

Citizens Advice Rutland

Annual Review 2019



**Free, confidential advice.
Whoever you are.**

**We help people find a way
forward with their problems
and campaign on big issues
when their voices need to be
heard.**

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

We're here for everyone.

**We're working with you to
improve your wellbeing and the
wellbeing of the community.**



Nothing endures but change; change is inevitable. The ability to withstand, to challenge, to prosper, to thrive or to be that change depends on many things including voice, opportunity, ambition, connections, confidence, foundations, a desire to learn and develop and support structures.

The pace of change alongside political, economic, environmental, social uncertainty, turbulence and

reality continue to demand responses and action - the consequences of which can challenge, inspire, improve, divide, confuse, or serve to exaggerate vulnerability.

The continuing evolution, prevalence and pervasiveness of the digital world presents both possibility and opportunity as well as a challenge to our connections, our sense of belonging, and in rapidly expectations to equality of access.

Global opportunity and vision is tempered by a more human need for a sense of local community, support and belonging, and also environmental pressures and political opinion.

Increasing and exacting pressures to over-scrutinise and evidence quality and process to justify our existence eat at the very enthusiasm and passion that drives us as well as consuming resources that in truth, don't exist.

Communities grow, places change, infrastructure tries to keep pace, identity battles to sustain and evolve.

Public Sector budgets are reduced and stretched requiring us to address individual and collective values, and think differently about our behaviours and how we support each other if we are to sustain and improve wellbeing. Communities and the Voluntary sector have always responded with passion, belief, innovation and commitment – the need for that approach and locally fashioned response is becoming more widely accepted and supported.

Whatever the outcomes and timeline the process of national political and governance changes have delayed action, and confused and divided communities.

Uncertainty impacts on economic development on local and national economic prosperity and opportunity, creating pressures on many families, individuals and communities.

Policy changes fashioned by political preference of economic stress tend to enforce changes that will create challenge for some.

And of course, we are increasingly aware that the ability of the planet to sustain us and support our health and wellbeing is becoming increasingly compromised by our current behaviours.

Against this backdrop Citizens Advice Rutland has and continues to work to promote its new role at the heart of wellbeing service, to forge partnerships and relationships that maximise the

talents and expertise available to support positive wellbeing journeys, to support communities, the voluntary sector and civil society to respond to need and opportunity, to work to appropriately influence county priorities and policies and ensure the relevant voices are heard.

Working to support and lead changes that improve the wellbeing of individuals and communities, promoting and supporting the positive impacts and opportunities of change, challenging changes that impact on people and our ability to support, and assisting those who have unfairly been exposed and left vulnerable. There is a long way to go, but actually the Citizens Advice movement has existed for 80 years, reimagining itself in response to the needs of people and stakeholders. What has remained constant in all that time is its independence, its role as part of the fabric of the geography it serves, its focus on confidentiality and impartiality, its obsession on the provision of the highest quality advice, and above all the focus on the needs of the individual, in access and in advice.

It is on these foundations that our reputation has been built, and in the gains for people, the development of confidence and resilience, and the substantial levels of social return delivered year on year. Citizens Advice Rutland is well placed to support individuals, communities and stakeholders to positively respond and potentially drive the change that is with us, and is yet to come.

The year in review has seen the service turn a corner, to become more established and recognised in its delivery of the Wellbeing

Service, and thanks are due to the volunteers, trustees and staff of the organisation whose passion and commitment has seen us through some choppy waters. Thanks and recognition are also richly deserved for our funders, our fundraisers, our partners in design and delivery, and our colleagues at Citizens Advice. And also to the people of Rutland who continue to show faith, trust and confidence in our services and to value our place in Rutland and our continued ambition shared with all services to make the county the happiest place for all.

The Chair of the organisation Chris Fisher has indicated his intention to step down from role and board around the time of the 2019 AGM. I think thanks in particular are due to Chris who took on the responsibility of leading board and organisation at a time of great transition and some uncertainty, and with a strong belief in our purpose and approach characterised by honesty, integrity and graft has taken us through to calmer seas.

