

citizens
advice

Doncaster
Borough

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

*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



cadoncasterborough.org

Foreword

I am proud to introduce this year's annual report for Citizens Advice Doncaster. Citizens Advice staff and volunteers continue to provide vital support to the people of Doncaster. They work in partnership with the Council and other Team Doncaster organisations, tackling local inequalities, improving access to services and championing our community's resilience.

Citizens Advice provide a range of provision to meet the needs of our people and communities. The community outreach project provides advice in the heart of our communities, with hubs in eight locations. Other work includes leading the South Yorkshire digital inclusion project, and partnering with British Gas Energy Trust helps tackle fuel poverty. By lobbying at a local and national level, Citizens Advice share the experiences of Doncaster people to influence central government and other large organisations.

The information in this annual report shows the differences made, with over 9,500 clients receiving the advice and support they need, on more than 35,000 individual issues. Through advice on debt, benefits, housing, and energy, there has been £13.5 million in income gains, making a real difference in what continues to be challenging times for many.

The full value of the services provided by Citizens Advice cannot be measured in purely monetary terms. The provision of independent advice and support can have a profound effect on a person's situation – often when they are at their lowest. I am pleased that the service will be trying to assess this type of impact by introducing measures of the wellbeing of their clients.

I look forward to continuing our work with the staff and volunteers at Citizens Advice Doncaster.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Damian".

Damian Allen
Chief Executive
City of Doncaster Council



**City of
Doncaster
Council**



Message from Chair



24/25 was another year in which Doncaster Citizens Advice (C.A.) grew strongly and in fact, as with C.A. generally, the only limit to the ability to provide advice was our own resource. In the financial year 24/25 we saw some 9,209 clients (23/24 - 9700) and generated some £9.6 Million income for them. (23/24 - £12.7m)

Having expanded our outreach centres last year we are now finalizing plans to modernize our buildings in Mexborough and Stainforth before next winter. I sincerely appreciate the patience of our staff and volunteers at both locations whilst these plans are implemented. One of our main funders is Doncaster Council, without whose support, we would not be able to see so many clients on such a wide variety of issues. It is not generally appreciated that funding from Doncaster is in two streams. One stream is to provide general advice to clients as necessary. Many other councils no longer provide funding for this. Other streams of funding are provided for to meet specific needs such as immigration issues or debt advice and cannot be used for different matters. For specific issues we also receive substantial funding from other organisations. You may also have read about the wish for the government to make the population more aware of the digital way of interfacing with authorities. Doncaster is a leader to widen digital inclusion and is working in collaboration with several adjacent Citizens Advice offices. My appreciation and thanks go to all our funders who are generally multi-year allowing us to plan the service long term and invest in our staff and volunteers.

Lastly my appreciation and thanks go to staff, volunteers and trustees. Often the issues that C.A. faces can be both difficult and disturbing and without the loyalty and commitment of the aforementioned life for our clients would be even more difficult than it already is. I am grateful to all that together make the C.A. one of Britain's most trusted and impartial organisations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew".

Andrew Wignall
Chair of Trustees
Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough



Message From Our CEO



At Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough, we believe no one should face life's challenges alone. Every day, we provide free, independent, and confidential advice to help people take control of their lives—because we know the right advice at the right time can change everything.

This year, we supported **9,209 clients**, helping with **31,207 issues**, and secured over **£9.6 million** in income gains and **£1.8 million** in debt write-offs. But behind every number is a person—someone who needed help navigating a complex world. And thanks to our incredible team and partners, we were there for them.

We've made great strides in digital inclusion, ensuring people can access advice and essential services online. We've built partnerships across South Yorkshire to support those most at risk of digital exclusion, delivering real progress in bridging the divide. Our work with the health system has also deepened. We now have a project based in GP surgeries, are launching a new partnership with RDaSH, and are in promising talks with DBTH. These initiatives reflect our belief that advice and health go hand in hand—because financial insecurity, housing instability, and access to welfare all affect wellbeing.

Innovation has played a vital role in how we deliver. We've expanded the use of wellbeing reporting (WEMWBS) to better understand our impact, and introduced AI tools like CADDY and Note Genie to support advisers and free up more time for client care.

But we face real challenges. Demand is rising—**800 calls a week**—and resources are stretched. The funding environment is tough, shaped by shifting national policy and growing community need. Yet, despite these pressures, we continue to deliver high-quality advice, adapt to change, and push forward.

At the heart of it all is our belief that whoever you are, whatever the problem, we're here to help. That's what unites our staff, volunteers, trustees, and partners—and what drives us every day.

As we look ahead, I'm reminded of a quote by Joe Strummer:
"Without people, you're nothing."

Thank you for standing with us.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'James'.



James Woods
Chief Executive Officer

Understanding Our Local Context

Doncaster is home to a population of approximately 312,800 people across 148,291 households, with a working-age population of 191,880 and over 60,000 residents aged 65 or older.

The challenges our communities face are stark. **Over 126,000 residents** live in areas ranked among the **20% most deprived** in England, and **35.2%** of children are growing up in poverty—significantly above the national average. Doncaster also has higher-than-average levels of disability, with **65,535** people living with long-term conditions, and 10.4% of residents claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Financial hardship is widespread, with 41% of households in arrears with at least one bill or debt, and **18%** of households living in fuel poverty. The social challenges extend further: **33,150** people provide unpaid care, **22%** report high anxiety, and **29,000** adults are long-term unemployed or have never worked.

