



Citizens Advice 1066

Annual Review

2014-15



Chair's report

I have been a member of the Trustee Board of Citizens Advice 1066 for four years now and became Chair in April 2015. I took over as Chair at a very difficult time, which we are still trying to come to terms with and manage our way through. Very sadly our Chief Executive Dina Christodoulou died in May after a short illness. We lost a truly dedicated and committed leader of the bureau who will be missed as much as a friend as she will a colleague. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to my fellow Board members who have supported me to make some very important but very difficult decisions about the bureau in highly emotional circumstances. I would also like to personally thank all the staff and volunteers for their commitment to keeping the bureau functioning over the past months in as a professional way as it ran when Dina was there – she would have expected nothing less. I would also like to make a special mention of Dee Woollard who is currently fulfilling the role of interim Chief Executive.

The bureau continues to be very busy with its day to day work supporting the people of Hastings and

St Leonards-on-Sea. All of our projects are running well which includes *Pension Wise*, *FADES*, money advice and our core business of general advice. We are busy raising funds to strengthen our future at a challenging time where we see much stronger competition for reduced resources and increasing demands. I am keen to keep Citizens Advice 1066 strongly positioned both locally and regionally as a professional organisation that is seen by funders as their first choice to deliver services. Citizens Advice 1066 continues to be a committed partner within the Advice and Community Hub which provides a critical service for some of the most vulnerable individuals and families living locally.

My first few months as Chair have not been easy but with the continuing support and commitment of staff, volunteers and colleagues on the Board I am very much looking to the future with a strong sense of optimism.

Marc Turczanski

Chief executive's report

This annual report celebrates the work and achievements of Citizens Advice 1066 over the last year as we contemplate the challenges ahead. A major milestone has been our successful introduction of *Adviceline* across East Sussex. This new telephone service adds to our face-to-face and email advice services. It means that local people are able to reach us in a way and at a time that suits them, whether it be for general or money advice.

Our partnership working with *HARC* and *BHT* within the Advice and Community Hub continues to flourish, with our reception and gateway service becoming the heart of the building. All three partners continue to strive to meet demand in a challenging funding environment. With the *Advice Services Transition Fund* due to end in the coming year, careful thought will need to be given to how we maintain the level of service to our local community going forward.

A big success for Citizens Advice 1066 this year has been winning the contract to deliver the government's new *Pension Wise* service across

East Sussex, Brighton and Hove. Our team of guidance specialists have worked hard to establish a new service from scratch, resulting in very high levels of customer satisfaction - all of which have contributed to an extension of the project into the next financial year.

For the future we are seeking funding to assist the most vulnerable in our community, including moving into a new area of client advocacy. By supporting people to access advice services, we hope to prevent those who struggle to cope from falling out of the system.

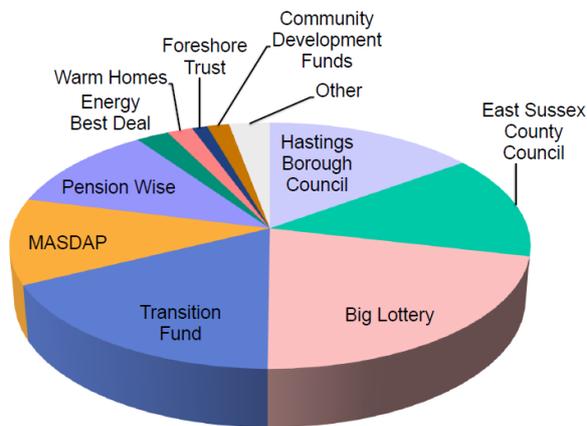
Our continuing success is down to our dedicated team of staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly over the year to introduce new ways of working. I would like to say a huge thank you to them all - especially for their support and understanding since the sad loss of our Chief Executive Dina Christodoulou. I hope we can continue Dina's legacy and support her replacement as we tackle the challenges ahead.