*Be like the tree, change your leaves and keep your roots.
Change your ideas and keep your principles!"*

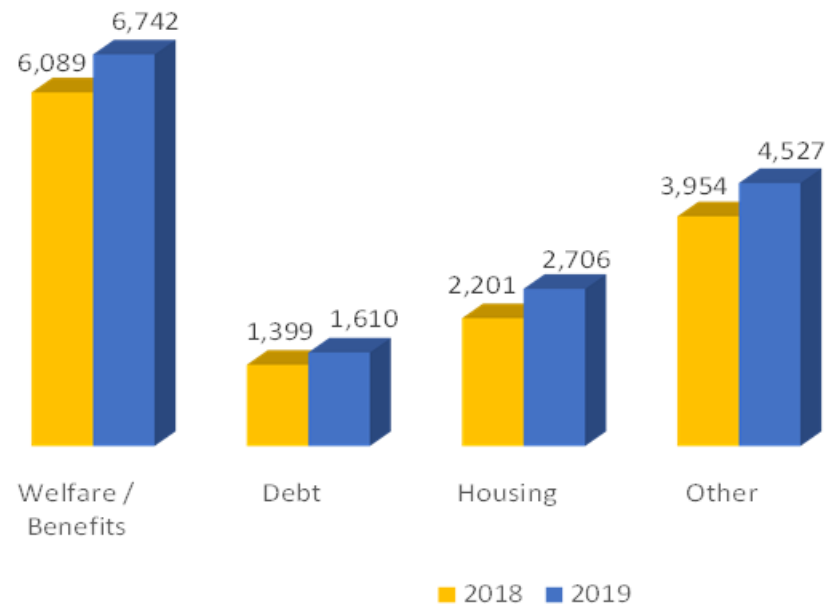
Tao proverb



Simon Mutsaars, Chief Executive

Our Clients

In 2018-19 we helped **2,591** clients with a total of **15,585** problems.



100% were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received



100% said that the advice had made some difference or a lot of difference to their ability to help themselves



100% said that the advice had made some difference or a lot of difference to their health and wellbeing



100% said they would use the service again



100% would recommend Citizens Advice Rutland to others

In total we gained just under **£1.3m** for clients and a further **£1.2m** for our 'For Rutland' clients.

For everyone, for 80 years

In September 2019 Citizens Advice celebrated its 80th anniversary, having started the day after World War 11 began, at that time opening in 200 locations to help people with the impacts. Fast forward to the current day and we are now a network of **279** local Citizens Advice bureaux. We provide support in **2,550** locations across England and Wales, with over **21,300** volunteers and **7,000** staff.

The Citizens Advice network helps millions of people every year. Last year this included:

- **28,500,000** website visits
- **1,273,000** face to face clients
- **867,000** people using our phone service
- **557,000** people calling our consumer helpline
- **287,000** people getting help by email or webchat
- **127,000** witnesses through the witness protection service

In Rutland we began our journey some 45 years ago, and remain proud of our impact for individuals and communities in the county, and of our contribution to the Citizens Advice story and success in the UK. We share a commitment to service approaches, values and principles and to the new service offer



narrative shaped in time for the 80th anniversary:

- *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.*
- *Our network of charities offers confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person, for free.*
- *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.*
- *That's why we're here: to give people the knowledge and the confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem.*

Case Study—Welfare Rights



The client is 35 years old and she has learning difficulties, behavioural problems and some physical problems with her hips and legs. She had been on Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for over 20 years but was invited to apply for the replacement benefit – Personal Independence Payment (PIP) at the end of last year. As a result of DLA being in place the client was eligible for a Severe Disability Premium on her other benefits.

After a medical assessment the claim was disallowed and we assisted with an appeal. The client lost over £140 per week as a result of this decision as she was no longer entitled to either the premium or DLA.