Digital exclusion also remains a barrier, with **17%** of South Yorkshire's population lacking the digital access or skills they need.

These figures are not just numbers—they reflect real pressures that are driving up demand for our services. At the same time, the funding environment is becoming increasingly challenging. Grants and contracts are more competitive than ever, while the policy climate is shifting rapidly under a new government, with reforms and budgetary decisions that have direct implications for our sector. Some of these changes are already impacting funding streams and shaping the types of support people urgently need.

In this context, our role is more critical than ever: to provide trusted advice, fight poverty and inequality, and ensure no one is left behind in a time of uncertainty and change.

While Doncaster faces undeniable challenges, it is also a place of **ambition, growth, and community pride**. The city is undergoing significant transformation—through investment in housing, infrastructure, skills, and the local economy—with a clear drive to make Doncaster a great place to live, work, and thrive.

As part of Team Doncaster, we are proud to contribute to this shared vision by ensuring that no one is left behind as the city grows. Our work tackling poverty, promoting financial resilience, and supporting wellbeing is central to creating a more inclusive Doncaster—where everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential and participate fully in the life of the city.

Together, with our partners across health, housing, education, and the voluntary sector, we are helping shape a brighter, fairer future for all who call Doncaster home.





Strengthen and expand our one-on-one advice services organisation-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.



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



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.



Amplify the efficacy and efficiency of our Advice services. By embracing new technologies and refining processes, we seek to optimize our availability and productivity without compromising on the calibre 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.



Dedicated to diversity and inclusion. 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 endeavours. 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.



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 Impact

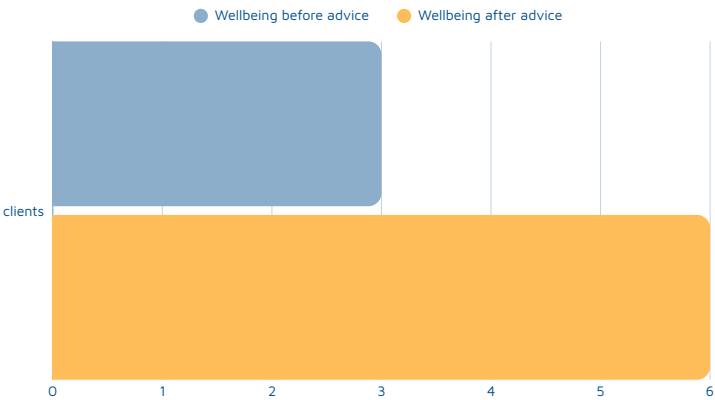
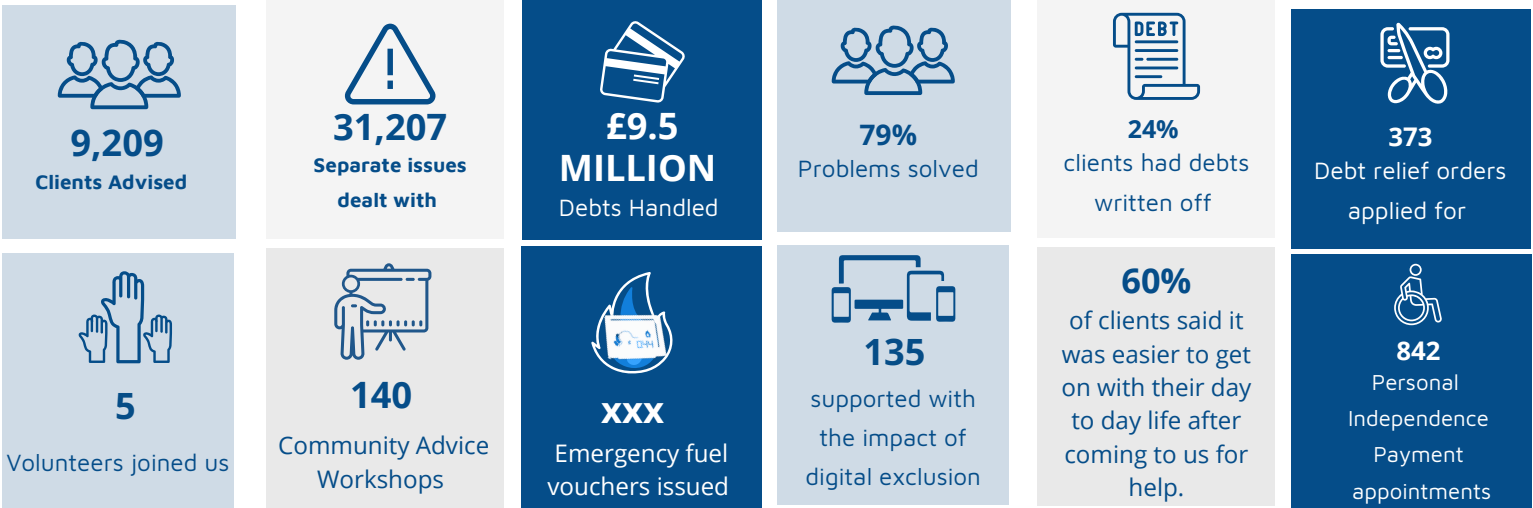


In 2024/25, Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough supported 9,658 clients, resolved 35,497 issues, and secured over £12.8 million in income gains, alongside £1.8 million in debt write-offs—helping people rebuild their lives.

For every £1 invested, we generated at least £21.97 in value, preventing homelessness, supporting mental health, and keeping people in work.

