

South East Staffordshire Citizens Advice Bureau

Annual Review 2010/11



Life changing advice

Our aims:

- to provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives

In 2010/2011 the Bureau...

- Gave advice to **3,374** individual clients
- Helped people with over **4,047** different issues
- Assisted clients to claim benefits worth over **£187,000**
- Helped clients deal with over **£7,500,000** in debt
- Benefitted from over **302** volunteer hours per week (paid equivalent has been costed at more than £244,320 a year)



Life changing advice

South East Staffordshire CAB improves peoples' lives by providing free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

South East Staffordshire CAB is embedded in the heart of the community, delivering services throughout the District in a variety of ways.

Our core service is provided by volunteers, who are fully trained in their roles. Our volunteers come from and work for their communities; their value to the organisation is immense and can be measured in local knowledge and understanding of the issues as well as monetary terms.

Our core income funds the gateway to advice, a triage system that ensures we empower those who can and concentrate our supporting the most vulnerable in society.

We work with partners to refer where appropriate and accept referrals to avoid duplication and utilise each others' expertise.

We measure outcomes to demonstrate our impact on people's lives.

We challenge discrimination wherever we find it.

We prevent problems by campaigning for changes in policies and procedures that affect many times more people than we see.

- We are a local charity and receive no funding direct from the government
- We rely on funds raised locally for all of our non-specialist services and some of our specialist services
- The advice we give is independently audited for quality assurance

“I would like to thank the CAB for the help and support you have given me over the last few weeks with the problem I had. It is nice to know that many of you are willing to give up your time to help those in need.”

“No way could I have sorted this out myself. I am now calmer and better able to cope with my health problems. I have more strength to look after my disabled child.”

Achievements and Performance

Throughout the year, the Bureau has provided a number of ways to access services:-

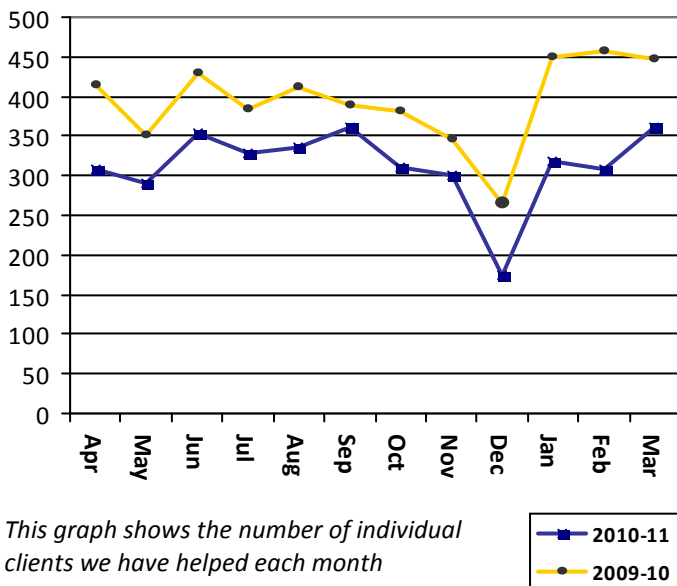
- a **walk-in service** to personal callers at our two offices for 9 hours a week at each office (total 18 hours per week) during which clients' needs are assessed and an appointment made if further, more detailed, advice is required. We now have trained volunteers operating the reception of clients.
- a **telephone service** for a total of 3 hours a week in Bureau; in addition we provided 6.5 hours per week to the County telephone service which operates 9.30am to 4.30pm 5 days a week
- **appointments** at our offices through our generalist advisers for 45 person hours per week and also by our Caseworkers for a further 80 person hours a week
- **outreach services** at Jigsaw community shop in North Lichfield and Curborough Community Centre. Also, through Additional Hours of Advice funding through Citizens Advice, Old Mining College and the Health and Wellbeing Centre in Burntwood
- **e mail advice** through our website

