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Trusted advice in times of change

Annual report
2023–2024

citizens advice

We are Citizens Advice

We exist to shape a society where people face far fewer problems.

“Without the help of Citizens Advice, I would have had all my possessions taken away and I would have been evicted. If it hadn’t been for Citizens Advice, I’d be on the streets right now. That’s the bottom line.”

Derek, Stevenage

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The narrative reporting in the Annual Report (Trustees' Report and Strategic Report) incorporates all Companies Act 2006 requirements for the Directors' Report and Strategic Report, and Charities SORP requirements for the Trustees' Report.

Introduction

We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. At Citizens Advice, we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality advice. When we say we're for everyone, we mean it. People rely on us because we're independent and impartial.

Citizens Advice offers free, confidential advice online, over the phone and in person.

No one else sees so many people with so many different problems, and that gives us a unique insight into the challenges people are facing today. With the right evidence, we can show big organisations—from companies right up to the government—how they can make things better for people.

That's why we're here: to give people the advice and the confidence they need to find their way forward—whoever they are, and whatever their problem.

This annual report and accounts are for the national Citizens Advice charity. We work with a network of local Citizens Advice charities, whom we've referenced throughout this report, but they are separate, independent charities. The national charity enables local charities to deliver their services and we jointly deliver specific national services.

When we say we're for everyone, we mean it. People rely on us because we're independent and totally impartial.

A message from our Chair

I'm enormously proud to be opening this annual report. Proud of our volunteers and colleagues who worked tirelessly for the millions of people who needed our advice and support last year. And proud to have taken on the role of Chair for a service I have long admired.

I started on 1 March 2024, and since then I've been talking to our volunteers and colleagues across the country about the challenges facing our service and the problems facing those who rely on us. The issues will feel familiar to anyone who has been following our progress over recent years.

Money is of course at the heart of things. The cost of living crisis persists. Whilst declining inflation made fewer dramatic headlines as the financial year came to an end, the impact on our clients was still hard felt. Incomes have not caught up with prices, and we head into another year in which a large proportion of the people we help with debt are in a negative budget. Even after expert advice, they have more going out than coming in.

This spiral of debt is something we unpacked in detail through our National Red Index, which we launched in February.

Our analysis showed that nearly 5 million people across England and Wales are in a negative budget, stuck in the red and building up debt to get by. More than 2 million more are escaping a negative budget by cutting their essential spending back to unsafe levels—for example, going short of food or heating.

I'm struck not only by the number of people and families who live in these awful circumstances, but also by the depth of the problem for those who experience it. The average monthly deficit for a negative budget household went from £270 in 2019 to 2020 to £365 in 2023 to 2024.

As people's problems mount up, demand for our services grows. But the money to pay for those services, in real terms, lags far behind. This means our volunteers and colleagues are working harder than ever—to help tackle debt, advise on consumer

rights, provide guidance on pensions and help witnesses in courts.

We all know that doing more with less is a sticking plaster at best, despite our resolve. We need new approaches to break the cycle. That's why we're evolving our strategy and altering how we work.

We've been consulting across our service on how to make the relationship between our local and national offices more robust. And also looking to improve how we operate and are structured at a national level. This is hard work, and means difficult times for our colleagues. I'm grateful for their ideas and their determination to work through these changes.

As we reach our 85th year, we can look back on decades of achievement and millions of life-changing moments for the people we support. I'm confident we can look forward to decades of success to come. By harnessing the power of our dedicated local offices and their deep roots in the community. By advocating for policy change on the strength of our unrivalled evidence about the problems people face. And being there for people in their time of need.

I look forward to working with the trustee board, executive team and every one of our volunteers and colleagues to make that happen.

Matthew Swindells
Chair

As we reach our 85th year, we can look back on decades of achievement and millions of life-changing moments for the people we support.

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A message from our Chief Executive

As our Chair notes in his introduction, 2023 to 2024 has been a year in which the long-term effects of the cost-of-living crisis have continued to negatively impact the people we help. Though inflation has fallen from previous record highs, millions of people are still struggling with the burden of their debt. Others face eviction and possible homelessness.

At its core, this ongoing hardship is rooted in the simple fact that millions of households have more money going out on essentials than coming in. The unusual reality of negative budgets has not gone away and should be of central concern to policymakers across government.

Our volunteers and colleagues throughout England, Wales and the Channel Islands continue to do first-rate work in extraordinarily difficult circumstances to make practical improvements to people's lives. But, as a service, we know that people's problems are becoming more complex and harder to solve.

That is in part why, last year, we launched our new living strategy, 'Transforming together: trusted advice in times of change'. This marks a significant development in how Citizens Advice thinks about where we're going and how we get there.

We're seeking, as a whole service, to centre ourselves around 3 missions, where progress will make the biggest difference to the people we help. We want to ensure our service is fit for the future and our advice responds to their changing needs, both in terms of the advice they need and the ways they access it.

We have long-since known that minoritised communities find it harder to access our advice, and are less satisfied with them when they do. For a service that seeks to empower people, the fact that those most disempowered by structural discrimination face such obstacles is a failing we all need to address.

And we need to do whatever we can to take earlier action to prevent people from reaching crisis point. A hallmark of the dual Covid and cost-of-living crises

has been a rapid rise in the number of people who need emergency support, such as food banks, through our services. Whether through our advocacy work or our advice services, we need to do whatever we can to reduce this acute need.

As the new government tackles the profound challenges we face as a society, Citizens Advice's core values will be vital.

Our commitment to working holistically—seeing the whole range of people's problems and trying to treat them together, not in isolation—will be crucial in renewing public services. Our strong community roots and our mature approach to partnerships, which challenges and seeks to improve in equal measure, can play a key role in an environment in which trust in government has been low.

As I enter my fourth year as Chief Executive of Citizens Advice, one of my principal learnings has been the speed with which the ground can shift beneath our feet. New problems emerge as the wider situation changes. As a key organisation on the frontline that helps people dealing with these issues, we need to constantly be flexible and innovative in our approach, embedding the core values of the service.

Clare Moriarty
Chief Executive Officer

As the new government tackles the profound challenges we face as a society, Citizens Advice's core values will be vital.

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About Citizens Advice

The Citizens Advice service is made up of a network of 240* independent local Citizens Advice charities across England, Wales and the Channel Islands, and the national charity. Our role as the national charity is to enable local Citizens Advice to deliver their services and jointly deliver other services at a national level, including the Witness Service and our website.

How we deliver our services with our local Citizens Advice

Our service is delivered by our highly-trained people — around 19,000 volunteers and 9,800 colleagues.

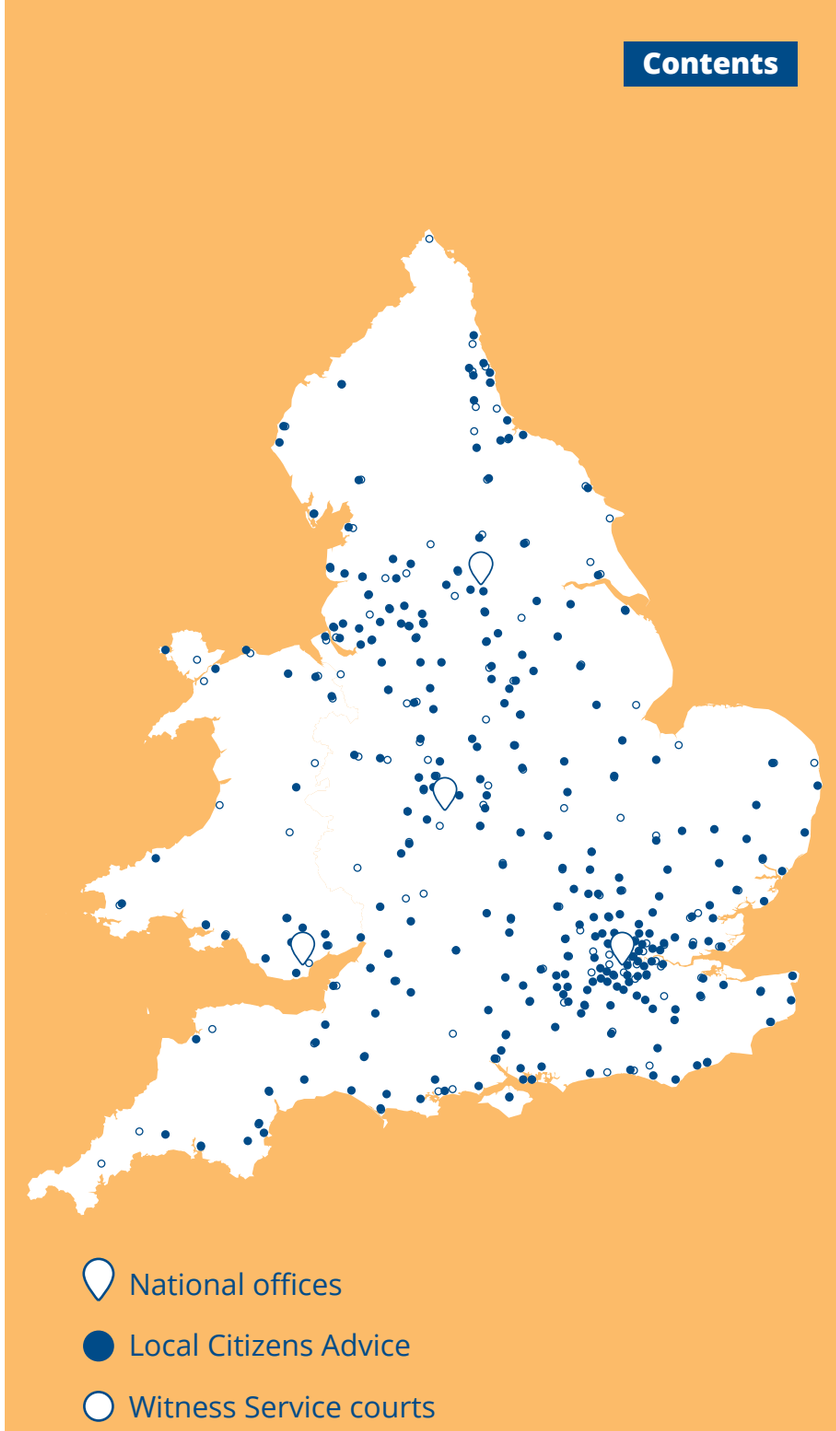
Throughout 2023 to 2024, along with our core generalist advice services, we delivered a number of specialist services. These included the Witness Service, Pension Wise, the consumer service, the Help to Claim (HtC) service, the Money and Pensions Service, and Advicelink across Wales. We're the statutory consumer champion for the energy market and the statutory consumer watchdog for the postal service.

Clients often come to us needing help with complicated inter-related problems. These have continued to grow in complexity since the pandemic began and throughout the cost-of-living crisis. We're uniquely placed to help our clients by offering an integrated approach, with our core advice services able to draw on specialised support nationally.

We offer local advice from around 1,900 locations across England, Wales and the Channel Islands. We run national Citizens Advice from 4 offices which provide the underlying systems and written resources that our network uses. These include:

- advice and information content
- one-to-one operational, governance and leadership support
- a framework for assuring quality
- training and learning to members, needed for the core advice operation

We also provide the infrastructure, content and advocacy to deliver our charitable purposes. The Witness Service is available in all criminal courts in England and Wales.



* During the financial year 2023 to 2024, there were 242 independent local Citizens Advice charities across England, Wales and the Channel Islands. The total number has decreased due to local mergers, though our geographical representation remains the same. The figure of 240 is correct at the date of publication.

Who we helped in 2023 to 2024

National and local Citizens Advice helps millions of people every year and in 2023 to 2024 we helped 2.68 million people one-to-one, by phone, email, webchat and in person. This included:

51.7 million
visits to our website

1.8 million
people helped on the phone (down 4.8% from 1.87 million in 2022 to 2023)

760,000
people helped by email (up 5.5% from 729,000 in 2022 to 2023)

627,000
people were helped face to face
(up 28.7% from 457,000 in 2022 to 2023)

168,000
people helped on webchat
(up 2.8% from 166,000 in 2022 to 2023)

80,000
witnesses supported
(up 1.4% from 79,000 in 2022 to 2023)

People come to us with a range of different problems, from benefits to housing, and immigration to debt. Many people have more than one type of problem—for instance, a housing problem with a debt problem. They could also come with 2 different debts, or 2 different benefits. Someone visiting our website might have a number of different problems, and so might look at several different pages.

Too many people we've helped with debt are now living in negative budgets, without enough income to cover essential outgoings like housing costs, utility bills and food. This is driving a mounting debt crisis.

We increased our face-to-face advice provision for the second year running following the pandemic and have also met the sustained high demand for our online advice content. We continue to adapt to provide help to people in a way that works for them.

For more information on how we estimate our value to society, see our technical annex.

Our value to society

We also publish an impact report where you can read more about our outcomes for clients.

For every **£1** spent on the Citizens Advice service, we deliver:

£14.60
wider economic and social benefits delivered

£1.90
government and public services saved

£7.90
financial gain to our clients

- **In 2023 to 2024, we saved government and public services £759 million**—by helping to stop problems from occurring or escalating, we reduce pressure on public services like health, housing or out-of-work benefits
- **We estimate that our total social and economic value to society in 2023 to 2024 was £5.7 billion**—solving problems improves lives, which means better wellbeing, participation and productivity for the people we help
- **And a further £3.1 billion in value to the people we helped (financial outcomes following advice)**—as part of our advice, we can increase people's income, through debts written off, taking up benefits and solving consumer problems

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Gale’s story

Gale*, a single woman in her 40s, lived with her mother in a house rented from her local council.

When her mother died in late 2022, Gale’s council said she could no longer stay in the three-bedroom property and would have to move into a flat.

Gale has mental and physical health issues and was receiving income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), a benefit which supports people with a disability or health condition affecting their ability to work.

Under her local council’s Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme, people receiving ESA are entitled to a 75% reduction in their council tax bills.

But Gale was told she would not receive support for her housing costs unless she switched from ESA to Universal Credit and paid more council tax, leaving her much worse off.

Grieving the loss of her mother and struggling to cope financially, Gale turned to Citizens Advice for help.

“It’s very unfair because I had no choice. I had to swap to Universal Credit to claim housing costs and I was penalised for that. It's a lot of money to lose and I’ve had to cut back. The impact has been huge, emotionally.

“Citizens Advice were very good. They went through all the details and helped fill out the forms. It took a lot of weight off my mind. Suffering with anxiety, things like that can really mess me up, so it was reassuring to know there was someone there to support me.”

* Names have been changed to protect anonymity

“Citizens Advice were very good. They went through all the details and helped fill out the forms…”

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What we achieved in 2023 to 2024

Delivery of our Business Plan for 2023 to 2024

We made significant progress in the previous financial year. Our business plan had 4 themes—advice, advocacy, inclusive access and organisational health.

1. Advice

Our advice theme related to the provision of advice in all its forms. We aimed to:

1. Protect and, where possible, increase the one-to-one advice provision within the available service, to enable more clients to access advice
2. Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of advice-giving processes to enable advisers to support more clients, whilst still providing a quality service
3. Make our advice fit for the future by understanding, defining and developing our place in the wider advice ecosystem

For 'advice' we:

- resecured our Help to Claim funding and won or secured £66m out of the £67m funded services income target. We distributed funding from donations to local Citizens Advice, with over £36m of income gains for clients
- made significant progress with volunteering transformation, commissioning research to better understand the value of volunteering across our service and creating a toolkit to help volunteer managers support volunteer wellbeing
- expanded our energy advice capacity and developed a proposition for Consumer Energy Debt Advice
- started modernising the technology behind the consumer service, building on the successful rollout of our Connect platform, improving the client experience of our phone services and reducing costs
- served 59% of our advice content to the public and advisers across the UK through our new content platform, Contentful, in partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland
- trialled new approaches to improving the on-site navigation and ease of search our website content, introducing ways to enable clients to more easily self-serve

2. Advocacy

Our advocacy theme sought to maximise our impact and opportunities to feed back from frontline insights to our advocacy work. We aimed to:

1. Test the idea that a stronger feedback loop between advice and advocacy would achieve greater impact for our clients

2. Further position ourselves as the leading organisation for bringing frontline insights into policymaking

For 'advocacy' we:

- gained a stronger advocacy voice by embedding colleagues in local Citizens Advice and used frontline insights in our data presentations, branding and advocacy
- established 'negative budgets' as a policy framework, launched our National Red Index, and called for government action to address the causes of people's costs exceeding their income
- appeared at select committees to give evidence on a range of issues, including energy support and regulation

3. Inclusive access

Our inclusive access theme aimed to tackle the ongoing disparities in access and experience for clients from marginalised groups. We aimed to:

1. Improve the accessibility of our service for marginalised clients
2. Improve the overall client experience for clients of colour
3. Increase the voice of clients and potential clients (especially those who are most minoritised and marginalised) in all of our work to improve our ability to meet their needs

For 'inclusive access' we:

- progressed our work to close the access and experience gap with an equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) dashboard for our client data, brand campaign work for people of colour and improvements to our discrimination advice
- established a Closing the Gap community of practice made up of colleagues across national Citizens Advice
- recruited a Senior EDI Specialist and Race Equity Specialist to support local Citizens Advice to mobilise on mission 2, and co-ordinate our racial disparities research project
- undertook work on involving people with lived experience, including creating a participation community of practice
- reduced the national organisation's gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps

4. Organisational health

Our organisational health theme was our most wide-ranging and focused on both the underpinning features of a successful organisation and system and the longer-term direction. We aimed to:

1. Improve the experience of colleagues in priority aspects of the employee lifecycle, increasing colleague attraction, satisfaction and retention
2. Build our understanding of system-wide finances and our strategic finance and funding options, prioritising our short- and longer-term sustainability activities accordingly
3. Work collaboratively across the service to build common purpose around our key opportunities and challenges. And work together to address them, progressively determining how to evolve

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our system and our strategic partnerships, with and for clients

4. Focus on strengthening our organisational foundations in the national organisation—including the key capabilities, processes, systems and behaviours needed to support the effective performance of Citizens Advice

For 'organisational health' we:

- launched our strategy and the local Citizens Advice Taskforce, a group of local and national leaders, including local Citizens Advice trustees, to help steer our strategy mobilisation

- delivered improvements to our talent acquisition, people data and induction processes. We completed a strategic pay review and conducted shorter working week projects

- took steps to improve financial sustainability through the business planning process and developed a medium-term financial plan

Our funding model continues to constrain the supply of advice and the support we can provide. With flat or decreased funding, we protected rather than increased the capacity of our funded services.

As financial sustainability was a key focus for our planning, we diverted leadership and colleague time to identifying savings and implementing robust financial and people change assessments and processes during the second half of the year.

We expected to complete work to move advice content by March 2024 but that milestone was moved to July 2024. Due to insufficient capacity, we were not able to complete all of the improvements to our discrimination advice that we had planned. We were also unable to complete a lived experience framework and principles. We've made progress with our funding strategy but there is more to do.

We adjusted the original strategy outputs for the year and prioritised establishing the Local Citizens Advice Taskforce and mobilising our new missions.

Our funding model continues to constrain the supply of advice and the support we can provide. With flat or decreased funding, we protected rather than increased the capacity of our funded services.

Business development and income generation

Financial sustainability is key to our future delivery. We continue working to secure longer-term funding for the whole service—at a national, local and, increasingly, regional level. Devolution is here to stay, and with it brings opportunities and challenges.

In the past year, we have established an organisational-wide regional funding approach that will enable local offices to compete effectively for devolved and regionalised funding.

In the last year we have invested in our fundraising team to enable us to maximise opportunities for funding frontline services, advocacy and infrastructure. We continue to maximise opportunities to grow our unrestricted income, alongside winning funding for restricted projects within key strategic areas. We will continue to work to improve this position, and recognise the need to continuously assess our activities against our strategy to maintain a sustainable unrestricted reserves position.

More stable funding helps us to plan further into the future and ensures that our services are financially sustainable and resilient. At the end of the financial year, just over half of our nationally-secured funding is through agreements of over one year.

In 2023 to 2024 we:

- secured the extension of key national services—Pension Wise, the Witness Service and the Wales Single Advice Fund
- competed for and won the Help to Claim bid, awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- secured funding for 64,519 fuel vouchers, supporting clients in fuel crisis
- obtained nearly £500,000 in funding to improve technical infrastructure support for debt advice
- supported the network to win £46,615,085 in funding
- continued to build relationships with Trusts and Foundations, winning £1m of new business and sustaining £1.5m of partnerships
- worked with our network of local Citizens Advice to explore how we can support them to fundraise locally within their communities

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Our strategy

Our strategy, vision and ambitions

In October 2023, we launched our strategy, Transforming together: trusted advice in times of change. As well as setting out how we'll deliver it and the enablers that will help us to do so, our strategy introduces a move to missions-based working.

This is a practical response to the need to ensure our work has the greatest impact. And a way of harnessing the power of being one service with many leaders.

Our strategy acknowledges that our service is rich in brilliant practice and innovative approaches, and brimming with ideas for the future. But also that we haven't always used the full power of our federated network to enable us to make the most of our collective resources.

A missions-based approach focuses our collective efforts on the biggest challenges. It also supports a new way of working together as one service that centres on learning and innovation. We hope that by encouraging innovation, attracting new investment and collectively problem solving, we will have the greatest impact for the people we are here to support.

Our missions are to:

1. Provide advice fit for the future—We'll be there for people when they need us in the ways that help make the biggest impact
2. Close the gap—We'll end the disparities in access and experience for marginalised people
3. Take early action—We'll prevent more people reaching crisis by addressing problems earlier

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Our EDI approach recognises that inequalities in society lead marginalised communities to face greater disadvantages, which drives demand for our services. For instance, our research shows that marginalised communities are disproportionately affected by issues with benefits, housing, employment and household finances.
The continued impact of the cost-of-living crisis is also more likely to lead marginalised communities to need our advice, support and advocacy.
This understanding underpins our new organisational strategy.

Whilst all our strategic missions relate to how we provide our services and advocate for change, mission 2 has an explicit commitment to ending the disparities in access and experience for marginalised people. To do this, we will work hard to reach the people who need us most, prioritise the needs of marginalised people and challenge disparities and inequalities, both in how we provide advice and advocate for change.

We have begun work on a range of activities to deliver on mission 2. These focus on improving

access for disabled clients, improving access and experience for clients of colour and centring lived experience. The work has included:

- launching an organisational-wide EDI data dashboard and accompanying monthly dashboard sessions. The dashboard is a collection of organisational data that covers client experience across our service, people surveys in local offices and people data for the national office

- starting our racial disparities research project. We know clients of colour are less likely to recommend Citizens Advice and have a poorer experience when they use our service. We're undertaking a flagship research project, grounded in design justice principles, to understand these disparities

- continuing our work to improve discrimination advice for marginalised clients

- establishing a Closing the Gap Community of Practice to ensure we can have the greatest impact in addressing equality disparities in service delivery

- recruiting a new Digital Accessibility Manager and Senior Race Equity Specialist

- launching a new brand campaign that centres clients of colour

Partnerships and sponsors

We build new partnerships to help us support as many people as possible. Securing funding and working with partners are absolutely essential to our financial sustainability in the most challenging economic situation we've seen in a generation.

The backing we receive from our partners and supporters enables us to continue helping the people who need us. The demand for our services is still at record levels, with client issues becoming more complex and harder to resolve.

It is more important than ever before that our service is sustainable and able to reach as many people as possible. The funding we receive through our partnerships not only allows us to fund vital programmes and services but also helps us to work more strategically. We are so grateful for the support we receive year on year, thank you!

