

Citizens Advice Basingstoke

Annual Review 2022/2023

Supporting our community in challenging times



Basingstoke

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"Citizens Advice Basingstoke operates from the heart of the community and is available for absolutely anybody needing advice, whatever their problem. I am inspired by the level of commitment and high quality of service provided by the staff and volunteer team, supported by the trustees. I will work hard to ensure that the charity evolves to meet the needs of everybody in our local communities."

Tony Curtis, Chair of Trustees.



Photo: Adviser Volunteer Training Course, with Operations Manager Callum Low

Welcome



Dear Supporter,

It is a privilege to welcome you for the first time as Chair of Trustees at Citizens Advice Basingstoke. I joined the Board during 2022, becoming Chair in April 2023 and I was Chief Executive of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council for seven years. I have seen first-hand the vital work that Citizens Advice Basingstoke carries out in support of vulnerable local people.

Our charity has been hugely impacted by both the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis. Our focus has been, and still is, on supporting our clients and communities through the challenges. These crises really bring home how much Citizens Advice is an essential support for people who are struggling and need help.

There are some changes to report on our Board. My thanks go to retiring Chairman Ian Green for his significant contribution over the last 15 years as a Trustee, Vice Chair and then Chair for the last six years. On behalf of our Board of Trustees I would like to thank him for his dedication and commitment to the charity as he continues as a Trustee with us.

We also welcome Richard Haas to the role of Vice Chair of Trustees. Richard is a Chartered Accountant, with a career in Asset Management and he brings a wealth of experience to the role. We are also seeking new Trustees to join our Board.

Finally, our thanks go to all of our volunteers and supporters for making our work possible, we could not do what we do without you. We also acknowledge gratefully the generous Strategic Partner Grant from Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, providing us with a stable base to continue supporting local people in our community with their current and future needs. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Curtis". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Tony Curtis
Chair of Trustees

Citizens Advice Basingstoke

Basingstoke Citizens Advice was founded in 1961 and is a local independent charity battling on an annual basis for funding to deliver its vital projects and services. We are also a member of the national association of Citizens Advice.

Our aims:

- To provide free, confidential and impartial advice to absolutely anybody, whatever the issue, problem or challenge involves.
- To research, influence and campaign for changes and improvements on the policies and practices that are affecting people's lives.

Providing High Quality Advice

We adhere to the Advice Quality Standard, the only sector-owned, independently audited standard that focuses on advice.

Nationally, Citizens Advice continually monitor the advice offered by Citizens Advice Basingstoke, which includes monthly random checks.

January 2023 audit: in the nine areas of leadership we were awarded Green Rating (Good to Excellent).

Advice with Casework in Housing (level D5.1), Employment and Telephone Services (national, regional and local telephone helplines).



Supporting Our Communities



Support

Helping people in our local communities is at the heart of what we do. The pandemic and current cost of living crisis have proved a very worrying time for people, particularly for those who are most vulnerable.

Photo: Graham Hatcher, CEO with some of the staff and volunteer team

Our data enables us to provide excellent national statistics on social issues. 51% of clients who come to Citizens Advice with debt related issues now have negative budgets, compared to 36% pre-pandemic. The data also indicates that by the end of 2023 the number of people needing help will be higher than in any previous year. Record breaking figures requesting advice on the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) are just one example of this.

During 2022-2023, thanks to advice from Citizens Advice Basingstoke, our clients gained **£1,067,335** and we helped **9,193** people to resolve their issues.

Our Team

Our volunteers play a huge part in helping people to keep warm during winter, putting food on the table and keeping a roof above their heads, working incredibly hard to support the needs of our community. We know we are not yet fully meeting demand, but with additional resources we can increase the number of people we help. We are actively seeking new volunteers and we have strengthened our staff team to ensure that we can continue to make a difference to people's lives.

The Mayor's Charity of The Year



We are delighted that Cllr David Leeks is supporting us as Mayoral Charity of the Year for 2023-2024. This will help us to raise awareness of our work and fundraise to help more people impacted by the cost of living crisis. Please donate to our campaign here: <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/cab-mayors-charity-appeal-23-24>

Photo: The Mayor of Basingstoke, Cllr David Leeks, with Graham Hatcher, CEO, and Lucy Sweet, Marketing & Fundraising Officer at the Mayor's Civic Coronation Service.

A National Service

We are a member of the National Association of Citizens Advice.

Citizens Advice provide the support listed in the table below to help people in Basingstoke communities.

Service	Description
Pensionwise	Free and impartial government guidance about your defined contribution pension options.
Consumer Helpline	Solve an ongoing consumer problem with a business seller. Help with reporting to Trading Standards.
Help To Claim	Free confidential and impartial support to help make a Universal Credit claim.
Research & Campaigns	Informing and influencing policy decisions. Find out more on our work in this area on pages 18-19.

Over 3,400 local Citizens Advice offices deliver advice services from community locations across England and Wales. However, not everyone is aware that each of these local offices is a completely independent charity, raising funds to deliver the services though which 2.5 million people collectively were helped to move forward last year.

Last year, **88,219** people from the area of Basingstoke & Deane viewed online self-help advice from the national website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk



Supporting Basingstoke Communities

Our team of trained advisers, many of whom are volunteers, offer a listening ear to help people find a way forward. Our clients come to us for help and resolution on issues around debt, budgeting, benefits, housing, employment, immigration, relationship and family issues and much more.



Our Impact

The figures below are based on the value of advice delivered by our office. Using a Treasury approved model developed by New Economy using the latest values, we only put a value on what we can firmly evidence. Income gained for clients uses their individual financial gain for a 12-month period as a result of our help.

- **9,193** number of people helped by phone, email, webchat or face-to-face,
- **31,309** interactions with or on behalf of our clients,
- **£1,067,335** income gained for our clients thanks to advice provided by advisers,
- **£2,448,511** saved by government and public services,
- **£6,216,046** gained in financial benefits to our clients from problems solved,
- **£16,071,100** in estimated wider social and economic value to society,
- **£11,431,617** in estimated improvement to clients' wellbeing.



