

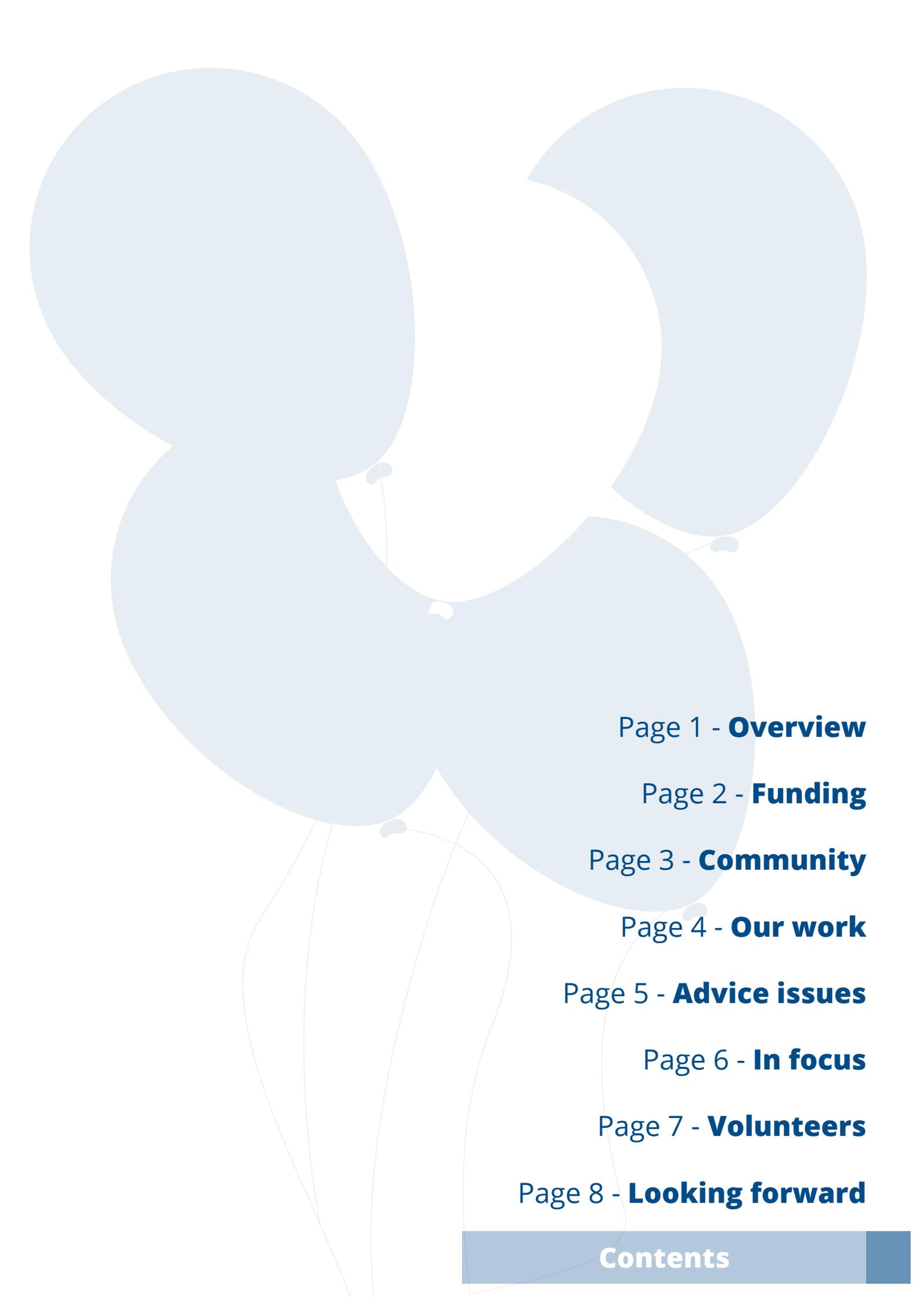
# Citizens Advice Rushmoor

Annual Report 2014 - 15

Celebrating 75  
years serving  
the local  
community

**citizens  
advice**





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Now more than ever, we are making sure that client needs are at the heart of everything we do, as the most vulnerable are disproportionately affected by austerity, and changes to welfare benefits.

