

# Scams Awareness Fortnight 2022

Evaluation



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# Campaign overview

This year's campaign took place over two weeks from 13 to 26 June. As with previous Scams Awareness campaigns, the overall objective was to reduce the risk and impact of scams by raising awareness and encouraging behaviour change amongst the public both at a local and national level.

This year's campaign focused on scams and the cost-of-living crisis. With many people facing increased financial pressures, there's a high chance that scammers will take advantage of this, so it's of vital importance to equip consumers. For example, we've already seen instances of scammers pretending to be energy companies, using high energy prices to lure people into "too good to be true" deals.

This led to 3 key aims for this year's campaign:

- Equip consumers with the knowledge and skills they need to recognise scams
- Empower people to take action if they think they've been targeted by a scam, including reporting it using the appropriate channels
- Encourage people to talk about their experiences with scams and help others

As demonstrated by the strong results in our KPIs (below), we think the campaign has been largely successful in meeting these aims.

## Our audiences

The strength of the Scams Awareness campaign is its breadth, with partners able to reach many groups and demographics. Given we know scams can affect anyone no matter who they are, we think it's important that we reach a wide range of consumers.

At the same time, it's important to make sure that messaging is tailored to each audience, and organisations are speaking to their audiences too. Using our data we identified two key groups to target:

- Online users: Given that Action Fraud data indicates that victims of online scams skewed relatively young, with 50% aged between 20 and 39 years old, there's a clear need to raise awareness of the issue with this group. This was achieved through digital campaigning with a particular focus on social media, as nearly 98% of 16-34 year olds using social platforms (with Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter and Facebook the most popular sites)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Adults' media use and attitudes 2022, Ofcom

- Doorstep targets: In contrast, people reporting doorstep scams, such as door-to-door sales and bogus tradesmen, tended to be older. 48.5% were over 60, and 35% were over 80. Only 9% were under the age of 30. Messaging to them should include non-digital channels, including face-to-face engagement and traditional media, as they're less likely to be online or use the internet (data suggests that 40% of people aged over 70 don't use or have access to the internet<sup>2</sup>).

## Our campaign approach

As Covid-19 restrictions were still in place during SA21, this year we shifted the campaign to a hybrid approach of face-to-face and digital campaigning. As demonstrated in case studies below, many local Citizens Advice offices engaged in local campaigning events, in-person meetings with partner organisations and face-to-face conversations with stakeholders. In addition, our digital campaigning packs allowed us to reach online consumers across the country.

This hybrid approach allowed us to reach our target audience and meet the goals of our Scams Awareness campaign. However, due to this continued change in approach, some outcomes from previous campaigns won't be directly comparable to this year's campaign.

## Campaign performance

Our KPIs for the Scams Awareness 2021 (SA21) campaign were:

Measure	Target	Result	Met objective ?
Organisations participating	450	<b>512</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>
Consumers reached through face-to-face campaigning	10,000	<b>22,100</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>
Contacts to the consumer service	5% increase	<b>13% increase</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>
Contacts to the scams action service	5% increase	<b>23% increase</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>
Reports to Action Fraud	3%	<b>12% increase</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>

<sup>2</sup> Use of Communications Survey: Digital Exclusion Analysis (2020)

Unique visits to relevant Citizens Advice advice pages	15% increase	<b>7% increase</b>	<b>Not met</b>
Media and local news coverage	70 media pieces	<b>30 media pieces</b>	<b>Not met</b>
Number of unique downloads of campaign resources.	5,000	<b>12,225</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>
Public support from MPs	25 MPs	<b>21 MPs</b>	<b>Not met</b>

## Significant Impacts

### More organisations took part in this year's campaign

During this year's Scam Awareness Fortnight, 512 external organisations took part in the campaign, an 8% increase from last year. This is in addition to the 187 local Citizens Advice offices across England and Wales that also took part in the campaign.

The participation of external organisations is important as it allows us to:

- Expand the campaign's reach through partners' social media, online and face-to-face channels
- Partner with local organisations to increase impact in the community
- Reach different demographic groups that might be unique to a partner organisation

### We reached more people through face-to-face campaigning

This year we saw a 119% increase in the number of people reached through face-to-face campaigning during the fortnight, estimated at 22,100 people. This is a significant achievement, as Scams Awareness 2022 aimed to have a fully hybrid approach between online and face-to-face delivery.

