



IMPACT REPORT 2023/24

# Helping clients find a way forward for 85 years



Test Valley

# Introduction

- Citizens Advice Test Valley provides services across the Test Valley with offices in Romsey and Andover as well as providing advice and support across other locations in the heart of the communities that it serves.
- We currently have a team of 44 volunteers supported by 16 paid staff members (8.65 fte)
- Compared to last year our client numbers  28.5% and clients receiving emergency / crisis support  30%.
- We could not do what we do without our incredible team of staff, volunteers and trustees – thank you to each and every one of them.
- Our advice service has never been more needed.
- **THANK YOU TO ALL OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

# What we do

Citizens Advice Test Valley's aims:

- We provide free, independent, confidential, and impartial advice
- We provide advice fit for the future – we'll be there for when people need us in the ways that help make the biggest impact
- Close the gap – we'll end disparities in access experienced by marginalised people.
- We will take early action – to prevent more people reaching crisis by addressing problems as they happen.
- We value diversity, and will promote equality and challenge discrimination.

# Our Commitment

*We will use all our resources to continue to improve the quality and accessibility of the Citizens Advice service, ensuring non-discriminatory treatment within the service for clients, staff and volunteers and by outside agencies. We aim to become a stronger champion for equality.*

We offer our advice by drop-in, telephone, email, and can offer face to face and telephone appointments.

Many of the issues we help with can be very complex or clients will present with multiple issues. We often work with our clients over weeks or months to help move them forward.

In 2023/24 we helped

- 34% of clients over the phone
- 39% by email
- 22% face to face
- 5% other (letter)

# Our Strategic Statement

*Helping the People of Test Valley Overcome Their Everyday Problems' – The Five 'A's*

## **Advice and Support**

We listen with empathy to empower clients with practical advice and advocacy. We are FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, IMPARTIAL and INDEPENDENT.

## **Appreciating our People**

We recruit, train, and invest in our team to motivate and skill them to deliver for our clients within a positive culture.

## **Accessibility**

We provide an inclusive service for all. Offering a wide range of communication channels including face-to-face, telephone, e-mail, web chat, and translation services where required.

## **Agility**

We respond to evolving client needs by implementing change and innovation.

## **Awareness in Test Valley**

We promote our service and purpose to our local community and other local organisations.

# Our Impact

 **6,548** clients

 **15,548** issues

 **18,281** activities

## Top 3 Issues

- 1) Benefits and Tax Credits
- 2) Housing
- 3) Charitable Support and Food Banks



**£453,159** in financial gains for clients, including:



**£25,144** in debts written off

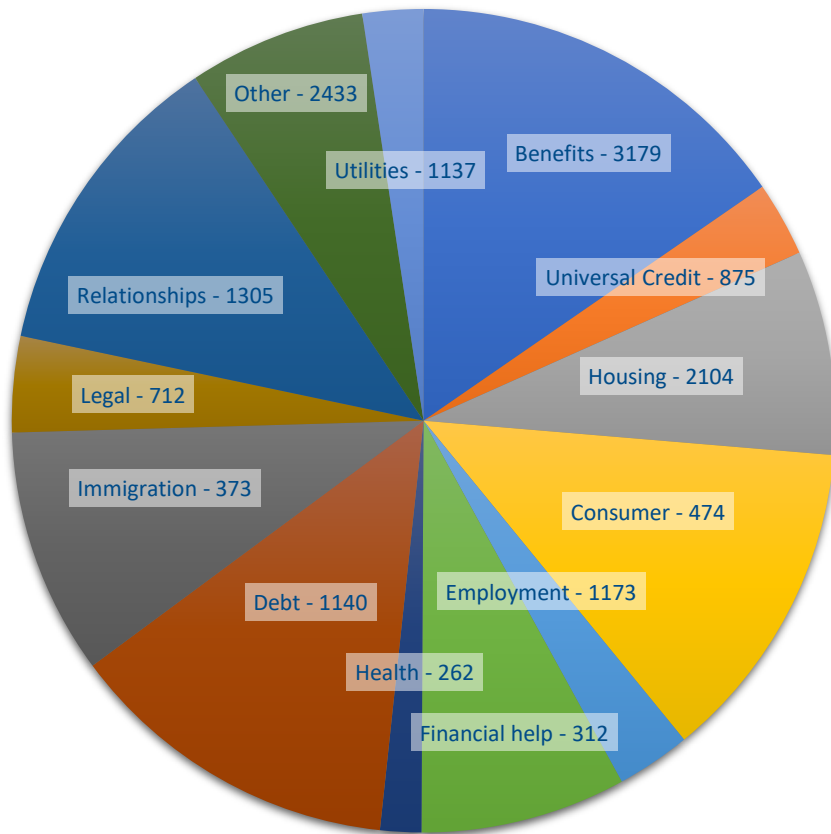


**£321,331** in income gain



**£106,684** in re-imbursments & miscellaneous

## Issues we have helped with in 2023/24



Last year, we saw 6,548 people about 15,548 issues – a 30% increase from the previous year.