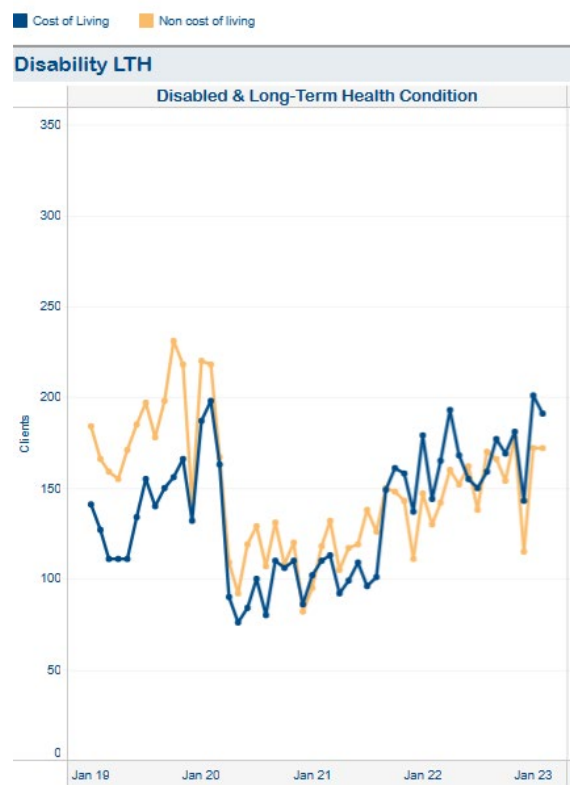
We have given advice on **15,144** issues in total, with **83%** of all enquiries relating to:

Client Issue	2023	2022
Benefits, Universal Credit and Tax Credit	24%	36%
Charitable Support & Food Banks	11%	Part of Benefits category until 2023
Employment	5%	10%
Housing	10%	15%
Debt	15%	9%
Relationships & Family	6%	6%
Utilities & Communications	12%	2%

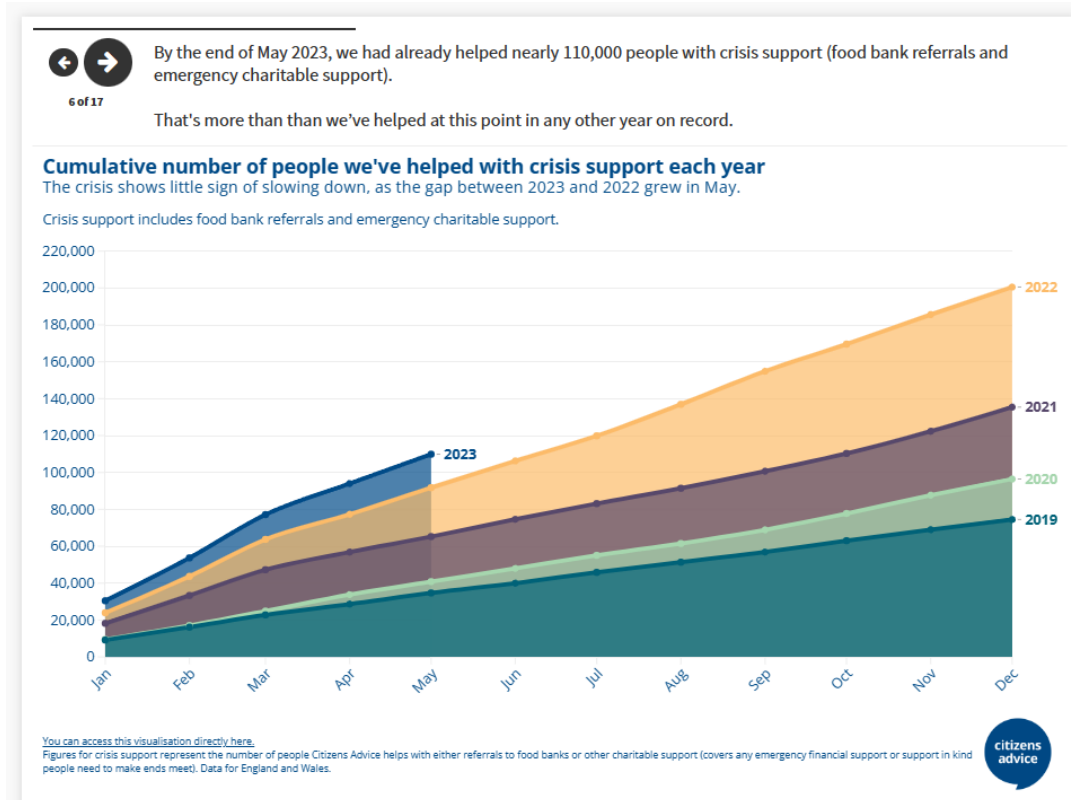
Cost of Living

The cost of living crisis is continuing to impact upon people's lives and the evidence is showing that this is only getting worse. Historically 30% of clients' queries were related to cost of living related issues. Today this is 50%.

Certain groups in Basingstoke such as vulnerable people with disabilities, carers and single parents are affected more than others. The adjacent chart shows how cost of living issues have recently overtaken all others for people with disabilities or long-term health problems. All charts included on these pages are from the **Citizens Advice National Cost of Living Flourish Dashboard**.



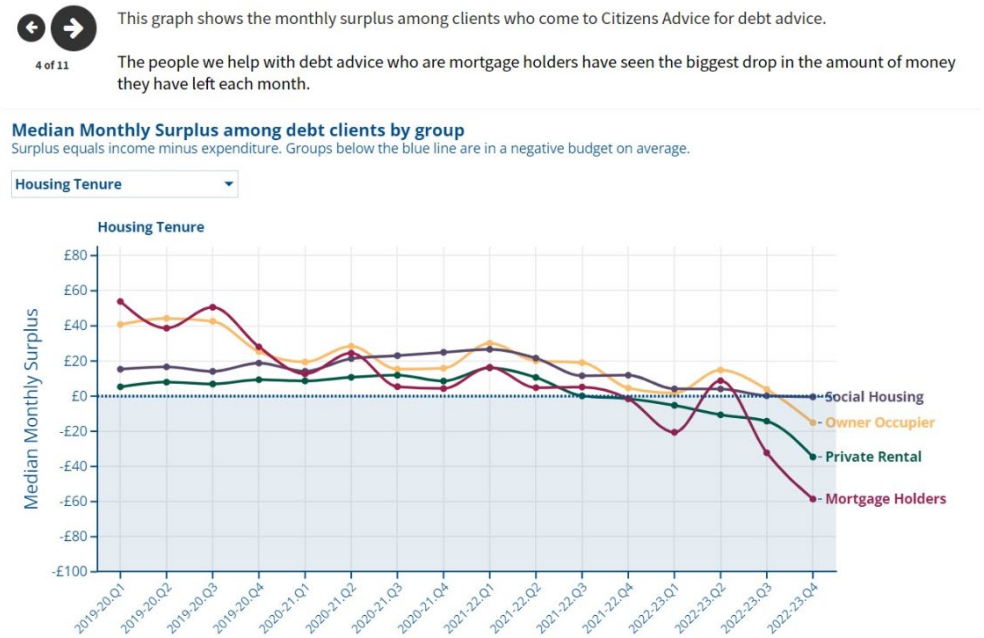
People who are really struggling come to us for crisis support, including food bank vouchers, fuel vouchers and other charitable support. As shown in the chart below, demand has grown inexorably over recent years and is now at record levels. By the end of May 2023 we had helped more people than in any other year on record with crisis support.