Aviva

So far, as part of our strategic partnership, Aviva has donated £7 million over 2 years to increase the capacity of our service. This is due to their ambition to help the UK Get Ready for the future.

Aviva funding has enabled our Adviceline advisers to support almost 50,000 people with 117,000 issues. And it has improved our website advice, increasing the number of clients who can self-serve by 10%. We've also developed an impactful programme of corporate volunteering activity which provides unique opportunities for Aviva colleagues to directly support our service.

British Gas

We received a donation of £150,000 from British Gas to help build capacity into our Help Through Hardship helpline, which provides critical advice and support to people in crisis.

Cadent Foundation

With support from the Cadent Foundation, we conducted a 12-month pilot targeted at 8 of the most deprived communities in areas where Cadent operates. This offered clients assistance with specialist energy efficiency advice and income maximisation.

We did this by having specialist caseworkers support clients with their problems through to resolution, by looking at their circumstances through a holistic lens. As a result of the pilot, we were able to help 1,927 clients, and identified over £2.7m income gain—an average of £1,432 per client.

Lloyds Banking Group plc

We entered a partnership with Lloyds Banking Group (LBG) in September 2022, offering a bespoke referral service for their customers which continued to flourish throughout 2023 to 2024. That year, our partnership supported 4,588 clients with more than 11,800 issues, resulting in a potential income gain of over £2.4 million for Lloyds Banking Group customers.

Macmillan Cancer Support

For over 15 years, Citizens Advice has partnered with Macmillan to provide vital welfare benefits advice to people living with cancer across England. This year, our partnership made a profound impact by supporting over 34,600 people with 200,000 advice issues, including over £112 million in financial gains.

Our advice tangibly improves lives, enabling people to afford better care, nutrition, transport and heating. The partnership demonstrates our shared commitment to empowering those living with cancer.

Mind

We continue to work with Mind on our Help through Hardship partnership. Together with the Trussell Trust, the partnership aims to tackle the underlying causes of poverty, including mental health problems. It does this by offering joined-up advice and support services for people on the lowest incomes and campaigning for a more just support system.

Advisers on the Help through Hardship helpline can refer callers to Mind's Infoline for information about mental health and how to get support. Local Citizens Advice work with local Mind services to provide holistic support to people experiencing both money and mental health problems.

National Grid

National Grid continues to be a strategic partner of Citizens Advice, supporting vital frontline service delivery through several energy programmes. In the first year of our partnership, more than £20 million of additional income was identified for our clients.

Alongside this, we have delivered a meaningful corporate volunteering programme which gives National Grid colleagues experience on the frontline of advice delivery. This mutually-beneficial programme has enabled us to support an additional 4,226 clients.

NatWest Group

NatWest Group has been supporting a referral service for their customers in partnership with Citizens Advice since 2020. In 2023 to 2024, our partnership supported 4,202 clients with more than 13,200 cases. This resulted in a potential income gain for NatWest Group customers of £1,469,755.

OVO Energy, E.on Next, Shell Energy

We partnered with OVO Energy, E.on Next and Shell Energy who provided funding through the Warm Home Discount (WHD) Industry Initiative to support the successful delivery of the Energy Advice Programme (EAP) across England and Wales.

In 2023 to 2024, through WHD funding, our advisers have provided energy efficiency and income maximisation advice to 10,638 people and identified a staggering £11,282,677 of income gains. We advised on 53,809 energy-related issues and provided £347,193 worth of fuel vouchers.

Southern Gas Networks (SGN), Northern Gas Networks, Wales & West Utilities

In collaboration, the gas distribution networks SGN, Northern Gas Networks, Wales & West Utilities have partnered with Citizens Advice to deliver the Energy Safeguarding and CO Safety Partnership across England and Wales.

In 2023 to 2024, we trained more than 440 Citizens Advice energy advisers on CO safety, increasing CO awareness amongst 8,620 households. We provided lifesaving CO alarms to 1,982 of the most at-risk households, supported clients with over 42,000 advice issues, and issued 1,113 food and 2,773 fuel vouchers. We also identified a staggering £5,422,362 income gain.

The Trussell Trust

In March 2020, right at the beginning of the Covid pandemic, Citizens Advice and the Trussell Trust launched the Help through Hardship helpline, with Mind joining the partnership in 2021.

The free helpline offers personalised, holistic support to people who don't have enough money for essentials. It can also connect people with a wider range of services and support, like a referral to the Trussell Trust foodbank network for emergency food.

We've expanded our partnership to strengthen local connections and use our shared voice to campaign for a more just support system for people facing poverty and mental health problems.

Yorkshire Building Society

We continued our innovative partnership with Yorkshire Building Society and expanded provision in July 2023. This increased our reach in local communities, with 28 local Citizens Advice offices delivering appointments in 41 YBS branches across England and Wales. In 2023 to 2024, our partnership supported 4,206 clients with more than 15,800 issues, resulting in a potential income gain of £1,865,202.

"I needed to fill in forms, but I'm dyslexic and suffer with anxiety. Citizens Advice were very helpful and went through everything with me. It took a big weight off my mind."

Gale*

* Names have been changed to protect anonymity

04

How we helped people

How we helped people

Citizens Advice delivers services across England, Wales and the Channel Islands. Our local Citizens Advice network provides advice through a variety of channels, including in person, over the phone, by email and over webchat. We also provide online advice content on our website.

We use our data to show how people want to receive advice and then respond to that need as best we can.

Demand for our services continues to rise. We work alongside our local network to support them to meet as much of this demand as possible, and to be the trusted advice that clients need in these challenging and changing times.

Advice

Adviceline

Adviceline is our nationally-supported remote generalist advice service. It is free to use and is our most widely-delivered service, with over 200 local Citizens Advice delivering a combination of phone, webchat and email advice through Adviceline.

This year, our Adviceline phone service answered over 650,000 calls—450,000 of which were unique clients. This means that, since launching in 2013, Adviceline has answered almost 8.5 million calls to people in England and Wales. In addition, in 2023 to 2024, our advisers have answered 25,000 contacts through Adviceline webchat and 21,000 contacts through Adviceline email.

As our generalist advice service, the information and advice our advisers give is extremely diverse, helping clients with all manner of issues. The top issues we helped people with in 2023 to 2024 were tax, benefits, housing, charitable support (such as referrals and crisis support) and relationships and family.

As well as providing direct support to clients, Adviceline plays a pivotal role in connecting clients to our other services. The Adviceline phone service gives clients the option to select our consumer, Help to Claim or money service. As such, Adviceline can be considered our virtual 'front door'—connecting millions of people to the support they need.

However, the service also faces continued demand and funding challenges. People are coming to us in greater numbers and with more urgent and complex problems. This means it takes our advisers longer to help them.

The result is that our virtual queues of people are getting longer. We know this is a key issue for clients who use Adviceline, as increasingly they have to wait longer to get through. It's also challenging for advisers who support—understandably—frustrated clients. Regarding funding, Adviceline is particularly reliant on local statutory funding, which has remained flat for a number of years.

In 2023 to 2024 we worked hard to address these issues where we could. We have secured additional

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funding from major donors and are making use of our technology and data functions, including our new remote phone advice platform. These help us to better understand demand and make the most of our resources.

In the year ahead, we'll continue to focus on supporting our network to make the best use of current resources to further improve their remote generalist services. At the same time, we'll work to increase our income to meet demand and funding challenges.

In 2023 to 2024:

93%
of local Citizens Advice services supported people over the phone on Adviceline

24%
of phone demand was answered

55,000
additional calls answered—an increase of 9% from 2022 to 2023

25,000
webchat contacts were answered

21,000
email contacts were answered

8.5 million
calls answered by our Adviceline service since 2013

Money Advice Development team

The Money Advice Development team works to develop money advice services for the network. The work cuts across all 3 missions: Provide advice fit for the future, Close the gap, and Take action early.

In 2023 to 2024, we delivered the following work to support local Citizens Advice and clients:

- set up a financial capability network group, following the success of launching 'Integrating Financial Capability into Advice' training
- supported client-facing money advice content by establishing a partnership with Plain Numbers
- helped advisers to see more clients by developing and launching a feature in our case management system, 'Casebook'
- designed 'Next Steps and Advice Summary' templates to better tailor the information that clients are given after a debt advice session. This supports Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) Consumer Duty and other regulatory requirements
- focused on talking to young people about money and finances by developing content and supporting a number of campaign initiatives
- established new relationships with the Deaf community and organisations that support those members. These included teaching students financial capability, consumer skills and scams awareness, and creating British Sign Language (BSL) TikTok videos together
- supported the relaunch of the National Young Consumer of the Year competition. We will support this again in 2024 to 2025 by working in partnership with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute

Witness service

We provide free and independent support for witnesses and victims in every criminal court in England and Wales, to help them give their best evidence. Our Witness Service is funded by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and provides support for both prosecution and defence witnesses.

Our service recognises that victims and witnesses often have other problems that intersect with their worries about attending court. We work closely with other organisations, including our network of local Citizens Advice. Our trained volunteers work tirelessly to give witnesses practical information and emotional support to feel more confident when giving evidence.

This year:

- we supported over 80,000 witnesses to give their best evidence
- we provided enhanced support for 35% of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses through our outreach service
- we made over 5,000 referrals to other services for additional support, including local Citizens Advice
- after receiving support, 96% of witnesses surveyed said they felt safer, 93% less anxious and 95% better prepared to give evidence.

Pension Wise

Pension Wise is dedicated to empowering people aged 50 or over through free, impartial guidance about accessing their defined contribution pensions. The service is available across England, Wales and Northern Ireland and is delivered in partnership with 36 local Citizens Advice offices. In 2023 to 2024, Pension Wise supported 75,000 clients with an average client satisfaction rate of 98%.

During this period, our phone delivery increased to 95%. This supported the response to demand levels whilst also ensuring that we kept a proportion of our face-to-face delivery for those that needed it. This balance reflects the needs of our clients in an ever-changing delivery landscape. We're able to provide for those operating in an increasingly digital world, opening up the service to more people whilst continuing to meet the accessibility needs of our most marginalised clients.

As the cost-of-living crisis persists, there is a growing interest in accessing pension savings early, as people consider tapping into pension pots to alleviate financial pressures. We're committed to helping people understand the implications of this decision and their options, and directing them to support for financial challenges where needed.

We've been working on improving the accessibility of the Pension Wise service for Deaf clients. We've developed and improved the BSL appointment booking process and have created a social media toolkit that promotes BSL Pension Wise appointments. This has further broadened the reach and accessibility of the service.

Looking ahead, we're focused on making more improvements to the accessibility of the Pension Wise service, streamlining our booking process, and analysing our data to better support our clients.

Help to Claim

Help to Claim gives people the support they need to claim Universal Credit—from starting an application to getting their first full payment. At a time of a cost-of-living crisis, this service is even more vital.
It ensures that people receive the correct amount of Universal Credit and, where needed, gives them the support to claim—which otherwise they may not have had.

2023 to 2024 was another busy year for Help to Claim, as our service supported 131,000 people on the phone and through webchat. In addition, 194,000 people fully self-served the advice they needed from our website—including our Help to Claim web pages being viewed 2.6 million times over the year.

Almost 9 in 10 (87%) clients said they would have been unable to solve their problem without the support of Citizens Advice, demonstrating how indispensable the Help to Claim service is.

The cost-of-living crisis impacts different communities in different ways and over the year we connected with around 2,600 local organisations. We did this with a focus on developing partnerships to help improve access for marginalised groups.

Help Through Hardship

Citizens Advice and the Trussell Trust have come together to develop a free helpline for people struggling to afford the basics. Operating in England and Wales, the helpline offers personalised advice and support to help address the underlying causes of the client's hardship. If required, the helpline also makes a quick and seamless referral to a food bank.

In 2023 to 2024 we helped 43,622 clients and issued 65,690 food bank vouchers, resulting in over 130,000

food parcels being distributed. At a time of a cost-of-living crisis, these food bank vouchers and the wider support are an essential lifeline for clients.

Our advisers helped to bring in over £40.6m in critical financial gains for these clients. At least £40.3m of this was achieved through increasing clients' income by claiming their full entitlement to benefits.

Consumer service

The consumer service helps everybody living in England and Wales with any consumer issues they may have—including advice on energy and post. We provide advice, education and research on policy issues. We also have a statutory duty to provide supplier performance information to consumers.

The service is provided through 8 of our local Citizens Advice and is delivered by phone, webchat and email. It is funded by our main funder, the Department for Business and Trade (DBT).

Our consumer service delivers excellent value for money—for every £1 spent on providing the service, consumers on average save £9.

In 2023 to 2024, the consumer service handled:

- just over 827,000 total contacts
- 610,000 general consumer queries
- 205,000 energy contacts
- 11,100 post contacts
- and 13,745,000 visits were made to the consumer pages of our website

It was an ambitious year, with work well underway to develop the consumer service and bring it onto our Casebook client management tool, which will go live in 2024 to 2025. This will make the service more efficient to deliver for our partners and, most importantly, will provide our clients with a more effective service.

We also introduced a new priority line for our general consumer clients, having previously introduced one for our energy clients. This helps clients to get a faster route into our advisers.

Providing specialist energy support

The consumer service is able to refer qualifying people to priority complaints teams at energy suppliers. This can help resolve problems more quickly.

Vulnerable clients will be referred to the Extra Help Unit (EHU) for additional support. This is a referral-only service and 84% of its referrals come from the consumer service.

Where people have tried and failed to settle a complaint with their energy company, we can refer people to the Energy Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will carry out an impartial review of the complaint and issue a resolution.

Energy

In a year that continued to be challenging for energy consumers, Citizens Advice has been there to provide people with advice and support:

- almost 50 million views of our content and messaging across digital and offline channels

- 3.76 million unique page views of our energy web pages
- we revised our website advice content, improving the results for key search terms and ensuring it meets people's changing needs
- we developed and launched a new version of the Energy Supplier Customer Service Ratings, to align with the new requirement for suppliers to host this data on their own websites
- we improved our interactive tool for comparing the energy use of appliances
- we held events to reach different communities with the energy advice they might need
- we worked in partnership with Energy Saving Trust to run Energy Savers Week in January 2024. We shared our top tips for staying warm and saving money on energy over the winter. Our content and messaging about this week of activity was seen over 6 million times

Energy advice projects

In addition to our work on consumer service energy issues, our energy advice projects had their busiest year yet. They mobilised and managed 5 separate energy advice services that resulted in a total of £6.5m funding for advice services through our local offices. This was 40% more than in 2022 to 2023.

Key outcomes for our energy advice in 2023 to 2024 include:

- over 69,000 clients supported with energy and income maximisation advice (up 10% from 2022 to 2023) by 168 local Citizens Advice across England and Wales
- an income gain of just under £52 million for our clients (a 116% increase from 2022 to 2023). Most of these clients were in fuel poverty. Our energy advice services supported them through crisis and longer-term debt management
- through the expansion of our Energy Advice Programme, we were able to provide detailed advice to almost twice as many clients as in 2022 to 2023
- we successfully expanded our Energy Caseworker service—the pilot scheme of 8 FTE advisers operating from 8 offices has been extended to 35 FTE advisers covering 35 offices across England and Wales

Money and Pensions Service Debt Advice Project

Our Money and Pensions Service-funded Debt Advice Project provides free debt advice across England. It offers this through a national free phone service, webchat and face-to-face provision in over 100 community-based advice agencies.

In addition, we provide a national centre for the processing of Debt Relief Orders (DROs). We also provide a casework service for the Money Advice Trust's National Debt Line.

We've supported over 200,000 people through the cost-of-living crisis by providing our service over multiple channels, so people can get advice in a way that works for them.

Contents

In 2023 to 2024:

- our national webchat and email service supported 96,442 new clients, with an 89% satisfaction rate
- our national phone service supported 47,734 new clients
- we supported 5,308 clients to obtain a DRO, writing off £73m of debt
- we provided 29,838 hours of casework support for 7,653 National Debt Line clients
- we supported 88,000 people in 108 areas through the work of 97 local Citizens Advice and 11 independent advice agencies
- through local delivery, we wrote off £69m of client debt, mostly through Debt Relief Orders or Bankruptcy

Wales funded services

In Wales we deliver Advicelink Cymru, a targeted service for people most in need of advice services, funded by the Welsh Government under its Single Advice Fund.

Advicelink Cymru offers a quality-assured advice service across Wales, providing advice in Welsh, covering the following advice areas:

- welfare benefits
- debt and financial capability
- housing
- employment and discrimination
- education

In 2023 to 2024, Advicelink Cymru helped 81,979 people with 402,512 issues through 417,887 activities. These are the unique pieces of work that go into resolving a client's issues.

Issues with benefits, debt and housing were the main areas people sought help with this year.

62,913 people (77%) we helped were from an identified priority group, including carers, older people, disabled people, people with mental health problems, and those experiencing domestic abuse.

This year, Advicelink Cymru secured over £47.5 million additional income for the people we helped, and wrote off over £13.2 million of debts.

Of those surveyed, 81% of people said they would not have been able to find a way forward without Advicelink Cymru.

Advicelink Cymru is now made up of 8 services in 6 regions across Wales, delivered by a network of local Citizens Advice offices and funded partners. Services include:

- regional community and specialist advice services
- a pan-Wales remote phone line

- Private Rented Sector Debt Advice Helpline
- Mental Health Crisis Breathing Space
- Basic Income Pilot for care leavers
- Claim What's Yours
- Debt Relief Order Unit

Basic Income Pilot

The Welsh Government Basic Income Pilot for care leavers gives a monthly pre-tax payment of £1,600 for a duration of 24 months from the month after a young person's 18th birthday. Our Advicelink Cymru service provides all young people in the pilot with financial advice, calculations and education focused on the prevention of financial crisis.

It also provides skills development, and advice and support with day-to-day issues like housing, employment and benefits. This has the aim of supporting young people to live independently at the end of the pilot. This year, as the pilot moved into its exit phase, we helped 250 young people with 981 issues through 966 activities.

Claim What's Yours

Claim What's Yours is a Welsh Government-funded income maximisation campaign. Through a dedicated helpline, it provides free and confidential advice about the benefits people may be entitled to. This year the service answered over 52,000 calls.

Debt Relief Order Unit

In 2023 to 2024, we launched a new pan-Wales Debt Relief Order (DRO) Unit. This Unit, established in response to a changing funding landscape across England and Wales, enables people who are experiencing significant debt issues to apply for a DRO. Over 360 DROs were submitted during the year.

European Union Citizens Rights (EUCR) service

This year our Welsh Government-funded EUCR service came to an end. The service provided free quality-assured information and advice services to EU, EEA and UK citizens through specialist advice services, including tribunal and/or Court representation services. This enabled these citizens and other migrant citizens who have the Right to Work to resolve any exploitation and/or discrimination issues related to employment.

In this last year of the service, we supported over 260 clients to resolve their cases and over 230 with advice related to employment and discrimination issues. 91% of clients felt their situation had improved and 100% were satisfied with the service they had received.

Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to our work in Wales, enabling us to reach out to marginalised people through our trusted community networks. Working with partners increases awareness of the value of advice and supports referrals both to and from our network of local Citizens Advice offices.

Our partners value the accessibility and speed of our Wales-wide referral system.

[I'm] 'Amazed at how speedy the referral was. The client had just left the office and was on the bus home when they got a call back from Citizens Advice.'

'Referral system is really useful, especially being 24 hours. Many of our services operate outside of traditional hours, especially working with young people and mothers outside of school hours. This means we can make referrals at any time which is really convenient.'

Working in this way helps us to take a more preventative approach: 75% of clients supported by Advicelink Cymru were advised at an early stage. A further 20% were advised before a crisis.

Each partner brings their own expertise and reach into a community of interest or place. Delivering quality-assured social welfare advice with wraparound support from partners—be it practical, emotional, clinical or social—provides a more holistic package. This matters because clients are increasingly seeking help with complex, inter-related problems.

This year saw a growth in our partnership working across Wales, with more partners signed up to our central online e-referral system. Over 55 partners actively made over 3,900 referrals, bringing the total number of e-referrals since the project's inception in 2020 to over 18,500. Many more e-referrals are made through longstanding local referral portals, offering people a range of ways of accessing our services.

Advocacy

We've been working to ensure that the cost of living remains a top priority for policymakers in England and Wales. To do this, we created a new framework for policymakers to understand and measure living standards through negative budgets.

Negative budgets are our key cost-of-living measure—they tell us how many of the people we help with debt issues can't afford their essential costs, and how big their monthly budget shortfall is.

We developed this work further when we launched our National Red Index, a tool that combines our frontline debt advice data with national survey data. This allows us to measure the scale and depth of negative budgets across Britain for the first time. The National Red Index can evaluate the impact of different policies on household budgets—showing policymakers what changes would be most effective in lifting people back into a positive budget.

We've shared our analysis with stakeholders, including several government departments, helping them understand how they can use the National Red Index in their work to address cost-of-living pressures. The National Red Index has also become a new data tool for national and local Citizens Advice colleagues, allowing us to speak not only about what we're seeing on the frontline, but what the picture looks like on a national scale.

Energy

A major factor pushing people into negative budgets is the ongoing affordability crisis in the energy sector. This has continued to be the main issue facing energy consumers this year.

Although prices started to fall from their peak in mid-2023, the removal of key government support schemes has meant that people have continued to face prices around 50% higher than before the crisis began. Addressing the energy affordability crisis remains a key focus of our work.

Advocacy spotlight

Addressing the ongoing energy affordability crisis and rising debt levels

Prepayment meters (PPMs) made headlines last year, with landmark Citizens Advice reports highlighting the heartbreaking numbers of people who couldn't afford to top up their meter. This led to a temporary moratorium on forcefit prepayment meter installations and work to improve protections going forward.

We've used our evidence and influence to shape the development of those protections. This led to the introduction of new rules on prepayment meters in November 2023.

In 2024, we've continued to use our research to highlight the experience of prepay customers, alongside the need for more affordability support overall.

Prepayment meters – 2023 to 2024 timeline

2023

March

We responded to Ofgem's call for evidence on what new protections for prepayment customers should look like and called for the moratorium to be extended. Ofgem extended their moratorium on prepayment protections

June

Ofgem published a statutory consultation on their proposed new prepayment rules. Their impact assessment that accompanied the consultation projected that the new rules would likely result in nationwide economic benefits of approximately £676m, achieved through a 4% reduction in excess winter deaths

July

We responded to the statutory consultation, arguing for greater protections for vulnerable households in the draft rules—including a wider set of consumers for whom prepayment is not appropriate

September

Ofgem announced that the new rules for prepayment installations had been finalised and would come into effect from 8 November 2023. Suppliers will now have to review their PPM cases on an annual basis. They must not install a PPM for customers with a baby in the home, a resident who is aged 75 or over or who has specific medical conditions

November

The new rules on PPMs came into effect in the licence conditions

2024

January

The first suppliers met the threshold to begin forcibly installing PPMs. We began monitoring PPM installation cases, and referring any poor practice on for further investigation. Our Shock Proof report estimated that over 2 million energy customers would have disconnected by the end of winter 2023 because they couldn't afford to top up their PPMs

April

Ofgem announced that the first wave of compensation to consumers affected by inappropriate PPM installations had been paid, and that 150,000 installations had already been reviewed by energy suppliers

Post

Last autumn was a significant time for our advocacy work on post and accessibility. We first drew attention to the fact that parcel deliveries don't work well for disabled people back in 2018. In 2019 we published a report on the ways in which disabled consumers should be able to better specify their needs.