This appeal took over 10 months to be heard. The tribunal overturned the original decision and awarded the client the highest rate of the care component of PIP and the standard rate of the mobility component. The client received over £6000 in arrears as a result of this appeal. The client used the majority of the money to discharge her debts, which had accrued during the appeal period, but still had enough money left to buy herself a new bed and a few items of essential clothing.

Discretionary Crisis Fund

Rutland County Council operates a Discretionary Crisis Fund to provide financial support to meet or help to meet a need that, unless provided, would severely disadvantage the client or a member of their household, i.e. a crisis situation. This fund was outsourced to Citizens Advice Rutland in January 2019 and is managed under the Council's criteria for the scheme.

An example may be that the client's benefit or wages are not paid on time and the client needs money for household fuel (for cooking or heating) in the short term until the problem is resolved. The fund can also be used to assist with such things as removal costs if a client has been homeless and is moving into new accommodation. Clients benefit from our administration of the scheme as we can provide seamless holistic advice to address debt and budgeting issues as well as to resolve the problems leading to the particular crisis.

Rutland Community Wellbeing Service

During the year Citizens Advice Rutland has continued to work with partners, deliverers and funders to develop and embed the Wellbeing Service within the County. Our Partnership with the Bridge East Midlands and The Longhurst Group, with additional delivery from Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland and Vista saw over 4000 referrals being made to the service in year, with extremely high levels of satisfaction reported by clients to the service.

The Service has become an increasingly familiar and understood place for Rutland individuals and communities who want to improve their wellbeing with a range of advice, information and support issues that include Housing and Homelessness, Debt And Money management, Physical Activity, Healthy lifestyles, Stop smoking, Emotional wellbeing, Dementia support, Substance misuse, Sensory impairment, volunteering and community and voluntary sector capacity and support.

Work to raise awareness with other public, private and community voluntary sector organisations has also taken place during the year, ensuring that there is a broader partnership of awareness, referral and support that can work with individuals to improve wellbeing. All of this without the need to tell personal stories more than once, or to run the risk of knocking

on the wrong door when advice or support is needed.

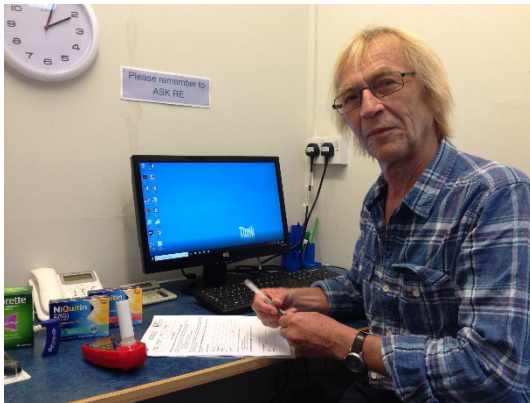
We will also continue to review the service to ensure we work to understand and respond to unmet need, that we consider changes to the way the service is structured, or how it is accessed in response to evidenced need, and that we work with each other and with others to attempt to identify and secure opportunities and funding that respond to the needs of Rutland citizens.



Stop Smoking Rutland

The Stop Smoking Rutland service receives referrals from a variety of sources including internal referrals from our partners. The majority of clients do self-refer. Our service is advertised widely across all GP surgeries, Rutland pharmacies, our website, Rutland Information Service, on Facebook, and twitter. Referrals from Leicestershire hospitals come via the Leicestershire Quit smoking service.

We continue to take a holistic approach to smoking cessation looking at general healthy lifestyles, both for physical and mental health. We assess trigger points (what leads to the temptation to have a cigarette) for increased smoking habits and we work with clients to look at strategies to deal with these.



We have been successful at targeting priority groups (Health Inequality groups) – over this year 27 clients from a total of 47 who successfully quit after 4 weeks and 21 out of 38 who successfully quit after 12 weeks were from these priority groups.

"In my first week I didn't buy 5 packs of cigarettes at £8 each. With that £40 I bought a microwave oven I'd seen in the supermarket – what an incentive to give up!"

