



ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

**citizens
advice**

**Canterbury
District**

Charity No. 803115
Company Number 02483455
Citizens Advice Number 75/0001

The Citizen Advice Service Aims

To provide the advice people need for the problems they face

To improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives

The Citizens Advice Service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

Contacting us

Canterbury: Westgate Hall Road, Canterbury CT1 2BT

By appointment only. To book please phone 01227 452762

Herne Bay: 185-187 High Street, Herne Bay CT6 5AF

By Appointment only. To book please phone 01227 740647

Telephone Advice 0808 278 7846

www.citizensadvicecanterbury.org.uk

Online Advice, Web Chat & email:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/web-chat-service>



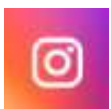
<https://twitter.com/CanterburyCAB>



<https://www.facebook.com/canterburycitizensadvice>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/citizens-advice-canterbury-district/>



<https://www.instagram.com/citizensadvicecanterbury>

OUR ORGANISATION

BOARD OF TRUSTEES Chair Andy Maysey ~ Hon. Treasurer David Cork ~ Hon. Secretary Dr. John Taylor
Trustees Brian Collins ~ Susan Record ~ Colin Jones ~ Abubakari Yakubu ~ Natalie Baylis

CORE STAFF Chief Officer Simone Field ~ District Service Manager Sarah Ciccone ~
Training Manager Sue Parker

Advice Session Supervisors Sue Parker ~ Heloise Barnard (Vol) ~ Julie Hannell (Vol) ~ Julie Wilson (Vol)
~Kate Cross (Vol)

WHITSTABLE OUTREACH Russell Feast*

ADVISER AND ASSISTANT TO THE DISTRICT SERVICE MANAGER Jenifer Amadi

MACMILLAN Senior Caseworker Alan Lawson ~ Assistant Senior Caseworker Sara Byrne
Caseworkers Clare Hanna ~ Janita Raiment ~ Ellie Cooley ~ Kate Cross

Support Workers Ellie Cooley ~ Charmaine Villiers*

IT CONSULTANTS Colin Jones (Vol) ~ Rod Lucy ~ Haydon Rouse

LEGAL ROTA CO-ORDINATOR Lesley Brierly

SHAW TRUST Project Manager Sue Parker*

Financial Capability Advisers Julie Hannell* ~ Jenifer Amadi*

HELP TO CLAIM Project Manager Sue Parker*

Trainee supervisors and Assistants to District Service Manager Julie Hannell* ~ Carrie Southby*

Advisers Carrie Southby* ~Peter Davis* ~ Kate Cross*~Taffney Clark-Piper *-Jeremy Cross*-Charmaine Villiers*

FINANCE Charlie Ferguson

VOLUNTEER ADVISERS

Canterbury Brian Middleton~ Terry Gabony ~ Gillian Grainger ~ Robert Veltman* ~

Ursula Fuller Julie Wilson ~ Sandy Monaghan ~ Paul Kusel ~ Kate Cross ~ Jane Stuart ~ Julie Hannell ~
Jeremy Cross (Benefits)

Herne Bay Howard Cohn (Benefits and Employment) ~ Kate Maguire ~ Mieke Vrijhof ~ Lena Relf

GATEWAY ASSESSORS

Canterbury Stephen Smith ~ Judy Seymour—Ure * ~ Syed Shah*

Herne Bay Russell Feast ~ Clare Hanna ~ Colin Boddy* ~ Robert Veltman* ~ Julie Hannell~
Helen Gardiner

ADMINISTRATORS

Canterbury Irene Sharp* ~ Katerina Dempli* ~ Jacqueline Man ~ Gill Cowperthwaite* ~
Kelly-Ann Williams

Herne Bay Shirley Bream* ~ Chris Clayton* ~ James Foley* ~ Eileen Griffiths ~ Diana Hill

BENEFITS FORM FILLERS Howard Cohn ~ Sally Hawkins

RESEARCH AND CAMPAIGNS Sarah Sayer*

DEBT CLINIC Advisers: Julie Hannell ~ Ursula Fuller ~ Lena Relf

DISTRICT TRAINEES Kate McGuire (Debt) ~ Michael Guy ~ Izzy Campbell ~ Jack Sullivan ~ Daniel Kirby*
~Miranda Pellacchia ~ Jessie Cloughly ~ Grace Higson ~ Jane Short

Trainee Supervisors Julie Hannell ~ Carrie Southby

* left the service or changed role

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

ANDY MAYSEY



As I write there is a whole host of issues which confront the Citizens Advice Canterbury District service. They range from “is the pandemic over and will we ever get back to normal?” to a cost of living and energy crisis with a side order of ever changing Prime Ministers.