After 5 years of Citizens Advice highlighting the issue, in November 2023 Ofcom finally introduced new consumer protections for disabled people in the parcels market. Around the same time, we published our third annual parcels league table, and we will continue to monitor the impact of these new protections over the coming year.

We're the statutory consumer watchdog for the postal service. We've continued to work with Ofcom and Royal Mail to advance consumer priorities around affordability and reliability.

We highlighted the ongoing issue of Royal Mail letter delays in media work during summer 2023. And we engaged with Ofcom on their review of the Universal Service Obligation, publishing our suggestions in the autumn. We also saw success in our work around retaining the 2nd class price cap, with Ofcom announcing in January 2024 that this will now be retained until 2027.

Consumer

With the cost of living continuing to put pressure on household bills, we've focused on showing the effect this is having. On people's ability to cover their essential bills and to access markets that provide basic services needed for day-to-day life. Our research found that in the year to August 2023, 4 million people were priced out of broadband, mobile or insurance markets.

We found that over 1 million households had had to cancel essential car insurance due to rising bills, with 89% of those who had cancelled finding it much harder to carry out daily tasks as a result.

We've used our research to highlight the need for a stronger system of bill support and to draw attention to the problems with the current system of social tariffs for energy, water and broadband. We have also continued to draw attention to our worrying research finding that people of colour are paying on average £250 more for their car insurance. We raised this when giving evidence to the Treasury Select Committee.

This year has been an important one for cross-cutting consumer rights, with the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers (DMCC) Bill passing through Parliament. We've continued to highlight how the design of sales processes, especially online, can lead to consumers being out of pocket.

In July 2023 we published our report Pushed to Purchase: Counting the cost of deceptive digital design in e-commerce, which explored the cost to consumers of poor design of consumer journeys. It found that, due to the design of an app or website, 1 in 6 consumers had bought something they didn't want or need, or later regretted purchasing.

It also emphasised the role of drip-pricing (where fees are added on towards the end of the sales process), reiterated our earlier calls to have this practice banned and for further action on subscription traps. Both of these topics were included in the final DMCC Act, which became law in May 2024 and will mean greater protection for consumers in these markets.

Given the extreme pressure on household finances caused by high inflation, we have continued to highlight the need for regulators to crack down on poor practices affecting consumers. This has included our work focusing on above-inflation price rises being included with mobile and broadband contracts.

Our report Dialling up prices: Why mobile and broadband consumers need better protections from unfair pricing practices identified that £1.4 billion was set to be added to consumer bills as a result of another round of price hikes in 2024. Crucially, we showed that most people didn't understand the terms of the contracts they were signing up to and we called for changes to be made to this practice. In December 2023, Ofcom announced that it intended to ban the practice of mobile and broadband providers including inflation-linked price rises in their contracts.

"I feel a lot better about everything now that Sara, my adviser at Citizens Advice, has helped me along. I just don't feel that pressure anymore. I also feel more confident about how to deal with situations like this in the future. And if I get stuck again, I know I can go back to Citizens Advice for help."

Malcolm, East Suffolk

05

Moving forward, transformation

Moving forward, transformation

Our priorities for 2024 to 2025

The 2024 to 2025 business plan marks a shift towards a new missions based approach. Our priorities include developing and implementing our strategy, foundational work to make our advice fit for the future, and to close the gap in disparities and prevent destitution. Our business plan also identifies other key work streams that will enable our missions.

Contents

Citizens Advice national business plan 2024 to 2025

Developing and implementing our strategy

We will:

- agree areas of shared focus with local Citizens Advice
- establish joint ways of working, including how to measure progress

Mission 1:
Provide advice fit for the future

We'll be there for people when they need us in the ways that help make the biggest impact. We need to keep our advice offer relevant, far-reaching and effective, and evolve our service offer to keep pace with people's developing needs—making use of new technologies.

In 2024 to 2025, we will:

- redesign our membership support offer and funded services approach
- support local Citizens Advice to adapt their volunteering models
- improve client experience through use of technology, such as AI
- position ourselves at the centre of energy / net zero advice

Mission 2:
Close the gap

We know that marginalised communities face greater difficulty accessing our advice and they sometimes have a poorer experience when they do. For example, in 2023 to 2024, Asian or Asian British clients (63%), Black or Black British clients (69%), mixed and other clients (65%) were less positive about how easy they found it to access the service compared to White clients (75%). We need to work harder to reach the people who need us most, prioritise the needs of marginalised people, and challenge disparities.

In 2024 to 2025, we will:

- deliver research on racial disparities and develop a Race Matters action plan
- develop a roadmap to improve access for disabled clients
- develop and launch a new framework to embed lived experience into our work

Mission 3:
Take early action

Over the last few years, we have seen a dramatic rise in the number of people seeking crisis support from our service. We'll prevent more people from reaching crisis by addressing problems earlier and tackling the root cause of issues, creating change to prevent future problems and inequalities. We will do this both in how we provide advice and advocate for change.

In 2024 to 2025, we will:

- engage stakeholders to influence election manifestos and a new government's first 100 days, with a strong focus on negative budgets
- work with the Trussell Trust to design a pre-crisis support offer, to prevent people from entering destitution

Enablers that will help us deliver on our ambitions

1. Financial sustainability
2. Digital
3. Working with others
4. People and culture
5. Trusted brand

We will lead a transformation programme to commission the work necessary to address our need to change, starting with:

- reviewing the role and design of our national organisation
- strengthening our leadership and culture capabilities
- agreeing and implementing our funding strategy
- continuing to plan for our long-term financial sustainability

Operating model design and delivery

We will agree and embed a new Target Operating Model—clearly defining the role of the national organisation and making sure we are designed to be fit for our future.

In 2024 to 2025, we will:

- **Streamline our structure**—review directorate and team design to ensure we are focused and effective in our work
- **Strengthen our leadership and culture**—further define our leadership, behaviours and ways of working. Ensure we're aligned with our values and that leaders are equipped with the skills to foster a strong workplace culture
- **Enhance our capabilities and end-to-end processes**—map and invest in the right skills and expertise to deliver our service ambitions and make sure our ways of working are efficient and effective
- **Refresh our governance system**—by creating a clearer decision-making framework, strengthening our board and executive committee structures, and updating key governance documents, policies and procedures

Review our support to local offices

In 2024 to 2025, we will:

- **Redesign our membership support offer**—based on what we're hearing from the network, create a more sustainable support model and an up-to-date membership agreement, membership fee and charging structure
- **Deliver a new future for funded services**—deliver a new operating model to test new ways to bring together, deliver and continuously improve nationally-led funded service delivery, to achieve greater alignment with our strategy, value for money and competitiveness

Products, Platforms and Technology

Over the past 5 years, we've modernised the core platforms that underpin our advice services and advocacy work. These include our content platform, case management tools, data platform, and phone platform. This investment and effort have provided us with the foundations to innovate and to support rapidly-evolving client needs.

As part of our local support offer programme, we're reviewing what our local offices most need to effectively run their advice services. We are also looking at how we can meet those needs in the most cost-effective way.

We will take better advantage of new technologies offered through our remote advice platform, Connect, to enable advisers to deliver advice more efficiently. For instance, onboarding webchat and exploring the potential of new messaging capabilities such as email and WhatsApp.

We will work towards our ambition of becoming market competitive in our provision of digital self service and remote advice delivery. And we will constantly innovate and experiment with technology.

As part of the organisation's mission to close the access and experience gap, we'll begin research to understand how we can further expand the reach of our advice to minoritised communities, including through new channels and partnering with other organisations.

In 2024 to 2025, we will:

- **AI platforms**—building out the engineering skills and platforms needed to provide national and local office colleagues with AI capabilities for productivity gains and new ways of providing services. These will ensure data security at the lowest possible costs
- **Member technology services**—enhancing our provision of back-office technology services to our members (as part of the LSO work) to provide options for lower cost, standardised and centrally-managed capabilities
- **Technology estate optimisation**—a number of opportunities have been identified and action plans developed to reduce cost, complexity and risk across the nationally-owned technology estate
- **Embedded security**—additional controls, tools and training are being implemented to further reduce our cyber security risks
- **Data Engineering**—modernising our data platforms and business intelligence tools to simplify how data is collected, accessed, analysed and reported on

Our structure, governance and management, including volunteers

Our trustee board provides strategic direction and guidance to national Citizens Advice and has oversight of its financial and operational affairs. The 12 board members are trustees under charity law and directors of the charitable company.*

The trustee board held 6 formal meetings in 2023 to 2024. It also meets as necessary to discuss other business and to attend informational sessions. This helps our trustees to shape the organisation's strategy, learn more about particular areas of work and develop further as a team. Our Chief Executive and executive team deliver our strategy and ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the organisation.

During 2023 to 2024, we started a programme of work to modernise our governance systems. In 2024 to 2025, we will implement a restructured set of board committees. We will refresh terms of reference, update our Articles of Association, and improve the internal governance systems and procedures that support our organisation's decision making.

Our trustees

—in order of their appointment date

Will Cavendish (until 21 August 2023) is Arup's Global Head of Digital Services and Leader of the London-based Advanced Digital Engineering Group. Previously, he was Applied Strategy Lead at DeepMind, served as a World Bank economist, and lectured at Oxford University and Imperial College. He has a doctorate in economics and was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 2015. Will was Chair of our technology committee and a member of our chairs' committee.

Ann-Marie Harkin (until 27 February 2024) is the Executive Director for Audit Services at Audit Wales. She has won both the Leading Wales 'Women in Leadership' award and the CIPFA Wales 'Public Finance Professional of the Year' award. Ann-Marie was Chair of our Cymru advisory committee, Acting Chair of its meeting held on 15 May 2024, and a member of our audit and risk committee and chairs' committee.

Jonathan Mogford (until 24 July 2024) brings an insight from the Citizens Advice local network, as he is Vice-Chair at Citizens Advice Wandsworth. His civil service career includes 25 years of healthcare and life sciences policy experience, 10 years of which were at MHRA. Jonathan is Chair of our equality committee and was a member of our chairs' committee.

* The strategic report requirement to provide an analysis of the performance and activities of the charity at the end of the year has been provided within the Trustees' report.

Lucinda Bell (Treasurer, second term will end October 2024) is currently a non-executive director of Derwent London and Man Group. She was also a non-executive director of Crest Nicholson until December 2023. She is Chair of the audit and risk committee at Man Group and Chair of the audit committee at Derwent London. Lucinda is Chair of our audit and risk committee, a member of our people committee, and was a member of our chairs' committee. She was joint Acting Chair of our nominations committee from October 2023 to February 2024.

Warren Buckley (Chair until 16 November 2023) retired from his role as Retail Director at Thames Water in January 2023. Previously, he was Global Head of Contact Centres for HSBC Plc and held positions at BT, Openreach, Orange, Avaya, Lucent Technologies and Vodafone. Before standing down from his role as a trustee and Chair of our trustee board at our 2023 AGM, Warren was Chair of our chairs' committee.

Finola McDonnell joined the Financial Times in 2018 as Chief Communications and Marketing Officer. Finola is a member of the FT Group executive board and oversees global communications, brand management, commercial marketing, partnerships and events. Previously, she worked for US news outlet CNBC, as Vice President of international communications and marketing. Finola is a member of our technology committee and, from October 2023, our nominations committee.

Jabbar Sardar (Deputy Chair until September 2024) is Global HR director for BBC Studios, the commercial subsidiary of the BBC which oversees TV production, channels and distribution globally. Jabbar is a member of our nominations committee and was a member of our chairs' committee. He was also Chair of our nominations committee until our new trustee board Chair, Matthew Swindells, joined Citizens Advice. Jabbar took a leave of absence from our trustee board in October 2023 and resigned in September 2024.

Steve Hughes is Assistant Director of Strategy & Performance at Oldham Council. He leads the council's policy, performance and data functions, and oversees the data and digital transformation programme. Steve has 12 years of experience in both Chief Officer and Chair roles within the Citizens Advice network and has been a cabinet member in local government. He has held senior non-executive positions in housing and education establishments and is an avid advocate for HIV awareness. Steve is a member of our equality committee and people committee.

Bevis Watts is the Chief Executive of Triodos Bank UK Ltd. Bevis has spent his whole career working in sustainability in the public, private and voluntary sectors. He was previously Head of Business Support at WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) and CEO of Avon Wildlife Trust. Bevis is a member of our audit and risk committee and was joint Acting Chair of our nominations committee from October 2023 to February 2024.

Janine La Rosa is the Chief People Officer at a large London hospital. Prior to this, Janine held a key role in London's Covid response, working to help close the equity gap in vaccine screening. She previously worked delivering high-value infrastructure and transformation programmes, both in the UK and overseas.

Mark Allen retired from Cancer Research UK in 2021, having spent 5 years as Executive Director for HR. Mark has been a trustee and Chair of several final salary pension schemes and Deputy Chair of governors for a large FE college. He is currently a trustee of AQA, the examinations organisation. Mark is Chair of our people committee, a member of our nominations committee and was a member of our chairs' committee.

Sarah Wilson (Acting Chair from 16 November 2023 until 28 February 2024 and Acting Deputy Chair from 1 March 2024 until the present day). Sarah was Chair of The Barnes Fund, a local trust that provides funding to local charities including Citizens Advice Richmond and sheltered housing. She sits on the Advisory Board of Oxfam's Enterprise Development Programme and has held non-executive positions in further and higher education. She was a senior executive at both the Financial Services Authority and Voluntary Service Overseas. Sarah is a member of our audit and risk committee.

Dr Roxane Heaton (from October 2023) is the Chief Information Officer of Macmillan Cancer Support. She has also held a range of public and private sector roles including Director of Digital and Innovation for Morrisons Supermarket. She has won several technology and digital national awards and in 2022 received a British Empire Medal for Services to Digital Technology during Covid. Roxane is Chair of our technology committee.

Matthew Swindells (Chair from 1 March 2024) is Chair of the Board for the 4 acute hospitals that make up the North West London Acute Provider Collaborative. He runs his own consultancy, MJS Healthcare Consulting, through which he provides strategic advice on digital transformation and global healthcare to a small number of innovative companies. He has spent his entire career in healthcare, most recently as Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer for the NHS in England. Matthew has become Chair of our nominations committee.

Frank Hont (from May 2024) is chair of trustees at Citizens Advice Liverpool and has been a senior manager in the private and public sectors. From 2002 to 2012, he was Regional Secretary for UNISON, the public sector trade union. Frank was a member of the government Commission on Integration and Cohesion and received an MBE in 2008 for services to community cohesion. He has been a member of the Liverpool Fairness Commission and also served as a City Councillor in Liverpool. He has been involved in the city-wide anti-poverty task group for 15 years.

Lewis Brencher (from June 2024) is Vice Chair of Citizens Advice Rhondda Cynon Taff and Executive Director of Communications and Engagement at Transport for Wales. He has been a Trustee of CARCT for 9 years. Lewis has become Chair of the Cymru advisory committee which is key in helping shape the work of Citizens Advice Cymru and supporting the work of the local offices.

Deborah Harris-Ugbomah FCA (Treasurer from October 2024) is a chartered accountant, auditing financial services before moving into investment banking and venture capital. She has extensive executive and Non-Executive Director experience in financial services, public sector including NHS, and non-profits. Since January 2022, she has served as an independent member, Chair and Trustee of various committees and organisations. Deborah is an ICAEW elected member of Council, a membership body for the accountancy profession where she is the first black person in 152 years to be successfully elected as President of the London ICAEW chartered accountants.

Trustee committees

The following committees supported the trustee board in its work over the past year:

Audit and risk committee

Advises the trustee board on risk management, internal controls, internal and external audit and financial reporting. This committee is constituted to contain 3 independent co-opted members.

Chairs' committee

A sounding board for the Chair of the trustee board, through planning the board's agendas, and shaping and agreeing the board's business. Our chairs' committee has been disbanded—its last meeting was on 4 September 2023.

Cymru advisory committee

Advises the trustee board on matters relating to Welsh policy, public affairs, EDI, strategic development and business planning. It also has a brief to assure the board that we are meeting our duties under current Welsh language legislation. This committee is constituted to contain 2 members from the local Citizens Advice network in Wales and 4 independent members with expertise in Welsh language, EDI and/or devolved policy matters.

Equality committee

Provides expertise and guidance on EDI to the trustee board in relation to our network, national Citizens Advice colleagues, and Witness Service volunteers and colleagues. Makes sure that promoting equity and tackling the discrimination experienced by our clients is at the heart of our advice and policy work. This committee is constituted to contain 2 members that represent the local Citizens Advice network and 3 independent co-opted members.

Nominations committee

On behalf of the trustee board, leads the process for trustee board appointments. Ensures plans are in place for orderly succession to trustee board and committee positions and oversees the development of a diverse pipeline for succession. Is responsible for the trustee board having the knowledge and skills it needs to lead Citizens Advice. This committee is made up of 4 members of our trustee board, one of whom is the Chair, and our Chief Executive.

People committee

Supports the trustee board through its oversight of the national Citizens Advice people strategy, which includes inclusive employer priorities. Is responsible for ensuring that our people policies and practices are consistent with our organisational behaviours and culture. Monitors and provides feedback on our pay and reward strategy and advises the Chair about the appointment, appraisal and pay of our Chief Executive and executive directors. This committee is constituted to contain 3 trustee board members and also contains 2 independent co-opted members.

Technology committee

Helps to shape and monitor the technology strategy and provides feedback and guidance about technology matters affecting the national organisation and network. This committee is constituted to contain 1 member that represents the local Citizens Advice network and 2 independent co-opted members.

Our trustees' dates of appointment and committee involvement during 2023 to 2024

Trustee	Appointed	Audit and risk	Chairs'	Cymru advisory	Equality	Nominations	People	Technology
Will Cavendish	22 Aug 2017	–	✓	–	–	–	–	✓
Ann-Marie Harkin	28 Feb 2018	✓	✓	✓	–	–	–	–
Jonathan Mogford	25 Jul 2018	–	✓	–	✓	–	–	–
Lucinda Bell	11 Oct 2018	✓	✓	–	–	✓	✓	–
Warren Buckley	11 Oct 2018	–	✓	–	–	–	–	–
Finola McDonnell	31 Mar 2020	–	–	–	–	✓	–	✓
Jabbar Sardar	29 Apr 2020	–	✓	–	–	✓	–	–
Steve Hughes	23 Jun 2022	–	–	–	✓	–	✓	–
Bevis Watts	1 Nov 2022	✓	–	–	–	✓	–	–
Janine La Rosa	1 Nov 2022	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mark Allen	1 Nov 2022	–	✓	–	–	✓	✓	–
Sarah Wilson	1 Nov 2022	✓	–	–	–	–	–	–
Roxane Heaton	31 Oct 2023	–	–	–	–	–	–	✓
Matthew Swindells	1 Mar 2024	–	–	–	–	✓	–	–

Independent committee members 2023 to 2024

As we knew that we would be refreshing and restructuring our trustee board committees in the 2024 to 2025 year, we did not try to fill some of the vacancies on our committees. In 2024 to 2025, all of our committees will be operating under new terms of reference and some will cease to exist, as their work will form part of a new committee.

	External members as per the terms of reference	Local Citizens Advice members as per the terms of reference	Notes on membership and vacancies
Audit and risk	3	0	The second term of 2 external members ended on 28 March 2023 and those roles have not been filled. The remaining external member stepped down on 2 October 2023.
Cymru advisory	4	2	1 external member was appointed on 14 December 2023, replacing someone who stepped down after their second term. 1 of our 2 local Citizens Advice members was seconded to national Citizens Advice on 9 August 2023 and will return to the committee in August 2024.
Equality	3	2	1 local Citizens Advice member stepped down on 30 January 2024 and that role has been vacant since then. 1 external member stepped down on 10 July 2024.
People	0	0	Although not set out in the terms of reference, 2 external members served on the committee throughout 2023 to 2024.
Technology	2	1	The local Citizens Advice member role has been vacant throughout the 2023 to 2024 year.

Recruitment, induction and training of national trustees and committee members

We always seek to ensure that our recruitment processes are open and equitable. As with previous years, in 2023 to 2024 we worked with an external recruitment agency to find our new trustee board members. We looked for people with the right knowledge and skills to lead our service, whilst ensuring that our trustee board remains reflective of the communities we serve. These roles were advertised in national media and with our network.

Our trustees can serve 2 consecutive terms of 3 years, but they must then leave our trustee board. A trustee who holds office as our Chair, Deputy Chair or Treasurer is not allowed to remain in that role for more than 6 consecutive years. After serving 6 years as either Deputy Chair or Treasurer, a trustee can be appointed to the role of Chair. Regardless of their role/s, no member of our trustee board can hold office for more than 12 consecutive years. At the end of this period, another 2 years must pass before any former trustee can be re-appointed.

During 2023 to 2024, we recruited 2 new trustees. The first of these was a standard trustee board member who also became the Chair of our technology committee. The second was a new Chair of our trustee board and our members approved that appointment at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on 5 February 2024. Our new Chair started his official role on 1 March 2024, which allowed time for an induction.

All new members of our trustee board and committees receive an induction to Citizens Advice that includes information about their role, our service and its governance. As part of this induction, we arrange meetings between each new member and the trustee board Chair, fellow trustee board and/or committee members, and key colleagues, as appropriate. Our trustees and committee members are unpaid volunteers but we reimburse them for reasonable expenses, which this year totalled £4,586.

Section 172 (1) statement

All charitable companies have a duty to act in accordance with Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 ("Duty to promote the success of the company").

The trustees consider they have complied with their duties when reviewing the aims and objectives of Citizens Advice, in planning activities and setting policies and priorities for the year ahead. Our charitable objects are to:

- promote any charitable purpose for the advancement of education, the protection and preservation of health, and the relief of poverty, sickness and distress

- ensure in carrying out its objects and in all aspects of its work, Citizens Advice is committed to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion, preventing prejudice and discrimination, ensuring equal access and promoting good relations between all sections of the community

The main activities undertaken to further our charitable purposes for public benefit are to provide the advice people need for the problems they face and to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

The trustees act in good faith to make decisions, working towards outcomes which they consider will be most likely to promote the success of the charity. This is done for the benefit of its charitable purposes as a whole, both in current periods and in the long term.

In discharging their duties, the trustees consider the impact on the interests of clients to be of paramount importance also taking into account our volunteers and colleagues. They also consider the need to foster the organisation's business relationship with suppliers and funders, whilst always retaining our independence and impartiality, and factor all of this into their decision-making process. Examples of key decisions taken this financial year include:

Setting the organisation's strategy, missions and enablers

The trustees kept clients at the heart of their decision making throughout an extensive co-creation process across the Citizens Advice network. This arrived at an ambitious strategy that made extensive use of data to develop and agree clear missions and enablers. These will maximise Citizens Advice's impact in pursuit of our purpose and charitable objects.

Approval of the business plan 2024 to 2025

Trustees provided extensive challenge and support in the setting of the annual business plan, including our influencing and advocacy priorities. This ensured that the final plan set out a limited number of clearly-defined strategic priorities which would be supported by more detailed implementation and departmental plans. This work was done with due regard to funder requirements, relationships and resources, whilst retaining our impartiality, and is being monitored through performance reporting.

Approval of the budget 2024 to 2025

Trustees provided extensive support and challenge to agree a budget for 2024 to 2025 which balanced the need for investment in key capabilities with ongoing financial sustainability pressures. The budget takes into account the impact on clients, as well as funder requirements, colleague experience and the resourcing of change.