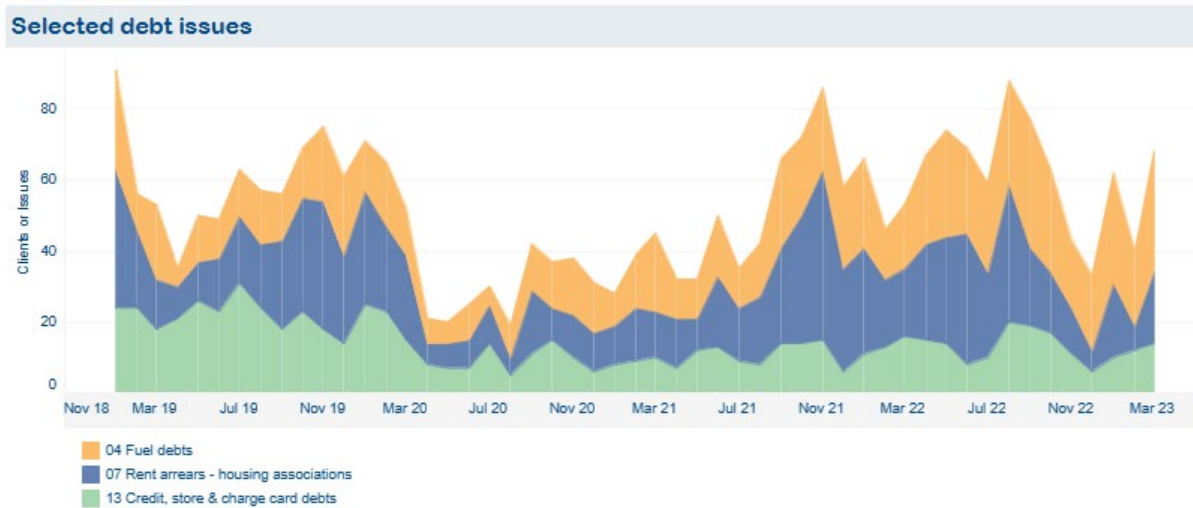
Our advisers work at five food bank locations across the town to reach and support those in need. Basingstoke Food Bank provides food for 799 people every month, compared to ten years ago when they helped 34 people.

Our data gives us a detailed insight into our debt clients' income and expenditure, enabling us to calculate their average budget surplus at the end of each month. In 2019, irrespective of housing tenure, on average most clients had a modest surplus. However, by 2023 we are finding that on average all groups of debt clients have a deficit and can no longer maintain a modest surplus with which to pay off their debts.

It is concerning to see the sudden nose-dive in the money surplus left each month for mortgage holders, as shown by the red line in the adjacent chart. Recent interest rate rises mean it is likely that this trend will continue.



In 2018/19 the biggest category of debt in Basingstoke was 'credit and store cards'. By 2023 it was 'rent arrears'; even higher than 'fuel debts' which was the highest category across England.



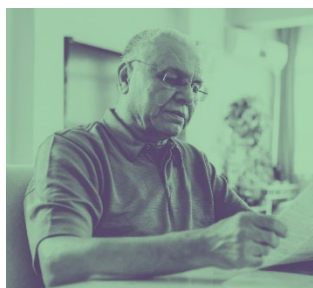
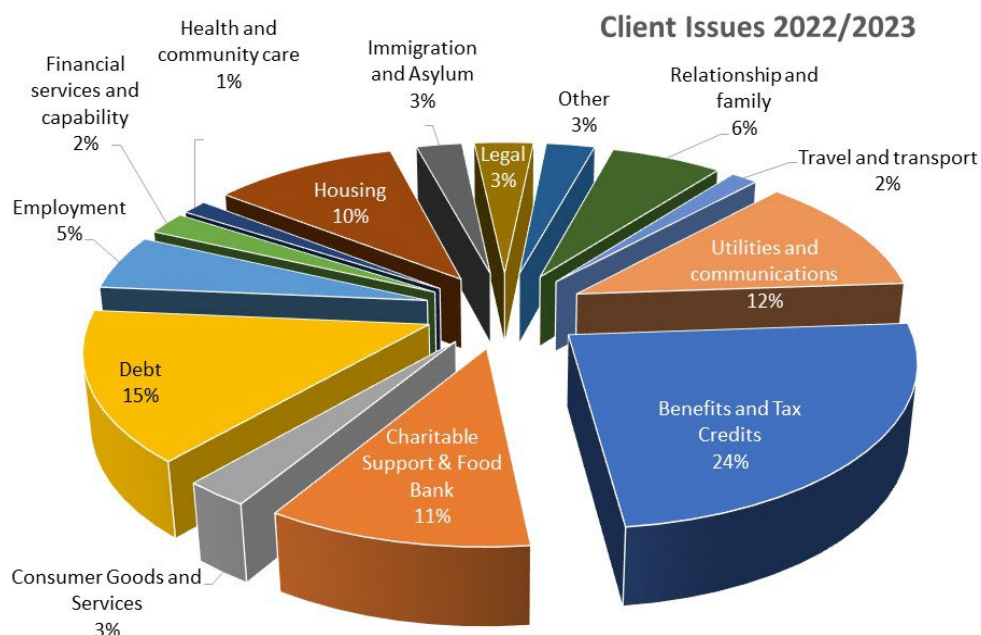
In relation to housing in Basingstoke, back in 2019, the issue we helped people most with was threatened homelessness. Now, the biggest issue is accessing accommodation, i.e. finding somewhere to live.

Resolving Issues

Our charitable work is unique in that we support absolutely everybody with any issue affecting their lives.

The chart opposite shows the wide range of issues on which we provide advice and resolution.

