

Citizens Advice Shepway

Performance Report to Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Period: 1/4/21 to 31/3/22



| | Outcome | Performance to date | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|----------------|------------|------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|---------|-----|------|----|-------|----|----------------------|----|--------------------|----|----------|----|------------|----|--------------------|----|-------------------------|----|-------|----|
| 1 | <p>Outcome 1 – To provide free, independent and confidential advice service primarily to people who live or work in Shepway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1800 clients advised and assisted 3600 issues dealt with including Benefits, Debt, Employment and Housing | <p>2625 clients provided with information/advice/assistance.</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Issue Distribution Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Issue Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Universal Credit</td><td>30%</td></tr> <tr><td>Benefits & tax credits</td><td>14%</td></tr> <tr><td>Housing</td><td>13%</td></tr> <tr><td>Debt</td><td>9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Other</td><td>7%</td></tr> <tr><td>Relationships/Family</td><td>8%</td></tr> <tr><td>Discrimination/GVA</td><td>6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Consumer</td><td>6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Employment</td><td>6%</td></tr> <tr><td>Immigration/Asylum</td><td>4%</td></tr> <tr><td>Health & Community Care</td><td>1%</td></tr> <tr><td>Legal</td><td>2%</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>We advised and assisted clients with 4258 different issues, the largest of which were in relation to Universal Credit.</p> | Issue Category | Percentage | Universal Credit | 30% | Benefits & tax credits | 14% | Housing | 13% | Debt | 9% | Other | 7% | Relationships/Family | 8% | Discrimination/GVA | 6% | Consumer | 6% | Employment | 6% | Immigration/Asylum | 4% | Health & Community Care | 1% | Legal | 2% |
| Issue Category | Percentage | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Universal Credit | 30% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Benefits & tax credits | 14% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Housing | 13% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Debt | 9% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other | 7% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Relationships/Family | 8% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Discrimination/GVA | 6% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Consumer | 6% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Employment | 6% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Immigration/Asylum | 4% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Health & Community Care | 1% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Legal | 2% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | Outcome | Performance to date | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|-----|--|-------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-----|--------------------------|---------------------------|----|----------------|---------------------|----|------------------|---------------------------|----|------------------|--------------------------|----|------------------|-----------------------|----|--------------------------|---------------------|----|--------------------------|---|----------|---------------------|-----------------|-----|--------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access and referral to specialist Housing and Debt advice services currently funded via LAA and Money Advice Service funding to clients referred via the generalist service and from local Shepway agencies | Referrals to: LAA Specialist Housing Team – 85 Specialist Debt Advisers – 45 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 250 homeless preventions | <table> <tr> <td>Resolving Housing Benefit/UC housing element issues</td> <td>110</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resolving rent and service charge issues</td> <td>46</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mortgage arrears</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other homelessness work</td> <td>104</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>264</td> </tr> </table> | Resolving Housing Benefit/UC housing element issues | 110 | Resolving rent and service charge issues | 46 | Mortgage arrears | 14 | Other homelessness work | 104 | Total | 264 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Resolving Housing Benefit/UC housing element issues | 110 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Resolving rent and service charge issues | 46 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mortgage arrears | 14 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other homelessness work | 104 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 264 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening hours | Opening hours changed following the pandemic as face to face advice was suspended. We now offer telephone, email and face to face appointments Monday to Friday from 9.00 to 4.00. We prioritise face to face appointments to vulnerable clients and those in greatest need of assistance. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of paid staff hours worked | <table> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Breakdown of paid posts and hours:</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Role</th> <th>Hours</th> <th>Funded by</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Chief Officer</td> <td>37</td> <td>Partially funded by FHDC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advice Session Supervisor</td> <td>30</td> <td>Funded by FHDC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Legal Aid Solicitor</td> <td>37</td> <td>Legal Aid Agency</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Legal Aid Caseworkers x 2</td> <td>37</td> <td>Legal Aid Agency</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Legal Aid Administrators</td> <td>46</td> <td>Legal Aid Agency</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Money Matters Adviser</td> <td>14</td> <td>Rotary Club - Folkestone</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Training Supervisor</td> <td>14</td> <td>Partially funded by FHDC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Help to Claim/Universal Credit Advisers</td> <td>28 hours</td> <td>DWP/Citizens Advice</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finance Officer</td> <td>7.5</td> <td>Partially funded by FHDC</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Breakdown of paid posts and hours: | | | Role | Hours | Funded by | Chief Officer | 37 | Partially funded by FHDC | Advice Session Supervisor | 30 | Funded by FHDC | Legal Aid Solicitor | 37 | Legal Aid Agency | Legal Aid Caseworkers x 2 | 37 | Legal Aid Agency | Legal Aid Administrators | 46 | Legal Aid Agency | Money Matters Adviser | 14 | Rotary Club - Folkestone | Training Supervisor | 14 | Partially funded by FHDC | Help to Claim/Universal Credit Advisers | 28 hours | DWP/Citizens Advice | Finance Officer | 7.5 | Partially funded by FHDC |
| Breakdown of paid posts and hours: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Role | Hours | Funded by | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chief Officer | 37 | Partially funded by FHDC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Advice Session Supervisor | 30 | Funded by FHDC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Legal Aid Solicitor | 37 | Legal Aid Agency | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Legal Aid Caseworkers x 2 | 37 | Legal Aid Agency | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Legal Aid Administrators | 46 | Legal Aid Agency | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Money Matters Adviser | 14 | Rotary Club - Folkestone | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Training Supervisor | 14 | Partially funded by FHDC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Help to Claim/Universal Credit Advisers | 28 hours | DWP/Citizens Advice | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Finance Officer | 7.5 | Partially funded by FHDC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Outcome 2 – Maintain a baseline of 20 volunteers to ensure provision of the generalist service. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | Outcome | Performance to date |
|---|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 3 volunteers available during opening hours to provide services including face to face advice. | <p>We have previously always met this target but with changes in service delivery due to the pandemic and with a lot of our volunteers being within vulnerable groups regarding Covid we have only had limited volunteers within the service this year.</p> <p>We currently usually have two volunteers per session and are currently running a recruitment campaign to recruit more. We have put additional resources into training and recruitment and have a 3 day per week Training Supervisor.</p> <p>Where volunteers have not been available paid staff have delivered and covered services to guarantee service delivery and ensure contract requirements are met.</p> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of volunteer staff with hours worked. | <p>Changes in working and the necessity to shield has meant that our volunteer contingent has reduced during the pandemic. We currently have 5 volunteers active for 40 hours each week. As stated we are currently working to recruit and train increased numbers of volunteers so this should increase over the next few months.</p> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training sessions undertaken by staff and number of trainees. | <p>There is a Training and Development Plan for staff and volunteers within the organisation. This is reviewed annually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainee Volunteers undertake Citizens Advice accredited training programmes which include on the job training, e learning and formal training courses. • Qualified volunteers and staff training is reviewed each year and training needs are assessed in order to meet individual, post and compliance requirements. • All staff and volunteers complete training on GDPR annually. • Staff also completed training in other areas including Homelessness and Housing, Debt & Insolvency, Welfare Rights, Equality and Diversity. |
| 3 | Outcome 3 – Working with partners to develop potential improvements in service provision and delivery. | |