I am afraid I do not have the answer to the first part but I am very pleased to report that, throughout the lockdown and subsequent easing of COVID restrictions our local Citizens Advice was able to maintain a service to clients and, more recently, has been able to reopen in a limited way to seeing clients on a face to face basis. Of course, there is a long way to go to operate as we did before the pandemic and this may be the new normal but the need for advice has not diminished. The success of this activity is entirely due to the tireless work of the staff and volunteers who deliver the service and their dedication and flexibility is much appreciated by me personally and my fellow trustee board members.

So, to the second part of my introductory statement. It comes as no real surprise that this winter will present our service with an increased pressure on our resources and we, the trustee board members and I, will do our utmost to ensure that needs are met both as far as the clients are concerned and the health and well being of our staff and volunteers.

Of course, nothing I can do is without the support of my fellow trustee members and I should like to thank them for their continued help, advice and support.

Clients Helped : 4276	Issues Advised On:13,793	Income Gained: £,6,995,210
Reimbursements £931	Debts Managed £476,301	Other Gains £301,330

IN MEMORY OF FORMER COLLEAGUES

Ian Macarthur
President
Retired Trustee



Ken Beere
Retired Adviser



Colin Boddy
Adviser



Gerry Mills
Retired Adviser



James Foley
Receptionist



REPORT FROM THE CHIEF OFFICER

SIMONE FIELD



The 2021- 22 year was another challenging one for us all. The rise and fall of the local Covid-19 rates meant we had to flex our service delivery channels in order to protect our clients, staff and volunteers and meet government regulations whilst continuing to deliver a high quality service to the local community.

Our main funding for the general welfare advice service changed from a contract to a grant during the year and forms part of a two year funding agreement from Canterbury City Council. We were again fortunate to be able to depend on the support of our colleagues at Canterbury Housing Advice Centre (CHAC) who have received a sub-grant from Citizens Advice Canterbury District which they use to support their service to advise local people about housing issues. I would like to thank all at CHAC for their help and support throughout the year.

During the year we also delivered a number of projects and dealt with the commissioning processes linked to their continuity.

Our Help To Claim (Universal Credit) service continued throughout the year and came to an end, for us, in March 2022 when the service transferred to Citizens Advice Swale . This project provided in depth advice and support to people making a new Universal Credit claim to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Our advisers checked whether potential Universal Credit claimants would be better off staying on legacy benefits, if they were already in receipt of these, then assisted them navigate the online Universal Credit claiming system. Where vulnerable clients were unable to access their benefits digitally the advisers assisted them by setting up three way calls with the DWP and helped clients to make telephone based claims instead. For our most vulnerable clients this service has been a lifeline and you can read more about some of the challenges we helped clients face in the Research and Campaigns section on page 12. I would like to thank all the HTC staff , including supervisors, case checkers and quality of advice assessors, for all their tremendous work on this complex project.

During the year our financial capability advisers Julie Hannell and Jennifer Amadi continued their excellent work to assist people affected by mental health issues deal with their finances, many thanks for your hard work. Similarly to Lesley Brierley for running the Pro Bono Family Legal Rota.

Demand for our Macmillan Welfare Benefits service expanded rapidly this year as the real cost of the pandemic became apparent in the increasing number of people facing cancer diagnoses at later stages of the disease. Late diagnoses meant that during the 2020-21 year 57% of our Macmillan clients came to us at the terminal stage, in 2019/20 this was 50%. Numbers of client cases opened rose from 676 clients in 2020/21 to 1000 in 2021/22 , this is a 48% increase. The pressure of client demand for help with their benefits whilst dealing with cancer prompted us to approach Macmillan for further funding and we are relieved to say that Macmillan has agreed and two new caseworkers will be recruited in the following financial year. My thanks again to all those involved in this service for their work above and beyond all expectations.

