



Advice in crisis

*and rising to
the challenge*

**Annual Review
2022-23**

**citizens
advice**

Rushmoor



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During a year when our team has continued to deliver much needed support to local people, two things stand out for me as Chair of the Trustee Board.

Firstly, the continuing impact of the cost-of-living crisis has resulted in demand for Citizens Advice services nationally reaching record levels. In Rushmoor we have provided advice to more than 10,000 people, helping them with over 30,000 issues. This is what we are here to do, and the fact that we have been able to support this number of people in an increasingly difficult environment is testament to the dedication and commitment of our team of staff and volunteers.

Secondly, due to the financial challenges experienced by many charities, we had to make the difficult decision to restructure the operational team, resulting in six paid staff leaving the organisation. Those staff were experienced, committed to helping our clients, and in some cases long-serving. All will be missed.

The Board thought long and hard before reluctantly accepting we would not be fulfilling our duty as Trustees if we had not taken this action. The restructure, while unsettling for all involved, was not, though, simply a cost saving exercise. The opportunity has been taken to build a more resilient, streamlined, and flexible service, responsive to different levels of client need.

I am confident that, while there will undoubtedly be further challenges for the service to face, the continued dedication of staff, volunteers and trustees will ensure that we are here for people who need us.

Trustee Board

As can be seen from the accompanying list, the Board has seen a degree of churn, and I want to acknowledge the contribution of those Trustees who have left during the year. They have all played their part in helping the Board function as a very effective team.

Notwithstanding the changes in personnel, the Board has continued to ensure we meet our legal, regulatory and governance responsibilities, alongside supporting the operations team and developing our future strategy.

I am grateful for the support of my Trustee colleagues, all of whom are volunteers. The role is at times challenging, but always rewarding and, looking ahead, I suspect that this is unlikely to change.

We are continually looking to diversify our Board membership and welcome interest from anyone who feels they would like to help us contribute to the community. If you feel you might like to join our Trustee Board, please contact me at:

andrew.al@citizensadvicersushmoor.org.uk.



Andrew Levey

Current Trustees:

Andrew Levey, Chair
Jason Halliday, Vice Chair
Uma Indran
(from February 2023)
Treasurer (from May 2023)
Annette Althen
(from September 2022)
Gaynor Austin
Gerald Baker
Gary Ghale
Joseph Bennett
Samantha Levey
(from September 2022)

Trustees during the year:

Calum Stewart
(to February 2023)
Chelsea Knight
(to March 2023)
Kay Goodchild
(Treasurer to May 2023)
Rev Malcolm Cummins
(to June 2022)
Tricia Phillips
(from September 2022 to
September 2023)

Drawing on our experience throughout the last few turbulent years, we have worked in 2022/23 to redesign our service model. The expertise, resilience and focus of all our team has contributed to our priorities as we have gone “back to the drawing board”, putting our client needs at the heart of those changes.

The shift towards phone contact as a preference for the majority is reflected in the priority we have placed on meeting that continuing demand. At the same time, our equalities and client focus has informed our recognition that face-to-face help remains essential. Being accessible to people with the highest level of need has driven our partnership engagement up the agenda, with referrals and outreach being a key element of our model.

Combining these key elements, we are particularly proud in the past year to have:

- Recruited and trained our new volunteer “Welcome Team” to support initial in person requests for help, opening our doors at both offices.
- Researched and delivered our new “Cost of Living in Rushmoor” report and action plan, working closely with local partners.
- Extended our work with the NHS to deliver services to people with significant mental health illness.
- Developed new services relating to energy and cost-of-living.
- Commenced our outreach with the Community Grub Hub on a weekly basis.
- Grown our referral partnerships to proactively support access to our service for marginalised and excluded people.
- Delivered help and raised our profile at community events and activities.

All of this fantastic commitment and drive by the team has been overshadowed by the awareness of the financial challenges we have faced as an organisation, and knowing we needed to take a strategic approach to survive as a charity. The significant restructure seen this year saw the loss of many valued team members, as we worked to streamline and prioritise the core skills needed to maintain the service.