As reductions in public funding continue to hit both our clients and our funders hard, we welcome new and improved tools so we can better report our impact, and provide strong evidence of the value of our service. Demonstrating the real difference we make, and our overall contribution through challenging times, is vital in the current context and economic climate.

The breadth of the service we now offer, ranging from light touch interventions to in depth casework and advocacy, gives us unparalleled opportunities to be flexible in meeting the diverse needs of our clients and communities. Our overall value not only to individuals, but to wider society, is illustrated in these Treasury approved figures.

We know that we face many challenges ahead; but the combined strengths of our volunteers, trustees, local partnerships and dedicated staff team, give us confidence in moving forward together.

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**6,574** individual people helped

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through **25,616** points of contact

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with **15,855** different advice issues

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worth **£6,680,102** to those people

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and **£5,768,300** to society at large

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with recorded gains of **£1,706,503**

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achieved by funding of **£644,005**

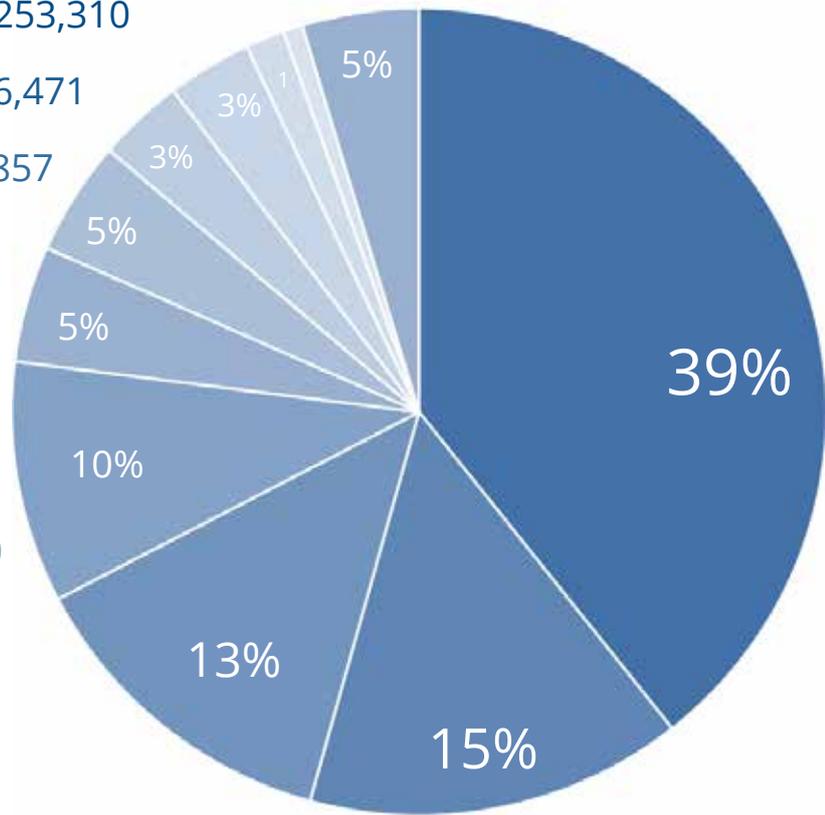
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plus **£714,485** of volunteer value

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Alex Hughes, Chief Officer

- Rushmoor Borough Council - £253,310
- Advice Services Transition - £96,471
- Gurkha Settlement Fund - £83,857
- Pension Wise - £62,278
- Surrey PCT - £30,000
- Broadhurst Trust - £29,468
- Positive Action - £22,140
- Money Advice Service - £21,700
- Hampshire Council - £10,000
- First Wessex Housing - £5,000
- Other - £29,781



