



Clients helped by  
Citizens Advice Bridport & District\*  
April 2018 to March 2019

 **2,513** people asked us for advice  with **6,679** issues



**2,608** benefit issues



**699** debt issues



**633** housing issues



**59%** of all activity was face to face advice



**£967,578** income gained



**£69,201** gained in debts written off

**44%** clients disabled or have long term condition, **27%** of whom had a mental health problem



**74** volunteers with an estimated value of **£407,506**

## **CITIZENS ADVICE BRIDPORT & DISTRICT SUMMARY IMPACT REPORT 2018-19**

### **2018-19**

Our workforce is made up of 6 part-time paid staff and 74 volunteers: 53 volunteer advisers, 13 volunteer support staff and 8 trustees. We continue to recruit good numbers of volunteers who want to make a difference in their community and are attracted by the comprehensive training offered by Citizens Advice. Collaboration with other local Citizens Advice offices (LCAs) and greater use of volunteer support has also enabled us to make efficiencies and reduce training costs.

The number of clients increased by 20% on the previous year. We also dealt with a larger number of issues with significant increases in Universal Credit problems. Much of our work is focussed on the most vulnerable with 44% reporting a disability or long term health problem. Many vulnerable clients require in depth face- to-face help and over half our clients access a face-to-face service from our main office, open 5 days per week, or from outreach locations. We have increased outreach provision in 2018-19 by providing services at the Lyme Medical Centre and local Food Banks.

Joint working and partnerships are important to us, demonstrated by our active role in the Local Advice Network (LAN) and Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP). We work in collaboration with other LCAs to staff the Dorset Adviceline providing access to telephone help 5 days a week which is particularly important given the rural nature of our area.

Our fundraising team has had a successful year and secured significant grants to help develop our specialist services and projects, including securing continuation funding for our benefit appeals worker, debt supervision and casework and a new project with West Dorset Mencap providing benefits and financial help to people with learning difficulties.

We are confident we provide a quality service demonstrated by excellent quality of advice and organisational audit results and positive client feedback consistently above the national average.

### **2019-20 and beyond**

We are part of a national Citizens Advice project from 1 April 2019 for claimants who need assistance making Universal Credit claims. This will give us an opportunity to test advice delivery through multiple channels including webchat. Additional grant funding secured will help us build on our capacity for debt work and manage demand.

Along with CITA and our network of LCAs we are constantly working to improve service delivery, including developing a joint website making it easier for clients to access support and advice.