



Our work and our impact

Help for all: our core service

At Citizens Advice Surrey Heath, we believe no one should have to face problems in life without good quality, independent, advice. We give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward whoever they are and whatever the problem. Our advice is free, confidential, impartial and independent. And is available via telephone, email and face-to-face. People can trust our advice as it is constantly checked and audited and we hold the Advice Quality Standard.

No other organisation sees so many people with so many different kinds of problems, and this gives us a unique insight into the challenges people are facing today. Although an independent local charity, we are licensed to National Citizens Advice which means we have access to checked and verified information and our client data can be combined with other local Citizens Advice to give an up-to-date picture of the problems people face both locally and nationally. This can be used to show organisations – including government – how they can make things better for people.

We see how problems can be linked. By helping people with the underlying cause of their problems and making sure they don't get worse, we save the government and public services millions of pounds every year.

In Surrey Heath, our advice is delivered by a team of around 40 volunteers who each give around 7 hours a week to support local residents (5 Receptionists, 35 Advisers). They need support, supervision and training which is provided by our paid staff including the FTE of two Advice Session Supervisors, a p/t Operations/Training Manager and an Administrator/Accounts Officer.

The above forms the basis of our core service.

Help with more complex problems

Increasingly we are seeing people with more complex issues and dealing with difficult challenges such as mental health issues, poverty and language barriers. They need someone to take the time to not just provide information but to also take action for them and assist them with understanding what steps they need to take.

In order to support this we have designed a number of projects and recruited staff to provide more specialist help and add value to our core service for local residents. Funding for these projects comes from grant applications and fundraising. In 2022/23 this meant an additional **£176,000 brought into the borough** for the benefit of residents of Surrey Heath.

We would not be successful in our project bids without our strong core service which both supports these and is, in turn, partially financially supported by our projects.

Current projects include:

- **SCC No one Left Behind** - Money and benefits advice for those struggling to make ends meet including help with dealing with debt, budgeting, accessing grants and unpicking benefit issues. This includes providing advice at outreach venues across the Borough.

- **Social Prescribing** - We are part of Surrey Heath Social Prescribing project and provide a Wellbeing Adviser who can link people into activities, support and services across the borough to improve their Wellbeing. This project also enables us to fund an Independent Living Adviser who provides home visits and helps with advice and completing complex disability forms for those who are housebound or have health or caring responsibilities and struggle with advice over the phone.
- **Financial Services and Wellbeing Support** - In partnership with Catalyst, this project supports people with mental health issues by providing a wrap-around service of money advice from Citizens Advice Surrey Heath and Wellbeing support from Catalyst.
- **Cost of Living Support** - This project funds a Cost of Living Assistant to help people quickly access the most appropriate emergency and charitable support including food bank referrals, Fuel bank vouchers, the Household Support Fund and Surrey Crisis Fund.
- **Household Support Fund (HSF)** - We were agile enough to set up a system to rapidly distribute this Government funding with the result that every £1 allocated has gone to local residents in need. As of 10 August this year we have distributed £475,102 in total with almost 33% going to the two wards with the highest deprivation in Surrey Heath.
- **Macmillan Caseworker** - We have just secured funding and are in the process of recruiting a caseworker to support people who have been diagnosed with cancer to ensure they access any financial support available and can get advice on other matters.

Our support across Surrey Heath in numbers

<p>In 2022/23, we supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5,836 individual clients with ● 20,240 issues through ● 21,675 activities including ● 6,345 advice phone calls, ● 1,126 advice emails and ● 909 face to face appointments. <p>With the help of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 49 volunteers whose estimated value of volunteering hours was £317,545 ● 9 FTE staff 	<p>Of the people we helped:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 43% had long-term health issues. ● 9% had disabilities. ● 15% classified themselves other than White British. <p>In an independent survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 91% found a way forward from our advice. ● 77% said their problems were solved or partially solved. ● 86% would recommend our service. 	<p>On top of our advice, we delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2,803 small grants through HSF and dealt with 3,282 claims. ● 425 food bank referrals supporting 947 individuals. ● 157 additional small awards for charitable support. ● 164 home visits. ● 27 outreach sessions across the borough. ● 369 disability forms and appeals completed.
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Our impact

In 2022/23 our work has delivered:

- £1,015,430 in debts written off.
- £3,992,374 in value of benefits advice.
- £1,886,665 in fiscal value, helping stop problems occurring or escalating.
- £12,681,633 in public value, improving people's wellbeing and productivity.
- £5,119,848 in value to the people we help by increasing income, writing off debts, taking up benefits and solving consumer problems.
- £350,000 in savings to housing providers by preventing evictions.
- £304,000 to the NHS by reducing use of health services.
- £1,088,000 in savings to DWP by keeping people in work.