Having the opportunity to reach more people through face-to-face campaigning allows us to communicate our scams advice with consumers that might not have an online presence.\*

## More people were getting in touch about being scammed and seeking advice online

- The Citizens Advice online advice pages on scams had **29,219 page views** during the fortnight - a 7% increase compared to the fortnight before. While this isn't as big an increase as we aimed for, it's still a significant rise, and we will review how we can improve this further in future
- The core scams advice pages saw a significant increase in unique page views compared to the same time period the fortnight before:
  - "Report a scam" (7%)
  - "Get help with online scams" (76%)
  - "Advice on scams" (386%)
  - Scams Awareness Fortnight (89%)
  - "Check if something might be a scam" (260%)

\*Please note that all face-to-face campaigning was conducted following government COVID-19 guidelines

- This suggests that while it's important to help consumers identify scams, once this has been done they're looking for support and clear, tangible actions they can take. There's also a clear interest in help with online scams specifically

## News Coverage

The campaign received widespread media attention, with national and local coverage throughout the fortnight. In total, there were 30 items of national and local press coverage.

## Scammers using cost of living crisis to target people - here are the most common tricks

According to Citizens Advice and the Consumer Protection Partnership, scammers have been targeting people using methods such as email and text messages - and claiming they can offer their victims refunds and rebates.

© Monday 13 June 2022 11:16, UK



File pic: iStock

National coverage was across a range of newspapers targeting different audiences, including: Sky News, The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Daily Express, The Sun and many broadcast interviews discussing the topic. This was a good spread of outlets, helping to maximise our reach across different audiences.

For local media, template press releases were provided to partners and local offices ahead of the launch to help promote the campaign. These received good coverage across the country, featuring in a variety of local and regional media.

## Social Media Coverage

Although this year's campaign had a strong focus on face-to-face campaigning, we continued to emphasise the importance of digital campaigning in order to spread our messages online, reaching one of our core target audiences of younger adults, given their high usage of social media.

### #ScamAware

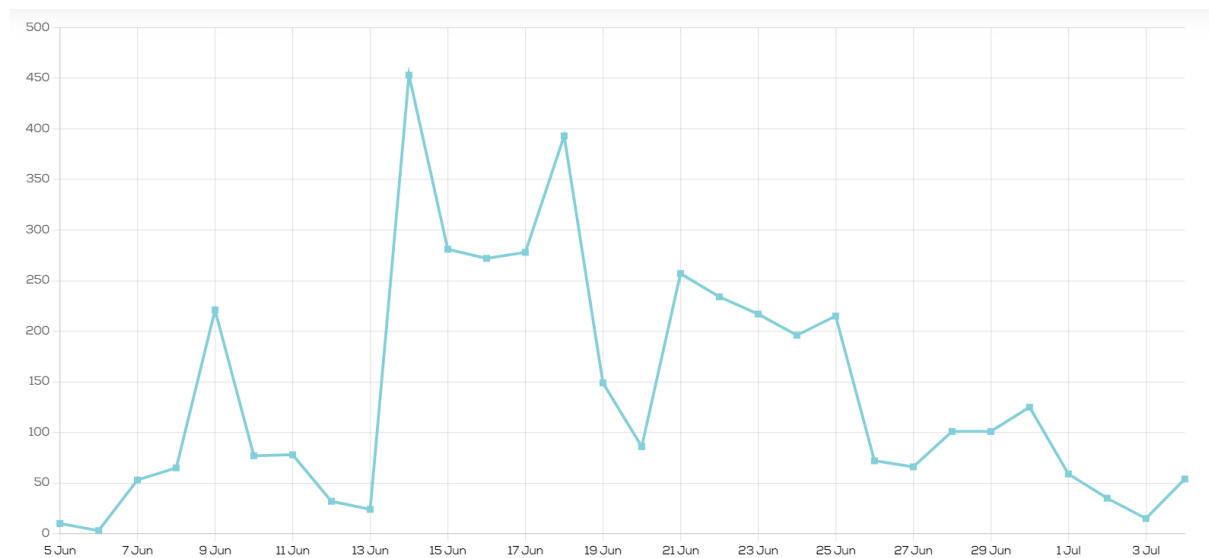
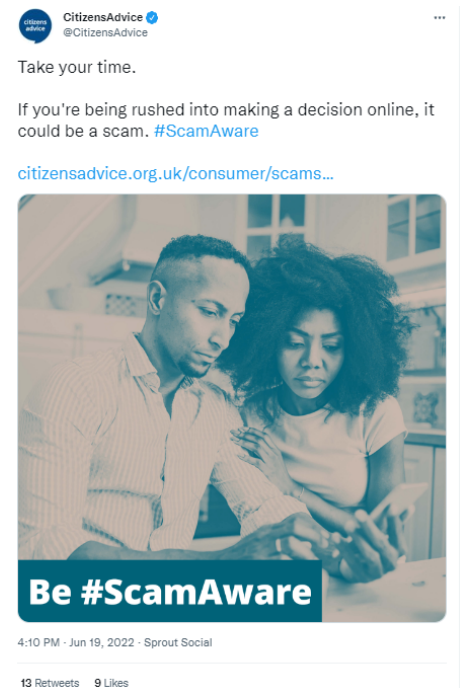
We encouraged partners to post the key campaign messages on social media throughout the campaign using the hashtag #ScamAware. To support this we created a social and digital toolkit, including template posts, an interactive quiz