**RUSHMOOR**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

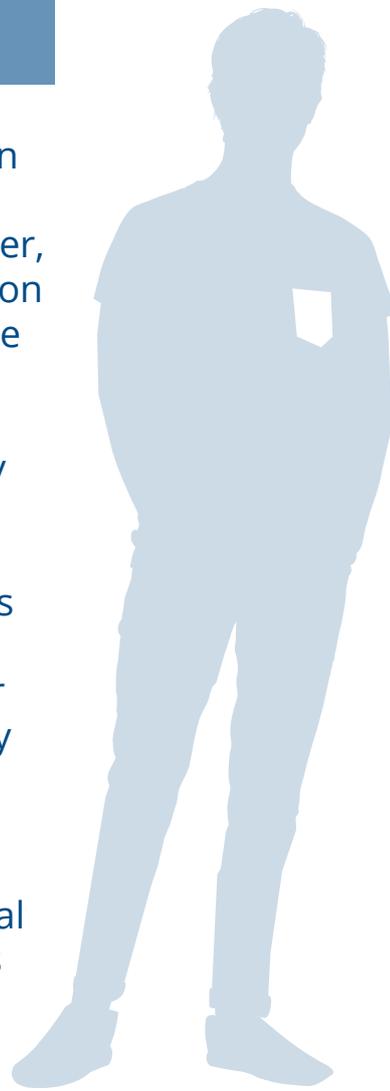
Our funding streams continue to diversify, with the range illustrated by two new projects supporting very different client groups; our Pension Wise Delivery Centre which commenced on 1 April 2015; and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner funding enabling our Nepali Specialist Community Adviser to work with people experiencing domestic abuse.

None of these projects or new developments would be possible without the consistent, strong support from Rushmoor Borough Council, not only for our core funding which enables our open door volunteer led service; but also extending generous help in other ways which embody true partnership working.

