

Our impact in 2022/23

“Helping the people of Test Valley overcome their everyday problems”



Test Valley

# We are Citizens Advice Test Valley

## Message from the Chair

It is once again my privilege, as Chair of the board of trustees of Citizens Advice Test Valley, to offer a brief introduction to this report.

CATV is a registered charity, formed in 2014 by the joining together of the previously separate Romsey and Andover offices, to provide a first-class free advocacy and advice service to the residents of Test Valley. It does so with the encouragement and substantial financial backing, by way of discretionary grant funding, of Test Valley Borough Council, for which we are extremely grateful.

We are a strategic partner of TVBC in helping those within the borough whose need for support remains as significant today as it has ever been. Whilst it may be thought, with some justification, that we live in beautiful and relatively prosperous part of the country, many residents have continued to experience extreme difficulty in dealing with the pressures that massive increases in accommodation costs and food and fuel prices have heaped upon them. Within CATV our advisers provide help and advice every day, face to face, by telephone, by email or video-chat, on issues of debt management, housing rights, employment rights, family breakdown and, increasingly, entitlement to financial support at local and national levels.

CATV also works with other support organisations to make the very best use of the limited resources available to charities generally. We are collaborating with the Andover and Romsey foodbanks to have an adviser on site at set times. We are providing dedicated debt advisers in Test Valley under a national scheme being managed in the county by New Forest Citizens Advice. We provide an outreach service in Whitchurch with financial support from Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council. Importantly, we liaise continually with Citizens Advice at the national level to maintain standards of best practice in the training of our people and the delivery of advice to those who desperately need it.

I am very grateful to my colleagues on the board of trustees, all volunteers themselves, for their support, hard work and undimmed enthusiasm in successfully steering the charity through increasingly difficult waters.

On behalf of the board of trustees I wish to express our deep gratitude to our volunteer advisers for their dedication and professionalism in every aspect of their service to our community. They are supported by our Chief Officer, Ange Moon, and her team of paid staff who regularly go way beyond what might reasonably be expected of them to ensure that a professional and highly effective advice service is delivered in ways that are best suited to the many and various needs of our clients.

For as long as the need for that advice exists, CATV will continue to provide it.

Stephen Bowden - Chair

# Who are we?

We have two offices one in Romsey Town Centre and one in Andover Chantry Centre. We also have Outreaches at Whitchurch and both Romsey and Andover Foodbanks.

We have 15 paid staff working across the offices, we have 45 volunteers helping the local community with their problems, we support home and hybrid working.

Our trustee board is made up of 10 skilled experienced people  
The whole team brings a lot of experience to their individual role and all live locally within Test Valley or neighboring authorities.

# Who are we?

## Our trustees:

Stephen Bowden (Chair)

Andy Gunn (Vice Chair)

Steve Hart (Treasurer)

Stella Coulthurst

Alexandra Gladwell

Elizabeth Leather

Katie Gray (nee Dutton)

Roger Clift

Linda Thorpe

Cllr Sandra Gidley (co-opted from TVBC)

## Our staff:

Ange (Chief Officer)

Tom

Mary

Sue

Lucille

Laura

Manders

Niki

Graham

Mandy

Jack

Susan

Caroline

Helen

Judith

## Our volunteers:

Sue

Paul

Alison

Brian

Dee

Barbara

Adele

Dave W

Howard

Judi

Sheila

Rhod

Heather

Megan

Ruth

Sonia

Marian

Reg

Nigel

Martin

David Q

Jenny

Mary

David T

Julie

Nancy

Helen G

Carol

Graham C

Judith F

Marian

Jan

Joan

Sarah

Jane

Helen W

Arabella

James

Andrew

Jasmin

Liz

Stephen

Tony

Frank

Sarah

# What we do

Citizens Advice Test Valley's aims:

- To provide the advice people need for the problems they face and
- To improve the policies and practices that affect peoples' lives.

We provide free, independent, confidential, and impartial advice. We value diversity, 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.

