



**Central
Dorset**

Help In Troubled Times

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



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

The aim of Citizens Advice Central Dorset is to provide the advice people need for the problems that they face and flowing from this, improvements to policies and practices that affect their lives. Our core principles are to:

**value and respect diversity,
promote equality,
challenge discrimination and unfairness,
work together and value the contribution of colleagues.**

We give free, confidential, independent and impartial advice to anyone, regardless of age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, race, religious belief or sexual orientation.

Chairman's Report

Before I introduce myself I must thank the previous Chair, David Cove for handing over to me an exceptionally well-motivated and extremely organised entity. In the 9 years as Chair, David oversaw the organisation merge twice and more than treble the community it serves. Under his guidance and with the able leadership of our Chief Officer, Daniel Cadisch, the organisation has maintained its local focus through these somewhat complex mergers and against a backdrop of Covid and local government reorganisation. There have been interesting times but the mergers have given us economy of scale and the ability to employ a talented secretariat.

By way of an introduction, I'm ex-services and when it came to leaving I had a little free time and an acquaintance mentioned about helping at Citizens Advice. So after some training, I became one of the Tuesday telephone assessors in the Gillingham office of North Dorset CAB. After making some comments about the Business Plan, I got involved in drafting it as a trustee of the Board. That was all some 15 years ago and after another rather serendipitous moment, I'm now Chair and putting my mind to matters like drafting an artificial intelligence strategy. Fortunately, we have just recruited a new trustee who knows about AI.

The 2021 census results are now complete and on the face of it showing little change to the Citizens Advice Central Dorset community. But that said, with the increased pressure on finance many more are seeking help from us for the very first time. We are additionally seeing a greater proportion of clients who identify as being disabled or having a long-term health condition. Of those, we have also seen an increase in those who identify as having mental health issues. This means that our service is reaching those most in need whilst still offering a universal service for everybody. And it is here that I wish to acknowledge and thank the dedicated volunteers and staff working from our four Advice Centres, and multiple outreaches, across our community.

Similar to all Local Citizen Advice organisations, we are a charity. We are certainly not a Central Government funded organisation as many insist on trying to tell us. It is up to us to communicate this clearly when we are looking for scarce resources whether they are funds or volunteers. I must acknowledge with grateful thanks the financial assistance given to us by both Dorset Council and many of the Town Councils; very much appreciated and much needed by the community. In order to cope with increased demand we remain on the hunt for funds and to that end, we are increasing our efforts in the area of income generation and looking at potential different approaches – answers on a postcard please. There is also always a need for volunteer advisers, assessors, IT support staff, and other roles. We will be running recruitment drives in various towns within the CACD area so please stop and see what we have to offer. When mentioning volunteers I must acknowledge and whole-heartedly thank our trustees for their support. Being a trustee is no longer in the realm of the great and the good, it is commitment and skill set. We now have experience of artificial intelligence within the trustee board but we are looking for a new treasurer, someone with marketing skills, and another with communications skills.

Looking towards the future there would appear to be no respite. At the time of drafting this report, global conflict has taken a turn for the worse, which maintains the pressure on energy costs and in turn the cost of living. Demand for information, advice and guidance will no doubt also increase. On that rather bleak note I will take my leave.



Adrian Goldsack, Chair of Trustees

Chief Officer's Report

I would like to start by acknowledging what an incredibly challenging time it has been over the financial year 2022/23. It has been challenging for our clients in having to cope with increases in energy, food and housing costs, which pushed many people to the limit and beyond. Our expert team of volunteers and paid staff have spent a good proportion of their time in directly responding to this cost of living crisis and it is all credit to them that our clients, partners and stakeholders have all expressed their appreciation of the outcomes obtained for local residents. I would therefore like to offer my sincere thanks to them all for the work they have delivered under the banner of Citizens Advice Central Dorset. Of course, it has also been challenging for those volunteers and paid staff by the fact that they too have had to deal with the increase in living costs and of course, they have been under additional strain through the sheer volume of work that has been required.

As mentioned above, our work is about achieving outcomes for people. We have been a listening ear, often hearing very tough situations that are being shared for the first time. Our advice and support can then go on to deliver real change for people. Whether that is about helping them to claim benefits, keep their job or stay in their home, it is about achieving fundamental positive change, often against all the odds. We continue to develop our model whereby our core of volunteers deliver our main service, which is a combination of face to face, telephone and digital help. Our paid staff, through effective and supportive supervision and the delivery of specialist projects ably support this team. These specialist projects are able to target those most in need, for example, our excellent Macmillan Welfare Benefits Project helps those who have received the very worst news possible. A key project, it uses the combined good work of Macmillan and Citizens Advice to get the right results at the toughest time for people.