As always the staff and volunteers in the General Service have remained dedicated and robust, switching from home based telephone advising to video based interviewing within our offices, then switching back again as lockdowns rolled out across the country in time for Christmas. When permitted, the volunteers reverted to in-office work. Towards the end of March 2022 we prepared to return to face to face interviews and developed plans to advise at community hubs in our deprived wards. The volunteers' support and enthusiasm is invaluable and much appreciated.

REPORT FROM THE SERVICE MANAGER

SARAH CICCONE



Last year I started my report with the words “What a year”. I stand by that for this year also. Things didn't start off too well, still under lockdown rules, no mixing, no meeting up, non-essential shops still closed and people losing their jobs as businesses go bust. Our service is needed now more than ever, thankfully we have a wonderful team of volunteers who have worked tirelessly to help all of our clients get through this unprecedented time.

In the beginning of the year we were all still working from home and our clients were given telephone appointments. We still managed to offer our clients a regular service as if it had been a face to face appointment, forms were still being completed, benefit checks done, debts dealt with and all other enquiries also done with ease. Yes there were some issues, but there was always a way around it.

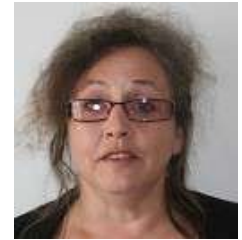
As the year went on the Covid rules started to relax a bit at a time. We were able to open our offices once again. We started with clients coming in and sitting in a separate room from the advisor, we then set up a video link between them and were able to advise safely. This worked well and more and more advisors decided that they would like to do this, enabling us to see more clients in the office. Eventually we dropped the video link and were able to see our clients face to face, it finally felt like things were getting back to normal. At this point we were able to offer our clients a choice of how they wanted to be seen, face to face, video link or telephone appointments were all on offer. Our clients were also happy that we could see them once again, although some still preferred the telephone option. So maybe one good thing has come out of the pandemic, we have managed to offer more of a service to our clients by giving them alternative ways of getting the advice they need.

Just as you think you are returning to some form of normality the next issue strikes. At the end of the year we were warned about a cost of living crisis and energy prices spiralling out of control with bills expected to be around £5000 a year. This would have an enormous effect on most of the population in the UK. For most of our clients it would mean making a choice between heating and eating. This would be horrendous for our clients, having already lost the Universal Credit uplift but as always we will be there to support and advise our clients to the best of our abilities.



REPORT FROM THE TRAINING MANAGER

SUE PARKER



Last year's report reflected on the fond memories of advisers who had left our service for various reasons during the initial stages of the pandemic and ended with looking forward to those new recruits who would become part of our team and they came indeed, and then they mostly left.

It's disappointing to see trainees leave given the commitment made by both the trainee and myself to their learning and development, but life happens and changes occur within the lives of individuals: opportunities for paid employment, health challenges within families and caring responsibilities arising that make continuation with volunteering impossible. Quite often the trainees themselves are disappointed that they have to leave.

Those who remained are now part of our advice team and are gaining competence and confidence in their roles, and these are our success stories, but we remain in the same position as we were this time last year with a need to recruit trainee volunteer advisers to rebuild our team back to the number of advisers we had pre-pandemic.

To those who have trained remotely due to office closure and to those who weathered the emergence of a new digital training platform engineered by Citizens Advice with its teething problems, I both thank you for your patience and commitment and I congratulate you that despite the problems we faced you have become such fantastic advisers. You make my job such a pleasure!



