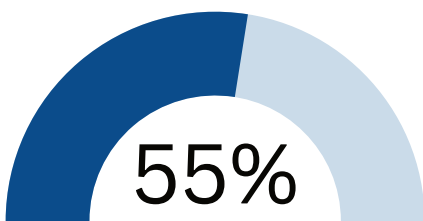
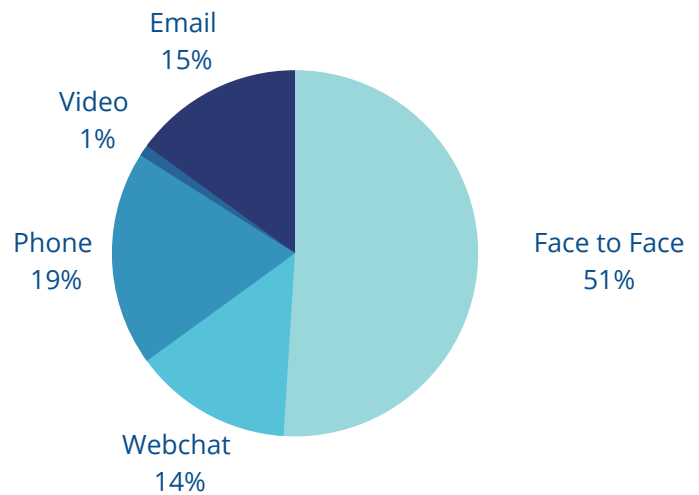
YEAR ON YEAR INCREASES IN DEMAND

Bar chart outlining the yearly increases in demand for our services.

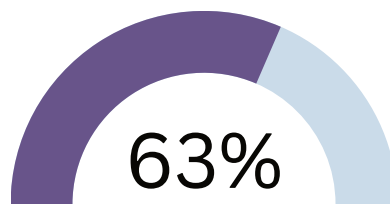


CLIENT CONTACT CHANNEL

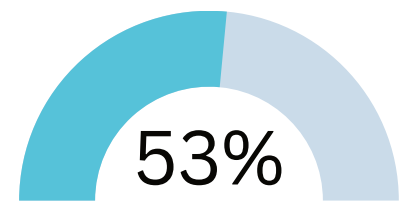
Pie chart featuring our channel options to clients



Increase in contacts from in work clients



Increase in clients who have mortgages or are homeowners



Increase in clients with a long term health condition or disability

Welfare rights Advice including Universal Credit

Increased 67%

Increase in clients contacting us for Energy and Utility related problems

Increased 136%

Number of clients contacting us for debt advice

Increased 45%

30%

Increase in clients contacting in crisis than the same period last year



Demand over the last 12 months

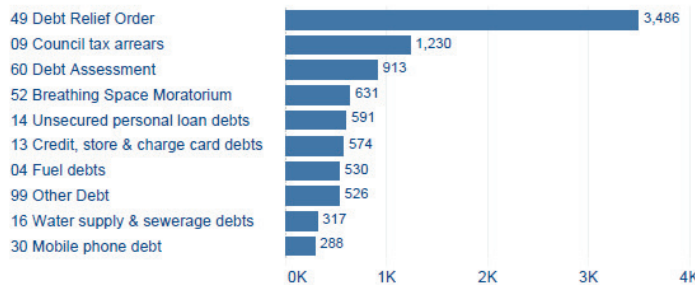
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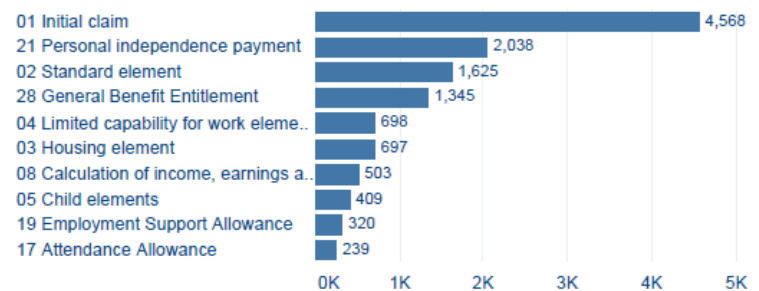
Issues

	Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	6,313	2,247
Benefits Universal Credit	9,548	2,352
Charitable Support & Food Ban..	937	528
Consumer goods & services	782	317
Debt	11,794	2,015
Education	87	37
Employment	859	373
Financial services & capability	368	248
GVA & Hate Crime	50	36
Health & community care	242	109
Housing	1,407	593
Immigration & asylum	381	137
Legal	725	234
Other	758	242
Relationships & family	670	285
Tax	149	68
Travel & transport	193	105
Utilities & communications	2,524	953
Grand Total	37,787	

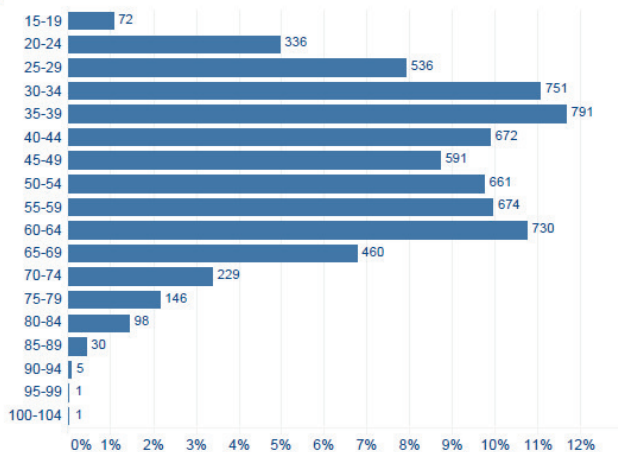
Top debt issues



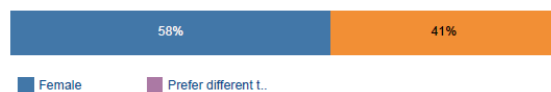
Top benefit issues



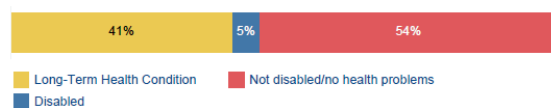
Age



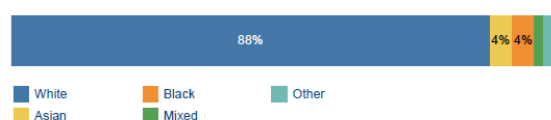
Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity



Community Presence

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Community locations are places where people can come together to socialize, learn, and access essential services. They play a vital role in building strong and healthy communities.

One example of an important community location is Citizens Advice Doncaster, which provides free advice and support to people on a range of issues, including work, debt, benefits, immigration, and housing. The organization has 18 locations across Doncaster, making it easy for people to access the help they need.

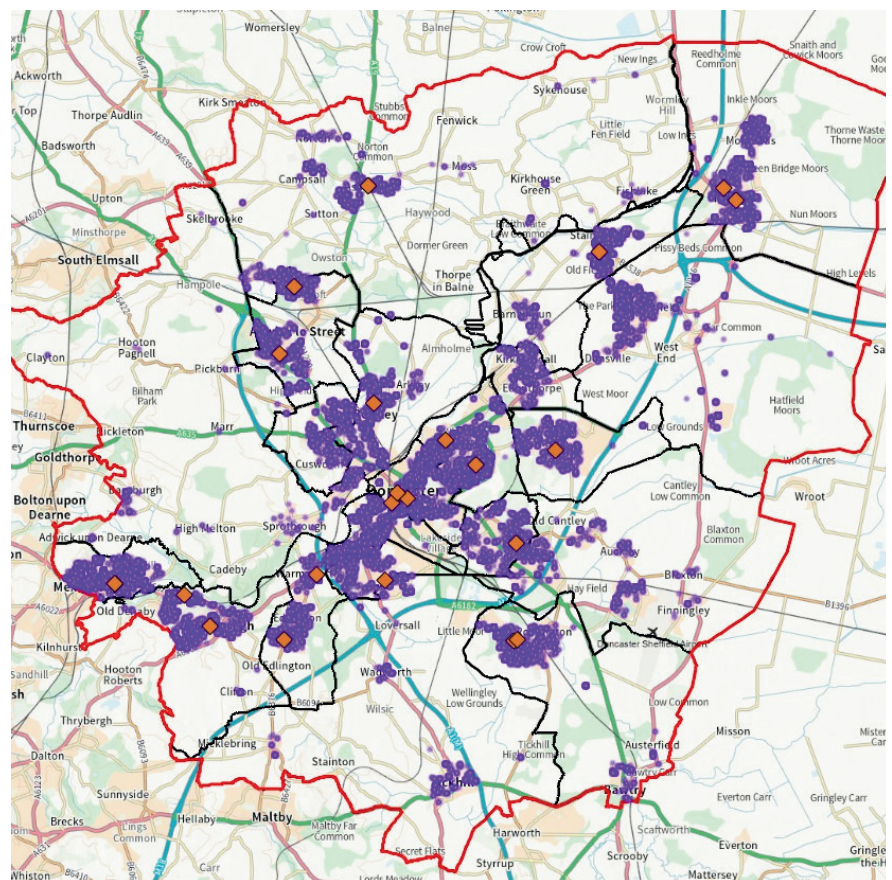
Community locations are important for a number of reasons. They can help to:

- Reduce poverty and inequality
- Improve mental health and well-being
- Promote social justice and equality
- Build stronger communities

Overall, community locations are essential for building strong and healthy communities. They provide a place where people can come together, learn, and access essential services.