When life is so hard for so many people, assisting them to achieve financial outcomes becomes even more important. Over the year in question, our team helped clients achieve over £5.3m in both welfare benefits and other income gains. Every pound makes a real difference and this additional income for clients has gone towards paying those basic bills of food, energy and housing.

When I give talks on the work of Citizens Advice, I always highlight the campaign work that we deliver. This year has been another productive one as regards campaigning. We have played our role in providing strong evidence that demonstrates the unfair practice of charging additional energy costs for those with pre-payment meters. We are delighted that this campaign saw a strong success in that Ofgem, the energy regulator, instructed energy companies to remove that additional charge, thus making life that bit easier for those who find it most difficult to cover their energy bills. Our evidence from local clients combined with others to make a case that got results.

After nine years as Chair of Trustees, Dr David Cove stepped down at the end of the year. His calm, considered and committed style has served us extremely well over the years. I would like to thank him personally for all his support to the management team and me. He demonstrated that he shares the values of Citizens Advice and led the organisation along the right path by putting those values into action. Over those nine years he oversaw two mergers with sensitivity and tact and there is no doubt that we have emerged a stronger and more effective organisation as a result. Thank you David.

Daniel Cadisch, Chief Officer



Treasurer's Report

Just as the organisation was recovering from the strains caused by the Covid pandemic, we were faced with the worst cost of living crisis in decades, with client numbers recovering to and increasing above pre-pandemic levels. Despite these latest challenges, CA Central Dorset has had a strong year financially we made a small surplus in the year to March 2023, whereas we recorded a deficit of £56,000 in 2021-22. Looking at the picture over the slightly longer term, this means that we have managed to generate a modest surplus over the past 3 financial years, despite the many challenges.

Key to the 2022-23 result was our ability to secure additional funding and our total income rose by 13% to £1.1 million. Given the pressures on the public purse, on Councils and charities this reflects the excellent work done by our team in building relationships and working closely with a variety of local partners. Dorset Council remain the most important of these, providing around 44% of our overall funding. The Ministry of Justice 'Access to Justice' project contributed £39k more than in the previous year and accounted for 13% of total income, while the well-established project to support clients of Macmillan generated a further 11%. The largest factor contributing to the increased income was the ability to work in a complementary way with local foodbanks, Councils and other interest groups that justified them in contracting our services.

The maintenance of our 'core' service is reliant on retaining Dorset Council as our key partner. Citizens Advice in Dorset, the consortium of the 3 Dorset County Citizens Advice offices, won the fixed price 3-year contract from Dorset Council, which runs initially until October 2024 - but it may be extended for a further 2 years from that date. This contract makes a major contribution towards financing our paid staff as well as our basic office infrastructure, although it is insufficient on its own. We therefore need to sell our unique volunteer-led service elsewhere and are contracted to provide services for various other charities, the NHS, central government and utility companies which, between them, account for the bulk of our 'project' income. The charitable status of Citizens Advice remains largely unknown and this is an area that we continue to develop. Relationships with Town and Parish Councils within our area of operation have been strengthened in recent years and make an increasingly important contribution.

In order to deliver our services to a wider variety of clients, total expenditure increased by over 7% to £1.1 million. Salary costs make up the bulk of our spending, representing 73% of the total. While we are a volunteer-led organisation, supervisory staff are needed to support volunteers and guarantee quality, while we employ specialists to deliver contracts won to address specific sectors and client needs. We work closely with partner offices of CA to deliver certain contracts and 9% of our expenditure is paid to them. The cost of maintaining our main office hubs in Weymouth, Dorchester, Sherborne and Gillingham is the other major expense : we continue to explore the most efficient ways of delivering our service as the nature of client demand evolves beyond face-to-face.

At March 2023 we held total reserves of £398,000. £63,000 of this relates to 'restricted' purposes, where money is received for a specific purpose and can only be spent in that area ; in due course this element will all be spent. The remaining reserves of £334,000 are 'unrestricted', meaning that they can be applied for any purpose. This complies comfortably with our reserves policy, which requires us to hold a figure equal to between 3 and 6 months of regular expenditure as fall-back should our funding dry up.

