

Our impact in 2021/2022

The difference our advice service makes to Sheffield



We are Citizens Advice Sheffield

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.

Our 4 service commitments:



Our services are accessible and available when needed



We support prevention and early intervention



We help people achieve the outcomes they want and which will have the greatest impact on their lives



We make the best use of our resources to make the greatest difference

Our advice

We provide free advice on the 5 main areas of law

- Welfare Benefits
- Immigration
- Debt
- Employment
- Housing



Our services

We deliver this advice through a wide range of services to reach as many people as possible

- Adviceline
- Hospital-based support
- Help to Claim
- Advocacy Hub
- Deaf Advice
- Consumer
- Mental Health
- Foodbanks
- Law Centre
- Pensionwise

And much more...

How we help

Many of our clients are vulnerable, for example due to their health or living arrangements, and facing really difficult situations.

Dana* is one of the people who turned to us last year.

Her story shows how we help people solve their problems and the positive impact this has on their lives.

Dana's story

Dana lives alone on a limited income.

She is unable to work due to multiple physical health issues including COPD, Muscular Dystrophy, Fibromyalgia, Osteoarthritis and mental health problems.

As a result she struggles to leave her home.

*name changed for anonymity



Dana's Story

Dana initially contacted Citizens Advice Sheffield in January 2021 for help getting a food parcel.

During her appointment, she mentioned a concern about her Personal Independence Payment (PIP) renewal.

CAS supported Dana to renew her PIP claim but her form went missing and her claim was closed.

The adviser helped Dana to submit a new claim but she was not awarded enough points in the assessment. The mandatory reconsideration was also unsuccessful so the adviser proceeded to appeal.

Dana had to rely on food banks throughout this time, she also faced challenges with her own mental health, had surgery and had to deal with her brother's funeral.



Dana's Story

After a further 6 months' of waiting for the tribunal hearing Dana **won** her appeal in April 2022 and was awarded around **£4,300** in backdated PIP.

This outcome is a huge success for Dana. She is finally given the money she was entitled to and no longer faces the enormous stress that comes with a benefits appeal.

As Dana's story demonstrates, people often come to us with multiple or complex problems.

We aim to provide a **holistic service** and can deal with most of the issues people come to us with, tailoring our advice to their needs.

We provide **follow up support**, including complex casework if it's needed to help people resolve their problems.

Wherever possible, we aim to **empower people** to find and use the resources to help solve their problems independently.



The difference this makes



The impact of our advice goes far beyond the financial outcomes.

The toll that living in debt or poverty can take on physical and mental health has been heavily evidenced.

The processes to resolve these problems are often lengthy and complicated, which can further add to the client's stress.

When a client's debts are cleared or their benefits appeal is successful, a weight is taken off their shoulders.

"It's taken a long time and hard work to resolve this issue and we would not have been able to do it without your expertise. It really has made a profound difference to the lives of X and X's family, including us. I can't thank you enough."

- Client feedback

"[I] can't express how much relief and support I felt being able to access the service and make [an] active decision on the best way forward for me. Exceptional service and very much appreciated."

- Client feedback

Sources: [JRF analysis of HBAI and FRS](#); [Jenkins et al 2009](#); [Lai ETC, Wickham S, Law C, et al 2019](#)



Our team

Citizens Advice Sheffield is made up of **169** paid staff and **51** volunteers, including trustees.

***“There is
always
something to
learn and I
love learning”***



Volunteering at CAS

Our volunteers have dedicated almost **7,600 hours** this year to helping our clients.

Volunteers contribute to many aspects of our service, including advice work, support services and research and campaigns.

What our volunteers have to say

"It makes you happy, the feeling that you helped someone, you can't compare that to anything else"

"When the pandemic hit and we all went into lockdown, volunteering with CA changed overnight...

Many clients suffered all sorts of additional difficulties in coping with everyday life. The DWP were faced with a massive backlog of appeals to process and naturally started conducting these over the phone as well. Suddenly, it became possible to attend appeal hearings by joining in on a conference call.

[This] certainly adds to the job satisfaction of the volunteer, to follow the process through to its conclusion. Previously, we would submit our arguments on paper and wait for the result, but now we can join in and see how the written submission affects the course of the appeal hearing."