Geolocation mapping showing demand across Doncaster in relation to our community locations.

The map highlights a significant demand across all wards, it supports our move to a more community based service.



We have a real community presence, we are in libraries, schools Gp surgeries and food bank locations, this increased in the access to our services over the last 12 months is something we are really proud of.

Our Projects

Activity / Project	What it funds	Key Outcomes
MAPS Debt Project	Our debt team consists of 6 specialist advisers and 4 support staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2,015 clients Advised.• £2,574,560 Debt written off• £14, 028 payments rescheduled• Received National award for recognition of performance.
DWP Help To Claim	Our Help to claim team consists of 3 full time advisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selected as the sole project provider for South Yorkshire in 2022/23• 2352 clients assisted with Universal Credit• Income gains of £818,900
Well Doncaster -Pod & Outreach Project	This project funds 20 community advice pod locations across the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advised 1273 clients with 2,276 issues• Stronger links with communities• Increased interest in volunteering• improved referrals from community groups• Income gains for clients £3.5 million
Yorkshire Building Society project	This award winning project places an adviser in the town centre branch Started March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 187 Cases opened advising and supporting 187 clients with 362 issues
British Gas Energy Trust	This project employes a team of specialist energy advisers, who deal with all aspects of energy advice and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £25,429 Income gains for clients• 472 Clients with 1754 issues• 649 Fuel Vouchers issued
Additional Funding from National Citizens Advice	We received a number of additional proejects from National Citizens Advice <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core Services donation• Energy funding• Research & Campaigns funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved access to vital advice services at crisis points in people's lives• Improved partnership working• Improve Research and campaigns responses
Help through Hardhship - In partnership with Mind & Trussell Trust	This great partnership project allowed us to improve the offer to of support and advice to clients who have mental health problems or disengage with services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved access to vital advice services at crisis points in people's lives• Improved partnership working• Improve Response to clients presenting with mental health requirements
Trussell Trust - Food bank Partnership	This innovative project allowed us to provide advice within food bank locations run by Trussell Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £67,269 Income gains for clients• 229 clients with 699 issues• £55,042. Debt handled

Partnership Working

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Our British Gas Energy Trust Partnership project provides holistic energy and money advice across Doncaster. The project supports residents through our multi-channel advice services. We offer in-depth energy assessments, facilitate debt advice referrals, and provide fuel vouchers and energy-saving equipment. We collaborate with local groups to support difficult-to-reach populations and upskill volunteers to refer clients and provide information and support. VAD support us with community workshops and referrals into the project.



Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough partnered with Yorkshire Building Society to provide holistic financial wellbeing support to the public, including YBS members and non-members. The service offers Generalist Advice appointments and provide onward specialist referrals where needed. This is an important addition to our general advice service.



We provided local and accessible solutions to existing and emerging problems faced by the food bank in Mexborough to help reduce dependency on food bank crisis support and improve access to advice and financial resilience of residents. We offered our communities free, confidential, impartial, early intervention specialist advice and support on the all issues presented at food banks, Issues include benefit entitlement, sanction, budgeting and debt among other issues.



Partnership Working

FREE Foodbank Workshops

All are invited to attend our **FREE** workshop at St. James Church to obtain information and support on a drop in basis about the following topics.

These events are from
13:00-15:00
St. James Church
St Sepulchre Gate W
Doncaster
DN1 3AQ

- 08/09/23 - Introduction to CADB & Benefits overview
- 04/10/23 - Energy
- 15/11/23 - Benefits
- 13/12/23 - Debt
- 17/01/23 - Introduction to CADB & Benefits Overview
- 07/02/24 - Benefits
- 27/03/24 - Energy



Our invaluable partnership with Trussell Trust.

We have been based in 3 Trussell Trust Food banks now for over a year and the impact has been nothing short of fantastic, we have had drop in sessions, appointments and advice workshops on a range of issues.

Together, we've managed **£133,172.20** of debt for clients, with **£65,278** written off, creating income gains of **£157,323** for **400 clients**.

In the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, this partnership is essential, and really looks to address the issues behind the crisis of food poverty. We have developed a good working relationship with the Trussell Trust and we look forward to continuing to support their service users.

Help through Hardship is a new pilot project which involved the designing of new project aimed at providing holistic support to people experiencing both financial and mental wellbeing difficulties. We worked closely with **Doncaster Mind** and **Trussell Trust Doncaster** to develop a responsive and engaging project with a strong mental health focus.

The partnership developed the role of Help through Hardship Coordinator to triage, assess, and support clients, as well as to gather feedback and support the research partners. We look forward to piloting this new project in 2023/24.



Key Achievements This Year

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- **£494,000** in new or extended funded projects received.
- Launched a New more accessible website which translates to over **158 Languages**
- **Partner referral tool** launched reaching organisations across the city now receiving over 100 referrals a month
- Launched a **Benefits and Budgeting tool** clients can use for free.
- We now work in partnership on projects with **5 other community organisations.**
- We are recruiting a **BSL Adviser** to improve access for this community.
- We are a founding member of the **Doncaster Advice Network**
- Our Debt team won a prestigious **National Citizens Advice awards for Team of the Year in 2022.**
- They were also **shortlisted** for an Institute of Money Advisers National Award
- We have embraced the community approach I set out to implement and now have 20 community advice locations across the City.
- We have used Reserves to run strengthen our links with the **NHS and ICB**, running a successful pilot in Askern
- We have recruited a **Volunteer Coordinator** to oversee and take charge of recruitment and retention of volunteers and have 12 new volunteers in training or recently qualified since May 2023, bucking the trend of low volunteer rates.
- We have taken on **3 new trustees**, all from different backgrounds and cultures improving the diversity and experience on our board.
- We joined the **Armed forces covenant** making a commitment to Serving personnel, veterans and their families
- We attend our first Pride Event and will be returning in 2023
- We have advised and supported **12,467 clients** with **37,787 issues.** a **33% increase** on last year.
- We have achieved over **£3.5 million** in income gains for our clients
- We passed our **Annual quality and governance** audit with an improved score.
- We have **New eye catching signs** at our Stainforth office increasing awareness of our local presence thanks to town mayor David Bowling
- We were awarded a **Citizens Advice National recognition award** for performance on our MAPs Debt Advice project.



Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough proudly holds the Advice Quality Standard mark for our advice with casework services and our telephone advice services.

This is an organisation quality standard for legal advice services operating in the area of social welfare law.

The quality framework includes a set of standards designed to ensure a service is well run. It has its own quality control mechanisms that in doing so, assures the quality of the information and advice services provided as well as promoting social justice. The quality standards and assessment methods used reflect the minimum standards necessary to ensure that clients seeking advice receive accurate, complete and timely advice; that they are able to obtain this advice from an advice provider which is accessible to them and able to act independently and in the sole interest of the client.

We have robust quality procedures in place in order to maintain our high standards in line with this framework. We ensure staff, volunteers and trustees understand the importance of high quality advice and the detrimental consequences of poor advice.

We support our team to achieve this through comprehensive training, mentoring and support.



Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough joined the Armed forces Covenant

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At Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough we are committed to supporting Doncaster's military service personnel and veterans and we are pleased to join the Armed Forces Covenant.

As a member of Doncaster's Armed Forces Community we have made the following pledges:

- no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen.
- in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate, especially for the injured or bereaved.

We have appointed Sarah Robinson and Ian Hatley as our Armed Forces Champions. They will act as a focal point for organising and promoting the support on offer for the Armed Forces Community.

As Armed Forces Covenant holders it is an honour to be involved in the shaping of future plans to help and provide advice for those who have served their country and ensure veterans have access to the services they require to make the transition into civilian life and enable them to use their valuable skills within the wider society.



Proudly supporting those who serve.