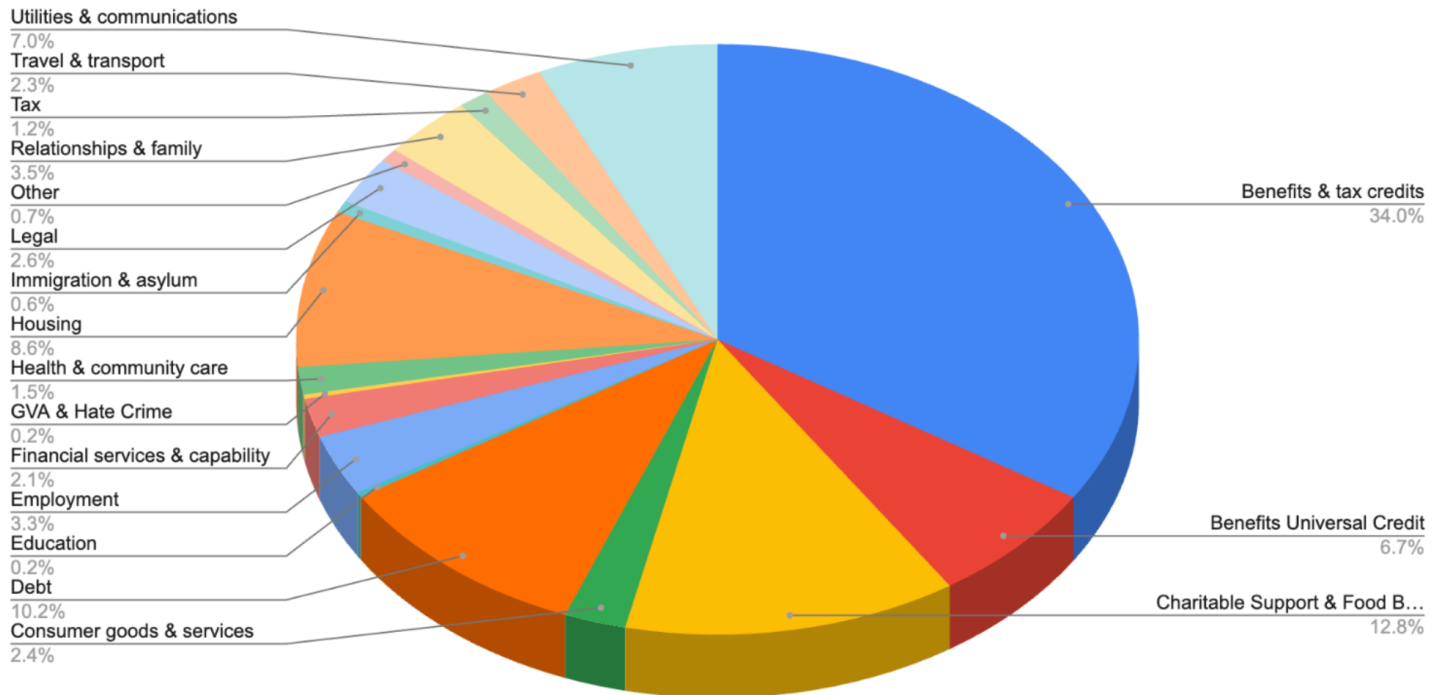
In conclusion, we have managed to balance the books this year, despite the ongoing pressure on our funding, and can look forward to future challenges from a sound financial standpoint.



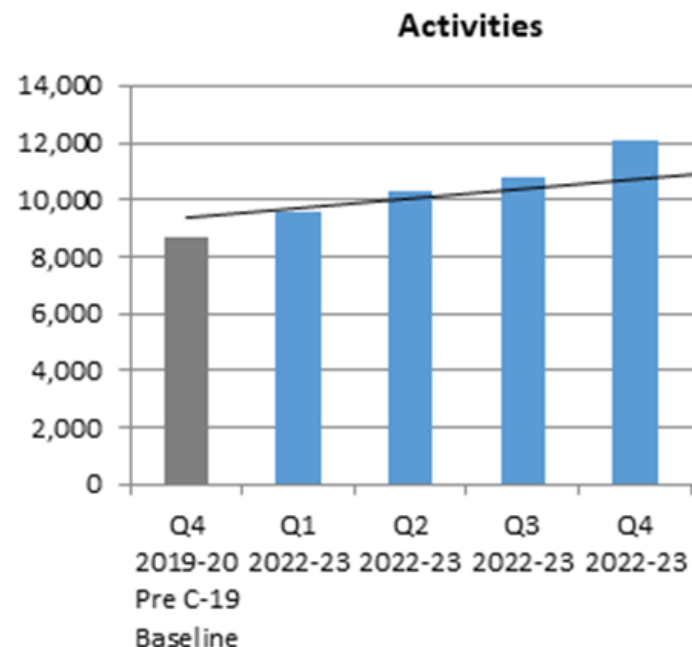
David Collins, Treasurer

Summary of the year

In 2022/23 we helped 8,879 people with 28,461 issues. This represents a 19% increase on the number of clients helped in the previous year and demonstrates the increase in demand for our advice due to the Cost of Living Crisis. 24% of our activity in 2022/23 was face to face, slowly returning to pre-Covid levels. The breakdown of issues in 2022/23 is shown below. The highest proportion of issues we helped with related to welfare benefits. The number of issues related to Charitable support represents a rise in request for foodbank vouchers and support with applications to the Household Support Fund.