This year, we strengthened our influence—joining the Doncaster Health and Wellbeing Board, Make it Real Board, and Ethnic Minorities Board—amplifying community voices where decisions are made.

Our impact goes beyond advice. We empower individuals and help shape a fairer, more inclusive Doncaster.



Working Together to Help Doncaster Thrive

At Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough, our mission aligns powerfully with the Doncaster Delivering Together – Thrive Model, which places people, communities, and relationships at the heart of local services.



Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough is proud to be part of a borough-wide movement that puts people first, values partnership, and builds the conditions for everyone in Doncaster to live well and thrive.

Smarter Support: How AI Is Enhancing Our Advice Services

This year marked a significant step forward in our journey to modernise and futureproof our service through the innovative use of artificial intelligence. In collaboration with the Citizens Advice Service Operations and Research Team (SORT), we co-developed two groundbreaking tools—CADDY and Note Genie—designed to support our advisers, improve service quality, and maximise our impact in the community.

CADDY (Citizens Advice Digital Duty Assistant) is an AI-powered assistant that helps advisers quickly locate relevant, trusted information across multiple internal guidance systems and external resources. It acts like a virtual researcher, streamlining the process of answering complex or unfamiliar client queries. This has drastically reduced the time advisers spend switching between systems or consulting multiple sources, freeing them up to focus more fully on the individual needs of the client in front of them.

Note Genie supports advisers by generating clear, structured case notes based on the advice given during a session. By easing the administrative burden of note-taking, it helps ensure case records are both timely and accurate, while giving advisers back precious time—time that can be spent with clients or in community outreach work. We've already seen improvements in consistency, compliance, and adviser satisfaction.

The impact of these tools has been tangible. Not only have they improved the efficiency of our advice process, but they have also helped reduce burnout, particularly at times of high demand. Advisers report feeling more confident in their responses and more present in their conversations. By embracing AI, we are not replacing the human touch that defines Citizens Advice—we are enhancing it, ensuring we can continue to deliver trusted, compassionate, and responsive advice at scale.

As the technology evolves, we remain committed to responsible AI use, ethical deployment, and sharing learning across the network. Our experience has shown that when digital innovation is done right, it can empower our people and strengthen our ability to deliver on our mission.

Thank You

To funders and supporters who've made this progress possible

Deaf Community Engagement

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In early 2024, Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough launched the Deaf Community Engagement Project, funded by Doncaster Council, to address a long-standing gap in access to advice and support for Deaf residents. Too often, Deaf individuals are excluded from mainstream services due to communication barriers such as a lack of BSL provision and a lack of Deaf awareness.

Throughout this project our BSL Advisors supported 100 clients, dealing with more than 280 issues, including benefits, debt, housing, energy, and consumer concerns. Financial gains for these clients exceeded £76,000, with additional support secured through energy advice and grants.

The project delivered one-to-one advice, workshops, and community outreach in British Sign Language. A dedicated Facebook page, 46 awareness events and strong partnerships helped build trust within the Deaf community and create a culturally appropriate model of support. This not only empowered Deaf clients with better understanding of their rights but also built greater independence.

This project has not only transformed the lives of those supported—it has reshaped how we think about accessibility. We are committed to embedding BSL support in future funding bids and ensuring inclusive service delivery is a permanent part of our strategy.

"The support is really good, it means I can get help and advice in lots of different areas." - Deaf Client (Translated from BSL)



32

Community
Awareness Events



OVER 100

Clients advised
and supported
via this project



£76,000

Income gains
for clients

"Deaf people face huge barriers just to access the services many take for granted, but when information is provided in BSL, those barriers start to break down. That is why this project is so important."

CHLOE PETERSON
Deaf Adviser



Case Studies: Deaf Advice


The client, a profoundly Deaf BSL user, has multiple physical disabilities. They rely on aids such as walking sticks and electric scooters. Unable to work, they claim DLA, ESA, CTR, and HB. The client lives in a St Leger Homes property and has recently moved to a new home without a functioning oven or fridge freezer, which they could not afford to replace.

To assist, I contacted Doncaster Council's Wellbeing Team and explained the client's situation. They advised applying for the Local Assistance Scheme (LAS) and provided a referral form. As the form was complex and in English, I explained the form in BSL and completed the LAS application with the client. I ensured the council understood the client's communication needs—text or email only. Additionally, I submitted a referral to the Wellbeing Team for further support.

The following day, the client received confirmation that they were successful in their application and were awarded a cooker and a fridge freezer. This immediate support significantly improved their living conditions, ensuring they could store and prepare food safely.

During the appointment, I further explored the client's situation, identifying they had multiple debts. In BSL, I clarified the meaning of the debts and outlined the available support, directing the client to our Debt team. The client thanked me for my help, stating that if this service had not been available, they would have continued to be anxious about their debt, not knowing where to turn.

This case highlights the vital role of accessible support services in addressing financial hardship and communication-related barriers.

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**“THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR HELP. IF THIS SERVICE
HAD NOT BEEN AVAILABLE, I WOULD HAVE CONTINUED TO
BE ANXIOUS ABOUT MY DEBT, NOT KNOWING WHERE TO
TURN.”**

- DEAF CLIENT

(TRANSLATED FROM BSL INTO ENGLISH)

Advice on Prescription

In January 2024, Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough launched the Advice on Prescription project in eight GP surgeries across Doncaster, following a successful pilot at Askern GP Surgery.