HOW OUR ADVICE HELPED BARRY*

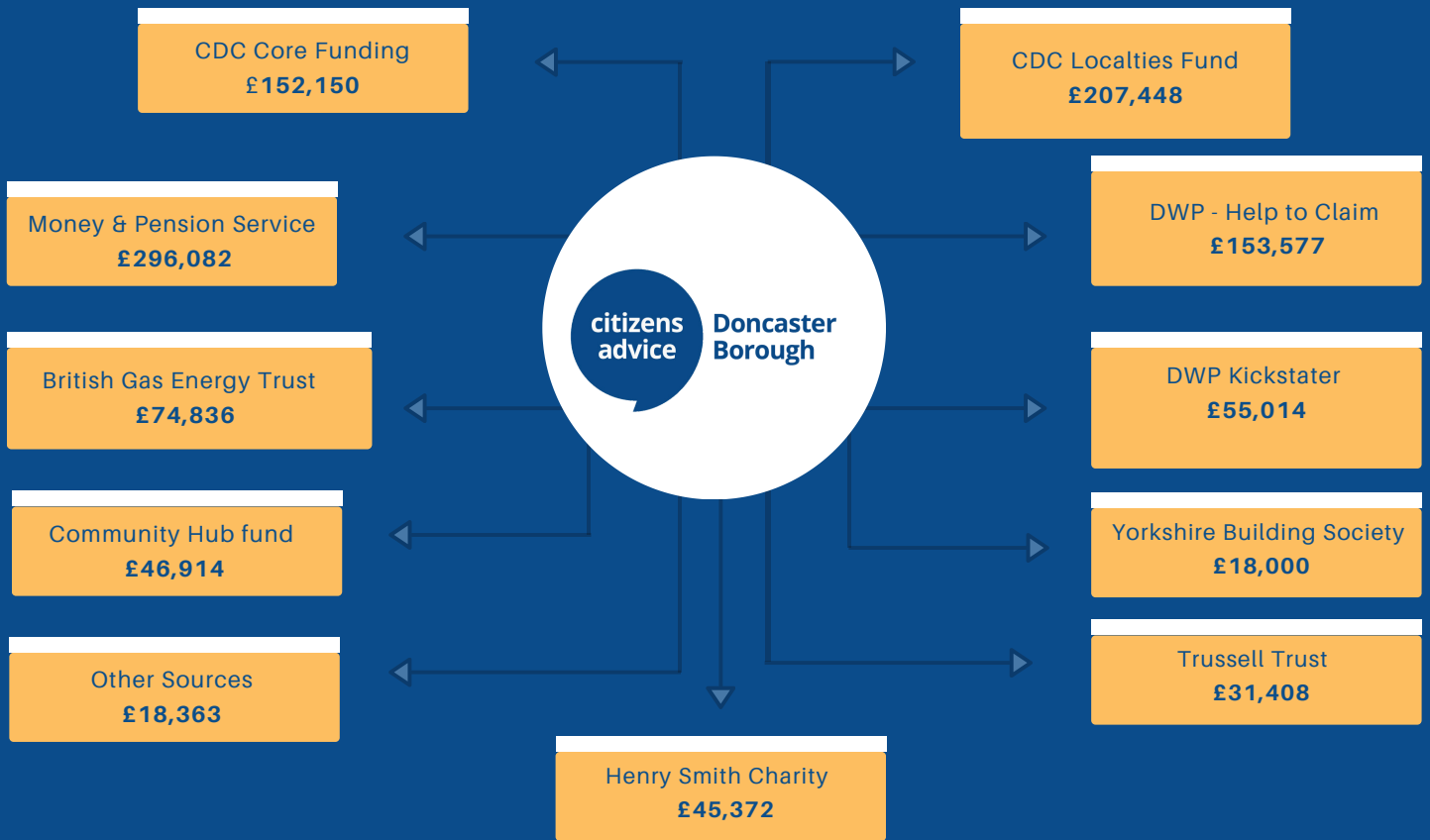
"I am very happy with the holistic approach of the Citizens' Advice Bureau and feel empowered to make a benefits claim myself"

Barry had worked full time for the last 30+ years, he had worked at the company since he left school. In September 2022 Barry had to leave work due to his worsening health issues. The client had never claimed benefits before, so he found the process was a little confusing and was apprehensive about accessing the necessary benefits. Barry is already in receipt of PIP (Personal Independence Payment) standard rate care and enhanced mobility and used this, along with his savings to live on. Barry initially sought assistance from his local Citizens Advice for help with energy costs, during this appointment he was referred to the Help To Claim Team.

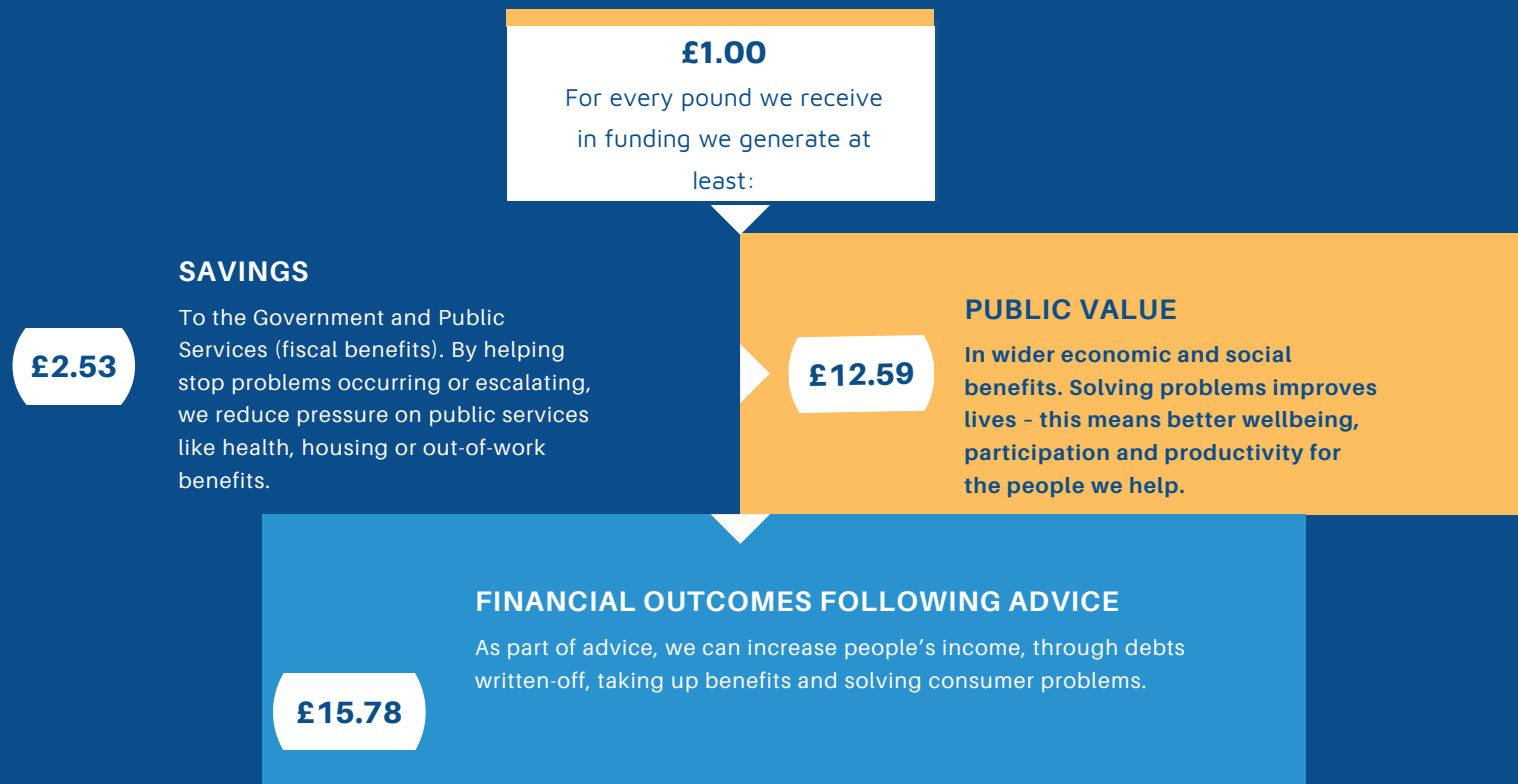
The Help To Claim Team assists clients to claim Universal Credit from the beginning through to the first correct payment. The Help To Claim Team performed a benefit calculation for Barry and identified that he may have been entitled to New Style Jobseekers Allowance of £367.46 per month, which could potentially increase after he has completed his work capability assessment, and £1.28 per month Universal Credit which would then passport him onto free prescriptions and other NHS treatments. Barry was very happy with the holistic approach of the Citizens' Advice Bureau and felt empowered to make a claim for the benefits online, knowing he can come back to us if he needs any additional assistance.