Congratulations to our newly qualified Advisers/Supervisors

Adviser - Jack Sullivan

Supervisor - Julie Wilson

Julie Hannell

Carrie Southby

ADVISER JACK SULLIVAN'S COMMENTS ON BECOMING A CITIZENS ADVICE ADVISER

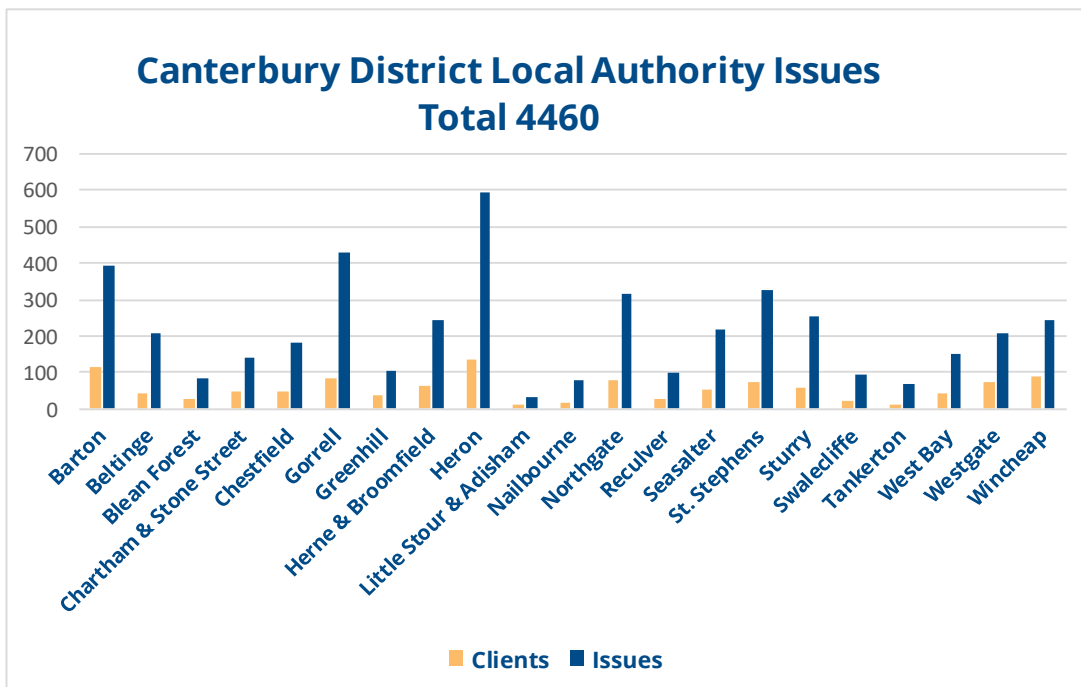


Volunteering for Citizens Advice was one of the best decisions I made whilst studying at university. My supervisors were extremely flexible and so I was able to mould my volunteering hours around my university deadlines and take days off for revision and other commitments as and when required.

Whilst on the topic of supervisors, I must add that I felt fully supported throughout my time at Citizens Advice and whilst at times I felt daunted by the amount of training required or the gravity of a particular issue I was advising on, the strong support system in place ensured I never felt out of my depth.

Personally, the two main reasons I volunteered at my local bureau were to help resolve local issues that were of concern to me and to aid my legal studies (I was taking my undergraduate law degree at the time). This opportunity gave me the platform to offer advice on a range of serious issues from child contact to domestic abuse to the issuing of food bank vouchers. I doubt anything will be able to compare to the sense of reward and satisfaction that comes from a client telling you how grateful they are for your help on some of these issues. In light of this, I certainly feel my first reason for volunteering had been satisfied. Similarly, the diverse areas of law covered ensured that I was able to get the most out of my legal education.