An 'activity' is recorded whenever an adviser adds a new note to our Casebook recording system. This happens when we see or phone a client, send or receive an email, contact a third party, and review a case for example to prepare for a benefit appeal. The graph below shows the increase in activities over the year.



Outcomes	2022-23	2021-22
Income gained for clients:	£5,338,802	£4,110,483
Reimbursements, service and loans:	£149,122	£43,900
Debts written off:	£433,585	£781,567
Payments rescheduled:	£3,318	£22,363
Other:	£459,207	£465,822

Research and Campaigns

Research and Campaigns work is about making a difference: using our clients' evidence to influence policy, improve services and bring about longer-term change, nationally and locally.

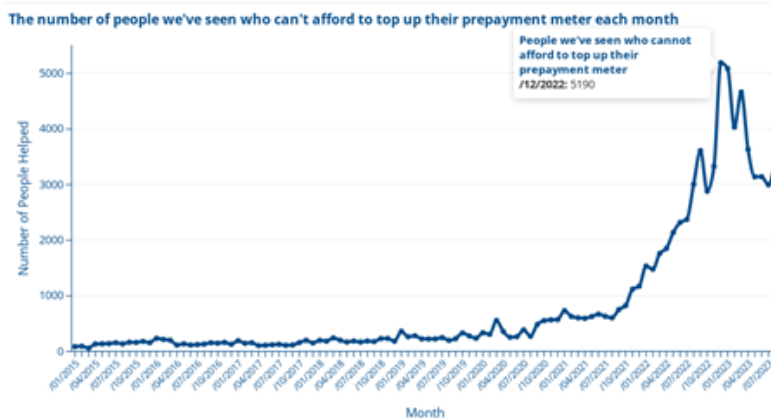
We have good systems in place across CACD to ensure that we collect and use our evidence productively. I am indebted to our small team of office leads who keep their teams up to speed: Rachel R and David G at Weymouth, Lee G at North Dorset and, newer to the role, Nicola M at Sherborne. Sadly our long-serving adviser and R&C lead at Dorchester, Richard C, retired in the summer and we thank him for all his support. Over the year we completed 655 'evidence forms' a significant and impressive increase on the 531 in the previous year. Whilst many related to the ongoing cost of living issues, a myriad of other issues were raised, from frustration contacting energy suppliers to scams to housing disrepair..... wherever advisers had spotted a broken system, an injustice or an absurdity that needed to be highlighted! We've also honed in on issues faced by people who face additional needs such as mental health issues or digital exclusion.

We've used this evidence in various ways. In January 2023 we finalised a report on the experiences of people working in the care sector using evidence from our Employment Unit, where 15% of clients worked in this sector. Common issues were around insecure contracts, travel time between jobs, and other

working conditions. The report was circulated to a number of local agencies/employers and led to a follow-up meeting with one local domiciliary care provider, at their request. Not surprisingly this was one of the agencies we felt already had a better approach to their workforce and they already had strategies in place to build engagement and communication to deal with employee issues as early as possible. It is no surprise that a current national Citizens Advice 'call for evidence' relates to the issues faced by migrant health and care workers coming to the UK on a workers' visa.

Our data, locally and nationally, shows trends and acts as a veritable 'canary in the coalmine' highlighting what is going on for people. Citizens Advice nationally run a monthly cost of living briefing, and have been tracking some key indicators - energy debt, council tax arrears, access to charitable help. One of the most striking illustrations of increasing need is this graph showing the number of people coming to us over the 8 years since 2015 who can't afford to top up their PrePayment Meter – the spike in need is December 2022/January 2023 and though the need then drops as we move into summer it does appear to once again be on the up-turn.

We continue to keep our colleagues across Dorset - and wider - up to date through our fortnightly E News Bulletin under the Advice Dorset Partnership umbrella, and by providing briefings - particularly on cost of living issues and what support is available - to partners in councils, health teams, and voluntary sector agencies.



You can access this visualization [here](#) - Data for England and Wales. Data is from Local Citizens Advice offices and the Citizens Advice Consumer Service. More adviser capacity mobilised in December helped us respond to demand. The figures from April 2023 have recently been slightly updated as not all of these cases had been counted.



Caroline Buxton, R & C Lead

Projects

GP Outreach Project Blandford Practice Outreach

Rough Sleeper's Initiative

The Rough Sleepers' Initiative Caseworker's hours have increased by an additional day and a half to accommodate the need in the county beyond Weymouth and Portland, with the Caseworker available for outreach throughout the Dorset Council area one afternoon a week. This has involved increased cooperation with Julian House, a rough sleepers' outreach organisation, who are the main source of outreach referrals.