Funding

At A Glance



Outcomes

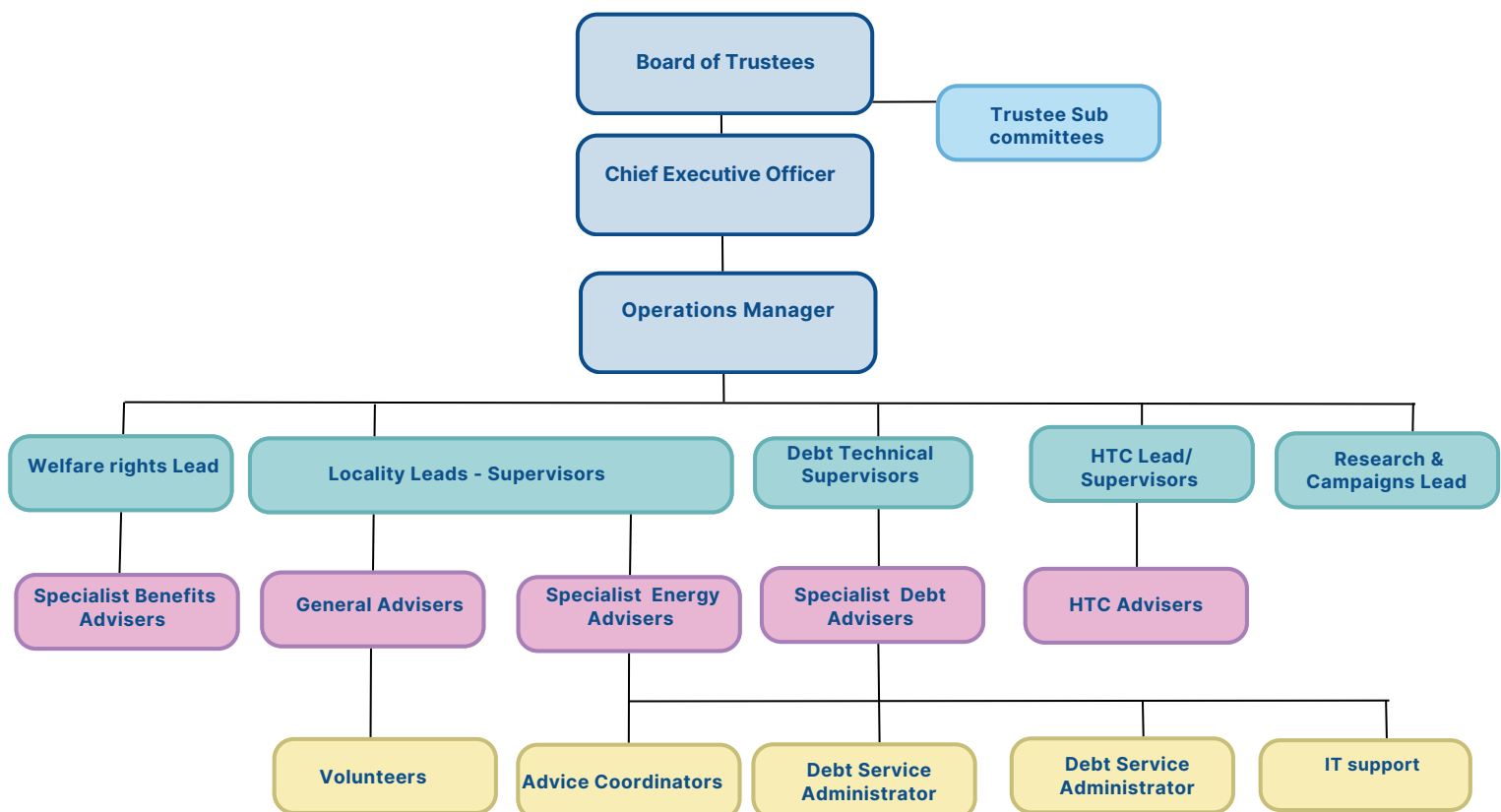


Governance & Structure

Our trustee board sets the vision and gives strategic direction to Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough. There are 4 formal trustee board meetings each year, along with other meetings and events, to help trustees shape the organisation's strategic direction and develop as a team.

Our Chief Executive, working with the Operations Manager, are responsible for delivering the strategy and for day-to-day operations. The trustee board is committed to high standards of corporate governance and complies with the principles and practices set out in the Charity Governance Code.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



Our trustees are the ultimate decision-makers for Citizens Advice Doncaster, and they are responsible for ensuring that the charity is run in a way that is legal, ethical, and effective.

They do this by setting the charity's strategic direction, overseeing its finances, and monitoring its performance.

Our trustees are all volunteers, and they come from a wide range of backgrounds and professions. They bring with them a wealth of skills and experience, which is essential to the good governance of our charity.

In the past year, we have welcomed three new trustees to our board: Bradley Barrass, Carly Harling and Godson Koyoto. We are very grateful for their willingness to give their time and expertise to support our work.

We have also said goodbye Trustees: Malcolm Jevons, who has served as chair, and vice chair in his years of service to Citizen Advice Doncaster Borough and Mexborough Citizens Advice.

We would like to thank them for their many years of service to Citizen Advice services in Doncaster, and we wish him all the best in the future.

We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated and skilled group of trustees. Their hard work and commitment is essential to the success of our charity.

Thank you to all of our trustees for your volunteer service.





Andrew Wignal - Incoming Chair

I originally trained as a chemist involved in vitamin D research based in Amsterdam. On returning to the UK my career moved into finance and then later into general management. I have generally worked in the packaging industry and have lived in Poland, Luxembourg and Germany.

Some 13 years ago I returned to the UK to retire. Since then I have been a volunteer at a hospice, the Princes Trust and Citizens Advice. I have served as Treasurer and Chair for local Citizens Advices and have also been involved with Citizens Advice at a national level.

In total I have spent over 12 years being involved with Citizens Advice.

I am excited about the prospect of serving as the Chair of Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough. I look forward to collaborating closely with fellow trustees, CEO James Woods, and the dedicated advice teams. Together, we aim to strategically mold the future of our service, striving to accomplish our agreed strategic objectives effectively.



Hello, my name is Brad, and the passion that currently takes up the most of my time is studying social anthropology (within the Human, Social and Political Sciences course) at the University of Cambridge. I'm Doncaster - well, Consibrough - born and bred. Growing up in Doncaster eventually led me to volunteering at Citizens Advice towards the end of Y13. I then became an employee, taking on multiple roles such as general advisor, debt administrator, and volunteer representative, as well as being involved in social media. Having grown up on a council estate, I've always been passionate about social inequality and improving access to fundamental provisions, so my time as an employee at Citizens Advice can only be described as fulfilling and meaningful.

Having extensive, recent and ongoing experiences both as a young person in Doncaster and in the organisation, I hope that I bring a grounded perspective to the trustee board; one that allows our policies to have an understanding of both of our employees (internal) and what the people in Doncaster require of us (external). Outside of Citizens Advice, I'm involved in other community building projects, such as being an ambassador for Zero Gravity, and launching a Northern Society in Cambridge as well as a Doncaster-Cambridge Uni network. I hope that I can continue to transfer knowledge and skills between all of these projects to increase the opportunities available to people in Doncaster.

I am Godson KATOTO, I completed my law degree in 2022 at Leeds Beckett University. I am a Paralegal aspiring to practice law. I have been with Citizens Advice since 2020/2021 where I started as a General Advisor, now a Trustee, a position of responsibility that I take seriously and honoured hold.



I'm Carly and I am an ambitious, excitable, focused and passionate young leader - voted within the Top 10 of Young Leaders, nationally by Housing 24 in 2018.



I joined the Local Authority almost 16 years ago and I have worked predominantly in Doncaster within the Housing sector both operationally and strategically.

My expertise are within Housing, Revenues and Benefits, Welfare Reform, Income Management and Tenancy Sustainability. I have worked closely with key partners and stakeholders over the years to support members of the public to sustain their tenancies, to obtain the appropriate financial help and support needed particularly given the backdrop of challenges. These include Welfare Reform - particularly Universal Credit, the EU Settlement Scheme following Brexit and the cost of living crisis.

Over the coming months, there are many changes relating to Universal Credit as DWP progress the roll-out of Move to UC. I am looking forward to working closely with the Chief Executive Officer to ensure those due to transition from Tax Credits (in the first instance) are able to access services, should help be required and make a claim timely to mitigate a break in entitlement / loss of income.

Outside of work, I have a young family and love sport. Particularly football and Gymnastics

Volunteers serve as a powerful force, amplifying our capacity to make a meaningful impact within our community. Their dedication is a priceless asset, greatly benefiting both our esteemed funders and the people we serve. While we navigated certain hurdles in 2022 and 2023, stemming from internal restructuring, our commitment to expanding our volunteer network remained steadfast.

Amidst these changes, we want to underscore our profound gratitude for our existing volunteers, whose unwavering support continues to shape the heart of our mission. As we stride forward, we extend a warm invitation to new members who wish to join our ranks, as their contributions are eagerly awaited and wholeheartedly embraced.

Our training strategy

At CADB, we've developed a robust training strategy that empowers volunteers with tailored skills and support. We offer a blend of academic resources, interactive e-learning modules, and hands-on experience through shadowing experienced team members. This comprehensive approach ensures our volunteers are well-equipped to make a meaningful impact while fostering their personal growth.

Volunteer roles

At Citizens' Advice, we invite volunteers who are eager to contribute their expertise across many various facets of our work. Our range of roles caters to a wide array of skill sets, these roles include:

- General Advice
- Reception
- Social Media
- Research and campaigns
- IT support
- Volunteer administration & recruitment

Each role is an integral piece in our mission puzzle, offering a chance for volunteers to channel their talents and passions most effectively



As we've previously mentioned, our journey in sustaining a thriving volunteer community hasn't been without its share of challenges over the past year. However, amidst these trials, we stand poised with renewed excitement to introduce an exceptional addition to our team – our new Volunteer Coordinator, Lesley Forshaw. With unwavering confidence, we anticipate Lesley's pivotal role in revitalising and optimising our processes. This strategic enhancement positions CADB to effectively address the surging demand for our services.