Approving national safeguarding policies and procedures

Trustees ensured that the annual review of our safeguarding policies and procedures was conducted collaboratively. The amendments agreed were informed by the learning identified by a dedicated Safeguarding Working Group. This aimed to improve awareness and create a more coherent approach to safeguarding through our suite of policies and procedures.

Brand awareness campaign approval

Trustees agreed a new brand identity for Citizens Advice, ensuring that the approach was built through consultation with local offices, national colleagues and clients. Trustees balanced the need to increase brand awareness and convert awareness to engagement with the potential unintended consequences of driving demand. They also ensured that the campaign was rooted in our strategic desire to reduce the gap in access and experience of minoritised communities.

Agreeing to consult on the redesign of the local support offer

Trustees agreed the principles of a whole-service consultation on the role of the national organisation in providing support to local offices, in line with the Membership Agreement. This is a fundamental aspect of the national organisation's operating model. When deciding how to engage in this redesign, trustees took account of clients' needs (including for accessible advice) in designing proposals intended to allow for a thriving local office network, as well as the financial sustainability of the national organisation. Trustees provided extensive support and challenge on matters of risk appetite, consultation approach, network sustainability, funder requirements and equity impacts. This enabled the organisation to arrive at an agreed model on which consultation could begin in 2024 to 2025.

Clients

The needs of our clients are central to our strategy, business plan and reporting. Our trustees recognise the significant impact that the cost of living crisis, steep rises to energy bills and inflation have had on our clients' finances and wellbeing.

Our trustees oversee our internal living strategy which takes a missions-based approach to meeting our clients' needs. It seeks to provide advice that's fit for the future, close the gap of access and experience for marginalised people, and act early to prevent people from reaching crisis point.

In addition to our annual impact report, our trustees receive regular updates and resources about our clients' needs, evidenced by our data. Each month, our data team updates our cost-of-living dashboard which analyses our client data by both theme and demographic. It also holds a monthly public event where experts from our own network and other third sector organisations discuss our latest client data and share their insights.

Our trustee board and a number of our committees have included at least one member from our network, which is one way we ensure that the needs of our clients are more directly represented across their work.

Volunteers and colleagues

Trustees receive anonymised information on colleagues' physical and mental wellbeing and are committed to promoting a healthy workforce. They support our ongoing work to build an inclusive culture and are committed to attracting and retaining diverse, high-calibre talent which volunteer and colleague development helps support. Senior leaders engage with colleagues to receive their opinions on key organisational developments, change and decisions through a number of mechanisms. These include all-colleague town halls, colleague conference, directorate meetings, our colleague community platform Workplace and colleague surveys.

Funders

Our trustees closely monitor our relationships with our funders and receive regular reports on how we are meeting funder requirements. The 'Our value to society' section of this report explains how our services deliver a high value-for-money return for our funders.

Suppliers

The charity has established procedures to make sure that external suppliers are individually verified to ensure they meet with the health and safety, regulatory and financial security standards required by the charity. Day to day, this function is overseen by the executive and trustees are responsible for reviewing the policy. This is in the context of how our service runs, how we work with local Citizens Advice and other organisations, as well as our external suppliers.

Community and the environment

Our trustees aim to limit the impact of our organisation's actions on the environment throughout our work and have measures in place to do so. Our facilities team closely monitors and works to minimise the carbon emissions arising from our 4 offices and colleagues' travel, and ensures that we comply with regulatory environmental standards.

Our sustainable travel policy encourages colleagues to use technology to meet remotely instead of travelling to other locations, and to use public transport when travel is needed. We promote sustainable commuting by providing cycling facilities and season ticket loans. It is extremely rare that any of our volunteers or colleagues need to use air travel in the course of their work. The 'energy disclosures' section outlines our carbon strategy and office energy use.

Standards and conduct

Our trustees are committed to high standards of corporate governance and comply with the principles and practices set out in the Charity Governance Code. We have many policies in place to ensure that our volunteers and colleagues act ethically in the conduct of our business.

All trustee board and committee members sign a code of conduct when they are appointed and declare any new conflicts of interest at the start of every trustee board and committee meeting. All national Citizens Advice colleagues are expected to follow the organisation's policies regarding EDI, safeguarding, IT, privacy, data retention, health and safety, political impartiality, and social media use. National Citizens Advice colleagues are also required to complete mandatory training on cyber security, EDI and safeguarding in our online learning platform, Skillbook.

In 2023 to 2024, we implemented many of the recommendations from the external board effectiveness review that took place during the previous year. We also began a full internal review of our governance that will further enhance our board and committee operations.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the aims, strategy and in planning future activities of the charity.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are also the directors of the charity for the purposes of company law. They are responsible for preparing the trustees' report (including the strategic report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law, the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the group, charity, incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, of the group for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions. These must disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable the trustees to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Financial statements are published on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and

dissemination of financial statements, which may vary from legislation in other jurisdictions.
The maintenance and integrity of the charity's website is the responsibility of the trustees.
The trustees' responsibility also extends to the ongoing integrity of the financial statements contained therein.

So far as each of the trustees at the time this report is approved are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the auditor is unaware
- they have taken all the steps they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information

Delegation of duties

Our scheme of delegation outlines decision-making responsibilities within national Citizens Advice.
It lists issues reserved for the trustee board and areas which may be delegated to the executive team. The standing financial instructions form the basis of the delegation of financial functions by the Citizens Advice trustee board to colleagues.

Our commercial and contracting policy sets out authority levels for purchasing decisions. We have committed to reviewing our scheme of delegation in 2024 to 2025.

Executive team

Our executive team is responsible for delivering the trustee board's vision and for the day-to-day operation of Citizens Advice. The following executive directors served during the reporting period:

Chief Executive
Dame Clare Moriarty

Interim Executive Director for Digital Technology and Advice
Alex Butler (from 19 April 2023)

Executive Director of People
Angela Buxton

Interim Executive Director of Finance and Commercial
Jameela Khan (from 15 February 2024)

Executive Director of Finance and Commercial
Karen Bass (until 14 February 2024)

Acting Executive Director of Policy and Advocacy
Matt Upton (until 12 December 2023)

Executive Director of Operations
Michele Shambrook

Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation
Tracey Waltho

Our people

Our service is run by committed and passionate volunteers and colleagues who work hard together to achieve so much for our clients. As the national organisation, we strive to improve all aspects of employee experience to ensure we are a brilliant place to work and volunteer.

We have recently focused efforts on improving our recruitment, onboarding and induction experience and have invested in a strong wellbeing and family friendly offer for colleagues. We are also very proud of the work we have delivered around EDI, most notably our Race Matters programme of work.

We are embarking on a significant transformation programme which is aimed at redesigning the

organisation to better deliver on our strategic missions. This will involve a considerable focus on cultural development, morale building, leadership development and healthy working.

We are committed to fostering an inclusive workplace. We aim to create an efficient, effective, fair and equitable recruitment journey and employee experience that welcomes and supports candidates and colleagues from all backgrounds. We believe that equity and accessibility are fundamental to creating an environment where every individual can thrive.

Our organisational approaches and processes are supported by our recruitment and selection, equity and diversity, disability and accessibility policies.

We actively promote our commitment to equity and the Disability Confident employer scheme in our recruitment processes. We do this by ensuring that all job adverts emphasise our dedication to providing a supportive and inclusive environment for disabled colleagues. We take a reasonable approach to each applicant, ensuring that potential candidates know that adjustments can be made throughout the recruitment process to meet their specific needs. Talent Acquisition Partners work closely with managers to ensure that action is taken to support individual candidates through the entire recruitment process.

Once candidates join the organisation, we prioritise assessing and implementing reasonable adjustments to create a welcoming and enabling environment from day one.

Before a new team member begins their role, managers work with them to identify individual development needs and any support to put in place. Our quarterly performance development reviews are designed to continue this support, with discussions around individual development needs. If additional support or adjustments are required prior to training and development activities, these are taken forward. Where we are working with a third party, we work with them to ensure equitable opportunities for all colleagues.

By embedding these inclusive practices in our culture, we are committed to enabling everyone to reach their full potential.

Wellbeing

In 2023 our wellbeing function moved into the equity and culture team, reflecting these areas' interconnectedness and their crucial role in organisational health and effectiveness. With challenges to people's wellbeing coming from world and national events, as well as (for some people) from organisational change and uncertainty, wellbeing has remained firmly on our agenda.

Like many organisations, we have experienced colleagues reporting higher challenges with mental health-related issues and this is showing up in our absence data. Over the last 12 months, the average number of days lost to sickness was 6.5 days. Mental health is the largest reason cited across this absence. In the period July 2023 to June 2024, there were 2,275 days lost to mental health-related absence, taken by 8.6% of colleagues. Whilst this is lower than some of the industry averages in our benchmarking data, we are keen to tackle any work-related contributors to mental health issues.

In 2023 to 2024, we:

- developed our emerging culture work to positively impact drivers of workplace wellbeing, and aligned our equity, culture and wellbeing teams and ways of working to complement and support one another

- planned for the people aspects of the current and future change programmes, aiming to protect and promote people's wellbeing as far as possible. This included developing people-centred change principles, workshops for managers, support with change and redeployment, promotion of resources, and subject-matter expertise input from our Wellbeing Lead into the people change process

- worked with stakeholders and projects organisation-wide to improve 'root cause' factors identified as impacting wellbeing in our organisation, including a project aimed specifically at improving our 'meetings culture'

- continued to provide information about, signposting to, and assistance and support for people's own wellbeing. We did this through a range of wellbeing initiatives, communications campaigns, development sessions and our team of Mental Health First Aiders, in addition to our external wellbeing provisions

- continued to develop our Mental Health First Aid team's knowledge and skills by providing regular continuing professional development (CPD) and networking opportunities

- co-developed and hosted a third sector Workplace Wellbeing Community of Practice, developing links and sharing good practice sector-wide

In 2024 to 2025, we'll focus on:

- improving our ability to access, report on and use wellbeing-related data for decision-making

- evolving our approach to measuring wellbeing in the organisation

- aligning our wellbeing, culture and leadership development work with the aim of improved workplace wellbeing

Equity, diversity and inclusion

We know we cannot meet the needs of our clients without an equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace culture at all levels of the organisation. This will not only mean Citizens Advice is a great place to work for all, but also that we collectively understand our clients better.

We're proud of the workforce diversity we have and will continue to better reflect the communities that we exist to help, particularly those who are marginalised. Diversity amongst our workforce will help us do better at scrutinising and challenging behaviours. It will also ensure we build a culture that allows us to be the best we can be for the people who need us.

Our national team profile shows that 70.2% of colleagues are women and 27.3% men. We have had an increase in colleagues who are disabled, Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual, and people of colour. 28.2% of employees have identified themselves as being disabled or having a long-term health condition and 15.8% are people of colour. 16.1% are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. 2.5% of colleagues are Trans or Non-binary.

In 2023 to 2024, we:

- continued our Race Matters work stream to address race disparities. This work has led to progress in an increase in representation of people of colour at the middle and top of the grade structure

- delivered our first Race Matters development programme—a programme to support colleagues of colour, their line managers and senior sponsors to work together and overcome barriers to progression. The programme led to tangible

change for all involved, including progression and active allyship in challenging barriers. This programme was a partnership with Jenny Garret Global and Reflexion and was awarded 'Highly Commended' in the Training Initiative of the Year category at the British Training Awards (June 2024)

- published our 2023 pay gap report, which showed that our gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps have all reduced since last year. We know we still have work to do to ensure these gaps continue to decrease year-on-year

- grew our network EDI community of practice, which discusses how local offices can make sure our services are accessible to everyone. It does this by focusing on a range of topics including race equity, engaging volunteers and colleagues with EDI work, and disability inclusion

- developed a new EDI policy, demonstrating our commitment to advancing EDI across the service, and its strategic importance in achieving our charitable objects

- launched a new reasonable adjustment toolkit and policy, designed to help managers and teams feel equipped in meeting accessibility needs. It also ensures disabled colleagues feel supported and included in the workplace

- supported the change process and developed an EDI impacts process for colleagues and clients. Feedback from stakeholders highlighted the importance of this work and it was often cited as an example of best practice

Our ambition is that Citizens Advice recruits, retains and enables marginalised people to thrive in the organisation and service-wide. We carefully consider equity in all of our work to achieve this, which has led to our EDI scores on the national Citizens Advice colleague engagement survey continuing to increase across all related questions. This is a sign that our ongoing work is having a positive impact.

However, we know that disparities still exist and we will continue to monitor the colleague engagement survey through an EDI lens. We've continued to support and strengthen our 4 colleague Equity Groups (REACH*, Disability, LGBTQ+, and Trans and non-binary). We have also started work to establish a new Women's Equity Group and have seen the benefits of our executive sponsorship programme for Equity Group chairs.

In 2024 to 2025, we'll continue to focus on creating a culture of belonging in the organisation. This will include:

- a specific focus on race and disability equity

- developing revised workforce targets across the employee experience journey

- working with the network to diversify volunteers and colleagues

- continuing to increase our EDI capability

Whistleblowing

We continue to take proactive steps to foster a culture where colleagues feel safe to challenge things they think may be going wrong. Accepting that our practices and behaviours may be challenged and knowing that we are resilient in the face of those challenges ensures continuous learning and growth.

In addition to our existing whistleblowing policy, this year we began using a new reporting platform, Integrity Line. This gives people raising concerns the option of doing so anonymously, whilst still allowing them to enter into a dialogue with the case

manager. The system also has a case management dashboard that enables case managers to track case progress and identify key themes, which provides a higher level of assurance for our trustees.

Remuneration policy

We evaluate all new roles using our industry-standard job evaluation scheme, allocating roles to grades. To attract the right talent, we benchmark against the mid-point between lower quartile and market median salaries. All national Citizens Advice employees are paid more than the Living Wage and, for those who live in the capital, the London Living Wage. Executive team remuneration is the responsibility of the trustee board's people committee, which sets pay levels on the basis of job evaluation outcomes and comprehensive benchmarking.

The annual pay award was agreed with our recognised Trade Union, Unite, in June 2024 and is effective from 1 April 2024. This award consists of a combination of a 1% increase in pay and a £650 flat rate payment—both are fully consolidated into pay up to the pay scale maximum. Any award that takes a salary above the maximum of the pay scale has been paid as a non-consolidated, non-pensionable monthly allowance.

This award resulted in pay increases of between 1.8% and 3.7%, with higher percentage increases going to those on the lower salary grades. Additional non-consolidated payments of between £125 and £375 have been distributed across our Senior Officer, Officer and Support grades.

Safeguarding policies

The people committee has the responsibility of recommending the appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures to the trustee board for approval. Our safeguarding working group ensures the organisation takes safeguarding governance priorities into consideration. There are various safeguarding policies in place:

- national (including Witness Service) safeguarding adults policy
- national (including Witness Service) safeguarding children policy
- national (including Witness Service volunteers and colleagues) safeguarding procedure
- Witness Service safeguarding procedure

We have a model safeguarding policy for local Citizens Advice, and it's a membership requirement for them to have a suitable one in place. This is complemented by safeguarding guidance for local Citizens Advice that is available on our intranet.

We have recently commissioned a review to ensure our safeguarding practices comply with best practice, and we are implementing its recommendations.

Volunteers

This year, around 19,000 volunteers have helped people to find a way forward and have supported us to work towards a society where people face far fewer problems.[1] As well as giving advice and helping witnesses, volunteers have continued to support the service in other roles—as trustees and in research and campaigns, fundraising and administrative roles. Whatever their role

[1] Number of volunteers between April 2023 and March 2024

and wherever they carry it out, we thank all our volunteers for their dedication, skills, energy and support to the service. We couldn't do what we do without them.

In 2023 we commissioned the largest piece of research into volunteering at Citizens Advice for 10 years. The research, delivered by Sonnet and the Centre for Charity Effectiveness, found that volunteering at Citizens Advice generates value to a range of people and organisations. To local Citizens Advice offices, other key stakeholders (such as the NHS), the economy and volunteers themselves. This was worth at least £100 million in 2023 to 2024. This is a truly amazing impact and one that evidences the many ways in which volunteers bring value to our work.

The research showed that, as well as significantly enhancing our frontline capacity at a time of ever-increasing demand, volunteers bring different backgrounds, skillsets and experiences into our work. They are local people supporting members of their community, shaping our services so that they best meet local needs. Our volunteers also help raise the profile of our service to extend its reach and improve our ability to support marginalised communities.

At the same time, recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of volunteers and ensuring our volunteer base is reflective of the communities we serve remains a challenge. Linked to this, we've seen a significant decline in our overall volunteer numbers in the past 5 years. This year, we've continued to work collaboratively with our Volunteering Transformation steering committee to better understand and address some of these challenges.

In 2024 to 2025, we will co-design and deliver an action plan based on the findings from the Value of Volunteering research. This will focus on driving up the volume and diversity of volunteer applications, alongside continuing work to adapt our volunteering models to better suit the needs of volunteers whilst supporting quality service delivery.

This year, we have also seen significant growth in our corporate volunteering programme, after introducing new skill-sharing programmes to complement our existing offer. In 2024 to 2025 we will continue to develop meaningful and impactful corporate volunteering programmes with our strategic corporate partners.

Our thanks go to all our volunteers and those who support them across the service, and particularly those volunteers and colleagues involved in the steering committee and research project. We could not have achieved it without you.

Volunteering in the Witness Service

The Witness Service currently helps around 80,000 witnesses per year with the support of 1,500 active volunteers. To build our volunteer base to pre-pandemic numbers, the Witness Service will continue to focus on volunteer recruitment.

The new centralised Witness Service volunteering colleague model has now been in place for over 15 months. It consists of a Volunteering Manager, 3 Volunteering Co-ordinators and a Volunteering Administrator,. This has supported a consistent approach to recruitment and has also enabled us to focus on improving the volunteer experience in areas such as communication and recognition.

This year's annual volunteer survey has given us valuable insights into our volunteers and how we can improve their experience. Of those surveyed, 83% of volunteers would recommend us as a great place to volunteer and the main reason for their volunteering was 'to make a difference to the lives of witnesses'.

EDI continues to be a focus for the service—our volunteers are predominantly aged over 55 (86.5%), retired (68.8%) and white (92.7%). 67.6% of our volunteers are female. A centralised recruitment function is helping to work towards diversifying our recruitment methods and we have seen positive results from this approach. We now have a diversity statement on all of our adverts and have proactively removed barriers to recruitment from our processes to make it a more inclusive experience for our volunteers. This has resulted in an increase in applications from students and those from a global majority background.

Privacy strategy

Citizens Advice's reputation is one of its most important assets. At the heart of that reputation is the trust that millions of people have put in our organisation when providing us with their personal information.

Our privacy strategy seeks to ensure that we uphold that trust by ensuring we handle data ethically and in accordance with the law. To help support this area of work, we have a Privacy Risk Management Board and an information governance team.

Citizens Advice aims to be an example of best privacy practice within the third sector.

Our privacy strategy sets out 6 high-level outcomes:

1. Policy and best practice will be embedded in the organisation
2. Clear roles and responsibilities for national Citizens Advice
3. A consistent and balanced approach to privacy risk
4. Privacy will be a visible part of Citizens Advice's work
5. There will be clear responsibilities for local and national Citizens Advice
6. Our confidentiality promise will be central to our service

Risk and internal controls

Citizens Advice believes effective risk management is key to successfully delivering our strategic priorities and achieving our missions.

Throughout the year, risk owners and managers regularly reviewed risks at team, project, directorate and strategic levels. These reviews assessed the likelihood, impact and risk appetite, the plans for mitigating the risks and the adequacy of those plans. Every quarter, our strategic risks are reviewed by the executive team, reported to the audit and risk committee and discussed by the trustee board.

We continue to raise the profile of risk management within the organisation. Our risk management policy is approved by the trustee board annually. It details our approach and internal control processes, including steps for identifying, evaluating, mitigating and monitoring risks. We use the 3 lines of defence model of assurance and operate a robust system of internal financial controls. This is regularly reviewed by management and internal auditors, and compliant with Charity Commission guidance and best practice. Over the year, the trustees have received assurances from management on the effective operation of controls.

Internal audit continues to be outsourced. Crowe have completed their first year in this role and an implementation review has identified some opportunities to further improve the impact of their work. Internal audit planning is informed by an analysis of the organisation's risk profile. The audit and risk committee receives quarterly reports on the recommendations our internal auditors make and monitors progress to completion and the overall performance of internal audit. Internal audits highlighted areas for development, most notably this year regarding organisational governance and cash flow forecasting. Improvements are already underway in both areas.

Our strategic risks are set out. They are accompanied by summaries of the plans to mitigate and manage them, including where relevant to bring them back within risk appetite.

Financial sustainability

⚠ Risks

Risks that would have an impact on our financial resilience.

Mitigation and management

We're continuing to address our long-term financial sustainability through the implementation of a multi-year transformation programme aimed at reducing our cost base and diversifying income. Mitigation measures recognise the external challenges the organisation faces. These include short-term funding arrangements, a real-terms decline in some of our largest grants, increased pension liability contributions, local authority funding pressures and a shift towards regional funding opportunities.

Pension liability

⚠ Risks

Risk that the liability will continue to increase.

Mitigation and management

The national charity is the principal employer in a defined benefit scheme, which was closed to future accrual from 2008. The deficit in the scheme is significant and there are risks that it will continue to increase. The scheme has a professional pension Chair, a board of trustees that includes representation from national Citizens Advice and professional advisers to help mitigate any risks that scheme has. Further details are given in Notes 23 and 24 to the financial statements.

Organisational effectiveness

⚠ Risks

Risks that could disrupt service delivery or organisational effectiveness.

Mitigation and management

Mitigations include collaborating across the service and working in close partnership with local offices to ensure that we make the most of service-wide opportunities. Moving forward, we will work together to redesign our membership support offer and approach to funded services. We will adapt them to support every part of our service to better serve clients, enable advice that's fit for the future, and ensure service-wide competitiveness.

People

⚠ Risks

Risks that would impact having the volunteers and colleagues we need to develop and deliver the range of services that we offer.

Mitigation and management

We need to be able to attract, recruit and retain the critical talent, capabilities and diversity of volunteers and national colleagues to be an effective, impactful charity. We continue to invest in and develop our organisational culture and employee benefits package, as well as strengthening our leadership and culture capabilities, engaging with Unite the union on change and transformation, and supporting local Citizens Advice to adapt their volunteering models.

Cyber security

⚠ Risks

Cyber security incidents and risks that could result in data breaches or affect our ability to deliver services.

Mitigation and management

Our primary systems are well designed and built, there is robust antivirus on all devices, services and core-managed systems, and mandatory colleague training in cyber security. In 2024, we gained the externally-audited Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation in recognition of our efforts to raise the hygiene of our systems and configuration. In 2023 to 2024, we rolled out improved security tools across our cloud infrastructure and email platforms. We'll continue to enhance protection systems across our technology estate and to work with local offices to help more of them become Cyber Essentials certified. The audit and risk committee receives an update on cyber security and data protection at alternate quarterly meetings.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

⚠ Risks

Risks that would undermine our efforts to improve access and experience gaps for our clients, our EDI capability and disparities amongst our workforce.

👁 Mitigation and management

We have rolled out an EDI learning programme to local offices and invested in our EDI capacity and capability. We are conducting research on racial disparities to understand the reasons for gaps in access and advice, developing a Race Matters action plan and continuing to embed lived experience in our work.

Organisational strategy

⚠ Risks

Risks that would prevent consistent strategic decision making, impact on system-wide cultural challenges, and result in missed opportunities to innovate.