We helped
3,374 clients

We dealt with
4,047 issues

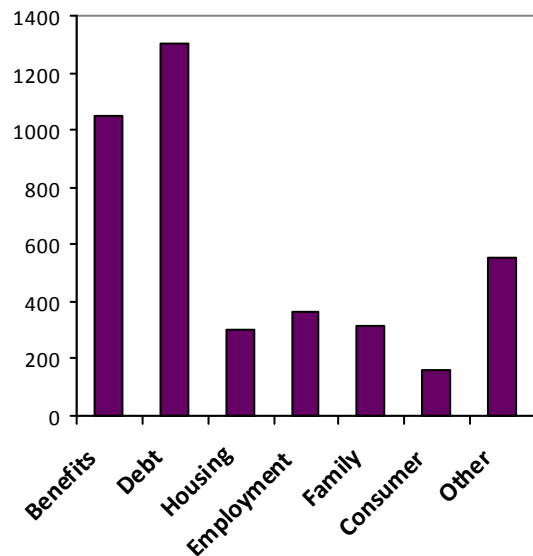
Clients made
3,603 initial contacts

The number of clients helped:



This graph shows the number of individual clients we have helped each month

The enquiries we helped with:



Where our clients live

In 2010-11, the top 6 such wards in which Bureau clients lived were;

- Chase Terrace
- Curborough
- Chasetown
- Summerfield
- Chadsmead
- Stowe

We have seen clients from surrounding areas including Alrewas with Fradley, Armitage with Handsacre and Whittington. These are the same Wards as in 2009/10.

Where our clients lived who we helped during 2010/11:

- **32.5% in Burntwood & Hammerwich** (30.5% 2009/10)
- **34.5% in Lichfield City** (27% 2009/10)
- **14.5% in the rural areas of Lichfield District** (14% 2009/10)

There has been an increase in the proportion of our clients living in Lichfield District for whom we have data from 71.5% to 81.5%.

We know that 3720 residents of Lichfield accessed the CAB service, some of them in places more convenient to them, for example where they work.

Client Satisfaction Survey 2010/11

99% were either happy or fairly happy with our service

96% said that their problems were sorted

87% said we made some difference to their peace of mind

91% said we increased their knowledge

100% said they would use us again

100% said they would recommend us to someone else

Specialist Services

During the year the Bureau provided casework in debt through our Caseworker funded by Staffordshire County Council and through a Caseworker funded by Michael Lowe's Charity to provide money advice in Lichfield City. This, along with funds from North Lichfield Community & Learning Partnership, has enabled the Bureau to continue to attend the Jigsaw Community Shop in north Lichfield on a regular basis.

We provided Welfare Benefit casework using funding from Mary Slater Charity and an advice service in Westgate Practice funded through Practice Based Commissioning.

We continued to provide a specialist casework service in Debt and Welfare Benefits funded by Legal Services Commission. Delays in awarding a new contract in November 2010 meant that we reduced the number of clients assisted during September, October and November.

Funded by King Edward VI Community & Learning Partnership, we continued to provide an advice service for pupils of King Edward VI School in Lichfield and also for parents of younger children at various schools in and around Lichfield.

Late notification of continuing funding for our Debt caseworker working in HMP HMYOI Swinfen Hall (included in clients seen living in Mease and Tame) meant that the number of cases reduced in January and February decreased. This funding has now been extended for a year from April 2011.

We again took part in the 'Moving Out' course at HMP & HMYOI Swinfen on the subject of budgeting.

“The help I received today was brilliant. The staff were extremely kind and helped put me at my ease. They respected my mental health and disability and were exceptional.”



£7,510,767 debt rescheduled

£187,316 benefits gained

Social Policy

We collect evidence of our clients' problems and use this to campaign for changes in national and local policies and services. We have a key role in speaking up for clients, raising issues brought into Bureau, contributing to public debate and informing legislation. Through completing eBEF forms through our electronic case recording system, we convey information about the issues confronting our clients and send it to Citizens Advice to be collated with those from all other Bureaux across the country. In the year 2009/10 we completed 282 eBEFs, a three-fold increase over the previous year. Our submissions have been used by Citizens Advice in submissions to;

- Department of Health
- Law Commission
- Office of Fair Trading

Locally we have presented evidence to Lichfield District Council about administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and helped draft a new Debt Strategy for Lichfield District.

Client Case Study

Married male client had become increasingly disabled by MS. Client lives in social housing with his wife (who is his main carer) and two dependent children. Unable to work, but wife still works part-time. He needs help with his personal care and mobility.

Client referred to CAB by his GP practice team for holistic advice and practical support.