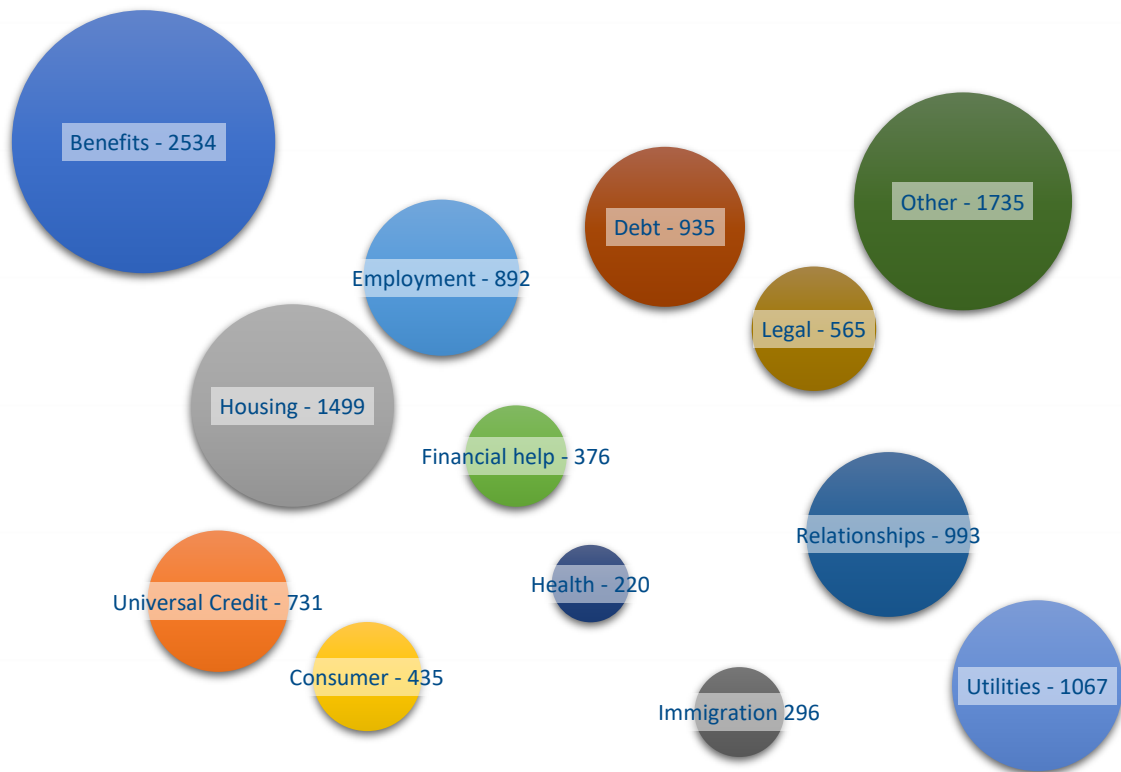
# How we help

We offer our advice by drop in, telephone, email, webchat and can offer face to face and telephone appointments. We have technology to carry out video interviews when required and, in some circumstances, carry out home visits

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 2022/23 we helped  
32 % of clients over the phone  
46% by email  
16% face to face  
6% other (letter, video call, web chat)