Outreach can take several forms: either meeting with the client at a local Citizens Advice office, a local library or café, or being accompanied by support staff from Julian House for home visits. Outreach visits have mainly been within the Weymouth and Portland or East Dorset and Purbeck areas and have covered a variety of topics including Personal Independence Payment [PIP] applications and debt.

There has been a marked increase in the number of clients attending the Lantern (a local housing charity in Weymouth). Our specialist Caseworker operates at a hub in Weymouth for other organisations involved in housing and homelessness and there is increased concern with the rising cost of living which has been reflected in the increased volume of debt cases seen by the RSI Caseworker over the past year, many of which concern debts to energy companies.

Additionally, more people are requesting benefits checks and enquiring about financial aid to cover the increase in energy costs. A few have mentioned that they are having to go without food to ensure energy bills get paid. The Caseworker is regularly asked when the next Government Cost of Living payment will be issued so that clients can plan how to make their usual income last until the next payment date.

Naomi M-R, RSI Caseworker

I have a very good relationship with the social prescribers who make up the Wellness Team at Blandford Practice. They give freely of their time and with the client's consent, are happy to supply me with necessary information about the clients I am seeing. They also regularly provide me with printed information, such as patient summaries for clients to support PIP and Attendance Allowance applications.

In turn, I am always available and willing to provide them with information and tips on how to apply for benefits and other information held by Citizens Advice. In general, I find the entire staff at Blandford Practice to be helpful, from the Practice Manager and Business Manager to the receptionists and nursing staff. With the patient's consent, they are always willing to answer my questions or provide information where they can.

I regularly fit in extra clients over the three I am scheduled to see each week. This is because I often need to make a follow-up appointment for a client, for instance to finish a PIP form which has a deadline. The reason for this is that Blandford Practice keeps my appointment schedule well-booked up to a month in advance, such is the demand for appointments.

As part of my work at Blandford Practice, I am willing to make home visits and have done so on a number of occasions. This is generally where clients are unable to reasonably leave their homes. Some examples of this work include an Attendance Allowance application for someone in a care home who was almost blind.

I also made a home visit to a client who has learning difficulties and lives in a rural area with no access to transport. This client had scored zero points on her first PIP application, but when I did the application I got her scores of 12 for both daily care and mobility, so she got PIP at both higher rates. I also contacted her social housing provider for her as she wanted to move to more affordable and suitable accommodation. I was able to give advice on how to search for local home swap groups.

Steve P, GP caseworker.

Dorset Macmillan Service 2023

This is a dedicated service sponsored by Macmillan to provide specialist advice to people in Dorset affected by cancer and their families. Our team provides a professional welfare benefits advice service which enables clients to understand their entitlements to benefits, eligibility and criteria, and provides assistance with applications.

We are supported in professional training by Macmillan and we are able to access Macmillan grants and a range of services to support our clients. These include financial guidance, specialist nurse cancer information, work support, Macmillan grants and energy advice.

We work closely with other stakeholders to provide the best experience for our clients and make contact with them within 24 hours. We collaborate with Macmillan by attending information and Wellness events across the County which provide information and interactive teaching.

People with cancer lose some income as a result of their cancer (on average people affected lose £860 a month). We identified over £ 4.4million in financial gains for people living with cancer last year, including Macmillan grants and state benefits people were entitled to.

Christine Land, Macmillan Project Manager

Couldn't have done it without my CA helper.

From a Macmillan caseworker

Working as a welfare benefits adviser at Macmillan has been incredibly rewarding. I've had the privilege of assisting individuals affected by cancer, providing crucial guidance on navigating the complex welfare system. My role involves conducting comprehensive assessments, offering tailored advice, and advocating for clients to secure the financial support they need during challenging times. Macmillan's dedication to empowering and improving the lives of those impacted by cancer is evident daily, and the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in people's lives has been both fulfilling and inspiring. The supportive team and the organization's strong mission make this role a truly impactful and gratifying experience.

Helen D, Macmillan Caseworker

A fabulous service, I spoke to really lovely people who immediately made me feel less anxious and that help was there for me. Great communication, they were confident with the information they supplied, they also sent me links to websites that could help me and a professional also contacted me. A really great service which I previously had no idea existed.
Thank you.

