

Stories from the Frontline

How We Help People Overcome Problems...

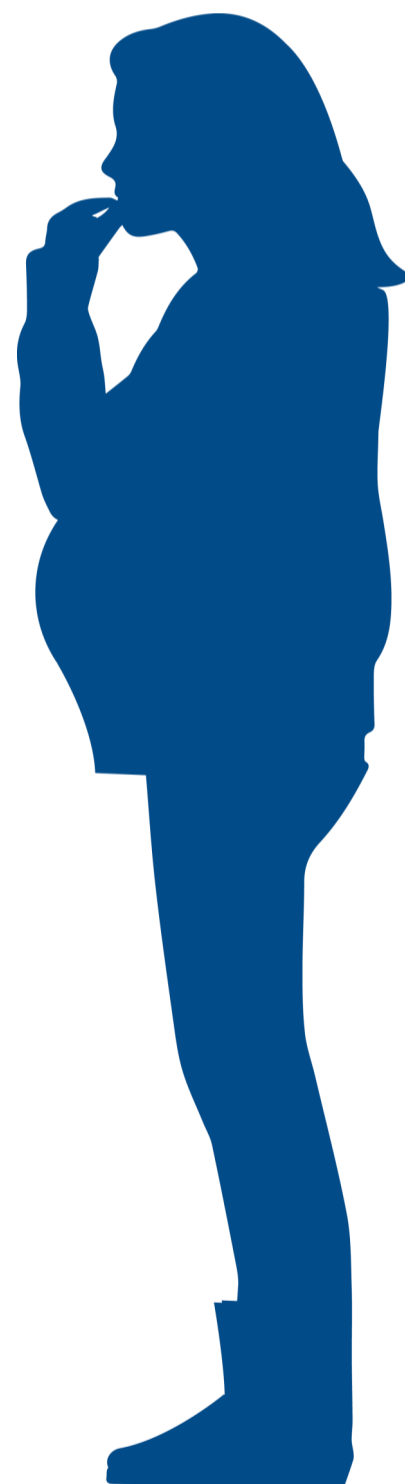
Pre-covid, Zara was a teaching assistant working for an agency as a bank worker in South East Cornwall.

She was staying with friends because she had fled an abusive relationship - but had just found a flat and things were looking up.

Then Covid 19 hit - she lost her flat because the landlord would not let anyone new rent from him. She also found out she was pregnant and in the high risk group because of an existing heart condition. She came to Citizens Advice with multiple issues and feeling very upset and confused.

HOW WE HELPED ZARA

Homelessness - Although she was staying with friends sofa surfing, they had confused lockdown rules and allowed visitors, but she needed to strictly self-isolate as she was high risk. We helped her get into emergency housing to keep her safe and then helped her apply for a charity grant for rent in advance to secure a new home of her own - with a further grant to get a carpet to make it warmer for when the baby came. (Continued on Page 2)



Frontline Stories (continued)

Money: We also helped by advising her on entitlement to benefits, such as Maternity Allowance/ Surestart Maternity Grant, Child Benefit, Council Tax Support and Universal Credit.

Employment: Because Zara was high risk and pregnant the agency she was working for said that none of the schools they worked with would give her any work and, as she was on a zero hours contract, she did not feel she could complain. We pointed out that if there was work and the reason she was not being given hours was directly due to her pregnancy this was discriminatory - she managed to use this information to negotiate with her agency and they furloughed her for the duration of lockdown.

Debt: Because she had no work from her employer and her income reduced on furlough she got into a bit of debt - we have helped her apply for a Debt Relief Order.

Speaking to BBC Radio Cornwall about her situation, Zara, who has now had her baby, said: **"I'm so grateful to my adviser at Citizens Advice. She really helped me through all the different problems I was facing and was really reassuring to know someone was on my side and helping to get things done."** (Name changed for confidentiality)

Why we need your help

Citizens Advice provided help for **almost 10,000 people** across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly last year and the predicted long term effects of lockdown means this number is **likely to increase substantially** in the next few months and years.

Chief Executive, Gill Pipkin, said: "To continue providing this level of service we need to raise around **£100k every year** to pay for our ongoing IT, training, office and staff costs.

"Although we receive a grant from Cornwall Council, under our five year agreement, this funding has reduced as the council has had to find its own savings because of the national squeeze on local authority spending.