👁 Mitigation and management

In October 2023, we launched 'Transforming together: our living strategy' and our core 3 missions. We have now moved into mobilisation, defining strategic areas of focus with local offices and establishing joint ways of working. These include how to measure progress and defining missions-based working and how it will be governed.

Organisational change

⚠ Risks

Risk that high levels of change affect performance.

👁 Mitigation and management

To ensure that parallel streams of change are co-ordinated and cohesive, we have recruited to organisational design and transformation roles, creating a transformation programme and executive-level board that aims to align and phase all streams of change, reviewing progress, identifying common blockers and releasing them.

Energy disclosures

Climate change and Citizens Advice

As an organisation, we recognise the impact of climate change and our responsibility to take action to contribute to the safeguarding of the natural environment for present and future generations. We take steps across a number of our areas of operation to reduce our environmental impact, and to work in the least environmentally-harmful way possible.

We are committed to reducing energy use and carbon emissions in our operations, and to raise awareness of the need to do the same amongst our colleagues and suppliers. We have started a project with Carbonxgen to understand our carbon emissions across all 3 scopes and we have created a draft plan to reduce our emissions.

Our carbon strategy for 2024 to 2025 on how we'll reduce our carbon footprint

Citizens Advice is mainly an office-based organisation. We work to reduce our carbon emissions through a focus on:

- **office energy use**—working with our landlords to improve energy efficiency and waste reduction. We're resizing our property portfolio to better fit post-pandemic usage. In the last 4 years we have reduced our space considerably and will continue to adjust the size of the portfolio

- **travel**—promoting public transport and more sustainable travel use and encouraging video conferencing where appropriate

Office energy use

We continue to work with our landlords to reduce Citizens Advice's share of energy consumption in office buildings.

Some additional actions we took during the year to reduce our emissions further are:

Our Leeds office

- We moved our Leeds office to a space where the landlord buys 100% of electricity through a renewable tariff that is backed by a REGOs certificate and is from offshore wind

Our Cardiff office

- We will not be renewing the lease for our Cardiff office when it ends in September 2024. Our plan is to take materially less space—therefore our emissions will reduce considerably during 2024 to 2025

Our Birmingham office

- We reviewed the times of operation of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system and reduced the hours

- We reviewed the temperature in the server room, enabling 1 of the 2 split units to be switched off

- We switched off HVAC in rooms that are not being used

Our London office

- We reviewed the PIRs and reduced the 'on time' from 30 minutes to 15 minutes

- We reviewed the times of operation of the HVAC system and further reduced the hours of operation from 6am to 5pm

- Our new landlord buys 100% of electricity through a renewable tariff that is backed by a REGOs certificate

- In March 2024 we terminated the lease for our office at 200 Aldersgate (circa 24k square foot). We took a new 5-year lease at 1 Easton Street (circa 9k square foot). Easton Street also has an EPC rating of B. This should reduce our emissions considerably for 2024 to 2025

Citizens Advice will be submitting our Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme (ESOS) audit in 2024 and will be creating a more detailed action plan from the findings for both buildings and transport emissions by year end 2024.

With all of the above taken into account, we are predicting that our 2024 to 2025 office CO2 emissions tonnes will reduce as follows:

Year	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025	2025 to 2026	2026 to 2027
Office Emissions – total tonnes	106	76	83	69	38	30	25
Actual/Estimate	A	A	A	A	E	E	E

Travel

As the figures demonstrate, travel-related emissions since the pandemic continue to increase but remain below pre-pandemic levels. The majority of the increase is specifically in train travel. Colleagues are still encouraged to work in a blended approach, using remote conferencing and online collaboration where possible, but travel has slowly increased where face-to-face meetings, networking and conferences are critical to relationships and a positive organisational culture.

Methodology

Emissions are related primarily to our offices, travel and overnight stays at hotels. Citizens Advice national offices are all based in landlord-managed buildings. Meter readings are taken from sub-meters or from the whole building and pro-rated. Travel and hotel emissions are calculated based on information from our suppliers and government guidance on emissions. (Flights, trains, other public transport and hotel stays are part of SECR Scope 3 category. Therefore, by reporting on emissions associated with them, Citizens Advice is going above and beyond the requirements of SECR.)

Gas consumption is calculated using pro rata space allocation of the whole of the 200 Aldersgate building.

Building landlords provide the meter readings to Citizens Advice. We have used Carbonxgen, an independent company, to calculate the CO2e with standard UK government methodology (using UK Government conversion factors for greenhouse gas reporting) and to verify the numbers presented in this report.

Greenhouse gas emissions due to UK energy use

Emission Source (Scope)	Tonnes CO2e 2019 to 2021	Tonnes CO2e 2020 to 2021	Tonnes CO2e 2021 to 2022	Tonnes CO2e 2022 to 2023	Tonnes CO2e 2023 to 2024
Natural gas combustion in landlord managed offices (Scope 3)	25.8	25.3	30.6	19.0	**19.0**
Electricity purchased (Scope 2)	79.9	50.7	52.2	49.7	**48.7**
UK travel: colleague mileage claims (Scope 1)	131.3	23.9	38.0	55.2	**57.9**
UK travel: flights, rail, tube, taxis and hotel stays (Scope 3)	192.7	1.0	22.5	59.9	**79.2**
Aggregate Tonnes (Scope 1 and 2 only)	**211.2**	**74.6**	**90.2**	**104.9**	**106.6**
Aggregate energy usage (Scope 1 and 2 only)	**1,092,115 kWh**	**385,757 kWh**	**466,424 kWh**	**542,438 kWh**	**551,229 kWh**
Total Tonnes	429.7	100.9	144.2	183.8	**204.7**
Total Tonnes per employee (intensity ratio)	0.452	0.101	0.144	0.183	**0.188**
Total energy usage (electricity and gas)	459,741 kWh	355,255 kWh	350,629 kWh	361,185 kWh	**374,811 kWh**

Ella*'s story

Ella* is a single mum in her 30s. She came to Citizens Advice for help managing her energy bills, after her electricity costs soared by around £300 a month.

For most of 2023, Ella's monthly electricity bill was under £100. But in the autumn, she and her children moved into a new property. This house was fitted with a prepayment meter and "ancient", inefficient electric storage heaters. Suddenly, Ella found her electricity bills were coming to around £400 a month.

These energy costs pushed Ella into debt and affected her mental health, as she was constantly afraid the power would go off. Her energy supplier repeatedly refused her requests to switch to a more manageable tariff—instead adding more debt to her prepayment meter account.

"It got to the point where I was literally choosing between putting the electric on or food on the table for the kids," Ella says. "I was panicking and that's when I went to Citizens Advice."

With help from Citizens Advice, Ella was able to switch to a different energy provider who offered a pay-monthly option. This support has made a "massive" difference to her and her family's life.

"Citizens Advice were fantastic," she says. "Things are so much better now. My bills now are reduced dramatically and I don't have to pick between electric and food."

* Names have been changed to protect anonymity

"It got to the point where I was literally choosing between putting the electric on or food on the table for the kids. I was panicking and that's when I went to Citizens Advice"

Contents

Financial review

Understanding Citizens Advice's finances

The Citizens Advice service is made up of a network of 242 independent local Citizens Advice charities across England, Wales and the Channel Islands, alongside the national charity. Each of our local Citizens Advice charities is separate independent legal entity with its own board of trustees that is accountable to the charity's beneficiaries for its charitable objectives. As such, we do not consolidate our accounts, and our accounts and the following financial review section of our annual report only include the results of the national organisation.

In this section, years written as '2023' and '2024' refer to the financial year ending in March. For example, '2024' covers the months of April 2023 to March 2024.

Income

In 2024 the total income for the national charity increased by 0.8% to £167.7 million from £166.3 million in the previous year.

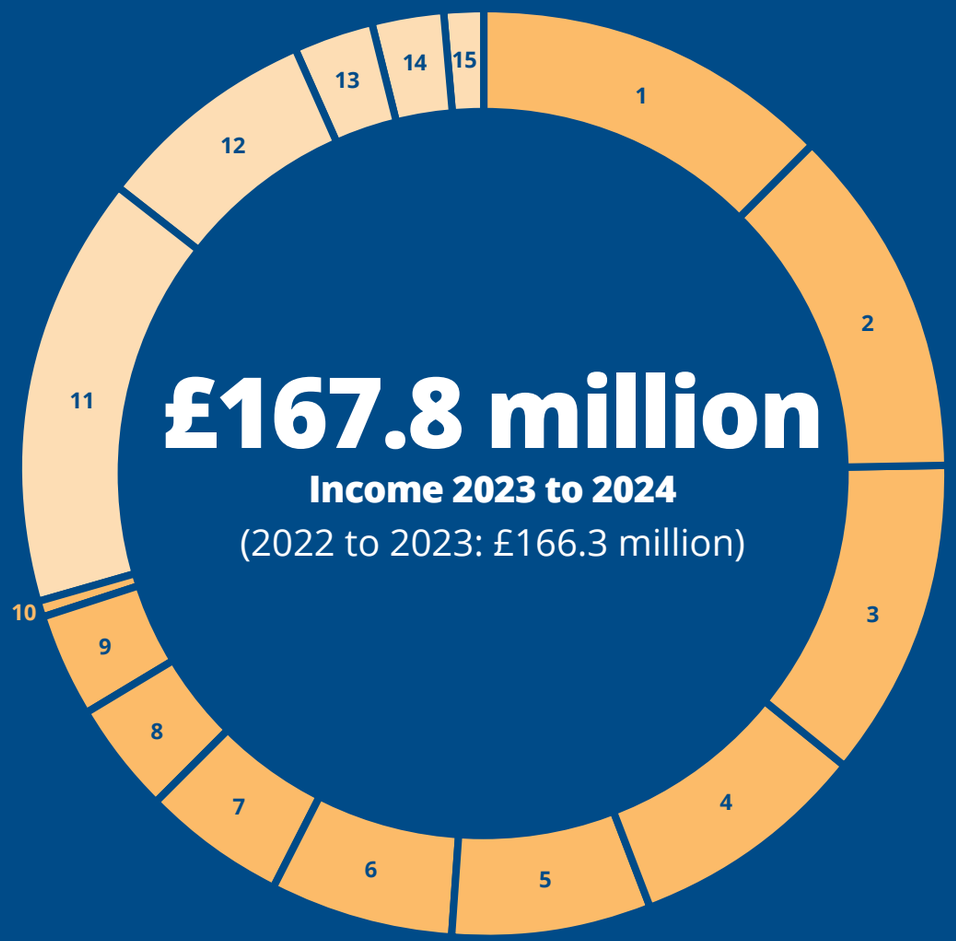
This reflects a decrease in restricted income to £118.4 million (2023: £127.3 million) and an increase in unrestricted income to £49.3 million (2023: £39.0 million). There was a significant decrease in corporate donations (both restricted and unrestricted), which tend to be one-off in nature, with total corporate donations falling to £10.6m (2023: £19.1m).

The movement from restricted to unrestricted income is largely due to contract income received from the Money and Pensions Service to deliver debt advice. Until February 2023 this service was all delivered under a restricted grant agreement. Since that date, part of the service now operates as an unrestricted contract. Funding received under contract increased to £13.1m during 2024 (2023: £1.6m).

The most significant unrestricted funding continues to be that provided by the Department for Business and Trade to support our core activities. This was largely unchanged this year at £25.3 million (2023: £25.1 million).

The chart below shows where our income came from this year.

In 2024 the total income for the national charity increased by 0.8% to £167.7 million from £166.3 million in the previous year.



Our main sources of income

Restricted

1. **£21.0 million**
   Money and Pension Service
   (2023: £28.0 million)

2. **£20.7 million**
   Department for Work and Pensions —Help to Claim (2023: £20.1 million)

3. **£18.7 million**
   Department for Business and Trade —Consumer (2023: £15.9 million)

4. **£13.9 million**
   Welsh government (2023: £13.2 million)

5. **£11.8 million**
   Ministry of Justice—Witness Service
   (2023: £11.4 million)

6. **£10.4 million**
   Money and Pensions Service —Pension Wise (2023: £10.3 million)

7. **£8.5 million**
   Other grant income—restricted
   (2023: £7.3 million)

8. **£6.8 million**
   Corporate donations
   (2023: £12.2 million)

9. **£6.0 million**
   Trussell Trust (2023: £7.3 million)

10. **£0.8 million**
    Other income—restricted
    (2023: £1.7 million)

Unrestricted

11. **£25.3 million**
    Department for Business and Trade —Core (2023: £25.1 million)

12. **£13.1 million**
    Other unrestricted income —contracts (2023: £3.2 million)

13. **£4.8 million**
    Other income—unrestricted
    (2023: £1.5 million)

14. **£4.2 million**
    Donations & legacies —unrestricted (2023: £7.4 million)

15. **£1.9 million**
    Other unrestricted income —from the network (2023: £1.8 million)

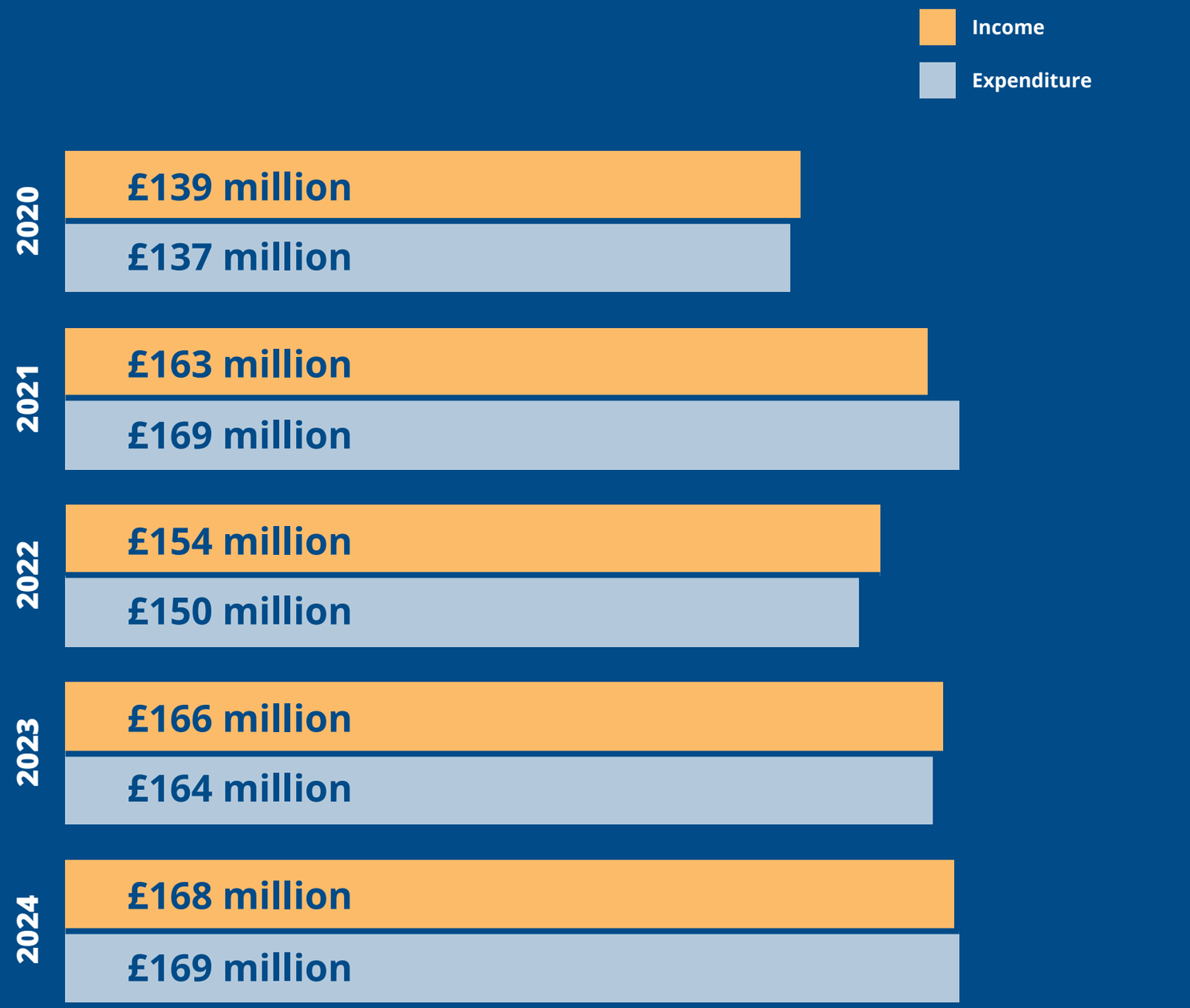
5-year snapshot of our income and expenditure (£millions)

The majority of our funding is awarded through funding agreements and is restricted to a particular area of activity and a specific financial year.

Therefore, where restricted income grows, there will tend to be a corresponding increase in expenditure in the same year, which is reflected in the 5-year snapshot of income and expenditure.

Following a period of significant growth over the last few years, with our income growing by over 19% from £139 million in 2020 to £166 million in 2023, we have seen income stabilise in 2024 at £168 million.

Trustee indemnity insurance up to the value of £10 million was in place for the duration of the reporting period. This was part of a wider policy purchased to provide cover for Citizens Advice and the network at a cost of £254,000 (2023: £227,000).



Expenditure against our 4 areas of charitable activity

Delivering through partnerships

This represents the largest proportion of our expenditure at £99 million (2023: £90.7 million). This includes a significant part of the funding to the local Citizens Advice network and other organisations, which increased to £79.4 million (2023: £78.9 million). We saw an increase in grant funding for energy advice which resulted in increased funding to the local Citizens Advice network to £5.4 million (2023: £2.5 million). Income diversification meant an increase in grant funding to our network over a range of smaller projects to £3.7 million (2023: £0.9 million).

Delivering information and advice

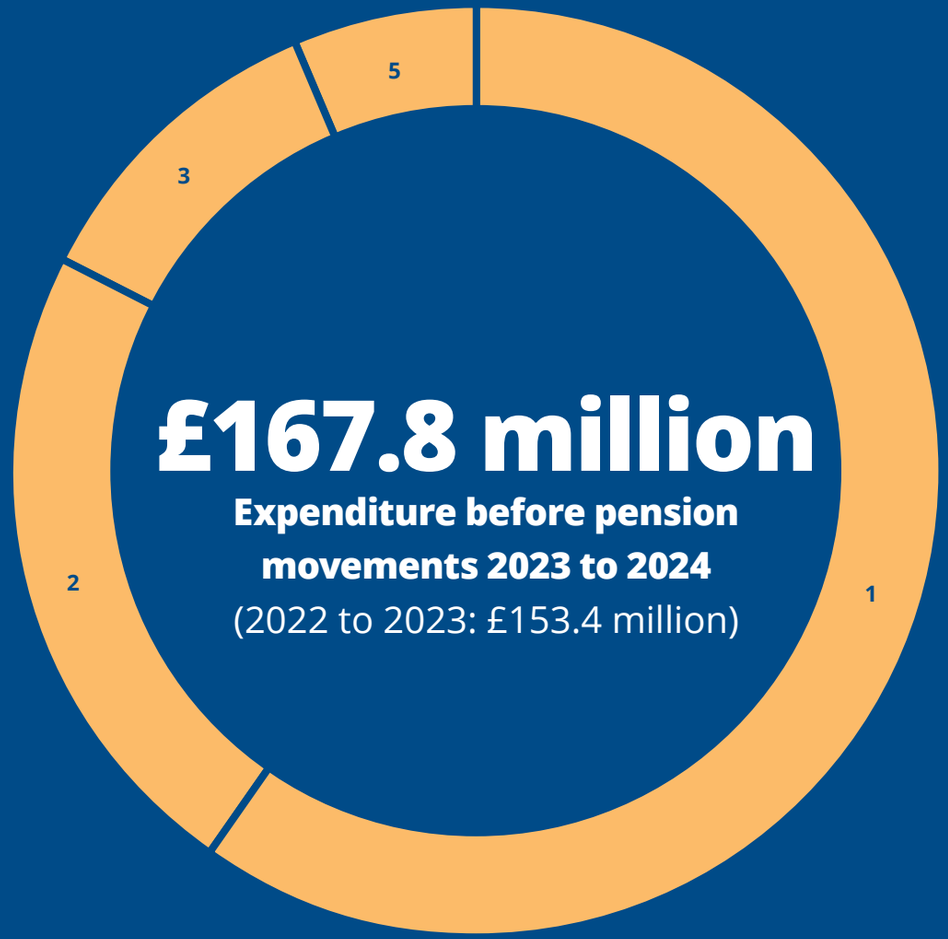
Our spending on information and advice in 2024 was £36.6 million (2023: £30.8 million). This included the direct delivery of services by Citizens Advice. The main areas of expenditure covered our consumer service, the Witness Service and the continued investment in our online and digital services for clients.

Strengthening our network

In 2024 we spent £18.7 million (2023: £20.7 million) on strengthening our network. This covered our core network support services, information services, systems support, training and quality assurance costs.

Advice and advocacy

Our expenditure on advice and advocacy in 2024 was £10.6 million (2023: £9.3 million). This included the delivery of our energy and post statutory duties in line with our agreed work plan. It also included expenditure on policy and influence from our unrestricted funds to support our other key areas of advice work.



1. **£98.7 million**
   Delivering through partnerships
   (2023: £90.7 million)
2. **£37.8 million**
   Delivering information and advice
   (2023: £30.8 million)
3. **£18.1 million**
   Strengthening network
   (2023: £20.7 million)
4. **£10.3 million**
   Advice and advocacy
   (2023: £9,4 million)

Pensions

National Citizens Advice is the principal employer of a defined benefit multi employer pension scheme. The other employers in this scheme are a small number of local Citizens Advice offices in London. The scheme was closed to new members and to future accrual in 2008. Each year these employers make contributions to the scheme towards the deficit. We remain committed to meeting our obligations in relation to the scheme and work closely with the pension scheme trustee board and its advisers.

Agreement on the 31 March 2022 triennial valuation was concluded with the terms submitted to The Pensions Regulator in August 2023. In the revised recovery plan, the employers agreed to make total contributions of £2.918 million from 1 April 2024 (of which national Citizens Advice pays £2.75 million). This was an increase from £2.279 million previously (of which national Citizens Advice paid £2.111 million). In addition, national Citizens Advice agreed to pay a one-off contribution of £2 million and £0.639 million on finalisation of the agreement. The latter effectively tops up the 2023 to 2024 year from £2.111 million to £2.750 million. These contributions are to be payable until the year ending 31 March 2040 and will remain fixed (reflecting the flat nature of its core unrestricted funding). For the 6 months commencing on 1 April 2040, national Citizens Advice will pay contributions of £1.375 million and the other participating employers will pay £84,000.

As at 31 March 2024, the negative pension reserve had decreased to £33.2 million (2023: £35.6 million). This represents the provision in the accounts for future committed cash payments to a closed defined benefit pension scheme. This negative balance will be reduced by the annual contributions over the payment period. The overall liability and the level of this reserve will vary based on the discount rate applicable to future contributions and periodic revaluations. The overall liability and the level of this reserve will be subject to the triennial revaluation of the pension liability and any subsequent change to the agreed repayment plan.

The next triennial revaluation will be at 31 March 2025 and will need to be agreed with the Pension Scheme Trustees and subsequently submitted to The Pensions Regulator.

Citizens Advice also operates a defined contribution scheme. New colleagues are automatically enrolled into the scheme and employer contributions are charged as they are incurred.