In this evolving landscape, we embrace change as an opportunity for growth, and Lesley embodies our commitment to pushing boundaries and reaching new heights.

Introducing Lesley Foreshaw - Volunteer Coordinator

With a decade-long journey in the world of volunteering, I am thrilled to introduce myself as the Volunteer Coordinator for Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough. From my early involvement in volunteering to my roles as a Volunteer Development Lead with Citizens Advice Witness Service, I have always been captivated by the potential of volunteering to empower individuals and uplift communities. This enduring passion ensures that volunteering will forever remain a cornerstone of my life.

The heart of volunteering management lies in my dedication to "empower people." This empowerment ripples through volunteers, local communities, and the individuals they assist, sparking transformative change while nurturing skills and assets.

Volunteering has been my personal wellspring of growth, introducing me to diverse people and invaluable life lessons. Every volunteer's journey is uniquely rewarding, contributing to personal development and the greater good in equal measure.

Amid recent challenges, volunteers have shown unwavering dedication, reinforcing the importance of volunteering and community fortification. For Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough, my vision includes key initiatives:

- Cultivating diverse volunteer opportunities to ensure inclusivity and benefit distribution.
- Establishing a robust recruitment system to engage the community and provide support.
- Maintaining high volunteer retention rates through strategic management.
- Facilitating open dialogue and feedback to enhance engagement and initiatives.

Volunteers drive positive transformation, bridging gaps and effecting change. Valuing and supporting volunteers strengthens our communities. My commitment to Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough extends beyond recruitment, focusing on creating a nurturing environment where volunteers thrive, with resources and recognition. As we foster appreciation and respect, the cycle of inspiration and involvement will endure.



Wider Impact of Volunteering

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Citizens Advice Doncaster is an independent, local charity and a member of the Citizens Advice network. We provide free advice and support to meet the needs of our community. This includes advice on a range of problems, such as with work, debt, benefits, immigration, housing and more. We're here to help everyone who lives, works or studies in the Borough of Doncaster.

Volunteering is the act of freely giving one's time and skills to help others or to support a cause. It is a valuable contribution to society, and it has a wide range of positive impacts, both on the individual volunteer and on the community as a whole.

Volunteering can have a number of positive benefits for the individual volunteer, including:

- Improved physical and mental health
- Increased social connection
- Enhanced skills and knowledge
- Greater sense of purpose and meaning
- Community benefits

Volunteering also has a number of positive impacts on the community, including:

- Strengthening social cohesion
- Improving the quality of life
- Promoting civic engagement

Volunteering is a powerful force for good in the world. It can have a positive impact on the lives of both individuals and communities. If you are looking for a way to make a difference, consider volunteering your time and skills to a cause that you care about.

54%

of our employed volunteers state that they are using it to change or evaluate their career.

15

Volunteers found work internally and externally in the last year

97%

would recommend volunteering at Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough

80%

of our unemployed volunteers believe they are overcoming barriers to employment

£131,000

The monetary value of volunteered hours over the year

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"There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in"

Desmond Tutu



We believe that it's important to not just to help people find a way forward, but also to understand what led to the difficulties in the first place and to do something about those underlying issues.

During 2022/23 we proactively looked to use our data and were committed to achieving positive outcomes through our Research and Campaigns work, participating in National and local campaigns and undertaking local research on the Cost of Living Crisis and how this impacts residents of Doncaster. We can do this in part because Citizens Advice is an anchor institution in towns and cities across the country, enriching the social fabric of local communities. We have taken the lead locally on National Campaigns like talk money week, improving awareness on issues and promoting advice.

This year we have produced, worked on and established key factors which will help us tailor services and produce more impactful campaigning moving forward.

Local Research - Cost Of living Crisis in Doncaster



Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough launched its online Cost of Living survey in September 2022. This was in response to the growing concern nationally and locally about the increases in daily living costs for households and the concern that inflation and energy costs will continue to rise in 2022/2023.

The research asked key questions about how worried people in Doncaster were about the increases and the impacts they were having and what changes they had already made or how they were planning to manage their individual circumstances.

It also looked at the type of support they had needed to access as a result and the effects on their health and well-being. The survey began in September and is continuing to run at present and to date we have had 423 responses.

National Campaign - Stopping forced installation of PPM

The impact of increased energy costs has seen more and more households struggle to meet demands and fall into arrears, this has led to an increase in the number of households forced onto more expensive prepayment metres.

We campaigned to stop this as it leaves in most cases the most vulnerable unable to heat their homes or cook food, it also has a significant impact on households' health and well-being.

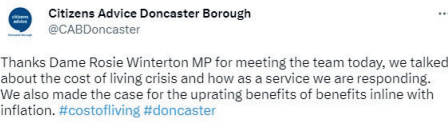
We met with Local MPs, we had articles in the local media, we promoted and discussed the issue on social media.





Local Campaign - Cost of living help and Support

We campaigned on a variety of issues relating to the cost of living, across the city. We have attended a events and put on workshops, discussing energy, finances and money management and Benefit entitlement. We have been invited to events like the one pictured organised By Local MP Nick Fletcher in Rossington, we have also attended schools, libraries and community centres when cost of living events have been put on.



National Campaign - Uplifting Benefits in line with inflation

One such example was our campaign to local MPs to up rate benefits in line with inflation, this is important because of the impacts this report reflects, and that those on the lowest incomes are disproportionately impacted by increases to basic amenities.



As a result of our campaigning up rating benefits in line with inflation is due to happen in April and is a vital first step in helping households weather this storm. Raising housing support in line with rents and additional government interventions will further close this gap.

Launched - The Doncaster Advice Network.

The Doncaster Advice Network is a group of charities, partner organisations and community based groups of all sizes working in the field of advice and support provision across the city. It was established to improve awareness and access to advice and support services at all levels. From improved partnership working to better understanding of local issues facing clients and local community groups.

The Network and its participants will look to:

- Work collaboratively to shape access and quality of advice on offer across Doncaster
- Campaign on issues as a larger group to push for policy change at a local and national level
- Share resources and expertise across the network.
- Promote volunteering and recruitment opportunities within the sector across the city.



Our Aims & What the future holds...

Our Aims are to continually strive to;

- Increase local and national awareness of our campaigns
- To be involved in Regional and National campaigns challenging discrimination and inequality.
- Share best practice about research and campaigns with other local Citizens Advice.
- Actively develop local campaigns about the issues that are really relevant to our residents.
- Engage with local partners and people of influence, including our MPs, on key national campaigns.



Moving forward, we want to develop our research and campaigns (R&C) work by;

- Joint campaigning with other like minded organisations on issues, increasing scope, voice and audience of our campaigning, this could be done ad hoc or via the Doncaster Advice Network of which we are a founding member.
- Launching a Podcast to discuss campaigns, why they are important what they are looking to achieve with special guests discussing how policies impact residents of Doncaster and what could be done to change this
- Increasing and supporting staff and volunteers to be more involved in our Research and campaigns work

The Doncaster Fairness & Well-being Commission is an independent body that has been established to explore fresh ways to involve local people, organisations, and businesses to look at how to improve the lives of Doncaster residents in difficult financial circumstances.

The Commission's aims are to:

- Gather evidence on the experiences of people who live and work in Doncaster so that it can better understand the challenges and opportunities they face.
- Make an independent strategic assessment of the nature, extent, and causes of inequalities in Doncaster.
- Make recommendations for tackling inequalities in Doncaster in the medium and long term to improve well-being across the borough.

The Commission's work is based on the recognition that inequalities in Doncaster are a major barrier to improving the well-being of all residents. The Commission is committed to working with people from all walks of life to develop solutions that will make a real difference to the lives of those who are most disadvantaged. Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough is a member of the Doncaster Fairness & Well-being Commission.

We have a deep understanding of the challenges faced by people in Doncaster, and they are using their data and client voice to shape the Commission's recommendations to improve Doncaster. For example, we provided the Commission with data on the number of people they have helped with debt, benefits, housing, and employment issues. This data has helped the Commission to understand the scale of the challenges faced by people in Doncaster and to identify areas where action is needed.

Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough has also shared the stories of their clients with the Commission. These stories have helped the Commission to understand the human impact of inequalities in Doncaster and to develop recommendations that will make a real difference to the lives of those who are most disadvantaged.

We have used the recommendations from the will use the recommendations to inform their strategic planning process and develop new services and programs to meet the emerging needs of the community. we will also use the recommendations to advocate for change at a local and national level and will review our progress against these recommendations moving forward.



Raising Awareness

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At Citizens Advice, our commitment to the people of Doncaster extends far beyond providing vital assistance and support. We recognize the importance of addressing broader societal issues that affect our communities. In our pursuit of greater equity and inclusivity, we actively promote awareness and understanding of various key topics, including Black History Month, LGBTQ+ rights, and disability issues.

We firmly believe that by shining a light on these issues, we can foster a more inclusive and equitable Doncaster. By engaging with and educating the community on these matters, we aim to eliminate discrimination, promote diversity, and create a welcoming environment where everyone can thrive.

