

How we help people



**citizens
advice**

Sheffield

Introduction

Every week, Citizens Advice Sheffield helps hundreds of people and families with problems affecting their lives.

We provide information, advice, advocacy and support that helps people to resolve these problems. This report is about the people we help, the services we provide and the impact we have.

We help about 21,500 people a year. Many of them are vulnerable and poor. They are often ill or disabled.

We have continued to improve our services. Our new website provides much better access to high quality self help information. Our Adviceline phone service operates from our new contact centre and is now answering over 160 calls every week.

We have introduced new “initial checks” so that we can find out, quickly, what help people need, and so offer this help more effectively and efficiently.

We are offering advice in 10 food banks.

We receive referrals from among others, Building Successful Families, Ambition Working, Building Better Opportunities, and NHS cancer, spinal injury and mental health services.

Our advocacy service helps people affected by the Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

We have continued to campaign for better public policy. We have won two awards for our successful campaign to change the law about Personal Independence Payment for some terminally ill people.

Our 150 volunteers and 151 paid staff are the backbone of our service. They do a fantastic job, often in very challenging circumstances, going way beyond the call of duty to help and support people. We owe them huge thanks.

We have secured our grant aid funding from Sheffield City Council for the next three years. We are very grateful to the Council and all our other funders for their continued support, without which the vital services we provide would simply not be possible.

We would welcome your support – please become one of our “friends” or make a donation via our website.

Mark Gamsu
(Chair)

Andy Buck
(Chief Executive)

January 2017

Our impact

In 2016 we helped 21,500 people - 5 in every 100 adults in Sheffield.



1 in 3

people had never used our service before



44%

have a disability or long term health condition



31%

are from black or ethnic minority communities

We dealt with 65,000 separate issues.



1 in 5

people had difficulty affording fuel, food or housing



£4.3 million

of debt has been written off for our clients



£6.8 million

of income has been gained for our clients

The difference all of this makes.



3 in 4

people said we have made a positive difference to their lives



1 in 4

people said we have helped them improve their income



1 in 4

people said we have helped them understand their rights

Jackie's story

Jackie had to give up work because of several complex long term health problems. She was receiving Disability Living Allowance to help with her care and mobility needs.

Jackie was told by the DWP that she needed to re-apply for the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP). She found all the paperwork to be very confusing, and her anxiety and depression were exacerbated. She asked us for help.

The hardest part of the process was the assessment visit from ATOS.



"I had only come out of hospital the day before and was feeling really ill. We had prepared carefully for the visit but the assessor was rude and offhand.



There were many inaccuracies in his report. He said he had tested me walking upstairs - I live in a bungalow!



The result was that the mobility part of my benefit was removed. We could no longer afford the car we depended on for getting to hospital appointments."

Our adviser helped Jackie to challenge this decision. We explained how to gather evidence and how to ask for the decision to be changed.



"The adviser kept me in the loop all the time. This helped maintain my morale. My husband noticed that after I had talked to the adviser it was as if everything had turned round.

It took four or five weeks to get the decision changed. It has made a big difference."

Helping where it's needed most

We provide help across the whole of Sheffield. However, many more people from the more deprived parts of our city ask for help.

In this chart, the city's 28 electoral wards are ranked by the Index of Multiple Deprivation: Firth Park is the most deprived ward and Ecclesall the least deprived.

The chart shows the percentage of the adult population in each ward that we have helped. In 2015 we helped 7.7% of adults in Burngreave, compared with just 0.6% in Fulwood – a nearly 13 fold difference. There are similar differences for people with long term illness or disability, and for people asking for help with welfare benefits, debt and housing.

Ward	Index of Multiple Deprivation	ALL CLIENTS	Long term illness or disability	Welfare Benefits support	Debt support	Housing support
Firth Park		6.3	2.1	3.6	1.9	0.7
Burngreave		7.7	1.9	4.2	1.7	0.8
Manor Castle		7.2	1.9	3.9	1.9	0.9
Southey		4.8	1.6	2.9	1.5	0.5
Arbourthorne		5.0	1.6	2.6	1.5	0.6
Darnall		6.0	1.6	3.7	1.2	0.7
Shiregreen and Brightside		4.4	1.4	2.4	1.3	0.4
Gleadless Valley		4.9	1.6	2.5	1.2	0.6
Beauchief and Greenhill		4.0	1.3	2.0	1.1	0.4
Central		3.3	0.7	1.6	0.6	0.5
Richmond		3.6	1.0	1.9	0.8	0.3
Woodhouse		4.7	1.4	2.6	1.2	0.5
Walkley		2.6	0.9	1.1	0.5	0.3
Birley		2.9	1.0	1.5	0.8	0.3
Mosborough		2.7	0.8	1.3	0.7	0.3
Hillsborough		2.4	0.9	1.3	0.6	0.2
East Ecclesfield		1.6	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.2
West Ecclesfield		1.0	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.1
Stocksbridge & Upper Don		2.9	1.3	1.6	0.5	0.3
Beighton		2.4	0.8	1.2	0.6	0.2
Stannington		1.9	0.8	1.0	0.3	0.5
Nether Edge		2.5	0.9	1.2	0.4	0.2
Broomhill		0.9	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1
Graves Park		2.4	0.8	1.2	0.4	0.2
Crookes		1.0	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.1
Dore and Totley		1.5	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.1
Fulwood		0.6	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1
Ecclesall		0.8	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1

Richard's story

We have been providing the Pension Wise service for South Yorkshire since 2015.