Tax, Legal, Education, Gender Violence Abuse & Hate Crime are included in 'Other'



Supporting Michael

Michael came to us in June 2022 for help after his six-month employment contract had come to an end. He was unable to continue working, due to serious health problems, having lost much of his vision and mobility due to Diabetes. Now with no income and bills mounting, Michael had fallen behind with his

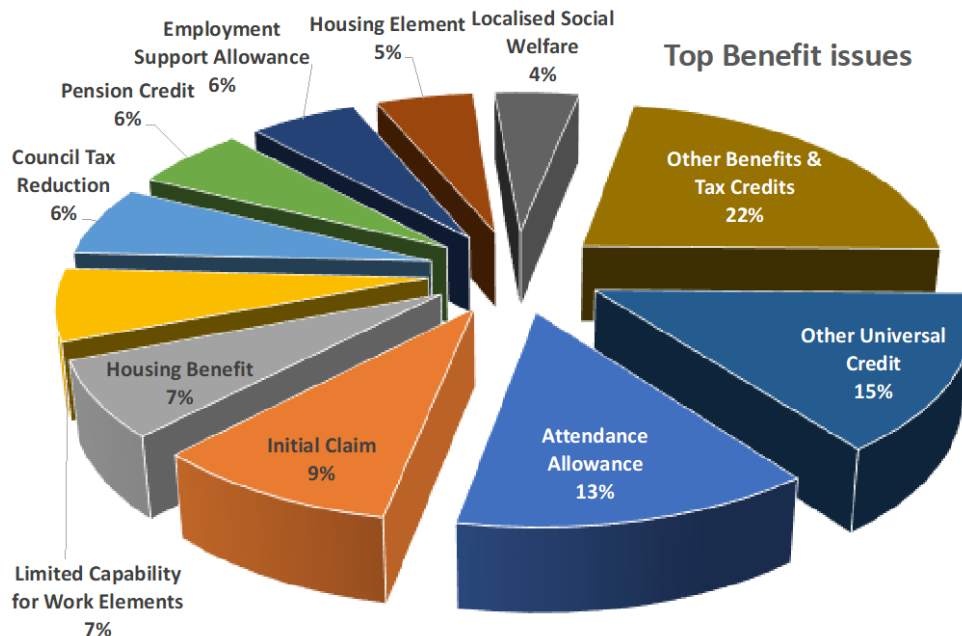
rent, Council Tax bills and payday loan repayments.

Over a series of phone calls and face-to-face meetings, our adviser supported Michael to apply for help with his living costs, with successful claims subsequently made for Universal Credit (UC), Personal Independent Payment (PIP) and Employment and Support Allowance.

Michael was also supported to claim for additional UC elements, energy and utility grants and the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Cost of Living Assistance Fund, together with a Discretionary Housing Payment to ensure he had income while waiting for his benefits to come through. Our Home and Well Project enabled us to add Michael to the Priority Services Register to receive extra support from his energy company for his prepayment meter and we were able to discuss further support for water and council tax bills. Michael's health then took a turn for the worse but fortunately he recovered quickly and our adviser was then able to arrange affordable debt repayments for him. Michael is now financially stable and planning to move closer to family and after many months our advisor was delighted to successfully close his case.

Top Benefits Issues

Almost a quarter of our work (24%) involves Benefits and Tax Credit resolution. This chart shows the areas in which we work to support clients to resolve benefit related issues.



Supporting David

David came to us for help following the loss of his job due to health problems. He had received an incorrect Universal Credit (UC) calculation due to his employer stating that he was being paid, when in fact he had received his P45.

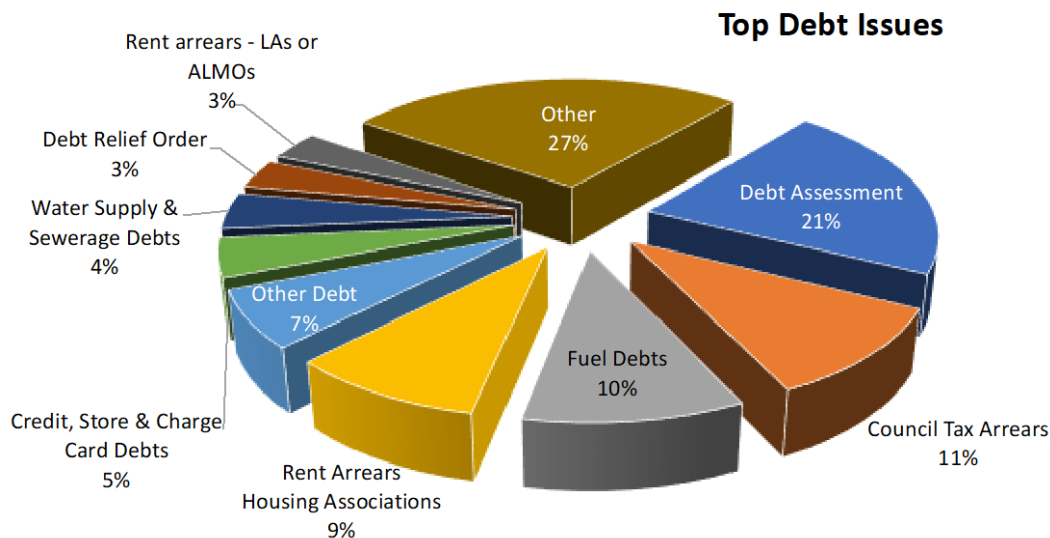


As a result, money had been deducted from his monthly UC payments, leaving him unable to pay his mortgage, direct debits and phone bill. He found himself unable to contact anyone for help and he had no food or funds for his prepayment meters, with no income due for 10 days.

Fortunately, David came along to his local Food Bank drop-in clinic, where our adviser provided him with a food voucher worth £36, a National Databank O2 SIM mobile phone card worth £90 and a Fuel Bank Foundation referral worth £30. Our adviser also referred David to our Energy Advice, Home and Well and New Forest Debt Case Workers for extra support on his finances, together with a referral to the Council for help with his Council Tax bills. A consecutive Food Bank voucher was also organised for the client to collect the following week.

Top Debt Issues

Many people that come to us for debt advice are in a negative budget. This means their income does not cover their essentials (like housing, energy and food). In Basingstoke 15% of our work is related to debt and the chart shows how we support our clients in this area.

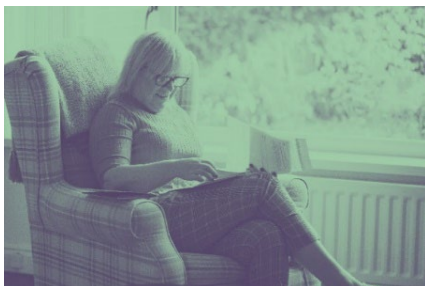


Supporting Clare

Clare is on a low income and was struggling with the rise in the cost of living. She was unable to work due to health conditions and was in receipt of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Housing Benefit and Employment Support Allowance (ESA).

She lived with her son Christopher, who cared for her and was also unable to work for medical reasons. Clare was finding it difficult to cover all of her bills, particularly the prepayment meters, in order to keep her house warm. The final straw for Clare was when her washing machine broke, meaning that by the time Clare and Christopher were referred to our Citizens Advice Adviser they had been unable to wash their clothes for three months.