We gained £453,159 for our clients in unclaimed benefits or by helping them have debts written off.

# OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteer roles are varied and rewarding, and our volunteers enjoy being able to make a valuable contribution and positive impact on people's lives.

We currently have 44 volunteers working with us, including 4 recent trainees – we are always looking for more to join our team.

**Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation.**

This year our trained volunteers gave us **£424,889** worth of their time to help deliver our services.

The average cost to train a volunteer in their first year is about £1,000 but this is a small amount compared to the value they give back to the community.

## What our volunteers say:

- ❖ I look forward to coming to work and feel able to ask for assistance if necessary. I am able to ask for help when needed.
- ❖ The staff are always welcoming and there is always a good chat. They are very supportive about how we are all feeling. Working at Citizens Advice is always a good experience and I feel good at the end of the day, even if I have not been able to help everyone. So inclusive and welcoming, very professional and well organised.
- ❖ CATV has supported me working from home and has a complete understanding of my ailments. However annoyed I get with myself the team are always supportive and understanding and help me manage my own expectations.

# What our clients have said about us:

"The first person I spoke to was very understanding of the issue I was faced with and offered logical advice on the first steps to take, this advice ultimately solved the issue."

"Excellent service from a knowledgeable & compassionate lady who was able to allay any fears I may have had."

"I find the CAB very helpful. I have been using them for many years and am always happy."

"The service is great and always happy to help and support. They take your problems seriously and make sure you get good result. Nothing to improve. Excellent service."

"They were very friendly and helpful. They helped put me at ease."



# Our projects

## Romsey Foodbank Caseworker

As well as helping with people at the foodbank, offering help and advice on surviving through the cost of living, we also used this role to help supply energy grants that were available to us through Hampshire County Council. Over 300 clients were supported with energy giving around £93,000 worth of help.

In total we helped 457 clients at the foodbank with food and energy and advice.



The main demograph looking for support though our foodbanks was 30-34 year olds and 50-54 year olds.

## Andover Foodbank Caseworker

We have a similar project set up working with the Andover Foodbank. Initially, with support from Test Valley Borough Council, we had an 8-hour caseworker located at the Foodbank. We have now been able to increase this to 20 hours over 5 days. We hope we will secure funding from the Trussell Trust for the next two years. In the last year we have helped over 150 clients with nearly 300 issues



# Thank you



We work in partnership with  
TVBC  
Aster  
Andover Foodbank  
Romsey Foodbank  
Mind  
Purple Oak  
Andover BID  
SSAFA (Hampshire)  
Jobcentre Plus  
Unity  
Whitchurch Town Hall  
Citizens Advice Hampshire  
Wessex Cancer Support  
Macmillan

We support the Andover Charities

# What's next?



## Better visibility of our strategy

So you know why we're doing what we're doing in Test Valley



## Recruitment drive

For trustees and volunteers



## Reporting our success

Celebrating the impact we're having  
(at our AGM on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024)



## Sharing it externally

Promoting the service, attracting funding and encouraging support

# Who are we?

## Our trustees:

Stephen Bowden (Chair)  
Steve Hart (Treasurer)  
Alexandra Gladwell  
Elizabeth Leather  
Katie Gray  
Roger Clift  
Linda Thorpe  
Victoria Martin

## Our staff:

Ange (Chief Officer)  
Tom  
Mary  
Sue  
Lucille  
Laura  
Manders  
Niki  
Graham  
Mandy  
Jack  
Caroline  
Helen  
Judith  
Jo

## Our volunteers:

Sue	Paul	Alison
Brian	Dee	Barbara
Adele	Dave W	Howard
Judi	Sheila	Rhod
Heather	Ruth	Nina
Sonia	Stephen	Reg
Nigel	Martin	David Q
Jenny	Mary	David T
Julie	Nancy	Helen G
Ann	Graham C	Judith F
Marian	Jan	Helen W
Sarah	Jane	Andrew
Arabella	James	Michaela
Jasmin	Liz	Patricia
Tony	Frank	

# Citizens Advice Test Valley

## Citizens Advice Test Valley

### ANDOVER OFFICE

1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
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### ROMSEY OFFICE

The Former Magistrates  
Court  
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Romsey  
SO51 8AQ

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Our registered office is 1st Floor, Chantry House, Chantry Way, Andover SP10 2LZ