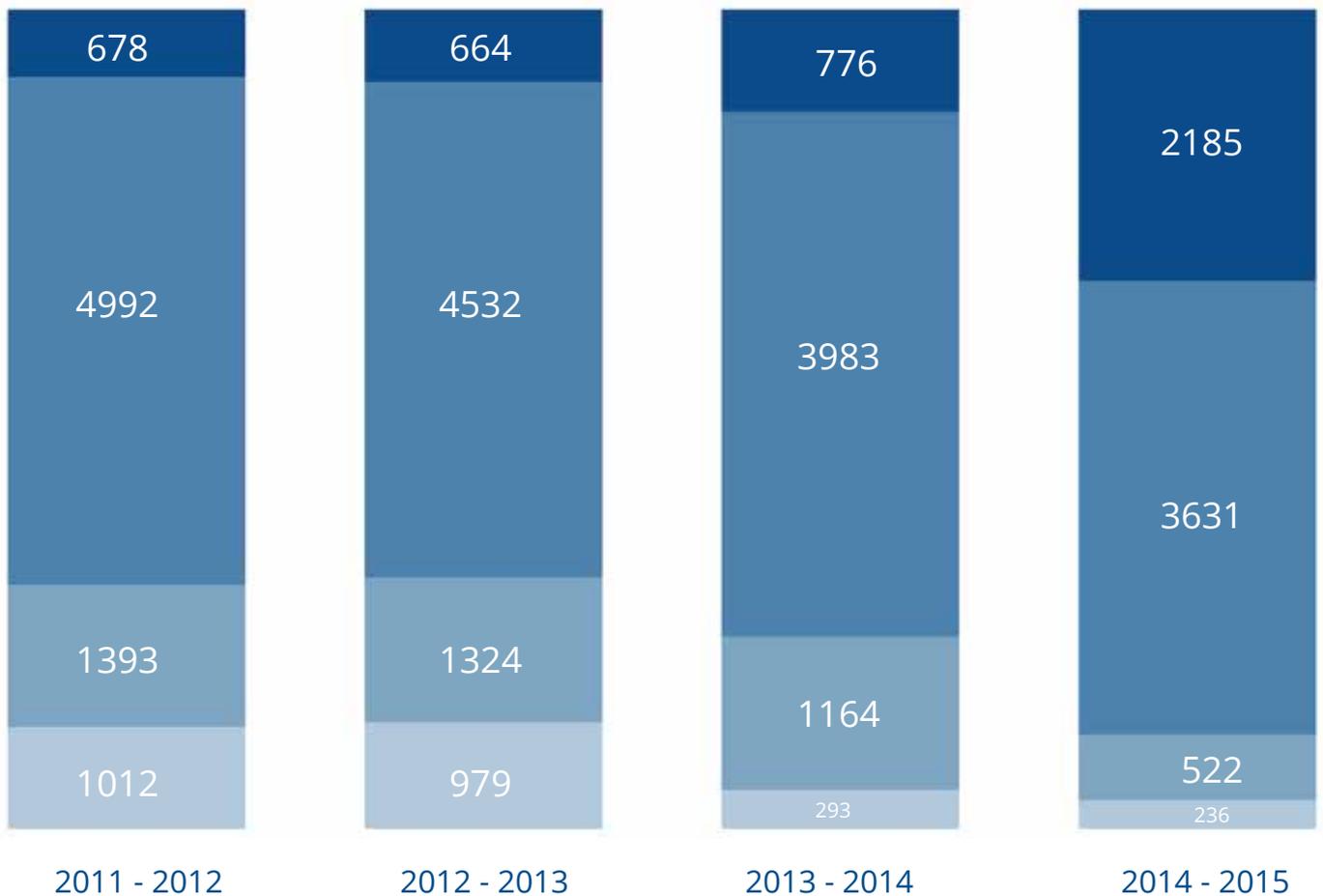
# Community

As a service, we have the big ambition that “everyone will be able to access free advice”. This year, more than ever, we have been able to put that ambition into practice, committing to overcome the particular barriers faced by Nepalese people needing our help, along with meeting wider community needs.

The figures here illustrate the success of the dedicated Nepali Language Drop-in we started in June 2014. Our dedicated team of paid and voluntary Nepali speaking staff has been outstanding, relieving pressure on mainstream services to benefit everyone; and also enabling individual Nepalese volunteers to develop skills and confidence.



- All asian ethnic groups inc. Nepali
- All white ethnic groups
- All other ethnic groups
- Unknown or not recorded





“Everything we do will start and end with our clients” this is our call to action as we work together nationally to reshape and modernise our service. In a year when we are celebrating significant anniversaries, Citizens Advice Rushmoor is proud to be at the forefront of developments in service delivery, with our local experience helping to shape the national service. We now offer a range of options at a client’s first visit to best meet their needs; these include:

- Sharing factsheets, information and signposting
- Guiding clients through relevant resources to enable resolution of problems
- Full in depth interviews to support and plan further action



As well as the face to face service, clients can also access help by phone, email and webchat. The exciting new online developments enable us to support clients online and guide them through to find the right help on the Citizens Advice public website.



Volunteers can deliver this remote service at an early stage in their journey, enabling us to help more people, and adding to volunteers’ development opportunities.

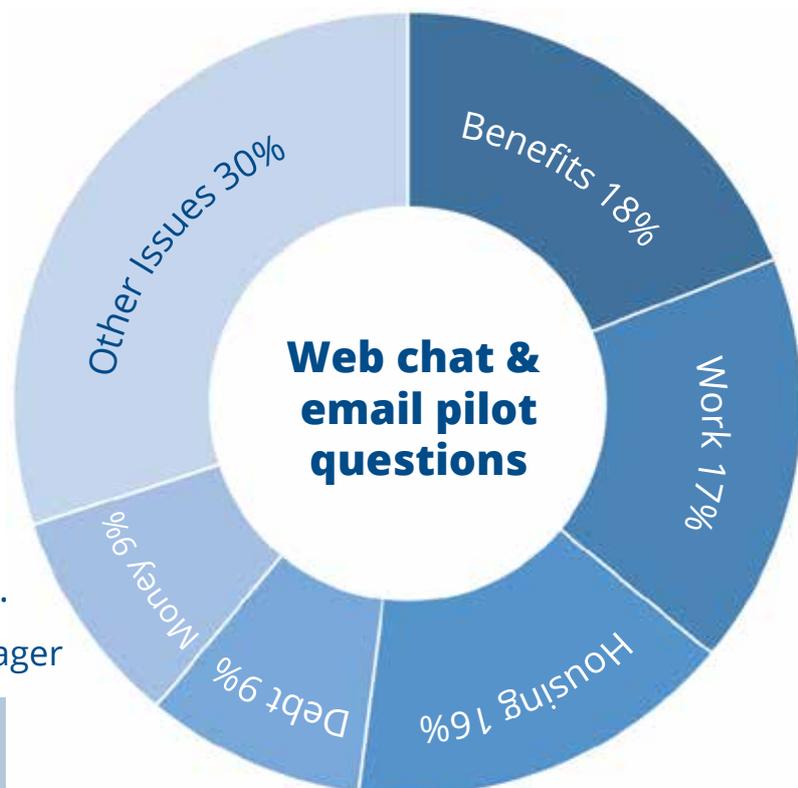
The chart to the right clearly shows we are reaching out into new demographics, with a different landscape of issues, through web chat.