Our Adviser immediately organised a grant of £1,000 from the Cost of Living Assistance Fund to help replace the washing machine and cover outstanding bills. Clare also received 3 x £49 energy vouchers through the Household Support Fund, while we also signed her up to the priority service register to receive extra support from the energy

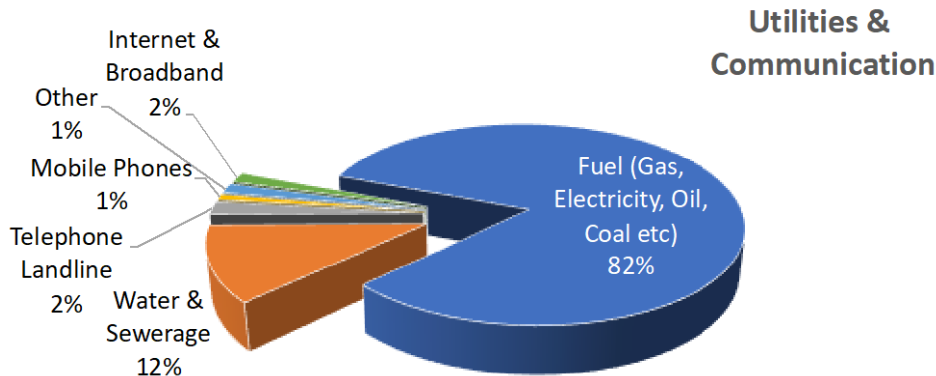


and water companies. Upon investigation, our adviser also noted that Christopher was eligible for Carer's Allowance and he was given the details required to make this claim.

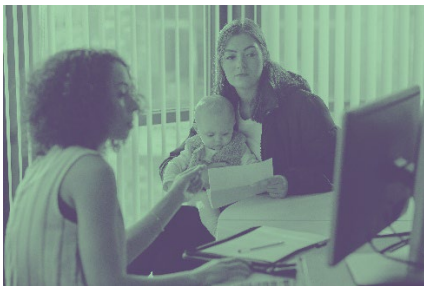
Clare was extremely grateful to our adviser and said it was such a big relief to know that they could replace the washing machine and have some money left to cover their bills.

Utilities & Communications Issues

Utilities and Communication issues represents 13% of our advice and support, with the majority of clients requesting help with their utility companies.



Over the last year National Databank has enabled us to provide **30 people with SIM cards**, giving them free mobile calls and data, helping to tackle data poverty.



Supporting Mariella

Mariella is a widow with four young children. She initially came to us for help to resolve a disputed debt with her energy company, following three failed opportunities by the company to update meter readings accurately. This had resulted in accrued arrears on Mariella's account.

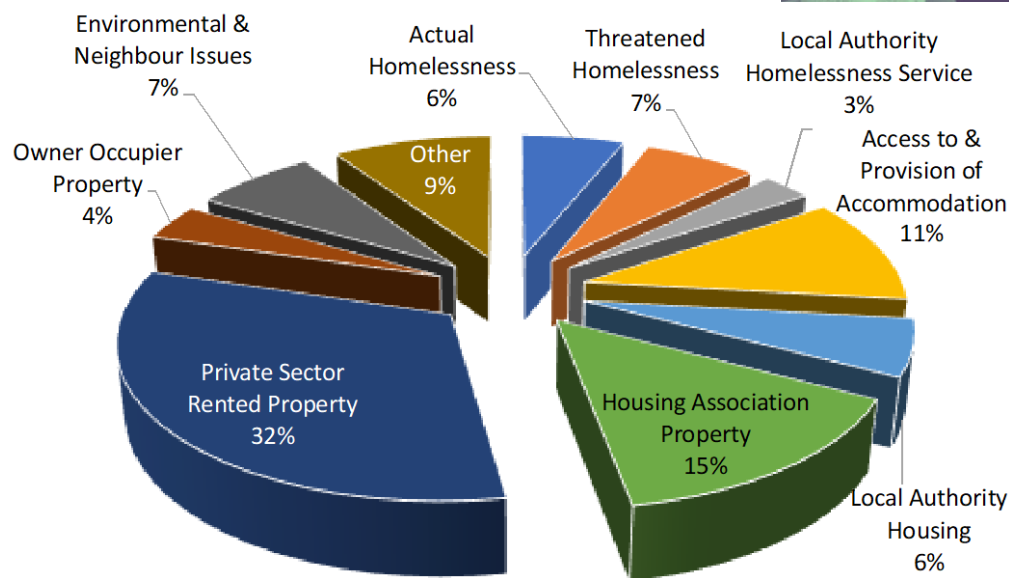
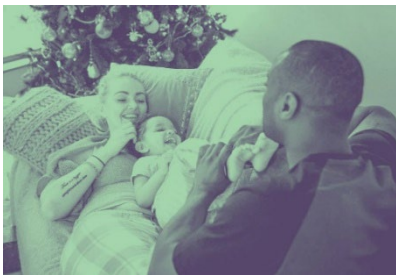
Our adviser carried out a debt assessment for Mariella, while a complaint was raised on her behalf with the energy company. An energy payment plan was negotiated with the prospect of applying for a grant to clear the arrears at a future date. However, Mariella chose to pay the debt after the energy company agreed to reduce the bill by 10%. Mariella was then able to switch to a new supplier.

After calculating Mariella's household income, our adviser registered Mariella for the water social tariff, reducing her monthly bill by £20 per month. A successful application was also made for Council Tax Support which was a saving of £1,125 for Mariella. In addition, Mariella was also offered a £15 supermarket voucher.

Finally, we arranged for Mariella to be added to the Priority Services Register for both energy and water, enabling her to receive advance notice of scheduled outages, support in an emergency and assistance when calling her new supplier. After much correspondence back and forth between the parties involved, we were able to successfully close the case after three months.