| | Outcome | Performance to date |
|---|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate fundraising activities identified, including working with local partners to secure additional funds. | <p>We are involved in a range of fund raising activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding was again awarded for April 2021 to March 2022 from the DWP via Citizens Advice national for a Help to Claim project which provides a 0.8 FTE worker to support people to claim Universal Credit. • Funding through Folkestone Rotary Club for a 0.4 FTE Money Adviser will continue until at least December 2022. • Legal Aid Agency funding continues until September 2023 when it will be due for renewal. A contract management review carried out by the LAA at the end of 2021 found we were fully compliant with all requirements. • Funding awarded from the Community Justice Foundation for £27,500 up until 31/3/22 to support delivery of our specialist housing advice services and to make up the shortfall in revenue caused by the pandemic. Further funding of £14,500 awarded for 2022 to 2023. • We regularly assess funding opportunities and where appropriate will apply. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway Voluntary and Networking Forum established & biannually | Regular attendance at Shepway Voluntary Sector Group meetings. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepway CA Agency referrals process established and promoted. | <p>We currently operate 2 specific referrals protocols/systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Housing contract – referral system set up and promoted to a range of partners including F&HDC, Porchlight, Sanctuary Supported Living, Probation Service etc... referrals are made through completion and submission of a referral form providing details of clients, problem and eligibility for Legal Aid. • Money Matters – Folkestone – referrals can be made to this project from other local organisations including MIND, JCP, Rainbow centre and others. Referrals are dealt with within a maximum of 5 working days. |
| 4 | Outcome 4 – Monitor casework and enquiries with a view to identifying trends and policy issues to inform local, regional and national social policy through: | |