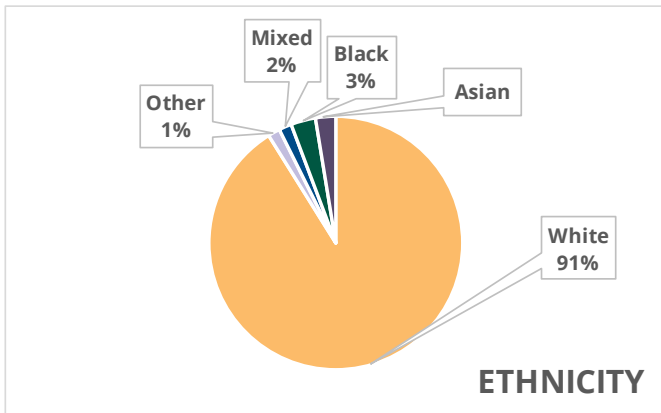
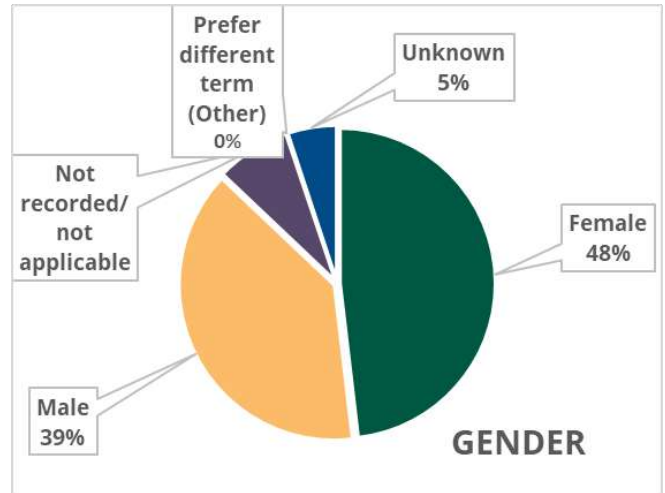
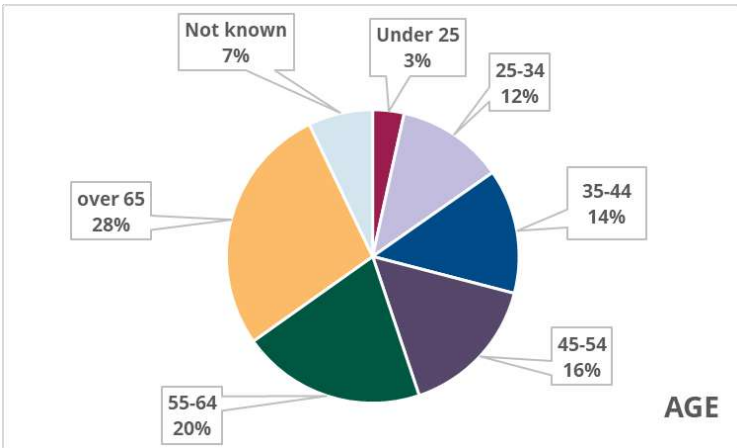
Studying books at university will only ever get you so far and I truly feel that my first class degree is directly attributable to being able to apply my university learning to practical real life situations at Canterbury Citizens Advice. I therefore highly recommend any student, particularly if you've got an interest in law or other social sciences, to take up the initiative and volunteer at your local bureau. You won't regret it.



MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

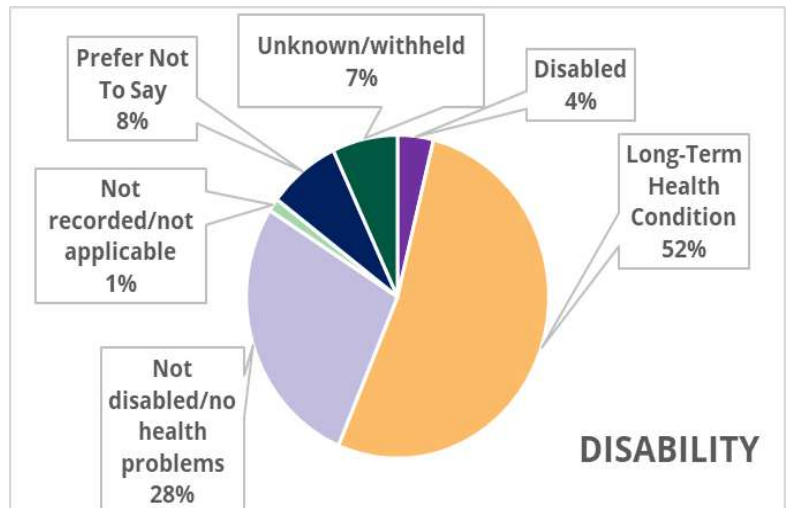
Number of people who began receiving support during the year <i>(Does not include returning clients if returning within 6 months)</i>	1000
Number broken down by people accessing the service:	
-Without a cancer diagnosis	8
-Without a cancer diagnosis but were supported as they are close to someone who did (e.g. carer)	25
-With a cancer diagnosis but the point in their cancer journey was not clear or not recorded	10
-Receiving a cancer diagnosis	59
-Undergoing treatment or in recovery from treatment	327
-Receiving palliative care or towards end of life (e.g. including people supported with DS1500 claims)	571
Total	1000
Number of people returning for further support during the year <i>(Includes clients returning within 6 months)</i>	12
Number of people who finished receiving support during the year	831
Number who finished receiving support broken down by the levels of support provided	
-Number provided with Information and signposting	1
-Number provided with Advice and Guidance (including basic casework)	4
-Number provided with Advice and Guidance (including basic casework and form filling)	0
-Number provided with complex advice and/or casework involving negotiation and/or advocacy that did not include benefit challenges and appeals (including any case where the total time to provide advice exceeds 30 minutes)	792
Number provided with Casework involving negotiation and/or advocacy that included benefit challenges and appeals	22
Total	831
Confirmed ongoing claims for cases closed	£2,529,723
One-off lump sums, excluding any Macmillan Grant awards	£74,352
A reduced liability (e.g. following a challenge against a benefit overpayment decision)	£9,3634
Blue Badges gained	£113,800
Macmillan Grants	£132,850