Our dedication to raising awareness on these subjects is rooted in our unwavering commitment to achieving social justice and equal opportunities for all in Doncaster."



Digital Inclusion

In today's digital age, access to technology and the internet has become an integral part of daily life. However, a significant challenge that persists in our community is digital exclusion. Digital exclusion occurs when individuals lack the necessary resources, skills, or access to digital technology, hindering their ability to fully participate in the digital world. This exclusion has far-reaching consequences, affecting access to essential services, employment opportunities, and information. It can exacerbate social inequalities and isolate vulnerable individuals and communities.

At Citizens Advice Doncaster, we are acutely aware of the impact digital exclusion has on our clients. In response, we are committed to making our services more digitally inclusive. We recognise the importance of providing alternative ways for individuals to access our support, whether through phone-based services, in-person consultations, or outreach programs.

Furthermore, we are continuously working to enhance our online resources and digital tools, ensuring they are user-friendly and accessible to all, regardless of digital literacy levels. By proactively addressing the issue of digital exclusion and adapting our services, we aim to bridge the digital divide, making vital information and assistance more accessible to all members of our community.

Digital Engagement

In our ongoing efforts to expand our reach and connect with the community, we recognise the immense potential of social media as a powerful tool for enhancing digital engagement. Through platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, we aim to foster a stronger and more dynamic online presence.

By sharing valuable information, updates, and resources on social media, we can engage with our audience, respond to their queries, and create a sense of community and support. Our commitment to improving digital engagement extends beyond disseminating information; it involves actively listening to our audience's needs, concerns, and feedback, allowing us to continually adapt and improve our services to better serve the people of Doncaster.



Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough



@CABDoncaster



@cadoncasterboro



Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough

As with the need for hardship support, the impacts on people's mental health and well-being were increased during the pandemic. Our team have put a lot of time and resource into stepping up our support in this area of work.

We now have 3 qualified Mental Health First Aid trained staff .

This training improves the confidence, skills and knowledge of delegates, to support people in crisis, developing a mental health issue and improving their own mental health and wellbeing. It establishes a better understanding how our advice and support, and signposting, can improve people's mental health and wellbeing.

Our Localities Supervisor is Mental Health Champion and regularly attends quarterly Mental Health Champion meetings at MIND, maintaining our Mental Health awareness and sharing best practice.

We have 3 members of staff who are Domestic Abuse champions, having completed the DMBC Domestic Abuse Awareness courses including Coercive and Controlling behaviours.

Our staff have all completed the Citizens Advice Suicide Awareness training and have refresher courses each year to support with the significant number of clients who are at the end of their tether.

We encourage our staff to take 5 minutes, talk about the challenges they have faced in their day so they are not taking problems home, affecting their Mental health and personal lives.

Mental health problems are the most common health issue among Citizens Advice clients, impacting 89,410 clients last year. Previous research found people with mental health problems are more likely to struggle with essential services, and support offered by providers is inadequate.





HOW OUR ADVICE HELPED MARGARET*

"Without the help of Citizens advice I wouldn't have been able to afford to heat my home or cook my meals until I got paid again in 2 weeks time, I cannot thank them enough!"

Margaret is a pension age individual who lives in Council property and is retired. Margaret is physically disabled and is in receipt of Attendance Allowance, she is reliant on help from family to meet her monthly bills but they too are now finding it difficult to help out. Due to increased cost of living she started to fall behind on her energy bills, Margaret is £987.54 in debt to Scottish Power (Gas & Electricity). Scottish power have forced the client to move from direct debit to prepayment meters due to the arrears despite Margaret being a pensioner and having health conditions including being deaf which made it difficult for her to deal with this herself.

We helped Margaret apply to Scottish Power Hardship Fund which was not provided to her by the supplier, we are waiting for a decision, if this is unsuccessful we will look to pay off her arrears through our partnership with British Gas energy trust to assist. We topped her meter up with £49 credit as she was unable to afford to do this herself we can issue a further 2 vouchers to support.

We ensured that she is on the priority service register so she won't be cut off. We helped Margaret with budgeting and provided her with a full benefit check to ensure she was receiving all she was entitled to, we also went through some energy saving tips to help her reduce her usage."



Ed Miliband MP for Doncaster North

"Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough provides a fantastic service supporting local people. The work that they do is so important at all times, and particularly now in the cost of living crisis we're facing.

"Constituents contact me about a range of issues and I often signpost them to Citizens Advice, knowing that the staff and volunteers will provide them with extremely knowledgeable, helpful and supportive advice.

"I am aware that there has been a large increase in people contacting Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough, and the team there work tirelessly to ensure that our community is well supported."

Ed Miliband



Dame Rosie Winterton MP for Doncaster Central

Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough (CADB) is a cornerstone of the services provided in Doncaster, ran by a dedicated team with expert knowledge who are able to assist local residents with problems that are brought to them.

Between the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, the need for organisations such as CADB has never been greater and I have full confidence in their ability to rise to the challenge.

If anyone is seeking advice with regard to their bills or benefits, then CADB should be their first port of call. They are an asset and a credit to the Doncaster community.”

Rosie Winterton



Nick Fletcher MP for Don Valley

"The world is a lot more complicated than it has ever been. We all need to navigate our way around but that is not always a simple exercise.

Every year we in Parliament pass new laws and new regulations. Not everyone can afford to pay for legal advice and those who can often balk at the fees charged by lawyers. Who can we turn to when we need help understanding what the law is? The answer to my question is the Citizens Advice Bureau. A free service. A skilled service. And most importantly a service provided by dedicated, informed and caring individuals.

The twin aims of the Citizens Advice service are "to provide the advice people need for the problems they face" and secondly "to improve the policies and principles that affect people's lives". they don't just advise, they also lobby for steps they believe would result in a fairer society.

Their website is an invaluable resource and well worth visiting should you have a problem. The other year they had over 12,000 client contacts handling over 37,000 issues. They brought in income gains of £1.1m for their clients. Results matter.

I'm very happy to say that Doncaster Citizens Advice Bureau has my full support. It provides help and support to those who need it. They act for the vulnerable in our society but their doors are open to all.

They do great work and long may they continue.

Nick Fletcher



Rachael Leslie
Deputy Director of Public Health, Doncaster Council

Citizens Advice Doncaster are a flexible, reliable and responsive partner. As an agency and brand, they are trusted by Doncaster residents to provide information, advice and practical support on day to day issues and at times of crisis. Taking a community centred approach, services have grown to meet rising demand and increased complexity, working with partners to provide holistic support and enabling people to regain a sense of control over issues affecting their lives.

Citizens Advice Doncaster have made a significant impact in ensuring Doncaster residents are able to access benefits and income that they are entitled to, adding pounds to pockets and contributing to financial stability for individuals, families and their communities.

Rachael Leslie



**Dave Richmond, Chief Executive
St Leger Homes of Doncaster**

We work closely with Citizens Advice Doncaster and see them as one of our key partners. They make an overwhelming contribution to helping address our tenants significant personal debt issues.

We value the daily contact we have with Citizens Advice Doncaster and the valuable advise and support they offer. Their role as an active member of the Doncaster Advice Network is also helping to ensure that a large numbers of organisations are able to offer effective support and assistance to a wide number of people in very difficult financial circumstances.

CA Doncaster Borough are part of the tight fabric of support services that make such a difference to addressing the key challenges we face here in Doncaster.

Dave Richmond



Damian Allen
CEO City of Doncaster Council

Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough (CADB) has been instrumental in providing vital cost-of-living support in collaboration with our Team Doncaster partnership. Through co-located working within our civic offices, we have been able to provide better, joined up support to those in need. In these challenging times, where demand for services have increased dramatically, CADB has played a crucial role through their reliable and invaluable guidance to over 12,000 clients just in the last year.

We are grateful for their continued partnership and are committed to working closely with them to support and address future challenges that our residents face in the future.

