

Citizens Advice Havant

Annual Review 2017/18



Citizens Advice Havant; formerly Havant and District Citizens Advice Bureau
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN: 617630
Charity Registration no 1111564

Company Limited by Guarantee Registration no 5517228, Registered in England
Registered Office: Leigh Park Community Centre, Dunsbury Way, Havant, Hampshire. PO9 5BG
www.citizensadvicehavant.org



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55th Year; formed in 1963



Citizens Advice Havant (CAH) is a highly regarded advice agency providing free, independent, confidential, impartial and high quality advice to local people on their rights and responsibilities. Our clients are our priority and volunteers are at the heart of our organisation, being the main workforce delivering the service. We strive to ensure that our services are accessible and are available throughout our community. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

We empower clients to help themselves by supplying excellent, accurate information and advice that can be accessed face to face, over the phone and online. Clients can also help to make a difference by allowing us to use their evidence to influence changes in unfair policies and practices at a local and national level. Our services are free to clients and funded by local grants and fundraising.

CAH is an independent registered charity with no national core funding from either central government or the national Citizens Advice service. Havant Borough Council is our valued principal partner and funder. We are also funded by local grants, donations, fundraising activity and project delivery. We work in partnership with a number of other local and regional organisations to ensure that our advice is part of the wider network of support to local people.

We tailor our advice and allocate our resources to meet our clients' needs, whatever stage their problem may have reached or the level of support and advice that is needed.

Some people come to us with quick questions: they may want to double-check a piece of information or ensure they have chosen the best course of action. After ensuring that there are no further underlying issues, we are likely to support these clients through signposting or self-help, enabling them to deal with their query quickly and effectively.

For others their situation may rest on a knife edge. We help people who have reached crisis point and need urgent help and more in depth support and advice. They may have bailiffs due that day, their energy supply may be about to be disconnected or their home might be about to be repossessed. It may have taken a lot of personal courage to decide to seek help and some clients need very specialist advice and in depth support.

Over the past three to four years, we have seen our client issues becoming more complex; mirroring life. Poor mental health is rising across all age groups. There is continual change in government policy and practice. Welfare cuts; employment limitations; the rising cost of living/housing; means that navigating life is harder than ever; especially for young people, low income families and carers. Many of our clients are the Government's recently labelled 'just about managing' category.

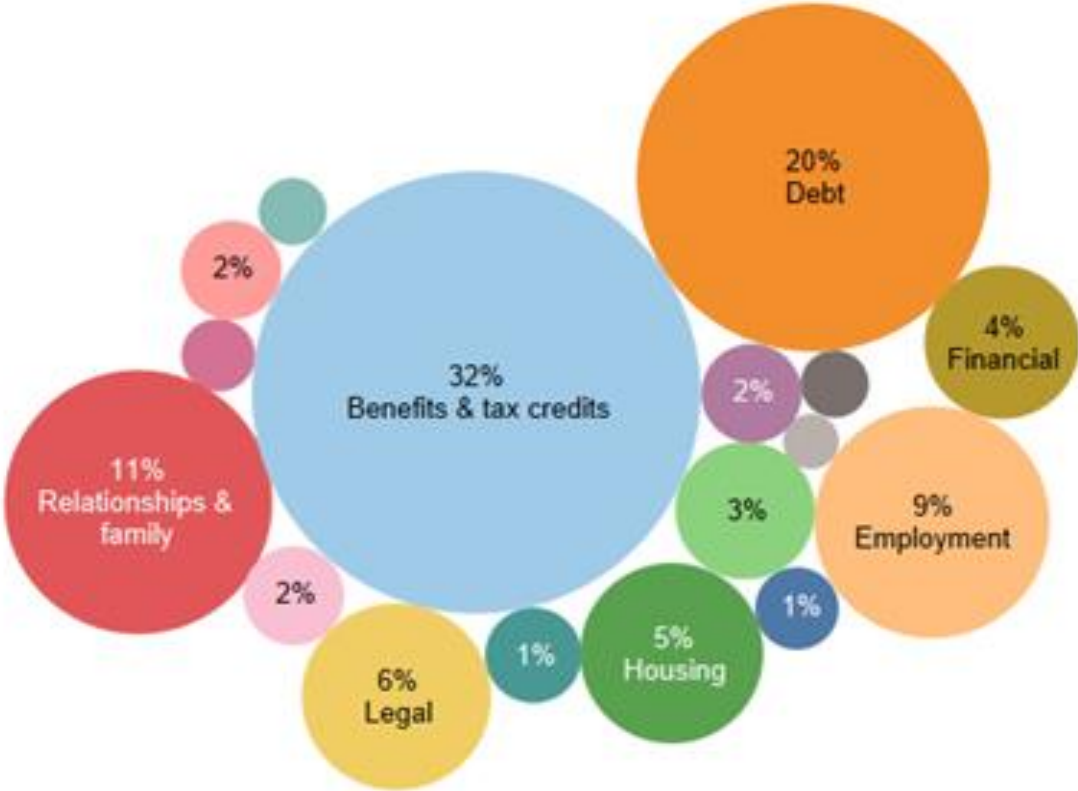
Whatever the issue we are supportive and non-judgemental and we do our best to help people find an appropriate, sustainable way forward and to improve their life chances and wellbeing.