Working in food banks and other food projects

We have advisers located in a number of food banks across the area, including at The Vale Pantry in Sturminster Newton, and projects in Gillingham and Weymouth. Sian Alvis, our Weymouth Advice Services Manager, writes about the Weymouth project which has just completed its first year:

The first year was very successful: 99 clients were supported by the project, with 499 issues. This demonstrates the level of support residents in these areas need. With three new locations - in the Westham Foodbank, the Portland Foodbank, and the Portland Library - our caseworker has been able to reach people that previously we were unable to support due to geography, transport links, and other barriers. We hope to continue this invaluable work in the future, and thank everyone involved who has made it a success so far. Here's how we helped one client:

Nicki (not her real name) had recently moved into a property she owns, with one child. She has severe hearing loss and cannot make phone calls. At the initial meeting, Nicki needed help in setting up payment for her water bills. The caseworker spoke with Wessex Water and put Nicki on the Priority Services Register, and arranged for Wessex Water to contact Nicki via email or text so a visit could be arranged to check about a meter and how to set up payments. Nicki then sought further advice on dealing with other bills for her new home, as many of the utility companies were inaccessible to her.

As part of our advice, the caseworker supported Nicki in checking she was receiving all the benefits which she was entitled to, and ensured her income was maximised. We also helped Nicki to apply for Household Support Fund supermarket vouchers. Nicki has continued to access our services regularly for ongoing support.

My father always used CAB and I see why now. They were extremely professional and capable. I received a telephone call the next day about my issue. I would definitely recommend CAB to others.

The advice I received for going forward has been amazing. The process is still in progress but I can see a light at the end of a very dark tunnel. Thank you so much.

I have no idea where you find your Advisers but they are amazing. Please take these chocolates to hand round to the team to thank you all.

Ukrainian Refugee Project

It has now been over a year since we started our Ukrainian Refugee Project at Citizens Advice.

Working closely with our partner organisations across Dorset, we have provided support, advice, workshops and webinars to our Ukrainian guests on a wide range of issues including housing, immigration, benefits, and employment. Dorset is now home to a thriving Ukrainian community with a number of Ukrainian-run businesses, Ukrainian craft and food markets from Blandford to Weymouth, and regular large-scale Ukrainian events that are enjoyed by locals and Ukrainians alike. There are now over 283 Ukrainians in private rented accommodation and hundreds in full-time employment.

Since the start of the project, there have been shifts in the types of queries we have received. Initially, the majority of questions were around Biometric Residence Permits, making Ukrainian cars UK road legal, converting Ukrainian driving licences, understanding and applying for Universal Credit and Pension Credit, finding employment, navigating the benefits system, resolving issues with sponsor families, and understanding which local organisations did what.

Over time, queries mirrored the changing situation as families began to look for more permanent accommodation and more stable employment. By February 2023, we were seeing more queries around housing, renting, buying property, tax, self-employment, and converting Ukrainian qualifications to British ones. This suggested that the situation had stabilised somewhat. There was a drop in new families arriving and priorities shifted to long-term planning. Some families moved to other counties and some even returned to Ukraine. Today, the majority of queries are around housing, access to benefits, and employment.

In August 2023, we began a new Ukrainian Employment Project headed by Sarah Campbell with the aim of providing tailored employment support to Ukrainians to find more meaningful employment. This project came about because we were seeing many highly-skilled clients in entry-level employment. This project has proven to be very successful and we are confident that it will continue to be so.

As an organisation we have learnt a lot from this project. Our local offices have had to get to grips with new ways of working to meet the increased demand and deal with Ukrainian specific queries. For example, our volunteers have become adept at using technology to assist with translation.

As Ukrainian specific legislation has evolved, we also have acted quickly to ensure the community is aware of the changes. The government's welcome decision to extend the validity of Ukrainian driving licences for three years and the recent 50% Council Tax reduction are cases in point.

As the war enters its 21st month, Citizens Advice continues to support the Ukrainian community. We regularly run workshops, support clients in local offices, conduct home visits, and contribute to webinars and information guides on issues such as housing and employment. Regular meetings with our colleagues at Dorset Council, Help and Kindness, Skills and Learning and others across Dorset keep us up-to-date with the latest trends in the community and allow us to respond quickly to new issues as they arise.

Thomas Hensher | Ukrainian Refugee Specialist Coordinator

Refugee Resettlement Project

It has been a busy year for our Refugee Resettlement Project with a number of new families from Afghanistan arriving in Dorset. Together with our colleagues at Dorset Council we have welcomed these families and helped them begin their new lives here.

There are a number of practicalities involved in the immediate resettlement process and it requires us to work closely with the Council's Resettlement team to ensure we are providing the families with the best possible start. Initial steps from our side involve setting up utilities, setting up Council Tax, setting up direct debits for rent, applying for Universal Credit, and applying for Child Benefit. Secondary steps involve, for example, support with budgeting, dealing with immigration queries, applications for reduced utility tariffs, employment advice, applications for charitable grants, and food bank referrals. After the basics have been covered, we provide ongoing support on a range of topics such as housing, family problems, consumer issues, debt, and benefits.

