



ANNUAL REVIEW 2020 - 2021

Welcome to our Annual Review of Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering for 2020 - 2021

Our last year was a very strange one for us and for the world in that no one (or very few) were able to remember a pandemic of such magnitude that would shake the way we live to its roots.

The year has been amongst the worst for most in living memory, however under the leadership of Debbie our Chief Officer and her team our organisation has served the good folk of Kettering and Corby to the very best of their ability and the highlighted areas in this review prove that point. Our staff have dealt with their enquiries with professionalism, empathy, compassion and timeliness and for this we owe them a huge debt of thanks. Many thanks to all staff and volunteers for guiding this ship through such troubled waters.

I would like also to thank our many friends and supporters in both Borough Councils without whose help and support we could not exist and we look forward to working as closely with the new North Northants Unitary Authority for years to come.

My personal thanks must also go to our Board of Trustees who support the organisation, and me, to help steer it in its direction of travel for the benefit of its clients.

As we begin to reach the end of this pandemic, we will have even more challenges ahead due to the fallout both economically and in respects of people's mental health which our employees and volunteers are more than capable of helping in the future. I do know however that our fantastic staff and volunteers are up for these challenges and are eager to do all they can to ease the road ahead for our many clients.

I look forward to many more years of successful outcomes here at CASCK.

- Paul Clarke, Chair of the Trustee Board



OUR AIMS

Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering provides **free, independent, impartial, confidential** advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We **value diversity, promote equality** and **challenge discrimination**.

OUR IMPACT

OUR IMPACT ON DEBT

In 2020-2021 Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering helped our clients to manage debts totalling:

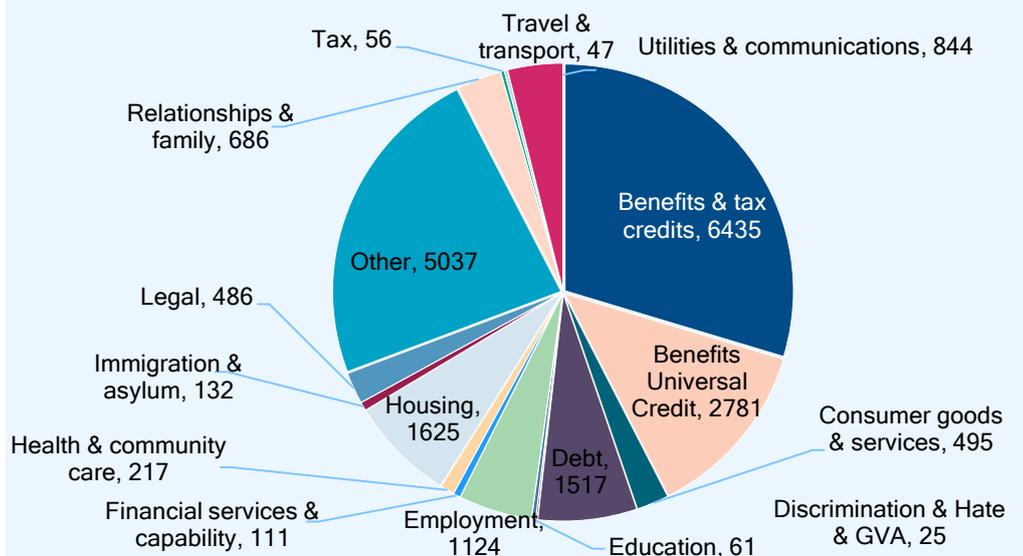
£1,904,385.20

OUR IMPACT ON INCOME

In 2020-2021 Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering generated an estimated income for our clients totalling:

£4,484,879.64

In the year April 2020 – March 2021, Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering assisted clients with 21,679 issues



THANK YOU to our funders and partners for your continued support

Our Funders: • Corby Borough Council • Kettering Borough Council • Northamptonshire Community Foundation • Henry Smith Charity • Big Lottery Homestart Corby • Kettering Community Unit • Awards for All • Citizens Advice • Big Local • CLS/Warm Homes Fund • Defra



Our Partners: • Corby Borough Council • CBC Housing Options • Kettering Borough Council • KBC Housing Options • Homestart Corby/Kettering • Community Law Service Northampton & County (CLS) • Big Local • Corby Voluntary & Community Services • Kettering Voluntary Network • JobCentre+ Corby • JobCentre+ Kettering • CENCA • Daventry Citizens Advice • Citizens Advice • Kingswood & Hazelwood Neighbourhood Centres • Kettering Community Unit Foodbank • Kettering Futures Partnership • Corby Foodbank

OUR WORK

We are a registered charity providing **free, independent, impartial, confidential** advice to everybody, regardless of race, religion, gender, disability or sexuality. We help our clients with issues that are important to them, from debt worries and benefit entitlements, to housing issues and energy advice.

