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Issue 5 – December 2016

An insight into Citizens Advice Hampshire

*in contact*



## *Our update for the Hampshire Advice and Information Community*



Another year passes and at Citizens Advice Hampshire we've just published our [2015/16 Annual Report](#). It illustrates just what a huge impact Local Citizens Advice across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have on our communities. Something we should not only celebrate but "sell" to our partners and funders.

We have a story to tell; it is based on client outcomes and the long term improvements in their lives. Client stories, surveys, and statistics all play their part. It starts with skilled advisors who listen to clients' issues, explore why they have come to Citizens Advice and look to find solutions. We need to answer the question, "what difference have we made?"

So if you look at our collective figures they are very impressive:

- Every £1 invested in Citizens Advice realises £15.47 for Hampshire clients
- Our 900+ Local Citizens Advice volunteers donated over £3.7m worth of volunteering hours last year
- 4 in 5 LCA clients said advice improved their lives, reducing stress and improving finances
- We secured £6.87m in financial gains for Hampshire Macmillan Citizens Advice clients
- 24,500 calls were answered by our Adviceline telephone assessors
- 203,700 issues were recorded by Local Citizens Advice clients.

Numbers give context but it's when you hear how we actually help that we can understand our impact. The following comments relate to a case our Macmillan team dealt with at a local hospice.

"The overall feeling is that the caseworker is wonderful and works wonders!! She just managed to find a policy that gave my patient a £100,000 pay out which has taken away all the financial worry of her children's future."

We make a real difference to people's lives but need the support of our partners and funders to secure the future of the service.

Paul Bright, CEO – Citizens Advice Hampshire  
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# Healthwatch Hampshire

## The Consumer Champion for Health and Social Care

Our Local Citizens Advice walk-in advice, information and signposting (AIS) service goes from strength to strength assisting clients with nearly 4,000 enquiries last year. In addition to providing a face-to-face service which grew by 40% during the year through the advice centres, clients can also be referred to the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service run by Citizens Advice Hampshire where specialists support people with more complex complaints involving NHS funded services.

**91%**

**Rated the AIS service as excellent or good**

**94%**

**Said the AIS information received answered their query**

'Healthwatch is a superb and brilliant organisation. I would advise anyone to use the service if they need it. You don't feel on your own with no-one to fight your corner.'

Between July and September, 37 new clients were referred to make complaints about NHS services. The NHS Complaints Advocacy Service helps people who may lack the ability to take forward a complaint on their own or whose complaint is particularly complicated. While investigating and resolving complaints for our clients and other service users, NHS providers often introduce improvements to the way they work which has lasting impact and benefits for future patients and users of their services.

### So what improvements has the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service helped influence?



**Better communications with people with dementia:** Ensures service providers take more time to explain procedures when seeking consent. Basingstoke Hospital has annotated dental surgery consent forms setting out the extent of procedures more clearly to patients and their families so they are clear on to what they are consenting.



**Better patient communications by consultants:** Ensures better relationships between patients/family members and medical staff and more effective coordination between ward staff. The Royal Hampshire County Hospital is looking to include patient communications as part of consultant recruitment and has appointed clinical matrons to better coordinate patient care.



**Better breastfeeding support for new mothers:** Ensures new mothers and their partners feel more supported during what can be a stressful and frustrating time for both newborns and their mothers. The Royal Hampshire County Hospital has reviewed its postnatal services resulting in the introduction of a core group of midwives and maternity support workers who explain the breastfeeding module to all new mothers and ensure it is completed for all babies. They will also provide more consistent and proactive support to mothers and families in their care.

# Healthwatch Hampshire

## “Your Voice Counts”

Healthwatch Hampshire is running a project to better understand the experiences of people using mental health services in North East Hampshire and Farnham. Commissioned by the Clinical Commissioning Group responsible for health services in the area, this work has been designed to inform the future development of services for local people.

The project will consider four broad client groups:

- Young people
- Adults
- People with learning disabilities
- People with dementia.

Service users and carers will have the opportunity to share their experiences and influence the way mental health services are provided locally.

Alongside a range of engagement events, Citizens Advice in Hart and Rushmoor are contributing to the project by running a survey of their clients' experiences of mental health services. This approach builds on our existing expertise in 'social policy' and campaigning work by introducing a more proactive approach to engaging with clients about health and social care services.