| | Outcome | Performance to date |
|---|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular reports on policy issues to Citizens Advice and local partners. | We submitted 43 policy reports to Citizens Advice national on a range of issues predominantly in relation to Benefits and Universal Credit problems. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of local Advice needs. | This was carried out in February 2022 and is attached – Appendix 1 |
| 5 | Outcome 5 – Measure client satisfaction to inform service delivery improvement plan by: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on responses to client satisfaction survey for the core advice service | Client feedback for the full year 2021 is attached in Appendix 2 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of formal complaints about Shepway Citizens Advice bureau | For the year 2021/22 we received 2 complaints, one related to access to the service and the other related to the extent of the advice we could provide as the enquiry was outside our usual enquiry areas which meant that we were only able to signpost the client to other organisations. Both were resolved by providing the clients with additional information. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other data which is mutually agreed for the purposes of performance measurement. | N/A |

Appendix 1 - Community Advice Needs Analysis

Measuring/ determining the need for advice

In assessing the actual and potential needs for advice in Folkestone & Hythe we have analysed our client and community profile information, and used available data on multiple deprivation as a way of determining advice need.

The Need: Geographical communities

The geography of Folkestone & Hythe, the nature of its communities and the levels of deprivation all combine to create a diverse pattern of need.

Folkestone & Hythe is a diverse district with the main towns of Folkestone and Hythe being in the East of the district with a predominantly rural environment in the west. Both areas have pockets of relatively high deprivation particularly in East Folkestone in the East and Lydd in the rurally isolated west.

As well as relatively high levels of unemployment compared with other areas in the South East average gross earnings are low. Gross weekly pay averages £607.80 in the Folkestone and Hythe which is lower than the South East average of £660.10 and the GB average at £613.10 (Nomis – ONS 2021).

Child Poverty

In the January 2021 KCC District Profile it was found that child poverty is at 20.2% in Folkestone & Hythe compared to 16.5% in Kent and 17 % in England.

Health & Disability

6.1% of Folkestone & Hythe residents describe their health as bad or very bad. This is higher than Kent (4.9%), south east (4.1%), and national (England: 5.3%) comparisons.

Over 20% of those that live in the district indicated that their day-to-day activities are limited by a long-term health problem or disability. This is higher than Kent (16.9%), south east (15.1%), and national (England: 17.2%) comparisons. (Folkestone & Hythe Equality and Diversity Annual Report, published September 2019/KCC District Profile – version 4/1/22).

There are also high levels of mental health issues with 24% of those claiming Disability benefits doing so in the basis of their mental health (KCC District Profile – January 2021).

Domestic Violence

Folkestone & Hythe is the 4th highest district in Kent in terms of incidences in domestic violence, and we certainly see clients who have been victims of this.

(Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group/KCC/Kent Police)

The Need: communities of interest

In addition to the geographical areas within Folkestone & Hythe affected by deprivation certain groups of people experience deprivation more acutely than others, or experience discrimination and harassment because of their personal circumstances or characteristics in addition to the general economic deprivation experienced by the community as a whole.