OUR CLIENT PROFILE

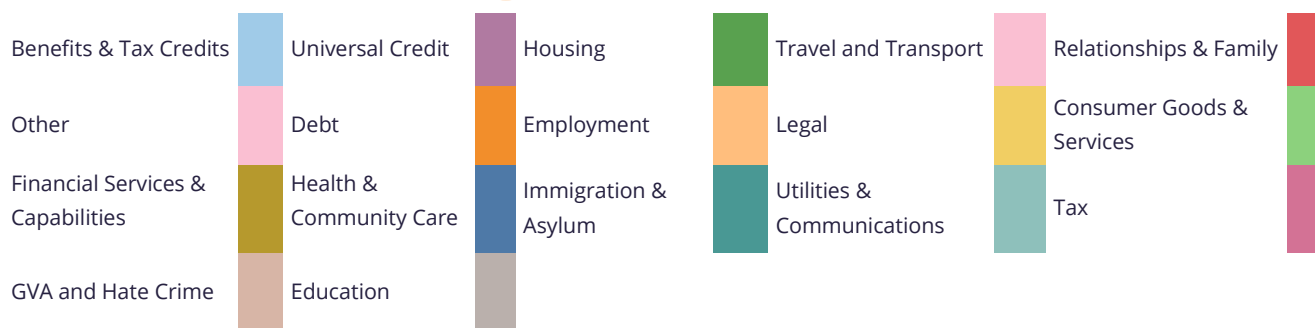
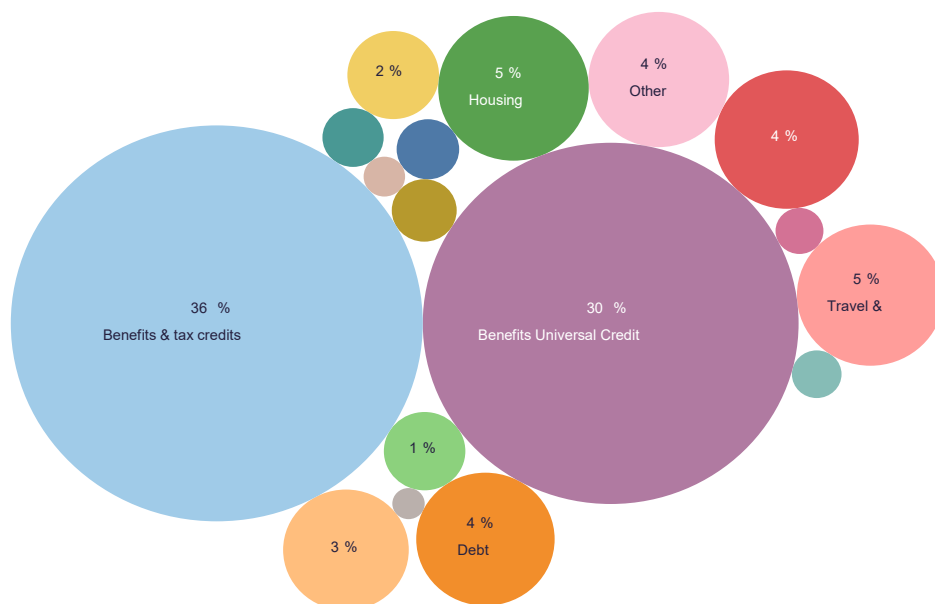


Breakdown of Disability

Cognitive Impairment	4
Hard of hearing	5
Learning Difficulty	7
Mental Health	196
Multiple Impairments	370
Not recorded/not applicable	1,587
Other Disability or Type Not Given	60
Physical Impairment (non-sensory)	1,027
Visual Impairment	8