Client's needs assessed and assisted in application for Disability Living Allowance (care and mobility) and Employment Support Allowance; referred to Health and Social Care for home assessment; needs discussed with client's landlord; assisted in making claim for assistance with mortgage repayment through insurance; and referred to MS support group for further help in managing his long term condition.

Due to CAB intervention in filling in forms client received DLA (care and mobility) in respect of his care needs during the day and ESA. CAB then assisted couple to consider their options via 'better-off' calculations and helped prepare a personal budget.

As a result of our help client's stress was reduced, which also reduced stress for the whole family and client was able to discontinue regular support from CPN.

As 'client journey' continues, CAB will continue to liaise with GP practice team to support client and his family to manage his long-term condition and ensure that Welfare Benefits received reflect his changing condition.

Client has become a volunteer at the CAB.

Volunteering

Last year South East Staffordshire CAB helped 3,374 people with more than 4,000 different issues. We know from client feedback that, for some people, the advice and ongoing support they received had a significant impact and changed their life for the better. For others, a quick response to an e-mail enquiry was all that was needed to point the way towards the resolution of their problem. Without the contribution and commitment of our volunteers, our ability to change lives would have been greatly diminished.

Shortly after forming the Government, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, spoke about his vision for the Big Society and the three main principles of empowering individuals and communities, encouraging social responsibility and creating an enabling and accountable state. He talked of taking 'a range of measures to encourage volunteering and involvement in social action'. Most of us working in the CAB service will recognise that these principles have been in action within the service for many years and underpin much of what we do every day. The Citizens Advice service engages over 21,000 volunteers who work to provide local community services in over 3,000 locations across England and Wales. By collecting the data provided by over 2 million people no organisation is in a better position to engage thoroughly in local public service debates.

Number of volunteers during 2010/11	Number of Volunteers	Total Volunteer Hours per week
Trustee Board Members	8	9
Gateway Assessors and Generalist Advisers	43	249
Administrators	11	33
Receptionists	3	11
Total	65	302

During the course of the year South East Staffordshire CAB had 65 volunteers fulfilling a variety of roles; between them they worked over 302 hours a week; the paid equivalent of this contribution has been estimated at more than £244,320 a year. Our volunteers come from all walks of life; some have been with us for many years and some for just a few months, but each person brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm.



Training

Changes and improvements to the Adviser training programme have provided more flexibility and enabled advice volunteers to work with clients much earlier than was possible in the past, without compromising quality. The modular system makes full use of the latest e-Learning and online Bitesize training functions, as well as the more traditional ways of learning, such as training packs and supported practical experience. We have in place training programmes for Generalist Advisers, Gateway Assessors and Receptionists. We also provide in-house learning for the support roles in the Bureau.

The Bureau has an ongoing volunteer recruitment programme and this year, we have successfully recruited 15 Gateway Assessors/Advisers, 6 Administrators and 3 Receptionists.

To enable our staff and volunteers to keep up to date with developments and changes in law, the Bureau holds monthly training sessions, which are delivered by our in house specialists and speakers from other groups and organisations.

In 2010/11, training sessions included:

- Environmental Health
- Domestic Violence
- Credit Union
- Trading Standards
- Psychology of Debt
- Census 2011



Note from our Chief Executive

When talking about how advice changes lives we often forget the effect that volunteering can have on people's lives.

Our volunteers come from a range of different backgrounds with a variety of life experiences which they bring to bear in their role at the Bureau. For example one of volunteers has been a Receptionist in a commercial organisation and we have been able to use her knowledge and experience to review our practices and procedures when greeting clients to our offices.

Many of our volunteers who leave us do so to find paid employment or to access further education, the training and experience they are given at the Bureau enabling them to take advantage of new opportunities.

The enthusiasm of the volunteers is an inspiration to us all. They work tirelessly for the benefit of the local community and support one another in a busy office environment.

I consider it a privilege to work with them.

Client Case Study

Client is married with 2 dependant children. His wife works and they are buying their house.

Client was made redundant in the Spring of 2010 as a result of the failure of the company he worked for. Unfortunately he was owed wages, holiday pay, notice pay and redundancy pay, which his employer said they could not afford to pay. He did not receive P60 or P45.

When he applied for contribution based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) he discovered that his employer had not paid National Insurance contributions so there was a delay in paying benefit. This meant that he could not make a claim for insurance payments to cover the mortgage.