Reserves

Total reserves

At Citizens Advice we recognise the importance of investing funds in the growth of the charity, whilst retaining sufficient levels of available reserves

- We ensure that our reserves provide a prudent level of cover to meet future obligations and guard against unforeseen contingencies on a going concern basis. Total funds at Citizens Advice comprise restricted funds, unrestricted funds and a negative pensions reserve. At 31 March 2024, total funds were £10.9 million (2023: £11.8 million), as detailed in the table below:

	2024 £m	2023 £m
Restricted funds	18.9	21.9
Unrestricted funds:		
Free reserves	22.3	21.2
General funds – designated	2.0	3.3
Designated funds – fixed assets	0.9	1.0
Total reserves excluding pension reserve	**44.1**	**47.4**
Pension reserve	(33.2)	(35.6)
Total reserves	**10.9**	**11.8**

Restricted funds

Restricted funds total £18.9 million at 31 March 2024 (2023: £21.9 million). The restricted deficit for the year of £3.0 million (2023: £10.9 million surplus) reflects the spend against restricted income received and recognised in prior periods. As reported last year, Citizens Advice was fortunate to receive £11.0m of income in the final part of 2022 to 2023. This drove the restricted surplus recognised last year. Part of this income was used to fund the provision of services in 2023 to 2024.

Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds excluding pension reserve represent funding where there is no restriction applied by funders as to how the funding is spent. Unrestricted funds excluding pension reserve total £25.2 million at 31 March 2024 (2023: £25.6 million). This is split between general reserves of £22.3 million (2023: £21.2 million) and designated funds of £2.9 million (2023: £4.4 million).

Designated funds represent those unrestricted funds that have been allocated by the board of trustees for technological investment. These have a value of £2.0 million (2023: £3.3 million), and a designated fund reserved for tangible and intangible fixed assets. This is equal to the net book value of those assets of £0.9 million (2023: £1.0 million). The trustees intend to review the funds for technological investment to determine whether this designation remains appropriate during 2024 to 2025.

Pension reserve

The negative pensions reserve as at 31 March 2024 had reduced to £33.2 million (2023: £35.6 million). This represents the provision in the accounts for future committed payments to a closed defined benefit pension scheme. This negative balance will be reduced by the annual contributions over the payment period. The overall liability and the level of this reserve will vary based on the discount rate applicable to future contributions and periodic revaluations. Further details are in the pensions section on page 108.

Reserves policy

In the 2022 to 2023 annual report we noted that the trustee board had commissioned a full review of the reserves policy. This review has been delayed until 2024 to 2025 due to staffing pressures. As a result, the trustee board, advised by our audit and risk committee and having considered guidance published by the Charity Commission, based its consideration of reserves on the existing policy.

Each year, the trustee board considers the level of reserves that it is appropriate for the organisation to hold. The policy as it stands is to hold free reserves equivalent to 3 to 6 months' core operating costs. This has been designed to protect the organisation from a significant fall in income or a material, unforeseen cost, allowing continuation of core services whilst managing that eventuality and/or resetting the cost base.

Core operating costs are considered to be total budgeted unrestricted expenditure for the year ahead, excluding any direct costs of charitable activities provided under contract and any overhead recharges from restricted projects. Based on this calculation, core operating costs are estimated to be £47 million in 2024 to 2025. Holding free reserves equivalent to 3 to 6 months of core operating expenditure would therefore equate to between £11.8 million to £23.5 million (2023: £11 million to £23 million).

Free reserves are defined as total unrestricted funds excluding pension reserve, less designated funds. As of 31 March 2024, our free reserves totalled £22.3 million (2023: £21.2 million).

Each year the trustee board reviews the reserves policy and the level of reserves that the charity is holding. Based on this latest review, the board considers the current free reserves of £22.3 million to be appropriate. It took into account the size and complexity of the organisation, the economic environment we're operating in, the risks we're managing and known investment plans above and beyond annual budgeted costs. Trustees also consider our current risk profile, balancing the need to reflect that risk, whilst making sure we're not holding funds unnecessarily at the expense of committing funds to meet our charitable objectives.

Investments

We continue to benefit from a strong cash flow supported by our funders. The total cash and short-term deposits balance at the year end was £46.5 million (2023: £42.8 million). As required in our Memorandum of Association, national Citizens Advice has the power to invest monies not immediately required for its purposes in or upon such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit. Citizens Advice's investment strategy is to manage the charity's cash flows and investments, controlling the associated risks to maximise income with minimal risk. At the year end, all cash and current asset investments are held as fixed-term cash deposits, notice accounts or immediately available cash and are held in UK-based institutions with strong credit ratings. Where risk or return is not negatively impacted, we hold funds as 'green' treasury deposits. Our investment policy is reviewed at least annually.

Grant-making policy

National Citizens Advice awards grants to local Citizens Advice (and other local charities and organisations) in line with our grant requirements with funders to meet the needs of our clients. Funds may come directly from national Citizens Advice for developmental opportunities that enhance our service to clients (including piloting or testing new ways of meeting needs or reaching more people) Or as a result of funding awards to national Citizens Advice for specific services. These funds are then passed on to the local offices for delivery, in a range of ways depending on the requirements of the specific grants. The grant application process is published on the Citizens Advice intranet so applicants are aware of the methodology. Evaluators are trained in-house and include members of the network to ensure transparency and objectivity, we also have a clear appeals process. In 2024, £79.4 million (2023: £78.9 million) in grants was passed through to the network of local Citizens Advice and other organisations from funding sources including:

- Department for Business and Trade for the consumer service
- Money and Pensions Service for the delivery of money and debt advice in England and Wales
- Money and Pensions Service for the delivery of pensions guidance through Pension Wise
- Department for Work and Pensions for the provision of support to help people make a Universal Credit claim
- Ministry of Justice funding for 2 contact centres for the Witness Service
- Energy companies for energy advice and education programmes
- Welsh Government for the delivery of face-to-face and telephone advice

Fundraising policy

In 2024, Citizens Advice continued to test and develop fundraising activities in national Citizens Advice. During the year, Citizens Advice did not use professional fundraisers or commercial participants to act on its behalf. No fundraising complaints were made in the reporting year.

We continued to actively develop long-term partnerships with companies, trusts and foundations to support our strategic aims and long-term sustainability. We recognise the need to protect marginalised people and other members of the public from undue pressure and any intrusion of privacy. This is reflected in the non-invasive fundraising activities we carried out in 2024 within national Citizens Advice. Given that we expect such activities to continue into 2025, we will ensure that, in compliance with our policies and general approach, we continue to protect the public's interests. We remain registered with the Fundraising Regulator and in compliance with its voluntary regulation scheme. Our fundraising policies and practices align with the Code of Fundraising Practice, in addition to relevant marketing regulations and legislation.

Going concern

The trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue operating for the foreseeable future. For the purposes of assessing going concern, this is considered to be a period of at least 12 months from the signing of the accounts and audit report. They therefore consider that it is appropriate for the financial statements to be prepared on the going concern basis.

In forming their assessment of going concern the trustees considered the following factors:

- **Adequate cash flow:** Cash and short term deposits at the end of the year totalled £46.5 million (2023: £42.8 million). We have forecast cash flow from this date for a period of 3 years, stress testing the forecasts under a range of scenarios. Based on this, we are confident that the organisation will have adequate cash to enable it to continue operating beyond a period of 12 months from the balance sheet date

- **Future funding:** Whilst there is always some uncertainty over future funding, key relationships are strong. All our major funding streams are confirmed for 2024 to 2025, and many are already confirmed into 2025

  All our major funding streams are confirmed for 2024 to 2025, and many are already confirmed into 2025-2026

- **Organisational transformation:** The trustees and executive team are engaged in a major organisational transformation project, aimed at redefining our structure and network offer whilst ensuring a sustainable long-term financial model for Citizens Advice

- **Financial expertise:** Our trustee board has financial expertise and appropriate management capability. Our robust financial controls, including planning, reporting and modelling procedures, allow us to deal with changing assumptions to ensure that the charity operates within its available resources

- **Pension scheme deficit:** The trustees have reviewed the likelihood that the pension scheme deficit will crystallise and consider this risk to be low. They therefore consider it appropriate to view the pension scheme deficit as a long-term liability, where the payments required by the pension plan will need to be met from forecast future cash flows. For further details refer to notes 1(c), 23 and 24 in the financial statements

Approval

This annual report of the trustees, under the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006, was approved by the Board of Trustees. This included approving, in their capacity as company directors, the strategic report and the directors' report. It is signed as authorised on the board's behalf by:

Name: Matthew Swindells
Title: Director (Chair)
Date: 16 October 2024

"Both advisors were excellent; very understanding, professional, and a pleasure to have sat with me to do my PIP form. What a credit to the team! Many thanks for all the help."

Anonymous client

Our funders

Citizens Advice enjoys support from a wide range of funders and we obtain the maximum value for every pound we spend. We would like to thank all of the organisations that have supported us during 2023 to 2024. We look forward to working with all of you in future years.

Government funders

- Department for Business and Trade (DBT)
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Ministry of Justice (MOJ)
- Welsh Government

Other public bodies

- Money and Pensions Service (MaPS)
- The Insolvency Service
- Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)
- Office for Product Safety and Standards

Other major funders

- Aviva
- BP
- British Gas
- Cadent Foundation
- Energy Saving Trust
- Entain
- E.ON Next
- GambleAware
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The William Kessler Charitable Trust
- Lloyds Banking Group
- Money Advice Trust
- Moondance Foundation
- National Grid
- Nationwide Foundation
- NatWest Group
- Northern Gas Networks
- OVO Energy
- Post Office
- Shell
- Southern Gas Networks
- The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust
- Trussell Trust
- Virgin Media O2
- Wales & West Utilities
- Yorkshire Building Society

Legal and administrative details

Legal status

National Citizens Advice is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It is incorporated in the United Kingdom and the registered office of the charity is in England. All independent local Citizens Advice are members of the national Citizens Advice charity and there are no other full members. The maximum liability of each member is limited to £1. Citizens Advice is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association as amended in October 2000, September 2009 and September 2010.

The registered name of the charity is The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux. Since 6 January 2003, the charity has used the operating name of Citizens Advice. The charity was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 13 July 1979.

The charity has an active trading subsidiary, Citizens Advice Limited (formerly Advice Services Information Limited). Consolidated accounts have been prepared. The basis of consolidation is set out in the accounting policies note. The charity also has a subsidiary pension trustee company, NACAB Pension Trustees Limited.

Registered office:

Citizens Advice
3rd Floor
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 0DW

Telephone: 03000 231 231
citizensadvice.org.uk

Registered charity number: 279057
Company number: 01436945

Company Secretary

Nicola Clarke
(until 9 February 2024)

Nic Buckley
(Acting from 10 February 2024)

Advisers

Independent auditor
BDO LLP
55 Baker Street
London W1U 7EU

Internal auditor
Crowe U.K. LLP
55 Ludgate Hill
London EC4M 7JW

Bankers
Barclays Bank PLC
1 Churchill Place
London E14 5HP

Lloyds Bank PLC
25 Gresham Street
London EC2V 7HN

Solicitors
Bates, Wells and Braithwaite
10 Queen Street Place
London EC4R 1BE

Independent auditor’s report to the members of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

Opinion on the financial statements

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Group’s and of the Parent Charitable Company’s affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of the Group’s incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

We have audited the financial statements of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (“the Parent Charitable Company”) and its subsidiaries (“the Group”) for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the Consolidated and Charity Balance Sheet, the Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Independence

We remain independent of the Group and the Parent Charitable Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC’s Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

Conclusions related to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees’ use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Group and the Parent Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months

from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Other Companies Act 2006 reporting

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report prepared for the purposes of Company Law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and

- the strategic report and the directors' report, which are included in the trustees' report, have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Group and the Parent Charitable Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatement in the strategic report or the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the Parent Charitable Company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or

- the Parent Charitable Company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or

- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the Group's and the Parent Charitable Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Group or the Parent Charitable Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Non-compliance with laws and regulations

As part of designing our audit, based on our understanding of the industry in which the Group operates, we gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Group and the Parent Charitable Company. We focused on laws and regulations that could give rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements. In addition, the Trustees are subject to many other laws and regulations where the consequences of non-compliance could have a material effect on amounts or disclosures in the financial statements, for instance through the imposition of fines or litigation. We identified the following areas as those most likely to have such an effect: Data Protection and Health and Safety Legislation, compliance with the Companies Act 2006, UK GAAP, FRS 102 Charities SORP and tax legislation. As part of our discussions, we identified the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to non-compliance with laws and regulations and how management monitor these processes. Where possible, we obtained and reviewed corroborating documentation.

Our procedures in respect of the above included:

- review of the Parent Charitable Company's documentation of risks and associated mitigating actions, considering ways that any risks could give rise to non-compliance with laws and regulations.

- review of minutes of Trustee Board and Audit and Risk Committee meetings for any indication of non-compliance with laws and regulations.

- making enquiries regarding any matters identified as a Serious Incident reportable to the Charity Commission.

- review of correspondence with regulatory and tax authorities for any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations.

- review of legal expenditure accounts to understand the nature of expenditure incurred.

- discussion with management, including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations.

Fraud

As part of designing our audit, we determined materiality and assessed the risks of material misstatement in the financial statements, including how fraud may occur. In particular, we looked at where management made subjective judgements, for example in respect of significant accounting estimates that involved making assumptions and considering future events that are inherently uncertain. We also considered potential financial or other pressures, opportunity and motivations for fraud. As part of this discussion, we identified the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud and how management monitor these processes.

We also completed the following procedures:

- completed a review of the minutes of meetings of Those Charged With Governance, as well as relevant Committee meetings, a review of internal audit reports and a review of correspondence with relevant regulators to identify any actual or potential frauds or any potential weaknesses in internal control which could result in fraud susceptibility;

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud. Areas of identified risk were then tested substantively;

- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested journal entries and other adjustments for inappropriate or unusual journals outside of our expectations, as well as for any significant transactions outside the normal course of business, taking into consideration the scope for management to manipulate financial results, for example, through the timing of the recognition of income;

- held a discussion among the engagement team as to how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements. We also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit;

- undertook discussions with management, including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;

- assessed the design and operating effectiveness of controls and procedures relevant to the preparation of the financial statements and the detection and prevention of irregularities and fraud.

- challenged the assumptions made by management in their significant accounting estimates in relation to classification of restricted funds, allocation of costs, going concern and appropriateness of the treatment of the pension scheme.

Our audit procedures were designed to respond to risks of material misstatement in the financial statements, recognising that the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery, misrepresentations or through collusion. There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures performed and the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we are to become aware of it.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located at the Financial Reporting Council's ("FRC's") website.This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Charitable Company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Charitable Company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Charitable Company and the Charitable Compan y's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Jill Halford

Jill Halford (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of BDO LLP, statutory auditor
London, UK

Date: 18 October 2024

BDO LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales (with registered number OC305127).

Consolidated statement of financial activities

Year ended 31 March 2024 (Incorporating an income and expenditure account)

	Note	Unrestricted		Restricted		Total	Total
		2024 £'000	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Income:							
Donations and legacies	2	**4,233**	7,420	**6,750**	12,164	**10,983**	19,584
Income from charitable activities:							
Grants	3	**25,300**	25,100	**110,921**	113,443	**136,221**	138,543
Delivery of services		**17,006**	4,427	**388**	1,699	**17,394**	6,126
Training and support		**465**	530	**-**	-	**465**	530
Other income:							
Other incoming resources		**599**	1,004	**390**	4	**989**	1,008
Investment income		**1,675**	528	**-**	-	**1,675**	528
Total income		**49,278**	39,009	**118,449**	127,310	**167,727**	166,319
Expenditure:							
Expenditure on raising funds	6	**2,670**	1,543	**218**	217	**2,888**	1,760
Expenditure on charitable activities:							
Delivering information and advice	6	**7,133**	5,603	**29,466**	25,235	**36,599**	30,838
Advice and advocacy	6	**3,480**	2,618	**7,129**	6,726	**10,609**	9,344
Strengthening the local Citizens Advice network	6	**14,575**	16,895	**4,139**	3,839	**18,714**	20,734
Partnerships	6	**18,523**	10,321	**80,472**	80,405	**98,995**	90,726
Charitable expenditure before pension movements		**46,381**	36,980	**121,424**	116,422	**167,805**	153,402
Charitable expenditure: Movement in pension provision	17	**856**	10,751	**-**	-	**856**	10,751
Total expenditure		**47,237**	47,731	**121,424**	116,422	**168,661**	164,153
Net (expenditure)/income		**2,041**	(8,722)	**(2,975)**	10,888	**(934)**	2,166
Net movement in funds		**2,041**	(8,722)	**(2,975)**	10,888	**(934)**	2,166
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward	19	**(10,047)**	(1,325)	**21,878**	10,990	**11,831**	9,665
Total funds carried forward	19	**(8,006)**	(10,047)	**18,903**	21,878	**10,897**	11,831

All activities derive from continuing operations. The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
The notes on pages 85 to 113 form part of these financial statements.

Consolidated and charity balance sheet

At 31 March 2024

	Note	Group		Citizens Advice	
		2024 £'000	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Fixed assets:					
Intangible assets	10	**436**	837	**436**	837
Tangible assets	11	**446**	171	**446**	171
Current assets					
Stocks	12	**84**	84	**84**	84
Debtors	13	**10,773**	14,954	**10,781**	15,007
Short-term deposits	15	**17,500**	10,000	**17,500**	10,000
Cash and cash equivalents	16	**28,963**	32,761	**28,943**	32,703
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	**(13,684)**	(10,788)	**(13,672)**	(10,783)
Net current assets		**43,636**	47,011	**43,636**	47,011
Total assets less current liabilities		**44,518**	48,019	**44,518**	48,019
Provisions for liabilities and charges	17	**(33,621)**	(36,188)	**(33,621)**	(36,188)
Total assets less all liabilities		**10,897**	11,831	**10,897**	11,831
Funds					
Restricted funds	19	**18,903**	21,878	**18,903**	21,878
Unrestricted funds	19	**25,184**	25,555	**25,184**	25,555
Pension reserve	19	**(33,190)**	(35,602)	**(33,190)**	(35,602)
Total unrestricted funds		**(8,006)**	(10,047)	**(8,006)**	(10,047)
Total funds		**10,897**	11,831	**10,897**	11,831

The charity has taken exemption from presenting its unconsolidated statement of financial activities under s408 of the Companies Act 2006.
The unconsolidated deficit for the year is £0.9 million (2023: £2.2 million surplus). The notes on pages 85 to 113 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the trustee board and signed on their behalf by:

Matthew Swindells
Director (Chair)
Date: 16 October 2024

Deborah Harris
Director (Treasurer)
Date: 16 October 2024

Company number: 01436945

Consolidated statement of cash flows

Year ended 31 March 2024

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net movement of funds	**(934)**	2,166
Adjustments for		
Amortisation of intangible assets	**402**	403
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	**157**	56
Profit/(loss) on disposal of tangible assets	**69**	-
Interest receivable	**(1,675)**	(528)
Decrease in stock	**-**	6
Decrease/(Increase) in debtors	**4,181**	(6,752)
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	**2,896**	(92)
(Decrease)/Increase in provisions	**(2,567)**	9,363
Net cash generated by operating activities	**2,529**	4,622
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible assets	**(502)**	-
Interest received	**1,675**	528
Purchase of short-term deposits	**(7,500)**	(10,000)
Net cash used in investing activities	**(6,327)**	(9,472)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	**(3,798)**	(4,850)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	**32,761**	37,611
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	**28,963**	32,761

Notes:

a) Analysis of changes in net debt	At 1 Apr 2023 £'000	Cash flows £'000	At 31 Mar 2024 £'000
Cash at bank and in hand	32,761	(3,798)	28,963
Total changes in net debt	**32,761**	**(3,798)**	**28,963**

The notes on pages 85 to 113 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

Citizens Advice is a public benefit entity registered as a charity in England and Wales and a company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated on 13 July 1979 (company number: 01436945) and registered as a charity on 21 January 1980 (charity number: 279057). The registered office of Citizens Advice is: 3rd Floor, 1 Easton Street, London, WC1X 0DW. The consolidated financial statements are prepared in sterling, being the functional currency of the company, and are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds.

1. Accounting policies

a) Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice. This is applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)—(Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006. Citizens Advice meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s). The principal accounting policies, which have been applied consistently, except where noted, are set out below.

b) Consolidation

Citizens Advice Limited, a trading subsidiary controlled by Citizens Advice, has also been consolidated within the accounts on a line-by-line basis. The net outgoing resources for Citizens Advice alone were £934,000 (2023: £2,166,000 net incoming).

A separate statement of financial activities for the charity is not presented because the charity has taken advantage of the exemptions afforded by Section 408 of the Companies Act 2006. The charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 from the requirements to present a charity-only cash flow statement.

Individual local Citizens Advice network members are not consolidated within these accounts as they are independent legal entities funded directly and indirectly from their own sources accountable to their own members and funding bodies, and not controlled by Citizens Advice.

c) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis. Detailed financial budgets are presented and approved by the trustee board on a 12-month basis together with forecasts and projections over a 3-year period. Our planning processes, including financial projections and scenario planning, take into consideration the current economic climate and its potential impact on the various sources of income and planned expenditure.

We acknowledge our pension fund obligations, and the impact of the 2022 triennial valuation on our contributions, and have a clear strategy to manage the deficit, which includes a deficit reduction plan and new Schedule of Contributions which was agreed with the pension scheme trustee board in August 2023.

We also acknowledge the impact this has had on our reserves, which now show negative total unrestricted funds. However the negative pension reserve reflects payments which will not crystallise in the short to medium term, and Citizens Advice has factored these contributions into our cash flow projections based on future activities. The contingent liability referenced in Note 24 has also been considered in the range of scenarios considered for cash flow projections.

After reviewing the Group's forecasts and projections, the trustees consider that the Group is well placed to manage the business risks it faces. This position is supported by a sufficient level of liquid reserves to cover business continuity and development plans, a good relationship with our key funders, existing funding agreements and contracts in place and proven ability to retain and secure new services.

The trustees therefore have a reasonable expectation that the Group has sufficient resources to continue in its operational existence for the foreseeable future. They believe that there are no material uncertainties that call into doubt the ability of the Group to continue as a going concern.

d) Intangible and tangible fixed assets

Fixed assets are stated at historical costs less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses and are recognised in the balance sheet on initial acquisition, in accordance with FRS 102. Only assets with an acquisition cost over £1,000 are capitalised. Depreciation is charged on a straight-line basis on the cost of assets less residual value over their estimated useful life. A full year's depreciation is charged in the year of acquisition. Fixed assets are assessed for impairment at the balance sheet date

The estimated lives of the assets are as follows:

Office and computer equipment—3 years.

Infrastructure software—between 3 and 8 years, depending on the duration of licence.

Software development costs and infrastructure purchased and developed in-house have been capitalised within intangible assets as they can be identified with a specific project anticipated to produce future benefits. Once brought into use, they will be amortised on the straight-line basis over the anticipated life of the benefits arising from the completed project, usually expected to be between 3 and 8 years.