"That is why we are seeking support and donations from other sources. We are very grateful to those charitable funds and parish councils that have helped out but **we still need to raise more money.**"

If you are able to help with a donation, or know a business or organisation that may be able to help, please contact Business Development Manager, Pippa Cann - pippa.cann@citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk



News Update...



Lights, Cameras, Action!

Citizens Advice Cornwall is working on three new videos to help people understand the basics about claiming benefits, dealing with debt and the work of Citizens Advice. The videos are being made with Porthleven-based production company, Crow Creative, and are funded by the Government's Covid Recovery Fund via the Charities Aid Foundation.

New Website Now Online

Our website has a much-needed new look following a complete redesign. The website is now much easier for people to navigate and find the information they need. There are clear, easy to follow links to Debt, Benefits, Consumer, Employment and Housing issues among others, and simple navigation to local Citizens Advice projects and services. CA Cornwall Communications Officer, Wailim Wong, said: **"Our website now acts as a one-stop-shop where people can find the important advice they need, access local specialist help, find our contact details or discover more about our organisation, volunteering, job opportunities and donating."** The new website - www.citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk - was funded by the Charities Aid Foundation and local Cornwall councillors via their Community Chest budgets.

NEW SERVERS

CA Cornwall has received an £8,800 grant from the Cornwall Community Foundation to upgrade its computer system with two new servers and 60 monitors to allow more advisers to work from home and keep-up with expanding demand for advice via phones and online.



News Update....



Staff and volunteers at CA's Penzance office celebrate the recent generous financial donation from Penzance Council towards their work in the town.

Help Hubs Network Expanding

Citizens Advice is installing a network of computers in community centres, libraries, food banks and village halls across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to make the service more accessible to everyone in the community.

The computers can be used by anyone to look-up information on benefits, employment, housing, debt or consumer issues, particularly those who lack access to computers at home. Staff at each venue will also help people with little or no IT skills access the computers and arrange online face-to-face appointments with a CA adviser.

So far, Help Hub computers have been installed at Torpoint Library, Bude Library, Launceston Gateway Centre, Treverbyn Community Hall, Helston Library, St Columb Minor Church Foodbank and Carn Gwaval Wellbeing Centre on St Marys.

THANKS

Organisations and councils across Cornwall have been helping Citizens Advice meet demand through generous donations. As ever, more grants are welcome to help fund our core services. In the meantime, we would like to thank the following parishes and towns for their kind support and generosity this year: Falmouth, Penzance, St Just, St Austell, Launceston, Liskeard, Saltash, Camborne, Truro, Callington, St Day, St Erme, St Germans, St Enoder, Launcells, Landrake.

**EU CITIZENS
LIVING IN THE UK
APPLY TO THE
EU SETTLEMENT
SCHEME TODAY
DEADLINE 30 June 2021!**

**citizens
advice**

Cornwall



HM Government

Now is the time to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. You could lose your rights to work and live in the UK if you miss the deadline (30 June 2021)!

Get started today at

[gov.uk/eusettlementscheme](https://www.gov.uk/eusettlementscheme)

FREE advice and support in **Cornwall**

Contact EU Settlement Scheme Team

Call 03333 440061

Email EUSS@citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk

Text ADVICE EUSS to 78866

Mobile 07762 824196 (calls, SMS, WhatsApp)

Irish citizens or those with valid indefinite leave don't need to apply.

Citizens Advice Services 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. Here's a brief rundown - see our website citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk for full details:

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: 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 new pension freedoms mean and retirement options.

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.

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 research into the problems experienced by our clients and feeds into national databases. Lobbies and campaigns for changes to improve people's lives and carries out public information campaigns on issues, such as avoiding scams, switching energy suppliers and consumer issues.

HELP TO CLAIM: A Government scheme, run by CA Cornwall, to provide help and support for people claiming Universal Credit for the first time.

WISE-UP!: Help for young people in N and SE Cornwall who are Not in Education, Employment or Training to help them develop their money skills and saving habits to improve their life chances.

HOUSING POSSESSION COURT DUTY SCHEME Trained CA advisers attend court to give help and advice to people facing housing possession hearings.

MHEND: Specialist, tailored advice on debts, benefits and money issues for clients of mental health charity, Pentreath.

EUSS: Trained advisers help with advice and information to guide EU and other European citizens through their EU Settled Status applications

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 ADVICE DEBT to 78866 and we'll call you back within 48 hours (excluding bank holidays and weekends).



Call us free on 0800-144-8848 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.



WE'RE HERE FOR EVERYONE