We would identify the following groups as particularly affected:

- People from eastern European communities/Migrant workers;
- People suffering mental health issues;
- People living with alcohol and drug addiction;
- People living with long term limiting illnesses or physical disabilities;
- People who are rurally isolated;
- People in low paid or insecure employment;

Shepway Citizens Advice Client profile

We believe that our client profile confirms that we are reaching a wide range of different groups particularly those from the above groups.

Alternative sources of help

Shepway Citizens Advice is the principal provider of independent advice in the Shepway. Other voluntary and non-profit making organisations who give advice as part of their services are listed In Appendix 1. Most provide advice as one of a range of services to specific client groups.

Folkestone & Hythe has a relatively small number of solicitors per head of the population, compared to other similar sized areas.

Subject categories

A great deal of our work continues to be focused on 4 main categories of Benefits, Debt, Employment and Housing. Debt has significantly decreased due to cessation of creditor action during the pandemic.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Benefits (including Universal Credit) | 40% |
| Debt | 10% |
| Employment | 6% |
| Housing | 13% (This excludes issues under LAA housing). |

This is predictable given the levels of poverty and deprivation present within Shepway and the development of specialisms in these areas. We fully expect these to be the main subject areas required in any new geographical locations, and will form the basis of the majority of advice required by new communities of interest.

In recent year's advice for migrant, predominantly European, workers has increased significantly, particularly in relation to in and out of work benefits used to top up wages or replace them when jobs end and more recently to do with the changes in status associated with Brexit and the need to have settled status to be able to access benefits and services.

Demand for housing advice currently outweighs our ability to supply and we will look to increase capacity through increased personnel in the longer term.

Mapping current advice need

| Area or client group | Advice need | Provision | Gaps / barriers |
|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| Benefit claimants/ people on low incomes | Welfare Rights advice. | Basic generalist provision through core CA service as well as other organisations such as Age UK | Current provision does not meet need in terms of availability, accessibility, level and quality. |
| | Universal Credit | Help to Claim service from 1/4/19 to 31/3/22. | This provided assistance to people to secure UC entitlements but ended on 31/3/22. |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | Debt Advice | We have funding for a 0.4 day per week Money Adviser. | Additional resources required to ensure demand is met. |
| Marsh residents | Full range of advice services due to deprivation levels. | No quality assured advice provision in this area. We therefore guarantee appointments for clients to ensure access to services. | For CA and other advice services residents have to spend considerable time and money travelling to Folkestone. |
| Domestic Violence victims | Full range of advice services | One stop shop and generic advice services. | Accessibility needs to be increased in order to ensure the advice needed is provided. |
| European and other migrant communities | Full range of advice services with interpreting as required. | Generic services available. Previously LA funded a dedicated migrant worker but funding was cut. | Language issues and support with benefit advice/claims as well as rights under the settlement scheme. |
| People with mental health issues | Full range of advice services tailored to their needs. | General advice available through CA and other agencies including MIND etc.. | Current provision does not meet demand in terms of accessibility and level of assistance |

Unmet need

We believe that there is significant unmet need notably in areas of rural isolation, people who cannot access our services within our current opening times and those requiring home visits. We continue to be committed to looking at ways to increase accessibility to meet these needs.

Other areas for new development

- Statutory information or advice under new legislation and policy changes.
- The geography makes outreach an especially appropriate service method, but we continue to lack resources to deliver outreach sessions. As yet we have not identified any additional resources to deliver services in the Marsh area.

Service users' views on advice needs

National feedback is reviewed regularly and we will plan to do a local survey on user needs within the next few months.

Our diversity profile

We want to understand how well our service reflects our local communities. Our diversity profile below highlights key comparators.