Damian Allen



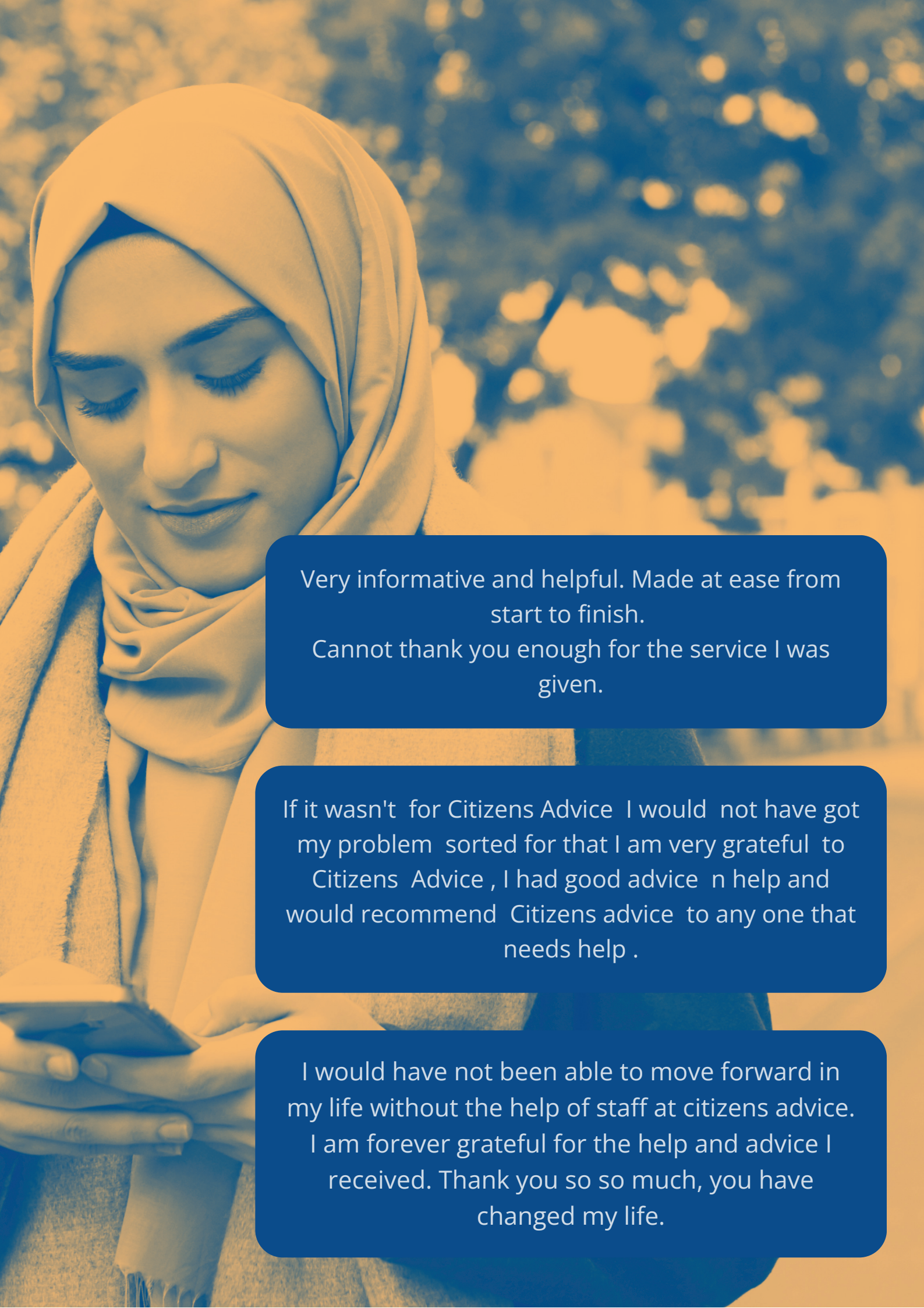
I attended the CAB at Stainforth and was helped by Paula, who was kind, compassionate and understanding of my predicament even though I was feeling embarrassed about it. I had a support worker from the creative support team at Doncaster otherwise I would not have been aware that I could request some help. Paula is a wonderful caring lady. I am so grateful for the help from CAB it is helping me to improve my quality of life.

Thank you so much.

The help I received has been exceptional and has eased my mind, but as the issue is still not resolved. I can't really comment much although when finished my problems that I went to CAB with will be sorted and my mind will be at ease more

My advisor (Christina) was sympathetic, empathetic and not only successfully got me my full eligibility for pip but helped me fill in a UC50 form.

I have complex needs and her help had a massive impact on my mental well-being, all for the better. I returned later to personally thank her with flowers and a card ! Would definitely use again, it is a fantastic service and would highly recommend!



Very informative and helpful. Made at ease from start to finish.
Cannot thank you enough for the service I was given.

If it wasn't for Citizens Advice I would not have got my problem sorted for that I am very grateful to Citizens Advice , I had good advice n help and would recommend Citizens advice to any one that needs help .

I would have not been able to move forward in my life without the help of staff at citizens advice. I am forever grateful for the help and advice I received. Thank you so so much, you have changed my life.

Help us make a difference

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Did you know that every local Citizens Advice branch is not just a place for help, but a registered charity?

Our mission to provide vital advice and support is more critical today than ever, and as we look ahead, the demand for our services continues to rise. Your contribution, no matter how modest, ensures that we'll always be here for the people of Doncaster.

Whether it's a heartfelt donation via cheque, a personal visit to any of our offices, or a quick scan of the QR code below to access our Charities Aid Foundation donation page, you're making a profound difference. Your one-time or recurring donation will be the beacon of hope for those seeking assistance.

Every little bit counts, and together, we can make a world of difference. See our social media for more details on how you can be part of this heartfelt mission.

We want to take a moment to extend our heartfelt gratitude to those who have generously donated over the last 12 months. Your support has been the bedrock of our work, allowing us to reach those in need and make a real impact in our community.

Thank you

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Case study

Adviser: Paula Lowther
Issue: Debt

The Client is 74 years old, White British, female and lives in a one bedroom, local authority property alone. The Client is also in receipt of State pension, two small private pensions, PIP (Enhanced rate Daily Living and mobility), Full housing benefit and Council Tax Support in payment.

The Client has been a long time client of the debt team and is in a reduced repayment plan with her two creditors. The Client contacted the Stainforth Citizens Advice as Cabot Financial required an annual review. During the appointment I performed a benefit check and this showed The Client's entitlement to Pension Credit. The Client was, at first, reluctant to apply as she had done so two years previously and was turned down. However I advised The Client that she should have had the Severe Disability Addition element added to the Standard Minimum Guarantee and with this added The Client is eligible. I took more time to explain the calculations made and offered to help The Client with the application process. With the help of a neighbour who had volunteered for Citizens Advice previously, and was known to me, the client applied for Pension Credit.

The Client was awarded Pension Credit at £57.59 per week backdated to January 2023 and awarded in time for the Cost of Living payment. This entitlement passported the client to the Cost Of Living Payment at £301.00 and free TV Licence. The Clients award means her income has increased by £287.87 per month.

£287.87
INCOME INCREASE PER
MONTH

CLIENT
AWARDED
PENSION CREDIT
AT £57.79 PER
WEEK

“I AM
OVERJOYED
ABOUT THIS”



Paula Lowther
Debt Adviser

Case study

Client is single, living in a private rented accommodation and has a full time job but due to his ongoing mental health conditions has taken some time off. Client moved into his property in July 2022 and took meter readings which were sent to the energy provider, a monthly payment was set up at £114.07. In April 2023 Client received a demand for £9,300 for unpaid bills going back to March 2022, Client had contacted the energy provider and received no help. Client then sent emails with evidence of tenancy and meter readings, he then received another letter stating the debt was £9,331.62 and that further action was now being taken to recover this money. This caused extreme distress and impacted his mental health.

Our advisor Stuart contacted the energy provider. The Client's information was located on their system, it was discovered that some of it was in a different location and that all the information was not in one place. Together we went through The Client's circumstances, the relevant emails and photos that had been sent were located. What became clear was that the previous tenant had accrued a large debt and when the new tenant moved in the information was not updated. It was also noted that the meter readings they had did not match the photos sent by The Client.

Further investigation and a check on the meters proved that they were sending conflicting information, it was clear that there was a fault and that the meters were giving FMR (False meter readings). We were then able to go through reading against payments made and come to an agreement that the debt was incorrect.

The supplier's operative that spoke with Stuart then discussed the matter with their supervisor. The supplier had managed to work out a basic calculation and wiped off £7,032 with immediate effect, leaving a debt of £2,268. It was agreed that this debt is "likely" not to be attributed to The Client and a hold was placed on it pending a further investigation. As The Client was eligible to join the PSR (Priority Service register) we arranged on the telephone for the client to be placed on it.

In conclusion The Client's debt has been wiped off, £7,032, with immediate effect, All debt recovery action was withdrawn, The Client received an apology for errors made and not taking action when client first contacted them. The Client is to have new meters installed and has been placed on PSR (Priority Service Register).

Adviser: Stuart Tovell
Issue: Energy Debt

£7,032

DEBT CLEARED WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.

ALL DEBT RECOVERY ACTION WAS WITHDRAWN

“THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR HELPING ME. IT IS A HUGE RELIEF TO KNOW THAT I AM NOT IN DEBT.”



Stuart Tovell
Energy Adviser

Case study

The Client had initially been referred to Help To Claim (HTC) by SSAFA as he is Ex-Military, The Client wanted help working out his options going forward, as one of his four children will be staying with him full time from 25-09-2023. The Client showed concern about his change of circumstances and how he would be able to ensure his income was enough to support his extra costs. The Client was also concerned that his income would be assessed as he is employed under a zero hour contract. Client showed basic understanding as he confirmed that he had used the online calculator himself and just wanted some extra support and advice.