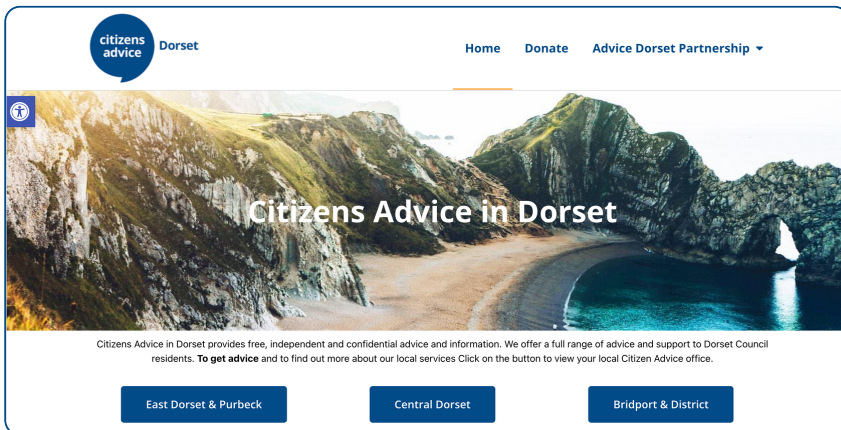
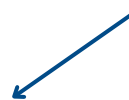
The new families from Afghanistan have been adapting well to their new lives in the UK. Their children are enjoying school and their parents are attending English language courses. Many of them have already found stable employment. This year one Syrian family successfully left the project after five years working closely with our team and they are now being supported by their local CA office. This was a positive result for everyone involved and we are confident that the family will continue to thrive. There have also been some real challenges, for example we have had to act quickly to avert homelessness on two occasions.

As new refugees continue to arrive in Dorset, we are ready to welcome and support them. We now have a lot of experience with refugee resettlement and are confident that we can deal with any issue that is likely to arise.

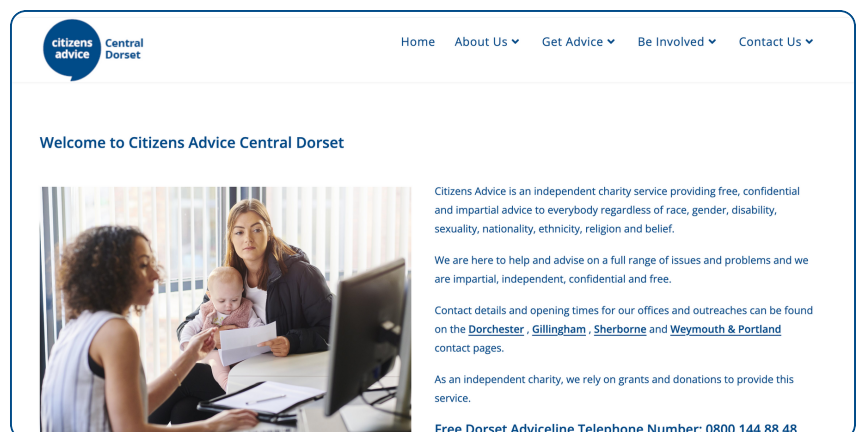
Thomas Hensher | Refugee Caseworker

Find us online :

Our new County wide website



Our Central Dorset website



Training

Training to be a generalist adviser with Citizens Advice takes a great deal of hard work, time and commitment. The end result is an adviser who has the knowledge and experience to serve their local community for many years to come. The training is both professional and in depth as the number of issues our clients face requires this.

Trainees attend weekly tutorial sessions for about five months and these cover a broad range of subjects including benefits, housing, employment and debt.

During this time, trainees are asked to complete a significant amount of work comprising study packs, e-learning and online assessments. Once initial training has finished, advisers start working for two sessions per week and there is further assessment after a year or so to ensure advisers are competent before receiving their adviser certificate.

During the training, advisers come into the office for one session per week to observe, gain more experience and see the 'theory' put into practice! This can involve working on reception which is a very good way of gaining experience, meeting clients face to face and becoming part of the team

Our most recent group, which started in January 2023 was much larger than previous groups and we used a room at Sherborne Town Council to train advisers from Dorchester, Sherborne and North Dorset offices. They are all now working as advisers in their local offices and gaining experience.

A new group of nine trainees started in September 2023 and are at the beginning of their lengthy and hopefully rewarding journey to become an adviser with Citizens Advice

Helen Cadisch, Training Supervisor

A newly-trained adviser's experience

Having completed my adviser training in June 2023, I tried to think what sums up my experience so far with Citizens Advice? There are so many things but the key word which came to me was support.

I wanted a challenge, in an environment which provides support to our clients, making a difference in their lives where possible, and to all the team managing the sometimes difficult cases we see.