Karyle Davidge-Stringer, Operations Manager

## Our work

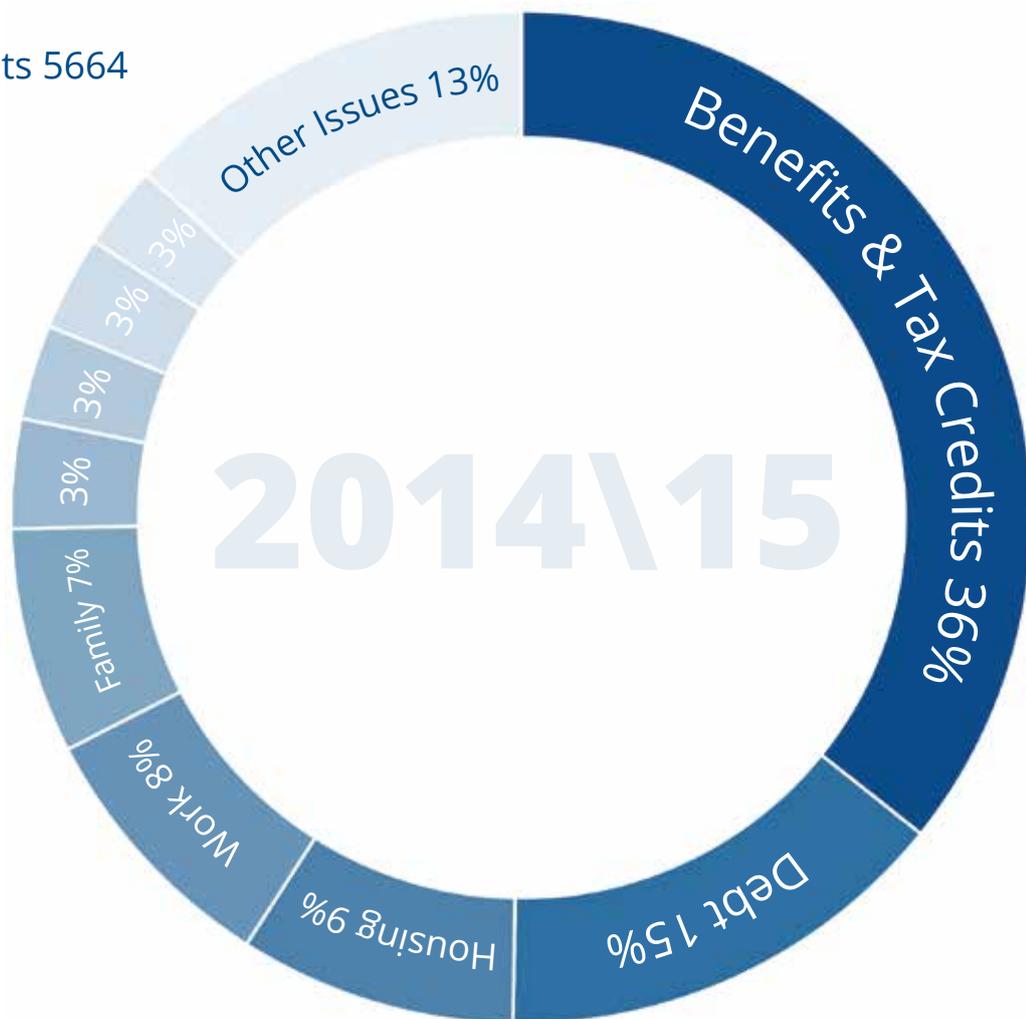
Case Study: Kate has enduring mental health difficulty and was being investigated for benefit fraud and debt issues. The dedicated team at Heathlands persuaded her landlord to revoke their eviction proceedings. A local charity helped with £500 to repay debts incurred during previous homelessness, enabling her to move to secure housing. An overpayment of housing benefit was reduced by £1300 and the remaining amount paid, when her claim to benefits was established by her caseworker.