The impact our volunteers have

John* is a pensioner with rheumatoid arthritis. He lives with his wife and relies on her for help as he struggles to walk moderate distances. With a progressive disease, he finds day-to-day life increasingly difficult.

John had been getting Disability Living Allowance (DLA) which included the use of a Motability car. However, when he converted to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) his claim was declined.

He submitted a mandatory reconsideration but this was unsuccessful.

"I find one of the most satisfying aspects of volunteering with Citizens Advice is when you can make a case for a client to successfully appeal an incorrect decision on a disability benefit."

John came to Citizens Advice Sheffield for help appealing this decision. He has severe mobility problems and he believed that the DWP failed to recognise this.

Our volunteer helped John to submit his appeal.

Although John had applied for PIP in October 2019, he didn't receive the original decision for 6 months. The appeal stage also faced several delays and didn't go to hearing until April 2021. As a result, John and his wife had gone 18 months without any DLA or PIP income and his Motability car had been taken away.

"The task before the tribunal was then to consider the state of the client's disabilities on the date of the original assessment almost 18 months before, and to do this over the phone without seeing the client. The evidence I had submitted would be crucial in assisting the tribunal to come to their decision. "

John was awarded the mobility component as an outcome of the appeal and was satisfied with the result. As he is now past retirement age, his only alternative for a new claim would have been Attendance Allowance which doesn't include a mobility component. He now has the option of applying for a review of his daily living if his condition further deteriorates.

Headlines: our advice services in 21/22



We have helped over
27,000 people



We have helped
with over **74,000**
different issues



Over a quarter of
the problems
people came to us
with were
considered 'urgent'

People access us in different ways



67%

by telephone



25%

by email



8%

by other channels,
including webchat and
targeted face-to-face

Who used our services in 21/22?



29% of our clients are from ethnic minority backgrounds



41% of our clients have a long-term illness or disability



57% identified as female
43% identified as male



Mental health was the number one health condition affecting our clients



86% of our clients are in the age range **25-64**

Measuring our impact



Welfare benefits remains our largest issue, accounting for **almost 57%** of issues



Over £11 million gained for our clients through unclaimed benefits



Debt was the second most common concern, accounting for **over 12% of issues**



Over £850,000 of debts written-off

Our service is responsive

The **Household Support Fund** was announced by the Government on 1 October 2021 to support vulnerable households to meet daily needs such as food, clothing, and utilities.

Sheffield City Council (SCC) were allocated over £5million to be distributed through small payments via an on-line application process.

As Trusted Assessors, **volunteers from Citizens Advice Sheffield** were able to support **454 digitally excluded clients** to successfully apply for this fund, achieving a total award income of **£250,000** with an average award of **£550***.

We also worked with SCC to implement a process for emergency applications, where clients were facing immediate crisis.

Our advice is effective



3 in 4 people

Found it easy or very easy to access our services




More than 8 out of 10 people

Were satisfied or very satisfied with how we handled their query and with the information and assistance they received



Nearly 9 in 10 people

Would recommend our services to others

A large, thick orange border in the shape of a speech bubble, with a tail pointing towards the bottom left corner, framing the text.

"I rate your services 5*. I will always recommend your services to anyone who needs it. Many thanks for helping our community access services."

Our advice is accessible


We continue to focus on how to reach people who face additional barriers.

We run a **Deaf Advice service** for **BSL users** and the Deaf community by video conferencing and face to face

We deliver advice in community languages through **bilingual advisers** and extensive use of **Language Line interpreters**.