Fixtures and fittings—5 years.

e) Stocks

Stocks are goods donated and held for distribution to local Citizens Advice. They are measured at fair value at the balance sheet date. Due to the nature of the goods and the availability of selling prices for comparable items, the fair value is based on market value of equivalent items and assessed for impairment at the balance sheet date.

f) Cash, cash equivalents and short term investments

Cash and cash equivalents are short-term highly liquid investments which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and that are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value. This includes cash in hand and deposits with banks not held for investment purposes. Short-term investments are fixed-term deposits held in excess of 3 months from the date of acquisition and hence not included in cash and cash equivalents.

g) Leases

Annual rentals are charged to the statement of financial activities on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease. Rent-free periods are accounted for over the lease period.

h) Pension costs

The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) Pension and Assurance Plan (1991) is a multi employer defined benefit scheme which was closed to future accrual during the financial year ended 31 March 2008. Having taken advice from the scheme's actuary, Citizens Advice cannot identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities on a consistent and reasonable basis. The disclosures under FRS 102 in this circumstance are shown in note 23.

The expected cost of providing pensions is calculated periodically by a professionally-qualified actuary. The operating costs of providing retirement benefits to employees are charged to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are incurred as required by FRS 102. A provision is recognised for future funding contributions in accordance with the accounting policy for provisions.

On 1 April 2005, Citizens Advice introduced a defined contribution pension, the Citizens Advice Group Personal Pension Plan operated by Scottish Widows. Since April 2014, colleagues have been automatically enrolled unless they opt out of the scheme. The employer's contributions are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they were incurred. Some Consumer Futures members who transferred in April 2014 retain participation in the Civil Service scheme.

i) Financial instruments

Citizens Advice has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at the present value of future cash flows (amortised cost). Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise the Group's debtors (excluding prepayments), cash and cash equivalents and short-term deposits.

Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise the Group's short- and long-term creditors excluding deferred income and taxation payable.

Investments in subsidiary undertakings are held at cost less impairment.

j) Grants payable and receivable

Grants payable are made to local Citizens Advice and other bodies, and the liability is recognised when the obligation arises as set out in the funding agreement for delivery of services resulting in the payment becoming unavoidable, typically when the performance-related obligations have been met, although the grant may not be due.

Grants receivable are recognised when entitlement is established, in particular where performance-related obligations have been achieved, there is probability of receipt and the amount can be reliably measured. Any unexpended grant is carried forward in reserves.

If any grant has been provided for a stated purpose, it is carried forward as restricted funds. Any unused grants not able to be used for the purpose determined by the funder are returned in accordance with the funding agreement.

k) Deferred income

Deferred income relating to subscriptions is shown within the balance sheet. Other deferred income relates to restricted funding received in advance but where the related expenditure can only take place in a future accounting period.

l) Legacies and donations

Legacies are recognised when they are received or when probate is given and a reliable estimate of the amount is available, whichever is sooner. Donations are recognised when the income recognition criteria are met, which is usually upon receipt. If there is entitlement, receipt is probable and the value can be reliably measured, donations have been recognised prior to receipt.

Gifts in kind are valued at a reasonable estimate of the value to Citizens Advice, which is normally equal to the market value. They are recognised when the income recognition criteria are met, typically when the goods or services have been received.

m) Delivery of services

The trading activities of Citizens Advice, including the local Citizens Advice membership fees, the sale of information products and delivery of advice services under contract, are exercised in the course of carrying out the primary purpose of the charity.

The income and expenditure are shown in the statement of financial activities as delivery of services and strengthening the local Citizens Advice network respectively. Income from annual membership and subscriptions to information products is recognised evenly in line with the period of provision of the service. Services delivered under contract are recognised as unrestricted. Income is recognised in line with the productivity (measured as time spent providing the service), alongside agreed recovery of implementation costs incurred.

Any activities that are not for the primary purpose of the charity are accounted for in Citizens Advice Limited and this subsidiary has been consolidated into the statement of financial activities.

n) Training and support

The training and support activities comprise income from the provision of training courses in debt, employment, welfare benefits and consumer issues. Also, contributions towards the cost of providing insurance cover on behalf of the network in England, Wales and the Channel Islands.

o) Other income

Income for the supply of services is recognised in line with the extent to which the service has been delivered, typically based on time spent providing the service, at which point there is entitlement and receipt is probable.

Goods donated for distribution are recognised as income at fair value which is the market value and held as stocks until distributed, at which point they are included under the charitable expenditure at the same value.

p) Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under the charitable expenditure activity headings with reference to activities performed in the year.

Costs of generating funds are those costs relating to fundraising for new donors or new projects. Colleague costs are all emoluments incurred. Other direct costs are non-colleague costs incurred by each principal activity. Governance costs are those incurred in connection with the administration of the charity's constitutional and statutory duties.

Irrecoverable VAT is treated as resources expended in the principal activity that incurred the original VAT. Support costs, including premises, fundraising, central administration, IT support, human resources costs, governance and finance costs (colleague and other costs), which are not directly attributable to a

particular principal activity, have been fully allocated to departments and activities based on direct colleague costs of the principal activity as shown in note 7. The allocation is completed on a consistent basis for all support costs across the charitable objectives, with the exception of delivery of services through partnerships. The delivery of services through partnerships are funded by restricted income and receive an allocation of support costs through full cost recovery, thus no allocation of unrestricted support costs is required.

q) Reserves

Unrestricted funds represent funds raised or grants awarded for no specified project which are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the charity's objectives. There are no carry-forward restrictions on unrestricted funds. Transfers to and from designated funds are subject to the approval of the trustees.

Restricted funds are awarded for a specified programme as declared by the funder, or restricted with their authority or with a restriction created by a legal process. The scope of the programme is still within the wider objectives of the charity. Income may be awarded in one year for expenditure in that or a subsequent year on a specified programme.

r) Provisions

Provisions for future liabilities are recognised when Citizens Advice has a legal or constructive financial obligation that can be reliably estimated and for which there is an expectation that payment will be made.

The provisions include Citizens Advice's pension liability in compliance with FRS 102. This provision has been calculated as the discounted value of future pension contributions as agreed per the latest Schedule of Contributions.

s) Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects the current and future periods.

The key judgements and estimates that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are described in the accounting policies and are summarised below:

Income recognition—Due to the range and complexity of the Group's funding streams, income recognition is deemed to be an area that requires judgement to appropriately apply the income accounting policies. In particular, consideration has been given to ensuring the correct classification between income from grants and income from contracts. Income from contracts is recognised when the entitlement is established, there is probability of receipt and the amount can be reliably measured. Income from contracts is recognised as unrestricted income where there is no requirement to pay back any surplus to the funders, and the surplus can be spent on any purpose. The charity has seen an increase in such income this year as part of the Money and Pensions Service debt advice activities switched from grant funded to contract funded as of 1 February 2023.

Pension scheme—The charity is part of a closed defined benefit multi employer scheme alongside 15

local Citizens Advice. During the period the scheme operated there were many colleagues who moved between working for the different entities involved in the scheme and full records of these movements are unavailable. As a result of these incomplete records, and after taking professional advice, the charity has determined that the scheme is unable to properly differentiate the liability between the scheme members. As a result, Citizens Advice accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution plan, recognising on the balance sheet the present value of the future committed payments. Further information is contained within note 23.

Pension liabilities—The charity recognises a liability relating to future deficit contributions as determined by the current Schedule of Contributions. Under accounting requirements, the liability shall be measured at the present value of the contributions payable, calculated using a discount rate. The discount rate used is 4.9% (2023: 4.8%), and this represents a key accounting estimate, but the charity obtains advice from a qualified actuary to determine this.. In order to determine the appropriate discount rate at each balance sheet date, the charity engages a firm of actuaries to provide expert advice about this assumption and the consequent effect on the pension liability. Further information is contained within note 23.

t) Events after the end of the reporting period

Events that occur between the reporting date and the date of signing, of which impact the financial statements, are assessed as either adjusting or non-adjusting events. This is determined by whether they provide evidence of conditions that existed at the reporting date or those that arose after the reporting date respectively. Material adjusting events are reflected in the values in the financial statements, whilst non-adjusting events are reflected in the disclosures only.

2. Donations and legacies

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Legacies	57	1
Donations - corporate donors	10,603	19,099
Donations - gifts in kind	63	113
Donations - individual giving	260	371
Total donations and legacies	**10,983**	19,584

There was a significant increase in corporate donations in 2023, which are typically one-off in nature. Donations included £2.8 million from Aviva (2023: £4.3 million) and £6.6 million from National Grid (2023: £6.0 million).

We received £1 million which was part of a £20 million donation to charity that Entain was required to make as a part of a settlement with the CPS and HMRC, announced in 2023.

Legacies also increased, but similarly these are one off in nature, with £55,000 of the 2024 value related to one estate. Gifts in kind includes professional services to the value of £nil (2023: £20,551) provided by 2020 Trustee Services, along with advertising credits for use on Google to the value of £62,732 (2023: £91,896).

3. Grants

a) Government grants

Funder	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	Purpose
Government department grants			
Department for Business and Trade (DBT) unrestricted	**25,300**	25,100	Core charitable objectives
DBT restricted	**12,251**	9,744	Consumer service
DBT restricted	**6,456**	6,122	Consumer (levy funded)
DBT restricted	**57**	50	Product safety
DBT restricted	**2,871**	2,871	Big Energy Saving Week/Network and energy advice
Department of Health	**-**	4	Membership of the Health and Wellbeing Alliance
Department for Work and Pensions	**20,744**	20,100	Universal Support: Help to Claim
Ministry of Justice	**11,777**	11,391	Court-based Witness Service
Competition & Markets Authority	**-**	22	Consumer policy
Welsh Government	**7,638**	9,788	Advice service
Welsh Government	**6,220**	3,375	Debt and housing advice
Welsh Government	**20**	16	Discrimination advice
Total Government grants	**93,334**	88,583	

3. Grants (continued)

b) Grants from other public bodies

Funder	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	Purpose
The Insolvency Service	**93**	72	Debt relief orders
Money and Pensions Service	**10,397**	10,271	Pension guidance
Money and Pensions Service[1]	**20,954**	27,998	Money and debt advice and debt relief orders
Total grants from other public bodies	**31,444**	38,341	

c) Other grants

Purpose (funder)	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Online scams awareness (Facebook)	**35**	474
Energy advice (various)	**4,293**	1,917
Specialist support (various)	**366**	1,149
Food banks (Trussell Trust)	**5,985**	7,303
Money advice (various)	**764**	776
Total other grants	**11,443**	11,619
Total grants	**136,221**	138,543

[1] Part of the Money and Pensions Service grant funding ended on 1 January 2023. Since 1 February 2023 part of this has been delivered under a contract, and as such, is not included in the figures above. This income is now included in unrestricted Delivery of Services in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activity.

A list of grant funders is available in the strategic report.

4. Information regarding directors and employees

The trustees of Citizens Advice are the non-executive directors of the charitable company. nil emoluments were paid to any non-executive directors (2023: £nil). Expenses of £4,586 (2023: £1,555) were reimbursed, or paid directly to third parties for 5 (2023: 7) of the non-executive directors during the year. These expenses related to travel, accommodation and subsistence incurred in the course of executing their duties. Trustee indemnity insurance up to the value of £10 million was in place for the duration of the reporting period. This was part of a wider policy purchased to provide cover for Citizens Advice and the network at a cost of £254,000 (2023: £227,000).

Employee costs during the year:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Wages and salaries	**44,649**	39,756
Social security costs	**4,897**	4,436
Pension costs	**3,189**	3,342
Temporary colleagues	**1,235**	1,317
Total employee costs	**53,970**	48,851

Wages and salaries above include £109,217 (2023: £876,277) for redundancy and settlement costs. Of these payments £nil (2023: £54,865) were payable to key management personnel. Redundancy payments were made in line with our contractual terms.

Pension costs shown above relate to amounts accrued in the year with £382,981 (2023: £nil) included in other creditors at year end. Payments totalling £2.7 million (2023: £2.4 million) were made to the Citizens Advice Group Personal Pension Plan. A payment of £55,985 (2023: £57,000) was made to the Civil Service Pension scheme for Consumer Futures colleagues who transferred to Citizens Advice in April 2014.

In addition to the pension costs disclosed above, contributions totalling £4.8 million (2023: £2.6 million) were made to the NACAB Pension and Assurance Plan (1991) which closed on 27 March 2008. £4.8 million (2023: £2.1 million) of this was paid from the existing pension liability provision.

The number of employees who received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs but including compensation for loss of office) in excess of £60,000 is analysed below:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
£60,000 to £69,999	**67**	54
£70,000 to £79,999	**35**	21
£80,000 to £89,999	**8**	11
£90,000 to £99,999	**5**	3
£110,000 to £119,999	**3**	3
£120,000 to £129,999	**2**	2
£180,000 to £189,999	**1**	1

Citizens Advice has identified the key management personnel as the executive team, as outlined in the strategic report. The total remuneration for key management personnel was £875,873 (2023: £934,462), including remuneration as included in table below, plus employer's Nationa Insurance (NI) of £91,280 (2023: £97,294). This includes pension contributions of £35,804 (2023: £35,147). In addition, the key management personnel were reimbursed £1,653 (2023: £1,193) for travel and out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of executing their responsibilities.

4. Information regarding directors and employees (continued)

Key management personnel remuneration for the year, including basic pay, pension and benefits was as follows:

Notes	Role	Remuneration to 31 March 2024			Remuneration to 31 March 2023
		Salary	Pension	Total	
	Chief Executive	£180,840	-	**£180,840**	£180,840
1	Executive Director of Advice and Advocacy	-	-	**-**	£127,174
1.1	Interim Executive Director of Advice and Advocacy	£78,224	£4,797	**£83,021**	-
	Executive Director of Operations	£123,700	£8,040	**£131,740**	£121,158
2	Executive Director of Finance and Commercial	£112,480	£7,207	**£119,687**	£54,193
2.1	Interim Executive Director of Finance and Commercial	£32,249	£2,067	**£34,316**	-
2.2	Interim Director of Commercial	-	-	**-**	£131,433
	Executive Director of People	£123,700	£ 8,040	**£131,740**	£131,181
3	Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation	£114,759	£7,459	**£122,218**	£39,937
3.1	Interim Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation	-	-	**-**	£51,252
4	Executive Director of Digital Technology and Advice	£57,500	£2,990	**£60,490**	-

1. James Plunkett was Executive Director of Advice and Advocacy until March 2023. Matt Upton was Interim Executive Director of Advice and Advocacy until 12 December 2023 This post has not been filled, with his responsibilities covered by directors.

2. Karen Bass was Executive Director of Finance and Commercial until February 2024. Jameela Khan has been Interim Executive Director of Finance and Commercial since February 2024. Andrew Seager was Interim Executive Director of Commercial until 4 November 2022.

3. Tracey Waltho has been Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation since 30 November 2022. Maz Hamilton was Interim Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation from 21 March 2022 to 6 October 2022 and was only included in the above comparative from that point, having moved from their role as Programme Director for Content Strategy and Delivery.

4. Alex Butler has been employed as Executive Director of Digital Technology and Advice since November 2023, having previously been in this role as a contractor.

Pension contributions for key management personnel in the scheme are paid at the same rate as for all colleagues. The maximum employer contribution available under the colleague scheme is 6.5%.

4. Information regarding directors and employees (continued)

On 1 April 2023 all colleagues received a pay increase of 2.5% of salary and £950, plus a further non consolidated payment of £850 to those in Support grades, £750 to those in Officer grades, and £350 to those in Senior Officer grades. Other salary changes were a result of role changes and revaluations. The remuneration policy is set out in the strategic report.

The average number of people employed in each activity during the year was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Raising funds	**19**	17
Charitable activities		
Delivering information and advice	**361**	350
Advice and advocacy	**151**	132
Strengthening the local Citizens Advice network	**286**	273
Partnerships	**274**	237
Average number of persons employed	**1,091**	1,009

5. Grants payable

Grants are received for the above purposes and distributed amongst local Citizens Advice members. The local Citizens Advice members who received a grant in the year are shown in Appendix 1

a) Grants to local Citizens Advice members

Purpose	2024 Total number	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Money and debt advice	154	**16,908**	21,326
Pensions guidance	17	**7,476**	7,426
Consumer advice	8	**7,160**	6,526
Universal credit: Help to Claim	60	**13,535**	13,606
Welsh Government funded projects	19	**11,582**	11,025
Energy advice	327	**5,415**	2,471
Witness services	2	**717**	672
Online scams awareness	-	**-**	109
Gambling support service	-	**-**	39
Debt relief orders	148	**63**	47
Help through Hardship	15	**5,004**	5,013
Cost of living	30	**1,042**	3,810
Various projects	67	**3,681**	915
Total local Citizens Advice network grants	847	**72,583**	72,985

5. Grants payable (continued)

b) Grants to other bodies

143 grants (2023: 78 grants) were paid to non local Citizens Advice network participants in delivery of national projects, funded by partner organisations.

Purpose	Recipient	2024 Total no.	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Debt advice	Better Leeds Communities	-	**-**	93
Debt advice	Birmingham Settlement	3	**348**	327
Debt advice	Burley Lodge Centre	3	**116**	41
Various	Citizens Advice Scotland	4	**2,591**	2,411
Debt advice	Ebor Gardens Advice Centre	3	**210**	194
Energy	Fuel Bank Foundation	1	**1,605**	508
Debt advice	Homemaker Southwest	2	**157**	154
Debt advice	Mind Salford	3	**115**	109
Debt line	Money Advice Trust	-	**-**	545
Debt advice	North Bristol Advice Centre	2	**128**	98
Various	Shelter	1	**460**	428
Various	SNAP Cymru	1	**142**	128
Debt advice	South Bristol Advice Services	2	**155**	33
Debt advice	St Vincent's Centre	2	**112**	107
Various	Various (2023: 58)	116	**677**	756
Total grants to others		143	**6,816**	5,932
Total grants		990	**79,399**	78,917

6. Total resources expended before pension movements

Total resources expended for the year ended 31 March 2024:

	Direct colleague costs £'000	Grants £'000	Other direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Costs of generating funds	757	-	1,766	365	**2,888**
Charitable objectives					
Delivering information and advice	14,795	11,538	5,116	5,150	**36,599**
Advice and advocacy	6,199	10	1,409	2,991	**10,609**
Strengthening the local Citizens Advice network	11,697	63	1,311	5,643	**18,714**
Partnerships	11,232	67,788	16,736	3,239	**98,995**
Total resources expended	44,680	79,399	26,338	17,388	**167,805**

Total resources expended for the year ended 31 March 2023:

	Direct colleague costs £'000	Grants £'000	Other direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Costs of generating funds	668	-	754	338	**1,760**
Charitable objectives					
Delivering information and advice	13,427	8,088	4,329	4,994	**30,838**
Advice and advocacy	5,062	63	1,661	2,558	**9,344**
Strengthening the local Citizens Advice network	10,499	47	4,881	5,307	**20,734**
Partnerships	9,083	70,719	7,978	2,946	**90,726**
Total resources expended	38,739	78,917	19,603	16,143	**153,402**

7. Support cost breakdown by activity

Support costs are allocated across activities based on direct colleague costs. The amounts below represent the allocated colleague and other allocated costs in note 6. Support costs breakdown by activity for the year ended 31 March 2024:

	Premises & Facilities Management £'000	Finance £'000	IT, Data & Change £'000	People Services & Comms £'000	Other Corporate Services £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Costs of generating funds	94	63	91	69	48	**365**
Charitable objectives						
Delivering information and advice	834	1,238	802	1,345	931	**5,150**
Advice and advocacy	774	519	744	564	390	**2,991**
Strengthening the local Citizens Advice network	1,460	979	1,404	1,064	736	**5,643**
Partnerships	825	571	794	620	429	**3,239**
Total support cost	3,987	3,370	3,835	3,662	2,534	**17,388**

Support costs include governance costs of £1.2 million (2023: £1.4 million). These costs include internal and external audit fees (see note 9), costs incurred in supporting the work of the trustees and an apportionment of executive team costs.

Support costs breakdown by activity for the year ended 31 March 2023:

	Premises & Facilities Management £'000	Finance £'000	IT, Data & Change £'000	People Services & Comms £'000	Other Corporate Services £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Costs of generating funds	62	59	90	75	52	**338**
Charitable objectives						
Delivering information and advice	513	1,178	745	1,505	1,053	**4,994**
Advice and advocacy	469	444	681	567	397	**2,558**
Strengthening the local Citizens Advice network	973	921	1,413	1,177	823	**5,307**
Partnerships	531	518	772	662	463	**2,946**
Total support cost	2,548	3,120	3,701	3,986	2,788	**16,143**

8. Corporation Tax

Citizens Advice is a registered charity and accordingly is exempt from taxation on income and gains where they are applied for charitable purposes. Citizens Advice Limited covenants all distributable profits to the main charity each year under Gift Aid and does not typically incur any tax liability.

9. Net expenditure

Net outgoing resources for the year are stated after charging:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Operating lease costs		
Property	**2,843**	1,608
Office equipment	**5**	23
Amortisation	**402**	403
Depreciation	**157**	56
External auditor's remuneration		
External audit fee	**120**	106
Tax advisory and compliance fees	**3**	9
Assurance services	**2**	-
Internal auditor's remuneration	**76**	76

10. Fixed assets – intangible assets

The fixed assets of Citizens Advice are the same as those of the Group, as stated below. Assets have been split between intangible and tangible assets in accordance with FRS 102 and the Charities SORP 2019. Intangible fixed assets include computer licences and software purchases.

	Operational infrastructure software £'000	Total £'000
Cost		
At 1 April 2023	3,509	3,509
At 31 March 2024	**3,509**	**3,509**
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2023	2,671	2,671
Charge for the year	402	402
At 31 March 2024	**3,073**	**3,073**
Net book value at 31 March 2024	**436**	**436**
Net book value at 31 March 2023	837	837

The amortisation charge is reallocated over all charitable activities.

11. Fixed assets – tangible assets

These include capitalised fixtures, fittings and equipment.

	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £'000	Total £'000
Cost		
At 1 April 2023	486	486
Additions	502	502
Disposals	(174)	(174)
At 31 March 2024	**814**	**814**
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2023	316	316
Charge for the year	157	157
Disposals	(105)	(105)
At 31 March 2024	**368**	**368**
Net book value at 31 March 2024	**446**	**446**
Net book value at 31 March 2023	171	171

12. Stocks

	Group		Citizens Advice	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Donated goods held for distribution	**84**	84	**84**	84
Total stocks	**84**	84	**84**	84

Stocks held are donated refurbished tablets and mobile phones which Citizens Advice distributes to local Citizens Advice.

13. Debtors

	Group		Citizens Advice	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Trade debtors	**1,123**	423	**1,117**	423
Other debtors	**1,289**	1,975	**1,289**	1,975
Prepayments and accrued income	**8,361**	12,556	**8,360**	12,556
Subsidiary undertakings	**-**	-	**15**	53
Total debtors	**10,773**	14,954	**10,781**	15,007

Included in other debtors is £9,498 (2023: £12,417) which relates to 23 (2023: 16) colleague season ticket, car, career development or home technology loans and the Cycle to Work Scheme. These are interest free and are recoverable through monthly payroll deductions. There were no executive directors (2023: none) with a loan outstanding at the balance sheet date (2023: £nil).

14. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group		Citizens Advice	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Trade creditors	**2,097**	511	**2,097**	511
Local Citizens Advice network grants	**3,680**	1,313	**3,680**	1,313
Other creditors	**1,895**	1,592	**1,895**	1,587
Other taxation and social security	**1,449**	1,197	**1,447**	1,197
Accruals and deferred income	**4,563**	6,175	**4,553**	6,175
Total creditors amounts falling due within one year	**13,684**	10,788	**13,672**	10,783
Accruals and deferred income comprises:				
Accruals	**3,756**	5,024	**3,756**	5,019
Deferred income brought forward	**1,151**	1,244	**1,156**	1,196
Amount released from previous year	**(1,026)**	(1,233)	**(1,026)**	(1,185)
Incoming resources deferred in the year	**682**	1,140	**667**	1,185
Total accruals and deferred income	**4,563**	6,175	**4,553**	6,175

Deferred income arises where funds are recognised, but not utilised in a financial year and the funder does not require repayment of the underspends, so they are carried forward for spend in subsequent years. Typically this occurs with funding agreements covering more than one year or where funding periods are non-coterminous with our financial year. Deferred income is generally utilised in the following financial year, but occasionally over several years.

15. Investments

The value of shares held in Citizens Advice Limited is £2 being 2 ordinary shares of £1 each which represents 100% of the issued share capital. The company is a private limited company which was incorporated on 16 July 1982. The company is incorporated in England. The company manages all forms of sponsorship opportunities and other trading activities on behalf of the parent company and covenants all profits under Gift Aid. The turnover in 2024 was £625 (2023: £47,750) but the subsidiary presented a loss after tax of £2,225 (2023: profit £29,227) and subsequently had negative net assets of £2,223 at 31 March 2024 (2023: £2). The shares are held as a fixed asset.

There were nil cash deposits held as investments at 31 March 2024 (2023: £nil) and nil were held as fixed assets (2023: £nil), but £17.5 million (2023: £10.0 million) were held in short-term deposits, maturing in 12 months or less.

16. Cash at bank and in hand

Cash and short term deposits valued at £46.5 million (2023: £42.8 million) were held as at 31 March 2024, made up of cash and cash equivalents of £29.0 million (2023: £32.8 million) and short-term deposits of £17.5 million (2023: £10.0 million). These were all held in UK accounts. Of these £1.9 million (2023: £3.3 million) has been identified in the balance sheet as a designated fund for technology investments.

17. Provisions

	Group		Citizens Advice	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Pension provision				
Provision at 1 April	**35,602**	26,285	**35,602**	26,285
(Utilised) for deficit funding contributions	**(4,750)**	(2,111)	**(4,750)**	(2,111)
Remeasurement due to change in discount rate	**(206)**	(2,669)	**(205)**	(2,669)
Remeasurement due to new schedule of contributions	**-**	13,420	**-**	13,420
Additional provision for salary linkage	**1,062**	-	**1,062**	-
Increase /(decrease) in pension provision in SOFA	**856**	10,751	**857**	10,751
Increase due to unwinding of discount	**1,482**	677	**1,481**	677
Pension provision at 31 March	**33,190**	35,602	**33,190**	35,602
Other provisions				
Provision at 1 April	**585**	540	**585**	540
(Released) during the year	**(2)**	(1)	**(2)**	(1)
(Utilised) during the year	**(445)**	-	**(445)**	-
Additional provision	**293**	47	**293**	47
Other provisions at 31 March	**431**	586	**431**	586
Total provisions at 31 March	**33,621**	36,188	**33,621**	36,188

17. Provisions (continued)

The nature of provisions and the expected timing of resulting payments are:

Nature of provision	Amount £'000	Payment due
Dilapidations payments due on leased buildings after first break clause	95	Between 2024 and 2029
Local Citizens Advice pension liability	5	By 2027
Advice risk provision	331	Between 2024 and 2025
Pension contribution liability	33,190	See note 23
Total provisions at 31 March 2024	**33,621**	

18. Financial instruments

As at 31 March 2024 the Group's financial instruments were:

	Group	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Financial assets at amortised cost		
Cash	**28,963**	32,761
Current asset investment	**17,500**	10,000
Trade debtors	**1,123**	423
Other debtors	**1,289**	1,975
Accrued income	**6,457**	10,560
Total financial assets at amortised cost	**55,332**	55,719
Financial liabilities at amortised cost		
Trade creditors	**2,097**	511
Other creditors	**1,895**	1,602
Accruals	**3,756**	5,024
Provisions	**33,190**	35,602
Total financial liabilities at amortised cost	**40,938**	42,739

Income, expenses, gains and losses in respect of these financial instruments were:

	2024 £'000			2023 £'000		
	Income	**Expense**	**Gains (losses)**	Income	Expense	Gains/ (losses)
Financial assets at amortised cost						
Interest on cash balances and short-term deposit	**1,675**	**-**	**-**	528	-	-

19. Statement of funds – Group and Citizens Advice

	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Transfers £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
Money and debt	6,443	21,436	(21,717)	-	**6,162**
Pensions guidance	198	10,397	(10,286)	-	**309**
Consumer and energy	5,906	29,924	(29,083)	-	**6,747**
Welfare	-	20,744	(20,744)	-	**-**
Wales specific services	-	13,878	(13,878)	-	**-**
Justice	32	11,777	(11,777)	-	**32**
Housing	13	55	(52)	-	**16**
Other	9,286	10,238	(13,887)	-	**5,637**
Total restricted funds	21,878	118,449	(121,424)	-	**18,903**
Designated funds	4,369	-	(1,400)	(128)	**2,841**
Unrestricted funds	21,186	44,528	(43,499)	128	**22,343**
Pension scheme	(35,602)	4,750	(2,338)	-	**(33,190)**
Total unrestricted funds including pension scheme	(10,047)	49,278	(47,237)	-	**(8,006)**
Total funds	11,831	167,727	(168,661)	-	**10,897**

Restricted funds represent that funding received with specific restrictions as to what it is spent on. The funds carried forward represent that restricted funding where income has been recognised but where the funds have not yet been spent.

Unrestricted funds represent funding where there is no restriction applied to how the funding is spent. This is split between freely available unrestricted funds and designated funds.

Designated funds represent those unrestricted funds that have been allocated by the board of trustees for technological investment, with a value of £1.9 million (2023: £3.3 million). The remaining £0.9 million (2023: £1.0 million) is a designated fund reserved for tangible and intangible fixed assets which are equal to the net book value of those assets.

The board of trustees has reviewed the reserves policy in the year and has maintained the target range of free reserves as 3 to 6 months of core operating costs. This equals £11.8 million to £23.5 million (2023: £11 million to £21 million). Free reserves are considered to be total unrestricted funds excluding pension reserve, less designated funds.

The pension reserve as at 31 March 2024 was £33.2 million (2023: £35.6 million) and represents the provision in the accounts for future committed payments to a closed defined benefit pension scheme. Further details are in note 23.

19. Statement of funds – Group and Citizens Advice (continued)

Comparative statement of funds – Group and Citizens Advice:

	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Transfers £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
Money and debt	5,872	28,209	(27,638)	-	6,443
Pensions guidance	159	10,271	(10,232)	-	198
Consumer and energy	3,376	25,359	(22,829)	-	5,906
Welfare	-	20,100	(20,100)	-	-
Wales specific services	7	13,179	(13,186)	-	-
Justice	34	11,391	(11,393)	-	32
Housing	172	8	(167)	-	13
Other	1,370	18,793	(10,877)	-	9,286
Total restricted funds	10,990	127,310	(116,422)	-	21,878
Designated funds	6,192	-	(1,365)	(458)	4,369
Unrestricted funds	18,768	34,229	(32,269)	458	21,186
Pension scheme	(26,285)	4,780	(14,097)	-	(35,602)
Total unrestricted funds including pension scheme	(1,325)	39,009	(47,731)	-	(10,047)
Total funds	9,665	166,319	(164,153)	-	11,831

20. Analysis of net assets between funds

Group

	Unrestricted		Restricted		Total	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:						
Fixed assets – intangible	**436**	837	**-**	-	**436**	837
Fixed assets – tangible assets	**446**	171	**-**	-	**446**	171
Current assets	**33,205**	31,342	**24,115**	26,457	**57,320**	57,799
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**(8,472)**	(6,256)	**(5,212)**	(4,532)	**(13,684)**	(10,788)
Provisions	**(33,621)**	(36,141)	**-**	(47)	**(33,621)**	(36,188)
Fund balance	**(8,006)**	(10,047)	**18,903**	21,878	**10,897**	11,831

Citizens Advice

	Unrestricted		Restricted		Total	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:						
Fixed assets – intangible	**436**	837	**-**	-	**436**	837
Fixed assets – tangible assets	**446**	171	**-**	-	**446**	171
Current assets	**33,193**	31,337	**24,115**	26,457	**57,308**	57,794
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**(8,460)**	(6,251)	**(5,212)**	(4,532)	**(13,672)**	(10,783)
Provisions	**(33,621)**	(36,141)	**-**	(47)	**(33,621)**	(36,188)
Fund balance	**(8,006)**	(10,047)	**18,903**	21,878	**10,897**	11,831

21. Local Citizens Advice network

The financial statements record the income and expenditure of Citizens Advice. Individual local Citizens Advice network members are not consolidated within these accounts as they are independent legal entities funded directly and indirectly from their own sources and are accountable to their own members and funding bodies.

22. Operating lease commitments

At 31 March 2024 Citizens Advice and the Group were committed to making the following minimum payments in respect of non-cancellable operating leases:

	2024		2023	
	Land and buildings £'000	**Other £'000**	Land and buildings £'000	Other £'000
Within 1 year	**694**	**5**	1,985	23
Between 2 and 5 years	**1,427**	**-**	397	-
After 5 years	**-**	**-**	-	-
Total operating lease commitments	**2,121**	**5**	2,382	23

At the end of the year there were capital commitments of £nil (2023: £nil).

23. Pension scheme

National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux Pension and Assurance Plan (1991)

Citizens Advice is the principal employer of a defined benefit scheme ('the Plan') in the UK which provides both pensions in retirement and death benefits to members. Pension benefits are related to the members' final salaries at retirement and their length of service at the date they retired or left pensionable service. The Plan closed to future accrual on 31 March 2008. The Plan also contains some money purchased additional voluntary contributions and protected rights funds, which are not included in these disclosures.

The Plan is a registered scheme under UK legislation. The Plan is subject to the scheme funding requirements outlined in UK legislation. The Plan is governed by the Plan's Trust Deed and Rules dated 4 April 2011. The Trustee is responsible for the operation and the governance of the Plan, including making decisions regarding the Plan's funding investment strategy (although they are required to consult the Principal Employer).

In accordance with the schedule of contributions in force over the 2023 to 2024 accounting year, the combined contributions to the Plan from Citizens Advice and other participating employers for the year ended 31 March 2024 were £5,218,000. This includes £4,918,000 towards the deficit, of which £4,750,000 relates to Citizens Advice, along with £300,000 as an allowance for administration expenses and all scheme levies, payable by Citizens Advice.

An FRS 102 actuarial valuation of the Plan was carried out on 31 March 2024 by a qualified independent actuary. Based upon membership data as at 31 March 2022, allowing for assumed membership movements over the period from this date, as well as any material membership movements significantly different from those assumed (for example, transfers out).

The most recent formal actuarial valuation of the Plan was at 31 March 2022 and revealed a funding deficit of £53,536,000. In the recovery plan agreed following the valuation, Citizens Advice and the other participating employers agreed to pay deficit funding contributions of £2,918,000 per annum with a view to eliminating the deficit by 30 September 2040. Of this, £2,750,000 relates to Citizens Advice along with £300,000 as an allowance for administration expenses and all scheme levies.

If Citizens Advice pays its annual contributions of £2,750,000 using an actuarial discount rate of 4.9% (2023: 4.8%) the net present value would be £33,190,631 (2023: £35,602,38). This is included in the balance sheet as a provision (as per note 17) and as a negative pension reserve (as per note 19).

The liabilities of the Plan are based on the current value of expected benefit payment cash flows to members of the Plan over the next 60 or more years. The average duration of the liabilities is approximately 11 years.

The Plan is exposed to actuarial risks such as market (investment) risk, interest rate risk, inflation risk, currency risk and longevity risk.

23. Pension scheme (continued)

Present values of scheme liabilities, fair value of assets and defined benefit asset (liability)

	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Fair value of plan assets	**60,594**	60,745
Present value of defined benefit obligation	**107,082**	111,169
(Deficit) in plan	**(46,488)**	(50,424)

The major assumptions used by the actuary were (in nominal terms) as follows:

Assumptions		
Discount rate	4.90%	4.80%
Inflation assumption (RPI)	3.20%	3.30%
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.80%	2.85%
Assumed life expectancies on retirement at age 65 are:		
Retiring today – Males	20.6	20.8
Retiring today – Females	23.4	23.6
Retiring in 20 years' time – Males	21.8	22
Retiring in 20 years' time – Females	24.5	24.7

24. Contingent liabilities

The NACAB Pension and Assurance Plan (1991) trustees are seeking clarification from the court on issues related to the Plan to resolve an uncertainty. As is standard in such proceedings, the charity (as the scheme's principal employer) acts as Defendant, but in practice seeks the same outcome as the Trustee. The case is not expected to be heard until 2025 and the financial impact remains uncertain depending on the outcome. In the event of an unsuccessful ruling the future deficit contributions payable to the Plan by the charity could be renegotiated by a material amount.

25. Related party transactions

Citizens Advice Limited is a subsidiary company owned by Citizens Advice and all Citizens Advice non-charitable trading is conducted through it. The directors are the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, Matthew Swindells, Lucinda Bell and Michele Shambrook. During the year ended 31 March 2024, it made a surplus before qualifying charitable donation and tax of £828 (2023: £34,110). The company incurred a tax charge of £3,053 (2023: £4,882), resulting in a net loss after tax of £2,225 (2023: £29,228 surplus).

At 31 March 2024, Citizens Advice Limited (company number 1652053) owed £14,879 to Citizens Advice (2023: £53,096). The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 were approved on 24 July 2024.

Citizens Advice International is a company which was registered in Belgium on 6 December 2004. Although not a related party under FRS 102, it is included here due to the connection of name and objectives. It was established to provide support to Citizens Advice organisations throughout the world. No charge has been made for any expenditure incurred by Citizens Advice on behalf of Citizens Advice International during the year. On 31 March 2024, Citizens Advice owed Citizens Advice International £nil (2023: £nil). Citizens Advice International is not consolidated into the accounts as it is a separate entity and Citizens Advice does not have the power to control it.

NACAB Pension Trustees Limited is a company limited by guarantee and is the corporate Trustee of the NACAB Pension and Assurance Plan (1991). Citizens Advice is the sole member of this company. This subsidiary was incorporated on 14 February 2017. There were no financial transactions or balances in the year to 31 March 2024 (2023: £nil).

The standing orders for trustee board recruitment require that at least 3 of our trustees must have local Citizens Advice expertise. As such, 2 of the trustees of Citizens Advice in the year to 31 March 2024 also had roles at a local Citizens Advice. Jonathan Mogford is Vice-Chair of Citizens Advice Wandsworth. Steve Hughes was COO at Citizens Advice SORT Group until December 2023 and is no longer employed by a local Citizens Advice. We have assessed that these do not create disclosable related party transactions, as in their Citizens Advice trustee role they are one of many trustees, and do not individually have sufficient influence over the direction of Citizens Advice.

The only other transactions with related entities in the year have been disclosed in note 4.

26. Company limited by guarantee

Citizens Advice is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. All local Citizens Advice are members of Citizens Advice and there are no other members. The maximum liability of each member is limited to £1. The trustees have no liability.

Appendix 1

Listed below are all the local Citizens Advice charities which have been the beneficiaries of grants payable by national Citizens Advice as summarised in note 5a:

Arun & Chichester Citizens Advice
Barnet Citizens Advice
Barnsley Citizens Advice
Barrow-In-Furness Citizens Advice
Basingstoke Citizens Advice
Bassetlaw Citizens Advice
Bath and North East Somerset Citizens Advice
Bedford & District Citizens Advice
Bedworth, Rugby and Nuneaton Citizens Advice
Bexley Borough Citizens Advice Bureau Ltd
Blackpool Citizens Advice
Bridgend County Borough Citizens Advice
Bridport and District Citizens Advice
Brighton and Hove Citizens Advice
Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau Ltd
Burnley and Pendle Citizens Advice
Bury & Bolton Citizens Advice
Cylch Conwy District CAB
Cambridge and District Citizens Advice Bureau
Camden Citizens Advice Bureau
Canolfan Cynghori Ynys Mon Citizens Advice
Canterbury District Citizens Advice Bureau
Cardiff and Vale Citizens Advice
Carlisle and Eden Districts Citizens Advice
Carmarthenshire Citizens Advice
Central & East Northamptonshire
Chapeltown Citizens Advice
Charnwood Citizens Advice
Cheshire East Citizens Advice
Chesterfield Citizens Advice
Citizens Advice 1066
Citizens Advice Allerdale
Citizens Advice Ashfield
Citizens Advice Birmingham
Citizens Advice Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole
Citizens Advice Bradford and Airedale and Bradford Law Centre
Citizens Advice Braintree and South Essex
Citizens Advice Brent
Citizens Advice Bristol
Citizens Advice Bromsgrove & Redditch
Citizens Advice Broxtowe
Citizens Advice Buckinghamshire
Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent
Citizens Advice Calderdale
Citizens Advice Central Dorset
Citizens Advice Chelmsford
Citizens Advice Cheshire West
Citizens Advice Cornwall
Citizens Advice County Durham
Citizens Advice Dacorum
Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar & Cleveland
Citizens Advice Denbighshire
Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts
Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough
Citizens Advice Dudley & Wolverhampton
Citizens Advice East Berkshire
Citizens Advice East Hampshire Limited
Citizens Advice East Herts
Citizens Advice East Lancashire
Citizens Advice East Suffolk Ltd
Citizens Advice Elmbridge (West)
Citizens Advice Esher & District
Citizens Advice Essex
Citizens Advice Gateshead
Citizens Advice Gosport
Citizens Advice Halton
Citizens Advice Hammersmith & Fulham
Citizens Advice Harlow
Citizens Advice Hart District Ltd
Citizens Advice Havant
Citizens Advice Hillingdon
Citizens Advice in North & West Kent

Citizens Advice Leeds
Citizens Advice Leicestershire
Citizens Advice Leighton Linslade
Citizens Advice Lindsey
Citizens Advice Liverpool
Citizens Advice Manchester
Citizens Advice Medway
Citizens Advice Merton & Lambeth
Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire
Citizens Advice Mid Mercia
Citizens Advice Mole Valley
Citizens Advice Newcastle
Citizens Advice North East Lincolnshire
Citizens Advice North Hertfordshire
Citizens Advice North Lancashire
Citizens Advice North Lincolnshire
Citizens Advice North Somerset
Citizens Advice North Yorkshire
Citizens Advice Northumberland
Citizens Advice Nottingham & District
Citizens Advice Portsmouth
Citizens Advice Reading
Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead Limited
Citizens Advice Rural Cambs
Citizens Advice Salford
Citizens Advice Sandwell & Walsall
Citizens Advice Sefton
Citizens Advice Services Corby & Kettering
Citizens Advice Sherwood & Newark
Citizens Advice Shropshire
Citizens Advice Solihull Borough
Citizens Advice Somerset
Citizens Advice Sort Group
Citizens Advice South East Staffordshire
Citizens Advice South Gloucestershire
Citizens Advice South Hams
Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire
Citizens Advice South Warwickshire
Citizens Advice South West Surrey
Citizens Advice Southend
Citizens Advice St Albans District
Citizens Advice Staffordshire South West
Citizens Advice Stevenage
Citizens Advice Stroud & Cotswold Districts Limited
Citizens Advice Sunderland
Citizens Advice Surrey Heath
Citizens Advice Sutton
Citizens Advice Swale
Citizens Advice Swansea Neath Port Talbot Limited
Citizens Advice Teignbridge
Citizens Advice Torfaen
Citizens Advice Watford
Citizens Advice Waverley
Citizens Advice West Northamptonshire and Cherwell
Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire (Witney)
Citizens Advice West Suffolk
Citizens Advice Westminster
Citizens Advice Wigan Borough
Citizens Advice Winchester District
Citizens Advice Wirral
Citizens Advice Wokingham
Citizens Advice Worcester & Herefordshire
Copeland District Citizens Advice
Coventry Citizens Advice
Croydon Citizens Advice Bureau
Cyngor Ar Bopeth Ceredigion Citizens Advice
Cyngor ar Bopeth Gwynedd Citizens Advice
Diss, Thetford & District Citizens Advice
Dover, Deal & District Citizens Advice
East Dorset & Purbeck Citizens Advice
East End Citizens Advice Bureau
Eastbourne Citizens Advice
Eastleigh Citizens Advice
Edenbridge & Westerham Citizens Advice
Enfield Citizens Advice
Epping Forest District Citizens Advice
Epsom & Ewell Citizens Advice
Exeter Citizens Advice
Fareham Citizens Advice
Flintshire Citizens Advice
Greenwich District Citizens Advice Bureau
Haringey District Citizens Advice Bureaux
Harrow Citizens Advice
Hartlepool Citizens Advice

Havering Citizens Advice Bureau
Hertsmere Citizens Advice Bureau
Hounslow District Citizens Advice Bureau
Hull and East Riding Citizens Advice Bureau
Ipswich & District Citizens Advice
Kensington & Chelsea Citizens Advice Bureau
Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre
Knowsley District Citizens Advice
Lancashire Citizens Advice
Lewisham Citizens Advice Bureau
Luton Citizens Advice
Maidstone Citizens Advice
Maldon Citizens Advice
Mansfield Citizens Advice
Merthyr Tydfil Citizens Advice
Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice
Middlesbrough Citizens Advice
Milton Keynes District Citizens Advice Bureau
Monmouthshire County Citizens Advice
New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau
Newport Citizens Advice Ltd
Newport Isle of Wight Citizens Advice
Norfolk Citizens Advice
North & West Gloucestershire Citizens Advice
North East Derbyshire Citizens Advice
North Tyneside Citizens Advice Bureau
North Warwickshire Citizens Advice
Oxford Citizens Advice Bureau
Oxfordshire South & Vale Citizens Advice
Pembrokeshire Citizens Advice
Peterborough Citizens Advice
Plymouth Citizens Advice
Powys Citizens Advice
Preston Citizens Advice
RCJ Advice
Redbridge Citizens Advice
Rhondda Cynon Taff Citizens Advice
Richmond Borough Citizens Advice Bureau
Rotherham & District Citizens Advice
Rushmoor Citizens Advice Bureau
Rutland Citizens Advice
Sheffield Citizens Advice and Law Centre
South Lakes Citizens Advice
South Tyneside Citizens Advice
South Worcestershire Citizens Advice
Southampton Citizens Advice Bureau
Southwark Citizens Advice Bureau
St Helens Citizens Advice
Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent Citizens Advice
Stockton & District Citizens Advice & Information Service
Sudbury & District Citizens Advice
Swindon Citizens Advice
Tadley Citizens Advice
Tameside District Citizens Advice
Tandridge Citizens Advice
Telford & The Wrekin Citizens Advice
Tendring Citizens Advice Bureau
Test Valley Citizens Advice
Three Rivers Citizens Advice Bureau
Torbay Citizens Advice Bureau
Torridge, North, Mid and West Devon Citizens Advice
Uttlesford Citizens Advice
Wakefield District Citizens Advice Bureau
Waltham Forest Citizens Advice Bureau
Wandsworth Citizens Advice
Warrington District Citizens Advice Bureau
Wealden District Citizens Advice
West Sussex (North,South,East)
Wiltshire Citizens Advice
Wrexham Citizens Advice
Wyre Forest Citizens Advice
York & District Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice helps people find a way forward.

We provide free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems. We are a voice for our clients and consumers on the issues that matter to them.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment. We're here for everyone.

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Citizens Advice is an operating name of The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.
Registered charity number 279057.

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