We continue to place client needs at the heart of our charity, as demand remains at unprecedented levels. Moving forward, we are putting the spotlight on support for our brilliant team – both paid and voluntary - so we develop, progress and collaborate together during challenging times.

Alex Hughes - Chief Officer

Historically, as a charity, we have had significant success in securing funding across a range of varied streams. This has included larger projects such as legal aid contracts and Money Advice Service – with Pension Wise one of the service’s most substantial funders currently - but also many smaller, shorter-term projects that are mostly opportunity driven and related often to the political, social, and economic challenges and priorities of the time. For many years, the ‘core’ grant from Rushmoor Borough Council has underpinned much of our work in Rushmoor and continues to be pivotal to the operation of the service. However, as funders seek to make savings, the service has not been immune to cuts. And, coupled with an increasingly competitive and scarce landscape for charitable funding, the coming years present unique challenge and opportunities. Therefore, one of the keys to the service’s continued success are its funding activities, and the meaningful diversification and work to increase its income streams. Ambitious to expand our income streams into new areas, we will increasingly need to drive activity in corporate funding and sponsorship, community fundraising, and individual giving.

A great example of our efforts from the last year was ‘Go the Extra Mile’, a sponsored walk event piloted by a small number of Citizens Advice offices across the country. 60 participants – a mixture of volunteers and staff, local councillors, partners, and former clients – took part in the 5 (+1) mile walk around the beautiful Wellesley Woodlands in Aldershot. Together, they raised an incredible £3,250 to support our frontline services.

If you’re looking at getting involved with some charity fundraising, find out more online:



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citizensadvicerrushmoor.org.uk/supportus

A day in the life - Community Grub Hub

As part of our significant partnership with one of our largest community pantries, the Community Grub Hub, we're supporting their ambition for a wider "wraparound" service for their 200 or more weekly customers by having one of our advisers stationed there every week to provide advice and information to some of the most marginalised in our community.



10:07am - Helped get a customer reconnected after his electricity supply had been cut off five days earlier due to failure to pay outstanding bills. Having just been made redundant, we arranged a follow up appointment to provide more detailed advice.

10:52am - Spoke with a customer worried about her son, who is struggling with addiction issues, and signposted to services that may be able to support him.

11:35am - Having had their claim for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) rejected, we walked a client through the process to respond; encouraging them to get in touch if they need support.

12:12pm - Homeless and now sofa surfing with friends, we helped a customer access an urgent advice appointment for help with housing and benefits.

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To read Joel's day at the GrubHub in full please scan the QR code or visit citizensadvice.rushmoor.org.uk/joel





Value of Volunteering

Volunteers remain at the core of our service delivery model and the support we provide enables many to return to paid employment.

Volunteering improves mental health & well-being, and decreases the need for other supporting services.

What this means to the community as a whole is valued at:

£276,003

Volunteer Contribution

We rely on volunteers at every level of our organisation and to every role, from receptionist, to assessor and adviser.

Our entire trustee board is made up of volunteers and all this combined equals an average 426 hours per week, worth an annual figure of:

£449,188

Cost of Living - Call to Action

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When we produced our “Cost of Living in Rushmoor” report in 2020, we had no idea of the Covid crisis around the corner. By 2022, the Cost of Living Crisis had become a byword, with huge impacts for local people in their day to day lives: we knew from what we were seeing, that it was time to update the research.

Thanks to some funding from Rushmoor Borough Council we were able to employ a researcher, with the new report published in March 2023. As well as the localised data giving insight into the specific impacts in Rushmoor, the research put individual voices and experiences at its centre, illustrating the human impact of the crisis.

Our “Call to Action” event to launch the report was attended by over 50 local people from the voluntary and public sector, resulting in real pledges and actions to mitigate the local impact of the crisis. We are continuing harness the strength of those partners as we progress the actions; and to lead initiatives which are already seeing some great successes.

Making a reality of the power of our local evidence and experience has never been more important; with our national evidence informing and reinforcing those priorities.