Generously funded by the NHS for a two-year period, the project was created to support individuals accessing GP services who may be facing issues such as debt, income concerns, food, fuel, and general advice. We found that many clients struggled to access support due to travel barriers, health conditions, or digital exclusion.

To date, our Advice on Prescription advisors have supported 615 clients, dealing with more than 2,808 issues including benefits, debt, housing, energy, and consumer concerns. Financial gains for these clients have exceeded £1,390,602.

The project has proudly delivered one-to-one advice, local pension credit workshops, targeted GP sessions, and continuous community support. Our advisors actively engage through patient participation groups, distribute information in local spaces, and share updates on both Citizens Advice and GP practice social media. Their consistent weekly presence at GP surgeries has helped build trust and continuity within the community, especially for those needing support in sensitive or complex situations.

This project has not only positively influenced the lives of those accessing our services—it has demonstrated the importance of outreach support in trusted and familiar locations. We are committed to making inclusive service delivery and safe spaces a permanent part of our strategy.

"I'm not good with technology, so I wouldn't have known what I was entitled to or how to send the evidence without the advisor's help."



2808
Issues
advised on



OVER 615
Clients advised and
supported via this
project



£1.3 MILLION
income gains
for clients

"Working within the GP practices has shown that many cohorts of people were unaware of or unable to access the correct health benefits or advice with 74% noting a long term health condition or disability but support provided through Citizens Advice within their practice has been essential in helping them do so."

MEGAN WARD
AOP Adviser



Case Study: Advice on Prescription



At 65, just months away from receiving his state pension, Mr. H found himself at a difficult crossroads. After taking early retirement, he was managing on a modest private pension while living in rented accommodation.

But life hadn't made things easy. A serious foot injury had left him with two toes amputated, 75% of his foot reconstructed through plastic surgery, arterial blockages in both legs, high blood pressure, and mounting anxiety. The physical pain was matched by the financial uncertainty that came with trying to manage a life on limited income.

Mr. H had previously applied for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) on his own and been unsuccessful. Discouraged by the process and not digitally confident, he assumed he wouldn't qualify—even though his health had only worsened. Without the digital skills to navigate online applications or the knowledge to challenge previous decisions, he felt trapped in hardship, unaware of the support he was entitled to.

That's when he met Megan, a Citizens Advice advisor, at a local outreach session. The appointment, held close to his home, removed a huge barrier—travel—and offered a safe, private space to talk through his needs.

Megan took the time to listen, understand his situation fully, and explain that despite his past experience, he met the eligibility criteria for PIP. She helped him reapply, completed the forms on his behalf, and supported him every step of the way, including applying for a blue badge and accessing further entitlements

Thanks to Megan's support, Mr. H received enhanced awards for both the daily living and mobility components of PIP—lasting for 10 years. He was also supported with successful Council Tax Reduction and Universal Credit claims. In total, Megan unlocked over £13,400 a year in financial support for Mr. H, alongside his blue badge.

£13,400.00

a year in financial support for Mr. H, alongside his blue badge.

**“I'M NOT GOOD WITH TECHNOLOGY, SO I WOULD'VE
STRUGGLED TO FIND OUT WHAT I WAS ENTITLED TO OR HOW TO
SEND THE EVIDENCE WITHOUT THE ADVISOR'S HELP”**

- MR H - CLIENT

ENERGY FOR EVERYONE

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In 2024/2025, the British Gas Energy Trust-funded project at Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough made a significant impact by supporting over 1,231 individuals facing energy-related challenges, addressing more than 4,650 issues in total. Through expert advice on fuel debt, budgeting, and income maximisation—including help accessing the Warm Home Discount, fuel vouchers, and other grants—the project secured over £1,088,578 in financial gains for local residents. Alongside one-to-one advice, the project distributed energy-saving kits and warm packs, delivered home visits to vulnerable households, and ran workshops to improve understanding of energy efficiency and financial resilience. Outreach work was targeted to reach those at greatest risk of fuel poverty, including families on low incomes and individuals with health conditions. Working in partnership with organisations such as Centurion, the team also coordinated borough-wide awareness events to broaden the project's reach. This holistic approach has helped people stay warm, reduce bills, and feel more in control during a period of rising living costs.

The project's proactive and inclusive model has been particularly effective in reaching marginalized communities, including those who may not traditionally seek support. By embedding advisers in food banks, community centres, and GP surgeries, the service became accessible where people naturally turned for help. Feedback from participants highlighted increased confidence in managing bills and improved wellbeing as a result of tailored support. The project also contributed to the wider energy advice ecosystem by sharing best practices across networks and collaborating with local partners on sustainability efforts. Its success demonstrates the power of coordinated, localised advice in tackling fuel poverty at scale.

"The support is really good, it means I can get help and advice in lots of different areas." - Deaf Client (Translated from BSL)



32
Community
Awareness Events



OVER 100
Clients advised
and supported
via this project



£76,000
income gains
for clients

When people are supported to understand their energy use and access the help they're entitled to, it can transform their wellbeing. This project is about long-term solutions that make a real difference

MAJA GOJTOWSKA
Energy Adviser



Case Study: Energy for Everyone

Anna, a 40-year-old single mother from Slovakia, lives in a privately rented flat with her two-year-old child. Anna, who has settled immigration status, is unable to work due to a physical impairment in her right knee and ongoing mental health challenges. She relies on Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Council Tax Reduction, and Child Benefit. Despite this support, Anna faces severe financial strain and health-related vulnerabilities.

