



We're continually working hard, and ready to help those in greatest need in our local community.



Rotherham & District

Annual Report 2017

2016/17 has seen Citizens Advice Rotherham & District (CARD) enjoy a period of stability and consolidation after a year of change. Our new CEO Nick Bussey took up his post at the end of July and he has undertaken a broad ranging review of the service provision, while also developing a number of key partnerships within Rotherham, not least of all with the Council.

The Council decision to undertake an advice needs review in 2017 led to an extension of our current contract and we are very grateful to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) for their continued support of CARD to the value of £200,000. This core funding is incredibly important as it enables CARD to provide much needed face to face and telephone advice, while also allowing us to innovate, delivering new services such as our web chat advice and I'd like to thank the Council for their continued support. Going forward, we want to expand our reach in terms of working in partnership with other organisations, as well as the services we provide, in order to deliver more advice to the people of Rotherham.

You will note from our annual statistics that we have seen a year-on-year increase in our client contact numbers, this has been primarily the result of a new ten seater call centre we invested in last September. As well as using some of our reserves, we received £2,500 funding from Citizens Advice and this money helped to transform our training room into a new call centre with privacy screens, larger monitors, headsets and operator seats. The result has seen us lift our response rate to inbound call from 15% to 40%, meaning we are able to help more people with free, confidential, independent and impartial advice.

Last year we also began to deliver advice via webchat. Clients can log in to the national Citizens Advice website and enquiries are then routed through to our team. This service is very popular with young people and people in work, and ties in with RMBC's aim to improve digital access to all services.

So 2016/17 has been a good year, we have made the most of our continued support from RMBC, expanded existing services and launched new ones. We have received good results from our external independent quality of advice reviews and our Money Advice Service funded debt team continues to deliver an excellent debt advice service to the people of Rotherham. But we don't intend to rest on our laurels and so next year promises to be even better. We have set ourselves a challenging target to have 50 volunteers giving advice by December 2017 and we want to use these volunteers to help us develop more services and meet the growing demand for advice in Rotherham.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our hard working staff, volunteers and trustees, without your dedication and commitment we would not be able to provide such an excellent advice service to the people of Rotherham.

Jean Rhind

Chair



A word from our CEO

citizens
advice

When you walk in to a new job there is always a temptation to leap in and implement lots of change, but sometimes you are better advised to take a step back and observe what is going on and then bring about any necessary change gradually.

A lot of my time has been spent focussing on networking with partners and potential partners, as I'm keen for Citizens Advice Rotherham & District (CARD) to be seen as more of an approachable 'can-do' organisation. To that end I have picked up the Chair of the Advice in Rotherham group and I was recruited as one of the four voluntary sector representatives on the Rotherham Together Partnership, which brings together all the leaders from statutory and private sectors. I've also been able to establish some strong relationships with key individuals at RMBC, as well as colleagues from across the voluntary sector.

CARD has a long history of delivery good quality of advice to the people of Rotherham, but in the last few years we have seen some funding cuts, while demand for our advice keeps rising, with the inevitable consequences of delays for appointments and problems for people accessing our face to face and telephone advice services. The challenge facing us is how to deliver more for less. The trustees and senior management team reviewed our strategic plan and recognised the big challenge was to move away from a primarily paid staff service, to one that utilises more volunteers and we set ourselves a target of lifting volunteer numbers from 18 to 100 over 30 months. We are making good progress towards our goal and already we have over 30 volunteers helping to deliver much needed advice services.

Last year has been a successful one in terms of services delivered and developed. We have seen a 25% increase in client numbers year on year, we have beaten all our service level agreement targets and have improved accessibility to the service for our clients. Through our excellent, in depth training programme we have helped seven of our former volunteers move on into paid work. We have consistently passed our external quality advice audit, demonstrating that when people can access our service they get good advice. We want to do better next year, with the introduction of Universal Credit, cutbacks in council services and the impact of Brexit on the cost of living we expect an increase in the demand for our service and we need to be ready.

So what are we looking to achieve next year? Well there are four key priorities for us in the next twelve months: more volunteer recruitment, expand the service delivery and develop two new areas of work. Firstly, via our new ASK RE programme, we will be supporting clients experiencing domestic violence and abuse, and secondly we will also be raising our profile as a centre for reporting hate crime.

Nick Bussey

CEO



**We are looking
to recruit 70
new advice
volunteers
by March
2019.**

Nick Bussey

Home visits making a difference

citizens
advice

In the last twelve months we have seen a total of 103 clients, under the Social Prescribing Service contract and confirmed outcomes have generated income of £169,317 which potentially will be spent within the local community.