In 2022-23 our special referral service for the **Mental Health Integrated Care Service (MHICS)** - assisted 108 clients with complex cases and needs with 729 issues and resulting in £186,278 of income gain and £47,999 of debts written off

The Broadhurst Trust funded project **Community & Partnerships** helped 68 clients with 455 issues, and received £196,358 income gain

Our telephone advice service for **The Brain Tumour Charity** helped with 1796 issues and achieved **£807,938** in annual income increase for 341 clients

We answered 1333 calls through our national **Adviceline** service and 581 calls to our local **Nepali Language Help Line**

In addition there were 36 highly complex and critical cases of domestic abuse helped by our **Nepali Language IDVA** funded by the Armed Services Covenant Fund



Joel, Aliza and Ivan Fortune Savers at Victoria Day

We are immensely proud of how our projects have developed to target support on those who are marginalised and facing barriers in accessing mainstream services. Through specific developments over the past year we have been able to:

- Deliver bespoke, own language services to Nepali people facing domestic abuse, developing relationships with police, armed forces, community groups and others to reach those most in need.
- Take referrals from community mental health services and psychiatric hospital, for people with severe and enduring mental health illness.
- Extend that mental health support to others in the community, working with the MHICS teams and Broadhurst Trust.
- Reach targeted local communities to deliver a range of energy advice, as well as deliver Household Support Fund payments to help those who are struggling to pay their bills.
- Provide tailored benefits and money advice to beneficiaries of The Brain Tumour Charity.
- Partner with the Community Grub Hub to provide weekly advice sessions as part of the wider wraparound support provided to service users.

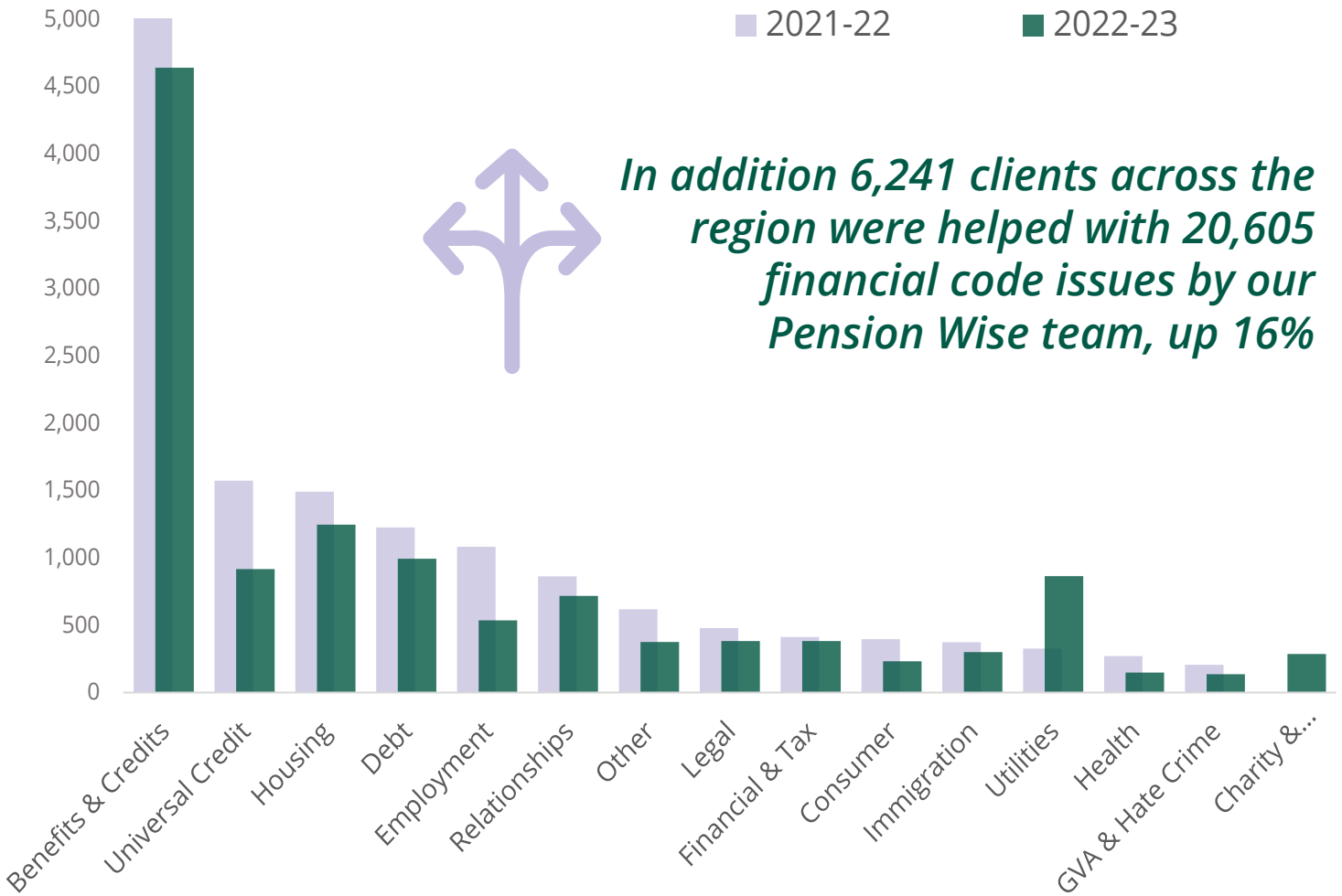
Through this and our wider work, directly generating over **£4 million** in gains to clients (see page 11) is a testament to the value of the work we do. Wider impacts such as homelessness prevention, energy advice and debt management have an immeasurable impact on our communities health and wellbeing.