We provide guidance about the choices people aged 50 and over have about their defined contribution pensions.

This is a free service provided by expert guiders.

Richard decided to find out more about his pension situation, and he was recommended to contact Pension Wise when he enquired about his state pension.



"I got an appointment close to where I live, which was very easy. Like many people I knew nothing about financial issues and had not got involved with my works pension.



All I knew was that my firm had changed pension providers. It was very reassuring to be able to talk to someone who was totally independent. The guider explained everything to me and I was able to get the gist of it very quickly.



When my firm had changed pension providers I had ended up with not one but two pensions. Like most people I had ignored pension letters and found them difficult to understand.



The fantastic news was that I had a total pension pot of £105,000 not the £60,000 I had thought!"

What people we help say about us

Always very helpful and reliable. I like knowing what time it will be open every week.

The advice worker was really helpful, and helped me with my PIP appeal.

Excellent service; wouldn't be able to survive without it. Thank you so much.

Very grateful for your help with re-instating my Carers Allowance payments.

You've relieved a lot of stress and money problems.

I am grateful for this service as it has been my only source of support.

I think the advice centre helps change people's lives and the advice workers do a great job.

Only place I can obtain advice in my mother tongue language and feel comfortable.

If there wasn't a Citizens Advice, I would be left flabbergasted and have nowhere to go!

Staff very friendly and helpful. Really appreciate it as I was really nervous in sharing my issue.

You could not have helped me more. I am really thankful that you exist. Thank you.

This service is very good, it has helped me out a lot with my problems when I most needed it.

Very patient, understanding. Took the time to hopefully help me achieve a more supported life.

The service has really helped me, while my wife has been very unwell and bedbound. The adviser has visited me at home.

Very helpful and knowledgeable, really helped us understand what we are entitled to.

Source: Citizens Advice Sheffield Client Survey 2016.

Naleli's story

Naleli is originally from Lesotho in southern Africa. She has been working as a nurse in the UK since 2005 and had become a British citizen.

She met her husband on a visit home.

They have a son who was born in England and a daughter who they adopted in Africa.

Naleli hoped to get visas for her husband and daughter so they could all live together in Sheffield, but the Home Office had refused her application.



"I was alone and finding it hard to cope. I found all the paperwork really difficult to understand. Someone had told me about Citizens Advice so I came and asked for your help."

We worked with Naleli to appeal against the Home Office's decision.



"It was a tough process but I got all the help I needed to put my case together, including background research about my culture which was really useful."



The visas were awarded and my family were reunited.



The help I had from Citizens Advice has been really great because in the end I've got my family with me!"

Our services

We provide...



Web access
to high quality self-help information



Phone access
to quick and convenient help



Face-to-face
help in 16 offices and 10 foodbanks



Specialist
help with housing, employment, immigration, finance & pensions



Advocates
helping people with mental health and mental capacity problems



Targeted help
for people with mental health problems, cancer, family difficulties and employment problems

Every £1 invested in our advice services generates at least...

£

£0.93

in fiscal benefits to the government

£

£6.21

in wider economic and social benefits

£

£11.47

for individuals through benefits gained, debt written off and other problems solved

Shelley's story

Shelley, a woman in her thirties with mental health and learning difficulties, was detained under the Mental Health Act in a specialist mental health unit.

An advocate worked with Shelley for several months, supporting her to understand her care and treatment as far as possible, to be involved in decisions, and most importantly to express her views to staff.



Shelley, who was very distressed on many occasions, had been due to attend a care programme approach (CPA) meeting on the unit to discuss her care with her doctor, nursing staff, and her social worker.



Her advocate was with her, and both were kept waiting for over an hour and a half, during which time Shelley became increasingly upset and distressed. The advocate checked a number of times and was told they would be invited into the meeting.

Eventually a professional who had attended the meeting came and told Shelley the meeting had been held without her, adding to her distress further.

The advocate used a 'non instructed advocacy' approach and raised a complaint on behalf of Shelley about this incident.

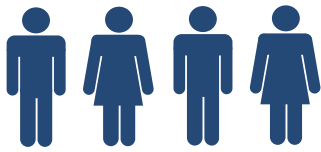


The complaint was partially upheld and a series of changes to procedure made to ensure that clients could more easily and safely access their CPA reviews, and to improve communication between staff, visitors and clients.

This also led to further training for staff at the mental health unit on the advocacy role.

About us

We have a dedicated team which includes:



151 paid staff



150 volunteers

11 trustees



30 locations

across Sheffield were used to deliver our services



116 training courses

delivered, including PIP briefings for other organisations



Working with 100s of partners and professionals

We are a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.



43 funders and donors
provided financial support in 2015-16



£3.5 million
in expenditure to run our services for 2015-16



85%
of our expenditure is on staff and volunteer costs

Our detailed trustees report and accounts are available on our website.

Free, confidential advice. Whoever you are.

We help people find a way forward with their problems and campaign on big issues when their voices need to be heard.

We value diversity, champion equality and challenge discrimination and harassment. We're here for everyone.

Citizens Advice Sheffield

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