

Our impact in 2018

The difference we make to South Gloucestershire



**citizens
advice**

**South
Gloucestershire**

We are Citizens Advice South Gloucestershire.

Every year thousands of people come to us for help solving their problems.

This means we're an important part of the community, with a credible understanding of local needs.

We use this to tailor our services and help improve local policies and practices.



£5.5 million

In financial value to the local people we helped last year

£21.28 for every **£1** invested in our service

This is Lucy

Lucy is an example of one of the people we helped.

Last year, we saw **4,416** people about **13,875** issues.

Lucy's story shows how we help people solve their problems, and why this is important.



What we do

We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships and consumer rights. We also provide energy advice.

Sometimes people have more than one issue they need help with.



Lucy was struggling - she had a young child and was behind in paying her rent.

The threat of being evicted was making her very anxious.

The strain was also aggravating several existing health conditions.

How we help



Simon, a volunteer adviser, helped Lucy with her problem. He found out she hadn't received her Housing Benefit or Employment Support Allowance for 5 months. This had put added pressure on her finances, which was why she was getting behind on her rent.

People access us in different ways:

- 57% face-to-face
- 33% by telephone
- 10% by webchat and email

We can deal with most of the issues people come to us with, tailoring our advice to their needs.



Simon advised Lucy of her rights regarding homelessness. He contacted her Landlord on her behalf and action was suspended. He also helped her prepare for her appeal to stop her being evicted.

Simon helped Lucy make a new claim for housing benefit. A specialist debt advisor helped her to apply for a Debt Relief Order and worked out a budget to help her maximize her income.

As Lucy was a vulnerable client, Simon was able to request a support worker to help her manage her other problems.

This is Simon

The wider value of volunteering

People like Simon give their time, skills and experience to enable us to reach as many people as we do.

There are also considerable benefits for them too, such as improved employability.

Last year our trained volunteers gave up over **£145,000** worth of volunteering hours to help deliver our services.



Our impact



7 in 10 people

felt less stressed,
depressed or anxious



Nearly 1 in 2

had more money or
control of their finances



2 in 5

had a more secure
housing situation



Nearly 1 in 2

felt their physical health
had improved



3 in 10

found it easier to do their
job or find a job



Nearly 1 in 2

felt they had better
relationships with others



3 in 5

found it easier to manage
day-to-day

Why fixing problems matters

If left unsolved, problems don't just affect the individual - they affect this community.

Solving them creates considerable value to society.

- **9 in 10 people** we help say that their problem negatively affected their life
- **2 in 3** say they had difficulty knowing who to contact or how systems work before advice
- **1 in 3** come to us when they needed to take action urgently

The difference this makes

The wider impact of advice is just as important.

Problems don't happen in isolation and can have severe consequences. Solving them stops these situations escalating.

82% say advice made a difference to their lives

77% say that they couldn't have done it without us.



Our advice helped stabilise Lucy's financial situation. Her debts were written-off. Lucy and her child avoided homelessness.

Her anxiety reduced, and her physical health improved too. She no longer needed additional health services.

Lucy also felt more confident and knowledgeable about handling similar problems in the future.

Don't take our word for it...

"I cannot thank you enough. Citizens Advice really was a shining light at the end of a very dark tunnel I had been lost in for many years"

"I feel like a weight has been lifted from my shoulders. I don't know what I would have done without your help"

"You have been a lifesaver and given me an incredible second chance that I never thought possible"

"Thanks to you, I'm able to return to a more peaceful state of mind"

"I was ready to end my life because I didn't think there was any way out of the problems I'd caused for myself. I can't tell you how much I appreciate all that you've done to help me"

"Because of your help I no longer dread the door knocking. I can now sleep better at night"

Our value to society



For every £1 invested in our service in 2017/18, we generated:

£3.41

in savings to
government and
public services
(fiscal benefits)

Total: £882,441

£19.25

in wider economic
and social benefits
(public value)

Total: £4,984,259

£21.28

in financial value to
the people we help
(specific outcomes to
individuals)

Total: £5,510,112

How we calculate our financial value

It's impossible to put a financial value on everything we do - but where we can, we have.

We've used a Treasury-approved model to do this.

- Keeping people in employment or helping them back to work
- Preventing housing evictions and statutory homelessness
- Reducing demand for mental health and GP services
- Improving mental wellbeing and positive functioning
- Improved family relationships

From our robust management information, we've also separately considered the financial benefits to the people we help.

Our value to this community

Our savings to the public purse include:

£ **£119,446**
saved by local government,
through reducing homelessness

Maximising the income for those we help prevents more costly intervention.

This helps reduce financial difficulty, promotes inclusion and benefits the economy.

This is only one fraction of our true value. We also:

- help clients negotiate local processes, such as welfare reform changes
- help local authority rent and council tax arrears to be rescheduled, and reduce the associated administrative costs

How you can get Advice



Call our AdviceLine on
03444 111 444, 9am – 5pm
Mon – Fri. Calls to this service
cost the same as calling 01
and 02 numbers



Visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk
for thousands of regularly
updated online advice pages



Visit one of our drop-in sessions:

Yate, Kennedy Way: Mon 16:30 – 18:30, Tue 10:00 – 15:00 & Fri 10:00 – 13:00

Thornbury, 35 High St: Tue 10:00 – 13:00 & Thu 10:00 – 12:30

Staple Hill, 96 High St: Thu 09:30 – 12:30 & Fri 10:00 – 13:00

Cadbury Heath, Juice Community project, Mon 11:00 – 14:00

Bradley Stoke, Jubilee Centre, Wed 10:00 – 12:00

Stoke Gifford, The Stokes Community Centre, 2nd & 4th Fri 10:00 – 12:00

Thank you to all our Funders

We can only help people like Lucy because of you



With thanks to JR and SA Brooks Foundation, Thornbury Town Trust and to Stoke Gifford County Councillors for their Member Awarded Funding. Thanks also to the following Parish Councils for their continued support: Acton Turville, Almondsbury, Cromhall, Dodington, Downend & Bromley Heath, Dyrham & Hinton, Frampton Cotterell, Great Badminton, Hawkesbury, Horton, Oldland, Pilning & Severn Beach, Pucklechurch, Rockhampton, Westerleigh and Winterbourne.

Citizens Advice South Gloucestershire, March 2019