and guidance to create your own content. We also posted advice content, media coverage and the quiz across our own channels.

On Twitter, there were **5,553 tweets** using the hashtag #ScamAware. These had a potential reach of up to **8.5 million people**.

**2,124 contributors** tweeted the hashtag during the campaign, including many with large numbers of followers. Notable examples on Twitter include @WestMidlandsPolice account (500k followers), Jess Phillips MP (570k followers) and Which? (115k followers).

Social media monitoring shows the use of the hashtag #ScamAware spiking across Twitter during the campaign, most notably on the launch day. However, usage and engagement of the campaign hashtag was strong throughout the fortnight.



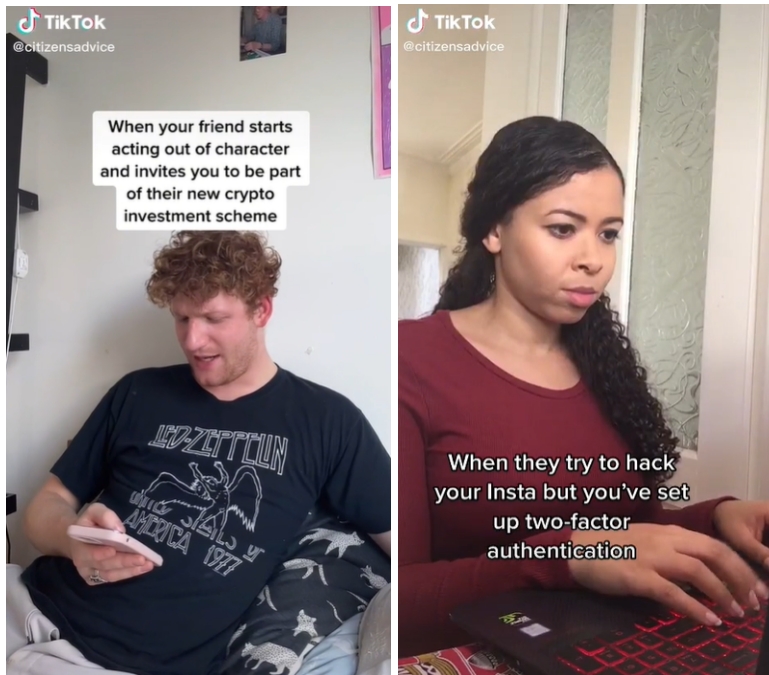
More broadly across social media channels, including Facebook and TikTok, SA22 content received just over **10,000 engagements**, from likes, shares and comments.



