

Our impact in 2016/17

The difference we make to Central Bedfordshire



**citizens
advice**

We are Citizens Advice in Central Bedfordshire.

Every year thousands of people come to us for help solving their problems.

This means we're an important part of the community, with a credible understanding of local needs.

We use this to tailor our services and help improve local policies and practices.



£1.598m saved by government and public services last year
- £4.35 for every £1 invested in our service



This is Karin

Karin is an example of one of the people we helped.

Last year, we saw 7132 people about 26960 issues.

Karin's story shows how we help people solve their problems, and why this is important.



What we do

We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships and consumer rights.

Sometimes people have more than one issue they need help with.



Karin was single and expecting her first baby. She was a Housing Association tenant in a 2 bedroom property which she shared with her brother but he had moved out.

As a result, the housing element of her Universal Credit was reduced and she began to accumulate rent arrears.

In order to make ends meet, she was cutting down on household essentials including food and the HA was threatening eviction.

How we help



Ian, a volunteer adviser, helped Karin with her problem. He helped her to complete a Discretionary Housing Payment form to cover the shortfall in her rent until her baby was born.

People access us in different ways:

- 59% face-to-face
- 34% by telephone
- 7% by email

We can deal with most of the issues people come to us with, tailoring our advice to their needs.



Ian offered Karin debt advice to manage her rent arrears. This stopped the Housing Association from threatening to evict her.

Together, they worked out a budget to help Karin with other debts and with budgeting advice Ian helped her to manage balancing her expenditure against her income.

Our advice is effective

Problems don't happen in isolation and can have a severe consequences. Solving them stops these situations escalating.

We help thousands of people like Karin - 77% say that they couldn't have done it without us.



7 in 10 people
are helped to solve
their problem

Slide 7

- 1** **Change to Nina**
Hazel Robertson, 08/09/17
- 1** **Good spot!**
Sian Whyte, 08/09/17

The difference this makes

The wider impact of advice - what we achieve as a result of solving problems and providing support - is just as important.

82% say advice made a difference to their lives.



Our advice helped stabilise Karin's financial situation.

Her anxiety reduced, and she felt able to take control of her situation. She felt better prepared for managing the costs of her baby as a single parent.

She also felt more confident and knowledgeable about handling similar problems in the future.

Our impact



7 in 10 people

felt less stressed,
depressed or anxious



Nearly 1 in 2

had more money or
control of their finances



2 in 5

had a more secure
housing situation



Nearly 1 in 2

felt their physical health had
improved



3 in 10

found it easier to do their
job or find a job



Nearly 1 in 2

felt they had better relationships
with others



3 in 5

found it easier to manage
day-to-day

Why fixing problems matters

If left unsolved, problems don't just affect the individual - they affect this community.

Solving them creates considerable value to society.

- **9 in 10 people** we help say that their problem negatively affected their life
- **2 in 3** say they had difficulty knowing who to contact or how systems work before advice
- **1 in 3** come to us when they needed to take action urgently

*Outcomes and impact research,
2017*

Our value to society



For every £1 invested in our service in 2016/17, we generated:

£1.598m
in savings to
government and
public services
(fiscal benefits)

Total: £1.598m

£8.291m
in wider economic
and social benefits
(public value)

Total: £8.291m

£10.475m
in financial value to
the people we help
(specific outcomes to
individuals)

Total: £10.475m

How we calculate our financial value

It's impossible to put a financial value on everything we do - but where we can, we have.

We've used a Treasury-approved model to do this.

- Keeping people in employment or helping them back to work
- Preventing housing evictions and statutory homelessness
- Reducing demand for mental health and GP services
- Improving mental wellbeing and positive functioning
- Improved family relationships

From our robust management information, we've also separately considered the financial benefits to the people we help.

Our value to this community

Our savings to the public purse include:



£222,276 saved by local government, through reducing homelessness

Maximising the income for those we help prevents more costly intervention.

This helps reduce financial difficulty, promotes inclusion and benefits the economy.

This is only one fraction of our true value.

We also:

- help clients negotiate local processes, such as welfare reform changes
- help local authority rent and council tax arrears to be rescheduled, and reduce the associated administrative costs



This is Ian

The wider value of volunteering

People like Ian give their time, skills and experience to enable us to reach as many people as we do.

There are also has considerable benefits for them too, such as improved employability.

This year our trained volunteers gave up £644k worth of volunteering hours to help deliver our services.



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The wider value of volunteering?

Sian Whyte, 07/09/17

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