In 2017/18 we helped 6,400 clients with approaching 10,000 issues. Of our core clients; 59% were female, 41% were male; 42% classed themselves as disabled or as having a long term health condition; 95% classed themselves as white; 32% of the advice given related to benefits and tax credits; 20% was debt related; about one third of our client contact was face to face – we also gave advice on the phone, by letter, email and webchat

Funding in 2017/18:

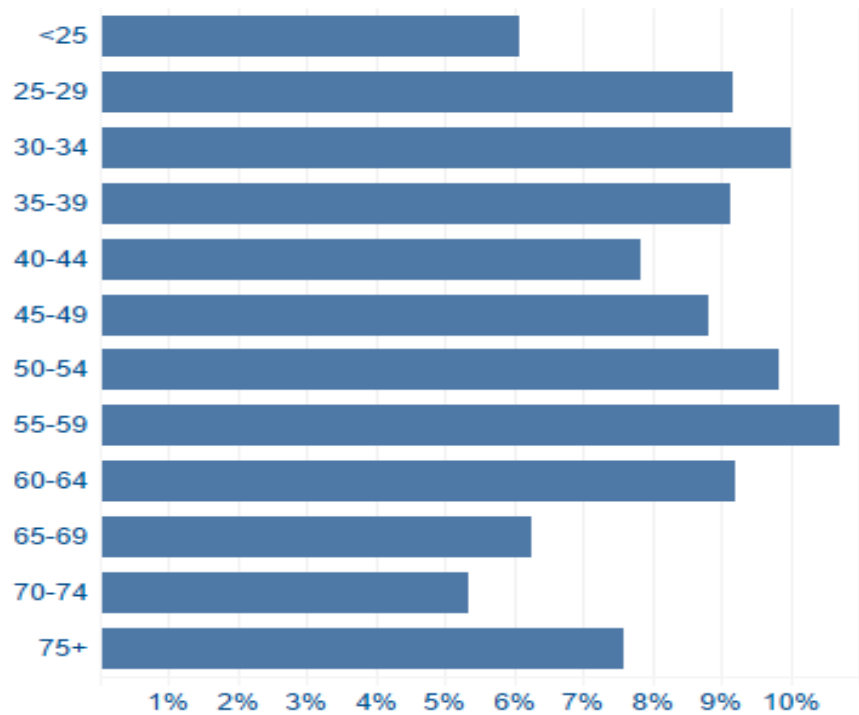
Havant BC	£114,000	Lowest per head of pop'n of all Borough/Districts in Hants
Big Lottery	£100,000	Workoutyourmoney project
CitAH	£74,000	Healthwatch Hampshire contracted service
CitAH	£32,000	Macmillan casework contracted service
Other	£14,000	Local fundraising and smaller projects
Total	£334,000	
Volunteers	£360,000	Value of our 61 volunteers using ONS data

Client issues



- Benefits & tax credits
- Benefits Universal Credit
- Consumer goods & services
- Debt
- Discrimination
- Education
- Employment
- Financial services & capability
- Health & community care
- Housing
- Immigration & asylum
- Legal
- Other
- Relationships & family
- Tax
- Travel & transport
- Utilities & communications

Age



Gender



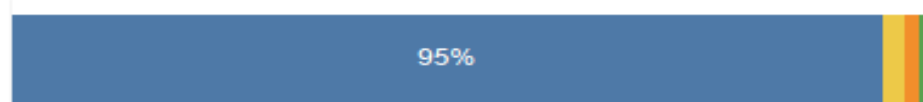
- Female
- Male
- Prefer different t..