Diversity Profile Comparison

| Gender | Community Profile | Client Profile | Shepway CA |
|---------|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| Males | 49.5 | 39% | 38% |
| Females | 50.5 | 61% | 62% |

| | Ethnicity | Community Profile | Client Profile | Shepway CA |
|-------|------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| | White: British | 91% | 84% | 87% |
| White | White: Irish | 0.7% | 0.5% | 4% |
| | White: Other White | 3% | 5% | 9% |
| Mixed | Mixed/multiple ethnic groups | 1.1% | 1% | 0% |

| | | | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|------|------|----|
| Asian | Asian/Asian British: Other Asian | 2.5% | 2% | 0% |
| Asian | Asian/Asian British: Indian | 0.4% | 1% | 0% |
| Black | Black or Black British: African | 0.3% | 1% | 0% |
| Other | Includes all other groups | 1% | 5.5% | 0% |

| Disability | Community Profile | Client Profile | Shepway CA |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| Disabled | 20% | 40% | 9% |
| Not disabled | 80% | 60% | 91% |

| Age | Community Profile | Client Profile | Shepway CA |
|---------|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| 0 - 19 | 21% | 1% | 0% |
| 20 - 29 | 10% | 12% | 4% |
| 30 - 39 | 11% | 20% | 13% |
| 40 - 49 | 12% | 23% | 26% |
| 50 - 59 | 15% | 26% | 22% |
| 60 - 69 | 13% | 15% | 13% |
| 70+ | 18% | 3% | 22% |

Even though our diversity in terms of ethnicity and age has increased it remains clear from the above that there are some areas where we do not fully reflect the make-up of our community with some groups such as within age and gender being significantly under or over represented.

How this analysis feeds into our strategic priorities/service development

We have analysed all the data described above, alongside available information from our stakeholders in order to plan our services.

We will also be open to taking on suitable emerging opportunities which are in line with our offering and overall strategic vision to ensure that they complement and enhance our service.

With the resources available to us, and taking into account all the factors above, we think we can offer the most effective service by focusing our attention on:

This year:

- Continuing to our succession planning ensures a seamless transition when people leave the service.
- Continue to look at ways to increase the diversity of our board to ensure it is more representative of the community.
- Increasing the number of volunteers in order to increase capacity within the core service.
- Work to continue to increase the overall diversity of our personnel to greater reflect the community we work in.
- Building capacity for longer term strategic aims through continuing to recruit and train additional volunteers as well as developing our existing staff and volunteers to take on different roles and increase skill levels.
- Maintaining our project funding through meeting all performance requirements.
- Proactively pursuing additional funding for Training and for subject specific areas such as Welfare Rights and Debt advice.
- Strengthening our Research & Campaigns work.
- Increasing our communications and raising our profile.
- Ensure that we meet the needs of those most vulnerable and in need of advice and assistance through working to increase the channels through which clients can gain information and advice initially focusing on:
 - Provision of face to face services where clients have difficulty accessing other channels.
 - Provision of other channels where face to face is difficult due to geography e.g. the Marsh area.

In the next 3 years:

- Continue to work to expand and strengthen our core services which are vital to the organisation's resilience and vital to local residents. It is also vital to the success of future projects as core services both support and feed into these more specific areas of work.
- Continue to work to fund other areas of work such as support to those most vulnerable specifically those with health issues and those who face issues such as domestic abuse.

Longer term:

- We will continue to monitor trends and emerging issues in order to respond to the needs of our communities and ensure the sustainability of the organisation.

Appendix 2

Client Feedback & Complaints Review – 2021

| | Positive responses |
|--|--------------------|
| How easy or difficult did you find it to access the service? | 76% |
| To what extent did the service help you to find a way forward? | 73% |
| To what extent is your problem now resolved? | 73% |
| How likely would you be to recommend the service? | 83% |

As we can see the results are generally positive though finding a way forward is much lower than national results. Locally the service has previously prioritised face to face services and has provided greater assistance to people than via telephone and email services are able to, so the changes in delivery may have had an effect. We will continue to monitor feedback and satisfaction levels in order to ensure improvements are made when necessary.

Comments from the national feedback include the following:

Just to say my problem is still ongoing but having Citizens Advice there has help me a bit but I am not a well person and this matter is going to take some time to sort out but knowing they are going to help me to the ends gives me some encouragement. Thank you.

Thorough in helping me take action.

I get anxious and it was great to go through the whole process on line and in email.

Still receiving good help and ongoing advice via telephone appointments.