## TikTok

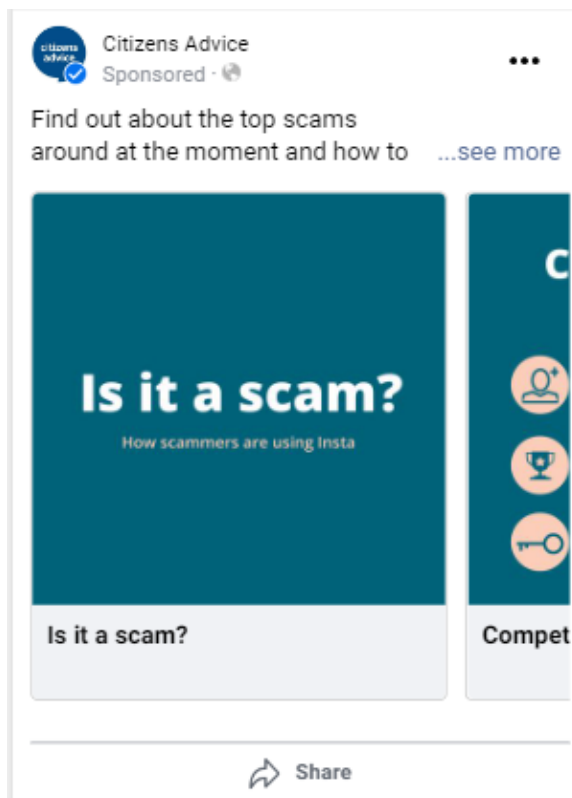
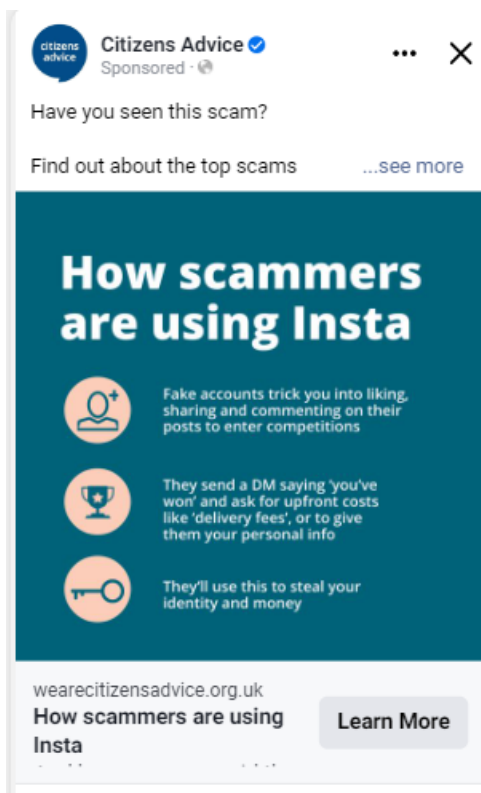
Given last year's success, we continued to promote SA22 on TikTok, a social media platform that is particularly popular with younger audiences. This was an important way we could reach this target demographic.

While there were only 2 posts, the videos were viewed 5,196 times. These were encouraging metrics, and suggest there is more we could do on TikTok.



## Paid social media promotion

This year Citizens Advice received charitable vouchers for paid social media promotion, allowing us to reach our target audiences through campaign ads on Facebook and Instagram. With the paid social media activity, we reached over **5.3 million people** and our content was seen over **7.2 million times**. This activity also saw **11,514 clicks** to scams advice pages on our website.



## #ScamAware Quiz

Following last year's successful pilot of a 'How #ScamAware are you?' quiz, we ran another interactive quiz as a way to have more sustained engagement with our audiences online. The quiz received just over 100 responses, significantly less than last year's. As a learning outlined in sections below, we believe this is due to a lack of time to promote this resource.

## MP Engagement

An email was sent to all English and Welsh MPs to raise awareness of the campaign and encourage them to get involved through their local partners and on social media. The email included a link to our campaign webpage, a link to our campaign briefing and a link to sample social media posts.

Responses from MPs were positive, with politicians from across the spectrum providing support to the campaign through their social media channels and in their local press.