## Issues we have helped with in 2022/23

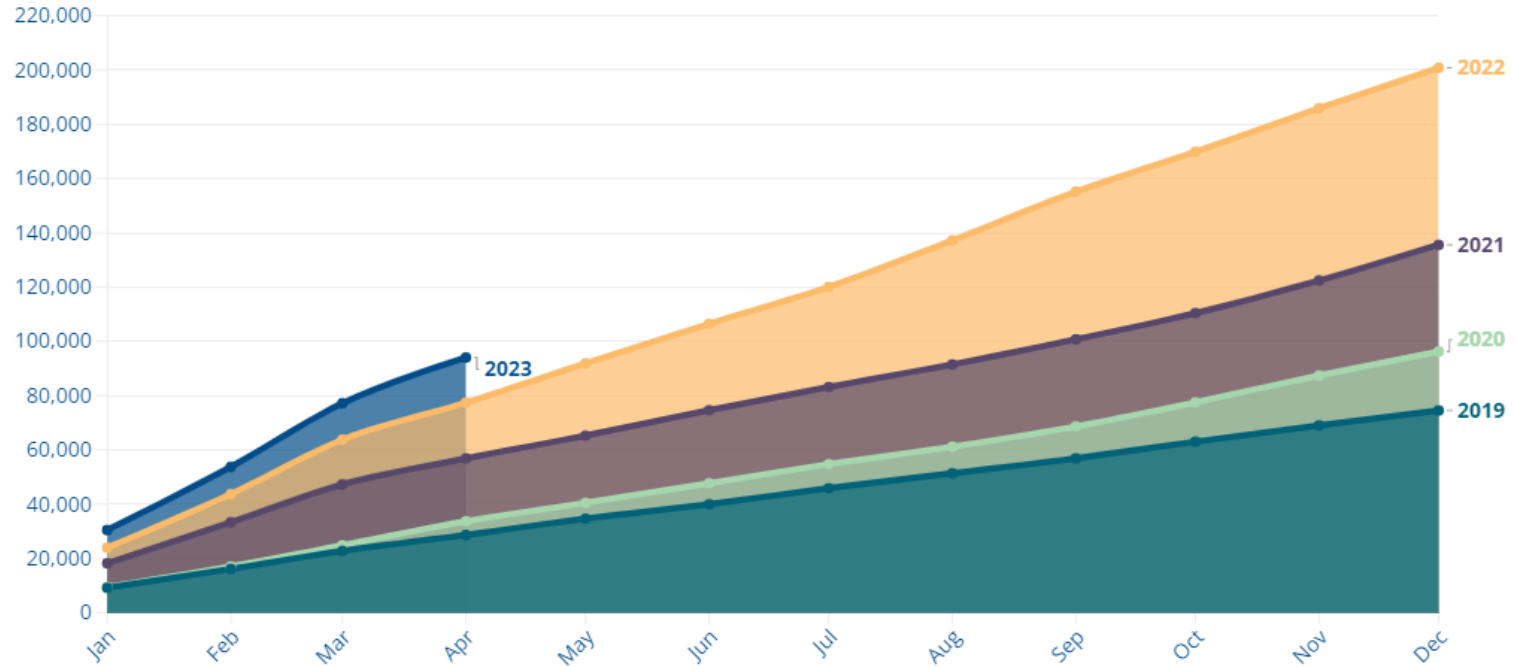


Last year, we saw 4,290 people about 11,419 issues.

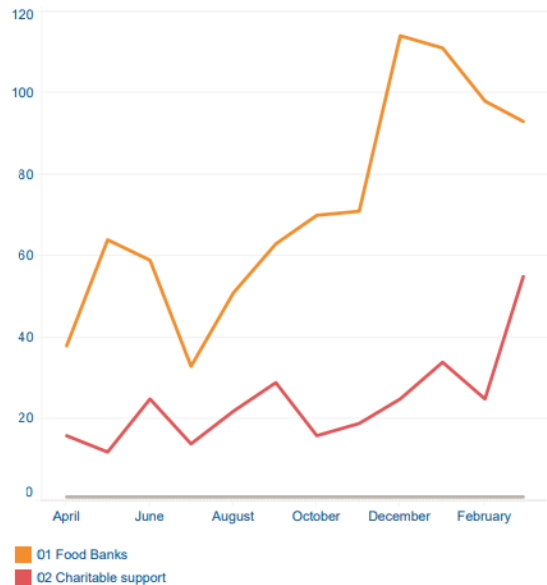
We gained £346,561 for our clients in unclaimed benefits or by helping them have debts written off.

# People Citizens Advice helped nationally with crisis support

- The cost-of-living crisis shows little sign of slowing down
- Crisis support includes food bank referrals and emergency charitable support.



# People CATV helped locally with crisis support



A graph showing the increasing number of clients coming to us for charitable support in 2022/23.



Over the last year, we have been able to access funds from Hampshire County Council to help clients with the cost of energy for heating their home.

This funding has allowed us to help 456 separate clients secure vouchers of £147 each, to assist with payment of gas or electricity bills. Providing £67,032 of additional support for the local community during 2022/2023.



# 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 39 volunteers working with us and were joined by 6 new volunteers in 22/23 - 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 **£453,657** 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 clients have said about us:

- ❖ "They were very friendly and helpful. They helped put me at ease."
- ❖ "I find the CAB very helpful. I have been using them for many years and am always happy."
- ❖ "The adviser was very friendly, and her attitude was very positive. She made me feel really confident on the next steps I should take forward."
- ❖ "I was made aware of other entitlements my former employer may have overlooked."
- ❖ "I think you have done marvelously."
- ❖ "Needed advice around a delicate situation & the adviser did all she could to get the best outcome and get me on the right track."

# Our projects

## Romsey Foodbank Caseworker

In 2022 we received funding from the Trussell Trust to offer a 20-hour caseworker role located within the Foodbank. This has proven very successful in helping vulnerable clients as they seek emergency help. The cost-of-living crisis has impacted lots of people meaning the help we offer has become even more crucial.

In 2022/23 we helped with 503 issues and helped clients gain £84,241 in benefits and debts being written off.



## Andover Foodbank Caseworker

As the Romsey project has been so successful, we have set up a similar project working with the Andover Foodbank. With support from Test Valley Borough Council, we have an 8-hour caseworker located at the Foodbank. This began in January, and we have already helped 119 clients in the first 3 months.



# Our resources

- As a **CHARITY** our funding is critical to provide our invaluable service to our local community.
- We are incredibly grateful to Test Valley Borough Council for our generous grant each year but we also do our own fundraising to boost our finances. We welcome donations and any other support available.
- Our website has links to our Donate button.
- Our other invaluable resource are our volunteers and we are always looking to expand the team. Check out our website about how you can volunteer with us.

# Our Strategy Statement for 23/24

## ‘Helping the people of Test Valley overcome their everyday problems’

**Advice and Support** (*2023 Focus*) — 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** (*2023 Focus*) — 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.

# Thank you



We work in partnership with  
TVBC  
Aster  
Andover Foodbank  
Romsey Foodbank  
Mind  
Purple Oak  
Andover BID  
SSAFA (Hampshire)  
Open Sight  
Deaf Plus  
Jobcentre Plus  
Unity

We support the Andover Advocates and  
Andover Charities

# Citizens Advice Test Valley

## Citizens Advice Test Valley

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Andover  
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Romsey  
SO51 8AQ

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