Advice trends

Last year, Citizens Advice Rushmoor helped 10,004 different people with 33,060 unique issues, through 26,029 activities in 9,861 cases across all our services.

This chart shows the distribution of advice issues across the different categories of the work we do.





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Our value to society in 2022/23

In 2022/23 for every £1 invested in Citizens Advice Rushmoor by our local authority we generated at least:



£

£1.75

in fiscal benefits
Savings to government
Reduction in health service demand, local authority homeless services, and out of work benefits for our clients and volunteers.

£26.11

in public value
Wider economic and social benefits
Improvements in participation and productivity for clients and volunteers.

£6.08

in benefits to individuals
Value to our clients
Income gained through benefits gained, debts written off and consumer problems resolved.

To find out more about how we've modelled our financial value, see our full technical annex: [Modelling our value to society in 2022/23](#)

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The impact of our work



592 clients gain a new award or an increase to their benefit worth a total of **£3,802,484** an average of **£6,424** per client



391 clients with debt issues 76% of which were resolved including **£662,417** written off, an average of **£13,558** per client



220 clients successfully claim one-off awards, or other outcomes, worth **£338,542**, an average of **£1,536** per client



£561,022 reduction in health service demand, by increasing well-being and people in-work saved the DWP **£694,113** in benefits



598 clients with **1246** housing issues Including **61** relating to possession, **37** actually homeless & **87** threatened by it



A combined value of **£19,952,245** in health, gains, well-being, participation and productivity for the 10,004 clients we helped in 2022-23

Our supporters:

Rushmoor Borough Council

Pension Wise

Frimley NHS

Broadhurst Trust

The Brain Tumour Charity

Hampshire County Council

Citizens Advice Hampshire

Armed Forces Covenant Fund & Police and Crime Commissioner

Aviva Crowdfunding

Who enabled us to deliver:

Our core, volunteer led service available to all Rushmoor residents – telephone, face to face, chat and email

Guidance sessions on defined contribution pensions for over 50s

Specialist casework services for clients with severe and enduring mental health conditions, in-patient & CMHRS

Outreach services and support for clients with mild to moderate mental health conditions

Benefits surgery delivered by telephone to beneficiaries of the charity

Developing our new “post covid” Welcome Team

Distributing energy grants from the Household Support Fund

Own language Domestic abuse service for Nepali residents

Delivering outreach services with the Community Grub Hub

RUSHMOOR BOROUGH COUNCIL



Hampshire
County Council



*Thank you to all our volunteers
and staff who continue to be
the bedrock of this service.*



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.



carushmoor.org.uk

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