*"Scammers are ruthless and will truly exploit people however they can and are quick to pick up on situations that make people vulnerable. Pretending to be from energy companies promoting good deals is just one way scammers are targeting people. It is*

*not always easy to spot a scam but Citizens Advice provides an Online Scams Helper if you are not sure and want to check. Please remember, if it's too good to be true it probably is."*

**Mims Davies MP, on her official website<sup>3</sup>**

*"Scams are crimes that can happen to anyone so it's vital that we raise awareness of what to look out for. I want my constituents in Mansfield and Warsop to have the knowledge and confidence to be able to report scams and safeguard themselves and others from these crimes. As a result of coronavirus, scammers are exploiting the financial pressures that people have been put under so it is more important than ever to ensure the public are on the lookout for potential scams."*

**Ben Bradley MP, in the Mansfield, Ashfield and Sherwood News Journal<sup>4</sup>**

In total, 21 MPs engaged with SA22. Given the reach and authority of MPs, this was an important way to extend the reach of the campaign, using their platform to highlight our key messages to their constituents.

## Partner Evaluation Survey Findings

We sent out an evaluation survey to all partner organisations that took part in the campaign, receiving 69 responses. These survey results give us some insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign on a local level.

### Partnership working, with a focus on face-to-face campaigning

As in SA21 and previous campaigns, we emphasised the importance of partnership working to reach target audiences within the community and expand the campaign's reach. Overall, 65% of partners we surveyed said they worked with other organisations for the campaign. These partnerships were formed between a wide variety of organisations, including local Citizens Advice, Trading Standards offices, foodbanks, police forces, councils and local community groups.

As face-to-face campaigning was still limited during SA21, this campaign emphasised the importance of non-digital activities to reach all our target audiences. Overall, 61% of partners engaged in face-to-face campaigning. Partnership working and face-to-face campaigning provide invaluable links to people in the community who might be under-represented or marginalised. In

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<sup>3</sup> [Mims Davies MP supports Scam Awareness Fortnight](#)

<sup>4</sup> [MP backs Scams Awareness campaign](#)

particular those who are digitally excluded. Some examples of this in action can be seen in the case studies section below. With many local offices reporting positive results, this is something we would encourage more of in future campaigns.

## Campaign materials

Once again, we received good feedback from partners on the campaign materials we provided this year, and they were widely used. From partners surveyed, 62% found the materials provided very useful, while 29% finding them somewhat useful.

Regarding our digital campaigning packs, 94% of partners made use of the social media resources, 89% used the template tweets provided, while only 21% shared our Scam Aware Quiz. As outlined as a learning in the section below, the resources provided with sufficient anticipation for the campaign were more widely shared, while other resources provided during the campaign were not promoted as much. Nevertheless, responses note that many partners with limited capacity to get involved in the campaign made use of the resources to help them get involved. This demonstrates the importance of the CPP providing easy to access and use resources for the campaign, allowing more partners to take part and raise awareness of scams.

Following last year's successful pilot, we also shared resources in different languages - specifically Polish, Arabic and Spanish. These were received positively, particularly as they helped them reach out to people who may be more vulnerable to scams due to language differences.

## Partner activities

Partners and local Citizens Advice carried out a range of campaigning activities to help spread the message of SA22 and empower consumers to take a stand against scams. Activities included:

- Distributing campaign materials to local organisations for display, including GPs, supermarkets, banks, libraries and community centres
- Sharing the media pack with other organisations, including local Councils and community groups, for them to share in their regular newsletters, websites and on social media
- Contacting elected officials, including MPs, councillors and Police and Crime Commissioners, to ask them to promote the campaign with their constituents
- Distributing leaflets through food bank parcels and Meals on Wheels

- Regular posts on social media to raise awareness of scams
- Writing local news articles and giving radio interviews to educate the public on how they can protect themselves from scams
- Holding online scams workshops with those in their local community

Many organisations used a combination of activities to help increase the reach of the campaign, making sure they were reaching audiences online and in person:

- Westminster Citizens Advice held two face-to-face events in local libraries across the borough, allowing the local office to spread our scams messages with clients outside of their client-base and with the wider public.

The local office engaged with 40 people directly, talking about how to identify a scam, where to report a potential scam and how to access further advice. This is a key example of non-digital campaigning to reach people who might not be online.

- West Berkshire Citizens Advice released a joint press release with their local Trading Standards Service, which included a quote from a local Councillor. The article was included in the Local Authority's Residents Newsletter and in the Penny Post newsletter, reaching over 28,000 consumers, many of whom are in rural villages.