Presenting Issues

Anna's situation became overwhelming in early 2024 when her energy provider, Utilita, changed her meters without notice. She stopped receiving bills and was unable to access accurate information through the company's app. After five months, she was unexpectedly charged £1,480.25 in backdated arrears on her prepayment meter, with 25% of every top-up deducted to pay off the debt. This left her anxious and struggling to afford essentials. Despite applying for Utilita's own energy grant, she was rejected due to the type of meter she had.

How We Helped

Our advisers stepped in to:


- Complete an energy survey and provide tailored energy efficiency advice.
- Support Anna with fuel voucher applications and referrals to food banks.
- Conduct a full benefits check and identify additional support, including the Warm Home Discount, Household Support Fund, and Discretionary Housing Payments.
- Refer Anna to mental health services for ongoing support.
- Help Anna apply for the British Gas Energy Trust (BGET) grant, which successfully awarded her £1,392.50 to clear her energy arrears.
- Provide a free £66.50 energy-saving kit to help reduce her bills.
- Offer financial and budgeting advice to improve her long-term financial stability.

The Outcome

Thanks to the support Anna received:

- Utilita apologized for the service failures, waived all late fees, and gave Anna a £90 goodwill payment.
- Her repayment rate was reduced from 25% to 5% per top-up, giving her much-needed breathing space.
- Anna received fuel and food vouchers worth almost £200.
- By implementing energy-saving measures, Anna is expected to save around £450 per year.
- The £1,392.50 grant cleared her arrears, removing a significant source of stress.

Overall, Anna's income gain from this support totaled £2,199.



"I CANNOT EXPRESS HOW RELIEVED I AM. FOR MONTHS I FELT TRAPPED IN A CYCLE OF DEBT AND STRESS. THANKS TO THE ADVICE AND SUPPORT I RECEIVED, I FEEL LIKE I CAN FINALLY BREATHE AGAIN AND FOCUS ON LOOKING AFTER MY CHILD. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR HELPING ME GET MY LIFE BACK."

REACHING COMMUNITIES

Thanks to the invaluable support of the National Lottery Community Fund, Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough (CADB) continues to deliver vital welfare benefits support across the borough. This funding allows us to tackle the root causes of financial hardship and help individuals navigate a complex and often overwhelming welfare system. For funders, local authorities, and the wider public, this project represents a high-impact, cost-effective intervention that directly improves the lives of thousands of Doncaster residents.

Through our Lottery-funded Welfare Rights project, we:

- Provide **expert, one-to-one advice** on welfare benefits – including help with initial applications, mandatory reconsiderations, and tribunal appeals.
-
- Run **targeted workshops** where a trained Welfare Rights Adviser explains how to correctly complete benefit forms (e.g., PIP, ESA, UC50). These sessions boost claim quality, reduce stress, and help people feel more in control.
- **Feedback has been excellent**, with many clients reporting improved outcomes and confidence.

Empower people living with disabilities, long-term illness, or other vulnerabilities to access the support they're entitled to.

Without this service, many people in Doncaster would:

- Miss out on vital income from disability and sickness benefits
-
- Struggle to challenge unfair decisions
-

Face worsening mental and physical health due to stress and poverty

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COMMUNITY
FUND

"I didnt agree with the DWP decison and felt like I had nowhere to turn and noone understood or listned to my heath issues until I spoke to Christina - shes a STAR"



63
Community
Benefits
Workshops



604
Clients advised
and supported
via this project



**£1.9
MILLION**
income gains
for clients

"Behind every benefit claim is a person facing hardship. As part of the Welfare Rights team we stand beside them — listening, guiding, and fighting to make sure their voice is heard. The support we provide often means the difference between crisis and stability, isolation and dignity"

CHRISTINA O'DONNELL
Welfare rights Supervisor



Case Study: Reaching Communities

Our client, a middle-aged man living with multiple health conditions, struggles with memory, concentration, and managing complex paperwork. He has no computer literacy, no home internet, and finds written communications from government departments overwhelming. When he approached our service, he was under significant emotional strain, having received multiple benefit-related letters with strict deadlines.

Presenting Issues

The client faced three urgent issues: a benefit overpayment he didn't understand and wanted to challenge; a refusal of his Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim despite clear difficulties with daily living; and a Universal Credit (UC) Work Capability Assessment decision that found him fit for work, despite health conditions that made job-seeking impossible. "It was too much to cope with," he explained. Overwhelmed by stress, he feared losing what little financial stability he had.

Support Provided


Our caseworker stepped in to prioritise the client's issues and offer practical, tailored support: We broke down each problem and explained the appeals process in simple, accessible language. We completed and submitted all mandatory reconsideration and appeal paperwork on his behalf. We gathered medical evidence and supporting statements to strengthen his PIP and UC cases. We acted as a digital intermediary, managing online communications with the DWP and using paper-based alternatives when needed. We provided consistent emotional support during what the client described as a "mentally exhausting" time.

Outcomes

Benefit Overpayment: After reviewing the documentation, we confirmed the overpayment was accurate. We explained this compassionately, and the client chose to continue with his existing repayment plan, declining debt advice.

PIP Appeal: We secured a successful appeal at the second mandatory reconsideration stage. The client was awarded the standard rate daily living component, receiving £3,321.14 in backdated payments. He said this result restored his peace of mind.

UC Work Capability Assessment: We submitted a detailed mandatory reconsideration request and successfully had the client placed in the Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) group. He now receives an additional £416.19 per month and is no longer required to seek work, which greatly reduced his anxiety.