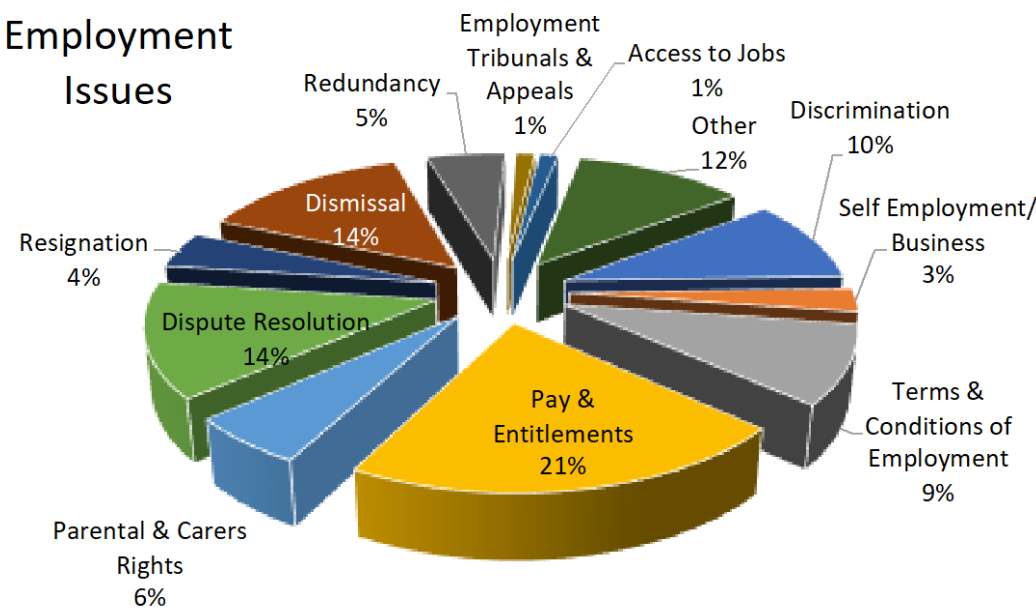
Housing & Employment Issues

The biggest area of our Housing work (32%) supports people with private-sector rented properties. We wait to see the full impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on mortgage holders, with recent interest rate rises leaving many unable to cover their monthly outgoings.



Housing Issues

Over a third of the advice and support that we offer clients on Employment cover the issues of Pay and Entitlements (21%) and Dispute Resolution (14%).



Enquiries by Local Ward

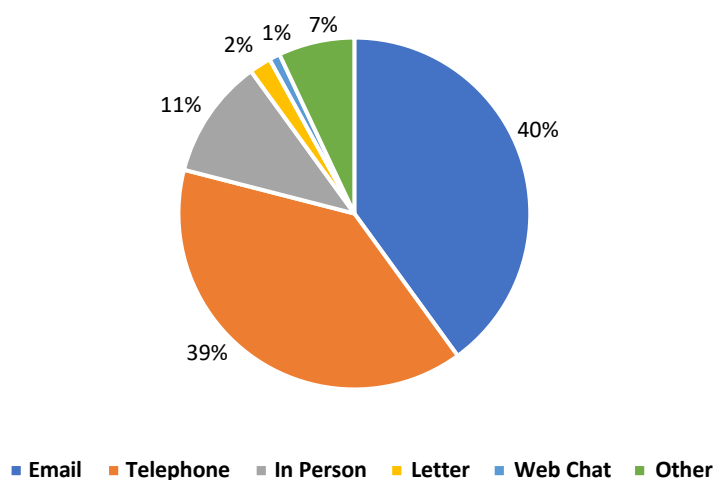
Where possible, we record the local ward information for the clients that we support, as shown in the table below. Many clients need our help with multiple issues, the table below only includes the primary enquiry. Ward information is often not supplied. The table below only shows a clients' primary enquiry, however, there are often multiple issues to resolve, meaning the figures in the table are considerably understated.

	Benefits & tax credits	Charitable Support & Food Banks	Debt	Employment	Financial services & capability	Housing	Legal	Relationships & Family	Utilities & communications	Others	Total
Basing & Upton Grey	80	24	10	13	9	35	17	21	18	39	266
Bramley	66	30	68	13	4	23	4	17	44	29	298
Brighton Hill	286	121	203	42	16	92	21	50	141	84	1056
Brookvale & Kings Furlong	244	136	147	51	19	136	41	61	121	103	1059
Chineham	159	73	51	29	14	38	19	36	70	75	564
Eastrop & Grove	203	87	93	31	21	51	26	59	79	76	726
Evingar	18	17	12	1	1	3			25	6	83
Hatch Warren & Beggarwood	65	35	31	25	3	37	14	27	22	32	291
Kempshott & Buckskin	187	106	129	16	16	54	21	27	115	55	726
Norden	265	133	143	65	23	107	39	39	140	100	1054
Oakley & The Candovers	97	58	39	21	8	34	5	19	55	31	367
Popley	255	155	148	56	24	70	23	79	152	102	1064
Sherborne St. John & Rooksdown	118	92	115	49	14	81	16	36	129	73	723
South Ham	353	170	288	37	42	78	33	57	240	99	1397
Tadley & Pamber	34	15	14	5	4	5	2	4	15	2	100
Tadley North, Kingsclere & Baughurst	25	13	14	8	4	9	7	5	13	11	109
Whitchurch, Overton & Laverstoke	87	30	51	14	7	21	17	15	34	21	297
Winklebury & Manydown	153	104	70	25	16	71	17	47	118	65	686

Did You Know?

We answer 100% of emails sent to us within **five** working days.

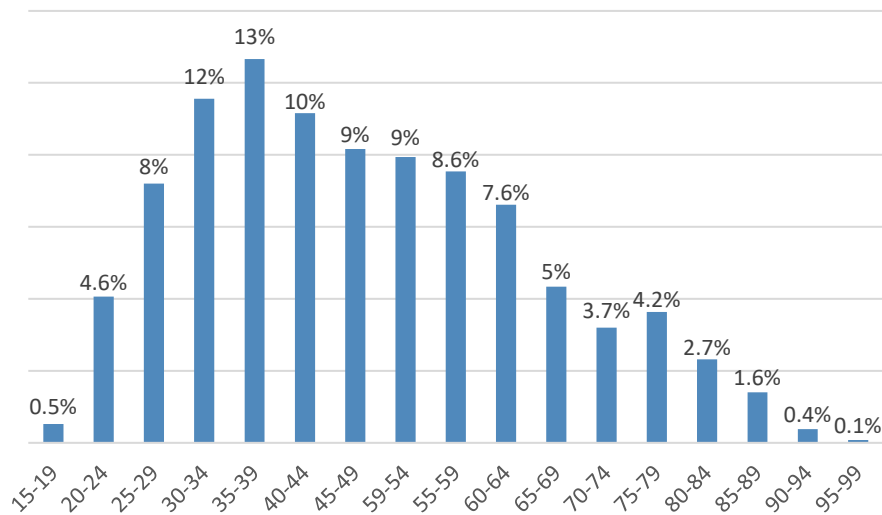
Our clients get in touch with us via the methods shown in the chart opposite.



Our Clients

When we say we're here for everyone, we mean it. The charts below give an insight into the lives of the local people we support across Basingstoke communities.