Case Study—Stop Smoking

The client was a male in his late 30s who had been smoking for about 20 years. He was already trying to quit by cutting down on the number of cigarettes and had started using an e-cigarette (vape) but was finding it difficult to cut down further. The stop smoking adviser explained that we are an e-cigarette friendly service and he could incorporate using vaping in combination with other licenced NRT products as part of his quit attempt.

He had been using a low nicotine strength e-liquid and found this did not satisfy his cravings so was still smoking several cigarettes per day. He was given nicotine patches to provide a steady substitute nicotine supply and advised to use higher nicotine e-liquid until he was able to cut out cigarettes completely. It was stressed that the majority of harm was caused by smoke inhalation and not nicotine and nicotine intake can be reduced slowly first by weaker patches and then just reliance on an e-cigarette even if that meant more regular vaping.

The client did manage to cease smoking completely in a few weeks but continued to use a vape to cope with recurring cravings but was able to use less often and with a lower nicotine strength e-liquid. We provided him with strategies to cope with cravings. He said that he had tried to give up many times but had failed. He stated that

"I will recommend this service as I could never have done this without you, thank you".

Community and Voluntary Sector Support

The organisation has continued to work to support the sector during the year. The 2018 community and voluntary sector conference was well attended with some extremely positive feedback from delegates.

The volunteer brokerage service has continued, with activity to promote the wellbeing benefits of volunteering including the staging of the first volunteering fair at the Castle in June 2019.



The service has worked with community and voluntary sector organisations at a number of levels including the development of new sector led partnerships such as the Natural Values Group, supporting and participating in sector led bids for external funding, engaging with community groups around organisational development and opportunities, worked with partners to improve communication and offer awareness throughout the sector, as well as contributing to community activities and events.



The organisation has also provided administration and management for The Healthy Rutland Grant Scheme, providing opportunities and development support for community groups, voluntary sector organisations and other not for profit civil society

organisations to access small grant funding to improve health and wellbeing for people in the community.

We are part of the Local Action Group for the European funded LEADER programme and are



delighted that a number of Rutland Community and Voluntary Sector organisations have now secured funding via this initiative.

Citizens Advice has continued to be a sector voice around a number of strategic and operational partnerships around the County. But significantly more needs to be done around voice, representation and development support over the coming years and particularly in light of issues of loneliness and isolation, prevention and sustainability, economic and economic challenges.



Armed Forces

Citizens Advice Rutland is delighted to have sustained our relationship with and our services from RAF Wittering. Funding support from the RAF Benevolent Fund has enabled us to continue this valued and impactful service on station, in addition to contributing to our advice and information support service for the RAF family in Rutland.



For Rutland

For Rutland raises funds to pay for Specialist Advisers at Citizens Advice Rutland, who provide free, confidential, independent, non-medical advice to people of all ages who are living with long term health conditions in Rutland and the Surrounding Community.



"For Rutland helped me to maintain my independence and quality of life".



Thanks to the skills of the trained advisers, every **£1 donated** to this service results in **£5 raised** from grants and government funding for people living with long term conditions in Rutland. In 2018/19 we helped **763** people,

covering over **4,000** individual issues.

"The For Rutland advisers helped us to cut through all the red tape"

We extend our thanks to the generosity of many, who have

donated funds, products and services to help change the lives of people living with long term illnesses in Rutland and the Surrounding Community.

Volunteer Fair

During National Volunteers Week, Rutland Community Wellbeing Service held a Volunteer Fair in Oakham Castle.



21 local charity organisations displayed their volunteering opportunities and they all reported that it was a very worthwhile event.

The event enjoyed a steady stream of visitors throughout the morning and 74 people expressed their interest in possible volunteer roles.



The chance to meet other organisations, to network and identify possible partnership working opportunities for the future was also really valuable.



All of the display teams

confirmed that they would be keen to attend a similar event in future.