"I COULDN'T HAVE DONE ANY OF THIS ON MY OWN," HE SAID. "IT WAS TOO COMPLICATED, TOO STRESSFUL. YOU TOOK THAT PRESSURE OFF ME AND I CANNOT THANK YOU ENOUGH."

DIGITAL INCLUSION

The digital inclusion project has had a significant and positive impact on our local community and partners, its success further reinforces the value and need for this level of wrap-around holistic support we are proud to provide at citizens' advice. Incorporating multiple different areas of support, we help people overcome barriers associated with digital exclusion, such as financial insecurity and resilience, economically inactivity and interaction with the labour market, Health inequalities and accessing relevant information and improving mental and health and wellbeing by empowering people with the skills and confidence to independently interact with digital services and opportunities.

This year citizens' advice has donated 308 devices to people experiencing the effects of digital exclusion the most. Identifying beneficiaries primarily via 1-2-1 advice appointments but also through our network of trusted referral partners. Each donation provides a rich insight and information on the realities and experiences of people simply unable to interact with services in a fair and inclusive way.

In addition to our device scheme, over 100 SIMS have been donated to people experiencing data poverty and 152 people have attended a community based Connect & Learn digital skills course, improving digital skills, confidence and optimism navigating the increasingly digital world. Our Digital skills advisor continues to drive engagement of our digital advice service - providing over 200 1:1 digital appointments.

Many clients have learnt new digital skills, had the courage to ask for help, overcome complex challenges and build confidence and courage, all of which contribute to monumental personal changes to the lives of people we support.

"Every day, I see firsthand how giving someone a device and the skills to use it can transform their life. It's about more than just technology—it's about breaking down barriers to essential services and building confidence for the future."

MARTHA CAPALDI
Digital inclusion Adviser

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South Yorkshire
Integrated Care Board

"The support is really good, it means I can get help and advice in lots of different areas." - Deaf Client (Translated from BSL)



32
Community
Awareness Events



OVER 100
Clients advised
and supported
via this project



£76,000
income gains
for clients



Case Study: Digital Inclusion

Martha, our dedicated Digital Advisor, supports clients facing increasing challenges in navigating essential digital services. Recently, she assisted a client who had been diagnosed with cancer and fibromyalgia. The client faced difficulties managing their health journey, particularly in sending crucial documents to their GP and hospital. Without a device and the confidence to use it, the client experienced significant stress and delays to their treatment plan.

Martha took the time to understand the client's needs and provided a donated laptop, along with one-to-one digital skills support. The client quickly gained the confidence to send and receive important medical documents, enabling them to independently manage their health from home. The laptop not only empowered the client to communicate more effectively with health services but also boosted their sense of control and reduced their anxiety.

Recognising the client's limited financial resources, Martha also identified that they were eligible for a social broadband tariff. Previously reliant on costly mobile data, the client was able to set up a secure, affordable internet connection for £12 per month.

This case demonstrates how our digital inclusion work extends beyond devices, addressing digital skills, affordability, and holistic wellbeing for our community.

The impact on the client has been profound. They now feel more in control of their health and are able to manage their care more efficiently. The donated laptop and skills training have given them the independence to interact directly with their GP and hospital, ensuring that important documents are sent and received on time. This has improved the client's health journey by reducing delays in care and avoiding potential miscommunication.

Additionally, the client reported feeling less isolated and more connected to the outside world. With the affordable internet connection, they can now stay in touch with family, access online support groups, and manage household affairs without worrying about running out of data. This has provided a vital lifeline for someone on a low income, offering both practical and emotional support.

Through Martha's support, the client has not only overcome immediate barriers but also built confidence in their own abilities. They now see digital technology as a tool to manage their health, connect with loved ones, and improve their overall wellbeing. This case illustrates the transformative power of digital inclusion in building resilience and supporting people to live more independently and confidently.



**"THE DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT HELPED ME CONNECT ONLINE,
LEARN NEW SKILLS, AND BUILD MY CONFIDENCE. I FEEL LESS
ISOLATED AND MORE ABLE TO ACCESS SERVICES AND
OPPORTUNITIES. IT'S CHANGED MY LIFE."**

Commitment to Quality and Standards

At Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough, we are proud to hold the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) for both our advice with casework services and our telephone advice services. This nationally recognised quality mark is awarded to organisations that provide legal advice in the area of social welfare law and demonstrates that our services meet robust, independently assessed standards.

The AQS framework sets out a comprehensive set of quality criteria, ensuring that clients receive accurate, complete, and timely advice from services that are well-managed, accessible, and always act in the best interests of those they support. It also reflects our commitment to social justice, and to ensuring that every person who comes to us receives the standard of support they deserve.

In addition to the AQS, we are also authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) for the provision of debt advice and relevant credit activities. This regulatory approval reinforces the confidence that clients, partners, and funders can place in our service delivery—particularly in areas of financial guidance and debt resolution where the stakes are often life-changing.

Maintaining these high standards is not just about meeting requirements—it is about our responsibility to the people who rely on us. We have developed and embedded robust quality assurance procedures to ensure consistency and excellence in everything we do. Our staff, volunteers, and trustees are supported through ongoing training, mentoring, and supervision, and are fully aware of the importance of delivering high-quality advice—as well as the serious consequences of getting it wrong.

Quality is not a destination, but a continuous journey. And as the challenges facing our communities grow more complex, we remain committed to improving and innovating—ensuring that the advice we give is not only trusted, but truly life-changing.