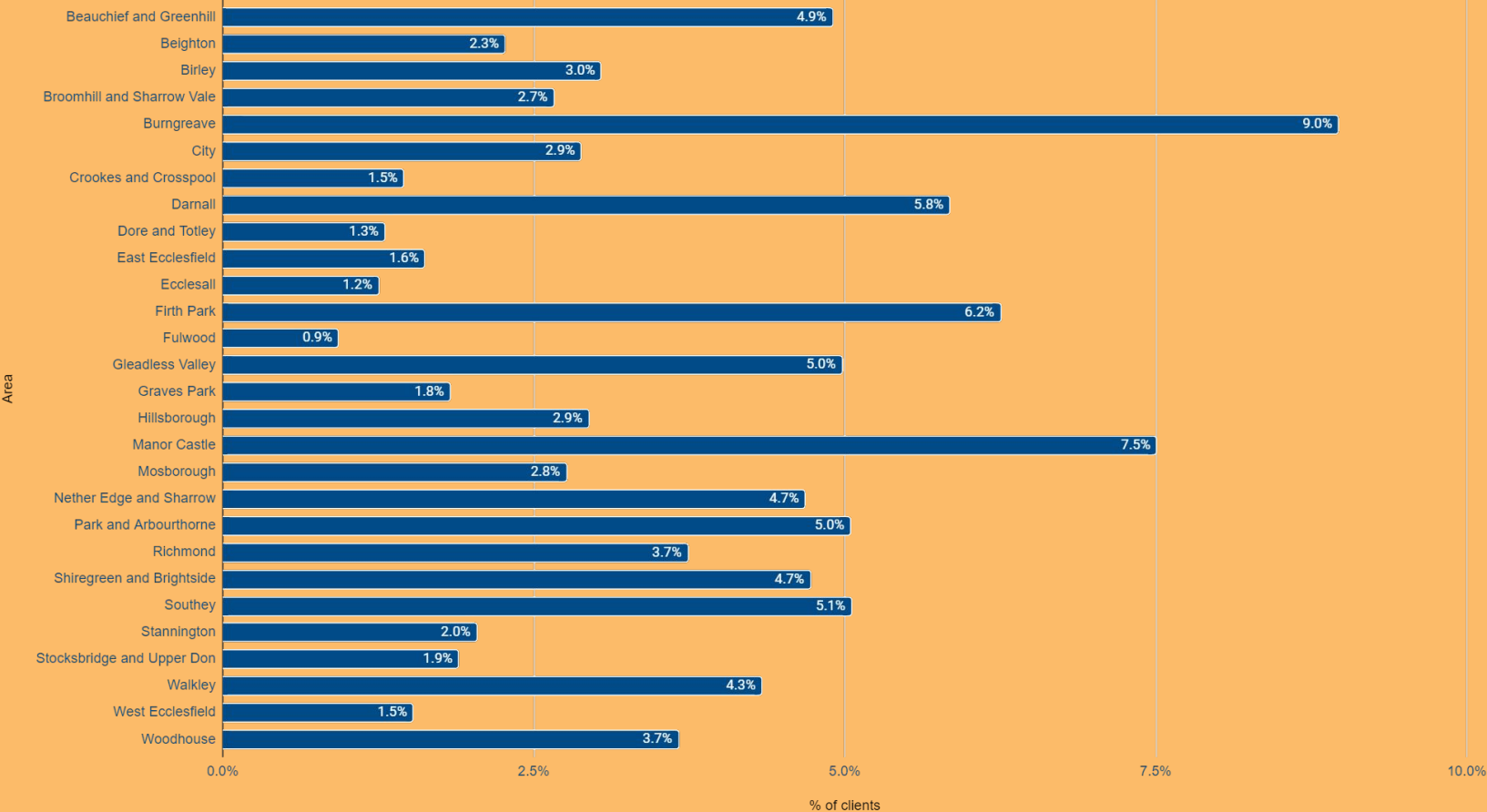
We have introduced **additional dedicated lines** for people who speak **Urdu/Punjabi, Arabic and Somali**.

We are in the process of **introducing an additional Cantonese/Mandarin line** for the **Chinese community**.



"100% service
from CAB for
deaf Sheffield"

% of Clients by Area



Our value to society

For every £1 invested in our advice service in **2021/2022**, we generated:

£2.51

in savings to
government and
public services
(fiscal benefits)

Total: £8,557,933

£20.64

in wider economic
and social benefits
(public value)

**Total:
£70,357,412**

£13.49

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

**Total:
£45,978,452**

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

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

Our value to the city

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**
- work with the local authority to help **improve their systems and processes**, such as the One Route In project

Our savings to the public purse include:



£688,278

saved by local government, through preventing homelessness and evictions

£1,666,863

saved by the NHS, through reducing use of mental health and GP services, and keeping people in work

Impact of Covid-19

Throughout 2021-22, Covid-19 caused ongoing disruption and challenges for our service and the people we help.