Income generated in last 2 months:

£169,317

Many clients expressed feelings of great anxiety regarding changes to the benefit system which threaten their benefits and ultimately their financial situation causing stress and impacting on existing long term health conditions. In all cases we have been able to alleviate this situation and maximise income in some cases by as much as £230 per week per couple.

The issues supported/advised have been predominantly benefits but also debt, employment and housing issues. We have recently supported a client and his wife with various benefit claims which were successful maximising income by £237.36 a week. There was also a substantial backdated payment. They have now with their daughter been able to buy a static caravan by the sea and are absolutely thrilled - they haven't had a holiday for many years.

Clients in the last
12 months:

103

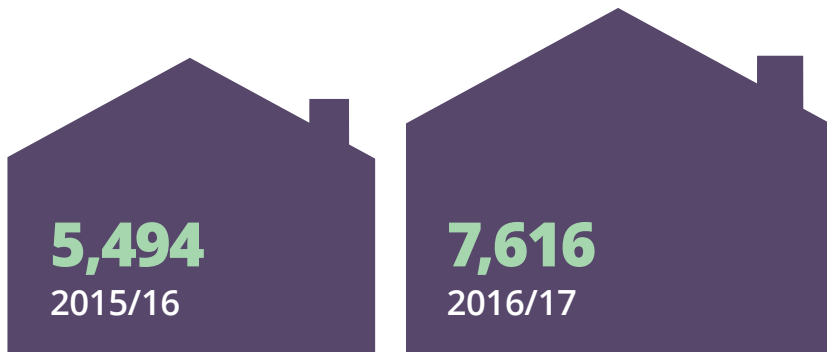
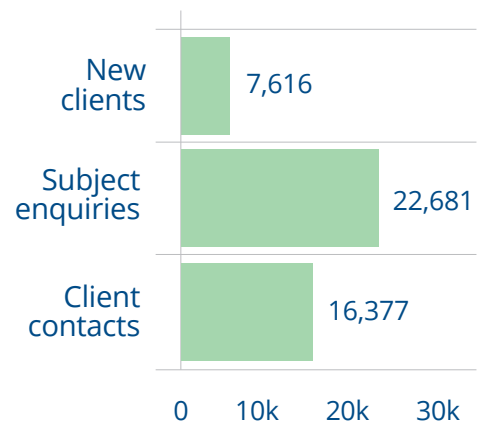
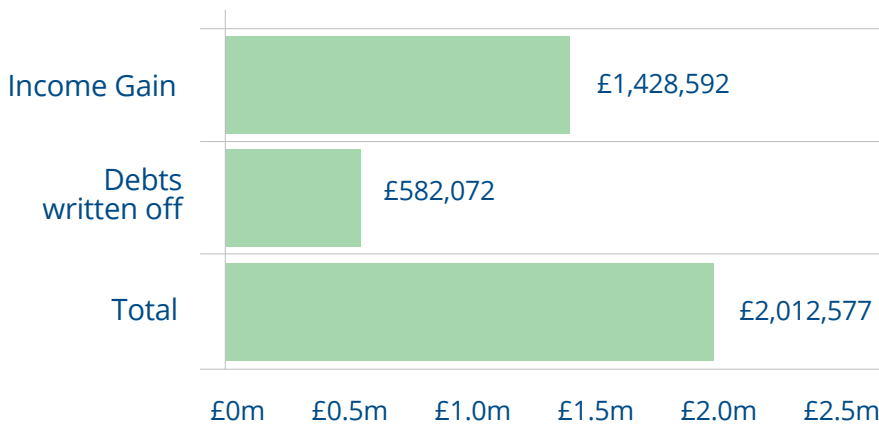
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£237.36 a week.

Making a difference in Rotherham



Last year saw us achieve an uplift across the board in all areas of our service. We expanded our call centre, meaning we could help more people claim their benefit entitlements and support more people who were struggling with debt.



During the last Citizens Advice Rotherham helped 7,616 new clients, dealt with 22,681 new issues and had 16,522 client contacts.

This is a client gain of

2,122
equating to a
38.62%

increase on the previous year.