ISSUES FOR THE YEAR



TOP ISSUES			
Benefits & Tax Credits		Relationships and Family	
PIP	1417	Divorce, Separation	191
Attendance Allowance	755	Dissolution	
Council Tax Reduction	515	Children	92
Other Benefits Issues	497	Death and Bereavement	84
Employment Support		Child Maintenance:	
Allowance	464	non-resident parent & family	14
		Social Services & Support	14
Universal Credit		Employment	
Initial Claim	1583	Pay & entitlements	110
Limited Capability for Work		Dismissal	58
Elements	592	Dispute Resolution	54
Housing Element	506	Terms and Conditions of	
Standard Element	420	Employment	41
Calculation of Income, Earnings &		Resignation	26
Capital	417		
Debt		Housing	
Other Debt	77	Private Sector Rented Property	201
Council tax Arrears	61	Environmental and Neighbour	58
Debt Assessment	43	Issues	
Fuel Debts	33	Local Authority Housing	54
Breathing Space Moratorium	29	Other Housing Issues	45
		Owner Occupier Property	37

Unrecorded Numbers are omitted

RESEARCH & CAMPAIGNS

- ⇒ Responsible for delivering Covid-19 Emergency Fund of £30,000 to clients in emergency need due to Covid-19.
- ⇒ Citizens Advice campaign #KeepTheLifeline to retain the UC uplift: statistics on Canterbury District Universal Credit claimants and profile of claimants plus a local case study sent to MP Rosie Duffield urging her to support the call for retaining £20 p/w UC uplift. We received a supportive response from MP 08.09.21. Despite this, uplift in Universal Credit was not maintained.
- ⇒ We wrote to MP Rosie Duffield asking her to raise a question in Parliament about the assessment and monitoring of the results of digital and telephone based welfare benefit tribunals compared to the results of in-person tribunals, provided evidence of local impact. MP submitted written question to Parliament about this and we await a result. We reported this work to National Citizens Advice through their Local Action Report Form procedure.
- ⇒ We invited Herne Bay MP Roger Gale to the Macmillan Coffee Morning to protect the NHS cancer workforce to make sure cancer does not become the forgotten 'C', highlighting cancer and the devastating impact it has on lives.
- ⇒ Wrote to MP Gale asking him to support Jeremy Hunt's cross-party workforce amendment to the Health and Care Bill to create a legal duty for the Government to publish projections of NHS workforce gaps every two years. This would hold the Government to account on delivering enough doctors and nurses to provide essential care. MP confirmed he was one of the signatories of the amendment. Despite our MP's support the vote went against.
- ⇒ We assisted a client with complaints to various government departments following a problem she had in relation to her benefits. The client was in receipt of Carers Allowance and became entitled to State Retirement Pension (SRP) on reaching state pension age. Due to the overlapping benefits rule the Carers Allowance should have been deducted from the SRP and the client's SRP paid up to her entitlement level. However the DWP completely failed to pay the SRP. The Carers Allowance was also then stopped as they thought the SRP had replaced it resulting in client missing out on hundreds if not thousands of pounds and ended up in rent arrears. The adviser noted that many other people have been facing delays in their State Retirement Pension and was the subject of a recent article in the Guardian. Our Benefit Adviser Jeremy Cross contacted DWP in a 3-way call with the client, fed back the advice from our Expert Advice Team that DWP had no legal basis for delaying payment of the SRP and demanded resolution within 5 days. The client's SRP was paid 4 days later.
- ⇒ Submitted evidence to the National Citizens Advice Network Panel Surveys in January, March, June, July, August, November & December.
- ⇒ Used the National Citizens Advice 5 Key Tweets to promote Research and Campaign issues through Facebook and Twitter.
- ⇒ Worked with Help To Claim (HTC) Best Practice Lead at Maidstone Citizens Advice contributing cases and feedback, e.g. reported a case where DWP Adviser insisted on going through a long list of questions with a vulnerable client, mostly irrelevant, call took nearly two hours, client so distressed daughter had to take over. Client's telephone connection lost at one point and DWP operator refused to ring client back, our HTC adviser had to ring the client back and start the application all over again with another DWP representative. Referred to DWP National Team as example of poor practice. Client said 'he could not have coped without HTC adviser's support'.
- ⇒ We received feedback from NHS England that views from our Macmillan Welfare Benefits Service about non-emergency patient support had helped improve non-emergency patient transport services: NHS England report 'Improving non-emergency patient transport services. Report of the non-emergency patient transport review. August 2021.'
- ⇒ We participated in a trial to allow direct referrals from Healthcare Professionals into the Macmillan Remote Psychotherapy Service. Following a thorough evaluation of the pilot service and a review by the Macmillan Innovation Board, it was decided that the remote psychotherapy service will be continued long-term, with ambitions to expand it in the following year. We continue to refer clients.

