

Our impact in 2022/2023

The difference we make to Cheshire West



Cheshire
West

We are Citizens Advice Cheshire West

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.



£2,760,220

saved by government and public services last year. That's £1.75 for every £1 invested in our service.

This is George

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

Last year, we helped 9,560 people about 36,467 issues.

George'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.

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



George was supported by a Community Connector after his brother's admission to a Care Home. He suffered from Mental Health issues and the task list before him was overwhelming.

The Community Connector was able to break down the tasks into small chunks and priorities.

George told us that a huge burden had been lifted and his mental health had improved due to our support.

How we help

People access us in different ways:



44%

by telephone



32%

by webchat and email



13%

face-to-face

£

Karen came to the Welfare Rights team for help with a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) appeal.

She suffers from a number of physical and mental health conditions. We helped her to gather her medical evidence and prepare her submission.

She won her case, which resulted in an increase in her weekly income of £156.90 and arrears of over £16,000, which were backdated to 2020.

How we help

People often come to us with multiple or complex problems.

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



Our Community Connector and Welfare Rights teams jointly helped Karen to sort out other issues.

We helped Karen to secure a Discretionary Housing Payment of £900 to pay off rent arrears.

Whilst she was waiting for her appeal, we also helped her with food vouchers, fuel vouchers and a payment of £250 to pay her bills when she had her benefit money stolen.

Our advice is effective

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

We help thousands of people like Karen.



8 in 10 people

said their problem was solved following advice, and 3 in 4 of them said they could not have resolved their problem without us



9 out of 10 people

said we helped them find a way forward

The difference this makes

The wider impact of advice – what we achieve as a result of solving problems and providing support – is just as important.



60%

said they felt less stress, depressed or anxious as a result of the help they received from us



On top of the financial gains, our service helped change Karen's life, as she was no longer struggling to pay the shortfall in her rent.

Our impact



Around 4 in 10

had more money or control of their finances



Over 4 in 10

had a more secure housing situation



6 in 10

felt less stressed, depressed or anxious



Around 4 in 10

found it easier to do their job or find a job



Over 4 in 10

felt they had better relationships with others



6 in 10

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.



Over 9 in 10 people

we help say that their problem negatively affected their life



Around 1 in 5 people

are not confident using the internet, including to search for information online



3 in 5 people

Lack confidence in taking action to solve their issue

Our value to society

For every £1 invested in our service in 2022/23, we generated:

£1.75

in savings to
government and
public services
(fiscal benefits)

**Total: £2.8
million**

£16.79

in wider economic
and social benefits
(public value)

**Total: £26.5
million**

£8.63

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

**Total: £13.6
million**

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.

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

- 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

Our value to this community

Our savings to the public purse include:



£ 235,273

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

This is Mia

The wider value of volunteering

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

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

This year our trained volunteers gave up **£245,538** worth of volunteering hours to help deliver our services.



Heating Bank Local Delivery

We have worked closely with Cheshire West and Chester council and other stakeholders to help provide fuel support for local households living in fuel poverty through the Household Support Fund via our Heating Bank

**3,483
applications
processed**



**Over 1,500
families with
children helped**



**£450k to help
households in
fuel poverty**



Research and campaigns

We worked with Trading Standards on raising awareness of scams and on promoting National Consumer Week.

We used social media covering topics of interest to our local community such as energy saving and how to get help with the cost of living.

We continued to highlight the issues faced by local residents. We contributed evidence to call for support for those affected most as a result of the cost of living crisis, including protections around prepayment meters.



Citizens Advice Cheshire West

www.citizensadvicecw.org.uk



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