

# **Citizens Advice Lincolnshire (CAL)**

**Monica Stark**, Chair Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire and CAL Liaison with LCC.

**Jenny Barnett**, CEO CA Lincoln & Lindsey

**Public Protection Scrutiny Committee Meeting**

9<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Our impact in 2022/23

# The difference we make in Lincolnshire

Page 2



# Citizens Advice Lincolnshire

There are currently three separately constituted Citizens Advice charities across Lincolnshire, working in partnership as one: **Citizens Advice Lincolnshire (CAL)**.

- CA Lincoln & Lindsey
- CA Mid Lincolnshire and
- CA South Lincolnshire.

# What we do

- We help people with a range of problems including issues with housing, debt, benefits, employment, relationships, mental health and support people who are facing poverty.
- The number of issues per client has risen in the last year to an average of 5.22 (4.86) which shows the complexity and time required per client.

# Citizens Advice Lincolnshire

Last year **15,021** (14,540) Lincolnshire clients were helped to resolve **76,934** issues (70,800)

This excludes clients accessing the national Citizens Advice website.

LCC's grant of **£278,000** leverages a 1:11 ratio of funding: **£3,117,206**

# How we help

People access CAL in different ways:



face-to-face



by telephone



by webchat and email

# Citizens Advice Lincolnshire

- Clients access our services primarily through the national telephone platform **Adviceline** which acts as a gateway to our services.
- Demand on Lincolnshire Adviceline is projected to have risen to **43,246** calls (42,224)
- Calls answered are projected to be **14,437** (15,428)- fewer answered as we move back to face to face sessions, with the same numbers of volunteers
- The increase in demand was mainly due to the cost of living crisis and the increase in energy costs

# Adviceline

- Last year, we were only able to answer 36% of calls, this has reduced to 34%, as the greater the demand, the lower the response % with the same resource.
- The decrease in calls answered is an issue of resource.
- This is being addressed by trying to recruit paid staff in some areas rather than volunteers, where finances allow, but means using reserves in a number of cases.



# Cost of living

- *“The rising cost of living (rising household energy bills, inflation and interest rates) is adversely affecting people’s mental health and wellbeing”.* Health watch Lincolnshire 27/04/23
  - 20% increase in calls around the cost of living
  - 24% increase in access to foodbanks and charitable goods, similar increase for fuel debts.
  - Daily harrowing examples of the choice between eating or heating.

# Core service

- This is our generalist service that the LCC grant makes a contribution towards.
- **8,316** (6,867) and **7,115** (6,145) unique people accessed the core service, our generalist advice service.
- On average each client had 2.87 issues to resolve

# Debt

- **2,895** clients were supported with debt issues.
- There was a 40% increase in the number of clients helped with debt.
- **752** in Qu1 to **1,054** in Qu4, reflecting the issues stated before.

# Debt

- **£10,058,090** value of debt advised on
- **£6,232,185** income generated or gained

# Specialist services

- These services include support around specific welfare benefits.
- The highest was in relation to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- The second highest related to housing benefit
- With Job Seekers Allowance third

# Top issues

- Top issues are consistently Universal Credit/Working Tax Credits
- Top benefit issues are consistently Initial Claim and Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
- Top Debt was Fuel Debt

# Partnerships

- We cannot achieve everything on our own.
- Partnership working is key to the way forward and what we aspire to do more of across Lincolnshire.

Some of our partnerships include:

- Foodbanks locally & nationally through our work with The Trussell Trust.
- Membership of the LCC Financial Inclusion Partnership.
- District Councils to distribute the HHSF and support refugees and asylum seekers
- Aiming to work with the NHS to provide advice in health settings.

# Our value to society (21-22)

For every £1 invested in our service in 2021/2022, we generated:

**£4.04**

in savings to  
government and  
public services (fiscal  
benefits)

**Total: £9,494,567**

**£31.66**

in wider economic  
and social benefits  
(public value)

**Total:**

**£74,474,037**

**£19.36**

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

**Total:**

**£45,540,014**



# 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 (21-22)

Our savings to LCC were £729,338 by:

- reducing homelessness
- maximising the income for those we help which 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 local authority rent and council tax arrears to be rescheduled, and reduce the associated administrative costs
- bring an understanding through our campaigns and data

# Research and campaigns

Our key focus has been:

- Cost of Living Crisis
- Energy issues
- Universal Credit



# Cost savings and efficiencies

- Efficiencies through growth
- Restructuring the delivery model
- Reduced premises costs
- Reduced services charges
- Fixed energy costs
- Increased hybrid working
- Multi-skilling staff
- Streamlining management
- Reducing service contracts

# Rent & charges

- Rent & service charges **£180,358**
- Rent & service charges from DCs **£102, 984**

# What clients say:

*“I found my contact very helpful and knowledgeable and was impressed with capacity to comprehend my problem and deliver sound advice. Well done”.*

*84% of clients would be happy to recommend the service.*