As he could not produce a P60 his daughter's application for Education Maintenance Allowance was disallowed. His wife's income is insufficient to cover all living costs and as a result savings were used to cover the mortgage and his wife sold her jewellery.

As a result of the stressful situation an existing health problem deteriorated resulting in him taking medication for stress and depression.

Following our intervention;

- JSA was put in payment, which meant that insurance covered mortgage payments
- His wife claimed Tax Credits and they claimed Council Tax Benefit
- Mr E claimed payments from his employer through an Employment Tribunal and has to date received £3,000 from the National Insurance Scheme. This has helped to replenish their savings but jewellery sold (much of which was of sentimental value) will never be recovered
- Mr E is now working 16 hours a week, which is giving him back his self respect and aiding his recovery.

Staff and Volunteers

Trustee Board

Claire Foulkes
Chris Edwards
Don Isaacs
John Thompson
Christine Zanin
Mary Danby
Martyn Tittley
Barry Diggle

Chair
Treasurer

Paid Staff

Sandra Cooper
Gillian Ede
Julie Lloyd
Katharine Osborne
Alan Thomas
Julie Burnett
James Oldfield
Viv Deacon
Ronnie Fraser
Lesley-Anne Jackson
Ashley Kpai
Jude Walker
Angela Watts
Reuben Horton
Lynette Gould
Michaela Plant

Chief Executive
Service Manager
Service Manager
Advice Session Supervisor
Advice Session Supervisor
Guidance Tutor
Senior Caseworker
Caseworker
Caseworker
Caseworker
Caseworker
Caseworker
Caseworker
Caseworker
Bureau Administrator
Administrator
Administrator

Volunteers

Dawn Adams-Heap
Moira Andre
Annette Andrews
Helen Bailey
David Baker
Megan Beacham
Suzanne Bennett
David Bill
Graham Black
Richard Bradbury
Hilary Brittain
Laurence Burford
Gerry Connock
Jackie Cooper
Debbie Corns
Les Cotterill
Sonia Coxon
Vicky Elliott
James Flintham
Edith Foden
Joan Fox
John French
Ann Gray
Tracey Hackett

Liz Hindle
Katy Hope
Denise Houghton
Peter Huckfield
Rowland Hughes
Ray Hunt
Denise Jacob
Lauren Jones
Deepti Kasthuri
Rubeena Kaur
Sukpreet Kaur
Linda Kendrick
David Kirk
Margaret Laybourn
Andrew Lenton
Joy Luff
Michael McNally
Roger Malcolm
Brian Maloney
Elaine Maloney
Alex Mason
Christine Monk
Kelli Morris
Reg Mycock

Marjorie Neilson
Brenda Pardoe
Mike Patmore
Mark Portlock
Andrea Pritchard
Stephen Prosser
Angharad Pugh
Ruth Rippon
Jade Rowley
Gerardus Schavemaker
Michael Sharman
Sarah Stublely
Pauline Trow
Colin Wall
Rebecca Ward
Diane Watson
Jane Whitehouse

Opening Times

Burntwood Office

Wade House, 7 Cannock Road, Burntwood, Staffs WS7 1JS

Drop-in: Monday 9.30-12.30
Tuesday 9.30-12.30
Wednesday 9.30-12.30



Lichfield Office

29 Levetts Fields, Lichfield, Staffs WS13 6HY

Drop-in: Monday 1.00-4.00
Wednesday 9.30-12.30
Friday 9.30-12.30



Outreach Sessions

Burntwood Health & Wellbeing Centre
High Street, Chasetown, Burntwood
Drop-in Thursday 5.00-7.00

Jigsaw Project
Dimbles Lane, Lichfield
Drop-in Tuesday (fortnightly) 10.00-12.00

The Westgate Practice
Greenhill Medical Centre, Church Street, Lichfield
Thursdays (Appointments only)

Telephone Advice

Adviceline Staffordshire: 08444 111 444 Monday-Friday 9.30-4.30

Email Advice

Available through our website: www.ses-cab.org

www.ses-cab.org

We would like to acknowledge with grateful thanks, our funders, who enable the Bureau to deliver the services that provide help to the people of our community.



Burntwood Town
Council



Lichfield City
Council



MICHAEL LOWE'S AND ASSOCIATED CHARITIES

THE MARY SLATER CHARITY