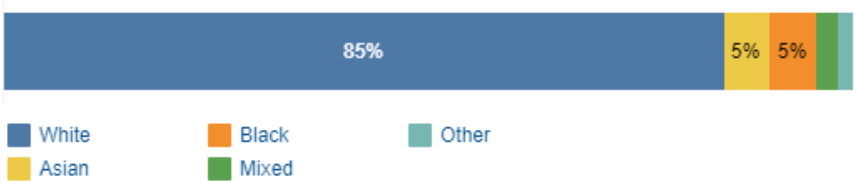
Age



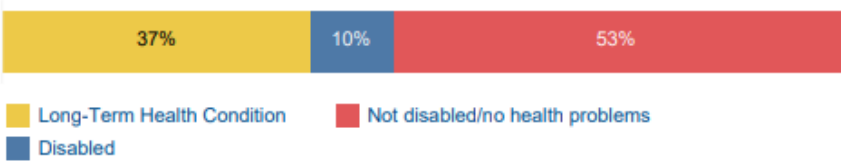
Gender



Ethnicity



Disability/Long-Term Health Issues



Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are passionate about changing people's lives and make an outstanding contribution to our charity. It would not be possible to deliver our projects and services without the support of our fantastic volunteer team.

We regularly recruit new volunteers in order to meet local needs. We provide specialist in-house training, covering the latest legal rights around housing, employment, benefits and much more, designed to help our volunteers begin resolving client queries within approximately two months. Regular ongoing training ensures we keep up to date with the latest changes.



By generously donating their time and expertise, our volunteers gain new skills, meet new people and make new friends. It really is a great way to give back to the local community while at the same time boosting confidence and improving wellbeing.

Photo: Callum Low, Operations Manager with new volunteers Andy, Des and Lucy

We have **52 amazing volunteers** in total and below are two being recognised for their hard work and valuable support.



Congratulations to Jane, (pictured left), our Advice Session Supervisor, who has been volunteering with us for an outstanding 30 years.

Volunteer Brigid (pictured right) supports us with case checking, while mentoring the team. Brigid is shown here being presented with an award from Citizens Advice Hampshire to celebrate Volunteers Week.



Last year, our volunteers generously provided an average of **242 volunteer hours per week**, with an estimated annual economic value of **£250,757** for our charity (based on Government average earnings).

"Volunteering is flexible, adaptable and fits in around family, caring and other commitments and you can instantly see the difference you make to people's lives." Saryu, Citizens Advice Basingstoke Volunteer

Research and Campaigns

As a service, we generate and categorise a huge volume of social data relating to the problems our clients are facing, giving us a unique insight into the challenges facing our communities today. We use this information to identify those issues that we believe are unfair as a basis to campaign for change.

We share our findings with our local MP, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and to the wider community via our Board of Trustees. We recently welcomed a visit from Maria Miller, Basingstoke MP, who we had written to, asking for support for our campaign on prepayment meters. This campaign was successful in pausing the forced transfer of energy customers onto prepayment meters. In the March budget the Chancellor mandated that prepayment meter customers should not have to pay a premium rate.

Where our campaigns are successful, we bring about improvements that benefit the whole community, not just those who seek our help.



Photo: Philip Nield, Research & Campaigns Co-ordinator, Saryu, Volunteer Adviser, Maria Miller MP and Graham Hatcher, CEO.

Whilst we have unparalleled statistical data, it is our clients' stories that are most compelling. In the recent winter period energy bills rose for everyone; but those on prepayment meters were the first to notice the massive price-hikes as these customers usually pay a higher per-unit charge.



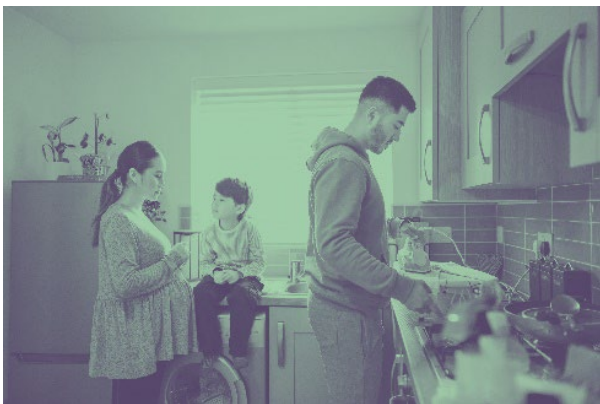
Henry - A Basingstoke Case with National Influence

Many energy companies were forcing clients with debts onto prepayment meters. Henry is on a prepayment meter and is diabetic, storing his insulin in his fridge. He did not understand that his supplier had switched him to a prepayment meter or how to ensure he had electricity. He was without power for days, ruining some of his insulin. His supplier has still not switched him over despite half a dozen phone calls and repeated assurances that they would.

Throughout the year we shared our data with other organisations including Shelter, MIND and the Trussell Trust and campaigned on support for energy bills. This campaign work was instrumental to the various support packages that kept energy costs manageable for most people.

Other campaigns that are continuing:

- Encouraging more financial help for people to insulate their homes, as demonstrated by Paul's issue with rental accommodation below.
- Identifying the problems facing private renters caused by the freezing of the Local Housing Allowance.
- Seeking changes to the process by which those people with disabilities can challenge decisions that result in the removal of their Personal Independence Payment.



Citizens Advice work hard to campaign for change to support people finding themselves in challenging and unfair situations. Paul lives in a privately rented rural property heated by oil. The house is very badly insulated with no double glazing and holes in some windows. Paul spends a large part of his income on heating, which has led to him falling into rental arrears. When he cannot afford to order more oil, which must be ordered in large and

expensive quantities, his family have to use electric heaters to keep warm. If the property was properly insulated, Paul would have more money to pay off his arrears and keep on top of the rent.

Community Partnerships

We undertake funded partnership projects, voluntary partnerships and community outreach to ensure that our services are accessible to those who need our help.

Project	Description
Local Emergency Welfare Scheme	A partnership working across Basingstoke & Deane to provide residents with emergency grants and other support.
Sovereign Housing Association	To engage with and provide help to the most vulnerable clients at risk of eviction.
Foodbank Outreach Service	A dedicated on-site face to face advice service at 5 outreach locations.
HIWCF Penton Trust	Alleviating poverty for the over 65's.
Healthwatch Hampshire	Ensuring people's views about NHS services are listened to and valued, to help improve health services.
Surviving Winter Fund and the Household Support Fund	Providing grants to people struggling to pay their energy bills.
Hate Crime: Third-Party Hate Crime Reporting Centre	Graham Hatcher, our CEO, is the independent chair of Basingstoke Hate Crime Working Group, campaigning to educate young people and raise awareness.
Home and Well	A Citizens Advice Hampshire partnership with SSEN, SGN, Portsmouth Water, Southern Water, South East Water and Hampshire & Isle of Wight ICB enabling vulnerable people to remain safely and independently in their own homes.
Money and Pension Services (MaPS)	Funding to build up capacity to deal with the increase in personal debt issues.
Collaboration	We work on a collaborative basis with other Citizen's Advice organisations, both on a local basis with Citizens Advice Tadley and through the Hampshire Consortium Citizens Advice Hampshire.
Social Inclusion Partnership	To reduce rough sleeping and increase social inclusion.
BASP Mental Health Alliance	To help with mental wellbeing.