Our Hampshire-wide information, advice and signposting service already provides vital feedback to Healthwatch Hampshire about trends and issues across their patch. This is a new piece of work for us delivered using a different approach. Through the 'Your Voice Counts' project we are exploring ways in which we can develop our role as a delivery partner of Healthwatch Hampshire, by using our local knowledge, networks and extensive client base to carry out targeted engagement work around health and social care.

For further information about the “Your Voice Counts” project or our contribution to the work of Healthwatch Hampshire please contact Ben Gillett, Healthwatch Hampshire Delivery Manager at [hwhdm@citahants.org](mailto:hwhdm@citahants.org).

# 92%

**Found the AIS service  
easy/very easy to access**

# 89%

**Were given choices to  
progress their AIS enquiry**

# 100%

**Would use the  
AIS service again**

- Visit your local Citizens Advice: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/)
- Email: [enquiries@healthwatchhampshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchhampshire.co.uk)
- Visit: [www.healthwatchhampshire.co.uk/](http://www.healthwatchhampshire.co.uk/)
- Phone: **01962 440 262**

**healthwatch**  
Hampshire

# Macmillan Cancer Support

## Celebrating a year of highs ...

People affected by cancer who are resident or being treated in Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, can benefit from the excellent support provided by our Hampshire Macmillan Citizens Advice Service.



**12,000**

clients since 2009



**2,476**

clients helped this reporting year - an increase of 17%\*



**100%**

of clients surveyed would recommend the service to others



**2m+**

Secured in financial gains for clients in the last quarter



**7,498,184**

secured for clients this reporting year



**7**

years of funding to date with 2 more guaranteed

\* The Macmillan reporting year runs from October to September

In addition to the daily telephone support line, we provide a face to face service not only in the advice centres but also at hospitals, hospices and other convenient locations as well as making home visits where appropriate.

Our annual report, due out shortly, sets out our achievements for the last reporting year. Highlights include a summary of the positive feedback received from our professional colleagues (hospital consultants, nurses and clinical staff, hospices and other health providers), an illustration of the issues facing our clients and their families and the outcomes we have achieved for them.

### How one home visit reaps multiple benefits

Our client was referred to us by Age UK as he needed to claim Attendance Allowance. His cancer surgery had left him unable to speak comfortably but through talking with his wife, our caseworker got the information needed to submit a claim not just for him but also for her as she also had health and care needs. Although her health was declining, his wife was more concerned about not being able to care for her husband than securing benefits for herself.

Good news! Both applications were successful; they received the highest rate of benefit which increased their household income by £164 per week. As a result, our clients became eligible for Guaranteed Pension Credit so they were able to claim full Council Tax Reduction. Their overall increase in household income was £19,000 per year!

The extra income means they can afford to pay for more help at home. Also, as neither is able to drive, they can afford to pay for taxis to take them both out and about so greatly improving their quality of life.

'Being diagnosed with cancer, your whole world is turned upside down. The emotions you go through are unbelievable. Being put in touch with HMCAS was amazing; this lady was so polite and understanding; helped me through a very difficult time, explained the answers to my questions.'

**Do you know someone who could use our help: Call our helpline on 0344 847 7727.**

# Local Welfare Assistance

## Helping those in crisis



### No crisis is too large...

When people feel they have exhausted every option available to them we are here to help. The Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) Service is available to any individual or household to stop a situation from developing into a crisis.

'Someone human who listens and wants to help'

### Available to all ...

The Service takes calls from individuals and also from agencies who are working on behalf of clients.

Our dedicated team will work with them to identify the most appropriate course of action to take to help resolve their situation. This could involve signposting to other support services in the county but may also include identifying grants, providing access to food banks or recycled furniture suppliers. We also assist people by helping them identify what caused the crisis point and what they can do to prevent it from happening again.

### Sharing knowledge...

The LWA service has amassed a huge amount of knowledge and information about and contacts with other agencies, charitable services and trusts. Thanks to their assistance, callers have been provided with fridge freezers, cookers, carpets, food and delivery of food, rent deposits, funding for a DBS check and travel costs to attend a funeral.

## When a crisis means 'heat or eat'

Mrs C was referred to the Local Welfare Assistance service. She was worried that she couldn't afford to pay her energy bills. She had to make a difficult choice - heat or eat.

It became clear that due to a personal injury and subsequent illness, her mobility had reduced her ability to perform manual handling tasks. This meant that she could not continue her agency work.