Whoever you are, whatever the problem: We're here to help.

HOUSING

We advise clients on issues including:

- Eviction • Private Tenancies
- Social Housing Tenancies
 - Possession Orders
- Property Repairs • Homelessness

BENEFITS

We advise people on how to claim benefits to which they may be entitled.

We also assist clients with appeals and mandatory reconsiderations.

DEBT

We advise on managing money, negotiating with creditors, and choosing debt management options.

OTHER

We provide information on how to access specialist help and give advice to clients on a wide range of issues including: • Disputed tax • Energy • Immigration • Consumer • Legal • Education We also issue vouchers for local Foodbanks.

EMPLOYMENT

We advise employees and employers on issues including:

- Unfair Dismissal
- Employment Rights
- Discrimination • Bullying

RELATIONSHIPS

We give information on how to access legal help and give advice on practical solutions in response to issues such as:

- Neighbour disputes • Domestic violence
- School problems • Family breakups

COMMENTS FROM THE BOROUGH COUNCIL LEADERS OVER THE YEARS

With the change to North Northamptonshire Council commencing at the end of the year being reviewed here, we wish our past Borough Council leaders well in their future endeavours and thank them for their consistent and valued support. We also welcome and look forward to working with the new North Northamptonshire Council and both Corby Town Council and Kettering Town Council.

"The CAB is a valuable resource in the town" – 2014

"The CAB is helping our residents through difficult times." – 2015

"Corby Borough Council is proud to support and work in partnership with the bureau." – 2016

"The CAB are based in the Corby Cube which allows us to have a stronger working relationship" – 2017

"Corby Borough Council would like to thank and congratulate CAB for yet another successful year in providing extremely valuable help and advice to Corby's community" – 2018

"We are extremely pleased to work closely with CAS and hope to continue this relationship in order to provide Corby residents with extensive, confidential and impartial advice that they need." – 2019



Cllr. Tom Beattie

"The CAS has helped residents through a number of difficult situations" – 2020

- Councillor Tom Beattie,
Leader of Corby Borough Council

"A place where people can share their problems and expect to get very good support in solving them" – 2014

"The CAB continues to be a very important part of our Local Strategic Partnership Team" – 2015

"I am pleased and proud to have the CAB on our team." – 2016

"I congratulate them on their successful year and continue to look forward to working with them in the future." – 2017

"I am pleased that they are an active member of our Local Strategic Partnership Team, I believe coming together in this way helps solve problems." – 2018

"The work CAB does along with their other third sector partners is increasingly important" – 2019

"With the changes that are happening in North Northamptonshire it is important that we continue to work ever closer with the CAB." – 2020



Cllr. Russell Roberts

- Councillor Russell Roberts
Leader of Kettering Borough Council

OUR TEAM

NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS' WEEK

We held our annual Volunteers' Week celebration via video call on 3rd June 2020

During the year 2020 – 2021, volunteers' week fell during the height of the Coronavirus pandemic, and this meant finding a way to safely celebrate the efforts of our Volunteers.

A "Virtual Coffee and Cake" event was held via videocall on Wednesday 3rd June 2020 at 12:30pm. All Volunteers, Trustees and Staff were gifted with home-made scones, jam, biscuits, a 'warm hug in a jar' candle and a card to express our gratitude for their continued support in the unprecedented times we were facing.



How much do our volunteers mean to us?

Over the past year, our team of valued and skilled volunteers have donated

£142,510

worth of time and effort to help us to help the local communities we serve.

Our volunteers represent the diverse communities we live in and reflect a wide range of different backgrounds, ages and experiences.

VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIAL

Since March 2020, when volunteers were asked if we wanted to work from home – who knew that it would be well over a year before any talk would take place about even the possibility of returning to the office at some point in the future.

So, with a lot of support from management, supervisors and our fellow workers, and with flexibility on our part, we volunteers have adjusted our patterns of work to remote working from home, and the months have flown past.

Some benefits of working from home have included the gratitude of the clients, that they are still able to access our services albeit over the telephone; and the joy of working with a dog at my feet (sometimes even on my lap!!).

Disadvantages? Trying to get my home printer to scan and print efficiently (there have been a few swear words!!); I have missed the face to face contact with the clients, the office staff and other volunteers; and the noise generated by the dog when the doorbell goes (all those home deliveries!!) and he just won't stop barking!! Apologies were offered to the clients if this happened during their telephone appointments!!!