Cordelia Woollard

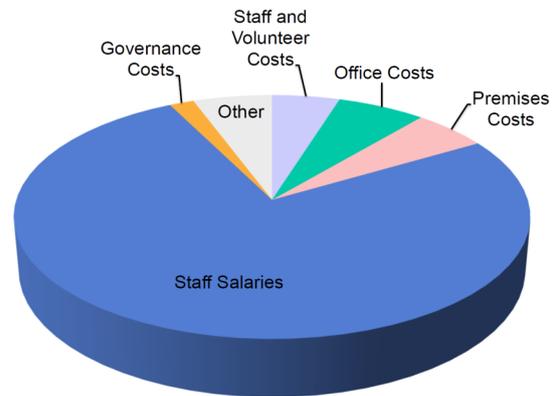
Summary of accounts 2014-15

2014-15 was another challenging year, but the bureau was successful in securing new grant funding for expanded and newly introduced projects. Total incoming resources for the year were £475,951, while operating expenses were £431,809. At the end of the year total unrestricted reserves were £96,288 and restricted reserves were £31,485, giving a balance of £127,773.

Income



Operating expenses



We would like to thank Hastings Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, Foreshore Trust, two local Community Development Funds, the Big Lottery, the Lloyds Foundation and others for their grant funding. We are also grateful to members of the public who gave donations and continued to support us throughout the year.

About us

Citizens Advice 1066 is a local charity offering residents information and advice on some of the most pressing issues they face today, including debt, housing, benefit entitlement, employment and relationship problems. The service is independent, confidential, impartial and free of charge, and is run with the help of around 40 trained volunteers supported by a core team of staff.

A dedicated *Money Advice Unit* at the bureau provides tailored help with more complex debt problems, including working with clients to manage down their debt. Specialist money advisers at the bureau work with clients - sometimes over months - to review their expenditure, maximise their income, prioritise their debts and agree a manageable repayment plan with their creditors. If necessary, they can help clients with applying for a debt relief order or bankruptcy.

A mental health programme provides debt and more general advice to clients who are experiencing mental health issues. Other bureau services include help with reducing energy costs under the *Energy Best Deal* programme.

Face-to-face *Pension Wise* appointments are available to people across East Sussex, Brighton and Hove. *Pension Wise* is a new service that provides guidance to those aged 50 or over on the options for their defined contribution pension.

A bureau *Research and Campaigns* team uses the experiences of our clients to lobby local and central government for system-wide improvements for the benefit of everyone. Aside from debt, the problems most frequently presented by clients locally include obtaining suitable housing - particularly in the private rented sector, poor practices by local employers and scams.

Donations can be made at any time by visiting:

www.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/CitizensAdvice1066

Our service in 2014-15 at a glance

We helped
4,309
clients

With
16,467
issues

For every

£1

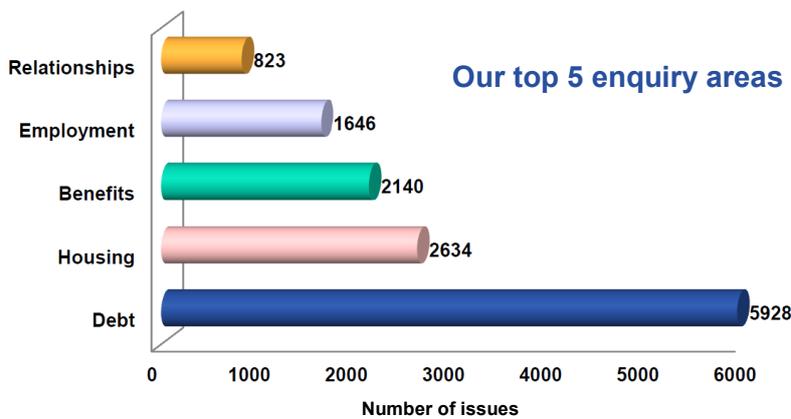
**funded or invested
we generated:**

£3.74 in local
authority savings

£2.84 in government
savings

£10.93 in individual
income gains

Our volunteers
generated a total of
£194,649 in wider
economic and social
benefits



We dealt with enquires through various channels

27%

face-to-face

15%

by phone

2%

by email

56%

by letter

We helped 589 clients with debts totalling £4,067,456
giving an average debt per client of £6,905

We supported the Borough Council's selective licensing of privately rented homes, campaigned for the introduction of changes to the regulation of Houses of Multiple Occupation, giving tenants easier access to energy meters enabling them to gain more control over their energy bills and avoid debt, and we promoted *Big Energy Saving week* and *Scams Awareness week*