Kate tells us she is looking forward to life in her new home with her daughter, an impossible dream only a few months ago.



## Advice issues

- Benefits & Tax Credits 5664
- Debt 2307
- Housing 1393
- Employment 1328
- Relationships 1143
- Legal 554
- Health 480
- Utilities 479
- Consumer 423
- Other 2084



**43%**

**increase in  
benefit &  
tax credit  
issues\***

The startling 43% increase in welfare benefits issues reflects the complexity of the welfare benefits system, along with some changes to service delivery models. Universal Credit implementation in 2016 will offer a mix of improvements and challenges; we are already working closely with partners to mitigate the inevitable impact of this major change.

**new debt  
matters  
we helped  
with fell by\***

The relative reduction in debt enquiries follows the end of our Money Advice Service contract in 2014, whilst our campaigns on payday loans and irresponsible lending have yielded some tangible results.

**36%**

The multiplicity of issues illustrated is echoed in the depth of support we offer, particularly for those least able to help themselves.

\*Quarter 1 2014-15 compared to Quarter 1 2015-16

April 2015 saw the start of our Pension Wise service.

Our highly trained guiders provide face to face guidance appointments to clients aged 50 or over with a defined contribution pension.

We were awarded this contract in December 2014 and worked hard to make sure that we were ready to deliver the service in April.

Our preparation included:

- Recruiting a new team of guiders and administrative staff
- Supporting guiders through their intensive training and assessment
- Refurbishing offices in Aldershot and Farnborough
- Working with other Citizens Advice offices to arrange regular outreach appointments
- Publicising and promoting the service to Citizens Advice staff and other organisations

**98%** 

We are very pleased that 98% of our clients report being 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with Pension Wise

Sarah Carter, Operations Manager

Health and Wellbeing :  
As evidence builds of the role of advice services in improving health and wellbeing, more opportunities are emerging for us to focus on reducing health inequalities, and improve health outcomes for all.

Our Advice for the Future project has helped us to forge closer links with local partners such as the Wellbeing Centre; develop the work of our Heathlands team working alongside mental health professionals; and embed our Healthwatch role.

Our Nepali Language Drop-in provides an ideal opportunity to share key health messages, improve awareness and support appropriate use of health services.

**Without your help I would not have been able to manage anything. I am very grateful for everything you have done. Thank you, it took a lot of weight off my shoulders at a very bad time**

**824**

**hours each  
week added by  
volunteers,  
worth**

**£13,740**  
(weekly)

Volunteering remains at the heart of our 75 year old service across all roles. Freely given time adds monetary value, and carries benefits far beyond service delivery. The huge diversity of our volunteer team of over 100 is reflected in age, experience, ethnicity and skills.

We know that the volunteering landscape is changing, with demographic shifts and changes to working lives. Citizens Advice Rushmoor is reshaping our volunteering opportunities to be flexible around individual aspirations, within a structured learning and development environment.

Our Saturday team is made up almost entirely of people who already work full time; whilst student placements continue to play a key role in delivering our webchat and phone services. Short term placements achieve great results on time limited projects.

The overall experience of volunteering builds confidence, skills, wellbeing and employment opportunities

As Trustees we pride ourselves on looking forward, ensuring we adapt to change nationally and locally, keeping pace with the needs of our clients.

As early adopters of the new Performance and Quality Framework being implemented across the Citizens Advice network, we received a strong assessment rating which reflected continued high levels of performance in governance and operational management of the organisation.

2015 was a special anniversary, enabling our outstanding team of paid staff and volunteers to celebrate 75 years of service to the community, a great reminder of the importance and resilience of what we do and the impact we have.