Alongside this, the local office made use of the social media pack by posting key messages on Twitter, some original material with a local perspective and campaign graphics. They also shared these materials with the Local Trading Standards, who successfully shared on their own social media channels. This is a good example of hybrid campaigning, making use of local press and online platforms to reach different audiences across the community.

- Another example of sharing our target scams messages with key audiences can be seen with Citizens Advice Plymouth, who delivered three presentations to 90 students who don't have English as a first language, many of whom are refugees or asylum seekers. The local office developed presentations with easy-read content to be shared with non-English speakers and students with learning disabilities, sharing our scams messages and service information.

Once again, partnership working at a local level allowed our campaign to reach different people, making sure the community remains scam-alert and aware of Citizens Advice services.

## Partners spoke positively about the campaign, noting the impact that they felt it had in their communities:

- “It was really positive to reconnect with our local Trading Standards Service in an in-person event since Covid restrictions caused the cancellation of many community events. We also have better links with the press teams at our local council who used our publicity materials and helped us reach out to a wider audience. The Newbury Mayor and Councillors said that it was good to see us promoting such an important message.”
- “Having done research throughout the year I was able to include more organisations this year thus reaching a wider audience. On the whole generally well received and supported by local authority Councillors and all organisations.”
- “I gave a talk at a large local WI group. After the talk they put a very positive post on their facebook page with 500 followers, thanking me for attending and raising scams awareness, and encouraging their members to contact Citizens Advice if they are worried about a possible scam.”
- “Very positive relationship with Nationwide, which we can now build on. Good media interest in the campaign, especially radio.”
- “Lots of positive feedback from individuals who said how much they appreciated the guidance offered. We also included details of how to contact our advice service and several mentioned they would be in touch about other issues. We also sent articles for publication in local Parish Magazines and a couple of the editors responded very positively about the content.”
- “This was an opportunity for us to raise awareness with partners and stakeholders of the work of CA in raising awareness of Scams.”
- “There's been a good takeup of leaflets. People are very reluctant to admit they may have a problem. Our advisers are certainly more scam aware and some think they may have avoided scams as a result of the campaign.”

# Lessons going forward

1. This year we saw a smaller increase in the number of visits to our Citizens Advice pages, although engagement was still high. Previous years have demonstrated that it's important that people engage with our website content to find further information about scams, continue to protect themselves and remain aware. However, this year we equipped consumers with much of the advice they needed via printed resources, meaning they may have had less need to look for further information online.

**Recommendation:** Make it clear during the campaign planning phase what the intention of each resource is and review our KPIs in line with that. ie which resources signpost to content on the website vs which resources provide advice upfront to consumers.

2. When comparing this year's campaign with SA21, we saw a drop in the number of media coverage and MP engagement. Although many MPs shared our messages and we received some widespread media coverage, we believe that the number of these dropped due to political turbulence and other priority issues surrounding the cost-of-living crisis.

Despite some issues being beyond our control, such as the political developments during the campaign, it's important that our messages are shared by Parliamentarians, stakeholders and the media. We linked our campaign to the cost-of-living crisis, but not all of our scam-related issues contained this information. For future campaigns we should aim to make media outlets and stakeholders more aware of the link between our campaigns and the current events that occupy consumer's minds.

**Recommendation:** Highlight more explicitly the link between our campaign and current events when sharing our messages with stakeholders, MPs and media outlets. This demonstrates that our messages remain relevant to the current climate and worthy of sharing with consumers.

3. Some of the resources we used in SA22 didn't receive as much engagement as last year's campaign. This was seen with our #ScamAware Quiz, where consumers answer questions online to test their knowledge on how to identify and deal with a scam.

As outlined in our evaluation surveys, the reason for this drop in engagement was because the quiz was released without much anticipation, unlike the other resources we put out. Many partners had already planned or scheduled the release of their content, which meant that the quiz was not shared to full capacity.

**Recommendation:** In future campaigns, we should try and plan all our resources in anticipation, keeping open communication with partners about what to expect and when, the importance of sharing certain resources and how to reach more consumers.

**[citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk)**

Published October 2022

Citizens Advice is an operating name of The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Registered charity number 279057.