

CORNWALL CITIZEN

Help us Reshape our Services After Lockdown

After a hectic few months converting our service to work from home, answering thousands of queries about furloughing, claiming benefits, dealing with debt, applying for business grants and administering foodbank vouchers our thoughts are turning to the post-lockdown future.

Citizens Advice Cornwall Chief Executive, Gill Pipkin, said:

"The lockdown has given us a rare opportunity to look at how we could improve our services in the longer term, reach more people in real need, explore new ways of contacting us and working more efficiently with our limited resources.

"We know the demand for independent, accurate and free advice is going to massively increase after the lockdown and it's vital that people in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly have somewhere to turn to. That's why it's essential we start planning now."

How You Can Help

Citizens Advice is part of the community and we need your suggestions about how we can reach more people in your area. We can consider running more outreach services, making use of technology to deal with more cases online or via webchat and social media, finding new ways to reach more remote rural areas and making sure people know how to access our services.

We may need to recruit new volunteers but we need to find safe places for them to work and to meet clients confidentially. Our annual budget is reducing so are there any ways you or organisations you work with might be able to support us? Email your comments to gill.pipkin@citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk



What else does Citizens Advice do in Cornwall?

Citizens Advice is known for its general advice service, which provides free guidance to everyone on a wide range of subjects, from benefits to consumer problems. But we also run a wide range of specialist projects across the county. Here's a brief rundown:

DEBT ADVICE SERVICE: Provides paid specialist debt case workers, working across Cornwall, funded by the Money Advice Service.

MACMILLAN CANCER CARE AND SUPPORT: Case workers provide specialist welfare benefits advice to anyone who has, or has had, a cancer diagnosis. The team covers the county and works at the Cove Macmillan Support Centre at the Royal Cornwall Hospital, Truro.

MONEY MATTERS: This team works from Cornwall Council's network of Family Hubs working with financially vulnerable families to build-up their money management and household budgeting skills.

PENSIONWISE: Free, unbiased guidance for everyone aged 50-plus with a defined contribution pension pot. Covers what the government's new pension freedoms mean and retirement options (but not financial advice).

FINANCIAL CAPABILITY: Aims to improve the level of financial skills in the population, especially the more vulnerable, to help prevent problems resulting from poor money management and co-ordinating the work of partner organisations across Devon and Cornwall.

VICTIM CARE UNIT: Provides advice for victims of crime, ranging from welfare benefits and employment to housing, relationship breakdown, domestic violence and debt.

FAMILY COURT DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT SERVICE: Offers practical information about the court process and emotional support to help victims feel more confident about attending family court hearings.

RESEARCH AND CAMPAIGNS: Detailed, in-depth research into the problems experienced by our clients locally and feeds into national databases. Lobbies and campaigns government, local authorities, public agencies and business groups for changes to improve people's lives. Also carries out public information campaigns on a wide range of issues, such as avoiding scams, switching energy suppliers and consumer issues.

Our Value to Society

It's impossible to put a financial value on everything we do - but where we can, we have. We have used a Treasury approved model to demonstrate our financial impact in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly:

In 2018/19 for every £1 invested in the Citizens Advice Cornwall service we generated at least:

£2.81 in savings to government and public services (fiscal benefits)

By helping stop problems occurring or escalating, we reduce the pressure on public services such as health, housing or our-of-work benefits.

Total £2.6 million

£11.43 in wider economic and social benefits (public value)

Solving problems improves lives – and this means better wellbeing, participation and productivity for people we help.

Total £12.3 million

£18.80 in value to the people we help (financial outcomes following advice)

Through our advice, we can increase people's income. We can help them get debts written-off, take up benefits they're entitled to or get compensation for their consumer problems.

Total £18.0 million





News headlines...

Fundraising Appeal

This summer, Citizens Advice Cornwall has launched an emergency fundraising appeal. Because of the increased demand caused by the coronavirus lockdown, we're taking on more volunteers to help with calls about benefits, housing, employment and relationship breakdowns. We need additional funds to buy headsets and laptops so our workers can work safely from home.

- £5 would buy an initial 20 minute telephone assessment for a someone in need
- £30 would buy a headset for an adviser to take calls
- £50 would buy a full advice session

If you can help, please donate via the "donate" button on our website: www.citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk

If you know an organisation that offers grants or may be interested in sponsorship opportunities please contact gill.pipkin@citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk

New Project for NEETs in N and SE Cornwall

Citizens Advice has launched £Wise-up - a new project targeted at NEETs - people who are not engaged in education, employment and training. Work has begun to recruit advisers who will work intensively with people in this category, to help build-up their household budgeting skills and help them handle money matters. The project will work in areas of deprivation in North and SE Cornwall and is funded by the European Social Fund via Community Led Local Development.

Contacting Citizens Advice in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

Although our offices and outreach operations are closed during the Covid19 restrictions, we are still continuing to offer our services to the public:



Text ADVICE to 78866 or for debt issues, text DEBT to 78866 and we'll call you back within 48 hours (excluding bank holidays and weekends).



Call us on 03444-111444 Mondays to Fridays between 10am and 4pm.



Check our [website](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) at www.citizensadvice.org.uk for useful, up-to-date information on a wide range of subjects and to take part in a webchat session.

FOR THE MACMILLAN CANCER ADVICE SERVICE:

Our office in The Cove at the Royal Cornwall Hospital is closed during the coronavirus outbreak but our advisers are still working. Please email macmillan@citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk

...or call 01872-672090. Callers will be asked to leave a message, and can expect a call back within 24 hours (excluding weekends).

PLEASE NOTE: All phone calls are charged at your normal rate.

HELP US HELP YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY:

Citizens Advice Cornwall is a local charity which depends on grants and donations. Please consider making a contribution to our work by using the DONATE button on our website.