ACCOUNTS

THE CANTERBURY DISTRICT C.A.B

Summary Statement of Financial Activities (including Income & Expenditure Account)

for the year ended 31st March 2022

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Income		
Canterbury City Council	160,728	160,728
Canterbury City Council Covid Grant	-	20,000
Macmillan Cancer Sup- Money Advice Service	157,719	142,132
Shaw Trust	10,262	18,272
Help to Claim B E I S Equip- ment Fund	6,250	12,500
Other Grants and Funding	73,979	73,581
Donations	5,409	9,010
Rental Income	22,124	21,105
Bank Interest	4,141	3,919
	7,287	11,538
	7	17
	447,906	472,802
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	324,027	312,754
Establishment Costs	35,917	24,711
Travelling Costs	1,430	919
Administra- tion Costs	3,325	3,923
Client Support Costs	96,641	100,196
	461,340	442,503
(Deficit)/ Surplus on total funds for	(13,434)	30,299
Arising from		
Unrestricted funds (Deficit)/	(2,680)	30,299
Restricted funds (Deficit)	(10,754)	-
(Deficit)/ Surplus on total funds for	(13,434)	30,299

Summary Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2022

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Fixed Assets	226,891	231,018
Current Assets		
Debtors and Prepayments	52,365	25,278
Cash at Bank and in Hand	90,287	134,878
	142,652	160,156
Less: Liabilities	19,664	27,861
	122,988	132,295
Net Assets	349,879	363,313
Being:		
Unrestricted Funds		
General Fund	96,124	94,677
Designated Funds		
Property Fund	226,878	231,005
Management & Maintenance Fund	26,877	26,877
Restricted Funds		
Legacy Fund	-	10,754
	349,879	363,313
<p>The funding from Canterbury City Council amounted to £160,728 (2021: £160,728) this included funding for Canterbury Housing Advice Centre, to whom payments of £57,862 (2021: £57,863) were made. This sum is included in Client Support Costs. We are grateful to the Council for their support.</p>		
<p>The funding from Macmillan Cancer Support continued in the year and £157,719 (2021: £142,132) was received.</p>		
<p>Help to Claim is funded by Citizens Advice to support clients in the early stages of their Universal Credit claim and £73,979 (2021: £73,581) was received.</p>		
<p>A copy of the full accounts is available and will be filed shortly with Companies House and the Charity Commission. These full accounts include a statement explaining The Board of Trustees responsibility for the charity's accounts and a statement that it has complied with the relevant standards.</p>		

CANTERBURY DISTRICT CITIZENS ADVICE

Advice and help for all in Canterbury, Herne Bay, Whitstable and Rural Areas

GENERAL ADVICE

Benefits Debt Housing Relationships Employment Immigration Health Consumer
Finance Education Tax Utilities

SPECIALIST SERVICES

Macmillan Welfare Benefits Advice for people affected by Cancer
Pro-Bono Family Legal Advice



OUR THANKS GO TO OUR FUNDERS



- * Canterbury City Council for Welfare Benefits and Housing Advice Grant Funding
- * Macmillan Cancer Support for Funding Welfare Benefits Advice Service In East Kent
- * The National Lottery -Awards for All: Building a Covid-secure environment
- * Streyntsham's Trust - Support of the residents of St Dunstan's Parish
- * Money and Pensions Advice Service - Debt Adviser Training
- * Shawtrust - Financial Capability training for people with mental health Issues
- * Hythe Ladies Probus Society
- * The Dean & Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral
- * Client Donations



WITHOUT YOU WE CANNOT HELP THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED

- * Join us and become an advisor, an administrator, a trustee or a fundraiser contact us: training@hernebaycab.cabnet.org.uk
- * If you would like to remember Canterbury Citizens Advice in your Will please contact the Chief Officer, Simone Field: distman@canterburycab.org.uk



Registered charity number 803115

Our thanks go to Diana Hill and Haydon Rouse for the design of this report

Citizens Advice Canterbury District 2022. Citizens Advice Canterbury District
is an operating name of The Canterbury District C.A.B