Initially daunted by the scope of what CA can cover and not knowing what issues may come in, I started the adviser training. I found myself meeting a great group of people, all contributing different experiences, skills and perspectives. The training was comprehensive and so well delivered by Helen, whose knowledge came through so clearly. It was well structured with scope for plenty of homework to try to get to grips with the information and complexities, and navigating 'Advisernet', our information platform. Additional support came with shadowing advisers and helping in the reception role, which put the training in the context of people's lives.

This description of a fledgling resonated with me: 'Far from being immaculate, as a new model should be, it will have an unfinished, imperfect look'!

However, the reality is that I am still nurtured and given so much support by the ASS (session supervisor) and other advisers – and my training and learning continues. And I am enjoying it!

Liz D, Generalist Adviser

From our volunteers

In 2022-23, we had 124 volunteers, across our four offices in a variety of roles - admin & support (including reception), generalist adviser, supervisor and trustee with an estimated public value of £656,198 p.a.

I'm a newbie to CA but have encountered the emotional repercussions from debt, mental health and isolation as a Samaritan volunteer.

It's eye opening to start to look at the practicality of advising on solutions for such issues.

Simon H

I enjoy being the Weymouth & Portland Volunteer Representative. As the link between the Volunteers and the Board I can raise issues positive and negative to ensure the Board are kept aware of what is impacting the delivery of our service at local level.

Liaising with my fellow Volunteer Representatives means that all Volunteers are kept aware of the situation in their neighbouring offices.

The Boards' positive engagement with local office visits and attending zoom team meetings shows we are all one team working hard together to deliver our best service to all our Clients.

Lin G

I've recently completed my training, still learning the process and systems.

Sherborne is a great office with a really good communal supportive team.

Robert D

From our partners

Team are always willing to go the extra mile to support their partners and our service users

Responsive – do what they say

We have great working relationships with them and the support they provide clients is Invaluable

Supporters and Trustees

Our Supporters

Our special thanks go to the following for their continued support:

- Dorset Council
- Blandford Forum Town Council
- Dorchester Town Council
- Gillingham Town Council
- Portland Town Council
- Shaftesbury Town Council
- Sherborne Town Council
- Weymouth Town Council
- Parish Councils
- Access to Justice Foundation
- Alice Ellen Cooper Dean Charitable Foundation
- Arnold Clark Foundation
- Big Energy Savings Network
- Big 4 Littlemoor
- Blandford Group Practice
- Corton Hill Fund
- Dorchester Foodbank
- Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group
- Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust
- Drandjeaw Charitable Trust
- Gillingham Foodbank / Trussell Trust
- Macmillian Cancer Care
- Money Advice Service
- NHS Charities Together
- Prince Zeiger Trust
- Simon Digby Charitable Trust
- The Blandford Group Practice
- Vale Pantry
- Valentine Trust
- Wessex Water

Every Citizens Advice office is an independent registered charity. Without funding and volunteers, we could not continue to provide our services in the Central Dorset area.

Current Trustees

- Mr Adrian Goldsack (Chair)
- Mr Richard Baker
- Mr Stephen Beare
- Ms Mandy Binsley
- Mr David Collins (Treasurer)
- Mr Stuart Dawson
- Mr Jean-Paul Dervley
- Mr Peter Green
- Mr Kunal Kansara
- Ms Tracy McGregor
- Ms Clare Stephens

Many thanks also to our smaller but no less important individual supporters and donors, whether clients or friends of our local Citizens Advice service.

How to get help

Citizens Advice Central Dorset offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice based around our Dorchester, North Dorset, Sherborne, and Weymouth & Portland Citizens Advice centres.

Visit our website for more information <https://centraldorsetca.org.uk>

Dorchester

1 Acland Road
Dorchester DT1 1JW

With outreaches in:

- Bere Regis
- Crossways
- Maiden Newton
- Puddletown

Sherborne

Manor House
Newland
Sherborne DT9 3JL

With outreaches in:

- Cerne Abbas
- Grove Medical Centre

North Dorset

4 Newbury Court
Gillingham SP8 4QX

With outreaches in:

- Blandford Forum
- Blandford Group Practice
- Gillingham Foodbank
- Shaftesbury
- Sturminster Newton
- Verwood & Cranborne

Weymouth & Portland

Weymouth Library
Great George Street
Weymouth DT4 8NN

With outreaches in:

- Community Venue
- Portland Hospital
- Portland Library
- Portland Foodbank
- Wyke Regis Health Centre
- Royal Crescent Surgery
- The Bridges Medical Centre
- Littlemoor Community Centre
- The Lantern Trust, Weymouth
- Weymouth Westham Foodbank

Dorset Adviceline: 0800 144 88 48 [freephone]