- Sally Cunningham, Volunteer

We would like to give sincere thanks to everyone, both volunteers and paid staff who work at our Corby and Kettering offices. They provide a first-class service to the residents of Corby, Kettering and the surrounding villages:

Adrian, Alex, Amy, Anne, Babs, Charlotte, Christopher, Clare, Debbie, Dorota, Emma, Fiona, Jane, Jasdeep, Jess, John, Joy, Julian, Katherine, Karen, Katie, Keeley, Khadija, Lesley B, Lesley T, Liam, Lorraine, Lynn, Margaret, Michelle, Mike, Pattie, Paul C, Paul T, Pav, Pete, Rachael, Ruth, Sally, Sukhy, Tina, Tracey, Trish, Vinny.

OUR CLIENTS

COMMENTS FROM OUR CLIENTS

"Wouldn't even know where to start without your help"

"Just talking is a weight lifted"

"I can't thank you (Rachael) and Pete enough, I'm so grateful for all the help you've given me. I'm so thankful for everyone at Citizens Advice; for all you do for other people."

OUR CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY CARRIED OUT IN OCTOBER 2020 SHOWED US THAT:

98.8% of clients said they were happy or very happy with the information and advice they received.

94.2% of clients said that their personal wellbeing has or will improve as a result of approaching us for help with finding a way forwards in resolving their issues.

100% of clients said they were happy or very happy with the service that they received.

RESEARCH & CAMPAIGNS

Nationally, Citizens Advice see two million people every year, and have a closer understanding of the problems that people experience than any other organisation. Your local charity, Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering know which policies are working and spot emerging issues early, in order to influence policy makers and services to bring about change that will positively impact the lives of people both locally and nationally.

LOCAL RESEARCH & CAMPAIGNS

Citizens Advice Corby & Kettering have identified many emerging issues within our communities in the past and have actively, and successfully collected evidence for these issues from our clients in order to help individuals effectively. We support national campaigns and locally promote awareness of the issues identified and evidenced across the country; such as the national Citizens Advice "Scams Awareness" campaign.

Going in to the coming year, we have restructured our Research and Campaigns team and plan to work even harder to address the issues facing people in our communities. We continue to work closely with our clients and our partners to ensure that people in our towns and surrounding areas are not disadvantaged by emerging issues that have the potential to impact their daily lives.

NATIONAL RESEARCH & CAMPAIGNS

Over the years Citizens Advice have campaigned on a range of different issues in order to improve the policies and services that affect our clients. These are just two of the campaigns we are most proud of:

Universal credit

What was the problem?

We were concerned that low income families on universal credit were likely to see support for childcare costs decrease from a maximum of 95 per cent to 70 per cent. This would mean that most low waged parents with young children wouldn't be better off in work.

What happened?

The Government announced it would implement one of our key recommendations to increase the support available for childcare costs from 70 per cent to 85 per cent.

Legal Aid reform

What was the problem?

Reforms to legal aid meant that more and more people could not find help when they needed it most. We were concerned that further reforms would put access to justice for ordinary people at risk.

What happened?

We campaigned to influence two Ministry of Justice consultations on transforming legal aid and judicial review and secured key concessions on a number of important issues.

SERVICE AVAILABILITY

KETTERING OFFICE

Opening Hours	Monday - Friday 9:00am - 2:00pm
Address	Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road, Kettering, NN15 7QX
Telephone	01536 482281
Email	volunteerdevelopment@casck.co.uk

CORBYP OFFICE

Opening Hours	Monday-Wednesday 9:00am - 2:00pm (Specialist appointments available Thursdays and Fridays)
Address	The Corby Cube, Parklands Gateway, George Street, Corby, NN17 1QG
Telephone	01536 265501
Email	volunteerdevelopment@casck.co.uk

NATIONAL ADVICE LINE

Telephone	03444 111 444
Available	Monday – Friday 10:00am – 3:00pm

LOCAL WEBSITE

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/corby-kettering

OUTREACHES

Outreach Locations: • Rothwell Library •
Desborough Library • Burton Latimer Library •
Kingswood & Hazelwood Neighbourhood Centres

STATEMENT FROM THE CHIEF OFFICER



In these unprecedented times, CASCK has continued to be there to provide the help and support needed to help people move forward. We succeeded in continuing to provide a seamless service throughout, with everyone moving to work remotely from March 2020. We encountered challenges along the way but as usual, the team found a way to

help everyone who approached us and we maintained our exemplary record in achieving 99% satisfaction in our client survey and a commendation in the House of Commons from our local MP, Philip Hollobone. I knew we had a great team, passionate and dedicated, but during the pandemic, they really have gone over and above to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people we serve – I am beyond proud of every single one of them! So, I must give a very heartfelt, personal thank you to all of the team, Trustees, Staff and Volunteers for rising to the challenges we have faced. Thanks too to all of our funders who have allowed us to adapt our services during the pandemic and all of our Partners, who too have adapted their services to continue to help others.

We know that the future is uncertain and there will be more challenges to come with people facing new issues brought about by the pandemic but we are ready to serve and will continue to deliver positive outcomes for those that need us.

- Debbie Egan, Chief Officer