Accredited, Regulated Trusted



Funding Our Mission

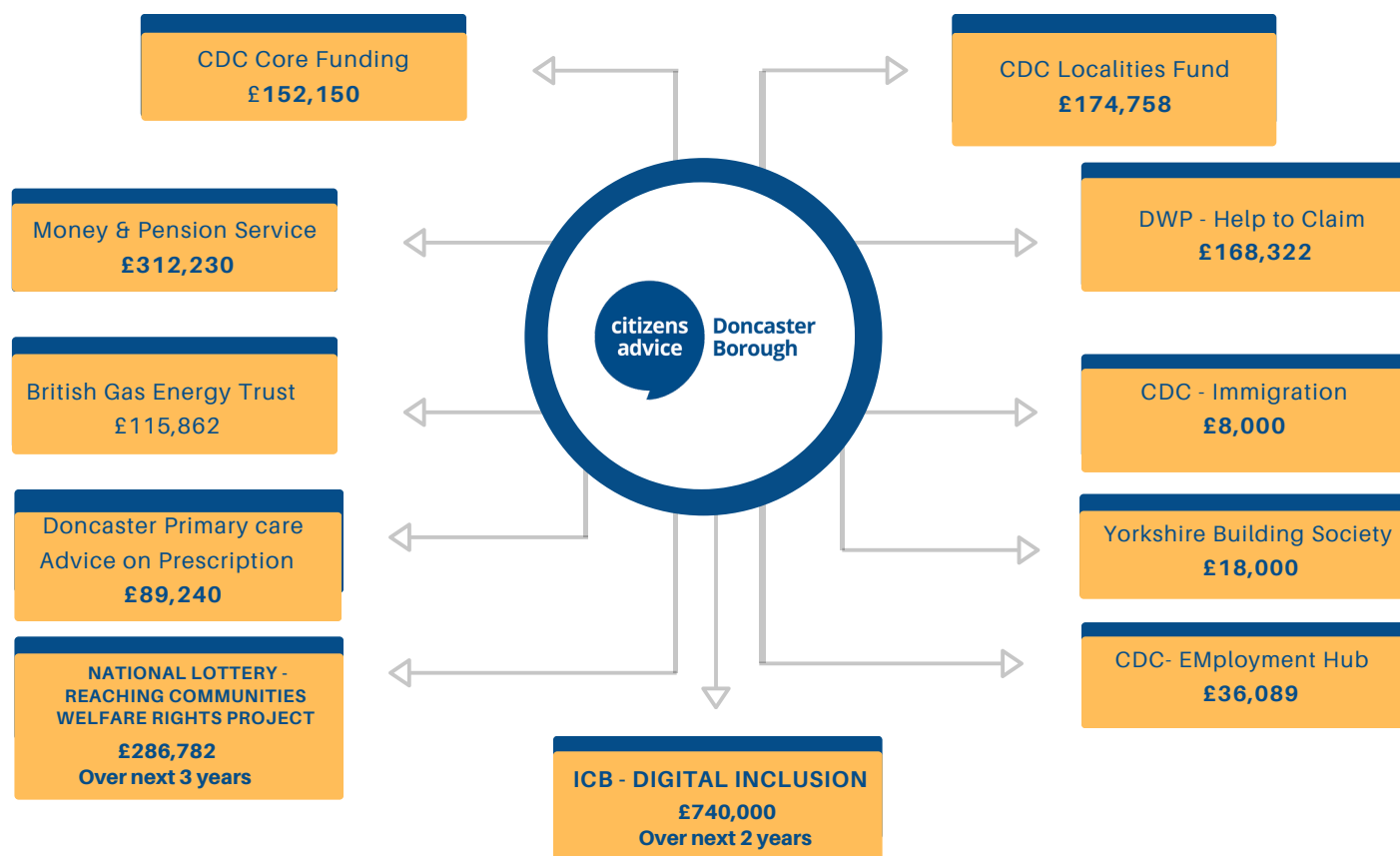
citizens
advice

Doncaster
Borough

We are immensely grateful to the local authorities, trusts, foundations, and national partners who continue to support our work. Their funding enables us to deliver life-changing advice services and stand alongside thousands of people in Doncaster each year who need support through difficult times. Without this vital backing, our reach and impact would simply not be possible.

However, we must also acknowledge the growing challenges we face. The funding landscape has become significantly more competitive, with many charities now bidding for fewer resources. This pressure has been further intensified by wider government funding decisions, which have impacted both the availability and continuity of support across the voluntary sector. Like many, we are operating in an environment where the demand for help is rising, but the means to meet it are stretched thinner than ever.

Despite this, we remain committed to delivering high-quality, independent advice—and we are actively exploring new partnerships, innovations, and sustainable funding models to ensure that no one in our community is left behind.



Future Funding Agreed for 2024/25 and beyond



Funding – Value to Doncaster

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The funding we receive is not just an investment in Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough—it's an investment in the people and future of Doncaster. As shown in our latest data, for every £1 we receive in funding, we generate at least £21.97 in total value: £1.00 in fiscal savings to government and public services, £2.94 in direct value to the people we help, and £14.68 in broader economic and social benefits. This includes over £35 million in public value from improved wellbeing, better family relationships, and greater personal resilience. We've also helped prevent evictions, reduce reliance on NHS and mental health services, and keep people in work—saving local services millions of pounds.

This impact is only possible because of the generous support of our funders, partners, and donors. We are deeply thankful for your continued belief in our mission. Yet, we must be honest about the road ahead. The funding environment is more competitive than ever, shaped by broader government spending decisions and increasing demand for services. Sustaining this level of impact will require continued collaboration, innovation, and investment in community-rooted advice services like ours. We remain committed to delivering exceptional value—for every pound, and for every person.