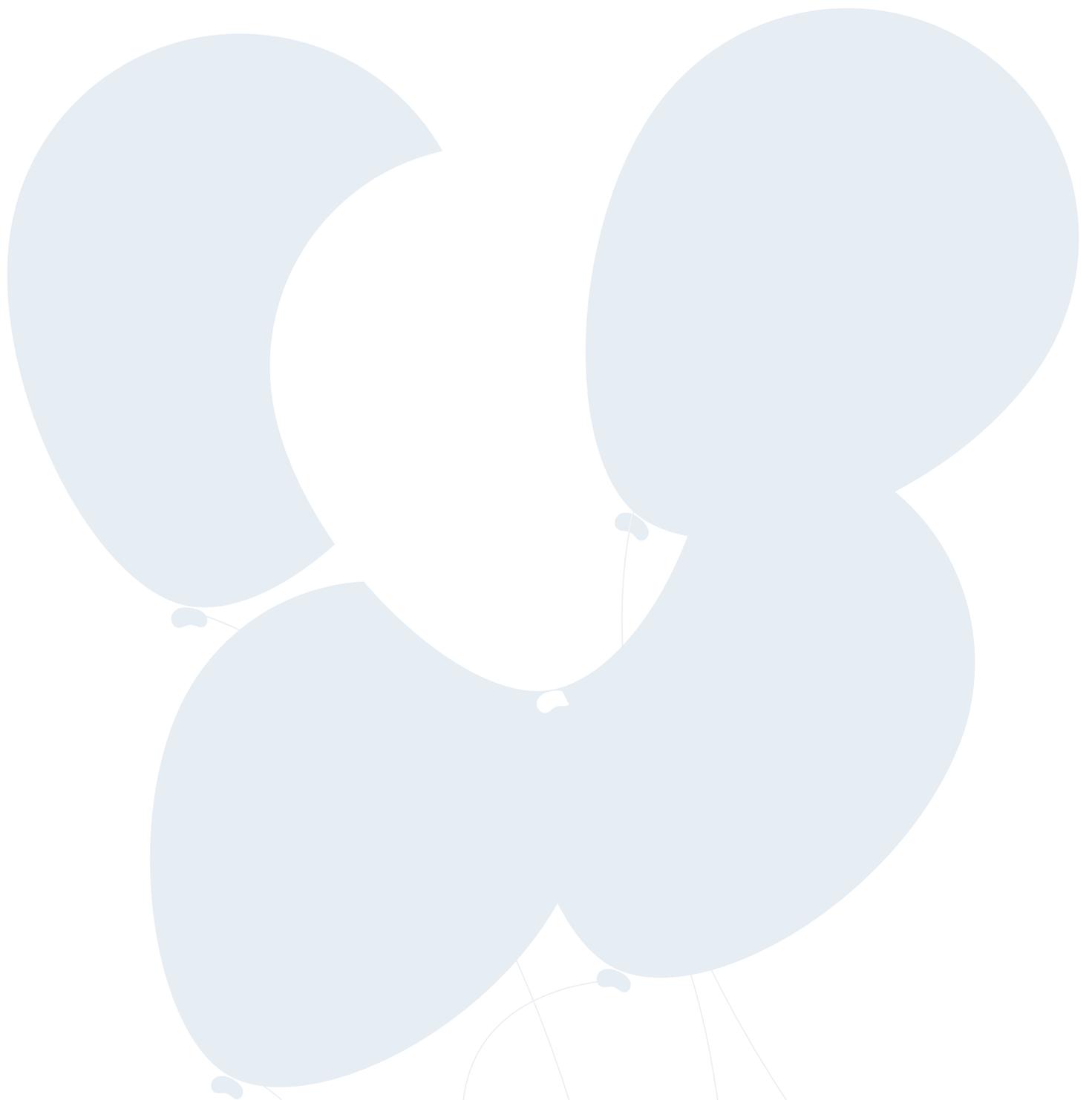


# 1940

**citizens  
advice**

# 2015

## Clare Davies - Chair



Thanks to all who took time to take part in our very special year, celebrating the 75 years of Aldershot, 50 years in Farnborough and 25 years of Heathlands. Looking forward to another 75 more ....

Thank you



**[rushmoorcab.org.uk](http://rushmoorcab.org.uk)**

Published by Citizens Advice Rushmoor October 2015

Citizens Advice Rushmoor is an operating name of Rushmoor Citizens Advice Bureaux. Charity registration number 1090669.  
Company limited by guarantee. Registered number 4354628 England.  
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN: 617719.  
Registered office: Elles Hall, Meudon Avenue, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 7LE