Staff Team

- We have **14** members of staff working a total of **363** hours per week.
- **5** members of our staff team cover specific project work for **111.5** hours per week.



Messages of Thanks

A Thank You from Buckingham Palace

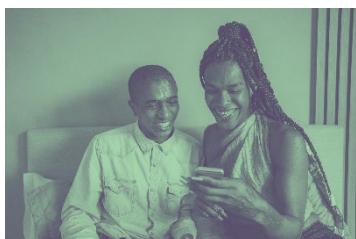
We were delighted to receive a message from Princess Anne during Volunteers Week, thanking all of our volunteers for everything they do for us:

"Volunteers have been a vital part of Citizens Advice since it came into being at the start of the Second World War. On my many visits to offices across the country I have seen first-hand the contribution volunteers make to the service, as well as how much they gain from the role. Without their commitment it would not be possible to help so many people find a way forward."

"I am delighted to support the Coronation Big Help Out and would encourage anyone to volunteer with their local Citizens Advice. I also want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all those current volunteers for their time, expertise and passion in supporting Citizens Advice, and for the difference they are making to the lives of people in their local communities." **Princess Anne**

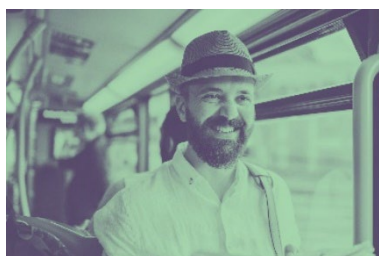
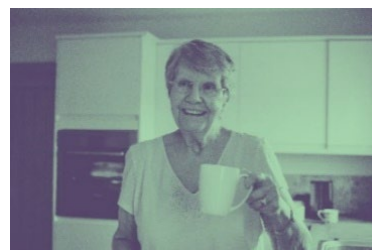
Feedback from our Clients

We regularly receive feedback from the people that we help, with people often popping into our office to say thank you to our advisers in person, delivering cards and posting letters and notes of thanks. Below are some of the comments we have received:



"You were so lovely and kind doing all you could to help me, fact finding, giving me telephone numbers, advice, a voucher for some help with food and bits and bobs for which you'll never know how grateful we were."

"I just wanted to say how truly thankful I am for all your hard work and efforts. Thank you seems such a small word but it comes from my heart."



"Thank you for your help in editing the letter to request outstanding payment from my old employer. It was successful and the money was paid within a week."

Our Funders

The trustees and team at Citizens Advice Basingstoke would like to thank all of our funders and donors who have supported our services, projects and resources over the last year.

The greatest challenge we face as a charity is to maintain and diversify our funding streams and we work extremely hard to raise funding to meet our outgoings of £373,639 per annum.

We are therefore extremely grateful to our principal funder Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council for providing us with a Strategic Partner Grant of £195,247, to support our core services this year. This provides a stable base from which we can continue supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable people in our local communities.

In return, our work is of huge financial benefit for the community. Using a Treasury approved model developed by New Economy using the latest values, it is estimated that our advice services provide a local saving to government and public services of **£2,448,511**, where the wider social and economic value to society is estimated to be **£16,071,100**, benefitting everybody living and working in our communities.

Thank you for your support, we could not carry out
our work without you:



supported by
**Basingstoke
and Deane**



Hampshire
County Council



Hampshire

SOVEREIGN



HiWCF
LOCAL GIVING FOR LOCAL NEEDS

**Greenham
Trust**



Hate Crime & Wellbeing

Citizens Advice Basingstoke is a Reporting Centre for those affected by hate crime, last year supporting **73 clients** with **84 issues**. We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

Hate crime can leave victims fearful, isolated and vulnerable. It can severely undermine their sense of safety in school, college and the wider community. It impacts greatly on self-confidence and self-worth and can lead to depression, anxiety and in extreme cases, suicide.

"Regrettably hate crime is common, yet despite the devastating impact it has on people's lives it is rarely reported. The Basingstoke Hate Crime Awareness Group (BHCAG) was formed to raise awareness and increase confidence in reporting hate crime and to challenge attitudes and prejudices, as we believe people have the right to live their lives free from abuse."

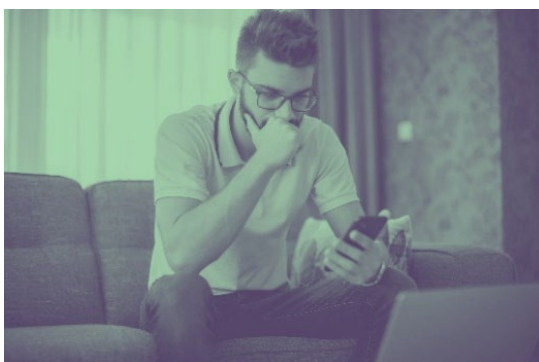
Graham Hatcher, Chair, BHCAG

Members of BHCAG include:

- Access4All,
- Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council,
- Basingstoke & District Disability Forum,
- Basingstoke Multi-Cultural Forum,
- Basingstoke Voluntary Action,
- Citizens Advice Basingstoke,
- Hampshire Police,
- Local community representatives.



Photo: Brighton Hill Community School Race Unity Day



Debt can make mental health problems like

anxiety and depression worse and can make earning and managing a budget even harder. We have close links with and are able to signpost to Andover MIND's Safe Haven Support Centre, which provides urgent mental health and emotional support outside of normal working hours.



Helping you to find your way forward

Phone: We are open from **Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm** for telephone consultations. Free Phone Advice Line **0808 2 78 78 29**

Our office is also open for face-to-face appointments, which must be pre-booked in advance and emergency support for those who need it.

Online: We recommend completing the '**Contact Citizens Advice Basingstoke Today**' form on our website, go to the link below, complete your details and submit your enquiry to us: www.basingstokeandtadleycab.org.uk/citizens-advice-basingstoke

Citizens Advice Basingstoke
The Discovery Centre
19-20 Westminster House
Basingstoke
RG21 7LS

For general information, please visit
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Please note that we are closed on Saturdays, Sundays, Bank Holidays and from Christmas Eve through to New Year's Day.

If you are thinking about volunteering as an adviser with Citizens Advice Basingstoke, we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch on trainingadmin@basingstokecab.org.uk



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