"Totally worthwhile and a great networking opportunity"

Research and Campaigns

As a service we hold a huge amount of data about the problems our clients and their wider communities face.

We can use this data to do several things:

- To help us research issues further
- To influence decision makers to change policies and practices
- To campaign to get decision makers to change policies and practices.



Research and Campaigns work is undertaken at both local and national level. Evidence gained locally is fed into national campaigns as we receive regular calls for evidence from Citizens Advice.

We regularly take part in the national Network Panel which is made up of staff and volunteers from across the entire Citizens Advice network. It provides an opportunity for local office members to have their say and contribute to national research and campaigns work.

This year we joined the Rural Issues Group which is a network of local Citizens Advice across England and Wales based in rural areas, or serving a district including rural areas. The group is funded by Citizens Advice.

The purpose of the group is to identify and highlight the issues around delivering advice to rural areas; liaise with Citizens Advice, helping them to ensure that their policies are fully rural-proofed as well as providing a regular flow of information on new developments and good practice.

This year we signed the Citizens Advice Council Tax Protocol with Rutland County Council. The Council have agreed to adopt this protocol as their public commitment to the protocol's principles of fairness, partnership working and transparency in local authority debt collection. As a result of this protocol we are meeting with local enforcement agencies (bailiffs) as well as the Council debt recovery staff.

This will help our clients who do get in to difficulties paying Council Tax as we will be able to negotiate with agencies more effectively. Over a third of clients presenting with a debt problem last year had council tax arrears.

Information Assurance

The Citizens Advice Rutland trustee board has approved an information assurance strategy, having identified the risks presented by the significant amounts of client data held by the organisation.

An information assurance management team exists to ensure that the confidentiality, integrity and availability of our sensitive data assets are maintained to a level which is consistent with the requirements of our clients, our funders and our strategic partners and data protection legislation.

The organisation has worked hard to achieve compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.



Thanks and Acknowledgements

Citizens Advice Rutland would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution given by a variety of funders and supporters. In particular Rutland County Council, the East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group, Oakham Town Council, Uppingham Town Council, Parish Councils, The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, The Rutland Trust, our For Rutland fundraising volunteers, and the many donations we receive from clients. We would also like to thank Barnsdale Lodge Hotel for their continued support and generosity.

Thanks and acknowledgement go to our extraordinarily talented and committed volunteers, who demonstrate great skill and care in their support for clients, but also make an immense contribution to shaping the look and feel of the organisation.



Financial Position



The incoming resources in the year were increased to £735,941(2018: 689,139). Of this £285,083 (2018: £288,084) was passed on to our partners in the Rutland Community Wellbeing Service, and £212,158 (2018: £106,752) related to restricted project activities by 'For Rutland', and The Rutland Healthy Small Grants Scheme.

An unrestricted surplus of £7,347 was made in the year. At 31st March 2019 Citizens Advice Rutland unrestricted free reserves were £121,444.

Summary financial information for the year is shown overleaf.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE					BALANCE SHEET			
Year ended					At 31 March 2019		At 31 March 2018	
31 March 2019					£		£	

We still need your help

Our ability to sustain excellent services relies on the continued support of the wider Rutland community in so many ways, and perhaps more so given the inception of the Rutland Community Wellbeing Service.

- We continue to need volunteers for CAR as well as to support the activity of our Community & Voluntary Sector partners.
- We want to hear from organisations across sectors to support work to engage and strengthen all Rutland communities and people.
- We need Champions who support our work and can assist us to ensure that we are reaching all parts of Rutland with a robust and effective offer.
- We need financial support to ensure we can sustain and grow our provision in response to the varied needs of Rutland residents.



Opening Times:

Monday: 10am – 5pm (telephone appointment available at 5pm)

Tuesday: 10am – 1pm; 1pm - 5pm appointments only

Wednesday: 10am – 4pm

Thursday: 10am – 1pm; 1pm - 5pm appointments only

Friday: 10am – 4pm

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