We discussed the details of a potential claim and how it would look based on The Clients individual circumstances, as The Client is single parent in employment I explained that he should seek help towards childcare costs, The Client confirmed that he would be putting his son into breakfast club and afterschool club but had no idea on the figures of this. I then explained to The Client that once he knows more he can update the costs onto his Universal Credit (UC) claim. I assisted The Client through another benefit check to ensure the advice given was as accurate as possible, estimated entitlements were discussed and different scenarios were used based on different working hours to reassure client that UC would be accurately assessing him every month using RTI from HMRC to ensure he will be getting paid as accurately as possible each month even though he has fluctuating income. The Client has housing costs through a 2 bed private rented property, his monthly rent is £650 but I discussed with The Client that UC would only look to paying the maximum LHA in that area and for his entitlement, LHA for a 2 bedroom in The Clients area is £440, which means that The Client would only be paid up to that amount for housing element, this is a difference of £210 from his actual liable rent. I gave The Client options about DHP with the local council and set expectations for how he could apply for this once he has his first statement from UC showing housing costs breakdowns.

In summary The Client also needed to make a new claim for child benefit so I sent all the relevant links on an email to The Client per request as he states he feels he is confident enough to manage this himself online, but also accompanied links with telephone numbers just in case. The Client was also invited back to HTC if he had any more questions about applying or preparing for his first payment. The Client would be entitled to standard allowance, housing element, child element and child care costs once he knows the amounts under UC. The Client's overall yearly benefit amount combined UC and CB is £11,799.84.

Adviser: Billie-Jo Haigh
Issue: Help To Claim

£11,799.84
YEARLY BENEFIT AMOUNT
COMBINED UC AND CB

CLIENT IS ENTITLED
TO STANDARD
ALLOWANCE,
HOUSING ELEMENT,
CHILD ELEMENT
AND CHILD CARE
COSTS

“ANY DOUBTS I
HAD, HAVE GONE
AND I FEEL LIKE I
HAVE A BETTER
UNDERSTANDING
OF THE SYSTEM
AND WHAT TO
EXPECT.”



Billie-Jo Haigh
Help To Claim Team

citizensadvice.org.uk

Case study

The Client is aged 34 and lives alone in his own house with a mortgage. He is on UC and receives the 25% single adult occupancy CT discount. He has split up with his partner and has 2 children. He was employed and has been receiving SSP since February 2023 and then lost his job in June. His last UC payment on the 15th September was £293 as he has no extra elements included and his last payment from work affected the amount, he is currently submitting fit notes. The Client has been diagnosed with autism, ADHD, anxiety and depression. He can go for days without sleeping or eating, and his symptoms have worsened since his father passed away last year. He stimulates a lot, rubbing a piece of fabric or other items with his fingers, making them sore, when he tries to pick things up his hands feel like they are being stung. He can't prepare food safely, his mum brings him his meals or he visits her house as he forgets to eat. Client is waiting for 1:1 counseling as group sessions trigger him, he gets frustrated and angry and doesn't know how to express it, he sometimes self harms and has violent outbursts. He has attempted suicide. He will fixate on something and forgets to go to the toilet then becomes overwhelmed. His mum and sister help him with his finances and any written correspondence. He also needs a reminder to shower and change his clothes. He doesn't go anywhere without the sat-nav on his phone, even to places he has been to many times. The Client had been sent a PIP form due on the 16th August and had asked for an extension to October. We completed the PIP form based on The Client's own information about his health conditions and how they affect his mobility, ability to carry out daily tasks and the help he needs, he did not have any medical evidence so I advised him to obtain his patient summary from his GP to include with the form. He said his ADHD nurse/counselor at Tickhill Road Hospital would write a letter/report showing his diagnoses. I advised him to write his name and NI number at the top of all extra paperwork he includes. He said his mum might write something in the space provided for someone who knows you. I then provided him with a copy of the completed form and advised him to read it through before his health assessment, which could be on the phone and advised him to obtain proof of postage and make a note of the date.

The Client was already aware that he could be eligible to claim NS ESA as he had worked and paid NI contributions during the previous 2 tax years, I explained that NS ESA lasts for 365 days, is paid fortnightly and get Class 1 NI contributions credited, whatever he receives in NS ESA is taken off his UC amount. During the year he should be sent a UC50 health questionnaire and have a health assessment. If he is found to have LCWRA your NS ESA can continue beyond the 365 days. As The Client already has a UC50 form he didn't think it would be worth claiming NS ESA. The Client has a further appointment booked for help completing his UC50 form.

The Client has contacted his mortgage provider, has been given a 3 month 'holiday' from his payments and is living off his bank overdraft. He has a loan and is in arrears with his phone and internet. I referred him to a debt adviser, who did a debt assessment immediately.

The client spoke very quickly, I encouraged him to slow down so we could go through each question one at a time, rather than everything being jumbled together and causing him stress.

The Client will attend his next appointment for help with his UC50.

Adviser: Christine Jones
Issue: Benefits

£5,100
SEVERE DISABILITY
PAYMENT MADE TO OUR
CLIENT

GIVEN A 3
MONTH
'HOLIDAY' FROM
HIS PAYMENT

“THERE WAS NO
WAY I COULD
HAVE DONE THIS
MYSELF”



Christine Jones
Benefit Specialist

Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated funders, committed stakeholders, and invaluable partners for their unwavering support over the past 12 months. Your generous contributions have empowered our charity to make a tangible impact in the lives of those in need. Your belief in our mission has enabled us to effect positive change, create opportunities, and foster hope within our communities. Together, we've transformed aspirations into realities. Your trust and collaboration are the cornerstones of our success, and we look forward to continuing this journey with you, working hand in hand to make the world a better place

Thank You



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Money &
Pensions
Service



Voluntary
Action
Doncaster



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Inclusive
Access to Independence



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Hub



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Mind
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St. Leger Homes
OF DONCASTER



Department
for Work &
Pensions



GOV.UK



NHS



Fairness & Wellbeing
Commission

A Special Thank you



MALCOLM JEVONS

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Malcolm Jevons for his unwavering commitment as a trustee, initially at Mexborough Citizens Advice and later as the founding Vice Chair of Citizens Advice Doncaster Bororough.

Malcolm humbly expressed his desire for a quiet retirement, but his energy, dedication, and wisdom have always been highly valued. We will miss his valuable contributions and wish him all the best for the future.

Reflecting on his journey, Malcolm joined Mexborough CAB in March 1996, initially as an individual trustee before taking on the role of a council appointee. Serving as Chairman until 2016, when Mexborough merged organisations with North East Doncaster to create Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough.

We hold Malcolm's and my contributions in high esteem, and it is with profound appreciation that we acknowledge the collective impact of our service to Mexborough CAB and CADB.





In Memoriam

BRENDA WILLIS

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Brenda Willis on Sunday, 18 October 2023, at the age of 92. Brenda Willis was an exemplary figure, known for her enduring dedication and support for Citizens Advice. Her legacy spans numerous years of service as a trustee at NEDCAB, where she notably held the positions of treasurer and Chair. Her pivotal role in the discussions that led to the establishment of CADB solidified her place as one of its pioneering trustees. Even after retiring from her trusteeship in 2018, Brenda continued to grace CADB as its honorary president.

Brenda's significant contributions have greatly influenced the advancement of Citizens Advice throughout Doncaster. Her cherished sense of humor, warm demeanor, astute intellect, and unwavering commitment to excellence have left an indelible mark. Her absence will be deeply felt, and her remarkable spirit will be dearly missed.



Contact Us

- Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster DN1 3BU
- Adwick Road Mexborough S64 0DB
- The Hope Centre Church Road DN7 5NS
- Thorne - The Bridge Centre Bridgestreet, Thorne, Doncaster DN8 5QH Thursday - 10am - 2pm
- Carcroft - Bullcroft Memorial Hall Chestnut Avenue DN6 8AP - Friday- 10am - 2pm
- Edlington -Helping Hands Community centre Edlington Ln, DN12 1PL Wednesday - 10am - 2pm
- Cantley -Neighbourhood Centre, 10 St Wilfrid's Court DN4 7AJ - Tuesdays - 10am to 2pm
- Armthorpe- Community Centre Church Street DN3 3AG Tuesdays - 10am to 2pm
- Rossington - The Family Hub Rossington, Grantham St, New Rossington, Doncaster DN11 0TA - Monday - 10am - 2pm
- Warmsworth - Stapleton center 77 Stapleton Rd, Warmsworth, Doncaster DN4 9LJ
- Askern community Library Station Rd, Askern, Doncaster DN6 0LA
- Denaby - The Old Library Church Road Denaby Main DN12 4AB
- Balby flourish - Flourish Woodfield Park, Tickhill Rd., Balby, Doncaster DN4 8QP
- Yorkshire Building Society - 20-26 Printing Office Street Doncaster DN1 1TR
- Woodlands - Woodlands Community Library and Hub, Windmill Balk Lane, Woodlands, Doncaster, DN6 7SB



<http://citizensadvice-doncasterborough.org>

- 01302 243057 - General enquiries / Appointments
- 01302 499330 - Local Debt Advice
- 0800 144 88 48 - National Adviceline
- 0800 144 8 444 - Universal Credit -Freephone
- 0800 240 4420 - Freephone Debt Advice line
- 0808 223 1133 - Citizens Advice consumer helpline



advice@citizensadvice-doncasterborough.org



<https://attenduk.vc/CADB-waiting-room>



www.cadoncasterborough.org



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