Our phone, webchat and online channels have proved to be an efficient and effective way to deliver quality advice to thousands of people.

We introduced **Community Access Points** and resumed targeted face-to-face appointments for our most vulnerable clients.

We have worked closely with new and existing partners to develop new ways to ensure those who need us the most can access our services.



Impact of Covid-19

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Sheffield City Council, via its COVID response line, direct people in food hunger to us so we can assess the causes of their food hunger.

Our close working history with food banks makes us the **best placed** to make the **most effective** referrals to one of the city's many food banks.



Community Access Points (CAPs) are now live in four venues in the city - touch screen video screens with the facility to share documents.

CAPs provide the opportunity for digitally-excluded people to meet remotely with an adviser. They require no special digital skills or know-how from the client.

CAPs are located in private spaces within familiar community venues.



Phone and Digital Advice

We now deliver the majority of our support via telephone and digital platforms, including email and webchat. This change, while initially prompted by the pandemic, has enabled us to dramatically increase the numbers of people we support and gives people in the city more flexibility over when and where they use our services. We deliver face to face services in a targeted way for those who need to access our support in this way, often working with partners.

Our clients are able to choose **when, where, and how** they contact us.

Our advisers can **assist more people**.



18,140 calls
answered through
Adviceline

Local Delivery



We continue to see clients who need face to face support all across the community and have developed new partnerships to increase our reach.

Advice in Refuges and the Independent Domestic Abuse Service

Specialist Housing Advice for people eligible for Legal Aid

Specialist immigration advice as part of the SPRING Project and for people applying for EUSS

Generalist and debt advice in-person through partnerships with local Food Banks (independent and Trussell Trust)

Mental Health Service based at Longley Centre and Michael Carlisle Centre

Hospital based support eg Weston Park Cancer Charity, Cystic Fibrosis Unit, Spinal injuries

Face to face support in British Sign Language through the Deaf Advice Service

Specialist debt advice, funded by Money and Pension Service

In-branch appointments with our advisers in partnership with Yorkshire Building Society

Research and campaigns

Our work in 2021/22 includes:

- Submitting a consultation response to the Health & Disability Green Paper
- Raising the issue of unacceptable delays to Work Capability Assessments in Parliament through Paul Blomfield MP
- Supporting the #KeepTheLifeline campaign and continuing to call for an uplift in benefits to help mitigate the rising cost of living
- One of our immigration advisers was instrumental in producing [a national report](#) into the hardships caused by 'No Recourse to Public Funds', a visa condition which prevents people subject to immigration control (including long-term residents) from receiving state benefits and housing assistance. This research was presented in Parliament to the Work & Pensions Committee.

We continue to use our voice to raise awareness of the issues facing our clients and propose practical, evidence-based solutions.



Not just advice

As the lead provider for Sheffield Advocacy Hub, we are now one of the **biggest advocacy providers in the country** and together deliver all the statutory advocacy for Sheffield.



We successfully completed the Quality Performance Mark assessment process and have been re-awarded the Advocacy QPM for three years



We provided in-depth casework to over 1,600 clients



We have successfully implemented a new Independent Case Review process

Citizens Advice Sheffield



All of our telephone services operate **Monday-Friday** (times vary).

Most of our numbers are **free to call** (local call charge rates apply to the language lines).

Sheffield Advice Line: 0808 278 7820 - 10am to 4pm

Help to Claim: 0800 144 8144 - 8am to 6pm

Consumer Line: 0808 223 1133 - 9am to 5pm

Sheffield Advocacy Hub: 0800 035 0396 - 9am to 5pm

Leave a message for a callback from our bilingual advisers

Somali Line: 0114 700 6896

Urdu/Punjabi Line: 0114 700 6881

Arabic Line: 0114 700 2345



@SheffieldAdvice

Citizens Advice Sheffield



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