£1.00

For every pound we receive in funding we generate at least:

**£2.7
Million**

FISCAL VALUE

To the Government and Public Services (fiscal benefits). By helping stop problems occurring or escalating, we reduce pressure on public services like health, housing or out-of-work benefits.

**£23
Million**

PUBLIC VALUE

In wider economic and social benefits. Solving problems improves lives - this means better wellbeing, participation and productivity for the people we help.

**£20
Million**

VALUE TO THE PEOPLE WE HELP

As part of advice, we can increase people's income, through debts written-off, taking up benefits and solving consumer problems.

£14.68

£369,617

**SAVINGS TO LOCAL
AUTHORITY**
BY PREVENTING
HOMELESSNESS AND
HOUSING EVICTIONS &
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

£527,079

SAVINGS TO NHS
BY REDUCING USE OF
MENTAL HEALTH AND GP
SERVICES, AND KEEPING
PEOPLE IN WORK

£1 Million

**SAVINGS TO HOUSING
PROVIDERS (BY
PREVENTING HOUSING
EVICTIONS)**

£798,376

**SAVINGS TO DWP
(BY KEEPING
PEOPLE IN WORK)**

£42,670

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE
SYSTEM (BY
PREVENTING HOUSING
EVICTIONS AND
HOMELESSNESS)**

£17.9 Million

WIDER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

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 2023 and 2024, 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.

The reasons volunteers choose to join our ranks are as diverse as the roles they embrace. While individual motivations vary, several common themes frequently emerge:

Transferable skills

Our extensive array of dynamic and deeply-engaged roles offers a fertile ground for volunteers to acquire and refine a range of transferable skills. Whether it's in office operations, research, communication, or customer service, Citizens Advice provides a rich learning environment that translates into real-world expertise.

Giving back to the community

The ripple of positive impact we create within our community is widely recognized. Volunteers often resonate with our mission and aspire to be hands-on contributors to the transformative changes we bring about in people's lives.

Embracing Challenges and Staying Active

Certain roles, such as advisory positions, present challenges that beckon those seeking rewarding experiences. Many retirees, driven by the desire to stay engaged and mentally agile, find these roles particularly appealing.

In summation, our volunteer ecosystem thrives on mutual benefit. As we equip our volunteers with skills and experiences that empower them to make a difference, they, in turn, become invaluable pillars of support for us.

97%

would recommend
volunteering at Citizens
Advice Doncaster
Borough.

80%

of our unemployed
volunteers believe they
are overcoming barriers
to employment.

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.

£131,000

The monetary value of volunteered hours over the year

Thank You

We couldn't do it without you!



Research & Campaigns: Amplifying Local Voices for National Change

At Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough, our Research and Campaigns (R&C) work is rooted in a deep commitment to listening to our community—and then using those insights to drive meaningful change. This year, our R&C work has not only informed local service delivery but helped shape conversations at a national policy level, reflecting the real challenges people in Doncaster face every day.

A standout achievement has been our continued work on energy poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, which saw us host a series of high-profile meetings with MP Miatta Fahnbulleh, Minister for Energy Consumers. These meetings brought together clients, partners, and staff to share lived experiences and ideas for change, directly informing national campaigns and energy policy direction.

We've also taken our advocacy further by actively engaging with our local MPs. This year, we were proud to have worked with MPs Ed Miliband, Sally Jameson, Lee Pitcher and John Healey, who have all visited our projects and met with clients and staff. John Healey visits our GP surgery-based advice project highlighted the crucial intersection between health and advice—and the need for sustainable funding to support it.

These engagements demonstrate our growing role in representing Doncaster's communities on the national stage. We are proud to be using our insight and evidence to influence decision-makers—making sure that local voices shape the policies that affect their lives.

Through our R&C work, we remain firmly committed to building fairer systems, improving access to justice, and ensuring no one in our community is left unheard or unsupported.



Acknowledgements

We'd like to express our sincere thanks to the many people and organisations who make our work possible.

To our funders, your continued investment has been vital in enabling us to support thousands across Doncaster. Your generosity helps us deliver essential advice, tackle complex issues, and build community resilience.

To our stakeholders and partners, thank you for your collaboration. From shared projects to strategic input, your support has strengthened our delivery and extended our impact.

To our community partners—GPs, housing providers, foodbanks, and schools—thank you for helping us reach people where they are.

And to our volunteers, staff, and trustees—your compassion, skill, and commitment change lives every day.

Together, we've made a difference—and together, we'll keep moving forward. Thank you for being part of the journey.

Thank You



A Special Thank you

CHARLOTTE DOBSON

citizens
advice

Doncaster
Borough

A huge thank you to Charlotte

After an incredible 19 years of service—both as a volunteer and a paid staff member—we're saying goodbye to Charlotte, who has been a truly integral part of our team.

From calming upset clients to supporting people through some of life's most difficult moments, Charlotte has always led with care, compassion, and dedication. Her impact on clients, colleagues, and communities across Doncaster is immeasurable.

We've been lucky to have her on our team, and even luckier to call her a friend.

Thank you, Charlotte, for your commitment over the past 19 years—you leave a lasting legacy.



Thank You



Contact Us



www.cadoncasterborough.org



01302 243057 - General enquiries
/ Appointments
01302 499330 - Local Debt Advice



<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>



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