Last year we supported local Rotherham citizens to manage debts worth

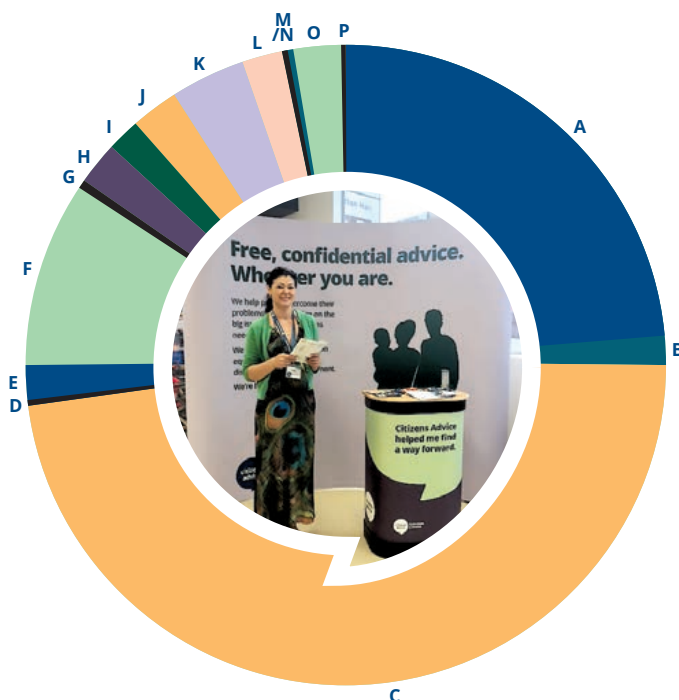
£5,850,279

We helped them to negotiate affordable, sustainable, repayment agreements with their creditors. This essential work relieves stress and worry, enabling families to focus on work and other priorities.

2016/17 client enquiries by category

The following table gives you a detailed breakdown of our 2016/17 enquiry statistics. Our two biggest areas of enquiry remain debt and welfare benefits. With the roll out of Universal Credit to Rotherham in 2018 we expect benefit enquiries to increase, while more local people resort to borrowing. Your local Citizens Advice will be on the front line, supporting local people with the continuing impact of austerity measures.

	Issues	% Issues	Unique client count	Ratio of issues per client
Benefits & tax credits	5,297	23%	2,009	2.6
Consumer goods & services	387	2%	231	1.7
Debt	10,732	46%	2,466	4.4
Education	39	0%	31	1.3
Employment	635	3%	414	1.5
Financial services & capability	2,155	10%	598	3.6
Health & community care	83	0%	62	1.3
Housing	541	2%	361	1.5
Immigration & asylum	200	1%	132	1.5
Legal	364	2%	201	1.8
Other	1,057	5%	472	2.2
Relationships & family	405	2%	292	1.4
Tax	57	0%	41	1.4
Travel & transport	74	0%	61	1.2
Utilities & communications	633	3%	230	2.8
Discrimination	22	0%	15	1.5
Grand Total	22,681	100%	7,616	



- A Benefits & tax credits
- B Consumer goods & services
- C Debt
- D Education
- E Employment
- F Financial services & capability
- G Health & community care
- H Housing
- I Immigration & asylum
- J Legal
- K Other
- L Relationships & family
- M Tax
- N Travel & Transport
- O Utilities & communication
- P Discrimination

Accounts summary

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2017.

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2017 £	Total funds 2016 £
Income & endowments from				
Donations and legacies	5,062	21,584	26,646	55,760
Charitable activities				
Charitable	200,000	324,676	524,676	522,460
Other trading activities	2,945	-	2,945	7,352
Investment income	45	-	45	263
Total	208,052	346,260	554,312	585,835
Expenditure on Charitable activities				
Support costs	1,357	2,561	3,918	3,708
Management costs	27,915	48,702	76,617	68,468
Charitable	211,808	310,708	522,516	534,811
Total	241,080	361,971	603,051	606,987
Net income/ (expenditure)	(33,028)	(15,711)	(48,739)	(21,152)
Net movement in funds	(43,714)	(5,025)	(48,739)	(21,152)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	126,263	5,025	131,288	152,440



Free, confidential advice. Whoever you are.

We help people find a way forward with their problems and campaign on big issues when their voices need to be heard.

We value diversity, champion equality and challenge discrimination and harassment. We're here for everyone.

To get help and advice you can drop-in on our open door session:

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
Thursday late opening till 7pm

You can find us at the RAIN Building, Eastwood Lane, S65 1EQ.
(behind the open market and opposite Rotherham College)

Alternatively ring any weekday between 9am and 4pm on the advice line:

0344 411 1444

Or go online at:

citizensadvicerotherham.org.uk

and follow the link to send us an enquiry form

For online information go to:

citizensadvice.org.uk

Or to webchat with an adviser go to:

goo.gl/4Vr95U



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