As the injury was the primary trigger for limiting her ability to work, we arranged a solicitors' appointment to get her specialist legal help.

She already received basic rate Employment and Support Allowance, but due to an overpayment the DWP was taking a deduction from her payments thus reducing her income.

Together we completed an outline expenditure sheet and she was pleased to learn how to reduce her outgoings. To help with her spending, we established a long term plan to better manage her income. We also provided information on what to do should the weather deteriorate and heating costs increase.

The immediate crisis – heat or eat – was addressed through a referral to her local foodbank. Also, taking into account her health and age, we were able to source a small financial grant to pay for gas and electricity in the short term.

Mrs C was very grateful for our help with the immediate crisis, that we had maximised her income and that she now understood how to manage her money to avoid a future crisis.

**£ 38%**  
of clients required help with benefits

 **33%**  
of clients had no money or an unexpected expense

 **17%**  
of clients needed furniture (beds, carpets, white goods)

Have you clients who need our help? Call us on 0300 330 1150 Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm  
(Answerphone available after hours and over Christmas/New Year)

# Citizens Advice Hampshire - Our year at a glance ...

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## Who our Local Citizens Advice help



**85,133**

enquiries dealt with directly



**59,003**

people helped via face-to-face access, phone, email and webchat



**36 million**

visits to on-line advice at [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk) - the Citizens Advice website

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## How they do this



**30+**

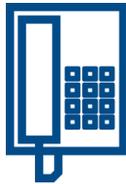
locations from which we deliver free, confidential advice across Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight



**900+**

volunteers who donated over £3.7m worth of volunteering hours last year, and over 200 paid staff who helped deliver our service

**1,674**



Calls from clients and agencies answered by the Local Welfare Assistance crisis line

**15,300**



emails and webchats answered

**24,500**



calls answered by our Adviceline assessors

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## The difference this makes



**90%**

of our clients reported satisfaction with our overall service



**4 in 5**

clients said advice improved their lives including reducing stress and improving finances



**2 in 3**

clients had their problem solved



**£1 invested**

generates £15.47 for Hampshire clients



**£83 million**

value to individuals of advice provided by our staff and volunteers

# OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE ...

We are incredibly grateful to our funders, partners, trustees and particularly our Local Citizens Advice colleagues for their support over the past year. Their expertise, ideas and enthusiasm have ensured many Hampshire people were able to access the advice and information they needed.

- **Funding:** Hampshire County Council continues to fund our core activities including training advice centre staff and volunteers (347 delegates attended 27 courses), hosting forums for trustees, strategic and operational managers and providing specialist telephone support in employment and welfare benefits.
- **Hampshire Macmillan Citizens Advice Service:** Funded by Macmillan since 2009 and also by a number of NHS organisations, trusts and charities. Providing access through a telephone helpline and a face-to-face service through advice centres, hospitals, hospices, home visits and other key locations, we supported 3,153 clients and secured £6.87m in benefits and other financial support for clients and their families affected by cancer.
- **Healthwatch Hampshire:** Our drop-in advice, information and signposting service saw a 40% increase in demand from our clients on the previous year – nearly 4,000 health or social care issues recorded. Over 160 clients were also helped by our specialists at the NHS Complaints Advocacy Service.
- **Adviceline:** An integrated call handling service hosted by 16 LCA, we answered 24,500 calls from clients across the county and beyond – an increase of 27% on the previous year. One of the largest Adviceline groups in the country we play a big role in the development and improved delivery of phone services across England and Wales.
- **Webchat and email:** With funding provided by Citizens Advice, nine Hampshire LCA are involved in the development, testing and delivery of advice via webchat and email. Last year we handled 15,300 client contacts.
- **Research and Campaigns:** A dual aim and principle of Citizens Advice, our Local Citizens Advice colleagues coordinate and collect evidence of poor and unjust services which is shared with local agencies/service providers and Citizens Advice nationally. This is then used to inform and influence policy decisions and change the way services (public and commercial) are delivered to local people.

## What does Citizens Advice Hampshire do?

Formed in February 2008 CitAH was created to support the 14 independent local Citizens Advice in Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.

- We support local Citizens Advice by facilitating knowledge and skills sharing.
- We enable collaboration between local Citizens Advice and other charities/organisations
- We partner with other organisations and charities

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