Disability / Long-term health



- Disabled
- Long-term health condition
- Not disabled/no health problems

Ethnicity



- White
- Black
- Asian
- Mixed
- Other

Chief Executive Report for 2017/18

This is my ninth AGM report as CAH reach 55 years. Researching the history of Havant and photos of the 1960's, I was struck by two features; firstly the number of prams and children in all the photos of the then newly developed and expanded Leigh Park and secondly the number of retail and motoring brands that featured so prominently then, but which have now disappeared. It's a reminder that nothing stays the same for long; all those children in the then modern Greywell shopping precinct are now close to retirement and household names they grew up with such as Woolworths, Victor Value, Dewhurst, Morris and Austin have all gone and Greywell is now tired and run down. Citizens Advice nationally celebrates its 80th anniversary next year and even though we are a household name and a well-respected brand, there is key work to do to secure our future.

Looking at CAH locally, there is a huge challenge in trying to guide a small organisation such as ours into a more certain future when we face continuous change and severe external pressures. The current landscape sees ...

- Less money to fund vital services across the public sector – the greatest source of income across our service. We see partners often shrinking services, and funders facing very tough spending decisions; resorting to often very expensive commissioning processes; public services being increasingly stretched and fragmented. Competition has been more damaging than productive; often reducing rather than increasing collaboration
- Client issues becoming more complex; mirroring life; with poor mental health rising across all age groups.
- Continual change in government policy and practice. Welfare cuts; employment limitations; the rising cost of living/housing; means that navigating life is harder than ever; especially for young people, low income families and carers
- Significant growth and use of digital technology by all sections of the population but especially a new generation who communicate and find information almost solely by digital means and who expect to access services when it is convenient to them
- A changing face of volunteering with more demand on the traditional resource of older volunteers who increasingly have to work or look after grandchildren, as well as the need for both parents to work, makes attracting and retaining volunteers need a different approach

I wish to recognise and thank all those who make it possible for us to provide this much valued local advice service, particularly our team of skilled and committed volunteers providing our front-line advice services. Also to our staff, our trustees, as well as our long term partners and funders; particularly Havant Borough Council, and our recent main project funders, the Big Lottery.

2017/18 has proved to be another challenging year; here are our major areas of work during the year:

- Client numbers continued at the plateau level reached in 2012/13. Welfare benefit issues are the dominant issue due to the ongoing Government reforms, but there was also a climb in numbers/complexity on employment issues
- Benefit to the local community of our services has been assessed at £4.5M per annum using an HM Treasury approved modelling tool
- The 'workoutyourmoney' project which commenced in early 2014, using Big Lottery Reaching Communities funding, provided money skills across the local community alongside and the school based programme focused on the next generation. Big lottery funding ended in March 2018 and work progressed on designing a phase B project
- Casework funded by Macmillan Cancer Support continued to undertake invaluable work for local clients. Macmillan funding continues on a year by year arrangement.
- Hosting of the Healthwatch Hampshire NHS Complaints Advocacy Service continued, with a small team operating from a Havant base covering the Hampshire area. The contract ends in 2018/19.
- Citizens Advice national membership now has a performance quality framework (PQF) which requires us to undertake continuous advice quality assurance and leadership self-assessment
- Significant resources were consumed to ensure we won a commissioned contract with Havant BC for our core funding; which is the lowest per head of population of any District/Borough in Hampshire
- Locally high deprivation levels impacted on client numbers and their capability; to be exacerbated by the arrival of Universal Credit late in 2018. This is accompanied by rising housing and homeless issues; rising mental health and care issues and the newly emerging threat of returning debt issues due to rising inflation on the cost of living.

Looking forward, I cannot be wholly confident that the team will cope with the multiple funding and service delivery challenges being presented, but we will continue to focus on supporting those in need in our local community. To succeed we will need to be creative with how we work and who we partner with, and be persuasive with compelling evidence for our funders.

Jon Stuart, Chief Executive

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Many thanks to our partners, sponsors and funders ...

- Havant Borough Council
- Big Lottery
- Citizens Advice
- Citizens Advice Hampshire
- Communities First Wessex
- Hampshire County Council
- Healthwatch Hampshire
- Local legal firms including Swains and Verisona Law
- Macmillan Cancer Support
- Our local donors and funders
- Our workoutyourmoney delivery partners